Particular to time and space
Historical and life-world explorations on the Brenner border Austria–Italy

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The border at the Brenner Pass crossing the Alps between Austria and Italy is politically and emotionally charged: Here, where for millennia there was an open transition between North and South and made possible the cross-border togetherness of the Tyrol region, an arbitrary boundary was drawn in 1918–1920 and Tyrol was divided. The article[1] explores the historical developments and lifeworld potentials beyond an exclusively political definition of border. Exploration in the two border villages of Brenner and Franzensfeste reveals experiences of living together across ruptures and crises, especially with regard to migration.

Historical strip lights: How barriers create sites

"Perhaps a place", as if that were not so certain, Siegfried Nitz (2004: 7) writes in a poem about the world of his childhood, the village Franzensfeste in South Tyrol/Alto Adige (Italy). It could be described as a *non-place* (cf. Auge 1994), but this would mean to misjudge its particularity. Franzensfeste, with the hamlets of Mittewald and Grasstein, is better known for its imposing

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fortress in the south than as residential area. The massive barrage of heavy stone quads, which rises at the end of a reservoir, closes the valley and hides the village behind it. Just as the fortress gives Franzensfeste its right to exist and its importance, so does the proximity to the Austrian border determine the conditions of life in the village of Brenner.

Both places, the one directly at the border crossing, the other 35 kilometres to the south, were mostly places of transit rather than of stay, determined in their genesis and further development by the alternation of closing and opening, of increased permeability and tightened barriers. For example, a narrow gorge in this area, called the *Sack*, plays a central role in the political myth of Tyrol, according to which this small country bravely defies enemies invading from outside. In 1809, when Europe was overrun by Napoleon's troops, Tyrolean fighters were able to stop the overwhelming army in the sack with stone avalanches. This may also have inspired the Viennese government to build the fortress almost 30 years later (from 1833 to 1838), this time to protect the empire from troops from the south. Defence technology is often based on past wars and can hardly prevent future ones.

Paradoxically, the construction of the fortress, which was never damaged during the war, opened up the valley to an arrival of over 4,000 workers from Italy and Balkan countries of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, rather than blocking it off. Next, the construction of the railway, which arrived here around 1867 and led to Vienna, Ljubljana and Trieste, gave the place unexpected significance and caused a large influx of workers (cf. Facchinelli 1998). They came from different countries of the multinational Monarchy to a place that had not existed before and that only came into being through them. A place where strangers did not meet locals, but where everyone was new, immigrant and foreign. Franzensfeste is thus a prototype of the migration society in the sense that it more clearly expresses what otherwise remains hidden behind the construct of local and foreign: that migration is not a historical emergency, but a human condition, *the actual form of human existence* (Hoffmann-Nowotny 1994: 388).

At the Brenner Pass it was the demarcation of the border that gave rise to the site. For centuries the pass was a crossing point for shepherds, traders and the German emperors on their way to the coronation by the Pope in Rome. Early settlers on both sides of the pass were involved in an intensive cultural exchange, as early archaeological finds demonstrate. Due to the partly skilful, partly brutal power politics of count Meinhard II, a political

unity on both sides of the Brenner Pass was created from 1248 onwards. Later on, the county Tyrol became a crown land of the Habsburg monarchy. The area between Kufstein (on the border with Bavaria) and Lake Garda comprised three language regions—German in today's Tyrol and South Tyrol, Ladin in the Dolomite valleys and Italian in Trentino, the former *Welschtirol*. Belonging and togetherness were defined by the common dynasty. In 1809, Tyroleans of all language groups fought together against the Bavarians allies of Napoleon. It was not until the national movements from the middle of the 19th century onwards that a gulf began to open up between *Deutschtirol* and *Welschtirol* (cf. Peterlini 2008: 19–24). German-Tyrolean parties fought against attempts at autonomy in Trento, whilst the emerging young Italy laid claim to the Tyrolean territory up to the Brenner Pass, which was finally decisive for Italy's entry into the First World War against Austria in 1915. With the secret treaty of London, the Allies secured the areas of Tyrol, south of the Brenner Pass and the Trieste region for Italy in the event of a war win (cf. Peterlini 2016: 8–19).

