

The Hinterland on Display

Establishing a Market for Rural Handicraft in Austria-Hungary

Abstract: In the late nineteenth century, mechanical production and the import of agricultural goods at lower prices challenged the working patterns of rural residents who engaged in home industry alongside farming. Handicrafts including textile manufacturing, woodworking, and ceramics were gradually replaced by cheaper and faster production in factories. At the same time, this development created new possibilities of selling goods from peripheral regions to an ever-expanding market. Against this background, state institutions, public associations, and entrepreneurs sought to harness artisanship as a resource in regional economic development.

This article discusses strategies for establishing a market for rural handicraft in the Habsburg Empire. The Austro-Hungarian state founded vocational schools and crafts were promoted in publications as well as through their display. The analysis focuses on the role of woodworking (carving, cabinetmaking, turning) in regional economies in the Galician Tatra Mountains and Moravian Wallachia between 1867 and 1914. Based on source material from schools, local museums, alpine clubs, regional exhibitions, and state authorities, this article highlights initiatives seeking to enhance the value of handicraft and thus to integrate the hinterland into the market economy beyond the agricultural sector.

Keywords: regional development, crafts, manual labour, vocational education, exhibition

Introduction: Marketing products from the hinterland

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the transition from manual to mechanical production and the import of agricultural goods at lower prices challenged the working patterns of rural residents who engaged in home industry alongside farming. Handicraft products including textiles, wooden items, and ceramics manufactured directly in and for the household were gradually replaced by low-cost and fast production in factories. In order to counter this development, state reforms and initiatives by public associations and entrepreneurs sought to foster regional development by opening up new avenues for goods produced in economically disadvantaged regions. Rural material culture was marketed to consumers in cities and tourists visiting the countryside, and folk ornaments provided templates for the establishment of distinct national and regional styles. Against this background, rural handicraft epitomised the development of regional economies in a modern, globalising market.

DOI: 10.25365/rhy-2020-5



Accepted for publication after external peer review (double-blind).

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Over the past decades, sociologists, anthropologists, and economists have addressed regional development policies aimed at overcoming disparities between centres and economically disadvantaged resource peripheries.¹ More specifically, they have pointed out how cultural traditions have been used for regional development and how certain work patterns such as occupational pluralism have been maintained not for nostalgic reasons but as a result of economic considerations.² Whereas these studies attribute the increasing focus on regional development in economic programmes to recent initiatives by international and supranational organisations such as the UN World Development Decades (since 1960) and the European Union Regional Development Fund (since 1975), similar initiatives implemented during the so-called first globalisation from the second half of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century have been undervalued. The following article therefore seeks to contribute to the ongoing scholarly debates on regional development from a historical perspective. The discussion foregrounds initiatives aiming to integrate rural regions within the Habsburg Empire into the global market economy during the period between the Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867 and the beginning of the First World War in 1914. It builds on ideas articulated in the field of new imperial history that emphasise the role of multinational actors and centre-periphery relations.³ The focus of this article lies on handicraft as a complement to rural economic and social histories of agriculture and animal husbandry. In addition, it draws on research on proto-industrialisation, the putting-out system, and home industry that shows how rural regions have been integrated into industrial production since the early modern period.⁴ Efforts to increase the value of rural handicraft in industrial society transcended mere economic considerations as these products were harnessed by national and regional movements. Against this background, the research literature on rural crafts in the late imperial period has paid particular attention to nationalism and the design of national styles.⁵ Whereas the nationalisation of crafts in the imperial urban centres through exhibition and publications is well-documented as a result, this article seeks to offer further insights into the role of crafts in regional economic development.

The following text is divided into three sections discussing strategies for establishing a market for handicraft in two regional economies in the Galician Tatra Mountains (today: southern Poland) and in Moravian Wallachia (today: eastern Czech Republic). The first sec-

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- 1 Markku Tykkyläinen, *Periphery Syndrome – a Reinterpretation of Regional Development Theory in a Resource Periphery*, in: *Fennia* 166/2 (1988), 295–411.
 - 2 Ullrich Kockel, *Regional Culture and Economic Development. Explorations in European Ethnology*, Burlington 2002.
 - 3 Ilya Gerasimov et al., *In Search of New Imperial History*, in: *Ab Imperio* 1 (2005), 33–56; Ulrike von Hirschhausen, *Diskussionsforum: A New Imperial History? Programm, Potenzial, Perspektiven*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 41/4 (2015), 718–757.
 - 4 For a general account of proto-industrialisation, see Peter Kriedte/Hans Medick/Jürgen Schlumbohm, *Industrialisierung vor der Industrialisierung. Gewerbliche Warenproduktion auf dem Land in der Formationsperiode des Kapitalismus*, Göttingen 1978. Besides economic, demographic, and social relief issues, scholarship on proto-industrialisation has focused on the division of household duties and the role of women. See e.g. Stefan Gorißen, *Der protoindustrielle Haushalt als Ort materieller Produktion. Das Ravensberger Feinleinengewerbe in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in: *L'Homme. Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 9/2 (1998), 156–182.
 - 5 See e.g. David Raizman/Ethan Robey (eds.), *Expanding Nationalisms at World's Fairs. Identity, Diversity, and Exchange, 1851–1915*, London 2018; Nicola Gordon Bowe (ed.), *Art and the National Dream. The Search for Vernacular Expression in Turn-of-the-Century Design*, Dublin 1993.

tion traces the economic and social reforms implemented by the Austro-Hungarian state that sought to upvalue handicraft in the age of mechanical production. Vocational schools provided training in commerce, crafts, and technologies, and artisanship was promoted in media outlets as well as through exhibition and collection in museums. In particular, the discussion reveals the social relief issues underlying these processes. In the second section, the example of woodworking (carving, cabinetmaking, turning) shows how handicraft was used to consolidate distinct regional markets in the age of modern labour, entrepreneurial capitalism, and mass media. In both regions discussed in this article, the establishment of a vocational school for woodworking (in Zakopane and in Valašské Meziříčí respectively) went hand in hand with the development of tourism, museum institutions, and commerce through personal and institutional connections. These interrelations helped establish centres in regions that had previously assumed the role of hinterlands. Finally, the third section addresses how crafts were used to construct a regional and national territorial identity for products in modern consumer culture. The analysis reveals the gradual shift that framed a primarily economic and social issue as a matter of identity serving nationalist and regionalist interests. The study draws on a variety of source material written and published by individuals and institutions, integrating documents originating from state authorities, vocational schools, local museums, tourist clubs, and exhibitions. In doing so, it sheds light on the changing city-hinterland relations in the late imperial period and the establishment of new centres within so-called resource peripheries.

Displays of manual labour in the age of mechanical production

In recent decades, several researchers have aimed to challenge the understanding of peasants as being spatially stable and fully submerged in the fields of agriculture and animal husbandry by discussing seasonal migration, small trade, and the putting-out system – especially in the textile industry.⁶ In fact, these men and women were oftentimes “peasant workers” as defined by Holmes and Quataert, whose patterns of economic involvement tied “their natural households to the evolving wage-based industrial system”.⁷ Many peasants engaged in small-scale manufacture and produced goods such as textiles, tools, furniture, and toys in their homes for their own use or for sale or barter at local markets. In Austria-Hungary, the German-speaking economic discourse originating in the capital Vienna referred to this branch of national economy as *Hausindustrie* (home industry). This notion described a mode of organ-

6 See e.g. Katrin Lehnert, *Die Un-Ordnung der Grenze. Mobiler Alltag zwischen Sachsen und Böhmen und die Produktion von Migration im 19. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig 2017; Göran Hoppe/John Langton, *Peasantry to Capitalism. Western Östergötland in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge 1994; Daniel Morrison, “Trading Peasants” and Urbanization in Eighteenth-Century Russia. *The Central Industrial Region*, London 2018.

