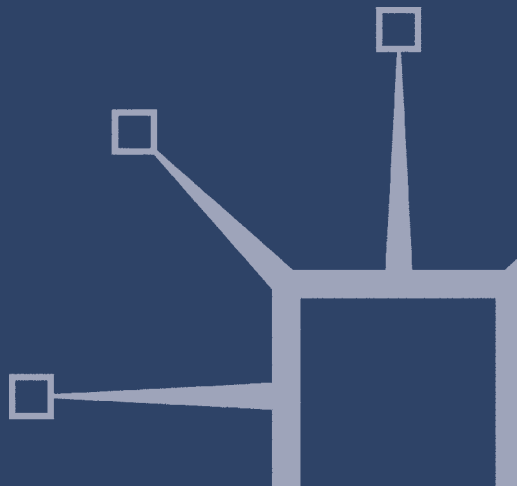# Transnationalism in the Prussian East

From National Conflict to Synthesis, 1871–1914

Mark Tilse

The Palgrave Macmillan Transnational History Series

Series Editors: **Akira Iriye**, Professor of History at Harvard University, and **Rana Mitter**, Professor of the History and Politics of Modern China at the University of Oxford.

This distinguished series seeks to: develop scholarship on the transnational connections of societies and peoples in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; provide a forum in which work on transnational history from different periods, subjects, and regions of the world can be brought together in fruitful connection; and explore the theoretical and methodological links between transnational and other related approaches such as comparative history and world history.

Editorial Board: **Thomas Bender**, University Professor of the Humanities, Professor of History, and Director of the International Center for Advanced Studies, New York University; **Jane Carruthers**, Professor of History, University of South Africa; **Mariano Plotkin**, Professor, Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Buenos Aires, and member of the National Council of Scientific and Technological Research, Argentina; **Pierre-Yves Saunier**, Researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France and Visiting Professor at the University of Montreal; **Ian Tyrrell**, Professor of History, University of New South Wales.

Titles include:

Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez
THE CHINESE IN BRITAIN, 1800–PRESENT
Economy, Transnationalism and Identity

Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra (*editors*)
COSMOPOLITAN THOUGHT ZONES
South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas

Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier (*editors*)
COMPETING VISIONS OF WORLD ORDER
Global Moments and Movements, 1880s–1930s

Martin Conway and Kiran Klaus Patel (*editors*)
EUROPEANIZATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
Historical Approaches

Joy Damousi, Mariano Ben Plotkin (*editors*)
THE TRANSNATIONAL UNCONSCIOUS
Essays in the History of Psychoanalysis and Transnationalism

Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott (*editors*)
TRANSNATIONAL LIVES
Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700–present

Jonathan Gantt
IRISH TERRORISM IN THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY, 1865–1922

Eri Hotta
PAN-ASIANISM AND JAPAN'S WAR, 1931–45

Martin Klimbe and Joachim Scharloth (*editors*)
1968 IN EUROPE
A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–77

Erika Kuhlman
RECONSTRUCTING PATRIARCHY AFTER THE GREAT WAR
Women, Gender and Postwar Reconciliation between Nations

Deep Kanta Lahiri Choudhury
TELEGRAPHIC IMPERIALISM
Crisis and Panic in the Indian Empire, c. 1830–1920

Bruce Mazlish
THE IDEA OF HUMANITY IN THE GLOBAL ERA

Glenda Sluga
THE NATION, PSYCHOLOGY, AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, 1870–1919

Mark Tilse
TRANSNATIONALISM IN THE PRUSSIAN EAST
From National Conflict to Synthesis, 1871–1914

Transnationalism in the Prussian East

From National Conflict to Synthesis, 1871–1914

Mark Tilse

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Contents

List of Tables

Appendices

Preface

This book aims to advance knowledge of nationalism through study of the forms of interaction between national groups. In the contemporary global context, nations, specifically nation-states, are prevalent, and their relations marked by forms of conflict that appear ubiquitous and perennial. Nevertheless, as one of the foremost properties of nationalism, 'conflict' is a phenomenon that lacks adequate explanation. It is hoped that this book will add a further nuance to the meaning of conflict as it occurs between nations.

