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Multiculturalism and time in Trieste: place-marketing images and residents' perceptions of a multicultural city

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Multiculturalism and time in Trieste: place-marketing images and residents' perceptions of a multicultural city

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This paper discusses how people encounter marketed images of places in order to explore whether place-marketing images are always seen as misrepresentations. As part of this, I question whether people always 'read' into place-marketing images the meanings inscribed by marketers, and I attend to the various dimensions of time that people draw on when articulating their views of their place's marketed identity. Using Trieste as a case study, I consider how a group of thirty-one residents perceived their city's 'multicultural character' as it was advertised during the bid for the 2008 World Expo and show that while the respondents did not read into Trieste's marketed multicultural image the meanings that the marketers intended, the interviewees largely supported Trieste's advertised image. I discuss how the evocation of specific temporalities (historical past, present and 'timeless') affected how the respondents articulated their views about Trieste's multiculturalism. I also explain why Trieste's marketed multicultural image captured the imaginations of the majority of the respondents.

Key words: place-marketing images, perceptions, temporalities, multiculturalism.

The audiences of place marketing

Despite place marketing being a phenomenon that has attracted the attention of academics and of professionals in marketing and tourism (Blumberg 2005; Gold and Ward 1994; Hall and Hubbard 1998; Kearns and Philo 1993; Kotler, Asplund, Rein and Haider 1999), with very few notable exceptions (Taylor, Evans and Fraser 1996; Young, Diep and Drabble 2006), geographers and urban scholars have seldom, and only partially, investigated the audiences of place-marketing images.

However, there is a body of work that, following a broadly post-structuralist geographical agenda, has dedicated much attention to deconstructing places' representations created by place marketing and incorporated in different media (i.e. pictures, brochures, posters, newspapers). Gold and Gold (1994), for instance, illustrate how, during the inter-war period, in order to entice more people to buy houses in the peripheral areas of the city, the suburbs were represented by some UK building societies in a sample of posters as attractive locations to live. By examining how

the houses were depicted and by disclosing the latent meanings encapsulated in some symbolic elements recurring in promotional posters ('the threshold', 'the small girl' and 'sunlight'), the Golds show how the building societies' campaigns were successful in conveying to the English middle classes persuasive messages about the desirability of possessing a house in the suburbia. In general, these studies have primarily explored the latent and manifest meanings incorporated by the place images produced for the tourist and business market (e.g. Laurier 1993; Nelson 2005; Short and Kim 1998). However, these analyses are mainly the result of the interpretations offered by the academics authoring the research, and tend to neglect how residents themselves understand these representations (Burgess 1990). Thus, we are not really sure how people engage with place-marketing images. Do they 'read' into these representations the meanings that marketers inscribe?

There is a body of work that has partially considered the responses of places' residents to place marketing by focusing on how people publicly oppose image-enhancing initiatives (e.g. Atkinson, Cooke and Spooner 2002; Reid and Smith 1993). Atkinson, Cooke and Spooner (2002) illustrate that the re-imagining of Hull as a 'pioneering city' involved the romanticisation of the city's maritime heritage. They point out that the silencing of the history of the fishing industry from the newly crafted image of Hull caused considerable opposition from the local community. In discussing the resistance met by Glasgow's re-imaging under the European City of Culture programme in the 1990s, Mooney (2004) emphasises that one of the most recurrent arguments used by critics concerned the fact that the new image of Glasgow as a vibrant and fashionable city did not reflect the local working-class culture, identity, and

history. In emphasising that the selling of places fosters the resistance of local communities, critics have privileged a discussion of those residents who oppose image-enhancing strategies, and have generally insisted that place-marketing images are misrepresentations of locations that do not reflect how local residents think and feel about them (e.g. Brownhill 1994; Holcomb 1994; Hubbard 1998; Philo and Kearns 1993; Ward 2003). It must be pointed out, however, that other 'non-oppositional' voices have been given very little attention in existing research about place marketing (but see Brennan-Horley, Connell and Gibson 2007; Gibson and Davidson 2004; Young, Diep and Drabble 2006). In order to understand if opposition is the norm, and if place-marketing images are always 'unwanted' misrepresentations of places (Philo and Kearns 1993: 3), a broader set of residents' voices should thus be considered along with the oppositional ones.

There is another issue that a research about the audiences of place-marketing images can help us to clarify. Studies exploring the relationships between place-marketing images and time have understood 'the past' as either 'history', 'memory' or 'heritage'. Despite these differences in understanding, these studies have all tended to consider 'the past' as a resource that place marketers can exploit in order to craft a place image (e.g. Boyer 1992; Chivallon 2001; Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000; Kearns 1993). Some have argued that residents' plural senses of the past of their place are not reflected by place-marketing images, and that the exclusion of local inhabitants' senses of 'history' from a place's representation is often at the heart of episodes of resistance to image-enhancing initiatives (e.g. Atkinson, Cooke and Spooner 2002; Philo and Kearns 1993). However, such an interest in 'the past' of places might have

diverted geographers' attentions from exploring how other temporalities (e.g. the present, personal memories and experiences) might matter to people when they think of and talk about the places where they live (cf. Massey 1995). Recent geographical research demonstrates how different senses of time intervene in the production of the city (e.g. Crang and Travlou 2001; Laurier 2008). Pile (2005), for example, considers spectres and ghosts as expressions of the disrupting, non-linear temporalities that inhabit urban places, and as elusive entities that relate to the traumas in a city's past (see also McEwan 2008). Hughes's (1999) and Roche's (2003) work examines the ways in which place-marketing strategies aestheticise cyclical temporalities such as the night-time, the end-of-the-year, and the millennium. All these works understand the city as the site where linear and non-linear temporalities intertwine, and view these multiple temporalities as all making a contribution to shaping cities' everyday life (Crang 2001). In this paper, I analyse the local audiences of Trieste's marketed image and I show that the past is not the only temporality that people evoke when encountering their place through promotional images.

