ČLÁNKY A STUDIE 130-148

Tourism as an "Engine" of Modernization in Venezia Giulia during the First Years of the Italian Administration

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Kavrečič Božeglav, Petra: Tourism as an "Engine" of Modernization in Venezia Giulia during the First Years of the Italian Administration

The paper's aim is to discuss whether tourism acted as an engine of modernization in rural areas. It focuses on the case of the south-eastern part of the Italian province of Venezia Giulia, namely the Istria (Pula/Pola) province. The territories assigned to Italy after the end of the First World War, especially the rural areas, were mainly underdeveloped. Within the modernization process and build of infrastructure, the Italian state also recognized tourism as a possible booster of growth and progress.

Key Words *Venezia Giulia; Italy; Interwar Period; Modernization; Tourism Development*

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DOI – 10.15452/Historica.2024.15.0007

The aim of the paper is to discuss if and how tourism acted as an engine of modernization in rural areas. It will present the case study of the southeastern part of the Italian province of *Venezia Giulia*,[1] namely the Istria (Pula/Pola) province. The new province, established after the end of the First World War, was very important for Italy, since it represented an integral part of the finally redeemed lands. As the territory of Venezia Giulia included great parts of the former Austro-Hungarian land of *Austrian Littoral (Österreichisches Küstenland)*, assigned to Italy in 1920 (Treaty of Rapallo), the territory in question faced significant political changes. In addition, the period of transition also affected other spheres, such as the economy, social life, and cultural life.

The territories assigned to Italy, especially the rural areas, were economically mainly underdeveloped. The Istrian region, for example, was mostly agricultural, where the foremost problem was still the inadequate water supply system.[2] This was seen as the principal cause of the underdevelopment of the region. Within the modernization process and build of infrastructure, the Italian state also recognized tourism as a possible booster of growth and progress, which will be discussed hereinafter.

Tourism had already become an established and popular leisure activity during the

[1] From the end of the First World War to the end of the Second World War, *Venezia Giulia* was an Italian region. The region was divided into four provinces: Trieste/Trst, Gorizia/Gorica, Pula/Pola (Istra/Istria), and Rijeka/Fiume. After the end of the Second World War, with the Treaty of Paris (1947) and the Memorandum of London (1954), parts of the former region were annexed to Yugoslavia.

[2] KAVREČIČ, Petra – RADOŠEVIĆ, Milan: Na morje! : izzivi turističnega razvoja v Istri v času Avstro-Ogrske in italijanske uprave s posebnim ozirom na leto 1925. *Zgodovina za vse* 24, 2017, no. 2, pp. 21–40.

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Habsburg period, though concentrated only in a few coastal towns, such as Portorož/Portorose, Opatija/Abbazia, Lovran/Laurana,[3] etc. Istria, on the other hand, is a peninsula with several localities on the coast. Since seaside tourism grew in popularity in the interwar period, the Italian authorities aimed at promoting tourism development in other areas of the region as well. However, several conditions had to be adequately set up. In the paper, I will present the actions of the authorities in infrastructure regulation of rural areas and discuss whether tourism development (if occurred) helped to improve and facilitate the (infrastructural) modernization of rural areas. The aim of the study is to show, or at least try to provide insight into, tourism development challenges in the context of modernization processes in the province. The period of the first years of the Italian governance will be primarily addressed.

Before I discuss the case study, it needs to be pointed out that the tourism history of the first half of the 20th century especially the interwar period and the Italian authority in its easternmost region, has been examined by some authors, not necessarily historians. There are some studies, such as those by Ivan Blažević and Metod Šuligoj (ed.) and Klabjan, that focus on the presence of Czechs and Slovaks in the Upper Adriatic from the late Habsburg period until Second World War, as well as scientific articles by Kavrečič, Kavrečič and Radošević, and Kavrečič and Klabjan.[4] However, the topic, especially from the point of view of the relation between tourism and rural development, has been marginally considered so far. If we focus on the case of Italy, there are some in-depth studies about tourism development in other Italian regions[5] and colonies,[6] however, without a specific emphasis on the relation between rural areas and

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[3] The Italian and Slovene/Croatian names of towns and other localities will be used when mentioned in the paper for the first time. Afterwards, the names will be in the language of the state to which they belong today, hence Italy, Slovenia, or Croatia.

[4] BLAŽEVIĆ, Ivan: *Turizam Istre*. Zagreb 1984; BLAŽEVIĆ, Ivan: *Povijest turizma Istre i Kvarnera*. Opatija 1987; ŠULIGOJ, Metod (ed.): *Retrospektiva turizma Istre*. Koper 2015; KLABJAN, Borut: *Češkoslovaška na Jadranu : Čehi in Slovaki ter njihove povezave s Trstom in Primorsko od začetka 20. stoletja do druge svetovne vojne*. Koper 2007; some scientific articles like KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!, pp. 21–40; KAVREČIČ, Petra – KLABJAN, Borut: 'Na najlepše morje na svetu, na Jadran' : procesi turističnega razvoja severnega Jadrana pred prvo svetovno vojno in po njej : primer Češke in Češkoslovaške. *Acta Histriae* 18, 2010, no. 1/2, pp. 175–206; KAVREČIČ, Petra: Biseri avstrijske riviere : Opatija, Gradež, Portorož : začetki modernega turizma na severnem Jadranu : *Kronika : časopis za slovensko krajevno zgodovino* 57, 2009, pp. 113–128; EAD: Parni stroj in turizem na Primorskem : prometne povezave kot dejavnik turističnega razvoja na primeru Postojne in Portoroža do prve svetovne vojne. *Annales : anali za istrske in mediteranske študije : Series historia et sociologia* 17, 2007, no. 2, pp. 315–336; EAD: Tourism and Fascism : Tourism Development on the Eastern Italian Border. *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 60, 2020, no. 2, pp. 99–119; EAD: Tourism by the Sea : Development of Customs, Habits and Fashion on the Beach. *Zonemoda journal* 11, 2021, no. 2, pp. 13–23.

[5] For South Tyrol, see e.g. MOROSINI, Stefano: I rifugi Alpini dell'Alto Adige/Südtirol dalla fruizione turistica al presidio nazionale (1918–1943). In: GASSER, Patrick – LEONARDI, Andrea – BARTH-SCALMANI, Gunda (eds.): *Krieg und Tourismus im Spannungsfeld des Ersten Weltkrieges*. Innsbruck 2014, pp. 181–207; BERRINO, Annunziata – KAWAMURA, Ewa: Grande guerra nell'area Sudtirolese : i mutamenti di una regione turistica e il dibattinto che li accompagna. In: Ibidem, pp. 271–292; BATTILANI, Patrizia: L'impatto della guerra sull'immagine turistica dei luoghi : il caso del Trentino e dell'alto Adige. In: Ibidem, pp. 33–54.

