The Swiss-Italian Border-space

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Introduction

The present work examines the Swiss-Italian border from a particular viewpoint: In contrast to the traditional view of the national state that looks at the border as the periphery, the theoretical concept of the border-space sees it as a centre. On the one hand the border separates and forms two individual, discernible entities. On the other hand it lets these entities meet each other along the boundary. The idea of the border-space sees a fertile capability in this meeting, where something new can come into being that did not exist before neither on the one nor on the other side of the boundary. These border-caused elements create spatial figures that are a part of the border itself.

PART I of the work develops the theoretical concept of the border-space along a reading of scientific border literature. PART II examines the Swiss-Italian border in order to identify these border-caused elements and to describe their spatial forms. This examination is not reduced on one particular scale, furthermore these border-caused qualities can emerge as well in close proximity to the boundary as also far away in the centres of the territories. However, where it is necessary to examine phenomena in a smaller scale, the work mainly zooms in to the area around Como, Varese and Mendrisio, later described as Regione Insubrica.
PART I: The concept of the Border-space
To imagine a fact infinite in itself is impossible for the human cognition. It cannot be described. To define a fact means to distinguish it from another and thus to impose a limit. So it is possible to recognise it as an entity. Philolaos, a Pythagorean scholar of the 5th century BC writes that everything that is perceptible needs to have a digit, meaning it needs to have a limit and thus an end. In the ancient Greek understanding, the term limited was generally higher valued than the endless. The limited consists in measure and form and therefore in harmony. An index for this assumption is the theory of Pythagoras about principles. He classifies principles in a positive and a negative line-up. The limited turns up in the line-up of positive principles along with one, male or light, while the limitless is classified among the negative principles such as many, female or darkness. Today, as we tend to favour the limitless, this view may seem to be one-handed. The preference for the limitless is above all immanent to religiosity. Christianity, along with other religions, defines the perfection of God in the quality of the endless or the eternal, while finitude and limits express the imperfection of the world. With increasing secularization, the issue of infinity became less important, so that today it is above all a mathematic problem. Indeed, not all entities are defined by external limits. In the early 18th century Leibnitz describes in the Monadology something that is not limited from exterior, but is defined by its particular quality. More illustrative is the Network that is defined by connectivity or a magnetic field that is defined by gravitation and repulsion. The definition, categorisation and abstraction of facts are the main occupation of human cognition. Through categories we do not only perceive or represent the world but, instead, simultaneously we also create it. Reece Jones states that in social sciences problematical categories such as culture, gender and scale have been criticized, however, moving beyond them has proved to be surprisingly difficult. It is evident that limits and definitions are not fixed, but often blurred and hard to perceive. They are objects of constant negotiations and shifts.

The boundary, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is a line that marks the limits of an area, a dividing line, often a limit of something abstract, especially a subject or sphere of activity. The interesting aspect is that there is only one boundary between two entities, it is a reciprocal limit. Therefore the boundary has a double meaning: It defines, what is part of the one entity, and it excludes, what is part of the other entity. The boundary is the place of common interest by the two entities. It not only separates the two entities, but in the meantime it connects them also together. To differentiate one thing to another does not mean to ignore the other. The contrary is the case: the other is constitutive in this process as a point of reference. It is a paradox that the more the one entity wants to be different from the other; the more it needs the other as a point of reference. Both entities are to the same extent constitutive for the boundary.

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1 WORKART, 1995, pp. 281
2 WORKART, 1995, pp. 281
3 WORKART, 1995, pp. 284
4 JONES, 2008, pp.174
The German term *Grenze* signifies the geopolitical border, but it is also used in a larger sense to generally describe a reciprocal limit of two spheres, similar to the term boundary. It is frequently used in everyday language and often used in a metaphorical sense. An example is the idiom *Grenzen setzen* that is mainly used in the context of child rearing and of political discourses. This example also illustrates the active and the modifiable aspect of the *Grenze*. In an economical context the often-used expression *Die Grenze des Wachstums* is the equivalent to the English *the limit to Growth*. If we consider that the *Grenze* is a reciprocal limit we can notice that the idiom in the two languages emphasizes different viewpoints on the same problem. The English one focuses on the growth and its limits. In the meantime by using the word *Grenze*, the German one indicates that there is another entity beyond the growth. If we agree that the two entities are to the same extent constitutive for the *Grenze*, then the idiom indicates that the entity of growth stands in a balance with the force of another entity that is beyond the growth. We can state that the English idiom emphasizes the limit as the periphery to the sphere of growth. The German idiom emphasizes a viewpoint that focuses on the centrifugal aspect of the problem.

A similar axial emphasize on *Grenze* we can often observe in German speaking discourses on arts and literature where the term is employed in a metaphorical sense. The German-Bosnian writer, philosopher and literary scholar Dževad Karahasan describes it «als Metapher für eine mögliche Form der Erkenntnis, als Ort außergewöhnlichen symbolischen Potentials, als universalgeläntes Symbol für Spannung, die per Definition fruchtbar ist, als eine Dramatische Form par excellence...» He further describes the *Grenze* as something purely objective. It is the place where two entities of the same kind meet each other. This could be two entities of space, two entities of time or two entities of sense. Since the two entities are to the same extent constitutive for the existence of the *Grenze*, it is completely part of the one identity, but at the same time it is already something completely different. The *Grenze* gives a perceptible form and identity to each entity, but at the same time it enables each entity to recognize what is beyond its own existence. Thus, everything that comes into being because of the *Grenze* goes beyond one particular identity and is therefore objective. So it becomes a metaphoric ideal, where art comes into being, if we consider art as a form of higher expression resulting from a symbiosis of material, author and idea. The following metaphor by Hegel helps to further illustrate and clarify the idea how the boundary becomes an origin of knowledge: «Für uns ist der Stein beschränkt, für sich selbst nicht; wir sind über seine Bestimmung hinaus; er ist mit dem, was er ist unmöglich identisch; das, was sein bestimmtes Sein ausmacht, ist ihm nicht als Nichtein.» Even if he uses here the term *Schanke* and not *Grenze*, we can state that the one, who learned that his existence is limited, has overcome his limitation. He learned that there is something else beyond his existence.

The limit or boundary is a constitutive element to define and describe an entity. Furthermore it is a place of objectivity and of origin for knowledge that goes beyond a particular entity. Even if these considerations do not primarily talk about political borders, they help to shed light on the problem discussed in the next chapters.

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6 To impose limits

7 «as a metaphor for a possible form of knowledge, as a place of extraor-
dinaire symbolic potential, as an universally valid symbol for tension, it
is fertile by definition, as a dramatic figure par excellence...»
KARAHASAN, 2003, pp.10

8 «In our view, the stone is limited, not in his own view; we are beyond
his purpose/ fate, he is immediately identic to his own existence; the
consistence of his particular existence doesn’t appear to him as a
non-consistence.» WORKART, 1995, pp. 288, after HEGEL: Vorlesun-
gen über die Philosophie der Religion, a.a.O., pp. 168

9 Barrier/ Limit (used in form of the adjective beschränkt)
The origin of the term *border* is in the late Middle English, when it was adapted from the Old French *bordeure.* However, the etymology won’t help a lot to understand the essence of the border. Fact is that today the term is mainly used in a geopolitical context.

### 1.2.1 Evolution

For a long time human social orders lived without fixed geographical borders. Evidently this does not mean that there where no boundaries or categories. But the spaces of affiliation, of inclusion and exclusion were created according to criteria such as relation by blood, tribe, language or profession. Therefore anthropologists and sociologists see borders primarily as binary distinctions such as us/them, here/there or inside/outside between groups at a variety of scales. Gerhard Sandner describes this order as a *Kulturlandschaft,* as an accumulation of cultural fields in various scales, juxtaposed, overlapped and nested one into another.

First attempts to establish fixed geographic borders were done under great efforts and enormous costs. The Great Wall aimed to protect the empire of the Chinese Qin dynasty against nomads and warring tribes. Later, in the same sense, the Roman Limes were supposed to fixate the limit of the empire against attacking Barbarians. Geographic borders finally got established hand in hand with the invention of modern cartography. The idea to draw arbitrary lines on a map to define the limits of states goes back to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. It marks the transformation of Europe from a system of feudalism into a system of states. From the viewpoint of the national states the border is an expression of power over space and is closely associated with the notion of territory. The process of forming a national identity is generally initiated from and associated with the cultural centres. In the case of Switzerland the established centres of identifications are rather the Alps, or in particular the Gotthard, whereas in many other countries this are the capitals rich in history and culture such as Paris in France or Rome and Florence in Italy. This national identity is aimed to be spread on the totality of the territory. As the periphery of the national territory, the border is a tool to decide what will be included in this identity and what will be excluded. The extreme case of this view on borders is embodied in the fascist projects of the 20th century that aimed to homogenise their territory. For example the idea that the area directly influenced by German language has to belong to German speaking Aryans exclusively. Fortunately the process of identity building is much more complex than that. Identities do not

