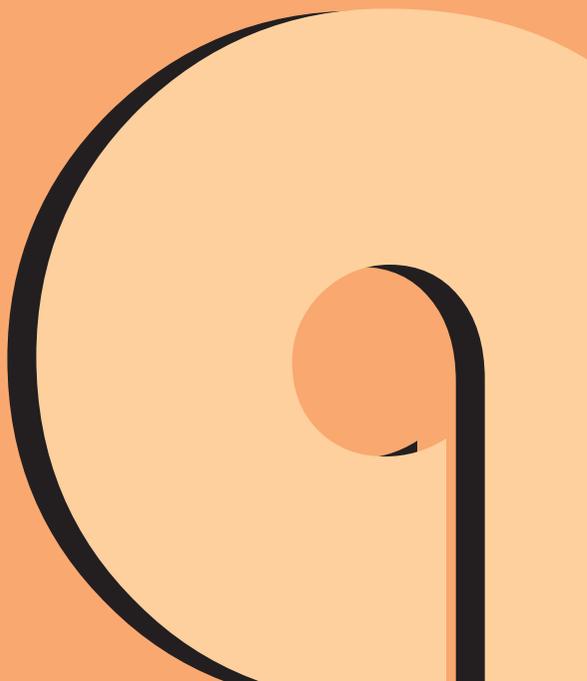




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**Special issue**  
**Multilingualism in Europe**

**Guest editor:**

**László Marác**



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## Effects of Habsburg educational policies measured by census statistics

This paper is dedicated to the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Habsburg realm, in particular as regards school education, its effects and the census registration of linguistic qualities among its population. After almost a century of German language dominance, national revival of the Habsburg peoples forced school education to renounce the upbringing of a supra-national and linguistic uniform leadership. Secondary and higher education gradually chose to breed new nationally conscious elites in the variety of peoples, contributing to the decomposition of the realm.

Nevertheless, promotion of the 'national languages' resulted in wide spread bilingualism, at least among the middle and higher classes. This bilingualism, however, was restricted to the nationalities and not implemented to Austro-Germans and Magyars, who, in their own secondary educational institutions, stuck to a virtually unilingual practice, a fact that, in the end, weakened their political influence. This inequality has to be taken into consideration when different school types are put in a contraposition.

One of the most usual ways to investigate developments in the lingual capacity of the Habsburg subjects is found in the decennial censuses, but these are presented with rigid and dichotomous concepts, just describing ethno-lingual identities, however, aphoristically equated with political 'nations'. This asks for clearer definitions, and this paper advocates a critical reconsideration of national and linguistic concepts and definitions, as habitually used in Habsburg historiography. An exposé of different educational practices in both parts—Austria and Hungary—of the realm may serve as context to this appeal.

**Key words:** Austria-Hungary; bilingualism; education; Jews; minorities; nationalism; Habsburg.



## 1. Origins of the multinational composition of the Habsburg empire

Up to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the territories of the Habsburg princes were populated in majority by communities speaking in a variety of German vernaculars. However, early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, linguistic diversification set going, starting with the annexation of the western and northern counties of the collapsed Hungarian kingdom. Consequently, Slovak and Magyar speaking communities enriched the linguistic composition. Also at that date, the Bohemian Kingdom was brought in a dynastic union with Habsburg, and after a century it would be forced to subdue to its crown, broadening the linguistic diversity further on with a Czech speaking community. Just before the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the final victory over Ottoman rule would bring all Magyars, Croats and the Transylvanian Romanians under the crown. In 1772, annexation of the southern province of Poland—Galicia—completed the process of ethnic diversification.<sup>1</sup> In the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, emperor Joseph II strived after reorganization of his realm by unifying and centralizing the motley of jurisdictions, administrations, privileges and rights. One ‘state language’ should be used, at least in contacts with the central administration: High German, being the language of the oldest and richest crown lands, and a scientific and commercial *lingua franca* in all of central and eastern Europe. Thereby, the emperor tried to copy a rational administration, already successfully implemented by the Great Powers—Great Britain, France and Spain—centuries earlier. However, traditional languages were allowed to continue their function on regional level and particularly as the vernacular in which magistrates and civil servants traditionally conversed with commons (Burian 1982; Wallnig 2003).

## 2. Higher education as a condition to impose and maintain Habsburg unity

Universities had to fulfil the necessary conditions by recruiting a new generation and bring them up to a culturally homogeneous and politically loyal elite. By implementing German, Habsburg universities would also benefit from the scien-

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<sup>1</sup> This study leaves the Austrian provinces Coastland (Küstenland), Dalmatia and Tirol (partly inhabited by speakers of Italian), and the Hungarian province Croatia-Slavonia out of consideration. In behalf of German written literature: Carniola = Krain, Styria = Steiermark, Carinthia = Kärnten, Bohemia = Böhmen, Moravia = Mähren, Silesia = Schlesien, Galicia = Galizien, Bucovina = die Bukowina, Transylvania = Siebenbürgen (Magyar: Erdély).



tific high level of university research and education in Germany. In the 1780s, however, Habsburg imperial administration marginalized clerical-jesuitical control, attempting to subdue religious dissident intellectuals, to return from German universities where they used to study. Lectures generally being performed in the German language, made an exception to theological courses, maintaining Latin, and to—however marginally scheduled—courses in Magyar and Slav languages and history. The Josephinian reforms also stretched over grammar schools, having to prepare a new bourgeois and gentry generation able to participate in German instructed university education. Next to the classical grammar schools, German instructed secondary schools modernized education by learning practical civil and military engineering, law and medical professions.

