

Introduction

Problems and Frameworks of Memory in Ethnological Research

My grandma often told me the story of how in World War II a German saved her home village of Kastelec, situated on the southern edge of the Karst, from being burned down. While they were busy sewing red stars, a German soldier suddenly entered the house. There was a moment of deathly silence. He stepped to the table and swept all the stars from under the sewing machine so that they fell behind the table. At that moment other German soldiers entered the room, had a quick look round, and departed. The German soldier, who in Slovene eyes was an occupier and aggressor, was never seen again, but they knew he had saved them from being killed and probably also prevented the village from being burned down. This is how a former partisan courier taught me as a young girl to “see the people” behind all kinds of stereotypes and also gave me the strength to undertake this difficult research.

This book talks about the memories of the people who stayed in Istria as well as those who came after the exodus. I deliberately use the term “exodus,” although it is controversial, and despite being reproached by most Slovenian historians who strictly refer to these movements as post-war migrations or emigration. The controversy surrounding the term reflects the different national discourses that exist when interpreting the past. Each nation defends its own parallel version of history and the reasons for the migrations, so different numbers of migrants are cited and different appellations are used (Verginella 2000; Ballinger 2003: 42–45).¹ While Italians and migrants call themselves *esuli*, which means refugees or exiles (Ballinger 2003), the predominant term in Slovenian and Croatian discourse is *optant*. This stems from the legal right to opt for Italian citizenship (based on the Treaty of Peace with Italy, signed in Paris on February 1947 and the London Memorandum in 1954), which

entailed an obligation to move to Italy (Volk 2003: 47–50; Gombač 2005: 65; Pupo 2015). While Italian historians talk about the Italian exodus (Pupo 2015), Slovenian and Croatian researchers emphasize that the migrations included Italians, Slovenes, Croats, and both voluntary and forced migrants. There are also interpretations arguing that wartime and postwar migrations from Istria to Italy across the new national border better suit the criteria of regional emigration than international migration (Gombač 2005). As a counterbalance to the exodus, Croatian historians have even introduced the concept of the “first exodus,” during which between 50,000 and 100,000 Croats and Slovenes are said to have left Istria and were Italianized by fascist violence (Strčić 2001; Dota 2010: 91, 103–6). Due to long-standing accusations of performing one-sided research because I do not include fascism in my investigations of the exodus, I have grown accustomed to mentioning the migrations of Slovenes and Croats on account of fascist violence before speaking about the exodus. I use the term “exodus” without any political or mythological connotations, without referring to a “mononational” process (Ballinger 2003: 7), which is often the case with Italian researchers, despite the fact that this is a very complex migration phenomenon. It is simply a term that is best known by the general public. Some Slovenian researchers use it (Volk 2003; Kalc 2019), and it is most frequently used in international literature. However, by using this term I do not pretend that the process was not monumental, after all it almost wiped out an entire ethnic community from a specific territory. By using it, I also question the so greatly extolled “free choice” or option, although in a legal sense it did exist.

My research into the memories of the so-called exodus began after I moved from Ljubljana to Piran/Pirano to begin a new job.² In summer the town was full of tourists, people hustling and bustling, shops and restaurants open, while in the winter it was like a ghost town where you hardly met anyone on the streets, only the odd local here and there, a number of them lost to alcohol and drugs, the streets empty, and closed shutters on the flats and houses. It is true that the inhabitants of Primorska (the Slovenian Littoral region)—known as *Primorci*—are used to this winter emptiness, but when I compared it with life in Brittany, which I was also familiar with, I felt something was not right. As far as I could see in France, people on the coast really lived with the sea; you could hardly find a local who did not have a sailing boat and whose life was connected with the sea the whole year round. It was more than a kind of decoration in the summer tourist season. How is it that in Istrian towns the locals did not seem to live with the sea? It is true that throughout the Mediterranean there is a difference between the

