

# AUTOCHTHONOUS “ITALIANNES” BEYOND ITALY’S NATIONAL BORDER IN ISTRIA IN SLOVENIA, ISTRIA AND DALMATIA IN CROATIA, THE MOUTH OF CATTARO IN MONTENEGRO AND SWITZERLAND’S ITALIAN GRISONS

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*Summary:* This paper considers the applicability of the concepts of nation and Italianness to the autochthonous ‘Italian’ cultures in the neighbouring regions of Istria in Slovenia, Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia, the Mouths of Cattaro in Montenegro, and Switzerland’s Italian Grisons. This research seeks to broaden the horizons of the study of ‘Italian’ cultures to overcome the restrictions of thinking about ‘Italianness’ exclusively within the borders of the Italian nation-state.

*Key words:* Italianness, nation, Istria, Dalmatia, Kotor/Cattaro, Grisons.

## 1. Introduction



*Figure 1: Mapping the Other Italies. (Source: Google Maps, 2014).*

This paper draws on a doctoral dissertation that asked why indigenous 'Italian' cultures can be found in Italy's neighbouring regions of Istria in Slovenia, Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia, the Mouths of Cattaro in Montenegro, and in Switzerland's Italian Grisons, which are shown in Figure 1. The question was first raised during a conversation I had with the writer Claudio Magris in Trieste in 2009. It was on that occasion that Magris suggested referring to those areas placed outside political Italy as 'Other Italies': 'Other' because those areas are different from Italy as a result of their spatial location in other states, which influences the cultures of these regions; 'Italies' on the grounds that there are people in those areas who refer to their own cultures as 'Italian', as will be examined in this paper. The rationale behind the conversation in Trieste was to contribute to raising awareness about the significance of the existence of indigenous 'Italian' cultures outside Italy. This paper aims to further the knowledge about these cultures. This is necessary because, despite the interest shown by intellectuals such as Magris, there is a widespread assumption that, except perhaps for the enclave states of San Marino and the Vatican, Italian culture coincides with Italy the nation-state. It is hard to pinpoint a specific cultural identity of the Vatican, and the same could be said of San Marino (Carpenter 2010: 855). With reference to areas located outside Italy's border, there are regions which, in the past, were considered as culturally 'Italian' (Buogo 1995; Vignoli 1995; 2000), such as the Principality of Monaco, Corsica, Nice/Nizza, and the upper part of Vallée de la Roya/Val di Roia in south-eastern France. Corsica became French in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Monaco may have retained independence but, like the city of Nice/Nizza, it became progressively Gallicized after 1861 (Vignoli 1995: 130). In the upper Vallée de la Roya/Val di Roia, a 1946 referendum showed that the population was largely in favour of France (Ugo 1989: 172) and that the local inhabitants should be considered as French (Giovana 1996: 84; Del Boca 1998: 70). Another case outside Italy is Malta. Nevertheless, as Giulio Vignoli (1995: 147) observes, even before coming under British influence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, local Maltese rulers did not feel the need to underline the 'Italian' culture of the population (Vignoli 1995: 147). However, what is important to say here is that nowadays, neither in France, nor in Monaco, nor in Malta are indigenous cultures explicitly and officially referred to as being 'Italian'. On the contrary, the four regions at the centre of this study were chosen because the 'Italians' of Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro as well as the people of the Italian Grisons explicitly and officially refer to some expressions of their own cultures as 'Italian'.

More significantly, the assumption that Italian culture and Italy the nation-state coincide is a legacy of the national ideology, which led to the creation of the Italian nation-state in 1861. In 2011, Italy celebrated 150 years since unification as a nation-

state. A profusion of public debates, special concerts, exhibitions<sup>1</sup>, newspaper supplements, such as those of *Corriere della Sera*<sup>2</sup>, as well as radio programmes, such as *Radio 24-Il Sole 24 Ore*’s *Gazzettino del Risorgimento*, were dedicated to the commemoration of this historical event<sup>3</sup>. In Italy, outside the media and political arenas, there was a noticeable increase of public displays of the Italian flag, as seen in the giant flag placed on a cliff in Figure 2. Moreover, at least judging by the amount of media coverage of the anniversary, ‘nation’ also appears to have become a surprisingly popular word, despite the paradoxical recurring talks of the “secession of northern Italy from the rest of the country and the creation of a new independent state, that of Padania” (Cento Bull 2000: 259).



Figure 2: Commemorating 150 years since Italian unification in Moneglia, Liguria, Italy.

<sup>1</sup> I am here referring to the official exhibition ‘FARE GLI ITALIANI 1861-2011, 150 anni di storia nazionale’. It was held in Turin in 2011. See FARE GLI ITALIANI (2011).

<sup>2</sup> *Corriere della Sera* created a web site dedicated to this anniversary. See CORRIERE DELLA SERA (2011).

<sup>3</sup> The *Gazzettino del Risorgimento* was broadcast daily by Italy’s business daily and radio station Radio 24-Il Sole 24 Ore. See GAZZETTINO DEL RISORGIMENTO (2011).

Such publicly projected feelings of a ‘popular’ Italian national sentiment are not a new phenomenon. However, displays of such feelings are usually associated with sport. What is peculiar about the celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Italian unification is not only that they honour a state, but that they also forge the view that the existence of the Italian nation is rooted in an historical consciousness. In 2011, MIUR, the Italian Ministry of Education, and MIBAC, the Ministry for Cultural Heritage, jointly published documents about the anniversary, to be adopted by schools, which emphasize the necessity for the creation of a nation-state. Unification was justified on the basis of ethno-linguistic, cultural, and historical “objective elements” (MIUR-MIBAC 2011)<sup>4</sup>. This view is common among scholars. For instance, Francesco Bruni (2010) posits that Italy as a social and cultural unit has existed since Roman times. This interpretation by politicians and scholars is not surprising given that, as John Breuilly (1996) points out, “intellectuals and politicians seize upon myths [...] inherited from the past [...] to promote national identity and justify national claims” (Breuilly 1996: 151).

Although celebrations also took place in Istria in Croatia, the degree of participation was different from those held in Italy, as will be explored in § 2 about ‘nation’ and sovereignty. What is significant is that celebrations held in Italy failed to mention that indigenous ‘Italian’ cultures cannot be contained within the nation-state, as will emerge from this paper. In fact, Italian state ideology taught in schools tends to ignore that indigenous ‘Italian’ cultures also exist outside Italy’s political borders. Consequently, there is little awareness of such cultures. Indeed, as the stereotype map in Figure 3 shows, Italy’s neighbouring countries are known for their products or ap-



Figure 3:  
‘Clocks’, ‘Slavs’,  
‘Dalmatia’,  
‘Uncharted’.  
(Source: Tsvetkov,  
Y. 2016).

<sup>4</sup> “elementi oggettivi (etnico-linguistici, culturali, storici)”. See MIUR-MIBAC (2011).

proximate geographic locations - 'clocks' for Switzerland; 'Slavs' and 'Dalmatia', as is the case of Slovenia and Croatia; 'Uncharted' with reference to the rest of former Yugoslavia - rather than cultures.

The map in Figure 3 is about national stereotypes, but is an indication that, in Italy, there is little awareness of the existence of Istria, let alone of indigenous Italian cultures there. Similarly, there is little awareness that a part of Switzerland is referred to as 'Svizzera italiana'<sup>5</sup>. 'Svizzera italiana' is a notion which in both Italy and Switzerland is almost exclusively applied to Italian-speaking Canton Ticino. Ticino's 'Italian' cultures have been extensively examined by scholars writing in English, especially in the United States. This is for instance the case of the work by Jonathan Steinberg (2016), who asks why there is an Italian Switzerland. Nevertheless, the limitation of Steinberg's work is that it focuses on Ticino's 'Italian' culture and only marginally touches on the Italian Grisons. However, Ticino will not be examined in this paper since its 'Italian' cultures are not perceived as being fragile, i.e. as 'threatened'. To look further east, beyond Italy's north eastern border on the map in Figure 3, existing published work in English tends to be limited to Istria, mainly within political (Ashbrook 2011; 2008; Šabec 2007), historical (Smith 2008; Klemenčič 2006), and anthropological approaches (Ballinger 2004; 2003).

To fill the gaps in knowledge about the Other Italies, this paper seeks to broaden the horizons of the study of indigenous 'Italian' cultures outside Italy in line with current trends within Italian studies to redesign the map of Italian culture, such as the atlas of Italian literature edited by Sergio Luzzatto and Gabriele Pedullà (2010). This atlas is meant to "[...] restore all the emphasis on the alleged periphery of an Italy too long drawn around a single central axis, the Tuscan one" (Luzzatto & Pedullà 2010: xvi)<sup>6</sup>. Significantly, this atlas posits that before unification 'Italian' culture hinged "around cities other than Florence or Rome. This occurred even in cities outside the borders of the peninsula [...]" (*ibidem*)<sup>7</sup>. As in the case of the 'Italian' cities and states before unification, this paper posits that there exist indigenous 'Italian' cultures outside the borders of the peninsula.

For a working definition of 'culture', which Raymond Williams (1985: 87) considered one of the most difficult words to define in English, this paper proposes to combine the broader notion of culture commonly used in English-speaking countries, with reference to day-to-day practices, with the Italian meaning, which tends to be restricted

<sup>5</sup> 'Italian Switzerland'.

<sup>6</sup> "[...] restituisce tutto il loro rilievo alle presunte periferie di un'Italia troppo a lungo disegnata intorno a un unico asse centrale, quello toscano".

<sup>7</sup> "[...] [L'Italia] ha ruotato, spesso e lungamente, intorno a città diverse da Firenze o da Roma, o addirittura esterne ai confini della penisola [...]"

to education and high culture. Throughout the Other Italies culinary practices, language, vernaculars, man-made landscapes, and literature contribute to defining the local cultural identities as 'Italian'. With this working definition of 'culture', the notion of what 'Italian' means in this paper refers both to cultural expressions, such as those mentioned above, as well as declared nationality. The term 'Italian' will be used between inverted commas, especially within the contexts of Switzerland's Italian Grisons and Montenegro's Mouths of Cattaro, where national identities do not coincide with Italy. However, inverted commas will not be used when applied to those people who refer to themselves as Italian nationals on the basis of self-declared nationality or passports, particularly in Istria in Slovenia, as well as in Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia. Also, with reference to culture, the term 'Italian' in this paper will be associated with words such as 'autochthonous' and 'indigenous'. Although 'autochthonous' is perceived as having a primordialist nature, as will be explored in § 7, throughout this paper the two terms are treated as synonymous. Nevertheless, 'autochthonous' will be used with reference to the Italians living in Istria in Slovenia as well as Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia, because this reflects the official denomination used in those areas. From the evidence I have gathered, Italians in Slovenia and Croatia use the term autochthonous in an ambiguous way. I have observed that this word is used by the Italians in Slovenia and Croatia with reference to the indigenous nature of their cultures, their ethnic origin, and to underline that Italians did not arrive in Croatia and Slovenia during fascism. More importantly, the terms 'indigenous' and 'autochthonous' are used throughout this paper because this research is not about the so-called 'Italian diaspora', which is an expression used to refer to Italian mass migrations that began after the political unification of Italy in 1861. The focus of this paper is on those *Comunità degli Italiani* of Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro as well as Switzerland's *Grigionitaliani* which have retained established links with geographical Italy and claim that their cultures are originally 'Italian'<sup>8</sup>.

Having established that this paper is not about the 'Italian diaspora' but indigenous cultures which claim to be just as much 'Italian' as those within Italy, I intend to explore the validity of nation theories regarding Italy and test their relevance with reference to the contexts of the Other Italies in the new millennium. Tensions have rekindled nationalist sentiments in some regions. Since it is important to appraise debates about nation in times of crisis, this paper tests the applicability of what Maja Mikula (2008) calls the "four rubrics" (Mikula 2008: 135) of nationhood: modernism, perennialism, ethno-symbolism, and primordialism in addition to what are usually referred

<sup>8</sup> In Italian the word 'comunità' is either singular or plural. I am keeping the Italian word, using it in English as a singular or plural noun as need be.

to as postmodernist approaches. Besides scrutinizing the pliability of modernist and postmodernist theories, I shall consider ethno-symbolism and primordialism. Although ethno-symbolism, perennialism, and primordialism may not be regarded as mainstream theories, they serve to put into perspective debates about the "historical construct" (Geschiere & Jackson 2005: 6) of ethnicity with reference to the concept of 'autochthony'. Since arguments about nation with reference to Italy tend to confine 'Italian' culture within the political borders of the modern Italian state, this paper also explores the concepts of 'Italianness' and borders. The first concept draws on difference and fragmentation rather than cultural homogeneity and unity. The second concept shows that political and mental borders contribute to the further differentiation of the Other Italies from Italy.

The Other Italies lie at the periphery of Italian "cultural systems of space" (Shields 1991: 3) and have their own specificities. What they also have in common is that scholarly research usually neglects their cultural output for ideological reasons, because the four regions lie outside Italy's political borders. Yet, they are connected to each other at an historical level. Moreover, geography is a connecting and a dividing force at the same time. It is a uniting factor in the mountains of Switzerland's Italian Grisons and the neighbouring Valtellina in Italy, which were politically bound for three centuries. Here, proximity is still felt in the close relations at personal levels which bind together the people of ancient Rhaetia. Further east, geographic connectedness is represented by the Adriatic Sea, "the sea of intimacy" (Bravetti 2005: 161). Nonetheless, the sea also has the function of acting as a separating element. With the rise of nation-states, the sea became more of a dividing obstacle. An element of connectedness is the Italian language, which is also a symbol of identity. When one thinks of symbols in the context of the Other Italies, it may be easier to associate this word with national flags. However, in the Adriatic, there are other symbols of 'Italian' cultural identity, such as the Venetian lions of St Mark and place names which have often been deleted or altered. Despite the disappearance of the Venetian state in 1797, the lions of St Mark found in Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro are contested symbols of power because they are erroneously associated with Italy's nationalism and fascism. Since there are common perceptions that 'Italian' cultural symbols are being eroded and erased, *Comunità degli Italiani* in Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro nurture a place memory which is about preserving 'Italian' cultural identity.

