THE SHIFTING BORDERS OF EU EXPANSION:
EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF REMOVING AND REPLACING BOUNDARIES ON
THE ITALIAN–SLOVENIAN BORDER

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of
PhD in Social Anthropology
in the Faculty of Humanities.

2012

VALENTINA MOISE

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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ABSTRACT:

University Of Manchester

Valentina Moise

PhD in Social Anthropology

TITLE: “The shifting borders of EU expansion: everyday experiences of removing and replacing boundaries on the Italian-Slovenian border”.

2012

This thesis is an ethnography of the Italian-Slovenian border. The data presented in this thesis have been collected during one year of fieldwork (August 2008 - August 2009) that took place in the Province of Gorizia, the smallest of the region Friuli Venezia Giulia in the North-East of Italy. To be more specific, I conducted my fieldwork in the two areas of this Province that straddle the international border between Italy and Slovenia: the main town of Gorizia and the wine area of Collio that stretches North West of the town. I chose these areas because the town has been portrayed by some locals as a divided town as the Italian-Slovenian border straddles its peripheries and the peripheries of the Slovenian town of Nova Gorica, and the wine growers that live and/or work in the Collio area remove and replace the boundary according to their business.

This thesis is about the making and marking of the Italian-Slovenian border now that both Italy and Slovenia are part of the European Union and, more importantly in this context, the Schengen Space. In fact, within the Schengen area the physical structures of the border have been erased; because of this erasure locals discussed the border as having ‘disappeared’, hence putting emphasis on the border structure as an object of demarcation.

This thesis is an ethnographic example of how such a combined erasure (of borders within the EU) and simultaneous maintenance of state borders is being experienced on an everyday basis. This research aims to be an example of how Gorizia and the Collio area are shaped by the local residents’ narratives and perceptions of the political processes of bordering and de-bordering: an example of border theory from the local perspective. This work wants to be an example of border as a quality -as ongoing activity-, rather than as a fixed object. As such this thesis is looking at borderworks: the multiple qualities of borders, and how those qualities constantly change.
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INTRODUCTION

I always wanted to write about Gorizia, its district, and more specifically its border: my experiences growing up there were my inspiration. I am from Gorizia and for at least my lifetime (29 years), this border has been considerably open especially when compared to other borders. There has always been dialogue with the Slovenian side of the border, as far as I can remember, however this dialogue was always invested with notions of the past: when it appeared, how, what it divided, or if it did divide at all.

The local literature confirmed that there was something to write about: several are in fact the local works that report the history of this area (e.g. De Vitis Piemonti & Spangher, 1987; Kusterle & Pillon, 2005), and Italian-Slovenian relationships through the centuries, from a political point of view (Cattaruzza, 2007; Sartori, 2004; Wörsdörfer, 2009), but also from a local perspective (Marušič, 2005; Marušič & Tavano, 2007; Stasi, 2009). Diverse were the definitions from more negative to more positive connotations, just to cite a few: conflicted area, last wall of Europe (Wikipedia, ‘Muro di Gorizia’), meeting point, intersection of cultures, cross road of Europe.

Ethnographies, like Ballinger’s History in Exile (2003), were the reassurance that there was something there to write about that might be interesting to somebody outside the local area and Italy. I was especially emotionally taken when I first noticed that Ballinger briefly describes Gorizia in her second chapter, “Geographies of Violence” (2003:56), and she compares it to her field place of Trieste explaining how it was also contested at the end of the Second World War. Her work, so strongly present in this thesis as an inspiration and guide, was what brought me to write the proposal for my research.
THE PROJECT EXPLAINED

In order to distinguish myself from the existing literature on borders and the European Union, I had decided to research the aspect of the entrance of Slovenia in the European Union and how border was understood, expressed and narrated by residents of an EU border area, since at the time (2007) I could not find reference to other works on an internal border of the EU. To be precise, what sparked this project was trying to understand why the local residents of the Gorizia district kept referring to the moment of Slovenia’s entrance to the EU as ‘now that there is no border’ [tr. adesso che il confine]non c’è più]. What emerged from this sentence was a strict association of the word “border” with what was represented by the border structures: the state line, still very much there, was not considered. The physical border had thus become the centre of this study to see if the freedom of movement of people and goods was the most important aspect of life on this border. My own local knowledge and some pre-fieldwork research led me to think that some further research in the history of the area would have been beneficial since the border had only been present in the area for sixty years (1947–2007) and its social significance was directly influenced by the historical events of these last years: the Second World War, the distinction between Capitalist and Socialist worlds, the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991, and the European Union. In fact, as far as I knew when I was writing a proposal, there might have been talk of ‘no border’, but there was a clear distinction between Italians and Slovenians.

When I left for fieldwork the plan was to conduct cross-countries fieldwork working with the Italian and Slovenian wine producers of the region of Collio/Brda which stretches right across the border, because most of them owned family businesses that pre-dated World War II, experienced the border from its ‘appearance’ to its ‘disappearance’, were affected by the border related events listed above. As a social group, the wine growers presented themselves as an ideal point of reference to explore historical and day to day relationship between
Italians and Slovenians and the place was perfect to pop quickly from one side of the border to the other to conduct immediate cross country research.

However, the focus of this thesis has expanded and shifted since then: once in the field, as always happens, there was a different turn of events, and my research has developed in a slightly different way to the project as originally envisaged. It now compares and contrasts how a different setting and livelihood make the same border appear as two different borders: specifically the town landscape and people living in the town, and country landscape and the wine grower that work there. Of one year on fieldwork (beginning of August 2008 – end of July 2009), only half the time was spent among the wine growers of the area of Collio, which is part of the district of Gorizia. I did in fact spend the other half my time in the town of Gorizia, working in a doctor's clinic, attending local events and speaking with people living and working in the town. What emerged was that in the town and in the country historical events are interpreted differently, border practices are different, perception of the other is different, who the other is, is different.

Overall, the reasons for this change of the project are various but they all come down to one main thing: my personal knowledge of the place and the way of life - since I am originally from Gorizia, I did in more respect than one conduct anthropology at home. The reason why the cross country project did not happen is first and foremost proof of this. Once on fieldwork I decided against it simply because my Slovene was not good enough. The intention was to enrol in a Slovene course as soon as I got to Gorizia, knowing from growing up there and regularly going back to visit my family, that this was a reasonable possibility, since Gorizia has an active Slovenian Minority and several courses. To my surprise I was not able to enrol in a course until March 2009, which was four months away from the end of my fieldwork. My basic knowledge of Slovene was not good enough to approach Slovenian wine producers in a way that I could really understand the nuances and technicalities of their job, and even if they
are all fluent in Italian, my prior knowledge of Italian-Slovenian relationships made think that it would not be enough to gain their trust. It is common local knowledge, confirmed by some people of the Slovenian minority that I met in the field, that Slovenians found it often offensive that Italians just assumed that they could be spoken to in Italian when they are in Slovenia and I did not want to put across that kind of message. I crossed to the Slovenian side of the border and had the opportunity to talk to people that reside in Slovenia, and live and work by the border, however no active participant observation was conducted in Slovenia.

Instead of comparing Italians and Slovenians, I compare how people that live in an urban setting relate to the border differently than the ones that live in a country setting: as I said above, the town and the country. This was not a conscious decision like the one of not approaching Slovenians, it just happened. When I arrived to Gorizia in the August of 2008 I decided, in order to earn some money, to take up a part time job at this doctor's clinic, which saw me busy five hours a day from Monday to Friday. If originally I had thought that working at the doctor's clinic was nothing more than something to support me, it turned instead to be a very useful experience and ethnographic space. I was in fact a receptionist, which meant that I was spending time in the waiting room area taking appointments and prescription orders from patients. This kind of situation left room for a lot of dialogue, which to begin with was initiated by the patients that were curious about me, having been a replacement for a secretary that had been there for years and had gone on maternity leave. When my answer was that I was there to “study the border” [tr. studiare il confine], it unexpectedly led to all sort of stories and opinions from the patients, especially the elderly ones, which made it a very different forum to reconstruct the history of this border from the point of view of those who actually lived through it. The local border was a topic where everybody had something to say, more so than the winemakers I had decided to conduct fieldwork among, and so more and more I took the opportunity to discuss “border issues” in the doctor's reception room,
collecting all the various anecdotes people were willing to share with me, from their personal biographies: from tales of particularly traumatic crossing experiences, to just comments about the difference between Italians and Slovenians. The rest of the day and during the weekend I was driving to the countryside, Collio, to work mainly with one family of Italian wine makers, the Brambilla. When at the end of my fieldwork I actually took the opportunity to contrast them with the ones narrated to me by the Brambilla and the wine producers in general, it was clear to me that the border history and the following accession of Slovenia to the European Union was experienced by the ‘townies’ [tr. cittadini], to use a term used by Giulio Brambilla, in a very different way than the wine makers and this was worth pointing out. In fact, what emerged from conducting fieldwork among the winemakers was how vine growers understood the land they work. There is an intrinsic connection between the winemaker and the wine their produce, because of this wine, as an object, brings a new reading, key to the study of borders. Wine as a drink, a beverage, as a product is tightly connected to where and how it is produced, and who it is produced by. Thus wine has terroir, it has a nationality: within the wine world it is extremely important and a point of emphasis where the wine comes from, which makes a discussion on the nationality of wine interesting but more complicated when said wine is produced in a border area. In fact the same row of grapevines, if divided by a national border, can produce, in the eye of an expert, two very different wines. In the wine region I decided to study, this is the story of many people that I met and I wanted to go and see how it affected the life of wine makers of both Italy and Slovenia that reside in that border area. I will discuss how the symbolic pairing of wine with blood connects it with belonging: how the winemakers show a need to trace a singular lineage, which erases multiplicity of heritage. I will continue explaining how the importance of ‘appellation of origin’ sets up divisions between different kinds of place.
- **THESIS STRUCTURE**

This thesis is structured to follow the comparison between the town and the country. The first chapter aims to create the framework: I present the geographic position of this area and its history, its political position within the European Union and the theoretical framework, using studies about the same area. Chapter One looks at the alterations to and historically changing perceptions of the border as documented in historical records.

From this point the thesis separated into Part I, the Town, comprising of Chapters Two and Three, and Part II, the Country, consisting of Chapters Four and Five.

The second and the third chapters will purely be about the time spent in the town centre: the stories collected by the patients of the clinic, and family and friends of mine since everybody showed interest and wanted to be involved. I have divided the chapters so that Chapter Two shows who the ‘townies’ are and how they relate to Slovenia and Slovenians, while Chapter Three shows when and how they cross and how the European Union come into discussion. Together, through a wide range of local people’s narratives, these two chapters provide an ethnographic perspective of the shift of socio-economical boundaries when the borders town of Gorizia and Nova Gorica undergo a transformation: the economic discrepancies and the ‘marginality and centrality’ of the towns was at time of renegotiation.

Along the same lines Chapters Four and Five present the wine makers: in Chapter Five I discuss who are the winemakers I work with, how they present themselves and their job especially in relation to their Slovenian counterpart. Chapter Five is exactly like Chapter Three about when the wine makers cross and how the entrance of Slovenia into the European Union had an impact on their life.

Five chapters to analyse how the unimportance of the border as a state line is only apparent, because this region has experienced a violent and traumatic past as I will discuss in Chapter One and Italian identity was emphasised at the expense of the Slovenian one during the
Mussolini era as I will discuss in Chapter Two, and there are quite different experiences of capitalist and socialist modernity as I will discuss in Chapter Three. Chapter Four will change setting but continue the conversation because through the winegrowers’ experience I will discuss the contemporary relevance of national, regional and supranational registers of identification. Chapter Five will finally close the discussion by asserting the capacity of economic interests to trump political ones.

There is no doubt in my mind that this thesis is ethnographically heavy and very little theoretically challenging but I guess I just wanted to let the people speak without drawing too many conclusions. My reporting might appear as scattered, vague, and almost generalised information: this is because I am actually trying to convey how there was a general feeling, or rather a need, to discuss the issue of ‘not having a border because of the European Union’ [tr. grazie all’Unione Europea non c’è più un confine], to use the words of an elderly lady in her eighties, who thought that there was nothing there to separate Italians and Slovenians anymore. This is just one of the many ways in which different people, of various ages, differing social backgrounds, upbringings and professions, discussed the removal of the border structures that was happening while I was living there, between August 2008 and August 2009. What I want to come across is the social significance the Italian-Slovenian border had in this area of the North East of Italy and the significance itself is different between the town and the country. I will do so with the aid of three main chunks of anthropological literature: history, border, EU. And, as my own contribution to the discipline of anthropology, I intend to show how, through ‘wine’, we have a new/different analysis of the area’s history, border and EU.
CHAPTER ONE:

THE BORDER: Historical and Political Framework

- WHAT, WHERE AND WHY

Gorizia: a border town, a divided town, a contested area. “Where is Gorizia? [It is] in the North East of Italy, in Friuli Venezia-Giulia on the border with Slovenia. It is a very small town, you probably don’t know where it is...near Trieste, further east from Venice.” This is what I normally say to people when they ask me where I am from, and as I will discuss later on in this chapter, I am not the only citizen of this town that uses this kind of explanation. In preparing for this thesis, I found out that this is also how tourist books and brochures of the area, web sites and archives present this town. Wikipedia, in its Italian pages, presents it as a “the city split in two by the border”, while the English version of it describes it as a “twin town of Nova Gorica” and it continues by saying that it is a part of an area that has been contested between Italy and Slovenia. This chapter aims to analyse this definition of this town and its province by presenting its historical and political context.

Gorizia is a small town but nevertheless a main town, one of the heads [tr. capoluogo], of the region of Friuli Venezia-Giulia, and, as such, it is also a province, which according to the official website counts around one hundred and forty thousand inhabitants. I conducted fieldwork within the town and the north-western hill region of its district, known as Collio. I will give a more detailed description of each site in the relevant chapters, however below I include three maps that aim to clarify exactly where I was and where the events I am about to describe took place.

1 e.g.:


2 http://www.provincia.gorizia.it/custom/home.php?
The first of the three is just to clearly point out where Gorizia is within the Italian territory since the description I gave at the beginning of this chapter is vague; it is normally given by me, and those who are like me [Gorizians abroad], with the assumption that Gorizia is not really taken in much consideration because of its marginal location and its size. In fact, in a novel (travel diary) I found about Gorizia, the author reports that a certain Lorenzo she met on the train on her way to Gorizia told her that “Gorizia non è niente” [tr. Gorizia is nothing] (Horrocks, 2003:58). My assumption as a local of the town and this definition of nothingness will also be looked at in the next few pages.

The second map, which follows in the next page, is a close-up of the district of the town; not of the whole purple area where the ‘Gorizia’ dot appears in the map above, but of the red dot itself. In the following map, the ‘red area’ marks the Province of Gorizia: in big bold white letters I report the name of the areas within the province as they are known to locals and as they are presented to the tourist and as they will be used in this chapter and throughout the thesis as a whole. The neighbouring areas of the Gorizia province, which will also be mentioned, are also marked: the province of Trieste, the one of Udine and more importantly the state of Slovenia. Within the red area, we can see that in the top right-hand corner there is darker patch, which stands to represent the actual town. The white shading under the words ‘Collio’ and the words ‘Carso’ emphasise the wine areas. My fieldwork took place from the
corner that stretches around the town and the whole northern border of the province: the hills of Collio.

Having said that and having shown the province of Gorizia, it makes sense now to zoom in even closer and include a representation of the exact area that I explored between August
2008 and July 2009: where the people I met, worked with and talked to lived. And, just to be more true to my project, as I will discuss in the second part of this thesis, it has been taken from a series of prints made to represent the wine areas of Friuli Venezia-Giulia, the region of Italy I was in. The map reported below is in fact part of a series made by Sevino dating back to 1984 and printed by ERSA\(^3\), the *Azienda Agricola per lo Sviluppo Rurale* (tr. agricultural development agency), which I found by accident in an old bar of the town at the beginning of my fieldwork and which the owner kindly allowed me to scan.

In the Gorizia district, in the year I was on fieldwork, my overall impression was that the residents were in search of distinction, of difference, they were in search of a border despite living on one. The reason seemed to have been that they suffer a loss for the disappearance of

\(^3\)This information is actually taken from the prints themselves because I could not find anything else about them in neither catalogues, books, archives nor internet research.
the physical structure, the visible border between Italy and Slovenia. In fact it seemed to me that the border, removed as a physical structure, was then invisible to ordinary people in Gorizia. Throughout the thesis I will show how much emphasis was put on the border's physical structure as a divide and therefore how they did not notice that other forms of differentiation were starting to appear. The border has been re-invoked in new ways, which I will show in the next few chapters.

To get to the description and the analysis of such processes I will start in this chapter with a historical overview to situate contemporary bordering dynamics within a temporal and political context. In fact there were always Italians and there were always Slovenians in the area, there was always a mixture, cohabitation, but it was modern history that called for a need of distinction that I witnessed while I was there. It is recent historical events that brought people to the need of some kind of border, as a form of order.

Thus, this first chapter will look at the history of this area, from when the town of Gorizia was founded to the days I was there on fieldwork, to make the reader aware of why the people of the area were discussing the removal of the border structures in the way they were. More space and discussion is given to the actual town of Gorizia and its origin rather than the whole area I conducted fieldwork in; the reason for this is that the primary concern of this chapter is to report the political history of the area which was mainly planned out in the centre of town. When discussing main political events, when I will talk about Gorizia and its area, I will mean the province and the parts of the province that specifically neighbour with Slovenia: to make reference to the second map, it will be the areas of Carso and, mainly, Collio.

Reporting the historical context will also help to situate this study of the Italian–Slovenian border within the anthropology of borders and of the EU in order to clarify why this particular border is distinctive, on the basis of what has already been written about this border and what this site shares with other borders. Through the voices of people that lived during the
most recent historical events (e.g. the Second World War, the Yugoslavian war and Slovenia’s independence and the accession of Slovenia to the EU), I will discuss how traumatic the recent past was and its ongoing relevance for the members of the older generation of this area of study. I will report the ways in which a politics of national statehood, in both its capitalist and socialist variants, served to institutionalise ethnicity during the twentieth century (Wörsdörfer, 2009). This historical grounding is meant to serve as a framework for the other chapters.

- GORIZIA: EXISTING LITERATURE

All the studies of the Italian-Slovenian border that I was able to find make reference to Trieste (e.g. Warwick 2003, Ballinger 2003, Worsdofer 2009), with the exception of Minnich (2003) who looked at the northernmost part of Friuli Venezia-Giulia, where the region borders with Austria in the North and Slovenia in the East. The only reference to Gorizia that I found within the non-Italian speaking literature was an article published in the Annales de Géographie by Sanguin and Mrak (2003) titled, “The Italian-Slovenian border in the Framework of the European Union’s Enlargement”. By looking simply at the year of those publications it seems to me that at the time when the accession of Slovenia to the European Union was imminent, a lot of interest was sparked in academics and it is not a coincidence that all of them decided to review the history of this borderland. However in this chapter I will go beyond the time of the accession, and I will report the events of 2007 when the Slovenian political representatives signed the Schengen agreements, which consequently brought the removal of the border structures between Italy and Slovenia. In fact, the Schengen Agreements, first developed in 1985, define that member states of the Schengen area will remove border controls among each other and reinforce the controls at the borders with non-
members. Despite Italy being a member state of the EU since its foundation in the European Coal and Steel Community (1952) and being a founder member in 1957 (Treaty of Rome – European Economic Community), Gorizia locals only started talking about the European Union in relation to the border subsequent to the accession of Slovenia to the European Union in 2004 (Ursic, 2004) and, even more strongly, when Slovenia was becoming a member of the Schengen Zone (articles of the 21 December 2007). This is important because the local residents always worded the removal of the border structures with this kind of sentence: “adesso che il confine non c’è più” [tr. now that the border is not there anymore]. This implies that the locals made it sound like a complete removal of the border, as if Italy and Slovenia were not to be two separate entities anymore.

Thus, I will argue in this chapter that the study of the internal border of the EU and the Schengen space are as equally important as studies made of the external perimeters and peripheries of said entity. The intent is in fact to create, here in these first pages, a grounding of the broader political contexts to see how the lived experiences of those living at the Italian-Slovenian border fit within. I will report for example the debates over the right of states to temporarily suspend Schengen arrangements and move towards ‘smart borders’, and the way in which the making of some borders is coupled with the re-emphasis upon security at Schengen’s outside borders. I will analyse for example how the temporary suspension of an open border for the G8 summit in 2009 is paradigmatic of a tension between openness and securitisation that is at the heart of the contemporary EU project. And that is why this study is compared with discussion of the re-bordering at the edges of Schengen area (Gallardo, 2008 and Nikocevic, 2005).

This chapter is meant as a framework to make sense of the paradoxes of openness and closure that characterised contemporary imagination (and politics) of Europe and the

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4 I will not define in more detail the Schengen area, because this is all that matters to those to whom I talked.
meaning of ‘Europe’ itself at the Italian-Slovenian border. As I will explore in the following pages, this idea, the idea that there was no border between Italy and Slovenia, created varying conversations and rhetoric about the European Union, but, most importantly, emphasised what sizeable impact this border had on peoples’ lives. I will discuss how those I talked to believed that the Italian-Slovenian border, that straddles the peripheries of the town, put them on the map and made the town they lived in recognisable; at the same time I will describe how the people who work for the local media or who are members of local cultural organisations are afraid to ‘defend the border’ (to borrow from Pelkmans, 2006) because it might make them look less European.

In order to explain why people talked to me about the Italian-Slovenian border and how these tensions and contradictions came about at the removal of its border structures, I will first dedicate a section of this chapter to the history of this town, bringing in not just the local literature but also the voices of those who lived through it.

- HOW DID IT GET TO THIS? HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

As Cole and Wolf explain in the preface of their ethnography on the Italian-Swiss border, in an alpine valley, “anthropology cannot do without history, for it is only through an anthropologically informed historical account of the genesis and development of the forces impinging upon our social and cultural microcosms that we can arrive at an adequate assessment of the ways in which these forces act upon each other in the present” (1974:xi). And this is also exactly the case in this fieldwork area, the present situation can only be explained by going back to the origin of this town and looking at how Italian and Slovenians always cohabitated in the same territory: people did not move but the government, the sovereignty changed.
According to local literature, which includes history books, pamphlets (De Vitis Piemonti & Spangher, 1997; De Grassi, 2006) and also tourist guides and photographic collections (Averna, 2007), the town has its origins in the village ‘Gorizia’ (Latin name derived from the Slavic word ‘gorica’, meaning ‘hill’). This existence is formally documented in 1001 A.D., but some settlements were probably already there in Roman times. It is reported in the above referenced books that the area, where Gorizia now is, was deemed, since its origins, to be in an ideal geographical position for settlements: the valley where the village ‘Gorizia’ was built stretched between two rivers, Isonzo and Vipaco, and was surrounded by hills, thus creating natural borders making the town harder to invade. The above literature also reports that groups of both Latin and Slavic origin settled in the village because this place was, since the Roman empire, an area of transit and at a crossroads between different territories: as such, it provided a meeting point and a ‘market-centre’.

As far as political history is concerned, the first mention of the village of Gorizia is dated to 1001 AD, when the emperor Ottone III donated its territory and the castle of Sylicanum (now known as Salcano/Solkan, a village in Slovenia and part of the municipality of Nova Gorica, just across the border\(^5\)) to two members of the local aristocracy: half went to the Patriarch of Aquileia, Giovanni IV, and the other half to the Duke of Friuli Verihen, also known as Guarento. However, more than a century later (1202) the Count of Gorizia at the time, from the family Eppenstein, reunited the territories under his government. For four centuries the territory remained under their government and administration and it expanded considerably. In 1500 the Hapsburgs took control over the County of Gorizia and in 1508, when under the control of the emperor Maximilian, the Venetian Republic sent an army to conquer the town, successfully. However, one year later in 1509, the Hapsburgs returned to reign the area and Gorizia remained an Austrian town until the end of the First World War: these were the

\(^5\)The map at the end of this section shows in the top right corner the town of Solkan.
centuries when the Gorizia territory not only expanded but also became rich and prosperous and a centre of market and tourism, according to what is reported on the town's tourist website (http://www3.comune.gorizia.it/turismo/it/il-periodo-asburgico-1509-1918 last accessed in January 2011) and can be seen on the map below that represents the Hapsburg Littoral in 1897.

For the purposes of this thesis the Hapsburgs' domination and the historical events that occurred after 1916 are the most interesting, because those were the years to which most people refer when they discuss the differences between Italy and Slovenia and the border
between them. From the nineteenth century to today there have been two world conflicts, a freedom fight, the foibe [tr. sinkhole] killings, the exile and a very hard post-war period that have not been dealt with and discussed properly: and those are moments that are needed to understand what this border is separating and how deep the divide is, for seventy years of history.

Notably, especially people in their seventies and eighties who I met mainly through my grandmother, used the Austro-Hungarian Empire to explain how the territory of Gorizia got larger. However, they emphasized that after the First World War it became Italian, even those territories that at the time of my fieldwork were in Slovenia (the majority of them made specific reference to Salcano/Solkan, Nova Gorica and the whole of its municipality - not the Istria coast⁶). To two of my grandmother’s friends, Marisa and Luisa, this was very important because, as they said, “the territory became what it was thanks to the Austrians [that is how they referred to the Hapsburgs] and the Italians liberated it. That was the territory; everything that happened after that was ‘unnatural’ (tr. innaturale), because they divided something that had a history as a whole (tr. una storia unica)”. In fact, in 1916, the whole territory of Gorizia became part of the Kingdom of Italy: Italian armies fought eleven battles with the Austrian armies in the region (the Isonzo river battles) trying to liberate the territory of Trieste and during the sixth of these battles they acquired the Gorizia territory. As Marisa and Marianna told me, their families were still considering themselves more Austrian than Italian; according to local historians (Di Gianantonio & Nemec, 2000) Italian nationality only started to become stronger for Gorizians during the Fascist era (1922-1947). Before then, different groups of Slavs and Italians were living under the Italian state. To be precise, according to Wörsdörfer (2009:27) the Fascio of Gorizia was created between the summer

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⁶ The reason for this is not only that these were the territories most of my grandmother’s friends grew up considering to be Italy, but probably also because the districts of Idria and Postumia were added post-1918 and they would have been territory that their parents or grandparents would have talked to them about as they were growing up. In fact, when these elderly people were narrating this history, they usually started with sentences such as: “as my granddad used to tell me”. 

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and the autumn of 1920 which was part of the branch ‘border fascism’, which was asking for the complete annexation of the region to the kingdom of Italy in order to gain real Italian Unity (2009:27). In fact according to this author WWI in this area was always meant to be a point of redefinition for the region national identity (2009:291); there is nothing to be surprised about then if Slovenians and Croats started more and more to be involved in the Yugoslavian cause as a way to defend themselves from Italian expansionism. Di Gianantonio & Nemec (2000: 33), Vivante (1997) and also De Grassi (2006) described how already at the end of WWI and the years immediately after, the cohabitation in the same territory of people of both Italian and Slovenian ethnic origin had created tension between the newly formed Yugoslavian state and the Italian local authorities. During the Fascist years this only increased as an extremely nationalistic and disrespectful attitude towards whatever was different from ‘Italian’ was officially promoted. In 1923, the Italian government passed the Gentile’s reform, which banned the Slovene language (Di Gianantonio & Nemec, 2000:64): Luisa, my grandmother’s eighty year old friend told me that despite being only little at the time, she remembered that her mother and her auntie were not speaking in Slovene anywhere outside the home because they were really afraid of what might have happened to them. Luisa added that, for that same reason, she did not speak Slovene: she could understand it, but she still felt that there was something wrong (tr. qualcosa di male) in speaking it. Mussolini’s approach towards the ethnic minorities, such as the Slovenian one in the area, was exclusionist and it led to a series of events, that today would be categorised as ‘ethnic cleansing’ (Di Gianantonio & Nemec, 2000), and this inevitably compromised the peaceful cohabitation of Italians and Slovenians in Gorizia by generating hatred among neighbours, colleagues, and even friends. As reported in Wörsdörfer (2009:), for Mussolini it was always about emphasising the Italian-ness of the territory: for example he considered the Isonzo river a holy river (2009:35). Those

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7 Terminology that Wörsdörfer attributes to Pirjevec (1995)
of Slovenian origin like Cristina, who when I met her was over eighty-five years old, had to keep their heads down, being excluded and marginalised: she remembered that her two childhood friends were not allowed to play with her after school, their mothers would not let them, because, as Cristina’s mother explained to her, they were worried that something might happen to them since Cristina was Slovenian. She also remembered when all their documents were changed: her surname was Kristiančič, but her younger brother’s surname was Cristiani, as the government was Italianizing all the surnames. As a reaction to the Fascist drastic measures in the 1930s, several organisations for the defence of the Slovenian minority\(^8\), present since the mid 1920s, started active fights against the authorities (Wörsdörfer 2009: 143): to begin with people were refusing the Italianisation of the surname and to be listed in the Fascist party, but as the repression continued the rebellion was organising attacks and killing of the main representative of the Fascist Party (Di Gianantonio and Nevec 2000: 80-95). Distinction between who was of Italian and Slovenian became clearer and clearer.

Between 1943 and 1945 Gorizia was under the occupation of the Nazi regime: this further intensified conflict and separation between the residents of Slovenian origin and the ones of Italian origin, as the partisans that were doing the most of the resistance were of Slovenian origin. In fact, Marisa, my grandmother’s friend mentioned above, told me that by being Italian and by being her father the owner of one of Gorizia’s restaurants, she had to dress as a ‘Giovane Fascista’ (Young Fascist uniform) just to go to school or mass. She was young and she did not completely understand or care what that meant, but it was enough to not be approached by some boys of Slovenian origin that she really liked (tr. piaceva).

Elga, an eighty year old woman, remembered living in this big building with an internal courtyard where children used to play. She grew up there and one of the families that lived there with them was of Slovenian origin: she continued saying that they were not particularly

\(^8\)e.g. Osvoldina Fronta, TIGR
close but her brothers sometimes played with two of the Slovenian boys. They were not friends but they were not enemies: however “in 1945 I [Elga] was walking through the courtyard and that horrible woman spat on me, just because she heard me say the day before I was proud to be Italian. She forgot she was living in Italy, she should have been proud too”. That was around the time when a new conflict began between Yugoslavia and Italy: on May 1st 1945, World War II was over but a group of Yugoslav partisans invaded Gorizia. Di Gianantonio and Nevec (2000: 176-177) described how Fascism sympathisers, supporters of the Italian State and nationality were taken at work or in the middle of the night by Tito’s partisans and they never returned.

The control that the partisans had over the town lasted barely over a month (forty days), but even under the control of the Allies, which started June 12th 1945, the conflicts did not change: local residents, as reported by Di Gianantonio and Nevec (2000: 178-199) did not know if Gorizia would become part of the Yugoslavian territory or the Italian one and therefore they did not know where to live, how to act, to whom to show their allegiance. The Belgrade Treaty of the 9th of June 1945 divided the area of Gorizia, as part of Venezia Giulia, into Zone A, under Allied military administration, and Zone B, administered by the Yugoslav army, as shown in the image in the next page.

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9 This is remembered as the Foibe period (http://www.storicamente.org/05_studi_ricerche/cattunar_link13.htm last accessed in April 2011); foibe was the name of the deep hole in the ground into which victims were thrown whilst still alive.
The two years between Belgrad Treaty and the Paris Peace Conference are described by Di Gianantonio and Nemec (2000: 177-190) as terrible: both the Italian and the Yugoslavian community were constantly, striking rebelling, protesting. According to these authors the population of Gorizia and its district though of the border as something temporarily and when the Allies visited the town nobody was prepared to ‘pick a side’. The two areas, the town and its countryside, were complementary and dependent on each other in terms of the local economy and the division in Zone A and B had effectively deprive one side of the population of the centre of business (the town) and the other of the products need to fuel the economy (the countryside). As I will show in Chapter Two, it was very hard for people deciding what to do, on which side of the border to go/stay. Several are the tales of people who were moving the provisional border posts, and it was most common in the countryside, like in Collio, so that a winegrower for example would manage to keep the whole of his vineyard in the same state\(^\text{10}\).

\(^{10}\) Refer to Chapter Five for more details.
To locals like myself the best example is the story of Countess Lidia\textsuperscript{11}, whose villa ended up right on the border. She used her wealth and political alliances (she was apparently Churchill’s friend) to influence the Allies army station in town to place the provisional border. She was in fact successful and the border trace is the proof: the line that was drawn straight, bends right at the peripheries of her house by the Salcano/Solkan border crossing. Locals authors and filmmakers, such as Covaz (2007: 45-51) and Veluscek and Medved (2004), regards her story as one of the ‘funny one’ that characterised this border area.

On February 10\textsuperscript{th} 1947 the issue was finally resolved, and the new border was agreed by the Allies: the town was officially divided on the 15\textsuperscript{th} of September 1947. The Yugoslavia Federation gained ninety per cent of the agricultural territory (4/5 of district area of the town), but the town centre remained in Italy. The border passed through the Northern peripheries of Gorizia, causing the Transalpina Square to be divided in half; the border was closed on the 16\textsuperscript{th} of September 1947 and it remained difficult to cross until the 1980s, when the Cold War ended. The half of the Transalpina Square that remained in Yugoslavia is now part of Nova Gorica, a town that was built starting on the streets of Gorizia’s periphery that ‘were forgotten in Yugoslavia’. To say it in Bruno’s words a frustrated seventy-eight years old man that never understood why local residents were not asked an opinion on how the border should have been delineated.

At the very beginning the border was welcomed and celebrated, especially by the Yugoslav community because they lived in liberation from what they lived under Italian occupation (considering specifically the fascist years). Soon enough though the World political landscape was divided by the Cold War and this border became a dividing line between democratic Western Europe and the Communist Eastern one: controls across border intensify and the border was stopped being just manned: barbed wires were places along the whole line of the border.

\textsuperscript{11} Lidovska Hornik
border and road blocks at all the main crossing points. In the countryside, in order to keep undersurveillance big open spaces, the government decided to erect watchtowers and some of them are still visible in the Collio landscape.

- BEFORE 2004

Before the entry of Slovenia to the European Union, Italy was seen as having a considerably stronger economy. Italy was part of the Western World of capitalism and, in the view of those who lived in Slovenia, stronger than Slovenia. Italians who lived in Italy and Slovenians who lived and worked in Italy declared this to me: Italian “Gorizians” were richer than their Slovenian counterparts.

As can be seen in the numerous stories I collected about people who were smuggling essential goods such as flour and sugar across the border, this started immediately after the end of the Second World War. The best examples come from the people who lived in Collio, and whose land was divided by the border\textsuperscript{12}: they had special agricultural work permits allowing them to cross into Yugoslavia at a time when the border was closed. Some farmers, after the border appearance, owned land across the state border: as such they were issued with dual ownership licences. As part of this licence they hold permission to farm land on the border area, however with the condition that they would not grow anything higher that forty centimetres. Having the the licence and the permit was not enough for crossing: they also need to have a passport, but the it could take about a year to be issued.

The first two years (1947-1949) crossing the border was dangerous: oftens, as reported by Veluscek and Medved’s documentary (2004), the solution was to straddle the border line hoping to catch a glimpse of a relative that was on the other side. Because the border guards were not allowing any kind of contact nor communication, people were trying their hardest to

\textsuperscript{12} I will present them more accurately in Chapter Four
look inconspicuous and pretending they were just for the sake of taking a walk. Finally in the
Spring of 1949 the first permits to meet up with relatives that lived ‘on the other side’ were
issued: however they only allowed for half hour meetings. This lasted until 1955 when Udine
Agreements were the first step towards the freedom of crossing of people and goods.

As the border became more permeable the economic relations between Italy and Slovenia
remained the same: Italians were still considering themselves richer. However, this was not
shown by actions such as smuggling goods in order to help the poorest part, but in the benefit
from the fact that Slovenians were ‘so poor that they would work for less money’ – as said in
the words of Anita. I met Anita at the doctor’s clinic where I was working: she was in her early
fifties and she worked as an administrator in one of the local schools. She was explaining to
another patient, who, like her, was in the waiting room, that her husband worked as an
administrator for the City council and that they had three children. As one of my duties was
reception, my desk was in the waiting room and I overheard the whole conversation. Anita
was saying that she would not know what she would do if she did not have a woman to clean
the house three times at week, as she did not have the time to do it. Anita was explaining that
the fact that she had been able to afford this since the mid-1980s was not because her or her
husband were rich, but because the people from the Slovenian countryside would work for
virtually next to nothing.

