

Out-sourcing an empire?

German migration, *Peuplierung* and the push for colonialism in 18th-century Hungary, Russia and North America

William O'Reilly

I Introduction

The population of German speaking early modern Europe was prepared to accept, was indeed resigned to, the inevitability of migration. In part, this was explained by the propinquity of borders in the Holy Roman Empire and the relative closeness of foreign and multi-ethnic groups in central and eastern Europe. The turbulence of warfare and resultant societal change in the region that followed in the wake of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and the various Ottoman Wars to the east prompted many residents to question the safety and long-term financial viability of remaining in the old country. A burgeoning sense of possibility emerged, fuelled by economic expansion, the growth of commodity culture, the erosion of fixed status categories, and the continuing impact of print. A lively commercial culture put things and ideas into circulation in unparalleled numbers, and the resultant ethos of mobility disquieted society. This air of upheaval generated an ethos of mobility that made Germans one of the most migratory of all national groups during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries alone, some one million Germans emigrated from their homelands in western and central Europe to start new lives abroad.¹ This constituted the largest migratory national group moving within an extra-national, extra-imperial framework. The majority of these German migrants

¹ Klaus Bade and Jochen Oltner, 'Germany' in Corrie van Eijl and Klaus Bade (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Migration and Minorities in Europe: from the seventeenth century to the present*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 65-83, here p. 68.

travelled either to North America, Hungary or Russia, with smaller numbers emigrating to the Netherlands, Denmark, England, Ireland, Spain, and elsewhere.

This paper considers (and in the context of this paper, all too briefly), the possibility of German migration into Hungary, in particular, and to the two other locations of greatest German settlement in the eighteenth century, North America and Russia, in three contexts: (1) in the context of ongoing debates about *Peuplierung* and *Impopulation*; (2) the practical enactment of *Staatenkunde* ideas by migrant (colonist) recruiters, who sourced German colonists for German settlements outside the borders of the Empire; and (3) how this outsourcing of imperial ambition –permitting migrant recruiters to operate within the Holy Roman Empire, in contravention of imperial law prohibiting emigration– may be seen as a tacit, at times quite active endorsement of colonial settlement beyond the *Reich*. While Hungary may be considered a particular case as a crown land, it can be shown that there as elsewhere, the encouragement of settlement was used in the first two to three generations to serve as a placeholder for later territorially-acquisitive aspirations. These points are sketched in this paper and I will willingly expand and support them further in presentation.

II Context

During the course of the eighteenth century, over a million Germans emigrated from their homes in western and central Europe, constituting the largest European migratory group moving to areas beyond their nations, or empires, of origin. The greatest number of these Germans travelled either to British North America, to Hungary and to Russia, the most successful areas in attracting migrants in the long eighteenth century. The larger study, from which this paper emerges, focuses on the activities of the agents who solicited and enticed, and subsequently trafficked in, German colonists; seducers, advisers, exhorters and cajolers, these colonist agents

were responsible for the systematisation of migration in the long eighteenth century, a process that had lasting effects on the large-scale migrations of the nineteenth century and thereafter. These agents were an important element in the process of European expansion, within and outside the European continent, and most significantly into the Atlantic world, and were the precursors of the later, more centralised approach to colonial settlement. The eighteenth century is thus seen as a crucial transition period in which the attitudes of European governments to the problem of populating their extra-territorial possessions were shaped partly by the consequences of agents' actions and partly by the transformation in labour service contracts that emerged as a direct result of the competition for colonists in Europe. Were it not for the intra-European and transatlantic competition for colonial labour, and here specifically German labour, significant changes in the European labour market would not have taken place, nor would the state-sponsored systematic control of immigration have reached the levels it did by the end of the eighteenth century.

Emigration across the Atlantic was in full flow by the mid-18th century and the imperial designs of western European states were transforming parts of Europe into global concerns. The similarly grandiose expansionist ambitions shared by Central European royal houses, however, yielded far fewer impressive results. The Habsburg monarchy was faced with a governmental quandary characteristic of many early modern continental European states, but unlike their regal neighbours to the west, the Austrian Habsburgs did not possess colonies in the Atlantic, Indian or Pacific Oceans, nor was there any realistic prospect of doing so. The short-lived imperial ambitions of the Austrian Habsburgs –to reunite the historic lands of the Spanish and Austrian branches of the family– came to a decisive end with the succession of Philip Anjou as king of Spain in 1700/1713 and the subsequent weakening of control of the port at Ostend left the monarchy with little or no access to the sea. The frontline of Habsburg possessions abutted an Ottoman Empire which had steadily expanded into southeast

Europe but was, by the early eighteenth century, gradually giving ground as an offensive drive pushed the border further south and east. For western European states, the Ottoman Empire remained, at worst, a declining military power and a possible trade partner: Ottoman influence both on land and at sea had been waning from the end of the sixteenth century. This was no consolation for the House of Habsburg and the Erblande, the Austrian lands so close to the frontier; for them, the southern frontier remained the last line of defence and the extensive armoury maintained at Graz was a constant reminder of the potential danger. Habsburg expansion to the west and north was denied by alliances and intrigues among fellow European powers; southward and eastward expansion was prevented by the frequent attacks and counter-attacks from the Ottoman territories.

In this context, any land regained in military successes from the Ottoman Empire needed to be absorbed into the Habsburg administrative system as quickly and efficiently as possible. For Habsburg civil and military administrators in Vienna, the most cost-effective and expeditious way to retain possession of captured territory was to recruit German settlers and have them settle –colonise– these former Ottoman possessions. These *gens de mérite*, in every way human capital, would play an increasingly significant role in consolidating ownership of the provinces and ‘Germanise’ them over time – or so it was expected.² Over the course of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, parts of the kingdom of Hungary, and particularly the region known as the Banat of Temesvár, became an unprecedented Habsburg experiment in colonial government. Four periods of emigration into Hungary can be distinguished for the period from 1683-1780: the emigration from Germany under Leopold (1688-1692); the Caroline migration (1712-1737); and the early (1740-1762) and later (1763-1767) settlements under Maria Theresia. Migration continued under Joseph II (1783-1787) and Francis (1790-1805), but under difference

