

# **Performing Maritime Imperial Legacies: Tourism and Cosmopolitanism in Odessa and Trieste**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the relation between new forms of post-mass tourism and the exploitations of maritime imageries related to the multicultural imperial narratives in contemporary Odessa and Trieste. The main hypothesis of this work is that the relationship between hosts and guests in post-communist seascapes and coastlines is often fraught with ambivalences and frictions, with special reference to the sea as a source of narratives, symbols and customs staged for tourist consumption. In particular, a growing sector of highly mobile and curious tourists who seek unusual, authentic experiences and who embrace a cosmopolitan ethos, are usually perplexed when the cosmopolitan pasts are reframed into national narratives. Accordingly, this paper aims to discuss the above-mentioned issue by focusing on two cases of maritime cities with a cosmopolitan history: Trieste and Odessa. In spite of the different geopolitical locations and economic standards, both cities are implementing their tourism policies by exploiting the material and symbolic importance of the maritime legacies of the cities and by playing upon narratives developed at a time when the cities were cosmopolitan maritime outposts of the Austrian and Russian empires. However, in the age of the empires, the multi-ethnic population of Odessa and Trieste, with special regards to the diaspora as an agent of civic progress, impersonated the gist of the multicultural imperial idea through their cosmopolitan flavor, economic prosperity and religious tolerance. In contrast, contemporary local decision makers try to turn these cosmopolitan imageries into factors of tourism development but often do not frame their actions within the changed economic and geopolitical contexts. Eventually, ‘exploring’ tourists are often puzzled by the experience of Trieste and Odessa because they are misled by a somewhat mythical interpretation of the social relationships at the time of the empires, and tend to misunderstand the present reality of ethnic and national relations in the cities.

**KEYWORDS:** Trieste, Odessa, tourism, cosmopolitanism, maritime imperial legacies

## **Tourism beyond the coastline: from the Adriatic to the Black Sea.**

Both politicians and entrepreneurs of the newly independent post-communist states are usually aware that the selection of symbols and images of their countries as tourist destinations can be a difficult task. This task might be even more challenging when the maritime dimension of the national identities become a part of these discussions, if we consider that from the 19th century onward the entrance of the sea into the national imaginations brought about contradictory forms of material and symbolic appropriations (for the Italian case, see Frascani 2008: 101–115).

In our time, the great part of the Adriatic seashores, both the Western and the Eastern parts, has reached the mature and post-mature stage of the tourist cycle (Agarwal 1997: 66–67; Savelli 1998: 114–116). Nevertheless, the typical standardisation of a summer seasonal product that defines seaside mass tourism has been obsolete from the 1990s onwards. Accordingly, since then maritime resorts have been experiencing original attempts to revive the uniqueness of the place through the resuscitation of forgotten traditions or the activations of new links, paths and connections that should deconstruct the famous image of the 3S (sun, sea and sand).

Particularly, as recently stated by Sedmak and Mihalic, the role of authenticity has been crucial as a differentiating and empowering factor in the context of Adriatic seaside resorts (Sedmak, Mihalic 2008: 1012). Therefore, the process of ‘staging authenticity’ (MacCannell 1999) acquires a growing importance for Adriatic resorts, especially for those that aim to attract new types of tourists who reject standardised and globalised products and are genuinely attracted by the local aspects of indigenous and autochthonous traditions (Crouch 1999; Gale, Botterill 2005; Coleman, Crang 2002). In the Adriatic region, like in other mature tourist destinations, those indigenous traditions are so closely connected with the countries’ national narratives that symbols and practices – specifically the ones with maritime features – become abstractions used to sell seaside tourist destinations as a part of the national heritage (Graml 2004: 141–144).

In this framework, I have been carrying out fieldwork on the eastern Adriatic seashores<sup>1</sup> to explore the ways relationships between hosts and guests would structure the cultural contents and the identity patterns staged for tourist consumption. Particularly, while the sea provides a source of narratives, symbols and customs that tourists are looking for, I argue that the way the sea is staged for tourism consumption in post-communist countries is not sufficiently explored. Sometimes, the romantic and naïve references to the rich heritage of maritime traditions seems to be enough to inspire some successful tourist policies, which aim to overcome the patterns of mass tourism in post-communist regions.

The survey carried out in the Adriatic basin aimed at decoding the expectations of a growing sector of highly mobile and curious tourists, who are usually exploring ways of overcoming the alienation of mass tourism. These tourists seek authentic experiences

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<sup>1</sup> My fieldwork was carried out in the frame work of a two-year national research project financed by the Italian Ministry of the Education and University. See [http://www.ricercaitaliana.it/prin/dettaglio\\_prin-2007PAB8EH.htm](http://www.ricercaitaliana.it/prin/dettaglio_prin-2007PAB8EH.htm)

outside everyday life, both looking for adventure and cultural enrichment; they may fall into the categories of ‘explorers’ or ‘drifters’ according to Cohen’s tourist roles typology (Cohen 1979).

In other words, their gaze, in the sense of John Urry (2000: 2–3), is mostly reaching out ‘beyond the coastline’, towards the islands and the cities of the other side of the Adriatic (Cocco 2008: 256–259). I termed them *terra-nauta*<sup>2</sup> for their nomadic habits and the intense attraction of the sea they usually experience. They like to move by sea (yachts, ferries, small boats) and consequently they seem to approach land destinations such as towns, countryside and mountains as if they were acting as sailors or maritime explorers. Moreover, in doing so, they also show a propensity towards a cosmopolitan mentality and international mind frames. One of the tourists I interviewed (who spent the summer travelling through the Dalmatian islands) sketches out quite clearly the attitude of the *Terra-nauta*: ‘To live the sea means to get in touch with the world and experience and encounter other cultures and nations. Especially the ones that are close by and share our common sea. To sail means to live a history we are a part of.’ However, during my fieldwork I also discovered that the point of view of the local hosts is a more ambivalent one. Both the local entrepreneurs and politicians in the Adriatic region are generally eager to celebrate the multicultural and cosmopolitan past of the maritime world, which is repeatedly recalled in tourist guides and informative brochures. However, the celebration is somehow ambiguous and it usually mingles contradictorily with national concerns and local fixations, which fold the stage with provincial and peripheral features.

As a result, the tourists who seek cosmopolitan and international experiences on the sea are quite often perplexed when maritime traditions, food, habits and cultural heritage are staged as ‘purely’ national products. In this context, my hypothesis is that the breakdown of the communist regimes transformed the maritime imageries of the Adriatic into a virtual battlefield where post-communist states seek new legitimacy of their national identities. This is true for the Adriatic, but I believe it could be extended to other maritime regions that have undergone post-communist transition, such as the Baltic Sea Region and the Black Sea.