The members of the Brambilla family –the winemakers I worked most closely with-
reinforced this point: they told me that, during the 1980s, the border became more relaxed
and passing from one country to the other was not as problematic; Italians were often going
to eat in Yugoslavian restaurants during the weekend or to put petrol in their car or to buy
cigarettes, since ‘on the other side’ (tr. dall’ altra parte) things were cheaper.

The 1990s, after the break-up of former Yugoslavia, was the setting for even more relaxed
border crossing. The break out of the Yugoslavian war was a moment lived with a lot of
anxiety in Gorizia since there was a strong military presence in the town. The Italian
government had sent their army to protect their border that it was now divided them with a
war zone: the time between the 27th June 1991 and the 7th July 1991 (the ten days Slovenian
took part in the war) is when this region saw again a new border. From 1991s onwards
experience of illegal border crossing and illigal immigraction became stronger and stronger,
scaring the citizen of the area. : if in the 1980s, people were still going through regular checks
of ID documents and also of what they had in their cars, in the 1990s, more often than not, it
was just a case to pull over next to the window of the cabin where officers of the border patrol
were sitting and show you had the documents with you: it was hardly necessary to open them
(this mainly on the Italian side, controls were slightly stricter on the Slovenian side).13.
For thirteen years then nothing much changed, the border stabilised and stayed easily
crossable one. The next big difference arrived eight months before I went on fieldwork in
December 2007, when Slovenian, now part of the Schengen space, did not need to be entered
by document control anymore. When I went on fieldwork, Gorizia was on the border with
Slovenia, but the growth of Nova Gorica and the beginning of the dismantle of the borbedr
structures made it almost impossible, in certain areas of the town, to tell where one town
ends and the other begins. The map in the following page shows how these two municipalities
could easily be seen as one.

13 Drawn from various local people’s account, but also past personal experience.
WHERE ARE WE? GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW:

_Gorizia, città d'Europa_ [Gorizia, city of Europe]: that is the road sign that welcomes visitors at the entrance of the town. The people who live in this town and its district had the tendency to consider themselves to be at the farthest Eastern boundary of the European Union. The locals were not obviously taking into consideration Greece, which became a member state in 1981 and is geographically further East. This peripheral location was emphasised to me when I was asking the people I met how they would describe where Gorizia was.

I started asking this question after a conversation I had with Boris, one of the regular patients of the doctor's clinic. Boris was in his late sixties; his sister migrated to Dover at the end of the WWII after she married an English soldier that fought in the area of Gorizia. One day he asked me: “So how do you explain where you are from to your friends? My sister always had to say that she was from near Venice or Trieste, if she was lucky enough that the people she talked to had fought in the war¹⁴”. I could not help but smile because I too say I am from near Venice and I did say that to him. In Boris’ opinion, Gorizia had its own right to be known, “up to a few years ago here is where there was the European border, we were the divided town”. This sparked my questioning to other people, mainly friends and family, on how they would describe where Gorizia is: the usual answers were “on the border between Italy and Slovenia”.

On the first of May 2004 Slovenia, along with nine other states, became a member of the EU. On that day, some locals, such as Boris, felt that perhaps Gorizia’s location had changed, and became somehow less important. In geographical terms nothing really changed, but economically and politically the town was not at the edge of the European Union anymore; that edge had moved further east.

¹⁴ Meaning WWII.
GORIZIA: MORE MARGINAL AT THE CENTRE OF EUROPE?

On the 1st of May 2004, this town was the chosen site for the celebration for the ideal of European Enlargement. Gorizia was chosen because, until that day, it had been presented in the media and in the history books as the border town, the divided town—compared to Berlin in many respects—; thanks to this depiction of Gorizia, politicians were able to present the event through the slogan ‘the last wall of Europe is falling down’ [cade l’ultimo muro d’Europa]. Gorizia was thought of as being marginal, but that sense of marginality was what was now giving it its recognition: it was clear to the people of the town that they had been the last stop of the Capitalist world. Everything across this town border, until 1989 at least, was Socialism. Being at the margin is here discussed as a form of empowerment (e.g. Serementakis, 1991; Tsing, 1993; Stewart, 1996), because they had special ‘perks’ by being in this location. In fact the region Friuli Venezia Giulia is a region ‘a statuto speciale’ (with special status) since January 1st 1963. This means, to put it very simply, that the region it is granted autonomy from the national government in applying certain decisions. This autonomy was given due to the fact the region was a border region and by the presence of different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minorities. In particular, it was given because of the restructuring of this territory after 1954 when the border agreements between Italy and Slovenia had been finalised. By law it appeared that the region was impoverished and needed autonomy in rebuilding itself. To the local residents this just meant having perks: “One thing that used to be great about living here” said Alessandro, a twenty-three year old, who was born, grew up and worked in Gorizia, “was that by crossing the border you got cheap cigarettes, cheap petrol, and cheaper drinks. And this was because they were just across the border. Now [2008] they are not cheaper anymore because the border is gone”. So to Alessandro, despite the reason why autonomy was granted, marginality was something to emphasise, its border proximity was something good.
Acquiring a geographically central position in the European Union, in the opinion of many of residents who saw in the border an economic advantage such as Alessandro, would have turned Gorizia, paradoxically, into what Green (2005) has described as being marginal: an in-between ambiguous entity. In fact, in the opinion of many, this border should, or had, put Gorizia on the map. As I have already discussed, Boris was one those that thought the border should have been given some form of recognition and Mariapaola thought like him. Mariapaola was a retired college teacher of history who was a member of the *Incontri Culturali Mittleeuropa*, an association that I will describe in more depth in the following pages. She said to me that “this town because of its geographical position, because of its border, has a very rich cultural patrimony which should be recognised. This border is our strength, our way to get to know more than just our own culture. People seem to think it is a limit, but it is because they do not look deeper”. In Mariano’s opinion, he being another member of the *Incontri Culturali Mittleeuropa*, Gorizia was known for this border. Maybe not always in a good light, but it was given ‘that special something’ (tr. *quel qualcosa di speciale*) that not many towns have, certainly not in Italy: “it is not for nothing”, he said, “that we have been compared to the Italian Berlin: there are not many divided towns around. We are different, we are special”. The border in all these narratives is talked about as a form of uniqueness and recognition, as something that gave value. And with the entry of Slovenia to the EU, the border that had put Gorizia on the map began to take on less significance to the extent that there will not be a physical border anymore. Boris in fact told me, “there is no point that you come and look at the border now, because now there is not a border to look at”. Because of the removal of the border structures, the people from the area and the media discussed the border in terms of it not being there anymore [tr. *adesso che il confine non c'è più*]; as if it has fallen [tr. *il confine è caduto*]. It was a rainy October Thursday afternoon and

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15 The dismantling and propositions for different uses of the border structures started while I was on fieldwork.
Giuseppe P. - a fifty year old man who was one of the regulars at the clinic - and I were on our own in the waiting room, and I was saying to him that I was trying to get hold of some pictures of the celebrations that happened in the town at the border controls and in the Transalpina Square the previous December when Slovenia became a member of the Schengen zone. He told me: “I wish I could help, my son was there but as far as I know he did not take any pictures, but it was amazing. The paper talked about all the people that were there on both sides and that they were ‘dying’ (tr. morivano dalla voglia) to be the first one to walk over to the other side without having to show their documents. They said there were not as many as they had anticipated but they were still many. Some people wanted to take something down to have the dismantling of the border there and then”. I then joked that they must have thought they were in Berlin and Giuseppe P. replied: “well the border is gone, or it is going, you heard the constant discussion”\(^{16}\). Mariano and Giuseppe P. compared the border at the peripheries of Gorizia to the Berlin Wall. However, the border in Gorizia was never a wall as such (in most places it was barbed wire) and the border structures are yet to be demolished, they might not even be demolished at all but put to a different use, as I will discuss in Chapter Three.

- THE EU AND THE SCHENGEN BORDERS

In her recent (2010) study on bordering practices, Wendy Brown notes a global move towards the mounting of physical perimeter fences around states that she situates within a discussion on global shifts in the relationship between states and sovereignty. And a similar argument has been drawn by Zaiotti (2007): this author calls it the ‘culture of border control’ (2007:33).

\(^{16}\) The landscape of the Gorizia town will be discussed more in depth in Chapter Three.
What is happening at the Italian-Slovenian border does question Brown’s hypothesis, or at least complicate it by showing how the increase in security along the outer borders of Schengen is coupled with the removal of border structures within. However there are parts of Brown’s discussion (2010) that make understandable the situation of the Italian-Slovenian border as I have interpreted; in fact, Brown (2010) actually discusses, analyses and deconstructs the physical/cultural object that a WALL is, and throughout this thesis I look at the emphasis that local residents give to the physical structures of the border. If Browns (2010) discusses why there are walls, what, where and when they are built, I look on what happens when they are removed. Her outcomes do though reinforce my argument, because she said people look for these walls and they build one, and I say when people find themselves at the removal of one they look for another one, because the border defines them. Defines them in the sense that it gives them a definition; a definition in the sense of structure, a definition in the sense of containment. Brown’s argument is that walls Shows people’s desire for protection and boundaries in a world where there does not seem to be any. Her containment and protection stands against my distinction and definition of where the banner “European” tends to blur who is who and what is where.

Many anthropologists discuss the dismantling of borders in the European Union as a way to transform or to reduce the political significance of the notion of the nation state (Bellier & Wilson, 2000; Wilson, 1998; Borneman & Fowler, 1997), but they do not analyse the actual ‘border removal’, nor do they spend time in focusing on how the border is constituted in this specific European Union moment. I am interested in how national boundaries are institutionalised in the lives of ordinary people, those who live and work in a currently somewhat ambiguous and changing European context. The ambiguity comes from the unclearness of its actual presence and the ambivalence local people felt towards it: the border had confined them within a specific location. Through an analysis of this border
transformation I am attempting to understand the process through which the whole idea of Europe is constituted in people’s everyday lives. In the past, people did discuss the possibility of the re-unification of the towns of Gorizia and Nova Gorica.

Across both these two towns, the geographical distinction was made very ambiguous by the removal of the border structures. According to what has been said prior to, and during the Enlargement celebration event (http://www.primomaggioagorizia.it/, last accessed in July 2008), because of the ‘fall’ of the Italian-Slovenian border, Gorizia and Nova Gorica should be the symbol, the embodiment of Europe, as was said by Mr Prodi. Mr. Prodi, the President of the European Commission in 2004, did consider political changes: in his opinion, the expansion of the European Union into Slovenia was a political masterpiece born from the necessity of peace (tr. from http://www.primomaggioagorizia.it/, last accessed in July 2008).

The dismantling of the last physical barrier between Slovenia and Italy means, in the president’s rhetoric, the end of the last physical barrier between West and East. There are still however, Prodi continued, mental borders to dismantle: those borders, he suggested, are unperceivable to people, since they cannot see nor touch them, but, “unluckily”, they seem to be very well marked and engraved in the consciences of many Italians and Slovenians (Ibid.).

The two halves of the town though still belong to two different states, but, in the conversations I had, this issue was not addressed. Thus, as discussed by Mr Prodi, the border did not disappear: its physical presence was undoubtedly being underemphasised, and the rules about the border changed significantly, but people still drew attention to the difference. In fact, as I will describe in Chapter Two, people did not recognise a significant (social) change in the border. Actually, remarks such as the ones quoted above that refer to the inexistence of the border demonstrate that, in the process of this political change, they did not recognise a border at all: the Italian-Slovenian border became invisible to the people that lived in the area. This is exactly the opposite of what Pelkmans (2006) has discussed about the Georgian-
Turkish frontier. Pelkmans (2006) argues that before the border was closed, the border area was a single social region. The same goes for Gorizia and the territory where now Nova Gorica has been built. In the case of Gorizia and Nova Gorica the impact for the residents in the Italian side lied in the fact that they could not see a border anymore and therefore they talked about the area as a single social region again.

This border is inside the EU and it is as such different to theories at the edge of the EU that take much more space in the study of border. Some of this literature still helps to reflect on some issues of an internal EU border, especially since I have not found a similar study on an EU internal border. Two are the cases I want to bring up here, even if there would be many to choose from: I picked works by Nikocevic (2005) and Ferrer-Gallardo (2008) because I can directly relate to both of them.

Nikocevic's article (2005) is about the Slovenian-Croatian border: it brings up the history of the area, the States perspective in how has been divided and how it should be divided, and it also discusses the locals’ perspective on the area and how their everyday practices and the history of the border has not been taken into consideration. Still exploring the Slovenian-Croatian border as a whole, Nikocevic (2005) compares in more detail two regions of it, the first one where the border is most rigid and the second one where the border is 'softer'. On the side where the border is more relaxed, the author explains how, despite the state line there was a constant crossover of people without much control (e.g the peripheral border, mainly countryside, the cemetery for example with no border control). Overall Nikocevic (2005) wants to give an example of "joint life" for the communities that live on the border. This joint life came to an end with the Slovenian-Croatian border becoming a Schengen border, a border at the peripheries of the Schengen agreement that separates who is in and who is out of the EU. The author claims to want to show how the States’ interest are different from locals’ perspectives and experiences of life on the border: the State perspective is to
make the border a clear cut line of separation between the state territories, despite the fact of how life has been experienced on the borders by the local communities. I chose this article because it almost shows the process in reverse: the Slovenian-Croatian border by becoming the outside Schengen border gave a clear cut distinction: it defined (or tries to) who is in and who is out. When the border is inside the same space (the Schengen one as for Italy and Slovenia), the distinction becomes blurred. Between Italy and Slovenia, as I will describe in the following pages, there is more political emphasis on those similarities brought upon by “joint life” and “community spirit”, especially because of the shared history.

And it is on this point about shared history that Ferrer-Gallardo’s article (2008) helped me. This article maps the history of the Spanish-Moroccan border. The author’s main intent is to understand how the border between the EU and “non-EU” is expressed in an area with such a particular history of colonisation. The emphasis is put on the meaning and functionality of an external Schengen border. In fact the author expresses how this kind of border can help to explore national categories but also post-national ones: Spain-Morocco and EU-non-EU. The author is very clear in explaining that one border does not substitute the other: the borderline has simply got two meanings. And this brings the author to affirm that this duality (national / post-national) is precisely one of the paradoxes of the EU. Ferrer-Gallardo (2008) analyses this contradiction between what is supposed to be a fortified border but yet permeable. To get to this point he analyses the history of the border using the concept of Lebensraum (both for Spanish expansion and the EU enlargement): expansion of the national territory to create more room for those who are expanding, which means that territories might belong to the same economic/political unit but they are ordered in a certain hierarchy. This can explain why the border can be permeable and easily crossable for economic reasons, but not so much in the movement of people across said border. The author borrows from Anderson (2001) in defying the border selective. The discussion then moves on to how the clear-cut definition
that outer borders of the EU want to have is not easily applicable in the border areas themselves. Ferrer-Gallardo (2008) discusses that, ultimately, the Spanish-Moroccan border is a symbolic border: a border to defy and construct otherness. This kind of otherness would bring more unity in the EU context. However the local community reinterpret this strict divide, this clear-cut border and reassess it into a series of boundaries. I found similarities between the situation I witnessed on the Italian-Slovenian border and what Ferrer-Gallardo described. First of all, the historical framework of this article was very helpful for me, because I am particularly interested in the comparison between the geopolitical situation of the border landscape during colonisation and after the appearance of EU. In fact, it is because of the history of the Italian-Slovenian border that the locals of the Gorizia province invest the last reconstruction of the borderline in a particular way. Obviously in this study there is not an issue of colonisation, but the territory (the border area) has been for centuries under the same sovereignty: as part of the Hapsburg Empire first and then as part of the Italian state. The political territory has been reconfigured at various times. This does consider the fact that subsequently, the border changed: first it was with the Yugoslavian Republic and then with Slovenia. In fact since this territory has been reconfigured, there was first a distancing between the Italian and Slovenian economies when the border was between Italy and Yugoslavia, and then the two communities started getting closer again as Slovenia gained its independence (1991) and slowly but surely became a member of the European Union (2004), and as such an equal of Italy. The two states as members have the same rights. As in Ferrer-Gallardo’s case (2008), in the Italian-Slovenian case there is also a double meaning of the border: the Italian-Slovenian border and an EU internal border. The tension of an internal border is less controversial than the one described for example by this author of an external border of the EY, but it can be experienced at an equal degree of intensity by the locals. In the case of the Italian-Slovenian border in fact, the new spatiality of the Schengen Agreements
does not take into consideration the experience of certain historical events, or how traumatic they were to the people that lived through them. O’Dowd (2003: 4) argues that borders are part of people and they are performed; as we saw for Brown(2010), borders are produced because of the need for order and control. They are the markers of sameness and difference: “between us and them”. In fact throughout the thesis I will underline new practices of re-bordering.

Blokker argues (2008:568) that the future of Europe consists of engaging with and transforming the long term differences, instead of simply being the site where member states meet along political, economic, institutional, and cultural lines. Diversity, in the author’s opinion, is something to consider even if what is different is difficult to articulate when it is constantly changing according to the point of view (a concept expressed also by Delanty, 2005). And diversity among those of Italian and Slovenian groups of the area is something that has been the constant subject of discussion since before the appearance of the state border: it is that difference that created most of the conflict, and it is those conflicts that made the decision for some people to relocate themselves on either side of the border.

Among the people I met in the town of Gorizia, the politics of the European Union are hardly discussed and mainly of no interest. There was more emphasis on the idea of being a mixture of Italian and Slovenian heritage but not European: *siamo misti* [tr. we are a mix], *siamo a metà* [tr. we are in half]. Nadja Velušček, author of several ethnographic documentaries about this border area, argues that the border created two worlds and a borderland. The borderland, of which Gorizia is part, is constituted by two languages united in one territory but as one big group of people, distinct from other Slovenians or other Italians. “We are in half. I think, a lot of us are already in half but a lot of them do not want to admit it. We are mixed, not all of us, but many and we should have respect, as simple as that”. According to Velušček, the communities of Italians and Slovenians have always lived in a mutual exchange,
borrowing from one another, mixing them together. The border separated this group of people but it did not divide them.

“The border can be freedom, or it can be a limit. For my generation growing up on the border meant instead to be conscious that your world is not the only one, but there are others, with different cultures and different histories. We were curious, we wanted to know what was on the other side of the border, where the Isonzo17 was finishing, therefore the border did not simply divide us, but also brought us together”. (quoted from Moja Meja- tr. My border).

This idea of mixture, and of halves, still implies different entities being brought together rather than one. It also underlines unity but not uniformity. This kind of rhetoric is also reinforced by the notion that Gorizia is not one town, but two, built in different times and contexts. Gorizia is a medieval town while Nova Gorica was born after WWII and the closure of the border (1947): a city built by the Yugoslavian Socialist Federation in order to demonstrate that the city should have remained in Yugoslavia (Marega, 2004). Marega argues that Nova Gorica is the political and administrative antagonist of Gorizia, and he suggests that the Yugoslavians, in April 1947, (prior to the border closure), had already considered building a new town. In Marega’s opinion, in the case of Gorizia and Nova Gorica the word unification cannot be used: it was not like in Berlin in 1989, there was nothing, in his view, to reunite.

“Nova Gorica before the Second World War was not in existence. It is a town built because Tito wanted it, in order to prove, cheating, in the international commitments, that Gorizia was supposed to enter in, at that time, Yugoslavia. Berlin in 1989 represented the re-unification of the same German people, but we do not have any sort of re-unification, because Italians and Slovenians have two towns, two cultures, two languages, that are different” (2004:1).

Considering the historical events presented by local sources and people’s narratives at the beginning of this chapter, Marega’s argument seems only partially true since it does not take into consideration the fact that the two groups cohabited the same territory prior to World War II. Differently from Velušček, he rejects the idea of either mixture or halves. Marega does

17 The river that straddles the area.
not take into consideration that there are Slovenians living in Gorizia for example, as he does not take into consideration that some people ended up becoming Slovenian simply because, by refusing to abandon the house they live in, they found that the border separated them from what they recognised as their state. This was the case of Ivana's parents. Ivana considered her parents of Italian origin, even if her paternal grandparents were coming from Slavic regions: neither she nor her parents talked Slovene, but in 1947, despite Ivana asking them to come and live with her and her husband, her parents refused to move. That house was the one Ivana's father had grown up in and he said to Ivana that he did not want the war to change that for him. Thus, Ivana's parents found themselves having to readjust to a completely new way of life which also meant learning another language.

- RE-INTERPRETING THE PAST THROUGH THE FUTURE

The entrance of Slovenia in the EU was seen as a return to the past territory: it terms of landscape the area will be one again. That is why most locals I spoke to assess the event as 'non-change'. The Italian-Slovenian border, at the time of my fieldwork, was being both marked and underemphasised simultaneously. In order to make this argument, in the pages that follow, I will analyse how the local newspapers and cultural associations I visited described 'this moment in time' as a 'rethinking' phase (tr. fase di ripensamento), where a review of the past was seen by the locals as necessary to see the prospect of a future for the city.

These two opposite sentences were: “now that things have changed” and “nothing actually really changed”. To be more precise, the ‘now’ in the previous sentences referred to the political removal of the border (December 2007), because that was the date that local people and the media viewed as the date when “the border disappeared”. This ‘change’ expression is in reference to the history of the Italian-Slovenian border: Bruno, for example, defined it to
me as a ‘young border’ (60 years old), constantly shifting in its character. Change, in all its different aspects, is definitely common at the margins of the European Union (Hadjimichalis & Sadler, 1995). Here it could be summarised like this: symbolically and politically, a lot of things changed with the inclusion of Slovenia in the EU (2004) and with the signature of the Schengen agreements (2007). Practically, very little has changed: ‘people can forget ID documents in the drawer -that is what changed’, Bruno told me. In sixty years, the Italian-Slovenian border shifted from un-crossable, to permeable, to barely noticeable, to not physically present; by living in a condition of ongoing change, people seemed to have adapted to this mutable situation. Throughout the whole of these years they established and maintained a relation with the border, which has slowly shifted in its nature. The change has been so gradual that the local residents have not lived through these mutations as big events. People from this area might not have moved but still might have been born in Italy, grown up in Yugoslavia and now live in Slovenia – e.g. Carina, who married just before the Second World War and got separated from her younger sisters. Some others, the majority I mentioned, would have been born in Italy, have grown up in Italy and continue to live in Italy – Marianna, Ida, Luisa. In order to stay in Italy some would have had to move – Corrado and Bruno -, while for some others it just happened - Elga. “Borders connect the ‘inner mobility’ of our lives with both the multiplicity of communities we may elect to become members of and the cross-cutting tendencies of polities to impose their border regimes on us in ways which compromise our mobilities, freedoms, rights, and even identities” (Rumford, 2006:163). The fact there was not a big change was exactly because they did share a past: before WWII Italians and Slavs shared the same state; the territory they inhabit was not divided in two territories.

The Incontri Culturali Mittleeuropei [tr. The Mittleuropean Cultural Encounters], a cultural association I visited at the time of my fieldwork and briefly mentioned above, promoted a
historical analysis of the area of Gorizia and Nova Gorica to encourage the sense that the area was experiencing a re-unification very much akin to the falling of the Berlin Wall. This association was founded in Gorizia in 1966 with the aim of bringing together theorists, novelists and artists from Central and Eastern Europe and organizing various kinds of events that ranged from conferences to exhibitions, from public lectures to fundraisers. The members wanted to “rearrange, on a level higher than the merely political or economical one, a texture of relations, values and traditions that had been scattered by the First and the Second World War events”\textsuperscript{18}. The chairman explained to me that the aim of these events is usually to develop and discuss the issues of conflict in the towns of Gorizia/Nova Gorica, since the towns are regarded as a web of interconnections and separations with many other places. “The Mitteleurope concept, the idea of middle Europe, or that of Europe as a means, was considered a symbolic means to express the feeling of belonging to a common fate shared by Central Europe peoples”\textsuperscript{19}. This kind of idea is to them ahistorical because no matter what moment in time is taken into consideration, what is defined by Mitteleurope is a communication that goes beyond dichotomies of North-South, East-West, Latin-Slavic, minority-majority. Basically Mitteleurope is that concept that truly allows one to cross any political, economical and cultural border. La Rider (2008:155) similarly conceptualised this notion of Mitteleurope: in fact, in his opinion it does not appeal to any real geography, but it is a mental map of how Germanic culture spread. This concept proves useful in understanding a unitary vision of the EU through diversity because it transcended the problem of national identification (La Rider, 2008:156). As La Rider (2008:156) tells us, Mitteleurope is an ambivalent notion because it can be used to emphasise the catastrophic effects of a Europe of nationalism and imperialism but it can, as in this case, be invoked to designate a civilisation of cross-cultural breeding. La Rider’s map is what Magris (1963) called the ‘Hapsburg myth’: the

\textsuperscript{18} From their web site: \url{http://www.incontrimitteleuropei.it/}, last accessed in February 2011.

\textsuperscript{19} From their web site: \url{http://www.incontrimitteleuropei.it/}, last accessed in February 2011.
balance of the Empire was based on differentiation between citizenship (belonging to a state – the Empire) and nationality (customs and traditions, but particularly the official language in use). The Hapsburg society was created on the grounds of federalism and pluralism. All the citizens would belong to a state and all of them would belong to a nationality, however the state and nationality were not the same. More importantly, in a state where all citizens were equal, a conflict of nationalities would be avoided. There was a condition of double belonging: loyalty to the state could be expressed by staying true to your cultural heritage. Ballinger (2003: 249), who conducted fieldwork on the Julian March, also recognises a promotion of this notion and an outburst of nostalgia for that era, but, she adds, the memory of past is reconstructed since in this picture what is not considered is the centralisation of the state and its specific protection over minorities that would only help the interest of such a state. In fact, The Hapsburgs were an empire, not a state and it seems that, within the promotion of Mitteleurope, the two notions are deeply confused. Hence, Magris’s definition of myth and not reality.

Overall, in the media, now that the European Union was playing a role in the area, the border (or probably I should say physical lack of thereof) was being promoted: instead of reading about the problems of living in a border area, the conflicts and the ‘leaking’20 this was creating, one would hear words of a re-birth of the area as it was “always supposed to be”. These were, for example, the words of Marisa and Luisa, the two friends of my grandmother who I introduced when discussing the history of the Gorizia and its territory. The disappearance of the border structures was not seen as something that brought the two territories together again. When I talked to a journalist friend of mine –Roberta- about this

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20 Seremetakis, in her emotionally evocative article “Borders in Pain” (1996:490) uses the word ‘leaking’ to define the current ‘transnality’ with regards to the Greek-Albanian border: she used the word to describe the fact that this border can be crossed, it is bi-directional; ‘leaking’ defines the interconnection, the mutual influence, and the movement.
European ideal they were pursuing, she told me that this was to avoid debate/unhappiness, to forget the negative and bring on the positives. The media, under the umbrella of the EU, were promoting forgetting: a re-united town because of re-united countries in Europe. Statements such as this acknowledge an unitary vision for an imagined ‘community of Europe,’ but, to reinforce what was said before by Velušček, united was never intended to mean the same. Blokker (2008) discusses how, within the integration project, this unitary vision was the cause of expectations: the new member states would embrace the existing European norms and values. The author continues by saying that this assumption was not made just by the existing members but also by the newcomers, “who, in a way, embedded the unitarian understanding of a European identity in their local self-identification as ‘Central Europe’” (2008: 258). This connotation is explained through the revival of European history, especially when the Hapsburgs were governing and controlling most of central Europe.

It seemed as if the media were saying to forget the border was ever there: Gorizia had returned to its origins, as if the past sixty years were nothing more than an historical parenthesis, similar to what Verdery (1999: 182), in the context of post-socialism, has described as the ‘deep freeze theory’. It is then to argue that the fall of Socialism, of the Soviet Union, is compared here in the same terms to the appearance of the European Union. The Iron Curtain, at the time, had designed a border that created a divide where it had not been: the past sixty years can be forgotten or not acknowledged because they are part of a period of limbo, a situation of transition that nobody wanted. Within this perspective, the European Union brought the situation back to what it was, nothing new, nothing changed. Marisa and Luisa said that the territory ‘under’ (tr. sotto) the EU was exactly the same as before: ‘you do not really cross anything to go to Salcano now: it is like before. It is just like going to another area of the town’. Trying to understand I told them: ‘but you still go to Slovenia’ and their reply was that the area was always inhabited mostly by Slovenian, so that was not a big
difference (tr. *una grossa differenza*). My grandmother was there with us and she said to me that I had to understand that people could now move around Gorizia and the adjacent area exactly as they used to do and, even if signposts had changed, that seems minimal to those of their generation.

Minnich (2003) conducted his research in a similar area to Gorizia, where Italy meets Slovenia but also Austria. In his work I found similar findings to my own, as for example when he mentioned that, as soon as the Slovenian government started negotiating its entry to the European Union in 1991, there were several references made to the Hapsburg period when the three countries were under the same domination and several assertions of a ‘re-birth’ of this era through a re-unification of three countries in the EU. The “heavy lid theory”\(^\text{21}\) was too simplistic in Minnich’s case: he argues that a re-evaluation and reconstruction of past relationship by those involved is done to serve the needs of the present. People to him shaped memory, history, and the past: to some extent they even invented them, according mainly to the political and cultural needs of the present (e.g. Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). The generation that lived through the war, people like Marisa, Luisa, my grandmother, have a practical view of the border (because they see it just in terms of border structures), as the people I met at border control interpret the European Union in a specific way because of their history: the present is shaped by the past.

Marianna, whose story I will discuss in Chapter Two, when she was considering how to define her nationality, said that if she should think of herself as something else rather than Italian, she would probably say that her family has an Austrian heritage since her grandparents grew up in Gorizia during the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

What is happening here is a re-bordering in a way, in the word of Walters (2006) when he quotes Andreas on the term (2003), to express the new value of border in economic and

\[\text{21 Another name for the deep freeze theory (Agelopoulos, 2004).}\]
military terms. And Walters is also the one that discusses the importance of territorialities as shifting rather than diminishing. And that is why he is focusing more attention on the changing landscape of the border, which is ultimately the task at end of this thesis. I am looking at the changing topography of this border to see what happens in terms of rebordering and that is why this Chapter serves as a framework. I like in fact very much when Walters express his reasoning in terms of political landscape quoting Buck-Moriss, 2002, 12(cf. Neocleous, 2003, 1–2).

“For bordering is a social function that is enacted through diverse means, in various settings and for different purposes. By thinking of (re)bordering as a contingent social practice, I argue, we can shed new light on the changing nature of borders in Europe.” (Walters, 2006: 145). The first point Walters is making in fact is that the border line, ‘the frontier’ is associated tightly with the state, it demarks the territory of the state (2006:145) and this opens his discussion of the EU making a form of state, and compares it to America that was born and constituted by starting from the border (2006:146). Walters then follows by borrowing from Rumford (2003) and his view of the EU and his theory of ‘reflexive government’, a pluralised political administrative space that governs governments. Italy and Slovenia are two different concepts, two different states with their own rules and regulations and at the border this is reinforced. “Reflexive government operates upon and through the terrain of the benchmark, the performance indicator, the best practice, the audit, the league table, budgetary and accounting mechanisms and countless other little political technologies. It confers a new kind of visibility on state and non-state agencies that encourages them to account for themselves and to compete with one another in terms of their ‘performance”’ (Walters, 2006:147).

References to the history of the Italian-Slovenian border or comparisons between the changes when the border first appeared and the ones when it ‘disappeared’ were used equally
by people to prove that the two countries should either be considered one big territory [Hapsburg reference mainly] or, alternatively, that they should not. People who lived through the traumatic end of the Second World War were the ones who used the past to prove it could not possibly be re-unified.

I am making particular reference to the majority of people I will discuss in Chapter Two, who felt for example that the appearance of the border made them lose family not just by distancing them physically but also socially (like Marianna, Ida or Carina), or those who thought that the border helped to create order to separate physically what was already divided culturally and socially (as Marega discussed above).

- CONCLUSION

Sanguin and Mrak (2003) made an analysis of this border from a Euroregion perspective and they also looked at the history of the area, devoting the entire second section of the article to the Gorizia and Nova Gorica border (pp.362-365). Because they actually analysed the Italian-Slovenian frontier, throughout the text they actually mention the area of Collio/Brda as well. They also discuss how the urban centre can be considered an example of Berlin - a divided town. They report important data/ statistics. As they report (2003:363), the Italian population in 1921 was more than double the Slovenian one: 14,190 against 6,141. In 2001, the authors report, the community of Nova Gorica was stretching across 302 square kilometres with 35,332 habitants while the Italian community of Gorizia really suffered with the partition caused by the border: 41 square kilometres for 37,072 habitants which in 1948 were 40,625. The border, according to the author, has completely disintegrated the fibre of the socio-economics of the urban area.

The appearance of a border affected the people, while its physical disappearance was played out at a political level and, with the exception of a big demonstration on the day, for the
people of the area *nothing really happened*. People discussed/narrated the story of the disappearance of the border always in relation to when it first appeared: they invest the present with a meaning by relating to a past and simultaneously to a possible future, and in the process giving new meanings to the past, reconstituting it.

The link to the past that arises in all these narratives could be considered under the title of nostalgia, because there is this very strong sentiment about something being lost, whether it is just in terms of territory, political cohesion, economic status and value, or even kinship. But, at the same time, I do not perceive a sense of longing, of ‘wanting it back’, but more of an expression of wanting to learn from the past and use it to make something similar but better for the future.

Despite all this though, this thesis is only half about the state border: it is about crossing the state border, and how the border landscape changes when two states belong to the same political entity, but ultimately it is about how new borders are made when ‘people can see that state line’. So it is a border about what makes them different that re-invents their concept of Italian-ness.
CHAPTER TWO:

Townies: “Who is Italian and Who is Slovenian”

- INTRODUCTION

As a resident of Gorizia for 18 years of my life (before I moved to the United Kingdom for my University Studies) I can say that the border has always been there. Everybody that lives in this town has a story about its experience of the border.

This chapter wants to explore what the border is in the residents narrative, but it is composed mainly from the notes from the older generation I spoken to: those ones who had the first impact with the border, when it first appeared and how they interiorised it and therefore how they explained it while I was on fieldwork, sixty years later than when it first appeared. It was shorter than the lifetime than most of the people I have spoken to which I met at the doctor’s clinic.

Italian identity was emphasise at the expenses of the Slovenian one during the Mussolini era and in the following pages I will look how people defines who is Italian and who is Slovenian and how the discussion evolves a lot around kinship and more specifically around disconnected kinship to borrow from Carsten (2000).

- WHO LIVES IN GORIZIA?

According to the official data by ISTAT (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica – the National institute of statistics), the last census run on the 31st October 201122 shown that Gorizia is a town of 35,798 inhabitants. Italians are the majority, but Slovenians do represent a consistent minority: the third biggest after Bosnian and Serbian with the headcounts of 336 inhabitants with a Slovenian passport.

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Howether this data do not take into consideration how many people do actually speak Slovene and, despite holding an Italian passport they consider themselves part of the Slovenian minority. Available data at this regard are not available however bi-linguism is strongly recognised in the town since the local authorities website are available also in Slovene.

The information available to give an idea of the extensive presence of the Slovene language is the fact that of the ten districts in which the town is divided23 (Campagnuzza, Centro, Lucinico, Madonnina del Fante, Montesanto-Piazzutta, Piedimonte del Calvario, Piuma, Sant’Andrea, Borghi San Rocco e Sant’Anna, Straccis) three of them (Piuma/Pevma, Piedimonte del Calvario/ Podgora and Sant’Andrea/Štandrež) are predominantly Slovene so much so that their Slovene denomination is as better know than the Italian one.

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23 http://www3.comune.gorizia.it/it/le-circoscrizioni-cittadine
In addition to the population distribution, another important index of the growth of the importance of Slovene as a language for the residents of this town is the number of Slovenian School that cater for the minority. In the town of Gorizia in fact there are thirteen nursery of which five are Slovenian, fourteen primary school of which three are Slovenians, three high school of which one is Slovenian, and finally eighteen kind of college education of which five are Slovenian. In Gorizia, there has always been a strong presence of the Slovenian minority and, therefore, there were also newspapers that cater for their needs: one of which is printed in Gorizia, the Primorski Dnevnik.

Information should be equally accessible on both sides of the border and for that to be so the government has been putting for years a lot of emphasis on language. During the time of my fieldwork, local people seemed to look at the entry of Slovenia in the European Union as something to which they still had to adjust: there was a lot of emphasis on the two countries working together and in making Gorizia bilingual.

