„INNOVATIVE IDENTITIES"? THE ISSUE OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC FRAGMENTATION IN MONTAGNA FRIULANA (NORTH EASTERN ITALY)

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Abstract

The current globalization realty is characterized by the constant coming up of new identities, that are appearing at any scale, almost as a side-effect of parallel phenomena signifying increasingly cultural indeterminateness. This paper argues that this phenomenon is connected to a condition of periphericity, namely to a sense of vulnerability that arise outside the umbrella once provided by modern state; furthermore this paper argues that this phenomenon is indifferently affecting any culture, not considering ethnic and linguistic derivation. Such situation figures out a sort of paradox of the globalization, which, while extending the hegemony of a uniform code, would induce per reaction the flourishing of local cultures, sometimes evidencing a self-referential character, other times configuring the main stain for a new territorial consciousness.

1. Introduction

The sometimes insisting sprout out of new identities is characterizing the current globalization realty; they appear at any scale, from the micro to the macro, almost as a side-effect of parallel phenomena signifying increasingly identity (cultural) and territorial indeterminateness (Herb, Kaplan (eds.), 1999; Wintersteiner et al., (eds.), 2010; Jelen, 2011; Ilieş et al., 2012).

This paper argues that this phenomenon could be connected to a condition of periphericity, in which some communities unexpectedly fund their selves in the new global map (which is in the same time upsetting the usual centre-periphery schema), namely from a sense of vulnerability, outside the umbrella once provided by modern state – that in

the same time is loosing in charismatic and material power.

Further elements can be individuated in a post modern phenomenon of revival of local cultures, obliterated in modernistic times by the centralization wave, and in the increasing weakness of modern institutions. These are accumulated problems (public debt, bureaucracy, political inefficiency), evidencing the incapability to accomplish longer their duty both, as provider of social services (safety, welfare, accessibility, pluralistic education) and as reference for an all-comprehensive identity in national terms; a problem common to many contemporary political systems, which is described by the rhetoric of the "end of cycle" of (western) democracy.

As a further element to be considered the reaction to a situation of uniformation induced by multiculturalism, with the "mixed" category becoming the most rapidly growing ethnic category in the global era (namely the fear for the disappearing of an usual idea of identity) (Ali, 2011). Another relevant aspect would be the establishment of a condition of borderless, repurposing the fear for competition of outside economies, namely the loss of some rent position; in the case of the Montagna Friulana (MF, see fig. 1)[1] it means the fear to be exposed to the more efficient "north" and the fast growing "east" in the Central-European scenario (borderland effect).

Further elements would be possible traced to a kind of marketing tactic, the peripheral communities would adopt for making their selves something distinguishable in the "flat" global scenario. This not just for touristic-economic purposes, but also for the possibility of obtaining a share of the public budget usually devoted to protection of environmental and cultural particularities (a usual task for the modernist welfare state). Such possibility indeed induces expectations (in terms of public funding, of promotion etc.), then configuring the risk for bringing to some artificial survival of the publicly-funded identity, with local lobbies advocating a minority status, in fact becoming a kind of minority "professionals" (then configuring a dangerous cultural bias).

Such situation figures out a sort of paradox of the globalization, which, while extending the hegemony of a uniform code, would induce per reaction the flourishing of a mix of local cultures, sometimes evidencing a self-referential character, other

times configuring the main stain for a new territorial consciousness.

2. The condition of periphericity: opportunity or condemnation?

Such perceptions are strongly influenced by the post-modernity "turn", which means amongst the others the upset of the perception of the territorial order, namely the inversion of centre-periphery disposition. It is a matter of geographical consciousness, about the position a certain group perceives to settle with regard to all the "others" and to other territorial and non-territorial factors; it depends probably on cultural or historical circumstances, which would determine the self-perception of a certain community in terms of being inside or outside (protagonist or victim) of certain context (Steinicke et al., 2011a, 2011b).

In some case, a condition of periphericity could be perceived as an advantage, in others as a definitive disadvantage; in the range of few km the perception of a certain identity could manifest in opposite significances. This issue is evidently correlated to the identification of the "self" in a "whole", what in regional-structural terms means the perception of being included or excluded from something: perhaps it could signify perhaps the level of social collaboration (e.g. functioning of the civil functions), the availability of infrastructures, the connection to "centers" (state, regional, "global" etc.) and the accessibility to wider flows, depending on geographical hierarchy (Chai at al., 1986).

The fact, that in a context of structural weakening the local emarginated group would tendentially perceive the outside world in a negative way is possibly more than an hypothesis: it would be probably affected by intestine conflicts, manifesting in different way the discomfort and the impossibility of maintaining a rational way of confrontation both, inside the community (among community members) and towards the outside institutions.

This until the society will reach a new equilibrium or, at the contrary, until it will definitively weak, with peoples maturing a sense of miss-trust, eventually a sense of self-hatred, risking the definitive desegregation. Probably a situation characterized probably by the spread out of instinctive reactions, that are going to characterize both, inside and outside relations, with the outside world being perceived from a condition of inferiority, as well as the local community were a kind of residuum left behind by the mainstream of geography and history.

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[1] For making the reading easier, it has been used in the text the official toponomastic in Italian, followed eventually by locally used names either Friulian-Italian, Slovenian or German; see the institutional webpage of the region Friuli Venetia Giulia http://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvg/cms/RAFVG/cultura-sport/patrimonio-culturale/comunita-linguistiche/ [11.11.2016].

Such motivations manifest in not predictable ways and in not coherent communication modes. Sometimes the group, perceiving itself as threatened, would react in an instinctive manner, like an "organic" being, with a whole personality defending his self in a lethal struggle for survival – since in those circumstances the rational confrontation codes are not working anymore. Sometimes it would just desegregate and disappear (as e.g. a community demographically weakening and migrating).

In such circumstances, single individuals, factions and groups, association and institutions, feeling limited and menaced (in a kind of "territorial trap"), would probably react as endangered "animals", for pure self-defense purposes, migrating or hiding their selves, fighting or escaping the reality. Yet they have as well the chance to positively react, elaborating compromises, starting initiatives and elaborating intermediate (innovative) identities. Evidently, social actors and settlement units, as well as economic or political organizations, are not behaving just like "atoms" in an invariable mechanically-determined game, which is just further "replicating".

