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1 When I first saw that the organizers of this conference put Belgium, Austria and Switzerland into one cluster I was wondering why. The first rationale one could think of is size: each is a small country. But surprisingly this was not the answer which I got when I asked a colleague about it. He argued that the choice might have been made because of Swiss Air. Why Swiss Air? Swiss Air, the national carrier of Switzerland, more or less dominates the major airlines of the other two countries in their joint operations: SABENA and AUSTRIAN AIRLINES. He obviously associated nation with airlines.

2 In this distinction I follow Csepele, György: *National Identity in Contemporary Hungary*. Boulder/Col.: Atlantic Research Publ. 1997.

3 Cf. Susag, Chris: *Finnish American Ethnicity as Measured by Collective Self Esteem*. Univ. of Joensuu Publ. in Social Sciences 37 (Univ. of Joensuu 1999).

4 It is not accidental that the Nazi regime which by many is considered as a monstrous exaggeration of nationhood usually preferred to speak about »Volk« instead of nation, though the party carried the term in its designation.

5 One of the first writers who emphasized the historical bounds of the nation was the Austrian poet and politician Guido Zernatto who wrote an excellent text about the emergence and the future of the concept. Cf. Zernatto, Guido: *Vom Wesen der Nation – Fragen und Antworten zum Nationalitätenproblem*. Wien: Holzhausen 1966; Zernatto, Guido: *Nation: The History of a Word*. *Rev. of Politics* 6 (1944), pp. 351-366, qtd. in Greenfeld, Liah: *Nationalism – Five Roads to Modernity*. Cambridge: Harvard UP 1992, p. 4.

Because there seems to be a lot of confusion about what is a nation I would like to touch on this question for a moment though theory is not my main emphasis here. The every day use remains blurred and rather superficial¹ though in some cases this can be justified from a pragmatic point of view. For example the title »United Nations« covers every state organisation, but completely neglects its inner structure: From the »grand nation« of the French via the »socialist nation« of former East Germany to the tribal states of Africa every more or less sovereign political organisation is considered to be a nation. To avoid such confusion I would like to point out briefly the basic theoretical assumptions which will guide my arguments. One is the distinction between *national ideology and national identity*.² With »national ideology« I mean the signifiers (flag, shield, name, programmes, special values, narratives like legends etc.) by which a group ascertains its existence as a nation. It is a collectively shared store of information which makes it possible for the members of a group to imagine, feel and express belonging to a nation. The national flag on the tail of an airplane or the name of the nation included in the company designation could be such signifiers. This store of information can transform into *national identity* when it reaches the everyday existence of the people. Only if a significant part of a population identifies with elements of a national ideology one can speak of national identity. In other words, national identity can be observed as a characteristic of an individual whereas national ideology can exist independently of the life world as artefacts.

The difference is along the lines of »cultural« and »social«. National ideology is the cultural and national identity the social dimension in the concept of nation. The one circumscribes the semantic options available to express nationhood, the other how these options are accepted and lived by the people. National ideology can be documented and passed on to anybody interested in it, whereas national identity is the real life in a society which has opted to become a nation. Outsiders and succeeding generations can analyse and study it but they cannot have it.³ Like any life it is transient. Besides this distinction I want to point out that to speak of a nation a third dimension must be considered: the presence of a special kind of political *institutions*. These institutions must provide the people with the opportunity to participate in the political decision making of the whole. By definition only those who have the status to participate are members of the nation. Historically the term democracy is used to describe this legitimation of power.

In the frame of this definition a society can only be considered as nation if all three dimensions or factors (ideology, identity and democratic institutions) are fully developed. Therefore not every politically organized people is a nation.⁴ In reality different configurations of the factors mentioned will appear. Neither of them alone nor in combination with only one of the other two surfaces. In the last instance it depends on the analyst whether a society can be considered as a nation or not. Besides that, it is assumed that nation is a *historical reality* which for sure has a beginning and most likely an end.⁵ Though from a normative point of view one can consider the nation as the most appropriate political representation of a society, analytically the force of history may not be neglected. All this has implications for the study of national identity. Firstly, the term national identity should be reserved for that subset of collective identity which is more or less explicitly related to the ideology of nation. Secondly, national identity is a phenomenon in development. No final picture of it can be drawn. Thirdly, national identity needs the support of institutions. The most appropriate for this is the sovereign (nation) state with its educational system. Any transfer of sovereignty to other political institutions must lead to an erosion of national identity.

1. Examples of Austrian National Ideology

In the stock of knowledge defined as national ideology, the name of a land or a people takes a prominent place. Already here it is difficult to frame the term »Austria« or »Austrians« with a national ideology. Though in 1996 the official Austria celebrated the millennium of the first appearance of »*Ostarrichi*« – an old version for »*Österreich*« which is the German name for »Austria« – in an official document, this does not necessarily decrease the difficulties. Whereas most, if not all, other European nations trace their designations back to the name of a tribe or a group of



6 About the relationship between Switzerland and Austria today see Altermatt, Urs/Brix, Emil (Eds.): *Schweiz und Österreich – Eine Nachbarschaft in Mitteleuropa*. Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau 1996.

