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Rediscovering cityness in the Adriatic borderland

Imagining cultural citizenship in Rijeka and Trieste across the long twentieth century

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Introduction

Since the nineteenth century, urban intellectuals, purveyors of culture, politicians, and policymakers in the Adriatic have imagined and represented urban societies as one among a number of possible paths through which their different political worlds and identities can compromise and coexist. These so-called city-makers shape the imaginations of the city. This study concerns how a range of cultural and political actors have created their city, its histories, its material landscapes, and its imaginations. It explores how, as city-makers, they imagined and experienced Trieste's and Rijeka's urbanity—or, rather what I shall term their distinct *cityness*—in relation to political turmoil and shifting borders in the wider Adriatic region over the course of the long twentieth century.

Questions of citizenship, identity, and belonging have been increasingly salient in the multilingual Adriatic borderland from the late nineteenth century, during which the region underwent a move from imperial to national rule. This region, in which Trieste and Rijeka are the main urban centers, can be understood as a microcosm in which some of twentieth century Europe's most pressing border issues and changes took place. Whereas the cities have long served as major European ports in global trade and migration, in the twentieth century the Adriatic region experienced a series of sudden discontinuities: the Habsburg Empire disappeared and nation-states emerged; new ideologies including nationalism, Fascism, Nazism, and Communism established new battlegrounds; the Cold War polarized the region between 'East' and 'West'; before the onset of Europeanizing politics, democratization, reunification, and EU membership.

While most scholarship has examined Trieste and Rijeka as indelibly shaped by the wider geopolitics of the region (which is certainly the case), my study places the focus more specifically on the distinct urban imaginations that have shaped this Adriatic borderland. In particular, it highlights how inspired by a past of flourishing ‘cosmopolitan’ free-port cities, nineteenth- as well as twentieth- and twenty-first century city-makers created new urban imaginations, often in direct opposition to contemporary politics of nationalism. The study explores, then, how generations of city-makers have remade cultural narratives of Trieste’s and Rijeka’s pasts by grounding these narratives in the urban landscape, and using such narratives to reposition the cities amid the wider border dynamics and politics of the region. In such narratives, the notion of Trieste’s and Rijeka’s distinct ‘cityness’ has been crucial, invoked to imagine new forms of urban cultural citizenship. In my analysis, I have chosen to adopt the notion of ‘cityness’ as developed by Saskia Sassen, in contrast to the more commonly used ‘urbanity’ for, as Sassen (2010, 13-14) argues, it makes possible to ‘capture something that otherwise might easily get lost,’ thus, to capture the open process of creation. Cityness functions ‘as a tool and as an intersection of differences which may open to something new, namely, other ways of appropriation of public spaces’ (ibid.). Accordingly, cityness emphasizes intersectionality and the capacity to make novel urban conditions.⁴

Trieste and Rijeka are often seen as sister cities on account of their common past as autonomous imperial ports. During the twentieth century, however, their trajectories diverged. This produced two different urban imaginations: whereas Trieste is embedded in a distinctly literary discourse, Rijeka is associated to a discourse of cultural politics. To compare imaginations of the urban past in the two cities, then, is to map diverse acts of cultural citizenship, to show how urban narratives and discourses are historically constructed and grounded in the urban landscape.

The chapters presented in this study focus on three crucial dimensions of urban place-making and practices of cityness: first, the historical process that underlies urban imaginations; second, how cultural policy provides an impetus for urban place-making; and third, the spaces and places of cityness and urban encounter. In exploring on how urban imaginations of both cities draw upon narratives of the past, which are then articulated and contested in the contemporary urban landscape, this study nuances critical scholarship on experience of historicity, belonging, and citizenship in the Adriatic borderland. It shows how a distinct sense of cityness remained crucial in negotiating multiple forms of belonging in the Adriatic borderland during the long twentieth century. These senses of cityness have persisted in cultural citizenship.

This study of sense of cityness in the medium-sized Adriatic towns of Trieste and Rijeka is situated against the background of a key historical development around Europe's understanding of identity, citizenship, and belonging. Having begun in the second half of the eighteenth century, it defined much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and remains a central condition of political debates today. I am referring, here, to the emergence of the 'modern' citizen, articulated through nationality and the increasing accepted belief that national citizenship should be coextensive with state boundaries.