The strategies of institutional appropriations of the sea and the coasts are not easy to implement. In fact, the maritime heritage of routes and international connections tends to work unexpectedly as a marker of cultural division. In other words, the maritime imageries and the memories of the Mediterranean cosmopolitanism may empower territorial identities that do not always comply with the ethno-national political requirements of the nation-states. This becomes significant when one considers the role of maritime cities, especially the port-cities of the Mediterranean that used to thrive as cosmopolitan emporia in the age of empires (Leontidou 1990). Those cities played a special role in the construction of the Mediterranean and consequently worldwide projections of the continental empires that maintained coastal possessions.

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<sup>2</sup> I borrowed the expression *terra nauta* from Prof. Josko Bozanic, University of Split. Prof. Bozanic explained me that *terra nauta* used to be a poetic name for Dalmatia at the time of the Republic of Venice.

Accordingly, I decided to enlarge the scope of my research introducing a more specific comparative topic. Being increasingly convinced that in order to disentangle the frictions and the ambivalences of the host-guest relation that takes place ‘beyond the coastline’ and in post-communist maritime spaces, I had to make two steps. The first one was to investigate the tourist gaze beyond the Adriatic basin, and the second one was to focus more specifically on maritime port-cities. The reason is that in these cities the mythologies of cosmopolitanism and maritime imperial legacies play a strategic role and are constantly nurtured by local public opinion. In this article, I reflect comparatively on two cities that are probably among the best examples of imperial creation of cosmopolitan emporia: Odessa on the Black Sea and Trieste on the Adriatic Sea.

To many tourists, Odessa and Trieste are ideas, or dreams, before than being real cities, because they are mainly known for literary and artistic heritage. Additionally, they were conceived by the imperial political authorities to be commercial and civilisational outposts. Thus, they were a part of a political and military projection towards newly incorporated maritime territories, which represented the new imperial frontiers. Maritime city-ports have traditionally represented a specific social and cultural environment (Luhmann, De Giorgi 1994: 275–281; Taylor 2004, Badie 1997), especially when they served large imperial communities. In a context of social stratification and ethnic plurality, which was typical of imperial powers such as the Austrian and Russian ones, these city-ports assumed both vital economic functions and highly symbolic values. In fact, by the 18th century onward, the continental empires invested materially and symbolically in the creation of littoral outposts towards the progressively global oceanic world of trade and commerce. Those cities were ‘special cases’ for the variety of people and the freedom and liberality of their customs, yet also aimed at portraying the civilizing message of the empires embodied in the urban multi-national and multi-religious local cosmopolitanism. Few cities more than Odessa and Trieste, in this perspective, impersonated the gist of the multicultural imperial idea through their cosmopolitan flavour, the economic prosperity and the practices of state-sponsored religious tolerance. Odessa and Trieste hosted large immigrant and diaspora communities, first of all the Jewish one, which extensively shaped the cultural and social landscape of the cities (Bianchini 2009; Dubin 1999). Moreover, the histories of Trieste and Odessa are exceedingly similar, from the imperial acts of foundation to the social engineering of their immigration policies. Eventually, the two cities also shared a post-imperial fate with the failure of the Russian and the Austrian empires, experiencing, though in different ways and times, tentative ethno-political redemptions and eventually the post-socialist implosion that introduced challenges.

It must be said, nonetheless, that the cases of Trieste and Odessa are also quite different under many aspects. The former was at the border of a socialist multi-national state (now post-socialist region) while the latter was included in a socialist and now post-socialist space. Also, in the case of Odessa, the integration into the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics meant somehow a replacement of the imperial experience of the Czarist Russian with another empire: the Soviet one (at least as far as the cosmopolitanism and internationalism are concerned). This is not the case of Trieste, were the end of the Hapsburg

Empire was followed by the incorporation into the Italian nation state. Nevertheless, one may also consider that the Italian Fascist regime manipulated and played upon the imperial narratives (especially referring to the myths of the Roman Empire and the Mediterranean civilization), in order to promote expulsions, internal migration and forced integration of the locals according to some social engineering principles. Moreover, even after World War II, the local scenario in Trieste was characterized by the huge immigration of the exiled populations from Istria (that reinforced the symbolic bond between the city and the peninsula across the border) and was deeply influenced by the destiny of Yugoslavia for the years to come.

Therefore, I believe that the performances based on the revival of maritime imperial legacies, regardless of Trieste's lack of incorporation into a socialist state, produce comparable discrepancies between cosmopolitan desires and provincial stances. They also deserve to be analysed comparatively.

In this paper, I suggest that both the tourist demands for some 'off-shore' sphere of multi-cultural experience 'beyond the coastline', and the attempts of the local hosts to stage it, reflect contemporary political concerns. In a way, tourist relations in post-communist maritime regions and, specifically, in the cities of Trieste and Odessa, resonate with preoccupations about identity and cultural clashes, i.e. tourist relations entail multiple frictions between the local, national and international patterns of identification. Moreover, the local urban elite experience difficulties in dealing with the contemporary marginalisation of their cities, and perform maritime imperial legacies as a tool for tourism development. In putting forward this thesis, I refer to and attempt to develop some notable investigations carried out by Pamela Ballinger (2003), who discusses the Hapsburg nostalgia in the city of Trieste; by Evridiki Sifneos (2005), who recasts cosmopolitanism as a feature of those pre-national entrepreneurs that were the members of merchant diasporas; and by Tanya Richardson (2008) who analyses the way the people of Odessa feel unique for the imperial legacies of the city.

## **The troubled re-discoveries of the Sea.**

The institutionalisation processes of national identities in post-communist states have overlapped and sometimes clashed with contemporary rediscoveries of local and regional identities in the same territories. These processes have included strategies of material and symbolic appropriations of the coasts and maritime spaces, nationally oriented re-interpretations of the sea, symbolic reconstructions of the maritime spaces and the revival of ancient affiliations to the Mediterranean koinè.

