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An Unintended Consequence: How the Modern Austrian School System Helped Set Up the Slovene Nation

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Abstract

The Austrian school reforms of the 1850s and 1860s, inspired by the mindset of the democratic and civic revolutions of 1848, turned a predominantly feudal and religious school system into a modern one and brought basic education to the masses. In the following decades, literacy increased, basic knowledge spread, and the overwhelming influence of the Catholic church in school matters diminished. Yet, as an “unintended consequence,” these reforms also had great implications for the process of building what turned out to be “the Slovene nation.” This article aims to illustrate that the formation of Slovene national identity—based on the use of the Slovene language as the main marker of Slovene ethnicity—was implemented to a large extent with the help of the Austrian school system and its efforts at centralization, systematization, and modernization. Measures like the creation of a school subject for the Slovene language, Slovene reading materials in school textbooks, and statistical categorization within school administrations played a crucial role in that process.

Keywords: Austrian school system; education reforms after 1848; language standardization; formation of a Slovene national identity; textbooks; national categorization

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This article aims to illustrate that the formation of Slovene national identity—based on the use of the Slovene language as the main marker of Slovene ethnicity—was implemented to a large extent with the help of the Austrian school system and its efforts at centralization, systematization, and modernization. Thanks to these efforts “from above,” the Slovene language was unified, standardized, and consolidated. While before 1848 there were vernaculars, huge dialectal varieties, different alphabets, a small corpus of the written language, and regionally specific writing traditions, following 1850 the development of a unified “national” language known under one name—Slovene—quickly gathered pace. Measures like the creation of a school subject for the Slovene language, Slovene reading materials in school textbooks, and statistical categorization within the school’s administration played a crucial role in that process.

In the following, I discuss these school reforms, that is, the efforts instituted “from above” such as laws, guidelines, and policies, by the new school administration and the Ministry of Religion and Education in Vienna in the aftermath of the revolutionary year 1848. I will focus on how they helped implement a common Slovene language and—as an “unintended consequence”—a collective Slovene national identity. When I call this an “unintended consequence,” I refer to the idea that it was not the main goal of the school reforms and legislation to create national identities; increasing basic education and literacy, modernizing the school system, and standardizing the

not-yet-developed languages were. But the “particular spaces” created by them gave place for national identities to develop, as Pieter Judson put it:

The precise concepts of nationhood that developed during the 1880s and 1890s owed a great deal to the particular spaces for them created by the empire. If we examine how existing laws, imperial structures, and political institutions shaped beliefs about nations and cultures, we may gain a clearer understanding of the dynamics that repeatedly reproduced nationalist conflict.¹

I will illustrate how these engagements were implemented throughout different types of schools, textbooks, and statistics. When put in dialogue with ego-documents and newspaper material, it will become apparent how contingent and yet-to-be-established those classifications were at first, but how effectively “Slovenes”—and as their counterparts, “Germans” and others—were produced in the long run. They were effectively being implemented into the minds of so many people, that after 1918, when the new Yugoslav state came into being, the idea of a Slovene national identity could no longer be neglected.

But before turning to the examples mentioned here, and the specifics of the Slovenes within the Austrian school system, it is necessary to situate these findings within extant research in Slovene historiography on nation-building, nationalism, and schools in the late Habsburg monarchy. Following this first section on historiography, the second section will provide a short overview of the Austrian school system’s development.

Old and New Approaches in Historiography

Traditional Slovene historiography on nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—as well as mainstream popular culture in Slovenia today—had and sometimes continues to have a primordial understanding of the process of Slovene nation-building. According to this model, in a rather black-and-white dichotomy, the Slovene national movement and its patriotic agents fought for the nation’s liberation from the domination of its national “Others,” especially Germans, but regionally also Italians, Magyars, and, later on, Serbs. Whereas Germans were depicted as the masters, this narrative often referred to Slovenes as peasants (*kmeti*) or servants (*hlapci*). After a short and glorious period of autonomy in the early medieval realm of Carantania, they fell under the “German yoke,” meaning under German dominance in a “German state,” under which they suffered for a thousand years. The opening of the Slovene national movement, established in the second half of the nineteenth century, is thus referred to as a glorious period of national rebirth or awakening (*narodni preporod*). The early national movement is portrayed in a very positive light within traditional Slovene historiography in its fight for, first, cultural and linguistic autonomy, and, later, independence. The nineteenth-century movement is thus seen as continuous with the Slovene ethnic community that existed since the times of Carantania. This historiographic narrative of continuity from Carantania to the modern Slovene independent state was most prominently deconstructed in the early twenty-first century by the Slovene medievalist Peter Štih.² In the traditional narrative, the fact that Slovene- and German- (and Italian- and Hungarian-) speaking neighbors in the shared and widely mixed territories of Lower Styria, southern Carinthia, Carniola, the littoral of the Northern Adriatic, and Western Hungary shared the same religion, traditions, folk culture, customs, and political circumstances—and lived together without major friction or feelings of ethnic difference—is widely ignored.³ Later

¹Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire. A New History* (Cambridge, 2016), 274.

²To cite only one of his papers, written in German: Peter Štih, “Die slowenischen Vorstellungen über die slowenisch-deutschen Beziehungen im Mittelalter,” in *Slowenen und Deutsche im gemeinsamen Raum. Neue Forschungen zu einem komplexen Thema*, ed. Harald Heppner (München, 2002), 1–19. The first, however, to critically question this myth of Slovenes being peasants was Sergej Vilfan, “Slovenci – kmečki narod?” [The Slovenes – a peasant people?], in 29. Seminar slovenskega jezika, literature in kulturi (Ljubljana, 1993), 229–43. See also Jernej Kosi, “The Textbook Myth: Slovene Peasants as Heroes of the Glorious Past,” *Sprawy Narodowościowe Seria nowa/Nationalities Affairs New Series* 50 (2018): 1–12.

³The common ground becomes more evident through the bottom-up approach of *Alltagsgeschichte*, see e.g., on the daily use of postcards in the mixed German- and Slovene-speaking regions of Lower Styria: Karin Almasy and Eva Tropper, *Štajer-mark*.

generations of Slovene historians did leave this very schematic narrative of continuity behind but still kept insisting on the pre-existence of a Slovene ethnic community, from which the Slovene national movement ultimately developed. The role of the Habsburg Empire was still seen in a mostly negative light, portrayed as the main adversary of the Slovene nation's development.⁴

By contrast, the modernist approach in historiography on Slovene nation-building—as most prominently represented by Joachim Hösler, Jernej Kosi, and Rok Stergar—offers a rather different and more nuanced picture. The modernist approach confronts the traditional historiography with its blind spots, black-and-white stereotypes, and myths, and instead stresses the common ground and national indifference of linguistically diverse people in this area across the centuries. Most importantly, it exposes traditional national myths for what they are—myths—and highlights that feelings of national belonging and ideas of national unity are rather recent phenomena that only became a strong social force in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵

So where does the Austrian school system of the nineteenth century fit into all of this? The focus of traditional Slovene historiography centered for a long time on the development of Slovene nationalist organizations, politics, and their main agents—basically a thin social layer of the educated male political elite.⁶ Their education was definitively stressed as an important factor. The role of schools, however, especially primary schools, and the literacy of the mainly rural masses was not given much attention. If it came up, the Austrian school system was often depicted as something “foreign,” implemented “from the outside,” coming “from [the nationally German] Vienna,” which did not contribute to the Slovene cause but rather stood in its way, actively hindering or even suppressing the Slovene nation's development.⁷ This focus on a historical narrative that portrays the Slovene national

Der gemeinsamen Geschichte auf der Spur: Postkarten der historischen Untersteiermark 1890–1920 / Štajer-mark. Po sledah skupne preteklosti: razglednice zgodovinske Spodnje Štajerske (1890–1920) (Graz, 2018).

⁴For an older, prevalently ethnicist, though still valid and nuanced literature on the formation of the Slovene nation, see Vasilij Melik, *Slovenska zgodovina od konca osemnajstega stoletja do 1918* [Slovene History from the End of the Eighteenth Century to 1918] (Ljubljana, 1966); Fran Zwitter, “The Slovenes in the Habsburg Monarchy,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 3, no. 2 (1967): 159–88; Janko Pleterski, *Študije o slovenski zgodovini in narodnem vprašanju* [Studies on Slovene History and the National Question] (Maribor, 1981); Stane Granda, *Prva odločitev Slovencev za Slovenijo: dokumenti z uvodno študijo in osnovnimi pojasnili* [The First Decision of the Slovenes for Slovenia: Documents with an Introductory Study and Explanatory Materials] (Ljubljana, 1999).

⁵See Joachim Hösler, *Von Krain zu Slowenien. Die Anfänge der nationalen Differenzierungsprozesse in Krain und der Untersteiermark von der Aufklärung bis zur Revolution. 1768 bis 1848* (Munich, 2006); Jernej Kosi, *Kako je nastal slovenski narod: Začetki slovenskega nacionalnega gibanja v prvi polovici 19. stoletja* [How the Slovene Nation Was Born: The Beginnings of the Slovenian National Movement in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century] (Ljubljana, 2013); Jernej Kosi and Rok Stergar, “Kdaj so nastali ‘ljubi Slovenci?’ O identitetah v prednacionalni dobi in njihovi domnevni vlogi pri nastanku slovenskega naroda [When Did the ‘Dear Slovenes’ Come into Being? On Identities in Pre-National Times and their Supposed Role in Slovene Nation-Building],” *Zgodovinski časopis* 70, no. 3–4 (2016): 458–88. For a regional case study on early national differentiation, see Karin Almasy, *Wie aus Marburgern “Slowenen” und “Deutsche” wurden. Ein Beispiel zur beginnenden nationalen Differenzierung in Zentraleuropa zwischen 1848 und 1861* (Graz, 2014). Fairly modernist views can already be found in Andreas Moritsch, ed., *Vom Ethnos zur Nationalität: Der nationale Differenzierungsprozeß am Beispiel ausgewählter Orte in Kärnten und im Burgenland* (Vienna, 1991). For a critical perspective on the Slovene narrative of the “unavoidable” fall of the Habsburg monarchy, see also Janez Cvirk and Jure Gašparič, “Neizbežnost’ razpada Habsburške monarhije – slovenski pogled [The ‘Unavoidable’ Fall of the Habsburg Empire: The Slovene Perspective],” *Studia Historica Slovenica* 5 (2005): 443–56.

⁶See Vasilij Melik, *Volitve na Slovenskem: 1861–1918* [Elections in Slovenia: 1861–1918] (Ljubljana, 1965), and its German translation *Wahlen im alten Österreich am Beispiel der Kronländer mit slowenischsprachiger Bevölkerung* (Vienna, 1997); Janez Cvirk, “Meščanstvo na Slovenskem in proces nacionalne diferenciacije [The Burghers in Slovenia and the Process of National Differentiation],” in 27. zborovanje slovenskih zgodovinarjev, ed. Aleš Gabrič (Ljubljana, 1994), 67–73; Janez Cvirk, “Slovenci in nemški državnopravni programi (1848–1918) [Slovenes and German State-Legal Programs (1848–1918)],” in *Slovenci in država: zbornik prispevkov z znanstvenega posvetna na SAZU (od 9. do 11. novembra 1994)*, ed. Bogo Grafenauer (Ljubljana, 1995), 73–82.

