INTRODUCTION

Two superficially minor, though on reflection significant, events took place while I was on a European Union–funded teaching exchange in the western Polish city of Poznan in May 2014. Given my family history and long-standing research on national and ethnic identities in Central Europe, particularly in Austria, the fact that these occurrences interested me was not surprising. Their wider significance, however, only occurred to me in due course. Eventually, it became clear that these seemingly banal occurrences exemplified the very essence of the questions this book poses. As such, they provide an ideal starting-point.

The first event occurred in the military cemetery Park Cytadela in Poznan, a remarkable, inevitably somber place that reflects the successive political eras, wars, and countless lives lost in the course of Poland’s tumultuous recent history. Late in the day, near the outer edges of the cemetery, I suddenly caught sight of a gravestone with a name most familiar to me: Matula. This had been my paternal grandmother’s maiden name, whose father had been Czech and whose mother half Slovenian, and who until her death in 2004 had told me and the rest of my Austrian family barely anything about her parents—so little, in fact, that no one even knows what role, if any, ethnic/linguistic ancestry had played in my grandmother’s earliest years. My grandmother’s autobiographical silence persisted despite interest by several family members. There are, of course, other, very different, much-better-known, and collectively shared silences that were prominent across Central Europe for much of the post-1945 era; those were the politically opportune, but ethically deeply problematic, silences of “reconstruction” that dominated on both sides of the Iron Curtain and left particularly the Holocaust largely unthematized for several decades. My grandmother’s silence was of a very different kind, it endured longer, and covered other stretches of time. Having been born in the hugely significant year that was 1918—only months before the end of World War I, the final disintegration of the Habsburg Empire, and the creation of the First Austrian Republic—my grandmother was particularly reluctant to talk about her childhood during the 1920s. This stood
in contrast to many others of her generation. We know that my grandmother was a relatively poor child of the multinational empire who lost both her parents while still relatively young. The sociologist and grandson in me has often wondered whether her silence was partly also that of the classical “stranger”—defined by Georg Simmel (1908) as a person who “comes today and stays tomorrow”—who felt to some extent out of sync with her surroundings and the increasingly nation-centered form they took in the course of her childhood, youth, and adulthood. Ten years after my grandmother’s death, standing in this cemetery in Poznan, my Polish friend reminded me that “Matula” was of course a common “Slavic” surname not only in what is now the Czech Republic but also in parts of Poland.

The second event took place during a visit to an outdoor heritage museum—the Wielkopolski Ethnographic Park Dziekanowice—not far from Poznan. A collection of traditional farmhouses from across the region that had been reassembled in the same locality, the museum resembled another one of its kind, which as a teenager I had visited regularly. Both sites, the Polish one near Poznan and the Austrian one near Graz, are impressive though romanticizing attempts to preserve a rural, premodern past. As post-hoc (re)constructions, such museums frame, whether by design or inadvertently, the past they depict in national terms. The museum I visited as a schoolboy thus presents itself as an Austrian outdoor museum, implying that its fields, houses, and other buildings depict a distinctly Austrian agricultural past (in its regional variations). The (sub)texts to the Polish museum seemed very similar; what was represented here was Polish history. Looking at the exhibits in one of many meticulously reconstructed houses, my Polish friend and I suddenly found ourselves in what had been a German family’s farmhouse, reflected in the written prayers displayed on the walls, in an old German translation of the Bible on the kitchen table, and in a postcard next to it. The latter had been written, in German, by a soldier, seemingly one of the family’s sons, in 1915. German farmhouses in what is now Western Poland hardly constitute a historical discovery. What was perhaps more noteworthy was its inclusion in an ostensibly Polish site of memory and national identity celebration. However, what surprised and touched my Polish friend and me was something different, namely the text on the postcard: far from the wartime rhetoric one may have expected to find in a message sent from the front, its author—whose subsequent fate we know nothing about—described a hitherto uneventful daily routine, expressed concern for his family and mentioned a girlfriend or possible fiancée. While, of course, one has to be careful not to take documents of this (or any) kind as straightforward or singularly sufficient mirrors of historical realities (Langewiesche 2012; Haring 2013: 305–306), the postcard and its surroundings nonetheless reflected—in their juxtaposition to the rest of a space presented as quintessentially Polish—a tension that runs through this book: between, on one hand, political worlds that have come to be structured in ethnonational terms;
and, on the other, everyday domains that also contain ambivalences, ambiguities, or “indifferences” (Judson and Zahra 2012) to “the national.”

This is an ambitious book. In its empirical coverage, its historical and geographical reach, it attempts to cover larger terrains than many contributions to a field now known as “nationalism studies.” Typically, those have fallen into one of two categories. In the case of the most seminal, conceptually focused scholarship of transdisciplinary impact, the focus has tended to be on large historical questions about the origins of nationalism (e.g., Anderson 1983); its social functions in industrializing societies (Gellner 1983) or as the quintessentially modern “sacralization of politics” (Gentile 2006); its utilization of long-established, premodern cultural phenomena in the service of modern political projects (e.g., Smith 2008); or its unnoticed structuring of our daily lives and most “banal” symbolic surroundings (e.g., Billig 1995). Alternatively, there is a large, continually expanding body of empirically focused research, reflected in a growing number of specialist academic journals, that examines the workings of nationalist politics in particular, carefully delineated geographical settings that often coincide with the territories of a given nation-state (e.g., van der Veer 1994; Brubaker 1998; Rancour-Laferriere 2001; Liven 2005; Csergo 2007; Banac 2014). For this latter category, the analytical trajectory tends to foreground understanding of context-specific details rather than comparative, theoretical insights.

The present book combines elements of these often separate concerns and foci, the general with the specific, the conceptual with the strictly context-bound. Unlike some available literature (particularly in the second strand of scholarship just mentioned) and much political discourse, this monograph does not take any one nation-state or its nationalist ideologies of (self-)legitimization as a priori parameters to the discussion but regards their genesis and ongoing institutional and ideological reproduction as themselves requiring analyses. Empirically focused on various territories within the former Habsburg Empire, and more narrowly, in later chapters in particular, on what is now present-day Austria, this book examines successive historical eras in which processes of “nationalization” (e.g., Guérard 1934: 5; Mosse 1975; Judson and Rozenblit 2005) have played key roles in constructing political institutions and cultural discourses of self-/other definition in national terms.

Through close engagement with scholarship in Austrian and Habsburg Studies and detailed analyses of a range of historical and contemporary empirical materials, this book also traces how for more than two centuries territories and populations in (Austrian) Central Europe—important regional differences and obvious historical discontinuities notwithstanding—have experienced a recurring tension: between, on the one hand, nationalism’s discursive and institutional rigidity and singularity (i.e., premised on ascribed, exclusive identities and the ethnicization of land and people); and, on the other, ambivalent identifications, “pluricultural” (Feichtinger and Cohen 2014) localities, complex life-worlds of

inter-ethnic “entanglements” and lived “hybridity” (Bhabha 1990). Crucially, this book further adds to existing constructivist literature (e.g., Judson and Rozenblit 2005; Wingfield 2003) in the study of (Central European) nationalisms in three respects: first, in its long historical coverage; second, in drawing attention to an additional dimension within nationalist discourse—its contextual fluctuations between “banal” (Billig 1995), or taken-for-granted, and “hot,” or aggressively mobilizing, nationalisms; and third, most significantly, through its theoretical focus on forms and processes of “social closure” (e.g., Murphy 1988) and their discursive manifestations.

