

How did 'export II' influence Val Poschiavo and Valtellina
during the 1960s and 1970s.

A long-hidden story



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HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION
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Part one: Identification and Evaluation of Sources

This investigation will focus on “How did ‘export II’ influence Val Poschiavo and Valtellina during the 1960s and 1970s”. It will analyze the meaning and economic importance of ‘export II’ and what influence ‘export II’ had on the people in the Swiss border region Val Poschiavo and the Italian border region Valtellina.

‘Export two’ was the term of the administration of the Swiss government regarding the smuggling. Hence the book titled *Export zwei. Eine Schmuggler-Geschichte*, first published in 2010¹, and the book titled *La carga*, first published in 1998², both provide insight into discussing this question concerning Italy and Switzerland’s different perspectives.

The first source evaluated in depth is Massimo Lardi’s book “Export Zwei. Eine Schmuggler-Geschichte”, published in 2010. This source’s origin is valuable because Massimo Lardi, the author, has lived through this period and knew many people involved in smuggling. Also, it shows how Val Poschiavo and its people saw an excellent opportunity to have a better life. It provides quotes of people in pus’cavin, the regional language is spoken in the valley, and much information about the legalization of smuggling, which the Swiss confederation called “export two.” Due to these insights, the author’s experiences, and critics that

¹ Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

² Massimo Mandelli, and Diego Zoia (1998). *La carga. Contrabbando in Valtellina e Valchiavenna*. Sondrio

make him an expert in this topic, this source's value is intensified. In controversy, there is a limitation in the value and origin because the book is written in a story, which could lead to misunderstandings in the acceptance of facts and events that eventually never happened as they are described. Another limitation of this source's origin is that Lardi, as a Swiss citizen, has only his point of view. This source's purpose is very valuable because Lardi notifies the reader how Val Poschiavo's situation has been and why people started smuggling. Besides, Lardi elaborates the hazards and problems for Val Poschiavo, coming with 'export II.' Also, there is insight given on how the Swiss confederation allowed the smuggling for its benefits. In conclusion, Lardi provides his expert opinion as one who lived through the period making this primary source valuable.

The second source evaluated in depth is Massimo Mandelli's and Diego Zoia's book "La carga. Contrabbando in Valtellina e Valchiavenna", published in 1998. This book contains various primary sources in the form of pictures and begins with a picture of women carrying sacks of coffee on their back on the cover. It also includes quotes in Italian, taken from the Italian smugglers. The book provides insight into the history of smuggling in this region since the Middle Age. Still, with the peak during the 1960s and 1970s, it intensely described how the Italian smugglers managed to survive and not get caught. There is insight given on how Italy struggled with the large number of smuggled goods that

were entering Italy and what Italy tried to do against the smugglers, and how successful Italy has been. This source's origin is valuable because it gives an insight into the point of view of Italy. Nevertheless, this one sighted view also makes this origin a limitation because Italy's story is not included, but Switzerland's point of view is not included. This source's purpose is valuable because it shows protocols of the finanzieri, routes of where the smugglers smuggled the goods to and showing what the smugglers used for smuggling and smugglers itself in pictures taken in this period. This source's value is valuable because it indicates that smuggling was significantly influential and lifesaving for the Italian people during this time.

Part two: Investigation

How did 'export II' influence Val Poschiavo and Valtellina during the 1960s and 1970s. The 'export II' Val Poschiavo is a border region in the southwest of Switzerland. The border region on the other side of the border is called Valtellina³. These two regions are familiar with smuggling since the Middle Ages. Bypassing the law or the taxes was continually happening, regarding the confrontation between two countries and one issue. One made a provision and legalized smuggling, and one held it strongly

³ Appendix (map 1)

illegal. 'Export II' was this unilateral provision of the Swiss confederation called. It allowed certain municipalities in Switzerland, such as Brusio⁴, the customs clearance of luxury goods such as tobacco and coffee, the goods solely had to be declared at the customs. However, Italy held it strongly illegal⁵ as it supported the Italian black market and did not bring taxes. 'Export II' was the result of high and low taxes in different countries. The taxes in Switzerland were low⁶. Conversely, the Italian people could not afford coffee or tobacco because of Italy's high taxes on coffee and tobacco⁷. This lack of affordability led the Italians to find another way to get at their goods, 'export II'. However, not only the Italians saw an opportunity to profit but also the Swiss people and government⁸. This essay will analyze the question regarding the following three aspects: Firstly, 'export II' and its critical economic influence on the Italian people and country, Secondly, 'export II' and its critical economic influence on the Val Poschiavo and the Swiss confederation.

