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Nowadays the Journal publishes a wide range of scholarly articles on ethnic and minority issues, with special emphasis on topics relevant for the so-called Alpine-Adriatic-Pannonian geographical area.

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Contacts / *Kontakti*

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SERGIU CONSTANTIN

The Legal and Institutional Framework for National Minorities in Slovakia

This study is part of a much more extensive research on the “Practices of Minority Protection in Central Europe” and it is based mainly on a detailed review of the Slovak legislation and of the existing literature on national minorities in this country. Firstly, I shall clarify what is a “national minority” in Slovakia. In addition to comparative statistical data, the study provides a concise presentation of the demographic trends and the territorial distribution of the officially recognized national minorities. A historical overview is essential for the understanding of the present context; therefore, the study follows in parallel fashion the situation of Hungarian, Roma and German minority groups from the end of World War I until today. Secondly, the study presents the Slovak legal and institutional framework in the fields of education, use of languages and political participation and it addresses some of the most sensitive minority related issues in the country. The conclusions emphasize the need for legislative changes in all three inter-connected fields analyzed, and explain the current trend of majority – minorities cooperation based on a consensus oriented political culture.

Keywords: Slovakia, national minorities, education, use of languages, political participation

Pravni in institucionalni okvir zaščite narodnih manjšin na Slovaškem

Članek je del mnogo obsežnejše raziskave o »Praksah manjšinske zaščite v Srednji Evropi« in temelji zlasti na natančnem pregledu slovaške zakonodaje in obstoječe literature, posvečene narodnim manjšinam v tej državi. Najprej pojasni, kaj je “narodna manjšina” na Slovaškem. Poleg primerljivih statističnih podatkov članek ponuja jedrnato predstavitev demografskih gibanj in ozemeljske porazdelitve uradno priznanih narodnih manjšin. Zgodovinski pregled je bistven za razumevanje sedanjega položaja, zato članek vzporedno primerja položaje madžarske, romske in nemške manjšinske skupnosti od konca prve svetovne vojne do danes. Nadalje članek predstavlja slovaški pravni in institucionalni okvir zaščite na področju izobraževanja, rabe jezika in politične participacije in navaja tudi nekaj najbolj občutljivih, z manjšinami povezanih vprašanj v državi. V sklepu avtor poudarja potrebo po zakonodajnih spremembah na vseh treh med seboj povezanih in analiziranih področjih ter razloži sodobne trende večinsko – manjšinskega sodelovanja, ki temelji na politični kulturi, usmerjeni h konsenzu.

Ključne besede: Slovaška, narodne manjšine, izobraževanje, raba jezika, politična participacija

Correspondence address: Sergiu Constantin, European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen, Viale Druso 1, I-39100 Bolzano/Bozen, South Tyrol, Italy, e-mail: sergiu.constantin@eurac.edu.

1. Introduction

This article aims to offer an overview of the existing legal and institutional framework for national minorities in Slovakia and is based on a much more extensive research “Practices of Minority Protection in Central Europe.”¹ It is not my intention to explore sociological, anthropological or political science related aspects of majority – minorities relations. Moreover, the article is conceived as a country case-study, and therefore does not go into a comparative examination of national minority issues at regional level, in Central and Eastern Europe. My choice is dictated not only by the complexity of such an attempt vs. the required limited length of a paper to be published in a scientific journal, but also by the need for this type of research on this specific country. To my knowledge, very few comprehensive legal studies on minority issues in Slovakia have been published in English so far. While doing research on the region I came across English language articles that separately cover various topics (e.g., the use of minority languages, the political participation of minorities, and the situation of the Roma), but I found nothing approaching a wide-ranging and updated presentation of the Slovak legislation relevant for national minorities. I believe that such study, although rather descriptive, is of utmost importance because it should be the starting point for any comparative and analytical paper aiming to assess the effect of Slovak laws and institutions within the country, as well as their impact in a larger, regional perspective. For a correct understanding of the existing situation at central and sub-state levels, it is absolutely necessary to look at the general legal framework, its evolution in time and its foreseeable future changes. The same is true when analyzing particular aspects of domestic legislation dealing with national minorities. In the case of Slovakia the best well-known example in this sense is offered by the norms regulating the use of state language, which have triggered heated internal and international debates in the last years. I would argue that beside the obvious politicization of the topic, the conflicting opinions expressed by the main actors are based on their different approach in the assessment of the disputed legislation. On the one hand, it is submitted that the Fico government was stuck in a narrow, abstract and decontextualized interpretation of the legal text. The mantra of the Slovak authorities was that there is no anti-minority provision among the articles of the controversial 2009 law because it deals exclusively with the use of Slovak language. On the other hand, the point of view of the representatives of the Hungarian minority took into account a more nuanced analysis of the respective norms. They focused not only on the letter but also on the spirit of the law. Indeed, minority representatives pointed out the unclear provisions of the new legislation and insisted on its potential negative impact in practice, not only on the use of minority languages, but also in other

10 interconnected areas that are particularly important for national minorities, e.g. media, culture, economic participation. This study touches these topics as well although indirectly. It focuses mainly on the key legal issues related to education, use of languages and political participation. The first question to be clarified is who are the national minorities in Slovakia.

2. National Minorities in the Slovak Republic

The Slovak legislation does not contain a definition of what a “national minority” is. Article 34 of the Slovak Constitution refers to “national minorities and ethnic groups” but the difference between the two is not clear. It seems that in early 1990s when the Constitution was drafted, the Roma population was not considered a “national minority” but an “ethnic group”. This initial status has been changed in the ensuing years. According to Petőcz (2007/08, 740-741) the Roma people have been implicitly recognized as a “national minority” through the adoption by the government of the Statute of the Council of National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (CNMEG) and by the inclusion of the Roma language in the declaration attached to Slovakia’s instruments of ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (EChRML). However, even the Statute of the CNMEG does not refer to national minorities as such. It includes a list of cultural associations or civic organizations that are linked to 12 national minorities: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, German, Hungarian, Jewish, Moravian, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian, Russian and Ukrainian. According to the 2003 Government Plan of Legislative Tasks, the Ministry of Culture was supposed to submit to the government by December 2003 a draft law on national minorities and a draft law on the financing of national minority culture (Council of Europe 2004, 2). The government at that time acknowledged the fact that the protection of national minorities goes beyond cultural matters and that there is a need for a comprehensive cross-sectoral law on the status of national minorities. Therefore through the governmental Resolution no. 1182/2003 of 10 December 2003 the deadline was postponed to December 2004 and the responsibility was transferred to the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, Human Rights and Minorities (Council of Europe 2005, 20) whose office prepared a working version in early 2006. However, the draft law has never been submitted for consideration to the government and the present government “has declared several times that it did not consider the adoption of such law its priority” (Petőcz 2007/08, 753).

The last official census of 2001 shows that 763,601 Slovak citizens (14.2 per cent)

out of the total population of 5,379,455 declared themselves as belonging to one of the national minorities. The Hungarians represent the largest minority in Slovakia with 9.7 per cent of the total population. They are followed by the Roma (1.7 per cent), Czechs (0.8 per cent), Ruthenians (0.4 per cent), Ukrainians (0.2 per cent), and smaller minorities such as Germans (0.1 per cent), Jews, Croats, Poles, Moravians, Bulgarians, and Russians. Statistical data for the period 1991 – 2001 show an expected decrease of the Hungarian population and a slight increase of the number of people who officially declare their belonging to the Roma minority.

Table 1

Hungarian, Roma and German population of Slovakia in 1991 - 2001

	Census						
	Total population Slovakia	Hungarians		Roma		Germans	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1991	5,274,335	567,296	10.8	75,802	1.4	5,414	0.1
2001	5,379,455	520,528	9.7	89,920	1.7	5,405	0.1

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2001).

* The 1991 census was organized within the framework of the Czechoslovak federation.

The main reasons for the decreasing number of Hungarians are the low birth rate among the members of this minority group and the immigration of young Hungarians to their “kin-state” and other Western countries. Although Roma is the only national minority for which the 2001 census registered a population increase, it is generally accepted that the official data are not accurate and that, in reality, the number of Roma is bigger. However, there is no consensus among the experts regarding the size of this minority. The estimates range between 370,000 (Vašečka 2006, 8) to 520,000 persons (Harda 2006, 38) which represent more than 9% of the total population of the country. Vaňo and Haviarová (2003, 307) argue in their comprehensive study on the Roma in Slovakia that currently 370,000-390,000 Slovak citizens belong to this minority group. It is undisputed that during the 1991 and 2001 censuses, many Roma declared Slovak or Hungarian ethnicity, depending on the region where they were living. Rejection of Roma identity due to perceived stigmas attached to it, fear of discrimination and insufficient awareness of legal issues related to ethnicity and nationality are only some of the factors that have contributed to this phenomenon. The lack of

12 reliable data impedes the attempt to present a clear demographic picture of Roma population. If the estimates above are correct, around 22% of the population of Slovakia belongs to national minorities.

From a historical perspective it is worth noting that the two world wars had a profound impact on the demographic evolution of the minority groups in the territory of Slovakia. The most obvious cases are the Hungarians and the Germans.

Table 2
 The decrease of Hungarian and German population in Slovakia, 1919 – 1991

	Census				
	Total population	Hungarians		Germans	
		No.	%	No.	%
1919	2,935,139	681,375	23.2	145,139	4.9
1930	3,254,189	585,434	17.6	154,821	4.5
1941	3,536,319	761,434	21.5	143,209	4.0
1950	3,442,317	354,532	10.3	5,179	0.1
1970	4,537,290	552,006	12.2	4,760	0.1
1980	4,987,853	559,801	11.2	5,121	0.1
1981	5,274,335	567,296	10.8	5,414	0.1

Source: Kocsis & Kocsis-Hodosi (2001, 56).

In terms of territorial distribution of national minorities, the overwhelming majority of Hungarians in Slovakia (92.2 per cent) live in South Slovakia along the 550 kilometers long Slovak–Hungarian state border. On this territory of 9,000 square kilometers, there are 523 localities where the ratio of the Hungarian population exceeds 10 per cent, and within this figure, 435 localities where this ratio exceeds 50 per cent. In Košice and Bratislava there are over 10,000 Hungarians, making up about 4 to 6 per cent of the population. The Roma minority is concentrated primarily in Eastern Slovakia. According to last census data, 85.5 per cent of Roma live in the following three regions: Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica. In addition there are significant Roma communities in other regions e.g. Nitra, Trnava, Žilina, Trenčín and Bratislava. The Ruthenian and the Ukrainian minorities are concentrated in the Prešov region, and in the East and

North towards the border with Ukraine and Poland. Germans live mainly in the Spiš region and in the historical mining towns (Council of Europe 2008, 13).

Slovakia became a member of the Council of Europe on 30 June 1993. The country signed the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) on 1 February 1995 and ratified it on 14 September 1995. Moreover, Slovakia signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on 20 February 2001 and ratified it on 5 September 2001.

3. A historical overview

At the end of the World War I, almost the entire territory of what was known before as Upper Hungary became part of the newly established Czechoslovakia. Minority rights were guaranteed by the protection clauses of the treaties of St. Germain-en-Laye (1919) and Trianon (1920), as well as the Czechoslovak Constitution (1920) and Language Law which was adopted in the same time. Article 48 of the Trianon treaty and Article 53 of the St. Germain-en-Laye treaty contain specific clauses regarding the autonomy of an area known as Ruthenia or Transcarpathia. Such autonomy status remained a dead letter despite its inclusion among the constitutional provisions. In accordance with the Language Law, the courts and the authorities had the obligation to accept oral and written submission in the minority languages in the municipalities where at least 20 per cent of the population was German, Hungarian or Polish. The judgments and the official responses had to be provided both in the state and the minority language. By 1926, in the court districts where Germans represented two thirds of the population, the cases were dealt exclusively in the German language (Brügel 1973, 60). Specific regulations in the fields of education and culture had been adopted as well. For example, a law of April 1919 contained guarantees for the continuation of the education system of Germans, and legislation of July 1919 regarding public libraries provided that all towns with more than 400 inhabitants belonging to a national minority would have to establish special minority libraries with public funds (Brügel 1973, 59). It is worth mentioning also that five ethnic German politicians were members of the Czechoslovak governments in the period 1926-1938. Before World War II, the Hungarian minority was represented by several political parties, and generally the Hungarian language was used, according to the law, in the areas where Hungarians represented over 20% of the inhabitants. Despite some problems regarding the denial of citizenship, discrimination in employment and the use of mother tongue in relation with public authorities, national minorities in Czechoslovakia “enjoyed unique

14 opportunities to organize politically, economically and culturally, in comparison to minorities in the rest of Central and Eastern Europe” (Daftary & Gál 2000, 10). The situation of the Roma minority was rather different. The Czechoslovak regulations and policies targeting the Roma population between the First and the Second World War followed an inefficient and discriminatory approach. A single but striking example is the Law on Wandering Gypsies of July 1927 which, according to Kollárová (2003, 36-37),

obliged the Roma to register themselves, allowed the authorities to check their identities in different ways, introduced Gypsy identification papers for people older than 14, limited the terms of itinerancy and the use of the itinerancy permit, prohibited the use of weapons and itinerancy in groups larger than one family, obliged the Roma to build camps only in places allocated for this purpose by municipal mayors, prohibited the stay of foreign Roma in the Czechoslovak Republic, allowed the entry of the Roma to be prohibited in certain places, introduced new rules pertaining to the health of people and animals, and allowed children younger than 18 years to be taken from their parents and placed in homes. (...) The law was modified according to the needs of various regions by the orders of district authorities. In the Spiš region, the law's provisions were modified to prohibit entry by Roma into: 1. all municipalities in the area of the High Tatra mountains; 2. all spa health resorts.

Despite the relatively stable inter-ethnic relations in the inter-wars Czechoslovakia, the “minority issue” was far from being resolved. In Slovakia, the Hungarian minority rejected the Trianon treaty from the beginning and claimed a revision of the borders and the annexation of the Southern part of the country and Transcarpathia to Hungary. The authorities responded with measures aiming at the Slovakization of the minority population (Kocsis & Kocsis-Hodosi 2001, 61-61). In the Czech lands, the relations between the majority and the so-called Sudeten Germans deteriorated progressively as the economic crisis hit the local economy hard. In the early 1930s, around 600,000 Sudeten Germans were unemployed meaning that at the height of the crisis some 40 per cent of the ethnic German workers were affected. The unemployment rate of Czechs hardly exceeded more than 10% and this national/ethnic inequality became a serious political problem (Suppan 2006, 15-16). Following the first Vienna Award of November 1938, Czechoslovakia lost more than 10,000 square km of Southern Slovakia and Transcarpathia to Hungary. It ceased to exist when the remaining part of Slovakia declared independence in March 1939 and became a client state of Nazi Germany. The Slovak legislation on state citizenship approved in September 1939 stipulated that Jews could not hold state citizenship under any circumstances while the Roma people were accepted only if “it could be proven beyond a doubt that the Roma lived an orderly family life, had a permanent abode and a job in the municipality, and if, based on their upbringing, moral and political reliability, and public actions, they had achieved the level of regular

citizenship” (Kollárová 2003, 37). In May 1940 Decree no. 130/1940 Coll. regulating the labor obligation of the Jews and the Roma entered into force. Persons belonging to the Roma minority were sent first to the labor camps and in 1942 to concentration camps, especially the “East Slovak labor units” (Kollárová 2003, 38).

After World War II, the Czechoslovak Republic was re-established but it lost Transcarpathia, which was annexed by the Soviet Union. Ethnic Germans and Hungarians faced a collective guilt for the war and the disintegration of the state. The so-called Beneš Decrees deprived them of their civil rights and removed their economic foundations. According to Presidential Decree no. 33/1945, Czechoslovak citizens of German and Hungarian ethnic origins lost their citizenship. The decree exempted those citizens of German and Hungarian ethnicity who had joined the Czechs and Slovaks in the fight for liberation or were victims of Nazi persecution. The legislation also established the possibility to apply for the re-granting of Czechoslovak citizenship (a policy called “Re-Slovakisation” in Slovakia) within six months after the decree entered into force (Kusa 2009, 278, 300). Presidential Decree no. 12/1945 concerned “the confiscation and expedited allotment of agricultural property of Germans, Hungarians, as well as traitors and enemies of the Czech and Slovak nation” while Presidential Decree no. 28/1945 regulated “the settlement of Czech, Slovak or other Slavic farmers on the agricultural land of Germans, Hungarians and other enemies of the state”.

At the Potsdam Conference, on August 1945, the request of the Czechoslovak government for an unilateral deportation of Hungarians from the country was refused (mainly due to pressure from the USA). An agreement on population exchange (based on parity) between Czechoslovakia and Hungary was signed on February 1946 under pressure from the Allied Control Commission (Vigh 2002, 179). The victorious Allied states signed the peace treaty with Hungary in Paris on 10 February 1947 but the population exchange was a slow process that lasted from April 1947 until December 1948. According to Kocsis & Kocsis-Hodosi (2001, 66-68), 68,407 ethnic Hungarians were forced to abandon Slovakia for Hungary and about 6.000 left of their own free will. The post-war situation of the German minority was even worse. According to the data of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Interior, 2,165,135 ethnic Germans were expelled by the end of October 1946 (Pykel 2004, 20). Fearing further persecutions many of the 200,000-300,000 Germans that were still living in Czechoslovakia, left the country by the end of 1948. As a result of these events, the ethnic composition of Slovakia underwent a profound change between the censuses of 1941 and 1950. The Hungarian population halved and the German minority was reduced

16 to few thousand people. Although the Communist regime that took the power in 1948 abandoned gradually the state policies adopted in the first years after the war, one cannot argue that national minorities enjoyed a favorable situation. The Hungarians and the other ethnic groups had the legal right to their own schools, media and cultural organizations, but these rights were typically not enforced. Minority organizations were placed under strict party control. Act no. 245/1948 on the Citizenship of Persons of Hungarian Ethnicity restored Czechoslovak citizenship to those who were citizens of Czechoslovakia on 1 November 1938 and who were not subject to the “voluntary exchange of population” between Slovakia and Hungary in 1946. Act no. 34/1953 on the Acquisition of Czechoslovak Citizenship by Particular Persons restored Czechoslovak citizenship to ethnic Germans who lost it as a consequence of the Presidential Decree no. 33/1945 and who were permanent residents of the Czechoslovak Republic (Kusa 2009, 298). In March 1952, the Ministry of Interior issued the Directive on the reform of conditions for Gypsy people which laid down the measures necessary for the assimilation of the Roma minority (Jurová 2003, 51). It can be argued that in the early 1950s, the state deprived the Roma of the last remnants of their material culture and their last forms of subsistence by withdrawing the trade certificates, which had allowed them to practice a trade as self-employed people, cancelling their musicians’ licenses, prohibiting them from performing wage labor for private farmers (in order to speed up the collectivization and socialization of the countryside), and prohibiting small crafts. Roma had to become unskilled laborers in physically demanding professions like construction and mining. A growing number of Roma children were transferred to “special schools” for the mentally handicapped. The Resolution on Working with the Gypsy People of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia of April 1958 reinforced the assimilation approach of the authorities as regards the “ethnographic Gypsy group”, a terminology that shows the reluctance of the authorities to even recognize the existence of the Roma national minority (Jurová 2003, 49-52).

The Prague Spring of 1968 was a key moment also for the national minorities living in Czechoslovakia. It yielded improvements in minority cultural and educational institutions and increased minority employment opportunities. Constitutional Law no. 144/1968 recognized the Hungarian, German, Polish and Ukrainian minorities and granted them rights that were “outstanding, even by Western standards but they were never fully implemented due to the Warsaw Pact invasion and subsequent period of ‘normalization’ which affected minorities like the rest of the population” (Daftary & Gál 2000, 11). In November 1968, the Ministry of Interior approved the establishment of the Slovak Union of Gypsies – Roma as a cultural and social organization. However, its impact on mobilizing

support for the emancipation of the Roma was insignificant. Jurová (2003, 59) points out that during the communist period

[t]he state spent several decades tinkering with the procedures and goals of assimilation and 'integration.' Its solution to the 'Gypsy issue' deprived the Roma of free will, input and initiative, and disturbed their ethical and moral values and ways of family and ethnic life. It did not permit the Roma to achieve self-fulfillment, and prohibited any displays of different cultural standards. On the other hand, it failed to replace these banned cultural supports with adequate role models and values, and forced the Roma to accept state ideas on how to integrate into 'the new society' and eliminate 'everything that is backward and Gypsy'. The result of the communist regime's 'solution' to the issue was the total disintegration of the Roma ethnic group, which was pushed to the outskirts of society, and suffered massive socio-economic, cultural and ethnic damage that was exacerbated by hostility from the majority population.

In November 1989 the Independent Hungarian Initiative was founded. It participated in the 1990 elections and took part in the first democratic Slovakian government. Two other Hungarian political organizations were established in early 1990. The Coexistence Political Movement and the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement formed a coalition in the 1990 and 1992 elections. In 1994, the three Hungarian parties entered in an electoral alliance and four years later they merged and formed together the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (MKP-SMK).

Law no. 428/1990 on the Official Language of the Slovak Republic established Slovak as the language of "mutual understanding and communication" in order to "support the development of the democracy and the culture of the Slovak nation and of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic in the spirit of understanding, of strengthening of national tolerance." It did not grant official status to any other language except Slovak, but it allowed for the use of Czech in official contacts. In addition, in the municipalities where minorities represented at least 20% of the population, it was possible to use minority languages in relations with the public authorities. However, the civil servants employed in these areas were not required to know and use the minority language; and all public documents were to be issued in the official language only. The law left a wide range of interpretation and in the ensuing years fierce political disputes erupted over bilingual toponymy signs, names in minority languages, bilingual certificates, etc. (Daftary & Gál 2000, 20-21).

The Constitution of Slovakia was passed by the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 1 September 1992. Since then the preamble of the fundamental law has been the centre of a political dispute. The crux of the matter is an introductory

18 phrase, which reads “We, the Slovak nation...,” thus making the Slovak Republic a national state of the Slovaks as defined by ethnicity. The Hungarian minority political representatives demand the replacement of these words with another expression that would convey the civic principle of the state, e.g. “We, citizens of the Slovak Republic...” (Vašečka 2006, 35). The Constitution contains a chapter on the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups. According to Article 34 (1), “[c]itizens of national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic shall be guaranteed their full development, particularly the rights to promote their cultural heritage with other citizens of the same national minority or ethnic group, receive and disseminate information in their mother tongues, form associations, and create and maintain educational and cultural institutions.” The Constitution declares Slovak to be the official language (Article 6) and stipulates that national minorities and ethnic groups have the right “to learn the official language.” In addition, the Slovak fundamental law guarantees the right of citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups to be educated in their mother tongue, the right to use the minority language in official communications and the right to participate in decision-making in matters affecting the national minorities and ethnic groups (Article 34, paragraph 2). The Constitution specifies that “[t]he exercise of rights by citizens of a national minority guaranteed by this Constitution may not threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Slovak Republic or discriminate against other citizens” (Article 34, paragraph 3).

The 1992 parliamentary elections brought to power a coalition of nationalist forces led by the Prime Minister Vladimir Mečiar. His party, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and the extremist Slovak National Party (SNS) chaired by Ján Slota governed Slovakia from 1992 until March 1994 and from December 1994 until 1998.²

On 19 March 1995 the Prime Ministers of Hungary and Slovakia signed in Paris a bilateral treaty on good neighborly relations and friendly cooperation which contains also provisions regarding minority rights. It was a compromise that Mr. Mečiar accepted due to the increasing criticism by the international community regarding the situation of the Hungarians in Slovakia. However, this positive development was followed by a number of restrictive measures regarding the rights of national minorities. On 15 November 1995, the National Council of Slovakia adopted Law no. 270/1995 on the State Language of the Slovak Republic (“State Language Law of 1995”) which abrogated Law no. 428/1990 on the Official Language of the Slovak Republic. The new regulation imposed fines on those who did not use the Slovak language in public communication in a proper way. This meant in fact a restriction on the use of minority languages in official

contacts. The discriminatory provisions of the State Language Law of 1995 were challenged by the opposition parties and in 1997 the Slovak Constitutional Court declared them unconstitutional. For example, the Court ruled that Article 3 (5) of the State Language Law of 1995 which required that written communications addressed to the public administration to be in the state language, was contrary to the Slovak Constitution which guarantees the right to use the minority language in official communications (Decision no. 260/1997). In spite of internal and international protests, the Mečiar government simply ignored the ruling of the Court and the provisions remained unchanged until a new coalition came to power in 1998. The reform on public administration adopted in 1996 established disproportionately large districts in the Southern part of the country where the Hungarian minority is concentrated. Despite the objections of the opposition parties, in May 1998 parliament revised Law no. 80/1990 on elections to the Slovak National Council. According to these criticized amendments introduced by the HDZS deputies, the electoral districts were reduced from four to one, the responsibility for the broadcast media coverage of election was placed in the hands of the government appointed directors of Slovak Radio and Television and the electoral threshold for coalitions of parties was raised (Deegan-Krause 2006, 56-57). As a consequence, the alliance of the three Hungarian parties faced the risk of not obtaining seats in parliament. In order to avoid this kind of scenario they were “forced” to merge and to establish the MKP-SMK which became a member of the government coalition led by Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda in the period of 1998-2006. Petőcz (2007/08, 748) notes, that the decisions

were taken within the so-called Coalition Council, i.e., an informal gathering of coalition party leaders and their deputies. In principle, decision making in the Coalition Council was based on consensus. Thus, from the point of view of the Hungarian minority, represented by MKP-SMK, this model bore very strong features of a shared-rule arrangement, or consociationalism. However, in practice, the de facto veto right of the MKP-SMK ensured via the Coalition Council turned out to be an illusion because, in critical situations, Prime Minister Dzurinda usually managed to circumvent Hungarian protests related to specific sensitive legislation by finding ad hoc alliances in parliament. The creation of the post of the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities, subsequently occupied by a nominee of the MKP-SMK, could be seen as yet another feature of a shared-rule (consociational) arrangement. In reality, because the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities is a member of the cabinet and without a portfolio, his competence and possibilities are rather limited. Effective policies related to national minorities have always been executed by various line ministries.

Already in November 1998 the coalition members agreed upon the necessity of adopting a law on the use of the minority languages. It was welcomed by the European Union, the Council of Europe and OSCE and sought by the MKP-SMK which imagined it as a detailed regulation meant to correct the

20 negative impact of the State Language Law of 1995. The draft law approved by the government in June 1999 did not take into consideration some of the main requests of the ethnic Hungarian politicians³ and therefore it was not endorsed by the MKP-SMK. The Hungarian minority party preferred to send to the parliament its own version of the draft law which failed to receive the necessary number of votes. On 10 July 1999 Law no. 184/1999 on the Use of Minority Languages (Minority Languages Law of 1999) was adopted by a narrow majority in the Slovak parliament. The opposition (HZDS and SNS) boycotted the vote, while the MKP-SMK alone voted against it, because the ethnic Hungarian politicians were not entirely satisfied with the content (Daftary & Gál 2000, 29-30) of the Minority Languages Law of 1999; this is analyzed in details in the section regarding the “Use of Languages”.

According to Világi (2007, 133), despite the political disputes between the Hungarian party and the other three partners in the ruling coalition of 1998-2006, the Dzurinda governments “managed to widen the institutional framework for solving the problems of minorities and corrected a number of deficiencies in the state’s minority policy. Changes included the reintroduction of bilingual school report cards and removal of the restrictions of the 1995 Law on the State Language regarding the use of minority languages in official contacts with state bodies. However, the most sensitive political problems – administrative reform and certain provisions in minority education – remained unsolved.” János Selye University, a state financed higher education institution with tuition in Hungarian language, was established in Komárno/Komárom in 2004 but it has only three faculties.

The situation of the Roma minority remained an issue of concern both at domestic and international levels. The report *Body and Soul: Forced Sterilization and Other Assaults on Roma Reproductive Freedom* (Center for Reproductive Rights 2003, 13-17) contains serious allegations about more than 100 cases of illegal sterilization of Roma women in Slovakia. In addition, the report exposes many cases of racism and verbal and physical abuse towards Roma women in public hospitals, including the denial of patients’ access to their own medical records and segregation in the medical facilities. The authors of the report emphasize that the Slovak authorities “failed to document and investigate reproductive rights violations, sanction those responsible or adopt policies designed to curb the practices that help perpetuate these abuses. Instead, the Slovak government and hospital administrators dismiss evidence of discriminatory treatment as either inconsequential or untrue.” Law no. 365/2004 on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination (Antidiscrimination Law) entered into force on 1 July 2004. It defines direct and indirect discrimination, harassment

and victimization, the subjects of obligations and the role of the specialized body for combating discrimination, namely the Slovak National Center for Human Rights. This law prohibits *inter alia* discrimination on the grounds of racial, national and ethnic origin. All state authorities, legal entities and persons must comply with the principle of equal treatment as regards employment and similar legal relations, access to public services and goods including housing, access to social assistance, education and public healthcare. Initially the Antidiscrimination Law provided for the adoption of specific affirmative action measures aimed “to prevent for disadvantages linked to racial or ethnic origin“. The government challenged these provisions at the Constitutional Court which decided in October 2005 that such measures are unconstitutional. The Antidiscrimination Law was amended in 2008 and the new Article 8a refers to positive measures meant to combat “forms of social and economic disadvantages“. In February 2004, the government decided to cut 50% of the unemployment benefits and the measure triggered massive riots in Central and Eastern Slovakia where large Roma communities are living. In some Roma villages from these areas the unemployment was as high as 100%. After thousands of policemen and soldiers clashed with demonstrators the government decided to soften its new welfare law (EurActiv 2004). In June 2008, the representatives of the Roma minority signed a “Declaration on the Standardization of the Language in the Slovak Republic” (Council of Europe 2009b, 44). The event was organized by the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities (Government Plenipotentiary) with the aim of establishing the necessary conditions for an effective education in the Roma language, including the training of teachers. According to the Slovak government, the preparations for accrediting a new full-time course on “Romani Language and Culture” at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (Institute of Roma Studies), in close co-operation with the Government Plenipotentiary, were in the final stage in summer 2009 (Council of Europe 2009b, 45).

After the 2006 elections, the MKP-SMK was left in opposition, although it received around 12% of the votes. The governmental coalition led by the Prime Minister Robert Fico was formed by his party Direction – Social Democracy (SMER) and the nationalist HZDS and SNS. Inter-ethnic relations in Slovakia deteriorated significantly in the ensuing years and diplomatic relations between Bratislava and Budapest followed the same negative trend. A dispute regarding the use of Hungarian place names in the textbooks for schools with tuition in Hungarian started in early 2008 when, according to Petőcz (2007/08, 734), the Minister of Education Ján Mikolaj “instructed the publishing houses that in textbooks used in schools in which Hungarian is spoken, all geographic and topographic names related to the territory of the Slovak Republic should appear

exclusively in the state language (i.e., in Slovak).” Following the forceful protests of Hungarian minority, in October 2008 the parliament amended the educational regulations in order to allow bilingual toponymy in the textbooks for minority schools. However, in December 2008, this legislation was vetoed by the Slovak president. Hungarian minority leaders and Budapest have reacted promptly and amid heated debates the law was approved for a second time by the parliament in February 2009. It entered into force in April 2009 but the problem is not resolved yet because the disputed provisions have been challenged as unconstitutional.⁴ Slovak-Hungarian relations heated up again few months later. On 30 June 2009, the Slovak parliament adopted a series of amendments to the State Language Law of 1995. The new regulations (“State Language Law of 2009”) entered into force in September 2009 and according to the Hungarian minority representatives they have a clearly negative impact on minority linguistic rights. The Slovak government expressed a totally opposite view (Council of Europe 2009b, 25):

Neither the current Act on the state language nor its amendment narrow down or interfere in any manner with the rights of persons belonging to national minorities guaranteed under relevant legal provisions. Just the opposite: the proposed legislation expands the scope of rights of persons belonging to national minorities by introducing certain new statutory rights in the economic and social field that, since the adoption of the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages, have not yet been incorporated into the Slovak legislation. This means that in connection with the alignment of legislation in this area, certain changes have been proposed to benefit the persons belonging to national minorities.

The OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek, declared that “[t]he adopted amendments to the State Language Law [of 1995] pursue a legitimate aim, namely, to strengthen the position of the State language, and, overall, are in line with international standards. Some parts of the law, however, are ambiguous and may be misinterpreted, leading to a negative impact on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities” (OSCE 2010, 3). On 1 of July 2009, the Hungarian language daily *Új Szó* received an official letter from the Ministry of Culture announcing that the newspaper was obliged by the new law to publish all place names in Slovak and only additionally in Hungarian. The author of the law, Minister of Culture Marek Maďarič, explained a day later that it was a mistake, a misreading of the law by the bureaucrats (Stanková 2009). The Prime Minister Robert Fico answered to the harsh criticism coming from Budapest on 5 of July 2009 at the celebration of Saints Cyril and Methodius who brought the Slavonic alphabet on the territory of Slovakia. In his speech, Mr. Fico emphasized that the “[p]rotection of the Slovak state language must be the first pillar of every Slovak government’s programme. It is namely the way to defend oneself from the dangerous irredentism that has been breathed from

over the Danube (river) ever more strongly” (TASR News 2009) On 21 August 2009 Slovak authorities did not allow the Hungarian president Laszlo Solyom to enter the country for an unofficial visit to Komárno/Komárom where he was invited by a civil organization to unveil a statue of Saint Stephen, the first king of Hungary. Few days later, on 26 August 2009, two Molotov cocktails were thrown at the Slovak embassy in Budapest. On 1 September 2009, around 10,000 Hungarian protesters demonstrated against the law in the town of Dunajska Streda/Dunaszerdahely. In mid September 2009, the prime ministers of Slovakia and Hungary met and agreed upon a set of measures to defuse the row which was poisoning their bilateral relations. However, 2010 is an electoral year in both countries and the nationalist rhetoric was soon renewed. In March 2010 the Slovak president Ivan Gašparovič vetoed a controversial Patriotic Act proposed by SNS and approved by the parliament. For him the problem was not the content of the law but the inappropriate timing for its implementation. On 4 May 2010 Mr. Gašparovič signed an amendment to the State Symbols Act proposed by the ruling coalition parties. According to the new rules which shall come into effect in September 2010, the Slovak flag, the words of the Slovak national anthem and the preamble to the Slovak Constitution must be displayed in every school classroom. Moreover, “patriotic education” should become a part of the curricula at each level of the school system. The flag and preamble should also be placed in rooms in which sessions of local and regional elected bodies take place. The national anthem must be played or sung before every local and regional elected body, government and national parliament session (TASR News 2010). On 26 May 2010, the newly elected Hungarian parliament dominated by right wing parties has passed with an overwhelming majority a controversial regulation allowing ethnic Hungarians from diaspora to get citizenship without the requirement of residence in Hungary, if they have Hungarian ancestry and speak Hungarian. Slovakia considers Hungary’s measure a security threat and reacted immediately by amending its own citizenship law in the same day. Anyone who will obtain the passport of another country will lose the Slovak citizenship. The Hungarian measure is due to come into effect in 2011, while the Slovak law entered into force in July 2010.

