

# **A Myth of a Regional Identity - Conflicting Ideologies and Language Attitudes in Istria, Croatia**

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# Research questions

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- ideologies and categorization processes „from above“ in circulation in ethnic discourses in the region of Istria;
- how is official rhetoric used in politics of identity at the everyday level, in perceptions of self and other
- what linguistic strategies are developed „from below“ by ethnic communities to define themselves and to make borders

# Theoretical approach

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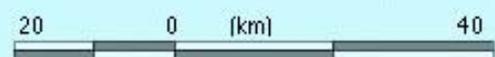
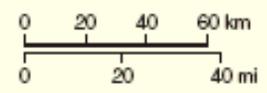
- ethnic identity as socially constructed, dynamic, dialogical, fluid by nature
  - emerges only in relation to the 'Other',
  - different levels of analysis: micro, median and macro
  
- Habitus and symbolic capital (Bourdieu)

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



# CROATIA

- ⊙ National capital
- Town, village
- ✈ Major airport
- International boundary
- Highway
- Road
- +— Railroad

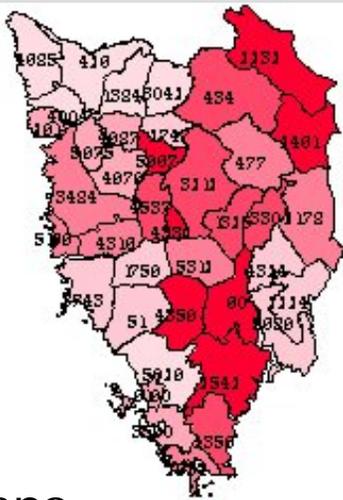


# History

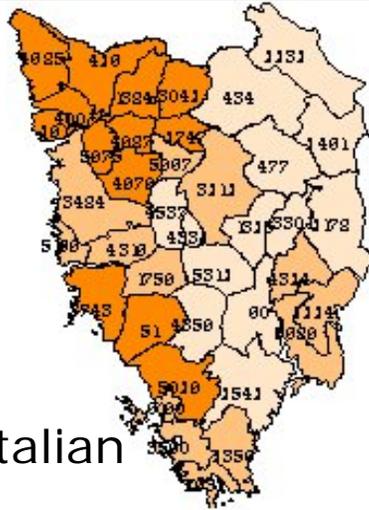
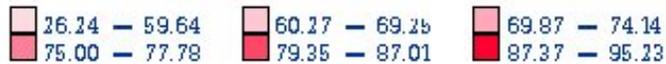
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- 1797-1918 Austrian Monarchy
  - Resurgent nationalisms/Italian dominance
- 1918-1943 Italy
  - Radical Italianization
  - Emigration of Croats and Slovenes
- 1943-1945 Nazi Germany
- 1945-1991 Yugoslavia:
  - exodus of Italian population
  - “brotherhood and unity” – support for ethnicities
- 1991- Republic of Croatia

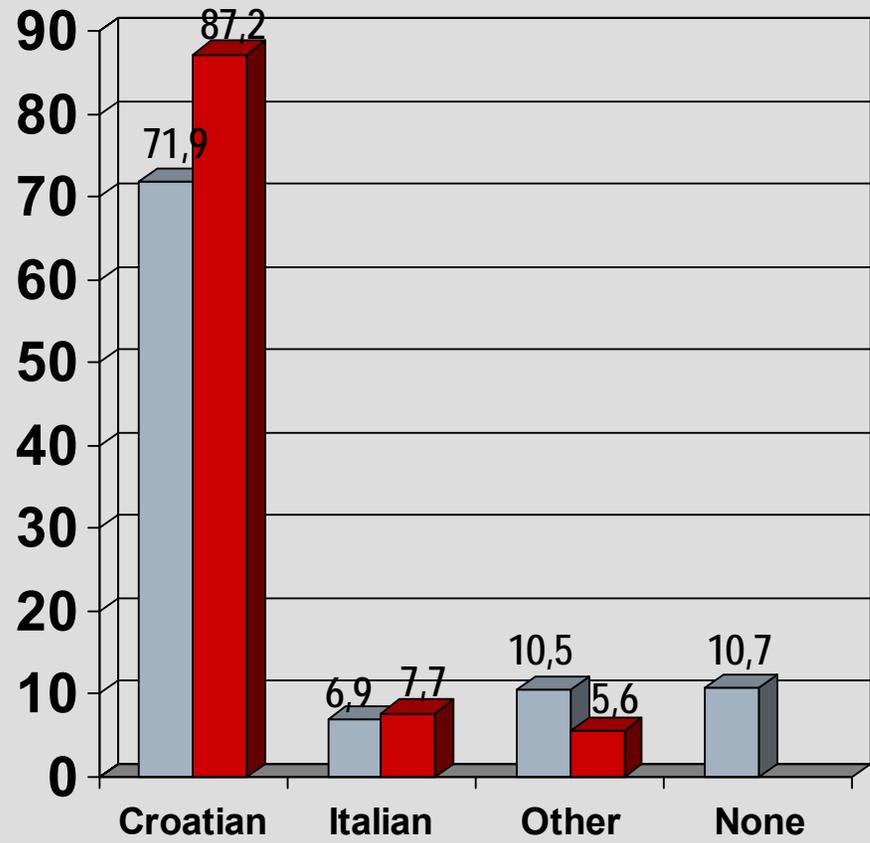
# 2001. Population by nationality and language



