

Everyday Life in the Borderland Area Between Yugoslavia and Italy After WWII, the Case of Northern Istria

Vsakdanje življenje v obmejnem prostoru med Jugoslavijo in Italijo po drugi svetovni vojni, primer severne Istre

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Abstract:

The article studies the effects that the new border had on the territory. The main question is how the abrupt absence in a territory caused by the creation of a new state border influenced its inhabitants. The focus will be on the case of the formation of the Yugoslav-Italian border after the end of World War II. My interest is to present how the process of 'bordering' affected the studied territory. The aim is to study how the process of bordering and the new border reality after the end of World War II, but especially after 1954, affected the population, its everyday life and economic and social interactions. The studied territory presents an interesting case of adaptation to the new political circumstances (with new states and state borders) affecting the population living near the new border, which did not exist in the past or at least not for almost a hundred and fifty years.

My aim is to research how the past interconnections and relations changed radically and were interrupted after the border was established. The question is how communication, cooperation and the exchange of goods were able to continue when the border caused a strong territorial division.

Keywords: border area after WWII, Yugoslavia, Italy, Istria, everyday life

Izvleček:

Članek preučuje učinke nove meje na ozemlje. Glavno vprašanje raziskuje, kako je nenadna odsotnost na nekem ozemlju zaradi nastanka nove državne meje vplivala na njegove prebivalce. Poudarek bo na primeru oblikovanja jugoslovansko-italijanske meje po koncu druge svetovne vojne. Zanima me, kako je »spreminjanje« oz. proces »obmejevanja« vplival na preučevano ozemlje. Analiziram, kako sta proces razmejevanja in nova mejna realnost po koncu druge svetovne vojne, predvsem pa po letu 1954, vplivala na prebivalstvo, njegovo vsakdanje življenje, ekonomske in socialne interakcije. Preučevano ozemlje predstavlja zanimiv primer prilagajanja novim političnim okoliščinam (z novimi državami in državnimi mejami), ki so vplivale na prebivalstvo ob novi meji, ki je v preteklosti ali vsaj skoraj sto petdeset let ni bilo. Raziskujem, kako so se pretekle medsebojne povezave in odnosi po vzpostavitvi meje korenito spremenili in prekinili. Postavlja se vprašanje, kako so se komunikacija, sodelovanje in izmenjava dobrin obdržali v času (močne) ozemeljske razdeljenosti.

Ključne besede: mejno območje po 2. svetovni vojni, Jugoslavija, Italija, Istra, vsakdanje življenje

Introduction

The article¹ studies the effects that the new border had on the territory. The main question is how the abrupt absence in a territory caused by the creation of a new state border influenced its inhabitants. The focus will be on the case of the formation of the Yugoslav-Italian border after the end of World War II. My interest is to present how the process of 'bordering' affected the studied territory. The process of 'bordering' or marking the borderline is very important, as the two opposing political sides tried to acquire as much territory as they could. Their claims were mostly opposed. However, this process represents only one part, or 'one side' of history. On the 'other side', as the historian Peter Sahlins explains in his book 'Boundaries', from 1989 (in which he primarily studied the case of France and Spain in the Pyrenees), it is important to understand how the negotiation of border 'identity' takes place. It is the capacity of the population living in the border region to modify the status quo of the state frontier, according to their needs and interests (Verginella 2021, 33). Therefore, the decision to take part or declare to be on one or other side of the border depends not only on political centres of power, but also on communities living in the border region (Walter and Verginella 2021, 33).

In the studied case, the research is going to focus on the border region of Northern Istria (part of Yugoslavia, and Slovenia after 1991), where difficult and lengthy diplomatic debates took place. As has already been said, the aim is to study how the process of bordering and the new border reality after the end of World War II, and especially after 1954, affected the population, its everyday life, and economic and social interactions. The studied territory represents an interesting case of adaptation to new political circumstances (with new states and state bor-

ders), affecting the population living on the new border, which did not exist in the past or at least not for a hundred and fifty years. This was also a common occurrence in other European countries, however, the case of Northern Istria with the focus on everyday life and capability of adjustment has not yet been fully addressed.

In this paper I am interested in studying the history of everyday life, focusing on history from below (people's history), on the daily experiences and survival strategies that people living along the border adopted to cope with the newly emerging political situation. The central question is how the border line (either the temporary demarcation line or the subsequent border), which divided the space both physically and ideologically, affected the local population along the Yugoslav-Italian border in Istria. The focus is on the adaptation to the new realities of life in socialist Yugoslavia. Not only did the political situation change, but family and business ties were severed in a territory that had belonged to one state (Austrian Empire/Austro-Hungary, Kingdom of Italy) since the beginning of the 19th century.

My aim is to research how the past interconnections and relations changed radically and were interrupted after the border was established. The question is how communication, cooperation and the exchange of goods were able to continue when the border caused a strong territorial division.

Methodology

The paper is based on the study and analysis of historical sources dealing with the post-war period in northern Istria and Yugoslavia in general. The central methodological approach consists of oral (history) interviews with people who lived (still live) in the border area. Sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted as part of the research. However, interviews with individuals who had been interviewed as part of other research, but who had also raised topics relevant to the present paper, were also included. It was envisaged that the interviews would be primar-

¹ This paper is the result of the research project 'Creating, maintaining, reusing: border commissions as the key for understanding contemporary borders' (J6-2574), financially supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).

ily with people who were born in the inter-war period, but in the end most of them were born after the war. Thus, different generations were involved in the research: there were those who witnessed the post-war demarcation processes, but most interviewees were of the generation that experienced the post-war reality and that of the border as children and adolescents (and through their parents' narratives). Interviewing members of different generations is a methodological approach that allows a broader understanding of post-war life in a border region and reveals different perspectives. People who lived on the 'east side' of the border were my main interlocutors, and I questioned them about their experiences living close to the border. As the Slovene anthropologist Polona Sitar has already written, such an approach allows us to see 'through a generational perspective, which, on the one hand, illuminates possible generational discontinuities, and on the other hand, also common understandings' (Sitar 2021, 146). I was particularly interested in the personal experiences of everyday life at the border, people's feelings when crossing the border, and their encounters and impressions when visiting Italy (especially Trieste) and returning home. What visiting a city in another country meant to them, what the purchased goods meant to them and above all how they remember border controls and surveillance.

The website of the project 'My Story from Silence' (Moja zgodba iz tišine 2022) published a story that meaningfully recounts and recalls the moments of crossing the Yugoslav-Italian border. The story tells of a visit to relatives in Rijeka (now Croatia), where the narrator's family from Trieste often went (Moja zgodba iz tišine 2022).² It recounts the traumatic experience of a female traveller in the 1980s, a time when the war had been or was supposed to have been long forgotten; a time that followed the conclusion of international and bilateral agreements between Yugoslavia and Italy. Even if the story is very short and represents only a brief encounter it is very

eloquent. The journey to Yugoslavia was one of many undertaken by the narrator. However, on this specific occasion, crossing the border affected her deeply. As her border pass (in Italian *Lasciapassare*, in Slovenian *prepustnica*) was damaged, the border guard stopped the car. After a moment of tension and fear, the officer advised her to get a new pass and let them go. The episode itself did not have a negative outcome, however, crossing the border was always a tense moment.

