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Complex Gateways

Labour and Urban History of Maritime Port Cities: The Northern Adriatic in a Comparative Perspective

Edited by Giulio Mellinato and Aleksander Panjek

Zgodovina
History

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Scientific Monograph
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Complex Gateways: The North Adriatic Port System in Historical Perspective

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Every seaport is a very peculiar kind of organization, each in its own way. Seaport management staff must simultaneously solve complicated technical difficulties, coordinate various (and sometimes conflicting) interests, and succeed in the harmonization of a wide set of competencies within a varied workforce. At the same time, they must keep the entire system economically competitive, technologically up-to-date, and reliable for all possible customers.

Moreover, seaports are usually distinctive key elements inside the socioeconomic fabric of the city surrounding them, bringing to mind a symbiotic relation between the two, each receiving and at the same time giving something vital to the other.

Probably because of this intrinsic complexity, the history of seaports has experienced a strange destiny: on the one hand, it is considered to be of key importance for understanding the historical patterns of international trade; on the other hand, very few researchers seem to choose the 'internal' history of the port activities as their primary field of study. Clearly, seaport history is a fringe specialization, with very few acolytes.

Most of the time, even the mainstream economic theories neglect what actually takes place inside the port areas: what matters is to assess what enters and what leaves the port, in quantity and quality. If anything, scholars measure the ports' competitiveness in an aggregate way, considering port systems as relatively homogeneous, a very standardized mechanism, whose performances can easily be compared from one country to another, from one sea to another. The port, in itself, remains

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a black box, and very few scholars try to open and analyse it. However, port histories are rich in very useful insights. Consider that, in order to be successful, each port must effectively manage and overcome fundamental economic contradictions that are deeply rooted inside the local environment. Traders want rates as low as possible, but the profits of the logistic operators are tied to high rates; furthermore, the interests of port workers clash head-on with those of both merchants and logistic operators. Thinking on another level, we can recall the fact that all the main economic actors (traders, logistic operators, port workers) are together interested in preserving the largest autonomy possible for their activities, while at the national, regional, and municipal levels, the political operators want to contain such independencies as much as possible. From some points of view, seaports are self-governing bodies, living side-by-side with other urban activities, with the risk of clashes between the port's and the city's priorities, especially those involving movements of people and goods, with ever-present risks of congestion, potentially jeopardizing many other urban activities. The cases for the emergence of conflicts are potentially countless. Moreover, we can speak about the implementation of customs duties and border controls, the issues related to health protection and safety, smuggling and tax evasion, the availability and the quality of insurance services and other financial activities related to trade, and so on.

We think that, within the available literature, some research questions seem to remain too poorly answered. In what ways did the internal organization of ports, the management of the various work specializations necessary for their functioning, and the need to continuously renew the port organization interact and adapt to external changes over time? And how were those issues recomposed into forms of unitary governance? How effective were those forms of management in economic, social, and even geopolitical and institutional terms? What about the human factor, inside the history of port development? Only a broad comparative analysis, through different geographical cases and different historical periods, can allow us to find at least some satisfactory answers.

In November 2019, the Koper conference started looking for some possible answers to these questions, beginning with the case of the Northern Adriatic seaports, with some useful comparisons to verify on a broader level the results coming from other local researches. As usually

happens on the best of occasions, the answers to the first questions came alongside the emergence of new queries.

In our perspective, ports could be, at the same time, gateways or chokepoints for commercial flows, or springboards for national economies aspiring to expand abroad, but also openings for the infiltration of unwanted influences, just to get the discussion started. Ports live, and even prosper, amid the most fundamental contradiction of all: to be primary actors in the economic field, but politically subjected entities, inside the institutional architecture of a modern state. Clearly, there is something in need of an explanation, in a way that primarily must pay respect to the complexity of the problems under observation.

In the end, ports are not simply places where the interchanges linking sea and land transport networks occur. Truly, they are locations connecting the greater part of the opportunities of the international economy. Moreover, most of the time, they are spaces where the solution of the contradictions arising from the confrontation of such different interests are found, granting stability to the entire system.

The recent literature has seen seaports mainly as components of wide networks of interconnections, stressing topics such as their governance (in order to guarantee the economic competitiveness and the technical viability of the entire network), their efficiency, and their resilience in the face of perturbations, or confronting the inner instability of the global trade system and the global supply chains. From another point of view, the theoretical literature has highlighted some key distinctive features among different kinds of seaports: links, gateways, nodes, hubs, or corridors (Ng et al. 2018).

The question is not trivial, in the sense that the increasing trade networks complexity urged scholars to dig deeper in search of the specific properties and functions the different seaports are displaying inside the global system of interconnectedness. The topic is not new (Hoyle and Hilling 1984, 14; Stevens 1999), but we think that its key research questions can be observed in a new light nowadays. More importantly for our analysis, this effort towards a more unambiguous definition of the seaport system's main characteristics produced a new line of thinking about the relations of port systems and the public authorities, stressing the differences in the patterns observable around the world (Neilson, Pritchard, and Wai-chung Yeung 2015). In some studies, the usual relation between economic activities and political institutions was completely reversed, in

favour of the latter, including in the analysis cases occurring inside some market economy frameworks (Ramos 2016).

Overall, a systematic intellectual structuration of what a seaport is and what are its main connections with its economic, social, and institutional environment seems to still be lacking (Pallis, Vitsounis, and De Langen 2010). At the same time, there is a proliferation of specialized books and papers, each starting from a highly-focused perspective and dealing with only a portion of the multilayered and multifaceted dynamic structure of a seaport. The old-fashion specialized subject of port economics seems to be not so popular anymore (Cullinane and Talley 2006; Talley 2009; Coto-Millan, Pesquera, and Castanedo 2010), but there are some very interesting books presenting cases of entangled developments between ports and cities (Wang et al. 2016; Hesse and McDonough 2018). Moreover, among the leading scholars dealing in various ways with the search for a comprehensive definition of what roles a seaport can play in the global connectivity system, there are some researchers sustaining the importance of path dependencies (Ducruet 2017), while others see as determinant and defining all the technological and organizational novelties which have appeared during the last decades (Lee and Cullinane 2016; Jacobs and Notteboom 2011).

Geographers, more than economists or historians, appear to be on the way to comprehensively defining port activities, urban synergies and regional positionalities inside the global environment. Recently, César Ducruet published three essays, formally distinct but closely linked within a very innovative conception of port activities as a dynamic and propulsive constituent of the complex mechanism of inter- and supraregional modernization, since the end of the eighteenth century up to very recent times (Ducruet, Cuyala, and El Hosni 2018; Ducruet 2018; Ducruet, Juhász et al. 2019). The indissoluble link between the history of ports and urban history seems to have been reaffirmed, while the connections between the economic history and the social history of seaports still appears weakly analysed.

Anyhow, as Sarah Palmer said more than 20 years ago, 'ports have rarely been treated as urban entities' (Palmer 1999, 100), in the sense that the human and social side of the seaports' activities have attracted less attention than the technical and economic ones. Since then, the reconstructions and the discussions regarding the rationality applied in seaport planning, building, and managing have been by far more numerous

than the ones regarding labour, the social impacts of port activities, and their relations with the urban environment (Williams 2003).

Something changed when attention shifted towards the 'global cities' and their key role in shaping the arrangement of the new level of interconnectedness, emerging so clearly at the beginning of the new millennium. The 'port-city-region relationships' became one of the focal points (Wanga and Ducruet 2012), recognizing the fact that the enhancement of the new functions, proper of a global-level seaport, were extremely demanding in terms of space and resources. The result was the determining of the entire development path, not only at an urban but also at a regional level, as was actually the case both for the rapidly growing Chinese seaports and for some old-style ports, forced to undergo rapid transitions in order to catch up with the innovations (Grossmann 2008; Wang and Cheng 2010).

During the first two decades of our century, the scholarship highlighted two different dynamics, coupling their effects inside the seaports' ongoing experimentations in better ways to capture (and to exploit) the flows of goods and wealth: on one hand, the transition towards a service-led economy and the dematerialization of the most lucrative forms of economic exchange; on the other hand, the radical relocation of several labour-intensive production and industrial activities. The latter has caused the need to rethink the use and the destination of numerous metropolitan areas, also determining the allocation of spaces for the more and more space-demanding port activities. During these years, the two main sets of specialists interested in the history of seaports (maritime historians and urban historians) divided themselves into more specialized subgroups, losing sight of the greater picture. At the same time, economists began to look at ports (both sea- and airports) with new eyes, considering them not only as hubs for goods and trade flows, but also as possible cornerstones for the newly emerging knowledge economy (Conventz et al. 2013; Conventz et al. 2015; Díez-Pisonero 2020). In the theoretical literature, we can also appreciate a drift from the study of the "hard" portion of port competitiveness (infrastructures, spaces, technologies) to the "soft" one, with an increasing attention devoted to human resources, organization, the ability to improve and adapt to changing situations (Ng 2006), and the interrelations between port activities and urban constraints (Alpcan 2019).

The idea that the traditional seaports' arrangement was about to be replaced by a new one gave birth to a new stream of researches, aiming at the preservation of the memories and the cultures embedded in the old seaports' operational structures (Davis et al. 2000; Beaven, Bell, and James 2016; Worthington 2017). In this present book, Janine Schemmer also presents a good example of memory safeguarding.

Very recently, a new topic has imposed itself on the interest of historians: that of sustainability, both environmental and social (Ng, Monios, and Jiang 2020; Carpenter and Lozano 2020), along with a more articulated interest in the historical development of city functions, developed particularly by urban historians (Wakeman 2020). From our point of view, this new research trajectory is extremely interesting, because it suggests a holistic approach to the study of port human-technical-economic functions (Fobbe, Lozano, and Carpenter 2020), and because it tries to overcome the long standing dichotomy dividing port and city destinies, recommending the use of a port-city approach, instead of the traditional port/city one (Van den Berghe and Daamen 2020). Within this book, we have collected a good number of cases.

We are confident that history will find new perspectives and materials to work with. In this sense, the North Adriatic port system seems to be a particularly insightful example, in the sense that it can couple the perspectives presented by two interesting lines of research: one dealing with the border gateways, and another one analysing the 'ports in proximity'.

Ake Andersson, two decades ago, defined a commercial hub as the point (properly, a *node*) where the different links of a network encounter one another, enabling the interconnection of different trade routes; from his perspective, a gateway is a place where different networks converge, making possible the transshipments between different means of transport. In historical terms, most of the time a hub corresponds to a city, but more properly a gateway is an area, as in the case of a big city and its surroundings, or a region, being a gateway by far more space- and resource-demanding than a hub (A. E. Andersson 2000). In this sense, the North Adriatic area has traditionally covered the role of a gateway region since the Roman and Venetian times.

Within the gateway-region perspective, in our times public institutions are vested with a pivotal role, in the sense that all the infrastructures needed for the gateway to be effective are by far too expensive and

too complex to manage for private investors. Historically, the emergence of some hubs can be seen as the result of private enterprises (as in the case of airports, chosen by companies as their home base, and then consequently infrastructured), but the emergence of all the major gateways was the result of some kind of public intervention (D. E. Andersson 2000). In turn, the localization of fundamental infrastructures in some areas creates long-term paths, which concentrate and channel not only traffic, but also opportunities for development and further concentration of flows in that area. A kind of virtuous circle, able to make the gateway region more and more central, and the surrounding territories dependent.

Again, the North Adriatic case fits the definition. The entries of both Trieste and Rijeka into modern world trade were decided by the Habsburg monarchy, and supported over time respecting the dual nature of the Habsburg possessions: Trieste was the gateway for the Austrian half of the Empire, and Rijeka for the Hungarian half. Two world wars broke the old arrangement into pieces, and very slowly a new equilibrium emerged after the Second World War, when Trieste was recognized as the Southern link of the Iron Curtain, and the federal organization of the new Yugoslavia assigned Rijeka to Croatia, leaving Slovenia to commit to having its own maritime outlet.

This new polycentric asset did not dismantle the gateway nature of the region. As in other cases (Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer 2005), the rigidity of the infrastructural network was almost impossible to overcome in the short term. On the contrary, the new situation pushed that role towards a higher level of complexity, where the actors did not collaborate directly, but were forced to take into consideration the others' actions when they drafted their future perspectives. In the case of Koper, as Rogoznica displays in her chapter, the possibility of a development closely linked with Trieste was taken into consideration, notwithstanding the politically hot nature of the border dividing the two cities.

At the same time, the coexistence of three seaports in a single region was not easy. In this case, the literature regarding the so-called 'ports in proximity' can help in designing a theoretical background (Notteboom, Ducruet, and de Langen 2009). Following this line of inquiry, the researchers have underlined how the multilevel and multispecialized organization of modern trade flows not only allows the coexistence of different ports within the same gateway region, but in some cases even favours it. The price to pay consists of a more than proportional increase in manage-

ment difficulties, and the need to create extremely complex and articulated governance structures. From this point of view, the North Adriatic case begins to diverge from the standard, opening a new possible line of research dealing with the history of ports in proximity inside the same gateway region, but linked to different political frameworks.

For all three ports, a succession of strong political wills have supported their developments, overcoming the difficulties arising from changes in the local social conditions and international trade developments. The historical evolution of work conditions could be a good mirror: the need to import workforce from the hinterland was similar in Genoa and Trieste, starting from pre-industrial times. However, the Genoa city authorities successfully managed not to integrate the immigrated workforce into the urban society, while in Trieste some problems emerged precisely because of the impossibility (or the unwillingness) of sending the immigrant workers back to their hometowns in the countryside, as Piccinno and Kalc show in their chapters. Not such a dated problem, since Panariti, Schemmer, and Centrih can actualize it to our days.

Another long-lasting issue is the institutional one, especially from the point of view of the burdens public authorities were willing to impose on the seaports' management, gaining control but at the same time risking the loss of opportunities and momentum for economic development, as Delogu and Darovec show in their essays, while a significant literature regarding Trieste already exists (Andreozzi 2003; Andreozzi 2013; Andreozzi 2015). With reference to the Upper Adriatic case, in order to analyse the relationship between port development and public authorities, we believe that the best observation point is the first decade following the Second World War. The book devotes two chapters to this period, embracing all three ports we have considered (Giulio Mellinato and Deborah Rogoznica).

Essentially, a strong governmental will backed the creation of all three ports. In the case of Trieste and Rijeka it was the Habsburg emperors, and a heavy involvement of the new Slovenian republican institutions in the case of Koper. At different times, all three ports were burdened with the task of representing symbols of national pride, causing long-lasting problems in Trieste and Rijeka (Mellinato 2018), but also favouring an early development for the port of Koper, due to the large commitment of the population in its construction, with the gift of free work by the common people and the great dedication of its first management.

Our research has shown that a fragile equilibrium between coexistence and competition emerged over time, producing a strange path towards competitiveness. Usually, especially thinking about medium-size seaports, the improvement of their commercial positionality is associated with their specialization and a closer symbiosis with their socio-economic environment. The three North-Adriatic ports acquired the latter, but failed in the former, especially during the post-war period.

Until the First World War, the ports of Trieste and Rijeka lived two quite parallel evolutive paths inside their own environments (Austria for Trieste, Hungary for Rijeka), even before the formal division of the Habsburg empire in 1867. Trieste was the first to cross some thresholds (the first regular steamship service, the first railway connection, the first telegraphic lines), gaining some competitive advantages, but Rijeka followed soon after, developing into one of the most important seaports in the Eastern Mediterranean. Between the two World Wars, both ports became Italian, sharing more problems than opportunities deriving from the situation (Mellinato 2001). The framework changed again after the Second World War, especially after the settlement of the so-called Trieste question, in 1954.

During the period 1960–1990, the three North Adriatic ports developed in very different ways. Considering only the traffic not involving oil, during those 30 years the port movements grew by 153% in Trieste, 471% in Rijeka, and 3,970% in Koper, where clearly the figure is affected by the very low level of its activities at the beginning. Starting almost from nothing, by 1990 the port of Koper was able to handle 4,856,931 tons of goods other than oil, while in the same year Trieste handled 7,750,851 tons. Since the mid-Seventies, more than half of the non-oil movements in the port of Koper were actually international, to or from Austria (40.96% of the international movements in 1985), Czechoslovakia (28.20%), and Hungary (23.97%) (Borruso 1996). Koper was able to substitute Trieste in serving part of its traditional hinterland, creating de facto a quasi-system out of the sum of the two ports sharing the same gulf. This system developed in various forms of competition and collaboration after Slovenian independence, finally forming the cornerstone from which in 2010 the North Adriatic Ports Association was founded. Now NAPA brings together the ports of Trieste, Venice, Koper, Rijeka, and Ravenna, aiming at the creation of that long-awaited systematization of the Northern Adriatic maritime gateway region.

Nevertheless, besides being gateways and nodes within international transport networks, seaports are also complex organizations in themselves, interconnecting functions, operations, and roles with material and immaterial flows of merchandise, people, and information. How do they really work? What are the essential organizational instruments processing and making operative all the complex interplay required for a seaport to be efficient? Finally, who really governs them? What are the real conditions granting an efficient functioning of an urban seaport?

Usually, mainstream economics portrays port systems following research paradigms largely included within the umbrella definition of functionalism, focused on the explanation of the actual situation, the rational choice approach, and quantification, substantially in line with a positivistic approach (Woo et al. 2011), along the same lines of the entire transportation research field (Modak et al. 2019). More or less the same could be said for other specialized research fields, such as Transport Geography (Ducruet, Panahi et al. 2019), Global Economic Relations (Michie 2019; Vivares 2020), and International Trade Studies (Martin 2015).

Sometimes, looking forward to future research, the necessity of a more empiric and real case-based approach is remembered (Buckley, Doh, and Benischke 2017), but the great majority of papers remain linked with a theoretical and mostly abstract view, giving little room to considerations concerning the real operational conditions in seaports. Even when the focus of the research is on the broader conditions allowing higher performances in the best-equipped seaports, the topics remain inside a dehumanized conception of 'infrastructure' and 'services' (Gani 2017), where the human and the labour factors are substantially missing.

Surprisingly, the human factor is considered mostly exogenous, even in papers where the aim of the research deals with more labour-related issues, and then discarded from the set of eligible topics worth consideration. For example, in the case of social sustainability, the bibliography is not only scarce, but also interested in topics like management and performance (Lim et al. 2019), rather than the working conditions, the workers' motivation, and the social footprint seaports can produce on the surrounding areas, contributing to the dynamics of the human environment well beyond the waterfront and the dock areas. Researching the transportation system in the light of their resilience, scholars privileged mathematical modelling and simulations. In a review of the available bibliography about port-system resilience, real-case studies were counted as

by far the smallest group within the different research methods chosen (Wan et al. 2018). The same could be said for maritime clusters (Shi et al. 2020), port competitiveness (Munim and Saeed 2019; Fiskin and Cerit 2020), and other sub-subjects.

In recent times, some recommendations were presented, suggesting new and more comprehensive ways to deal with the complexities of port history, both in relation to the subjects chosen and the chronological extension of the research. Port work (and workers') historical studies have been recognized as a promising sub-field of research, although scholars specializing in this subfield tend to have little interactions with other port historians. As Sarah Palmer pointed out, 'those specializing in the study of port labour tend not to identify themselves with other types of port historian, seeing themselves as social rather than maritime historians' (Palmer 2020).

On the other hand, port economists feel themselves so close to the economic research paradigm to neglect, or simply consider exogenous, the social and cultural environment.

By the beginning of the new century, the publication of two green papers (by the World Bank and UNCTAD) ignited a new debate, leading to a broad assessment of the scope, limits and possible application of inquiries regarding the relationship between styles of governance and port performance. Immediately after the publication of those "official" papers, within a general reconsideration of the matter, Mary R. Brooks and Kevin Cullinane have highlighted the fact that an oversimplification of the approaches used to study the functioning of port systems could lead to a poor understanding, and therefore to serious errors of governance and programming. As they have said, the fruitful approach is the one where 'port performance is viewed as a function (output) of the match (or fit) among the characteristics of the organization's external operating (or task) environment, strategies and structures' (Brooks and Cullinane 2007, 392). In theory, this approach considers the economic and the non-economic goals equally important, clearly reflecting a full appreciation of the hybrid nature of seaports, as simultaneously profit-seeking firms, government extensions, key services providers for entire economic sectors, utilities and logistic nodes, and so on. Notwithstanding this more open-minded approach, the human factor remained missing in these studies, including in recent times (Lacoste and Douet 2013; Munim, Saeed, and Larsen 2019). Actually, economic literature dealing with the

functioning of port systems evolved in the sense of a focalization and a polarization on the internal and more technical processes, especially those involved in the acquisition of higher levels of performance (Fiskin and Cerit 2020).

The suggestions aiming at a broadening of the analytical gaze outside the port areas have also produced a new current of studies, which, however, has first of all extended towards the perimeter the very mechanical and technical approach adopted to analyse the inner side of port systems, rather than integrating external socio-economic dynamics into port performance research (Ducruet, Itoh, and Joly 2015: Munim and Schramm 2018).

Recently, some new insights in the sense of a more careful consideration of the human contribution to the port economic performance came firstly from the stream of comparative port studies (Ensslin et al. 2018), and secondly from the application of complexity theory to the field of port-system studies (Goulielmos, Pardali, and Miliaraki 2007). However, both these approaches are awaiting further development, and of now they are only presenting the first results of some innovative research efforts, still not giving us a complete map of a substantially new territory.

On the other side, studies on port work (and workers) have gained a new momentum since the year 2000, with the publication of the ponderous *Dock Workers: International Explorations in Comparative Labour History 1790–1970*, in two volumes (Davis et al. 2000). As already stated, until now this research stream has remained connected more with trade union history and the social history of workers and their environment (working, living, housing conditions, processes of socialization, labour culture and identities, family and social connections, and so on), than with the economic side of port-system studies.

During the years following 2000, the speeding up in the evolution of the entire global commercial connectivity system directed researchers towards a more holistic approach, considering the growing imbrication of economic and social factors in seaport-systems development. Starting with the extension to port studies of the analytical schemes of 'classical' industrial relations studies (Barton and Turnbull 2002; Turnbull and Wass 2007), to a growing interest in the outcomes related to the privatization of port activities (Reveley and Tull 2008), researchers recognized seaports as frontiers for the massification and work downsizing process-

es increasingly interesting all the traditional productive sectors, starting from the 1980s and 1990s.

The question of port-work organization has remained debated over time, as the port reform process continued during the 2000s and 2010s, directing a lively interest towards the analysis of seaport governance, management, and organization. Particular attention has been devoted to understanding the origins of the new level of conflict triggered by the continuous reforms in work organization (Cole and Hart 2018; Bottalico 2019). Several papers followed more or less the same scheme: the containerization process and the development of global supply chains led to a substantial disruption of local port-work habits and organizations, seen in various ways as consuetudinary and culturally driven or linked to privileges and benefits. As Peter Cole has effectively summarized, in the port workers' eyes, the transformation was so revolutionary that they were unable to say if they were 'working the containers, or getting worked by them' (Cole 2018, 191). Subsequently, the reforms sparked quite harsh reactions by the workforce, especially the less specialized levels, and thus those more at risk of expulsion from the new high-performative logistic structures (see Tonizzi 2014; Bottalico 2017 for the Italian case), sometimes reproducing situations of conflicts already experienced during other periods of techno-organizational deep changes (Hamark 2014). Unfortunately, the examination of these historical precedents does not seem to have attracted much scholarly interest.

At least in one case, the port-city relationship has become the primary issue of the research, but from a clear urban-sociological point of view (Mah 2014). Other scholars have analysed the evolution of the port-city interrelation using different paradigms (Konvitz 2013), oftentimes underlying the inner tensions between port systems and the surrounding urban areas (Nogué-Algueró 2020), but a synthesis is still missing.

This is quite disappointing, because some of the most researched tropes, such as 'flows', 'circulation' and 'connectivity', are intrinsically related not only to the connection of different spaces and activities, but also to a very wide and comprehensive perception of the backgrounds required and the outcomes produced by trade and transportation activities. Thus the question: why are these activities so transversally stretched within different economic sectors and social environments, and the research about them is not?

Very recently, a few scholars tried to find new paths, in order to find a more holistic approach for writing histories of ports and cities as an interconnected whole, sometimes looking back to the age of steam (Heerten 2021) and sometimes studying the structure and functions of contemporary maritime clusters (Shi et al. 2020). In some cases, scholars meritoriously chose the port workers' positionality inside the new equilibria of the globalized supply chains and the emerging 'internet of things' as their investigation focal points (Lee 2013; Alimahomed-Wilson and Ness 2018). However, these are still isolated cases and sporadic experiments, waiting for their structuration inside a reliable research agenda.

In this book, we try to find out our own way to deal with the complexity of the social, technical, economic, and institutional entanglement defining the history of any seaport. Our common implicit research question was: can we use our thinking about the historical identity of the city-port nexus to find new insights about the possibility of overcoming the specialized approaches, and have an evolutionary representation of the symbiotic/syncretic arrangement of the city-port systems, inside the peculiar North Adriatic environment?

We have adopted a transdisciplinary approach, encompassing economics, sociology, anthropology, and politics, with the common aim of crossing disciplinary boundaries and studying the city-port nexus as an integrated entity.

Over a long-run perspective, the definition of a seaport identity has resulted from the stratification of many waves of intervention, from the first institutional definitions of its roles, privileges, and operational areas (also in an abstract and theoretical way, as Delogu reminded us) to the subsequent slow definition of its economic, social, and even cultural and symbolic values (Janine Schemmer).

One of the things our research has collectively pointed out is that the oftentimes-supposed independence of a seaport in determining its own development path is strongly in need of a redefinition. External forces shaped and directed the possible options, limiting the freedom of choice of the actors. Firstly, the actions of the international networks in modern times (Luisa Piccinno), and later at the advent of the supply chains, the technological development, the transport revolutions, and other exogenous-produced changes were several times more important than internal decisions in defining the evolutive path of the city-ports we have considered. In almost all the chapters, the same mechanism repeated itself: the

pressures from the external environment were mainly discharged over the labour factor, triggering a stimulus and response dynamic that every time led to a conflictual phase. The labour factor was never passive in determining the new outline of port organization, and in so doing, workers largely contributed to the redefinition of the new settlement of the port-city nexus. After our research, we can say that excluding the labour dynamics from every historical analysis of the evolution of a port system can led to serious misunderstandings.

Some other transversal themes are present throughout the entire book. According to us, the two most important are: the overlap of governing responsibilities and the role of the context within which a seaport operates.

On the one hand, the overlap of roles and responsibilities (port management; city, regional national governing bodies; port, logistic and maritime independent operators, workers) inevitably causes a systemic instability, where a dynamic equilibrium between regulations and interdependencies must be found and implemented continuously. The overlap seems to be the heart of the entire question: if it is managed well, then the city-port nexus is functioning, and the port can be a real gateway. In contrast, if the overlap is not managed efficiently, the port performs badly, projecting its dysfunctionalities into the entire local socioeconomic environment, triggering a vicious circuit of greater conflict, less profitability, and a worsening of the general conditions.

On the other hand, the research published in this book suggests that a sound evaluation of the general economic performance of such a complex system as the city-port nexus is possible only when the social environment is fully integrated within the analysis. Technically speaking, ignoring the social context may bias every analysis related to the real level of efficiency and performance of a seaport, because considering exogenous the human and social dimensions will inevitably lead to an underestimation of the so-called 'transition costs' related to the technological development. In times of continuous and accelerating techno-organizational change, it seems to be a far from marginal limitation.

The chapters in this book can provide many examples. Some of them seem to be quite evident even at a first glance. For example, the struggle concerning the degree of rigidity of the port-labour market in Genoa and Trieste (Luisa Piccinno and Aleksej Kalc) during the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries presents a structural similarity to the conflicts for la-

bour conditions during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Lev Centrih and Loredana Panariti). Moreover, the unsatisfactory outcomes caused by the overlap of responsibilities, but also by the mismatch of the strategic goals, was more or less the same in Rijeka during the eighteenth century (Ervin Dubrović), in Trieste during the AMG years (Giulio Mellinato) and in Koper when the times seemed ready for the creation of an oil terminal (Deborah Rogoznica). An interesting precursor can be found at the very beginning of the modern debate on free ports (Giulia Delogu), suggesting that precisely the overlay of responsibilities can be one of the most important (and understudied) components of the complexity inherent in these kind of studies.

As already said, almost all the chapters deal with the analysis of the relationship between the port and its surrounding environment in the broader sense, even from the cultural point of view (Janine Schemmer). Every time, and independently, all authors have highlighted the multilevel interdependencies linking (but also bounding) ports and their socioeconomic environment, well beyond the usual roles assigned to ports as providers of working positions, services, utilities, and so on. New issues have been pointed out: how can seaports play a role in the construction of consensus towards the established order, of symbolic values to the advantage of the entire port-city nexus, of new instruments for controlling social marginality, at the local level, or even of means of pressure and direction of foreign policy.

The evidence we have studied suggests that the human factor is largely undervalued and that some adjustments are in order. The cases presented in this book have the aim of bringing out a research perspective closer than usual to the real life of operating city-port systems. From this perspective, we think we can say that port performances rely on more than one equilibrium (technosocial, institutional, financial, environmental, human, and others) in such a complex way that an equally elaborate set of analytical tools must be arranged and made operational, in order that this research topic may be appropriately studied.

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2

Assistance to Ships and Cargo Handling in the Early Modern Port of Genoa

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Introduction

Each port is confronted with different operational problems, posed by its harbour, traffic features, economic policies established by the government with jurisdiction over the port, or by other structural factors that are likely to change with time. During the early modern age, following the commercial revolution that had taken place two centuries earlier and the subsequent changes in maritime transport, as well as in the circulation of goods and capital, wide swaths of Western Europe underwent sweeping economic and social changes. The population was growing, albeit slowly, and becoming increasingly concentrated in urban areas. At the same time, the volume and variety of traded products were growing, while the network of maritime traffic was expanding to include the New World. Some scholars have described this new scenario as the first globalization age (Flynn and Giraldez 2004, 81–108). In this context, the Mediterranean, while lying far from the new transoceanic routes, actually managed not to become a peripheral sea. Rather, it became a dynamic region, where each port was an integral part of a more extensive merchant network, with Atlantic ports playing the leading role. Mediterranean port cities, with their vitality and dense network of economic relations, became network hubs with significant traffic flows reaching out from the sea into the mainland.

The port of Genoa – examined here from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the years immediately following the fall of the Republic and the advent of the Savoy rule – is the perfect case in point. When the glorious days of the Maritime Republics were over and their Black Sea colonies lost at the beginning of the modern age, Genoese mer-

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chants progressively shifted their economic interests towards the western Mediterranean. At the same time, they began getting involved in both trade and financial businesses, establishing close relations with the Spanish Crown and becoming its main financiers. In this new phase of its history, Genoa regained the leading role it had previously lost, although it had always been one of the wealthiest cities in Europe. The port, whose facilities had been revamped in the late Middle Ages, became the centre of a wider economic system capable of efficiently handling increasing traffic volumes. This work aims to examine the organization of the port of Genoa, with particular focus on its workforce, identifying any relevant rearrangements that had to be made over time in order to cope with concurrent traffic increase and changes.

From a methodological point of view, this investigation follows a quite recent historiographical approach suggesting a new key for port history interpretation: in other words, ports are no longer considered as independent entities, exclusively influenced by government policies, but rather as components of a commercial network (Caracausi and Jeggle 2014, 1–12), which greatly affects them with its peculiar features and density of links. According to this approach, ports can also be classified based on their function as network hubs. It is thus possible to see how this function changes over time and what are the implications for their structure and operational organisation. In this regard, the classification provided by Wim Blockmans, Mikhail Krom, and Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz in the collective volume published in 2017 on European maritime trade between the late Middle Ages and the early modern age is key to putting the Genoese case into context.

European ports are generally grouped into four categories, depending on the type of traffic that characterizes them. However, at the same time, there might be some overlap: ports linking local/regional production of certain goods and overseas outlet markets; ports of transit along the main traffic routes; ports linking intercontinental merchant networks and the European market; and large ports/commercial hubs, as centres for importing and redistributing a wide variety of goods (Blockmans, Krom, and Wubs-Mrozewicz 2017, 8–9). More specifically, the latter category is made up of large port cities and their respective ports. Their primary function is to import and redistribute colonial products, food, and raw materials designed to meet the needs of their population, local pro-

duction, and the hinterland, as well as to foster highly profitable re-export flows.

The port of Genoa, examined in this analysis, belongs to the latter category, together with Venice, Marseille, and Barcelona in the Mediterranean area, and Bruges, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Gdansk in Northern Europe. These cities were hubs of extensive traffic networks that would increasingly expand in the modern age, due to the above-mentioned population growth and the opening of new oceanic routes. Together with the consolidation of the large nation states and the subsequent implementation of mercantilist policies, these factors significantly impacted European maritime trade, with its main routes shifting towards the Atlantic coast. However, even if the Mediterranean was losing centrality, this process did not lead to the decline of its ports, which would partly change their role within the continental merchant network. More generally, despite lower traffic volumes than northern European ports, they still benefitted from an overall traffic increase. In order to cope with such changes, these large ports dealt with and handled traffic volumes that kept growing during the modern age by progressively building new infrastructures and storage areas. In many instances, this process had a significant impact on urban planning. Conversely, in others, the areas used for port activities – piers, quays, shipyards, storage warehouses, light towers, and signal lights – would develop independently of the city. In other words, the development of a port, and specifically of a large port/commercial hub, did not always generate a proper port city, i.e. it did not always bring about far-reaching changes in the urban fabric. In this case in particular, it would be more suitable to speak about a 'city with a port' rather than a port city (Poleggi 1989, 7–9; Piccinno 2017, 159–60). Further, from a population and employment point of view, large ports attracted not only merchants and businessmen looking for business opportunities, but also skilled and unskilled workers – captains, sailors, shipwrights, and porters. All these trends were independent of any immigration-promoting policies that might have been implemented by the respective governments (Piccinno and Zanini 2019, 283).

Throughout the above-described process, some unique features can be observed in the Genoese case. From a city planning point of view, its harbour, with its piers and quays, warehouses and ship repair facilities is bordered by the *Ripa*, a long line of buildings and palaces all along its perimeter, forming a barrier to the inhabited centre behind it. Although

deeply linked from an economic point of view, for a long time the port and the city had developed independently of each other. With the traffic expansion between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, triggered by the creation of the *Portofranco* – the Free Trade Area, first established for grains in 1590 and extended to include all kinds of goods in 1623 – more and more space within the city walls was taken up by the growing demand for storage areas. For example, in the 1720s, ten new neighbourhoods were built from scratch in an area of 13,000 square meters previously occupied by communal ovens to store cargoes kept in the free trade area (Piccinno 2006, 773–94). However, the new Free Port in Genoa, unlike the one in Livorno, for example, failed to trigger any significant population increase in the city. Actually, this measure was designed to increase the volume of incoming goods, attracted by customs duties due only when the goods would be sold again, rather than by real demographic policies aimed at encouraging stable immigration. Indeed, the Republic of Genoa never implemented any specific policies to attract foreigners, except in some unique circumstances, such as after the 1656–57 plague. Free Port measures, essentially aimed at attracting ships, would also follow the same approach (Massa Piergiovanni 1995, 44). This does not detract from Genoa being a cosmopolitan city, open to foreigners and tolerant towards religious minorities. It was thus the destination of mostly temporary or seasonal migration flows, closely linked to traffic trends and functional to the needs of port operations.

The role of the Genoese port in the European maritime trade network

In order to assess the importance and role of a port within Europe's vast and dense merchant shipping network, six key competitive factors must be taken into account in order to determine the type and intensity of a port's traffic. These factors are: location, hinterland, density of connections with other ports, political/institutional context, degree of openness to foreigners, and efficiency in the management and settlement of commercial disputes (Blockmans, Krom, and Wubs-Mrozewicz 2017, 1).

The first two elements are obviously linked to the very geography of the region where the port is located. Apart from determining whether a port is strategically positioned with respect to the main traffic routes, the following conditions must be checked: Is it a natural harbour? Are appropriate infrastructures needed to protect the quays? Is it located along the

coast or inside a river or a lagoon and, consequently, are there any accessibility problems due to a shallow draft? Finally, the quality of connections between the port in question and its hinterland should be assessed. The economy of a port hinterland is also important: are goods manufactured there exclusively for the supply of the port city, or also for export? A hinterland with scarce resources and/or difficult to reach due to natural obstacles does not necessarily affect port traffic. Quite the contrary, it might be a strong driver to resorting to maritime routes, looking for produce the land cannot supply, thus favouring strong trading relations with other ports in order to obtain the goods necessary for the subsistence of the local population.

The density of connections with other ports impacts the volume of traffic handled within each port and positively influences its positioning within a hypothetical hierarchy based on this parameter. However, using this approach, the importance of trade and long-haul connections should not be overestimated over local traffic and shipping. The latter are often more difficult to quantify, nevertheless they are equally important. Further, other crucial elements for port operations must be taken into account, such as: the political-institutional context of the country and/or city in which a port is located; its relations with other countries; and the level of managerial independence from the central authority, as well as any implemented strategies to attract traffic. Cases in point could be, for example, the granting of Free Port rights, trade agreements with other countries, policies for the supply of goods to the local population, or, more generally, tax and customs policies. Other elements to be reckoned with are the social fabric, the presence of a dynamic business environment and of a local merchant class, and the degree of openness to foreigners. Last but not least, the local administration, and the efficiency and degree of autonomy of the judicial system on maritime-port issues, especially in terms of speed of conflict resolution – disputes between merchants, insurance issues, general average claims, etc. – are all elements affecting port efficiency and, consequently, its competitiveness.

By applying this analysis model to the Genoese case, a series of useful elements can be identified to better understand the importance and role of Genoa's port in the Mediterranean. As a hub of a merchant network, throughout the modern age it would expand and change its structure with respect to new scenarios following the increase in traffic and the emergence of new ports located in strategic positions. As far as its

location is concerned, the port of Genoa, despite its favourable position in the centre of the Mediterranean, was definitely not a necessary transit point on the maritime routes crossing the Tyrrhenian Sea. Actually, it held a relatively back-seat position, in the most northern part of the Ligurian Gulf. Also, from a geomorphological point of view, it cannot be considered to be a natural port, since breakwater dams are necessary to protect it from the winds – especially a south-western wind called the *libeccio* – and continuous dredging is required due to its shallow draft. This latter problem is caused by debris brought by rivers and streams running through the city from the Apennines behind it, and flowing into the harbour. This mountain range dividing Liguria from the Po Valley, while, on the one hand, a natural protection against possible enemy invasions, on the other hand slowed down communication with the hinterland. Indeed, only winding paths crossed the Apennines, along which goods were transported exclusively on pack animals with great difficulty, especially in winter.

Apart from difficult communication with the hinterland, resources for the sustenance of the population were scarce, due to the almost total lack of farming land. As is well known, in the modern age the extent of a city's subsistence area was closely linked to its size and number of inhabitants. In the case of Genoa, which at the time had about 50–60,000 inhabitants, it included the whole of the Genoa Republic territory. In this regard, the following two factors must be taken into account: trade between the city and the *Riviere* (its Eastern and Western coasts) was conducted exclusively by sea, and locally produced resources were not sufficient. Because of their modest land yields, Genoese hinterland peasants never tried intensive farming, but tilled the land only for their own consumption. Therefore, for its survival, Genoa had to resort to maritime trade and, in particular, to the import of food and raw materials for local manufacturers (Massa Piergiovanni 1995, 71–88).

At the same time, however, the above situation was also both a driver and an opportunity to develop thriving trade, re-exporting these products as well as selling local, made-in-Liguria goods abroad. For example, the production of silk velvets and damasks would employ raw silk from Sicily, Spain, and the East; metalworking was based on iron ore imported from the Elba Island; while for paper production, rags had to be imported from all over the Italian peninsula and from abroad. The high cost of raw materials was a common feature of all these industries, whose products

were then sold internationally and, in some cases – such as for paper – even in the New World (Massa Piergiovanni 1995, 43–69). From a quantitative point of view, grain imports were crucial to the survival of the population and were the most important commodity unloaded in the port of Genoa. The Black Sea markets, the Kingdom of Naples and Provence had for long not only been the main grain suppliers but also important trade centres on behalf of third parties, a business that had always characterized the merchant navy of the Republic of Genoa. Since the end of the sixteenth century, ships carrying grains would arrive from northern Europe, thus contributing to radically changing the merchant routes of the Genoese port. The prevalence of grain transport over other commodities reached its peak in the 1620s, when this type of cargo would account for up to 43% of all the ships calling in Genoa. In the following decades, it would decrease to around 25–30% (Grendi 1971, 24; Grendi 1973, 170–1). Between the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, similar traffic trends were recorded. Most of the goods handled in the port were imported products, still mainly timber and food. At the same time, packaged goods increased considerably, reaching up to 10,000 tons per year (Doria 1988, 137–40). Only as late as the 1770s was a significant growth in overall trade recorded. However, this positive trend was not prompted by any significant increase in domestic demand, but rather by the increment in foreign demand resulting from re-established peace in Europe, as well as by trade with the Levant picking up (Doria 1988, 162–5).

