Summary

The objective of this book is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to answer the following questions: Why is it that most mainstream historiographies remain informed and determined by national/nationalist ideologies in some important aspects? Why do "national histories" seem to be so right and natural? Why is it that the substantial part of theorising about nationalism remains informed by objectivist concepts of the nation and what are the consequences of this? Secondly, considering the answers to the above questions, this book offers a possible alternative approach to the historical study of nationalism based on a re-evaluation of the epistemological foundations of traditional history, broadening its methodological corpus by incorporating analytical approaches used in the social sciences and by introducing the social psychological theory of social representations into the interpretations of historians.

At the core of every nationalist ideology there is the story of "the nations'" journey through history towards its ultimate self-realisation, usually in the form of a sovereign state. Professional historians, at certain points, legitimated this viewpoint of the past and elaborated the "true" history of their "nations" within a nationalist narrative which championed the emergence of nation states. Nationalist historiographies often openly and deliberately serve the ideological purposes of nationalisms but, even if this is not the case, at least they help to create, maintain and reinforce the idea that "nations" are objective entities and consist of natural groupings of people – the existence of which is given and independent of human agency. However, this explicit nationalism is not examined primarily in this book. In my opinion there is no need to add to the already great amount of critical reflections on the role traditional nationalist historians play in producing and reproducing the ideology and social practice of nationalism. I am more interested in the ways and mechanisms involved in the *objectification* of the category of nation and *essentialising* the category of nationality (ethnicity), which can also be observed in the writings of those historians who are not explicitly or consciously nationalist and whose primary objective is not to write *national histories*. In this book I attempt to explain the phenomenon occurring when even narratives written by historians, who attempt to follow one or another tradition of social constructionism remain within the conceptual framework of nationalist ideology in some important aspects, without those historians' conscious agency.

To understand this, I begin with an examination of the epistemological and methodological foundations of traditional historiographies as they developed during the early 19th century. Furthermore, in the second chapter I investigate some of the underlying cognitive practices that are behind human apprehensions of the social world, particularly *psychological essentialism* and the *objectification* (*reification*) of social categories, both of which are easily identifiable in naïve conceptions of "nation". I suggest that the epistemology of traditional historiographies is necessarily influenced by essentialist and objectifying thinking. To get these modalities of cognition under control – modalities that are hindering the possibility of attaining critical knowledge – it is necessary to adopt certain methodological measures; particularly and above all, by designing and using an analytical vocabulary for the work of interpretation. That is, clearly distinguishing between the categories and terminology functioning in the social practice of everyday life (past and present) and the analytical terminology used by the historian when interpreting social phenomena. The naïve understandings of 'the ordinary man' about social reality and the meanings about it conveyed through everyday language should not be taken for granted as critical reflections on the realities of social existence. Such naïve knowledge – following Bourdieu – should rather be considered as a part of social phenomena in itself. It is characteristic of 'commonsense' knowledge about the social world that it tends to categorise people into groups and treat these groups as if they were things or objects. This tendency is also more than apparent in traditional national and nationalist historiographies. It is one of the main assertions of this book that the historian, the analyst, when studying the social phenomena of the past should be wary about the way he/she thinks and speaks about "nation(s)" and related social categories and socio-psychological phenomena. Historians should be careful not to conflate an idea of an objective entity with an objective entity, careful not to think about things where there are in fact processes of identification, attribution and relation, and avoid thinking about stability and inherency where there is in fact "fluidity" and contingency. I demonstrate that these are common fallacies within not only folk perceptions of social reality but also mainstream traditional and national/nationalist historiography.

The third chapter outlines the possibilities for employing the theory of *social representations* developed by the social psychologist Serge Moscovici in combination with the very similar theoretical approach masterfully used by Roger Chartier, the famous French historian and prominent member of the *Annales* and *New Cultural History* schools of history. Both of these theoretical approaches diverge from the

Durkheimian theory of *collective representations*. I suggest that a consequent application of both of the above mentioned authors' theories of social representations would have radical consequences for the epistemological grounding of historical research into nationalism; it would help to prevent the fallacies of essentialism and objectification in thought about "state", "nation", "ethnicity" and "identity".

The final chapter is an empirical demonstration of some of the theories presented in this book. I analyse the changes in social representations of the Slovak speaking population of the north-western part of the Hungarian Kingdom in late 19th century Hungarian/Magyar nationalist discourses. The focus is on the period after the 1867 *Ausgleich* with particular attention given to the years of World War I. The study is based on the analyses of five Magyar regional newspapers (distributed in mainly Slovak inhabited areas). I explore the usage of social categories ("people/folk", "nationality", "nation") and stereotypes as they were utilized in social representations of the Slovaks. I follow how seemingly subtle changes within the predominant Hungarian/Magyar nationalist ideology of the "Hungarian (political) nation" and particular directions in domestic policy and events abroad influenced, and in fact changed, the way in which the Slovak population was represented. The discourse analyses in connection with the theories of social representations that are applied in this case study proved to be a very effective approach to studying the various facets of the social functioning of nationalism.

Two specifications need to be made clear before continuing. Firstly, about the particular historiographies discussed; secondly, about the concept of nation as it functions in the areas of East-Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. This book was originally written as a doctoral thesis at the Institute of History of The Slovak Academy of Sciences and as such it sought to address primarily Slovak and perhaps other "post-communist" historiographies within this region of East-Central Europe. The critique of traditional and national/nationalist historiography was exemplified by references to mostly Slovak and partly Hungarian authors, similarly to the examples from history used in my argumentation which were primarily drawn from the history of the former Hungarian Kingdom during the 19th and 20th centuries and set in the region in which Slovakia (as part of Czechoslovakia), Hungary in its present day frontiers, and some other states were established during the years 1918-1920. Likewise the concept of nation examined critically is to be found primarily in Slovak, Hungarian, and other national/nationalist historiographies of East-Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe (including historiographies from the territories of the former USSR).

It is exceedingly difficult to arrive at a satisfactory definition of the "nation" going beyond the general statement that it is a social category. To avoid possible misunderstandings it is important to understand certain important differences between East-Central, South-Eastern and Eastern European usage of the term and concept of nation on one side and the Anglophone countries on the other. The term "nation" in this work – if not indicated otherwise – is used to refer to the pre-dominant concept of the "nation" as it has been reproduced in East-Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe since the 19th century. To clarify this, what follows is not my concept of nation but an outline of how common people (and many historians with them) understand the term nation. Indeed, to criticise this kind of folk understanding of the "nation" in scholarly historical research and writing is a main theme of this book. According to this concept "nation" is an ethno-cultural community defined by descent, language, culture, customs, history, territory and other criteria (e.g. religion) depending on particular cases but not necessarily by the borders of a state. A "nation" in this understanding can stretch over the territories and borders of several states, or, within the borders of one state there could be more than just one "nation". Very important in this respect is the idea of national territory, that is, a territory perceived as the natural (or God-given) and inalienable property of the "nation". As Ernest Gellner so rightly pointed out it is indeed the ultimate goal of nationalists to achieve a total overlap of the supposed national territory with the territory of the state (the state itself being considered to be a property of a "free nation"). However, according to the concept of nation described here, it is not the borders of the state that define the "nation" in the first instance – in fact, there is no direct ontological relation between the "nation" and the "state".