² R.F. Arnold, *Geschichte der deutschen Polenliteratur von den Anfängen bis 1800* [sic], Halle, 1900, pp. 4-8.

terms and conditions.³ Private migrant recruitment ventures also took place during this time but are much more difficult to categorise.⁴ Starting with their victory over Ottoman forces at Vienna in 1683, the Viennese administration commenced a process of territorial expansion which was unique in early modern continental European history; large-scale territorial expansion not limited to extra-European colonisation, but occurring within the continent, and lasting until the early 1800s.⁵ Colonisation and expansion within continental Europe were inextricably linked with contemporary developments in the wider Atlantic world; the same German migrants were targeted for recruitment for America and for parts of continental Europe. The processes of reconquest and settlement carried out by Habsburg officials, as we shall see, were modelled on, or directly imitated, practices in North America. Hungary, and later parts of southern Russia, was envisaged as an entrepôt for merchants, ministers, soldiers and settlers, a new site for development and design. As in North America, economic and administrative success was the ultimate objective in the early years of conquest and colonisation. The project of territorial expansion crucially depended on the successful plantation of the country with immigrants from the German lands, who became human weapons in the struggle for Habsburg military and economic success.

The period after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) changed the political and military map of Europe, ensuring that the Ottoman empire was, militarily, on the defensive by 1683 and allowing the Viennese court to revive dreams of greatness. Most tantalising

³ Arnold Scheuerbrandt, 'Die Auswanderung aus dem heutigen Baden-Württemberg nach Preußen, in den habsburgischen Südosten, nach Rußland und Nordamerika zwischen 1683 und 1811', Kommission für geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg (ed.), *Historischer Atlas von Baden-Württemberg*, Stuttgart, 1972-1988, Map XII, 5, esp. pp. 13-27; János Barta, "'Pflüg' mir den Boden, wackre Schwabenfaust". Die deutsche Einwanderung nach Ungarn im 18. Jahrhundert und ihre Bedeutung für Staat und Gesellschaft', in Marta Fata (ed.), *Migration im Gedächtnis. Auswanderung und Ansiedlung im 18. Jahrhundert in der Identitätsbildung der Donauschwaben*, Franz Steiner Verlag: Stuttgart, 2013, pp. 23-38, here: pp. 26-27.

⁴ Karl-Peter Krauss, *Deutsche Auswanderung in Ungarn. Ansiedlung in der Herrschaft Bóly im 18. Jahrhundert*, Schriftenreihe des Institutes für Donauschwäbische Geschichte und Landeskunde vol. 11, Stuttgart, 2003, pp. 83-84.

⁵ Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government. Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World*, New Haven and London, 2000, esp. Preface, pp. xi-xviii, highlights the importance of understanding the reverse processes of colonisation at work in Europe in the 'Age of Expansion'.

for Vienna was the hope of acquiring the whole of the kingdom of Hungary, a possibility which had wafted before them in the early sixteenth century, only to seemingly dissipate in the face of a rapid succession of Ottoman victories. For the Hungarian nobility who had been dispossessed of their lands since the early sixteenth century, it appeared that Ottoman defeat spelled the long-awaited opportunity to regain their ancestral lands. These ambitions were misguided, however, as the Habsburg court had decided from the outset that any lands reacquired were to become *neo acquisita*: the booty property of the Crown. Hungarian counterclaims to the land were ignored in a more public way after the Transylvanian revolts of the early eighteenth century brought relations between Germans and Transylvanian Hungarians to a new low. In laying claim to the territory, the Viennese Administration insisted that these lands, which were effectively a rolling frontier that could be pushed further southwards and eastwards, should be planted with faithful imperial subjects from Germany; the government sought immigrants who might be induced to venture their lives and livelihoods in return for a new beginning and generous state support to establish homesteads on fertile land. This was a unique opportunity for a land-locked power eager for imperial expansion and much-needed revenue. For the first time in the late seventeenth century, the Habsburg administration found itself in the role of coloniser- not in *terra incognita* in the Americas, nor in the *res nullius* of the Pacific, but in the 'empty lands' of Europe, which would now be put to use and thereby acquired by the conqueror.⁶

The Habsburg Administration thus became a colonial enterpriser in a manner that superficially resembled the activities of their British, French, Spanish, Portuguese,

⁶ 'In the absence of sustained argument to right of occupation grounded on the supposed nature of the indigenous inhabitants [colonizers] were driven to legitimize their settlements in terms of one or another variant on the Roman Law argument known as *res nullius*. This maintained that all 'empty things', which included unoccupied lands, remained the common property of all mankind until they were put to some, generally agricultural, use. The first person to use the land in this way became its owner.' Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World. Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-c.1800*, New Haven and London, 1995, p. 76.

Swedish and Danish royal counterparts, but which was, in fact, unusual – that of a coloniser in Europe itself. This was, however, not an entirely novel case. Other powers had also sought to hone techniques of colonial extraction closer to home before heading out across the Atlantic. The experiment in colonial government that had led Sweden to colonise New Sweden along the Delaware had originally started in the Nordic north in the lands of the Sami, whilst Britain had its colonial experience in Ireland, before venturing to New England. The Habsburg monarchy experimented in Hungary, before subsequently pushing northwards into (Polish) Galicia in the eighteenth century and thereafter consolidating Habsburg government of the northern Balkans in the nineteenth century. Southern Hungary (an area the size of present-day Belgium) became the Habsburg beehive: a model and structure of colonial government much sought-after and fervently expounded. For the monarchy to produce the rich honey of success, industrious worker bees would need to tend the land, feed from the fruit of the earth, and serve their Queen. Migrants were regarded as the worker bees of colonial industry and the regimented structure of the hive meant the colony could be uprooted and transplanted to different environments.⁷ Willing migrants were promised untold success, in the hope that the boundless possibilities afforded by virgin soil would entice dutiful workers to the under-populated, partly depopulated, southern Hungary. Just as the hive provided a powerful model for the emergence of British colonies on the shifting and conflicted North America frontier, its inherent order allowed Habsburg state-builders to impose discipline and stability along the turbulent borderlands where Christianity and Islam collided. Across the sea in Massachusetts, colonists labelled new migrants who did not work hard enough as ‘lazy drones’; in Hungary, industrious drones were encouraged to work in the hope they would establish a safe and permanent settlement and develop stable agriculture.⁸

⁷ ‘Endorsed by both ancient wisdom and nature, the hive seemed to offer a perfect model for colonisation. Just as bees swarmed from the overfull hive, English men and women should leave England, groaning under its heavy burden of overpopulation, for the good of the commonwealth.’ Karen Ordahl Kuppermann, ‘The Beehive as a Model for Colonial Design’, in eadem. (ed.), *America in European Consciousness 1493-1750*, Chapel Hill and London, 1995, pp.272-292, here p.273.