7 Douglas R. Holmes/Jean H. Quataert, *An Approach to Modern Labor: Worker Peasantries in Historic Saxony and the Friuli Region over Three Centuries*, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28/2 (1986), 191–216, 192. For a reassessment of the role of crafts in the history of industrialisation, see also Maxine Berg, *Skill, Craft, and Histories of Industrialization in Europe and Asia*, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 24 (2014), 127–148.

ised labour at home rather than the performance of work in factory buildings, although such activities did not preclude an affiliation with industry.⁸ The International Statistical Congress held in 1876 in Budapest, Hungary, distinguished between three types of home industry: The first type included the production of goods by families for their own daily needs and consumption in the same household. The second type referred to home industry as an additional source of income alongside agriculture, especially through the selling of small quantities at local markets. The third type consisted of the so-called *Verlagsindustrie* (putting-out system), which became more relevant during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the process of industrialisation progressed. In this system, peasants still produced goods in their own household, but did so on order of a factory or business in their local environs.⁹ In a synthesis of these three types, the Austrian Ministry of Commerce provided a more general definition of home industry as “any commercial productive activity” that was conducted in people’s own homes as their main or additional occupation and without requiring labourers from outside the sphere of their respective family and household.¹⁰

The private nature of this form of production means that the available historical data on home industry and small trade is sparse. Contemporary accounts reveal the difficulties that researchers and reformers faced when seeking to generate reliable information on this segment of national economy. For example, Carl A. Romstorfer, the director of the State School of Commerce (*Staatsgewerbeschule*) in Chernivtsi/Czernowitz/Cernăuți, Bukovina, took on the task of writing a report on home industry in Galicia, a crown land with a high illiteracy rate and few large industries. Romstorfer’s report was prepared in his capacity as a member of the special committee organising the display of a home industry group at the General Agricultural and Forestry Exhibition (*Allgemeine Land- und Forstwirtschaftliche Ausstellung*) held in Vienna in 1890. He noted that peasants in Galicia were wary of sharing information on production in their households, seeking to keep their commercial activities secret from state tax collectors who would lie in ambush at local markets to identify and register them as manufacturers. Even if they did not produce any goods for sale themselves, the population in rural regions withheld the names of those who did to keep them from being subjected to taxation.¹¹

This caution may be attributable to the fact that home industry generally did not yield significant earnings. Because of the low relevance for economic investment and the limited source material, home industry and small trade have not received much attention from scholars of economic history compared to large industries. Instead, handicraft has been primarily discussed in research dealing with the discovery, revival, and preservation of rural traditions

8 See Matthew Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History. Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847–1918*, University Park 2013, 117.

9 Commission permanente du Congrès international de statistique (ed.), *Compte-rendu de la neuvième session à Budapest. Deuxième partie. Travaux du congrès, Budapest 1878, 689–670*. See also Max Hoenig, *Nördliches Mähren*, in: Wilhelm Exner (ed.), *Die Hausindustrie Oesterreichs. Ein Commentar zur Hausindustriellen Abtheilung auf der Allgemeinen Land- und Forstwirtschaftl. Ausstellung, Vienna 1890, 95–96, 95*; Eugen Schwiedland, *Kleingewerbe und Hausindustrie in Österreich. Beiträge zur Kenntnis ihrer Entwicklung und ihrer Existenzbedingungen*, Leipzig 1894.

10 K. k. Handelsministerium-Erlass vom 16. Sept. 1883, cited in Cornelius von Paygert, *Das galizische Schuhmachergewerbe als Hausindustrie*, Munich 1891, 20–21. English translations of this and all following quotations by the author.

11 Carl A. Romstorfer, *Galizien*, in: Exner (ed.), *Hausindustrie*, 106–166, 153.

and folk art. In this context, the interrelation between visual arts, ethnography, and nationalism as well as the development of national styles by appropriating regional cultures – as was the case with the region of Kalotaszeg/Țara Călatei in Transylvania for the Hungarian and the so-called Zakopane Style in Podhale for the Polish nation – have been of particular interest.¹² In contrast to these studies in the field of design history, this article focuses on the socio-economic history of handicraft in modernity. The abovementioned *Allgemeine Land- und Forstwirtschaftliche Ausstellung* of 1890 is only one example of how traditional manual labour was displayed alongside modern technologies in the presentations of regional and national exhibitions and world fairs as well as in the collections of museums of industry and applied arts. Institutionally, handicraft was thus by no means a different domain separated from modern industry. What did set the two fields apart, however, was the lacking economic viability of handicraft in contrast to mechanical production. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the new road and railway infrastructure and the introduction of steamships allowed goods to be transported over longer distances, which in turn placed increasing pressure on the prices of manually produced goods from Europe. Moreover, new materials and manufacturing processes superseded artisanal production as well, for example in the gradual replacement of wooden toys with toys made of metal.¹³ The competition presented by the globalising market economy put the rural population under even greater economic pressure. Rural craftsmen were subjected to a vicious cycle, as they had resorted to small trade to compensate for their shortage of income from agricultural production. This was particularly fatal for villages that had specialised in a single product (e.g. wooden spoons) for sale at local and regional markets. They relied almost entirely on small trade for lack of an industrial centre to provide employment.

In light of these circumstances, the value of manual labour as compared to mechanical production had to be increased, and the domain of home industry became inseparably linked to the issue of peasant relief necessitated by general economic decline. The state took an interest in assuring decent earnings from manual labour in order to prevent the rural population from becoming a social liability for their parishes. In the second half of the nineteenth century, state initiatives promoted handicraft as a remedy to the economic crisis among the rural population by seeking to provide the latter with additional income during harsh winters that rendered agricultural work impossible. Teachers were trained in Vienna and sent out to the various crown lands to instruct the villagers in crafts and thus “teach [Austria’s] people to help themselves”.¹⁴ The response to these initiatives was divided, as some praised the efforts to safeguard traditions and the high level of skill involved in handicraft while others criti-

12 See e.g. Diana Reynolds, Zentrum und Peripherie: Hegemonialer Diskurs oder kreativer Dialog? Wien und die “Volkskünste” 1878 bis 1900, in: Anita Aigner (ed.), Vernakulare Moderne. Grenzüberschreitungen in der Architektur um 1900. Das Bauernhaus und seine Aneignung, Bielefeld 2010, 85–115; Katalin Keserű, The Workshops of Gödöllő: Transformation of a Morrisian Theme, in: *Journal of Design History* 1/1 (1988), 1–23; Edward Manouelian, Invented Traditions: Primitivist Narrative and Design in the Polish Fin de Siècle, in: *Slavic Review* 59/2 (2000), 391–405; David Crowley, Finding Poland in the Margins: The Case of the Zakopane Style, in: *Journal of Design History* 14/2 (2001), 105–116.

13 Manuel Schramm, The Invention and Uses of Folk Art in Germany: Wooden Toys from the Erzgebirge Mountains, in: *Folklore* 115 (2004), 64–76, 65.

14 Amelia S. Levetus, Modern Wicker Furniture, in: *The Studio* 30 (1903–1904), 323–328, 325; cited in David Crowley, The Uses of Peasant Design in Austria-Hungary in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries, in: *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 2/2 (1995), 2–28, 19.

cised an alleged unwillingness to align these economic measures with the necessary social changes. Adolf Loos, a renowned Vienna-based architect who was raised in a family of artisans in Brno/Brünn, condemned the urban elites for selfishly expecting the peasantry to wear home-made folk costumes so as to satisfy the elite's desire for picturesque sights.¹⁵ To Loos, this type of dress reflected the wearer's resignation in regard to achieving social mobility.¹⁶ Members of women's movements in particular criticised the state's efforts by pointing out the miserable working conditions under the putting-out system and the restricted mobility of women who were bound to the household by their work.¹⁷ At a public lecture discussing the significance of female handicraft for the national economy in 1899, Marianne Hainisch, a leader in women's education reform in Austria, stressed the absence of economic prospects for women receiving training in a trade that could not compete with mechanical production. Instead, she advocated full access to other educational programmes including universities, which in her view would truly increase women's options in life.¹⁸

These divergent positions reflect the changing scope and function of home industry between the 1870s and the 1910s. Originally, it represented an intermediate stage between domestic work and full-scale mass production in factories. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, however, the discourse gradually devolved into a binary between rural industry and factory-based manufacturing, thus shifting home industry into the domain of *Volkskunst* (folk art). Alois Riegl, a well-known art historian and preservationist who supervised the textile department at the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (*k. k. Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie*),¹⁹ sought to explain the difference between home industry and folk art in a treatise entitled *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie* (1894). Riegl based his understanding of folk art on traditional artistic expression common to a group of people, whereas home industry integrated these traditional patterns into the new economic system of capitalism.²⁰ Historical and ethnographic scholarship has long pondered the questions addressed by Riegl concerning the relation between modern industry and folk art: Did folk art represent a stage of proto-industry? Can it be considered the opposite of modern industry? Or did the two continue to exist side by side in competition with one another? In an article dealing with the wooden toy industry in the Ore Mountains at the border between Saxony and Bohemia, for example, Manuel Schramm shows that the causal relation between folk art and industry was in fact diametrically opposite to what many studies have assumed. It was for industrial production that the Saxon Homeland Protection Association (*Landesverein Sächsischer Heimatschutz*) invented folk art as a marketing concept in the early twentieth century to increase sales.²¹ The notion of folk art was thus derived from industry and there

15 Rebecca Houze, *Textiles, Fashion, and Design Reform in Austria-Hungary before the First World War. Principles of Dress*, Farnham 2015, 249.

16 Adolf Loos, *Wäsche*, in: Franz Glück (ed.), *Adolf Loos: Sämtliche Schriften in zwei Bänden*, vol. 1, Vienna 1962, 113–120.

17 See e.g. Lily Braun, *Die Frauenfrage. Ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und wirtschaftliche Seite*, Leipzig 1901.