Thus the word nation in East-Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe does not have any connection to the notion of citizenship in the sense it is used in English. Similarly, the word *nationality* does not refer to the notion of being a citizen of a state, but to the membership of an ethno-cultural community (i.e. "nation") by birth or assimilation. In other words, nationality is seen as an essential property of a person but not a juridical and political category of citizenship. To make things even more confusing the word *nationality* also has a second meaning: it denotes a group of people linked by descent and culture, that is, something that could be likened to Anthony D. Smith's *ethnies*. In fact in Slavic, Hungarian, Romanian and other Eastern European languages the word nationality is today sometimes used as a synonym for "ethnic group". However, it is important to understand this meaning of the word in connection to the above outlined concept of nation: *nationality* (nationalit*ies* in

plural) could then be described as a “lesser nation”, or a potential, yet-to-be “nation”. Indeed it is very difficult to pin-down a precise meaning of this (second) concept of *nationality*; in everyday discursive practice its meanings are strongly contingent and context dependent. It is also important to note that the importance and potency of this concept was much greater in the 19th and 20th centuries than today.

People having the above outlined understanding of nation (and nationality) also tend to believe that just as every individual “has” a “nationality” (i.e. a personal trait stemming from the “quality” of belonging to a “nation”) so humanity is essentially national in character (i.e. naturally and since ancient times divided into “nations”). This concept of nation can be identified as the dominant one in the later 19th and 20th centuries’ discourses of the regions of East-Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe and seems to remain the underlying concept of nation used in the social practice in the 21st century as well. As I have already said, it is also to be found in the discourses maintained by national and nationalist historians in these regions.

This short sketch could, in many ways, relate to the theories of E. Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Michael Billing and others and rightly so [I would like to highlight especially Clifford Geertz’s thoughts on primordial sentiments as particularly enlightening though often misunderstood]. An informed reader would, however, even before recognising the theories of these authors, probably immediately find an association with the famous western *vs.* eastern nationalisms dichotomy of Hans Kohn. Deliberately I did not refer to this dual classification because I found it flawed and based on mistaken assumptions, as have many others. The problem with most of the typologies of nationalism is that they are based on ideal types usually derived from the theoretical treatises of nationalist intellectuals, legal norms or political programs, speeches or statements – as such they fail to account for the day-to-day functioning of the phenomenon of nationalism among individual social actors. I wish to emphasise precisely this social psychological dimension of nationalism. From the social psychological point of view nationalism (or ethnonationalism) and racism are variations of the same “branch” of social cognition; they incorporate the same underlying thinking about humans, human groups and categories. Thus, with certain simplifications it can be stated, that the above sketched East-Central, South-Eastern and Eastern European concept of the nation is not compatible with the idea of the nation in English speaking countries, notably the United States of America. In its meaning it is much more akin to the concepts of *ethnicity* and/or *race* as they function in the United States and the United Kingdom than to that of the nation.

Finally, when I discuss *national/nationalist historians* or *historiographies* I have in mind historians who write the histories of their (or other) "nations" (as described above). In East-Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe the "nation" remains a very important frame of reference with (and through) which people identify themselves and others. Another distinction between *national* and *nationalist* historians/historiographies is made specifically for the purposes of my argumentation in this work. By the latter I designate those historians who openly pursue a nationalist ideology in their writings; those who consider it to be the fundamental purpose of history writing to write the history of the "nation". They consider any other possible goal or motivation for the critical study of the past to be secondary. In fact this kind of history writing preoccupies itself with a systematic production (or reproduction in many cases) of stories apt for *national self-* and *other-* identifications. The historians whom I categorise as *national* on the other hand distance themselves from nationalist perspectives and are usually critical of nationalist historians. It is not unusual to discover that these historians subscribe to one or another kind of analytical or even interdisciplinary approach to historical research and interpretation. Yet I call them *national* because they consider the "nation" and (nation) state a proper "unit" of historical analyses and (as I will demonstrate later) often objectify (reify) the category of nation and treat "nationality" (ethnicity) or "national identity" in essentialist ways as objective givens.

I

In the first chapter I investigate the reasons why traditional historiographies are so rigidly stuck to the narrative as a form of interpretation and to the "nation" (and nation state) as a structuring frame (or better, the only structuring frame considered to be valid) for historical writing. My reasoning departs from the classic six-point critique proposed by Peter Burke [1991, p. 3-6], which points out the limitations of traditional historiographies, as contrasted to analytical interdisciplinary fields and/or schools of historiography: Traditional historiographies are essentially concerned with politics, thus with histories of the state, institutions and organizations. These are seen to be "emanations" of "nations" and are equally prerequisites and consequences of their pre-supposed existence. This necessarily has an impact on the heuristics and the range of sources which are deemed to be reliable and worthy of the historian's attention. Thus there is a hierarchy of suitable sources, the most valid being documents, official records and government archives

etc. Traditional historians largely ignore social phenomena in their interpretations; they construct their narratives as linear continuations of acts of sovereignly acting individual historical actors (usually great and mighty men: rulers, politicians, generals, high clergy, nobles etc. – who are seen as representatives of their "nations" or yet-to-be-nations or fighters for "national freedom", etc.) only rarely taking into account natural, structural, and supra-individual – that is, broadly speaking – social factors and determinants. Finally and most importantly, traditional historians tend to think that past events and phenomena have an objective truth, that there is only one true objective finding expressed in the form of a narrative; if the historian is competent enough and has enough sources at his/her disposal this truth is, in principle, discoverable. This concept of "objective history" – the ultimate true story of "how it actually happened" – either explicitly believed and declared consciously (although progressively to a lesser and lesser extent) or implied in the text manifesting itself in the ways the historian constructs his/her narrative and develops his/her reasoning – constitutes the very foundations of the traditional historians' epistemology. Traditional historians believe that *the past* (what once happened and is gone) and *history* (sum of accounts, narrative representations of the past) are in a directly mirroring relationship to each other. That is *history* is, at least in principle, the true description of *the past*.