The Europe-wide revolutions that followed in the wake of the 1789 French Revolution altered existing conceptions of citizenship. Whereas city rights had previously been accorded to privileged citizens, this period saw the birth of new social rights, premised on notions of freedom, social justice, and inclusivity (Prak 2018, 5-18; Isin and Turner 2002). Citizenship concerns the relations among people and a state, mutual rights and obligations, and, more fundamentally, 'the right to claim rights.'⁵ Recent historical studies of citizenship have emphasized that, contrary to what had been assumed, citizens' rights and participation did not necessarily improve in the aftermath of the French Revolution. The emergence of citizenship should rather be seen as a bumpy path, which often led as much to the centralization of national authority as popular involvement (see Prak 2018, 3, 302-306; Peverelli 2019). Indeed, increasingly from the nineteenth century onwards, networks of writers, artists, and intellectuals across Europe fostered and promulgated national consciousness: that is, an awareness of (often constructed) national pasts and shared cultures. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these discourses would give rise to nationalism as a political ideology of state.⁶ Whereas initially national consciousness was premised on citizens' sense of belonging and historical consciousness, the politicization of nationality altered the meaning of the term 'citizen,' which came to involve juridical recognition and status as member of a national community. Despite many different interpretations of the relations among forms of citizenship and nationality in various times and places, in nineteenth century Europe citizenship generally referred to a sense of belonging to a national homeland bound to a particular territorial space.⁷

The convergence of citizenship and nationality did not go unchallenged, particularly in Europe's borderlands. The rise of national consciousness has been especially problematic in border regions, where people often harbor plural national attachments that must be negotiated. Intellectuals and politicians often ended up 'stammering the nation' in that they had great difficulties 'carving out a space for

themselves in between *patrias* [homelands], and in living bilingualism and multi-patriotism' (Zanou 2018, 3). It is now well known that not only politicians but historians and geographers too played important roles in the nationalization of Europe's states. Indeed, these figures recast state histories and territories according to nationally determined narratives (see, e.g., Beck 2007). There is nothing self-evident, linear, or natural about the path towards a Europe of nationalized states: forging it required continual cultural work.

Recently, research has focused on nation-states' regions, especially border regions, a key development that has allowed for 'a more multidimensional understanding of the relationship between nationalism, sovereignty, self-determination and democratic governance' (Nimni 2009, 319). Historians have demonstrated how regions actively propagated regional particularity during the nineteenth century.⁸ Brittany, for instance, developed a distinct identity for the sake of regional touristic promotion. The cause of other regions such as Catalonia or the Basque Country, however, resulted in highly politicized and often violent struggles for autonomy (and as such adapting into a nationalized discourse of the region) (Young 2012; Conversi 1997). Research on multiethnic border regions—including Upper Silesia, Galicja, South Tyrol, and Alsace—has shown that, when it comes to the needs and ambitions of stateless nations, the model of the nation-state is not always feasible (Bartov and Weitz 2013; Karch 2018; Nemes 2016; Weismann 2017; Bialasiewicz 2003). Inhabitants of the Polish-German border region of Upper Silesia, for example, often saw their region as a unified land, characterized by bilingualism (Polish and German) and religion (Catholicism), which provided for multiple loyalties (Karch 2018). What is more, scholars have highlighted how nationality was not an issue of absolute significance in nineteenth-century citizens' everyday lives. Nationalism's political foremen may have pursued complete commitment to the cause among the populace—but many people remained indifferent (Ballinger 2012; Zahra 2010; Cole 2012; Bresciani 2019).

In the Adriatic region during the nineteenth century, questions of nationality and citizenship were largely regulated through the institutions of the imperial Habsburg state. The imperial state was endowed with mythical significance, and citizens had a common sense of belonging to the empire. Continuity—in politics, social relations, and historical development—was guaranteed by the state.⁹ As in the case of Upper Silesia above, citizens of the Habsburg Empire identified with categories such as social status or religion, which were non-ethnic and more local than national or imperial. With the increasing rise of national consciousness in the late Habsburg era, however, national loyalties largely existed alongside imperial loyalty. Having moved beyond the study of Austro-

Hungarian society solely through the lens of the nation, historians of the Habsburg Empire have established several new insights. They reshaped the existing historical narrative, according to which the Habsburg Empire was internally ruptured by nationalisms. Instead, historians have demonstrated how imperial patriotism often concurred with national loyalties. This serves to relativize the nation-states that exist today, highlighting that there might quite plausibly have been other outcomes.¹⁰ This rethinking of the imperial legacy has given rise to a revival of ‘the Habsburg model’ of Europe’s borderlands as an alternative narrative for European belonging and ‘cross-national political organization’ in the European Union (Bialasiewicz 2003, 23).