In the research of nations and nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe, theories of conflict have been pre-eminent. This study, in comparison, expounds a further dimension of the relationship between nations, by its application of the paradigm of *synthesis* – one that is ancient, even primordial, in origin, and fundamental to the Western philosophical tradition. Having been associated in the social sciences principally with Hegelian and Marxian social theory, this study represents the first application of this concept in the research of nations and nationalism. The book uncovers and theorizes forms of harmonization between nations, through its examination of the protracted history of conflict between Germans and Poles in the Prussian East.

This book, which is the product of doctoral research, is based upon a diverse range of German and Polish source material, much of which has not been utilized before. In particular, extensive use has been made of state files located in the Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu, Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku, the Geheimes Staatsarchiv-Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin and the Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Bonn.

complete. In addition, I wish to acknowledge the dedicated care of my supervisor, Dr Mark Hewitson, as well as the many other individuals who have contributed generously in various ways to this book. Of these, special mention should be made of Dr Lars Fischer, Dr Matthias Strohn, Dr Daniel Rudolph, Johanna Wallbaum, Juliane Wallbaum and Christa Wallbaum, and the partners and fellows of the European Doctorate in the Social History of Europe and the Mediterranean. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. St. Karol Kubicki for his kind permission to reproduce 'Wieża Babel' for the cover image of this book. Finally, this book is dedicated to my grandparents Olga, Joe and Betty.

Mark Tilse
February 2011

Series Foreword

In the mid-twentieth century, the borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe saw some of the most terrifying consequences of nationalism at its worst. An aggressive empire used ideas of race to conquer huge tracts of the region, and endorsed ideas of racial 'purity' that enabled them to carry out a programme of enslavement and genocide. In the post-war period, the same region found itself under another empire, that of the Soviet Union. In more recent years, it has been the rather different framework and structures of the European Union that have influenced the politics of the region. Yet its changing history does demonstrate that transnational structures have always existed alongside national ones in this region.

Mark Tilse's brilliantly stimulating volume adds another dimension to the complex history of this much-contested region. Using a rich range of primary sources and a rigorous approach to the meaning of transnationalism, he shows the way that German and Polish identities interacted, conflicted and synthesized in the late nineteenth century. At a time when Polish statehood still seemed a distant dream, the inter-actions between the Polish and German communities in Eastern Prussia meant that two identities often seen as emblematic of two oppositional national groups also coexisted and cooperated. In areas varying from politics to personal relationships, the two communities found areas of commonality as well as the conflict that came from the 'springtime of nations' just a few decades previously. Particularly notable is the role of the Catholic Church, another great transnational entity whose influence on European modernity has perhaps been underestimated in recent years. But perhaps the most intriguing area is the study of intermarriage between Germans and Poles, which as Tilse points out 'represented social harmonization between the nations in its most intimate and intense form, and the concomitant creation of a distinctly transnational institution': surely one of the most powerful rebukes, underpinned by empirical data of the most rigorous sort, to the 'purist' talk of race and nation that would overwhelm the region just a quarter-century after the conclusion of the period covered by this study.

Tilse's study will be of interest to historians who study areas well beyond the Prussian East itself. It is a superb piece of historical research,

first and foremost, but it also does a sterling service in indicating directions of travel for the field of transnational history. By combining archival research in 'national' archives with a framework that demands attention beyond the categories of the nation-state, this study is an exemplar of the new ways of seeing historical terrain which we had thought were familiar. We are proud to include it in our series.

Rana Mitter
Akira Iriye

Abbreviations

AFES	*Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Bonn*
APG	*Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku*
APP	*Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu*
GStA PK	*Geheimes Staatsarchiv-Preussischer Kulturbesitz*
HdA	*Haus der Abgeordneten*
PPS	*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* (Polish Socialist Party)
FSV	*Freisinnige Vereinigung* (Freethinking Union)
FSVP	*Freisinnige Volkspartei* (Freethinking People's Party)
SDKP	*Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego* (Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland)
SDKPiL	*Socjaldemokracja Królestwa Polskiego i Litwy* (Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania)
SPD	*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
TCL	*Towarzystwo Czytelni Ludowych* (Society for Folk Reading Rooms)
TDN	*Towarzystwo Demokratyczno-Narodowe* (Democratic National Society)
KTRP	*Katolickich Towarzystw Robotników Polskich* (Catholic Association of Polish Workers)
TSP	*Towarzystwo Socjalistow Polskich* (Society of Polish Socialists)
ZKTRP	*Związek Katolickich Towarzystw Robotników Polskich* (Union of Polish Catholic Workers' Societies)
ZZP	*Zjednoczenia Zawodowego Polskiego* (Polish Trade Union)

Introduction

In the close confines of today's city of Posen, Germans and Poles treat each other like foreigners.