The second very important point about traditional historiography's epistemological foundations that must be stressed here concerns the *form* and *language* employed. For almost half a century there has been a great amount of discussion on these issues within the theory and philosophy of history. Within this discussion the argument is voiced that traditional historians hold a very similar logic on history to that which common people have. Traditional historians think about the past as a causally interconnected chronological sequence of events. Just as the common people in our civilisation, they perceive a deep continuity with the past ending in the present moment. This is probably one of the main reasons why people tend to think about history in terms of having (possessing) it, or owning it. Expressions like "*our history*" or "*their history*" designating the collective possession of history – most often by the "nation" – are ruled precisely by this sense of a deep continuity between the past and present. Thus it comes as no surprise to discover traditional historians using *common language* in their narrative representations of the past and, as a consequence of this, they also often adopt the concepts and understandings of *folk sociology* communicated through common language (*folk sociology*: the ideas of common people about social reality, or so-called *common sense knowledge* if you prefer).

Developing on these general observations I have concluded that the reason traditional historiographies are exclusively narrative, inherently national (and/or nationalist) and reluctant to research the social and cultural phenomena of past societies (to think about past people as equally *products*, *producers* and *reproducers* of their social and cultural systems or environments) and critically utilise the theoretical and empirical knowledge from other disciplines of the social sciences and humanities (notably sociology, anthropology, psychology, geography and literature studies) is to be found in the epistemological foundations and restricted methodology of professional traditional historiography as it has developed since the 1820s-30s. It is also largely due to the metaphysical idea that there is a definitive truth discoverable in the past (i.e. history as a narrative description of "how things actually happened") that traditional historiography sealed itself off from some of the principal methodological approaches used in the social sciences. Since Ranke mainstream historiography followed the very same basic tenets about the nature of historical knowledge and the "scientific" methods of obtaining that knowledge. The main consequence of this was a fundamental reluctance to apply social theories to the work of historical interpretations. Theories generalise, they presuppose and identify particular general conditions while, according to Ranke and traditionalist historians, history (the past) consists of a series of unique events and deeds of men: in other words history is about *particulars*. It must be noted though that this denial of the relevance of social theories for history writing – be they theories about society, psychological, economic or political theories – was originally a self-consciously held and philosophically informed epistemological stance. However, in many places this evolved into institutionalised ignorance of social theories and their analytical application in historical interpretations.

Marxist theory is the most cited example of the faults resulting from applications of theory to history writing. In this case the principal doubts about the correctness of theories in historical interpretations (as being generalising) were supplemented by strong accusations of an ideologisation of history. Of course, this was a critique taken up by traditional historians stemming from their theoretical position of belief in the existence of non-ideological "objective history"; history written by them. In a bizarre twist of irony this naïve realist ontological and epistemological position was precisely the same as that held by "Marxist" or "Marxist-Leninist historians" in the countries of the Communist bloc. They believed, or at least declared, that Marx's (and Lenin's) theory of class struggle as the propelling momentum of history was not merely a theory but a true description of a concrete reality, contrary to the

ideologically flawed history written by the “bourgeois” and “imperialist” historians of the capitalist West. It is also very important to note that in both the communist as well as non-communist traditional and national/nationalist historiographies the categories of *nation* and *nationality* functioned in the same way on the level of social cognition, i.e. essentialistically and objectifyingly. In addition, we can observe that just as the “Marxist-Leninist historians” from the Communist bloc objectified and essentialised the “nation” and “nationality” so did they social “class”. Thus, “Marxist-Leninist historiographies” continued with traditional Rankean objectivist epistemology and a great number of historians in “post-socialist historiographies” continue to do the same.

I argue that it is precisely within the domain of the epistemological foundations and methodology where we can seek the answers as to why history writing remains to such an extent national/nationalist and informed by national ideologies and naïve understandings of social phenomena. Yet again it is the domain of the epistemological foundations and methodology where we can prepare the ground for properly analytical and trans-disciplinary historiography.

II

In accordance with a social constructionist approach I consider traditional historiographies’ metaphysical objectivism untenable. Instead of the ideal of seeking the “ultimate truth” we should think about historical interpretations in terms of their validity (or invalidity) in relation to the data derived from the sources but also – and equally importantly – in relation to the relevant theoretical and empirical knowledge of the social sciences and humanities about the behaviour of and the social and mental world of humans. Such a shift in epistemology would enable us to work systematically with the theoretical knowledge of other disciplines applicable to historical research. Of course, this has been happening for some time; there are well-established historical schools working with various kinds of critical social theories. In the past few decades even some traditional historians, from time to time, allude to some constructivist theories about the construction of identities, collective memories and so on. Nevertheless this rarely goes beyond anything more than repeating clichéd constructivist formulae because of epistemological and methodological incompatibilities. The traditional historical method comprises of well-established, complex techniques of heuristics and source criticism but leaves the very person of the historian completely outside its impact. The rules used in historical research to regulate

how we achieve critical knowledge about the past comprise the idealist requirement of the *historian's objectivity* but they do not determine how to be objective (even if we forget about the untenable metaphysical connotations of this objectivity, we are still left with nothing but a declared ideal).

One of the major rules of sociology established by the early great minds of the discipline, Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, is about the distance of the researcher from the object of his/her enquiries, which in fact means distance from the social environment in which he/she is living and particular social phenomena in which he/she participates. One of the important means of achieving such distance is the use of analytical language carefully designed by the researcher in order to evade the meanings of everyday language and the naïve (folk) understandings of social participants. Traditional historians usually accept this, however in turn, they also argue that this is a proper measure for social scientists since they study the present but it is pointless for historians because they study the past which, since it has already happened, cannot exert any formative (deforming) influence on the researcher. This is precisely where traditional historians miss the point. Historians function in the same present social reality as social scientists; they are under the same social influences and constraints as social scientists. It should be as vital for historians to detach themselves from the everyday language and naïve understandings of the common man as it is for social scientists. In fact, it should be even more important because *history* (understood here as narrative representations of the past) plays an important role in a multitude of present day social phenomena.

Research into the past should begin with a consideration of the conditions of the present. Thus when dealing with the social phenomena of the past, I argue that we should do so through a proper analytical terminological apparatus and a consequential use of critical social theories. Of course, Durkheim's *positivist rationale* of achieving or uncovering "objective knowledge" through the use of analytical language is just as untenable as the Rankean idea of "objective history". Nevertheless, the purpose of analytical terminology remains the same: to accurately conceptualise the social phenomena under research and to minimise the constitutive impact of naïve concepts and categories on the processes of research and interpretation.

