

THE STATE WANTS IT SO, AND THE FOLK CANNOT DO ANYTHING AGAINST THE STATE ANYWAY

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After Slovenia and Croatia proclaimed their independence, a new defining of the state borders took place. The result of a new situation is, among other things, that the population from the both sides of the border had to re-define their social and cultural space. The author did fieldwork in the village of Sv. Peter, placed on today's border between Slovenia and Croatia near the river Dragonja. On basis of his fieldwork, he analyses the process of disappearing of many intercultural communications between Croatian and Slovenian population, as well as the process of disappearing of kinship, friendship, economic and other relations. At the same time, he discovers new socio-cultural processes, such as a shift in identity, or, to be more precise, forming of new identity (from ethnic to national) and the changes that follow the new concept of time and space.

As a political intervention in a particular space, the new state border between Slovenia and Croatia has changed not only the physical environment, but also forced the inhabitants of the border villages to

redefine their social space. In the village of Sv. Peter¹ the border has broken numerous intercultural communications, kinship relations, friendships and economic relations by which the wider social environment of the border villages' inhabitants had been defined.

After the publication of Barth's book *Social Groups and Boundaries* anthropologists have predominantly concentrated their attention on cultural and symbolic boundaries (Barth 1969). State borders and sociocultural processes that go on at borders and near them have only recently attracted their attention (Donnan & Wilson 1994). I myself did not give much consideration to this question when I started my fieldwork two years ago in Sv. Peter. However, on arrival I soon encountered the meaning, role and consequences of the new international border for everyday life in the village. One of the most obvious consequences of dividing space and people was the acceleration of the process of creating "us" and "foreigners", or the process of changing identities and the concepts of space and time that are connected with them, which is also the subject of this discussion.

1. The importance to identity of social space and time

Though an image and structure of a space cannot give us the exact appearance of social relations and structures, they constitute a part of the momentary social order and in every environment represent one of the basic elements of our image of ourselves. Maurice Halbwachs wrote that a group living in a certain environment forms this space, and that the relation between the group and its image of the outer environment actually directs the group's development (Halbwachs 1991:129). But how does a group reestablish the image of a certain space and what conceptual apparatuses does it use in this "direction"?

The structure of social memory² in Sv. Peter is represented by family genealogies, local geography and their historical experiences that

¹ Sv. Peter (Saint Peter) is an Istrian village which is situated some 10 km from the Adriatic coast of Slovenia. It lies on a hill above the valley of the river Dragonja - which, since 1991, has become the border between Slovenia and Croatia - and the village of Dragonja which (in the last 50 years) has developed, more or less, through migration from Sv. Peter.

In the village of Sv. Peter I am in the process of concluding my research into social memories and time perception. This research is part of a larger project entitled "Between Tradition and Modernity" being carried out by the Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

² Halbwachs talks about collective memory by which a certain group is enabled to create the image of the world. The latter is connected to the acceptable interpretation of the past, which results from communications and not from a personal memory (Halbwachs 1991). Thus, collective memory has an unexchangeable social role. That is why I use the

"represent essential elements of the collective image of the world, collective behaviour and collective memory of a certain group or society" (Giordano 1989:19). Through everyday contacts with the environment which includes these historical experiences, this space has been socialized in contrast to remote anonymous space. In this way the space connected to memory has built some kind of a bridge between the past and the present. Links between social space and memory are thus of a temporal character which means that each individual and group is temporally included in social time and space. Although Barbara Adam says that "all time is social time" (Adam 1990:42) it is the multiplicity of time³ for which we have to define social time that connects space and memory.

Social time is a social construct. Its basis is represented by events transmitted through memory, experiences, social relations and social processes in a given space. A certain social group can locate all these elements into the past, present or future. The terms "before" and "after" suffice for social memory, so that a group brings together in imagination events which did not occur together (Elias 1989:45). It thus concerns the collective images of time that are conditioned by daily life-practice and the local logic of organizing the everyday of a certain group. Social time originates in social interactions and primarily performs the task of a medium for coordination and synchronization of social life (Nowotny 1995:81). That is why each social group has its own social time. In spite of its abstraction it is simultaneously experienced and structured, and bound with concrete events.

