**Diverse minorities in the Italo-Slovene borderland: "historical" and "new" minorities meet at the market.**

Alessandra Miklavcic
University of Toronto

This paper explores how in the border city of Trieste, located in the north-eastern corner of Italy, the contested memories of the past impinge upon the every day life of the Italian majority and Slovene minority's inhabitants. It argues that their embodied memories and practices, which are rooted in historical power inequalities and struggles over territory, are reinterpreted and played out in the midst of a wave of new immigrants, the new minority: former Yugoslav citizens, Albanians, Chinese, Romanians, North Africans who have arrived in the last fifteen years as a consequence of the post-socialist disintegration and geopolitical global changes.

In addressing the conference theme on diversity I intend to explore how discourses of inclusiveness and exclusiveness turn around the slippery concept of territory. The paper draws on an ethnographic fieldwork I conducted as part of my doctorate in 2001-2002 and on some new material gathered from a more recent visit I made to the area in summer 2006, when I was able to detect a number of changes.

Specifically, I will focus on two dimensions of the "contact zone" where "hybridity" – which I understand as a contingent space of encounter that can enable moments of transformation among social subjects – can be tackled: the first one is the

marketplace, archetypical site of exchange and therefore encounter; the second one is the city as subject whose encounter is materially expressed through a visual dialogue with its signs, its traces or better its markers. In particular I refer to the graffiti, which play a role as meta-encounter, as it will be further suggested.

In order to make sure I don't loose you in the metaphorical texture of the city, in its highly theoretical streets and in its schizophrenic signs, I need to mark some signposts which will now and then be reiterated. First, I start with an analysis of territory and its relation to minority and the minor. Second, I introduce you to he heavy threads of this city's past. Third, two sites of everyday encounter will be analyzed. Last but not least, I will conclude the paper with a reflection on how old and new minorities participate in the formation of territory.

That modernity is highly characterized by the interconnectedness of capitalism and nation-state building is well known, less evident is how each of them has been transformed and affected by the other. It is safe to describe the relationship between capitalism and nation-state building as a tension between the centrifugal force of capital and the centripetal force of the nation – a tension which plays out on a territory.

Territory should be taken as a sign-concept that functions in contradictory ways, and that is constantly transformed through a process of territorialization, deterritorialization and re-territorialization (Deleuze-Guattari 1983, 1987). Deleuze and Guattari contend that every territory in which life is organized and habituated is traversed by "vectors of deterritorialization." In other words, territory is a space of encounter and struggle over meanings and identities. It could be described as a "struggle over hegemony" in the Gramscian sense, whereby naturalized practices constitute

structural layers of power relations whose stability is based on a process of incorporating counter-hegemonic  forces; however these counter-hegemonic forces are vectors of deterritorialization, i.e. destabilization and carry the power of becoming.

The modalities through which power operates on the territory vary according to historical contingencies and according to a person's status and point of view, and thus can be differently perceived. It is not paradoxical therefore to affirm that for some "territory" is "ethereal," and materializes itself in the "no place" of global transit (Augé 1995), and yet for others it is very material, vivid, and embodied. I here have in mind the various national movements of "soil and blood," for whom territory constitutes a primordial index of belonging. For the life of many immigrants who become new "minorities," "territory" delimits resources and rights, which are mainly denied to them. However, the immigrants' presence as a labour force has the power of deterritorializing the same territory and by doing so, also of re-territorializing it in new constellations of becoming. This is happening for instance in the Trieste marketplace with the growing presence of Chinese vendors who are "appropriating" the space of the city by re-territorializing it in a simulacrum of their home country, Chinatown.  For the historical minorities of Trieste, e.g. the Slovene minority, 'territory' is a contradictory and almost schizoid signifier. On the one hand Slovenes in Trieste have a right to citizenship and special legal protection connected to their official status as a historical minority with deep and far reaching ties to the land. On the other hand, however, this right is stripped of the most basic symbolic marker of social identity, i.e. language. However much the Slovene inhabitants of Trieste are legally recognized as an official minority, the Slovene language is glaringly absent, if not altogether erased from the city's public space.