winter and the summer, which is full of life and tourists, yet in Piran I had the impression that the people living by the sea did not really live with it, at least most of them did not. A few years ago, the parish priest in Strunjan/Strugnano complained that when he wanted to revive the traditional boat pilgrimage from Piran to Strunjan on the eve of the feast of Our Lady's Assumption, he could not find enough people who actually owned boats. I remember my surprise during an interview with an elderly Italian local to determine how many Istro-Venetian dialectal words for the sea existed. This is logical as they lived with it and constantly observed it. Probably less than half of these words are known in the languages that came here following the exodus. This absence of expressions and the fact that the present-day fishermen have taken most of their maritime and fishing vocabulary from the local Istro-Venetian dialect shows that most of Istria's present-day population, the immigrants, had no connection with the sea.³ When I began this research ten years ago, people, especially the Italian speakers, did not like to talk about the exodus. During this decade, other subjects indirectly connected with the exodus have also been studied. For example, Neža Čebon Lipovec (2018, 2019) studied ideological changes in the architecture of Istrian towns following the exodus, Suzana Todorović (2016) studied Istrian dialects, and the exodus has increasingly been mentioned in the media. Even in 2017, it was difficult to talk publicly in Slovenia about the suffering of people at the time of the exodus, and this is proven by the fact that after an interview I gave on this subject on Radio Trieste, I received a call from an Italian politician who congratulated me for this brave and sincere act.

Although prior to my research quite a number of historical studies had been done on the exodus, mostly by Italians, I still missed hearing the views of the people who had experienced this dramatic social change, that is, an ethnological view or in the vocabulary of historians "the view from the bottom up." I encountered the simple affirmation that "the people left"; yet I wondered how someone who is attached to their homeland, house, and sea can simply "go," leave everything behind and become a refugee. Was the act that cut so deeply into people's lives really based only on a voluntary decision? How can 200,000 to 300,000 people—the figures quoted for the exodus from Istria—voluntarily leave their home? And how is it that nothing is known about these migrations that brought such far-reaching social, ethnic, and economic change in Istria? Why is there nothing in school curricula, nothing in the Slovenian media, nothing except some academic literature?⁴ Beginning with very simple questions, which historians with their frequently dry data focused only on politics do not bother answering, I embarked

on an ethnological study that placed people, their thoughts, emotions, and views in the forefront. My study is therefore less concerned with politics although with an awareness of its grip. The aim is not to judge who was right and who was not but simply to understand the people: those who stayed and those who went. How did they experience the changes? How did they live together? What kind of relationships did they establish among themselves and toward their environment?

This study, therefore, does not deal with history but rather addresses ethnology and cultural anthropology. The basic premise is memory, which in anthropology is understood to be the “trace of the past in the present” (Lavabre 2007: 139). Another theoretical framework is provided by David Lowenthal’s postmodern, constructivist paradigm, which states that the past is solely an artifact of the present (Lowenthal 1985: XVI). The past is so distant that it must be reconstructed, and it is solely an identifier in the present (Hobsbawm 1996; Fakin Bajec 2011: 27). This means the past does not exist on its own, but only in relation to the sociopolitical context of the present. The present is constantly re-defining the past. Even if it is not so distant, it is always marked by the present context and historicity (Fr. *l’historicité*) (de Certeau 1987). This is why the study does not focus on reconstructing the past on the basis of memory—the work of historians—but rather investigates what people said happened and not what did happen. This leads to the question of what these representations of the past say not only about the past but also about the present. How do people remember what they experienced, what do they emphasize, what do they now consider to be important? If historians ask themselves what the (past) reality was like, anthropologists ask how people see and construct this (past) reality?⁵ As anthropologists respond to postmodern critique, constructed reality is also reality. It is equally effective and materializes in the practice of people (Muršič 1999: 24). This book therefore gives a voice to the people who remained silent because their memories did not correspond with the public discourse of either. I will probably not clarify the past, but I will give it the freedom to speak through different voices and touch us in the present.