18 Houze, *Textiles*, 131–132. The lecture was held by Viktor Mataja (1857–1934), an Austrian economist, at an event organised by the Society for the Foundation and Promotion of the Museum of Female Crafts (*Gesellschaft zur Gründung und Förderung des Museums für weibliche Handarbeiten*) in Vienna. See *Dokumente der Frauen* 1/5 (1899), 127.

19 Today: *Museum für angewandte Kunst*.

20 Alois Riegl, *Volkskunst, Hausfleiß und Hausindustrie*, Berlin 1894, 13, 57–59.

21 Schramm, *Invention*, 64.

was no fundamental difference between modern industry and traditional handicraft, from the perspective of functionality and praxeology.

Many early initiatives to revive traditional artisanship were supported by members of the gentry who established workshops and took on the task of marketing their products to buyers abroad.²² Peasants were usually too poor to buy the raw materials needed for their production in large quantities, which meant that the state or wealthy citizens often provided the necessary capital. Women from aristocratic families in particular dedicated themselves to supporting the production of textiles (lacework, embroidery, etc.) in rural regions where they also held country estates. One of these women was Etelka Gyarmathy, who attained popularity after decorating the Kalotaszeg room with rural artefacts from the eponymous Transylvanian region at the Hungarian National Exhibition (*Ungarische Allgemeine Landesausstellung/Országos Általános Kiállítás*) in Budapest in 1885. Building upon this popularity, Gyarmathy later headed a centre for home industry in the Kalotaszeg region that maintained agents in Berlin, Munich, Brussels, Paris, London, and New York.²³ Most such ventures by the gentry and the associated exhibitions of rural handicraft were not suited for mass production, however. At the world fair held in Paris in 1878, English and American visitors to the Austro-Hungarian ethnographic collection featuring kilims subsequently placed an order for thousands of such woven carpets. These orders could not be filled since it took several months to hand-weave a kilim in workshops. Count Włodzimierz Dzieduszycki, who had been responsible for the display, thus felt constrained to telegraph to Paris that a kilim factory had burnt down, rather than admitting to managing a small-scale business.²⁴ The charitable initiatives by members of aristocratic families could be maintained only due to the latter's financing and thus did not rely on the market mechanism of supply and demand. As soon as this was the case, mass production of handicraft items in many instances constituted nothing other than decentralised factory-based manufacturing, with the only difference being the building in which the peasants worked. For this reason, Alois Riegl outright denied the possibility of sustaining handicraft under the new economic conditions. When peasants entered into a wage-based system, he asserted, they needed to modify their products in order to meet the expectations of consumers in a free market driven by competition.²⁵

The integration of rural crafts into market mechanisms was reflected in the fact that they began to form parts of regular displays at regional, national, and world exhibitions. The 1867 world fair in Paris, for instance, included a section entitled History of Work (*Histoire du travail*). The exhibition organisers intended to facilitate comparison between products made by people from different epochs and regions in order to inspire contemporary production.²⁶ A few years later, at the world fair held in Vienna in 1873, the organisers included

22 See Sandra Heffernan, Patronage, Photography and Politics. The Influence of Archduchess Isabella on Design Transformation of an Aesthetic, in: Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings 9 (2012), n.pag.; Crowley, Peasant Design, 20.

23 Juliet Kinchin, Hungary. Shaping a National Consciousness, in: Wendy Kaplan (ed.), The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe and America. Design for the Modern World, London 2004, 142–177, 146–147.

24 Ludwik Dębicki, Włodzimierz hr. Dzieduszycki, in: Portrety i sylwetki z dziewiętnastego stulecia [Portraits and figures from the nineteenth century], Kraków 1906, 257–269, 263–264.

25 Riegl, *Volkskunst*, 65–66.

26 M. E. du Sommerard, Exposition universelle de 1867 à Paris. Commission de l'histoire du travail, Paris 1867, 5.

a section dedicated to products from home industry in more than ten European countries and East Asia as well as a special display of women's crafts (*Frauenarbeiten*). The aim of the home industry display was to increase the reputation of manual labour, which contemporaries tended to view as a mark of backwardness and an impediment to achieving the highest standard of civilisation.²⁷ The review written by Jacob von Falke, who was later appointed director of the Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna, illustrates the prevalence of social issues in the displays of this type of industry. In particular, von Falke praised the displays by the national commissions of Hungary, Romania, and Greece, which shared his understanding of the exhibition group as displaying a distinct type of work instead of ethnographic objects. He nevertheless recognised the low economic significance of these products, however, and attributed a moral value to them instead that could, according to von Falke, keep the rural population from assuming work in construction and other heavy industries.²⁸ The arrangement of the display was unsystematic, and another reviewer lamented the "strange" and "scattered" arrangement of the Austrian group, whose objects appeared "as if they refused to belong together".²⁹ Conglomerate arrangements were not unusual for home industry exhibitions that were systematised upon becoming part of a museum collection. In museums, the objects were preserved and used for educational purposes with the aim of enabling home industry products to compete on the international market.³⁰

During the following decades, the Austrian state authorities – motivated by commercial interests – invested more resources into strengthening the educational system for crafts. It was believed that the articulation of new styles distinct from those of other states would support the development of modern consumer society and national economy. Among other things, these reforms in Austria-Hungary were inspired by the British Arts and Crafts movement and the institutions established in the immediate aftermath of the first world fair held in London in 1851. On the basis of the world fair collections, the South Kensington Museum (today: Victoria and Albert Museum) in London was associated with a school dedicated to education and training in art and design. The museum and the school were connected through their joint objective of promoting national industry, and their collections were used by the students and teachers as models for their own creative activity. The South Kensington Museum inspired similar initiatives in other European countries, including the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry established in Vienna in 1863, which was associated with the new Vienna School of Arts and Crafts (*Wiener Kunstgewerbeschule*) four years later. The effects of these initiatives were not limited to the imperial centre but extended to the provinces as well. With the enactment of the Trade Ordinance of 1859, the traditional guild-based apprenticeship in towns had been abolished in favour of liberalisation of the labour market. This decision confronted the reformers with the challenge of ensuring the quality of products, which spurred the transfer of responsibility for training to the state education system. As a result, arts and crafts schools were established throughout Austria, with the

27 Florian Franz Römer, *Die Nationale Hausindustrie auf der Wiener Weltausstellung 1873*, Budapest 1875, 6–9.

28 Jacob von Falke, *Das Kunstgewerbe*, in: Carl von Lützow (ed.), *Kunst und Kunstgewerbe auf der Wiener Weltausstellung 1873*, Leipzig 1875, 41–180, 138–139.

29 Römer, *Nationale Hausindustrie*, 18.

30 Von Falke, *Kunstgewerbe*, 138–139.

school in Vienna assuming a leading role.³¹ Talented students could earn scholarships for studying in Vienna before eventually returning to their native regions as teachers. In 1875, the Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna displayed works from schools from all over the Empire for the first time in an attempt to propagate the ideal of competing in the global market economy throughout Austria-Hungary. Moreover, teachers, directors, and government officials could obtain a comprehensive overview of the state of professional education through the display of school statutes, annual reports, teaching materials, models, tools, and inventories of school libraries.³² The museum in Vienna would then acquire works by pupils from schools across the Empire for its collection as examples of regional folk art.³³

In the early 1870s, around 40 vocational schools (*Fachschulen*) were founded in Austria by the Ministry of Commerce as part of a large-scale effort to foster local industries. Due to the overlap in competencies with the Ministry of Education, a joint commission of both ministries (the *Central-Commission für Angelegenheiten des gewerblichen Unterrichts*) was established in 1872 to oversee all vocational schools.³⁴ These schools continued the tradition of industrial secondary schools that taught general skills to trainees in the evenings and on Sundays when they were not working alongside their master craftsmen. The schools established in the 1870s each specialised in a specific industrial sector, and the ministries were careful to grant financial support only to schools they deemed economically viable. Thus, the vocational schools either built on a locally traditional branch of home industry or on consolidated efforts to develop new industries in peripheral regions. The commission pointed out that the establishment of schools was not suitable as a catchall remedy for local misery, however, since a school's work would not spur economic growth within only a few years' time: Training a few dozen pupils each year could hardly outweigh the unemployment of thousands in a particular region.³⁵ But while the commission took a sceptical stance concerning local requests for schools based on "the existence of one woodcarver among the poverty-stricken population of a mountain valley",³⁶ it was not a rare occurrence for vocational schools to emerge from private initiatives at the local level. Driven by the idea of fostering local industry, teachers and craftsmen installed rooms and bought equipment for training – sometimes years or even decades before state authorities agreed to upgrade these workshops and expend a fixed amount for a state school with qualified teachers.³⁷ At

31 Matthew Rampley, *The Vienna School of Art History. Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847–1918*, University Park 2013, 119.

32 Ausstellung der kunstgewerblichen Fachschulen, in: *Mittheilungen des k. k. Oesterreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie* 10/121 (1875), 413.

33 Houze, *Textiles*, 80; Andreas Gottsmann, *Staatskunst oder Kulturstaat? Staatliche Kunstpolitik in Österreich 1848–1914*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2017, 52.