With the hoisting of the tricolour in November 1918, the Brenner became a boundary for the first time. For Italy, this meant the completion of its idea of unification, for Tyrol the end of its political unity. The area south of the Brenner Pass became the Italian province of Alto Adige, in German called Südtirol (South Tyrol). Whereas the, over decades, oppressed and disadvantaged new province had to go through a painful but finally successful process to become the autonomous model region of South Tyrol. The new state border also accelerated the growth of the settlement on the Brenner Pass. Around 1930, when Mussolini, out of mistrust of his ally Hitler, also had a ring of bunkers built here as the core of the planned Alpine Wall, 5,000 soldiers were stationed at the Brenner, some of them bringing their families with them. Merchants' and workers' families settled down.

At a distance of 35 kilometres, two non-places had thus become places, grown out of nothing in an attempt to control, regulate and, in case of emergency, stop passage, which at the same time meant mobilising migration. In both places, which only owe their existence, more visibly than others, to migration in the first place (because which place does not?), the question of natives and foreigners becomes fragile. In a partly autobiographical examination of significant sites and incidents in the recent history of South Tyrol's autonomy, I have described this neuralgic place of my earliest childhood

from my parents' memories. The following short excerpt refers to the 1960s, the time of the most serious political conflicts and violent attacks:

»The Brenner people must be a particular breed. Many worked at customs, at the railway, at forwarding companies, almost nobody had relatives nearby, and nobody had roots. German and Italian families lived very closely together. [...] If you do not consider a border politically, it has its flair. Austrian and Italian frontier guards met each other in their favourite taverns, bars and inns. We bought chocolate on the other side, coffee on this side of the border. The few German families stuck together. However, when my mother enumerates the people she liked, also the names of the Italian Brenner families spontaneously cross her lips.« (Peterlini 2003: 10).

Migration in the interplay of economy and politics

The arrival of the railway and the large train station allowed the population of Franzensfeste to grow in rapid succession. In 1869, the municipality still had 314 inhabitants. Only twelve years later, the number had increased by more than a third. In 1900, the population reached 844 persons, by 1910 it was 1,269 persons—a quadrupling in 40 years (Heiss 2012: 161). The population came from different areas of the Monarchy, but—surrounded by a German-speaking area—was predominantly oriented towards the German language. In 1881, one tenth of the population still declared itself Italian, which was 40 people; in 1910 there were only three. The tendencies to ethnic homogenization in the linguistic overlapping areas had also had its effect here.

Beyond linguistic assimilation, Franzensfeste preserved a special feature: the history of its origins from the immigration of families of workers and public servants promoted the formation of a self-confident "confessional mixed, church-free and ideologically deviant enclave" (Heiss 2012: 162). Franzensfeste was one of the few strongholds of social democracy in the oppressive conservative environment. The railway was a fertile humus for labour and social consciousness. In addition to the book printers, who fought for their rights mainly in northern Tyrol but were few in number, the workers and officials for the railway were harbingers of an enlightened workforce. In Franzensfeste they were joined by one of the few peripheral industrial enterprises in Tyrol south of the Brenner Pass, a cardboard box factory in 1890, which "brought a touch of industrial spirit to the village and offered secure

jobs to immigrants from other valleys in South Tyrol and Upper Italy" (Heiss 2012: 158).

From 1895 onwards there was a Social Democratic Party in Franzensfeste as well as leisure clubs of the railway union, which was notorious for being left-wing. The suspicion of the Catholic Church was correspondingly deep: the railway station quarter was apostrophized as Jewish quarter (ibid.: 162). Soon a Christian Social Workers' Association was founded, and the construction of the new Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus began (Kramer 1957: 162), in order to counteract the loss of souls and influence. This example shows, on a small scale, how migration per se challenges power structures and social orders, which on the one hand is socio-politically and culturally productive and creative, and on the other hand leads to a rejection and defensive attitude towards migrant movements. Migration as a "significant motor of social change and modernisation" (Mecheril 2010: 8) irritates and provokes the resistance to change of more or less conservative societies.