When the Slovak parliamentary elections took place in mid June 2010 the relations between the two states seemed to be at the lowest point for many years. As expected, both majority and minority politicians played the so-called “ethnic card” in the electoral campaign, a strategy that mobilized their hardcore electorate in the past but also worsened inter-ethnic relations. The outcome of the vote showed a remarkable change of the situation. One of the surprises of the elections was the catastrophic results of the Slovak nationalist parties SNS and HZDS and the Hungarian minority party MKP-SMK. The SNS only barely

received the number of votes necessary to pass the 5 per cent threshold required for parliamentary representation. The HZDS and MKP-SMK performed even worse as they obtained no seats in the National Council. One of the unexpected winners of the elections was the newly established multi-ethnic party called Most-Híd (meaning “Bridge” in Slovak and Hungarian languages). In 2009, a more moderate faction of MKP-SMK split and formed Most-Híd which aims to represent not only Hungarians from Slovakia but all citizens of the country regardless their ethnicity. According to its statute, Most-Híd is a “party of cooperation between Hungarians and Hungarians, Hungarians and Slovaks and between any other national minority” in a “multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural state” (Most-Híd, 2010). In the 2010 elections the party of prime minister Fico (SMER) obtained more seats in the parliament but it lost power. A new government was formed by a coalition of centre-right opposition parties: Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS), Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) and Most-Híd. In July 2010, Ms. Iveta Radičová, the leader of SDKÚ-DS, became the first female prime minister of Slovakia and Mr. Rudolf Chmel, the vice-president of Most-Híd, was nominated Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities. According to the amendments of the Competence Act that have been approved by the new government in August 2010, among the new competencies of the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities are the promotion of culture of national minorities and the preparation (together with Ministry of Education) of education policies for national minorities. Mr. Chmel will direct and coordinate the tasks related to human rights, ethnic minorities, equal treatment and gender equality. For these areas he performs also tasks related to the reallocation of the funds. All documents on issues regarding ethnic minorities have to be approved by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities. The amendments of the Competence Act shall enter into force on 1 of November 2010.

In August 2010 the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities announced the intention of the Slovak government to amend the threshold required for the use of minority languages in official communications that is stipulated by the Minority Languages Law of 1999. According to Mr. Chmel, Slovakia will follow the recommendation of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the existing 20 per cent threshold shall be reduced at 10 per cent. The Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities acknowledged that even a measure of this kind does not solve the problem in the case of the smallest minority groups like Bulgarian or Polish. But the government seems to be determined to find alternative solutions as regards the public use of lesser

spoken minority languages. One of the legislative priorities of the Deputy Prime Minister is the abrogation of the sanctions stipulated by the State Language Law of 2009. Amendments to the law shall be prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture. Moreover, according to his new competencies, the Deputy Prime Minister plans to draft by the end of 2010 a law on the protection and promotion of national minorities' culture.⁵

4. The Legal Protection of National Minorities in the Fields of Education, Use of Languages and Political Participation

The Slovak Republic became a member of the European Union on 1 May 2004 and it is obvious to all that the EU conditions on minority rights played a crucial role in the positive developments of domestic policies and legislation in the late 1990s. The recommendations of the Council of Europe and of the High Commissioner on National Minorities gained more weight after the EU accession began but their importance should not be neglected as they have shaped and made EU policy possible (Skovgaard 2007, 7). However, as Világi (2007, 149) argues, "it was the specific socio-cultural characteristics of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia that helped this particular minority make use of EU pressure to launch its agenda within the domestic political context." The Roma and the other small minorities had no influence in shaping the relevant domestic policies in relevant fields like education, use of languages and political participation.

4.1. Education

Article 34 (1) and (2)(a) of the Slovak Constitution stipulate that citizens belonging to national minorities have the right to be educated in their mother tongue (in addition to the right to learn the official language) and the right to establish and maintain their own educational and cultural institutions. According to Law no. 596/2003 on State Administration and Self-Governance in the Educational System, primary schools are established and administered by towns and municipalities and secondary schools are established and administered by self-governing regions. This law assigns a series of tasks to territorial self-government authorities and the local state administration authorities. A municipality or a self-governing region shall control compliance with generally binding legal regulations in matters of upbringing and education in the schools that it established. Moreover, the municipality or the self-governing region shall

issue organisational instructions for the directors of these schools and shall provide expertise and advice for schools and directors. The regional education office shall, *inter alia*, provide professional advice on the organisation of education to municipalities and self-governing regions and to the founders and directors of private and church-affiliated schools. Financial matters are regulated mainly by Law no. 597/2003 on the financing of primary schools, secondary schools and school establishments. The financing of education system depends on the approved state budget for the relevant calendar year. The Ministry of Education shall provide for and distribute funding from the state budget through the regional education offices. Other funds come from the budget of the municipality and of the higher-tier territorial unit (Principles of the government of the Slovak Republic 2009, 14).

The 2004 Antidiscrimination Law (as amended in 2008) allows for temporary positive measures in the field of education for members of disadvantaged groups. According to Article 8a (1), their aim is to ensure equal access in practice through targeted preparatory programs or through the dissemination of information about these programs or the opportunities to apply for places in the education system.

In May 2008, the National Council of the Slovak Republic adopted Law no. 245/2008 on education and instruction (School Law). Among the principles that represent the basis of the Slovak education system are the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and, in particular, segregation (Article 3 point d) and preparation for responsible life in a free society in a spirit of understanding and tolerance, equality between men and women, friendship between peoples, national and ethnic groups and religious tolerance (Article 3 point j). According to Article 144 (1) (d), children have the right to education in the state language and the mother tongue, under the conditions laid down in this law. Pedagogical documentation in schools and school facilities is kept in the state language but Article 11 (2) allows schools providing education and instruction in national minority languages to keep bilingual pedagogical documentation, i.e., in the state language and in the national minority language. Pupils belonging to national minorities have the right to learn the state language and the right to education in their mother tongue and in primary and secondary schools with tuition in a minority language, and the teaching of the Slovak language and literature shall be ensured, as specified in Article 12 (3). Furthermore, according to Article 12 (5), pupils belonging to national minorities are guaranteed education and instruction in:

- a) schools and classes providing education and instruction in the language of the relevant

- national minority,
- b) schools and classes in which one of the subjects is the language of a national minority, while the remaining subjects are taught in the state language; in these schools and classes, certain subjects – especially art education, music education or physical education – can be taught in the language of a national minority,
- c) school facilities providing education in the language of a national minority.

Article 12 (9) stipulates that the language used for examination shall be the one used for teaching the respective subject and Article 18 (3) guarantees that diplomas and certificates issued by schools with tuition in a minority language shall be written in the state language and the language of the respective national minority. The School Law was amended in October 2008 in order to allow the use of minority language geographical names in the textbooks used in the minority language schools. However, we should remember that the issue remains unresolved because the amendment was challenged on 11 June 2010 as unconstitutional by the representatives of the Slovak nationalist parties SNS and HZDS. The parents or legal representatives of the child have the right to choose his/her school according to the child's interests and hobbies, religion, belief, nationality and ethnicity (Article 144 (5)) and a pupil or a student who considers himself/herself wronged in his/her rights or lawfully protected interests by any failure to apply the principle of equal treatment may pursue his/her claim by judicial proceedings according to the Antidiscrimination Law (Article 145 (3)).

In order to ensure the education and instruction of children and pupils from socially disadvantaged environments, schools shall create special conditions; this entails education according to individual study programmes, adjusting the organization of education and instruction, adjusting the environment for the provision of education and instruction, and the use of specific methods and forms of education and instruction. The Ministry of Education may grant allowances for pupils from socially disadvantaged environment, i.e., pupils coming from families whose average monthly income during the previous six consecutive months did not exceed the subsistence minimum under specific legislation (Article 107).

Roma pupils are still over-represented in the special schools for children with disabilities. The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) points out that "they are 28 times more likely to be placed in such schools than their non-Roma counterparts, that up to 50% of Roma children are erroneously placed in Special Elementary Schools or classes and that approximately 10% could be immediately reassigned to mainstream education" (Council of Europe 2009a, 18). In August 2008, the Ministry of Education issued Decree no. 322/2008 on Special Schools. The regulation outlines the procedure for placing children in Special Elementary Schools on the base of the so-called Concept of Education and

Training of Roma Children and Pupils, including the Development of Secondary and Tertiary Education that was adopted in April 2008 by Slovak authorities. As stated by the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (Council of Europe 2009a, 18)

[o]ne of the stated objectives of this concept is to lower the percentage of Roma children attending Special Elementary Schools by, among others, maintaining and developing the “zero year” for children who are deemed not to have the requisite abilities for entering the first grade of elementary school. The authorities have indicated that the concept includes the preparation of socially and culturally independent tests on the educational abilities of six and seven year-old children. The concept also provides that these tests are to be performed solely by pedagogical and psychological advisors.

On the other hand, the Slovak government (in Council of Europe 2009b, 53) argues that

[t]he continued relatively high number of Roma pupils in special schools for pupils with mental disabilities was mainly the result of the use of standard tests for assessing school maturity and intelligence potential that did not take account the child's environment. The newly developed specific tests (outputs from the Phare 2001 project – School Aptitude Test for Socially Disadvantaged Children and RR Screening – a battery of tests for ruling out mental retardation in 6 to 10-year old children from socially disadvantaged environment) that have been used in practice since 2004 are expected to eliminate this shortcoming. Another reason for a higher number of children with mental disabilities in the Roma population is the closed character of their communities, as a result of which they show a higher incidence of predispositions causing an unfavorable health status of children, including mental disabilities.

Law no. 131/2002 on institutions of higher education (Higher Education Law) does not contain specific regulations on national minorities but it regulates the organization and functioning of private higher education institutions. Law no. 465/2003 established the Hungarian language University of János Selye in Komárno/Komárom, with Faculties of Economy, Pedagogy and Reformed Theology. Education in Hungarian is offered also by the following higher education institutions: Faculty of Philosophy at Comenius University in Bratislava; Faculty of Philology at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and Faculty of Pedagogy at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra – Faculty of Central European Studies. The Roma language can be studied at the Institute of Roma Studies at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. Since 2001 it is part of the newly established Faculty of Social Affairs at this university. In cooperation with other faculties, it provides study for future teachers for first four grades of elementary schools focused on the Roma culture together with social work focused on the Roma community. The German language can be studied as the language of specialization at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra,

Comenius University in Bratislava, Prešov University and Catholic University in Ružomberok.

As regards the institutional framework, it should be mentioned that the Ministry of Education has a department for schools with instruction in minority languages and education of the Roma. The Ministry of Education's Council of Experts on Education and Instruction of the Roma has been functioning since 2005. Another advisory body called the Council for National Minority Education was established by the Ministry in 2006. Its aim is to assist the Ministry of Education in performing its specific tasks laid down in the 2006 Manifesto of the Slovak government. The Concept of Education and Instruction of National Minorities was adopted through Government Resolution no. 1100/2007. In the case of the Roma minority, the government approved Resolution no. 206/2008 on the Concept of Education and Instruction of Roma Children and Pupils Including the Development of Secondary and Tertiary Education. A series of decrees of the Ministry of Education deals in detail with the organization and function of the Slovak schools: Ministry of Education Decree no. 137/2005 on school inspection, Ministry of Education Decree no. 306/2008 on kindergartens, Ministry of Education Decree no. 314/2008 on secondary schools and on the list of subjects that require the verification of special abilities, skills or talents, Ministry of Education Decree no. 320/2008 on primary schools, Ministry of Education Decree no. 322/2008 on special schools, Ministry of Education Decree no. 325/2008 on school facilities for educational counseling and prevention and Ministry of Education Decree no. 649/2008 on the purpose of the allowance for pupils from socially disadvantaged environments.

According to the law on the ratification of the EChRML, the Hungarian language enjoys the maximum protection and promotion in the field of education. Slovak authorities shall make available education in Hungarian at kindergarten, primary, secondary, vocational school and university levels as well as adult and continuing education courses. In the case of Ruthenian and Ukrainian language, Slovakia pledges to make available a substantial part of the pre-school, primary, secondary and vocational education. Moreover, the state shall provide facilities for the study of these minority languages as university and higher education subjects and shall offers these languages as subjects for adult and continuing education. For Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, German, Polish and Roma the level of protection and promotion in education field is lower: in pre-school education, the authorities shall take action when there is demand in a sufficient number according to Slovak legislation, while in primary, secondary and vocational schools, these minority languages shall be taught as an integral part of the curriculum. In addition, it should be possible to study these minority languages as university

and adult (continuing) education subjects. For all nine minority languages covered by Part III of EChRML, the state shall make the necessary arrangements in order to ensure the teaching of the history and culture, to provide the basic and further training of the teachers and to set up a supervisory body responsible for monitoring the implementation of minority rights measures in the field of education.

4.2. Use of Language

Art. 34 (2)(b) of the Slovak Constitution stipulates that citizens belonging to national minorities have the right to use a minority language in official communications and Art. 27 guarantees the right of petition. Everybody has the right to address governmental authorities and public administration in individual and public matters with petitions, proposals, and complaints either individually or in association with other persons.

Law no. 300/1993 on names and surnames (with subsequent amendments) lays down in Article 1 (1) and Article 4 (1) that a citizen of the Slovak Republic acquires the common surname of his/her parents or, if the parents have different surnames, the surname of one of them agreed upon at the time of concluding their marriage or, if the parents are not married and have different surnames, the surname agreed upon by both parents. Article 5 specifies that the surname used by the citizens of the Slovak Republic in their communication with the authorities is the surname acquired in accordance with the present law, with the previously applicable legislation, or by entering into a marriage, using the spelling and the order in which the surname was entered in the register of births or the register of marriages. Article 7 (1)(a) allows the change of the foreign language name into its Slovak equivalent or vice versa without any restriction or request of permission from the authorities. Also from the provisions of Article 16 of Law no. 154/1994 on registry offices (with subsequent amendments) it follows that female citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to national minorities have the right to use their surname in official communication in the form in which it was entered in the birth register or the marriage register by the registry office, without the Slovak grammatical suffix indicating the gender. Moreover, according to Article 19 (3) of Law no. 154/1994, a citizen belonging to a national minority whose name was recorded in the birth register, before 31 December 1993, in the Slovak equivalent instead of his/her mother tongue spelling, have the right to request that his/her name is registered in his/her language using the Latin alphabet. In such case, the citizen may ask to be issued an excerpt from the register bearing his/her original name if the person was issued a registry excerpt of a later date with the Slovak equivalent of his/her name. The registry office is

obliged to comply with such request.

According to Law no. 191/1994 on the designation of municipalities in the languages of national minorities, the state authorities have the obligation to display separate road signs in the minority language in those municipalities where at least 20% of the population belongs to a national minority. However, as Gyuricsek (2003) noted, this law “does not concern the official recognition of names of municipalities and parts thereof in minority languages either, it merely regulates the use of traffic signs indicating the beginning and the end of the municipality. (...) [I]t would be an official recognition of these names if they could also be used on buildings that are the seat of public administration bodies, railway stations, bus stops, harbours, hospitals, etc”. According to Article 1 and 2 of the Law no. 191/1994, in official relations, in public documents, stamps of municipalities, cartographic works and postal communications, the names of the municipalities shall be written exclusively in the state language. This law contains an annex listing settlements to be designated also in a minority language, and according to Art. 2 and 3 the inhabitants of a municipality may decide in a local referendum on a change of the designation of their municipality listed in the annex, or they may determine the designation of their municipality if it is not listed in the annex. Such referendum is valid only if more than 50% of the local population with voting right participates. The decision is adopted if 80% of the voters support the initiative. Gyuricsek (2003) argues that these provisions can be considered discriminatory because Law no. 369/1990 on the municipal establishment contains different rules for local referenda. It stipulates in Article 11a (5) that voting results shall be valid when at least a simple majority of entitled voters participated in the referendum and a simple majority voted in favour. According to Article 11a (1) (a) this provision shall also apply to the referendum concerning the change of the name of the municipality. It should be emphasized that Article 3 (3) of Law no. 191/1994 excludes the application of the norms on local referenda regarding the designation of municipalities if their name was changed in the period 1867 - 1918 or 1938 - 1945. Such settlements may have received an official Slovak names derived from the name of a prominent Slovak personality: e.g. Bernolákovo (from Anton Bernolák, Slovak priest and linguist in the 18-19th century), Gabčíkovo (from Jozef Gabčík, Slovak hero of World War II), Štúrovo (from Ľudovít Štúr, leader of the Slovak national movement in the 19th century), Sládkovičovo (from Andrej Sládkovič, Slovak poet of 19th century). These names have nothing in common with the historical minority language names of these municipalities. In 2007, the Committee of Experts on the application of EChRML declared that “while understanding the sensitivities which lie behind the legislation, [the Committee] does not know whether the limitation contained in Art. 3 (3) of the 1994 Act prevents traditional Hungarian

place-names from being used as a matter of fact” (Council of Europe 2007, 48) and encouraged the Slovak authorities to clarify this issue. Two years later the Committee of Experts noted that “[i]n a statement pursuant to Article 16 (2) of the Charter, the Grammar Language Office informed the Committee of Experts that about 100 traditional and correct forms of place-names in Hungarian are prevented from being officially used because of impossibility to adopt or use Hungarian place-names which were used between 1867 and 1918 and between 1938 and 1945. Traditional Hungarian place-names apparently cannot be used either with respect to places that were renamed after a Slovak person in 1948” (Council of Europe 2009c, 36). The Slovak authorities were requested by the Committee of Experts to comment on this issue in the next periodical report.

Article 1 (2) and (4) of the State Language Law of 1995 specifies that Slovak has priority over other languages applied on the whole territory of the Slovak Republic and that this law does not regulate the usage of languages of national minorities and ethnic groups. The rule is that the state language is used in all official contacts, in the education system, in mass-media, cultural events and public meetings, in the armed forces, in judicial and administrative proceedings, in the economic activities and health care. Exceptions apply to the use of minority languages in the certificates issued by schools in which the education has been carried out in the language of the minorities (Article 3 (3)), in textbooks used in the minority schools (Article 4 (4)), in broadcast programmes and cultural events for/of national minorities (Article 5 (1) and (7)) and in contacts with administrative and judicial authorities (Article 7 (2)). The penalties for failing to comply with the rules regarding the use of the state language that have been abrogated in 1999 by the Minority Languages Law have been reintroduced by the State Language Law of 2009. It stipulates fines for those who do not use Slovak language in all forms of non-private communication. Persons, legal entities and organizations may receive fines up to 5,000 Euros if they do not respect the provision according to which both oral and written communication must be in Slovak while a version in a second language, which is word by word identical to the Slovak, may follow, but, if printed, only with smaller characters. The legislator accepted some exceptions. For example, regional broadcasting in a minority language is allowed and in the municipalities where minorities live in a significant number, medical staff and their patients may speak in the minority language. The controversy over the exact meaning and interpretation of this legislation⁶ still persists although in December 2009 the Slovak government made public the explanatory principles for a unitary interpretation of the these norms. The opponents of State Language Law of 2009 emphasize that it allows the intrusion of the state in language use in private contacts and that financial sanctions may create a mechanism of “language police” and a system of “language denunciations”.

The Minority Languages Law of 1999 guarantees that persons belonging to a national minority which in the most recent population census amounts for at least 20% of a given municipality's inhabitants, have the right to use their mother tongue in communications with official bodies. According to Article 2 (3), they have the right to submit written documents in the language of a national minority, and the right to receive an answer from a state body in both the official state language and the language of a national minority (except for public documents). Article 2 (4) specifies that members of the national minority are also entitled to receive the rulings of administrative bodies in their mother tongue in addition to the state language. In case of doubt the wording of the version issued in the state language shall prevail. Furthermore, paragraphs 5 and 6 of the same article lay down that public institutions' signs and administrative forms shall be made available also in the language of the national minority. Article 3 (1) and Article 4 (1) stipulate that in municipalities where a given national minority represents more than 20% of the inhabitants, street signs may be displayed in the language of the respective minority and the local council may hold proceedings in the language of the national minority if all people present agree. Although important information (on binding regulations, warnings, health care notices, etc.) shall be displayed also in the minority language (Article 4 (2) and (3)), public authorities and their employees are not required to have command of the minority language (Article 7 (1)). Public authorities and their employees shall use the state language in official contacts, and may use the minority language under the conditions established by the Minority Languages Law of 1999. The Slovak Government Regulation no. 221/1999 contains a list of 656 villages where minorities amount to at least 20 percent of local population. This list also contains 57 villages where the Roma minority meets the above-mentioned threshold. Article 6 (5) of Law no. 211/2000 on the Free Access to Information obliges state agencies, municipalities, as well as legal entities and natural persons that have been given the power by law to make decisions on the rights and responsibilities of natural persons or legal entities in the area of public administration to disclose information also in the languages of national minorities in the municipalities where the Minority Languages Law of 1999 is applicable.

The existing domestic standards concerning the use of minority languages in relation to administrative authorities and public services are mirrored by the law on ratification of EChRML. The selected provisions shall be applied in the territorial-administrative units where persons speaking one of the nine minority languages represent at least 20% of the population. Some of the clauses ensuring a stronger protection have been selected only for the Hungarian language. The Slovak administrative authorities and public services shall ensure that those employees who are in contact with the public use the respective minority

languages when dealing with individuals who submit oral or written applications and/or documents in the minority language. The applicant shall receive the answer in the respective language. The state shall allow the use of Hungarian language within the framework of the regional and local authority. Slovakia shall allow and/or encourage the publication by regional and local administrative authorities of their official documents also in the nine minority languages. Moreover, the local authorities are allowed or encouraged to use the minority languages in debates in local councils and to use and adopt their traditional and correct forms of place names. Furthermore, with regard to the public services provided by the authorities or other persons acting on their behalf, Slovakia undertakes to allow the users of the minority languages to submit requests and to receive a reply in these languages. In order to implement the above measures, Slovakia shall ensure translation or interpretation as may be required and shall appoint the civil servants in the territorial-administrative units where they can make use of their minority language knowledge. Last but not least, every person concerned has the right to use or adopt a family name in the minority language. The Minority Languages Law of 1999 does not cover the use of minority languages in the judicial sphere. Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Article 47 of the Constitution stipulate that all parties in judicial proceeding shall be treated equally under the law and that a person who claims not to know the language used in the proceedings shall have the right to an interpreter. Following the constitutional principle, Article 2 (20) of the Criminal Procedure Code reads as follows: “If a defendant, his/her legal representative, a victim, an interested party or a witness declare that they do not speak or understand the language of the proceedings, they shall be entitled to an interpreter or a translator.” Moreover, according to Article 28 of the Criminal Procedure Code

- (1) If there is a need for interpretation of the content of a statement or if the person referred to in Art. 2 (20) declares that he/she does not speak or understand the language of the proceedings, an interpreter shall be assigned by a measure.
- (2) If the person referred to in Art 2 (20) chooses a language for which no interpreter has been entered on the list of interpreters or if the matter allows no delay and no registered interpreter can be found, the law enforcement agency or the court shall appoint an interpreter for the official language of the state which that person understands.
- (3) If there is a need to translate the record of a statement or other document, a translator shall be assigned. The provision of paragraph 2 shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Article 18 of the Civil Procedure Code stipulates that “[i]n civil proceedings, the parties shall have an equal status. They have the right to use their mother tongue or the official language of the state, understood by them, before the court. The court shall have the obligation to ensure for them equal possibilities for the exercise of their rights.” Article 141 (2) of this Code specifies that the additional

costs resulting from the use of the mother tongue by the party are borne by the state. The above mentioned regulations apply also to the proceedings before the administrative courts (Council of Europe 2008, 51). According to Article 11 of Law no. 564/2001 on the Public Defender of Rights, any person can appeal to the Ombudsman using his/her mother language and costs of interpretation shall be borne by the state.

According to the EChRML ratification instrument, Slovakia guarantees that in criminal proceedings, the accused has the right to use his/her mother tongue and the courts shall not consider inadmissible requests and evidence, written or oral, solely because they are formulated in one of these nine minority languages. The same is valid for the litigant in civil and administrative procedures, where the use of interpreters or translators shall not involve extra expenses for the person concerned. Slovakia pledges only in the case of the Hungarian language not to deny the validity of the legal documents drawn up with the state solely because they are drafted in the minority language. Finally, the state undertakes to make available in Hungarian, Ruthenian and Ukrainian the most important national laws, particularly those which concern the users of these languages.

4.3. Political Participation

Article 34 (2)(c) of the Slovak Constitution guarantees the right of the members of national minorities to participate in the decision-making process regarding matters affecting their interests, the freedom to association and the right to vote. Article 20 and 30 guarantee the right of the citizens to participate in the administration of public affairs directly or by freely elected representatives. However, as Petőcz and Tóth (2009, 31) argue,

[n]either of the laws regulating how decision making bodies function (i.e. the parliament, regional and local self-administration bodies and different levels of executive power) contain any specific provisions that would guarantee minority representatives participation, or even having a say, in the decision making processes.

Law no. 83/1990 on associations of citizens (with the subsequent amendments) provides the legal base for the establishment of non-governmental and non-political organization of national minorities. Moreover, Article 4 (a) of this law forbids the setting up of any association that deny or restrict the rights of other citizens on the basis of, *inter alia*, nationality, race, religion and associations that incite hatred or hostility based upon the aforementioned grounds, or promotes violence or violates the existing legislative framework. All organizations and associations must be registered at the Ministry of Interior which has the

competence to refuse the registration if the statute indicates that a certain organization or association pursues the above mentioned prohibited objectives, or intends to use prohibited means. For the same reasons, the Ministry of Interior can decide about the dissolution of registered associations. Both the refusal to register and the decision for dissolution can be appealed to the Supreme Court. Two associations established by members of Hungarian minority (Nomos Regionalizmus and Harmonia) and an extremist Slovak organization called Slovak Togetherness were dissolved by the Ministry of Interior in the period 2007-2009. The first two were dissolved on the account of unconstitutional aims to establish in Slovakia a form of territorial autonomy for Hungarian minority (CTK News, 2009). The third organization was dissolved because it instigated hatred and intolerance on national, racial and religious grounds.

Law no. 85/2005 on political parties and political movements (Political Parties Law) provides the legal framework for the establishment of political actors. A political party comes into existence upon the registration carried out by the registry of political parties at the Ministry of Interior. The application should include the party statute and a list signed by 10,000 citizens. The Ministry of Interior may reject the registration if the statute is deemed unconstitutional or it does not respect the domestic legislation or international obligations of Slovakia. A registered party can be dissolved only by the Supreme Court (upon proposal by the Public Prosecutor) if its activity violates the law. In 2006, the Supreme Court dissolved the extreme right wing party "Slovenská pospolitos – National Party" which pledged to change the political system from democracy to a kind of fascism following the model of the Slovak Republic during World War II.

At the moment there are various registered parties that represent the interest of national minorities. The Party of Hungarian Coalition (MKP-SMK) was the main political organization of Hungarian minority in Slovakia in the last decade but its role decreased dramatically since it lost parliamentary representation after the 2010 elections. The new protagonist of the political scene is the multi-ethnic party Most-Híd which aims to represent not only Hungarians from Slovakia but all citizens of the country regardless their ethnicity. There are several Roma minority parties in Slovakia: Roma Coalition Party (SRK), Roma Initiative in Slovakia (RIS), Union of Roma Citizen Initiatives in the Slovak Republic (Ú-ROI), Party of Social Democratic Roma in Slovakia (SSDR), Roma Party in Slovakia (SRÓŠ), Party for the Integration of Roma in Slovakia (SIR), Party of the Democratic Unity of Roma (SDJR), Minority Party (SM). However, the impact of all these parties on the political scene is very limited.

4.3.1. Representation in the government and its advisory bodies

The specialized department of the government responsible for issues regarding national minorities and ethnic groups is the Directorate General of Human Rights and Minorities, which reports directly to the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities. Its organizational office - the Directorate General of Human Rights and Minorities - also functions as the secretariat of the Government Council for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (CNMEG), which is an advisory and coordinating body of the government of the Slovak Republic for the area of national policy and for the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The CNMEG is composed of the representatives of the 12 officially recognized national minorities. They are appointed on a parity principle (so that each national minority has one representative) and are nominated by national minority associations and organizations. The CNMEG is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities and the vice-chairman is the Minister of Culture. According to the Slovak authorities, the right to vote in the CNMEG is reserved only for the representatives of national minorities and no issue concerning a particular national minority or ethnic group may be considered unless the representative of the minority concerned is present. The civil servants from central state administration authorities and experts on minority issues that are invited to the meetings of the CNMEG do not have the voting right (Council of Europe 2009b, 6). The system is especially criticized by Hungarians because of its unbalanced representativeness (i.e., each minority is represented by one member regardless its size) and its inefficiency (i.e., CNMEG resolutions have no really impact as they are not binding).

Other governmental structures that have competencies in the field of national minorities and ethnic groups function within the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education "has a division for schools providing instruction in minority languages and for the education of Roma communities." The "Section for Minority and Regional Cultures" at the Ministry of Culture ensures the execution of state administration in the area of culture of national minorities and of disadvantaged groups of the population. An advisory body for the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities is the "Commission for the Support of the Culture of National Minorities and Ethnic Groups". In conformity with the relevant decrees of the Government Office, this Commission assesses the provision of subsidies for financing publishing activities, activities of theatres and folk art ensembles, activities of cultural and religious institutions, special-interest activities, sports and cultural activities, and educational projects of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic

groups (Council of Europe 2009b, 7 and 24).

The advisory body to the Government on Roma issues is the Plenipotentiary Office for Roma Communities which was established in 1999. Its aim is to address the problems of the Slovak Roma by implementing the necessary measures for the improvement of the situation of this national minority. The Head of the Plenipotentiary Office is appointed by the government following a proposal from the Deputy Prime Minister. One advisory body of the Plenipotentiary Office is the “Grant Commission for the Social and Cultural Needs of the Roma Community and for Addressing the Problems of the Roma Community” which assesses applications for subsidies and projects relating to these needs and for addressing these problems (Council of Europe 2009b, 24). Petőcz and Tóth (2009, 32) note, that all these institutions deal with minority issues but

[t]here is no legal act regulating the employment of persons belonging to any national minority in the office of the government, in the ministries, at lower levels of public administration or in any other public institutions established by law. There are no statistical data available on the ratio of Slovak and non-Slovak employees in public administration.

4.3.2. Representation in Parliament

Slovakia has no specific legal provision regarding the representation of national minorities in the parliament. Law no. 333/2004 on elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (Parliamentary Electoral Law) lays down the conditions for participation in the general elections. According to Article 18 (1) and (5), a party or a coalition has to submit a list of not more than 150 candidates no later than 90 days before the day of elections. The final list of candidates shall be registered by the Central Election Commission no later than 70 days before the day of the elections. A decision of the Central Election Commission not to register a list of candidates of a political party can be challenged before the Supreme Court (Article 20 (1) and (4)). It is an electoral system of proportional representation with a threshold for political parties of 5% of the total number of valid votes cast. The threshold stands at 7% for coalitions of two or three political parties and at 10% for coalitions of at least four political parties. If no political party or coalition has passed the threshold it is lowered by 1% for each of these parties/coalitions (Article 42 (2) and (4)). With the present system, only the large Hungarian minority manages to achieve parliamentary representation. The 5% threshold seems to be particularly unfavourable for the Roma minority.

As stated by the Slovak authorities (in Council of Europe 2009b, 7), the parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, National Minorities and the

Status of Women examines draft acts, international treaties and government programmes from the point of view of their compliance with human rights and the rights of persons belonging to national minorities enshrined in the Constitution and arising from the international commitments of the Slovak Republic.

In the period 1998 – 2006, MKP – SMK has been a member of the governmental coalitions and in the 2002 and 2006 elections it obtained 20 parliamentary seats. In the 2010 elections the MKP – SMK paid the price for its perceived incapacity to bring improvements to inter-ethnic relations and for its contribution to the radicalization of the political discourse following the disputes surrounding the 2009 amendments of the law on the use of the Slovak language and the early 2010 tensions between Bratislava and Budapest on the issue of dual citizenship. MKP – SMK lost its parliamentary representation and the leadership as the political force representing the interests of Hungarian minority in favour of the newly established multiethnic party Most-Híd. The latter obtained 14 seats in the National Council with a programme focusing not only on minority issues but also on matters of general concern like regional development, elimination of corruption, taxes and health care.

4.3.3. Representation at Regional and Local Level

Law no. 302/2001 on Self-Government of Upper-tier Territorial Units has established eight self-governing regions.⁷ The Slovak territory has been divided in such a way that in none of these upper-tier territorial administrative units are Hungarians in majority. Only in two regions (Nitra and Trnava) this minority represents more than 20% of the population. Law no. 303/2001 on Elections to the Bodies of Self-Government Regions and on Amendment to the Code of Civil Procedure (Regional Elections Law) has contrary to the parliamentary elections introduced the majority rule. Article 14 (8) stipulates that a candidate for regional elections can be nominated only in one electoral constituency. According to Article 41 (1) and (4) the candidates with the highest number of valid votes in the relevant constituency are elected in the council of the self-government region. The candidate who receives an absolute majority of votes is elected chairman of the regional government. In the 2001 elections, a self-administration body with majority Hungarian representation was established in the Nitra region. A candidate running for the coalition of five political parties and political movements, which included also the MKP – SMK became the chairman of one self-governing region. Sixty candidates of the MKP – SMK were elected to regional councils (Council of Europe 2005, 50). In the 2005 regional elections MKP - SMK obtained only 53 seats in regional councils and also in

40 the Nitra region the results were less satisfactory than in the previous elections. Members of no other national minority obtained seats in regional councils. No national minority candidate was elected chairman of a self-governing region. Representatives of the Roma community did not succeed in getting into any regional self-administration body until the 2009 regional elections when one candidate of Roma Coalition Party (SRK) obtained a seat in the elected body of Prešov region (ROMEIA/RPA 2009). Based on the elections' results, Petőcz and Tóth (2009, 32) criticize the system, arguing that

[b]ecause of the two-round system of elections, there is no chance for a Hungarian representative to be elected chairman of any regional self-administration body. In 2009, the preparations for the next elections clearly showed that the introduction of electoral districts having one or more seats within regions (subject to the decision of regional self-administration bodies) conceal a serious danger for Hungarian representation. The election districts in Nitra and Bratislava regions have been set-up in a way which decreases the chances of Hungarian representatives being elected.

Local elections are regulated by Law no. 346/1990 on Municipal Elections. The representatives of the local self-administration bodies and mayors are elected the same way as at the regional level. Municipalities with less than 1,000 inhabitants can decide not to establish electoral districts. As for mayors, each municipality constitutes one election district. In the 2002 municipal elections, the representatives of national minorities obtained 238 positions as mayors of municipalities and 2138 candidates of national minorities were elected to the municipal councils (Council of Europe 2005, 49). In the 2006 municipal elections the MKP - SMK won 215 positions as mayors and 1952 seats on the municipal councils. The Roma Initiative of Slovakia obtained 36 seats on municipal councils and 6 seats as mayors (Council of Europe 2009b, 57).

5. Conclusions

In Slovakia a sole set of norms applies to all national minorities regardless their size and territorial distribution. In practice such a system has an uneven impact on the two categories of national minorities: the large and territorially compact Hungarian minority and the small and/or territorially dispersed other minorities. The large Roma minority represents a separate case due to its specific situation. Major issues of concern for all national minorities are inter-connected with cultural, social, political and economical factors such as education, social cohesion, the development of human capital for a multilingual global market, participation in public life, etc.