34 Franz von Haymerle, *Einleitung*, in: Franz von Haymerle (ed.), *Centralblatt für das gewerbliche Unterrichtswesen in Österreich*, vol. I, Vienna 1883, 8.

35 Central-Commission für Angelegenheiten des gewerblichen Unterrichtes, *Denkschrift über die Grundsätze für die Errichtung gewerblicher Fachlehranstalten*, in: von Haymerle (ed.), *Centralblatt*, vol. I, 23–31, 27.

36 *Ibid.*

37 See for example the account on a local teacher who founded a school for shoemakers in Uhnów/Uhniv that later became a state school, in: Paygert, *Schuhmachergewerbe*, 51. The State Tapestry and Carpet School (*Zemská škola gobelinová a kobercová*) established in 1908 in Valašské Meziříčí operated for more than a decade as a private enterprise before receiving support from the parliament. See Jaro Kučera, *Zemská škola gobelinová a kobercová ve Valašském Meziříčí*, in: *Drobné umění, výtvarné snahy* 5 (1924), 103–106.

the same time, not every vocational state school was well-received. If the establishment of a school resulted from a decision by the imperial centre, that plan could be met with prejudice and hesitation by local authorities who did not concur with the ambitions of the political and economic centres to redirect production from local consumption to the global market.³⁸ These divergent opinions notwithstanding, however, it was this process that ultimately generated a modern regional economy and hence a market for rural handicraft.

Modern regional economies: The example of woodworking

In recent years, the regional scale has received more attention from historical scholarship in the wake of an increasing interest in centre-periphery relations and the interaction between the imperial, national, regional, and local levels.³⁹ The efforts aimed at promoting and reviving home industry through vocational schools reveal the interdependencies of these layers for promoting regional economies. The following analysis focuses on two particular regional economies: the first in Podhale in the Galician Tatra Mountains around Zakopane, and the second in Moravian Wallachia around Valašské Meziříčí/Wallachisch Meseritsch. By using the example of woodworking, it seeks to show how efforts directed by nearby political and economic centres as well as by local elites stimulated the growth of economic centres within rural regions, thereby fostering those regions' cultural self-conception. Valašské Meziříčí and Zakopane are illustrative examples for this process as the locations of the largest and most cost-intensive vocational schools for woodworking in Austria-Hungary.⁴⁰ Woodworking includes carving, turning, and cabinetmaking and lends itself well to an analysis of regional economies since it combines the sectors of industry, commerce, and museums and cultural institutions along with the vocational schools outlined above. Wood was considered "*par excellence* the favourite material of the peasant worker"⁴¹ and represented the equivalent male product to textiles, which were mainly manufactured by females. In many places including the ones mentioned in this study, educational facilities for woodworking were established alongside those for textiles.⁴² Whereas male students tended to be from modest backgrounds, however, women learners usually had higher middle-class upbringing. In contrast to their male peers, they had hardly any perspective of securing employment outside of teaching positions upon leaving school.⁴³

38 Die kunstgewerblichen Fachschulen in Oesterreich, in: Beiblatt zur Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst 11/2 (1875), 17–22, 21.

39 Eric Storm, Regionalism in History, 1890–1945: The Cultural Approach, in: European History Quarterly 33/2 (2003), 251–267; Maiken Umbach (ed.), Municipalism, Regionalism, Nationalism: Hybrid Identity Formations and the Making of Modern Europe, Special Issue of European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire 15/3 (2008).

40 Anhang zum zweiten Theil der Protokolle. Uebersicht über den Aufwand für Zwecke des industriellen Bildungswesens im Jahre 1884, in: Franz von Haymerle (ed.), Centralblatt für das gewerbliche Unterrichtswesen in Österreich, vol. IV, Vienna 1885, 93–115, 103–105.

41 Michael Haberlandt, Austrian Peasant Art, in: Charles Holme (ed.), Peasant Art in Austria and Hungary, London/Paris/New York 1911, 15–30, 22.

42 Ibid., 21.

43 Clementine von Braunmühl, Die kunstgewerbliche Ausbildung der Frauen, in: Mittheilungen des Mährischen Gewerbemuseums 4/46 (1886); 4/48 (1886), n.pag.

Contemporaries describe the two regions of Podhale and Moravian Wallachia as prime examples of areas with distinct folk traditions where ethnographic publications on embroidery, woodcarving, and other local crafts abounded.⁴⁴ Against this background, the analysis of the formation of regional economies follows the culture economy approach to rural development as presented by sociologist Christopher Ray. This approach is characterised by an “attempt by rural areas to localize economic control”⁴⁵ that in this case is applied to historical phenomena, thereby providing a *longue durée* perspective on rural development in Europe. Ray’s typology distinguishes between four modes of rural culture economy and involves all the stakeholders that were already relevant in the late nineteenth century. The first mode defined as “commoditization of local/regional culture” seeks to create and valorise resources by attributing a place identity to them. This is particularly relevant for the tourism industry, which ties cultural expression to a specific territory in order to increase economic benefit.⁴⁶ The domain of home industry epitomises this understanding as soon as it is framed as folk art, as discussed in more detail in the third section of this article. The discussion in this section, however, foregrounds Ray’s second and third modes encapsulated in what he refers to as the normative capacity of culture economy. These modes seek to develop the local economy so as to enable engagement with consumer capitalism in the global economy. The second mode constructs a territorial identity and projects it to the outside, while the third mode sells this territorial identity to the inside of a region.⁴⁷ Both modes are outlined below, referring first to the case of Podhale and then to Moravian Wallachia.

In the two regions considered in this article, public associations for tourism, mountaineering, and embellishment of landscapes were instrumental in shaping the modern culture economy. Territorial initiatives launched either through existing organisations (e.g., state authorities) or through new structures, sought to promote regional development. One organisation active in this respect was the Tatra Society (*Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie*), the first alpine club in Galicia. It was established in 1873 in Nowy Targ/Neumarkt close to the Hungarian border by a group of Polish-speaking intellectuals, with its seat moving to Kraków/Krakau soon thereafter. In 1874, the new society adopted statutes outlining four objectives that framed their activities: first, to study the Carpathian Mountains, in particular the Tatra and Pieniny ranges, and disseminate information about them to the public; second, to encourage visits and facilitate access to the mountain areas for researchers and artists; third, to protect local animals; and fourth, to support the mountain industry in all its forms.⁴⁸ With this fourth objective, the Tatra Society stood out among other alpine clubs throughout Europe in that it strove to stimulate industry in mountainous areas and thereby improve the living conditions of the poor mountain population.

44 See among others Władysław Matlakowski, *Zdobienie i sprzęt ludu polskiego na Podhalu: zarys życia ludowego* [Decoration and domestic utensils of the Polish people in Podhale: An outline of folk life], Warsaw 1901; František Bartoš, *Lid a národ. Sebrané rozpravy národopisné a literární* [The folk and the people. Collected ethnographic and literary debates], vol. 1, *Velké Meziříčí* 1891.

45 Christopher Ray, *Culture, Intellectual Property and Territorial Rural Development*, in: *Sociologia Ruralis* 38/1 (1998), 3–20, 3.

46 *Ibid.*, 6.

47 *Ibid.*, 6–7.

48 Statut Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego z siedzibą w Krakowie [Statutes of the Tatra Society headquartered in Kraków], in: *Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego* 1 (1876), 2–19, 2.

For this purpose, the society established a school for woodcarving (*szkoła snycerska*) in Zakopane, a community located in a High Tatra valley, in 1876.⁴⁹ During the first few years of its existence, the school was entirely funded by the society, as neither of the communities of Nowy Targ and Zakopane was willing to co-finance such an institution together with the Ministry of Commerce.⁵⁰ The school enterprise took off when the Tatra Society funded a six-month stay by Maciej Marduła, a self-taught woodcarver from the Podhale region, in Kraków to be trained as the future schoolmaster. He was instructed by Franciszek Wyspiański, a well-known Polish sculptor. At the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition held in 1877 in Lwów/Lemberg/Lviv, the Tatra Society organised a display portraying the school to promote its undertaking to the state authorities. The school's efforts were acknowledged by the Ministry of Commerce and the Galician parliament, which agreed to co-finance the school together with the society and voluntary contributions. As soon as the state entered the scene, the school underwent a professionalisation process directed at "exploiting the native mountain-dwellers' skills" (*wyzyskać wrodzonych zdolności górala*)⁵¹ to develop the local industry. Networks between this endeavour, the alpine club, and vocational schools in Austria grew quickly. The Tatra Society appointed Dr. Ludwik Ganczarski, a physician and custodian of the Tatra Museum in Kuźnice, as member of the school committee, and the Ministry of Commerce ended up appointing another man as headmaster of the school in place of Marduła: Franciszek Neužil (František Neužil) possessed the necessary professional experience to market wooden objects from a mountain region in his previous capacity as teacher at the Vocational School for Woodworking (*Fachschule für Holzbearbeitung/odborná škola pro zpracování dřeva*) in Králíky/Grulich in northeastern Bohemia. This school had been founded in 1873 in connection with the exhibition of home industry in Vienna to promote the sale of wooden nativity scenes and figurines known as *betlémy*. In Králíky, and a few years later in Zakopane, the schools were initially met with scepticism by local residents. Although there were no tuition fees for the school in Králíky, hardly any pupils enrolled in its first year.⁵²

The school in Zakopane was located in a remote mountain region close to the Hungarian-Galician border. Now called the Vocational School for Wood Industry (*Szkoła Zawodowa Przemysłu Drzewnego*), it was at the forefront of the state's efforts to develop secondary education in the relatively poor region, and admission required successful graduation from an elementary school.⁵³ The Galician state granted scholarships to young people without the

49 Sprawozdanie z czynności Towarzystwa tatrzańskiego za czas od 28 maja 1876 do 26 maja 1877 roku [Report on the activity of the Tatra Society in the period from 28 May 1876 to 26 May 1877], in: Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego 2 (1877), 3–7, 4.