As Maurice Halbwachs first argued, a person remembers together with their community. Such remembrance is not an individual act but takes place together with other members of the group to which a person belongs. According to Halbwachs’s theory, memory depends on *les cadres de la mémoire*—frameworks of memory. In his opinion, memory is like everyday life, the ordinariness of social worlds, groups, and individuals who belong to or identify themselves with groups that share common or collective memories. This collective memory is adapted to suit the needs of contemporary time and social context so memory is selected

depending on the needs of the present time. Society supports what will be remembered and what will be forgotten, as will become evident when we deal with silence as the result of the collective censorship of those individual memories that do not support the collective view of the past. Individual memory is only temporary, without meaning, as memory remains collective because we always think as members of a group. And if memory is the intersection of collective influences and social networks in which the individual is active, then we are talking about Halbwachs's "multiplicity of social times," as the individual with his multiplicity of social identities is always a member of different groups—the family, religious community, social class, and more. For Maurice Halbwachs, all human thought is memory. The "present of the past" is, on the one hand, a trace of the past in the present and, on the other hand, memory of or selective reference to the past. Memory connects the individual with the community and determines their belonging. The fact that it establishes a connection between the past and the present makes it a fundamental element of identity. This is why memory is more connected with identity and the present than the past (Halbwachs 1925, 1971; Confino 1997; Fabietti and Matera 1999; Lavabre 2007; Širok 2009; Baussant 2019).

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Halbwachs's paradigm of *les cadres de la mémoire*, which explores the social conditions necessary for the production of memories, remembering and forgetting. His concept of the multiplicity of memories is particularly useful, and one of the fundamental questions is how the transition from individual memories to collective memory and vice versa occurs. This concept may be applied to the question of competitiveness, representations, conflicts, and in understanding memory as the result of the simultaneity of different, overlapping and opposing identities (Halbwachs 1971; Confino 1997; Lavabre 2007).

This study contains little of the dominant historical perception of memory, which is mostly based on the politics of memory and the paradigm of *les lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1984, 1986, 1993), where the subject being studied is the genealogy of the representation of symbols in which collective identities, public narratives of the past, and even more political (ab)use of the past are crystallized (Lavabre 2007). In this approach, memory is reduced to its ideological and political form, that is, to the subjective experience of a group that uses memory to maintain power relations. Therefore, the field of research does not cover the social and experiential - the everyday history of memory. By reducing a cultural phenomenon to its political dimension, the transmission, diffusion, and meaning of representations is neglected. A problem arises if a historian is attentive only to the visible and official memory while neglecting the

reception of this memory by the people (Confino 1997). Such critique of memory by historians applies primarily to political history. As Marie-Claire Lavabre (2007) observes, unlike the sociological or anthropological perspective, memory in the hands of historians is mostly reduced to an epistemological curiosity, subject to the imperatives of proof and argument. The perception of memory through oral history is more akin to that of anthropology. Alessandro Portelli, one of the first theoreticians of oral history, draws attention to the combination of three aspects: the historical event as a fact from the past, the narrative we are listening to as a fact in the present, and the relationship between the two as a combination of the past and the present. According to Portelli, oral sources tell us not only what people did but also what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did (Portelli 2016). The main theoretical framework of this book will not be political or historical as in so-called border studies, which focus on the political aspect of memory, but rather anthropological literature about memory, migrations and migrant societies, heritage, and so forth.

Life Stories and the Ethnographic Position

Almost ten years had to pass after the first interviews were carried out before I began writing this book. The French anthropologist and sociologist Nicole Lapierre describes a similar need to distance herself from emotionally charged memories in her book on the study of Jewish memories of the Holocaust *Le silence de la mémoire*. She writes that it was necessary to step back in order to free herself of connections with the people, so that the complex landscape of different life stories and memories could clear up. When carrying out research so close to home in a place that is fed by the shadow of drama, and where you are in touch with intimacy and keep a distance, how do you justify that you no longer call or visit the people who welcomed you into their homes? Distancing and freeing oneself therefore come with the risk that you will be considered ungrateful (Lapierre 1989: 77–78). The same was necessary in my case. Time had to pass so I could calm my emotions after the life stories I had heard and recover from the tears I had shared with the people. I had to distance myself from the Italian speakers whose painful memories had upset me,⁶ especially as in the early phase of my research I felt a moral obligation to be a spokesperson for their mute memories. First I had to deal with my own stereotypical views of Italians. As a member of Slovenian society, my perception of them was burdened with the predominant stereotype of fascists responsible for over twenty years