In this respect two cognitive practices which structure our thinking and talking about the social world can be identified as dangerous for the social sciences and humanities: *psychological essentialism* and *objectification* or *reification* (both terms are commonly used in the discourses of the social sciences and humanities and roughly

refer to the same phenomenon of cognition. The first is central to the *theory of social representations* as elaborated by the social psychologist Serge Moscovici [1988, 2001], whilst the second is often mentioned in connection with the influential work of social scientists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann [1966]). *Psychological essentialism* is a cognitive predisposition universal to all humans. It supposes that entities of a certain kind share essential (inborn) features which make them one of their kinds. This concerns, in fact, almost every thing in the world people cognise about and applies equally to entities of an inanimate nature and to the living and also equally to animals and humans. There is a set of very complex theories developed by cognitive and social psychologists and anthropologists – and supported by research – which explain the general principles and functioning of psychological essentialism. For our purposes it is enough to concentrate on the essentialist thinking of people about the social world and particularly about nation/nationality, ethnicity and race. The functioning of essentialism in these cases is obvious: people believe that humans are born national (ethnical/racial), that is, everyone has his/her true (and only one true) nationality (ethnicity/race) which is inherent to his/her being and determines his/her "qualities", ways of behaviour, values, morals, etc. (these presumptions are of course based on prejudices and stereotypes). This belief is not necessarily expressed explicitly; it is not only outspoken nationalists or racists who hold essentialist beliefs about "nations" or "races", on the contrary essentialist convictions about these social categories usually function implicitly as underlying, self-evident "facts" about humanity.

The second cognitive practice, which is referred to as *objectification* (*reification*) is in a sense closely connected with essentialism. Described simply, objectification is a misidentification of *abstractions* for *objectively existent entities*, that is, in our case a misidentification of *social categories* for things, of *relations* for things, and of *processes* for things. A further peculiarity of objectification is a tendency to ascribe natural or supra-natural (extra-societal) origins to processes, practices and/or entities which are products of human agency. It is precisely here where we can find an important overlap between essentialism and objectification, making "nations" seem fundamentally real, not as categories of social classification but as tangible entities within the world. It is well documented that people think in these ways and that both modes of cognition, essentialism and objectification, are universal to humans (present and past!) regardless of social or cultural determinants. Let me note here that awareness of these modes of cognition has immense implications not only for the sphere of epistemology and methods of the social sciences and humanities, but

also for the theories of social behaviour which historians (could) utilise in their research of past societies. For instance, such events and phenomena as legal or other discrimination of categorically delineated groups of population, certain acts of war, mass killings and genocide, the functioning of power relations and the organisation of dominance over people and territory are just the most obvious examples where the functioning of both modalities of cognition – essentialism and objectification – can be easily identified. Considering this in our interpretations of history would provide us with different perspectives and enable us to arrive at new findings about the past deeds of humans.

From the above explanation it must also be evident that historians, social scientists and other scholars – just as every human – are naturally inclined to think in essentialising and objectifying ways. And indeed in the past twenty years or so both essentialism and reification (objectification) have been heavily criticised in social constructionist (or postmodernist if you like) discourses as major flaws within "older", "traditionalist", "positivist", etc. scientific discourses. It is clear that uncritical usage of common language greatly reinforces essentialism and objectification in social scientific discourses. Next to the objectivist epistemology this – i.e. essentialising and objectifying thinking and language – is in my view the main reason why traditional historiographies remain inherently national and/or nationalistic.

In the second chapter I demonstrate these points using particular examples from Slovak and Hungarian historiographies. I show how notions of the "state", "national territory", "nation" and "identity" are routinely and habitually essentialised and objectified, even by historians who are interdisciplinary in their approach and whom adhere to one or other tradition of social constructionism.

Most national/nationalist historians automatically use the same term and concept of the *state* for, what are historically, extremely disparate forms of domination of space and inhabitants. From an analytical point of view to think about pre-modern kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, medieval or antique republics or city-states in terms of "a state" without any specification, thus anachronistically reproducing a concept with particularly modern meanings, produces tremendous difficulties and misconceptions. This practice is no doubt another consequence of the perception of a "deep continuity" in history. For nationalist historians "the state" – regardless of whether it is ancient, medieval or modern – is usually only of symbolic interest and used merely as an *icon*: the ultimate sign of the "nation's" greatness. Thus the "state" becomes something that is essentially a *hallmark* of the "nation's" existence

throughout the whole history of humanity, moving forth in time, disappearing and reappearing in the history of the "nation" as a steady object, an emanation of the "nation". Nationalist historians are only secondarily (and to a limited extent) interested in the *state* as a phenomenon: an organization of political domination over a territory, the systems of which should merit careful study.

In East-Central, South-Eastern and Eastern European historiographies objectification of the state often goes hand in hand with the objectification and essentialisation of territories as "national". This often manifests itself in how historians routinely name territories anachronistically. It is generally accepted to speak, for instance, about Germany or Italy in periods preceding the actual formation of these geopolitical entities in the later 19th century. In this book, of course, the practice of automatically speaking of Slovakia before 1918 is initially critically examined. The example of Slovakia is a clear-cut case: Slovakia did not exist as a named bounded territory prior to 1918; it was delineated by the Paris Peace Conference and sanctioned by the *Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye* and the *Treaty of Trianon* in 1919 and 1920. Before that its territory was an integral part of the Hungarian Kingdom (1000-1918) [or at times differently designated areas of the Austro-Hungarian or Habsburg Empire]. Despite this undisputed historical fact, it is a common practice to represent the territory of Slovakia as an existent entity even before 1918. For instance, in the standard reference multi-volume book "History of Slovakia" one of the chapters is named: "*The Formation of the early feudal state of Hungary and Slovakia*", or for other examples from other respected books: "*Hungary and Slovakia in the 12th century*", "*The economic situation in Slovakia in the 10th-12th centuries*" or "*The inclusion of Slovakia into Habsburg Monarchy*" and so on. I suggest that although this practice of retrospective naming is a consequence of "nationalist historicism" as it has developed since 1918, it still continues to be reproduced by non-nationalist and even non-national historians as well. These historians claim that it is merely an innocent localisation to identify a territory for a reader without any presupposition that territories can be and are inherently national. On the contrary, I argue that this practice is far from being innocent and harmless. It cannot be justified on several grounds, above all else because it is anachronous and nationalistic; it willy-nilly instils the notion that territories are in principle the "sacred" and inalienable properties of "nations".

The ways that the "state" and "national territory" are objectified and essentialised, as shown above, are connected to notions of "nation" and "nationality". These, unlike other social categories, are often heavily objectified, treated as substantial entities,

things in the world, or sometimes as *collective beings* endowed with self-consciousness or the capacity to make decisions and act upon them. This finds its most obvious manifestation in the metaphorical language which is used to describe nations and/or nationality, especially in personification. Statements such as: "*Slovaks desired*", "*Hungarians wanted*", "*Hungarians conceded*", "*Slovaks looked to the south with hope*", "*Slovaks sensed that the right moment came*", "*Hungarians grieved*" etc. are again, not just innocent metaphorical enrichments of the text or practical abbreviations as many claim. These figures of speech are meaningful and comprehensible only because of the general belief in the objective existence of nations as essentially homogeneous communities. The reproduction of such metaphors, when the thoughts, desires, intentions, acts and deeds of individuals or identifiable concrete groups of people (such as the leadership of a political party for instance) are attributed to a collective actor, the "nation", function in almost every kind of discourse, beginning with ordinary everyday speech, political discourses, throughout literature and the arts and culminating in national/nationalist historiographies. This not only makes a propelling argument in favour of working with an analytical vocabulary in historical interpretations but also leads us to the conclusion that analytical historians should be very careful about using figures of speech in general, especially in the manner demonstrated above.