(Re)definitions of identities are connected with the (re)conceptualization of social time and space. Identity is not just a certain relation or state, but appears as a formally multilayered phenomenon in which the following meanings are usually considered: belonging, self-seeing, self-evaluation/attributing prestige (Elwert 1996:110–111). That is why every meditation about identity depends on social and political environment in a given time and space, and on the categories with which we can create differences between us and the others.

In the Istria of this century the continuous reestablishment of these differences and the identities that are connected with them is, among others, a consequence of numerous state borders. These and the various life experiences connected with them, together with specific economic and political development, were the main reasons that in Sv. Peter (and, very

term Social memory that tells us "who we are, embedding our present selves in our pasts, and thus underpinning every aspect of what historians often now call *mentalités*" (Fentress & Wickham 1992:201).

³ Besides others, Elias 1989; Halbwachs 1991; Dux 1992; Nassehi 1993; Makarovič 1995 and Weis 1995 also wrote about the multiplicity of time.

likely, in a good part of Slovene Istria) the differences between "us" and "the others" were put forward as ethnical differences.

Ethnicity - in the sense of belonging to a certain ethnical group - has a very special and important role in an individual's feeling of identity. In certain specific situations ethnicity can be a mutable strategy based on particular historical conditions (Mac Clancy 1993:85) and also, most certainly, environments. I am going to represent one of such environments, where identity as a very flexible form of self-identification was defined (when necessary) with various (cultural) substances, with the village of Sv. Peter as an example. My hypothesis, which I will try to prove, is that because of the new state border or, in other words, politically created space, the inhabitants of Sv. Peter have (re)defined their identity by adapting it to their (changed) experiences from everyday life in the new circumstances.

2. The Šupetrci and their neighbours

Immediately after World War II the region of Istria⁴ was partitioned by "Morgan's line" which separated Istria into Zone A which was governed by the Allies, and Zone B under the jurisdiction of Tito's Yugoslavia. The Paris peace agreement of 1947 stipulated the formation of the free Trieste territory which, due to ideological reasons, never really came to life. In 1954, the London Memorandum divided the territory between Yugoslavia (which was given Zone B) and Italy (which took over Zone A) (Marin 1992). In socialist Yugoslavia, the river Dragonja marked the border between the Istrian part of Croatia and Slovenia - however this border had more of an administrative nature than anything else. With the independence of Slovenia and the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991, Istria was again partitioned by a border - this time an international one which

⁴ Istria, whose name is connected with the Greek legend about the Argonauts, is the biggest peninsula in the north Adriatic. Due to its size and strategic position, Istria represented an important administrative and trade area from the early antique times. As such, throughout history it was the scene of numerous changes in rulers and the administrations/sovereignties that were connected with them, along with the destruction. Between the 13th and the 17th century the decimation of the population was caused by wars, assisted by plague and malaria epidemics. These were all reasons for Istria to be an area of continual colonizations. If we take the Venetian administrators - they settled not only the south Slavs, but also the Morlaks, Aroumanians, Cyprians, Lombards, Friulians, Venetians, French, Germans and even the Spanish, the Dutch and north Africans (Darovec 1993). In spite of all these colonizations it is believed that in the 16th century at the latest there was a basic ethnical image shaped in Istria, one that can be roughly described as the romanized coastal part, and the interior inhabited by the peoples of Slavic origin (Bertoša 1986).

runs along the Dragonja river and divides the independent republics of Slovenia and Croatia.