In the wake of renewed interest in Mediterranean studies, a specialised section of Italian scholarly literature suggests that the Adriatic Sea set the stage for the development of a maritime culture that bound most of the cities and the islands of the region until the end of the 19th century. In our time, such a culture would still be performing a supporting function to powerful representations of local cosmopolitanism of the Adriatic cities (Apollonio 1998; Matvejević 1987; Mucci & Chiarini 1999; Ivetic 2000). Therefore, some scholars

imply that in spite of the consolidation of the national ideologies and the progressive construction of modern nation-states, the Adriatic communities would retain the multicultural maritime features of a civil society in which ethnic, religious and language differences are fading away. Moreover, antagonist nationalisms have sometimes exploited such images in the process of fragmentation of former Yugoslavia, recovering a hierarchy of civilisations that dated back to the time of the Venetian rule over the Eastern Adriatic (Wolff 2001). Particularly, Western and self-perceived Mediterranean communities of former Yugoslavia have tried to oppose their seemingly higher civilisation against the backwardness and primitive mentality of the dwellers of the inland (Cocco 2007; Ballinger 2002; Bakic-Hayden 1992; Ashbrook 2006). As a result, the maritime local cosmopolitanism functioned as a factor of exclusion and differentiation from the projects of ethnic-national homogeneity, which were born far from the sea. In the case of the Black Sea, the conception of a specific sub-section within Mediterranean studies seems to be more problematic; because of its geo-political features the Black Sea remains at the intersection between two different academic traditions of social analysis, which usually split the littoral into completely separate fields (King 2002: 4–5). Nonetheless, the changes brought about by the post-communist transformation set the Black Sea back in the stage as a specific object of study and a target of political initiatives. According to Charles King, the present social construction of the Black Sea revolves around an ambiguous imaginary location of the sea both at the frontier of diverse civilisations (Greeks/Barbarians, Christian/Muslim etc.) and at the peripheries of some wider cultural spheres (Mediterranean, Balkan, Asiatic, etc.). Therefore, those who approach the topic of Black Sea would eventually face the ambivalence of a region that has been periodically both isolated and integrated within the continental power systems that periodically ran over the littoral (King 2002: 11). In fact, similar suggestions also fit the Adriatic basin as the territories of the Adriatic coast, especially the Eastern Adriatic, maintained an ambivalent position in the imaginaries of the central European powers, with special regards to the Habsburg Empire of the 19th century (Baskar 2002). On one hand, the exotic attraction of the seaside seduced many citizens of the continental regions of the Empire, who visited the coast as tourists or went to work there as civil servants. On the other, during the 19th century the Austrian monarchy reasserted its continental core by the Danube (*Donaumararchie*), thus keeping a safe distance from the sea (Johler 1999).

The role and the fate of the cities of Odessa and Trieste reflected such ambivalent relationships between the coast and the inland. Until the end of the Russian Empire, Odessa played the role of the major imperial maritime hub, thus remaining the virtual administrative, political and cultural centre of the entire Russian Black Sea seaside. However, that central position also maintained some degree of ambivalence. In fact, Odessa was quite often considered to be the ‘least Russian of all the Russian cities’ by Russian visitors; they were often surprised by its diverse ethnic composition and the exotic habits of its citizens. Moreover, the cosmopolitanism of Odessa was also expressed geographically, since the city was located in a symbolic north-south and east-west crossroad: at the crossing point between the Middle East, Western Europe, the Balkans, Russia and Northern Europe. It was at the same time the Russian material and immaterial door to ‘elsewhere’, but it was elsewhere

itself. Even in this case, the parallel with Trieste is important, as the northern Adriatic city-port was also portrayed as a bridge and a connecting point between geographically and symbolically opposite realms (Balkans-Western Europe, Germanic-Mediterranean-Slavic worlds etc.). Therefore, the cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic characters of Trieste and Odessa were not only due to their resident populations that were directly involved in the activities of trading and exchanging goods in the city-markets. In a different way, cosmopolitanism expressed an urban outward projection for the international trading links that made of Trieste and Odessa transfer points and more extensively places of material and immaterial conversion between the land and the sea (Driessen 2005; Leontidou 1990). Considering that the railway did not reach Odessa before the 1860s and the ‘Southern Railway’ connected Trieste with Vienna only in 1857, such port cities were obviously oriented towards the sea and found in the sea their natural connections with the larger society of the world. For instance, to travel in the hinterland of Odessa was difficult and dangerous; for long time, the only mean of transportation consisted of carriages pulled by bulls or horses. Nevertheless, to the pioneers of international adventure tourism, both foreigners and Russian travellers who would have probably reached Odessa via sea, the famous Baedeker guide (published in 1914) warned that they should be prepared to an unexpectedly ‘civil’ city. More specifically, Odessa was described as a modern city with only minor attractions for tourists that were probably searching for the exotic and seducing atmospheres of the East. Accordingly, a famous visitor of Odessa in the 20th century, the writer Mark Twain, reports in 1867 that he was struck by the large streets and the new houses of Odessa: ‘For a long time, I have been not feeling home like when I was in Odessa ... there was nothing reminding us we were in Russia ...’ (King 2002: 221–222).

After 1990, the topic of the sea becomes more persistently a part of the wider political debate on the post-communist development strategies. For instance, the sea and the seaside started to receive intense symbolic investment in Croatia for the supposedly crucial role of the Adriatic regions for the independence and the development of the entire country. However, during the years of the ‘homeland war’, the centralising politics of the newly established Croatian state mostly marginalised the Adriatic territories (sometimes unpleasantly referred to as the ‘South’ of country), with special regards to Istria and Rijeka that hosted local movements of political opposition to the ruling party of HDZ (Cocco 2007: 9–13). Even in Slovenia, after the country gained independence in 1991, the reduction of sovereignty over the Adriatic coast forced Slovenians to reinvent their seaside and coastal towns as properly ‘Slovenian’. Considering that tourist flows of the Slovenian travellers to the Adriatic have been traditionally directed towards Dalmatia (now abroad, in Croatia) the promotion of the Slovenian littoral was not a simple assignment, for that piece of coast was never considered particularly fashionable or attractive by Slovenians. Moreover, any tourist promotion of the coastline shall inevitably face the issues raised by the quite problematic ethnic relations between the former Italian speaking dwellers, the immigrant Yugoslav families and the new Slovenian tourists (Weber 2007: 197–201). On the northern shore of the Black Sea, Ukrainian independence triggered similar disputes, especially around the coastal region of the Crimean peninsula (mostly Russian-speaking and home of the Russian

military fleet). In spite of the new Ukrainian state's attempts to diffuse and consolidate some common notions of national identity, the borderland history of the country and the vastly different understanding of major events made the implementation of state projects a quite difficult endeavour. The antagonism between Eastern or Western orientation, the debate on primary affiliation with Russia or Europe, the contested sense of territoriality and the controversial perception of a shared history are all elements that shape the Ukrainian identity as something difficult to keep together (Bechtel 2006: 62–71)

In this context, Richardson's analysis of Odessa is quite inspiring because it shows how the cultivation of a cosmopolitan sense of place in the city may generate tensions and contradictions in the formation of a commonsense understanding of Ukraine as a nation and a state (Richardson 2008: 15–21). For instance, the people of Odessa tend to stress the fact that the city is older than 1794 – its official date of foundation – for it would have been a gateway and a place of trade and connection well before Ukraine. To many citizens of Odessa, the city represents a unique place, an almost distinct nationality made of international and multiethnic components bound together by the affiliation to the urban identity of the maritime emporium. Although the existence of the Ukrainian state is not radically contested and many non-Odessa-born Ukrainians are living peacefully in the city, the autochthonous people would never accept the definition of Odessa as a Ukrainian city. To support these beliefs, people of Odessa quite often restage the historical-mythical narrations of the imperial past vis-à-vis the nationalizing efforts of the new Ukrainian state