To conclude this introduction, it is worthwhile to say that it is through the careful analysis and investigation into specific formations of indigenous 'Italian' cultures in these four different regions that this paper can begin to explore to what extent terms such as "Italianness" and "nation" are applicable to these areas.

## 2. Nation and sovereignty: a post-Schengen disorder?

Debates about nations have preoccupied philosophers and historians for about two centuries. According to scholars such as Anthony D. Smith (2009), such discussions are a legacy of the modern age, for “we are entering a post-modern era and therefore witnessing the emergence of a ‘post-national’ order” (Smith 2009: 11). For Smith (*ibidem*), nation-states are a thing of the past. Nevertheless, the political and economic crises, which engulfed countries such as Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, terrorist threats as well as the mass migrations to Europe, have shown that nation-states are not outdated. In fact, 2011 already saw the reintroduction of border controls and economic protectionist policies in parts of Europe<sup>9</sup>. This occurred well before the refugee crisis escalated to the levels seen in 2015, when about a million migrants reached the EU, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW 2016). The combined phenomena of political and economic crises, fear of terrorism, and mass migrations threaten to question the validity of EU treaties such as the Schengen agreements about freedom of movement between signatory states.

Moreover, some EU member states that participate in the Schengen Area, such as Denmark and Austria, acted unilaterally to reintroduce border checks with Germany, Sweden, and Italy in 2011 and 2016 respectively. There is a tendency across Europe from national governments to argue in favour of claiming back national sovereignty from Brussels and suspend the Schengen agreements. At the same time, recently, other member states, such as Slovenia and Croatia, have given up “a significant part of their sovereignty” (Järviemi 2015) to become part of the European Union and others, such as Montenegro, are in talks to join the European Union. Even non-EU members such as Switzerland are affected by national sovereignty debates. Switzerland agreed, at least in part<sup>10</sup>, to implement the Schengen agreements in 2008. However, on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2014 the Swiss people voted in favour to amend the federal constitution through a popular initiative that aimed to curb mass immigration from the EU. Because of this popular initiative, relations between Switzerland and the EU have become more difficult, according to a document about relations between Switzerland and the EU published by FDFA, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA 2016). Furthermore, agreements regarding free movement of people and trade may have to be renegotiated, as Britain’s government showed by calling a referendum on EU mem-

<sup>9</sup> Denmark re-introduced permanent border controls with Germany and Sweden in 2011, as reported by *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (2011): “Wieder Zollkontrollen an den Grenzen zu Dänemark” [Customs controls are reintroduced at the Danish borders].

<sup>10</sup> In part because Switzerland opted to retain custom controls on goods, whereas there are no passport controls for people.

bership in 2016. Although Switzerland's and Britain's disputes may be contingent, they prove that, contrary to perceptions of repudiation and attenuation of the roles played by nations, particularly in the areas at the centre of this study, nations are not superseded concepts and are still open to debate.

### **3. About the applicability of the idea of nation with reference to Istria, Dalmatia, the Mouths of Cattaro, the Italian Grisons and Italy**

Although Italy has not resorted to referenda in an attempt to claim back more powers from the EU, one reading of the Italian constitution indicates that Italy is a country obsessed with the idea of the sovereign nation<sup>11</sup>. As mentioned in this paper's introduction, myths about the existence of an ancient Italian consciousness seem to pervade common perceptions. Myths, such as that of ancient Rome being the mother of Italian culture, were created because, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Italian literary culture was perceived to be in decline (Omodeo 1946: 54). This is because Italian culture mainly relied on the achievement of few writers, such as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, who lived in centuries long gone. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century intellectuals in Italy were trying, according to Adolfo Omodeo (1946), "to take [...] Italian culture to the same level as that of other nations" (Omodeo 1946: 54)<sup>12</sup>. Following Italian unification, according to Derek Beales and Eugenio F. Biagini (2002), the myths of the "origins of the development [of the nation were] pushed further and further back in time" (Beales & Biagini 2002: 3). In fact, according to Adrian Lyttelton (1993), sentiments towards an Italian nation have a relatively recent history. "the Italian [national] question did not exist as a political reality before 1796" (Lyttelton 1993: 63-64). More importantly, Lyttelton remarks that "Unitarian propaganda attempted to win popular support and to diffuse a new idea of nationality through education" (*ibidem*). It is therefore speculative to argue that an Italian nation existed before the modern age. Francesco Pirani (2011: 40), who warns against interpretations of love of country as having roots in a distant past which bring to the surface traces of a national sentiment, also shares this view. Pirani's view is that Italy in Roman times or in the age of Dante was different from that of Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, for Pirani (*ibidem*), writers such as Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, or Machiavelli, regardless of how much they loved Italy in their writing, were not the references of the 'Risorgimento'. The Risorgimento, according to Denis Mack Smith (1997), was "any-

<sup>11</sup> In fact, the sole repository of cultural assets in Italy, according to article 117 of the Italian constitution, is the central state in Rome. Hence the Italian obsession with sovereignty of the Italian nation-state with reference to culture.

<sup>12</sup> "per portare [...] la cultura italiana alla pari con quella delle altre nazioni".

thing but popular, [...] largely a revolution of the disinherited, of the starry-eyed, of the educated unemployed and underemployed” (Mack Smith 1997: 35). The main achievement of the Risorgimento was that of enabling Italian political unification to evolve into a single nation-state in 1861. Before this event, Italy was vaguely interpreted as a dormant, faded place that evoked a distant past. Mainly for this reason, it was visited for its Roman, medieval, and humanist heritage as part of the Grand Tour. Although imagined, to paraphrase Benedict Anderson’s (2006) words, this place known as Italy had ‘natural’ borders. For Lyttelton (1993), Risorgimento theorists such as Mazzini believed “that Italy’s boundaries had been set by nature, and that the division of Italy constituted ‘violence against natural rights’” (Lyttelton 1993: 64-65). ‘Natural’ boundaries coincided, arguably, with the Mediterranean Sea and the Alps, as the poet Goffredo Mameli, author of today’s Italian national anthem, wrote in his *Inno militare* in 1848<sup>13</sup>.

Yet, at the time of Italian unification in 1861 the Italian Grisons<sup>14</sup>, Istria, Dalmatia, and the Mouths of Cattaro did not become part of the new state. Before 1861, Italy was a vague place made up by several states often at war with one another. Although the sea and the Alps surrounded Italy, sources suggest that geography did not define political, linguistic, and cultural borders, as is the common perception today. In 1786, for example, in his *Italienische Reise*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (2007 [1786]: 28) observed the slow change of language, from German to Italian, as he headed southward past Rovereto, a town south of Trent, then in Tyrol and now in Italy. But it is only in Verona, then part of the Venetian Republic, that he referred to the towers indicating the border between Venice and the Austrian imperial state (Goethe 2007 [1786]: 33). Nowhere did Goethe set any vague boundaries of Italy. Nor did he write about an Italian nation. His images of Italy were largely based on pictures of ancient Roman civilization, not a modern Italian nation-state with precise political or supposed ‘natural’ borders. Likewise, at the time of Goethe, concepts of Italian sense of belonging, in relation to the will to build an Italian nation-state, were vague expressions.

Even though Italy lacked a distinct identity of its own around the time of unification, there were people in areas outside the northern and eastern border created in 1861 who looked with interest to the experiment of the creation of the new nation-state. There were different reasons for this interest in areas outside the border. One reason, for example, relating to this paper, refers to the common perception among the intellectual, political, and military elites of the time, that the outer borders of the new Kingdom of Italy were not perceived as coinciding with those of the Italian nation.

<sup>13</sup> “finché non sia l’Italia una dall’Alpi al mar” [until Italy is one, from the Alps to the sea] (in MARUCCI 2001: 180).

<sup>14</sup> According to sources the expression ‘Grigioni italiano’ dates back to the 1850s.

For example, in 1860, as Mack Smith (1985) notes, Garibaldi resented the fact that "Cavour had bartered away to France Garibaldi's homeland of Nice" (Mack Smith 1985: 17)<sup>15</sup>, and sacrificing, thus, "national territory in the process" (*ibidem*).

As suggested in this paper's introduction, celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Italian unification took place throughout Italy, but also in neighbouring countries. To honour the historical occasion, events with a rhetorical emphasis on the achievements of modern Italy took place in Istria in Slovenia, Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia, and even the Italian Grisons in Switzerland. Seemingly, however, the degree of participation in the celebrations was different. On the one hand, in Croatia and Slovenia, local Italian-language magazines and newspapers, such as *Panorama* and *la Voce del Popolo* (2011a)<sup>16</sup>, emphasized the sacredness of unity and the importance of concepts such as the nation to underline how the Italians of Slovenia and Croatia feel as part of the Italian nation. On the other, in the Italian Grisons, celebrations were centred on the theme 'Noi e l'Italia' mainly to remember the establishment of diplomatic ties and the relations between Switzerland, particularly the Grisons, and the new Kingdom of Italy in 1861<sup>17</sup>.

It is in response to these sets of events, particularly in relation to the emphasis given to debates about Italy as a nation in some of its neighbouring countries, that theories of nationhood should be tested beyond the state borders of present-day Italy. In fact, theory reading pointed to the fact that mainstream scholarly debates about Italy and nationhood largely ignore what takes place beyond state frontiers. To bridge this gap, the following sections focus on the Other Italies by drawing attention to epistemological interpretations of terms such as nation. For the purpose of this paper, it is necessary to consider the appropriateness of discussions about nationhood with reference to the four regions considered in this research. Consequently, it is essential to examine a series of theoretical approaches to nationhood and test them in the context of the four areas.

Although expressions such as 'nation' raise "severe conceptual difficulties" (Smith 2009: 14), the purpose of this paper is not to offer new definitions of 'nation'. In fact, according to Alexander J. Motyl (2001), applying definitions of nation may be a futile job given that "there are almost as many theories of nations [...] as there are definitions" (Motyl 2001: xi). Likewise, Breuilly (1996: 171) argues that there are many

<sup>15</sup> Back then Nice was known as Nizza (Marittima).

<sup>16</sup> On a monthly basis, for a year, Rijeka/Fiume-based magazine *Panorama* published accounts of the historical role played by Istria's and Dalmatia's Italians in the process of Italian unification. *La Voce del Popolo* (2011a) dedicated a special issue to the celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Italian unification

<sup>17</sup> *Pro Grigioni Italiano*'s 2011 cultural theme was 'Noi e l'Italia', or 'Italy and us'. The main event took place in Milan in September 2011 (*Il Grigione Italiano* 2011: 2).

definitions and theories of nationhood. Instead, what is important to do here is to test whether concepts of ‘nation’ used in conjunction with Italy are applicable and appropriate to perceptions of belonging and identity in the Other Italies. In considering the field of studies about nation, this paper tests interpretations of the basic concepts of nation examining the “four rubrics” (Mikula 2008: 135) of nationhood: these include modernism, ethno-symbolism, perennialism, and primordialism. Additionally, this paper considers the relevance of postmodernist approaches to nation. Whilst ethno-symbolism, perennialism, and primordialism may not be regarded as mainstream theories, they serve to put into perspective debates about the “historical construct” (Geschiere & Jackson 2005: 6) of ethnicity. This may be relevant when considering the Italians living in Istria in Slovenia and Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia, who claim that their cultures are autochthonous because they have been present in these areas since Roman times. However, during fieldwork it became clear that ethnicity is extraneous to Switzerland’s Italian Grisons, because in Switzerland ethnicity plays no role in the construction of national identities. Moreover, in the Italian Grisons the term ‘nation’ is used by the local population to designate exclusively Switzerland rather than Italy. Despite the different specificities of the Other Italies, these areas can be examined, except for the Swiss case, within Italian irredentist narratives<sup>18</sup>. Irredentism defends the idea of the sacral necessity for Italy to include all lands between the Alps and the Mediterranean; what lies outside Italy’s present border should be reclaimed as “external national homelands” (Brubaker 1998: 277). Theories about nation will be examined in the following sections to establish whether and, if so, in what senses, it makes sense to perceive the Other Italies as part of the Italian nation. This is important because scholarly debates within Italy, such as Federico Chabod’s (1979) and Maurizio Viroli’s (1995) critiques, examine theories of nation in Italian contexts, but do not question whether Italian national culture should include, to borrow from Rogers Brubaker (1998), “homelands” (Brubaker 1998: 277) outside the border of the nation-state. There are scholarly debates about nation in conjunction with Italy’s internal political border, such as those by historians Marina Cattaruzza (2007) and Glenda Sluga (2001). However, the limitation of these two works is that they deal exclusively with Italy’s north-eastern border around the city of Trieste, whose importance with reference to the Italians of Slovenia and Croatia will be explored in § 10. Only little work as, for example, the autobiographical reflections on flags and borders by Grytzko Mascioni (1984), has been published about nationhood on the border between Italy and Switzerland’s Italian Grisons.

<sup>18</sup> Irredentist literally means ‘unredeemed’. For scholarly debates about Italian irredentism, with particular reference to Italy’s north-eastern border, see Katia PIZZI. (2001).

#### 4. Modernism

Modernism is relevant to the context of Italy because Italy was unified into a sovereign, centralized state during, and within the context of, the modern age. In fact, theory reading has indicated that ideas about 'nation' in conjunction with the necessity of one sovereign Italian state were only introduced after the French Revolution, as explored in § 2. According to Smith (1998: 9), the roots of classical modernism are to be found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Like Smith, Elie Kedourie (2008) claims that the nation is a product of modernity. For Kedourie (2008), nations did not exist in antiquity. Like Kedourie's, Guido Zernatto's (1944) critique of the term 'nation' aimed to prove that nations did not exist in antiquity or in the Middle Ages. Kedourie and Zernatto are not alone in positing that nations are products of modernity. Breuilly (1996) also considers the theoretical settings of nationhood "as an aspect of modernity" (Breuilly 1996: 146).