50 Leopold Świerż, Kilka słów o szkole snycerskiej w Zakopanem [Some remarks on the school for woodcarving in Zakopane], in: Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego 6 (1881), 128–132, 128.

51 Ibid., 130.

52 Johann Kretschmer, Grulich, in: Exner (ed.), Hausindustrie, 92–94, 93.

53 Sprawozdanie z czynności Wydziału Tow. Tatrzańskiego za czas od 7 lutego 1881 do 5 lutego 1882 r. [Report on the activity of the Department of the Tatra Society in the period from 7 February 1881 to 5 February 1882], in: Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego 7 (1882), IV–VII, V. On the general history of the school, see also Tomasz Kędziora, Zakopiańska szkoła przemysłu drzewnego w latach 1876–1918 [The Zakopane School for Wood Industry in the years 1876–1918], in: Studia Historyczne 34/4 (1993), 477–488; Halina Kenarowa, Od Zakopiańskiej Szkoły Przemysłu Drzewnego do Szkoły Kenara. Studium z dziejów szkolnictwa zawodowo-artystycznego w Polsce [From the Zakopane School for Wood Industry to Kenar's School. A study on the history of vocational-artistic education in Poland], Kraków 1978.

necessary financial means, and the school grew steadily. Initially, the students only produced a variety of small wooden objects such as boxes, chess boards, cigar holders, frames, buttons, spoons, and forks.⁵⁴ Due to continued growth of the school, however, the Ministry of Education decided to enlarge the institution after a few years by including carpentry and the production of larger objects.⁵⁵ In addition, a lacemaking school (*Krajowa Szkoła Koronkarska*) was established in the same community to also improve the living conditions of young women. These schools not only formed part of the same effort by the state but also exhibited personal connections: Josefa Neuzilowa, the wife of the director of the woodworking school, assumed the post of artistic director at the lacemaking school.

The development of the Vocational School for Wood Industry was assessed positively, and by 1887, the Tatra Society declared the fourth objective of its statutes to be fulfilled. After only ten years of operation, a total of twelve teachers and ninety students across eight departments had increased the cost of the school's maintenance beyond the society's financial means. All permanent commitments were taken over by the Galician crown land by recommendation of the Galician Commission for Home and Craft Industries (*Komisja krajowa dla spraw przemysłu domowego i rękodzielniczego*).⁵⁶ Sculptors, carpenters, and turners were trained at the school to become specialists in their field whose products and labour force reached larger markets beyond Zakopane, the Podhale region, and Galicia as a whole. In order to promote the local industry associated with the vocational school, a Society for Wood Industry (*Towarzystwo Przemysłu Drzewnego*) was established in Zakopane in 1888.⁵⁷ This society purchased wood, tools, and instruments for the workshops, supervised the production process, and opened outlets to sell products made in Zakopane. The close relations between this initiative and the school were reflected in Neuzil's appointment as the new industry society's chairman.⁵⁸ The resulting economic network helped to establish and project a territorial identity of Zakopane and the Podhale region to the outside world by means of wooden products.

The establishment of vocational schools simultaneously stimulated endogenous development as manifest in the third mode of culture economy outlined by Ray.⁵⁹ This can be illustrated using the example of Moravian Wallachia, where another major Austrian woodworking school maintained close ties to large businesses in the region. Moravian Wallachia was a poor region in southeastern Moravia with an abundance of wood, and the small town of Valašské Meziříčí emerged as an industrial and educational centre within the region during the nineteenth century. The Vocational School for Woodworking (*odborná škola pro spracování dřeva/Fachschule für Holzbearbeitung*)⁶⁰ was established in 1874 by the Austrian Ministry of Commerce at the instigation of Alois Mikyška, a local resident and member of the

54 Święż, Kilka słów o szkole snycerskiej, 131.

55 Sprawozdanie z czynności Wydziału Tow. Tatrzańskiego za czas od 3 marca 1884 r. do 8 marca 1885 r. [Report on the activity of the Department of the Tatra Society in the period from 3 March 1884 to 8 March 1885], in: Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego 10 (1885), V–VII, V.

56 Sprawozdanie z czynności Wydziału Tow. Tatrzańskiego za czas od 8 lutego 1886 do 6 lutego 1887 [Report on the activity of the Department of the Tatra Society in the period from 8 February 1886 to 6 February 1887], in: Pamiętnik Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego 12 (1887), XXIV–XXVII, XXVI.

57 Listy z kraju. Zakopane [Letters from the region. Zakopane], in: Kurjer Lwowski, 15 September 1888, 2–3, 3.

58 Gospodarstwo, przemysł i handel [Household, industry, and trade], in: Kurjer Lwowski, 17 April 1886, 5–6, 6.

59 Ray, Culture, 7.

60 This was the name of the school from 1883 to 1918. Kamila Valoušková/Ivana Ostránská/Pavla Knápková, Moderní škola napříč třemi staletími. 140 let odborné dřevařské a stavební školy ve Valašském Meziříčí [Mo-

Moravian Parliament. The unhesitant support extended by the state authorities reflected their view of the local wood industry as an economically viable undertaking from the beginning – in contrast to the early efforts in Zakopane. This was partially due to the strong position of the wood industry in the crown land, where the Moravian Museum of Industry (*Mährisches Gewerbemuseum*) in Brno was prepared to organise pattern exhibitions of tables and chairs.⁶¹ This museum understood itself as a centre for Moravian crafts and issued calls to priests and teachers in villages and remote regions to collect products manufactured in home industry and donate them to the museum.⁶² The cooperative of cabinetmakers then encouraged their members, especially the trainees, to visit the museum and draw inspiration for their own work from its furniture collection.⁶³

The school in Valašské Meziříčí was the first educational facility in all of Bohemia and Moravia dedicated to woodworking and thus presented a local alternative to the previously exclusive option of receiving this type of education in Vienna. The school was quickly deeply “enrooted” (*zakořeněna*) in the region of Moravian Wallachia, as one of the school’s graduates described it.⁶⁴ Its pioneering character also entailed the necessity to develop the entire institution from scratch: There was no curriculum, no teachers, no course books, no suitable rooms, and no experience at the local level when the school was established.⁶⁵ Central requirements for curricula of vocational schools were issued by the Ministry of Education only in 1884, a decade after the first schools were founded.⁶⁶ Similarly to Zakopane, the first teachers were identified among local cabinetmakers and woodcarvers and granted scholarships to receive training in Vienna.⁶⁷ These individuals, who had grown up working in home industry, attended drawing classes and were trained in bookkeeping and the use of mechanical tools such as turning lathes. When they returned to their communities, they were each gifted a lathe by the school to take home with them, and the Viennese museum remained in contact with its graduates to review new products and receive patterns, thereby learning more about home industry in the provinces.⁶⁸ As a result, many of the headmasters and teachers at vocational schools across Austria-Hungary during the following decades were part of a close-knit personal network since they had all graduated in Vienna.⁶⁹

dern training across three centuries. 140 years of the School for Woodworking and Construction in Valašské Meziříčí], Vsetín 2014, 41.