To summarise, the main research question I address in this paper is concerned with how people understand the promotional image of their place in order to explore whether place-marketing images are always unfaithful representations of locations. As part of this, I also question whether residents can always 'read' into place-marketing images the 'meanings' that marketers intend, and whether people merely draw on their understanding of the past of their place when encountering the marketed identity of the place where they live. To illustrate how the analysis of a group of Triestines' understandings of their city's advertised multicultural character helped me

to shed some light on these issues, I begin by outlining Trieste's birth as a multiethnic port city and introducing the city's recent bid for the 2008 World Expo. I then describe how Trieste was advertised as a 'multicultural city' in order to clarify the meaning that the promoters associated with this image. Combining Henri Lefebvre's (1991) idea of space with John Allen's (2003) theory of power, I detail the theoretical framework that guided my investigation of the local audiences of place-marketing images in Trieste. I then show how discourse analysis provided the tools for examining Triestines' encounters with their city's advertised multicultural character.

An historical introduction to Trieste: the birth of a multiethnic city

For centuries Trieste had been a small port city with a population of a few thousand. Its residents were primarily 'Italian', although, since the Middle Ages, groups of Slavic people also inhabited the territory. After decades of war with the Republic of Venice, at the end of the fourteenth century Trieste's rulers decided to entrust the city to the protection of the Habsburg monarchy. The development of Trieste as a multiethnic city was the product of Habsburg mercantilism; that is to say, of Austria's aspiration to become a maritime power (Purvis 2009, this issue). Beginning with Charles VI's declaration of Trieste as a free port in 1719, the Habsburgs put into practice a series of policies aimed at encouraging the settlement of foreign merchants and traders in a city that lacked a 'substantial merchant community' (Purvis 2009). The immigration of Greeks, Serbs, Germans, Slovaks, Hungarians, Croats, Bosnians, French, English, Turks, Armenians, Italians and Jews from all over Europe brought about the diversification of

Trieste's population, and fostered the creation of a 'multi-ethnic commercial elite' that, in the span of a few decades, contributed to make Trieste the prosperous commercial port of Vienna (Purvis 2009). In effect, Trieste was the main port of Austria-Hungary and this 'Habsburg hinterland' sustained the city's economy. The city's economic development slowed down following the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire at the end of the First World War. Trieste was then annexed to the Kingdom of Italy to become just another marginal Italian city (Valdevit 2004).

Besides the nationalisation of its economy (see Finzi, Magris and Miccoli 2002), the 'making of Trieste Italian' included the Italianisation of its population. The local political authorities envisaged the Slovenian community 'as a problem in a nationally defined terrain' (Sluga 2001: 39). The forced Italianisation of the Slovenians was particularly harsh during Fascism. Their cultural institutions were closed, they were forced to Italianise their names, and episodes of violence towards Triestine Slovenians were frequent. Conversely, when the Yugoslav army arrived in Trieste on 1 May 1945 (one and half days before the Anglo-American Allied troops) taking credit for liberating the city from the Nazis, they attempted to rapidly erase all that represented 'Italy' in order to make Trieste the seventh republic of communist Yugoslavia (Valdevit 2004). Episodes of violent repression of the Italian population were particularly intense in the first two weeks of May 1945 and included the mass-killings of hundreds of Italians (Sluga 2001: 83). The day that marked the end of the conflict between the Italians and the Slovenians in Trieste is 12 June 1945, when the Anglo-Americans formally took over the so-called A Zone (Valdevit 2004: 54). From the first half of June 1945, Trieste and its province were divided in two zones: the A Zone and the B Zone. This latter was controlled by the Yugoslav military administration. In 1954, the London Memorandum annexed the A Zone to Italy and the B Zone to Yugoslavia.

After the end of World War II, Trieste's population suddenly increased and was diversified with the arrival of the Istrian refugees, Italian-speaking inhabitants of Istria (the peninsula located between the gulf of Trieste and the bay of Kvarner) who were forced to leave their homes when their region was assigned to Yugoslavia. Today, Trieste is the smallest of the Italian provinces. Following a negative demographic trend starting in the mid-1950s, nowadays Trieste's population has fallen to about 216,000 inhabitants (Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia 2000). According to the last census including a question on ethnic identity (1971), the Slovenian-Triestine community represented 5.7 per cent of the city's population. Although the relationship between the Italian-Triestines and the Slovenian-Triestines is no longer marked by episodes of violence, a feeling of reciprocal 'antipathy' still characterises a section of the local population (see Morris 2001: 97–102). The German-speaking community mostly (but not completely) emigrated when Trieste was annexed to Italy in 1918. Croats, Serbs, Romanians and Greeks are still part of the so-called '*minoranze storiche*' ('historical minorities') that live in Trieste. Along with the *minoranze storiche*, an increasing presence of recently migrated groups of Chinese, Albanians, Africans and South Americans contribute to making contemporary Trieste what Jan Morris has recently described as an 'ethnic enclave of sorts' (2001: 102).

Trieste's prosperity had started to decline with the city's official incorporation into Italy in 1918, after which the economy was primarily fuelled by public investment.