In fact, one of the most influential works about nationhood was published in 1882 by Ernest Renan at a time when Italy had just been unified. What is interesting about Renan's work in conjunction with Italy is that he considered the creation of the Italian nation-state as a product of general consciousness rather than a project pursued by a dynasty, the House of Savoy, and a few intellectuals. Unsurprisingly, Italian intellectuals such as Chabod (1979) share Renan's view. Chabod (1979: 75) argued that the factors determining nationality for Italians were will and consciousness. However, Chabod's theory is weak because, before unification, poor literacy and the lack of compulsory education prevented the forming of such a consciousness in most 'Italian' states, except in Austrian-ruled states, as Romano Bracalini (2001: 67-75) claims. Consequently, the creation of a national identity could not have been based on a consensual "daily plebiscite" (Renan 1992 [1882]: 19). On the contrary, as Mack Smith (1985) points out, the actual plebiscites for the approval of unification, in a context where "universal suffrage was [...] something of a misnomer" (Mack Smith 1985: 383), were limited to the educated few.

A more relevant theory of nation with reference to Italy is that of Ernest Gellner (1983) who defined the nation as "a political principle" (Gellner 1983: 1) based on the idea of the state. For Gellner, the Italian Risorgimento achieved the equation of "one nation, one state" (Gellner 1983: 134). Gellner identified in Italian high culture an essential element in moulding Italian national identity. Besides culture, Gellner underlined the importance of the limits of the nation, both as a spiritual and geopolitical concept. In fact, Gellner (1983) acknowledged that a nation's boundary could have failed to include "all the members of the appropriate nation; or it can include them all but also include some foreigners" (Gellner 1983: 1). In this respect, Gellner's ap-

proach is pertinent to the context of the Italians of Slovenia and Croatia, who found themselves, after a period of unity with Italy, living in ‘guest’ states. Nevertheless, Gellner’s theory is unworkable in the Italian Grisons. The people of the Italian Grisons claim that they identify with Switzerland as a political nation whilst they regard expressions of their culture, such as language, literature, and food as ‘Italian’. Although Gellner (1983) also argues that language is a “necessary touchstone” (Gellner 1983: 43-44), it was observed that in the Italian Grisons language was never used as a pretext to seek political annexation to Italy. It is precisely with language that Anderson (2006) furthers Gellner’s argument. According to Anderson (2006: 45), vernaculars emerged as print-languages to replace Latin thanks to capitalism. Thanks to the print-process people developed an awareness (Anderson 2006: 44) of the existence of others with whom they could connect. Like Gellner, Anderson touches on the issue of borders claiming that nations have limits (Anderson 2006: 7). More explicitly than Renan, Anderson perceives the nation as a sovereign “imagined political community” (Anderson 2006: 6). What is relevant to this paper is that Anderson argues that the nation is imagined as limited and sovereign implying that nations must be defined by formal boundaries, such as state borders. However, this does not say where the limits of the Italian nation are, given that beyond boundaries “lie other nations” (Anderson 2006: 7). If this were the case, then none of the Other Italies could be imagined as part of the Italian nation. A further limitation in Anderson’s argument concerns language. In Italy, Italian as a print vernacular was not the fundamental element behind nation-building, since language did not become an issue until after political unification<sup>19</sup>. It is therefore anachronistic in the Italian case to claim that the seed “of the nationally imagined community” (Anderson 2006: 44) could be seen in the print-vernacular. Although written Florentine vernacular was already considered a prestigious literary language in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century thanks to Dante, no political movement emerged to claim there should be political unification based on language. Indeed, the Florentine vernacular, as sources indicate, spread to the Grisons and the Venetian state thanks to the printing press<sup>20</sup>. However, it did not spark an Italian national consciousness in either area. In fact, in the Italian Grisons, at no stage was there ever a political movement seeking a political union with the Italian nation-state.

Mostly, Anderson’s approach fails to explore the roles played by the state in forcing nation building. To this purpose, it would be more appropriate to refer to Breuil-

<sup>19</sup> According to Claudio MARAZZINI (1994: 360-361), at the time of unification in 1861, out of a population of 25 million only 600,000 people, or 2.5% of the country’s population, were able to use Italian. Of these 400,000 were Tuscans and 70,000 from Rome.

<sup>20</sup> During the Reformation and Counter-Reformation the print press in the ‘volgar lingua’, i.e. modern Italian, started in Poschiavo, in the Italian Grisons, in 1549 (POLLINI 2007: 75).

ly (2011; 1996; 1993), who considers the theoretical settings of nation building as an expression of politics. Breuilly (1996) identifies three essential elements: "doctrine, politics, [and] sentiments" (Breuilly 1996: 146), with the latter as synonymous of "national consciousness" (*ibidem*). In this respect, Breuilly (1996: 148) argues that the most important role in nation building is that played by politics. Furthermore, Breuilly identifies two factors pivotal to ideas of modern nations: bounded territories as "hallmarks of the modern state" (Breuilly 1996: 165) and language as "basis for making political distinctions" (Breuilly 1996: 152). With the first, Breuilly (1996: 165) highlights the significance of the modern state which limits the nation, seen as a body of citizens. In this framework, political rights matter more than cultural identities. With the second, Breuilly (1996) recognizes that language gains importance in a political sense when it is incorporated into "law, polity and economy" (Breuilly 1996: 152) at institutional levels.

Unlike Chabod, Breuilly (1993) acknowledges that there was little popular involvement and support in the process of building the Italian nation-state, given that Italian national consciousness "was rather different from the romantic, linguistic and ethnic ideas which intellectual historians have emphasised" (Breuilly 1993: 96). Like Mack Smith (1997) and Bracalini (2001), Breuilly (1993: 114) points out that, during the Risorgimento, national unification had no popular appeal given that the masses were largely uneducated and communication scarce. In fact, the Italian nation-state was created to "impose as much control as possible" (Breuilly 1996: 115) in order to develop a national identity. Italy was created so hastily that former Piedmontese Prime Minister Massimo D'Azeglio allegedly said that after making Italy it was time "to make Italians" (Beales & Biagini 2002: 2). Nevertheless, like Gellner, Breuilly (2011) recognizes a common sense of Italian national identity limited to some intellectuals in representations of high culture, such as literature. However, Breuilly (2011) acknowledges that in the Italian case "there was no common culture or a mutually comprehensible language" (Breuilly 2011: 87). Breuilly (2011) points out that historical discourse is pivotal in the formation of the concept of the Italian nation, but he also claims that "a few territorial states and local domination could claim to be Italian" (Breuilly 2011: 87). Breuilly identifies the contradictions surrounding the existence of an Italian nation-state which is politically centralized but culturally inhomogeneous, as will be argued in § 9 of this paper about Italianness. Yet, Breuilly's interpretation contrasts openly with those of Karl W. Deutsch (1969: 38) and Francesco De Sanctis (1961), who observed patterns of cultural homogeneity in Italy identifying unity of culture from the Alps to Sicily, as will be explored in § 9.1 about *italianità*.

Although Breuilly focuses on the roles played by the state in creating a national identity based on the idea of a shared high culture, he does not say whether the state's

current borders exclude parts of the Italian nation. After all, the identification of the nation with the state, although essential, does not help answer the question whether state borders coincide with those of the nation and if there is a nation beyond the political border, as is, for example, claimed by the Italians living in Slovenia and in Croatia. Breuilly (1996) raises another issue that is pertinent to the Other Italies when he argues that “political identity and loyalty are, first and foremost, with and to the nation” (Breuilly 1996: 149). In the case of the Italians in Istria and Dalmatia, the state of residence, i.e. Slovenia and Croatia, and the “mother nation”<sup>21</sup>, i.e. Italy, have been at odds for decades due to territorial claims, property ownership and, more generally, minority rights. In other circumstances, nation and state can be seen as one body, as in the Italian Grisons, where the Swiss ‘willed nation’ is identified with the institutions of the Swiss state, and there is no reference to a ‘mother nation’, identifiable with Italy, as a separate body outside Swiss borders.

## 5. Ethno-symbolism

Unlike modernism, ethno-symbolism seeks to find the roots of nations and in how these are interpreted and mobilized in pre-modern eras. John Armstrong (1982) argues that symbols are important concepts to understand the “emergence of nations in the premodern period” (Armstrong 1982: 7). Equally, Smith (2004) examines the links between nation and ethnic groups - which he refers to as ‘ethnie’ - underlining the functions played by “religious [...], political, social and linguistic myths, memories and traditions” (Smith 2004: 199). Such an approach is referred to as ethno-symbolism, which, for Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (2004), “stands in opposition” (Guibernau & Hutchinson 2004: 1) to theories such as modernism. According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2004), Smith establishes that “there is continuity between modern nations and a pre-modern past” (Eriksen 2004: 50), and ethnie is at the base of shared national identities. For Smith (1999), modernism fails to consider “the pre-existing cultures and ethnic ties of the nations” (Smith 1999: 9), which arose with modernity. Smith’s ethno-symbolic approach is a critique of modernism, but not a total break from it, given that ethno-symbolism focuses on classifying “types of nations” (Smith 2009: 23). In distancing himself from modernist approaches, Smith (2009) argues that ethno-symbolists part company with modernists on several key issues. These include the questions of symbolic resources; *la longue durée*; ethnie and nation; elites and masses; and conflict and reinterpretation (Smith 2009: 14).

<sup>21</sup> “nazione madre”.

Smith (2009) acknowledges that modernists "also consider cultural and political variables" (Smith 2009: 14), such as language, but he challenges modernism's inability to "tell us which communities, ideologies and sense of identity will emerge and take root" (Smith 2009: 15). However, Smith (2009) suggests that ethno-symbolists explore the "constituent symbolic resources" (Smith 2009: 15-16) of communities, such as "traditions, memories, values, myths and symbols that compose the accumulated heritage of cultural units of population" (Smith 2009: 16). Eriksen (2004) observes that, for Smith there are six components of 'ethnie':

1 A collective name. [...] 2 A common myth of descent. [...] 3 A shared history. [...] 4 A distinctive shared culture. [...] 5 An association with a specific territory. [...] 6 a sense of solidarity. (Eriksen 2004: 51).

There are limitations in the application of such subjective elements to the Other Italies, particularly to the Italian Grisons, where only the fourth element may be applicable with reference to high culture. Moreover, the expression "shared history" (Eriksen 2004: 51) posits a problem in this area given that at no stage has the Italian Grisons been part of a state named Italy. As far as the Adriatic Other Italies are concerned, they have been historically part of Italy at a political level, albeit for short periods in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With reference to the applicability of "a distinctive shared culture" (*ibidem*), it is appropriate in all areas, including Italy itself, provided that with culture the interpretation refers to high culture and particularly to literature both in Latin and the vernaculars. As to the "association with a specific territory" (*ibidem*), this expression is rather ambiguous, because of the change of rulers in different geographical areas over the centuries. This dimension is nevertheless tied up with the historical one. Last but not least is the "sense of solidarity" (*ibidem*), which Eriksen emphasizes as the "most important criterion of ethnic identity" (Eriksen 2004: 52). This sense of solidarity may be applicable to Istria in Slovenia and Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia, less to the Mouths of Cattaro in Montenegro for legal reasons, but not to Switzerland's Italian Grisons. Solidarity is not just based on perceived affection, given that the Italians living in parts of Slovenia and Croatia are part, to quote Brubaker (1998), of legally recognized "external national homelands" (Brubaker 1998: 277) with "ethnonational kin in other states" (*ibidem*). What is meant by the expressions ethnic identity and ethnonational is not clear. Nevertheless, in Slovenia and Croatia, according to Furio Radin (in Pirjavec Rameša 2007: 7), "nationality, in the sense of ethnic identity, is de facto stuck on you upon birth"<sup>22</sup>.

This concept is reinforced by the relationship between Italy and the Italian minority in Slovenia and Croatia. This is considered a national minority in a legal sense

<sup>22</sup> "la nazionalità, nel senso di identità etnica, ti viene affibbiata praticamente al momento della nascita".

(Mancini 2005: 263), both as a legally bound solidarity and an economic one. The minority is subsidized by the Italian government because of agreements signed by Italy and Yugoslavia in 1954 and 1975. However, if the sense of solidarity works well in Slovenia and Croatia, it is in the Italian Grisons that Smith’s ethno-symbolist theory seems to be weakest. This is because Smith’s (1996) interpretation of the “territorialisation of memory” (Smith 1996: 453) suggests that the founding myths and symbols of Switzerland arose within a Swiss-German ethnic nation, although these elements are now also shared by Italian-speaking cantons. The specificities of the Italian Grisons are addressed by Jürg Steiner (2001: 138-154), who does not oppose Smith’s view, but points to Swiss fractures along language rather than ethnic and ‘national’ lines. Despite this, Steiner (2001) posits “a drifting apart” (Steiner 2001: 144) of the Italian Grisons from Switzerland, given that “economically, Italian-speaking Switzerland is already to some extent part of the greater Milan region” (Steiner 2001: 148-149). In fact, Mathias Piconi’s (2008: 30) linguistic analysis of the Italian Grisons shows the opposite: in the Italian Grisons, the population is oriented towards Swiss-German-speaking centres in their own canton rather than Italy.

## 6. Perennialism

In contrast with modernism, perennialism claims that the origins of nations are to be found long before modernity. Sources indicate that this theory is applicable to the idea of Italy as a nation because the “backbone of the national revolution” (Mack Smith 1997: 35) that was the Risorgimento included the influential scholar De Sanctis. De Sanctis argued that Italy existed as a nation because it had one national literature and one national identity for centuries, as will be examined in § 9.1 about *italianità*. De Sanctis’s perennialism is in line with Smith’s (1998) interpretation of this theory. According to Smith (1998: 22-23), perennialism favours the view that nations are ancient cultural communities, but also that they are part of popular consciousness. Adrian Hastings (1997: 12) posits that nations originated during the Middle Ages. In agreement, Felix Gilbert (1975) supports the view that, although there was no “fully developed national feeling” (Gilbert 1975: 22) because loyalties were accorded to local princes or cities, it is not precise “to deny the existence of [Italian] national consciousness in the Renaissance” (Gilbert 1975: 22-23).