Given the treaties and the improved relations between the two countries, one would have expected a more 'relaxed' border crossing, but in the case of the above account, as well as in the conversations with my interlocutors, this was not necessarily the case. This narrative shows a multilayered and diverse experience of the *border* and the experience of crossing it.

Bordering, Agreements and Treaties

Before we consider the impact of the new border and the resulting discontinuity on a territory, which was politically, economically and socially interconnected for more than one hundred years, we need to briefly explain the circumstances that led to this reality. The border 'question' in the studied region (wider than just Northern Istria) existed for a long historical period (Marušič 2004; Panjek 2015) during which different political actors (especially the Republic of Venice and the Habsburg Monarchy) manifested their interests in the territory. After the collapse of the Republic of Venice and the transitory period of Austrian and French governance, the territory was assigned to the Habsburgs in 1814. The Austrian crown land named the *Austrian Littoral*,³ which included the Margraviate of Istria, Gorizia and Gradisca and the Imperial Free City of Trieste was established (Kavrečič 2017; Marušič 2004, 59). The name *Littoral* was a 'strategic' decision made by Vienna to emphasize Trieste's role as a port city. In reality, only a small part of the crown land was on the coast

² The project's aim was to collect 'stories from silence' about the experiences of people in the post-war period in Istria, the Karst and Trieste.

³ The name also had other variants: Österreichisch-illyrische Küstenland / Litorale austro-illirico / Avstrijsko-ilirsko primorje

(Marušič 2004, 59). The name was translated into Slovene as *Austrijsko primorje*, and this is why the region came to be known as *Primorska*. This name is still used today to refer to the western part of Slovenia. On the other hand, the territory in question also acquired the Italian name of *Venezia Giulia*. This was how it was referred to after 1863 by the Italian nationalists who considered this territory to be historically Italian (Kavrečič 2020, 115).⁴ This paper will partly present the period following World War I, however, the main focus will be on the period after the end of World War II. After 1918, the region of *Primorska* (the former *Austrian Littoral* and partly *Venezia Giulia*) was subject to political negotiations. As Italy was actively involved in the war and was on the side of 'the winners', the promised territories were assigned to the state. After diplomatic negotiations with the Kingdom of Serbs (also allies), Croats and Slovenes, the territory formally passed to Italy in 1920 (Treaty of Rapallo). The former *Austrian Littoral* officially acquired the name *Venezia Giulia*. *Venezia Giulia*, known in Slovene as *Juljska Krajina* (also *Juljska Benečija*) and *Julian March* in English, became a universally accepted name during the negotiations for border delineation in the period following World War II.

After the end of World War II, the political power positions changed. Post-war Yugoslavia – part of the anti-fascist and anti-nazi alliance during the war – claimed the territories that it believed were unfairly assigned to Italy after World War I. The disputed border in this region was not only the process of bordering between two countries, but also between two opposite political systems.

Negotiating where to draw a demarcation line and reaching a consensus or agreement on the border between all parties involved is a complex process that has taken place in different historical periods and circumstances. The drawing

4 Also, in the context of the irredentist movement: in the Italian perception, especially political, this region represented the 'redemption' of the provinces that had been associated with the long Venetian presence. Its heritage had been used as justification for Italian territorial appetites since the 19th century.

or establishment of demarcation lines and new borders has a profound impact on all aspects of life. In addition to the political relations between the countries or lands involved, it affects the living conditions of people who find themselves in new border contexts, in new realities. When new borders are established, especially in areas that have been the subject of conflict for many years, life changes drastically. New borders also create new relationships and conditions for living and coexisting. Adapting to a new reality always requires much effort and ingenuity. If we focus on the question of the delimitation of the border between Yugoslavia and Italy in the northern Adriatic after the end of World War II, we can see that the resolution of this issue was complex and protracted. In order to understand the dynamics and relations manifested between the two countries and other powers involved, it is necessary to explain the process of border creation itself. The area subject to demarcation that is discussed in this paper was ethnically diverse and no clear dividing line could be drawn based on 'national' affiliation. In addition, the future Yugoslav-Italian border was also the site of an ideological struggle between two political-social-economic systems. It is therefore not surprising that international powers became involved in the process of bordering through their diplomatic representatives.

The Long Process to a New Border, the Case of Istria

As an interlocutor explained:

Most of Istria, including us, remained under Yugoslavia... so, for us the change was like going out of the frying pan into the fire. They were not much more... zone A was far up north, zone B was still there anyway, they could cross with passes every day, the rest of us [outside the zones, note P.K.] once a month, and even then we were checked 'to the bone'... if we wanted to buy one kilo of rice, or one kilo of pasta, or two bananas for the child, then washing powder or soap, you had to have lire. And if we got these lire, we

could go to Trieste, we could take what was allowed, which was half a kilo of meat, six eggs, one litre of milk, one quarter of a kilo of butter, two packets of cigarettes, and they asked us: 'what else have you hidden?' [Interlocutor 14]

The processes of 'Creating, maintaining, re-using' borders are long-term processes that have formed the political, economic, cultural and social status and relations in society (state). In order to understand all these phenomena it is crucial to be familiar with the background and motivations that have influenced the creation of new borderlines, their maintenance and re-use or adaptation in specific historical circumstances. The creation of a demarcation line between two countries in this area disrupted the existing contacts in the economic, social and cultural spheres. When taking into consideration only the northern part of Istria, it should be considered that the territory was part of a single state entity for many centuries: the Republic of Venice until the end of the 18th century, the short French presence at the beginning of the 19th century, the Austrian Empire/Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1814 until the end of World War I and the Kingdom of Italy from 1920 until 1943. The newly created border in the period following World War II had drastic consequences on both eastern and western sides. The long-standing links between the urban centre (Trieste) and the rural periphery (Istria) were severed, and an area that had been part of a single state structure for more than a hundred years found itself in two countries that stood on opposite 'sides' in terms of political, ideological and economic doctrines. The new reality radically affected the daily life of the area's inhabitants.

In order to understand the process of bordering, it is necessary to briefly explain the events and circumstances that led to its creation.

5 The quotation is from the title of project N. J6-2574, financed by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS): 'Creating, maintaining, reusing: border commissions as the key for understanding contemporary borders' (head Marko Zajc, PhD, Institute of Contemporary History).