After the Napoleonic era, German exclusivity was somewhat mitigated by bilingualism, however often on an optional base and bound to culturally related subjects.<sup>2</sup> This marginal importance was agreed upon by the Habsburg nobility, being the political and military class of the empire. This apparently contradicts their proudly cultivation of a variety of aristocratic national identities. But, nobles identified themselves as noble nations, and before that primarily as a Habsburg upper class, dependent upon and loyal to the dynasty of the realm. Common people, living in serfdom, could not participate such a nation, so their languages were respected as honourable remnants of the past indeed, but not yet as national symbols and even less as modern vehicles of expression. While many of the gentry used German, and not few of the high aristocracy maintained French as their superior language of thought and culture, they left the original language of their old nation, in a rather restricted variety, for every day communication with servants and serfs.

### **3. Nineteenth century educational dynamics in secondary schools and at universities, up to the sixties**

In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a greater part of the gentry and the townspeople in the Slav and Hungarian speaking territories identified themselves politically and culturally with Germanophone Austria. This, generally was the case in the Czech provinces (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia), Slovenia (Carniola, and the

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<sup>2</sup> Engelbrecht vol. 5 (1986) and vol. 6 (1984) with an overview of educational practises and their legal regulations. Thalmann (1983: 434–349) about the academic relations between Austria and the German states.



southern parts of Carinthia and Styria) and Croatia. The self-conscious Hungarian gentry in the inner-Hungarian, as well as in the upper-Hungarian (Slovak) and the Transylvanian counties, possessed more national consciousness and, at the same time, were aware of the political weakness of their elitist national concept. This contributed to the implementation of magyarizing policies by the nobility, in cooperation with the clergy, at an early date.

When so called *landesübliche Sprachen* (usual languages) got admittance to the curricula in secondary and grammar schools, even as means of instruction, such institutions would become breeding places for the future national leaderships. Even, pupils from German cultural settings joined and took lead in this revival.<sup>3</sup> In the Hungarian counties the exclusive introduction of Magyar went on more radical coming to a climax in the revolution of 1848. After the insurgence being violently struck down, reforms were turned back in favour of neo-absolutistic centralism, freezing further progress during more than a decade. Accordingly, the statistics gathered in this period, show us the results of more than eighty years of Habsburg educational policy. In a summary: 80 percent of all university lectures was performed in German, to a somewhat lesser extent also at Pest (Budapest) University, where, nonetheless, one third of the lectures was given in Magyar. Together, the Habsburg universities matriculated more than six thousand students, constituting a real multinational background, originating from all over the empire and also from former Poland and countries still under Ottoman rule. A minority of only 40 percent of the students pretended to have German as mother tongue.<sup>4</sup> In the dominantly Slav speaking provinces, grammar (*Gymnasien*) and other secondary schools (*Realschulen*), still kept German in its place, but in schools in which Czech and Polish were already given a substantial place, this practise was left unhindered. Around the middle of the century, in the five Austrian provinces with a numerically dominant Slav population, 41 dominantly German to 15 dominantly Czech, Polish and Slovene grammar and secondary schools existed. In Hungary (with the exception of Croatia) the situation was quite the reverse: 33 German, together with 11 Slovak and Romanian, secondary schools opposed 76 Magyar ones. However, a dichotomous comparison

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<sup>3</sup> Hroch (1968: 45, 113–114, 119–149). Wallnig (2003: 26) points at the difference in standard use appropriateness, making some languages for the time being lesser fit for education than others.

<sup>4</sup> Numbers without theological faculties, holding on to Latin, and concerning to Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Graz, Innsbruck, Cracow, Lemberg (Lwów) with a different and in time changing status as University or Academic High School. Czernowitz and Kolozsvár were not yet established and Olmütz (Olomouc) had recently lost its status.



between these schools according to language is relative, as the German ones sometimes provided free courses in other languages, and the Slav ones always obliged their pupils to internalize a full command of German. (Frommelt 1963: 103, 121–129; Mádl 1983: 73–75; Otruba 1983: 96–97, 100, 104; Kuz'min 1983: 118–125). The difference between the Austrian provinces and the Hungarians counties is striking and reflects a very educational policy, purposely breeding a Hungarian citizenship, while secondary and higher education in the Austrian provinces yet took some other generations to leave the mission of breeding a Habsburg state elite, giving education over to the national emancipation of a new Polish, Czech, and Slovene generation.