⁷See, emblematically, Franc Ostanek, “Ob 200-letnici slovenskih šolskih knjig [On the Two-Hundredth Anniversary of Slovenian Schoolbooks],” in *1972 – Razstava ob dvestoletnici slovenske šolske knjige*, ed. Slovenski šolski muzej (Ljubljana, 1972), 5–16, 5; and similarly in Monika Govekar-Okoliš, “Koncept nacionalne vzgoje in pouk zgodovine v srednjih šolah na Slovenskem v 2. polovici 19. stoletja” [The Concept of National Education and History Lessons in Secondary Schools in Slovenia in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century],” in *Trojarjev zbornik*, ed. Danijela Trškan (Ljubljana, 2011), 83–96, 95. When schools have been in the focus of research, it was mostly in secondary education. See Monika Govekar-Okoliš, *The Role of Grammar Schools in Forming the National Identity of the Slovenes within Austria from 1849 to 1914* (Hamburg,

movement as “independent of and opposed to the state”⁸ has caused some blind spots in Slovene historiography, namely how important the Austrian school system was to its development and that (today widely forgotten) Slovene scholars and experts *within* the education system—by contrast to the traditional black-and-white dichotomy of “the Slovenes” vs. the “German state”—were actively contributing and influencing it.⁹

This article instead postulates that the process of Slovene national identification—which by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was widespread among people in this region—could not have developed so successfully if the state had been really opposed to it and actively hindered it. Therefore, I follow the advice of Pieter Judson “to take the role of empire seriously in the construction of ideas of nationhood,” that is,

Imperial institutions, laws, and administrative practices played crucial roles in giving shape to the more successful forms of nationalism. Distinctive nationalist movements developed in response to and operated very much within the idiosyncratic institutional, legal, and constitutional structures of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹⁰

This article stresses the favorable influences of the Austrian school system (and therefore the empire) after 1848 on the development of the Slovene language and the development of a Slovene national category of identification. It aims to connect the most relevant research on Slovenes within the Austrian school system¹¹ with the aforementioned modernist approach on Slovene nation-building. The article also presents insights into the civic education of the population through schools and how school authorities tried to strengthen and implement imperial patriotism. Even though, traditionally, research on civic education focused more on supposedly homogenous nation-states and how they cultivated national identity,¹² there are also some excellent studies (most notably by Ernst Bruckmüller and, recently, Scott Moore) on the “nationalizing state”¹³ of the Habsburg Empire, its civic education, and the fostering of loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty through the school system.¹⁴

2017). As an exception on elementary schools, but with a national perspective: Mira Cencic, *Osnovna šola na slovenskem narođnem ozemlju* [The Elementary School on Slovene Ethnic Territory] (Koper, 2018).

⁸Gary B. Cohen, “Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of the State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy,” *Central European History* 40, no. 2 (2007): 245.

⁹Karin Almasy, “Fallen into Oblivion: On ‘Forgotten’ Slovenes from the 19th Century School Book Production in the Slovene Collective Memory,” in *Ślówiańska pamięć. Slavic memory*, eds. Karolina Cwiek-Rogalska and Marcin Filipowicz (Kraków, 2017), 207–22.

¹⁰Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 274. Those structures developed under Maria Theresia, Joseph II, and later chancellor Metternich. On the different understandings of the “nations” within the empire during Joseph’s reign, see Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 85–89; on the nationality policy of Metternich, who promoted “cultural nations” to prevent “political nationalism” that could become potentially state threatening, see Philipp Decker, “Nationalities without Nationalism? The Cultural Consequences of Metternich’s National Policy,” *Nationalities Papers* (2022): 1–18.

¹¹For the Slovene case, see the substantial groundwork by Vlado Schmidt in three volumes, most relevant here: *Zgodovina šolstva in pedagogike na Slovenskem* [History of Schooling and Pedagogy in Slovenia], vol. 3, (1848–1870) (Ljubljana, 1966), furthermore: Karin Almasy, *Kanon und nationale Konsolidierung. Übersetzungen und ideologische Steuerung in slowenischen Schullesebüchern (1848–1918)* (Vienna/Weimar/Köln, 2018); Oliver Pejić, “Predstave o Drugem v habsburškem izobraževalnem sistemu: imagološka analiza slovenskih in nemških beril pozne habsburške monarhije [The Presentation of the Other in the Habsburg Educational System: An Imagological Analysis of Slovenian and German Readers in the Late Habsburg Monarchy]” (MA Thesis, University of Ljubljana, 2019); for local examples, see Theodor Domej, “Schule und Lehrerschaft bei der ‘Nationalisierung’ der Kärntner Slowenen,” in *Eliten und Nationwerdung*, ed. Tina Bahovec (Klagenfurt, 2003), 85–118; Almasy, *Wie aus Marburgern*, 128–69; for later effects in the interwar period in Yugoslavia, see Pieter Troch, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia: Education, Yugoslavism and the Balkans Before World War II* (London, 2015).

¹²See for France, the pioneering work of Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford 1976); Stephen L. Harp, *Learning to be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850–1940* (Dekalb, 1998); also for England and the US: Andy Green. *Education and State Formation: The Rise of Education Systems in England, France, and the USA* (New York, 1990).

¹³Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge 1996), 63.

¹⁴Ernst Bruckmüller, “Patriotismus und Geschichtsunterricht: Lehrpläne und Lehrbücher als Instrumente eines übernationalen Gesamtstaatsbewußtseins in den Gymnasien der späten Habsburgermonarchie,” in *Vlfanov zbornik: Pravo - zgodovina - narod = Recht - Geschichte - Nation*, eds. Ernst Bruckmüller and Vincenc Rajšp (Ljubljana, 1999), 511–30; Ernst

Research on schools in other areas of the Habsburg monarchy (such as Alexander Maxwell's work on Slovakia and Ágoston Berecz's on Transylvania) suggests that sometimes the outcome of certain school reforms and regulations differed from the intentions of its creators. The outcomes were multifaceted.¹⁵ As the Slovene case will demonstrate, the two outcomes could coexist: by trying to satisfy existing language rights (in the Austrian part of the monarchy) through separate curricula for these languages, and through classifications within the school system, not only was loyalty to the monarchy promoted, but as an unintended consequence, other identification, namely national ones, were *simultaneously* and inadvertently encouraged and successfully promoted.

The School Reforms of the 1850s and 1860s

Even though the birth of the modern Austrian school system is usually dated back to 1770, when Maria Theresia declared schools a *Politikum*, or to 1774, when she introduced compulsory school attendance, the system was only seriously modernized after the reforms inspired by the liberal ideas of the revolutions of 1848. In the aftermath of 1848, namely in 1849, the *Entwurf der Organisation der Gymnasien und Realschulen in Oesterreich*—the “Magna Carta” of Austrian high schools, written by Franz Exner (1802–53) and Hermann Bonitz (1814–88)—was provisionally introduced. In 1854, the minister of education Leo von Thun-Hohenstein (1849–60) made the *Organisationsentwurf* permanent. The *Gymnasien*, until then at their core grammar schools for young men of the upper classes, were radically modernized to the form in which they still exist in Austria today: eight years of secondary education (into which new school subjects were introduced—including, notably, the natural sciences and living languages) to be completed with the final exam, the *Matura*, which allows one to continue their higher education at a university. Even though classical languages and an overall Catholic spirit were still very much alive, they were drastically reduced in comparison to the pre-1848 situation.¹⁶

The era of neoabsolutism (1851–60) put a temporary stop to many developments kicked off in 1848. Weakened by the revolutionary upheavals, Franz Joseph I sought the support of the Church. In the *Konkordat* treaty of 1855 with the Holy See, he granted the Church—once again—widespread privileges and influence, most notably control over marriage and education. Supervision on all school matters, especially control over primary schools and its teachers, was given back to the Church. Only the supervision of the middle schools, though in theory also controlled by bishops, stayed with the Ministry of Religion and Education. However, the previous reforms of the middle schools that von Thun put into law in 1849 stayed intact and were not reversed, thanks to his ability to find a compromise between progressive education ideas and conservative and religious principles.¹⁷

Whereas middle schools were fundamentally reformed after 1848, elementary schools had to wait until the late 1860s, after the reorganization of the empire with the *Ausgleich* of 1867 into the Dual Monarchy of Austria–Hungary. In terms of government, administration, and legislation, the two

Bruckmüller, “Zur Entstehung der kulturellen Differenz: Fragmentarische Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Nationalbewusstsein und Grundschulbildung im alten Österreich,” in *Focus Austria: Vom Vielvölkerreich zum EU-Staat: Festschrift für Alfred Ableitinger*, ed. Siegfried Beer (Graz, 2003), 164–79; Ernst Bruckmüller, “Patriotic and National Myths: National Consciousness and Elementary School Education in Imperial Austria,” in *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, eds. Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky (New York, 2007), 11–35; and a recent, compelling work: Scott O. Moore, *Teaching the Empire: Education and State Loyalty in Late Habsburg Austria* (West Lafayette, 2020); and, in more general terms, of course: Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*.

¹⁵ Both studies mentioned are situated within the Hungarian part of the empire, in which language and school policies differed considerably from the Austrian part. This is why, in my opinion, we come to different results. For the Slovak case, see Alexander Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia. Slavic Hungary, the Czechoslovak Language and Accidental Nationalism* (London, 2009); for Hungary, especially Transylvania, Ágoston Berecz, *The Politics of Early Language Teaching: Hungarian in the Primary Schools of the Late Dual Monarchy* (Budapest, 2013).

¹⁶ Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens. Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs*, vol. 4, *Von 1848 bis zum Ende der Monarchie* (Vienna, 1986), 148; Peter Stachel, “Das österreichische Bildungssystem zwischen 1749 und 1918,” *Kakanien Revisited* (2002): 1–11, 28.