An ambitious longue durée perspective distinguishes this book from many existing studies of national(ist) identity politics (e.g., Wodak et al. 1999; Guibernau 2007), and the successive historical contexts examined here inform this monograph’s chapter structure. I thus begin with an examination of romantic thinkers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, paying particular attention to their claims regarding nations and their histories, which are subsequently shown to have been reappropriated across successive eras since then. Chapter 2 traces the processes of “nationalization” of Central European localities especially during the latter stages of the “long nineteenth century” (Hobsbawm 1962, 1975, 1987). Rather than reflecting the primordial solidarities and units of political action they are widely assumed to be, “nations” had to be constructed in processes implicating civil society associations in a growing public sphere (e.g., Judson 2005a, b), including politicians as well as the media and cultural elites (e.g., Engemann 2012). Yet there is also evidence of, and a consequent need to discuss, various forms of resistance and indifference to nationalist endeavors (e.g., Judson and Zahra 2012).

Focusing on the period from 1914 to 1945, chapter 3 examines the historical era that can be described as the heyday of nationalism and as the most infamous illustration of the dehumanizing, murderous dimensions of modernity (Bauman 1989). While the discussion covers again large, complex historical terrain that includes World Wars I and II and the Holocaust, the analytical focus rests on particular contexts that illustrate the workings of (increasingly extreme) nationalist social closure on the part of ethnic majorities and the concomitant experiences of exclusion, persecution, and—in the case of genocide—systematic murder suffered by those “othered” by nationalist politics.

Moving on to the post-1945 context and the backdrop of the Cold War, chapter 4 examines what Michael Billig (1995) terms “banal nationalism,” which—while barely noticed—provides the symbolic means underpinning the ongoing, daily reproduction of national boundaries, institutions, and identifications. The chapter expands on this by examining the role and content of cultural memories and amnesias—the latter particularly relevant to long-dominant, selective narratives of World War II and the Holocaust—underpinning the postwar construction of “national mythscapes” (Bell 2003) and their constitutive, at times competing, discourses on the past.

Tracing the contours and effects of a further historical rupture, chapter 5 examines the rise of neo-nationalism (McCrone 1998; Gingrich and Banks 2006) since the 1980s. This is analyzed as reflecting further processes of social closure and a concomitant transformation of (or, seen in broader historical perspective, a “return” from) banal to hot nationalisms (see Skey 2009: 340). This discussion continues in chapter 6, where I explore the growing tensions between the economic and technological changes of the contemporary era, on the one hand, and national counterreactions—often premised on cultural nostalgia for the postwar decades (see Piketty 2014: 96)—on the other. Further examples of a current “re-nationalization” (Hartleb 2012) are explored in chapter 7 and its examination of (EU-skeptical and digitally highly “literate”) right-wing populism.

In its conclusion, Nationalism Revisited distills core empirical findings and conceptual insights contained in the preceding chapters. Overall, this book also pays particular attention to the context-specific unfolding of a broadly recurring pattern: nationalist discourses and politics, their historically variable force and consequences notwithstanding, invariably aim for different types of social closure and have historically done so most effectively in contexts of structural/material crises or perceived social decline.

Before embarking on this long historical journey, the conceptual apparatus enabling my discussions needs to be outlined. I now turn to the required theoretical groundwork, which revolves around the question as to how social closure can be defined, researched, captured, and analyzed.

Social Closure

Through analyses of wide-ranging historical and contemporary materials, this monograph develops a central argument that spans historical contexts and geographical settings: it traces how the politics of nationalization have manifested in successive eras through forms of “social closure” that lead to “various more or less institutionalized forms of inclusion and exclusion” and that, following ethnonational patterns, are also subject to contestation, shifts, and reconfigurations over time (Wimmer 2004: 6). As we will discover, the common denominator across a range of historical and regional settings examined consists of a repeated narrowing of life-worlds and identifications to ethnonational levels, effecting institutional exclusion and discursive foregrounding of “the nation” over and above other forms of solidarity and historical points of reference.

We begin these theoretical preliminaries with a discussion of one of the book’s core concepts (to be elaborated on in later chapters)—the notion, originally derived from Max Weber and paraphrased by Frank Parkin, of social closure:

By social closure [Weber] means the process by which various groups . . . improve their lot by restricting access to rewards and privileges to a limited circle . . . [T]o do
this they single out certain social or physical attributes that they themselves possess and define these as criteria of eligibility . . . [A]ny characteristic may be used to this end provided it can serve as a means of identifying and excluding “outsiders” . . .

Exclusionary social closure is thus action by a status group designed to secure for itself certain resources and advantages at the expense of other groups . . .

The most effective and complete form of social closure are those which employ criteria of descent and lineage. (Parkin 1982: 100)

This is a collective exercise of power along established or emerging social hierarchies. Elsewhere, Parkin (1974a, b) distinguished between two modes of social closure—exclusion, “downward” exercise of power by dominant groups; and usurpation, “upward” resistance by the subordinated (also see Murphy 1988: 108). Subsequently, Raymond Murphy (1988: 1), arguably the most influential proponent of a refined, (neo-)Weberian “closure theory,” explored various “codes of social closure: [the] formal or informal, overt or covert rules governing . . . monopolization and exclusion.” Important questions follow: first, what—in any given social setting—is being monopolized, and from what is another group being excluded? Second, what are the “codes” or “rules” employed to affect such closure?

Detailed answers to these general questions are context-specific and can only emerge through close analysis of relevant empirical data of the kind examined in later chapters. But a more generic response is already possible at this stage: (neo-)Weberian closure theory recognizes that social life includes struggles over (collective) access to various rewards and resources, privileges, rights, status, wealth, or a combination of these and other political goods, and that access for some entails exclusion for others. Further, and relevant to the “codes” dominant in any given epoch, Raymond Murphy recognized that while the “structural fault” of some exclusion is characteristic of all social formations, its particular form(s) have always been subject to historical shifts:

Forms of domination and exclusion . . . accepted as legitimate for centuries, such as those based on lineage (aristocratic society, caste society), race (slavery) and gender, have been successfully challenged as illegitimate by . . . usurpationary movements. There is no reason to believe that contemporary forms of domination and exclusion . . . will be forever free from similar challenges. Popes have run up against reformation movements, presidents of capitalist enterprises have faced revolutionary movements, and now doctors are encountering resistance to their monopolistic power. The successful usurpation of . . . an accepted code of exclusion and its replacement by another is characteristic of the most important social transformations in history. (Murphy 1988: 47–48)

This dynamic, as later chapters show, provides a way of illuminating nationalisms and national identities, from their early manifestations as discourses of usurpation, to their later twentieth-century reign of dominance (as the then most con-
sequential channels of “monopolization and exclusion”). Such historicization also acknowledges that future shifts may take very different forms, be it in the direction of a further (re)trenchment of the national or in a possibly “post-national” direction; either way, closure theory predicts new forms of monopolization and exclusion rather than their utopian transcendence.