[6] See e.g., HAMETZ, Maura: Replacing Venice in the Adriatic : Tourism and Italian irredentism, 1880–1936. *Journal of Tourism History* 6, 2014, no. 2–3, pp. 107–121. In the Italian perception, especially political, this region represented its now "redeemed" provinces that were associated with the long Venetian presence and heritage, which was used as a justification for their territorial appetites since the 19th century. Hametz's article focuses on the role of tourism in the identification of the Venetian heritage of Istria and Dalmatia as Italian. For Libya and Albania, see e.g. HOM, Stephanie Malia: Empires of Tourism : Travel and Rhetoric in Italian Colonial Libya and Albania, 1911–1943. *Journal of Tourism History* 4, 2012, no. 3, pp. 281–300. For Libya, see e.g., CAPUZZO, Ester: "Visitate

modernization within this service industry. This paper will thus address a topic which has not been given enough attention in scientific research so far. While the political history of the region and of the studied period is widely and thoroughly scrutinized in Slovene and Croatian historiography, the economic history and the relation between modernization (in urban and rural areas), the state, and tourism have not been considered. However, this field is very relevant, since the purpose of the state was also to implement and consolidate its authority through leisure activities and the improvement of living conditions. As stressed by Battilani and Fauri,[7] scholars have studied *tourism* in recent decades, also addressing the role of *tourism as an engine of growth in less-developed regions*. Hence, the state's agenda was to acquire loyal citizens, advocates, and followers of the Italian fascist regime, which has been approached in different ways. An efficient way was to invest in tourism infrastructure in localities where natural features could provide a source of tourist attraction. Since the spread of seaside health tourism throughout the 19th century also reached the Mediterranean region and became a fashionable and lucrative industry, the political authorities invested significant financial resources in this sector.

Tourism Development in the Late 19th Century

Before taking into consideration the studied period, I will briefly present the conditions for tourism development and the existing tourist infrastructure in the studied territory before 1918 (or 1920). Tourism gained economic importance and value in several countries especially in the last decades of the 19th century. As mentioned, some tourist resorts and infrastructure developed during the Habsburg period. In the studied area, tourism was concentrated mostly in coastal towns, in the so-called *pearls of the Austrian Riviera*.[8] Former fishing villages and rural areas drastically changed their appearance and infrastructure during the last decades of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Compared to thermal tourism and its development in the rest of Europe, seaside tourism developed later. In the case of the Austrian Riviera, the simultaneous development of different forms of seaside spa tourism emerged, namely winter-climate tourism (like Opatija and the island of Lošinj/Lussin) and summer-seaside tourism (like Portorož and Grado). The new medical discoveries that recognized the beneficial properties of the sea and sea air prompted the development of seaside health resorts in the coastal part of the crown land of the Austrian Littoral. As pointed out by Trieste physician Alessandro Goracucchi, sea air was attributed curative effects for the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis and other lung diseases, nervous disorders, hypochondria, melancholia and disorders arising after great intellectual tension.[9]

Doctors played a significant or even crucial role in the recognition and attribution of the positive healing effects of seawater, which encouraged the establishment of bathing facilities for treatments with seawater, sea air, brine, and mud for various diseases that affected the population of the industrial period. Despite their promotion of the establishment of seaside health resorts, tourist infrastructure successfully developed only in some parts of

la Libia" : Il turismo nella Quarta Sponda tra le due guerre mondiali. *Nova Historica* 2016, no. 56, pp. 5–37.

7 BATTILANI, Patrizia – FAURI, Francesca: The Rise of a Service-Based Economy and Its Transformation : Seaside Tourism and the Case of Rimini. *Journal of Tourism History* 1, 2009, no. 1, p. 27.

8 KAVREČIČ, P.: Biseri avstrijske riviere, pp. 113–128.

9 Ibidem, p. 116; see also STRADNER, Giuseppe: *Novi Schizzi dall'Adria*, II. Trieste 1903.

the province, like Opatija, Portorož, Lovran, Brioni/Brijuni Islands, the island of Lošinj, and Grado. Natural features and resources alone were not the only factors that enabled the creation of the health resorts. Financial investment in infrastructure, the arrangement of bathing facilities, and promotional activities were also of great importance. The seaside resorts in the period before the First World War were oriented towards a demanding market, as they had developed as elite destinations for wealthy guests, providing them with different treatments as well as the comfort of luxurious accommodation infrastructure and entertainment facilities.[10] The benefits were not just for investors in tourism and providers of accommodation and medical treatments, but also for the local rural population, who benefited from tourism, as they got involved in the tourist industry as workers in accommodation facilities, transport providers, food suppliers, etc.[11] However, other parts of the Istrian peninsula, with several localities on the coast, did not get involved in this process and retained their mostly rural character during this period.

Political and Economic Circumstances in Interwar Italy and Their Impact on Tourism

The end of the First World War was characterized by several changes in political structure, economic system, social and cultural values, and daily life. The European continent, for example, faced the decline of old regimes, the creation of new nation states, and the radicalization of political ideologies and doctrines. The studied territory was subject to many changes, primarily affected by political transition. The area passed from one state entity, the Austro-Hungarian multi-ethnic empire, to another, the Kingdom of Italy, a predominantly mono-ethnic state. Within the new state, the Slovene and Croatian populations of the former Austrian Littoral and parts of other former Habsburg lands, as well, faced strong Italian nationalism, culminating in the formation of the fascist political regime in 1922.

However, in the years 1922–1926, the Italian political economy took a more "liberal" direction, with the state's involvement in some industrial and financial sectors (e.g. energy and banking) and the privatization of service sectors (e.g. telephone and life insurance). During this period, also called *linea De Stefani* (named after Minister of Finance Alberto De Stefani), the state increased indirect taxes and, above all, brought previously reluctant industrial groups closer to fascism thanks to the policy of restraining workers' wages. With the new Minister of Finance in 1926, Giuseppe Volpi, Italy introduced a deflationary policy characterized by a reduction in domestic demand, restriction of credit, reduction in wages, and especially a reassessment of the lira exchange rate. From 1931, the state directly engaged in entrepreneurial intervention in industrial activities, procuring credits for businesses and reinvesting profits.[12]

The economic policy of the fascist regime was specific in many ways, also affecting the process of modernization (infrastructure, roads, sewerage, and water supply systems) of rural areas. In 1928 (amended in 1933), the Serpieri Law, also known as *Legge Mussolini per la bonifica integrale* (Mussolini law for comprehensive reclamation), regarding the investments of the state in the land reclamation, was issued. These territories were considered to be of *predominant social interest*, where the state directly intervened

[10] KAVREČIČ, Petra: *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju*. Koper 2017, pp. 335–337.