In the field of education the Slovak legislation offers to all persons belonging to national minorities the possibility of choosing between various types of schools (e.g., monolingual and bilingual). However there are certain conditions to be fulfilled and in practice a certain minority is not able to enjoy monolingual education but only bilingual instruction. It is not the law that “forces” a minority to opt for a certain type of education but a combination of factors on the ground (minority size, territorial concentration, lack of qualified teachers, etc.). Only persons belonging to the Hungarian minority can study in their mother tongue from kindergarten until university. It should be emphasized that a limited number of specializations are available in Hungarian at university level. The Slovak legislation allows for minority education if there is a “substantial number of pupils belonging to national minorities”. A general expression of this kind may be used in order to permit a certain flexibility in the implementation of the law, e.g., each municipality decides if the number of minority pupils is “substantial” enough in order to establish a certain type of minority education. However, minorities run the risk that in practice these general terms of the law are not interpreted in their favour. The Ministry of education has the last word on some important aspects of education (e.g. number of schools) and the relations between the central and sub-national levels of government are not always easy. It is submitted that the Slovak legal framework in the field of education ensures, in general, the necessary conditions for the preservation of national, cultural and linguistic identity of national minorities. Nevertheless, the existing norms do not provide always satisfactory solutions for small minorities, as was also acknowledged recently by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities. From a functional point of view, the bi/multilingualism is largely welcomed in Slovakia as a valuable asset for individual and society in general. On the other hand, the existing educational regulations fail to contribute to the development of a certain dialogue of cultures within the process of socialization between the majority population and minorities. Pupils belonging to the majority who are living in municipalities with rather large minority population do not study the local minority language in the mainstream schools. The minority languages (except German) are not even optional subjects in the public schools with tuition in the state language. It is obvious that the existing Slovak legal and institutional framework in the field of education may be improved in order to better fulfill its role of promoting cultural diversity in a multicultural and multilingual society. The social inclusion of the Roma minority remains a matter of serious concern and although the Slovak education system adopted since 1990 certain specific measures in this field, they lack coherence and coordination and their overall impact is questionable. Slovakia has domestic regulations prohibiting discrimination and school segregation but their implementation is clearly unsatisfactory. In my opinion, a part of the problem is the lack of coordinated and reliable information at the central, regional

and local levels about Roma segregation in schools.

The use of minority languages remains a highly politicized issue in Slovakia. The harsh domestic and international debates that followed the approval of the controversial State Language Law of 2009 demonstrate the negative impact of a piece of legislation that serves a political aim without a social and cultural need. It is not surprising that after the change of the government following the June 2010 elections, one of the first measures announced by the new Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities was the intention to amend the contested provisions of the State Language Law of 2009. The new Slovak government also announced its intention to review the existing 20 per cent threshold stipulated by the Minority Languages Law of 1999 as a requirement for the right to use a minority language in communications with public authorities. Hopefully, these minority-friendly measures will be followed by legal changes that will allow a larger minority representation in the decision making bodies.

The existing Slovak laws relevant for political participation of national minorities do not contain specific provisions that guarantee their representation. Especially the small minorities and the Roma are clearly affected. So far, the large Hungarian minority managed to obtain the necessary number of votes for parliamentary representation but the 5% threshold represents an obstacle for the others. The situation looks similar in the case of elected regional self-administration bodies. The Slovak territory has been divided in self-governing regions in such a way that in none of them are Hungarians in the majority. The results of the elections show that with the present system, minority representation in regional and municipal councils is rather limited.

As long as Slovak nationalist parties were partners in the coalition ruling the country, the public sphere was dominated by a political culture of confrontation, "us" vs. "them". The political discourse was poisoned by nationalist rhetoric and, in general, the moderate voices denouncing the artificially created ethnic tensions received less attention from the mass-media than extremist opinions. There was little room for the development of a consensus-building political environment but public polls showed always a different reality on the ground. Inter-ethnic relations were perceived as problematic mostly in the mono-ethnic majority areas and not in the ethnically mixed territorial-administrative units. Before 2010, the politicization of the minority issues, especially during electoral campaigns, was an effective tool for the nationalist politicians (both Slovak and Hungarian) for the mobilization of their ethnic groups. Creating and maintaining a conflicting climate was their main strategy on political agenda. It was not a coincidence that only few days before the elections of June 2010, HZDS and

SNS representatives challenged as unconstitutional the norms regarding the bilingual geographical names in school textbooks. Although immediately after this legislation was passed in 2009, the leaders of these parties announced their intention to address the issue to the Constitutional Court, they waited more than one year, until the end of the electoral campaign. HZDS and SNS played all on the so called “maďarská karta” (Hungarian card) or on the “Roma problem” but in the end their tedious and sometimes outrageous anti-minority discourse proved to be a boomerang that came back and damaged them during the 2010 elections. On the other hand, the MKP – SMK was abandoned by the Hungarian minority electorate because it seemed stuck in the old logic of confrontation and was unable to offer viable solutions for the future. The electoral results of Most-Híd, a multi-ethnic party established only one year before the elections, is a positive sign for a future political culture of consensus, an approach based on cooperation between majority and minorities.

44 Notes

¹ The project “Practices of Minority Protection in Central Europe” aims to identify best practices of minority protection, while at the same time studying, under which conditions such practices can function and under which circumstances the application of certain measures is not recommendable. This project funded by the Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich covers Austria, Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania and it is implemented by a consortium lead by the Competence Centre for South East Europe at the University of Graz (Austria). The partner institutions are the Institute for Minority Rights of the European Academy of Bolzano (Italy) and the Institute for Ethnic Studies (Slovenia). The projects uses the qualitative research methodology and has two components: a legal-theoretical part of cross-area legal country-studies including a comparative legal analysis and an empirical part of cross-country studies, that analyze, using an interdisciplinary approach, the implementation of the legal regulations as well as their impact and effect in the following key areas: Culture, Media, Education, Language, Economic participation, Political participation. For more details see <http://www.eurac.edu/mimi> (visited in July 2010).

² From March 1994 until December 1994 Slovakia was governed by a broad coalition of left wing, center and right-wing parties led by Jozef Moravčík. The Hungarian political representatives in the parliament supported this coalition openly. In this period two important laws for minorities were passed: one on names in birth registers and marriage certificates, and the other on the use of bilingual signs.

³ For example, MKP-SMK proposed that the minority language be allowed in official contacts in municipalities where the minority constituted at least 10% of the population arguing that a 20% minimum threshold, as proposed in the government draft, was too high.

⁴ On 11 June 2010, the leaders of Slovak nationalist parties SNS and HZDS have challenged at the Constitutional Court all regulations regarding the bilingual geographical names in school textbooks. The Court’s judgment is expected later this year. For details (in Slovak language) see the information published on the website of the Slovak Constitutional Court at http://www.concourt.sk/rozhod.do?id_submenu=c&urlpage=akt_cin (visited in July 2010).

⁵ For details (in Slovak) see <http://www.sme.sk/c/5505436/chmel-prehodnoti-20-percentnu-hranicu-pre-pouzivanie-jazykov-mensin.html> (visited in July 2010).

⁶ For example the Slovak authorities argue that these regulations affects only public and not private contacts but Art. 1 (5) specifies that the law applies not only to state and municipal authorities, but also to “legal persons, self-employed natural persons and private individuals”.

⁷ From 2002 to 2004 some of the state administration competencies was gradually devolved to these self-governing units and municipalities through Law no. 416/2001 on the transfer of some competencies from state administration bodies to municipalities and higher-tier territorial units (i.e. self-governing regions).

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LÁSZLÓ KUPA

The Misfortunes of a Relocation of Rumanians in the 18th Century: the Case of the Banat of Temes

For political, confessional and economic reasons, Habsburg emperors settled a large number of (mainly German-speaking) people in the Banat of Temes, which had a sparse population and untilled fertile land. Maria Theresa aimed to create a single zone populated exclusively by Catholic, German-speaking settlers in the strategically important border zone with its centre Timisoara. In order to achieve that aim, she had to uproot the Rumanians who had lived there for years, ordering their relocation to other unpopulated areas. This plan met with only partial success and was not fully executed.

Keywords: population geography, minorities, resettlement of Hungary, immigrants, economy, religious identity

Nesrečna selitev Romunov v 18. stoletju: primer Banata ob reki Temes

Habsburški vladarji so iz političnih, verskih in ekonomskih vzrokov v pokrajini Banat ob reki Temes, ki je bila redko poseljena in je imela veliko neobdelane, rodovitne zemlje, naselili večje število (večinoma nemško govorečih) priseljencev. Marija Terezija si je želela v strateško pomembnem obmejnem območju s središčem Temišvar ustvariti cono, ki bi jo naseljevali izključno katoliški, nemško govoreči priseljenci. V ta namen je morala izkoreniniti Romune, ki so tam živeli že dolga leta, in jih preseliti na druga nenaseljena območja. Ta načrt je bil le delno uspešen in tudi nikoli ni bil v celoti uresničen.

Ključne besede: populacijska geografija, manjšine, selitve, Madžarska, priseljenci, gospodarstvo, verska identiteta

Correspondence address: László Kupa, University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities, Rókus Str. 2 H-7624, Pécs, Hungary, e-mail: kupa.laszlo@t-online.hu.

1. Introduction

Hungary's century-and-a-half occupation by the Turks (1526-1699) had serious consequences. One of them was the stagnation of the population, which in some areas caused even a significant decrease. The period following the re-conquest of Buda (1686) was characterized by rough absolutism, and the struggles during the Rákóczi War of independence (1703-1711) were a reaction to it and made a battlefield of several parts of the country.

This period of almost two hundred years was not favourable for peaceful construction: as a significant part of the population escaped from the occupied territories large pieces of land were left uncultivated, and the resultant disorder in the environment caused epidemics that made the cultivation of land even more difficult in these areas.

While in around 1500 the population of the Carpathian Basin could be estimated at 4 million, later this population is estimated as being at most 4.2 million (Wellmann 1989, 25). This means that while the population of England and France grew by approximately fifty percent (Diedericks et al. 1995, 33-35), Hungary's population actually stagnated.¹

In this paper I examine the ethnic and demographic trends which caused significant change in the Kingdom of Hungary.² To this end I review the following issues:

- ◆ Hungary's demographic and ethnic situation after Turkish rule;
- ◆ the review of the Banat of Temes;
- ◆ the historic background and preparation of resettling the Rumanians;
- ◆ a description of the settlement itself;
- ◆ the balance of the settlement.

2. Hungary's Demographic and Ethnic Aituation After Turkish Rule

The decrease of Hungary's population occurred on the fertile Hungarian Plain and the uplands of Transdanubia - areas ideal for agricultural production. The recommencement of ordinary everyday life and agricultural production made it essential that a productive population be moved to areas with low densities of population. These processes had three basic forms: the movement of people

within the country, emigration of people from areas under Turkish rule not belonging to the Kingdom of Hungary (e.g. Serbs, Rumanians and Bulgarians), and organized settlements. The movements within the country, to a significant extent, resulted in the relocation of people formerly living in more densely populated, hilly areas (the people of the hills) to areas more suitable for land cultivation. For example, the Slovak population arrived in today's Voivodina in the Republic of Serbia in this way. The Serbs, fleeing from Turkish rule, arrived in organized form, under the leadership of their patriarch, Arsenije Cernojevic, from beyond the Kingdom of Hungary. A large number of Rumanians emigrated in a spontaneous manner to the territory of Transylvania from present-day Rumania. Organized settlement resulted in an increase in population that may be addressed statistically. A part of the settlements were proposed by the Viennese Court itself, but the landlords - who had vested interests in starting cultivation on deserted pieces of land - also played an important role in this process. The Court considered the land liberated by imperial forces as a new acquisition and formed the *Neoacquistica Commissio* (New Acquisition Commission) under the leadership of Lipót Kollonitsch, archbishop of Esztergom. Under Kollonitsch's lead, an *Errichtungswerk* was created to populate the new acquisition by foreigners.

The settlers were predominantly German-speaking. Most of them arrived from present-day Austria and Germany. The decrease of available land, overpopulation and a change in the system of inheritance can be mentioned among the reasons for German resettlement.

Neither the settlers' ethnicity, nor their religious affiliation mattered to the Viennese Court. On the one hand, the Viennese Court intended to counterbalance the rebellious Hungarian population through the settlement of German-speaking people in certain areas. According to some contemporaries, the Hungarophobe Lipót Kollonitsch strived at "taming the Hungarian blood, having a tendency for revolution and unrest, with German blood" (Ács 1984, 164). On the other hand, as the absolute majority of the settling Germans was Catholic, the Viennese Court wanted to settle Catholic believers among the population that had, at the time of Turkish rule, converted to Calvinism.

However, it would be a mistake to overlay the political/confessional aspects of the settlement. It was in the interest of the Court as well to make those settled by *impopulatio* to stabilize taxpayers, increasing thereby the Chamber's regular income. The trendsetting economic policy of that time was mercantilism, whose principle was *ubi populus, ibi obulus* (where there is population, there also is money). Therefore the Court could hope for more income by increasing the number of taxpayers through settling foreigners, rather than by movements within

the country. In summary, we can claim that, although not in equal proportion, all the above-mentioned three factors (political, confessional and economic) played a role in the Court's settlement policy.

It is clear that in the case of settlements by landlords the economic factor was felt more powerfully, as the value of their estates depended on their economic potential. However, the landlords had to adjust to the Court's political and confessional requirements, for the very reason that settlement could be effected only with the Court's permission (Kupa 2008a, 102-103). The confessional requirement was usually not contrary to the landlords' convictions as they themselves were predominately of Catholic persuasion (Kupa 2008b, 163). The differences between them and the Court were mainly of an economic nature, as the Court frequently gave priority to short-term tax maximization, while for the landlords – who had huge outlays as regards the financing of the settlements – the stabilization of the labour force was more important than the realization of immediate and excessive revenues.

Organized settlement was carried out in many phases. The first phase was the period following the expulsion of the Turks and the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718). It was during this period that the settlement of the Germans on the geographic focus of this study, the Banat of Temes, took place. During the second phase, under the reign of Maria Theresa, settlement was carried out on the largest scale. Joseph II still had much to do in the last period; during his ten-year reign approximately 7,600 German families arrived in what was then the territory of Hungary (Ács 1984, 176).

Due to foreign emigration, organized settlement and the natural increase in the population, the population of the Kingdom of Hungary exceeded eight million at the time of the census of 1787, meaning that the population had more than doubled in 70 years (Kosáry 1990, 56; Katus 2010, 113). But there was a significant change not only in the number of inhabitants, but in ethnic relations as well. While, according to estimates, the number of Hungarians had reached 3,200,000 out of the total population of four million at the end the 15th century (Szabó 1990, 51), by 1787, Hungarians formed a minority and their number was estimated to be approximately 3 million (Szabó 1990, 124-125).³

58 3. Introduction to the Banat of Temes

Hungary's ethnic map had changed, and within it the most complex ethnic relationship had developed in the Banat of Temes. It is worth mentioning that there were objections in connection with the terminology almost one and a half centuries ago. The eminent topographer Frigyes Pesthy said that the title Ban of Temes had not existed in the Middle Ages, and therefore the Banat of Temes could not have existed in those days (Pesty 1868, 20-21).⁴ Not only Germans, but Italians, Spaniards and French also arrived in small numbers in the Banat of Temes⁵ between 1720 and 1740. In O'Reilly's opinion (2003, 81), the first settlers were quite certainly soldiers and tradesmen. In 1737 a settlement permit was issued for Catholic Bulgarians fleeing from Turkish rule, and in the 1740s Krassovans, coming from the Serb-Bulgarian border, found a new home here. Many of the repatriating Serbs, led by their patriarch (Arsenije Cernojevic), arrived in this region (Szabó 1990, 144) and, as we shall see later, Rumanians arrived in the Banat of Temes as well. This already colourful picture was enhanced by those 3,130 persons who were deported here. Expelled from Vienna, they were declared *persona non grata* from an ethical perspective between 1732 and 1768 (Szabó 1990, 147-148).⁶ Most of the rebellious peasants who were forced to leave their homes in the County of Hauenstein in Baden, Schwarzwald, finally found shelter in the Banat (Szabó 1990, 148). Simultaneously, Eugen von Savoyen expelled the Hungarians from Temesvár (today's Timisoara, Rumania) in 1718 and "Hungarian settlers were forbidden to enter the territory of the Banat or any other location" (Szabó 1990, 160).⁷

Even with the Treaty of Passarowitz the Banat of Temes was not reintegrated into the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, but was divided into eleven districts and was put under separate administration. The territory was placed under military administration and its first governor was Count Florimund Claudius Mercy.

Settlement started soon after 1718.⁸ Contemporaries called the settlement of Germans in the Banat of Temes the *Schwabenzug*. In the course of the 1720s, Mercy relocated approximately 15,000 Germans to Timisoara, which had been destroyed in the wars. One of Eugen von Savoyen's biographers wrote that the prince himself allegedly warned Mercy not to receive any people other than Catholic Germans into the castle of Temesvár, as the Germans were the only ones who could be fully trusted. Greeks, Serbs and other ethnicities should be tolerated only in the suburbs (Borovszky 1914, 63). There were artisans and craftsmen among the settlers, who contributed considerably to the fast industrialization of the area (Ács 1984, 172). Many among them petitioned for the issuing of guild

privileges which, however, the Court refused to consider (Kulcsár 2004, 344). The Germans who settled in the Banat of Temes, besides various economic benefits, received building sites, ready-built houses and farm-buildings, together with livestock. At the beginning, Germans were reluctant to settle in the Banat of Temes due to the proximity to the Turks and the unusual climate, and there were many who regretted having settled here. The majority of the settlers were paupers, who undertook to leave their homes in the hope of obtaining land. For a long time their only wealth was their land and they feared that somebody would deprive them of that land. Historians explain this fear as the basis of their suspicion against strangers, their hitherto inexperienced drive for acquisition, their extraordinary thrift and their hard work (Ács 1984, 172-173).

The mentality of the early settlers was seriously criticized. For example, Emperor Karl himself stated in 1724 that there were many drunkards and worthless people among the settlers of the Banat of Temes who lived off begging and tramping, at a financial burden to others (Ács 1984, 174). One can find similar opinions even at the end of the 18th century. For example, Karl Riesbeck, the Secretary of Mainz, wrote the following in his book, *Letters of a Frenchman Traveling across Germany*, published in 1783, about the Germans settling in Hungary: "Only the most useless people from Bayer, Swabian and Frankish lands and the Rheinland go to that country /.../. Those having enough money for a trip to America, rather emigrate there /.../. Only the poorest, in possession a couple of pennies for a trip along the Danube, look at Hungary as their last resort" (Ács 1984, 174). In spite of the critics one can state that as a result of the settlements, one of Hungary's sources of foodstuffs was successfully formed from the former marshy and sandy area of the Banat of Temes (Ács 1984, 172).

Although the process of settlement was interrupted due to the Turkish war between 1737 and 1739 and the Plague, it continued during the reign of Maria Theresa. In her colonization patent of 1763, the empress – among other matters – wished to guarantee territories in the Banat of Temes for soldiers who had served in the Seven Years War (Kulcsár 2004, 242). In 1767, the Court decided to have 2,000 new houses built for German settlers on its chamber lands in the Banat of Temes. This period was the Golden Age of settlement. The empress decreed what a Swabian village should look like and this way model villages populated by Germans came into existence. Maria Theresa even made sure that there were enough craftsmen and teachers. The settlement was costly even for the Court. 200,000 Forints was noted to have been spent over nine years (1763-72).⁹ The peak of the emigration was the three years between 1768 and 1771, when almost 17,000 settlers arrived. They came from Lorraine, Trier, Alsace, the Black Forest, Luxemburg, Mainz, Baden, Swabia, the Tyrol and Switzerland (Ács 1984, 175).

60 On his first visit to the Banat of Temes in 1768, Joseph II was most dissatisfied with the Temesvár administration, and especially with the efficiency of the bureaucratic work there, with its amateurish, wasteful expenditure and the mentality discovered in the offices (Kulcsár 2004, 315-324). It was at this time that he criticized the ignorance of the Romanian and Serbian Greek Orthodox population (Szentkláray 1879, 207-208).¹⁰

Although Maria Theresa stopped the settlement, her son, Joseph II took it up again in 1782, laying down stricter rules for the settlers. During this third phase of settlement, almost six thousand German families arrived at the Banat of Temes from the areas of Koblenz, Frankfurt and Rothenburg am Neckar (Ács 1984, 176).

This was the last phase of German settlement. In 1775, approximately 40,000 Germans lived in the Banat, but by the census of 1851 this population had risen to 335,000 (*ibid.*). As an effect of the settlement, the most colorful ethnic picture of Central Eastern Europe could be painted on the Banat of Temes (Ács 1984, 171).

The Rumanians arriving in the territory of the Banat of Temes further coloured this ethnic map. Their ancestors had appeared in this area in the 13th century and diplomas issued in the 14th century speak about the “Rumanians of the Banat” (Makkai 1943, 383). Although another, even larger-scale Rumanian immigration took place after the liberation of Temesvár (1716), this process was negatively influenced by the Russian-Turkish war of 1737-39. There were Rumanians who, joining the Turks, attacked the territory of the Banat of Temes, in some places causing greater damage than the enemy (Szentkláray 1891, 5). The historian researching the history of the Banat of Temes knows that Rumanians “fled across our borders in large groups under the rule of the great empress” (Szentkláray 1879, 267). On one single day, on August 6, 1765, simultaneously more than 750 refugee Rumanians arrived from Turkish national territory (*ibid.*). The administration in Temesvár was not enthralled by their arrival – some did not even comply with the requirements set by the authorities for quarantine (*ibid.*). Finally even diplomatic steps were taken. The Legate, Baron Benkler, was instructed to inform the Turkish Porte officially that those Rumanians who had escaped from Turkish territory should be called home with the promise of amnesty and the remedy of their grievances. However, this proposal was not successful; therefore the administration in Temesvár was forced to host the large number of Rumanian families. The areas of Karánsebes, Lugos, Oravicza and Mehadia were designated for them. Although the Viennese Court accepted the fact of settlement, it instructed the administration in Temesvár to “carefully and

gradually relocate them elsewhere after a while” (Szentkláray 1879, 268).

There are not even estimates of the number of Romanians settling in the Banat of Temes, nor of immigration of Romanians to Transylvania; all we have at our disposal are a few partial summaries (Köpeczi et al. 1986, 977). However, during this period we can speak not only of immigration to the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary but also of popular movement from Transylvania to the Principality of Romania. And not only Romanians emigrated from Transylvania: for instance, Szeklers fled from military service to Moldavia (Szádeczky Kardoss 1908, 239-242). Hungarian historians believe that migration to the Kingdom of Hungary from the Principality of Romania was proportionately far greater than Romanian migration in the other direction (Köpeczi et al. 1986, 977). The fact that there was an immigration excess in the direction of Hungary, is accepted by Romanian historians (Köpeczi et al. 1986, 978), although the outstanding writer of twentieth-century Romanian history differs in this question.¹¹ According to David Prodan the degree of immigration between Hungary and the Romanian Principality was of equal proportion, although the eighteenth century ended with an “excess of emigration” (Prodan in Katus 2010, 119).

The Court took care that wherever possible only Roman Catholic Germans and those of the Greek Orthodox faith should settle in the Banat of Temes. This religious policy of the Court itself contributed to ethnic conflict in the region, as when for instance it sent Serbian priests to villages inhabited by Romanians (Miskolczi 2005, 91).

4. The Historic Background and Preparation of the Rumanians

Such were the events leading to the repatriation of the Rumanians in the Banat of Temes. This emigrational process – as we shall see later on - was not only done peacefully, but features of forced migration took place as well, as external force, the pressing circumstances of migration, and the devaluation of pre-emigrational situations characterized these situations. We must emphasize that these difficulties affected not only the Rumanians living in the Banat of Temes, but the local Hungarians and the Germans from Austria.

Although the term forced migration can be applied to the topic of this article, we have to emphasize that it was Maria Theresa herself who proposed the relocation of the Rumanians, in other words an empress whose rule was provided by the

62 legitimacy of a monarch who ruled by the grace of God.¹² The addressees of her decrees were not citizens, but subjects, for instance the Rumanian peasants who suffered relocation. The chronicler of these events was Jenő Szentkláray, who extensively researched the history of the Banat of Temes well ahead of the Millennium in 1896 - the year of the one thousandth anniversary of the foundation of the Hungarian state.¹³

The first stop in our story is Maria Theresa's colonization patent of 1763, after which large-scale, systematic German settlement started in the Temes Gap, whose system was ordained by the Viennese government only in 1767. The empress used the period of peace following the Seven Years' War to fill with people the Banat of Temes. As was the norm for settlement at that time, large, abandoned pieces of land were available for the execution of her plan. However, the legal status of the ownership of the land was unsettled. The abandoned land, which was called *predium*, came into existence where villages that had been destroyed during the Turkish rule were in the possession of the Treasury and located around villages containing Rumanian inhabitants. The Rumanians occupied the more valuable part of that land, which they cultivated to the extent they considered necessary for their livelihood. Of the size of the prediums, "nobody knew, nobody measured them, but they spread from one borderline to the other" (Szentkláray 1891, 7). Neither cadaster nor land registration prevented the Rumanians from their intention of acquiring land, but the legal status of the land they possessed was also unresolved. Although the government leased the land unused by the inhabitants, the use of the land was rather wasteful. The cattle stock pastured there was disproportionate to the size of land leased. Thus it was possible for Joseph II, in a report written to his mother, to mention that as many as 27 Hungarian acres were allotted to one cow (*ibid.*). The empress "little by little confiscated abandoned pieces of land" and gave them, in part to new German settlers, partly into the hands of Germans who had already settled (Szentkláray 1891, 8-9).

The settlement of the Germans from Germany was not conflict-free, and there were incidents between the Rumanians already living there and the newly settling Germans. In 1764 complaints arrived at the administration in Temesvár against the Rumanian inhabitants of the Maros region. The Germans accused them of "constantly harassing the settling German colonies which endangers the foreign settlers' property and even lives with their nightly roamings and thefts" (Szentkláray 1891, 9). The catalogue of crimes allegedly perpetrated by Rumanians did not end here but was supplemented with accusations of "breaches of the peace" and "receiving stolen goods", too (*ibid.*).¹⁴ Szentkláray reported about events as follows: "To bring their hooliganism under control, a whole regiment had to be ordered against them from Temesvár. The prisons

of the territory's court were constantly fully packed with Rumanians, but the punishment could affect only accomplices, because the most dangerous found shelter in unreachable areas in the hills or in the woods" (ibid.). As we can see, there were no doubts in Szentkláray's mind with regard to the criminalizing of the Rumanians.

Following the incidents just mentioned, Maria Theresa decreed on July 14, 1765 that the Rumanian villages in Southern Hungary were standing in the way of German settlement, and so the Rumanians living there must be relocated to another area. The reasoning behind the relocation and its enforcement was the task of the government, while its execution was the responsibility of the provincial administration in Temesvár. The empress even mentioned that relocation of the Rumanian population should be done with necessary care and not all at once but progressively (Szentkláray 1891, 9-10), and that the relocations should be reported to the Viennese Court case by case. A short justification for the relocations was given by Maria Theresa herself, who referred to *ratio status militaris et polici*, arguing for the relocation. The above mentioned cattle-rustling and smuggling were included among the arguments, but were supplemented with two new elements: defence of the treasury and the security aspect of a potential war with the Turks (Szentkláray 1891, 10). Maria Theresa did not choose a totally new approach when she proposed population exchange. In earlier years there had been cases when the "population of hooligan villages" (ibid.) was relocated to the territory of neighbouring Rumanian villages, and the land of the relocated was declared "newly found" *predium* (ibid.) by treasury officers. These relocations resulted in complaints from those concerned, so Maria Theresa ordered the presidency in Temesvár in 1765 to offer a proposal that would "meet the both the highest desires and the interests of the Rumanian people" (ibid.).

Upon the empress's request, the first civilian president of the land administration, count Perlas, prepared a memorandum. As the most important reason for the relocation he refers to the "safeguarding of German colonization, [emphasizing that] the German colonists are frightened and fear being settled in *prediums* lying among Rumanians" (Szentkláray 1891, 11). Among the count's arguments, there are bitter memories from the time of the Russian-Turkish war of 1737-39, almost thirty year earlier. In his opinion,

the German population in the Banat has suffered much more from the rebellious Rumanians and their wandering bands of robbers than from the Turkish enemy. During the war few German villages had seen living Turks, whereas the Rumanians laid waste to numerous German villages, razed them, killed many Germans or sold them as prisoners to the Turks.

These atrocities could happen again, as he argued, as “most German villages are built scattered among Rumanian villages” (Szentkláray 1891, 11) which was why the people living there could not rush to each other’s aid. In count Perlas’ opinion, what had happened in the past could happen again in the future, in the event of a potential Turkish attack.¹⁵ The aspect of re-catholization appears among the arguments, too, although less stressed than in the case of settlements. The count suggests that the deserted area between Temesvár and Arad should be populated with new German settlements which would result in “a chain of Catholic German villages from the River Maros down to Temesvár” (ibid.). However, besides the religious aspect count Perlas mentions another pragmatic, secular one: the linking of German villages so that they would be able to help each other “in case of need” (ibid.). The bitter memories of the extensively-mentioned Russian-Turkish War appear again in the memorandum, but in another context. Count Perlas now is not simply speaking of “rebel Rumanians” and “their bands of robbers”, but in effect is questioning the loyalty of the Rumanian population in the event of a Turkish attack (Szentkláray 1891, 12).¹⁶

The memorandum deals in detail with territorial issues of relocation. Count Perlas proposes the settlement of 1,500 German families in the Lipppa and Temesvár districts to the areas occupied by relocated Rumanians (ibid.). For the Rumanians living here, those prediums were designated to where the Germans would have settled. Perlas has another proposal, however. He stresses that the prediums mentioned would mean significant income for the treasury and identifies which territories should be used for the relocation of the Rumanians if more appropriate land cannot be found. However, according to the count, there were such available territories in the Banat of Temes.

The count suggested that each Rumanian should receive 30 acres of land (ibid.). However, he added that based on the experience of earlier settlements, more Rumanian families could be relocated as more German families arrived in the same territory. German families could replace the relocated Rumanian families (Szentkláray 1891, 12). Therefore the treasury would benefit from it as well, as “emperor’s prediums” should not be excluded from cultivation, while the memorandum offers the perspective that “their lands will be better utilized and shall not be left unused, as was done so far” (Szentkláray 1891, 13).

The empress ordered that “each colonist should get 24 acres of plough land and 6 acres of meadow”; besides that, separate pasture and one acre of farmyard and garden should be provided (Szentkláray 1891, 13-14). She ordered that “in relocated Rumanian villages the same size of land shall be given to each family as in the settled German villages” (Szentkláray 1891, 14). She even decided in

detail in which villages the 2,000 German families arriving from the Rheinland in 1767 would be housed. She took care that craftsmen arriving with German colonists continue their crafts and that the preparation for the settlement should be executed by “those having skills in land surveying and civilian construction” (ibid.). The empress had her directives: the predium to be occupied shall be selected one year earlier, the deserted areas shall be surveyed “with geometrical precision”, the dimensions of the roads, the distance between houses, the farmers be supplied with seeds etc. (Szentkláray 1891, 15).

The area for the German settlement, existing villages and yet-to-be-populated prediums were located around the Maros, the Tisza and the Béga rivers, while for the Rumanians, territories were sought out beyond the Béga. Here there were two deserted state prediums: Klek and Továk (ibid.). In Szentkláray’s opinion there “was enough treasury land to distribute” (Szentkláray 1891, 16). The advantage of the land here was that it was lying “all in areas populated by Rumanians” (ibid.). The Rumanians living here were “a population that had survived Turkish rule”, small in number and therefore – in Szentkláray’s opinion -, “unable to harm anyone” (ibid.).

The relocation of the Rumanians followed a prepared plan. The idea of the court administration was to designate the Nagybecskerek area, called *Schiebung* at that time and mainly populated by Rumanians, for relocation (ibid.). The planner of earlier German settlements, the land engineer Johann Kostka, was assigned to measure and map the land necessary for relocation. The task of persuasion was given to counsellor Plasch, who allegedly performed the “calming persuasion” (Szentkláray 1891, 17) so successfully that “the Rumanian villages ordered to relocate usually signed the petition” (ibid.). The resolutions were passed for the execution of the relocation, based on counsellor Plasch’s report. These resolutions were born in the spirit of enlightened absolutism. The municipalities in question had the right to speak out in defence of their interests, but the administration – due to the lack of any higher legal source - was entitled to act with full power, and therefore did not have to take into consideration the petitions of the villages (ibid.).

The conditions of relocation were regulated in detail. It had to be executed during the spring, or by mid-summer at the latest, on one hand so that the repatriated would have time to plough before the fall sowing, and on the other hand so that the Germans occupying the place of relocated Rumanians could occupy empty houses and start building their own (ibid.). Those relocating, as in the case of settlements, were given different provisional benefits.¹⁷ However, the administration gave no right of decision as to which predium to relocate to, or

66 to measure the land (Szentkláray 1891, 18). Under the terms of the empress's decision, they were obliged to accept 20 acres upon which to pasture their herds, although they had been used to doing so on land twice as large.

Plans changed at the last minute. The inhabitants of three villages (Sefdin, Kisfalud and Szakálháza) did not want to accept relocation. According to the original plan, the Rumanian population of two of these villages (Sefdin and Kisfalud) would have received land on the deserted area of Klek, but the people from Sefdin found the land they received to be insufficient, while the others (from Kisfalud) asked not to be settled together with the population of the other village in one settlement because "they are difficult to get on with, and are avoided by everyone" (ibid.). The population of the third village did not want to relocate at all. They offered a solution by settling only 200 families instead of 300, as a result of which they still had enough space for them to not give up their own farms. The village where 60 families lived stated in their petition that they had owned the village "since ancient times" (ibid.) where the church was built of hard material that could not be relocated to any other village (ibid.). In order to solve the problems, counsellor Plasch proposed two villages with the same name (that of Torák), separated by the River Béga, therefore the "thievish-natured" (ibid.) Rumanians from Sefdin could be separated from the Rumanians of the other village. The latter were not the people from Kisfalud, but people from Szakálháza, who wanted to remain where they were, and who had been promised compensation for their church from the German settlers. The predium in Klek was given to people from Kisfalud who had protested against the people of Sefdin.

In this way the predium in Klek would be too crowded for 100 families from Kisfalud, as they were entitled to 3,000 acres, as opposed to the 4,262 in the predium of Klek; consequently, for the remaining 1,264 acres those Rumanians from Rékas were intended to be relocated who were living mixed with the German population (Szentkláray 1891, 18-19). For the Rumanians in Szakálháza it was made clear that "under no circumstances can it be allowed that Rumanians live among Germans in Szakálháza" (Szentkláray 1891, 19). The cost of the relocation was covered by the state and timber and stone for building was provided by the treasury estate for the Rumanians.

5. The Relocation

The relocation was scheduled to start on St. George's Day in 1767, but the Rumanians were not ready by that time, and a cattle-plague erupted in the area where they were supposed to relocate. Finally, after missing even the final deadline, relocation had to be postponed until the end of July, and went slowly. The real nature of the relocation can be seen more clearly if we quote the chronicler: "The relocation of three hundred Rumanian families, totalling almost two thousand people, on five or six hundred wagons, with oxen, cows, herds of sheep and pigs, must have been an unusual sight, even in Southern Hungary in the last century, full of such typical examples of caravan life!" (ibid.).

