

STUDIES IN GLOBAL SOCIAL HISTORY
STUDIES IN GLOBAL MIGRATION HISTORY

A HISTORY OF DISPLACED KNOWLEDGE

AUSTRIAN REFUGEES FROM
NATIONAL SOCIALISM IN AUSTRALIA

PHILIPP STROBL



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A History of Displaced Knowledge

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A History of Displaced Knowledge

Austrian Refugees from National Socialism in Australia

By

Philipp Strobl



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For Johanna and Eva



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Abbreviations

| | |
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| DLM | Deutsches Literaturarchiv (Marbach/Neckar) |
| DÖW | Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes |
| GBFLÖ | Gesetzblatt für das Land Österreich |
| LBI NY | Leo Baeck Institut New York |
| MUL | Monash University Library |
| NAA | National Archives of Australia |
| NLA | National Library of Australia |
| ÖstA | Österreichisches Staatsarchiv |
| SJM | Sydney Jewish Museum |
| SLV | State Library of Victoria |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees Archives |
| USHMM | United States Holocaust Memorial Museum |

Introduction—A History of Displaced Knowledge: Refugees from National Socialism in Australia

1.1 *Homo Migrans*

Migration changes lives: this simple message surfaces through the nine chapters of this book. The experience of migration, whether voluntary or forced, not only causes biographical disruptions and alters life paths but also shapes discourses, opinions, practices, social orders, and ultimately knowledge and ideas. It affects not only the people directly involved in the migration process but also the societies of origin and the host cultures. Migrants never come empty-handed. Regardless of whether they possess financial capital or material wealth, they bring with them a different, very important form of capital, ideas and knowledge, values sociologist Pierre Bourdieu described with the term “cultural capital.”¹ In this process, *homo sapiens* quickly evolved into *homo migrans*, conquering the entire world, as the migration historian Klaus J. Bade pointedly remarked.²

Migration is a natural human experience. It is as old as humankind. Before, and even after, the invention of forms of long-distance communication, it was primarily migration that disseminated ideas and knowledge throughout the world. The process of migration thus drove human development. As long as there was migration, people were emotionally affected by it. In more recent history, migration has become institutionalized and subject to norms and regulations. This process reached a preliminary climax with the development of modern statehood, the formation of nation-states, and, ultimately, the growing possibilities for these states to control their borders and thus the people living within them. As social historian Marlou Schrover pointed out, there was a very close relationship between the formation of nation-states, control of mobility, and exclusion of people or groups of people as the strengthening of

1 Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of the Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J.E. Richardson (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241–258.

2 Klaus J. Bade, “Warum es kam, wie es kam: Autobiographische Anmerkung,” *Historical Social Research* 30, no. 1 (2018): 9–94, 9.

nation-states in the 19th century and the invention of national citizenships created an intensified interest in the legal protection of national borders.³

The formation of national identities, as constructed entities of groups of people furthermore led, on the one hand, to notions of togetherness and superiority, but, on the other hand, ultimately also to feelings of exclusion.⁴ The distinction between citizens and “foreigners” or “aliens” and thus between people who “belong” and those who “do not belong” constituted a central category of difference.⁵ As a consequence, modern states became much more efficient at controlling their populations and excluding certain groups of people, which were regarded as racially inferior and “undesirable,” from immigration and thus from “belonging.” An early example of such an exclusion process was the so-called Chinese Exclusion Act passed by the United States government as early as 1882.⁶ Other white settler societies, such as Canada and Australia, were soon to follow. One of the first laws the Australian parliament passed after the establishment of its constitutional assembly in 1901 was the so-called Immigration Restriction Bill, designed to prevent “undesired” Chinese, Japanese, and Indian migrants from coming to Australia.⁷ National seclusion and the restriction of immigration further intensified after the end of the First World War and the crisis years of the late 1920s. Subsequently, the lists of those regarded as “undesirable” grew.