Focusing only on the period after 1918, greater changes affected the former *Austrian Littoral*. The territory became the subject of political negotiations between the successors of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (in this case the State of SCS, which merged with the Kingdom of Serbia and Montenegro to form the Kingdom of SCS on December 1st 1918) and the Kingdom of Italy. The latter entered the war in 1915 on the side of the Entente Powers, which emerged victorious. In the negotiations before it entered the war, Italy was promised territory in the event of victory, including the Crown Land of the *Austrian Littoral*. The Kingdom of SCS and the Kingdom of Italy signed the already mentioned Treaty of Rapallo on 12 November 1920, which meant Italy acquired the territory of the former Crown Land and parts of Carniola, Carinthia, and Dalmatia. The intergration into the new country was strongly marked by the Italian inter-war fascist regime, which officially came to power in 1922. This totalitarian political regime, which lasted more than twenty years and was strongly committed to the 'ethnic bonification' of the newly acquired territories, drastically affected the area (Troha 2018, 165–167).⁶

After the end of World War II, the situation was even more complicated. This time, the position of 'power' was at least partially reversed and new political dynamics came to the surface. The victorious new post-war socialist Yugoslavia made clear its demands for the Rapallo border to be corrected. Yugoslavia was a member of the Allied Powers in the war and, as one of the victorious countries, expressed its demands for the redemarcation of the area and the creation of a new frontier.⁷ The political discourse, or rather the question of the influence of the blocs that emerged after the war (the Eastern communist Bloc and the Western capitalist Bloc), also came to the fore in the redrafting of the border between Yugoslavia and Italy (Italy joined

6 For the period following World War II see also Kacin-Wohinz and Pirjevec (2000), Pirjevec (2008), Pirjevec, Gorazd Bajc, and Klabjan (2005), Pirjevec et al. (2006), Troha (1999), Troha (2016), Troha (2019).

7 See note 6.

the Allies after surrendering in 1943). As in other European countries, the disputed territory was ethnically inhomogeneous. It was a region where both the Slavic (Slovenes and Croats) and the Roman (Italians) ethnic communities were living.

In 1945 the demarcation line, named after the British general and negotiator Sir William Duthie Morgan, divided the disputed territory of the region called the Julian March / *Julijska Krajina* / *Venezia Giulia* (Sporazum o Julijskoj krajini 1945, 19).⁸ After the demarcation line was drawn, the Anglo-American forces abandoned their plans to occupy the whole region and agreed to divide it into two areas. However, they insisted that Trieste remained in their zone. The compromise solution that resulted from the negotiations was also formalised. General Jovanović and General Morgan signed an agreement – the ‘Belgrade Agreement’ – on 9 June 1945. The Julian March was divided into two occupation zones, Zone A under Allied military administration and Zone B under Yugoslav military administration (Sporazum o Julijskoj krajini 1945, 19).⁹ The second agreement between the two sides was signed in Duino (Italy) on 20 June 1945, and included ‘military concessions on the part of the Belgrade Agreement’ (Milkić 2014). The agreements on the division of the zones of interest were signed after long and difficult negotiations between the powers involved (the former Allies) (Nećak 1998; Cunja 2004).¹⁰

The demarcation line between the two military administrations was perceived as temporary by both sides. The area – the subject of the dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy – was also problematic due to the possibility of new military confrontations breaking out. The border

issue was partially solved by the 1947 Treaty of Paris (signed on 10 February, entered into force on 15 September). The Treaty was signed by the Allied powers and their associates on one side and Italy on the other (Treaty of Peace with Italy 1950). The Paris Peace Treaty delineated the border between Yugoslavia and Italy in the northern part of the area, while at the same time establishing the ‘Free Territory of Trieste’ (FTT) in Article 21. It also delineated the border between Italy and the FTT, and between Yugoslavia and the FTT. Article 5 specified that the exact border line was to be determined ‘on the spot’ by the Boundary Commission, which was to be composed of members of the governments of the two parties concerned, and which was to complete its work in no later than six months. It was important that the members of the Boundary Commission set the boundary in accordance with local geographical and economic conditions, meaning that no village or town with more than 500 inhabitants, or important transport (rail or road) links and water pipelines were outside the already established boundary line or subject to change (Treaty of Peace with Italy 1950). However, the reality turned out to be different. As two interlocutors said, the members of the commission came and placed the stakes ‘*Se venì una mattina e mola i picchetti...*’ [translation from dialect, meaning ‘They came one morning and left the stakes’], without talking to the local population (Interlocutors 12 and 13).

The Treaty was a solution for only part of the disputed border between Yugoslavia and Italy, while the still ‘problematic’ southern territory resulted in the formation of the FTT as a new independent, sovereign State. This territory was divided, similarly to the Julian March, into two administration zones (Zone A, under an Allied Military Government and Zone B under a Yugoslav Military Government). In 1954, the signing of the London Memorandum or Memorandum of Understanding meant both military governments handed over their mandates to the Governments of Italy and Yugoslavia (Memorandum of Understanding 1956, 100):

8 The division of the Julian March: the area west of the demarcation line included Trst/Trieste with rail and road links to Gorica/Gorizia, Kobarid/Caporetto, Trbiž/Tarvisio, and the region of Pulj/Pola as well as the ports on the west coast of Istria.

9 The signatories of the Belgrade Agreement were the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Dr Ivan Šubašić, the British Ambassador, R.C. Skrine Stevenson, and the US Ambassador, Richard C. Petterson.

10 See also note 6.



Figure 1: Annex 1 To the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governemnts of Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Yugoslavia regarding the Free Territory of Trieste, initialed in London on 5 October 1954

The Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States will withdraw their military forces from the area north of the new boundary and will relinquish the administration of that area to the Italian Government. The Italian and Yugoslav Governments will forthwith extend their civil administration over the area for which they will have responsibility.

The Treaty also included boundary adjustments. This meant the villages of Plavje/Plavie, Spodnje Škofije/Albaro Vescovà, Elerji/Elleri and Hrvatini/Crevatini were transferred to the administration of the Yugoslav Government and annexed to Yugoslavia. After the signing of the Memorandum, the two governments were obliged to 'appoint a Boundary Commission to effect a more precise demarcation of the boundary in accordance with the map at Annex I' (Memorandum of Understanding 1956; Troha 1999).

However, the border issue was not completely resolved. Yugoslavia recognized the Memorandum and the border as definitive by ratifying it, while Italy considered it to be a demarcation line – an inconclusive, temporary border. Italy never submitted the Memorandum to Parliament for ratification to highlight the Memorandum's temporariness (Škorjanec 2006, 44). As Škorjanec explained in her research into the process of Italo-Yugoslav border negotiations, the debates and proposals lasted for twenty years. There were (secret) discussions among commissions and ministries during this period. The main actors in the process were the foreign ministers and the so-called 'group of 4'. After negotiations between special political agents and a meeting at Strmol Castle (Slovenia), followed by meetings in Dubrovnik (Croatia) and Strunjan (Slovenia), and after the formal initialling in Belgrade, the diplomatic solution was reached in Osimo (Škorjanec 2006). With the final signing of the Osimo treaties on 10 November 1975, the border between the two states was finalized. Article 7 determined that: 'On the date when this

Treaty enters into force, the Memorandum of Understanding signed in London on 5 October 1954 and its annexes shall cease to have effect in relations between the Republic of Italy and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia' (Treaty on the Delimitation of the Frontier 1987; Drašček 2005).

