

Framing National Ambivalence in Interwar Yugoslavia
Lower Styria and Its “Germanophile Slovenes” (1918-1929)

By

Oliver Pejić

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of History

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Comparative History*

Supervisor: Balázs Trencsényi

Second Reader: Constantin Iordachi

Budapest, Hungary; Vienna, Austria

2020

Copyright Notice

Copyright in the text of this thesis rests with the Author. Copies by any process, either in full or part, may be made only in accordance with the instructions given by the Author and lodged in the Central European Library. Details may be obtained from the librarian. This page must form part of any such copies made. Further copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the written permission of the Author.

Abstract

The present thesis examines the discursive articulation and contestation of nationally ambivalent practices in Lower Styria, a formerly Habsburg and majority Slovene-speaking region of interwar Yugoslavia, during the first ten years of Karađorđević rule. By looking at reports from the contemporary Slovene- and German-language press, it researches select aspects of the post-war cultural project of “Slovenization” in order to show how the political transformation of 1918/9 ushered in a new national policy that, much like in interwar Czechoslovakia, made ethnolinguistic nationalism a state-enforced ideology and introduced novel forms of involuntary national categorization. In spite of these innovations, however, Lower Styrian society was also marked by a strong presence of “nationally ambivalent” social, cultural and political practices that contemporary Slovene nationalists framed as “Germanophilia.” The thesis’s individual subchapters examine how the transition to a new “national” government caused a noticeable renegotiation of performed identity among Lower Styria’s officialdom, as well as how new forms of involuntary identity ascription manifested themselves in the interwar Slovene education system and during the 1921 Yugoslav population census. The thesis argues that in spite of its newly gained ascendancy in Lower Styrian society, Slovene ethnolinguistic nationalist discourse was not left unchallenged. The authoritarian aspects of the Slovenization process were fiercely contested in German-language newspapers, and it also found implicit rejection in the diverse nationally ambivalent practices that caused much indignation in the contemporary Slovene-language press.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Discourses of National Ambivalence in a Transnational Context.....	6
1.2 Studying National Ambivalence: Hermeneutics and Methodology	10
2. A Contested Province: Lower Styria in the Late Habsburg Period (1867-1918).....	16
2.1 Town and Countryside: Sociolinguistic Hierarchies and Emerging Nationalism	17
2.2 National Ambivalence in Lower Styrian Politics: Mobilizing Slovene Speakers Against Slovene Nationalism	23
2.3 “National Struggle” and Its Culmination during the First World War	25
3. “Yugoslavia is Here”: Slovenization and National Ambivalence in Lower Styria During the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918-1929)	27
3.1 The 1918/9 Purge: (Re)negotiating the Identities of Lower Styria’s Officialdom	30
3.1.1 Assigning Identity to Lower Styria’s Bureaucrats	32
3.1.2 Assessing the Purge: Breaks and Continuities in Lower Styria’s Officialdom	34
3.2 Educational Reform: The Battle Against National Ambivalence in Lower Styrian Schools.....	39
3.2.1 German Schools for German Children: Redefining the Space for German- Language Education in Post-Habsburg Lower Styria.....	40
3.2.2 “Germanophile” Parents and the Persistent Appeal of German Education	45
3.3 The 1921 Yugoslav Population Census: Statistically Reclaiming Lower Styria’s “Nationally Alienated” Slovenes	49
3.3.1 Mentally Preparing the Nation for the Census	50
3.3.2 Assessing the Census’s Success.....	52
4. Conclusion.....	54
5. Bibliography	57
5.1 Primary Sources.....	57
5.1.1 Books and Other Printed Primary Sources	57
5.1.2 Newspapers	57
5.2 Secondary Sources.....	57

1. Introduction

On 3 October 1929, ten months after King Alexander Karađorđević abolished the parliament, suspended the constitution and installed a royal dictatorship, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was officially renamed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.¹ By then, roughly ten years had passed since the Habsburg Empire collapsed and its southeastern provinces became part of a new political entity that was defined as a South Slavic nation-state. The political transition that these regions experienced was part of a wider European phenomenon. Throughout Central Europe, the pre-war imperial political order was liquidated and replaced by a wholly new order that was nominally founded upon the principle of “national self-determination.” The “unmaking” of imperial sovereignty, however, was in no way a smooth or straightforward process. The states of interwar Central and Southeast Europe thus faced a wide array of unforeseen political, economic and social challenges, not the least of which was the contentious issue of “national minorities.”²

The extent to which national minorities preoccupied interwar Yugoslav political discussions becomes apparent as soon as one takes a look into the country’s heterogeneous and multilingual political press. A commentary published in 1929 by *Slovenski gospodar*, a Slovene-language conservative newspaper, ascertained that “[i]n recent times, it is particularly common to write about national minorities. ... We have a Hungarian, a German and a Romanian national minority. Out of all of these, the German one is the most insatiable.”³

¹ Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, trans. Dona Geyer (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2019), 104. Other notable English-language overviews of interwar Yugoslav history include Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 1984), and Dejan Djokic, *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

² Natasha Wheatley, “Central Europe as Ground Zero of the New International Order,” *Slavic Review* 78, no. 4 (2019): 900-903.

³ “Ali so nemčurji narodna manjšina [Are Germanophiles a National Minority]?” *Slovenski gospodar*, no. 14, 3 March 1929.

As the reader soon finds out, the “insatiability” of Yugoslavia’s Germans is said to lie in the fact that their cultural demands do not reflect their “objective” demographic presence:

We are not thinking about the Germans in Vojvodina or Kočevsko. We also disregard the handful of real Germans in Maribor, Ptuj and Celje. Instead, we want to have a proper talk with the ‘Germans’ living in the other towns, markets and villages of former Lower Styria. ... We all know very well that these are the sons of Slovene parents that have abandoned their language and nationality. For God’s sake, what kind of a ‘German’ is a person who has to use Slovene when speaking with his father or mother?! This is also why we do not call them Germans, since we are afraid of offending genuine and authentic Germans by planting them such wares. Since forever, we have called them: *nemčurs* or *nemškutars* [“Germanophiles”].⁴

The fact that Slovene nationalists were carefully differentiated between authentic (*Nemci*) and inauthentic members of the national Other (*nemškutarji*) is hardly surprising. After all, a pronouncedly organicist understanding of national identity had been a defining feature of Slovene nationalist discourse ever since the birth of a Slovene-language political press in the revolutionary year of 1848.⁵ In a typically Herderian manner, Slovene nationalists understood their nation as an ethnolinguistically defined community and its speakers as morally obliged to maintain, celebrate and cultivate the use of their mother tongue. In line with this logic, they used the slur “Germanophile” to denote native Slovene speakers who either did not espouse such a value-driven stance towards Slovene culture, or; even worse, consciously identified as Germans by virtue of their entry into the German cultural milieu.

Why were many Slovene speakers disinterested or actively hostile towards the goals of the Slovene nationalist movement? Nationalists would traditionally find explanations for such “treasonous” behavior by pointing towards the “denationalizing” structures of the Habsburg Empire. Factors such as the state’s supranational character, the sociolinguistic hierarchies that shaped its society and education system, not to mention the attempts by rival

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ According to the Digital Library of Slovenia’s searchable online database of digitalized newspapers and journals (accessed June 15, 2020, <https://www.dlib.si/>), the first occurrence of the term *nemškutar* may be traced to the 21st issue of *Slovenija*, the first Slovene-language political newspaper (“Slovenske dežele [The Slovene Lands],” *Slovenija*, no. 21, 12 September 1848).

nationalist activists to mobilize Slovene speakers for their own national projects, were all seen as ample reasons as to why many native Slovene speakers did not end up behaving as model Slovene patriots. And while various forms of nationally ambivalent behavior may have been excusable under the old “non-national” regime, the fact that they persisted even decades into the age of “national freedom” nevertheless immensely frustrated the Slovene national activists of the interwar period.⁶

For the Yugoslav state’s formerly Habsburg territories in the north, the 1918 transition to Karađorđević rule without a doubt marked an important shift in terms of identity politics. Unlike the old Danube Monarchy, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was a polity in which ethnolinguistic nationalism was a state-enforced ideology. At least for its “state-bearing” (*državotvorni*) South Slavic citizens, one’s performed national identity was henceforth expected to be in harmony with one’s presumed ethnolinguistic background. And while many individuals that had once behaved in a nationally ambivalent manner eventually reconciled their linguistic, social and political practices with the new zeitgeist, a substantial number continued to engage in activities that national activists variously identified as national indifference, ambivalence, or even outright national treason, all the way until the state’s collapse in 1941.⁷

It is safe to say that a thorough study of the various manners in which nationally ambivalent practices manifested themselves in the formerly Habsburg provinces of interwar Yugoslavia would by far exceed the scope of a Master’s thesis. In order to offer at least a

⁶ A commentary published by a liberal Slovene-language daily in 1929 thus recalled how “[t]en years ago, as we occupied our house and cleansed it of usurpers, we took consolation in the idea that the influence of the artificially and forcefully instilled foreign tongue will already disappear within the first generation. We expected, and with full right, that the young people who had entered and also completed our schools would eradicate the tradition of Germanophilia [*nemškutarjenja*]. We see today that we were terribly wrong and that things cannot go on like this anymore.” (“Za narodno vzgojo obrtniškega naraščaja [For a National Education of Junior Craftsmen],” *Mariborski večernik* “*Jutra*,” no. 33, 9 February 1929).

⁷ A recurring characteristic of such late reports is exactly the disbelief in the prevalence of such behavior even “after twenty years of our national freedom” (“Ki so krivi, niso krivi [Those That Are Guilty Are Not Guilty],” *Slovenija*, no. 25, 24 June 1938).

partial contribution to the research on this phenomenon, the present study asks how the critical juncture of 1918 influenced the framing and understanding of nationally ambivalent practices in a particular region of Yugoslavia during the first ten years of Karađorđević rule.⁸ The region in question was known as Lower Styria,⁹ and the nationally ambivalent Slovene-speakers among its population were framed by contemporary Slovene nationalists as “Germanophile Slovenes” (*nemčurji/nemškutarji*, in German *Deutschtümler*).

To employ the terminology of Tara Zahra, Lower Styria’s “Germanophiles” were by and large a typical “imagined noncommunity.”¹⁰ Its purported members did not necessarily identify with it *per se*, but were nevertheless categorized as such by Slovene nationalists on the grounds of the specific practices they engaged in. Which, however, were the particular practices that interwar Slovene nationalism identified as being Germanophile in character? And how were such practices discursively articulated and contested in what had then been the primary discursive arena of the public sphere, i.e. the press? The present thesis explores these questions by looking at how contemporary Slovene- and German-language newspapers reported on select aspects of the post-war project of cultural “Slovenization.” It will show from the press’s perspective(s) how state policies aimed at eradicating national indifference in Lower Styria met both complacency as well as resistance in a society whose members reacted diversely and unpredictably to the new “national” spirit of the times.

The overarching argument of this study is that the 1918/9 transition from Habsburg to Karađorđević rule ushered in a period that was defined not only by important qualitative

⁸ The chronological framework of this study consists of the period between the interwar Yugoslav state’s establishment in 1918 up until the introduction of a royal dictatorship in 1929. The royal dictatorship did not trigger any particular change in Yugoslav policy towards national ambivalence and primarily serves the arbitrary purposes of periodization.

⁹ Lower Styria (*Spodnja Štajerska/Untersteiermark*) consisted of the southern portion of the eponymous former Austrian crownland. A majority Slovene-speaking region, it had a traditionally strong German-speaking urban presence and was seen by contemporaries as a particular hotbed of Germanophile sentiment.

¹⁰ Tara Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93–119, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0037677900016715>.

changes in terms of nationality politics from above, but also by numerous unexpected continuities in attitudes and popular practices from below. The newly gained ascendancy of Slovene ethnolinguistic nationalism prompted a notable part of the Lower Styrian population to renegotiate their performed identities in accordance with the new zeitgeist. Much like in the late Habsburg period, however, this organicist view of national identity was not left unchallenged. On the level of elite discourse, its validity and justness was fiercely contested in German-language newspapers, and it also found implicit rejection in the diverse nationally ambivalent practices so often discussed in the contemporary Slovene-language press.

The thesis is arranged according to the following structure: The remainder of this introductory chapter will offer some further reflections on discourses of national ambivalence in a wider transnational context (1.1), as well as a discussion of the methodological approaches that have thus far been employed in its study (1.2). To offer some indispensable insight into the dynamics of Lower Styrian society in the pre-Yugoslav years, the second chapter provides an overview of the region's history during the late Habsburg period (1867-1918). The third chapter of the thesis is dedicated to select aspects of Lower Styria's post-war project of "Slovenization" and its echoes in the contemporary press. These include the 1918/9 bureaucratic purge (3.1), the reform of the education system (3.2), and finally the execution of the 1921 Yugoslav population census (3.3). A conclusive summary of the thesis's main findings and arguments is provided in its fourth chapter.

1.1 Discourses of National Ambivalence in a Transnational Context

When observed from a comparative perspective, the lexical differentiation that Slovene nationalists made between “real” and “inauthentic” Germans, Italians and Hungarians¹¹ reveals itself to be a phenomenon that was by no means rare in a transnational context. Taking just the wider Habsburg, Ottoman and Romanov (post-)imperial space into consideration, we come across analogous linguistic constructs in an area spanning from the Baltics in the north and all the way down to the southern Balkans.¹²

It should be noted that the semantic breadth of such labels tended to oscillate and change throughout time. The meaning of the slur *nemškutar* could thus range from “pro-German” (e.g. a sympathizer of politics that benefit “German interests”) to explicitly “pseudo-German” (i.e. an individual of non-German origin who consciously and articulately frames themselves as German). Obviously enough, such pejorative terms masked the inherent diversity of personal convictions that people labelled as such may have actually held.

¹¹ The labels *nemškutar/nemčur*, *lahon* and *madžaron* formed a kind of “triad” of national apostates in Slovene nationalist discourse. In a 1924 article reflecting on Slovene political orientations during the late Habsburg Empire, we may for example read that there were Slovenes “who were completely estranged from their nation and wished for this nation to drown as soon as possible in a foreign sea. These were the so-called Magyarones, Germanophiles and Italianophiles [*madžaroni, nemškutarji in lahoni*].” In “Resna beseda ob pravem času. Vprašanja. [A Serious Word at the Right Time. Questions.],” *Slovenski narod*, no. 257, 9 November 1924.

¹² To offer an illustrative but to no extent exhaustive set of examples: In the Estonian language, the corresponding term for Germanophiles is *kadakad*, meaning “junipers” (*Historical Dictionary of Estonia: Second Edition*, s. v. “Germanization”, by Toivo Miljan (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015). In Latvian, such people were called *kārkluvācieši* (“osier Germans,” which “probably refers to the very pliable and bendable nature of this plant compared with the more ‘masculine’ notions connected with the oak, an important tree in Latvian folklore” (Per Bolin, *Between National and Academic Agendas: Ethnic ‘Policies’ and National Disciplines at the University of Latvia, 1919-1940*, Södertörn Studies in History 13, Södertörn Academic Studies 51 (Stockholm: E-print, 2012), 63)). In Lithuanian, the corresponding terms for “German” and “Germanophile” are *vokietis* and *vokietininkas* (Klaus Fuchs, “Die Ermittlungen von Matas Krygeris zum deutschnationalen Finanznetzwerk im Memelgebiet 1935”, *Annaberger Annalen* 13 (2005), 90, f. 9). The language also differentiates between Poles (*Lenkai*) and Polonophiles (*lenkomanai*) (e.g. Egdūnas Račius. “Muslims of Interwar Lithuania: The Predicament of a Torn Autochthonous Ethno-Confessional Community,” in *Muslims in Interwar Europe: A Transcultural Historical Perspective*, eds. Agai Bekim, Ryad Umar and Sajid Mehdi (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 197). In the languages of the Habsburg Empire, we come across additional terms for denoting Germanophiles (*poněmčenec*, *němčik* in Czech) as well as Italianophiles (*talijanaš* in Croatian) and Hungarophiles (*mađaron* in Serbian and Croatian, *madarón* in Slovak, *maghiaron* in Romanian as well as *madyaron* in Ukrainian). Further south, Serbian knows a term for Bulgarophiles (*bugaraši*), and Bulgarian and Macedonian both have specific expressions for Grecophiles (*gr̃komani/grkomani*) and Serbophiles (*sr̃bomani/srbomani*).

However, labels of this kind were consistent to the extent that they denoted behavior and practices that nationalists in one way or another framed as nationally ambivalent.

That the activists of a given nationalist movement should use specific slurs to attack their co-nationals for supporting “non-national” politics does not appear particularly outstanding. In the Habsburg context, an example of such a purely “political” pejorative would be the Italian *austriacante* (“Austrophile”).¹³ On the other hand, if one were to specifically look for nationalist movements that employed such labels on an ethnic basis, they appear to share at least two characteristics that make the presence of such a discourse likely. Firstly, the nation should be primarily framed as an ethnolinguistically defined community. Secondly, the movement’s national activists must perceive their nation as threatened by some form of “denationalization.” The latter manifests itself as the “loss” of the nation’s members through their linguistic and, accordingly, also national assimilation into a foreign culture.