The inhabitants of Sv. Peter⁵ refer to themselves as "Šupetrci". Most of the people with whom I spoke told me that they were Šupetrci because they spoke a local dialect. The cultural and symbolic boundaries of the Sv. Peter's community are determined by their dialectal speech functioning as an identifiable element of the villagers' collective identity.⁶ Since the area covered by the local speech refers only to the village of Sv. Peter, the village hamlets, and partly to the village of Dragonja, the traditional living and working space of Sv. Peter was/is divided in details with the dialectal toponyms. In the process of socialization, especially of the villagers' children, and partly of the immigrants, these toponyms help to socialize the boundaries of the "Šupetr" area. Thus it is not just some empty space - nature outside a house, a hamlet or a village - but a clearly defined and bounded space of a local community whose members recognize themselves as Šupetrci. All who come from the outside are marked as foreigners and called "forešti"⁷ by the locals.

Who will be called a "forešt" and when depends on his origin and the context of the particular event. That is why the example of Sv. Peter provides us with two kinds of foreigners.

1. Inside the village community and in cases when no one from the "outside" is present at the discussions, all the men and women who married into the village, the inhabitants of neighbouring villages who live in Sv. Peter or are there on some kind of business, all the acquaintances and the coincidental visitors from the coastal towns are denoted as "forešti".⁸ They differentiate between those who married

⁵ In the 1991 census the village of Sv. Peter had 306 inhabitants of which 85.6% were Slovene; 2.6% Italian; 1.3 Croatian; 0.9% of other nationality. One person declared him/herself as a Yugoslavian, 10 individuals, i.e. 3.2% declared themselves regionally, 6.2% were indeterminate. 132 men and 45 women had a certain occupation (besides that, many women were active in the informal occupations sector). Farming (intensive production of garden vegetables, vine-growing, olive trees) represented an important additional source of income for the employed. Sv. Peter is predominantly a Catholic village. The parish church is situated in the next village of Krkavce whereas there is a branch church in the village itself. There is also a village hall - the seat of the local council and the cultural-artistic society KUD "Sloga", a cooperative shop and a pub.

⁶ The local dialect is an Istrian dialect of Slovene with its specific syntax, special soft pronunciation of the letter æ and the use of a wide range of Italian words. In the local variant of the dialect from Sv. Peter there is a range of (archaic) terms and accents that are practiced only in the dialectal speech of Sv. Peter and that the inhabitants are always willing to enumerate.

⁷ The word "forešt" originates in the Italian word *foresti*.

⁸ It is interesting that their relatives who live in the coastal towns or in Italian Trieste are never referred to as "forešti". This confirms the thesis that you become a Šupetrc at birth and stay one forever.

into the village and those who moved in by buying or building their own house there. It is very important for both sets of newcomers how they represent themselves in the village, with whom they communicate, how and when they talk, because, as an informer told me, "if you come, everyone looks at you, at your behaviour". Dependent on the sex of a "forešt", it is generally expected that he/she will act according to the unwritten moral codex called "krjanca".⁹ The community will carefully observe his/her behaviour and all mistakes will be verbally sanctioned in the form of rumour spreading.

2. The other type of "forešti" is represented by the foreigners who come into the village officially, on business or as tourists. When these are present, the former "village forešti" are not considered foreigners any longer, but are given the status of Šupetrci. The general belief is that most of the "forešti" of this second type come into the village on official duty bound - tourists and friends are an exception - and usually from the town. Until they know who they are dealing with, the Šupetrci are very cautious and first try to get as much information about the foreigner as possible. They are especially interested in where the foreigner comes from i.e. is he/she from the city-centre or from the countryside-periphery, and what nationality he/she is. For it is not at all the same if a "forešt" is, for example, a Slovene, an Italian, a Croat, a Bosnian or a German, nor is it the same if he/she comes from the countryside or from the city.