Already in Weber and with heightened urgency in Murphy’s elaborations there is a recognition that ethnonational sentiments and identifications can be powerful conduits for social closure. Weber (1978 [1922]: 40–41) mentioned national communities—alongside “religious brotherhoods” and families—as examples of communal relationships (Vergemeinschaftung) premised on strong “subjective feeling[s]” of belonging together, as opposed to “associative relationships . . . of rationally motivated interests.” We here encounter an early version of what subsequently a founding father of nationalism studies would term nationalism’s “spell,” or rationally inexplicable, affective power (Gellner quoted in McCrone 1998: 84). Murphy (1988: 126) again builds on Weber in observing that “firmly rooted sentient communities” or “communal status groups”—based on “race, ethnicity, language and religion” (i.e., the very symbolic anchors to many a national group’s self-definition)—can effectively channel “usurpation and resistance to exclusion” by providing “important organizational resource[s],” that is, a recognized, “pre-existing community.” At the same time, (dominant) national-communal status groups exercise “downward” “collectivist closure,” manifest in the institutions of citizenship and in restrictions on immigration (Murphy 1988: 181).

The (neo-Weberian) concept of social closure will be the theoretical driver for the analyses to be developed in what follows. This application will also critically reflect on social closure and the associated concept of a communal status group. We will thus see that what are taken and clearly often felt to be “pre-existing communities” had to be “imagined” (Anderson 1983), socially and politically constructed—although usually on the basis of already existing, premodern cultural practices, symbols, traditions, and connections (Smith 1986; 2008)—and reified in the first place. Put differently, while nations require(d) active ideological work to be willed into existence, they have proved remarkably plausible, effective, enduring, and appealing as mechanisms variously enabling the monopolization of, and exclusion from, political rights and social advantage.

This book’s major theoretical contribution therefore consists of the application of the concept of social closure to the constructivist study of nationalisms in Central Europe. This will enable a diachronic tracing of different forms of exclusivist identity politics in their lived, institutionalized (and institutionalizing) manifestations and, more narrowly in the particular examples of discursive data examined in chapters 1 to 7, of the crystallizations and workings of nationalist closure. First, however, further preliminary questions remain to be addressed,
including the tricky issue as to how nationalist social closure can be recognized and researched.

**Detecting Nationalist Closure**

Taken on their own, the concepts of social closure and communal status groups, or even a constructivist approach to nationalism, would not suffice as drivers for the ensuing analyses. Instead, the question as to how these notions and understandings can be operationalized in the service of empirical research needs to be answered. Importantly, how can nationalist social closure be recognized, understood, “captured,” documented, and analyzed by social scientists and historians? Which methodological-cum-analytical strategies might work here? While I elaborate on the particular materials to be examined later, the premises underlying my application of social closure as a concept need to be spelled out first.

As demonstrated in Murphy’s neo-Weberian formulation, social closure recurs as a structural process throughout human history, albeit in context-specific and hence changing forms. The central question for my purposes arises as to when, where, and how social closure takes nationalist form, and how this can be detected. It is well established and will be corroborated in the ensuing chapters that, since the nineteenth century, nationalist closure has implicated particular political actors, institutions, and cultural practices. Crucially, nationalist closure also manifests in language use of various kinds and in multiple settings. This opens up the central analytical line pursued below: what follows can be described as a search for, and examination of, the discursive traces left by nationalist forms of social closure.

How do we recognize such traces? And how might we then make analytical sense of such evidence? For the present book, my first methodological decision was to approach a wide range of relevant textual/discursive materials (see below) as qualitative data; I take such historical materials to contain and transmit culturally shared but also often debated and contested meanings, values, interpretations, and political positions. However, not fully satisfied with standard thematic analyses of such materials, whereby recurring themes are first identified and coded in the data and then interpreted in relation to one another and to relevant established scholarship, the ensuing discussions here work with a linguistically more fine-grained, always carefully contextualized, approach. This I find, across the following discussions, in an analytical strategy combining core concepts from critical discourse analysis (CDA) and select contributions to social and anthropological theorizing. To spell out my central epistemological premise: it is this combination of conceptual strands that will enable me to detect, record, and make sense of nationalist social closure in its discursive (and institutional) manifestations.

This poses definitional questions. While usually tied to language (as we see below), discourse has also been conceptualized more broadly, as going beyond the linguistic. For example, Rom Harré (1998: 132) defines “discursive activity [as] the work we severally or jointly engage in when we make use of a common system of signs for the accomplishment of some task or project.” This is relevant to some of the cultural practices and materials that feature in later chapters alongside more typical “language-based” data. Focusing on the latter, CDA defines as discourse all written and spoken language, of any form and in any register, which it conceptualizes as forms of “social practice” (Fairclough 1989; Weiss and Wodak 2003). Language-mediated social practices are seen to emerge from, and hence need to be understood in relation to, their wider social and political contexts (e.g., Kumiega and Karner 2018), which discourse in turn feeds back into, either as a contribution to structural reproduction or as a force of ideological resistance. Put differently, discourse is both shaped by and in turn has impacts on its wider contexts (e.g., Weiss and Wodak 2003; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). CDA has born particularly impressive results in illuminating the discursive “construction, perpetuation or justification, transformation . . . or dismantling” of national identities (Wodak et al. 1999: 33). Building on this, later chapters examine similar processes of reasserting, negotiating, or at times refusing identifications on several geographical scales, most centrally in relation to “the nation,” but also with symbolic reference to localities, regions, ethnic and religious communities, and more recently in relation to “Europe.” Such discourses will be traced across contexts, across a wide range of social and cultural domains, and as articulated by a diversity of (structurally and ideologically differently positioned) historical actors.

Broadly defined, and to reiterate, CDA approaches language not as a neutral medium of communication but as a form of “social practice” that is shaped by, and in turn feeds back into, its generative social and institutional contexts. In other words, language in all forms needs careful contextualization and examination for its (often implicit) ideological trajectories and political effects. Critical discourse analysis recognizes written texts and spoken utterances as being inevitably socially positioned, both in terms of origins and effects. While CDA is a “broad church” of conceptually diverse and mutually complementary schools of thought, my approach selects, combines, and elaborates on those core concepts most suited to examining the linguistic crystallizations of political processes of monopolizing rewards and resources, of including some in, and excluding others from, access to rights, goods, and privileges.

I next turn to those core concepts, largely though not exclusively derived from critical discourse analysis, which will enable my analyses in chapters 1 to 7. In doing so, there are three analytical levels, or foci, to be distinguished. For the sake of clarity, I will describe them as the levels of discursive form, ideological/argumentative content, and context.

Discursive Form: Boundary (Re)Production and Inter-category Relations

Rather than being used in a set chronological sequence, the three analytical levels, here summarized under the headings of form, content, and context, will be employed concurrently in the following chapters. Yet, for the sake of theoretical exposition, I outline them separately first. This distinction bears similarities but also noticeable differences from Wodak and Reisigl’s (1999: 188) analytical steps constitutive of their “discourse-historical approach”:

Having (a) uncovered the contents or topics of a specific racist, anti-Semitic, nationalist, or ethnicist discourse, (b) the discursive strategies (including argumentation strategies) are investigated, and (c) the linguistic means and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realizations of the discriminatory stereotypes are then looked into. (Italics added; also see Wodak 2015: 35)

As we will discover, my approach works with a less rigid chronology to these analytical steps and underneath a different overarching theoretical umbrella, namely social closure theory. But the use of discourse analytical tools, alongside others, and a focus on discursive forms, contents, and their wider contexts will also be central to the present book.

