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SEVER CRISTIAN OANCEA

Mapping early modern centres and peripheries: 'Marginality' in an east-central European context

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Abstract: This article takes a case-study from the early modern Habsburg Monarchy to explore the scope and validity of centre-periphery models in historical research, and in particular to investigate how 'marginality' is historically produced and reflected in primary sources from the period. It is argued that the series of unsuccessful campaigns for the creation of an independent Hungarian province of the Society of Jesus are instructive in this respect as they document the growth of Hungarian patriotism and national sentiment in the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The movement and its underlying national agenda caused concern at the Habsburg government in Vienna and the Society's Generals in Rome, and met with uniform opposition from these centres. Hungarian patriotism is shown to have been the ideological expression of a sense of growing discontent and estrangement between the Hungarian and Croatian Jesuits on the one side, and the Germans and, as the sources put it, 'Slavic-speaking' Jesuits on the other. The divisive issues were partly of a political nature, arising from Leopold I's repressive Hungarian policy which posed a dilemma to loyal native Hungarian Jesuits after c.1670. However, beyond their immediate political context, these tensions revealed a more significant flaw in the provincial structure of the Society and its operation at different levels of the hierarchy. The outcome was systematic discrimination against native Hungarians and Croats. This caused a profound rift among the different ethnic and national groups of the Society in Austria and Hungary which undermined the smooth operation of the chain of command from the centre in Rome. The case of early modern Hungary thus can be seen as illustrative of the divisive legacy of the Counter-Reformation and its contribution to the process of polarisation and disintegration that eventually led to the falling apart of the modern Habsburg Monarchy.

Keywords: Marginality, Centres, Peripheries, Proto-nationalism, Ethnicity, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Society of Jesus, Mission, Counter-Reformation

Rezumat: *Trasând centre și periferii în perioada modernă timpurie: "Marginalitate" în contextul Europei Central-Răsăritene.* Prin acest studiu de caz, din Monarhia Habsburgică în perioada modernă timpurie, articolul își propune să investigheze scopul și validitatea modelului centru-periferie în cercetarea istorică. În mod particular, analiza de față investighează modul în care "marginalitatea" este creată și reflectată la nivelul surselor primare. Seria

campaniilor succesive de creare a unei provincii independente ungare a Ordinului Iezuit, deși lipsită de succes, este extrem de relevantă din perspectiva scopului acestui studiu, deoarece înțelegerea eșecului permite detectarea creșterii sentimentului național și a patriotismului maghiar în a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea și la începutul secolului al XVIII-lea. Mișcarea și evidentă sa agendă națională au creat îngrijorare atât în ambianța Curții de la Viena, cât și la Roma, printre Generalii Ordinului, îngrijorare tradusă într-o opoziție comună a celor două centre. Patriotismul maghiar este considerat a fi expresia ideologică a unui sentiment crescând de neîncredere și tensiune între iezuiții maghiari și croați, pe de o parte, și cei germani și "vorbitori de slavă", după cum îi numesc sursele, pe de altă parte. Divergențele apărute erau, în parte, de natură politică, fiind generate de politica autoritară a lui Leopold I față de Ungaria, care a creat neliniște în rândul iezuiților maghiari după anul 1670. Pe lângă contextul politic imediat, tensiunile dezvăluie existența unor vicii structurale în funcționarea Ordinului, atât la nivel provincial, cât și la nivelul diferitelor eșaloane ierarhice. Ceea ce a rezultat a fost o discriminare sistematică a iezuiților maghiari și croați, atitudine care a condus la apariția a numeroase fisuri între diferitele grupuri etnice și naționale ale Ordinului din Austria și Ungaria, subminând în cele din urmă controlul funcționării Ordinului, exercitat de la centru, din Roma. Astfel, exemplul Ungariei în perioada modernă timpurie este unul ilustrativ pentru moștenirea generatoare de tensiuni a Contrareformei și pentru contribuția acesteia la procesele de polarizare și dezintegrare care vor conduce în cele din urmă la destrămarea Monarhiei Habsburgice

Cuvinte cheie: marginalitate, centre, periferii, proto-naționalism, etnie, Ungaria, Croația, Slovenia, Ordinul Iezuit, misiune, Contrareformă

The notion of centres and peripheries has become a powerful if frequently challenged shorthand for denoting often complex relations involving a controlling, extracting or attracting centre, and some form of dependency and inequality on the part of the periphery. Conceived initially as a spatial concept in geography and the sciences, and imported subsequently as an analytical tool into sociology, the concept has received a mixed reception from historians, ranging from essentially metaphorical use to sophisticated attempts to apply it to phenomena in social and cultural history. Among economic historians, the model of centres and peripheries continues to enjoy wide currency, in spite of being challenged by the new school of post-colonial historiography¹.