One of my interlocutors who was involved in the negotiations for the Treaty of Osimo recalled: 'Slovenia had the main word in these negotiations... it was the most interested party, especially due to the question of the minority... the relations with Italy were friendly, but when there was a strain in relations... the minority was the most affected... this is why our aim was to have good relations' (Interlocutor 15).

The signing of the Treaty of Osimo brought the long frontier negotiations to an end and a political agreement was finally reached. All the international treaties enabled the development of better relations and cooperation between the two states. How these arrangements affected the everyday reality of the border population will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

Life '*al konfin*' [On the Border]

In the present paper, the principal interest is in the inhabitants of Northern Istria living on the eastern side of the new border. Life after the war was still challenging for people living on the border/demarcation line. As an interlocutor remembers:

After 1954 it changed a little bit and then the conflict between individuals started. When the milestones were set, some people were irritated, rightly so. Because it happened that the little land they had was now on two sides... in Zone B and in Yugoslavia... and of course it was not pleasant because they needed border passes so they could work on their fields [the interlocutor is referring to the border line between Yugoslavia and zone B of the FTT, note PK]. So, on the other side... they started to move the stakes as they wished. There was a lot of trouble because they were accusing each other

er, they were also fighting, and the police came to make peace. Until they [the states involved, note PK] agreed on the border and established the national borders according to the law... so, with these stakes... the house was right on the border line... here was the border where the house was and the yard... they tried to divide the yard and the house in half... it was all hypocrisy and bad neighbours... and this poor poor man was so tormented that he went at night to move the stakes, so his house would be left with the whole yard. But the best fields still remained under Yugoslavia on the other side, in Gabrovica [village in Northern Istria, note PK]. And that man needed a permit every time he went to work on his land, and that was the dispute that remained for years and years, even after the border was settled... that hate remained until death... [Interlocutor 14]

However, different experiences show different points of view. For some people who were only children when the demarcation line was set, the memories may be different and not that 'traumatic': 'I don't remember when they were fixing... [the demarcation line, note PK], but they were giving chocolate, they were giving chocolate to children... there were Americans and English living next door, the Scottish were marching through the village singing with bagpipes until 1953, the Trieste crisis' (Interlocutor 15).

These examples clearly reflect the 'reality' of living in the area, which was divided by the 'newly' established border. Considering the treaties mentioned in the previous paragraph, the 'other side of history' is becoming more comprehensible. The official side, consisting of political agreements, provides only a part of the overall circumstances. As explained by the political scientist Bastian Sendhardt (2013, 25–26):

For a long time, the study of borders was focused on state borders as static ontological entities with predominantly physical features, but the past two decades have seen a

sea change in the study of borders. During the recent history of border studies, there has been a shift from the consideration of borders as mere geographical demarcations to a perspective that emphasizes the changing meaning of borders, different types of borders with different functions, and the social construction of borders.

In this perspective I am not interested in studying the post-war political circumstances, disputes, antagonisms, negotiations and demonstrations of political power, but how people living on the newly established border – which abruptly interrupted 'traditional' interconnections and interdependence in the area – managed to adjust to the new reality. What significantly characterized the second half of the previous century, especially the first decades after the war, was the sudden absence of the 'other side' of the territory, a territorial discontinuity. As one of my interlocutors explained: 'My mother used to say there was a big of change... before, before there was fascism, before there was Austro-Hungary, there was one state, Italy was one country and all of a sudden there was a border' (Interlocutor 7).

Economic, social and family ties between the city (Trieste) and its rural hinterland were severed. As my interlocutors pointed out, 'Back then it was one country, there were no problems, people went to Istria for goods, and women went to Trieste to sell goods... lived with each other... men went to work... and then, once they cut it off... you run out of everything...' (Interlocutor 8).

Of course, there was Italy and no one knew the border. Then, when the border came it was a disaster for the nation [in the sense of the people, the population, note PK] to get used to it... Then they drew the line and the other system came and there it was. They were just used to it anyway, they went to Italian schools at that time too, the ones who were nationally aware, Yugoslavia, Italy... Because yesterday there was no such thing, it was like cutting this table in half. It bothered

them terribly; they needed some time to be...
The one who could not do that, left. [Interlocutor 6]

It was therefore a two-way situation with the urban areas dependent on labour and agricultural products, and the rural areas on trade and jobs. In the years and decades following the end of World War II, the urban centre lost its rural supply of goods for trade and its workforce. The other side, the rural area, lost the centre where people sold their products and migrated for work, and which enabled them to carry out their principal economic activity and increase their income (Verginella 2021; Kalc 2008; Panjek and Lazarević 2018). It is important to emphasize that the interconnections or interrelations existed on both sides and this new reality caused an 'absence' on both sides of the border, causing a drastic loss of income and a possible fall in living standards. Suddenly divided by a new state border, the population reacted in different ways. The main goal was to maintain economic ties with Trieste. The historian Marta Verginella explains that most of the population in the rural areas, regardless of their political, ideological or national affiliation, continued to cross the border and work in Trieste. In 1947, for example, around 2,000 workers and people who sold their products in Trieste went there every day. The Yugoslav communist authorities in zone B tried to obstruct mobility across the demarcation line, as they considered this practice of going to work in the capitalist 'other' side a bad example. It was an ideologically controversial activity. The Yugoslav authorities implemented several direct or indirect sanctions to prevent this transit (Verginella 2021). We need to understand that in the period after the end of World War II, the town of Koper and its hinterland were still 'underdeveloped' and unindustrialized (Žitko et al. 1992). Most of the inhabitants 'made their livelihoods by fishing, seafaring, salt farming, agriculture, retail trade and crafts'. An important work activity involved daily migration to Trieste but the war and the post-war demarcation aggravated the situation (Kralj and Renner 2019). One interlocutor

(Interlocutor 2) also emphasized this new reality. He remembers his mother's experience during the FTT years:

My mum and her friends smuggled goods across the border. It was not really to break the law, but to survive. It was a need because there were goods you could not find in zone B... All the women in the village were smuggling... My mum got caught once by the *graničarji* [border guards], smuggling eggs... my dad told me this story later, she was ashamed and didn't want to talk about it... she went to prison for a few days... controls were very strict... but 90% of people smuggled to have a better life.