The city is seen as an attractive but foreign organism which is frequently equated in Sv. Peter with power, exploitation, and the state, or as one of my informers said: "the state has never done any good for anyone". He also told me that "the state and citizenship are things which come and go". That is why national identity was "something which was never discussed, at home we never discussed whether you were Italian or Yugoslav, in Istria we always belonged to those who were in power". The (national) state is connected with the national identity. Most of the Šupetrci say that they have always considered themselves Slovenes. Several men from the village told me that they had actually had their first positive experience with national identity after W.W.II in the Yugoslav army, in which the Slovenes had the reputation of being hardworking and reliable soldiers. But at home the Šupetrci preferred publicly to refer to themselves regionally - as

⁹ "Krjanca" (the word comes from the Italian word *creanza*) is said to be imparted. In Sv. Peter it is understood as proper behaviour, good manners connected with a person's good reputation. Similarly to "fama" in Sicily (Giordano 1992:357–358) it is confirmed daily or redefined by public opinion. The older generation of the villagers still consider "krjanca" to be a kind of "symbolic" capital in the form of individual prestige (cf. Bourdieu 1976).

Istrians, especially because of the very negative historical experiences with national identification.¹⁰

Besides being based on language, the common regional Istrian identity was based on similar social circumstances and, dependent on their ethnic (minority) membership, even on similar historical experiences. This gained importance after W.W.II when Istria was (administratively) divided between the Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia. Šupetrci described themselves especially as Istrians in Italian Trieste where they had friends and relatives who as political or economic migrants moved to Trieste after 1954.¹¹ The same self-description also applied in other non-Istrian parts of Slovenia. The majority of the inhabitants of Sv. Peter are bilingual (i.e. they are able to speak at least two languages: the Istrian dialect of Slovene and the Trieste dialect of Italian), thus they had no problems communicating in Trieste. And because they were Istrians the Triestinos distinguished them from the mass of stigmatized shoppers of consumer items who came from the whole of ex-Yugoslavia, and who changed Trieste in the 1970s into the "most northern bazaar of Europe", as one of my informers expressed himself.

The inhabitants of the neighbouring villages and hamlets on the other bank of the river Dragonja (Kaštel, Škodolini, Mlini, Kaldanija), who lived in the same country until 1991, belonged in the first category of "forešti". The intercultural communications between them and the Šupetrci were based on economic ties and also on kinship and friendship connections.

The Sunday mass in Kaštel was thus a place of continual exchange of the information on the labour market and harvest. "Istrians had very bad soil. They never knew how much they would reap. It was better for them to come to us to "zernada"¹² or to "half-hire" the land. In this way they were sure to get half-of the harvest," as I was told by an informer from Sv. Peter. Because of different land-owners' relations and natural conditions many workers from the villages of Kaštel's parish came to Sv. Peter for day work. At the same time the Šupetrci, especially the women, went to the neighbouring Istrian towns and villages as sellers and buyers (of the harvest crops and other rural goods). Due to these mutual

¹⁰ The villagers still remember fascist Italy when they were not allowed to speak Slovene (in public), and the first years after W.W.II when some families had to leave Sv. Peter because of political (members of the Fascist Party in the period of Mussolini's Italy) and national reasons (Italian nationality).

¹¹ Between 1945 and 1956 more than a half of all inhabitants emigrated from Istria (Titl 1965:113; Ballinger 1996). Approximately 20% of the inhabitants of the inner part of Slovene Istria moved to Italy in that period (Titl 1965:119).

¹² The word originates in the Italian word "*giornata*" meaning day's work.

economic benefits there has been no occurrence of rivalry between them. But rivalry was present in the relations between the Šupetrci and the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages living in the same parish, since this latter was the primary area for seeking marriage partners.

Villages on the other side of the Dragonja were not in the narrower "marrying area" of the Šupetrci, but nevertheless marriages with the Šupetrci were not an exception. I have also heard that the inhabitants of Kaštel often asked the Šupetrci to be godparents to their children. The Šupetrci visited their relatives in these villages particularly on the days of the more significant church festivals. They also came to Kaštel and Momjan where there were dances that were connected with these festivals. Until the 1960s these dances had some kind of a ritual role whose function was to provide a meeting place for the potential marital partners. Many friendships, especially among men, were struck there where social differences in the form of land-ownership had no significance. In most cases these friendships among men were based on distant blood and ritual relations.¹³