The Germans moving to their designated locations immediately and successfully petitioned to change the name of the village. Thereby Sefdin became Schöndorf, while the old Kisfalud became Engelsbrunn (Szentkláray 1891, 20).

Although during the last days of August the building of the houses was in progress, the life of the relocated Rumanians was not ideal. The cattle-plague continued to cause devastation, drinking water was poisonous, the houses, built of mud, were damp and mouldy due to wet air and the people lacked food. Szentkláray, although lacking concrete data, even stated that the mortality rate among the relocated had risen at "an alarming pace" (ibid.). The problem turned even worse as the people from neighbouring Jankahida attacked them as well wishing to steal a significant piece of the land that they already considered insufficient.

In addition, the treasury officers showed no leniency when they forced them to cultivate the land. This made the situation even worse. A part of the relocated fled, leaving their houses and land behind. They took the money advances with them, causing warrants to be issued to arrest the fugitives – without much success. The sites became the property of the treasury, and they were either transferred to other settlements or planted with vines. The president of the settlement committee, Count Schlick, interpreting the situation in a somewhat original manner, reported to his superiors in March 1768 that "Rumanians cannot be convinced to undertake the cultivation of a single allotment that had been offered for a family. The Rumanians like large pieces of land, not for cultivation but to indulge in the herdsmen's idle (!) pleasures" (Szentkláray 1891, 21).

Count Schlick's report¹⁸ with its bucolic tone was followed by an intervention by the empress. Maria Theresa took the position that although a complete plot of land was equal to 31 acres, not every relocated person was entitled to get one.

68 Complete plots were given only to those who could cultivate them. Less wealthy Rumanians were given two-thirds or half of a plot, while craftsmen received a garden and three acres of pasture or meadowland.

In other words, one had to be thrifty with one's land. The empress therefore ordered that the land had to be remeasured, the farming reviewed and land taken back from those not wanting or unable to cultivate it (*ibid.*). The repossessed land had to be redistributed again, but only for those who could plough and plant the whole and meet this requirement for six months.

Maria Theresa's order was not really understood in Temesvár: for instance, they did not understand what the size of a half or two-thirds of a plot was, or what should happen to those vineyards owned by the treasury which settlers had taken possession of. It was to this end that the empress specified the size of the plots in question on the basis of the 31-acre unit. A two-thirds plot was equal to 21 acres, while half a plot was equal to 13 acres. The planting of vines was forbidden on flat areas, and was allowed only on those hilly parts which were not good enough for growing grain (Szentkláray 1891, 22).

However, this was Maria Theresa's last genuine action in the area of Rumanian relocation. Her attention was drawn away by other state issues. The assets in the Banat of Temes fell under the management of the Court Chamber, which did not concern itself with any further relocations of Rumanians (*ibid.*). In Szentkláray's view, Maria Theresa was hoping that she would be able to return to the management of this issue in more peaceful times (Szentkláray 1891, 24).

This did not happen. During the spring of 1768, Joseph II travelled across the Banat of Temes and visited the former Rumanian villages handed over to Germans, and Nagybecskerek and its neighbourhood populated by relocated Rumanians. The future emperor of Hungary was stunned by what he had seen, and he wrote the following in his diary: "Rumanians receive bad treatment, they are frequently forced to hand over their houses and plots to others and move elsewhere, and consequently they prefer to emigrate" (Szentkláray 1891, 24).¹⁹ It was evident that he came to the conclusion that the Banat of Temes, in the following year, should be "either placed under military administration or handed over to private landlords" (Szentkláray 1891, 24). However, the Banat of Temes was annexed to the Kingdom of Hungary in 1779.²⁰

6. The Balance of the Relocation

Although Maria Theresa's German settlement process occurred during this period, the project of relocating Rumanians could not be considered as successful. First and foremost, it certainly was not a success from the viewpoint of the relocated Rumanians. They were treated as criminals for an event that had happened a quarter of century before, and which was no concern of theirs. Even their loyalty was questioned. Not everyone received the land that had been promised and they could pasture their animals on only half the land they had been used to. Their new living conditions were significantly worse than in their former home, both they and their cattle were decimated by plagues. But neither was it successful from the court's perspective, as in spite of such sacrifices, the plan for a single German-populated zone around Temesvár failed and the revenues of the treasury did not increase to the extent hoped for.

The memory of the relocation lived on in the collective memories of both peoples even in Szentkláray's day. At that time, the Germans knew that their villages had been inhabited by Rumanians and older Rumanians knew about their earlier location away from their ancestors (Szentkláray 1891, 5). We cannot know to what extent the Viennese Court's settlement policy, including the creation of a single German zone in Temes area, burdened the relationship between the Germans and the Rumanians, two peoples with totally different ways of life. We know well that the coming together of nomadic stock breeders and settled farmers has been full of conflicts for centuries, so if we discount the unpredictability element, then these conflicts were due to differences in ways of life.²¹ None of the ethnic groups can be accused of escalating the conflict, as the German settlers – as in other cases - simply wanted to exploit the opportunity to settle, hoping that their life would improve. The Rumanians living in the Temes Gap clung to their homes and traditional way of life.

Szentkláray did not examine the future of the relocated Rumanians, he simply made the remark that under Hungarian rule they were hurt "neither in their old homes, nor their ethnicity, nor language, nor religion" (Szentkláray. 1891, 25).²² One cannot underestimate these results, if we think of recent village destruction, contemporary punitive language laws, or atrocities carried out in the name of national identity, or genocides identified along religious lines.

We cannot consider the relocation a tragedy, for when Maria Theresa realized that the relocation of the Rumanians would do more harm than good, she did not enforce her erroneous ideas but changed her mind. It is true that she reigned by the grace of God, not by the will of others.

70 Notes

¹ The newest historical and demographic research supposes a slight rise in population between 1500 and 1720, as today the population of the Kingdom of Hungary in around 1500 is estimated to have been not 4 million, but only 3 – 3.5 million people (Katus 2010, 112).

² This study has been made within the framework of the Research Workgroup on Minorities of Pécs.

³ According to Domokos Kosáry's calculations, the number of Hungarians was approximately 3.5 million (Kosáry 1990, 59).

⁴ In Pesty's view, the term, Banat of Temes (which was unprecedented historically) was the creation of the Viennese Court's lack of knowledge, as when the 'Elyat of Temes', created during the second part of the 16th century, was simply renamed to the Temesvarer Banat, which was followed by the term Banat of Temes, when Prince Eugen von Savoyen conquered Temesvár (Pesty 1868, 23-26).

⁵ William O'Reilly described the Banat of Temes from a topographical perspective: "an area of approximately 28,500 km², it is bordered in the north by the river Maros, in the south by the Danube and in the west by the Tisza. Further to the north lies the county of Arad, to the south Serbia, to the west the county of Bács and to the east Transylvania and Wallachia" (O'Reilly 2003, 78). The area of the Banat of Temes is "now divided between Hungary, Romania and Serbia" (ibid.).

⁶ The most obvious reason for expulsion was deterrence. The historian István Szabó (1990, 147) claims that the Habsburg Empire "used the Banat for the purpose of deportation, as naval states used their overseas colonies and Russia used Siberia."

⁷ In Szabó's opinion (1990, 160), the most obvious reason for keeping the Hungarians away had some political considerations. In 1755, Bartenstein the state chancellor thought that it had always been dangerous for states to allow unsatisfied people to live along their borders – he considered Hungarians as such people (ibid.). For the settlement view of the reliability of settlers and unreliability of Hungarians see O'Reilly (2003, 81).

⁸ Among other Romanian historians, Aurel Tinta has studied the settlement into the Banat of Temes up until 1740.

⁹ According to some calculations, neither did the 200,000 forints set aside for settlement prove sufficient, and so between 1763 and 1773 the Court spent more than 3,000,000 forints to this end (Kulcsár 2004, 245).

¹⁰ Of late the Romanian historian Costin Fenesan has studied the cited criticism of Joseph II (Kulcsár 2004, 363). For further details related to the criticism see footnote 20 below. In 1977 the Romanian historian Ioan Pop published his work on the 1773 travel diary of Joseph II from the Romanian and Saxon viewpoints (Kulcsár 2004, 359).

¹¹ The proportionate population of Romanians in eighteenth-century Transylvania was for instance studied at the end of the 19th century by Nicolae Togan (see Togan 1898), at the beginning of the 20th century by Augustin Bunea (see Bunea 1901), between the two world wars by Virgil Ciobanu (see Ciobanu 1926), and in the 1960s and 1970s by Natalia Giurgiu (see for example Giurgiu 1966, 55-66; Giurgiu 1972).

¹² For different historic types of legitimacy see Ferrero (2001), for the interpretation of Ferrero's legitimacy-understanding see Bibó (1990, 313-316), and for the applications by Bibó of Ferrero's legitimacy-principles see Kupa (2009, 129-130).

¹³ For the topic of the one-hundredth anniversary of the Southern Hungarian counties that was celebrated in 1879, a monograph of 500 pages was published (Szentkláray 1879, XI). Szentkláray's relevant works on the Banat of Temes are still authentic. See O'Reilly (2003, 96 and 99).

¹⁴ The livestock theft theme of the Rumanian pastors has appeared upon numerous occasions in the century-old historic discourse. For this see Hunfalvy (1894, 204-207), Moldován (1913, 17-18), Moldován (1895, 241), Fekete Nagy (1941, 112), Makkai (1943, 416-417), Jakó (1943, 529), Berlász (1943, 589), Szabó (1990, 142), Gáldi-Makkai 1941, 42-43), Makkai (1989, 59). The livestock theft theme survived the Second World war and even the Cold War as well. See Mazower (2004, 63-64), and Prévélakis (2007, 177).

¹⁵ "Is it not the same type of danger that threatens the German settlers in case of frequent Turkish invasion, if they were left among Rumanians?" (Szentkláray 1891, 11).

¹⁶ István Szabó (1990, 142) referred to the Viennese Court's mistrust in connection with Rumanians in the Banat.

¹⁷ They were exempted from paying half of the royal taxes, the grain, sheep and calftithe and farming and transporting wood for three years. They had to pay for seed grain in monthly instalments, and received 100 loads of hay for feeding animals. They were allowed to take the building material of the houses with them or could sell it and were allowed to take young fruit trees from the garden (Szentkláray 1891, 17).

¹⁸ There were problems with the early land cultivation of the German settlers in Banat. The settlers did not have skills for farming and the main organizer, Count Mercy, had to force them to cultivate land (Borovszky 1914, 305).

¹⁹ In another of his works Szentkláray (1879, 207) refers to Joseph II's opinion of 'Serbs and Rumanians as being unsympathetic towards the latter, and as even including cruel criticism. The emperor in his memoirs mentioned the Rumanian people's "indescribable ignorance" and "servile obedience", but in his opinion neither the Serbs nor the Rumanians had any knowledge of elementary education (ibid.). Joseph II's criticism survived and similar opinions could be encountered at the outbreak of World War I (Czirbusz 1913, 65). Krisztina Kulcsár (2004, 358-386) treats Joseph II's official reports (Relation) – and so also his criticism – in detail.

²⁰ Szentkláray (1879, 215-216) quotes a memorandum of Joseph II opposing the re-annexation of the Banat of Temes.

²¹ We could see that these fights occurred not only between the German and the Rumanian population, but among Rumanian villages.

²² There might have been a need for tolerance, because the population of the Banat of Temes comprised exclusively non-Hungarian ethnic groups. Lénárt Böhm (1867, 120) in his study on the Banat estimated the population to be 317,928 in total. More than half (181,639) were Rumanians, more than quarter (78,780) were Serbs, while Germans, along with Italians and French living there amounted to not even 15 percent (43,201).

72 References

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SONJA KERT-WAKOUNIG

Bilingual Topographical Signs in Carinthia: From the Ortstafelsturm (The Organized Assault on Topographical Signs) to the Conference of Consensus

Bilingual topographical signs and the issue of a positive attitude towards the Slovenian language in the southern Austrian province of Carinthia have been the subjects of a longstanding public debate. Through interviews with 'ordinary' Carinthian Slovenes, people who are outside the public eye but who, nevertheless, are directly affected by the highly charged atmosphere of the language conflict within which their daily lives take place, this article will address the process of the transformation of language-related values in Carinthia within the community of Carinthian Slovenes from 1972 to the present. The author attempts to ascertain the importance of the symbolic merit of bilingual topographical signs in helping to preserve language and identity, while trying to assess whether a significant increase in the value of the Slovenian language amongst the broader population has occurred. It will also evaluate the role of the so-called Consensus Group for Carinthia in the processes involved.

Keywords: bilingual topographical signs, Carinthia, Carinthian Slovenes, assault on topographical signs, consensus conference, visible language, identity

Zweisprachige Aufschriften in Kärnten – Vom Ortstafelsturm zur Konsenskonferenz

Zweisprachige topographische Aufschriften und die Akzeptanz der slowenischen Sprache in Kärnten sind Gegenstand langjähriger Diskussionen. Auf der Grundlage von Interviews mit öffentlich weniger beachteten Kärntner SlowenInnen, die jedoch unmittelbar in das sprachliche Spannungsfeld in Kärnten eingespannt sind und dort ihren Alltag bewältigen müssen, versucht die Autorin folgende Fragen zu beantworten: Wie bewerten Kärntner SlowenInnen den Prozess eines Wertewandels im Hinblick auf die slowenische Sprache in Kärnten in den Jahren 1972 bis heute? Was bedeutet ihnen die Symbolik zweisprachiger Aufschriften in Bezug auf den Erhalt ihrer Sprache und Identität? Wird die slowenische Sprache in Kärnten heute mehr geschätzt als in der Vergangenheit? Welche Rolle spielt dabei die so genannte "Kärntner Konsensgruppe"?

Schlüsselwörter: zweisprachige Aufschriften, Kärnten, Kärntner SlowenInnen, Ortstafelsturm, Konsenskonferenz, sichtbare Sprache, Identität

Correspondence address: Sonja Kert-Wakounig, Krščanska kulturna zveza, 10. Oktober-Straße 25, 9020 Celovec/Klagenfurt, Avstrija, e-mail: kert@kkz.at, sonja.kert@aon.at.

Dvojezični krajevni napisi na Koroškem – Od pogroma do konference o konsenzu

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Dvojezični topografski napisi in vprašanje pozitivnega sprejemanja slovenščine na Koroškem so predmet dolgoletne javne razprave. Članek temelji na intervjujih s koroškimi Slovenkami in Slovenci, javno manj vidnimi in slišanimi osebami, ki pa so neposredno vpete v koroško polje jezikovne napetosti in so prisiljene v njem preživljati svoj vsakdan. Avtorica članka poskuša odgovoriti na naslednja vprašanja: Kako koroški Slovenci ocenjujejo proces transformacije vrednot v zvezi s slovenščino na Koroškem od leta 1972 do danes? Kako gledajo na simboliko dvojezičnih napisov v zvezi z ohranitvijo svojega jezika in identitete? Ali je slovenščina na Koroškem danes bolj cenjena kot v preteklosti? Kakšno vlogo pri tem igra tako imenovana »koroška konsenzna skupina«?

Ključne besede: dvojezični napisi, Koroška, Koroški Slovenci, pogrom, konference o konsenzu, vidni jezik, identiteta

1. Einleitung

Die Frage der zweisprachigen Topographie in Kärnten, besser bekannt als die sogenannte "Ortstafelfrage", ist für das Land und die dort lebenden Kärntner SlowenInnen stark emotional geprägt. Durch die Art der Behandlung dieser Frage werden verschiedenste Gefühle hervorgerufen und beschworen, wodurch das Zusammenleben der deutsch und slowenisch sprachigen Kärntner Bevölkerung empfindlich gestört und auch die vorhandene Rechtsnorm zu einer "Ortstafellösung" bei den ohnehin spärlichen Versuchen ihrer korrekten Umsetzung torpediert wird. Hinter jeder Emotion aber liegen konkrete Vorkommnisse, die diese hervorrufen.

Das Verhältnis des österreichischen Staates zu Kärnten, den Kärntner SlowenInnen und der Durchsetzung von deren verbrieften Rechten als anerkannte nationale Minderheit, war seit Beginn der Erste Republik und ist teils immer noch ambivalent. Davon zeugt die umfangreiche Fachliteratur sowohl auf österreichischer als auch slowenischer Seite zu diesem Thema.

Trotz der in letzter Zeit etwas verstärkten Bemühungen der österreichischen Behörden sind auch abseits der öffentlich sehr breitgetretenen Ortstafelfrage noch viele Bereiche offen. So wurde etwa die finanzielle Volksgruppenförderung vom Bund seit Jahren nicht erhöht, die Kulturförderung der Kärntner slowenischen Organisationen durch das Land Kärnten ist verschwindend gering und äußerst

78 unverhältnismäßig. Als Beispiele angeführt seien die Förderungen für den “HeimatHerbst” (eine Veranstaltungsreihe der Kärntner Landesregierung), das Kärntner Volksliedwerk und den Kärntner Sängerbund von insgesamt rd. 570.000 EUR, für den Kärntner Abwehrkämpferbund und den Kameradschaftsbund rd. 80.000 EUR, für beide slowenischen Dachkulturverbände samt acht örtlichen slowenischen Kulturvereinen insgesamt (!) jedoch nur rd. 15.000 EUR (Kärntner Landesregierung 2009). Eklatant sind auch die Unterschiede bei der Förderung des Musikschulunterrichtes an der slowenischen bzw. deutschen Musikschule in Kärnten. Die Förderung pro Kind des Kärntner Musikschulwerkes beträgt 1.300 EUR, pro Kind der Slowenischen Musikschule/*Glasbena šola* hingegen nur 530 EUR (Inzko 2010, 9).

Erwähnt sei hier auch ein besonders krasses Beispiel österreichischen Umganges, und zwar die Art der Volkszählungen, wie sie die österreichischen Behörden übten, um die Anzahl der Slowenen amtlich möglichst niedrig zu halten. So hatte man zahlenarithmetisch in den Jahren 1951 bis 1971 in einigen Gebieten Kärntens einen Rückgang der slowenischen Bevölkerung um satte 80 Prozent erreicht. Nicht nur Vladimir und Matjaž Klemenčič (2010, 120) meinen, dies könne nicht einer natürlichen Siedlungsbewegung, sondern nur einem außerordentlich starken Assimilationsdruck und Manipulationen bei Volkszählungen zugeschrieben werden. Ebendort nachzulesen ist eine diesbezügliche wissenschaftliche Beweisführung mit sehr interessanten Details.

Eine besondere Problematik liegt natürlich ganz grundsätzlich in der Verbindung von Minderheitenrechten und Prozentzahlen bzw. ihrer (zur Zeit praktizierten) wechselseitigen Abhängigkeit. Minderheitenrechte sind als Grundrechte nicht teilbar. Auch der Staatsvertrag betreffend die Wiederherstellung eines unabhängigen und demokratischen Österreich, gegeben zu Wien am 15. Mai 1955 (Staatsvertrag von Wien) bindet die Rechte der nationalen Minderheiten bewusst nicht an Prozentzahlen bzw. eine “beträchtliche Anzahl” an Minderheitenangehörigen, sondern an ein bestimmtes Territorium (autochtones Siedlungsgebiet), das als zweisprachig gelten und wo Slowenen das Leben in ihrer Sprache nicht nur ermöglicht, sondern garantiert werden soll (vgl. Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2010, 77-80). Das inkludiert Schulbildung, Amtsverkehr, topographische Aufschriften u. a., eben das gesamte Spektrum des gesellschaftlichen Lebens, wo Sprache eine Rolle spielt.

Nach einer Beschwerde des Kärntner slowenischen Anwalts Rudi Vouk hinsichtlich der nur einsprachigen Ortstafel von St. Kanzian/Škocjan erging im Jahr 2001 das erste Ortstafelerkenntnis des österreichischen Verfassungsgerichtshofes (VfGH 2001; s. auch Klemenčič & Klemenčič

2010, 478), mit welchem die rechtliche Notwendigkeit einer zweisprachigen Ortstafel für die Ortschaft St. Kanzian/Škocjan festgestellt wurde. In der Zwischenzeit ergingen 18 Ortstafelerkenntnisse, wobei der Verfassungsgerichtshof für die Aufstellung zweisprachiger Ortstafeln von einem zehnpromzentigen Anteil an slowenischer Bevölkerung ausging. Das österreichische Volksgruppengesetz 1976 sah zweisprachige topografische Aufschriften nur dort vor, wo der Anteil der slowenischen Bevölkerung mehr als 25 Prozent betrug. Dies wurde vom Verfassungsgerichtshof mit dem genannten Erkenntnis als verfassungswidrig aufgehoben. Im Lichte der obigen Ausführungen erscheinen aber auch die neuen Ortstafelerkenntnisse als zwar weniger restriktiv ausgelegtes, jedoch immer noch auf Prozentzahlen aufbauendes Vehikel auf dem Weg zu einer rechtskonformen, oder, wenn man so will, einer europäischen Lösung des Ortstafel- bzw. Sprachenstreits in Kärnten. Hingewiesen sei auch auf kritische Anmerkungen der Fachwelt (Gstettner 2004; Novak 2005/2006; Vouk 2004, 2008, 2009) zum Minderheitenschutz in Österreich im Allgemeinen und zur Nichterfüllung des Staatsvertrages von Wien und der Amtssprachen- und Ortstafelerkenntnisse des Verfassungsgerichtshofes im Besonderen (s. dazu auch NSKS 2006). Mahnende Wortmeldungen zum aktuellen Fortgang der Bemühungen gibt es auch von Politikern, etwa den Apell des österreichischen Bundespräsidenten Heinz Fischer, “/d/ie Zeit ist reif – čas je zrel” (KZ 2010a), oder entsprechende Anmerkungen des slowenischen Präsidenten Danilo Türk, “/d/as dauert zu lange” (ST 2008, 6) oder “/i/ch glaube, dass es noch zu früh für eine positive Bewertung ist” (KTZ 2010, 4). Die jüngsten Entwicklungen dazu sind im letzten Absatz dieses Artikels angeführt.

Im Kärntner Sprachenstreit respektive in der Ortstafelfrage wird also trotz der oben genannten Rechtsnormen, deren Umsetzung im Verantwortungsbereich der österreichischen Bundesregierung liegt, insbesondere des Staatsvertrages von Wien, bekräftigt und unterstützt durch zahlreiche Erkenntnisse des österreichischen Verfassungsgerichtshofes zu Amtssprache (VfGH 2000) und Topographie (die oben erwähnten 18 Erkenntnisse, als Beispiel zitiert sei VfGH 2005), mit deren Umsetzung gezögert und versucht, Entscheidungsprozesse und selbst Entscheidungskompetenzen auf Personenkreise außerhalb der Bundesregierung zu verlagern. Dies rief und ruft Proteste von Fachleuten sowie aus den Reihen der Kärntner SlowenInnen hervor, insbesondere deswegen, weil ihnen diese Personenkreise wenig vertrauenerweckend erscheinen. Dies ist nicht verwunderlich, handelt es sich doch teilweise um dieselben Personen, in deren Verantwortung der starke Rückgang der slowenischen Umgangssprache in den letzten 50 Jahren liegt.

Der nachfolgende Artikel ist eine Darstellung der Entwicklung des Klimas bzw.

eines eventuellen Wertewandels in Kärnten im Hinblick auf die slowenische Sprache und deren Stellenwert im öffentlichen und privaten Leben im Zeitraum vom Ortstafelsturm 1972 bis zur Konsenskonferenz im Jahr 2005 und den folgenden. Ausgehend von einer empirischen Untersuchung der Erlebnisse von Kärntner SlowenInnen im genannten Zeitraum und deren Interpretation durch dieselben (Kert-Wakounig 2010) werden im folgenden die Ergebnisse dieser Untersuchung exzerpiert wiedergegeben, gemeinsam mit dem Versuch jenen Prozess zu bewerten, der in der so genannten "Kärntner Konsenskonferenz" sein Schlagwort fand. Die Feststellungen basieren auf Interviews der Autorin mit Kärntner SlowenInnen im Zeitraum Februar bis Mai 2007 (veröffentlicht in Kert-Wakounig 2010, 118-221). Die Interviews wurden nach dem Prinzip eines Leitfadenterviews, kombiniert mit Elementen des narrativen und biographischen Interviews (Schmidt 1997; Bogner & Menz 2004) geführt. Als Erinnerungshilfe wurden bei Bedarf Fotos vorgelegt. Befragt wurden zehn Kärntner SlowenInnen verschiedener Alters- und Berufsgruppen, die den Ortstafelsturm 1972 bewusst miterlebt haben. Weitere Auswahlkriterien waren Wohnort (Umgebung Bleiburg/Pliberk, St. Kanzian/Škocjan, St. Jakob/Št. Jakob) und Geschlecht (fünf Frauen/fünf Männer). Die Interviews wurden im Kärntner slowenischen Dialekt geführt, die Zitate daraus werden hier in ihrer deutschen standardsprachlichen Übersetzung wiedergegeben. Zitiert wird nach InterviewpartnerIn – Kürzel IP plus fortlaufende Nummer.

2. Ausgangspunkt und Fragestellung

In den Jahren seit der Verlautbarung des ersten Erkenntnisses des österreichischen Verfassungsgerichtshofes zu zweisprachigen topografischen Aufschriften in Kärnten im Jahr 2001 (VfGH 2001) wurde die Öffentlichkeit mit zahlreichen Meldungen zu diesem Thema überhäuft. Den Weg in die öffentliche Debatte bahnen sich allerdings vorwiegend Meinungen von Politikern und anderen Personen des öffentlichen Lebens. Dazu haben bereits zahlreiche Autoren geschrieben (z. B. Entner 2005; Gstettner 2002; Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2010; Korschil 2006; Korschil & Simmler 2005; Novak 2005, 2005/2006; Pandel et al. 2004). Von besonderem Interesse und bisher nicht oder wenig bzw. nur implizit beachtet sind jedoch auch die Ansichten aus dem Hintergrund, d. h. von öffentlich wenig beachteten Personen, die aber unmittelbar ins sprachliche Spannungsfeld in Kärnten eingespannt und gezwungen sind, in diesem ihren Alltag zu bewältigen.

Wie also wird der Prozess eines Wertewandels im Zusammenhang mit der

slowenischen Sprache in Kärnten von Kärntner SlowenInnen bzw. aus der Sicht des einfachen zweisprachigen Menschen in Kärnten erlebt? Ist es aus deren Sicht zu einem solchen Prozess überhaupt gekommen? Welche Bedeutung messen Kärntner SlowenInnen der Symbolik von zweisprachigen Aufschriften im Hinblick auf die Erhaltung ihrer Sprache und Identität zu? Erlebt die slowenische Sprache in Kärnten im Vergleich zur Vergangenheit eine erhöhte Wertschätzung und wenn ja, wie äußert sich diese? Welche Rolle spielt dabei die so genannte »Kärntner Konsensgruppe«?

3. Wertewandel im Zusammenhang mit der slowenischen Sprache in Kärnten aus der Sicht von Kärntner SlowenInnen

Der Prozess eines Wertewandels in Kärnten hinsichtlich der slowenischen Sprache ist nach wie vor zwischen zwei sehr gegensätzliche Pole gespannt. Während der eine Pol um eine Normalisierung des Verhältnisses zur slowenischen Sprache und auch um deren öffentliche Anerkennung bemüht ist, hält der andere Pol starr an alten Verhaltensmustern fest und stellt sich gegen eine gleichberechtigte Behandlung der slowenischen Sprache in der Öffentlichkeit. Diese Bipolarität in Kärnten kann sich auch in ein und derselben Person ausdrücken, erkennbar etwa am Beispiel des ehemaligen Bürgermeisters von Grafenstein/Grabštanj, Valentin Deutschmann, der sich als Politiker vehement für die Abschaffung des zweisprachigen Unterrichts in seiner Gemeinde einsetzte, während er selbst seine Kinder zum zweisprachigen Unterricht anmeldete (vgl. Messner 2006), oder auch an Landeshauptmann Jörg Haider, der sich einerseits überaus weltoffen und "slowenenfreundlich" gab und andererseits Slogans wie "Kärnten wird einsprachig" (WZ 2006) postulierte. Die Ablehnung der Sprache erweist sich somit vornehmlich als politisches Instrument, das abseits der tatsächlichen Bedürfnisse und Wünsche der (slowenischen und deutschen) Bevölkerung ein entspanntes und offenes Verhältnis zur slowenischen Sprache und deren Anwendung in Kärnten behindert. Ähnliche Entwicklungen zeigen sich auch an zahlreichen weniger prominenten Beispielen. Berichtet wird etwa von einem ÖVP-Gemeindepolitiker aus Bleiburg, der begonnen hatte slowenisch zu lernen und trotzdem in einem Rundschreiben seiner Partei den Slogan "Stadtamt bleibt Stadtamt" befürwortete (IP 4).

Festgestellt wurde, dass in der Kärntner Bevölkerung die slowenische Sprache heute allgemein zwar verstärkt als positiver Wert wahrgenommen wird, doch

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sind nach Ansicht der InterviewpartnerInnen für deren Erhalt geeignetere Wege als die bisherigen zu beschreiten. Erwartet wird etwa die Erfüllung des österreichischen Staatsvertrages, der Urteile des Verfassungsgerichtshofes oder eine aufrichtige Dialogführung unter gleichberechtigten Partnern.

4. Rückgang der slowenischen Umgangssprache in Kärnten, Gründe dafür und die dadurch Verursachten Ängste

Das 1920 abgegebene feierliche Versprechen der Kärntner Landesversammlung an die Slowenen in Kärnten, dass sie ihre “sprachliche und ihre nationale Eigenart jetzt und alle Zeit wahren will” (Mohar 1986) kann angesichts des heutigen Ist-Zustandes als nicht erfüllt angesehen werden. Nach offiziellen Volkszählungen beträgt der Rückgang der Anzahl der Kärntner Slowenen von ca. 66.191 im Jahr 1910 (Grafenauer 1946, 169) auf ca. 13.000 im Jahr 2001 (Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2006, 27), was auch einen massiven Rückgang der slowenischen Umgangssprache zur Folge hat.¹

Zum “markantesten Rückgang der slowenischen Umgangssprache ist es allerdings erst nach Abschluss des österreichischen Staatsvertrages gekommen”, meint der in Kärnten aufgewachsene Sohn des deutschen Malers Werner Berg und Zeitzeuge Veit Berg (Berg 2010, 14).

Einen wichtigen Grund dafür sehen die Kärntner SlowenInnen auch darin, dass die slowenische Sprache im öffentlichen Bereich nicht sichtbar ist.

“Die Sprache eines Volkes spiegelt das traditionelle Wissen über Umwelt und Kultur ihrer Träger wider. Der Untergang einer Sprache bedeutet damit auch den unwiederbringlichen Verlust dieses Wissens und dieser Kultur”, ist auf der deutschen Internetseite der UNESCO zu lesen (UNESCO 2008) und auch vor diesem Hintergrund ist die Sorge der Kärntner SlowenInnen um den Erhalt der slowenischen Sprache als ihrem wichtigsten, lebenden Kulturerbe und Unterscheidungsmerkmal in Kärnten zu sehen. Der Rückgang der slowenischen Umgangssprache in Kärnten und die Nichtakzeptanz von slowenischen Namen etwa auf Ortstafeln wird als sehr schmerzhaft empfunden, die verhinderte Präsenz auch in der Öffentlichkeit als vorsätzliche Verdrängung der slowenischen Sprache aus dem kollektiven Bewusstsein Kärntens gesehen. Im Umkehrschluss ermögliche sichtbare Sprache deren Erhalt und die Identifikation aller

OrtsbewohnerInnen mit dem ganzheitlichen, d. h. zweisprachigen Charakter des angestammten Wohnortes.

Die vielfach negativen Erlebnisse von Kärntner SlowenInnen in Bezug auf ihre Sprache wie etwa die massive Agitation der Kärntner Heimatverbände, die permanente Verächtlichmachung des slowenischen Dialekts und das dadurch angegriffene Selbstbewusstsein der Kärntner SlowenInnen, gepaart mit ungenügendem Schulunterricht in slowenischer Sprache bewirkten bei vielen, sich gänzlich vom Slowenischen abzuwenden (Berg 2010, 14). Ebendort schreibt Berg (2010, 14), 1934 als Sohn deutschsprachiger Eltern in der damaligen Gemeinde Rückersdorf/Rikarja vas geboren und dort in einem rein slowenischen Umfeld aufgewachsen: "Bei meinem Eintritt in die Volksschule Möchling/Mohliče war ich das einzige Kind, das die deutsche Sprache beherrschte. Heute werde ich schief angesehen, weil ich mich mit Vorliebe der slowenischen Umgangssprache bediene".

Dies steht in krassem Widerspruch zur amtlichen Diktion der Kärntner Landesregierung, wonach die Minderheitenpolitik in Kärnten vorbildlich sei (KTN 2010a), und es keinen Konflikt mit der Volksgruppe gebe (KTN 2010b). Auch FPÖ-Obmann Heinz-Christian Strache meint, dass das Zusammenleben von deutsch- und slowenischsprachigen Kärntnern heute weitgehend konfliktfrei sei (FPÖ 2010).

5. Klima in Kärnten

Die Untersuchungsergebnisse zeigen, dass das Klima zwischen slowenischer und deutscher Volksgruppe in Kärnten, das Voraussetzung für eine bessere Entwicklung ist und das zur Anerkennung Kärntens als zweisprachiges Land durch alle maßgeblichen Faktoren (Einzelpersonen sowie politische und andere Gesellschaftsträger) führen soll, zwar besser geworden ist und eine Entspannung des Verhältnisses zur slowenischen Sprache festgestellt werden kann. Trotzdem ist unter den Kärntner SlowenInnen ein Gefährdungsgefühl spürbar. Im Jahr 1972 und den folgenden war das Gefühl der körperlichen Gefährdung noch sehr stark. So meinte einer der Interviewpartner: "Meine Tante hat furchtbar gelitten, jetzt werden sie uns alle Rechte niederreißen, ich sah, wie sie meinen Vater deswegen verprügelt haben und habe das später selbst auch erlebt" (IP 4). Ein andere wiederum sagte aus: "Ich hatte jeden Tag Migräne, der Direktor war ein Abwehrkämpfer" (IP 9). Die Mutter eines Erstklasslers etwa sah sich genötigt, ältere Schulkinder um Schutz für ihren Sohn auf dem täglichen Schulweg zu

bitten: "Passt ihr auf ihn auf, nehmt die Kleinen in die Mitte, damit sie nicht jeden Tag verprügelt werden" (IP 5). Später verlagerte sich das Gefühl der Gefährdung vor allem auf die Angst vor dem endgültigen Verlust der eigenen Sprache und Kultur als Teil der eigenen Person.