**"Does history go with the territory?"**

To understand the importance of the economy of the past and its valuable currency in the carrying out of exclusionary and inclusionary projects we have to turn to the history of this border area.

In the Trieste border area cohabitation among multiple others has been one of the city's foundational myths along with the hybridity of its population. However, the myth is used both to construe alterity and to deepen alienation and incommunicability. During the Habsburg Empire, which ended in the aftermath of World War I, Trieste was a cosmopolitan port city composed of a multiethnic population of Italians, Slovenes, Germans, Greeks and Jews. The idea of a multiethnic Empire, however, started to dissolve at the moment in which the bourgeois concept of nation took over, and made it unthinkable that one territory, i.e. Trieste, could belong simultaneously to more than one "nation." The "one land, one people and one language" ideology, which has shaped the majority of nation-state building projects, was carried out through homogenizing and assimilationist campaigns.

The contested memories of Italians and Slovenes of the border area of Trieste revolve around two signs: "fascism" and "foiba," which are grounded in late nineteenth and twentieth century structures of power. These factors have played a role in rigidifying group identities through memories that are constructed in oppositional terms.
Between 1918 and 1921 the city of Trieste, the Slovene Karst, Istria, Fiume and Dalmatia passed under Italian sovereignty, and a process of "Italianization"/colonization soon started. The "allophone populations" were especially targeted. During Fascism the

process of forced Italianization was exacerbated by a blatant policy of erasure of Slavic identity: the Slav language was banned from the public space and last names were by law Italianized. Various forms of resistance started to appear and strong was the longing to be part of a Yugoslav nation which would include the city of Trst.[1] During World War II, Slovene and Croat people in the Italian annexed territory genuinely embraced the Slav Partisan Movement as a way to free themselves. The vacuum of power left by the sudden signing of the Italian armistice – soon replaced by the Nazi control over the area – unleashed violence in Istria, the peninsula south of Trieste. Both representatives of Fascist authority and simple Italians were targeted. Here the second sign of contested memories comes into play: "the foiba."

The foiba is a particular kind of cave similar to a cone-shaped well which opens up vertically towards the surface and is present in the geological Karst region. In this interim of power, the revenge against Fascist repression took the form of throwing Italians into the foiba – whether they were complicit with the fascist regime or not. These "holes" became people's graves. The phenomenon of "infoibamento" – "throwing people into the foiba" was repeated in Trieste in the geopolitical scenario of 1945 when for 40 days the Yugoslav Tito Partisans took over the city of Trieste claiming its "ownership." During the Yugoslav interim before the arrival of the Anglo-American Allies, many people, the majority of whom were Italians, disappeared. They were "thrown" into these "foiba" holes on the Triestine Karst.

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[1] The imagined Yugoslav community included   all of the territories where Slovenes and Croatians lived, including the cities of Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, the city of Rijeka and the Slav Venetia.. The latter is a territory in the high Friuli which is inhabited by Slovenes and was incorporated into the Italian monarchy in 1866.

After the Yugoslav occupation, Trieste passed under the Anglo-American administration. The post–war interim, which lasted from 1945 to 1954 when the border resolutions were signed, was a period of intense diplomatic struggles over territoriality and the destiny of Trieste was not yet clear. In 1954 Trieste passed under the Italian sovereignty. For the Slovenes living in Trieste the border resolutions made them a minority within their territory/land and signaled the end of the imagined community of many Slovenes and Yugoslavs who built their vision of their national community around an understanding of Trieste as a key centre within their imagined Yugoslavia. On the Yugoslav territory the majority of the Italian population left the area, leaving behind them a very tiny Italian minority.[2]

Trieste's role as a border city again began to shift in 1992, when, after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the border countries of Slovenia and Croatia became independent states. On May 1, 2004, Slovenia became part of the European Union and the frontier, at least on the political level, began to disappear. While the material border has always been porous, even during the Cold War, when the Italo-Yugoslav border was the most open border between the eastern and the western blocs, the city of Trieste was traversed by multiple inner borders that have contributed to a rigid entrenchment of ideological, linguistic, and ethnic differences among its mainly Italian and Slovene inhabitants. More recently, Trieste has become one of the gates through which illegal immigration flows into an increasingly intolerant Europe. Trieste is by no means new to immigration, as its history indicates. However, the presence of newcomers on the

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[2] In the aftermath of the border resolutions of 1954, around 250-300 thousand people who identify as Italians left the areas which went to Yugoslavia. A large community of them, which are called esuli (exiles), moved to Trieste where they now constitute a particularly strong political enclave which has been unfortunately capitalized by the right-wing parties.

territory, mainly from former Yugoslavia, China, and North Africa further complicates the boundaries between "us," "the other," and "the other others."