A primarily ethnolinguistic framing of the nation seems an obvious precondition to the extent that a civic framing of nationality should at least theoretically make an individual’s presumed ethnic origins irrelevant for his national belonging. Furthermore, the Herderian celebration of authentic and linguistically defined culture that was typical for such nationalisms both politicizes an individual’s relationship to his presumed “native” language and problematizes linguistic assimilation as a form of “denationalization.”¹⁴ When national

¹³ The online edition of the most renowned Italian encyclopaedia (*L'Enciclopedia Italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*) defines *austriacante* with the following words: “*Durante la dominazione austriaca in Italia, cittadino di nazionalità non tedesca (soprattutto italiana) che accettava con un certo favore quella dominazione e non condivideva le aspirazioni d'indipendenza comuni ai suoi connazionali.*” (Treccani, s. v. “austriacante,” accessed June 02, 2020, <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/austriacante/>).

¹⁴ The Romanticist celebration of national authenticity that allowed subsequent culturally framed nationalist movements to arise has its obvious intellectual roots in the writings of the famed philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder. Considering diversity as the highest value of human culture, he argued that all languages reflect the specific mentalities and identities of their speakers. In accordance with this logic, no language may be considered superior or inferior – linguistic variation represents a value in itself. Cf. Tomasz Kamusella, *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009), 44-47; Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 97-101.

activists thus saw the numbers of their linguistically defined nation dwindling, framing the nation in organicist terms seemed like a viable means of discrediting cultural assimilation as inherently immoral and problematic.

If we take this subjective sense of national endangerment into account, the assortment of nationalist movements that framed nationality in pronouncedly organicist terms appears quite logical. These are all evidently ethnolinguistic nationalist movements based upon languages that, at the given time period, enjoyed limited social prestige and were not widely accepted as mediums of social mobility. The passage of their speakers to a higher social stratum thus usually involved the acquisition of a more prestige language.¹⁵ While such patterns of unequal sociolinguistic hierarchies may have been freely observable in the past, it was their explicit politicization and framing as an ethical issue that shows the inherently modern character of ethnolinguistic nationalist discourse.

Scholars of nationalism often stress that individual nationalist movements should not be categorized according to the simple binary of civic and ethnic nationalism.¹⁶ In effect, most nationalisms tend to include both civic and ethnic aspects, and the relationship between them changes throughout time.¹⁷ A similar argument can also be made regarding the role ethnic origins play in nationalist discourse. Just as much as organicist arguments were useless for German nationalists in a region such as Lower Styria, they were perfectly relevant for their

¹⁵ Throughout the long 19th century, similar sociolinguistic dynamics as those that defined the relationship between Slovene and German could thus also be observed between languages such as Czech and German, Slovak and Hungarian, Lithuanian and Polish, or Ukrainian and Russian.

¹⁶ For a critical appraisal and discussion of the literature, see e.g. Krzysztof Jaskułowski, “Western (Civic) ‘versus’ Eastern (Ethnic) Nationalism: The Origins and Critique of the Dichotomy,” *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 171 (2010): 289–303.

¹⁷ Throughout Europe, nationalism became more pronouncedly ethnic after the 1870s: “[T]his is exactly the period when nationalism gradually changed its function from an oppositional ideology, often linked to revolutionary social demands, to a legitimizing doctrine” (Balázs Trencsenyi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Volume I: Negotiating Modernity in the ‘Long Nineteenth Century’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 384). Such new currents in nationalism tended to be ethnically exclusivist, anti-modernist, particularist, and aggressive, i.e. convinced that group conflict is inevitable (Maciej Janowski, “*Wavering Friendship*: liberal and national ideas in nineteenth century East-Central Europe.” *Ab Imperio*, no. 3-4 (2000): 82-83).

colleagues in the Kingdom of Hungary. Indeed, how could a German nationalist from one of Cisleithania's German-speaking "language islands" (*Sprachinseln*) advocate an organicist conception of nationality when such communities traditionally maintained their demographic presence through the linguistic assimilation of newcomers from the non-German-speaking countryside? Conversely, such a discourse was perfectly compatible with the political goals of German ethnolinguistic nationalists in the Kingdom of Hungary. Much like the Slavic ethnolinguistic nationalists in Cisleithania, they criticized their co-nationals for disrespecting their language and succumbing to voluntary "denationalization" owing to the increasing ascendancy of the Hungarian language in Transleithanian society.¹⁸

To recapitulate, the present subchapter has argued that in spite of their wide semantic spans, labels such as Germanophile, Hungarophile etc. were all consistent to the extent that they denoted practices that, from the perspective of national activists, in one way or another strayed from the expectations of "proper" national behavior. Throughout this thesis, such practices are consistently referred to with the umbrella term "national ambivalence." This terminological choice, however, goes against an established yet heavily contested tradition in the existing scholarship. Indeed, a person acquainted with the secondary literature would quickly point out that one would usually see in its place the term "national indifference."

This terminological uncertainty is not coincidental. Indeed, it largely reflects the extent to which the methodological and hermeneutic approaches that one should employ when studying the reception of nationalist mobilization still remain contested in historiography.

¹⁸ A German-language newspaper from Syrmia addressed this phenomenon with a discourse typical for any Cisleithanian ethnolinguistic nationalist movement: "A large part of the Germans in Croatia-Slavonia as well as in Hungary is not only indifferent in a national sense, but all too often is also not grounded in their character. The Germans form the most turncoats and renegades. Some have too little and others absolutely no national self-awareness. They feel and behave all too often as Croats in Croatia-Slavonia and as Magyars in Hungary." (Ein Banater Schwob in der Ferne, "Sind die Deutschen in Kroatien Kroaten und in Ungarn Magyaren?", *Deutsches Volksblatt für Syrmien*, 11 March 1906. Translated and cited by Philip W. Lyon, "After Empire: Ethnic Germans and Minority Nationalism in Interwar Yugoslavia" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2008), 89).

Besides offering an overview of the relevant methodological debates, the following subchapter will define both the present thesis's methodological approaches as well as its contribution to the existing body of scholarship.

1.2 Studying National Ambivalence: Hermeneutics and Methodology

Understandably enough, historians have always been aware of the fact that the process of nationalist mobilization involved many hurdles and unexpected forms of resistance from the general populace. Traditionally, however, they would interpret these issues more or less in harmony with the national perspective of contemporary nationalist activists themselves. They would take for granted the existence of discrete groups consisting of “authentic” and “inauthentic” members of a national community, and also employ such categories in their research without much critical reflection.¹⁹

This nationally-minded interpretative framework was thoroughly criticized in an influential 2001 essay by historian Jeremy King. He characterized such traditionalist approaches as “ethnicism,” i.e. the tendency to view national identity formation as a linear and teleological process leading from a pre-modern ethnic identity to a modern national identity.²⁰ Furthermore, he called upon historians to draw methodological inspiration from the works of the anthropologist Rogers Brubaker.²¹ In his innovative writings on ethnicity and

¹⁹ Typical examples of such studies from various post-Habsburg national contexts attempted to determine the “real” distribution of nationalities in the Habsburg Empire. In Austria, the censuses would not ask people for their nationality, but instead for their “language of daily use” (*Umgangssprache*). It is thus hardly surprising that such studies found it necessary to differentiate between “authentic” and “denationalized” members of a national community. For example, the Slovene historian Janez Cvirn admitted in 1988 that blaming national renegades for “unrealistic” census results “cannot rectify the entire palette of issues that arise when studying the national structure and international relations within language islands,” but still conceded that there are methodologies which enable a “more objective representation” of national demographics (Janez Cvirn, *Boj za Celje: politična orientacija celjskega nemštva 1861-1907* [The Battle for Celje: The Political Orientation of Celje's Germans 1861-1907], Zbirka zgodovinskega časopisa 5 (Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 1988), 6).

²⁰ Jeremy King, “The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond,” in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Nancy Wingfield and Maria Bucur (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2001), 123-127.

²¹ See in particular the essays published in Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004).

nationalism, the latter suggested that identities should not be studied as groups “objectively” existing in reality, but rather as cognitive processes or “perspectives on the world.” In order to avoid uncritical categorization, historians should thus instead look at the processes and activities involved in “group-making” or “grouping.”²² One year later, King would demonstrate the applicability of such methodology in his case study on nationalist mobilization in the Bohemian town of Budweis/Budějovice during the late Habsburg and interwar periods.²³

The influence Rogers Brubaker would have on subsequent research on national identity formation cannot be overstated. The aforementioned monograph by King was the first in a series of innovative works that offered a fresh perspective on nationalization processes in modern East Central Europe. Almost all of their authors drew methodological inspiration from Brubaker’s writings, and the majority of them dealt with regions or localities within the framework of the Habsburg Empire and its successor states.²⁴ Such works offered plentiful empirical evidence of how attempts at enforcing a nationalist worldview among the wider masses oftentimes yielded unpredictable and frustrating results.

²² “By its very nature, categorization creates ‘groups’ and assigns members to them; but the groups thus created do not exist independently of the myriad acts of categorization, public and private, through which they are sustained from day to day” (ibid., 79).

²³ Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).

²⁴ An early forerunner of such studies was Gary Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). Other notable monographic studies include Eleonóra Babejová, *Fin-de-Siècle Pressburg: Conflict & Cultural Coexistence in Bratislava 1897-1914*, East European Monographs, 617 (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2003); James Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006); Robert Nemes, *The Once and Future Budapest* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005); Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), and Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008). Informative surveys of this historiographical development are provided in Maarten Van Ginderachter and Jon Fox, “Introduction: National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe,” in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, eds. Maarten van Ginderachter and Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019), 1-14; Alexei Miller, “‘National Indifference’ as a Political Strategy?” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 20, no. 1 (2019): 63-72, <https://doi.org/10.1353/kri.2019.0003>; Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities.”

An attempt to devise a theoretical framework for the study of such apparently “anti-national” practices finally came in 2010, when Tara Zahra proposed subsuming them under the common analytical category of “national indifference.”²⁵ Ever since then, the concept’s viability has been tested on a wide range of chronologically and geographically diverse case studies.²⁶ In her programmatic essay, Zahra employed a somewhat vague and poetic language when describing the practices that supposedly fall under the concept of “national indifference.”²⁷ Subsequent researchers have identified three basic forms of behavior to which the term may be applied according to her own historiographical opus. The first of these would be so-called “national agnosticism” – the adherence to pre-national forms of loyalty and the inability to identify with modern forms of national categorization. The second would include people displaying fluid, flexible or opportunistic forms of national identity – in nationalist discourse, such groups would traditionally be called “hermaphrodites,” “side-switchers,” “hybrids,” etc. Thirdly, national indifference supposedly also includes certain practices frowned upon by ethnolinguistic nationalists such as bilingualism or interethnic marriage.²⁸

²⁵ Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities.”

²⁶ The most notable of recent publications to apply the concept to a variety of geographical contexts has been the edited volume *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, eds. Maarten van Ginderachter and Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019). Other recent examples of case studies include Per Bolin and Christina Douglas, “‘National Indifference’ in the Baltic Territories? A Critical Assessment,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 48, no. 1 (2017): 13–22; Karsten Brüggemann and Katja Wezel, “Nationally Indifferent or Ardent Nationalists? On the Options for Being German in Russia’s Baltic Provinces, 1905–17,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 20, no. 1 (2019): 39–62, <https://doi.org/10.1353/kri.2019.0002>; Andrei Cusco, “Russians, Romanians, or Neither? Mobilization of Ethnicity and ‘National Indifference’ in Early 20th-Century Bessarabia,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 20, no. 1 (2019): 7–38, <https://doi.org/10.1353/kri.2019.0001>; Filip Erdeljac, “Between Nationalism and Indifference: The Gradual Elimination of Indifference in Interwar Yugoslavia,” in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, eds. Maarten Van Ginderachter and Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019), 106–126; David Feest, “Spaces of ‘National Indifference’ in Biographical Research on Citizens of the Baltic Republics 1918–1940,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 48, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 55–66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2016.1269438>; Marek Jakoubek, “On the Process of National Indifferentiation: The Case of Bulgarian ‘Czechs,’” *Nations and Nationalism* 24, no. 2 (April 2018): 369–89, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12381>; Lucian N. Leustean, “Eastern Orthodoxy and National Indifference in Habsburg Bukovina, 1774–1873,” *Nations and Nationalism* 24, no. 4 (October 2018): 1117–41, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12415>.

²⁷ For example, “[w]hat we might call indifference has gone by many other names (often derogatory) in the past: regionalism, cosmopolitanism, Catholicism, socialism, localism, bilingualism, intermarriage, opportunism, immorality, backwardness, stubbornness, and false consciousness, to name a few” (Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities,” 98).

²⁸ Cf. Miller “‘National Indifference’ as a Political Strategy?” 64; Van Ginderachter and Fox, “Introduction,” 4.

The fact that the notion of national indifference inherently comes from nationalist discourse itself led Zahra to refer to nationally indifferent individuals as an “imagined noncommunity.” She admitted that this may lead historians into the trap of taking the existence of such groups for granted, but nevertheless claimed that “[o]nce imagined, indifference to nationalism became as real and meaningful a category as the nation itself and had significant social, cultural, and political consequences.”²⁹

Both the issue of its overstretched polysemy as well as the question whether nationally indifferent individuals may be analyzed as meaningful and discrete groups would feature prominently in the criticisms levelled against Zahra’s proposed conceptualization. In addition, historians often criticized the non-agency, passivity or ignorance of national thought intuitively implied with the term “national indifference,” as well as its limited applicability outside of the Habsburg imperial context.³⁰ As many subsequent researchers have noted, behaving in ways that were disagreeable to orthodox national activists in no way implied that such individuals were actually oblivious to national thought. On the contrary, in many cases this kind of behavior in fact demonstrated a very acute and skillful awareness of national logic.³¹

²⁹ Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities,” 105.

³⁰ Notable constructive criticisms of Zahra’s concept include Bolin and Douglas, “‘National Indifference’ in the Baltic Territories?”; Gábor Egry, “Beyond Politics: National Indifference as Everyday Ethnicity,” in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, eds. Maarten van Ginderachter and Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019a), 145-160; Feest, “‘National Indifference’ in Biographical Research”; Brendan Karch, “Instrumental Nationalism in Upper Silesia,” in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, eds. Maarten van Ginderachter and Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019), 180-203; Gerald Stourzh, “The Ethnicizing of Politics and ‘National Indifference’ in Late Imperial Austria,” in *Der Umfang der österreichischen Geschichte: Ausgewählte Studien 1990-2010*, ed. Gerald Stourzh (Wien: Böhlau, 2001), 283-323; Maria Todorova, “Is There Weak Nationalism and Is It a Useful Category?: Usefulness of Weak Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 21, no. 4 (October 2015): 681–99, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12112>; Alex Toshkov, “The Phantom Subject of ‘National Indifference’: A Response to Tara Zahra, ‘Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,’” *Slavic Review* 69.1 (2010), accessed June 15, 2020, <http://www.slavicreview.illinois.edu/discussion/Toshkovessay-onZahra-final.htm>.

³¹ Commenting on the oft-cited phenomenon of multiple hundred thousand Czechs performing a switch to German identity during the Nazi occupation, Toshkov noted that such behavior “is illustrative of an acute awareness of identity politics as well as a mastery of the role of being a national subject; that is the exact opposite of indifference to nationalism” (ibid.).

For many scholars, the viable to solution to the aforementioned issues appears to be a shift towards a more functionalist or pragmatic understanding of “national indifference.” Brendan Karch has for example introduced a Weberian distinction between “value-driven” and “instrumental” stances towards nationalism.³² An even more elaborate methodological framework was proposed by Gábor Egry. Drawing from the writings of Rogers Brubaker, J. E. Fox and C. Miller-Idriss, as well as from Michael Billig’s concept of “banal nationalism,” he proposed “everyday ethnicity” as a wider concept that may cover all the practices traditionally subsumed under “national indifference.” A pronouncedly situational and interaction-based concept, its main advantage appears to be the elimination of the dilemma whether a certain person or group of people *is* or *is not* nationally indifferent.³³ In order to demonstrate the viability of this concept, Egry drew numerous examples of behavior from interwar Romanian society that evidently conflicted with “canonical” nationalism, yet cannot satisfactorily be explained as “national indifference.” On the other hand, a focus on the situational relevance of national or ethnic categories allows us to move beyond the binary categories of activism vs. indifference: “It has a much broader scope and includes not only rejecting ethnicity ... but also hiding, redefining, accepting or contesting it.”³⁴

In short, such constructive polemical articles have convincingly argued against the uncritical usage of the concept of “national indifference” as originally formulated by Tara Zahra. However, since scholars of nationalism necessarily engage nationalist discourse and the groups it constructs, it seems likely that they will continue to research the practices

³² While the former, characterized by ultimate or uncompromising convictions, would be fit for describing the attitudes of national activists, the latter – wherein “no single ultimate value drives actions” – would be better suited to describe the behavior of nationally ambivalent populations (Karch, “Instrumental Nationalism,” 182).

³³ “Everyday ethnicity is a phenomenon connected to the ‘people’ and to contexts that are rarely associated with nationalist politics. However, quite often the trigger of ethnicity is a politicized understanding of an event or an interaction, but this politicization is not the revelation of an already existing, latent national identity but rather a momentary occurrence that could just as easily disappear as it could remain[.]” (Egry, “Beyond Politics,” 148-149).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

subsumed under this label as a bundle of related historical phenomena. For the sake of convenience, I therefore refer to these diverse practices in this thesis by using the umbrella term of “national ambivalence.” While the “nationally ambivalent” by no means amounted to a group expounding some articulate form of identity, I believe a Brubakerian methodological approach that is conscious of how groups are discursively constituted nevertheless allows a productive study of such “imagined noncommunities” as constructs of nationalist discourse.