As economic and intellectual centers, cities have been key sites in the negotiation and shaping of multinational citizenship in the Adriatic region. This can be seen in the case of nationalists living in Dalmatia and the cities Trieste and Venice during the nineteenth century.¹¹ As Dominique Kirchner Reill (2011, 14-15) has shown, these intellectuals advocated a consociational model of cultural and political autonomy for the Adriatic nations within a multi-national state, believing in a ‘peaceful Adriatic regionalism that required lesser nationalisms.’ For these ‘fearful nationalists,’ the Adriatic Sea was the center around which nations were commercially, administratively, politically, and culturally intertwined through newspapers, steamship companies, trade, and intellectual exchanges. This led Kirchner Reill (2012, 5) to maintain that citizens in the Adriatic region tended to adopt a stance of ‘cosmopolitan pragmatism’ when it came to national questions. Triestines and Venetians ‘just hoped to keep their cosmopolitan city free from the directives of any one national state’ and thereby protect their commercial interests.¹² Scholars have approached Trieste and Rijeka as port cities—places of opening up toward the wider world. This research has explored how port activities shaped social, economic, and political life in the cities (Apih [1988] 2015; Cattaruzza 1995; Pupo 2018; Valdevit 2004). Other scholars have explored how plural populations and ideologies in the region have shaped everyday cultural and social life (Abram 2017; D’Alessio 2003; Klabjan 2014). This diversity, it is argued, is the fruit of urban autonomy, and has fed into literary imaginations of the city as borderland.¹³ Attention has been paid to narratives of a cosmopolitan past that have given rise to a distinct memory politics in Trieste and Rijeka and are repeatedly refashioned in political urban landscapes.¹⁴

Although my research builds upon this scholarship, I will contribute a crucial new element. Current scholarship on cities in the Adriatic understands border cities as being subject to the wider region’s geopolitical dynamics and has, for the most part, approached Rijeka and Trieste as simply locations and locales of everyday interaction. Through

my research, I hope to show that these cities are not only microcosms that have been subject to contested politics of culture by surrounding states. Rather, I also understand Trieste and Rijeka as places in which generations of local city-makers have taken an active role in continually remaking and reimagining a distinct sense of cityness. This sense of cityness being perpetually imagined and reimagined in Trieste and Rijeka, I will argue, presents these border cities as key forces in the politics of belonging and citizenship in the Adriatic region.

This study brings together a historical perspective on Adriatic identity politics with a contemporary geographical perspective on place-making. In this way, I mean to shed new light on how nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban citizens in the Adriatic borderland experienced and embodied multinational identity politics during a historical shift from an imperial to a national form of citizenship. What is more, I show how inhabitants of contemporary cities make sense of this pluralist past in relation to a present defined by Europeanization and globalization—how they restage this past for new political projects in the city. This study traces how historical and contemporary intellectuals, artists, writers, historians, politicians, and policymakers have imagined these cities as both in constant dialogue with changing geopolitical conditions and somehow set apart from surrounding imperial, national, regional, and global worlds. I have adapted the notion of city-makers from the field of critical policy studies, using it to make visible the multi-scalar network of actors, forces, and ideologies that drive urban transformation (Çaglar and Schiller 2018; Peck 2005; Clarke et. al 2015). Approaching historical and contemporary cultural and political figures (who might be more readily studied in the humanities) in terms of city-makers (a term more common in the social sciences), allows me to lay bare multiple facets of urban dynamics. Further, it allows me to trace the ways in which the cultural narratives produced by city-makers are themselves subject to subsequent contestation and remaking. The study demonstrates how, together, the production of, engagement with, and responses to urban imaginations constitute a historically layered process that is strongly embedded in the urban landscape itself. I argue that, for the actors followed in this study, urban imaginations serve as a means of negotiating the various shifting worlds inhabited by Rijekans and Triestines. As such, the urban imaginations at the center of this study are often (but not always) premised on a sense of in-betweenness. In focusing on experiences and imaginations of Rijeka and Trieste, I explain why and how a distinct *sense of cityness* could persist as an alternative experience of belonging during periods in which nationalism laid exclusive claim to citizenship practices.

Why should one explore the city as a category of belonging? Without doubt, ‘cityness’ represents just one of many figures or narratives through which citizens have defined their identities and modes of belonging in the long twentieth century. All the same, I argue that the city holds out a kaleidoscope through which we can see how people formed alternative, multi-scalar imaginations, experiences, and practices of citizenship. I approach urban space as a comprised yet open public space, riven by relations among wider geopolitical realities and social structures. In this, I draw on Doreen Massey’s insightful conception of a ‘global sense of place.’ While places ‘may have a character of [their] own, it is absolutely not a seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everyone shares’ (Massey 1991, 28). Urban places are processes, then, in that they emerge in and through routes and networks through time and across space. Accordingly, urban experiences and imaginations ‘are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself’ (ibid.). Thus, Massey concludes, ‘such multiple identities can either be a source of richness or a source of conflict, or both’ (ibid.).