"During the year we have attended all the more significant masses and fairs. As far as I can remember I've never missed a "Martinje"¹⁴ in Momjan," an informer recalls these contacts and adds "we were on better terms with them than with the neighbours from our own parish. We knew they were Croatian Istrians and that they were poorer, but we respected and acknowledged one another." My question if the inhabitants from the other side of the Dragonja were called Croatian Istrians was answered negatively. "They were Istrians, just like us. We spoke the same language, the only difference being that they used more of the Croatian and we more of the Slovene words. It is only now that we call them Croatian Istrians. Before we were all just Istrians." Both sides were therefore aware of the language differences and with that of the ethnical differences, but the latter did not play any role in the given context. The Šupetrci referred to themselves as well as to the inhabitants from the other side of the Dragonja as Istrians, while they were called "the Šavrini" by the latter.

First changes in their interacting social relations and intercultural communications arose with the exodus from the coastal towns and their later industrialization. At the end of the 1950s many men and women from Sv. Peter took employment in Portorož, Izola and Koper, and the first traffic connection with the coastal towns was introduced. The 1960s

¹³ Some of the "Mediterranean" anthropologists believe that these two features determine the traditional form of rural male friendships (cf. Papataxiarchis 1991; Vale de Almeida 1996).

¹⁴ "Martinje" - St. Martin's day is a traditional folk festival on November 11th when people celebrate the origin of new wine.

and especially the 1970s were the period of the countryside's modernization. This was the time of intensive building of new houses and technological modernization in agriculture. The higher grades of the elementary school were moved to the village of Sečovlje and, after finishing the elementary school, more and more young people continued their education in the coastal towns.

In the 1950s and 1960s many people, especially from the border villages of what is now Croatian Istria, moved to the coastal towns, took jobs and stayed there permanently. Due to the fact and the postwar agrarian state reform in which especially the bigger land-owners were dispossessed, peasants from the Croatian villages no longer came to Sv. Peter for day work. Yet their economic relations were not broken, but continued in some other ways. It was mainly in these Istrian villages where the Šupetrci sought (cheaper) master masons and workers who built their houses. They used to buy various household goods, artificial fertilizers, and particularly agricultural mechanization, while the Istrians drove across the Dragonja to mill their corn and buy wine in Sv. Peter. The economic contacts thus survived, but they were not based on direct and mutual economic benefits. Until the 1980s many of the inhabitants of Sv. Peter still went at times to Kaštel to attend the Sunday mass, to visit their relatives and to the dances connected with various festivals. But there were no young people from Sv. Peter among them. It was the period/time when the young from Sv. Peter started to buy their first cars. Whenever they went somewhere, they usually travelled in a number of cars and they only mixed with each another. Their first destinations were restaurants with live-music in the tourist town of Portorož and later the coastal discotheques. They only went to the Istrian villages to buy building materials for they were usually cheaper there, when they wanted to cash cheques, which used to be a profitable malversation due to Yugoslav hyperinflation at that time, and to the most important festivals with dances. In the 1980s friendship relations between the Šupetrci and the Istrians from the other side of the Dragonja river became a rarity. But because of the relationship and economic ties among the inhabitants from both sides of the Dragonja, we can nevertheless expect that the contacts will continue in spite of the new state border.

However, the year 1991 saw concrete changes of state borders and the outbreak of war on the territory of Yugoslavia. Although a great majority of the villagers agreed with the secession, none of them actually thought about the consequences that a state border would bring. With Slovenia's attainment of independence, television (as a medium and an ideological tool) in Sv. Peter became an instrument of new (ideological) coding of time, and a new social time determiner for the household

everyday of the inhabitants. In daily broadcasts the Šupetrci were confronted with news about the atrocities of war which were being committed only a little more than a hundred kilometres away. In their opinion, all this was going on precisely because of some new borders, and in the name of unsolved multiethnic problems. The border region along the river Dragonja became a space inhabited by customs officials and the police. Right in the immediate vicinity of Sv. Peter, the interstate relations between Slovenia and Croatia started to get complicated due to the unsolved question of three smallish hamlets by the Dragonja. In solving this problem both the countries clung to the technique of retardation. But the time maneuvers with which they wanted to obtain better negotiating positions only aroused fear and doubt in the local people. And these are the main reasons why almost all the contacts with the inhabitants from the Croatian side of the border have been broken. Except when it was for cultivating their fields on the other side of the Dragonja, the Šupetrci actually have not crossed the border since 1991. Besides that, they do not introduce themselves as Istrians any longer.

