

INTRODUCTION

Understanding Multiculturalism: The Habsburg Central European Experience



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Today, after decades of linking the concept of multiculturalism to a call for tolerance of cultural heterogeneity, societies are subjecting multiculturalism to close scrutiny. In countries of culturally mixed populations, society commonly viewed the entire idea of multiculturalism as a mandate to protect minorities and guarantee them individual and collective rights. If, in the decades following the political upheavals of 1968, the commitment to multiculturalism was perceived as a liberal manifesto, multiculturalism in the post-9/11 era is under attack for its relativizing, particularist, essentializing, and potentially divisive implications.

Under the cover of multiculturalism, new injustices might be permitted—as, for example, if permission were granted to Muslims in Europe to have sharia govern familial and communal relations. Multiculturalism celebrates diversity while at the same time permitting different cultural camps within a given society to ascribe to “the others” a specific linguistic, ethnic, or religious identity and origin, thereby limiting them in terms of the “defining culture”—and implicitly circumscribing their role in that society. One notes here a distinct odor of patronizing protectionism and tolerance, but also one of distance from the culture of “the others.” The multicultural respect for their distinctiveness comes along with a claim of its own superiority. In other words, multiculturalism in this view easily becomes a concealed, inverted, self-referential form of racism, a “racism of distancing oneself.”¹ In a recent review of studies on the challenges to contemporary polities of dealing justly with diverse populations, Timothy Garton Ash found that programs and policies of multiculturalism have so often produced contradictory, illiberal results that, with respect to normative political theory and public policy, the term itself “should be consigned to the dustbin of history.”²

In the realm of nation-state policy, multiculturalism results from a strategy adopted by the governments of nation-states to solve problems created by cultural diversity and is now, under postnational conditions, subject to particularly severe criticism. The initial introduction of legislation to assure the political rights of those persons whose language, religion, race, or place of origin differ from that of the national majority was well received. Given the postnational condition proclaimed today, however, people have become increasingly aware of how such well-meaning measures also abetted a policy of classifying individuals into presumably homogeneous groups along ethnic, linguistic, or religious lines and denying ambiguity or indifference, in order to create subordinate units manageable for the dominant groups of society.

In the Anglo-American world, multiculturalism implies the political will to include, recognize, and represent ethnically diverse groups living together in single nation-states. As shown in the following chapters, in other parts of the world multiculturalism as a political doctrine has often turned step-by-step from an integrative practice into an ideology that aimed at keeping the groups separate from each other and from the majority. Since multiculturalism in continental Europe typically stands for the idea of peaceful coexistence of ethnic groups in single political units without allowing them to intermingle, right-wing political activists in several Central European countries have been using multiculturalism as a tool for consolidating the established power relationships between majorities and minorities. Today—or today again—minority populations fear that their own distinctive culture may fall victim to a uniformly imposed dominant culture. It must not be ignored, however, that from the political perspective, the views of the late eighteenth-century German idealist thinker Johann Gottfried Herder still strongly influence today's nationally encoded and territorialized understanding of cultural identity—one people (*Volk*), one language, one state.

Beyond these contemporary political conflicts but inspired by the challenges they pose, this book offers a scholarly discussion of multiculturalism whose results might then be fruitfully applied to contemporary political questions. For purposes of this book, we use the notion of multiculturalism as a delimited analytic tool of historical inquiry, and we consider the term to be appropriate as a category of scholarly description and analysis of the social conditions characteristic of societies that comprise culturally heterogeneous individuals and communities. They live together in spaces confined by politically established frontiers characterized by uncontrollable crossings and interactions in the practices of everyday life that are culturally encoded in multiple ways. Thus, we understand multiculturalism within the framework of this pluralistic cultural experience, without presupposing any necessary dominant or leading culture or any necessary direction for the development of relations and contacts between the various cultures.

Habsburg Central Europe may be regarded, as Moritz Csáky argues, as a “laboratory” for the pluricultural experience—to use a descriptive term without the exclusionary and essentialist assumptions that “multiculturalism” often carries in political contexts—in which processes significant for the globalized character of society in the twenty-first century can be usefully explored. This volume identifies and examines historical practices for dealing with the challenges of linguistic diversity, pluriculturality, and hyphenated identities that currently confront Europe and the world, and hopes to make a significant contribution to a more enlightened and fruitful approach to this critical problem confronting modern society.