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2 Newman, 2006
3 He doesn’t use the term field in the sense of an agricultural field (homogenised surface and clearly defined limits), but comparable to a magnetic field, which is able to move and the places in the field can be described with the terms gravitation, distance, direction and contiguity.
4 Sandner, 1987
5 What I call here geographic border is the totality of dynamics caused by imposing a boundary to limit state territories. This term is widely used in the scientific literature, even if nowadays geography, as a science of space of societies, is treating also spaces in transformation. Saskia Sassen opposes the (traditional) geographic border to the border as institution. Latter includes topological measurements that aim to border networks. (Sassen, Sept 06, 2011)
6 Amilat Szary, 2013, pp. 416
exist only on a national scale, but are in general much more consistent in a smaller scale (local, regional, etc.) To a limited extend they also exists on a supranational scale (language area, continent etc.). Further identity building is not exclusively a top-down process, but a constant cultural activity of societies. As a reciprocal limit between states, the border is an object of the international law. As that the course of the boundary has to be defined precisely. In the alpine region around the Matterhorn the boundary between Italy and Switzerland was not established in abstract lines on a map, but along geographical landmarks. The origin is a lingual description using words such as peak, edge or ridge. In section where landmarks are less striking it also uses words like the highest point of the glacier, a prominent boulder or the spot at which water would flow to one side or another. Later this description got translated into maps. Due to climate change and the on-going melting of glaciers, some of these landmarks shifted up to 100 meters since the last actualisation of the course in 1940. This led to a recent revision of the course of the boundary. Since this change did not affect any inhabitants or the allocation of precious natural resource, and the two countries do not have major tension, the new course could be negotiated without problems. In international waters the course of the boundaries are not fixed at all. This however gives rise to enormous international conflicts. In the Barents Sea, to name only one example, several nations are engaged in a bitter struggle for the sovereignty over enormous deposits of natural resources such as oil, gas, fish and marine mammals.

Through colonialism the European invention of the geographic borders has been exported around the world. In Asia, Africa or America the colonial powers negotiated the courses of boundaries among themselves and imposed it on the continent regardless of local conditions such as history or social orders. Such a high level of abstraction is called mathematical borders. The lines, drawn on a map, often connect abstract geographical points of enormous scale, such as the boundary between USA and Canada that follows the 49th degree of latitude. The counter term to the mathematical border is that of the natural borders. It is often applied in the literature to denote topographical characteristics such as mountains, ravines or rivers that interrupt an easy communication, and therefore suggest the installation of a political border. The above-described alpine boundary between Italy and Switzerland is an example of this type. But the term itself is misleading, as it suggests the course of the boundary as God-given and obscures the fact that the political border is a purely human project.

In the intense discussions on globalisation that emerged in the 1980’s many scholars anticipated a future in a borderless world. Through the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the Iron Curtain this anticipation got nursed and enforced. The enormous success of books such as The World is Flat proves that this opinion still is wide spread. The author describes the world as a level playing field, thanks to Internet and globalisation, where everyone has the same opportunities of commerce. Consequently historical and geographical divisions become increasingly irrelevant. But the borderless world discourse itself is disciplinary and place specific. It is primarily a discussion of economists and information scientists (cyberscholars), while geographer, social scientists, sociologist and international lawyers are more sceptical. On top this discourse mainly took place in the western world. In Africa, for example, the outcome of superimposed colonial borders remained a far larger subject for scientific research than the actual reconfiguration of borders in parts of Africa. Paradoxically the increased possibility of global access to Internet also strengthens the affiliation to national identity and the place of origin, by giving emigrants access to information and communication. In fact, borders did not disappear and continue to structure the geographical order of the world. But the situation has become more complex and the understanding of territory and border has become less rigid. Globalisation changes the hierarchy of space. It interconnects the important places among themselves beyond the traditional border by superimposing new networks and it increasingly opened up the borders for flows of capital and information. Networks require different techniques of bordering than the traditional geographic borders. Those methods will further be discussed in the next chapter.

Besides we assist opposite developments taking place worldwide. In Europe a gradual opening of the borders in the Schengen area and the reinforcement of collaborations across the boundary takes place. Since the

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7 CF. HÂNE, Justin: As climate changes, so do borders. Swissinfo.ch, March 30, 2009
8 BENEVOLO; ALBRECHT, 1995, pp. 4
9 NEWMAN, 2006
10 FRIEDMAN, Thomas L., 2005: The World Is Flat, A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century
11 NEWMAN, 2006, pp. 146
1980’s the establishing of transboundary border-regions has actively been promoted by the European Union, including heavily founded research projects, as a mean to reduce mutual suspicion in the transformation from a system of war to a system of peace. At the same time the extended EU has its problems with the outer-Schengen borders. The mechanism of separation that has partly been taken off from the inner Schengen borders has been reinforced at the contours of Schengen space. Worldwide probably more boundaries are getting established continuously as there are getting removed. With the discussion on national security in post-9/11 America, the US state boundaries have drastically been tightening in order to prevent elements of terrorism entering the national territory. The border to Canada, traditionally known as a ‘soft’ boundary, has now become much more difficult to cross. The Mexican border, already tight before, has become even more difficult to cross for illegal immigrants. There have been immense research projects funded by the Bureau of Homeland Security, much more than for example comparable studies on economic collaborations across the national borders.

1.2.2 Spatial dimensions

In a geopolitical context, the term boundary represents the linear aspect of a border. It coincides with the demarcation line that was drawn on a map or indicated by boundary stones in the terrain. The boundary is the hard reciprocal limit of two entities as discussed in the first chapter. In the political context the idea of the boundary is the barrier, the end of the territory. But it is always also the place of contact with the other entity. In a situation of conflict there is often an attempt to reduce the border to its linear dimensions and the boundary can get a physical expression in form of a fence or a wall. At the worst it gets extended to a corridor of no-mans land, as a sort of an offset boundary to protect the original boundary. This was the case with the Todesstreifen at the former boundary between the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). The demarcation line was offset and the resulting strip was partly equipped with automatic firing system and mines. This strip is not a border-space in the sense of this essay. The name Todesstreifen indicates that this is not the aim to create a space in a humanistic sense. It is rather indicating the aim to build a barrier that is completely impenetrable and avoiding the contact with the other entity, which the boundary is generating automatically. Being that, it is like a building of the type of Glacis. But even in a situation, where a boundary is completely impenetrable, it is still the place of contact with the other, although the other might be fictionalized in this case. In a 2003 essay the German-Romanian writer Herta Müller describes her experiences with the closed boundary in communist Romania. During a train journey from Temeswar to Bucharest there was a section where the tracks follow the course of the Danube, which coincides with the boundary to Yugoslavia. Most passengers stood up and went to the window, sunken in thoughts, gazing with wistful eyes to the other side of the river. Even if information from outside were systematically blocked by censorship authorities everyone had an idea about how the life on the other side of the boundary must be like. This kind of imagination can lead to an effect of shock and disappointment if one day the border gets opened up after a long period of conflict. Meeting the other for the first time after long separation can result in enforcing suspicion and distrust.

Since the political border is a complex, multi-layered construct, it is never reduced to be a hard reciprocal limit only. There are always continuities, but of course, in a situation of conflict and militarisation, these are reduced drastically. In a situation of demilitarisation and collaboration of the two states the borderlands become important as zones of mutual interaction. Borderlands exist around the state boundaries, but they vary in their intensity and extend to which they affect people on both sides of the boundary.

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13 NEWMAN, 2006, pp. 149

14 Death strip

15 Derived from the verb glacer (to slip) it denotes an artificial slope encircling a fortification to better protect it against enemies. Today the term is also used for the idea of a buffer zone, a zone of battle between the territories of two enemy states.

17 MÜLLER, 2003, pp. 57
In the borderland, qualities from one side of the boundary become a topic on the other side; it is the sphere of influence from beyond the boundary. Thus it is a zone of cultural, social, economic and linguistic hybridity that enables a gradual movement from one cultural norm to another. In the extreme case one cannot distinguish any linger, if he is on the one side of the boundary or already on the other, and the actual course of the boundary becomes completely arbitrary. Under the stress of confrontation borderlands are nearly inexistent, since local transaction beyond the boundary are usually discouraged and often illegal. The lingering flow mainly happens between the national centres. But in the shift from conflict to a more harmonious situation, the borderlands often play the predominant roles, responsible for more interactions than the centres. In rare cases the collaboration in the borderlands are driven by nostalgia in order to maintain former affiliation. More often the driving force is pure pragmatism, recognizing the economic potentials of the particular situation. In the relevant literature different expressions are applied for the borderlands, among American authors the term frontier is predominant, others speak about border-regions or trans-boundary border-regions. In the specific case of Europe the term Euroregion denotes borderland-collaborations that have been encouraged politically by the European Union.