¹⁷ Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, vol. 4, 89; Erika Weinzierl-Fischer, *Die österreichischen Konkordate von 1855 und 1933* (Vienna, 1960), 97; on Thun see Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 226f.

parts of the monarchy went their separate ways and for Cisleithania, the *Staatsgrundgesetz* of 1867 became the liberal cornerstone, in which control and supervision of the whole education system was declared a state affair.¹⁸ In 1868, a liberal majority in the *Reichsrat* managed to issue the *Schul-Kirche-Gesetz* and in 1869, the *Reichsvolksschulgesetz*. As a result, the Catholic Church lost all supervision over schools, and the educational system finally became a state-led endeavor. Eight years of compulsory school attendance for boys and girls was introduced, and different branches of schools—like the *Berufsschulen*, *Bürgerschulen*, *Realschulen*, and kindergarten—were established or drastically reformed. Moreover, teacher training was professionalized, and *Lehrerbildungsanstalten* was founded as well: From now on, teachers were public officials, with four years of training, a proper salary, and a pension.¹⁹

In comparison with the pre-1848 situation, the main goal of primary school education changed from providing obedient subjects with moral and religious instructions (“*[um] aus den Schulen wohlgesittete, und brauchbare Unterthanen zu erhalten*”)²⁰ to providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to become capable members of society (“*[um] sie mit den zur weiteren Ausbildung erforderlichen Kenntnissen und Fertigkeiten auszustatten und die Grundlage für Heranbildung tüchtiger Menschen und Mitglieder des Allgemeinwohls zu schaffen*”).²¹ Many new schools were built, courses were taught by well-trained teachers, and school attendance increased. As a result, literacy rates increased dramatically within just a few decades, as did the average level of education and standard of living.²²

The Ministry of Religion and Education actively supported the development of vernaculars spoken by its citizens into fully developed languages. After the *Ausgleich* in 1867, especially the Slavic languages in the Austrian half of the monarchy, not only Slovene, but also the Croatian, Ruthenian (Ukrainian), Czech, and Polish languages benefited greatly. The idea was to use these languages to reach citizens and to spread knowledge and the empire’s values.²³ Even though Slovene literary studies and popular culture, often guided by nation-based concepts, like to emphasize the contributions of one or another Slovene writer or poet to the development or enrichment of the Slovene language (that shall not be denied), it is also fair to say that the empire and its school system—with its support and stimulation for language development and all its involved agents from different origins—played one if not the crucial role within this process.

The Foundation of It All: A Common, Codified Slovene Literary Language

The Slovene nation was and is still today based on the Slovene literary language, respectively the “national language,”²⁴ as one of its main constituent components, as was and is also the case for many other nations in Central Europe. This is evident when we look at the demands or goals of

¹⁸“Staatsgrundgesetz vom 21. December 1867,” in *Reichs-Gesetz-Blatt für das Kaiserthum Oesterreich, Jahrgang 1867* (Vienna 1867), 394–396, 396.

¹⁹See Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, vol. 4, 28; Hanns Mikoletzky, *200 Jahre Österreichischer Bundesverlag* (Vienna, 1972), 52; Helmut Engelbrecht, *Erziehung und Unterricht im Bild. Zur Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens* (Vienna, 1995), 290; Ernst Springer, “Das Mittelschulwesen,” in *1949–100 Jahre Unterrichtsministerium 1848–1948: Festschrift des Bundesministeriums für Unterricht in Wien*, ed. Egon Loebenstein (Vienna, 1949), 114–38, 147.

²⁰“Schulordnung für die deutschen Normal-, Haupt- und Trivialschulen. Patent vom 6ten Dezember 1774,” in *Theresianisches Gesetzbuch*, 116–37, 119.

²¹“Gesetz vom 14. Mai 1869 [...] [Reichsvolksschulgesetz]” in *Reichs-Gesetz-Blatt für das Kaiserthum Oesterreich. Jahrgang 1869* (Vienna 1869), 277–88, 277.

²²Vlado Schmidt, *Zgodovina šolstva*, vol. 3, 18–21; Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, vol. 4, 226.

²³Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, vol. 4, 130. The development of school legislation in the Hungarian half of the monarchy after 1867 was in fact very different. On the Hungarian law of nationalities of 1868, school legislation enforcing Magyarization and Hungarian language, and the Lex Apponyi, see a detailed overview in Berecz, *The Politics of Early Language Teaching*, 52–66.

²⁴I agree with Alexander Maxwell that “language” is not a useful analytical term since it can mean at least three different things: (1) “literary language,” “script,” or “orthography,” when referring to “a series of standardized conventions for spelling and grammar,” (2) different speech varieties, also referred to as “vernaculars,” and (3) most relevant for this article, “the *idea* of a national language” that is “most closely linked to national concepts, and most clearly claims a specific territory.” As Maxwell states—and this seems very accurate for the Slovene case too: “Political actors typically conflate all three meanings of the word ‘language’: writing = speech = the national language (and thus national ethnoterritory).” Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia*, 74f.

Slovene national activists. From the very first Slovene political programme, the petition *Zedinjena Slovenija* sent to the emperor in 1848, Slovene national demands and goals always revolved around language rights: from more language rights and the use of Slovene language in courts and councils, offices, and departments, to the goal of a “Slovene” university in Ljubljana and “more Slovene language in the schools.”²⁵ Therefore, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at Slovene language codification and the role the Austrian school system played in that process.

Before 1848, the Slovene language was not yet a fully developed, supra-regional, standardized, and codified literary language able to fulfil all the necessary functions of a “national” language. A variety of genres of literature had not yet been developed. Different forms of alphabets were in use and competed with each other. There was still no consensus on the name and nature of that Slavic vernacular, nor that it was a language by itself to be clearly differentiated from the neighboring language Illyrian/Croatian. Nor was there a standardized, codified language norm—the first normative spelling, Fran Levec’s *Slovenski pravopis*, was published only in 1899. Dialectal or stylistic differences on how to write Slovene (not to speak of the varieties in oral usage) were huge. Little to no specific terminology for the sciences, law, and other specialized fields existed, and so specialist texts were almost non-existent.²⁶ In terms of Haugen’s model on language planning, the four activities associated with language planning—selecting a language norm, codifying it, implementing its functions in society, and elaborating a vocabulary—were not reached yet in 1848.²⁷

In the middle of the nineteenth century, there was not a widespread consensus that all those things would be a desirable goal; it was still widely acknowledged that there were different Slovene/Slavic vernaculars, mainly spoken among people of modest origin and education. The language of writing, higher education, and the higher branches of society was unquestionably German. Anton Šantel (1845–1920), son of modest peasants from today’s Austrian-Slovenian border region in Styria, who attended the Gymnasium in Maribor/Marburg and became a respected professor at the Gymnasium in Görz/Gorizia/Gorica, wrote his memoirs around the turn of the century, and described the linguistic situation in his childhood as follows:

Today’s generation cannot even imagine the kind of circumstances the Slovene language was in back then. Keep in mind that almost all literature or songs which we have today were written later, and that back then, nine years after 1848, only occasionally did men start to develop a national consciousness. Until then, we grew up in the tradition that even if you speak Slovene, you do not write it. What was written down had to be in German. In elementary schools, Slovene was spoken only to communicate with students, and so they learned to read the catechism and the prayer book. The main purpose of schools was to teach German. People who knew some German kept speaking German. Slovene was spoken only by people who had not had the chance to learn German, so primarily illiterates and those who had forgotten the German they were taught in school. Speaking Slovene was a sign of being uneducated: educated Slovenes used this language only to communicate with uneducated people, e.g., a priest or a teacher speaking with peasants, a student speaking with his peasant parents or other relatives, and among themselves only now and then, and sometimes as a joke.²⁸

²⁵ See Hösler, *Von Krain zu Slowenien*, 273–82; Josip Apih, *Slovenci in 1848. leto* [Slovenes in 1848] (Ljubljana, 1888), 118–19; and Stane Granda, *Prva odločitev Slovencev za Slovenijo*.

²⁶ See Hösler, *Von Krain zu Slowenien*, 152–59; also Erich Prunč, “H zgodovini slovenskih predavanj in slavistike na graški univerziti [On the History of Slovenian Lectures and Slavistics at the University of Graz],” in *Slavistična revija* 18 (1970): 241–48; and with an emphasis on the 1840s and the importance of the newspaper *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice*, see Janko Lokar, “Bleiweis in Novičarji v borbi za slovenski jezik in domače slovstvo [Bleiweis and Novičarji in the Struggle for the Slovene Language and Domestic Schooling],” in *Bleiweisov zbornik*, ed. Josip Tominšek (Ljubljana, 1909), 2–24. On the lack of terminology for all branches of sciences, law, etc., see Karin Almasy and Tanja Žigon, “The Development of Slovene specialized terminology in the 19th century through translations of mathematics and biology textbooks,” in *Academic Writing from Cross-Cultural Perspectives: Exploring the Synergies and Interactions*, eds. Agnes Pisanski Peterlin and Tamara Južnič Mikolič (Ljubljana, 2020), 22–55, especially 29–31.

²⁷ Einar Haugen, *Language Conflict and Language Planning. The Case of Modern Norwegian* (Cambridge, 1966).

²⁸ Anton Šantel, *Zgodbe moje pokrajine [z lastnimi risbami]* [Stories from my Region] (Ljubljana, 2006), 145–46; and its German translation Anton Šantel, *Grenzenlos zweisprachig. Die Erinnerungen des Keuschlersohnes Anton Šantel (1845–1920)*

Šantel's account illustrates the situation in his linguistically very mixed home region of Lower Styria, where in comparison to Carniola, German was also present in the daily life of rural people. It depicts the different statuses assigned to the two languages: German was the language of the urban upper classes and higher education, the chosen language of the towns and the bourgeoisie, whereas Slovene was thought of as a "peasants' language." Nationally thinking Slovene intellectuals were painfully aware of the fact that the Slovene language was not yet developed enough to be considered a proper "national language."²⁹

Nevertheless, within only half a century, and thanks to the efforts of national activists and politicians, newspaper men, editors, writers, and other intellectuals in public life, the Slovene literary language developed quickly and successfully into a fully functional "national" language. What was crucial in helping that process of language development and the spread of linguistic norms—and this is one of the article's main arguments—were guidelines and regulations for schools and textbooks.

Let's start with the question of the alphabet and what is referred to as the Alphabet war (*Abecedna vojna*) in Slovene historiography.³⁰ The old German-based alphabet, dating back to Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century, called the *Bohoričica* after its inventor Adam Bohorič, was criticized by scholars (e.g., Jernej Kopitar) for being inadequate e.g., to express Slovene sibilants. In the first half of the nineteenth century, new alphabets were invented by Fran Metelko, called the *Metelčica*, and Peter Dajnko, called the *Dajnčica*. Both alphabets were based on the Latin letters, but introduced newly invented special characters and borrowed some letters from the Cyrillic alphabet for writing some Slovene sibilants, vowels, and semivowels. Textbooks and textbook translations written in these alphabets were published in the 1820s and early 1830s. Their use of these different alphabets had a regional component: *Metelčica* was popular mostly in Carniola, and *Dajnčica* in the eastern parts of Styria. At the same time, Ljudevit Gaj, the main figure of the Illyrian movement, invented his own alphabet for the South Slavic languages, known as *Gajica* or also called the "tschecho-illyrisches Alphabet," because it was and is still based on the Latin script and enriched by special Czech characters. In 1846, the first Slovene textbooks were printed in *Gajica*.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, four (!) different forms of scripts (not to mention the other orthographic varieties and inconsistencies) were to be found in textbooks and other publications of this language. This linguistic chaos was too much for the authorities. In 1833, the *Studienhofkommission* banned the *Metelčica* and in 1838, the *Dajnčica* from use in schoolbooks and official publications. But still, the two other scripts, *Bohoričica* and *Gajica*, remained in use, until finally, in 1848, the newly formed Ministry of Religion and Education introduced by decree the "so-called Illyrian orthography,"³¹ to be used in primary schools in Carniola, and in 1849 ordered the *k.k. Schulbücherverlag* to print Slovene textbooks only in the new *Gajica* script. As Joachim Hösler puts it, "the ABC dispute was 'solved administratively' from outside,"³² that is, "from above." It was not Slovene intellectuals and writers disputing with each other over these issues in Carniola and Styria (e.g., Matija Čop, France Prešeren, Franc Metelko, Peter Dajnko)—on whom older Slovene historiography and linguistics liked to focus—who reached a consensus on the alphabet most suited for writing in this language, because their opinions differed considerably. In the end, decrees on school matters coming from the Ministry of Religion and Education in Vienna put an end to the dispute.