71%  
Croats



7% Italian

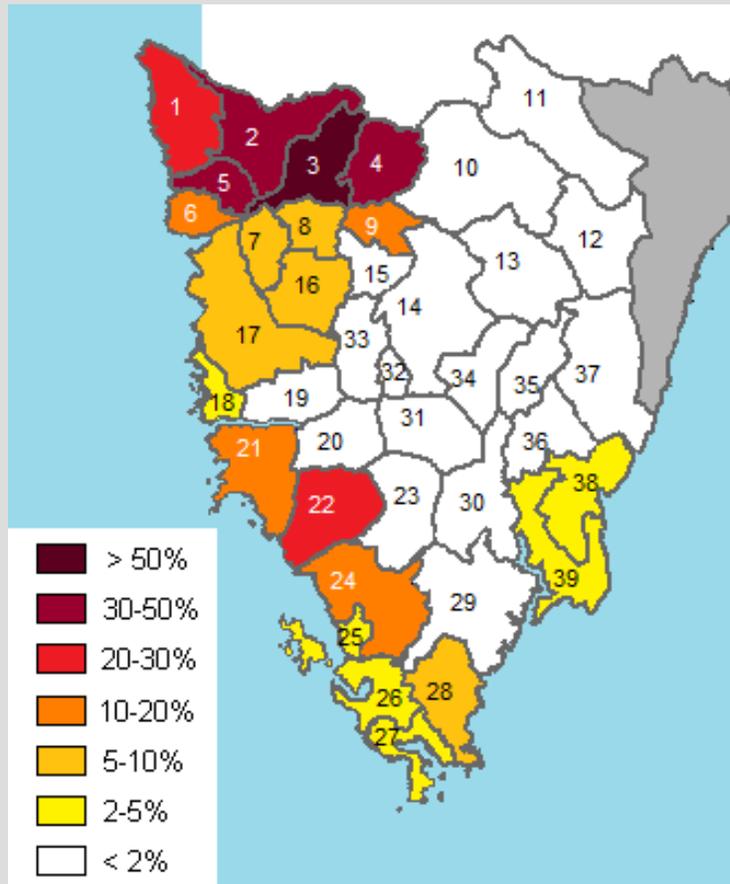


■ nationality ■ language

# Linguistic diversity

Romance varieties

South-Slavic varieties



# Policy context

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- European policy
  - Europe of regions
  - Protection of minorities and minority languages
- Competing nationalisms
  - Istrianity in conflict with Croatian & Italian identities
  - Standard language ideologies
- Regional political party IDA
  - Multiculturalism, tolerance, harmony, continuity of co-existence, official bilingualism
  - Istrianity as complementary to Croatian and Italian identities