The spatial counterparts to territories are networks. These spaces are not defined by external limits but by connective cohesion. As such they do only to a small extend respect traditional geographic borders. But this does not mean that these spaces are not bordered. The cyberspace, as the epitome of a network and the supposed borderless world, is in fact full of communities and affiliations, bordered by strict demarcation criteria. The basic criteria are access to computer and knowledge of basic computer skills. Once in the cyberspace, spaces are bordered by passwords, memberships or web policies. Networks exist in various scales. Globalisation empowers those networks of global scale. In many ways they predominate over territories by interconnecting the important places among themselves. This new situation requires new bordering methods. Thus national borders are not only along the territory’s periphery anymore. With increasing intensity, the efforts of the bordering process focus on junction and neuralgic points in the centres of the territory, such as airports, train stations or free trade zones. This new bordering methods not only increase the spatial complexity of the borders, they also diversify criteria. As smart border they separate the ones who have access to relevant spaces from those who do not. In the past, for example in the Middle Age, barriers have been built to separate a sovereign against another sovereign. Today such barriers often only prevent the unwelcome ones to cross the boundary, mostly refugees or poor. But this physical barrier along the territory’s boundary is only one point in a chain of bordering elements. Other elements ensure that transaction flows, diplomats or wealthy citizens continue to circulate freely between the same two countries. The most extreme version of the smart border is probably the GPS bracelet, a border reduced to the scale of the human body, controlling offenders where they can go and where not. Saskia Sassen even makes the hypothesis that the more traditional borders open up, for example for capital and information to flow, the more other bordered spaces emerge. As examples for such new bordered spaces she names the example of the World Trade Organisation, which offers a space of cross-border mobility for high-level professionals; a space that is completely impenetrable for the large majority of the world population. Another example is global finance and shadow banking, especially the fact that most of financial capital flows within private networks. So have many public stock markets been bought by private societies, even if they are supposed to be public institutions. Access to these spaces is very limited.

1.2.3 Border-space

What I call border-space in this work takes into account two elements: the first is the fertile capability of the border to give rise to something new; the second is the spatial form of such emerging qualities.

The idea of the fertile capability does not look at the border as the periphery anymore but as the centre of interest. This viewpoint goes back to the first chapter, when I described the Grenze as an origin of knowledge. It is based on the idea that when two entities meet something new can come into be-
ing. This fertile quality goes beyond the idea of hybridity in the borderland, when elements from the one side of the boundary become topical on the other side too. It does not mean continuities that cross the boundary either. It is based on the idea that there are elements and activities, which appear only because of the border. They are therefore a part of the border themselves. These elements are not reduced to the linear form of the boundary. They happen in various places and with different spatial extensions. Thus the border itself creates spatial figures. *Figure 1* illustrates three levels of extension of the border: the boundary line as the sharp, reciprocal limit of the two entities; the borderland as a space of hybridity and the border-space that consists in border-caused elements. These three levels do not impose an either/or situation; they are in any case present at the same time. But according to the particular situation, the importance and the intensity of the different levels changes.

*Figure 1*: Three levels of an extension of the border
PART II: The Swiss-Italian Border, a case study
This chapter gives some general introduction on the course and the implementation of the state-boundary between Italy and Switzerland.

2.1.1 Historical Outline

The course of the boundary between the Swiss Confederation and the former Kingdom of Italy was fixed in an official agreement in 1941. Since then, several smaller changes have been made, mainly because of road construction, water corrections, hydropower projects or natural shift of demarcation (see chapter 1.2.1). One example is the 1955 exchange of 0.5 km² of land between the Italian Province of Sondrio and the Canton of Grisons that enabled Switzerland to construct a dam in order to use the valley Di Lei as a source for hydropower production. The artificial lake is on Italian territory, only the dam is on the Swiss side of the boundary due to this exchange. The 1941 agreement is based on pre-existent definitions of the international boundary. The course of Switzerland’s external limits, or rather that of the Old Swiss Confederacy, was mainly defined in the Congress of Vienna in 1815. But before the Risorgimento the sector, which is today common with Italy was shared with a variety of political entities.

Ticino was conquered by the towns of the Old Swiss Confederacy in the early 16th century during the transalpine campaigns. In the ordeal of the Italian wars, which began in the end of the 15th century and endured until the middle of the 16th century, several European powers were battling for the upper hand in northern Italy. Swiss mercenary soldiers were involved in the battles for its full duration, serving various sovereigns. However, the Old Swiss Confederacy was actively involved only in the conquest of Milan in 1499 and the battle of Marignano in 1515. Subsequently in 1516, it was acknowledged to be in power over Locarno, the Valle Maggia, Lugano and Mendrisio. Thus, it got in control of the Gotthard, one of the most important trade routes between the north and the south of Europe. The first exact definition of the course of the boundary in this area was done in the Treaty of Varese in 1752 between the landvogt of Locarno and the state of Milano. But the boundary between Ticino and Lombardy remained highly porous for cultural and economical exchange, whereas the topographical barrier of the Alps remained far more difficult to cross. It is much later, in the period of Fascism that the border became tighter and Ticino actively searched for a separated identity to neighbouring Italy. But even in this period exchange did not stop completely. In 1919 Italy annexed the South Tyrol, thus the length of the common boundary of Switzerland and Italy was extended. Due to the European integration in the second half of the 20th century, this boundary became also the dividing line between Switzerland and the European Union. The bilateral agreement of free movement between these two entities integrates Switzerland in the Schengen area. The agreement has been fully applied since June 2002, considerably reducing the effect of separation. However custom taxes for goods have not been abolished.

1 Kenneth Boulding, 1989
2 www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/19410063/index.html

3 Literal translation: resurgence; denotes the historical movement for Italian unification active between 1815–1871
4 Until the Risorgimento Italy was a geographical but not a political entity
5 www.bfm.admin.ch
2.1.2 Course of the boundary

The Swiss-Italian state boundary measures 741 km. For both of the countries it is the longest land-boundary that they share with another state. It touches several political sub-entities, in Italy the autonomous region of the Aosta valley, the regions Piedmont, Lombardy and the autonomous region of Trentino-South Tyrol, in Switzerland the Cantons Valais, Ticino and Grissons. As a further subdivision a variety of Provinces in Italy and districts in Switzerland are touching the boundary with not less than 70 municipalities on each side. A large part of the course of the boundary is in terrain that is not easy to access, including mountaintops such as the Matterhorn or the Monte Rosa. It passes over some important alpine traffic routes such as the Great St Bernard or the Splügen Pass and crosses the Lake Maggiore (80% IT, 20% CH) and the Lake Lugano (37% IT, 63% CH). In the case of Chiasso Como the boundary runs throughout a continuous urban fabric. Despite the continuity of this urban space, the crossing points are rather few in this area, thus the course of the boundary cannot be identified on a building map but nevertheless it can be identified on a street map. Along the entire Swiss-Italian state-boundary 32 road crossing points are installed. For the largest part, those are characterised by the petrol stations in immediate proximity on the Swiss side, tempting Italian customers to profit from the lower petrol tax.

7 km out of the 741 km of the total boundary encloses the enclave Campione d’Italia, which is part of the Province of Como but surrounded by the territory of Ticino. The boundary follows the limits of the municipality; to its West it is located along the middle line of the Lake Lugano. To access Campione d’Italia there is no custom control. Furthermore the use of Swiss currency is standard and the inhabitants benefit from a special regulation which is taking in account that most of them are working in Ticino. The place is widely known for the big Casino. Also in these terms it benefits from special regulations, which do not conform to standard regulations nor in Italy, neither in Switzerland. Switzerland repeatedly tried to integrate Campione d’Italia in its territory until the early 20th century by proposing exchanges for other parts of Switzerland.
**Picture 2:** In the case of Chiasso and Como the state-boundary runs through a continuous urban fabric. Nevertheless large-scale infrastructure emplacements and a slight change of architectural style indicate the existence of the boundary.

**Picture 3:** Between the municipalities of Ponte Tresa and Viconago the state-boundary is fixed in the middle of the river Tresa.
Identity can be seen as an anthropological phenomenon. For individuals as well as for collectives it is not a given fact, but a constant cultural process. The definition of who we are (or who I am) happens to a large extend in reference to a constantly changing environment. Therefore, basic anthropologic oppositions such as us/them, here/there or inside/outside play an important role. An important source for the Identity is the memory of an experienced past. More precisely, it is the selective memory, than only experiences useful for the present situation can be taken into account. This chapter examines border experiences, which possibly are giving raise to border-identities.

«Das Gedächtnis muss schöpferisch sein.» ¹

¹ «Memory has to be creative» Peter von Matt, 17.01.1998: Die Kunst der gerechten Erinnerung. Speech at the ceremony «200 years modern Switzerland»

2.2.1 Language

Obviously, the Swiss-Italian state boundary does not coincide with the separation of languages. If this would be the criterion the boundary would need to be shifted in several sectors. The Italian speaking part of Switzerland includes Canton Ticino, where Italian is the official language, as well as 8 municipalities in the South Grisons. In this canton Italian is the co-official language along with German and Rhaeto-Romanic. In the Italian autonomous province of South Tyrol, which shares a short section of the boundary with the canton of Grisons, German is the co-official language along with Italian. The same is the case for French in the autonomous region of the Aosta Valley that is bordered by the Valais to its north.