Die Kärntner SlowenInnen spüren heute die Verachtung und Herabwürdigung der slowenischen Sprache, die sie als Teil der eigenen Persönlichkeit sehen, in Form von Ortstafelverrückungen, der Anbringung winziger slowenischer Aufschriften, der Lächerlichmachung von Rechtsdokumenten, die ihr Überleben als sich insbesondere durch die Sprache definierende Volksgruppe sicherstellen sollen, und ähnliches in den Jahren 2000 und den folgenden in gleicher Weise schmerzhaft oder noch verhängnisvoller als den Gewaltakt des Ortstafelsturmes aus dem Jahr 1972 (s. dazu auch Gstettner 2002 und Stergar 2003). Bestätigt wird dies weiters durch Aussagen wie diese: "/d/as ist die logische Fortsetzung einer seinerzeit ungestraften Barbarei, Verspottung des Rechtsstaates" (IP 1) oder: "/d/as ist eine Erniedrigung der Kärntner Slowenen und beleidigt mich jedes Mal, wenn ich vorbeifahre" (IP 1) oder: "/d/as schadet uns sehr und macht mich sehr betroffen" (IP 2). Schmerzhafter empfunden wird es deshalb, weil die Verachtung ganz offen von höchster politischer Seite in Kärnten kommt, was jede Hoffnung auf ein Durchgreifen übergeordneter politischer Organe zugunsten von Rechtsstaat und gutem Zusammenleben zunichte macht. Dies bestätigt die Aussage: "/f/rüher waren das Privatleute, wenn ich bedenke, dass das jetzt ganz offiziell passiert, welcher Fortschritt soll das sein, so gesehen ist es noch schlimmer, wenn der Landeshauptmann selbst Tafeln entfernt" (IP 9).

Andererseits ist auch in der Wahrnehmung der Kärntner SlowenInnen eine gewisse Entspannung spürbar und so gab es von den InterviewpartnerInnen auch Aussagen wie: "/s/slowenisch in der Schule wurde irgendwie schon viel selbstverständlicher" (IP 9); "/f/rüher wurde man angegriffen und man musste schweigen, jetzt kann man davon sprechen; die Leute sind nicht mehr so aufgehetzt, der Standpunkt des Bürgermeisters ist aber unverschämt" (IP 3). Positiver läuft es laut den InterviewpartnerInnen vorwiegend im privaten Bereich bzw. dort, wo die Slowenen ihre Rechte nicht mehr einfordern oder der Konflikt aufgrund des Verschwindens eines der Konfliktpartner, nämlich der SlowenInnen, zum Erliegen gekommen ist. Die Erfahrungen der InterviewpartnerInnen sind durchwegs die, dass Aktivitäten zur Verbesserung des zwischenmenschlichen Klimas zwischen deutsch und slowenisch sprachigen KärntnerInnen vorwiegend von slowenischer Seite ausgehen, wo das Bedürfnis danach ausgeprägter ist und die Kärntner SlowenInnen in Ermangelung sichtbarer Zeichen für ihre Anwesenheit ständig auf sich aufmerksam machen müssen. Dies wird auf lange Sicht als sehr ermüdend und stressbehaftet erlebt. So gestalten immer mehr

slowenische Kulturvereine ihre Veranstaltungen zweisprachig, diese zahlreichen Initiativen um Kommunikation und Dialog werden immer noch von zu wenig deutsch sprechenden KärntnerInnen angenommen. Es gibt zwar einen gewissen urbaneren Personenkreis, der darauf anspricht, die direkten Nachbarn bleiben jedoch aus. Dies bestätigen die Aussagen: “/w/ir haben sie schon eingeladen, sie uns aber nicht” (IP 3), “/d/as Klima zum Dialog versuchen ja nur wir selbst zu erzeugen” (IP 4) oder “/d/ie einheimischen Deutschen kommen aber nicht” (IP 10).

Als persönliche Anmerkung sei beigefügt, ob überhaupt von einem guten Klima gesprochen werden kann, solange eine Sprachgruppe die sichtbare Niederschrift in der Sprache der anderen auf demselben Territorium lebenden Sprachgruppe in der Weise, wie dies in Kärnten geschieht, problematisiert. Einer Weise, die in vielen Kärntner SlowenInnen den Eindruck wach hält, der Ortstafelsturm aus dem Jahr 1972 könnte auch heute noch wieder stattfinden. Dier geht hervor aus Aussagen wie “/m/an müsste die Leute nur ein bisschen aufhetzen und ihnen Waffen in die Hand geben, ich bin überzeugt, dass es genauso kommen würde” (IP 3) und “/d/as kann ich mir schon vorstellen. Man muss ja nur noch ein bisschen aufhetzen, sicher. Ich bin davon überzeugt” (IP 6). Auch andere berichten von einer bedrohlichen Stimmung, die an die dreißiger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts erinnere, vor emotional geschürten Konflikten zögen Menschen verängstigt den Kopf ein (Winkler 2006).

6. Die slowenische Sprache in Schulwesen und Wirtschaft

Im zweisprachigen Schulwesen in Kärnten ist nach einem Tiefpunkt im Schuljahr 1975/76 zwar ein stetiger Aufwärtstrend zu beobachten (1975/76: 1.224 Kinder oder 13,95 Prozent 2007/08: 1.892 Kinder oder 40,55 Prozent), das Interesse für Zweisprachigkeit verringert sich mit zunehmender Schullaufbahn jedoch drastisch (vgl. Wakounig 2008, 318-319). So sinken die Anmeldezahlen in den ersten Klassen der Hauptschulen im Vergleich zu den Anmeldezahlen in der vierten Klasse Volksschule um 80 Prozent (Wakounig 2008; vgl. auch Domej 2003/04). Zum Thema äußerte sich auch Štefka Vavti (Vavti 2010), s. dazu auch Strokovno pedagoško združenje (SPZ 2004).

Als besonderes Problem sehen die Kärntner SlowenInnen den Unterricht der slowenischen Sprache, die in Kärnten mittlerweile mehr oder weniger als Fremdsprache, ähnlich dem Englischen, unterrichtet werde. Hier komme es

nämlich zu keiner nennenswerten Anbindung an die kulturellen Hintergründe der Sprache bzw. einem Kontakt zu deren SprecherInnen (IP 6). Auch werden keine erhöhten Ambitionen wahrgenommen, die Sprache wirklich ernsthaft zu erwerben. Bestätigt wird das durch folgende Aussage: “/d/as soll sich [das Kind] halt ansehen und diese vier Jahre lernen” (IP 6). Wahrgenommen wird, dass Anmeldungen zum zweisprachigen Unterricht in Randgebieten steigen, während in Gebieten, wo das slowenische Leben noch stärker präsent ist, keine ähnlichen Trends bzw. starke Reibungen zu beobachten sind. Diese Wahrnehmung wird unterstützt durch die Tatsache der Verringerung der Anmeldezahlen zum zweisprachigen Unterricht laut Bericht über die aktuellen SchülerInnenzahlen in den zweisprachigen Kerngebieten Bleiburg/Pliberk und St. Michael ob Bleiburg/Šmihel nad Pliberkom. In Bleiburg/Pliberk gab es im Schuljahr 2009/10 77 SchulanfängerInnen, davon 36 Anmeldungen, und im Jahr 2010/11 79 SchulanfängerInnen, davon 36 Anmeldungen. Das heißt, es gab eine Verringerung der zum zweisprachigen Unterricht angemeldeten SchülerInnen von 46 auf 45 Prozent. In St. Michael ob Bleiburg/Šmihel nad Pliberkom verzeichnete man im Schuljahr 2009/10 81 SchulanfängerInnen, davon 36 Anmeldungen, und im Schuljahr 2010/11 94 SchulanfängerInnen, davon 34 Anmeldungen. Dies ergibt eine Verringerung von 41 auf 38 Prozent.²

Die steigenden Anmeldezahlen zum zweisprachigen Unterricht werden ebenfalls kritisch betrachtet, ersichtlich aus Aussagen wie “das ist eine gute Entwicklung, doch die slowenischen Sprachkenntnisse nehmen trotzdem rapide ab” (IP 1) und “das ist nur gut für die Statistik” (IP 7). Auch werden entsprechende praktische Sprachkenntnisse nicht wirklich erwartet, die Sprachkompetenz entwickle sich nicht zufriedenstellend. Ein/e InterviewpartnerIn meinte dazu: “/i/ch betrachte das nur noch von der Warte, dass das Klima entsprechend ist” (IP 9).

Wahrgenommen wird ein verstärktes wirtschaftliches Interesse an der slowenischen Sprache und das damit verbundene Lerninteresse, jedoch wird darin kein nachhaltiger Nutzen für das Überleben als Volksgruppe gesehen (IP 6). Der intellektuelle Vorteil wird nach Ansicht der InterviewpartnerInnen überdies nur von der höheren Bildungsschicht erkannt, während das Angebot von “einfachen” Leuten nicht genutzt wird (IP 9). Beobachtungen, Anmerkungen und Feststellungen dazu sind auch in Zupančič (2005) und Brezigar (2005).

Für die slowenische Sprache muss man sich also bewusst entscheiden, was in Kärnten offensichtlich immer noch ein Problem ist. Die Existenz einer Sprachgruppe wird nicht nur durch ihre intellektuelle Elite sichergestellt, vielmehr auch durch das einfache Volk. Dieses braucht einen Lebensraum, wo es sich frei bewegen und sich auf allen Ebenen in seiner Sprache verständigen kann. Die

Sprache muss als etwas Funktionales erlebt werden. Erst wenn die zweisprachige Natur des Kärntner Lebensraumes zur Selbstverständlichkeit wird, wird sich auch der einfache Mensch, der sich mit dieser Frage nicht (nur) auf intellektueller Ebene befassen will und dies weder seine Aufgabe ist noch von ihm erwartet werden kann, zweisprachig entwickeln können. Eine Gesellschaft wird nicht nur durch ihre intellektuelle Elite begründet, sondern durch viele verschiedene Gesellschaftsschichten, wobei jeder dieser Schichten das geboten werden muss, was sie jeweils braucht, auf eine Art und Weise, die für sie durchführbar ist.

7. Bedeutung von sichtbarer Sprache und Identität

Die Sichtbarkeit der Sprache ist für die Kärntner SlowenInnen von wesentlicher Bedeutung und würde dies ihren Bemühungen um ein Überleben als Volksgruppe sehr entgegenkommen. Ohne sichtbare Zeichen in ihrer Sprache fühlen sich die Kärntner SlowenInnen ausgelöscht. Sichtbare Sprache ermögliche Gleichberechtigung, erhalte die Kultur und stärke die Identität, erhöhe die Lebensqualität, ermögliche eine entspannte Identifikation aller Bewohner eines Ortes mit der dort gesprochenen slowenischen Sprache bzw. den dort lebenden SlowenInnen, rege zum Erlernen der slowenischen Sprache an, lehre Toleranz, fördere den Dialog, flöße Selbstvertrauen ein und sei wichtig für das Wohlbefinden, meinen die InterviewpartnerInnen.

Eine fehlende zweisprachige Aufschrift wird als verstecktes Zeichen fehlender Akzeptanz der nicht sichtbar gemachten Sprache und deren Sprechern sowie als Versuch der Verdrängung der slowenischen Sprache aus dem kollektiven Gedächtnis der Kärntner Bevölkerung verstanden. Dass eine derartige Verdrängung aus dem kollektiven Gedächtnis in Kärnten tatsächlich stattfindet, wurde unter anderem auch vom ehemaligen Präsidenten des Verfassungsgerichtshofes Ludwig Adamovich festgestellt, der meinte, dass "wegen des Verstreichens einer Zeitspanne von 17 Jahren der Zusammenhang mit den Bedingungen für den Abschluss des Staatsvertrages in weiten Kreisen der Bevölkerung in Südkärnten offenbar völlig verloren gegangen ist" (Adamovich 2006, 10). Bewiesen wird der Erfolg dieses Prozesses bzw. die diesbezüglich berechnete Sorge der Kärntner SlowenInnen (InterviewpartnerInnen) unter anderem auch durch Aussagen wie "/i/ch denke, die Kärntner Slowenen haben sich 1920 für Deutsch-Kärnten entschieden." (KZ 2006a, 57) oder "[In Völkermarkt/Velikovec] erfuhr ich, dass vor allem die Kärntner Slowenen für die Zugehörigkeit zu Österreich und damit für Deutsch als Sprache gestimmt haben"

(KZ 2006b, 45), oder "Slowenen wollen selbst keine zweisprachigen Ortstafeln", wie dies der Kärntner FPÖ-Obmann Martin Strutz (NEWS 2004) und andere (WNO 2000) postulieren.

Solche Behauptungen stehen in klarem Widerspruch zu den Aussagen der kärntnerslowenischen InterviewpartnerInnen, die überdies überzeugt sind, dass es durch eine sichtbare zweisprachige Bezeichnung von Orten zu weniger Assimilationserscheinungen kommen bzw. dies die Kärntner SlowenInnen in ihren Bemühungen um den Erhalt der eigenen Identität fördern würde.

Die Identität ist für die Kärntner SlowenInnen untrennbar mit der slowenischen Sprache verbunden, ihre Benachteiligung wird als persönliche Beleidigung wahrgenommen, ihr Verlust, die "Ausrottung von Worten" wird gleichsam körperlich als ein Schritt zur Ausrottung von Menschen erlebt. So sagte ein/e InterviewpartnerIn aus: "/h/inter jedem Wort steht auch ein Mensch, wenn man Worte nicht aushält, hält man auch den Menschen dahinter nicht mehr aus" (IP 1).

Es kann also festgestellt werden, dass durch die Nichtpräsenz der slowenischen Sprache in der Öffentlichkeit die Assimilation mitverursacht bzw. gefördert wird, da den Kärntner SlowenInnen dadurch die vollständige Identifikation mit ihrem Heimatort verwehrt, das Zugehörigkeitsgefühl von der unsichtbaren zur sichtbaren bzw. von der konfliktbeladenen zur konfliktfreien Sprache gefördert (vgl. Grözing 1998, 10-11) und dadurch in Kärnten ein Identitätswechsel von der slowenischen zur deutschen Identität vorangetrieben wird. Ausgehend von der Feststellung, dass "der Mensch als Unikat seine Individualität ständig mit der Perzeption, die andere von ihm haben, in Einklang bringen muss" (Južnič 1993, 101), wird dadurch der deutschsprachigen Bevölkerung in Kärnten die richtige Perzeption des Volkes, mit dem es auf einem gemeinsamen Gebiet lebt, unmöglich gemacht und der Eindruck vermittelt, die andere Sprachgruppe wäre nicht vorhanden und müsse daher auch nicht berücksichtigt werden.

Zu Fragen der Identität und den in Kärnten daraus erwachsenen Konflikten ganz aktuellrecherchiert hat auch Jürgen Pirker. Er analysiert die Wechselwirkungen von Politik, Identität und Recht im Kärntner Konflikt anhand der Identitätskonzepte der diversen Interessensvertreter beider Bevölkerungsgruppen. Ausführlich besprochen werden auch verschiedene andere in diesem Artikel angesprochene Bereiche (Pirker 2010).

8. Konsenskonferenz bzw. “Kärntner Konsensgruppe”

Im Frühjahr 2002 lud der damalige österreichische Bundeskanzler Wolfgang Schüssel Vertreter der österreichischen politischen Parteien, der Kärntner Regierungsparteien sowie der Kärntner Slowenen und der Kärntner Heimatverbände zu einem runden Tisch um nach einer Lösung der Ortstafelfrage zu suchen. Dies sollte nach dem Modell einer Konsenskonferenz erfolgen. Nach drei solchen Zusammenkünften kündigte ein Teil der Kärntner Slowenen, nämlich der Rat der Kärntner Slowenen, die Zusammenarbeit auf mit dem Argument, dies gehe in eine falsche Richtung (Kert-Wakounig 2010, 48). Auch die weiteren Zusammenkünfte der nun im Umfang beschränkten Konsenskonferenz brachten keine Lösung (Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2010, 484-489). Die Konsensgruppe erklärte jedoch, sie wolle weiter an einer Lösung und der Verbesserung des Klimas in Kärnten arbeiten und erstellte unter der Leitung des Historikers Stefan Karner das so genannte »Schüssel-Karner-Papier«. Eine auf diesem Papier aufbauende Verordnung wurde vom höchsten gemeinsamen Gremium der Kärntner Slowenen (dem erweiterten Koordinationsausschuss, bestehend aus je 30 Vertretern des aus der Konsenskonferenz ausgeschiedenen Rates der Kärntner Slowenen und des dort verbliebenen Zentralverbandes slowenischer Organisationen) mit Beschluss vom 9. 7. 2006 abgelehnt. Die Gründe dafür sind ausführlich in Klemenčič & Klemenčič (2010, 504-529) nachzulesen.

Die Konsenskonferenz in Kärnten wird von den InterviewpartnerInnen im Wesentlichen einheitlich kritisch beurteilt. Gespräche mit den deutschsprachigen Mitbürgern werden durchwegs begrüßt, abgelehnt wird jedoch die Form, in welcher diese Gespräche in der so genannten “Kärntner Konsensgruppe” ablaufen. Dazu meinten die InterviewpartnerInnen: “/d/as Zusammenleben erfordert Gespräche, das sind jedoch nicht Verhandlungspartner hinsichtlich unserer Rechte” und “/d/as ist Mitwirkung unserer Leute bei Verhandlungen mit jenen, die uns nicht wohl gesinnt sind, die keine offizielle Macht haben, die all das, die negative Entwicklung, verursacht haben und gegen alles Slowenische waren” (IP 1); “/Gespräche sind gut, bis zu einem gewissen Grad” und “/d/as ist eine unmögliche Mausehelei ohne jegliche rechtliche oder politische Grundlage, ein fauler Kompromiss” (IP 3). Diese Gespräche werden nicht als notwendiger, in alle Richtungen offener Dialog wahrgenommen, sondern vielmehr als Verhandlungen mit dem Ziel möglichst wenig zweisprachige Aufschriften in Kärnten zu erreichen. Für die InterviewpartnerInnen sind weder die deutschen noch die slowenischen Mitglieder dieser Gruppe glaubwürdig. Vermisst wird bei ersteren die ernsthafte Benennung und das Bekennen von Fehlern aus der

Vergangenheit. An die Adresse des ehemaligen Chefredakteurs der Kleinen Zeitung und Konsensgruppenmitglieds Heinz Stritzl richtete man etwa, dieser müsse "wenigstens sagen, aber damals ist mit ein Fehler unterlaufen. Das ist kein schäbiges Partisanendenkmal, sondern ein Denkmal, was diesen dort wirklich leidgeprüften, umgebrachten Menschen geschehen ist" (IP 4), bei zweiteren die Berechtigung, im Namen der Kärntner SlowenInnen zu sprechen: "Vertreter, die sich nicht demokratisch wählen lassen" und "Jugoslawien besteht nicht mehr, in Slowenien gibt es demokratische Wahlen, in unseren Strukturen aber wird entschieden wie früher im Zentralkomitee" (IP 4), bei beiden werden deren lautere Motive für die Teilnahme in dieser Gruppe angezweifelt. Zu den slowenischen Konsensgruppenmitgliedern wurde etwa gesagt: "/d/as sind Herren, denen es mehr oder weniger um ihren Machterhalt geht, doch um das Slowenische geht es ihnen nicht mehr" (IP 3), bzw. an die Adresse von Josef Feldner: "/e/r hat politisch ja nichts anderes mehr, spielt keine Rolle mehr" und "vielleicht hat er sogar ein schlechtes Gewissen, wo er doch dreißig Jahre so gegen die Slowenen gehetzt hat" (IP 10). Von den deutschen Konsensgruppenmitgliedern nicht entkräftet werden konnte der Eindruck, ihnen ginge es nur um das Herabdrücken der Anzahl an aufzustellenden zweisprachigen Aufschriften: "Es bleibt immer weniger übrig; das ist so eine Bittstellerei; wenn der Verfassungsgerichtshof meint, es sollten zweihundert [zweisprachige] Aufschriften sein, kann man darüber verhandeln, ob es mehr geben soll, nicht aber darüber, dass es weniger sein sollen" (IP 9), "Sie haben doch bis zuletzt geschrieben, was sie erreichen wollen, wenn schon [zweisprachige] Tafeln, dann nur wenige und keine Öffnungsklausel" (IP 8) unter gleichzeitigen Bemühungen um eine Ausweitung ihres (sprich: des deutschen) Einflusses in Slowenien: "/j/etzt werden sie für die deutsche Minderheit in Jugoslawien kämpfen wie früher in der ersten Republik, uns, die wir etwa eine Kulturautonomie gefordert haben, wurde gesagt, zuerst die anderen dort." (IP 8). Die slowenischen Gruppenmitgliedern hingegen hängt der Vorwurf nach, sie wären wirtschaftlich und in anderer Weise abhängig von der Politik und hätten auch keinen Rückhalt in der Bevölkerung: "/d/ie Führenden dieser Organisationen sind im Prinzip ohne Basis." (IP 7). Zusätzlich genährt wird diese offene Skepsis insbesondere aus dem Mangel an klaren Worten der Mitglieder dieser "Konsensgruppe" zu zahlreichen aktuellen Vorkommnissen in Kärnten, wo sich immer noch Feindlichkeit gegenüber der slowenischen Sprache entlädt: "/w/enn ich dann den ‚Kärntner‘ lese, wie kann das sein?" (IP 5). Die Gespräche werden von den InterviewpartnerInnen als unsystematischer Schacher abseits gesetzlicher Regelungen und als unnötiges Hinauszögern einer Lösung der Frage der zweisprachigen topografischen Aufschriften in Kärnten wahrgenommen.

Die Skepsis über die Tätigkeit der "Kärntner Konsensgruppe" in der derzeitigen

Form geht weit über die InterviewpartnerInnen hinaus. So stellt der Obmann der Kärntner Einheitsliste, Vladimir Smrtnik, in einem Kommentar fest, dass dieser Dialogprozess von vielen Kärntner Slowenen kritisch betrachtet würde und es ein fühlbares Misstrauen gegenüber Josef Feldner gäbe, der erst dann glaubwürdig sein würde, wenn er sich bei den Kärntner Slowenen für die brutale Assimilationspolitik, die er in den vergangenen 40 Jahren führend mitbetrieben hat, entschuldigt (Smrtnik 2007). Andere meinen, der Dialog abseits der Politik bestünde bereits seit vielen Jahren und sei keine Erfindung des Zentralverbandes slowenischer Organisationen oder des Kärntner Heimatdienstes. Trotzdem käme es keinem Verein in den Sinn, sich in die rechtlichen Angelegenheiten zwischen Staat und Kärntner Slowenen einmischen zu dürfen, dies täte nur der KHD, der Dialog wäre überhaupt nur wegen der Jahrzehnte langen Hetzkampagnen des KHD notwendig (Kert 2008). Horst Ogris (2002) meinte dazu, die Kärntner Politik verharre wie die sprichwörtlich Maus vor der vermeintlichen Schlange Heimatdienst, die letztlich ein Popanz – weil ein privater Verein – wäre, ein Verein, der es mit der Wahrheit auch nicht so genau nähme.

Eine Konsensuskonferenz dient dazu, ein kontroverses Thema von hoher gesamtgesellschaftlicher Bedeutung außerhalb von Fachkreisen in der Laienöffentlichkeit zu diskutieren. Das Verfahren hat Elemente der moderierten Verhandlung, der öffentlichen Expertenanhörung und der Laienbeteiligung. Das dort erreichte "Bürgervotum" hat eine beratende Funktion, so nachzulesen u. a. in der Werkstatt für Dialogische Planung der Universität Kassel (UNI KASSEL 2003). Der Stellenwert der Ergebnisse einer Konsensuskonferenz hängt von mehreren Faktoren ab, nicht zuletzt von der fairen Auswahl der Teilnehmer (Köberle 2000). Eine Konsensuskonferenz macht überdies nur dann Sinn, wenn über den Gegenstand noch keine abschließende politische Entscheidung vorliegt, meint Köberle ebendort.

Davon und von der in Kert-Wakounig (Kert-Wakounig 2010, 46-47) erläuterten Grundidee einer Konsenskonferenz nach dänischem Modell ausgehend muss festgestellt werden, dass die "Kärntner Konsensgruppe" die Kriterien einer richtigen Konsenskonferenz nicht erfüllt, denn es wird über einen Gegenstand verhandelt, über den bereits abschließende politische und (höchst-)gerichtliche Entscheidungen vorliegen. Aufgrund mangelnden Vertrauens kann sie auch eine Partizipation breiterer Bevölkerungsschichten bei (sprach)politischen Entscheidungen nicht erreichen und wird durch ihre Tätigkeit das Verständnis für erforderliche politische Maßnahmen bzw. deren Akzeptanz nicht erleichtert. Überdies zeigt sich die Gruppe nicht als Beratungsorgan der Regierung, sondern geradezu als deren Ersatz, was im Widerspruch zu demokratischen Grundsätzen und dem eigentlichen Zweck einer Konsenskonferenz steht.

Nachdem auch bis zum Jahr 2008 keine Lösung der Ortstafelfrage herbeigeführt werden konnte, erklärte die "Kärntner Konsensgruppe", sie werde ihre Verständigungsarbeit dessen ungeachtet weiterführen (KZ 2008, 5). Sie entwickelt allerdings wenig eigene Aktivitäten, sondern wird von verschiedenen Seiten (vor allem von politischen Parteien) zu Veranstaltungen und Diskussionsrunden eingeladen, wo sie vor allem für die Umsetzung des von ihr entwickelten "Konsenspapiers", genannt auch "Schüssel-Karner-Papier", wirbt (s. dazu Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2010, 521). Die "Kärntner Konsensgruppe" hat auch mehrere Auszeichnungen erhalten (den Europäischen Bürgerpreis, den Kulturpreis der Stadt Villach sowie den österreichischen Verfassungspreis, alle im Jahr 2009). Daraus könnte man schließen, dass sie in deutschsprachigen Kreisen offenbar besser aufgenommen wird als in slowenisch sprachigen, auf jeden Fall aber lässt es den Schluss zu, dass sie einen gewissen politischen Rückhalt genießt. Eine Beleuchtung der Gründe hierfür würde den Rahmen des vorliegenden Beitrags sprengen, könnte aber als Anlass zu einem weiterführenden Artikel genommen werden. Der Obmann des Kärntner Heimatdienstes und Mitglied der "Kärntner Konsensgruppe" Josef Feldner vermisst zwar trotzdem eine Unterstützung durch die Politik und spricht von "radikalen Kräften auf slowenischer und deutscher Seite, die einer Versöhnung entgegen stehen", welche er aber nicht näher definiert, sondern nur darauf hinweist, dass eine Lösung, wie sie die "Kärntner Konsensgruppe" vorschlägt, "lediglich 50 bis 75 neue Orte mit zweisprachigen Bezeichnungen" beinhaltet (Večer 2009). Nach den oben genannten Preisen soll sie ihre Arbeit auf Einladung des ehemaligen österreichischen ÖVP-Innenministers und nunmehrigen EU-Abgeordneten Ernst Strasser im März 2011 in Brüssel präsentieren. Strasser sprach sich ebenfalls für eine auf dem Schüssel-Karner-Papier aufbauende Ortstafellösung aus (KZ 2010b, 17).

Die von Feldner angesprochenen "radikalen slowenischen Kräfte" können trotz ihrer kritischen Bemerkungen zur "Kärntner Konsensgruppe" jedenfalls nicht die in diesem Artikel zitierten InterviewpartnerInnen sein, denn diese wünschen sich einen Dialog, den sie in ihrem privaten und beruflichen Alltag und zwischenmenschlichen Umgang auch auf breiterer gesellschaftlicher Ebene selbst leben.

Die "Kärntner Konsensgruppe" könnte mit entsprechenden Adaptionen (geeigneter Zusammensetzung, geeigneter Kommunikation, geeigneter Aktivitäten) jedoch durchaus zu einem Instrument einer breiteren Dialogentwicklung werden, das sich für die Umsetzung der erforderlichen (sprach)politischen Maßnahmen und die Erfüllung gesetzlicher Vorgaben hinsichtlich der zweisprachigen Topographie in Kärnten einsetzt und das

Verständnis dafür festigt. Oder ausgedrückt mit den Worten des österreichischen Bundespräsidenten Heinz Fischer: “/w/enn man die Bemühungen zu einem offenen Dialog mit den Bürgern und Bürgerinnen in Kärnten ausweitet, wie das von den beiden Autoren begonnen wurde, dann bleibe ich trotz allem zuversichtlich, dass wir auch dieses Problem einer vernünftigen Lösung zuführen können” (Feldner/Sturm 2007, 9).

9. Zusammenfassende Bemerkung

Zusammenfassend muss festgestellt werden, dass beim Verhältnis von Kärnten zur slowenischen Sprache heute im Gegensatz zu 1972 eine gewisse Entspannung wahrnehmbar ist, dass dieses Verhältnis jedoch in einigen wichtigen Bereichen immer noch getrübt ist. Positiv nehmen Kärntner SlowenInnen etwa die Erkenntnisse des Verfassungsgerichtshofes zu zweisprachigen Ortstafeln oder die steigenden Anmeldungen zum zweisprachigen Unterricht in Kärnten, aber auch bestimmte Signale aus Nachbarschaft und beruflichem bzw. wirtschaftlichem Umfeld, in geringem Maß auch aus der Politik, wahr. Nichtsdestotrotz können sich die meisten vorstellen, dass es unter Umständen auch heute noch zu Vorkommnissen wie dem Ortstafelsturm kommen könnte.

Negativ wahrgenommen wird nach wie vor die Kärntner Politik, aber auch die so genannte “Kärntner Konsensgruppe”, deren Proponenten wenig Vertrauen entgegengebracht wird. Die emotionale Betroffenheit über Aktionen wie das Verrücken zweisprachiger Ortstafeln ist heute ebenso groß wie seinerzeit beim Ortstafelsturm, wiewohl heute nicht mehr um Leib und Leben, sondern “nur” um den Erhalt von Sprache und Kultur gebangt wird.

Erwähnt werden positive Ansätze in der Kärntner Wirtschaft. Rein wirtschaftliche Motive für den Spracherwerb werden jedoch als unzureichend für den Erhalt der slowenischen Sprache in Kärnten bezeichnet.

Die Interviewergebnisse zeigen, dass

- ♦ der Wunsch nach öffentlicher Anerkennung der slowenischen Sprache in Kärnten (etwa durch das Anbringen zweisprachiger Ortstafeln) unter den Kärntner SlowenInnen groß ist und
- ♦ dies als Notwendigkeit für die Wahrnehmung der slowenischen Sprache als normalen und identitätsstiftenden bzw.-erhaltenden Bestandteil des Kärntner Lebens angesehen wird,
- ♦ die Sprache nicht als politisches Instrument, sondern als Ausdruck der Seele

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- gesehen wird,
 - ♦ das Klima zwischen deutsch- und slowenischsprachigen KärntnerInnen trotz einiger positiver Entwicklungen noch einer nachhaltigeren Verbesserung bedarf,
 - ♦ die “Konsensgruppe” in der behandelten Form nicht das geeignete Mittel zu diesem Zweck ist.

Für eine wahrhaftige und nachhaltige Verbesserung des Zusammenlebens der slowenischen und deutschen Volksgruppe in Kärnten sowie die Erhaltung der Identität und das Wohlbefinden auch der Kärntner SlowenInnen in ihrer Heimat sind zweisprachige Aufschriften also notwendig, sie sind auch Gradmesser für das Klima im Lande. Die Sprache soll nicht Zankapfel, sondern eine kulturelle und menschliche Bereicherung Kärntens sein.

Zum Abschluss sei dem Leser ein Ausschnitt aus einem (in der österreichischen Tageszeitung Der Standard veröffentlichten) Artikel des Kulturredakteurs der slowenischen Abteilung des ORF im Landesstudio Klagenfurt-Celovec, Horst Ogris (2002), nahegebracht:

Eine kluge Frau, eine Zugereiste, sinnierte kürzlich im Gespräch, dass der sogenannte Konflikt weitergehen würde, solange man nicht begreift, dass man einer großen Anzahl Kärntner Menschen ihre Identität zurückgeben müsste – jener großen Zahl, in deren Eingeweiden noch der slowenische Ursprung rumort, sich manifestiert in ihrer Liebe zum slowenischen Kärntner Volkslied, in der unvermeidlichen Tante Mici, die fast jeder vorzuweisen hat, bis hin zur Großmutter, die ein Unterkärntner Bürgermeister vor Jahrzehnten vor Kanzler Klaus weggesperrt hat, weil er fürchtete, sie, die einzige Abonnentin des Naš tednik, könnte mit ihrem Vorväteridiom das deutsche Bild trüben. Bedenkt man es genau, kann man dieser Theorie manches abgewinnen. Die Kärntner Politik könnte den Anfang des dritten Jahrtausends als Epoche beginnen, in der man der Mehrheit der Menschen in Südkärnten Wege zur Selbstfindung, zur Wiederentdeckung der Identität freimachen, die dorthin führen könnte, dass eine zweisprachige Ortstafel niemanden mehr störe...

Horst Ogris wurde am 18. 2. 2010 mit dem silbernen Ehrenzeichen der Republik Österreich ausgezeichnet.

10. Jüngste Entwicklungen

Versuche zur Klimaverbesserung in Kärnten werden auch nach dem Tod Jörg Haiders im Jahr 2008 vor allem von jener politischen Option in Kärnten gestört, welche in den letzten Jahren den meisten Zuspruch erhielt und der auch der

Kärntner Landeshauptmann Gerhard Dörfler angehört (das Bündnis Zukunft Österreich/BZÖ, nach der Abspaltung in der Zeit von Jörg Haider unter dem Namen Freiheitliche Partei Kärntens/FPK im Jahr 2009 wieder in die Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs/FPÖ eingegliedert).

Der Nachfolger von Jörg Haider setzte zunächst weiterhin auf vom österreichischen Verfassungsgerichtshof als verfassungswidrig erkannte Regelungen (die staatsvertraglich zugesicherten Rechte sollten nur jenen Kärntner SlowenInnen zuerkannt werden, die in Orten leben, wo ihr Prozentanteil mehr als 25 % beträgt) und dachte öffentlich über die Einberufung einer "Fachkommission" nach, die für Kärnten zusätzliche italienische Ortsnamen ersinnen sollte (Sommersguter 2010, 24) wie dies seinerzeit der übelbeleumundete Senator des faschistischen Italien ("Totengräber von Südtirol"), Ettore Tolomei, in Südtirol getan hatte (vgl. Zeller 2004, 59). Im September 2010 gab es wieder versöhnlichere Töne und Dörfler sprach von zehn Prozent "Zweisprachigkeit in den Gemeinden als Grundlage für das Aufstellen zweisprachiger Ortstafeln" (ST 2010a). Dörfler verlangte außerdem eine Minderheitenfeststellung (ST 2010b), von der er jüngst wieder abrückte (ORF 2010a), allerdings unter Protest seines FPK-Parteiobmanns Uwe Scheuch (ST 2010c). Dies alles nach einem Besuch des österreichischen Staatssekretärs Josef Ostermayer am 12. November 2010 in Kärnten, wo Gespräche mit Landespolitikern, Bürgermeistern und den in der "Kärntner Konsensgruppe" mitwirkenden Slowenenvertretern geführt wurden. Nach diesen Gesprächen kündigte Ostermayer eine mögliche Lösung mit "mehr als 141 und weniger als 163 zweisprachigen Ortstafeln" an, dies ohne Minderheitenfeststellung und per Verfassungsgesetz (2/3 Mehrheit im Parlament) mit taxativer Aufzählung der davon betroffenen Ortschaften (ORF 2010b).

