BETWEEN KYIV AND VIENNA: HISTORIES OF PEOPLE, IDEAS, AND OBJECTS IN CIRCULATION AND MOTION

CFP: International Conference, Vienna, 4-7 December 2019

The relationship between Austria and Ukraine has never been static, nor has it been one- or even two-sided. The two countries are linked historically by various, changing, and competing state entities, actors, and visions. While they do not border each other, contemporary Ukraine and Austria have a rich and complex shared history. Throughout the long 19th century, areas of contemporary Ukraine were provinces of the Habsburg Empire. Large parts of the urban fabric of contemporary Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Uzhhorod, as well as smaller towns nearby, were shaped within the larger imperial contexts of Austria, later Austria-Hungary. Imaginary and emotional linkages that hearkened back to this shared past were rediscovered in the late Soviet and post-socialist periods. Yet there is more to the relationship than this nostalgia for Habsburg Galicia: being part of the Austrian monarchy had long-lasting effects. In many ways it was key for establishing connections and circulation throughout the 20th century until today within the space that became part of several states in Central and Eastern Europe, including Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and others. It is precisely these circulations and multilateral connections that the conference aims to explore and highlight.

A decade ago, Ukraine was described as a "laboratory of transnational history,"[i] widening our understanding of what can be included in the history of the state. At the same time, the transnational approach calls not only for national borders to be transcended, but also for the ways of seeing the relationships between other entities to be reconsidered. While much of the conference's attention will be on the (post-)Habsburg space from the 18th century to the present day, we encourage the incorporation of transimperial optics to highlight the dynamics between the Habsburg, Romanov, Ottoman, and German empires. By focusing on people, ideas, and objects and using transnational and transimperial lenses, this conference seeks to explore the ways the local, the European, and the global are imagined and experienced from the perspectives of the space broadly defined as "between Vienna and Kyiv." Thus, within the "Cultural Year Austria-Ukraine 2019", we invite scholars to look at Ukraine and Austria as a process, as a broader space that includes and goes beyond the two present-day countries.

This interdisciplinary conference, part of the "Cultural Year Austria-Ukraine 2019", uses the lens of circulation and motion to explore both contemporary and historical influences of the two cultures and societies on each other. At the same time, Austria and Ukraine do not exist in a vacuum – and, indeed, did not exist in their present form for the vast majority of their mutual history. The conference therefore seeks to move beyond simple considerations of direct, bilateral relations between two states and instead integrate their history into the broader history of Europe and the world. When thinking about issues of circulation, motion, and interaction, three themes emerge: people, ideas, and objects.

Human mobility has long been a crucial factor that defined the development of the area between contemporary Ukraine and Austria, dating back to the late 18th century, when the first cohort of Habsburg bureaucrats arrived in a city that would increasingly come to be called Lemberg. This was part of a period when it seemed the whole continent was on the move: indeed, the entire world was both geographically and conceptually in motion. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Vienna became a destination for upward mobility, with the integration of large swathes of territory. It was a multigenerational phenomenon, as families moved from regional towns to provincial cities to the imperial capital. The city was a center of power, both political and economic, attracting those who had power and those who aspired to it. it was a destination for students, members of parliament, businessmen, and aristocrats; for those who already had means and for those whom changing place offered a means to advance – or even just to survive.

For example, as a center of learning, Vienna attracted young people from the province of Galicia to study. It was a site to produce knowledge to sustain and develop empire, while also furthering individual careers. But it also became a hotbed of new thought: university graduates in Vienna and across Europe forged new ideologies and movements, created intellectual and political circles, and took these ideas and practices home. Many who set up their life in this context developed it further to become founding and crucial members of new states, from Italy to the Soviet Union, from Germany to Albania. Those who engaged in the Polish and Ukrainian visions for the future in the 20th century shared formative experiences in the imperial capital.