3. The process of formation of the Šavrine identity

There are several theories about the origin of the word Šavrin (a male member)/Šavrinka (a female)/Šavrinija (the territory). Geographically the hills in the interior of Slovene Istria should be called the *Šavrinska brda*, but the author who mentions this denomination doubts the correctness of this theory himself, since the name *Šavrinska brda* has never been accepted in local speech (Mclik 1960:145). One of the first people to denote this area ethnically was Czoernig, for he mentioned the name Šavrini referring to the Slovenes living between Trieste and Savudrija, who represented the older settlers of Istria (Czoernig 1886). In Rutar's description of Trieste and the surrounding area (Rutar 1896:65) the name Šavrini refers to the Slovene-speaking population from the vicinity of Koper and Pomjan.

In Istria the women who regularly went from the Slovene part of Istria to the interior of the peninsula to buy eggs and then (until the first years after W.W.II) resold them in Trieste were called Šavrinke. Although, at first, only the female egg-resellers were denoted by this name, this occupational denotation eventually passed on also to the men. It is important to say that they have never identified themselves as Šavrini in the past. They have only been called so by the inhabitants of the nowadays Croatian part of Istria.

"From the time we don't go across to the other side, to Croatia, we are Šavrini" one informer told me. Since the new state border has been

established, the Šupetrci have identified themselves as Šavrini both at home and in Croatia.

Before W.W.II there were even some village women from Sv. Peter who were egg-dealers who often went to the villages towards Umag to buy eggs, but they never considered this occupation their primary activity. Besides, the term "Šavrinska brda" is unknown in the village. Neither occupational nor geographical denotation has therefore been connected with Sv. Peter. But from the 1980s we can nevertheless witness the process of the beginning and establishment of ethnic Šavrine identity in Slovene Istria and Sv. Peter. At that time the women's choir in Sv. Peter was named Šavrinke and the village football club started to play under the name Šavrini.¹⁵

According to what people say, the Šupetrci did not personally identify themselves as Šavrini until 1991. What's more, no one from the village could locate the area where the Šavrinke were supposed to live and perform their activities. Even the professional researchers of Istria were confronted with this problem. In a conversation about Šavrinke, a geographer who lives in Koper and has studied Istria said: "When I asked in a village if Šavrinke had lived there, I was told that they had come from the neighbouring village. When I asked about Šavrinke in that village I was sent to the previous one." I have also found out that there are two images of Šavrinke in Sv. Peter. On the one hand they were brave women who made an irreplaceable contribution to the survival of their families, and were some kind of mediators between the traditional rural world and urbane coastal towns. They were, namely, the ones who brought many an innovation into their homes. But on the other hand Šavrinke used to be denoted pejoratively in Sv. Peter since the nature of their work was such that they spent a lot of time away from home and from their families where they should, according to the patriarchal agrarian morality, primarily perform the role of being mothers and wives.

In my opinion it is largely owing to the writer Marjan Tomšič that the public image of Šavrinke has changed. Though we can trace some previous attempts at literary extolling the Šavrinke (cf. Rogelja & Ledinek 1996), Tomšič's book *Šavrinke* is the beginning of strong popularization of their literary image (Tomšič 1986). After the book was published, Tomšič, who is actually an immigrant from inner Slovenia, held literary evenings about Šavrinke in most of the villages of Slovene Istria. He was

¹⁵ The choir's naming and the name of the football club can be understood as a generally spread folkloristic phenomenon of the 1980s in Slovenia as well as in Yugoslavia. It was connected with the economic crisis, forming nationalisms which also appeared in the form of localisms and redefining of people's own identities and the boundaries connected with them (cf. Bowman 1994; Pusić 1995).

also the editor of the memoirs of one of the Šavrinke - egg-dealers (Franca 1990; 1992; 1995). On the basis of his endeavours an (idealized) image of the Slovene Šavrinke as suffering mothers sacrificing for their children was shaped in the 1990s.