## **Trieste and Odessa: images of cosmopolitanism and the role of diasporas as local agents of civic transformation.**

With the end of the Communist regimes, in places like Odessa and Trieste people experienced the revival of a local celebration of hybridity and multi-cultural coexistence, which was usually justified by the reference to the maritime imperial legacies of the Russian and Austrian empires. Although Trieste was not a part of a communist state, the events connected with the exiled Istrian population in the aftermath of the Second World War and the strong (though uneasy) social and economic ties with Yugoslavia just a few kilometres away, produced intense relations between the development of the city and the post-Yugoslav transition processes. The revival of Trieste, apparently contradicts a well-established scholarship that has generally tended to assess the Empire-States of Central and Eastern Europe as agents of political and economic decline. In other words, the local imperial legacies in Trieste and Odessa stand out against the conventional belief that imperial Russia or imperial Austria were undergoing stagnation and regressive social trends. In fact, especially if considered from the point of view of international free port cities like Odessa or Trieste, the role of the imperial state was not completely in contradiction with the modernising trends that were taking place in 19th and 20th centuries (Bianchini 2009; Baskar 2008; Ballinger 2003; Frascani 2008; Zipperstein 1991). Conversely, focusing on the development of cosmopolitan city-ports, one may see how empires were not just concerned with internal problems of order and stability; they have also been able to perform the role of modernising institutions.

In Odessa, the central state authority, especially the empress Catherine the Great, sponsored the immigration of Jewish, Greeks, Armenian commercial diasporas, to acquire the benefits of traders' and bankers' expertise. The more than 100 nationalities populating Odessa in the 19th century were attracted with the promise of economic freedom, social emancipation and urban tolerance; those promises of cosmopolitanism responded to a political project, that is to say to develop and 'civilise' the newly acquired territories around the Black Sea by forging new links between Russia and the rest of the world (Herlihy 1986; King 2002; Karidis 1981). A similar state sponsorship – by another famous empress, Maria Theresa – allowed the transformation of the Habsburg Trieste into a multi-ethnic and multi-religious commercial city. Trieste represented the spirit of the progressive Habsburg mercantilism of Austria as a maritime power and portrayed the newly established political-economic ambitions towards the Adriatic and the Middle East (Good 1984; Dassovich 2003). Therefore, the political investment of absolutist states on places of trade and exchange aimed at turning them into the new centres of a new imperial order that was opening to the global oceanic society (Wallernstein 1979; Schmitt 1954; Braudel 1972). Eventually, the seemingly contradictory practice of creating a hub in a doorway, that is to say to establish a centercentre in a border area, embodied a pre-nation-state enlightened imperial strategy to manage the upcoming ambivalences of modernity. Also, frontier cities such Trieste and Odessa stood out as cosmopolitan trading centres in a world society that was progressively globalising through the establishment of extensive social networks. Thus, while the seductions of the Westphalian order took the upper hand in Central and Eastern Europe, the imperial authorities were searching a balance between the ambivalent and contrasting orientations towards the local, national and international scales (Kofman 2005; Donald, Kofman & Kevin 2009). Fascinatingly, that pursue of balance was focused on the gateways of the Empires: a projection that somehow reproduced a model of technological, economic and political development, which already made of the city of Venice the 'hinge' of Europe in the late medieval and early modern period (McNeill 1974).

The city of Trieste, until the end of the 18th century was a small northern Adriatic coastal town, with a tradition of loyalty to the Austrian Crown dating back to 1392. With a population ranging between 3,000 and 5,000 Italian-speaking inhabitants, Trieste gained the status of a free port in 1719 and after that its population grew enormously. During the 19th century it became a privileged place for the development of a maritime imperial imaginary for its unique role of a principal emporium and main port of the Habsburg Empire (Cattaruzza 1995; Del Bianco 1979, Coons 1982). The Austrian Lloyd, a state-ruled navigation company founded in 1830, regularly connected Trieste with European, Asian, Australian and African ports, although the great majority of its routes were towards the eastern Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. During the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph, a significant part of the Austrian nobility developed an interest and a passion for the Mediterranean Sea and regularly travelled down to the Adriatic coast.

According to a local legend of Trieste, the Empress Elizabeth (the famous 'Sissi') saw the sea for the first time in Trieste and used to spend time near it in the Castle of Miramare. The imperial family and its friends were fond of cruising and sailing, thus Trieste

became the privileged departure place for all Hapsburg adventures in the Mediterranean Sea and beyond (Giubek 2003; Sirovich 1996).

Although Austria possessed several important maritime outposts, rich in tradition and appointed by new administrative functions (such as the military harbour of Pola/Pula, in Istria), in the city of Trieste the maritime projections often expressed the quite modern cosmopolitan glamour of scientific expeditions, adventures, sporting challenges and colonial seduction (Scotti 1998, 2010). Accordingly, in line with the Habsburg ideology of the super-national mission of the empire, Trieste was officially celebrated as a place of ethnic and cultural hybridity; the city status of free port was associated with images such as the one of the 'bridge', the 'crossroad' and 'the melting pot' (Baskar 2008: 99).

In the case of Odessa, the story is remarkably similar to the one of Trieste. After the wars waged and won against the Ottoman Empire, the newly established Russian control of the northern coast of the Black Sea led to the creation of a new southern province of the Russian empire: New Russia (Novorossija). Such a new frontier region had its centre of gravity in the city of Odessa, the largest modern port-city of the entire Black Sea basin. By the end of the 18th century, Odessa was a portrait of the ideal Russian imperial city: an agent of civilization fuelled by political, cultural and social optimism (King 2002: 179). Like Trieste, which was turned by the Empress Maria Theresa into the free port of the Empire, the city of Odessa was founded on the Black Sea in 1794 by Catherine the Great. At that time, Odessa was just a dusty Tatar settlement named Hadji-Bey, with no more than 2,000 inhabitants and an uncomfortable small harbour constantly exposed to strong eastern winds. Nevertheless, it was the most relevant fortified town of the north-western coast of the Black Sea and its small Ottoman fortress was gained in 1789 by the Russian forces led by the Spanish born commander José de Ribas, one of the heroes of the Odessa pantheon. Also, Odessa had been chosen for its strategic position, close to the rivers Dnepr, Dniester and Danube, and the proximity to the Russian fleet headquarter in Sebastopol. The name Odessa (in Russian Odesa) refers to the old ancient Greek colony of Odessos and expresses a neoclassic taste, quite popular at end of the 18th century; interestingly, it seems that the substitution of the name Odessus with the female Odessa was the choice of Catherine the Great.