Local politicians were discussing at the time of my fieldwork [and had been since before 2004] the possibility of making Gorizia a bilingual town by improving/replacing road signs\textsuperscript{24}, and more importantly, by introducing Slovenian as a second language in all the schools of the town. This created much debate in Gorizia during the months between September 2008 and December 2008: there were those who thought this was a way to make Gorizia Slavic and removing its Italianness. This is Rodolfo Ziberna's opinion as reported in a post\textsuperscript{25} and an article\textsuperscript{26} of December 2008. The National League\textsuperscript{27} of which Ziberna is a member, fought against Gorizia becoming bilingual because, in his opinion, as much as the two ethnic groups cohabited in Gorizia for centuries, they were never present in equal percentage. Ziberna sees

\textsuperscript{24} This should take place since the national laws 482/1999 and 83/2001 in regards to the protection of the Slovenian minority grant financial aid.
\textsuperscript{25} http://patriottismo.forumcommunity.net/?t=22101091 last accessed in December 2010.
\textsuperscript{26} http://leganazionale.it/gorizia/raiss38.htm last accessed in december 2010.
\textsuperscript{27} An association founded in 1891 which aim is 'to defend and valorize the Italian culture and language in the areas of the North-East of Italy (http://leganazionale.it, last accessed in December 2010).
the bilinguism as an imposition of Slovene language to the Italian majority [a term he repeatedly emphasised]: a way to undermine the official language, which is indeed Italian. Ziberna states that the Slovenian minority reside as a majority in only two areas of the town and therefore the town as a whole does not need to be bilingual. Language is discussed in this context by Ziberna as a marker of identity. Despite the never-ending debate\(^{28}\), the number of Slovenian language courses in the last few years has risen, and despite such a rise, the availability still did not meet the demand. Slovene language courses have always been available, but they were mainly aimed towards people who were part of mix origin families (children or partners): there were not many, and they were mainly organised by the language centres. While I was there on fieldwork, one could find Slovenian courses everywhere: the library, schools, universities, even the city council was organising them. Moreover, these courses were of many different levels and orientation: business Slovene, colloquial Slovene, Slovenian grammar, just to mention a few.

In this case language is not discussed as a marker of identity. Antonsich states that the symbolic nature of language is one to differentiate those that belong to a nation in contrast to those that do not (2008:514), however belonging, or rather social distance, is marked by a specific form of language, a dialect. Ballinger (2003) conducted research in the Julian March, an area that, before 1947, was all part of the Italian territory, but that now comprises of the Italian, Slovenia, and Croatia states. The Julian March was politically generated after two geographical re-definition of the state borders\(^{29}\), but Ballinger discusses how the linguistic varieties of the region, Italian and Slavic, are influenced by each other, particularly in the local dialect that can be used as a marker of identity for the whole region (2003: 24-25). I recognised a similar phenomenon in the area of Gorizia: Recarli (1976) describes the local

\(^{28}\) Discussion on whether or not making Gorizia and Trieste bilingual were still a matter of content in the beginning of 2010 as reported on the local paper (http://ilpiccolo.gelocal.it/cronaca/2010/01/21/news/treni-e-bus-bilingui-menia-aggressione-all-identita-italiana-1.12995 last accessed in December 2010)

\(^{29}\) post WWII between 1947 and 1956; and post 1991, after the Yugoslavian war.
dialect as a form of Venetian dialect, with a high Slovenian influence. In the district of Gorizia and specifically in Collio, the dialect instead is more a criterion for hybridity, or mixture. As Irvine and Gal (2000) explain this idea of mixture is born from the assumption that national groups are naturally monolingual, instead of considering monolinguism as ideologically constructed (2000:53-54).

All this is part of life in a border area, it is just statistics that one could find anywhere, but what is more interest is how people discuss these phenomenon and their experience of it.

- LIVING WITH THE BORDER

While on fieldwork I soon discovered that discussing the border was, to many people, a way to discuss the process through which family and personal relations were interrupted or ceased to exist. Most people in the age range between their mid-sixties and late eighties who I met described how, when the border first appeared in 1947, it separated people who inhabited the same territory: often it separated families. The appearance of the border created a physical separation, which eventually turned into a social one, even between relatives, as in the case of two sets of sisters whose story I will describe in the following pages.

Social distance, such as this, is described at length by authors such as Borneman (1992), Berdhal (1999), Ballinger (2003) and Pelkmans (2006). The Italian-Slovenian border created a divide in terms of nationalism -between Italians and Slovenians- and one in terms of political economy -between the Capitalist and the Socialist World\textsuperscript{30}:- depending on which side of the border people relocated to, they were endowed with different cultural and social categories. Therefore families were separated by much more than just a physical border, which in time became permeable and crossable.

\textsuperscript{30} as we saw in Chapter One, until 1991 Slovenia was part of the Yugoslavia Federation, which was a Socialist state.
Ideas about kinship are often crosscut by ideas of nation and nationality (Borneman, 1992): blood ties are invested with naturalising powers that validate, for example, national formations. In fact, the use of kinship as banner (‘family of man’) is used to promote the concept of a harmonic and unanimous nation, where hierarchy and differentiation are portrayed in a natural biological order of relations (McClintock, 1993; Nash, 2005).

When there is a border, the idea of ‘where you come from’ is overemphasised: it is often about what side you are from, in terms of what nationality one is. In a lot of my notes this is the starting point for a discussion of the person’s kinship: they told me about their family history to assert to what degree/percentage they are Italian, Slovenian, or a mixture.

“Once they closed the border, because of my surname, I was automatically considered a Slav [tr. slava]: I had never even been in Yugoslavia! My surname is Slovenian. My family is from Gorizia for generations. Does it really make such a big difference? ...no, I think that in Gorizia there was always Italians and Slovenians, not like in Nova Gorica, there, there were always more Slovenians, because the villages, the suburbs that remained there were mainly Slovenian speakers. ... My family was blocked inside Yugoslavia. My surname is Slovenian, but I never really feel Slovenian. But not completely Italian either. I am mixed. The fact is this: when someone is talking badly about Slovenians it annoys me. When someone is talking badly about Italians, it annoys me as well, just as much. I would like it if they could live in peace together, we are one thing here, one people”.

These words were from Ivana, a woman in her late eighties, who was a patient of the doctor’s clinic where I worked. When I met her she was a widower and lived with her daughter but, at the time when the border was closed she was a newlywed and had just moved from her parents’ house to go and live with her husband.

In the previous chapter, I discuss how some of the town peripheries remained in Yugoslavia when the border was drawn and closed in 1947; Ivana’s parents’ house was in that area, while her house remained in Italy. As a result she was separated from her family and she did not see them properly for many years. Ivana said her surname was Slovenian – Barbarich,
because her father's father was originally from Divaca, a Slavic town. However, her parents were born in Gorizia and so were herself and her brother and sisters: specifically her and her siblings were all born in the Italian State since she was the eldest and she was born in 1922. She said she could remember her grandparents talking in Slovene when she was little, but she never really did because her mother could not. She also remembered her dad telling her stories about where her granddad grew up and why he moved - which was why she said she felt really strongly about her Slovenian heritage, even if, as I reported above, she did not consider herself Slovenian. To Ivana the border marked a difference that in her opinion was not necessary: it was done arbitrarily, and it fixed a nationality to a person, even if the person was not necessarily recognised as such.

Through her article “Geographies of Relatedness”, Nash makes use of Carsten's approach (2000) towards kinship in a way that can be useful to look at in the study of this border: what Carsten (2000) discusses as relatedness can be used to explain human geography across space and time. Relatedness is what makes connections, or how connections are made or broken or remade, which Carsten has discussed in a few of her works (2000, 2007); by her definition, relatedness is the on-going act of making connections, “through naming, adoption, and marital relations, or through a complex process of interweaving social and biological idioms of being related” (Carsten, 2000:16).

The knowledge of a certain relatedness can ground a person in a certain place: in this case by asserting that her family was born and grew up in the area, Ivana established herself as being from that place. However she also felt alienated in Gorizia, because the appearance of the border disturbed what she considered the territory of Gorizia. Like Carsten's adoptees, Ivana looked for some temporal and physical grounding: “... Knowing who is who and where

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31 I wrote here exactly what Ivana told me; Divača is a small town a few kilometres from the Italian border as shown on the town city council website (http://www.divaca.si/index.php?vie=cnt&str=6_slo)
in a context of increasing anxiety about the porosity of borders…”(Nash, 2005:457) is very important. In the example above, it is clear how the permeability of the Italian-Slovenian border had made it very difficult for Ivana, who is narrating, to establish in which nation-state she could be socially grounded.

As for Ivana, in most occasions, kinship was discussed more in terms of displacement and disconnection in Gorizia rather than a process of becoming connected. The narratives I have collected about the appearance of a state border in Gorizia often make reference to how this event was lived very intimately; because of it, “I lost family” Tullio told me. Tullio’s grandparents, similarly to Ivana’s parents, had their house in the area that remained in Yugoslavia and they died before he could ever see them again, since they passed away at the beginning of the 1950s. Tullio’s story is an example of information I collected when I was not even expecting it. In fact, during the time I spent practising what I saw as ‘informal fieldwork’, on several occasions, when I explained my research, I found myself listening to stories about what it was like living with the border in the past, or before the border even appeared. These stories were generally about the speakers’ personal experience of the border, what it meant to them and why it still means something now: the relationship between themselves and the border. Corrado, for example, is an old man who came over to me while I was sat in a bar telling a friend of mine how surprised I was that growing up in the area, I never actually realised how many local families have been divided or estranged during the war. I do not know much about him, because I never actually met him again and all he did was talk about his past, but he really shared with me some personal aspects of his life that the border made him think of: he looked in his seventies and by the way he was talking, he must

32 When talking to people I met through friends of mine, and that I never actually got to talk to again, it was very difficult for me to get precise dates on when things happened. I met Tullio at a friend’s birthday party: he was her husband’s auntie’s husband. He did not leave locally anymore (they moved to Padova) but he grew up in Gorizia. I learned about his border experience just because he decided to share it with me when I told him about my research. I write here the beginning of the 1950s because it was 1954 when the residents of Gorizia obtained the ‘lasciapassare’ (tr. let it pass) document that allowed them to cross over to Yugoslavia.
have been. In fact he said he was a teenager in 1947 and even if he was young he knew there and then (tr. *in quel preciso momento*) that the border was a big mistake. His parents decided to leave the house in Salcano\(^{33}\) because they did not want to stay in Yugoslavia, even if his mother was from Kromberk\(^{34}\) and that is where all her family were. In his words, “as you can imagine, we never heard from them again - the border was too hard to cross: my mother suffered because of it and I think she blamed my dad”. In fact, Corrado explained that his father was sceptical about Tito and felt safer by not being under his government: he had a cousin that lived and worked in Gradisca and he decided it would be better for them to go there. “Seeing my mum suffer made me hate this border, but I was young and if it would have been for the best I probably would have forgotten about it (tr. *mi sarebbe passata*).” In Corrado’s opinion, Gorizia became too small to accommodate everybody that decided to remain in Italy and a lot of people started moving further and further out. “You youngsters are all going”, he said to me after I told him I was studying in Manchester; for Corrado the border represented the end of Gorizia: “this border was the end of this town”.

Tullio and Corrado shared with me their memories of losing people close to them when the border was first closed in 1947: the border as an experience of disconnected kinship. In many of these narratives, the negative or positive experiences of that event strictly related to how they felt about the people that lived on the other side of the border. For example, in more than one case I heard similar words to this: “it is not just about the border being there, it is personal”, said Adriana who was not allowed by her parents to marry Mirko, because her parents knew he was a sympathiser of Tito’s partisans that invaded Gorizia in 1945 and tried to get Gorizia to become part of Yugoslavia. Adriana blamed Mirko for betraying her, for hurting her and her family. She blamed the war and the border and the division and she

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\(^{33}\) A village just across the Gorizia border, which used to be part of Italy before WWII. Refer to map in Chapter One for visual representation.

\(^{34}\) Italian name Moncorona, one of the many villages that are part of the municipality of Nova Gorica, right across the border in Slovenia and that used to be in Italy before WWII.
blames the Slovenians. Other common phrases were similar to those spoken by Marino “I have my reasons, reasons the government do not know because it did not affect them; it affected me and my family”. I met Marino at the doctor’s clinic: he was in his late fifties and he was very annoyed that Slovenia entered the EU and now ‘all sorts of collaborations’ were planned by the two states. He said it was not easy for him to think of collaboration with the state that made his granddad and his uncle disappear into thin air (tr. *nel nulla*)\(^{35}\). For Adriana and Marino the border was a marker that kept those who had hurt them away from them: the border was a symbol, a memory of a personal trauma.

Ivana, Tullio, Corrado and even to a certain extent Adriana and Marino share an experience of kinship that has been disrupted. I choose to use the term disrupted because when I read Carsten’s (2000/b) description of the adoptee’s in Scotland and how they discussed their ‘missing link’ with their biological family, I was struck by the fact the people I talked to, whose relatives remained in Slovenia, seemed to undergo a similar experience. People like Tullio and Corrado talk about loss for example; Marino and Corrado add to what I said above that they tried to find their lost relative, like the adoptees tried to find their birth parents, Ivana and many others like her who knew where they relatives still were after the border became more permeable, tried to get reconnected to their relatives. Corrado also tried to reach the family that, because of the border, he did not really remember. These are all the experiences that Carsten (2000/b) described the adoptees going through in their search for their birth parents. I am not trying to draw a direct connection between adoption and separation through the border since they are entirely different social processes, but for the people involved they can feel similar. Carsten’s fieldwork among the adoptees meant that the different families that developed after the disruption –the adoptive families- were invested with certainty and spoken in an idiom of kinship (2000:13).

\(^{35}\) Marino’s reference is to the Foibe phenomenon of 1945: when Tito’s partisans occupied Gorizia for a month a lot of people that were affiliated/ collaborated/ worked for the Fascist regime were taken, arrested and more often than not killed.
From the narrative that will follow it would seem as axiomatically more significant when family members were separated by the border, irrespective of how close they were socially before the border was closed. The following narrative shows that “the meaning of blood ties are contingent and variable” (Carsten, 2000:13) and that the cultural differences that the border has not only marked but also created make it sometimes easier for a person to state their belonging to one nation rather than another.

Marianna, an elderly woman in her eighties, grew up living with her grandparents, her mother and her younger sister. She never mentioned her father. When the Second World War started Marianna was in her late teens and she was working in a factory to contribute to the family upkeep, since her grandparents were old and pensioners and her mother was on and off doing various jobs. During the years of the war her mother had started courting a man, a Slavic sympathiser (to use Marianna’s words). He was involved in the partisan movement, everybody knew it in the town and this meant that the “Fascist police” (again using her words) was keeping an eye on her mother, and also on her and all of her family. Marianna was also in trouble at work because of her closeness to this man, and more than once, she thought she would be dismissed because of it. By the end of the war her grandparents had died [of old age] and the three of them had been left on their own. At this point, Marianna’s mother was still dating the same man and when the border appeared in 1947 he decided he was going to move to the Yugoslavian side, specifically because, Marianna assumed, of the crimes she believed he had committed when he was a partisan. Marianna’s mother decided to go with him and left Marianna and her sister on their own in Italy. According to Marianna, they were not even given the option to go along because he did not want them since they were the daughters of another man. Marianna hardly kept in touch with her mother, mainly because she did not want to. When the border was first closed it was extremely hard to keep in touch, especially as they did not go and live immediately on the other side but in a village further
away. Marianna did not see any reason to make a lot of effort to nurture a relationship that had been so easily discarded by her mother. What Marianna knows is that her mother got married with this man, got pregnant with twins and lived the rest of her life as a family with them. She felt she was abandoned and left to be a mother to her sister. When crossing the border became easier, Marianna said she got in touch with her mother again only because her sister insisted. She went once to the cemetery after her mother died, but not to her funeral. As far as she was concerned, she did not have half brothers; she did not know them, she never met them: they spoke a different language, they grew up with different values, and they were Slavic, in her view.

Marianna portrays the border as a category of exclusion: something that takes, keeps, maintains specific elements out of the picture. Border thus signified abandonment. The border to her is the limit that she refused to cross because she felt discarded by her mother. The border to her is precisely the kind of disconnection I refer to above, but it is also a clear-cut interruption and a break that happened partially by accident, but mainly by choice (her mother’s choice). The contacts between the Italian and Slovenian sides, in the beginning, were minimal: a glimpse of someone through the fence or a brief meeting once a month by the fence. As years passed the border became more permeable, but the lack of contact very soon had become lack of relation. The border is then interpreted as “the kinship that has stopped”.

In another conversation I had with Marianna, she did tell me how happy she was when her sister started ‘standing on her own two feet’ (even if still at the time of my fieldwork, in her seventies, she would eventually run to Marianna for help). She was finally free to look for someone she could actually rely on. When Marianna finally got married, her husband’s family became her family. Similarly, she described some of her friends as the sisters she never had: she thought her sister looked at her as a mother, because she was too young when their
mother left and she was also too young to remember the grandparents who Marianna considered as the closest things to parents she and her sister had ever experienced.

The entry of Slovenia to the European Union made this border extremely permeable and the disconnections could easily be reconnected, but, as in Marianna's case, this was not always what people wanted. Marino, who I already mentioned, was of the opinion the EU was to make people believe that everybody – Italians and Slovenians- are the same. He was obsessed by the way in which the entry of Slovenia in the EU was celebrated, since it was discussed that the town of Gorizia and Nova Gorica were being re-united (http://www.primomaggioagorizia.it last accessed in July 2008). However, that was only the perception of some of the local residents, because the EU wanted and indeed encouraged freedom of movement by abolishing border controls between those members that belong to the Schengen area, but it never argued that there were no social or cultural differences between people. The EU argued quite the opposite; the European Union asserts the principle of subsidiarity, which the basic idea, is ‘unity in diversity’: everyone is different, but everyone is equal. What Marino, and others misunderstood is that what the EU was trying to underemphasise was the idea that these social or cultural differences should be reflected in political divisions: this was what the EU wanted to remove. Once I spoke to Marianna about it and she was of the same impression as Marino. Before WWII social differences were not emphasised between Italian and Slovenians and, as residents of the same area, they were in that regard one and the same. In her experiences the political division that the appearance of the border emphasised, created a gap too big to be crossed. Old friends and relatives separated by the border were really ‘mirror images’ -to use Borneman’s expression (1999)- and so, similarly to the West/East German case he described, re-unification was also difficult. More importantly, it is problematic to talk about re-unification: Italy and Slovenia are of course not really ‘two faces of the same coin’ in the same way as the two Germanies. Ballinger
(2003) conducted fieldwork in an area not far from Gorizia, which was shaped by the same historical events: she argues that despite people being originally from the same group, same nationality, they now differentiated themselves between those who left [tr. exiled] and those who stayed behind [tr. rimasti -remained]. The border had created the difference and relocated the national identity: the redefinition of state boundaries that occurred post World War II made it so that a lot of the inhabitants exiled themselves within the new geographical spaces to which they belonged.

“Social boundaries of distinction are fluid, relational, and always under construction” (Berdhal, 1999:105): the area of Gorizia is situated in a context of post-national formation, because the border is both the site to discuss national distinction and transition, because the people of the area, like the people of Kella studied by Berdhal ‘produce an acute consciousness of in-betweenness’ (Berdhal, 1999:232). Berdahl used this notion to describe how the borderlanders between West and East Germany were forming a new idea of Germanness; I will use it to discuss the new patterns of sameness and difference that are emerging to create social distinction in Gorizia, a border between member states of the European Union. In the case of the West/East German border, the reunification happened as a united single Germany and, as Berdhal (1999) discusses, a new generation that moves back and forth the old border “may actually prevent solidification of identities at either end” (1999:232). However, in the case of the Italian-Slovenian borderland, the border is not gone, but simply underemphasised. Freedom of movement and easier access to places and people from across the border are not a reunification but a reconnection; and that has included confrontations and comparisons to what the connections were before they got interrupted. Ida and Clara were two sisters; I met Ida through Ivana, she was her childhood friend. Clara, her sister, at the end of the world remained in Prvačina (tr. Prevacina), a village now in Slovenia\textsuperscript{36}. According to Ida – and Ivana

\textsuperscript{36} Like Solkan and Kromberk mentioned above this village is also very close to the Italian-Slovenian border, it is now part of Nova-Gorica municipality and it used to be in Italian territory before WWII.
confirmed, the two of them were very close, always doing everything together, liking the same clothes and the same music. However when Ida first got re-united with Clara in 1957 she said she was not the sister she remembered: she could only talk about work in the fields, criticising Ida because she was a housewife. Clara was not talking about shopping anymore, but about saving money and working hard. Ida met with an alien version of what she remembered of her sister: “it is harder to accept deviance from nearby relatives”, as Pelkman (2006:86) said in relation to the people of Sarpi on the Georgian-Turkish border. Pelkmans (2006) explains that in Sarpi, over the Soviet years during which the Border was closed, people on the Georgian side began to develop a sense of a big difference between the Georgian side and the Turkish side. This is also the case for the Italian and Slovenian. Pelkmans (2006) discusses that, because of this recognised difference, when the border was opened again after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the people re-imposed the border as if it had not been opened. In Pelkmans’ case border structures though had not been dismantled, the border just became crossable.

I never had the chance to meet Clara, but Carina shared a similar story: she, like Clara, remained in Yugoslavia and had sisters that remained in Italy, like Ida. Carina said to me: “my sisters had changed: they constantly looked at me as if they had to take care of me. I was the bigger sister and I always used to take care of them. That is why we were separated: I remained because I was older and married and I stayed with my husband in Solkan. (tr. Salcano) They think of me as poor, as weaker. They think of me as a Slovenian not as their sister. They think they are better because they got to stay in Italy”. The border made it so that social differences that were not there, appeared. Both narratives raise issues of poverty: they emphasised that those who lived in Italy were in the world of Capitalism while those who lived in Yugoslavia were living in the world of Socialism and each accuses the other to make that kind of difference instead of just getting reunited with a sibling.
Distinction is always somewhere found and emphasised: differences are relational, they emerge out of interactions with people. Bourdieu (1987:11) theorised a symbolic social space of distinction and I, as Berdhal before me, “see social distinctions not as fixed objective boundaries but rather as relational concepts produced and reproduced in practice” (Berdhal, 1999:114).

- BORDER STRUCTURES: YES OR NO?

Paxson (2010:447) argues that “regional histories matter to the dynamic process that create landscapes as well as to how residents and outside observers give meaning to these landscape”. Pelkmans, in his study of the Georgian-Turkish border, argues that the border’s physical presence became part of the landscape for the Georgian residents who lived nearby (2006:19). When I was carrying out fieldwork, the ongoing debate at a political level, which was manifested in the media, was: “Could/should the border structures still be part of the landscape?” In fact, this area is still the point where two states meet; the difference now is that these territories are both part of a bigger entity, the European Union. The two countries are also both part of the Schengen Agreement, which means that the border between them does not need to be marked, to be physical: it became underemphasised and less noticeable since people do not need to show their passport when they move from one of these states to the other. So, in this specific context, the legal status of the border has changed, and so did the landscape of which the border is part. In the following pages I will explain through three different examples how people still invest it with a meaning, in some cases historical significance –the Forum’s view-, and in a few others as the safeguard of natural resources –reported in the next section of this chapter. Through the following narratives I want to argue that two separate understandings of border structures appear in this area: the people in the town were concerned with the social distinction that the border structures were giving to the
area. The particular argument is the connection informants made between border as cultural heritage, and, by extension as a touristic asset (how to use it, improve it, and establish it).

People invest with a completely different meaning the border structures and the place, by discussing how to use what remains of the visible border: not as an impediment but as an asset. Forum is “a cultural association that proposes to transform the city using its culture, meaning its history, heritage and tradition. Actually, it proposes to transform the cities, because it is not possible to conceive a future for this territory without thinking of it as united urban focus for the municipality of Nova Gorica, Sempeter-Vrtojba, Gorizia and its district” (translated from http://forumgorizia.blogspot.com last accessed in May 2011). This association does not want to see the physical border removed: all the members agree that the barbed wire should go and that the territory, such as fields, should be reunited (obviously if of the same owner), but the border crossing stations should not be dismantled. Antonia, a passionate researcher of the history and politics of the area, is one of the most prominent members of this association. She told me that what she is trying to propose, supported by the other members of Forum, is the re-using (tr. reuso) of border structures: the border posts – in her opinion- are a physical marker of the territory, an emblem of local history (tr. un emblema della storia locale). In this instance, the built environment is represented as having an inscribed and embodied memory, to use Connerton’s terminology (1989). More importantly, Antonia and many other Forum members belong to the homonymous political party (which is part of the opposition in the political sphere of Gorizia administration), and comparing Connerton’s theory to what Forum is doing, they are also expressing a particular political view: a national approach towards cultural heritage. The use of borders to assert this perspective is one way to assert the kind of knowledge that borders represent: the assertion that the border marks a particular kind of difference between people. When discussing this idea with some the members they, united, got slightly defensive, because they do not want to
suggest that Italians and Slovenians are different, but that the border was meant to mark a difference, which they absolutely do not agree with. Using the border as a site of remembrance is meant exactly to not make the same mistakes again. Antonia insisted upon the fact that history shows how Italians and Slavs cohabitated the territory of Gorizia and the adjacent territory in Slovenia for centuries: granted they did not always do it peacefully – she said- but the biggest conflicts came about post WWI when national ideology such as fascism started to develop. Antonia’s idea, what the Forum members proposed, is that the old border posts become sites of the Museum of ‘900: this would be a multi-sited museum scattered through the Gorizia area (not just the town but all of its district which would include the stations of the Collio area), which would exhibit through pictures and objects the history of the First and Second World Wars, which were key conflicts that defined the borders in this area. In fact, after the First World War, the Yugoslavian Federation was created but the state territory of Gorizia did not change from what it was while it was part of the Austrian Empire; however, after the Second World War, the territory was considerably reduced and the border split the town of Gorizia into two (De Grassi, 2006). From the time when it first appeared till the nineties, the border was not just separating Italy from Yugoslavia, but also the capitalist world form the socialist one: it stood as a representation of a cultural border not just a physical one. Creating a museum out of the border structures would be, in Davide’s words another Forum member and strong advocate of the Museum of ‘900, a way to live with (tr. vivere con) the territory and not simply in (tr. vivere nel) it; engage with what the territory has to offer. In this instance the notion of place loses the connotation of the natural one, the land, and it assumes a political one. Also, in Antonia’s opinion, it would be a good way to promote the territory through its heritage to attract not only more tourists, but also school trips, since they, as an association, had the feeling that the local history of Gorizia was known only to the locals. But, in heritage terms, it had another kind of historical significance – the history of the
cold war. According to the Forum members, the border being the biggest mark on this territory and the consequences of it being built having radically changed the place—as in state territory—it should not be physically removed, but be used to remember. Moreover, they argued, this museum could help to better advertise the already existent paths of the First and Second World Wars (routes designed to guide the tourist around the landmark of the wars), which are promoted in the tourist brochures of the region and go from one site to the next; the museum could help create new paths.

The members of Forum were claiming that first of all the border structures are a symbol of regional heritage, like the mills were for the conservation group of Alltown described by Edwards (1998): for the members, Gorizia was known to very few ‘outsiders’ and the ones that did know it only knew it for being ‘a divided town’, and so they were promoting the argument that Edwards sums up in the in ‘the need of a bit of history’. Moreover, Forum members continued, this heritage does not belong just to Gorizia but it is part of European and World history; the meaning behind this is what Macdonald (2009) describes as difficult heritage: a history that needs to be passed on so that we can learn from it. By becoming a symbol of a difficult past, the border structures would be invested by the same kind of power: the one to pass on a message to the future generations as when Hitler invested the buildings of Nuremberg with a Nazi message hoping that it would pass along to future generations, long after he himself had died. In a similar way, the border structures are seen by the Forum members as a way to pass on Gorizia’s difficult heritage. Up to this day though, the members of this cultural association have not managed to win the argument in favour of the preservation of border structure; in fact, in September 2009 two of the border patrol stations were put up for sale, and in May 2010, they were officially sold. The mayor of Gorizia sees it very similarly to the locals of Alltown (Edwards, 1998:160): they did not see the point in putting valuable money into buildings that had ‘no use’ anymore and that reminded them of
horrible experiences. In Gorizia, the border patrol station have been emptied and locked
down since December 2007 and despite all the attempts and arguments put forward by the
Forum members in the name of heritage, the mayor decided to put them up for auction and
use the money for ‘something more important’ in the town as reported in the local
newspaper, Messagero Veneto, on 10th of May 2010.

The border is considered something necessary to understand what place is: the border is
essential to what makes place in this area, even if there are different ways of understanding
what place is and how it is constructed. All these accounts reinforce Rumford’s idea (2006)
that the border is not an entity that stands for itself, but it is made by different ‘borderworks’,
meaning different aspects the border has and the different ways in which it can be expressed.

The history of this town as narrated by local experts and local residents is here to explain
how certain events have been narrated according to how people experienced those events,
but, most importantly, the kind of emphasis they give to the border structures and therefore
their disappearance. People like Elga and Marianna who had a bad experience with the Slavs
(tr. gli Slavi) as they both called Slovenians while talking to me, believed that the border
structures should not disappear, because it was the border that kept them apart. They were
afraid that without a physical structure of the border, there would no longer be distinction
and they would be associated with people of whom they did not have a good opinion and that
hurt them. Instead, Marisa and Luisa were discussing the disappearance of the border
structures by seeing the area of Gorizia as rightfully one as it was before the Second World
War, but in their conversations it did not seem as if they understood that Slovenia and Italy
were still two separate states. In all the above narratives the border is imagined as very
physical, rather than simply political or cultural. As I will describe in the following pages, this
particular image of the border is also reinforced by the younger generations and the local
media; the divide and the mixture between Italians and Slovenians in Gorizia throughout
history created an image of the European Union as an ambiguous, indistinctive group of people and places. This is quite different to what it is (Unity in Diversity); I will analyse people's statements where unification is clearly discussed in terms of sameness, not just in terms of political rights, but especially in cultural and social rights.

Nikocevic's chapter (2005) helped me clarify two aspects in my thesis. The first one is the "joint life" of the Italian and Slovenian border communities without the two communities creating a culture of their own but still being distinctive. It can help me to explain the aspects of "sameness" discussed about the Italians and the Slovenians on this border area. Mainly the author discussed to what degree the people that live right by the border line are identifying themselves as either Croatian or Slovenian: in what circumstances this happens. In both the areas of this border that the author discusses, the local people cannot really emphasise differences between either side of the border. There are examples of how people identify themselves as Istrian: discussion on how the communities speak the same language/dialect and how there are cross-country marriages and so how is the kin been divided by the border line.

- CONCLUSION

"Over the past half century, the state has come to heed regional demands and respond to personal, cultural and commercial needs for cross-border contact and interchange. Inhabitants of the divided region have gradually won concessions from state administrations on both sides of the border to their demands for freer cross-border passage. Moreover, an implicit recognition of the existence of the border region as the integral living space of earlier times is growing" (Warwick, 2003: 147). Warwick (2003) also writes about the history of the Italian-Slovenian border discussing regional belonging: he primarily focuses on the Slovenian community, while I primarily focus on the Italian one. He also describes the region
highlighting what I have been discussing so far in Chapter One and Chapter Two: how the area has long been cohabited by different ethnic communities and how this cohabitation has been disrupted by constant outside intervention. As I did the author emphasises how different state authorities and administrations have kept changing (2003:146).

Warwick (2003), Minnich (2003), Ballinger (2003) all looked at the Italian-Slovenian border and the issues of belonging to the territory, proving themselves good reference point for what I have been presenting here: how the families of those who I spoke to have resided in this territory as far as their family history goes.

Warwick (2003), Minnich (2003), Ballinger (2003), followed a similar patter to mine: they also write about the history of the Italian-Slovenian border: in their opinion, it is thanks to the region’s shared history that is possible to talk about a shared identity for the population of the area. The border cannot stop a deep regional identity that was created through a common shared history.

People’s narratives that I have heard in the town of Gorizia do not speak of one singular identity: the closest definition is the one of mixture, but it still brings together two different elements. After 1916 a deep nationalisation of the area happened (the Fascism years) that caused friction and difference. The historical events that happened after that were not seen as just a parenthesis. I am not arguing that the area is necessary conflicted and fought over as once it might have been, but the border brought other some order, distinction that the locals were previously struggling to find. This is in fact Wörsdörfer’s argument (2009): he states (2009:296) that ‘being Italian’ and ‘being Yugoslavian’ were categories used to classify, a national dimension was, at first, imposed to the resident of this area, but through the years the inhabitants assimilated.

Warwick’s (2003) argument reside in the permeable nature of this border: he wrote the article prior to the accession of Slovenia to the EU and the subsequent removal of the border
structure, but he still emphasise a constant crossing on the residents’ part. Warwick’s stance (2003) is to talk about a community, which identify themselves by the place that separates them and that they been separated. He talks about a regional identity in a similar way to Flynn’s one in her “We Are the Border” (1997), where she writes about the Shabe of the Benin-Nigerian border. Warwick (2003) does not use the term borderlanders as Flynn does (1997): he does not say, as Flynn does for the Shabe, that the identity of the people of the Slovenian-Italian border is the one of borderlanders, that they identify themselves as being ‘people of the border’. Warwick’s point of view (2003) is that the identity of the people of this area was mixed and was there before the border appeared, while Flynn (1997) said that it is the border that makes the people.

Where Warwick and Flynn share the argument is that deep placement and deep territorialisation (Flynn’s terminology, 1997:313) unifies people in an identity. In fact, the Shabe (the people that Flynn studied) make and take advantage of the border: the Shabe see the border as an opportunity and cannot imagine themselves without it. So what I argue comprises elements of both: I see the deep placement and the deep territorialisation. I do not think, as Warwick does (2003), that this makes the identity of the area. I do think that the Italians I presented in these pages see the border as an advantage as the Shabe portrayed by Flynn but I do not think that the Italians and Slovenians cannot imagine themselves without the border because the border is the site of opportunity. In fact, in the stories I reported there is nothing about a strong transnational identity like the one Flynn talks about (1997), if anything there is a strong national identity. Warwick (2003) talks about this deep national identity but he defines it as being Istrian: from the region of Istria that, at the end of WWII, happened to become divided between different states, Italy, Slovenia and Croatia.
In the case of the border that cuts across Gorizia though, I could not say I identified this regionalism, to the contrary, people make a difference between being Italian in Gorizia and being Slovenian in Gorizia.

In the next will discuss movement across the border, like here I discussed kinship exchange (marriages) and interruptions, but this does not make a translational identity like in Flynn’s case, it makes you almost change nationality itself. (Flynn, 1997:313). “The ‘border’ is not merely an arbitrary line dividing two nations; it is a social grouping based on historical, residential claims to the region. The social grouping of the ‘border’ is defined by residence in the bi-national territory that surrounds the international border. Membership is determined not by ethnicity or nationality, but by length of continuous residency in the region” (Flynn, 1997:319).

Warwick (2003) discusses Istrian identity, almost as Ballinger (2003) does, but without mentioning her. He also quotes Minnich (2003) and the Carithians. Minnich (2003) also in fact espouses the regionalist theory and extends it to the meaning of the EU as I already outlined in the previous chapte. In fact, Minnich (2003), as Warwick (2003), sees and discusses Italians and Slovenians as marginalised by their centre of power and the nation state they live in and therefore they look for correspondence with those who live on the other side and create an identity cross-border.

This is a way to go beyond the meaning of the nation state and a successful Europe. What interests me here in both the case of Warwick and Minnich that I also tried to discuss is the idea of history and of shared history, political history to be precise belong to the same unity and how this is narrated. But this shared history is not necessarily a reflection of shared identity because of the territory they live in, as Minnich and Warwick concluded. Rather than in an identity I argue this point of interaction, this recognition is done by everyday practices and that is why the distinction between the town and the country is so important. Because in
the town activities went separate ways, in two opposite directions and this is reflected in the
dynamics of one town in two. At the same time if in the town the political is stronger and the
ideal of Europe and economic free movement are seen in a positive light to promote and
encourage through local events, it is not the case in the country where the economic equality
creates a problem. I do not see regionalism because of the history of nationalisation that
Gorizia and its territory underwent. Gorizia was not in fact part of anything like Istria or
Carinthia discussed by Warwick (2003) and Minnnich (2003), it was a mixture of cohabitation
and from WWI onwards was simply made very clear who was cohabiting in the region.