# Research data

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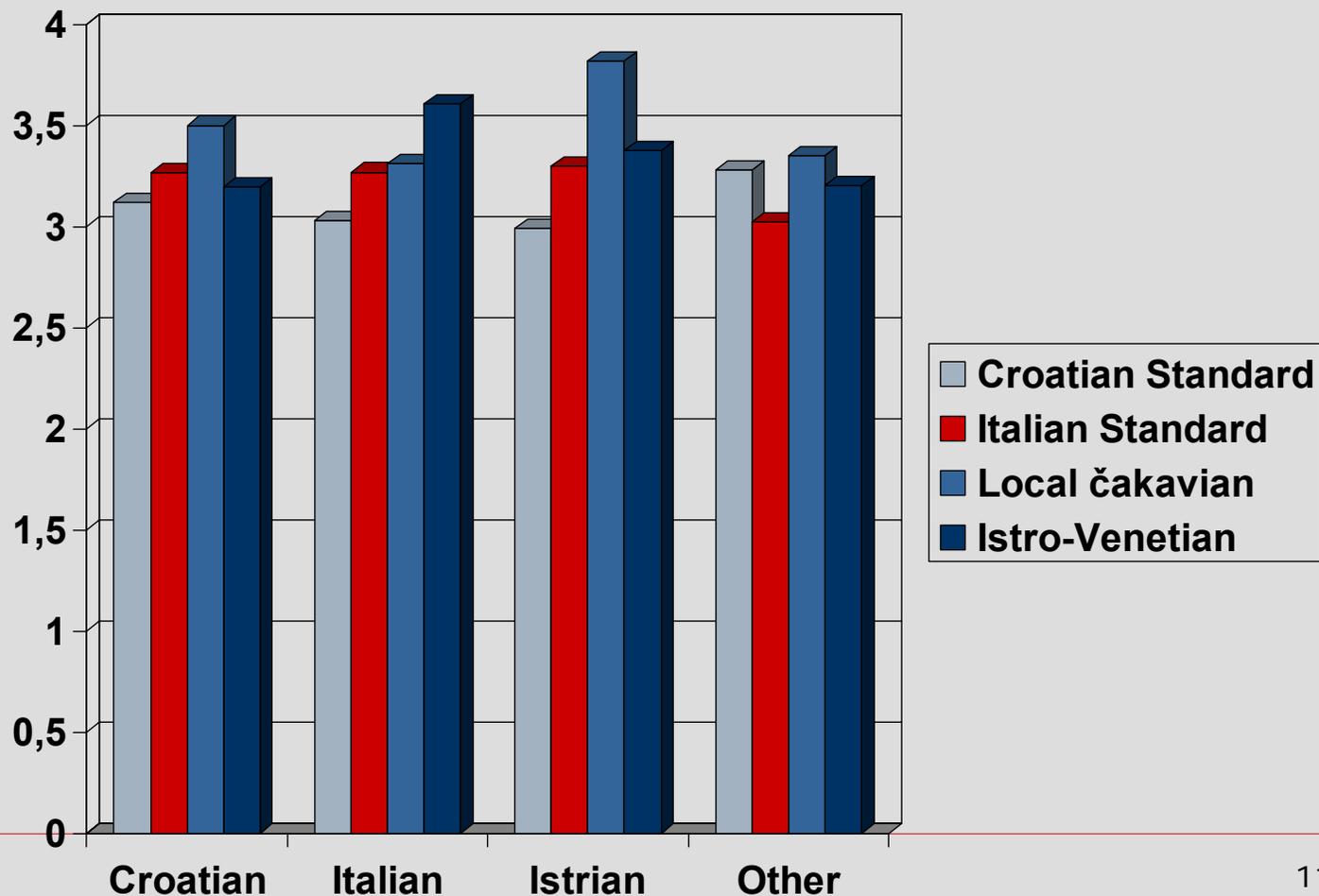
- Quantitative data on language attitudes:
  - 1300 secondary school students
  - Matched-guised test
- Qualitative data:
  - 80 in-depth interviews
  - ethnographic observations

# Spatial identification

	Degree of attachment %							Reported highest degree of attachment (%)
	None	Low	Moderate	Strong	Rank	Mean	S.D.	
Place of birth	7.20	11.87	31.80	49.13	2	3.24	0.91	30.40
Place of residence	4.16	8.67	28.25	58.23	1	3.46	0.76	46.34
Istria	5.72	17.16	38.56	38.56	3	3.10	0.88	11.17
Croatia	5.64	18.37	41.68	34.32	4	3.06	0.85	9.07
Europe	15.17	33.62	36.22	14.99	5	2.52	0.92	3.02