**"Spaces of encounter"**

Whereas conflict scenarios are openly performed during political elections, and in particular on occasions where old wounds are strategically re-enacted for the purpose of addressing new anxieties, in everyday life the boundaries among the different ethnic groups – the Italians, the Slovene minority, and the new immigrants – are more subtly expressed or brought to new conditions of becoming.[3]

In analyzing the market and the city walls as sites and surfaces of encounter and struggle over territory, historical narrative and imagined community/future, I intend to pursue an approach which goes beyond the dichotomy of "us" versus "them" marked by a linear consequentiality. Instead I intend to trace the reverberations of encounters and the lack of them in rhizomatic ways, non-causal links.

The market of Trieste, which historically is situated around Ponterosso square, the core of Trieste's social space, offers a privileged standpoint to detect the change of the population's ethnic composition and its consumption patterns. It also offers us a space where to grasp practices of exclusion, and shifts in ethnic/racial stigmatization. The Trieste market has always been a meeting point of peoples, languages and goods and it has been transformed through time. In the 1970s it was a mecca for Yugoslav buyers in search for western items, in particular jeans and shoes. Nowadays the market attracts the regular transborder clientele from Slovenia and Croatia who has continued to gravitate

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[3] Stronger than in any other area of Italy, conflicts between the right-wing and left-wing parties in Trieste continue to rely on the collective memory of the past, instrumentally used in discussions on immigration. The presence of the exiled community [esuli] plays an important role.

around Trieste for shopping and working. It also attracts now Hungarians, Slovaks and Poles, who stop by in their tourist visits to Italy. Another category of postsocialist consumer who has emerged in the last years is the new wealthy bourgeoisie from Russia. This extravagant clientele is characterized by quick and expensive shopping visits. The most visible transformation of the market however is less linked to its consumers than to its vendors who are Senegalese, Somali, and more recently, Chinese. It is in particular on the presence of Chinese stores that I will focus in this paper. Over the last five years especially, these stores have in fact dramatically changed the physiognomy of the market. [4]

During my fieldwork four years ago, the Chinese stores were mainly visited by the transborder clientele attracted by their affordable prices. The women of Slovenia who I interviewed were cautious to admit that they were buying at the Chinese stores as they were not willing to be associated with the "Balkan clientele."

The Triestine inhabitants have attached to these outlets a similar stigma of low status and have mixed feelings about this new phenomenon, which they look at both with curiosity and paranoid anxiety. [5] The presence of red lanterns at the entrance of the stores frightened Italian store-owners of the area who responded to this perceived de-territorialization of their own territory by laying symbolic claim to it, re-territorializing it through the display of Italian flags [see photo], as if to denote a national enclosure amidst a web of floating people and products.

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[4] In 2001 Chinese-owned stores were 150, in 2006 Chinese-owned stores were 200.

[5] A similar kind of anxiety was expressed in the 1970s when Yugoslav shopping practices, made many Triestini shudder, as they periodically witnessed Trieste turning into a Balkan town, literally assaulted by "Slavic hordes." This brought back uncomfortable memories of the forty- day occupation by Tito partisans in May 1945. Local newspapers reported on the phenomenon, often using derogatory epithets. The example is the weekly *Il Meridiano*, which pointed out in the 1970s "*Gli sciavi di ieri sono i migliori clienti di oggi*" [the *Slavs* of yesterday are today's best clients

During my last visit I saw a few changes in attitudes and buying practices. More

Italian-owned stores had become Chinese outlets, a phenomenon which brings to the

forefront the overriding power of capital over nationalist considerations. The Chinese

network is capillary – its way of operating includes contacting store-owners directly, and

offering extremely appealing cash-down payments. Another consideration which might

force the Italian owner to sell is that he/she might feel that if he waited longer the

property could be devalued due to the "lowering" of the area. I think however that this

hypothesis is quite unrealistic as the area is centrally situated and the stores are on the

ground floor of architecturally and historically valuable buildings.