Our mothers also went; my mother went in the evening. They used to take eggs, *trapa*, wine, and then there was the border, there was a fence, and they had to crawl under the fence to sell the robes the next morning... yes, at night, because they carried a bit more. I remember our aunt Ema from Santoma [near Koper, note PK], my father Victor's sister; she and our mother and all the women together brought 200 eggs. My aunt came once a week to collect the money. [Interlocutor 7]

These examples show that since the early modern period, it was women in particular who travelled to the urban areas to sell the surplus of their agricultural products. For example, women purchased grain in Trieste, used it to make bread and then sold it back to the city. This type of activity also enabled a better economic standard as well as women's economic independence and an important role in decision-making in the family (Verginella 2021).

As has been mentioned, in the years 1947 to 1954, crossing over to zone A of the FTT was limited by the Yugoslav military government. Severe restrictions and regulations were introduced to limit transit between the zones. The problem was that qualified workers who were needed in zone B were working in Trieste instead of in the communist zone. Even former

partisans migrated to Trieste daily for work and members of the communist party were involved in retail trade. The new socialist political leaders found this outrageous. However, any impediment to transit fomented hostility so the communists were forced to adopt forms of indirect pressure, such as engaging mostly younger men in youth work actions or confiscating transit permits to zone A (Verginella 2021).

My interlocutors also explained that zone B was mainly a rural area without industry and was seriously affected by the interrupted connection with Trieste: 'We received some help, there was no industry, only agriculture...in that period we lost our connection with Trieste... and crossing to zone A was not allowed... so people smuggled' (Interlocutor 2) or: 'It was not allowed to cross the zone, only those with permits' (Interlocutor 15). Another added:

People were inventive here; they went to Trieste to sell things, one to smuggle, to get along, because it was Istria. I won't say fifty percent of the population lived off, I won't say 'šverc' [smuggling, note PK], and they carried butter, meat, drinks, wine, and schnapps. Because that wasn't allowed. It was at the borders, I don't know, a kilo of meat, everybody had their own way. [Interlocutor 6]

As the Yugoslav authorities could not really stop this trade, they did not take serious restrictive actions against it. It was considered an embarrassment, but the authorities were aware that any strict restrictions would cause discontent especially among the poorest population in zone B, and could cause a political fracture in the zone they wanted to annex to Yugoslavia. The local population was also very disturbed by the fact that local communist party secretaries were the ones who approved the permits for travel to zone A. Nonetheless, the relations that were disrupted by the reality of the new border could not be stopped and after the final border resolution in 1954 (or 1975), the states of Yugoslavia and Ita-

ly started introducing special cross-border agreements (Verginella 2021).

If we reconsider Sendhardt's statements, we can agree that 'the traditional view of borders as static structures made room for a new theoretical understanding of borders as 'historically contingent' processes (Newman and Paasi 1998), an understanding that includes in the definition of borders their ready potential to change' (Sendhardt 2013).

Ties With Family and Friends

Immediately after the war, a lot of people moved out, somewhere around 1947 or 1948, and it was pretty empty [the village by the border where the interlocutor is from, note PK]. Problems are problems, we didn't have a problem because we had these passes. We used to go, sometimes it was 4 times a year, 4 times a month. [Interlocutor 6]

Crossing the border was important for economic survival, but also to keep in touch with relatives, friends and/or clients on the other side (Kralj and Renner 2019). A state border suddenly divided members of the same family. In line with the international treaties, people in the former military zones could also decide to move from one zone to the other, or to the other country. The inhabitants of both states tried to keep in touch with those on the other side and to help each other. There were families who did not see each other for long periods of time: 'When we first went to Trieste with the *prepustnica* [pass, note P.K.], I saw my mum's sister for the first time... my mum had not seen her for a long time either' (Interlocutor 16).

People moved for different reasons, such as political disagreement with the new regime, economic motives, fear, propaganda and family:

We were terribly sorry when they left [neighbours in Koper, note PK] because they were really nice people. Their relatives, some of them still live here and they were, they had a farm here on the old Šmarska road [near Koper, note PK] and it's a pity they left be-

cause they were really nice people. At that time there was such a climate, propaganda, they mainly went because many people went over [left for Italy, note PK], so they went over there too. I remember my late father-in-law, he was from Marezige... when we were chatting, I asked him, okay, why did some of them go over? Whole villages emptied out too. He said, it was because... now let's leave propaganda... each village had someone who was the informal, he was not the mayor, who was respected by everybody. If he and his family moved away, the whole village went. Or almost the whole village. If he didn't go, then no one else went. That was one example. [Interlocutor 9]

Our people thought of them [emigrants, note PK] as poor, they left, and most of the migration was political... there was the West... Yes, Škofije [a village on the former Morgan line, note PK] was empty. There were very few of us in Škofije. Most of those who went stayed [in Italy, note PK]. The first place they went was here, just over the border, there were barracks. There's like this centre now [shopping, note PK], the service centre... and everybody could settle there and then you got a job there. There were elderly people living in Italy, in Italy, they took somebody, some family, they signed them over [their property, note PK]... even instead of going to the army, they ran away to Italy and then they got their parents and sisters, and they got an old farm and they settled there. [Interlocutor 6]

After settling down in Italy (Trieste), some people (re)established ties with family and friends 'on the other side'. However, there were families and friends that lived in the city even before the war. They moved there for work. There were also cases when people moved from Trieste during the war or after it:

My mother is originally from the Brkini hills, and my father was a sailor who worked as a waiter on cruise ships. Then, in 1941, he

disembarked and moved his family, me and my brother who was one year older than me, also born in Trieste, to Slivje, in the Brkini, to my mother's home. Because it was easier to survive; they had already started to bomb the city. [Interlocutor 9]

No, we didn't buy much... but we brought to Trieste meat, cigarettes, for example, and we also had family in Trieste on my mother's side. You also brought them cigarettes, there was an aunt... just Drava without filters, the most awful ones, but a strong cigarette. [Interlocutor 9]

What to Sell and What to Buy

When the political situation changed and the Iron Curtain border 'opened' in the early 1960s, Trieste became a popular destination for cheap purchases for the people of Yugoslavia. However, for the population living in the border area, Trieste was a centre where they mainly purchased goods in shops. In order to buy these goods, they came to the city with their own products to sell, mainly agricultural products such as prosciutto, wine, schnapps, poultry, etc. (Nečak 2000, 302).

The goods that were mostly purchased in Trieste included pasta, coffee, soap and washing powder, tights, slippers and clothing, later also construction material and technical equipment. 'There was this one world in Trieste... I would drool over some ... I did not see them [goods, note PK] anywhere else. [Interlocutor 16]

People did not purchase luxurious goods but mostly essential needs: 'washing powder... we didn't even have enough of it to wash one handkerchief... well, we didn't even have a handkerchief... and soap, you hadn't seen it unless you'd brought it from Trieste... so this is what we bought, for the poor' (Interlocutor 14).