Finally, some words should also be said regarding the current state of research. With the exception of two recently published studies,³⁵ the present thesis represents one of the few attempts thus far to apply such methodological approaches to the study of national identity formation in interwar Yugoslavia.³⁶ It should thus offer new empirical insights on the character of national ambivalence in interwar Europe and apply recently developed historiographical concepts to a relevant case study. In addition, the thesis’s focus on the critical juncture of 1918 makes it a part of the growing literature dealing with post-imperial transitions in Central Europe. It will therefore also offer useful comparative insight into the identity politics in interwar Central Europe’s new nation-states.³⁷ As will be pointed out throughout the thesis, the nationality policies of these states shared much in common, making them fruitful ground for future comparative research.

³⁵ Erdeljac, “Between Nationalism and Indifference”; Jernej Kosi, “The Imagined Slovene Nation and Local Categories of Identification: ‘Slovenes’ in the Kingdom of Hungary and Postwar Prekmurje,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 49 (2018): 87–102, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237818000103>.

³⁶ Comprehensive syntheses on the state’s history usually focus on the Serbian-Croatian political conflict, and methodological essentialism tends to also characterize works dealing with interwar Yugoslavia’s national minorities. While they may contain valuable empiric data on groups such as Germanophiles or Hungarophiles, they do not engage with such constructs in a critical manner. The most comprehensive survey on the history of interwar Yugoslavia’s minorities is Zoran Janjetović, *Deca careva, pastorčad kraljeva: nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941* [The Emperor’s Children, the King’s Stepchildren: National Minorities in Yugoslavia 1918-1941], Biblioteka “Studije i monografije”/ Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije 29 (Beograd: INIS, 2005).

³⁷ Besides *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism*, many innovative case studies are contained in the recent edited volume *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, eds. Paul B. Miller and Claire Morelon, *Austrian and Habsburg Studies* 22 (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2019). On the post-imperial transition in Czechoslovakia and Romania, see Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*; Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995).

2. A Contested Province: Lower Styria in the Late Habsburg Period (1867-1918)

The sociocultural dynamics that characterized Lower Styrian society during the interwar years can hardly be grasped without insight into the region's history during the late Habsburg period. While the political transformation of 1918/9 did bring many important qualitative changes to local identity politics, the specific character of nationalist mobilization as well as its ambiguous reception among the wider populace were profoundly shaped by decades of life under the legal, institutional and cultural framework of "Old Austria," i.e. Cisleithania. The aim of the present chapter is to offer an overview of the factors that defined both the form and popular reception of nationalist mobilization in Lower Styria beginning with the Austrian-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 and up until the conclusion of the First World War in 1918. Since an all-encompassing political or cultural history of the region would obviously surpass its scope,³⁸ its goal is rather to focus on those historical aspects that are most intimately connected with the nationalist construction of national ambivalence.

First of all, however, some words should nevertheless be said about the basic geographical and cultural characteristics of the area in question. Lower Styria (*Untersteiermark/Spodnja Štajerska*) functioned as an informal geographical term that, at least since around the mid-nineteenth century, denoted the southern, majority Slovene-speaking portion of the eponymous Habsburg province with its capital in Graz. As one of the

³⁸ The political history of Lower Styria during the late Habsburg period has been the subject of multiple monographic works. On the historical development of "German" party politics in Lower Styria, see Janez Cvirn, *Trdnjavski trikotnik: Politična orientacija Nemcev na Spodnjem Štajerskem (1861-1914)* [The Fortified Triangle: The Political Orientation of Lower Styrian Germans (1861-1914)] (Maribor: Obzorja, 1997), published in German as *Das "Festungsdreieck": zur politischen Orientierung der Deutschen in der Untersteiermark (1861-1914)*, ed. Ernst Bruckmüller et al., trans. Irena Bruckmüller-Vilfan, *Forschungen zur geschichtlichen Landeskunde der Steiermark* 76 (Wien: LIT, 2016). For historical surveys of Slovene party politics, see also Filip Čuček, *Svoji k svojim: na poti k dokončni nacionalni razmejitvi na Spodnjem Štajerskem v 19. Stoletju* [Each to Their Own: On the Path Towards a Final National Differentiation in Lower Styria in the 19. Century], *Razpoznavanja / Recognitions* 29 (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2016); *ibid.*, *Uspehi spodnještajerskih Slovencev v Taaffejevi dobi: gospodarske, socialne, kulturne in politične razmere na Spodnjem Štajerskem v času Taaffejeve vlade (1879-1893)* [The Successes of Lower Styrian Slovenes during the Taaffe Period: The Economic, Social, Cultural, and Political Conditions in Lower Styria in the Time of Taaffe's Government (1879-1893)] (Zgodovinsko društvo Celje: 2008).

core hereditary Habsburg crownlands, Styria was part of the Cisleithanian political framework after the Austrian-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. While its internal subdivision was never officially established, the dividing line between “Lower” and “Middle” Styria was traditionally said to follow the northern borders of the Windischgraz/Slovenj Gradec, Marburg/Maribor and Luttenberg/Ljutomer districts (*Bezirkshauptmannschaften/okrajna glavarstva*).³⁹ With minor deviations, this line was later confirmed as the state border between the Republic of Austria and Yugoslavia (1919-1941, 1945-1992) and continues to define the Austrian-Slovenian border up until the present day.

2.1 Town and Countryside: Sociolinguistic Hierarchies and Emerging Nationalism

Throughout the nineteenth century, observers noted that language use in Lower Styria was marked by a clear separation between urban and rural areas. With the exception of the German-speaking rural region of Abstaller Feld/Apaško polje, most of the Lower Styrian countryside remained predominantly Slovene-speaking, while German functioned as the customary language of townspeople irrespective of their “ethnic” descent. At the same time, urban settlements were also marked by various degrees of bilingualism. Understandably enough, traders and craftsmen had to possess a working knowledge of local Slovene dialects in order to communicate with the largely monolingual countryside.⁴⁰ Rudolf Puff, a Gymnasium professor from Marburg/Maribor, could thus note in 1847 that the local social life is “German throughout, albeit it starts turning Slavic already in the nearest rural areas. Almost all native Marburgers are proficient in both languages, the servants usually already becoming so after spending one year in town.”⁴¹

³⁹ On the various geographical divisions of Lower Styria, see Robert Sieger, “Die landschaftliche Gliederung des Unterlandes,” in *Südsteiermark: Ein Gedenkbuch*, ed. Franz Hausmann, 28 (Graz: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei “Styria,” 1925). The present thesis employs bilingual place names when writing about the Habsburg period, and monolingual ones when discussing the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

⁴⁰ Cvirn, *Trdnjavski trikotnik*, 9-12.

⁴¹ Rudolf Gustav Puff, *Marburg in Steiermark, seine Umgebung, Bewohner und Geschichte. I. Band* (Graz: 1847), 259, cited in Cvirn, *Trdnjavski trikotnik*, 11.

While bilingualism was therefore traditionally present in Lower Styrian urban society, the practical use of the two languages nevertheless followed certain established linguistic hierarchies. The use of German was understood as an external marker of burgher identity, and socially mobile Slovene-speakers readily accepted this fact.⁴² Indeed, a different sociolinguistic situation hardly seems imaginable, given that an appropriately socially differentiated register of Slovene that could fulfil such a role was simply not in (widespread) use at the time. The memoirs of several notable Slovene nationalist politicians from Lower Styria reveal that they grew up in predominantly German-speaking households. Such was the case of Josip Sernec (1844-1925) from Windisch Feistritz/Slovenska Bistrica, and similar conditions also prevailed in the family of Josip Vošnjak (1834-1911) from Schönstein/Šoštanj: “We usually spoke German to each other in our house, but we also knew Slovene. However, we felt neither as Germans nor as Slovenes, since nobody cared about nationality until 1848.”⁴³

Understandably enough, people such as Vošnjak and Sernec were educated in an era when the Slovene language was still in its early stages of standardization. In 1860s Marburg/Maribor, “[a] Slovene was not upset because he had to converse with a German in German, considering that he also spoke German to Slovenes.”⁴⁴ Even the visitors of events organized by Slovene middle-class cultural societies called “reading rooms” (*čitalnice*) only gradually began conducting their conversations in Slovene instead of German.⁴⁵ And while the standing of the Slovene language in schools and administration gradually improved by the turn of the century, this did little to diminish the *de facto* superior chances of social mobility

⁴² Cvirn, *Trdnjavski trikotnik*, 10.

⁴³ Ibid., 11-12. Citation taken from Josip Vošnjak, *Spomini* [Memoirs] (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1982), 16.

⁴⁴ Anton Šantel, *Zgodbe moje pokrajine* [Tales from My Province] (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2006), 146.

⁴⁵ Peter Štih, Vasko Simoniti and Peter Vodopivec, *A Slovene History: Society – Politics – Culture*, E-Razpoznavanja / E-Recognitiones 2 (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2008), 297.

provided by the knowledge of the German language.⁴⁶ Although Slovene nationalist politicians called for providing children with an education that would “protect” them from “denationalization,” it seems apparent that many Slovene-speaking parents found pragmatic considerations more important when they tried to find ways to enroll their children into German-language schools.⁴⁷ Indeed, the “objective” usefulness of German and the hypocrisy Slovene leaders supposedly showed in their attempts to keep the Slovene nation from acquiring it would feature prominently in the discourse of Slovene nationalism’s political opponents in Lower Styria.⁴⁸

In short, it may be argued that the practical sociolinguistic hierarchies that defined life in Lower Styria did much to make the Slovene-speaking population skeptical towards some of the goals of Slovene ethnolinguistic nationalism. On the other hand, ever since the Austrian-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, activists calling for the protection of children from “denationalization” found increasing support for their cause in the legal framework of the Austrian state itself.⁴⁹ While the Hungarian half of the Monarchy legally recognized the existence of a Hungarian political nation and effectively behaved as a Hungarian nation-state, the empire’s Austrian half remained conceived as a multinational state that, at least in theory, acknowledged its citizens’ rights to “further one’s language and nationality.”⁵⁰ The state’s protection of national and cultural autonomy west of the Leitha was most famously expressed in the first three paragraphs of Article 19 of the Austrian constitution:

⁴⁶ Owing to the varying successes of Slovene nationalist politics, the standing of Slovene was much stronger in Carniola than in other Slovene-speaking provinces, including Lower Styria. Cf. *ibid.*, 312-314, 327-329.

⁴⁷ On “privileged” languages and unequal linguistic hierarchies in the Habsburg Monarchy, see Stourzh, “The Ethnicizing of Politics,” 304-306.

⁴⁸ Janez Cvirn, “Deželna in narodna zavest na (Spodnjem) Štajerskem [Provincial and National Identity in (Lower) Styria],” in *Avstrija. Jugoslavija. Slovenija. Slovenska narodna identiteta skozi čas*, ed. Dušan Nečak (Ljubljana: Oddelek za zgodovino filozofske fakultete, 1997), 79.

⁴⁹ On how national categories increasingly gained ground in the Cisleithanian legal system and came to define daily life, see Stourzh, “The Ethnicizing of Politics.”

⁵⁰ On the different handling of national issues in Austria and Hungary, cf. Gerald Stourzh, “Die Gleichberechtigung der Volksstämme als Verfassungsprinzip 1848-1918,” in *Die Habsburgermonarchie: 1848-1918: Band III*, eds. Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: 1980), 975-1206, and Ludwig Gogolák, “Ungarns Nationalitätengesetze und das Problem des magyarischen National- und Zentralstaates,” in *ibid.*, 1207-1303.

1. All nationalities [*Volksstämme*] of the state are equal, and each nationality has the inviolable right to preserve and further its nationality and language.
2. The equality of all the languages usually used in a particular region in the fields of education, administration and public life is acknowledged by the state.
3. In regions where several nationalities live together, it must be ensured that the education institutions of the state are organized in such a way that each of these nationalities will be able to be instructed in its own language, under no pressure to learn a second regional language.⁵¹

Unsurprisingly, it was particularly the third paragraph that provided ethnolinguistic nationalists a strong argument for the validity of their discourse. Included in the constitution on the insistence of Bohemian-German deputies fighting to prevent the obligatory study of Czech on the crownland's gymnasiums, it was popularly known as the "prohibition of language coercion" (*Sprachenzwangsverbot*).⁵² While monolingualism thus theoretically became a civil right in Cisleithania, optional bilingual education remained ubiquitous and would also be enforced as obligatory in various local contexts.⁵³

When it comes to the practical implementation of "national equality," it may be said that "a quite generous and liberal practice of adjudication of suits in the field of nationality and language rights developed over the decades in the two highest courts of public law of the realm."⁵⁴ As one could expect, the battles fought by nationalists over national rights more often than not concerned the use of language in schools and administration. Such debates reached their pinnacle in the province of Moravia, where "national struggles" over the education of children led to the infamous "Lex Perek" as part of the so-called Moravian Compromise of 1905.⁵⁵ This law legally recognized the protection of children from national

⁵¹ The cited translation is taken from Susanne Czeitschner, "Discourse, Hegemony and Polyglossia in the Judicial System of Trieste in the 19th Century," in *Diglossia and Power: Language Policies and Practice in the 19th Century Habsburg Empire*, ed. Rosita Rindler Schjerve, Language, Power and Social Process 9 (Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003), 78. Czeitschner apparently mistranslated that the equality of languages was guaranteed (*gewährleistet*) – such was indeed the case in one of the law's drafts – when it was merely just acknowledged (*anerkannt*) in the law's final formulation.

⁵² On the negotiations surrounding the law, see Stourzh, "Die Gleichberechtigung der Volksstämme," 1011-1015, and the original German text in *ibid.*, 1014.

⁵³ Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 24.

⁵⁴ Stourzh, "The Ethnicizing of Politics," 285-286.

⁵⁵ This topic has found its most detailed treatment in Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*.

“alienation” (*Entfremdung*) by proscribing that they should “as a rule” visit schools run in a language that they were capable of speaking.⁵⁶ As Moravian politics became increasingly “ethnized,” the issue arose as to how an individual’s nationality may reliably be determined. Until 1907, an individual’s declaration served as the defining factor for solving such cases. At that point, however, the Imperial Court conceded that in contested cases, the authorities should also take *sachliche Momente*, i.e. objective factors into account. In other words, this meant that the decision on an individual’s national identity was now ultimately up to the authorities.⁵⁷

Such rulings amounted to an unprecedented confirmation of the legitimacy of objectivist over voluntarist conceptions of nationality within the Habsburg legal framework. Up until the empire’s demise, however, they were only implemented in the province of Moravia. In Lower Styria, the decision regarding a child’s language of schooling thus ultimately came down to the will of parents. This opened a wide maneuvering space for the nationalist German School Association (*Deutscher Schulverein*), which intended to uphold the province’s “German character” by financing private German schools in areas where public ones were not available.⁵⁸ Unsurprisingly, contemporary Slovene press reports were full of disgrace over the “lacking national consciousness” or “blindness” of ethnic Slovene parents that sent their children to such schools. On the other hand, when it comes to working class parents, they also regularly pointed out their economic dependency on German employers as a reason for accepting such decisions.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Stourzh, “The Ethnicizing of Politics,” 312.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 314.

⁵⁸ Established in Vienna in 1880, the association nominally pursued the goal of maintaining German educational institutions in areas where the “German” community was endangered by assimilation. As opposing nationalist activists regularly pointed out, however, many of its schools housed children that were not native German speakers and were thus essentially meant to *spread*, not *maintain* German culture. See e.g. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*; Mikuláš Zvánovec, “The Battle over National Schooling in Bohemia and the Czech and German National School Associations: A Comparison (1880–1914),” *Austrian History Yearbook* 51 (2020): 173–92, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237820000144>.

⁵⁹ On the Slovene nationalist press’s reporting on the German School Association’s activities in Lower Styria, see Andrej Vovko, “Delovanje Deutscher Schulverein na Slovenskem Štajerskem v luči pisanja Slovenskega

Even if such arguments may have served Slovene nationalists as mere excuses for the paradoxically “anti-national” behavior of their co-nationals, they do open up the complex question of determining individual agency in cases of seemingly nationally ambivalent behavior. For one, cases where German company owners would pressure non-German workers to enroll their children into German schools were a known and oft criticized occurrence in the Bohemian lands.⁶⁰ While a more accurate impression regarding the personal convictions of the parents themselves would warrant specialized research, the ambiguities involved in such cases demonstrate the inherent complexity of the issue in question.

Finally, accusations of pressure and abuse would also regularly surface during the decennial Austrian population censuses. As is well known, the latter did not record the population’s nationality, but rather its “language of daily use” (*Umgangssprache*). Unlike in the Hungarian censuses, multilingualism was not an available option.⁶¹ And while the information gathered by the census was supposed to be of purely linguistic nature, national activists (and, to an increasing extent, the Austrian state itself)⁶² tended to interpret them in a national sense. As one might expect, Lower Styria’s German national activists campaigned for a literal understanding of the census question, while Slovene nationalists called upon their co-nationals to enter their “mother” language, regardless of the language they might most often use in daily life.⁶³ In any event, the 1880-1910 censuses in Lower Styria showed an

Branika [The Activities of the *Deutscher Schulverein* in Slovene Styria in Light of the Reports in *Slovenski Branik*],” *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* 70, no. 3 (1999): 431-452.