The last ontological misconception I mention critically in this book is the case of the term "identity". The majority of national/nationalist historians consider "identity", especially the national identity, to be an inherent and almost biological property of every single human being. However, the case of "identity" is a bit more complicated since non-nationalist and even constructionist discourses are also permeated with an objectified concept of identity. It is not unusual to see social constructionist historians – and apparently not only in East-Central, South-East and Eastern Europe – claiming that "identity" is something always changing (the metaphor of *fluidity* often being used), contingent and even context dependent, yet in turn treating "identity" as if it were a stable *thing*, something that can be categorised and neatly sorted into types (national, ethnic, collective, regional, sub-regional, urban, rural, confessional, and so on). This is very obvious when "identity" is described as something that was constructed or reconstructed throughout history. To re-construct something requires a form and content which could again be constructed into its once existent state. Perhaps this could be dismissed as merely an instance of taking a metaphor literally. Nevertheless that kind of objection does not stand: If "identity" is a "mental entity", as is generally agreed, then necessarily it must be an outcome

of mental processes (and on a different level of social processes) – i.e. self and other *identifications*, *categorisations*, social *referentiations*, mental and social *representations* – thus we might ask, what is it precisely that was *constructed*? "Identity", that is a permanent situational flow of mental and social processes? Is it reasonable to think about *mental and social processes* as constructs? Or, is it more reasonable and correct to think about *things* – that is, narratives, symbols, borders, ideologies, cultural contents and artefacts, etc. – that people in one way or another *identify* themselves or others with, as being constructed? Most of the standard scholarly historical discourse on "identity" suffers from this kind of objectification, that is, from the misidentification of the mental and social processes of identification as things. In such cases both notions of "social construction" and "identity" fall victim to objectification and become rather problematic for proper analytical employment.

Both psychological essentialism and objectification/reification are just natural modes of cognition inherent to every human being; hence these will inevitably have their constitutive impact on our knowledge when thinking intuitively. I suggest that without consciously established epistemology and methodology based on meticulous attention to analytical vocabulary it is not possible to avoid the fallacies and mistakes caused by misidentifying abstractions, social categories and processes as things, from treating as natural what is, in fact, social and from considering as stable and given what is historically "man made" (socially constructed) and contingent.

III

In the third chapter I propose an alternative approach for the study of the phenomenon of nationalism in historical studies which avoids essentialism and objectification of the category of "nation". I begin with a critical overview of some of the most quoted theories of nation and nationalism. More precisely, I concentrate on the ways in which various theorists – E. Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, B. Anderson, Hugh Seton-Watson, A. D. Smith, Walker Connor, Adrian Hastings, Josep R. Llobera, and Liah Greenfeld – defined "nations" and nationalism. Most of these theorists and historians (with the exception of B. Anderson and the partial exception of E. Gellner) unconsciously employ strongly objectifying concepts of nation. They begin with a presumption that "nations" are social groups — a number of people sharing certain features or beliefs that make them a "nation". Departing from this general point we can distinguish two definitional approaches: *objectivist* and *subjectivist*. The first defines "nations" in terms of objective criteria, i.e. the properties

and conditions that must be present so one could think and speak about a group of people as a "nation". A classical definition of this kind is the one proposed by A. D. Smith: "A nation can (...) be defined as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" [1991, 14]. Proponents of the second, subjectivist approach consider the search for the objective characteristics of "nations" fallacious. The only relevant criterion for them is whether or not the people concerned believe they form a "nation". Here undoubtedly, E. Gellner's definition is among the most influential: "Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation (...) nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. (...) It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be (...)" [1983, 7]. Certainly subjectivist definitions seem to be much closer to social constructionism than objectivist ones. Nevertheless, theorists of both orientations consider "nations" to be communities of people, that is something – if only in theory – countable and observable; something that is objective in its existence in the same way as for instance is Mount Everest, the building of the Palace of Westminster in London or the Sun. Indeed it was probably the most valuable part of B. Anderson's theory that by defining "nations" as *imagined communities* [1983, 1991] he shifted the ontology of "nation" from the objective world into the world of social cognition; an extremely important change the epistemological consequences of which were not appreciated adequately in the bulk of literature on nationalism.

In the 1990s several authors drew attention to the mistaken ontology of "nation" which was perpetuated by standard theories on nationalism: Zygmunt Bauman [1992] and later M. Billig [1995] suggested that it is precisely the false ontology of the "nation" which lies at the core of every nationalist ideology and common peoples' beliefs about the "nation". Katherine Verdery [1993] suggested that it is more accurate to think about the "nation" as an *ideological construct*, *potent symbol*, and a *classificatory scheme* and not as a community or body of people. Finally it was R. Brubaker who came up with a radical proposal not to operate the term "nation" as a category of scholarly discourse at all. Brubaker points out that the innocent looking question: "what is a nation?" is the basic source of misidentification [because] "(...) the very terms in which it is framed presuppose the existence of the entity that is to be defined. The question itself reflects the realist, substantialist belief that 'a nation' is a real entity of some kind, though perhaps one that is elusive and difficult to define."

Thus even the subjectivist definitions are substantialist (objectifying) if they "see nations as shaped by such forces as industrialization, uneven development, the growth of communication and transportation networks, and the powerfully integrative and homogenizing forces of the modern state" [1996, 14-15]. Brubaker suggests that we should not reproduce and give credence to the objectified (or *substantialist* as he likes to call it following Bourdieu) concept of "nation" by defining and using it as an analytical category. Instead, he suggests that we should realise the immense importance of the naïve concepts of nation as hugely important categories of everyday social practice. To think about "nations" as real and observable entities, i.e. groups, is a major ontological misidentification. From a consequent social constructionist perspective "nation" cannot be considered anything other than a *social category*, a product of social practice. In other words, Brubaker suggests that we should stop thinking about "nations" as social groups and think about them as social categories: instead of thinking about the emergence and development or building of "nations" we should think about the emergence, realisation and functioning of *nationalism*.

Similarly to *class*, for instance, "nation" is above all a social category. As I have already mentioned within "Marxist" or "Marxist-Leninist" historiographies of countries of the Communist bloc, alongside the category of "nation", "classes" were also habitually subject to objectification and essentialism. However, many historians very quickly abandoned this view about classes after 1989; they started to think and speak about classes as schemes of social classification and as social constructions (even during the first decade after the demise of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia most historians refused to use the term "class" altogether because it was considered hopelessly ideologically contaminated). In accordance with Brubaker I suggest a similar shift in perspective for the *category of nation*: to think about "nation" as a social category, a powerful symbolically charged scheme of classification, an ideologically backed perspective on the world of humans (imagined communities) or above all, as a discursive "flow" of *social representations*.