I understand cityness, therefore, as a kaleidoscope of experiences that endow the city with meaning. In so doing, I draw on the spatial theory as set out by Doreen Massey (1991) and John Agnew (2011), for whom spaces are geographical places to which people have ascribed meaning and which they have woven into their lived experience. This view of people’s sense of place depends upon the two other understandings of space: specific location and the locale which provides the setting in which everyday activities unfold. In the context of my reading of Trieste and Rijeka, this concern with spatialities has led me to examine the ways in which historical and contemporary intellectual, cultural, and political actors make sense of their cities by engaging with the spaces, places, and experiences in the urban landscape. In this, it is crucial that places are understood as imbricated not only in a network of social relations, but also in a web of experiences of past, present, and future. ‘Place,’ John Agnew (2011, 319) reminded us, ‘is often associated with the world of the past and location/space with the world of the present and future. From one perspective, place is therefore nostalgic, regressive or even reactionary, and space is progressive and radical.’¹⁵ This conception of sense of place informs my analysis of Trieste and Rijeka. Indeed, across the various chapters and cases studies I critically interrogate seemingly taken-for-granted understandings of cityness in Trieste and Rijeka. Chapters 1 and 2, for example, indicate how the widely used term *triestinità* (‘triesteness’) and a Rijekian sense of urban autonomy constitute historically resonant tropes, the meanings of which have changed over time. Simultaneously,

I investigate how particular sites evoke memories and experiences of urban pasts, which, in turn, set the stage for present and future urban agendas. Chapters 6 and 7, for instance, trace how in recalling memories and emotions, particular urban sites prompt embodied experiences of cityness.

In arriving at this focus on how urban citizens make sense of place, I have been inspired by the work of several scholars, whose books offered key insights during the research. Pamela Ballinger's *History in exile* (2003), which examines historical memories and experiences of displacement in Istria, guided various phases of my research in the Adriatic. This book—much like Ballinger's wider work—is path-breaking, not just for its highly reflexive method of studying narrative constructions of belonging, memory, and identity in this border region. Above all, her historically informed anthropological approach brought me to the understanding that people whose histories and memories are marked by change, displacement, and transformation often seek to ground their sense of belonging in the materiality of the landscape—in this case the Istrian landscape. The work of both Maura Hametz (2005) and Glenda Sluga (2001) has also provided key insights, especially in revealing how the border city of Trieste has been taken as the locus of highly politicized narratives, through which memories and histories have been formed and negotiated. In tracing the memory and myth of Trieste's national 'problem,' they show—in different ways—how representations of this city as a locus of either cultural and national difference or as national myth became self-fulfilling prophecies, performing their own discourse. To me, this underlined the significance of narratives of cityness in this complex borderland, which requires further exploration. In addition, books by Scott Spector (2000) and Judith Walkowitz (2012) on the urban cultural territories of Prague and London's Soho district respectively provided methodologies and examples for understanding how people's cultural practices embody experiences of cityness. The experiences described in these studies are often created at a particular moment, enabling a position of in-betweenness in relation to the (geo-)political and historical dynamics of identity formation at work in the cities. This inspired me to investigate how past and contemporary urban inhabitants in Trieste and Rijeka experience cityness (place) in relation to the wider urban landscape (space) at particular moments. Accordingly, I set out to establish how citizens in Rijeka and Trieste have historically experienced their local belonging and navigate their lives toward the future.

Approaching the dynamics of belonging, nationality, and citizenship in the Adriatic region through the lens of senses of cityness has three advantages. First, it shifts the—still dominant—consensus among scholars of nationalism and citizenship, according to which modern ideas

of citizenship diffuse out from western European origins.¹⁶ My study, in contrast, shows how the European borderland was a central force in the process of citizenship formation. Borderlands, Etienne Balibar (2004b, 1-2) has suggested, ‘constitute the melting pot for the formation of a people (*demos*) without which there is no citizenship (*politeia*).’ Borderlands, therefore, ‘are not marginal to the constitution of a public sphere but rather are at the center’ (ibid.). This study builds on the extensive body of critical literature that has emerged over the last two decades in the field of border studies, which aims to understand the changing realities and imaginaries of borders, and reflect critically on border studies’ research agenda.¹⁷ The cities Trieste and Rijeka, this study seeks to demonstrate, are urban borderlands. As such, they are centers of regional cross-border mobilities, liminal zones at which Europe’s geopolitics have been most tightly enforced. They provide a plural regional, European, and global platform for intercultural transmission and political transformation. Accordingly, Trieste and Rijeka are part of a group of similarly ‘in-between’ Mediterranean geographies, which, though vibrant and modern, are often overlooked. The histories of these alternative Mediterranean modernities have been brought to the fore by cultural scholars of the Mediterranean such as Iain Chambers (2008), Predrag Matvejević ([1991] 1999), and, in a different way, Fernand Braudel ([1949] 1995).¹⁸