But this movement towards Vienna was not unidirectional: as a capital, it enabled circulation, a waypoint for multiple routes and choices as people crisscrossed the empire and the broader world. Vienna became a transitory point, a stop on the way for people in search of a better life. They came not only from the lands of the Habsburg Empire but from further afield: whether from the borderlands between the Ottoman and Habsburg realms or from the southern provinces of the Romanov Empire.

If in the Habsburg era motion was limited by an individual's means and desires, in the post-imperial space movement became qualitatively different, now controlled much more by the state. Governments limited movement, and in many cases essentially blocked it, while never fully stopping it. New nation states introduced passports, controlling belonging and regulating mobility. By the 1930s new visions had gone radically further, selecting groups and displacing them. During the Second World War, movement merged with disappearance – for example, the 1944 transport from Budapest that took Jewish inhabitants to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In occupied Lviv, Stalag 328 was the final site in the lives of captured soldiers from the Red Army and the French military, but also of Italian soldiers after Italy's capitulation.

The postwar order brought changes to borders, and walls both literal and imaginary served to fence both sides off from each other. Even if they left options for crossings, the boundaries existed and defined the possibilities of connections.

The expectation of a wall-less world was perhaps most palpable as the border fence between Hungary and Austria was dismantled in spring 1989. The vision and politics of Europe became larger and more inclusive. Yet as we see today, in the 21st century the external borders of the

EU determine the patterns and dynamics of continental and even intercontinental movement, as well as individuals' agency in their own destiny.

Now, in a more general sense, in a conversation between an EU country and a country just outside its borders, we are well-suited to reflect on mobility as one of the major challenges that is facing society. Ukraine is dealing with massive internal displacement as a result of the war in the Donbas and the Russian annexation of Crimea; but the state is also confronted with problems of emigration that are shared among much of Eastern Europe. What happens when millions of people leave, more or less permanently, for opportunities abroad? Meanwhile, Austrian political discourse is dominated by anxieties over the scope of freedom and the price of safety.

The circulation of ideas differs from human mobility as ideas are often perceived as placeless and bodiless. But of course they are embedded in specific contexts, developed, articulated, and shared by particular people, whether their names are known to us or not. The period and space at the center of this conference's attention are particularly fruitful and creative. The multilingual, multinational patchwork of Austria-Hungary mixed experiences and ideas, but it ended in the unmixing of people. Here we can find examples to help us tell a global history of ideas that are saturated with optimism and an expectation of progress, but there is also a darker history that must be considered, one of the consequences and price of ideas.

For the period considered by this conference, one of the crucial challenges was how to respond to and manage differences and diversity, both cultural and social, within the realities of and ideas about states, societies and individuals. If we look at these approaches to diversity through the lens of an age of questions, as suggested by Holly Case, we can argue that the large questions of the 19th century were experienced with particular intensity among the societies and people of the Habsburg, Romanov, and Ottoman empires, and their legacies have persisted to this day.[ii] In this region, ideas were concentrated and experimented with. These ideas took shape on spectrums between the coexistence of as many people as possible and exclusionary ideologies; the utmost value of the individual and the predominance of the collective; visions of emancipation and totalitarianism; party pluralism and a party-state system; progress and despair; openness and danger; evolution and revolution; the desire for change and longing for preservation.

Ideas are never purely fixed to these poles; to see their dynamics and hybridity, therefore, we must bring them to the places where they emerge and the people who shape and circulate them. There are many examples, but three cases taken together can help recalibrate our spatial and temporal optics for the region.

Born in Sambir, in the easternmost province of Austria-Hungary, Les Kurbas traveled to study in the capital of Vienna. He was an ambitious experimenter in theater and the arts, who put his ideas on stage in revolutionary Kyiv and Kharkiv as the capital of Soviet Ukraine; he was ultimately shot in the forests of Karelia. His artistic explorations urged cultural and social emancipation, and his ideas about the power of culture probed the link between art and the state. His life and work refine our understanding of the relationship between center and periphery and interrogate the role of cultural diversity in radical transformation.[iii]