The recession of the Italian economy and the diminishing buying force of Italian

consumers influenced by the effect of the introduction of the euro[6] have compelled

Triestine consumers to shop in the Chinese stores; as a matter of fact, the allure of

fashion brought many to opt for Chinese imitations over brand clothing, realizing that

fashion is about appearance and not quality.

The market, in its large sense, is where exchange takes place. The capitalist

market in particular is governed by the law of profit, which demands a space for

encounter between people also on the symbolic, linguistic level. Exchange in the market

place requires diversity, which is expressed in both material and qualitative terms.

Material are those aspects which are linked to quantity, measure and price: they are for

instance products sold and acquired and to which  a monetary value is attached.

Qualitative aspects instead transcend quantity and measures and therefore are outside the

economy of price. And yet these are the elements which can actually lead to mutual

transformations:  they can open up a dialogue, overcome ethnic/racial stereotypification,

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[6] The entrance of a unified euro in Italy has brought a doubling of prices with a loosing of buying force.

can create a new language engage in a process overall different. The qualitative aspects therefore go beyond the formality of the event reaching the social and political by giving birth to new possibilities.[7]

I will "enter" the market through the lens of language, specifically, I will analyze what its everyday use reveals of ongoing tensions and problems connecting the histories of old and new minorities within the Triestine territory.


**"Bilingualism never!"**

As mentioned earlier in the paper, the Slovene minority's identity is strictly linked to its language.  As for other historical minorities in Italy, Slovene minority is defined in terms of linguistic rather than  ethnic belonging, even though the public urban space bears no trace of its existence.[8]

Since Fascism,  when Slovene was not permitted, the refusal to recognize the Slovene language in the city of Trieste continues with a no bilingualism attitude despite the Slovene minority's protected legal status. [9] According to the  international treaty resolutions which marked  the border between  Italy and Yugoslavia at the end of World War Two, the Slovene minority in Italy and the Italian minority in Yugoslavia  were granted  protection, and bilingualism  was acknowledged  in all areas which comprise a minority population of more than 25%.

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[7] Pidginization of language in colonial settings and consequent creolization of identity.

[8] The Italian state recognizes twelve linguistic minorities. Art 2 of the law no.482/1999 states: "In concordance with the article 6 of the Constitution and the general principles adopted by the European entities the State preserves the language and the culture of the Albanian, Greek, Catalan, German, Slovene, French, This Law does  not apply  to the Roma and the  Sinti.

[9] The Slovene community in Italy lives in Friuli-Venezia Giulia in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia, and along the border area of the province of Udine. In 2001 the Italian parliament passed a new law for the protection of the Slovene linguistic minority in the whole Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Nevertheless, in the local communities the pace of implementation of the protective measures that derive from the new law has been slow.

Despite the fact that bilingualism is effective in four municipalities in the rural outskirts of Trieste, it is within the city that the official use of Slovene in the public sphere remains sanctioned by multiple forms of cultural prohibition. Many Italians still strenuously oppose it, and many Slovene speakers who have suffered from marginalization have internalized this opposition. The Slovene minority has been the target of hatred by right-wing Italian groups who see the use of Slovene language as endangering the Italianness of this border area; their longstanding slogan "Bilingualism never" has been present in a variety of settings from wall graffiti, to political rallies, to the soccer stadium. The "Bilingualism never" ideology goes against the grain of the European Union's policy of minority rights and recursively enacts the Fascist period when speaking Slovene in public was illegal. The use of the Slovene language in Trieste has therefore been marginalized from public spaces and has acquired an intrinsic identity connotation. The Slovene minority in the city, although protected by laws, has so far lacked general recognition and has proceeded through "a parallel life" (Kosuta 1997). This parallel life is traceable through the presence of signs written in Slovene which are visible at the underground/"submerged" level (Stranj 1989) of Slovene cultural associations and other institutionally recognized spaces such as Slovene schools and banks.