From observation, perennialist theories may be applicable to the contexts of the Italians of Istria in Slovenia and Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia who claim to be autochthonous and ethnically Italian. Ethnicity is another feature of perennialism. As Joshua Fishman (1980) writes, the rootedness of ethnicity in history is deep and, spanning gen-

erations, goes back to "common ancestors" (Fishman 1980: 84). This interpretation that nations are somehow timeless has other supporters. Walker Connor (2004) underlines ties between ethnic groups and nations and puts the emphasis on "the timelessness of nations" (Connor 2004: 35). However, according to Connor (2004), "concepts of Croatian [and] Italian [national identity] [...] and the like were largely absent" (Connor 2004: 39) further highlighting that "people regularly identified themselves in terms of village, clan, district, region or a local identity" (*ibidem*). Connor (1990) also maintains that national consciousness of the masses "were quite mute with regard to their sense of group identity" (Connor 1990: 100), given their levels of illiteracy and isolation. Consequently, as in the Italian case, "evidence of ethnic consciousness among the elites cannot be accepted as evidence of national consciousness without evidence that it is shared across a broader spectrum of the putative nation" (Connor 2004: 41).

One limitation of perennialist approaches is that they support the idea of the existence of an Italian nation in pre-modern times without supplying convincing evidence. Hastings (1997: 114) assumes that a literary language is a criterion to identify a nation. According to Hastings (1997: 116) "an Italian national identity was recognized in the fifteenth century" because of a literary, but not - interestingly - spoken language, mainly confined to princely establishments. This literary language, which incidentally had not been referred to as 'Italian' but Florentine or Tuscan vernacular until the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>23</sup>, for Hastings is proof of the existence of an Italian nation. This theory is less convincing if it is to be applied to the Italian Grisons in Switzerland. It is true that the Italian Grisons has been sharing a literary language with the Peninsula for centuries. Nonetheless, the people of the Italian Grisons claim to be part of the Swiss nation rather than Italy. To this purpose Connor (2005) refers to the Swiss nation as a "grouping of two essentially different and often competing identities" (Connor 2005: 41), when, in fact, there are four Switzerlands, one for each language group. Smith (2004) concedes the presence of a "Rhaetian [...] ethnic sentiment" (Smith 2004: 200) as being substantially different from Swiss sense of nationhood. Nevertheless, he ignores the fact that the 'third Switzerland', i.e. Italian Switzerland, does not coincide with Ticino, but also includes the Italian Grisons. In all of this, both Smith's and Connor's limitations are the fact that they consider Switzerland as a nation made up of different ethnicities rather than one nation with four official language groups.

<sup>23</sup> Gian Giorgio Trissino, whose *Il castellano* was published in 1529, was among the first to use the term 'Italian' to describe the vernacular originally referred to as Florentine. See Antonio SORELLA (1999: 15).

## 7. Primordialism

Primordialism assumes that a nation is based on race. According to Philip Smith and Brad West (2001), "primordialists see identities ascribed by birth and tradition" (Smith & West 2001: 85). Moreover, Edward Shils (1982: 74) underlines the importance of factors such as language and territory. For primordialists, national consciousness is seen as having ties with cultural beliefs that have existed for a long time. However, not all concur with the above connotations of primordialism. For instance, for Daniele Conversi (2004) "not a single unanimous definition of the term has emerged and the very concept remains shrouded in ambiguity" (Conversi 2004: 269). Despite elusive definitions of primordialism, primordialist approaches, intended as interpreting nations as entities that have existed since days immemorial, should be tested in the context of nation-states. It is in such a setting, although not in European contexts, that Clifford Geertz (1973) discusses primordialism in relation to what he views as "new states" (Geertz 1973: 234-255). In those societies that strive to become modern, "primordial attachments tend [...] to be [...] preferred bases for the demarcation of autonomous political units" (Geertz 1973: 255). In fact, "advocates of primordialism [...] draw attention to the centrality of territory, kin, custom, language and religion in cementing nationalist ideologies" (Smith & West 2001: 85).

The link with race comes to the forefront in Smith's (2009) critique of primordialism. Primordialism "in many circles, [...] has become a term of opprobrium, combining the sins of naturalism, essentialism and retrospective nationalism" (Smith 2009: 8). This is because primordialists view nations "as forms of extended kinship [...] coeval with the family" (*ibidem*). For Smith (2009), Pierre van den Berghe sees "nations, along with ethnic communities and races, as expressions of extended kinship, deriving ultimately from individual genetic reproductive drives" (Smith 2009: 8), supporting thus a 'racial' origin of nation. According to van den Berghe (1995), human beings favour those who are biologically closer to them and "behave favourably (or 'altruistically') to others in proportion to their real or perceived degree of common ancestry" (van den Berghe 1995: 360). Furthermore, van den Berghe (1995) criticizes social scientists who prefer not to discuss issues about biology, race, and human behaviour by arguing that "linkages between biology and behaviour" (van den Berghe 1995: 358) should be investigated and not dismissed.

Theory suggests that primordialist interpretations have been applied to justify the claims of the historical nature of the Italian nation. According to Adeed Dawisha (2002), it was Mazzini who "persisted in vigorously advocating an allegedly ethno-historical basis for one Italian nation" (Dawisha 2002: 9). Dawisha is not alone in seeing a primordialist element in the process of Italian unification. Peter Geschiere and

Stephen Jackson (2005), in their critique of concepts of autochthony, perceive the validity of the "historical construct" (Geschiere & Jackson 2005: 6) of ethnicity in spite of its "apparent primordialism" (*ibidem*). Yet the validity of this theory is not applicable to the Italian Grisons, where ethnicity plays no role in defining the cultural identity of the local population, as it became clear during the conversations I had during my fieldwork in Switzerland. Nonetheless, there may be some scope in Istria and Dalmatia, at least in the arguments about the ethnic nature of the local Italians who claim ethnicity in support of the autochthonous nature of their presence as much as Italians in Italy do.

## 8. Postmodernism

Although, as explored in the introduction, nation-states are still relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Smith (2009) argues that we are entering a post-modern era and therefore witnessing the emergence of a 'post-national' order in which the formerly dominant realm of the national state has become fragmented and superseded, [and] nationalism is increasingly repudiated and/or attenuated (Smith 2009: 11).

Smith's quote helps frame postmodernism within debates about nationhood. Nevertheless, postmodernism eludes easy definitions since, as Rachel Walker (2001) observes, "there are different types of postmodernism" (Walker 2001: 612). It is nonetheless possible, as Smith (2009) points out, to observe that for postmodernists a nation can be referred to as "a discursive formation of linguistic and symbolic practices" (Smith 2009: 11). Although postmodernist scholars such as Julia Kristeva (1993) concede to modernists that the "idea of nation was molded by the French Revolution" (Kristeva 1993: 6), she does not examine the causes of nation building, for postmodernism goes beyond nations. Kristeva (1993) argues that it is important to go "beyond the origins that have assigned to us biological identity papers and a linguistic, religious, social, political place" (Kristeva 1993: 16) and ensure that individuals are able to "choose their membership" (*ibidem*) for the "capability of a nation [...] is revealed by the right it affords individuals to exercise that choice" (*ibidem*). Kristeva chooses cosmopolitanism and a "transnational or international position situated at the crossing of boundaries" (*ibidem*). This position signals a break from the idea of a bounded nation-state based on concepts of "homogeneous cultures" (Gellner 1983: 55).

Postmodernist approaches emphasize "difference and otherness" (Walker 2001: 612). Ideas of difference, as well as what Smith (2009) refers to as the "hybridisation and the fragmentation of a unified sense of national identity" (Smith 2009: 12) are debated themes within postmodernist theoretical approaches. Concepts of dif-

ference and diversity are also the focus of the work of Nicole Töpperwien (2001) about Switzerland. Töpperwien’s analysis “confront[s] the modern phenomenon of the nation-state as organization of integration with the postmodern paradigm of normative diversity” (Töpperwien 2001: 1). This implies “accommodating diversity” (Töpperwien 2001: 221) by law rather than excluding diverging cultures as in Germany and Italy. In Switzerland, diversity is based on principles of territorialization, which is organized around the four linguistic groups making up the Swiss nation.

Within postmodernist approaches, difference and diversity are also channelled through ideas of hybridization and fragmentation, which feature in the work by Partha Chatterjee (1998), Homi Bhabha (1997; 1994; 1990), and, with emphasis on the Italian, Slovenian and Croatian case, Pamela Ballinger (2004). For Chatterjee (1998), the “authority and legitimacy of the nation-state are in crisis” and it is essential to “think beyond the nation” (Chatterjee 1998: 57). For Chatterjee (1998), it is necessary to overcome national boundaries and produce “a sense of political solidarity whose principles are nonterritorial” (Chatterjee 1998: 59), which assumes a dissociation of cultural identities from territories. Bhabha’s position is rather different. In looking at aspects of nationhood in former Yugoslavia, debating concepts of “ethnically cleansed national identity” (Bhabha 1997: 30), Bhabha interprets nations as hybrid imagined communities rather than based on “cultural homogenisation” (Conversi 2007: 19), as described by Gellner.

Furthermore, Bhabha sees the points of contact between civilizations, such as boundaries and borders, not as marginal but as the core in locating culture. In fact, Bhabha (1997) claims that in “our plural, postmodern times” (Bhabha 1997: 30) the “edges of contact between civilizations” (*ibidem*) is where the core culture becomes defined. Bhabha’s theoretical aspect of hybridity finds an empirical application in Ballinger’s (2004) anthropological analysis of hybridity and authenticity in the border regions between Italy, Slovenia, and Croatia. Ballinger (2004) debates aspects of “purity and hybridity” (Ballinger 2004: 32) in and around Istria. She examines how political borders between the three countries help differentiate Italians and Slavs, at least as perceived by the exiled Italians from Istria living in Trieste. Moreover, Ballinger remarks how exiled Istrians living in Italy “endorse the purity thesis” (*ibidem*), espousing the primordial idea of Italy as a nation explored in § 7. This is in contrast with the view of the contemporary inhabitants of Istria, especially the Italians who, as sources have highlighted, consider their cultures as hybrid.

Overall, Bhabha’s approach helps address the question of the limits of the Italian nation. Bhabha’s (1990: 293) view of the nation as a metaphor which owes its existence to the dissemination of texts implies that elements of the nation may well reside outside the political boundaries of the political nation-state. Bhabha (1990) rec-

ognizes, albeit in contexts different from those of the Other Italies, the "cultural construction of nationness as a form of social and textual affiliation" (Bhabha 1990: 292). It is perhaps in literature that national narrative can go beyond the "problematic boundaries of modernity" (Bhabha 1990: 294) and the constraints of the nation intended as a politically bounded space. Bhabha's argument may fall into more fertile terrain in former Yugoslavia, particularly where he posits notions of "hybridity of imagined communities" (Bhabha 1994: 5).

The difficulty in applying hybridity in Switzerland's case is that the Confederation considers itself as a nation-state based on principles of a diversity promoted by the state rather than 'hybrid' national cultures. Töpferwien (2001) espouses post-modernist approaches by examining nation-states "as organization[s] of integration with the postmodern paradigm of normative diversity" (Töpferwien 2001: 1). The state should not encourage homogenization, but "maintain and promote all diversity" (Töpferwien 2001: 287). Töpferwien's argument has limitations because her analysis focuses on German-speaking and French-speaking Switzerland but fails to consider Romansh-speaking and Italian-speaking Switzerland, which are essential parts of the Swiss Federal state. Furthermore, Töpferwien's interpretation given to concepts such as *Willensnation*<sup>24</sup>, in relation to loyalties towards external nations (i.e. Italy, France, and Germany), is contradictory. If the term *Willensnation* refers to "a nation that exists as long as and only because the Swiss or more precisely the constitutive groups are willing to be Swiss" (Töpferwien 2001: 221), this cannot imply that Switzerland's French, German, and Italian-speaking populations should feel "close [...] and loyal to the respective populations of the neighboring countries" (Töpferwien 2001: 234). It is true that the French and German-speaking populations took different sides during World War I, but sources indicate that this did not occur in the case of Switzerland's Italian Grisons in relation to Italy. In fact, if both statements were to be considered as valid, the Swiss nation would simply dissolve. Finally, in the case of the Italian Grisons, given their self-determination based on a form of communal civism, it is difficult to imagine loyalties towards external nations. After all, the population of the Italian Grisons does not perceive its minority status, which is only a numerical factor, as an external body outside the Swiss nation, but one of its constitutive elements. On the contrary, the Italians in Slovenia and in Croatia, who never experienced forms of self-government, are formally recognized as national minorities. Finally yet importantly, as national minorities, they are marginalized or regarded as strangers in their own homelands.

As explored in the previous sections, concepts of 'nation' in relation to Italy tend

<sup>24</sup> 'willed nation'.

to befit the Italians in Slovenia and in Croatia but are inapplicable to the Mouths of Cattaro in Montenegro or the Italian Grisons in Switzerland. People in the Mouths of Cattaro and in the Italian Grisons, who refer to their cultures as being ‘Italian’, do not make any official claims of political allegiance to Italy. In fact, drawing on observation, it could be argued that national identities in the Mouths of Cattaro and the Italian Grisons are expressed to indicate a sense of belonging to the Montenegrin, Croatian<sup>25</sup>, and Swiss nations respectively. Consequently, ‘nation’ itself, to a considerable extent, is a concept of limited and partial use in this context. Furthermore, suggestions that the Other Italies could be set within narratives about the so-called Italian diaspora are also unworkable because the expression ‘Italian diaspora’ is used to refer, almost exclusively, to Italian mass migrations, which began after the political unification of Italy in 1861. The notion of ‘Italian diaspora’ is unworkable in Istria in Slovenia, Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia, and Switzerland’s Italian Grisons because the sense of cultural belonging of these areas is primarily founded on claims of autochthony rather than immigration from the Italian Peninsula. In § 3 I also partially refuted suggestions that debates about Italian cultures outside Italy should be placed within irredentist narratives, at least in the case of the Italian Grisons, despite the claims made by Italian nationalists who aim at re-establishing an Italian empire based on the myth of ancient Rome<sup>26</sup>. Nationalists endorse the early 20<sup>th</sup> century idea that the Italian nation-state should include Istria, Dalmatia, the Mouths of Cattaro, and parts of Switzerland to create a ‘Greater Italy’, to borrow an expression used by William Kay Wallace (1917) in a study about Italy’s territorial expansion<sup>27</sup>. Nationalists distort interpretations of Italian literary works, such as those of Dante and Petrarch, which portrayed an Italy vaster than it is today. Nevertheless, as discussed in § 3, Dante’s and Petrarch’s Italies of the premodern period were not the precursors of the current centralized nation-state. In fact, the cultural fervour of the Middle Ages and Renaissance occurred despite the political fragmentation and, arguably, because of it (Coluzzi 2007: 298).