In the 1950s, the city's economy was severely damaged by a long period of crisis in the shipbuilding industry, Trieste's main economic sector. Through the 1970s and 1980s, Trieste suffered as a result of the crisis of Fordism and the subsequent withdrawal of the central state from support of its main economic sectors. More generally, the contemporary weakness of the Triestine economy is due to its protracted dependence on public capital, the limited diversification of its industrial sector, and the intrinsic fragility of small and medium businesses (Colombino and Minca 2005).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Trieste's urban elites hoped to reverse their city's economic fortunes by bidding for the 2008 World Expo. In December 1999, representatives of Trieste's intellectual, economic and political world came together and agreed that hosting the 2008 Expo would benefit their city for two main reasons. The international event would re-launch Trieste economically, and provide the funds necessary to redevelop its half-derelict historic port, whose potential residential and commercial regeneration is an issue that has animated the local political debate for 30 years (Caroli 2004). When the Italian Government agreed to nominate Trieste to the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), the institution in charge of allocating the World Expo, the Italian city found itself competing for the international event with Thessaloniki (Greece) and Zaragoza (Spain). It was Zaragoza which eventually won the 2008 Expo bid on 16 December 2004.

Marketing Trieste's 'multicultural' character

Trieste's main institutions (the Municipality, the Province, the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region, the Chamber of Commerce and the Port Authority) constituted the TEC (Trieste Expo

Challenge), the public company that was in charge of managing the bidding process. The TEC marketed Trieste as a 'multicultural city' and as 'the city of science'. Although I focus on discussing Triestines' encounters with their city's advertised multicultural character, it is important to stress that these two images were interwoven by the marketers.

At the beginning of the bidding process, Trieste was broadly marketed as a multi-cultural port city. According to the TEC, Trieste inherited 'the capacity of integrating different ethnicities and cultures from its glorious past when it was part of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire' (TEC 2002). Yet, this 'mythicized vision' of Trieste that draws on the city's idealised past (Ballinger 2003) for legitimating its marketed 'multicultural' character, was sidelined in the last year of the bid, when the TEC decided to offer a different version of their city's 'multi-culturalism'.

In fact, throughout 2004, the marketers associated Trieste's multicultural character with both the contemporary city and with its other image: 'the city of science'. From the end of 2003, following the BIE's feedback about Trieste's candidacy, the TEC decided to propose an Expo entitled 'the mobility of knowledge' (TEC 2004a). This was a theme that broadly aimed at organising a world exhibition dedicated to different kinds of 'human knowledge' such as science, technol-ogy, and different cultural heritages. 'The mobility of knowledge' was a theme that, according to the TEC, reflected Trieste's role and identity as 'the city of science'; namely as a city that is home to a growing cluster of international research facilities (TEC 2004b). Trieste's multiculturalism was thus advertised as the outcome of the city's capacity to attract in its research institutes—the AREA Science Park, the International Centre of Theoretical

Physics, the Third World Academy, the United World College of the Adriatic, the International School of Advanced Studies—an increasing number of scientists from all over the world. By concretely involving the local international scientific community in the actual marketing of Trieste, in 2004 the TEC presented their city's multicultural character in a series of videos, pamphlets and 'live presentations' held in Paris that emphasised the presence in the Italian city of a large number of highly educated people with different ethnic backgrounds (see TEC 2004c, 2004d). In sum, it was primarily Trieste's contemporary role as an international 'city of science'—and not its past as the multiethnic port of Austria—that eventually granted Trieste its 'multicultural' character.

Investigating the audiences of place-marketing images: a methodological framework

In order to understand the meaning that the promoters connected to Trieste's marketed multicultural image I examined documentary sources (e.g. marketing material, candidacy dossiers, newspaper articles), and I interviewed three representatives of the TEC. I also interviewed five members and the president of the Pro Trieste Expo Committee, the association formed by volunteers who worked to involve the local community in the campaign. In order to investigate how Triestines understood their city's marketed image I interviewed a group of thirty-one residents who were selected using snowballing techniques. I interviewed twenty-two men and nine women. Most respondents were aged between 24 and 42 years old, and only five were aged from 48 to 58 years old. The fact that I started to snowball through my own

social networks resulted in most of my interviewees having higher than average educational qualifications. All the research participants were residents of Trieste and had different occupations. All were Italian except for one informant who was Indian. Two of the thirty Italian interviewees defined themselves as Slovenian-Triestines, twenty informants identified themselves as Triestines, one respondent defined himself as Istrian, and the remaining seven respondents clarified that they were not originally born in Trieste as they had moved to the city in the last few years. I generated my informants' responses using both an object elicitation technique—using promotional objects such as flags, leaflets, booklets, a T-shirt, badges, stickers (cf. Harper 2002)—and a list of prompts. These techniques engendered a conversation focused on issues related to the bid (i.e. the informants' views about Trieste's marketed image, the Expo, the re-use of the Old Port, how the campaign was managed and the respondents' opinions on the marketing material they were observing). I recorded the interviews in Italian with a digital voice recorder and analysed the original transcripts in Italian.

A Lefebvrian understanding of people's encounters with place-marketing images

The 1991 English translation of Lefebvre's *La production de l'espace* has inspired in the Anglo-American academic world a broad range of theoretical debates and empirical research (Elden 2001). However, rather than provide a review discussion of how this work has been variously appropriated in geography and urban studies (e.g. Allen and Pryke 1994; Brenner 2000; Cartier 1997; Hubbard and Sanders 2003; McCann 1999; Merrifield 1993; Soja 2000), here it is sufficient to

examine how Lefebvre's spatial imagination provides a theoretical guide for exploring how people engage with their place's marketed image by drawing on many different resources.