Another big decision made in Vienna by the new school administration under Leo von Thun-Hohenstein was the question of which "style" should be used to write in schoolbooks. Due to substantial regional varieties, especially between Carniola and Styria/Carinthia, and the separate

an seine Kindheit in Leutschach und Jugend in Maribor, eds. Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik and Christian Promitzer (Graz, 2002), 140–41.

²⁹See, for example, the frustrated description of the writer and literary critic Fran Levstik (1831–1887) in an 1856 newspaper article: "Almost all of us, who write, *put together* Slovene words, but we *think* in German. This way, we cannot hope for excellent Slovene prose any time soon . . ." Fran Levstik, "Napake slovenskega pisanja," [Errors of Slovene Writing] *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* 6 January 1858, p. 38.

³⁰The most compelling discussion of this dispute can be found in Hösler, *Von Krain zu Slowenien*, 191–97.

³¹See the decree in Klaus Frommelt, *Die Sprachenfrage im österreichischen Unterrichtswesen 1848–1918* (Graz/Köln, 1963), 142.

³²Hösler, *Von Krain zu Slowenien*, 190.

jurisdiction of each diocese on school and textbook matters before 1848, the grammar, orthography, and morphology used in textbooks differed considerably. Von Thun-Hohenstein decided to standardize this chaos and consulted experts and influential intellectuals on these matters. Among others, he corresponded with the Slovene bishop Anton Martin Slomšek (1800–62) of the Lavant diocese and asked for his opinion on several occasions. Most influentially, he was advised by the important Slovene philologist and Slavicist Fran Miklošič (1813–91), who informed him also about the lack of quality and uniformity in Slovene textbooks.³³ So, on 6 February 1851, von Thun-Hohenstein issued a decree that Slovene textbooks should follow the grammar and orthography found in the Slovene translation of the Official Law Gazette, the *Reichsgesetzblätter*. Shortly after, on 9 July 1851, in a decree concerning “Slovene language in elementary schools of Carniola,” he ordered that the “language style (*Stylisierung*)” to be found in the *Reichsgesetzblätter* should be the “general guideline” (*Richtschnur*) for Slovene language use in schools and textbooks in general.³⁴

Keep in mind that, by 1848, this “national” language-in-the-making did not yet have one established name. In establishing a single name for all the Slavic/Slovene vernaculars and the different regional writing norms, the Austrian authorities and the school administration played a crucial role. Around the same time, in the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions, the first issues of the *Reichsgesetzblatt* were also translated into eight languages, among them also Slovene.³⁵ In the very first German issue of the Law Gazette, this language was still explained as “Slovene, that is at the same time Windisch and Carniolian” (*slovenische (zugleich windische und krainerische Schriftsprache)*), whereas the first vernacular translation of this first issue was “in the Slovene language” (*v slovenskem jeziku*).³⁶ The very first translator of the Official Law Gazette into Slovene was Fran Miklošič, and we can assume that he made a very conscious decision to translate by using only one, unified name for the language: Slovene. Because the Law Gazette was the “stylistic guideline” for how to write Slovene textbooks from 1851 onward and because, again, we see Miklošič as the responsible agent/adviser in the background, the name also stuck in school matters. This is noteworthy if we consider that before 1848, each diocese printed its own textbooks in its own language style and alphabet.³⁷ But from this time onward, schools, textbooks, the corresponding school subject, and other forms of categorization used this name and this name only: Slovene. So, the Slovene case illustrates that “the Habsburg linguistic classification from 1849 and its consequent institutionalization had a noticeable influence on the outcome of nation-building.”³⁸

³³ Miklošič wrote official reports for the ministry and advised the minister on a lot of different issues, such as linguistic matters. See Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (ÖSTA AVA), Unterricht 1848–1918, U2 Schachtel 5531, Fasz. 4896, 24 D., Ministerium des Cultus und Unterrichtes, “Prof. Miklošič berichtet ad 10845 über den ersten Theil des Kleemannschen Lesebuches für Gymnasien,” Akt Nr. 927, 30. January 1851; and for Slomšek’s correspondence: Slovenian School Museum (hereafter SSML), arhivska zbirka, fasc. 114, Korespondenca Slomška, pismo 21, “Bemerkungen über die Schul- u. Schrift-Sprache” vom 12. März 1850. Thun also corresponded with other Slavic scholars, such as František Čelakovský, on school matters. For Thun’s correspondence, see Christof Aichner, *Die Korrespondenz von Leo von Thun-Hohenstein*, in <https://thun-korrespondenz.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/about.html>.

³⁴ The whole decree was published in Frommelt, *Die Sprachenfrage im österreichischen Unterrichtswesen*, 145. Slovene newspapers also published information on this decision. See Editorial Board, “Slovensko berilo za 1. gimnazijalni razred [The Slovene Reader for the First Gymnasium Grade],” in *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (26 February 1851), 45. See also Schmidt, *Zgodovina šolstva*, vol. 3, 98.

³⁵ Michaela Wolf, “Der habsburgische Translator als Beamter und Leiharbeiter. Das Redaktionsbüro des Reichsgesetzblattes von 1849–1918,” in *Beyond Equivalence, Graz Translation Studies*, vol. 9, eds. Nike Kocijančič Pokorn et al. (Graz, 2005), 39–56; Aleksandra Nuć, “Slowenische Translatoressen treffen auf Asklepios. Die Übersetzungen des Reichsgesetzblattes ins Slowenische am Beispiel der Gesetzesexte über die pharmazeutische Berufs- und Hochschulausbildung im Zeitraum von 1849 bis 1918” (Ph.D. diss., University of Graz, 2017).

³⁶ Ministers Franz Stadion and Alexander von Bach, “Einleitung zu dem allgemeinen Reichs-Gesetz- und Regierungsblatte für das Kaiserthum Oesterreich 1849,” in *Allgemeines Reichs-, Gesetz- und Regierungsblatt für das Kaiserthum Oesterreich* [RGBI], [vol. 1] 1849 (Vienna, 1850), i–vii, vi.

³⁷ See Tanja Hojan, “Slovenska šolska knjiga ob 200-letnici uradnih šolskih knjig [The Slovenian Schoolbook on the 200th Anniversary of Official Schoolbooks],” in *1972–Razstava ob dvestoletnici slovenske šolske knjige*, 17–51, 25.

³⁸ Rok Stergar and Tamara Scheer, “Ethnic boxes: The unintended consequences of Habsburg bureaucratic classification,” *Nationalities Papers* 46, no. 4 (2018): 575–91, 586.

As we have clearly seen, the years 1848–51 were crucial for the codification of the Slovene language. There was one set script and one set name for this language in 1849 and a guideline establishing in which “style” this language was to be written in 1851. All these decisions regarding schools and textbooks were made by minister Thun-Hohenstein, inspired by the mindset of the revolutionary year 1848, and were advised on by important Slovene scholars, first and foremost by Fran Miklošič. Of course, some individuals still may have continued privately to use the other scripts and older orthography or still insisted that they spoke “Carniolian.” But the new codifications had a lot of (institutional) power behind them and were therefore quickly and widely implemented.

Slovene as Teaching Language and School Subject After 1848

A demand very often made by contemporary Slovene nationalists was to “bring more Slovene into the schools,” and respectively to have more “Slovene schools.” But they rarely offered a precise definition of what that really meant and what was demanded in detail.³⁹ Therefore, it is worthwhile discussing, first, Slovene as the teaching language in middle and elementary schools, and second, Slovene as a school subject separately, as I will do in the following.

Slovene as the teaching language in elementary schools existed in prevalently Slovene-speaking areas already well before 1848. In 1848, Exner stipulated that, in elementary schools, there should be teaching only in the mother tongue of the schoolchildren.⁴⁰ Also in upper-level schools, it was common practice that a teacher, if able and willing, would translate ad hoc what has been said in German into Slovene.⁴¹ This was simply a necessity, otherwise, schoolchildren would not have understood their teachers.

In high schools, Slovene as the teaching language was introduced in small steps starting after 1848, and each school decided individually. In the aftermath of the revolution, a common first step was to introduce it in religion and Slovene language classes, later also in “easy subjects” such as history and geography. A large obstacle in this regard, especially in the 1850s and 1860s, was the lack of modern Slovene textbooks, reading materials, and capable Slovene-speaking teachers. The first Gymnasium to make Slovene its sole language of instruction was the *Realgymnasium* in Kranj/Krainburg in 1870. By contrast, in Styria and Carinthia the upper classes of every Gymnasium were taught in German. In the late nineteenth century, a number of high schools decided on parallel classes taught in Slovene (e.g., in 1895 in Celje/Cilli, which caused the polemic *Cillier Schulstreit*).

During the seventy-year timeframe between 1848 and 1918, especially after the 1870s, the number of elementary and middle schools with Slovene as the language of instruction grew continually, especially in predominantly Slovene-speaking areas (e.g., in Carniola). But the higher one rose through the educational grades, the more one was taught in German.⁴² The legislative framework for this development was the famous article 19 of the constitution of 1867, which stipulated that all national groups had the right to cultivate their language and were guaranteed the necessary means for elementary education in their language.⁴³ This legislation led to a general trend of linguistic homogenization in the educational system in the late Habsburg monarchy, which has been dubbed by Hannelore Burger as the process of “driving out multilingualism” (*die Vertreibung der Mehrsprachigkeit*).⁴⁴

³⁹Schmidt, *Zgodovina šolstva III*, 102.

⁴⁰See [Franz Seraphin von Exner], *Entwurf der Grundzüge des öffentlichen Unterrichtswesens in Oesterreich* (Vienna, 1848), 6; Schmidt, *Zgodovina šolstva*, vol. 3, 33 and 126; Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens. Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs*, vol. 3, *Von der frühen Aufklärung bis zum Vormärz* (Vienna, 1984), 130.

⁴¹This is mentioned also in reports to the school administration. See e.g., Tanja Žigon, Karin Almasy, and Andrej Lovšin, *Vloga in pomen prevajanja učbenikov v 19. stoletju: Kulturnozgodovinski in jezikovni vidiki*. [The Role and Importance of Translating Textbooks in the 19th century: Cultural historic and linguistic perspectives] (Ljubljana, 2017), 97–98.