MORITZ JAFFÉ (1909)[1]

Poles and Germans were divided as two completely inimical peoples; there was no contact between them.

EUGEN KÜHNEMANN (1937)[2]

Poles and Germans are so mixed together that a political division would harm the one or the other people.

DIETRICH SCHÄFER (1913)[3]

In the back of Schulze's farm sheds, they're kicking up a row, the Polish ox is dancing with the German cow![4]

It was the paradox of German–Polish history that Germans and Poles were at once enemies and lovers, strangers and friends; multiple forms of interaction structured the national relationship, as it existed in the German Empire. The problem at the heart of this paradox was not only a matter of hermeneutics, but also of the sustainability of a particular mode of social existence: the nation. In the German–Polish provinces, this question became ever more critical as the two principal nationalities became increasingly embroiled in conflict during the latter decades of the nineteenth century.

It was, however, a marked feature of this conflict that, consequentially, individuals and groups came to deviate from national categories of thought and behaviour, manifesting the creation of 'transnational' modes of existence. In theoretical terms, the formation of transnational

phenomena constituted a triadic paradigm of *synthesis*: the interaction between two discrete nationalisms had inadvertently created a new category that harmonized the relationship between the original two. This study will therefore present the paradigm of synthesis between nationalisms as a distinct theory of transnationalism.

The interaction between nations has been construed according to a number of interpretative paradigms. The most ubiquitous is of 'conflict'.[5] A paradigm of *conflict* has been dominant in the analysis and interpretation of relations between Germans and Poles during the nineteenth century. In essence, the growth of two national movements during the course of the century, and the oppressive policies exercised against the Polish nationality by successive Prussian governments, resulted in national *conflict*; Germans and Poles struggled over national rights and against the perceived threat to the survival of their national communities. This paradigm is typical in the historiographical field. German and Polish scholarship concerning the German–Polish relationship between the Partitions of Poland and the First World War has, by tradition, centred on Prussian *Polenpolitik* and the adversarial social and political aspects of the relationship.[6] These analyses have naturally been based on a bipartite national model. The characterization of the German–Polish relationship as a 'nationality conflict' originated in the vocabulary of Imperial Germany, where it was commonly articulated by the term 'Nationalitätenkampf'. The concept of 'national conflict' has subsequently been applied in a number of recent studies of European nationalism to a wide range of European regions.[7]

A directly contrasting paradigm is that of *cooperation*. Cooperation is not equivalent to *harmony*, and there is an important distinction to be made between the two. As Axelrod and Keohane have stated: 'harmony requires complete identity of interests, but cooperation can only take place in situations that contain a mixture of conflicting and complementary interests. In such situations, cooperation occurs when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others.'[8] In other words, cooperation is always predicated upon a degree of conflict. In the German–Polish case, *cooperation* occurred, for example, when the Catholic Centre Party began to collaborate with Polish political leaders during the 1870s for particular domestic political ends, such as agricultural protectionism and in order to oppose socialism. Although specific actions and experiences denoted by this concept have not usually been historiographically significant, in recent years, research has appeared that has aimed to explore and highlight the nuances of social life between Germans and Poles. In doing so, such work has

often brought out the 'cooperative' or 'symbiotic' aspects of life between national groups at a local level.[9]

A third paradigm is that of *exchange*. The technical meaning of *exchange* is the act of (conscious) giving, with the receiving back of something else in return. It is, therefore, a two-way (or more) activity between two (or more) parties. In reference to the German–Polish relationship, instances of *exchange* are discernable in history. An example is that of the commemorations held at Thorn in February 1873, where German and Polish committees arranged two separate events to celebrate the anniversary of Copernicus' birth. Representatives from each of these organizations were invited to the other's event, where publications were exchanged between them.[10] By far the most eminent form of *exchange*, however, is economic exchange: the act of buying and selling goods and services. The economic relationship between Germans and Poles was one that has been considered as critical in period and later accounts of the national relationship. In addition to immediate forms of *exchange* between national groups, looser processes of two-way transfer over longer time spans are also conceivable; accordingly, the concept has been deployed explicitly by scholars, usually in reference to cases of cultural, linguistic or intellectual transmission over national borders.[11]

