

Aus:

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Zonen der Begrenzung

Aspekte kultureller und räumlicher Grenzen in der Moderne

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Die Begriffe »Grenze« bzw. »Grenzraum« verweisen auf vielfältige Bedeutungsebenen. Dieser Band rückt das Spannungsfeld von klar definierten Raum- und Grenzkonzepten sowie brüchigen, fragmentierten und widersprüchlichen sozialen Praktiken ins Blickfeld und fokussiert zugleich Konflikte, Reibungsflächen und Übergangszonen in »Grenzbereichen«.

Exemplarische Fallstudien analysieren (zeit-)historisch relevante Themenfelder wie mehrsprachige/plurikulturelle (Grenz-)Regionen, Migrationen, Geschlechterverhältnisse, nationale und religiöse Identitäten, Handlungsspielräume sowie Erinnerungskulturen.

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Zonen der Begrenzung

Aspekte kultureller und räumlicher Grenzen in der Moderne

GERALD LAMPRECHT, URSULA MINDLER, HEIDRUN ZETTELBAUER

„Die Grenze ist etwas Zwiefaches und Doppeldeutiges: bisweilen ist sie eine Brücke, um dem anderen entgegenzugehen, bisweilen eine Schranke, um ihn zurückzustoßen. Oft entspringt sie dem Wahn, jemanden oder etwas auf die andere Seite verweisen zu wollen, die Literatur ist unter anderem auch eine Reise auf der Suche nach Entzauberung dieses Mythos der anderen Seite, der Versuch, zu verstehen, daß jeder bald hier und bald dort steht – daß Jedermann, wie in einem mittelalterlichen Mysterienspiel der andere ist.“¹

In seinen *Grenzbetrachtungen* thematisiert der Schriftsteller und Wissenschaftler Claudio Magris, wie sehr sein Leben durch die „Erfahrung der Grenze“ strukturiert ist. Magris wuchs in den 1940er Jahren in Triest/Trieste/Trst auf, einer Stadt, in der „man die Zweideutigkeit der Grenze, ihre positiven und negativen Aspekte [...], die offenen oder geschlossenen, starren oder beweglichen, unzeitgemäßen oder niedergerissenen, schutzbietenden oder zerstörerischen Grenzen“ besonders nachhaltig erleben konnte. Im mehrsprachigen und pluri-kulturellen Kontext Triests führte dies, so Magris, häufig „zu einem Gefühl der Unsicherheit, der Nichtzugehörigkeit und des Fremdseins, zu dem widersprüchlichen Gefühl, zugleich im Zentrum und an der Peripherie zu leben“.² Für Magris liegt gerade in der bewussten Auseinandersetzung mit der Ambivalenz und

1 | Claudio Magris, Auf der anderen Seite. Grenzbetrachtungen, in: Ders., Utopie und Entzauberung. Geschichten, Hoffnungen und Illusionen der Moderne, München 2002, 61.

2 | Ebda., 64.

Vielschichtigkeit von Grenzziehungen, mit der Gleichzeitigkeit verschiedener Dimensionen von Grenze an einem Ort, mit der doppelten Qualität von Grenze als „Brücke oder Schranke“³ ein zentrales Potential, denn die Grenze „bringt den Dialog in Gang oder unterdrückt ihn“.⁴ In seinen *Grenzbetrachtungen* thematisiert er zugleich ein zentrales konstitutives Moment moderner Sinnstiftung und Identitätsbildung, die immer auf Ab- und Ausgrenzung eines ‚Eigenen‘ von einem ‚Anderen‘ fußt:

„Jede Abgrenzung hat mit Unsicherheit zu tun und mit dem Bedürfnis nach Sicherheit. Die Grenze ist eine Notwendigkeit, denn ohne sie, oder besser ohne begrenzende Unterscheidung, gibt es keine Identität, keine Form, keine Individualität, ja nicht einmal eine reale Existenz, denn sie würde vom Gestalt- und Unterschiedslosen verschlungen. Die Grenze bedeutet Wirklichkeit, verleiht Umrisse und Gestalt, bestimmt die Besonderheit der Einzelperson wie des Kollektivs, der Existenz wie der Kultur.“⁵

Anknüpfend an den von Magris skizzierten breiten Grenzbegriff wird auch im Folgenden davon ausgegangen, dass „Grenze“ bzw. „Grenzraum“ auf vielfältige Bedeutungsebenen verweist. Meint der Begriff im engeren Sinn politische, nationale oder geographische Trennlinien, so rückt er weiter gefasst zugleich soziale, ökonomische, kulturelle, gesellschaftliche und identitäre Grenzziehungen und Begrenzungen ins Blickfeld. Löst er einerseits Assoziationen von Eindeutigkeit, Klarheit und Ordnung aus, so verweist er implizit immer auch auf Orte des Überganges, der Transgression, auf Un- und Unterordnungen, Peripherien, Zwischenräume und -zonen. In gewissem Sinn definieren erst Grenzzonen, Peripherien, Zwischen- und Übergangszonen ein wie auch immer geartetes ‚Zentrum‘. Hier werden die Verwerfungen scheinbar holistischer Konzeptionen von personaler wie kollektiver Identität sichtbar, zugleich sind Grenzzonen immer Räume der Transgression, des Übergangs und der Liminalität.

Spätestens seit der kulturwissenschaftlichen Wende und im Zuge des *spatial turn* ist der Grenzbegriff unter geänderten Gesichtspunkten (erneut) ins Interesse der geisteswissenschaftlich-historischen Forschung gerückt.⁶ Die Auflösung der die Nachkriegszeit prägenden räumlich-politischen Ost-West-Blockbildung, das Ende des Kalten Krieges, der Prozess der Osterweiterung im Rahmen der Europäischen Union (EU), die Öffnung innereuropäischer Grenzen durch das Schengen-Abkommen und die damit einhergehende intensivierte Abschottung des EU-Raumes ‚nach außen‘, die globale Expansion von Kapital- und Arbeitsmärkten sowie die neuen räumlich-politischen Verflechtungen der „westlichen Welt“ mit „Ländern des Südens“ – all diese Phänomene und Prozesse haben im letzten Drittel des 20. Jahrhunderts nicht nur „alte“ territoriale wie kulturelle

3 | Ebda., 63.

4 | Ebda., 62-63.

5 | Ebda., 71.

6 | Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften* (= rowohlts enzyklopädie 55675), Reinbek bei Hamburg 2006, 284-328.