¹ For its adoption into sociological theory see for example Edward Shils, *Center and periphery: essays in macrosociology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). Patrick L. Baker, *Centring the periphery: Chaos, order and the ethnohistory of Dominica*, (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1994), attempts an interdisciplinary

For the historian of Central Europe, discussing centres and peripheries remains a thorny issue, much complicated by the political legacies of its nations' and ethnicities' interwoven past². Its application to the early

approach that draws on centre-periphery concepts from environmental system theory and geography for explaining social order and social change in Dominica 'before the cataclysmic sixteenth-century social changes that peripheralized so much of the world.', *Ibid.*, 16. For more conventional recent usage in economic history see, for example, Philip Cottrell et al. (eds.), *Centres and peripheries in banking: the historical development of financial markets*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), and Maria Christina Chatziioannou, Gelina Harlaftis (eds.), *From the Levant to the City of London: Mercantile credit in Greek international commercial networks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). The significance of supposed peripheries as a formative influence on metropolitan cultural identities is demonstrated in: Daniel Carey, Lynn Festa (eds.), *The postcolonial Enlightenment: Eighteenth-century colonialism and postcolonial theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), see especially 22-33 and the literature cited on 21, n. 50.

In the introduction to his study *The European Renaissance. Centres and Peripheries*, Peter Burke draws attention to some important limitations of the concept of centre and periphery, including its potentially distorting effect if applied to cultural phenomena, and the resulting need to 'tell the story from multiple points of view' and indeed different points in time to take into account the transient nature of centres. These observations are pertinent to the subject of his book, but raise questions about the author's use of these terms, notably the centrality of Italy through the period under consideration, which is based primarily on its art-historical pre-eminence, see Peter Burke, *The European Renaissance. Centres and Peripheries*, (Oxford and Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1998), 12-13. More recently, Richard Butterwick et al (eds.), *Peripheries of the Enlightenment*, (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2008), 1, are cautiously supportive of the idea of 'epicentres' of the Enlightenment whilst highlighting the significance of local networks and putting the idea of peripheries and marginality to the test through a series of case studies; see for example the chapter by Simon Burrows, "Grub Street revolutionaries: marginal writers at the Enlightenment's periphery?", in Butterwick et al., *Peripheries of the Enlightenment*, 145-161, which convincingly argues that 'Grub Street helped to shape the progress of the French Revolution' as 'previously peripheral rhetorical styles, images and fears supplied by London's Grub Street became embedded at the heart of the revolutionary script.' *ibid.*, 161. The critical response from historians of science is mentioned in the introduction to Fiona Clarke's illuminating investigation into the applicability of Shil's theory of central value and belief systems and their system-stabilising capacities to the Mexican Enlightenment, see Ead., "The *Gazeta de Literatura de México* and the edge of reason", in: Butterwick et al, *Peripheries of the Enlightenment*, 251-264.

² For a recent attempt to assess modern East-Central European history using this concept see the collection of essays by Ion Stanciu, Sliviu Miloiu, Iulian Oncescu (eds.), *Europe as viewed from the margins: An east-central European perspective from World*

modern world raises further questions about conceptual validity, given the plurality of mental maps in and beyond Europe in this period. The definition of margins and marginality obviously requires comparison as well as a common points of reference. Inevitably, marginality lies either in the eye of the beholder, or is the result of agreement and convention. In the context of modern historical research, applications of the concept usually involve an element of both³.