Conversely, migration itself can be set in motion, accelerated, stopped or changed by economic, political, military or ecological upheavals—and often in a painful and traumatic way. The annexation of South Tyrol by Italy simply deprived a large part of the Austrian railway employees in the country of their right to be there. In the years before, most municipalities had never officially recognised the more socially democratic-minded railway employees from other parts of the Monarchy as citizens, in order to prevent social democratic growth in elections. Thus, 90 per cent of them left Italy (Peterlini 2016: 37). South Tyrol lost a politically mature and critical section of the population, which would have been important not only for a pluralistic debate within the country, but also for its political representation under the upcoming fascism. The country, almost completely robbed of its social-democratic component, under fascism withdrew into subterranean national perseverance, which created a fertile ground for the approaching Nazism.

In Franzensfeste 150 of 245 railway families left their home (Lechner 2005: 20), to which they had given vitality and diversity. This triggered a rare solidarity across language groups. While in South Tyrol the usual dynamic prevailed that ethnic oppression drives the oppressed groups into self-ethnicization and displaces supra-ethnic interests, such as social, economic and even gender rights (cf. Butler/Spivak 2011: 24ff), the railway workers set an example of solidarity across language groups. This was not limited to Franzensfeste, but was particularly striking there: from 24 April to 21 May

1921, for a whole month, a strike in protest against the dismissal of a large part of the German-speaking railway workforce shut down all rail traffic on the Brenner route. Italian trade unions also participated massively in the strike. Adolf Berger junior, son of the then chief engineer, recalls: "We sat on the rails and sang the Internationale together, each in his own language." (Tiroler Geschichtsverein 1989: 28)

With the forced emigration of the German-speaking railway workers, the demographic composition of the population in Franzensfeste abruptly changed once again. Italian workers filled the vacant positions, and additional workers were needed for the construction of the new Italian railway line. This trend was further forced by the 1939 resettlement agreement, the so-called *Option*, according to which Mussolini was to receive the land of South Tyrol and Hitler his people—a cynical barter between two dictators. Like in the whole country, 90 percent of the German population of Franzensfeste decided to emigrate to the Reich. While in other parts of the country, however, emigration was partially stopped by the following war events, here real emigration was much higher due to the proximity of the border and the lack of economic prospects for the German language group (Heiss 2012: 164). In the interplay of emigration of the German population and continuing immigration from Italian provinces, the population was almost completely ethnically exchanged: while the German language group represented a narrow majority of 54 percent until 1939, it was only 26 percent in the year of the German invasion in 1943 (Kramer 1957: 153). The cardboard box factory, for example, had to hire new workers from other provinces almost overnight. (cf. Nitz 2004: 11).

Another industrial enterprise, promoted by fascism, provided for immigration from the 1930s onwards. The transport of perishable goods such as milk, fresh vegetables, fruit and meat led to the establishment of an ice factory, which specialised in the production of 22-kilo sticks of ice for refrigerated vehicles. Despite the high level of emigration due to the option, the population thus grew to over 1,362 inhabitants by 1943. Because of the many workers, around 3,000 people stayed in this pluralalistic microcosm during the day. Franzensfeste counted several grocery stores, two butcher shops, a dozen haulage companies and more than enough bars and restaurants (Del Piccolo 2008).

Franzensfeste was a village at the pulse of technology and progress, of traffic, industrialisation and the associated energy requirements: 1931 an

electric power station was built, 1940 the dam between village and fortress. An entire hamlet was flooded for the power plant, similar to the *Reschenpass* on the border to Switzerland. There, the parish tower of the flooded village still rises out of the artificial lake like a memorial. In Franzensfeste, nothing reminds us of the violent intervention against nature and man. This may also have something to do with the constant exchange of the population, which made breaks with the past, with the loved and the familiar, more bearable.