⁶⁰“This pressure was called “Kinderfang” – (“capturing children”) – a not very nice word employed for a phenomenon that was recognized and criticized not merely on the Czech side, but by German high officials or politicians as well” (Stourzh, “The Ethnicizing of Politics,” 313).

⁶¹ On the history of Austria's population statistics, see Emil Brix, *Die Umgangssprachen in Altösterreich zwischen Agitation und Assimilation: die Sprachenstatistik in den zisleithanischen Volkszählungen, 1880 bis 1910*, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs 72 (Wien: Böhlau, 1982).

⁶² Following the 1905 Moravian compromise, “[t]he employees of the autonomous administration in institutions having to deal with both nationalities were supposed to be appointed according to ethnic proportion as indicated by the linguistic census” (Stourzh, “The Ethnicizing of Politics, 311). This data would also play a role in the 1914 Galician compromise (*ibid.*, 311, f. 86).

⁶³ On the political debates and accusations of abuse surrounding the censuses in Lower Styria, see Filip Čuček, “Vpisal se je med Nemce, dasiravno komaj za silo nemško tolče: Občevalni jezik kot element manipulacije v popisih prebivalstva 1880-1910 na Spodnjem Štajerskem [He Declared Himself a German, Although He Could

increasing use of German in the region's urban settlements. While various machinations and pressures from the politically dominant "German" party undoubtedly added to the statistical predominance of German, the census results undoubtedly also reflected the practical sociolinguistic dynamics that defined Lower Styrian society up until the empire's collapse.⁶⁴

2.2 National Ambivalence in Lower Styrian Politics: Mobilizing Slovene Speakers Against Slovene Nationalism

When it comes to studying the spheres of life in which "nationally ambivalent" practices manifested themselves, it goes without saying that electoral politics obviously played an important role. In Austria, the latter encompassed political participation on three levels: the commune (*Gemeinde/občina*), the province (*Land/dežela*), and the parliament. While elections on the first two levels remained organized according to a curial (i.e. estate-based) system up until the fall of the monarchy, subsequent democratizing reforms led to the establishment of universal male suffrage into the Austrian parliament by 1907.⁶⁵ Although much more favorable than in Carinthia, the performance of Slovene nationalist parties in Styria was rather meagre compared to a province like Carniola. While the Carniolan burgher classes to a large extent already began supporting Slovene nationalist political parties by the 1860s, such a development never happened in Styria. There, "German" political parties⁶⁶ not only retained their monopoly in cities, but also kept its support base among rural notables.⁶⁷

Hardly Patter in German: The Language of Daily Use as an Element of Manipulation on the 1880-1910 Lower Styrian Population Censuses], *Zgodovina za vse*, no. 2 (2007): 57-68.

⁶⁴ The share of people declaring Slovene as their language of daily use thus fell from 89% in 1880 to 84% in 1910 (*ibid.*, 66). Slovene politicians would usually draw attention to the fact that the heads of households would oftentimes fill out the census polls out without directly consulting their (oftentimes Slovene-speaking) servants. In addition, the people conducting the censuses were oftentimes German nationalists themselves, and therefore supposedly prone to bias (*ibid.*, 63). It may be noted that local census results were largely dependent on the political party that was in power at the given moment. In Schönstein/Šoštanj, the share of people declaring German as their language of daily use thus jumped from 15% in 1900 to 70% in 1910 (*ibid.*, 66).

⁶⁵ On the electoral system in the empire's Slovene-speaking provinces, see Vasilij Melik, *Volitve na Slovenskem: 1861-1918* [Elections in the Slovene Lands: 1861-1918] (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1965), 5-10.

⁶⁶ As Melik points out, what Slovene nationalists tended to call the "German party" was actually an umbrella term for a wide range of movements ranging from "the Constitutional Party, liberals of all creeds, the German Progress Party, the *Deutsche Volkspartei*, the Great German parties, various agrarians, etc." (*ibid.*, 213).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 237-238.

Unlike in Carniola, the Styrian German parties were not willing to surrender the rural curia to the Slovene nationalist parties. In order to politically mobilize the Slovene-speaking countryside, they thus developed a lively Slovene-language press that tried to steer away Slovene-speaking rural voters from their influence. Denouncing the latter as selfish xenophobes, clericals and Slavophiles, it framed itself as the protector of Slovene agrarian interests and called for “solidarity” between Slovene farmers and German townspeople. In many regards, the discourse of the so-called *štajercijanci* (named after the newspaper *Štajerc*) functioned as a sort of alternative model of Slovene identity compared the one propagated by mainstream Slovene nationalist parties. While they did not deny the legitimacy of Slovene national feeling, they at the same time also did not problematize existing sociolinguistic hierarchies. “Without admitting ourselves to any sort of Germanizational intent,”⁶⁸ they thus called for the increased presence of German in Slovene schools; supposedly, this was primarily to serve the practical needs of the Slovene people.⁶⁹ Eventually, the people gathering around the newspaper *Štajerc* formed a political party of their own, and it became a serious political contender after it was formally organized into the Progressive Union (*Napredna zveza*) in 1907.⁷⁰

As with all of the previously discussed “nationally ambivalent” practices, the interpretation of voting behavior is seriously complicated by questions of individual agency. When it comes to the relative electoral successes of the *štajercijanci*, Janez Cvirn has emphasized Austrian patriotism and decisive anti-Yugoslavism as contributing factors.⁷¹ On

⁶⁸ *Štajerc*, no. 4, 10 Februar 1902.

⁶⁹ “We are willing to offer 5000 crowns to anyone that can find at least one article from our newspaper that would claim that our farmer should abandon or hide his mother tongue and thus become a German. ... If we have ever said: Farmer, it is good for you if you know how to speak two languages, we were not wrong” (*Štajerc*, no. 3, 9 Februar 1902). Cited also in Cvirn, “Deželna in narodna zavest,” 79.

⁷⁰ On the history and successes of so-called *štajercijanstvo* (“Styrianism”), see Cvirn, *Trdnjavski trikotnik*, 305-309; *ibid.*, “Deželna in narodna zavest.”

⁷¹ According to him, the increasingly Yugoslavist orientation of Slovene nationalist parties was “apparently wholly incomprehensible to many a simple Slovene peasant” (*ibid.*, *Trdnjavski trikotnik*, 308-309).

the other hand, he has also drawn attention to the fact that the party experienced its greatest successes in winegrowing areas such as Haloze/Kollos and Slovenske Gorice/Windische Bühel. In such areas, German nationalist landowners could have easily influenced their economically dependent and impoverished winegrowers to vote according to their own preferences.⁷² Indeed, such considerations appear relevant for the study of electoral behavior in the Habsburg Empire in a wider sense. By the turn of the century, voters received their ballots and voter identifications beforehand, making the latter prone to a wide range of manipulations from parties that were in power at a given locality.⁷³ And while it does seem obvious enough that an economically independent Slovene speaker may not have necessarily voted for a Slovene nationalist party, the lack of personal agency in what appears to be nationally ambivalent behavior must necessarily be taken into consideration in order to avoid misleading interpretations.

2.3 “National Struggle” and Its Culmination during the First World War

The present chapter has thus far primarily focused on the institutional frameworks and *longue durée* cultural phenomena that defined both the maneuvering spaces for national activism as well as its popular reception in Lower Styrian society. Such a picture would arguably not be complete without mentioning the instances in which nationalist mobilization actually led to palpable forms of societal conflict. Various forms of nationalist street violence indeed became increasingly common in the years leading up to the First World War.⁷⁴ Historians have tended to take the tense atmosphere of political life, as well as the recurring bouts of violence that usually accompanied nationalist demonstrations, as proof that a process of “national differentiation” in Lower Styrian society had clearly taken place in the late Habsburg period.⁷⁵

⁷² Ibid., “Deželna in narodna zavest,” 84.

⁷³ Melik, *Volitve na Slovenskem*, 170-172.

⁷⁴ See e.g. Čuček, *Svoji k svojim*, 112-114, 135-136, 140-141.

⁷⁵ Filip Čuček thus claims that “[b]y the turn of the century, the nationalizing process was more or less complete on both the German as well as on the Slovene side, and the population was nationally divided. Political life had

Obviously enough, the existence of such nationalist conflict in Lower Styria during the last decades of Habsburg rule cannot be denied. However, as Pieter M. Judson has emphasized, “[a] citizen might vote for a local nationalist candidate after a particularly hard-fought election campaign, but this did not necessarily make him a committed member of a national community once the excitement of the campaign had ended. ... People’s daily level of commitment to nationalist demands was rarely reliable or even predictable. This is why we need to think in terms of ‘event-driven’ or ‘situational’ nationalism.”⁷⁶

When it comes to the above cited judgments regarding Lower Styria, it appears questionable to speak about “national differentiation” without examining the criteria according to which people supposedly “differentiated” themselves. In other words, did the political tensions during the turn of the century actually turn every Slovene (or German) speaker into a supporter of Slovene (or German) nationalist politics? To the disappointment of national activists – obviously not. The press regularly reported that the physical altercations between Slovene nationalists and “Germans” involved “Germanophile [i.e. ethnically Slovene] rabble.” And while the diverse motives that led such Slovene speakers to engage in violent brawls against Slovene nationalists would require a separate study, a glance at the press already shows that they too often involved various forms of economic dependency, as well as the pursuit of quite pragmatic goals – including the always popular *frajbir*.⁷⁷

already been completely defined in nationalist terms for a while already, and the politics of national differentiation radically sharpened the international relations in the province.” (ibid., 136).

⁷⁶ Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 274.

⁷⁷ Reporting on how the municipal government of Schönstein/Šoštanj mobilized the local fire department against a planned celebration by the liberal nationalist *Sokol* gymnastics association, the politically Catholic *Domoljub* noted that “[t]hey dressed up all the factory workers into fancy uniforms. No wonder – everything can be done for some *frajbir* [free beer], of which there was plenty.” (*Domoljub*, no. 200, 3 September 1910). Evidently, economic dependency (the aforementioned workers were employees of the mayor) and informal paternalistic relations also played an important role in mobilizing people for participation in such nationalist conflicts – most likely, to a larger extent than a deep nationalist conviction of any sort. To cite another example; following a fight that ensued during another *Sokol* festivity in Cilli/Celje, *Domoljub* exposed the names of some of the individuals involved in the brawl: “As we have reported before, mostly unemployed delinquents, besides them also the employees of German shops, as well as the famously “chivalrous” German *Burschen*.” (“Dogodki v Celju [The

The sociopolitical context that was described throughout the present chapter radically changed already before the breakup of the Habsburg Empire. As the First World War broke out and military absolutism replaced constitutional rule in Cisleithania, Lower Styria's German nationalists exploited the newly hostile political climate to denounce local Slovene national activists (and, quite commonly, also ordinary people) for treason and subversion.⁷⁸ Much like in other parts of the monarchy, such denunciations not only did much to sour communal relations, but also produced many innocent victims and led to a heightened distrust towards the Habsburg state.⁷⁹ To a large extent, German nationalist excesses during the war years contributed much to the vengefulness of Slovene nationalists in the post-war period. This, in turn, is a topic that will be explored in the following chapter.

3. “Yugoslavia is Here”: Slovenization and National Ambivalence in Lower Styria During the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918-1929)

As Habsburg central authority finally crumbled in late October 1918, various nationally defined and self-appointed representative bodies effectively overtook the functions of the now defunct imperial state.⁸⁰ On 29 October, an independent State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs was proclaimed in the former empire's South Slav inhabited provinces. In roughly a month's time (1 December), this short-lived political entity united with the Kingdom of Serbia to form the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Particularly in contested Lower Styria, the first year of this new political reality was marked by great uncertainty. While a swift military operation by the Slovene general Rudolf Maister initially secured the state's Styrian border with the Republic of German-Austria, this *fait accompli* was officially made permanent only

Events in Celje],” *Domoljub*, no. 39, 24 September 1908). As one could expect, the majority of the listed surnames were Slovene.

⁷⁸ See Martin Moll, *Kein Burgfrieden: Der deutsch-slowenische Nationalitätenkonflikt in der Steiermark 1900-1918* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2007).

⁷⁹ Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 397.

⁸⁰ For an overview of how the Habsburg collapse played out in the empire's individual provinces, see *ibid.*, 431-441.

through the signing of the Treaty of St. Germain on 10 September 1919.⁸¹ The pronounced political uncertainty of the era notwithstanding – or, one may argue, precisely because of it⁸² – the new self-appointed Slovene government in Lower Styria acted very quickly to implement a program of radical cultural transformation that has been variously referred to as “Deaustrification” or “Slovenization.”⁸³ Slovene nationalists saw the 1918 “overthrow” (*prevrat*) as a chance to not only avenge their political enemies, but also to revert the historical wrongs of Germanization and usher in a new period of free “national” development. In other words, they believed that the time had come for them to eradicate the structures that had been making national ambivalence possible during the Habsburg period.

Both the stunning rapidity with which the cultural landscape of Lower Styria changed during the first few weeks of “national” rule as well as the spheres of life which were affected by this process were neatly described in the contemporary press. A Slovene newspaper from Maribor portrayed the atmosphere of these early post-war days with the following words:

Yugoslavia is here. ... Let us just consider: we suddenly have Slovene signs on all train stations up to Spielfeld. All of Lower Styria’s prefects⁸⁴ – except for in Radgona [Radkersburg], whose time will also come – are Slovenes. The military wears national cockades, and it has Slovene commanding officers. It has Slovene as its language of command. All of this happened practically overnight. Everyone must at once notice this immense change, which took place in a matter of days. However, these are only the external signs. A lot of time still needs to pass before thorough changes become noticeable.⁸⁵

In such early reports, one may detect a very typical combination of excitement and unease.

On the one hand, commenters welcomed the state’s swift implementation of the Slovene

⁸¹ Štih et al., *Slovene History*, 349-350.

⁸² Ervin Dolenc, “Deavstrizacija v politiki, upravi in kulturi v Sloveniji [Deaustrification in the Politics, Administration and Cultural Life of Slovenia],” in *Slovensko – avstrijski odnosi v 20. stoletju/Slovenisch-österreichische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, Historia: znanstvena zbirka Oddelka za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani 8, eds. Dušan Nečak et al., 81-94. Ljubljana, Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete: 200481.

⁸³ Cf. Dolenc, “Deavstrizacija v politiki;” Aleš Gabrič, “Hitra slovenizacija šolskih in kulturnih ustanov [The Swift Slovenization of Educational and Cultural Establishments],” in *Slovenski prelom 1918*, ed. Aleš Gabrič (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2019), 141-160.

⁸⁴ This term refers to the Habsburg institution of district governor (*Bezirkshauptmann/okrajni glavar*).

⁸⁵ “Prvi dnevi Jugoslavije [The First Days of Yugoslavia],” *Straža*, no. 88, 4 November 1918.

language in all the institutions and spheres of life where it had the immediate power to do so. On the other hand, they also did not fail to note that there were still many logistical as well as psychological obstacles to this undertaking: “One must consider that we still have many German officials among us whom it will be impossible to fire in case they understand our language. Of course, they too will have to submit themselves [to the new order], but some time will nevertheless pass before they catch up with the new state of affairs.”⁸⁶

Understandably enough, a much more somber atmosphere pervades contemporary reports from the Lower Styrian German-language press. In an aptly titled article (“*Ruhig Blut!*”), Celje’s *Deutsche Wacht* ascertained that the establishment of a new South Slavic state “presented multiple hardships for the legally protected German minority, for which, however, primarily the mob and the young fanatics who make use of the mob ought to be blamed.”⁸⁷ Besides reassuring its readers that the new government should honor and protect German property and life at all costs, this report too expressed awe at history’s contingent and unpredictable character:

Even if all-powerful Fate has turned us into the subjects of a South Slavic nation-state, and if we must count on the fact that great obstacles are being prepared for our national development and activities, we still have no reason to lose our peace and calm as long as we coolly consider the facts and stand together in imperturbable unity and strong trust. After all, it has been emphasized time and time again that the new state is supposed to be a modern state of law (*Rechtsstaat*), and in such a state it should likely be possible to avert a violent suppression of Germandom.⁸⁸

Such outwardly meek expressions of goodwill would soon enough prove to have been naive. Not only was the new government openly bent on crippling the institutions that had maintained German cultural life in Lower Styria, but the logic of strict ethnolinguistic nationalism it enforced also seriously undermined the latter’s chances of self-preservation. However, such unfavorable circumstances did not stop the German-language press from

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ “*Ruhig Blut!*” *Deutsche Wacht*, no. 44, 2 November, 1918.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

contesting the justness of such measures, as well as questioning the consistency of the new Slovene government's organicist view on nationality.

Owing to spatial constraints, the present chapter cannot possibly offer a thoroughly exhaustive overview of all the administrative measures undertaken as part of government's project of "Slovenization." Instead, it will rather focus on those of its aspects that are most intimately tied to the attempted eradication of national ambivalence. The individual subchapters will primarily focus on the manner in which such "Slovenizing" measures were received and reported on in the contemporary Slovene- and German-language press. In addition, they will pay particular attention to reports that concern the prevalence and shape in which nationally ambivalent practices took place in interwar Lower Styria.