Grenzziehungen obsolet werden lassen, sondern zugleich neue Grenzziehungen, neue „räumliche Disparitäten, Raumansprüche und Abgrenzungen“⁷ hervorgebracht. Doris Bachmann-Medick konstatiert in dem Zusammenhang mit Stephano Boeri vor dem Hintergrund von gegenwärtigen Prozessen der Enträumlichung und Entortung in der Spätmoderne gerade eine Rückkehr des Raumes: „Any careful study of our surroundings indeed reveals a multiplicity of borders, walls, fences, thresholds, signposted areas, security systems and checkpoints, virtual frontiers, specialized zones, protected areas, and areas under control.“⁸ ‚Raum‘ meint damit vor allem auch die „soziale Produktion von Raum als einem vielschichtigen und oft widersprüchlichen gesellschaftlichen Prozess, eine spezifische Verortung kultureller Praktiken, eine Dynamik sozialer Beziehungen, die auf die Veränderbarkeit von Raum hindeuten“.⁹ Entsprechend geht es in aktuellen historischen Analysen, die sich in der Theoriebildung des *spatial turn* positionieren, sowohl um die Politisierung/Entpolitisierung, Naturalisierung wie Symbolisierung von Raum im weitesten Sinn bzw. mit Henri Lefebvre um die soziale Konstituierung des Räumlichen sowie um die Bedeutung des Räumlichen bei der Herstellung sozialer Beziehungen.¹⁰ Erst der Blick auf Grenz- und Übergangszonen lässt (häufig implizite) Strukturen kultureller Identitäten und gesellschaftlicher Ordnungen sichtbar werden. Dies betrifft alle Bereiche der Gesellschaft und Kultur, Politik, Ökonomie, Kommunikation, Migration und daran geknüpfte je spezifische Identitätslagen, wobei sich die jeweiligen Diskurse, Kontexte und Praktiken wechselseitig durchdringen.

Mit dem Begriff des Raumes kommt unweigerlich auch der Begriff der „Grenze“ ins Blickfeld. Interdisziplinäre Zugänge wie jene der *Border Studies*¹¹ betrachten „Grenzen“ dabei vor allem als Konventionen, Gebräuche und kulturelle Vorstellungen und rücken Grenzziehungen als soziale Praktiken des Handelns und der Herrschaft, Besitznahme und Exklusion/Inklusion ins Blickfeld. Der Fokus liegt dabei nicht auf Grenzen als widerspruchsfreie, eindeutige und klar zugeordnete Kategorien menschlicher Ordnung, sondern – wie etwa Benjamin Davy formuliert hat – gerade auch auf der Frage von mangelnder Übereinstimmung von Raum- und Grenzkonzeptionen.¹² Vor diesem Hintergrund rückt der vorliegende Sammelband dabei gerade Spannungsfelder von einerseits klar definierten Raum- und Grenzkonzepten sowie andererseits brüchigen, fragmentierten und widersprüchlichen sozialen Praktiken ins Blickfeld und fokussiert zugleich auf Konflikte, Reibungsflächen und Übergangszonen in Grenzbereichen. Ziel

7 | Ebda., 287.

8 | Ebda., Zitat 287, auch 288.

9 | Ebda., 289.

10 | Ebda., Zitat 289, 291. Zu den konkreten theoretischen Ansatzpunkten, auf die im Rahmen des *spatial turn* rekurriert wird, vgl. 292-302.

11 | Vgl. dazu etwa das Mission Statement des Centre for Border Studies an der University of Glamorgan. [border.research.glam.ac.uk/, 5.11.2011].

12 | Vgl. Benjamin Davy, Borders Studies [www.ruhr-2030.de/grenzen/inhalt_grenzen.htm, 30.5.2011]. – Ders., Wilde Grenzen. Die Städteregion Ruhr 2030 als Möglichkeitsraum, in: Informationen zur Raumentwicklung (2002) 9, 530-531.

ist es, von den skizzierten theoretischen Ansatzpunkten ausgehend, Fragen von Raum- und Grenzkonzepten in exemplarischen Fallstudien auf Mikroebene kritisch zu analysieren. Dabei werden Themenfelder fokussiert, die aus einer historischen Perspektive in der Moderne relevant scheinen: mehrsprachige und pluri-kulturelle Grenzregionen und -zonen, Migrationen, Geschlechterverhältnisse, nationale, religiöse Identitäten, wie auch (nationale/transnationale) Erinnerungskulturen.

Gewissermaßen paradigmatisch für das Anliegen des Bandes steht daher als Auftakt Pieter M. Judsons Beitrag *Writing the History of Cultural Borderlands in Habsburg Central Europe*. Indem er zeigt, dass nationalisierte Sprechweisen über *Sprachgrenzen* keine sozialen Praktiken abbilden, sondern überhaupt erst herstellen bzw. unter größten Mühen von NationalistInnen versucht wurde, die propagierten Konzepte „Wirklichkeit“ werden zu lassen, plädiert Judson dafür, diskursiv hergestellte Grenzsetzungen – insbesondere so vermeintlich stabile Kategorien wie national-sprachliche Grenzen – im Forschungsprozess nicht zu verlängern, sondern diese gerade mit einer transnationalen Sicht auf Zentraleuropa in der Moderne zu konterkarieren. Sein Plädoyer findet in vielen der nachfolgenden Beiträge des Sammelbands Anwendung, wobei diese zugleich die breite Ausdifferenzierung aktueller (zeit)historisch-kulturgeschichtlicher bzw. -kulturwissenschaftlich orientierter Arbeiten zur Thematik dokumentieren. Dabei werden vor allem vier Dimensionen von Grenzziehungen im Rahmen empirischer Fallstudien vertieft: ein erster Teil *Be/Entgrenzte Räume* nimmt staatlich-nationale Grenzen in den Fokus und deren gewollte/ungewollte Überschreitung; als Beispiele dienen einerseits Krankheitsepidemien bzw. medizinisch-wissenschaftliche Diskurse über entsprechende Gegenmaßnahmen wie Quarantänen, des Weiteren und vor dem Hintergrund systemtheoretischer Überlegungen der Zerfall des Habsburgerreiches im Spiegel von Repräsentanten der österreich-ungarischen Besatzungsmacht in Rumänien zwischen 1916 und 1918 und schließlich die strukturellen Rahmenbedingungen und individuellen Reflexionen von jüdischen Flüchtlingen, die auf der Flucht vor dem NS-Regime (mitunter auf Umwegen) in Kanada landeten. Der zweite Abschnitt des Buches *Inklusion – Exklusion – Transgression* spannt einen inhaltlichen Bogen von Juden/Jüdinnen in der Populärkultur, jüdischen Veteranen im Bund jüdischer Frontsoldaten, über Konzepte eines „guten Lebens“ in Kontexten der Freimaurerei, über Geschlecht als Analysekategorie in Ego-Dokumenten – in theoretisch-methodischer Hinsicht, sowie als Beitrag zur Biographie-Forschung – bis hin zu Fragen nationaler/transnationaler Gedächtnislandschaften in Österreich, Slowenien sowie in Europa. Alle Beiträge in diesem Abschnitt sind eingebettet in die Frage von Grenzziehungen und Grenzüberschreitungen in einem weiten Sinn, verstanden als grundlegendes Strukturmuster kultureller Repräsentationen in der Moderne. Der dritte Teil des vorliegenden Sammelbandes rückt wiederum *Begrenzte Zugehörigkeiten* im Rahmen nationalisierter, rassifizierter und vergeschlechtlichter Kontexte ins Blickfeld. Thematisiert werden verschiedene Ausformungen von diskursiven Ab- und Ausgrenzungskonzepten einerseits sowie Selbstverortungen und Selbstpositionierungen von sozialen Gruppen sowie Individuen andererseits. Alle vier Beiträge in diesem Abschnitt zeigen – am Beispiel von Erzählungen über