Notably, Lefebvre described space as being generated through the simultaneous inter-action of three of its 'aspects'; 'spatial practices', 'representations of space' and 'spaces of representation'. With the notion of 'spatial practices' (or 'perceived spaces'), he aimed to explain how space is comprised of daily routines and everyday concrete experi-ences. With the idea of 'representations of space' (or 'conceived spaces'), Lefebvre intended to indicate that space also consists of abstraction, and that it is imbued with power. 'Conceived spaces' are those 'uniform' spaces (Allen 2003: 161) that are produced by a society's ruling classes with the help of experts (e.g. architects, planners, place-mar-keters), and that originate in *savoir* (technical, scientific, and ideological knowledge). The notion of 'spaces of representations' (or 'lived spaces') reminds us that space is also the product of emotions and imagination. Lived spaces have their roots in the culture and tradition of a people, but also in the memories and dreams of individuals. Lefebvre empha-sised that space is also produced through its indissoluble interrelations that it has with 'time'. Although he did not articulate at length what exactly 'time' means for him, crucially he envisaged it as a multifaceted 'social reality' (1991: 219). That is, to Lefebvre there is not just one sense of time, there is instead a multiplicity of qualitatively different tempor-alities (e.g. chronological, rhythmic, cyclical) that simultaneously intervene in the pro-duction of space (cf. Crang 2001).

The idea that space is a phenomenon simultaneously made of many temporalities and of everyday experience, conceptualisation and representation, emotions and imagination,

provides the broad theoretical framework through which I interpret my respondents' encounters with their city's marketed image. In practice, I envisaged my informants' accounts of Trieste's multicultural image as occasions in which the interviewees articulated their own representations of their city by drawing on their everyday concrete experiences, their ways of thinking, imagining and feeling about their city, and also by drawing on different senses of time, such as different kinds of past or present.

However, to suggest people produce their own representations of space is to depart from Lefebvre's idea that these are the spatialities produced by 'powerful' social actors such as urban elites. Lefebvre's definition of conceived spaces in particular, and his theory of the production of space in general, are constrained by his notion of power. Lefebvre in fact mainly conflated power with 'domination'. I, there-fore, employ John Allen's (2003) more nuanced view of power to show that ordinary people can produce conceived spaces. Allen argues that 'power is never power in general, but always power of a particular kind' (2003: 2). Power presents itself in various 'modalities'; among these he considers dom-ination, resistance, authority, seduction, manipulation, coercion, induction, persuasion and negotiation. In Allen's view, power is an 'effect' that is produced through social interaction and that is mediated in space and time. According to him, '[t]here are no pre-formed blocs of power out there ... There are only *resources* and abilities ... which may be mobilised and deployed to produce what we would recognize as power' (2003: 96, my emphasis). People may mobilise different kinds of resources to achieve a goal: ideas, knowl-edge, discourses, money, objects, symbols, and so on. Power, in Allen's understanding, is not a 'capacity' that can be located in the hands of a few powerful social actors who exercise it at

The second is the present Trieste that they, presumably, experience on an everyday basis, and that seems not to incorporate the traces of what they think multiculturalism is about. For these respondents, 'multiculturalism' is mainly about the peaceful coexistence of different people belonging to different ethnicities and that, in the interviewees' imaginations, inhabited a past Trieste that they had never actually experienced.

These informants' responses show that the past is not the only temporality people evoke when articulating their ways of thinking and feeling about their place. In these accounts both a past and a present Trieste are evoked by the interviewees, and both affect the way in which they respond to their city's marketed image. The past is used to affirm a bygone multiculturalism that the informants cannot experience in the present. The present is evoked to argue that this imagined multiculturalism does not characterise their city anymore. The combination of these two 'temporally distinct' Triestes is therefore employed by the interviewees in order to reject their city's marketed image.

In this case, the opposition to Trieste's image does not originate in the fact that this representation did not incorporate residents' views of the history of their place, as some of the existing studies about place marketing seem to suggest (e.g. Atkinson, Cooke and Spooner 2002; Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000; Philo and Kearns 1993). The opposition to Trieste's image originates from the fact this image did not reflect the respondents' views of the present of their city. However, in considering these accounts it is possible to argue that, for some residents, Trieste's multicultural image was a misrepresentation of their city. Yet, opposition reflects only one of the possible responses that people offer when encountering their city's marketed image.

Yes, Trieste has always been multicultural

Many respondents supported Trieste's marketed image by primarily describing Trieste's tolerant multiculturalism as inherited from the city's past as the port of the Habsburg Empire. More specifically, in their accounts they all evoked a Trieste that 'has always been' multicultural. Asked whether Trieste is a multicultural city, Luigi explained:

Well, Trieste … as in all border cities, it has *always* been traversed by many people, who slowly had an influence in the city, on its uses, on its character … Trieste-ness is, in fact, a mix of numerous traditions, Latin, German or more precisely Austrian, Slav, Hungarian, Greek and so on. The fact is that Trieste has *always* been a city that, on the whole, was rich, bourgeois I'd say … this has facilitated the creation of a Triestine culture … which is a medley, well amalgamated of all these people … Trieste has been able to maintain … all these traditions, religions … Trieste has practically had a place of worship for every European and non-European religion … with an attitude of tolerance … maybe also for reasons of pure convenience, in the sense that, respect and tolerance towards those who came from far away, were they Greek merchants, Austrian insurers, Serbian unskilled workers or whatever, they were useful and especially of economic advantage for a city in expansion.

Luigi articulated his support of Trieste's peaceful multicultural character by evoking three different Triestes in his account. There is a Trieste which existed in the historical past, a city where workers and businessmen from various countries came to make money; another Trieste which has 'always' existed, namely a Trieste which since time immemorial has been a target for immigration

their own will, such as Lefebvre's ruling classes. In Allen's view, all individuals have at their disposal resources of different qualities and in different quantities which they can 'mobilise' to intervene in the world.