7 Cf. Csaky, Moritz: *Die Vielfalt der Habsburgermonarchie und die nationale Frage*. In: Altermatt, U. (Ed.): *Nation, Ethnizität und Staat in Mitteleuropa*. Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau 1996, pp. 44-64.

8 Cf. Münch, Richard: *Das Projekt Europa*. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1993.

9 »Schaut ringsumher, wohin der Blick sich wendet, lachts wie dem Bräutigam die Braut entgegen« or »Es ist ein gutes Land, wohl wert, daß sich ein Fürst sein unterwindet.

tribes (e.g. Germans), in the case of Austria it is a term most probably given by Bavarian administrators to a small stretch of land east of a small river (Enns) more than 1000 years ago. It should be mentioned that it took until after World War II that this event was considered a significant part in the national ideology of Austria. For the centuries preceding »Austria« was first of all associated with the Habsburg family, which was also called the House of Austria. I do not have to mention here that this family originated in what is today Switzerland⁶ before they began to adopt the term Austria in the 13th century. What I want to point out is that the word »Austria(n)« is not derived from the designation of a tribe like the name of most nations but historically most prominently stood for the political organization of the House of Habsburg. This explains why between the ancient *Ostarrichi* and the present Austria the term had such arbitrary meanings often depending on the changing luck of the House of Habsburg.

Until 1918 all kinds of people with different ethnic and language background could claim to be Austrian⁷. When after World War I the French politician Clemenceau coined the famous sentence »L'Autriche c'est ce qui reste!« it was the will of the constitutional assembly of this »rest« that its name should be »Deutsch-Österreich«. We know that this name giving was prohibited by the winners of World War I. But what is less reflected on is the fact that that endeavor indicates that the name »Austria« was compatible with different ethnic and language groups, because choosing the term »Deutsch-Österreich« implies that one was aware of Non-German Austria as well. Even now occasionally one can meet old people in the US, Canada or elsewhere who say they are of Austrian descent although their ancestors spoke Czech, Polish or other languages. And also now in the post-89 Europe⁸ one can be confronted with similar statements. For example only recently the president of the Republic of Slovenia said in a discussion on whether to recognize an ethnic group of »Altösterreicher« in present Slovenia that »at one time we were all Austrians«. Maybe it was through this multi-ethnic semantic which irritated nationalists that German was constitutionally declared the official language of Austria; and sociologically speaking: The connotation of »Austria« is closer to *Gesellschaft* than to *Gemeinschaft* if we may use this distinction by Ferdinand Tönnies. With classical nations, it is usually the opposite.

Besides the name, *legends* are usually also prominent part of national ideology. One such Austrian legend is about the origin of the Austrian red white and red banner. The legend tells about the bravery of Duke Leopold V of Babenberg. When after the battle of Akkon in the year 1190 only that part of his shirt remained white which was covered by his belt the rest was blood soaked red. Another more significant story is told in the play *König Ottokars Glück und Ende* by Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872). It is about the dramatic events during the transfer of *Ostarrichi* from the Babenberger to the Habsburg dynasty. The main protagonists of the play are Rudolf von Habsburg and König Ottokar von Böhmen. The Bohemian king was defeated in a battle 1278 by Rudolf. This is considered to be the beginning of a correspondence between the Habsburg dynasty and the term Austria. In contrast to national sagas of other countries, this play does not paint a prehistoric archaic picture of the beginning of the nation (e.g. the Finnish *Kalevala*) nor does it praise a hero who brings his people to civilization (e.g. the Hungarian *Arpad saga*), but it shows the dramatic events in the process of taking power in a given system. Besides that it praises the people and the landscape of Austria (along the Danube).⁹ In this play (a tragedy!) Grillparzer tried with the tools of a writer to express and support an antinationalistic national ideology in an age when all around Austria nationalism was flourishing. The spirit of it can be found condensed in one sentence by Grillparzer: »Von der Humanität über die Nationalität zur Bestialität«.

To round up briefly what I want to say about national ideology here a few other aspects. The Austrian state eagle: It carries on its head a golden crown similar to the tower of a city wall, in its claws a sickle and a hammer and between the claws a torn chain. This heraldic animal after World War I replaced the famous double headed eagle of the monarchy. It is said that the tower crown is to symbolize the burgher, the sickle the farmers, the hammer the working class and the torn apart chain the liberation from Nazism in 1945. The presence of hammer and sickle have been criticized due to their semantic proximity to the symbols of communism. After 1989, Jörg Haider, leader of the *Freedom Party*, suggested removing them. Interestingly enough this move did not find any significant support neither in the political elite nor in the population.



¹⁰ The best about the national ideology of Austria can probably be found in Heer, Friedrich: *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität*. Wien, Köln, Graz: Böhlau 1981.