- 61 Dr. Kisa, Ueber Tischlerarbeiten, in: Mittheilungen des Mährischen Gewerbemuseums in Brünn 1/17 (1884), n.pag.
- 62 Aufruf an die Bewohner Mährens, in: Mittheilungen des Mährischen Gewerbemuseums in Brünn 1/23 (1884), n.pag.
- 63 Die Tischler-Genossenschaft und das Mähr. Gewerbemuseum, in: Mittheilungen des Mährischen Gewerbemuseums Brünn 5/19 (1887), n.pag.
- 64 Bohumír Jaroněk, Vzpomínky na školu [Memories of school], in: Drobné umění, výtvarné snahy 5 (1924), 142–146, 145.
- 65 B. Weltrubský, Jubileum školy [The jubilee of the school], in: Drobné umění, výtvarné snahy 5 (1924), 123.
- 66 Franz Rosmaël, Zum Lehrwerkstätten-Unterricht an Fachschulen für Holzindustrie, in: Franz von Haymerle (ed.), Supplement zum Centralblatt für das gewerbliche Unterrichtswesen in Österreich, vol. VI, Vienna 1888, 81–87, 81.
- 67 Valoušková/Ostránská/Knápková, Moderní škola, 43.
- 68 Zur Frage der Haus-Industrie, in: Mittheilungen des Mährischen Gewerbemuseums 2/30 (1885), n.pag.
- 69 Ueber die Verwendung der Absolventen der Kunstgewerbeschule des k. k. österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie im Lehramte und in der Praxis, in: von Haymerle (ed.), Supplement, 19–22, 20.

The school in Valašské Meziříčí was closely connected to woodworking businesses settled in the region, as the graduates provided the much-needed workforce for their factories. This mutual relationship was reflected in the fact that the school usually refused requests for products from customers so as not to compete with the businesses active in the region.⁷⁰ The largest enterprises specialised in bentwood furniture; they included Jacob & Josef Kohn, a company based in Vsetín, and Gebrüder Thonet, who operated several factories in Moravia as well as branches in Hungary and the Russian and German Empires, with offices in many major cities in Western Europe and the United States. These companies – along with others in the Austro-Hungarian, German, and Russian Empires – hired graduates from the woodworking school in Moravian Wallachia on a regular basis.⁷¹ The mode of operation of the brothers Thonet illustrates how the craftsmen trained by the vocational schools were integrated into a regional economy alongside the rural population. The company had originally been founded in Vienna but soon relocated to rural Moravia in the 1850s. Similarly to textile entrepreneurs, woodworking companies were attracted by the abundance of unskilled workers among the rural population that would guarantee low production costs.⁷² These workers were desperately needed as the business grew rapidly. By the 1890s, Gebrüder Thonet was producing more than one million pieces of furniture per year and employed more than 6,000 workers.⁷³ The business used beech trees from Moravian Wallachia and contracted labour from members of the rural population: Male peasants transported trees from the forests, while women and children grated and pickled wood before it was sold to factories, where skilled workers assembled the furniture.⁷⁴

Due to the expansion of the putting-out system, economists were increasingly sceptical whether the efforts to support applied arts and handicraft by enhancing the quality of products would be able to save small trade. Against this background, reformers had greater faith in promoting skilled labourers rather than well-crafted products as a solution to economic crisis. They hoped that a higher degree of skill as confirmed by a school certificate would allow workers to earn better wages and secure more regular and steady employment outside of home industry.⁷⁵ However, the graduates entering the woodbending industry were looked down upon by their peers with more artistic ambitions.⁷⁶ Pupils graduating in cabinetmaking and turning generally had easier access to the labour market than those completing courses in woodcarving. Franz Rosmaěl, director of the school in Valašské Meziříčí from 1876 to 1907, expressed concerns over the difficulties of woodcarvers in finding employment, as their skills

70 Zur Frage der Belebung des Kunstgewerbes in Mähren, in: Mittheilungen des Mährischen Gewerbemuseums in Brünn 1/9 (1883), n.pag.

71 See the correspondence on the placement of graduates kept in the State District Archive (SOKA) Vsetín, fond 267, inv. č. 606.

72 Gerhard Meißl, Wien und Brünn – Metropolen und Subzentrum im Wirtschaftsraum der Habsburgermonarchie zwischen 1890 und 1914, in: Lukáš Fasora/Jiří Hanuš/Jiří Malif (eds.), Brno Vidni, Videa Brnu. Zemské metropole a centrum říše v 19. století/Brünn – Wien, Wien – Brünn. Landesmetropolen und Zentrum des Reiches im 19. Jahrhundert, Brno 2008, 173–192, 177.

73 Mährische Industriestätten, in: Mährisches Tagblatt 13/194, 26 August 1892, n.pag.

74 Thonet's gebogene Möbel in Paris, in: Die Presse 31/211, 4 August 1878, 10–11, 11.

75 Emanuel Adler, Ueber die Lage des Handwerks in Oesterreich, in: Edmund Bernatzik/Eugen von Philippovich (eds.), Wiener Staatswissenschaftliche Studien 1, Leipzig/Tübingen 1899, 1–130, 88.

76 Jaroněk, Vzpomínky na školu, 143.

were only used in the production of luxury goods.⁷⁷ Heated debates about the value of skills consequently ensued that were framed not only in economic but increasingly in political terms. The position of reformers interested in economic viability contrasted sharply with the artistic ambition of school graduates, and the centralised education system and expanding factory production were met with criticism by those who feared cultural homogenisation across the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Shifting regional economies and appropriation of local traditions

The efforts to establish schools ultimately could not prevent the gradual economic decline of manual production and home industry. Over the course of a few decades, this decline led to the inevitable public perception of handicraft as an outdated skill, rooted in the deep past and reflective of bygone traditions. Michael Haberlandt, director of the Austrian Museum of Ethnography, summarised this perspective in an article on the home industry exhibition he had co-organised at the Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna in 1905. He characterised the exhibition as a historical one in which “the ‘once’ and ‘in former times’ are eternal refrains in the hymn of the public to the diligent and exquisite work of our people.”⁷⁸ This realisation notwithstanding, Haberlandt still endorsed the objective of reviving home industry through museums, vocational schools, and the discipline of ethnography – even if no results had been achieved in this respect since the General Agricultural and Forestry Exhibition of 1890.⁷⁹ He believed that the “primitive enterprise” of home industry reflected the true nature of the people (*Volk*),⁸⁰ and therefore criticised the vocational schools all over Austria-Hungary for lacking close contact to the local population, instead adhering to the requirements of education as defined by the imperial centre. Haberlandt’s position found expression in his exclamation calling for “more respect to the people and their skills and less ‘school!’”⁸¹ Such a critical view on the state vocational school system sought to make sense of the inevitable decline of handicraft. At the same time, the perceived estrangement of people’s skills through state education was prone to regionalist and nationalist interpretations.

The discussion of the woodworking school in Valašské Meziříčí above shows that the labour aspect by far outweighed the design aspect in the imperial school system. Amelia Sarah Levetus, a British-Austrian art historian, has appositely pointed out that the objective of training was “to create superior workmen”, whereas the schools of applied arts were responsible for educating men to be artists and teachers.⁸² Woodcarving was one of the fields where the pro-

77 Rosmaël, *Zum Lehrwerkstätten-Unterricht*, 83.

78 Michael Haberlandt, *Ausstellung Österreichischer Hausindustrie und Volkskunst, Kunst und Kunsthandwerk*, in: *Monatsschrift des k. k. Österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie* 9 (1906), 24–52, 24.

79 *Ibid.*, 40–42.

80 *Ibid.*, 28. For a discussion of Michael Haberlandt’s ethnographic work, see Olaf Bockhorn, *Nationale Volkskunde versus Europäische Ethnographie. Michael Haberlandt und die österreichische Volkskunde um die Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert*, in: *Narodna umjetnost* 33/2 (2005), 87–97, 92.

81 Haberlandt, *Ausstellung*, 46.

82 Amelia Sarah Levetus, *The Craft Schools of Austria*, in: *International Studio* 103 (1905), 201–219, 201.

fessional identities of worker and artist overlapped. Because of their interest in artistry, some pupils, graduates, and local residents expressed resistance to teachers and course content provided by the Viennese institutions. Bohumír Jaroněk, for example, a painter who attended the woodworking school in Valašské Meziříčí from 1885 to 1889, criticised the school curriculum for covert Germanisation. In his memoirs, he harshly disapproved of the favouring of German over Czech terminology and reproached his teachers for deeming command of the Czech language a useless skill on the labour market. In an attempt to counter this trend, Jaroněk compiled and shared terminology with fellow Czech-speaking students.⁸³ The course content he described corresponded to the programme of Viennese historicism by promoting Roman, Greek, and Renaissance design. While this programme was exported to curricula across the Empire by the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry, ornaments produced in local home industry were simultaneously sent to Vienna from schools in regions from Galicia all the way to Bosnia.⁸⁴