With such moral values the Šupetrci could identify themselves as Šavrini and explain their idealized past. What is supposed to have remained from this past as (united) tradition are/were usually only folklorisms. At the moment when the new state border cut through the living space of the Šupetrci, we can start following the process of accepting some external manifestative elements of cultural heritage. The Istrian dialect of the Šupetrci is becoming "Šavrinsko" and with that also Slovene, just as the local costume and dances are. One informer even told me that "the songs which we once sung are now Šavrinske while I used to tell my children that these very same songs were Istrian".

With the help of redefinition of the past on the basis of experiences from the present, the Šupetrci accepted the identity of Šavrini as their own answer to the recent changes. The Šupetrci had never emphasized that the neighbouring Istrians were Slovene or Croatian, but with the new Šavrine identity the latter all of a sudden became Croats. And the Šavrini became Slovenes. With the transition from ethnical to national characterization of their neighbours, these have become "the others" and with that some kind of "foreigners". And foreigners are traditionally not accepted only as different, what is often overlooked in anthropology, but usually also as worse and inferior.¹⁶

4. Concluding observations

All the changes of statehood, political and administrative interventions in the last century have influenced (in some cases to a greater in other to a lesser extent) the national, demographic, cultural, economic and social composition of Istrian villages as well as the coastal towns they surround. Thus it is not strange that today when Istrians discuss borders what they are really discussing is themselves and their identity, strategies for everyday life and the practices with which they have symbolically and physically interpreted the existence of borders on the multicultural and

¹⁶ With this we can also explain the formation and the meaning of an oral tradition connected to the borders. For instance one such story recalls an Istrian from Trieste whose car was stopped by Croatian policemen and after it was searched they left a human corpse in its boot. Such stories are told everyday in the village pub while those who tell them all refer to the validity of various witnesses and statements who can never be (and need not be) found or, even less so, double-checked. I have dubbed stories like this the mythology of borders and the present for they are based on a distinction between chaos and order.

multiethnic territory of Istria. To talk today about borders in Istria, including the latest one between Slovenia and Croatia, means above all to talk about the past and the states connected to it, to talk about migrations, separations, disappointments and disempowerments. It also means to talk about the dialectical relations between various social groups on both sides on the borders which are (also through the process of inter cultural communication between individuals) creating what Donnan & Wilson have termed the culture of borders (Donnan & Wilson 1994:10).

The basis of this discussion in which we dealt with the period of the past that the villagers of Sv. Peter had experienced, was the time of "traditional" identities when they were still "clearly delineated, stable over time and firmly located in space" (Löfgren 1996:53). In this century and especially after W.W.II economic and political changes conditioned numerous socio-cultural changes. In this context the new state border in Sv. Peter has actually accelerated the concluding of a process of changing the villagers' identity and at the same time triggered a new one. The new state border between Slovenia and Croatia has physically curtailed the traditional space of the Šupetrci where, right up until the middle of the twentieth century every activity, had its own time. With this we can also witness a change of cultural content. This is why we can, in accordance with Fabian's thesis that "geopolitics has its ideological foundations in chronopolitics" (Fabian 1983:114), say that the political time on which the reconstruction of the past of the Šupetrci was based is an ideologically constructed instrument of power and control. This is due to the fact that the redefinition of their past ran parallel to the process of the redefinition of their identity. And in an environment in which national identity never was a primary factor in the construction of individual identity the state, in this case Slovenia, could not want for anything better. Why?