The 20th century brought massive global displacements of hundreds of millions of people.⁸ Unsurprisingly, many different observers retrospectively used dramatic metaphors to describe the period. Eric Hobsbawm called it the “age of extremes.”⁹ Others gave it different labels, such as the “age of genocide,”¹⁰ the “age of displacement,” or the “age of dispossession.”¹¹ Among the main events

3 Marlou Schrover et al., “Introduction: Illegal Migration and Gender in a Global and Historical Perspective,” in *Illegal Migration and Gender in a Global and Historical Perspective*, ed. Marlou Schrover et al. (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2008), 9–38, 13.

4 Comp. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

5 Levke Harders, “Belonging, Migration, and Profession in the German-Danish Border Region in the 1830s,” *Journal of Borderland Studies* 34, no. 1 (2018): 571–585.

6 *U.S. Statutes at Large*, Volume 22, 1881–1883, 47th Congress, U.S. Congress, accessed November 30, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/item/lsl-v22/>.

7 Klaus Neumann, *Across the Seas: Australia's Response to Refugees: A History* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2014).

8 Comp. Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: University Press, 2013).

9 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World 1914–1991* (London: Abacus, 1995).

10 Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the 20th Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).

11 Jerzy Zdanowski, *Middle Eastern Societies in the 20th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

that triggered the exodus of millions of people from many different territories across the globe, ranging from western Europe to southeast Asia, were the Nazi takeover in Germany, the German expansion in Europe, and subsequently the Second World War which, altogether combined, caused a global displacement of at least 60 million people.¹²

Nazi expansion in Europe created a large group of racially persecuted people who suddenly faced the experience of being “undesired” in two different ways. Firstly, they were deprived of their civil rights and were consequently forced to flee their own homelands. Then, when trying to leave their oppressive homeland, they realized that, in many cases, they were not welcome in other countries which could have offered them refuge and a new home. A brutal road of dispossession and displacement followed the Nazi expansion from 1933 onwards. Among the first who were forced to flee were the opponents of the Nazi regime in Germany, as well as those the regime regarded as “racially inferior.” Jews, Romani, and, after the German expansion, also Slavs became increasingly isolated and deprived of their civil rights. They were then expropriated and forced into emigration. At least half a million people from the Greater German Reich, as established in 1938, fled. This number includes approximately 130,000 Austrians, who fled after the annexation in March 1938.¹³ Another 33,000 fled after the annexation of Sudetenland and the Czech lands in 1938 and 1939, respectively.¹⁴ Along with the refugees, the Nazis drove invaluable cultural capital, ideas, and knowledge out of their sphere of influence. The overall scope of that fatal intellectual eradication dramatically reduced the role of German culture and academia in the world and affected cultural and intellectual life in Germany and Austria for decades.¹⁵

Refugees came from all walks of life and from different social strata. When the Nazis imposed their own purportedly “racial” definition of “Jewishness,” tens of thousands of Catholic or Protestant Germans, Austrians, and Czechs became “Jewish” overnight and were consequently subject to isolation and oppression. The so-called Nuremberg Laws, enacted in 1935 and later also extended to Austria and the “Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia,” provided

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- 12 Ruth Balint, “Children left Behind: Family, Refugees and Immigration in Postwar Europe,” *History Workshop Journal* 82, no. 1 (2016): 1–23, 2.
 - 13 Philipp Ther, *Die Außenseiter: Flucht, Flüchtlinge und Integration im modernen Europa* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2018), 99.
 - 14 Ther, *Außenseiter*, 99.
 - 15 Comp. Friedrich Stadler, ed., *Vertriebene Vernunft 1. Emigration und Exil österreichischer Wissenschaft 1930–1940* (Vienna: LIT, 2004); Friedrich Stadler, ed., *Vertriebene Vernunft II. Emigration und Exil österreichischer Wissenschaft 1930–1940* (Vienna: LIT, 2004).