Since we do not want to reproduce the logic of nationalist politics in the late Habsburg Empire in our analysis, we employ the notion of multiculturalism for historical inquiry descriptively and analytically. Or, to put it more explicitly, since it is the main goal of this volume to understand the manifestations of multiculturalism in Habsburg Central Europe, we have to formulate a new methodological approach, beyond any simple or static political notions of multiculturalism, which will allow us to capture cultural diversity more appropriately and precisely by defining culture as fragmented, multivalent, and fluid. This approach allows us to explore—paraphrasing Anil Bhatti’s words in this volume—how Habsburg Central European society was structured with respect to culture; that is to say, it was and still is characterized by more fluid, communicatively open pluricultural conditions, instead of bounded, fixed ones. To grasp these structures in analytical terms, the authors of this book strive to define and use more elaborate categories than “multilinguality,” “multinationality,” or “multiethnicity,” which do not encompass but rather typically obstruct the highly complex and dynamic cultural phenomena in question. However, since multiculturalism as a concept and a set of realities was and still is politically, and in consequence socially, relevant in the whole Central European area, multiculturalism is the focal point and object of study for our book, though that term in itself does not provide the theoretical approach and conceptual framework for our work.

Multiculturalism and Habsburg Central Europe

In this volume, multiculturalism will be revisited through the prism of the Habsburg Central European historical experience. If the experience of heterogeneity, whether in the form of multilinguality, multinationality, multiethnicity, differing administrative and legal structures, or different religions, has been the norm in Habsburg Central Europe and beyond for centuries, does such pluralism make a region multicultural? Or to put a finer point on the question, what political agenda may be hidden behind the apparently naive but common

labeling of societies as multinational rather than multicultural? If one follows convention and labels the Habsburg Monarchy as multinational, multilingual, or multiethnic, the scholar not only runs the risk of retaining an implicit political dimension, but also of reproducing in the analysis the very nationalism our volume seeks to overcome. In recent writings the renowned Austrian historian Gerald Stourzh shows that in the late nineteenth century national politics increasingly promoted what he calls an “ethnicizing process” that tended to deemphasize not only the legal position and political roles of imperial Austria’s historical provinces but also of the individual person as a “citizen of the state”—replacing the position of the individual as a citizen equal before the law with the criterion of individuals’ national or ethnic belonging. The citizen of the state became a member of a nationally defined group officially termed a “nationality” (*Nationalität*) or later, a “national group,” (in German, *Volksgruppe*). In this view the Habsburg Monarchy gradually turned from an empire encompassing several historic kingdoms and many provinces into a multinational, multiethnic, and multilingual state in which each nationality increasingly favored the ideal of national belonging now understood in ethnic terms, with both the central authorities and protagonists of the national movements within the monarchy promoting linguistic purity and monolingualism, and instruments of governance increasingly focused on the various nationalities.³

The historical region we focus on, and that we call Habsburg Central Europe, can be defined as a geographic designation or as a heuristic concept. For decades, this designation stood for the whole Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and, after World War I and the treaties of St. Germain and Trianon in 1919/20, for the successor states. Later on—after much scholarly reflection on the German imperialist concept of *Mitteuropa* (Central Europe)—many observers included Germany and other adjacent countries in the scheme of Central Europe.⁴ In this volume we define Central Europe in terms of the legacy of Habsburg Central Europe, not geographically in the framework of *Mitteuropa*. Our concept of Central Europe is predefined in two main categories: first, a structural one, which Moritz Csáky terms the “pluralities,” constituted by the rich experience of linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity within the region and the adoption at various times of Spanish, Italian, French, and Ottoman styles in the arts, music, and cuisine, as well as in practices of everyday life; and second, one of values and practice, that is, certain distinct traditions and correlate actions that were generated by shared social and historical developments. Over time, both categories experienced significant shifts in meaning.

The entire social area we call Habsburg Central Europe was under significant pressure from broader mechanisms of political and social change. The political change from the estates-based state of the early seventeenth century to the absolutist state and finally to the constitutional state after 1848 and 1867 offered new social and economic opportunities for individuals and social groups and entailed

at the same time considerable risks for other people, while cultural heterogeneity proved a far more constant characteristic of these societies.