⁸ Tammy Horn, *Bees in America*, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2005, p. 20.

Many destinations sought migrants, and the early eighteenth century ushered in a period of choice for Germans willing to emigrate, rendering competition for labour inevitable. The valuable raw materials at the heart of the empire-building project, German migrants were presented with a great directional choice: to go westward to America or eastward to Hungary and Russia.

III Colonist Agents

A model of colonization and settlement in the eighteenth century which includes a consideration of the role and significance of agents offers profound insights into the development of colonial society in America, Hungary and Russia. There was never any simple colonial encounter between metropolitan interests and passive settlers. Colonization and relocation in the eighteenth century was in fact the product of cooperation and competition between colonist recruiter agents, acting for private landowners or governmental agencies, in a process that linked North America with western and central Europe. Emigration was not a simple, localized, affair; rather settlers were being actively incorporated into the labour, economic and migration networks of empire in America, Hungary and Russia. Reductive approaches, often resorting to unhelpful push-pull models to explain demographic movement, tell us too little about the mechanics of colonization and migration in the eighteenth –or any– century. Only by charting the sourcing, transportation and initial settlement of migrants can we understand the complex processes that were at work. A variety of different groups, in Germany, Vienna, Hungary, England and America, speaking from a range of different economic, political, defence and religious positions, shaped and contested this process. Moreover such debates, which include the varied and complex involvement of colonist agents, help to remind us that regions such as Hungary and America cannot be entirely separated in the important international market in human capital which emerged in the eighteenth century and which no longer involved just the Atlantic world, but areas beyond. The complex realities and hybrid nature of a

migrant society in the eighteenth century challenge the more narrowly defined boundaries of nation and national identity of our time. Many migrants moved from location to location without seeing any cultural or community break resulting. Landscapes changed, but the individuals remained the same, as colonist agents facilitated the process of relocation in a new land.

The recruiters who tempted migrants and who organised their travel would, in later centuries and our own, be called human traffickers. In the recent past, questions relating to the formation of community and society amongst emigrants have received some attention, while the urgent political and economic importance of populating territories has also been identified as a key component of early modern political thought. Between the homely and the familiar, the enticing and foreign, between Heimat and Wanderlust, these migrant recruiters who solicited and enticed, and subsequently trafficked, colonists. Simultaneously acting as seducers, advisers, exhorters and cajolers, these colonist agents were responsible for the systemisation of migration in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Through their actions, circum-Atlantic competition for colonial labour, specifically German labour, wrought significant changes in the European labour market and catalyzed state-sponsored, professionalized control of immigration, in turn irrevocably changing state policy towards migrants. The processes migrant recruiters initiated would have lasting effects on large-scale migration, finding resonance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and beyond.

Migration studies have traditionally focused on the analysis and evaluation of various 'push' and 'pull' factors, when explaining the causes of particular movements. However, not all major occurrences can be seen as potential stimuli for triggering emigration: labour shortage in one area was often not of itself sufficient to stimulate immigration. A range of diverse factors must be taken into consideration, as the

‘push-pull’ model does not adequately explain European migration before the nineteenth century.⁹ Sole reliance on the rubric of push-pull would suggest that all migrants acted freely and independently in choosing their destination of resettlement. This was certainly not the case with regard to seventeenth and eighteenth-century German migration to North America and to central and eastern Europe, since migrants were more frequently than not directed towards a specific territory by a recruiter. And the recruiter worked, almost without exception, for the financial reward that accrued to him, and was rarely if ever motivated by philanthropic zeal or charitable commitment. Accordingly, the actions of human traffickers and intermediaries in the migration business must assume greater significance in the analysis of early-modern human movement.¹⁰ In fact, until the process of moving people became a profitable enterprise, and connections were made between the supply and demand for labour, large-scale migration could not have occurred without the efforts of migrant recruiters.

IV *Peuplierung* and *Impopulation*

In the German lands, the term ‘*Peuplierung*’, from the French *peuplement*, meant quite simply settlement, population or colonization; in the Habsburg lands, the term *Impopulation* was used synonymously. As a *leitmotiv* for greater cameralist ideas, the term encompassed a range of absolutist-era theoretical and political meditations on population and populationism.¹¹ At the heart of the politics of *Peuplierung* was the

⁹ For a development of these ideas, see Georg Fertig, ‘Does Overpopulation Explain Emigration? The Case of 18th Century Transatlantic Migration from the Rhine lands’, *John F. Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien, Abteilung für Geschichte, Working Paper No. 84/1995*. Dirk Hoerder, ‘Segmented Macrosystems and Networking Individuals: The Balancing Functions of Migration Processes’, in: Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (eds.), *Migration, Migration History, History. Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, Frankfurt am Main, 1999, pp. 73-84, argues that migration might be regarded as a normal, balancing process within emerging world economic systems.

¹⁰ For more on the idea of the intermediary in early modern history, see Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels (eds.), *Renaissance Go-betweens: Cultural exchange in early modern Europe*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin and New York, 2005, esp. Peter Burke, ‘The Renaissance Translator as Go-Between’, pp. 17-31.

¹¹ Josef Elmer, ‘Bevölkerung’, in *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit*, vol. 2, Stuttgart, 2005, pp. 94-119

assumption that the ongoing increase in the population of a state would lead to a comensurate increase in power and wealth. In the words of the jurist Theodor Ludwig Lau, writing in 1719, “the strength and wealth of a state is rooted in the multitude of people”.¹² This is not to suggest that a clear and defined programme of settlement and colonization existed for within Germany, no more than there did for territories outside the empire; rather there was a general tendency to see an increase in the size of the population as something which should be actively encouraged. This tendency came to be systematised in the writings of the Cameralists, who emphasised the need for a strong population as part of a wider economic recovery following the Thirty Years War, and who sought to limit the rights of subjects to move.