Paolo Coluzzi’s (2007) interpretation of culture residing in fragmentation is not shared by Italian nationalists such as De Sanctis, as explored in § 6 about perennialism. Nationalists, in their pursuit of political unity, tend to claim ownership of what may constitute ‘Italian’ culture in general by convincing people of the existence of an Italian nation with one homogeneous literature and one identity before modernity. This interpretation of what may constitute ‘Italian’ culture led to the process of political unification, which was carried out by military force to achieve territorial conquests whilst drawing justification from the myth of cultural unity. However, as will be explored

<sup>25</sup> In the Mouths of Cattaro, it is common to hear local Catholics describe themselves as ‘Croats’.

<sup>26</sup> For a map of areas claimed by Italian irredentists see IRREDENTISM (2013a).

<sup>27</sup> For significant discussions about Italian irredentism see IRREDENTISM (2013b).

in § 9, 'Italian' culture is not necessarily homogeneous. More importantly, 'Italian' culture should not be seen as being confined within the political borders of the modern Italian state. In order to consider the areas that, despite being outside political Italy, claim to be culturally 'Italian', § 9 proposes to reinterpret what is meant by 'Italian' culture. This section will put forward the notion of Italianness which draws on difference and fragmentation rather than homogeneity and unity. Moreover, §§ 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3 will examine three different interpretations of Italianness in relation to their adaptability to the four Other Italies. In § 9.1 I will examine *italianità* as a term used to refer to Italianness as an expression of unity based on political and linguistic identities, as well as national character. In § 9.2 I will analyze the notion of *italicità* as an articulation of Italianness divested of the Italian nation-state and national character contained in *italianità*. Last but not least, § 9.3 will consider *venezianità* with reference to the cultural identity of the three Other Italies found on the eastern Adriatic, which draws on Venetian heritage.

## 9. Italianness

Running counter to present-day Italian ideology taught in schools, which emphasizes political and cultural unity, § 9 reclaims the suggestions that Italian culture resides in political fragmentation. In order to overcome the limits of ideas of nation, this section proposes to refer to Italianness as a concept encompassing inhomogeneous articulations of 'Italian' cultures, such as the ones of premodern Italy, rather than a unitary national identity forged by state ideology. Although the *Oxford English Dictionary* (or *OED*) does not record the word Italianness, there is evidence of this word in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>28</sup>. Regardless of other uses and meanings of such term, this paper considers 'Italianness' as an English word. Italianness is employed in the context of this study to relate to articulations of 'Italian' cultures which Mascioni (in Buogo 1995: 7-13) referred to as 'aura italiana'<sup>29</sup>, in relation to Italian literature produced in regions outside political Italy. Italianness is to be intended as a concept accommodating difference and plurality, whereby difference is reflected in the geopolitical orientation of countries such as Slovenia,

<sup>28</sup> According to Edmund WEINER (2011), Deputy\_Chief\_Editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Italian-ness" [sic] was a neologism when John Owen used it in the index (but not the text) of his "Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance" (1893) p. xix. After that there is an occurrence in Edith Elmer Wood, 1910, with "An Oberland Chalet", ix. 102: "Presently we began to descend a path so steep that it was hard to keep one's balance. Vegetation gradually reappeared, then some signs of humanity, an empty cow-hut or so, and finally, on a slope below us, we saw a group of men and women cutting and binding grass. And oh, the joyful Italianness of it! All the women had bright-colored kerchiefs on their heads and one wore a brilliant red skirt" (WEINER 2011).

<sup>29</sup> 'Italian aura'.

Croatia, Montenegro, and Switzerland. This is in contrast with the prevailing state-imposed idea of sameness based on Italian unitary ideology. Italianness is rooted in Greco-Roman civilization as well as the municipalism and political fragmentation which characterized the early modern ages. However, it is important to strip Italianness of political connotations associated with today's nation-state. Italianness is not a tool in the hands of the political power centred on and in Rome. In fact it brings back to mind the multiple cores typical of the city states of the Middle Ages, not the unified Italy founded in 1861. Besides reflecting fragmented geographical and political settings, the Italianness entailing difference is based on cultural expressions that manifest, for instance, a variety of vernaculars, art, architecture, and culinary styles. Moreover, in the specific case of the Other Italies, Italianness cannot be perceived as homogeneous since it reflects diverse political, economic, educational, and judicial systems. It also coexists with other cultures in Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Switzerland. Even where Italian is the official language of power and vehicle of high culture, as in the Italian Grisons, the political system based on direct democracy and a local bottom-up approach to political and religious power make the individual articulations of Italianness in the Italian Grisons so different from those of centralized Italy.

Italianness, as articulations of plural 'Italian' cultures, reflects not only the Other Italies but also Italy as a 'geographical expression' of early modern history. There are analogies between today's Other Italies and Italy before modernity. Then, city-states such as Florence and Venice were not just 'two Italian cities' which, according to today's common perceptions, share[d] the same cultural identities, as is taught in schools and universities. Today, Florence is seen as the cradle of Italian high culture and Venice plays second fiddle within the rhetoric of 'unitary culture'. Since Venice and [former] Venetian territories are oriented to the Levant, they are somehow perceived as less 'Italian'. Notwithstanding these differences, there is opposition in Italy's political establishment to the idea of handing back sovereignty to Venice<sup>30</sup>. Yet, even nowadays, the linguistic identities and especially the architectural appearances of the former Republic of the Serenissima still single it out in Italy and Europe. To this purpose, Smith (2013), in a study about art and national identity in early modern Western Europe, compares two different characters. Stopping short from defining Venice or Florence as 'nations', unlike for instance John Julius Norwich (2003)<sup>31</sup>, Smith (2013: 28) points out that the

<sup>30</sup> In May 1997, on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Napoleon's ending of the Serenissima, eight Venetian separatists were arrested for hoisting the flag of St Mark on the bell tower in St Mark's square. They wanted an independent Veneto. They were indicted and sentenced for violating the integrity of national unity. Originally, prosecutors wanted to sentence them to life in prison. Two were sentenced to jail and were never pardoned by the Italian president. See PC47TV (2012).

<sup>31</sup> Throughout his book, Norwich refers to Venice as a nation.

fragmentation of the states in early modern Italy reflects the different cultural expressions such as language, food, art, and architecture. For instance, Florentine art is based on drawing and the Venetian typified by the use of colour<sup>32</sup>. Cultural as well as political differences made them very distinctive. Nevertheless, today, the rhetoric of cultural unity claims the opposite, i.e. the existence of an Italian national cultural identity based on the unitary state. The subordination to the credo of cultural unity dictated by the necessity to attribute a uniform cultural identity to all things Italian may well reflect tendencies in contemporary Italy, which claims to be politically, and consequently culturally, as "one and indivisible" according to the Italian constitution<sup>33</sup>. However, all of this is unworkable in the Other Italies where political allegiances do not necessarily rest with the Italian state and forms of hybridization make them unique.

It is therefore necessary, for the purpose of this paper, to reclaim ideas of 'Italian' cultures based on fragmentation and articulations, as in the two examples of Florence and Venice, for the contextualization of the Other Italies. The prevailing tendency to consider Italian culture as being one, fuelled by state ideology taught in schools, is based on the influence of 19<sup>th</sup> century literary critic and politician De Sanctis, for whom national history and literature, and therefore high culture, become one (Pope & Neubauer 2004: 10). Carlo Dionisotti (1999), who debates the geography and history of Italian literature, challenges De Sanctis's unitary notion of cultural narratives as having one centre, originating in Florence. In fact, according to Dionisotti (1999: 203), Venice was a flourishing publishing and literary powerhouse during the Renaissance. This explains why and how, during the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian literature developed on a northern, more specifically Venetian base. Like Dionisotti, Giulio Lepschy (2001) criticizes the rhetoric of unity, which suppressed the importance of articulation of Italian cultural geography. For Lepschy (2001: 490), "being a Venetian, a Florentine [...] ought not to be seen as subordinate to the overarching feature of being Italian". In line with these interpretations, which are applicable to the contexts of the Other Italies, the following three subsections will analyze Italianness within three different interpretative perspectives, *italianità*, *italicità*, and *venezianità* in order to approach the four regions with a degree of flexibility not found in ideas of the nation imagined as one and homogeneous.

<sup>32</sup> 'disegno' in Italian hence English 'design'. According to the OED (2016a), the English term 'design' was "influenced semantically by Italian" (OED 2016a) [i.e. Florentine].

<sup>33</sup> 'una e indivisibile' according to Article 5 of the Italian constitution. See COSTITUZIONE DELLA REPUBBLICA ITALIANA (1947).

### 9.1. *Italianità*

Italian national culture is usually referred to as being characterized by *italianità*, which is a vague term, used in association with anything ‘Italian’. For instance, *italianità* may be associated with cultural expressions such as food, language, high culture but also politics and national character<sup>34</sup>. These expressions may all be relevant to the sense of being ‘Italian’ of the population of the Other Italies, except politics and national character, which posit problems, as will be explored in this subsection. Food is important because food production is at the heart of the ‘Italian’ cultural identity of the Italian Grisons. Food historians Alberto Capatti and Massimo Montanari (1999), who debate Italy’s culinary identity, seek to find a common sense of *italianità* in “culinary practices and the culture of food” (Capatti & Montanari 1999: xiv), which they consider as “essential elements of this identity” (*ibidem*). Yet, proving the *italianità* of food is difficult. This is because, unlike food production, whose ‘authenticity’ is sometimes accompanied by protected geographic denominations, food consumption in the form of ‘Italian-style’ dishes is neither an exclusive cultural trait of Italy nor parts of Switzerland, Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro. ‘Italian-style’ food such as pasta and pizza are a worldwide phenomenon.

Although “food is culture” (Montanari 2006: xi) and tends to be perceived as a component of Italian cultural identity, *italianità* has other connotations which interact: language, politics, and national character. Linguistically, *italianità* refers to the marker of cultural identity that is the Italian language. This language draws its origin from the Florentine vernacular which became known as Italian beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Sorella 1999: 15). Unlike linguistic *italianità*, which is shared by Italy and all Other Italies, political *italianità* is a product of the modern age, given that the term *italianità* has been around since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, according to Angelico Prati (1951: 557). Prati argued that lexicographer Giuseppe Baretta first used this word before 1789<sup>35</sup>. Contrary to the perennialist opinions disseminated by literary critic-turned politician De Sanctis, as explored in § 6, it would be anachronistic to confer to *italianità* any political meaning in relation to the idea of nation before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. To this purpose, Bracalini (2001: 296) remarks that poet Giacomo Leopardi considered the Italy of his days a country without a nation<sup>36</sup>. Consequently, given that the origin of a shared Italian consciousness as a political feeling should be seen in the context of nation building in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sources suggest that *italianità* and nation developed as polit-

<sup>34</sup> See the work by Katia PIZZI (2001) with reference to *italianità* as “a synonym for the [...] literary tradition of Italy” (PIZZI 2001: 118).

<sup>35</sup> Born in Turin, Baretta (1719-1789) lived and worked in London as a literary critic and lexicographer.

<sup>36</sup> Leopardi lived between 1798 and 1838.

ical terms at around the same time<sup>37</sup>. Indeed, the construction of Italy into a nation-state in the 1850s gave *italianità* a political connotation (Cortelazzo & Zolli 1992: 634).

The idea of political *italianità* in conjunction with the Italian nation-state formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century overlaps the linguistic connotation. This has led to confusion where-by politics and language become interwoven. Because of this confusion, *italianità* in conjunction with language is usually associated with Italy alone and Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Switzerland are forgotten. In fact, linguistic *italianità* tends to be exclusively identified with the Italian nation-state. This erroneous interpretation is shared by politicians such as former Italian president Carlo Azeglio Ciampi. Ciampi (2002) confuses language and politics when he posits that “language [is] an essential component of *italianità*, a founding element of the unity of our country, [...] and the vehicle of our civilization” (Ciampi 2002)<sup>38</sup>. Ciampi’s argument follows into the footsteps of perennialist scholars such as Hastings (1997: 116) who, as explored in § 6, thought that Italian national identity already existed in the Middle Ages. As a precursor of perennialism, De Sanctis (1961) forged the notion that “Italy already had [in the 13<sup>th</sup> century] her own culture; a national and very advanced one: Europe used to go and study in learned Bologna” (De Sanctis 1961: 26)<sup>39</sup>. Clearly, Ciampi’s interpretation is influenced by De Sanctis. Yet, Ciampi’s interpretation of *italianità* is problematic for two reasons. First, Ciampi assumes that *italianità* coincides with Italy as a unified state. His political interpretation excludes the population of Switzerland’s Italian Grisons, who identify with the Italian language, hence the expression ‘Grigioni italiano’, but not with Italy the political nation-state. Second, Ciampi’s viewpoint leads to the mistaken assumption that language is a founding element of the unity of Italy. However, this is not accurate given that in 1861, when Italy was unified, only about 2.5% of the country’s population were able to use Italian (Marazzini 1994: 360-361).

