

# THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF LOCAL TOURISM CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FISHERY AND TOURISM IN IZOLA<sup>1</sup>

Nataša Rogelja

Institute for Humanistic Studies ISH, Ljubljana, Slovenia

*ABSTRACT* The paper is about the fishermen community in Izola, a coastal town in the North-east of the Upper Adriatic. Attention is given to the wider socio-natural context within which fishermen from Izola find themselves situated after the break-up of Yugoslavia. The principal change that fishermen find most influential to their situation is the new state border that caused losses of previous fishing territory along what is now Croatian coast. Special attention is given to one of the several adaptive strategies devised by the fishermen from Izola, which was increasingly demonstrated after 1991: combining fishery with tourism. Two points are central to the research: what is the fishermen's attitude towards tourism activities in comparison with fishery and what is it that people from the tourist industry are marketing for the tourists that involves fishery? The last of the two questions partly brings to the fore the tourism discourse of the newly established Slovene state about its coastal area, and the analysis of the fishermen's perspective on the new situation and their adaptation to tourism.

## INTRODUCTION

I remember how several years ago I watched some slides, with my friends back home, from my summer vacations on the Adriatic coast. The photographs that captured my friends' and above all the photographer's – my – attention, were undoubtedly those that portrayed colourful wooden boats in the port, silhouettes of the fishing vessels with the setting sun in the background, tanned and weather-beaten fishermen faces, and bits of coastal villages that I had managed to cut out the neon advertisement signs from. At the time that I joined a research project at the Institute for Humanistic Studies ISH and started on my fieldwork in the Upper Adriatic region, I also started to look through the tourist brochures and postcards of this region. I found out that many of the photographs in the tourist brochures and postcards were very much the same as mine. Several questions incited my curiosity. For instance, where did the interest for certain images stem from, and which mechanisms were involved to produce the aesthetic and emotional response in the viewer? What, if any, are the consequences of these ritualised images in everyday life, in the concrete dimension of space and time? These questions were pertinent to me throughout my research on fishery and tourism in Izola.

Interestingly enough, in the final stage writing this article, I came across an advertisement published in the nautical review *Val* (Wave), which triggered off another association. The photograph in the advertisement was taken in the port of Piran. It showed a young woman in a white mini skirt sitting on a fishing net full of fish, sunbathing and reading the very same review she was advertising. Behind her, there was an elderly man cleaning the net, peering at the same time over the woman's

shoulder. On the one hand, then, he is interested in the review, and on the other, one could say he is making a pass at the woman. Two main stereotypes in the advertisement are represented: that of a fisherman, and that of a tourist. A possible interpretation is that the fisherman corresponds with the old, archaic, passive principle, whereas the tourist corresponds with the modern, perhaps, aggressive principle (she assumes the right to sit on his net while the fisherman is cleaning it). The fisherman is here to stay, whereas the tourist comes and goes. The fisherman works, the tourist relaxes. The tourist is flirting with the landscape surrounding her, while the fisherman is part of this landscape. The fisherman is flirting with the young woman, and at the same time, he is flirting with the nautical world: the tourist forms a part of his scope of flirting. Although the two figures could be seen as very different in many ways (for example, female-male, archaic-modern) they appear to interact harmoniously with each other. The advertisement, though, stresses both harmony and tension between the two stereotypes; it demonstrates the coming together of two (different) worlds, which are on the one hand affectionate to each other, but on the other, incompatible. It can be observed that the advertiser intends in the review to state that they are capable of overcoming this incompatibility. The review is only the channel, or the medium; but at the level of its content, one could talk about the broader field attached to imagery and the sea.



Fig. 1. From nautical review: Val (Wave), June 2001. Ljubljana.

I will discuss the connection between fishery and tourism in Izola on two levels. The first level reveals *fishermen as tourist workers* and is based primarily on my ethnographic evidence. It brings in the fishermen's perspective: their view of tourism and tourists.<sup>2</sup> The other level highlights *fishery as a part of the tourist landscape*. I will present an analysis of the selected tourist brochures and postcards printed over

the last ten years and comment upon the image of fishery they present. In the ensuing discussion, I will attempt to place these two views in dialogue with each other.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of bringing together an analysis of the fishermen's perspective with an analysis of tourist brochures and postcards is based on the presupposition that *the ethnography of local tourism and of localities bidding for tourist attention shows the role of larger processes that define economic and cultural realities* (Pálsson and Durrenberger 1996:7). The dialogue between the two levels seems reasonable because it broadens the scope from the local to the national and trans-national scale. These latter two scales also contribute towards a proper outline of the concrete dimensions of people in action. My second presupposition is that *through tourist brochures the local and broader scales can be observed*. In my opinion tourist representations are, on the one hand, contextualised with actual tourist imagery and on the other, they allude to national discourses. In this paper, I will pay attention to local details and their attachment to the broader context, where the scales of discourse will be local and national. In doing so, I will draw upon the writings of Ulf Hannerz, emphasising the redefinition of the anthropological project in the sense of the following:

One necessary ingredient in making anthropology contribute realistically to an understanding of the contemporary world ... might be not to look just in front of us, first, at whatever we take to be an other culture, and then over the shoulder, at the audience at home, but also sideways, at the various other people also situated at the interfaces between cultures and engaged in making the global ecumene. There are journalists and film-makers there, tourists and tour guides, social workers, jurists, business consultants... (Hannerz 1993:48 in Pálsson and Durrenberger 1996:6).