In the period between 1823 and 1845, when the governor general Michail Voroncov ruled, the city was embellished with monuments and cultural institutions. It also obtained the status of 'free-port', with exemption from the payments of custom fees. This last acquisition definitely signed the fate of Odessa, turning an old Ottoman fortified town into a flourishing international cross road, with a heterogeneous and growing population of 78,000 persons (Herlihy 1986: 120–121). The city was the third largest of the Russian Empire and played the role of a virtual gateway to Russia from the entire Mediterranean world. Somehow, a hundred years after the foundation of Saint Petersburg, the Russian empire again performed its social and political engineering with the creation of a new multi-ethnic and multi-religious free port. A quite rapid population growth for the high number of immigrants coming from Central Europe and the Middle East made Odessa the quintessentially exotic city of Russia: certainly more exotic than Moscow and even more than the 'European' Saint Petersburg.

In spite of the great number of temporary residents, who only came in town for business and then left, the city population was growing constantly throughout the 19th century from the immigration of German, Greek Armenian and especially Jewish diasporas. In 1823, an English captain harboured in the port of the city commented that: ‘apart of the dust of the streets and the impressive numbers of Jews (sic), the impression of the city was a good one’ (King 2002: 184).

Diasporas were attracted by the favourable economic conditions but also, and perhaps more importantly, by the prospect of life in an enlightened Christian kingdom that was promoting social tolerance and freedom of commerce. The Jewish community, usually oppressed and limited in its sphere of action, found in Odessa (as in Trieste) the appropriate social and cultural conditions to perform its interlocking role of mediation between the city and the rest of the world. In fact, the city and its immigrant population lived in a state of isolation from the countryside and its Slavic and Kazakh peasants. Diasporas, in this regards, represented intense social networks that circulated ideas and practices; thus, their economic and social performance had the effect of ‘binding’ together social strata and geographical site that were quite separated and were not necessarily part of the same diasporas. (Bianchini 2009: 6–11). The involvement of diasporas in some specific sectors of trade, administration, finance, and craft eventually strengthened the connections between nobility, traders, peasants and bureaucrats. In other words, their role of mediation enhanced the creation of a functionally connected regional space and at the same time introduced some degree of etherarchy. Certainly, all diasporas developed autonomous cultural subjectivity as they were simultaneously experiencing the interdependence of wide trans-European connections.

Accordingly, Odessa soon acquired names that described its cosmopolitan character and multinational milieu, such as ‘the melting pot of Russia’. Until the end of the Russian empire in 1917, the city was deemed one of the few places in Russia – together with Saint Petersburg – where trade, culture and liberal customs could grow (Iljine 2004). The wide range of civil-oriented activities that diasporas promoted both in Odessa and Trieste, like in other multi-ethnic port-cities of the Mediterranean (such as Alexandria or Thessaloniki), made those trans-national communities agents of change and local development. Therefore, the cosmopolitan features of the urban milieu of Odessa and Trieste were a specific cultural phenomenon that characterised commercial diasporas and were strictly connected with the idea of civil progress. In Odessa, resident Greek merchants were often involved in the financial and architectural development of the city and not surprisingly were often asked to do so by the governing bodies (Vasilis 2001). As a result, Jewish and Greek elites were directly investing in real estate of the city, contributing to its urban development and owing many the most beautiful western-style buildings of Odessa. The close relationship between urban growth and the cosmopolitan culture of the commercial diasporas reverberated in the architectural shape of Odessa. Apart from the private buildings, the picturesque character of the city was given by its boulevards, luxury restaurants, bookshops, theatres, opera houses, clubs, banks, hospitals and many other sites and buildings, which aimed at celebrating civil progress. A similar urban growth took place in Trieste, where the financial, banking and

trading companies' sumptuous headquarters flourished side-by-side with literary societies and famous mitteleuropean cafés (the port of Trieste became a central gateway for coffee traders). From this standpoint, according to Evridiki Sifneos, cosmopolitanism was both a distinctive cultural worldview and a set of publicly oriented practices that drew inspiration from the Western European Enlightenment (Sifneos, 2005: 97). However, the golden age of cosmopolitanism was the final era of the Empire (end of 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries). Later, the international culture expressed by the commercial elites before the shaping of modern national identities gradually faded away.

## **Maritime imperial legacies, mythologies of cosmopolitanism and present day tourism challenges.**

By the second half of the 19th century, the expansion of travel and tourism went together with important technological acquisitions in the field of transportation systems. The steamers, railways and better roads allowed not only foreigners but also many citizens of the empire to discover their maritime frontiers for the first time. In Russia, the coastal region of the Black Sea (the Novorossija frontier land) was still a half-domesticated frontier in spite of being administratively integrated into the Empire. However, it was now more accessible to the rest of Russians who could now approach and discover it by travelling, writing and painting. To the artists, writers, poets and educated travellers from the continental cities, the trip to Odessa represented a sort of step into an enlightened hub within a primitive domestic foreign land. There, it was possible to interact with the exotic Turkish, Greek, Jewish and Tatar elements of the mingling maritime culture.

Even in Trieste, the exotic attributes of the city grew stronger with the development of modern means of transportation, which enabled also new forms of labour migration besides travelling. One of the famous examples is the case of the *alessandrine* (in Slovenian *aleksandrinke*, 'women of Alexandria'), the Slovenian women who immigrated to Alexandria of Egypt to work as *au pair* ladies or baby-sitters for the rich merchant families of the African city. The female migration towards Egypt was part of a larger migration trend towards many port-cities of the eastern Mediterranean such as Smyrna, Thessaloniki, Beirut, Tunis, Alger and Cairo. However, Alexandria held a particular attraction for immigrants that moved from all the European Mediterranean countries, including the Austrian and Ottoman empires. The migration movement started after 1869, when the Suez Canal was opened and continued until the end of the Second World War. Immigrant women served both in immigrant European families and in local Arab or Copt families and integrated into a cosmopolitan merchant society that was benefiting from an intense economic development (Baskar 2008: 107–109; Makuc 1993; Tomsic 2002).

However, the case of the *alessandrine* suggests that the changes in transportation systems, like the developments in shipping and communications played a crucial role in the process of erosion both of the Mediterranean cosmopolitanism and the local autonomy of the cities – a role that may be as important as the rising national antagonism and the sovereign assertiveness of newly established nation states (Purvis 2009).