Dazu sei angemerkt, dass eine solche Lösung von den Kärntner Slowenen mittels Beschluss des erweiterten Koordinationssauschusses bereits im Jahr 2006 abgelehnt wurde. Der letzte gemeinsame Kompromissvorschlag der Kärntner Slowenenorganisationen stammt übrigens aus dem Jahr 2002 und beinhaltet 394 Ortstafeln. Die damaligen Volksgruppenvertreter sprachen von einem "Kompromissvorschlag" (Rudi Vouk, Vize-Obmann des Rates der Kärntner Slowenen) und "der unteren Grenze" (Marjan Sturm, Obmann des Zentralverbandes slowenischer Organisationen). Dies gegenüber 800 Ortstafeln, wie sie unter Zugrundelegung der Daten und Umstände des Jahres 1945 aufgestellt werden müssten (Klemenčič & Klemenčič 2010, 484–486).

Anmerkungen

¹ Bei den Volkszählungen vor 1910 war die Zahl der Kärntner Slowenen noch höher. So wurden im Jahr 1880 84.862, im Jahr 1889 84.497 und im Jahr 1990 74.967 Slowenen in Kärnten gezählt (Grafenauer 1946, 169). Die Objektivität der amtlichen Volks- und Sprachenzählungen nach 1900 ist jedoch stark in Frage zu ziehen. Siehe dazu Ausführliches in Klemenčič & Klemenčič (2010).

² Telefonische Auskunft der Abteilung Minderheitenschulwesen beim Amt der Kärntner Landesregierung (Leiterin Sabine Sandrieser) vom 16. 11. 2010. Zitiert aus aktuellen Unterlagen bzw. dem in Vorbereitung befindlichen Jahresbericht über das Schuljahr 2009/10, Landesschulrat für Kärnten, Klagenfurt.

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PIOTR CHMIEL

“Incomers”? The Image of the “Slavs” in the Works of Early 20th Century Triestine Authors

The article describes the way in which the Italian authors of the beginning of the 20th C. represented the “Slavs”, i.e., Slovenes and Croats, who inhabited the region of Istria. The aim is to reconstruct the terminological system used by them as well as the main features of the “Slavic” identity which emerges from the texts analysed. It seems that, whatever the political views of an author, the “Slavs” used to be perceived as newly arrived persons in the public life of the Istrian towns of the littoral, towns mostly inhabited by the Italians. Such persons were considered dangerous from the perspective of any eventual change in the political borders of the region. According to the texts on the personal level “Slavs” were very traditional with respect to religious issues. They were rather exotic, being the owners of particular and inexplicable souls. They were also treated as members of an inferior civilisation that was penetrated by Italian influences. However, the vision of the authors cannot be classified as a colonial one. It is rather another model of discourse, defined here as a discourse on “Incomers”. It seems that this model may explain the characteristics of some journalistic visions present in the contemporary press.

Keywords: Istria, Trieste, Slovenes, Croats, Italians, image

Un Nuovo Arrivato? L'immagine dello “slavo” negli scritti di autori triestini dell'inizio del Novecento

L'articolo illustra il modo in cui negli scritti di autori italiani dell'inizio del Novecento vengono rappresentati gli „slavi“, ossia gli sloveni e i croati che vivono in Istria. Nell'articolo si cerca in particolare di ricostruire il sistema terminologico usato nonché i tratti principali dell'identità dello “slavo” che emergono dai testi analizzati. Sembra che, nonostante le diverse opinioni politiche degli autori, uno slavo venga percepito come un nuovo arrivato nella vita pubblica delle città istriane della costa, prevalentemente abitate da italiani. Esso è pertanto ritenuto pericoloso nella prospettiva di un eventuale cambiamento di appartenenza politica della regione. A livello personale, dai testi emerge la figura di uno “slavo” per un verso molto tradizionalista in questioni confessionali, per un altro verso invece un po' esotico, in quanto dotato di un'anima particolare e inafferrabile. Esso è anche considerato come appartenente a una civiltà inferiore, permeata da influenze italiane. Tuttavia la visione degli autori non può essere classificata come coloniale. Si tratta piuttosto di un altro modello di rappresentazione, definito nel presente contributo come discorso sul Nuovo Arrivato. Si ipotizza che questo modello spieghi le particolarità di alcune rappresentazioni giornalistiche piuttosto diffuse oggi.

Parole chiave: Istria, Trieste, sloveni, croati, italiani, immagine

Correspondence address: Piotr Chmiel, University of Warsaw, Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies
Artes Liberales, ul. Nowy Świat 69, 00-046 Warsaw, Poland, e-mail: piotr.chmiel@student.uw.edu.pl

Prišleki? Podoba “slovanskega” v delih tržaških avtorjev na začetku 20. stoletja

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Članek opisuje, kako so italijanski avtorji na začetku 20. stoletja pisali o “Slovanih” oziroma Slovencih in Hrvatih, ki so naseljevali območje Istre. Namen članka je tako rekonstrukcija terminologije, kot tudi glavnih značilnosti “slovanske” identitete, ki izhaja iz analiziranih besedil. Zdi se, da so avtorji, ne glede na svoja politična prepričanja, “Slovane” vedno obravnavali kot prišleke v javnem življenju istrskih mest, ki so bila v glavnem poseljena z Italijani. Ti ljudje so v luči prihodnjih sprememb političnih meja v pokrajini veljali za nevarne. Iz besedil je razvidno, da je bil “Slovan” na osebni ravni glede verskih vprašanj zelo tradicionalen. Zaradi svoje posebne, nedoumljive duše je veljal tudi za rahlo eksotičnega. Obravnavali so ga kot pripadnika manjvredne civilizacije, prežete z italijanskimi vplivi. Vendar odnosa italijanskih avtorjev ne moremo opisati kot kolonialističnega. Prej bi ga lahko umestili v drugačen model diskurza, definiranega kot diskurz “prišlekov”. Zdi se, da ta model osvetljuje tudi značilnosti nekaterih novinarskih pogledov v sodobnem tisku.

Ključne besede: Trst, književnost, 20. stoletje, “Slovani”, podoba

1. Introduzione

L'obiettivo del presente articolo è quello di presentare il modo in cui gli autori italiani dell'inizio del Novecento descrivono la popolazione istriana di origine slava.¹ Si presterà attenzione soprattutto a quegli scrittori che produssero la loro opera negli anni precedenti alla prima guerra mondiale. Tra questi ne sono stati scelti tre: un giornalista, Virginio Gayda, portavoce delle opinioni strettamente conservatrici riguardo alle questioni nazionali e divenuto poi un importante collaboratore del regime fascista; un pensatore vicino alle idee socialiste, Angelo Vivante, nonché un noto letterato triestino, meno conosciuto per i suoi saggi dedicati alle questioni nazionali, Scipio Slataper. Quest'ultimo era lontano sia dalle posizioni socialiste che da quelle nazionaliste o irredentiste, come d'altronde ammise egli stesso (Slataper 1925, 119). Tuttavia, come si vedrà in seguito, è difficile definire le opinioni dei tre autori in modo univoco. Malgrado ciò, l'analisi dei testi di questi scrittori sembra delineare in modo sufficientemente chiaro un panorama delle opinioni degli italiani sui problemi etnici coevi in Istria. Anche il periodo preso in considerazione ai fini della ricerca non è casuale: i saggi e i *réportages* degli autori sono usciti negli anni direttamente precedenti alla Grande Guerra (Gayda 1914, Vivante 1912; i testi di Slataper, nonostante la loro più tarda pubblicazione, vennero editi sulla rivista *La Voce* dal 1909 al 1914). È dunque un momento storico in cui la possibilità di una guerra che – in questa parte d'Europa

– avrebbe dovuto modificare i confini statali esistenti, veniva presa seriamente in considerazione da tutti gli intellettuali interessati alla politica. In più i pensatori triestini si rendevano conto del peso che avrebbe avuto il fattore nazionale in un eventuale cambiamento dei confini oppure in caso di costituzione di uno stato nazionale sloveno o croato. La rappresentazione degli “slavi” creata in quegli anni, è perdurata talvolta per alcuni decenni: a testimoniarlo nell’articolo sono alcune citazioni di Giani Stuparich, amico di Slataper e autore di un libro di memorie della propria giovinezza, e di Fulvio Tomizza, noto autore di romanzi la cui azione si svolge in Istria. I passi di questi scrittori sono stati qui citati soltanto per illustrare il perdurare di una visione o di uno stereotipo ereditato dai primi due decenni del Novecento. È inoltre chiaro che la percezione reciproca degli italiani da una parte e degli sloveni e dei croati dall’altra dopo il 1945 era già diversa da quella del 1914, dati gli avvenimenti del Ventennio, della seconda guerra mondiale e degli anni successivi.

Oltre ad avere uno scopo cognitivo, che può essere un contributo alla ricerca nell’ambito delle questioni nazionali, il presente articolo si propone di affrontare anche un problema teorico. A tale fine si introduce il concetto del Nuovo Arrivato. Si ritiene infatti che la percezione degli “slavi” nei testi qui presentati possa essere definita utilizzando questo concetto. La rappresentazione degli slavi quale emerge dagli scritti analizzati non è soltanto la mera definizione di un altro gruppo nazionale (anche per il motivo che i tre intellettuali preferiscono ricorrere ad altre categorie, di razza o di civiltà, ovviamente non congrue al significato attuale di queste nozioni). Gli “slavi” vengono descritti come un gruppo esotico, appartenente a un’altra civiltà, ritenuta inferiore, più tradizionalista nelle questioni confessionali, anche se in via di sviluppo nazionale e in fase di relativa modernizzazione. Ci si potrebbe dunque chiedere se tale rappresentazione - non trattandosi solo di un discorso nazionale - sia forse semplicemente di carattere coloniale. Tuttavia pare che il modello coloniale sia inapplicabile a tale genere di descrizione: il concetto di Nuovo Arrivato sembra più adatto. Inoltre è un concetto che potrebbe essere applicato anche ad alcune descrizioni fatte da giornalisti o analisti contemporanei. È stato proprio questo il motivo per cui si è pensato di redigere il presente articolo.

Il testo è diviso in sette parti: la prima ha un carattere introduttivo, destinato a spiegare alcune nozioni utilizzate dagli autori citati; successivamente vengono riportate le citazioni relative alla migrazione degli sloveni e dei croati verso le città della costa istriana; alla descrizione della “civiltà slava”; al carattere degli “slavi”; allo scontro tra italiani e “slavi”; al ruolo della religione nonché alle nozioni possedute dagli autori in questione sui popoli slavi. Infine si cercherà di definire il concetto di Nuovo Arrivato.

L'articolo può essere considerato storico in quanto si concentra su testi prodotti cento anni fa, i quali si riferiscono alla situazione dell'epoca. Tuttavia l'attenzione non verrà focalizzata su questioni storiche riportando gli avvenimenti di allora o descrivendo in modo dettagliato alcuni processi. Si è consapevoli del fatto che la storia dell'Istria è tema di numerose opere sia italiane che slovene e croate. Nell'articolo ogni accenno ad eventi storici avrà un carattere ausiliare e sarà pertanto inevitabilmente schematico.

2. Problemi terminologici e metodologici

Prima di cominciare l'analisi bisogna essere consapevoli che i pensatori di un secolo fa adoperavano termini alquanto diversi da quelli che utilizziamo oggi per definire gli stessi concetti. Ovviamente non facevano distinzione tra nazione ed etnia, né fornivano la definizione dei termini utilizzati, quindi ogni tentativo di definirli deve essere per forza induttivo.

Tutti i tre si servono del termine di nazione italiana o di italiani per descrivere sia gli abitanti dello stato italiano sia gli abitanti dell'Istria che si sentivano appartenenti alla nazione italiana. Anche per loro il criterio più importante per decidere se uno facesse parte della nazione italiana o no era quello soggettivo. Non hanno neanche difficoltà nel trattare la nazione italiana come una determinata entità: uno dei suoi punti di riferimento è il movimento nazionale ottocentesco, il Risorgimento e le correnti unificatrici con infine l'irredentismo. Tutti considerano la nazione un fenomeno non soltanto storico e culturale, ma anche politico. L'esistenza dello stato italiano fornisce dunque loro un'altra base per posizionare la nazione italiana nel sistema dei concetti utilizzati. Di solito, parlando degli italiani, gli autori si riferiscono alle città della costa, dove la prevalenza demografica dei loro connazionali era rilevante. L'entroterra della penisola era invece abitato da una popolazione mista, prevalentemente di origine slava. Non sembra corretto chiamare alcuni abitanti di quei posti italiani, anche se parlavano un dialetto romanzo locale, del resto comprendente elementi slavi. All'interno dell'Istria a quell'epoca il senso nazionale non pare essere definito in modo preciso. Per questo motivo bisognerebbe definire la popolazione locale piuttosto come di origine neolatina. Tracce di un tale dubbio sono in effetti riscontrabili negli autori analizzati: l'italiano è per loro colui che è originario dell'Italia o del litorale istriano e dalmata. Il villaggio italiano-istriano non esiste. Tra l'altro, nella letteratura italiana non esisterà fino ai tempi di Fulvio Tomizza, ossia fino agli anni Sessanta del '900.

Più problematica sembra per i suddetti scrittori la definizione della popolazione

istriana di origine slava. Gli abitanti slavi dell'entroterra istriano sono semplicemente "slavi" e non rientrano nella mappa mentale italiana. Si è però ben consapevoli della loro esistenza e del loro numero. Di contro, però, gli autori citati non sanno estendere il concetto di nazione agli sloveni e ai croati di Trieste, Fiume e di altre città. Questi in realtà avevano saputo definirsi dal punto di vista nazionale e avevano anzi gradualmente iniziato a rivendicare vari diritti all'epoca chiamati politici, ossia una certa tutela della propria lingua e cultura nonché della loro diffusione, il diritto all'uso delle proprie lingue nella Chiesa, all'attività di associazioni di carattere nazionale, ecc. Nonostante ciò, i pensatori triestini sembrano non essere in grado di riunire nella stessa nozione un abitante slavo dell'interno, da cui si sentivano in certo modo impauriti, con uno sloveno o un croato della città che voleva essere titolare degli stessi diritti degli italiani.

Per questo motivo nei testi si trova sempre la parola "slavo", sebbene gli autori sembrino, almeno parzialmente, coscienti del fatto che gli sloveni e i croati costituiscano due nazioni diverse. Un altro ostacolo per gli scrittori è la mancanza di uno stato nazionale sloveno o croato, anche se nei saggi si accenna a una tale possibilità. Infine gli autori italiani non conoscono la cultura degli sloveni e dei croati e quindi non sanno ridefinirla nel contesto nazionale, come è stato fatto in molte nazioni occidentali (Smith 1992, 378-379; Banti 2000, 150). I pensatori citati si sentono quindi più sicuri parlando semplicemente di "slavi". Nel presente contributo si metterà tale parola tra virgolette commentando le citazioni, ma solo nel caso che tale parola venga riferita a membri di nazioni slave, consapevoli della propria identità. Inoltre, l'uso della parola "slavo" in riferimento alla seconda metà dell'Ottocento e al Novecento può acquisire un significato alquanto offensivo, associato all'epiteto di s'ciavo (schiavo), riferito a una persona il cui territorio veniva percepito, per citare l'espressione di Stranj (1992, 16), "sia come territorio di conquista sia come fonte di una incombente minaccia".

Forse per il motivo di tali dubbi i tre autori evocano concetti più estesi, come razza. Nell'uso del termine razza c'è qualcosa di mistico: è un gruppo di popoli che parlano lingue simili e hanno un'anima comune, come tutti gli slavi o i "popoli nordici" (Slataper 1925, 377) ossia germanici. C'è alla fine la razza latina, di solito identificata con gli italiani, visto che si tratta di testi di autori triestini che incontravano più spesso austriaci o sloveni che ad esempio francesi. Un altro concetto, fortemente apprezzato da Slataper, è quello di civiltà (Slataper 1925, 204), identificata per lo più con una regione in cui varie etnie o nazioni sono convissute per secoli, talvolta rimanendo sotto il governo di un impero. La civiltà slataperiana può essere anche una nuova narrazione della storia di un'area geograficamente vicina, unita da un centro geografico come un mare o un fiume. Per il pensatore la storia di una civiltà è più reale di tante storie nazionali. Di grandi

civiltà ne enumera cinque, ma soltanto per riportare degli esempi: quelle baltica, renana, adriatica, mediterranea e danubiana.

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Affrontati i principali problemi teorici, bisogna aggiungere ancora una nota, soprattutto riguardo a Slataper. I tre scrittori erano attivi anche come giornalisti o commentatori della situazione internazionale. E poiché quest'ultima cambiava rapidamente, essi, cercando di reagire ai suoi cambiamenti, talvolta scrivevano cose non del tutto congrue. Bisogna dunque considerare questi scritti come uno specchio delle correnti intellettuali presenti a Trieste alla vigilia della Grande Guerra e non come sistemi ideologici.

3. Una Birnam adriatica

Chi è dunque uno "slavo" nella percezione di questi pensatori triestini? È soprattutto un nuovo arrivato: sul piano sociale viene percepito come un immigrato, di solito un operaio che abita nei sobborghi triestini e spesso lavora nel settore dell'industria navale. Ma nello stesso tempo è un nuovo arrivato anche sul piano politico. A partire dagli anni Settanta dell'Ottocento lo "slavo" comincia a mettere in rilievo i suoi diritti politici (oggi si parlerebbe piuttosto di diritti delle minoranze), anche se non li rivendica in maniera esplicita. In quest'epoca a Trieste, inclusa nei confini della monarchia austro-ungarica, sono piuttosto gli italiani a domandare varie concessioni al governo asburgico. Si tratta sia dell'apertura di istituzioni che servono a tutelare la cultura italiana, come scuole e un'università, non concessa a Trieste dal governo austriaco per non spianare un ulteriore percorso di propaganda nazionale agli irredentisti (Hösler 2008, 144); sia di libertà politiche in senso proprio (Cattaruzza 2007, 20). Tutta la regione giuliana era considerata dagli intellettuali italiani di Trieste come una parte delle terre irredente che – prima o poi – avrebbero dovuto essere unite all'Italia. Il problema più importante per quegli intellettuali era dunque trovare il modo per riuscire a unificare tutte le terre ritenute italiane, secondo le ragioni di uno stato nazionale. In questa prospettiva lo "slavo" non veniva definito.

L'ottica cambiò verso l'anno 1890 (Sestan 1947, 95), quando ebbero luogo le migrazioni slovene verso Trieste. A quel tempo la ricca città portuale attrasse, similmente ad altri centri industriali d'Europa, gli operai che in questo caso provenivano soprattutto dall'interno dell'Istria. Si trattò di un fenomeno tutt'altro che esiguo: secondo Apih (1966, 13) nel 1913 gli operai di Trieste, circa 24 mila persone, costituivano un quinto dell'intera popolazione cittadina. Paragonando i censimenti nazionali di Trieste, effettuati secondo i criteri della lingua d'uso

e dunque più favorevoli agli italiani – dal momento che la maggior parte degli immigrati sloveni spesso ricorreva all'italiano (Verginella 2008, 90) - risulta che il numero degli sloveni a Trieste nel periodo tra il 1890 e il 1910 si decuplicò. Nel medesimo tempo il numero di tedeschi si triplicò e quello di italiani raddoppiò (Perselli 1993, 431). Tuttavia bisogna ammettere che non tutti gli storici sono concordi nell'affermare che il processo di migrazione slovena verso Trieste fosse così intensivo e veloce. Secondo Pacor (1964, 34) si trattò di un fenomeno molto più duraturo e graduale. Della stessa opinione era anche Slataper (1925, 99). In ogni caso, alla vigilia della prima guerra mondiale, Trieste diventò una specie di "capitale morale e mentale" slovena (Valdevit 2004, 7), contando più sloveni che Lubiana stessa. Sottolineando l'importanza di Trieste per il territorio nazionale, uno dei politici sloveni di allora, Ivan Tavčar, la paragonò ai polmoni della Slovenia, mentre Lubiana doveva esserne il cuore (Košuta 2002, 1187).

Cambiata la composizione etnica della città, alcuni intellettuali italiani di Trieste si resero conto che l'appartenenza dei territori istriani all'Italia rischiava di diventare più problematica. In altre parole, le stesse ragioni (demografiche) per cui l'Istria doveva essere inclusa in Italia, potevano servire come argomento per annetterla a un altro stato nazionale creato dagli "slavi". La paura di una tale soluzione si diffuse anche per altre ragioni: gli austriaci non erano mai riusciti a dominare Trieste. La lingua tedesca, usata tra le persone colte, non aveva mai preso il sopravvento sul dialetto triestino. La popolazione slovena disponeva invece di nuove classi dirigenti, che operavano per il risveglio nazionale, e di un numero sempre maggiore di persone che continuavano ad arrivare a Trieste e ad usare – almeno tra di loro – una lingua incomprensibile agli italiani. Tutto questo andava sommato, come osservano Ara e Magris (2007, 33), alla presenza di quella stessa popolazione proprio alle spalle di Trieste (per servirsi del titolo del famoso volume di Tomizza), mentre l'area su cui gli austriaci erano etnicamente prevalenti era priva di un'analogia continuità.

A partire dagli anni Sessanta dell'Ottocento, come vuole Oliva (2005, 7), la presenza degli sloveni nello spazio pubblico di Trieste divenne sempre più consistente. Furono fondate varie sale di lettura (*čitalnica*) e centri nazionali (*narodni dom*), fu avviata l'attività di cori o gruppi di danza che si dedicavano alla diffusione di canti e balli popolari. Queste attività venivano promosse dalla prima associazione politica slovena a Trieste, *Edinost* (Unità), fondata nel 1874 (Valdevit 2004, 6) e preceduta da una simile organizzazione (Soča; Isonzo) attiva a Gorizia dal 1869 (Stranj 1992, 72). Sempre più alto nella Venezia Giulia era anche il numero di scuole elementari con lingua d'insegnamento slovena e croata. Nel 1913, escludendo la città di Fiume, ve ne erano 321 slovene e 167 croate (Čermelj 1974, 41). Fino al 1914 furono 18 mila gli studenti sloveni che finirono scuole

con l'insegnamento della propria lingua (Hösler 2008, 133). Comparvero inoltre dei periodici pubblicati in croato e sloveno come le *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (Notizie contadine e artigianali) che incoraggiavano i membri delle nuove nazioni alla partecipazione alla vita politica (Verginella 2008, 89).

A questo contesto va ricondotto il discorso degli intellettuali triestini sul presente e futuro carattere etnico della città. Un'immagine interessante si trova nei testi di Virginio Gayda, un giornalista che scrisse delle lettere da Trieste mandate a La Stampa. Da queste lettere emerge l'immagine di una città assediata da una popolazione non italiana che la sta conquistando economicamente, politicamente e demograficamente, al punto che perfino i titoli dei suoi *reportages* evocano quest'associazione (L'assalto a Trieste, L'avanguardia slava, La minaccia slava). Gayda, schierato coi nazionalisti, vede il futuro della città in una prospettiva pessimistica per gli abitanti italiani. In più, la migrazione slovena non è per lui spontanea, ma "è l'assalto organizzato alla conquista del potere su Trieste" (Gayda 1914, 16). Infatti ritiene che "questi slavi della campagna devono essere come un'avanguardia: dei soldati in combattimento con una precisa missione di conquista" (Gayda 1914, 12). Un ruolo molto importante nella "conquista" viene attribuito da Gayda ai centri nazionali sloveni chiamati *narodni dom*. Questi posti sono secondo il giornalista molto pericolosi, tanto più in quanto nello spazio pubblico italiano non esiste nulla di analogo.

Il Narodni Dom è una curiosa forma di aggregazione politica, tipica degli slavi, che si trova in ogni centro importante e rappresenta già una evoluzione della cosiddetta citalnica, che vuol dire gabinetto di lettura, ma non ha in realtà nulla da fare con la lettura, mascherando, con il suo nome innocuo, un nucleo più embrionale di club politico (Gayda 1914, 85).

Secondo il giornalista,

l'afflusso slavo non si può nascondere più. Non ha toccato ancora nulla della purezza italiana della città, ma è già un fenomeno che si deve seriamente meditare. Nei quartieri più lontani, a torno gli arsenali e le officine, trovate intere, compatte colonie slovene di operai. Piccoli negozi, società di ritrovo non hanno più un puro carattere italiano. Nelle strade i bambini non parlano più italiano. Vi è qualcosa di nuovo, di straniero (Gayda 1914, 13).

L'atteggiamento pieno di paura di fronte ai cambiamenti demografici viene invece criticato da Slataper che si contrappose al gruppo integralista degli irredentisti. Riguardo ad alcune concessioni in favore dei diritti degli sloveni e croati scrive: "Voi [irredentisti] gli slavi li volete barbari come i padroni inetti vogliono castrati i servitori" (Slataper 1925, 113). Il pensatore presta l'attenzione al modo in cui vengono trattati gli "slavi" come gruppo nel momento in cui rivendicano certi diritti:

Ho domandato l'altra sera a un amico che personalmente tratta con gli slavi, ma li considera intrusi da massacrare secondo ius belli: - Se uno slavo ti chiede un libro, tu glielo presti? - Sì, naturalmente! - Se cento slavi ti chiedono una scuola, approvi che sia data? - No, naturalmente! (Slataper 1925, 118).

Infine vale la pena di citare un passo di Giani Stuparich, incluso nei ricordi dedicati a Trieste. Il volume di queste *mémoires* fu pubblicato nel 1948, nel periodo in cui le sorti di Trieste e della cosiddetta zona A del Territorio Libero di Trieste non erano ancora decise. Nonostante il fatto che la città portuale si trovasse sotto l'amministrazione degli alleati occidentali, non era escluso che un futuro trattato potesse assegnarla al territorio jugoslavo. In quelle circostanze la voce di Stuparich, molto conservatrice dal punto di vista nazionale, fu una protesta contro una tale soluzione del problema triestino, soluzione che l'autore deprecava. Non stupisce dunque che lo scrittore evochi spesso concetti stereotipi, rappresentando anch'egli gli sloveni e i croati come una gente nuova, arrivata in massa dai boschi adiacenti alla città:

Un popolo straniero, diverso di lingua e di costumi, non in secoli come Dalmazia, ma in pochi decenni, forse in pochi anni l'avrebbe [quella terra] maturata alla brama d'espansione. E quel popolo l'avevamo immediatamente alle spalle. Dall'orlo del Carso, con uno strattone ai paletti di confine, sarebbe potuto scendere su Trieste, che ignora, come un roseo gregge, godeva di stendersi al sol su quell'ultimo spazio aperto del golfo (Stuparich 1948, 234).

Lo "slavo" dunque sceso dai boschi per impadronirsi delle città della costa; quasi come se sulle sponde dell'Adriatico si svolgesse un atto del *Macbeth*.

4. Una visione coloniale?

È interessante vedere come le due nazioni vengano presentate quasi come due mondi diversi, appartenenti a due civiltà che non hanno alcun punto in comune. In Gayda l'italianità è piena di gioia tipica per tutti i popoli che sfruttano il sole, sotto il quale è nata la civiltà europea:

C'è tutto quello che inamora lo straniero tedesco che sogna il sole e la sua gente. Tutto è sincero, libero, gaio. Il popolo vive sulla strada e canta. Le caminiere, che finivano nella città del lavoro, non pesano la loro ombra sulla grazia molle e leggiadra delle donne brune, chi vi dicono la lieta poesia dell'Italia. Tutto è italiano: le case, gli uomini, le insegne dei magazzini, i manifesti dei teatri, gli annunci del giornale, le vetrine delle librerie (Gayda 1914, 4).

Sotto lo stesso sole vive un'altra gente, gli "slavi". Questi, però, non paiono essere geograficamente vicini agli italiani. Non sono un popolo del sole, bensì un popolo che sembra alieno dalla civiltà:

Nell'interno del paese, fra le colline di vigneti, i villaggi slavi si staccano subito, con le loro case basse e fumose, assonnate nel silenzio, le enormi nidiate di bambini, malati di povertà, sempre estatici, in vedetta sulla strada, le sregolate bande dei maiali che pascolano in un fango perenne. Sono villaggi tristi, di una razza assolutamente diversa da quella che popola la costa: ma vi scoprite spesso ancora, mescolandovi fra loro gente, qualche traccia dell'influenza italiana. Quasi tutti gli uomini, molte donne parlano l'italiano: i bambini no. Ciò vuol dire che il paese non è più degli italiani (Gayda 1914, 187).

Ciò che regna in quei villaggi è il disordine, la povertà nonché – e si parlerà di ciò ancora in seguito – un certo senso di nostalgia o malinconia, associato da molti pensatori europei al carattere slavo in generale. Il disordine e la povertà, accompagnata da un'alta natalità, sono segni di una civiltà inferiore che – essendo troppo vicina alle città italiane della costa – è inevitabilmente in un certo modo permeata da influenze italiane.

Oltre alla povertà a provocare la paura della gente civile c'è anche la coscienza di qualcosa di diverso. Nei suoi ricordi Stuparich osserva che a Trieste antebellica si diceva che i contadini istriani fossero "cattivi e terribili; che per un fico, per un grappolo d'uva rubati erano capaci di ammazzare" (Stuparich 1964, 52). Lo testimonia anche un passo da *Il mio Carso slataperiano*, in cui allo zio del narratore, insediatosi in una campagna carsica, viene chiesto da conoscenti triestini: "Ma non ti ga paura d'esser sempre fra quei s'ciavi duri?" (Slataper 1962, 81).

Tuttavia lo stesso scrittore presenta anche un'altra prospettiva della diffusione della cultura italiana. L'intellettuale descrive infatti l'irredentismo culturale, ossia una corrente irredentista che Slataper – lui solo - definisce (Slataper 1925, 70) come favorevole a una naturale diffusione dei valori italiani verso la "civiltà danubiana", corrispondente in linea di massima ai territori dell'impero asburgico. In questa accezione l'italianizzazione degli slavi meridionali non è una snazionalizzazione, ma piuttosto una forza che li attrae e costituisce uno stimolo per il loro sviluppo. L'italianizzazione è quindi "una tassa che l'Adriatico impone al Danubio se vuol espandersi nel Mediterraneo" (Slataper 1925, 205). Bisogna aggiungere, però, che – stando alle parole del pensatore – il fenomeno riguarda ogni popolo, "sia tedesco o slavo o albanese" (ibid.). L'autore conclude proclamando una disparità tra nazioni che non si trovano su un livello uguale:

Noi italiani, italiani di Trieste, siamo più colti degli sloveni /.../. Se essi vogliono vivere nel nostro piano, ci raggiungano; se essi vogliono vincere, ci superino. Io non dico che domani essi non possano essere magari più di noi, ch'essi non facciano degli sforzi stupendi per arrivare, ma oggi essi non sono più di noi, noi siamo nel mondo un'umanità più ricca che la loro (Slataper 1925, 108).

Sviluppando il discorso, Slataper ammette la possibilità che le terre giuliane

in futuro cessino di far parte dei territori culturalmente legati all'Italia. Spera comunque che “/.../ noi latini /.../ meriteremo di essere ricordati, e saremo vivi ancora in ciò che gli slavi avranno dovuto imparare da noi” (Slataper 1925, 119).

Il problema dell'uguaglianza (o, considerando il modo in cui fu affrontato, piuttosto dell'ineguaglianza) delle nazioni ritorna nella letteratura postbellica. Il primo a introdurre le culture slovena e croata nell'immaginario letterario italiano è Fulvio Tomizza (Zlobec 1990, 20). Nel romanzo *L'amicizia* uno dei protagonisti dubita che il patrimonio culturale sloveno possa essere ragionevolmente paragonato con quello italiano o addirittura con quello tedesco; rispondendogli, un amico osserva che anche gli sloveni hanno i loro grandi scrittori, solo che essi non sono conosciuti altrove. In seguito il discorso cambia e i due protagonisti riflettono, in modo alquanto allusivo, sull'atteggiamento degli sloveni verso gli italiani:

“Non credo che a Irena [la fidanzata slovena dell'amico] interessino certi problemi” sostenesti a rischio di ridurla.

“A tutti loro non possono non interessare”.

“Per quel che ne so, a loro qui preme far funzionare il locale. Perciò devono saper stare con tutti. Sono in una situazione diversa dagli altri”.

Capii come ti eri orientato: li consideravi meno sloveni, già un po' cittadini, grazie ai buoni affari. Soltanto così riscattata, forse interamente recuperabile, potevi accettare Irena quale possibile fidanzata, i suoi come eventuali parenti (Tomizza 1980, 196-197).

Il commento del narratore sembra del tutto adeguato.

Vale la pena dunque di riflettere se l'immagine degli slavi presente nei testi di Gayda e Slataper possa essere ritenuta una visione coloniale. Infatti, gli “slavi” – già per lo stesso fatto che vengono considerati un tutt'uno, senza che si avverta la necessità di dividerli in nazioni – sono descritti come un gruppo inferiore e lontano dal mondo civilizzato. All'italianità viene associata una missione civilizzatrice che porti i popoli slavi verso la modernità. Un'eco di quest'idea si trova nell'atteggiamento descritto nel succitato passo di Tomizza. Per Slataper la cultura italiana – la lingua e le correnti elaborate all'interno del mondo italiano, nonché “arte, letteratura, costumi, tendenze” – è predominante nel bacino adriatico (Slataper 1925, 205). Tutti questi tratti sembrano essere facilmente ascrivibili al discorso coloniale. Tuttavia una tale presentazione del problema pare troppo semplicistica. Nel contesto istriano manca infatti una relazione di dipendenza, che è invece tipica del colonialismo (Kieniewicz 1986, 281 e 286). Gli sloveni e i croati non seguirono soltanto i modelli italiani di creazione delle idee nazionali; se facevano parte di organizzazioni italiane o usavano la lingua italiana durante gli incontri nei propri circoli nazionali (Rutar 2003, 29-30), tutto ciò lo trattavano piuttosto come un mezzo per propagare la loro idea nazionale e

non come un obiettivo. Contrariamente alle speranze di alcuni italiani, gli sloveni che partecipavano alla vita pubblica italiana non si italianizzavano. Ne erano consapevoli sia Slataper (1925, 99 e 110) che Vivante (1912, 61). Gli "slavi", nonostante tutte le difficoltà terminologiche rivelate dagli autori italiani, stavano diventando una nazione moderna: il loro movimento nazionale veniva descritto e preso in seria considerazione dai pensatori menzionati. Questi ultimi vedevano che gli sloveni non accettavano la missione civilizzatrice di cui loro parlavano. Infine – e questa è forse l'osservazione più importante – è impossibile paragonare i rapporti costituiti in Istria a quelli al di fuori d'Europa (Kieniewicz 1986, 280). Gli italiani di Trieste non erano padroni, ai sensi del discorso coloniale, perché anche loro erano sottoposti al governo viennese. Il discorso svolto allora dagli italiani è un discorso teorico, lontano da un'impostazione pratica. Forse a Roma si potevano nutrire già allora ambizioni puramente coloniali verso le popolazioni del bacino adriatico, come verso quelle del Maghreb, ma a Trieste la situazione era diversa.