Somehow, things in Franzensfeste and Brenner have always been different in comparison to the perceptions, moods and developments in the rest of South Tyrol. When the rest of the country resigned economically and politically in the 1950s, the two often shady and marginal places flourished. For the Brenner village, the State Treaty for Austria in 1955 was a stimulating economic impulse. Austria's acquired sovereignty had a particular effect on the border with Italy, and border trade came to life: "Whoever was able to offer something to eat on the road, at that time did good business. There was a queue in front of every 'shop', and some merchants from the shantytown could bring the money they had earned in a single day to the bank in an apple crate." (Senoner 20013: 70). The gold-rush atmosphere also loosened up life on the Brenner, in stark contrast to the gloomy mood in South Tyrol in the 1950s and 1960s, when a long uprising with dynamite attacks accompanied the political struggle for autonomy like a threatening echo. South Tyrol experienced decades of tension and violence due to the terrorist attacks. While the bombers were smuggling dynamite across the border in flat cars, with blonde-haired women in the side seat and often with baby carriages, life at the Brenner Pass went on almost unencumbered. There were love affairs across the border, people married back and forth, and at the same time the presence of so many border guards ensured permanent vigilance in view of the flourishing smaller and larger, legal and less legal border trade.

In Franzensfeste, the railway, along with the electric power station and the state presence, remained the generators of further prosperity. The staff of the Ferrovie dello Stato was constantly increased, the station was a central reloading and customs clearance point on the Brenner route. Forwarding companies settled down, and since the 1950s, cattle transports had also increased enormously. This required a considerable logistical effort, as customs clearance and health checks (with a special veterinary service) had to be carried out as quickly as possible in combination with a wide range of other services. Often up to 150 livestock wagons arrived per week (Del Piccolo

2008). The *Dopolavoro* as a leisure-meeting place for railway workers became the social centre, just like the shooting range and the innkeeper once were in typical Tyrolean villages. In many parts of South Tyrol, young people from farming and working families had to look desperately for work in Germany, while in Franzensfeste the forwarding companies and service providers created good job opportunities.

From the outside, Franzensfeste was perceived as an "ugly hole" (Kinigadner n. d.). The good wages, low housing prices and ideal transport connections, made it a place of good life for the residents. Despite the immigration from mostly poor Italian regions, which was steered by fascism and right wing post-war governments, the fascist successor party MSI remained in the minority among the Italian population. From 1952 to 1982 the school principal Oddo Bronzo was mayor. He was the only socialist mayor in the whole of South Tyrol and also one of the very few Italians who was perfectly bilingual, an integration figure and representative of a very special South Tyrolean, typical for the inhabitants of Franzensfeste, according to Thomas Klapfer, the mayor in office in 2016 (interview 8.8.2016)

From overcoming to reinforcing borders

In the 1970s and 1980s, about 1,600 inhabitants lived on the Brenner Pass. There were five schools, a kindergarten "and so many telephone connections that they filled five pages in the telephone book" (Mitterer 2013: 21). Immediately after the Schengen Agreement came into force in 1998, the population dropped to around 300 people. The security forces alone had previously accounted for almost 250 people. After Schengen, only 30 state officials from the finance, police and carabinieri departments remained stationed at the Brenner Pass, says Mayor Franz Kompatscher (interview 8.8.2016). With the privatisation of the railways, further jobs were lost. When on the 1st of April 1998 the then provincial governors of Tyrol and South Tyrol Wendelin Weingartner and Luis Durnwalder, triumphantly raised the border bar as a symbol of the division of Tyrol, it was a highly celebrated event. On the Brenner and in Franzensfeste however "it got dark overnight" (Klapfer, interview 2016). The legal, semi-legal and illegal business, from freight forwarding to foreign exchange speculation to smuggling, lost their most important basis. The border was freely passable, the currency was converted to the common euro, the

range of goods was globalized anyway—"today you can get anything anywhere, it makes no sense to cross the border to buy it here if you can get it in any shop over there" (Kompatscher, interview 2016). While the drawing of the border as a closure of space had allowed the place to grow and flourish, the opening of the border now reduced it back to a space of transit. One after the other schools had to close, the village remained without a permanent priest, and one page in the telephone directory was enough for the names of the inhabitants. (Mitterer 2013: 22)