The phenomenon of Habsburg Central Europe at issue here should be viewed as a dynamic structure of culturally variegated social areas affected by processes of demarcation and exchange, including in particular the use of shared symbols. This interactive area expanded or contracted in size over the centuries, and thus Belgrade in Serbia at the time of the wars of Ottoman imperial expansion from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries CE was just as much a part of Habsburg Central Europe as was Leipzig, a city that, though also not part of the Habsburg Monarchy, enjoyed intellectual exchange with both Prague and Vienna during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. One can say much the same about Breslau/Wrocław after Prussia took most of Silesia from the Habsburgs in the 1740s, and the entire province of Lombardy in northern Italy contributed culturally to Habsburg Central Europe from the time of the War of Spanish Succession just after 1700 to the Italian Risorgimento of the mid-nineteenth century. Ultimately, we note that the Habsburg Monarchy was indeed only one part—albeit a highly significant one—of the larger concept of Habsburg Central Europe.

Differences and Identities

Scholarly writers of the nineteenth century bore witness to the characteristic prenatal cultural constitution of the Habsburg Monarchy. They described the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as a “state of contrast,”⁵ in which *no* single province was inhabited only by members of one cultural or ethnic group or one religious denomination, speaking only one language. History shows that diversity as a lived and intensely debated experience does not, in defiance of all differences, necessarily articulate itself in divisive terms. In this regard the Habsburg Monarchy serves as an excellent case in point.

The intricate experience of Habsburg Central Europe lends itself particularly well to establishing a model for coping with the challenges of modern cultural heterogeneity, as the chapters presented in this volume show. It is now generally accepted that cultural differences often serve social and political functions of constituting identity. Those functions result from processes of signification that articulate or even establish specific power relationships. Stuart Hall argues that the postulation of difference serves as the distinctive feature of the very symbolic order, which we choose to call culture.⁶ Recent studies have abandoned the nineteenth-century notion of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by an individual and unique past and kept alive by the imagined national tradition of the people.⁷ Nowadays, culture is conceptualized as a system of orientation, helping to constitute identity by means of differentiation but

always in flux. Thus, cultures are no longer regarded as “things with mind,”⁸ but as preemptive, arbitrary, fragile, and historical. If cultures are not conceptualized in this contingent and mutable way, identities are inevitably essentialized. It is the intention of this volume to reflect on and critique the still-common reification of cultures. The Austrian physicist and philosopher Ernst Mach once noted that identities were in fact names, makeshifts, and remedies that allow a temporary orientation, and that they are strongly shaped by the difference from that which they are not. Mach used here the phrase “by the environment” (*durch die Umgebung*) in asserting that identities are more intensely affected by demarcation from their immediate surroundings than by any inherent “psychological identity” (*psychische Identität*).⁹

Our approach strives to portray cultural, and in consequence social, differences and identities as two sides of the same coin: neither is conceptualized as static, deeply rooted, and intrinsically authentic. In contrast to earlier theological, philosophical, or biological conceptualizations, identities are now understood as fragile, provisional, continually rebuilt, and constantly shifting—as unstable interfaces evolving in a dialogue between similarity and difference under specific conditions of power.¹⁰ They are no longer viewed as quintessentially constant in times of change. The contemporary theoretical approach recognizes and heightens awareness of the historically experienced differences leading to different expressions of collective identity, be it regional, social, religious. However, differences also have the potential to increase discrepancies between cultures, as well as to stimulate or support challenges to asymmetrical balances of power.

Epistemological Implications of the Nationalization Process

In the Habsburg Monarchy after the mid-nineteenth century, nationalist activists exploited the many manifest heterogeneities for their own purposes. In order to establish the very nations they claimed to represent, nationalist movements made culture an inherent part of geography and territory. They exaggerated differences and nationalized identity in bi- or multilingual communities by using language as a differentiating feature. Nationalists perceived homogeneity in the use of language as the ideal model of political unity and state organization. Teachers, journalists, and artists supported the nationalization process, which included, for example, performances of “national” vehicles in the “national” language in opera houses, theaters, and other public venues. Nationalist activists used public spaces as stages during the late nineteenth century for inventing, spreading, and enforcing national identities by generating so-called ethnic differences and presenting national communities as immutable natural phenomena. In the scholarly sphere, historiography, language, literature, law studies,

and other disciplines played their part by subjecting inquiry and conceptualizations to the national master narrative. Nationalists worked assiduously to enforce national loyalties and to combat ethnic and national indifference, ambiguity, and mutability in the population and then fostered narratives that denied or minimized the existence of indifference and mutability.¹¹ The development of the nationalist master narrative also affected the construction of collective memory, especially the building of historical traditions, which is still the case. If history writing in and about Habsburg Central Europe interprets cultural differences in society only as a result of nationalist endeavors, this might signify that it still operates within the national narrative initially defined by the activists of the nineteenth century. One might thus easily ignore the daily practice of individuals' identification with various contradictory nonnational narratives, which later were wrongly understood as being national.