3.1 The 1918/9 Purge: (Re)negotiating the Identities of Lower Styria's Officialdom

Understandably enough, one of the first measures with which the new Slovene government aimed to secure its position was a thorough purge of the state bureaucracy. Officials who were considered pillars of the old regime, "foreigners" (i.e. Germans) or enemies of the Slovene national movement were either retired, deposed or replaced by reliable personnel.⁸⁹ Reading both contemporary Slovene reports as well as the works of later nationalist historians leaves the impression that this was a rather straight-forward process in which "Germans" and their ethnically Slovene "Germanophile" scrooges lost power and were replaced by some abstract category of authentic "Slovenes." What, however, were the "group-making" processes – to use Brubaker's terms – according to which these categories were constituted? And to what extent were such identities subject to negotiation and redefinition?

The beginnings of the Slovenization process in the bureaucracy may already be traced to the first session held by the National Government of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs

⁸⁹ Dolenc, "Deavstrizacija v politiki," 82.

in Ljubljana (*Narodna vlada Države SHS v Ljubljani*) on 1 November 1918. The declaration of Slovene as the exclusive language of administration on the territory under the government's control already made it clear to many officials that were proficient solely in German that their livelihoods had now come under serious threat. On its second session the following day, the government began its one-by-one purge of the administration, starting with the highest-ranking provincial office-holders and eventually moving down to the lower ranks of the bureaucracy.⁹⁰

A decree issued by the national government on 16 December 1918 finally announced that the purge should encompass all officials presumed to be of German nationality. It included the following directives regarding their dismissal and potential reemployment:

1.) The officials of the former Austrian state that are of German nationality and were employed on the territory of the National Government of S., C. and S. are to be dismissed. The dismissal is to be done by special decree. Their income is to be terminated. ... 4.) The officials named under 1.) may under valid reasons be individually retaken into the service of the State of S., C. and S., either by contract or part-time. In every such case, the decision must be made by the entire National Government of S., C. and S. in Ljubljana. The fact that the person in question stems from a native family must also be considered a valid reason.⁹¹

It should be mentioned that this decree – as was noted in the text itself – was in essence a reciprocal measure accepted in reaction to a similar decree issued in German-Austria during late November.⁹² In a wider European context, the officialdom of all post-Habsburg successor states was undergoing a “national” reorganization in the early post-war years that involved the coordinated migration of officials and other specialists to their new “nation-states.” In line with this logic, many consciously “Slovene” officials who had been employed in what was

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ “202. Naredba celokupne Narodne vlade SHS v Ljubljani glede državnih nameščencev nemške narodnosti, glede repatriiranja in selitvenih stroškov jugoslovanskih državnih uslužbencev in glede prispevkov za rodbine državnih nameščencev, ki morajo živeti začasno ločeni od rodbine [202. Decree of the Entire National Government of S., C. and S. in Ljubljana Concerning State Employees of German Nationality, the Repatriation and Moving Costs of Yugoslav State Employees, and Contributions for the Families of State Employees Who Temporarily Must Live Separated From Their Families],” in *Uradni list Narodne vlade SHS v Ljubljani*, no. 25, 19 December 1918, 53-54.

⁹² Ibid., 53.

now the territory of German-Austria decided to leave their posts and migrate to Slovenia.⁹³ Conversely, in the Lower Styrian German press one could read almost daily reports about officials leaving Yugoslav-controlled territory and taking up new posts in German Austria.⁹⁴

3.1.1 Assigning Identity to Lower Styria's Bureaucrats

What were then the actual criteria according to which a particular official's nationality was to be determined? According to Dragan Matić, the national government's ascription of Slovene and German nationality to its bureaucrats may essentially be likened to Karl Lueger's famous saying: "*Wer ein Jud' ist, bestimme ich!*"⁹⁵ In other words, it was the government itself that in most cases decide an individual's national belonging.⁹⁶ Soon enough, however, it became apparent that the new state would suffer tremendous shortages of competent personnel in case this purge of "non-Slovene" officials was applied consistently. On 3 January 1919, the National Government in Ljubljana thus ascertained that "it will be impossible to survive without all foreign-born (*tujerodnih*) officials; if all of our territorial claims are fulfilled at the peace conference, the Committee for Justice will e.g. require an additional hundred judges."⁹⁷

The preserved petitions from officials who were the government deemed to be German, yet did not desire to leave their posts, offer interesting insights into how such individuals framed and renegotiated their identities after the 1918 revolution. While inquiring into how this process took place in Lower Styria would require special archival research, the

⁹³ Peter Ribnikar (ed.), *Sejni zapisniki Narodne vlade Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov v Ljubljani in Deželnih vlad za Slovenijo 1918-1921: 1. del: Od 1. Nov. 1918 do 26. Feb. 1919* [Minutes of the National Government of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs in Ljubljana and the Provincial Governments for Slovenia 1918-1921: Part 1: From 1 Nov. 1918 to 26 Feb. 1919] (Ljubljana: Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 1998), 36.

⁹⁴ In *Deutsche Wacht*, we may thus for example read how "[t]he outgoing director of the Gonobitz [Konjice] district prefecture, provincial government secretary Dr. Paul Hohl, was trusted with the direction of the district prefecture of Bruck until further notice. ... Head postmaster (*Oberpostmeister*) Franz Trummer from Windischgraz [Slovenska Bistrica] was transferred to Eisenerz according to his own request" (*Deutsche Wacht*, no. 46, 16 November 1918.).

⁹⁵ "I am the one who decides who is Jewish!"

⁹⁶ Dragan Matić, "Konec prve svetovne vojne – dokončni zaton nemštva na Slovenskem [The End of the First World War – the Final Downfall of Germanism in the Slovene Lands]," in *Slovenski prelom 1918*, ed. Aleš Gabrič (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2019), 246.

⁹⁷ Ribnikar, *Sejni zapisniki*, 239.

examples gathered by Matić from post-war Carniola are illustrative enough for the present purposes. Arguably the most interesting case concerns a certain Henrik Czerny, who offered the following amusing arguments in support of his “non-German” character:

My father was a Czech, and my mother was a Slovene-born citizen of Ljubljana. ... Because I was forced to communicate in the German language, I came to be seen as a German. The real reasons behind this, however, were; that I have had bad hearing since my early childhood; that in my day, German was the only language of instruction in high schools; and that I was not able to learn two languages because of my bad hearing. However, I later learned as much Slovene as necessary to fulfil my official duties.⁹⁸

Perhaps more importantly, Czerny did not forget to note that he was “never politically active, never a member of any German association, but instead always voted for the candidates of the Slovene People’s Party during elections.”⁹⁹ He also called attention to his old age and the existential threat his firing would pose to his seven children. Much like Czerny, Josef Schleimer from the German-speaking rural region of Kočevsko/Gottschee – a person that even hardline Slovene nationalists would have considered an “authentic” German – also successfully reapplied for his post. His superior supported his application, saying that “he was always unbiased in a political sense and never stood out. ... His children are still at a tender age, and it will not be difficult for him to raise them in a Slovene spirit, especially since his wife is a Slovene, and the family speaks Slovene anyway.”¹⁰⁰

Such examples allow us to reconstruct the practices through which an individual “performed” his membership in a certain national community. In addition, they also make evident that for many individuals, private or existential concerns obviously outweighed any abstract form of national loyalty. They were thus willing to adapt their (linguistic, social, cultural) practices in line with the demands of a given time-period instead of leaving their

⁹⁸ Dragan Matić, “Nemci na Kranjskem od druge polovice 19. Stoletja do prehoda v jugoslovansko državo [The Germans of Carniola from the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century until the Transition into the Yugoslav State],” in *Migracije in slovenski prostor od antike do danes*, Zbirka Zgodovinskega časopisa 30, eds. Peter Štih and Bojan Balkovec (Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 2010), 564.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 565.

native environment in order to settle in what was supposed to be their “nation-state.” According to Matić, it is clear “that in reality, much more than his national identity, it was the person of the petitioner that was important, the extent to which he was needed, his prospects for successful Slovenization and, of course; whether he in fact turned out to be an ‘oppressor’ in past times.”¹⁰¹

3.1.2 Assessing the Purge: Breaks and Continuities in Lower Styria’s Officialdom

In Lower Styria, the post-war purge of the civil service appears to have been responsible for the majority of migrations to German-Austria in the months leading up to the Treaty of St. Germain on 10 September, 1919. The government of Austrian Styria for example registered 495 refugee families with 1870 members by June, 1919. 32% of these families belonged to officials, 26% to railroad workers, and 13% to teachers.¹⁰² Pro-Austrian teachers were hit particularly hard by the purge, since many of them participated in the bloody “demonstrations for Maribor’s German character” on 27 January 1919. In the aftermath, 36 high school teachers and 200-300 primary school teachers lost their jobs throughout the province.¹⁰³

When looking at contemporary news reports, it appears that many commenters were satisfied with how the purge was executed. An opinion piece from late January 1919 described how “[i]n public offices, be they tax offices, post offices or courts, there are Slovene signs. Likewise, on the railways, everywhere one may already see a majority of Slovene officials; we feel as if we are home, that we are lords and no longer servants. ... A considerable part of the officialdom has left. The national government’s individual commissioners have acted quickly and thoroughly; we are grateful to them for this cleansing.”¹⁰⁴ Conversely, a specific

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Cvirn, “Nemška manjšina na Spodnjem Štajerskem v času med obema vojnama (1918-1941) [The German Minority in Lower Styria Between the Two World Wars (1918-1941)],” in *Migracije in slovenski prostor od antike do danes*, Zbirka Zgodovinskega časopisa 30, eds. Peter Štih and Bojan Balkovec, (Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 2010), 571.

¹⁰³ Dolenc, “Deavstrizacija v politiki,” 82.

¹⁰⁴ Ivan Prekoršek, “Iz najnovejših dni [From the Most Recent Days],” *Nova doba*, no. 7, 25 January 1919.

characteristic of the purge in Lower Styria was also that in comparison to Carniola, the region suffered from a pronounced lack of adequate personnel with which the existing “non-reliable” officialdom could be replaced.¹⁰⁵ As a consequence, the process not only took place in a more gradual manner, but also involved retaining or reemploying many people that in the eyes of Slovene nationalists had indeed once been “oppressors,” i.e. behaved problematically during the late Habsburg period.¹⁰⁶ As the following pages will show, it was this continuity in personnel that was not only a source of Slovene nationalist discontent with the project of “national renewal,” but also a testimony to both national pragmatism as well as to the persistence of national ambivalence. Indeed, Slovene nationalists were apparently at least partially right when they ascertained that someone’s outward “Slovenization” oftentimes simply masked a latent “Germanophile” conviction now hidden within.

Complaints regarding the maintenance of old personnel in Lower Styria’s public offices already surfaced during the early months of the purge. A report from Konjice that was published in the liberal centralist newspaper *Jugoslavija* on 9 January 1919 offers an illustrative example of such discourse: “In the local public offices, for example in the court, the tax office, the district representation, etc., all of the same Germanophile officials are warmly sitting as if we were still under Old Austria. The municipal secretary of Slovene Konjice is a person who has always been a passionate Germanophile and *Heiler* (*hajlovec*).”¹⁰⁷ In about a month’s time, *Jugoslavija* would again report on the situation in Celje, where “hardline Germanophiles, who in the past could not speak Slovene even for their basic needs, still remain in state service. While these people occupy the best positions, our

¹⁰⁵ Matić, “Dokončni zaton nemštva,” 247.

¹⁰⁶ On similar continuities in administrative staff in interwar Romania and Czechoslovakia, see Gábor Egry, “Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions: Local Societies and Nationalizing States in East Central Europe,” in *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, eds. Paul B. Miller and Claire Morelon, *Austrian and Habsburg Studies*, 22 (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2019), 21-25.

¹⁰⁷ *Jugoslavija*, no. 8, 9 January 1919.

nationally conscious men have to earn money through shabby occupations. The authorities should finally take a look at these people, who refused to know us just a few months ago!”¹⁰⁸

A particularly interesting opinion piece related to this topic was published in the same newspaper in September 1920. The initial inspiration for the text was apparently the fact that “in Maribor, two judges, who were notorious Germanophiles in the Austrian period, were again taken into service.”¹⁰⁹ The author then proceeded to offer some reflections on how the state ought to handle the process of employing such individuals considering the current lack of available staff. According to his opinion, it is the geographic location of the post that determined whether an individual might end up being politically harmful or not:

If we send a Germanophile official, judge, servant, railway worker, or person of whatever rank, to a place that is absolutely homogeneous, e.g. to Novo mesto, Krško etc., then he cannot harm us one bit. On the contrary; all of our prior experiences with denationalization testify that his family or, rather, his children will again be Slovenized, i.e. that in a Slovene environment, they will by their own become decent, normal Slovenes like us. In addition, it is almost certain that the Germanophile parents will not particularly resist the currents of the time and milieu, because they are well-versed in adaptation.¹¹⁰

Conversely, such people had a strong potential to sow mischief when stationed in border-towns “that up until now had been real nests of Germanophilia.”¹¹¹ By this, the author obviously meant the traditionally German-speaking urban centers of Styria and Carinthia: “Here they will resist the victorious Slovene atmosphere more successfully and might form ‘national’ minorities in future times.”¹¹² In line with the ubiquitous expressions of outrage that one may read in the contemporary press, he emphasized that “it is a very bad influence on our national people, who managed to survive the toughest of times, to suddenly see former renegades in their old power and glory.”¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ *Jugoslavija*, no. 33, 5 February 1919.

¹⁰⁹ “Nemčurji in državna služba [Germanophiles and State Jobs],” *Jugoslavija*, no. 217, 10 September, 1920.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

Much like in the example cited above, this form of pragmatic identity adaptation was oftentimes portrayed as typical for a specific psychological profile. The opportunism that such presumed ethnic Slovenes displayed under the Habsburg regime supposedly also showed in their behavior under the new Karađorđević dynasty. Slovene nationalist newspapers with an anti-centralist orientation would thus often draw parallels between the Germanophiles of yesterday and the Serbophiles or rather, “Yugoslavophiles” (*jugoslovenarji*) of present times. A very illustrative example of this parallel-drawing that is worth quoting at length was published in a 1921 issue of the newspaper *Avtonomist*:

It is interesting to look at these people today. Most of these “Germanophiles” underwent an external transformation overnight – but of course not in their manner of thinking. They remained loyal to themselves. In the past, they would go through thick and thin with the Viennese government, but today they are more Serbian than Belgrade itself. Before, they were “Germanophiles,” today they are “Yugoslavs,” or sometimes even “Serbs.” ... We know of people that did not know a single word of Slovene (they did not want to know!) before the end of 1918; that passionately despised everything that wrote, spoke or felt Slovene. Now, they say about themselves that they “feel” Yugoslav, and some “Germanophiles” even backed this up by finding a spiritual (inner) need to convert to – Orthodoxy! They remained loyal to their old motto – “*Los von Rom!*”¹¹⁴

The article offers a vivid illustration of how many national activists that had suffered persecution during the Habsburg period must have felt regarding the reacceptance of such individuals into public service: “If one skims through the names of our new ‘dignitaries,’ his eye stops at every second case. What, this one as well? The one that denounced me in 1917? It can’t be! And those ones, who behaved so cruelly towards Slovene soldiers? Unbelievable!”¹¹⁵ As we can see, while some commenters believed that the flexibility of identity displayed by such individuals promised their successful future assimilation, many others also saw in it an elementary moral defect and doubted their fitness for public functions.

¹¹⁴ “‘Nemčurji’ – nekdanj in danes [‘Germanophiles’ – Once Upon a Time and Today],” *Avtonomist*, no. 3, 25 April 1921.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

In 1921, the leading Catholic newspaper *Slovenec* drew similar parallels between old Germanophiles and contemporary integral Yugoslav nationalists. Criticized by the centralist liberals for suspected Austrophilia, the Slovene People's Party's main organ claimed that it is exactly the centralist liberal Yugoslav Democratic Party where the "Austrian-Hungarian mentality reigns supreme in the worst sense of the word. ... Under the guise of Yugoslavism, they support the Great Serbian state idea, the state language and religion, just like our former Germanophiles supported the Great German one. Their most important weapon was that sort of 'patriotism' that denounces and suspects its opponents, that gloats itself just like the former Austrian 'hurrah-patriots.'" ¹¹⁶ Articles such as this one reflect to what extent accusations of being "Austrian" or "Habsburg" in character – a rather common trope in interwar Slovene nationalist discourse – could have been employed to denounce a wide range of political opponents and were at the same time by themselves prone to contestation.

In conclusion, it may be ascertained that the 1918/9 bureaucratic purge forced Lower Styria's officialdom to thoroughly reconsider their personal relationship to the new "state of affairs." While many of those deemed unreliable by the government – as we could see, being perceived as "ethnically" German did not necessarily compromise one's chances of reemployment to full extent – indeed decided to seek their fortunes abroad, a considerable number of them apparently tried to adapt to the new circumstances and change their practices in line with the new zeitgeist. And while contemporary nationalist news reports abounded with skepticism towards such "newly discovered" Slovenes or Yugoslavs, such pragmatic cases of self-adaptation neatly illustrate the extent to which the Slovene-German national division in interwar Slovenia was a "performed" form of identity, one that was both fluid and subject to pragmatic considerations.

¹¹⁶ "Dve mentaliteti [Two Mentalities]," *Slovenec*, no. 44, 24 February 1921.