[11] The involvement of the local population in tourism has been mentioned in sources (newspapers, guidebooks, books), however, data about their concrete involvement have not been studied by the author of the paper so far.

[12] DOGLIANI, Patrizia: *Il fascismo degli italiani* : *Una storia sociale*. Druento 2008, pp. 127–128.

in deforestation, plumbing and sewerage system works, as well as in the process of malaria prophylaxis and the construction of roadways. Within this process, the valorization of land, consisting of land reclamation and settlements with farming families, was conducted. In Istria, for example, it was implemented in 1929.[13] These investments influenced the tourism sector as well, since the development and success of a tourist locality also depend on adequate water supply, sewerage system, roads, and accessibility infrastructure.

The aim of the Italian authorities was to promote their ideology and political doctrine, particularly or even more intensively, among the population of the newly acquired lands, like those of Venezia Giulia and South Tyrol. Tourism served as a regime propaganda tool at home and abroad.[14] In the contested areas of the newly acquired territories after the First World War, another agenda was related to tourist sites – the construction of the Italian national identity. As known, political ideology and tourism are interrelated, since a specific ideology also justified and implemented its authority with the help of tourism. Hence, these lands were considered *terre redenti*, finally redeemed lands from the Austrian regime. Italians or Italian-speaking inhabitants, however, did not mainly populate the territory, which represented an inconvenient situation for the authorities. In these specific circumstances, an efficient strategy for the affirmation and justification of the Italian presence in the region was also implemented through the "use" of tourism. The Italian fascist regime was well aware of the growing relevance of tourism and its significant potential for economic progress and social well. The period following the end of the First World War was characterized by the end of the elite[15] tourism, which was challenged and subject to significant adjustments. With the spread of its accessibility among the middle classes and thus a much higher number of tourists, the demand for tourist services grew. The political authorities were especially aware of the economic benefits of tourism (domestic, but especially international).

Tourism in Italy in the 1920s and 1930s

A crucial moment in tourism development during the interwar period was the establishment of ENIT (Ente Nazionale Industrie Turistiche), the Italian National Tourist Board, in 1919 (with Decree no. 2099 from 12th October; transformed into Law on 7th April 1921, no. 610).[16] In 1920, the Automobile Club was founded with the purpose of improving automobile development in Italy. Until that period, *tourism was in the hands of private organizations (not under the control of the national government*).[17] However, before the foundation of the national tourist association, there were organizations which promoted tourism. The first association was the Club Alpino Italiano (Italian Alpine Club), estab-

[13] Ibidem, pp. 137–138.

[14] BOSWORTH, Richard J. B.: Tourist Planning in Fascist Italy and the Limits of a Totalitarian Culture. *Contemporary European History* 6, 1997, no. 1, p. 15; DOGLIANI, P.: Il fascismo, p. 157.

[15] As pointed out by historian Annunziata Berrino, the Great War and the revolution in Russia (1917) caused the ultimate decline of what was left of Europe's ancient and resilient aristocracies. BERRINO, Annunziata: *Storia del turismo in Italia*. Bologna 2011, p. 202.

[16] *Gazzetta Ufficiale Del Regno d'Italia*, 23. 5. 1921, n. 120, Parte I, Legge 7 aprile 1921, n. 610, che converte in legge il R. decreto 12 ottobre 1919, n. 2099, relativo alla istituzione dall'Ente nazionale per l'incremento delle industrie turistiche, pp. 1–2. Montebelli in her paper regards the year 1921 as the time of the establishment of ENIT.

[17] MONTEBELLI, Stefania: "L'Italia Turistica" in 1930's : History of a Journey and Care Resort. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6, 2016, no. 11, p. 82.

lished in 1863 and focused on alpine tourism, followed by the Touring Club Italiano in 1894. According to historian Stefano Pivato, the foundation of the organizations represented a change in the way of travelling and of looking at Italy, and it became a sort of practical training in the ideals of the homeland and the nation. Tourism was thus very far from being a pure and simple leisure activity and became a form of pedagogy aimed at training Italians.[18] In the years preceding the war, tourism in Italy was also recognized as a lucrative economic activity and *a promising economic phenomenon*.[19]

The institution of ENIT, however, marked a significant improvement in tourism development. The aim of the Tourist Board was to establish Italy as a modern tourist destination. Its purpose was the promotion of visits by domestic and foreign tourists. Another important step was taken in 1926, when *Aziende autonome di cura, soggiorno e turismo* (Bureaus for Health, Holidays, and Tourism) – i.e., tourist management enterprises – were established by the state. The *Aziende* were placed in communities that offered tourist services or already had the status of tourist destinations. These actions were important and are considered *one of the greatest merits of the fascist regime regarding tourism*.[20] In fact, tourism was, after agriculture, regarded as the second most important industry in the country.[21] The tourism branch involved several sectors; besides hotels and transport, it also included industries such as iron, steel, textile, furniture, flatware, chemical, and electric. All these were necessary to produce materials for tourist infrastructure (accommodation, furnishings) and transportation.[22] Tourism represented (and still does) an activity which involved several sectors, since it used products from different manufacturing sectors (e.g., food production). Besides, it provided, and still provides, new job opportunities and income from tourists, who spend additional money while on vacation.

After the end of the war, tourism popularity increased, especially for seaside destinations, attracting new social classes, such as the urban middle class. The seaside resorts represented a different, distant environment from the urban industrial centres and the fashion of sea bathing in summer prevailed.[23] However, it is worth pointing out that the summer season in the health resorts of the former Austrian Littoral had already prevailed before.[24] Yet, different causes and motivations influenced this transition in pre-war elite tourists' seaside destinations, like those of Côte d'Azur. Firstly, the consequences of the First World War led to the decline of old empires and, with them, the "old" nobility, and the post-war difficult situation, as well as the presence of North American tourists and the influence of American writers. Their presence encouraged and promoted the "summer" season.[25] Italian tourism, despite the state's initiatives and the long "tradition" of various

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18 PIVATO, Stefano: *Il Touring Club Italiano*. Bologna 2006, p. 32.