### ***3.1. National emancipation since the 18-sixties on secondary school and university level***

In the 18-sixties, neo-absolutism had to give way to more democracy, in what would be called, the 'constitutional era'. From now on and up to the 18-eighties, bourgeois liberalism would determine politics. Further democratization by gradually amplifying voting rights broadened the political participation of the Austrian 'peoples', and caused liberalism to retire in favour of a variety of competing nationalisms. At least in Austria, while in Hungary suffrage was restricted to the educated and possessing class, for the most part being Magyar, or magyarized higher classes of the various peoples.

The predominance of German disappeared in most grammar and secondary schools in Austrian provinces inhabited by a Slav speaking majority. Half the 'German' pupils in the schools, situated in dominantly Slav speaking areas, actually were children of Jewish middle class parents who persisted in bringing up their offspring in a culturally German atmosphere. In Galicia, where an insignificant minority of several percentages (numbering three hundreds of thousands) of germanophones (or speakers of Yiddish) lived, educational polonization went on radically. Between 1851 and 1910 German instructed schools diminished from 9 to 1, and Polish and Ruthenian ones increased from 6 to 87. Czechization of education raised more resistance because Germanophones, dominated higher social strata, and constituted a minority of more than one third (three millions) of the population of the three Czech provinces. Since the 1880s, a continuous and intensifying political struggle succeeded in Czech majority districts and communes, by the extension of Czech language usage in civil service. From 1851 to 1910, German instructed secondary and grammar schools tripled in



numbers from 29 to 91 (of which one was bilingual), while the Czech instructed ones increased by more than ten times from 9 to 100. In Carniola, German dominance in secondary and grammar education persisted with 3 institutions, notwithstanding a Slovenization of civil services. In 1910, only one Slovene secondary school appeared to be established, next to 5 bilingual institutions.

In collating all numbers of German and Slav schools, we have to bear in mind that they are only conditionally comparable, because German kept an important place as a subject in the curricula of the Slav schools, which simply were obliged to deliver bilingual graduates, while German schools often felt free to neglect the Slav languages. As an unexpected consequence, particularly graduates from Czech schools, being bilingual, could take advantage in filling civil service vacancies, not only in Czech districts and communes but also in central public administration and jurisdiction.

Since the establishment of Dualism in 1867, Hungary speeded up magyarization of non-Magyar instructed secondary schools. Between 1851 and 1910, their numbers reduced to one third from 43 to 14, while the Magyar schools more than tripled from 76 to 231. While knowledge of Magyar was a *conditio sine qua non*, and the knowledge of other languages no formal obligation for a public carrier, Magyar instructed schools were freed deliberately from paying attention to minority languages, but not so non-Magyar instructed schools, obliged to bilingualism, in order to deliver graduates fit for civil service.

After 1849, for another decade, the germanophone character of the universities was reinforced by dismissal of disloyal scientists, as a rule belonging to the nationalities. The conservative and church loyal colleges who took their places, continued the Germanophone traditions. But in the 1860s, when national politicizing of instruction could not be postponed any longer, important consequences in favour of the Slav languages had to be drawn by the universities in the Austrian provinces, while Budapest gained the status of national Hungarian university and banned German from its lecture-rooms. Both universities of Galicia—Cracow (Krakau) and Lemberg (Lwów, Lviv)—transformed to national Polish institutions, particularly after the majority of their students arrived from the Prussian and Russian controlled parts of Poland, since the Polish resurrection of 1863 failed, and Polish education was suppressed. At Prague University, both competing nationalities were unable to take the lead, each representing one half of the students. In 1882, the number of Germanophone students, being in a majority of Jewish descent, dropped to a minority of 42, against 55 percent Czechs.



After fierce debates in parliament and scuffle in the streets, the university had to be separated, hence following the splitting up of the technical academies, in which the Czechs already settled a majority earlier. The German university kept a multi-national and multi-religious character for a while, as may be shown by the composition of the students around 1900: half of them being Jewish and a quarter Czech. But national separation went on: the Czechs diminished rapidly to 5 percent in 1910. Contrarily, the Czech university did hardly attract Germanophone students from the beginning.<sup>5</sup>

### ***3.2. National emancipation since the 1860s on elementary schools***

So far, our attention was restricted to higher levels of education, in which not more than a few percentages of the (male) population did participate. However, just they belonged to the leading classes of the empire, and from them the leadership of the Habsburg peoples, in their struggle for emancipation to nations, would arise, too.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century reformers were not much interested in education on elementary level and for sure, they did not expect non-German speaking common people to learn German. For a long time yet to come, the often shabby equipped elementary schools, attended by a minority of children in consideration, would only marginally be able to contribute to educational goals. But regulation and control improved this situation, and around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, half the population in the Austrian provinces might be considered to have received an essential command of, at least, reading. Literacy in eastern Austrian provinces (Galicia and Bucovina), and in almost all Hungarian counties needed another half of a century to reach that level. In 1910, in the western Austrian provinces, literacy surpassed 90%, in Hungary not yet 50 percent (varying from west to east, between 70 and 30 percent). This deficiency consequently invalidated the policies of Magyarization, and has to be taken into account when, as below will be exposed, schools and their respective language regimes are compared.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Frommelt (1963: 103, 121–123); Goldinger (1967: 145, 197–199); Winter (1968: 258–260); Senz (1977: 22–25); Mádl (1983: 73–75, 119–122); Otruba (1983: 96/7, 100–105); Kuz'min (1983: 112–123). Their numerical data differ, partly because they refer to different periods.