And there was something else here, mostly elderly people, they had Italian pensions too because then they all worked under Italy and every two months they had an Italian pen-

sion, not like here because every month they went to get their pensions and they bought rice, washing powder, pasta and candy. Here there were very few sweets, there weren't as many sweets as nowadays when we have hundreds of different kinds of sweets. [Interlocutor 6]

During my interviews, the aspect of interdependence and relations among people in the area emerged. Like in the past, despite the border control and restrictions, communication, exchange of goods and commerce was 'revitalized' or resurfaced. This means not only people from Yugoslavia went to Italy to sell and buy goods, but also people from the nearby border area in Italy came to Yugoslavia to purchase goods. As an interlocutor pointed out: 'Cross-border trade was flourishing...' (Interlocutor 15).

There was also interdependence, and as one interlocutor mentioned, the situation changed in the sixties and the seventies:

They [Italians, note PK] were coming to buy meat, petrol, dairy products... they were highly appreciated... it was a situation of mutual benefit... in Lokev [village on the Slovene Karst, note PK] there were three, four butcheries, it all worked well... not only on paper.

We were more equal...they were coming to our taverns...for them it was the hinterland, to come here and have a good time... they also went to the farmers to buy produce. [Interlocutor 16]

Since the 19th century the Istrian peninsula and the Karst (with their respective rural communities) had strong economic ties with the urban centre of Trieste. The towns in the hinterland of Trieste and Istria and the rural surroundings developed important interrelations with the port city. As pointed out by the historian Dušan Nečak, Trieste was known as the 'centre of gravity' of the Slovene hinterland (Nečak 2000). In this regard, one interlocutor said his mum told him that before the war 'they earned their living by selling their produce... turnip,

carrots, potatoes...which they took down [to Trieste] ... also wood... there was poverty... in the winter men took [the goods] by *karjola* [wheelbarrow]' (Interlocutor 4).

As asserted by the historian Vida Rožac Darovec, the economic relations and exchange took place until the middle of the 20th century, when the establishment of new borders meant the Istrian [her study is about the case of Istria, note PK] population was separated from its most important economic centre (Rožac-Darovec 2006). However, although the border between Yugoslavia and Italy marked the border between two 'opposing' political and economic systems, socialism and democracy, the exchange of goods and relations continued:

We sold only meat, later, after the war...there was no interest for other...we had to hide the *lira* [Italian currency], they did not allow... we were lucky to have some relatives down there [in Trieste] and we left them there or they brought them [*lira*] here. [Interlocutor 4]

My mother used to collect milk in the villages, as much as 200 litres of milk... we had a carriage at home, and a mule, and at half past one in the morning she would collect it... then deliver the milk to all the houses, even just half a litre... she would take it up to the 8th floor. [Interlocutor 7]

It was common to buy rice, pasta, washing powder, but also fruits, which were not easily available in Yugoslavia at the time like oranges, bananas, strawberries and mandarins. As the author Silvio Pecchiari Pečarič recalls (2020), he first saw bananas in Trieste:

I like going to Zone A because many things are not available in Zone B. The shops sell things I have never seen before, even some yellow fruits I have never seen before in our garden that I would like to try. They explain to me that they do not grow here and that they are called bananas.

References to goods that could not be found in Yugoslavia were common in my interviews. Sometimes articles that were not essential for life but simply improved people's lifestyles were also mentioned, for example table tennis (Interlocutor 15), Christmas lights (Interlocutor 6), watches (Interlocutor 15) or purses (Interlocutor 10). Later, during the seventies and eighties, it was common to buy technical equipment and construction material:

We were working on this house, which was an old ruin, nothing, old stones, there was nothing to buy then under Yugoslavia, all these building materials, everything, for everything you had to go to Trieste, there was a lot of smuggling, even the politicians were smuggling, all citizens were smuggling. Then, with these passes, we transported everything from cement to bricks, tiles, radiators. [Interlocutor 10]

When I went to buy a rotovator, the one I have now, I hid 3 million lire and put them in the first aid [kit]. I had a *fičo* [car – Zastava 750] and I took my mother with me. And we got to the border and then the customs officer: 'Good afternoon, where are you going?' To Milje [Muggia, Italy], to the marketplace. And it was Thursday [the day of the market, note PK] ... 'What do you have to declare? What do you have in your first aid kit?' My mother blushed immediately. 'Show me what you have in your *fičo*' ... and then three others came up behind, I think they were some mates. 'Go on, go on'. [Interlocutor 6]

We crossed the border in cars, *fičos* and *stoenkas* [cars made by the Yugoslav automobile company Zastava, note PK]. We borrowed passes, five or six people went. It was doable, but it wasn't easy... Iron on the roof of the car. That car barely started, but little by little it was possible, one pass, two or three... [Interlocutor 8]

Border Controls and Experiences

Due to restrictions, only limited amounts of products were allowed to be brought to Italy, like 'half a kilogramme of meat, half a litre of schnapps, cigarettes...some clothes, slippers, coffee' (Interlocutor 15). In order for the trip to Italy to be worth the effort, people had to hide what they were bringing back in different ways, as they usually took more than was allowed:

So, what did you take there... because they checked you... down there [probably meant at the border crossing, note PK] there was one customs officer [woman]... she even looked under [the skirt, dress, note PK] ... the men were different, she was evil ['*žleht*']... and they asked us 'what else have you hidden'... if they didn't get anything, just what was legal, they were very disappointed... because if they uncovered something, they immediately got a stripe on their sleeve, like they were real customs officers. [Interlocutor 14]

Butter, cigarettes... Cigarettes no problem, but butter that all melted... and there was one from Sveti Anton [village near Kopar, note P.K.] ... she always had her trench coat buttoned up... even in the summer... it smelled so bad... of course, she had meat [in her trench coat]... she brought a whole cow... they made packages. I don't know what the meat was like, but within a week she brought a whole cow or a calf... and nobody approached her because of the smell. [Interlocutor 6]

After the war, crossing the border was made easier for the residents of border areas. In 1949, the first agreement between Yugoslavia and Italy, known as the First Udine Agreement, was signed. It covered the territory north of Trieste and referred only to people who owned land on both sides of the border, allowing them to cultivate land on the other side of the border. The London Memorandum of 1954 obliged Italy and Yugoslavia to conclude an agreement on small-scale border traffic as soon as possible. The agree-

ment signed on 20 August 1955 (in Udine) was valid for a ten kilometer strip along the entire border (Nećak 2000; Hrabar 2016). Article 7 of the Memorandum declared (Memorandum of Understanding 1956; Čepič 2018):

The Italian and Yugoslav Governments agree to enter into negotiations within a period of two months from the date of initialing of this Memorandum of Understanding with a view to concluding promptly an agreement regulating local border traffic, including facilities for the movement of the residents of border areas by land and by sea over the boundary for normal commercial and other activities, and for transport and communications. This agreement shall cover Trieste and the area bordering it. Pending the conclusion of such an agreement, the competent authorities will take, each within their respective competence, appropriate measures in order to facilitate local border traffic.