I also draw upon the theoretical starting points of various contributions in *Images of Contemporary Iceland: Everyday Lives and Global Contexts* (Pálsson and Durrenberger 1996). The authors talk about local communities as communities situated in the space-time continuum. In doing so, they stress the chaotic flow of images and identities in their broader contexts and the plurality of voices in the process of imagining. Some authors (among whom D. MacCannell, R. Hewison, D. Greenwood) regard connections between local and broader contexts as an alienating reconstruction of the local as a process in which, as MacCannell suggests, the local is subsumed to the global (MacCannell 1992 in MacDonald 1997:157). Although, for example tourist heritage representations certainly involve some of the processes of 'inauthentication' of culture, I am inclined to agree with this point with Sharon MacDonald. She talks of the representations of Aros, a tourist centre in Scotland, as those that involve a good deal of translating the local into categories with more global semantic scope. At the same time she stresses that the creators of tourist representations are very concerned with presenting a sense of local distinctiveness (MacDonald 1997:156, 157).

## FISHERMEN AS TOURIST WORKERS

I will try to describe the phenomena with answers related to the connection between fishery and tourism in this section. These answers draw heavily upon my ethno-

graphic material and relate to the following questions: which are the concrete forms of this connection? How is it represented by the fishermen's perspective? And how is the connection possible in the first place? The latter question foregrounds the opinions of fishermen-tourist workers upon tourists' expectations and wishes.

*CONNECTION BETWEEN TOURISM AND FISHERY IN NUMBERS*

In the coastal area between Piran and Ankaran, according to the data of *Obinski sekretariat za finance in gospodarstvo – obina Koper* (Municipality of Koper – public sector for finance and economy) dated 23rd of April 1997, there were 74 fishermen involved in fisheries as their primary occupation and 107 fishermen involved in fishery as an additional occupation. Although my ethnographic evidence is limited to the coastal area that is nowadays part of the state of Slovenia, my decision for doing so is not based on the presupposition that people involved in fishing and tourism in the selected area share a different cultural repertoire from the people involved in the same work outside the state border. Rather, it is based on the fact that one of the changes that fishermen in Slovenia find most influential to their situation is the establishment of the new state. The new state border caused losses of previous fishing territory along what is nowadays the Croatian coast; closed fishing territory and the prohibition of fishing with drag-nets during the late spring and summer period meant a dead season for fishermen involved in this kind of fishing technology. Additionally, in the period of the dead season, the state of Slovenia does not now support fishermen in paying their health insurance and from 1991 laws considering fisheries are in the competence of the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry in Ljubljana.



Fig. 2. Map of the area (IAS 2000. Ljubljana:CZ).

Fishermen who (mostly in the summer period) combine fishing and tourism are also engaged in the facility of passenger transportation. In the area between Ankarana and Piran there are 16 such boats that combine fishery and tourism, while in Izola, there are 8 such boats.<sup>4</sup> In this combined business, the individual fishermen are involved as well as the company *Riba d.o.o.* [Fish ltd.].

*ABOUT DIFFERENT WAYS OF FISHING... TOURISTS OR VISITORS?*

The analysis of my ethnographic evidence highlights three predominant forms of tourist fishing boat excursions and I will use them for the purpose of this article as descriptors. They are: panoramic tours; picnics and other forms of excursions with a type of restaurant service; recreational fishing for visitors and the presentation of fishing. In this last case, we could talk of two 'sub-forms'; in the first, the work on fishing boats is adapted to the visitors (it takes less time, for example). In the second, visitors do not disturb the ordinary working routine on the boat but are just additional crewmembers. I will call the latter *participation*. Officially, participation is practiced just in the company Fish ltd., whereas other fishermen sometimes take occasional visitors on the boat to fish with them or just observe them working but, as they say, they do not practice that to earn, but to please the visitors. The adapted presentation of fishing involves predominantly school groups, while in the case of the participative fishing there are smaller groups of people (3-5 persons) that stay on board with fishermen the entire day. Fishing with a drag net seems the most appropriate or the only appropriate way to enable such an experience for the visitors. Fishing with nets, for example, is unsuitable because there is a 12-hour period between the placing and lifting of the nets. The catch of mullet, which is generally one of the big events in the area, is also unsuitable because the timing for catching them is unpredictable – it can often happen during the night. The most frequent excursions that are practiced among fishermen from Izola between May and September are panoramic excursions and fish picnics (as they call these excursions where seafood is offered). The average number of working days in the season is between 70 and 100 days.<sup>5</sup>

The visitors that sign up for such excursions are mostly people living in Slovenia, which gives special character to this business. When fishermen talk about their visitors they stress that they are not involved in business with tourists but that they deal mostly with *organized groups*. In saying that, the word *tourist* is attached to the stranger (not living close nor speaking the Slovene or Italian language<sup>6</sup>) and the words *organized groups* is linked to the scholar groups, working collectives or other professional groups from various seminars and congresses, all coming from Slovenia. The other words (rather than organized groups) that fishermen use in describing their guests are: 'visitors', 'home guests', and 'the world of business'. As one of them said:

...Mostly we work... this with the tourism we do not work at all, hardly ever... because we work just little with the agencies, and we have very few strangers. Mostly we have Slovenes, various companies, clubs and groups from all parts of Slovenia (M2, Izola, February 2001).