of violence against Slovenes. Now I sympathized with these Italians and dismantled the notions of the “good Slovenian” and “evil Italian” I had been taught. I faced the unpleasant consequences of our “righteous” national liberation struggle,⁷ which produced thousands of migrants from Istria, and the marginalization of those “who do not belong (any more).”

Although in the beginning I kept returning to some of the narrators, naively thinking that I would learn new facts and thereby acquire a more complete picture, I reached saturation point and everything began to appear the same. I already knew everything in advance. I had to experience this satiation, when the life stories and information become repetitive and enthusiasm wanes (Lapierre 1989: 77–78). I had to survive this “cursed” part of ethnographic study in which you become a foreigner in your own research and are overcome by fatigue and boredom (Perrot 1987 in Lapierre 1989: 77), and when all the stories appear to be the same. Some time had to pass for me to establish a critical distance from all the conversations and all the people I had talked with. In truth, both sides are victims of history, some happy in their new home, others unhappy, some robbed of connections with their roots, others of their community, some ignorant, others triumphant, while some feel guilty because of the people who had to leave. Some time had to pass before I could abandon the black and white dichotomy between “victims” and “perpetrators,” “victors” and “losers,” “persecutors” and the “persecuted,” “good” and “bad,” “lies” and “truths” (Baussant and Foscarini 2017: 22–23) and before I could realize that the roles are interchangeable and unclear, and before I could stop making moral judgments. Above all, I began to see people and their individual fates set against political and historical backgrounds.

Sometimes I am asked why I need to delve into such painful, conflictual topics and would it not be better if such “undigested history” (Baskar 2002; Ballinger 2003; Rogelja and Janko Spreizer 2017: 70) were simply forgotten or swept under the carpet? As Tim Ingold (2018: 27–28) says, the goal of researchers is not only to contextualize and analyze but to show that we care about someone. By giving the people we talk to a voice, we show that we care about them and through their memories we place them in our present and put the past into context. The past is not just an object of memory. “In remembering, on the other hand, the past is not finished but active in the present” (Ingold 2018: 28).

The beginning of this ethnographic research, when I first encountered such different memories, was emotionally very difficult. I listened in tears to the pain of Italian Istrians who had become complete foreigners in their own homes, their feeling of being abandoned by the state,

families, friends, acquaintances, and their feelings of marginalization, stigmatization, and collective criminalization. In the background there was the unutterable feeling of social roles being overturned, when you are no longer esteemed, important, and “civilized,” but become invisible and a second-class citizen. On the other side, there are stories of oppressed people who finally freed themselves from the yoke of fascism, not only its physical violence but also its symbolic oppression that made them feel inferior and as if they were second-class citizens. Stories about the “promised land,” which became “ours” after so many decades of injustice, suffering under fascism and World War II. Then there are the stories of those who came to this newly acquired part of Yugoslavia, the promised land of new opportunities, as complete foreigners, unaware of the heavy burden of history and the region’s deep wounds. And the stories of the *esuli*,⁸ the migrants, the story of how someone committed suicide because of the pain caused by his completely different status in the promised land of Italy, where they went from “being someone to being nothing,” the stories of the *esuli*, the word with the most negative connotations, and people who were so disappointed by the “promised” land that they returned home. People who go quiet when they hear the word “exodus,” people who neither want to hear nor speak about the exodus. . . . Or people who no longer want to speak with the researcher after having told her too much. And parts of painful testimonies, parts of interviews not recorded because of very intimate moments and tears. . . . Without any scientific evidence . . .