There are two important implications of this aspect of Allen's view of power for my investigation of the audiences of place-marketing images. First, and maybe most obviously, if we adopt Allen's notion of power, people can no longer be thought of as only being able to either oppose, or passively accept, place promotional images, as some research has emphasised (e.g. Kearns and Philo 1993; Mooney 2004). Mobilising different resources, people may also question, be seduced by or even ignore place-marketing images. Second, and perhaps less obviously, Allen's idea that all individuals may mobilise various resources to act in the world helps us to imagine how it is not just 'the ruling classes' who produce conceived spaces. Ordinary people, according to their different social positions, for example, may employ a wide range of intellectual resources (e.g. ideological discourses, scholastic knowledge, understanding of history) to produce representations of space. In other words, we can suppose that ordinary social actors are able to 'conceive' the place where they live; that is, to produce homogeneous, coherent representations of their place.

Thinking of conceived spaces as also produced by individuals emphasises how it is not just professional marketers and politicians' meanings and ideologies inscribed in a place-marketing image which intervene in affecting the way in which people perceive the marketed identity of the place where they live. My interpretation of Lefebvre's theory of space emphasises that people encounter their place's marketed image in complex ways that imply much more than a straightforward act of 'reading' the meanings that promoters

associate with these representations. It provides a theoretical framework that enables us to see how residents' encounters with their place's marketed image emerge from the amalgamation of many different elements that include ideological discourses and knowledges, practices and experiences, emotional investments and imagination, and a wide range of temporalities. How people may evoke different senses of time when encountering their place is one of the issues that this paper aims to bring to light.

In this respect, discourse analysis provided the tools that were particularly useful to identify which (and how many) temporalities the informants evoked when articulating their views about their city's image. Discourse analysis is a 'field of research' (Taylor 2001: 5) that aims at exploring in detail how people use language to 'present different pictures of reality' (Tonkiss 1998: 249). The term 'discourse' refers here to 'the activity of talking and writing' (Smith 1998: 246). Language is not seen as a transparent, innocent and neutral medium reflecting 'reality' in a straightforward way, but as the means through which people actively construct their social worlds (Tonkiss 1998). People use language to *do* things (Taylor 2001: 7). For example, people use language to make claims, sow doubts, persuade, agree, apologise, and lie (see Smith 1998: 247; Taylor 2001: 7; Tonkiss 1998: 250).

I hence examined my data to observe how the interviewees used specific words to support, oppose, or ignore, for instance, Trieste's marketed multicultural image. My analysis, therefore, focused on identifying the recurrent features of the language, such as specific terminologies and grammatical forms, which my informants used to articulate their opinions about Trieste's marketed image. A discourse analytical strategy helped me to

analyse the interviews by focusing on all the expressions referring to 'time' that the informants employed in their accounts about their city's multicultural character (cf. Taylor and Wetherell 1999). For instance, when coding and analysing the interview data, I have considered the verbal tenses, such as the present, future, and past, and terms such as 'in the past', 'a hundred years ago', 'now', 'today', 'nowadays', 'always', that the respondents used to construct their accounts about Trieste's multiculturalism.

Exposing Triestines' encounters with their city's multicultural character

When encountering their city's marketed image, the respondents were mostly indifferent to the meaning attributed to Trieste's multiculturalism by the promoters. The informants did not actually 'read' into this marketed image the sense of Trieste's multiculturalism originating in the city's scientific character because they primarily tended to ignore it. However, most of the respondents were seduced by Trieste's multicultural image and supported it in different ways. Only eight informants denied that Trieste is a multicultural city.

Trieste is not multicultural … It was [multicultural] in the past

Overall, eight of thirty-one interviewees clearly opposed Trieste's marketed image. The respondents who had been living in Trieste only for a few years rejected it by ignoring it. They answered my question about the city's advertised multiculturalism arguing, as Roberta did, that 'Trieste is not multicultural'.[1] Refraining from commenting

further on why Trieste was not multicultural to them, these informants were obviously not seduced by the city's marketed image.

The image also did not appeal to some Trieste-born informants. Marcello saw that what he defined as a 'multicultural vision of tolerance' 'has been lost over time'. He explained his claim in more detail:

Historically … the free port facilitated the confluence … of people coming from all over the Habsburg Empire, from Greece, from Italy itself … [The] free port was the first lever of this multiculturalism [that] afterwards disappeared. After the inclusion [of Trieste] in Italy … today [the city] has no longer the characteristics that it had within the Austro-Hungarian Empire … [People] used to speak three or four languages without any problem in this city.

Furio was the only one of my informants who clearly stated that depicting Trieste as 'multicultural' was a 'false image' of his city, a representation that some politicians had made up 'to show off' ('*farsi belli*'). He argued:

Well … I'd say that Trieste was … was great in its time, [it was] a multicultural city … Therefore it was [multicultural] in the past, I believe that nowadays … I think that Trieste welcomed a lot of foreigners a hundred years ago … Look, I don't think that it is like that [multicultural] … I don't know, it's like giving … an image of what [Trieste] is not.

Marcello and Furio rejected Trieste's marketed image; but they did not oppose it by ignoring it as the non-born Triestines did. They rejected this representation, evoking in their accounts two distinct Triestes that they compared. One is the Trieste that emerges from the informants' knowledge of their city's past when it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

by a multitude of diverse peoples, and which has always been prosperous; and, finally, a Trieste as it is today: a multicultural tolerant city which is also home to a variety of religious places of worship.