Different forms of excursions offered on fishing boats are, as the fishermen emphasised, also very different in terms of their content. If the panoramic excursions, fish picnics and recreational fishing are connected with amusement and relaxation, demonstrational fishing can be seen as an educational experience and the participative fishing as a kind of 'special' event that encompasses emotional and physical engagement. The differences in terms of content can be partly linked up with different forms of tourist gaze (Urry 1990): the collective tourist gaze, the educational tourist gaze, the romantic tourist gaze... Urry's typology of tourist gazes reflects the different nature of tourist experiences, expectations and wishes, but as a model cannot always be applied to ethnographic data. To a degree it can be argued that in the case of panoramic excursions, the focus of interest is not so much on 'authenticity' but on amusement and relaxation. However, in the case of participative fishing, the connection is more obvious: it is precisely to do with immersing oneself in the supposed authenticity, trying to become, as one of fisherman stated, 'a fisherman for one day'. In the latter, the working routine is the object of the tourist gaze, moreover the form and the content of a certain image becomes the subject one should live through as much as possible. In a certain sense one could talk about 'exoticising' the practice of fishing.

*THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CONNECTION: BETWEEN STATE BORDERS AND BEACHES*

The establishment of the state border that caused losses of previous fishing territory along what is nowadays Croatian coast is the most frequent explanation for combining fishery with tourism. Some of the fishermen stressed that they were practicing similar excursions even before the founding of the state of Slovenia but these were, as one of them said, 'unorganised, not serious and forced actions'.<sup>7</sup>

...As I said... 15 years ago we began... I could say... we were forced to do this because of the inquiry of guests and so on... and we were doing this by the way, during the summer... we did it on Friday, Saturday, Sunday. When we saw that there was a lot of interest, we began to take it a little bit more seriously and then the prices were also set, you understand...(M3, Izola, February 2001).

Along with arguments about the establishing of the new state border that caused the combined activity, other explanations were also cited. These included: *the demand and interest on behalf of clients; a new service on the market; lack of territory for the existing number of fishermen along the presently Slovenian coast, and; the over-fished Slovenian sea*. These explanations are backed up with the following statements: 'everybody thinks fishing is a harmful technology'; 'it is said that our sea is very small and so we have to protect it'; 'fishing must be reduced'... Such explanations are heard on TV, in newspapers, in the statements of public persons...<sup>8</sup> With the alloy of such statements, the fishermen's explanations highlight the positive aspects of combining fishery with tourism, and often it is stressed that state agencies should support such activities.

Fishermen also emphasise the interest of their customers as an important factor in establishing such an activity. Above all, this is mentioned in cases when fishermen speak about the demonstrational fishing or the participative fishing.

Consequently, the attractiveness of their product is mentioned in a way that it brings something new to the existing market for connecting the fishing world with the tourist market and gives them an opportunity to stay in touch with the sea.

... I started with the fishing *osmica* [eight]... what would it mean...why should *osmica* be only related to meat. And because our starting point is fish why not fishing *osmica*... we made quite a big attraction out of it, because it was something new. We connected this fishing world with the tourist offer. And this was an idea how we could change the fishing world into a tourist offer, since there was not much sea left... (M2, Izola, April 2001).<sup>9</sup>

...I started this in 1993, after the break-up of Yugoslavia, I made my living just from fishing... All my family and I. And you have to maintain such a big boat and you have to maintain three families. And obviously ... what can we do ... to reorganize ourselves and to change our work into something completely different, or try to live with the sea again and then we tried with tourism and for 4 to 5 months we've been fishing. So the whole year is covered, a little of fishing and a little of tourism. If it is not so you cannot live properly. Tourist workers... yes you could say, but still we are with sea and so on... With the same boat we catch fish and tourists. This is it... (M4, Izola, May 2001).

Although it seems that the only or primary reason for fishermen involved in the tourist business was the new political situation after 1991, there are other meaningful reasons that fishermen identified as well. Explanations of fishermen's involvement in tourism can be related to ecological, political and tourist discourses. For the purposes of this paper, I will divide them into three categories; those talking about the fishermen's own interests; those talking about the visitor's interests and those based on ecological reasons. In the first case, primary concern is given to higher incomes, diversified work in the summer and winter periods, livelier work in general and finally also the fact that you can remain connected to the sea. The visitors' interests involve, above all, relaxation, entertainment, healthy food and air, the possibility of fishing with fishermen, education, sea and authentic experiences. Finally in the field of ecological reasons, the advantages of such a connection link up primarily with statements of an overly small, polluted and over-fished sea, of the numbers of fishermen being too large, et cetera... Although things are interconnected, I can speculate that the visitors' interests are closely related to the tourist discourse and the economic and ecological reasons are closely related to the political and environmental-protective discourse.