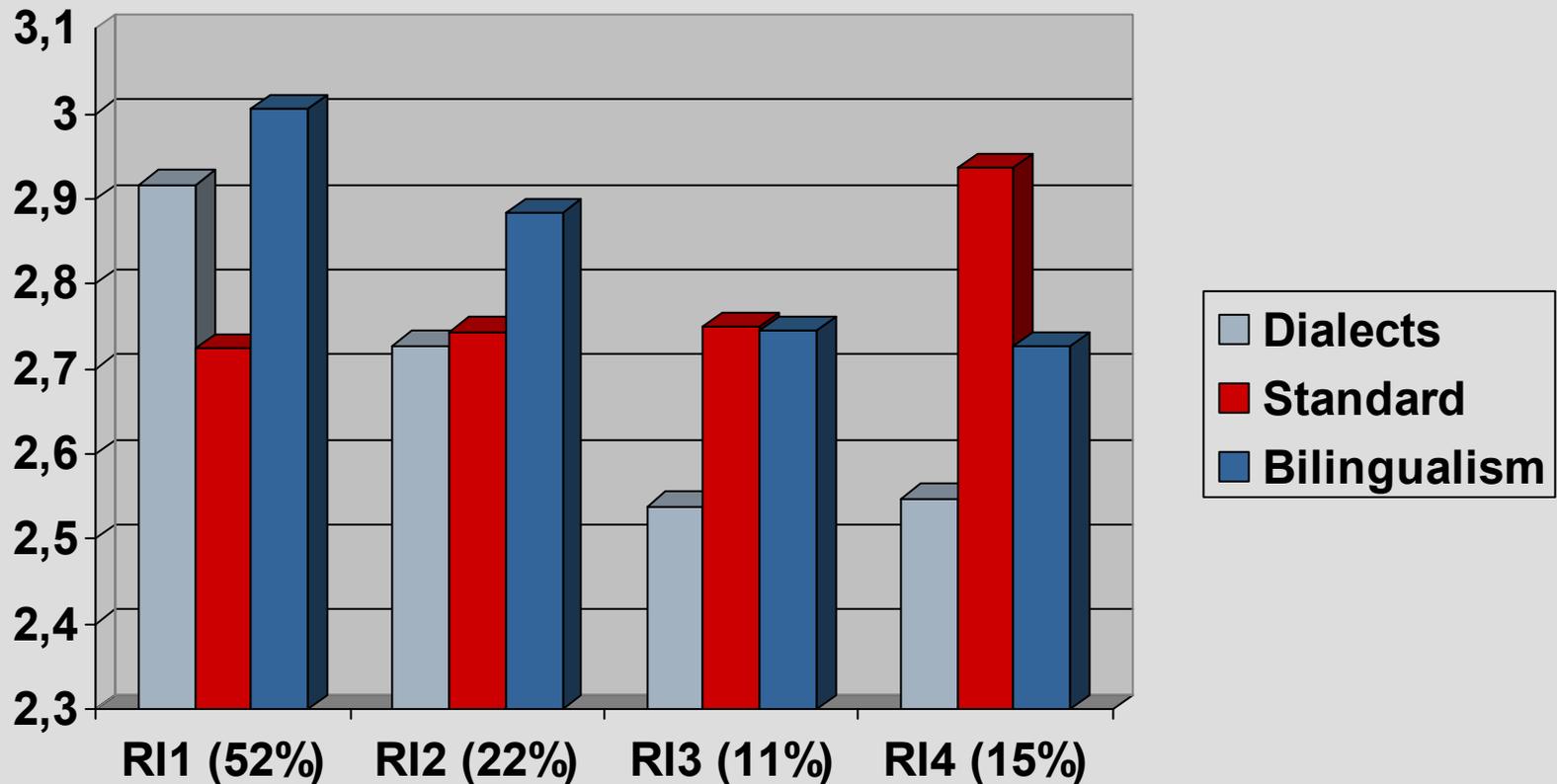
# Language attitudes by nationality

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# Language attitudes by regionality index

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# Istrian Habitus

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- Istrian vs. Istranin
- Living there, sharing the way of life
- Speaking Istrian – koine

*„We made this language to use it toward the outside, which all Istrians can understand... a universal Istrian language, but then we have different Istrian local dialects which we use toward the inside...” (Istrian, 31).*

- tolerant, open, civilized, diligent
- Different from “furešti” (strangers)