The introduction of *prepustnice* or passes was very important for the local inhabitants as it made it easier for them to cross the border. At first, people were allowed to cross the border four times a month. This meant farmers from Yugoslavia could legally sell their produce in the ten kilometer strip along the border. It was predominately women who sold the produce, but they also took some 'illegal' goods to the other side (Verginella 2021), or took more than was permitted.

Before cars became widespread, people used public transportation – mostly boats, buses and trains. Crossing the border was a crucial part of the trip and was characterised by specific dynamics. As stated by the social scientist Breda Luthar: 'The domination that is established through communication is an integral part of the trip to Trieste ... a series of communicative interactions where the positions of superiority and subordination, power and weakness, of ethnic and class differences were established'

(Luthar 2004). These interactions were an integral part of the border crossings.

I went to Trieste with my mum, by *vaporetto* [boat] or by bus. We had to get off the bus at the Škofije border crossing and pass through the customs inspection on foot... the bus was waiting for us on the other side of the border... When we went to Italy the Yugoslav customs officers usually checked our documents... My father was a butcher, not many butchers or meat then... so I went with my mum to Trieste to sell meat, or eggs, cigarettes. [Interlocutor 1]

I don't know, she mostly went alone, I crossed the crossing point, helped her to carry... We walked, we went by bicycle, later by bus. We were afraid, you had to hide. But I went with her because I also carried something, helped. [Interlocutor 8]

Women often took children with them because they were not subject to severe controls. My interlocutor said that sometimes her mum gave her some meat or other goods to hide, but rarely. The hardest thing was the border crossing, as one said: 'I was always scared when crossing the border...' (Interlocutor 1). Another interlocutor said:

It was terrible crossing the border... very stressful... we were very scared of the customs officers... if they found that you had too many goods, they took them from you... I remember two women who were very strict, two sisters Marina and Milica or something like that... they didn't speak Slovene, Serbian I think... but they lived in Koper... they were the worst, worse than men... if you had too many goods, they just took them from you. [Interlocutor 3]

Yes, it was all types... most came from Serbia... very few Slovenes were customs officers... and they always looked at you as if you were smuggling... they didn't look at you normally... well, actually you needed to bring something back... there were things

you couldn't get here... so you had to go there. [Interlocutor 4]

Oh Madonna, they controlled us, I remember... They were these *babice*, customs officers, and they would check the women all over, we called them *babice* [grandmothers, note PK]. Then, when I was already travelling with my pass, they would see if you had money, you weren't allowed to have too much. If you hid it, they took it away... no penalty, they just took it. [Interlocutor 11]

Another interlocutor, from the village of Branik (near Nova Gorica) went to Trieste once a week with her mother. They had vineyards and sold wine, schnapps, meat, fruit and butter in Trieste:

At five in the morning the train went from Branik to Kreplje [village on the Karst] and to Opčine [Villa Opicina, Italy]... the customs control was on the train... but when we came to Opčine we had to exit the train and there were desks... I still remember... and everything you had, you needed to put on them... the Italian control... [Interlocutor 5]

The Yugoslavs controlled already on the trains: 'My mum made herself a pouch from fabric and put meat, schnapps and even butter in it...' (Interlocutor 5). Women used to hide goods under their skirts and if they were subject to severe controls, the female customs officers 'examined them carefully... if you did not declare anything and they found something, they took it from you... you never got it back... although they let you go' (Interlocutor 5).

Although the controls were strict and unpleasant on both sides, the Italians and the Yugoslavs allowed the smuggling of goods to a certain extent. The Yugoslav authorities were aware that people were carrying more than the permitted quantities, but 'in order to keep the social balance, they turned a blind eye'. Even though the Italians 'apparently persecuted smuggling', they allowed it to some extent, as Trieste was also marked by the new border situation as

the city had lost its natural hinterland (Rožac-Darovec 2006). This was also explained by my interlocutors:

I don't know how much was allowed, three packs of tiles each, sometimes, sometimes you would take five and they'd send you back, the customs officer. You had to take them back to the shop. Strict... there were (also) people who said *bejži, bejži* and he closed his eyes [metaphorically: pretended not to see, note PK]. [Interlocutor 8]

One customs officer explained to me, look, he says: They think we're bad, I know that when he brings iron, because he's building a house and he has this iron on his trailer, and you ask him how much iron is there? And then he lies to you and says exactly as much as is allowed, and I know because I see there's more and I say, isn't there a kilo more? No, he says. I ask him twice so he'll say, yes, yes, a kilo more. Ok, go on, because he's going to go again anyway, I know that... when he takes you for a fool, he makes an idiot of you. [Interlocutor 9]

Conclusion

Through the study of everyday life in a border area, the article showed how multi-layered and diverse the effects of a new border on a territory can be. The case study addressed the territory of Northern Istria in particular (with some minor mentions of the Karst and Goriška regions), with the aim of researching how the sudden absence in a territory caused by the creation of a new state border affected the inhabitants. The interest was to study the impact of the new border line on the population living on the eastern side of the Yugoslav-Italian border after the end of World War II.

The main methodological approach was based on holding oral history interviews with people who lived (or still live) in the border area. I was particularly interested in their experiences while living close to the border. Their 'stories' revealed a more intimate experience of every-

day life and the economic and social interactions near a newly established border. Since the interviews were carried out with members of different generations, different perspectives on the studied topic were gathered. As became clear in the course of my conversations with the local inhabitants, the post-war reality was seen differently by children and adults. Another perspective was that of the 'second' generation – my interlocutors remembered or recalled their parents' or relatives' experiences or stories told by them. This opens up new questions related to methodological issues. These were, however, not addressed in this paper, as the question was how communication, cooperation and the exchange of goods were able to continue when the border caused a strong territorial division, and how this situation was perceived by the local population. What were the daily experiences and survival strategies that people living along the border adopted to cope with the newly emerging political situation? The central question was how the border line, which divided the space both physically and ideologically, affected the local population along the Yugoslav-Italian border in Istria.

The present paper tries to show that physical and political boundaries do not necessarily completely interrupt economic and social interaction in a territory. As explained, the 'official' version of history is one thing, while the other more 'personal' view, which has been addressed in this paper, is another version. In the studied case, as in similar others, it has been shown that despite the restrictions and strict division, people find ways to communicate, cooperate and survive.

This paper has taken into consideration only one 'side' or 'reality', which was manifested in the studied region after the end of World War II. For a broader and better understanding of the relations and interactions between the inhabitants of the border area, similar research should also be undertaken with the population on the 'west side' of the new border.