#### *VISITORS AND THEIR WISHES*

One of the explanations as to why this connection comes about in the first place is also the aforementioned interest of visitors. In relation to this explanation, the following question arises: which are those expectations and questions produced by the social environment and further 'put in front' of the fishermen? To what extent the fishermen relate to them, and if so, how are they trying to satisfy them? Although this article does not take into consideration the visitors' perspective, the opinions of fishermen will be discussed in the following section. In connection with panoramic

excursions, the most highlighted aspect – meant to be crucial in attracting visitors – was amusement and relaxation. In the opinion of some of my interviewees, the ‘amusement on the boat’ in comparison with the ‘amusement on the land’ was different and much better. The visitors’ reactions described by fishermen are as follows: ‘they became very talkative’; ‘they lighten up’; ‘they relax’; ‘they sing’; ‘they take off the tie’; ‘sometimes there is a bit of adrenaline because of a wave and afterwards even greater enjoyment, they enjoy the sea and nature’... Apart from the ambience, the other attractive aspects emphasized also included: the fact that they are with ‘real’ fishermen; that a lot of the fishing equipment stays on the boat also during the summer and is shown to people; and also the fact that very fresh fish (considered as a healthy food) is on offer. Often, fishermen stress that they are trying to get the fish that swam in the sea only several hours ago. It is assumed that visitors could not get hold of such fresh fish as the fishermen can provide them with. The positive side to recreational sport fishing is primarily that many people can fish together and compete with each other, proving themselves as fishermen. On the other hand, fishermen can show the visitors the fishing territories.

...These visitors come for their own pleasure, because they want to fish. That is why I took them to the fishing spots, where there is fish and that is where they fish then. And fishing... as we know... you can catch something or you might not... In the meantime they get hungry, thirsty and become a bit moody. Some were successful and the others were not... If they are successful in fishing they are pleased; if they are not they get angry. So you must be able to adapt to the situation and satisfy visitors. If they did not catch anything you offer them some fish snack for comfort... (M2, Izola, April 2001).

Participative fishing is stressed as something very distinctive among all others forms of tourist product. Often, this product is not meant to be profitable as a job, but as an activity, which in the first place came from the visitors’ interests. It aims to please visitors, and after all, as one of the fishermen said: visitors are ‘living with fishermen for a day, which is something special; they become one of them for a day’.

Fishermen also emphasised that visitors are interested in the state border between Slovenia and Croatia. As one of them explained:

...Some attractions are shown, let’s say, if there are special wishes we take them there... Usually they want to see our state border on the sea... interestingly we do not know exactly where it is... some of them imagine that there is a wire on the sea. And then... you say we are out, we are in (Slovenia)... (M5, Izola, March 2001).

An evaluation of the tourist business dimension also brings the following question to the fore: what can fishermen offer in comparison with the ordinary tourist boats? The question is in close connection with the visitors’ interest. If each of the above mentioned visitors’ interests is related to the fishermen’s explanation, the following connections can be made: the successful entertainment and relaxation are closely related to the atmosphere (the sea, the fish and the fishing boat are supposed to provide a healthy, relaxed and domestic atmosphere), safety (that is provided by

the knowledge of the sea fishermen are supposed to possess); for recreational and demonstrational fishing, the fishermen's knowledge is crucial; and for participative fishing, the fishermen themselves and their working routine become the object of the tourist gaze.

#### FISHERY AS A PART OF THE TOURIST LANDSCAPE

A specific form of the relationship between fishery and tourism can be noticed in the tourist discourse. In selected tourist brochures and postcards we can also find motives presenting fishery and fishing-related activities, objects and people, among other things.<sup>10</sup> They can be seen together with images of sailing boats, surf, tanned bodies, architecturally interesting towns: I only mention the most frequent ones; they form part of the tourist landscape, fitting into the specific range of social admirations, claims and expectations.<sup>11</sup>

Tourist images are understood through various topics; each of these contributing to the effect of a specific image. Shedding light on certain representations and their contexts can, in part, answer the question of why specific motives are popular and to what their messages are bound. Tourist representations reveal a net of social relations, attitudes towards nature, wishes, expectations, and the formation of new identities. We can look upon concrete tourist representations as the reifications of the popular current issues. John Urry's objects of the tourist gaze are, for example, placed in a complex and changing hierarchy. As he argues:

An array of tourist professionals develop who attempt to reproduce ever-new objects of the tourist gaze. These objects are located in a complex and changing hierarchy. This depends upon the interplay between, on the one hand, competition between



Fig. 3. Postcard: Piran (Photo: S. Simi )