Another element of national ideology is the saying that contemporary Austria was forged in the concentration camps of the Nazis. The enemies from between the Wars – *Socialist, Christian Democrats and Communists* – finally found each other between the barracks of the camps and laid the foundation for the new Austria, which for all future should exist separated from Germany. A derivation from this covenant is the Austrian version of *social partnership*.

National Holiday: The Austrian national holiday is the 26th of October. It commemorates the day in 1955 when the national assembly declared »everlasting neutrality«. It is also said that on this day the last soldier of the occupation (!) forces left Austria. Until the sixties this day was called the »Day of the Flag« (*Tag der Fahne*) and only since 1965 it is a national holiday (*Nationalfeiertag*). It is worth mentioning how the nation is celebrated on this day: There is very little martial brimborium as very often in other countries but relaxing, hiking and sports.

National Anthem: Since post World War II Austria has probably the most peaceable national anthem in Europe. It praises the location, the landscape, the culture and the genius of the people. The music is heavy, similarly to a religious hymn. Actually it is said to be a hymn of the Freemasons from the 18th century. The music of the previous Austrian anthem was by Joseph Haydn and now belongs to the German national anthem.¹⁰

I will not continue the discussion of national ideology here, but there are certainly more elements which would deserve attention: neutrality, the Habsburg heritage, *Mitteleuropa*, cultural superiority, the myth of victimization etc. Most of the latter are more contested today but they are also intellectual artefacts. And this is again a peculiarity of Austrian nationhood: it was only in the 1970s and 1980s when an Austrian minded intellectual elite started to dominate the public discourse. Until then but particularly before World War II and in the 19th century the dominating national ideology was German. Austrians as the »better« Germans. It sounds paradoxical, but when Austrian national ideology the first time became more or less uncontested in the country in the late eighties, historical events began to question the nation as such. The collapse of communism in 1989 brought a great push forward to a supranational Europe: and neutral Austria applied for membership in the European Union.

2. National Institutions

As I advocate a concept of nation for which institutions are constitutive, I must say something about this in the case of Austria. Austria is usually considered as a late nation, but unlike other late nations it had national institutions long before it accepted its own nationhood. The Austrian national assembly (*Nationalrat*) was established in 1918/19 right after World War I. Paradoxically one of the first decisions it made was to declare Austria a part of Germany. Usually national assemblies do the opposite, they declare a country as independent from another country. The *Nationalrat* had a predecessor in the late Monarchy: the *Reichsrat*. Although this was not representing all strata of the population it exercised some control on the government. And at least the *Nationalrat* inherited the representative neoclassic building at the *Ringstraße* in Vienna from the *Reichsrat*. Quite often the names of former Imperial Institutions were changed to »National ...«: *Nationalbank*, *Nationalbibliothek* etc. Two other institutions equally important for a modern nation also go back to the 19th century. It is the Austrian code civil and the core of the constitution which is still valid today. The Austrian code civil (*Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) was one of the first in Europe. It dates from 1811. The core of the constitution (*Staatsgrundgesetz*) which mainly regulates the political rights of the individual is from 1867.

Besides that, many other institutional elements necessary for constituting the nation state, though not characteristic only for the nation state alone, continued to exist from the previous time. Among them most important the structures, values and customs of the state bureaucracy. The military, for example, as part of it, still cultivates the idea of continuity. At least in Central Europe this is quite unusual for nation building (e.g. Germany, Italy). Here typically national identity together with national mobilization emerged in the 19th century, and only then institutions were established. Maybe it was a little different with the classical nations of Western Europe. But though in England and France the nation inherited a more or less strong state its institutions had to be completely remodeled, and also there national ideology preceded to a sig-



11 Cf. Greenfeld 1992.

12 Cf. Bruckmüller, Ernst: Nation Österreich. Wien: Böhlau 1996 and Haller, Max/ Gruber, Stefan: Der Nationalstolz der Österreicher im internationalen Vergleich. In: Haller, M. (Ed.): Identität und Nationalstolz der Österreicher. Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau 1996 (Identity and National Pride of the Austrians), pp. 432-499.

13 About the option of »Austria as a German state« in the 1980s cf. Pelinka, Anton: Zur österreichischen Identität. Wien: Ueberreuter 1996. – Actually, whether or not Austrians feel as Germans significantly depends on how the question is phrased, cf. Ley, Michael/ Gehmacher, Ernst (Eds.): Das Ende des Nationalismus. Wien: WUV 1996, p. 98.

14 Cf. Haller/ Gruber 1996, p. 65.

nificant extent the modern institutions or at least developed simultaneously.¹¹ In the case of Austria modern political institutions emerged not only long before national ideology and national identity but what is even more important they showed strong loyalty to the German nation. This explains to some extent the smooth way in which some of them were taken over by Nazi Germany in 1938 and then later again rather smoothly formed the administrative basis for the Second Republic. Where else the nation building process is usually integrating and enlarging Austria was pushed and broken out. First it was pushed out by Prussia from Germany in 1866 and then it was broken out from the Danubian Monarchy and not permitted to return to Germany in 1918/19. During all this the institutions showed a surprising continuity.