As Ruth Behar (1996: 2) wonders, what are the limits of an ethnographer’s listening and note-taking when the person being interviewed opens up their heart? What are the limits of compassion and respect, which should not be surpassed, not even in the name of scientific research? Anthropologists discovered a long time ago that anthropological truth is person-specific.⁹ All depends on the researcher’s emotional and intellectual baggage. No two researchers ever hear the same story, the researcher never observes something that did not happen outside his presence (Behar 1996: 6–9). Both the researcher and the person who is the subject of the research are affected by conscious and unconscious psychological processes. In the process of forming ethnological knowledge, we cannot avoid the subjective experience while objective reality is illusionary; all our descriptions of the “other” are the product of our own projections, which lie deep within us and of which we are frequently not even aware (Corin 2007: 258; Leibing, McLean 2007, 19–20). The fundamental paradox of anthropology is in its fundamental method of participant observation. The anthropologist is supposed to attain the native point of view, but without actually going native. They then write

down what they have heard, compare it to what they have read by Karl Marx, Max Weber, Antonio Gramsci, and Clifford Geertz and are on their way to doing anthropology (Behar 1996: 5). Unfortunately, anthropology has developed into an artificial feeling of superiority, personal testimonies being considered taboo due to depersonalized modern trends. Although the discipline developed out of the need for giving a voice to “others,” the Western fantasy of studying the barbaric “others” focused on “culture” and not on the “individual.” From self observation with the awareness of the complex historical and psychological picture, we have made the transition to observing ourselves—and we should be pluralistic, ahistorical, and impersonal. However, sensitivity does not mean that everything is personally acceptable, instead it is more a case of identifying with the observed person (Behar 1996: 14–16, 26).

There is no sincere interview without empathy, so every ethnological study is part of the researcher, their emotions, acceptance, facing and empathizing with the observed. This is why I have no illusions that ethnological writing (as any other) can be objective. After so many years of research, my initial naivety, struggles with my stereotypes about “others,” assuming the role of spokesperson for the silenced “others”—the Italian minority—I began to establish a critical distance with which I try to view all people in history in the same, distant way, but this is probably a great disappointment for all who allowed me to enter their intimate world and expected me to become their spokesperson. In this respect, I can neither completely disappoint them nor satisfy them. Similarly to Nicole Lapierre (1989: 33), I was moved by the life stories I heard and felt a certain moral responsibility after hearing them, which lies like a shadow of burden on this study. By becoming a spokesperson, while at the same time trying to preserve the critical distance of the external observer, I am pushed into the difficult ethnological role of the researcher who disappoints everyone—all who entrusted me with some of their intimate memories, in the hope that they would perhaps be heard by society at large. Despite the fact that so much remains untold and unutterable; caught in the gestures, looks, silent pauses. . . .
“The word is impossible but oblivion unbearable” (Lapierre 1989: 16), all the more so when the boundaries between the perpetrator and the victim are blurred and interchangeable, when both sides bear the burden of the past both collectively and individually.

My observational position is both a problem and an advantage. On the one hand, I can be an “external” researcher as anthropology demands. Neither I nor my family comes from Istria but from neighboring Karst. As part of the broader Primorska region, we share a common history with Istria having been part of the same littoral region in the

Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as a common recent past under fascist Italy and a common struggle against the Italian (and later German) occupier during World War II. Trieste was historically our region's economic center, which meant that the inhabitants of the Karst and the Brkini had regular contact with Italians, who unlike in Istria were not a community that had historically been present in the region. I was far enough and also near enough to "understand" or at least try to understand the Istrians. On the other hand, I can also consider myself to be an insider observer. I attribute this to my Primorska identity, which like Istria has a political discourse based on the anti-fascist struggle, my knowledge of the Italian language due to everyday contact with Italians, and my education and current work in Koper/Capodistria, where I have a network of friends, acquaintances, and colleagues. It is thanks to this situation that I was able to come into contact with the people I interviewed, although I realize that these Istrians I spoke with consider all people like me who come from above the imaginary border above Črni Kal as "Slovene" or *forešt* (foreigner). Pier Paolo Viazzo would call such an anthropological view, that is neither "native" nor "distant," a "view from up close" or a "view from the neighborhood" (Baskar 2014: 438). Although I am neither completely "inside" nor completely "outside" in my perception, I am nevertheless more "outside" for many Istrians and will always hear the reproach: "you don't know our history" (van de Port 1999: 14)!