A further major paradigm in the social sciences has been that of *assimilation*. A process of assimilation is one of ethno-cultural change in which a minority individual or group adopts the culture of a dominant group, complete homogenization being the ultimate outcome.[12] The modern meaning of assimilation was rendered in Imperial Germany by the terms 'Germanization' and 'Polonization'.[13] Recent scholarship of the German–Polish relationship has started to readdress questions of assimilation (and 'acculturation': the diffusion of an alien culture into a society) between these two nationalities in central-eastern Europe, beginning with attempts to critically assess the meaning of these concepts, involving dialogue between anthropologists, historians and sociologists.[14] These developments mark a response to the predominantly dichotomous interpretation of the German–Polish relationship in the historical field. The more transgressive and 'symbiotic' features of this relationship have been until now relatively neglected.[15]

The present study advances a further paradigm, of *synthesis*: a process by which the combination of contradictory phenomena produces something qualitatively new. It is a paradigm predicated upon contradiction and conflict. Indeed, as world history has shown, the relationships between nations are inherently conflictual; nations continually vie and conflict over contradictory national interests and rights. It is to be

argued that the social interaction between Germans and Poles produced identities, social structures and cultures that transgressed national categories of thought and behaviour, and as such were 'transnational'. Moreover, these transnational forms of consciousness and behaviour subverted and destabilized nationalism in the region, both German and Polish, and as such made the conflict harder for each to win.[16]

The paradigm of synthesis is triadic, and marked by two essential properties: *creation* and *harmonization*. First, the interaction between the two nations *created* something qualitatively new: transnational mentalities and practices.[17] Second, these transnational forms represented a *harmonization* of the relationship between the two nations, namely between discrete national cultures, identities or interests.[18] The properties of 'creation' and 'harmonization' are fundamental to the synthesis paradigm, as identifiable in the history of the concept.[19]

The paradigm of synthesis is a *transnational* paradigm. In order to justify this assertion, it is necessary to contextualize it within the field of recent scholarship. The research of transnationalism is extraordinarily disparate and wide-ranging. Since the 1990s, the term 'transnational', and its cognates, has become common currency across the social sciences, resulting in a disparate range of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives.[20] Despite this apparent diversity, however, the term has a core meaning as denoting *social phenomena that extend across national borders*. Hence, it is stated in a recent book series that '"transnationalism" broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states. Today, myriad systems of relationships, exchange, and mobility function intensively and in real time while being spread across the world.'[21] Similarly, the eminent historian of transnationalism, Sebastian Conrad, has defined the concept thus:

> The concept denotes features and constellations which transcend national borders. These include also the history of foreign policy and international relations, above all in their recent form. The concept 'transnational' should be applied to far and away the greatest part of trans-border relations and assumes that the demarcation between domestic and foreign politics, which structured earlier controversies, is now obsolete. Such relations can be considered bilaterally or multilaterally, with balance or asymmetrically.[22]

The simple principle intrinsic to transnationalism, of extension across national borders, has meant that the application of the concept in

historical research is wide-ranging and disparate. Within the discipline of history, important areas of interest have included the study of diasporas and migration, post-colonial studies, Jewish history, intellectual history, economic and financial history, imperialism, workers' history and the history of consumption. Since the 1990s, the term 'transnational history' has been closely associated with American historical research, particularly attempts at 'internationalizing' American history.[23]

'Transnationalism' is the precondition of 'globalization', a concept to which it is closely related. The basis of contemporary globalization is the existence of transnational economic, political and cultural processes and institutions.[24] The two terms are not, however, synonymous. 'Transnationalism' implies extension across national borders, and as such is predicated upon the existence of a border. In comparison, globalization implies (in its ultimate form) the ideological renunciation and practical *elimination* of borders. In other words, it is the attainment of a condition beyond states, borders and concepts of territoriality, with the projection into a single, unified, 'global' domain. In this sense, 'globalization' may be considered as a developmental stage beyond 'transnationalism'.[25] There is a further important distinction to be made between the concepts of transnationalism and globalization, which is the ideological dimension of the latter. Whereas 'transnational' is principally a descriptive term, 'globalization' involves normative agendas and debates that are central to its make-up.[26]

In accordance with the definition of transnationalism given above, in this study the term designates social phenomena that extend across the national border. The theoretical novelty and importance of the *synthesis* paradigm is twofold, in accordance with its essential properties of 'creation' and 'harmonization'. First, social practices and mentalities were *created* which transgressed the categories of nationalism. Second, these transnational forms represented a *harmonization* of the relationship between the two nations. As such, the paradigm represents two aspects of the national relationship, concerning which existing paradigms have been inadequate. Namely, it represents the forms of harmonization and the creation of new discrete phenomena. It is the aim of this study to elucidate the formation, scope and political significance of these transnational modes of thought and behaviour.