The last three competitive factors to be taken into account (political/institutional context, degree of openness towards foreigners, and efficiency in conflict management and resolution) are closely interconnected and therefore can be examined together. Commercial relations were undoubtedly favoured by Genoa's political-institutional context and its neutrality policies. Also, the state government was firmly in the hands of the city's aristocracy, i.e. the same people who were managing a vast network of both financial and mercantile businesses stretching out to the rest of Europe. This is also the reason why public and private interests would perfectly coincide when economic policies had to be formulated. Because of this very situation, the port could be managed with great autonomy and efficiency. Two main *Magistrature* (authorities) – *Padri del Comune* and *Conservatori del Mare* – were in charge of the port, with well-defined responsibilities. Financially, the port was partially supported by *Casa di San*

Giorgio (Piccinno 2000, 67–109). Shipping /maritime litigations and commercial disputes were referred to the Conservatori del Mare and the Civil Rota, respectively. In any case, mediation and out-of-court settlements would prevail over recourse to the aforementioned bodies of justice (Piergiovanni 1988, 17–25). Finally, the policies of the Republic of Genoa towards foreign businessmen were constantly tolerant and substantially open, and also to religious minorities. This in spite of the fact that no actual demographic policies had ever been implemented aimed at favouring an increase in the city population. Genoa was, therefore, a cosmopolitan city, where Huguenot, Jewish, French, Catalan, and Flemish merchants, while not really numerous, would play a significant role by successfully contributing to port traffic growth (Piccinno and Zanini 2019, 285–96).

Port operations organization and workforce specialization

As previously pointed out, in the modern age, the port of Genoa was not only key to receiving the supplies needed to sustain the local population, but also to exporting the products manufactured in several major Po Valley centres, thus attracting traffic of imported raw materials and exported finished goods. In order to fulfil this important role as a leading Mediterranean commercial hub, a pretty complex organization was required, with government bodies, businesses, and workforce operating in a highly synergistic manner. As to the latter category, all types of work were carried out under the control of about two dozen craft associations. They were structured as guilds, each with its own independence and different levels of specialization, professionalism, and social status of its members. They were subject to the authority of the Padri del Comune, which was the body responsible for the management of the port and of shore facilities, and the Conservatori del Mare, in charge of all the issues related to navigation.

Whenever the keeper of the *Lanterna* - Lighthouse - would signal the approach of a ship to the port by hanging the appropriate signal (called *coffino*) on its top, pilots were the first to be alerted. This optional service was generally requested by captains who, when arriving at the port for the first time, preferred to put their ship in more expert hands in order to manoeuvre her into the port (Piccinno 2000, 123–4). Actually, unlike the lagoon port of Venice, entering into the port of Genoa when the weather was good was not particularly difficult, at least for the more experienced captains or for those who used to call at Genoa more regularly.

Despite this, especially during strong *libeccio* winds, every now and then accidents would occur within the harbour that at times even caused shipwrecks (Iodice and Piccinno 2021, 96–7).

As soon as vessels entered the roadstead, numerous port services for both navigation and cargo handling were made available to them. The *Arte dei Linguisti*, the Interpreters' Guild, would be called on to help foreign seafarers carry out all formalities related to anchorage, health checks, and payment of duties. Moreover, interpreters would offer assistance when an average claim had to be submitted to the magistracy in charge, namely the Conservatori del Mare. The so-called *fruttaroli* and *minolli* were in charge of ship supplies like food and ballast, respectively. The *barcaioli*, the boatmen, transshipped cargoes from one ship to another on board different types of smaller boats and carried the cargo ashore for the ships that had to stay in the roadstead, carried passengers into the port, and aided ships in distress.

As far as shore services were concerned, porters were divided into different guilds depending on the type of product they had to handle and the quay they were serving: they were in charge of loading and unloading, and would manually carry the goods to and from the quays to various destinations in the city. Both bulk and packaged goods were handled by different types of skilled workers – from those in charge of weighing grain and oil (*misuratori*), to those packing the goods (called *ligaballe*), as well as those (*barilai* and *bottari*) handling watertight containers such as barrels and drums for the transport of wine and oil. Finally, the Guilds of *calafati* – caulkers, *maestri d'ascia* – shipwrights, and *stoppieri da pece* – in charge of waterproofing ship timber with pitch and tar, were involved in ship building and repair, which were carried out in the *Darsena* – dry dock, and in the arsenal, as well as in private shipyards. In Genoa, the majority of shipyards were not stable establishments. Mostly, freely available areas near the sea were used where wooden shacks were built for temporary storage of materials and tools used for shipbuilding and hull repair.

Overall, the labour force working in the port of Genoa between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is estimated to number around 1000–1300 workers, or about 2% of the city population (which had about 55,000 inhabitants on average). By the end of the eighteenth century, however, this figure had practically doubled, accounting for about 3–3.5% of the entire population and over 10% of the city's male workforce (Doria

1988, 141–2; Piccinno 2000, 122). In order to better understand causes and processes underlying this trend, all collected information – obtained from official workers' lists, charters, and regulations – has been pooled together, and each guild classified by the type of operations conducted within the port organization. Since available data are not homogeneous in time, they have been classified by centuries, to better highlight long term trends. Also, quite significantly, in particular for certain jobs, such as porterage and the transport of cargo by boatmen within the harbour – even if, to a lesser extent, this was also the case for other jobs – the number of those who were not officially working, and therefore were outside the guild system, was particularly high; in some cases there were as many unregistered workers as guild members. Evidence of this can be found in the numerous petitions and complaints submitted by guild members to the authorities concerned. However, due to its illegal nature, it is quite difficult to exactly quantify the actual number of informal workers (Piccinno 2000, 7, 140–2).

Table 2.1: Guilds working in the port of Genoa

Guilds and related industry		Average number of guilds members			
		XVI c.	XVII c.	XVIII c.	1797–1820
Shipbuilding	Calafati (Caulkers)	55	?	108	?
	Maestri d'ascia (Shipwrights) (*)	21	?	55	36
	Stoppieri da pece	12	12	15	?
Sea Services	Barcaioli (Boatmen)	65	65	210	500
	Cadrai and Rumentari (waste disposal) (**)	-	-	8	?
	Linguisti (Interpreters) (**)	-	-	40	?
	Piloti (Pilots) (**)	-	-	20	24
	Minolli	?	24	35	45
	Compagnia soccorsi marittimi (Rescue services Company)	-	-	-	100

Guilds and related industry		Average number of guilds members			
		XVI c.	XVII c.	XVIII c.	1797–1820
Shore Services	**Porters**				
	Caravana Portofranco	40	55	110	220
	Grassini	12	12	40	40
	Oil	13	13	18	19
	Wine	171	171	180	360
	Grains	-	-	500	780
	Coal (Ponte Spinola)	-	-	130	350
	Ponte Mercanzia	-	-	48	180
	Lesser Companies	-	-	210	250
	Measurers				
	Grains	18	18	30	30
	Oil	8	?	?	?
	Coal	-	-	-	34
	Ligaballe	15	40	124	?
	Barilai	?	23	35	?
	Bottai	15	14	14	?

(*) Around 1818, 37 children of masters were reported as awaiting registration, while 54 masters were working the trade without being properly enrolled (ASG, CM, 464, doc. 23 August 1818).
(**) These guilds were an integral part of the Boatmen Guild until the mid-eighteenth century.

From an initial examination of reported data, it can be observed that some guilds (i.e. *stoppieri da pece* and barrel makers) had a relatively limited number of members (between 10 and 50) which would remain more or less constant over time. Others, conversely, especially between the end of the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth century, would increase significantly in the number of registered members. This trend was particularly relevant in sectors employing less skilled labour, such as in manual carriage and packaging (*ligaballe*) of goods. There are several explanations for this situation. In the first case, authorities had allowed mass hiring in order to give jobs to the many war veterans, especially after the Napoleonic wars and under the Savoy rule. In the latter case, it was due to a strong increase in traffic volumes of packed rather than bulk goods, for which more workers were needed to handle them. These cargoes mostly featured textile raw materials, metals, spices, various manufactured goods, hides, soda, pitch, saltpetre, alum, and some foodstuffs – sugar, dry fish, dried fruit and nuts, etc. (Doria 1988 140–1). Porters were certainly the most numerous group of port workers, accounting for

about 80% of the entire workforce. The Boatmen Guild was also quite important in terms of number of members (during the eighteenth century there were 210 registered members on average) and activities carried out: they were the only ones authorized to move freely with their boats within the harbour and the only ones entitled to carry goods and people (Dondero 1996, 36–152; Piccinno 2000, 134–64).

The porterage system inside the port deserves to be looked at in greater detail, because of its quite unique features and complex and different problems it had to confront. Its work environment was characterized by contradictions and contrasting elements, which would vary over time. In the Genoese port, since the fifteenth century, porters did not simply carry cargoes to and from ships and port warehouses, but they also transported them over a much wider geographic area. Since wagons were not allowed to enter the city, in order to avoid excessive traffic, it was up to these porters to carry the goods to retailers' warehouses and to the shops, as well as to the *stationes* from where they would be carried farther by pack animals across the Apennine passes (Grossi Bianchi and Poleggi 1980, 97–100). This transport service was provided by several guilds. Their work was governed by strict internal rules (so-called *Statuti*), as well as by regulations enforced by the magistracy of the Padri del Comune. However, because of this complex and articulated system, guilds' business scopes would often overlap, with frequent fighting over the right to transport cargoes arriving at the port. This work fragmentation did not really match the level of skills and professionalism of the porters, who would often look for better job opportunities by changing employer and moving from one guild to another. The strongest and most evident contrasts were reported between three guilds entirely made up of foreigners – the Caravana of Bergamo, the Swiss porters in charge of transporting oil, and the *grassini* coming from Domodossola and transporting cured meat, cheese, butter and candles – and those, which were the majority, of the so-called national porters, who were carrying wine, wheat, and coal: the porters of Ponte Mercanzia, etc. Basically, frictions were mostly caused by the privileges enjoyed by foreign guilds: they were better paid, enjoyed more advanced forms of social security, and had stronger barriers against the admission of new members. This last condition in particular ensured a higher volume of work and more secure income to registered members. Indeed, as can be seen from the data reported in Table 2, during the difficult period between the fall of the Republic,

in 1797, the annexation to the Napoleonic Empire, and the subsequent Savoy rule, foreign Porters' Guilds did not record the same exceptional increase in the number of members as the national guilds.

Table 2.2: Porter Guilds working in the port: number of members from 1797 to 1815

Guilds	1797	1808	1814	1815
Caravana Portofranco	220	220	190	220
Oil	18	18	18	19
Grassini	12	12	12	12
Wine (Darsena)	225	310	310	440
Ponte Reale	115	24	40	74
Mercanzia	80	110	110	210
Coal (Ponte Spinola)	130	104	160	370
Ponte Legna	20	30	33	38
Grains	550	450	450	681
Marinetta	24	28	36	73
San Lazzaro	22	24	22	26
Lanterna	21	21	21	19
San Lazzaro Dogana	16	16	16	16
Total	1453	1367	1418	2918

Source: ASCG, ADGP, 488, 12, Leggi e regolamenti relativi al facchinaggio

Further elements of confrontation and social conflict can also be found in the showdowns between the oldest guilds and the more recent ones established in the eighteenth century. The former, with their strong traditions, could rely on well-established operational areas and monopoly positions, while the latter had to fight every day against poorly defined transport rights and limited scopes of operations. In particular, this was the case for the smaller guilds, such as those working at the quays Reale, Mercanzia, Legna, Marinetta, Passo Nuovo della Lanterna, and San Lazzaro. Among the guilds with the oldest traditions were the three guilds made up of foreigners and the wine porters, all established between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Among the more recently established guilds, apart from the highly numerous Grain Porters Guild, and those assigned to the various quays where general cargo was unloaded, there was also the Coal Porters Guild. The latter association in particular was most probably established around the mid-eighteenth century (its first certain record dates back to 1770) following the growing

importance of this fuel handled in the port of Genoa. For the same reason, in the period in question, the number of its registered members recorded the highest growth: from 130 in 1797 to 370 in 1815. It should also be pointed out that, even if the guilds were progressively abolished in the 1830s following a liberalization drive of port activities, in 1851 there were still 396 regularly registered porters with the Coal Porters Guild, who were still working under a monopoly regime (Piccinno 2000, 310–17).

A rigid system controlled by guilds: with what consequences?

While, on the one hand, the guild system ensured a high degree of professionalism and offered an effective way to control its members' activities, on the other hand, as a closed system, it was not flexible in terms of job supply. This would often clash with the fluctuating demand for some port services – from pilotage to transport by barge or manually of both incoming or outgoing cargoes – which was dependent on external variables beyond any control, such as, for example, traffic trends, in turn linked to natural events like plague and famine, or political events like wars, etc. In this regard, the Boatmen Guild is a good case in point: for a long time, it would agree to unregistered workers being allowed to work the trade with impunity, in order to meet the needs of the port in periods of strong traffic growth, provided the number of registered workers did not increase (ASCG, PC, 627, 21 October 1730). This unusual approach could be explained by the many privileges enjoyed by guild members: dowries for the masters' daughters, social security systems for sick members or members with economic difficulties, and financial aid for widows and orphans. Therefore, in order to face changing market needs, they were ready to accept even clear limitations to their monopoly conditions, provided they could avoid admitting new members.

Differences between the various guilds working in the port are another important feature, both in terms of their more or less remote origins and, as seen above, in the number of registered members and their level of specialization. The result was a system that was quite difficult for city authorities to manage, especially at times of employment slumps following decreases in traffic. The registered members of the oldest guilds were generally better skilled, with incomes enabling them to enjoy higher living standards. Controls by the authorities of these guilds were relatively limited and mainly aimed at protecting government tax interests.

With regard to the efficiency of the overall services offered by the Genoese port's workforce, from pilotage to cargo handling both within harbour waters and on shore, the strong guild system of port labour organization, while ensuring high quality standards, would often lead to artificial increases in transport costs that had to be borne by the carriers operating in the port of Genoa. Service prices were not the result of free bargaining, nor did they follow the laws of supply and demand. They were set by the guilds themselves, enjoying consolidated monopoly positions, and approved by the relevant city authorities: Padri del Comune and Conservatori del Mare. This arrangement became a real problem in the nineteenth century, when the, albeit slow, economic growth began to clash with the traditional port labour system stifled by the stiff guild organization and bound by ancient customs. Porterage services, in particular, were a source of concern for the Savoy government. They knew too well that excessively high transport costs demanded by these workers could discourage shippers from using the Genoese port, which served as the sea outlet for the Savoy kingdom. The most evident consequence of such a situation was, over time, some loss of competitiveness of the Ligurian port in favour of other Mediterranean ports, where accessory costs to the transport of goods by sea were, in certain periods, cheaper. However, its excessively high labour costs were certainly not the only problem facing the port of Genoa, which was also beset by low draft, chronic dearth of mooring areas, and lack of spaces for the storage of goods on shore.

Only around the mid-nineteenth century, under the strong liberalist drive launched by the Savoy government, did the Genoese Chamber of Commerce – the body then in charge of the Free Port and responsible for several other port matters – begin to challenge the system and to definitively liberalize port services, thus getting rid of what still remained of the, by then, obsolete guilds. Its organization and infrastructure had clearly been exhausted by the exponential increase in traffic due to the acquisition of the hinterland Liguria had always lacked, the development of a railway network, and industrialization slowly rolling in. New investments and, above all, new operational specializations were necessary. A crystallized situation is evident in an 1851 report (ASG, *CC*, 10, Note) on the state of port labour: nothing had yet been done to adjust the system to changed port needs, and the guilds of boatmen, caulkers, shipwrights, and porters could still impose their rules, with all subsequent

problems. However, while recognizing the need to enforce radical changes in order to restore port competitiveness, which was to include full port labour liberalization, the authorities concerned soon realized how difficult the whole operation was. It was indeed necessary to revamp a system which, despite innumerable difficulties, had allowed the Genoese port to successfully operate for almost five centuries and to become a fundamental reference point for Mediterranean traffic.

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3

Porters in the Eighteenth-century Port City of Trieste: A Special Group Within the Working Population of a Free Market Economy

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Porterage and porters

Porterage was one of the most popular occupations in the past. Before the modernization and mechanization of the transport sector, all the operations related to loading, unloading, delivery, and all kinds of movement of goods depended on animal and, largely, human physical strength. This was especially the case in cities, where narrow street systems restricted access for draught animals and loads had to be delivered to the upper floors of buildings. A good example is Genoa, which in the modern era grew in height without significantly changing its medieval urban plan, interspersed with a custom-made street network. Because of this, and because the narrow streets were also an extension of trade, craft, and other workspaces, the entry of carts into the city was even forbidden. Thus, until urban restructuring, which began in the 1840s, freight and passenger urban transport were almost exclusively under the control of the porters (Piccinno 2005). With the spread of urbanization in the eighteenth century, many towns and cities acquired a planned appearance, with a rational road and street network designed to ensure the smooth movement of traffic. Porterage, however, retained its role, since the demand for porters' services increased with the quantities of exchanges and the movement of goods. At the same time, the market for unskilled labour did not lack for the urban and rural proletariat, which struggled to offer only its physical strength. In this way, supply and demand grew with a strict parallelism. Porterage was, of course, always widespread in port cities, where

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it played a key role in maritime or river and lake transport, or other trade activities.

Porters were usually organized by companies, in a corporate way. The Companies based their structures on statutes or contracts with the city administrations, which determined the internal legal order for members and the public position of the company, and its economic relationship with the labour market. The roles of the companies and the types of carrier services were different. One company might have a locally defined scope, such as a city district, a port area, or a transshipment route. Others were specialized in the type of cargo, such as the transport of water, oil, coal, meat products, or people and their luggage, and still others were tied to both the local type of work and cargo. The scope, specializations, and all the rules were set by the local authorities according to the needs of individual carrier services and the availability of labour. Porterage rights were usually exclusive and frequently monopolistic. This was sometimes due to security reasons or trust. One such example was the port customs porters, who had to guarantee that no irregularities occurred when goods crossed the customs border. Therefore, in some cities the customs granted a monopoly position to companies of foreigners, whose members were not allowed to have relatives or other interests inside the city (Orelli Vassere 2000, 227–8).

Private privileges and monopoly positions sometimes depended on the type of goods or service. Local administrations allocated them on the basis of permanent contracts, and companies managed to obtain them by taking over from other companies. They could also derive from other privileges, such as concessions granted by city administrations to certain bearer companies in recognition of special public benefit. Such were the accolades in some northern Italian cities for taking away the sick and dead during the plague (Piccinno 2002, 4–5). On the one hand, the administrations demanded a rigid and precisely regulated structure of porter work, in order to meet the needs and ensure the appropriate quality of porter services. On the other hand, regulations and monopolies prevented the overcrowding of workers and their falling below the subsistence limit. They also enabled the sustainability of companies through the generational renewal. Some retained distinct ethnic features and other forms of identity. This was particularly the case for companies formed by immigrants who, operated as migratory work systems. An example of such a company is the Caravana del portofranco in Genoa, which consist-

ed exclusively of porters from the Bergamo area (hence also the name of Caravana bergamasca) and had the exclusive right to transport certain goods in the port of Genoa. That right was acquired as early as the fourteenth century, and it was maintained continuously for 500 years until the liberalization of transport, in the first half of the nineteenth century (Piccinno 2002, 4; Massa Piergiovanni 2011). Examples of ethnically defined monopoly companies are the oil carriers (Camalli da olio) in Genoa and the customs carriers (Facchini di dogana) in Florence and Livorno, which originated in the Swiss Canton Ticino.[1] In Livorno, the Swiss porters succeeded the Bergamaschi (who were granted a private privilege in the seventeenth century) because of the excessive annual fee demanded by the public administration for the contract. The ethnic connotations of both companies, however, stemmed from the privilege itself, which provided for the transfer of rights to the relatives of its members (Panattoni 1863). Similarly, although in peculiar forms, porters experienced very different organizational systems in other European and Mediterranean cities, often differentiating groups of local and immigrant workers (Belfanti 1994, 69–70 for Mantova; Levi 1985, 89 for Cadiz; Kaplow 1982, 62 for Paris; Stern 1960 for London; Eyal 2002 for the Turkish migration).

Porterage was a less simple profession than we can imagine at first glance. In addition to physical strength, it required the skill of properly handling different types of cargo, organizational ability, and responsibility. It was not enough to carry many goods; they also had to be manipulated, measured, sorted, flowed, arranged and properly stacked in warehouses, etc. On several occasions, the companies were also entrusted with supervisory tasks. Reliability and the company's good name were important in all this. Customer trust was generally one of the main assets of the companies' existence and operation. Species of carrier were also socially stratified according to the different economic situations of individual companies.

Despite the recognition they received for their economic role,[2] the porters were nevertheless among the least reputable professions and occupied positions at the bottom of the social ladder (Garzoni 1585, 346;

1 For more information on these cases and the differences between monopoly companies and those operating in the free market, see Orelli Vassere 2000; Orelli Vassere 2004; Orelli Vassere 1996.

2 Due to their flexibility in taking on other jobs, and contributing to solve some conundrums and labour needs, some considered them the 'ointment' of the city's economic wheels, Mocarelli 2007, 643.

Heerma van Voss 2006). In the eyes of the urban elites, who nurtured prejudices against all the mechanical or physical occupations, they were considered the most trivial forces, just useful and therefore barely tolerated. Such an image was also associated with the fact that many porters came from hilly areas, where the cultivated urban populations usually located the underdeveloped and even wild world (Garzoni 1585, 346; Belfanti 1994, 67–70; Mocarelli 2005; Zannini 2000; Mocarelli 2009). The organization habits of the porters and the workers themselves, with their rude and vulgar manners, also contributed to spread this image. The companies were cohesive groups with a strong sense of belonging and solidarity. In conflicts between companies, with the authorities but also with the social environment, they proudly defended their interests and their honour. The problem, however, was that many porters flirted with poverty and could become a social burden or even offenders in times of crisis.[3] Because of all this, they received special attention from the elites and the authorities, who considered them a potentially subversive and dangerous category for public order. In the eighteenth century, when in their pursuit of the conquest of society, in accordance with the principles of the good and useful, the social élites began to treat marginals in the same way as criminals, porters also became subject to special security norms (Mocarelli 2007).

Porterage in Trieste: peculiarities and dilemmas

During the eighteenth century, when Trieste became the main Austrian port,[4] the market for porters grew rapidly. The importance of the por-

3 We can highlight the point looking at the various names given to the porters. Thus, for example, in Naples they were called *lazzaroni* because, with their tattered attire, they were similar to Saint Lazarus, symbolizing extreme poverty. *Lazzarone* was the name for a member of the lowest Neapolitan people, and in the wider Italian area it established itself as the name for unpreparedness (De Bourcard 1858, 7). Even the general Italian term for the porter, *facchino*, is still used today in connection with rude and vulgar behaviour.

4 After the proclamation of free navigation in the Adriatic Sea in 1717, the Austrian Emperor Charles VI in 1719 granted the port cities of Trieste and Rijeka the status of free ports, and promoted their maritime trade specialization through a purposeful policy. After decades of uncertainty and the administrative reorganization of the Adriatic coastal region, during the time of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, in the second half of the century, Trieste developed economically, and attracted an increasing number of immigrants from the wider hinterland and the entire eastern Mediterranean. In 1735, the city had a population of about 5,000, and by the end of the century, more than 20,000. Alongside the medieval town centre,

ters, or in Italian, *facchini*, for the development of maritime and commercial activities is attested by the explicit instructions for these workers in the free-port patents (Kandler 1848, 68). Their numbers rose sharply over the decades. The 1758 census counted 119 of them (Mainati 1818, 286), in 1775 more than 400 (BCT, AD, CG, 1775), and 745 in 1792,[5] considering only the Old Town, and without women, who were present in large numbers among the bearer workers. The figures also refer to the city's permanent residents, but in addition we have to consider the temporary porters, who appeared in large numbers seasonally or occasionally. The Trieste market of porter labour was economically attractive because it offered an opportunity to earn more than in other heavy labour or agricultural work (Apih 1957, 81). This created problems in the Trieste agrarian economy, which adapted to the growth of the urban food market and represented an important source of income for both the peasant population of Trieste and the agrarian and urban landowners. City owners of vineyards in the suburban area thus complained because they had difficulty in finding workers for seasonal work among local farmers, as well as those from neighbouring districts, and they had to overpay the manpower (Kalc 2005, 293). Professionals also became porters, although this was often a form of 'emergency exit', in the absence of more suitable employment opportunities.

Porterage in Trieste had a number of unique features and differed in many ways from the organizational forms of porterage and the legal position of porters in other cities. Two reasons could explain this peculiarity: the sudden appearance and rapid growth of employment opportunities in this sector, which met with a great workforce availability in the nearby countryside, and the free-port legal order and economic policy. In Trieste, even before obtaining the status of free port, we do not find guild institutions or something recalling the medieval corporative system. With the free port status, however, all forms of corporative amalgamation were banned, because every economic activity had to be free and develope on the basis of supply and demand. Every local or newcomer in the city was allowed to engage in every profession or activity, if they demonstrated appropriate professional skills, self-sufficiency and

which was named the Old Town (*Città vecchia*), a new, rationally designed urban agglomeration extended, for which the name New or Teresian City was established (*Città nuova or Città Teresiana*), Kalc 2008.

5 AST, CRG, b. 876, Tabella Sommaria Della popolazione Stabilita nel Distretto della Città Vecchia di Trieste coscritta nell'Anno 1792, 4 January 1793.

honesty, and behaved in accordance with prescribed social norms. The same was true for porters and other unskilled labourers. Although in some areas and in specific cases there were private entrepreneurs holding monopoly privileges, the free port authorities used them and limited participation in the urban economy only in order to satisfy everything that could promote successful development and prevent the most disruptive social phenomena.[6]

Due to the openness of the labour market, and the absence of formally organized companies based on exclusive rights and professional orders, among Trieste porters we cannot find groups that are as clearly defined by ethnic or local origin, as in the aforementioned cases. The urban *facchini* were mostly immigrants. Among those registered in the 1775 census just over 10 percent were born in Trieste (Table 1). They came mostly from the Slovenian hinterland, mainly from the area of Postojna, the surroundings of Ljubljana, the Karst, and the Vipava Valley (Carniola and Gorizia region), and Friuli (Venetian republic). However, there is no example of strategic alliances between them, connecting the urban labour market and the workers' place of origin into a complementary economic system, with recognizable links like family chains or circular migration. Such forms of economic behaviour are more characteristic of porters coming seasonally from Friuli and Istria (Venetian republic), and then returning to their native places with the earnings. In this way, they complemented the agriculture-led economic resources and contributed to the family income in the place of origin. However, their status and work logic were not comparable to the formally organized companies as in the other cities, as they entered the labour market as individuals, unrelatedly, and in free competition with everyone else. The censuses of the population did not count these workers, because they did not permanently live in the city and were not treated by the city authorities as members of the urban population. Many returned to work in the city regularly year after year, as temporary employees. Others appeared on an occasional basis, as they easily found employment from spring to winter, when maritime traffic was at its busiest peak and construction and other works were underway. Some, however, hurried to Trieste for other reasons, or were travelling through the city, and they took the opportunity to earn some money along the way by temporarily

6 Concerning the demography, immigration, and immigration control in eighteenth-century Trieste, see Kalc 2012.

becoming porters. All this was evidenced by Trieste police officers, who kept records of newcomers and issued residence and economic permits in the city. These records, which were quite approximate due to the high mobility of the population and the insufficient police apparatus, have not been preserved in the police archives. Therefore, at the moment it is not possible to estimate the numerical extent of these temporary presences (Čeč and Kalc 2010; Kalc 2008).

Table 3.1: *Facchini* in the 1775 Trieste census, by gender and origin

Origin	Male		Female		Together	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Trieste	**35**	**11.2**	**13**	**13.1**	**48**	**11.7**
Immigrants	**277**	**88.8**	**86**	**86.9**	**363**	**88.3**
Carniola	118	37.8	42	42.4	160	38.9
Gorizia region	75	24.0	36	36.4	111	27.0
Friuli	38	12.2	3	3.0	41	10.0
Veneto	14	4.5	0	0.0	14	3.4
Istria	6	1.9	4	4.0	10	2.4
Other	26	8.3	1	1.1	27	6.6
Total	**312**	**100.0**	**99**	**100.0**	**411**	**100.0**

Source: BCT, AD, CG, 1775

On the one hand, the number of porters housed in the city was the result of the growing attractiveness and receptivity of the city's unskilled labour market. Secondly, their arrival was the result of the stratification of peasant society in the urban hinterland, and the fragmentation of families whose individual members separated themselves from the domestic economic environment, searching for alternative life paths in the city. At the same time, they were the result of a tendency towards individual economic independence which, through urbanization and integration into the urban economy, wore away the social marginalization in the places of origin. These processes have led to more or less successful, and not always stable, rooting inside the urban environment. Most immigrants initially set foot in the city's labour market temporarily or occasionally, and in time they settled in the city. The transition was mostly individual and, unlike the aforementioned city examples, systemically uncon-

nected. It meant a cut with the economy of the place of origin, where the sons of small farmers and cottagers had no opportunity for family reproduction and were bound for social marginalization.[7] When entire families immigrated, they usually first tried their luck in the agrarian suburbs of Trieste, where they settled as tenants or workers on the estates of the city landowners. Many then decided to move to the city, where they multiplied the ranks of the urban proletariat, making money only through unskilled wage labour (Kalc 2004, 361).

Resident porters showed a high average age (over 40 years) as a consequence of their long stay in the city. Barely 20 percent were under 30 years of age, and more than 16 percent were over 50 years of age. As many as 64 percent of them were between 30 and 50 years old (Table 2). Gender differences are evident in the segment up to 30 and over 50 years of age. They are associated with the earlier entry of men into the profession and the longer life expectancy of women, many of whom made a living in widowhood through carrying services. In other cities, the members of various foreign caravans and companies of porters were usually younger. In Mantua, for example, ten-year-old boys were introduced to the profession (especially the ones from the Trento area) by delivering suitable loads and goods, and 70 percent of porters from this area first went to work in Mantua before the age of 20, while about a quarter of them immigrated to Trieste at the same age (Belfanti 1994, 75). It is worth noting, however, that the former figure includes those who came to the city seasonally, while for Trieste we do not have this kind of information. It is also characteristic that the vast majority of porters listed in the Trieste census registers were married, and it was with marriage and the formation of a family that a more permanent settlement took place in the city. Being married to a local woman, most often to an immigrant, and having a family in the city, was also considered a statement for maintaining a permanent residence, and therefore a form of belonging to the urban population. This was very important from the point of view of social status, because these families, in case of need, received the same treatment as the city natives, with further advantages in the labour market in comparison with the precarious newcomers.

7 In relation to this transition in the context of migratory movements, compare Rosental 1990.

Table 3.2: *Facchini* in the 1775 Trieste census, by gender and age

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
-15	2	0.6	0	0.0	2	0.5
21–25	16	5.1	2	2.0	18	4.4
26–30	53	17.0	9	9.1	62	15.1
31–35	49	15.7	12	12.1	61	14.8
36–40	86	27.6	18	18.2	104	25.3
41–45	25	8.0	11	11.1	36	8.8
46–50	40	12.8	22	22.2	62	15.1
51–55	8	2.6	7	7.1	15	3.6
56–60	20	6.4	10	10.1	30	7.3
61–65	8	2.6	5	5.1	13	3.2
66-	5	1.6	3	3.0	8	1.9
Total	**312**	**100.0**	**99**	**100.0**	**411**	**100.0**

Source: BCT, AD, CG, 1775

In Trieste too, the porters formed a layered and autonomous occupational and social category of workers. 30 percent of the men (and just under a quarter of the entire workforce) settled in the city were private porters, permanently employed in wholesale and forwarding firms, in stores, and in various private companies (Table 3.3). Less than 14 percent of men were public *facchini*. These were the customs porters (*facchini di dogana* and *facchini della muda*) - there were 26 of them in 1775 - who served in the free port customhouse. They were subject to special obligations laid down in the rules of 1754, and were therefore the only ones recognizable as a formally constituted group. They were in charge of bringing the goods to the customs scales and of delivering them outside the port. They were paid by drivers or cart owners at certain rates, and when there was not enough work at customs, they could join the free market (AST, CRS, b. 457, doc. 15–16, 31 January 1754). Sanitary porters in charge of quarantined goods (*facchini di sanità*) worked in the infirmary, and postal porters (*facchini di posta*) worked at the post office. A few porters specialized in carrying oil (*facchini di olio*), salt (*facchini di sale*, at the public warehouse and salt administration), wine (*porta vino*) and flour and cereals (*facchini di farina e di grani*).

Table 3.3: *Facchini* in the 1775 Trieste census, by gender and employment

Kind of *facchini*	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Market *facchini*	155	49.7	93	93.9	248	60.3
Private *facchini*	94	30.1	0	0.0	94	22.9
Public *facchini*	43	13.8	0	0.0	43	10.5
Specialized	20	6.4	6	6.1	26	6.3
Total	**312**	**100.0**	**99**	**100.0**	**411**	**100.0**

Source: BCT, AD, CG, 1775

The market porters were the most numerous. They freely offered themselves on the market day by day. There were 248, or 60 percent, of them. As many as 37 percent of these were women. They appear in the archival sources with the terms *facchino*, *facchino di piazza* (market porter), *facchino di giornata* (daily porter), and *porta sacco* (sack porter). The latter name refers to a sack that was used to carry various bulk goods, and was usually carried with them as a working tool together with a kind of apron or harness. Sack porters, or *porta sacco,* were mainly women (three-quarters of all sack porters and 87 percent of all female porters) who had an advantage over men in grain transshipment (BCT, AD, AP, Giornali di Polizia, 19 December 1774). Certain goods were transshipped in baskets and these workers were called *porta cesto*. Although the data collected do not provide elements for defining more precisely the differences in the position of these workers, there is a clear line between the permanent employees of the companies and private individuals or those who served public institutions, and those whose earnings depended on the daily labour market. This last category of porters was numerically the most variable and socially fragile. During the months of busiest port traffic, it multiplied with the arrival of temporary porters. At times when there was a shortage of work, however, the livelihood of this kind of workforce thinned, and in many cases fell below the subsistance. During the winter months, as the police administration pointed out, the delay of ships, which could not land at the piers due to bad weather, could mean starvation for many porters' families (BCT, AD, AP, Giornali di Polizia, 1 December 1774).

Compared to market porters, the privately employed ones seemed a kind of professional elite. Their stronger economic and social position

also stemmed from the reputation and protection of employers, and the consideration they received on this account. Good examples are the unanimous actions of Triestine traders against the return of military conscripts, which were demanded by the authorities in the immigrants' districts of origin. This was advocated by the police themselves, who took care not to flee abroad, as this would be detrimental to the state and the urban economy (AGCT, MC, b. 29, 22, 1, 1779; Dorsi 1989, 149). There was also no sympathy among the private porters for joining some undisciplined or even rebellious associations, as the nature of their work was different and under the control of employers. Differences are also noticeable in family situations. A characteristic of the urban proletariat was that families tried to compensate for low and precarious earnings by the gainful engagement of all able-bodied members. Porters were the most prominent examples of such an economic strategy, which is particularly clear among general market porters. According to the 1775 census, in more than 80 percent of cases, porters' wives were also busy in a job. The wives of porters regularly employed by companies and private individuals worked in about 45 percent of cases, while the wives of customs porters worked in barely 15 percent. The porters' wives performed various activities, most often being washers or even porters themselves, serving in homes and engaged in retail sales. Although the term 'housewife', used by the census source to describe married women who do not pursue a profession, does not exclude some form of gainful employment, it nevertheless draws attention to the different economic situations between the categories of porters. Many indications also reveal that market porters helped themselves by performing other heavy jobs, so that in many cases porterage was only their primary activity. Female porters, who accounted for 37.5 percent of the market and nearly a quarter of all porters, are a somewhat special case. They were generally at the bottom of society, and their lucrative activities were often the only source of income. Many were, as mentioned, the wives of porters, but many were the wives of peasants and other unskilled workers. Moreover, many were widows and therefore single women who had to take care of themselves and often of the family. If they really have preceden in transshipment of grain, what offered them the opportunity to earn, many also competed with men and adapted to the lowest tasks.

In short, market porters represented a particularly endangered and problematic segment of the urban society. This is highlighted by the re-

cord of the police officer in charge of counting the population in 1775. Regarding the *Rena* neighbourhood in the Old Town, he pointed out that 'poor people without a profession' live there, 'earning a living as general porters or peasant day labourers. Their wives carry sacks or serve around the houses. They are all full of children they do not care about, letting them wander around the city. These children harass people, beg in churches and houses, and feed only on *minestrone*[8] shared by Capuchin priests at the monastery doors on certain days."[9] Similar warnings can be read in police files and reports of school inspectors who complained because child porters and other lowly people did not go to school; they walked around the streets and multiplied the incidents of road rage. Their parents had no control over them because they had to earn hard bread and many sent them to beg instead of school (BCT, AD, AP, Giornali di Polizia, 19 December 1774).

This was only one of the aspects inconsistent with the principles of good policing and a productive and virtuous society advocated by enlightened absolutism. However, other problems harmful to public order also arose. Due to the lack of earnings on the labour market, various illegal practices and forms of delinquency were born in the porters' ranks, from vagrancy to petty crime. This was due to temporary and occasional porters staying in the city regardless of work opportunities, wanting to settle permanently (BCT, AD, AP, Giornali di Polizia, 12 December 1774). When they lost their jobs, they automatically became vagrants and, according to the law, ripe for deportation to their homeland. In the lists of arrested persons, we can find many such cases as well as persons who have been caught in begging, idleness, or some other offense, and have apologized by declaring themselves as porters (BCT, AD, AP, 15 August 1768). Looking from this perspective, we understand how blurry the boundary between work and non-work was, between legality and illegality, and how employment as a porter was actually a two-way path, sometimes leading to marginalization, sometimes allowing a return to an honest life.[10]

8 Soup.

9 BCT, AD, AP, Continuazione del Protocollo de' rimarchi sopra li mancamenti trovati nella visita delle Case fatta in occasione della coscrizione generale, 26 February 1775.

10 As we can see in other cities. In Italy, even the verb *camallarsi* came into use, which derives from the name for the porter, *camallo* (of Arabic origin), and is meant to regain the reputation and honesty lost through the porterage(Piccinno 2005, 19).

Among the porters, we can also find the hiding of lawbreakers and illegal business. As the porters were recognizable by their special clothes, criminals disguised themselves as porters (with a harness and a sack) in the city. Unhindered and with the helplessness of the police, they engaged in theft, fraud and other prohibited activities (BCT, AD, AP, 30 August 1768). The *facchini* and their families were, above all, very mobile and it was very difficult to control them. From year to year, with the maturity of housing leases, they moved within the city from apartment to apartment. It happened that many dropped out of the census records because they did not know if they would keep their apartment, so they declared to the enumerators that they would leave Trieste (Breschi, Kalc, and Navarra 2001, 185, 190, 192). Issues like the growing number of *facchini*, the strong sense of professional affiliation and social identification developed in their ranks despite the absence of corporate organizations, the poor life, and perhaps the resistance they faced in other cities, all raised concerns for security and dictated special attention in relation to this category of workers. They were necessary for the development of the port and the city but, at the same time, they were a problematic and potential threat to public order. The functioning of a free port and the development of the maritime and trade activities also depended on ensuring a good level of public order and security. Therefore, from the middle of the eighteenth century, Trieste, together with Vienna and some other major Austrian cities, was considered a laboratory for the development of the so-called police sciences and police practices (Čeč and Kalc 2010, 518–20).