Second, focusing on cityness in the Adriatic offers a different view of citizenship. This notion is commonly understood in terms of the citizen-state relationship, which is still often defined through individuals’ political and legal rights and status as recognized members of a sovereign political community within a defined territory.¹⁹ Investigating the sense of cityness in Rijeka and Trieste shifts our attention from *subjects* of citizenship to *acts* of citizenship. More precisely, it foregrounds cultural citizenship, premised on cultural competences performed in the urban public sphere.²⁰ Engin Isin developed the notion of *acts of citizenship* as a framework with which to interpret citizenship dynamics in a globalizing era of the ‘citizen without frontiers,’ who is constantly on the move, as are its ideas, practices, and products. Isin (and Nielsen) contrast ‘activist citizens,’ who ‘engage in writing scripts and creating the scene,’ with ‘active citizens,’ who follow existing formal and institutionalized scripts and scenes (Isin 2008, 38). *Cultural citizenship* is one manifestation of such activist acts of citizenship, which, as Gerard Delanty (2002, 64) remarks, ‘shifts the focus of citizenship onto common experiences, learning processes and discourses of empowerment.’ As such, cultural citizenship ‘concerns the learning of the self and of the relationship of self and other, ... citizenship concerns identity and action; it entails both personal and cognitive dimensions that extend beyond the personal to the wider cultural level of society’ (ibid.). Cultural citizenship, thus, creates the

possibility for novel conditions of citizenship and unbounded belonging.

I argue that the multiple manifestations, imaginations, and experiences of Triestine and Rijekan cityness analyzed in this study can be understood as expressions of cultural citizenship. Indeed, they constitute empowering acts through which citizens autonomously establish ways of relating to political governments. City-making, then, involves the doing of deeds that enact cultural citizenship. This conceptual approach has led to an important finding: that the local experience of multiple belonging did not disappear with the coming of more exclusivist forms of national citizenship. Rather, it persisted in cultural citizenship. Through this investigation of the dynamics and experiences of cultural citizenship in Trieste and Rijeka, I do not mean to dispute the existence of juridical and political definitions of citizenship. I have rather meant to open up new perspectives on questions of citizenship and belonging, which go beyond the existing ways in which scholars and governments have grasped and approached these categories. This study adds a close empirical examination of cultural citizenship in two border cities to the existing scholarly literature on acts of citizenship.

Third, focusing on cityness in the Adriatic region during the long twentieth century helps make sense of ‘the cosmopolitan city’—a phenomenon that has been rediscovered in the social sciences and humanities in recent years. In attending closely to cultural citizenship practices in Trieste and Rijeka, I critically explore the cosmopolitanized discourse around border cities. Often, cosmopolitan imaginaries of Adriatic cities figure an example of the variety of cosmopolitanisms that arose from the late 1990s, according to which they were the local manifestations of a ‘globalizing world’ (Pollock et al. 2000). These port cities are often invoked in attempts to imagine a ‘grounded,’ ‘rooted,’ or ‘vernacular’ cosmopolitanism (Bhabha 1996; Werbner 2006).²¹ In the context of both cities, however, seemingly vernacular forms of cosmopolitanism have often been exposed as another, more elite type of cosmopolitanism, which takes the form of intellectual projects concerned to establish universal citizenship, human rights, transnational belonging, and tolerance of diversity and difference (Cheah 2007; Robbins 1998). All of these cosmopolitan imaginaries, whether articulated in social and cultural practice or as an intellectual program, derive from and are embedded in borderland experiences. One of the arguments put forward in this study is that by overdetermining the cultural imaginations and representations of the cities’ ‘border experiences,’ Trieste and Rijeka are inscribed as cosmopolitan places. ‘Indeed, the existence and experience of borders is ‘always *overdetermined* and, in that sense, sanctioned, reduplicated and relativized by other geopolitical divisions’ (Balibar [2002] 2011, 79). Borders and border cities *perform* the functions of a border.

Etienne Balibar emphasizes that without this ‘*world-configuring* function,’ then ‘there would be no borders—or no lasting borders’ or border worth believing in (ibid.). Crucially, enactments of borders catalyze cosmopolitan imaginations. This study shows how, from the late 1980s onward, border experiences in Trieste and Rijeka were increasingly taken as the focus of a cultural production in a distinct cultural-political European discourse. In this discourse, the two cities functioned as nodal points in a program that aimed to foster more open, tolerant, and inclusive societies in the aftermath the Cold War and other European conflicts.