the legal basis for the massive process of dispossession and expulsion of those who were defined as Jewish regardless of their self-affiliation and identification. They were no longer regarded as citizens and became subject to legally enshrined discrimination and later a deadly plan of action.¹⁶ Expelled from their country, their primary aim was to find a safe haven from which to survive the Nazi terror, and build a new life. An immense obstacle to this undertaking, however, was the fact that the international community was very reluctant to offer shelter or even support to refugees.¹⁷ Finding a destination country became increasingly difficult, especially during the second half of the 1930s. At first, refugees from Germany sought a temporary refuge in the adjacent countries of Czechoslovakia, France, Belgium, Austria, and Switzerland, hoping for the possibility to return after a commonly expected quick collapse of the Nazi regime.¹⁸ These hopes, however, dwindled with the fast expansion of the Nazi empire, and a growing number of refugees had to consider a more permanent exile in more remote regions. The March 1938 Anschluss of Austria brought Europe's third largest urban Jewish community (Vienna) into the Nazis' sphere of power. The fast enactment of the discriminatory Nuremberg Laws in Austria and their subsequent execution by Adolf Eichmann with the establishment of the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung (Central Agency for Jewish Emigration) in Vienna¹⁹ caused another wave of refugees. As a result, many countries which, until then, had offered at least limited protection for refugees from Nazi terror, sealed off their borders, which led to an increased illegalization of refugee migration.²⁰

Consequently, refugees began spreading across the world, moving to wherever they could secure some of the rare entry permissions. The largest share emigrated to the United States, Palestine, France, or the United Kingdom, the

16 Hannelore Burger, *Heimatrecht und Staatsbürgerschaft österreichischer Juden: vom Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts bis in die Gegenwart* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), 152; Beate Meyer, "Ausgrenzung und Vernichtung der deutschen Juden (1933–1945)," in *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, ed. Arno Herzig and Cay Rademacher (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2008), 218–223.

17 Gatrell, *Modern Refugee*, 77.

18 Philipp Strobl, "Medienhistorische Überlegungen zum Bild deutschsprachiger Flüchtlinge in englischsprachigen Tageszeitungen," in *They trusted us, but not too much: Transnationale Studien zur Rezeption deutschsprachiger Flüchtlinge in englischsprachigen Medien*, ed. Philipp Strobl (Hildesheim: Universitätsverlag Hildesheim, 2020), 9–26, 12.

19 Hans Safrian, *Eichmann's Men* (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 2010); Hans Safrian, *Die Eichmann-Männer* (Vienna: Europa, 1993).

20 Comp. Marlou Schrover et al., eds., *Illegal Migration and Gender in a Global and Historical Perspective* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2001).

most well-known host countries for Central European refugees. These countries have been subject to intense research in different academic disciplines in the past few decades.²¹ Alternative routes and destinations for emigration, however, have appeared on the radar of migration historians much later.²²

Among those who escaped were numerous qualified and educated people who had acquired important knowledge and cultural capital. In his study about the contributions of German exiles to British and US society, historian Daniel Snowman wrote 20 years ago: “What makes the events of the 1930s almost unique in history is the intellectual talent of the refugees. [...] No other emigrant group in history was so talented, highly educated and influential.”²³ Some might regard this statement as exaggerated, especially if we think of the input of culture and ideas French Huguenots had brought to different regions in Europe or North America during the 17th century, or the enormous cultural and economic boom refugees from the sacked city of Antwerp had initiated in 16th-century London. It is indisputable, however, that when the Nazis took over they drove many of the world’s greatest artists, musicians, filmmakers, writers, and scientists out of the Reich, causing irreparable damage to one of the world’s most developed high cultures.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the German-speaking area was among the leading regions in the world, economically and culturally. Vienna, Hamburg, and Berlin were hubs of culture, education, and the arts. Germany, despite the setbacks of a lost war, was in midst of the second phase of industrial revolution. Its economy still ranked among the world’s most powerful and