⁴²For a detailed overview, see Almasy, *Kanon und nationale Konsolidierung*, 82–85; and maps for the different types of schools: Helmut Rumppler and Martin Seger, *Die Habsburger Monarchie*. vol. IX/2, *Soziale Strukturen. Die Gesellschaft der Habsburger Monarchie im Kartenbild. Verwaltungs-, Sozial- und Infrastrukturen nach dem Zensus von 1910* (Vienna 2010), 220–27.

⁴³“Staatsgrundgesetz vom 21. December 1867,” 396.

⁴⁴Hannelore Burger, “Die Vertreibung der Mehrsprachigkeit am Beispiel Österreichs 1867–1918,” in *Über Muttersprachen und Vaterländer: Zur Entwicklung von Standardsprachen und Nationen in Europa*, ed. Gerd Hentschel (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), 35–50; and idem., *Sprachenrecht und Sprachengerechtigkeit im Österreichischen Unterrichtswesen, 1867–1918* (Vienna, 1995).

Simultaneously, the so called *utraquist* bilingual elementary school, very popular, especially in Carinthia and Styria in the 1850s and 1860s, was in gradual decline. In these bilingual schools, subjects were taught in two different languages. They were not treated equally though; the second *Landessprache* (i.e., Slovene in Carinthia and Styria) was used in the lower grades, only until the students knew German sufficiently to be taught in that language. Even though this type of school was popular among Slovene parents because a good command of German promised their children later social mobility and professional advantages, nationalists began to criticize this type of school as a tool for assimilation, namely Germanization.⁴⁵ Over time, elementary schools became increasingly “German” or “Slovene”: for example, in Lower Styria, there were 199 bilingual schools in 1870, but only 49 left in 1912/13.⁴⁶ It is important to stress the fact that, as Pieter Judson has shown, the driving forces behind this development were not state institutions, but rather nationalist associations (such as the *Deutsche Schulverein* or its Slovene counterpart, the *Društvo sv. Cirila in Metoda*) and nationalists on the local and regional levels who built private schools and kindergartens, promoted monolingual schools, and used their influence over district school boards to turn bilingual schools into monolingual ones.⁴⁷

Beyond the mere teaching of other subjects in the Slovene language, the school subject of the Slovene language itself, especially in secondary schools, was of great importance to the development of national thinking and the formation of a nationally conscious elite.⁴⁸ With the major reform of the Austrian secondary school system, as stipulated in the *Organisationsentwurf* in 1849, a new canon of school subjects was introduced in secondary schools. Even though the classical languages Latin and Greek still had considerable hours per week dedicated to them in the *Gymnasien* (about 6–8 for Latin and 4–6 for Greek), other foreign languages were introduced: German (between 2 and 5 h a week) and—in the areas of mixed Slovene-German speaking population—Slovene language (around 2 h a week).⁴⁹ By 1850, Slovene language as its own subject was introduced in nine *Gymnasien* in “Laibach, Neustadtl [Novo mesto], Klagenfurt, St. Paul, Graz, Marburg, Cilli, Triest und Görz,”⁵⁰

⁴⁵ On utraquist schools, see: Gerald Stourzh, “Die Gleichberechtigung der Volksstämme als Verfassungsprinzip 1848–1918,” in *Die Habsburger Monarchie. Die Völker des Reiches*, vol. III/II, eds. Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna 1980), 1141; for utraquist schools in Carinthia, see Theodor Domej, “Sprachpolitik und Schule in Kärnten 1774–1848,” in *Staat – Land – Nation – Region. Gesellschaftliches Bewußtsein in den österreichischen Ländern Kärnten, Krain, Steiermark und Küstenland 1740 bis 1918*, ed. Harald Krahwinkel (Klagenfurt 2002), 154–158; for a discussion of local examples from Maribor/Marburg: Almasy, *Wie aus Marburgern*, 144–47.

⁴⁶ Peter Urbanitsch, “Die Deutschen,” in *Die Habsburger Monarchie. Die Völker des Reiches*, vol. III/II, eds. Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna 1980), 82. For a geographic distribution of bilingual schools throughout the monarchy in 1910, see the map in Rumpler and Seger, *Die Habsburger Monarchie*. vol. IX/2, *Soziale Strukturen*, 221.

⁴⁷ Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation. Activists on the Language Frontier of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, 2006), 47–48. On the *Deutsche Schulverein*, founded in 1880, see also Werner Drobisch, “Der Deutsche Schulverein 1880–1914. Ideologie, Binnenstruktur und Tätigkeit einer (deutsch)nationalen Kulturorganisation unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Sloweniens,” in *Kulturelle Wechselseitigkeiten in Mitteleuropa. Deutsche und slowenische Kultur im slowenischen Raum von Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, eds. Feliks Bister and Peter Vodopivec (Ljubljana 1995), 129–54; Janez Cvirk “Deutsche und Slowenen in der Untersteiermark: zwischen Kooperation und Konfrontation,” in *Slowenen und Deutsche im gemeinsamen Raum. Neue Forschungen zu einem komplexen Thema*, ed. Harald Heppner (Munich 2002), 111–25.

⁴⁸ This point has been made several times in Almasy, *Wie aus Marburgern “Slowenen” und “Deutsche” wurden*, 152; and in Almasy, *Kanon und nationale Konsolidierung*, 78–90, especially 89.

⁴⁹ To give a precise example: In the 1854 school year, the classical gymnasium in Ljubljana/Laibach dedicated 2 teaching hours in every class to Slovene, whereas German had (varying between classes) 2–3, Latin 6–8, and Greek 4–6 h a week. The *Staatsgymnasium* in Maribor/Marburg dedicated 2 teaching hours to Slovene, 2–4 for German, 4–6 for Greek, and 5–8 h to Latin in the same year. The *Unterrealschule* in Klagenfurt, with no classical languages and more emphasis on spoken languages and science, for the same year dedicated slightly more hours a week to spoken languages, namely 3 h to Slovene and 4–5 to German. See: “Lektionsplan des Jahres 1854,” in *Jahresbericht und Programm des k.k. akademischen Gymnasiums zu Laibach* (Ljubljana, 1854), 10–15; “Lehrstoff und Lehrverfassung im Studienjahr 1854,” in *Viertes Programm des k.k. Staatsgymnasiums in Marburg* (Maribor, 1854), B; and “Lehrplan,” in *Jahresbericht der Unterrealschule zu Klagenfurt* (Klagenfurt, 1854), 38–46.

⁵⁰ The list of *Gymnasien* was cited in ÖSTA AVA, Unterricht 1848–1918, U2 Schachtel 5531, Fasz. 4896, 24 D, Ministerium des Cultus und Unterrichtes, “Landesschulbehörde in Gratz überreicht zwei Exemplare von dem ersten Theile von Kleemanns slowenischen Lesebüche für Untergymnasien,” Akt Nr. 10845, 12 December 1850.

though not yet as a “full” subject in comparison to the rest. It was obligatory only for Slovene students and became a subject for them at the final *Matura* exams in 1850, while German students had the optional subject *Slovenisch für Deutsche* (for whom negative exams in this subject posed no impediment in their advancement).⁵¹

The importance of this new school subject (especially in the upper classes) is to be stressed in three regards. First, Slovenes had to learn the (standard) Slovene language properly, because most of them did not know how to write and read in Slovene yet.⁵² Second, the subject taught the students not only grammar and literature, but simultaneously also a new identification beyond the older regional identities, namely, “that they were not merely Carniolians, Styrians, Carinthians, and Primorci, but first and foremost Slovenes.”⁵³ Third, even though only a small portion of the (male) population attended a middle school, those men later on formed the Slovene intellectual elite that was crucial to and influential for the spread of national thinking and the Slovene national movement.⁵⁴ To illustrate all these effects we can see how a former student of the Gymnasium in Maribor/Marburg, the later lawyer and Slovene nationalist Josip Sernev (1844–1925), described the impact of this subject:

Even though I had told them that I knew Slovene only poorly, they put me into the Slovene class for Slovenes, whereas Germans, who learned Slovene, had their separate hours. My knowledge of Slovene was so insufficient that at the beginning there was almost no word in my written exercises that had not been marked or underlined once, or twice with a red pen, because I did not have any clue about Slovene grammar. But my teacher, Professor Majciger, and after him also his successor, did not grade my bad knowledge, but rather my learning improvement, so that already in the first semester I was given a *recht befriedigend* [a C], and later never a grade worse than that, so that I remained the model student of my class. In this clever way, my teachers made me like learning Slovene, and also influenced my national thinking.⁵⁵

As the account by Sernev illustrates, the human factor plays a decisive role in school and education in general, and in the formation of a national belief system in particular; as in Sernev’s account of his professor Janez Majciger,⁵⁶ many later national thinking men reported on the crucial influence a specific teacher had on them.⁵⁷

When discussing how “national” languages were implemented in the education system of the Austrian Empire after 1848, it is worthwhile to take a closer look, clearly differentiating between the language of instruction spoken during class and the respective language as its own subject of study. For the formation of Slovene national identification, the latter seemed to have had more relevant long-term effects.

⁵¹On the development of the Slovene language as a new school subject at the gymnasium in Maribor/Marburg, see, in detail, Almasy, *Wie aus Marburgern*, 148–53; and, in general, Almasy, *Kanon und nationale Konsolidierung*, 85–89.

⁵²As the *Unterrealgymnasium* at Klagenfurt also complained: “ . . . because only the fewest Slovenes are able to read in their mother tongue! (. . . weil die wenigsten Slovenen in ihrer Muttersprache lesen können!)” in *Jahresbericht der Unterrealschule zu Klagenfurt*, 16.

⁵³Schmidt, *Zgodovina šolstva*, vol. 3, 330.

⁵⁴See Miroslav Hroch, *Das Europa der Nationen: die moderne Nationsbildung im Vergleich* (Göttingen, 2005), 103; Cohen, “Nationalist Politics,” 261ff; and Almasy, *Wie aus Marburgern*, 152.

⁵⁵Josip Sernev, *Spomini. S spremno študijo Janeza Cvirna* [Memories. With an Accompanying Study by Janez Cvirn] (Celje, 2003), 3.

⁵⁶Janez Majciger (1829–1909), after studying classical and Slavic philology at the University of Vienna and passing a teaching exam, became a supplementary teacher at the Gymnasium at Maribor/Marburg in 1857, where he taught until his retirement in 1900. See: Šlebinger, Janko “Majciger, Janez (1829–1909),” in *Slovenska biografija*, ed. SAZU ZRC (Ljubljana 2013). Proper teacher training was introduced only in the School Act of 1869 in the form of four-year *Lehrerbildungsanstalten*. Teachers of earlier generations only had minor training in so called “Präparandenkurse.” See “Gesetz vom 14. Mai 1869 [...] [Reichsvolksschulgesetz]” in *Reichsgesetzblatt für das Kaiserthum Österreich. Jahrgang 1869* (Vienna 1869), 277–88, 281 and Almasy, *Wie aus Marburgern*, 163–66.