The entrance of Slovenia in the EU, and its agreement to Schengen rules and regulations just
brought closer to the surface the memory of recent historical events. This is proven by the fact
that their personal narrative is what people wanted to talk to me about when they found out I
was conducting a research about this border. As I explained as the conversation started
building stronger and stronger about idea of unification, the more people were starting
defending the group they were belonging to defending themselves and defining the other. And
the other was defined through the most traumatic event of the recent political history: the
*Slavo, the Communist.*

Thirty-year-old stories about "the most open border in Europe", about the *melting pot,*\(^{37}\) were
being replaced by article such as the one by Rumiz (2004), Rumiz (2007) and Cerno (2007)
that compare Gorizia border to the Berlin Wall. However as reported in studies by Berdhal
(1999) and Borneman (1992), Berliners could not cross the border at all: contacts between
the Italian and Slovenian communities despite having been difficult, and to begin with illegal,
have been constant. The communist world was in fact very different than the socialist one: it
is proven by more permeable border and freedom of movement.

This constant exchange of the two communities happened thank to the landscape of the

\(^{37}\) *Incontri Culturali Mitteleuropei*
urban environment of how the two towns did develop so close to look as one as I am about to discuss in the next Chapter.
CHAPTER THREE:

Gorizia and Nova Gorica: two different towns.

- INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Two I described how the distinction between the two groups is recognised in cultural and political terms by those who reside in the area, and how the residents do not think of it in terms of a border. In fact, the border is only considered with regard to the border structures and the division between Italians and Slovenians is only addressed in terms of territory. In fact I outlined how since 2007 people discussed the town in terms of ‘no border’ and ‘re-unification’.

Slovenia became part of the Schengen Area on the night between the 21st of December 2007 and the 22nd of December 2007: at exactly midnight the border structures ceased to have any official authorities. The local newspaper Messaggero Veneto reports that at that moment the mayors of the towns of Gorizia and Nova Gorica walk through the main border crossing (Valico di Casa Rossa) followed by a crowd of people that wanted to celebrate the ‘disappearing border’ (Cerno, 2007): the scene was reminiscing of Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin. The article is in fact a comparison between the events of that December night in Gorizia and Nova Gorica with the ones of the Brandenburg Gates in Germany of the 9th November 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell, choosing as a title Gorizia come Berlino 18 anni dopo (tr. Gorizia as Berlin 18 years late). Even before that night Gorizia was know as the Italian Berlin because the two towns of Goriza and Nova Gorica shared a square were built one against each other and they felt as if they were one town divided by the Cold War. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) claim that what believed to be traditional are often instead recent creations, a consciously constructed invention in the service of certain (ideological) goals. Nova Gorica appeared when the border appeared in 1947 and despite the ambiguous urban
Historical events and the way the local people interpreted has been discussed in the previous two chapters; the physical changes the changes in the territory and the landscape are equally important and helps explain the angst that local resident of the town of Gorizia shown by be compared and associated with their Slovenian counterparts. Specifically this chapter is about where and how people crossed the Italian-Slovenian border and how in the moment of crossing was marked and emphasized.

Difference is constantly underlined in the narratives I collected about crossing the town border. This chapter will show that, even at the time of my fieldwork when movement across border could not have been any easier since the removal of the border structures, sameness is not accomplished in people’s mind, difference is still perceived. In fact despite the rhetoric of political and economic events organized around here, the town locals cannot help but ‘spot the difference’.

I will start by making a description of the urban context, the landscape of the town, pinpointing were border crossing are exactly and how people have been using them and what they thought of them. By looking at people movement, through the border, this chapter wants to follow the theme of the previous one in the sense that the area might still appear as one at the time of my fieldwork and not actually as belonging to two different states: I argue that this landscape is what triggers the town resident to reinforce the difference. In fact, especially when the local governments organise events aimed to promote unity and collaboration people rhetoric verge along the lines: “be aware that we are not one, it might seem so but there is us and there is them.”

Basically, this chapter looks at the Gorizia town border with Nova Gorica from where it is, and how it has been cross, to how it gets ‘exploited’ by local residents and local authorities
alike and what this exploitation results in. In a nutshell this chapter is about the advantages and disadvantage of the Italian-Slovenian border being an internal EU border.

- WHERE TO CROSS

In the previous chapter, when talking about the distribution of the population in Gorizia, I mentioned that the town comprised of ten districts. I will now proceed to look at the actual landscape of the town concentrating on those areas that are more interested for border crossing and Italian-Slovenian relationship.

The district of Montesanto Piazzuta is the second Northest district of the town (after Piuma one) and it stretches right down to its centre district covering the biggest portion of the town border\(^\text{38}\). As such it comprises three out of the four official border crossing points (tr. *valichi*) of Gorizia, including the main one: Valico di Salcano (the Italian Via del Monte Santo continues on Cesta IX Korpusa in Slovenia), il San Gabriele (the road which the crossing take the name on continues on Erjavčeva Ulica in Nova Gorica), and the main one of Casa Rossa, known also by its Slovenian name Rožna Dolina, which unites the Via della Casa Rossa in Italia e Vipavska cesta in Slovenia. The last official crossing of the town is in the district of Sant’Andrea of which it takes the name, this is the most southeast periphery of the town. This *valico* connects Gorizia with Vrtojba (tr. *Vertoiba*) from the A Road 17 (tr. *Raccordo autostradale*) that in Slovenia continues with the name H4.

In addition to this there are several ‘unofficial’ points of crossing in the town since, as I have already discussed, the 1947 border with Yugoslavia was outlined by the Allied forces and it did not actually consulted the local authorities of Italy and Yugoslavia which were both claiming more territory using respectively the natural border given by the landscape and the ethnic principles. Bruno, who we met in the same context in Chapter One, relocated to Gorizia

\(^{38}\)To reference the map look at Chapter Two, page 55
when the place where he was from became part of the Yugoslavian state at the end of the Second World War. Every time I talked to him he always showed a lot of frustration on how the Italian-Slovenian border had been delineated: the line, in his opinion, was decided on by staring at a map on a table and those who marked it had not a great idea where Gorizia actually ended: “who in his right frame of mind (tr. sano di mente) divides a square? What is the meaning? They [the Allies] clearly did not realise what was there and when they did they decided to forget about it because at the end of the day (tr. alla fine dei conti) it had nothing to do with them!”

As reported in Sanguin and Mrak (2003: 363), the border demarcated in 1947 left to Italy the majority of the historical centre, the university, the hospital and the cemetery. Nova Gorica was built on what were the eastern districts of the town (Solkan, Pristava, Kromberk, Rozna Dolina and Sempeter). The urban plans of Gorizia and Nova Gorica often though give the impression that the towns are one, or at least that one is the extension of the other. Giuseppe P. who I already mentioned in the first chapter, a fifty year old man who was one of the regular at the clinic said that “there is no point debating about what to do with the border control stations (tr. valichi)... and if you ask me, in some places they should be completely removed, like the Valico of San Gabriele: it is on a road and it just slows down traffic now for no reason... the road continues on the other side”.
As for the border patrol station described by Giuseppe P., other border stations were placed on a road that continued on the other side of the border. By this I mean that between the Italian passport control station and the Slovenian passport control station there was hardly any distance. Also in areas where there were no border posts and the barbed wire has been removed, Gorizia and Nova Gorica do look like the same town, as for example in the square mentioned above in Bruno’s narrative. This is the square where the northern train station of Gorizia was located before 1947: this was the main train station of Gorizia because where the Transalpina Railway, that connected the Hapsburg Empire, Vienna to Trieste, was passing through this station since 1904. This train station, after the border became permanent, remained in Yugoslavia. That was the starting point from where Nova Gorica was rebuilt: the very first thing that was done was suspending right on the facade an inscription “We are building Socialism” and a big five-pointed star as its symbol.

The open area in front of the station was divided into two: part of it was still in Italy and from that the name of ‘divided square’, that became a symbol of the border of Gorizia and Nova Gorica and what help the imaginary construction of a ‘divided town’ and its comparison to Berlin. Apart from local narratives, such as Bruno’s, the best example is given by Rumiz (2004), a journalist from the national daily newspaper La Repubblica, who calls this square “the Brandenburg Gates of our own little Berlin”. Because of such open space the border of this squared used to at the same time a highly patrolled area and the ideal place for controlled meetings of people living on different sides of the border, that I have discussed in the previous chapters.

For its symbolism, this square was also chosen as the place where to hold the celebration of European integration on the 1st May 2004. In preparation to the event the area was restored and rebuilt: a more circular shape was given to its edges and in the centre a mosaic depicting in a stylised fashion the destruction of the famous Boundary Stone No. 57 was placed. An
inscription completes it: “Mosaico della nuova Europa / Mozaik nove Evrope” [tr. Mosaic of New Europe]. As part of the enlargement celebrations, on the 1st of May 2001 day there was a symbolic removal of the barbed wire. Even so, up until December 2007 it was not considered a legitimate place for crossing the border and some police officers were always present there to make sure that there was not any illegal trespassing. Visitors to the square could only move within the square.

Here some images of how this area changes through the last few years.
Despite the remodelling of the area and its symbolism of a Europe without border, this area still does not have a single name: in Italian is called Piazzale della Transalpina [tr. Transalpina Square], to emphasise the importance of this area of the town at the beginning of the 1900s, while in Slovene is named Trg Evrope [tr. Europe Square], to celebrate Slovenia’s entrance to the European Union, detaching the country from its Socialist past. The failure in finding a common name for the divided square not only proves, but reinforces, that Gorizia and Nova Gorica are and always have been two towns. Their inscribed landscape (the name of streets and monuments) has in this case shown that the names chosen for the mapping of Gorizia reflect the beginning of the 1990s century because that it’s the time when Gorizia was its most renown and wealthiest. While in Nova Gorica emphasis is given to more recent events, from when the town was built to when Slovenian gained its independence from Yugoslavia to its entrance in the EU. The inscribed landscape is often suggestive of what are the points of reference for a community, what is chosen to pass on to the local future generations; according to Alon Confino (2006:32), explains that “the collective memory does not only tell us how the past in represented in single museum or commemoration but also how the past is represented in the life of social group”. In the study of collective memory we should look not only at the representation of the past but also at its rejection and reception.”

As mentioned above, the city centre of Gorizia was never divided and it remained in Italy, it is now the district ‘Centro’ (tr. Centre). It is at the heart of the town and contains the main historical building (i.e. the Castle, a reconstruction of the medieval one that was present when the town was first mentioned politically in 1001) and the main shopping area. The historical centre develops at the bottom of the castle by the walls of the medieval Borg and is characterised by palaces dating back to the 13th century and then amplified and restored throughout the 16th century to the 19th. Many of the historical palaces that are not now museums are used for commercial and residential purposes.
Nova Gorica centre is instead very modern and built around shopping and entertainment. The layout of the town as a whole is new and modern: built with functionality in mind in fact. The proof is in the initial construction of the town: in three years (1947-1950) five apartment blocks were built which were giving home to seven hundred people.

- THE TOWN AS ONE

Despite the emphasis of Gorizia and Nova Gorica being two completely different towns, inspired by the official cross-country cooperation, a lot of events have been organised to promote the area as united, as being in cooperation; to cite some: while I was there I attended the music event *Concerti sul Confine* [tr. Concerts by the Border]. This event started in 2004 with the idea of promoting cross-border events: Italian singers and musicians performing alongside Slovenian ones. But from 2009 the acts were even more international, because the idea behind this event was to promote community: something to be enjoyed at the same time by both sides of the border, and the divided square is the site where it occurs.

For four Friday nights in March 2009, the Administration of the Province of Gorizia in collaboration with ARPA (Associazione per la Ricerca della Psicoanalisi Applicata- tr. Association for Applied Research in Psicoanalysis), and the Association Forum, organised the film festival *Barriere di Contatto* (tr. Contact Barriers) where they showed films about crossing boundaries of a political, geographical and psychic nature. In commenting on the film on political barriers, *Le Vite degli Altri* (tr. The Life of Others), Mr Nereo Battello discussed how the film set in East Berlin in 1984 should help one to understand life in Gorizia in the first years post-WWII. He commented that the Gorizians should learn from the past and make the most of the collaboration with Slovenia, since now ‘we are all part of one territory’ and the memory of conflicts and separation should be forgotten.

Another event inspired by cross-country collaboration took place in September 2008 (26-
it was much more popular and better established than the previous two. It was called *Gusti di Frontiera* [tr. Tastes of the Frontier] and it was first organised in 2004. It took place during a long weekend: it stretched throughout the main road of Gorizia and its central square. It started off as an event that put emphasis on bringing together the food and wine of the states separated by the border of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, but in 2008, food and wine stands from various regions of Europe were present. However, the main square of Gorizia – Piazza Vittoria - was dedicated only to the local products of Italy and the neighbouring regions of Slovenia and Austria. This choice was made by the organisers to emphasise the spirit of community in which the region lives with its cross-country neighbours.

Plans for the kind of events as the ones described above, all started to be thought of at the same time of the Enlargement ceremony (2004): they were not necessarily about the border area of Gorizia and Nova Gorica, but about many diverse issues. They incorporated ideas of inter-regionalism, unification in diversity, plurality. While exploring the event ‘Tastes of the Frontier’ I was chatting with one of my friends, Giulia: I have known her since high school, she is a year older than me (27 at the time) and she has always lived in Gorizia. She was basically giving me a tour of this fair and she told me that since 2004 all these events about the union of different cultures have been ‘popping up’ (tr. *spuntati*): ‘this is not the first but it is definitely the most successful’. I then asked her why did she think that was and she told me in her opinion it is because Gorizia is on a border: as she said, ‘the idea of border in the EU aims towards collaboration and exchange and here, for example, you get to learn about different food and drink from other countries’. The words border, barrier, frontier are used more to emphasise in which kind of territory - a European border area - they are happening in than the content of the event.

Of these three events only the last one was successful and it one of Gorizia prides and joy. But when I was there the EU was not emphasised, the border was not mentioned: in the
papers yes it was but not by people. Asking around: “people were there to eat”, “enjoy the
city”, “there is finally something to do”, “it is something different”.

While looking at how the border was emphasised in local events, I also found out about two
projects that did not seem to have a chance to be actually developed because they were not
covered by the INTERREG plan. The first was the idea of a cross-country University as
proposed and explained by Rodolfo Ziberna, the president of the Consorzio Universitario
Goriziano (Gorizian Univeristy Consortium). He envisaged a university whose buildings would
preferably be placed on the borderline, so to be truly cross-country: courses would be taught
in English to attract students from all over Europe. It would be called University of Europe
and the staff would initially be selected from the lecturers that teach at the Universities of
Nova Gorica, Udine and Trieste, so to expand also work opportunities for the people who live
in the surrounding territory. The second was the plan for a cross-country hospital, an idea I
heard about from one of the doctors of the clinic where I was working, but Roberto Covaz
(2007:103-106) also mentions it in his book Niente da Dichiarare (tr. Nothing to Declare)
where he narrates the relations between the town of Gorizia and Nova Gorica. This cross-
country hospital would be built to cover the area of both the districts of Gorizia and Nova
Gorica, and it would be bigger and better equipped than the two existing ones. Staff would be
of both Italian and Slovenian nationality, but in either case bilingual. This hospital would
provide a better health plan, based on communication and integration of neighbouring towns
that now are not really collaborating. In fact, both the hospital of Gorizia and the one in Nova
Gorica are small entities and they need to refer procedures they cannot cover to the bigger
hospital within their state, Trieste, Udine or Ljubljana.

Everything described so far demonstrates that a European dimension is embraced in the area.
“While it is not a shared way of life that characterizes this new model of culture, the act of
collaboration and social interaction paradoxically creates the conditions for new networks
and shared patterns of practice that can be described as singularly ‘European’” (Ingram, 2010:15). These collaborations among countries do not create a territory but they definitely work towards the creation of a new social space; that is why it is possible to define the European Union as a “new spatiality of Politics” (Rumford, 2006: 160). However in the case of Gorizia the new social space presents itself like the old social space when the two national territories (Italy and Slovenia) belonged to one state before WWII. Different groups of Slavs and Italians were living together first under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and secondly under the Italian state.

- **WHEN PEOPLE CROSS**

When the border was closed, after 1947, without its agricultural countryside, the Italian population was facing great difficulties: Fabi (1991) says that Gorizia had, post WWII, the highest rate of unemployment in the country. In the immediate following year regulations and different ways for crossing the border were implemented. Thanks to the Udine Agreements (1955) the poverty brought upon by the closure of the border was tackled: in fact claiming on natural, cultural and economical ties, these agreements stipulated relative freedom of crossing for the residents. The ID Document *Lasciapassare* [tr. Let Pass] allowed the people not only to go to the other side of the border but also to buy and bring back a limited amount of basic goods. To begin with, this document /permit was allowing the holder to cross between Italy and Yugoslavia only four times a month, but these rapidly increased.

I will then look at when crossing became common practice (from the mid 1980s onwards) and discuss when and how people did it.

When do people cross the border, either from Italy to Slovenia or viceversa, it is mainly to shop, to buy to consume. This chapter aims to explore everyday consumer practices, which kept a constant flow of Italians and Slovenians across the international border, and how this
relationship has always been maintained in terms of difference. This section of this chapter looks at how there were always two distinct groups that lived in Gorizia and that such difference was marked in primarily economic terms: who was/is the richer group and who is the poorer one.

I will discuss a series of consumer practices and I will illustrate how the residents of the town of Gorizia and some Slovenians who work in both places, emphasise a complete shift between who is buying what and where. To simplify, I will look into the events that first led Italians to appear as the more affluent ones in comparison to Slovenians and how when I was conducting my fieldwork, between 2008 and 2009, the reverse applied. If, before Slovenia became an EU member, Slovenians were hoping to come to Italy for better jobs and more desirable commodities, after its entry, it was the Italians who were going to Slovenia for the same things at better value for money. I will describe this process drawing examples from various fields: medical procedures, restaurants and supermarkets, and goods that have are controlled by the state such as petrol and cigarettes.

Specifically, I want to conclude showing how the relation between Italians and Slovenians is also about a search for balance. I will describe how some of the locals thought that the European Union would mean the end of a discussion on ‘cheaper prices’ and ‘better quality’ and bring about more even, equal and stable relations between Italians and Slovenians. In fact, petrol owners argue that the idea of coopetition (Sartori, 2004) – cooperation through competition – promoted by the European Community has, instead of creating an equal relation between the two states, completely shifted the balance.

The Slovenians, before the entry of Slovenia to the EU, also considered Italy richer and, before Slovenia separated from Yugoslavia, Gorizia was seen as a ‘fun fair’ to use Petra’s words. I met Petra when I was looking for somebody who would help me with my ‘conversational Slovene’. It was October 2008 and I had been on fieldwork for two months
and all of the Slovene language courses were fully booked. I posted advertisements around Gorizia asking if anyone would be interested in tutoring me and I also asked some friends of mine who are part of the Slovenian minority of Gorizia. Petra contacted me through common friends, however, she was not from the Slovenian minority: she was from Nova Gorica and she worked in one of the casinos as a croupier. Petra was only a couple of years older than me and she spoke very good Italian. Unfortunately we got along so well that we ended up ‘chatting’ too much and practised very little Slovene. I was asking Petra what it was like growing up in Slovenia so close to the border, because I felt that we had similar backgrounds, just from different sides of the border. Petra said that when she was little (more or less seven years old) a trip to Gorizia was magical, simply because there was more choice in anything. She particularly put emphasis on Barbie dolls, saying that in toyshops in Gorizia there was so many more kinds of Barbies than in Nova Gorica. Another thing Petra remembered clearly was that she and her older sister were always begging her mother to buy Nutella, because in Nova Gorica you could only buy a poor Slovenian imitation, and it just did not taste as good. Petra said that her mother always used to complain that Nutella cost more, but she would always buy a pot of it as a treat. After 1991, when Slovenia obtained its independence from Yugoslavia, Petra said that Slovenians started becoming wealthier and so her mother and father would also take them to buy clothes in Gorizia. To Petra, when she was a teenager, that sounded amazing because, among her friends, Italian fashion was the best you could get, and any T-shirt bought in Gorizia, “would have allowed us to say that this was in fashion and that I got it in Italy. Now everything I find in Italy I can find in Slovenia too: Italy is not that special anymore. I go to Italy if I want to buy something Italian... like an Armani dress, because that would not be cheaper in Slovenia”. With this last sentence Petra underlines the shift in the relation between Italians and Slovenians that I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, but this is only one example of a shift in the relationship.
The other reason that Slovenians were crossing the border over to Italy was to earn more money. In Gorizia houses between the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, a great amount of illegal Slovenian workers were employed as “domestic helpers”. The majority of women I talked to in Gorizia who hired domestic help, especially between the 1980s and the 1990s, would look for it in Slovenia, as it was cheaper. One of this woman was Anita who I have introduced in regards to this topic in Chapter One: when talking at the doctor’s clinic, Anita did not mention that the Slovenian woman she employed was not actually officially registered. Anita did not refer to this because that was common practice: Slovenians were ‘working in black’ [tr. lavoravano in nero]. That meant that they were not officially registered to work and they were receiving cash in hand, paying no taxes. At one of my friend’s mother’s house, I met a Slovenian woman, Alenka, who worked as domestic help since 1985. She told me that at one time every family in her village, Prvacina, had at least one member working in Gorizia as domestic help. Being a cleaner in a house in Gorizia paid much better than any basic job in Slovenia; jobs such as shop assistant, secretary, or even lower level administrator. In some cases, she said, it even paid better than being a teacher. Slovenian women, Alenka argued, were not just doing this because they had to, but also because they wanted to. In fact the Lira [Italian money at the time] was much stronger than the Dinar [Slovenian money at the time]. However, Alenka continued by saying that, as time passed by, thanks to Slovenia’s independence from Yugoslavia and its entry to the EU, Slovenia became richer and salaries increased. People no longer needed to look to Italy to earn a reasonable amount of money. Proof of this phenomenon is Katarina’s story. Whilst on fieldwork a friend of a friend, Katarina, was specifically looking to hire some domestic help from Slovenia. Katarina was in her mid-thirties, working full time as an accountant. She had two children and her husband often travelled for work. Katarina was a Slovenian citizen resident in Gorizia and she specifically wanted to hire somebody from ‘the other side’ (tr. da di la) because she would not
heve register her. Also, Katarina added, since she herself was of the Slovenian minority, when the woman\textsuperscript{39} - the domestic help - was there she could just pass as a friend of hers, in the remote possibility that someone would check. What she did not realise was that the common assumption, that Slovenian women are looking to be employed to do house jobs in Gorizia, was no longer valid and it came as a shock to her not being able to find someone that would do it cheaply and ‘in black’: Slovenian women were asking the same amount of money, if not more than officially registered Italian cleaners, because of the risks of not being registered. She was told that by working officially registered in Slovenia, not only might Slovenian cleaners have got the same amount of money, but they would also acquire contributions towards their state pension. Katerina lived in the belief that the economy was still better in Italy and so working in Gorizia would still be attractive to the Slovenians, like it was for her ten years before. Slovenia also had the Euro and, being a small country (in terms of population), work possibilities were greater and better remunerated.

Labour was not the only think thought of as being cheaper in Slovenia. When I asked people of Italian origin for the reasons they were going to Slovenia, many told me that it was ‘going to eat out’ (tr. andare a mangiare fuori) in a Slovenian restaurant. This was a reason shared by people of different ages, genders, and social background. The best story of this experience came from Carlo, who was a police officer in his forties. He grew up and lived in Gorizia all his life and he was describing what his family did as though everybody else he knew did the same. As Carlo said, “twenty years ago it was very common practice for the residents of this area [people who live in Gorizia and its immediate peripheries] to go on Sundays to eat in some ‘osteria’ [tr. inn] in Slovenia, as you got big portions and low prices. The menu did not offer a lot of variety, not as in restaurants in Italy anyway, but the bill would be less than half of what you would pay for a very similar meal in Italy”. The osterias were described by Carlo as very

\textsuperscript{39}The fact that in this narrative, as in Anita’s, the hired help is referred to as a woman could open a discussion on gender practices. However, this discussion is not relevant to the purpose of this chapter, so I will not analyse it.
modest and unpretentious ‘little places’ (tr. posticini) where tables had no table cloths nor fancy cutlery. However, in Carlo’s words, ‘these osterias are now an extinguishing species (tr. una specie in estinzione)\textsuperscript{40}, because, after the separation of ex-Yugoslavia and Slovenian independence, things rapidly changed. Carlo’s opinion is that, thanks to the tourism boom that Slovenian experienced in the late 1990s, most of these osterias were quickly upgraded to restaurants: the environment was becoming less rustic (tr. rustico), menus and table-cloths were introduced and by improving the standards of the place the prices also went up. Carlo said to me: “Now, it is not at all cheaper to eat in Slovenia unless you are happy to pay in cash without having a receipt.” From personal experience I can say that this does not happen in all the Slovenian restaurants across the border of Gorizia, however, Carlo was not the only person I spoke to that emphasised this aspect. The standard of food had also improved and - Carlo continued saying- now going to eat in Slovenia ‘is just like going to eat in Italy, or even better’. One particular thing I specifically found interesting is that many Italians told me that they also went to eat pizza in Slovenia: this was a recent phenomenon apparent whilst I was conducting my fieldwork, because at the time that I was growing up in the town, Slovenian pizza would have been classified as ‘absolute madness’ (tr. pazzia). Whilst I was growing up, Slovenian Pizza was considered to be “bread topped up with stuff”; however between 2008 and 2009 I was taken to a pizzeria in Slovenia and I was told the following exact words by my high school friend Giulia: “Believe me, they even learnt how to do pizza! And it is cheaper!” Giulia was one of the few of my friends who did not move from the town unless she was going on holidays, and she took it upon herself to show me all the things that had changed since I left to go to university in 2001.

Giulia was the one who first explained to me that it was common knowledge, amongst the residents of Gorizia, that the quality of products in Slovenia had considerably improved, and

\textsuperscript{40} Even in Italian this is an expression that does not really apply to buildings, however this is the one that Carlo used and so I decided not to change it; in fact I believe that the meaning is quite clear: they were shutting down, they were less and less.
this was indicated by the fact that Italians were shopping in Slovenia for all sorts of things, ‘even clothes’ (tr. *persino vestiti*) to say it in her exact words. The explanation for this comment is that people of Italian origin had always considered the Slovenians as being bad dressers: ‘dressing like a Slovenian’ was a common insult to someone that did not dress well, followed by ‘next time you will put fuchsia and orange together like only a Slovenian would do’\textsuperscript{41}. I first heard it from Elisabetta a twenty-five year old girl who worked with Giulia. When I heard it, the phrase reminded me that it was something I heard before when I still used to live in Gorizia. Gorizia, being the small town it was, did not have a large shopping centre: between 2008 and 2009, the local economy had started to struggle and many shops were starting to shut down. As reported in the local paper, Gorizia had to compete with the nearby towns of Udine and Trieste which were not too far away (thirty five-forty five kilometres), were bigger and even had shopping malls. Nova Gorica also had a shopping mall – Qlandia - which opened in September 2008, as I started my fieldwork. This shopping mall was not large, but a shopper could find certain products that in Gorizia s/he could not find. The opening of this shopping centre put the shops of Gorizia into a deeper crisis. Gioia, who owned a city centre shop, explained me that, before Qlandia opened, the distance between Gorizia and Udine or Trieste worked as an advantage for them, as not everyone would be willing to travel the distance just to buy, for example H&M clothes, which were very popular/trendy in Italy. Gioia continued however that at the shopping centre in Nova Goriza there was an H&M shop and it was only 1.5 kilometers away, so there was really nothing stopping the Gorizians moving away from shopping within the town. Giulia and Gioia’s narratives demonstrate that the Gorizians were going to Slovenia for the same reason that Petra said the Slovenians used to go to Gorizia: this shows a complete reversal of the roles. If before it was the wish of Slovenians to be able to buy in Italy, now Italians were buying in Slovenia. Gorizians looked

\textsuperscript{41} I do not know the reason why the colours fucsia and orange were specifically paired up in this sentence.
now at Nova Gorica not only as having a greater choice of products, but also as being generally more efficient, since, for example, shops were open during lunch time and on Sundays, which in Italy they are not.

However, when discussing efficiency, the data I collected during the time I was working at the doctor’s clinic (August 2008-January 2009) are more exemplary. During my time there I found out that more and more Italians were going to Slovenia for medical procedures. It was at the clinic that I found out from patients that they would rather go to Slovenia to see a dentist or an optician (oculist) and for x-rays. The reasons for this were two: in order of importance, there were no waiting lists and they were cheaper. Hardly anyone in Gorizia was going to the hospital to see a free/NHS equivalent dentist; it was always a matter of going private. Dentists in Gorizia, according to the patients at the clinic, were really expensive and always fully booked. In Nova Gorica one could be seen within the day and the cost would be half. For the optician and x-rays it was first and foremost because of the massive waiting lists that there were at the hospital in Gorizia. In fact, if a patient had nothing urgent but had only to undergo routine check ups, s/he would end up waiting for at least three months. There was a lady who suffered with rheumatism in her hands: her condition was not new but the doctor had prescribed an x-ray to make sure that the situation had not deteriorated. When she went to book the appointment at the hospital, she was not given one until seven months’ time. She was outraged and came back to the clinic to see if her GP could have done anything about it but unfortunately she could not. So this lady told me that she went to Slovenia because even if it meant she would have to pay towards it, at least she would have it done within the week, and the costs were considerably lower than going to a private facility in Italy.

Efficiency and lower costs were also taken into consideration in comparing Italians and Slovenians, in relation to a veterinary. A friend of mine, Tiziana, had an aunt who worked for the Animal Rescue Home in Gorizia; she told me that she was advising everyone who had a pet
to go to Slovenia for routine vaccines, and general check ups, because they were definitely cheaper than in Italy. Economic relations between Italy and Slovenia were established in Gorizia were first a question of money, then it was a matter of quality and then efficiency. What people can buy and for how much money, whether the quality is good and whether it is fashionable can be called the concerns of capitalism. Even when I discussed health care (there was no talk of social services) it was about the costs.

All this considered, there are two aspects where the relation between Italy and Slovenia has not changed at all: gambling and prostitution. These are, in fact, legal in Slovenia. Nova Gorica had always been renowned for its several casinos and its ‘girl’s club’ [tr. club di ragazze], both of which have a considerable clientele of Italians. Those Gorizians, who were so against Slovenia joining the EU who on the 1st May 2004 hung black flags from their balcony and windows in sign of mourning, were complaining and worrying exactly about this ‘degeneration’ coming over to Italy to corrupt the citizens of Gorizia. Elga the elderly lady in whose Slovenian neighbour spat on, was one of those. She said that gambling and prostitution were two of the main things that defined the character of the Slavs (tr. Slavi). It showed, in her opinion, that they were immoral and depraved. For Elga, that was the main reason why the border structures should not have been demolished. In her mind, there was now (after December 2007) more risk that Italians would start thinking that these kind of practices were acceptable. The younger population of Gorizia completely disagree with Elga: university students, people in their twenties, thought that Nova Gorica was the only place close by where to find entertainments. Carmelo and Daniele, for example, are two students who moved to Gorizia to study at university. They both come from large cities in the centre of Italy and they said they were shocked by how little there was to do in Gorizia for the younger generation. “There is not a disco, nor a club that stays open past midnight” – said Daniele- “Yes, it is like living in a village in the middle of nowhere”, reinforced Carmelo. Their main problem was not
owning a car, because they said that they noticed that people from Gorizia, of their age, would just get the car and go to Udine or Trieste or to the seaside, especially in the summer. In both Daniele’s and Carmelo’s opinion, Nova Gorica offered the entertainment that Gorizia could not or would not offer and it was only a walk away. Probably because I was a female, the two students went out of their way to reassure me that what was interesting them was not the lap dancing or strip-teasing clubs but the casino. They told me that the casinos offered much more than just gambling, but it was also the place where there were a lot of concerts, magic shows, and parties of different nature. Elisabetta, Giulia’s co-worker mentioned above, emphasised their view by saying that just a little outside Nova Gorica there were two disco clubs that stayed open until the early hours of the morning, where people could go dancing and have fun. Elisabetta described how she would go to the club, and said that she would normally take a taxi, but she would even order that from Nova Gorica as they were considerably cheaper than the ones in Slovenia.

The catalogue of things that people who reside in Goriza did find cheaper in Slovenia does not end here however the argument they make is always the same: it is cheaper, it is more efficient and it is good quality.

- NOT CROSSING

Overall what the above section showed that it was perfectly reasonable crossing the border in order to gain something: this is a very practical and utilitarian view of the border (or lack thereof) which is shared also by the people residing in the countryside, specifically the winegrowers who I will talk about in the next two chapter.

When checks at the borders of the country were formally reinstituted for nearly a month (from the end of June – mid July 2009) on the occasion of the G8 International summit, which was held in Aquila –Italy- from the 8th till 10th of June, I decided to spend a few hours everyday
at one of main passport control stations of Gorizia to collect the reactions of those who were
crossing from Italy to Slovenia. The Schengen Treaty was suspended in Italy between the June
28th 2009 and July, 15th 2009, in order to guarantee security for the World leaders and
delagations that were taking part in the G8. At the beginning of that July, one woman waiting
in her car queuing to cross to Slovenia told me that the best thing the European Union had
done for the area was “eliminating the queues anytime somebody wanted to cross over, which
happens here a lot”. In this statement the woman discusses the disappearance of border
passport control stations as something that made things easier in practical terms. More
importantly, she recognised it as something done by the EU. The fact that the border ‘re-
appeared’ only seemed to be discussed in terms of change. An elderly couple (they looked in
their sixties), who I also approached while they were waiting for their documents to be
checked, said: “I forgot about these queues. Things did not change a bit”- said the man. “Well,
things did not really change before. I mean this is the difference really, now we stop like we
did before. But you know the fact that the border is not there anymore only means this: that
we cross without stopping. It is not a big change”, added the woman.

The recurrence of the expression that it is not a big change in my notes is interesting,
because it motivated me to look more closely at how the entry of Slovenia to the EU was
contextualised in the media. Gorizia, when I visited, was undergoing a moment of change, and
the people affected by this change also had an active role in this change. When talking about
the border that crosses Gorizia and its district, not only the people but also the media seemed
to feel obliged to make a comparison: to make a statement of change. People from the area of
Gorizia that I have spoken to do all discuss change, either by constantly referring to it, or by
asserting that it did not occur. For Michele for example, with the entry of Slovenia into the EU
everything changed. Michele was one of the pharmacists who worked more closely with the
clinic where I was working, and in his opinion ‘without borders (tr. senza confini) you could
breath a different air (tr. *si respira un’altra aria*) in Gorizia’; in his opinion people were more involved with the other side of the border, they were more predisposed in developing the territory, more interested in attract tourists. ‘The border was limiting -Michele said-, it closed the area, now it is more open’.

- FINDING THE BALANCE

The fact that there is a change to the Italian-Slovenian consumer relationship has been discussed in terms of the European Union. However, on the Italian side certain people found this disappointing, because ‘changing things for the better’ would have meant a form of ‘equality’. The particular group of people I am referring to is that of the owners of the petrol station of Gorizia. The above words are Gennaro’s. Gennaro is the owner who started the whole debate with the local authorities which I am about to describe. He said that all he was asking was that ‘they would found a balance’ (tr. *che trovassero un equilibrio*).

Certain goods with which ‘quality’ was not necessarily associated, had been bought by the residents of Gorizia in Slovenia, since 1957 when the border was open. As Alessandro mentioned in Chapter Four, cigarettes and petrol had always been cheaper in Slovenia, and gave a very good reason to cross the border. This was because in Italy the price of these goods is controlled by the State; cigarette, especially, are controlled by State Monopoly and this means that no private company has the right to distribution. In this regard a welcomed aspect of living on a border was having at hand the ‘duty free shops’. These were located between Italian and the Slovenian border control stations: as the name suggests, the goods sold in this shop are not subjected to taxes. Most of the Italians went to the duty free to buy cigarettes, which in Italy were highly taxed. However, as Bruno the older guy introduced in Chapter Four who relocated in Gorizia after the reconfiguration of state borders of 1947, told me that up until 2004 the residents of Gorizia could not bring across the border more than two packets
per person, because that would have lowered the sales in Gorizia. Bruno and his wife remembered crossing the border and hiding a box of ten packets under the car seat or in the boot of the car hoping not to get checked for smuggling goods. However now Bruno could do the same thing without having to hide them when they are re-entering Italy. To Bruno that was a great improvement because it was less stressful, even if in the ten years prior to 2004 he could count on the fingers of one hand the times he, or anybody he knew had been checked.