**"Bilingualism never yet plurilingualism f-ever"**

Although bilingualism in Trieste is looked down upon, language practices are more fluid than they might at first appear. Transborder workers, new immigrants from the former Yugoslavia as well Senegalese North Africans and Chinese have brought their idioms on

the street  and they use them without the scared self-consciousness present among the

Slovene community.

In particular creative linguistic performances take place at the market, what

Bakhtin would call the heteroglossic market. In deterritorializing the idiom – by replacing

Italian with other registers – the market language re-territorializes itself through the

formation of a pidgin-like idiom rich in Slavic words, which meets the communication

needs of  a  transborder clientele.  The vocabulary focuses on price, size, colour, etc.

The Chinese dealers in Trieste's marketplace have adapted particularly well to the

multilingual clientele by learning its languages. Their surprisingly fairly good knowledge

of Serbian/Croatian  and Hungarian bears the traces of their intermediary stop-overs in

the porous countries of east Europe before reaching the "West" through crossing the

Slovene-Italian border.[10]

A similar poly-vocality of languages is present in the signs which appear on the

shop-windows of the Chinese owned-stores. A simple sign indicating the hours of

operation or whether the store is open or closed could be written, besides Italian, also in

Croatian or Hungarian. If the tendentially right-wing Italian population in Trieste shows

such a phobic resistance to the use of the Slovene language, my question here becomes,

why is there no similar resistance in relation to pluri-lingual signs on shopping windows?

I argue that the domain of market and domain of nation do not interfere into one

another as far as they do not involve issues of citizenship: the territorializing of the body-

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[10] In the 1990s Serbia was the privileged entry point for the trafficking of Chinese in Europe, because bilateral agreements between the two countries had eliminated visa requirements. From Serbia, the trafficking of Chinese immigrants – through the help of international and local criminal organizations – took the route to Trieste. In 2000, an important criminal organization was caught and dismantled in Trieste. Since then the routes of trafficking have changed, creating new Chinese communities in Albania and Romania.

citizen.  The malleability of the code to a certain extent is tolerated in the space of the

market as far as  the person linked to it is recognized as a client, and not a citizen. In

other words, the *homo economicus* is welcomed and its diversity is accommodated. It is

the *homo minoritarius* who is a threat.

At stake here there are two different sensibilities towards languages and nations:

what we can call thin and thick language. The thin language is a language which is

simply a means of communication, it is seen in neutral terms and can be pragmatically

chosen, such as in domain of the market or in the situation of the nation-state building

contractually applied. This tradition has its roots in the pragmatic philosophy of language

and of contractual nation-building as championed by the early modern philosopher John

Locke. The thick language per contra is completely embedded in the identity of the

person, the people. This approach is linked to the work of the German Romantics and its

cultural dimension has been theorized by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which states that

language shapes thought. In the context of European historical nationalism, a thick

language is the sign of belonging which, where it was not "naturally" present, had to be

"invented or standardized" and implemented through a capillary policy of education. The

extent to which language provides the cohesive force for the nation can be made clear

through an Italian well-quoted example. In the 1860s after the unification of Italy, the

statesman Massimo d'Azeglio affirmed: "fatta  l'Italia bisogna fare gli Italiani." [Now

that we made Italy, we need to make the Italians themselves], and one way to make

Italians was by unifying the Italian language. The conviction that the Italian citizen will

be shaped through a capillary standardization of the Italian language was so rooted, that it

was used in a coercive way during Fascism towards the Slovenes. Yet it did not

completely reach its goal, on the contrary it reinforced the link between Slovene ethnicity and language. In the aftermath of World War Two Italy has recognized the status of homo minoritarius to certain citizens. This was an extra benefit to its citizens. Yet between law and its implementation there is a grey area in which democracy is apparently endorsed and not fulfilled in its entirety.