⁵⁷The same is true for Šantel, who also emphasized the positive influence professor Majciger had on him; see Šantel, *Zgodbe moje pokrajine*, 144. Josip Vošnjak (1834–1911), another important “Slovene patriot,” mentions at length the influence of his elementary teacher Peter Musi. See Josip Vošnjak, *Spomini* (Ljubljana 1905), 15–17.

Slovene and/or Illyrian?

Even though there was now a subject called “Slovene language” in most of the *Gymnasien* in the mixed but predominantly Slovene-speaking areas, in the aftermath of 1848 there still were no proper Slovene textbooks available to teach this subject. The *Organisationsentwurf* advised that, in such a situation without proper teaching materials available, reading materials should be taken temporarily from translations, or from other Slavic languages. In the case of Slovene, the Slavic language most closely related was the Illyrian language,⁵⁸ and so should be consulted. The authors Gundulić, Palmotić, and Georgić, authors from the baroque literary tradition in Dalmatia, are mentioned by name.⁵⁹ From curricula and memoirs, we know that this was indeed common (though provisional) practice in the Maribor/Marburg Gymnasium up to the 1860s,⁶⁰ until this controversial issue was also administratively resolved “from above,” that is, from the school administration in Vienna, and the practice was abolished. In 1864, the Gymnasium in Maribor/Marburg asked the *Unterrichtsrat*, the supplementary organ set up in place of the Ministry of Education during the years 1860–67, to make the provisional practice of using Gundulić’s *Osman* and Palmotić’s *Kristijada* in Slovene language classes permanent. The request was declined with the explanation that “Illyrian is, in general, of no use to gain deeper insight into the organism of the Slovene language.” Even though the file does not mention his name, we can once again suspect Fran Miklošič as an advisor in the background on this matter, since he was a member of the *Unterrichtsrat*.⁶¹ This was the end of the provisional use of Illyrian texts for instruction of the Slovene language, and an important step toward fencing off this language from its closest relative. We can only speculate which other directions the language development would have taken—at least in the eastern parts of predominantly Slovene-speaking territories—had this not been the case. Once again, through regulations on schools and textbooks, the development and unification of the Slovene language was influenced to a great extent by language policies set by the school administration in Vienna.

The Implementation of “Sloveneness” in Textbooks

As already argued, Slovene language as a new school subject also implemented the national identification of “Sloveneness,” *en passant*, into students’ minds as a “perspective on the world.”⁶² This becomes obvious if we look closer at the reading materials used in schools, especially at anthology-like readers (*Lesebuch*, and in Slovene *berilo* or *čitanka*), the most common type (and among the lower classes, along with the *Rechenbuch* and the *Katechismus*, the *only* type) of textbooks approved by the Ministry for the use in schools. They provided reading materials of various genres and topics for almost every subject taught over the course of one or two academic years.⁶³ As previous research

⁵⁸The Illyrian movement is not to be understood as a precursory movement for either the Slovene or the Croatian national movements but was rather a common cultural and linguistic identity concept for what later turned out to be Slovenes and Croats. The movement had its peak in the first half of the nineteenth century. Later, by the middle of the century, “Illyrian” lost out in comparison to its two other competitors—the Slovene and the Croatian national ideas—and came to be understood more synonymously as “Croatian.” For a detailed discussion on “Illyrism,” see Rok Stergar, “Nationswerdungsprozesse und neue Grenzen. Der Zusammenbruch der französischen Herrschaft in den Illyrischen Provinzen und ihre (Re-)Integration in das Kaisertum Österreich,” in *Am Rande der großen Politik: Italien und der Alpenraum beim Wiener Kongress*, ed. Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften und Europäische Ethnologie, Universität Innsbruck (Innsbruck, 2017), 97–122, 114–19. The case of Illyrian identity seems to be a parallel case of a failing identity concept as described for the Slovaks with the Hungarian, All-Slav, and Czechoslovak identity concepts that did not catch on. See further, in Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia*.

⁵⁹See *Organisationsentwurf*, 28–29 and 151.

⁶⁰Santel, *Zgodbe moje pokrajine*, 144. It is mentioned as part of the curriculum in the last two—seventh and eighth—school years. See e.g.: “Lehrverfassung im Studienjahr 1856,” in *Programm des k.k. vollständigen Staatsgymnasiums in Marburg* (Maribor, 1856), 20; “Abgehandelte Lehrpens,” in *Programm des k.k. Gymnasiums in Marburg* (Maribor, 1860), 18–19.

⁶¹“das Illyrische [ist] im Ganzen genommen nicht geeignet, eine gründliche Einsicht in den Organismus des Slowenischen zu fördern,” ÖSTA AVA, Unterricht 1848–1918, U2 Schachtel 5531, Fasz. 4896, 24 D, K. k. Staatsministerium u. a., “Statthalterei für Steiermark mit dem Einschreiben der Marburger Gym. [bezüglich der Bewilligung für den Lehrgebrauch von Gundulić Osman, Palmotić Kristijada und Miklošič Chrestomathia palaeoslovencia],” Akt Nr. 8410, 19 August 1864. On the Unterrichtsrat, see Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, vol. 4, 87.

⁶²Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, 2004), 17.

⁶³For details on readers, see Almasy, *Kanon und nationale Konsolidierung*, 110–23, and on the establishment of a common Slovene identity through translated texts in those readers, 282–305.

has shown, national content was only subtly or “subcutaneously” introduced to the students, and editors had to make sure it never contradicted Austrian patriotism and loyalty to the emperor.⁶⁴ So they passed on their own double convictions to their readers by strengthening a feeling of national Slovene identity *and at the same time* confessing their loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty and the whole empire—a strategy and ideology summed up in one word as *Austroslavism*.⁶⁵ Specific terms used by textbook editors and writers to explain this “double patriotism” included the “wider homeland (*širša domovina*)” and the (not specifically explained) “narrower homeland (*ozja domovina*).” More often than not, as examples from readers clearly show, texts also simply praised “the homeland”—without ever giving a name and without telling the readers what this homeland exactly was—especially when they talked about the ambiguous “narrower homeland,” which could be understood as one’s crown land, home region, town, or village. But this could also be the regions inhabited by Slovenes, which is to say the “Slovene lands,” the territory which symbolically houses the collective Slovene national identity.⁶⁶

Let us now look at some examples on a textual level of how Sloveneness was instilled in elementary and middle school readers, when texts were translated into Slovene (mostly from German, sometimes also from Czech and Croatian). By looking at translations and comparing them with the original texts in other languages, we can clearly see interventions, cuts, additions, and changes. In fiction and non-fiction prose, short texts were “localized,” that is framed as Slovene or played in a Slovene setting. This occurred in elementary school readers, for example, where parables and fables told age-appropriate stories which played out in Slovene villages or described events that happened to little Tone, Marijana, or Urša (and not to Carl, Brigitte, or Walburg, as in the German versions).⁶⁷ The harmless world presented in a textbook in this way was a “Slovene world.” Also, non-fiction texts (or translations) in Slovene readers focused (not exclusively, but still frequently) on regional “Slovene” topics, such as local customs and traditions, biographies of important Slovenes, or most commonly the natural beauties of important sites in Slovene-inhabited regions, such as the Postojnska jama, the karst, lakes such as the Wörthersee/Vrbsko jezero or the Blejsko jezero, the Soča/Isonzo river, or mining in Idrija. The same goes for monographic textbooks such as from geography or biology in the higher classes, simply by stating that the natural phenomena or animal discussed is also present in “our lands,” meaning in “the Slovene lands.”⁶⁸ Even in mathematics textbooks, the given examples were localized. Whereas in the German version of the same *Rechenbuch*, the students had to add together the specific number of kilometres between the stops Gloggnitz–Mürzzuschlag–Graz of the Southern Railway, the textbook example in the Slovene translation asked students to add together the kilometres between the stops “Dunaj [Vienna]–Gradec [Graz]–Celje–Ljubljana.”⁶⁹

Sometimes, the editors of the school readers intervened at the linguistic micro level of individual words to “Slovenize” certain contents, especially in the early textbooks of the 1850s, as the following

⁶⁴ Only in the hysterical atmosphere immediately before and during World War I did editors of Slovene readers raise the authorities’ suspicion for stoking up “Pan-Slavic sentiments” and for aggravating “national activities.” But this is a topic for another paper. See Almasy, *Kanon und nationale Konsolidierung*, 341–69.

⁶⁵ On Austroslavism, see Andreas Moritsch, “Der Austroslavismus – ein verfrühtes Konzept zur politischen Neugestaltung Mitteleuropas,” in *Der Austroslavismus: Ein verfrühtes Konzept zur politischen Neugestaltung Mitteleuropas*, ed. Andreas Moritsch (Vienna, 1996), 11–23. On Austroslavism in textbooks, see Ernst Bruckmüller, “Patriotic and National Myths,” 17.

⁶⁶ See examples, in: Karin Almasy, “Heimat und Welt in konzentrischen Kreisen. Wissenskanon und Vorstellungswelten in slowenischen Volksschullesebüchern um 1900,” in *Dynamiken in der Wissensproduktion. Räume, Zeiten und Akteure im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Manfred Pfaffenthaler and Wolfgang Göderle (Bielefeld, 2017), 123–47. More traditional Slovene research in a rather black-and-white perspective does not grasp this concept of “double patriotism” and speaks of a “paradox” that Slovene students were not able to understand, see Govekar-Okolš, “Nacionalni koncept,” 95.

⁶⁷ The examples are taken from Slovene translations of parables by the popular German children’s book author Christoph Schmid (1768–1854): Christoph Schmid, “Das kostbare Kräutlein;” in *Kurze Erzählungen. Ein Lehr- und Lesebuch für die deutschen Schulen in Bayern* (Munich 1866), 27; “Drago Zeljce,” in *Čitanka za obče ljudske šole. Izdaja v štirih delih. III del. Za četrto in peto šolsko leto štiri- in večrazrednih šol* [Reader for elementary schools in four volumes, vol. III, for the fourth and fifth school year], eds. Henrik Schreiner and Franc Hubad (Vienna, 1904), 39.

⁶⁸ A discussion at length with all the mentioned examples is in Almasy, *Kanon und nationale Konsolidierung*, 253–305.