In Franzensfeste, partly due to a crisis in the industry and partly due to a delay in modernisation, the cardboard box factory had already closed in the 1980s and the ice factory had lost its technological justification. With EU integration and finally Austria's accession to the EU, the withdrawal of customs and financial police also began. In the 2001 census, the population fell to 822 persons compared to 1,130 in 1981. The ethnic balance also shifted once again: 57.82 percent declared themselves German speaking in 2001, while the former Italian majority fell to 40.69 percent. The trend continued until 2011 (the last census to date): now 59.63 percent were German-speaking, 38.51 percent Italian-speaking. (Astat 2011: 91) Although the village thus followed the trend of the continuing nationwide strengthening of the German language group, it fell far behind the economic upswing of the German-speaking periphery of South Tyrol. Thus Brenner and Franzensfeste were, contrary to the pendulum swing in the surrounding area, once again on the way to becoming a non-place. For Hans Heiss (2012: 155), the present Franzensfeste is an example of those temporary places "where something irrevocably comes to an end, turns beyond recognition or simply decays" (Raabe/Sznajdermann 2006: 9).

The gloomy picture at the turn of the millennium has since become somewhat more colourful. In Franzensfeste, the empty apartments attracted numerous migrant families. They found cheap housing and good public transport connections for their jobs in the surrounding villages and in the towns of Sterzing, Bruneck, Brixen and Bozen. The lower demands on living comfort made apartments in poor condition or without heating still attractive. Far away from being an idyll, the immigrant families at least met a local population, who largely know about the fragility of being locals themselves. In fact, sooner or later also the locals had immigrated or knew of stories told by their families. This allowed—despite all the uncertainty—a certain calmness in dealing with migration.

Thus Franzensfeste, in its temporary decay and change to unrecognizability, ultimately remained true to itself. Migration is inscribed in the town's chronicle: "Anyone who comes to Franzensfeste tries to get away immediately, but after a while, when someone has lived here for a while, they will gladly come back or feel the longing to do so," wrote the legendary mayor Oddo Bronzo in a letter to the Italian local newspaper *Alto Adige*. (Bronzo n. d.) "When I read this, I feel like I could write it all now", says the later Mayor Klapfer (interview 2016).

The village that Bronzo describes in his letter is not a beautiful, but a liveable place. Here everybody is foreign or nobody, nobody is native or everybody. For the mayor of the good old days, the immigrant families of railway workers, officials, financiers, workers and service providers gave their vitality to the village, whereas for the Post-Schengen-Mayor Klapfer these are the migrants from 27 nations. (Interview 2016). They make up 25 percent of the local population—with around 1,000 inhabitants in 2016. With those who continuously receive citizenship thanks to ten years of residency, there would be much more.

> »For me, they are all Franzensfester, that's how it used to be, whether German or Italian, I grew up like that, we never made a difference. Why should we do that now? If someone says that these are not real Franzensfester because they have only recently arrived, I answer: Where do you want to draw the line? Your family has been here for 40 years, mine for 100 years—should I then say that I am a real Franzensfester and you are not?« (Klapfer, interview 2016).

The question of who is native and who is not, is nevertheless difficult to avoid. It also became one of the dilemmas for the project "Intercultural encounter at the community level" (Profanter/Lintner 2011) of the Organisation for One World (OEW). How to define a "group of natives" (ibid.: 108) in a village that owes its existence to migration and where there was multiple ethnic exchange. In the publication of the results, the authors found themselves reproducing the stereotypes of the native and the foreign, which were to be deconstructed by the project, simply through the selection of images—people in colourful garments, with headscarves, dark-skinned children—in the "depiction of the foreigner" (ibid.: 77ff). *Stranger* and *natives* are categories of

deeply rooted systemic orders that are constantly being thwarted in the real world, but which are not abolished.

Usual orders are visibly relativized in Franzensfeste, but not suspended. The village never had a company of *Schützen*, the German-Patriotic Association of Tyrol par excellence in the tradition of homeland-defence from 1809, and the only marching band during the fascist period was an Italian one (Del Piccolo 2008), while they are German-oriented everywhere else in South Tyrol. Nevertheless, Franzensfeste also reflects in many ways the ethnic division structures of the South Tyrolean society. "We have many things twice, as everywhere else in South Tyro" says the mayor: "Italian workers' association (Acli), German association of the working people (KVW), Italian club for the elderly, German club for senior citizens, the German fire brigade in Mittewald, the Italian fire brigade in Franzensfeste." (Klapfer, interview 2016) Even basically open institutions and associations, such as the youth centre or the choir, are usually dominated by one language group (Profanter/Lintner 2011: 83, 110), while the respective others stay away: "If there is an association here, something is taken over strictly by the Italians or by the Germans." (ibid.: 110) Social and public spaces in which encounter is not primarily dependent on the language are a prerequisite for integrative processes. The usual offer in South Tyrolean villages with their inns and bars as meeting places is not easily accessible for migrants. The Muslim population in particular is afraid of them due to the predominant presence of alcoholic beverages.