In fact, the watery connections that linked the port-cities of the Mediterranean

were progressively eroded right from the second half of the 19th century, both for the development of long-distance shipping overseas and because of land-oriented technological developments that allowed the constructions of streets, railways and bridges to increase the connections between the coast and the inland. In the meantime, new classifications of people based on race, ethnicity and nation entered in competition with the old maritime-based affiliations. In other words, the identity patterns produced by the traditional maritime connections began to fall outside the evolving juridical and administrative structure of the state. The ethnic-national ones proved to be more compatible with the emerging nation state codes, although they were created within an imperial bureaucratic system. Accordingly, in the Eastern Adriatic these transformations started at the time of the Hapsburg rule, when the old categories of the Venetian administration such as 'Dalmatians' or 'Morlachs' were unable to represent politically, culturally, linguistically and ethnographically the identities evoked by terms like Slavs, Croats or Italians. In this perspective, Pamela Ballinger claims that the Austrian administration started a 'terrestrial conversion' of the cultural identities of the Adriatic people, who consequently began to experience an ethnic differentiation from their neighbours (Ballinger 2008: 30). As a result, the sense of ethnic difference grew together with a sense of spatial perception of isolation and diffidence, which was sometimes expressed by the image of the island surrounded by a hostile sea. Specifically, the 'Slavic ocean' was surrounding the 'language islands' of the Italians of Istria and Dalmatia or the Germans of Bohemia (Judson 1983). Interestingly, the image of the islands, which had a major role in the age of exploration and expansion of the European countries worldwide, was progressively associated to the sense of isolation and segregation (Gillis 2004). However, if the Hapsburg state conversion of old maritime identities went together with the development of stronger ties between the city-ports and the metropolitan centres of the inland, the sense of strong local identity in the port-cities did not fade away. On the contrary, it somehow grew stronger.

Similarly in Russia, the stronger integration of the city of Odessa both within the continental networks of transportations and the central political system did not hinder Odessa residents from maintaining enduring memories of former regimes and imperial pasts. Therefore, those imperial legacies represented a strong tool of social imagination and local resistance to the homogenizing attempts throughout the 20th century. From this standpoint, Tanya Richardson states that 'sense of place'-based identities ('I am from here'), like the one experienced by the citizens of Odessa, are not the product of failing modernisation, rather the effect of modernity (Richardson 2008: 10). The people of Odessa look with pride at their city, its quality of life and specific urban culture that are embedded in the charming architecture of the old imperial free port. It seems they genuinely believe that the imperial legacies allow them to subvert the official nation-state-based imagination, thus making a different Russian-cosmopolitan identity possible. I would add to Richardson's argument that the 'sense of place' not only structures some alternative cosmopolitan identity and a city-based self-perception different from the official national narratives. In fact, that 'sense' does not frame just an 'experience' but may inspire and support forms of 'agency', i.e. entrepreneurial and political strategies.

In this regard, in the course of my fieldwork I realised that those ‘sense of place’ identities and their ambivalent references to maritime imperial legacies play a crucial role in the way local elites frame tourism development strategies. Purposely, in spite of their different geopolitical locations and economic standards, both Trieste and Odessa are re-shaping their urban identities through tourism policies that are based on the material and symbolic importance of the maritime legacies for the future of the city<sup>3</sup>. My assumptions are based on background research conducted between autumn 2008 and summer 2009, which focused on the analysis of tourism promotional products elaborated at the town, provincial and regional levels, such as leaflets, guides, maps and all other information supports distributed at tourist offices. Also, I carried out an overview of the most popular websites in English, Russian and Italian languages dedicated to tourism in the two cities. Eventually, I made almost 29 half-structured interviews with tourist entrepreneurs and civil servants working on the tourism sector at the town administration and the regional government; interviews included talks with civil servants, consultants, entrepreneurs and members of ethnic and religious minorities in the cities of Odessa and Trieste. Moreover, I had similar interviews with tourists moving ‘off-shore’ (cruisers, sailors, yacht-owners, etc.) in the Adriatic and the Black sea, specifically 42 both in Trieste and Odessa<sup>4</sup>.

Although my fieldwork is still ongoing and the research is in progress, I believe the arguments I have already exposed provide some elements for a stimulating discussion and they should contribute to further investigations along the same path, if only because the data I collected in my background research can be crossed with ‘motivation patterns’ of the tourists ‘beyond the coastline’ found at the wider national level (see footnote 1) and help to structure the host-guest relationship. That is to say, the tourists’ motivation patterns have been drafted after collecting more than 700 structured surveys (multiple choice) in the Adriatic region. The surveys have been processed by a multivariate analysis of the data and then elaborated further with a cluster analysis, i.e. with the key-clustering method<sup>5</sup>. Finally, I crossed the major contents extracted by the hosts’ tourist discourses in Trieste and Odessa with some integrated, multivariate patterns of behaviours of the ‘guests’<sup>6</sup>, that describe the expectations of the *terra-nauta* type of tourist. Certainly, a similar survey on the tourist motivations should be done in the Black Sea to provide a sounder methodological ground, but I think that some valuable reflections can be already put forward. As a result, the first evidence is that both in Trieste and Odessa post-communism has meant the dismantlement of structured economic activities, changes in the symbolic geographies and transformation of mobility patterns. In this context, tourism has been playing an essential role to support the conversion of pre-1990 urban identities into something new. From this

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<sup>3</sup> Additional fieldwork in the city of Odessa has been carried out by two graduate students (Simona Pisarri and Raffaella di Febo) of the University of Teramo, Faculty of Political Science, Cultural Tourism Degree, who spent a semester in Odessa with the support of a scholarship of the Department of International Relations, University of Teramo

<sup>4</sup> Originally the idea was to carry out 50 interviews in Odessa and 50 in Trieste, but that number was not reached. However, significant relations among the answers of the informants have been detected

<sup>5</sup> Statistical Programme for Social Science (SPSS), version 16

<sup>6</sup> For details on the behavioral patterns of the type of tourists I refer to as ‘*terra-nauta*’, follow the link at footnote no. 1

standpoint, the present-day city tourism strategies are largely playing upon the narratives developed at the time when the cities were the maritime outposts of the Austrian and the Russian empires.

The most popular tourist name for Odessa is the ‘Pearl of the Black Sea’, which can be found in almost all of the tourist promotional information. Besides, short descriptions of the city for tourist consumption refer to Odessa as an exotic ‘Southern’ or ‘Mediterranean Russia’, a ‘kaleidoscope of colours and people’ and a ‘Western European City’. The merchant and trading soul of Odessa is often usually evoked, for instance quoting the ‘thriving enterprises that have left the city with some splendid architecture from the 18th and 19th centuries, and a multifaceted, irrepressible spirit’<sup>7</sup>. Tourist guides like to repeat how Odessa is rich in Western European culture and known throughout the world for its art and culture. According to the section ‘About Odessa’ of the Odessa internet portal ‘Travel-to-Odessa’<sup>8</sup>: ‘Odessa has always had a spirit of freedom, probably endowed by its ability to accept many different peoples. The city is constantly hosting exhibits, symposia, and conferences. It is the site of consulates and trade missions of many countries and many cultural exchange societies are active in the city’.