19 Ibidem.

20 BERRINO, Annunziata: La nascita delle Aziende Autonome e le politiche di sviluppo territoriale in Italia tra le due guerre. *Storia del turismo : Annale*, 2005, no. 5, p. 38; see also KAVREČIČ, P.: Tourism and Fascism.

21 This was also asserted by Fulvio Suvich, an important Italian politician and diplomat during the fascist period. He was the Government Commissioner for ENIT. BOSWORTH, R. J. B.: Tourist Planning, p. 15; KAVREČIČ, Petra: 'Sacro pellegrinaggio' : Visits of World War I Memorials on the Soča/Isonzo Front in the Interwar Period. *Etnološka tribina* 40, 2017, no. 47, pp. 153–154.

22 MONTEBELLI, S.: "L'Italia Turistica", p. 82.

23 BERRINO, A.: Storia, pp. 202–203.

24 See also KAVREČIČ, P.: Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju.

25 BERRINO, A.: Storia, pp. 203–204.

forms (and pre-forms) of tourism (pilgrimages, Grand Tour, thermal tourism), faced several challenges, as it was considered "misunderstood" by most of the Italian press. Within the political discourse, especially the fascist party, the attitude towards tourism was different, recognizing its significant role as a vital income.[26]

An important role for the "creation" of the fascist man, which also included tourist and leisure activities, was played by the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (further OND). The OND was established by Royal Decree-Law of 1st May 1925, with the aim of organizing workers' leisure time. By statutory definition, the institution took care of *the moral and physical elevation of the people, through sport, hiking, tourism, artistic education, popular culture, social assistance, hygiene, health, and professional training*. The primary purpose of the OND was initially limited to the formation of provincial committees to support recreational activities, but between 1927 and 1939, it evolved from a social welfare organization into a national "movement" that supervised the organization of leisure time.[27] As explained by historian Victoria Da Grazia, the OND's aim was to provide individuals *with a totally integrated range of social services*. The OND engaged in various activities, such as instruction, training and artistic education, physical education (including sports and tourism), and different types of assistance (housing, consumer affairs, health and hygiene, social insurance, and company recreational facilities). She also argues that: *Such an all-embracing structure implied a far broader and deeper commitment by the party to the organizing of worker recreation and welfare than had previously been indicated by the syndicalists or the government*.[28] The OND was involved in tourism promotion with the aim of creating "a new national identity".[29] This part or role of the OND was even more emphasized in the new Italian regions, however, this is not the primary focus of this paper.

Venezia Giulia's Tourist Potentials and Impediments with Special Focus on the Istria (Pula) Province

The region of *Venezia Giulia* was divided into four provinces: Trieste, Istria (Pula), Gorizia, and Fiume/Rijeka. During the Habsburg period, tourism was concentrated only in a few coastal towns and islands. Since seaside tourism increased its popularity, the Italian authorities aimed at promoting tourism development in other areas of the region in order to facilitate the economic and social development of rural areas. For this purpose, several conditions had to be adequately established first, like water supply systems, sewerage, road infrastructure, etc. Another important factor was time. Since Italy engaged in the Second World War within the Axis powers in 1940 and surrendered to the Allied forces in 1943, the period of its authority was relatively short. This limited time frame could not provide enough possibilities to successfully implement the planned projects for the formation of new tourist destinations. Besides, as will be shown in the paper, several

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[26] Ibidem, p. 207.

[27] KOLEGA, Alexandra: *Opera nazionale dopolavoro - OND, 1925–1945*. Sine loco 2007. Online, cited on 22nd January 2024, accessible at https://siusa.archivi.beniculturali.it/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?TipoPag=profist & Chiave=14; *Gazzetta Ufficiale Del Regno d'Italia*, 14. 5. 1925, n. 112, Numero di pubblicazione 846. REGIO DECRETO-LEGGE 1 maggio 1925, n. 582. Istituzione dell'Opera nazionale del dopolavoro, pp. 1842–1844.

[28] DA GRAZIA, Victoria: *The Culture of Consent : Mass Organisation of Leisure in Fascist Italy*. Cambridge 1981, pp. 38–39.

[29] Ibidem, p. 179.

other obstacles and circumstances hindered a more intensive engagement in tourism.

The natural features and the favourable geographical location by the sea did not necessarily provide sufficient conditions for tourist development. Istria faced many challenges which prevented the authorities from taking actions in that direction. For one, it needs to be emphasized that, in the interwar period, two thirds of the population of Istria still relied on agriculture. According to statistical data from 1931, 62.4 % of the population was engaged in agriculture, 17.3 % was employed in industry, and only 3.6 % was engaged in commerce. Tourism prevailed in destinations from the Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) period, such as Opatija, Portorož, Mali Lošinj, and the Brijuni Islands, which was also registered in the daily press of Pula, Rijeka, and Trieste.[30]

During the period of the Italian regime, the ownership of tourism infrastructure was also problematic and represented an obstacle to development for the Italian authorities. Why? As pointed out by the Istrian local newspaper *L'Azione*[31] in 1925, the issue was that even in the mid-1920s, tourism infrastructure was still in foreign hands. The problem was thus the continued presence of foreign ownership, especially German and Hungarian. The author of the article in the newspaper reflects on these circumstances, which, as he commented, had been a frequent issue of discussion in the press. He observed: [...] *it is a fact that the tourism industry, which has been flourishing in the last decades on the charming Istrian coasts as well – is in the hands of foreigners, and the reason is that none of us has ever thought of appropriating and profiting from it, as the entrepreneurial foreigner did, who today is the absolute owner of the main hotels – superb meeting places of the rich – on our beautiful beaches: this is the truth!*[32] Despite this, he also commented about some biased and exaggerated reactions of a political nature which accentuated that a foreign presence in a health resort could constitute a real hazard for the cultural and political influence in certain parts of the Italian border. Even though Italy, through its tourism organizations, was indeed interested to invest in tourist infrastructure and promote the already established localities, it was still partly affected by the previous – Habsburg – period. This was also clear in the provenance of guests, who continued to come mainly from German-speaking countries, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.[33]

The "solution" was in the process of transition, especially in the ownership of accommodation and bathing facilities, and the introduction of Italian regulations and legislation, which, normally, took time. However, the aim of tourism is to accommodate and satisfy guests, hence a less "nationalistic" approach needed to be implemented. The following article thus shows a wider perspective, since it did recommend the "Italianization" of tourist resorts, but still with attention and sensitivity towards the guests, mostly Germans, and their needs: *It is therefore better to indulge customs and habits, but always within one's own dignity and self-respect* [...] *in order to erase the deplorable imprint, it is not enough to criticize, but it is necessary to act, and to act vigorously: because either the foreign owner does good business,*

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30 KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!, p. 25.