The long way to regulating the porters' work

The porters thus became the subject of special attention for the free port administration and the trading elite, especially the stock exchange wholesalers who, with their views and interests, strongly influenced the economic policy and administrative policy choices in the city. At the end of the 1760s, the idea arose to introduce a register of porters in order to systematize the position of workers and to control all those who might join this profession. The initiative came in 1768 in the form of a part of the police administration reform, with the introduction of a new system for police operations. Antonio Pittoni, the police commissioner at the time, had the final word (Čeč and Kalc 2010, 534). The register of porters (*Rollo dei facchini*) should also serve to rationalize the porterage services by regulating the number of workers according to the market demand or

the employment opportunities, in a way so as not to increase the number of poor people during the idle seasons for port traffic. The initial regulatory plan introduced two separate matrices, one for company and private employees, the other for porters offering themselves freely on the market. For the latter, the reform envisioned the distribution by the different companies and the appointment of foremen to deploy workers as needed by the clients. Payment was assessed on the basis of the weight of the goods carried, the distance, and the method for the delivery, as in the cases of manual transshipment. The chiefs were personally responsible for every inadequate performance of the work done by each subordinate member of the group. Porters and those who wished to join them had to be registered with the stock exchange deputation and entered themselves in the register, so the workers' register could be properly compiled and maintained. Without this prior procedure and admission to the register, no one would be allowed to offer porter services. The guards were tasked with controlling the species of porter and punishing every violator of the rules.[11]

However, despite the compilation of the register, everything remained the same, because everything got stuck when it came time to set the official price for the services. According to wholesalers, the tariffs for porter labour were in conflict with the principle of a free economy, and thus with free port legislation (BCT, AD, AP, Giornali di Polizia, 9 May 1774). The need to regulate porter work re-emerged in the mid-1770s, with population growth and increasing breaches of public order which, according to police experience, stemmed mainly from uncontrolled access to the porter labour market. However, trade operators again did not tolerate any interference, not only because of the issue of tariffs but also over the concern that the port would be left without a sufficient number of workers. The renewed plan, drawn up by Police Director Pittoni, therefore provided that the temporary workers from Friuli and Istria (foreigners from the Venetian republic) were allowed to provisionally enter the porter labour market during favourable seasons. Permanently resident porters certainly retained an advantage, especially those who negotiated lower prices for services, which the chiefs were obliged to take care of when deploying workers. Merchants retained full freedom in hiring pri-

11 BCT, AD, AP, 30 August 1768; Giornali di Polizia, 20 January 1769; Giornali di Polizia, 18 April 1769.

vate and market porters. Again, reserves prevailed, while regulations remained once more deadlocked.

The adoption of a new protocol did not take place until 1792 with the introduction of a new police order, when efforts were renewed to improve 'public education' and control over the increasingly 'disbanded low people'. This time, the merchants agreed to the introduction of a policy for porters because, at that time, they were paying for porter services at three times the usual price due to the lack of manpower. The rules provided for obtaining a written permit and a special tin badge issued by the police administration, on the basis of evidence of 'impeccable moral, honourable, and fair conduct' for each worker. This had to be listed in the general population register and recorded in a separate protocol with the name, surname, age, house number of the address in the city, the place of origin, and the personal description. In this way, the police obtained the necessary information to prevent the 'spilling' of unwanted people, and to avert the possibility that the label necessary for practicing the profession might be passed into the hands of unauthorized persons. Private porters were also obliged to adapt to the system, without having to show their goodwill to the police because they were subject to a guarantee from their employers. The authorities managed this system quite flexibly and did not 'excessively make it difficult to accept new people into the register' so that 'the lack of a porter workforce would not make their services more expensive and burden the merchants too much'. A significant change occurred at the request of the merchants to control the internal organization of the porters, especially regarding the chiefs and their supervisory duties. The merchants wanted to prevent this category from self-electing its leaders, and thus becoming too independent and corporately cohesive. Therefore, they demanded that the role of leaders be assigned to persons of other social status, who were appointed from among the chiefs of neighbourhoods (*Capi contrada*). These, in turn, were among the auxiliary police staff.[12]

Conclusion

The regulations for porters (*Regolamento per i facchini*) came into force in early 1793 (AST, CRG, b. 547, 27 June 1794). Its adoption coincided with the tightening of security measures against external threats and internal political ferment, adopted by the state at the time of the spread of

12 AST, CRG, b. 545, 8 October 1792, 7 December 1792; b. 546, 27 December 1792.

the revolutionary spirit and the events of the war. The rules had a two-fold purpose: to maintain public order and to control and regulate the immigration of the common people. In both tasks, its effects were only partial, as the priorities of the trading elite and the state itself remained the growth of the port and the smooth strengthening of the economy. When he was drafting the rules for porters, Trieste Police Director and District Chief Antonio Pittoni received a recommendation from the government to work closely with the stock exchange deputation, and not to take any decision beyond the views of the 'mercantile community' (BCT, AD, AP, 4 February 1775). Following the adoption of the rules, which provided for the protection of merchants' interests regarding the prices of porterage labour, the main aim should have been that 'the market will not suffer from the lack of such an important labour component' (AST, CRG, b. 545, 15 December 1792).

During the following years, inside the police documents we can continue to find references to porters from Austrian Lands and foreign countries who did not register, who did not obtain the prescribed permits to live and work in the city from their homeland, and mentions of registered porters who were not wearing a badge among other violations of the rules and police orders. Warnings that violators would be expelled under a speedy police procedure and conscripts would be enlisted in the military were implemented, but not too strictly (AST, CRG, b. 547, 27 June 1794). They were periodically announced by the police from the 1770s, giving the impression that they threatened more than they acted, despite the fact that security regulations were further tightened in the second half of the 1790s, before and after the French occupation. During the nineteenth century, porters continued to play an important role in the urban society, and benefited from regulatory measures that had long been rooted in the system established in 1793. The increase in the number of porters was associated with the growth of the city's port role in the second half of the century, with the accelerated process of urbanization and modernization, opening new questions, no longer only in terms of social management and organization of this work category but also in terms of labour law, health, education, and housing. As the final and important chapter of this history, along with the liberalization and politicization of the society, the Trieste porters, as in other ports, entered the trade union and political scene as a special segment of the urban proletariat, within which, until recently, they played an influential role.

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AST, CRG: Archivio di Stato di Trieste, Cesareo regio Governo del Litorale in Trieste.

AGCT, MC: Archivio Generale della Città di Trieste, Magistrato Civico.

BCT, AD, AP: Biblioteca civica di Trieste, Archivio Diplomatico, Atti di Polizia.

BCT, AD, CG: Biblioteca civica di Trieste, Archivio Diplomatico, Coscrizione Generale Della Città e Porto Franco di Trieste.

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4

The Rijeka Trading Company

Ervin Dubrović
City Museum of Rijeka

Rijeka Port: Great Expectations and a bad Start

Until the early eighteenth century, the House of Habsburg had not developed maritime affairs. So, it was a great novelty when, after the War of the Spanish Succession and the Turkish War, Emperor Charles VI focused on economic affairs, primarily encouraging trade and navigation on the Adriatic Sea. After the peace treaties in Utrecht and Rastatt (1713 and 1714), the former Spanish Netherlands, as well as Naples and Sardinia (later replaced by Sicily) belonged to Charles VI, who thus acquired important maritime countries that significantly influenced changes in the Austrian economy and state finances (Faber 1995; Faber 2001).

With a patent dated 18 March 1719, the Emperor especially encouraged trade and convinced merchants of the new business opportunities. In the first point of the imperial patent, the rights to settle and work unhindered were confirmed to all foreign traders, shipowners, and craftsmen; in the second point the repairs and widening of the main roads and the freedom of traffic and use of all sea and river harbours were announced. The third point declared 'free ports of two Adriatic Sea cities, Rijeka and Trieste, where from now onwards all merchants – who otherwise buy goods that come from our Hereditary Lands from second, third, fourth, or even from fifth parties – will in the future be able to do it for the great part first hand and thus have a good opportunity for an even greater profit."[1]

Further provisions in the Austrian Hereditary Lands guaranteed local and foreign merchants special freedoms and promised various benefits, especially in ports and maritime traffic, whilst with the twelfth point

1 The charter of King Charles VI. About the declaration of Rijeka and Trieste as free ports from 18th March 1719 (Dubrović 2001, 320–1).

Mellinato, Giulio, Aleksander Panjek, eds. 2022. Complex Gateways. Labour and Urban History of Maritime Port Cities: The Northern Adriatic in a Comparative Perspective.
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of the charter it is explicitly stated that 'every nation, in order to advance trade in the city of Rijeka or Trieste or outside of it, is to build a public building or apartment, and for that purpose, it can buy land, or acquire it in another way…' (Dubrović 2001, 321).

The Emperor encouraged the development of Rijeka, and ordered the building of the Lazaretto of St Charles Borromeo with a special secure harbour, a *mandracchio*, with an inn for merchants and warehouses for goods. Other harbour facilities were also set up, and the Carolina Road was built that connected Rijeka with Karlovac, from where the Pannonian granary was reached via rivers. In a gesture of support for the development of the port, the Emperor sailed from Trieste to Rijeka in the summer of 1728 and personally opened the new road, and then travelled by carriage to Karlovac from where he continued onto Vienna.

However, he was not particularly happy with the development of Rijeka's port. Trieste, in contrast, was developing rapidly and all the traffic between the Austrian interior and the Littoral was directed to this port, which proved to be sufficient for the trading needs of the Austrian Hereditary Lands. By the middle of the century, when the Littoral of Trieste was reorganized, the region gained even more importance. Even traffic from the newly-conquered countries in the east (the so-called *Terre neoaquiste* – Banat, or the Timişoara banat) was directed here (Dubrović 2019, 43–51). However, due to the considerable distance and unfavourable conditions, neither the Trieste nor Rijeka traffic from the interior of Hungary and the Banat managed to develop more seriously for a long time (Dubrović 2010, 79–90). Not even the settlement of Orthodox Christian merchants (who began to arrive as early as 1717 from Bosnia and southern Adriatic regions and for whom the possibility of equal business practice was guaranteed) was capable of being a particular incentive. In short, no single local or foreign merchant was able to be the founder of any significant development.

The successful Company in Ostend

The large English and Dutch East India and West India companies had already strengthened themselves in the seventeenth century in the struggle to conquer colonies and profits. Following the model of these great companies, the first Austrian Oriental company was founded in Vienna back in 1667, and it operated in both Trieste and Rijeka. However, it was

not successful and it quickly fell into difficulties and was shut down (Bronza 2016, 139–52).

A second Oriental Company was founded in Vienna at the time of the declaration of free ports, managing branches in Trieste and in Rijeka. Nevertheless, it too was unsuccessful: it survived just ten years and went into administration in 1729 (Andreozzi 2017, 65–7).

The cause of the collapse of the first Austrian companies was primarily the underdevelopment of the Central European economy, which was not yet a match for the big business affairs that were being conducted in the leading Atlantic seaports. The Austrian aristocracy knew how to govern a country, go to war, and care for its own large estates, but they did not know how to run large production plants and overseas trade. Nor was the middle-class ready; the small Central European "shopkeepers" were still not up to doing business on the European market.

When business was directed towards the sea, as state politics began to encourage maritime traffic, the Dutch came to the forefront – particularly the merchants and bankers from Antwerp, Ghent, and Ostend, where the main shareholders of the East India Company in Ostend (founded in 1722 in the Austrian Netherlands) were. This was the first successful Austrian company, also operating in Rijeka. Despite the good prospects for the successful continuation of its work, it was abolished in 1731 due to Imperial diplomatic concessions to the English government, who did not want to allow the spread of Dutch and Austrian interests into India. Nevertheless, the Company in Ostend was run by successful merchants and bankers who developed trade with Bengal (Bankipur - Bankipore) where the Company also had its own facilities.

During the 1730s and 40s, the Habsburgs were once again preoccupied with wars rather than with the development of the economy, and new efforts for the development of trade and business only restarted in the middle of the century. Later companies, such as the Timişoara Company established in 1759, operated briefly and unsuccessfully.

The last to be founded in the Austrian Littoral was the Asian or East India Company in Trieste, which operated from 1775 to 1785. Due to the large share of the Dutch from Antwerp (today Belgium), it was later called the Trieste-Antwerp Asian Company. And it too, after initial successes, ended in the failure and collapse of the leading group of investors.

The sluggish Central European Empire in the eighteenth century was luckily not involved in the struggle for the division of colonies, in

which the companies of the western countries played a leading role. The Habsburg Empire did not have a battle fleet and merchants could not be provided with the necessary protection. However, if it wanted to develop the economy and encourage trade through the main state ports, it could not give up on the establishment of a large company that could provide a significant incentive to trade. The previous, both good and bad, experiences again pointed towards Antwerp – to the powerful banking and trade centre that could simply and successfully develop the imperial initiative (Lindemann 2017, 1–18, 175–85).

The establishment, organization, and investors of the Trieste-Rijeka Trading Company

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the Court Chamber launched a new trading company with great ambitions. It was very clear to the Viennese that they had to entrust the traffic that they, too, wanted to drive through the ports of Trieste and Rijeka to the business people from the Austrian Netherlands (Hoffmann 1932, 17–54, Hoffmann 2006, 45–65).

The founding of the Trieste-Rijeka Trading Company was conceived by Count Philipp Kinsky (Prague 1700 – Vienna 1749), the president of the Court's Banking Commission (*Banco Hofdeputation*), at the end of 1740.[2] Kinsky died before the completion of the work that was continued by his successor, Count Rudolph Chotek (Belušice, Czech Republic 1708 – Vienna 1771), the president of the Court Chamber and head of the Commercial Directorate (*Kommerzdirektorium*), and the president of the Court's Banking Commission (*Banco Hofdeputation*) from 1749 to 1765. Chotek obligated the Austrian administration in Brussels to approach the leading business people in Antwerp and to persuade them to participate in the founding of a new company with ambitions.[3]

2 Philipp Kinsky, a member of the Czech aristocratic family, during the reign of Charles VI was ambassador to London from 1728 to 1734, and from 1741 after the enthronement of Maria Theresa, he was the Empress's close friend and adviser, as well as the chancellor of the Czech court office and finally president of the Court Banking Commission (*Banco Hofdeputation*). He was attributed with various personal abilities but also as being obstinate and arrogant, due to which he was not particularly popular.

3 To date, many texts have been written about this company that primarily produced sugar and traded in various goods; however, the correspondence between Vienna and Antwerp was slightly unclear, nor have the main protagonists of the Company been researched sufficiently. Although material about the Company is

Antoniotto Botta Adorno (Branduzzo, Lombardy 1688 - Torre d'Isola, near Pavia 1774), a former military commander and Austrian governor of Genoa (Laenen 1901),[4] was appointed as the minister plenipotentiary (*minister plenipotenziario*) in Brussels just before the founding of the Company in 1749; he was entrusted to find appropriate investors and directors for the Company. Along with the governor, the Habsburg Archduke Charles of Lorraine, Minister Botta Adorno was the most influential man inside the Austrian administration.[5]

On 23 August 1749, Botta Adorno contacted Aldegonde Proli Pauli (Houtman-De Smedt 1983, 71–2), the widow of the banker Pietro Proli, the former director of the abolished one-time East India Company in Ostend (1722–1733) and the Proli banking family. Thereby, he also connected the business circles of Antwerp with the Court Chamber in Vienna. Aldegonde Pauli (born in the United Provinces of the Netherlands in 1685, died in Antwerp in 1761), was the mother of fifteen children and the head of the

kept in Vienna, Trieste, Rijeka, and Antwerp, previous researchers, in Antwerp and in Vienna, mainly focused on individual, isolated sources, and they had a somewhat incomplete picture of the circumstances of the creation and development of the Company. Several years ago, I reviewed part of the extensive material about the Company preserved in the *Finanz und Hofkammerarchiv* in Vienna, and the very thorough work of archivist Victor Hoffman was used. When the restoration research of the Company's administration building in Rijeka started, other Croatian researchers began to be interested in the history of the Company and the building, in particular, Petar Puhmajer of the Croatian Conservation Institute from Zagreb, who had also researched in Vienna, as well as in the Archivio di Stato in Trieste and the State Archives in Rijeka.

4 He was born inside an aristocratic family from Genoa, from which seven doges were chosen. He distinguished himself in several wars and commanded Austrian units in Northern Italy. He also became the Austrian governor of Genoa and was remembered for the imposition of high taxes. He remained the minister plenipotentiary (*minister plenipotenziario*) in the Austrian Netherlands in Brussels, with powers close to the governor's, until 1753. After returning to Italy he became the prime minister of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, and later an ambassador in Russia, in the court of Empress Catherine the Great.

5 I am sincerely grateful to the experts, researchers and archivists in Antwerp who deal with the Rijeka Company. Of great help to me during the research there were: University professor Helma Houtman-De Smedt, my colleague from the Museum aan de Stroom, Jan Parmentier, and Christian Selleslach, archivist in the Museum Plantin Moretus, where extensive material about the Company related to the Moretus family is preserved. With their collegial kindness, they allowed me an insight into the material and enabled me to clarify the connection between the Vienna Court and the bankers and merchants in Antwerp, who jointly founded the Company and built the Company's facilities and the administrative palace in Rijeka.

Proli banking house (Michielsen 1935, 273–307).[6] Botta Adorno contacted her with the request that she suggest to him a man suitable for the position of director of the grand company to be established (Michielsen 1936, 6; Houtman-De Smedt 1983, 71). She responded several days later, proposing her son and Urbano Arnoldt, an experienced merchant and trusted man who had already been working for the Proli house for more than two decades.

Urbano Arnoldt (Southern Austria, circa 1700 – Rijeka 1775) was suited for business in Vienna and the Littoral because he was a native of the Northern Adriatic or Southern Austrian regions (Houtman-De Smedt 1983, 71–6). At first, he worked for Venetian and Viennese trading houses, and in 1729 he boarded the ship *Cheval Marin* and sailed from Cadiz to India as supercargo on behalf of the Austrian financier Adam Prunner (Michielsen 1936, 6–7). According to other information, he was supercargo in 1728 and supervised the cargo that he loaded in Trieste for Bengal, for the Company in Ostend, returning in 1730. Arnoldt then worked in Antwerp, and, after the abolition of the Company in Ostend, became the accountant of the Proli house. He also ran his own business and from 1741 to 1745, he was involved in the tea trade carried out by the Swedish East India Company from Gothenburg, which imported tea from China and Bengal.[7] Arnoldt's stake in many large companies is testament to his skill: along with shares in the Rijeka Trading Company and the Company in Gothenburg, he also owned shares in the Company in Havana, the Company in Bayonne in France, and the San Fernando Company in Seville, as well as some Italian securities (DARI, AD, 1775). He and the young Charles Proli (Antwerp 1723 – Brussels 1786) travelled to Vienna on 10 September 1749 to discuss deals in the Court Chamber with Count Chotek. After Vienna, they went to Trieste and then to Rijeka, to see for themselves the working conditions for the future company and the bene-

6 Aldegonde was from an Antwerp family of intellectuals and merchants. Her grandfather studied at the University in Leuven and was a city doctor in Antwerp. After Pietro's death, she took over control of her husband's business and showed her special business and banking abilities.

7 Upon the invitation of the Austrian authorities in Brussels to be involved in the founding of a new company, Arnoldt, at first (by a letter dated 24 August 1749) replied that he was prevented due to work with diamonds! In the end he nevertheless accepted the offer. The governor of the Austrian Netherlands, Charles of Lorraine, described him in a letter to the Empress dated 10 September 1749 as a respected man who spoke many languages.

fits of both cities. Despite a greater inclination for Trieste, they opted for Rijeka.

Other investors from Antwerp were also included in the company – a group of the Moretus printing family, the successors of the Parisian Christophe Plantin, the famous founder of the most celebrated Dutch printing house.[8] Jean Jacques Moretus (Antwerp 1690–1757), ran the family printing company from 1730 to 1757. The family also dealt in other businesses, and so from the very beginning, it was involved in the Rijeka Company. Even more directly involved were Jean's son Francois Jean and his wife Maria Theresia, and several members of the extended family who were linked to them via marriage connections. The Moretus family group had approximately the same number of shares as the Proli group.[9]

Along with the main investors, the shareholders from Antwerp, about a quarter of the shares were acquired by people from Vienna, including leading people of the Court Chamber and the Commercial Directorate such as Count Chotek and others who, despite the small number of shares, had significant influence because the State ensured the Company privileges and the monopoly over the production of sugar. Empress Maria Theresa was also a shareholder; Urbano Arnoldt and the already elderly Thomas Rima awarded her twelve shares 'as a sign of recognition' in the autumn of 1750 (Michielsen 1936, 13–9).[10] It was a symbolic act whereby she did not gain great influence because the leading shareholders already

8 Jean Jacques was the head of *Officina Plantiniana* (*Plantinsche Druckerije*), of which several members owned a large parcel of shares, along with his son Francois Jean Moretus, and his son's wife Maria Theresia, born Borrekens, as well as families connected to them by marriages: the Borrekens, Wellens, de Neuf, Schields. (Geysen et al. 2016).

9 Francois Jean Moretus (Antwerp 1717–1768) was the leader of the Officina Plantiniana from 1757 to 1768 and was the co-owner of the Katoendrukkerij (cotton printing company) of Dambrugge. The extensive correspondence with the management in Rijeka in the family archives (Museum Plantin Moretus Antwerp), testifies to his involvement in the Rijeka Company. His wife Maria Theresia, born Borrekens (Antwerp 1728–1797) came from a wealthy noble family. After her husband's death, she was directly involved, and in 1768 she became the head of the printing company and led the family company for three decades. One of her close relatives, Jan Borrekens, worked in Rijeka in the 1750s, as did Jean Antoine Wellens, also related to the Moretus family.

10 The first three directors were: Urbano Arnoldt (8 May 1750 – 7 February 1755), Thomas Rima (1 October 1750 – 7 February 1755), at one time the secretary (secretaris) of the Company in Ostend, who at the time of the founding of the Company was 65 years old, and the young Jean Antoine Wellens (1 August 1752 – 7 February 1755), the son of the first mayor of Antwerp, Pierre Antoine Wellens.

had significantly greater stakes; Urbano Arnoldt, the largest individual investor, entered the Company with sixty shares; however, the main investors with their family members had many more (Kobler 1896, 87–9; ÖStA, FH, vol. 103).

In the beginning, the company was named after Proli; however, later it began to be called after Arnoldt. His position was probably settled by a deal between the two leading groups, the Prolis and the Moretuses. Although both families invested more than Arnoldt himself did, he was the most suitable person to be the director, as an enterprising foreigner acceptable to both sides. Although the Proli family had the largest ownership stake in the Company, the Moretus group was also close to them.

Despite the initial thousand shares, with the founding of the Company two thousand shares worth a thousand forints each were issued, in total an amount of two million forints.[11] By far the largest number of shares, as many as three quarters, were bought by bankers and merchants from Antwerp in the Austrian Netherlands (today's Belgium), who were also joined by a few foreigners, investors from the Northern Dutch Provinces (United Provinces) such as the bank Pye & Cruikshank of Amsterdam (Michielsen 1936, 40–1).[12]

Privilegierte Handlungs-Kompagnie zu Triest und Fiume – the Privileged Trieste-Rijeka Trading Company – was entirely in the hands of the Flemish, so the leading people in Vienna feared that the Austrian interests in Antwerp, where the majority of the owners were gathered, would be endangered. Therefore, the Court Chamber requested the headquarters of the Company to be in Vienna. The Chamber's special envoy Franz von Mygind (1710–1789), Chotek's secretary (*secretarius*), better known as a botanist and the director of the Vienna Botanical Garden than as a politician, failed to secure the dominance of Vienna at a meeting of shareholders in Antwerp. However, as a consolation, he did succeed in securing the appointment of the third member of the board, one of the directors

11 Amongst the first to enter the Company was the Court's Banking Commission (*Banco Hofdeputation*), who bought 144 shares on 20 October 1750, and, together with other investors, the Austrian share was limited to a total of 276 shares.

12 By 13 December 1750, 1,100 shares had been sold, of which the Viennese owned 276 and the Antwerp merchants 842. The number of shares later grew. The share of the leading Viennese and Austrian investors in one of the first lists was: The Vienna Banking Commission (*Wiener Banco Kommission*) 144, Count Taffe 24, Empress Maria Theresa 12, and all others equally: Rudolf Chotek, Jean Charles Chotek, Count Ulfeld, Count Esterhasy, Count Joseph Kinsky, and Wober and Joseph Belusco from Trieste.

who would, along with two Dutchmen, be a representative of Austrian interests.[13]

Mutual concessions were inevitable: the headquarters of the board of shareholders remained in Antwerp, the administration was in Rijeka, the Court Chamber in Vienna maintained the right of control, and the dividends could only be paid in Vienna. The administration was obliged to deposit the money of the Company in the Vienna City Bank (*Wiener Stadt Banco*). Both sides, Vienna and Antwerp, were mutually obliged to inform each other about important decisions; those made in Antwerp had to be communicated to Chotek in Vienna, and all the decisions under Chotek's authority had to be known to the shareholders in Antwerp.

Despite the attempts of the Court Chamber to maintain as much control as possible, the merchants and bankers from Antwerp continued unhindered to do business with other private banks, and, apart from the credit from the Proli bank, they also used the financial resources of the Pye & Cruikshank bank from Amsterdam, which was a shareholder in the Company. However, they also worked with the Viennese bank Fries (Michielsen 1936, 25).

The Rijeka Trading Company and sugar

In October 1749, Count Chotek proposed diverse business activities for the future company, far more than were accepted by the Dutch shareholders. He also proposed the production of paper, cotton and canvas weaving, an alcohol distillery, and glass and porcelain factories. He also tried to get the Company involved in mines and shipbuilding, as well as to trade in a wide variety of goods, apart from coffee and copper, and to grow and sell its own tobacco, as well as getting involved in the insurance business and a lottery.

Arnoldt and Proli rejected all of Chotek's requests that they produce completely different products. The Dutch insisted on the production of sugar and that they should have the exclusive rights to production and sales. After the Viennese talks and after a tour of Trieste and Rijeka, Arnoldt and Proli returned to Antwerp in November 1749. Although at first, during the discussion about the establishment, the Company was mentioned as Proli's, Arnoldt very quickly intruded, and as early as February 1750, they agreed that the new company would be founded un-

13 The Trieste merchant and politician, Baron Pasquale Ricci, was initially designated this position.

der the title of Urbano Arnoldt & Comp. This was confirmed with a patent (Privilege) that the Empress issued on 1 October 1750 (Kobler 1896, 87–9). Urbano Arnoldt & Comp. was granted the right to:

> *… in Trieste start a trading company on land and sea with the following rights: that they can only establish and maintain for 25 years the production of sugar in the Austrian Hereditary Lands; with an exemption from paying customs duties, road tolls, and other taxes on the import of the materials necessary for the construction of buildings and warehouses, as well as the raw materials for the work of the refinery. Administration and refinery employees are exempt from all public obligations such as the obligation of keeping-watch, military service, public services, and labour (robotte). The Company is allowed the free import of raw sugar from foreign countries into Trieste and Rijeka, and only has an obligation of paying consumption tax for refined sugar that it delivers to the interior.*

The monopoly in the production and sale of sugar in the Austrian Hereditary Lands included a wide area from the Adriatic to Central Europe: Upper and Lower Austria, Styria, Carniola, Carinthia, the Province of Gorizia, Tyrol, Istria, and Trieste (Kobler 1896, 87–9).[14]

A notable sum, 226,000 forints, was allocated for the construction of the refineries, warehouses, and residential houses, and the same amount for the building of three ships. The Rijeka plants were built in three locations outside the city area, at Brajda, Brajda-Smrekari, and Ponsal (Majer and Puhmajer 2008). The administration building with its surrounding smaller buildings – workshops, mill, warehouses, and auxiliary buildings – was constructed right near the Lazaretto of St Charles (built 1728), and at the time of the greatest production it also occasionally used the warehouses of the Lazaretto. Although the Lazaretto had its own enclosed harbour, *mandracchio*, in front of the administration building, there was a manmade shoreline and quay for the mooring of boats. Two smaller complexes were also constructed. Near the main complex, in the area of Brajda-Smrekari, another refinery with surrounding buildings was also built. The progress of the construction of the Company's plants is also witnessed by the fact that a third complex at Ponsal with a refinery and

14 ÖStA, FH, vol. 103. Point 13 of the Privilege set out that 2,000 shares of 1,000 forints each were assembled. On 20 October 1750, the Vienna Banking Commission (*Wiener Banco Kommission*) registered its entry into the Company with 144 shares, and a readiness to deliver money to the director Arnoldt.

surrounding buildings, a park, and woods, quite far from the Company's main complex, was finished at the end of 1752 (Michielsen 1936, 30).

Sugar was the main product, and it was produced in all three plants. Although in the sixteenth century, Antwerp was the European centre of the refining and trade of sugar, which in its raw form came from Central American plantations and Dutch estates on the Canary Islands, Amsterdam and London later became the main sugar centres, as did Hamburg, which played a leading role from the middle to the end of the eighteenth century. At the time of the Rijeka Company, it was there that the European price of sugar was formulated. In the mid-eighteenth century, there were hundreds of small, mostly family-owned, refineries in Hamburg; at one point there were as many of them as days in the year 365! Therefore, there were many master refiners, *raffineurs*, from Hamburg in Rijeka, too.

The Company most frequently procured raw sugar in the Atlantic and Mediterranean ports: in Bordeaux and Nantes, Le Havre and Marseille, sometimes even in London, Liverpool, Venice, and also Lisbon. In the initial years of business, production took place in three separate refineries, a large one with eight boilers and two small ones with four boilers each. Later, 24 boilers operated, four in each of the six refineries, in the main complex at Brajda, in the plant in the large park at Ponsal (the remains of the former Oil Refinery at Mlaka are there to this day), and in the plant in the area of Brajda-Smrekari, where today the Maritime Faculty is located (Hoffmann 2006, 54).

By the middle of the eighteenth century, sugar was still expensive and its price was constantly rising; many derivatives were being produced, whilst the price depended on the degree of refining, as well as on the prices at the stock exchange in Hamburg, which in the eighteenth century also became the main centre of European sugar production. The nuances of the different degrees of refinement could be divided into several basic groups (Michielsen 1936, 35).[15] The coarsest and cheapest was *lumpen*, then several variations of *melisa*, then *raffinate* or *rafinada*, then several of the finest *kandis* sugars, white and brown. Sugar syrup was also sold – the brown liquid that failed to crystallise.

Along with the production of sugar and alcohol, the latter made from molasses, the useless mixture that remained after refining, the Company,

15 'Lumpen, Melis ord., Melis fin, Pet. Melis fin, Rafinat ord., Rafinat fin, Candisbrodt, Candis blanc, Candis jaune, Candis brun, Sirop brun.'

from the beginning, also traded in many other goods (mostly colonial) primarily sold in the East, in Istanbul and İzmir. An inventory of the various goods in the warehouses was compiled at the start of business, in 1753, by Balthasar Proli (Antwerp 1722 – Germany circa 1804), the elder brother of the famous Charles Proli, who in the meantime dedicated himself more to Far East business affairs and the Trieste Asian Company than to the business in Rijeka. One of the leading people in the Rijeka plants, Balthasar confirmed the wide scope of the business (Michielsen 1936, 23).[16] Apart from Rijeka and Trieste, the goods in the warehouses in Milan were also listed, and the quantities on Proli's list were expressed in Viennese pounds (circa 560 grams); the greatest quantities were of coffee and cocoa, but there were also paper, pepper, tea and ginger, and flax seeds, as well as ropes, indigo, and lead. One of the directors, Kennedy, made a note of what business was involved on 18 August 1755. There were 'little speculations such as the one in which a thousand pounds of coffee procured in Marseille were sold in Venice along with a good profit' (Michielsen 1936, 23).

Although the refineries in Rijeka were, by 1754, producing enough sugar to supply the Austrian Hereditary Lands, the Company's owners in Antwerp did not like the losses, which they obviously did not consider as justified. The ships that were built were sold unfavourably, and there were also other losses because the administration took too many risks in the production of potash, candle wax, and rosolio. Therefore, by 1754, a new administration was in place and a new name was given to the company that began to be called Arnoldt, Kennedy, Wellens & Comp. Despite the changes, Arnoldt remained a member of the administration until 1758. From 1760 a representative of the Austrian shareholders, a councillor of the Provincial Administration in Trieste (*consigliere dell' i.r. governo di Trieste*) participated in the balance check every year.

The fact that on 30 June 1768, the company had 704 employees, 339 from Rijeka and the surrounding area, 316 other Austrian subjects, and 49 foreigners, as well as the structure of employees who, apart from working in the Rijeka refineries in the direct production of sugar, also worked in the warehouses, in the transport of firewood, and as waggoneers, carpen-

16 Original list: 'Cacao 18,854 lb, gingembre 2,085 lb, brax rafine' 203 lb, bois de campeche 4,272 lb, plomb d'Angeleterre 5,735 lb, piment 4,228 lb, semence de lin 1,903 lb, cordages 1,205 lb, Indigo St Domingue 525 lb, bois de lie'ge 89 lb, peaux de vau d'Angleterre 1,090 lb, cuir a' semelles 165 lb, plomb brule' 1,678 lb, caffe (Bourbon-Martinique) 29,824 lb, the' 4,051 lb, poivre 8,496 lb.'

ters, glaziers, blacksmiths, stablemen, masons, and stokers also testifies to the Company's additional activities (Kobler 1896, 87–9). Besides those who worked in Rijeka, some of them worked in the smelters in Tarvisio and in the mines of coal that they transported to Trieste via Famlje and Škofije. They also worked on the little boats used for transporting coal to Rijeka, as well as in the warehouses in Trieste, Karlovac, and in the eastern branches, in Baja and Timişoara and Sibiu (Hermanstadt).

When the Company's defined 25-year term expired, its Privilege was renewed on 23 January 1775 for another 25 years and in 1800 for another 4 years (Kobler 1896, 87–9). In 1808, Emperor Francis I of Austria extended the privilege to 1814 with the condition that the Company, whose centre remained in Rijeka, continued to be called the Privileged Company of Trieste and Rijeka and that it was under the supervision of a governor.

The foundation of the new Company – born as if the old one had never existed – changed the ownership structure in some way, but did not damage it (Hoffmann 2006, 49). Some of the shareholders withdrew and were paid off, whilst others invested in the new Company. This was the period of the best business, despite the fact that the "new" Company no longer had a monopoly over the production of sugar and despite the fact that many new sugar refineries appeared at this time and that sugar ceased to be an exclusive commodity. At its peak, the Company had about 1,000 workers and intended to triple its production to 60,000 cents. It also intended to increase the number of workers. Counting the families of the workers, it planned to support 12,000 people.

The end of the Company and the port of Rijeka

In the year 1800, the life of the Company was extended for a further 4 years, and then again until 1814. The greatest difficulties began during the Napoleonic Wars – in 1812 almost all the workers were dismissed, and subsequently, the owners in Antwerp were shaken by the founding of Belgium and the severing of the strong ties of Antwerp with Austria.[17]

At the same time, the Rijeka Company extended into the nearby areas and in Central Europe more and more new sugar factories were built. The basic raw material and technology soon changed too – the production of sugar from beets began.

17 The Company was completely abolished in 1826. The last director, Livino Massart, sold off the estate and movable property over the next few years.

However, the fact remained that the Rijeka Company, in fact, the Trieste-Rijeka Privileged Trading Company, was the largest and most successful of all the Central European trading companies of the eighteenth century. The records of contemporaries, such as the note that Emperor Joseph II wrote in his diary on 13 May 1775, confirm its importance in the life of Rijeka, as well as the fact that the Company, even at the peak of its activities, did not ensure business vitality and great trade for the port. The emperor's impressions were very precise and clear. Arriving by boat from the south, he toured the coast, the ports, and shipyards and said: 'Then we travelled off towards Rijeka next to anchored boats between which were also two foreign French boats that were delivering sugar. One of those two boats did not load anything, so it was necessary to dispatch it with stones.'[18] Of everything in Rijeka, the emperor only praised the Company and its overflowing warehouses.

Although the port began to grow more significantly only after its annexation to Hungary in 1779, during the Napoleonic Wars, it lagged again, together with the Company that in the new circumstances was coming closer to the end. Many decades had to pass until the resurrection of the port and its eventual rise.

18 From Joseph II's diary, *About the conditions in Croatia and on the Adriatic coast in 1775* (Dubrović 2001, 324).

Appendix

Table 4.1: List of ships of Rijeka shipowners (*Specifica dei Bastimenti dei Proprietarij di Fiume*), 1759

Ships	Ship owner	Weapons		Crew members	Load capacity in tonnes
		Cannons	Cannons for stone balls		
Petachi	David Giacomo	16	-	20	230
Chechie	Giustini Gioanni	6	8	10	112
	Compagnia di Trieste e Fiume	16	-	20	200
	Danni Constantino	4	-	10	100
Marciliane	Mattio Tomassich	-	6	12	98
	Tomassich Francesco	2	-	11	95
	Bradicich Giuseppe	-	-	10	75
	Brancovich Cristoforo	-	-	10	75
	Loi Giorgio	4	-	8	70
	Tomicich Tomaso	-	-	5	40
Pandore	Simonich (?) Lorenzo	-	-	11	75
	Tomicich Gioanni	4	-	8	45
Trabacoli	Minodi (?) Giuseppe	4	4	10	70
	Bradicich Giuseppe	-	4	8	55
	Giustini Gioanni	-	8	8	50
	Danni Constantin	-	-	5	32
	Tomassich Mattio	-	-	5	37,5
	Luppi Gioanni	-	-	4	24
	Fumulo Gioanni	-	-	4	22
	Tomicich Tomaso	-	-	5	45
	Bradicich Andrea	-	-	6	40
	Giustini Gioanni	-	-	7	34
	Bradicich Giuseppe	-	-	3	18
	Knesevich Mattio	-	-	4	17
Pellighi	Bacarcich Vicenzo	-	-	4	18
	Derossi Nicolo	-	-	8	20

The Company has one of the biggest ships in Rijeka, but after initial efforts, the Company stops shipbuilding and shipping. The list provides insight into the number, variety, and size of domestic ships, as well as crew size and deadweight, and the importance of the weapons that larger ships have. There are two types of cannons: those with iron and those with stone balls (Petriere). Source: DARI, JU 4, vol. 18.

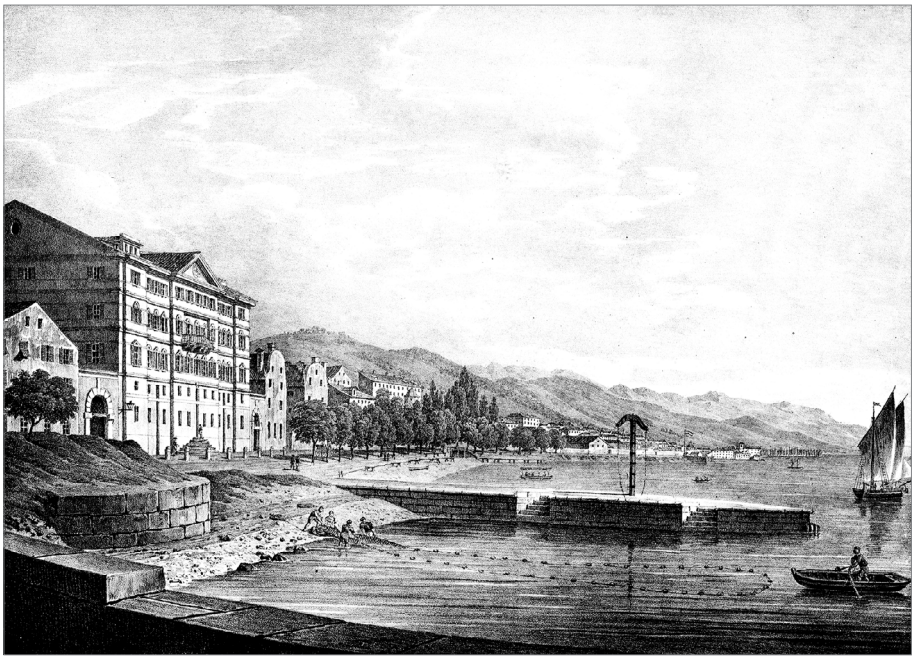

Figure 1: Palace of the Trieste-Rijeka Privileged Company built in 1776

The old administration building was destroyed in a fire in 1775. It does not seem that the building was burned down completely, because the new one, built as early as 1776, is said to be 'meliorem in form est reedificata' ('restored and even more beautiful than before'). The palace is the largest business building in Central Europe, and by the ceremonial halls, it also has offices and service areas, and on the ground floor sugar warehouses and cellars. Source: City Museum of Rijeka

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ÖStA, KA: Österreichische Staatsarchiv, Kriegsarchiv.

ÖStA, FH: Österreichische Staatsarchiv, Finanz und Hofkammerarchiv.

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5

The Free Port Debate: Economic Policies, International Equilibria and Mythologies (Eighteenth-Nineteenth Century)

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During the first half of the eighteenth century, a wide debate sparkled, aiming at defining what were the salient features of a free port. The most fortunate definition, later taken up in all the major encyclopedic works from the *Cyclopaedia* to the *Encyclopédie*, was coined by Jacques de Savary, based on the 1669 edict for the establishment of the free port of Marseille. Once defined, the identity of the free ports began to be discussed and criticized, among others, by Melon, Broggia, Forbonnais, and Genovesi. Between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, the free ports had become a global phenomenon, which went beyond the Mediterranean basin in which they were born at the end of the sixteenth century. As noted in several entries in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, free ports were seen not only as economic instruments, but also as tools to be used in the configuration of the international relations.