⁶⁹ Numerous examples in Slovene translations of biology, history, and mathematics textbooks can be found in Žigon, Almasy, and Lovšin, *Vloga in pomen prevajanja*, 78–131. For the railway example, see *ibid.*, 108.

example from middle school readers will illustrate. We can find examples of the adjectives *kranjski* (Carniolan) or *slovenski* (Slavic) being replaced by the adjective *slovenski* (Slovene). In the famous poem *Na moje rojake* (*To My Compatriots*) from 1806, often reprinted by readers in the following decades, Valentin Vodnik had originally addressed his fellow man in the first line: “*Krajnz! Toja sémla je sdrava* (Carniolan! Your soil is sound . . .).”⁷⁰ In the first Slovene reader for secondary schools from 1850, the line was still addressed to his fellow Carniolan compatriots (though linguistically modernized).⁷¹ But, from 1865 onward, the compatriot addressed to readers was not Carniolan anymore, but Slovene: “*Slovenec! Tvoja zemlja je zdrava* (Slovene! Your soil is sound . . .).”⁷² We can assume that the editor, Anton Janežič (1828–69), of the widely used reader (1865) made this change and the next generation of reader editors followed him in the decision to make the poem fit the new national identity concept.

As has been convincingly shown by Joachim Hösler, the same “editing process” in favor of a common Slovene identity concept on a micro-textual level can also be witnessed in the most important Slovene newspaper of the time, the *Kmetijske and rokodelske novice*. From 1846/47 onward, its editor Janez Bleiweis (1808–81), started to replace *kranjski* in received texts with the adjective *slovenski* and thereby strongly enforced the national dimension of the noun *Slovenci*, that is, “Slovenes.”⁷³ Where Bleiweis, with his interventions, subtly though effectively pushed public perception toward a Slovene national identity among adults, the editors of school readers did the same among the easily influenced youth. So, what we can see clearly by examining Slovene textbooks of that era is that in a subtle, but effective way, textbooks and readers portrayed a “Slovene perspective on the world,” and thereby shaped and sharpened a specific national worldview.

The Categorization Effect of Middle School Statistics and the Vanishing of National “In-Betweens”

The long-lasting “unintended consequence” of perceiving oneself in terms of a national language-based identity was caused also by statistics and recordings in different situations and for various occasions that put people into mutually exclusive “ethnic boxes.”⁷⁴ Following the international trend toward statistical recording from the 1850s onward,⁷⁵ middle schools throughout the empire kept records of their students. They listed their honor students, students receiving a stipend, their graduates, their teachers, events during the school year, the textbooks and teaching materials used, donations given to the school’s library, topics of the *Matura* exam, and so on. Those numbers and information were published each year in printed annual school reports called *Jahresberichte* or *Programm*.

Unsurprisingly, in this statistical overview, the students were also categorized according to language use and, by extension, their nationality. As in the Habsburg census, taken later, the equation “language use = nationality” was inherent in these statistics.⁷⁶ By having its students placed into different

⁷⁰Valentin Vodnik, *Pésmo sa pokúshino* [Poems] (Ljubljana 1806), 3. In a later version from 1816, Vodnik himself already changed “Krajnz” into “Slovenz,” but mostly liked understood this term in a broader way. For a discussion on Vodnik’s use of these ethnonyms, see Kosi, *Kako je nastal slovenski narod*, 250.

⁷¹V[alentin] Vodnik, “Na moje rojake,” in *Slovensko berilo za pervi gimnazijalni razred* [Slovenian Reader for the First High School Class], ed. N. N. [Johann Kleemann] (Ljubljana, 1850), 17.

⁷²Valentin Vodnik, “Na moje rojake,” in *Cvetnik za slovensko mladino. Pervi del.* [Anthology for Slovene Youth. First Part], ed. Anton Janežič (Klagenfurt, 1865), 4. Still present in 1897: Valentin Vodnik, “Mojim rojakom,” in *Tretje berilo za občne ljudske šole* [Third Reader for the General Primary School], ed. N. N. [Peter Končnik] (Vienna, 1897), 64–65.

⁷³Hösler, *Von Krain zu Slowenien*, 347.

⁷⁴Stergar and Scheer, “Ethnic boxes.”

⁷⁵From 1853 onward, the *Internationale Statistische Congress* was the international forum for statistics and its application in state administration. In 1855, at the Second Congress in Paris, the formation of statistical committees was recommended. In 1863, Austria established the *k.k. statistische Central-Commission*. See Wolfgang Göderle, *Zensus und Ethnizität: zur Herstellung von Wissen über soziale Wirklichkeiten im Habsburgerreich zwischen 1848–1910* (Göttingen, 2016), 165.

⁷⁶On the Austrian census, see Emil Brix, *Die Umgangssprachen in Altösterreich zwischen Agitation und Assimilation. Die Sprachenstatistik in den zisleithanischen Volkszählungen, 1880 bis 1910* (Vienna, 1982), 27–30; and Göderle, *Ethnizität und Zensus*, 193–227.

categories, individual schools helped to propagate the notion that the students belonged to different national groups and so enforced a groupism that was defined by language use.⁷⁷ In the later decades of the nineteenth century, the column in question in these tables appeared to be quite standardized, with most of them using the category *Muttersprache*.⁷⁸ Additionally, in later decades, most of the tables also listed a column called “place of birth,” *Geburtsort* (*Vaterland*), or sometimes *Geburtsland*, even though all were citizens of the Habsburg monarchy, which classified the students according to their crown lands of origin.⁷⁹

However, there were a number of ambiguities and terminological imprecisions in these middle school categorizations, especially in the earlier decades of the 1850s and 1860s. Sometimes, middle schools categorized their students not based on different mother tongues, but as “nationalities.”⁸⁰ Some did not have such a column at all,⁸¹ others avoided the question in terminology altogether by not giving the column a name; in such cases, after the total number of students in each year, the statistics continued with “among them are” (*darunter sind*), and giving the number of Slovenes, Germans, Croats, Italians, and so on.⁸² Comparing a number of annual school reports from different middle schools and different decades, it becomes clear that every school counted and categorized in its own way, though there was, over time, the tendency to name the national proxy classification as “mother tongue” (*Muttersprache*).⁸³

A very interesting example is given by the *k.k. Staatsgymnasium* in Maribor/Marburg, where the name of this column in the annual reports from the 1850s and 1860s changed from year to year. In 1854, it spoke of nationality (*der Nationalität nach*), in 1855 only about language (*Sprache*), in 1856 and 1857, there was no statistical overview on the students at all. In 1860, this column was not given a name but divided the students into Slovenes and Germans. From 1861 onward, this category was named “mother tongue” (*der Muttersprache nach* or simply *Muttersprache*).⁸⁴

Most interestingly, the *Staatsgymnasium* in Maribor/Marburg did not only give binary possibilities of either Slovene or German, but (in 1854, 1855, and 1861–68) still offered a third, in-between category. In the years 1855, 1861, and 1862, this third possibility was called *Utraquisten*,⁸⁵ which was defined as follows: “*Utraquisten*” were students who, “according to their own testimony, grew up in their parents’ home learning both the German and the Slovene language equally from an very early age on and have equally good command of both languages.”⁸⁶ After 1863, this possibility in the category “*der Muttersprache nach*” was called “*Deutsch-Slovenisch*,” and so the students were respectively “*Deutsch-Slovenen*.” Those already having national convictions seemed not to have liked this

⁷⁷Brubaker, *Ethnicities without Groups*, 8.

⁷⁸See *Jahresbericht über das k.k. Gymnasium in Triest* (Triest, 1896), 84ff; *XXXI. Jahresbericht des Kaiser Franz-Josef-Gymnasiums in Pettau* (Ptuj, 1900), 22; *Programm des k.k. Staats-Gymnasiums in Cilli* (Celje, 1895), 68.

⁷⁹*Programm des k.k. Staats-Gymnasiums in Cilli* (Celje, 1895), 68. *Fünfzehnter Jahresbericht des steierm. Landes-Untergymnasiums zu Pettau* (Ptuj, 1884), 15; *Jahresbericht des k.k. Obergymnasiums zu Laibach* (Ljubljana, 1884), 74.

⁸⁰*Dritter Jahresbericht der k.k. Staats-Oberrealschule in Marburg* (Maribor, 1873), 54; *Vierter Jahresbericht der k.k. Staats-Oberrealschule in Marburg* (Maribor, 1874), 44; *XLII. Jahresbericht der steiermärkischen Landes-Bürgerschule in Cilli* (Celje, 1912), 11; *Jahresbericht der Unterrealschule zu Klagenfurt* (Klagenfurt, 1854), 56.

⁸¹See *Jahresbericht des k.k. Gymnasiums zu Neustadt* (Novo mesto, 1855), 30; *Jahresbericht des k.k. Gymnasiums zu Neustadt* (Novo mesto, 1856), 33.

⁸²For example, as practiced by the *Staatsgymnasium* in Ljubljana/Laibach (see the *Jahresberichte des akademischen Gymnasiums zu Laibach* (Ljubljana, 1854–68)) and the *Gymnasium* in Celje (see *Programme des k.k. Staats-Gymnasiums in Cilli* (Celje, 1865–69)).

⁸³For this argument, I relied on random sampling of more than ninety annual reports of different schools from all the areas with a Slovene-speaking population between 1850 and 1918, but mostly Maribor, Ljubljana, and Celje.

⁸⁴See *Programme des k.k. Staatsgymnasiums in Marburg* (Maribor, 1854–68).

⁸⁵*Programm des k.k. Staatsgymnasiums in Marburg* (Maribor, 1855), 15; *Programm des k.k. Staatsgymnasiums in Marburg* (Maribor, 1861), 37; *Programm des k.k. Staatsgymnasiums in Marburg* (Maribor, 1862), 57.

⁸⁶“Unter der Bezeichnung ‘Utraquisten’ sind diejenigen Schüler verstanden, welche nach ihrer eigenen Angabe von früher Kindheit auf im Elternhause die deutsche und slovenische Sprache zugleich erlernten und beider Sprachen gleich mächtig sind.” *Programm des k.k. Staatsgymnasiums in Marburg* (Maribor, 1861), 37. The term was also used in the linguistically mixed Budweis/Budějovice, but not referring to individuals, but rather to bilingual municipal schools and bilingual classes. See Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans. A Local History of Bohemian Politics 1848–1948* (Princeton, 2002), 34, 38, 102.

in-between category. Years later, in 1886, in the newspaper *Slovan*, this third category was harshly criticized by a former student of the school, because it did not fit binary national categories:

Apparently, some powerful men felt that there were too few nations (*narodi*) in Austria, so they invented one more nationality (*narodnost*): halflings (*polovičarji*), in the annual reports of the Gymnasium Maribor the so called “utraquisti,” those who knew Slovene and German equally well.⁸⁷

The interesting Slovene term *polovičar* (from *polovica* “half”) pejoratively used here translates to “halfling” and refers to someone who does or is something only in half. The critique of this in-between category fits the general criticism of bilingualism and bilingual education from national associations and sizable parts of the pedagogical mainstream of the time (as has been already illustrated by Tara Zahra with examples from Bohemia and Moravia, and Pieter Judson for the Slovene-German “language frontier” in Styria). From the perspective of nationalist activists, bilingual education would breed social outcasts with low self-esteem, individuals who could not keep up with their peers, “linguistically neutral hermaphrodites,”⁸⁸ or even violent renegades. In Styria, the concern was mainly for “children from mixed marriages or children of nationally hermaphrodite parents” that would become “lost” to their nation.⁸⁹

However, in later decades, this third in-between possibility was no longer given in the statistics of the *Staatsgymnasium* in Maribor/Marburg and the “halflings”—the *utraquisti*—vanished.⁹⁰ This correlates with the fact that people, also on other occasions and in other regards, were increasingly forced to take sides and to decide on one—and only one—ethnolinguistic group identity for themselves (naturally, at the expense of other options)—a choice, they may not have wanted, been able to make, or understood.⁹¹ Nevertheless, in reality, these in-between identifications did not vanish, and feelings of “national flexibility” or “national indifference” still existed.⁹² Choices were made rather opportunistically, pragmatically, and based on economic, financial, and other considerations. Nationality issues were not always key for making specific decisions in life.⁹³ Or as Rok Stergar and Tamara Scheer have put it, “identification with a nation did not follow an algorithmic logic” and “nation-ness remained contingent and situational.”⁹⁴

In sum, these school statistics were an early attempt by the empire to not only categorize its population along national lines, but by doing so also effacing the nationally indifferent.⁹⁵ Moreover, the trend toward the category “mother tongue” reflects the developments and discourse in European

⁸⁷This was taken from a long obituary for the former Slovene teacher at the *Staatsgymnasium Marburg* and priest Božidar Raič and was apparently written by a former student. See: R. A., “Božidar Raič,” in *Slovan*, no. 15 (1886), 231.