Due to the common past under the reign of the Dukes of Milan until the 16th century, the language evolution in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland and the Lombard regions are closely related. The vernacularly used local Lombard language belongs to the Gallo-Italic languages together with the languages of Liguria, Piedmont, Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna. They all have their initial roots in Latin, which served as the common written language. In 1426 the dukes of Milan imply the written Italian as language for official correspondence. This new language, which was only accessible for the ruling class, combined elements from three sources. The first source was the elevated Latin, the second one was the common communication language within Gallo-Italic languages and the third was the Tuscan literary language, the precursor of Standard-Italian. The towns of the Old Swiss Confederacy, which became in power over Ticino in the 16th century, largely took over established regional administration and accepted the Tuscan literary language as the official language for regional governance. From the midst of the 16th century in many places of Ticino and the valleys of South Grisons the Tuscan literary language got accessible to broader sections of the population, mainly because local churches adopted it as the common language for the religious context. ² This evolution is astonishing since the Catholic Church in general adopted Italian as language for liturgies only in the second half of the 20th century. In most parts of Italy the Italian language became accessible to a broader part of the population only through the Risorgimento and was more intensely promoted in the 20th century.

² BIANCONI, 2008
The Italian language in Switzerland was questioned during the period of Italian fascism. In Ticino, extended debates on the identity of the region took place and for the first time a distinction to the neighbouring Italy was searched. Some politicians demanded to designate the local Dialeto as the official language in order to achieve a clear detachment to Mussolini’s language politics. But there were also the representatives of the Irredentism, who had sympathies with fascist Italy (see chapter 2.1.2). Nevertheless, between these extreme positions, most politicians and intellectuals advocated to hold on to the Italian language and to differentiate between cultural and political affiliation. The upcoming term Svizzera italiana shows the complex relation of political affiliation to Switzerland with an Italian cultural identity.

After the establishment of the Gotthard tunnel in the end of 19th century, when Ticino became far better accessible from the German speaking part of Switzerland and more attractive for tourism, the local population began to worry about a possible Germanization. This concern lasted for a large part of the 20th century and led to a dispute between Ticino and the Swiss Confederation. The so-called Rivendicazioni ticinesi consist in a series of demands towards the Confederation between 1924 and the 1970’s claiming for an increment in promotion of the cantonal economy and in political autonomy. Additionally they demanded the protection of Italian culture and language by a close-down of German schools or higher subsidises for autonomy. The upcoming term Svizzera italiana shows the complex relation of political affiliation to Switzerland with an Italian cultural identity.

Today, within the Italian speaking part of Switzerland, for 82% of the residents Italian is their mother tongue. Of course the language has been adapted to a certain extend, to the political occurrence. On the one hand, it contains helvetisms, expressions unused in Italy and related to particular circumstances. These are often derived from German or French terms such as casa malati, azione or vignetta autostradale. On the other hand, there are expressions adapted from the local dialects such as alpatore, grotto or riale.

In many regions, where the Italian language is used today, the local languages survived up to now in the form of local dialects. This is also the case of the Lombard language in the area of the Italian part of Switzerland and Lombardy. Within the Lombard dialects there is a variety of local variants. They varies to the point that they are mutual unintelligible. The closer one gets to the ridge of the Alps, the more the dialetto is meld with alpine dialects of other origins. But there is also a trend to adapt the regional differences towards a kind of koiné language, which is a unified supraregional version of the Lombard dialect. Today the dialects are mainly used within the context of families and friends, but not in the media or in an official context. In the Lombardy as well as in the region of the Sottoceneri and in the agglomeration of Locarno the dialects have been losing importance during the last decades. In Lombardy 19–30% of residents still uses the dialetto today. This value corresponds to the situation in the agglomerations of Lugano and Chiasso, while in Locarno and in the Mendrisotto the rate is just slightly higher. Meanwhile, in the agglomeration of Bellinzona about half of the population still uses the local dialect. Further North in the alpine valleys and in the South Grisons nearly the whole population speaks the local dialect in their everyday life.

Other historic occurrences have lost importance. For example, Bosco-Gurin (Ticino), lost its German majority between 1990 and 2000. It was the last remaining village founded by the Walser, on the south side of the Alps that maintained a German majority up to that moment. Other Walser municipalities such as Formazza, Macugnaga (both Verbano-Cusio-Ossola, Piedmont), Rima, Alagna (both Vercelli, Piedmont) or Gressoney (Aosta Valley) already changed to Italian majority earlier in the 20th century.

But the Italian language in Switzerland is not limited to its territory; it is present in the whole country. Out of all Swiss residents with Italian as their mother tongue, 56% do actually live in the Italian speaking part, while the remaining 43% live in other regions of the country. This is to a large extend due to immigration (see chapter 2.3.1) and according to that their concentration is the highest in the urban centres, in the industrialised areas of the Central Plateau and the Jura as well as in the centres of tourism in the Grisons and the Valais.
Thus, at first sight, the use of language does not respect the actual course of the state boundary, but refers to historical occurrences. Nevertheless, we can state that the boundary influences the use of everyday language. For the Italian part of Switzerland this concerns the use of Italian as well as of the local dialects. Interestingly, also regional dynamics crossing the boundary can be noticed, for example the frequency of the use of the dialect in the Sottoceneri and the adjacent parts of Lombardy. Historical caused local particularities, such as the German language in the Walser villages or the variety of differences in local dialects, are loosing their importance. In occurrence, networks, which are caused by international dynamics like the spread of Italian language in the German speaking part of Switzerland, are maintaining their importance.

2.2.2 Political Tensions

The movement of *Irredentism* emerged for the first time during the Italian *Risorgimento* and became manifested in the claim to integrate the territories of Trentino and Trieste – at that time still belonging to the monarchy of Austria-Hungary – into the unified Italy. Later, *Irredentism* named the attitude that is in favour of an integration of the Italian-speaking Switzerland into Italy as well as the very enthusiastic supporters of the *Italianità*. In Ticino, no form of *Irredentism* was reported throughout the 19th century. This changed drastically under the upcoming nationalism at the beginning of the 20th century, when the vindication of the *Italianità* became an emotional issue. Within the outraged debates about the cultural identity of Ticino, many expressed their sympathy towards Italy during the First World War. Nevertheless, the political Irredentism mainly remained powerless in Italian-speaking Switzerland. The cultural magazine *L’Adula*, published between 1912 and 1935, insisted on the affiliation of Ticino to the Italian language and culture. It criticized the political orientation towards Switzerland and as well as centralistic tendencies in national politics. After the First World War the magazine repeatedly took position in favour of the Italian Fascism. Therefore, the federal council close it down in 1935. Mussolini officially disapproved *Irredentism* and repeatedly expressed his political sympathy towards Switzerland. At the same time, he maintained relations with

10 The idea of a common identity of the entire reunified Italy.
The Swiss-Italian Border-space

2.2.3 Regione Insubrica

The term Regione Insubrica refers to the tribe of Celts, the Insubres that settled in the oldest glacial epoch in the north of the river Po. Their centre was the city of Mediolanum, the ancient Milan. Another influential city, which was founded by the Insubres, is Como. Their settlement area was limited to the west by the river Ticino, to the east by the river Serio and to the north by the territory of the Leoponti, who lived in the upper part of today’s Ticino. They got subjugated under the Romans in 149 BC together with the other tribes of Gallia Cisalpina and received the Roman citizenship in 49 BC. During the following centuries their name survived in the place named Sibrium. It was used from time to time to indicate different (geographical, natural, political, institutional and economical) aspects of this area and is present in historical maps until it disappeared in the beginning of the 19th century. The term was reactivated in the 1990’s as Regione Insubrica, in the discussions of transboundary collaboration in the region of Como, Varese and Mendrisio. Later, this led to the institutional framework of the Insubrica Euregion, established in 1995 as an union under private law of the following entities: the Canton Ticino, the Lombard provinces of Como, Lecco, Navarre and Varese, as well as the Piedmont province of Vareno-Cusio-Ossola. It corresponds with the intention of the EU to establish so-called Euregions to promote transboundary economic collaboration, formulated in the 1980 declaration of Madrid. The goal of Insubrica Euregion is to promote and simplify collaboration beyond the boundary in the region of the three lakes, to encourage labour mobility and to provide coordination among the responsible institutions. This happens in order to generate economic growth and maintain a region of high quality of life. Beyond that, it aims to promote consciousness for a region that exists already as a geographical, historical, cultural and linguistic, but not as a political entity. The area, consisting of a population of approximately 2.7 million people in

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11 GILARDONI, 2007
12 www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/17/03/blank/key/2009/02.html
13 Gallia Cisapina (Gaul this side of the Alps), contrary to the Gallia Transalpina, is the Roman term for the area between the Alps, the Apennines and the Adriatic Sea that is inhabited by different tribes of Celts who arrives here between the 6th and the 4th century BC.
14 Historical site, today part of the municipality of Castelseprio in the province of Varese
2010 (Ticino, Varese, Como, Lecco, Verbano-Cusio-Ossola and Navarre), has a high rate of transboundary commuters (see chapter 2.3.4) One of the main difficulties in the Union is the shift between institutions. The Swiss canton Ticino has a size comparable to that of an Italian province, but these do not have enough autonomy and power to set up powerful collaborations. In addition, the Lombardy is only partially interested in the collaboration due to its size and the main focus on the Milan conurbation. However, the foundation of the Insubrica Euregion brings enforced cooperation of trade unions with it in order to promote and protect the rights of labouring beyond the state-boundary.