This markedly political character of the free ports would again emerge strongly during the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Napoleonic administration designed (unsuccessfully) a system of *entrepôts* wishing to connect the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, to gain economic and political control of the seas and defeat the British. Until the 1860s, free ports continued to occupy the political and economic debate. For instance, in Britain, they were seen as a premise for a more comprehensive system of free trade. Conversely, in the French, Italian, Spanish, Habsburg, Russian and Latin-American areas, free ports were described alternatively as the best solution to revive trade, or as an institution

Mellinato, Giulio, Aleksander Panjek, eds. 2022. Complex Gateways. Labour and Urban History of Maritime Port Cities: The Northern Adriatic in a Comparative Perspective.
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harmful to the internal equilibrium of the port cities and the nations that hosted them, and even as emblems of a despotic power.

This contribution examines the debate about free ports: how they were defined after their institutional creation, how they were then scrutinized and criticized, but also how they were transfigured in powerful, positive (even salvific) images and mythologies.[1] Ultimately, despite a discontinuous history (free ports were continuously reconfigured, created, and cancelled) at an institutional level, this contribution shows how the concept of a free port became a well-established one, creating a lasting image which played a primary role in economic and political debates, and even in cultural imaginaries.

The Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century Debate: Free Ports between Definitions and Imaginaries

As is known, the first free ports were established in Genoa and Livorno in the early 1590s with different goals and different regulations but under the same image, namely that of a welcoming and blooming port. While the first one was a very contingent answer to the victual crisis the Genoese Republic was experiencing because of the severe cooling of temperatures in the first phase of the Little Ice Age, the second was part of a largescale project envisaged by the Medici rulers to revitalize the Tuscan economy and to insert the Grand Duchy in the international arena.[2] By the eighteenth century, albeit with significant tariff and legislative differences, the free port model was to find application throughout the entire Mediterranean (Naples, Venice, Civitavecchia, Tangiers, Marseille, Fiume, Trieste, Messina, Ancona, Nizza-Villafranca), in Northern Europe (Dunkirk, Bayonne, L'Orient, Ostend, Althona, Hamburg, Marstrand) and in the Caribbean (Curaçao, Saint Thomas, Saint-Domingue, Martinique, Jamaica, and Dominica) (Tazzara 2017; Trampus 2021).

Around the mid-seventeenth century, inside the European debate on trade, the free port as a concept took on a positive connotation, espe-

1 The preliminary results presented in this text are part of an ongoing wider research project focused on new communication strategies in free ports in the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries in the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic.

2 The theoretical economic framework in which free ports are traditionally ascribed is that of mercantilism (Reinert 2011; Magnusson 2015): this aspect is more thoroughly discussed in the forthcoming volumes by G. Delogu (*L'emporio delle parole*) and G. Delogu, K. Stapelbroek, A. Trampus, eds. (*Free trade and free ports in the Mediterranean*. New York-London: Routledge).

cially thanks to the success of Livorno (Peri 1638, 3:141; Worsley 1652; Linda 1664, 40; Howell 1664, 3; Feliu de la Penya 1683, 111; Montanus and Dapper 1671, 489). Soon, Marseille also rose as a positive model to be imitated (Savinien d'Alquié 1670, 494; Marchetti 1671, 27; Passerone 1681, 88). In both cases it was emphasized that the new status of free port had given a decisive impulse to the development of international trade. Even the first critics of the free port, such as Francis Brewster, could not fail to acknowledge the success of the Tuscan experiment (Brewster 1695, 29).

This first phase of the public debate on free ports was mainly focused on the analysis of existing free ports, and on the opportunity to establish new ones in other countries, with a competitive function. The first results were in fact a series of discussions, under Charles II of England, about the possibility of establishing a free port in Bombay: 'Would Your Worship please, but for a few years, to make Bombay a free port […] no doubt you would find it the readiest and best way for its establishment, as Leghorn, Genoa, etc. many at this day give evidence' (Fawcett 1936, 211). When this project was rejected, the British government decided to create a free port in Tangiers. The North-African one, however, was a brief and unsuccessful attempt (Sheeres 1680, 46–7).

The key moment for the theoretical elaboration, with the attempt to define precisely what a free port was, dates back to the early eighteenth century and to the elaboration of Jacques Savary's *Dictionnaire universel du commerce*, published posthumously in 1723 by his brother.[3] In the *Dictionnaire universel du commerce*, starting from a text of a technical nature (the edict of Marseille of 1669), Savary described the free port in a very simple and concise way: 'Port franc en termes de commerce de mer. C'est un port où il est libre à tous Marchands, de quelque Nation qu'ils soient, de décharger leurs marchandises, et les en retirer lors qu'ils ne les ont pu vendre, sans payer aucun droit d'entrée ni de sortie' (*Dictionnaire universel du commerce* 1726, 2:1191). Savary's definition, translated throughout Europe and taken up literally both by the *Cyclopaedia* and by the *Encyclopédie*, became the text from which, around the middle of the century, a new debate on the free ports started. Montesquieu, Matthew Decker, and Adam Smith defended the insti-

3 A more comprehensive analysis of the eighteenth-century debate and definitory struggle around free ports is in Delogu (2019b).

tution, while Broggia, Forbonnais, Mirabeau, and Genovesi criticized it.[4] The free port was mainly reckoned as an obstacle for internal development. Meanwhile, the *Encyclopédie méthodique* (1784), taking into account the contemporary debate and the political situation, renewed the definition of a free port, stressing for the first time its role not only from the economic point of view, but also from the political one, as an instrument within international relations. An example was the friendship treaty between France and the Thirteen American Colonies, which led to the establishment of two new free ports (Bayonne and L'Orient). To illustrate the question of the free ports, the *Encyclopédie méthodique* did not limit itself to the Mediterranean basin and continental Europe, but implicitly recognized the existence of an actual global dimension, referring also to similar institutions and projects in the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean.

A few years later, during the French Revolution, the question of the free ports emerged again, with a markedly political character. In fact, by including them among the privileges of a feudal nature, the revolutionary government decreed their total abolition in 1789, precisely because they were contrary to the principles of equality and uniformity that had to regulate the nation. The measure raised a wide debate among the defenders of the free port. The one side emphasized the economic benefits of the free port and rediscovered their (mythical) origins in classical antiquity. The other side referred to Forbonnais and reaffirmed the economic disadvantages for the general prosperity and, at a political level, the incompatibility with the new egalitarian France. Such discussions produced different results in the various port cities under French dominon: if Bayonne and Dunkirk regained the possibility of practicing preferential duties as early as 1791, Nice saw similar requests rejected in 1794, and Marseille would also see its petitions rejected by Napoleon, until 1815.

Therefore, defining free ports was not a neutral operation. Being economic but also political institutions, since the seventeenth century and then with even greater intensity in the eighteenth century, free ports aroused intellectual debates. Above all they became the object of negotiation between centres and peripheries, and between the different social components that populated them, and therefore laboratories of concep-

4 Meanwhile, the free port also attracted criticism of a moral nature, being seen as a lawless space in which people of different religions and customs could freely mix (Lavenia 2009). Moreover, they were also considered immoral because they fostered excessive luxury, as foreshadowed by Fénelon in his well-known *Les aventures de Télémaque* (1699).

tual and institutional elaboration, theoretical reflection, and reformist practice. In addition to being topics of a 'technical' debate (both economic and political), free ports had gradually also become elements of the public imaginary, featuring in a vast production of travel and geographical description of a more popular nature. Thus, between the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, while they were being condemned as emblems of a despotic feudal past, a positive narrative recognizing them as factors of development and rebirth also continued to resist.[5]

The nineteenth-century debate about free ports: 'modern' solutions or 'old' problems?

Later on, during the Napoleonic era, free ports became again an object of economic and political interest. The first to claim their usefulness, after the debates of the revolutionary age, was Simonde de Sismondi in his treatise *De la richesse commerciale* (Sismonde de Sismondi 1803, 2:419–41). Starting from the now canonical definition of Savary, and the example of Livorno, Sismondi reconstructed how, thanks to free port status, cities such as Bayonne, Dunkirk, Marseille, Genoa, Ancona, and Trieste had become the 'entrepot de tout commerce de la Méditerranée' (p. 426). Although in the general layout of the work he referred preferably to the theories of Adam Smith, for the specific point of the free ports, he developed his own original vision, destined to have a wide influence. Sismondi started his analysis by quoting Jean Herrenschwand who, referring to Smith, considered free ports as a possible intermediate step towards free trade. After this initial phase of national development, however, he considered them as an obstacle, if not a danger, to the growth of internal economy (Herrenschwand 1786, 94). Instead, Sismondi asserted that free ports, not ensuring any monopoly, did not necessarily favour the 'commerce de transport' to the detriment of internal manufacturing and agriculture, as also demonstrated by Marseille itself (p. 428). Another of the main objections made to free ports, of favouring smuggling, was also re-

5 As an example, see Dodsley, J. 1787, celebrating the extraordinary development of Trieste, which, thanks to its status of free port, was able to revive the glories of its Roman past. Moreover, see Carpaccio 1805; *Dictionnaire de la conversation et de la lecture* 1836; Balbi 1841, I, no. 24. More generally, on the free port as a vector of prosperity, see Antonelli 1839, in particular the entry 'free port' which offers a global panorama of the question (Vanzon 1842) in particular the entries 'Genoa, 'Gibraltar', 'Livorno', 'Trieste'.

jected (Magnien 1804, 30; Launay 1792). Indeed, he came to the conclusion that:

> *Il y a peu de pays en effet, auquel il convienne aujourd'hui plus qu'à la France, de multiplier ses ports francs, elle a besoin, non point e faire elle-même le commerce de transport, mais qu'on le fasse pour elle. […] C'est notre intérêt encore d'attirer les capitalistes étrangers dans nos port. […] Bientôt les marchands qui se domicilieraient dans nos ports, compareraient les profits de leur commerce, avec ceux qu'on pourrait attendre du perfectionnement de nos manufactures ou de notre agriculture […] les capitaux des Anglais seraient bientôt destinés à mettre en mouvement une industrie toute française.* (pp. 439–41)

In short, Sismondi proposed to create a system of free ports (Antwerp, Dunkirk, L'Orient, La Rochelle, Bayonne, and Marseille), considering it one of the few effective (and therefore justified) governmental interventions in the economic field. In the same year, Jean-Baptiste Say published his *Traité d'économie politique* in which, in contrast, he defended the absolute principle of free trade without privileges and rejected, as useless and illegitimate, any government action aimed at regulating trade. In May-June 1803, Say arrived at a real confrontation with Napoleon, following the failure of the peace of Amiens. Napoleon, in fact, was laying the foundations of the continental blockade (Tarlé 1928; 1931; Crouzet 1964; Dufraisse 1966; Woolf 1990, 167; De Francesco 2011, 89–90; Grab 2015), with the well-known letters to the courts of Madrid, Naples, and Florence requesting the closure of all ports to British products and ships. With his reflections, although distant from pro-Napoleonic positions and circles, Sismondi seems to have provided important theoretical bases to Napoleon and his entourage (Chaptal, Collin de Sussy, Coquebert de Montbret, Montgaillard) for the development of an economic policy. In addition to measures dictated by the exceptionality of the moment (such as the continental blockade of 1806), Napoleon and his entourage imagined the creation of a series of free ports (or rather *entrepôts*) at a global level, to ensure that France had stable control over seas and trade, even in peacetime. The model that Napoleon had in mind, however, was not that of the free port tout court (such as Livorno or Trieste, in which the privilegies were extended to the whole city), but of the *entrepôt* or 'free point' as in Genoa, in which only one specific area of the port enjoyed customs privileges. In this spirit, the free port of Genoa was preserved and a new one was created in Venice, limited to the island of San Giorgio (Delogu

2019a). However, at the same time, Marseille's request to regain the pre-1789 status of a free port was rejected. The loss of the Caribbean colonies (which were to be a central point of the system), the continuing state of war, and the failure of the blockade meant that the Napoleonic project never fully saw the light. However, Sismondi's thought and Napoleon's actions were destined to have a lasting influence in other contexts, thanks to the revival and reinterpretation by Melchiorre Gioia (Delogu 2020a).

Gioia (Sofia 1988; 1990; 2017) appeared on the public scene at the beginning of the Napoleonic age in Italy, winning the famous competition *Quale dei governi liberi meglio convenga alla felicità d'Italia* with his essay. Since this first work, printed in 1798, Gioia had emphasized the positive and pacifying role of (free) trade. Then in 1802 he published *Sul commercio dei commestibili*, a treatise in which he presented a straightforward defence of free trade in grains. The rapidly evolving international situation, however, prompted him, in 1806, to give voice to a very different position in *Cenni morali e politici sull'Inghilterra* (Delogu 2020b). Here, fully embracing the Napoleonic blockade, Gioia pronounced himself in favour of government intervention in the economic field, to safeguard national interests and freedoms. Meanwhile, since 1807, Gioia had been elaborating a more comprehensive treatise on 'public and private administration', which would later come to light between 1815 and 1817, under the title *Nuovo prospetto delle scienze economiche*. This treatise was the point of arrival for his political-economic thought. Internal liberalization and the overcoming of a feudal system based on hierarchical orders had to coexist with the regulatory action of the 'administration' in the economic field. By regulatory action Gioia meant customs protections, with the aim of safeguarding internal manufacturing and workers, and stimulating productivity and attracting capital. Napoleon had already made an attempt in this direction: in fact, the free port seemed to Gioia one of the most suitable tools. In the fifth volume of the *Nuovo Prospetto*, Gioia therefore addressed the question of the free ports, quoting Sismondi as the authority supporting his positions (Gioia 1817, 5:219–22). Gioia reiterated that free ports had a positive role both for international trade and for the internal markets. Always attentive to the political and institutional side, he underlined their role for the management of public health and for the control of epidemics, a task of fundamental importance inside the framework of an efficient administration.

During the 1810s–1820s, in the British arena, the debate on free ports continued to be intertwined with the more general one about free trade, remaining at a theoretical level, without practical applications. Following the eighteenth-century interpretations by Decker and Adam Smith, free ports were assigned a positive but transitory and intermediate role in increasing the trade volume: 'We know that wherever a port is declared free in any part of the world, trade accumulates in it in a remarkable manner (e.g. Leghorn, Genoa, Cadiz, Trieste, Singapore).' Consequently, harmony and prosperity increased, and the opportunities for war decreased in the same proportion: 'Free Trade has a tendency to promote pacific and friendly relations among the nations of the world' and 'to diffuse the light of civilization and true religion over the whole earth' (Baines 1830, 30–1).

Elsewhere (from Cadiz to Odessa, Venice, Marseille, Naples, and Angostura), in places where the Napoleonic impact had been more incisive, due to direct domination or cultural penetration through the dissemination of the *Civil Code* or through networks of contact with former Napoleonic officials, the debate on free ports generated more heated discussions of a political nature and plans for institutional reform.[6] In 1818, in Veracruz (Mexico) a heated debated sparkled on free ports and free trade. The debate intertwined economic reasoning with political agendas: in the crumbling Spanish Empire, talking about free ports was anything but neutral. The loyalists strongly opposed the project of creating a free port in Veracruz, advocated by the local commercial elites, claiming that it could be like a 'contagion', affecting not only all Mexico and the rest of the Empire, but also Europe (Arillaga 1818), and a prelude to indipendentist claims.[7] The Mexican case does not stand out as something exceptional in the Latin American context. In fact, it is part of a wider network. The very same request for a free port in Veracruz, addressed to the Real Tribunal del Consulado de Mexico, had been printed in La Habana and then had originated a debate on the two sides of the Atlantic, reaching Cadiz and Seville. Meanwhile, in addition, in Cadiz petitions for

6 More diffusely on Napoleon: 'Free Ports, Free Trade, Freedom: Napoleon's Manifold Legacy in Institutions and Images', in T. Dodman, A. Lignereux eds., *From the Napoleonic Empire to the Age of Empire. Empire after the Emperor.* Cham: Palgrave [forthcoming].

7 A more in-depth analysis of the Latin American case will be provided in Giulia Delogu, '"It is like a contagion": the debate on free ports in Latin America between (18th and 19th centuries)', *Global Intellectual History* [forthcoming].

and against a free port had started appearing from the 1810s (Torrejón Chaves 2002).[8]

Eventually, Napoleon's own project would be re-read as the will of the 'founder la liberté des mers'.[9] Napoleon - a cumbersome figure, not explicitly quotable in all contexts - was somehow recognized as the political father of modern free ports, or in any case as the deviser of a vision of free trade alternative to the English one. At the same time, in the Italian, French, Spanish, and South American area the intellectual paternity belonged to Melchiorre Gioia (Sandelin 1847, 423). The Italian economist had a vast, albeit indirect, influence: his masterpiece *Nuovo prospetto delle scienze economiche* was in fact plagiarized by Mariano Torrente, a governmental official, and published under the title *Revista general de economía política* (1835) in La Habana, becoming a successful textbook of economics in all Spanish-speaking nations. In the 1830s discussions within the Italian peninsula, from Venice to Naples, the passages on free ports taken from the *Nuovo Prospetto* became an essential starting point, both for the supporters of the free ports and for the critics. The main supporters of the free port in Habsburg Venice were – and it seems not to be a coincidence – the cousins Giuseppe and Defendente Sacchi and Francesco Foramiti, who shared an apprenticeship in Napoleonic Milan and Pavia (Foramiti 1829; Sacchi and Sacchi 1830; Delogu 2019a, Delogu 2020a). At that time, the Sacchi cousins gravitated around the milieu of the journal savant 'Annali di Statistica' of which Gioia himself was also part.

The case of Venice appears to be of considerable interest because it reveals other aspects, useful for a more comprehensive understanding of the question of free ports between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Delogu and Farella 2020). In fact, in addition to confirming the centrality of the Napoleonic experience and the theoretical elaboration started by Savary and later led by Gioia, the Venetian debate also highlights, on the one hand, the involvement of the various social components of the city, and on the other the role played by communication strategies and the creation of suggestive and powerful images. As for the first point, the sources of the time reveal the involvement not only of intellectuals such as Sacchi and Foramiti, but also of lagoon fishermen, glassmakers, dyers,

8 See the documentation kept at the AGI, C, 61A and 61B, 1651, 1652, 1653, 1671, L.1012.

9 Battur 1845, with the note that: 'L'Editeur de cet ouvrage en a fait distribuer gratuitement 500 exemplaires à MM les Membres de la Chambre des Pairs et de la Chambre des Députés.'

and soap producers (Naccarini 1827).[10] Then, the sources reveal the local Chamber of Commerce's protagonism, when it was capable of becoming a place of mediation between the various instances, successfully conveying to the Imperial court in Vienna its own project to establish a free port.[11] As for the second aspect, those who fought for the creation of the free port in Venice often resorted to the example of Trieste. In fact, the Habsburg city actually had a well-rooted image of progress due precisely to its status of free port, which had favoured trade development, population growth, urban redesign, and the foundation of cultural institutions (Foramiti 1829, 18). Trieste had also been able to convey a triumphant image by promoting the constant publication of the *Portate*, namely the lists of ships arriving and departing, to display the growing amount of its traffic.[12] The success of Trieste and the decline of Venice had become a veritable *topos*: 'Venise, qui n'avait pas fait plier à temps des anciennes règles exclusives, avait perdu presque tout ce qui lui était resté de commerce depuis que, dans son voisinage, le gouvernement autrichien avait fait de Trieste un port franc sur le plan le plus libéral; institution qui avait repeuplé et recréé cette ville' (Vincens 1834, 3:413).

Meanwhile, in 1832, Carlo Afan de Rivera (1832) launched a debate on the opportunity of having a free port in the areas surrounding Naples. The past Napoleonic domination had revived a debate that had actually erupted several times in the Neapolitan area, where, since the sixteenth century, the question of creating free ports or entrepôts had been discussed. In the Napoleonic era, to counterbalance the continental blockade, as already happened in Venice, Naples had been declared a free scale (Ciccolella 2019). This status was initially maintained upon the return of the Bourbons, and new reflections on the possibility of extending the

10 ASVE, ACC, b. 13, t. 1, n. 30: *L'arte dei tintori alla Camera di Commercio Arti e Manifatture; I Fabbricatori di Vetro di Murano alla Camera di Commercio Arti e Manifatture, 29 gennaio 1816; Notificazione di Giacomo Pasini Fabbricatore di Saponi*, 15 ottobre 1816.

11 ASVE, ACC, b. 59, t. 1, n. 10; b. 68, t. 1, nn. 10 e 28; b. 81, t. 1, nn. 10 e 11; b. 89, t. 2, n. 35; b. 103, t. 6, n. 14.

12 The *Portate* had been circulating from 1776 (in handwritten form) by the will of the governor Karl von Zinzendorf and then were inserted in the appendix to the city gazettes ('Triester Welt-Korrespondent', 'Triester politische und Handlungs-Zeitung' and, from 1784, 'Osservatore Triestino'). From 1805 to 1858, annual collections were published under the title of *Portata de' Bastimenti del porto-franco di Trieste*. Once it became a free port, Venice too, from 1835 to 1847, had proceeded to print the same publication format (Delogu 2019c).

free port began. These project, however, had been stopped by the uprisings of 1820–1821. Afan de Rivera proposed the creation of a free port in Nisida, to be placed side by side with a series of storage warehouses in Pozzuoli and a lazeret in Capo Miseno. A strong emphasis – as in Gioia's thought – was placed on the importance of the free port as an institution capable of promoting both development and state control over matters such as public health and epidemics. However, Afan de Rivera's proposal on free ports aroused many critical responses between 1833 and 1836, of which the most significant were those by Lodovico Bianchini, Mario Luigi Rotondo, and Matteo de Augustinis (Di Salvia 2000, 87–114). De Augustinis (1833, 11) acknowledged Gioia and Sismondi as the theoreticians of the modern concept of the free port. At the same time, he attributed the political paternity 'to the prestige of two great authorities, Colbert and Napoleon' (Augustinis 1836, 238). In conclusion, however, he condemned free ports as protectionist and monopolistic measures. In his reasoning, there were only two specific cases in which the establishment of a free port could be a positive measure. The first case was when the nation suffered a serious natural disaster and could therefore exceptionally resort to the free port, although, according to Augustinis, the very example of Messina, declared a free port in 1728 and then again in 1783 after the earthquake, had not been particularly successful. The second exception was when a nation was in conditions of backwardness and scarcity of population; then the free port could become an engine for not only economic, but also cultural development: such had been the case of Odessa. According to Augustinis, Naples in the 1830s was not in either of the two situations: the free port, therefore, was not the solution to be adopted for reviving the kingdom's economy.

However, the positive image of the free port as spring of development not only for the economy, but also for the society and the urban fabric, largely persisted and continued to be an important element in the political and economic debates. The prospective of establishing a free port remained a sort of recipe for revitalize cities in crisis. Only later, in the changed climate of the 1860s, free ports come widely under attack: for instance, inside the Italian public discourse, even Trieste would have been seen in a quite different light. It transitioned from the paradigm of the successful and thriving city to a model not to be imitated. Within the Risorgimento context, it became the symbol of 'a politically despotic or economically ill-advised government' itself (Boccardo 1861, 4:127; Biundi

1864, 35–6). The Italian post-unitarian situation had many similarities with what had happened in France during the Revolution: the newborn Italian Kingdom, in fact, ended up abolishing all its free ports, following a European trend that also led to the abolishment of the free port in Odessa and in the French ports. When Trieste became part of the Italian State, after World War I, its status of free port would also be cancelled.

Between the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, free ports as institutions would be eradicated from the Mediterranean basin in which they were born. Nevertheless, they maintained a longer vitality at a global level, for instance in Singapore (Wong 1978). They showed an even longer persistence as concepts and images on which to build ever-new solutions (Trampus 1999; Finardi and Moroni 2001; Moberg 2017), resurfacing periodically in public debates as recently illustrated by the post-Brexit *Freeports consultation* launched by the British government in 2020 about the possibility of creating a series of free ports in the United Kingdom. Similarly, again in 2020, a series of proposals of instituting special economic zones within the ports of Trieste, Taranto, and Venice started to be discussed. The special economic zones, albeit in a totally mutated context, still resemble an attempt of resuscitating the Mediterranean free port tradition.

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6

Trieste 1948–1952: A Contended Port City and the Marshall Plan

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The relationship between a city's institutional arrangement and its role as a maritime international commercial crossway is often not simple, especially during periods of major political transition. During more or less normal times (or, when changes could be kept under control) successful port cities could be powerful attractors of wealth, but also socio-institutional-economic structures so complicated as to require a wide range of special administrative care, both for the management of current business and for the development of strategies maintaining the equilibrium over time (OECD 2006).

Typically, in port cities economics, society, and institutions interact in peculiar ways, and, over time, almost every successful port city has elaborated a specific settlement of the tensions originating from the close interplay of different (even contrasting) interests, paving the way for the emergence of a great variety of typified solutions.

In some aspects, the maritime identity of Trieste is more complicated than usual, being not only an international port, but also a borderland city, and a link (or a chokepoint) between different nationalities and cultures. For these reasons, the historical reconstruction of the local port system activities is never a simple matter of recognition and reconstruction of roles, rules, the efficiency and efficacy of the businesses carried out inside the port areas, and the extension and shape of the interconnections. Instead, it is a matter of reconstructing the complexity of the port system as a whole, with its interweaving of different and interacting levels and dynamics, rather than a mechanical succession of causes and effects. Within this research, politics, economics, society, culture, and so

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on thus become points of view, the necessary starting points to begin an analysis that considers the material and immaterial infrastructures of the port system as equally important.

Looking at the Trieste case, the Marshall Plan years are an exceptional point of view, since the destination of the Plan-related resources were administered by Allied officials, almost entirely American nationals, engaged in the chase of an extremely difficult-to-find equilibrium between the local needs and the general aims of the European Recovery Program. Actually, in the end, the local side prevailed, and the American officials used this exceptional flow of financial resources to revive a typical assisted and parasitic economy. In other words, the American intervention in Trieste produced a result strikingly opposite to the official mission of the Plan.

The Trieste exception

A large portion of the traditional port histories typically deals with the complexity of port operations considering mainly one dynamic (the movement of goods and the organization of services), and then elaborates by adding the interactions of the main dynamic with other notable aspects of a port-system evolution (Fischer and Jarvis 1999; Palmer 2020).

Recently, new streams of study and approaches have enriched the port historiography, coming from urban historians, cultural and social historians, international relation studies, and so on (Konvitz 2012; Harlaftis 2020). At the same time, new studies have given new energy to the traditional specialization. Summing up, the new studies all emphasize comparisons (Loyen, Buyst, and Devos 2003), long-term perspectives, the digital elaboration of datasets, and an integrative view of the peculiarities and complexities characterizing the maritime economic world (Rohou, Laube, and Garlatti 2017, 363–72; Harlaftis and Theotokas 2020).

On the other hand, the historiography about the Marshall Plan began to consider its wider infrastructural implications only recently, using the ERP experience in order to infer some evaluations concerning the possible future impacts of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative on the global commercial networks and, possibly, the entire world order (Shen and Chan 2018). Since the beginning of the Chinese initiative, in 2014 (Chen 2014), a new stream of studies tried to look at the multi-purpose, multi-faceted, multilateral integration achieved thanks to the Marshall

Plan as a possible backdrop for coping with the complexities related to the emerging new strategic perspectives. The role of seaport cities gained a key position inside these studies, not only as infrastructural intersections, but also as control points, both for commercial flows and for the reliability of the infrastructural network (Deepak 2018).

The establishment of a new kind of infrastructure connectivity would eventually change the spectrum of Chinese-European relations, just as the Marshall Plan changed the relations between the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean (Habova 2015). Within these studies, the main issue seems to have been the disentanglement of the infrastructural value of the Plan (the reconnection of the material flows) from the other effects connected with such massive transfer of material and immaterial resources (Da and Hai 2019), such as the economic recovery, the technological update, the productivity gains, and all the other, well-known and well-studied, long-term consequences (Eichengreen 2007; Bischof, Pelinka, and Stiefel 2010; Fauri 2010).

The case of Trieste during the Marshall Plan may bring some insights, especially regarding how in those times, the local Allied government figured out a possible solution for the complex combination of political and economic tools and goals, the overlapping of the short and long term, and the increasing contradiction between the local dimension and the global scenario. How the governors dealt with these difficulties in the past could tell us something about the forces at work, related to the economic balance on the surface, but also to the power transition underneath.

Trieste and the European Recovery Program

As it was said, 'The port of Trieste, standing at a crucial strategic point at the head of the Adriatic, had a turbulent history in the mid-twentieth century' (Hametz 2005, back cover). Whether those turbulences were mainly due to the geographical position, the economic role, or the geopolitical importance of being the southern link of the Iron Curtain we will probably never know. The best guess is that every aspect of the Trieste history has an inner international nature, and clearly the port (together with all the related activities) is the most international part of the city, at least in economic terms.

Being an international crossroads is a specific characteristic of every port city. This international exposure is usually related to quicker and wider changes in their histories. When changes reach a magnitude be-

yond the capacity of the local control, it could happen that the political instabilities of the city reflect themselves in the economic and port activities, or else, reversing the line of change, port difficulties can hinder the entire city life.

In the literature, scholars have especially devoted attention to the physical organization and organizational management of port systems (González and Trujillo 2007), while port historians have adopted a more comprehensive approach. However, some topics, such as the multiple political and institutional influences determining the evolutive path of a port (along with technology, organization, and economics), still remain an understudied territory.[1]

Recently, new attention has arisen for the study of the network of interconnections surrounding the life of the biggest ports (Lee and Lee 2016; Dwarakisha and Salim 2015): supply chains, value chains, long distance infrastructural connections, and the role of ports as key links of a more and more complex global connectivity system. From this point of view, not only the performance evaluations require a comprehensive update (Park and De 2004), but a new holistic approach should be adopted, in order to properly locate the history of a port inside its proper economic, technical, but also socio-politico-institutional environment (Jacobs and Notteboom 2011).

Looking at Trieste after the Second World War, during the Allied Military Government period, occupying authorities used their complete control of local economic activities to foster the social and ideological "normalization" of the residents, and to direct the city's political future as well. Actually, the intertwining of economic instruments and political aims was something coming into Trieste from outside, with the experiences accumulated by AMG officials during their operations in the rest of Italy, and such procedures were quietly supported by the Roosevelt administration.[2]

1 Sarah Palmer spoke of 'the recognition that a port is an interface, not only as conventionally perceived between sea and land, but also between types of institutions or interests': Palmer 1990, 266; see also Tull 2014.

2 'It is for the sake of the future economic life of the world at large and thereby for our own future that we should go on with the job at once and utilise all the resources within our means. A total war is not won by winning battles alone. The peace must also be won' (ACS, ACC, roll 508, box 92, folder 2165, Report of the Fea survey mission in Italy, p. 121).

The real novelty in Trieste was the sense of urgency connected with the unstable local social and political situation, and the insecure international collocation of the city. The roots of these instabilities were deeply grounded in the final years of the Second World War.

From 1944, it was clear that Germany would lose the war, and that its socio-economic system, devastated by the aerial bombings, would be in need of almost everything. The best chance to regenerate the economy of the countries in central Europe was therefore to strengthen the traditional, southern routes of communication: the Adriatic and the Danube. Dated April 1945, there is a Trieste port map over which someone has highlighted some areas for the location of future English and American infrastructures (quarters for troops, warehouses, areas of service, etc.).[3] In the annexed document, the main purpose for those installations was identified as the managing of supplies and supports for combat troops in Austria and southern Germany.

Also for the Slovenians, the control of the Trieste port had, from the beginning, some important political implications: including Trieste inside the new Yugoslavia would have produced the conditions for the control of the entire old Italian Eastern frontier. In this sense, the best guarantee that in the postwar period the Trieste economic system would be in Yugoslav hands was given by the control of the territory obtained by the partisan troops who arrived first in the city, before it was controlled by the United States' and Great Britain's armies. The city's conquest was considered proper compensation for the violence of Fascism and for the Italian aggression against Yugoslavia in 1941. It was said that 'To our enemies it should not remain the booty of the violence. We should obtain the satisfaction that the violence is punished and in the meantime the test that the imperialist oppression not lead to some durable result.'[4]

In the end, an Allied Military Government ruled Trieste, in an increasingly bitter confrontation siding the USA and the UK with Italy, and Yugoslavia with the Soviet Union, at least until 1948, the first year of the Marshall Plan (Cox 1977; Valdevit 1996).

During the first months after the end of the war, the AMG tried to manage the emergency and avoided pledging itself to longer-term pro-

3 'Port of Trieste oct. 1944-dec. 1945', in: ACS, ACC, roll 25e, box 1011, subindicator 10000/109/1011.

4 Cf. the speech by Lojze Ude, *Nekaj načelnih pripomb k vprašanju o mejah*: Troha 2003, footnote 52.

grammes.[5] The port itself was so damaged that the first supplies for the city were landed on a shore outside the port, using landing craft, because all the port's wharves were mined, damaged by air bombing, or rendered useless in other ways. Wreckage so cluttered the accesses to the port that it was impossible for ships to approach.

The port facilities, slowly reactivated, were used for months to disembark supplies for the troops and food for the starving population, including in the direction of Yugoslavia, under the Unrra and other relief programmes. Normal commercial flows were simply non-existent, but the military necessities helped in fostering the reconstruction of the damaged facilities, and in keeping the whole port system busy. Moreover, the reactivation of the main economic activities as soon as possible became the first political requisite, in order to employ (and to appease) a potentially dangerous mass of several thousand highly politicized workers, led by the pro-Yugoslav faction of the local leftist political spectrum.

AMG officers quickly had to find a single solution for two categories of problems. On the one hand, they had to find legitimacy for their role as trustworthy guarantors, not only in maintaining the status quo, but also as specialists in the transition from the disasters and famines of the war to a peace based on freedom and prosperity, as the propaganda of the time promised to everyone, including to the inhabitants of that Eastern Europe which in practice began in Trieste. On the other hand, the slow pace of economic stabilization and the poor prospects for a recovery in international trade put two of the fundamental pillars of the Trieste economy in crisis, which therefore had to be at least partially reinvented and adapted to the circumstances. These were the two fundamental determinants that forced the officers of the Venezia Giulia AMG to invent a completely new intervention strategy to steady the situation in the administered territory, both economically, but also socially and politically.

Looking at the same scene from a completely different point of view, the international nature of the 'Trieste question' urged the USA and UK

5 Even in January 1946, the Chief Commissioner of Italian Allied Control Commission, the American admiral Ellery Stone, required instructions about the future economic collocation of Trieste and its territory: 'Broadly speaking, it appears that the question to be decided is whether AMG Venezia Giulia is to be treated economically and financially for all purposes as part of Italy, or whether it is to be administered as a separate economic entity (as is being done on the political side) until a final decision as to the future of the area has been taken.' Ellery Stone to Allied Force Headquarters, 18 January 1946 (NARA, WO, 204/411; in copy at IRSML, b. 72).

governments to a sequence of diplomatic moves, aimed both at securing the Allied position locally, and at extending the Western influence over the entire area. The first step was the Italian Peace Treaty, where a specific clause was dedicated to the international status of the Trieste port activities.

> *The Instrument of the Free Port of Trieste (Annex VIII) establishes the Free Port, free of customs, 'in order to ensure that the port and transit facilities of Trieste will be available for use on equal terms by all international trade and by Yugoslavia, Italy, and the States of Central Europe.' The Instrument binds the Free Territory and the signatory countries through whose territories the Free Port's traffic passes to facilitate the movement of this traffic and not to apply any discriminatory measures against it* (Unger 1947).

When a new set of opportunities presented itself in the form of an autonomous participation in the European Recovery Program, the AMG officials immediately interpreted it as a game changer. With only one move, participation in the Marshall Plan could solve several problems: an immediate solution for the financial difficulties and the anchoring of the Trieste economy (with the entire city following) to the Western field. At the same time, the Allied government had the opportunity to build up some key mechanisms, in order to control the social and political discontent inside the administered area.

In this sense, the relative percentage of landings out of the total port movement in the post-war years is more significant than absolute data.

Table 6.1: Port of Trieste 1945–1948. Goods loaded and unloaded (Addobbati 1968, 130).

Years	Unload	Load	Total
	%	%	%
1945	92	8	100
1946	96	4	100
1947	84	16	100
1948	79	21	100

During the early years of the post-war period, the 'resource' port, so to speak, had its primary use entirely within the allied logics aimed at a stable settlement of Central Europe, in terms of a direct control of

the territory, starting from Trieste and reaching the occupied zones in Austria and Southern Germany. The city, if anything, benefited indirectly from the flow of supplies passing through it, and, in such times, this was indeed an essential benefit for the local economy.

The famous historian Arnold Toynbee was active as an expert at the Foreign Office study centre during the war years. He drew up a memorandum on the future economic role of Trieste, focusing his attention on its port. The central assumption of Toynbee's memorandum was the proposal to maintain the free port institution in Trieste, and to entrust its management to an international commission made up of representatives of the countries that would use the equipment of the port itself, in addition, of course, to the representatives of the winning powers. Such an internationalization would have had a whole series of consequences: firstly, it would have allowed the Allies to control the best lines of communication to central Europe that existed at the time (taking into account the heavy damage suffered by German infrastructures and the uncertain political situation of postwar Germany). Secondly, a ground of exchange would have formed with the Soviet Union and its allies in the difficult post-war planning. Finally, a medium-long term Anglo-American intervention in Trieste would have given substantial help to Italy in an attempt to resist the foreseeable Yugoslav pressures (with the 'formidable support of the Soviet Union', said the document) aimed at controlling the area of the Northern Adriatic.[6]

In the following years, once the emergency was over, the restoration of the international function of the port became one of the main aspects of the search for a self-sustaining economic system in Trieste. As time passed, this search proved more and more difficult, but above all increasingly politically dangerous, because it would have endangered that fragile consensus structure that the Trieste AMG had managed to build.

6 'It has become clear that if, for ethnographic and political reasons, we mean to resist Yugoslavia's claim to annex Trieste, we must have up our sleeve a plan for administering the port, and the roads and railways connecting it with its non-Italian economic hinterland, which will safeguard the legitimate economic interests, in Trieste, of Yugoslavia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, as well as the sovereign rights and legitimate economic interests of Italy.': *Administration of ports serving a Soviet or partly Soviet-controlled hinterland*, memo annexed to a letter by Arnold Toynbee, 22 May 1945 (but the protocol date was 24 July 1945), in the Public Record Office, Foreign Office (from now on Pro-Fo), 371/50791 (copy at Istituto regionale per la storia della Resistenza e dell'Etá contemporanea (Trieste), b. 73, f. VII).

From this point of view, the management of the port issues could also be interpreted as a test of the viability and practical applicability of the entire strategy developed by the American military government structure during the Marshall Plan years.

ERP and the Trieste port system: quantities and qualities

The Free Territory of Trieste became a late member of the OEEC. The starting point was not an entirely local decision, but a request made by the Italian ambassador, when Italy was already a member state. The Italian representative asked for the recognition that the 'The Italian Government cannot indeed remain indifferent to the moral and the material needs of the population of Venezia Julia, which by immemorial tradition has closely participated in the development and achievements of the European population."[7]

The ERP in Trieste, therefore, was devised mainly as "compensation" for a post-war settlement which (instrumentally or otherwise) was recognized as penalizing and worthy of an extraordinary remedy, while the usual image of a push for triggering an autonomous recovery after the war was left in the background.

This was the starting point of all the contradictions of the unusual application of the Marshall Plan directives in Trieste. The main US Congress law, the one igniting the complex procedures for the realization of the European Recovery Program, clearly stated that:

> *The restoration or maintenance in European countries of principles of individual liberty, free institutions, and genuine independence rests largely upon the establishment of sound economic conditions, stable international economic relationship, and the achievement by the countries of Europe of a healthy economy independent of extraordinary outside assistance.*[8]

Conversely, in Trieste the intervention perspectives remained much more linked to the war logic than to those aimed at a peaceful integration of Europe, and not only because of the exceptional duration of the allied military government (Granger 2006, 38). One of the main problems, as we will see, was the inability of the Allied officials to effectively imagine

7 IUE, OEEC, Memorandum Participation of Trieste in the European Recovery Program, 1010 C(48) 080.

8 The Economic Cooperation Act of 1948, *Public law 472, 80th Congress*, April 1948.

a stable positionality for the Trieste economic system inside the Western area, while, on the other hand, both the Italian government and the local Italian officials acted to subdue the local economy to certain Italian needs, especially in the maritime sector. At the end, the ERP-Trieste project was one of the most financed in Europe (on a per capita basis) but it was quite completely fruitless in creating a self-sustained economy.