The analysis indicates that all the informants who supported their city's marketed image by considering Trieste's multicultural character to be primarily a heritage of their city's past tended to construct coherent accounts about their city's image in a specific way. That is, they all evoked a Trieste that has existed since time immemorial. For instance, recollecting how she enjoyed watching a video shot for marketing Trieste during the bid, Chiara R. said: 'they showed … a sense of freedom, a sense of multiculturalism that is present in this city … Trieste is a city where different cultures have *always* been living together'.

As with Luigi and other interviewees, Chiara employed the term 'always' in her account. 'Always' is an adverb that brings to mind a kind of temporality with no beginning and no end. Using this term, the respondents evoked the imagination of a 'timeless Trieste' that is able to traverse history. The evocation of this 'timeless temporality', which is a dimension of time that 'bridges' the past and the present, characterises all of my informants' supportive accounts about Trieste's multiculturalism. Except for three research participants (two of whom I discuss in the next sub-section), all those respondents who did not use the term 'always', either denied that Trieste is multicultural, or offered a different interpretation of their city's multiculturalism. In my view, then, it is exactly the imagination of a Trieste that exists as multicultural since time immemorial that helps these informants to offer a strongly persuasive account of their city's marketed image.

Trieste is multicultural … if one does not consider … the Italian–Slovenian issue

When I mentioned to Mario that during the campaign Trieste was represented as a multicultural city, he agreed enthusiastically:

Sure sure! … I think that Trieste having been used to … not having a clear identity which … First Italian then Austrian then Italian again, Austro-Hungarian, well, then also that period of mix between English, Slovenians … Yugoslavs well … [Trieste] has always had many many other realities … Then there is the issue of the Karst … [T]he *minoranza* [Slovenian community] stays in the Karst. They try to make the integration, sometimes it's difficult sometimes it's less [difficult].

Mario is clearly seduced by the marketed image. However, citing the 'issue of the Karst' (the Karst is the limestone plateau that circumscribes the Gulf of Trieste, and is an area often envisaged by Triestines as the home for the Slovenian 'minority') he figuratively pointed to the tension existing between the Italian-Triestines and the Slovenian-Triestines living in his city. Implicitly mentioning the tension between the 'Italians' and the 'Slovenians', Mario spelled out a problematic aspect of Trieste's more recent history that the marketers have concealed in order to propose a positive image of their city's tolerant, multicultural character.

Lorenzo also talked about the 'Italian-Triestine' and the 'Slovenian-Triestine' groups living in his city, arguing:

Yes … Trieste is a multicultural city … Well, historically Trieste is a port and is a city where many various ethnic groups have lived together rather harmoniously I'd say. Well, if … if one does not consider the Italian–Slovenian issue … However … Trieste has always had relationships with

all the civilisations of the Mediterranean and … of the East …

The historical minorities have always lived I must say rather harmoniously. Again, I exclude what is the … friction between a part of the Italian population … and a part of the Slovenian population … There have been clashes but somehow nothing [serious] happened.

Lorenzo 'bracketed off' the Italian–Slovenian issue at the very beginning of his account. He (unconsciously) repeated—and disclosed—the operation the marketers made when crafting Trieste's image. In order to persuade me that Trieste is a tolerant multicultural city, he explicitly excluded from Trieste's multicultural-ism a part of Trieste's recent history. He in fact argued that 'one [should] not consider' the 'friction' between the Slovenian and the Italian communities. This 'clash', Lorenzo told me repeatedly throughout the interview, merely reflects the attitude of a small fraction of Triestine society; namely a small percentage of the entire population (who he presumes are usually tolerant) from which he implicitly excluded himself.

These research participants also supported Trieste's marketed image as reflecting their city's identity. However, the fact that they more or less explicitly mentioned the tension between the Italian-Triestine and Slovenian-Triestine com-munities, points to how place-marketing images are indeed selective representations of a place's history, created through the silencing of some voices and histories (Philo and Kearns 1993). The city-marketers carefully avoided including in the image they advertised the 'Slovenians' and the 'Italians' as 'components' of the city's multiculturalism. This is presumably because the mentioning of these two groups would have potentially reminded local residents of the tensions between the two communities, and

may have eventually undermined the credibility of the multiculturalism that the marketers attributed to Trieste.

[Yes] … because there is a lot of immigration … but …

For other respondents Trieste's multicultural-ism is less a matter of the city's past, and deals more with their city's present. For example, Sara argued:

Trieste has many foreigners … With all these different foreigners now there is quite a big community of Chinese, of Serbs … and [Trieste] is in reality multicultural, the different cultures are there. As for their integration then [this] is quite another matter, [integration] is partial … I don't know how to say it … Trieste, despite it welcomes you, it keeps reminding you of this.

When I reminded Chiara B. (a Triestina belonging to the Italian-Slovenian community) of her earlier statement that Trieste is 'more and more multicultural', she explained in more detail her claim:

Because there is a lot of immigration! There are all the Serbs who fled from the war, the Albanians who ran away from the war and from starvation, then there are all the coloureds …

Then well there are the Chinese! They are scary! The fact is that these people do not want to integrate … They are increasingly more and more … they are taking the place … of Triestines in practice.

Whilst ignoring the marketers' view of Trieste's contemporary multiculturalism as originating in the city's scientific research community, informants such as Sara and Chiara B. offered their own way of conceiving

and experiencing their city's multiethnic character. For these respondents Trieste's multiculturalism is primarily the outcome of recent immigration.