This paper aims to assess the meaning and historical significance of marginality in an east central European context by investigating the case of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Hungary and its ambivalent place on the mental map of the Society of Jesus. The Jesuits have been selected as they were a globally operating venture that was coordinated from its General's base in Rome, seat of the papacy and centre of the Catholic Church⁴. This paper will seek to demonstrate that the Society's fate in early modern Hungary illustrates the ambivalence of the Jesuits' attempt to reconcile the demands of the centre and periphery, resulting in frequent conflicts of spiritual and political considerations. Situated on the frontiers of Christianity, the kingdom of Hungary was for the larger part of the century by no means perceived as central to the concerns of Western Christianity. The Estates of the Holy Roman Empire, for example were slow to mobilise or pay for Hungary's defence, in spite of acknowledging its strategic

War I to the Cold War, (Târgoviște: Rumania, Grigore Stanciu Study Centre for the History of International Relations at Valahia University Târgoviște, 2007).

³ See for example the use of the concept to explain notable variations in the perception of, and responses to witchcraft between and within different regions of Europe, in Bengt Ankarloo, Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early modern European witchcraft. Centres and peripheries*, (Oxford: Clarendon 1991). Part III, 219-422 takes its inspiration from Fernand Braudel's description of the Mediterranean world, its geography, societies, and economies, in complementary dichotomic terms to achieve a holistic approach. Applied to the phenomenon of witchcraft in Northern and Eastern Europe, the editors' argue this meant 'Social and geographical distance made the élite more antagonistic to cultural deviation, which previously might have been frowned upon but generally tolerated at home.' *Op.cit.*, Introduction, 8. Obviously, contemporary views of the 'centrality' or 'marginality' of, for example, Gdansk, the Valtelline, or Ancient Babylon, would have varied greatly amongst a merchant, Spanish official, or English Fifth Monarchy Man, though one assumes a certain level of convergence of opinion on the issue of the moral significance of Babylon.

⁴ The global nature of the Society's organisation and activities is discussed in detail by Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); see in particular the author's conclusions regarding the centrality of the non-European missions to 'salvific Catholicism', *ibid.*, 245-257.

importance. They were slower yet to contribute to Hungary's liberation from Ottoman occupation, to which two-thirds of the lands of St Stephen's crown remained subject between c. 1570 and 1687. By contrast, the Estates of this most rebellious of all provinces in the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy were imbued with a sense of their sacred nation's historical mission, and they stubbornly and violently rejected the marginal and subservient status to which the Habsburgs tried to reduce them. Attempts to bypass the Hungarian Estates on important political decisions, or impose absolutist rule sparked a string of rebellions and conspiracies in the seventeenth century⁵. If none of these rebellions resulted in the permanent loss of Hungary, with possible knock-on effects on Bohemia and Austria, it was purely because the Austrian Habsburgs on the whole lacked the intransigence of their Spanish relatives⁶.

⁵ See László Makkai, "The Crown and the diets of Hungary and Transylvania in the sixteenth century", in Robert Evans, T.V. Thomas (eds.), *Crown, Church and Estates*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1991), 80-91, as well as the chapter by Sergej Vilfan, "Crown, Estates and the financing of defence in Inner Austria, 1500-1630", in Evans, Thomas, *Op.cit.*, 70-79. For the early period see Géza Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy in the sixteenth century*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 89-118 on military defence, and 209-233 for the Bocskai uprising and the divisions it revealed among the Hungarian nobility regarding loyalty to the dynasty. For the seventeenth-century uprisings and relations with the Habsburgs and Viennese government see R.J.W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550-1700*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 235-274. The issue of military defence in the early seventeenth-century is covered as the prehistory to Austria's later quest for great power status in the magisterial study by Michael Hochedlinger, *Austria's wars of emergence: War, state and society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1683-1787*, (London, 2003).

⁶ It was fortunate for the Monarchy that Leopold I's immediate successors did not follow his example. His intransigence in the matter of an autonomous Hungarian Jesuit province is discussed in this paper. Evans, *Making of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 259, n. 57, cites some revealing evidence of Leopold I's deep-seated antipathy towards the Hungarian nation and nobility, in spite of his displays of clemency towards repentant conspirators, see *ibid.*, 263. It has been noted that the first plans for the *Einrichtungswerk* of 1703 showed utter disregard for existing constitutional structures of the realm, inviting comparison with the fateful onslaughts on Hungarian liberties in the late seventeenth century, see R.J.W. Evans, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3-14, especially comments on pp. 5 and 11. For the backlash to the conspiracy of 1670/71 see also Márta Fata, *Ungarn, das Reich der Stephanskronen, im Zeitalter der Reformation und Konfessionalisierung*, (Münster: Aschendorff, 2000), chapter VIII, 269-283. The documents relating to the centralizing *Einrichtungswerk* are now available in a critical edition by János Kalmár and János Varga (eds.), *Einrichtungswerk des Königreichs Ungarn (1688-1690)*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010).