On the one hand, the Italian Government did not hesitate to hinder or reject any initiative that did not fit into a national development plan and had exclusively local values, to the detriment of the country's interest. On the other hand, it did not hesitate to support strong national and local interests – such as public enterprises (Ilva, shipbuilding and shipping firms), or monopoly groups (Italcementi) - to the detriment of small and medium-sized industries:[9] precisely the accusation that the Italian government and the ECA mission in Rome levied against the AMG (Serra 1954).

After the plan started, the attitude of the American officers within the AMG changed quite quickly. The first position was very close to the one expressed by the Public Law n. 472, which privileged in the first place the economic integration of the whole of Europe. During the second year of the plan, the attitude shifted, embracing a sort of local adaptation, which had as its main objective the creation of increasingly solid links between the Trieste economy and the Italian one.[10] In practice, starting from its second year, the Trieste ERP became an unofficial extension of the Italian ERP.[11]

9 NARA, RG, 331, File 75, Allied Secretariat Planning papers, AMG-BUSZ/FTT, Haraldson, Establishment of new enterprises in Trieste (copy at IRSML, b. 76).

10 'It is unfortunate that the Italian Govt has found it necessary to adopt a political approach in dealing with matters which should be considered in economic terms if ERP is to be a success. [...] AMG's approach has been (and will continue to be) in the direction of the complete integration of this territory into a unified Western European economy. This may ultimately occur directly or via the Italian economy. In either case the final objective is the same and the course of action we have outlined is the only one which makes economic sense to us.' NARA, RG 469, entry 1394, box 10, fasc. Programs – Trieste 1948/49, Ivan B. White [Director Finance and Economic Department, GMA-Trieste] to Secstate, Washington, 5 May 1948, 'secret'.

11 'I have been mindful of your concern that AMG's recovery planning and programming be closely coordinated with that of the Italian Government, with a view to making the eventual transfer of this area to Italy as smooth a transition as possible.' NARA, RG 469, entry 1394, box 10, fasc. Programs – Trieste 1948/49, White to 'Members of the Council', Trieste's 1949–50 Investment Program, 15 August 1949.

Among the beneficiary countries, Trieste was the fastest, together with England, in making use of the ERP aid assigned it: by December 1948 almost 70% of the aid granted up to that point had already been committed, compared to 40% in Italy, 34% in Germany and 52% in France; cumulative utilization progressively increased to 91% in mid-1951 (Spagnolo 2001, tab. 3.1). By the end of 1949, the procurement authorizations connected with the ERP-Trieste project consisted of more than 50% of goods coming from the United States, while a further 16% consisted of crude oil. Noteworthy is the fact that more than 20% of the total expenses was absorbed by the ocean freights paid to transport the goods. The Trieste percentage was extremely high: for the entire programme, less than 8% of the expenses was paid for ocean transportations. Italy paid 14%, Austria and West Germany both paid almost 10%. Clearly, for Trieste, the transportation of the aid was a business in itself; a sort of secondary benefit, in addition to the goods, given for free.

Table 6.2: ERP-Trieste Procurement Authorizations - April 3, 1948, December 31, 1949. (Thousands of dollars)

Area or Country of origin	Destination Trieste
Grand total	23,155
Commodity total	18,327
Ocean freight	4,828
United States	12,338
Latin America	1,273
Participating countries	525
Other Countries	4,192
Middle East Oil Area	3,749
Siam	443

Source: Economic Cooperation Administration 1950, Table XIV–4

The Free Territory of Trieste was also the only participating country, together with Belgium, to use 100% of the counterpart funds originating from US aid in industrial investments – more than twenty billion lire at the time – compared to a share of 61% in France, 58% in Germany, and 52.3% in Italy (Spagnolo 2001, tab. 3.1).

Formally, the plan favoured all industrial activities, but on closer inspection they were, in most cases, activities closely related to the mari-

time fate of the Territory of Trieste, and therefore to its identity as a port city.

Table 6.3: Financing of Trieste's Economic Recovery Program 1948–52.[12]

	Recapitulation	Investment Program by Category (Lire)
A.	Shipbuilding	51,000,000,000
B.	Industrial Reconstruction and Modernization	9,000,000,000
C.	Fisheries and Fish Canning	1,560,000,000
D.	Tourist Facilities	900,000,000
E.	Housing	2,100,000,000
F.	Port and Industrial Zone Development	1,900,000,000
G.	Rehabilitation of Public Utilities	985,000,000
H.	Agricultural Development	1,250,000,000
I.	Petroleum Refining	4,600,000,000
	Total	**73,295,000,000**

From the end of 1947 onwards, the US and UK Governments began to think about the future of Trieste on a longer-term perspective,[13] well beyond the simple management of the post-war emergency, and we can detect some strategic lines.[14] Particularly, the most important aim in the economic field was the building of a system of self-supporting economy. The governors of the new state-like entity (the Free Territory of Trieste) wanted to create firm conditions for independency from Italy but also from Yugoslavia. The project elaborated inside the AMG was directed in the first place at reaching a situation of a self-supporting econo-

12 NARA, RG 469, Mission to Italy, Office of the Director, Subject Files, Meeting Erp Coordination and Progress (copy in IRSLM, b. 76, f. RG 469), Commander and Military Governor's Erp Coordination and Progress Meeting. Minutes of Meeting No. 5, 8 July 1949, pag. 2.

13 'In relation to the present economic emergency in Europe. the logical consequence of the present state of the world is that measures of assistance envisaged by this Government should be consciously limited to Western Europe, based on the concept of the economic unity of Europe west of the Stettin-Trieste line.' (From a US Department of State Memorandum, 30 August 1947, in Holm 2017, 157–8.

14 The constitution of the Free Territory of Trieste can be considered as a clarification of the actual tasks of the AMG itself. The Chief officer for economics (the British lt. col. Birkensteth) was told that 'It was in British political and economic interests that Trieste should become a going concern. It was on the borderline between the Western Powers and the Soviet sphere of influence, and we should therefore make every effort to see that it functioned smoothly.' Public Record Office, Foreign Office 371, 67467, R-12356, Minutes of a Meeting held in Room 25 Foreign Office on Wednesday 3rd September [1947], on the Economic Future of Trieste.

my, and that goal was believed to be easily achievable because the Trieste and Italian economies were considered not complementary (Economic Cooperation Administration 1949b). Apart from other things, self-sufficiency was intended as a result of economic integration between Trieste and the entire Western Europe economic system, in coherence with one of the fundamental postulates of the European Recovery Program. A little romantically, it seems that Allied officials thought it possible to create a kind of Hong Kong on the Adriatic, an autonomous and economically efficient port-city, capable of providing its maritime and commercial services to all possible customers, on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Such a view led the AMG to privilege, between the objectives of the plan, the immediate restoration of transport activity from the port of Trieste to Austria, Germany, and Switzerland (Valdevit 1999, 126). In 1950, the Austrian ECA mission organized a major ceremony in Trieste, on the occasion of the arrival of the four-millionth ton of ERP goods, unloaded in the Adriatic port and directed to Vienna (Schröder 2000, 219). It was the confirmation of the pivotal role assigned to the city, inside a wide network of interdependencies, that was the backbone of the American control strategy along the southern section of the Iron Curtain (Hogan 1987).

Especially at the beginning of the Marshall Plan, for different reasons, the logistic opportunities available in Trieste were considered as a key element for a quick start of the recovery not only in Austria, but also in Southern Germany and Italy.

For the Western-occupied zones of Austria, one of the main concerns was the lack of fuel and raw materials, indispensable for a restoration of the main industrial activities and after that, for the reactivation of the entire Austrian economic system along a self-sustaining perspective of development (Economic Cooperation Administration 1949a, 4 and 55–9). Without an initial injection of food, fuel, and raw materials the entire Austrian industrial system could not have produced sufficient output to restart the export circuit and gain an acceptable level of economic self-sufficiency for the entire country.

For Germany, the question of the availability of supplies was critical. The main problem was the complete disruption of the system of complementarities that had sustained the economic development of the country since its unification:

> *The chief problems of Western Germany are recovery from the complete disorganization of economic life and political institutions which followed the defeat, and the difficulties of adjusting to the separation from industrial Western Germany of the predominantly agricultural Eastern territories which were formerly a major source of food for the West* (Economic Cooperation Administration 1949c, 1).

The direct political connection between the US-occupied portion of southern Germany (Bavaria, Hesse, and Württemberg-Baden) and the US quota of the Trieste AMG was certainly an element in favouring the Northern Adriatic port. Furthermore, the selective destruction of vital lines of communication (especially bridges) redirected a large part of the main supply routes along some unusual North-South lines Economic Cooperation Administration 1949c, 60–2), instead of the traditional network of interconnections over all the territory. Also for these reasons, Trieste was perceived as the best choice to feed Bavaria, and then to hustle the economic recovery of the entire American zone.

Finally, for Italy, the most important matter was not the port in itself, but the possibility of benefitting from the flow of foreign currencies connected with the port activities. Operating in Italian lire, Trieste port activities, in practical terms, generated valuable currents that directly supported the course of the national currency, with advantages such the ability of the entire Italian economy to relate to the international markets.

This exceptional (and very temporary) coexistence of positive aspects strongly pushed the resumption of traffic in the early days, but it could not support the transition of port activities towards more modern forms of logistics. In other words, the haste of the early days brought immediate benefits, which were paid for with less capacity for modernization over a longer time frame.

In the short run, the strategic value of the port infrastructures increased the still greater-than-usual political importance of the Trieste socioeconomic stabilization, leading to a local standard of living generally higher than the Italian one.

Table 6.4: Indexes of cost of living or retail prices (1948 = 100)

Period		Austria	Germany (bizonal area only)	Italy	Trieste
1948	Jan.	[not available]	[not available]	100	99
	Feb.	[not available]	[not available]	99	107
	Mar.	[not available]	[not available]	102	97
	Apr.	[not available]	[not available]	102	101
	May	[not available]	[not available]	101	99
	June	[not available]	100	100	100
	July	88	105	95	94
	Aug.	87	104	99	95
	Sept.	87	105	101	99
	Oct.	100	109	100	102
	Nov.	100	109	101	102
	Dec.	104	111	102	104
1949	Jan.	104	111	103	107
	Feb.	104	111	102	97
	Mar.	104	111	103	107
	Apr.	104	109	104	109
	May	104	106	104	113
	June	119	105	103	109
	July	119	106	100	105
	Aug.	119	104	101	105
	Sept.	120	103	101	103
	Oct.	124	103	99	102
	Nov.	133	103	99	101
	Dec.	135	103	98	[not available]

Source: Economic Cooperation Administration 1950, Table IX–2

Since 1948, the funds expected from the Marshall Plan would have been spent especially to restore and to modernize the circuit of production and use of ships that had been typical during the Austrian period: shipbuilding, maritime transport, port activities, and commerce. Out of about 170,000 gross tons of ships launched in those years in the Trieste and Monfalcone shipyards, ships for a total of around 100,000 tons were financed by the Marshall Plan (Valdevit 2002, 631–50). It is a known fact that the Free Territory of Trieste was the unit that gained more in Europe (on a per capita basis) from the Marshall Plan benefits.

> *ECA aid to Trieste has, therefore, been of benefit of Italy, as well, both directly in that a considerable portion of the imports provided by this aid have been on Italian account, and indirectly, in that the receipt of aid by Trieste and the resulting generation of counterpart have decreased the contribution of dollars which Italy has been required to make from the common foreign exchange pool, and of lira to cover Trieste's budget deficit, which Italy is committed to supply. […] Properly stated, therefore, the issue is not whether aid to Trieste should be terminated but rather whether it should continue to be supplied directly as Eca aid to Trieste, or should be handled indirectly through the Italian program.*[15]

The construction of this new identity for the local economy should also keep in account the particular interplay between the internal and external determinants. After Tito's expulsion from Cominform (1948), the American politics for the area's stabilization succeeded in detaching Yugoslavia from the Soviet influence, also subsiding the construction of a new port system in Slovenia, located near the boundary with Trieste at Koper-Capodistria. The help given to Capodistria is a good example of the limits of the short-term optics of that time. The doubling of the harbour capacity was a good choice with respect to the Anglo-British desire, after 1953, to solve the problem of Trieste with a compromise, assigning Zone A to Italy and Zone B to Yugoslavia. However, in a more long-term perspective, the objective of a self-supporting economy was lost, and for Italy there remained the commitment to assist an over-sized and in part parasitical economy.

'Unfortunately, during the reconstruction process Trieste missed a priceless opportunity to renew its port facilities in the light of recent experience made in the field of maritime transport, and in view of its foreseeable evolution' (Maggi and Borruso 1996, 38). In fact, in other ports, especially in Germany, after the almost complete destruction suffered during the war, the ports were completely rebuilt following an up-to-date approach. In contrast, the prevailing trend in Trieste was to restore things exactly 'as they were before', thereby missing a crucial opportunity for endowing its port facilities with a layout that might have been more

15 NARA, RG 469, Eca, Deputy Director for Operations, Office of European Operations, Italy Division, Trieste Decimal File 1948–1953, folder: TR Ec. Activ. 1.0 1.2 1.24 (copy in IRSML, b. 76), Alex B. Despit to C. Tyler Wood, 16 February 1951.

adequate to the needs of the immediate future, needs that were already emerging at that time.

In those years, the destiny designed for the port was a wholly international one, in sharp contrast with the political destiny of the city and its territory. We can say, so many years later, that it was the right place, but the wrong time.

Furthermore, noteworthy is the fact that the direct ERP aid programme in Trieste ceased early, in 1951. From that moment on, the support to the Trieste economy was directly mediated by Rome: the ECA mission in Rome absorbed all the remaining Marshall Plan-related activities in Trieste, and the ERP mission in Trieste was closed. This was the result of strong disagreements between the AMG and the Italian government regarding the most appropriate economic policies to follow in relation to the FTT, but also (and perhaps above all) between the AMG and the head of the ECA mission in Trieste, Galloway – the only one strongly supporting a pure economic view inside the application of the ERP aid programme. In other words, the official position was to consider the Trieste situation as exceptional as the one adopted in Berlin, or in Greece and Turkey.

At that time, the figures could give the impression of a successful recovery. Starting from 1949 the weight of the goods loaded and unloaded in the port of Trieste was permanently higher than the previous maximum of 1913. But these were very different goods. In 1951 'poor' goods such as cereals, coal, oil, and timber contributed a total of 63.1% of port traffic, while in 1913 their share was only 40.9%, clearly indicating how at the time the trade was made up of a greater share of 'richer' goods, the transport of which made more money, and whose handling and trade left the city with greater wealth. Furthermore, starting from the 1950s, a large part of the overall growth of the port movement was linked to the increase in the traffic of oil products: almost 40% of the unloaded goods in 1955, stably over 50% since 1962 (Mellinato, Scrignar, and Staccioli 2004).

What can be learned?

When the end of Marshall aid in Trieste was approaching, the United States representative to the GMA briefly explained to the State Department the profound meaning of what had been done in Trieste during the previous years, and what would have to be done while the experience of the allied administration lasted.

> *No one here really thinks of Trieste recovery in the same sense as the recovery of other OEEC countries; as long as the present international situation continues [...] Trieste cannot hope to achieve full recovery and self-sufficiency at any reasonable standard of living. [...] Such a policy also has had the political objective of keeping the Trieste population on the side of the West through demonstrating continual improvement in the material situation.*[16]

The overexposure of the city's political role had turned out to be the best bargaining chip for attracting extraordinary resources to the city, and not only for its reconstruction, but also to achieve a certain positive transformation in living conditions, at least relatively, compared to what had been done in Italy (Valdevit 2004, 259).

The combined action of the Italian government and the allied military government of Trieste had determined the simultaneous interweaving of two converging lines of intervention, generating the conditions for a reconstruction of the Trieste maritime economy, which only partially took into account the changed settlement of the international maritime market. The result, already highlighted by Giampaolo Valdevit,[17] was an increase in the dependence of the local economic system on state intervention, an involvement that followed operational criteria partly different from the search for company profitability. Summing up, we can say that, over the years, such misled use of the Marshall Plan resources led to a weakening of the Trieste maritime positionality, precisely in the years in which, even in the maritime sector, the economic presence of the new Yugoslavia was significantly expanding.

> *[I]t was apparent that neither the Yugoslavs nor the Italians would go along with this Free Territory of Trieste and we didn't press it, A, because we were pretty well committed politically to returning the city to Italy, and, B, it didn't make much economic sense to have a Free Territory of Trieste since the city had been developed under the old Austro-Hungarian Empire as a port for the whole empire, which*

16 NARA, RG 59, State Department Central File, 850G.00 / 5–24 50, (copy in IRSML, b. 76), US Political Adviser (Trieste) to State Department (Washington), 29 July 1950.

17 During the reconstruction years, the public actor was the dominant presence in Trieste, in striking contrast with the basic vision permeating the Marshall Plan. This kind of legacy would leave substantial traces also during the following decades, 'in mentality, in practice, in results'. Cf. Valdevit 1999, 133.

> *made sense before World War I. Trieste's hinterland had been so fragmented politically that the port's raison d' être was lost* (Fuchs 1974, 41).

The Marshall Plan provided the Trieste AMG with the abundance of financial means necessary to support all the activities started, but it also entailed abandoning the search for a self-sufficient economy: the much sought-after stabilization ended up with a nearly complete subjection of the local economy to state support.

In its essence, the ERP made the city economy more dependent on Italy both directly (with financial integration) and indirectly. For example, the reconstruction of the Trieste Lloyd fleet took place within the logic of the Italian 1936 Finmare reform (the Italian state-owned and quasi-monopolistic shipping company), thus inextricably linking the Trieste company's fleet to the Italian integrated maritime transport system.

Over time, ERP aid had helped to restore the Trieste-AMG budget by making the Italian financial intervention less and less decisive, while Trieste had become a sort of 'dollar factory' for Italy, as ECA officials remembered. On the other hand, the true nature of the Trieste ERP (political, not economic) rose from every angle the problem was faced, and made it increasingly incompatible with the remaining structure of the Marshall Plan in the rest of Europe.

> *The relatively higher standards of living which must be maintained there for political, social and military occupation reasons create a set of conditions which make it impossible to consider Trieste's needs with the same economic criteria as are used in Italy. For obvious reasons, the Occupation Authorities must be left free to establish economic, political and social conditions which make the Occupation as acceptable as possible, but at the same time to accomplish Anglo-American objectives. […] The entire pattern of economic development in Trieste has been based upon the necessity of maintaining minimum unemployment levels and maximum social and political tranquillity, without too much concern for the future economy of the Territory. […] I can only see an economic unit of another agency being effective, if it is the economic arm of the Military Government in Trieste.*[18]

18 NARA, RG 469, Eca, Deputy Director for Operations, Office of European Operations, Italy Division, Trieste Decimal File 1948–1953, folder: TR Ec. Activ. 1.0 1.2 1.24 (copy at IRSML, b. 76), Memorandum, M. L. Dayton to Alex B. Despit, 6 February 1951.

The story was ended at the highest level of the ECA, recommending three measures which were then all adopted. The maintenance of ERP-related aids to Trieste would continue through Italy, the military government would retain ownership of a part of the counterpart funds, and finally the ECA Mission in Trieste would be suppressed, but some economic officer of the GMA would become ex officio the manager of the ECA for the Free Territory.

Despite the insistence of the official US Political representative in Trieste to the State Department, the Marshall Plan was suspended in Trieste earlier than elsewhere, in June 1951. The sudden stop left behind not only some troubles for the AMG (not only of a financial nature, but also in relation to food supply, for example) but above all it created a weakening of the local authorities, confronting the growing Italian requests for returning Trieste to Italy as soon as possible. In March 1952, when the Marshall Plan was over, an ECA telegram from Rome to Washington also concluded the parable of US financial commitments in favour of Trieste.

> *Since our policy is one of furthering integration of Trieste into Italy and since Italy is both willing and anxious to meet Trieste's financial needs (in fact Amg claim Govt is too generous with result that unnecessary and uneconomical use of resources is being continuously proposed by Itals), there does not appear to be economic justification for further aid to Trieste with the outlay of administrative funds to maintain a special mission. [...] Allocation of the aid earmarked for Trieste or Italy therefore would serve three very definite purposes: (A) tie Trieste more closely to Italy; (B) give Itals an opportunity public-relations-wise to show extent of their assistance to Trieste and (C) utilize US aid for defense-supporting purposes.*[19]

Alberto Berti, an observer very informed about the Trieste economic situation, but active outside the city at that time, in 1954 presented the 'Perspectives of the Trieste economy' in a Milanese magazine. He explicitly said that 'The new administration will have to deal with a demanding and depressed city' (Berti 1954, 10), which in the following years would address schizophrenic requests to political power: a greater administrative

19 NARA, RG 469, Eca, Mission to Italy, Office of the Director, Subject Files 1948–1957, folder: Trieste 1952 (copy at IRSML, b. 76), Telegram, Eca-Rome to Eca-Washington, 22 March 1952.

autonomy, in the name of the 'specialty' of its economy, but also greater economic assistance, interventions, and subsidies (Balestra 2001).

The episode reveals the mental architecture with which the city economic ruling circles really planned the reconfiguration of their roles. The State (whether the AMG or Italy, it did not matter) should have functioned as a financial background for port-maritime-merchant activities, and the added value produced by these activities would have constituted the income for the city. Self-government (i.e. control by representatives or trustees of those executive circles) of the general warehouses, shipping companies, shipyards, and other bodies responsible for managing ships and services would have constituted the best guarantee for their use below cost, and therefore granting that added value flow that fed the city.

To obtain similar results, the local economic groups needed to rely on a strong state, financially able to support the commitments associated with maintaining an assisted and largely parasitic area (Comitato di coordinamento delle medie e piccole aziende di Trieste 1954). Clearly, the local economic leadership lacked the ability to mature a development project suited to the needs of the Trieste commercial and maritime identity, especially considering the context of the cold war.

In 1954, with the return of Trieste to Italy, the prospects that opened up for the port were not easy. A threat came in the form of the increasing competition from the Croatian port of Rijeka, rebuilt after being completely destroyed during the war. Moreover, since the end of the fifties, the dangerously close Slovenian port of Capodistria-Koper also became operative. It was built largely from scratch thanks to US funding, provided to facilitate the conclusion of the Trieste question, as a sort of compensation for the final transfer of the city to Italy (Lodato 2000, 309; Ažman Momirski 2020). Again, a plain example of how the impelling political urgencies prevailed, at the expenses of a sound long-term economic programming.

The activities carried out by the Trieste AMG also represent a sort of verification of the development process followed by the local system in that period, because of what happened in the previous decades. Even more significant, in my opinion, was the failure to devise some original solutions, or new intervention projects and mentalities, with which the Allies futilely tried to find their solutions to Trieste's problems. Often these plans were carried out starting from suggestions or models emerging from the local reality, but, in particular in the economic field and in

the years considered here, the final decision was always taken within offices where only allied personnel were present. In this sense, the strange experience of the Trieste version of the ERP is also a verification of the practical viability of the entire political background of the plan, which entrusted local representatives with the task of finding a balance between political objectives and economic instruments. The same local representatives inevitably filtered both suggestions and plans for their realization through their own conceptual background and experiences in the motherland, in this case provoking a short-circuit: the use of exceptional resources officially pursuing long-term goals, but practically, aiming at very short-term results. It was a complex game of filters and mirrors, which at times, but not always, was able to take advantage of the best aspects of both experiences: the US and the local one.

Like many hybrids in nature, even the Americanization of Trieste and its territory was not fruitful. The massive US involvement did not give rise to a dynamic and prosperous economy, but rather to a sleepy and assisted society. During the second half of the twentieth century, the local society replaced the ethics of making its own in the best of times with the opportunism of positional rent and the repeated affirmation of 'rights' for compensation, for the numerous and troubled political events that the region had experienced in the first half of the century.

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IUE, OEEC: Istituto Universitario Europeo, Organisation Européenne de Coopération Economique.

NARA, RG: The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group.

NARA, WO: The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, War Office.

PRO, FO: Public Record Office, Foreign Office.

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7

The Post-war Economy in Koper: Development Plans for the Port Industrial Activities, with an Emphasis on the Oil Sector

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Regional Archive in Koper

Industrialization and perspectives for oil economy development in the Koper district after the Second World War

Starting in 1953, a period of rapid economic growth began in Yugoslavia. By 1960, its social product growth was among the largest in the world. As production, exports, labour productivity, and living standards increased significantly during this period, Yugoslavia began to be ranked among the middle-developed countries (Prinčič 2005, 1019). After the settlement of the territorial dispute with Italy, the Koper area was gradually economically integrated within Yugoslavia (Rogoznica 2011, 292–8). The rapid rise of industrial activity in the coastal municipalities of Koper, Izola, and Piran after 1954 is clearly evidenced by data on investment growth in the industrial sector, which amounted to 2 billion 256 million dinars in 1954–1956, and 6 billion 527 million dinars in 1956–1961. The number of industrial employees increased by as much as 83%, from 3,098 units in 1953 to 5,673 in 1961. The share of the national income coming from industrial activities increased from 1 billion 187 million dinars in 1954 to 7 billion 208 million in 1961, equal to a 522% increase.[1] With the acceler-

1 During the post-war period, completely new metal-processing industrial plants were established: Tomos in Koper, Lama in Dekani, Mehanotehnika in Izola, the Stil furniture factory and Iplas plastic factory in Koper, an electrical materials factory, and then a metal haberdashery in Šmarje. The fish-processing industries Iris (ex Ampelea), Argo (ex Arrigoni), Ikra (ex Delanglande) merged in 1959 into a large food industry, named Delamaris; PAK, 712.1, t. e. 214.4, Skupščina občine Koper, Urbanistični program slovenske obale, Investbiro Koper, 1966, Izdala Skupščina občin Koper, Izola in Piran – Tiskalo Časopisno založniško podjetje 'Primorski tisk' v Kopru 1966, 46.

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ated industrialization, the Koper district gained exceptional importance within the Slovenian economy, mainly in relation to its traffic-strategic coastal location, which in the post-war period influenced the construction of the port of Koper (Terčon 2015, 293–8).

Along with this new economic development, the growing need for fuels and lubricants began to appear in the Koper district, both in relation to land transport as well as for the needs of maritime transport and industry. After the end of the Second World War, fuel contingents for the Koper area were provided by the Yugoslav federal government and supplied by the companies Jugopetrol and Jugonafta.[2] Local companies carried out the distribution of fuels. Initially, the fuel depots were managed by the fuel department at Avtopodjetje Adrija, and in 1948 an independent company, called Istra-benz Koper,[3] was established to supply fuels and lubricants to the then zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste. Fuel was supplied from Rijeka, Solin, Bosanski Brod, and Osijek, and after the annexation to Yugoslavia, the supply of fuel and lubricants to the Koper area took place mainly from the Rijeka and Sisak refineries.[4] From the refinery in Rijeka, the Istra-benz company was supplied directly by tank trucks, and from the Sisak refinery using railway tanks to the Podgorje railway station. The gas was then transported to the depots in Koper or to individual pumps. Sales of fuel and lubricants took place at pumping stations in Divača, Koper, Izola, Piran, Buje, Umag, Novigrad, and Kozina. The company supplied goods directly to customers of larger quantities of fuel using tankers. The transport capacity was initially supplied by all types of ships, namely fishing, passenger, and cargo ships, as well as the suction excavator *Peter Klepec*, which performed dredging works in the new port areas in Koper. Due to the growing fuel consumption, the company bought a new tanker with a trailer with a total capacity of 29,000 litres in 1959 and the associated equipment with which, with the development of the port of Koper, they wanted to supply fuel for larger ocean-going ships. The customers of fuel and lubricants were mainly local and regional companies. After the signing of the Udine Agreement between Yugoslavia and Italy, in 1955 there was a sharp increase regard-

2 PAK, 170, Istrska banka, t. e. 33. 65, 'Dopis Jugopetrola Zagreb', rec. n. 106/47, Koper, dated 22 December 1947.

3 PAK, 170, Istrska banka, t. e. 40. 78. 'Splošno poslovanje trgovine s tekočimi gorivi in mazivi Istra-Benz in načrt za izboljšanje in koordinacijo dela v celoti'.

4 PAK, 170, Istrska banka, t. e. 40. 78. Letter n. G/Š-49, dated Koper 22 November 1949.

ing the sale of fuel to the holders of small border passes, who came daily from nearby parts of Italy by motor vehicle.[5]

With the increase of local consumption, the demand for petroleum products increased rapidly by the beginning of the 1960s, both at the national and state level. During the first period, the oil turnover at the Yugoslav level was constant until 1961 and amounted to around 600,000 tons, which accounted for imports and exports between domestic ports for the needs of the Adriatic coast. Then, the oil trade doubled in 1962, and in 1963 it even tripled compared to 1961, reaching a height of 1,840,000 tons of oil.[6] Given the increased needs for petroleum products during this period, an idea emerged with the goal to establish a special channel for the import of gasoline and heating oil through the port of Koper, through which about 116,000 tons of oil were imported annually. For the manipulation and storage of imported oil and its derivatives, the construction of tanks was planned in the Port of Koper, with an initial static capacity of 35,000 tons, which would be gradually increased to 100,000 tons. In this way, the new depots would at least partially cover not only the local, but all the Slovenian needs for this energy source.[7]

Plans for the development of the port industrial zone in Koper

Along with the plans for the import and transshipment of the petroleum products in the port of Koper, in the early 1960s many new ideas about the development of industrial facilities related to oil refining began to emerge. Within the then prevailing economic concept of the need for rapid industrialization of the country, the development of the Port of Koper was inevitably linked to that of the industrial sector and industrial production: 'The Slovenian industry supplies raw materials and exports through Rijeka and other ports, which are overloaded with maritime cargo. The Port of Koper has all the conditions to meet the needs of Slovenian industry, as it is the most natural economic partner of this industry and forms an economic whole with it.'[8]

5 PAK, 24.3. 'Investicijski programi pri OLO Koper', t. e. 13. 3. 'Investicijski program za nakup avtocisterne, Trgovinsko podjetje Istra -Benz Koper', dated 1959.

6 PAK, 728, Petrinja Danilo, t. e. 11, 'Razvoj Luke Koper, Pregled programov in raziskav', November 1964, 28.

7 PAK, 728, Petrinja Danilo, t. e. 11, 'Razvoj Luke Koper, Pregled programov in raziskav', November 1964, 67.

8 PAK, 728, Petrinja Danilo, t. e. 11, 'Razvoj Luke Koper, Pregled programov in raziskav', November 1964, 64.

In 1963, the highest governing body in Primorska, the Koper District People's Committee, prepared a *Study on the development of the economy in the Koper basin*. In accordance with the prevailing socialist economic syntagm, the development of the port of Koper also included the industrialization of its hinterland, following the example of the highly developed European port and industrial centres, especially nearby Trieste, with which economic connections were planned. According to the plan, an ironworks, an oil refinery, and petrochemical plants were to be built in the hinterland of the port of Koper, employing a total of 7,505 people. The refinery was expected to employ 1,020 people, petrochemical plants 1,485 people, and the ironworks as many as 6,000 people. The total industrial area was expected to cover approximately 220 ha of land. The facilities were to be built in the area along the riverbed of the relocated Rižana, along which cargo ships would be able to navigate, for unloading iron ore and coal for the ironworks. The main petrochemical plants were to be built along the planned canal, which could also be used for unloading raw materials, if necessary. The immediate coastal area was intended for locating tanks of various petrochemical or raw materials for the refinery. According to the plans, the area intended for storage included 32 ha of land. The stored fuel would be distributed among three consumers, namely 38% of the stored fuel would be made available for consumer needs of the Slovenian and Croatian hinterland, 38% of the fuel would be used for the needs of the Koper refinery, and 24% for international traffic with Austria. For the supply of gas or liquid distillates from Trieste's refineries, the committee planned the construction of a pipeline, the so-called 'Pipe line Trieste-Koper', with a length between 6 and 8 km, while domestic raw materials would be supplied via land transport. The railway network was supposed to be extended in order to reach the petrochemical plants along the main core, which was to be connected to the international receiving of raw materials, and along the side cores, which were planned along individual sectors. The loop connection to the main port vessel would allow the movement of freight traffic within the port area, or directly to the ironworks, located on the east side of the basin.[9]

In March 1962, a meeting of representatives of the SRS Executive Council, the Koper District People's Committee, and representatives of

9 PAK, 24, OLO Koper, t. e. 1787. 1, OLO Koper, 'Študija razvoja gospodarstva v koprskem bazenu, Zvezek 3, Sekundarna in finalna predelava nafte (petrolkemija)'. Koper: Invest-Biro, 1963.

Luka Koper discussed the SRS Executive Council's proposal to divide Luka Koper into two parts: the Port Administration and Construction Institute and a special Goods Transfer and Storage Company. The proposed reorganization did not take place but two years later a new business association, called the Koper Industrial Zone, was founded in Ljubljana. The association reunited some of the most important Slovenian industrial and commercial companies (Tovarna dušika Ruše, Železarna Jesenice, Tovarna aluminija Kidričevo, Etol Celje, Petrol Ljubljana and Prehrana Ljubljana), the import-export Yugoslav company Centroprom Beograd, and Luka Koper. Its aim was to prepare a plan for the arrangement of the port complex and the gradual preparation of construction surfaces, communications, and other infrastructure facilities, in order to make more rational use of industrial shores, conversion plants, warehouses for raw materials, and similar facilities. Otherwise, each company was to independently manage its facilities inside the area. The development of the port, in connection with the import of raw materials from overseas countries, was supposed to enable, above all, the modern tendency of industry to approach the sea'.[10]

From this perspective, the establishment of the Business Association was expected to have a significant impact on the further development of the Port of Koper. With the agglomeration of commercial and industrial traffic in the port, it was thought possible to achieve quotas sufficient to make profitable the construction of modern converters. On the other hand, international business cooperation was also favoured in 1963, with the declaration of the Port of Koper as a free customs zone. In addition to customs facilities for the movement of foreign and domestic goods through the port, the aim was to encourage the cooperation of domestic and foreign companies with additional services, including industrial processing for Central Europe and overseas.[11]

From 1966, the urbanization program for the Slovenian coast also foresaw the possibility of the development of new industries within the port activity, inside the port 'industrial' zone. According to the urban plan for Koper, the industrial port and zone were located in the area of the so-called Ankaran bonifika, which included land from the Rižana

10 PAK, 728, Petrinja Danilo, t. e. 11, 'Razvoj Luke Koper, Pregled programov in raziskav', November 1964, 135.

11 PAK, 728, Petrinja Danilo, t. e. 14. 7, 'Program razvoja Luke Koper do leta 1975', Koper, June 1969, 34.

River to the Križišče-Ankaran road on the north side, and the Križišče-Koper road on the east side, so that the entire Sermin hill belonged to the industrial zone. The building plan of the Port was harmonized with the building plan of the city of Koper, and included in the urban plan of Koper according to the proposal of the Port.[12]

Koper was supposed to offer some advantages for the development of the processing industry in the immediate port hinterland, In particular: the extensive available space over an area of 600 ha; the organized free customs zone; proximity to the port and the port converters; a developed communication network between the sea and the hinterland; the possibility of providing satisfactory quantities of fresh water; the potential reserve of workforce in the immediate hinterland; and the interest of domestic and foreign industrial companies in setting up their plants in the industrial zone of the Port of Koper. In addition to the plans drawn up in 1963, which provided for the installation of a refinery and the development of ferrous metallurgy and petrochemistry, the installation of a thermal power plant run on liquid fuels was planned inside the industrial zone of the Port of Koper, with a capacity of 200 MW, which would gradually increase to 600 MW. The produced power was supposed to be partly used for the needs of the Slovenian coast and Istria, while most of it would flow through the power line towards Ljubljana, to cover the growing electricity deficit in Slovenia. The planned connection with the transmission line from the Divača substation to Trieste would also enable the exchange of energy with Italy. In addition to the construction of a terminal for storage of fuel oil and heavy oils, they also planned a terminal for liquid chemicals, and devised plans for the construction of a terminal for receiving specialized ships with liquefied Saharan natural gas, with facil-

12 PAK, 728, Petrinja Danilo, t. e. 11, 'Razvoj Luke Koper, Pregled programov in raziskav', November 1964, n. 137. The port area destined for the trade operations stretched along the northern coast of the town, along the Škocjan Bay barrier to the Rižana River, and ran west along the sea in a north-south direction to the extreme western edge of the breakwater in the 'old port of Koper'. It covered the old port area, to the Harbour Master's Office, and from there it ran in a straight line to the northern edge of the road at Belvedere, and from west to east along the natural border between Koper Hill and the coastal plateau to the so-called port square with the passenger station. On the west side of the port square, it turned to the northeast and ran parallel to the Škocjan Bay closure and included all the permanent and most important warehouses. The border of the trading port turned east, near the oil tanks, and ran along the south side of the railway tracks to below Sermin, where it crossed the tracks under the Koper freight station and returned west north of the railway tracks to the Rižana River, along which it ran to reach the sea.

ities for its storage and regasification. From Koper, gas would be transported via a gas pipeline through Slovenian territory to consumption centres in Austria and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The capacity of the underground reservoirs was expected to be 125,000 cubic metres. In order to make the most of the free customs zone status, the plan called for the construction of other facilities inside the industrial zone of the port of Koper. The plan involved the building of an oil mill with a capacity of 200–300 tons of processed raw materials per day, a feed factory, and a plywood factory (based on imports and processing of exotic wood from West Africa). Moreover, other productions were expected to start: rice husk, hazelnut packing, textile confection, assembly of bicycles, production of hats, processing of waste cirrus into essential oil, production of various metal objects, and the like. At the same time, they noted that the implementation and concretization of the offers and plans for the industrial zone were linked to the harmonization of Yugoslav foreign trade regulations, with the possibility of an active integration into the international economy.[13]

The kerosene port terminal and the liquid fuel storage facilities in Sermin

At first, the company Petrol was established on 12 May, 1945 by the Yugoslav government as part of the establishment of the State Petroleum Company Jugopetrol, headquartered in Belgrade. Immediately after its foundation, the company opened branches in all the federated Republics, and two years later each branch became an autonomous company, as did Jugopetrol Ljubljana.[14] This Company became independent after the Government of the People's Republic of Slovenia, by Decision no. S-zak. 571 of 18 January 1947, founded the Trade and Production Company 'PETROL' Ljubljana. The company's main business was wholesale and retail: oil, petroleum products, lubricating oils and lubricants, motor vehicles, spare parts and accessories, paints, varnishes, chemicals and supplies, rubber, and rubber and plastic products. Moreover, among other activities, the refining of oil and petroleum products was also envisaged.[15]

13 PAK, 712.1, Skupščina občine Koper, t. e. 214, Skupščina občine Koper, Urbanistični program slovenske obale, Investbiro Koper, 1966. Published by the Municipal Assemblies of Koper, Izola and Piran. Koper: Primorski tisk, 44–49.

14 Petrol 2019c.

15 PAK, 95, Okrožno gospodarsko sodišče Koper, t. e. 434.4, Okrožno gospodarsko sodišče v Ljubljani, III R 10/71. Izpisek iz registra podjetij in obratov.

In 1953, Jugopetrol Ljubljana was renamed Petrol Ljubljana and obtained registration for the import of petroleum products. By the end of 1960, Petrol Ljubljana thus had 31 service stations.[16] By far the biggest and most important milestone in this period was the launch of the Sermin installation in Koper by Petrol, and with it the supply of goods from sources other than the previous exclusive supplier, INA.[17]

As the main republican company authorized to trade in oil and its derivatives, Petrol obtained a location permit in 1963 for the construction of a liquid fuel storage facility in Sermin, at the extreme western end of the future industrial port in Koper. INA Zagreb developed the projects for the construction of the installation, in cooperation with the Port of Koper, and the Petrol Ljubljana company acted as an investor. According to the calculations at the time, the investment for the entire 'Petrol' complex, which was expected to reach a total capacity of more than 100,000 tons of storage, was estimated at 2,330 million dinars.[18] The project envisaged the bridging of the Rižana River by pipelines and the construction of an industrial railway track with a temporary filling station for tank trucks, utilizing an extension of the pipeline. It was planned that the supply of fuel would be undertaken by tankers, and the removal by tank trucks, and, after the construction of the railway line, also by rail tanks,[19] and that the kerosene port would use the same floating basin originally reserved for bulk cargo. A tanker landing bridge was planned on the north side of this basin, from where pipelines were to run to the oil storage complex. In the first phase, the construction of tanks with a total capacity of 35,000 tons of single storage was planned and, in the final phase, 100,000 tons of single storage.[20] In addition to the tanks, the following was planned as part of the warehouse: an administrative building, a gatehouse, a building for liquid fuel pumps, a building for fire and cooling pumps, a tanker filling station, an access road, technological pipelines, fire pipelines, and an industrial track on the south side of Rižana.[21]

16 Petrol 2019b.

17 Petrol 2019a.

18 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 11, 'Program razvoja luke v Kopru', 1965, 310.