3. The case of the mountain area of Friuli

Such situations have been well defined in literature in the post-mod culture frame (supposed to evaporate or to became "liquid"); the same for the case of the alpine rural geography in different circumstances, both, in "critical" and descriptive-quantitative terms (Appadurai, 2001; Rumley, Minghi (eds.), 1991; Kaplan, Häkli (eds.), 2002; Weixlbaumer, 1988).

Indeed in mountain space – as well as in other spaces characterized by remoteness, natural topographic obstacles, and territorial discontinuities – such condition of periphericity is perceived alternatively as a problem or as an opportunity. Probably this considering the expectations the community manifests to become dependent of some "centre", considering as well further local attitudes (as autonomy tradition or social compactness), as well structural accessibility, availability of infrastructures and economic self-sufficiency.

In order to test such connection we would consider the MF, an area comprehensive of the northern and the eastern part of the province of Udine
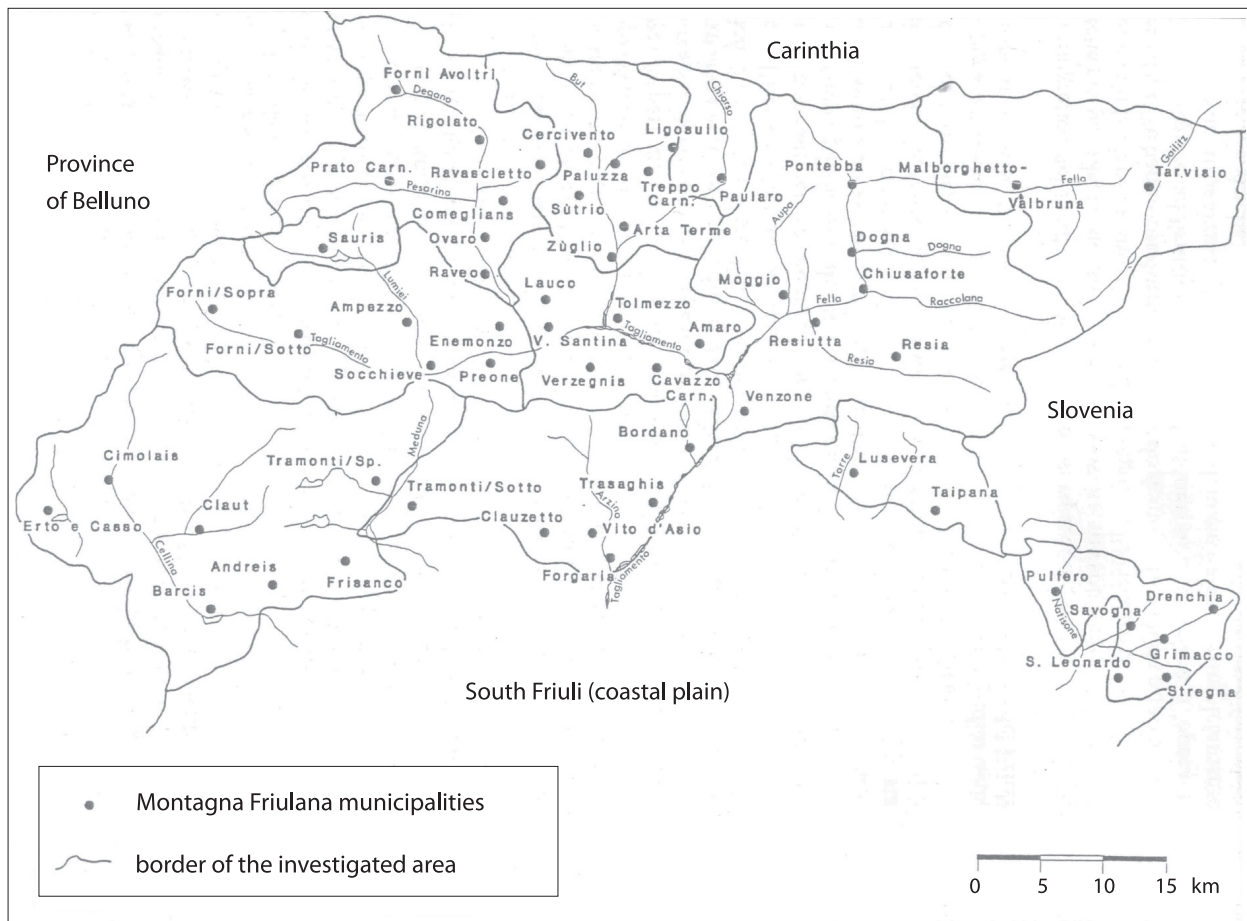

Fig. 1. The Montagna Friulana as per E. Steinicke, comprehended in the administrative provinces of Udine and Pordenone, in the northern part of the FVG region, north-eastern Italy
Source: Own elaboration based on Steinicke (1991, p. 40).

Tab.1. Population and demographic trend in the municipalities of the Montagna Friulana

municipalities and sub regions	resident population		% (1951 =100%)	municipalities and sub regions	resident population		% (1951 =100%)
	1951	2011			1951	2011	
Arta Terme	3208	2273	-29	Chiusaforte	2187	705	-68
Cercivento	1220	705	-42	Dogna	987	200	-80
Ligosullo	432	180	-58	Moggio Udinese	3854	1842	-52
Paluzza	4271	2403	-44	Pontebba	3931	1535	-61
Sutrio	1758	1376	-22	Resia	3350	1101	-67
Treppo Carnico	1409	659	-53	Resiutta	798	320	-60
Zuglio	1150	607	-47	Venzone	3592	2223	-38
Canale S.Pietro	13448	8203	-39	Canal del Ferro	18699	7926	-58
Paularo	4408	2782	-37	Lusevera	2377	711	-70
Comeglians	1839	540	-71	Taipana	2841	699	-75
Forni Avoltri	1508	653	-57	Prealpi Giulie nord (Torre)	5218	1410	-73
Ovaro	3935	2064	-48	Drenchia	1392	141	-90
Prato Carnico	2538	958	-62	Grimacco	1737	395	-77
Ravascletto	1500	569	-62	Pulfero	3735	1052	-72
Raveo	739	506	-32	San Leonardo	2283	1210	-47
Rigolato	2058	513	-75	Savogna	2077	506	-76
Canale di Gorto	14117	5803	-59	Stregna	1883	413	-78
Ampezzo	2472	1058	-57	Prealpi Giulie sud (Natisone)	13107	3717	-72
Enemonzo	1846	1355	-27	Bordano	1483	810	-45
Forni di Sopra	2070	1071	-48	Clauzetto	1840	402	-78
Forni di Sotto	1598	660	-59	Forgaria del Friuli	3202	1854	-42
Preone	655	279	-57	Tramonti di Sotto	1952	423	-78
Socchieve	2253	938	-58	Trasaghis	4125	2337	-43
Alto Tagliamento	10894	5361	-51	Vito d'Asio	2939	843	-71
Sauris	885	429	-52	Prealpi Carniche - Ovest	15541	6669	-57
Amaro	1199	820	-32	Andreis	1125	289	-74
Cavazzo Carnico	1601	1102	-31	Barcis	1056	256	-76
Lauco	2529	805	-68	Cimolais	1092	431	-61
Tolmezzo	8329	10659	28	Claut	2408	1027	-57
Verzegnis	1818	929	-49	Erto e Casso	2219	389	-82
Villa Santina	2002	2223	11	Frisanco	1568	683	-56
Area Tolmezzo	17478	16538	-5	Tramonti di Sopra	1614	385	-76
Marborghetto Valbruna	1512	965	-36	Prealpi Carniche - Est	11082	3460	-69
Tarvisio	6438	4683	-27				
Valcanale	7950	5648	-29	Montagna friulana	132827	67946	-49

