

The background of the entire slide features a close-up of a globe showing the continents of Africa and Europe. In the foreground, on the left, is a large, out-of-focus chess piece, likely a king or queen, made of light-colored wood. The overall lighting is soft, and the colors are muted, giving it a professional and academic feel.

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CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC ANALYSES

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Research Paper No. 26

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HISTORICAL OUTLINE, CULTURE AND POLITICS

The Town of Trieste looks out to sea from the eastern shores of the Adriatic; west lies Venice, south Dubrovnik, and behind sits the limestone hinterland of the Karst, a main point of access to Central Europe's Danubian plan. The Port of Trieste is today the only international free port in Europe since 2017, meaning goods being sent from there can benefit from a series of tax exemptions.

While walking in the streets of Trieste, a sense of grandeur is breathable in all its buildings' facades and boulevards. Grandiose Italian flags wave across the city. The central square, Piazza Unità d'Italia (Unity of Italy Square), is often referred to as one of Italy's most beautiful squares by Italian media and many events of national relevance are held in the city and broadcasted on the national networks.

The scope of this article is to outline the presence of a Trieste problem and generally outline its relevance for European politics and culture. It is not enough, however, to provide a complete depiction of each of the problem's aspects, for which further research is going to be suggested.

Contended between Italy and Yugoslavia after the Second World War, the dispute for Trieste had been settled with the creation of an independent nation state from the territories surrounding the city under the name of Free Territory of Trieste (FTT), constituted under the Treaty of Paris with the agreement between the Allied Forces and Italy (1947).

However, the small nation of FTT never enjoyed complete sovereignty. Guarantor powers that alternatively ruled the Territory at since the Treaty came into force have repeatedly failed to carry out the transition of the Free Territory of Trieste to a full sovereign nation.

Internationally accepted maps today picture the city of Trieste within the Italian boundaries. Surrounding territories in the immediate east are divided between Slovenia and Croatia. In the last few years, the issue of Trieste has prompted renewed claims for the FTT from the Triestine population, who have begun to vow more vehemently for the completion of the transition process.

During the 18th century, the economic primacy of Trieste played a bonding role in shaping the common Triestine identity, made of individuals of different ethnic backgrounds. The city enjoyed, within the Habsburg empire, a wide range of autonomies. Trieste's free port status attracted the politically and culturally displaced. Censuses conducted by the Habsburg administration provided evidence of an attendant multilingual competency in a range of languages and dialects, including Italian, Ladin, Friulian, Slovene, Croatian, Serbian, German, Romanian, and Greek.

After the dismantling of the Habsburg empire after the First World War, and with the rampaging nationalist movements finding fertile soil in Trieste, Italy and Yugoslavia fought harshly over the ground of Trieste. Trieste's history as an international problem has coincided with the international legitimization of the ethno-nation as the appropriate basis of sovereignty, which has in turn corresponded to the imaginative representation of ethnically heterogeneous communities as a problem (Sluga 2001, Anderson 2006).

Pivotal elements of the dispute on Trieste are national(ist) identities. Sahlins defines national identity as a socially constructed and continuous process of defining 'friend' and enemy. Thus, Larry Wolff has shown that the idea of "Eastern Europe" was invented as a particular kind of space – essentially backwards barbaric – by "Western" intellectuals during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Such were the conditions under which nationalisms flourished in Trieste, a multi-ethnic territory bordering the East and the West, representing the very outpost of Central Europe in the minds of Western intellectuals, that needed to be protected from the advancement of the barbaric "Slavs".

Today's Triestine independentists are the "cosmopolitan" inheritors of the vision of "Trieste Nation" much before the nationalisms and their outgroup and ethno-foundationalist patterns took over Trieste. They view themselves as neither Italian, nor Slovenian or Croatian. Their claim for independence of Trieste is based upon a legal framework and a cultural differentiation of the indigenous population with respect to the ruling nation state. The cosmopolitan "alternative", in the terms of Waltrou, is the lack of a need of a people to have an active or direct involvement in the social life of a plural number of cultures to internalize them and belong to each of them at the same time. The "cosmopolitans" are not defined in their identity by their ethnicity, original language or traditions. In addition, Waltrou argues, individual meaning, integrity and character are not to be traced in the exclusive involvement in a mono-ethnic community and a cosmopolitan attitude does not mean the lack of an identity. As opposed to communitarian visions of a monocultural, shared history and ethnic tradition the concept of minority is overcome by the embracement of a multicultural and cosmopolitan tradition. Such a view would well represent the genesis of the idea of Trieste Nation and the historical-cultural foundation to the compromise sought with the creation of the Trieste as an independent nation, in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Trieste's role in the Habsburg empire was, as I have outlined, of absolute primacy. Today, In Italy, Trieste is a medium-sized city on a borderland. The concept of complex interdependence, by the neoliberalists Keohane and Nye, will serve me to depict Trieste's strategic positioning regarding its two main longer rulers: the Habsburg empire before, and Italy at present.