The remainder of this article will focus on the fate of the Jesuits' Hungarian mission in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It will be argued that, far from being an isolated venture, this mission formed part of the Catholic Church's global efforts to recover lost ground in Europe whilst pushing the frontiers of the faith to the ends of the earth so as to win the inter-confessional contest for the souls of indigenous peoples.

As it was, the Jesuits were eminently suited to playing this part:

In the later sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the Society epitomized the universal claims of the Church militant by its supranational organization, its insistence on strict obedience to the higher levels of the hierarchy, and its principle of rotation of offices and personnel among the Jesuit colleges and provinces. However, the very success of the Society in terms of its geographical and numerical expansion undermined the foundations of its universal mission in the seventeenth century: to succeed in their various tasks, the Jesuits had to win the hearts and minds of the Catholic princes and the elites who as patrons and pupils became the most important transmitters of the Society's religious and educational message. The more successfully the Jesuits entrenched themselves at local and national level, the more difficult it became to avoid involvement in the worldly affairs and conflicts of their patrons. Conversely, failure to succeed among the elites and population of Protestantized territories increased the Jesuits' dependence on the support of their Catholic patrons, most notably the Habsburgs. The case of the Jesuit mission in the Austro-Hungarian province illustrates this dilemma. While the missionaries in the provinces were grappling with the problem of limited resources, the Society's headquarters became concerned with the centrifugal forces of nascent national sentiment and ethnic conflict amongst their own ranks.

As will be shown, the Austrian province came close to breaking up as a result of these tensions. The background to these tensions was the long-standing political conflict between the patriotic Hungarian and Croatian nobility and the royal governments of Ferdinand III and Leopold I. Contrary to the wishes of the mostly Bohemian hawks in Vienna, the Hungarians fought off attempts to subject the nobility to the humiliating treatment that had been meted out to the rebellious Bohemians in the seventeenth century⁷. The archival evidence from the Generals' correspondence reveals that national sentiment was on the rise even among the Jesuits, very much contrary to their founder's spirit and regulations, and all the surviving evidence suggests that the case of Hungary reflected a wider trend towards proto-national 'patriotism' in the European provinces

⁷ For the relevant quotations see Hochedlinger, *Austria's wars of emergence*, 8.

of the Society. In due course, this became a serious strain on relations between the Society's centre and provincial representatives.

As will be shown in the following, the campaign for the reorganisation of the Austro-Hungarian Jesuit province with the aim of creating a separate and independent entity for the native Hungarians was very much the result of these pressures, and had strong ethnic and national overtones. The controversies that surrounded this initiative revealed a deep-seated mutual distrust between the Hungarian and Croatian Jesuits on the one side, and the German and Slovene members of the province on the other. The divisive issues were partly of a political nature and resulted from Leopold I's Hungarian Counter-Reformation policy, in which the Jesuits played a conspicuous part, but which potentially posed a dilemma to native Hungarian Jesuits. Secondly, it was argued at the time that the institutional structure of the Austrian province disadvantaged native Hungarians and Croats with regard to their academic training and prospects of promotion to the higher ranks of the Society's hierarchy. This issue was to cause a deep rift among the Austrian and Hungarian Jesuits in the seventeenth century and overshadowed relations between the Hungarians and the provincials and Generals of the Society until 1773.