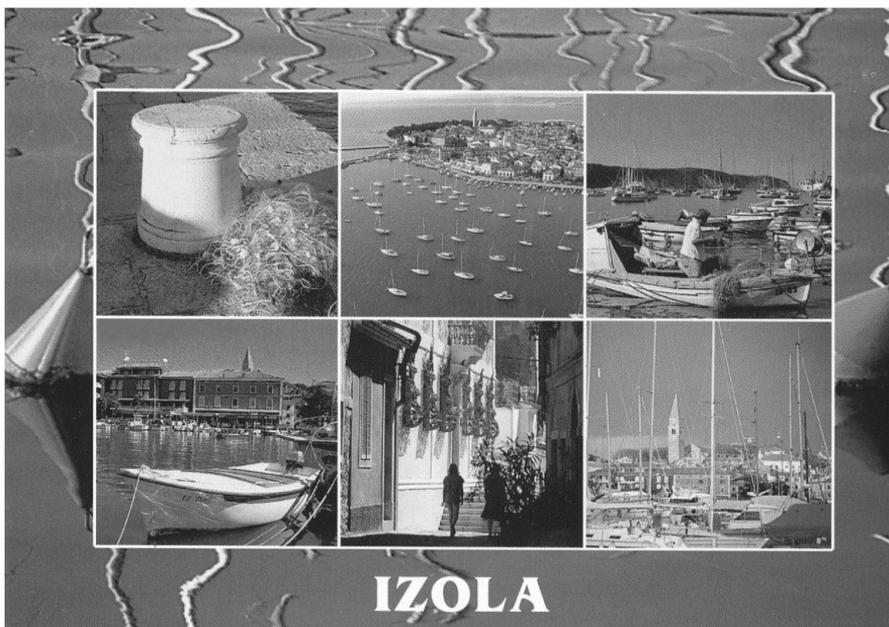


Fig. 4. Postcard: Izola (Photo: Jugovi & Neve ny).

interests involved in the provision of such objects and, on the other hand, changing class, gender and generational distinctions of taste within the potential population of visitors (Urry 1990:3-4).

As such, it is important to understand tourist representations beyond the categories of real-unreal, to refer to them through the prism of their current interpretation. They reveal the value of the tourist experience, which is formed through the constant redefining of good and bad, suitable and unsuitable. We can imagine the production of tourist representations as building connections with certain places, images, and landscape... These connections are not simply limited to the visual level, in the sense of the visualisation of a certain segment but, as Orvar Löfgren says, they involve emotions as well. He believes that modern tourism should be looked at as upon the field where individuals explore, cultivate and form emotional experiences during the last 200 years (Löfgren 1999:16).

I would suggest that tourist brochures and postcards are useful materials through which we can learn about local identity and displacement of culture for tourism. In the following lines I will comment upon photographs depicting fishery themes, as well as texts referring to fishery (both those accompanying the photographs and those found in various guides).

*THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMAGE OF FISHERMEN BETWEEN MEDITERRANEAN, THE GOOD OLD TIMES AND THE UNPREDICTABLE SEA*

Representations of fishery in the selected tourist brochures and postcards take up approximately 10 per cent of all the (visual and textual) information presented. Even

though the text presented is not examining in detail the motives and perspectives of producers of the tourist material, there are a few facts that should be highlighted before moving further. When dealing with tourist brochures and other materials aimed at tourists, one must bear in mind that much can depend on *who* produces the information. The producers of the tourist brochures and postcards that I refer to in the following analysis are independent authors (photographers, text writers and designers), government tourist departments or private publishing houses and institutes. The selected material is not directly related to the commercial advertising propaganda (this being so in the case of travel organizations' and hotel's advertisements) but must be seen either as a wish to present truly 'informative information' or as an independent author's work. The other interesting thing that should be stressed is the fact that almost all producers involved are working and living in Slovenia, and many of them are locals in the region that is being examined. The situation presented here is thus the following: native producers refer their publications for local consumption. The frame of reference is thus home-centred and can be linked with local and national discourses for the most part.

If I generalize, visualization of fishery focuses on three main fields: the representation of boats that are needed for fishing; the representation of fishing equipment and finally the representation of people (mostly male) who are involved in fishing or activities connected with fishing (for example, cleaning nets). In the set of selected material, we find 13 photographs that show fishing boats; of which 10 show older wooden boats equipped for fishing with ordinary nets and only three show boats equipped with dragnets. Among the fishing equipment shown, there are mostly nets, but in addition we see also ropes and barrels for salted sardines. The nets are either shown as the main motifs and are set in the foreground, as a decoration, or set in the context of their use (cleaning or fishing). The third type of visual representations of fishery shows male persons who are involved in different ways in the fishing economy. Most of them show the males in the centre of the photograph, their work is placed at the centre of interest and interestingly, more than half of these photographs show elderly males. Smaller wooden boats, fishing nets and elderly persons leave an impression of the times gone by, an impression which, in my opinion, also carries a nostalgic flavour (sepia coloured photographs, the silhouette of a fishing boat at sunset...). The

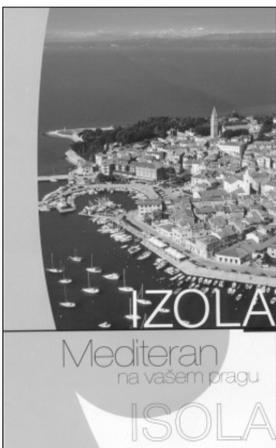


Fig. 5. From tourist brochure: Izola – Mediteran na vašem pragu [Izola – Mediterranean on your doorstep] 1998. Izola: Turisti no informativni center Izola.

common denominator of these images can be understood through the concept of good old times, which in its turn contains ideas of rurality, honesty, originality... The same can be said for most textual parts of tourist brochures referring to fishery. It is described as a part of the economic history of coastal towns – on one hand, it is seen as a part of an unbroken coastal tradition, virtually a museum piece that has been preserved and is still being used today, and on the other hand – the importance of fishery for the establishing of the coastal towns is accentuated. Fishery is portrayed as a primal peculiarity of day-