This study tells the story of what I describe in terms of the *cosmopolitanization* of two border cities at the edges of multiple states and ideologies.²² In so doing, I do not seek to establish the extent to which Rijeka and Trieste really are cosmopolitan. I am concerned instead to develop an account of how the idea that these cities are cosmopolitan took on a life of its own. I have approached cosmopolitanism as a historically and culturally constructed concept, limited to neither everyday practices or intellectual projects. Critically interrogating processes of cosmopolitanization in this way, this study contributes to scholarly debates about the significance and critical uses of cosmopolitanisms.²³ Trieste’s and Rijeka’s cosmopolitan imaginations, I propose, constitute a cultural medium, through which new relations among self, other, and world arise (Delanty 2006).

RESEARCH STRATEGY

The central methodological challenge posed by this research, it turned out, was the question of how to make sense of overdetermined representations of the ‘cosmopolitan city.’²⁴ Many previous scholars have acknowledged and addressed the problem that researchers often project their own values and interpretations onto their objects of analyses. In attending to the Adriatic borderland I have been keenly aware of sociological critiques of so-called ‘methodological nationalism.’ This refers to the tendency among scholars to build their accounts on the (often unquestioned) basis of nations and the nation-state. In presupposing the significance of the nation, scholars have often overlooked globalizing dynamics and frames of reference (see, e.g., Beck 2007). And yet, I would suggest that the risk of ‘methodological cosmopolitanism,’ or ‘methodological urbanism’ is equally pressing.²⁵ Narrowing one’s critical lens to a single spatial category, undoubtedly, always involves such dangers. I have already indicated the significance of Massey’s reference to ‘global sense of place’ in this introduction. This text offers a framework for placing one’s emphasis not just on the city as a physical location, but more broadly on the intersections among multiple spatial, temporal, and social orders that together

constitute the city as a ‘place.’ In these overlapping relations, we see the variety of forces that overdetermine the ‘cosmopolitan city.’ On these complex intersections, Gerard Delanty (2006, 41) writes that ‘the critical aspect of cosmopolitanism concerns the internal transformation of social and cultural phenomena through self-problematization and pluralization. It is in the interplay of self, other and world that cosmopolitan processes come into play.’

In this study, I investigate this interplay as it unfolds in the ‘cosmopolitan city,’ focusing on the cultural production of the cosmopolitan imagination. Overdetermined representations of ‘cosmopolitan’ Trieste and Rijeka, my objects of study, make sense in themselves. Attending to the processes of historical and spatial meaning-making they entail new insights into the knowledge production around these cities and their significance in a globalizing world. This study explores how urban imaginations of Trieste and Rijeka as cosmopolitan border cities emerged and what projects of city-making they subsequently inform.

This study focuses on two cities that today, despite their great past, are often cast as midsize and ‘peripheral’ in relation to other European centers. Although the stories analyzed in this study make clear that both size and marginality are relative terms, the cities’ size today—neither small nor especially large—allows for a distinct type of analysis. In approaching them, I could balance detailed empirical observation with a mapping of larger dynamics and theories of place-making. What is more, the cities’ size made possible a comparative analysis over a *longue durée* (comparative in that I compare Trieste with Rijeka; *longue durée* in that my study spans 150 years). This would have been impossible in the case of larger cities. The metaphor of cityness encompasses all of the various pasts and ideologies at stake in these cities. This approach allows me to show how Trieste and Rijeka have served as laboratories for experiments in identity as well as in imaginative and material city-making.

At the core of my interest here is how these cities’ inhabitants have made sense of the urban world in the period beginning in the 1870s and running until the early 2000s. This timeframe is bookmarked by the upsurge of nationalisms in the Habsburg Empire and the reemergence of Balkan nationalisms in the decades after the Cold War. The chapters in this study show how perceptions of citizenship changed drastically over the course of this century and a half. Moreover, the contemporary restaging of an urban past in Trieste and Rijeka is based on memories of autonomous, modern, liberal, and democratic city-states in the late nineteenth century.

I investigate the urban imaginations constructed by several generations of city-makers. With this term, I refer to purveyors of culture, urban intellectuals, politicians, and policymakers. Accordingly,

city-makers should not be understood as contemporary urban planners, but rather as a much broader set of figures who shape and mediate the image, narratives, and branding of cities. Although they establish cultural and political agendas for cities, urban imaginations also often take on a life of their own. City-makers' imaginations and visions are fashioned in literature, art, historiography, and touristic and political discourses of the city. I put these imaginative cityscapes in a historical perspective by looking at how and why imaginations of Rijeka and Trieste as border cities emerged historically. Acts of representing cityness imply physical and imaginative detachment from the material urban landscape. My aim in this study is to examine how this happens in specific contexts and how urban narratives and representations change the meaning of cityness. As I show, while the urban imaginations through which people mediate their sense of cityness seem to persist unchanged over time, new understandings of citizenship have actually transformed them profoundly.