31 The Pula daily newspaper in Italian began to be published on 1st January 1919 under the title *L'Azione*. In 1922, the owner of the paper became Federazione Fascista Polese. From 1st January 1929, the newspaper changed its name to *Corriere Istriano* and became an organ of the National Fascist Party for Istria. It stopped being published in 1945. *Digitalizirana građa : L'Azione (1919–1921)* (tal/ital). Online, cited on 22nd January 2024, accessible at https://www.ino.com.hr/digitalizirana-gradja/info/lazione.

32 Società editrice L'Azione – L'Unione Editrice Istriana. *L'Azione*, 10. 9. 1925, no. 215, p. 2.

33 Ibidem.

and then he will certainly adapt to our orders, or he does no business, and then the Italian capital must take over.[34] The persisting presence of foreign owners of tourist facilities represented discomfort for the Italian authorities in the region. Nonetheless, they were well aware of the possibility of a decrease or problem which would be caused by a drastic impairment in the current situation, and they encouraged a more strategic and pragmatic approach.

Tourist arrivals in the first post-war years were registered in the new provinces as well. Statistical data can be found in ENIT reports, newspapers, tourist press, etc. For the province of Istria (Pula), where most established seaside localities were located (Portorož, the Brijuni Islands, and the island of Lošinj), the data for 1923 are presented in Table 1. The figures show that the number of domestic tourists – Italians – and the sum of all foreign tourists are almost equal. Most of the now foreign guests came from the former common state, from Austria and Hungary. This is a clear sign of continuity in tourist flows to the popular seaside destinations. In order to maintain the arrivals from those countries, it was necessary to avoid drastic changes or interference in ownership.

Table 1: Number of tourists in the province of Istria (Pula) in 1923[35]

TOURISTS (according to nationality)	Number
Italians (domestic)	16 715
Foreign	
French	134
English	430
Germans	1 404
Nationalities from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire	12 933
Russians and Poles	214
North Americans	70
South Americans	15
Other nationalities	1 800
Total number of foreign tourists	17 000
Domestic and foreign tourists	33 715

The other two established tourist destinations of the pre-war period, Opatija and Lovran, were part of the province of Rijeka. In Table 2, data are presented for the tourist visits to Opatija in the first half of 1925. The data for the most distinguished tourist locality in the *Venezia Giulia* region show that most of the tourists were still international. Even though the year 1925 was declared as *Anno Santo* and a lot of domestic tourists and pilgrims were expected to travel across Italy, the Opatija case shows that foreign guests prevailed, especially from the former Empire. This tendency also persisted in the following years, as shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Number of tourists in Opatija in the first half of 1925[36]

[34] Ibidem.

[35] Ibidem, 15. 2. 1925, no. 40, p. 2.

[36] KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!, p. 33; *L'Azione*, 4. 7. 1925, no. 158, p. 4.

Country of origin	Number
Italy (domestic)	1 708
Hungary	5 578
Austria	3 220
Czechoslovakia	2 851
Germany	2 485
Yugoslavia (Kingdom of)	1 587
Poland	around 535
Romania	271
England	148
North America	around 63
Switzerland	40
France	34
South America	13
Sweden	8
Egypt	6
Other countries	169
Domestic and foreign tourists	18 716

Table 3: Tourist visits to Opatija from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czechoslovakia, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and Kingdom of Italy (domestic) from 1925 until 1930[37]

Country of origin	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930
Italy	4 237	4 805	4 387	4 264	4 456	4 075
Hungary	10 990	9 074	8 115	8 567	7 991	7 879
Austria	8 545	6 961	4 531	4 877	4 539	6 074
Czechoslovakia	6 805	4 780	2 706	3 227	4 742	5 734
Germany	5 166	3 963	5 379	7 226	10 199	11 221
Yugoslavia	4 059	5 026	1 811	1 376	1 501	1 285
Poland	1 200	625	502	657	913	1 232
Total	41 002	35 234	27 431	30 194	34 341	37 500

As shown in Table 3, the majority of guests in the period from 1925 until 1930 predominantly arrived from Hungary. In fact, Opatija was the top tourist destination for the former Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy, also due to the vicinity of the port of Rijeka, at the time of the Empire, the only seaport of Transleithania. The highest number of Hungarian tourists came to Opatija in 1925, representing 26.8 % of all guests. On the other hand, their number slowly decreased over the years, falling from over 10 000 in 1925 to less than 8 000 in 1930, thus still representing 21 % of guests, lagging only behind the tourists from Germany, who reached almost 30 % of all guests. A similar decrease in visits can be traced

[37] Državni arhiv u Rijeci (further DAR), 174, fund Lječilišno povjerenstvo Opatija, La Riviera del Carnaro, 6. 1. 1926; KAVREČIČ, P. – KLABJAN, B.: 'Na najlepše morje na svetu, na Jadran', p. 193.

for tourists from Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. This can also be attributed to political and economic circumstances. Domestic tourists represented almost 13 % of average visits in the presented period, with yearly visits of around 4 000 guests.

Similarly, as in the whole province of Istria (Pula), the visits to the tourist locality of Portorož (today in Slovenia) was predominantly characterized by domestic guests (Table 4). More complete data are available only for the years 1921, 1922, and 1924, when around 80 % of guests were Italians, with the majority coming from Venezia Giulia. Foreign guests mostly came from Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Opatija, with its more international clientele, is a specific case, since it had already acquired a more cosmopolitan and elite position among tourist destinations in the Upper Adriatic area in the pre-war period.