An integrative link across divisions has always been sports. In Franzensfeste this used to be, for example, table tennis in the parish hall and in the bar garden of the restaurant or billiards in the *Dopolavoro* (Kinigadner nod). The strongest integrative force, ethnically equal and social, is still football today. In Profanter/Lintner's research project (2011), the football teams of Franzensfeste—from the U8 upwards clearly recognisable as integrating by name and skin colour—unfortunately did not come into evidence. Too few participated in the encounter project on which the research was based. Encouraging integration through encounter initiatives, no matter how passionate they may be, rarely goes beyond good intentions (cf. Chisholm/Peterlini 2012: 141), because it remains selective and artificial. Rather, integration requires concrete experiences of the other person, based on real needs and habits. For women, for example, the project has made visible the importance of the playground and thus of children as future *Franzensfester*, albeit limited

to very specific age groups (Profanter/Lintner 2011: 82f.). For people working outside it is partly the route in the train on the way to work (ibid.). Those who travel this route at commuting times can experience how people of different origins greet each other, sit together, exchange short words—they share a piece of mobile living space, often of course also without knowing or wanting more from each other. The origins of the 250 migrants from 27 countries make it difficult to form larger communities in favour of retreating into the private sphere, but also prevent ghettoization in parallel worlds.

Because of the refugee movements, the Brenner Pass became the focus of fierce polemics between Italy and Austria in 2014/2015, which attracted attention throughout Europe. The worry that refugees arriving in Italy via the Mediterranean Sea could continue their journey to Austria on a massive scale led Austria to consider closing the border. The historic conflict seemed to be turning around: Whereas historically Italy had insisted on a sharply drawn line at the Brenner Pass in order to avoid any doubt about its claim to South Tyrol, Austria was now insisting on closing the boundary. The border, which South Tyrolean politicians still complain about as a separation from the fatherland and the protecting power Austria, has now been drawn more sharply by Austria for 'protection' against refugees

At the same time, the village of Brenner, which had almost died out, owes its demographic revival to migration. The reasons for settling in the border village are similar to those in Franzensfeste: apartments that are not always cheap, but in any case have become vacant, comfortable trains to the workplace, vacant structures that owe the migrants their continued existence, such as the Italian kindergarten. Unlike in Franzensfeste, immigrants from Pakistan form a remarkable community on the Brenner Pass, "by far the largest", as Mayor Kompatscher estimates (interview 2016). The Pakistani youths thus form active peer groups and their mothers happily take part in sewing courses. However, the opportunities for community life that goes beyond ethnic group formation are meagre. The mayor also sees one of the few opportunities in sports: "We will have to do something about it" (ibid.).

The place, which in 2016 became the focal point for the refugee debate throughout Europe, is unspectacularly marked by the presence of migrant families: "The living together is fine, once there was trouble because the children of a foreigner family were allowed to stay up late and were very loud, so I just talked to the people, then they understood." (Kompatscher, interview 2016). The association Volontarius took care of the refugees arriving daily in

small groups and individually in the middle of the village from 2016 on, without any major difficulties. The border village is again dependent on how the larger politics operates around it. For now, Austria is shying from a border blockade, but the technical devices are ready in case of larger refugee movements.

Probably the densest expression of how structural orders are able to share diversity is school. At the same time, the school, based on the duty to admit all children regardless of their origin, represents an open social space in which togetherness can be lived, even if only for the limited time of instruction and school age. The primary school in Franzensfeste is located in a small building, the German language school on the ground floor and the Italian school on the first floor above. In both schools, depending on the year of birth, up to 100 per cent or slightly less of the children come from migrant families, divided into a German and an Italian school.