List of Interlocutors*

Interlocutor 1, 1952, Koper, 1.3.2021
 Interlocutor 2, 1952, Koper, 1.3.2021
 Interlocutor 3, 1956, Koper, 5.2.2021
 Interlocutor 4, 1949, Lokev, 31.3.2021
 Interlocutor 5, 1952, Lokev, 31.3.2021
 Interlocutor 6, 1955, Škofije, 9.6.2022
 Interlocutor 7, 1939, Sv. Anton, 23.7.2021
 Interlocutor 8, 1948, Sv. Anton, 23.7.2021
 Interlocutor 9, 1941, Koper, 13.10.2021
 Interlocutor 10, 1950, Škofije, 6.4.2022
 Interlocutor 11, 1948, Boršt, 16.11.2021
 Interlocutor 12, 1943, Lokev, 15.4.2021
 Interlocutor 13, 1939, Lokev, 15.4.2021
 Interlocutor 14, 1925, Koper, 28.9.2022
 Interlocutor 15, 1940, Koper, 30.3.2023
 Interlocutor 16, 1944, Koper, 30.3.2023

* All my interlocutors will remain unknown. The only data is year of birth.

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Summary

Negotiating about the positioning of a demarcation line, and reaching a consensus or agreement about a border between all parties involved is a complex process that has occurred in different historical periods and circumstances. The establishment of a line of demarcation strongly marks all aspects of life. In addition to the political relations between the countries or lands involved, it affects the living conditions of people living near the new border who find themselves in a new reality. When new borders are established, especially in areas that have been the subject of disputes and conflicts for many years, life changes drastically. New borders also create new relationships and conditions for life and coexistence. Adapting to a new reality always requires adjustments. The process of establishing or agreeing on a border, especially in disputed areas where different or even conflicting political regimes seek to annex territories, is long-lasting and demanding.

In this paper, I focus on the issue of determining the border between Yugoslavia and Italy in the area of the northern Adriatic after the end of World War II. Resolving this issue was demanding and took many years. In order to understand the dynamics and relations that were (or were in the process of being) established after the war between the states and the other forces involved, it is necessary to explain the very process of border creation. The area that was the subject of delimitation and which I discuss in the paper was ethnically diverse, so a clear dividing line based on 'national' affiliation could not be established. In addition, there was also an ideological struggle between two political and social systems on the future Yugoslav-Italian border. Therefore, it is not surprising that international forces with diplomatic representatives were involved in the border process.

As a historian interested in people's everyday lives, who focuses on views 'from below' – the daily experiences and survival strategies that the inhabitants of the border

area established in order to cope more easily with the emerging political situation – I pay most attention in this paper to the post-war conditions in which the people along the border lived. The central question is how the border line (either a temporary demarcation line or a later border), which divided the space both physically and ideologically, affected the local inhabitants.

The research focuses on the period after the end of World War II and life along the Yugoslav-Italian border in Istria. The emphasis is on studying how people adapted to the new reality of life in socialist Yugoslavia. Not only did the political situation change, but existing ties (family, business) were severed in the territory that had belonged to one country since the beginning of the 19th century (the Austrian Empire/Austria-Hungary, the Kingdom of Italy). At the forefront of interest is the question of how interconnections and relationships changed and broke after the border was established. The question arises as to how communication, cooperation and the exchange of goods were preserved in a period when the border caused a strong division.

Povzetek

Pogajanja o tem, kam postaviti demarkacijsko črto in doseg skupnega konsenza oz. dogovora o meji med vsemi vpletenimi stranmi, je zapleten proces, ki se je odvijal v različnih zgodovinskih obdobjih in okoliščinah. Postavitev ali postavljanje demarkacijske linije in novih meja močno zaznamuje vse vidike življenja. Poleg političnih razmerij med vpletenimi državami ali deželami vpliva na življenjske razmere ljudi, ki se znajdejo v novih mejnih okvirih, v novi realnosti. Ko so vzpostavljene nove meje, zlasti na območjih, ki so bila dolga leta predmet sporov in spopadov, se življenje drastično spremeni. Nove meje ustvarjajo tudi nova razmerja in pogoje za življenje ter sobivanje. Prilagoditev na novo realnost vedno terja številne prilagoditve. Proces postavljanja oz. dogovarjanja o meji, posebej na spornih območjih, kjer si za priključitev teritorijev prizadevata različna ali celo nasprotujoča si politična režima, je dolgotrajen in zahteven. V prispevku se osredotočam na vprašanje določitve meje med Jugoslavijo in Italijo na območju severnega Jadrana po koncu druge svetovne vojne, kjer je bilo razreševanje tega vprašanja zahtevno in dolgotrajno. Za razumevanje dinamik in odnosov, ki so se po vojni vzpostavili (vzpostavljali) med državama in drugimi

vpletenimi silami, je treba razložiti sam proces ustvarjanja meje. Območje, ki je bilo predmet razmejevanja in ga obravnavam v prispevku, je bilo etnično raznoliko in jasne ločnice na podlagi »nacionalne« pripadnosti ni bilo mogoče postaviti. Poleg tega je na bodoči jugoslovansko-italijanski meji potekal tudi ideološki boj med dvema politično-družbenima sistemoma. Zato ni presenetljivo, da so se v proces t. i. borderinga vpletele mednarodne sile z diplomatskimi predstavniki. Kot zgodovinarica, ki jo zanima vsakdanje življenje ljudi in se osredotočam na poglede »od spodaj«, na vsakodnevne izkušnje in preživitvene strategije, ki so jih prebivalci ob meji vzpostavili, da bi se lažje spopadli z novonastalo politično situacijo, pozornost v prispevku primarno posvečam povojnim razmeram, v katerih so ljudje ob meji živeli. Osrednje vprašanje je, kako je mejna črta (tudičasna demarkacijska črta kot kasnejša meja), ki je prostor delila tako fizično kot ideološko, vplivala na tamkajšnje prebivalce. Raziskava se osredotoča na obdobje po koncu druge svetovne vojne in življenje ob jugoslovansko-italijanski meji v Istri. Poudarek je na preučevanju prilagajanja novi življenjski realnosti v socialistični Jugoslaviji, ko so se ne samo spremenile politične razmere, ampak tudi pretrgale obstoječe vezi (družinske, poslovne) na teritoriju, ki je že od začetka 19. stoletja pripadal eni državi (Avstrijsko cesarstvo/Avstro-Ogrska, Kraljevina Italija). V ospredju zanimanja je vprašanje, kako so se medsebojne povezave in odnosi po vzpostavitvi meje spremenili ter prekinili. Postavlja se vprašanje, kako so se komunikacija, sodelovanje in izmenjava blaga ohranili v obdobju (močne) mejne razdelitve.