The experience of transnationalism in the Eastern Marches is explored in this study through the research of four main facets of the German–Polish relationship: language and semantics, regional politics, marriage and sex, and cultural institutions.[27] The research is empirically based

upon the adjoining provinces of Posen and West Prussia between 1871 and 1914. This period begins with the founding of the German Empire, the beginnings of the *Kulturkampf* and the introduction of major policies of Germanization against the Polish minority; it ends with the outbreak of war, the juncture that ultimately led to the collapse of German hegemony in the region and the creation of a Polish state. The historical narrative of the interim years was predominantly determined by the seemingly insuperable contradiction between national interests. Posen and West Prussia were the most contested of the mixed-nationality provinces in the East; both had been part of the Polish Commonwealth, and consequently had large Polish minority populations. For this reason the two provinces were the central focus of Germanization policy. Being at the centre of the national conflict, the changes in the German–Polish relationship that occurred here, both quantitative and qualitative, were of the greatest political significance. The temporal range of this study enables the elucidation of both the short- and long-term significance of these developments.

The interpretation of border territories and 'regions', particularly those located in Eastern Europe, has emerged as an important area of research in the study of nationalism. This has been symptomatic of a more general re-evaluation in contemporary scholarship of the nation-state as the normative unit of historical analysis. The paradox of this re-evaluation has been that two apparently opposite tendencies have developed: tendencies that reflect the paradoxical effects of globalization itself. On the one hand, a disparate field of research has focused upon supra-national (or 'transnational') structures and processes, inspired, at least in part, by the advancement of political, economic and cultural processes of integration in contemporary Europe and the wider world.[28] On the other hand, scholars have taken microhistorical approaches, focusing upon 'sub-national' entities such as regions and localities, as well as the history of everyday life (*Alltagsgeschichte*). These have represented in part a reaction to the macroscopic practices that have become established in social history.[29] In the research of border regions three major tendencies are discernable. First, there is scholarship which critiques the discursive hegemony of the nation-state concept; second, there is research which analyses the processes of nation-building and demarcation at a border; and third, there are studies which interpret the specific interactions between national entities.

The first of these tendencies, involving critiques of the nation-state concept, typically seeks to revise the politico-cultural status historically

conferred upon border territories. In a Europe of ascendant nationalisms and emerging nation-states during the course of the nineteenth century, border regions, with their objective features such as dialects, became viewed as inferior spaces. This was a consequence of the way in which 'nationalization' conventionally became equated with 'modernization'. Such a perspective grew out of the doctrines of nineteenth-century economic liberalism, according to which entities such as border regions and small nations would become assimilated by the larger, economically superior, nation-states. This perspective had profound cultural underpinnings. As Stuart Woolf has written:

> The enlightenment confidence in the passage from primitive tribes via feudalism to contemporary civilisation led to the […] conclusion, common to all nineteenth century western intellectuals, from John Stuart Mill to Friedrich Engels, that size was an indication of human progress and a pre-condition of the nation state. The more advanced civilisation of the greater nations was beneficial to the smaller, more backward peoples, who would only gain from their incorporation within the state frontiers of the former.[30]

Border territories became places where nations contested their national rights with other nations. In this way, the denigration and neglect of transitional regions led to the denigration of the identities found within them. Nevertheless, their inevitable function as economic and cultural crossing-points had conferred considerable importance upon border territories.[31]

An example of research which critiques the hegemony of the nation-state concept is Philipp Ther's study of the Silesian borderland, which examines the extent to which identities forged in border regions rivalled and supplemented national identities, creating political programmes and mass movements of their own. Ther's approach has been to consider the viability of regionally defined political identities.[32] In a similar vein, linguists have studied the border regions of Eastern Europe and have characterized their mixed dialects as foci for identity formation, rather than as necessary, but provisional, means of communication.[33]