3.2 Educational Reform: The Battle Against National Ambivalence in Lower Styrian Schools

Decades of “national work” during the late Habsburg period made it clear to Slovene national activists that many of their co-nationals could not always be trusted to make the “right” decisions when it came to issues of grave national importance. The relative agency people possessed in matters such as education was therefore seen as potentially harmful for the national collective as a whole. In order to prevent such “abuses” from happening in the age of “national freedom,” the new Slovene authorities seized for themselves the right to define a contested individual’s nationality. The present subchapter will explore the implementation of this policy in two spheres of Lower Styrian life in which it most representatively came to expression. These include the enrollment of children into minority German schools and the execution of the 1921 Yugoslav population census.

It is worth noting that this aggressively inclusive national policy shared much in common with that of another interwar Habsburg successor-state – the Republic of Czechoslovakia. In both cases, local nationalists pursued a policy of “forceful inclusivity,” whereby the nation’s collective rights to self-preservation override the individual rights of its members decide on their or their children’s national belonging.¹¹⁷ A comparative reading of Tara Zahra’s seminal study on the “battle for children” in the Bohemian lands reveals an astonishing array of parallels between the nationality policies of the two states, one that may without a doubt be ascribed to the common legacy of the political culture of the Habsburg

¹¹⁷ The term “forceful inclusivity” or “inclusiveness” is employed by Oskar Mulej in his analysis of the policies of interwar Czech and Slovene national liberal parties. It denotes “a firm tendency ... to involuntary[il]ly include as many members of national minorities into the dominant nation as possible” (Oskar Mulej, “Interwar Perspectives on Liberalism in Central Europe: the Czech, Austrian and Slovene National Liberal Heirs, 1918-1934” (PhD diss., Central European University, 2017), 271). While sharing the same belief in an objectively definable and ethnolinguistically conceived nationality with contemporary Greater German liberals in Austria, it lacked the latter’s pronouncedly exclusivist discourse, whose primary goal was to exclude Jews from the racially defined national community (ibid., 261-262).

Empire.¹¹⁸ Much like in interwar Czechoslovakia, however, the Yugoslav government's policy of involuntarily integrating the nation's "lost sheep" did not pass without backlash. In Lower Styria, it was not only protested by the local German-language press as a breach of individual and parental rights. In addition, it was also apparently contrary to the desires of many putatively Slovene parents that, for various reasons, had wished for their children a German-language education.

3.2.1 German Schools for German Children: Redefining the Space for German-Language Education in Post-Habsburg Lower Styria

The new Slovene government's reform efforts in the field of education began with the naming of Karel Verstovšek as its commissioner for education and religion (*poverjenik za uk in bogočastje*) on 31 October, 1918.¹¹⁹ Verstovšek retained this post all the way until December 1920 and may be considered a sort of "common denominator" for the National Government's educational policy during this period.¹²⁰ An active participant in the Slovene take-over of power in Lower Styria following the Habsburg collapse, he was among the few Styrian natives in an otherwise majority Carniolan cabinet. Verstovšek's Styrian background also supposedly came to the fore in his pronouncedly antagonistic course towards the province's Germans – many of his reform proposals were judged as overtly radical even by the majority of the government's members.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ On the Habsburg continuities in Czechoslovak political culture, see Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 108-9.

¹¹⁹ Ervin Dolenc, *Kulturni boj. Slovenska kulturna politika v Kraljevini SHS: 1918-1929* [Kulturkampf. Slovene Cultural Policies in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes: 1918-1929] (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1996), 23. The formulation of this title reflects the fact that its bearer was to overtake the functions of the old Habsburg minister of religion and education (*Minister für Kultus und Unterricht*). Other studies offering a general overview of the early Slovenization of the education system following the Habsburg collapse include *ibid.*, "Deavstrizacija v politiki," Gabrič, "Hitra slovenizacija," Narte Velikonja, "Razvoj šolske uprave. Splošni pregled s posebnim ozirom na osnovno šolstvo [Development of the Educational Administration. A General Overview with Particular Reference to the Primary School System]," in *Slovenci v desetletju 1918-1928: Zbornik razprav iz kulturne, gospodarske in politične zgodovine*, ed. Josip Mal (Ljubljana: "Leonova družba" v Ljubljani, 1928), 691-744. Vovko, "Nemško manjšinsko šolstvo."

¹²⁰ Gabrič, "Hitra slovenizacija," 141.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 142.

The new commissioner's interventions into the education system began with a decree from 16 November 1918 that made Slovene the exclusive language of instruction on all state schools. "Foreign-born nationalities" were allowed to have both public and private minority schools with the state language as an obligatory subject under the condition of having "a sufficient number of school-aged children."¹²² A second decree issued on the same day also made Slovene the language of instruction and administration on all hitherto bilingual secondary schools and teacher's training colleges.¹²³ The number of children necessary in order for a minority school or parallel class to operate was finally defined as forty in a subsequent decree circulated on 20 November 1918.¹²⁴

In 1900, the language of instruction on one third of all Lower Styrian primary schools had been either German, or (in the case of bilingual schools) overwhelmingly German. At the same time, the percentage of people who had declared German their language of daily use amounted to about 15% of the population. By 1922, there were parallel classes with German as the language of instruction in only fourteen municipalities on the entire territory of interwar Slovenia.¹²⁵ As one might expect, this reduction of the scope of German education in post-Habsburg Lower Styria also led to a mass lay-off of teaching staff. Much like in the case of the bureaucratic purge discussed earlier, this process did not necessarily involve the firing of teachers that were considered "ethnic" Germans. Instead, it encompassed all individuals who were framed as Germanophiles and considered unreliable in the new political situation.¹²⁶

¹²² "109. Naredba poverjenistva za uk in bogočastje [109. Decree of the Commission for Education and Religion]," *Uradni list Narodne vlade SHS v Ljubljani*, no. 10, 20 November 1918.

¹²³ "110. Naredba poverjenistva za uk in bogočastje [110. Decree of the Commission for Education and Religion]," *ibid.*

¹²⁴ Gabrič, "Hitra slovenizacija," 143.

¹²⁵ Dolenc, "Deavstrizacija v politiki," 83.

¹²⁶ A report prepared by the Society of Slovene Professors (*Društvo slovenskih profesorjev*) in November 1918 for example called for the firing of those Slovene professors who had "served the German system with incredible servility." (Gabrič, "Hitra slovenizacija," 149).

In a 1921 article in which he reflected on as well as retrospectively defended the reforms he oversaw during his tenure, Verstovšek made the following conclusion: “The public must never forget that all of our ideals in the field of the education were realized in such a short time by the unified state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which took huge burdens upon itself for the sake of the school system.”¹²⁷ When we consider the radical manner in which the schools of interwar Slovenia changed during these first few years of post-Habsburg rule, it does indeed seem as though the new Yugoslav sociopolitical context allowed Slovene national activists to realize their program of nationalizing the education system to its fullest possible extent.

As has already been mentioned, the minimum number of children required for the establishment of a German-language parallel class was forty. These children, however, had to be “of genuine German nationality.”¹²⁸ The determination of nationality in such cases was more clearly defined on a session held by the Higher Council of Education (*Višji šolski svet*) on 23-24 June 1921. The latter decided that Slovene schools must be visited by children with at least one parent of Slovene origin.¹²⁹ Much like in interwar Czechoslovakia, the final decision regarding the nationality of children rested with the local school authorities.¹³⁰ The latter employed a system of so-called “surname analysis,” whereby children with Slavic-sounding surnames were obliged to visit Slovene-language schools regardless of their declared nationality or linguistic capabilities.¹³¹ As one might expect, this measure caused great backlash in the German-language press:

[The school authority] simply ascertains that one of the parents is supposedly of Slavic origin; if necessary, it can also reach back to a putatively Slavic grandparent. That the parents should declare themselves as German, or that the grandparents were also considered nothing else but German, is irrelevant as long as the school authority

¹²⁷ Karel Verstovšek, “Preustroj šolstva v Sloveniji,” *Slovenec*, no. 10, 14 January 1921.

¹²⁸ Janez Cvirn, “Nemci na Slovenskem (1848-1941) [Germans in the Slovene Lands (1848-1941)],” in “*Nemci na Slovenskem 1941-1955*, ed. Dušan Nečak (Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 2002), 117.

¹²⁹ Velikonja, “Razvoj šolske uprave,” 712.

¹³⁰ Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 126-128.

¹³¹ Cvirn, “Nemci na Slovenskem,” 117.

decides otherwise. And this official decision entails that a child or grandchild from such a marriage should be attributed to the Slovene nation and is thus obliged to visit Slovene classes.¹³²

Employing a typically liberal pattern of argumentation, *Cillier Zeitung* ascertained that “just as religious consciousness is free, so should nationality be free as well. Indeed, even freer! While one’s religious confession involves certain external formalities, the latter are not present in one’s declaration of nationality; their lack makes facilitates the passage from one nationality to another. However, this change, which depends on one’s disposition and cannot be ascertained according to one’s descent, must nevertheless be left over to the free will of every individual.”¹³³

German newspapers did not forget to point out the hypocrisy of surname analysis considering that “[t]he number of Slavic-sounding names among German citizens faces just as large a number of obviously German names among Slavic families. We would like to avoid listing the various Grafenauers, Šmids, Reichs, etc., since we do not think that the people bringing up such arguments are naïve enough to actually be convinced of their tenability.”¹³⁴ In any case, the newly imposed system of objective nationality ascription evidently also caused many palpable problems for families whose children simply did not know Slovene, but were categorized as such by the authorities. One year later, *Cillier Zeitung* reported that “[t]he son of a local Yugoslav citizen of German nationality, whose studies at the local high school were not successful, should continue his education at the vocational school in Graz. Since he is not proficient in the Slovene language, he was not able to visit any local vocational school, as none are available with a German language of instruction.”¹³⁵ Conversely, some Slovene nationalist newspapers apparently found amusement in the linguistic difficulties

¹³² “Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht,” *Cillier Zeitung*, no. 57, 17 July 1921.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ “Schule und Volksentfremdung,” *Cillier Zeitung*, no. 77, 24 September 1922.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

faced by their “newly Slovenized” co-nationals. In 1924, the liberal-nationalist newspaper *Tabor* reported on the following overheard German conversation from the streets of Maribor:

Two mothers: “Think about it, today our Luisl showed up for school enrollment, and now he’s suddenly called ‘Vekoslav:’ isn’t that crazy?!” “They’ve also rechristened our Koarl; now he’s called ‘Drago.’ What does that mean? Obviously, it means nothing at all.” – Two schoolchildren: “Hey, have you already done your ‘spis’ [essay]?” “Oh yeah, and I’m also already done with my ‘zadača’ [homework]!”¹³⁶

As one may gather from the “unpolished” German, the people involved were apparently lower-class German speakers that were trying to make sense of their own “Slovenization.” Understandably, *Cillier Zeitung* did not find such anecdotes particularly funny. Instead, it ironically remarked that “*Tabor* owes its readers an explanation for such happenings, of which we could offer a wide range of further examples.”¹³⁷

Despite being a subject of considerable controversy, the objective ascription of nationality during school enrollment remained in place up until the end of the period under examination.¹³⁸ In 1925, a decree issued under Svetozar Pribičević’s tenure as Minister of Education preserved the contested system of involuntary national classification, but decreased the number of students required for the establishment of a minority parallel class to thirty.¹³⁹ Pribičević’s reply in parliament to a German deputy that was referring to the sanctity of parental rights is worth quoting at length, since it neatly illustrates the presence of an identical discourse of denationalization across a wider post-Habsburg Yugoslav space:

I would agree with such a point of view if our state had ruled the territory of Vojvodina for multiple centuries. ... However, these parts were dominated by the Hungarian state policy, which pushed Serbdom from Szentendre and Pest down to Novi Sad. ... And because of such a policy, we had to see various Popovičs, Pavlovičs and many others become Germans and Hungarians. And let me now ask you: Is it patriotic of us to allow Hungarianized and Germanized parents to define the nationality of their

¹³⁶ German original: “Denk’s ma, heut war unser Luisl bei der Schuleinschreibung, und jetzt hast er aufemol ‘Vekoslav;’ is des net narisch?!” “Unsern Koarl habns a umtaft; hietz hast er ‘Drago.’ Wos hast des? Dos hoast ja nix.” ... “Du, host du dai ‘spis’ schon gmocht?” “O jo, und die ‘zadača’ hobi a schon fertig!” (*Tabor*, no. 51, 1 March 1924).

¹³⁷ *Cillier Zeitung*, no. 19, 6 March 1924.

¹³⁸ It was only lifted in 1930, and even then this was done through a confidential decree issued by the Ministry of Education (Cvirn, “Nemci na Slovenskem,” 119).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

children, i.e. to decide which schools they should visit? Either we lend legitimacy to the state of affairs that was defined by Hungarians, or we take back what is ours.¹⁴⁰

Finally, it is interesting to note that the enforcement of the same ethnolinguistic nationalist principles actually led to a relative thriving of German education in the formerly Hungarian regions of Vojvodina. Not only was the ethnic identity of the local German speakers never put under question, but the authorities also had a vested interest in stopping their traditional patterns of assimilation to Hungarian culture. The result was that many formerly Hungarian-language educational institutions now introduced German as their language of instruction.¹⁴¹

3.2.2 “Germanophile” Parents and the Persistent Appeal of German Education

Despite the rigidity of the new government’s educational policy, it nevertheless could not fully erase older hierarchical views regarding the German language’s prestige and necessity. As late as 1925, many Slovene parents were apparently asking for their children to be taught German as a non-obligatory subject. The administrator of the Maribor province issued a decree in which he ascertained that such parents “ought to be influenced in a way so that they will learn to value the beauty of their own mother tongue. Usually, it is simply their lack of national consciousness that is making them demand this type of instruction and burden their children, so that they are incapable of properly focusing on other subjects. ... It should thus be explained to them that in our free country our language is given a chance to flourish, and that the old Austrian saying that “you won’t come far with Slovene” is not valid anymore.”¹⁴²

Such decrees notwithstanding, there apparently existed a wide interest among the Slovene-speaking populace for German primary education. In 1928, the Minister of Education issued a decree according to which the will of the parents should again be taken into

¹⁴⁰ Dušan Biber, *Nacizem in Nemci v Jugoslaviji: 1933-1941* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1966), 319.

¹⁴¹ Janjetović, *Deca careva*, 228.

¹⁴² Velikonja, “Razvoj šolske uprave,” 712.

consideration during school enrollment.¹⁴³ A subsequent circular decree also explicitly stated that this process should not involve inquiring parents about their nationality.¹⁴⁴ After these new ordinances, an organized campaign began for the establishment of a German-language school in the surroundings of Celje. The provincial administration in Maribor thus received 222 hand-written petitions from local parents asking for the enrollment of their children into German classes. The Celje-based *Nova doba* reported that “[t]here are only three families among these 222 petitioners that may be called German ... everything else is Slovene.”¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, it claimed that local Germanophiles wanted to portray such petitioners (mostly working-class factory employees and about a hundred farmer’s families from the surrounding area) as members of the local German minority, “although it is clearly visible that neither the parents nor the children can speak a single German word, and all of their Christian names and surnames are completely Slovene.”¹⁴⁶

The appearance of such petitions opened up the obvious question of parental motives. As one could expect, some newspapers claimed that the economic dependency of such parents on German employers made them prone to manipulation: “It is not difficult to gather signatures among poor folk, whose primary concerns are obviously of an existential kind; among people that are employed in various factories and afraid of losing their jobs in case

¹⁴³ “In order to both establish the freedom cultural development for national minorities as well as fulfil the demand for learning the state language, the decree issued on 1 November 1927 for Bačka, Banat and Baranja will be extended to those localities of the Maribor province inhabited by the German or Hungarian national minorities. According to it, children are to be enrolled into German and Hungarian primary school classes on the basis of their nationality, their spoken language, and the statements of their parents. It is also decreed that the state language must be taught in these classes, and that the children must be raised in a national and state-forming spirit.” Quoted in “Gonja za nemške šole v Celju in okolici [The Campaign for German Schools in Celje and its Surroundings],” *Jutro*, no. 145, 22 July 1928.

¹⁴⁴ “The inspectors and teachers must strictly follow Decree no. 54, according to which children are to be accepted into those primary schools in which their parents want them to be enrolled. The parents must not be asked whether they are Germans, Hungarians or Slavs. Names also should not be taken into account during the enrollment process.” Quoted in “Wie in Slowenien mit der ‘Lösung’ der deutschen Schulfrage begonnen wird,” *Cillier Zeitung*, no. 62, 5 August 1928.

¹⁴⁵ “Prizadevanje nemškutarjev za nemško šolo v Celjski okolici [The Germanophile Endeavors to Found a German School in the Surroundings of Celje],” *Nova doba*, no. 83, 25 July 1928.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

they would decline such a signature.”¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, a lengthy polemical piece published in *Cillier Zeitung* argued that such petitions amounted to nothing more than a pragmatic attempt by lower-class Slovenes to secure for their children a functioning knowledge of the German language:

The paramount reason is that ... the wider masses of the populace are no less conscious of the necessity of learning the German language than the intelligentsia. The people simply express this sensibility in a different manner. The circles of the intelligentsia, who are materially or otherwise capable of conferring to their children a German education, confirm this necessity *via facti* by allowing their children to learn German. In doing so, they are however guilty of the hypocrisy of not only publically denying this necessity, but also battling every sign that seems to point towards the realization of the same goals for the wider masses. Poor workers and little people can of course clearly see how the leading circles deal with this issue. They see in the daily press that stepping up to a better position in one's daily life is impossible without knowing the neighboring world language.¹⁴⁸

Supposedly, the parents saw this motion as the only realistic possibility for their children to learn German, although “one may presume that they would rather make this happen within the regular Slovene primary schools.”¹⁴⁹ The German associations therefore decided to comply with the Slovene parents' wishes and bring their petitions forward, because the authorities were supposedly unwilling to listen to them. Reflecting on the reasons behind this highly esteemed view of German, the newspaper ascertained that “it is an oft observable fact that Slovene parents, especially from the working classes, often speak German to their small children.”¹⁵⁰ If the latter were sure that their children would receive this knowledge during their regular schooling, such motions would probably become unnecessary, and, with them, “this whole drivel about ‘*Nemčurstvo*,’ since this *Nemčurstvo* simply amounts to nothing else but the (as of now unrealizable) popular yearning to learn the neighboring world language,

¹⁴⁷ “Gonja za nemško šolo v Celju in v okolici [The Campaign for a German School in Celje and its Surroundings],” *Jutro*, no. 150, 28 June 1928.