19 PAK, 712.1, Skupščina občine Koper, t. e. 265.15. Zadeva 351–608/1964: Petrol Ljubljana, Lokacija skladišča tekočih goriv pri Luki Koper.

20 PAK, 728, Petrinja Danilo, t. e. 11, 'Razvoj Luke Koper, Pregled programov in raziskav', November 1964.

21 PAK, 712.1, Skupščina občine Koper, t. e. 265.15. Zadeva 351–608/1964: Petrol Ljubljana, Lokacija skladišča tekočih goriv pri Luki Koper.

In connection with the construction of a terminal for petroleum products, a study for the construction of the Koper-Vienna oil pipeline was prepared, along with a project concerning the construction of a terminal for the storage of liquid chemicals was prepared. In the industrial zone, the construction of other facilities that were not directly connected to the oil terminal was also planned.[22]

As a consequence of some infrastructural difficulties and other problems, the construction of the terminal for imported petroleum products was significantly delayed. The so-called kerosene port was completed by the end of 1968, after the construction of the Koper-Prešnica railway line in 1967. It was located in the area north of the mouth of the Rižana River.[23] The bridge for landing the ship was located together with the bridge for unloading liquefied gas and chemicals, by the middle port basin before the Rižana estuary. A 700 metre embankment was built from the mouth of the river Rižana to the west into the sea, and a second, deeper port basin was excavated. At the western end of the embankment, on its southern side, a platform for the erection of conversion arms was built. Two years later, two steel pipe bumpers were built next to the platform for the safe mooring of tankers, up to a carrying capacity of 80,000 DWT, and at a landing speed of 10 cm/sec. The so-called port basin II was deepened to 16 metres in 1970–1973 and widened. The largest tanker to land at the kerosene port by then had 96,000 DWT.[24] At that time, the storage capacity (55,000 m^3) enabled an annual turnover of around 800,000 tons of fuel. Oil for the Bosanski Brod refinery began to be imported through the terminal. However, enterprises interested in oil transit to Austria were also expected to appear.[25]

The installation was managed by a special business unit of Petrol: Instalacija tekočih goriv, Koper – Sermin (Installation of liquid fuels, Koper – Sermin), specializing in the storage of liquid fuels and the performance of related businesses. The founder company provided the fixed

22 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 11, 'Program razvoja luke v Kopru', 1965, 310–313.

23 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 11, 'Program razvoja luke v Kopru', 1965, 310.

24 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 24. 1, 'Študija povezave z naftovodom in produktovodoma luke Koper in Iplasa Koper z rafinerijo Aquila pri Trstu, Naročnik Luka Koper in Iplas Koper', Ljubljana, December 1978.

25 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 11 'Program razvoja Luke Koper do leta 1975', Koper, June 1969, 78; 97–98.

and current assets for the operation, since that business unit did not have independent rights.[26]

The plans for the arrangement of the port industrial zone

The development of Slovenian industry in the 1960s was no longer as rapid as in the previous decade. In the years 1964–1967, and from 1970–1972, production growth slowed down, and the share of industry in the social product of the Republic decreased from 50% to 44%. However, as the Slovenian share in exports, investment, the value of fixed assets, the number of employees, etc. increased within Yugoslavia, the Republic continued to maintain its leading position in the economic field (Prinčič 2005, 1081).

After the construction of the Koper - Prešnica railway line, in 1968 the Koper Industrial Zone Induscona Koper Business Association was abolished. To continue the activities related to the planned industrialization, a new company based in Ljubljana was established, which was supposed to take on the role of 'organizer and carrier of the development of the port-industrial complex'. The founders of the new company were Kreditna Banka in Hranilnica Ljubljana, the Community of Railway Companies Ljubljana, Luka Koper, Petrol Ljubljana, Ladjedelnica 2. oktober Piran, and the company Prehrana Ljubljana.[27] Based on the investments and the joint risk, the partners were to decide within the Business Committee on concrete investments and on the work of the company. The connection between the port development programme and the concept of industrial zone development was conceived in three points, or directions of development. The most important of these was the expansion of the trade in liquid cargo (oil and liquid chemicals), which was also to sustain the activities dedicated to the appropriate industrial processing of oil and petroleum products. This was followed by the development of bulk transport (mainly phosphates and some other minerals) which, in turn, would push the development of the primary industrial processing.

26 PAK, 95, Okrožno gospodarsko sodišče Koper, t. e. 434.4., dated Ljubljana 26 March 1971, 'Conclusion'.

27 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 14. 20, 'Predlog o izločitvi gradnje luške in komunalne infrastrukture iz delovne organizacije LUKE koper', dated Koper, 21 May 1970.

The development of a trading port (general cargo) followed only as a third factor which was supposed to encourage the other industrial activities.[28]

The planned Koper industrial area was supposed to enable the development of the entire Slovenian economy, offering a starting point for broader economic connections with the Central European hinterland countries.

> *The Koper economic complex can satisfy most of the requirements of Slovenia's future economic programme, namely the future railway connection and a functional port. The development of the maritime industry and that of the basic processing industry could give direction to the Slovenian economy in connection with the Austrian, Czech, and Hungarian economies. In other words, the economic development of the mentioned countries can foster a certain development of our economy, and in particular the development of the economic complex in Koper.*[29]

Within this context, taking into account the already prepared plans, the future Koper industrial zone was envisaged, with the development of the so-called basic industries: refinery, oil mill, petrochemical plant, ironworks, chemical production, and some other light and local industry facilities. The global needs of the industrial zone in the port were estimated to require a coastline long enough to accommodate 3 to 5 million tons of miscellaneous cargo per year (throughput, bulk cargo, and liquid fuels).[30]

The port was supposed to provide investment funds for the construction of the so-called Second Basin, which would be entirely intended for industry (liquid and bulk cargo, with appropriate terminals), as an arrangement of the relevant water area and access channels. The company Industrijska zona Koper was expected to provide for the infrastructural equipment of land intended for industrial activity. At that time, the area envisioned for industrial and port activities measured 1,630 ha: 155 ha of land for the port and the public warehouses, and 1450 ha for the needs of the industrial zone.

28 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 14. 8, 'Program razvoja luško-industrijskega kompleksa v Kopru', dated Koper, November 1969, 22.

29 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 14. 23, Koželj Bogomir (ed.), 'Generalni načrt industrijske cone Koper, Ekonomski del. Avtorji: Baškovič Ivo, Koželj Bogomir, Matjan Slavko, Sovinc Ivan, Prodan Silvan', 34.

30 Ibid., 47–61

A first phase concerned the arrangement of around 950 ha of land (the so-called zone A of the industrial zone Koper), of which 500 ha were to be allocated for industrial facilities. The construction of the basic road network, the arrangement of torrents and watercourses, the drainage of the terrain, and the construction of the basic sewerage network were planned. About 27 million dinars were needed to arrange the first 100 ha of land. Financial calculations were also prepared regarding the necessary investments to increase the capacity of the Koper - Prešnica railway line. It was estimated that the total investment for the rehabilitation of the line for traffic of up to 4 million tons of cargo would amount to 104.5 million dinars per year, of which 76.2 million dinars were for fixed, and 28.3 million for mobile devices.[31]

Simply, it was too much. Due to the lack of investment funds, it was not possible to proceed with the construction of planned industrial-port facilities and infrastructure in the following period. The management of the Port of Koper began to follow the example of Croatian ports, thinking about different business solutions.[32] In 1967 and again at the beginning of 1969, the Port of Koper's Administration proposed that the construction of communal infrastructure and port facilities be separated from the Port administration, and that a special work organization be established for this purpose. The Slovenian Executive Council did not support this proposal, expressing the opinion that the industrial zone should be merged with the Port.[33]

The Port of Koper Administration changed its mind at the beginning of the 1970s, abandoning the idea of a separation between the port activities and the management of the port and municipal infrastructure. This was due to the bettering of the conditions for obtaining credit funds, intended for communal arrangements and port infrastructure, and above all the adoption of the Republic Act on the Republic's Participation in Financing Port and Communal Infrastructure, on the basis of which Luka Koper obtained 13 billion dinars. Despite the provision of funds for the self-regulation of its own infrastructure, the management of Luka was still strongly in favour of the project to revive the planned industrial area over its hinterland. To this end, it was proposed to reorganize the Urban

31 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 14. 8, 'Program razvoja luško-industrijskega kompleksa v Kopru', dated Koper, November 1969, 25.

32 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 14. 19. 'Informacija o organizaciji upravljanja – vodenja in gradnji infrastrukturnih objektov'.

33 Ibidem.

Land Management Fund, which should take the initiative so that labour organizations would have a concrete interest in building industrial plants in the area. In doing so, they referred to the adopted urban programme of the Slovenian coast, which provided for the possibility of erecting larger industrial facilities in this area. Plans to build heavy industry facilities were given new impetus. In addition to the already prepared studies, in 1972, the working organizations Interexport Beograd, Krka Novo Mesto, Sava Kranj, Metalka Ljubljana, and Luka Koper, with the help of a foreign partner, commissioned the Industrial Planning and engineering company from Davos for a new study for the construction of a refinery in Koper. The working organizations Adriacommerce Koper, Agraria Koper, Interevropa Koper, Iplas Koper, Interexport Belgrade, Kreditna Banka Koper, Krka Novo Mesto, Splošna plovba Piran, and Tomos Koper decided to establish a new company called 'Sermin Koper' with joint funds. The focus of the business was: design; construction of municipal infrastructure facilities; construction of industrial processing capacities; and production, purchase, processing, sale and transport of gas, oil and their derivatives. In agreement with the Municipal Assembly of Koper and the Land Management Fund of the Municipality of Koper, the company Sermin Koper was expected to take over the management and arrangement of a land complex with a total area of around 260 ha in the Škocjan Bay, where a residential and business complex and a municipal industrial zone were planned. The complex was supposed to be located almost entirely in a depression, i.e. 2/3 under the seawater level, which was unusable for construction purposes at the time. It was planned to arrange the land, prepare urban and technical documentation, and regulate the entire area to the required height by arranging the reclamation regime (material would be obtained by deepening port basins) and planned stage construction.[34]

From industrial to energy-economic zone: economic and social changes on the threshold of the 1990s

The 1970s marked a period of major investment projects and large foreign borrowing for Yugoslavia during the sharp rise in the international price of crude oil (the oil shock following the Israeli-Egyptian war in the au-

34 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 14.22, 'Sermin Koper, Podjetje v ustanvaljanju, Osnove za program za izgradnjo komunalnih in infrastrukturnih objektov in industrijskih kapacite', dated Koper, July 1972.

tumn of 1973), leading the country into a debt crisis and the first period of Yugoslav inflation (Borak 2005, 1213).

While the ideas of developing heavy industries in the hinterland of the Port of Koper were eventually discarded, the development of port capacities for handling and storing liquid cargo in partnership with Ljubljana-based Petrol and the search for alternative energy sources came to the fore at the outbreak of the oil crisis. In 1971, Petrol sold more than a million tons of petroleum products and sales continued to grow in the following decades with two million tons of petroleum products. In the late 1970s, they turned to alternative energy sources such as gas. With the newly built gas pipelines in Austria and Italy, thinking about the possibility of supplying natural gas to Slovenia had become feasible. The gasification of Slovenia also dates back to this period, as the company TOZD Petrol Zemeljski Plin was founded in 1975, which began transporting gas in 1978 after the construction of the first main gas pipeline (Lorenčič 2013, 124).

A new study was prepared in 1975 (Žiberna et al. 1975) related to the construction of a refinery in Koper, followed, in 1978, by another prepared by the Port of Koper about the possibility of a connection between the port of Koper and the Aquila refinery near Trieste. The report envisaged an increase in the capacity of the Koper oil terminal and the construction of two pipelines, one for oil and the other for the refined product, connecting the port of Koper and the Iplas factory with the Trieste refinery. The oil pipeline was supposed to run along the western slope of Sermin, along the left bank of the Rižana across the Ankaran bonifika to Škofije; from there, along the route of the abandoned Trieste-Poreč line to the state border and then across the Miljska plain to the Aquila refinery. The total length of the pipeline was 6.0 km, 4.11 km of which was on the Yugoslav side and 1.89 km on the Italian side.[35] The product pipeline would run from the Aquila refinery along the same route in the opposite direction, crossing the Ankaran intersection and the Rižana river in a straight line to the petroleum products storage complex below and in the eastern part of Sermin. The length of the route of the product pipelines

35 A total of 6.5 km on the terrain, of which 4.53 km was on the Yugoslav side and 1.97 km on the Italian side.

was expected to be 5.0 km on the map, and 5.5 km along the terrain, 3.53 km of which was on the Yugoslav side and 1.97 km on the Italian side.[36]

The document 'Concept and Strategy of Coastal Development to 1985' presented a new concept for the long-term economic development of the coastal region and, again, the development of the energy-industrial zone with the chemical industry was pivotal. In accordance with the guidelines of the Slovenian economic strategy, or the so-called 'Programme of activities for the development of the concept of oil and gas economy', which was adopted in Slovenia in 1978, the long-term development plan in Koper aimed at the expansion of the petrochemical and energy-related industries. At the municipal and coastal level, this perspective began to consider the establishment of a Koper Energy and Industrial Zone Business Community, which would focus its activities on the construction of a liquefied natural gas terminal and its connection to the main gas pipeline in the medium term. The terminal was supposed to provide the necessary additional quantities of gas for the implementation of Slovenia's gasification programme, and was also expected to benefit the transit of gas to Croatia. Afterwards, the construction of propylene chemistry facilities and the construction of terminals for petrochemical products would follow. Together with the liquefied gas terminal, a propylene terminal was to be built, in order to connect the propylene pipeline with the Iplas plants, expected to become the leading company in the sector.[37] In line with this orientation, an enquiry was carried out in 1979 concerning some aspects of the construction of a liquefied natural gas terminal in the Sermin area.[38] Three years later, in 1982, a liquefied petroleum gas and carbon dioxide filling station began operating in Sermin's new industrial facilities of the company Istrabenz, and gas sales doubled during the first year. Until 1985, the construction of a thermal power plant and the arrangement of an industrial zone remained among the priority investments.[39] The entire area was expected to cover 4,572 ha of land, with

36 PAK, 728, Danilo Petrinja, t. e. 24. 1, 'Študija povezave z naftovodom in produktovodoma luke Koper in Iplasa Koper z rafinerijo Aquila pri Trstu, Naročnik Luka Koper, Koper in Iplas Koper', dated Ljubljana, December 1978.

37 PAK, 776, Skupnost obalnih občin Koper, t. e. 88, 'SRS Slovenija, Skupščina obalne skupnosti Koper, Analiza možnosti obale za obdobje 1981–1985', dated Koper, June 1979, 16–17.

38 See: Prijon 1979.

39 Istrabenz plini 2019.

infrastructure covering 1,332 ha, and the industrial zone covering 960 ha, with a total occupation of 15,000 people (Plut 1978, 47).

At the end of the 1970s, some analyses began to appear in Slovenia starting to consider industrialization not only from the point of view of economic efficiency, but also in the light of its possible negative consequences for the living environment. In 1979, a study prepared by Dušan Plut, inside the Environment Commission at the 1979 COMECOM Council, emphasized the need for recognition and consideration of ecological principles in social planning, and also for the future development of the Koper littoral and the planned construction of an industrial zone:

> *In the future, it will be necessary to pay more attention to ecological issues and take them into account to the same extent as all other components of social planning. All moments of planned development must be considered and sectoral approaches coordinated. The favouring of transport-industrial development and tourism without proper care for ecologically equalizing areas (food, oxygen, water), the accumulation of population and economy in the coastal zone while neglecting the rural environment, the dysfunctional use of the coastal zone, the sea pollution and other spatial problems require a coordinated approach.* (Plut 1978, 47)

High-profile plans for the industrialization of the immediate hinterland were reconsidered inside a new intellectual framework during the 1980s, with greater ecological awareness and, above all, a lack of financial investment due to of the second period of Yugoslav inflation. Namely, industrial production stagnated, while the Slovenian economy declined, and the growth rates of the social product, industrial production, and investment in fixed assets were negative (Prinčič 2005, 1218–9).

In the context of the deep economic and financial crisis, the authorities eventually deviated from the planned facilities of heavy and petrochemical industry, and economic development focused on industrial manufacturing and especially tertiary activities related to the commercial development of the Port. The Long-Term Plan of the Coastal Area for the period from 1986 to 2000 clearly highlighted the new economic strategy and the orientation towards renewed technological approaches, under the influence of different social values:

> *A special role in the long-term industrial development on the [Slovenian] Coast will be played by the organization and develop-*

ment of the industrial zone in the area between the Port of Koper, Ankaranska cesta, and the Ankaran-Koper intersection road. In accordance with modern development tendencies, as part of the efforts to restructure the Slovenian economy, we will establish our geopolitical position, built infrastructure, and institutional advantages (free customs zone, border cooperation) for the organization of a port industrial zone based on maritime development components, technological complementarities, developmental interdependences, and economic security, providing new impulses for our assertion in the international exchange of labour. When selecting technological development programmes, we will strictly take into account the requirements of environmental protection and other ecological restrictions, especially with regard to pollution of the sea, air, soil, and watercourses.[40]

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8

Workers of the Port of Koper and the Economic Reform Period in 1960s Slovenia

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Introduction

The Luka Koper firm (Port of Koper) was officially founded in May 1957 (Terčon 2015, 293–4). It was a time of deep social, political, and economic dislocations in socialist Yugoslavia in general, and in the coastal region of the People's Republic of Slovenia in particular. The District of Koper was the administrative unit which took control of this part of the northern Adriatic region, which was incorporated into Slovenia (Yugoslavia) only with the London Memorandum of 1954. Virtually the entire Italian ethnic community, but also many Slovenes and Croats, abandoned their settlements and moved to Italy (Troha 2000; Gombač 2005; Centrih 2019a). The District of Koper, once part of the 'B Zone' of the Free Territory of Trieste, had been previously administrated by the Yugoslav Army, and was now fully integrated into the Slovenian economy. New residents from the interior of Slovenia and the other Yugoslav republics eventually moved in. Since thousands had left, in the late 1950s and early 1960s the region would seem to be a land of opportunity. The substantial fluctuations of the labour force at that time, however, show this was not exactly the case. In 1963, for example, 2,900 workers came to Koper, followed by an additional 2,700 the following year, but the same number of workers left town as well (Centrih 2019a, 159). The Slovenian socialist economy, and the state in general, was going through serious changes during this period. The development of socialist workers' self–management since the early 1950s in practice meant the gradual development of independent companies, and later also a market economy, while the decentralization of the Yugoslav state meant that state investments were slowly evaporat-

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ing, while republic-based banks providing commercial credit grew in importance. These political and economic processes reached a peak in 1965, when economic reforms encouraged the introduction of even more radical market elements into socialist society (Prinčič 1999, 169–74).

The aim of the following article is to investigate these turbulent processes in the 1965-1970 period, using the example of the Port of Koper and its labour force. For the Port, these were crucial years in many respects. The main challenge was the construction of a railway from Koper to Prešnica which would connect the port with the Slovene interior and with customers in western and eastern Europe. The Port had to acquire financial resources, win over Slovenian public and political support, and face uneasy competition with other Adriatic ports. Working conditions were harsh. As a consequence, workers often responded with strikes or 'work stoppages', as strikes were officially known in socialist Yugoslavia.

In the first part of the article, I will present the historical sources and research efforts already conducted on the topic. The second part discusses the meaning of the 1965 economic reform for the Slovenian coastal region and the Port of Koper, and the third part investigates the strike at the Port of Koper in 1970. Key points and takeaways are presented in the conclusion.

Historical sources and research of the Port of Koper

The main primary source about the topic in my investigation is the archive fond of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia (AS 1589/III, 1589/IV). The League of Communists of Slovenia (LCS), known until 1952 as the Communist Party of Slovenia – but afterwards still often referred to simply as the Party, being a part of the League of the Communists of Yugoslavia, was the ruling and leading political force in post-war Slovenia. Virtually all relevant social, cultural, political, and economic issues took place under its auspices. The Port of Koper, as the only relevant Slovenian port, received considerable attention from the LCS. The archive fond in question contains reports, minutes from local Party assemblies and conventions, analyses of crisis events such as the 'work stoppage of 1970' at the Port of Koper, and also information about local public opinion. Daily newspapers, such as *Delo* (*Labour*), represent another important historical source. The 1960s in Slovenia were a period of liberalisation in all levels of society. The press was not an exception. By the end of decade, the press was openly reporting on 'work stoppag-

es', including events at the Port of Koper. The use of the press and journalists for lobbying and to generate public pressure for various economic or political goals, often against the official political line of the Party, even became a best practice among company directors. Danilo Petrinja, the founder and charismatic director of the Port of Koper, later testified that 'journalists from all the Slovenian papers became involved in efforts to enforce the decision and the provision of appropriate funds for railway construction. Positive public opinion was generated' (Petrinja 1997, 82, 85).

Scholarship on the topic is extensive. Only the most relevant elaborations are mentioned here. The 1970 strike at the Port of Koper has been already studied by Sabine Rutar (2015). Using Danilo Petrinja's personal archive, preserved in the Koper Regional Archive, Rutar reconstructed the event in detail. Her 1970 strike assessment is two layered: a) conflict between workers and management; and b) rivalry within management, i.e. Petrinja and his competitors. By analysing the Yugoslav socialist self-management systems' strategies to contain social unrests, Rutar's study further provides a valuable comparison between Koper events and industrial conflicts in the late 1960s in the San Marco shipyard in Trieste. While my study does not significantly change the image of the 1970 Koper events already described by Rutar – with a possible exception in the assessment of the violent character of the strike – it puts more attention on the atmosphere of economic reforms in 1960s Koper.

The problem of 'work stoppages' (strikes) under socialism has been the subject of extensive research in Slovenia since the 1980s. The most exhaustive account of the topic – the anxiousness of the regime in dealing with strikes and other labour-related conflicts – is provided by Bogdan Kavčič and his associates (1991) and more recently by Jurij Hadalin (2018).

The most important scientific work about the Port of Koper was conducted by Nadja Terčon (2015). Her book is an in-depth study of the first period of development of the Slovenian maritime industry from 1945 to 1958. Political contexts and the serious difficulties facing the founders of the Port of Koper are described in detail. Terčon's findings are essential for the critical reception of the testimonies which form the key secondary historical sources (Petrinja 1993[1]; 1997; 1999; Ugrin 2000). For the

1 Danilo Petrinja, in the 1990s, produced lots of material regarding the history of Port of Koper. The material of 1993 was published by his person in the form of an elaboration, later not entirely used in his article (1997) and a book (1999). I would

economic reforms in the 1965-1970 period in Slovenia, the works of Jože Prinčič are essential. This author examines the historical roots of the process and the reasons for the failure of the reforms. In his studies, he explains the role of directors in socialist enterprises and by doing so brings to light the triangular power relations between management, workers, and the Party (Prinčič 1999; 2005; 2008a; 2008b).

The reform of 1965: Stane Kavčič in Koper

In December 1965, Koper hosted a special meeting. Between July and September, the Yugoslav Federal Assembly passed 29 legal regulations on economic reform (Prinčič 2005, 1046). This was certainly not the first reform in the history of socialist Slovenia and Yugoslavia and by no means would it be the last, but this particular round had a unique character. In essence, the reform marked an attempt to approach a market economy to the greatest possible degree while at the same time maintaining the fundamentals of socialism: social ownership of the means of production, continued development of workers' self-management of companies, and the leading role of the LCS. It was a risky business in every respect. It was easy enough to criticize the classical (Stalinist) Soviet planned economy model in Yugoslavia at the time, but creating something new and better was another story. It was the Soviet model that the Slovene/Yugoslav communists had at least partly applied immediately after the war, and it had brought relative economic recovery to the devastated country and secured political power for the Party.

Many meetings and consultations were held in Koper beginning in the spring of 1965, with the aim of implementing the necessary steps in economic and political terms. By the end of the year many questions still remained unanswered, and reluctance in the face of the reforms appeared to be persistent. At the meetings of sociopolitical organizations such as the League of Communists, trade unions, the Youth Organization, workers' councils, etc., virtually everyone came out in favour of the reform. However, in June the Central Committee (CC) of the LCS was informed of public opinion in Koper regarding the coming changes. Certain 'individuals' were apparently spreading negative attitudes and concerns about the future. Layoffs were foreseen at companies, but unlike in the capitalist West, the local trade union would not stand up for its workers. On the

like to thank Dr. Jurij Hadalin for providing me the copy of the elaboration in question.

contrary, residents feared that 'the union will comply with layoffs'. Others felt that the reforms would hit those with the lowest personal income and standard of living the hardest: 'Those who own cars, flats, etc. should assume the burden instead.' Koper was also said to be in the throes of 'consumer fever'. It seemed that people were buying everything they could in anticipation of speculative profits when prices went up. Some were afraid Koper would pay a high price because it shared a border with Italy. The people of Trieste were presumably already buying everything up, in particular carpets, in order to resell at a profit. Others were anticipating a grim future because people were thought to already be living beyond their means. Building two weekend houses, one at the seaside and another in the mountains, was considered unsustainable, but so were mass purchases of washing machines imported from Italy: 'There is one merchant from Trieste who claims he made no less than 70 million Italian liras with washing machines here. Apparently, we now have more washing machines here than in Trieste. Was that rational?' Local communists and other activists discussed the anonymous gossip and opinions. 'The objectives of the reform must be properly interpreted,' they claimed (AS 1589/IV, t. e. 1664, Informacija, 18 June 1965).

In fact, it would take more than just a proper interpretation. Nothing short of a mental leap was needed. Late in June the municipal committee of the LCS of Koper hosted Svetko (Cveto) Kobal, a secretary of economy ('minister of economy') of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia (SRS) and one of the key reform planners. 'In terms of arousing private initiative, individual interest, we need to make a big psychological leap just in how we raise our children,' Kobal told his comrades. Further, he claimed that substantial differentiation in personal incomes was necessary. Industry relies on highly skilled cadres, so these should benefit the most (AS 1589/IV, t. e. 1664, Zapisnik, 25 June 1965, p. 19).

For Kobal, the push for income differentiation was nothing short of a 'battle'. At the same time, the companies, their managers, and the workers' councils were adamant in their view that a rise in wages should come only with a rise in productivity. But in July, the productivity issue caused a scandal at the Port of Koper. According to a local Party report to the CC LCS, the director (Danilo Petrinja) had publicly claimed that the Port employed as many as 300 unproductive and 600 productive workers. Administrators, security guards, mechanics, electricians, etc. were thought to be particularly redundant. Petrinja was criticized by the mu-

nicipal committee of the Party for his 'subjectivity'. Presented without any serious economic analysis, such views only caused dissatisfaction in the collective, or so the local Party claimed.

And with good reason. At the time there were 'minor work stoppages' at the Port of Koper. The longshoremen took advantage of the situation to demand better pay for their work. It was blackmail, or at least that is how the Party described it. The Port, on the other hand, promised to consider rewards for actual work performance. The local Party organization reported to the CC LCS that it would take more than that. The Port management apparently lacked a real connection to its workers. There were many meetings at the company, but only at the top. In other words, the report hinted that the management of the Port of Koper was autocratic. Challenging that view, Petrinja later recalled that the management bodies 'always eagerly solved particular problems concerning development together with all the workers'. Petrinja did not deny that discipline was a problem, and testified that some recently arrived workers were cooling enthusiasm for work by saying they 'came here to make money and not to work' (Petrinja 1999, 7, 9). It is worth noting that in his memoirs, Petrinja kept this cynical statement in Serbo-Croatian: *'Došao sam da zaradim, a ne da radim'*. In this form, the statement was commonly used in Slovenia in those days to express a prejudice against workers from the other Yugoslav republics, that they lacked a work ethic. On the other hand, Petrinja highly praised workers from Istria, Kras, and Brkini who apparently did not mind working long hours (Petrinja 1999, 6). The same Party report mentioned Petrinja's criticism of special federal benefits enjoyed by the Port of Bar in Montenegro. For the Port of Koper, the reforms had in many respects started even earlier. Already in May 1965, the Workers' council of the company liquidated as many as 33 'unnecessary jobs'. The council further said it would cut 60 jobs in administration and maintenance (*režijski delavci*) and curb future employment (AS 1589/IV, t. e. 1664, Informacija, 17 July 1965).

The kick off of the reform in the summer of 1965 posed many challenges and dilemmas. The municipal committee of the LCS of Koper, under the leadership of first secretary Branko Gabrščček, invited Stane Kavčič for a Q&A in December. At the time, Kavčič was a secretary of the CC LCS, and he held the position of president of its Ideological Commission. He was still relatively young (46), had a working class background, and had been a Party member since 1941. He was ambitious, and strongly advocat-

ed reforms; he would go on to become President of the Executive Council (EC, 'prime minister') of the SRS (1967–1972). His reputation in Slovene historiography is that of the key figure of the 1960s 'liberalism' movement (Repe 1990, 47; 1992; 2003, 272–83). In an unpublished 1971 interview, Milovan Djilas, the renowned revolutionary and Tito's close associate before falling out of favour with him and ending up in prison, praised Kavčič as 'the first modern statesman in Yugoslavia: smart, rational in spirit and not an ideological mystic' (Košir 2016).

Kavčič's mission to Koper was essentially all about explaining the new 'rational spirit' of socialism and demonstrating resentment towards any remaining traces of 'ideological mysticism'. Kavčič received no fewer than 27 questions in advance from 'the leading communists' responsible for the local economy. One question was a little provocative, since it addressed the issue of the 'depoliticization' of the economy, namely, how should communists conduct their activities in the new situation? In other words: should the Party be kicked out of the companies? Kavčič was careful enough not to answer directly. In his opinion, the Party was to be the bearer of and fighter for the new way of thinking. But the core of his argument was an affirmation of the law of value – supply and demand in the socialist economy. In other words: the market and competition with as little state intervention as possible. No federal investment funds, but banks looking to finance profitable projects. Companies should deposit as much of their resources as they could with the banks and receive interest as income, which they could even divide among the workers: 'Banks should simply evolve into companies that collect incomes.' As simple as that. Kavčič even summed up the most up-to-date thinking of reformers regarding foreign investments in the Yugoslav economy, not only in the form of loans, but also through direct investment. Lastly, he said that prices should be fixed for a very small number of commodities (such as bread and grain), with all others regulated by the market itself. Since the Slovenian costal region had recently experienced a considerable influx of western tourists, the locals were very interested in keeping the foreign currency for themselves instead of depositing it with the federal bank. No problem, said Kavčič: the dinar will eventually become a convertible currency, so hoarding liras, marks, and dollars will become irrelevant. And of course, Kavčič was staunchly against any equalization of personal incomes: 'Those who are more competent, with higher intellectual potential and possessing creativity, must be entitled to a pay raise in a reason-

able timeframe.' He attacked the belief that the essence of socialism lies in the distribution of goods and not in production, and further resented a stubborn adherence to the virtues of solidarity and unity at the price of poverty and shortages.

In the discussion, Kavčič briefly addressed the construction of a railway to connect Koper with the interior. It was a top priority for the Port of Koper. Kavčič was in favour of the project, claiming the construction was of national (economic) interest to Slovenia. But above all, Kavčič outlined how, in the realm of ideas, a part of society, even some communists, were confused and suffering from stagnation. 'The struggle between the old and the new' is how Kavčič described the process, and by doing so probably unintentionally repeated the 'formula' infamously used by Stalin to explain away every phenomenon. When asked whether conflicts over income distribution between those who have more and those who have less were about to emerge, he replied in the affirmative. Kavčič more or less openly admitted there would be winners and losers. He anticipated all sorts of conflicts, including between low income workers and those who were better off thanks to their work performance. But in his view, these conflicts were not something to be afraid of (AS 1589/IV, t. e. 1664, a. e. 137, fasc. 455, Zapisnik, 17 December 1965).

The strike at the Port of Koper in 1970

Born in 1922, Danilo Petrinja was a typical first generation socialist director. He started life as a carpenter, participated in the national liberation struggle from 1943 to 1945, was a Party member from 1944, and performed various political tasks until he was finally appointed director of the Water Community of Koper (Vodna skupnost Koper) in 1956, the company which would shortly undertake construction of the Port of Koper (Marušič 2010, 190–4). After 1945, in Slovenia as in all Yugoslavia, factory directors bore a closer resemblance to army commanders (which many in fact had been) than to normal managers. In fact, many had been partisan fighters or other notable participants of the national liberation struggle and revolution. Their powers (but also their duties) at the time were nearly absolute and they only paid lip service to the workers' councils (established since the early 1950s) and mostly continued to do so long into the 1960s when their powers were formally limited. Unlike young directors of the second generation, who as a rule were more (formally) educated and sought cooperation with workers' councils, these 'partisan'

or 'mighty' directors were known as authoritarians (Prinčič 2008a, 104–8). Formally, workers' self-management in the 1965–1970 period meant that on the level of the company, the director was no longer an employee of the state, accountable directly to the republic/communal authorities. He was now beholden to the elected workers' council (which also officially appointed him to this position on the basis of a tender commission consisting of workers' representatives and local community/republic delegates), and was supposed to manage the company in line with its directives (Prinčič 2008b, 66–7). Each company also had an LCS organization.

Theoretically speaking, the director was little more than first among equals at the company, but the reality of mighty managers like Petrinja was drastically different. They were bosses in the most imposing sense of the word. Petrinja won this status predominately through his deep commitment to the construction of the Port of Koper. The actual views of the highest authorities in Slovenia and Yugoslavia regarding port construction in Koper are still the subject of debate. Terčon is probably right in arguing that even though many testimonies and documents suggest that top politicians did not support the project, that was not really the case. Silent support existed in Slovenia; had it been otherwise, Petrinja's efforts would have been in vain (Terčon 2015, 294, 314). The fact remains that unlike other ports in Yugoslavia (and as Bruno Korelič, Petrinja's successor, outlined, literally anywhere else), the Port of Koper was not built by the federal state or republic, i.e. through investment funds (the latter represented only a tiny share of total funding), but largely with loans. For the purpose of this article, this crucial fact is seen as having negative consequences for workers' wages and living standards in general (Petrinja 1997, 74; Terčon 2015, 296). Obtaining loans, looking for investors and partners, required lobbying top politicians and Party functionaries, but also bullying and dangerous confrontations. Petrinja's published account of the construction of the Port of Koper gives the reader the impression that it required trials and strain worthy of Marvel heroes. In his career as Port director, Petrinja was brought before the courts four times and investigated by the Party commission five times, although he did get off the hook each time (Petrinja 1999, 10). In Belgrade in 1961, Petrinja unsuccessfully tried to persuade the federal secretary (minister) for transport, representatives of the Yugoslav railways and the Port of Rijeka, and the Croatian secretary for transport to bring tariffs for cargo transport from Koper to Kozina up to the same levels enjoyed by the Port

of Rijeka. He virtually lost his mind, cynically asking whether 'the attitude of Yugoslavia regarding Primorska [the coastal region of Slovenia] is to be the same as that of the Italian invaders?' (Petrinja 1997, 78). At the end of the day, Petrinja's opponents threw in the towel, and he was promised tariffs on more favourable terms.

An even bigger challenge for him was the construction of a railway line between Luka Koper and Prešnica. It was built between 1964 and 1967, at a time when the economic reforms were reaching their peak. Obtaining finances from any federal or republic fund was completely out of the question, since the latter had been abolished by the reform. Petrinja was now fighting for commercial loans on far less favourable terms than before, and he begged interested partners to form a consortium of investors. This time he ran afoul of President of the EC of the SRS and Party big shot Viktor Avbelj. At a meeting in February 1964, Avbelj was furious at Petrinja for lobbying in the press for the railway. After the meeting Petrinja resigned from his post as director, but the workers' council of the Port of Koper did not accept the resignation. Petrinja survived, and financial resources were secured for the railway. Slovenian Railways took out loans for the 31-kilometre Koper-Prešnica railway in 1971; by then the economic reform was already dead (Petrinja 1997, 84–7). But in the late 1960s these loans were a considerable burden on the Port of Koper, particularly on its workforce. The same could probably be said for the loans taken out for the construction of the port itself years earlier. This burden undoubtedly contributed to the strike of 1970, the event to which we will now turn.

I have already briefly discussed the 'minor work stoppages' at the Port of Koper in 1965. This should not be taken to mean there were no other port strikes in the period following the events of 1965, leading up to 1970. It does mean, however, that something really important happened in 1970, since it resulted, inter alia, in the founding of a special commission at the Koper Party branch. The commission's report is preserved in the archive of the CC LCS. I should also mention that I was unable to obtain any other Party reports on strikes in the period. Moreover, Party documents reveal that in the heat of reforms, the Port of Koper was not considered the most pressing problem in the coastal region of Slovenia. Tomos, a motorbike factory in Koper, appeared to be far more problematic. It suffered from the typical problems of a young market economy. Suddenly it became extremely hard to obtain certain parts for motor-

bikes because Tomos' suppliers cancelled production of certain lines due to low profitability. In 1966, as many as 500 motorbikes remained unfinished for that reason. The Party report further claimed that Tomos was hoarding large stocks of production materials for the same reasons as many other companies at the time – they were afraid these commodities might soon be unobtainable on the market (AS 1589/III, t. e. 184, fasc. 487, Zabeležka, 14 June 1966, 2–3).

So, what happened at the Port of Koper in early spring 1970? Regarding the events in question, I was able to obtain a report ('Information') and political assessment of the work stoppage from the local Party branch dated April 1970. Other sources are some press articles published in the central Slovenian daily *Delo* in March and April, and a letter the President of the workers' council of the Port of Koper, Milan Končarevič, submitted in June to the Secretary of the Secretariat of the CC LCS Andrej Marinc, who would become Stane Kavčič's successor as President of the EC of the SRS in 1972. In order to reconstruct the events, Petrinja's highly detailed accounts (1993; 1999) proved to be of enormous value as well. In addition, Rutar's archival findings – especially Petrinja's reports, Proceedings of the Directors' Meetings and documentation of Workers' council meetings through 1969–1970 – provide valuable insight into the conflict (2015).

The accounts published in *Delo* clearly summarize the position of the Party almost to the letter, although they avoid taking a harsh tone with director Petrinja. On the other hand, the letter to Marinc addresses the strike only indirectly, the main substance being a defence of the former and current director (Petrinja had stepped down in April, and that fact alone speaks volumes). The letter could easily have included the views of the workers' council of the company and its president. But there are none. Its tone is cold, and it is limited to a 'response regarding criticism of business policies of the Port of Koper, which includes incorrect references to data and facts' (AS 1589/IV, t. e. 226, a. e. 506, Stališča, 16 June 1970). It could pass as a routine report submitted by any Western manager to a board of trustees. The local LCS report and assessment targeted Petrinja with the clear aim of discrediting him. That was hardly a surprise, as his boldness and arrogance had earned him plenty of enemies in high places over the years. Yet this document at least illustrates the living conditions of Port of Koper workers, and by doing so, if only indirectly, gives them a voice.

But without precluding further research, the historical data briefly described here can be considered representative, even if they lack information about the number of participants. Nor were the dates on which the strike took place and working units properly specified in the Party commission report. Petrinja, on the other hand, called the 'work stoppage' a 'general strike', and said it was started at 7:00 AM on March 27 by the machine operators and longshoremen. The immediate cause of the workers' unrest was unpopular decisions taken by the workers' council and adopted on February 24, which were based (falsely, according to Petrinja) on data suggesting operating losses and included draconian disciplinary measures and less favourable terms for billing hours worked, but according to Rutar also dismissals. Petrinja was apparently sick when the first signs of worker dissatisfaction appeared in the form of 'forced meetings'. But on that morning in March something really dramatic happened. Workers at the Port of Koper who stopped their work, marched by the Tomos factory and held a rally in Tito Square, the central public space of Koper. Egon Prinčič, who was filling in while Petrinja was on sick leave, was apparently even at the head of the procession waving a Yugoslav flag. At Tito Square, Radio Koper provided workers with loudspeakers. The workers were loud, and they demanded Petrinja be allowed to speak, which he did at the behest of the local Party, even though he deeply disagreed with these kinds of demonstrations. At the meeting of the workers' council at the Port of Koper, the yelling continued, and the council did suspend several of the unpopular measures adopted in February. *Delo* also reported that the longshoremen stopped their work and went on a 'peaceful procession' through Koper, passing the Tomos factory and ending up at the main square, where they demanded the presence of the president of the municipal assembly and the management of the Port. They were reportedly carrying banners and shouting slogans referring to 'disorder in the distribution of personal incomes'. Contrary to Petrinja, *Delo* recalled they were clearly dissatisfied, but were not yelling. Prinčič's strange performance with the flag was also omitted (Petrinja 1993, 214–5; Guzej 1970a, 2; Rutar 2015, 281). According to Rutar, a strike itself was not only a typical industrial conflict between workers and management for higher wages, it was also a moment of fierce conflict between Petrinja and the management whose aim was presumably his dismissal. Studying company files, Rutar suggests that some members of the Port's management 'helped to incite the strike or at least skilfully fomented it'.