Source ISTAT Italian Census Bureau; http://www.demo.istat.it; see map 1.

and Pordenone, Autonomous Region Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG), Italy, bordering with Slovenia (east) and Austria (north). The area is characterized by many aspects of marginality in terms of loosing capacity, of depopulation, of weakening of welfare systems, with emergence of "ghost" cities and villages (Čede, Steinicke, 2007). It means, in a context

of regional-structural transformations, the degeneration in a new condition of dependency, with the spread off of a perception a self-insufficiency.

The settlements are dislocated in a scarcely populated area of about 42.5% of the whole surface of the region FVG (7 857 km²), with a population of 67 946, that is 7% of the whole regional population

(1 236 103 inhabitants). Such figure is getting even worse because of long term trends out-migration, demographic ageing, economic decadence, with proliferation of "Wüstungen", deterioration of social connections, mis-management of landscape and environment, worsening of infrastructural networks, and further signs of decay[2].

The decrease of population counts for a half in the last 50 years, from 132 827 in the '50ies to nearly 67 946 in current census data (tab. 1); the demography is worsening also because of correlated ageing, migrations and "brain drain" effects, with the indicators showing a long-term migration to the leading centers of the southern part of the area, where are settled the administrative and industrial centers, far from the mountain area (especially the cities of Udine and Trieste).

This leads to increasingly marginalization problems, a paradox, if we consider that the MF valleys are historically the "Pass-land" on the Central-European axis, between the East and the West, the North and the South of the continent, and are currently crossed by relevant infrastructural corridors like highways, high-capacity railways, pipelines etc.

Actually, local societies can just perceive the dis-advantages of such flows (pollution, crowding, commuting-traffic), that just stream massively up and down the main Alpine channel, ignoring the lateral valleys of this area (indeed worsening the sensation of being excluded of the reality). In fact, such streams appear just as the metaphor of the modernity, passing "trough" or "over" the peripheral MF, with flows of peoples, tourists, freights etc. crossing this area, not including and not aiding in any way the local communities.

4. Structural and cultural weakening in the late modernity

Obviously, such weakness is not exclusive of this area; critical long term trends have been observed along the Alps and other mountain and emarginated areas (in Italy it is the case of western Alps and of Apennine mountains, at the contrary of well developed and demographically stable Dolomite and Central-Eastern Alps). Nevertheless, here, although

considering some recent counter-tendency elements, mainly induced by amenity settlement and emigration movements, the crisis manifests an extraordinary persistence, evoking the existence of specific circumstances.

Such weakness manifests itself in both cultural and structural terms; the former is proved by a progressive lost of social common rituals and by the spread out of indiscriminate outcry attitudes. The latter by the long term deteriorating of economic and demographic situation. Indeed it is difficult to state, in which way such processes are correlated and mutually influencing, whether the cultural weakness is the cause or the effect of the territorial crisis (the condition of periphericity), or the reversal. It has to be suppose that such processes are intrinsically connected.

Such trend began to be irreversible during the time of late modernity, starting from the '50ies, when became evident a condition of structural delay of the MF compared with other parts of the region (the southern and coastal plain and cities). It happened almost surprisingly. After the late modernity turn, the valleys suddenly have found their selves in a condition of periphericity (at the contrary, in pre modernity period the mountain valleys have been comparatively flourishing), with the diffusion of the perception, by the side of the mountain populations, of being deprived of something, to the benefit of the urbanized part of the region.

During this period the southern alluvial coastal plain (more suitable for developing scale economics for business, communication and production in modern terms) begin to show the characteristics of the rapid development, with massive "third industrialization" and consummistic development (urbanization, spread out of middle class culture, increasing well-being standard, automobile and private mobility etc.), since that time generating an attraction effect on the – from that time – emarginated mountain.

Since the '50s the southern urban-industrial areas began to attract peoples and resources of the mountain, whose economics began reciprocally to show the signs of a weakness, as a consequence. Such negative trends developed progressively until the final crisis, configuring a wide desertification effect for entire MF valleys, and once decreased below some threshold, risk to collapse and disappear. Such effects seem to evolve in a contextual regional-level "zero sum game", with economics and societies loosing value and cohesion and depressing irreversibly in a "closing in its self" system, then giving birth to an ideology based on claims and protestations.

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[2] "In nessun territorio della zona alpina il processo di spopolamento è così incessante e così fortemente radicato come nelle Alpi friulane, dove accanto ad appezzamenti abbandonati si sono configurati luoghi completamente disabitati (ghost towns); luoghi questi, dove dunque, sono fallite anche le tradizionali strategie di sviluppo economico e territoriale atte ad arginare lo spopolamento" (Steinicke et al., 2007, p.549).

The structural weakening configures the exactly parallel to the social weakening, which is epitomically described by the disappearing of regulation codes, and furthermore by the spread off of intestine conflictuality. Further consequences of such drift are the spread off of several social disturbances, and finally emargination and mass population out-migration. Indeed, a vicious circle exerting a dramatic effect for conservation of the local culture: the progressive weakening of communities, loosing self-confidence and the respect in their own culture, loosing codes that demonstrated to be enough efficient to permit the long term survival of the community in the past times. A progressive weakening that would probably combine with further fragmentation tendencies, placing a lethal threat to communities with millennia of history.