Social closure, as a process of enabling the monopolization of rights, rewards, and resources and concomitant mechanism of exclusion, inevitably involves the drawing of boundaries. For social closure to work, “the deserving,” “the entitled,” the privileged, or the included need to be defined and distinguished from those that are henceforth to be excluded from contextually relevant and finite goods or entitlements. Without the drawing, definition, and maintenance of boundaries, closure cannot work or occur. Therefore, a crucial question to be put to all of the data to be examined across later chapters is what those materials reveal about (context-specific) understandings of a (national) “ingroup” and its various others.

It is precisely in relation to the issue of boundary-drawing and maintenance that the first key concept, borrowed from critical discourse analysis, provides vital momentum to discussions of nationalist social closure. The concept in question is that of the linguistic deixis, which Michael Billig (1995: 94) includes among the “linguistically microscopic habits of language,” which operate “beyond conscious awareness” but play a crucial role in the ongoing reproduction of our world of nation-states. Billig (1995: 106–109) elaborates on this component of “banal nationalism”:

Deixis is a form of rhetorical pointing . . . [through] words such as “I,” “you,” “we,” “here” or “now” . . . To understand the meaning of a deictic utterance, listeners have to . . . [put] the speaker at the centre of the interpretive universe . . . with “we” frequently being the listener and speaker, evoked together as a unity . . .
Politicians, rhetorically presenting themselves as standing in the eye of the nation, evoke the whole nation as their audience . . .

This place has to be unimaginatively imagined and the assumptions of nationhood accepted . . .

[Deixis can do its business unobtrusively, running up the flag so discreetly that it is unnoticed even by the speaker or writer . . .

Utterances are not merely produced by contexts, but they also renew those contexts . . .

They help to shut the national door on the outside world . . . [N]ational identity is a routine way of talking and listening; it is a form of life, which habitually closes the front door, and seals the borders.

While reiterating CDA’s premise that language is produced in, or “by,” contexts, which texts and utterances in turn “renew” (in either pre-established or altered fashion), this account offers ideal analytical anchors for an examination of how boundaries required for nationalist social closure are (re)drawn linguistically. Consequently, attention will be paid to personal pronouns as well as to other deictic references, such as those to particular times or places, in chapters 1 to 7. Rather than treating social closure in the abstract, a focus on the deixis at work in the materials to be examined enables us to record and capture the drawing of boundaries—and hence processes of monopolization and exclusion—as they unfold; or, more accurately, as they are or were accomplished in particular texts, documents, or statements.

Of course, not all deictic references rhetorically point to “the nation.” All social hierarchies and “axes of power, inequality and exclusion” (Brah 1996) provide people with frames of reference in their talk, writing, and actions. Thus, a central analytical task below will be to identify statements that indeed point to a/the nation. Ideological content and discursive form are, as was hinted earlier, intertwined and need to be analyzed in tandem. In this instance, this means that attention to formal rhetorical features—including personal pronouns and topographical or temporal references—requires simultaneous attention to the kind of group, place, or time being referenced and the type of boundary-work accomplished. Put more simply, my central, though not exclusive, focus will here lie on identifying forms of national deixis (rather than deictic references to localities, class, religion, gender, age, etc.).

In the spirit of allowing empirical materials and insights to critically reinflect and refine the theoretical frameworks employed, it should already be mentioned at this stage that some of Billig’s central claims will be treated as posing open empirical questions to be tested rather than as definitive answers: although accurate for the context Billig himself examined, historically many nationalisms have been far less banal, not yet routinized, but, rather, explicitly politicized, highly self-conscious, and anything but unnoticed. The broad, longue durée perspective adopted in the present book draws attention to both the forms of banal nation-
alism that Billig examines, and the types and periods of “hot nationalist passion” (Billig 1995: 43–44) he contrasts them to. That difference is also, importantly, a difference in the kind or depth of cultural-political consciousness implicated and draws attention to the wider circumstances giving rise to one or the other type of nationalism. Examples of explicit, aggressive nationalist “pointing” abound in the materials examined below, thereby emphasizing this key question as to how to theorize the relationship between “hot” and “banal” nationalisms respectively. While this can only be answered through my later empirical discussions, Billig’s outline above serves the more immediate theoretical purpose of illustrating how discursive activity can be approached as social closure in action.

Boundaries create categories, and the latter pose the follow-up question as to how the relationship between the categories in question is (con)textually defined. This opens up a second avenue to be pursued in the discussions to follow. In a contribution to social and anthropological theorizing, Gerd Baumann and André Gingrich (2004) identify different “grammars of identity.” The insight that all identifications require otherness—or that any ingroup self-constitutes through the construction of boundaries and difference—is well established and, as such, also underpins nationalism studies in their entirety. Building on seminal works by Edward Said, Edward Evans-Pritchard, and Louis Dumont, and connecting them to contemporary ethnographies, Baumann and Gingrich take a vital next step: not content with recording discourses of otherness, they pose the question as to how the relationship between “self” and “other” is defined in a given political discourse, cultural practice, or social setting. Retranslated into my present concerns, this enables us to subject processes of social closure to further scrutiny. While nationalist closure, like all social closure, effects the exclusion of some “other” in facilitating a monopolization of certain rights and resources for the (national) ingroup, I will also ask the following questions of different nationalisms: who is the “other” they construct? Is there only one outgroup, or are there several? In the latter scenario, are all outsiders “othered” in identical ways? Does the discourse in question posit a degree of absolute or relative, permanent or temporary, difference between “self” and “other”? In a given context, does nationalist discourse enable, demand, or prohibit the other’s potential assimilation into the “national community”? Put differently, how context-specific or diachronically enduring are particular discursive constructions of difference and hence exclusion?

Baumann and Gingrich (2004) distinguish three grammars of identity: the first, which they derive from Said and term “orientalization,” constructs categories of “self” and “other” as permanently, mutually exclusive, diametrically opposed, negative “mirror images” of one another (i.e., along the pattern of “everything we are, they are not and will never be”). The second grammar, constructed on the basis of tribal affiliations first recorded by Evans-Pritchard, is defined as “segmentary” and regards identifications, alliances, and oppositions as context-bound, on a sliding scale of successive inclusions and exclusions; the pattern here

is to turn local enemies into allies when confronted by an external, common enemy; the latter may in turn become an ally when faced with yet another group of outsiders on a larger geographical scale, and so on. Finally, a third grammar, building on Louis Dumont’s work on the Indian caste system, detects identifications of “encompassment” whereby an overarching category of belonging is held to subsume various categories of people, albeit without their necessary agreement and allocating them places of hierarchical inferiority (i.e., following the pattern of “you are really one of us, whether you recognize it or not, but your status is lower than mine”).