5. Esoticità slava

È inoltre interessante che vari autori attribuiscono agli slavi una certa composizione psichica, ossia un misto di esoticità, melanconia e decadenza. In quest'ottica la "civiltà slava" non può essere parte dell'Occidente, associato al razionalismo e al progresso: "Intuiamo che il carattere slavo /.../ è un po' decadente-romantico, sentimentale, delicato; che la civiltà slava è già, quasi prima di nascere, inquinata da degenerazione" (Slataper 1925, 379). Lo slavo meridionale è anche "fantastico" e "cavalleresco" (Slataper 1925, 240). In un altro passo l'intellettuale, definitosi "slavo-tedesco-italiano", illustra le caratteristiche del "sangue slavo", che ha parzialmente nelle vene: "Del sangue slavo ho in me nostalgie strane, una sentimentalità bisognosa di carezze, di compiacimenti, un sognare infinito senza confini" (Marin 1965, 59). Il pensatore triestino arriva finalmente a una conclusione che assimila, da un certo punto di vista, la civiltà latina a quella slava. Secondo lui, esiste "una femminilità slava e italiana, [contraria] a[lla] maschiezza dei popoli nordici (tedeschi propriamente detti, inglesi, scandinavi)" (Slataper 1925, 377).

Lo "slavo" è dunque diverso dall'italiano, è un altro. Contemporaneamente ha nella sua natura i tratti che lo possono avvicinare all'italiano. Quest'affermazione apre la strada a una letteratura postbellica di conciliazione che cerca di trovare nell'identità istriana piuttosto gli elementi comuni alle due civiltà: ciò che è *et - et* e non *aut - aut*, per citare un'osservazione di Rakovac (2001, 16). Così si crea una relazione complessa, non bianco-nera.

116 6. Scontro

Nel frattempo però le descrizioni delle razze o civiltà appaiono di solito in un contesto di scontro, presente o futuro. Così anche per Vivante, un grande pacifista, "il tempo deve decidere quale delle due civiltà, la più giovane [degli sloveni e dei croati – P. Ch.] o la più vecchia [degli italiani – P. Ch.] possa guadagnare il terreno sull'altra" (Vivante 1912, 111). Il pensatore aggiunge ancora: "In sostanza, lo slavismo dorme finché l'italianità sonnecchia" (Vivante 1912, 105).

La stessa opinione viene espressa in modo leggermente diverso da Slataper:

Finché Trieste non ha coscienza di sé, finché gli slavi parlano italiano e la cultura si compie e si soddisfa nel commercio, nell'interesse commerciale, la vita è discretamente pacifica. Appena nasce il bisogno d'una cultura disinteressata, la crosta fredda è rotta e si discoprono i dibattiti ansiosi (Slataper 1925, 94).

E in più:

la storia dell'Adriatico, nel suo significato generale, è la continua lotta di predominio fra la civiltà italiana /.../ e la civiltà danubiana che in tutte le epoche e le forme cercò di stabilirvisi, infrangendo il baluardo delle Alpi Retiche, Carnie, Giulie e Dinariche (Slataper 1925, 47).

Il problema ritorna, comunque, nella coscienza di autori contemporanei. Fu Tomizza, uno dei portavoce della collaborazione tra le nazioni dell'Istria, a osservare in una delle interviste che

Tra italiani e slavi c'è un rapporto che preesiste alla storia, che è molto forte, ma che la storia vuol compiere in continuazione. La storia, molte volte, crea barriere e fratture di incomprendibilità, di freddezza, di odio e di vendette (Tomizza 1990, 240).

Gli autori sono dunque consapevoli di una prossima necessità di affrontare il problema nazionale (più che nazionale?) in Istria.

7. Ruolo della religione

Molti storici dei rapporti nazionali sottolineano il ruolo della religione nella formazione delle nazioni moderne slovena e croata. Spesso l'attenzione è rivolta all'attività del clero sloveno (Valdevit 2004, 6) e di quello croato (D'Alessio 2003, 98; Ivetić 2005, 65) nel movimento di risveglio delle due nazioni. Secondo Šišković (1978, 95) soltanto otto degli attivisti principali del movimento sloveno

non erano istituzionalmente legati alla Chiesa. Un conoscitore dei rapporti confessionali in Istria a cavallo del XIX e XX secolo, Wörsdörfer (2003, 123-126), descrive gli italiani istriani – soprattutto quelli cittadini – come secolarizzati, di fronte a un'alta religiosità degli sloveni e dei croati. Queste popolazioni erano ritenute più integraliste a livello di partecipazione e presenza a manifestazioni di carattere religioso. Esistono numerose testimonianze di italiani che descrivono comportamenti che parevano loro abbastanza particolari. Secondo tali testimonianze gli "slavi" usavano togliersi il cappello passando davanti a una chiesa (Wörsdörfer 2003, 140), mentre le loro donne anziane recitavano il rosario "per non perdere il tempo strada facendo" (Milletto 2005, 49). Nel periodo precedente alla prima guerra mondiale il clero sloveno e croato divenne inoltre sempre più attivo nelle città della costa, dove assisteva gli sloveni e i croati stabilivisi. Da queste nazioni provenivano anche numerosi vescovi. Basta ricordare che tra il 1875 e 1918 nessun vescovo di Trieste fu italiano: in quel periodo la guida della diocesi locale fu affidata a tre sloveni, due croati e un tedesco (Zovatto 1984, 7-8). Il clero sloveno e croato usava nei contatti con i propri connazionali di Trieste e dell'Istria la propria lingua nelle preghiere e nella stampa. Nel 1871 a Trieste esistevano ormai 26 giornali di ispirazione cattolica, pubblicati in sloveno (Stranj 1992, 204). Il clero spesso svolgeva attività politica a favore della nazione di provenienza (Wörsdörfer 2003, 143). Diventati vescovi, i preti sloveni e croati favorivano spesso la popolazione "slava" nell'erogazione delle borse di studio o nell'ammissione ai seminari (Zovatto 2006, 42). Contemporaneamente le loro figure acquistarono anche un valore simbolico, fungendo così da esempio per gli altri risvegliatori, come avvenne soprattutto nel caso di monsignor Juraj Dobrila (Ashbrook 2006, 14). Tutti questi fenomeni, per quanto normali nel contesto confessionale descritto e in relazione ai cambiamenti demografici della regione, suscitavano inquietudine in molti italiani. Per essi, infatti, l'attività degli "slavi" all'interno della Chiesa cattolica apriva la strada a una marginalizzazione italiana. Paradossalmente, il fatto che sia gli italiani che gli "slavi" fossero della stessa confessione, rendeva più difficili i rapporti tra di loro. Ambedue i gruppi trovavano così un altro terreno di scontro: la religione e l'attività della Chiesa. Si può presumere che, nel caso in cui gli "slavi" o gli italiani fossero appartenuti a un'altra confessione, gli sloveni e i croati non sarebbero entrati nello spazio pubblico italiano e sul piano confessionale ci sarebbe stata una separazione totale.

Le tracce di un conflitto tra gli italiani da una parte e gli sloveni dall'altra si conservano nelle testimonianze e nella letteratura. Di due diverse visioni del ruolo della religione nella vita pubblica scrive Vivante (1912, 116). Il succitato Wörsdörfer (1984, 143) menziona una protesta dei consigli municipali di Trieste e di numerose cittadine istriane contro "il clero esotico che non ha padronanza della lingua italiana", "che per mestiere fa volentieri politica" e semina discordia

e zizzania". Ne *La miglior vita*, un capolavoro di Fulvio Tomizza che narra la storia novecentesca di un villaggio istriano, viene riportato un dialogo tra il parroco croato, don Stipe, e un italiano del luogo. Questi, essendo preoccupato dell'eventuale indottrinamento nazionale, non permette ai figli di frequentare la scuola gestita dal prete:

"Perché non permettete che i ragazzi vengano a scuola?"

La voce del vecchio proprietario si levava di poco sull'ansimare basso e continuo provocato dall'asma. "I miei nipoti non sono mai mancati a dottrina".

Il parroco sorride: "'Credevo che imparare un po' a leggere e a scrivere non facesse male neanche a loro".

"Non mancano maestri veri né a Umago né a Buie", tagliò netto il Jure /.../. Ci seguì sul ballatoio quando noi avevamo già imboccato la strada e forte, perché tutti lo udissero, ci scagliò dietro: "Vi conosco, politicante di un prete. Voi buttate la pietra e nascondete la mano" (Tomizza 1977, 65-66).

Pare quindi che in quel periodo – gli anni precedenti alla prima guerra mondiale – per un italiano medio di Trieste l'attività degli sloveni e dei croati sul piano religioso fosse molto significativa e che quindi, parlando di questioni nazionali, non se ne potesse assolutamente prescindere.

8. Conoscenza del mondo "slavo"

Escludendo Gayda, che del mondo slavo fornì una rappresentazione giornalistica, di cui forse all'epoca c'era un certo bisogno, i due autori qui analizzati dispongono di una vasta conoscenza dei problemi degli slavi in generale. Slataper sa distinguerli in sloveni, croati e serbi (Slataper 1925, 371); in cattolici e ortodossi (Slataper 1925, 212); conosce addirittura la differenza tra russi e ruteni (Slataper 1925, 167 e 225). Egli elabora anche delle ipotesi sui loro possibili progetti politici, ma senza dimostrare particolare acume. Ricostruisce inoltre il contesto storico e geopolitico di vari gruppi slavi, tra cui le lotte con i turchi e con i tedeschi (Slataper 1925, 377). Conosce la differenza tra il panslavismo, inteso come movimento di ispirazione zarista (panrussismo), e l'austroslavismo, che lui chiama panslavismo (Slataper 1925, 214). Non crede in una unificazione nazionale slava (Slataper 1925, 314), adducendo a sostegno della propria tesi vari fattori politici. Le sue affermazioni in proposito, cui va aggiunto il paragone di sloveni e croati rispettivamente con gli italiani settentrionali e meridionali, dimostrano ancora più chiaramente che egli considerava gli slavi, non solo quelli meridionali, come non aderenti a categorie di tipo nazionale. Le loro "stirpi" (Slataper 1925, 214), che ognuna per sé non costituiscono singole nazioni, appaiono peraltro agli occhi dello scrittore troppo

diverse tra loro per poterne creare una unificandosi.

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Un ottimo orientamento nel mondo "slavo" va riconosciuto pure a Vivante. Egli dedica la sua attenzione soprattutto agli sloveni, descrivendo le varie questioni linguistiche che riguardano la loro lingua (Vivante 1912, 198). Inoltre apprezza la loro scolarizzazione (Vivante 1912, 124) e l'alto interesse per lo studio delle lingue classiche.

9. Conclusioni

Quale è dunque l'immagine dello "slavo" nei testi di Gayda, Slataper e Vivante, redatti negli anni vicini alla prima guerra mondiale? Sicuramente è un'immagine piuttosto giornalistica che analitica e tanto meno scientifica, nonostante alcuni dati precisi di cui si servirono gli autori, soprattutto Vivante e Slataper. È anche una rappresentazione fortemente legata al contesto, al momento storico e alla regione in cui si formò. Lo "slavo" è uno che - vista la massiccia immigrazione di non italiani verso Trieste e nelle città della costa - probabilmente in un futuro non molto lontano governerà la Venezia Giulia. Egli non è molto civilizzato, cerca di creare strutture sue proprie, non vuole copiare quelle italiane (anche se è storicamente permeato dalla civiltà italiana). Della sua attività sul piano culturale si sa poco. Comincia a reclamare i propri diritti. La sua sola presenza pare sufficiente ad alimentare uno scontro tra due civiltà. È un credente forte e integralista, tende a impadronirsi delle strutture ecclesiastiche o addirittura a sfruttarle per la propria lotta politica. Singolarmente è affascinante per certe inclinazioni nostalgiche e in quanto dotato di un'anima per certi versi simile a quella italiana, ma in gruppo è pericoloso, perché vuole marginalizzare il ruolo degli italiani nella regione. Sta per costituire una o più nazioni in senso occidentale, ma come definire questi tentativi, non risulta chiaro.

Bisogna dire che quest'immagine - lontana dal ragionamento coloniale, come è stato mostrato in uno dei paragrafi precedenti - pare essere utilizzata ancora oggi nel discorso giornalistico, sia quello sugli immigrati presenti in Europa sia quello relativo ad alcune - appunto - nazioni o culture al di fuori dell'Europa, soprattutto quelle che si trovano in via di modernizzazione. In ogni caso si tratta di gruppi apparsi nella vita pubblica delle società occidentali solo di recente, e cioè o in senso letterale (gli immigrati) o in senso figurato (le nazioni o culture non-europee fino a poco tempo fa ignorate da varie descrizioni, *reportages* o saggi). A proposito di questi gruppi, si sottolinea il ruolo in essi svolto dalla religione o la misticità della loro cultura, talvolta anche la loro tendenza allo scontro con il mondo occidentale.

Si riflette sulla possibilità di una loro europeizzazione o modernizzazione e sui tratti della cultura europea oppure occidentale che potrebbero attrarli rendendo così minime le conseguenze dello scontro. Si discute della tolleranza verso certi atteggiamenti o costumi e si è affascinati dall'esoticità e da alcune caratteristiche spirituali di altre culture.

Ovviamente, il caso degli "slavi" nella visione degli scrittori triestini non può essere paragonato al discorso giornalistico odierno senza alcune riserve. Mentre gli sloveni e i croati che affluirono verso la Trieste nell'Ottocento erano vissuti per secoli sulle terre istriane, gli immigrati odierni si stabiliscono in Europa arrivando da fuori. Alcuni di loro sono dotati di una ben sviluppata identità etnica o nazionale in senso moderno. Osservazioni simili vanno fatte anche riguardo ad altre culture che non si espandono fisicamente verso il territorio europeo (per esempio a causa di guerre o modifiche di confini), sebbene siano legate a esso economicamente o talvolta politicamente. Bisogna essere coscienti di queste differenze prima di trarre delle conclusioni dal confronto qui svolto.

Ci troviamo dunque di fronte a un altro tipo di discorso, non nazionale, perché non sempre si sanno dividere i membri di queste altre culture in nazioni - spesso anche la parola "etnia" non è del tutto adatta (Tibi 1996, 174-175) - né coloniale, perché privo di una relazione di dipendenza o di sottomissione (soprattutto se riferito, per esempio, alle descrizioni dei cambiamenti economici in Cina o nell'Asia sud-orientale). Ovviamente non si intende in questo breve articolo descrivere esaustivamente il fenomeno, molto complesso, né esemplificarlo ricorrendo a delle precise citazioni. Non è questo l'intento dell'autore. Ciò del resto non sembra nemmeno possibile senza una buona strategia metodologica (come descrivere il fenomeno? In base a che tipo di testi? Su quale cultura (nazione) e su quale momento concentrarsi?). Nonostante ciò, e con tutte le riserve espresse sopra, parrebbe che il filo conduttore di tale discorso sia similea quello sugli "slavi" di un secolo fa. In tutti i casi si tratta di un Nuovo Arrivato nel discorso pubblico. Si ritiene dunque che tale concetto, cui vanno ascritti i tratti riscontrabili nei testi citati sopra, possa essere utile come strumento d'analisi del discorso odierno relativo alle questioni nazionali.

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¹ L'articolo è uno degli esiti della ricerca svolta dal febbraio all'aprile 2009 nelle biblioteche dell'Università di Pisa e della Scuole Normale Superiore pisana. L'autore ha avuto la possibilità di beneficiare di quel periodo di ricerca, incluso nel corso dei suoi studi di filologia italiana, grazie alla borsa di studio concessagli dall'Istituto Italiano di Cultura. Il progetto di ricerca, finanziato dalla borsa, si chiamava L'Istria come territorio di confine culturale ed era destinato all'analisi della letteratura italiana storica e narrativa riguardante l'Istria nel corso del Novecento.

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JANEZ PIRC

Misrepresentations of Africa in Contemporary Slovene School Textbooks

Inspection of contemporary Slovene geography textbooks discloses continuing questionable images of Africa, such as “the favourableness (of the African regions) for the settlement of the Whites” and a discourse of races and tribes. Misrepresentations of Africa of such a kind were to be expected in the late stage of European colonialism. The common denominator behind this is Eurocentrism, which has a strong influence on the occurrence of occasional racial views and the prevailing negative image of Africa. There is a lack of wider socio-political, historical and economic context as well as a great shortage of positive images – both written and visual - in the contents of the textbooks. These problems were identified in a detailed analysis of a selected number of geography textbooks for Slovene primary and secondary schools. The article presents the results of this analysis in a form of a categorization of common misrepresentations of Africa, and explains the basic institutional elements influencing the contents of the textbooks. The author offers examples of concrete solutions to the contents that are criticized here, explains what has already been done to balance the images of Africa, and states what actions should still be taken to attain its quality presentation in Slovene geography textbooks.

Keywords: misrepresentations of Africa, textbooks, geography, Slovenia

Izkrivljene podobe Afrike v sodobnih slovenskih šolskih učbenikih

Ob pregledu sodobnih slovenskih geografskih učbenikov se soočamo s spornimi pogledi na Afriko, kot denimo “ugodnosti [afriških regij] za poselitev belcev” in z diskurzom o rasah in plemenih. Takšne izkrivljene poglede bi bilo pričakovati v pozni fazi evropskega kolonializma. Skupni imenovalca za tem je evrocentrizem, ki vpliva na prisotnost občasnih rasnih optik in na prevladujoče negativne podobe Afrike. V vsebinah učbenikov je prisotno pomanjkanje širšega socio-političnega, zgodovinskega in ekonomskega konteksta, kot tudi pozitivnih podob. Vsi omenjeni problemi so bili zaznani v podrobni analizi izbranih geografskih učbenikov za slovenske osnovne in srednje šole. Članek predstavlja rezultate analize v obliki tipizacije pogostih napačnih razlag Afrike in obrazloži osnovne institucionalne dejavnike, ki vplivajo na vsebino učbenikov. Avtor ponudi primere konkretnih rešitev za kritične vsebine, pojasni, kaj je bilo že storjenega za uravnovešanje podobe Afrike in katerih dejanj bi se bilo še treba poslužiti za doseglo kakovostne upodobitve kontinenta v slovenskih geografskih učbenikih.

Ključne besede: izkrivljene podobe Afrike, učbeniki, geografija, Slovenija

Correspondence address: Janez Pirc, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Erjavčeva 26, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia, e-mail: janez.pirc2@guest.arnes.si, pirc.janez@gmail.com

1. Introduction

“Not to know is bad, not to wish to know is worse.” (Wolof proverb)

What are children taught at school about Africa? Little of importance, say Africans living in Slovenia (Ozmeč 2007, 55; Uršič 2010, 4); and even less that is positive about the continent. Inspection of current Slovene geography textbooks discloses continuing questionable images of Africa, such as the favourableness (of the African regions) for “the settlement of the Whites” (Novak et al. 2004, 11, 16) and a discourse of races and tribes. It is hard to accept such misrepresentations of Africa at the beginning of the 21st century in view of the fact that schoolbooks are among the first more extensive information sources about that continent for students in Slovenia (and generally outside Africa). The immediate question here is what influences a state of affairs in which the contents of geography textbooks can still contain so many outdated, unrealistic, negative and pejorative concepts, information and images.

These problems were identified in a detailed analysis of a selected number of geography textbooks for Slovene primary and secondary schools as part of the project *Izobraževanje za razvoj na trdnih temeljih* (Education for Development on Solid Bases) of the African Centre Association of Slovenia in 2010 (Pirc et al. 2010, 4). This article argues that the images of African social characteristics mentioned above resemble presentations of the continent in the period of the 19th and early 20th century European colonial presence there, and most likely are the products of the continuation of European colonial approaches when discussing Africa. European colonial perceptions of Africans were generally marked by concepts of race (pseudo-scientific racial hierarchies) and tribe (tribal division and social organization of Africans), which have all been scientifically denounced in the last few decades as (mostly) ideological constructs without any real explanative value (Parker and Rathbone 2007, 3, 26, 36; Reader 1998, 606-611; Ki-Zerbo 1977, 396; Muršič 2005; Lowe et al. 1997; Ilc 2006, 84). On the other hand, the different European colonial administrations assessed the value and potential of African regions on the basis of the possibilities of exploiting cheap local labour and natural resources, and of their “suitability” for the settlement of Europeans, while more or less ignoring or limiting the socio-economic needs and political and cultural achievements of Africans (Ki-Zerbo 1977, 402; Južnič 1980, 96-103; Kasule 1998, 82-85; Curtin 1996, 448; O’Toole 2001, 49-50).

Furthermore, some close similarities in the portrayal of the African continent

between the geography school textbooks and Western mass media will also be exposed in the paper. If we paraphrase van Dijk (1987, 46), mass media are one of the main sources of information about social characteristics and processes in Africa for adults, just as textbooks are for students in schools. The reason to also include mass media in this debate are the findings of many analysts with respect to media discourse on Africa (Palmberg 2001b, 8-9; Mezzana 2002; Ivančič 2007, 4, 7, 19; Jeffs 2000; Ilc 2006, 5-6), which have showed a predominantly negative and occasionally sensationalistic approach with decontextualised or one-sided explanations prevailing in their coverage of that continent.

The article first briefly discusses the social role of geography textbooks and their critical analysis. The next section explains the mechanism of transmission of the planned contents of curricula into textbooks in Slovenia. The following section presents the methodology and framework of the analysis of the textbooks. The core part of the article presents the results of the analysis in a form of a categorization of what are termed common misrepresentations of Africa in the textbooks' contents. Six different types of the misrepresentation were identified: a Eurocentric perspective; a short historical memory (i.e., the use of the colonial period as a benchmark); race- and tribe-based views and other unsuitable, offensive or outdated terms and concepts; negative perceptions of modern Africa; errors and inconsistency in the data; and an unsuitable selection of photographic and illustrative material. Each type is presented with exemplary quotations, with critical commentary, from the textbooks which are then contextualised and accompanied with proposals of concrete solutions wherever possible. Finally, the conclusion presents what has been done recently to improve the image of Africa and to achieve its more balanced presentation, together with suggestions as to which actions still have to be taken to attain a more accurate and positive image of the African continent in Slovene geography textbooks.

2. The Social Role of (Geography) Textbooks and of Their Critical Analyses

Teun van Dijk (1987, 46), one of the leading researchers in the sphere of critical discourse analysis, claims that "where mass media are the primary information source about ethnic groups for adults, textbooks and children's books (including comics) play a similar role for children" (and probably also for some parents). Therefore it is not surprising that the analysis of school textbooks "yields results that are rather similar to those of the media" (van Dijk 1987, 46). Schoolbooks can be seen as reflections of the established view of things and therefore as

“excellent study objects for the mainstream images offered in the public sphere. They contain material which has been sifted at many stages (from the writer to the publishing companies and their editors in consonance with the prescribed curriculum) before they are packaged as standardised prescribed knowledge and sanctioned views” (Palmberg 2001a, 197). A critical analysis of discourse in media and education is especially important because these two factors indirectly construct and control the knowledge and interpretation of the world (Čepič & Vogrinčič 2003, 313-314).

The aim of the analysis discussed here was to point out the misrepresentations of Africa in Slovene geography textbooks and to suggest the possibilities of achieving a more balanced, accurate and positive representation of Africa there. Similar intentions led to other research projects and revisions of textbooks with a long tradition. After the First World War the League of Nations began stimulating work in this sphere in order to combat mutual xenophobia and to avoid stereotypes of war-time adversaries, while UNESCO paid much attention to this subject already at its very inception in 1946 (Pingel 2010, 9, 11). The analysis of geography, history and civic school textbooks is very important in the context of attaining a higher quality of education towards “democracy, human rights and international, as well as intercultural, awareness” (Pingel 2010, 8). Only a few significant and topical projects and publications of the last decade in Slovenia have been achieved in the sphere of these subjects, including media analysis, that have focused specifically on Africa or other non-European parts of the world. These are mostly university diplomas and articles.

There was an informal project of the Initiative Group for the Non-disparaging Presentation of the Cultures of the World in Slovene Textbooks, (henceforth, ‘the Initiative’) carried out in 2007, that had a different approach to the subject of analysing the treatment of Africa in textbooks. It had members from different disciplines and indirectly led to the project and analysis discussed in this paper. The Initiative started within the framework of the African Centre Association (*Društvo Afriški center*) of Slovenia, and was initiated by one of its members¹ who as a parent was shocked by the negative and distorting images of Africa that his children had to learn from their textbooks (Pirc et al. 2010, 4; Ozmeč 2007, 55). Thus the work of the Initiative mostly focused on the analysis of discourse and of images of the social characteristics of Africa in one Slovene geography textbook. The Initiative, which included also the author of this article, consisted of small group of experts on Africa from different disciplines as well as of Africans living in Slovenia. Later on it began cooperation with Kula the Slovene ethnological and anthropological association, and expanded its researches to Asia. The Initiative entered into regular consultations with one of the publishing companies and

produced a detailed critical report for one of its textbooks. Together with Kula it organized a round table “Peoples of the World in the Slovene School System and Modern Professional Vocabulary” where some of the results were discussed (Ozmeč 2007, 55). The speakers there also concluded that it is not only the subject of geography which is questionable when presenting non-European peoples to pupils, but also some others such as history and literature. With the perseverance and persuasion by some of its members, the Initiative achieved a situation whereby some of the most questionable requirements for the African portion of the geography textbooks’ contents in the curriculum were withdrawn or replaced with more appropriate ones.

3. The Influence of Curricula on the Textbooks’ Contents

It is almost impossible to analyse the contents of Slovene geography textbooks without a simultaneous review of the geography curricula for primary and secondary schools. The reason is simple: the curricula contain more or less detailed guidelines, goals and also concrete key terms which students should adopt and learn. They have to be included in the contents of the textbooks or the latter are not approved for the use in schools. Thus, a short excursus to explain the process of renewing the curricula and the transmission of the planned contents of curricula into the textbooks in Slovenia with the focus on the geographical features of Africa is developed in this section.

In 2007 the National Education Institute of Slovenia (NEIS) had been intensively preparing a reform of the curriculum. The NEIS is a public institution authorized by the Ministry of Education and Sport for the implementation of educational reform. Previously the last general reform of curricula for Slovene primary and secondary schools was performed in 1998. The latest reformed curriculum was finally approved only for secondary schools,² while the reform for primary schools has still not been finished (NEIS 2010; Marn 2007, 26-27; Ivelja 2010). The so called Curriculum Development Groups are an integral part of the NEIS. One of them, Humanities and Social Sciences, covers also the Geography Subject Group which is in charge of discussing and approving proposals for the reformed curriculum for geography (NEIS 2010). The final word in the process of approving the curriculum rests with the Council of Experts of Republic of Slovenia for General Education (*Strokovni svet Republike Slovenije za splošno izobraževanje*) at the Ministry of Education and Sport. This Council also approves the textbooks for primary and secondary schools if they follow the directives and

contents of the curriculum (SSSI 2010).

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The geographic features of Africa are taught relatively extensively in the 8th year of primary school (children of 13 years of age) and in the 2nd year of secondary school (adolescents of 16 years of age) – together with other non-European parts of the world, except Asia which is already included in the 7th year of primary school together with Europe. Despite the intentions and the positive moves of NEIS for the reform of the primary school curricula, this has not happened yet. There are however possibilities that the new curricula could finally come into effect in 2011 (Pirc 2009). This still remains the main and the basic problem in connection with the contents of geography textbooks for the 8th year of primary schools. The textbooks that include a chapter focused on Africa still contain the same disputed and questionable orientations and contents that were already detected in the smaller-sized analysis by the Initiative in 2007 (Pirc et al. 2007, 2-3). This leaves the impression that geography in primary schools is still taught mainly in the spirit and with the methods that were present in the period of European colonialism on the African continent, especially its final stage.

Still, it has to be mentioned that the activities of the Initiative in 2007 resulted in some important changes in the content orientation of the curricula. On the primary school level this is still evident only in the form of the draft for the reformed curriculum, where for example the discourse about the races (racial groups, racial fragments, “Bantu blacks”, “Sudanese blacks” – in Slovene: *rasne skupine, rasni drobci, Bantu črnici, Sudanski črnici*) and the questionable expression “Black Africa” were omitted at the request of the Initiative (personal correspondence with Igor Lipovšek 2007 and 2010³; MŠŠ & ZRSŠ 2010). On the other hand, some “goals and contents” were added at the suggestions of the Initiative, aiming to reach a more realistic and balanced image of Africa in the reformed curriculum for secondary schools. Thus, through geography lessons the students should also *inter alia* adopt the following “goals and contents” (Polšak et al. 2008, 16) concerning Africa, which were missing in the previous version of the curriculum:

- ♦ they should recognize its cultural and linguistic diversity;
- ♦ they should be aware of the existence of the long and far-reaching history before the arrival of Europeans on the African continent; /.../
- ♦ they should be familiar with the past and current consequences of (neo) colonialism in Africa and with the influence of the great powers on some of the conflicts; /.../
- ♦ they should understand the phenomena of famine and poverty in particular parts of Africa not only as a consequence of natural catastrophes and development assistance but also as a result of unjustifiable world agricultural

policy for produce from the African market (Polšak et al. 2008, 16, 23; personal correspondence with Igor Lipovšek 2007).

Content orientations of this kind, as well as principled goal orientations of geography curricula for primary and secondary schools that among others expect the students to “be able to form opinions and values, such as respect of other nations and cultures” (MŠŠ & ZRSŠ 2010, 16), raise our expectation for positive changes in the sphere of perceiving or learning about the geographic characteristics of modern and former Africa (and also of other non-European parts of the world). Certainly, the contents of the aforementioned curricula still need many improvements and conceptual alternations. At the same time, new elements in the reformed curriculum penetrate only slowly and gradually into new editions of textbooks. One of the reasons for this is also the fact that the old editions of the textbooks still keep their validity in most cases for two more school years after the introduction of the reformed curriculum, and furthermore the latter is also introduced gradually – starting with being limited to the 1st year of secondary school. Moreover, it is obvious that the transfer of the prescribed contents from curricula to the textbooks leaves a lot of scope for different (and mostly negative) interpretations of the contents. As Bešter (2009, 108) also claims, the Slovene school system supports the principle of a multicultural approach in education, though the majority of such contents and orientations remain realised merely on a declarative level.

4. Methodology and Framework of the Geography Textbooks Analysis

The critical analysis focused on those Slovene geography textbooks that contain chapters which directly deal with Africa. The analysis was performed as part of the project *Izobraževanje za razvoj na trdnih temeljih* (Education for Development on Solid Bases) of the African Centre Association, a Slovene association bringing together Africans living in Slovenia and others interested in Africa (Pirc et al. 2010, 4).⁴ The project included four geography textbooks by four different authors/joint authors and from three different publishing companies. Three textbooks for the 8th year of primary school and one for the 2nd year of secondary school were chosen. At the present time there are in Slovenia four different textbooks available for the students of 8th year of primary school and two different ones for the students of the 2nd year of secondary school. Two books – one for primary and the other for secondary school - were not selected for the analysis since they were published by the company whose textbooks were already carefully analysed

by the Initiative Group for the Non-disparaging Presentation of the Cultures of the World in the Slovene Textbooks in 2007.

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The analysis is based on qualitative methods. The content analysis focused mostly on the socio-geographic images of Africa – i.e., the kind of messages that some parts of the text present and the context in which they were written. The aim of the analysis was also to point out any materials omitted from the chapter about Africa, and especially to suggest concretely how the questionable contents could be presented in a more beneficial manner. The research group included seven reviewers from multidisciplinary backgrounds⁵ - among them an ethnologist, an anthropologist, a political scientist and a geographer. The detailed analyses included multiple examinations of each textbook and its corresponding workbook: each was reviewed by four members of the group, who prepared separate reports. These were the bases for a summative report for each textbook, prepared by the coordinator of the group (Pirc et al. 2010, 4). Its final version was ready only after reviews by the team members. The complete report including all the summative reports was presented in public in October 2010.

5. Common Misrepresentations of Africa in the Textbooks

General approaches to the non-European parts of the world in Slovene geography textbooks are in accordance with Van Dijk's opinions about how school textbooks in the West depict countries of the world. He claims that different studies of these textbooks show that the home countries, or other Western countries and Western civilization in general "are systematically portrayed more extensively, more favourably, and as superior to the colonised, Third World or 'Black' countries of the southern hemisphere" (van Dijk 1987, 46). Similar conclusions were also found in analysis of the aforementioned geography textbooks with respect to Africa, where the common denominator behind them could be generally described as a Eurocentric world view.

As Amin (2009, 78) states, the concept of Eurocentrism is difficult to define precisely. Eurocentrism is a matter of attitude, not content (Davies 1997, 16). Briefly, the Eurocentric approach to history is based on the construct of the well-known "Western" history of Europe and the World, having Ancient Greece, Rome, feudalism and capitalistic Christian Europe as its cornerstones. In this context, it is closely intertwined with the racial dimension of the basis for the supposed European cultural unity on one hand, while distancing itself from

the non-European parts of the world as its opposites in a racial and religious senses (Amin 2009, 6, 66). It regards European civilisation as superior and self-contained, while neglecting the need for taking non-European viewpoints into consideration (Davies 1997, 16). Thus, we can speak of Eurocentrism as a colonial world view, since it strives for the gradual occidentalisation or europeisation of the rest of the world. This phenomenon is characterised by a belief in the superiority and universalism of its European model of human development and serves as a justification for the European conquest of the world (Amin 2009, 79; Mastnak 2009, 183). Its roots are in the Renaissance, and it flourished in the 19th century (Amin 2009, 5).

When, therefore, analysing the images of Africa in geography textbooks, we can speak about many dimensions of Eurocentrism. The first one, simply called a “Eurocentric perspective,” includes the geographic dimension – i.e. dividing the World into the “Old” and “New”, “Discovered” and “Undiscovered” (i.e., by Europeans) – and generally one-sided explanations or decontextualisations of the complexities of Africa. The other variations of Eurocentrism may be identified as the historical dimension: exposing the (positive) role of European colonial rule in Africa while neglecting the rest of African history, the ethnic dimension: discourse on races and tribes and the use of colonial terminology for the peoples and geographical names involved, and negativism towards Africa and Africans (as the opposite to Europe and Europeans).

The following results of the analysis do not show the balanced image about Africa that is mentioned for the reformed (or the draft of the reformed) curricula above. First of all, this is the consequence of the fact that most of the textbooks were published before the curriculum reform. In addition, they offer many similarities with the mass media when portraying Africa, which will be discussed in more detail later. The primary school geography textbooks approach Africa with a regional-geographic perspective. First they discuss it by focusing on the general geographic characteristic of the whole continent; this is followed by the division into three regions (North, Tropical and South Africa). In contrast, the secondary school textbooks discuss Africa on a basis of a problem approach and thus focus only on chosen physical and socio-geographic characteristics. Despite these differences, the following main or common questionable contents (i.e., misrepresentations) are more or less inherent to all the four textbooks analysed. In the form of, e.g., certain expressions, sentences or paragraphs, they may be classified under more than one characteristic of the textbooks’ content.⁶

5.1. Eurocentric Perspective

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In this case we may talk about narrow, one-sided perspectives or monoperspectivity on Africa. The best evidence for this is the continuum of discourse on the “discovery” of Africa by the Europeans: “Beside other geographic discoveries, they [the Europeans] started to discover the West African coast in the 15th century” (Novak et al. 2004, 14). This is an explicitly Eurocentric and indirectly also a colonial perspective of the division of the World into the “Old World” and the undiscovered, unexplored “New World” (Brazier 2007, 61). This is especially fallacious for Africa, since the continent is known as a cradle of humankind. It is time to finally overcome the terminology used in history and geography about the so-called geographic discoveries from the late 15th century on, and to use at the most reference to explorations and expeditions. As O’Toole claims (2001, 44)

It is ironic that people continue to credit European explorers of the nineteenth century with the ‘discovery’ of rivers, waterfalls, and such in Africa when it is obvious that Africans living there already knew these things existed. Obviously, discovery simply meant that a European had verified in writing the existence of something long known to others.