Rom_nija, im Rahmen von wissenschaftlichen Diskursfiguren wie ‚den Orient‘ bzw. ‚die Nation‘, im Rahmen sprachlich-nationaler (*imagined*) *communities* in Grenzregionen Südostmitteleuropas sowie in literarischen Imaginationen entlang der Kategorien Nation, „Rasse“ und Geschlecht – gerade die Brüchigkeit und Ambivalenz kultureller Grenzsetzungen auf. Der letzte Abschnitt des Bandes *Grenzsetzungen und Handlungsspielräume* rückt noch einmal stärker das Moment der konkreten Handlungsmöglichkeiten und -spielräume vor dem Hintergrund diskursiver Grenzsetzungen ins Blickfeld – am Beispiel von Gewalt-entgrenztem Verhalten von NS-TäterInnen im Rahmen der Lynchjustiz an alliierten Fliegern (Fliegermorde) in der Steiermark, im Hinblick auf die konkreten Aktionsfelder und Handlungsmöglichkeiten des „Judenschleppers“ Josef Schleich und schließlich im Rahmen der „Karriere“ eines „jüdischen“ Kreisamtsleiters und seiner Versuche, die vom NS-System gesetzten Grenzen zu überwinden.

Um an dieser Stelle nochmals auf Claudio Magris’ einleitend zitierte Bemerkungen zurückzukommen: Nicht nur Magris’ Biographie ist in hohem Maß von der geschilderten „Grenzerfahrung“ geprägt, sondern auch sein literarisches wie wissenschaftliches Werk: „Ohne diese Erfahrung der Grenze wären viele meiner Bücher nicht entstanden“, schreibt er. „Die ganze *Donau*¹³ ist ein Buch der Grenze, eine Reise auf der Suche nach der Überwindung und Überschreitung nicht nur der nationalen, sondern auch der kulturellen, linguistischen und psychologischen Grenzen; nicht nur der äußeren, realen Grenzen, sondern auch der Inneren eines Individuums verlaufenden Grenzen [...]“. ¹⁴ Dies kann auch als Plädoyer für eine unabdingbare Reflexion über die eigene Positioniertheit als ForscherIn im Rahmen des Forschungsprozesses gedeutet werden, wenn Magris weiter ausführt:

„Jenseits der Grenze war also gleichzeitig das Bekannte und das Unbekannte. Ein Unbekanntes, das man wiederentdecken, wieder bekannt machen mußte. Schon als Kind begriff ich, wenn auch undeutlich, daß ich jene Grenze überschreiten mußte, wollte ich wachsen und meine Persönlichkeit entwickeln, daß sie nicht völlig gespalten wäre. Ich mußte sie nicht nur physisch überschreiten, mit Hilfe eines Visums im Paß, sondern vor allem innerlich, indem ich die Welt jenseits der Grenze neu entdeckte und meiner Realität einverleibte.“¹⁵

Eine solche in hohem Maß selbstreflexive Positionierung im Prozess des Forschens und Vermittelns legt auch der Zeithistoriker Eduard G. Staudinger in seiner zeithistorisch-kultugeschichtlichen Thematisierung der Komplexität und Vielschichtigkeit von „Grenze“ und „Grensräumen“ an den Tag – und dies scheint nicht zuletzt auch bei ihm einer biographisch bedingten Sensibilität für die Thematik geschuldet zu sein. In

13 | Claudio Magris, *Donau*. Biographie eines Flusses. Übersetzt von Heinz-Georg Held, München 1988.

14 | Magris, *Grenzbetrachtungen*, 70.

15 | Magris, *Grenzbetrachtungen*, 62.

seinen Arbeiten und Forschungsprojekten, in denen er häufig wissenschaftliches Neuland betreten und zeithistorische Grundlagenforschung früh mit kulturgeschichtlichen Analysen verschränkt hat, spielen Fragen der Wahrnehmung, Ausdeutung, Aushandlung sowie die Prozesshaftigkeit verschiedener Phänomene von Grenzziehungen und „-überwindungen“ sowohl in einem territorial-politischen wie kulturellen Sinn eine zentrale Rolle.¹⁶ So etwa auch in einem jüngst erschienen Beitrag zur „Grenzlandschaft“ der Südsteiermark, die im „langen 20. Jahrhundert“ zeitweilig auch als Staatsgrenze sowie als „Grenze zwischen Ost und West“ fungierte. Die (historisch mitunter heftig umkämpften) politischen Grenzverläufe in dieser Region dienen Staudinger als Ausgangspunkt, um die Vielschichtigkeit des Begriffes „Grenze“ bzw. „Grenzraum“ grundsätzlich zu thematisieren und den Auswirkungen staatlich-politischer, territorialer Grenzziehungen auf die soziale Praxis im Sinne eines „Lebens an/mit der Grenze“ nachzugehen. Ins Zentrum rückt er dabei nicht nur individuelle wie kollektive Sinnstiftungsprozesse, sondern immer auch Fragen der Grenzüberschreitung, deren Möglichkeiten und Implikationen. Zugleich unternimmt er den Versuch „Grenze“ und „Grenzgebiet“ zu typologisieren und zeichnet Strukturen, kulturelle Repräsentationen und Strategien an „faktisch geschlossenen Grenzen“ ebenso nach, wie Muster der „Koexistenz“, „Interdependenz“, „Integration“, „Pseudo-Integration“ und schließlich Grenzen im „Inneren umgrenzter Territorien“.¹⁷ Viele der von ihm skizzierten Deutungsmuster finden sich auch in den vorliegenden Beiträgen wieder. Indem Staudinger den Blick auf kulturelle Imaginationen, Erinnerungs-, Denk- und Argumentationsmuster von Grenzen und Grenzregionen lenkt, ebenso wie auf Prozesse der Kommunikation, Interaktion und Grenzüberschreitung, verfolgt er einen ähnlich breiten Ansatz, wie er auch dem vorliegenden Sammelband zugrunde liegt.

16 | Vgl. etwa exemplarisch: Eduard G. Staudinger, Alltagsgeschichte am Beispiel von Vereinsgeschichte aus der Steiermark (1900-1938), in: Veröffentlichungen des Verbandes österreichischer Geschichtsvereine (VVÖGV) 25 (1985), 258-273. – Ders., Die Südmark. Aspekte der Programmatik und Struktur eines deutschen Schutzvereins in der Steiermark bis 1914, in: Helmut Rumpel/Arnold Suppan (Hg.), Geschichte der Deutschen im Bereich des heutigen Slowenien 1848-1941 (= Schriftenreihe des österreichischen Ost- und Südosteuropa-Instituts 13), Wien 1988, 130-154. – Ders., Zum Plan eines Gebietstausches zwischen Österreich, Ungarn und Jugoslawien aus dem Jahr 1921, in: VVÖGV 26 (1989), 97-101. – Ders./Siegfried Beer, Grenzziehung per Analogie. Die Miles-Mission in der Steiermark im Jänner 1919. Eine Dokumentation, in: Stefan Karner/Gerald Schöpfer (Hg.), Als Mitteleuropa zerbrach, Graz 1990, 133-152. – Ders., Von der Mehrheit zur Minderheit. Die deutschsprachige Bevölkerung des Abtaller Feldes im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert, in: Harald Heppner (Hg.), Slowenen und Deutsche im gemeinsamen Raum. Neue Forschungen zu einem komplexen Thema (= Buchreihe der Südostdeutschen Historischen Kommission 38), München 2002, 96-110. – Christian Promitzer/Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik/Eduard G. Staudinger (Hg.), (Hidden) Minorities. Language and Ethnic Identity between Central Europe and the Balkans (= Studies on South East Europe 5), Münster 2009.