On Interlocutors and the Method

Due to a lack of ethnological and cultural anthropological research focusing on the exodus and its impact on Istrian society, at the beginning of my study I concentrated on understanding this phenomenon "from the bottom up," that is, from behind political narratives, focusing on the memories of the people who now live here. Most studies of so-called population movements mainly focus on the experiences of migrants, while the space left behind in the wake of mass migrations is often ignored as if life there had stopped. Attention is therefore rarely turned to the "emptied" and "newly settled" areas,¹⁰ which are usually referred to by concepts such as contested places, pasts, and memories.

This study includes the views of not just one ethnic group, but all who now live in Istria: Slovenian and Italian Istrians, Slovenian and Italian immigrants, and immigrants from the southern republics of the former Yugoslavia, that is, from the dominant, hegemonic to the marginalized and overlooked. Most interlocutors were of Slovene or Ital-

ian ethnicity. Further research will place greater emphasis on gathering memories of people from the southern republics of the former Yugoslavia. In the anthropological framework, we talk about the multivocal approach, which is used when studying the concept of place (Rodman 1992), and in this case in connection with the perception of heritage. From the point of view of oral history, it partly resembles the method of *histoire croisée* (Werner and Zimmermann 2006; Verginella 2010; Čebbron Lipovec 2018).

The study is based on transcribed interviews with fifty-three people; some interviews were carried out more than once with the same people. It is also necessary to count the numerous untranscribed interviews, during which recording was not possible. For these rare quotes from conversations, it is expressly mentioned that they are field notes. Most interviews are based on life stories that directly reflect the social and political circumstances in the past, and I tried to find out more about views on migrations and social realities. As Istria is my working environment, the research includes many everyday, random, informal conversations; many examples of participant observation; notes from many public round tables I attended on the subject of Istria, and more. Finding interlocutors was like a “snowball effect”: one person recommended another and most were recommended by friends and colleagues from Istria. I could have carried on doing more interviews but there comes a point at which a limit has to be set on the research. In addition to the transcribed, unstructured interviews, a number of students carried out ethnographic research involving interviews on different subjects at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Primorska during these ten years. There were also many informal, unrecorded conversations; the material gathered includes notes jotted down on the go, thoughts from everyday conversations in the street, at work in Koper and in Piran—basically in the course of my everyday work in Istria. I limited my research to the Slovenian part of Istria, both the urban and non-urban parts, the main reason being practicality as this is part of my everyday working environment and my social network meant it was easier to find interlocutors. On the other hand, I must mention that I also obtained many insights into the social realities of the Croatian part of Istria, from where a number of my interlocutors originate.

I also tried to obtain the views of the third side, that is, the *esuli*, the Italians who left Istria. However, with the exception of the very communicative president of a French association of emigrants from Istria and Dalmatia in Paris, I ran into an impregnable wall so I quickly gave up on the idea. The above president was surprised that the *esuli* did not want to speak to me. This is an expression of the deep, unhealed wounds and

hatred for those who are supposed to have forced them in one way or another to leave, and contempt for the *sc'avi* that drove many to engage in right-wing politics.¹¹

I also made use of the already published life stories of contemporary Istrians (Pahor 2007, 2011, 2014; Menih 2011) and books containing the memories of Italians who remained,¹² supplemented with the memories of those who left (Castelli 2018).¹³ In addition to academic works I found that literary works by Istrian writers of Slovene, Croat, and Italian origin also provided a good introduction to the topic. They give clear evidence of the social wounds caused by the exodus, of traumas and dilemmas, immigration, new and old social relations, and more (Tomizza 1980, 1989, 2015; Rakovac 1983; Ugussi 1991; F. Juri 2010; Milani Kruljac 2011).