This especially in an area which is characterized by an extreme variability in cultural linguistic terms: the crisis in MF means the threat to a borderland mixed region, characterized by Romance (Carnian, Friulian and Italian), Slavonian-Slavonic and Germanic speaking groups spread out in the valleys. A place representing the transition area between the central-European and the Mediterranean space, among the Balkans and Italian peninsula and the Danube valley (Wendt, 2001) (in which the different European linguistic cultures have met since ancient times as spontaneous historical diffusion (Ilieş et al., 2011)).

5. The flourishing of micro identities

Nowadays such different cultures nowadays are affected equally by crisis factors and are showing similar reactions. The data describes a long term weakening, in which economic worsening is combining with social uncertainty, affecting inevitably on the identitarian dimension: a context inclined to intestine conflictuality, with cultural and material codes just overlapping any further local contraposition, and inclined as well to proliferation of ethno-linguistic micro-identities – the variable considered in this study, rather than of other character, such as religious, ideological-political, or strictly territorial.

On the basis of our investigation it is possible to enlist a sequence of "innovative" identities, from the traditionally recovered to apparently totally invented ones, from what it is possible to define as a revival identity to a neglected one, for variants not (yet) recognized as a national standard or not recognized at all, neither by scientist (philologists, geographers, sociologists) nor by official institutions. Some of those are indeed based on the expectation of local groups to be recognized as an authentic culture, or to be accredited as local variants of official language, claiming for ethnographic peculiarities e.g., in culture, traditional music or vernacular literature (mainly oral), or even "genetic" terms (see below the grotesque case of Resia valley).

Such claim would be based alternatively on something primordial (therefore indemonstrable), assuming a "culturalist" marker as the evidence of a peculiar identity, often as a strictly geographical issue (the belonging to a valley, to a village, to a fraction of a village, to a special landscape, mountains or rivers etc.). Rarely it develops in civic/rational terms, namely targeting the representation of a common interest (e.g. the claim for a material need, for control on political action or for infrastructure improvement, the spread out of environmental questions movements), demonstrating that in such context the civic approach is usually weaker: due to the social "confusion", people rarely participates to elaboration of public life in rational terms; e.g. they do not attend to civic assemblies, but they are inclined to undertake informal quarreling or occasional protestations, tendencially assuming rebel attitude.

More often the spread out of innovative identitarian movements is the result of a distorted social dynamics, resulting e.g. from the contraposition between two or more associations, each one claiming for "purity" or for a sort of primogeniture. In other cases the acknowledgment of a new culture is just the result of "top down" politics, often pursuing a "positive discrimination" manoeuvre (considering that the modern welfare state usually supports local minorities).

Sometimes it results from the initiative of some influent local faction or personality (e.g. the Major of a small municipality, the VIP residing in a rural area, the entrepreneur offering working places) pursuing individual objectives. Other times the foundation of a new micro-culture is a direct consequence of a manipulative use of local media, with some association or some individual (just as a hobby or as a game) founding a new "variant" of a certain ethnicity, starting with the organization of a local movement. Sometimes the promotion of an innovative identity relies "tout court" on a manipulation of a certain tradition, in other cases it comes form the "refuse" of some innovation (in conservative or escapist terms), eventually perceived as an imposition (it is the case of the superposition of a national linguistic standard on a local dialect).

All these, cases potentially inducing domino effects (a kind of "fractalization" of identities, using the Appaduray terminology) (Appaduraj, 2001, p. 68.), with the creation of apparently innovative

movements, as well as the diffusion of negative attitude, namely of identities induced just by a reaction in contraposition circumstances (Korostelina, 2008). Such effects are realizing in a fragmented context, with informal groups or just single individuals purposing an innovative language in a sectarian context, in an arbitrary manner – a paradox, considering that the first function of a language is to be an instrument for improving the communication and to enlarge the audience (Minnich, 1993).

6. Test area

Such tendencies have been observed in a wide series of case studies, nearly in any village of the MF, assuming different forms and instruments – such as home-printed booklets, social media, blogs and web pages, inter-personal circumstances, start up of spontaneous committees, as well door-to-door communication networks. Sometimes the contents of such expressions are similar to an occasional outburst, other times they are the beginning of a wider movements, inclined to assume as well political character with the intention of pursuing objectives of social influence. Indeed, such ways of expression are not always significant indicator of a consolidated public opinion, but just "iceberg peaks" signifying a "minority" of organized agitators trying to "opening the door" in the local society, pursuing particular targets.

Furthermore, beside the usual communication circuits, such movements are spreading out on the web, assuming a typical immaterial form, as a universe of information, opinions and "taking sides", occasional polemics and disputes on the "blog-sphere", which is becoming a kind of arena for the local dialectics – indeed often manifesting in self-referential modes, since not inducing a significant feed-back. In general these expressions rely on the tools offered by the free communication, without filters and censure, in order to get a wide communication base (considering also that the accessibility of such instruments is usually easy and inexpensive). All this is configuring a general confusion of expressions and open source media, in which the local society is inclined to express, manifesting sometimes drift effect of the "trash" communication (e.g. indulging in offensive and vulgar language).

Such material has been analyzed with a screening method: an information base not necessarily expressing something coherent, but a good barometer of local tension, with communication tools used by individuals and associations as simple multiplicators of opinions. Indeed, they have to be considered just

what they are, namely spontaneous liberatory expressions: either than the purpose of some solution, the simple outburst of some frustration.

Furthermore it has been performed a search on local newspaper, especially on letters column, as well as on articles written by local correspondents (usually not professional journalists). This assuming that the private readers letters sent to newspapers would represent a way for "measuring" the identity-proliferation phenomenon. Such newspapers are the MessaggeroVeneto (MV), based in Udine, the Il Gazzettino from Udine-Pordenone and the Primorski Dnevnik, Slovenian newspaper of Trieste, all of them printed outside the investigated area (since no daily newspaper settles inside the MF).

Local periodicals with different origin have been as well reviewed, such the Dom and the Novi Matajur (from Cividale, in Slovenian and partially in local dialects), La Vita Cattolica and Il Nuovo Friuli (from Udine, in Italian and Friulan). Names of privates, when cited, have been punctuated. Such letters are – as verified – usually not filtered, even when usually selected by their polemical potential in mobilizing the public opinions, in order to manifest the latent tensions (and presumably to increase newspaper circulation).