Such descriptions recall the famous Pushkin poem Eugene Onegin, when referring to Odessa the poet says: ‘There everything reminds of Europe: the colors gay, the air’s like syrup; Italian heard throughout the streets, where a proud Slav can a Spaniard meet; Moldovian, French, Albanians, Greeks, forget not sons of the land of Egypt’ (Pushkin 2003). Similarly, in an airport magazine (‘Welcome to Ukraine’, distributed for free in Ukrainian airports), the charms of Odessa are celebrated by quoting a letter sent by the Duke of Richelieu, the famous governor of Odessa to the Emperor Alexander the First: ‘Never have I seen in any country so many nationalities almost opposite of manners, languages, clothes, religions and customs on such a little territory.’ All of which is to say that the peculiar combination of a rich diversity of cultures and the small size of the territory is what would give to Odessa its vibrant spirit and material wealth.

In the case of Trieste, the official booklet (brochure ‘Le terre di Trieste’), printed by the regional tourist office and distributed in the tourist offices of the city, bears an interesting title: ‘Trieste. A view over the world’. Such title contains all the most important features of the city, being a truly multi-national micro-cosmos, which would be mostly attractive to tourists. Browsing through the text of the booklet, the reader notices that Trieste is also called ‘a borderland’ and ‘a city with thousands facets’. Interestingly, the multicultural tradition is strongly associated with the maritime character of the city for the sea is both ‘central’ to the city life and made of ‘border waters’. Similarly to Odessa, promoters try to endorse Trieste’s nickname ‘The pearl of the Gulf’ (perhaps ‘The pearl of the Adriatic’ would have been a little bit too much, considering the competition of Venice and Dubrovnik, among the others). So, within the Triestine tourist imagery, the sea plays a two-fold interlocking function.

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<sup>7</sup> See [www.odessaguide.com](http://www.odessaguide.com), accessed 14 November 2009

<sup>8</sup> See [www.travel-to-odessa.com](http://www.travel-to-odessa.com), accessed 12 December 2009; see also ‘Odessa Ukraine, My City’

The sea has been a permeable border that enabled a mix of religion, architecture, culture and gastronomy. Especially from the point of view of religious identities, both the printed data I went through and the interviews I had confirmed that the city tourist promotional strategy aims to celebrate the historical presence of the merchant maritime communities as a crucially strong point. The religion of Trieste is officially described as ‘the cult of the cults’ as the city ‘gave hospitality’ through the centuries to the Orthodox, the Jews, the Lutherans and the Elvetics (see the section religion at [www.turismofvg.it](http://www.turismofvg.it)).

Although the city is a truly crossroad of people, nations, languages and traditions, Trieste would provide a truly central standpoint for the ‘literary atmosphere and mercantile spirit’ that would permeate a specific cosmopolitan urban outlook: a ‘blue Mitteleuropa’<sup>9</sup>, blue like the colour of the sea. In other words, thanks to its maritime history, Trieste could nowadays host museums, archives, theatres, cafés and charming palazzi that make the streets of the city *brulicanti di vita* (see also Bergamini 1999)

However, quite often the local strategies of tourism development seem to explicitly forget that the material conditions and the cultural frames have completely changed since then. In doing so, post-fordist tourism does not really take off and the process of staged authenticity is trapped in the ambivalences of unsolved ethnic, social and economic problems. In Odessa, despite the local authorities’ efforts to promote the cosmopolitan image of the exotic though ‘European’ maritime city, the public sector appears almost powerless<sup>10</sup>. Virtually all tourism activities are in private hands, while public authorities do not even run tourist information desks. Contemporary private entrepreneurship is not necessarily interested in acting for civic progress in the way the commercial diasporas of the 19th century were. Therefore, according to most of the local experts and public functionaries, the state had to sell most of the historical tourist resorts and prestigious buildings for financial reasons. However, the new private owners in most cases are not particularly eager to preserve or gentrify the places they buy. Nor do they seem concerned by the need to develop an international tourist attractiveness that would revive the cosmopolitan heritage of the city<sup>11</sup>. Conversely, since 1995–1996 clubs and pubs for young, and mostly Ukrainian, people are multiplying along the urban beach of Arcadia. From 2009, entry into one of the almost 30 beaches of Odessa is now free, by decree of the mayor of the city. However, international tourists do not head to the beaches very much, since they

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<sup>9</sup> In the website [www.triestecultura.it](http://www.triestecultura.it) (accessed 12 January 2010) the city is presented as a place where Mitteleuropa is painted with blue: ‘Here you can breathe a special air. Here, at the most Eastern edge of the upper Adriatic. Here, in the blue Central European town, where great writers like James Joyce, Italo Svevo and Umberto Saba found inspiration. Trieste, the city that embraces the sea or, to put it better, that hosts the sea as a permanent guest. To begin with Piazza Unità, among the largest and charming squares on the seaside’. Interestingly, in spite of the cosmopolitan and international ambitions, both the geography of the city (most Eastern edge of the upper Adriatic) and the mentioned literary pantheon (Joyce, Svevo, Saba) are designed from an Italian perspective. How eastern is Trieste compared to other Upper Adriatic destinations in Slovenia and Croatia? And what about others writers like the Triestine Slovene writers like Srečko Kosovel or Boris Pahor?

<sup>10</sup> Serghei Geor, Regional Government of Odessa, Department of Culture and Tourism. Interviewed by Raffaella Di Febo, 27 May 2009

<sup>11</sup> Nadia Ieksarova, State Academy for Architecture and Construction of Odessa. Interviewed by Simona Pisarri. 21 April 2009