The price of petrol is also high due to a high percentage of State taxes. On the 1st January 1963 to the Region Friuli Venezia-Giulia was granted the Statuto Speciale [Special Status] 42; this meant that the region was granted the power to make constitutional law. What this has done, amongst other things, was to lower the prices of petrol in comparison to the Italian national prices so that the general economy would not suffer from people going to buy petrol in then Yugoslavia, and now after 1991 in Slovenia. However, despite the prices being lowered the practice of buying petrol outside the national territory was something that still happened while I was on fieldwork. Interestingly enough it was happening more frequently and with less restrictions than ever before because of the constant rise in petrol prices in Italy. Since the entry of Slovenia in the Schengen zone, the Gorizian petrol station owners entered into an argument with the local and national government in regard to the prices of petrol. In Slovenia the cost of petrol still was, as it had been, cheaper than in Italy. However as the national cost of petrol kept going up, so did the ‘special local’ prices mentioned above. Slovenian petrol was now costing even less than those special prices, and this meant that the residents of Gorizia kept crossing the border to get petrol, thus causing many petrol stations to close down. The majority of the wine-makers I worked with used much petrol to power not only their cars but also their tractors and special instruments they were using to prune the grapevines. They

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42 http://www.consiglio.regione.fvg.it/pagine/istituzione/statuto.asp?sectionId=167&subSectionId=171
were always going to buy petrol in Slovenia because it's so much cheaper and it is so close by (tr. è vicino ed economico). When I spoke to Gennaro, he told me that this was absolutely ridiculous because, in his opinion, the taxes on petrol should be the same at European level and not at a State level: petrol, in Gennaro's opinion, is universal, it is something that is used everywhere and as such the price should be on a parity. Gennaro said that there should not be this kind of discrepancy between member states of the EU and there should be economical balance. Obviously Gennero in his explanation did not seem to take a lot of elements into consideration, what he was implying is that even higher prices than the one in Italy (as in France for example) should be equalised, and so his theory would potentially not turn to his advantage. Gennaro's point of view was that if it had to be expensive, then it would be expensive but if it would be the same everywhere, people like him who were living on a border with a state with cheaper prices, would not be put out of business. Gioia, when discussing people going to shop at Nova Gorica shopping mall, made a similar reference: she said that even if there were the same availability of labels in Gorizia, they would still probably be cheaper in Slovenia, and so it was like fighting a losing battle.

- **CONCLUSION**

If, before, (up to 2004) Italians were buying a second home in Slovenia as an investment, when I was on fieldwork (between August 2008 and August 2009), it had just started to be the reverse. Moreno, the Brambilla's Italian neighbour I introduced in Chapter Two, when he was describing his house, told me that he and his wife had done particularly well for themselves in buying the house they bought, because if you wanted ‘a town get-away in the hills’ (tr. un ritiro in collina) most people from Gorizia would buy a house in the villages of Brda- the Collio counterpart. Moreno said that this was because, the houses there were really cheap and a very good investment as a second house. However, as mentioned above, things
had changed: while I lived in Gorizia, a lot of houses were for sale in the historical centre of Gorizia. Many of the historical centre apartments were for sale, mainly because they needed to be restored, and such restoration needed to be done preserving the original character of the house. For this reason they were expensive and they for sale for a long time. In February 2009 an article appeared in the local paper ‘Messagero Veneto’ stating that Slovenians had shown a lot of interest in these properties: the journalist based his article around the potential of the historical city centre becoming Slovenian and that, slowly but surely, Gorizia would come to be seen as Nova Gorica’s suburbs. The members of the political party/cultural association FORUM (referred to previously) had always claimed to be in favour of creating a strong collaboration between the two countries. Antonia, the member with whom I established a closer relationship, was commenting on this article by suggesting that the Slovenians were buying these properties as a counter reaction for having lost ‘their’ city centre at the time of the war. As we saw in the previous chapter, this was not the case since Nova Gorica was built after the war. However it was indeed build out of the peripheries of Gorizia which remained in Yugoslavia. So, as Antonia explained, it is reasonable to consider Gorizia as their town too. However, Antonia could not help that feeling as if they [the Italians] were being colonised and it was only a matter of time before Gorizia would lose its “Italianness”. Collaboration did not mean they would lose control or distinction, which is what the ‘housing’ situation was going to inevitably turn to. Antonia’s comments concluded on the note that such ‘colonisation’ should probably have been expected because it was a reaction to the lack of collaboration with the Slovenians that the contemporary government of the day was demonstrating.

In the context of the informal economy, on the one hand the advent of the European Union has been a blessing on the other it had been the most horrible nightmare. The border crossing was now unmonitored and this was the main reason for of the unbalance. “Nova Gorica is
blooming while Gorizia is dying”, this was the rhetoric of the newspapers. When Gorizia local newspapers described the situation in these terms, they were obviously being bias towards the Italians, who, the journalist considered, were slowly becoming ‘inferior’ to the Slovenians. During a discussion with friends I suggested that this could actually be seen as the relations between Italian and Slovenian being finally balanced since, before the Italians were the ‘stronger’ while now the Slovenians are. This statement was not at all welcomed as a few of my friends, such as Federico or Giulia, argued: the European Union was supposed to promote equality so nobody was to be seen as better, richer, or stronger than the other, Federico said.

In all of the above examples, thanks to the European Union, Slovenia was believed to have achieved the same quality standards that Italy had offered and, even in those cases were it was not quite there yet, it was of popular opinion within the town that it was just a matter of time. The best example of this proves, once again, to be the wine. At the time of my fieldwork Slovenian wine, as mentioned in the third chapter, was still believed to be of a lower quality of an Italian wine. Even when Carlo was discussing ‘eating out’ in Slovenia in the previous section, he told me the only component of the meal that was not quite matching Italian standards was the wine they served unless it was, of course, produced in Italy.
CHAPTER FOUR:

Collio Winemakers: there is wine between the ties.

- INTRODUCTION

In the region of Collio the wine business is the main activity and, as such, it is very competitive: the grapevine is the most cultivated plant and it has been for years.

In the first few months of fieldwork (August-October 2008) I met with various people involved in the wine business: the range varied from famous producers who export their wines internationally to small independent wine makers, who only sell to a small circle of people and businesses (such as local wine shops or restaurants). I also had the opportunity to take a course titled ‘Closeness to Wine’ (tr. Avvicinamento al Vino), which explained basic notions of wine making and wine tasting, and I had the opportunity to talk to people who were deemed to be wine connoisseurs (experts).

Most of the wines produced in the Collio area come from family businesses (some larger than others), which, by definition, is a private business owned by one or more members of the same family. According to the size of the business other people outside the family can join the work force or even take some ownership of the business, as long as the major stakeholders remain within the family. The ownership of the business is generally passed on from father to son(s), and most winemaking people I spoke to said this was how the particular, family-specific, skills of winemaking are maintained: the wine remains the same because the winemakers come from the same family, raised with their particular way of making wine.

This chapter recounts how border relations are established focusing specifically on one case study: the Brambillas. Their own account of their social connections could have described their close past relations with Slovenia, thus highlighting the border in their own story. Instead, they told a story about their (Italian) wine business. After I have established what the
narratives are about the border that we find in the area of Collio and how the area itself is presented to give an idea of certain typology of narratives, I will look at how the Brambilla present their family history and network of friends. I will argue that, on the basis of these accounts, what makes relationships for the Brambilla is their wine business. As Edwards and Strathern tell us, there is a distinction between the blood ties a person might have and his/her social interest to conclude that they are both factors of what makes a relation: “a person who could be claimed in terms of blood ties may be disowned through lack of social interest, which might or might not be a matter of consequence. Conversely, someone who was forgotten may be claimed back through resurrected biological links” (2000:160).

In the next few pages, I will show how, for the members of the Brambilla family constructed a certain kind of narrative about themselves that marked a different kind of distinctions between themselves and their neighbours. I will discuss how these differentiations are also ways to make and mark the Italian-Slovenian border. “As Bourdieu (1984) has shown with respect to consumption - albeit with implications for production - distinction is central both to the wine-grower’s identity and to the commercial value of wine in an increasingly capital-intensive age of mass production” (Ulin, 2002; 699).

The Brambillas’ property is set on the top of the hill, a few metres away from the state border between Italy and Slovenia. On the site, there are three buildings: a house, something resembling a stable connected to the old house and something resembling a warehouse, which is in fact their wine cellar and wine storage room.

Many small-scale wine family businesses, such as the Brambillas’, have a crossover between their winery and their home: they are built on the same site, but most importantly they are both part of the household. The visitor would not ever be invited into the family home, because their living space and entertaining space is the wine cellar. That is where I found Mario and Paolo the first time I drove up to their house (August, 24th 2008) and it took a few
months before I made it into the Brambilla home, when I was invited to join them for a winter
dinner meal (November, 11th 2008). Initially, I was ushered into the wine cellar, as is most
usually the case when a stranger comes to visit: this is not necessarily for advertising motives,
it is simply because, as Paolo Brambilla told me, it is where they spend most of their time. The
‘home’, according to him, is where you go and have your evening meal, sleep and, occasionally,
watch some TV. The lunchtime meal does not require one to go home, because, I was told by
Paolo and also witnessed that, it is something quick and light, ‘between jobs’ [tr. tra un lavoro
e l’altro]: lunchtime is a pause not a stop. The home is for when you stop, when you are not
doing anything. Everything else happens in the cellar.

On entering the Brambillas’ property, the first thing a visitor is most likely to get offered is a
glass of wine. The offering of the wine as the very first act is the best way, they think, at least
as Mario put it, that they have in introducing themselves: this wine is us.

The wine is not just a product; it is part of them. Wine is personal here. Howell (2001), who
looked at transnational adoption in Norway, described how the symbolic power of blood
relations can be reworked. For example the adoptive families she described consider their
child’s birth the first moment they meet with him/her: biological notions of kinship are
completely challenged. Kinship relations can be reshaped by what contains most substance
and meaning to the people involved: in this ethnographic case I argue that such a substance is
wine. Genealogical metaphors are often invoked for the wine one has produced/made: ideas
of sharing blood and substance are often expressed by the wine maker or members of the
families of wine makers. Demitri, a man whose life history I will present in the following
pages, was out of the wine business for a while and decided to go back to it on the basis that
‘wine is in his veins’ (tr. vino scorre nelle mie vene), and wine growing was ‘in his blood’ (tr. nel
mio sangue).
Very similarly to the sheep farmers described by Gray (1998:354), the Brambilla men and many other wine growers believed that their ability to make wine derived from family traditions: it is something that is passed on through generations, like thick hair or big noses. For this reason wine is believed to share the same substance of the person who makes it. In this chapter I will describe how this connection is explained by the wine growers themselves and in the wine literature (Cipresso, 2006), as I will argue that, in the case of the wine growers from this borderland, the placement of people and their wine in specific genealogies demonstrates a specific construction of social distinction.

Wine is about the people who make it and as such it allows an understanding of their social life; the Brambillas’ family life is located on a border. “Our experience in our own society is that work in production earns money, and money is the means by which the family can be maintained and, therefore, reproduced. At the same time, the reverse holds: the family and its reproduction of people are the means by which the productive system of society is reproduced” (Yanagisako & Collier, 1987:24). A family reproduction mirrors society’s reproduction: constructions of families are shaped by labour and capital and also contribute to shape it. The Brambilla men’s understanding of their kinship is shaped by their work in the wine business, which also shapes the social space they inhabit.
THE WINE FAMILY GENEALOGY

The country of origin is present on the majority of wine labels from around the world, and it is there, in theory, to identify the character and quality of the product. “In France, only wines vinified from grapes coming from a single domain can carry the chateau label, a privilege that has considerable commercial appeal and translates into greater financial return” (Ulin; 2002:698).

The Brambilla family's way of narrating their family history provides a sense of how border relationships and ideas of nation and nationalities are combined. Stories told by members of the Brambilla family regularly used the border to state where they are from; the difference between being Italians and being Slovenian, is key to what the male members of the Brambilla family defined, perceived, and experienced as kinship, yet their expression of nationality seemed only loosely related to the state. I came to the conclusion that their business – wine production - is key to the understanding of their use of the border as a process of classification and differentiation.

Mario Brambilla said his family was of ‘pure’ Italian origin. His understanding of ‘family’ usually referred to his immediate family – himself and his wife Lucia, his two sons Paolo and Giulio, and three daughters, Sofia, Teresa and Carla – though at other times it extended to other members too. According to Mario – who is generally understood to be the head of the Brambillas’ wine business and of the household - the family settled in the area at the beginning of the 19th century when his parents came over from the neighbouring region of Veneto. In this, like other conversations, Mario really stressed his family’s origin from Veneto: he talked about himself as coming from there, even if all the living family members were born in Collio. Mario saw the family as being from Veneto, even if most spoke in the dialect of

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43 Paolo and Giulio legally owned the business when I was there, however Paolo told me that this was only a recent development due to some health trouble his father had. Mario ‘butts in’ (tr. s’intromette) often, Paolo said, he did not really let go of being in charge and all things considered, Paolo continued, he and his brother did not mind.
Friulano, the region in which they live, and not in the Veneto dialect. Mario’s parents both came from families of vine-growers: some illicit borrowing of money [of which I have no clear details] made them leave their hometown in Veneto to search for a new place to settle. When they arrived in Collio, they realised that this area was already being cultivated with grapevines, so they saw an opportunity to re-start their business: they bought some land, they built a house and the family has been there ever since. Three generations of Brambilla have now lived in Collio and, when I talked to some members of two of these generations about themselves, they never mentioned any connection with Slovenians, which for the area, I thought of as quite unusual. In fact, the majority of the wine producers that reside there, and definitely the ones I came to know, are part of the Slovenian minority. Many of their surnames were taken as a clear indicator in the region: Korsic, Gradnik, Keber, Primosic, for example, do not only sound Slovenian to people in the area, but they come from Slovenian words. Most of the wine producers I have spoken to have their vineyards in both countries; some belong to the Slovenian minority, some belong to families that were divided during the war, or simply, some had their land cut through by the border during the Second World War.

At the beginning of January 2009, I found out that Lucia, Mario’s wife, was from a Slovenian minority family. Mario was born in the late 1940s, Lucia about ten years later. Their children were born in the 1970s. Mario and Lucia met at the market in one of main villages in the area; Mario reported that when they started seeing each other, Lucia’s family did not welcome him. They were against the union and Lucia was physically punished by her father because she was going out with him, an Italian. They kept seeing each other in secret and eventually Mario expressed his intention to marry Lucia to her parents, but he was rejected by them. So, according to Mario, he and Lucia together decided that Lucia should get pregnant: in this way nobody could object to the marriage, because it would be a scandal for the girl’s family if they did not. And so Lucia did get pregnant, and they did get married, but her father
and brothers did not attend the ceremony. Later in my fieldwork, Mario mentioned that eventually his father-in-law warmed to him and he reckons he even got to become his favourite son-in-law, because of “what a hard worker I am”. Just before concluding my fieldwork, I did ask Paolo (the eldest of Mario and Lucia’s sons) about it, but he avoided my questions. All he said was: “we just grew up with my paternal grandparents and it was inevitable we were closer to them”. As this revelation occurred fairly late on in my fieldwork, I did not have the opportunity to pursue it much further.

As Mario saw it, the wine business is all about the ‘name’: if you can make a name for yourself and for your wine, you are in. “Slovenian wines, as any other wines, are in competition with our wines because we are a small business that does not have a name. So the competition is in the price first and the quality after, but only when you try to go for a business that does not know you”. Paolo sold their wines regularly to friends for example, but I had chance to understand what Mario meant when, in April 2009, Paolo invited me to go with him to Trieste where he had some meetings with some restaurateurs to see if they were interested in serving the Brambilla wines in their restaurants. Paolo had five meetings and in three out of five of these meetings, after Paolo had given his wine to sample and discussed a price with the restaurateurs, the latter said: ‘good quality and good price, how come I have never heard about you?’ ‘Not having a name’ (tr. non avere un nome) means not being known, renowned. The distinctive brand name of the wine (as opposed to the grape name – Merlot, Pinot, etc) is usually the name of the family that produces it: knowing the wines means to know the family that produced the wines. Thus the name (and quality) of the wine is deeply related to the name (and reputation) of the family. The family name stands as a guarantee of quality, and when a product has a guarantee of quality it can be sold at a higher value.

In this sense, the wine is a relative, a member of the family, and not just a product. Roberto Cipresso, author of The Wine Novel (2006) supports this idea by adding another
dimension to the notion of *terroir* explored in chapter One: in chapter after chapter he tells his readers how the wine is as much about the land it comes from as it is about the people who are making it and how they are making it (to be explored in the following chapter). In Cipresso's fourth chapter, which is actually about the wine that is made in the region of Italy where the area of Collio is located, he describes how the wine's parents are *Madre Fatica* - Mother Fatigue - and *Padre Lavoro* - Father Labour/Work. The Author describes wine making as being about creating, nurturing and providing using a parenting metaphor. The roles of parents are both played by the wine maker: he does not just have to work – Labour – but also work hard – Fatigue. He needs to make a real effort. If those two characteristics meet, the wine maker can generate the wine: Cipresso says 'every wine is a child' (2006:114). The kinship terminology is also directly used by the winemakers: for example, Mario Brambilla, and sometimes the other men in the family as well, often introduced me to one of his wines by calling it his 'baby' (tr. *bambino*) (and each of the Brambilla men had his own 'baby'): the reason for this, he said, is “the time I spent looking after it; it cannot be considered something less important”. Cipresso continues by saying ‘wine is a child ‘of a big family and it is often difficult to claim its paternity, but it is also a very proud moment’ (2006:115). The grapevine, like a child, needs to be nurtured, cared for and looked after, until it grows and becomes a wine to be proud of. In a local film *La Terra Nel Sangue* (tr. The Land in the Blood), in a scene we hear that the grapevine has literally been watered by the winemaker’s sweat because the farmers sweat so much to work the land to take care of the plant. A lot of the wine producers, and Mario especially, thought that this image was very accurate: as it is accurate to say that the wine is your own flesh and blood. It is all the effort that you put into making it that makes you share a blood relationship, figuratively speaking, with it. The soil that the grapevine was grown from, not only belonged to the family but it had also been worked by a family member
and the grapes were also picked and turn into wine by family members. The comparison with the world of kinship comes spontaneously to Mario: as he said to me he could not think of anything else to call his wine but ‘his baby’. When I suggested the word ‘product’ (tr. *prodotto*), he laughed and said to me: “I produced my children too”.

Some of this resonates with Rebecca Cassidy’s description of horse breeding in Newmarket (Cassidy 2002): Cassidy suggests the idea of ‘pedigree’ was closely associated with particular notions of genealogy and kinship that resonated with English kinship more widely. A similar notion of pedigree seemed to be permeating Mario’s comments about his wine: the wine’s pedigree comes from a combination of soil and other conditions, mixed with breeding and work by the wine maker. The wine producers identify themselves with their wine: it is one with them, it is part of them, and it will live and grow with them. The idea of pedigree – or in case of humans, genealogy and what is hereditary - as for the horse breeders (Cassidy, 2002), applies also to the wine makers: the trade is passed from father to son, from one generation to the next. Their genealogy is part of their wine pedigree: if they are from a renowned tradition of wine makers they are more qualified to know what makes good wine. The genealogy metaphor discussed in the introduction continues here and it can be combined with the notion of pedigree: they use the expression that the wine is of noble heritage because it comes from their family lineage. In the narrative above Mario Brambilla told the story about his family generally placing emphasis on the fact that his parents come from winemaking families. He emphasised his Veneto wine making family origin: this association would give the right to claim the Italian-ness for his wine but also a good quality of wine production, since the Veneto region has a long and renowned history in the business. The Brambillas’ wines are Italian wines, from a long winemaking tradition and expertise. Bigger wine producers of the area that advertise their firms and products through web-sites (something that the Brambillas

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44 This is a specific notion of wine making that I will discuss at more length in Chapter Three also in comparison to vine growing and wine producing.
cannot yet do) include a section about the history of their companies (as is the case for any business that needs to make a claim to some form of heritage): almost all of them claim they were already in existence during the Hapsburg period and they come from long family traditions (e.g. http://www.liviofelluga.it; http://www.gradnik.it both accessed in March 2011). This is another way, in addition to the Brambillas’ narrative, to show that this notion of pedigree is a selective process. Cassidy herself investigates this theory in a later work (2003) on Thoroughbreds where she describes them as a link between geographies and ideologically distant territories (page 13). In racing, the patronage of the British, as times have changed, has been put into question. Whoever writes pedigree decides where to start from, what to date back to and how to move forward (page 15).

The parallel with Cassidy’s ethnography (2002) also is suggestive of the lack of attention paid to the Slovenian side of the Brambilla family. In Cassidy’s ethnography, non-horse relatives are ignored, considered to be strangers and outsiders. The wine is Italian because Mario comes from an Italian wine making pedigree: from his perspective he was from wine growing stock. As I said Paolo Brambilla did not ever mention his mother’s family, focusing on only certain aspects of his family background (like the one described already in Mario’s narrative). The reason for this I do not know, however I do find the fact interesting because the majority of the wine makers in that region were from the Slovenian minority. In this area, the social convention from which genealogy seemed to be worked out is on the basis of who before you was involved in the wine business. Nothing else is actually considered. Generally speaking the wine business is passed over from father to son(s), so in the majority of cases tracing a wine making genealogy meant considering the patrilineal descent. However, in the case of Marko Torli, both his mother’s family and his father’s family are important because they were both involved in the wine business. Marko is another small wine grower of the region: he was in his late thirties and his business was relatively new (five years old). In
his opinion his business would progressively grow, because he was extremely qualified to make wine – ‘his wine would soon be amongst the best in the area’ - since both his parents came from families of wine growers and so all they did at family reunions was ‘talking about wine’ (tr. parlare di vino). He knew so much about wine that he could not have been anything but a wine grower. This was one of the first things Marko told me when we met and I asked him how he opened his business.

- **WHO IS DOING IT AND HOW THEY DO IT**

  In the wine business, Denominazione di Origine Controllata (Protected Geographical Indicator) is the criterion that allows a wine to be distinguished and ranked. However, particular characteristics of a territory for wines made within the Collio/Brda area are not actually enough to distinguish the Italian wine from the Slovenian wine; terroir is given by the winemaker and the level of skill the winemaker possesses.

  Having established how certain genealogical accounts created a particular kind of social distinction, it is now time to discuss how knowledge and skill are acquired: being part of a family of winemakers explains how some people do, and others do not, become skilled winemakers. I already described how the Brambilla family used genealogical metaphors that give Italian-ness to their wine, and this was also used to explain their ability to be good winemakers. There is a logic of both blood and breeding in the transmission of this ability: members of the family learn everything about wine making from a young age, and they are in any event born into the business. In the story Mario narrated about the family, he described how his grandparents were winemakers who decided to move their business to another winemaking area. As I understood, the Brambillas meant that the skills to learn wine making are handed from father to son – and these skills have been learned over decades or even centuries (if past generations are taken into account), and to learn them properly you need to
begin as a young child and grow up with the skill. Their understanding of genetics, or rather their expression, ‘being in your blood’ refers indeed to nurture rather than nature and that is because it refers to skills learnt from a young age and from growing up in a certain environment, not because of genes. The starting point of my discussion will be the division of labour between genders in the wine business, then I will move on to a description of the various ways in which the actual job is understood and done, and I will conclude with a description of the how different ways of doing the job are associated with a different social status and a different border side.

- **THE WORKER**

As we saw in the previous chapter, in a small family business like the Brambillas’, no one apart from the immediate family was really involved in the production of the wine, which made the wine they produced very important and very personal to them. At the time of my fieldwork, the Brambillas’ wine-business was formally owned by Paolo and Giulio (Mario’s two sons), but Mario still liked to run things and, most of the time, his sons had serious difficulties in being listened to by their father. These three men were involved in every stage of production and were the ones taking on the responsibilities, the ones making the decisions and they acted as reference points for others. For example, they were my reference point: in order to understand the wine business I always tagged along with one of them. The female members of the family were somehow marginal: Lucia, Mario’s wife, and two of their three daughters - Sofia and Teresa - only took on an active role at the beginning of the wine making cycle and at its end: during the *vendemmia* [tr. the grape harvest] and during the bottling process.

Giordano has already described how, in the Sicilian context, the practice of drinking wine was considered to belong exclusively to a male universe (Giordano 1987:57) and that women
drinking wine was frowned upon (Gibson and Weinberg, 1970). When Giordano and Weinberg discussed gender division though, they were looking at wine as a symbolic resource; my focus more concerns the division of labour. Giordano's data on the wine business in Sicily describes the exact same arrangements that I had witnessed: only men are charged with the big decisions regarding the business, while women took on a side role. Calabresi, who conducted fieldwork at a similar time as Giordano, but in another region of Italy – Tuscany - also describe that the man, the head of the household and the business, had the most precious grape reserved for him to drink, but more importantly to pick (1987:124): the head of the household is the only one who can take care of such a delicate business, such as the Vin Santo grape. In her case, the Vin Santo grape was not picked by anyone but the head of the household because, ‘it required a trained eyed and complete concentration’. The Brambilla business also had specific crops that required only the head of the family's attention. This was the case for the Fragolino grapes: only Mario – former head of the family business - and Paolo – the current head - were harvesting them. As they told me they own several crops of this kind of grape: an amount that produces more wine than could conceivably be destined for personal consumption alone, and that made it subject to legal restrictions according to EU law because the grape is not of European origin; so they preferred that not many people knew about it. Second, and more importantly in this discussion, the two Brambilla men explained to me that this grape is very delicate, can easily be compromised, and so it requires handling by an expert hand and special attention. If, on one hand, the employees were not even aware of where these crops were, the family members, on the other hand, were not allowed to touch those grapes because nobody else

45 As I said above Giulio also owned the business, but he and Paolo shared different kinds of responsibilities: as I will also mention in the following pages, Giulio took a more dominant role when more technical things needed to be done, such as controlling the efficiency of wine containers, adding gas to the wine, and insert the corks. Also Paolo was the eldest of the two brothers and he considered himself – and Mario also spoke of him as such - the one with more responsibility and competence to handle more delicate tasks.

46 By EU law 1432/1999 wine produced by non-European grapes in European territory can be produced for a person's own consumption but not for sale. The hybrid of grape from which Fragolino comes from is also known as an American grape: it is a non-European grape.
apart from Mario and Paolo knew exactly the care to put into them. Paolo in fact told me that certain things are only for those that 'live the vineyard' [tr. *vivono il vigneto*], something that employees or female family members are not considered to do.

For my fieldwork, these gendered stages of production compromised my involvement with women. At the very beginning of my fieldwork, when it was all about ‘picking the grape before it was too late’, everybody was involved (both men and women), the Brambillas even employed people, because the family members would not have been enough. The people working there were Paolo, Giulio (for what he could do since he had a broken leg), Mario, who was driving the tractors that carried the grapes from the fields back to the canteen, Lucia, occasionally their daughters Sofia and Teresa, plus four students and three Slovenian women. During this initial stage of production almost everybody was equal, everybody had to work their hardest and everybody was getting the same length breaks. However, Paolo was obviously in charge and he was expected to supervise the people from outside the family, especially the students, as they had not done it before. Mario was also helping with the supervising even if he was involved in the actual act of harvesting. Lucia, on top of giving a helping hand, was also expected to prepare some lunch for the members of her family while the other members of the harvesting team brought their own packed lunch from home. However, despite this, they all ate together: when it was time for the half hour lunch break everybody was driven back to the Brambillas’ wine cellar with the last lot of morning grapes, and there they would eat, drink and briefly rest. Mario and Lucia were the only two who would not eat in the canteen with everybody else, but would go back into the house to have their meal properly sat at the kitchen table.

As much as she could, Lucia took part in the wine process (I have been told she was really hands on and hard working when she was younger and she was not pregnant), but by the time I began my fieldwork, and apart from picking the grapes, Lucia mostly ran the household.
She prepared the meals, picked fruit and vegetables from their vegetable garden, looked after the chickens and even killed them if she needed to cook them. Ulin’s article (2002) on labour and identity among French wine cooperatives, even if not explicitly, also provides some indication that women were not involved nor considered important in the process of wine making in his research either: in fact, in his writing, the women are hardly ever mentioned. In Ulin’s ethnography (1996), women are presented almost as equal, whether that is the case or not is unclear: the issue though is that Ulin did not perceive any gendered division of labour as I did in my fieldwork. In fact in his penultimate chapter, “Winegrowing Stories”, the author chose to narrate the story of two men and one woman. While the wine was being bottled (from mid-May onwards), Lucia joined us occasionally in the cellar, but she only helped moving some bottles around (sort of tidying up before someone packaged them). That was probably the reason I never really got to know her that well: we did not spend a great deal of time together. The same goes for Sofia and Teresa, whom I briefly met and spoke to during the ‘bottling’ phase. Most of what I know about the women of this family was told to me by the men; for example, I learned from Paolo that Sofia and Teresa helped out with bottling, because, Paolo said, one was made redundant from her other paid work and the other had days off. Mario told me once the business was always meant for the ‘boys’, but his daughters would always be more than welcome to help out, because it is a family business. At the same time, in contrast, my gender did not compromise my participation, to some extent it helped me to have more of an active role in the bottling stage of the process: Paolo in fact asked my opinion ‘as a woman’ on which bottle would be more appealing for the consumer. When I answered that I did not really know, his reply was that ‘as a woman’ I was bound to know more about what was aesthetically pleasant. It did not matter to Paolo that I had absolutely no idea about how wine consumers go about choosing which wine to buy. My immediate reaction to this was to point to Paolo’s sisters that were there in the cellar with us: “why don’t you ask
which ones they prefer, they are women!” Paolo replied: “they are my sisters, they don’t know, they are not interested in things like this, because we just really drink our wine, from any bottle, mainly the ones we don’t sell!” and then he laughed.

Incidentally, I never witnessed any of the Brambilla women having a glass of wine in the canteen like the men did to either quench their thirst or simply have a taste. However, I was allowed and expected to have a drink of their wine when I was visiting, but I was an outsider, and for me, different rules applied. In fact, Calabresi, also a female anthropologist, was drinking wine at the table but she was not diluting it with water like the other female members of the family did. I know though that the women do drink, I saw them do it at the dinner table and on special occasions. And also Paolo’s remarks implied that they do and that they are also knowledgeable in matters of wine, since they would not be persuaded by the packaging. In fact I was thought of as knowing less about wine than any of them. I was the kind of ‘ignorant’ that would probably choose the wine by its bottle, by what the packaging tells me. So I was more ‘ideal’ for the job because I was representing the consumer and Paolo was trying to find out what would appeal to me. I am the external. If you know your wine, it does not matter which packaging it comes from.

As I will explain in the following pages, Mario and his sons believe that you learn through practice: and in a circular agreement, their view is that women are unable to practice because they are not made for this job or, alternatively, the job is not meant for them. I heard this perspective expressed by men on various occasions when I asked to try something, or offered to help: I was often pronounced too weak. So, differently than before, it was not a case of not having a certain knowledge or expertise but as I was told: ‘moving the land … activating the machinery… transporting grapes requires a strength that women do not have”. However as Paolo told me, women are much more diplomatic and more inclined to learn foreign languages or are good with numbers so as often as he could he tried to delegate sales and
accounting to his sister Teresa. This is an expression of gender politics and an assertion of certain kinds of gender hierarchies and differences from a man's perspective; the Brambilla men were finding whatever excuse they could to avoid doing the work they did not like – ‘women are naturally better at it than men’- and keeping the work they liked the most – ‘women are no good at work like that, they are not strong enough’. Beer and Lewis (2006: 9) picked up on a similar gender divide while conducting their research among the vine growers of Marlborough in New Zealand: they noticed that labourers are mainly male and that there is a gender allocation of jobs based on height, strength and flexibility; male labourers are given more physically demanding tasks compared to females.

Women do not only take a secondary role within the process of making wine, but, more importantly, they marry outside the family. As we saw in the previous chapter, the wine is branded through the family name: a woman who gets married takes her husband’s name, or at least her children will. Consequently, a married woman will never be able to continue the business, because the business would not be able to continue carrying the Family name, but it will take on a new one. Throughout my fieldwork I only met one woman who was the head of her wine business: Ms Ivancic. She is from the Slovenian minority of the area, as her surname suggests: the business she owns is quite big and well established, however is not, like the majority of the other wine businesses of the area (e.g. Wine Firm Brambilla, Wine Firm Carlo Rospello, Wine Firm Magnier) named after her.47 Her business had vineyards in both countries, divided by the border and the manual labour she employed was also mainly Slovenian; the wines her firm produced sold really well not only in the local area, but also nationally and internationally. Ms Ivancic was unmarried and she still carried her father’s name: she had two children – a daughter and a son - and they both took her surname. More than what she said about herself, it is interesting what others said about her: she was

47 If I actually reported what the business is called, even by using pseudonymous, Ms Ivancic’s real name could be recognised, and since I promised not to reveal it I will omit this detail from this thesis.
described as a man, in the way she looked and in the way she acted. “When you will meet her, you’ll see she is a big woman, short hair, big muscles” said Giuseppe, the man who introduced me to her; “You can tell she has been shaped by working in the fields: not very feminine, is she?” Paolo Brambilla told me, when he found out I had met her; “she has to be hard; she has not got any brothers, so her dad showed her how to take care of things. Practically everybody else that works for her is a man and she needs to prove, by doing what they are doing, that she is the boss”, her mother told me. Due to a job that is not suited to her gender, in the grapevine growers’ opinion, her body and her actions have been shaped to suit those of another gender: her example crosses the gender boundaries of this job and also reinforces them. Although wine making is seen as a man’s job, nevertheless there is some understanding that people have to learn to be men: when a woman does that, it is not that she cannot do it, as the Brambilla men were implying in the previous statements; it is that when she does it, she becomes a man.

This commentary about Ms Ivancic obviously implies that gender, for members of the Brambilla family, is not only a matter of birth but it is also performed: wine making, being a man’s job, is not impossible for women; it is just that women who do that job end up becoming men. This material shows that men become men by doing one thing rather than another, and women become women by doing something else (within the business and outside of it). This reflects Judith Butler’s (1990) theory that gender is not something that people are born with, or which they learn very young and then do for the rest of their lives; rather, gender is created at the moment that somebody behaves in one way rather than another, and this is constantly the case, throughout people’s lives. The description of what people say about Ms Ivancic shows that people recognise the performative character of gender: it is not that women cannot do men’s work; it is that they would stop being women if they did, and that is not something that most women would want.
- **THE JOB**

Having established that this profession is characterised by a strong gender divide, I will now turn my attention to the process of making wine – both viticulture and vinification - with emphasis on how this activity is learned and practiced. Menotti (2008: conference paper) presents his profession as quite traditional: by traditional he means that it has hardly changed since it first developed. In order to have wine as a final product, no matter where or how, grapes need to be harvested and fermented. Beyond this though, both these actions can be done in a variety of ways and new techniques are always being tried and, if successful, implemented.

One of the first things I realised when I conducted my fieldwork was that the wine process was not just one singular act, one practice, but it depended on the type of practical relationship that people established with the things and the other people around them; thus, what will be the primary context is peoples’ engagement with the wine process. The notion of skill will be only partially addressed as embodied knowledge; it will instead be used to compare concepts of craft and technology and how these demonstrate and differentiate the various levels of involvement within the wine process. My description, of the various ways to understand and practise the process through which grape becomes wine, aims to underline the boundaries that this profession constructs within itself and how that becomes involved with reconfiguring the border between Italy and Slovenia.

Most of what I now understand of wine making comes from what I have learned from taking the 'Closeness to Wine' course and from testing this knowledge while I was in the company of the men of the Brambilla family. I decided to attend the aforesaid course because I wanted to learn the technical terminology I would be exposed to by working with the Brambillas.

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48 *Diplomacy of wine* held in Gorizia on the 4th of December 2008 by the Department of International Politics of the University of Trieste (explained in more detail later in this chapter).
However I did not predict it would have demonstrated diverse ideas of how this profession should be learned. ‘Closeness to Wine’ was a crash course: it lasted just over a week, three hours each night, and it was built around lectures and tasting. The aim was to learn how the grape becomes wine and how to judge and sample wine. For different sessions there were different experts (such as oenologists, winemakers, wine producers and sommeliers), but the majority of the course was handled by oenologists, who made the overall feel of the course very technical. These courses were developed with the idea that ‘everyday people’ (tr. le persone di tutti giorni –meaning those not involved in the wine business) do not know what to look for in a wine, they do not know how to taste nor how to judge it. Techniques involved in viticulture –harvesting grape- and vinification –fermenting the grapes to turn them into wine- both determined the taste of a wine, so it is important to have some knowledge of both.