So it was for reasons of state, economy and political philosophy that writers in Germany in the second half of the seventeenth century and thereafter came to address the issue of *Peuplierung*. Cameralism, which strove to create a “rational management of all areas of society through an ‘enlightened’ bureaucratisation of all branches of administration”, dominated later seventeenth and eighteenth century economic thought in Germany.¹³ Two categories lay at the foundation of Camerilist thought: the category of Nature and the category of *Polizei*, policing. The Camerilist worldview identified qualities in nature and sought after their creation, their flourishing and their loss. Cameralist thought as developed by Johann Joachim Becher and others, which borrowed from the scholastics, and especially Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, encouraged an exploration of nature in all its forms as a means of encouraging and

¹² “In der Menge des Volcks wurzelt sich die macht und Reichthum eines Staates”: Theodor Ludwig Lau, *Aufrichtiger Vorschlag, Von glücklicher, vorteilhafter, beständiger Einrichtung der Intranthen und Einkünften der Souverainen und ihrer Unterthanen, in welchen von Policey- und CammerNegocien und Steuer-Sachen gehandelt wird*, (new edition 1969, Frankfurt am Main), Frankfurt am Main, 1719, p. 5.

¹³ Quotation from Thomas Sokoll, ‘Kameralismus’, in *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit*, vol. 6, Stuttgart 2007, p. 290-299, here p. 291. The best study of ‘Kameralismus’ is Angela Raubach, *Zum Verhältnis von Politik und Ökonomie im Kameralismus. Ein Beitrag zur sozialen Theorienbildung in Deutschland und ihrer Genese als Polizei*, University of Hamburg doctoral dissertation, Hamburg, 1982 (‘Tag der Disputation 18.05.1983).

developing a market economy.¹⁴ The category *Polizei* is harder to categorise: when for Cameralists more than a concept cast in opposition to politics, it was constructive and can be identified as having three distinct, but complimentary, motivating forces. The first, a Christian impetus, sees the state as a moral representation of the desire to promote the common good and to maintain peace and stability. In this context, Christian morality must be policed to maintain the common good.¹⁵ A second impetus for policing the population is a utopian desire to transcend the existing form of the state, which serves only as an aid to society in the desire to reconcile with nature and attain perpetual peace. “The state-utopia of the ‘*Geschlossene Handelsstaat*’ [closed commercial state] was seen as the philosophical terminal stage of German Cameralism”.¹⁶ And a third impetus for policing can be attributed to an enlightened desire to enable citizens to flourish, beginning from the starting point that the origins of all that is wrong are in an inability to see where one’s best interests lie.¹⁷ Policing in Germany in the period before the writings of von Justi had less to do with ‘social disciplining’ and modernising the state and much more to do with trying to preserve the society of estates as it was; to do this, the population should be kept in check, at home and in gainful production for the state. Emigration should be prohibited at all costs.

¹⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie und Praxis. Sozialphilosophische Studien*, Frankfurt am Main, 1978, pp. 48, ff.

¹⁵ Günther Fabiunke, *Martin Luther als Nationalökonom*, Berlin, 1963, pp. 160, ff.

¹⁶ Hans Maier, ‘Politikwissenschaften’, in Ernst Fraenkel and Karl-Dietrich Bracher (eds.), *Fischer-Lexikon Staat und Politik*, Frankfurt am Main, 1957, p. 283; the term of course, is Fichte’s, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat: Ein philosophischer Entwurf als Anhang zur Rechtslehre und Probe einer künftig zu liefernden Politik*, Tübingen, 1800. For a genealogy of the concept’s origins in seventeenth-century natural jurisprudence, see István Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge, MA, 2005, pp. 159–84, originally published as ‘The Language of Sociability and Commerce: Samuel Pufendorf and the Theoretical Foundations of the “Four-Stages” Theory’, in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 253–76.

¹⁷ Johann Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, *Natur und Wissen der Staaten als Quellen alle Regierungswissenschaften und Gesetze*, (ed. by H.G. Seidemantel), Mittau, 1771, p. 7, ff; J.H.G. Justi, *Die Grundfeste zu der Macht und Glückseligkeit der Staaten; oder ausführliche Vorstellung der gesamten Policy-Wissenschaft*, 2 vols., Königsberg and Leipzig, 1760-1761, here vol. I, p. 66, ff; J.H.G. Justi, *Vergleichungen der europäischen mit den asiatischen und andern vormeintlichen barbarischen Regierungen*, Berlin, Stettin, Leipzig, 1762, pp. 8-15.

The splintered sovereign territories which formed the German empire needed to promote inter-German trade as much as extra-imperial trade, and hand-in-hand with a new interest in political economy (as reflected in the establishment of new university chairs in the subject in Halle, Frankfurt an der Oder and elsewhere) came an interest in securing a strong population.¹⁸ Where Mercantilism was concerned with trade and limiting the export of resources perceived as limited, Cameralism was concerned with production, the means of production and ultimately limiting the actions of the agents of production, the men and women of a territory. The politics of population control – limiting emigration and, at times, encouraging immigration – was a crucial part of the politics of Cameralism.¹⁹ The increasing cost of governing with *potestas absoluta* meant that for reasons of defence, finance, economy and order, a strong population was essential and emigration must be prevented at all costs.²⁰ It was in this fusion of absolutist power politics and the cameralist desire to promote an ideologically-informed *Peuplierung* to promote economic growth, that the question of emigration was placed centre stage.

It was towards the end of the seventeenth century, in a battle which pitched *Staatenkunde* against ‘Political arithmetic’, that the scientific analysis of population was initiated. In France, a new commitment to the study of population was already evident in the late sixteenth century and can be seen in Jean Bodin’s *Le Six Livres de la République* (1586).²¹ Above all, administrators in France developed an interest in the ideology and methodology of the census, which was seen as a ‘barometer’ or

¹⁸ Thomas Simon, “Gute Policey”. *Ordnungsleitbilder und Zielvorstellungen politischen Handelns in der Frühen Neuzeit*, (Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte, vol. 170), Frankfurt am Main, 2004, pp. 461-465.