stop in Odessa when they are cruising in the Black Sea. About 133,000 tourists disembarked at the port of Odessa in 2008, especially from luxury cruising ship, even though the great part of these tourists usually spend only one to two days for an excursion in town. Moreover, in spite of the cosmopolitan ambition of the city, walking around the city, a tourist gaze would catch predominantly a wide offer of ethnic Ukrainian souvenirs, food and market products<sup>12</sup>. In Trieste, the situation is somehow different, first of all because the city did not undergo the strain of post-communist transition and benefits from a healthier economy. However, considering that the collapse of the communist systems and the enlargement of the European Union should have pushed Trieste at the 'centre of the New Europe', as local newspapers and literature like to repeat, the results are still far below the expectations. The famous Trieste-born "Generali" insurance company has recently migrated to Venice and the harbour passenger terminal of the city is suffering the competition of nearby Koper and Rijeka. Also, a few years ago the city administration applied to candidate Trieste as site of the 2008 Expo (World Exposition) proposing the quintessentially cosmopolitan slogan: 'Mobility of Knowledge'. The Expo should have attracted capitals and financing to enable a thoughtful restoration of the abandoned old Austrian port infrastructures (Porto Vecchio). However, the application was rejected by the international evaluation committee, and the general opinion I gathered after speaking both with entrepreneurs and local functionaries of the public sector is that the main reason for failing was the enduring inability of the local ruling class to cooperate. In this somehow sad context of self-commiseration, tourism is usually hailed as the way to change the future of the city by calling back the rich imperial tradition of the cosmopolitan Hapsburg free-port. However, despite the intense reminiscences none of the major city projects with some impact on tourism, such as the 'Sea Park', the restoration of the city beach of Barcola and the development of the waterfront have been concretely realised. What most of the tourists experience when they are disembarked at the city port from one of the mega-cruisers of the Costa or MSC companies is barely comparable with the busy atmosphere of the old free port. Most of the tourists I had the opportunity to interview, although charmed by the city's evocative architecture, are puzzled by what to them seem to be an 'empty city', a 'melancholy resort for elders' or 'a site cut-off from the rest of Italy'. In addition, cruisers moving along the shores of the Mediterranean usually stop in Trieste on Monday, when basically all shops are closed and tourists find it difficult even to drink a coffee in a bar. I personally believe that this last fact tells a lot about the inability of the local ruling class to perform anything like an efficient tourist strategy. As said at the beginning, the cosmopolitanism expressed by places like Trieste and Odessa is awakened in the post-communist period. However, it is for an 'imperial nostalgia' for a better cosmopolitan world that is inexorably lost, and that was initially elaborated at the end of the 19th century, when the empires were still alive (Ara, Magris 1982). Nevertheless, the imperial nostalgia of Trieste and Odessa intensively revived in the transition period that was opened up by the end of a 'former world' of the communist period. I think the persistence of such nostalgia depends on the fact that any definitive inclusion of Central-Eastern Europe into the new Western-European realm is constantly postponed. Accordingly, to Pamela Ballinger, the imperial nostalgia in the city

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<sup>12</sup> Tatyana Stamikova, Tourist Agency "Primexpress", interviewed by Raffaella Di Febo, 12 May 2009

of Trieste evokes the romantic reminiscence of a political experiment of religious and ethnic diversity, which was nonetheless sponsored by an absolutist state (Ballinger 2003: 84–85, 90, 94). Therefore, the memories of the cosmopolitan Trieste, of its bourgeois and hybrid customs, and the subsequent decline into a melancholic provincial town, would probably resonate with contemporary concerns. In Ballinger's opinion, the celebration of cultural hybridity and civic progress would exorcise the political and cultural preoccupations of the Western public opinions with the issues of identity, tolerance and the challenges to the nation state.

In principle, I quite agree with Ballinger's thesis, but I would add that those concerns are not just part of some local literary self-portrait but they can support some relevant performances of public and private actors, which have an impact on the ongoing urban identity-making process. Specifically, I suppose that the extensive and passionate discussion around tourism and the role of tourism for urban development is a part of those contemporary concerns. In particular, the citizens of Trieste and Odessa may possibly live the illusion of a progressive, civic oriented and dazzling multiethnic city by staging their maritime imperial legacies for tourism purposes.

Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that the cosmopolitan and hybrid nature of the free port of Trieste was designed by an imperial administration and found its *raison d'être* in the commercial and political ambition of an absolutist state (Dubin 1999: 4). Similarly, in Odessa the municipal authorities were given exceptional power and freedom to realise an autonomous urban development (Richardson 2008: 21). The free port status allowed Odessa to have financial and commercial ties so strong with foreign markets that the city was virtually cut off from the remainder of Russia and even Novorossija. Odessa territory was basically a 'state within a state' and the municipality had its main relationships with the European and Asiatic ports of the Mediterranean. Therefore, although the city saw a radical drop of the European population and the growth of the Russian one after the construction of the railway, the people of Odessa developed an even stronger Western and European identity.

In conclusion, I think that the revived cosmopolitan identities of Trieste and Odessa rely upon a somewhat mythical interpretation of social relationships at the time of their respective empires, which is experienced in an age when both empires and the powerful state-sponsored municipal autonomies have disappeared from the European map. Nonetheless, the cosmopolitan maritime legacies represent an important differentiating factor that could be exploited in the tourism market. However, in many ways, both Trieste and Odessa have been progressively marginalised in the regional and global economies. Thus, longing for a more international and cosmopolitan past does not necessarily produce good tourism strategies. In fact, imperial nostalgia may lead to mistaking the nature of state sponsored imperial cosmopolitanism and misunderstanding the present reality of ethnic and national relations in the cities. In other words, although maritime imperial legacies may act as factors of attraction for new types of tourists, tourism strategies should take into account the technological, political and cultural changes undergone by the cities since the time of the empires. In particular, entrepreneurs and politicians dealing with tourism development will face the peripheral and marginal conditions of Trieste and Odessa within the contemporary geography of the political and economic power.

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## POVZETEK

Prospevek raziskuje odnos med novimi oblikami post-masovnega turizma in izkoriščanja pomorskih metafor v sodobni Odesi in Trstu. Onovna hipoteza je, da je odnos med gostitelji in gosti v post-komunističnih pomorskih okoljih in obalah pogosto preobremenjen z dvomji in trenji, še posebej, kadar je morje vir pripovedi, simbolov in kostumov, ki služijo turistični potrošnji. Še posebej so v trenutkih, ko je kozmopolitanska pretekost uokvirjena v nacionalne naracije, zbežan rastoči sektor visoko mobilnih in radovednih turistov, ki sprejemajo kozmopolitanski etos. V skladu s tem se prispevek osredotoča na dva primera pristaniških mest s kozmopolitansko zgodovino: Trst in Odesa. Kljub različnim geografskim lokacijam in ekonomskem standardu, obe mesti uveljavljata turistično politiko prek izkoriščanja materialne in simbolne pomembnosti pomorskih tradicij obeh mest in prek preigravanja naracij iz časa, ko sta bili obe mesti kozmopolitanski pristaniški oporišči avstrijskega oziroma ruskega imperija. Vseeno pa sta v času imperijev multietnični populaciji Odesa in Trsta ter njuni diaspori kot gonilo civilnega napredka, posebly jedro multikulturne imperialistične ideje skozi svoj kozmopolitanski okus, ekonomski razcvet in versko tolerantnost. Ravno nasprotno pa današnji lokalni veljaki želijo te kozmopolitanske metafore spremeniti v dejavnike turističnega razvoja, pri čemer pa svojih delovanj ne postavijo v spremenjeni ekonomski in geopolitični kontekst. Zaradi tega so 'raziščujoči' turisti v Trstu in Odesi pogosto zmedeni, saj jih zavede precej mitska interpretacija družbenih odnosov v času imperijev, zaradi česar tudi napačno razumejo trenutno realnost etničnih in nacionalnih odnosov v obeh mestih.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** Trst, Odesa, turizem, kozmopolitанизem, pomorske imperialne tradicije

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