# Linguistic habitus–speaking Istrian

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## □ Bilingualism – multilingualism/receptive

*“I never think about it... It just depends on the person I meet whether I speak Čakavian, Istrovenetian or Croatian..”*

## □ Code-switching, code-mixing, strong multiple interferences

*“I am Italian, my husband is Croatian, we mix both (languages) all the time... This is the only way we can understand each other”*

*„You greet an Italian Buon giorno, and he says Dobar dan. It's a sign of respect. My mom can't speak Italian, and her first neighbours know only a few words of Croatian. But they get along well, because they are good people”*

# External view of Istrian habitus

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» *What can I say, those who live here and were born here, are **true Istrians**, they all speak Italian. It does not even matter if they are Italians or not. But they had that contact, this opportunity to learn Italian from the beginning, I think, from an early age.*« (M, 52, Albanian)

# Restricted multicultural habitus

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*»If there is anything that is autochthonous here, it is asparagus, truffles and Croatian, Slovenian and Italian people living in this region. .. Those who know, those who live with us in this region for many decades, even centuries, do not ask themselves this question. We are all part of this milieu. Those who come from the outside, without the basic information, they will need a certain amount of time to get used to the idea. Not all.« (M, 45, Italian, Pula)*

# Hierarchy of Othering

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- Croatians from outside Istria
- Italians from Italy
- Other groups /immigrants

# Croatians from outside Istria:

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- " they are from Croatia, beyond the other side of the mountain Učka.. You can see it in their homes, behaviour, in everything"*
- " Sometimes when we joke we call them Turks..."*
- " I am not discriminating, but there is always a kind of mentality inside us, maybe in our families and then they transfer it to us. And when I hear a Slavonian, I will rather [be in company] with Istrians than Slavonians. I don't know why, they aren't bad either, I simply don't know why, I can't explain."*
- " They often think that we are Italians, I do have Italian name, and I speak Italian, but I am Istrian Croatian..."*

# Italians from Italy

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*“while studying at the university in Trieste, my Italian colleagues called us Sćavi or Slavi”*

*“Ah, real Italians, they think differently, they were brought up differently’,... ‘They have lunch at noon exactly!’*

*“ They always see you as a foreigner and like to call you extracomunitario”*

*“Once, when travelling in Italy by train, an Italian lady said to me you speak so well Italian, and I responded – you too madam. It was perhaps rude, but I really felt like a donkey in another’s yard...”*

# Other groups - immigrants

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*“People from Istria 'don't want to have anything to do with them unless they have to (...) For example, [when] I go to the market, I prefer to buy Istrian honey, not for example honey from Daruvar. Because of its quality.’ We are somehow more naïve, while ‘these others are either skilful tradespeople or like to make up stuff.’ This is the matter of upbringing”*

*“I do not go to pubs and restaurants where waiters do not know what biska is ..that newcomers ‘exploit this openness and tolerance [of Istrians], and don't accept it as a value.’*

*“They just stubbornly stick to their ways, they do not learn our dialects and should adapt to our ways...”*

# Immigrants view

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» *It's an unwritten rule ... Here you have to eat three bags of salt (to become Istrian) and in one life you cannot eat up three bags. They will accept you only after it becomes certain that you live wholeheartedly here, which means being integrated in the whole system, and not just formal integration in different institutions and so forth, but also in communication with people and in private communication.* «

(M, 57, Albanian)

# Exclusionary linguistic practices

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»*Working in the hospital I came across the problem of language because people here speak the Istrian (variety) and I simply did not understand it... Sometimes they would say give me that šu, šu, give me that šugaman, and I wouldn't know what that was.*«

( F, 63, Vojvodina)

»*This was really bothering me at the beginning: I came to the hairdresser, to the butcher and I hear only Italian. [...] And I was so embarrassed then, and now as well. [...] I don't understand a word. I mean, I do not have to understand, but that is not nice when they are speaking and I do not have any idea what are they talking about, I just stand and wait...*«

(Macedonian, F, 60)

# Conclusions

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- *»This multiculturalism, it is an outside word which we do not experience in the inside. We don't have a feeling of multiculturalism....that we are this... they are that, or multiethnic...« (F, 35, Istrian).*
- Differences between official regional discourses and unofficial ones
- Homogenized heterogeneity
- Selective diversity