Where Kurbas's life highlights cultural diversity, the story of Hersch Lauterpacht shows us the flip side of diversity, when the inability to live with it leads to the destruction of human lives. Lauterpacht was also a child of Galicia, who traveled to Vienna to study law. But if Kurbas looped back, Lauterpacht continued westward, making a spectacular legal career for himself in Britain and contributing to the European Convention on Human Rights in the 1950s. His insistence on the importance of defining crimes against humanity ran counter to the concept of genocide advanced by Rafael Lemkin, a lawyer affiliated with the university of Lwów in the 1920s. Their shared experience of growing up in imperial settings, maturing professionally in post-imperial states, and losing families in the Holocaust led to very different concepts and answers to the question of who should be protected, the individual or the group. This question of how to balance the rights of individuals and groups remains pertinent today.[iv]

The last case brings the spatial dimension of ideas to the forefront and highlights the importance of the social. Recovering from the First World War and revolution put the issue of overcoming social difference and building a more just society at the top of the agenda across Europe, be it in social democratic Vienna or socialist Kharkiv. Considering these two cities together is fruitful not only for comparison, but also to understand the ways ideas circulate, take hold, and are implemented in specific places. Their individual manifestations might have diverged wildly, but at the core were similar concerns over injustice and a willingness to experiment with new social practices and orders.

Taken together, these three examples bring to light several questions in the way we approach the circulation of ideas. Where are ideas created and how are they set in motion? How is experience translated into concepts, and how do concepts have the power to shape experience? Do ideas have power in themselves, or from where do they derive their power? Who bears responsibility for the consequences of ideas, and how are their costs distributed? How can we grasp the contexts in which ideas are articulated and spread, but also how they go unnoticed or are forgotten and then rediscovered?

The ethereality of ideas stands in contrast to the stark materiality of objects, goods and resources. It may be easier for ideas to flow, but the circulation of goods is tangible and its impact on societies and the environment is direct. Centering our focus on goods, material objects, and resources can help to revisit the relations and hierarchies between places and people.

The distribution of natural resources is preconditioned, a given, but their exploitation and distribution vary: who controls them, who benefits from them? For example, the early excavation of oil near Drohobych dramatically changed the life of the city, transformed economic relations in the province, shaped the empire, and contributed to the geopolitical story of the energy balance of power.[v] The site of extraction has long been exhausted, but the central question of energy resources continues to shape Ukrainian-Austrian relations today.

Another topic that remains prevalent is human trafficking: while public opinion treats it as a more recent development, white slavery was in fact a widespread public concern throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire and beyond, showing the trans-imperial and global networks of moving people as a commodity. Cities where combating trafficking was highly prevalent in local administrative concerns included Czernowitz and Trieste.[vi] White slavery is at the core of Ivan Franko's 1900 novel "Crossing Paths."

The movement of capital brings distant places together, in bank accounts, investment portfolios, intergovernmental agreements, the incorporating documents of shell companies, or purchased property. But how to measure the benefits and impacts? A disembodied click on an online bank account can profoundly impact a distant place and people. Austrian investment in Ukraine has played a crucial role in Ukraine's economy. At the same time, in the streets and courtrooms of Vienna we might glimpse evidence of the imbalances and problems of Ukraine's economic and political transformation.

People, ideas, and objects are of course inextricably linked. Such entanglements are exemplified by the story that began with the decision of count Józef Maximilian Ossoliński to establish an institution in Lemberg. A prefect of the Imperial library in Vienna with family roots in pre-Austria, he took the ideas of enlightenment to a city he never set foot in. His collection of art and books was moved to establish and develop the first public library in Galicia. Reflecting the changing nature of the idea of the nation and the public, the Ossolineum became crucial to advancing the Polish case for statehood, an interwar bastion of Polish culture in the multinational city. The war and the change of borders cut through the building, its holdings and staff. The building was bombed, the Dürer drawings in its collection were stolen by the Nazis and never recovered, and finally the entire collection was split between Soviet Lviv and Polish Wrocław. Efforts are ongoing to bring the collection together in digital form, but this is only one piece of reassembling the multitude of connections and meanings that this collection represents for the past two centuries of entangled relations between states including Poland, Austria, and Ukraine.

