

***Imperial Intercultural Legacies in the Adriatic***



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Historical legacies of transnational practices have an impact on the concerns about intercultural dialogue in present Europe. The relations may be those of echoing, affinity, or (re)interpretation, particularly when imperial legacies intervene and complicate contemporary cultural encounters. The multicultural composition of the Habsburg Empire in the late 19th and early 20th century presents such a challenging historical legacy which deserves to be reconsidered from the present point of view. This era brought vibrant urbanization, industrialization and tourism development to the South-Eastern part of the Monarchy, including the Adriatic towns and tourist resorts which became spaces of intensive cultural exchange, economic mobility and immigra-on from diverse parts of the Empire. This mixture of people drew on the practices of their various places of origin, in order to organize social relations, labour and trade through both contests and intercultural dialogue. The paper seeks to uncover these past forms of transnational practices through re-creation of intercultural identities that were denied by the modernity discourse of national historiographies. These historical versions of the popular imagery of cosmopolitanism will be contrasted with observed contemporary forms of proclaimed multicultural coexistence and multilingualism in the officially bilingual European region of Istria, today divided among three countries. The paper will explore to what extent the historic context and social memory determine present discourses on muticulturalism and the coexistence of various old and newly immigrated ethnic groups as well as the ways those images shape a sense of a mixed regional identity and intercultural communication in everyday life.