States interact in complex interdependence, a condition that can manifest either as vulnerability or sensitivity. Schematically, the former occurs when a state's capacity of harming another state can produce

long-term effects and is the more powerful condition. Interdependence sensitivity is the relation of a state with another state that can cause the former short-term damage.

From the past idea of Trieste Nazione to the role as an Italian remote city, Trieste changed from having powerful assets regarding its central administration (then the Habsburg Empire) to having a secondary role in the economic and political panorama of the central administration (Italy). Considering the administrative framework of Trieste during the Habsburg empire, during which Trieste enjoyed greater autonomy and power, Trieste has more interdependence versus Italy (vulnerability), while was in a position of interdependence sensitivity versus the Habsburg empire. Consequently, the idea of Trieste Nation, that gained momentum during the Habsburg empire and is today reprised, would be a more attractive option for independentists.

On the other hand, Wendt views rising interdependence as stimulating collective identity and integration, which would also be the case of modern Italy. Arguably, this circumstance might just be a compelling reason why the problem of Trieste has remained virtually unaddressed for many decades to date.

Considering the complex interdependence theory, behind Trieste's "separatism" from Italy, there is also at least a *perception* of portions of the Triestine population shift of Trieste's interdependence vulnerability to sensitivity as regards Italy (BBC, 2015). Such a possibility would be best addressed by a relevant survey. Indeed, the ancient economic splendour and the subsequent depression of the city economically and culturally are one of the motives adduced behind claims of Trieste's natural inclination as independent entity, much apart from the relevant juridical framework that, still, has substantial arguments.

JURIDICAL CONTEXT

One month before the signing of the Peace Treaty with Italy, the United Nations Security Council accepted the role of guarantor of the integrity and independence of the Free Territory of Trieste with Resolution S / RES / 16 (1947) and approved its establishment. The signers to the treaty of Paris including Italy and former Yugoslavia (the latter among the Allied Forces), with the guaranty of the UN, recognised Trieste and its surroundings as a sovereign nation, with Italian, Slovenian and German as official languages.

The Peace Treaty of 10th February 1947 with Italy included the former Yugoslavia as contractor among the Allied Forces. The intention of the Treaty with Italy was to accommodate an ethnically and culturally mixed population in a neutral independent country. The intention was also to cool down territorial claims between Italy and Yugoslavia, due to its strategic importance for trade.

Article 4, Section I of the Treaty with Italy fixes the FTT's borders. Section III, article 21 provides that "The Free Territory of Trieste is recognized by the Allied and Associated Powers and by Italy, which agree that its integrity and independence shall be assured by the Security Council of the United Nations" and that Italian sovereignty shall terminate upon entering into force of the Treaty.

On 15 September 1947, the British-US military government of the Free Territory of Trieste declared the establishment of the new independent State with this trilingual proclamation "to the population of the Free Territory of Trieste". However, the American and British administration of respectively Zone A and Zone B did not have any conclusive results as regards transition from their military regime to democratic institutions.

For this reason, the 1954 London Memorandum, then was signed between Italy and Yugoslavia to officially share the supervision of the Territory. Zone A was under the control of Italy, who became responsible of the democratic transition of Zone A of the FTT, while Zone B passed under the supervision of Yugoslavia.

The two countries' supervision on the territory, according to the Memorandum, would be founded on a special fiduciary mandate of administration, while the primary guarantor powers remain the United States

and the United Kingdom. The administration, parallelly, was converted from provisory military administration to provisory civilian administration. The reason for that was that the military apparatus did not allow to pass the necessary reforms given the limited time available to the military administration.

The London Memorandum of 1954 only gave the control of the territory to Italy and Yugoslavia *de facto*, but not *de jure*. Since then, Italy and former Yugoslavia have mandate to provide for the transition to the democratic institutions for the territory of Trieste.

In 1963, an act of Italian domestic law provides for the institution of the Autonomous Italian Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, with Trieste as regional county seat.