¹⁹ Hans-Georg Graf, ‘Zusammenhänge und Wechselwirkungen zwischen Bevölkerungs- und Wirtschaftswachstum’, in: F.-X. Kaufmann, (ed.), *Bevölkerungsbewegung zwischen Quantität und Qualität. Beiträge zum Problem einer Bevölkerungspolitik in industriellen Gesellschaften*, Stuttgart, 1975, pp. 30-44, here p. 31.

²⁰ Wolfgang Reinhard, ‘Zusammenfassende Überlegungen’, in: Lothar Schilling, (ed.): *Absolutismus, ein unersetzliches Forschungskonzept?, eine deutsch-französische Bilanz*, Pariser Historische Studien, vol. 79, Munich, 2008, pp. 229-239.

²¹ Jean Bodin, *Le Six Livres de la République*, 1586, Book V, Chapter 1.

‘thermometer’ of public welfare, ideas which peaked and reached fruition in the writings of Maximilien de Béthune, first Duke de Sully and Jean-Baptiste Colbert. In England, the registration of vital events resulted in the creation of ‘Political Arithmetic’ and the invention of the life table, an idea put forward by William Petty but developed by John Graunt, at a time when an “orgy of measurement” invaded many minds in England.²² In Germany, the trend gave birth to *Staatenkunde*, a new form of descriptive statistics and a commitment to the idea of *Peuplierung*.

For the early modern mercantilist state, *Peuplierung* and the maintenance of a strong and gainful population temptingly offered a three-fold increase in defence, taxation revenue and production. Three distinct phases in the development of the politics of *Peuplierung* in Germany in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be identified.²³ The first phase, ending at the turn into the eighteenth century, was a restorative phase, concerned with covering the gaps in population left by the Thirty Years War. In this phase, migration within Germany was from areas of over or regular-land utilization to areas of under-utilization, where farmland was available. In the second phase, to 1750, a number of German states particularly concerned with building-up manufacturing and production, targeted trades and craftsmen, seeking to recruit them for their states. And the third phase, concerned with ‘speculative’ *Peuplierung* (what Habsburg administrators in Vienna called *Impopulation*, as we shall read below), where the quantity of migrants was of more concern than the

²² Jacqueline Hecht, ‘The Past recaptured – Population Thought, Science and Policy throughout History’, in Rainer Mackensen, Lydia Thill-Thouet and Ulrich Stark (eds.), *Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Bevölkerungstheorie in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1989, pp. 26-52, here p. 38.

²³ Bernd Wiese and Norbert Zils, *Deutsche Kulturgeographie. Werden, Wandel und Bewahrung deutscher Kulturlandschaften*, Busse Seewald, Herford, 1987, p. 90; Hartmut Heller, *Die Peuplierungspolitik der Reichsritterschaft als sozialgeographischer Faktor im Steigerwald*, Mitteilungen der fränkischen geographische Gesellschaft, no. 30, Erlangen, 1971, p. 34.

quality – less attention was paid to agricultural and artisanal skill as large numbers of migrants were settled on landed properties and in *Tropfhäuser*.²⁴

A series of German writers took up the theme of *Peuplierung*, emigration and immigration in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hermann Conring (1606-1681), Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff (1626-1692), Johann Joachim Becker (1635-1682), Gottfried Wilhelm Freiherr von Leibnitz (1646-1716), Theodor Ludwig Lau (1670-1740), Georg Heinrich Zincke (1692-1769), Johann Peter Süßmilch (1707-1767), Johann Heinrich Gottlieb von Justi (1717-1771), Jakob Freiherr von Bielfeld (1717-1770), Johann Friedrich von Pfeiffer (1718-1787), Albrecht Philippi (1721-1781), Josef Freiherr von Sonnenfels (1733-1817), Johann Peter Frank (1745-1812): all wrote extensively on the subject.²⁵ All agreed, as J.J. Becker wrote, that “a fundamental rule of state [must be] to make the land populous, which will then create both wealth and nurishment”.²⁶ In the words of Theodor Lau, possibly the most radical of the populationists amongst the German political philosophers, the court’s most important concern was to actively foster and grow the population, and to limit emigration at all costs.²⁷ The aim, while, “attentive to feelings and custom, [was] to maintain and indeed improve a proportionate number of healthy subjects”, for the betterment of the state.²⁸ The politics of *Peuplierung* was, in this age of Cameralism,

²⁴ Thomas Gunzelmann, ‘Hassenberg – ein Beispiel ritterschaftlicher Peuplierung im Coburger Land’, *Jahrbuch der Coburger Landesstiftung*, vol. 35, 1990, pp. 279-294, here: p. 280.

²⁵ Primary literature by these authors is extensive; the best review of their work is Markus Zbroschzyk, *Die preußische Peuplierungspolitik in den rheinischen Territorien Kleve, Geldern und Moers im Spannungsfeld von Theorie und räumlicher Umsetzung im 17. – 18. Jahrhundert*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, 2014, esp. pp. 54-260.

²⁶ J.J. Becher, *Politischer Diskurs: Von den eigentlichen Ursachen des Auf- und Abnehmens der Städte, Länder und Republiken, in specie, Wie ein Land volckreich und nahrhaft zu machen, und in eine rechte Societät civilem zu bringen ist*, (facsimile edition), ‘Klassiker der Nationalökonomie’ series, 3rd ed., Frankfurt am Main, 1688, p. 3.

²⁷ “...die Populosität und Bevölkerung des Staates...[zu] befördern.” Theodor Ludwig Lau, *Aufrichtiger Vorschlag, Von glücklicher, vorteilhafter, beständiger Einrichtung der Intrannden und Einkünften der Souverainen und ihrer Unterthanen, in welchen von Policy- und Cammer-Negocien und Steuer-Sachen gehandelt wird*, (new imprint, 1969, Frankfurt am Main), Frankfurt am Main 1719, p. 66.