In examining peoples' sense of cityness in both the past and present, this study draws on a wide range of source material in multiple languages. The very composition of these sources reflects the border condition. Indeed, they include texts in Italian and Croatian, as well as Trieste's local *triestino* dialect and Rijeka's *fumano* dialect (both of which are rooted in Italian). Other historical sources were written in German and English, and still others in Hungarian or Slovenian. Given the often bilingual and multilingual policies implemented in both cities by governments of various stripes, historical sources in the latter two languages were often accompanied by Italian or German translations. This enabled me to compare the different versions and provide a consistent English translation. I have indicated these cases in an endnote.

Alongside my study of cultural and historical-political representations, I undertook fieldwork on location. In this way, I combined humanities-based and social sciences-based approaches. This allowed me to follow up on my close analyses of the dynamics of meaning-making around ideas of cityness with a different set of observations of how contemporary city inhabitants interact with historically layered urban spaces on a daily basis. In this sense, I focus on how cultural representations and practices of city-making relate to the social and political contexts in which they are produced. To grasp how city-makers imagined and experienced different senses of cityness, I examined official self-representations put out by Rijeka and Trieste (policy documents, political agendas, local newspapers, tourist marketing, and urban historiography) and semi-official self-representations (city novels, fiction, memoirs, visual art, fiction films, documentaries, and museum exhibitions). Written and visual sources were supplemented by forty interviews with contemporary city-makers. The material enrolled in this study can therefore be sorted

roughly into four categories: largely published sources consulted in local libraries; unpublished historical sources in local archives in Trieste, Rijeka, and Rome; cultural representations (such as city novels and literature, visual art, and monuments) that, for the most part, are publicly available and accessible; and a corpus of forty semi-structured interviews with various city-makers. Much more important than the historical accuracy of this mosaic of sources are the paths of their imaginative construction: the motives, mindscapes, hopes, and symbolism that underlie their cultural, historical, and political narratives.

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews that I conducted addressed the various visions and public discourses of Adriatic border cities at stake in this study. My selection of interviewees was based on their professional interventions in cultural and political practices of city-making. The interviewees I approached have each had a strong influence on the ways in which their cities are imagined, whether that be through policies, cultural practices, or artworks. I selected them for their visibility in the city-making process. Most were famous locally, key actors in the self-images projected by Rijeka and Trieste themselves, or central to influential city-making projects. With local literary authors, artists, film makers, museum professionals, journalists, historians, aldermen, policy-makers, and other cultural professionals, I discussed professional and personal experiences of their home-cities and how they were imagined in relation to histories of the wider region. I do not directly discuss all of the forty interviews, which were conducted in English or Italian, in this study. Nevertheless, each interview has helped contextualize the topic and my local fieldwork. All of the interviews are listed in the bibliography. My choice to interview stakeholders was driven by a desire to explore cultural and political actors' own rationales for imagining and representing cityness as they do. Some of their representations of cityness are still in the making, as is especially clear in chapters 5 and 7. Given that it had just won the title of European Capital of Culture as I started out on my research, Rijeka in particular offered the unique prospect of following processes of city-making as they occur.

The interviews offered an opportunity to grasp the political agendas driving contemporary manifestations of urban particularism in depth. The ideas of cityness expressed by city-makers were built on historical imaginations in which Trieste and Rijeka acquired a unique urban identity, as well as on political memories of liberal autonomy in these cities. In the present, these historical imaginations and political memories have been reworked in service of identity politics in the neoliberal city. Indeed, for some of my interviewees, public representations of Triestine or Rijekan cityness served as means of either branding their city (and thus attract international tourism) or setting their city apart from radicalizing

political agendas on the rise at regional and national scales. Others interviewees—most of them artists, literary authors, and filmmakers from Trieste—emphasized that their cultural representations did not serve political agendas. On the one hand, this referred to a certain conception of artistic practice, in which the meaning of an artistic or literary work is determined iteratively by its audiences, not once and for all by its maker. On the other hand, art and literature often articulate experiences that are still as yet undefined. The interviews with policymakers and especially artists and writers provided a unique space in which to explore tensions among the motives of urban branding that often initiate and fund cultural representation and the inherent ineffability and instability of cultural meanings. This dynamic is key to the processes through which cityness is materially articulated in specific places in the border cities under study.

Hence, in combining various methodological approaches and source materials, this study aims to establish how cultural representations and practices of cityness in Trieste and Rijeka function in relation to the historical and socio-political contexts of their production.

STRUCTURE

This study comprises three thematic parts and a conclusion. In examining various dimensions and manifestations of cultural identity politics in Trieste and Rijeka, the following chapters map a broad range of acts of cultural citizenship. The seven chapters each develop their own trajectories. As such, they can be read separately, they all circle around a cluster of common themes and advance a common set of arguments concerning city-making processes in the Adriatic borderland. Each of the three parts reflects on a particular narrative of these processes. Without the pretense of providing a comprehensive account of urban place-making in Trieste and Rijeka, the three parts cover histories, cultures and places, as various manifestations of cityness. In attending to these, I undertake a mapping of several key issues and dynamics of historical urban consciousness and its interactions with identity politics in the wider region.