17 | Eduard G. Staudinger, Aspekte zum Thema „Grenzen – Grenzziehungen“ aus regionalgeschichtlicher Perspektive, in: Dieter A. Binder/Helmut Konrad/Eduard G. Staudinger (Hg.), Die Erzählung der Landschaft, Wien-Köln-Weimar 2010, 9-18, hier v.a. 16-18.

Als HerausgeberInnen möchten wir den vorliegenden Band Eduard G. Staudinger zum 60. Geburtstag widmen. Eduard ist für uns nicht nur ein sehr enger Freund, sondern auch ein wunderbarer Lehrer, der uns in vielerlei Hinsicht dazu bringt, über Grenzen hinweg zu denken. Dafür möchten wir ihm mit diesem Buch herzlich danken.

Gerald Lamprecht, Ursula Mindler, Heidrun Zettelbauer
Graz, im Dezember 2011

Writing the History of Cultural Borderlands in Habsburg Central Europe

PIETER M. JUDSON

In recent years, the concept “Borderland” has become popular among scholars as a term used both to describe and to analyze the history of cultural relations in multi-lingual regions of Central and Eastern Europe.¹ Such borderlands did not usually mark boundaries between states but rather zones of cultural exchange *within* large multi-national continental empires such as Austria-Hungary, Russia, or the Ottoman Empire.² As an analytic concept applied to sites of study in the Western Hemisphere, borderland studies has shifted the focus of historical analysis away from an emphasis on cultural differences in those sites to an investigation of cultural exchange and to the specific, historic terms of such exchanges. By contrast, in Central and Eastern Europe, investigations of borderland regions are still often shaped by national outcomes in the twentieth century that rest on a presumption of original cultural differences within specific territories. Instead of a focus on exchange or on cultural mixing, we are still more likely to encounter claims and counterclaims about ethnic origins and national authenticity in the study of borderlands in Central and Eastern Europe.

In the study of the Habsburg Monarchy, the concept of borderlands has largely been shaped by nationalist activists of the nineteenth century. In the absence of nation states, nationalists sought to anchor their cultural and political claims to specific, bounded, geographic territories where they could argue that their national language was in general use.³ Within those regions, nationalists fought to privilege their language for official use in schooling, administration and the judiciary. The imagined boundaries of the

1 | For example: Omer Bartov/Eric D. Weitz (Ed.), *Shatterzone of Empires. Ethnicity, Identity, and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands*, Indiana 2012.

2 | One recent exception that examines a political borderland between states is: Paulus Adelsgruber/Laurie Cohen/Boerries Kuzmany, *Getrennt und doch verbunden: Grenzstädte zwischen Österreich und Russland 1772-1918*, Wien 2011.

3 | An excellent and exhaustive analysis of the this phenomenon of territorialization is Peter Haslinger's recent study of the Bohemian lands, *Nation und Territorium in tschechischen politischen Diskurs 1880-1930*, Munich 2010.

territories they claimed became a lot more precise for nationalists after 1880, when the Cisleithanian state began to include questions about people's language of daily use in its decennial census. Armed with the latest census data about language use, nationalist activists claimed that it was possible both to delineate the precise boundaries between nations, and to assess how those boundaries shifted over time.

Given the potential for such shifts, nationalists were especially sensitive to the border regions of the areas they claimed as places where people who spoke one language were likely to come into contact with people who spoke other languages. These regions where one encountered more than one language in daily usage were known as *Sprachgrenzen*. As a scientific category the *Sprachgrenze* was already an object of study for statisticians, folklorists, or for state officials who regulated the language of instruction in schools and textbooks in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, for nationalist activists and their political projects after 1848 and especially after 1880, the *Sprachgrenzen* became potent symbols of national vulnerability and of supposed threats to national survival. Nationalists believed that their nation was weakest at these linguistic borders where neighboring nations might subject it to cultural attack.

In fact, local language use and its symbolic significance in such regions were far more complex than nationalists liked to admit. As in other parts of Europe, both West and East, zones of language usage were rarely delineated by clear borders. In many regions of both Austria and Hungary, for example, inhabitants of commercially or administratively oriented towns often used a different language than did inhabitants of the surrounding countryside. Moreover, inhabitants of *Sprachgrenze* regions often attained a functional competence in more than one language, depending on the situational demands of daily life. The need for such multi-lingual competence resulted in part from the fact that the power relationships of these many languages to each other were not symmetric. Knowledge of some languages, such as German in Styria, Italian in Trieste, or Polish in Galicia, for example, was clearly privileged in state administration, commercial relations, and in secondary education. A functional knowledge of these privileged languages offered possibilities for social mobility to those whose families spoke other regional languages, at least in the period before 1900.⁴ One turn-of-the-century historian of the Austrian *Volksschule* noted that already in the 1820s, for example, Slovene-speaking parents had complained to religious and secular authorities that “Krainerisch lernen unsere Kinder zu Hause; in der Schule sollen sie deutsch lernen”. Moreover, in regions of mixed language use it was not uncommon for parents to send children to a neighboring region to receive some education in the other language, whether it be Slovene and German in Carinthia, Carniola and Styria, or Czech and German in mixed language regions of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.⁵

4 | Power relationships embodied in language usage could change. A language like Czech that in the Bohemian Lands had been relatively under privileged in 1867, actually achieved an equal (some would argue privileged) status in Bohemia by the turn of the century.

5 | Cited in Joachim Hößler, *Von Krain zu Slowenien. Die Anfänge der nationalen Differenzierungsprozesse in Krain und der Untersteiermark von der Aufklärung bis zur Revolution*

By the late nineteenth century nationalists treated such practices of bilingualism with fear and suspicion, thanks largely to their passionately held beliefs about the Darwinian character of national struggle that also shaped their views of the *Sprachgrenzen* regions. They claimed that people on these frontiers had engaged in an ongoing struggle for centuries to preserve their nationality. And although such frontier regions often differed radically from each other in terms of their demographic, social, or economic profiles, the nationalist imagination tended to project similar qualities onto them that made all sites of national conflict into a similar kind of space.