The proposal for a separation of the Hungarian part from the Austrian province was made for the first time at the Provincial Congregation in 1649, and the matter continued to be urged by the Hungarian Jesuits in the early 1650s. However, the General of the Society, P. Goswin Nickel, endorsed the position of the Austrian provincial Zacharias Trinckellius, erstwhile Rector of the College in Graz, that a separation was undesirable and indeed not viable in view of the small number of Hungarian clergy and houses⁸. The Austrian provincial's memorandum on the general state of the Austrian province was primarily concerned with the state of the most important Jesuit institutions in the region, located in Graz, and suggests that he opposed the move for separation to prevent a financial drain on their resources⁹. Until the college and university of Nágyszombat (Trnava, Tyrnau) took charge of the lands across the Leitha, the burden of raising priests and missionary clergy for Hungary and Transylvania rested entirely with the Styrian colleges and the university in Graz. Further support came from the foundation of a college in Zagreb by the recently re-converted Styrian family of Thanhausen, who were to found a further

⁸ Bernhard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*, vol. III, (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder), 185.

⁹ Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (in the following cited as ARSI), Austria, Epistolae (1601–1660), ff. 293-296.

college in Fiume for the Illyrian mission¹⁰. The Austrian provincial was responsive to the Hungarians' plea for support and suggested opening a novitiate in adjoining Inner Austria, at the Styrian college in Leoben, to increase the supply of priests for Hungary. He remained, however, bitterly opposed to the idea of a separate and independent Hungarian province. Nothing daunted, the belligerent Hungarian Patres put this issue again on the agenda at the Provincial Congregation in 1655, and tried to strengthen their case by arguing that a separation of the lands of royal Hungary from the Austrian province was strongly urged by the Hungarian magnates and clergy and was perceived as a matter of national interest. Avoiding the political issue, the Austrian critics expressed doubts about the viability of the Hungarian colleges if deprived of Austrian support and proposed dividing the existing province into an Austrian-Hungarian and an Austrian-Illyrian branch. The implication would have been a continuing Austrian presence in both provinces¹¹.

These setbacks did not discourage the proponents of Hungarian independence: the demand for a division of the province was thus back on the agenda at the next Provincial Congregation in Vienna in 1658. This time the Hungarian Jesuits supported their plea with a lengthy list of complaints which focused on the neglect of the Hungarian mission and the lack of support from the Austrian provincial. With regard to the government of the province, it was criticized in particular that the Hungarian Patres were not consulted on matters of faith and discipline. The appointment of a separate Provincial or Vice Provincial was hence vigorously urged as the obvious remedy¹².

Much to the disappointment of the Hungarians, the General's answer remained evasive in failing to engage with their complaints and specifically with their charges of discrimination. Instead, he repeatedly postponed the

¹⁰ For Leoben s. ARSI, Austria, Epistolae (1601–1660), p. 294. The Styrian link is discussed by Johann Andritsch, "Die Grazer Jesuitenuniversität und der Beginn der katholischen Restauration im Karpatenraum", in Johann Andritsch, Othmar Pickl et al. (eds.), *800 Jahre Steiermark und Österreich, 1192–1992*, (Graz: Historische Landeskommission für Steiermark, 1992), 247–294, and Johann Andritsch, *Studenten und Lehrer aus Ungarn und Siebenbürgen an der Universität Graz (1586–1782)*, (Graz: Forschungen zur geschichtlichen Landeskunde der Steiermark 22, 1965). The documents and correspondences relating to the Thanhausen donation for the colleges in Zagreb and Fiume can be found in the Diocesan Archive Graz–Seckau, Jesuiten (9), XIX–c–38, "Familie Thanhausen betreffend (2)".

¹¹ ARSI, Austria, Epistolae 22 (1661–1766), ff. 211–227: "De forma dividendae Provinciae Austriae"

¹² Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, III, 185–186.

decision, as it turned out indefinitely, while at the same time expressing his disapproval of the idea of a separation on grounds of principle. Steadfast opposition to a division along national or ethnic lines effectively remained the Generals' response for the rest of the seventeenth century¹³. The most tangible reasons for this were political considerations, i.e. the Society's concern for the wishes of Emperor Leopold I, who abhorred the idea of an autonomous Hungarian province while otherwise continuing his predecessors' policy of aligning political and ecclesiastical boundaries in the politically stable Habsburg heartlands. In 1679, for example, he supported the creation of the province of Tyrol-Salzburg for the Augustinian order in 1679¹⁴.