The distinct qualities of rural material culture in terms of colours, patterns, materials, and techniques were promoted by a centralised imperial system of media outlets ranging from pattern portfolios to the acquisition of objects for museum collections and exhibitions. Between the 1870s and the 1900s, displays of handicraft became a standard element of regional and world fairs. Associations for the promotion of home industry from various countries organised display groups that featured actual individuals from rural regions showcasing their skills on the exhibition ground. At the world fair in Paris in 1900, woodcarving was performed in the Russian Village that had been set up by a society promoting new Russian art. At the world fair in Chicago in 1893, two Irish villages were installed by organisations promoting industry in rural regions, the Irish Industries Association and the Donegal Industrial Fund.⁸⁵ Lastly, the Galician Regional Exhibition (*Powszechna Wystawa Krajowa*) in L'viv in 1894 included the arrangement of an entire village consisting of farmhouses and huts from various regions of Galicia that had been translocated to the exhibition ground and were grouped around a wooden village church. In a Hutsul hut from Kosów/Kosiv in the Carpathian Mountains, the visitors could watch Wasyl Szkryblak (Vasyl' Shkribliak), a Hutsul woodcarver, perform his work as he lived there with his family during the entire time of the exhibition.⁸⁶ Szkryblak later became a teacher at the woodworking school in Wyzhnytsia/Wyżnica/Vijnița, Bukovina. After decades of promotion, the reputation of the Hutsul woodcarvers extended well beyond their home region, and the teachers employed at the school in Bukovina received orders from as far away as the USA.⁸⁷

83 Jaroněk, *Vzpomínky na školu*, 145.

84 Diana Reynolds, *Die österreichische Synthese. Metropole, Peripherie und die kunstgewerblichen Fachschulen des Museums*, in: Peter Noever (ed.), *Kunst und Industrie. Die Anfänge des Museums für angewandte Kunst, Vienna 2000*, 203–218; see also David Crowley, *Zur Aneignung bäuerlicher Formen in Österreich-Ungarn im späten 19. Jahrhundert und frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, in: Aigner (ed.), *Vernakulare Moderne*, 57–84.

85 See Martin Wörner, *Vergnügung und Belehrung. Volkskultur auf den Weltausstellungen 1851–1900*, Münster et al. 1999, 40, 80, 98.

86 Albert Zipper, *Führer durch die Allgemeine Landes-Ausstellung sowie durch die königl. Hauptstadt Lemberg, L'viv 1894*, 92.

87 Tadeusz Seweryn, *Huculska wykładanka w drzewie [Hutsul design in wood]*, in: *Przemysł Rzemiosło Sztuka* 4/1 (1924), 5–18, 11.

Throughout Europe, networks promoted regionalist product design and attended to the sale of rural handicraft.⁸⁸ The continuity of these efforts at the regional level is particularly striking in a portfolio series consisting of ten issues published by the Industrial Museum in Lviv (*Muzeum Przemysłowe*) in 1880–1889. The series entitled *Home Industry Ornaments by Ruthenian Peasants* presented a collection of handmade products to the readers for inspirational use in drawing classes. The seventh issue published in 1883 was dedicated to Hutsul woodcarving and especially the work of Jurko Szkryblak (Iurii Shkribliak), Wasył's father and a peasant from the mountain village of Jaworów/Iavoriv located around fifty kilometres west of Lviv.⁸⁹ The publication assembled drawings of wooden objects carved by Szkryblak and presented a short account of his life to illustrate the possibilities open to “true talents” of succeeding in the most unfavourable conditions. Szkryblak had been born the son of mountain peasants and left for Hungary as a young man upon joining the army. When he returned to his village, he engaged in woodcarving – much to the amusement of his neighbours. In addition to working as a farmer, he began to sell his artefacts at local markets. Public recognition came for the first time when a local priest commissioned him to reconstruct the main altar in the village church of Jaworów. Szkryblak's reputation slowly began to extend beyond the boundaries of the mountain village and eventually reached the intellectual milieu surrounding the Industrial Museum in Lviv. Facilitated by his relations to this sphere, he was able to display his work at exhibitions in several cities within the Habsburg Empire: in Lviv (1877), Kolomyja/Kołomyja/Kolomea (1880), and Trieste/Triest/Trst (1882), where he was awarded medals.⁹⁰

The purpose of pattern portfolios was to support the modernisation of crafts and the development of a new style that would make manual production more competitive on the market. Pattern portfolios featuring folk art were aimed at complementing or opposing the designs from classical antiquity and the Renaissance that had previously dominated drawing classes. Dušan Jurkovič, for example, an architect from Upper Hungary, was motivated by the general lament that design had fallen into eclecticism when collecting patterns of Slovak crafts for use in his own work.⁹¹ Publications like his series *Práce lidu našeho* (The Works of Our People) were intended not simply to preserve handicrafts but rather to revive them as part of modern industry. By using pattern portfolios in drawing classes from elementary schools to vocational schools and even universities, the Ministry of Education sought to counteract the gradual disappearance of traditional ornaments. The schools harnessed didactic formats to disseminate knowledge on embroidery and weaving techniques that were being superseded by other technologies. In 1911, the Society of Drawing Professors in Moravia dedicated an entire issue of their journal *Náš směr* (Our Movement) to the question of the use of ornaments inspired by folk embroidery in the school curriculum, assembling reports submitted by teach-

88 See e.g. Lada Hubatová-Vacková, *Krása věcí, průmysl a moderní společnost (1870–1918)* [The beauty of things, industry and modern society (1870–1918)], in: Lada Hubatová-Vacková/Martina Pachmanová/Pavla Pečínková (eds.), *Věci a slova. Umělecký průmysl, užité umění a design v české teorii a kritice 1870–1970* [Things and words. Arts and crafts, applied arts and design in Czech theory and criticism 1870–1970], Prague 2014, 27–63.

89 Ludwik Wierzbicki (ed.), *Wzory przemysłu domowego. Wyroby snycerskie włościan na Rusi (Huculy)* [Home Industry Ornaments. Woodcarved Products by Ruthenian Peasants (Hutsuls)], Lviv 1883.

90 Seweryn, Huculska wykładanka, 7.

91 Dušan Jurkovič, *Práce lidu našeho. Lidové stavby, zařízení a výzdoba obydlí. Drobné práce* [The works of our people. Folk architecture, utensils and decoration of dwellings. Minor works], Vienna 1905.

ers and headmasters across Moravia. One teacher from a public school warned that economic interests still outweighed the educational aspect of ornaments in view of the strong tendency to use folk patterns for commercial purposes. He stipulated that teachers would need to be cautious not to motivate their pupils to view ornaments as a means of advertisement.⁹²

Against this background, efforts to design a distinct style on the basis of local traditions, in a similar vein as the invented traditions described by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger,⁹³ were supported by state authorities. Economic interests were a central factor in this development, as actors either opposed commercialisation or sought to forge their own style in competition with others. Among the styles promoted during the late nineteenth century, the so-called Zakopane Style stands out in its successful marketisation. The development of the *styl zakopiański* is generally attributed to Stanisław Witkiewicz, a painter and architect born in the Russian partition of Poland who visited Zakopane for the first time in 1886 and was instantly fascinated with the local mountain culture. At a time when the chalet style originating in the Swiss and Austrian Alps dominated the construction of leisure residences in the Carpathian Mountains, Witkiewicz drew inspiration from the local techniques of the *Górale* (highlanders) in Podhale when designing commissioned buildings in Zakopane. One of these buildings, which is considered exemplary for this style today, was the Villa Koliba he designed in 1892 for Zygmunt Gnatowski, who needed a building to house his ethnographic collections.⁹⁴

Witkiewicz's buildings represented one of several versions and competing visions of the Zakopane Style at the turn of the century. The term "Zakopane Style" was probably coined by the first director of the woodworking school, Franciszek Neuzil, while promoting a series of furniture items produced by the school workshops for the local noblewoman Róża Potocka. The school's second director, Edgar Kováts, an architect born in Bukovina, popularised the notion among the wider public. He was well-connected within the Viennese and L'viv intellectual milieu and was promoted to professor of architecture at the L'viv Polytechnic School (*Szkoła Politechniczna*) a few years after accepting the position in Zakopane. Moreover, Kováts was responsible for the Galician pavilion at the world fair in Paris in 1900, which he designed together with his students. In 1899, he published a collection assembling 24 tableaux featuring works from the woodworking school and entitled *Sposób zakopiański* (The Zakopane Manner) in Vienna with funding from the Galician Provincial Council. Kováts appears to have been aware of the contested issues surrounding the presentation of a distinct local style to the wider public beyond the Tatra Mountains. In the introduction to this collection, he explained that he did not intend to participate in the debates over whether the ornaments belonged to an unknown prehistoric people, an earlier epoch of Polish art history, or whether they were autochthonic works of the local *Górale*.⁹⁵

By contrast, the Zakopane Style promoted by Witkiewicz integrated two of these interpretations. Shortly after Kováts' publication, Stanisław Eljasz Radzikowski, a member of the Tatra Society and friend of Witkiewicz, published a treatise on the Zakopane Style that embedded

92 B. Fišer, Untitled, in: *Náš směr*. Review for Artistic Education, Drawing and Artistic Industry 6–7 (1911), 111–113, 112.

93 Eric Hobsbawm/Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983.

94 See Teresa Jabłońska/Zbigniew Moździerz, "Koliba" pierwszy dom w stylu zakopiańskim ["Koliba" the first house in the Zakopane Style], Zakopane 1994.