²⁸ “...dem Gemüth und der Sitte nach, eine proportionierliche Menge gesunder Untertanen [zu] haben, [zu] unterhalten und immer mehr [zu] verbessern.” Georg Heinrich Zincke (or ‘Zincken’), *Anfangsgründe der Cameralwissenschaft*, 4 vols., Leipzig, 1755, here vol. 1, p. 267.

conceived of, and practiced, in a competitive fashion; that is, from the basis of a territorial and stately competitive perspective. States observed one another, competed with one another and sought to triumph over each other economically, and in the relative size of their population. This growing interest, indeed obsession, with maintaining a strong population can help to explain the variety of perceptual possibilities, concrete and abstract, associated with the ‘reality’ of the time.²⁹ And the qualitative aspect of this politics of people expressed itself, increasingly, in the way in which men, women and children came to be seen as “human capital”, whose economically useful skills and energies should be turned to the increase in wealth of both the state and other citizens.³⁰ These ideas may have ebbed and flowed in interest in recent centuries, but they have survived into our own times, in the ‘Human Capital Theory’ of Nobel Prize winning economist Theodore W. Schultz, and others.³¹

V Colonisation

The active adaptation and reformulation of the mode and means of colonial settlement in North America and Hungary by military, economic and financial elites demonstrates the complex processes of accommodation, exchange and reform which shaped human settlement in the eighteenth century. German understandings of both American and Hungarian society, and the tantalising opportunities they held, reflected pressures and innovations in these lands at least as much as metropolitan ideologies of populationalism or military protectionism. Moreover, the power of metropolitan interpretations was often dependent on experience in the colonies and, crucially, local agent-recruiter expertise. These forms of local knowledge were not only more effective guides to policy-making, but were more likely to be accepted by new settler

²⁹ Peter Nitschke, *Einführung in die Politische Theorie der Prämoderne 1500-1800*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 2000, p. 1.

³⁰ Kaufmann uses the terms “Humankapital” and “Humanvermögen”; F.-X. Kaufmann, *Schrumpfende Gesellschaft. Vom Bevölkerungsrückgang und seinen Folgen*, Edition Suhrkamp; 2406, Frankfurt am Main, 2005, pp. 29, ff.

³¹ Theodore W. Schultz, *Investing in people. The Economics of Population Quality*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1982.

communities. Into the gap between high-political aspirations of a strengthened state and parochial dreams of a better life abroad fitted the colonist agent; entrepreneurial, mercurial, informed.

By the mid-eighteenth century, opportunities for German settlers in America and in Hungary were both well-established and well-known in Europe. Many hundreds of thousands of willing migrants had left the German lands travelling in search of new opportunities in the east and in the west. And the majority of migrants attracted the attention and influence of colonist recruiters at some point along their travel route. Matching the individuals and families needed to grow a region with the information and ability to reach that intended destination took on new importance in the eighteenth century, as the desire to attain a strong, secure and successful population led to a competition for human cargo. Specialised local knowledge was needed to source potential settlers. Familiarity with the organs of government, with language, with means and modes of transportation, with the mustering and making ready of large groups of colonists; all these and many other skills were needed to insure a successful venture.

The colonist recruiter possessed these skills. Arising from the oft-hated soldier enlistee, a class of men which drummed up recruits and thrust the king's shilling on unwilling young men throughout Europe, agents came into contact with most sections of society in the course of their work, sliding skilfully through all tiers of church and state bureaucracy.³² Agents would take responsibility for promoting the new territory

³² The literature on this subject is vast; see, *inter alia*, Fritz Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser and his Work Force: a Study in European Economic and Social History*, 2 vols., Wiesbaden, 1964, *passim*; Rainer von Rosenberg, *Soldatenwerbung und militärisches Durchzugsrecht im Zeitalter des Absolutismus*, Frankfurt am Main, 1973; Peter H. Wilson, 'The German "Soldier-Trade" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: A Reassessment', *International History Review*, 18 (1996), pp. 757-792; *idem.*, 'The Politics of Military Recruitment in eighteenth-century Germany', *English Historical Review*, vol. 107 (2002), pp. 536-568; Michael Hochedlinger, 'Rekrutierung-Militarisierung-Modernisierung. Militär und ländliche Gesellschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie im Zeitalter des Aufgeklärten Absolutismus', in Stefan Kroll and Kersten Krüger (eds.), *Militär und ländliche*

to potential colonists. They would act as an interface between commercial interests and bureaucracy; between the 'Planter' class of landowners and both colonists and governmental bureaucracy; as sources of local knowledge for the government and as ambassadors of knowledge to the sources of labour in the German lands.³³

Just as deceitful was the assertive pretence to a professional identity, what Barbara Benedict has called "the colonization of values by self-defined experts".³⁴ Recruiters, agents of travel, were such self-defined experts who walked the fine line between mastering, and being mastered by, their curiosity. But curiosity about abroad, about a better life, was no idle novelty; nor was it useless or meaningless as some would have it.³⁵ Migrant recruiters grew to become virtuosi in the construction of wonderful collections about life abroad; they were collectors with a cabinet-mind, using details as tokens of power in the retailing of inquiry, production and consumption.³⁶ What Jürgen Habermas has described for the commodification of art in the eighteenth century can be argued for information about opportunities abroad in the seventeenth and thereafter: just as objects, discoveries, literature, theatre and exhibitions freed culture from the service of state power, the commodification of curiosity about life abroad opened up the possibility of migration to a growing body-politic hungry to

Gesellschaft in der frühen Neuzeit, Hamburg, 2000, pp. 327-375; Clifford J. Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate. Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, Oxford, 1995, *passim*; Thomas M. Barker, 'Military Entrepreneurship and Absolutism: Habsburg Models', *Journal of European Studies*, vol.4, 1974, pp.19-42; André Corvisier, 'Military Emigration from Central and Eastern Europe to France in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in Rothenburg, Király and Sugar, *East Central European Society*, pp.515-45; John Komlos, *Nutrition and Economic Development in the Eighteenth-Century Habsburg Monarchy: an Anthropometric History*, Princeton, 1989, esp. Appendix A, 'Recruiting Practices of the Habsburg Army', pp.225-239.