The Treaty of Osimo, signed in 1975 was a bilateral political agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia by which the two countries renounced their previous opposing claims on the Free Territory of Trieste. This agreement was not going to change the obligations contracted with the multilateral Treaty of Paris of 1947.

The ambiguity of the present situation prompted claims of sovereignty by the local population, regardless their ethnicity. The appellants, therefore, refer to the territory of Trieste as a sovereign state groundlessly administered by two stranger nations. In this regard, two passages found in a 1952 UN report are pivotal. The Report stated that "In cases of territorial changes the question of nationality becomes *ipso facto* a matter of international concern, as it's from the outset the concern at least of two States, the acquiring State and the State whose territory is acquired" (UN, 1952). Also, the ceding State is under an obligation to recognise the rules established by the cessionary State As regards the nationality of the inhabitants in accordance with the treaty of cession. Of the Treaties of Peace concluded after the Second World War, only the Treaty with Italy contains provisions dealing with the nationality of inhabitants of the territories ceded by Italy and the nationality of the inhabitants of the Free Territory of Trieste. In the Treaty with Italy of 1947, the principle of domicile (in the sense of habitual residence) in the territories ceded by Italy has been used (Article 19). The same applies as regards acquisition of the nationality of the Free Territory of Trieste (Annex IV, Article 6, to the Treaty).

In a letter by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, the admission of the Free Territory of Trieste as sovereign nation is restated. Date is cited for the start of the administration of the territory being 1947, while end date is cited. Expressly, it is said "The Peace Treaty entered into force on 15 September 1947 and terminated Italy's sovereignty over the Territory (article 21 (2)). The Security Council, however, never discharged its responsibilities under the Treaty with respect to the Territory due to its inability to appoint a Governor for the Territory." This would mean that in 2016 it was restated that Italy has no sovereign rights over Trieste and is still expected to carry out the independent administration installation of the Free Territory of Trieste.

As seen, the overall juridical context of the Trieste problem is fuzzy and allows for ambiguous interpretations. Such a situation is dangerous and is the germ of conflict escalation: as such, it requires appropriate address at international level.

CONCLUSION

In the above paragraphs, I have been able to characterise the Triestine question and conclude there are elements of Triestine identity.

The territory of Trieste combines a series of factors that make it of absolute relevance: its cultural symbolic role in the Italian national borders history and in defining the border at large of the West (first within the Habsburg empire, and after within Italy) vs. the Balkans and, not least, its strategic position as a port to the Mediterranean.

The “cosmopolitan alternative” of the Triestine independentists offer interesting viewpoints for Europe, particularly for addressing the issues of migration, as well as of European integration. The Triestine people of today see the city as a free state that would be the perfect example of European integration, multicultural and multi-ethnic but still with a strong shared identity.

The gap between the treaties and the city’s current status establish the measure of Trieste’s problem. The discontent of a local population of Triestine vowing for the constitution of the Free Territory of Trieste adds urgency to the formulation of an answer at an international level.

In the work “The rights of minority cultures” (Kymlicka, ed.) Buchanan makes a point about the cases for the rightfulness of secession. The aspects Buchanan exposed are suggested for further research regarding the Trieste problem, namely: the pure self-determination of the nationalist argument, preserving cultures, self-defence (see Kosovo), rectifying past injustices, consent as measurable indicator.

The definition of nation of Walby, which combines Smith and Anderson, becomes especially meaningful: ‘The nation is a political and cultural project based on common heritage (Smith) and imagined community (Anderson). A common heritage is a whole of values, history, uses and practices, literature, while what Anderson refers to the “imagined community” is the imagination that builds a common identity of a group aiming to enlarge that – for practical reasons – cannot fuel it solely with face-to-face interactions.

The communitarian imagination of Trieste’s independentists is shared, but the question is, to which extent is it? Would ever Trieste be mature place for enjoying the independence that the Treaty of Paris provided for? How to answer this question? Would a referendum be appropriate? Or would another form of assessment? Still, the present situation suggests that the leverage of the Triestine independentists has not strongly influenced the rest of the Triestine population.

On the other hand, the legal framework concerning the territory of Trieste, needs specification and revision, as the multiple treaties and provisions that intervened throughout the 20th century, seem to be short-sighted and lacking a dialogical progression.

It is recommended that further research is carried out, taking aim at determining more clearly the juridical and procedural admissibility of the Free Territory of Trieste, especially with regards to assessing the grounds for self-determination of the population of the designated territory of Trieste as by the Treaty of Peace with Italy of 1947, and at conducting comparative studies on the Triestine culture(s).

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