To reinforce the point made in the first chapter, the very first lecture of the course was: the grapevine comes from the soil. Each grape type requires different characteristics of terrain. The oenologist who was giving the course was obviously of the opinion that, in order to be able to operate the right choice, one had to study: it requires knowledge of geology, chemistry and biology. For Paolo Brambilla recognising the soil is something that a person needs to learn how to do, but not necessarily through study: geological and chemical notions will help you to spot which land is needed for which type of grape, however one can know the land by working it. As Paolo said: “anybody can learn that, it is just a case to match the pairs [tr. metterli insieme, chi va con chi], and that it is what wine producers [tr. i produttori di vino] would do”. “But - he continued - you should not choose the soil starting from the grape but starting from the wine: when you plant a grapevine you already need to feel what your wine will be like, sweet, robust, dark, acid; for example, if the grape will be exposed to a hot sun the wine will be sweet; if the soil is rich in minerals the wine will be saltier, if it’s calcareous it will be sour. That is what the wine maker [tr. il vignaiolo] would do. If one works on a specific
piece of land he can judge from the colour, the moist, the flora for which grape it would be more suitable”.

So to summarise: the course taught me about wine making through teaching from books, and Paolo said it was also about practical experience. This is the difference between abstract training and craftsmanship – what people do when they learn through the work of a master, and they learn using their hands. This is a well-known and long-studied distinction in methods of learning: a distinction between epistemological and ontological learning techniques – the first focusing on learning through information, and the second focusing on learning through practice.

The grape always matures at the end of the summer and that is when it starts to be picked. At which time grapes should be harvested the sources (the course, field observations and readings) coincide: between the end of August and September. I was told at the course, and I witnessed, that the first grapes to be picked are the ones to make white wine (l’uva bianca – the white grape), then you pick the red grapes: generally though all grapes should be picked before the rains start to fall, especially if it means a change of seasons and the temperature starts to drop. These are the rules, but Mario told me that he knows when the grape is ready by eating it. This practice was also noted by Calabresi (1987:123), when she was told by one of her informants that, “an experienced farmer knows when a grape is ripe by the taste”. Mario said that this is something that large scale wine producers have lost: in large scale production the grape is merely looked at and the harvest conducted on the base of ‘the faster, the better” [tr. più veloce è meglio è], in order to beat the weather and, most importantly, to keep the cost of manual labour as low as possible. In harvesting season, both big and small wine businesses employ extra labour49. For the Brambillas this meant employing cheap labour, and this specifically meant Slovenians. The Brambillas did not often employ manual labour, and this specifically meant Slovenians. The Brambillas did not often employ manual

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49 For small business extra means ‘outside the family’ while for bigger business it means ‘in addition to those who are already employed’
labour, but when they did they would first try to employ Slovenians ‘in black’, in fact the three women helping with the harvest and Marian who helped move the land were paid cash in hand. This meant that they were not official labour. They were not enlisted anywhere, therefore, they were not officially working. The reason for this was that despite now being part of the European Union, the laws and taxes would still have been too much and probably even too complicated (this was never explained to me in detail), and ultimately not worth it for the amount of time the three women and Marian would have actually worked for them (between two and six weeks at the most). On the other hand, the students who the Brambillas employed for the grape harvest were regularly registered as manual temporary labour and the Brambillas paid tax and insurance for them. The difference was laying in the fact that, according to Paolo Brambilla, it would have been obvious that they would have needed help for the vendemmia since they are registered wine producers, but, at the same time, they did not necessarily have to employ qualified labour: students were cheap, and the tax to register them would not have been high, and the fact the Brambillas had employed someone would have avoided any investigations. Investigations of this nature, I was told by Paolo, do not often occur in this side of Italy, however they did not want to raise suspicion. More importantly, Paolo explained, if checks were to happen, the three women or Marian would have easily passed as friends since the Brambillas live so close to the border. When I asked why they took the risk, the Brambillas told me that these women and Marian knew what they were doing, they had a form of expertise that the students did not have: however registering them as qualified labour force would have cost the Brambilla and the workers a lot of money.

As soon as the grape was picked, viticulture (growing the grapes) had been completed and vinification (turning into wine) began through the grape being pressed: in the past it was done by feet, now by machinery. The fruit will pass through a big colander where the skin will
be removed, separated and automatically thrown away\textsuperscript{50}: the pulp is then pressed and reduced to a juice which is sent to ferment in big cylinders. The juice in the process of fermentation is called must. This is what I learned about vinification at the ‘wine course’: I got all the remaining information from what I witnessed and what was explained to me by the male members of the Brambilla family. In fact this is the stage where wine becomes personal, when every business makes really different decisions. This is also the moment when the process becomes intimate, secret. Fermentation takes place in the heart of the winery, right in the cellars where there is no natural light and the temperature is controlled. Despite having begun fieldwork researching in various wine production businesses, when this particular stage of the wine process was reached, contact with most of them was interrupted: I was not welcome to witness the actual production stages. Most of these informants described this process to me in general lines – just as I did now – because, since I was ‘collaborating’ with ‘rival’ wineries, I could have become a ‘spy’ and tell the others about the secrets in the production.

The three Brambilla men were the only ones who really guided me through the process of vinification: first they made me taste the must, and then explained to me how this would be different from the final wine. Must is very high in alcohol content and it is quite sweet: it is also quite rich and very flat. Then they showed what they did to make the must become wine. In a couple of instances the Brambillas also asked me to help with some of the procedures. In November, for example, the Brambillas started tasting the new wine and Paolo, Mario and Giulio together made decisions on whether different ingredients should be added to make the wine either more bubbling or sweeter or both. I had the chance to see how gas is added to make white wine lighter and slightly sparkling, but I did not get to do it because, despite

\textsuperscript{50} This happens for the majority of the wines produced in the area, but there are a couple of exceptions made for special productions or for certain dessert wines. In these few cases the grape, before being pressed, is left to dry.
looking quite simple\textsuperscript{51}, I was told it is very difficult to maintain a balance and to stop at the right time. In fact, this procedure was almost always done by Giulio, who, according to Paolo, was the most technical of the two brothers; as Paolo jokingly said to me once, he was the head while Giulio was the arm. Making the wine lighter, I was told, was about making the wine more digestible, but still retaining its flavours; according to Paolo and Giulio this would be more to the consumer's taste (especially white wine consumers). The Brambilla brothers took a lot of time in explaining to me what they were doing (and occasionally allowed me to try), so I would know what it was like, how difficult or how easy it was. They wanted to show me that certain aspects of the wine process are reserved to those who 'live within the process', while others were more accessible to non-experts, as long as they apply themselves to it. Vinification, in their opinion, cannot be learnt from a book: we can study what is the right time to taste, or which is the right temperature is needed for fermentation to occur, but what you want to make of the wine is something too personal to be explained, it something that only who feels wine [tr. sente il vino] know how to do.

I learned on the course that white wines are ready before the red ones: the main reason being that white wines need to be drunk younger and turn to vinegar quicker than red wines do. Red wines are the ones that undergo longer fermentation process and that, in order to be made, they need to be 'moved' (simply stirred or moved to different containers). It was after Christmas when the Brambilla were making decisions regarding their red wines (which for now are only a couple): they tasted the wine and decided where it was going to be kept and for how long: red wines develop fuller body and depth in taste only by resting a good few years.

In Paolo Brambilla's opinion the wine is not the final stage of the wine process, bottling it is. Wine courses do not cover this aspect, but Paolo thought this was a moment that required a

\textsuperscript{51} A very small cube shaped machine is attached to the big cylinder through a little tube: by controlling the pressure on the screen and the temperature of the wine of the cylinder, you add the gas.
lot of effort, attention and expertise. In Paolo’s opinion, the reason why so little attention was devoted to the bottling phase was because no specific knowledge is required to put the wine into the bottle. However, he thought, a lot of knowledge is required in choosing the right ‘packaging’ (the bottle and the label). Paolo did in fact take on a completely different role during this stage; while Giulio was left to make sure that the wine level did not go over a certain part of the neck of the bottle, and that the cork would not to be put in too deep so to avoid the contamination of the taste, Paolo was concentrating on which colour, shape and size the bottle should have. The bottle had to represent the wine that is in it and only the wine maker knows exactly how the wine is. In fact Paolo made me notice that big scale wine producers use the same bottle for all their wines, apart for special production, and the difference was only in the name of the label to indicate which wine was in it. Paolo was saying that unfortunately, that was how things were for them too, but his plan was to have enough money one day to have ‘character bottles’ [tr. bottiglie con personalità], that would respect the character of the wine. For example he could see a bigger slightly squat bottle for robust red wines, and more feminine bottles with a longer neck for white wines. It is interesting that in the above explanation of the bottling process Paolo was completely dismissive of the knowledge required for those processes, which people outside the wine business would not know. Knowing how much wine to put in a bottle or how deep in a cork should go for him is something ‘usual’, ‘obvious’. To me these notions were alien and so I told him that I thought they did show knowledge, Paolo replied to me that these were aspects of the job that required measuring and anyone could do it, it did not require skill.

I watched how different levels of skill are connected to how the job is learned. In my notes I summarised it as if there are at least two levels of skills involved in this business. Skill Level One is about knowing how to pick grape, where to plant it, how to prune it and when and how to harvest it. Despite how you do the job –whether you are a vine grower, a wine maker, a
wine producer, or an oenologist— you need to know this. Skill Level Two is fermentation: how do you achieve it, what you put in it, how long you make it go on for. Skill Level Two is the one that happens in the cellar that can be hidden (while the first requires specialized knowledge but happens outside so it can be observed) and it is purely the choice of the winemaker to share this knowledge. From what Paolo Brambilla had said through his description of being a skilled winemaker, this skill cannot be learned by approaching the job as a science. Scientific knowledge is also addressed by the wine course, which explains oenology as the study of viticulture and viniculture: oenology is about knowing specific wine related theory. However this course aims to teach anyone how to learn and appreciate wine cheaply and quickly: the concept of wine production is then brought down to a simple technique, easy to learn and extremely accessible. For Paolo Brambilla, the theory—the scientific aspects—is helpful but cannot stand on its own; it requires human experience of the job. The bigger wine producers who I interviewed at the beginning of my fieldwork, by keeping me out of their cellars and making their ways of production a secret, obviously felt that the wine making practice can be learned and reproduced: they wanted to keep me from learning their particular way of doing it. Grasseni, in her study of Taleggio cheese makers in Italy (2003), argues that the capacity of doing things in a specific way is largely developed through training: knowledge is passed on, and the body learns. Obviously, skill is not something innate; in Mario and Paolo Brambilla’s view of acquiring the skill, it takes a lifetime and is passed on from father to son. But there was also a ‘breeding’ element (in Cassidy’s terms) in the view of the Brambillas: they argued that wine making needs to run in the veins in order to truly be able to do this profession. Since I am not from a wine making family, it does not matter how much I learn, I will not be able to reproduce it anyway. The large wine producers I spoke to also recognised the breeding element, when they discussed inheriting the business from their father or when they were discussing about passing on to their sons: they also remarked the emphasise of learning from
a young age ‘by living and breathing the wine’ (tr. *devi vivere e respirare il vino da quando sei piccolo*). However, enough knowledge of the theory can help an outsider – like myself – to require just observation and not necessarily practice to pick up just enough details to be able to reproduce their wine. This was the argument used for example by Mr Rospello and Mr Marzia two of the wine producers with whom I made contact at the very beginning of my fieldwork and whom I stopped visiting after being denied access into their cellar at the end of 2008 (December). They both said similar words, which combined as “You do say you just want to participate and observe Valentina, but I have been telling you a lot about what we are doing here and how we do it. You are claiming you are trying to learn how to make wine, but you do not have to learn exactly how I make mine. You have been talking with enough people in the business by now; some information might slip. Look you do not need to say what is going on in the cellar, I just tell you the guidelines”.

Obviously, this issue relates back to the matter of the border: if wine-making can be easily learned by anyone who cares to study it or observe how it is done, then there could potentially be little if any difference between the wine produced in one country rather than another. However, if wine making is additionally a matter of ‘breeding’ – both of the grapes and of the families who take care of the grapes and turn them into wine – then cultural and social borders are enormously important. And as the last chapters have shown, the labelling of wine draws strongly on this notion of breeding, and the old borders drew strongly on the idea that the people of each country belong to different nations as well. So Italian wines will be entirely different from Slovenian ones because the wines reflect the soil, the families, the cultures and the people who make them. In this complicated way, wine making is all about marking and re-marking borders. And the dispute about ‘Tocai’ wine demonstrates that the EU is quite happy to reinforce that type of national/cultural difference: the wine ‘belongs’ to one side rather than another. So the question whether the means to make a good wine is given
purely by learned skill or, whether in addition, it has to do with particular families and places, is very pertinent to this thesis.

- SCIENCE, SKILL, ART OR CRAFT?

In the previous section I used different terminology to discuss the people I conducted fieldwork with; I distinguished between the small wine makers and the big wine producers. The scale of production has very little to do with the difference in the name; rather, the issue involves the degree to which the head of the business becomes directly engaged with the process of making wine. In the Collio area, there is a tension and a symbolic distinction is made between those people who grow grapevines, those who make wine and people who produce it. Anybody who knows how and where to cultivate grapevine, but sells the grape without producing his own wines, is called a vine-grower (tr. viticoltore). The distinction between making and producing wine lies in how much the owner of the business- the person whose name is on the label on the bottle- is involved in the various stages of the production. The winemaker [tr. il vignaiolo] is the one who looks after the grapes and follows it through the process of vinification until it becomes wine. Wine producers are instead the cooperatives, or owners of big wine businesses who are only involved in the ‘money making process’ [to use the description Mario Brambilla gave me]: the producer [tr. il produttore] just supervises other people who follow the various stages of the wine process; he is a manager. I have also noted a more managerial role taken by the owners of larger wine businesses –the wine producers- but I would only have assumed it was because of the scale of production until I have heard repeatedly Mario Brambilla priding himself of being both a producer and a maker: “Io non solo produco vino, ma lo faccio ancora!” [tr. I don’t just produce wine, I still make it!]. That is why the name changes between winemaking (tr. fare vino) and wine producing (tr. produrre vino): two different meanings for the same act. The word fare -make- is used to
distinguish from *produrre*—produce—because the former entails an active role—the use of a person’s own hands—in the wine process, while the latter entails machines, supervising, not physically participating in the job, but observing. Mario Brambilla always made this distinction when his sons were telling him to take it easy, that he could take a step back, because he could trust them to take over, but being a wine maker meant for him participation in the process: pick the grape, taste the wine, work the fields.

The ways things are done give a particular meaning to both the action and the object made. Latour (1993) describes the world as generated by interrelation: he suggests that relations happen not only between people and things, but also between the concepts of the two. The relations between people and object are continuous and this repetition of the relations is a means to difference, not sameness as it could be presumed: in fact the repetition of an act is always judged in comparison with how it was first made, it is about spotting where and how it is not like the original. In fact, Latour emphasizes that there are always two ways to talk about an object: what it is made of and its aesthetics and symbolic aspects (2008:2). So objects are never matter of facts but they are matter of concern. Winemaking and wine producing are two ways through which a person and the act of wine making are put into a relation: the act—the technique—coincide, but—the materiality of the act—changes since the wine maker and the wine producer experience the act in two different ways.

Mario, Paolo and Giulio Brambilla perceived their work as wine making, in contrast to wine producing, because for them it is a craft, a form of skill that is inherited and not acquired. The winemaker is the artisan, the one who creates something out of a grape, who crafts the grape. The winemaker sees, in the wine, the object of an individual expression: when the wine maker chooses the place to plant the vine, when he picks the grape, when he bottles the wine, he already has in mind the final object. This considered, according to Merleau-Ponty a winemaker is an artist (1962); wine making happens through giving something a meaning,
and the meaning is made, in Latour’s terms, from the aesthetics and the symbolic character of the relation between objects. The winemaker, therefore, does not need to learn how to make wine, and in fact Mario, Paolo and Giulio Brambilla have an aversion for any course on the subject, because to them, ‘the craft’ is embodied in the artisan, in the winemaker: it is passed on from father to son.

They do talk of themselves as craftsmen (tr. artigiani), but they do not see themselves as artists (tr. artisti), and they laughed when I mentioned the word. They have, in fact, a particular conception of what an artist is and this conception is related to economic notions: an artist, to them, is someone who does something – even wine – just for pure pleasure not because s/he needs to ‘earn his daily bread’ (tr. guadagnarsi il pane quotidiano). The Brambilla men found pleasure in what they do, they were passionate about it, but it was a job, not a hobby as it was, in their opinion, for an artist. The wine the Brambillas produced needed to be good, because it needed to sell – it was their livelihood. They live off their work and art is not something you can necessarily live off, Paolo and Giulio said: they believe that as an artist you have a completely different perspective of the end product. As they explained to me, art also allows you to be experimental in a way that craftsmanship does not: as craftsmen they needed to be technical and precise. The wine maker in respect to the artist is seen as a ‘skilful technician’. The Brambillas thought of themselves as craftsmen because they created something by working directly with the material not because they did not utilise modern wine production techniques: they did look for innovation and they did want to expand. An artist, in Paolo Brambilla’s opinion, is someone who can completely break boundaries or be extremely traditional, because ultimately, his choices are not made to conform to rules and regulations or to appeal to the consumer. To clarify, he told me about a guy that does not live far away from them who looked at winemaking as extremely traditional, “a romantic idea of wine making, like the one that is portrayed in films”. “Look at Gaspare down the road, he is in the
shopping business but he likes to make wine: he still press it with his feet. He does it for fun.”

According to Paolo’s specific view, an artist is not in competition with anyone: he might give his product as a gift, they might write an article about it, but it is not something he lives on.

In contrast to Paolo Brambilla, many wine producers talked about wine as making art: wine making to them was an artistic expression. The wine producer I interviewed – Mr Rospello- was actually discussing wine from a completely different point of view to the one Paolo was using: art as something rare and non-reproducible. Mr Rospello is an elderly man in his early seventies, his family has been in the wine business for over five generations and his children have successfully proved that there is going to be a sixth. Mr Rospello referred to wine as a form of art; he did not discuss what an artist does, like Paolo Brambilla did. All wines, he said, are categorised by year (tr. annata), as well as grape variety. Every annata is compared to the one of the previous year, and despite being the same grape, from the same vineyard, made by the same family, the wines are never identical. Latour and Lowe (2010:4) said about art “A work of art -no matter of which material it is made- has a trajectory or, to use another expression popularized by anthropologists, a career”. They continue: “since for a work of art to be original means nothing but to be the origin of a long lineage” (p5). The practice, the making of something, is like the performance of something: the technique gets done and repeated, but it is never quite the same. Mr Rospello continued saying that this is why every family keeps at least a bottle of each annata of each of their wine: to preserve the history of their products, to be able to narrate what made a wine what it is to date. “Wine private family collections can be seen as historical ‘documents’ that require a unique cultural interpretation” (Black, 201052): in this case Black considers this collection as a form of the preserve memory – taste memory-. The wines of the collection are meant to remind the current winemaker the main sensory themes so that their wine would have a consistent style and preserve the

52 Internet source, her blog: http://rachelblack.ca/
tradition. This is certainly true, but other sentences that Mr Rospello said in passing, gave me the impression that these collections are also created following the concept of art as valuable—worth money. He told me that some *annata* of his red wines had been so successful that many people asked him for more bottles; he was in that instance, describing the success of his business and what pushed him to increase production year after year, that he said: “you know those wine auctions they do especially up there where you live? Well the bottle I have of that Merlot 1985 would probably fetch a fair few hundreds [of euros]”. The wine producers such as Mr Rospello might consider themselves as artists, but what could be more appropriate is perhaps art brokers: if the craft of making wine is available to everyone, then it cannot be seen as a work of art, but if it is a work of art, then it is worth seeing, and therefore buying. The wine producers’ representation of wine production as an art, seen through Mr Rospello’s words, is in my view also a marketing strategy. Whereas Paolo’s understanding of art would clash completely with his view that winemaking is artisan craft. For the latter, in fact art is not something you earn from, but something done for pure pleasure and passion, while an artisan craft is something which knowledge you learn through practice and earns you your livelihood.

Mr Rospello and Paolo Brambilla both recognise their relationship with wine as a commercial one. However what makes the wine personal to Paolo—working with his own hands, living in the vineyards, a degree of innate knowledge of their work—is for Mr Rospello a marketing strategy: a family history in the business, traditional way of production are all categories that add value and that is why they need to be emphasised. “Building on cheesemakers’s insights, I forward a notion of terroir as a conceptual terrain on which artisan entrepreneurs negotiate the potentially fraught relationship between the social and the ecological values they espouse and the commercial value they seek (Miller, 2008)” (Paxson, 2010: 446). Wine producing is in this sense a trade: as such it is more understandable that to
them is very important that the details of it remain a secret, since it operates through competition.

- THE WINE BUSINESS HIERARCHY

Throughout Ulin's body of work (1987, 1995, 1996, 2002), the main subject is a wine cooperative from the South-West of France and their fight to get established in the wine business. In one article (Ulin, 2002), Ulin points out how wine growing is associated with idea of social positioning, social status. In the area of Collio, I perceived a social positioning also derives from the amount of skill someone brings to the wine process.

At the beginning of my fieldwork I had a long talk with a man in his late thirties called Demitri, who I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. He grew up in Collio, though he did not live there during my fieldwork (he lived in Gorizia), and for a very long time (in his late teens and twenties), he lived in a different area of Italy. However, he said, wine is in his blood and he was anxiously waiting to go back to it. Demitri's parents still lived in Collio while I was there and they, like the Brambillas, also had a house really close to the border. Although Demitri did not live there anymore, he was always going back to his parents' house at least once a day, because that was, he said, where his heart and the wine business was located. When Demitri was growing up, his father and his uncle were already owners of various plots of land but they were cultivating very few vines. Mostly the grape they collected was consumed as fruit and very rarely sold to wine cooperatives or wine producers to 'become' wine. When Demitri had to choose a college course and later a degree, he decided to take agricultural studies: he said that this was mainly a choice he was originally forced into by his parents, because they always wanted him and his elder brother to take on the wine business. He was though now happy they made him do that, because otherwise it would be harder to work to the goal he had now set out for himself. Demitri here acknowledges the importance
of oenology and the contribution this discipline gives to the profession of wine producer. Nevertheless, at the time Dimitri had not known that, and once he completed his studies he decided that ‘country life’ [tr. *la vita di campagna*] was not for him and he decided to follow his brother to Tuscany. Ironically, in Tuscany he ended up, he said, ‘living a country life but from a business point of view’. He and his brother were in fact selling tractors to farmers (they were the brokers between the factory and the buyers). That business took off very quickly and, by the time I met Demitri, he was also selling tractors in Slovenia and in Croatia. Living in the Tuscany countryside made Demitri miss home, and in his late twenties he decided that it was time to go back to Collio. Originally his plan was to expand the tractor business in the Collio area, and he did so. But at the same time his father and his uncle decided they were becoming too old to manage and work the vineyards on their own so they asked Demitri and his brother if they wanted to take a more dominant role in the ‘family properties’. That was when Demitri decided that it was time to put his studies to good use and enter the wine business that was so remunerative in the area. Demitri and his brother decided then to invest most of the money they earned with the tractor business in buying more land and planting grapevines. They also turned part of their estate into a small bed and breakfast with a little farm at the end to exploit the fast growing oeno-gastronomical tourism.

When Demitri and I talked, they were in their second year of ‘grape collection’ (before the vines start producing grapes they need three years): Demitri’s goal was to have his own wine label one day. At the time, Demitri was mainly a vine-grower but he wanted to bring the business to the status of wine-maker and then to wine producer. In fact he was trying to get really involved: he decided to become a counsellor on the Consorzio Collio board [mentioned in chapter 1], and tried to befriend most people who could give him advice on how the wine business works. Demitri was the person who gave me most of my contacts to begin my fieldwork, because, in his opinion, “it was all about knowing the right people” (tr. *conoscere le*
persone giuste). Demitri though was looking at wine from the point of view of the businessman; the people I met after him were seeing making wine as craftsmanship and, like the Brambilla family, considered a wine businessman as being emotionally detached from his work. From Demitri’s point of view, the profession is innate since he thinks wine runs in his blood but it cannot be done accurately unless it is learned, and that is why he is happy that he chose to take a degree in oenology. He also makes a distinction between winemaking and wine producing, but by the way he talks it is clear that for him, the difference is not in the detachment from the land but on the scale of production and the remuneration –the producer earns more money than wine makers. The distinction that Demitri operates shows how, in his view, the area is hierarchically socially constructed: he sees being a wine grower as the lower end of the scale and wine producer as the higher end.

In Paolo’s opinion, there is no such hierarchy: a person can only know wine if he is making it. That is the only way to truly understand it and, he added, I still had to learn what really was behind winemaking. He, his brother and his father often made fun of me, because I did not really drink much wine, and especially because I was taking this course. Paolo thought that the wine belongs to those who actively make it from beginning to the end: they are the people who actually know it and can recognise it among others. He despised people who handle the courses for sommelier and closeness to wine, and he, joined by his father and brother, made fun of those who take the course. Paolo felt strongly about this, because a few years ago he decided to take the course, because he thought that if he had a title such as sommelier, their business would have benefit from it. But he thought the people he was been taught by were actually really pretentious and presented ridiculous techniques about tasting and even more ridiculous about the flavours the wine might have. He agreed that different wine should be drunk in different glasses, like they teach you, but he did not see it as a necessary requirement for people to distinguish good wine from bad wine, and he definitely did not think you can feel
a ‘whole party of flavours’ (tr. *una festa di sapori*) in your mouth. Undoubtedly wines have various characteristics of taste and after-tastes, but the people who handle these courses seemed, in his opinion, to want to make wine something more complicated than what it is and probably, he added, the reason was to sell it more. Paolo thought people were trying to make something difficult and elaborate out of the wine, so that those who bought it felt like they become somehow special, better.

Paolo and his father and brother for the same reasons seemed to hate the status of the ‘big names’ (tr. *i grandi nomi* - big scale wine producers) like Mr Magnier mentioned in the first chapter, or Mr Rospello mentioned above. They felt really strongly about the wine being of those who make it and they thought of ‘the big names’ as business men who are not involved in the various stages of productions: ‘they have not got working hands anymore’. They are supervisors. In the Brambilla men’s opinion, this sort of ‘producers’ lost the right to call the wine their own: ‘if they did not work on their wine [production], then they did not know what they were producing, so there might be their name on the label but it is not actually their wine’. Again the same reasons stood for not taking part in the Consorzio Collio (even if could probably give them more money) or any of its activities. Consorzio Collio, the cooperative briefly discussed in the previous chapter, is very similar to the Sigoulès Cooperative discussed by Ulin throughout is body of work (1996, 2002, 2010): its activities involved vinification and intense marketing and advertising. But Paolo and his father and brother felt like the Consorzio itself is just another way to rob small wine growers of something that is theirs – the potential wine that could be made by their grape and the recognition for it. The Brambilla men did not agree with any political stands the Consorzio takes around the business: from their point of view, the Consorzio was not so much about the wine as it was about making money. In the above section I discussed the different ways in which the wine is

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53 I once told him that a guy in my course described a sip of a wine as a very robust meaty body with an after taste flavor of peppers and various herbs.

54 And described at more length in the last Chapter.
made: wine making –craftsmanship/artisanal form- and wine producing –the more ‘industrial’ one. The former in this context is used negatively and is associated with the Slovenian way of wine production and is seen as inferior. Slovenians are seen as inferior, because of the techniques of production that they implement- artisanal but almost artisanal because of ignorance, not because of choice- and a very domestic use of the wine or a very small market. This classification places the Slovenians as being inferior to the Italians and it reflects Herzfeld’s (2004) notion of hierarchy of value: the criteria of evaluation are authenticity and tradition, but there is a distinction between the act of evaluating and who, what and how is evaluated. The association of Slovenian with the artisan model of production is given the same value of the Cretan craft apprentice. To use a metaphor, Slovenia could be portrayed as the worker with neither innate knowledge nor a technical school background: it lacks in skill, in knowledge and artistic vision and as such, within the wine panorama, is marginalized. Thus, the craftsmanship/artisanal idea of winemaking encourages the making and marking of borders in a way that the more ‘industrial’ one does not.

The border between Italy and Slovenia is here contextualized as one of economic value.

- DIFFERENT LANGUAGE, SIMILAR PEOPLE

People who live around Gorizia, and particularly in the area that extends beyond the northeast side of the town –Collio-, almost always have a story, a narrative, to connect themselves to the other side of the border, to Slovenia. Almost everyone I had the chance to talk to had a cross-country history. In fact the Collio area itself is described in relation to the border it stretches across: in the town centre of Gorizia, it is known to be one of the areas where the Slovenian minority has settled. While Slovenians I know, like Petra my Slovenian tutor, told me that the adjacent Slovenian hills –Brda- is Italianised: she was specifically
referring to the Slovene spoken in the area, since the dialect these people speak contains a lot of Italian words).

The Collio region is mostly populated by the Slovenian minority, so it would make good sense for Italians in the area to speak Slovene (it could be seen as an economic advantage, for example, as well as a social one). Nevertheless, the Brambilla family showed a complete lack of interest in acknowledging or even in exploiting their Slovenian heritage. The Brambilla did not speak Slovenian while I was there, not even when they had to interact with people who were working for them and who could not speak Italian. In fact, it was during such interactions that some members of the Brambilla family found out I was taking part in a Slovenian course and we had the chance to talk about the importance of learning this language in this particular area of Italy.

It was the middle of March: I was meeting Paolo, one of the two owners of the Brambilla wine business [the other one is Giulio, who is also Paolo’s brother], at one of their vineyards because he and his father – Mario – were busy turning the land to plant new vines. The Brambilla did not own a machine to do such a job. They did not deem that necessary because anyway through the help of their Slovene neighbour Fabian, they managed to get the paid help of Marian, who owns one of these machines. Marian was a man in his early thirties who could not speak Italian, apart from some words thrown in here and there, and some general greetings. Paolo was exactly the same with his Slovene. Their communication unfolded through gestures: Paolo was running up and down the field to indicate to Marian which route to follow. Moving his arm in circle towards himself to show him to come forward, big waves of both arms above his head to indicate Marian to stop or to attract his attention. If Marian was instead close by, the shout of a ‘NO’ or a ‘STOP’ was sufficient. When twelve o’clock came and the sun was getting too hot to continue Marian went home to come back the next day, and Paolo and I drove back to their house. Once we had some lunch and Paolo started checking
various wine tanks for temperature and pressure, I could not help but comment that it would have been much easier if Paolo and Marian spoke the same language. I mentioned that I was taking a course to learn Basic Slovene and I said that I was happy about it not only because it would help me with my research (or so I was hoping) but also that I felt very inadequate at being unable to communicate with the ‘neighbours’ (meaning the Slovenians), and that this course for me was long overdue. By now Paolo and I were joined in the canteen by Mario: both Paolo and Mario decided I was being a bit overly sensitive about these issues and they found it quite funny, since in their opinion, practically everybody in Slovenia speaks Italian, and that it is certainly not something we (meaning Italians) forced them to do. At this point I said that despite that, learning Slovenian is something that residents of Gorizia could benefit from, especially in the local economy; I then added as an example a lot of my fellow students on the Slovene course who were there either because their boss told them they need to know the language (shop assistants for example), or because, since unemployed, they were told at the job centre that the Slovene language on their CV could have improved their chances to get a job. Paolo and Mario saw my point in relation to these people, but they did not take up the implicit link I was making with what I witnessed that morning. So I decided to be more explicit: “Come on Paolo, you are telling me that it would have not been easier if you and Marian would have spoken the same language this morning?” Paolo looked puzzled, because he could not understand what I was referring to: he said that he would have done everything the same way since he would not have just given instructions to someone and left them on his field to do whatever. No matter what language Marian spoke he would have checked step by step what he was doing, he would have still run up and down the field. At the end of the day that was his responsibility. Paolo felt that the messages he needed to communicate had been delivered successfully. We ended this particular conversation on the note that communication goes beyond language. But then Mario jumped in saying he thought it was actually ‘weirder’
to him, and Paolo concurred, that I was not really able to talk the local dialect, since that is what makes people really bond. According to them, when you talk in 'language' [tr. in lingua] (they mean in Italian and not in dialect), you are at a professional distance; you do it when you do not really know each other. Knowing Slovene might seem a prerogative at state level to make any local business work or improve, but it was not something that Paolo, nor Mario, deemed a requirement to do their job.

Paolo and his Slovenian neighbour Fabian spoke to each other in this local dialect, which to Paolo was another proof that he did not need to study Slovenian. A bigger barrier than language is the use of ‘proper Italian’ instead of dialect: the latter is the one that creates closeness and communality while the former emphasises social distance. However, most of all, emphasis is put on communication: at all levels, in the political implementations or in the locals' view.

In this example about Paolo and Mario Brambilla’s ‘rejection’ of the Slovene language and their emphasis of the local dialect there is a specific way of making social distinction. I believe they form their opinion through what they do: despite how I approached the subject of talking Slovenian, as something that could help with their wine business, they told me exactly the opposite. They did not feel different from Marian or Fabian because of the language they all spoke, but they felt different to me because I was not speaking in dialect. After this reflection, I also realised that the few words that Marian and Paolo actually exchanged that day and the following days while Marian kept working for them, were not in Italian nor Slovene as such, but their were in the local dialect.

Mario Brambilla often made the remark that his family has a very good relationship with their Slovenian neighbours, “with no problems we are friends” (tr. andiamo molto d’accordo, non ci sono problemi, anzi siamo amici). As I mention in the introduction, the Brambillas’ house is extremely close to the border and a great part of their neighbours live actually in
Slovenia. The particular neighbour mentioned above—Fabian and his family—are actually among the Brambilla's closest friends: they often visit each other or even work together. As I mentioned before, it was Fabian who suggested Marian should work in the Brambilla's fields. I did not meet Fabian till seven months into my fieldwork but I have always been aware of the importance he had, and the degree of respect that was shown to him, especially from Mario and Paolo.

Here is one example. It was the beginning of September, one of the first times I was visiting the Brambilla and I was still trying to get my bearings. It was mid afternoon and I was standing with Paolo in the back of the yard, right outside their wine cellar. We were standing at the top of a slope that was entirely cultivated with grapevines. It was a very clear afternoon and I was looking at the landscape and the hill in front of us: on the left side, just as you started going up the hill there was a nice white house, not too far from where we were. Having spotted the house, I found myself wondering where the land belonging to the Brambilla began and the land belonging to the other house ended, since among them there were only vineyards, which could have belonged to any of the two properties. From where we were standing I could not spot any clear definition of where the border was. So I asked Paolo and he told me that, even if I could not really see it between all the grapevines, right at the bottom of the hill there was a small stream that was actually a sort of natural marker not just of the end of their property but also of the border. I then asked him about the house and he told me that it was Fabian's and it was in Slovenia. Paolo used this as a starting point to indicate one by one the houses across on the other side of the hill and the names of those who own them. Paolo continued explaining that he actually had very good relationships with most of his Slovenian neighbours, much better than his Italian ones over there [tr. di là] (he said pointing behind his back). This was just the first narrative of many that I collected that involved the Brambilla discussing their Slovenian neighbours. Mario and Paolo, and occasionally Giulio (Paolo's
younger brother and co-owner of the business) actually expressed to me a few times how the fact they were ‘strangers’ [meaning not from this region, but from Veneto] helped them to fit in better with the Slovenian neighbours. The family settled in Collio just before the First World War so they had chance to witness the various problems that the area experienced when the border first came into existence: loss of land, moving at night of the picket fence, arguments and falling out of long time friends, the death of relatives. But they thought of themselves as witnesses, not as participants, because they were new to the area and they did not know anyone and they did not lose anything to anyone. In Paolo’s words, coming from a different area of Italy helped them settling in this area better than the families that were already here from Collio: they had no history with Slovenians and therefore no conflict.