Fig. 6. From tourist brochure: Izola-Isola 1999. Izola: *Turisti no gospodarsko združenje*.

to-day history that runs alongside the 'main-stream' political and cultural history and while the political history changes rapidly; fishery has a more constant role. In some parts, fishery is presented as being a naturally ingrown part of the area and this being the case, it is used in the introductory part of the tourist materials. Alongside personal characteristics (kind, pleasant, charming town), national (Slovene town) and geographic adjectives (coastal town), the adjective 'fishing' is also used, representing one of the most outstanding characteristics of

Izola. For example: 'Izola, Slovene coastal tourist town with a smile and a fishing tradition' (Simi 1997:31). These seem to be of special interest because in the introductory sections, the author wishes to present, in just a few words, the main characteristics of specific towns in the most attractive way. The strong positive connotation of the adjective 'fishing' can be noticed in such cases. On the basis of interviews with the producers of tourist brochures, I would argue that the adjective 'fishing (town)' hints at the following information: Izola has not turned its back on the good old times; Izola is still an honest and pleasant town... A special effect is added by the use of the diminutive form of the word town (*mestce* – small town). The connection between small and honest (meaning small is honest) is often used in tourist mottos that promote Slovenia as a small and honest country. Moreover, fishery and fishermen are mentioned in connection with the characteristic cuisine of Izola that offers supposedly healthy seafood, as well as in connection with fishing holidays. One could say that the 'Dionysian' description of the festival (festival of fishermen, wine, dance, music and good times) incorporates the hidden intention directed towards freedom, relaxation, but also uninhibited and reckless behaviour.

The texts accompanying the photos serve to highlight further the other contexts as well. Two of them in particular, in my opinion, deserve special attention: *the sea* and *the Mediterranean*. Descriptions of the sea are highly romanticised and the connection between the inhabitants of the coastal towns and the sea presented in tourist brochures carries a transcendental note. One of the tourist brochures, ubiquitous in the year 2000, stressed the close relation between the inhabitants of Izola and the sea, a relationship in which the tourist is also invited to experience. The text also emphasises the importance of fishery in keeping this connection alive.

...Each story has its beginning. Once upon a time Izola was an island... As time passed the island was united to the mainland, but nevertheless Izola maintained its close relation to the sea - through fishing, with its mild winters and hot summers, inviting to spend the holidays just here, on the seaside... In Izola, where the music of your vacation has the sound of the sea (Izola-Isola 1999).

A recommendation for seaside tourists generally follows this idea, advising them to appreciate the connection with the sea and its 'healing and spiritual powers'. Much more than just a sea where we could swim and have fun in, we are introduced to the sea that is the object of admiration, through which we come into contact with nature, wilderness, with eternity. The poem by Jorge Luis Borges included in one of the tourist brochures emphasises the fact that the sea is also an inspiring object; the experience of the sea, as presented here, is (in the first place) spiritual. The poem begins with the following words: 'Long before the time condensed to days, the eternal sea already washed the shores...'

If the context of the sea can be described in words of romanticised wilderness and healing effects, we need to understand the context of the Mediterranean also within a wider political and cultural framework. The titles of the brochures such as *Mediterranean in Slovenia* and *Izola – Mediterranean on your doorstep* tend to display the 'Mediterranean-ness' of the region. Not only in the titles, though. The adjective Mediterranean is used over and over again in the text: Mediterranean food, the Mediterranean climate... It is possible to understand the emphasis on the 'Mediterranean-ness' of the region in several ways; as a flirtation with the imaginary concept(s) of the Mediterranean; as the Mediterranean as an important cultural-historical area; as a place where the so-called western civilization originates and as the Mediterranean representing a previously established tourist region. At the same time, the specific peculiarities of the Slovene Mediterranean are stressed, mostly talking about the proximity of the high mountains. The emphasis on the Mediterranean can be understood through the process of increasing popularity of the Mediterranean as a tourist region, which could be, as Löfgren stresses, observed in several phases. The starting point, as he puts it, could be traced in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the first Mediterranean tourists were members of the English upper class; their wish to learn about the classic culture led them through the towns of Italy and France. Löfgren connects a second phase with the new means of transport that extended the frontiers of the tourist Mediterranean. Education was no longer the focus of the travel; the institutionalisation of leisure time occurred, the important components of travel became relaxation and fun, and the summer holidays come into being. Löfgren suggests that a third phase is characterized by stepping away from the four S's (sun, sand, sex, sea). The tourist experience is in the third phase marked by the great R that unites romantic, special experience, and the re-establishing of the connection between man and nature (Löfgren 1991:157-168).

I would argue that the tourist material examined in this study reflects elements from these various phases, but that on the whole, the representations of fishery correspond mostly to the last phase.