<sup>6</sup> In eastern parts of the realm, a third of the school able children still did not attend school education on a regular basis. Thus, the Hungarian level of literacy was lower, however differing with concern to the ethnicities. In total, 28 percent of the Romanians, 58 percent of the Slovaks, and 67 percent of the Magyars mastered the art of reading and writing, next to 71



From the beginning of the century, though sparsely scattered, elementary schools in Hungary became more and more Magyarized by the clergy, and in 1840 this praxis came under central legalization. Yet, for the time being, Lutheran (German and Slovak) and orthodox (Romanian) schools stayed beyond this control.

In Austrian elementary schools, the use of the language was decided upon by local authorities and clergy. In the three Austrian provinces with a Czech majority population, the proportions between the German and Slav instructed elementary schools (42–51 percent) reflected the relative proportions of both language groups (37–63 percent). Only one out of ten children attending *utraquist* schools and they were more or less exposed to Germanization.

Around the middle of the century, in Galicia with its insignificant German speaking minority, only some percentages of the elementary schools instructed in German, but nearly one quarter was bilingual, using German next to Polish and Ruthenian. One may suppose these German schools to be particularly attended by Jewish children.

In the provinces with a Slovene speaking minority—Carinthia and Styria—the political dominant class counteracted the establishment of Slovene schools, and favoured bilingual *utraquistische Schulen*.<sup>7</sup>

Since 1872, Hungarian administration acquired a series of Magyarizing reforms as a condition for public financing of denominational schools, being a vast majority. The *Lex Apponyi* of 1906 concluded this process with the prescription of Magyar as a voluminous subject and as means of instruction in na-

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percent of the ‘Germans’, including the Jews, who, with their religious literary tradition, increased the statistical level considerably, later on to the benefit of the Magyars and at the expense of ‘Germans’. (Rieth 1927: 52–66; Frommelt 1963: 48; Dolmányos 1966: 289/7, who, together with Hanák and Szász 1966: 214, refer in their elaborations to the authentic statistical sources, as published by de Viennese and Budapest state authorities).

<sup>7</sup>Austrian school statistics of the Austrian provinces: Wiskemann (1938: 54–57), Frommelt (1963: 48, 88/9). In 1847, of all Slav speaking children enrolled in elementary schools in the province of Galicia and in Slovenian speaking districts of the provinces of Carinthia and Styria, 90 percent attended *utraquistischen Schulen*, as opposed to 10 percent in the Czech provinces. These schools used the mother tongue for instruction on the lowest, to give way to increasing German instruction on higher levels. Critics condemned this system as facilitating Germanization. Their discussion in the Slovene-Carinthian context, can be found in Pohl (2001/2011.).



tional sensitive subjects such as culture and history. (Dolmányos 1966: 283–288) The results are shown by the numerical development of non-Magyar instructed elementary schools: between 1860 and 1910 they doubled, but the number of Slovak-bilingual instructed ones decreased from nearly two thousand to 360 (not yet one tenth of all schools in the Slovak speaking counties), and that of German-bilingual instructed ones from 1,800 to 330 (in majority those independently financed by the Transylvanian Saxons). Romanian and Serbian Orthodox schools diminished their numbers too, with some quarter of their original volume.<sup>8</sup> German, Czech, Slovak and Slovene nationalist leaderships founded private institutions in communes, in which their language was neglected by the existing schools. National school societies intended to prevent the younger generation from getting ‘lost to their nation’—in a nationalistic vision: to become denaturalized.

Generally, a command of the dominant state language, either German or Magyar, next to the mother tongue, was seen as a tool of necessity in the hands of the leading class of the minority nationalities, enabling them to defend the national interests of their people. But contrastingly, this very bilingualism was supposed to be a danger for children of the commons, whose monolingualism had to be cultivated, even launched as a weapon in the national struggle, consequently compelling the authorities to respect and recognize such languages.

#### 4. Transmission from ethnicity to nationality

Around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of Habsburg urban and middle class citizens used German as only or principal language, so in Prague, Budapest, Brno (Brünn), Bratislava (Preßburg, Pozsony) and Ljubljana (Laibach). In other important cities, such as Lwów (Lemberg, L’viv), Czernowitz (Chernivtsi, Cernăuți), and Kolozsvár (Klausenburg, Cluj) and tens of smaller towns in Slav and Magyar speaking country sides, a quarter up to one half of the town dwellers happened to be German by language and culture: particularly the politically ruling and well to do class, engaged in civil and military service, or in commercial enterprises and free intellectual professions. They partly consisted

<sup>8</sup> Hungarian school statistics: Macartney (1938: 24–26, 78, 203, 252/3, in regard to Slovak instructed schools); Rieth (1926: 65, in regard to German instructed schools), Hanák and Szász (1966: 239, 283, in a general summary). These authors present differing figures. One has to keep in mind that the number of school visiting children doubled in this period and consequently the number of schools did the same.



of Austro-Germans, but also of bilinguals, having an ethnic Czech, Slovak, Slovene, Croat or Magyar background, while Polish, Ruthenian and Romanian middle classes did participate to a fewer extent in the pre-national German culture.