As explored in the previous paragraph, political *italianità* is of limited use if applied to the context of the Italian Grisons. However, this is not the case of the indigenous Italians who live in Slovenia and Croatia. Political *italianità* posits another challenge because it is not only interwoven with language, but also contributes to defining Italian national character, as emerges from a study by Silvana Patriarca (2010). Patriarca posits that *italianità* is a feature of national character, which is represented by vices expressed in “narratives, tropes and stereotypes that had been circulating in Europe at least since the mid eighteenth century” (Patriarca 2010: 23). Patriarca examines the evolvement of notions of Italian national character before and after uni-

<sup>37</sup> With reference to Italy alone.

<sup>38</sup> “la lingua [...] componente essenziale di italianità e [...] veicolo della nostra civiltà”.

<sup>39</sup> “l’Italia avea [nel Duecento] già una cultura propria e nazionale molto progredita: l’Europa andava già ad imparare nella dotta Bologna”.

fictionation from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century through the pages of critics, politicians, and historians. Filtering the work of Jacob Burckhardt about the individualism of the Italians, Patriarca (2010: 83-85) claims that what made the greatness of the imagined, fragmented Italy of the Renaissance, was excessive individualism. Individualism and the lack of the ability to collaborate prevent the modernization of the Italian character in the process of mass democracy, which crushes the individual. Patriarca gives a rather primordialist interpretation of Italians who are seen as a people prone to vices such as corruption and laziness (Patriarca 2010: 124). Ultimately, this negative national character as expression of excessive individualism contributes to defining Italians as an ethnic. Despite the negativity, the pliability of Patriarca’s interpretation of *italianità* as an expression of a national character based on individualism, corruption, laziness, and vice could be applicable to the Italian institutions in Slovenia and Croatia, where vices such as corruption are documented<sup>40</sup>. Nevertheless, an interpretation of *italianità* as ‘Italian vices’ makes the pliability of Patriarca’s interpretation difficult in the context of Switzerland’s Italian Grisons. This is because the Italian Grisons’ Germanic cast of mind, which emerged from my findings based on ethnographic interviews, reflects Switzerland’s representations of national character, one based on efficiency, precision, and industriousness, which stands in antithesis to Italy’s.

## 9.2. *Italicità*

Businessman and former politician Piero Bassetti coined the term *italicità* in 2002 (Bassetti & Janni 2004). Behind the original idea of *italicità*, ‘Italian’ sense of belonging is not perceived as being based on language, territory or passport (Bassetti 2008: 24). This concept breaks away from the ideology of political nations built on language as an element of unity, which encompasses Ciampi’s idea of *italianità* explored in § 9.2. *Italicità* “generates a sense of loose belonging” (Bassetti 2008: 24)<sup>41</sup>. Bassetti posits that attitude and certain - but not specified - ways of doing business based on personal networking are the foundation of *italicità* (*ibidem*). Sociologist Giovanni Bechelloni (2007) examines *italicità* from a “phenomenology point [of view] and from the theory point [of view]” (Bechelloni 2007: 105). However, Bechelloni, unlike Bassetti, argues that the idea of *italicità* should be limited to Italian citizens, people who are originally Italian as well as those who “have adopted [...] Italian cultural traits” (Bechelloni 2007: 105). Bassetti’s idea has been supported and expand-

<sup>40</sup> For instance fund misappropriation by the head of EDIT, the Italian publisher from Rijeka/Fiume, led to his resignation and prosecution in 2014.

<sup>41</sup> “genera un senso di appartenenza sciolto”.

ed in Switzerland by politicians such as the former president of the Grisons Claudio Lardi (in Paleari 2012), as well as by scholars such as Remigio Ratti (2010). In fact, both Lardi’s and Ratti’s viewpoints are in contrast with Bassetti’s disengagement from language. For Lardi (in Paleari 2012: 42) *italicità* is a *tifoseria* in favour of Italian language and culture<sup>42</sup>. Ratti (2010) argues that language is a component of *italicità* and should not be seen as an “exclusive property of Italy the Nation-State or Roman official power” (Ratti 2010)<sup>43</sup>. According to Ratti (*ibidem*), people who support *italicità*, whom Bassetti (2008) refers to as *italici*, “do not look for links based on a Mother country but are linked by culture” (Ratti 2010)<sup>44</sup>. A special role as linking medium of the *italici* should be *Comunità Radiotelevisiva Italofona* (or *CRI*), a network of Italian-speaking radio and TV channels that operates in countries such as Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Switzerland.

The concept of *italicità* has limitations with reference to the Other Italies. According to the Radio Capodistria journalist Lara Drčić (in Paleari 2012), *italicità* is not applicable to the Italians living in Slovenia and Croatia. This is because, for Drčić, the *italicità* network overcomes the idea of belonging to the Italian nation of which the Italians living in Slovenia and Croatia are an integral part (in Paleari 2012: 42). Bassetti’s idea of *italicità* is based on business networking. The novelty in Ratti’s interpretation of *italicità* lies solely in the detachment from Italy conceived as a ‘mother nation’. The idea of networking based on media is also stronger than Bassetti’s approach, but there is an over-reliance on the importance of language, which takes the theory closer to Ciampi’s *italianità*. As to Bechelloni’s interpretation, his sociological approach is too inclusive but aleatory for, arguably, fashion styles and holidays are hardly a distinctive feature of Italian culture. Furthermore, Bechelloni’s approach contains discriminatory ideas. For instance, *italicità* is interpreted as an “entirely Italian way of maintaining a relationship with the Roman Catholic faith” (Bechelloni 2007: 105). This viewpoint alienates protestant minorities in Italy and excludes the reformed churches, which characterize parts of the Italian Grisons.

### 9.3. *Venezianità*

*Venezianità* is an articulation of Italianness confined to the former state of the Serenissima<sup>45</sup>. Within this research, *venezianità* refers to Venice’s cultural legacy in

<sup>42</sup> ‘ensemble of supporters’.

<sup>43</sup> “l’italofonia non passa più esclusivamente attraverso lo Stato-Nazione Italia o l’ufficialità romana”.

<sup>44</sup> “Gente che non cerca un legame di Patria, bensì di cultura”.

<sup>45</sup> Some scholars prefer to use the term ‘venezianità’ when referring to the heritage of the city of Venice and its lagoon and ‘veneticità’ to areas in the surrounding regions. Nevertheless, it is perceived that the current linguistic heritage of Istria, Dalmatia, and the Mouths of Cattaro is influenced by the Veneto vernacular used in Trieste and that

Istria, Dalmatia, and the Mouths of Cattaro, which was once also known as Venetian Albania. Even after the end of Venice as a political and commercial power, there is evidence that the population of the towns and cities once part of the Serenissima remained faithful to it. For instance, after the demise of Venice in May 1797, the Serenissima’s gonfalon, i.e. the banner with the lion of St Mark, was last lowered in Perasto, now Perast, in the Mouths of Cattaro on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1797. On that occasion, the myth that the gonfalon was hidden, rather than destroyed, and ‘buried’ underneath the altar of the local parish church and in the hearts of the people was born. Ostensibly, on that day, an oath of allegiance to the Serenissima was sealed by the Venetian words ‘Ti con nu, nu con Ti’ (The other Venice 2010)<sup>46</sup>.

Besides myths, to this day, there are visible traces of the legacy of Venice in the towns and cities on the eastern shores of the Adriatic. For instance, Venetian lions are visible in most cities on gates and walls. Typical Venetian mullioned windows are commonly found in Istria and Dalmatia. Restoration of this heritage is now possible thanks to *Regione Veneto*, which approved a regional law (Regione Veneto 1994) to fund the restoration and promotion of Venetian heritage in the former dominions of the Serenissima in Istria and Dalmatia across Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro. *Venezianità* is also about language and food culture. Food names and recipes from Istria in Slovenia, Istria and Dalmatia in Croatia, and the Mouths of Cattaro in Montenegro, including those written in Slavonic languages, bear striking similarities to those from the lagoon city. In fact, in the eastern Adriatic, languages, including Romance as well as Slavonic vernaculars, are permeated with Venetian words and inflections, which are treasured by the population that identifies with ‘Italian’ cultures.

Although *venezianità* is referred to throughout this study as the cultural legacy of Venice, Venetian culture is perceived as being a footnote of Italian culture. This mindset is a legacy of the ideology that favours the existence of the Italian nation-state. Because of the dominant ideology, which relegates the Venetian past to play a secondary role to those of Florence, Rome, and Italy as a whole within the rhetoric of Italian national identity, ideas of Venice and, consequently, *venezianità*, tend to be limited to tacky images such as gondola rides and carnivals, which trivialize the Serenissima’s complex cultural identity. Venice and Venetian areas are described by guidebooks as ‘Italian’ rather than ‘Venetian’. Nowadays, it seems difficult to extricate Venetian from Italian nationalist narratives that favour the quest for a unitary Italian identity. Although

the ‘authentic’ Venetian elements no longer exist. For a detailed discussion, see Günter HOLTUS, Michael METZELTIN & Christian SCHMITT (1988: 522). This approach is inconsistent. In the same study, Dalmatia is referred to as ‘veneziana’ rather than ‘veneta’. It is for this reason that, for the purpose of this study, which is not a linguistic one, no distinctions of any kind are made, given that both components are interwoven.

<sup>46</sup>‘You with us, us with You’.

Venice ceased to exist politically long before nation-states were created on both sides of the Adriatic, sources show that Venice's spirit lives on in the territories known as "Dominio da Mar" (Salimbeni 2002: 13)<sup>47</sup>. It is in such settings and within this spirit, that the concept of *venezianità* should be understood in the context of the Other Italies. This is because, as Thomas Schweigert (2010) observes, "Venice maintained some kind of presence in Istria and on the Dalmatian Coast from the Kvarner Gulf down to the Montenegrin littoral for eleven hundred years" (Schweigert 2010: 351).

*Venezianità* includes art, architecture, language, and food culture. For instance, the Byzantine and Ottoman influences in architecture make Venice, but also Istrian and Dalmatian towns unique. Yet, *venezianità* is complex and has no 'pure' identity. For example, in today's coastal Montenegro, Venetian culture shares an older heritage with "Dalmatia (Latin and Slavic), that of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire" (Schweigert 2010: 351). "Venetian nationalist historiography" (Schweigert 2010: 353) distinguishes between a Latin and a Slavic Dalmatia. However, what is important to say here is that distinctions were not based on ethnic but religious affiliations. The Latin or Catholic component in the Mouths of Cattaro, as Vesna Lipovac-Radulović (2009: XVI) observes, looked to Venice for protection<sup>48</sup>. Unsurprisingly, in the Mouths of Cattaro cities such as Kotor/Cattaro and Perast/Perasto, have preserved to this day an architecture with a patent 'Italo-venetian' footprint which is also very evident in language. On the contrary, other coastal towns such as [Stari] Bar/Antivari and Ulcinj/Dulcigno have retained a more 'oriental' appearance, since they were subjected to Ottoman rule for centuries.

Considering the above, it is necessary to point out that *venezianità* is not an exotic articulation of Italianness. To this point Schweigert (2010: 352) regards the use of the term 'Italian' in Dalmatia as "anachronistic" (*ibidem*) and that it "smacks of irredentism" (*ibidem*), since the building of Italy as a political and linguistic unit only started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike Schweigert, Magris (2006) does not conceal the Italian element within Venetian or 'Latin' heritage:

the Italian presence, which was so fundamental for Dalmatia, got thinner until the savage British bombing of Zara and the exodus at the end of WWII. Today, Italians from the Peninsula ignore this great role of the Venetian and Italic presence as well as its great and dramatic decline (Magris 2006: 33)<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> 'Sea Dominion'.

<sup>48</sup> According to Benjamin ARBEL (2013), "on several occasions Venice rejected proposals of voluntary submission by envoys of several towns and principalities. [...] The city of Cattaro had to appeal several times to the Venetian authorities before convincing them to take it under its rule" (ARBEL 2013: 137).

<sup>49</sup> "la presenza italiana, così fondamentale per la Dalmazia, è andata via via assottigliandosi sino al selvaggio bombardamento inglese di Zara e all'esodo alla fine della seconda guerra mondiale. Oggi gli italiani della penisola ignorano questo grande ruolo della presenza veneta e italice e il suo grande e drammatico declino".

Today, for the ‘Italians’ living in Istria, Dalmatia, and the Mouths of Cattaro, unlike the Italians from Italy, roots “in the Venetian and Habsburg periods” (Ballinger 2004: 42) play important roles in the formation of local identities. However, acknowledging the importance of these roots has not stopped the decline, especially in Dalmatia, of Venetian cultural identities, which are ‘threatened’ with extinction by demography. Unsurprisingly, Ballinger (2003) refers to “Italian speakers from Istria and Dalmatia” (Ballinger 2003: 29) as “Latinate linguistic islands stranded within a sea of menacing Slavs” (*ibidem*). This Romance component at linguistic level is, together with art, architecture, and food culture, a distinctive feature of *venezianità*. Romance vernacular varieties exist in both spoken and written contexts, especially in Istria. As Michele Metzeltin (1992: 322-323) observes, there is no single form of vernacular but several examples of linguistic hybridity of language contact between Romance and Slavic vernaculars. Metzeltin points out, however, that there were already differences in the preservation of Latin elements in Dalmatia and Istria before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Dalmatia, the Romance component began to decline quickly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whereas in Istria, whose maritime cities were - and still are - linked with Venice by tradition, language, and customs (Metzeltin 2002: 267), the decline started after WWII.