If we apply the same distinction of thin and thick language use to describe the immigrant, we are brought back to the tense threads of capitalism and nationalism. The thin immigrant is the deterritorialized illegal immigrant who plays an important role in the economic growth, and s/he is tolerated as homo economicus, at least from the pragmatic point of view. The thick immigrant is the legal migrant who might eventually become a citizen and therefore feared by the majority for the consequences of her re-deterritorialization on the nation.

In this extremely complex relation between territory, citizens and minorities, which, admittedly I have only barely outlined here, is it productive to lump together the historical Slovene minority with the new minority? As a first answer to this question, I propose to make a distinction between minority and minor, loosely adopting the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari (1986). Whereas minority refers to the conventional notion of a small ethnic or racial group, which in the language of the state is expressed numerically through statistics and demography and by so doing legally recognized, minor is a wide-ranging term that transcends a precise group and does not have a strictly numerical connotation. Its connotation is more qualitative, and linked to the ethical agency of becoming minor, which constitutes a challenge of the dominant discourse – as Deleuze and Guattari show by applying the concept to minor literature,

minor language and minor politics. I acknowledge this 'subversive' dimension of minor, nonetheless I wish to stress that minor is more often than not an ascribed status of marginalization attached for instance to immigrants by pointing to their deterritorialized political and collective dimension. Moreover minor has another semantic connotation of not-yet-adult, which in an evolutionist-racial frame means inferior. The thick immigrant can be defined as homo minor. The homo minor is a deterritorialized political collective which has the potential of becoming and therefore transforming the territory – the national/hegemonic identity.

Both the homo minoritarius whose minority language is symbolically banished/excluded from the city, and the homo minor whose racial presence threats an apparent uniform society face resistance by the hegemonic Italian society, which refuses to accommodate them as "citizens." I suggest that this resistance has in part to do with the difficulty of changing a national narrative, a narrative which can include the old and new minorities.[11] It is at this stage of the encounter via citizenship that the national narrative of homogeneous unity forcefully resists any frame for "multicultural" diversity. This is particularly visible in the constant re-territorialization of the city as "Italian" as it will be soon clear with the graffiti.

## "Territorializing city walls"

The second site of analysis of this paper is the city space as subject. Encountering a city is definitely not such an abstruse situation as it might sound at first. In the everyday

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[11] The attempts to reconcile the contested memories of fascism and foiba of the last years have shown a revisionist tendency which reproduced exclusionary practices. See  Chapter Seven of my doctoral dissertation. Miklavcic, A. 2006 *Border of Memories, Memory of Borders. An Ethnographic Investigation of Border Practices  in the Julian Region.* (Unpublished Dissertation) Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto.

walking and inhabiting the city, a person follows the rules of the place and the laws of movement. I argue that the city of Trieste can be analyzed as a subject and therefore it is possible to have an encounter with it through its visual signs, which contain layers of its past and the surface of the contemporary "here and now."

While the encounter at the market is visible, pragmatically negotiated and based on verbal and non-verbal practices of communication, the encounter with the city is a meta-encounter, ephemeral and yet marked by signs which convey the extent to which the city is in the middle of a constant tension between inclusiveness and exclusiveness, deterritorialization and re-territorialization. The strange space where the verbal and the written connect, where encounter is sought after and fought against, is the city's architectural surface, her skin. The walls of the city constitute a multilayered site where language/race micropolitics are played out. The encounter of the other is not directly mediated but verbally expressed in visual signs. More often than not the message etched on the city's surface is anonymous, or might be tagged with the logo of a political organization or movement. Through a persuasive language the signs claim ownership, they mark territory as either exclusively "mine" or "yours," and yet the city's surface absorbs the tensions, shows its scars in a way that allows for a potential future to be written, a future which can be otherwise. The future to be written follows an interaction, a dialogue or "war." Let's analyze then, the graffiti war in Trieste.

What struck me the most was not so much the graffiti artists and their messages, but people's reception of this visual speech. The analysis of the anonymous and politically-motivated practice of graffiti (Phillips 1996) is a useful barometer of an area's political atmosphere. In the struggle over deterritorialization and re-territorialization there

is a constant negation of otherness, of diversity. Towards this aim, similar messages convey the discourse of exclusion, which denies minorities their rights, be they historical or new.