The Italians lacked work, money, and food. Due to the Post Second World War, economic recovery was not as rapid as in Switzerland. They were looking for a way to survive, which they

⁴ Appendix (map 1)

⁵ Domenig, Hans (1995). Von Schmugglern und ihren Spielverderbern. *Terra Grischuna Nr. 3, 8-11*.

⁶ SRF (2020). "Tonnenweise Kaffee und Zigaretten» srf.ch.

<https://www.srf.ch/audio/zeitblende/tonnenweise-kaffee-und-zigaretten-goldene-schmugglerzeit-im-val-poschiavo?id=11895005>, accessed January 4, 2021.

⁷ Massimo Mandelli, and Diego Zoia (1998). *La carga. Contrabbando in Valtellina e Valchiavenna*. Sondrio

⁸ Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

found in smuggling luxury goods. The Italians saw their opportunity to earn money and not only survive but also to survive. However, this smuggling was hazardous and implicated huge risks. Good endurance and durably physical health⁹ were required since most smugglers had to move through the intermediate area, the mountains, and risk their lives by getting arrested or shot by the border patrol, overloaded, or crashed off the mountain¹⁰. Through the smuggling, they earned about ten times more than an average worker in Italy¹¹ did. The enormous Italian black market, with the smuggled goods, was moving on, insatiable now for luxury goods and eclipsing any other cross-border traffic.¹² Italy noticed the lack of funds in its reserves. Soon the government found out that luxury goods were not going through the official custom border but through the intermediate area, the mountains, instead. Which made the same goods crossing the border became contraband¹³. It required Italy to hire even more finanzieri, which would watch out 24 hours a day and stop the smugglers¹⁴. However, the smugglers could not be stopped as easily as Italy thought.¹⁵ They always invented new, more bold strategies, such as using cars and use double bottoms to hide the goods or merely bribing the finanzieri to cross the border.¹⁶ Most

⁹ Alessandra Jochum-Siccardi (2006). *Val Poschiavo: il passato in immagini*. Poschiavo

¹⁰ Massimo Mandelli, and Diego Zoia (1998). *La carga. Contrabbando in Valtellina e Valchiavenna*. Sondrio

¹¹ Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

¹² Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

¹³ Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

¹⁴ Massimo Mandelli, and Diego Zoia (1998). *La carga. Contrabbando in Valtellina e Valchiavenna*. Sondrio

¹⁵ Massimo Mandelli, and Diego Zoia (1998). *La carga. Contrabbando in Valtellina e Valchiavenna*. Sondrio

¹⁶ Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

of the hired *finanzieri* were quickly bribed because they did not earn much either, which led to another problem in Italy, corruption¹⁷.

By the 1960s, Switzerland was well developed and in a more favorable economic situation than Italy. 'Export II' was lucrative for the valley and its people and the Swiss confederation. The customs clearance of the thousands of tons of coffee beans and tobacco a year¹⁸ was managed by the Swiss government¹⁹ to support interior economic growth²⁰. 'Export II' provided part of the financing for Switzerland's social welfare bill²¹. It was a money machine that created new markets and opportunities, which helped Switzerland get even more advanced²². With the 'export II' restaurants, banana stalls and pubs were designed to feed the daily amount of more than five hundred smugglers²³. The significant creation, however, were factories and thus jobs. Seven coffee bean roasting plants²⁴

¹⁷ SRF (2009). «Kaffeeschmuggel im Puschlav» srf.ch.

<https://www.srf.ch/play/tv/sf-spezial-fernweh---in-den-alpen/video/kaffeeschmuggel-im-puschlav?urn=urn:srf:video:0b9945c2-8126-4565-b1a5-1729202ed8c5>, accessed January 20, 2021.

¹⁸ Otmaro Lardi, and Silva Semadeni (1994). *Das Puschlav*. Poschiavo

¹⁹ SRF (2020). "Tonnenweise Kaffee und Zigaretten» srf.ch.