Today several other groups also use the term for cultural, political or educational purposes. The Insibia Radio is an amateur Radio station established in 2007. It aims to promote the Insubrica Euregion as a region of economical collaboration, tourism and cultural affiliation. The Associazione Culturale TerraInsubre is established 1996 in Varese. It publishes a periodical revue and organizes various cultural events. The association insists on historical topics related to the Celtic heritage, but also on local identities such as language or gastronomy. It can be seen as an emanation of the Lega Nord in Varese. The Università degli Studi dell’Insibia, founded in 1998, is state University with two campuses in Como and Varese as well in some minor centres.

The term Insibrism signifies the demand for political institutionalisation of the region or even for political autonomy. Nonetheless, no major political party stands behind this intention. There are two distinguished phases and movements of Insibrism that focus on slightly different geographic areas. The first one is the Movimento degli Indipendenti Insubrici, founded 2002 in Ticino and later in the South Grisons. Its leader Werner Nussbaumer was a former member of the Green party and a representative in the cantonal parliament of Ticino. After the arrestment of Nussbaumer in May 2003, the movement disappeared from the political scene. Another movement is the Domà Nunch, active since 2005. This organisation maintains the online review El Dragh Bloeu. They are mainly active in organizing conferences and

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16 TORRICELLI; STEPHANI, 2009, pp. 34
17 Insibrain Independence Movement
18 Domà Nunch can be translated from the Western Lombard dialect (often referred to as Insubric language) as ‘Only Us’ or ‘Only Our’
rallies (Insubrian National Day, Linguistic conferences on West Lombard Dialects, etc.). Although the organisation has no representative in political institutions, they declare on their website that since 2012 they are not only a cultural association anymore, but also a political movement that runs for the Lombard regional elections. Ideologically, they can be associated with the eco-nationalism and they uphold the idea to turn back to a regional economy and to self-determination. In particular their members are engaged against urbanisation and new infrastructures, such as the project of the new motorway Pedemontana Lombarda.

In the Regione Insubrica we observe an awareness recovering for a region that existed in history but is now divided by the state-boundary. This region is defined by different geographical limits, according to the different groups that use the name Insubria. This reactivation is motivated both by a nostalgia of a common cultural past, as also by a pragmatic view to improve economic relations.

### 2.2.4 Contraband

The particular, regional version that is the focus of this paragraph has a lot to do with the identity of the people living along the boundary. Contraband activities are reported since the 16th century and testify of a persistent porosity of the border between Italy and Switzerland. These activities always have been illegal, but before the reunification of Italy the border controls were highly inefficient and contraband was not object of legal proceedings.19 Thus, among local population, it was predominantly seen as an occupation that is particular to this region. Contraband made a livelihood for many poor families20 and was a structural element of the socio-economic landscape in the borderland.21 Only after the Italian Risorgimento with the introduction of a unified penal law and national border guards these activities became the target of combating crime. Since the two sides of the boundary were marginalized regarding their national economies, local authorities on the Swiss side of the boundary tolerated it to a great extent22 and the local

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19 POLLY, 1989, pp. 100
20 POLLI-SCHÖNBORN, 2012
21 BAZZOCCO, 2011
22 POLLI-SCHÖNBORN, 2012
population on both sides did not condemn it morally. But on a national level it led to diplomatic tension between the two countries, and to the construction of a fence along the boundary in the 1890’s. The success was limited and the fence got named ramina by local inhabitants. But the contraband activities from then on also had a violent side and were causing casualties among the spalloni as also among border guards. Marco Polli describes the typical spallone as a social bandit as he is convinced not doing any morally shameful. Contraband also consisted in a rebellion of the population against centralistic national governance, in order to maintain their local roots beyond the boundary.

Since the second half of the 19th century the privileged goods for contraband were those which were protected under state monopoly in Italy such as tobacco, coffee and sugar. Factories producing these goods were often built in close proximity to the boundary. The Italian spalloni crossed the boundary to buy the goods on the Swiss side, often directly at where they were produced. They transported these goods overnight in a so-called bricolla during exhausting marches over mountain roads. They wore spe-

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23 BAZZOCCO, 2009
24 The topic complicated the conclusion of trade agreements, for example in 1878 when Italy demand the Swiss government to install a custom cartel in order to combat contraband activities. (POLLI-SCHÖNBORN, 2012)
25 Verdigris (patina)
26 The spalloni are the porters, the labourer of contraband, who carry the goods across the border for a charge.
27 POLLY, 1989, pp. 99
28 TOGNINA, 2008
29 For example the tobacco industry in the second half of the 19th century was concentrated in the Sottoceneri, in Lugano, Locarno and Brisago. An obvious reason for the installation of the factories in close proximity to the boundary is the possibility to engage cheap labour from Italy. Those were a considerable part of employees in the labour intense tobacco industry. Whereas, according to approximate extrapolations for the period of 1874–84, it is possible that 33% of the production has been distributed illegally, most of it beyond the state-boundary. This was probably a further reason for the installation of these factories in close proximity to the boundary. Cf. POLLY, 1989, pp. 183–204
30 After the Second World War a similar scenario took place in the Val Poschiavo with coffee roasting factories (BAZZOCCO, 2011)
31 Briccola is a dialect term for that sort of backpack (a box in a jute bag), used by smugglers to transport goods. The term indicates the container and the content.
cial shoes made of jute in order not to leave any traces. Furthermore all of them always carried a sickle with them, so that they could cut off their loads and run, in the case that they were spotted by border guards. A group of *spalloni* was always accompanied by a *stellone*, a kind of forerunner sent on patrol to make sure that the way is clear. *Map 1* indicates the main directions of contraband activities along the section of the Sottoceneri-Como boundary as a case study over the total period from 1868 to 1894. It shows the places of arrest and the placing of dwelling of arrested *spalloni*. We see the main activities among this section between the region of Chiasso and the area around the city of Como. However, it is also possible that in this section the border guards were more efficient than in others. Furthermore, flourishing contraband activities were also reported in the area around the Lake Maggiore, the Centovalli and the Val Bregaglia.

During the Second World War contraband mainly took place in the opposite direction, hence the roles of the border guards also reversed. Up to then the *Swiss Border Guards* largely tolerated the activities, while the Italians were engaged in strict controlling. Now the *Swiss Border Guards* began to strictly control the border, but only with little success. The predominant products now in this period were those that were rationed or difficult to get in Switzerland, namely ham, rice, bicycles and shoes. Also refugees were accompanied by the Italian *spalloni* by payment to pass the border.

Since the 1950’s contraband activities gradually decreased, due to the economic growth in Switzerland and the enlarged possibilities for trans-boundary commuting (see chapter 2.3.3). Since the mid-1970’s this form of contraband definitively lost its attractiveness because of the inflation of the Italian Lira. Due to the progress of the means of transport, contraband today is not primarily associated with the borderland anymore but is a worldwide problem.

Contraband is an example of the productive capability of the border. This might be considered as a negative outcome since contraband is in general an activity that is politically unaccepted and morally shameful, but it is noticeable that even scholars write with a touch of nostalgia about this particular form of contraband that was very much part of local culture.

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32 BAZZOCCO, 2009
33 BAZZOCCO, 2009; TOGNINA, 2008

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2.2.5 Arts and Architecture

Today we find many Romanesque and Gothic monuments on both sides of the boundary, but even more from the 16th to the 19th century, which testifies on-going lively exchanges after Ticino has been conquered by the Helvetic squads. The region could build upon a rich heritage: the Lombard *commacini* were at the only ones, who could build stone arcs at their time, thanks to special machines. Their achievements from the 7th century are seen as a significant contribution to the rise of Romanesque Architecture. Later many important architects and artists from the region around the lakes emigrated to build important monuments in the occidental civilisation: Pietro Antonio Solari from Carona was called to Moscow in 1491 to construct buildings and towers in the Kremlin, Domenico Trezzini was involved in the early 18th century in the most important monuments of St. Petersburg as well as in the emergence the Petrine Baroque, Maerno, Borromini and many others built churches in Rome and all over Italy that testify of the rich historical sediment in this region.

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34 Stonemason
35 The Solari were a dynasty of architects and painters over several generation that were mainly occupied within the construction of the dome of Milan
Flows across the Boundary

2.3.1 Migration

Migration between Switzerland and Italy took place in different periods. As social phenomena, several types of migration have to be distinguished considering divergent geographical and social spaces and representing different human fates. Common to most of them is the fact that the decision to leave the place of origin often turns out to be a definitive one, although, many migrants maintain the dream of returning back one day to better support their decision to move. On the one hand, they will never find back their places of origins the way they left them and often enough, poor Italian villages became almost empty during industrialisation due to emigration. On the other hand, they get integrated in society and everyday life at their new place, especially through education and the social integration of their children.

Until the beginning of the economic growth in the early 20th century, large areas of Ticino were characterised by poverty and underdevelopment (see chapter 2.3.3). Some of the young people found work in the nearby Silk Industry in the region of Como. Many others emigrated to find work in the early-industrialized cities in the north of Europe.