A key persona in this 'conspiracy' was presumably Egon Prinčič, who soon became Petrinja's successor (Rutar 2015, 282–3).

In contrast to my research findings, Rutar's reconstruction of events suggests that workers of the Port of Koper 'rioted at their workplace', while the demonstration itself was apparently 'aggressive'. In concluding remarks, Rutar goes as far as characterizing the Koper event of 1970 as a 'significant violent public labour conflict' (2015, 278–9, 288). Concrete forms and results of this aggressiveness/riot remain unclear. Mine and Rutar's research does not provide numbers of those injured, equipment or building damage, or of any detained/arrested. In any case it is safe to assume that the Koper events of 1970 were nothing like the late 1960s conflicts at the San Marco shipyard in Trieste. In August of 1966, workers of Trieste's shipyard called for a general strike in order to stop the closure of the shipyard. In October of 1966 conflict escalated; workers were fighting with the police and more than 500 of them were arrested, about 80 injured, and some public buildings in Trieste were damaged. Similar fights also broke out in Trieste in June 1968, resulting in 135 arrests and about 50 policemen and 16 civilians injured. In 1969, San Marco shipyard workers occupied the docks again (Rutar 2015, 285). As far as the Koper strike of 1970 is concerned, it is very strange that the Party commission left these juicy details out of the report. It inquired into the identities of the warehouse workers and longshoremen, but (unlike in other cases) left their names out. Since strikes were a sensitive topic in the period of socialism, the caution – *Delo* reported no photos or data regarding the number of strike and rally participants – is understandable. After all, no article on 'work stoppages' was published at all until the middle of the 1960s (Kavčič et al. 1990, 88; Hadalin-Milharčič 2018, 149). But this degree of caution is notably less understandable for an exclusive Party report ('Information'). *Delo* actually did publish a number of articles about the event, and they provide some valuable details. It is also worth noting that the strike at the Port of Koper nearly coincided with the 50th anniversary of the famous railway workers strike which had led to a communist-supported demonstration of solidarity in Ljubljana and ultimately ended up being lethally repressed by the regime at the time. The press called the events of 1920 a 'strike', that is a genuine and logical manifestation of class struggle, while industrial conflicts under the socialist regime were only 'work stoppages' – they were an anomaly, something barely comprehensible (Jerman 1970, 2). Under Yugoslav self-managed socialism, com-

panies were nominally run by the workers themselves, while management performed executive tasks on their behalf. A strike was absurd for, in theory, the workers were striking against themselves.

But why did this "anomaly" occur at the Port of Koper? As Rutar suggests, the conflicts in the port's management most probably played an important part in the strike. But without poor living and working conditions and problems with workers' wages, the management could not take the advantage and manipulate the event in the first place. Besides, the Party was very good in settling brawls between bureaucrats and the managerial elite in its own ranks. However, settling class conflicts proved to be a much more difficult task. The Party's claim of its leading role in society was based on the promise to direct the project of modernization in line with the interests of the working class. Workers' dissatisfactions put the Party to the test. As explained by Rutar, that was the reason why the authorities in Yugoslavia at that time dealt quickly with the workers' demands, largely by satisfying them. Even though strike organizers were often targeted, more often than not, managers were those to be accused (Rutar 2015, 286).

Diverging from Petrinja's much later account, the Party claimed, in general terms, that the 'unsettled and insufficiently stable system of income distribution and insufficient involvement of workers in self-managing decision making, of necessity maintained the wage mentality which was clearly manifested in the work stoppage.' This assessment was also published in *Delo* (Guzej 1970b, 2). For the Party, the situation at the company was severe. So severe, in fact, that Stane Kavčič, 'the liberal', reportedly demanded that the Port workers immediately receive a raise, even if it put the company in the red (Petrinja 1993, 216). In 1970, the Port of Koper had 1,200 employees; in the previous year, 500 workers left the company to find better jobs elsewhere. Many specialists quit their jobs as well (6 specialists with a higher education over the previous two years: warehouse managers, shift foremen, etc.) These figures more or less match Petrinja's latter day account: 490 left the Port in 1969, and 703 were newly hired (Petrinja 1993, 212). The Party recognized that the port was paying the price for economic reform. As suggested above, federal funds were no longer available to finance its investments, while commercial banks offered credits on unfavourable terms. To make matters worse, the Port of Koper was the main investor in the railway from Koper to Prešnica.

The Party commission also harshly criticised Port management for its treatment of the workers. For example, some workers were fired merely for taking unauthorized leave from work. The working process was poorly organized, sometimes with two shifts in a single day, lasting as long as 14 hours or even more. (Petrinja later testified that it was even worse. In the period of railway construction, some workers even did up to three back-to-back shifts, usually with no paid overtime.) Bruno Korelič, familiar with the late 1960s and 1970s Koper economy, much later even more dramatically described the living conditions of the workers in Tomos and the Port of Koper: 'The workers felt like slaves and had nothing to lose. They came to Koper to work to earn money and send money back home to Bosnia. If their expectations were not met, they had no trouble turning their backs and going home or rattling.'

The Party report further claimed that the company had invested only in industrial capacity, but spent less on the wellbeing of its workers. They started to build showers, toilets, and locker rooms only recently, in the past year. And housing conditions were intolerable (they were later described at length by Petrinja). The voices of the workers consulted by the Party commission can be clearly heard through these critiques: 'The Commission cannot escape the observation that the worker at the Port of Koper has to date been neglected.' But the party went much further in criticizing the management: not only did the company lack proper standards for evaluating work, but decisions taken by the worker-led self-management bodies were curtailed by the director himself. Some conclusions are particularly scathing: 'The head of the company had no interest in social organizations' [the Party, trade union] active performance, and often treated them as transmitters of decisions already taken by the senior management (collegium of professionals) and the director' (AS 1589/IV, t. e. 226, a. e. 506, Informacija o vzrokih prekinitve dela; Petrinja 1993, 212; Petrinja 1999, 6; Hladnik-Milharčič 2015, 11). It is also worth noting that the cited Party document had been edited post factum by an unknown reader, maybe even by some functionary from the CC. The harshest criticism regarding the management of the Port had been outlined in pencil and given quotation marks. For example: the commission's assessment on the director's negligence had been crossed out. A handwritten remark on the edge of the page reads: 'Out?'

Končarevič's letter to Marinc starts with a warning about the potential disintegration of the Port of Koper. It seems ideas were being floated

about spinning off the construction works and maintenance shops from the Port of Koper company. But he continues by addressing the general conditions at the Port of Koper, even mentioning the strike implicitly. In order to support his cause and refute criticism of poor management, he outlines the same hardships mentioned in the Party report. But he also refutes comments (not mentioned in the Party report) about how the Port of Koper had put more resources into wages than into the company's development. He included numbers to prove his case. Regarding the debt load, Končarevič stated that the Port had to repay as much as 25 million dinars alone each year for the credit, which amounted to a third of its total income. He bitterly recalled that the Port of Koper was the only port in Yugoslavia built by the working collective itself. And wages were stagnating: until 1967, employee earnings were about 30% above the average in the SRS, but this figure had fallen to 10% by 1969. Petrinja later explained that workers also worked really hard for their above-average wages. For example, workers had to carry 120 kg sacks of Cuban sugar, and two men were assigned to carry 300 kg bales of cotton. Such details go a long way towards explaining the high workforce turnover rate. Lastly, Končarevič notes that prices for port services had not changed since the beginning of 1970, while prices for materials and other necessary commodities had gone up (AS 1589/IV, t. e. 226, a. e. 506, Stališča, 16 June 1970; Ugrin 2000, 13).

Petrinja left the Port of Koper in April 1970, immediately after the strike. The event and burnout were the reason, as he claimed later. Even though he was awarded the prestigious Boris Kraigher prize for his achievements in January, and the workers' council initially did not accept his resignation (again!), and despite receiving the support of Stane Kavčič, this time, he left for good (Petrinja 1999, 10).

Conclusion

At the end of his life, Danilo Petrinja recalled that until 1967, the ratio between the minimum and maximum wage in the Port of Koper was 1:3.5, and that his personal salary was somewhere in the middle. At that time 'more than half of the employees earned more than me. And I was happy about that. They contributed more value to the company' (Ugrin 2000, 13). He further regretted that the company's management was not entirely successful in doing everything they could to ensure the workers would treat the Port of Koper as their own, as a company that would also provide

attractive opportunities for their children (Petrinja 1993, 212). But he was also proud to remember that he and his closest associates in those days 'took the path of the market economy. By doing so, the Port was liberating itself from the state-bureaucratic management methods' (Petrinja 1999, 9). Petrinja also recalled the following experiment: a group of workers received a certain amount of money per tonne of goods transshipped and it was entirely up to them how to divide the sum. According to Petrinja it was 'the highest peak of development of self- management', while others labelled it as a 'capitalist system' and so it was abolished (Ugrin 2000, 13).

To be sure, these assessments came not only long after the reforms of 1965, but also at a time when socialism itself was dead and the (fully capitalist) market economy was perceived as the only imaginable option. It is still safe to assume that Petrinja did firmly advocate for reforms in the 1960s. There is also little reason to question his attitude about his low salary and the contribution of workers to the production of value, even if it is an attitude that is even less comprehensible today than the idea of strikes was under socialism. After all, Petrinja started his life as a carpenter and later joined the partisans and became a communist, a person committed to national and social liberation at a time when the outcome of the war was far from certain (1943, 1944). Nevertheless, these two arguments, taken together, appear to contradict each other.

In the present Slovenian historiography, the economic reforms that began in 1965 and their aura of 'liberalism' are mostly perceived as positive yet highly inconsistent, 'burdened with the ideology and politics from which it arose' (Repe 1992, 931). Explaining the goals of reforms in Koper in 1965, Kavčič candidly addressed this 'burden'. But doubts and reservations persisted. In 1967, the Commission for socio-political relations and ideopolitical problems of the CC LCS addressed the fact that most Party members still did not have a clear impression of what the reforms were about. Even worse, a part of the membership was reportedly afraid that, with the reforms, the Party was deviating from some basic principles of socialism: 'the issue of equality, increasing social inequality …'. Other members had serious doubts about the goal of making the dinar a convertible currency: 'the dinar was convertible in pre-war Yugoslavia, a low standard, unemployed workers and intellectuals, searching for work abroad were the consequences' (AS 1589/III, t. e. 218, Povzetek z razprave o reformi, 26 July 1967).

Did the Port of Koper workers manifest their position regarding the reform by foot? It would be wrong to infer that the workers of the Port of Koper went on strike against the reforms as such. The strike was clearly limited to the immediate problems of wages and working conditions. And after all, the first major recorded strike in socialist Slovenia/Yugoslavia took place in Trbovlje, in 1958 (Hadalin 2018, 144–8), years before the serious market turn of the reforms. It was not exclusively the introduction of a market economy that sparked unrest among the workers. It would be more correct to conclude that the gradual 'liberalization' and relaxation of the regime since the late 1950s, which was by no means the outcome of market principles, allowed the resistance of workers to be manifested in such a form, and to reach the point where articles on 'work stoppages' appeared in the press. But if this was the case, what forms did earlier resistance take? The same liberties noted in the case of the workers also apply to Party members, who enjoyed far greater freedom to express their dissent and concerns than at any previous point.

Yet it is clear that the reforms of 1965 made life much more precarious for the workers: they were easier to fire, prices went up, and wages became tied solely to the performance of the company, like in any capitalist country. All the while, many hardships experienced in the first decade of the socialist project persisted.

It may seem strange, but Petrinja correctly illustrated the 'wage mentality' of some workers: 'I came here to make money and not to work.' Nationalist prejudice aside, this statement was grounded in the banal fact that workers wanted to earn as much as possible for as little work as possible. What appears as idleness is in fact the diametrical opposite of the logic of capitalist exploitation in its most basic form: to extract as much living labour for as little reward as possible. In the concrete historical situation, it was a response to the conditions of hyperexploitation experienced by the Port of Koper workers in the second half of the 1960s. As such it made sense, regardless of the best intentions (the development of the Port of Koper) of managers, including Petrinja. Going three shifts with no breaks might have been a heroic accomplishment in the history of any socialist construction, but, at the end of the day, it was still hyperexploitation. 'Non-work habit' rather than 'work habit', that is, refusal of work, is by no means confined to premodern/preindustrial cultures, it is also a basic resistance against discipline and subsumption to capital, as Gisela Bock put it in order to explain the resistance of immigrant

workers from Southern/Eastern Europe in USA in the late nineteenth century (1987, 49–50). An alternative response was workforce flight (officially called fluctuation), which took place on a massive scale in the late 1960s. It is a spontaneous resistance strategy used by the working class from the beginning of capitalism to our own times (Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989, 29).

Tito and his conservative associates may have put party 'liberals' like Stane Kavčič in their place in 1972 for threatening the LCY monopoly on power (Repe 2003, 89), but the stakes and issues were much more substantial than the mere prestige of aging revolutionaries and autocrats. From 1968 to 1971, students rose up in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, and not only around issues of democracy and freedom. Their demands and concerns also contained elements of social justice (Repe 2003, 278–9). Reluctance over the reforms of 1965 may have been conservative at its core, but it also contained a sincere and legitimate concern that socialism may have already reached the point of no return. After all, Petrinja's generation knew first-hand the price that had to be paid to develop a new society. But where/when does socialism end and capitalism begin (and vice versa)? Lenin may have been wrong about many things, but not in his assumption that revolution is essentially about the conquest of state power; it does not generate a new society automatically (Centrih 2019b, 324–5). The latter takes time and countless struggles, and lots of mistakes, tragedies, setbacks, illusions, coincidences, reforms etc. To put it simply: socialist revolution as the Event is not the same as socialism as the Process. So, the first multiparty elections in Slovenia (since the 1930s) in the spring of 1990 only officially ended the Party's monopoly over state power, but neither destroyed socialism nor delivered capitalism. The crucial events that would eventually determine the shape of capitalism in Slovenia took place long before and long after 1990.[2]

Was the (failed) reform of 1965 one such event? Had the victory over leaders like Kavčič only been a temporal break, a desperate attempt to stop the inevitable – the introduction of a fully capitalist market econo-

2 Similarly, J. Piškurić, in her recent in-depth study on everyday life in socialist Slovenia, challenges perception of transition as a linear process, a sharp break between socialism and capitalism. According to her, important political and economic changes happened already in 1980s. And further, many widespread everyday life practices – which actually predated socialism – based on networking, reciprocity, solidarity, mutual help, etc, survived up to the present day also because they were solidified in socialism (Piškurić 2019, 332–9).

my? The fact remains that many Party members believed that their life's work was in jeopardy and were probably happy when the reforms lost steam by the late 1960s and were eventually aborted. If that was the case, then 'work stoppages' like the one at the Port of Koper probably proved that their fears were grounded. The turbulent 1965-1970 reform period in Slovenia and the rest of Yugoslavia thus raises the question of the nature of socialism and its relation to capitalism. Leaving manifestos, programmes, and ideals aside, what was the fundamental difference?

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9

A Respected Profession After All: Work Structures and Self-Perceptions of Hamburg Dock Workers After 1950

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Dock work – experiences and narrations. Introduction

Since the 1960s, with the arrival of the container, the working reality has changed in ports worldwide. The success story of the container and the radical changes it brought are well known and academically researched (Levinson 2006). While dock work in some former port cities merely plays a marginal role today, other ports, like Hamburg, have been able to maintain their status as an important reloading point. Hamburg is suited to an analysis of the technical transformation and its effects on work conditions as the port still plays a major role in the city's economy and public image (Rodenberg 2008) – despite enormous job cuts. In addition, the dock worker's profession has always received a lot of media attention, and several formats have contributed to the image and the local anchorage of the domain.

As the perspective of the workers themselves received hardly any attention within this process, narrations on these transformations were at the core of my doctoral thesis (Schemmer 2018a). My ethnographic study analyses the actors' experiences and positions connected to the effects of technical transformations on individual biographies and collective work practices. It provides insights into social and cultural spaces, and the ways the workers subjectively cope with the changed working environment, accelerated work rhythms, and the disappearance of numerous colleagues. This process is to be considered against the background of urban development in port cities and the musealization of dock work, influencing individual as well as collective experiences.

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Figure 1. The Harbour Museum Hamburg is located in quay shed 50a
On the museum site, there are large devices like Van Carriers and cranes.
Behind the flood protection wall is the port basin. Credit: Janine Schemmer.

My research began in the Hafenmuseum Hamburg, the local Harbour Museum, an institution where former dock workers' memories are spatially located (Figure 1). Although the municipality runs the museum, there were only a few permanent employees back then, supported by student assistants, and I was one of them for several years. Apart from the directorate, the main protagonists on site as of now are volunteers and former dock workers, shipbuilding workers, and seamen. During my working hours, I had the chance to listen to the narrations of the so-called dock seniors. I established first contacts with interview partners there, and was soon able to develop further connections. Overall, I collected twenty-five interviews with retired dock workers who began their careers between the 1950s and 1970s, thus before and after the arrival of the first full container ship in Hamburg in 1968. Most of the interview-

ees are German; a few Portuguese and Turkish workers who arrived in Hamburg after the 1960s also form part of the sample.[1]

When I started my research, one dock senior pointed out the misnomer of the term *dock worker* and spoke about *workers in the port* instead. He made me aware of the professions' heterogeneity that stands in harsh contrast to the homogenous picture often drawn of this occupational group, to which collective values are frequently ascribed. This image is related to the development of the organization and the characteristics of dock work that changed fundamentally in Hamburg after the arrival of the container. Despite global developments such as containerization, structures of ports worldwide have not changed homogeneously. Local ways of organization equally influenced the transformations of ports and the work carried out (Dubbeld 2003, 118).

In this paper, I sum up some of my central findings concerning the structural transformation and its influences on the social space (Bourdieu 2006) and former dock workers' self-perceptions. As occupation, work structures and habitus are closely interlinked, professional qualifications strongly influenced their social capital. Specifically, I will focus on the changed self-awareness and the social and economic advancement of those workers who qualified for technical work and remained in the port, highlighting their reflections about habitual behaviour changes.

Exploring the port – an economic and cultural space

The history of the dock workers is closely interwoven with the development of the respective port cities and has to be analysed in this context (Cooper 2000, 539). The texture and character of the city of Hamburg and its harbour area as a 'structuring and structured space' (Hengartner 1999, 16 ff.) appears essential in public representations of dock work as well as

1 The protagonists I spoke to have in several ways incorporated the port history and firmly identify with it to this point in time. Unfortunately, the voices of countless persons who lost their jobs, and are not or do not want to be part of this narrative community for various reasons had to be left out. As my analysis specifically focuses on cargo handling where women were rarely employed, I did not interview female protagonists. In my study, I also reflect the fact that the self-positioning of the interview partners must always be read in relation to their external positioning. By explaining their former working life to me, an interested young woman with no specific knowledge of dock work and port structures, they consciously place themselves in the tradition of dock workers and present themselves as such.

in the interviews.[2] The city is a 'culturally coded space saturated with history and stories' (Lindner 2008, 86). This characteristic applies particularly to port cities, where many circulating narratives are part of an imaginary. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask whether port cities are 'a metaphor with a strong memory value and a weak sense of reality' (Berking and Schwenk 2011, 7).

The insights I gathered doing field research in the Harbour Museum shaped my view of the port as a workplace and at the same time as a location for cultural tourism and an event site. Analysing the media coverage of the last 60 years provides insight into the cultural production of the port city of Hamburg, its maritime atmosphere, the port as a workspace, and the implementation of social as well as cultural ideas about the workers. An early example is the radio programme 'Hafenkonzert' of the radio station Norddeutscher Rundfunk, broadcasted since 1929 and for many years directly from onboard the incoming and outgoing ships. It reported about the port, the cargo, the shipyards, the sailors' life, and wanderlust. Even today, many former workers refer to the programme. Unsurprisingly, as early as the 1950s, the port's tourism potential increasingly became the focus of tourist advertising (Amenda and Grünen 2008, 112 ff.). Furthermore, several local politicians supported the idea of a particular image of work in the port in their speeches and actions throughout the decades, highlighting the importance of the workplace not only for the city's economy, but also for the workers and inhabitants. The proximity of politics testifies to the importance of the harbour as an economic centre, while at the same time most mayors also drew benefit from the port for representative purposes. These images of the port and its status as a symbol for the city have to be considered when analysing the narrations on the workplace. Besides, the interviewees closely observed and actively experienced the change of large parts of the former port area from a working into a cultural district. The Speicherstadt, the old port area in the city centre, was built in 1888. The port relocated to the western and southern part of the city through containerization, with new terminals built from the 1970s onwards. After losing its status as a freeport zone in 2003, enterprises from entertainment industries and the creative sector began to settle in the Speicherstadt, and the district turned into a cultural event-space. Next to it emerged the so-

2 I translated all cited quotes from German-speaking authors from German into English.

called HafenCity, a vast restructuring project, occurring in several other European port cities. Characteristic features of the former port and its labour remain in the form of warehouses and cranes and function as the scenery for this event-space, where the profound change of maritime economy materializes.

Apart from material and tangible transformations, several new protagonists began to appropriate the former port area: city marketing, artists, city guides, students, researchers, etc. discovered the district for themselves. However, the port's specific history, and above all that of its workers, remains rather underrepresented. Besides the International Maritime Museum, which is devoted primarily to the history of shipping and maritime culture in general, the Speicherstadtmuseum is another private institution dedicated to a specific section of former dock work in the warehouse district. This marginality of the history of dock work in the city's representation is surprising, as the port has always played a central role in Hamburg's economic policy and in the city's self-image and marketing (Amenda and Grünen 2008, 56 ff.).

As last witnesses of the old port, several workers not only experienced this process passively but became involved and accompanied it actively. Hence, besides the technical transformation, a parallel process of historicizing the port and disappearing working methods has taken place since 1989, when historical ships turned into museum sites for the first time. Already in 1986, some former port workers and trade unionists raised the idea of a museum, which finally opened its doors in 2005. The Harbour Museum, in which the old working world is preserved and made tangible, is situated opposite Speicherstadt and HafenCity in one of the last heritage-protected quay sheds built in 1908. It is located within close range of the container terminals. While the Harbour Museum is the forum where former workers in the port convey their experiences and meet up, at the same time, it has been established as a venue for events in the local cultural scene and for cultural tourism (Schemmer 2018b). The cultural commitment testifies to a strong awareness of the significance of the changes regarding not only the profession but also the port and the shaping of the city. Such consciousness also informs the narratives of my interview partners.

Occupational profiles and qualification – a new image for dock work

Developments in work organization continuously led to new working methods and techniques. However, after 1950, the responsible companies, institutions, and politics experienced significant institutional, technical, and structural changes. For a long time, dock workers were characterized above all by muscle power. Therefore, the restructuring with the focus on technical skills strongly influenced the workers' self-image and the perception others had of people in the port. Below, I will shortly outline the central structural developments.

Whereas the bars around the port used to be the place of employment for casual workers, this system changed when in 1906 port employers founded the Hafenbetriebsverein (HBV). The HBV introduced work cards to control the labour market and divided the workforce into permanent workers, unskilled workers, and casual workers. The HBV was the first institution for job placement, but it had no specific intention to improve the social situation. This kind of employment changed with the founding of the Joint Dock Company (Gesamthafenbetrieb/GHB), the labour pool of the port, created by the National Socialists in 1934. All employers in the port became affiliated with the GHB, which assigned its workers to the respective company. All port workers received a port card. Anyone who had a card was and is considered a dock worker; this system is still valid today. Furthermore, the port card entitled workers to the right to an employment contract with the GHB. In the case of being dismissed from a private port company (Hafeneinzelbetrieb/HEB), workers were assigned a job with the GHB, depending on the conditions of their dismissal. Although this safety net only lasted until 1969, it continued to be associated with some kind of autonomy in several interviews. The aim of the foundation of the GHB was to control the workers and, above all, to politically de-radicalize them.

Immediately after the Second World War, the Joint Dock Company continued its work. Although the British Control Commission removed the legal basis of the institution, several associations and the trade union ÖTV (Gewerkschaft Öffentliche Dienste, Transport und Verkehr) continued its work in non-institutionalized ways. On 3 August 1950, the Federal Council passed the Law on the Creation of a Special Employer for Dock Workers (Gesamthafenbetriebs-Gesellschaft 1997), and prepared the ground for a 'democratically constituted labour pool' (Bartsch 1999,

49) that took up its work in February 1951. Its structures were and are still essentially the same as those in 1934. Peter Bartsch, one of the former chairmen of the GHB, commented on this development as follows: 'Perhaps it is fair to say that the body of the organism GHB was formed in those years, but the spirit that suited it was only taken in after the end of the war, and not suddenly, but gradually' (1999, 49). With the distinction between body and mind, i.e. the framework, convictions, and contents, Bartsch actively takes up the founding of the GHB by the Nazi regime, distances himself from it and emphasizes the democratic values of the company. The main effort of this renewed institution that existed and exists alongside private companies was and is to reduce the casual character of dock work. Besides this, it aimed to create steady employment conditions, as the volume of work in the port was subject to significant fluctuations, both long-term (e.g. due to cyclical demand) and short-term (due to the irregular arrival of ships).

Above all, the GHB provided security for unskilled workers who were not employed by a private company and were only requested when many workers were needed. Through the GHB, in February 1948, a guaranteed weekly income was established and paid also when there was no work to be done. In the years to follow, the company took several further actions to bring forward decasualization.[3] A positive consequence of these structural developments for employers was the decline of the need and willingness of employees to strike.

Since then, there have been three types of workers: those employed by a private company, the workers employed by the GHB, and the temporary, so-called unskilled workers, whose deployment continues to be cause for discussion (Dietz 2011). As shown in the next section, the latter shaped the common perception of the freedom-loving, independent worker for decades. However, the depictions hardly ever address the precarious conditions (de Vries 2000, 707). With this image, constructed and maintained in several media reports, numerous stereotypical associations are still interwoven today. It was not until 1967 that GHB workers were equated in terms of employment legislation with workers of private port companies (Helle 1960, 7). Furthermore, the latter were trained for

3 The port fund bears the so-called guaranteed wage for GHB workers, used to finance periods of low employment. This is achieved through handling charges, which all private port companies collect in their invoices and pay to the GHB.

the handling of technical equipment relatively early, while the GHB started training drivers of the container gantry crane from 1978 onwards.

The second significant transformation process set in after the arrival of the first full container ships in Hamburg in May 1968. As early as 1967, one year before its appearance, the newspaper *Das Sprachrohr*, edited by the GHB, published a programmatic article about the increasing importance of the box, to familiarize the workers with this kind of activity. With headlines such as 'Don't be afraid of the container' (GHB 1967, 3), the GHB promoted a more comfortable manner of working with it. Possible concerns on the side of the workers about the effects of container transport on their workplace, as mentioned in the quotation, seem comprehensible, since containerized cargo increased rapidly. Whereas in 1968 container cargo was only 2.1% of total cargo handling, it was 18.2% in 1973 and reached 42.4% in 1982. Although the container divided public opinion and initially had enthusiastic advocates and fierce opponents, there were already three terminals in the early 1970s.

Politicians and unionists, who collaborated rather closely, were conscious of the need for skilled workers soon after the appearance of the first containers, not only to train specialized staff that were essential but also to attract more junior employees as there were not enough workers in the port in the 1970s (Grobecker 1985, 138). Official reports of the Joint Dock Company claim that workers' shortages can be traced back to the job's poor reputation due to hard or dirty work and its casual status (GHB Annual Report 1979). Thus, in 1975, traditional professions were restructured, with special training for water and landside activities, resulting in state-approved skilled occupations. The reorganization was important to increase income, and strengthen the workers' rights and the profession's image.

Concerning the technical transformation, several interview partners vividly talk about the change of work procedures, of workspaces, and the development from teamwork to more individualistic and isolated workflows. However, they do not describe these transformations as sudden ruptures, but as a slow process. For decades, there had been a coexistence of self-learned practical work knowledge (Hörning 2004) and containerized movement of goods (Figure 2). Thus, parallel work practices may be one of the reasons why technological changes are never described as a complete break in the biographies. At second glance, though, a lot of ambiguity can be traced in the narratives. Furthermore, the evalua-

Figure 2. General cargo handling at the Container Terminal Tollerort, around 1990. Archive: Hafenmuseum Hamburg, Bestand Cordes/HHLA.

tion of the transformation through containers and computers today varies vastly according to age and individual careers. In addition, fluctuation in the port was always high. The transformation processes did not result in mass layoffs as companies alleviated job cuts by offering their employees early retirement and reduced working hours.[4] However, the number of workers went down from 13,000 in 1978 to 6,000 in 1994.

In the Hamburg case, one can point out that this structural transformation progressively led to better social, professional, and financial circumstances for those who did not lose their jobs. However, unskilled work never disappeared, but relocated. Since the early 1990s, container packing has been a central topic of discussion, as many companies transferred outside the former free port area where they are not obliged to pay the port tariff (Achten and Kamin-Seggewies 2008).

The fundamental role of work as a 'social resource' (Kocka 2010, 1) in people's everyday lives manifests in their narrations about it. New structures that went hand in hand with both the organization of work and technical developments changed workers' self-perceptions and how others perceived them and transformed social interactions, established networks, and the socio-cultural fabric of dock work.

Climbing the social ladder – imaginaries and self-awareness

Authors of historical studies on the Hamburg port during the German Empire and the Weimar Republic paint a picture of the dock worker as he was to be found for over a century: the casual worker, whose most important skill was physical strength (Grüttner 1984; Weinhauer 1994). For decades, dock work was mainly associated with noise, stench, and, above all, back-breaking work. The figure of the simple worker, who tended to have a negative image, appears in several interviews: 'Whoever worked there, they were all, they were young men of second-class. Those who worked in the port were nothing. Those in the shipyards, yeah. But not in the port, not in cargo handling, that was all, "ah, he's got lice", and with the dirt and all that - no woman wanted to have anything to do with it. Let me tell you that' (Carsten Brandes, 1942). As a young man, Carsten Brandes learned the traditional profession of bargeman, but soon qualified to work with containers. His observation mirrors the fact that dock

4 A detailed social history of developments in port work after 1950 is yet to be written. A look at the number of people who lost their job and the companies' measures suggests that this is only one version that needs to be further analysed.

work continues to carry a gendered connotation. It further suggests a low reputation of dock workers also taken up in other accounts. When talking about the beginning of their professional lives, very few of my interview partners mentioned that they decided voluntarily to take the job. Rather than choosing dock work, it provided a good way to gain a lot of money for hard work, as many emphasized. As work was rare in those years, many interviewees started an apprenticeship arranged by relatives, acquaintances, or other contacts. While some came to the port after they went to sea and to settle down, it offered a new professional orientation to workers with different professional backgrounds.

One reason for the mainly negative ascription by others was the formerly low social and occupational status of the docker, as casual workers and those on short-term contracts shaped the image of the 'uncultivated, raw, drunkard worker' (Grüttner 1984, 273), which was constructed, transported, and maintained through various channels over decades and with which numerous stereotypical associations are interwoven. As no specific expertise was required for dock work in the post-war years, anyone who could get their hands dirty and was willing to work hard could be trained to work in the port until the structural changes of 1975 set in. As already mentioned, in most cases GHB staff carried out the simplest and at the same time hardest and dirtiest tasks, another reason for the correspondingly bad image GHB workers had to withstand for a long time.

In the immediate post-war years, media depicted dock workers through their marginal social situation and political developments. Until the 1970s, they represented typical workers as a large, hardworking family sharing collective values, and authors referred to the harmonious, solidary, and down-to-earth coexistence (Figure 3). In addition, the Hamburg dock worker was portrayed as Northern German. This is remarkable as the first so-called guest workers arrived in the port as early as 1959, and almost one third of the GHB-employees were of foreign origin in 1979 (Gesamthafenbetriebs-Gesellschaft 1979, 12).

With structural transformations, this image partly changed. In May 1987, Hamburg celebrated its 798th port anniversary. On this occasion, the local paper *Abendblatt* reported to a wide audience on the transformation in an article titled 'The silent revolution' (Sillescu 1987, 3). The subtitle went: 'The port is dead. Long live the port' and underlined the port's central position in the city's economy and as an employer. However, the 'Silent Revolution' referred to the manner of transformation, at least

Figure 3. Finished load. Coffee from Brazil on the *Cap San Lorenzo*, July 1965. Credit: Karl-Heinrich Altstaedt.

from an outside perspective: as a slow, imperceptible process, as also mentioned in many interviews. The journalist explained that qualified workers were in demand, as from now on 'two big Cs', container and computer, were trend-setting. He highlighted the continuous success of the port as a trading and transshipment centre, in contrast to the negative developments that occurred in the shipbuilding industry. However, now the 'typical' dock worker, represented in the article through Mr. Steiner, was praised as a qualified technician: 'Today he no longer needs biceps, but brains. As a loading master, he sits on the tower of the container terminal at the computer screen and is responsible for hinterland control. […] Steiner's working world is still the port. But nothing is as it used to be' (ibid). Workers with a foreign background remained marginal figures in the public representation.

Over the years, a romantically idealized image of the dock worker prevailed, and has spread since the 1980s as the number of workers and their traditional occupations has decreased. The traditional worker's imaginary has been turned into a nostalgic figure that is represented in various reports. The image functions as a projection screen for protagonists from the outside and for the workers themselves, and by using it, they combine the positive features and values of the traditional work with those of the new.

In many interviews, the narrators point out that, for various reasons, the dock worker can no longer be compared with that of the past. Uli Amling, who was responsible for the handling equipment in a stevedoring yard, puts the professional activity in perspective: 'Even today, dock worker sounds just so negative. After all, really qualified professions make up dock work today' (Uli Amling, 1949). The bargeman and training instructor Gustav Paulsen refers to the often one-dimensional media portrayal that circulated about the profession: 'That's still in the newspaper today, the job title, when someone committed a crime somewhere. Once, I complained to the BILD newspaper, as they always wrote, the dock worker such-and-such. So they said, "yes, but we also write, the doctor, or whoever". (…) After all, it's a respected profession today' (Gustav Paulsen, 1927). In many descriptions of work practices, qualification plays an important role regarding the upgrading of the occupational profile, but also regarding the quality and the status of dock work, which from 1975 onwards was skilled work from a legal perspective. Above all, Paulsen defends the occupational profile against simplistic media portrayals in the

tabloid press, which does not provide an objective picture of the manifold activities and skills. Such differentiated statements manifest the cultural capital of the interviewees.

Although many locate themselves in the habitual tradition of the dock worker in regard to values and attitude, they also distance themselves from the outdated image of the unskilled worker. However, Bernt Kamin-Seggewies, former head of human resources at the GHB, explains in our interview that certain imageries of masculinity and associations based primarily on outside appearance not only continue to shape images of the dock workers to this day, but are also taken up and passed on by the actors themselves. He relates the following characterizations in the context of the GHB workers and colleagues: 'Some of them run around with tattooed arms, come along on the Harley and tend to puff up. (…) The habitus is still dragged along by some, although the work has changed. It is very interesting to note that the reputation of the dock worker, both among individuals and in the public's perception, is still that of the drunken day labourer of yesteryear, which has nothing to do with reality anymore' (Bernt Kamin-Seggewies, 1960). He expresses some employees' need to carry the acquired economic capital to the outside world through status symbols such as motorcycles or cars. In this example, he vividly illustrates the use of the imaginaries ascribed to their occupational profile in a situational way. They stage habitual attributions to express their masculinity that no longer correspond to current practices. In contrast, in several interviews with actors who belong to a different age cohort, they characterized themselves as social climbers through their abilities and qualifications. Their acquired cultural capital becomes visible as they tightly link their professional biographies to structural developments.

Gustav Paulsen depicted the social advancement using the images circulating about the work and the financial opportunities that arose over the years. He explained that during his time in the port, he had experienced three generations of dockers, mirroring the processes: those after the war had nothing, those afterwards had a bicycle, and those afterwards had a car and moved away from port areas. The development described not only reflects economic and spatial changes, but also influenced social relations.

Changing patterns of solidarity

Containerization and modern cargo handling brought along a variety of transformations concerning the social space. New professional practices brought changed social structures in the working groups, and influenced arrangements based on interaction and solidarity on a professional as well as political level.

Besides a strong reduction of jobs, one central aspect mentioned in the narrations was reduced opportunities for weak or older colleagues or those who were only partially able to work (Kiupel 1990, 77). The port used to offer its workers various niches, and companies, for example, hired workers who were no longer able to carry out their usual activities due to accidents or sickness as custodians in so-called convalescent workplaces, even if they were unable to do physically demanding dock work. These kinds of workplaces were part of 'informal solidarity structures' that dissolved over the years (Brüggemeier 1984, 254). As the system supported the individual, Walter Widmann accentuates the activities with and for each other: 'On this quay shed, for example, there were two or three men who always had something to sweep, to clean, or they cleaned windows […]. We were able to drag them along. And that's no longer the case today' (Walter Widmann, 1940). Widmann, who worked as a training instructor for many years, also explained that workers who could not attend further training courses or work with technical equipment due to a lower level of education were deployed elsewhere. This already hints at the importance of qualification to stay in the system. Gustav Paulsen, his colleague at the training centre, also emphasizes this aspect. He describes the handling of teaching materials as a major problem for many colleagues who were not used to written tests. Although their working practices were convincing, they fell out of the system due to a lack of abstraction capacity. Furthermore, a central condition for qualification and equal opportunities was knowledge of the German language. In addition, as a training instructor for the GHB workers and a council member, he was particularly committed to work security and health protection, but states that it was not an easy task to transmit this importance to his colleagues, who were mainly interested in working a lot, including overtime, in order to gain money.

Besides transforming the social composition of the profession, the altered work organization affected workers' political attitudes. The regulation of the port milieu by politicians and port operators alike formed

the backdrop for this development. As early as the mid-1920s, the gradual process of de-politicization and a 'boost of individualization' by overpowering companies and powerless unions set in (Weinhauer 1994, 265). Under the National Socialists, the 'breakup of oppositional workers' parties and organizations' was pushed forward (Weinhauer 1997, 417), and the collective capacity to act steadily decreased.

This especially shows in the narratives about the meaning of the syndicate. One must consider the role of the trade union ÖTV in the context of post-war developments. The ÖTV was concerned with ensuring a stable situation for smooth port handling and mediating between employers and employees. Therefore, the policy of the ÖTV often drew criticism. In many cases, the union's approaches were portrayed as too employer-friendly, its attitude as too appeasing and barely confrontational (Geffken 2015, 126). Although various political groups such as the Communist Federation (KB) and the Communist Party of Germany/Marxist-Leninists (KPD/ML) were active in the port in the 1970s, the narrations gave no opinions about these groups. Although all interviewees stated that they had been members of the trade union, this was due more to tradition than political conviction. Many say that they left the ÖTV at the latest when they retired. Some have mixed feelings about the institution, arguing that they did not see their interests adequately represented. Others do not express an explicit opinion and remark that they joined it because everybody did back then, and because the GHB as an employer insisted on it. Uli Amling, who was a permanent employee in a stevedoring company, explains that, despite some doubts, he felt the ÖTV represented his interests well: 'While in between I resigned from the syndicate, I joined it again later, because it kind of gives you a safe feeling. Because you know you can get help if something goes wrong. But I never made use' (Uli Amling, 1949). In response to my question as to how many of the permanent employees in private companies were involved in trade union activities, the former general manager Anton Ermer expresses an exact position: 'Well, in these companies it was actually rather low. Far less than 50%. Why? We paid above tariff. We always motivated our people so much that when there was a strike they didn't participate' (Anton Ermer, 1940). Because of the high wages, political disputes lost their importance. However, Ermer also hints at a kind of pressure exerted from the employers.

The attitude of the former stevedore Achmed Amanat towards the duty and function of the trade union varies significantly from German colleagues' statements. Amanat left Istanbul in 1968, and after several job positions in Germany and France came to Hamburg in 1977. Amanat explains his initial scepticism towards the institution. This may also be since experiences with unions from other countries differed greatly (Goeke 2011). However, he emphasizes the importance it eventually gained for him: 'I used to get annoyed about it. But later on, I understood what it was all about. As a worker, you don't think about the advantages, but they pay attention to it. Most of the workers have to be in the union to stand up for something in a strong way. […] Whenever we had issues, we went to the workers' council' (Achmed Amanat, 1942). The union developed into an approved counterpart. Eventually, the membership strengthened his self-perception as a dock worker as well as part of the working community: 'We were, I mean […] we never said, uh, he's Portuguese, German, Turkish, we never said that. We were always equal in the community' (Achmed Amanat, 1942). While he may have experienced discrimination of any kind in his everyday work, e.g. due to language skills, the trade union in his portrayal appears as a non-hierarchical space in which he knew his rights were secured. His remarks indicate that organizations such as the trade union, which for many workers of German origin had an increasingly minor role as a reference point, could have a different value and significance for workers with a different background.