In this respect I suggest the *theory of social representations* as a basic theoretical point of departure for research into nationalism. It is a theoretical tradition with a relatively long history and several improved versions. The basics come from Émile Durkheim who introduced the concept of *collective representations* to social scientific discourse. Later it was picked up on and further developed by several scholars, most notably by the social psychologist Serge Moscovici and the historian Roger Chartier (both of whom prefer to speak about *social* representations instead of *collective*). I introduce the theory of the first to gain an insight into the workings of

social knowledge (i.e. social representations) and to understand how abstractions are endowed with objective reality; the theory and ground breaking work of the second serves as an excellent example (and sort of guideline) of working with this theoretical approach in historical research. Social representations are defined as socially available and shared knowledge which appear in a form similar to *theories* and centre around a *theme* (e.g. that people are naturally divided into "nations" since time immemorial, or that there are aggressive or barbarous and peaceful and civilised "nations", or that there are "old nations" and "new nations", and so on) "a series of propositions which enable things or persons to be classified, their characters described, their feelings and actions to be explained, and so on. (...) Social representations appear as a 'network' of ideas, metaphors and images, more or less loosely tied together". [Moscovici, 2001, 152-153]. This theoretical position has an immense epistemological impact and could prevent us from even inadvertent objectification and essentialism when thinking about the phenomena of social life or, in our case particularly, nationalism. It unmistakeably leads us, even forces us, to realise the ontological properties of social categories on the one hand and people or things to which they refer to on the other. Necessarily we will have to bear in mind that the social categorisation, naïve understandings and interpretations of the social world by social actors are a production of *knowledge* that in many important respects is a constitutive element of social reality and not an unbiased reflection of objective social reality. As introduced above, the mechanism of *objectification* is a very important part of the theory of social representations.

To objectify is to endow abstractions with hard reality, i.e. objectification is an ontological mistake. It happens when an abstract idea (a thought or concept) is represented as a mere "reflection" (a designation) of the entity – that is a real entity, something that objectively exists and is part of objective reality – it refers to. The idea (concept) postulates the very existence of the supposed entity it is designating. Thus it is not from the observation of a *thing* (entity) that exists that the idea (concept) of that thing is generated, but the other way round: the idea (concept) itself directly postulates the supposed objective substantial existence of the very *thing* it is designating. Let us consider the example of "nation" as it has been employed in the social practice of the past two centuries. When a nationalist claims "here lives a nation" it is done in a way as if he/she were just *naming* the hitherto existent but not yet uncovered (hidden, slumbering, or subdued into unconsciousness, etc.) entity – the "nation"; the nationalist concept of nation simply postulates the objective existence of a substantial nation since time immemorial (or at least from very long ago)

above and beyond human consciousness and agency. Of course, such a “delusion” can only function because some kind of concrete reality, serving as a manifestation (and at the same time a proof) of the existence of the objectified abstraction, is always found and/or created. In this case, such reality is bestowed upon “nation” by material artefacts or (materialised) ideal entities such as: “national languages”, paintings and sculptures of “heroes of the nation”, buildings such as “national theatres” or “national assemblies” for that matter, poetry written by “great poets of the nation” or histories of “nations” written by historians, public space: squares, streets, buildings, even towns and cities named after “the great men of the nation”, and so on. All of these are objectively existent material entities that lend an appearance of substantiality and objective existence to the category of “nation”. This is how an abstract idea and a social category and a classificatory scheme become objective “things” in the human mind.

IV

The last chapter of this book is a case study of the practice of social categorisation in late 19th and early 20th century Hungary with particular attention given to the years of World War I. I study a particularly well-delineated “specimen” of the periods’ Hungarian/Magyar nationalist discourse about the Slovaks who inhabited the northern areas of the Hungarian Kingdom. This specimen contains articles from five local weeklies issued in the Hungarian language and written by editors who were clearly adherents of Hungarian/Magyar nationalism. All five journals were issued in the three north-western counties (two of them bordering Moravia, then a part of the Habsburg Empire of Austria) where the Slovak nationalist movement was most active. A majority of the inhabitants of these counties spoke Slovak. It is necessary to understand the context of the examined discourses before continuing on to the results of the analyses.

In our period of interest the Hungarian Kingdom was still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was largely multiethnic; after Magyars Slovaks were the second largest group of inhabitants. The ruling political elite (which consisted almost exclusively of Hungarian/Magyar nobility throughout the 19th century) sought to linguistically and culturally homogenise the country. The first systematic efforts to assert a policy of assimilation date back to the 1830s and 1840s; the second wave of attempting to turn the politics, economy, educational system, public and cultural life into an exclusively Magyar system began in the early 1870s. Hungarian/Magyar

nationalism in the 19th century (until 1918) was governed by the doctrine of the "Hungarian (political) nation". It appeared as a civic doctrine, since the "Hungarian nation" was defined as, above all, a political entity, a sum of all citizens within the Hungarian Kingdom. This was even proclaimed in law: the preamble to the so-called 1868 *Nationality Act* declared [that] "according to the basic principles of the constitution, all citizens of Hungary form one nation in the political sense: the indivisibly united Hungarian nation of which every citizen of the fatherland is an equal member, regardless of which nationality he belongs to". In practice this originally liberal political conception of the Hungarian nation gradually acquired a strong ethno-nationalist dimension. From the 1870s onwards this became the absolutely dominant aspect. This shift in emphasis can be readily observed in the policies of the Hungarian governments and especially in legislation on matters affecting the education system. This development was related to two factors: firstly, the *Compromise* of 1867, which established the Dual Austro-Hungarian Empire, effectively meant that the Hungarian ruling elite could continue in its nation state building "project" which had been hindered by the revolution and interrupted by the lost war against the Habsburgs in 1848/49 and the subsequent Habsburg neo-absolutist regime; secondly, to the generational change among the ruling elite, when the liberal nationalist political leaders who negotiated the Compromise and composed the above quoted *Nationality Act* retired and were superseded by a more consistently nationalist and less liberal generation of politicians. However, in this case study I was interested in the changes that happened at the level of social representations as they appeared within the period discourses of the rank and file proponents of Hungarian/Magyar nationalism. Perhaps it is needless to say that there is always a direct relationship observable between politics, legislation and representing social reality in everyday social practice. I focused, in particular, on the shifts that occurred in the social categorising of the category of "Slovaks": that is on the usage of categories of "people" ("folk"), "nationality" and "nation" by the editors of the five weeklies when speaking about Slovaks.