Despite Chiara B.'s and Sara's attempts to offer a convincing account of Trieste's multiculturalism, their initial support for the city's multicultural character *appears* to be slightly disrupted. By stressing that in Trieste the 'integration' between the different ethnicities is 'partial', Sara's account suggests that Trieste's advertised multiculturalism is not always so harmonious. However, her questioning of Trieste's image does not undermine her support for her city's marketed image. Nor does Chiara B.'s negative opinion about the Chinese contradict her view that Trieste is multicultural. What these respondents' accounts indicate is that there might be tensions between the different ethnic groups living in the city.

The research participants who emphasised that Trieste's multiculturalism is the result of contemporary migratory phenomena, brought to light another aspect of Trieste that the promoters avoided including in their city's marketed image. Including the various ethnic groups that compose contemporary Trieste's social fabric in the city's advertised multiculturalism, could evoke issues related to immigrants' integration with the existing local population (as Chiara B. and Sara's accounts suggest), which could undermine Trieste's marketed image as a peaceful multicultural city. Next, I discuss why the majority of Triestines agreed that Trieste is a 'multicultural city'.

Multiculturalism is part of our DNA

Trieste, as one informant argued, 'was born as such … as multicultural in itself'. Other respondents claimed that 'multiculturalism

is part of our DNA'. Chiara R. argued that 'multiculturalism'

is something *you bring with you from the past and inside you*, also because if you ask a Triestine where his grandparents come from no one will tell you that they all come from Trieste.

Discourse analysts would argue that referring to parts of the body (the 'DNA', 'inside you') and/or natural events (such as birth) is a strategy that people use in order to naturalise their arguments. However, in my view, the respondents' use of these expressions is much more than a way of naturalising their accounts about Trieste's multiculturalism. It is a way of pointing to how what the marketers called 'multiculturalism' is something that in the respondents' views is really embodied in Triestines and Trieste itself. I always concluded the interviews by asking my informants which part of the world their families originated from. Those of my research participants who were born in Trieste described their origins as being Triestine, Friulan, Hungarian, Austrian, Croatian, Istrian, Dalmatian, German and Slovenian. However, 'multiculturalism' is not only part of Triestines' personal bloodlines. It is also part of their everyday lives, as the people I interviewed and spoke with informally often pointed out by suggesting that 'multiculturalism' is inscribed in Trieste's social, cultural, economic and political fabric in many ways.

According to many Triestines, 'multiculturalism' is also embodied in their dialect, a Venetian dialect that mingles words borrowed from Slovenian, Croat, Friulan, Greek, French, German and Yiddish, and that substitutes '*parlar in lingua*' ('to speak in *the* language') for Italian in Triestines' everyday social encounters (Minca 2009, this issue). Other residents pointed out that 'multiculturalism'

is present in their food; that is, Trieste's 'Mitteleuropean' cuisine mingles Italian food with the culinary traditions of Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Istria. A few people argued that 'multiculturalism' is part of their leisure time during holidays and weekends spent crossing the 'real' borders visiting neighbouring countries (primarily the Istrian and Dalmatian regions located in Slovenia and Croatia). Some Triestines drew attention to the free time they spend crossing less 'concrete' and more temporal and 'inner borders' by going to the *osmizze* on the Karst, inns serving their traditional food and wine for eight days during the year and representing a heritage of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's economy and culture; or by going to the coffee-shops in the city centre, heirs of Austro-Hungarian tradition.

Many research participants stressed that 'multiculturalism' is also part of Trieste's urban landscape, and can be experienced when encountering different religious buildings during a stroll through the city centre (the Serbian Orthodox church, the Roman Catholic church, the Lutheran-Evangelical church, the Greek Orthodox church, and the Synagogue). The informants who argued that their city's multiethnic character is the outcome of contemporary migratory influxes suggested that 'multiculturalism' is also reproduced in and by Trieste's economic fabric: from the cross-border workers who come on an everyday basis from Slovenia and Croatia to the thousands of Serbs who, during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, moved to live and work in Trieste. These respondents also emphasised that Trieste's 'multicultural' socio-economic fabric now includes the growing Chinese community that is taking the place of the mainly South Italian and Turkish *jeansenari*—those shopkeepers who, from the end of World War II until the 'end of communism',

used to sell Western goods such as jeans to customers coming from Central and Eastern Europe to shop in Trieste during weekdays. The informants' accounts that referred to the co-existence of the 'historical minorities' in Trieste suggested that 'multiculturalism' is also part of Trieste's political and social ethnic frictions between the 'Italians' and the 'Slovenians'. Despite the fact that the relationships between the Italian and the Slovenian-Triestines are not always peaceful, these frictions represent occasions in which Trieste's 'multiculturalism' is reproduced on an everyday basis.

In sum, what the marketers called Trieste's 'multiculturalism'—whatever that might be (perhaps the 'spirit of Trieste' as one of my informants once called it)—is perceived by many Triestines as embedded in their city's everyday life. This is why Trieste's marketed representation as a 'multicultural city' emerged as an image that captured most of the respondents' imaginations, their interests, and their sense of their city's identity.

Conclusion

My analysis of Triestines' encounters with their city's marketed image has been guided by Henri Lefebvre's (1991) spatial imagination. By drawing on the French thinker's theorisation of space, I have shown that people encounter their place's marketed image in complex ways that imply much more than a straightforward act of 'reading' into the meanings that the marketers encode (or that academics are able to grasp) in these representations. I have illustrated that the respondents encountered their city's marketed image by articulating their views of Trieste's 'multiculturalism', which they constructed by drawing on a wide range of resources originating

through their own ways of experiencing, thinking, imagining and feeling about their city. The interviewees' responses have brought to light various senses of Trieste's 'multiculturalism', which differed from the TEC's own vision of a multiethnic Trieste constructed around the presence in the city of a growing community of 'cosmopolitan' scientists.