Such letter are supposed to be significant indicators even when considering some biases, as the repetitiveness of some writers: when the polemical "violence" would reach the top, waves of letters inundating the newspaper editorial board, soon disappearing after a while. It has been estimated that about 40% of the letters are targeting directly or indirectly the identity issue, offering material for a possible list of self-defined identities.

In particular with these articles it is possible to describe the situation of minority belonging considering the three most important minority groups located in MF, in respective areas of historical settlement, applying a symmetrical investigation on the three linguistic roots. This in order to verify differences in the behavior of such groups, whether they are assuming different attitude evidencing "culturalist" significance.

7. German variant: Carnia and Valcanale

German speaking settlements in MF have a particular form, since they diffuse in isolated rather than continuous settlements (Weixlbaumer, 1988; Steinicke et al., 2011b; Domenig, 1997). It happened because of original formation of such communities, deriving from late medieval colonization of German settlers, who assumed in this area mainly an

Fig. 2. The title of village booklet meaning "that's life… but no devil can understand it"!, a slogan in self codified language, not using German graphic signs, stating implicitly – with some complacency – that nobody can understand it

Source: Zaiting van Cirkul Kultural va Tischelbong, n. 67, August 2011 (cover sheet).

"infiltration" schema, with forestry and mine workers (traditionally using diffusely iron instruments for the diverse activities) settling inside Furlan and Slavonic populated area (already existent since the early Middle Age times or even earlier), where the population were devoted mainly to extensive agrarian-pasturage activities.

This population settled remote places, at that time not yet occupied, like lateral valleys, high mountain plateau or shadow side of the valley, where there was possibility for forestry, mining and blacksmiths activities (in Tarvisio, Valcanale valley), or mountain farming and transhumance, like in Sauris (Ger. Zahre), Timau (Ger. Tischelwang, local German dialect Tischlbong), and Sappada (Ger. Ploden)[3].

Other groups settled in other periods in Valcanale (Ger. Kanaltal, Slo. Kanalska Dolina, Fri. Val Cjanal), when German speaking peoples followed the expansion of Austrian empire in the centuries, namely the consolidation of its administration apparatus, composed mainly by officials, clerks, merchants, businessmen, contributing to the formation of the commercial town of Tarvisio (Ger, Tarvis, Slo. Trbiž, Fri. Tarvìs), Pontebba (Ger. Pontafel, Slo. Tablje, Fri. Pontajbe) and Malborghetto (Ger. Malborget, Slo. Naborjet, Fri. Malborghet).

Further traces of German-Austrian culture settlement are spread out in the region, but not represent a compact unity with historical continuity (as eventually in Gorizia and Trieste, cities which maintain a well recognizable cultural and urbanistic Habsburg semblance).

About this relatively few and insulated cases there is available scientific literature. In these case it is possible to observe active groups of local revival, culture etc., assuming either than the German official language, the local variant; Hochdeutsch is considered for school purposes, but for the local dialectics it is clear a tendency of elaborating an innovative code. Such case of "spin off" of new language (evoking a particular culture) would evidence an incongruence (or, from the localistic point of view, a coherent attitude) between the linguistic code and the national identification; actually such groups are preferably defining their selves as "friulani" with, as mother tongue, a German (Austrian) dialect (see fig. 2).

A curious approach to such phenomenon, considering the dimensions of this communities, consisting of few hundreds of peoples, with the language used as an instrument for ethnic self identification (inside communication), not really for wider (then "true") communication purposes. Similar questions are common for further high mountain settlements, where the local association seems to be inclined to use an original linguistic marker. At the contrary in

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[3]   which actually lies in province of Belluno, in Veneto region, but is in predicate to adhere to the province of Udine.

lower parts of traditionally German speaking valleys, the investigation shows a different situation, with the existence of associations claiming Hochdeutsch as the own language (the Kanaltaler Kulturverien in Valcanale), organizing standard teaching courses, with some dozens of subscribers; as far as we know, in this circumstance there are not groups claiming Austro/German local variants.

This possibly happens because of the "urban" character of such community (pivoting the administrative centre of Tarvisio), or probably because of the continuity with the Austrian territory, or because of the prevalence in the border area of functional use of the language for tourism, business or trade (possibly because the minority is alimented by "fresh blood" cultural inserts as well by economic initiatives from trans-border area).

Different situations are represented by the traditionally mixed Slovenian/German area like Camporosso (Slo. Žabnice, Ger. Saifniz, Fri. Cjamparos) and Valbruna (Slo. Ovčija Ves, Ger. Wolsfsbach, Fri. Valbrune), which can be better to be interpreted in the category Steinicke defined of "diffuse Ethnizität" and of active multi-lingualism, characterized by the attitude of the local population of adapting the used tongue to circumstances. But such hybrid-multilingual traditions seem to became rare and even to extinguish.

8. The Slavonic variant: identity labels and classification refractory cultures

The further case is that of the Slovenian settlements, which are localized on the western side of the Julian Alps watershed (approximately) and therefore historically gravitating to Venetian (and then Italian) political area, either than to Slovenian outback (previously under the Habsburg and the Yugoslavian rule). Such settlements are characterized by territorial continuity and ethnic coherence on the eastern belt of MF: indeed a coherence mostly just apparent, since the structure of the Slovenian speaking population is composed by rural clusters scattered in a wide topographic fragmented area, scarcely communicating with each other. In fact the relations between these communities with the Slovenian upper Soča/Isonzo valley have been rather weak in the history, and have been further obstructed (hindered) by the superposition of political state borders (especially in Venice and Habsburg epoch).

This fact provoked a dependency on outside areas, preventing integration in a wider Slovenian speaking area, in particular preventing the formation of urban elite during the modern time able to represent the ethnic character of the rural population (as it happened e.g. for others Slovenians "outside Slovenia", who could refer to the social elite of towns such as Gorizia and Trieste or Klagenfurt) (Jelen, 1996; Vavti, 2007).