Although linguistic *venezianità* has long been declining, despite its rich bequest to Slavonic vernaculars, as Lipovac-Radulović (2009) remarks, *venezianità* still exists in expressions such as architecture, art, and food. Nevertheless, expressions of *venezianità* are sometimes contested in Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro with reference to [mis]appropriation of cultural heritage and symbol restoration. Critique from Italy about the [mis]appropriation of Venetian cultural heritage by Slovenes or Croats is harsh. For instance, Dario Alberi, author of a monumental work about the art and architecture of Istria (2006) and Dalmatia (2008), hits out against [mis]appropriation of Venetian heritage by Croatian nationalist intellectuals (Alberi 2008: 1580-1581). Moreover, there are tendencies to cast a bad light on the name of Venice among Croatian intellectuals. Ljerka Šimunković (2001), in his study about Venetian language policies in Dalmatia, points out how, beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Croatian nationalist narratives attempted to tarnish Venetian heritage and history. However, Šimunković (2001: 97-98) challenges and refutes such negative narratives by indicating that some Croatian scholars defend the legacy of the Venetian Republic, for it contributed to the preservation of the Roman Catholic faith and the Croatian language. In fact, Šimunković (2001: 98) claims that Venetian authorities never interfered in the promotion of local education, since this was left to municipal authorities. Even so, Dalmatians moved to the Italian peninsula (Šimunković 2001: 99), in particular the University of Padua (Roić 2007: 93), near Venice, to attend university, a tradition which, according to my key informants in Slovenia and Croatia, continues today. Despite all

this, negative attitudes towards Venetian heritage are common and may be ascribed to the fact that Venice is interpreted as a colonial empire (Arbel 2013: 161). Larry Wolff (2001) acknowledges certain attitudes of obscurantism towards Venice; even in ostensibly multicultural Yugoslavia, there were tendencies to neglect to mention the jurisdiction of the Serenissima or to consider "the centuries of Venetian rule in Dalmatia [...] as a benighted interlude of burdensome and boring imperial domination" (Wolff 2001: 359).

Overall, a first limitation of *venezianità* is that it is partially applicable. For instance, it does not encompass the Italian Grisons. A second limitation is that, today, it is difficult to disentangle Venetian and Italian elements. Not only do they seem to overlap, particularly at a linguistic level, but also Italian traditional unitary narratives relegate Venetian cultural expressions to a subordinate role. A third limitation in the application of *venezianità* is the petty distinction between 'veneziano' and 'veneto'. The former is often applied to Venice alone; the latter is used for the areas of Venetian influence, including Istria and Trieste, whose role as a cultural centre will be explored in § 10<sup>50</sup>. Trieste, as well as being part of Austria for centuries, was an important centre of the Venetian and Italian cultural worlds, as were cities such as Dubrovnik/Ragusa, Kotor/Cattaro, Split/Spalato, Šibenik/Sebenico, Rijeka/Fiume, and Pula/Pola, as Sanja Roić (2007: 98) points out. However, this terminological distinction between 'veneziano' and 'veneto' need not exist. *Venezianità* should be seen as a koine, a set of cultural attributes common to Venice and the other territories that have strong cultural ties, at linguistic, artistic, and culinary levels with the lagoon city. Finally yet importantly, a fourth limitation is the negative consideration that *venezianità* receives in some quarters of scholarly research in Slovenia and Croatia, as both Wolff (2001) and Šimunković (2001) highlight. The legacy of Venice is mistakenly interpreted as the legacy of an imperialist power interested in repressing the 'Slavs'. Furthermore, Venetian legacy is confused with Italian rule during fascism, which tried to stamp out 'Slavic' cultures. The fact that fascism, Italy, and Venice are thrown together in one big equation is unsurprising. After all, as Wolff (2001) observes, Mussolini thought that regions such as Istria, Dalmatia, and the Mouths of Cattaro were "Italian in [...] origin" (Wolff 2001: 355) and held "in its bosom [...] the remains of Venice" (*ibidem*).

The previous eight sections explored concepts of nationhood and Italianness in relation to the Other Italies. Another interesting and important aspect about the Other Italies is that differences from Italy are sharpened by the fact that the Other Italies lie outside the borders of the nation-state. The final two sections of this paper will explore the roles played by borders in relation to the Other Italies. For a definition of

<sup>50</sup> For Venetian influence on the vernacular of Trieste see Stefania TUFFI (2016: 103).

the term ‘border’, this paper refers to the OED. According to the OED, border is one of those terms with a rather large number of synonyms. Besides having interchangeable equivalents like “boundary line” (OED 2016b), border can refer to the “district lying along the edge of a country or territory, a frontier” (*ibidem*). To overcome the narrow definition of border as a dividing line and include the areas near the frontier, this paper also refers to the “land[s] or district[s] on or near the border between two countries” (*ibidem*) as borderlands. For a working definition of borderland suitable for the scope of this research, this paper refers to the words used by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), who regarded borderlands as areas where “culture [...] [and] languages [...] cross-pollinate and are revitalized; they die and are born” (Anzaldúa 1987: 20).

## 10. Political borders

Anzaldúa’s reflections are applicable to the context of Italy where cultural production might have not occurred if, as Coluzzi (2007) argues, cities such as Rome, Venice, Florence, Milan, and Turin “had belonged to the same state” (Coluzzi 2007: 298). Borders caused fragmentation but contributed to cultural cross-pollination and the diversity within Italian culture implied by the Italianness examined in § 9. Borders were important to such an extent that Italian literary culture “is studded with imposed, sustained, overcome, respected, trespassed, broken borders, barriers, and limitations” (Paganini 2003: 10)<sup>51</sup>. Despite the relevance of borders within Italian literary tradition, today’s Italy is a highly centralized state. Borders and borderlands have little space in a culture that reflects its political centralism except, perhaps, for critically acclaimed writers such as Magris and Paolo Rumiz, who come from the Italian port city of Trieste, near the Slovenian frontier. Trieste is a city which, according to Katia Pizzi (2010), “rests uncomfortably within Italian national boundaries” (Pizzi 2010: 41). During the Cold War, Trieste found itself between two opposing worlds<sup>52</sup>. On one side was capitalist Italy, on the other socialist Yugoslavia. Despite ideological divisions during the Cold War, Trieste was not like nearby Gorizia and Nova Gorica, where barbed wire divided two cities as well as Italians from Yugoslavs. Barbed wire and ideologies divided Gorizia and Nova Gorica as much as the Wall divided Berlin. In fact, because of the relative openness of the border, it was observed that Trieste functioned and still functions as a meeting point between east and west at cultural levels. This location as meeting point near an open border explains why the Italians from Slovenia and Croa-

<sup>51</sup> “è costellata di confini, barriere, limiti: imposti, subiti, superati, rispettati, violati, infranti”.

<sup>52</sup> According to Angelo ARA and Claudio MAGRIS (2015), for Trieste tensions continued after WWII (ARA & MAGRIS 2015: 161).

tia often choose to be educated at Trieste's university and why this city still influences the literary works of Italian writers from Istria.

Ostensibly, after the end of the Cold War, borders became less relevant as elements of division in Europe. Yet, today, it is necessary to rethink of perceived opinions that borders are less important in the aftermath of the migrant crisis referred to in the introduction. However, when I started researching for this paper and while I was doing fieldwork in the Other Italies, there were perceptions that borders were losing their function as barriers. Borders were seen as irrelevant because

they no longer fulfil[led] their historical role as barriers to the movement of goods, ideas and people, and as markers of the extent and power of the state (Wilson & Donnan 1998: 1).

Moreover, the enlargement of the European Union allowed Slovenia and Croatia to join the EU in 2004 and 2013 respectively. Arguably, Italy's outer borders with Switzerland and Slovenia became less relevant with the implementation of the Schengen agreements of which Switzerland and Slovenia are signatories. Yet, despite the abolition of formal border checks as entailed by the Schengen agreements, borders paradoxically exist and do not exist at the same time. From observation, borders seem to be central not just in contemporary literary cultures from Istria and the Italian Grisons but in debates about current affairs as well. The escalation of the refugee crisis in 2015 has shown that political debates about the relevance of state borders as barriers imposed by nation-states across Europe are not over. Although this refugee crisis developed after the research for this paper had taken place, what is important to say here is that Slovenia laid a razor-wire fence allegedly to protect its border with Croatia and prevent a flood of refugees in December 2015. In fact, this border has been contested ever since it was formally declared in 1991. More importantly, the Slovenian-Croatian border contributed to increasing the sense of fragility of the Italians who live in Istria, whose family ties have been severed because of the border. Although a consequence of the refugee crisis may be the reintroduction of border checks and the end of free movement of people across Europe, borders as barriers also paradoxically create opportunities. This paradox is highlighted by Sandro Bianconi (2005) writing about the border between Switzerland and Italy in an historical context:

the border not only asserted itself as an element of separation and liaison; the stronger it was in indicating diversity, the more it favoured and created exchanges and dynamics between bordering spaces (Bianconi 2005: 207)<sup>53</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> "la frontiera si è confermata nel ruolo di elemento di separazione e di relazione, non solo, quanto più è stata forte nel segnalare la diversità tanto più essa ha favorito e creato correnti e dinamiche tra gli spazi confinanti".

## 11. Mental borders

In spite of cross-pollination of cultures and exchanges as pointed out by Anzaldúa (1987) and Bianconi (2005), this paper posits that boundaries also exist in another form, i.e. as mental borders. Mental borders, to borrow Robert J. Kaiser’s (2001) words about geographical boundaries, “are necessary for identity formation” (Kaiser 2001: 326). Beyond mental borders lies ‘otherness’. Mental and ‘real’ boundaries help “distinguish a group from another” (Anzaldúa 1987: 25). Kaiser’s and Anzaldúa’s arguments about the necessity of borders to create an ‘other’ are relevant to the borderlands of Istria in Slovenia and Croatia, where, for the local Italians, the formal border introduced in 1991 is still an “open wound” (Anzaldúa 1987: 25). Because of the wound opened up by borders and, more recently, by the employment of razor wire, the conversations I had with the indigenous Italians suggest that Istria is a borderland in the sense of “vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary” (Anzaldúa 1987: 25).

This creation of ‘otherness’ beyond the border is also relevant to the context of the Italian Grisons. For instance, Mascioni (1984: 92), writing about flags and borders, reflected on the effects borders had on his own life and the minds of people around him. These people imagine and interpret those who are born or come from the other side of the border as ‘different’. Mascioni, like his ancestors, was born on the Italian side of the border, but was educated in both Switzerland and Italy<sup>54</sup>. Mascioni, who held dual citizenship, interrogated himself on being different from the others because of his dual citizenship (Mascioni 1984: 90). The Switzerland-Italy border deeply affected Mascioni. The border was a “double national demarcation line seen from both sides [...]. At the same time this border was the *limen* of my personal chronicle” (Mascioni 1984: 96)<sup>55</sup>. Despite feeling that the border affected his identity, Mascioni did not evoke ostensible ethnic tensions along the border, given that he considered the two sides as the same people, “the same ethnic family” (*ibidem*)<sup>56</sup>, whose political destinies were separated by Napoleon Bonaparte (Massera 2007). More importantly, for Mascioni the people of Switzerland’s Italian Grisons and Italy’s Valtelline were one people not two. However, in his search for identity, Mascioni was not so much interested in the diversity of national identities. Mascioni’s novelty is that he compared the different cultural identities of mountain people, like himself, the people of Italy’s Val-

<sup>54</sup> He was born at Villa di Tirano, in Italy’s Valtelline. Like several Italian Grisons’ families, who have owned vineyards and properties in the Valtelline for centuries, Mascioni was no exception.

<sup>55</sup> “una doppia frontiera nazionale vista da ambedue i lati [...] nello stesso tempo era il *limen* della mia cronaca personale”.

<sup>56</sup> “una stessa famiglia etnica”.

telline and Switzerland's Italian Grisons, with those of city people, such as Milan, where he was educated. The idea that in the Alps between Switzerland and Italy people share a common mountain cultural identity, despite the political border, is not only important to Mascioni but to other people in the Italian Grisons, as I discovered by speaking to locals during my stays in the region. What is important to say here is that, for Mascioni, the differences created by the political border are written on paper, such as passports, which define national identities, whereas the cultural differences between city and mountain are impressed in the mind. Mascioni's position seems to be rather isolated within scholarly debates about borders, national, and cultural identities. However, his view is common among people of the Italian Grisons who hold dual citizenship, Swiss and Italian, because of intermarriages. Unlike Mascioni, scholars such as Wilson and Donnan (1998) posit that border people attempt "ideologically to construct political divides" (Wilson & Donnan 1998: 4) and that states strive to "control the cultural fields which transcend their borders" (*ibidem*). It is possible to admit that states try to create political differences for ideological reasons. However, the limitation of Wilson's and Donnan's interpretation, with reference to Switzerland's border in the Italian Grisons, is the emphasis on the interaction of "borders and ethnicity" (Wilson & Donnan 1998: 13). For Mascioni, ethnic identity debates are absent on the Switzerland-Italy border.

However, sources indicate that this is not the case of the Adriatic borderlands where Italian and Yugoslav political expansionism in the eastern Adriatic in the 20<sup>th</sup> century fomented divisions between ethnies. Moreover, divisions were exasperated when Italy and Yugoslavia first, Slovenia and Croatia later, drew up state borders without taking in consideration the cultural hybridity of the populations of Istria and Dalmatia. Consequently, Italian nationals ended up living in Yugoslavia and Yugoslavs - mainly Slovenes - in Italy. Nowadays, these populations describe themselves, at least in Slovenia, Croatia, and Italy, as national minorities that "share ethnic ties across the border as well as with those residing at their own state's geographical core" (Wilson & Donnan 1998: 14). The borderlands minorities inhabit "highlight the problem of difference inside the nation" (Sluga 2001: 163).

Within today's postmodernist mindset, which values difference, as was explored in § 8, the mental border, which dislikes difference and 'otherness', is at odds with values expressed by constitutions. For instance, a reading of the Slovenian constitution indicates that it was drafted within a postmodernist mindset to acknowledge and defend the existence of the 'other'. The 'other' is in the form of indigenous national minorities, such as the Hungarian and Italian ones. However, because of the mental border, there are perceptions among the Slovenian majority of Istria in Slovenia that the Italians of Istria are non-indigenous and a foreign element. However respectful of

the 'other', at least in the theory posited by the Slovenian constitution, Slovenia is imagined as a homogeneous nation-state where the hybrid 'other' is a foreign element. Yet, the cultures of Istria, seems to be reflecting Bhabha's (1994) notion of "cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 1994: 5).