The interlocutors in the book are anonymous. They have been given fictitious names either because they asked for this or because of the sensitivity of the topic that remains controversial after so many decades. As Elda, an Italian interlocutor said regarding anonymity: “There’s no doubt, these matters are too sensitive.”¹⁴

This book was written to show the people’s perspective and their emotions. I wish to draw attention to ordinary people caught up in the turmoil of great political upheavals, to place people at the forefront with anthropological theory serving only to shed light on these processes. Blank spaces will undoubtedly be left in our knowledge of this turbulent episode in history and its influence on present-day society. My version of the truth will probably be just one of many different versions. As Elda, an elderly Italian interlocutor commented, “But no one will tell you the truth. Even after so many years it is unpleasant for some people there to remember these things. . . . You see, she too would like to understand those people who left, and the people who came. But it will be hard for you to get to the end because no one tells anything, no one wants to tell.”¹⁵

By studying Istria’s contentious past, this book turns to self-critical reflection on an overlooked chapter of national history; focusing on national discourses; relations between the majority and the minority, a taboo topic; the relations between marginal, alternative, and dominant hegemonic memories and heritage; fluid borderland identities; place attachment; appropriations of traditions and the past; and more. These views may well shake the self-evident convictions—as they did mine—which we as members of Slovenian society have consciously and unconsciously adopted through education, the media, and everyday discourse. As the Croatian ethnologist Dunja Rihtman Auguštin (2001: 210–17) wrote, ethnologists must be like their society’s conscience, it being their



Map 0.1. Positions of the border between Italy and Yugoslavia after 1945 (Made by Andrej Preložnik in Hrobat Virloget, Gousseff, and Corni 2015: 23, Figure 1).¹⁶

moral and even patriotic duty to be critically present, constantly alert, and ready to criticize and deconstruct political myths. Both national collective memory and national heritage are based on chosen, unforgettable achievements, making selections from the past and tradition while silencing and forgetting what would constitute a different story from another perspective. Memory and heritage are under the influence of the power and authority of those who have colonized the past and whose versions of history matter (Hall 2008: 221). Oblivion and even a

historical mistake are crucial for the formation of a nation, so the development of history (and anthropology) constitute dangers for a nation (Renan 1998: 8–9; Orlić 2012: 17). The fact is that courage is needed to sincerely confront ourselves, what has been kept silent, and stereotypes about the “other,” both individually or collectively. As Aleida Assmann (2007: 23), a researcher of memory, asserts, European integration will remain an empty dream until nations establish a shared consciousness as victims and perpetrators. To achieve this, “inappropriate” memories must be integrated and not erased, people must face their own memories and listen to “others” with empathy. This is also the aim of this book.

Notes

1. I will deal with the problem of national identities in the Istrian multicultural environment later.
2. The territory is officially bilingual so every toponym in Istria must be written in both languages. For the sake of simplicity, I will give both the Slovenian and Italian names of places only when they are mentioned for the first time. In direct speech, the name is given in its narrated form—either Italian or Slovenian.
3. As the linguist and Italian language specialist Suzana Todorović wrote (email, 29 October 2019), “You can only carry out a survey of fishing and maritime terms in the coastal area among autochthonous Romance-speaking Istrians.” It is generally considered that the present-day Slovenian fishing industry in Istria was not originally Slovenian (Rogelja and Janko Spreizer 2017: 23).
4. Much more has been written on the Italian side.
5. I would like to thank Michèle Baussant (CNRS, Paris) and Mateja Habinc (University of Ljubljana Faculty of Arts) for thoughts expressed in discussions and Petra Kavrečič (University of Primorska) for her advice concerning oral history.
6. In order to avoid the longer term “Italian speakers” I often say Italians or Italian Istrians, although many in Istria are not defined as Italians in terms of nationality but as Slovenians and before that as Yugoslavs.
7. From a speech by the President of the National Assembly of Slovenia Milan Brglez held on 20 March 2015 in a celebration at the anti-fascist monument in Strunjan (more on this in the chapter on conflicting national memories).
8. In Italian public discourse *esuli* is the generally accepted term for migrants from Istria and Dalmatia. In Italian it means exile or refugee.
9. In this book I used the terms ethnology and cultural anthropology as different names for the same discipline as they have overcome their differences and different research emphases in the past (see Eriksen 1995: 13–15; Slavec Gradišnik 2000: 105–10).
10. As will be shown later, the exodus had different phases, but only the last one can be referred to as mass migration, which took place in both directions—into and out of the territory.
11. The distinctly contemptuous and insulting word *schiavo/šćavo/šćavo* (also *scervo*) has an older origin as it was already used in the early Middle Ages to designate the inhabitants of the region of Goriška, Istria, Friuli, Carniola, and Dalmatia. This word, *Scavi* (meaning “slaves” in Italian), was the general designation for the wider Slav