The current fragmented pattern is particularly evident in the sequence of valleys along the Italian-Slovenian border from the Valcanale in the north, to Resia (Slo. Rezija), Torre (Slo. Ter) and Natisone (Slo. Nediža) valleys, to Collio (Slo. Brda, just north of Gorizia), configuring a set of divided settlements, depending culturally and structurally from non-Slovene towns of the Italian plain, towards them they possibly developed a sense of cultural subalternity. Nowadays such situation represents the ground for a tendency to further fragmentation, in several terms, linguistic and cultural, combining with further differentiation schema of social, economic (rural/urban, rich/poor, modern/traditional, conservative/innovative), topographic (plain/mountain) and then of ethnic and linguistic character (Slavonic/ Romance, and finally local dialect/literary Slovenian).

Such binary classifications are characterizing the discussion about the identity at any level, inside the communities, between the communities and Friuli neighbors, the Italian provincial authorities, as well the official minority institutions based in Trieste and Gorizia, and finally the Slovenian national outback. A kind of historic and geographic "incoherence" – namely a gap between ethnic identity and political belonging – which seem to incentive an attitude to particularisms, as well as an attitude for escaping any classification (see Fig.3 as an example of self-codification of local vernacular Slovenian used on the media).

An inclination relying sometimes on a kind of representation of the "self" as original and non reproducible paleo-Slavonic units, that have to be preserved from any "contamination". A definition contrasting the one purposed by the Slovenian nationals, who are advocating the assimilation to the language standard, which sometimes is interpreted by local autonomists as a maneuver pursued by the national lobby for extending the political influence on the valleys (repurposing the image of the former Tito's Jugoslavia communist expansionism). A situation exacerbated by the effects of the mentioned structural crisis, prospecting a mix of motivations and of disputes in which material and indentitarian elements are continuously confusing in small communities, that appear to be bound to further divide until a probable auto-destruction.

The level of the polemics between standard Slovenian and (supposedly) not Slovenians assumes an increasing relevance in recent years, reaching the

juridical/penal level, regarding outrageous outcry and asserted lethal "threats" ("Resia: the defense for the Italianity now is finally in front of a judge")[4]. In some circumstances the identity quarrel reaches the level of the "genetic" discussion, therefore – as the Major of Resia stated – not to be classified "tour court" as Slovenian but as something particular and unique ("Strong attacks to C. for the 'Resian race'" [sic])[5].

In fact such presumed uniqueness of Resia (and eventually of others communities) is advocated in a incongruent manner. This lobby alternatively claims the inclusion in a Slovenian cultural space (as in occasion of the adherence of Resia to the regional law 38/2001 prospecting subsidization for cultural minorities, see below), or the exactly opposite, underlying the uniqueness in "genetic" terms (indeed a usual characteristic for any isolated villages, considering as well the genetic drift, to which were exposed communities in the long term of pre-modern history). Such positions mature in circumstances of contraposition among groups, swinging among opposite theories (namely the belonging to the Slovenian matrix, the absolute refute to such belonging or something else).

Finally such attitude would contaminate the local society, who is systematically dividing in factions, contrasting each other and competing for social influence, generating a number of associations inside and outside the valley[6], polemizing vainly on local booklets, newspaper rubrics, blog-sphere and further social communication tools. The question has been recently purposed again at official level, considering the decision of the Resia municipality of adhere to the status defined by the mentioned regional law 38/2001, prescribing benefits for the promotion of communities classified as Slovenian (introducing possibly an asymmetry among Slovenian and self declared non-Slovenian).

In that moment the Municipality council decided to adhere to that classification – namely it applied to that project – with probably the intention of not being excluded by the aids that would be provided by the law (whose original intention has been the protection of linguistic minorities). However, the Municipality council – following a sudden change in public opinion, probably as a consequence of a disappointment in such expectations – just retired its

adhesion[7], and deciding to adhere to the opposite language "front". Then "the Municipality Council deliberated to comprehend the Municipality of Resia in the category of those protected in quality of being of Friuli origin"[8]; a decision configuring a paradox and a philological "non sense" considering that the Furlan is a Romance language.

From this point of view, such change of Resia municipality derives from a confusing representation of the identity, with lobbies "playing" with the different variants, eventually inventing them. The volatile interpretation of the own identity appears as a tactic, but it could represent as well the "mirror" echoing further disputes (material/economic), and then the sign of an internal weakness, in general the tension induced by a condition of remoteness and the fear of being definitively excluded[9].

Such tensions are expressed by some letters, signed by the president of the association "Identità e tutela Val Resia", actually based in Udine (therefore outside the valley),[10] stating that "despite the studies about genetics on Resia – a unique 'ethnic group' – and the millennial 1400 years long settlement in the valley, we are condemned to be a Slovenian National Community, robbed of our identity, of our traditions and of our culture"[11].

In fact the local – scarcely codified – languages represent something suitable of adaptation, with phonetic and graphic signs, lexicon and grammar differences being instrumentally stressed or minimized, alternatively, in order to underline a belonging. The Slovenian standard answer to the above assertions is: "pristaž take politike je sam župan S.C., ki si je izmislil nestrokovno pisavo krajevnega narečja, da bi se čim več oddalili od slovenščine".[12] The MessaggeroVeneto reader N.S.G. in his letter "Investimenti ed emigrazione"[13], citing prominent Slovenian linguists makes clear the rainbow of different position stating that "Philologists state scientifically that [the local dialect] belongs to one of the seven dialectological bases, in which the 47 Slovenian dialects

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[4] MV, 15/9/2011, p. 49, A.C.: "Resia: la difesa dell'italianità ora finisce davanti al giudice".

[5] MV, 16/6/2010, p. 12, "Duri attacchi a C. per la 'razza resiana' "; names of letters authors have been cited per initial letters.

[6] Like "Identità e Tutela val Resia", http://itvr.blogspot.it/; "Tutela e identità Valresia" [11.11.2016], http://www.valresia. it [11.11.2016], and others.

[7] MV, 15/8/2010, p.11, "Resia, il consiglio comunale non vuole la tutela per le minoranze slovene", A.C.

[8] Author's free translation from Italian.

[9] MV, p.17, "Piuttosto che unici, in via di estinzione", 1/7/2010.

[10] signed A.S., MV, p.14, „Determinazione ingiusta", 19/8/2010.

[11] Author's free translation from Italian.