As we discover later, it bears analytical dividends to interrogate the discursive form nationalist discourses can take also for their grammars of identity, for the way(s) in which they not only draw boundaries but also define the relations between “self” and “other(s).” Echoing the question posed earlier about the cultural assimilation dominant majorities have demanded of “the other” in some contexts, there may indeed also be other “grammars of identity” at work in some political positions; Baumann and Gingrich’s list of three grammars should therefore not be seen as exhaustive but as merely a theoretical starting point. In any case, the notion of grammars of identity, and the kinds of analytical questions they facilitate, will help sharpen our lens for the workings and various dimensions of different forms of nationalist closure. Put more simply, a strongly assimilationist nationalist discourse, for instance, which demands that minority communities lose all markers of cultural distinctiveness and be subsumed by the dominant majority, does not cease to be nationalist; but its discursive “logic” and ideological demands are clearly different from other nationalisms that construct “the other” as fundamentally different and permanently “alien.” Finally, while identity grammars are tied to boundary-construction and hence a feature of what I term discursive form, they also implicate—as we have just begun to discover—the larger claims and interpretations articulated in the discursive materials with which I concern myself in this book. Repeating what has been said, our different analytical levels—form, content, and context—are closely intertwined and will have to be approached in tandem. With this mind, I turn to my second, closely related, analytical layer.

Ideological Content, Argumentative Structures, Narratives of History

Much of what has been outlined calls for more elaborate definitional remarks concerning key terminology employed in this book. This applies particularly to the notion of ideology. There is an important link to be mentioned between discourse and ideology; as Bo Stråth and Ruth Wodak (2009: 28) emphasize in their outline of critical discourse analysis, “speaking and writing always represent, "NATIONALISM REVISITED: Austrian Social Closure from Romanticism to the Digital Age" by Christian Karner. https://berghahnbooks.com/title/KarnerNationalism
produce and reproduce attitudes, beliefs, opinions and *ideologies*” (italics added). What, then, are the latter? How is ideology, a term that has already featured in this introduction and will recur throughout this book, defined here?

*Ideology* lies at the heart of much scholarship in the intellectual (sub)disciplines on which I here draw, including (political) linguistics, sociology, cultural studies, anthropology, history, and political science. The term demands definitional clarity, particularly since it is also part of everyday language and political rhetoric, where it is often left undefined, invoked vaguely, yet put to a range of subtle though important argumentative purposes. To avoid complicity in such unreflected rhetorical trickery, I propose to follow Martha Augoustinos’s (1998) definition of the “ideological” as comprising all language and (other) social practices that contribute to the reproduction or contestation of existing relations of power. Thus defined, the concept avoids pronouncing on the veracity or otherwise of what people say and do; ideology, in this definition, can be either dominant or resistant, which makes it conceptually particularly pertinent to nationalism as a form of politics that has variously found itself in power and opposition. Either way, ideology is understood as words or actions that are socially situated and politically consequential. This feeds into this book’s epistemological core: I here work with the premise that in paying analytical attention to the contexts, meanings, and workings of written and spoken language and other sign systems, one can help illuminate wider processes of institutional reproduction and transformation and the implicated self-identifications and boundary negotiations.

An important practical question remains: namely, how to operationalize this conceptualization of ideology, as a process, in research focused on various texts. In other words, how will nationalist ideology be detected, captured, and made sense of in the following discussions? Two concepts, one also derived from critical discourse analysis, the other from seminal contributions to nationalism studies, will prove vital here. The first is the notion of the *topos*. CDA defines topos as “structure[s] of argument” (e.g., Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak 2009: 9)—that is, those “parts of argumentation,” the “explicit or inferable premises . . . [that] connect the argument . . . with the . . . claim” (e.g., Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 74–75). Described as “obligatory premises,” topos (e.g., of purported threats, dangers, decline, etc.) are “central to . . . seemingly convincing fallacious arguments . . . widely adopted in prejudiced discourse” (Krzyżanowski and Wodak 2009: 22). Relevant topos captured in the literature, to which the ensuing discussions will add, include argumentative structures centered on alleged “threats and dangers” (Krzyżanowski and Wodak 2009: 112), giving rise to a shared and heightened sense of cultural anxiety that, as will be shown, has a long record of driving nationalist sentiments; topos of “national unity” (Kovács, Horvaáth, and Kinsky-Müngersdorff 2009) encountered in politically top-down or bottom-up invocations of an allegedly homogenous
national community; but also various topoi of national or indeed transnational “solidarity” and “history” (Krzyżanowski 2009). Relying on a priori assumptions rather than open-minded engagement with all available evidence and counterevidence, topoi effect circular, ideologically “naturalized” arguments in which conclusions are presupposed and unreflexively asserted rather than arrived at in the course of a critical, dispassionate examination of diverse sources and data.

Among the most prominent argumentative schemes to be analyzed with the help of the discourse analytical notion of the topos are those pertaining to a nation’s purported history. I will here build on a core insight in the existing nationalism studies literature that pertains to nationalist historiography or “myth making” (Bell 2003). The workings of nationalist ideology across Central Europe (as indeed elsewhere) will thereby be shown to consistently approximate John Hutchinson’s (1987: 13) seminal outline of the “moral regeneration” theme, or trope, typical of (cultural) nationalism:

Nationalist historians—Palacky of the Czechs, Michelet of the French, Iorga of the Rumanians, Hrushevsky of the Ukrainians—are no mere scholars but rather “myth-making” intellectuals who combine a “romantic” search for meaning with a scientific zeal to establish this on authoritative foundations . . . [O]nly by recovering the history of the nation through all its triumphs and disasters can its members rediscover their authentic purpose. These histories typically form a set of repetitive “mythic” patterns, containing . . . a founding myth, a golden age of cultural splendour, a period of inner decay and a promise of regeneration.

As an interpretative schema (Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov 2004) that offers a ready-made, frequently encountered, ideologically motivated and mobilizing reading of history, such narrative patterns postulating a nation’s long-distant “golden age,” followed by its subsequent decline, while awaiting its promised “re-awakening,” is well established in the literature (e.g., Karner 2006; Smith 2008). The following analyses build on this in tracing such topoi of a (national) golden past, a present decline, and a future revival across long stretches of time, in a range of sources, as well as their manifold political uses and their contestation by those offering alternative constructions of history.

In addition to this characteristically nostalgic yet hopeful narrative of history, nationalist discourse also revolves around concerns about (perceived) social (dis)order. As we will discover, the two components—nationalism’s often damning judgments of the present (premised on perceptions of a “disorderly” or “unjust” here and now) in contrast to its views of both the past and the anticipated future—tend to go hand in hand. Underlying its glorifying constructions of a particular past, though not one inevitably located in the national community’s distant history, and its disgruntlement with the present is the nationalist tendency to conceive of “communities” in functionalist-organic terms; what Ernest Gellner "NATIONALISM REVISITED: Austrian Social Closure from Romanticism to the Digital Age" by Christian Karner. https://berghahnbooks.com/title/KarnerNationalism
(1998: 76) detects among the early romantics will be shown to have recurred, in
different forms, across contexts and generations since:

They taught that the organic unity of a traditional, rural community was preferable to
the extreme division of labour, the functional specificity, of a modern urban society.
They set out to codify the old peasant cultures, and use them as the basis of a new
ethnically defined . . . nationality, which was to become the new basis of politics, re-
placing dynastic loyalty, religious identification, and pride of status by pride of culture.