³³ Cf. Lillian M. Penson, *The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies. A Study in Colonial Administration, Mainly in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1971, esp. chs.I and IX, 'Colonial Problems and Colonial Representation, 1600-1660', pp.1-19 and 'Agents, Planters, and Merchants, 1660-1760', pp.174-193.

³⁴ Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity. A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2001, p. 2.

³⁵ Lorraine Daston, 'Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 18 (autumn 1991), pp. 93-124.

³⁶ Laura Seelig, 'The Munich Kunstkammer, 1565-1807', in Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (eds.), *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985, pp. 76-89.

consume possibility.³⁷ Yet in early modern Europe the curious appetite became ever-more empirical. And while a curious villager could not see America, or see Hungary, or actually see life abroad, he and she could see a facet of empirical evidence for the added-value of emigration in the living person of the recruiter. Ideas are faint, but visual impressions are forceful, and the printed prohibitions on emigration served only to raise the curiosity of villagers, then met with the physical presence of a Newlander in their midst.³⁸ Seeing rarities, Barbara Benedict has convincingly argued, “occult or material, comes to represent the knowledge of the world, in the same way that Renaissance wonder cabinets displayed the universe [...] Symbolically, curiosities collected from overseas represent travel; seeing and possessing them demonstrates the knowledge of the world, particularly for those whose class and means prohibit them from travel itself.”³⁹ The ambition to know, and to dare to know and then act on that knowledge by emigrating, was drawn out by the actions of recruiters, who came to represent travel and curiosity. What was revolutionary, was their insistence that, irrespective of class and means, travel was open to all. Colonist recruiters were transgressives, eluding identity and dismantling boundaries, purportedly serving others while entirely serving themselves. The actions of German migrant recruiters for North America and Hungary lies at the core of this greater study. For Russia too, recruitment agents or *Vzyvateli* (‘summoners’) worked to draw colonists, and especially Germans, into new lands opened up in the eighteenth century.⁴⁰ From the publication of Peter I’s Manifesto of 1702, which summoned foreign immigrants to the new Russia, Russian recruiters became active in the German lands, seeking soldiers, merchants and artisans.⁴¹ In the era of Catherine the

³⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1989.

³⁸ Oliver A. Johnson, *The Mind of David Hume: A Companion to Book I of “A Treatise of Human Nature”*, Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1995, pp. 40-41.

³⁹ Barbara M. Benedict, *Curiosity. A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2001, p. 17.

⁴⁰ Roger Bartlett, *Human Capital: the settlement of foreigners in Russia, 1764-1804*, (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 63-64; Konrad Schünemann, *Österreichs bevölkerungspolitik unter Maria Theresia*, (Berlin, 1935), pp. 299-303.

⁴¹ Lindsey Hughes, "German Specialists in Petrine Russia: Architects, Painters and thespians," in *The German Lands and Eastern Europe*, ed. Roger Bartlett and Karen Schönwälder, pp. 72-90. For edicts

Great, a mass immigration was prompted by the 1763 manifesto for the settlement of the Russian lands, and agents were sent into the German and Swiss lands, broadcasting promises and enjoying remarkable success. Some of these agents worked for private estate owners, while others came under the auspices of central government offices.⁴²

This interplay between the demands of colonial administrators and migrants, in Vienna, Buda, Rotterdam, in London, Philadelphia and St Petersburg, led to tension concerning the objective of the colonial venture as a whole. Migrant aspirations and metropolitan policy were in constant dialogue, a dynamic process of exchange and challenge where claim and counter-claim led each interest group to modify its position almost constantly. By the 1760s particular craft and agricultural workers were more than ever specifically targeted for recruitment. This led to a change in the organisation and planning of the subsequent settlement of the Hungarian lands. Similarly in Pennsylvania, Germans already established in the American colony reacted to the dramatic increase in volume of migrants arriving in the preceding decade by establishing migrant aid groups including the German Society of Pennsylvania in 1764.⁴³ Responding in a charitable fashion to the needs of recently-arrived poor fellow Germans, the organisation also assisted immigrants in litigation against shippers who mistreated them en route to America.⁴⁴ Such simple changes

issued in the German Lands against emigration to Russia, see *Landesarchiv Speyer*, Bestand A2, Kurpfalz, Akten, Nr. 371/2/8, 'Verordnungen über Aus- und Einwanderung, 1766-1785, Edikt des Kurrheinischen Kreises gegen Auswanderung nach Rußland.'

⁴² The Baron Caneau de Beauregard, resident in Holland, held influence with the government in Saint Petersburg and directed a company which set up colonies on the Volga, which were then given Swiss names. Finding his colonies taken over by the Catherine government in 1768, Beauregard offered his services as a recruiter to the Habsburg Administration in Vienna, before eventually returning in poverty to Holland. K. Stählin, *Aus den Papieren Jacob von Stählins*, (Königsberg and Berlin, 1926), pp. 332-335; Konrad Schünemann, *Die Bevölkerungspolitik*, pp. 299-303; Roger Bartlett, *Human Capital*, pp. 63-64.

⁴³ Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Brethern Beginnings: The Origins of the Church of the Brethren in Early Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Ambler, Pa., 1992, p. 51.

⁴⁴ Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Brethren Beginnings: The Origins of the Church of the Brethren in Early Eighteenth-Century Europe*, Ambler, Pa., 1992, p. 51; Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers*, p. 148.

were indicative of more substantial trends, which challenged the established transatlantic trade in German migrants.

The search for human capital, for recruitable German settlers, was far broader and more developed by the end of the 1760s than it had been at any previous point in the eighteenth century. The changes which had emerged in the late 1740s and early 1750s saw a transformation in the nature of transporting Germans from continental Europe to America from an irregular, haphazard trade into a highly ordered, tightly regulated and fiercely competitive mass enterprise, where merchants traded in a new, profitable freight.⁴⁵ Here, as in the trade in migrants to Hungary and Russia, agent recruiters acted as middlemen, applying their special expertise to co-ordinate the demand for labour with the supply of transportation. Agents acted as the essential link in spreading news of opportunities available abroad to the waiting domestic audiences. Their activities, together with considerably increased profit margins for shippers, meant that the trade in immigrants continued. As we have seen, the trade in supplying migrants from the German lands to America also changed in the 1760s. As the peak of trans-Atlantic emigration passed in 1753-4, shipping merchants in the Dutch ports and in London returned to their occasional transportation of German immigrants, leaving the principal business to shippers operating out of Rotterdam. This meant that as European traders saw less profit to be made in the transatlantic transportation of Germans, those same traders no longer required colonist recruiters to drum up human freight for European ships.⁴⁶ Recruiters came to be robbed of their livelihood by the vagaries of the market economy.