[12] R.D., 2012, Ali bodo v Reziji Slovence izgnali iz doma, ki ga je podarila Slovenija? Dom. Kulturno verski list, XLVII/15, August 31, 2012, p. 11, čedad/ Cividale d.F. (names are punctualized since concern private letters).
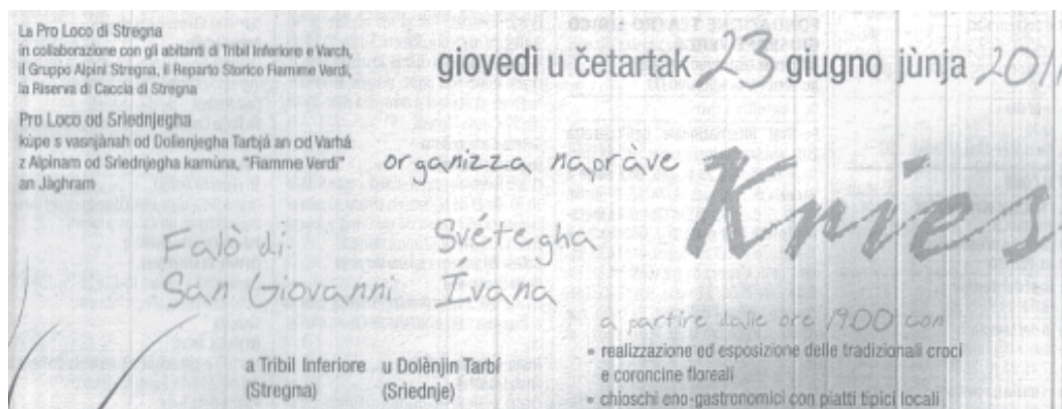
[13] MV, p. 17, 16/9/2010.

Fig. 3. Promotion of the rural celebration in the village Stregna in occasion of the event called "Kries"; poster composed in Slovenian dialect (or paleo Slavonic) self codified written language

Source: MV 19/6/2011.

were classified, therefore the introduction of the bilingualism is legitimized"[14].

Resia – a remote beautiful alpine valley, with less than 1 000 inhabitants, surrounded by the majestic snow covered peaks of the Mount Canin – represents the paradox of identity in times of globality, with conflicting associations claiming by chance the exactly opposite, namely the belonging to the Slovenian koinè, the Friulian-Italian loyalty, or the absolutely uniqueness, with a sequence of intermediate positions.

9. Romance Variants: the Friuli culture

The Friulan situation presents similar aspects, but on a different scale, highlighting the same fundamental question, and the same tendency to arbitrary disputes about something that indeed is impossible to define in positivistic-objective terms (namely the codification of a language that was never been used as a written official language). Such language (the "Furlan") is an ancient language, resulting probably form the mix of Latin and Celtic elements occurred since the time of the Roman conquest of the area.

This code resisted to different waves of standardization thank to the fact it remains the language of a population occupying peripheral areas, that, indeed thank to this condition, survived for centuries until today – differently as happened to the languages spoken from time to time by the military and urban elites, derived from powers and populations who invaded MF in the past from outside (Roman, Longobard, Slavonic, Hungarian, Turk, Venetians, Habsburg etc.). This fact brought to the elaboration - indeed rather late in the national history – of the

rhetoric of the "Patria del Friuli" (fatherland) in the frame of a well definite territorial imaginary, originating by the glorious history of the Aquileia Patriarchate, the medieval "state" which represented the original myth of such "patria".

Geographically these territories lie in the area between the mountains and the see, and between the two rivers Tagliamento (on the west) and Isonzo/Soča (on the east), configuring something "organic" and ideal, about that any Furlan should be conscious. Such ideal had in the last decades an important revival – after centuries of being neglected, mainly in favour of official Italian standard - assuming the significance of the reaction to a supposed imposition (then a "patriotic" idea generated by the reaction to a "cultural imperialism").

Finally the Furlan culture representatives claim a true national dignity based on a long tradition, being the language spoken in a much wider area, when it was the main language of the whole arc from the Central-Western side of the Alps (connecting with western European Gallic languages) to the Upper Adriatic (Trieste and Istria). A residuals of such languages would be the Ladino spoken on the Dolomits, the Rumantsch in Graubünden (Switzerland), and the Istrota in Istria region (Croatia). Nowadays it is spoken mainly in Udine province, in part in Pordenone and Gorizia area, by a few hundreds of thousand of peoples. It suffered especially in modern times an emargination process, when it has been confined in rural areas, with the main towns in Friuli assuming progressively the language of the authority (usually a Venetian dialect, then Italian standard).

Since that times the Furlan evidenced a typical minority-subalternity complex ("sotans" vs. "sorestans") (Maniacco, 1985). In many times a set of institutions have been established to improve it. It is the case of the public Societât Filologjiche Furlane (SFF), and of

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[14] Author's free translation form Italian.

others initiatives that have been promoted in the spirit of the "positive discrimination" principle, the modern welfare state applied in order to sustain the minorities. It provides above all the necessity of codifying the (almost exclusively until then) oral use language, in order to unify the different variants, and to limit the ongoing erosion (typical indeed for any minority languages), which would otherwise endangering the language and the ethnicity in its whole.

Today the main issue is about a definitive – generally acknowledged – written mode, in order to make of the Furlan a code susceptible of being applied as well for institutional purposes, for education at any level of schools and public communication. A question connected with that of lexicon, phonetic, graphic, syntactical and grammar rules, the SFF had the statutory duty to elaborate and certify – a task, institutionally promoted, but started immediately a sequence of disputes. In such context the language question assumes further motivations, signifying the reaction against "imperialistic" attitude of the major cultures (targeting alternatively Italian-state centralism, "globalization" and multi-cultural society, European "bureaucracy", computer and television culture etc.).

Above all, it means especially the arising of a bulk of claims for not "orthodox" variants, eventually accredited as more authentic, sometimes just evidencing slight linguistic differences, symbolized by the academic herudite quarrel for an "o" or an "e" as final word letter or some other apparently not much significant questions. Such claims are diffusing in the different areas in the Furlan spoken area, especially in the MF and in further peripheral areas. Virtually any village would purpose a cultural self defined code, a fact that, whether from a cultural point of view could be considered an element of vitality, from the "tactic" of the promotion of the minority in its whole represent a set of problems.

Furthermore, such diversification tendency is often superimposing to administrative issues, and to autonomy claims, sometimes justified in terms of the revival of local identities, sometimes just instrumentally used for the purposes of some territorial lobby. It is the case of the mountain movement for establishing a new "province", to distinguish the "Friulani" from the "Carnici", separating them from the "imperialistic" Udine, considered the capital town of Friuli, for a population supposedly composed by Carnian-Celtic descendents in the Carnia.