Because with the help of the redefinition of the past and their own identity the Šupetrci have now invented "Others" who are not Istrian anymore but Croats from the other side of the border. In this process they were helped by their historical experience with borders and states, their collective social memory which is framed by those Mediterranean dichotomies which according to Christian Giordano determine "the confrontation and the ambivalence between legality and legitimacy" in Mediterranean societies (Giordano 1996:64–65). Because of the political intervention into the space the Šupetrci helped to create an idealized image of the times past and so redefined their local Istrian identity. They became Šavrini and thus also Slovenes, although largely owing to their historical

experiences, they still do not really like to define themselves nationally in public.¹⁷

The cultural reconstruction of the past in relation to experiences from the present is what Norbert Elias has called the fifth dimension of time and space (Elias 1989:52), the new local identity of Šavrini and a new understanding of space (and this encompasses space from the local level right up to the space occupied by the Slovene state) today presents the villagers with a (false) feeling of social security as well as economic and political stability. And these factors are precisely the preconditions for a "belief" in the state and its national identity as we must bear in mind, if I may paraphrase Sharon Macdonald's hypothesis, that the structural and cultural criteria for ethnic identification (of the Šupetrci) can be significantly different from those present in the representative group (of the Slovenes) (Sharon Macdonald 1993:9). For the inhabitants of Sv. Peter, the most recent partitioning of Istria represents a change in the structure and qualities of their inter-cultural communication. Sadly, this is an inter-cultural communication between two (separated) societies (i.e. between the Slovene and the Croatian Istrians) which belong to the same cultural tradition. And this is the fact that again proves the finding of Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin that cultures do not differ only in "how people work and live, but also in what they think about themselves, how they behave, or, actually, in what happens in the discrepancy between their thinking and behaviour" (Rihtman-Auguštin 1984:13).

Last but not least - is it not the case that Sv. Peter contradicts some well known anthropological thesis on nations and nationalism? Namely, in Sv. Peter we witness the consequences of the creation of a new nation-state which produce - and this is crucial - a new ethnic identity while at the same time the state succeeds in establishing the "impossible": in the Slovene part of Istria the social and cultural boundaries have become identical with political borders.

¹⁷ Although I am not familiar with the exact information, it is not long ago that many of the Šupetrci applied for additional Italian citizenship. However, most of these applications were turned down. When I asked why they submitted these applications at all an informer told me: "You know, we Šavrini are Slovenes. But in Istria you never know what is coming along next and we do all this for the safety of our children".

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DRŽAVA JE HTJELA DA TAKO BUDE, A NAROD I ONAKO NIKAD NE MOŽE (IĆI) PROTIV DRŽAVE

SAŽETAK

Članak se bavi redefinicijom identiteta i rekonceptualizacijom vremena i prostora stanovnika uz aktualnu slovensko-hrvatsku granicu. Naime, osamostaljivanjem Slovenije i Hrvatske kao dviju nezavisnih država nakon raspada jugoslavenske državne zajednice, došlo je među njima do određenja novih državnih granica. Slijedom te nove situacije, stanovništvo s objiju strana granica našlo se u situaciji da nanovo određuje društveni i kulturni prostor u kojemu se zateklo. Autor na temelju empirijskoga istraživanja u selu Sv. Peter, koje je smješteno na današnjoj slovensko-hrvatskoj granici u blizini rijeke Dragonje, analizira proces nestajanja brojnih međukulturnih komunikacija među hrvatskim i slovenskim stanovništvom, zatim proces nestajanja srodstvenih odnosa, prijateljstva, gospodarstvenih odnosa, i sl. ali istodobno otkriva nove društveno-kulturne procese, kao što je primjerice pomak u identitetu (od etničkoga do nacionalnoga), točnije oblikovanje novoga identiteta.

Autor se, doduše, obazire na značenje kulturnih i simboličnih granica (u barthovskome smislu), ali posebnu pozornost obraća na značenje državnih granica i ulogu što ih te granice, zajedno s ulogom nacije, nacionalizma i nacionalne države imaju na društveno-kulturne procese na istraživanome području. On obrazlaže stvarne posljedice nove situacije, a to je njezin odraz na svakodnevni život stanovnika sela Sv. Peter i njihova okružja.