The second area of research, of investigating the processes of nation-building and demarcation at a border, is the most extensive. Important areas of interest have included the structure and growth of national identities and movements at the border;[34] the relationships between regional and national identities;[35] and state policies vis-à-vis border territories and national minorities. A major aspect of the last of these

has been the politics of language in nationally contested regions. For instance, several monographs relating to German–Polish history have illuminated in detail the *Polenpolitik*, especially language policy, of Prussian governments.[36]

The treatment of the German–Polish borderland in this study belongs to the third historiographical tendency identified; that is, research concerning the socio-political interactions between nationalities in a border region. Other works belonging to this category have been previously discussed in the classification of paradigms above. The concept of interaction is logically dependent upon a principle of demarcation, in other words, the establishment of a binary relationship. Similarly, the concept of transnationalism has no reality without the establishment of the demarcation that its phenomena transgress. Consequently, the methodology of this research as it proceeds in the following chapters is to juxtapose the structure of the binary relationship with the formation of those transnational ideas and social structures that transgressed it. Therefore, Part I examines how the national divide was structured in the provinces of Posen and West Prussia, and in doing so, serves as a foil for the analyses of transnational phenomena that follow in Parts II and III.

In Chapter 1 the aim is to explain the logic of nationalism in the German–Polish border provinces; in other words, to analyse how the national divide between Germans and Poles was constructed. With the termination of Polish statehood following the dismemberment of the Polish Commonwealth by the partitioning states of Prussia, Austria and Russia between 1773 and 1795, the demarcation between German and Polish nationalisms in the borderland was no longer viable on the principle of state membership. Moreover, ethnic heterogeneity, so characteristic of the lands of the multinational Commonwealth now possessed by Prussia, excluded territorial demarcations. The reality of mixed and irregular settlement rendered the concept of a 'border', with its territorial connotations, untenable. Instead there was only an ideologically grounded 'interface'. It is to be argued that the interface was predicated fundamentally upon linguistic difference, and that its changing contours after 1871 were at the root of the national conflict in the Prussian East. Chapter 2 extends further the analysis of nation-building and demarcation initiated in Chapter 1. It argues that cultural institutions were of prime importance in structuring the national divide, performing a leading role in sustaining 'national culture' in provinces of mixed settlement. Three types of institution receive particular attention: theatres, libraries and *Hochschule*.

The subject of Part II (Chapters 3 and 4), entitled 'The Cultures of Transnationalism', concerns the socio-cultural manifestations of transnationalism. The theme of Chapter 3 is the 'language and semantics of transnationalism'. The argument is advanced that language not only structured the interface between German and Polish nationalisms; it also subverted it. Linguistic and semantic categories existed that transgressed the national divide, and in doing so were foundational for the formation of transnational social structures. This occurred in two principal ways: first, through the condition of bilingualism, and second, by the coming into existence of a semantic conflation of nationality and religious denomination. This conflation semantically underpinned the formation of a 'Catholic–Polish axis', bringing Poles and German Catholics into spiritual and material communion. Moreover, it is argued that some German Catholic communities possessed substantive 'transnational cultures'.[37]

Chapter 4 examines the practices of marriage and social contact between Germans and Poles in the Prussian East. In marriage and sex, the paradigm of synthesis found its profoundest expression. For these events brought not only changes of consciousness and behaviour, but also of 'racial' identity. Before the 1890s, mixed marriage was most contentious in its religious implications, particularly during the *Kulturkampf*, but in the Wilhelmine period, *Mischehe* (German for 'mixed marriage') increasingly took on connotations of national and racial mixing. Accordingly, sex between the nationalities was widely perceived by contemporaries as producing cases of 'racial hybridity'.

Chapters 5 and 6 form the third part of the study and consider the specifically political facets of the German–Polish relationship. The aim in each is to identify how, and with what consequence, political doctrines and movements mediated the formation of transnational institutions and other forms of transnational identity and behaviour. In Chapter 5, the focus is upon the politics of Catholicism; in Chapter 6, the focus is upon socialist politics. It was upon the basis of these doctrines and their respective movements that integrative processes were most significant.

Despite the apparent polarization of the political spectrum by the end of Bülow's chancellorship between 'German national' elements and the representatives of Polish nationalism, transnational forms of consciousness and behaviour had been developing between Germans and Poles in party and associational life. Within Catholic milieus, the principal phenomenon of this kind was the way in which confessional allegiance led German Catholics to support Polish candidates electorally. This political

phenomenon was a corollary of the general semantic conflation of religious and national identities existing in the Prussian borderland. Politically, the main points of reference for a 'Catholic–Polish axis', which transcended the national divide, had been established during the 1870s, when the *Kulturkampf* strengthened the popular association of Catholicism with the Polish national cause.