The Brambillas look at their past in a selective manner in order to emphasise their lineage of winemakers, not mentioning their Slovenian element. Paolo though does talk about his grandparents being Slovenians when he discussed the affinity with his Slovenian neighbours. His description of Fabian for example: “the man makes his living from the wine. He understands how we work, we understand how he works. We practically share a vineyard: ours is directly facing his, when we have time we can help each other, because it is like working on our own land. Fabian’s business is not as big as ours, but that is his goal, plus his wife works so they do not rely completely on Fabian’s earnings. We enjoyed drinking together and the same kind of music.” Paolo and Fabian share a similar social positioning in terms of what they did, what they earned, how they lived, what they like. Paolo specifically, but the other two Brambilla men as well, felt closer to the Slovenian side and ‘disliked’ their Italian neighbours: often they made derogatory remarks about those (Italians) who live ‘over there’, like Paolo did in the narrative reported above. Paolo was not necessarily being derogative but he was distancing himself from the Italian neighbours and placing his family closer to the Slovenian side.
The most obvious example occurred around March 2009 when I had just started going regularly to the Brambilla’s house. One morning I drove up to the house, but, once I got there, nobody was around. So I decided to have a walk around and take some pictures, since it was a beautiful clear day. I never got the chance though, because as I was collecting my thoughts and admiring the garden of the property next down the road from the Brambilla’s one, the owner popped out and he asked me if I was looking for someone or something. I introduced myself and told him what I was doing: that was enough to get me invited into his house, get a tour of the property and an explanation of why it was built in the way it was built. The owner was Moreno, an engineer from Gorizia, who bought the house not just for investment reasons but especially because he wanted a place in the country where he could come to relax or to work undisturbed. The house was also a nice getaway from the town’s heat in the summer, even if he and his wife still went on holidays, especially to the seaside. Moreno also told me all about his family and his experience of the border, his opinions, and his wife’s ideas on the matter. At the end of what was basically a very long monologue, he also told me I was free to quote him in my research as I liked, without needing to ask him. I ended up spending the morning in Moreno’s house and I managed to get away excusing myself saying I was expected at home for lunch. Once I managed to leave Moreno, I walked back to the Brambilla’s house where I had left my car: that is when I saw Giulio coming towards me. After greeting me, he told me he saw my car parked there when he came home from his physiotherapy (he had broken a leg early that summer and he was still on crutches) and he was actually wondering where I was. So I explained that I met Moreno and that I spent the morning with. Giulio laughed and he told me that they should probably have warned me before that their closest neighbour is a townie – cittadino.-55 that might come up to get a bit of peace for himself, but that often disturbs others when they work. It was my turn to laugh. Giulio continued saying that he and his family

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55 As opposed from campagnolo –countryman, man from the country.
realise that Moreno is a nice guy that does not mean any harm, but he is always showing off. In Giulio’s opinion, Moreno thinks he is better than the Brambilla men, since he always shows off the precious tobacco he puts in his pipes and goes on and on about what they have and what they do.

Social distance was much clearer in the way some members of the Brambilla family discussed another of their neighbours: Mr Magnier. In this specific case, because of the social distance, the relations between him and the Brambilla family is almost non-existent. Mr Magnier was one of the biggest names in wine producing of the area who lived close by: his house and cellars are enormous, part of a big complex surrounded by walls and gates. Among themselves, the three Brambilla men call Mr Magnier’s estate a Hollywood style villa: they think it is ridiculously big and not in keeping with the area. They say he should not call himself a wine producer, because “God knows when is the last time it set foot among the grapevines (tr. *tra le viti*)”. They told me they had some deals/businesses (tr. *affari*) with him in the past (never telling me exactly what) and they found it ridiculous that Mr Magnier introduces himself as a descendant of a noble German family, when he is, in Giulio’s view, ‘more common than chicken’ (tr. *più comune di un pollo*). It is interesting that Mr Magnier’s account of his family background, or rather, Giulio Brambilla’s view of that account, is not like other people’s.56 I never really developed the subject with Giulio, nor the other Brambilla men, but I was once talking to an acquaintance in a little inn in town and somehow we got to the subject of Mr Magnier. Elio, my acquaintance, also knows the Brambilla family and so I decided to tell him that I had the impression that the Brambillas did not really like Mr Magnier. Elio told me that in the past the Brambilla used to sell their grapes to Mr Magnier and one year they had more grapes than Mr Magnier had because one of Mr Magnier’s vineyard had ‘caught a bug’ and the grapes had to be thrown. At this point, as Elio told me, the Brambilla demanded more

56 It is also a way to express wine genealogy as discussed in the previous session; looking back at the Hapsburg.
money for the grapes, or at least some recognition at ‘label level’, since the wine could have not been made without their grapes. But, still according to Elio, Mr Magnier refused, because, first of all he was buying the grapes at the price that had been pre-arranged and, since he owned it, he was entitled to do whatever he wanted with it. At this point, as far as Elio knew, the Brambilla family felt mistreated and decided to interrupt all businesses with Mr Magnier. Elio was sure that, from that point on, the Brambilla had only ‘bad things’ to say about Mr Magnier. This also helps to understand what the Brambilla meant when they said that Mr Magnier is a man that looks only at his own interest that does not respect other people work. The Brambilla do not have the same kind of personal relationship with Mr Magnier or Moreno that they have with Fabian. From Giulio’s description it is clear the Brambilla men do not feel like they have anything in common with Moreno nor Mr Magnier and during the time I spend with them I have only heard another Italian family been mentioned, the Rossi, to whom they associate through their passion for hunting.

Paolo Brambilla’s social network is composed mainly by Slovenians. The Brambillas recognised more similarities with the Slovenians that the Italians: similar houses, similar work ethics, similar size of plots. Their techniques of wine productions are just as good as those of their immediate Slovenian neighbour, and far removed from Mr Magnier’s means of production. There are definitely some Slovenian Mr Magniers, but the Brambilla do not know them. The social space of winemaking sees the Brambillas in neighbouring positions with the Slovenian wine producers they know, rather than the Italian ones: they do not see any border between them, apart from the state one, which to them does not really mean anything. “Why should I care if Fabian is Slovenian? I do not care where he lives. To me, the fact that, down there, there is a border does not mean anything”, Paolo said when I asked him how did he feel about living so close to the border and how did he feel that, apart from Moreno, his closer neighbours were Slovenian.
CHAPTER FIVE:

Collio: The Wine Landscape

- INTRODUCTION

So far I tried to discuss how the wine growers of the Collio area - through the example of the Brambilla - understand their social life and articulate their social space through their wine, as in Cassidy's ethnography (2002) people's in Newmarket made connections through horses and horse racing. Like in Cassidy’s case, discussing one’s family, one’s genealogy, is seen as credentials and it serves a social function (2002:33). Continuing the discussion along similar lines, in this chapter, I will describe how wine represents a way to generate a post-national category, how it belongs to the realm of ‘imagined beverages’ as well as ‘imagined communities’" - to use the words that Bestor used when he described Sushi global market (2001:85).

Collio is a hill region which stretches between the Isonzo river and the river Iudrio which is actually an affluent of the Isonzo river and it straddles on its right side. The region of Collio does need to be analysed in relation to its Slovenian counterpart (Brda)57: if looked at from a distance (or from above) the two areas look as one. All the hills are now cultivated by grapevines and, by the way they are constructed a person could not tell if a house is Italian or Slovenian. Even the roads, that in Brda were once very narrow and in poor condition, were being enlarged and improved, specifically so that the area can look more homogenous and project into the prospective tourist’s imagination the landscape of the Tuscan hill countryside58. The reason Collio and Brda are not one, though, is because the state border between Italy and Slovenia divides the region into two, but physical structures of the border

57 Both Collio and Brda can be translated in English with the word ‘hills’.
58 Information collected by various sources, from road workers, to winemakers, to simply passers-by.
are scattered around the hills and more importantly, they were considerably underemphasised.

I came to the conclusion that there is an intrinsic relation between the grapevine and the border because I grew up in the area and because it was my fieldwork site between August 2008 and August 2009, but also by thinking about place in the way Massey (2005) suggested. Massey argues that space is the product of interrelation, it allows for plurality and it is always in progress. As she says, if space is the product of stories-so far, place is the collection of those stories (2005:130). The notion of place that she proposes is one where specificity (local uniqueness, a sense of place) derives not from some mythical roots nor from a history of relative isolation ... but precisely from the absolute particularity of the mixture of influences found together there” (Massey, 1999:18). This chapter will attempt to show that the Collio area is built on some kind of integral relationship between the land, the border and the vineyards, and how this inter-relation takes different interpretations.

This chapter attempts to be an ethnographic approach to Massey's theory of space: I will show that the notion of place is always part of other things –terroir, historical heritage, tourism- and as such is understood and analysed in different ways. This chapter will consist mostly of a description of what Collio people, and some texts, say about terroir and other aspects of being in Collio and being in a border area. Where I draw on different theorists (such Hirsh, 1995; Basso, 1996; Ingold, 2007), I am not using them in order to develop my own analysis, but in order to highlight different aspects of what the Collio people say about their land and their place. In that sense, the use of the theory is not analytical but descriptive. It is for that reason that there are mutually contradictory arguments in the chapter: structuralism happily lives with phenomenology. I am using different theoretical perspectives to better describe what is going on in Collio; I am using the theory as a comparative tool – comparing what people are saying with what that analysis would suggest.
This chapter, ethnographically, will rely mostly on how place should or is presented to tourist by the local wine industry, in comparison to how Mario Brambilla, a local wine maker I worked closely with, described the place he lives in. I shall start by looking at how first the wine and then the border are interpreted by specific notions of place and landscape. I will then continue discussing what kind of understanding of place are used by locals to present and construct the area of Collio /Brda for tourists and I will then proceed discussing the engagement that the people who reside in Collio have with the landscape they inhabit. The chapter will come to its conclusion discussing in which occasions emphasis is put on the similarity between Italian and Slovenian wines. This similarity was, in fact, used to promote and advertise the Collio area that in the future it could potentially be seen as one and only area with the neighbouring Brda, as it was before the war. In order to achieve this 'unified wine landscape', the proposition was to produce a common product: as wine areas the two share the same pedigree –the same history in wine making and they share vineyards.

- THE PLACE OF WINE: TERRAIN AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

While on fieldwork different people emphasised to me, how important terrain was in what makes wine. As discussed in the previous chapter, at the beginning of my fieldwork, I took a course about winemaking: the course giver was an oenologist who stressed from the very first lecture that grapevines come from the soil. The importance of choosing the right place to grow grapes showed awareness of the role climate and soil play in the production of good wine: different types of grape required different conditions to grow (such as water and sunlight exposure), but also the same grape could become different wine if exposed to different conditions. According to Cipresso (2006), a great part of the hard job consists in choosing the right land: the consistency of the soil combined with the above mentioned factors are what make ‘good grape’. In his book *The Wine Novel* he gives various examples of
this, the most striking being that Madeira wine was absolutely tasteless until an anonymous sailor moved it, by accident, south of the equatorial line. The change of climate, latitude, and the constant movement of the ship made it so that an anonymous insipid wine became one of the most renowned wines in the whole world (Cipresso, 2006: 63-67). Paolo Brambilla, the wine maker with whom I worked most closely, explained to me that total sunlight exposure is especially important to grow red grapes. One day in March 2009 I called him to let him know that I was on my way up to meet him: he told me not to go at the canteen where we usually met, but to come down to the field where he and his father were working. I had never been to those fields before and he had to give me directions because they were quite distant from their estate. Why did they buy these fields was my first question being so distant; Paolo told me it was because these slopes were ideal to grow red grapes since they were facing south, the only worry though was that the summer would be very dry, and this could have compromised the growth of the plants. The wine course, the male members of the Brambilla family, the readings, all sent out the same message: knowing what land\textsuperscript{59} [tr. conoscere la terra] makes good grapes is an essential part of wine making.

In a border area, territory as explained in the previous narrative, has nothing to do with state boundaries and nationality, however geographical indicators do. The geographical indicators for food were originally developed at the beginning of the 19th century in Europe and more specifically in France (Barham, 2003; Paxson, 2010; Pratt 2008). Even if they are now extended to all kinds of products, they were designed to label the location of the origin of a wine. This was the birth of the classification of growth (1855), concept from which the idea of terroir has been developed. This process of localisation first started in France as Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée (AOC), which was a labelling system of the geographical origin of products (Trubeck & Bowen, 2008) and, in 1992, became an EU regulation (Barham,

\textsuperscript{59} In this context by place I mean the combination of soil, climate and light exposure.
known as Protected Denominations of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indicators (PGI). Both PDO and PGI are meant to protect international property rights, not only by guaranteeing and protecting the place of origin of the product, but also to include national legislation. A lot of famous protected foods are named after the place they are produced or traded in, such as Stilton cheese or Parma ham. As Barham (2003) explores though, ‘place names’ have often been confused for ‘product names’ ignoring the region of origin, mainly because of immigration but also because of popularity. Phenomena such as globalisation are the elements that make regional products, or products that bear geographical indicators, vulnerable (Tregear, 2003:91), but national legislations are vital for them to be respected.

I encountered an example of a ‘wine international border’ while I was in the field and I learnt about the dispute over the name Tocai, one of the most renowned wines of the region of Collio. As reported in various websites that represent the area: “modern vine growing started in the middle of the 19th century and the goal of the continuous development in vine-growing is represented by the D.P.R. of the 24th of May 1968, which recognised the wines of Collio, among the first in Italy, as being worthy of the DOC certification” (http://www.gradnik.it last accessed in March 2011). From 2004 forward, an international debate originated because, by European Union legislations, the wine producers in Collio would not have been able to use this name anymore, because of the Tokaj wine made in Hungary. Various newspapers followed the debate and most of them are referred to in the book titled Bye Bye Tocai which Cristina Coari published while I was in the field (2008). In this book, she explains how the debate developed from an issue of name and label to a political issue between state members of the European Community. “In the case of the usurpation of the name, it is the state that intervenes” (Barham, 2003: 129), and it does so by looking into if the name of the product is associated with a place and so the idea of territory is not anymore just about composition of
soil and climate. This is perfectly highlighted in the Tocai/Tokaj dispute, which resolved with the Collio wine growers having to change their wine’s name to Friulano. The vineyards from which these wines are made are the same: they were first formally identified during the Austrian Empire. Disputes are still ongoing regarding whether these plants were from Italy and exported to Hungary or vice versa. Tocai wine was very famous, not only within Italy but also internationally, and it was one of the wines that generated most of the income for the wine growers of the area of Collio. Once Hungary became a European Union member (2004), the Hungarian government requested and obtained the protective geographical status for the name of ‘their’ wine, since it was named after a place: the Tokaj area/town. The argument made by the Collio wine-producers was that the vineyards might be the same but, first of all, they were growing in a complete different territory and soil, and, secondly and most importantly, the production of the wine was different: in fact the Tokaj is a sweet dessert wine, while Tocai is dry and a ‘meal’ wine [tr. vino da pasto]. In addition, the pronunciation of the name might be the same but the actual spelling of it is different. In fact, the name might actually mean different things: at the time of the Austrian empire there was a little stream, in the Collio region, called Tocai, or it could make reference to a conversation between some Italians and some Slavs working with the same grapevines. The Italians asked to the Slavs where the grapevines they were working on were coming from and the later replied in their native language ‘tu kaj’ (tr. from here)\(^60\). In the above quoted book, Coari (2008) also narrates how this debate is somehow still ongoing and that in the hearts of the local people will probably be never entirely resolved. In fact, when people first found I was conducting fieldwork among the wine producers to research the shifting boundaries of the European Union, they asked me if my project was going to talk about or was related to or at least was

\(^{60}\) [http://www.coquinaria.it/archivio/regioni/friuli/vinocollio.html](http://www.coquinaria.it/archivio/regioni/friuli/vinocollio.html) last accessed in November 2010.
inspired by the Tocai dispute and, more often than not, they gave me their opinion, which was always siding with the Collio wine-producers’ point of view.

The main concern for both parts involved in the debate was to protect a product, a brand, and a tradition linked locally that was also famous internationally. The concept under debate was heritage: the Hungarians were trying (and succeeded) to acquire geographical protection for the product using the same argument that was used in preventing Parma ham and Champagne (Guy, 2003) being produced outside their native regions. A glass of wine is not merely a recipe that can be created in a laboratory: the wine distinct flavour comes from grapes found only in a particular place. The Italians were instead using the notion of place as terrain: if the terrain –soil- was different, the ways of making it were different, then the flavour of the wine was different. Thus, what is proposed here is a particular connotation of the word terroir as ‘the taste of place’, with place referring to what the place is made of –soil, topography and microclimate (Paxson, 2010: 444).

Barham (2003: 128) argues that geographical indicators are a way to reconnect people, production and place: “Labels of origin hold the potential of re-linking production to the social, cultural and environmental aspects of particular places, further distinguishing them from anonymous mass produced goods, and opening the possibility of increased responsibility to place” (Barham, 2003:129). In both the Hungarian and the Italian cases this is true, even if they were attaching two different meaning to the word place. Barham (2003) argues that because of the unavoidable physicality of the geographical indicators, rather than intellectual property\(^{61}\), the Geographical Indicators should be considered an example of collective property. Herzfeld defines heritage as the realisation that the collective property transfers between generation (2004:198): even in this case, both Tocai and Tokaj are expressions of heritage, despite the distinction that is given as to by what the notion of place

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\(^{61}\) This has been discussed by authors such as Moran (1993) and Ray (1998).
should be constituted. What both the Hungarians and Italians present as their real concern is to protect a product or tradition seen locally as an expression of their heritage, even if they go about it in different ways. The heritage industry in general is becoming a more and more powerful force. This is evidenced in the growing number of cultural heritage management degrees available to take in universities, as well as by documents such as English Heritage’s “Power of Place”\(^ {62}\), which stresses the potential benefits of business locating themselves and stressing the local and particular historic aspects of the premises they inhabit. An argument that appeal to heritage is more powerful since it appeals to people’s tangible sense of place and belonging. In this particular case this is valid with the difference that is not just the place, but also the product of the said place: the wine.

Even on an EU basis the issue of origin is becoming important, as evidenced in the work done on the issue regarding Parma ham for example (Arfini&Mora, 1998), which cannot be produced outside its native place. The fact that a product is branded with the same name as its place of origin creates a stronger connection between place and product than the mere notion of place as terrain: it is invested by a sense of authenticity given by the fact that a place with that name exists. Pratt (2008) discuss how the idea of authenticity and its significance are quite culturally and historically specific and when it comes to food –or drinks- is a value that links production and consumption. All I am doing here is to describe the culturally specific associations that are made between names, authenticity and value. To use the name outside the place of origin would be to either falsify authenticity or to utterly destroy the brand, since the relationship between place and product would be severely compromised, as would its associated cultural value. Can the association of Tocai with Italy be just an attempt to develop a counter-tradition and authenticity (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983)? It is referenced to the past and the origin of the vine is unclear. The taste of Tocai is different from

its Hungarian antagonist. For this wine border, what is it that makes the difference? Cipresso (2006) explains how the same plants can easily become different wines simply by the land they are growing on, disregarding which are the techniques used in the production: for example the Austrian wine Silvaneer, in California becomes Zinfandel, but the origin of the grapevine is actually traced back to Croatia where it is called Crljenak. The same grape had also been imported to the South of Italy and there it got the name of Primitivo di Manduria (Cipresso, 2006:196-197). The European Community granted the protective geographical status (and relative PDO) to those wines that are produced within the territory and made by grapes that are harvested exclusively in the same territory and that have a denomination of origin, a place of origin. In this case, Tokaj, being a town in Hungary and not ‘just a name’, wins the argument.

This account aimed to shed some light on how different constructions of place can be applied to a product and be both valid and how these notions are used to categorise, to classify and to create and reinforce boundaries. Territory, as terrain, is not a border between the hills of Collio and the ones of Brda –between Italy and Slovenia-, but their wines were still differentiated in term of place. The notion of terroir is a notion of place applied to food commodities and specifically to wine. As such it is a way to represent place and, later on in this chapter, I will describe how the local wine industry use it to map the place through taste.

- TOURISM: TASTE IN PLACE

In previous statements of 2004, when Slovenia first joined the European Union but not yet the Schengen space, the mayor of Gorizia at that time, Vittorio Brancati, mentioned how it was the border that helped the territory to preserve its natural beauty and resources. He made particular reference to the agricultural resources that helped sustain the economy of the area,
such as the vineyards: in this case the border gave a positive lack of change, because there was otherwise the possibility, in his view, that a large and unhealthy urban centre could have developed (translated from: http://www.primomaggioagorizia.it last accessed in July 2008).

When I was on fieldwork, a lot of emphasis was put into exploring the beautiful natural resources of the area. At the conference “The Diplomacy of Wine” held in Gorizia on the 4th of December 2008 by the Department of International Politics of the University of Trieste, there were a lot of papers linking the wine to the territory. Various experts (journalists, economists, lawyers, wine producers, politicians) had their own take on the subjects, quoting not just examples from the area of Collio/Brda, but also from other territories in Italy, France, Poland and Hungary. Some of the speakers focused on the territory as the origin of wine and others on the importance of the geographical denomination for products such as wine, issues that had already been addressed in this chapter. One paper in particular is interesting for my purposes here: Gianni Menotti on “Il Collio tra specificità territoriale locale, nazionale e internazionale” (tr. “Collio specificity in local, national and International territory”). Most of this paper argued that the cultivating of grapevines in this area is way to preserve the landscape and tradition; as such, Menotti suggested that making wine is representative of a specific culture, the culture of wine in a specific territory. "Vineyards is what Collio is made of- we should cure them, care for them- how we treat our vineyard is like a presentation of how much we care of the place we live in, like hands are a presentation card for a person". Menotti suggested that the vineyards in the region of Collio/Brda have been present since at least the eighteenth century, and the fact the activity continues showed respect for the work and for the place. Viticulture is perfect for the Collio soil and landscape: a hill region with a marly arenarious soil, with slight amounts of clay in places. For the wine, Menotti went on, it is important that the territory preserve its characteristic, because, being a product of the land, the wine would preserve its characteristics. Menotti followed this argument by noting that
where the wine comes from is one of the first things people look for. The idea Menotti is proposing in his paper is that by improving the land, the territory, people of the area are also improving society. He was saying that the society is focusing more on the values that, in his opinion, are the most important: taking care of the environment means living in tune with nature, respecting the territory, making a person better because s/he does not pollute the environment. It also shows that that person keeps in touch with his/her history and tradition, does not forget his or her past. People who act this way are better for the society, they make a better society: a society that respects the natural environment and knows where it comes from. Terroir is therefore seen a system, a model, for thoughtful action (Mintz, 1985): a way to interpret the place as somewhere where people would like to live in or visit. This model of terroir builds on existing anthropological literature that explored how food is more than just food, but a symbol (e.g Delamont, 1995; Sutton, 2001): wine motivates action, or more precisely preservation. The idea of place discussed is similar to the one Hirsch (1995:29) proposed of landscape: a puzzle made by many pieces that appear as one united image. In the previous section I have already described how local people interpret it and here I want to illustrate how through this interpretation they transform it for touristic purposes.

In the introduction, I mentioned that, when I explored the Brda hills, I noticed that a lot of money had been invested in enlarging and improving the road surface condition and its pavements: trees such cypresses and olive trees were planted to create pleasant views, and to give a countryside feel to the vista. When I talked to a couple of road workers –Mitja and Robert- and some Slovenian friends –Petra and Rafaela-, I was told that the reason for all this

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64 Menotti was reflecting some rather unexamined assumptions about both ‘society’ and ‘nature’. If somebody cultivates the soil, that is surely cultural, not natural? He is suggesting being cultural in a way that, in his view, does not harm ‘nature,’ rather than really arguing that people should be natural. Also, his view of society reflects a notion of society that is distinctly modern and west European: the notion of the existence of something social that goes beyond people’s personal interactions and families, and that adds up to something that is more than the sum of its parts. Menotti is drawing on these familiar, and particular, constructions of nature and society in making this assertion. He was not speaking about nature or society in the abstract, but drawing on very particular views of those concepts.
was to encourage tourism: the model they had in mind – said Rafaela65- was the one of the Tuscany countryside, a famous wine region that attracts many English and American tourists. One of my friends – Petra66- also pointed out to me how a lot more Bed and Breakfast opened in both the hills of Collio and Brda now that the region was becoming to be more and more known as a wine region worth visiting. According to both Petra and Rafaela, the idea was to construct a landscape that will evoke in the tourists' imagination the worldwide famous Tuscan hills and countryside. Following the Tuscan example, the tourist board mapped out the Collio/Brda area through a series of wine routes (tr. la strada del vino /vinska cesta) in order to promote the area through its biggest source of income: the wine. These wine routes are country roads designed to take the tourist on a scenic route around various vineyards, passing numerous wineries and wine cellars where you can stop and enjoy a glass of local wine. The concept behind the wine routes is, in my opinion, very similar to the ‘paths of war’ in which border structures were to be included, as discussed in Chapter Three: in fact, if the latter puts people in relation to place through the history of such places, the former aspires to achieve the same relation but through the wine. My interpretation of wine routes, and what my analysis aims to show, is that space and place are here built through the sensory experience of the wine, and therefore through taste. Taste is commoditized to fit a touristic purpose that would benefit the local economy. The model of travel these wine routes propose is not destination oriented, but ‘experience oriented’: the traveller, and subsequently, the tourist, is invited to experience, first what this land is like by enjoying the beautiful scenery, and secondly ‘what it tastes like’67 by sampling what this land produces. For example, the

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65 Rafaela is a childhood friend of mine who at the time of my fieldwork was working as a translator for the Brda web site (http://www.brda.si/ last accessed on December 2009), translating Slovenian into Italian, English and German. Working there she also knew about some of the projects and ideas behind them.
66 Who I will introduce in more details in Chapter Five.
67 “il sapore di questa terra” found in several tourist brochures.
website Piccolo Collio[^68], designed to promote the area by a group of winegrowers, presents Collio as ‘a place to taste’ (tr. *un posto da gustare*).

Lisa Law studied Philippine emigrants in Hong Kong and she explains in her article[^69] how taste can convey a sense of place, just as much as sight does. Her argument is that a specific landscape can be transformed into a completely different one through different sensory experiences. As Law reports, a square in Hong Kong was just part of the urban landscape of a metropolis, but for the Philippine women working as cleaners or baby sitters in the city, that square on Sundays completely changed, because it became an extension of their home country, it was no different than being in the Philippines. The transformation happened because these emigrant women had their free day on the Sunday and they cooked Philippine traditional food and they met up in the square.

In Collio, taste, or more specifically wine, is used to construct a place in order to add value to the area and sell it to potential tourists who are interested in agricultural landscape and the importance of geographic location for sustainable products. In other words, the wine industry is embedded in and maps out the landscape of food tourism. The oeno-gastronomical branch of tourism consists of the exploration of local food and products, that the tourist can experience from how it is made to how it is consumed and then can consume it him/herself.

In the region Friuli Venezia-Giulia, where Collio is, there is an organisation called The movement of Wine Tourism that relates to, as we saw for Tocai/Tokaj dispute, heritage and place. This is an association of 120 wineries of the area that advertise the territory in relation to the wine produced there, sponsoring several events[^70], trying to promote the message that they are dependant on each other; one could not exist without the other (Hall, C.M and Mitchell, R “Gastronomic Tourism –Comparing food and wine tourism experiences” in Novelli, M. *Niche Tourism: Contemporary Issues, Trends and Cases*, pp. 73.-“Wine tourism is a subset of

[^68]: [http://www.piccolocollio.it](http://www.piccolocollio.it), last accessed in March 2011.
[^69]: In *The Taste of ethnographic things: the senses in anthropology* by Stoller, P.
[^70]: Translated from [http://www.mtvfriulivg.it/mtvfriuli.html](http://www.mtvfriulivg.it/mtvfriuli.html) last accessed on May 2011.
food tourism, being defined as visitations to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals and wine shows for which the grape”). I took part in most of these events, and they are all tasting experiences. The majority of these events (Cantine Aperte/Open Cellars; Cantine Aperte Bike; San Martino in Cantina /St Martin’s Day in the Cellar) involved moving around from winery to winery while you taste the wine of the area admiring the territory. The most interesting of these events, or rather I should say the oldest and most popular was ‘OPEN CELLARS’, because, compared to the others, it was a cross border event during which the wine cellars of the Collio/Brda were open to the general public. The tourists, but also interested locals, got the chance to see how and where the wine gets made, and then taste it. I went around with a couple of friends to see what it was like, and it was quite interesting. One of the friends that came with me was pleasantly surprised. Federico had only recently returned to Gorizia after at least ten years spent living abroad and he still remembered the area as divided by border controls station. He said that he recognised that it was mainly a tourist event but the collaboration of the Italian and Slovenian sides to promote the area made it, in his opinion, a true ‘without border’ experience. Federico was shocked that there was not even a difference between an Italian or a Slovenian wine cellar: the wine growers were welcoming everyone, speaking and switching between the three most spoken languages in the area [Italian, Slovenian, German -a lot of German and Austrian tourists]. As Federico said “if it was not for the old passport control stations yet to be dismantled, we would not even notice we were going from one country to the other”.

Specific interpretation and construction of place are made through this last example: the area is imagined and presented as one, as the same and not divided between two different states. The Consorzio Collio, a Collio wine cooperative described in the following chapters, at length in Chapter Five, is also trying to establish, through tourist events, some cross-country collaboration. While I was on fieldwork I had a few meetings with Paolo Bianchi, the vice
president of the association at the time: he told me that, despite the Italian tradition in wine making being much more renowned in the national and international market than the Slovenian one, it will be inevitable that after the border structures are dismantled, people will start to see the region of Collio/Brda as one, since there is no actual geographic distinction. So, he continued, the best way to promote the area without losing the market to cheaper competition would be to have cooperation: that is how events such as Collio In Vespa and the Collio Caccia al Tesoro (Treasure Hunt) came into being. The first one is an all year round promotion: from all the wineries and Bed and Breakfasts that decided to participate, you can hire a yellow vespa (famous Italian scooter) for free to explore the region of Collio/Brda. “The project was born after the fall of the last wall that was dividing East Europe from West Europe: a wall for which Gorizia was symbol and victim. Now it is possible to cross the border without the use of ID documents.” (Translated from: http://www.ilturista.info/blog/988-Il_Collio_in_vespa_alla_scoperta_della_zona_collinare_e_dei_suoi_vini/, last accessed in December 2010). The treasure hunt is an event that took place for the first time on the 14th of May of 2009 and it was for the under 25s, who could participate in a maximum team of four, and it required the use of a car. It was an all day hunt around the hills of Collio/Brda, with a final prize of money, bottles of wine, meals in a restaurant of the area, etc. In the above ethnographic material, wine terroir and the Italian equivalent of Protective Denominations of Origin (Denominazione di Origine Controllata –DOC) are used as marketing mechanisms and carefully constructed. This argument is made by both Pratt (2008) and Grasseni (2003): both authors view the concept of terroir as something for tourists more than for quality as it is advocates by producers that call for it or by organisations such as Slow Food Movement. Terroir is an idea used in order to claim uniqueness and increase a place’s reputation, “a kind of place marketing” (Barham, 2007: 279). The above quoted local organisations –Forum, Movement for Wine Tourism, Consorzio Collio- make, of both the border and the wine, a
marketing exploit in the ways they try to promote the territory through a very specific political agenda. The European Union promotes cooperation through competition: the wines of Collio and Brda both share the notion of place that apply to wine -terroir. Through cross-country activities place is also depicted as the same and the wines from the two different countries are brought together in equal competition. In this context terroir is nothing more than a value-marketing label that promotes place-based distinction, but without necessarily explaining what that entails. Place was generated more from words and images than it was through experience.

Experience is instead how place is constructed by the winemakers, according to what Mario Brambilla said. As I will describe in more depth in next pages, the notion of terroir is also constructed by who makes wine and how it is done. The local winemakers do not simply interpret what they see as a livelihood: they have a strong connection with the place they inhabit. In other words, I do think that by buying the wine you buy the place (to paraphrase but contrast Grasseni, 2003), and it is not just a touristic slogan.

-COLLIO: A DELICATE AND COMPLICATED EXPERIENCE

Up to this point, I have shown how a ‘sense of place’ can be conveyed by travelling through the land (various examples of routes), the history (border structures), and the taste. In this section, I will attempt to discuss how all of the above are also embedded within the local peoples’ lives.

Dario Stasi, describing Collio, writes: “Here the wine is absolutely the main character: in the landscape, in people’s work, in people’s talks, in the tradition, in its future, in the rites and in the mythologies of an ancient culture which is capable of uniting the sanctity of the Eucharist with the profanity of the inn” (tr. from 2009: 63). The author continues by saying that, in this area, any subject of conversation could develop from starting to talk about wine. This
statement intrigued me because I found, in my notes, it to be absolutely true: everything can be explained by using a metaphor coming from the wine. Many of the conversations I started with Mario Brambilla commenced talking about a particular wine, its taste, its way of making it, and it ended talking about family, politics, history and even globalization. For example one particular afternoon in June 2009, Mario and I tasted one of the new wines made from the year before that were now ready to go on the market. By talking about his wine we started to discuss how is harder and harder to know what people want in a wine, what makes them buy it: is it the price, the place it is from, ‘what is it?’ For Mario this was an issue for every product in the global market: it was a problem of too much choice, everything could go everywhere. Our politicians –Mario continued- should focus more in at least promoting local products for local people, so there was more a guarantee of a market for a local producers like himself. “Local politics though are just concerned with petrol at the moment, it is months I read only about protest of the area petrol stations, have you read?” And just like this we went from tasting the new wine commenting on colour and taste to talking about the local petrol station owner protest about the prices of petrol in Italy with comparison to Slovenia.

Place is also understood through grapevines. The wine and the vineyards are not just an integral part of Mario’s life, but also what he measured everything against: he used the vineyards to explain the landscape and the history of the place in which he was living. The territory is, for Mario, in symbiosis with the vine. He constructs an understanding of space, place the senses: he combines a phenomenological approach and a cultural approach, like the one used by Basso (1996). 

There was a particular time during an evening in May, at sunset, when I was admiring the view that was at the back of the Brambilla’s house, just outside the door of their wine cellar: I made a comment on how beautiful it was to stare at those endless vineyards; it had the power to relax me. I explained to Mario how I thought even the drive to get up to their house was for
me extremely energizing and somewhat therapeutic, because it was completely immersed in these green vineyards, where my mind could wander freely. Not being able to really see the end of them, not far off in the distance where a small village was appearing on the top of a hill, gave me an idea of freedom: no worries, no problems, no responsibilities. It was springtime and the only other colours apart from the green of the grapevines were white clouds of cherry trees in full bloom and some pink clouds of plum and peach trees. I told Mario how peaceful and somehow out of space and time this picture seemed to be for me; the end of my fieldwork was only few months away now and by this time I really grew to appreciate the tranquillity of the area. At the same time, I was still, after ten months, in disbelief at the fact that I could cross the border without even noticing: one minute I was in Italy and the next I was in Slovenia. Being from the area, and after exploring the surrounding so much as I have done in the past few months, I should have been able to map out every single corner of it, to know exactly where the border was passing through, since that was what I came to research. But looking at the landscape, sometimes I found myself not paying attention to the border, because there was not an obvious border anymore. It was not like this when I left the area to go and study in the UK. After hearing these words Mario chuckled, and made fun of me:

“it is a beautiful land Valentina, you are right. I am lucky my parents moved here. This land has seen things though, so many. You say it is peaceful, and yes it is in a way, but it is also so complicated. It is a complicated land and that is why the vine feels right at home here, because grapevines are complicated plants. All you see here, in front of you, is big grown green beautiful plants, but you have to look after them to make sure that they grow like this. You have to protect them every step of the way: they cannot have too much sun or too much water, you should know this by now. And the parasites? Well, luckily enough you did not have to see them, that is good for us more than for you, less problems, but when the vines gets sick then it is not easy to cure them. It is so delicate, like a little girl.”

What I described to Mario in the above narrative are the endless rows of vineyards on hills that are divided between two countries but to the eye of the uninformed beholder this is not perceivable. The beginning of the above narrative is a description of what it felt like to be in
that landscape, both for myself and for Mario: this could be seen as a phenomenological description of the meaning of landscape. Ingold (2007:74-75), for example, might define Mario’s narrative and my description of the area through his concept of habitation of a space we talk from the place as we had experienced it—our experience of the place--; a clear expression of a view from within. As a researcher, by trying to live the life of the ‘inhabitant’, in Ingold’s opinion, I would have been able to ‘learn his place’. However ‘my’ place and ‘his’ place are quite different: we have two different experiences of the place. My experience make reference to when the border controls station were still active and moving around was not as easy, while now I experience movement and freedom. Mario’s experience of the place is given by the grapevines: from Mario’s narrative it is clear that the landscape is an active entity and it is invested with anthropomorphic features, as if it had a will of its own. In both cases place is described through perception: it describes the inwardness of the world—the world is drawn into the perceiver—, “yielding a kind of knowledge that is intuitive, engaged, synthetic and holistic” (Ingold, 2000: 245). Mario’s inward world comes from engaging with and sensing the environment, as phenomenology would suggest.

What makes the landscape of the Collio/Brda area are vineyards, some olive and cherry trees, a few villages, and some of the border’s physical structures. The view from one house often only slightly differs from another view from another house: obviously it was not the same view but the elements in it would have been the same. Both Mario and I, though, were familiar with the view from outside his wine cellar and it was for us extremely meaningful: Mario said that for him, it meant home, because he grew up seeing it; for me it represents the place where I conducted fieldwork for so many months. The border and the vineyards are what constitute the area of Collio, what gives it its ‘sense of place’ (Basso, 1996). Rather than a just phenomenological approach, Basso combines phenomenological and cultural approaches. The author does not deny the importance of physical experience in developing an
understanding of a sense of the word, but he says that this is insufficient: memories, social relations and narratives (stories) are equally important. Basso argues that when people have a favoured site they are easily prone to feel strong emotions about it: this experience is what Basso defines as ‘sense of place’ (1996: 54) and this sense, he suggests, is a ‘cultural activity’ (1996: 83). When I, talking to Mario, mentioned how this view made me feel I was making a self-reflection, which is part of having a sense of the place, in Basso’s terms.