⁸⁸Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca/London, 2008), 23–27, 24.

⁸⁹Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 44.

⁹⁰See, as random samples, the annual reports (*Programme des k.k. Staatsgymnasiums Marburg*) from 1871, 1873, 1876, 1877, 1879, 1881, 1885, 1886, 1889, 1895, 1901, and 1916. Most of them used the term “Muttersprache.”

⁹¹On nationalist conflicts, tensions, and the pressure of taking sides in Lower Styria, see especially Janez Cvirk, *Das “Festungsdreieck.” Zur politischen Orientierung der Deutschen in der Untersteiermark (1861–1914)* (Vienna, 2016). The vanishing of the category “utraquisti” correlates with the fact that—as has already been discussed—the specific type of bilingual elementary school by the same name, the utraquist school, was also pushed away gradually. See Burger, “Die Vertreibung der Mehrsprachigkeit,” 41.

⁹²On national indifference, see the already mentioned Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*; Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*; King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*; further: Tara Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities. National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93–119; Rok Stergar, “National Indifference in the Heyday of Nationalist Mobilization? Ljubljana Military Veterans and the Language of Command,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (2012): 45–58.

⁹³Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 47.

⁹⁴Stergar and Scheer, “Ethnic boxes,” 575.

⁹⁵This phenomenon, of course, has counterparts elsewhere and intensified after 1918 in the new nation-states. See especially for Moravia, Bohemia, respectively Czechoslovakia after 1918, Tara Zahra, “Reclaiming Children for the Nation: Germanization, National Ascription, and Democracy in the Bohemian lands 1900–1945,” *Central European History* 37, no. 4 (2004): 501–43; and “The ‘Minority Problem’ and National Classification in the French and Czechoslovak Borderlands,” *Contemporary European History* 17, no. 2 (2008): 137–65. And in more general terms on national classifications, see Alexander Maxwell, “Nationalism as Classification: Suggestions for Reformulating National Research” *Nationalities Papers*, 46, no. 4 (2018): 539–55.

and Austrian statistics of that time, visible in the fact that from 1880 onward, the Austrian censuses asked for people's *Umgangssprache*, or language of everyday use. It popularized the idea that one's nationality can be easily measured or pinned down by one's language use.⁹⁶ As Stergar and Scheer have pointed out, such categorizations were powerful and, in the long run, produced group identities. "The boxes used in bureaucratic forms and questionnaires [and we might want to add: in school statistics] by the modernizing state throughout the nineteenth century turned into ethnic boxes."⁹⁷ As they continue:

by classifying its inhabitants in ethnolinguistic categories, in schools, the army, during the census, and on other occasions, the Habsburg state helped popularize the idea that everyone could be ascribed to a single, objectively determined, and internally homogenous national group. In other words, that everyone had an ethnic box they fit in.⁹⁸

However arbitrarily those categorizations were first "made up," they effectively produced "Slovenes" and "Germans" (and after 1945 "Austrians") in the long run. Perhaps this is most strikingly documented in the following recollection. A former student of the *Staatsgymnasium* in Maribor/Marburg, Anton Šantel, who we have heard from earlier, recalled in his memoirs the process of data collection for these statistics:

One day [in 1861], Principal Lang came to our class with a bunch of papers and asked every one of us in alphabetical order for his mother tongue. . . . When it was my turn, I stuttered that I had equally good command of German and Slovene. [Pavel] Turner, who sat next to me, punched me under the bench and whispered: "You are a Slovene! You are a Slovene!" At the same time, Principal Lang asked me: "In which language did you first say your prayers?" . . . So I answered: "Slovene" . . . and that's what he wrote down.⁹⁹

Conclusion

As Pieter Troch has convincingly shown for interwar Yugoslavia and its elementary schools, by then the Slovene national identity and the Slovene language were already well established and were factors that could no longer be ignored or negotiated away. Even though there were voices that demanded the reduction of Slovene to a mere dialect of Serbo-Croatian, or to create a new common linguistic unity out of both languages into one "uniform Yugoslav written language," those suggestions were unsuccessful, and "Slovenian was recognized as a separate language."¹⁰⁰ Moreover, he shows how elements from Slovene culture and history were used and reinterpreted in curricula and textbooks (though clearly in a smaller number than Serbian and Croatian ones) to create an overarching Yugoslav cultural identity.¹⁰¹ This shows convincingly that in the decades prior to 1918, a unified Slovene language and a largely known and accepted Slovene national identity had successfully been built in most Slovene-speaking areas, where schools with Slovene as a subject and as a teaching language alongside Slovene textbooks existed prior to 1918. Of course, there were limits. The findings by Jernej Kosi on the region of Prekmurje prove this argument to be true *ex negative*; in Prekmurje, which belonged to the

⁹⁶In 1872, at the International Statistical Congress in St. Petersburg, it was decided that censuses in the countries represented at the Congress were to ask for the *langue parlée* of its people from then on. This decision was pushed by one stream within the scientific community which felt that "nationality" was to be measured with one (easily countable and measurable) criteria, that is, language. The Habsburg Empire's main statisticians were sceptical toward this concept but adapted their census accordingly. Therefore, from 1880 onward, the Austrian census asked for the people's *Umgangssprache*, thereby implementing a new category of thinking into the people's mind and popularized the equation "language = nationality." See Göderle, *Zensus und Ethnizität*, 219–28.

⁹⁷Stergar and Scheer, "Ethnic boxes," 576.

⁹⁸Ibid., 583–84.

⁹⁹Šantel, *Zgodbe moje pokrajine*, 229.

¹⁰⁰Pieter Troch, "Between Tribes and Nation: The Definition of Yugoslav National Identity in Interwar Yugoslav Elementary School Curricula." in *Südost-Forschungen*, 69/70 (2010), 152–81, 161, 162, 164.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 167–171.

Hungarian part of the empire prior to 1918, such schools did not exist, and in 1918 a feeling of belonging to the Slovene nation was not yet extant.¹⁰² The case of Carinthia also attests to these conclusions: where there was only a small number of such schools, the mobilization effects toward a Slovene group identity were limited (and were rather steered toward a German national identity).¹⁰³ It is fair to conclude that the Austrian school system between 1848 and 1918 was very influential in setting these favorable social and educational circumstances and fuelled the mobilization toward a Slovene national group identity.

As was made clear, the Austrian school administration's modernization efforts after 1848 were impressive and long-lasting. They brought basic education to the masses, increased literacy, over time diminished the overwhelming influence of the Catholic Church and turned an essentially feudal society into a modern one. So without a doubt spreading literacy and basic education among the masses can be identified, as Jürgen Osterhammel put it, as one of the "most important cultural transformation processes of the nineteenth century," which contributed to what he termed "the Transformation of the World."¹⁰⁴ The development of not-yet-fully standardized languages of the empire, such as Slovene, was crucial for achieving this transformation, because only in this way could the common people who spoke these languages be reached effectively. Thus, a lot of effort was made to standardize, modernize, enable, and enrich the Slovene language. This largely came "from above," through the specific regulations set by the school administration—a fact that has not yet been appreciated and stressed enough in existing historiography. However, the Austrian school system—and here I want to contradict traditional Slovene historiography—was not something "foreign" or "German," implemented by Vienna against the will and without the collaboration of Slovene scholars and education experts to obstruct Slovene linguistic and national development. On the contrary, Slovene experts within the school system¹⁰⁵ were active agents and co-decision makers who significantly influenced the content of Slovene-language textbooks, educational policy, and linguistic standardization processes; they acted by advising ministers of education on school legislation, writing, translating, editing, and creatively "Slovenizing" textbooks, deciding on the approbation of such textbooks as anonymous peer-reviewers, categorizing students based on national categories, and, last but not least, by teaching the Slovene language and thereby also instilling the Slovene national concept into children's minds.

In conclusion, the mid-nineteenth-century school reforms, with regulations to strengthen and consolidate the Slovene language, had effects way beyond their primary scope. As an "unintended consequence," the Slovene national group identity was enforced and empowered considerably. As this article has demonstrated, the Slovene language as its own subject of study, the creation of Slovene reading materials for other subjects, and that material's translation and "Slovenization" for textbooks and statistical categorization within the school's administration, played a crucial role in the process of turning "Slovene" into one of the possible ethnolinguistic boxes tracked by the Austrian Empire and into a vivid and long-lasting identity concept for many people.

Acknowledgements. The author is currently employed at the University of Graz and a researcher within the research project "Schools and Imperial, National, and Transnational Identifications: Habsburg Empire, Yugoslavia, and Slovenia" (J6-2573) at the University of Ljubljana. I would like to thank the members and the consultants of the research project, especially the lead Rok Stergar, as well as the two peer-reviewers and the editors of the AHY for their helpful comments on earlier drafts.

Funding. This project was financially supported by the Slovenian Research Agency.

¹⁰²Jernej Kosi, "The Imagined Slovene Nation and Local Categories of Identification: 'Slovenes' in the Kingdom of Hungary and Postwar Prekmurje," *Austrian History Yearbook* 49 (2018): 87–102.

¹⁰³Hanns Haas and Karl Stuhlpfarrer, "Die Habsburgermonarchie – Assimilation durch Schule," in *Österreich und seine Slowenen* (Vienna, 1977), 14–24.

¹⁰⁴Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 2009), 1117.

¹⁰⁵Due to a lack of space, this paper does not mention by name all the important experts behind the scenes. Detailed examples of Slovene peer-reviewers, translators, editors, writers, teachers, and officials can be found in Almasy, *Kanon und nationale Konsolidierung*, especially in the chapters 91–138 and 139–86.