The historical evidence from such multi-lingual regions does not suggest that their inhabitants necessarily considered themselves to belong to warring national societies, at least not to the degree that nationalists hoped they would. Rather, the inhabitants of such regions often understood their communities in terms of regional loyalties, religious practice, and social class. The fact of linguistic difference alone did not even mean that their inhabitants viewed their *Heimat* regions as national or cultural borderlands. The barriers of language did not prevent them from socializing in the same pubs, worshipping in the same churches, and marrying each other. In fact it was the relative unwillingness of local people to make language – or nation – their foremost loyalty, that brought nationalists to focus their efforts so intensively on the full “conversion” of these frontier populations. Nationalists in turn explained local behaviors that contradicted their logic as the outcome of “forced assimilation”, of “de-nationalization”, of bribery exerted by the other nation or simply as the product of rural ignorance.

In making claims to real territories, nationalists marked their borderlands with recognizable natural phenomena that inscribed nationalist conflict into the landscape itself. In fact, most nationalist accounts of *Sprachgrenze* regions in novels, essays, or journalist pieces, began not with descriptions of people, or even with the languages they used, but rather with a consideration of how the natural landscape – rivers, hills, or mountain ranges – had allegedly separated two nations from time immemorial. These descriptions of nature then gave way to a narrative that tried to explain how more recent developments – usually unexpected results of economic modernization and migration

1768 bis 1848, Munich 2006, 142. – On the Bohemian Lands see: Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls. National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands 1900-1948*, Ithaca NY 2008, 1-3; 24-27. – Helmut Fielhauer, Kinder- „Wechsel“ und „Böhmisch-Lernen“: Sitte, Wirtschaft und Kulturvermittlung im frühen niederösterreichischen-tschechoslovakischen Grenzbereich, in: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 81 (1978), 115-148. – Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation. Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*, Cambridge MA 2006, 1-3; 47. – See also, generally: Maria Kurz, *Der Volksschulstreit in der Südsteiermark und in Kärnten in der Zeit der Dezemberverfassung*, phil. Diss. Wien 1986. – Petr Lovoziuk, *Karlovy/Libinsdorf: A Village in Discourse, a Discourse in a Village. Preliminary Research Report*, in: Zdeněk Uherek/Jan Grill (Eds.), *Fieldwork and Local Communities. Prague Occasional Papers in Ethnology* 7 (2005), 146-173. – Peter Mähner, *Grenze als Lebenswelt. Gnadlersdorf (Hnanice), ein süd-mährisches Dorf an der Grenze*, in: Peter Haslinger (Hg.), *Grenze im Kopf. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Grenze in Ostmitteleuropa*, Wien 1999, 67-102.

– had created a breach in the natural boundaries that had long separated two nations. In the nationalist imagination, such unnatural breaches had also made the frontier into a critical site for nationalist conflict.

In the late nineteenth century, given the rise of mass literacy and the increased attention paid to population movement, nationalist activists increasingly projected their fantasies and their anxieties for the future onto this half-imagined idea of the frontier. They worked hard to create a sense of borderland in the particular locations they defined as *Sprachgrenzen*, often creating in reality the very frontiers they had at first only imagined. They constantly adopted new strategies for their work, raised millions of crowns to build hundreds of minority schoolhouses, libraries, social centers, and monuments that would help to mark frontier territories as their own. They raised more money for propaganda efforts, for nationalist newspapers, for economic improvement schemes, and for welfare programs. German nationalists even funded a colonization scheme in the region between Marburg/Maribor and the Mur/Mura river in order to strengthen their position on this borderland.

A haunting paradox drove these remarkable efforts, a paradox that guaranteed that nationalist efforts would never be sufficient and would always have to be intensified. On the one hand, nationalists conceived of frontier people as brave representatives of the nation who fought daily for its survival. On the other hand, however, their knowledge of bilingualism, intermarriage, and regional loyalties caused nationalist activists to worry that these very same people did not share enough of a nationalist outlook. Nationalist writings repeatedly betray fears that these people did not even realize that they lived on a national frontier. In fact, to the great frustration of some activists, people of the frontier often refused to commit themselves fully to one nation or another. They refused to accept that their language-use gave them a distinct cultural identity as members of a nation. Even worse, their very indifference to nation meant that such people, like wartime renegades, often betrayed the national cause. For these reasons the borderland offered national activism enormous possibilities, but also extreme danger.

Today, a nationalist view of the world continues to dominate the ways that we write the histories of these multilingual regions in both obvious and subtle ways. In a general sense, the creation of nation states in the region in the twentieth century produced official schools of history to justify the nation-state outcome, linking twentieth-century states to national communities that had allegedly existed as such in earlier periods. But the ongoing power of the nationalist way of thinking about such regions results in part from our inability to see the labor that produced the nationalized world. Too often the teleological concept of the modern nation in Central Europe is presented in such normalizing (indeed naturalizing) terms, that its development hardly demands explanation. Historical accounts of nationhood usually seek to understand why, or under what circumstances the inevitable development happened when it did, rather than explaining why it happened at all. The kind of labor most historians associate with the nationalization of populations is still often referred to as “awakening”. So-called “awakeners” served as catalysts to a development that was waiting to happen. The need to explain the nationalization of populations fully as the product of labor can thus seem

counterintuitive, especially in multi-lingual frontier regions where national differences must have seemed most “natural”. Even constructivist theory of the last decades that focuses on the making of national communities nevertheless often implies the inevitability of the national outcome.⁶

Nationalist successes (the general rise of a nationalized public in nineteenth-century Europe) confirm what we expect to find, given how used we are to a nationalist way of seeing the world. But perhaps the successful outcome of this hard work should not be so readily presumed. We might understand the development and character of the nationalization process more fully if we focused instead on the repeated *failures* of nineteenth-century nationalist activists to build the kinds of enduring national communities they hoped to create. These failures have remained largely invisible in histories of Central and Eastern Europe because we, like the nationalists, accept too easily the idea that the very existence of linguistic difference produced nationalization. If instead we recognized both the hard work and frequent failures of the nationalists, we might develop a more historically insightful understanding of the character of nationalization or of ethnic conflict when it did happen. We might then also see the degree to which nationalist activists, once they obtained state power, produced the necessity of ethnically pure societies, a necessity that has dominated and continues to dominate European developments.

To do so, however, requires us to approach the broader histories of Central Europe in a more self-consciously non-national and more transnational way. In my view, a transnational history is not one that simply compares two or more national societies, in the ways that some historians today practice it. For example, a transnational history of the *Sprachgrenze* region between the Mur/Mura and Drau/Drava rivers would not simply compare “the Germans” and “the Slovenes” by attempting to tell a history from two national perspectives. Rather, a transnational history looks beyond the very concept of nation for its analytic power. Such an approach should avoid making nations into historical subjects or actors altogether, and see the nation instead as the situational outcome of exchanges among many historical actors. Finally, to produce such a history requires us to find new ways to link our understandings of the local to our larger trans-regional historical narratives. Many historians, particularly in Austria today, have produced superb analyses of local society that demonstrate the situational workings of the idea of nation, and that prove the greater importance of other forms of community bonds, such as regionalism or religion. Yet all of us encounter severe difficulties when we attempt to relate these local findings to the broader narratives that structure our historical understanding of Central Europe.