Class-consciousness as symbolic value

Alongside the effects on informal networks and institutions, the increased economic capital affected the political participation of many workers. New structures and qualifications led to an increased process of individualization.

While due to structural transformations and job cuts, various strikes took place in American ports as early as the late 1960s and English ports during the 1970s, the port of Hamburg and its workers, who worked around the clock, profited from these conflicts as the shipping companies made for the Hamburg port instead of Liverpool, for example (Grobecker 1985, 138). In 1979, the labour pool even employed 69 English migrant workers with temporary work contracts, coming above all from Liverpool and Manchester. However, as they had to pay unexpectedly high social security contributions and earned so little that the work did not pay

off, they returned to England at the end of 1979 (Gesamthafenbetriebs-Gesellschaft 1979).

After some wildcat strikes in the early 1950s, mainly led by the communist party KPD which demanded wage increases (Geffken 2015, 90), the only major strike in which the union was involved occurred in 1978 and was based on demands for wage increases for the increasingly qualified skilled workers. In the narrations, the strike is never mentioned as an essential action but rather as an anecdote. Most interview partners did not remember or elaborate on the reasons, and there is no collective memory of the strike. In the magazine *Arbeiterpolitik*, an anonymous contemporary author dealt with the strike action controversially. Besides criticising the approach and attitude of the ÖTV, he explains the German dock workers' behaviour. In his statements, he critically comments on their lacking historical awareness and class-consciousness, stating that contemporary dockers could rarely imagine the spirit 'with which the workers dared to paralyse the port in former times. […] If they go on strike now, they mostly don't know what it means. To them, striking means: not going to work' (N.N. 1978, 32).[5] He further comments that this is not surprising, as they lack experience compared to other European colleagues, 'because after 1945 they had become used to being social partners instead of class enemies. They, therefore, have little practical experience with solidarity' (ibid). This lack of practical experience is mirrored in my interviews, where the strike rarely appears as an explicitly chosen topic, and interviewees mostly pick it up at my request. One interviewee points out that strike-breakers were mainly among the permanent employees of private companies. In a few narrations, the strike marks the turning point in the organization of work and the rise of containerization. For Erwin Meier, working as a bargeman back then, the strike marks a significant juncture. Remarkably, in retrospect he combines the transformation and incipient decline of traditional dock work with the major strike: 'And there we stood striking, six of us, and just before that a somewhat older colleague had already said to me, "You, boy, if you ever get the chance, go into the containers. This thing with the barges is no good"' (Erwin Meier, 1949). In his further narrative, he criticises the strike's organization and positions himself as a follower rather than an activist.

5 An important point of reference in publications and narratives to this day remains the Great Dockers' Strike of 1896/1897, to which many narrators refer in order to connect to long-existing actions, which, however, hardly ever occurred in this form later on (Achten and Kamin-Seggewies, 2008).

After 1950, Hamburg could no longer assert itself as the 'stronghold of the labour movement' (Weinhauer 1994, 19). In retrospect, many interview partners instead focused on their professional career to keep their jobs in the port.

However, solidarity and social cohesion did not lose their meaning and value, but received other connotations and became visible in different contexts. For example, Paul Wonner takes a clear stand on the political attitude: 'We can't stand machos and Nazis. Those are the things where we say: No chance! […] Nevertheless, we pay attention to that, because they are mixing in a bit, as I've heard. […] If there is a person about whose attitude we are insecure, we don't turn him over. He'll be gone eventually. In this case, we're tough. And that's what we announce during recruitment. Any Nazi characteristics are grounds for dismissal. And we're proud of that. 'Cause part of being a docker is being a worker' (Paul Wonner, 1950). Wonner clearly defines the political standpoint and the limits of the tolerable, underlining the consistency and determination in approaching politically right-minded colleagues. Some years before I interviewed Wonner, the candidate of the right-conservative 'Schill party' was voted the second mayor in Hamburg. Wonner explained that a frighteningly large number of unionists and workers voted for it. By referring to the success of the party in 2001, he also showed that the widely established image of left-wing groups such as workers is no longer valid, with their turning to right-wing parties and contents (Eribon 2016). Wonner still clearly positions the symbolic figure of the worker on the left. However, these symbolic meanings are rather an expression of subjective positioning and hardly ever reflected in collective political action practices. Concerning the political image of the dock worker, Kamin-Seggewies refers to the homepage 'Proud to be a docker', a Europe-wide campaign launched to keep alive the political tradition in the ports and to make it plain to current employees 'that they are workers, too' (Bernt Kamin-Seggewies, 1960). This statement shows the symbolic value that is continuously attached to the figure.

Although the structural transformation resulted in a largely de-politicized work culture regarding public and visible political action, many former workers continue to articulate their consciousness as dock workers and the strong social cohesion amongst colleagues.

Narrating and negotiating dock work - conclusion

While in different settings narrative patterns about dock workers' experiences may be similar, local characteristics in talking about social, technical and atmospheric spaces can be identified. The transformations triggered by containerization resulted in the need for qualified staff, and therefore affected work methods, the working group, the workplaces, and specifically the self-perception of interviewees.

Occupational advancements not only shaped individual career paths, but also found their way into the narratives, focussing on the portrayal of individual professional biographies. In biographical retrospect, perceived losses due to technological change are evident both on a personal level and, above all, related to social connections and attitudes. The meaning of and identification with formerly strong and long-established institutions such as trade unions experienced a decline or a reinterpretation. Respective activities increasingly lost their importance due to professional, and especially financial, security. While some interviewees highlighted the specific focus on understanding or transmitting the importance of achieving qualifications and technical skills to pursue their careers, several narrations show that an increased economic capital had an effect on active political commitment. Thus, the changed organizational structures and qualification measures led to de-radicalization and partly also to de-politicization as individualization processes and economic interests prevailed. However, the workers emphasize the social, collegial, and solidary character of dock work, which despite undergoing a change did not lose its relevance. Many express their moral convictions and political attitudes. However, they no longer carry them to the outside world in the form of visible political action.

The imaginary marks both the ideas circulating about the port city and its workers as well as the narratives of the interviewees. Since the 1970s, media reports and publications have directed new perspectives on this occupational group and its activity fields. Dock workers were increasingly portrayed and perceived not so much as casual or second-class workers, but rather as skilled ones, and were thus able to act and become visible as such. This process changed the way the group interacted with each other, and influenced their self-image and positioning. Since the 1990s, the image of the worker has been replaced by a romanticized, fascinated idea of a profession from the past. The traditional dock worker transformed into a popular nostalgic figure, appearing to this day as a refer-

ence to Hamburg's maritime history. In the narrations, one can observe an active engagement with familiar images, which points to the acquired cultural capital of workers in the port, who in many cases know how to deal with these ideas, and ground them historically. Thus, they refer to the fact that the dock worker has long functioned as a projection screen. In the narrations, the former workers in the port actively combine popular images with their personal and professional biographies. The imaginary functions as a stereotyped image of the outside world, from which they clearly distinguish themselves. This testifies to heightened awareness of the symbolic capital of the profession.

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10

The Labour Factor: The Docks of Trieste and Koper through the Global Crisis

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Introduction

It was 26 April 1956 when Malcolm McLean's ship Ideal-X left the Port of Newark in New Jersey for the Port of Houston with fifty-eight aluminium truck bodies and a regular cargo of liquid bulk. From that moment, the 'container' became a new, innovative system for the movement of goods, determining, with its diffusion, new types of ports, ships, cranes, storage structures, vehicles, trains, and an increase in organizational complexity. Moreover, it resulted in fundamental changes in port expansion and the rewriting of the port geography in different countries, with the beginning and flourishing of the business in previously unknown locations, and its decline in others. The container has become the undisputed standard in maritime transport and has laid the foundations of a new era for the transport of goods, thus generating a profound transformation of production structures and economic relations over the entire planet. As Mark Levinson notes in his container history: 'Low shipping costs helped make capital even more mobile, increasing the bargaining power of employers against their far less mobile workers' (Levinson 2006, 4).

The introduction of containers, in fact, represents a watershed for the organization of work; however, it is not just about what happened in the port areas: such a significant decrease in transport costs has affected the domestic production of several goods. These goods have often become cheaper to buy or to produce elsewhere. Also, the speed of movement, with ships stationed for shorter periods in ports, has not been without consequences. For example, companies that had introduced work organization models inspired by the Toyota Production System, such as 'just

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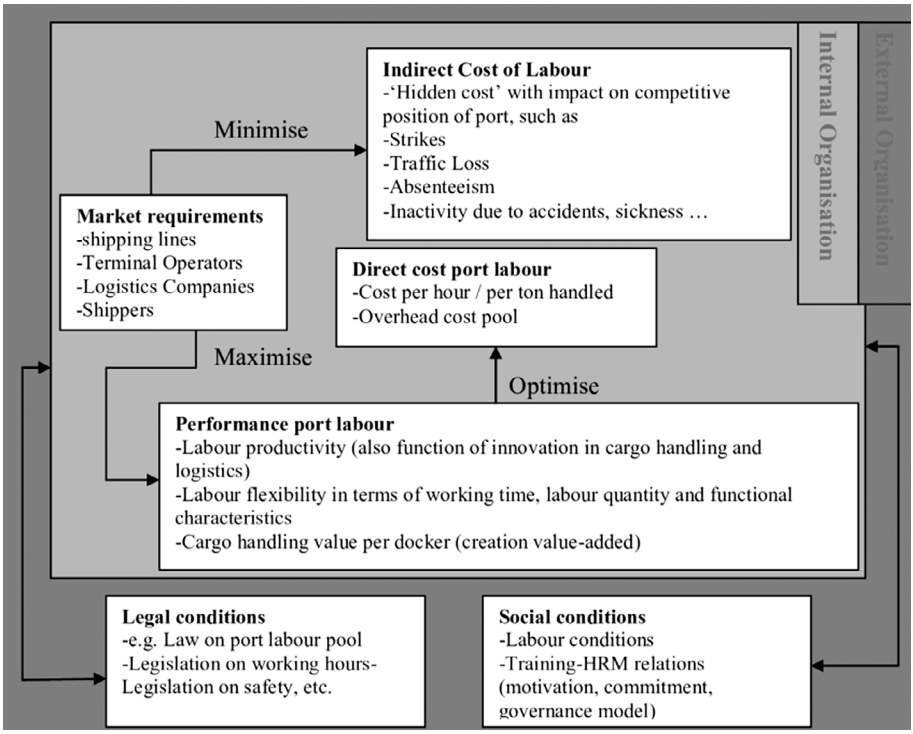
in time' and 'lean production', which cancelled the need for stocks and warehouses in their production organization, would probably not have been able to respond to consumer requests if transportation times had not been reduced (Sampson and Wu 2003, 123–4).

During the time that has passed since Ideal X's voyage and the diffusion of container transport, haulage companies have equipped themselves to take advantage of the new system and their customers have similarly adapted to the new logistics. To match the change, ports have expanded and developed the relevant areas to accommodate and sort ship loads. Furthermore, they have strengthened rail and road connections.

Moreover, the most recent trend towards naval gigantism in the so-called 'container revolution' must also be noted: a course taken to favour economies of scale and contain operating costs. However, the increase in the size of container ships – and the speed with which this change has taken place – affect the entire logistics chain. Substantial investment is required to adapt the relevant infrastructures and to update working procedures and practices so that they can cope with considerable work peaks. In addition, the greater cargo volume of mega ships can result in congestion in the hinterland (International Transport Forum 2015, 54–5).

In addition to the global crisis that started in 2008, the close relationship between the evolution of traffic and the port labour market has influenced the work in the ports examined in this research, i.e. Trieste and Koper. Analysing true port work, namely docking, unloading, and loading of goods, we observe how, while in many productive sectors the economic and financial crisis has caused a drastic increase in unemployment and the closure of many companies, in the ports considered, it has accentuated the changes already underway by changing the type of work required of the workers. This work, as the dockers say, is determined by the ship, meaning that shipping, handling and logistics companies, transport operators, and shippers impose certain logistical demands on ports and terminals and these requests are conditioned by the characteristics and needs of the several supply chains. Port terminals must meet these market needs if they want to acquire cargo on a lasting basis and stimulate economic growth within the port and in the immediate hinterland. The following scheme, developed by Theo Notteboom, presents a conceptual framework on dock labour (Notteboom 2010, 29):

As can be seen, the operators of global logistics require dock workers to increase the productivity of their work by reducing indirect costs



as much as possible with an increasingly pressing request for greater flexibility, not infrequently also fuelled by the search for greater profits or economies of scale. This organization of port work takes place within a wide variety of legal and social conditions and the work systems vary considerably depending on how the proposed conceptual scheme elements are combined together (Bologna 2006; ILO 1996).

Trieste and Koper: Work Organization

In Trieste, as in the rest of Italy, port work was regulated by Law 84/94, with its subsequent revisions and additions, until the enactment of Legislative Decree 169/2016 and the subsequent outline of Legislative Decree, the CD 'Correttivo Porti'.

The Italian Law 84/94 was a regulatory intervention which, in addition to restructuring port discipline in general (with the institution of the Port Authorities to replace the previous economic institutions and organizations, retaining only general coordination, control, and promotion functions), incorporated the important dispositions taken by the Court

of Justice of the European Community, which had sanctioned the applicability of competitive legislation to the sector of operations and port labour as well. The port labour reserve was therefore abolished and the role of harbour companies and groups redefined. Previously, workers involved in port operations had to form companies, which then had the exclusive right by law to carry out the operations of embarkation, disembarkation, transshipment, and general handling of goods in ports. This reserve was guaranteed by means of criminal penalties for those who used labour not registered in the appropriate registers (Costantini 2014; Macario 1992).

Articles 16, 17, and 18 of the Law regulate port operations by identifying three 'markets' within the cycle:

a) the market of operators offering their services to the user, the shipping carrier, and/or the terminal operator, for which the carrying out of exclusive fixed structures is not necessary (port companies authorized pursuant to art.16),
b) the market for temporary labour supply companies (art. 17),
c) the market for terminal operators, that is to say, operators who carry out the loading, unloading, and handling of goods by means of fixed infrastructures and superstructures (art. 18).

This subdivision brought elements of flexibility into the organization of work in order to ensure adequate coverage of manpower suitable to satisfy an often fluctuating demand. However, the fact that the law provided for a sort of 'optional monopoly' in favour of institutions deriving from the transformation of the companies and port groups, made subsequent amendments and additions necessary, in particular as regards art. 17, namely temporary work. The former harbour companies, in fact, continued to provide temporarily, but in a monopoly position, their workforce to those companies whose staff were insufficient in periods of increased work (Munari and Carbone 2006, 249).

This tortuous process was finally stopped when Law 186/2000 was passed, providing a stable structure to the sector six years after its original formulation. According to this regulation, each port has a single temporary labour supplier in order to allow authorized companies (art.16) or concessionaires (art.18) to turn to the so-called labour pool, for the integration of staff among its direct employees (Ales and Passalacqua 2012).

If we examine the responses of the Italian ports to the new regulations, it appears that implementation formulas and operating models

have been identified. They were elaborated on the basis of the traditions and specific operational needs of each: a reality articulated with different internal mechanisms as to the functioning and organization of work, that in a research carried out by Isfort with the trade unions had been defined as being similar to the Far West (Appetecchia 2011). At this moment, however, the port of Trieste is a port where, after a long process of change, Law 84/94, with subsequent amendments, is applied.

In Slovenia, a new law regulating the functioning of ports dates back to 2001 (Jermann 2007). Like the previous regulations, it allows only one person to exercise the management of the port, as well as the execution of commercial port services. This system has brought about considerable development in the port industry in Slovenia and also in the former Yugoslav Federation. Port managers, who also provide port services, are companies operating directly, and which can therefore make the necessary investments faster (Jakomin and Beškovnik 2005). Since the independence of Slovenia in 1991, Luka Koper d.d. (Port of Koper plc) has become a public limited company, with 51% of the shares owned by the State. It deals with cargo handling and warehousing for all types of goods, complemented by a range of additional services for cargo with the aim of providing comprehensive logistics support for its customers. The company manages the commercial zone and provides for the development and maintenance of port infrastructure. Indeed, the Port of Koper differs from other European ports precisely because it manages all port activities directly, or through its own subsidiaries and affiliates (Luka Koper 2020, 19).

While in Italy specific legislation has been developed regarding the organization of port work, although not always equally applied in each port, in Slovenia the workers of Luka Koper d.d. are subject to national labour legislation and rules governing contracts and administration. The public majority company, Luka Koper d.d., manages the free zone, the port area, and carries out the role of terminal operator. Until January 2020, direct company employees and indirect workers worked in the port and associated companies. The latter were called 'external workers' or third-party IPS workers. IPS stands for Izvajalci Pristaniških Storitev, that is, Port Service Providers. In 2016, for example, 36 companies had IPS status. Many of them, however, were denounced by trade unions and workers for infringement against workplace regulations, such as irregular payments, 'slave' working conditions, non-compliance with employ-

ment contracts and safety rules, and the submission of workers to the so-called 'gazda', i.e. the 'owners' of subcontracting companies (Kovač 2017). Koper Port workers proceeded, therefore, on two parallel tracks under very different conditions: direct employees with a significantly higher salary than all the workers of other state-owned companies in the country and the third-party IPS workers with wages halved or reduced to a third of those of direct workers.

According to data provided by the former chairman of the board of Luka Koper, Dragomir Matić, in 2016 the company managing the port had issued 1,237 operating permits within the port even though, in fact, 600 to 740 employees operated every day within the third-party structure (A. S. 2017). The workers – the trade unions revealed – earned only 3 to 4 euros per hour and needed to work as many as 300 hours per month to make a living, otherwise the owners would consider them bad workers. The gap between the number of permits and actual attendance was probably due to the need to always have a reserve of labour available to respond to peaks in work. However it contributed to strengthening the positions of the 'gazdas' that they could, with the threat of using other workers, lower protection advantages and wages.

Luka Koper d.d. had been using third-party IPS manpower since 1995 but, even though IPS workers often performed the same type of work as direct employees, they had much lower wages, fewer rights, and less protection. However, Slovenian legislation provides that the supply of labour can only be carried out by administration agencies, while the IPS third-party companies should have dealt exclusively with commercial collaboration. For this reason, in 2017, following a series of checks carried out by the Labour Inspectorate, Luka Koper d.d. was prohibited from using workers from the IPS Encon company and in 2017, the Administrative Court of Ljubljana confirmed the decision. In this case, in fact, it would be a form of circumvention of the legislation on the regulation of the labour market, which allows the supply of labour only to employers with appropriate authorizations, and subjected to adequate controls (Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti 2016; IUS-INFO 2017). From the judgment it emerged that the port service providers carried out their duties in the port in such a way as to configure the standards of an employment relationship. This means that they performed their services under the control and directives of Luka Koper d.d. and were included in the work process in the same way as employees. In contrast, Luka

Koper d.d. has acquired a legally binding opinion, according to which giving instructions and supervising IPS third-party personnel complies with the execution of the concession contract, if the supervision and instructions given do not refer to the execution of the agreed services. The company also appealed against two judgments of the Koper Court of 2011 and 2016, in which the Court confirmed that cases of collaboration with IPS third-party workers did not configure the administration of labour (Lukič 2017).

The Encon ruling has affected the entire port job market: Luka Koper d.d. should have requested the necessary licenses from partners to perform labour supply activities or should have directly employed IPS workers. Although the port administration claimed that other collaborations were not at risk, the workers' unfavourable situation was once again in the spotlight when the Supervisory Board voiced their distrust in the Administration led by Dragomir Matić during the Extraordinary Shareholders' Meeting at the end of December 2017. Matić, in turn, stressed that the administration of Luka Koper d.d., in the operational plan for 2018, rejected by the Supervisory Board, had foreseen 232 new hires for 2018 and over 500 new hires over the following five years. Regarding the requests made by the unions to hire IPS workers, he then clarified that it was not possible to immediately hire 1000 people (T. R. 2017; Al. and L. 2017).

A review of the period 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2017, carried out by PWC, has sifted through Luka Koper's collaboration with IPS third-party workers. In particular, according to the report, there was no strategic document that regulated relations with suppliers of port services or a model for managing them. It was not even clear how many external workers were needed. It also follows that Luka Koper made use of IPS third-party manpower without regard for public procedures for the supply of services or the services themselves (Bucik Ozebek 2017). 'There should be a procedure for awarding services by means of which the transparency of the procedures would be demonstrable and that there would be no people involved who were connected in any way with Luka Koper', said the Council member, Rado Antolovič, in an interview with the newspaper *Delo* about the Luka Koper analysis (Babič Stermecki 2017). In these statements Antolovič, albeit not quite directly, seemed to take up one of the union's complaints, namely the fact that some Luka Koper employees were involved in the subcontracting. Besides, in Antolovič's opinion,

the fact that Luka Koper had collaborated with the IPS since 1995 did not justify an administration that did not guarantee people humane working conditions and was not committed to overcoming irregular practices (Gleščič 2017; Šuligoj 2017).

It must also be said that some of the IPS workers were foreigners and therefore subject to the very restrictive legislation for foreign workers in Slovenia promulgated after 2011 (Lukič 2010; Medica and Lukič 2011).

Between 2018 and 2019, not only as a result of the significant mobilization of workers in recent years, but also following protests against the privatization of the port, hiring policies moved towards a 'decasualization' of work, thus increasing the number of direct employees. The Control Committee of Luka Koper d.d., in 2018, in fact gave the green light to an important change in the internal labour market. In that year there were 1,311 direct port employees and the number set for 2019 was 1,695, thus providing for 384 new hires. The proposed solution was based on the work of three groups of workers: direct workers, temporary workers, and a small number of subcontracted companies. Luka Koper committed itself to cancel all relationships with temporary workers or external companies that were in place and publish a new public tender. The so-called outsourcing focuses mainly on the management of the car terminal and on the emptying of containers. A competition notice was also to be prepared for the 300 direct hires, a notice to be made public in July 2018 (Luka Koper 2018). 'This model of solution to the problem relating to the workers executing port operations is economically bearable and respectful of current labour regulations', confirmed the current President of the Board of Directors of Luka Koper, Dimitrij Zadel. In 2018, 48% of workers at the Port of Koper were direct employees, while 52% worked in the port on behalf of external companies. With the new agreement signed and approved, 61% of workers are to be employees of Luka Koper, 12% are to be temporary workers and 27% are to be workers from companies outside the port. The new organization was to be up to speed, according to Zadel, in the autumn, or at the latest by the end of, 2018 (Gleščič 2018).

The comment of the strongest union of the port, i.e. that of the crane operators, is optimistic, as with this agreement Luka Koper has undertaken the commitment to treat all the workers who work inside the port in the same way, with the same wage levels and same workloads.

What is being configured is the so-called 'tristebrni model' (three-pillar model) which includes direct work, work administered, and subcontracting relationships with external companies. The target? More direct workers and a greater wage balance (Luka Koper 2018).

However, using external companies has allowed Luka Koper d.d. to save more than half the budget that would have been spent every year if all the workers had been direct employees. Against the background of this great change there is the lawsuit being brought by the company Ips Projekt. Founded by a group of entrepreneurs excluded from the port following the application of the new workforce recruitment model, it is demanding the payment of 20.7 million euros by the port administration which now pays the workers around 40% more than what their companies paid them before (Luka Koper 2019a; Luka Koper 2019b; Urbančič 2020).

As we have said, in Italy the port labour market represents a very specific segment of the labour market in general. It is governed by the Port System Authorities who exercise a power of regulation and supervision and have a planning and direction role. Previously, the managing bodies of the port had an economic character, with partly executive, administrative, operational, and managerial competences, while in accordance with Law 84 the new Authority has only public tasks. It has changed from being a public enterprise to becoming a guarantor of private activities. Not surprisingly, the new rules require 'the privatization of all activities having an operational and managerial character', leaving the Port Authority with the sole tasks of administering and managing the port territory, controlling the activities of companies, and promoting the port system as a whole.

The application of the law and subsequent amendments have produced several variations in Italian ports: over time in Trieste it has caused a progressive loss of the role of the Port Company and strengthened the role of terminal operators. The Port Company, transformed according to article 17 of Law 84/94, has gradually become marginal in the operation of the port due to a lack of calls. After its liquidation, the function of temporary work provider was assumed by a newly established company founded by some of the main terminal operators of the port and improperly by several multi-service companies. Therefore, the organizational model was very fragmented, with a strong presence of cooperatives. They provided services according to a very flexible and differentiated working

regime using many types of employment contracts (Appetecchia 2011). This situation has given rise to an internal competition played on the reduction of tariffs, accompanied by a reduction in costs for the safety of workers and also by the bankruptcy of some companies. Many workers found themselves in a situation of extreme uncertainty due to the reduction in hours worked. For this reason, in 2009, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region signed an agreement for payroll subsidies to port workers, mostly employees of cooperatives which otherwise would have been devoid of any social safety net.

The process begun with Law 84/94 found full realization only in 2016, when the Port Labour Agency was established in Trieste, which brought together many workers from failed cooperatives. The Agency is responsible for providing temporary work in ports; therefore, it selects and hires workers according to the limits of staffing set by the port authorities and guarantees adequate training plans (Bottos, Conti, and Rustichelli 2019).

The reconstruction, albeit partial, of the organization of port work in Trieste and Koper allows us to formulate some general considerations. The global crisis has had a strong impact on the labour market in these two ports, changing the conditions of many workers. The new needs of ports and the growth of work peaks caused by naval gigantism require a manpower that has a higher level of training and is available to perform different tasks. The multifunctionality required of the workers is compensated by greater stability. However, the issues related to the protection of employment still remain open in the context of the governance of the automation and innovation procedures of the sector. Furthermore, there is the decisive impact on ports made by shipping companies that aim to achieve cost cuts along the transport chains by decreasing the protection of workers and safety at work. The trade unions dispute the claim of the companies for the involvement of the crews of the ships in port operations, causing serious safety risks on board and on the quays and also with drastic repercussions on employment. According to the scheme proposed by Notteboom, from which we started, there is a general trend that affects all ports and that pushes towards open and autonomous pool systems with reserves of temporary employment agencies. There are strong pressures from port companies towards continuous work with flexible start times and variable shift lengths. This also depends on the consequences of naval gigantism and the impacts it entails on the port and terminal sector and on logistic chains. The volumes handled are considera-

bly increased and, given the limits of the infrastructural equipment, in terms of manoeuvring channels, length of the piers, and depth, require a new organization of work, as we read in the Plan of Personnel of the port of Trieste (Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mare Adriatico Orientale Porti di Trieste e Monfalcone 2019).

In fact, in the operational reality, work peaks are no longer understood as merely quantitative exceptional moments, but as structural elements of a variable cyclicality in quantity and quality. This cyclicality disrupts the traditional working hours of terminal employees and proposes professional, quantitative, and qualitative needs that are uneven in shifts and working days. The variable cyclicality means that we are not faced with sudden surges in the demand for resources (manpower and means) compared with a predetermined and predictable regular standard, but of a permanent variability or possible variability of the factors that contribute to the demand for labour resources and means.

Therefore, it is necessary to organize workers' spaces and skills in a different way. In fact, in a dynamic and constantly evolving context, continuous training is becoming increasingly important, both as regards specialized professionals and for multifunctional ones, with the aim of obtaining a widely usable workforce (Autorità di Sistema Portuale del Mare Adriatico Orientale Porti di Trieste e Monfalcone 2019).

Furthermore, the great variability of arrivals by sea must be combined with the regularity of rail transport, and this entails an expansion of port infrastructures. The expansion of infrastructures is beginning to arouse some resistance from local communities which, perhaps, consider it worthwhile to invest scarce public resources in another direction and support the idea of a more balanced distribution of traffic between ports. However, both the ports of Trieste and Koper estimate that they could benefit from the attraction of large ships and foresee expansion operations in the short term.

The Strikes

An analysis of strikes in the ports of Trieste and Koper can allow us to measure a more complex series of phenomena concerning the two cities and their relationship with their respective port systems. According to the scheme developed by Sapsford and Turnbull, studying the strikes in British ports, there are two models that describe these collective actions and their relations with other forms of industrial conflict: the 'balloon'

and the 'iceberg' model. The balloon hypothesis identifies the strike as one of the forms of agitation that depends on legislation and negotiation, in practice like a balloon: if you squeeze one part, the air comes out of the other. It is a 'plus, minus' model because the strike is the response to a decrease or lack of other forms of bargaining. On the other hand, we can be faced with the iceberg when work stoppages, negotiations, changes in legislation, and even unorganized protests are part of a single block and the strike represents the tip of the iceberg. In this case, the model is a 'plus, plus' model because it sums up all the reasons for the conflict and represents the visible tip. Of course, much depends also on the specific sector taken into consideration and on its characteristics. Various researches on port work have highlighted how, over time, the balloon model has become the more frequent. In fact, with the decasualization of port work and all the other subsequent labour market reforms, other forms of unorganized protest (what cannot be seen in the iceberg) have decreased, bringing the protests back within the exclusively trade union parameter (Sapsford and Turnbull 1994).

Many of the more recent strikes that have affected workers of both ports can be reported within the reasoning carried out by Sapsford and Turnbull and be traced back to the balloon metaphor. Nevertheless, we can identify two strikes (one in Koper and one in Trieste) that can be related to the image of the iceberg. In these cases, in fact, it is possible to recognize in those collective actions motivations and meanings beyond the boundaries of the port, bound to the social realities of reference.

The first strike that we will consider is the one involving the Koper crane operators. From 29 July 2011, more than three hundred workers belonging to the professional union stopped working for eight days. The crane workers were protesting against the new working regime that was imposed on them by the Port Management. Apart from demanding improvements in workers' safety, the crane operators opposed a new work scheme envisaging three operators switching on two cranes in one shift, while currently two operators work one crane. The changes would also cut their breaks from two hours to one.

The formal strike organized by the crane operators shortly afterwards was followed by the spontaneous support of IPS employees, many of whom came from the area of the former Yugoslavia, who demanded the same wages for the same tasks and equal rights for all (Gleščič 2011). There were moments of tension and the management of the port threat-

ened to retaliate against the strikers for the damages suffered because of work stoppage. Moreover, the management of the port did not recognize the requests of the IPS workers because they were not direct employees of the port (Je. G. 2011).

The demonstration received the support of workers in the ports of Trieste and Rijeka and that of the Slovenian railway unions and was backed by the organization of the Invisible Workers of the World. The strike and the protests ended after eight days, when an agreement was reached that included three points: first, that the strike was legitimate and that the workers involved would not be discriminated against in any way because of the strike; second, that the Koper Port Authority would be involved as an equal partner in further negotiations between workers, subcontractors, and the Port Authority; and third, that the workers' wages would be raised by 5% and that a collective contract would be signed for all dock workers, regardless of whether they were directly employed by the Port or by any subcontracting company (Vidmar and Učkar 2014, 83–4).

What makes this strike fit into the iceberg model concerns on the one hand the relationship between 'secure' workers and 'uncertain' workers and, on the other, the reporting that was given by the media.

The Crane Operators' Union was set up in 2007 to overcome the fragmentation of port unions and as a response to a representation that was considered too soft. It is defined as an 'anarchist' union due to the assembly modalities with which decisions are taken and because it exclusively groups direct employees of the port. The division between direct workers and subcontractors is also an ethnic division: the direct workers are Slovenians or long-standing immigrants, while the subcontracted employees are often the result of recent immigration and subject to legislation that, at least in their first year of permanence, puts them at the complete mercy of their employers. The fact that they spontaneously supported the crane strike, their attempts to create an autonomous trade union organization, and the relations between individuals from opposing countries in the Balkan wars deserves further study. Irrespective of the ethnic segmentation of the labour market, this concerns not only the port, but also the whole city, and requires broader reflections.

When Slovenia's largest daily newspaper, *Delo*, reported the long strike, it presented it as a 'partisan protest', giving more emphasis to managements' positions (Šuligoj 2011). It also published a letter from

Bruno Korelič, a charismatic and well-known figure, for a long time director of the port, who claimed that crane operators were fighting for their privileges (Fabijan 2012). It was the local newspaper *Primorske Novice*, and especially the national TV reporting, that also gave a face and voice to the 'other' strikers: the IPS workers. Many articles appeared that reported the conditions of work and exploitation and this aroused understanding and support in public opinion. National television also contributed to this by broadcasting interviews with workers who denounced their 'servile' condition. Even a union like that of the crane operators, representing secure specialized workers, when discussing the model of work organization in the port included in its analysis workers who until then had been much less visible.

If the hypothesis that defines the 2011 strike as an iceberg strike is correct, there remains to be investigated if and how the connections within the port union world have changed the relations between 'secure' workers and 'uncertain' workers and, furthermore, how the connection between the port and the city has evolved.

In their interviews, the representatives of the Koper Crane Operators' Union also referred to the hard work carried out by previous generations to build the port in the Socialist period, proudly recovering a part of its past that became a local identity element in the narrative. Therefore, even the contemporary port continues to be a strategic area of the city. Furthermore, it still transmits a strong identity drive, despite being a place far removed from previous working methods and closed, for safety reasons, to nonprofessionals. It therefore continues to express potential. If the development of containers seemed to have impaired connections between the port and urban society along with the territory, the most recent moments of struggle and protest go, instead, towards a new recovery of relations with the reference territory.

In Trieste also, the port is proving to be a place for the transformation of social identity, becoming the fulcrum of a new image of the city. Analysing what happened at the trade union level, the birth of the Trieste Port Workers' Coordination represents one of the elements of this change. In 2014, the failure of a historic cooperative in the port, with the consequent job loss for 8 people, replaced by workers from Taranto, was the spark that led to the creation of the Coordination. The fact that Trieste employees had been supplanted by workers from outside opened a dispute over the stabilization of those who lived in the city. However,

the Coordination fought above all for the application of Annex VIII of the Paris Peace Treaty within which this new body is always defined as 'the international free port of Trieste'. In fact, adherents of the Coordination maintain that the port should be organized according to the Annex and not to Law 84/94. By applying the Annex, in their opinion, traffic would increase and so would wages, thanks to the numerous tax breaks provided. Despite the historic presence in the port of national unions, the movement affiliated to the USB[1] is, at the moment, the one that counts the greatest number of adherents and on several occasions has aspired to act as a privileged interlocutor of the Port Authority. Often in controversy with the trio (CGIL, CISL, and UIL),[2] who are accused of dealing too little with workers' requests, the Coordination, whose representatives often speak in the local dialect, has been the protagonist in recent years of various protest initiatives. They are asking the government that the special free port regime of the port should be correctly communicated to Brussels so that Trieste should be added to the list of existing duty-free points in the European Union. In summary, the Coordination is concerned essentially with three topics: the direct hiring of all workers operating in the port, a negotiating table for a first-level contract, and the establishment of a special, facilitated tax regime.

Even in Trieste, as in Koper, the regularization of the 'uncertain' workers operating in the port has assumed a central role. It is interesting to note the increasingly important role assumed by the 'local' trade unions or associations that recover imaginary and specific claims linked to the city and the territory of reference.[3]

Conclusions

We have followed events in the ports of Trieste and Koper before, during, and after the years of the global economic crisis, placing them in their national contexts. The crisis, which in many economic sectors have drastically reduced the number of companies and employees, has reinforced a

1 The USB (Unione Sindacale di Base) is a union born in 2010 from a merger between a number of different base unions.

2 The CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro), CISL (Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori), and UIL (Unione Italiana del Lavoro) are the main union confederations in Italy.

3 The information on the strikes of Koper and Trieste is based on the Facebook pages of the Sindikat žerjavistov pomorske dejavnosti Luke Koper and those of the Coordinamento Lavoratori Portuali Trieste.

change already underway in the ports with regard to workers' tasks and skills (Mariani and Sommariva, 2014). In fact, the increasingly massive use of containers, the development of mega ships and the European competition regulations have influenced working times and the greater use of 'uncertain' labour (Tonizzi 2014). In ports, the decrease in workforce and the dissolution of port communities with a progressive removal of the port and the reference territory had already taken place. However, precisely during the years of the crisis, the struggles undertaken within the ports for the stabilization of 'uncertain' workers and for improvement of safety and working hours brought the port closer to its citizens. In the cases considered, ports and territories have started talking to each other again, but in a different way from previously. The fracture between before and after, linked to all the conditions and factors that have been investigated in this research, is also of an ideological character. In fact, those groups of workers, strongly characterized from a political point of view that once represented the connection between inside and outside, have been lost. This is a process that has just begun, not without opacity and ambiguity, but it is nevertheless helping to convince local communities to experience the port and its structures, not as a burden, but as a driving force for the local economy.

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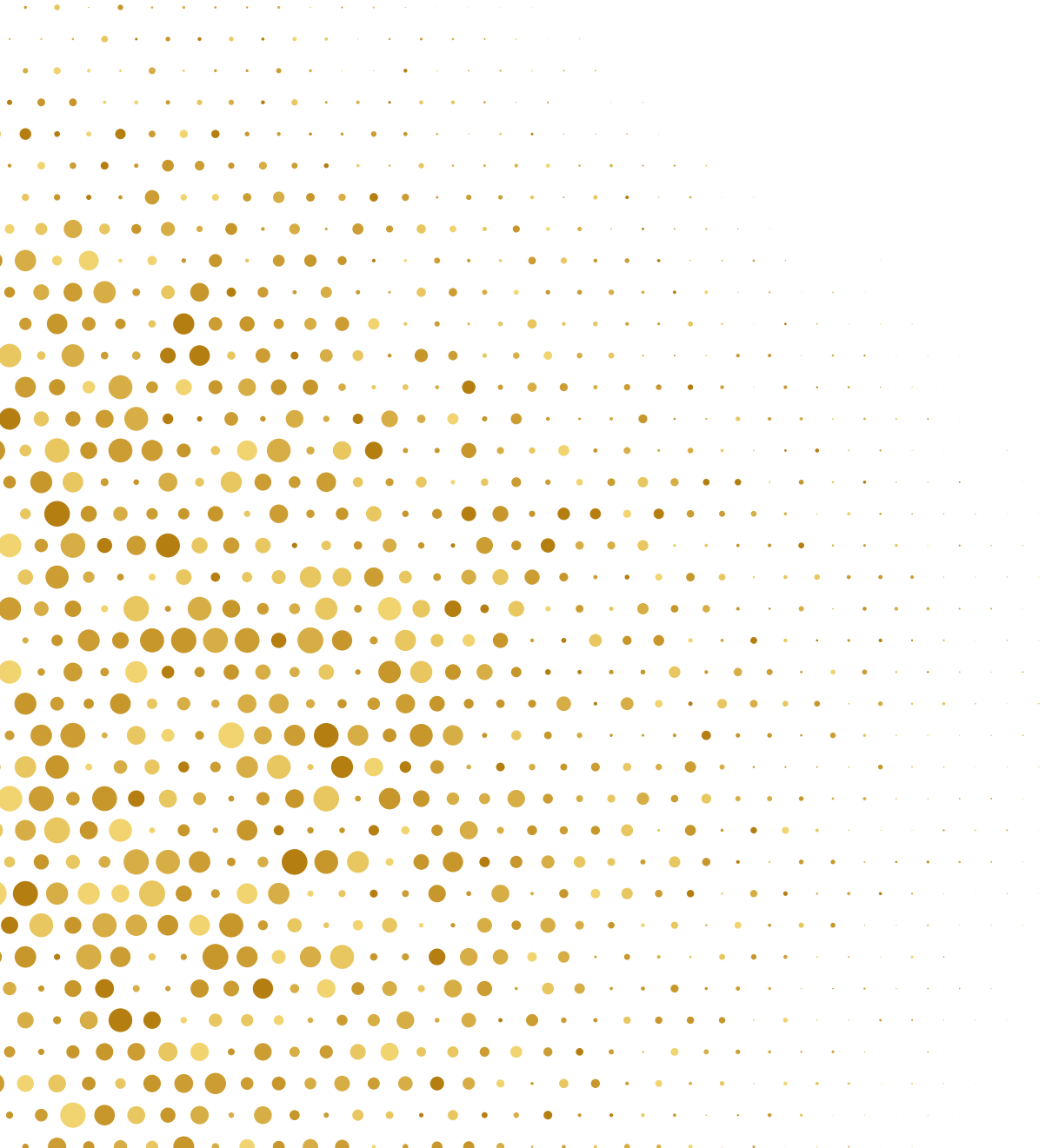

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In this book, we try to find out our own way to deal with the complexity of the social, technical, economic, and institutional entanglement defining the history of any seaport.

The common implicit research question was: can we use our thinking about the historical identity of the city-port nexus to find new insights about the possibility of overcoming the specialized approaches, and have an evolutionary representation of the symbiotic/syncretic arrangement of the city-port systems, inside the peculiar North Adriatic environment?

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