Throughout his reign Leopold remained opposed to the idea of a Hungarian province because he feared it would back the Hungarian nobility's struggle for political autonomy¹⁵. The Hungarian uprisings in the last three decades of the seventeenth century in fact posed a grave dilemma for the native Hungarian Jesuits: on the one hand, they took a conspicuous part in Leopold's repressive Counter-Reformation policy: For example, in 1687, General Count Antonio Carafa headed the tribunal that punished the second Thököly uprising, resulting in twenty-four executions.

As part of this they produced religious propaganda that extolled its achievements and attempted to rationalize the violence involved to make it acceptable to Hungarian Catholics¹⁶. The Society even paid a blood toll for their involvement, as the first Hungarian Vice Provincial Baron László Sennyey pointed out in 1698 with reference to the assaults on Jesuit houses

¹³ For a detailed account see László Lukács, *A független Magyar jezsuita rendtartomány kérdése és az osztrák abszolutizmus: 1649-1773*, Szeged, József Attila Tudományegyetem, 1989. The English abstract has been consulted as well as a selection of Latin documents as cited below. The documents in Lukács's book are with few exceptions complementary to the sources from the Generals' Archive cited in this article, so they can usefully be read in conjunction.

¹⁴ The creation of the province of Tyrol-Salzburg came about at the request of archbishop Max Gandolf von Khuenburg and Emperor Leopold I, s. Johannes Gavigan O.S.A., *The Austro-Hungarian province of the Augustinian Friars, 1646-1820*, (Rome: Analecta Augustiniana, 1975), 16, n. 72.

¹⁵ Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, III, 186–187.

¹⁶ For Jesuit propaganda relating to the religious persecutions in Hungary s. Maria Goloubeva, *The Glorification of Emperor Leopold I in Image, Spectacle and Text*, (Mainz: Philip Zabern, 2000), 155-163. The Jesuits' involvement in the Counter-Reformation campaigns are described by Franz von Krones, "Zur Geschichte des Jesuitenordens in Ungarn, 1645–71", *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 79 (1892): 280–354 and Franz von Krones, "Zur Geschichte Ungarns (1671–83) mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Thätigkeit und die Geschichte des Jesuitenordens", *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 80(1893): 353–455.

in the 1680s, and the eviction and murder of Jesuits by the rebels¹⁷. On the other hand, there was unmistakable evidence of patriotic sentiment among the Society's Hungarian recruits. This became more articulate over the last two decades of the century as frustration mounted over the exclusion of native Hungarians from the higher ranks of the provincial hierarchy. An anonymous Hungarian memorandum that was sent to the General in 1700 highlighted the inequities of the Austrian provincials' policy of recruitment which placed native Hungarians at a disadvantage. As a result, there were a large proportion of Germans and Slovenes among the province's clergy who had no knowledge of the Hungarian language. The memorandum argued that the Hungarian nobility took exception to this, and that this policy had considerably diminished the Society's prestige with its Hungarian patrons. The catalogue of novices was cited as evidence of the provincials' preference for recruiting Germans and Slovenes. If Hungarians and Croats were accepted into the Society they were employed as teachers in the lower classes for years on end, thus making no progress in their studies. By contrast, the Germans and Slovenes were reluctant to learn Hungarian and take on teaching and missionary chores. They hence completed their courses faster and stood a much better chance of being promoted to the higher ranks of the Society. The concluding statement of the memorandum gives an instructive glimpse of the complexities of national and ethnic tensions at the time in making the further claim that the Slovene Jesuits from Carniola were deliberately dilatory in learning the Croatian language because they detested the country it originated from¹⁸.

Far from reflecting a paranoid state of mind, the Hungarians' suspicion that discrimination was intentional rather than accidental were all too well-founded, as a closer look at some contemporary memoranda from German and Austrian members of the Society reveals: In 1678, a secret consultation of eight leading members of the Austrian province took place, among them the provincials, P. Nicolaus Avancini and P. Michael Sicuten, and the rector of the college and university in Graz, which played an

¹⁷ Sennyey's letter of 29 April 1698 to General Gonzalez is transcribed in Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, III, 187. For baron Sennyey, who held a doctorate in philosophy and theology, produced at least three books, one on the "true idea of nobility", and was chancellor of Graz and Nágyszombat/Trnava, see the biographical information in Richard Peinlich, *Geschichte des Gymnasiums in Graz*, I, (Graz: Verlag des k.k. Gymnasiums, 1869), 77 and the relevant entries in the lists of authors, professors and other office holders on 81 – 104.