Table 4: Number of guests in Portorož in the years 1921, 1922, and 1924[38]

	1921		1922		1924	
Country/province of origin	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Venezia Giulia	2 083	60.5	1 250	55	1 155	15
Old provinces (Italy without Venezia Giulia)	694	20.5	680	30	/	/
Austria	164	5	76	6	2 464	32
Czechoslovakia	137	4	147	3.3	2 695	35
Hungary	251	7	30	1.3	616	8
Other countries	251	7	100	4.4	770	10
Total	3 403	100	2 283	100	7 700	

To summarize, the "old" tourist seaside localities managed to maintain their activities and to provide services according to demand in the tourist market. On the other hand, there were towns and villages located by the sea which could benefit from this economic sector as well. This was also identified by local authorities and media, such as the aforementioned *L'Azione*, which acted as an advocate for the region and especially its town Pula. In an article from 15th February 1925, it was affirmed that: *Our region has all the necessary characteristics and qualities to become a region of intense tourist activity*. The newspaper certainly gave major attention to the province of Istria (Pula). It claimed that: *Conditions and geographic position, purity of the sky and mild climate, beauty of beaches and clarity of the sea, particularly favourable conditions of our seaside and climatic resorts, are also factors that can effectively contribute to the increasing development of tourism in the province. Not only the province, but our city* [Pula] *and its immediate vicinity have wonderful localities, magnificent seashores that could, that should, be enhanced for better exploitation* [...] *Our city* [Pula]*, as well as the province, has all the premises and all the qualities necessary to become, in the near future, a good seaside resort and a tourist centre. Success will not be missed, because we also have* [...] *resources that have their own tourist attractions which still need to be developed and enhanced.*[39] The very enthusiastic

[38] *Bollettino di Portorose ed elenco dei forestieri*: *Riviera istriana*, 15. 6. 1922. Portorose, La commissione di cura, p. 2; Ibidem, 30. 9. 1922. Portorose, La commissione di cura, p. 2; Ibidem, 4. 10. 1924. Portorose, La commissione di cura, p. 5.

[39] *L'Azione*, 15. 2. 1925, no. 40, p. 2.

affirmations and premises were though not enough, since the Italian authorities in the province and region had to face many other obstacles and challenges.

In his analysis of the development potential of the tourism industry, Italian senator and engineer Ugo Ancona pointed out that it was not enough to pay attention only to hotels. In his opinion, it was also necessary to build roads, to create new and improve existing transport links, and to ensure that there was sufficient entertainment and comfort of all kinds for guests. He said: *The underdevelopment of the tourism industry is still pronounced, and if we don't act to promote progress, we will be confronted with an influx of guests with weaker purchasing power*.[40]

Ancona's judgement was in fact based on solid ground. Still in the mid-1920s, no asphalted roads existed in Istria. The first kilometres of asphalted roads were opened between Trieste, Koper, Izola, and Piran in 1927, while asphalt reached Pula – the capital of the province – only in 1938. The authorities tried to manage the situation through regular maintenance of existing roads and, in some places, the opening of new ones (e.g., Pula–Vodnjan). Other challenges in the field of transport links were present. Several projects and ideas – like new railway connections, steamboat lines, flight connections (Portorož in 1921), and bus services – were prepared during the Italian administration in the region. The first rail transport links in Istria were in fact built during the Austrian administration, connecting Trieste with Pazin, Pula, and Rovinj. The Trieste–Poreč narrow-gauge railway line (Parenzana) was also in use from 1902 until 1935. The section of the Southern Railway from Divača to Pula – called the Istrian railway – was built in 1876, and the section of the same line from Pivka to Rijeka was opened in 1873.[41] The interwar Italian *Direzione delle Ferrovie dello Stato* (State Railways Directorate) planned the construction of new railway connections within the new state borders. The proposal was to connect Trieste with the Rovinj hinterland through Umag and Poreč. This section would then join the existing line to Pula. The second section would connect Trieste directly (via the planned seven-kilometre tunnel through Učka) to Opatija and Rijeka. The plans, primarily due to a lack of financial resources, were not realized.[42]

Challenges of Tourism Development in Rural Areas in the Pula (Istria) Province

During the period of the Italian administration, most of the Istrian coastal towns underwent organizational and infrastructural changes and progress. That also included initiatives to improve the visibility of existing tourist resorts in foreign markets and to establish new ones. On 22nd February 1925, *Societa Alberghi e Stabilimenti di Umago d'Istria* (Association of Hotels and Resorts in Umag)[43] was founded, with the aim of building a new hotel in the area of Punta (del Moro), north of Umag's Old Town. In fact, Umag was the only town in Istria where a new tourist centre was established in the inter-war period. In 1925, Hotel Roma was built, and in the 1930s, some new hotels and villas were constructed as well, with the total capacity of 150 beds. Some investments were planned in Poreč, also on the western coast of the Istrian peninsula. Poreč tried to develop as a cen-

40 KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!, pp. 21–40; *L'Azione*, 23. 9. 1925, no. 226, p. 2.

41 For more information about transport infrastructure during the period of Austro-Hungary see: KAVREČIČ, P.: Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju, pp. 196–210.

42 KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!, p. 26.

43 *L'Azione*, 18. 2. 1925, no. 42, p. 3.

tre for aromatherapy – with the treatment involving grapes. However, only one villa was built there in the interwar period.[44]

Major organizational shifts took place on the eastern Istrian coast, part of what was then the province of Rijeka. On 1st February 1925, *L'ufficio Viaggi e Turismo* (Travel and Tourism Office) of the Italian National Tourist Board was set up in Lovran.[45] This was the third tourist office in the province, in addition to those in Rijeka and Opatija, while in the whole region of Venezia Giulia, there was only the ENIT office in Trieste, which recorded lower tourist arrivals, with the exception of the classic travel period (summer) to Brijuni and Portorož. However, it is worth pointing out that in 1925, there were only fourteen such offices in the rest of the Kingdom of Italy, which shows the important tourist strategic point represented by the easternmost region of Italy.[46] These offices also cooperated with *Ente provinciale per il turismo per la Provincia d'Istria* (Provincial Tourist Board in Istria, established in 1936).[47] At the local level, other societies were established, for example *Società per il promovimento dei forestieri nella Venezia Giulia* (Society for the Promotion of Tourist Visits in Venezia Giulia) operating since 1921. It was important to promote the development of tourism at the seaside resorts for domestic and foreign visitors.