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- 21 Hagit Hadassa Lavsky, *The Creation of the German-Jewish Diaspora: Interwar German-Jewish Immigration to Palestine, the USA, and England* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017); Mitchell G. Ash and Alfons Söllner, eds., *Forced Migration and Scientific Change: Emigré German-Speaking Scientists and Scholars after 1933* (Cambridge: University Press, 1996); Steven J. Ross, ed., *Wandering Jews: Global Jewish Migration* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2020), Frank Caestecker and Bob Moore, eds., *Refugees From Nazi Germany and the Liberal European States* (New York: Berghahn, 2016); Saul Friedman, *No Haven for the Oppressed: United States Policy Toward Jewish Refugees, 1938–1945* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017); Vicki Caron, *Uneasy Asylum: France and the Jewish Refugee Crisis, 1933–1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Tanja von Fransecky, *Escapees: The History of Jews Who Fled Nazi Deportation Trains in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019).
 - 22 For more information, see Margit Franz and Heimo Halbrainer, eds., *Going East—Going South. Österreichisches Exil in Asien und Afrika* (Graz: CLIO, 2014); Susanne Korbel and Philipp Strobl, eds., *Cultural Translation and Knowledge Transfer on Alternative Routes of Escape from Nazi Terror: Mediations Through Migrations* (London: Routledge, 2022).
 - 23 Tom Ambrose, *Hitler’s Loss: What Britain and America Gained from Europe’s Cultural Exiles* (London: Peter Owen Publishers, 2001), 12.

innovative at that time. Music, movies, theatre, medicine, architecture, and electrical engineering were only a few of the booming social and economic sectors of the 1920s and 1930s. When the Nazis came to power, they began to remodel and dissolve a highly innovative and productive urban society and culture from Hamburg to Vienna,²⁴ leading to a significant transplantation of knowledge and cultural capital. Even many non-German contemporaries had observed that fact: despite the general anti-refugee mood that dominated the English-speaking media during the late 1930s, numerous newspaper articles can be found that mentioned the valuable cultural capital and knowledge driven out of Nazi Germany. Various contemporary newspapers reported on the high level of qualifications of many refugees, describing the situation with phrases such as “Hitler’s loss is our gain.”²⁵

1.2 “Gains and Losses” in the History of Knowledge

This book is about these “gains” and “losses” frequently described in the historiographic literature. It seeks to offer a history of ideas and of displaced knowledge and thus delves deeper into the history of a group of migrants initially regarded as “undesirable” in Australia. Its primary focus is not on life stories but rather on performative aspects of ideas, knowledge, and cultural capital, as they moved and transformed.

The book offers a novel perspective on refugees from Nazi Germany who migrated to Australia. It follows their roles as cultural translators and questions how they recall their translations. By doing so it seeks to isolate, research, compare, and analyse the memories that translators, and their descendants, had of their own translations. Not unlike a jigsaw puzzle, it seeks to connect, contextualize, and synthesize fragments of memories to analyse them against the backdrop of literature and other sources on the specific social, cultural and/or professional domain in which the translators located their translations. It is ultimately a study about humans and their cultural capital and, more

24 There are many excellent depictions of cultural life in the German-speaking area during the 1920s and 1930s. See, for example, Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman, eds., *Interwar Vienna: Culture between Tradition and Modernity* (Rochester: Camden House, 2009); Daniel Snowman, *The Hitler Emigrés: The Cultural Impact on Britain of Refugees from Nazism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2002); Ambrose, *Hitler’s Loss*.

25 See for example: N.A., “Hitler’s Loss is Our Gain,” *The Daily Telegraph*, November 25, 1940, 6; N.A., “Hitler’s Loss is Our Gain,” *Cairns Post*, December 5, 1940, 7.

specifically, about the question of how knowledge was acquired, transported, imported, and, finally, adapted.