Overall, the three parts develop chronologically. Part I covers the long rise of nationalist identity politics from the 1870s until the 1950s. Part II broaches first the global ideological identity politics that characterized the Cold War and then the neoliberal politics that took hold in the region from the 1960s into the 2000s. Part III focuses on contemporary identity dynamics as they play out in specific urban places and their spatial relations to the past. Adhering to chronology in structuring this study has made it possible to bring forward changing imaginations of cityness. However immutable such historical urban

imaginations may seem, critical examination shows how they are subject to change, indeed radical discontinuities.

Chapter 1 investigates various perceptions of cityness in the history of Trieste, especially during its transition from imperial to national forms of citizenship. The chapter covers the identity politics that arose in the tensions among city, empire, and nation from the late nineteenth century through to the 1950s, discerning four distinct stages and tropes of cityness along the way. After 1918, the city's writers increasingly came to privilege the notion of *triestinità*—'Triesteness,' the quality of Trieste, its inhabitants and culture. *Triestinità* emerged as a key idea in the imaginative cityscapes created by the city's cultural and literary practitioners. Much more than a narrowly political discourse, this distinctively Triestine sense of cityness emerged through cultural acts of citizenship. Chapter 2 focuses on the dynamics through which a sense of cityness arose in Rijeka during the same historical period. Unlike Trieste's, Rijeka's discourses of urban particularity were strongly embedded in the historical politics of liberal autonomy, premised on the power of the city's councilors, that had been lost in 1896 with the assertion of central Habsburg rule. This experience of losing political autonomy inspired several generations of cultural and political figures in Rijeka to reestablish independence. This struggle manifested itself in urban imaginations that foresaw a great future for the city, giving rise to several political 'adventures.'

Chapter 3 explores the heritagization of Trieste's historical sense of cityness. I examine how urban imaginations of Trieste's past were retrieved, cultivated, and restaged in local marketing and city branding projects from the 1990s onward. Local cultural policy projects, such as those that have renewed Trieste's old port and city center, build on a memory of a grounded, actually existing cosmopolitan past. Trieste's city-makers, however, have struggled to simplify this narrative into a resource for city branding. Subsequently, chapter 4 attends in greater depth to how Trieste's cosmopolitan imaginary has travelled from being a theme in literary production to featuring centrally in contemporary city branding. It does so by investigating the heritagization of Trieste's literary sense of place. Through a literary museum, statues of literary figures, a literary city walk, and other projects, city-makers have searched for ways of modulating Trieste's literary significance into embodied urban experiences. Chapter 5 explores how imaginations of Rijeka's past have been cultivated through contemporary projects of city marketing and heritagization. In particular, it focuses on marketing, cultural events, and politics surrounding Rijeka's nomination as European Capital of Culture in 2020, which energized the city's cultural economy and politics, and heightened its historical sense of place.

Chapter 6 and 7 examine how various understandings of cityness

relate to, and are negotiated at, specific urban places in more depth. This dialectic of discrepant imaginations unfolds in embodied cultural practice and affective politics. Chapter 6 focuses on Trieste's beaches and literary cafes, exploring how recent voices and representations address everyday experiences at the Pedocin beach and Caffè San Marco. These places of urban encounter, these cultural representations suggest, have moved away from the elite poetic imaginations that have fashioned cultural narratives of Trieste until recently. In chapter 7 I explore memories and debates surrounding Rijeka's Rikard Benčić factory and National Theater. The municipality put these places at the heart of their cultural policies and as such they figure centrally in attempts to remake a Rijekan sense of cityness too. In response to the municipality's agenda, a recent documentary and theatrical performance make use of these two urban heritage sites as historically charged sites. The places are used to critically discuss Rijekan experiences of the past, repudiate existing narratives of urban particularism, and empower the city as a center of criticism leveled against rising nationalism in Croatian society.

The conclusion evaluates the ruptures and continuities that mark the development of Trieste and Rijeka's distinct senses of cityness. It compares these two different imaginations and the various projects of city-making that they inform. Focusing on cityness in this way grants insight into the cosmopolitanization of these Adriatic border cities, while also highlighting the significance of discourses of cultural citizenship for the study of this borderland and its cities. The conclusion thus calls for further scholarship on acts of cultural citizenship: scholarship that could both shed new light on the complexity of everyday experiences of belonging in this Adriatic borderland specifically, but also on the role of European cities more generally in reshaping identity-politics, belonging, historicity, and borders across today's Europe.