In the rest of this article, using examples drawn from Imperial Austrian contexts, I want to offer some specific ideas for how historians might shift their view, how they

6 | Jeremy King, The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond, in: Maria Bucur/Nancy Wingfield (Ed.), *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, West Lafayette IN 2001, 112-152.

might develop more transnational approaches to studying borderlands. I offer three main points of analysis:

First, to return to the effort to avoid making nations into historical subjects or actors, I follow the ideas of sociologist Rogers Brubaker. Brubaker warns against viewing groups as the basic units of social life, “as if they were internally homogeneous, externally bounded, even unitary collective actors with common purposes”.⁷ Groups form and re-form constantly. A view that treats nations as historical actors, however, imagines such groups to be permanent communities. Nation is never an unchanging and enduring community, a real thing in the world. Brubaker suggests, however, that we should consider “nation” as a way to *perceive* the world, as a lens through which people can understand the world, and not as an actor *in the world*. If nation offers people a cognitive approach to the world, then it can be adopted or discarded, depending on the situation. The problem for nationalists was that despite their best efforts, even they could not presume that people would always use this particular lens to understand the world. So the task of the historian is not necessarily to investigate nations, but rather to *investigate the situations* in which people adopted a nationalist lens to understand their world. The question should never be “what did a nation do?” but rather “when, or in what situations, did nation matter?”⁸

In order to realize this approach, however, it is also necessary to examine the specific nature of nationalist community building work at the local level. A complex appreciation of local context becomes critical in order to understand the range of ways in which local people could interpret their worlds in the first place. How did activists attempt to give nationalist meaning to local phenomena?

At the same time as we consider the local, we also need to understand the ways in which regional and Empire-wide legal or institutional structures influenced how nation could be understood or where change could be made. This brings me to my second point: Popular nationalist feeling did not by itself produce nationalist political movements in Austria. Rather, Austria’s particular constitution (1867), its laws, administrative structures and particular governing institutions all created spaces that made a politics organized around nationalism both possible and fruitful. Nationalists took advantage of the structural conditions specific to Imperial Austria to promote their movements at all levels of politics and social life. They built a lasting place for their movements in local and regional institutions through their effective use of Austrian laws, particularly those that regulated communal autonomy, those that guaranteed the rights of association, and those that determined the shape of the school system. Nationalists applied the legal guarantees of linguistic equality in schooling and public life to an ever-expanding number of social situations. In doing so they transformed the idea of linguistic equality at all levels of education, bureaucracy and the judiciary into an

7 | Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, Cambridge MA 2004, 7-27.

8 | Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*. – See also: Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*, New York 1996, 13-22.

effective program of nationalist activism.⁹ Gradually, nationalists even found ways to insert concepts of national rights – not simply linguistic rights – into some constitutional, legal, and judicial institutions of an Imperial state that did not generally recognize the existence of nations in law. It is worth remembering that although nationalists after 1918 often described the Austrian Empire as a “prison of nations”, it was only with the creation of self-styled nation states in the region after 1918 that nationalists gained the power to inscribe national identities into law and apply them to people, often against their will. Ironically, one could argue that national identities in the successor states often became prisons for many of the individuals trapped in them.

Because the Imperial Austrian state did not recognize any official nations within its borders, it also obviously had nothing to say about the territorial definition of those nations or who belonged to them. The nationalists themselves assumed the task of defining territorial boundaries and membership in their nations, and they usually did so by combining the language used by the people who inhabited a given territory with elements of its national history. Particularly in the western regions of the Austrian Empire, nationalists treated language use as the authentic marker of peoples’ national identity. There certainly are other ways of defining national belonging, including, as in Galicia and Bukovina, by religious practice, or as with Czech nationalists in Bohemia, on the basis of state’s rights. But perhaps because no other elements of local culture marked recognizable differences within these communities in the west, language-use came to define national identity.¹⁰

Language use offered nationalists a concrete form of difference that could define national belonging, thanks largely to the nature of Austria’s legal institutions. Because the 1867 fundamental laws called for the equality of all locally used languages in schools and in public life, issues of language use provided local activists with rich possibilities for making political demands. Language use in the local post office, on local street signs, in the local schools all provided endless possibilities for protest and activism. The fundamental laws had not explained just what “equality of language use” in public life should look like or how it should be achieved. This vagueness allowed nationalist to demand bigger and more expansive applications of these guarantees from the courts and the legislatures. The decennial census offered the nationalists yet another tool in popularizing their ideas. In order to provide effective education and bureaucratic service to local society, the Austrian state attempted to measure local language use in the census every ten years. This census asked citizens to report their “language of daily use” and not their “mother tongue” or their “nationality”. The state had no wish to create natio-

9 | On the laws and judicial rulings that offered nationalists increasing spaces for political activism, see: Gerald Stourzh, *Die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in der Verfassung und Verwaltung Österreichs, 1848-1918*, Wien 1986. – Hannelore Burger, *Sprachenrecht und Sprachgerechtigkeit im österreichischen Unterrichtswesen 1867-1918*, Wien 1995. – For examples of school law and judicial decisions for Lower Styria see: Kurz, *Der Volksschulstreit*.

10 | Jeremy King argues that in mid-nineteenth-century Bohemia the only group capable of becoming a nation, based on cultural differences, would have been the Jews. King, *Nationalization*.

nal identities or categories in law, but it wanted to know about the usage of recognized languages in every region.

The nationalists instrumentalized the census immediately. The census offered concrete statistics that simplified social reality by categorizing people in terms of the language they reported. Through official linguistic categories (like “Czech” to include “Moravian” or the exclusion of Yiddish) the census also helped to standardize language use on paper in ways that supported nationalist claims, even where such clarity did not in fact exist. Moreover, the Austrian state allowed citizens to report *only one* language in the census, whether or not they used more than one language in daily life. This meant that the prevalence and character of different forms of local bilingualism was never measured. This exclusion of bilingualism allowed activists to treat bilingualism when they encountered it, as an exceptional quality rather than as a statistical norm. It also helped them in their claim that the census results reflected national community loyalties. Nationalists purposely confused the measurement of language use with a statistical portrayal of nations, asserting that language use marked an exclusive form of personal identity and not simply a strategy for communication. Many historians make the same mistake, although perhaps not intentionally. They too view language, in the words of Joachim Höslér with regard to Krain, “no longer as a means of communication, but as a status symbol and proof of belonging to a nation”.¹¹

Not surprisingly therefore, every ten years when the government took the census it became a highly political occasion that resembled a political campaign. Rival nationalists accused each other and the government of corrupt practices, of forcing or bribing some people to report the “wrong” language. And there was much corruption in how forms were filled out and counted. Some nationalist organizations even carried out their own private census in order to be able to discredit the results of the government census.¹² But to understand the frontier idea fully, it is more important to see beyond the conflict over corruption or intentionally inflated or deflated numbers. For the first time, the census enabled nationalists to *map* their nations accurately onto *particular territories*. The census allegedly showed with startling precision exactly where two nations met. Taken over time, the censuses also purported to show exactly how these frontiers changed, in which *Sprachgrenzen* one nation *declined* or another nation *advanced*. The census enabled nationalists to name those places where the nation was imagined to be in greatest danger of losing ground and people to an enemy nation. Nationalist literature after 1880 used military references to refer to these frontiers where members of one nation battled members of another nation, where the front advanced, where bridges must be built, where defensive positions must be strengthened.