¹⁸ These grievances are related in a memorandum that was probably written by Sennyey for the General in 1700, ARSL, Austria, Epistolae 22 (1661 – 1766), f. 288. The memorandum urges the creation of a fully autonomous province.

important part in the Hungarian-Transylvanian mission¹⁹. Their memorandum on the Hungarians' proposal for a separate province made a forceful case against this idea, taking its stand not only on the Emperor's known hostility to the project, but also maintaining that native Hungarians were innately unfit to be admitted to the government of the Society and its houses. This claim is supported by an unsympathetic account of the Hungarian national character, which, so the argument, made Hungarians stick together in a way that one could only marvel at, and they were 'more national than other peoples'. They hence always strove for autonomy and hatched plots against the Habsburgs²⁰. The authors go on to cite past and recent examples as evidence of the rebellious spirit of the Hungarian nation, whose aristocracy reportedly maintained in private that it was not for the Society to rule them, but for the nobility to rule the Society. Given the constant threat of rebellion, the Austrian Patres' presence served an indispensable political service: it was imperative for the Emperor to have reliable German informants in the towns and fortified places who would faithfully report on the state of affairs²¹. The fact that these statements apparently were not picked up on by the General is instructive of the way in which the headquarter's attitude towards political involvement had changed since Acquaviva's instructions for the German provincial in the early seventeenth century. It is likewise notable, but only at first sight paradoxical that relations between the German and Hungarian members of the Austrian province deteriorated further as the Catholic reconquest made progress: In his memorandum of 1695, the Austrian provincial P. Franciscus Voglmayr, who was a native Austrian, rejected the proposal for an independent Hungarian province in strong terms that are outspoken on the issue of national antipathy: The Hungarians are yet again described as a 'very nationally minded people' who harboured sinister feelings towards the Germans, whom they scattered over the various Hungarian houses so that they could treat them despotically and tyrannically. Apart from their hostile disposition towards Germans, they were also unfit for governing themselves as they were inexperienced in the economic and financial side of running their colleges, hence wherever they were allowed to run houses they became

¹⁹ The memorandum for the General that was drafted on the basis of their deliberations is reprinted in Lukács, *A független magyar jezsuita*, 62–64. It seems likely that it strengthened the General's determination to prohibit the creation of a separate Hungarian province.

²⁰ "Primum, quia hungarorum genius est sibi invicem mirum quantum adhaerere, et plus quam alia gens nationales esse; exteros nihili pendere, contra austriacos reges semper querelas miscere, in eosque (quos saepe contumaciae imputare dicunt) rerum sinistrarum eventus devolvere, sicut in familiaribus eorum congesibus persaepe audire est." Lukács, *A független magyar jezsuita*, 63

²¹ Lukács, *A független magyar jezsuita*, 63.

impoverished and neglected: 'Ubi opus est industria, non quaeras in Ungaria, conformiter ad genium nationis.' Given the General's concern for the moral and spiritual integrity of the Society, Voglmayr's most powerful blow against the Hungarians' ambitions was delivered under the guise of pastoral care: he thus insinuated that the Jesuits of an independent province were likely to degenerate in their standards of honesty and moral and decorous conduct. Experience taught that the raw and uncouth Hungarian novices needed to be exposed to the civilising influence of their German peers. For that reason previous Generals like John Paul Oliva (1664-1681), Charles de Noyelle (1682-1686), and others had recommended sending German students to Trnava (Nágyszombat), and Hungarians to Vienna. Voglmayr's self-congratulatory account of German achievements included a swipe against allegedly mediocre Hungarian professors who were no match for those who had benefited from studying at German institutions²².

This was a forceful and vitriolic rebuttal indeed, and its reverberations were still palpable in a memorandum of 1698 by the Hungarian Vice Provincial László Sennyey (1631-1702). Sennyey obviously felt it was important to support his renewed appeal to the General for the creation of a Hungarian province with a strenuous denial of suspicions that the native Hungarians would relinquish their loyalty to the Habsburgs and join the Hungarian opposition's cause²³. Sennyey's plea failed to persuade General Gonzales, who hinted that it would be years before a full separation could be contemplated. At the same time he reassured Leopold I that the separation plan would not be decided without prior consultation with him²⁴, which was tantamount to declaring it stillborn.