My study has also suggested that place-marketing images do not always impart meaning to their audiences. Past research in different fields of the social sciences, inspired by insights from semiotics, such as geography (e.g. Burgess 1990; Daniels 1993; Nelson 2005), media and audiences studies (e.g. Morley 1992; Williamson 1978), and visual sociology (e.g. Faccioli and Harper 2000; Kretsedemas 1993), has tended to assume that different forms of representation (e.g. advertisements, television images, photographs, paintings) are unquestionably evocative of meanings. Yet, my analysis has also shown that representations such as place-promotional images do not always communicate meaning to their audiences. Some of my respondents (i.e. the informants who recently moved to Trieste) tended to ignore Trieste's marketed multicultural image and did not associate it with any specific meaning. In particular, place-promotional images may not evoke meanings when they do not capture people's attention, or when people find them irrelevant or uninteresting.

Lefebvre's idea that space is composed of multiple dimensions of time has also provided a guide for investigating how people may engage with place-marketing images by drawing on different temporalities. 'The past' emerged as an important temporality that the respondents evoked for either supporting or denying Trieste's multicultural character. However, some interviewees considered Trieste's 'present' to be more significant than 'the past', and other respondents evoked the existence of a 'timeless Trieste' to construct their supportive accounts about their city's multicultural character.

In describing how the interviewees engaged with Trieste's promotional image, I have shown that place-marketing images are not always perceived as misrepresentations of places as argued by much of existing research (e.g. Barke and Harrop 1994; Brownhill 1994; Holcomb 1994; Hubbard 1998; McCarthy 2005; Waitt 1999; Ward and Gold 1994). In illustrating how most of the interviewees supported Trieste's marketed image I have also shown that these representations do not always foster the opposition of the majority of people in a place, as assumed by some geographers (notably Philo and Kearns 1993).

However, the informants' different views of their city's 'multiculturalism' clearly indicate that the TEC's representation of Trieste was indeed a highly sanitised and selective image of Trieste and its assumed multiethnic character. The TEC's construction of multiculturalism around the idea of science and the 'cosmopolitan scientist' clearly extended only to certain groups and classes of people. This image was articulated by emphasising that privileged people with different ethnic backgrounds and high levels of education inhabit Trieste. It was crafted by excluding other groups of (perhaps less privileged) people who live in the city such as the Chinese, Serbian, Albanian, African, South American and Slovenian communities, which some of the informants indicated as being part of contemporary 'multicultural' Trieste. More generally, the respondents' complex articulations of Trieste's multicultural character indicate that we need a more nuanced approach for discussing the images created by place marketing. What is required is a perspective that can help us to go beyond

the binary approach that has frequently encouraged an understanding of these representations as simply 'false images' of 'real places'.

Acknowledgements

Note

1. In quoting the interview extracts I use the informants' real first names.

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Abstract translations

Multiculturalisme et temps en Trieste: images promotionnelles des lieux et perceptions par ses habitants d'une ville multiculturelle

Cet article traite de la manière dont les gens perçoivent les images promotionnelles des lieux afin de savoir si les images d'endroit mis en valeur pour promouvoir la ville sont toujours vues comme des représentations erronées. Dans ce contexte, je doute que des gens «interprètent» toujours dans ces images promotionnelles les significations enregistrées par le service de marketing, et je m'occupe des dimensions variées du temps dans lesquelles les gens puisent quand ils formulent leurs opinions sur l'identité commercialisée de leurs villes. En utilisant Trieste comme cadre d'étude, je cherche à savoir comment un group de 31 habitants a perçu le «caractère multiculturelle» donné à leur ville pendant leur tentative de recevoir l'exposition universelle 2008 et je montre que si les personnes interrogées n'interprétaient pas l'image multiculturelle présentée de Trieste dans le sens escompté par le service de marketing, les interviewés ont largement soutenu l'image présentée de Trieste par ces derniers. J'examine comment l'évocation des temporalités particulières (de passé historique, de présent et d'«intemporalité») ont influé sur la manière dont les personnes interrogées ont formulé leurs opinions au sujet du multiculturalisme de Trieste. J'explique également pourquoi l'image

multiculturelle présentée de Trieste a captivé l'imagination de la majorité des interviewés.

Mots-clefs: images d'endroit mis en valeur pour promouvoir la ville, perceptions, temporalités, multiculturalisme.

Multiculturalismo y tiempo en Trieste: el mercadeo de imágenes y las percepciones de los residentes de una ciudad multicultural

Este papel se discute como la gente se encuentra imágenes mercadeadas de lugares para explorar si las imágenes siempre están vistas en una manera distortada. De esta forma, pregunto si la gente se interpreta el significado de las imágenes merca- deadas escrito por los promotores, y considero las varias dimensiones del tiempo de que la gente se refiere cuando se articulan sus opiniones de la identidad mercadeada de su lugar. Usando Trieste como ejemplo, considero como un grupo de 31 residentes se perciben 'el carácter multicultural' de su ciudad anunciado durante el Expo Mundial 2008 y expongo que aunque los demandados no se supieron la misma imagen multicultural de Trieste mercadeada por los promotores, la mayoría de los entrevistados se apoyaron la imagen mercadeada de Trieste. Discuto como la evocación de temporalidades específicas (el pasado histórico, el presente y el eterno) ha afectado las articulaciones de los demandados sobre el multiculturalismo de Trieste. También explico porque la imagen multicultural mercadeada de Trieste ha captado las imaginaciones de la mayoría de los demandados.

Palabras claves: imágenes mercadeas de lugares, percepciones, temporalidades, el multiculturalismo.