Such romantic organicism—defining “the community or the ongoing tradition as
the real unit, transcending the individual, who only finds the possibility of ful-
filment[,] creativity and thought . . . [and] identity . . . within that community”
(Gellner 1998: 181)—provides many nationalisms with their social ontology.
Such ontological assumptions will be shown to have shaped Central Europe pro-
foundly, albeit in contextually variable ways, since the late eighteenth and early
nineteenth centuries.

In parts of what follows, I also touch on how (Far) Right/nationalist dis-
courses offer a characteristic juxtaposition and synthesis of what social scientists
recognize as functionalist and conflict theories of society. The crux of each is al-
ready contained in the “label”: functionalists conceive of social life as a well-oiled
machine, in which different components (e.g., institutions) perform mutually
complementary roles to ensure the successful reproduction of the whole (i.e.,
“the community”). By contrast, social conflict theorists detect antagonisms, op-
positions, and exploitation in social life. What are mutually exclusive positions
on the level of social theory turn out to sometimes be mutually complementary
components for political discourse. Nationalists typically extol ideal visions of
“their” communities—ones first located in the past, sorely missed in the pres-
ent, but promised for the future: back then, or soon again, according to the
subtle or often explicit nationalist claim, things “worked,” were “just,” or will be
“made right” and “make sense once more.” However, while internally functional-
ist (i.e., with regard to the assumed, naturalized workings of “our” community),
nationalists tend to conceive of external, intergroup relations through a conflict
paradigm: whether informed by forms of sociobiological evolutionism or other
interpretative frames, at the heart of nationalism’s ontology is the assertion—
prominent among its defining topoi—that conflict between culturally diverse
groups is inevitable (or even desirable).

The analyses developed across the ensuing chapters also take the long-
established, obvious insight that studies of nationalism require careful contextu-
alization one step further: we will repeatedly discover that nationalisms are often
best analyzed in tandem with their ideological competitors, in wider political
fields of disagreement and struggle for dominance (e.g., King 2002). With regard
to the topoi and social ontology sketched above, it is already worth noting how
nationalism’s obvious political “other”—the political Left—differs with regard

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to their competing and constitutive argumentative structures. As written into the very foundations of the political Left, it regards “the history of all hitherto existing society [as] the history of class struggles” (Marx and Engels 1967 [1848]: 79). To restate the obvious, at the root of a Marxist social ontology lies a conceptualization of societies as internally ruptured by exploitation and (class) antagonism. Yet this conflictual paradigm can—as in the case of some anti-nationalist/anti-racist discourses recorded among the contemporary Left and mentioned in later chapters—sit alongside remarkably functionalist interpretations of external, intergroup relations; ethnocultural pluralism is thereby seen as facilitating forms of invariably enriching and, unless or until disrupted by nationalist interference, effortless forms of “convivial” (Gilroy 2004) diversity and boundary crossings.

Put more simply, I explore in parts of what follows just how these competing interpretative frames applied to social life—“internally homogenizing” and “externally antagonistic” (van der Veer 1994: 105) in the case of nationalism, and internally conflictual and externally functionalist in the case of some discourses on the Left—have manifested in parts of Central Europe at particular moments over the last two centuries. Both frames offer ready-made “explanations” of history, the present, and the future; both positions purport to offer (anecdotal) evidence supporting the veracity of their claims; and, typical of topoi, both can be remarkably reluctant to acknowledge counterevidence.

Methodological lessons follow from this. As with all social science, contextualization plays the central role in the following discussions—on at least four levels. First, as has already been hinted, the study of nationalist politics generally demands careful contextualization, which is the conditio sine qua non for scholarship to generate empirical insights, which are of course inevitably context-bound, and wider conceptual-theoretical momentum. Second, as one of my main analytical drivers, critical discourse analysis demands, as we have also seen, careful contextualization of texts or utterances in the wider contexts, out of which language—here understood as “social practice”—emerges, and upon which it in turn acts. Third, the introductory outline of particular topoi above provides a first indication of the divergence between complex social realities (in the plural), on one hand, and their ideological-interpretative simplifications, on the other. Some of the most seminal scholarship in Habsburg/Austrian/Central European Studies (e.g., Cohen 2014; Feichtinger and Cohen 2014; Judson 2006; Judson and Rozenblit 2005; Judson and Zahra 2012; King 2002; Wingfield 2003) has explored such divergences between historical realities and their ideological distortions, particularly with regard to nationalist attempts to reshape social life in line with its own visions. The success of the present book will need to be judged by whether or not it can further develop insights generated by these just-mentioned authors. Building on their work—thorough contextualization of nationalist discourse, including the use of a wide range of sources for the purposes
of triangulation and to be able to “read” any one discourse “against the grain”—will prove vital.

Finally, there is a fourth, even broader but equally important, dimension to contextualization, to which I turn next. This concerns the macroprocesses of modernization, industrialization and, more recently, of postmodernity and postindustrialization, out of which nationalisms and contemporary neo-nationalisms have emerged.

Modern and Postmodern Contexts to Nationalist Closure

Crucial parts of the contexts to the following analyses are to be found in defining events and phases in (Central) European history (see Okey 2001) since the French Revolution. These have included the impact of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and the end of the Holy Roman Empire; the Congress of Vienna, the eras of the Vormärz (Pre-March) and of the German Confederation (see Gruner 2012); the Revolutions of 1848/1849 (e.g., Sperber 2005) followed by successive periods of neo-absolutism and constitutional monarchy; a gradual shift from liberalism to the “nationalization” (e.g., Judson and Rozenblit 2005) of Central European societies toward the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth; World War I and the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire; the interwar period as an age of (new) nation-states, of economic crises, the rise of fascism and Nazism; World War II and the Holocaust; the period of the Cold War and superpower rivalry from the second half of the 1940s until 1989/1991; the age of European integration; and our current era of an apparent “renationalization.”

Thus sketched, the large and complex historical terrains to be covered make the task of contextualization a very formidable one. The challenge assumes even greater dimensions once we look beyond historical key dates to capture deeper social changes and structural shifts that were their conditions of possibility. To trace nationalist closure in former Habsburg Central Europe since the nineteenth century, one needs to engage with profound social transformations generally subsumed under the term modernization. Its many dimensions comprise the Enlightenment as well as reactions against it, and, arguably yet more centrally, the fundamental changes to the social fabric brought about by industrialization and urbanization, their geographically wider, yet unequal impact enabled by the railway, educational reforms, and new technologies of communication (e.g., Judson 2006: 7). Modernization further entailed democratization, the rise of mass politics, and both the growth of vibrant public spheres and the expansion of state bureaucracies. It involved increasingly global markets dominated by European/Western powers, and long-distance connections of supply, production, and distribution. What is more, modernity is associated with cultural shifts generally
attributed to the secularization and individualization of social life. Yet, modernity has also seen the persistence, often indeed an exacerbation, of steep social inequalities (e.g., Piketty 2014), extreme ideological polarization, including politics of hatred and racism, and the technological capacity to conduct warfare on a global scale.