We must always keep in mind the metaphorical nature of these nationalist claims. They did not necessarily reflect some deeper reality in local society. Moreover, while the nationalists used the census results to popularize their territorial claims, even they

11 | Höslér, Von Krain zu Slowenien, 52.

12 | See individual examples cited in: Emil Brix, *Die Umgangssprachen in Altösterreich zwischen Agitation und Assimilation*, Wien 1982.

did not seriously believe that the frontiers simply constituted settings for two warring nations. Because nationalists were well aware of the deficiencies in the census – the fact that it ignored bilingualism, and the fact that reporting language use did not signify a commitment to nationhood – they worked to take advantage of those very elements. They presumed that in any frontier region there were people who could be persuaded to switch sides. Nationalists often admitted that they were not simply mobilizing members of their own nation. Instead, they competed to convert people who could belong to either side. This made the frontier even more socially unstable in reality than it was in the abstract. People could and did switch sides from one census to another, making it necessary for nationalists to work even harder to maintain their gains or minimize their losses from one census to the next.

How did nationalists embed perceptions of cultural difference in the daily situations of village or small-town life? How did they use language to create divisions in communities? What was the labor that sought to transform local perceptions? This brings me to my third point of analysis: how nationalists labored to produce convincing perceptions of nationhood at the local level, and how they connected those local perceptions of nationhood to larger trans-regional ideas of nationhood. The concept of nation requires that the individual view herself as part of a largely abstract interregional community, a community in which one can never meet all of its members.¹³ Nationalists had to convince local people that they belonged to an important larger community of people that extended well beyond their region. Local and regional newspapers especially played an important role in creating a sense of national membership by framing local news in trans-regional terms.

The challenge of making national community real in daily life was far more difficult than many scholars admit because it did not flow easily from the fact of different language usage. As we know from Gary B. Cohen's pioneering work on Czech- and German-speakers in nineteenth-century Prague, the choice to identify with one language community or another among the lowest classes of society depended on the existence of organized neighborhood social networks. German-speaking workers who moved to predominantly Czech-speaking neighborhoods, for example, usually learned to use the Czech language, thereby "becoming" Czechs in the eyes of nationalists.¹⁴ Particularly in rural areas, however, where there was far less organized political life and few regional social networks at all, the task of creating nationalists in local society was indeed ambitious.

Until the 1880s, nationalist conflict remained largely a matter for politicians. Debates over language use in the bureaucracy or in school policy took place in the Austrian Parliament, in provincial diets and in newspapers. In the 1880s, however, nationalists developed new strategies to mobilize far more people. In part, this change resulted from

13 | Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition, London 1991, 6.

14 | Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914*, Princeton 1981, 281.

the gradual addition of new voters to the political system. Franchise reform increasingly gave the right to vote to far more men and culminated with universal manhood suffrage for the parliament in 1907. All parties saw that they would have to mobilize more voters in more regions in order to maintain their political influence. In an age of increasing mass mobilization the idea of nation had to become a more popular lens for viewing the world. One nationalist strategy involved the creation of nationalist protective associations [*Schutzvereine*]. These associations did not actually aim to protect nations, as their name implied. Instead, they sought to mobilize mass support for nationalist causes and to create real national communities in the first place, especially in the language frontier regions.¹⁵

Education was the first policy field where nationalists hoped to nationalize the perceptions of people on the frontier. Since Austrian law promised all people a right to an education in their own language, demands that the government and the courts fulfill this promise offered a fruitful issue to nationalist politicians. Education also gave nationalists the opportunity to transform the attitudes and values of children and win them for the future. In fact, the first popular protective associations founded were the School associations, the German *Deutscher Schulverein* and the Czech *Ustřední matice školská* organized in 1880, followed in 1885 by the Slovene *Družba Ciril Metod* and the Italian *Lega Nazionale* in 1891. These organizations raised money to found minority language education in communities where too few children spoke the national language to qualify for a state school. In frontier communities the school associations used an apocalyptic rhetoric about the need to “save the thousands of children who are lost to the nation every year”.¹⁶

The school associations also built minority school buildings, “frontier fortresses” that became visible local symbols in the landscape of a national community. They organized private Kindergartens to prepare young children for schooling in their proper national language, and they fed poorer children a mid-day meal at school. In multi-lingual frontier regions such minority schools often competed with state schools for

15 | See, for example the essays in: Peter Haslinger (Hg.), *Schutzvereine in Ostmitteleuropa. Vereinswesen, Sprachenkonflikte und Dynamiken nationaler Mobilisierung 1860-1939*, Marburg 2009.

16 | On the school associations see: Pieter M. Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries. Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914*, Ann Arbor MI 1996, 207-215; 229-236. – Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 19-81. – Werner Drobesh, *Der deutsche Schulverein 1880-1914. Ideologie, Binnenstruktur und Tätigkeit einer deutsch-nationalen Kulturorganisation unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Sloweniens*, in: Feliks J. Bister/Peter Vodopivec (Hg.), *Kulturelle Wechselseitigkeit in Mitteleuropa. Deutsche und slowenische Kultur im slowenischen Raum von Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum zweiten Weltkrieg*, Ljubljana 1995, 129-154. – Alexandra Špiritová, *Ustřední matice školská v letech 1880-1918*, in: *Paginae historiae* 1 (1993), 178-195. – Roman Zaoral, *Die tschechischen und deutschen Schulvereine in Böhmen am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts in Germanoslavica* 7 (1995) 2, 107-115. – Andrej Vovko, *Mal položi dar... Portret slovenske narodnoobrambne šolske organizacije Družba sv. Cirila in Metoda 1885-1918*, Ljubljana 1994.

the attendance of the very same children, offering benefits such as clothing, shoes, free books, meals, and gifts at Christmas in order to build attendance and win over more children for the nation.

A second kind of protective association worked to improve the economic chances of the national community in these same frontier regions. They provided members of the national community with job training, farm implements, seed or fruit trees, livestock, and with welfare benefits when necessary. At Christmas they too provided the village children with gifts of shoes and clothes. Some of these organizations like the radical German nationalist *Südmark* even raised money to try to bring so-called “colonists” to frontier regions, in order to strengthen their nation in the census. But this kind of colonization policy was far too ambitious to change the linguistic composition of frontier regions significantly. At best, colonization had a propaganda value that demonstrated the power of nationalist activism.¹⁷

Although nationalist associations claimed to save people from being “denationalized”, in fact, they sought to convert people who simply had no national identity at all. The indifference of many people to nationalist commitment gave activists the chance to win over all kinds of people to their cause, *not simply those who shared their language*. At the same time, however, nationalists often had to admit defeat when some people in rural villages expressed no interest in the idea of nation no matter what language they spoke. This caused great frustration to nationalists, and their publications frequently speak of national renegades, national cowardice, and national betrayal. Despite the optimistic public presentations of their work, their frustration suggests that many people did not respond to nationalist activism, or that they only responded in some situations.