<https://www.srf.ch/audio/zeitblende/tonnenweise-kaffee-und-zigaretten-goldene-schmugglerzeit-im-val-poschiavo?id=11895005>, accessed December 14, 2020.

²⁰ Burgdorfer Krimitage (2014, November 9th). "Rien à déclarer. Von Schmugglern, Zöllnern und heisser Ware." *Burgdorfer Krimitage*, Page 14 and 19.

https://kuverum.ch/l/cmsfiles/ws/dokumente/Module/Kuverum_8_Modultage/ausstellung_doku_sm.pdf

²¹ Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

²² Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

²³ SRF (2020). "Tonnenweise Kaffee und Zigaretten» srf.ch.

<https://www.srf.ch/audio/zeitblende/tonnenweise-kaffee-und-zigaretten-goldene-schmugglerzeit-im-val-poschiavo?id=11895005>, accessed December 14, 2020.

²⁴ SWI/SRG (2020, October 29). «Schmuggel-Epos zwischen Veltlin und Puschlav.» *swissinfo.ch*.

<https://www.swissinfo.ch/ger/schmuggel-epos-zwischen-veltlin-und-puschlav/586504>, accessed January 28, 2021.

had been built in a valley with around five thousand inhabitants²⁵. It made generous support for the economy of Val Poschiavo as a former impoverished border region. It boosted tourism, the job market, gastronomy, and industry. It was the aid the people needed to survive and earn enough money²⁶ in this time of yore impoverished border region.

In conclusion and regarding the arguments I would say 'Export II' had a massive influence on both sides. 'Export II,' which was clearly against the Italian state, created an intensively, by the *finanzieri* and army, controlled and hard border. While in Switzerland, 'export II' brought mainly positive influences, and its people and companies made adequate profits out of the 'export II' since the smuggling was made perfectly legal. On the Italian side, the influence was negative. From the WWII flawed, emerging country, Italy did not approximate profit from 'export II,' as more costs, crime and corruption were happening. Nevertheless, also positive, where Italy's people living in the Valtellina could also profit from the provided food supply. Flounder in the unknown of their future, the Italians would produce ideas they would never have thought of before. Risking their lives was an everyday danger which the smugglers would see as has to be taken. However, the smuggling significantly influenced the Valtellina by having

²⁵ Spiess, Andrea. (2002). *Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung der Siedlungen des Puschlavs*. Spiess.ch. <http://spiess.ch/maturaarbeiten/poschiavo.pdf>, accessed January 29, 2021.

²⁶ Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

improved the living standard of many Italians in the Valtellina. It helped survive thousands of poor Italians in the Valtellina who could not survive without the perilous smuggling. However, as a country, Italy had an immense amount of tax money missing in their state treasury, and the Italian black market was still expanding. Italy's expenditure was getting greater, as more *finanzieri* had to be hired for the night and day surveillance, which all had to be paid off. In the end, it did just influence Italy's bill. In Switzerland, however, the 'Export II' influenced, as history shows^{27,28}, the support and promotion of the economy of border areas such as Val Poschiavo. The influence of 'export II' enhanced the economy of Val Poschiavo as a border region and created new jobs in every sector possible, thus also roasting plants. 'Export II' was a significant provision made for the whole Swiss public and economic system.

Part three: Reflection

Writing my Historical Investigation abled me to experience the methods and challenges that historians face. I first picked a region and period. I decided to choose Val Poschiavo and Valtellina because of my familial background, and I often visit Val Poschiavo during my winter break. Knowing the eventful history