The European Industrialisation effected drastic sociocultural reorganisations. In the 19th century Italy was characterised by great zones of poverty and notably got industrialised later than its neighbouring country Switzerland. Due to this imbalance, hundreds of thousands of Italians found their way to Switzerland during the 20th century. The first wave of Italian migrants consists those who were engaged in the construction of railway tunnels at the end of the 19th century. In the case of the Gotthard (1872–82) it involved labour mainly come from the north of Italy. For the Simplon (1898–06) the building company prefers workers from the south (Calabria and Sicily), apparently because they better support the high temperatures in underground construction sides. In this period of increased unemployment among construction side labourers, some cases of violent riots against Italian seasonal workers were reported; examples are the Käfigturnkrawall in Berne, or the so-called Italienerkrawall in the Working-class district Aussersihl in Zurich.

1 LÉVY, 2013, pp. 415
2 RICCIARDI, CHATTACIN, 2012
3 The case of riot is named after the Käfigturn, the prison at the time. 50–60 labourer attack Italian workers on a construction side on the outskirts of town. After some of them got arrested, the riots of the organized labours could only be stopped by the military.
4 Several days of spontaneous riots after an Italian mason stabbed a labourer from the Alsace.
After the Second World War Switzerland was in an exceptional economic condition. Contrary to most other parts of Europe the industry was mainly intact and there were enormous international demands for machinery. The country urgently needs engineers. Italy was one of the few countries without an emigration regulation. Many Italian engineers came to work in Switzerland, mainly from the ‘golden triangle’ (Milan, Turin and Genoa). Subsequently also well-educated craftsmen, foremen and small entrepreneurs emigrated to work in Switzerland, primarily from the Nord-west. In the first period from 1945–49 they mainly come as seasonal workers.

The first wave of unskilled labour migration also began after the Second World War, but became more intense in the 1950’s. These migrants mainly came from the North-East of Italy. The above-described migrants mainly lived separated from the Swiss society, since they were engaged in specialised industries or in the large-scale infrastructure construction projects. The new arrivals live within the society and work in restaurants or as labourer in the construction sector. From 1960 on, for the following quarter of the century, masses of unskilled labours from the South of Italy find their way into Switzerland. They contributed considerably to the fast economic boom of the country during this period. Between 1958 and 1976 Switzerland was incontestably the first destination for Italian migrants. At the same time, the hinterlands of Southern Italy suffered from considerable depopulation. Even though many of these immigrants were highly motivated to integrate themselves in the Swiss society, they had to suffer from the first wave of xenophobic motivated discourses in Switzerland. From the mid 1960’s on debates on overpopulation of foreign inhabitants is a predominant topic of political discussions. It had its peak in the initiative by James Schwarzenbach in 1970, which claimed to reduce the share of foreign population to 10%. According to Toni Riccardi three key elements subsequently led to a normalisation and to a situation of more mutual respect. The first one is the tragedy of Mattmark, when a part of a glacier has detached and fallen on a shantytown accommodating labours from the nearby dam construction. 56 out of 88 deadly victims are Italian nationals. Because of negligent security precautions the event caused a diplomatic crisis between the two countries as well as legal proceedings, even if without success. At the same time, within the Swiss population, consciousness on the deplorable living conditions of the Italian population grow and public debates on reciprocal respect and solidarity took place. The second element was the ‘Solidarity initiative’, started in 1974 that came to public vote in 1981. It is a counter model to the precedent xenophobe initiatives. Although it was refused massively, it was a first attempt to subsequent improvements of the legal status of immigrants. The third element according to Toni Riccardi was the triumph of the Azzurri at the football world cup 1982, when thousands of Italian workers celebrated in the Streets of Switzerland, causing a wave of solidarity.

Another social phenomenon related to migration is related to the political refugees. First Italian socialists arrived at the beginning of the 20th century, fleeing repressions in their country. But most of them arrived from the 1920’s on with the rise of Fascism. They came mainly from the cultural centres in the north such as Milan, Turin or Genoa. Many of them continued their political activities in exile and were organizing themselves. Most influential were the Italian socialists in Zurich, organized around the Cooperativa italiana, forming an outpost of the Partito Socialista Italiano. Switzerland became the country with the most associations of emigrated Italians. The Colonie Libere Italiane is the largest still existing association. Founded in 1943 by a group of Italian antifascists in Geneva, it is today present in the entire country and is mainly concerned about legal rights and economic conditions of migrant labours in Switzerland. Ticino in particular attracted political refugees, intellectuals and artists, not only from Italy but also from Germany and other parts of Europe, searching refuge from the opening abyss in the political centres. Some well-known examples were Hermann Hesse in Montagnola (1919–62), Stefan George in an old mill near Minusio, Paul Klee, Walter Keller, Adolf Saager or Walter Kurt Wiemken. In their concerns about arts and humanities they left their mark on the cultural landscape of the region.

In German the children of Italian immigrants are often called secondas and secondos. Many of them do not posses the Swiss nationality, even though they completely grew up in Switzerland. As second-generation migrants all around the world, many secondas and secondos in Switzerland have a particular relationship to their place of origin that they often know only through holidays. It embodies a strong place of longing and leads to a particular form of Italianità that does not exist in Italy and contributes considerably to the cultural life in German-speaking parts of Switzerland.

RICCIARDI, CHATTACIN, 2012

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Flows across Boundary

Musica Leggera

Second generation immigrants often figure as protagonists in novels, representing possible concerns and mentalities of this part of the population. One example where this heritage is rather described as a difficult experience is Musica Leggera (1996) by Franco Supino. The first-person narrator looks back at his adolescence. He actively tries to maintain the tension of being between these two national identities. The novel is constructed along the lyrics of popular Italian songs. Those are an important source for the identity among the migrant’s children. When a friend of him wants to know what kind of music is a hype at the moment in Italy, he has to admit that he has no idea, whereas he knows exactly what kind of Italian music is popular in Switzerland. Indeed many of these popular Italian songs were more successful in Switzerland than they were in Italy. Italian television was not yet possible to receive; his parents did not read any books or newspapers, but they watch every week ‘Una ora per voi’ a broadcast on the Swiss television channel for the Italian immigrants, so they are supplied with information concerning Italians in Switzerland. With the Italian music and among his Italian friends he nourishes his nostalgia for the country. At the same time and under great effort, he achieves to convince his parents not to move back to Naples after they have decided so. This is a common fate of many of his Italian friends in the neighbourhood. All of them try to convince their parents to stay, some with success, others without. At the same time he continuously insists on cultural differences between his Swiss schoolmates and himself. Also the language situation is complex. In his family they speak the Neapolitan language. In the corsi di lingua e cultura italiana (compulsory for children of Italian immigrants) as well as in the Italian church choir he learns Italian and he also speak it among his Italian friends. However, his father does not accept the Italian language at home, it has to be either Neapolitan or German. With his Swiss friends he speaks Swiss German while in school the standard German. All these languages are used in the novel within the dialogs. The personality and the lifestyle of this first-person narrator can be read as an internalization of the border or as the manifestation of the Swiss-Italian border in the life of a person.

While earlier migration took place in both directions, during the 20th century migration was mostly from Italy towards Switzerland, because of the uneven economic developments in the two countries. But according to the period, origin and education of the migrants, it translates in a variety of different social phenomena and political reactions. Today approx. 288,000 Italian nationals live in Switzerland while approx. 50,000 Swiss nationals are living in Italy.

2.3.2 Public transport

Since a long time the Gotthard has been an important trade route for large parts of Europe. With the opening of the Gotthard Railway Tunnel in 1882, this position could be strengthened, as well as with the opening of the highway tunnel in 1980. Today it links the main seaports of the north of Europe (Rotterdam and Hamburg) with the one of Genoa in the South of Europe. Further, it is the main artery between the economic centres of the two countries Zurich and Milan. The scale and importance of this connection causes the implementation of superordinate infrastructure in the region where it passes through, for example at the boundary crossing point in Chiasso. To a certain extend it is also a catalyst for the process of urbanisation and economic development along the Gotthard route since a long time. Since Ticino became far better reachable from the rest of the country through the opening of the tunnel, it was constitutive for developments such as tourism and industry. Through this strong north–south axes in the region of Ticino and the north of Lombardy there is a certain lack of east–west connections. Those are more difficult to construct due to the topography. The TILO network tries to close this gap on a regional scale, especially with the connection between Varese and Mendrisio that is under construction at the moment. Map 4 examines the relation between geographical distance and necessary time of travel by train from Chiasso. The scale of superposition is chosen so that the geographical distance Chiasso–Milan corresponds to the relevant time. It clearly shows the problem of lacking east–west connections. Further it shows that the geographical barrier of the Gotthard still translates in travel time, seeing that the destinations in the south are much faster reachable than the ones in the north. The enormous project Alp Transit will
tackle this problem by reducing considerably the necessary transit time of the Gotthard lane through the construction of basis tunnels through the Gotthard and the Ceneri as well as further measurements. The project also aims to shift the transportation of goods from the road on the railway. It is a historical curiosity that we can find a completely oversized freight depot in Luino on the shore of Lake Maggiore. It is a relict of a plan in early industrialisation to build a direct Railway line Genoa–Luino–Gotthard, not serving Milan. Within the Alp Transit project this line will be improved and will become increasingly important as a second access to the Gotthard from the West-Milan region.
The regional network TILO (Treni Regionali Ticino Lombardia) started as joint venture cooperation between FFS (Swiss federal Railways) and Trenitalia to better organize the regional public transport in the transboundary region. Nowadays it is a company based in Bellinzona; 50% of equities belong to Trenord, which is responsible for the regional rail traffic in the Lombardy. It implies a continuous and branched network between Airolo and Milan. TILO is one of the main achievements of collaboration within the above-described Regione Insubrica and is visible in a efficient upgrade of regional transport.