Here, we meet the first obstacle in defining ethnicity and nationality. The apolitical ethnic concept of people—German: *Volk*—being of a general relevance in pre-national Europe, essentially changed its meaning in the run of the second half of the century, when it was politicized in a new national concept, and made ethnicities to become nations.<sup>9</sup> In the Habsburg territories, ethno-geographical divisions and relations of numerical strength between the peoples did not change drastically between 1860 and 1910. But so did political and economical power relationships as a consequence of the interaction between migration and urbanization, democratization and national emancipation. This considerably restricts the comparative base in using these terms.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ethnicity and nationality are also used synonymous and then opposed to the political concept of nation. In this study we favour the term ethnicity as most directly related to the Herderian concept of *Volk*.

<sup>10</sup> In census figures one may find a reflection of the vanishing presence of German speaking townspeople. In Hungary, their percentage halved between 1850 and 1880, and yet again between 1880 and 1910, from 50 to 20 to 10 percent. (Hanák and Szász 1966: 203, 206/7) Educational indications can be found in Prague, where children attending German elementary schools halved between 1880 and 1910 (Wiskemann 1938: 58). Since 1866, after a period of bilingual instruction, grammar school students had to choose for an institution with either German or Czech instruction. Their choice illustrates the non-linear development of national consciousness. E.g. in the Bohemian town of Plzeň-Pilsen, the proportion of Czech mother tongue students in the German grammar school temporarily increased from 10 to 30 percent, the Jewish ones from 10 to 40 percent (Newerkla 2003:185–190). An overall ‘mentality’ history of Habsburg bourgeois class is still needed to clear the differentiated process of assimilation in and resistance towards Magyarization and Czechization among the German speaking urban middle classes, up to now often described with anachronistic national concepts. An encouragement may be found—either from German or Hungarian points of view in Farkas (1932); Pukánszky (1934 and 1938); Valjavec (1963: 185–199, 215–221); Zimmermann (1974: 54–55); Senz (1977: 28–30); Hutterer (1988); Kořalka (1991: 93–95). In the first place our concern is directed to those culturally germanized urban Catholics, to be distinguished from the Lutheran citizens in a range of towns in Slovak and Transylvanian territories, founded in mediaeval times by kings and princes, who privileged these economically important settlement, populated by migrants from Saxony—miners, traders and artisans. Some 15 of these towns preserved their German linguistic character up to the beginning of the 20th century.



Politicizing ethnicity to nationality interplayed with democratization. School education cannot be undervalued as the instigator and moulder of this process. However, in this respect, 'German' was to be excepted, not being an indication for an original homogeneous ethnic identity. The Habsburg 'Germans' were decidedly not developing from homogeneous ethnic roots to one nationally emancipated German nation, as, contrastingly, the other Habsburg peoples did, being homogeneous ethnic collectives from the beginning.

In historical and statistical description and analysis, these variable and changing meanings have to be taken into full consideration, in order to avoid anachronism. As most complicated example in this respect, again, we will elaborate the so-called Germans in the non- or partly German speaking territories. They consisted of (1) German speaking civil servants originating from germanophone Austria, of (2) descendants of mediaeval settlers—known as Saxons—in a range of Slovakian and Transylvanian towns, mostly of Lutheran faith, of (3) descendants from 18<sup>th</sup> century immigrants—known as Swabians—scattered in clusters of villages, spread all over once partly depopulated Magyar (border)counties, and to a lesser extent also in Romanian, Croat, Polish and Ruthenian speaking environments, of (4) culturally Germanized bourgeois and gentry with particularly Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Slovene and Croat ethnic backgrounds, and, (5) after their legal emancipation in the 1850s, Jews.<sup>11</sup>

These five quite different collectives, scattered all over the empire, lived without intensive mutual contacts and therefore, cannot be considered as one homogeneous ethnicity, proper to emancipate together to one nation. Their dialects varied considerably from each other, were not mutually understandable, and they often were not able to use Standard German as a self evident overarching common medium, because High German was not taught, particularly not in the schools of the Swabian villages. After 1880 the young Swabian generation learned to use Magyar as their standard language, and when writing in German, constructed a mixture of standard and dialect, and followed a Magyar spelling.

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<sup>11</sup> The ethnographic mosaic of Hungary resulted from the Ottoman occupation, during which the population almost halved. In the 18th century, following the Habsburg liberation, it tripled, partly because of colonization, attracting immigrants from all peoples, but particularly from south-western German states, next to Slovaks coming from the northern counties, and to Serbians, flying across the borders to escape Ottoman rule. Next to the voluminous and rich variety of German written ethnographical and political literature concerning the Germanophone Hungarians, a short and adequate English written overview of this colonization can be found in Paikert (1967: 30–47), comparable with an equally condensed overview by Valjavec (1963: 185–206).