At the beginning of this chapter I already explained the specific meaning of the term "nationality" and the concept of "nation". This is just a short reminder of what these terms meant at this time: "nationality" meant not only the personal "quality" of belonging to a "nation", but the very same word also meant a linguistic and cultural grouping, that is, something which nowadays habitually may be called "ethnic groups". A study of the various sources suggests that throughout the first two thirds of the 19th century the categories of "nationality" (as a group) and "nation" were

not clearly separated form each other semantically: in Magyar discourses they were used interchangeably. Gradually, during the 1870s and 1880s, the two notions became clearly separated and endowed with particular meanings. This semantic specification occurred simultaneously to the strengthening of the ethno-cultural dimension of Hungarian/Magyar nationalism. It appears obvious that there was a direct correlation between the two phenomena, although further research and discourse analyses will be necessary to gain a better insight. To sum up, from the 1870s onwards it seems that within Magyar nationalist discourse the notion of *nationality* began to clearly mean a social entity that was considered to be in some respects similar to, yet lesser than, a "nation". The main difference was that "nationality" was seen to lack a political structure while a "nation" had political representatives who were capable of winning and upholding a political structure for the "nation", i.e. a state. From this perspective, however contradictory it might seem, a "nationality" was a potential "nation"; "it" only had to organize itself and generate a political leadership capable of gaining "a state". The third social category designating a collective, which often appears alongside the categories of "nationality" and "nation", is "people" (or "folk"). This was apparently considered to be a harmless and politically neutral designator used to represent not only the general populace, but also specifically the ethnically non-Magyar inhabitants of the Hungarian Kingdom (the "Slovak people", the "Romanian people", etc.). It is obvious that within the tense atmosphere created by the nationalist policies of assimilation and homogenisation of the 1870s up until the first decade of the 20th century it was neither accidental nor unimportant and without consequences how a certain ethnically categorised population was represented: whether as a "people/folk", a "nationality", or a "nation".

Until the late 1860s and early 1870s there was no fixed idea of the "Hungarian (political) nation". Obviously therefore several conceptions existed simultaneously. Some non-Magyar representatives of nationalist movements, notably among them some Slovak politicians, strove to implement a conception according to which the "Hungarian political nation" would be recognised as the only "nation" in the Kingdom, but would consist of the six "nationalities" of the country: Magyar, Slovak, Romanian, Serbian, German, and Ruthenian. That is, the "Magyar nationality" would be merely one among equals in every respect. The rationale behind this conception was that instead of merely one collective entity congruent with the territory of the state there would be six collective entities territorially defined within the state. Due collective language and cultural rights would be equally granted to them all. This was not acceptable for the dominant Hungarian/Magyar liberal nationalist elite,

which eventually forced through the conception of the single "Hungarian political nation" consisting of individual citizens and not "nationalities". However there was still to be respect for the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the non-Magyar population (granted by the *Nationality Act* in 1868). As I said earlier, from the 1870s onwards this conception became strongly ethnicised by the Hungarian/Magyar ruling elites; the notion of the *Hungarian* (i.e. state defined) became deeply and intrinsically conflated with the notion of *Magyar* (i.e. ethnically defined). Within Hungarian discourses this conflation appeared to be natural and could easily occur. All the more since in the Hungarian language a distinction was never made between the state (Hungarian Kingdom) and ethnicity (Magyar): both are designated by the same word "Magyar" (*Magyarország/Magyar Királyság* = Hungary/Hungarian Kingdom, *Magyar* = a Hungarian, i.e. any inhabitant of Hungary, as well an ethnically Magyar person). In contrast to this, in Slovak and other Slavic languages such a semantic distinction between the state (and its inhabitant) and the ethnic category of Magyar occurred by the beginning of the 19th century (in Slovak: *Uhorsko* = Hungary before 1918/Hungarian Kingdom, *Uhor* = an inhabitant of the Hungarian Kingdom, *Maďarsko* = Hungary after 1918, *Maďar* = an ethnically Magyar person). Of course this conflation of "Hungarian" with "Magyar", that is of the dimension of the state and the ethnic category, was also present in Hungarian language discourses prior to the 1870s. However, it was from that decade onwards that it became an unchallengeable ideological doctrine of the "Hungarian nation". Later I will quote an example of the way in which this semantic conflation functioned on the level of social cognition.

Let us turn back to the semantic clearing between the concepts of nationality and nation and its consequences. From the 1870s onwards, as various sources suggest, the non-Magyar populace of the Hungarian Kingdom was gradually to a lesser extent represented as "nationalities" and to a greater extent as "people". A further important change was that the term "nationality" began to be used also as an adjective to designate the politicians and activists of non-Magyar nationalist movements within Hungary. They were most often labelled as "nationality provocateurs", "nationality troublemakers" or "nationality extremists". These people with their agendas of linguistic, cultural and political emancipation of their respective non-Magyar "peop les"/"nationalities"/"nations", were perceived and represented by the Hungarian/Magyar nationalists as an imminent threat not only to the unity of the "Hungarian nation" but also to the integrity of the country. In Hungarian/Magyar nationalist discourses non-Magyar nationalist politicians and activists were stereotyped as

people guided by selfish interests and as traitors financed by hostile foreign powers (the Habsburgs, the “Russians”, the “Romanians”, the “Czechs”, and so on). Obviously, the purpose of such representations was to make them appear as illegitimate self-appointees and not as rightful representatives of their “people”, “nationality” or “nation” as they represented themselves as in turn. Thus, the proponents of the Slovak nationalist movement, whose organisational basis was the Slovak National Party (a loose political organisation rather than a political party in the standard sense of the word), were represented as adherents of Pan-Slavism and traitors to the (Hungarian) “nation” and fatherland. In contrast the “Slovak people” were usually represented in Hungarian/Magyar nationalist discourses as God-fearing, industrious, obedient, submissive and most importantly “the most loyal and faithful Hungarians” of all the non-Magyar “people”(!).

This practice of social representations lasted until around the end of the first decade of the 20th century. After his premature retirement of 1906 István Tisza, a very important and powerful figure in Hungarian politics, whose ideological-political orientation can be characterised only by the seemingly mutually exclusive categories of liberal-nationalist-conservative, returned to the top of politics in 1910. Tisza returned firstly as a party leader, then as Speaker of Parliament and eventually, from 1913 became the Prime Minister of Hungary. He sought to implement a new kind of policy towards the political representatives of non-Magyar nationalist movements in Hungary – especially the Romanian nationalist movement which was the strongest – based on mutual acknowledgement and a certain minimum level of cooperation. This meant that above all Tisza himself, the media (i.e. the press) under his influence and his supporters changed the way in which they described the non-Magyar populace and nationalist movements. The rigorousness employed in representing the non-Magyars as “people” was abandoned and the category of “nationality” returned to be used alongside the category of “people” almost becoming a synonym. Simultaneously political representatives of the non-Magyar nationalist movements became to be represented as a legitimate political force, although in no way the true representatives of non-Magyar “people”. However, it is important to bear in mind that these changes occurred in the media that was sympathetic to Tisza and his “new course” policy. It would be very difficult to quantify the ratio between the “new” and the “old” modes of social representation of the non-Magyar population and nationalist movements and *ipso facto* also the idea of the Hungarian nation within the Hungarian/Magyar discourses in the years before the outbreak of World War I. For instance, from among the five analysed weeklies two were outright

supporters of Tisza's "new course" policy, while one was obviously strongly opposed to it. Regardless of this uncertain factor, from the particular case of Tisza we can learn about the functioning principles of the social representations of such categories as "people", "nationality" and "nation", but also "ethnicity", "race", "class", or any other potent – present or past – social category. This particular case demonstrates the significance of political power and the ability of a person, or group of persons, to enforce a change in social representation and thus exert a formative influence upon social reality.