Many of these curiosities in the emergence of national institutions are closely related with the Austrian national identity to which I will turn in the next chapter. It can be said beforehand that until 1918 Austria was a transnational term encompassing at least eleven ethnic groups with more or less strong national desires. Austria was a state of many would-be nations but there was no Austrian nation. Irrespective of this situation an Austrian mindedness existed, which meant an identification with the state institutions and with a certain way of life. This orientation could be found in all ethnic groups. It is difficult to say whether the national identity or the Austrian mindedness were stronger, because the Austria of that time did not fall apart from inside but ended due to a lost war. The remaining Austria of the First Republic instead had national institutions and a clear national identity, but they did not correspond. Whereas the institutions were definitely Austrian, the national identity was German. To speak of a second German state as the elites did is inconclusive, because nations must insist on unity of institutions, identity and ideology. Can anybody imagine French children singing the *Marseillaise* with the text of the *Deutschlandlied* as their national anthem in their schools? In socialist Vienna things like this happened in the thirties. Because the school administration did not like the Austrian anthem, the children were ordered to sing the *Deutschlandlied* to the music of the old Austrian *Kaiserlied*.

3. National Identity

We defined national identity as the empirical distribution of national ideology, institutional identification and conduct in a population. Hence a population, which not any more or not yet shows awareness for national ideology or national institutions, by definition lacks national identity. This does not mean that such a population has no collective identity at all, but just that it cannot be considered as national in the frame of our theoretical approach. From this point of view not every comment of a variable concerning a politically organized people can be interpreted as an indicator for national identity. In every case the association of such responses with ideology and institutions will also have to be considered. To avoid confusions with terms like cultural identity one could also speak of nation-consciousness or nation-oriented conduct instead. For example numerous studies have found out that the Austrian population is very proud of its country.¹² International comparison even shows that in this respect Austria has been among the top ranking countries for many years. This is usually interpreted as »high national pride«. From what was said before such quick conclusions might not be justified. Not only that the wording of the question must be taken into account, but also the relation of the respondent to the concept of nation as such. It is self-evident that one can appreciate a country and its people without considering it as a nation.

The question whether Austrians are a nation or not is actually another variable for which quasi longitudinal data are available. As already mentioned, in the fifties a substantial part of the population still considered Austrians as Germans.¹³ This decreased until 1995 to about 10% whereas those who feel belonging to the Austrian nationality has increased to almost 90%.¹⁴ The statement »Austrians are a nation« has received continuously more approval from 47 per cent in 1964 to 85% in 1995. Though validity and reliability of such questions could be questioned it is without doubt that the term »Austria(n)« today receives wide approval in the population. Though as mentioned before, whether this can be interpreted as a strong national identity can be contested. One could argue that in a time when every state is called a nation such answers do not carry much information. The meaning behind »nation« itself must become an object of study. How do the respondents understand it, and what do they associate with it?



15 Cf. Langer, Josef: Nation – Schwindende Basis für soziale Identität. In: Haller 1996, pp. 327-381

16 Cf. Schelsky, Helmut: Die skeptische Generation Düsseldorf: Diederichs 1957.

3.1. National Identity among 17-19 Years-old Austrians

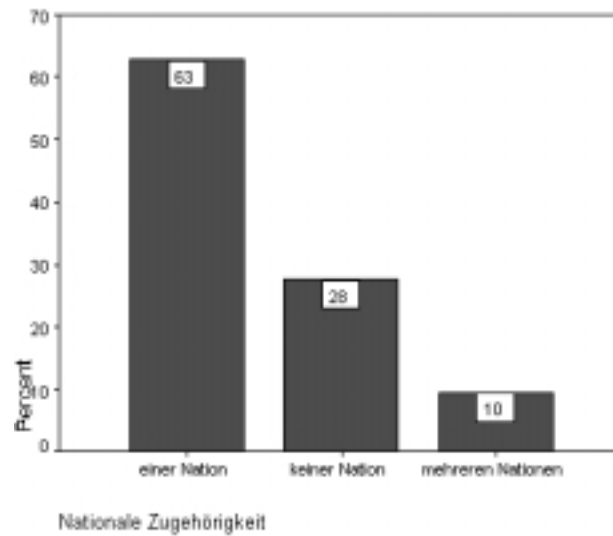
We have argued that pride in citizenship or country is not necessarily a variable of national identity nor is it a sufficient indicator for nation-consciousness. In a study of the age group of 17-19 year-olds in Austria¹⁵, we have therefore applied additional empirical approaches including content analysis of teaching materials, intensive individual and group interviews with representatives of the cohorts as well as expert interviews to get a better understanding of this question. In all these endeavors the most important was to direct the attention not only to the collective consciousness but to the concept of nation in particular. Not to mention that the young generation has long been considered as a good indicator for anticipating the future. To ask this group about its perception of nation should therefore provide some insight into the future of this type of collective identity.