Although notions of cultural hybridity are applicable to the regions of the eastern Adriatic where Romance and Slavic cultures meet and mingle, Bhabha's approach is unworkable in the borderlands of the Italian Grisons. This is because, as Mascioni posited, Switzerland's Italian Grisons and Italy's Valtellina are considered as one people despite the political border. Yet, even in the Italian Grisons there are mental borders to be overcome, as posited by Mascioni (1984: 100), who had an existential dilemma about overcoming or going beyond borders in everyday life. He felt the need to overcome the physical border separating Switzerland and Italy, which contributed to creating the differences between 'us', i.e. the Swiss, and the 'other', i.e. the Italians. Thus, the mental border is the imagined line between the 'other' and 'us'. Mascioni's existential going beyond this mental border is typical of the Italian Grisons. Mascioni, like the other writers from the Italian Grisons faced a dilemma represented by the difficulty of having to express himself for a readership situated in Italy, which he considered a foreign republic (Mascioni 1984: 100). Foreigners, i.e. Italians, can consider one as a writer because they share the same language, i.e. Italian, rather than readers in one's own country who use Swiss-German, French or Romansh and only minimally Italian. Although Mascioni had an Italian passport<sup>57</sup>, which he acquired by birth, and despite sharing a language with Italians, his Italy is, paradoxically, a foreign state, despite shared cultural identities. Paradoxically, in all of this, for Mascioni, the Italian language becomes a key imaginary bordering device, or a weapon, albeit one 'weapon' which could be turned against himself. Mascioni used Italian to communicate within his own fatherland, i.e. Switzerland, where paradoxically his Italian required translation. Ultimately, despite the infinite complexity of being Swiss, based on the effort of wanting to live 'associated' to one another, Mascioni accepts that this struggle between rival national flags, borders, and cultural identities is part of the nature of being Swiss from the Italian Grisons. After all, it is in Switzerland that Mascioni finds his kindred. Moreover, he identified in the Swiss flag his original community despite the shared cultural identity with Italy, of which language is just a symbol.

Overall, the representations of borders as mental constructs typify the Italian Grisons and Istria. However, in Switzerland, from observation, it is not possible to conceive of borders as a tool to define ethnic identities, as is the case in former Yugoslavia.

<sup>57</sup> Mascioni was head of the Italian cultural institutes in Zagreb, Dubrovnik/Ragusa, and Nice.

Yet, borders are used to demarcate national identities in all areas. Consequently, debates about the nature of frontiers and borderlands prove that "the rigidity of some states in their efforts to control the cultural fields which transcend their borders" (Wilson & Donnan 1998: 4) has left deep traces, or mental boundaries, in the minds of people inhabiting borderlands.

## 12. Conclusion

This paper aims to raise awareness about the existence of autochthonous 'Italian' cultures outside the boundaries of the Italian nation-state. It came out of an observation that, usually, debates about Italian cultural studies are confined within the national discourse of political Italy. However, this paper, in helping dislodge assumptions that political Italy and 'Italian' culture are synonymous, overcomes the insularity of Italian national discourse by positing that indigenous 'Italian' cultures also have an international dimension. This international dimension derives from the location of these cultures in parts of Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Switzerland.

From a theoretical point of view, this paper contributes to reinterpreting what is meant by 'Italian' in association with culture other than declared nationality based on passports and language. I put forward the notion of 'Italianness' which does not just draw on bureaucracy, such as passports, or language. Italianness has been defined as a concept encompassing inhomogeneous articulations of 'Italian' cultures, such as the ones of premodern Italy, rather than a unitary national identity forged by state ideology. Three different interpretative perspectives of Italianness are explored: *italianità*, *italicità*, and *venezianità*. *Italianità* is interpreted as a political concept, with reference to the Italian nation-state. *Italianità* is also about language and food as well as national character. Although linguistic *italianità* figures as an important symbol of cultural identity in the Mouths of Cattaro and in the Italian Grisons, and as marker of cultural and national identities in Istria and Dalmatia, language is not the sole element contributing to forge the notion of Italianness. In fact, the part of the population which identifies with 'Italian' cultures expresses a sense of Italianness based on literature, food, architecture, landscapes, symbols, as well as language and vernaculars. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that *italianità* in the sense of national identity based on passports and national character is inapplicable to Switzerland's Italian Grisons and the Mouths of Cattaro in Montenegro. This explains why, particularly in Switzerland, there is support for the notion of *italicità*, whose novelty is the promotion of 'Italian' cultures without the ideology of the political nation-state. By deconstructing the myth that Italian culture coincides with the Italian nation-state, it has been possible to ex-

amine how Italianness in the Other Italies is a concept encompassing inhomogeneous articulations of 'Italian' cultures. Deconstructing the myth of the Italian nation-state as sole repository of Italian culture serves to demonstrate the partial applicability or inapplicability of the idea of 'nation' to the contexts of the Other Italies. Although theories of nation in relation to Italy, especially the modernist and primordialist approaches explored in § 7, with reference to politics and autochthony, prove to be relevant to *Comunità degli Italiani* in Slovenia and Croatia, they are largely inapplicable to the Italian Grisons and the Mouths of Cattaro, as explored in § 8 about postmodernism.

The Other Italies remain on the margins of debates about Italian culture. Marginality seems to be caused by the peripheral geographical location of the four regions. Furthermore, the Other Italies are influenced and enriched by Slavic and Germanic cultures. Influences from other cultures and cultural hybridity clash with the idea that Italian culture is homogeneous, in the way Italian culture is imagined to reflect Italy as a nation-state. Moreover, the Other Italies are of little use to the writing of Italian national culture because of their political belonging to other nation-states. Despite marginality and exclusion from Italian national narratives, there is a sense of connectedness with one another and Italy at an historical level. For instance, in the Adriatic Other Italies the revival of cultural connectedness with Italy is taking place thanks to the activities of two administrative regions of Italy, which promote local 'Italian' cultures and endorse restoration of cultural heritage of Venetian and 'Italian' origin. So too in the Alps: whereas previously a centuries-old political unity had bound together the Italian Grisons and the Valtelline, which were part of the same state between 1512 and 1797, there is still a sense of closeness, despite the divisions caused by political and mental borders.

Given the importance attributed by the people of the Other Italies to the preservation of their cultures, this paper informs a global audience about the existence of indigenous 'Italian' cultures outside Italy. This paper has sought to understand to what extent there are indigenous 'Italian' cultures in four areas which tend to be overlooked within Italian studies. It has also sought to prove that although the 'indigenous' 'Italian' cultures of the Other Italies do not necessarily coincide with Italian national culture from Italy, because of their different political orientation and influences from other cultures, they are nevertheless connected. Future research is likely to be useful provided that the Other Italies are not seen as appendices or footnotes of 'Italian' culture, which should be divested of its 'national' ideological shackles created after political unification in 1861.

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FIGURE 1: Mapping the Other Italies. (Source: Google Maps, 2014).

FIGURE 2: Commemorating 150 years since Italian unification in Moneglia, Liguria, Italy.

FIGURE 3: 'Clocks', 'Slavs', 'Dalmatia', 'Uncharted'. (Source: Tsvetkov, Y. 2016). Photograph taken from <http://alphadesigner.com/mapping-stereotypes/>.

### List of abbreviations

CRI= Comunità radiotelevisiva italofoina (Italian radio broadcasting community).

FDFA= Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

HRW= Human Rights Watch.

MIBAC= Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage).

MIUR= Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (Italian Ministry for Education, Universities, and Research).

OED= Oxford English Dictionary (Online edition).

PGI= Pro Grigioni Italiano (Pro Italian Grisons: cultural organization from the Italian Grisons).

### About spelling of names, geographical terms and their location

Surnames ending in 'ch' and in 'ć' usually point to the Italian versus Slavonic spelling of the same names. Official Slavonic forms of place names in Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro are used in conjunction with Italian equivalents, e.g. Koper/Capodistria, Rovinj/Rovigno or Kotor/Cattaro. Italian equivalents are important because they are an expression of the cultural identity of the indigenous 'Italian' population. With reference to Switzerland, the expression *Grigioni italiano* or *Grigionitaliano* has been translated into English as Italian Grisons. It is followed by a verb in the singular. Throughout this paper, Grisons, rather than German Graubünden, is used as the English equivalent of the whole canton, Switzerland's largest. The Italian Grisons refers to four valleys lying south of the Alpine watershed. The Italian Grisons' inhabitants are referred to as 'Grigionese' for the whole Canton and 'Grigionitaliano' (pl. 'Grigionitaliani') for the people of the Italian Grisons only. As to Istria, the place name refers to a region straddling three countries. The main bulk is in Croatia, three municipalities are in Slovenia and one in Italy. Dalmatia is a broad term. In this study, Dalmatia refers to the coastal strip of land and the islands of Croatia from Rijeka/Fiume in the north down to coastal Montenegro to the south to include the Mouths of Cattaro. I have in-

<sup>58</sup> All photographs are by the author unless stated otherwise.

dividuated the ‘Mouths of Cattaro’ as “a ganglion of five or six basins joined by narrower channels [which] are the Bocche or mouths that give the name to the gulf” (Jackson 1887: 18). Like Jackson, Jules Verne (1885) referred to the area as “bouches de Cattaro” (Verne 1885: 435), a name which still survives today in the local denomination ‘Boka’ [Kotorska]<sup>59</sup>. The inhabitants of the Mouths of Cattaro are referred to as ‘Bocchesi’ or, in modern English, ‘Bokelian’ because this is how they prefer to be called.

## Note

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<sup>59</sup> From Venetian ‘boca’ and Italian ‘bocca’, ‘mouth’.

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**RIASSUNTO**

L'“ITALIANITÀ” AUTOCTONA OLTRE IL CONFINE NAZIONALE DELL'ITALIA IN ISTRIA IN SLOVENIA, IN ISTRIA E DALMAZIA IN CROAZIA, NELLE BOCHE DI CATTARO IN MONTENEGRO E NEL GRIGIONI ITALIANO IN SVIZZERA

Lo scopo di questo contributo è quello di promuovere la consapevolezza dell'esistenza di culture 'italiane' indigene al di fuori dei confini dello Stivale. È una rielaborazione di una ricerca interdisciplinare in cui ci si propone di superare i limiti posti dalle restrizioni ideologiche che imprigionano la cultura 'italiana' all'interno dei confini dello stato nazionale italiano. Questo studio traccia una disamina delle teorie esistenti relative a concetti come 'nazione', 'italianità' e 'confine' nel contesto di quattro aree collocate in Slovenia, Croazia, Montenegro e Svizzera dove sopravvivono culture 'italiane' indigene. Il termine 'italiano' verrà utilizzato tra virgolette nei contesti del Grigioni italiano e delle Bocche di Cattaro, dove le identità nazionali non coincidono con l'Italia, bensì con la Svizzera o il Montenegro. Ciononostante non saranno utilizzate le virgolette nei contesti sloveni e croati, laddove c'è chi dichiara la propria appartenenza culturale come italiana.

Parole chiave: italianità, nazione, Istria, Dalmazia, Kotor/Cattaro, Grisons-Grigioni.

**SAŽETAK**

AUTOHTONO “TALIJANSTVO” IZVAN DRŽAVNIH GRANICA ITALIJE, U SLOVENSKOJ ISTRI, HRVATSKOJ ISTRI I DALMACIJI, U CRNOGORSKOJ BOKI KOTORSKOJ TE U TALIJANSKOM GRAÜBUNDENU U ŠVICARSKOJ

Cilj ovog doprinosa je promoviranje svijesti o postojanju “talijanskih” domaćih kultura izvan granica Apeninskog poluotoka. Ovo je prerada interdisciplinarnog istraživanja u kojem se predlaže prevladavanje granica ideoloških restrikcija s kojima se “talijanska” kultura zatvara isključivo unutar granica Italije. Esej razmatra postojeće teorije vezane za pojmove kao što su “nacija”, “talijanstvo” i “granica” u kontekstu četiriju područja u Sloveniji, Hrvatskoj, Crnoj Gori i Švicarskoj, gdje opstaju domaće “talijanske” kulture. Termin “talijanski” se koristi pod navodnicima za područje talijanskog Graübundena i za Boku kotorsku, gdje se nacionalni identiteti ne podudaraju s Italijom, već sa Švicarskom ili s Crnom Gorom. Ne koriste se navodnici za područja u Sloveniji i Hrvatskoj, jer tamo postoje osobe koje izjašnjavaju svoju talijansku kulturnu pripadnost.

Ključne riječi: talijanstvo, država, Istra, Dalmacija, Kotor/Cattaro, Grisons-Graübunden.

**POVZETEK**

AVTOHTONO “ITALIJANSTVO” ONKRAJ NACIONALNIH ITALIJANSKIH MEJA V SLOVENSKI ISTRI, V ISTRI IN DALMACIJI NA HRVAŠKEM, V BOKI KOTORSKI V ČRNI GORI IN ITALIJANSKEM GRAUBÜNDNU V ŠVICI.

Namen tega prispevka je spodbujanje ozaveščenosti o obstoju avtohtone “italijanske” kulture zunaj meja italijanskega škorja. Gre za predelavo interdisciplinarne raziskave, katere cilj je preseči meje, začrtane zaradi ideoloških omejitev, ki “italijansko” kulturo zapirajo znotraj meja italijanske nacionalne države. Ta študija podrobno razčlenjuje obstoječe teorije v zvezi s pojmi, kot so “narod”, “italijanstvo” in “meja” v okviru štirih območij, ki se nahajajo v

Sloveniji, na Hrvaškem, v Črni Gori in Švici, kjer je ohranjena avtohtona "italijanska" kultura. Izraz "italijanski" bo uporabljen med narekovaji za italijanski Graubünden in Boko Kotorsko, kjer nacionalne identitete ne sodijo v okvir Italije, temveč Švice ali Črne Gore. Vendar narekovajev ne bomo uporabili za slovensko in hrvaško okolje, kjer nekateri svojo kulturno pripadnost označujejo kot italijansko.

Ključne besede: italijanstvo, narod, Istra, Dalmacija, Kotor, Graubünden.