Socialism had first emerged weakly in Posen and West Prussia during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Its most important representatives had been the German Social Democrats (SPD) and, after 1892, the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). Chapter 6 examines the juncture between nationalism and transnationalism within the regional Social Democratic movement. It is argued that, at grass-roots level, transnational organizational structures and behaviours came into existence in the Eastern Marches. These had both ideological and practical causes. However, the evidence available points most strongly to the conclusion that they were primarily the consequence of an 'internationalist' ideology. The chapter therefore begins with an examination of the ideological premises existent within the Social Democratic movement that had a bearing upon the national question in the Prussian East, before progressing in its second section to an examination of the grass-roots experience in the region.

Part I
Nationalism

1
The Logic of Nationalism in the Prussian East

Origins of the interface

The meaning of transnationalism in Posen and West Prussia was dependent upon the conception of national difference. Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is to elucidate the logic of national difference between Germans and Poles. It is to be argued that the national divide in the Prussian East was predicated fundamentally upon linguistic difference after 1871. This ideological perspective was predominant and was sanctioned by the state.

The same conception of nationality underlay the means of rationalising and *quantifying* national difference: statistical science. Without statistical analysis the two 'imagined communities' would have remained without quantification and spatially undefined. In expansive, ethnically complex territories such as Posen and West Prussia, the only means by which the national relationship could be quantified was by statistical analysis. Similarly, it is only upon the basis of statistics that the present-day observer can understand the pattern of settlement in the nationally mixed provinces.

The national conflict that developed in Posen and West Prussia after 1871 hinged on statistical interpretation, and was sparked by the state's efforts to redress the demographic advances of the Polish nationality in the border provinces. In this sense, statistics were the cause of the national conflict, and during its course, discourse and political activism on both sides of the national divide referred to statistical interpretation as their frame of reference. It is to be argued in the second section of this chapter that the rationalization of nationality through statistical analysis was a fundamental precondition for the national conflict as it ensued. Conflict was a logical consequence of the binary construct

itself. The national conflict was the predominant factor in the social and political contexts of the region after 1871. However, as will be shown in the following chapters, the binary construct was not only the precondition of 'national conflict', but also of 'synthesis': the ideological and behavioural transgressions of the logic of national difference.

The conception of nationality as predicated upon language received one of its most authoritative and widely influential treatments in the work of the eminent Prussian statistician Richard Böckh. Böckh was a latter-day representative of the Herderian conception of nationality. He propounded a doctrine of the primacy of language and it was symbolic that his seminal book of 1869, *Der Deutschen Volkszahl und Sprachgebiet*, was dedicated to the memory of Ernst Moritz Arndt. Böckh's published treatises dating from the late 1860s provide important insights into how nationality was popularly understood in the latter decades of the nineteenth century in Prussia. Böckh propagated a philosophy of nationality as based upon language. Language was the direct expression and symbol of the *Volksgeist* (national spirit); of the 'Gemeinschaft des Logos'(community of logos). Adherence to this *Nationalitätsprincip* (principle of nationality) would lead to the fulfilment of the national 'spirit' (*Geist*), and this principle was in the interests of all peoples.[1]

The primary basis for a nationality was the community of descent or the community of birth inside the individual nation; language was the principle for the determination of descent. An important distinction was made between the mixing of two nationalities and the individual who has descended from two different nations. Two *Volkstämme* (peoples) which had become mixed together over centuries and thus 'deformed' could fuse to create a new *Volk;* conversely, two halves of a *Volkstamm* (people), which had become separated over time, could develop gradually into two new ones. In contrast, the individual could only belong to one or the other nation, whilst equal identification with both was regarded as impossible.[2] Accordingly, Böckh argued:

> The indication of two languages in statistics for an inhabitant is inadmissible [...]. With the individual the category of bilingualism is to be excluded absolutely. The individual can change his language, but not belong to two at the same time, as the equality of both, which does not exist in nature, should also not be accepted in statistics.[3]

Significantly, he implicitly accepted the idea that an individual could change his nationality, which, for him, was synonymous with language.