Additionally it is well known that historically nationalism and nation-consciousness had its major protagonists among the young generation. For the present time though the respective genre of studies do not emphasize this topic very much. In the forefront there are usually general life-style characteristics and the specific events which produce communality among age cohorts and mold them to a generation in the sociological sense. Thus we hear in Austria (and Germany) of the ›wartime generation‹ (›*Kriegsgeneration*‹), the ›*Flackhelfer-Generation*‹ (the end of war youth which as a last reserve is kept together by the experience of massive air raids on cities), the ›skeptical generation‹¹⁶ of the fifties and as a kind of antidote to the wartime generations the ›68ers. But it is worth mentioning that the closer one gets to the present, the less the writings about ›generations‹ imply the question of ›nation‹, though sometimes hostile attitudes and behavior towards foreigners are occasionally classified as ›nationalism‹. The term is, for example, frequently ascribed to groups of juveniles (e.g. skinheads) acting violently against foreigners.

The primary data considered here belong to a study of upper secondary and vocational school students (N=262) carried out in 1995 in eastern (Vienna), western (Innsbruck) and southern Austria (Klagenfurt). Information was gathered by questionnaires and group discussions directly with the students, through content analysis of history textbooks and intensive interviews with teachers. Maybe the most significant question in the context of national identity was the one of belonging to a nation. The question was explicit and direct. It did not focus on ›Austria‹ but on the ›nation‹ and not ask if others (the Austrians) were a nation but if the respondent himself felt ›belonging to a nation‹: ›*Do you have the feeling of belonging to a nation?*‹ From those 17-19 year-olds – the ›next generation‹ – who responded to this question (85%), almost one third (29%) indicated that they do not feel they belong to any nation (Figure 1). Only 62% felt they belonged to one nation (predominantly Austrian) and 9% to several nations. In the following we will focus on the *non-nation* oriented youth, because they are most interesting for testing the proposition that Austrians have a low nation-consciousness at the same time as their pride in the country is high.

First of all, the non-nation oriented group does not differ in *gender* distribution from the sample. Male and female have this characteristic with the same likelihood. With respect to social stratification, this orientation is predominant among children of *salaried employees/management* (39%) and *skilled workers* (41%). Among those who come from a *civil servant, professional* or *entrepreneurial* family background, this orientation is much less frequent. Only 17% of the children whose fathers are civil servants are non-nation oriented. One could summarize that the idea of nation is in trouble, particularly with the employed social classes not protected from market competition. Whereas in the milieu of state employees and small business owners it is still adhered to. Does the concept of nation today serve the interests of these groups?

Figure 1



In contrast to this, type of education and region do not comprehensively differentiate the results. Whether the students are from Vienna, Innsbruck or Klagenfurt the distribution of the responses is similar. This also holds for vocational schools and high schools. What does differ is that students from vocational schools significantly more often refuse to answer this question. We don't know whether this is because of a lack of imagination or because of negative feelings. However what we do know is that the nation-oriented students more often have (77%) a distinct cognitive concept of nation than the non-nation oriented (56%). The latter obviously had to answer the question more often from a mere emotional point of view. We will see later that the school seems to play an important role in setting a cognitive map for the development of nation-consciousness, though a cognitive map does not necessarily mean a feeling of belonging to a nation. In our case, many vocational school students do not feel they belong to a nation because with them the whole idea is lacking, whereas high school students give the same answer from a critical evaluation of the concept.

This connection can also be shown with respect to another question: »Are you proud of your country?« The answers correlate with nation-consciousness (Table 1). Though students who are nation oriented more often are »very proud« of Austria (52%) than non-nation oriented students (27%) this is not a one to one relationship. The answers clearly indicate that being proud of a country is not the same as being nation-oriented though it is a collective feeling and there is some correlation. One can refuse or even not know the concept of nation and still be proud of a particular society. Considerable pride in a country and low nation-consciousness is compatible and vice versa. As we have seen before, a high proportion of Austrians have shown great pride in their country in an international survey, the older generation more, the younger less. But from this alone we cannot automatically conclude a high degree of nation-orientation.

Table 1

»Nation-consciousness«
and »proud to be
Austrian«
»Are you proud to be
Austrian?«

	one nation	no nation	several nations	
Pride	%	%	%	
very proud	52	27	36	
somewhat proud	33	36	42	
not very proud	9	20	10	
not proud at all	5	15	10	
N	134	65	19	218
%	100	100	100	

Feeling of belonging to ...

17 Cf. Znaniecki, Florian: *Modern Nationalities*. Westport: Greenwood Pr. 1973, p. 105.

18 Cf. Gellner, Ernest: *Nationalismus und Moderne*. Berlin: Rotbuch 1991, p.95.

19 Cf. Francis, Emerich: *Ethnos and Demos*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1965, p. 95.

20 Cf. Langer 1996, p. 362.

Every collective identity includes feelings towards group symbols. But besides the nation only few collective entities in history have managed to load symbols like the flag, shield, and anthem with strong feelings. Only if that was accomplished these symbols began to make whole societies move in one direction. Do young Austrians still have considerable edifying feelings towards them? If so, the proposition of a declining influence of nation on collective identity would have to be reconsidered. From Table 2 we can see that in particular from the one third of non-nation oriented students, only small proportions admit edifying feelings in connection with national symbols. If the Austrian flag were raised, not more than 18% of this group would show such emotions, and for the army marching out even less (14%). Most of all it is sport events with Austrian teams in international competition that seem to be able to mobilize such feelings (with 68% from nation-oriented and 51% non-nation oriented youth). We can also see that even among those who feel they belong to a nation, the identification with symbols which are constituent (flag, anthem and army) for nation-consciousness is not very frequent. We consider this as support for the proposition of no or at least a low level of nation-consciousness.