Nationalists used other strategies to make perceptions of nationhood real in daily life. Local nationalists portrayed the landscape and architecture of contested regions in terms that recalled their national identity. Nearby mountain peaks or hill-top castles or rivers gained nationalist significance as part of the national landscape. But nationalists also pointed to man-made elements of the landscape as examples of their own nation’s progressive modernity, particularly those that embodied technical knowledge. Street names and monuments commemorating nationalist heroes confronted villagers with reminders of national identity.¹⁸ Local celebrations and rituals to mark holidays were

17 | Eduard Staudinger, *Die Südmark: Aspekte der Programmatik und Struktur eines deutschen Schutzvereins in der Steiermark bis 1914*, in: Helmut Rumpler/Arnold Suppan (Hg.), *Geschichte der Deutschen im Bereich des heutigen Slowenien (Zgodovina nemcev na območju današnje Slovenije), 1848-1941*, München-Wien 1988, 130-154. – Pieter M. Judson, *Versuche um 1900 die Sprachgrenze sichtbar zu machen*, in: Moritz Csáky/Peter Stachel (Hg.), *Die Verortung von Gedächtnis*, Wien 2001, 163-173. – Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 100-140. – On the important gendered divisions within this nationalist labor, see: Heidrun Zettelbauer, *“Die Liebe sei Euer Heldentum”. Geschlecht und Nation in völkischen Vereinen der Habsburgermonarchie*, Frankfurt am Main 2005.

18 | For examples see: Nancy Wingfield/Cynthia Paces, *The Sacred and the Profane: Religion and Nationalism in the Bohemian Lands, 1880-1920*, in: Pieter M. Judson/Marsha Rozenblit (Ed.), *Constructing Nationalities in East-Central Europe*, New York 2005, 107-125.

also given a nationalist content in order to remind people of their connection to a larger national community. Wherever possible, such festivals attempted to mobilize the entire community, especially the young.

Still another nationalist strategy involved framing and shaping the way information was reported in local and regional newspapers. Rising literacy rates in Habsburg Austria produced a considerable growth in newspapers and other publications, many of which conveyed a strongly nationalist point of view to their readers.¹⁹ Newspapers interpreted every kind of event in nationalist terms, and left no space for alternative understandings of the news. For example, the nationalist press frequently recounted incidents of physical violence against minority schoolhouses in frontier regions. These schoolhouses allegedly served as targets for popular nationalist anger, and this produced vandalism that was often framed in terms of “schoolhouse dramas” that recounted the vandalism. Nevertheless, it is impossible to judge with certainty how many such incidents were premeditated, resulting from a focused nationalist anger, and how many were simply the products of situational factors such as drunkenness.

A well documented attack on the German minority schoolhouse in Lichtenwald/Sevnica in 1908 serves as an excellent example of the ambiguities surrounding cases that nationalists framed as examples of nationalist violence.

It is difficult to untangle the exact motives and feelings of the perpetrators who, in the early hours of September 23, attacked the school with stones. The defendants later testified that they had acted in an inebriated state and were unaware of what they were doing. On the other hand, the Slovene nationalist lawyers brought from Cilli/Celje to defend them, argued in their closing statements that the youths had targeted the school understandably to respond to a recent German nationalist attack on the Slovene Sokol meeting in Pettau/Ptui (an incident that had also produced rioting in Laibach/Ljubljana). However the teacher at the German school, a man named Tomitsch who knew the youths and had chased them that night, testified that he did not think the defendants had been aware of their actions, nor that the attack had been in any way premeditated. Nevertheless, the German nationalist newspapers reported the incident with indignation, describing it as a well-planned Slovene nationalist attack on German *Nationalbesitzstand*. Slovene nationalist papers meanwhile justified the attack as an understandable action by young nationalist patriots aggrieved by the German treatment of the Sokol in Pettau/Ptui. The truth, of course, was not simple. Incidents like this demonstrate the usefulness of Brubaker’s approach. The drunken perpetrators may indeed have spouted some nationalist slogans, but their vandalism was hardly an expression of specific nationalist rage, despite what the newspapers tried to say about it. It was as if they had assumed a nationalist lens in targeting the school, but not that they themselves were

19 | Gabriele Melischek/Josef Seethaler, *Presse und Modernisierung in der Habsburgermonarchie*, in: Helmut Rumpler/Peter Urbanitsch (Hg.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, Band VIII/2, Wien 2006, 1535-1714.

committed nationalists. In another situation, or without alcohol, they might have acted quite differently.²⁰

Still another strategy of the nationalist organizations was to harness the enormous potential of the consumer revolution around 1900 by making national identity a guide to all forms of personal consumption. Activists raised funds for nationalist organizations by selling cheap consumer items such as kitchen matches or soap. But their propaganda also demanded that men and women make nationalist choices in all walks of life, from where they shopped for food to what restaurant they visited, from what bank they used to which physician they consulted, from whom they hired as a domestic servant, to the tourist destinations and guidebooks they selected.²¹ Nationalists made both economic and personal arguments about consumption. The economic argument taught people that even in their smallest consumer actions, they could support the life of the national community. The personal argument discouraged social interaction among people who allegedly belonged to different nations. Such interaction increasingly came to be stigmatized as “mixing”. Even though the national enemy might also be their neighbor, people should learn the importance of difference in social life.

How might we measure the success of all this nationalist work? I believe these efforts were not completely totalizing in their nationalizing effects, nor did they always succeed in shaping the views of ordinary people. Sometimes nationalist stories may have convinced local people, but more often the nationalist point of view failed to make consistently committed nationalists out of people. There is a difference between the *claims* made by nationalists, and their actual *ability* to shape the perceptions of local peoples as completely as they would have liked. Nationalist symbols and national discourse may have been everywhere. Still, we cannot conclude that people always adopted a nationalist perspective, nor that they saw themselves as part of a larger national community. The nationalists themselves produced most of the evidence we have for such a conclusion. People may have shared nationalist views in some situations but not in other situations. This point is confirmed by those nationalist publications that often complained in frustration about the indifference they encountered among their alleged compatriots on the language frontier. A writer for the German nationalist *Südmark* complained typically in 1911 of the Germans of Ceršak/Zierberg in Styria that too often “they side with the Slovene enemy against their own people”.²² Meanwhile, in parts of Bohemia, Czech nationalists complained that Czech families continued to send their children to German schools, giving no thought to their national identity. In Southern Styria, parents continued to demand a bi-lingual education for their children, even though the possibilities for such an education largely vanished, thanks to the efforts of the nationalists.²³

20 | Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 183-185. – Pieter M. Judson, *Remaking Civil rights into National Rights: A Local Trial in Sevnica/Lichtenwald 1908* (unpublished manuscript).

21 | For examples see: Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 141-176.

22 | *Mitteilungen des Vereins Südmark* 6 (1911) 34.

23 | See examples in: Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, especially 31.