10. The Lega Nord movement

This movement realizes by chance in the politically-oriented Movimento Friuli, inspired by autonomy ideals, but maintaining rather a moderate tone (it never claimed for secession, just for administrative autonomy and cultural promotion), relying on a popular reformist movement, opposing any centralistic elite – in particular the Italian statalistic culture, accused of having de-nationalized the Furlan culture once it assimilated Friuli in its administrative frame. Movimento Friuli had some success in the '70s and in the '80s, then disappeared and gone into a major wave of an autonomist party with more radical program, which spread out in Italy in late modernity times. This can be considered the last stage of a fragmentation processes – indeed assuming eventually radical significances, with the spread out of the well-known Lega Nord party.

Such movement – originating outside the Friuli region, namely in Lombardy and Veneto – would possibly signify a radicalization of similar process assuming immediately political consistence. It would mean the rebellion against the political capital Rome, claiming for taxes reduction, state devolution and the transformation in a federal constitution, assuming by chance xenophobic attitudes. It claims a program relying on the foundation of a "totally invented" new identity (Agnew, Brusa, 1999, p. 123; Albertazzi, 2006), recovering a mythical Celtic primordiality (representing the image of Celtic tribes fiercely resisting to Roman invaders), assuming from the beginning the sense of a rebellion.

A movement rapidly spreading out, that can be interpreted in many ways, as the reaction to a "end-of-the-cycle" welfare state, as a populist variant (cyclical for democratic systems, as happens in many others European countries); it assumes the late modernity typical form of the revolution of the "haves" against the "have-not" (the North against the South), with the aim to resist the re-structuration the welfare system, the modern state built over the years. A "[….] post modernist territorial political movement in its self-conscious manipulation of territorial imaginary" (Agnew, Brusa, 1999, p. 123). In fact the Lega spread out in Friuli and elsewhere in North Italy, gaining consensus, claiming alternatively secession from Rome and form the European Union, or "tout court" the fight against multi-cultural ideology, evoking the risk to be invaded by Islam fundamentalists, North African refugees, East European immigrants or Chinese business men or someone else.

Finally the movement reached many times the ruling position at several local and regional level and (paradoxically), on Italian government in Rome (hold

in periods 1994–1995, 2001–2006 and 2008–2011, in a coalition supporting Berlusconi's party). Indeed, such movement overlies just to some extent the Movimento Friuli, which never advocated such extremists claims: the correlation between Lega Nord and Movimento Friuli seems not to be very strong, sometimes they are mutually exclusive, even when several Movimento Friuli leaders took actively part of Lega Nord movement. In general, it is possible to say the Lega Nord originated from a domino effect induced by the spreading out of an artificial way of elaborating identities (paradoxically provoking the loss of significance for the concept of "identity").

11. The ongoing changing inventory of identities – true or fictive?

The question of defining an identity represents something new in the new global reality, confusing and upsetting the relatively stable structure of the modernity. In some circumstances it starts a process, which - once started – would be impossible to be kept under control, assuming finally political significance (as the Lega Nord, risking some geopolitical drift, claiming separatists programs). Obviously, when the identity becomes suitable of being innovated arbitrarily (or "pluralistically") innovated, it risks the loss in significance, degenerating in something superficial, suitable of being used instrumentally.

Therefore, it is difficult to elaborate a method in order to verify such invention as something true or fictive, justified or arbitrary. The fundamental right for anyone of expressing his self with a preferred code (a re-invented "mother tongue", a new "ethnicity", a political-territorial movement etc.) appears in conflict with an idea of cultural efficiency of the community, relativizing the same idea of the identity. It is the case of MF with a set of communities persistently breaking in new parts, dissolving the cohesion of settlements and cultures, and the concept of identity properly collocated in a definite geography and history. A process indifferently affecting the language groups in the area, demonstrating that such "syndrome" affects indifferently any ethnicity.

Finally this process is bringing to the creation of a list of labels configuring a kind of local "Babylonia": a paradox, considering that the language obviously exists for communication purposes (both, inside and outside the group), that prefigure the risk for self-destruction of some culture. Indeed in these circumstances the identity-linguistic marker seems to be used mainly for oblique purposes, as the consolidation of a "faction", pursuing some particular target. This phenomenon means something different as the arising of a multi-linguistic area (a "diffuse Ethnizität" condition theorized just few decades ago) (Čede et al., 2012), configuring possibly a self reflexive game, where just the contraposition would represent the original causality for the formation of a new identification code: a vicious circle indeed, that would signify the risk for the relativization and then for the possible extinction of the local culture.

Furthermore, such "Babylonian" uncertainty makes any institutionalization of that code impossible, The question of the acknowledgment of a official status (which seems to be essential in order to give to a local code a chance of survival, e.g. predisposing bilingual tables in public areas, lecturing in schools, using the written language in administrative acts), and the transcription for the written use (which is practically useless when the language is spoken by few hundred of peoples) appear as something impossible to realize. Sometime the institutional work of the officially recognized organizations is openly contested, demonstrating once more that in these circumstances the national character of a culture is difficult or either impossible to ascertain.

The risk is that the impossibility of standardizing a mixed dialect would bring to the disappearance of such code; it happened recently to many fringes of the investigated area, prospecting a progressive erosion of the multi-linguistic culture of Friuli, to the advantage of a standard code. It is the case of the disappeared S.Leopoldo area dialect in Valcanale (Slo. Lipalja Vas, Ger. Diepoldskirchen, Fri. Laglesie), mixed Slavonic and German, as well the mixed Slovenian-Friulian tongue of the Montenars village in the Gemona area, and of many others; it would be possible today to draw up a map of dissolved local cultures, mainly due to the incapability of maturing a coherent position. Indeed the question of the "purity" (a primordialist/ essentialist approach) of some culture (the "Hochdeutsch", the "uncontaminated" Slovenian, the official Italian, the authentic Furlan or the "purity" of the respectively local mixed variants) could bring to something obsessive, but the complete arbitrariness would provoke to lose the sense of social-territorial belonging.

In fact, the groups advocating such originality configure a paradox within communities living together since 1 or 2 millennia suddenly discovering to be something different. In such situation, with the infinitesimal proliferation of micro identities, with the communities becoming smaller than the subsistence threshold would require, further criteria for the authenticity accreditation are a need (Heynen, 2006; Chai et al., 1986).

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