Lutherans, in particular in Transylvania, traditionally received education by autonomous denominational schools, which, for many centuries, cultivated an orientation towards Germany and its language. Therefore, just they may be called Germans in a national sense. Although their original Yiddish was hardly understandable to German gentiles, secularizing middle class Jews Germanized themselves linguistically in an Austrian cosmopolitan culture, in the second half of the century. (Hutterer 1963; 1994: 53–59).

### 5. A criticism of census definitions and methodology

Census data, being collected since 1880, included all Jews in the German category, according to a rather broad linguistic definition, considering Yiddish to be a German dialect. In Hungary, an overwhelming majority of Hungarian Jews trespassed the borderline between German and Magyar linguistic identity. Between 1880 and 1910, these Magyarizing Jews contributed for one half to the impressive increase of the Magyars: from 45 to 55 percent (Kann 1945). In Austria, speakers of German, having a Czech background, and living in territories inhabited by these ethnicities, often returned to their ethnic roots, and the German minorities in those Bohemian and Moravian towns dominated to insignificant proportions. Those with a Slovene background and living in Carinthian and Syrian towns, contrarily, enforced their Germanization up to 1919. It will need no explanation that the five German ethnic categories, mentioned above, did not undergo the same co-ordinated emancipation towards one national identity, as was the case with other Habsburg peoples. In Hungary, Austro-Germans largely marginalized, by emigration as well as assimilation in the Magyar nation, and so did of course the formerly Germanized autochthonous middle class and gentry too, reverting in a national way to the identity of their forefathers. Swabians Magyarized on different levels and a part of them tried to maintain a rather contested combined identity as ethnic Germans and national Hungarians together: *Deutschungarn*. Solely, many Lutheran Saxons emancipated themselves as participants in the modern German nation. These processes were under way and by far not finished when Austria and Hungary collapsed. Then, after 1919, a quarter of the Czech, and half the Slovakian, Polish and Transylvanian Jews, under the influence of Zionism, opted for a separate Jewish nationality, as soon as this opportunity was offered to them by the new successor states (further explanation in note 11). This obliges us to question the definition of the languages as census categories, implicitly but not yet correctly being used as indicators for national identity. And it puts another important question: *what is the social, not to speak*



*of political, relevance of the usual description of the Habsburg populations with national categories, deriving upon—different—census defined linguistic criteria?*

This also brings us to criticize the census methodology as such. When, from 1880 onwards, census authorities started to collect data in a systematic way, Austria, registering the colloquial speech, used other methods and definitions than Hungary. Austria, registering the daily vernacular (*Umgangssprache*) of hundreds of thousands, not any longer living in their original linguistic environment, but as immigrants, as domestic personal or social ascendants in a new social setting they had to conform to. These were not able speak their own language colloquially and in public any longer, but, in most cases used the German language. In Hungary the mother tongue had to be registered, but in the “detailed instructions” to the census officers, the category of a mother tongue was redefined ambiguously as the language one loved to speak. Thus, the mobilized class often did not register their first language learned, but Magyar as their politically correct language. While, in Austria, the language of civil administration and school education depended on legally conditioned numerical proportions of the language groups within communes and districts, the census often transformed in a national referendum, a poll to settle the official language regime.

In Austria as well as Hungary, lower classed people could be manipulated, even misused, when social dependency or illiteracy obliged them to accept or call in help from civil and religious authorities, school teachers, landlords and patrons, by filling in their census forms. Subsequently, the census and its interpreters, denying sociolinguistic reality, elevated ethno-linguistic groups to ‘nationalities’.

## **6. Bilingualism and national pragmatism**

Till now, it is usual to explore historical ethno-national relations with linguistic census criteria as indication: criteria depicting language groups in a conceptual dichotomy, and denying bilingualism with its fluent transitions between these groups. Yet, the Hungarian census provides information about bilingualism too, however scarcely and inconsistently presented in only some studies dealing with



the methodology of the census.<sup>12</sup> Summarizing the results: In the 15 counties, including Budapest, combining the western and southern half of the Hungarian Kingdom, about 5 millions civilians lived in 1880, of which 1,2 millions were registered as being of 'German mother tongue'. Up to 1910, their absolute number did hardly increase, and so, their relative portion decreased from one quarter to one fifth. However, the number of German-Magyar bilinguals, to be found in equal numbers in both language groups grew to more than 800.000, a doubling since 1880. In the total of 'mother tongue' Magyars and 'mother tongue' Germans, they constituted 13 percent and 38 percent, reflecting two following stages: that of linguistic assimilation supposedly exerted by Magyar instructed school education, followed by a political choice. In the capital Budapest, dynamics were much stronger, the number of 'Germans' dropped even in absolute numbers, and relatively from more than one third to less than one tenth in a population meanwhile tripling from 0,35 to 0,9 millions. Also, 550.000 Slovak-Hungarian bilinguals, largely inhabiting the 17 northern counties, and also living in Budapest and its countryside, were divided in 40 percent with Magyar and 60 percent with Slovak as their assumed 'mother tongue'.<sup>13</sup> The Jews of Budapest, shifted in the same period from Yiddish (officially: German) to Magyar. In 1880 they numbered 25 percent, of which two thirds were registered as 'German', making this language group 36 percent of the population. But when, in 1910, nine out of ten Jews preferred to be Magyars, their shift had consequently contributed considerably to a German decrease below 10 percent. The sociolinguistic—bilingual—reality behind these numbers may be illustrated by the total number of bilinguals: 80 percent in 1880, and still 50 percent in 1910. (Petersen 1933; Kann 1945; Lukacs 1988: 84–93, 100–103) We may conclude by these numbers that, between 1880 and 1910, almost four hundreds of thousands of Germans-by-language—more than half of them being Jews—found a national home in the Magyar nation. In the same period, ethnic Slovaks shifted to Magyar nationality to a not much lesser extent. Next to emigration, this is one of the mayor explanations for the stagnating absolute numbers of Germans and Slovaks, during the second half of the century up to 1910, a period in which meanwhile the whole population of Hungary increased by one half. We have to con-