Mario was an old man, in his late sixties: it was only the beginning of May and his face was already tanned from working every day outside in the fields. He had stopped talking, but not thinking. He was gazing at the field, at the house on the other hill, leaning on right side on the cane he used to walk with. He was wearing his straw hat just slightly tilted backward, almost as if he was making sure that the trim of the hat would not impair his view. I wished I had taken a picture of Mario in this position: I thought it was very emblematic of how a man feels strongly about his land, his gaze completely lost in the fields surrounding us, like in a deep meditation. I could not though keep my curiosity from interrupting the flow of his thoughts and I asked him: “why do you say that the land is complicated? Did the grapevine make it complicated?” He seemed annoyed, but being the good man that he was gave me this answer.

“I don’t know why, why did I say the land is complicated... the grapevine does not make the land complicated; they understand each other because they are both complicated. I meant the history of this place, didn’t I? We talked about it enough times, because you always ask. It is the border, isn’t it: it is complicated. It does not bother me, but it did bother this land. Look down here, at the bottom here, you know anyway because you have been, it is a river, and we told you before there was barbed wire too. I remember my Lucia always worried if the kids were going running down there, they were hurting themselves, if there were not a border, we both could have focused on the work, instead of worrying after them. When you work a land as a living, there is never a pause, because the land does never really rest, Nature never really rests. When you are a farmer you do not get holidays. This border made a lot of people pause or made it more complicated for people to work their land. The patrols were bad, because they were ruining the land. Even ten years ago in the last war, all those soldiers

71 He meant 1991, he just got the counting wrong.
coming up here to check that Albanians or Serbs were not escaping and that by accident the war was not going to come over here, and, in reality, you heard it more in the city than we did up here. They just ruined our vineyards.

Mario mentions how the fact that the border was there at the end of their plot was a source of worries, because kids were playing near the barbed wire and could get hurt, but most importantly the worries that the border generated was distracting him and his wife from the work they were supposed to be doing. Place triggered memories like the ones just evoked by Mario are also an example of cultural activity. Both Mario and I had the ‘classic’ place-based thoughts that Basso describes in his article: in fact, Basso argues that after reflecting or memorising about oneself, place triggered thoughts moved onto thoughts of association (1996: 55). Basso uses this expression because landscape and place were not constituted by what the Apaches saw, but how Apaches related to them through their stories.

Grapevines are delicate; they do not like to be messed with, and the soldiers messed with them, like at the beginning, I was little but I still remember, no consideration whatsoever, passing a blind line and you go to bed and the morning after there is a border passing through your vineyards. Obviously, like I told you before, people were moving poles in the middle of the night. But I remember this one thing now, oh you are going to like this story, one afternoon there was a head to head between a farmer and a soldier. We were up there actually, where the border is now, just a little bit further up. You know before there was not that crossroads and the border etcetera, just the vineyards. You plant the grapevines quite straight, don’t you? In ordinate lines, like we did the other month, remember? But if there is the space to squeeze one in maybe you do, often you do. Plus at the time, you know even if it was a bit closer to the limit of the road it was not exactly the end of the world. With all these laws they do for nothing now72, you have to be careful instead: you never know when some idiot that does not look where he walks passes by, trips and falls. And then the fault is of the farmer because the plant was there; I say the fault is of those who do not look, but never mind.

In Mario’s account this is obvious: he made reference to road works and the laws that protect the passer by, and he remembered about his father’s fellow vine-grower that lost some of his vineyards at the end of WWII. In the above narrative what is described is not the place, not the

72 He means things are now protected by a law, that he considers ridiculous. For example, here, he refers to the fact that is someone hurts him/herself on somebody else’s property he can sue the owner of said property.
view that we were looking at, but what that view made us think of and feel: to put it in Basso’s words: “it was actively sensed” (1996:55). The Apaches described by Basso recalled stories about a particular place to reflect on people’s acts and behaviours: in fact, for them, learning what places were called and what legends occurred in these places was the method to pass on their social knowledge and to learn what was acceptable behaviour socially for them. The same thing can be seen from how Mario’s story continued.

Anyway, we farmers of the area were all united to check what to do with this border being put down. I was with my dad, but I was a kid, so I was not really following the conversations before you come up with another one of your questions. But I remember the argument, because they started shouting, and at the time, just after the war, you were not one to go and argue with soldiers because they might still be trigger-happy. These soldiers were putting down the big poles for the border and they wanted to put it down right where this line of grapevines of this farmer was going through, it would have lost a whole line of plants: to paint you a picture a bottle of wine for sure. Clearly this man was not happy about it, and he started complaining and all the men [meaning the other farmers] started backing him up; Valentina, even then, that was our living, all the politics and ok, we understand, but be more considerate, we have to live and the men up there did not seem to understand. And soldiers are just like donkeys: they follow orders. Do not get me wrong, I am happy for the army and good discipline, but the working man is a disciplined man, because he will answer to the land, you cannot make the land do what it does not want to do. Anyway these soldiers were not considering the fact we lived off those plants you know, so because the men were more than the soldiers they sort of reached a compromise, but it was still a very hard compromise: only one of the plants got removed and, in its place, the pole got put down, in exactly the same hole, then the net [the barbed wire] was passing between two lines of grapevines and that poor farmer found himself with half a field here [Italy], and half a field there [Slovenia]. True, and you know it more than me, he was not the only one, but, still, seeing that plant being removed it was like his land was re-possessed, his vineyard broken, it hurt him deeply. My father told me then how lucky we were to have found ourselves a house on this hill because we had the river that did the border, no need to ruin our land”.

Mario’s perception, and my own, of the place is made of two main elements: the vineyards and the border.
The border structures since the accession of Slovenia to the European Union have been dismissed and mostly dismantled, and therefore only a few of them are still visible, but not exactly recognisable, since they look like some white little houses. They are only recognisable if the person looking knows where they are. The border was the criterion that we [Mario more than me] were using to consider/explain/analyse what we were looking at. In my own description of the area, I expressed ideas of unity, of an interrupted landscape, and of freedom and ease of movement, making reference to how this was different from when I used to live in the area and border structures were still present. I was thinking of the landscape in terms of how it was when I used to live there and what I came to research. Mario, on the other hand, compared the vineyards (what we could see) to the border (what we could not see) because these were the symbols of his two realities: the vineyards were his work, his livelihood, while the border was the context in which he had to live. Mario paints/depicts the border as an element of limit, worry and disturbance: a context he and others like him did not choose but nevertheless learned to work with. “Well, a border is delicate, isn’t it? We had to learn how to work around it, like we work around the vine, they are perfect for each other”.

Both the territory and the plants are given anthropomorphic characteristics; when Mario talked about how delicate, complicated and in need to be understood both border and grapevines are, he expressed the difficulties of his life and what kind of efforts need to be put in if someone wanted to live in this particular area doing what he did. Overall, this narrative roots Mario in the social soil from which he grew up, a localised version of selfhood (Basso, 1996: 85). He presents himself using the place: he uses the place to tell us about himself: he described the place through his experience of it.
- EASY MOVEMENTS

Viticulture is an example of agrarian work, which, through daily chores, physically forms the landscape and the perception that people have of it (Gray, 1999). When I talked to people who live in Collio the benefit they felt that they got from the removal of the physical border was that of just being able to move around through their landscape more easily. For all the people who work within the wine business, border structures came across as a nuisance. In fact, many are the tales that depict these structures as ruining their fields, making the fields less accessible and their daily work more difficult.

Barbara Ivančič – the mother of one of the wine growers I originally contacted - remembered that her husband had many troubles in having documents issued to go and work on his own vineyards that remained in the Yugoslavian territory, and also when he did obtain them his day work was made longer because he could not simply cross from one field to the next but he had to go all the way to the passport control stations. These people’s accounts are reinforced by what is described in local historical reports and local novels and films\(^3\): the focus is often on how having the land (agricultural land) in two different countries was nothing but a problem, because people, especially immediately after the war, found themselves having to spend a lot of time at passport control just to work on their own property. Having the licence to cross the border immediately after WWII had its advantages – said Barbara Ivančič - since it was a form of contact with relatives left on the Slovenian side and it provided a way to smuggle goods such as coffee and sugar to them. Barbara and her husband Edi were actually of Slovenian origin and most of their family remained in Yugoslavia. Barbara described to me that they knew that their relatives had been cut off from everything. The town of Gorizia before 1947 had been the market centre of the territory: this meant that it was the place where goods were arriving and then being distributed to the territory. As Barbara explained,

there was nowhere for her relatives to go to buy even the simplest things such as flour, because Nova Gorica did not have much, as it was still ‘under construction’. Barbara recalled coming up with the strangest plans in order to take basic foods for friends or relatives who lived across the border: she recalled how one winter, she stuffed her bra with two small bags of sugar. She was sure that the border officers (tr. i finanzieri) would not notice them under her jumper and coat; she remembered being afraid but, she said, that they were so used to see her husband going up and down the border, that fortunately that day apart from checking their permit they did not pay much attention.

Barbara was not the only one and it is not just typical of winegrowers but also of other involved in agrarian work. Maria, for example, a woman who lived on the outskirts of Gorizia town told me that she and her husband would cross over by bicycle using not the town border post but the ones in the countryside. Their fields were they cultivated some corn and vegetables were not in Yugoslavia, but right on the border, so, in order to do certain jobs [tr. vari lavori]74, they were allowed to cross the border. Maria had a distant cousin living in Yugoslavia who could not even afford to buy bread or sugar. So what Maria and her husband would do some nights before crossing over, was to take the bikes apart and pour flour in the frame of the bicycle: by doing this the guards at the border would not find it and she was able to help her cousin. Maria recounted these events as being both scary and exciting, but most of all necessary. “Here in Italy we were living comfortably, while on the other side [in Yugoslavia, now Slovenia] they had absolutely nothing, so I felt obliged to help” –she said-. It is fortunate that she did not get caught smuggling, because – she said- many who did were lucky if they only spent few days in prison, or they could be physically beaten and hurt very badly.

As the years passed, the border became more permeable –easier to cross-, but this phenomenon did not make a difference on how the people of Collio/Brda kept referring to the

74 Unfortunately she did not explain and I did not ask.
border structures as a nuisance. When talking with people still actively involved in the wine business, the same message came across: the vineyards served an important purpose, while the border brought to them no benefits.

For example, the members of the Brambilla family –the winemakers I worked most closely with- told me that, from the 1980s onwards, the border became year by year more relaxed and passing from one country to the other was not a problem: border guards in recent year were not even stopping people to check their documents anymore. However, as easy as it might have been to cross, crossing was not the problem. Paolo Brambilla said to me that the border “has always been a nuisance. I have got the border right there [pointing at the bottom of the field], but if we wanted to see our friends we had to go all the way around to cross, because the closest official border crossing point is over on that hill [pointing further right in the distance]. It is ridiculous, and that is why more often than not you just risked it!” So the nuisance was not crossing the border, but reaching the border post. What makes it more explicit is the experience of three Slovenian women I met while harvesting the grapes in September 2008. They lived in a village on the hill in front of the vineyards we were working in, and they have been grape harvesting these same fields since ‘they can remember’ [tr. da che mi ricordo]. Before September 2007, they had to go ‘the long way to cross the border’: because the border posts were all the way to the next hills and, since they did not drive, they had to be dropped off by one of their relatives and be picked up by one of the Brambillas (who owned the field we were harvesting). But when it came to that grape harvest at end of August, beginning of September 2008, when I met them, they finally managed to just walk across. The removal of the border’s physical structures was seen as an advantage simply in terms of mobility and time saving. Overall, all these people expressed a simply pragmatic view of the border. The people I spoke with barely addressed the issue of crossing/having to work in
another state: the border is seen as what interrupts their everyday practices. This particular relation with the border ties in with their relation to the place, the land, as their job.

When it came to changes introduced by the EU, many of the people who live and work in Collio were only interested in how it affected them, rather than in taking an interest in the wider political or philosophical implications of the change. The wine growers considered change when discussing their work/business without making a direct reference to the European Union, unless they were talking about import/export laws that affected the wine market, but that will be the subject of the next chapter. The wine producers did not talk about the entry of Slovenia to the EU or of the dismantling of border structures unless they were prompted by questions such as: “what is it like now that you have not to pass border control anymore?” On these occasions, a common phrase, I found in my notes, was: “I/we know things have changed but they have not really changed”. The reason for this answer is that the winegrowers considered what they did on a daily basis, and that had not in fact changed much for them. Paolo Brambilla, Demitri and Mr Rospello, for example gave me the answer I just reported: they said that their job was not taking them to Slovenia so it was not really their concern. On the other hand though, even what has been modified, it was not thought of as such: for example, the three Slovenian women working as grape harvesters for the Brambilla family saw getting to work quicker and more directly as nothing really changed in their life. The Brambilla agreed: it is not a big change. Ms Ivančič and Marko Torlio also did not see a big change in the ability of not having to cross the; Marko Torlio could not deny it was a simpler way to work, but he remembered that, when he was working with his father, crossing the border was such a ‘normal’ thing to do, that it was almost disrupting not crossing. This is a practical utilitarian view of the border (or lack of thereof).
- TERROIR OF COLLIO WINES: UNIQUENESS THROUGH DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

As described earlier, Terroir is a French word that is now used internationally to describe the specificity and the uniqueness of a product through its locality: it is a category assigned to various agricultural products, especially wine, to make explicit the relationship that local artisans and producers have with the land. By making this relationship explicit, the wine is invested with a distinction of taste (Bourdieu, 1984): taste, in Bourdieu’s terms, is a type of symbolic capital that forms and is formed by one position within the space. Taste is a process of distinction – differentiation – and as such it creates and reproduce social boundaries. Terroir, being a notion of place invested by taste, creates also boundary: as a system of classification, it generates difference.

“The ‘difference’ of a place must be conceptualised more in the ineffable sense of the constant emergence of uniqueness out of (and within) the specific constellations of interrelations within which the place is set” (Massey, 2005: 68). In this final section I would like to discuss how Massey’s political geography and relational arguments helped me to think about some aspects of my ethnography differently: how Mario’s representation of the place is connected to the wine industry’s one, for example.

This chapter is an example of how place shapes people, how place is embedded in peoples’ lives and reflected in their everyday actions and choices as political and economical subjects. This shaping and building is made through constant interrelation of not just wine and border, but also different analysis of the concept of place. My approach follows Massey in arguing that place is inter-relational. “This is a notion of place where specificity (local uniqueness, a sense of place) derives not from some mythical roots nor from a history of relative isolation – not to be disrupted by globalisation – but precisely from the absolute particularity of the mixture of
influences found together there” (Massey, 1999:18). Massey’s point here is that transnational, global influences, affect the constitution of place as much as whatever is going on locally.

It was important for me to first present what is put into an interrelation to construct place by showing how through place border and wine are mutually constituted. Notions of place bring boundary to the wine: the wine world has borders, which are seen through how place is considered in this world (terroir -PGI). And the border in this region is understood also through wine: wine is a way to cross it (Wine tourism movement or cross country wine related events), and border is interpreted through the winemaking experience. This mutually constituted relationship though is interpreted differently, according to which approach is use to understand place: whether it is a structural/textual approach to the notion of place or a phenomenological one.

According to Massey, space allows for plurality and heterogeneity: a coexistence of different trajectories. She defines space as “a simultaneity of stories-so far”, “place as collections of these stories” (2005: 130) and “landscape as constituted through practices” (Ibid, 9). The Collio place is told through different stories and experiences about how the border and the vineyards come together to constitute it: different people describe the place in different ways but using the same elements (the border and the wine). According to which analytical approach is used to tell the story, space place and landscape transforms their interpretations. These are what Massey calls ‘vantage points’, different ways of looking, living, experiencing and relating to the space. The multiplicity and juxtapositions of various notions of place make it so that Collio is seen as a constantly evolving and ‘lively’ space. As mentioned in the introduction, this chapter meant to be an ethnographic approach to Massey’s ideological concept of space: how place is made through relations and landscape cannot be represented as a static surface because it is always in the making (2005:107).
The terroir of the Collio wine is given by the interrelation of everything that has been explored in this chapter. Tregear’s work (2003) on Stilton cheese suggests that food and place are linked by exploring concepts of history and traditions, which are linked with concepts of market and innovation: every product considered ‘typical’ of an area- such wine in Collio- represents a mixture of these concepts. In Tregear’s opinion the researcher’s task should be investigating the process of how this mixture happen: I have done so proposing that, according to the local notions of place, there is intrinsic relation between wine and border that make place. Terroir is a model that people use to make sense of their relationship to the land (Trubek, 2008; Paxson, 2010): “it offers a theory of how people and place, cultural tradition and landscape ecology, are mutually constituted” (Paxson, 2010:444). Mario’s narrative, describes the border and the grapevine as understanding each other, as complementary to each other, as sharing similar characteristics. Mario was locating himself in the environment: his personal history was connected with the one of the place. Ingold’s says that, landscape “is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to- the lives and works of past generation who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left something of themselves” (2000:189).

The wine producers described by Robert Ulin (2002:709) that work in co-operatives in Southwest France promote just that. By not having a distinctive pedigree, they made it their mission to invent it: they represent a whole region, they are the Region. Micro-events occurring in the area of Collio already indicate this as a possibility:

-COLLIO / BRDA: ONE WINE REGION?

After the war, the border was limiting the vineyards and, in that way it was also classifying them: the vineyards that remained in Italy immediately assumed higher value from the ones that remained in Slovenia, because Italy, as country, is renowned within the international
wine market while Slovenia is not. The Slovenian wines entered in direct competition with the Italian wines when Slovenia became part of the European Union, this was three years earlier than the actual removal of the border structures. From the perspective of wine world production Slovenian wines cannot even compare to Italian wines since Italy is one of the top wine producing countries\textsuperscript{75}, but in this area the phenomenon has been felt really strongly especially within the local market. At the time of my fieldwork, local Slovenian wine producers could sell their wine to the Italian businesses without being subjected to high taxes: this meant that they sold their wine at cheaper price than local Italian wines, because, in Slovenia, the costs of production are still cheaper.

The Consorzio Collio was really very much in competition with their Slovenian counterpart – Občina Brda-, but the two cooperatives were now trying to promote the two wine regions almost as one area and, as such, as ‘one tasting experience’\textsuperscript{76}. Paolo Bianchi, the vice president of the Consorzio Collio when I conducted fieldwork back in 2008/09, was though very aware that the use of the removal of the physical border in order to attract more tourists and more potential wine buyers to the area, could confuse or mislead the customers in believing that one unified region meant also one group of wine producers: they wanted to keep their national origin still very distinct; the wine label would have to show even more clearly now whether a wine was a Collio or a Brda product. The general feeling amongst not only those who live in Collio and are part of the wine business, but also among wine consumers in town, was that, in a few years time, when Slovenia will have the same technique of production and general expertise of Italy, there will be a dispute equal to the one that happened between Italy and Hungary over the Tocai/Tokaj wine, discussed above. In fact, such debate can also serve as a testimony of how concepts of skill and art are applied in the context of wine businesses.

\textsuperscript{75} http://faostat.fao.org/site/636/DesktopDefault.aspx#ancor
Two different skills derived from two completely different traditions of wine making [fermenting the grape/ dry the grape and extracting the concentrate juice].

Some wine producers proposed as a solution to resolve this problem to label wine with ‘Border’ (tr. vino di Confine): these are the wine of the borderland. A group of young wine producers came forward with the idea of a wine called Limes (which in Roman Latin means border or boundary). At the time of my fieldwork, this wine was not on the market, it was being introduced as a new research product to promote the area of Collio/Brda as one and not two: the product is invested with a political meaning. I have heard about this proposition during the presentation of the Limes wine: the two young producers/ students presenting put a lot of emphasis on the ‘united past’ of the area of Collio/Brda: the vineyards were indeed not divided in two separate states before WWII, the wine makers shared then the natural conditions and the same means of production during the wine process, they were indeed one big group of wine producers. The choice of its name – LIMES -was because the Slovenian wine makers and the Italian wine makers share the same resources and conditions to make their wines: the two wine regions, the two states could come to an agreement and promote the area through Border Wines.

Limes wine is an Uvaggio, which means it is made by different kind of grapes: it is a mixture of Malvasia, Tocai and Ribolla. It is also a mixture of nationalities, because it is made with the grapes offered by three Slovenian wine producers and three Italian ones. It is a dry white wine ideal to drink during a meal. During its presentation I also had the pleasure to taste it: I think it is interesting to report in this context that an older man sat at the presentation was completely unimpressed by this wine not because it was bad, but because it was, in his words, ‘a classical Collio wine, produced everywhere before and after the war’. In his opinion, it was all about the marketing, about the re-launch of the area within the oeno-gastronomical tourist

76 (in order to promote the European Union ideal of ‘coopetition’, cooperation through competition)
business, and the makers of this wine confirmed it: when I interviewed them they said that the tasting experience was meant to be of a classical Collio wine to reinforce the memory of the area as a whole. Through the power of taste memory this wine becomes about lifestyle and politics: the promoters of the wine want it to be a reminder of the good that was produced when the area was one region. The concept of taste memory in relation to wine has been already discussed by anthropologists like Black (2010), but not as invested with a specific political agenda. The fact that tasting Limes wine reminded the old man of a wine he tasted before the border appeared meant that the experiment had been successful: the wine was a reminder of the area as one and that it is indeed possible to talk about reunification. This product is an EU hybrid in a way: sponsored by EU funding, it promotes the EU political agenda of cooperation among members states and it also takes a specific stand in the local debate [to be explored in chapter four] on whether it can be forgotten that the area belongs to two different states.

Thus wine can be seen as a vessel of re-articulation of memory and history because it is part of a political process, similarly to how Klumbyté (2010) discusses the meaning and practicing of the consumption of the Soviet Sausage in Lithuania. As for the Soviet sausage described by Klumbyté (2010:28) “people invoke a specific historical and geopolitical order when describing food”. The old man at the Limes wine presentation was doing the same thing when re-calling the wine before WWI. The idea behind Limes (as well as the Soviet Sausage) is to accept a difficult history that can though project familiarity: “Familiarity implies continuity with the past and the intimate biographical link of a subject to an object. Familiarity, but it does not guarantee the homogeneity of the object under consideration”. Limes is not in fact the wine from before the war, it simply tastes like it because it has the taste of something that

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77 This wine was the project of two students of the University of Udine: the two students were children of two famous wine producers of the area and they were studying to become oenologists. The project was also very personal to them because their families were from the Slovenian minority and did not perceived any difference with the residents across the border.
has been reunited. Limes wine is intimately intertwined with people’s political sensibilities: the two students behind the project embrace ideas of the EU, they grew up with them. The border to them was never actually a problem or an impediment especially since they are from the Slovenian minority in Italy. For the old man in the audience the wine was not special because he did not embrace ideas of reunification, the period before the war was, so far as he was concerned, gone.

Thus Limes wine creates a way to overcome the distinction, or to at least embrace it: the past, here, is very much about the present (Klumbytė, 2010: 32). In fact, I do not think this is a case of nostalgia branding as the one described by Klumbytė (2010), but it is a case of promotion, because it addressed present issues for making an advantage in the future. Limes wine stood more as a form of creolisation (James, 1996:77), because it represented a mixture of nationalities and also of time and place: it is indeed a revival of the local and a call for authenticity but within new political realities. “It is through the interactions of market and place, perhaps re-arranged on time and space but not fundamentally altered, that communities –places- continue to encounter ‘the material and cultural means for their social reproduction’, material and cultural means that in this example might as in so many others may be new, alien, transformed, but no less important for creating local meanings and local social conditions” (Bestor, 2001:92). This new wine is the symbol of new local meaning and conditions.

When I told the Brambilla men about this proposal, Paolo, supported by Mario and Giulio, simply said that in his opinion this was nothing more than a big scheming mechanism of marketing in order to attract more tourists, or to sell more wine, and he did not understand the reasoning for it. He had a different idea on how a wine would get sold; as he put it: “As a business you are always in competition with other businesses of the same nature, whether they are smaller or bigger, same nationality or different one. A business constantly has to keep
re-inventing itself to keep going. We want to sell our wines and other wine makers want to sell their wines but a new denomination of origin will just create unnecessary competition”.

More than once I talked to the Brambilla men about the entrance of the Slovenian wines on the national and international market. Generally they expressed worries, because they realised that this meant more competition. Slovenian wines were seen as threatening since they were cheaper but the same could have been said of other countries where the cost of wine production is cheaper. The Brambillas felt their ‘personal’ market is established and constant, and not necessarily at risk, even if ‘you never know’ [tr. noi abbiamo i nostri clienti fissi e non c’è un vero rischio che ci abbandonino, ma non si sa mai]. When I brought up the Limes producers' idea about Border Wine in other discussions –or interviews- I had with other wine producers, the general opinion was that it was not a good idea, because the Denominazione di Origine Controllata does indeed protect the products from one area –in this case obviously the wines-. However, it is better if the area is smaller and exclusive, rather than be expanded, because, as the Brambilla said, even if not in the same words, already businesses are in competition with the one that shared the same denomination. The ‘COLLIO DOC’ label is established and well-known, the Slovenian wines can have another denomination, because physical characteristic of the territory might be the same, but the technique of production simply do not share the same history in the world of wine making.

As much as the Collio/Brda area is portrayed for marketing purposes as ‘one wine area’ and ‘one tasting experience’, the wine process create a marker of exclusion and inclusion, it represents the border. The Slovenians I met made wine primarily for their own consumption and not to put on the market. Among the Italians I spoke to, whether their winemaker or local shop owners or people I spent time with, there was a general assumption that Slovenians cannot make wine: they believed Italians know their wine and that the Slovenians did not. Italians care about the quality of a wine, both in the way they make it and when they drink it,
while the Slovenians do not. Even some people of the Slovenian minority I spoke to in passing reinforced this idea, adding often this kind of statement: “In Italy you drink wine, in Slovenia Beer”.

At the presentation of the Limes wine I was sat behind a man in his late sixties: after we tasted the wine and we listened to the proposition of the new label of Border Wines, he turned to the man sat next to him, who was younger than him, and he explained him that the wine produced and drank before the war is neither what is considered now to be Italian wine nor what is considered to be Slovenian wine. Back then, he said, it was all about making good quality wine: something that tasted nice and sold well. Nowadays, Italians see the wine as a product that gives you status (the importance of the quality and knowing your wine), and the Slovenians see the wine as an alcoholic beverage (it is not about the quality, but about the alcohol, is good as long as it gets you drunk). I could have disagreed, but I was eavesdropping and I felt too embarrassed to jump into someone else’s conversation: in fact, the wines produced in Brda were becoming more and more popular at the time of my fieldwork, it was easier to find them in restaurants and small local shops. More recently they were also presented at the London International Wine Fair\footnote{http://2011.londonwinefair.com/content} accessed March 2011: the Opoka Ribolla wine is exclusive of the Brda region and it was described as having a wonderful and unique taste. The description of Slovenian wines and wine-producers is an example of what Herzfeld (1997) would have called social poetics: the meaning of something is contingent and variable and people can shape it according to their agenda.

The Italian- Slovenian border in the context of the wine process and the wine market can be summarised based on what Douglas calls connoisseurship (1987:9). The Italian are the one who know it, understand it and know how to make it, while the Slovenians are still getting their bearings. This conceptual dimension is linked to distinctions between pure and impure,
and to domestic versus foreign: binary opposed concept that create a general social order (Douglas, 1966). Douglas argues that an inherently untidy experience such as, in this case, blurred national boundaries, can be clarified by separating and demarcating—as in this case—or by purifying and punishing everything that does not conform. “Foreign is often regarded as simply inferior ... the preference for domestic reflect parochialism—and the strong cultural meaning attached to locality and cuisine” (Bestor, 2001:87).

As for Wilson (2000: 141) even here the European Union is judged in terms of its local economic impact. The technique of productions and the knowledge of the international wine business of the Slovenian wine producers was considered to be inferior to the ones of the Italians. This was believed by the Italian wine producers to be simply a question of inexperience. Giovanni, the owner of a wine shop in Gorizia, told me that it was an issue of visibility (tr. visibilità). “As you know by now Valentina, what matters the most in the wine business is the name a product has. The same goes for the name the country has as a wine producing country. Slovenia is not known in the worldwide panorama, but Slovenian wines have their little to envy (tr. hanno poco da invidiare) to the Italian wines.” In Giovanni’s opinion Slovenian wine would soon be to the same standards as Italian wines: their ‘visibility’ in the global market would soon rise thanks to better access to the European Market. “The EU symbolizes, in effect, the tremendous benefits of economic cooperation, exemplifying the prospects offered when states eliminate protective measures and lower tariffs and trade barriers” (Haran, 2008:5). Sidney Mintz observes that ‘foods were until recently a function of time (and of space) in ways that, for much of humanity, they hardly are today’ (1997:185), but Bestor argued that “in production and distribution, foods are even more a function of time and space than in the past” (2001:90). Both Bestor and Mintz were talking about trade: trade is not the issue but market is. It is not a global market as such, but it does nevertheless cross

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79 He means that they were nearly just as good as each other.
border, so similar characteristics, notions and ways of investigation can be applied in this context: so “the transformations of meanings attached to relationships and to commodities are equally important for understanding the global role of markets, the cultural process of markets and commodity chains, and the ever shifting relationships between local actors and global stages” (Bestor, 2001:92).

The Brambillas saw in expanding their business a potential solution. In fact, in Paolo’s opinion, if they were now to establish a strong market network whilst Slovenian wines were still trying to catch up, they would not probably get affected. In fact, as I already discussed, the Brambilla men believed that once a wine had a reputation it was more difficult to be replaced by cheaper products. Their business was still quite small and it was only in the last few years (when Paolo and Giulio took charge) that it had been trying to expand. Mario was not really interested in expansion, obviously he would have liked to sell more wine, but he thought the promotion should be kept at a local scale. For example I witnessed, on more that one occasion, arguments between him and Paolo, as Mario did not really want to sell his wine to a business in the south of Italy, as Paolo was doing, because they always had to chase people for them to be paid. Towards the end of my fieldwork, these arguments became more frequent. In the last couple of months I was there, Paolo was often asking me if I could promote his wine in England, as I lived over there and I had some contacts. When Mario heard these conversations he kept getting wound up. In his opinion, trying to expand abroad was too complicated, too expensive and not really worth it especially since foreigners do not really know what good wine is and they would probably buy anything as long as it is cheap.

There were also small-scale wine producers who are trying to sell their own wine or that take part in co-operatives (they put all the grapes together and make the wine under the label of the cooperatives). The biggest co-operative in the area was Consorzio Collio (taking the name of the region) and it was actively involved not only in the production of the wine but
also in the advertising of the area and in cross-countries activities (also for touristic needs), as we already saw. The Consorzio Collio is a cooperative and an example of economy of scope (Brunori& Rossi, 2000: 418): it represents the winemakers and established and enforced the regulations governing the standards of products and service. This Consorzio was an example of a collective action since it is a cooperative that aims at concentrating economic power so as to reduce the costs and also concentrate political power by stimulating promotion. “Collective action at the local level and its capacity to create alliances beyond locality. Collective actions enable small entrepreneurs to mobilise social relations to improve their economic performance and create new opportunities of growth. ... Collective action produces a local framework in which a constructed environment, institutions, symbols and routines facilitate the activities of small firms by giving them access to resources that could not be accessed by individual action alone” (Brunori& Rossi, 2000: 409).
CONCLUSION:

Chris Rumford, in his article *Theorising Borders* exhorts his readers, fellow academics, not just to study borders, but to also start one’s thinking from them, because borders can shape people’s perception of the world (2006: 166). This thesis aimed to be an example of how Gorizia and the Collio area are shaped by the local residents’ narratives and perceptions of the political processes of bordering and de-bordering: an example of border theory from the local perspective.

This thesis is about everyday practices on the EU internal border: through these practices new ways to interpret the border, sameness and difference come into play.

The physicality of this border was always the starting point: how border structures have shaped the territory of Gorizia and its district from the moment they appeared back in 1947. The cohabitation of people of Italian and Slovenian origin in the area started prior to that year: settlements of Italian and Slovenian communities are in fact traced back to the foundation of the town of Gorizia.

The history of the area has been analysed at length and discussed with particular focus on the historical moments to which the people I talked to referred: the Hapsburg Empire and the two World conflicts, and in particular the period between the end of WWI and the end of WWII. In fact, perception and interpretation of this border all stem from the shared history that these communities experienced prior to 1947. Events between 1947 and the time of my fieldwork have obviously been looked at in detail since they directly affect the issue of border relationship: they represent in fact the history of the Italian-Slovenian border.

I have argued that the 1947 border was indeed seen as the object that brought order to the area, and clearly defined who was who and who was where, by giving to each community a clear state and territory.
The years between 1947 and 1955, which saw the border at its least permeable possible, were the years that clearly emphasized the national distinction, creating a divide and a lack of recognition even between members of the same family that got separated by the Italian-Slovenian border, making the nation they belong to become the family they recognise and could associate themselves to. This phenomenon was clearest in the Town rather than in the Countryside, because there were different daily practices, different possibilities of work, shops were more obvious and thus bigger divide was created. In the countryside life on both side of the border continues as one, in parallel almost: Italian and Slovenian winemakers were doing exactly the same things - just on opposite sides of the State line.

The border in the town had created two different worlds, but in the country it did not. The European Union challenged the distinction of the two different worlds for the Townies of Gorizia and instead it started making the winemakers of Collio call for new kind of distinction, to which they did not feel the need to appeal before then.

One area of fieldwork: the same border, the same regional context, the same political context, but two completely different sets of data between the town and the country. The difference lay in the landscape and in peoples’ everyday practices across this landscape. To assess the border, it is the everyday practices of crossing it and defining it that matter.

The two different landscapes and the different sets of practices are the reasons why the thesis is split in Part I – The Town and Part II – The Countryside. The two parts though aimed at mirroring each other. Chapters Two and Four presented the people that lived respectively in the town and in the border, the history they had with it and how they respectively chose to narrate it. Chapters Three and Five instead, building on the presentation given in the chapters that respectively precede them, explain what it means to live on an EU internal border for the people in the town and for the people in the country. And that explains why I decided to look
into wine: the importance of using wine as an element of analysis in the study of border: discussing how what is important is the symbolic meaning which is invested in wine.

In the town the border was harder to cross, while the border in the country was easier to cross thanks to the agricultural permit people had to allow them to work their own land that was left in the other side.

What this thesis has mainly discussed is that in the town the border structures are perceived as the border: the physical manifestation of the border is recognised as the only form of differentiation. People expressed anxiety: they worried that the disappearance of the border posts would create some form of ambiguity in distinguishing themselves from the Slovenians. Local residents recognised that the physical separation that the border imposed created also a political and social division: having completely different economies especially has always been throughout the years of the physical border what has separated Italians and Slovenians.

The entrance of Slovenia to the EU, making it an equal to Italy in both political and economic terms, made local people worries that the two groups would not be distinguished. In fact common criteria of differentiation such as language do not seem as strong around Gorizia for two main reasons: the town is heading towards bilinguism and the local Italian dialect presents various words of Slovene in it.

The emphasis of the economic border continues in Part II. In the countryside the way in which distinction is operated and emphasised between those who live in Italy and those who live in Slovenia changes: nationality, ethnic origin and cultural difference played only a small part in marking such distinction, as the wine growers asserted their social position through their wine. In fact, what brings together or separates Italians and Slovenians is a history in the winemaking business and the techniques of wine production. Slovenia, in the worldwide wine panorama, is not one of the most renowned countries for its wine production: as such, local wine growers, wine sellers, and local consumers associate Slovenia with the more artisanal
way of production, while Italy with a more industrial one. The Italian-Slovenian border is thus made and remade in economic terms: an Italian terroir is of the two the strongest.

As wine is a product of connoisseurship though, what could potentially make the wines of the area more renowned and appreciated is a form of regionalism. Since Italian and Slovenian vineyards share the same soil and climate, and in the very near future, possibly the same techniques of production, regionalism could be the only way to avoid competition between the two countries.

This thesis has been about the Italian-Slovenian border and in which aspects it is plural and relational. It connects Italians and Slovenians by social, political, and economic relations. By the interpretation of the local people of border as the physical border structure it suggested that, for the locals, border is a limit a division of territory and nothing else: however people mark sameness and difference between Italians and Slovenians because of their proximity to this state border.
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