The graffiti, Basta s'ciavi [Enough with slavs] is one such example. Sciavi is a derogatory term used to define Slovenes and other Slavs in general. It was somehow used pejoratively as *villano, bifolco, zotico* [rude, ploughman, boor] to index the archetypal peasant character more than the actual Slavic nationality. Toward the end of the nineteenth century a racial dimension was added, and, using the evolutionary hierarchy of the day, the Slav became identified with a lowly, servile status in relation to the Triestine Italian urban dweller. The message, or more precisely, the threat, is directed against both the Slovene minority and the new immigrants who come from the former Yugoslavia.

Another revealing example is the graffiti: *Basta Immigranti* [Enough with Immigrants]. These messages are framed in short, threatening expressions that target "the others" but do not confront them physically. For this reason I call them meta-encounters. Using the tool of ubiquity and playing on the production of fear the anonymous interlocutors mark the territory through symbolic violence. Graffiti however do not stay mute or untouched. "Graffiti wars" are ongoing and signs are frequently transformed. For instance, I took a picture of *Basta Immigranti* [Enough with Immigrants], but when I later returned to the same spot, I saw two overlapping pieces of political graffiti, one drawn over the other: the latest message had become "*Basta Fascisti*" [Enough with Fascists].

Another example will suffice to further express how the two major historical signs of contested memories, i.e. fascism and foiba, are re-shaped in ways that create a discourse of exclusion towards new minorities.

"*Albanesi, Kosovari, tutti in foiba*" ["Albanians, Kosovars, all in *foiba*."]

An analysis of this graffiti highlights the political power of a word that is used to convey threat in a different geopolitical situation. Symbolic violence is expressed by re-signifying *foiba* as a space of ethnic abjection. In the presence of new immigration flows from Albania and Kosovo, the graffiti is used as a threat against this particular group either by Italian residents or by Serbs who constitute a very large community. If this is the case one wonders why the message was written in Italian instead of Serbian. If the message was written by Serbian anonymous interlocutor/s, it brings another dimension to territory that of transnationalism.


**Conclusions**

In the current conjunction of late capitalism and re-territorialization of nation-states, territory still plays a very important dimension which, however, is expressed through new modalities of power. Trieste's history as I hope to have conveyed throughout the paper has constantly oscillated between inclusiveness and exclusiveness, in today's scenario these forces are actively embraced by people, market and nation-states. An inclusiveness approach still looks back – not with out nostalgia – to the Austrian Empire, to its cosmopolitanism and its idea of a Mitteleuropa, "the central European region." The supra-national community of the European Union seems to be taking up this historical

heritage, and for this reason it is loaded with expectations. It sees Trieste as a plural city; it recognizes the Slovene presence and has a positive outlook towards immigrants.

Exclusiveness is linked to the historical experience of the rise of the nation-states, and significantly explains the unilateral link of one people to one Land and to one language. The exclusiveness approach tends to erase differences, sees the city of Trieste as uniquely Italian, blames immigrants and globalization as eroding the forces of "patria" [homeland], family and religion.

In the processes of encounter played out in the city-scape, bodies, languages and architectures, are all affected, and whether they undergo transformation or a hardening of entrenched positions, they nonetheless participate in the production of aleatory and rhizomatic becomings. In this paper it was my intention to explore how discourses of inclusiveness and exclusiveness make use of the past as an authoritative force. I have tried to show how in the process of "othering" that takes place towards the Slovene minority and immigrants, there is a concomitant dimension of "us-ness," inscribed in their "being minor/ity." National and economic dimensions are constantly renegotiated, making it hard to tackle the paths through which new formations of citizenship are taking place.

It was the very difficulty of this topic that forced me to invoke/create analytical categories such as the "thin" and "thick" immigrant, the "homo economicus" and the "homo minoritarius." The distinctions between these categories are not so clear-cut and are constantly rearranged in different ways.

I thank you for your patience and look forward to receiving comments and suggestions on the topic, although I do have one final question: Are we still missing a

cohesive language to understand these phenomena, or is our need for theoretical

structures at all cost which limits our capacity to understand?

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