95 Edgar Kováts, *Sposób zakopiański* = *Manière de Zakopane* = *Die Art Zakopane*, Vienna 1899.

the characteristics of *Górale* material culture in a narrative centring on the Polish nation.⁹⁶ The style promoted by the woodworking school was criticised by Witkiewicz for rejecting the essence of the local mountaineers' culture. Soon upon his arrival in Zakopane, Witkiewicz launched a campaign against then director Franciszek Neužil to have him removed. He feared that the curriculum focusing on Renaissance elements, as was standard throughout the Habsburg Empire, would impose designs on the local population that would make them forget their own traditions.⁹⁷ He accused the school of promoting "Tyrolean-Viennese taste, a German poison" that was "killing the artistry of the highlanders".⁹⁸ This position fearing German-speaking dominance strongly overlapped with criticism expressed both within and outside the Austro-Hungarian Empire that equated cultural imperialism with Germanisation. Besides Jaroněk's memoirs mentioned above, similar statements were made in the Russian Empire in the context of efforts to modernise Estonian culture⁹⁹ and in the British Empire in reaction to the new hegemony of German manufacturers.¹⁰⁰

Research on the debate surrounding the Zakopane Style has emblematised the discovery of cultural elements in the periphery by urban intellectuals and their appropriation for the Polish national movement. However, the debate is also significant in terms of agents from different regions in the Austrian-Hungarian and Russian Empires disputing the *genius loci* of a particular place they had all moved to following the patterns of imperial mobility. Against this background, the debate between Witkiewicz and the schoolteachers also revolved around the general role of education in promoting local handicraft. Witkiewicz was sceptical of formal education in general and did not let his son attend school.¹⁰¹ What is more, their training in Vienna did not appear to influence the position of the vocational school's headmasters on the Zakopane Style: All of the directors including Neužil, Kováts, and later Stanisław Barabasz, who was born in Galicia and a close friend of Witkiewicz, had received their training in Vienna. In the debate about the Zakopane Style, these actors born in different places and fluent in several languages disputed the framework in which the local *Górale* culture was to be embedded: Did it form part of a centralised empire either celebrating or denying regional diversity? Did it belong to the Polish nation or to some other entity altogether? In the end, the arguments presented by the two camps promoting the interests of the Habsburg Empire on the one hand and of the Polish national movement on the other had much in common: They both appropriated imperial institutions for their own purposes as they invoked the authority

96 Stanisław Eljasz Radzikowski, *Styl zakopiański* [The Zakopane Style], Lviv 1900.

97 Diana Reynolds Cordileone, Alois Riegl in Vienna 1875–1905. An Institutional Biography, Farnham 2014, 119–120.

98 Stanisław Witkiewicz, *Na przełęczy. Wrażenia i obrazy z Tatr* [On the mountain pass. Impressions and images from the Tatra mountains], vol. I, Warsaw 1891, 32.

99 After a trip to Finland, Natalie Pärna organised needlework courses for girls in Tallinn in order to modernise Estonian culture and accused the previous course of promoting Germanisation. Sirje Tamul, Die ersten Handarbeits- und Haushaltungsschulen im estnischen Mädchenschulwesen (19. Jahrhundert bis 1917), in: Anja Wilhelmi (ed.), *Bildungskonzepte und Bildungsinitiativen in Nordosteuropa (19. Jahrhundert)*, Wiesbaden 2011, 339–364, 349.

100 Ernest Edwin Williams, "Made in Germany", London 1896.

101 Tomasz Pawlak, Prywatysta Witkiewicz. O maturze Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza [The private person Witkiewicz. On the school leaving examination of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz], in: *Pamiętnik Literacki. Czasopismo kwartalne poświęcone historii i krytyce literatury polskiej* 2 (2013), 205–218.

of culture to assert their respective visions of empire.¹⁰² Consequently, the reconceptualisation of local mountain culture was shaped by the forces of regionalism, nationalism, imperialism, and globalisation alike.¹⁰³ It was not just Witkiewicz who claimed to be acting in the interest of the local population – the members of the Austro-Hungarian imperial school system had similar ideas in mind when they reminded the teachers at vocational schools that their institutions had been established “for this land, for these conditions, for this population”.¹⁰⁴ Ultimately, both strategies to adapt and shape new local traditions were based on economic considerations that aimed to project a territorial identity to a public beyond the local sphere.

From the perspective of students, the imperial framework – and especially the efforts to promote local industry within the national economy – provided education in art and design to young men who had previously lacked such opportunities. The training received at vocational schools did not have to contrast with place identities; rather, the social relations fostered by these schools supported identification with the region by training local students as part of an imperial regional development initiative. In the case of Valašské Meziříčí, the former Czech-speaking schoolmates reunited on multiple occasions in various cities in Hungary, Bohemia, and the German Empire while maintaining strong ties to the region of Moravian Wallachia. These ties were consolidated several decades later in the establishment of the Wallachian Open-Air Museum in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm founded by the Jaroněk brothers, who had both attended the woodworking school in the 1880s.

Conclusion

Competing claims to local traditions by different groups of agents highlight the need for comparative approaches in historical research on rural regions. The example of woodworking in the two case studies of Zakopane and Valašské Meziříčí exhibited similar patterns of appropriation by translocal elites despite the different embedding of styles within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Polish nation, Moravian Wallachia, Zakopane, or the international market. The debates on regional styles revolved not least around the question of which markets the products were directed at, who controlled their sale, and who consumed them. By tracing the position of handicraft within the market economy of the late nineteenth century, this contribution has revealed the economic considerations underlying debates on place identity that continue to have an effect into the present.

The preceding pages presented different strategies for establishing a market for rural handicraft in Austria-Hungary after mechanical production, migration, and new global import channels for agricultural goods drastically transformed working patterns in the countryside. As a result of this transformation, home industry was no longer deemed economically viable, and initiatives by the state and members of the intellectual urban milieu sought to increase the

102 Pieter Judson shows how imperial institutions helped shape local society, thus treating nationalism as “a product of imperial structures and regional traditions”. Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire. A New History*. Cambridge, MA 2016, 9, 269.

103 For a similar mechanism at work in the German Empire, see Maiken Umbach, *The Vernacular International: Heimat, Modernism and the Global Market in Early Twentieth-Century Germany*, in: *National Identities 1* (2002), 45–68.

104 Romstorfer, *Galizien*, 153.

value of handicraft. Over the course of several decades, debates unfolded on how to preserve artisanry while the social conditions of production were undergoing fundamental changes. By drawing on Christopher Ray's model of rural culture economy, this contribution has shown that the valorisation process could take the shape of regional development projected to the outside world or of endogenous development within a specific region. In Zakopane, the Tatra Society and the state supported woodworking in order to sell distinct regional characteristics to outside markets. In Valašské Meziříčí, on the other hand, local politicians and the state promoted woodworking to secure the workforce for regional industries. These efforts supporting regional development, whether directed towards the outside or inside of the respective region, resulted in the establishment of vocational schools. Such institutions followed the imperial logic of providing social relief to peripheries by teaching them how to help themselves in difficult economic conditions. The Empire coordinated the export of teachers trained in Vienna and the import of local skills and ornaments for display in the Museum of Art and Industry in the imperial capital.

With this process, the Austro-Hungarian state put the hinterland on display as part of a major initiative to revive handicraft. The efforts were driven by the wish to train workers rather than artists and designers, however, and the display of handicraft items was integrated with modern technologies at world fairs and regional exhibitions or formed part of exhibits presenting the past and present of work. The purpose of their display was thus first and foremost to engage with socio-economic issues, although this perspective shifted in the direction of a more representational function towards the end of the nineteenth century. After the first generations of craftsmen from the peripheries had received their education in Vienna and returned to their native regions, the economic role of handicraft and the design of objects was disputed by newly emerging centres all over the Empire. The publication of pattern portfolios and the promotion of local styles such as the Zakopane Style show how agents in the regions challenged the narrative projected by the imperial centre. Their requests for decentralisation in terms of design were sometimes embedded in national movements as in the case of the Polish-speaking milieu around Kraków, or they could be aligned with Moravian, Austro-Hungarian, or Czechoslovak identity-building projects as in the case of Moravian Wallachia.

Exhibition display was intended to support rural handicraft under new economic conditions, but instead it ultimately promoted this branch of industry as the product of a bygone era. Visitors at home industry exhibitions increasingly came to view these products as historical relics similar to the archaeological artefacts displayed only a few rooms further on. In the course of this process, handicraft changed its social and economic function, and the place identity of products assumed ever greater importance. This development helped spur regional economies, but it also ascribed new meaning to crafts and to the people performing those crafts. Against this background, it is important to consider the entire mechanism at work in establishing regional culture economies. Small trade and rural woodworkers were integrated into an ever-expanding global market driven by industrial interests while the narratives describing manual production sought to maintain the aura of the traditional, individual woodcarver. Hence the efforts to establish a market for rural handicraft are illustrative of the changing city-hinterland relations in modernity, as agents in rural regions began to establish centres in their own right.