The tourist development of Pula, as the centre of the province of Istria and its largest city, did not receive much attention in the press. One of the few mentions refers to a letter from R. Bragheta, published in *L'Azione* under the meaningful title *How can Pula become a tourist destination*. He described the natural resources for development that were present in the immediate vicinity and that only needed to be valorized in an appropriate way. He suggested the creation of a "lush park" and, above all, the appreciation of the sea and the air. It should be emphasized that Pula had been Austria's main naval base and a major shipbuilding centre since 1859, becoming an important industrial city, thus it is understandable that tourism was not in the forefront. Nonetheless, some accommodation facilities had already been built during the Austrian period. In 1908, the first modern hotel, the Riviera Hotel, was placed in a strategic location in the area between the harbour pier, the Arena, and the railway station. It also featured additional facilities, such as a concert hall, a café, and a hairdresser's salon. According to available data, there were nine hotels in Pula in 1914.[48] Despite the unfavourable position, Bragheta's initiative was supported, as Pula, especially in the coastal area, was intensively reforested over the following decades, creating conditions for a more comfortable and pleasant seaside living. This measure also contributed to a better quality of the natural environment and the construction of tourist infrastructure (hotels), which, at the time of the Austrian administration, existed exclusively in the centre of the city.[49]

While the circumstances for tourism development were not completely favourable for the urban seaside centres, the challenges for rural areas were even bigger. The villages by

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[44] ZADEL, Zrinka – RUDAN, Elena: Razvoj smještajnih kapaciteta i poduzetništva u obalnom dijelu istarskog poluotoka u Hrvatskoj : Razvoj namestitvenih zmogljivosti in podjetništva obalnega dela istrskega polotoka na Hrvaškem. In: ŠULIGOJ, M. (ed.): *Retrospektiva*, pp. 166–167.

[45] *L'Azione*, 31. 1. 1925, no. 27, p. 2.

[46] See also: KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!

[47] ENIT (Ente nazionale industrie turistiche): *Relazione sull'attività svolta nell'anno 1925* : *propaganda, organizzazione, statistica, consorzio degli uffici di viaggio e turismo, bilancio*. Rome 1926.

[48] ZADEL, Z. – RUDAN, E.: Razvoj, p. 162.

[49] KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!, pp. 27–28.

the sea, which had not gained tourist relevance even during the Austrian period, were also severely burdened by problematic hygienic and health conditions. A number of endemic diseases and frequent epidemics affected the rural areas of the studied territory still at the beginning of the 20th century. The main causes can be attributed primarily to poor hygiene conditions, inaccessible medical care, scarcely developed health (and other) infrastructure, as well as insufficient measures to organize health services, and inadequate health and education in general. The First World War and its negative consequences, like the forced evacuation of the civilian population from southern Istria, and the general economic degradation that occurred due to the changed geopolitical situation and national borders in the post-war years, aggravated the situation. The most widespread infectious diseases were dysentery, scabies, measles, syphilis, typhoid fever, and, above all, tuberculosis, the main cause of the high mortality and morbidity rates that placed the province of Istria (Pula) at the top of the list of all the provinces of the Kingdom of Italy. Another infectious disease which was the cause of many problems was malaria. This situation left the province with a number of negative consequences, demographically, socially, and economically.[50] In this context, or because of the slow progress towards modernization and the provision of adequate health and hygiene standards, the development of tourism as an economic sector outside the existing and established tourist "oasis" was hampered.

These problems were also discussed at the *Congresso provinciale fascista* (Fifth Fascist Provincial Congress) in 1926, where Istrian engineer Italo Defranceshi pointed out that: *Despite its great natural beauties, Istria has remained economically in last place among the Italian lands. 'Why?'* he asks: *I can answer without hesitation that the first and main reason for Istria's backwardness is the lack of drinking water, which in turn leads to a high incidence of malaria, which persists in the areas of marshes and ponds. These are also the only sources of water for the population and livestock, but they are also the main agents of anophelism* [the increased presence of Anopheles mosquitoes, which transmit the disease, M. R.]. *Water scarcity and malaria are preventing the development of Istrian towns that could be attractive for summer holidays and bathing. New tourist destinations could compete with existing destinations such as Opatija, Portorož, Brijuni, and Lošinj, bearing in mind that Istria is the closest sea gateway to most of Central Europe*.[51] During the congress, malaria was particularly mentioned, since malaria zones in Istria were still numerous in 1925. In the municipality of Pula, there were thirteen fractions (towns, villages) declared *zone malariche*. In other parts of the province, other municipalities or parts of municipalities were declared as such: the mainland of the municipality of Fasana/Fažana, the municipality of Dignano/Vodnjan, Barbana/Barban, Canfanaro/Kanfanar, San Vincenti/Svetvinčenat, Valle/Bale, Rovinj, Piran, Terzo, Ossero/Osor, Neresine/Nerezine, Lussingrande, parts of the Parenzo/Poreč municipality, Orsera/Vrsar, Cittanova/Novigrad, Antignana/Tinjan, Gimino/Žminj, and Fianona/Plomin.[52] Many of these municipalities are located by the sea and represented a potential for tourism development. Even so, the disease posed a serious obstacle to tourism development and, in general, prevented investments in accommodation and other tourist infrastructure. The circumstances in favour of tourism develop-

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[50] Ibid., pp. 28–29. For further literature see: RADOŠEVIĆ, Milan: O dizenteriji, ospicama, sifilisu, šarlahu i tifusu u Istarskoj provinciji za talijanske međuratne uprave (1918–1940). *Problemi sjevernog Jadrana*, 2015, no. 14, pp. 55–81.

[51] KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!, pp. 28–29.

[52] *L'Azione*, 17. 1. 1925, no. 15, p. 2.

ment, especially seaside mass tourism, were created mostly after the end of the Second World War. Many of the above-listed localities are well-recognized tourist destinations in the present day.

After the end of the First World War, malaria rose again due to the return of sick soldiers from malarial battlefields (Albania, the Soča-Piava front). The abandonment of arable land and other socio-economic and health-organizational factors contributed to the spread of malarial mosquitoes and consequently to a higher incidence of the disease. In 1924, a major outbreak was recorded in both coastal and inland parts of Istria, with the highest incidence in the area of Poreč, where there were 126 deaths and over 3 000 cases (1 % of the total population). This situation did not affect the already established tourist destinations, where consistent preventive and curative measures were taken and thus successfully prevented the spread of the disease. This was not the case in Istrian rural areas.[53] While infectious diseases like syphilis, typhoid fever, and tuberculosis were familiar, malaria was unknown in some countries. Thus, for potential Austrian, German, Hungarian, Czech, and other tourists from Central Europe, malaria was an exotic disease and as such created a sense of fear, which made them cautious about choosing these seaside destinations for their holidays. Tourists did not want to visit places that were in any way "burdened". A possible impediment was also evidenced in the sale of products for the prevention and treatment of malaria (quinine), which could be purchased in shops and caused foreign tourists doubts about the sanitary and hygiene conditions of the visited places. A proposition was addressed to the Sanitary Director to sell the medicine only in pharmacies.[54]