Table 2

The acceptance of nation and national symbols

»Do you have edifying feelings at the following occasions ...«

Feeling of belonging to ...

	all	one nation	no nation	several nations
National symbols	(9)	(108)	(138)	(81)
	%	%	%	%
a. When the Austrian flag is raised	32	27	18	47
b. When the president holds a speech	6	7	2	11
c. When Austria athletes win in international competition	62	68	51	58
d. When the army marches out	16	16	14	21
e. When the national anthem is played at events	41	40	27	31
f. I have never had such feelings	16	15	22	11

3.2. Teaching National Identity

As molded in a complex historical process national identity is not easy to influence by rational action. Nevertheless political organizations like governments and parties have always tried to do this. In many countries the state is especially tempted to do so with its influence on the educational system and propaganda. There are examples like the former German Democratic Republic which tried to transform its citizens into to a »socialist nation«. Authors like Znaniecki¹⁷ and Gellner¹⁸ both agree that schools and education are important instruments of the nation state. Similarly, Francis¹⁹ additionally emphasized the function of schools to *standardize* the population. Today one could hold up against this view the impact of the global media which compete with the views of the nation states transmitted by state schools.

For our purpose it is important to find out how the Austrian school system imparts the concept of nation. For this purpose, history *text books* have been analyzed as well as extended interviews with *teachers* carried out. Besides that, the students have been asked to name *heroic times* and important *personalities* in Austria's history. All this should indicate the semantic field in which the development of nation-consciousness is embedded in Austria.

The history curriculum for the age group of 17-19 years-old covers the 19th and the 20th century. Incidentally these are also the high points of nationalism, nation and nation state in Europe. All the more one is surprised how little attention is paid to this phenomenon in the Austrian textbooks and in teaching this phenomenon. First of all, in the vocational schools for apprentices, history is not a subject at all. Instead a kind of social- and institutional study is taught where the topic of nation is completely substituted by information about governmental institutions and the dynamic of social groups in general. In contrast the teaching materials for history in secondary schools (*Gymnasium, Höhere Schule*), which give access to the tertiary educational system, are manifold. Teachers critically indicated that it is difficult to choose, because there is such a variety of documents and other materials. But also here the nation is a minor matter. In the major history textbooks only 4 to 5% of the content is dedicated to the nation²⁰. In content the theme



21 In 1994 two-thirds of Austrians voted for membership of the country in the European Community. In no other country was a similar approval reached. Many reasons have been given to explain this behavior. Most commonly it was attributed to the dishonest advertising campaign of the government or to a kind of longing for unification with Germany. We would rather argue that unlike the Swiss, Austrians were always affiliated with large (imperial) political organizations and prefer this to small units. For their subconscious, the EU is just that what they have been accustomed for most of their past.

is focused on ›nationalism‹ and the ›conflict between nationalities‹ which is suggested to have led to the end of the Habsburg Monarchy. When the emergence of the nation state in Italy, Germany and Poland is discussed, the hidden evaluation is rather negative. For Poland for example, uprisings and the deportation of rebels to Siberia are emphasized, for Italy the increase of social inequality as an outcome of nation building is emphasized, and for Germany the exclusion of Austria. Another message sent to the students is that nation is a difficult and complicated concept. All in all what the students learn about nation is not suitable to raise any enthusiasm or sympathy. From the perspective of the accredited textbooks, Austria does not appear to be a nation, but rather as a timeless mirror in which the events of history are reflected – this is for the high school students. For the apprentices, on the other hand, Austria it is simply a state organization.

The teachers confirm that they have problems with teaching the concept of ›nation‹. To speak about ›our nation‹ is usually avoided. Instead the term ›Austria‹ is favored signifying a long term historical actor. Dominant is not the idea of a collectivity like a *tribe* but rather of *individuals* and *organizations*. In the Austrian historical consciousness the imagination of a tribe (the ›Austrians‹) taking possession of a piece of land which from now on will be its legitimate territory is missing. Instead the first mentioning of the present name of the country in a document about the passing on of a fiefdom from a feudal lord to a vassal²¹ is commemorated.