2.3.3 Economy

Switzerland and Italy constantly maintained trade relations. From the time of the Risorgimento until the 1960’s Switzerland was one of the most important export markets for Italian products, comparable with Germany or France. The main products until the crisis of 1929 were silk wares, after the crisis predominantly food products. In the opposite direction, in different phases, Switzerland exported cheese, watches as well as mechanical and chemical products. Due to the small size of the country, the Swiss economy is highly dependent on networks going beyond its state territory. Since it’s strategic location enclosing parts of the Alps, connectivity and transit industries have a long tradition. Therefore it is not astonishing, that it always played the more active role than Italy, when it comes to put out economic feelers. In the second half of the 19th century many entrepreneurs were active in Italy, mainly in the hospitality and the cotton industry. At the turn of the 20th century more than 60 cotton spinning enterprises belong to Swiss patrons, most of them situated in Lobardy, Piedmont and in the region of Naples. During the main period of immigration of unskilled Italian labours in the 1950’s (see chapter 2.3.1), specialized branches of the Swiss economy, such as the tourism sector in Valais, actively searched in the Mezzogiorno for people corresponding to a specific profile of formation and successfully recruited them thanks to the uneven economic situation. Even if Swiss industry was mainly intact after the Second World War, the national economy was threatened to get isolated. The country thus invests in the railway system of its neighbouring countries in order to increase connectivity as soon as possible. What started with preliminary financing in Germany soon got applied on other projects. For the building up of the Simplon–Luino–Milan route, Switzerland preliminary financed the Italian part of the route in 1955 with 880 billions Francs. At the moment further investments in the Italian railway system are discussed. The most important one is the improvement of the already mentioned rail transport route of Luino as a second access to the Gotthard in order to help maintaining the Gotthard as the most important transport route between Genoa and Rotterdam/Hamburg. Surely such investments also happened in the opposite direction, although to a smaller extend. Fiat was one of the main sponsors for the construction of the Great St Bernard car tunnel in 1964. In 2012 Switzerland carried out direct investments in Italy of CHF 25 billion in total, the other way around, Italy directly invested CHF 4.2 billion in Switzerland.11

Despite the on-going crisis in Italy, the conurbation of Milan is a strong economic pole and one of the wealthiest regions in Europe. The vicinity of Milan was deindustrialised only in the beginning of the 2000’s, but the restructuring towards an increased service sector was done radically an successfully in terms of economic growth. Milan is a hub for international companies and cultural institutions that are connected throughout the world. Through the world expo in October 2015 the position of the city within the network of international cities will again be enforced and will result in an increased connectivity with international trade, extended tourism activities and reinforced infrastructure. Thus the Milan economy is not dependent on the Swiss border. In the dynamic of the actual crisis, the Italian economy is increasingly reduced in this conurbation. Map 6 shows a significant increase of employees in Milan during the period of 2005–10, while nearly all other regions of northern Italy drastically loosed employees. Since nearly all regions in Switzerland increased their number of employees, the sum includes the offset of the rise of prices. (NZZ 05.12.2013: Bahnausbau als exterritoriale Wirtschaftsförderung)
12 Eurostat regional Yearbook 2013: For example map of GDP per inhabitant pp. 22: Lombardy is among the top regions of Europe, while the rest of Italy, especially the south of the country, has much lower positions.

7 KUDER, 2011
8 It correspond approx. to 770'000 spindles 15’000 looms. On the entire Italian territory exist approx. of 2,1 billions spindles and 80’000 looms at the time. (KUDER, 2011)
9 RICCIARDI, 2013
Flows across Boundary

The economic development in Ticino during the 20th century was closely related with border-caused dynamics. For a long period the canton was characterised by poverty, underdevelopment and emigration. (see chapter 2.3.1) The Alps as a physical barrier towards the rest of the Switzerland on the one hand, institutional differences to Italy that disadvantage collaboration on the other hand were isolating the canton geographically. But also the internal circulation was difficult due to the landscape formed by mountains and profound valleys. The territory stayed to a large extent agricultural; the three main cities Bellinzona, Locarno and Lugano contained far less than 10'000 inhabitants in 1850.13 In addition agricultural revenues were modest since the topography is difficult to farm. The region had great expectations in the opening of the Gotthard railway tunnel in 1882 that should act as an incentive for industrialisation in Ticino. Indeed, after the opening, some industry got installed along the railway as well as a tourism industry in Lugano, Locarno and Ascona. But the situation did not fundamentally change, then the effect was largely offseted by expensive mountain taxes for the transportation of goods, that were only abolished in 192614 as a result of the Rivendicazioni ticinesi, the series of demands that the canton addresses towards the Confederation.15

In the first phase after the Second World War, Ticino could not keep up with the economic boom that took place in the rest of the country. The first consequence of this boom for Ticino was the arrival of mass tourism from German speaking Switzerland. Subsequently the traditional elitist tourism from all over Europe loosed its importance and with it the traditional tourism centres. These new tourists favoured camping sides along the lakes and on the riversides or secondary homes and guesthouses on the hills. Furthermore, a gradual re-opening process of the Italian border took place, so that the Ticino stopped to be in a cul-de-sac position anymore. At a national level, as a reaction to mass immigration and under the impression

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13 Lugano: 5’939, Bellinzona: 3’209, Locarno: 2’944. (Historische Lexikon der Schweiz www.hls-dhs-dss.ch)
14 LEIMGRUBER, 1991
15 GILARDONI, 2011
of emerging fear of foreigners overpopulating the country, the Swiss federal government introduced a series of regulations, such as the number of foreign workers that could be employed by individual firms. In 1966 transboundary commuters got exempted from these restrictions.16 This placed Ticino in a privileged position, since the nearby Italian regions figured subsequently as a pool of cheap labours. These changing parameters gave birth to an enormous economic boom and fast process of urbanisation in the second half of the 20th century. In a first phase the traditional textile industry remained predominant. Nevertheless, a strong growth could be seen in the metal-working and engineering industry and the most spectacular increase was the one of the building sector. The construction volume of 1973 was more than 20 times the one of 194817.

Swiss banks had already become increasingly important since the 1930’s, because they were able to give better credits to foreign banks and companies (Fiat, Pirelli…) than comparable institutions in other countries. In 1945 Italians founded a first bank in Ticino in order to store capital and companies (Fiat, Pirelli…) than comparable institutions in other countries. In 1945 Italians founded a first bank in Ticino in order to store capital outside their country. Subsequently local business quickly recognised the potential in this idea. During a phase of restriction of Italian economy towards an enforced state control in the 1960’s and the devaluation of the Lira in the 1970’s the banking sector in Lugano became the subsidiary of Zurich for Milan. Besides the security against inflation and the discretion of Swiss banks, Italians did find here also cultural similarities in business dealings. Official data documenting the transfers between the two countries do not exist, but there are obvious indexes of the increase of the Lugano banking sector: the number of employees rised from about 1500 in 1960 to 6000 in 1974.18 This development was accompanied by the increase of assurance companies, notary offices and tax experts. During the economic crisis in 1970’s some sectors of the industry decreased, but the fast growth of the tertiary sector largely compensated them. If the urbanisation in an earlier phase was limited to the agglomerations of the cities, since the late 1970’s it includes the entire pre-alpine area. The development primarily is translated into a strong incline of average living standards and an increase of the population. The urbanisation process in Ticino in the second half of the 20th century was faster than anywhere else in the country.19 While the alpine valleys suffer from depopulation, the entire pre-alpine area knows enormous increase of built volume and the agricultural land is reducing significantly.

During the 1990s Ticino suffers from a crisis resulting in a strong decrement of employees. In the first decade of the 20th century the regional economy recovers due to the strengthening of the Swiss Franc against the Euro and the favourable economic situation in Switzerland in general. But conversely there is an increasing gap between the Sopra- and Sottoceneri. In the period of 2001–05 the number of workplaces in Sopraceneri was almost stagnant while they increased enormously in the agglomeration of Lugano and of the Mendrisotto. The latter area now forms a continuous urban network that can be seen as an extension of the Milan metropolis. In the actual crisis in Italy many Lombard enterprises invest in the finance and service sector of this area, as they expect higher security (for example the fashion industry of Milan). Transboundary commuting becomes furthermore strong in Lugano and in the Mendrisotto, while traditionally it was much stronger in the municipalities that are located in immediate proximity to the boundary, in particular Chiasso, Stabio and Ponte Tresa. One possible explanation for the increasing gap between the Sotto- and the Sopraceneri is that of the critical mass. In order to play a role in the new order of enforced international networks, cities need to have a minimum size to be able to attract international investment.20 With a population of about 55’000 inhabitants Lugano is by far the largest city in Ticino.