A similar perspective, with even more direct colonial connotations, is valid for the discourse on the “favourableness” of specific African regions for the settlement of Europeans (or “Whites”): “On the north [of Africa], at the Mediterranean, there is the Mediterranean climate, that is favourable for the settlement of the Whites” (Novak et al. 2004, 16). In this context, the textbooks also mention the settlement of Europeans in the African regions where their relative share in relation to the complete number of all inhabitants is very small or insignificant (Novak et al. 2004, 29; Resnik Planinc et al. 2007, 24).

One-sided and mostly misleading explanations of the socio-political and economic complexities of modern and past Africa are also closely connected with a Eurocentric perspective. This may also be expressed simply as decontextualisation. The events and conditions on the African continent are thus presented without their critical socio-political and historical context, or exaggeratedly simplified. This method releases Europe or the West from almost all the responsibility for the poor state of affairs in the aforementioned respects in many African countries: “Many new [African] countries agreed on different forms of dependency on the former colonizers or multinational companies, because of the poverty and economic-political problems” (Kürbus et al. 2004, 44). Instead, this could be written: “Many new countries agreed on different forms of dependency on the former colonizers or multinational companies

because of the poverty and economic-political problems, which were *mostly caused simply by European colonial rule*”⁷

Furthermore, the social image of Africans is often treated in a patronizing manner and at the same time, to a great extent, as a consequence of distance and lack of understanding. On the one hand, the Africans are presented as ill-fated, needing help (e.g., during various humanitarian catastrophes or wars); and on the other hand, they are exoticized as “tribes” who often fight each other for incomprehensible reasons and who are incapable of achieving socio-political stability and economic successes: “The decay of traditional African society is accelerated by numerous dictatorial régimes, disputes between nations and conflicts that are frequently stimulated from abroad” (Resnik Planinc et al. 2007, 19).

This is an example of the lack of valid explanation for the decay of the so-called African traditional society – whatever this may be. It is understandable that the textbooks need a certain amount of generalization and simplification, though it is very difficult to talk about traditional African society in the singular because of its multitude of peoples, cultures and also religions (Pirc 2009, 3). Wars certainly result in a high intensity of change the social organization in the areas where they take place, though Africa is no exception here. It is also true that many conflicts are stimulated from abroad, though the authors could be at least a bit more specific which “abroad” was meant here – i.e., whether it is one of the ex-colonial metropolises or one of the African neighbours (Iliffe 1997, 257; O’Toole 2001, 52; Braeckman 2004, 14; Brumen 2003, 77, 80-81). We may mention here also some well-known African examples of lasting dictatorial regimes (e.g., in the former Zaire and in Guinea) where the leaders of the states commanded a kind of “growth of cultural awareness” of their nations by “returns to authenticity” (and similar phrases), – thus endeavouring to preserve or achieve a kind of imagined tradition (Ewens 1999, 462-466; Duran 1999, 547). As has been stressed, Africa is no exception to the general rule here, either. This kind of discourse, as cited above, thus also hints that this kind of processes and situations are inherent to Africa.

The example of the way of depicting Africans, as described here, also has parallels in how the African continent is usually presented in the West, other than in textbooks. Palmberg (2001b, 15) writes that the continent is presented as primitive in two variations: “in one sense of ‘primitive’ Africa as original, pure and unspoilt”. As Mezzana (2002) states, it is an area of “breathtakingly beautiful wild habitat, rife with danger,” and is also an “allochronic” land, where “time is believed to flow differently to the diachrony experienced by the rest of humanity”

(Mezzana, 2002). The other sense of “primitive” mentioned by Palmberg (2001b, 15), involves Africa standing for “underdeveloped, not sufficiently sophisticated or learned.”

To a crucial degree, the Eurocentric perspective conditions the remaining common characteristics of the geographic textbooks analysed.

5.2. Short Historical Memory – Colonial Period as a Benchmark

In most of the cases, the historical memory of the analysed textbooks extends only back to the European colonisation of Africa and ignores earlier African history, including any kind of achievements of African state formations and cultures. Indeed the only common exception here is the mentioning of Old Egypt (e.g. Novak et al. 2004, 20; Resnik Planinc et al. 2007, 20; Verdev 2010, 25). An example in this context is the following sentence: “The African interior was unknown to the Europeans until the beginning of 19th century”. This statement appears in a subchapter, significantly entitled “The Troubles of the Whites in Tropical Africa,” which is supposed to deal with the physical geography of the continent, but instead presents the problems of 19th century European explorers of Africa and the obstacles for settlement of the Europeans there (Novak et al. 2004, 14). The context of this part of the textbook is clearly colonial in the sense of its almost epic description of the heroism of “our” explorers in Africa and in its view that European settlement in Sub-Saharan Africa was the norm; as such, it should simply be removed.

Another example is when the foundation of Liberia is mentioned with language idealising the role of the USA in this period of history: “The first independent country on the African soil was Liberia. It was founded by the USA in order to return the liberated slaves there” (Verdev 2010, 26). The fact that Ethiopia was the oldest African independent state, in existence from ancient times, is here simply ignored (Mazrui 1999, 108).

As van Dijk (1987, 46-47) states, this kind of approach towards history is true of the majority of textbooks in most ex-colonial countries. In them, colonial history is described “in terms of adventures, explorations, heroic feats, or the diffusion of ‘civilization’, rather than in terms of exploration, slavery or brutalities”. The history of colonised peoples “before and after the colonial period” is neglected (van Dijk 1987, 47). This could also be said for the following sentence, where the “dissemination of the culture” of the colonisers is mentioned in the first

place, although it is followed by reference to atrocities: “[The Englishmen and Frenchmen] disseminated English and French culture, renamed countries and rivers and destroyed the culture of the natives” (Novak et al. 2004, 27).

This kind of statement may be placed also in the context of the relativisation of the criminal extent of the European colonial regime in Africa.⁸ This is the kind of question posed in a section on selected socio-geographic characteristics of Africa: “Explain the idea of neo-colonialism. List and explain some *positive* and negative consequences of neocolonialism of Africa” (Kürbus et al. 2004, 45). As Južnič (1980, 164) writes with reference to neocolonialism, it is a continuum of colonialism in the sense of the continuation of actual dependence of African countries on the great powers. It would be definitely possible to enumerate its advantages at length, i.e., those gained by the multinational companies and governments of numerous Western countries, whereas at the most we might include into this group some corrupted political cliques in Africa.

There has to be added that today’s Europe is still far from being immune even from official calls to recognize the “positive aspects” of colonialism in Africa. The most famous recent case of this is probably a French 2005 proposal for a law which mentioned, inter alia, that school programmes should recognize “the positive role of the French presence /.../ in North Africa” (Pingel 2010, 40; LOI n° 2005-158). After strong protests, this part of the law was finally repealed in 2006 (Raizon 2006).

5.3. Racist and Tribalist Viewpoints and Other Unsuitable, Offensive or Outdated Terms and Concepts

Probably the most obvious sign of the portrayal of African (and other non-European) socio-geographic characteristics in Slovene geographic textbooks is the usage of discourse on races and tribes. The Slovene anthropologist Rajko Muršič (2005) has already been writing about this problem, while stressing the role of ethnology and anthropology in this context. The textbooks for primary schools still divide the people of Africa into races and racial types, though as it was already mentioned above that the parts of curriculum stressing racial classification (and mentioning tribes) will be omitted when the reformed curriculum finally appears. As Muršič stresses (2005), the concept of race cannot explain human variation and thus has no explanative role at all. “The human ways of life have no connection with the physical basis of the peoples. There are more differences between people within populations than between populations, and this is true both for physical appearance and for the genetic bases. The use of racial

categories is not only incorrect but also very dangerous” (Muršič cited in Uršič 2010, 4). This can quickly lead to racist thinking, where, as Palmberg (2001b, 7) claims, “some are hopeless cases by birth due to ‘races’ they are born into”. In the paternalistic approach, they talk about the “less advanced” peoples instead, who “must be guided by “enlightened peoples” into the light of civilisation” (ibid.).

A clear example of mentioning race as the basic characteristic of the African population is the following: “The most numerous among the races are blacks, followed by the whites, while there are also some members of the yellow race, half-breeds and racial fragments” (Resnik Planinc et al. 2007, 19). If we turn the mirror on our own continent, Europe, we have not seen any such description for its population in modern textbooks (such as dividing Europe’s population into Dinaric, Nordic and other racial subgroups). Instead of racial viewpoints, the authors should write about the ethno-linguistic and cultural diversity in Africa.

“In ‘Black’ Africa, the most numerous peoples are the Bantu, followed by even slightly darker Sudan Blacks. Both live in tribes” (Novak et al. 2004, 21). This is another excerpt from textbooks where beside race the authors also mention the concept of tribe that is so common when speaking about African ethnic groups. As Lowe et al. (1997) and Ilc (2006, 84) write, the idea of tribal organization of Africans was one of the primary ideas or myths on which were established representations of Africa and Africans in the era of European imperialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. “European travellers, missionaries, colonial administrators, and ethnographers in the past have tended to collapse multiple identities into single concept of ‘tribe’. This was an outsiders’ model of who Africans were and how they lived” (Parker and Rathbone 2007, 43). The idea of “tribe” reflects the once widespread but now outdated 19th century social theory where social organizations and forms of government that are “said to precede civilization among pastoralists and simple agriculturalists, were called tribal” (Lowe et al. 1997). “Tribal” and “African” are still virtually synonyms (Lowe et al. 1997; Reader 1998, 609). Again, the geographic textbooks do not mention, for example, that there are any tribes living in modern-day Europe.

Thus, we can agree with Mezzana (2002), when she writes about the abuse of the term tribe (and its derivatives) for the use of modern descriptions of Africans and Africa. The expression promotes misleading stereotypes and has no consistent meaning. “At best, any interpretation of African events that relies on the idea of ‘tribe’ contributes no understanding of specific issues in specific countries” (Lowe et al. 1997). This term should be avoided and replaced by, e.g., peoples, ethnic groups or nations, depending on the socio-political context.

All the textbooks analysed¹⁰ also contain terms for different African peoples that are offensive, obsolete, Eurocentric or politically incorrect. Resnik Planinc et al. (2007, 19) and Novak et al. (2004, 21) refer to “Pygmies, Hottentots and Bushmen” (in Slovene: *Pigmejci, Hotentoti* and *Bušmani* or, literally, *Grmičarji*) in the context of giving examples of “racial fragments”. Basically, this is still the continuum of the racial discourse mentioned above, except that here we are dealing with terms for certain peoples constructed by Europeans on the basis of their supposed physical or phonetic characteristics. These ethnic groups naturally have their own expressions for themselves which they prefer, while the pejorative Euro-colonial terms should be withdrawn. For the “Pygmies” the most common and correct expressions used today are the Baka (or M’Baka) and Mbuti people, while for the other two peoples are usually named together as Khoisan (Kasule 1998, 96; Furlong 2001, 373; O’Toole 2001, 26). The example of referring to Tuaregs or Berbers (Resnik Planinc et al. 2007, 18-19; Novak et al. 2004, 22; Verdev 2010, 24) are slightly less questionable, because these expressions do not relate to their physical appearance. Still, in the majority of cases, the members of these two peoples prefer the use of their own names: Kel Tamashek for Tuaregs and Amazigh for Berbers (Brumen 2001, 142; Willis 2008, 240).

Closely connected with presenting only a very limited number of ethnic groups in Africa and usually focusing only on the those mentioned above and most likely on the Zulu, Maasai and Arabs as well, without any specific explanation for their selection, introduces another two important characteristics of the depictions of Africans in the textbooks. There is a clear exoticism in the descriptions and visual images, together with the common phenomenon of synecdoche. As Mezzana (2002) explains for the latter, this is for example “when populations such as the Maasai are used to represent the entire African continent”. It is understandable that textbooks cannot even list one main ethnic group for each African country, but the impression from the textbooks for primary schools is that only a handful of peoples live in Africa, possibly merely those just mentioned. For example, we can only guess why, of all important ethnic groups in East Africa, only the Maasai are mentioned (or portrayed on pictures) in almost all textbooks (Kürbus et al. 2004, 38, 49; Resnik Planinc et al. 2007, 18, 25; Novak et al. 2004, 28) - as if they were the only or one of the most numerous and influential peoples in this part of Africa. The same goes for example for the Zulu in Southern African region or the “Pygmies” in Central Africa.

The reasons for choosing to present this limited number of ethnic groups from Africa, in particular, may be traced back to the age of European imperialism on the African continent of the 19th century and Europe’s obsession with the “wild and primitive savages”, conditioned also with a poor knowledge of African

societies in general (Lindfors 2001, 55, 66; Taylor 2000, 116). The impression is that the appearance of the peoples mentioned above in textbooks is a direct consequence of this kind of vision of Africa. These peoples are still seen as “wild tribes”, untouched by modern (Western) life – talking about their habits and their visual appearance – i.e., as exotic. As Palmberg (2001a, 199) argues, this kind of representation of Africa also suits the European constructed image of Africans as a peasant and non-urbanised population – where, simply, “one African is all Africans”.

The last integral part in the framework of unsuitable terms and concepts is some of geographical names in Africa. Some of them still bear the old colonial designations, named after different European monarchs and explorers (e.g. Brazzaville), while on the other hand, many of them changed their names in accordance with the new socio-political climate and local African languages in the post-colonial period (e.g. Maputo – former Lourenço Marques). Then there is also the third group, where both the former colonial and the present-day local African name are officially or non-officially in use. In such cases, the analysed textbooks seem to take into account only the old colonial names – e.g. for Victoria Falls (Resnik Planinc 2007, 10; Verdev 2010, 11). The textbooks should also include the official local African names together with the European, colonial terms. In this example, that is Mosi-oa-Tunya (in translation the smoke that thunders) (UNESCO, 2010).

5.4. Negative Perceptions of Modern Africa

In this context, the basic characteristic of all the geographical textbooks analysed is the primary orientation on mentioning and listing different aspects of problems and catastrophes in Africa. Wars, diseases, famines, desertification, demographic growth and poverty – which is vaguely defined and equated with economic (non) development – are the synonyms for the modern Africa in the textbooks (e.g. Kürbus et al. 2004, 44-45, 52, 56-59; Resnik Planinc et al. 2007, 16-17, 19; Novak et al. 2004, 14, 21, 28; Verdev 2010, 16-17, 20-21). As Palmberg (2001a, 204) writes, the space given to Africa in the schoolbooks “seems to be fully occupied by the all-dominant theme of ‘development problems’”. This is also similar to the mass media coverage of Africa, where “Africa is problems” (ibid.; Ivančič 2007, 4, 19).

The key words of the section “Lower Equatorial Africa” (Resnik Planinc et al. 2007, 24) are representative of this kind of image: “diamonds, Tsetse fly, tropical wood, clearing of tropic rainforest, military conflicts”. Even where these key words are not negative per se (diamonds, tropical wood), they are presented in

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a (neo)colonialistic perspective of the exploitation of natural wealth, instead of mentioning, for example, biotic diversity. Besides, the problems in Africa are usually presented as problems inherent for this continent only, or as problems for which the Africans are exclusively responsible. Such is the case of the optional section in the secondary school textbook which is entirely devoted to the most common diseases in Africa (Kürbus et al. 2004, 58-59). Africa is presented there as a very sick continent. This can be the only explanation of the fact that even this additional section concerning this continent is again full of descriptions of diseases. If there is a need for such contents in a textbook, they could be placed at its end where problems of all continents would be presented, as the majority of these diseases also appear in other parts of the world.

As we can see, there is a critical lack of positive images which would present African achievements. These would have a motivation role for the students and would de-exoticise and bring this part of the world closer to them. Some of the very rare exceptions here are the mentions of Ethiopian runner Haile Gebrselassie and South African cardiac surgeon Christian Barnard in one of the textbooks (Verdev 2010, 27, 22).

5.5. Errors and Inconsistency of Data

These characteristics are also important but not as critical as the problems mentioned above. The reason is that they do not necessarily result in a negative image of Africa and Africans, though they can still contribute to misconceptions. As examples of errors or inconsistency, the different number of African states may be mentioned within and between textbooks – instead of 54 we read about 53 (Verdev 2010, 8) and 55 states (Novak et al. 2004, 9). Another example would be the claim that Namibia achieved independence in 1989 (Novak et al. 2004, 35) instead in 1990.

Beside erroneous statements there is also the problem of the out-of-date statistical information that is occasionally cited in the textbooks. Social processes are generally very dynamic, and consequently statistical data are obsolete as soon as they are published. However, minimal deviation from the current data is one thing, but when the textbooks contain data that are in great extent different from the latest statistics it is another — as, for example, the citation of much too low a number for the total population in Africa, i.e., with 760 million (Novak et al. 2004, 9) instead of a little more than one billion (UNFP 2009, 91). This kind of problem could have been easily solved in the reprints of textbooks by their publishing companies by incorporating regular reviews and statistical updates;

after all, corrections like this do not even demand a new technical formatting of the textbooks' pages.

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5.6. Unsuitable Selection of Photographic and Illustrative Material

This last category is only briefly discussed, since it would require much more space for graphic appendices to illustrate examples of the photographic and illustrative material in the textbooks analysed. We may simply summarize that the majority of the themes of the photographs and illustrations are similar to the characteristics mentioned above: materials showing primitivism, the exoticism of Africans and their general differences from "us"; depictions of stereotypical images of the African wilderness and destroyed forests, people living in dire conditions of hunger, war and slums, and other problems, stereotypical and negative images.¹¹ Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this generalised impression – the textbook by Verdev (2010) presents for the most part pictures of very good quality and a balanced selection of themes on the one hand, whereas on the other, the textbook by Kürbus et al. (2004) presents a catalogue of stereotypes and crime news of Africa. This visual part of the textbooks is a specific sphere, which on a meaning-content level has a similar importance to the texts. The curricula do not contain a single word about this aspect of the problem, though we believe that there should be included at least some basic guidelines about the criteria for the thematic content of the photographs and illustrations.

6. Conclusions

Throughout the six points made in the last section it has become clear, that – as was stressed at the very beginning of this article - the images of African social characteristics resemble presentations of the continent in the era of European colonialism and that there are also similarities of these images with the portrayal of Africa by the Western mass media. The parallels with the mass media can be found especially in the spheres of decontextualised explanations of the socio-political and economic complexities of Africa, in negative perceptions of modern Africa and in the unsuitable selection of photographic material. Correspondence to colonial perspectives on Africa is at its most obvious in the Eurocentric and negative approach to African reality, in the short historical memory and in racial or tribal viewpoints with which ethno-cultural structure and processes on the continent are discussed. It may be rather surprising that Slovene geographic textbooks have adopted some perspectives on Africa which could be expected

in some ex-colonial countries rather than in a country which emerged from the Socialist and Non-Aligned block and thus on principle traditionally expressed more solidarity and understanding to this part of the world.

The answer for this phenomenon can probably be found partly in an eager reorientation towards the West generally in all social spheres including the school system and the writing of textbooks while, on the other hand, Slovenia drastically lost its touch with almost everything African: from economic and political relations to migration flows and media presence in Africa, especially in the first decade after independence. This can probably also explain the basic resemblance between the negative image of the African continent in the mass media and textbooks. Some additional reasons for such an image of Africa in geography textbooks are to be found in the lack of modern critical literature from Slovene researchers, especially in geography, and thus in reference to books that are 30 or even more years old with many out-of-date concepts and data.¹²

We are aware of what Pingel (2010, 41) claims, that no textbooks can be strictly impartial, when taking account of the different regions of the world. What the analysis of these four geography textbooks aimed was to offer alternatives to build a more balanced and updated image of modern and historical Africa, rather than to artificially embellish its image. As the Slovene geographer Kunaver (2005, 41) wrote, “the most frequent results of non-objectivity and ignorance are stereotypes and one-sided explanations”, and this analysis aims to encourage the processes of improving a situation of this kind. One of the visitors who attended the public presentation of the results of this analysis¹³ commented that the main victims of this kind of representation of Africa is not really Africa itself but the students in the schools. They live in a global society, and not being prepared for its challenges is the greatest victim of misrepresentations of contemporary and past Africa.

These critical analyses of Slovene geography textbooks and curricula has shown that such work is necessary and possible if we want to improve the quality of education – in this case about the geography of Africa. As these and some other analyses and opinions have shown, initiatives of this kind may be necessary also in other subject-fields. This is especially true if we presume knowledge to be a public good, where we can feel entitled to contribute our own share in order to improve the situation, particularly for the sphere of primary school since this is mandatory. We may adopt the few following steps if we want to legitimize and activate a critical analysis of the textbooks and curricula of the subjects concerned:

- ♦ we should argue our own role (as an individual or a group – within or outside the official working frame) in relation to the responsible institutions (in the

Slovene case: the Ministry for Education and Sport and NEIS), to explain why exactly we have an interest in participating with suggestions or opinions to improve a certain subject;

- ♦ we have to stress what were the precise problems that we detected in content or methodology, and scientifically argue the reasons for them;
- ♦ we should suggest concrete possibilities for improvements, corrections or alternatives (with scientific references).

Given the pervasive re-occurrence of questionable contents, it is obvious that there is a great lack of regular critical multidisciplinary reviews of the geography textbooks and curriculum in Slovenia. This is, surely, not simply a problem concerning learning about Africa but also about other non-European parts of the world. The optimal solution may be to use a multidisciplinary approach at an early stage, when curricula are being prepared or reformed and when textbooks are being written (e.g., collaboration between geographers and historians and cultural anthropologists, ethnologists and sociologists).

Further research on the image of Africa in Slovene geography textbooks should also include the analysis of other textbooks which only indirectly speak about Africa or Africans (e.g., when mentioning emigrants or African diaspora around the world), and analyses of older Slovene geography schoolbooks of the last few decades (e.g., during the last decade before the intensive decolonization in Africa started); these analyses may establish how many or which images of Africa used in modern schoolbooks have been non-critically transmitted until our own times.

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¹ Samo Košnik.

² Its implementation began gradually in the school year 2008/2009.

³ Igor Lipovšek is the director of Geography Subject Group.

⁴ The project was put into effect in 2010 and was co-financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and the European Commission. It also included a critical analysis of two history textbooks.

⁵ The group was coordinated by the author of this article.

⁶ The complete detailed analysis of the four textbooks is available in the report of the project *Afrika v slovenskem šolskem sistemu* (Pirc et al., 2010).

⁷ Emphasis by the author.

⁸ By “criminal extent of European colonial regime” we refer to “destroying the culture” of Africans – the direct or indirect consequence of forced evictions of natives from their territories, of slave or forced labour, of oppression of their human, political and economic rights, etc..

⁹ Emphasis by the author.

¹⁰ One exception is the secondary school textbook (Kürbus et al. 2004), which does not include any mention of African peoples, except in the context of certain catastrophes.

¹¹ Radinja (2009, 61-87) extensively analysed the role of photographs in Slovene geography textbooks about Africa.

¹² For example one of the textbooks refers to the collection of books about the peoples of the world, *Ljudstva sveta*, that was published in the years 1979 and 1980.

¹³ The event took place in Ljubljana in October 2010.

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About the Contributors / O avtorjih

Sergiu Constantin

Sergiu Constantin is a researcher in the Institute for Minority Rights of the European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen (South Tyrol, Italy). He is a graduate of the Law Faculty of University of Bucharest (Romania) and holds a Master degree in European Studies from University of Graz (Austria). His research interests are related mainly to the legal protection of national and ethnic minorities, Central and South Eastern Europe, European enlargement and autonomy models. At the moment he is involved in a two-year research project that tries to identify the best practices of minority protection in Central Europe, while at the same time studying the conditions under which such practices can function and the circumstances in which the application of certain measures is not advisable. Before joining the team of the European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen, he worked as governmental expert in the Directorate for Legislation of the Department for Protection of National Minorities of the Romanian Government.

Sergiu Constantin je raziskovalec na Inštitutu za manjšinske pravice Evropske akademije v Bocnu (Južna Tirolska, Italija). Diplomiral je na Pravni fakulteti Univerze v Bukarešti (Romunija) in magistriral iz evropskih študij na Univerzi v Gradcu (Avstrija). Pri svojem raziskovalnem delu se v glavnem posveča pravni zaščiti narodnih in etničnih manjšin, Srednji in Jugovzhodni Evropi, širitvi Evropske unije in modelom avtonomije. Trenutno se ukvarja z dvoletnim projektom, ki poskuša opredeliti najboljše prakse manjšinske zaščite v Srednji Evropi, hkrati pa raziskuje, pod kakšnimi pogoji lahko takšne prakse delujejo in v kakšnih okoliščinah uporaba določenih ukrepov ni priporočljiva. Pred vključitvijo v kolektiv Evropske akademije v Bocnu je bil zaposlen kot vladni strokovnjak na Direktoratu za zakonodajo Oddelka za varstvo narodnih manjšin romunske vlade.

László Kupa

László Kupa is a full professor at the Sociology Department of the Faculty of Humanities at University of Pécs. His fields of research are Ethnic Minorities and the History of Sociology. He published two books, edited eleven other books, two with co-editors. He takes active part in the academic life in Hungary and he is the chairman of the Department of Research on Ethnic Minorities of the Hungarian Sociological Association. and also chairs an Academic Team in Pécs which conducts research on ethnic minorities. He is the member of the editorial

board of Holocaust, a periodical in Hungary.

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László Kupa je redni profesor na Oddelku za sociologijo na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Pécsu. Raziskuje etnične manjšine in zgodovino sociologije. Objavil je dve, uredil pa enajst knjig, dve s souredniki. Dejavno sodeluje v madžarskem akademskem življenju. Je predstojnik Oddelka za raziskovanje etničnih manjšin pri Madžarskem sociološkem združenju in Akademskega tima, ki v Pécsu raziskuje etnične manjšine. Je član uredniškega odbora madžarske revije Holocaust.

Sonja Kert-Wakounig

Sonja Kert-Wakounig attended the bilingual elementary school at Božji Grob/Heiligengrab in Austrian Carinthia before enrolling in the Federal Grammar School for Slovenes in Carinthia's capital, Klagenfurt, Austria. She attained a Masters Degree at the Alpe-Adria-University (Faculty for Cultural Sciences) in Klagenfurt. After spending ten years of her working career with the Austrian Revenue Office, where she was responsible for the Slovenian official language, she is now a self-employed translator of Slovenian and German. Since March 2010 Kert-Wakounig has been Chairperson of the Christian Cultural Association, one of the two central cultural body of the Carinthian Slovenes.

Sonja Kert-Wakounig se je po končani dvojezični ljudski šoli pri Božjem Grobu/Heiligengrab v občini Pliberk/Bleiburg na avstrijskem Koroškem šolala na Zvezni gimnaziji za Slovence v Celovcu, kjer je leta 1986 maturirala. Diplomirala je na Alpsko-jadranski univerzi v Celovcu (Fakultät für Kulturwissenschaften). Deset let je skrbela za uradni slovenski jezik v avstrijski davčni upravi, sedaj je samostojna prevajalka za slovenščino in nemščino. Od marca 2010 je predsednica Krščanske kulturne zveze, ene od obeh osrednjih kulturnih organizacij koroških Slovencev.

Piotr Chmiel

Piotr Chmiel is a PhD candidate at the Artes Liberales Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies in Warsaw and is working on a dissertation on the Idea of Antemurale Christianitatis in the Political Thought of Poland and the Republic of Venice in the 16th-17th centuries. He is a graduate of Italian philology and cultural studies. He recently received a scholarship from the Socrates-Erasmus Program for research at the University of Padua and also a research scholarship sponsored by the Italian government at the University of Pisa. He has led a

152 seminar on the role of borderlands in Polish culture at the Collegio Universitario Don Mazza in Padua.

Piotr Chmiel je doktorski študent na Inštitutu za interdisciplinarne študije Artes Liberales v Varšavi. Diplomiral je iz italijanske filologije in kulturnih študij. Pred kratkim je na Univerzi v Padovi dobil štipendijo programa Socrates-Erasmus, na Univerzi v Pisi pa raziskovalno štipendijo italijanske vlade. Na Collegio Universitario Don Mazza v Padovi je vodil tečaj o vlogi obmejnih območij v poljski kulturi.

Janez Pirc

Janez Pirc has a degree in geography and a PhD in political science (ethnic studies). He is employed at the Institute for Ethnic Studies in Ljubljana, Slovenia, as a researcher. His research focuses on the areas of migration and ethnic studies. His major field of interests are: international migration in Africa and the EU, integration processes of migrants, selected social processes in Africa, images of Africa, settlement and demographic processes of the Roma in Slovenia.

Janez Pirc je diplomirani geograf in doktor politologije (etnične študije). Na Inštitutu za narodnostna vprašanja je zaposlen kot asistent z doktoratom. Njegovo raziskovalno delo je usmerjeno na področji migracij in etničnih študij. Podrobneje se ukvarja z mednarodnimi migracijami v Afriki in EU, s procesi integracije migrantov, z izbranimi družbenimi procesi v Afriki, s podobami Afrike, z naselbinskimi in demografskimi procesi Romov v Sloveniji.

Reviewers in 2010 *Recenzenti prispevkov v letu 2010*

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Doc. dr. Dino Abazović, Fakultet političkih nauka, Univerzitet Sarajevo

Asist. Marinko Banjac, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Univerza v Ljubljani

Prof. dr. Bojan Baskar, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

Prof. dr. Anton Bebler, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Univerza v Ljubljani

Doris Debenjak, Ljubljana

Mag. Živka Deleva, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University, Bratislava

Prof. dr. Danica Fink Hafner, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Univerza v Ljubljani

Dr. Danijel Grafenauer, asistent z doktoratom, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, Ljubljana

Doc. dr. Andrej Hozjan, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Mariboru

Asist. Dr. Nikolai Jeffs, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

Red. prof. dr. Majda Kaučič-Baša, Fakulteta za humanistične študije, Univerza na Primorskem, Koper

Red. prof. dr. Matjaž Klemenčič, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja; Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Mariboru

Izr. prof. dr. Miran Komac, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, Ljubljana

Dr. Samo Kristen, višji znanstveni sodelavec, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, Ljubljana

Izr. prof. dr. Marina Lukšič-Hacin, Znanstveno raziskovalni center, SAZU, Ljubljana

Dr. Branko Marušič, znanstveni svetnik, Raziskovalna postaja ZRC SAZU v Novi Gorici

Prof. dr. Liam O'Dowd, Centre of International Borders Research (CIBR)

School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Queen's University, Belfast

Mag. Antonija Petričušić, Katedra za sociologiju, Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu

Prof. dr. Jože Pirjevec, Fakulteta za humanistične študije, Univerza na Primorskem, Koper

Dr. Janez Pirc, asistent z doktoratom, Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, Ljubljana

Doc. dr. Ksenija Šabec, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Univerza v Ljubljani

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Guidelines for Contributors

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General

The editorial board of **Treatises and Documents, The Journal of Ethnic Studies** welcomes the submission of scholarly articles in the field of ethnic and minority studies, especially on racial and ethnic relations, ethnic identity, nationalism, xenophobia, the protection of (ethnic, national, linguistic, religious, and other) minorities, migration, multiculturalism and related subjects. The journal is particularly interested in discussions regarding ethnic and minority issues in the so-called Alpine-Adriatic-Pannonian area and all comparative studies, which include – only partially or as a whole - this geographic area. This area comprises the Alpine arc, the hinterland of the eastern Adriatic and Pannonian Basin. More technically, this area includes the following countries: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Italy, Germany (especially the southern part), Hungary, Kosovo, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. Also Macedonia and Bulgaria may be interesting cases.

Three issues of the journal are published every year, usually in April, September and December.

Articles that are submitted must be original, unpublished material and should not be simultaneously under consideration - either in whole or in part - for publication elsewhere.

The journal encourages the submission of articles in English, since this enables authors to present their ideas and work to a broader public. However, articles in other languages – with a special emphasis on the Slovenian language – are also welcome. The abstracts of the articles are always published in the language of the article and in English.

Authors who do not have native or equivalent proficiency in English must prior to submission have the article read by someone with this proficiency. This step ensures that the academic content of your paper is fully understood by journal editors and reviewers. Articles which do not meet these requirements will most likely not be considered for publication.

Manuscripts should be submitted in electronic form and must include:

- ♦ the submitted article, with the title in the language of the article and in English;

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- ♦ an abstract of the article in the language of the article and in English; this should include a brief presentation of the issues discussed, the methodology used, the main findings and the conclusions;
- ♦ 3 – 7 key words the language of the article and in English.

The length of the title, the abstract and the key words in one language should not exceed 1,400 characters (including spaces). More detailed information about the form of submitted manuscripts is presented in the prescribed template, available at the journal's website (<http://www.inv.si>).

In a separate document please submit: the title of the article, the author(s) name and a brief biographical note on each author with full contact information (for publication in the journal). Please refer to the template (at the journal's website) for further detailed information.

All submitted manuscripts are subjected to peer-review procedure by at least two reviewers. The review procedure is double blind. Authors may be asked to revise their articles bearing in mind suggestions made by the editors or reviewers. The final decision on publication rests with the editorial board.

Manuscripts should be sent by e-mail, in Word (.doc), to Sara Brezigar, editor-in-chief: editortd@guest.arnes.si.

Format and Style

The preferred **length for articles** is between 30,000 and 45,000 characters, including spaces (between approx. 4,500 and 6,500 words). Longer articles may be accepted at the discretion of the editorial board. A limited number of endnotes are permitted, if they are used for explanatory purposes only. They should be indicated serially within the article.

Authors should take into careful consideration also the **style and format requirements** of the journal, which are presented in the template (available at <http://www.inv.si>) in more detail. Particular attention should be paid to the formatting of references, single spacing throughout and the inclusion of keywords and abstracts. Articles that do not meet these requirements will be returned for modification before being read and reviewed.

Referencing Style

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The **Harvard author-date system** of referencing must be used for bibliographical references in the text and in the alphabetical list of references at the end of the article. Authors should ensure that all and only those references cited in the text appear in the list of references. General bibliographies should not be provided. Authors must also follow the requirements regarding referencing style and format as presented in the table of examples, available at the journal's website (<http://www.inv.si>).

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Publishing house Drava (Austria), 2010,
252 pp.

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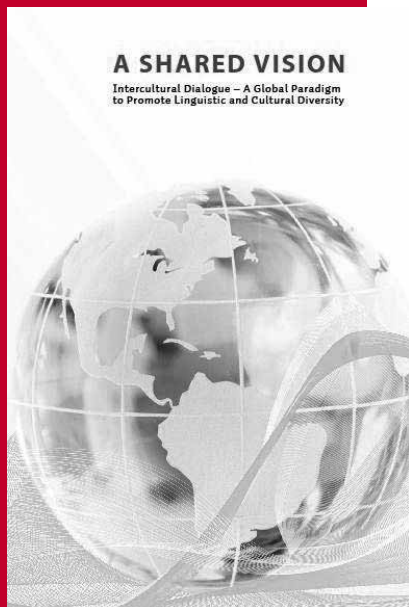
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Slovenia.

Contact person:

Janez Stergar,
janez.stergar@guest.arnes.si

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