National identity is, according to the Cambridge historian Peter Burke, "clearly an important field of study, and it has received a good deal of attention recently, from sociologists and social historians alike." Burke finds it self-evident that "even in the modern world of nations it is obvious enough that other types of cultural identity remain significant: regional identities, ethnic identities, civic identities, and religious identities, to say nothing of gender, of family, or of clerical or noble identities (whether or not these should be described in terms of 'class')." "This multiplicity, when it is recognized," Burke concludes, "is sometimes perceived as a 'postmodern' phenomenon." However, for him, "there seems to be nothing uniquely postmodern, or even modern, about it." He evaluates these older definitions of identity (which include hyphenated identities) rather as persistent "rivals to national identity."¹² They are still present, but in the process of memorization they have become distorted. Thanks to the well-meaning efforts of the experts on tradition building—who so often turned identity and memory into a vast monoculture of "methodological nationalism"¹³—as well as to the many proponents of multiculturalism caught in national identity traps, potentially enriching differences and confrontations were transformed into situations of insurmountable opposition, boundaries were drawn, and parallel societies created.

The significance of the present volume lies in its theoretical approach. It analyzes and critiques those existing theoretical presuppositions, which scholars still hold even though they have been proven inadequate to the understanding of multicultural phenomena such as nation-based concepts of identity building. This volume advances the development of more productive transdisciplinary approaches to cultural diversity. The point of departure is the Habsburg Central European experience of diversity—and from this point the volume will develop its theme, transcending the Western perspective, on the one hand, by extending the horizon of empirical analysis of cultural pluralism to India and South America and, on the other hand, by clarifying conceptions from this

perspective. In doing this, the volume advances the ongoing efforts to break through nation-based concepts of multiculturalism, identity, and difference and directly addresses the question of how we can best understand the social, political, and cultural realities of culturally heterogeneous societies.

For the authors of this volume, identity formation can be explained only by means of appreciating and analyzing the development of the discourse and social or political performance of identity under particular historical conditions, as well as the capturing in that discourse of memories of prior historical experiences. Memories provide important means for the constitution of identity. Memory is no longer defined as a given point of departure; it can serve multiple meanings and is continuously being transformed in processes of recoding. Over time, new protagonists accentuate new differences or recalibrate old ones to build new collective identities. This volume offers a subtler and more nuanced analysis of the role of memory in the elaboration of discourses of identity, such as in historiography and tradition building, than is possible in conventional discussions of identity. The latter adopt nationalist narratives all too easily and try to connect contemporary identity to a distant, imagined historical moment, in the process of which they become caught in the trap of methodological nationalism by employing the conceptualizations of nineteenth-century nationalists as categories of analysis and then explaining collective identities in complex cultural milieus from an at base nationalist perspective. In the early twentieth century Austrian intellectuals heavily criticized the destructive effects they anticipated from the application of the nationality principle to the heterogeneous state. As an antidote, figures such as Otto Bauer, Karl Renner, and Hans Kelsen elaborated theories of how to put national autonomy into practice with guarantees for the rights and freedoms of individual members of minority communities that were to be grounded in a “personality principle” or “rule of law” rather than in distinct territorial bases. However, also acting politically, they were not always able to transcend the habits of thought of nationalist politics. It is significant that a scholar such as Ephraim Nimni still labels Otto Bauer as one of “the precursors of multiculturalism,” since drawing this very connection offers—from our pluricultural point of view—evidence for the methodological nationalism that the authors of this volume seek to overcome.¹⁴

One must also note that the more national criteria are used to explain social processes of pre- or postnational conditions, the more fallacious such reasoning becomes. Before the late eighteenth century neither national nor ethnic categories were articulated in intellectual or popular discourse. Yet if they still play a role in describing social processes after the twentieth century, they do not meet the needs of the “post-national constellation,” as Jürgen Habermas has termed it.¹⁵ Continuing to think within the constraints of national and ethnic categories leads to ignoring the connected and shared histories inherent in political, social, and economic practices, or to ignoring other cultural identities based on class,

region, and gender, which, Peter Burke and others argue, frequently rival powerful national identities.