As we move from a discussion of modernity to postmodernity, its much-debated successor, we face yet other profound shifts. For formerly industrialized parts of the world, this has often entailed a postindustrial shift (Bell 1973) leading to significant loss of previous working-class employment to service-sector jobs or indeed to permanent “redundancy” (Bauman 2000; 2004). Culturally, the postmodern loss of faith in modernity’s “meta-narratives” (Lyotard 1984)—that is, science, the Enlightenment, a belief in progress—seems to be matched by growing political apathy or a generic distrust in elites, authorities, and established structures. The digital revolution since the 1970s, meanwhile, has given rise to a “network society,” indeed a new “mode of development,” defined by global flows and interconnections as well as by new exclusions and resistance identities (Castells 1996, 1997). As we discover in later chapters, some such resistance identities assume distinctly neo-nationalist forms and need to be understood as symptoms of our postindustrial, digital age.

The following chapters examine a wide range of materials that illustrate that nationalist rhetoric, organizations, and politics have emerged—as prominent forms of social closure—from some of the very contexts and experiences most profoundly shaped by modernity and postmodernity. Two related points need to be made already at this stage. The first is to emphasize that nationalism cannot be explained away as merely a reactionary force of anti-modernity or of parochial traditionalism. As we will discover, nationalism’s and neo-nationalism’s relationship with core dimensions of (post)modernity is considerably more complex. One particularly well-documented illustration of this is the fact that nationalist associations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries utilized “a new and universal education system”; they emerged from contexts reshaped by “new transport and communication infrastructures and . . . the growth of interregional commerce” and self-defined as the vanguard of modernity and “progressive change” (Judson 2006: 67–68). Similarly, as we shall also see, in the early twenty-first century, prominent politicians on the neo-nationalist Right have been quick and adept at embracing digital communication technology and social media, for which growing sections of the electorate, notably including many young voters, have rewarded them at the ballot box. Put simply, (neo)nationalisms are not anti-modern but need to be understood as part of (post)modernity. Related to this, “modernity” needs to be shorn of any lingering utopian connotations; rather than delivering on the Enlightenment promise of progress and equality for all (see Malik 1996), (post)modernity has seen new forms of social closure, many of which have taken nationalist forms.
The second point to be anticipated concerns a core theoretical issue explored in this book and mentioned earlier: contextualization of nationalist rhetoric and politics demands their analysis in conjunction with their ideological competitors and opponents. Repeatedly and across very different contexts we will discover that nationalism is never an uncontested ideological force, but one among several mutually competing political blueprints. It follows that we need to include the wider circumstances that trigger political-discursive contests. An important, though underused, passage in the early work by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977) will prove important here. Bourdieu argued that at certain moments of crisis people subject a previously taken-for-granted cultural common-sense, the “universe of the undisputed” or doxa, to critical examination. The result of such crisis-induced cultural reflections, Bourdieu predicts, is never consensus; instead, crises trigger heightened consciousness and result in a “universe of [competing] discourse[s]” (Bourdieu 1977: 166–171; also Vertovec 2000; Karner 2005b, 2007b, 2011). What, then, triggers such consciousness-raising, politicizing, and ultimately polarizing or fragmenting crises? Bourdieu’s (1977: 168) answer lies in the “objective crises” brought about by “culture contact” or by “the political and economic crises correlative with class division.”

This book develops this line of argument further by postulating that modernity and postmodernity, in their entirety and their multiple dimensions summarized above, can be read through Bourdieu’s lens: far-reaching structural shifts and cultural changes associated with these successive historical epochs are thus seen as dislodging previously taken-for-granted life-worlds, triggering collective debate and disagreement about formerly undisputed, now rapidly changing, cultural environments, and in some contexts as generating endemic crises that are met by competing political responses, of which nationalism is but one. Seen from this theoretical vantage point, nationalist social closure can be related to its wider historical/structural contexts and examined alongside its ideological opponents. While the relevance and value of this thus-refined conceptual framework will be demonstrated throughout the following discussions, we also need to remember that nationalisms should themselves not be reified: for example, the difference between “hot” and “banal” nationalisms, in Billig’s terminology, and the transformation of one into the other (Skey 2009), will also be examined across a range of contexts.

Synthesizing these conceptual strands, my challenge lies in capturing forms of nationalist rhetoric and mobilizing in specific parts of (former Habsburg) Central Europe, latterly in present-day Austria in particular, and across time. This requires an analytical strategy that combines thorough contextualization with attention to the argumentative-discursive details in the textual materials to be examined. Each of the theoretical strands thus outlined (i.e., social closure, deixis, identity grammars, topoi, the effects of modern crises) will recur throughout the following chapters and guide the analyses they offer. In turn, this will provide

insights into the workings of different forms of nationalist social closure, in part also through contrast with its political competitors.

Concluding Introductory Remarks

By way of a conclusion to this introductory chapter further remarks concerning the approach taken in the following discussions, as well as their geographical scales and foci, are in order. As has been outlined, this book follows a qualitative trajectory in examining a wide range of historical and contemporary materials pertaining to nationalism in (former) Habsburg Central Europe, with particular foci on parts of Cisleithania and, subsequently, contemporary Austria.

Conceptually, I build on (neo-)Weberian “closure theory” to explore how social closure can be recognized, captured, documented, and analyzed. More specifically, the emphasis lies here on nationalist social closure, which we will find to be a historically recurring process with context-specific, and hence rhetorically and institutionally variable, manifestations. This entails asking the prior question as to when and how social closure acquires nationalist contours. Key to my methodological operationalization of closure theory is a discourse analytical focus on (written and spoken) language of diverse registers and in manifold settings. The critical discourse analytical approach to investigating all language as “social practice,” shaped by and in turn impacting its contexts, will be shown to be ideally suited to examining the linguistic manifestations of nationalist closure and its articulation by different political and social actors in specific institutional settings and through various cultural practices.

Put simply, this is a book that examines the traces of nationalist social closure in a particular part of the world and over the (relatively) longue durée. Much hinges, of course, on the choice of settings and materials involved in this endeavor. It is therefore useful to compare my approach to two of the most significant contributions to Habsburg/Central European Studies of recent decades. Jeremy King’s (2002) “local history of Bohemian politics” provides an important point of reference, insofar as it masterfully moves between geographical scales, from the wider regional and (trans)national contexts to the particular locality—that is, Budweis/Budějovice—that constitutes King’s focus. King thereby offers wider contextualization of local events and political shifts in Budweis/Budějovice over the entire troubled century between 1848 and 1948. What follows seeks to emulate this long historical lens and its insistence on relating local developments to their considerably wider contexts. Yet, while King remains singularly focused on Budweis/Budějovice, my approach is geographically broader and more eclectic.

Pieter Judson (2006), meanwhile, traces the workings, frustrations, and “successes” of nationalist activists in a way that is historically more narrowly delineated than King’s study—that is, stretching from the 1880s to the 1920s—yet

geographically wider and more comparative, bringing together research on Bohemia, southern Styria, and, to a lesser extent, Tyrol and Trentino. Methodologically, the present book shares Judson’s eye for a wide range of relevant sources and his multiregional approach. At the same time, *Nationalism Revisited* re-widens the historical focus considerably—to stretch from the Romantics’ “national revival” (Timms 1991: 901) to the digital age of the early twenty-first century—and is, in geographical terms, not confined to the “language frontiers of Imperial Austria” (Judson 2006).