Hardly anywhere else is South Tyrol's school system, separated according to language groups, as incisive as here. Both in Franzensfeste and on the Brenner Pass with a similar composition of schoolchildren, the mayors are in favour of joint kindergartens and joint schools, but the official school policy according to the Statute of Autonomy does not allow it. (Kompatscher and Klapfer, interviews 2016) The division of educational institutions according to language groups, which is intended to protect the ethnic minority, makes it more difficult than elsewhere to design learning spaces that are not limited to formal teaching, but that also include and make use of the diversity of the world we live in (Baur/Larcher 2011: 164ff).

Left to their own devices and divided into two school systems, the kindergartens and schools on the Brenner Pass and in Franzensfeste threaten to become problem areas in which teachers are overtaxed and pupils are deprived of better opportunities. At the same time, there is a great deal of untapped potential here for breaking new ground. It is precisely the multilingual competence that is present in such heterogeneous class situations that is a resource that has been recognised by international multilingualism research (cf. Cummins 2006: 38), but which is still completely misunderstood in monolingual, nation-state societies with the idea of a single dominant language that should be perfectly mastered. This also applies to South Tyrol. The official and partly life-world bilingualism (related to the German and Italian language group, since the third language group of the Ladin stands in a different context) contrasts the monolingual habitus (Gogolin 1994), but

rather doubles it as a separate variant for each of the two groups instead of overcoming it. The protection of the minority language German makes it more difficult to open up to the actual language diversity in many school classes, because language policy and sometimes parents fear that their children will not learn German properly. In addition, children of German or Italian-speaking parents bring their children to schools in the surrounding villages where the migration density is lower. On the other hand, multilingualism competence means that children play on several language registers at the same time, get along with foreign words and codes, and communicate beyond linguistic norms and cultural imperatives of unity and purity.

Outlook

The communities Brenner and Franzensfeste both represent in a complex and different way that topos for which migration research is always looking for new terms. As living worlds *in between*, they are presumably the third space from which Homi Bhabha (2000: 5) hopes for the emergence of something new between strangeness and adaptation, between rejection and assimilation. It is true that host cultures have a high assimilation effect on those who come, but their adaptations also change what the migrants adapt to (ibid.: 136). Both communities can also be described as transnational social spaces (Pries 1996) or as transtopias (Yildiz 2013: 9). As global places (Heiss 2012), they transcend and irritate structural orders. This makes them proving grounds for exploring how integration can be imagined, what tasks it places on all population groups, what conceptual changes are necessary. As a pure adaptation achievement of migrants, integration as a political strategy falls short: "We need new models", is the simple insight of the mayor of Brenner, "the way people used to think, it is no longer possible, even if one wanted to". (Kompatscher, interview 2016). In his youth, the fire brigade did not accept the so-called "mixed-language" children, not even when the predominant family language was German. Even if only one parent belonged to the Italian language group, this was sufficient reason to thwart the admission of a linguistically German socialized youth—an undisguised, but hardly conscious racism that had crept into the long justified struggle of the German-speaking South Tyrolean minority.

The search for perspectives of the two places beyond the language walls common in South Tyrol ties in with their strengths in the past. For the Brenner Pass, the mayor sees the greatest hope in the next stage of expansion for the new outlet-centre. The aim is to transform the border town from a transit point back to a place of rest. The mayor hopes that the town will then be able to resurrect, also thanks to the migrant population (Kompatscher, interview 2016).

In Franzensfeste, the hope lies in the migration of labour, which historically founded the town, in the favourable traffic situation and in the fortress, which was the original crystallisation point for the settlement. The need for survival creates visions: An accessibility of the fortress from the village, preferably spectacularly on a kilometre-long footbridge over the reservoir, and in the village a meeting place that is accessible to everyone and offers something for everyone, from PC stations to card games, because inns alone do not meet all needs. A former house of the hated fascist administration, which Mussolini had built, would be a suitable location. "Yes, and why not a multicultural kitchen in the *Dopolavoro*," muses the mayor (Klapfer, interview 2016). The idea is not only to use the nearby state border for crossing and exchange, but also to overcome internal social, linguistic and cultural boundaries. Migration, which makes the place a non-place in conventional ideas, is its real future resource.

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