Goals

This volume addresses substantive questions of global importance: the chapters explore strategies of collective identity formation in the past and present in culturally diverse frameworks that recognize the claims of difference, while at the same time they are able to rise above the ethnic, racial, and/or cultural demarcations induced and reinforced by the nation-state. Taking Habsburg Central Europe as a point of departure, the contributors to this volume offer a substantial modification of the nation-based concept of identity. If contemporary political actors across Europe want to avoid following the old paths charted by nationalist identity policy in attempting to construct a distinct European identity, they should be prepared to develop new approaches while increasing awareness of the lingering effects of nineteenth-century concepts. This volume reconceptualizes various understandings of identity and concepts of the coexistence of culturally diverse populations within states while jettisoning the methodological nationalism characteristic of many contributions to the field. We want to analyze and understand the different manifestations of multiculturalism as a political strategy or discourse with which new boundaries of inclusion or exclusion were drawn, and as a mode of understanding and practice used by social actors for coping with diversity. The value added by the pluricultural point of view is that attributed differences may be valued by analysts as long as they are considered for what they are, namely, identity-constituting features, established in specific power relationships, but with no ontological status or value as such. Furthermore, we note that our scholarly approach to multicultural manifestations differs from both multiculturalism and ethnopluralism as political conceptions. On the one hand, it is distinct from the former, which has commonly served as a state-directed or politically induced concept of cultural diversity that tends to view cultures as monolithic blocks and calls for diversity while at the same time trying to reify and possibly also degrade “the other.” On the other hand, ethnopluralism refers to a culture of perceived autochthonous and allochthonous ethnic groups. The modern concept of ethnopluralism has much in common with—as well as many significant differences from—the multiculturalism so cherished by left-wing liberals: both recognize culture as essence. However, by seemingly defending cultural disparity, ethnopluralism is able to veil its, at base, racist character—a fact that we ignore at our peril.

The respect that most modern societies demand be shown for the identity of other cultural groups calls for attentiveness to the differences between them and is expressed in the motto “unto each people its own.” This concept—clearly

analogous to the “separate but equal” explanation and defense of segregation—plays directly into the hands of those political powers that seem to accept the inevitability of cultural diversity, while at the same time engineering its protection. Thus, they are able to defend the distinct lines of ethnic segregation that they draw in order to show who, in fact, is in charge of the situation. Preserving diversity is not an obligation, and other measures similar to those described above should be recognized for what they are: an attack on human rights. Understanding multiculturalism within the framework of cultural diversity is an important endeavor of contemporary scholarship. Pluriculturalism—as elaborated in this volume by Anil Bhatti—meets the epistemological requirements for historical inquiry. In this perspective culture is conceptualized as a meshwork of similarities and differences that describes ongoing processes both of negotiation, transfer, and translation and of marking the boundaries of which everyday life consists. Identifications do not emerge from multicultural coexistence but from cross-cultural exchange and shifting demarcations.

If we want to understand multiculturalism in the Habsburg Central European experience, we must recognize its cultural coding in multiple ways rather than simply designating the region as multicultural. No rigid conceptual approaches have been imposed on the authors, so as not to impoverish the different analytical approaches, or to reify the research strategies as they are represented in the following chapters. The authors critically scrutinize the deployment of multiculturalism as a political strategy and scholarly category, taking a nonessentialist notion of culture and a dynamic understanding of the role of memory as a point of departure in the elaboration of discourses of identity. Since this book proposes new interpretations of the Habsburg Central European multicultural experience, it is also necessary to assess that experience from a wider perspective.

The book begins in the first section with several approaches to understanding processes of identity formation in culturally diverse societies, with comparisons of the Central European experience to other parts of the world. Anil Bhatti’s chapter on India and Michael Rössner’s on Latin America are particularly instructive. They bring in the global dimension by comparing ways of dealing with cultural diversity in East and West with the Habsburg Central European case, about which both scholars are well informed. Bhatti and Rössner show that national self-understanding in Habsburg Central Europe never became as essentialist as in India (Hinduness, *Hindutva*), Latin America (ethnic mix, *Mestizaje*), and colonizing Europe (e.g., Germanness, Britishness, Frenchness), and that Indian and Latin American postcolonial theory offer new concepts and approaches (e.g., palimpsest, rhizome, hybridity) for understanding the pluricultural phenomena in Habsburg Central Europe beyond the nationally encoded concept of multiculturalism.