²⁷ Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

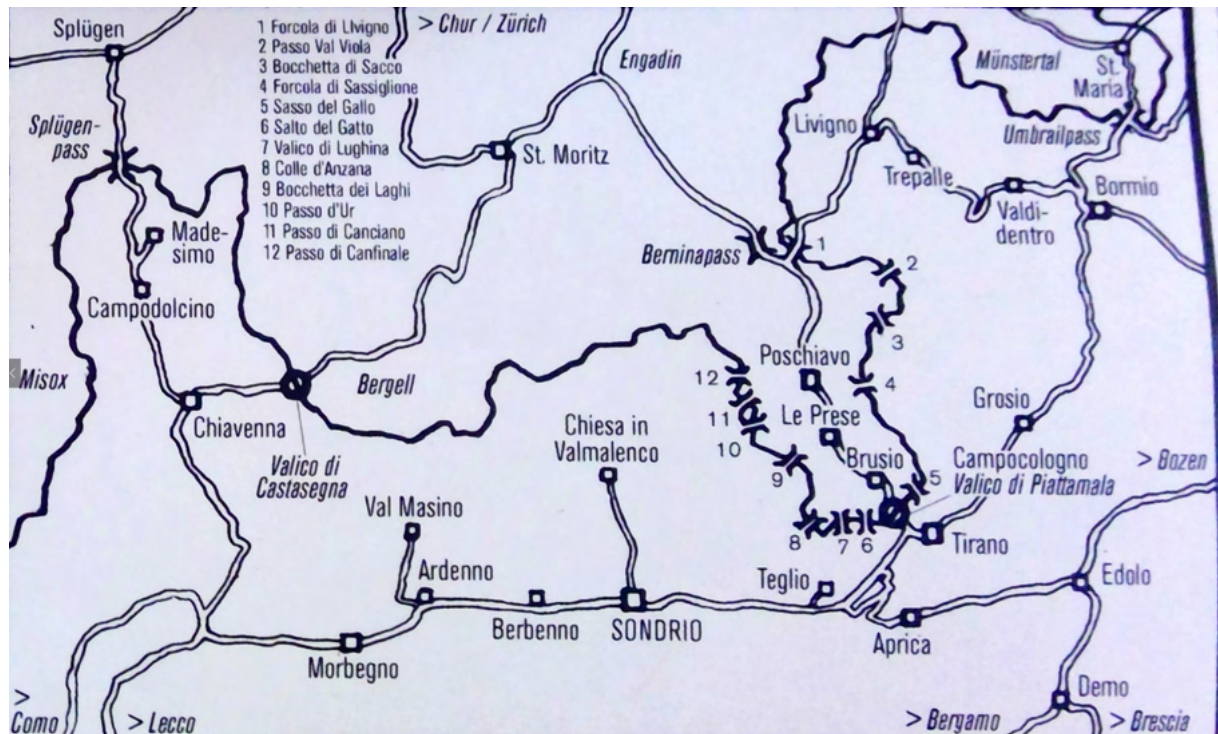
²⁸ Massimo Mandelli, and Diego Zoia (1998). *La carga. Contrabbando in Valtellina e Valchiavenna*. Sondrio

of the valley, I tried to choose one of the most momentous events. Soon after I picked the topic, I started my research on sources, but I struggled to find appropriate and enough sources. Since I know people in Val Poschiavo, I asked them to help me, getting reliable sources, which was particularly challenging. It is not a topic that is often mentioned, and most sources are hidden in museums, archives, or libraries all over Switzerland.

As a result, not much is public about it. I started to contact historians and authors of the books I had found on the internet, but which were not available. That is how I got to know Massimo Lardi, the author of “Export Zwei; Eine Schmuggler-Geschichte” which is one of my main sources. He was the one who helped me by explaining the entire system of the ‘export II’ and providing me his book. After I got all the sources together and read them, I had summarized them. While reading my sources, I had a significant advantage by speaking fluently Italian because half my sources were written in Italian. I began to formulate my research question in a further step. I struggled a lot with developing my research question, which was my greatest hurdle, and I had to change it quite a few times. By the time I was satisfied, I had begun to write. In the beginning, I struggled with the structure and how I will proceed and organize to answer the question correctly. I soon realized that accounting for the influence of ‘export II’ during the 1960s and 1970s is not an easy task. Especially when countries have various development levels,

Switzerland was financially more stable than Italy and was not as affected by the Post Second World War economic development as Italy. The customs and excise duties may differ, especially if there is no bilateral agreement. Coupled with the two mountainous regions Val Poschiavo and Valtellina, the geographical location, which made it difficult for border patrols to monitor and the historical context of smuggling, may have been influential during the post-Second World War of the 1960s. “Export zwei. Eine Schmuggler-Geschichte” as well as “La carga. Contrabbando in Valtellina e Valchiavenna” gave me harsh but remarkably interesting insights on how life in the valley where my grandmother was partially growing up has been influenced by illicit trade.

Appendix



Map 1 The road from Poschiavo, showing the Swiss-Italian border, Val Poschiavo and Valtellina, Massimo Lardi (2010). *Export zwei*. Zürich

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