## FISHERY: BETWEEN ETHNOGRAPHY AND TOURIST IMAGERY

Confronting tourist brochures and postcards from the area in question with ethnography originates from the presupposition that the fields in question are connected, that they inform each other and that the understanding of local actions demands a closer look at the broader discourses as well. What I suggest in this arti-

cle is that tourist representations are highly contextualised – firstly, within the wish to present local distinctiveness and secondly, within the popular tourist imagery – while at the same time, they show a tendency for the ‘correct’ national presentation. The images from within the tourist landscape are actually concrete forms, covering the needs of *invented traditions of imagined communities* as well as adapting to other current trends. Tourist representations are neither unchangeable nor are they unidirectional. Although they radiate the illusion of stability and closeness, they are in fact, as far as their external appearance is concerned, very adaptable and readily dynamic. Tourist representations are formed from the beginning through the processes of gazing, on the one hand, and showing on the other. This formation is a vivid process in which the imagery and the concrete action are not only intertwined, but they also mutually form, shape and react. In the same way that tourist representations require appreciation of their context, the identity of an individual or group also does not rely only on the observed activities within the locale. Instead, it is formed on the crossroads of influences that stem from beyond its immediate surroundings. George E. Marcus stresses that: ‘...It is the various elements of this process of dispersed identity construction – mobile, related representations in many different places of many different characters – that must be grasped as social fact’ (Marcus 1996:46).

When speaking about the ethnography of local tourism on the basis of the connection between fishery and tourism, one must bear in mind the various correlative representations of fishery that bring one to the understanding of local specifics. These representations are *de facto* living in the same *habitus* as actors involved in the research. Tourist representations are only one of many fields of reference. This is not to say that one should see people as the passive recipients of external influences. On the basis of my ethnography and analysis of tourist representations, I suggest that people are not only aware of the external images based on themselves, but are also trying to co-operate actively with them and make them a part of their daily activities.

Thus, the connections between fishery and tourism can be, as viewed from the perspective of the people who make a living from combining these two activities, on the level of content, divided into three groups; educational excursions for primary and secondary schools; panoramic excursions for pleasure; and participation in fishing as a special experience. It is between these last two that a stark contrast is evident. The first has an air of easy, unburdened fun and even recklessness about it, while the other is connected to a more ‘profound’ experience. The profundity of this experience is characterised mostly by the notion of bonding with the sea and the fishery. The sea, as understood here, takes on the role of representing the concept of wilderness, a notion that one should not treat as a defined physical area, but a state of mind. Fishery adds to this experience a link to the primal and the rural, since it represents an activity that every day inevitably includes a confrontation between man and nature. Anthropologists working in the area of maritime anthropology often stress that ‘being with nature’ is also one of the positive attributes of being a small-scale fisher. According to anthropological data, fishery is often perceived as a ‘natural way of life’, in contrast with the ‘city way of life’ that is supposedly characterised with criminality, alienation, consumerism, violence, et cetera (see Einarsson 1996:49; Acheson 1981:296).

One could say that, when considering participative fishing, the desired tourist experience is not limited to the surroundings; it extends to the fishermen and their working day, which in turn becomes the object of the tourist gaze. The nature of the participation in fishing can mostly be linked with the fishery representations in tourist brochures and postcards, while the content of panoramic excursions corresponds with a field that is not close to the fishery motifs in various tourist representations. Rather, it is much closer to the concept of the holiday as a time of leisurely fun. Despite emphasis on the positive connotations of participation in fishing, the fishermen-cum-tourist workers emphasise the appeal of all three forms on offer, in the sense of connecting *the world of fishery with the tourist product*. The world of fishery is to be understood in this statement in an abstract sense and is thus closely related to romanticised tourist (re)presentations of fishery. Not dissimilarly to that seen in *the world of fishery*, the word *tourist* also takes on an abstract role. When generalising, fishermen-tourist workers talk about tourists, but when describing individual instances (such as describing specific trips and the activities that they include), they tend to use more precise terms, talking about women from the countryside, miners, high school students et cetera. Since the adjective tourist tends to have a negative connotation (for example, *...the fishing holiday is not what it used to be, it's become a tourist show...*) the position of not being involved in tourism is a most convenient one.<sup>12</sup> It either makes an excuse for the visitors who allegedly are not tourists, or the hosts who allegedly are not tourist workers but actually fishermen.

In basic terms, there are four explanations presented by the fishermen-tourist workers for their involvement in the tourist industry: the political situation, the economic interest, customer demand and the beneficial ecological effect. The connection between the tourist discourse and customer demand can be elaborated. When asked why tourists choose such a way of spending their free time, the answers produced by the fishermen-tourist workers coincide with the most visible thematic parameters, which correspond to the fishery motifs. Among them are the concepts of relaxation, enjoyment, freedom, contact with nature, a healthy environment, food and the so-called authentic experience.

Although certain assertions in the tourist representations and in my ethnographic evidence are compatible, the discrepancies between the two can also be noticed. One of the reasons for combining fishery with tourist activity, as stressed by fishermen, is the image of fishery as a harmful economic practice, whose replacement with tourist activities is in the 'interest of nature'. Tourist brochures and postcards do not however mention this aspect of fishery. They characterise fishery as a benign, naive and simple activity (the photographs of nets, smaller wooden boats...). Although fishing is actually mentioned frequently as a harmful activity in the media discourse (with the notable exception of instances dealing with 'national pride'), fishery in the tourist discourse is presented in a completely different light: as a romanticised activity. Along these lines, the invitation to participate in an excursion with a fishing boat, as mentioned in the tourist guides, is portrayed by photographs of older wooden boats. In actuality, the excursions take place on larger boats with dragnets. The implicit mention of boats with dragnets cannot be explained only through the prism of aesthetics (the smaller boats supposedly deemed as being more

attractive). It can also be understood in connection with dragnets being seen as a harmful technology, a topic of many discussions among people who are involved in fishery, as well as being mentioned in newspaper articles (see Podbevšek 2001).