<sup>12</sup> Census criticism can be found in: Korodi (1909: 252), and Rieth (1927: 52–61), and more recently in Senz (1977: 8–9, 37), and Brix (1988: 48–51, 56–62).

<sup>13</sup> Figures about these bilinguals are elaborated on in Langhans (1911: 204–207); Rieth (1927: 70–73); Schittenhelm (1937/8); Lökkös (2000: 68, 208, 232). Obviously, most of them were ethnical Germans or Jews and Slovaks, having learned Magyar as a second language, but expressing their national preference by pretending Magyar to be their first language.



clude that most of the Jews, and considerable parts of ethnic Germans and Slovaks changed their national identity, or more precisely: did not proceed their political emancipation in a 'ethnically-nationally consequent' way. But we would simplify this national emancipation-across-the-language-borders, when taking the language statistics as just an indisputable indication, because, as a rule, these nationally convicted 'Magyarones' stayed bilingual for at least some generations. This process of assimilation was also under way among the other peoples, however largely concentrated in those particular Croato-Serb and Romanian ethnicities, living under religious submission by the authority of Rome in the so called Uniate eastern churches. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, these institutions were installed, and afterwards controlled and privileged by the Austro-Hungarian state ever since, which may explain their willingness to cooperate in the Magyarizing policies.

Comparable figures in the Austrian half of the empire are not available, but between 1880 and 1910, in the dominantly Czech provinces approximately one out of ten bilingual 'Germans' (re)gained Czech national identity. Among these trespassers, Jews were to be found in growing numbers, particularly in the smaller Czech dominated towns, where they had to escape a double discrimination, being German and Jew at the same time. Around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Prague, more than half the population appeared to be German-by-preferred-language, but after the decade of neo-absolutism, bilingual middle classes re-engaged with the Czech nationality. Between 1880 and 1910, mass immigration from the Czech speaking countryside, contributed to the reduction of the relative number of those expressing to use German as colloquial language, too. They decreased from one fifth to less than one tenth of the population. Among them, in 1880, almost all Prague Jews were still to be found, constituting one half of the German language group. But in 1910 more than half the Prague Jews registered themselves as being Czechs, which contributed to the diminishing of the 'Germans' below 10 percent. Consequently, the German language had to give up minimal legal guarantees for its use by public administration. Nevertheless, not few middle and higher class inhabitants hanged on to their individual and non-political preference for German culture and education, as may be shown by the disproportionally high participation in German instructed Prague secondary schools and academies.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> In 1910, the German university, two academies and six grammar schools were attended by 30 percent of the students on this level, four German secondary schools by 25 percent, six secondary institutions on a lower level by 15 percent. Finally, the proportion in the elemen-



## 7. A concluding note about census concepts as indicators for historical description and analysis of the multi-ethnic and multi-national Habsburg realm

Historical studies concerning ethnical traditions and national revival in 19<sup>th</sup> century Central Europe lack important nuances by taking less heterogeneity and dynamics into account, when using bureaucratically defined indications for description and concepts for analysis. ‘German’ particularly, is an example, at first being a very broad and diverse ethnic and cultural concept, but afterwards politically narrowing by modern nationalism. Since then, historical studies invoke conceptual confusion by presenting German as one coherent and continuous identity throughout the whole 19<sup>th</sup> century and before. The Habsburg peoples evaluated at their own pace from an ethnic state of being to a chosen, however often also enforced, modern political identity. This process came to a climax in the political decomposition of the Habsburg realm to new, exclusively national states. The modernisation of pre-national identities, focusing on and constructing in modern national ideology and identity, radically affected pre- and, at the same time, supra-national cosmopolitan culture and its linguistically expression in German. In those days, national thinking welcomed the devaluation of this traditional elite culture, and advocated the superiority of traditional ethnicities becoming modern nationalities, and, as such, legitimated by international law. Half a century before the collapse in 1918, the last emperor, Franz Joseph, already recognized his realm to be “an anomaly in the present day world”. Ironically, the census implemented by his state bureaucracy, facilitated this development, presenting an implicit assumption of organic continuity between ethnic and national identities, which transformed his subjects from *Völker* to *Nationen*.<sup>15</sup> Censuses did not properly reflect the dynamics of the multinational and multilingual societies of the Habsburg realm. They presented without nuances just one-dimensional figures about ‘language groups’, implicitly regarding them as ‘nations’, without taking the process of transition from ethnicity to nation into account. However, such an implied assumption of monolingual national identities as subjects of an essential and necessary historical outcome obscures the view on the dynamics in which modern national consciousness engendered. In fact, widespread 19<sup>th</sup> century bilingualism, covered multiform identities,

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tary schools reached the average number of ‘Germans’ in Prague. (Cohen 1984; Iggers 1988: 438/9; Havránek 1996).