¹⁴⁸ “Zur Frage des deutschen Volksschulunterrichts in Slowenien,” *Cillier Zeitung*, no. 82, 14 Oktober 1928.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

the dominant cultural and trading language of Central and Eastern Europe, the necessary and ever so close means of [social] advancement in the whole world.”¹⁵¹

Understandably enough, both *Cillier Zeitung*’s celebratory *Kulturträger* narrative regarding the “natural” popular yearning for German education as well as the Slovene nationalist dismissal of such parents as mere slaves of German capital likely masked the complexity of motives such individuals actually held when it came to the education of their children. Nevertheless, a comparison with the findings of Tara Zahra shows that such parents apparently shared much in common with the typical Czech parents that wished to enroll their children in the German schools of interwar Czechoslovakia. Working on archival sources, she concluded that “the overwhelming majority of contested children came from working-class, lower-middle-class, or peasant families ... [t]he parents of contested children frequently expressed their hopes for social mobility in their testimony during reclamation trials.”¹⁵² A further parallel is offered in the means through which such parents apparently tried to achieve these goals. Just as Slovene parents (supposedly) realized that the only option for making their children learn German is to enroll them into German minority schools, so did Czech parents apparently consciously begin framing themselves as Germanized Czechs in order for their claims to make sense within the nationalized discourse of the time.¹⁵³

Finally, while a journalistic source base makes it rather difficult to gauge to what extent such Slovene-speaking parents were acting out of their own convictions or were enticed to do so through various forms of pressure, it appears as if the concrete living circumstances they found themselves in did much to perpetuate the traditional sociolinguistic hierarchies

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 128.

¹⁵³ “While many did not privilege nationalist priorities as they chose schools for their children, they did gradually learn to articulate their own interests and identities using the national categories and scripts promoted by school officials and the state. Parents from Czech-speaking regions or with Czech-speaking ancestors increasingly described themselves as Germanized Czechs, rather than as individuals without clear national loyalties, in order to secure the right to send their children to a German school.” (Ibid., 129).

that Lower Styria inherited from the Habsburg period. Despite governmental attempts to weaken the economic power of local Germans, they still remained the owners of vast rural properties (most critically, the Lower Styrian vineyards) as well as of many important industrial enterprises.¹⁵⁴ Journalistic reports show that some of these factory owners organized private German lessons for their employees, or enforced the use of German through various other methods.¹⁵⁵ Despite now living under a “national” regime, such individuals – given that they had a German-nationalist political orientation – nevertheless apparently used their available maneuvering space to contribute to the “problematic” survival of German culture’s prestige in the eyes of interwar Lower Styrian society.

3.3 The 1921 Yugoslav Population Census: Statistically Reclaiming Lower Styria’s “Nationally Alienated” Slovenes

The second chapter of this thesis has already offered some insight into to the extent to which the decennial population censuses had been politicized under Habsburg rule. Understandably enough, excitement also ran high when the new Yugoslav state undertook its first population census on 31 January 1921.¹⁵⁶ Instead of the old Habsburg category of “language of daily use,” the new census was to register the population’s “mother tongue.” Much like in the case of school enrollment, however, the information someone declared was supposed to be based on “objective” criteria. In other words, if the census-taking authorities did not find a person’s

¹⁵⁴ In Lower Styria, these included e.g. the Westen factory of enameled wear in Celje, Hutter’s textile factory in Maribor, Woschnagg’s leatherworks in Šoštanj, Abel’s glass factory in Hrastnik, Laurich’s leather factory in Konjice (Cvirn, “Nemci na Slovenskem,” 125).

¹⁵⁵ In the Carinthian town of Guštanj (today Ravne na Koroškem), the children of the employees of the local factory supposedly received German instruction at home in groups of two to three (“Naši Nemci se nočejo spametovati! [Our Germans Do Not Want to Come to Their Senses!],” *Mariborski večernik* “Jutra,” no. 145, 27 June 1928).

¹⁵⁶ On how the 1921 population census influenced the perceived demographic presence of interwar Slovenia’s German community, see Cvirn, “Nemci na Slovenskem,” 108-114; Mitja Ferenc and Božo Repe, “Nemška manjšina v Sloveniji med obema vojnama [The German Minority of Slovenia during the Interwar Period],” in *Slovensko-avstrijski odnosi v 20. Stoletju: Slowenisch-österreichische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, Historia: znanstvena zbirka Oddelka za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani 8, eds. Dušan Nečak et al. (Ljubljana: Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete, 2004), 148-150; Vladimir Klemenčič, “Nemci v statistiki v jugoslovanski Sloveniji med obema vojanama [Germans in the Statistics of Yugoslav Slovenia during the Interwar Period],” *Zgodovinski časopis* 40, no. 4 (1986): 465-470.

declared mother tongue to be in line with their “objective” nationality, they had the right to make the final judgment on this issue.¹⁵⁷ Much like in interwar Czechoslovakia, the population of Yugoslavia was thus subject to a system of involuntary identity ascription.¹⁵⁸ The present chapter explores how the execution of the census as well as its relative success were discussed and evaluated in the contemporary Slovene- and German-speaking press.

3.3.1 Mentally Preparing the Nation for the Census

Much like during the earlier Habsburg censuses, the 1921 population census was a source of considerable anxiety in the contemporary press. In the days leading up to its execution, newspapers thus posted numerous articles in which they called upon their readers to do their “national duty” and honestly declare their mother language. A typical piece that was specifically directed at “borderland Slovenes” was for example published in the Styrian nationalist *Murska straža*, i.e. “Guard on the Mura/Mur river”:

You have already found out the meaning of a census. Among the various questions to which you will have to reply, there is also the question regarding your mother language. Our state does not know the language of daily use, through which the previous Austrian-Hungarian government made Germans and Hungarians out of Slavs. Others had to renounce their mother language. In Yugoslavia, this is no more; our nation is free. Anyone that would now hide his mother language shall be excommunicated from the nation and would do well to pack his things and move as soon as possible to where his heart is desires.¹⁵⁹

Repeating again the typical differentiation between “genuine” and “inauthentic” Germans, the newspaper concluded that “[r]eal and honest Germans can be equal Yugoslav citizens, but there is no more room left for Germanophiles in our homeland, which was liberated through blood and martyrdom. Everyone should answer the question about their mother language honestly and justly.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Cvirn, “Nemci na Slovenskem,” 110.

¹⁵⁸ Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 118-126.

¹⁵⁹ “Obmejnim Slovencem! [To Borderland Slovenes!],” *Murska straža*, no. 4, 28 January 1921.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

One day earlier, *Cillier Zeitung* posted a direct and pompous appeal to its readership that it should not be afraid to declare itself as German on the upcoming census. Interestingly enough, its reflections on past censuses also spoke about various pressures, which presumably affected people identifying as Germans in Slovene-nationalist dominated Carniola: “If for whatever reason some of you may have proven yourselves a tad weak on some earlier census, then the time has also come for you to regain your senses and publically declare that which remains within. While a courageous spirit and upright character are prized by everyone, while cowardice and weakness may be exploited, but never honored.”¹⁶¹ In any event, the newspaper presumed that the census should respect an individual’s personal declaration of nationality and that no pressures should be exerted on people who deem themselves German:

The German trader; the German craftsman; the German farmer have no need to fear that some sort of damage to their existence should arise from their avowal to the German nation. ... We live in a democratic country. It would be impudent to presume that the authorities of a state of law [*Rechtsstaat*] should somehow limit the freedom of declaration, or that this self-evident fact should somehow lead to negative consequences for the people in question.¹⁶²

As one might expect, contemporary Slovene nationalists did not respond well to such appeals. The following day, *Jugoslavija* reacted to the above cited article by claiming that “Germanophiles only became so truth-loving and sensitive in Yugoslavia. During the previous population censuses, they found it perfectly fine that the German authorities pressured Slovenes with threats and promises, and simply arbitrarily turned them into Germans.”¹⁶³ As will soon be apparent, however, the hopes expressed in *Cillier Zeitung* proved rather naïve. The counting commissioners conducting the census relied mostly on “objective” criteria and thus denied the people it deemed ethnically Slovene the right to declare themselves as Germans by mother language.

¹⁶¹ “Volkszählung,” *Cillier Zeitung*, no. 8, 27 January 1921.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ “Nemci in ljudsko štetje,” *Jugoslavija*, no. 24, 28 January 1921.

3.3.2 Assessing the Census's Success

The 1921 Yugoslav population census revealed a drastically different sociolinguistic picture compared to the censuses that had taken place under Habsburg rule. According to census-based data, the numeric strength of the German-speaking community inhabiting the territory of interwar Slovenia thus dropped from 103.949 in 1910 to a mere 41.514 in 1921. And while the post-war migrations of German-speakers – as was discussed in subchapter 3.1, the majority of emigrants were former Habsburg officials – may account for about half of this population drop, it was also clearly the result of the 1921 census's new language policy. In any case, it was exactly Lower Styria's urban settlements (Cilli/Celje, Pettau/Ptuj, Marburg/Maribor) that experienced the most drastic demographic transformation. The statistics showed them all as having Slovene-speaking majorities, and the number of German-speakers in them dropped by 22.000 people.¹⁶⁴

An expected wave of triumphalism swept the Slovene nationalist press once the first preliminary census results became publically known. Indeed, it largely claimed that the census results were “obvious” to informed observers and that they now finally showed Lower Styria's “true” national character: “Everyone who had known well the local conditions could have rightly expected such results. No pressure was necessary for us to achieve them, simply the fact that a national state was established.”¹⁶⁵ Many articles expressed hope that with the new census, national ambivalence (and, according to some writers, the German presence in Lower Styria altogether) will finally be eliminated:

People that used to be nationally lax, that did not care about whether they should be recorded as Slovenes or Germans, have now again remembered their Slovene fathers and mothers and became what they were in their early youth – Slovenes. ... [I]n twenty years, during the third population census, there will be no more traces of Germans in Maribor. The generation that will come out of our national schools will be conscious,

¹⁶⁴ Cvirn, “Nemci na Slovenskem,” 108-109. The data for 1910 does not include the formerly Transleithanian region of Prekmurje.

¹⁶⁵ “Dosedanji rezultati ljudskega štetja [The Results of the Population Census So Far],” *Jugoslavija*, no. 41, 17 February 1921.

it will no longer be lukewarm, and it will no longer know neither Germanophilia nor “internationalism.”¹⁶⁶

At the same time, a part of the press was apparently nevertheless displeased with the fact that certain “objectively determinable” Slovenes declared German as their mother language on the census. *Jutro* thus reported that “[i]n Žalec, 26 pseudo-Germans [*posili-Nemcev*] were recorded during the population census. It is typical that a certain mother declared herself as Slovene, but her children as German. The Germans are being recruited from the “ancient German” Janič and Sadnik families.”¹⁶⁷ The same newspaper also considered invalid the census results for the town of Ptuj: “How can various people from [the rural regions of] Slovenske gorice, Haloze, or even from Lower Styria and the entirety of Slovenia in general, come to the idea to list German as their mother language?”¹⁶⁸

When faced with such “inconsistencies,” the press called for a revision of the census results. In the words of *Ptujski list*, “[t]he counting commission should only take a good look at the some of the polls, and they would see how many [surnames ending on] *-ec*, *-ik*, *-ič* and *-un* are pushing for the German mother language, even though they were born in Slovene municipalities; even though their acquaintances know how pleasant they used to chat in Slovene during their youth, and how their mothers and fathers did not know German.”¹⁶⁹ Much like in Czechoslovakia, a contested person’s national identity was to be determined through an external investigation: “Let them interrogate Ptuj’s old Slovene families that know Ptuj’s Germans from first to last, and they will easily give information on all of these false Germans that were recorded on the census and have not come to their senses yet.”¹⁷⁰ An even more elaborate system of national classification was proposed by the liberal *Nova doba*:

¹⁶⁶ “Slovenski Maribor [Slovene Maribor],” *Tabor*, no. 36, 15 February 1921.

¹⁶⁷ “K ljudskemu štetju [On the Population Census],” *Jutro*, no. 48, 25 February 1921.

¹⁶⁸ “Ptujsko nemštvo in ljudsko štetje [Ptuj’s Germans and the Population Census],” *Jutro*, no. 52, 2 March 1921.

¹⁶⁹ “Ljudsko štetje v naših mestih [The Population Census in Our Towns],” *Ptujski list*, no. 8, 20 February 1921.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

In all cases in which the honesty of the declared information and statements proves doubtful, the commission should call forward the relevant party so that it proves its birthplace with official documents (birth certificate, etc.). If this should not suffice, two neighbors from the location where the person in question spent their childhood should be called forward. In questionable cases, it will only be possible to officially determine an individual's nationality on the basis of official documents and with precise testimonies from witnesses/neighbors.¹⁷¹

In line with its usual voluntarist framing of nationality, *Cillier Zeitung* attacked such newspapers as anti-democratic and apparently ignorant of the fact that “modern sociologists, jurists and democrats consider every person's unaffected individual declaration to be the criterion of nationality; in other words, that they allow an individual's most natural right of self-determination. ... The democratic proposition [of objective nationality determination] that is reflected in the above cited texts may be new and original in this country, but has, according to our knowledge, never seriously been debated by any of the presses of Western democratic countries.”¹⁷² Such authoritarian strains of thought were however not seen as incompatible with democracy within the specific national liberal traditions of Central Europe. In the words of Tara Zahra, “[t]he notion of forced national or racial classification evokes some of the darkest moments in recent history. ... But in the Bohemian Lands, it was in the name of democracy, national self-determination, and minority rights that parents first lost the right to choose a national affiliation.”¹⁷³

4. Conclusion

The present thesis has explored three basic aspects of the transition from “imperial” to “national” rule in the formerly Habsburg region of Lower Styria. Firstly, it has looked at how this transition affected the identity framing of the region's officials. Working on existing literature as well as reports from the contemporary press, it has shown how the post-war purge

¹⁷¹ “Ljudsko štetje in narodnost [The Population Census and Nationality],” *Nova doba*, no. 23, 22 February 1921.

¹⁷² “Ein Vorschlag zur Revision der Volkszählung,” *Cillier Zeitung*, no. 16, 24 February 1921.

¹⁷³ Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 9. On national liberalism in interwar Czechoslovakia and Slovenia, see also Mulej, “Interwar Perspectives on Liberalism.”

of the bureaucracy forced Lower Styria's officialdom to thoroughly reconsider its personal relationship to the new "national" state of affairs. The manner in which many formerly "nationally ambivalent" officials pragmatically renegotiated their practices in order to suit the new "national" zeitgeist largely reflects to what extent national identity in this specific local context amounted to a performed identity. Conversely, the pragmatism and flexibility shown by such individuals received a mixed response from the Slovene nationalist press; while some commentators welcomed such developments as a sign of progress, they also made many other skeptical of the fitness of such individuals for public service.

The second aspect of the "Slovenization" process that was researched within this thesis concerns the post-war reform of the education system and the novel system of involuntary identity ascription it introduced. Much like in interwar Czechoslovakia, Slovene nationalists attempted to curb the purported "denationalizing" effects of German-language education by enforcing an organicist view on national identity within the school enrollment process. As may be gathered from contemporary German-language reports, this reform caused considerable backlash from the region's German public. Its journalistic outlets contested this policy not only from a liberal perspective of voluntarist national identity, but also pointed out the practical troubles a part of the region's German-speaking population faced when its monolingual youth entered the Slovene education system. At the same time, contemporary Slovene press reports expressed indignation at the persisting wishes of "Germanophile" Slovene parents to enroll their children into German-language schools. While such practices open up the difficult question of determining individual agency, they undoubtedly offer promising material for future archival-based research.

Finally, the execution of the 1921 census in interwar Yugoslavia amounted to another historical situation that allowed the manifestation of both novel forms of objective identity ascription as well as nationalist accusations of national ambivalence. While the Slovene

nationalist press celebrated its results as final proof for the “real” national relations in the country, it nevertheless pushed for an even tighter objectivist approach towards nationality that appears to have shared many common traits with the execution of the census in interwar Czechoslovakia. Conversely, the German-language press attacked such a policy as a breach of elemental individual rights. While an examination based on journalistic sources only allows us to trace the discursive articulation of national ambivalence during the 1921 census, a study that would also take into account the relevant archival materials appears could lead to interesting transnational findings on nationality policy in interwar East Central Europe.