The problem of epidemics can also be identified or recognized as a cause for the promotion of those tourist destinations which retained a good reputation and had already been established in the Habsburg period. These localities were "malaria-free" zones.[55] In the malaria zones, several measures to contain the further spread of infectious diseases were implemented by the authorities (e. g., closing of schools, introduction of better hygiene, land reclamation, melioration, prohibition of free movement of animals, education of population, cleaning, etc.).[56] In order to provide a safe and healthy environment for possible tourist development in the future, the measures needed to be successfully applied first. The process was complicated and long. It is necessary to stress that most of the measures were only partially implemented in the 1930s, and by 1940, all the major Istrian towns, with the exception of Vrsar, Rovinj, Kanfanar, Bale, Žminj, Svetvinčent, and Vodnjan, were connected to the water supply network. Progress was also made in the field of health, and especially in the areas of the Mirna and Raša (rivers) valleys and the former saltpans of Koper, where at the beginning of the 1930s, land reclamation was used to create new arable land and to rehabilitate former malarial areas. The larvicidal method, which was introduced in the mid-1920s, had almost eradicated malaria in Istria by the end of the 1930s.[57]

The modernization processes in the province, especially in its rural areas, contributed to the creation of a basis for a better living standard of the population. With the new water

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53 RADOŠEVIĆ, Milan: Od gambuzija do pariškoga zelenila : kako je pobijeđena malarija u Istri. *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 45, 2013, no. 3, p. 515; KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!, p. 29.

54 *L'Azione*, 5. 6. 1925, no. 133, p. 2.

55 Ibidem.

56 ŠKROBONJA, Ante (ed.): *Epidemične bolezni v Istri v 19. in 20. Stoletju* : *Le malattie epidemiche in Istria tra '800 e '900* : *Zarazne bolesti u Istri tijekom 19. i 20. stoljeća*. Koper 2010.

57 KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!

supply system, eradication of infectious diseases, or at least improvement of hygiene standards in the region, and construction of new road connections, the possibilities for tourism development in other coastal areas were created. In the mid-1920s, some other factors encouraged tourism development in Italy. First, the year 1925 was proclaimed *Anno Sancto*, which increased the movement of population across the country. Another important step was taken in the same year, when a decree regarding the standards for hotels was issued. The decree established mandatory requirements for the implementation of hygiene and health improvements. ENIT oversaw the promotion and awarding of subsidies or other aid initiatives aimed at hotel locations that were insufficiently or inadequately provisioned for the needs of tourism. It also recommended the issuing of opportune agreements with provincial doctors, giving preference to those hotels that met higher standards of sanitation according to the regulations.[58] The new hotels had to be located in "healthy" environments where high hygiene and sanitary standards were met. According to these requirements, it is clear that in Istria, the poor supply of clean water and the persistent presence of infectious diseases represented a serious obstacle to tourism development outside the established destinations. Even existing destinations faced challenges stemming from defamatory news about the alleged spread of malaria in foreign newspapers.[59] The hygiene and economic circumstances in the region thus did not meet all these demands in the 1920s, meaning that the high-set standards were reached only in already established tourist destinations.

Conclusion

In the case study of the southeastern part of the Italian province of Venezia Giulia, namely the province of Istria (Pula), the possibilities and opportunities for tourism development in the first years of the Italian administration were discussed. Due to the consequences of the war and the difficult post-war political and economic circumstances, the territory in question was mostly underdeveloped. This was especially characteristic of rural areas, which were also known to be underdeveloped in the previous period. With the Italian investments and engagement in the modernization of infrastructure (water supply systems, eradication of infectious diseases, construction of new road connections), the aim was also to support the progress and improvement of the region with tourist supply and services.

Tourism emerged and its popularity in the region grew during the Habsburg period, though concentrated only in a few coastal towns, which drastically changed their image, evolving from former rural areas (especially fishing villages) to elite destinations for sea-based health treatments. Even though Istria is a peninsula, the spread of tourism depended on many factors (initiatives, financial sources, investments, etc.), which reached only some seaside localities. After the end of the First World War and the establishment of Italian governance in the region, tourism was given even more emphasis and the authorities aimed at promoting its development in other areas of the region as well. However, several conditions had to be adequately set up. Problems such as bad road connections, lack of tourist infrastructure, low hygiene standards, and frequent

[58] RD (Regio decreto) 24 May 1925, no. 1102. "Approvazione del regolamento per le migliorie igieniche negli alberghi," Online, cited on 15th July 2020, accessible at http://www.comune.jesi.an.it/MV/leggi/rd1102-25.htm.

[59] KAVREČIČ, P.: Tourism and Fascism, pp. 107–l08; KAVREČIČ, P. – RADOŠEVIĆ, M.: Na morje!

epidemics, especially malaria, obstructed the effective and efficient development of new resorts.

The paper's aim is to discuss if and how tourism acted as an engine of modernization in rural areas. The case study shows that the Italian authorities tried to promote tourism in other parts of the region – especially in underdeveloped rural areas – however with very little success due to several obstacles and also limitations of time.

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Summary

Tourism as an "Engine" of Modernization in Venezia Giulia during the First Years of the Italian Administration

The paper's aim is to discuss whether tourism acted as an engine of modernization in rural areas. It focuses on the case of the southeastern part of the Italian province of Venezia Giulia, namely the Istria (Pula/Pola) province. The new province, established after the end of the First World War, was very important for Italy, since it represented an integral part of the finally redeemed lands. As the territory of Venezia Giulia included great parts of the former Austro-Hungarian land of Austrian Littoral (Österreichisches Küstenland), assigned to Italy in 1920 (Treaty of Rapallo), the territory in question faced significant political changes. In addition, the period of transition also affected other spheres, such as the economy, social life, and cultural life.

The territories assigned to Italy after the end of the First World War, especially the rural areas, were mainly underdeveloped. Within the modernization process and build of infrastructure, the Italian state also recognized tourism as a possible booster of growth and progress. Tourism had become an established and popular leisure activity already during the Habsburg period, though concentrated only in a few coastal towns. Istria, on the other hand, is a peninsula with several localities on the coast. Since seaside tourism increased in popularity in the interwar period, the Italian authorities aimed at promoting tourism development in other areas of the region as well. However, several conditions had to be adequately set up.

In the paper, the actions of the authorities in infrastructure regulation of rural areas are presented. The raised question is whether tourism development (if occurred) helped to improve and facilitate the (infrastructural) modernization of rural areas.