In Habsburg Central Europe, the practices of everyday life were shaped by both nationalist doctrines of national homogeneity and a reality of striking

heterogeneity (language, confession, culture) and multiple identities. Rounding out the first section, Pieter Judson's chapter warns against adopting what Jeremy King has termed an "ethnicist approach,"¹⁶ confusing those who spoke a language with those who felt a belonging to a nation defined by the use of that language. National loyalties were never as deeply rooted as were other forms of self-identification (e.g., religion). If one ignores these realities, the analytical use of multiculturalism might simply presume the existence of separate ethnic cultures, defined on the basis of language use. In multilingual communities, the choice to use *one* or another language did not necessarily evidence a defined national loyalty but rather often a situational strategy to increase one's life chances in given social circumstances. Thus, Judson asks: did Imperial Austria's multilingual composition make its society in fact multicultural? Or vice versa: does the multiculturalist's approach not simply validate in retrospect the social boundaries that the national activists had once created? If in everyday life few such boundaries had actually existed, Judson asks with good cause how and why these societies came to be understood and analyzed overwhelmingly in nationalist terms.

The chapters in the second section of the book raise questions about the dynamics of multicultural societies and the relationship to politics and the state. Patrice Dabrowski and Pamela Ballinger identify in their chapters different forms of political action that arise out of multicultural circumstances. Dabrowski examines the critical impact of multiculturalism on nation building in the inclusive interwar Poland. In the reestablished Polish state, the traditional understanding of the Polish nation, meaning the noble class, clashed with new ethnolinguistic conceptions. Multiculturalist approaches to the nation challenged the integralist nationalist view that acknowledged ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity in regional areas but still insisted on a common loyalty to a Polish nation-state. In her main example, Dabrowski shows the efforts made to present the Hutsuls, highlanders on Poland's southern borders, as a culturally distinct community. For political, cultural, and economic reasons, they were exhorted to maintain their nativeness when integrating into the modern state. Pamela Ballinger analyzes how people in Istria, a small peninsula that was divided in 1991 between Slovenia and Croatia, used claims for multiculturalism as a political instrument "against the state." Her chapter critically examines the recent policy, discourses, and practices of multiculturalism in Istria. Multiculturalism there has been presented in its recent political form against the nationalist Croatian state. However, the Istrian regionalist project has adopted many of the limitations of a state-sponsored system of ethnonational identity politics derived from the previous Habsburg and Yugoslav incarnations of political multiculturalism. In particular, the tradition of understanding identity as dominantly marked by linguistic difference remains present in the Istrian way of acting with cultural plurality and practicing ethnic diversity. Dabrowski

and Ballinger consider multiculturalism as Pieter Judson does, more or less as a nationalist invention, albeit from different perspectives.

Migration in the twentieth century has continuously reinforced multicultural realities in the daily life of the Austrian Republic, even if the dominant political forces have often tried to ignore those circumstances. Michael John's chapter reminds us that Austria since 1918 has been in fact a "land of immigration," made up of people with different cultural backgrounds. In contrast to Istria, however, multiculturalism is not an issue of formal government policy in contemporary Austria, even though political forces have repeatedly debated the impact of cultural diversity. There has been a huge influx of immigrants, and although many have acquired citizenship, large numbers do not have the minority rights that the six constitutionally recognized, relatively small autochthonous ethnic minorities possess. To a great extent the people of the Austrian Republic appear to have forgotten the great waves of migration in the old empire, and that part of their history has ceased to be an integral part of their collective self-understanding.