The (broadly) discourse analytical perspective adopted considers careful contextualization of all data a methodological imperative. While the present book’s historical depth and geographical breadth underscore the importance of continuous contextualization, they also demand that in each case the relevance of the particular historical and geographical context and of the particular discursive data examined are made clear. Put differently, the selection of particular sources and documents to be analyzed will require justification. Contextualization and a rationale for the inclusion of particular data will be core tasks. One obvious selection criterion for many of the materials discussed in what follows is that they reveal the discursive crystallizations of nationalist closure. However, across the ensuing chapters it will transpire that this does not by itself suffice. Nationalism, as has been mentioned, needs to be understood as part of ideologically broader discursive fields; for those to be captured more fully, as this book strives to do, a wider range of political positions needs to be examined. Reiterating another point already anticipated, nationalisms themselves need to be recognized in their discursive plurality. To do so, the materials examined in what follows will therefore include well-known “top-down” textual impositions of nationalist political agendas, the articulation of nationalist and other positions in media and other forms of public discourse, as well as their everyday, “bottom-up” negotiation by the less prominent, often problematically labeled “ordinary social actors.”

In each case, a rationale for the selection of the particular voices captured and discussed will prove important. Their analysis further develops empirical-historical scholarship on the political contests and shifts that have shaped Central Europe, and Austria more narrowly, over a period of more than two hundred years. What is more, the theoretical apparatus applied and refined in the present book provides new insights into the workings of nationalist discourses per se. Finally, there are additional empirical questions and conceptual angles particular to single chapters, rather than applicable to this monograph in its entirety, which have not yet been mentioned but which are introduced when relevant. These additional questions are also meaningfully addressed by the conceptual perspective and its methodological operationalization (i.e., nationalist closure to be examined with the help of CDA and other pertinent theoretical “leads”) adopted here.

The likelihood remains that my selection of particular texts and other data for analysis will be questioned by critical readers. Selection is of course inevitable. It

is my contention that the following discussions achieve analytical coherence and manageability through a consistently applied strategy. In each historical context, my focus will be on two types of texts and statements: first, discursive turning-points that altered the broad course of events or reflected a change in prominent ways of talking, thinking, and acting; second, recurring (or typical) texts and statements representing widely-circulating, frequently encountered patterns of argumentation and mobilization.

Each thematically and historically focused chapter explores its core issues through carefully researched textual examples and their settings from within the (former) Habsburg Empire, especially from present-day Austria. In addition to close engagement with relevant historical and social scientific scholarship, Nationalism Revisited is underpinned by detailed analyses of a wide range of pertinent discursive materials: these include philosophical/literary writings (especially in chapter 1), political manifestos and media discourse (i.e., parts of chapters 2 to 7), biographical writings (especially in chapter 3, parts of which discuss select life histories of Holocaust survivors), other relevant cultural and media representations (especially chapters 4 to 6), and readers' letters to tabloid newspapers (especially chapters 6 and 7). Each chapter thereby follows a similar analytical structure: an outline of the wider historical context is followed or accompanied by the selection and analysis of particular discursive data that reflect the workings of (nationalist) social closure in its respective contexts. As the discussion unfolds, and alongside such structural commonalities, the relative analytical weight to be placed on secondary literature and primary materials will also noticeably shift. In chapters 1 to 3, the emphasis will lie on secondary literature, which will meet the crucial purpose of providing the historical contextualization needed for a longue durée analysis. This having been said, these earlier discussions will also already be complemented by relevant primary data (i.e., philosophical texts, political statements and speeches, prominent cultural representations, and the aforementioned life histories) that will be presented as some key formulations of proto-nationalist and early nationalist discourse or, conversely, as reflections on experiences of enduring extreme discursive and social closure. From chapter 4 on, the relative analytical emphasis will gradually shift toward a more systematic focus on primary materials, to be found in a wide range of relevant sources, which are analyzed as instances of nationalist rhetoric and mobilization since the postwar era. Secondary literature will of course continue to play a vital contextualizing function in those later chapters as well. However, new data will occupy a (relatively) more prominent place there, through which both continuities and some discontinuities with nationalist discourse and social closure in earlier eras will be traced.

Further, my moves in and out of different local and regional contexts are a deliberate and necessary part of the analytical strategy employed. It is precisely by departing from exclusively and a priori national units of analysis that this book helps illuminate the political-discursive work invested, across complex and highly

heterogeneous historical contexts, in processes of nationalist closure. Where much political and some academic discourse works with the circular assumption that nationalisms merely reflect the purportedly inevitable “convergence”—in Ernest Gellner’s seminal paraphrasing (1983)—of “political and cultural units,” Nationalism Revisited develops the constructivist counterargument (e.g., Cohen 2003; Wingfield 2003) further. It does so, first, by employing its discourse analytical strategies to capture processes of social closure as manifest in a wide range of empirical data; second, the book’s *longue durée* perspective demonstrates how different, yet broadly comparable, institutional and discursive mechanisms of boundary-definition and entrenchment can be discerned from the late eighteenth/early nineteenth to the early twenty-first centuries across a diversity of localities, regions, and often distinctly “pluricultural” (Feichtinger and Cohen 2014) life-worlds.

The value of the diachronic approach adopted here thus manifests in its sustained attempt to highlight how (nationalism’s) discursive and organizational features recur, or rather have been reappropriated, over time and across contexts, yet in context-specific fashion. We discover that argumentative structures and mobilizing strategies hark back, albeit often undoubtedly inadvertently, to older claims and ways of arguing and organizing. The latter are thereby remolded to fit new circumstances. I will capture the discursive dimensions of this through the heuristic category of the palimpsestic rewriting of older textual and ideational strands (Karner and Kazmierczak 2017).

Adopting a broad and ambitious historical perspective, then, this book builds most directly on Pieter Judson’s (2006: 17) seminal study of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century “process[es] of attempted nationalization,” which were driven by nationalist activists and organizations and their “hard ideological labor” dedicated to creating “frontiers” and to imposing reified, singular, distinctly national identities. In his conclusion, Judson (2006: 257) raises the possibility that “we may perhaps liberate ourselves from the unnecessary discursive prison that nationalists around us continue to re-create.” Current developments across and beyond Europe reveal that renewed nationalization has become a hallmark of the early twenty-first century. As later chapters show, boundaries are currently rehardening, identities are being re-reified, and calls for national frontiers to be protected or closed are louder than they have been for decades. Nationalist social closure is, once again, with and all around us. In what follows, I pay close attention to how exactly, on the linguistic/discursive and organizational levels, such nationalist “prisons” have—across different contexts and during successive eras in Central Europe’s, especially in Austria’s, experiences of modernity and postmodernity—been created, institutionalized, and experienced, but also contested.
Notes

1. Instead of engaging with ongoing debates (e.g., Piontek 2018) as to the precise outer limits of Central Europe, I start from the premise that as an internally highly diverse area it includes—but is not limited to—the territories that constituted the Aus-

tro-Hungarian Empire from 1867 until 1918.

2. It is worth noting that in his most recent work, Andreas Wimmer (2018) explores is-

sues of “nation building” in particularly impressive historical and geographical breadth, posing the question as to *Why Some Countries Come Together while Others Fall Apart.*

3. More recently, Ruth Wodak (2016: 19) has returned to the distinction between “form and content,” insisting that an analysis of contemporary right-wing populisms must span both of these dimensions. I here draw on this important argument, while develop-

ing it in novel empirical and conceptual directions.