linguistic and ethnic group, ignoring the differences between different Slavic languages and identities (Makuc 2015: 165–66). An example that describes the attitude of the *esuli* toward Slovenes and Croats is the story of an *esule* from Gorizia, who in his disappointment that Istria had become part of Yugoslavia, devoted his whole life to proving the borders of the Romance-speaking territory, Venetian identity, and therefore the Italian identity of his native Poreč/Parenzo in Istria. This hatred stemming from his pain was overcome by his daughter who, to her father's chagrin, began climbing Slovenia's mountains (Rijavec 2020: 25).

12. Istrian Italians do not like to be defined as the ones who remained (It. *rimasti*). As Valeria says, "I never want to say that I 'remained'—I was born here, I didn't remain. When someone talks about 'the ones who stayed' I am offended." I am sorry and apologize to all Italians if I have offended them, but I use this word for want of finding a better one to designate those who did not emigrate.
13. In addition to these there are also many other published memories of *esuli*, in particular a series of books entitled *Chiudere il cerchio: memorie giuliano-dalmate*, which could be translated as Closing the Circle: Julian-Dalmatian Memories (Miletta Matiuž and Rumici 2008).
14. The personal information of the people I spoke with is kept in my personal archive.
15. "Però la verità non te la dirà mai nessuno. Anche dopo tanti anni non è piacevole ricordare quelle cose lì, per certi . . . La vedi anche ella che vuol arrivar al capo di 'sta . . . di gente che xe andata via di gente che xe andata via, di gente che xe restada. Ma arriverà con fatica al capo perché nessun dixi, nessun vol dir." Just to illustrate I have given the exact words used by my interlocutors speaking in the Istro-Venetian dialect. Unfortunately, in the text, all the speech will be translated meaning that the book will lose the richness of the Istro-Venetian dialects.
16. Grey lines: The borders of the Venezia Giulia between 1945 and 1947 which was divided by the Morgan line (the dashed line) in zone A (administered by the Allied forces; darker color, western part) and zone B (administered by the Yugoslav National Army; brighter color, eastern part). The western border almost entirely coincides with the border between Italy and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy until 1918 and the eastern border follows the border between Italy and Yugoslavia in 1941. Dotted lines: The borders of the Free Territory of Trieste (1947–1954). After the Paris Peace Treaty (1947), zone A of the Venezia Giulia (west of Gorizia and Monfalcone, dotted) was given to Italy, while the majority of the zone A of the Venezia Giulia (the eastern part and the area around Pula) and the majority of zone B went to Yugoslavia. The most disputed part of the former Venezia Giulia gained special status and was divided into zone A (administered by Allied forces; darker with lines, northern part) and zone B (administered by the Yugoslav National Army; brighter with lines, southern part) of the Free Territory of Trieste. After the London Memorandum (1954), zone A became part of Italy and zone B part of Yugoslavia. Black lines: the present-day borders between Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, and Austria.