Antagonizing the Emperor to please the obstreperous Hungarians was obviously not a thought any of the Jesuit Generals would entertain, but their opposition also reflected spiritual concerns for the integrity of the Society and its global mission. The Generals' missives to the Provincials bear testimony to their concern at the stirrings of separatism and nationalism among members of various European provinces. At the beginning of the Austrian-Hungarian controversy in 1658, General Goswin Nickel thus expressed his concern at reports that national sentiment was getting stronger by the day among members of the province ("Spiritus nationalis dicitur magis in dies invalescere."). On the one hand, the Hungarians complained about the small number of natives who held prestigious offices, on the other there were Jesuits who publicly declared that Hungarians should not be admitted at all

²² Voglmayr's memorandum of 1695 for General Thyrsus Gonzalez is reprinted in Lukács, *A független magyar jezsuita*, 69-73, at 70–72.

²³ Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, III, 187.

²⁴ Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, III, 187–188.

to governing positions in the Society. The General ordered the Austrian Provincial to end these quarrels, and to make sure to eradicate the national spirit entirely ("spiritum nationalem penitus eliminet.")²⁵.

While the political and confessional circumstances of Hungary made it a special case, national sentiment and its destructive potential had been attacked vigorously by General Nickel in his lengthy second missive in 1656 as an issue that affected the Society globally and needed to be addressed at all levels. In a fervent appeal to all members of the Society he condemns the "pernicious national and provincial spirit" that was spreading among the Jesuits and was threatening to undermine its spiritual purpose. He warned that the Society would become ungovernable if members were appointed not on the basis of merit and aptitude, but for their national and social backgrounds²⁶.

In opposing the growth of national sentiment the Society the General was arguably fighting a battle of retreat as the Hungarians' demand for national alignment of provincial boundaries was not an isolated instance. A similar request was submitted in 1651 for the separation of Poland and Lithuania from the German *Assistenz*. Its proponents argued that national pluralism was making the vast and ethnically varied *Assistenz* ungovernable. From about the mid-seventeenth century there is evidence from the Jesuits' annual reports and the Generals' provincial correspondence to illustrate that national or ethnic antipathies which in some cases had been simmering for a long time were now more likely to flare up and result in demands for a realignment of provincial boundaries in line with national sensitivities²⁷.

In conclusion, the specific case of the early modern mission of the Society of Jesus in Hungary and its evidence for the existence of early

²⁵ ARSI, Austria 7 (1656–1663), General's letters of 6 April 1658 and 25 Mai 1658 to P. Johann Bertholdi, ff. 101–103 and 109–110.

²⁶ "De Nationali, Provincialique pernicioso Spiritu in Societate vitando", second letter by General Goswin Nickel, 16 November 1656, *Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium*, ff. 699–729.

²⁷ Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, III, 188. In 1665 the magistrate and Italian Jesuits of Trient pressed for the removal of the German Patres of the College to make it entirely Italian, and there was evidence of mutual and public national antipathy, Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, III, 162. In 1702, General Gonzalez ordered the public punishment of a Scottish Jesuit in Graz for breaching the Society's regulations "ex spiritus nationalis fervore", ARSI, Austria, 10 (1695–1705), f. 600. The late seventeenth-century school dramas mentioned in the *Litterae Annuae* from Dillingen at Eichstätt in Germany document the popularity of patriotic, 'national' themes such as the debilitating cultural impact of Italian and French fashions and mores. Examples are quoted by Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten*, III, 495–496.

national sentiment that affected centre-periphery relations suggests a much longer than hitherto assumed period of gestation for the modern national and ethnic conflicts and movements that were to beset and undo the modern Habsburg Monarchy. Religion became a divisive factor that underpinned emerging national identities and emphasised their distinctiveness. The early modern Counter-Reformation could thus be seen as a contributing factor to the long-term process by which the political map of modern East Central Europe was substantially reconfigured, resulting in historically significant regions and their urban centres being relegated to the margins of power in modern Europe.