Hence, in conclusion, I suggest that the contexts surrounding fishery representations in the selected study material at the same time serve as the focal points through which the ethnographic evidence and the tourist discourse can be brought into a dialogue. They can be divided into three clear contexts: a) the Mediterranean context; b) the context of the sea; c) the context of good old times. To summarise just a few instances in relation to fishery presentations: travelling through an imaginary Mediterranean landscape, becoming entangled in tourist brochures and furthermore, interpreted and brought to life in our mental preconceptions may equate to distancing oneself from the civilised world, to come into contact with the rural and the 'natural'; travelling to the sea may mean to swim and sunbathe, tanned skin, an 'authentic' contact with the outdoors and the sea, freedom and health; the search for contact with a once more common lifestyle means to come in contact with the supposedly good old days, with a just, traditional society... Even if the contact alone is an abstraction, the motives of tanned fishermen, fishing boats at sunset, cleaning colourful nets on a white pier are actually the condensed forms of such demands, admirations, wishes and experiences. These do not only concern the tourist, but also reveal a wider social space. It is most likely that a certain image survives various vacation landscapes, during a certain period the image's content (or maybe just its metaphorical meanings) and thus its message may be altered, while the form apparently remains unchanged. In the tourist brochures and postcards, fishery representations map out only a section of the vacation landscape: it appears that the part of the demand spectre they cover is exactly the one concerning nature, the rudimentary and the times gone by.

## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of the actor's perspective is being used in the sense of structural organisation of the observation (researcher's observation) that defines the observed.

<sup>3</sup> This article does not take into consideration the perspective of tourists-visitors. This segment will be analysed in future work.

<sup>4</sup> Numbers refer to my ethnographic evidence.

<sup>5</sup> Numbers refer to my ethnographic evidence.

<sup>6</sup> Izola is situated in the bilingual coastal area, where both Italian and Slovene are considered to be official languages.

<sup>7</sup> The word forced, as I understood it, was meant in a way that the interest of visitors had always existed but prior to Slovenia's independent state fishermen were neither prepared for tourist business nor were they interested in it.

<sup>8</sup> Although the statements of my informants do not lean upon concrete articles one could easily trace such information in the Slovene media (comp. Šuligoj 1994, Šoštaršič 1994, Šuligoj 1995, Šuligoj 1999, Hlaj 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Osmica (eight) is a name for a special kind of selling and serving wine and food (mainly meat) at home,

introduced by Maria Theresa. The main idea of osmica was that once a year vine-growers were allowed to sell the remaining old vine without taxes for eight days. Nowadays the event called osmica has mainly a tourist character.

<sup>10</sup> Selected tourist brochures and postcards: tourist brochures – Izola-fotovodnik 1995. Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko. Ljubljana; Koper-fotovodnik 1995. Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko. Ljubljana; Piran-fotovodnik 1994. Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko. Ljubljana; Simi Sime 1996. Piran. Ljubljana; Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko; Simi Sime 1996. Izola. Ljubljana; Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko; Simi Sime 1996. Koper. Ljubljana; Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko; Mediteran na vašem pragu-Izola 1998. Izola: Turistino informativni center; Mediteranska Slovenija 1999. Ljubljana; Slovenska turistina zveza; Izola-Isola 1999. Izola: Turistino gospodarsko združenje. Postcards: Slovenska riviera na 14 razglednicah. <http://www.si21.com/sisart/razglednice.html>; Razglednice slovenske obale published by Sidarta and selected postcards of publishing houses Sisart, Confidia, Jugovi & Neve ny.

<sup>11</sup> The term landscape is understood here as a mental category, within a specific time and space dimension. In his article entitled 'L'ethnologie et le paysage', Gerard Lenclud stresses that landscape refers to two levels of reality – subjective and objective; to take this twin subjective-objective as a whole is, in his opinion, a precondition for analysis. The word landscape refers to a specific fragment of the world, as seen through a mental lens; landscape as a mental category must therefore be understood as historically and culturally preconditioned. The conceptual scheme of the tourist discourse which landscapes the coast between Ankaran and Piran is, in regard to what has just been said, just one of the many possible interpretations. Lenclud discusses mainly the topic of landscape as an object of research in ethnology. He concludes that the mental refiguration of a place or object into a specific landscape cannot be observed but just deduced (Lenclud 1995). Following his argument it seems reasonable to talk about the refiguration of a place or an object into a specific landscape in the case of finished landscape representations and its creators. Here surely belong photographers, writers and designers of tourist informative material and postcards. I will limit my analysis to finished representations and, for the time being, leave out the research conducted among the makers of tourist representations and their relationship to the local as well as broader context.

<sup>12</sup> The negative connotation of the word tourist refers to my ethnographic data.

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