Keeping this as a tentative and overarching story, we invite scholars to propose contributions that explore questions related to the concept of circulation and motion in the region broadly defined (for the purposes of this conference) as “between Kyiv and Vienna” by looking at thematics that include but are not limited to:

- People:
    - professionalization and criminalization of mobility: labor, services, legal frameworks, and technology;
    - associations, groups, circles, milieus and the circulation of ideas, objects, and people;
    - (in)visibility of movement and travel: hierarchies and representations, personal agency and encounters;
    - creativity, dissent, and relations with the state: manifesting loyalties, belonging, neutrality;
    - diversity and coexistence: conceptualizing, negating, remembering;

- Ideas:
    - knowledge, science, scholarship and the transnational and international flow of ideas;
    - intellectual and cultural experiments: texts, artefacts, artworks, artists, production;
    - social and cultural context of science, knowledge production, dissemination, and appropriation and the technologies and hierarchies of access and knowledge;

- ideas and agencies of change and transformation: reforms, revolutions, and transitions;
- improving the place, improving the world: ideas, their contexts and consequences;

- Objects:
  - discovery, distribution, management and exploitation of goods, resources, and capital;
  - living from and living with the environment: practices of recognition and using;
  - environmental and technological advances and failures;
  - inheriting and heritage: restitution, recognition, claims, awareness, cooperation;

- Space:
  - defining and defying borders, divisions, and divides (imperial, state, post-war, Cold War, EU);
  - notions of spaces for movements and interaction: Central Europe, East-Central Europe, Eastern Europe, borderlands, "neighbors," "bloodlands," zones, in-between spaces;

- Time:
  - post-moments (post-imperial, post-war, post 1989/91): ruptures and continuities;
  - neglect, erasure, legacies, and presence after ruptures and disappearance;
  - impact of war and radical violence on the circulation and motion of people, ideas and objects.

To Apply
Please submit your paper proposal, including title and abstract (max. 250 words), and a CV to austriaukraineconf2019@iwm.at by 5 August 2019.

We encourage submissions from advanced graduate students and early-career academics as well as established scholars.

Practical Information
The working language of the conference is English. Presenters are expected to submit a paper of 3000-4000 words by 15 November 2019. Conference organizers will cover travel costs and accommodations; most meals will also be provided.

Conference Background
This conference takes place within the framework of the "Cultural Year Austria-Ukraine", running throughout 2019 at the initiative of the foreign ministries of Austria and Ukraine. (For more, visit austriaukraine2019.com.) It is co-organized by the Ukrainian Institute (Kyiv), the Institute for Human Sciences/Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen (IWM; Vienna), and the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe (Lviv), in partnership with the Jerzy Giedroyc Centre for Polish and European Studies at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (Kyiv) and the Department of History of Central European University (Budapest).

Important Dates
Proposal submission deadline: 5 August 2019
Notification of acceptance: by 1 September 2019
Paper submission deadline: 15 November 2019

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[i] Philipp Ther and Georgiy Kasianov, eds., *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography* (CEU Press, 2009).
[ii] Holly Case, *The Age of Questions Or, A First Attempt at an Aggregate History of the Eastern, Social, Woman, American, Jewish, Polish, Bullion, Tuberculosis, and Many Other Questions over the Nineteenth Century, and Beyond* (Princeton University Press, 2018).
[iii] Mayhill C. Fowler, *Beau Monde on Empire's Edge: State and Stage in Soviet Ukraine* (Toronto University Press, 2017).
[iv] Philippe Sands, *East-West Street: On the Origins of "Genocide" and "Crimes against Humanity"* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2016).
[v] Alison Frank, *Oil Empire: Visions of Prosperity in Austrian Galicia* (Harvard University Press, 2005).
[vi] Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Devil's Chain: Prostitution and Social Control in Partitioned Poland* (Cornell University Press, 2015); Nancy Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford University Press, 2017).