Regional transboundary collaboration between Ticino and Lombardy actively started in 1981 with first collaboration in order to improve traffic systems across the boundary. In fact most of the collaborative initiated projects concern the sector of transport. The institutional highlight was the above described foundation of the Insubrica Euregion. The region was for a long time characterised by a certain economic stability since Como and Varese were able to balance with those of the Mendrisotto. But the decrease of employees on the Map 2 indicates that since the beginning of the recent crisis this is not the case anymore.

The two countries maintain intense economic collaboration since a long time. During the 20th century we see different dynamic in the Ticino than
in the surrounding Italian regions. The enormous economic boom is directly linked to evolution of the border. In the recent crisis the Italian economy is more and more reduced to the one of Milan, which is well situated in the network of international cities. At the same time also Ticino sees an increasing gap between the Sottoceneri which is able to be connected with the economy of Milan and the Sopraceneri which is not able to successfully install these connections.

2.3.4 Transboundary commuting

Transboundary commuting exists since the state-boundary was established. But a specific term to denote it was created only during the 20th century. Before 1914, transboundary commuting took place rather in the opposite direction than today. Many Swiss companies create agencies in nearby areas on the other side of the boundary. Specialist employees often commuted from Switzerland to these places. Until 1914 there is no statistical coverage, since border-crossers were not systematically controlled. In 1931 the two countries attempted to regulate transboundary commuting and agreed on a strip of 20km of depth to each side of the boundary as a zone where transboundary commuting is allowed. This zone has never been revised officially until it became invalid with the agreement of free movement, but it was not respected anymore since a long time. Due to the above-described development, Ticino became a zone of intense commuting across the boundary during the second half of the 20th century, especially after the facilitation in 1966. Subsequently Italian in-land immigrants increasingly settled close to the boundary. A very common process was indeed that the regional population build new houses for themselves, and rent out their former homes to the new immigrants.

As far as I know, Map 7 from 1990/1992 was the last one that has been elaborated in such a complete manner indicating the place of dwelling, the place of work and the direction of flows of transboundary commuters. Since the agreement of free movement there is no systematic recording of these three data per commuter anymore. Thus it is not possible anymore to map the

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22 KREIS, 2007
23 LEIMGRUBER, 1991
24 TORRICELLI; THIEDE; SCARAMELMINI, 1997, pp. 77
directions of flows, but only the rate of transboundary commuters per place of work and per municipality of dwelling. If one compares those less complete mappings with the here printed one, one can still state some tendencies.\textsuperscript{25} During the 1990s crisis in Ticino in almost all of the municipalities the rate of transboundary commuting is decreasing. The strongest decrease in this period is in the municipalities that had a high rate before, in particular this is the case for Chiasso, Stabio and the agglomeration of Lugano. On the Italian side one can state that the rate of transboundary commuters got reduced the most in the municipalities that are not located in immediate proximity of the boundary. During the economic recovery after the year 2000 it is obvious that a strong increase in commuters took place in the agglomeration of Lugano as well as in the Medrisotte, while traditional municipalities of transboundary labouring such as Chiasso or Ponte Trese continuously decreased. Almost stable are the rates in the entire Sopraceneri. This again gives evidences to the above-described increasing gap between Sopra- and Sottoceneri. In 2012 a total of 55 000 transboundary commuters are employed in the entire Ticino, corresponding to more than 30\% of the cantonal labour market.\textsuperscript{26} Since the year 2000 transboundary commuting mainly has increased in the service (real estate, computer, research and development), economy, education and health sectors, while the traditional strongest sectors, the industry and the hospitality sector have decreased.

\textsuperscript{25} Further mappings we can find in the same oeuvre (TORRICELLI; THEIDE; SCARAMELLI, 1997, pp. 79) indicating the change of the rate of commuter in the period 1990–96; in SCHULER, DESSEMONTET, JEMELIN, JARNE, PASCHE, HUG, 2007, pp. 285 indicating the absolute rate per place of dwelling and place of work for the year 2000 and in TORRICELLI; STEPHANI, 2009, pp. 9 indicating the change per place of work in the period of 1995–2005

\textsuperscript{26} TORRICELLI, 2013
As defined in PART I, the border-space emerges out of the fertile capability of the border. It is the appearance of something new in the moment when two individual identities meet each other. It can be denoted in several cases out of the examined aspects.

The first case is the cultural space of contraband. It is the definition and juxtaposition of two different fiscal systems, a liberal in Switzerland and a highly protectionist in Italy,\(^1\) that offered the opportunity for this particular form of trade to the local population on both sides of the boundary. Since the region was marginalized in terms of economy, this metier has been pursued without any harm for a long time and it was a considerable part of the local socio-economic structure. It would go beyond the possibilities of this work, to analyse if the region would have been marginalized to the same extend if the border had not been installed. The space of contraband consisted primarily in a network between a multitude of manufacturers on the Swiss side of the boundary and resellers on the Lombard side. On a finer level, the network touched a large part of the regional population (employment in the manufactures, further reselling of goods, cultural recognition of contraband within local institutions and authorities). This network was particularly regional and it was in political and morale conflict to national politics and to the idea that the state is controlling the whole territory. Today this particular form of contraband is mainly a space of memory. It is still very present in local literature, in oral transmission\(^2\) and the *Swiss Customs Museum* in Cantine di Gandria figures as a memorial accessible to the public.

The second identifiable border-space is the economic development of Ticino since the post-war period. It can be seen as a pure product of the border. Today’s most important branches (tourism, banking and retailing) are to the largest extent depending on clients from abroad, on transboundary commuters as well as on policymakers outside of the canton. All the important border-linked evolutions played in favour of Ticino: the gradual re-opening of the Italian border, the 1966 policy to exempt transboundary commuters from important restrictions, the change of course in Italian economic policymaking in the 1960’s and the devaluation of the Italian Lire in the mid 1970’s. The economic growth also translates in a complex network of working relationships beyond the boundary, most directly visible in the number of transboundary commuters. The rail network TILO is a physical manifestation of these relations. It is furthermore a testimony of successful collaboration of different institutions beyond the boundary.

A further case of a border-space that can be clearly identified is the space of cultural expression of the so-called *secondos* and *secondas*, the second generation of Italian immigrants. This is a sociocultural phenomenon that is not fixed to any particular place, but the experience of the border is constitutional to it.

But in the case of the Swiss-Italian border, another phenomenon is more striking, which is a kind of antithesis to the concept of the border-space. This phenomenon is perhaps an even more pleasant discovery. It is the observation that the boundary in many ways did not fulfil its basic purpose to

\(^1\) BAZZOCCO, 2011

\(^2\) TOGNINA, 2008
separate two entities from each other. The most proper expression for this observation is probably to speak about Ticino as a «palimpsest of Lombard culture.» This means that it remains a part of the space of rich Lombard culture, even though new administration and governance was imposed after the conquest through the Helvetic squads during the 16th century. The fact that they accepted to maintain the Tuscan literary language for regional governance enables Ticino to evolve as a part of Italian language area. This may be the most evident aspect. Furthermore the cultural heritage of built monuments and art production until the 19th century on both sides of the boundary, testifies of the unity in the region. We can suppose that people living in the borderland did not drastically perceive the boundary as a barrier until the end of the 19th century. It is in the time of raising Fascism in Italy that extended debates on the cultural identity of Ticino are reported and a clear distinction to the Italian neighbours is strived. Nevertheless the henceforth-popular term Svizzera italiana illustrates the aim to maintain the superposed identity of Italian culture and the political affiliation to Switzerland. The persistence of Lombard culture is also a source of exotica for Swiss-German tourists within their own country. Thus, since the opening of the Gotthard the region also had to play the roles of a sun deck for the rest of the country or of an open-air museum for unspoiled life in an Arcadian landscape. But also political refugees, as well as artists and writers, find a place of dwelling in this environment, throughout different epochs.

To see Ticino as palimpsest of Lombard culture coincides insofar with the idea of borderlands, as both are spaces of hybridity. But the process is different. In the borderland topics from the one side of the boundary become important on the other side, mostly within the process of the reopening of a border. The idea of the palimpsest rather denotes the fact that Ticino and the Lombardy in many ways never have been separated from each other. Surely this is not true for everything and the political separation translate to some extend into cultural phenomena. This is visible in the regional adaption of the Italian language as well as in the adoption of lifestyle to the opening hours and to the diverging average living standards on each side of the boundary.

This suggests the conclusion that the Swiss-Italian border separates much more clearly in terms of economy and governance, while cultural bound-aries much stronger persist according to their historical occurrences. The juxtaposition of different institutional entities (fiscal systems, economic policies etc.) turns out to be fertile in many ways, but not in favour of everyone. These emerging phenomena are not in lack of problems and tensions: the difficulties of second generation immigrants to find their personal identity, the effort to reduce economic imbalance on the two sides of the boundary or the violent incidences going along with the culture of contraband. However all these phenomena, caused by economic circumstances also translate into cultural spaces.

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3 GIARDONI, 1983, pp. 281
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