The chapters in the final section of the book examine how people in the former Habsburg lands have expressed and negotiated identities in the complex multicultural settings in which they have lived. Oto Luthar, Andrei Corbea-Hoisie, and Moritz Csáky each reply to the questions raised by Pieter Judson in his own way: Luthar with a microhistorical approach, Corbea-Hoisie with a community study, and Csáky with a macrohistorical synthesis. All three focus on the practices of dealing with cultural heterogeneity, which do not necessarily efface differences but rather permit and retain them. Oto Luthar discusses the development of intercultural practices in the Slovenian region of Prekmurje, located in the multilingual triangle of Austria, Croatia, and Hungary. The author offers two revealing documents about everyday experience: a poor but educated soldier's diary, written in three languages, and a handwritten multilingual cookbook. Nationalist activists insisted on language use as essential in defining distinct national communities, but Luthar's documents demonstrate the contingent use of particular languages, depending on momentary circumstances, by individuals who, in fact, defined their loyalties in varying ways. Luthar argues that the polyglot mode of remembering and sharing particular kinds of expertise was a usual practice of everyday communication and intercultural cohabitation in a nationalizing society, even while it was becoming more and more ethnically divided. Corbea-Hoisie uses multiculturalism as an analytic category for describing its expression in Bukovina (today in northeastern Romania). Here the imported urban culture of German and Jewish settlers clashed with the practices of the autochthonous population. From the late nineteenth century neighborhoods changed at an accelerated rate and locals came into conflict with in-migrants, who gained and maintained supremacy. The gap between the metropolitan center and regional periphery grew continuously, dividing

society along social, ethnic, and confessional lines. The new strange neighbors became targets of national protest, occasionally ending in violence. Ultimately, the Bukovinian model of multiculturalism stood for suppression, a life in conflict and hostile coexistence, missing any intercultural encounter—the never-accomplished ideal that Corbea-Hoisie illustrates with two fictional wet nurses, Gregor von Rezzori's *Kassandra* and Aharon Appelfeld's *Katerina*. Moritz Csáky opposes and transcends the multicultural approach that perpetuates categories that nationalists have introduced in their elusive quest for a coherent national culture. He presents an analytic model to historicize the nationalists' projects of cultural homogenization by deconstructing the categories that continue to inform historiography and cultural memory. He reappraises cultural heterogeneity as the ordinary state of life, stimulating communication and offering modes of transcultural interaction. From this point of view, Habsburg Central Europe may be regarded as a "laboratory" in which processes emerged that have global relevance today.

The chapters presented in this book offer a nuanced analysis of the multifaceted cultural experience that took place in the Habsburg Monarchy and beyond. The authors respond to the question of how social spaces that are culturally coded in multiple ways can be described historically without lapsing into the categories once introduced to justify the separation of groups that were assigned to a nation, an ethnicity, or a singular culture. In the long run, the book might stimulate reflection upon what the uncritical adoption of politically exploited notions can tell us today about how we approach history, even if we only try to understand multiculturalism in a territory we now call "Habsburg Central Europe."

Notes

1. Slavoj Žižek, *Ein Plädoyer für die Intoleranz* (Vienna, 1998), 70–71.
2. Timothy Garton Ash, "Freedom and Diversity: A Liberal Pentagonram for Living Together," *New York Review of Books* 59, no. 18 (22 November 2012): 33.
3. See, e.g., Gerald Stourzh, "Ethnic Attribution in Late Imperial Austria: Good Intentions, Evil Consequences (1994)," in *From Vienna to Chicago and Back: Essays on Intellectual History and Political Thought in Europe and America*, ed. Gerald Stourzh (Chicago, 2007), 157–76; Gerald Stourzh, *Die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in der Verfassung und Verwaltung Österreichs 1848–1918* (Vienna, 1985).
4. See Friedrich Naumann, *Mitteleuropa* (Berlin, 1915).
5. Friedrich Umlauf, *Die Oesterreichisch-Ungarische Monarchie: Geographisch-statistisches Handbuch mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die politische und Kultur-Geschichte für Leser aller Stände* (Vienna, 1876), 1–4.
6. Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the 'Other,'" in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London, 1997), 236: "The argument here is that culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within

- a classificatory system. The marking of ‘difference’ is thus the basis of that symbolic order which we call culture.”
7. See Katherine Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers: Three Centuries of Political, Economic, and Ethnic Change* (Berkeley, CA, 1984); Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA, 2004); Rogers Brubaker et al., eds., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton, NJ, 2008).
 8. Michael Herzfeld, *Anthropology: Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society* (Oxford, 2001), 28.
 9. Ernst Mach, “Auszüge aus den Notizbüchern 1871–1910,” in *Ernst Mach: Werk und Wirkung*, ed. Rudolf Haller and Friedrich Stadler (Vienna, 1998), 180.
 10. Anil Bhatti and Dorothee Kimmich, eds., *Ähnlichkeit. Ein kulturtheoretisches Paradigma* (Constance, 2015), passim.
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