As one may gather from the numerous recent case studies that were discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the study of the various “stumbles, halts and wanderings of the Nation”¹⁷⁴ has much to offer in terms of stimulating methodology. On the other hand, it is also evident that one of the field’s elementary challenges, i.e. the attempt to liberate the historian from the binary world of nationalist thought in which he is immersed, tends to require a more unorthodox and primarily archival source base. Owing to the extraordinary events that have marked the year in which it was written, the present thesis has unfortunately only managed to approach the study of nationalist ambivalence from the perspectives of its most obviously nationally-minded observers, i.e. the contemporary press. In doing so, however, it has nevertheless hopefully offered a synthesis of recent methodological developments as well as some new insights into the discursive articulation of national ambivalence in a particular post-Habsburg region of interwar Central Europe.

¹⁷⁴ Van Ginderachter and Fox, “Introduction,” 1.

5. Bibliography

5.1 Primary Sources

5.1.1 Books and Other Printed Primary Sources

Ribnikar, Peter, ed. *Sejni zapisniki Narodne vlade Slovencev, Hrvatov in Srbov v Ljubljani in Deželnih vlad za Slovenijo 1918-1921: 1. del: Od 1. Nov. 1918 do 26. Feb. 1919* [Session Minutes of the National Government of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs in Ljubljana and the Provincial Governments for Slovenia 1918-1921: Part 1: From 1 Nov. 1918 to 26 Feb. 1919]. Ljubljana: Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 1998.

5.1.2 Newspapers

Avtonomist. Ljubljana, 1921-1924.

Cillier Zeitung. Cilli, 1876-1883, 1919-1929.

Deutsche Wacht. Cilli, 1883-1919.

Domoljub. Ljubljana, 1888-1944.

Jugoslavija. Ljubljana, 1918-1922.

Jutro. Ljubljana, 1920-1945.

Mariborski večernik "Jutra." Maribor, 1927-1941.

Murska straža. Radgona, 1919-1924.

Nova doba. Celje, 1919-1995.

Slovenec. Ljubljana, 1873-1945.

Slovenija. Ljubljana, 1848-1850.

Slovenski gospodar. Maribor, 1867-1941.

Slovenski narod. Maribor and Ljubljana, 1868-1943.

Straža. Maribor, 1909-1927.

Štajerc. Ptuj, 1900-1918.

Uradni list Narodne vlade SHS v Ljubljani [Official Journal of the National Government of S., C. and S. in Ljubljana]. Ljubljana, 1918-1919.

5.2 Secondary Sources

"Austriacante." In *Treccani*, <http://www.treccani.it/>.

Babejová, Eleonóra. *Fin-de-Siècle Pressburg: Conflict & Cultural Coexistence in Bratislava 1897-1914*. East European Monographs, 617. Boulder: East European Monographs, 2003.

Banac, Ivo. *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*. Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 1984.

- Biber, Dušan. *Nacizem in Nemci v Jugoslaviji: 1933-1941*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1966.
- Bjork, James. *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- Bolin, Per. *Between National and Academic Agendas: Ethnic 'Policies' and National Disciplines at the University of Latvia, 1919-1940*. Södertörn Studies in History 13. Södertörn Academic Studies 51. Stockholm: E-print, 2012.
- _____ and Christina Douglas. "National Indifference' in the Baltic Territories? A Critical Assessment." *Journal of Baltic Studies* 48, no. 1 (2017): 13-22.
- Brix, Emil. *Die Umgangssprachen in Altösterreich zwischen Agitation und Assimilation: die Sprachenstatistik in den zisleithanischen Volkszählungen, 1880 bis 1910*, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs 72. Wien: Böhlau, 1982.
- Brubaker, Rogers. *Ethnicity Without Groups*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Brüggemann, Karsten and Katja Wezel. "Nationally Indifferent or Ardent Nationalists? On the Options for Being German in Russia's Baltic Provinces, 1905–17." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 20, no. 1 (2019): 39–62. <https://doi.org/10.1353/kri.2019.0002>.
- Calic, Marie-Janine. *A History of Yugoslavia*. Translated by Dona Geyer. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2019.
- Cohen, Gary. *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.
- Czeitschner, Susanne. "Discourse, Hegemony and Polyglossia in the Judicial System of Trieste in the 19th Century". In *Diglossia and Power: Language Policies and Practice in the 19th Century Habsburg Empire*, Language, Power and Social Process 9, ed. Rosita Rindler Schjerve, 69-106. Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003.
- Cusco, Andrei. "Russians, Romanians, or Neither? Mobilization of Ethnicity and 'National Indifference' in Early 20th-Century Bessarabia." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 20, no. 1 (2019): 7–38. <https://doi.org/10.1353/kri.2019.0001>.
- Cvirn, Janez. *Boj za Celje: politična orientacija celjskega nemštva 1861-1907* [The Battle for Celje: The Political Orientation of Celje's Germans 1861-1907]. Zbirka zgodovinskega časopisa 5, Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 1988.
- _____ "Deželna in narodna zavest na (Spodnjem) Štajerskem [Provincial and National Identity in (Lower) Styria]." In *Avstrija. Jugoslavija. Slovenija. Slovenska narodna identiteta skozi čas*, ed. Dušan Nečak, 74-84. Ljubljana: Oddelek za zgodovino filozofske fakultete, 1997.
- _____ "Nemci na Slovenskem (1848-1941) [Germans in the Slovene Lands (1848-1941)]." In *"Nemci" na Slovenskem 1941-1955*, ed. Dušan Nečak, 99-144. Ljubljana: Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 2002.
- _____ "Nemška manjšina na Spodnjem Štajerskem v času med obema vojnoma (1918-1941) [The German Minority in Lower Styria Between the Two World Wars (1918-1941)]." In *Migracije in slovenski prostor od antike do danes*, Zbirka Zgodovinskega časopisa 30, eds. Peter Štih and Bojan Balkovec, 568-575. Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 2010.

- _____. *Trdnjavski trikotnik: Politična orientacija Nemcev na Spodnjem Štajerskem (1861-1914)* [The Fortified Triangle: The Political Orientation of Lower Styrian Germans (1861-1914)]. Maribor: Obzorja, 1997.
- Čuček, Filip. *Svoji k svojim: na poti k dokončni nacionalni razmejitvi na Spodnjem Štajerskem v 19. Stoletju* [Each to Their Own: On the Path Towards a Final National Differentiation in Lower Styria in the 19. Century]. Razpoznavanja / Recognitiones 29. Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2016.
- _____. *Uspehi spodnještajerskih Slovencev v Taaffejevi dobi: gospodarske, socialne, kulturne in politične razmere na Spodnjem Štajerskem v času Taaffejeve vlade (1879-1893)* [The Successes of Lower Styrian Slovenes during the Taaffee Period: The Economic, Social, Cultural, and Political Conditions in Lower Styria in the Time of Taaffe's Government (1879-1893)]. Zgodovinsko društvo Celje: 2008.
- _____. "Vpisal se je med Nemce, dasiravno komaj za silo nemško tolče: Občevalni jezik kot element manipulacije v popisih prebivalstva 1880-1910 na Spodnjem Štajerskem [He Declared Himself a German, Although He Could Hardly Patter in German: The Language of Daily Use as an Element of Manipulation on the 1880-1910 Lower Styrian Population Censuses]. *Zgodovina za vse*, no. 2 (2007): 57-68.
- Djokic, Dejan. *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Dolenc, Ervin. "Deavstrizacija v politiki, upravi in kulturi v Sloveniji [Deaustrification in the Politics, Administration and Cultural Life of Slovenia]." In *Slovensko – avstrijski odnosi v 20. stoletju/Slovenisch-österreichische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, Historia: znanstvena zbirka Oddelka za zgodovino Filozofska fakultete v Ljubljani 8, eds. Dušan Nećak et al., 81-94. Ljubljana, Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete: 2004.
- _____. *Kulturni boj. Slovenska kulturna politika v Kraljevini SHS: 1918-1929* [Kulturkampf. Slovene Cultural Policies in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes: 1918-1929]. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1996.
- Egry, Gábor. "Beyond Politics: National Indifference as Everyday Ethnicity." In *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, eds. Maarten van Ginderachter and Jon Fox, 145-160. London: Routledge, 2019.
- _____. "Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions: Local Societies and Nationalizing States in East Central Europe." In *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, eds. Paul B. Miller and Claire Morelon, 15-42. Austrian and Habsburg Studies, 22. New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2019.
- Erdeljac, Filip. "Between Nationalism and Indifference: The Gradual Elimination of Indifference in Interwar Yugoslavia." In *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, eds. Maarten Van Ginderachter and Jon Fox, 106-126. London: Routledge, 2019.
- Feest, David. "Spaces of 'National Indifference' in Biographical Research on Citizens of the Baltic Republics 1918–1940." *Journal of Baltic Studies* 48, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2016.1269438>.
- Ferenc, Mitja and Božo Repe. "Nemška manjšina v Sloveniji med obema vojnoma [The German Minority of Slovenia during the Interwar Period]." In *Slovensko-avstrijski odnosi v 20. Stoletju: Slovenisch-österreichische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*, Historia: znanstvena zbirka Oddelka za zgodovino Filozofska fakultete v Ljubljani 8,

- eds. Dušan Nećak, Boris Jesih, Božo Repe, Ksenija Škrilec and Peter Vodopivec, 147-160. Ljubljana: Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete, 2004.
- Fuchs, Klaus. "Die Ermittlungen von Matas Krygeris zum deutschnationalen Finanznetzwerk im Memelgebiet 1935." *Annaberger Annalen* 13 (2005): 83-157.
- Gabrič, Aleš. "Hitra slovenizacija šolskih in kulturnih ustanov [The Swift Slovenization of Educational and Cultural Establishments]." In *Slovenski prelom 1918*, ed. Aleš Gabrič, 141-160. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2019.
- Gogolák, Ludwig. "Ungarns Nationalitätengesetze und das Problem des magyarischen National- und Zentralstaates." In *Die Habsburgermonarchie: 1848-1918: Band III*, eds. Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, 1207-1303. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980.
- Jakoubek, Marek. "On the Process of National Indifferentiation: The Case of Bulgarian 'Czechs.'" *Nations and Nationalism* 24, no. 2 (April 2018): 369-89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12381>.
- Janjetović, Zoran. *Deca careva, pastorčad kraljeva: nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941* [The Emperor's Children, the King's Stepchildren: National Minorities in Yugoslavia 1918-1941]. Biblioteka "Studije i monografije"/Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije 29. Beograd: INIS, 2005.
- Janowski, Maciej. "Wavering Friendship: liberal and national ideas in nineteenth century East-Central Europe." *Ab Imperio*, no. 3-4 (2000): 82-83.
- Jaskółowski, Krzysztof. "Western (Civic) 'versus' Eastern (Ethnic) Nationalism: The Origins and Critique of the Dichotomy." *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 171 (2010): 289-303.
- Judson, Pieter M. *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- . *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Kamusella, Tomasz. *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009.
- Karch, Brendan. "Instrumental Nationalism in Upper Silesia." In *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, eds. Maarten van Ginderachter and Jon Fox, 180-203. London: Routledge, 2019.
- King, Jeremy. "The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond." In *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Nancy Wingfield and Maria Bucur, 112-152. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2001.
- . *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Klemenčič, Vladimir. "Nemci v statistiki v jugoslovanski Sloveniji med obema vojanama [Germans in the Statistics of Yugoslav Slovenia during the Interwar Period]." *Zgodovinski časopis* 40, no. 4 (1986): 465-470.
- Kosi, Jernej. "The Imagined Slovene Nation and Local Categories of Identification: 'Slovenes' in the Kingdom of Hungary and Postwar Prekmurje." *Austrian History Yearbook* 49 (2018): 87-102. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237818000103>.
- Leerssen, Joep. *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

- Leustean, Lucian N. "Eastern Orthodoxy and National Indifference in Habsburg Bukovina, 1774-1873." *Nations and Nationalism* 24, no. 4 (October 2018): 1117-41. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12415>.
- Livezeanu, Irina. *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building, & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Lyon, Philip W. "After Empire: Ethnic Germans and Minority Nationalism in Interwar Yugoslavia." PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2008.
- Matić, Dragan. "Konec prve svetovne vojne – dokončni zaton nemštva na Slovenskem [The End of the First World War – the Final Downfall of Germandom in the Slovene Lands]." In *Slovenski prelom 1918*, ed. Aleš Gabrič, 231-249. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2019.
- . "Nemci na Kranjskem od druge polovice 19. Stoletja do prehoda v jugoslovansko državo [The Germans of Carniola from the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century until the Transition into the Yugoslav State]." In *Migracije in slovenski prostor od antike do danes*, Zbirka Zgodovinskega časopisa 30, eds. Peter Štih and Bojan Balkovec, 551-567. Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 2010.
- Melik, Vasilij. *Volitve na Slovenskem: 1861-1918* [Elections in the Slovene Lands: 1861-1918]. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1965.
- Miller, Alexei. "'National Indifference' as a Political Strategy?" *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 20, no. 1 (2019): 63-72. <https://doi.org/10.1353/kri.2019.0003>.
- Miller, Paul B. and Claire Morelon, eds. *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*. Austrian and Habsburg Studies 22. New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2019.
- Miljan, Toivo. *Historical Dictionary of Estonia: Second Edition*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.
- Moll, Martin. *Kein Burgfrieden: Der deutsch-slowenische Nationalitätenkonflikt in der Steiermark 1900-1918*. Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2007.
- Mulej, Oskar. "Interwar Perspectives on Liberalism in Central Europe: The Czech, Austrian and Slovene National Liberal Heirs, 1918-1934." Doctoral dissertation. Central European University, 2017.
- Nemes, Robert. *The Once and Future Budapest*. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005.
- Puff, Rudolf Gustav. *Marburg in Steiermark, seine Umgebung, Bewohner und Geschichte. I. Band*. Graz: 1847.
- Račius, Egdūnas. "Muslims of Interwar Lithuania: The Predicament of a Torn Autochthonous Ethno-Confessional Community." In *Muslims in Interwar Europe: A Transcultural Historical Perspective*, eds. Agai Bekim, Ryad Umar, and Sajid Mehdi, 178-204. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016.
- Sieger, Robert. "Die landschaftliche Gliederung des Unterlandes." In *Südsteiermark: Ein Gedenkbuch*, ed. Franz Hausmann, 28-42. Graz: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei "Styria," 1925.
- Stauter-Halsted, Keely. *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848-1914*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Stourzh, Gerald. "Die Gleichberechtigung der Volksstämme als Verfassungsprinzip 1848-1918." In *Die Habsburgermonarchie: 1848-1918: Band III*, eds. Adam Wandruszka

- and Peter Urbanitsch, 975-1206. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: 1980.
- "The Ethnicizing of Politics and 'National Indifference' in Late Imperial Austria." In *Der Umfang der österreichischen Geschichte: Ausgewählte Studien 1990-2010*, ed. Gerald Stourzh, 283-323. Wien: Böhlau, 2011.
- Šantel, Anton. *Zgodbe moje pokrajine* [Tales from My Province]. Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2006.
- Štih, Peter, Vasko Simoniti and Peter Vodopivec. *A Slovene History: Society – Politics – Culture*. E-Razpoznavanja / E-Recognitiones 2. Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2008.
- Todorova, Maria. "Is There Weak Nationalism and Is It a Useful Category?: Usefulness of Weak Nationalism." *Nations and Nationalism* 21, no. 4 (October 2015): 681–99. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12112>.
- Trencsenyi, Balázs, Maciej Janowski, Monika Baar, Maria Falina, and Michal Kopecek. *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Volume I: Negotiating Modernity in the 'Long Nineteenth Century'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
- Toshkov, Alex. "The Phantom Subject of 'National Indifference': A Response to Tara Zahra, 'Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis.'" *Slavic Review* 69.1 (2010), accessed June 15, 2020, <http://www.slavicreview.illinois.edu/discussion/Toshkovessay-onZahra-final.htm>.
- Van Ginderachter, Maarten and Jon Fox. "Introduction: National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe." In *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, eds. Maarten van Ginderachter and Jon Fox, 1-14. London: Routledge, 2019.
- and Jon Fox, eds. *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*. London: Routledge, 2019.
- Velikonja, Narte. "Razvoj šolske uprave. Splošni pregled s posebnim ozirom na osnovno šolstvo. [Development of the Educational Administration. A General Overview with Particular Reference to the Primary School System]." In *Slovenci v desetletju 1918-1928: Zbornik razprav iz kulturne, gospodarske in politične zgodovine*, ed. Josip Mal, 691-744. Ljubljana: "Leonova družba" v Ljubljani, 1928.
- Vovko, Andrej. "Delovanje Deutscher Schulverein na Slovenskem Štajerskem v luči pisanja Slovenskega Branika [The Activities of the *Deutscher Schulverein* in Slovene Styria in Light of the Reports in *Slovenski Branik*]." *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* 70, no. 3 (1999): 431-452.
- Andrej. "Nemško manjšinsko šolstvo na Slovenskem v obdobju stare Jugoslavije [The German Minority Education System in the Slovene Lands in the Period of Old Yugoslavia]." *Zgodovinski časopis* 40, no. 3 (1986): 311-321.
- Wheatley, Natasha. "Central Europe as Ground Zero of the New International Order." *Slavic Review* 78, no. 4 (2019): 900–911. <https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2019.248>.
- Zahra, Tara. "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis." *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93–119. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0037677900016715>.
- *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Zvánovec, Mikuláš. "The Battle over National Schooling in Bohemia and the Czech and German National School Associations: A Comparison (1880–1914)." *Austrian History Yearbook* 51 (2020): 173–92. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237820000144>.