<sup>15</sup> “*In der heutigen Welt eine Anomalie.*” Citation by Wandruszka in his Preface (1989: XI–XII).



which often retraced their path when personal conditions and political situations changed. The outcome - uniform and exclusive national identities - is a rather modern phenomenon, finally a result of processes of assimilation, forced emigration and national cleansing in the national states in which the Habsburg multi-form society was remodelled after 1919.<sup>16</sup> This becomes clear, however beyond the framework of this study, in the censuses of the national states erected on former Habsburg territory, in 1919. These brought more freedom of choice to those nations belonging to the new state nation—Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Romanians and Croats—and to Jews, but at the same time put pressure on those, belonging to the two old imperial nations of Austria and Hungary, now becoming devaluated to the status of national minority.<sup>17</sup>

This contribution advocates a more sober and nuanced practice in using national identity concepts, when describing the historical realities of Central Europe. Particularly, attention has to be paid to the dynamics of identity formation and shifting, particularly in concern to those identities which became burdened by the increasing nationalistic atrocities, after the 1860s. In this field of study, anachronism is always on the look-out.

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<sup>16</sup> Frommelt (1963: 16–20) recapitulates critics of those days, accusing early leaders of ‘language nations’ to claim political sovereignty in advance, by prematurely raising language groups—ethnicities—to political nations.

<sup>17</sup> After the collapse of the realm, the censuses of the newly erected national states used other definitions and exerted other pressures on those to be registered, hence causing considerable shifts in the national composition of their populations. If we exclude 300,000 Germans and 400,000 Magyars—mostly dismissed civil servants, military and expropriated landowners and their families—who emigrated to the territorial remnants of Austria and Hungary immediately after the war, a striking difference with the first Czechoslovakian, Romanian and Yugoslavian censuses appears in the ‘disappearance’ of another 100,000 Germans and 200,000 Magyars between 1910 and 1920/30, most of them being Jews, now opting for an own Jewish nationality. This new category was provided to them by the new states, obviously intending to diminish the statistical number of Germans and Hungarians. N.B. in the remnants states of Austria and Hungary, the census continued to refuse a separate Jewish nationality, and so Jews had to take the nationality of the state for granted, just as was usual before the war (De Bryas 1926: 156; Molnár 1938–9; Mócsy 1983: 8–14, 153–195).



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### UČINCI HABSBUŠKIH OBRAZOVNIH POLITIKA MJERENI STATISTIČKIM ALATIMA POPISA STANOVNIŠTVA

Rad se bavi multietničkim i višejezičnim aspektima Habsburške monarhije, posebice po pitanju školstva, njegovim učincima i podacima o lingvističkim odrednicama stanovnika monarhije zabilježenim u popisu stanovništva. Nakon gotovo cijelog stoljeća dominacije njemačkog jezika, nacionalno buđenje naroda u Habsburškoj monarhiji prisililo je škole da se odreknu nad-nacionalnog i lingvistički uniformnog odgoja. Srednje i visokoškolsko obrazovanje usredotočilo se na obrazovanje nove nacionalno svjesne elite iz različitih nacionalnih skupina, što je doprinijelo raspadu monarhije.



Međutim, širenje “nacionalnih jezika” dovelo je do širenja bilingvizma među srednjom i višom klasom. Ovaj se bilingvizam međutim odnosio na nacionalne manjine a ne na Austrijance, Nijemce i Mađare, koji su se u svojim obrazovnim institucijama obrazovali isključivo jednojezično, što je u konačnici dovelo do slabljenja njihovog političkog utjecaja. Ova se nejednakost mora uzeti u obzir kada se uspoređuju različite vrste škola.

Jedan od uobičajenih načina istraživanja razvoja lingvističkih sposobnosti građana monarhije je uvid u rezultate desetogodišnjeg popisa stanovništva, u kojem su podatci predstavljeni unutar krutih dihotomija, te samo opisuju etno-lingvističke identitete, koji se, međutim, aforistički izjednačuju s političkim “nacijama”. To zahtijeva jasnije definicije, pa se u ovom radu zalazemo za kritičko promišljanje nacionalnih i lingvističkih koncepata i definicija koje su korištene u habsburškoj historiografiji. Ekspoze različitih obrazovnih praksi u oba dijela monarhije: Austriji i Mađarskoj, može poslužiti kao kontekst za to promišljanje.

**Ključne riječi:** Austro-Ugarska; bilingvizam; obrazovanje; Židovi; manjine; nacionalizam, Habsburzi.