⁴⁵ See Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers*, esp. ch. 3, 'The Trade in Migrants', pp. 59-112

⁴⁶ Strassburger and Hinke, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers*, vol. I, p. xxxiv.

Those settlers who became colonist agents in Hungary were quick to realise that opportunities there were just as advantageous as in America.⁴⁷ Vienna's hopes, in the aftermath of reconquest, of reinforcing the region through military means gradually gave way to the economic concern of turning Hungary into an agricultural success. These economic interests were later overtaken by financial concerns that the province should become a source of tax revenue, rather than a cost to the state. But Vienna's determination to implement an all-encompassing programme for the recruitment, shipping and settlement of German colonists came too late for the region. From 1767 onward, Vienna instigated a more determined effort to have agents escort those families recruited in the empire for the settlement of the Banat, but the process of selection was limited to families capable of financially underwriting their own settlement costs. This decision damaged the goodwill and reputation which clearly existed in the Empire for Hungary at a time of fierce competition in western Europe for migrants for the Atlantic colonies and the lands of rival European states. Whereas migration to North America had been markedly changed in the late 1740s and early 1750s by the systematic organisation of the transportation of migrants from the Dutch ports to America, the opposite was the case in Austria. The issue of transportation to the Banat was not clarified in the 1760s as it might have been; the journey increasingly became the responsibility of individual migrants and financial consideration restricted the creation of an organized system.

VI Towards Conclusions

In general, the Habsburg settlement of Hungary with German colonists was mercurial in organisation and lacked both official scrutiny and interest, especially when compared with the activities of agents for North America and for other contemporary

⁴⁷ Roger Bartlett and Bruce Mitchell, 'State-Sponsored Immigration into Eastern Europe in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', in: Roger Bartlett and Karen Schönwälder (eds.), *The German Lands and Eastern Europe*, Basingstoke, 1999, pp. 91-114, here: p. 105; Mark Häberlein, *Vom Oberrhein zum Susquehanna. Studien zur Auswanderung nach Pennsylvania im 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, 1993, pp. 89-92; Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers*, pp. 27-31 and 116-117.

European absolutist states engaged in the attraction and settlement of migrants.⁴⁸ The drive to plant Hungary with colonists was, most clearly by the end of the 1760s, marked by vested interests, antagonism and improvisation. Habsburg agents failed to imbibe the methods employed by agents working for any of the American colonies—and by the time new methods were attempted, it was too late. These agents failed to compete as successfully and as enthusiastically in this market for human capital because Vienna had not learned from the successes of recruiters for America in the 1740s and 1750s.

Colonist agents held decisive control over the shape and direction which migrations could take; be it helping to create a demand for migrants in America by recruiting large numbers for the transatlantic trade or meeting the demand for families in the Banat by recruiting in parts of the empire. An intermediary means of bringing commodities to market was needed, and in this market for human capital, labour was retailed most successfully by agents acting as brokers. Thus a model of colonisation and settlement in the eighteenth century which includes a consideration of the role and significance of agents offers profound insights into the development of colonial society in America and Hungary. There was never any simple colonial encounter between metropolitan interests and passive settlers. Colonisation and relocation in the eighteenth century was in fact the product of co-operation and competition between colonist recruiter agents, acting for private landowners or governmental agencies, in a process that linked North America with western, central and eastern Europe. Emigration was not a simple, localised affair; rather settlers were actively incorporated into the labour, economic and migration networks of empire in America, Hungary and Russia. The simple polarities and oppositions that still pervade much historical

⁴⁸ See: Schimscha, *Technik*, p.165; Georg Reiser, 'Zur spät-theresianischen Ansiedlung im Banat. Gottlob, Triebswetter, Ostern', *Neue Heimatblätter*, vol. I, 1935, pp.258, ff; Friedrich Reschke, *Genese und Wandlung der Kulturlandschaft des süd-östlichen jugoslawischen Banats im Wechsel des historischen Geschehens*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Cologne, 1968, pp.57, ff.

writing and political discourse tell us too little about the mechanics of colonisation and migration in the eighteenth –or any– century. Only by charting the sourcing, transportation and initial settlement of migrants can we understand the complex processes that were at work. A variety of different groups, in Germany, Vienna, Hungary, England, America and St Petersburg, speaking from a range of different economic, political, defence and religious positions, shaped and contested this process. Moreover such debates, which include the varied and complex involvement of colonist agents, help to remind us that regions such as Hungary and America cannot be entirely separated. The important international market in human capital which was beginning to emerge in the eighteenth century no longer involved just the Atlantic World, but areas beyond. The complex realities and hybrid nature of a migrant society in the eighteenth century challenge the more narrowly defined boundaries of nation and national identity of our time. Many migrants moved from location to location without seeing any cultural or community break resulting. Landscapes changed, but the individuals remained the same, as agents facilitated the process of relocation in a new land. And in an age when empire and imperialism was shifting from a classical form of territorial acquisition to one of resource and capital acquisition, what might be termed ‘proxy imperialism’ merits closer scrutiny. For Habsburg central Europe, the “dream of universal empire” proved, in the eighteenth century, beyond reach as the century was consumed by the search for sanctioned pragmatism. What is sure, is that empires could not be stagnant, nor could they be restricted to one continent; *Plus Ultra*, ever further, required every empire to continue to expand, and importantly to expand overseas. When that could not be enacted, then empire could be out-sourced and proxy, where the actions and labour of subjects abroad could be charged to the credit of the empire at home. The labour, language and culture of migrants abroad served to make them placeholders –colonists, of a sort– in a proxy empire abroad.

