

## **Understanding the Transatlantic Migration Experience: The Inter-marriage of US-Migrants from Austria-Hungary as an Indicator of Acculturation, 1910 – 1950**

By Annemarie Steidl

Social scientists and historians have developed a rich body of research on transatlantic migration during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but most studies have addressed migration as a phenomenon affecting either individual nation states or individual ethnicities. To overcome the limitations of an ethnic centered historiography and its self-referential evaluations, the comparative approach has served as a valuable purpose. The extensive territory of the multi-ethnic Habsburg Monarchy serves as an excellent case study for such an analysis of differences and similarities of multiple ethnic and socio-cultural groups which migrated to the US from 1870 to 1914.

Inter-marriage is a crucial, probably the crucial, mechanism of ethnic intermingling, and of assimilation. My presentation will contribute to an understanding of this historical process by describing patterns of assertive mate-seeking among migrants from Austria-Hungary, other European migrants and people already born in the US in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ethnicity is a concept that has been used to describe a specific type of group identity that emerges in certain social contexts, and that in different ways expresses the categorization of individual's own notion of belonging to a specific cultural group. In which ways was the concept of ethnicity used by previous studies on inter-marriage and why is it important to get a more detailed picture on ethnic differences?

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## **Measuring the “börtönben nemzetek” (“Prison of Nations”): Census-Counting in the Kingdom of Hungary, 1870-1910, and in the United States, 1870-1920**

By James W. Oberly, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and Visiting Professor, University of Minnesota, 2010-2011

Census-taking and census-reporting became a hallmark of advanced nations in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. After the 1867 compromise that established the Dual Monarchy, the Kingdom of Hungary took responsibility for conducting a decennial census. The censuses of 1870-1880-1890-1900-1910 collected information about each individual in the Kingdom. In addition to basic information about households, such as age, gender, and relationship

within families, the Hungarian census counted nationality, language, and religion. The royal statistical office published summaries of the census results, and although disputed, the 1910 census provided the basis for estimating ethnic groups in the post-Monarchy successor states. By contrast, the U.S. census was very cautious in reporting on nationality, language and religion. From 1870 through 1910, the U.S. maintained its own version of the “prison of nations” by counting the place of birth of immigrants from the Habsburg Monarchy as only “Austrian” or “Hungarian” (or in some years, “Bohemian”). The U.S. did not begin tracking language until 1910, and never did ask individuals their religious confession. A century later, it is easier for scholars to make sense of the ethnic and religious makeup of the Kingdom of Hungary than of the migrants from that kingdom who emigrated to the U.S.

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### **Maintaining South Slav Migrant Groups. The Praxis, 1890ies to 1960ies**

By Wladimir Fischer

Ethnic identities have been treated as a ›given‹ for many decades. This presentation departs from the great *difficulty* of maintaining a group at all, taking South Slav migrant groups from the 1890ies to the 1960ies in the Northeastern United States as an example. Around 1900, migrants from all parts of Europe, including the Austro-Hungarian migrants, proudly showed off their ›nationality‹ in North America. They took part in economy, including banking and publishing, in public life and in discourses. Both on the individual and the organized level, migrant life was transnational and there was ethnic co-(e)ration. After WWI, ethnicity took on the traits of a niche economy although it was still thriving and encompassed large audiences. After WWII, South Slavic ethnic life became a culture on the retreat.

To maintain a group, there must be »engineers« or identity managers who do this and they need a »machinery« (media, discourse, communication). Two concrete examples from Rankin, Pennsylvania and Ely on Minnesota’s Iron Range will illustrate how migrant activists were trying to keep up their groups before WWII.

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