Böckh recognized statistical survey as being the key to establishing nationality, and specifically the sections therein concerning *Volkssprache* (popular language). He advocated the definition of language as being the language used within the household. The category of *Zweisprachigkeit* (bilingualism) in surveys (used in four Prussian administrative districts) was regarded as false and put down to a theoretically flawed decision in Prussian legislation for the Grand Duchy of Posen, based on the belief that some individuals could be equally competent in German and Polish. Böckh denied this, maintaining that the true existence of this category 'still has not been proved with the example of any individual'.[4]

Of profound significance for the future of German national-political development, particularly in respect to the *Sprachpolitik* of the 1870s, was Böckh's distinction between *Volkssprache* and *Staatssprache* (language of state). The former was defined as 'that which men use in the most intimate spheres of the family and in the wider realms of local and regional social intercourse; it is their means of common understanding, their spiritual heritage'. In comparison, the 'higher prestige of a *Staatssprache* is needed only for those matters whose nature means that they can not be dealt with on the local level'. As this characterization suggests, it was assumed that both languages could coexist.[5]

Richard Böckh's emphasis upon language as the prime criterion of national identity was representative of his time. Other prominent writers concerned subsequently with the Eastern Marches expressed the same view. For instance, the liberal journalist Käthe Schirmacher, in a lecture delivered in Culm in West Prussia, contended that 'national' was near in meaning to 'völkisch'. But whereas 'Volk' implied a people or body of men, the word 'national' implied much more the sense of 'the innateness given by birth, the inborn nature, spirit, and stock'. The nation came into existence 'through the unity of birth, which is dependent upon unity or similarity of environment, habitat, development, history, and expressed above all through unity of language'.[6]

In a similar vein, the prominent Hakatist Leo Wegener explained the meaning of 'nation' for the Germans in an article in *Die Ostmark* as being 'the unity of a people that feels bound together through the consciousness of a common language, a common tradition in which customs and mores coincide, and a homeland'. Austria and Switzerland were not regarded as nations, because of their many languages, nor were the gypsies, who possessed no land, or the Jews, who only possessed a tradition. For Wegener, a state was not a prerequisite for the existence of a nation.[7] In a similar work of German propaganda, addressed to the German population of the East, the economist Wilhelm Wendorff

proposed: 'as the mark of nationality applies language, mother tongue, national language [*Volkssprache*]. A people of mixed descent must therefore logically have also more than one national language . . . but a people cannot lastingly remain bilingual and so the language of the dominant people will finally become the national language.'[8]

The ethno-linguistic conception of the German nation was propagated in Imperial Germany more widely by conservative nationalistic writers such as Heinrich von Treitschke and Paul de Lagarde, both of whom argued that ethnic homogeneity was a necessity for the German national state. Treitschke propagated his ideas through his highly influential Berlin Lectures, in which he sought to legitimize the state's strivings to create a nationally homogenous state. He had argued that 'when several nations are united under one state, the simplest relationship is that the one which wields the authority should also be the superior in civilization. Matters can then develop comparatively peacefully, and when the blending is complete it is felt to have been inevitable, although it can never be accomplished without endless misery for the subjugated race.'[9]

Ethno-linguistic definitions of the nation were also becoming increasingly prominent in Polish intellectual discourse during this period, following the failed insurrection of 1863. Andrzej Walicki has argued that in its aftermath, 'the liquidation of the last remnants of the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, as well as its very name, put "Polishness" on the defensive and, of course, favored the transition to the narrow, ethno-linguistic definition of the nation'.[10] Added to this was the increasing social prominence of Jews and Germans resulting from rapid industrialization, in relation to whom Poles were mainly subordinate. To these factors was added the rising national consciousness of the emancipated Polish peasantry in Russian Poland. Out of this period emerged ideologies and movements such as National Democracy, bearing ethnocentric tendencies and, in particular, which emphasized the political importance of the ethnic 'nation of the peasantry' as opposed to the historical 'political nation' of the gentry.[11]

The fundamentality of language, in underpinning and structuring nationalism in the border provinces, was underscored by the great lengths the state went to during the 1870s and in the decades thereafter to forcefully assimilate the Polish population to the greatest degree by suppressing the use of Polish in public life. The so-called Germanization Laws, passed between 1872 and 1876, introduced the substitution of German for Polish for teaching in all elementary and secondary schools in the province of Posen. Another important piece of legislation was the