The analyses of the articles in the five weeklies under examination begins with the last issue from July 1914 and ends with the issues from autumn 1918, when they stopped to be issued (the last one ended distribution in November 1918). These weeklies were standard local journals almost exclusively written by one or two editors and described county affairs (local politics, economics, culture and public life) as well as some of the important events of "higher" politics. I searched for articles that, in one way or another, mentioned Slovaks – that is the "Slovak people", "Slovak nationality politicians", "Slovak soldiers", etc. The above explained modes of social representation of the Slovak people and nationalist politicians are fully observable in all five weeklies during the first three years of the war. That is, the "Slovak people", or in the two journals sympathising with Tisza's policy also the "Slovak nationality", were represented as wholeheartedly and sincerely loyal to the country and the (Hungarian) "nation". For the editors the best proof of this was the smooth and quick mobilisation of soldiers in Slovak inhabited areas. On the other hand, representatives of the Slovak National Party were treated with suspicion even despite the declaration that was issued by the party in the days following mobilisation. In this declaration the party leadership announced that for the duration of the war the party would cease its activities and proclaim its full support for the Austro-Hungarian armies. In the analysed journals this declaration was received either neutrally or with open hostility because it was deemed to be dishonest. In fact, in the first weeks of the war all the stereotypes about the corruption and treacherousness of "Slovak nationality extremists" were repeated. Later on however, this negative propaganda about Slovak politicians and activists ceased (partly because of Tisza's intervention).

In all the journals a special place was devoted to reports about the destinies of serving troops who came from the counties in which the journals were published. In the first months of the war, when the Austro-Hungarian army had a few successful offensives on the Eastern front, most of the editors never failed to specially mention the bravery and determination of the Slovak soldiers serving in frontline army units.

Indeed, the bravery of Slovak soldiers (“the worthy sons of the Slovak people”) was an important theme continuously reappearing in representations of the “Slovak people” or “nationality” as good Hungarians loyal to the nation and fatherland. This emphasis on loyalty remained a stable element in the picture of the “Slovak people/nationality” until the last year of the war; to quote an example from 1915:

> Among all the nationalities, precisely the Slovaks are closest to the Hungarian heart. They are so close to us, that it may already be impossible to separate them from us. We feel that our hearts beat together [...] The Slovaks have flowed into the concept of the Hungarian nation and in my view it is no longer possible to separate them from it. [...] They [Slovaks] offer us their help, sacrifice their lives and blood in struggle against the common enemy [...] We support each other [...], because we form a single whole, because we are Hungarians. Indeed, the Slovak is also a Hungarian. He has lived here with us for centuries. For centuries, he has eaten our bread, lived on our land and been under our protection.

This quote is especially revealing in regard to the dual – *statist* and *ethnic* – character of Hungarian/Magyar nationalism and its concept of the Hungarian nation. Clearly two “we” groups can be deciphered from the above sentences. The writer of the article represents the Slovaks as a “nationality” that is part of the “Hungarian nation”. But in turn he contradicts this picture when he describes the Slovaks as “*them*”. From the author’s perspective the Slovaks are closest to “*us*”, they offer “*us*” help and for centuries the Slovaks have eaten “*our*” bread and lived in “*our*” land. It is clear that the author really wants to see the Slovaks as part of the “Hungarian nation” (“*we Hungarians*”), as citizens of Hungary and he represents them as such but he also betrays the fact that his mental world contains a narrower definition of the term “Hungarian nation” with “*we Hungarians*” as ethnic Magyars – a category that certainly did not include the Slovaks. The statist and ethnic perceptions of the “Hungarian nation” freely overlap; one conception prevails over the other depending on the situation and context in which the expression is used.

This was the way that the Slovaks were socially represented by the analysed weeklies until June 1917, when sudden and radical changes can be observed in all of them. Beginning with this date the hitherto extremely negatively perceived politicians of the Slovak National Party started to be represented as legitimate political leaders (sic!) of the “Slovak nationality”. This was a radical shift considering the distrust and animosity towards the SNP in the previous decades. The cause of this sudden change was the 30th May 1917 Declaration of the Czech MPs in the Austrian parliament in which they demanded the demarcation of the northern territories of the

Hungarian Kingdom inhabited by Slovaks and their unification with the lands of the Czech Crown (then part of the Austrian part of the Dual Empire). Czech MPs claimed Slovaks were the eastern branch of the "Czechoslovak nation" that had been subdued and oppressed by "Magyars". The idea of Czechs and Slovaks forming one "nation" was not new, however this was the first time that it was officially pronounced and laid claim to in its own right at a high political level. The Czech MPs repeated their request once more at the beginning of January 1918 when they demanded the federalisation of the Empire with Czechoslovakia being one of the federal states.

Consequentially, in the period from June 1917 until the end of the War we can observe that the editors of the weeklies under scrutiny started to describe Slovaks more as a unique "nationality"; one that was separate and had nothing to do with the Czechs. At the same time references to Slovaks being good and loyal members of the "Hungarian nation" disappeared almost altogether. In turn the Czechs were represented as a prominent threat to the very existence of the "Slovak nationality". The journal editors repeatedly urged SNP politicians to publicly denounce the "*Czech lies*" about the existence of the "Czechoslovak nation". The SNP remained silent on the issue and officially maintained its passivity, to the great unease and even dismay of the journal editors, one of whom in the last month of the war went as far as to call upon the "Slovak nationality" to decide its fate as a "free nation" in a plebiscite (which was an allusion to the so called 14 points of the US President Woodrow Wilson). Here I wish to emphasise that these changes in the social representation of Slovaks occurred in the analysed weeklies, but not at all on the level of the Hungarian government and Parliament. It is also evident that these changes happened spontaneously as the editors of the journals reacted to the political situation. I did not find any evidence to suggest that they were instructed or coerced by authorities. Obviously, the importance and relevance of the changes in socially representing the category of Slovaks in the studied journals cannot be overestimated as far as the larger historical picture of the times is concerned. This case study of local journals should be seen primarily as an example of the nature and functioning of social categorisation and representation in everyday social practice, past and present.