The answers of the students seem to directly reflect the teaching as described by the teachers and the content of the text books. Asked about which periods of Austria's history one could be proud of the *Second Republic* after 1945 was mentioned in first place and in second place came the Baroque, the war against the Turks and later against Napoleon. Out of about sixty topics spanning 2000 years the students were proud of only two (Viennese Congress and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) that fall into the 19th century. Otherwise that century which at least in Europe was the high point of nationalism hardly exists in the students' collective memory. This result is complemented by answers naming the most important personalities in Austria's history. First and second place go undisputed to Wolfgang A. Mozart and the Empress Maria Theresia, two personalities from the Baroque period. Otherwise among the first ten places are mostly personalities from this century and especially from the time after 1945, among them the former chancellor Bruno Kreisky and the movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger. From the 19th century only the Emperor Franz Joseph was mentioned. Obviously the 19th century, which is so important with respect to nation-building for neighbors like Germany, Italy or Hungary, attracts little attention by the Austrian youth of today. Instead collective identity is gained from the Baroque more than 200 years ago and from the present.

3.3. Alternatives to the Nation?

In his writings Karl W. Deutsch²² (1972) has indicated two possibilities to transcend the nation: 1) to move one level beyond (globalism) or 2) one below (localism). Today the latter is reflected on the one hand in the debates on the new nationalism in post-communist countries, ›small is beautiful‹ and regionalism²³ in the West and fundamentalism in the religious sphere. On the other hand a ›new world order‹ was proclaimed, and more important, we can observe the formation of transnational entities on a macro-regional level. This is accompanied by the emergence of a kind of global culture made possible by a media revolution (i.e. satellite TV, Internet). We assume that these processes irritate and finally will erode the traditional nation-consciousness, especially in societies like Austria where it was only recently consolidating and that on a low level.

In our study we looked at the alternatives to the nation by the way of three indicators: 1) degree of belonging to different levels of society, 2) importance of various social circles and 3) the identification with life-style groups. Whereas other studies²⁴ have shown that the average Austrian has a kind of multiple identity with respect to territorial entities on different levels the 17-19 year-olds seem to behave somehow differently. ›Multiple identity‹ means that persons will identify with their local communities to the same extent as they identify with Austria or even with Europe. With our study this cannot be confirmed for the cohorts of the young. Here in particular the identification with level 2 (city/community) and level 5 (Europe) is low in comparison with level 1

22 Deutsch, Karl W.: Der Nationalismus und seine Alternativen, München: Piper 1972.

23 Cf. Ohmae, Kenichi: The End of the Nation State, New York: Free Press 1996.

24 Cf. Haller/ Gruber 1996, p. 394.



(neighborhood) and level 4 (Austria). From this general pattern the non-nation oriented group deviates significantly in level 4 where only 9 versus 23 per cent of the nation oriented feel strongly attached to Austria. Conclusion: The attachment of the young is lower than that of the average Austrian throughout all territorial levels, also with respect to Europe.

If it comes to the importance of belonging to certain social circles the differences become more pronounced. An overwhelming majority of the students ascribes highest importance (very important) to ›friends‹ and ›family‹ (almost 80%). A second cluster is composed of ›leisure groups‹ and ›school classes‹ (35% and 17%). The lowest percentage of respondents consider ›religious groups‹ (4%), the ›population of the province‹ (3%) and ›all Austrians‹ (8%) as ›very important‹ for them. It is worth noticing that whereas the territory with distinct exceptions (city/Europe) attracts similar attachment on all levels in the view of the young, the importance of social circles dramatically declines with the increase in size which usually is strongly related to a shift from primary to secondary types of relations. Whereas within the frame of territory, ›Austria‹ attracts almost the same attachment as ›neighborhood‹, only a very small group of students consider the ›Austrian people‹ to be an important social circle for them. Here the difference between the nation oriented and the non-nation oriented is less pronounced than in other dimensions of the study. But also in this case the social attachment of the non-nation oriented is more cautious, particularly when it comes to the peers at school. Only 9% of them consider school to be a ›very important‹ social circle (20% with nation-oriented).

Besides these differences in attachment to territory and ascribing importance to social circles we could observe a variety of identifications with contemporary life style groups as well as more conventional associations. The fact that only 30% declared a permanent group affiliation indicates that the majority of the 17-19 year-olds never or only occasionally join groups. Of those who responded to the question three quarters mentioned membership with conventional groups (soccer clubs, fraternities etc.) and one quarter with modern life style groups (skater, techno etc.). With respect to nation-consciousness it was striking that the students unanimously declared that they would rather not wear national costumes to school, though in other social milieus they would do it. This also supports the proposition that Austrian schools today have, mildly speaking, a low profile in producing and supporting nation-consciousness.

In group discussions and intensive interviews, many of the students expressed interest and sympathy for a great variety of life-style categories and affiliations. Names like skater, heavy metal, hip hop, raver, techno, snowborder, skin heads, crunch, new waves, handy types, junkies, biker and so on were mentioned. None of them has anything to do with national integration. They are rather identities offered by *international business* and the *global media*. It also appears that the non-nation oriented young people are especially prone to these kind of offers. The low profile of nation among young Austrians is also indicated in other survey results which for example show that out of 50 popular terms none carries a national orientation. Most of them are even not German but rather rooted in the Anglo-Saxon culture.

25 Cf. Haller/ Gruber 1996.

26 Cf. Brubaker, Rogers: Nationalism reframed - Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1996, p. 18.

4. Conclusions

The Austria of today is not a typical nation, but a society with a strong *Staatsbewusstsein* and considerable *confidence* in its history. The backbone for both are the state institutions. But from this I would not conclude that it is a ›Staatsnation‹ in the theoretical sense. For this Austria is historically too distant from the respective western European models. But that does not make Austria to an Ethnonation either. The empirical indicators produce in both directions confusing results, especially when national identity is concerned.²⁵ Still it would be bold to apply to Austria an understanding of nation as a ›contingent event‹ as recently suggested by Rogers Brubaker²⁶ when discussing the post-communist situation. For this there is too much development and continuity in the Austrian case, however with a closer look the results do not fit clearly in any of the theoretical pictures of nation, nationness, nationalism etc. It seems to me that as a historical phenomenon nation has not fully taken possession of Austria. It was only at the end of the eighties when Austria came the closest to be called a nation as conceptually understood in this contribution. I have argued that this particular status in the process of nation building should make Austria prone for denationalization in the post-89 era, though empirical studies do not show a



clear pattern yet. In part the blurred picture is due to confusing theoretical concepts applied and the methodology. What we can say is that the young generation seems to comprise significant numbers of individuals who do not feel they belong to a nation at all or have no concept of it whatsoever. Instead they not only show high expectation towards European integration but also get increasingly drawn into the segmented, individualized life-style of global culture (consumerism, media, etc.). Though the latter might be even more wide spread in other European societies with more profound metropolitan areas, it is the configuration of low nation-consciousness, the ambivalent and opalescent character of the term ›Austria‹ together with the steamroller of global youth culture which makes accelerated denationalization in this country a likely scenario for the near future.

Concluding we want to point out a number of scenarios for the future. Each of them if getting realized will have different effects on Austrian national identity.

a) The regrouping of the *Bundesstaat* (federation)

aa) Mild version: A new distribution of responsibilities and competencies is negotiated.

Strengthening of provincial authorities is intended. Such negotiations have been going on for years now. Regional identity would benefit.

ab) Strong version: *Bundesländer* (states of the federation) are suggested to be put together (e.g. Styria and Carinthia) especially for saving administrative costs. This would probably negatively effect the regional identity. Examples exist from the Nazi era. The effect on the state level is uncertain. Most likely it would lose influence.

b) Transborder regions

It has even been considered that the institutions of the central states could be completely diluted and replaced by regional transborder structures. The *Bundesländer* would unite with provinces of the neighbouring states and form a new type of political actors in the frame of the European Union. Occasionally such ideas are mentioned in the media, but they have never been more than a *Denkmöglichkeit*.

Those who consider a) and b) assume that the Austrian *cultural identity* will remain even if the national (or state) identity should disappear. Those who advocate b) even expect a strengthening of this identity (Mitteleuropa). Given the strong role of the state in Austria in forming collective identity in general and national identity in particular, this assumption is very doubtful.

c) The German card

Since Austria joined the EU the already strong influence of German capital and German media in the country has further increased. Given the historical peculiarities of Austria it is not completely impossible that in case of a significantly weakened state structure (all power to Brussels) the country could silently be incorporated into Germany. Especially if the rest of Europe as in 1938 loses interest in a separate Austria. One should not forget that a sovereign Austrian republic was originally established against its own will by those who won World War I. This former interest of Western Europe could turn in the opposite direction. Though in this scenario Germany would also have lost sovereignty to the EU, it could well be that this new powerful administration gives Austria up for simplifying its decision making structures.

d) The EU as *Einheitsstaat*

It is not completely impossible that under certain conditions the EU might turn into a totalitarian system. This can be provoked by increasing complexity in the course of continuing enlargements. In this case the central authorities of the EU might decide for structuring the »Empire« according to technical considerations of keeping power. This can lead to an artificial structure of districts as it for example existed in the former German Democratic Republic. The ideology of the nation state could be replaced by an European national ideology or imperial ideology. To understand the latter one would have to look into the ideology of earlier multiethnic empires.

e) Failure of European integration (or globalization)

The scenarios so far assumed a weakening of the national state structures in favour of transnational governance. But it is imaginable that EU integration, respectively globalization, will fail. In



this case the nation state could experience a revival. Similar to the new nations in eastern Europe after the disintegration of the Soviet block this would lead to new chances and opportunities for this phenomenon. For Austria it would not necessarily be the worst case, because it could give a chance for completion of the national project.

Conclusion: More than with the old established nations in Europa the survival of an Austrian national identity depends on the continuation of central state institutions. Otherwise it is imaginable that the term »Austria« will only remain as the name of a *Euroregion* at the Danube between Passau and Vienna, and in the case of scenario d) not even that. But even if the state structures remain in the one or other way the population could quite easily slip into the new emerging identity realities of Europe, simply due to the peculiarities of its nationhood. One of the last from the old European political cultures which reached (almost) the stage of nationhood, Austria could be one of the first who adapts to the new transnational structures, which finally have some resemblance with the past of the country.

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