This book is located at the crossroads of two research streams that have produced promising approaches and results during the past two decades: the history of knowledge and migration history. It focuses on what historians of knowledge describe as “displaced, transplanted, or translated knowledge,”²⁶ arguing that people whose presence in the country was not initially desired, for many different reasons, translated, mediated, and adapted cultural capital, knowledge, ideas, and cultural practices from an urbanized Central European avant-garde society in a country that was about to replace its semicolonial British settler identity with the formation of a multicultural collective postwar identity.²⁷

The main interests of the book revolve around the question of how Austrian refugees in Australia remembered their translation experiences. It explores migration of knowledge and ideas in refugee mediations as a long-term process, analysing refugee translations that took place in Australia over a period of roughly six decades (1938–1998). This period was overall a time when most of the refugees were professionally or culturally active and in the midst of the most productive phase of their lives. Since a considerable part of the book investigates the refugees’ processes of taking up cultural capital in Austria between roughly 1900 and 1939, it presents also a global depiction of the 20th century from a transnational, knowledge-centred perspective.

Being aware of the fact that cultural mediations can usually be regarded as reciprocal, multidirectional processes that equally affect all the people involved, the book also considers how living in Australia and acting as cultural mediators affected the refugees’ own identifications and their processes of importing, adapting, and creating knowledge. To achieve that goal, the following pages will highlight and analyse which knowledge and cultural capital the refugees regarded as worthy of translation and question how they mediated this knowledge between their immediate migrant surroundings and the majority society. It will further explore how they exercised agency to promote their ideas and their cultural capital, and will show whether and how they adapted it by interacting with their social and cultural environments. It does not use a normative conception of “identification” and “integration” but rather follows

26 Peter Burke, *Exiles and Expatriates in the History of Knowledge: 1500–2000* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2017), 2.

27 Comp. Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond Identity, Theory and Society,” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (2000): 1–47.

the multilayered concept of transculturation, implying that change takes place for both parties in the encounter process.²⁸

Methodologically, it draws upon a combination of collective biographical and prosopographical approaches. It uses prosopography to locate a group of people that were not specifically perceived as an ethnic minority in Australia. Additionally, its main part builds upon qualitative, biographical approaches, relying on the refugees' perspectives and analysing ego documents such as biographical depictions, oral-history interviews, autobiographies, diaries, and letters. The main focus is on individual and collective memories of elements of knowledge and culture that circulated between the refugees and the Australian majority society. It is important to be aware of the constructed nature of such sources. They originate out of a certain individual interest and offer an individual perspective on historical events. In a socio-historical context, they are particularly important as they deal with the question of how people had dealt with the constraints of their time and how they had processed them subjectively.²⁹ When analysing and interpreting testimonies, it is crucial to not only consider the actual text but also the context, such as omissions, breaks and contradictions.³⁰ An analysis of the information hidden in the context can sometimes reveal more about the author and their self-awareness than the actual wording of the text, or in the words of the Italian scholar of American literature and culture Alessandro Portelli: "The most precious information may lie in what the informants hide, and in the fact that they do hide it, rather than in what they tell."³¹ This book thus uses ego sources and analyses not so much to testify to the interpretation of an event, but to analyse collective patterns in terms of memorizing and processing of historical processes and events.³² To offer an additional wider level of analysis and deeper insights into the context, it includes outside perspectives to show how refugee translations have been perceived within their own cultural and economic domain. Thus, besides

28 Antoon de Baets, "Exile and Acculturation: Refugee Historians since the Second World War," *International History Review* 28, no. 1 (2006): 316–335, 329; Burke, *Exiles*, 3.

29 Alexander von Plato, "Zeitzeugen und die historische Zunft. Erinnerung, kommunikative Tradierung und kollektives Gedächtnis in der qualitativen Wissenschaft—ein Problemaufriss," *BIOS* 13 (2000): 5–29.

30 Christiane Bertram, "Lebendige Erinnerung oder Erinnerungskonserven und ihre Wirksamkeit im Hinblick auf historisches Lernen," *BIOS* 28 (2015): 178–199, 181.

31 Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories. Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 53.

32 Dorothee Wierling, "Oral History und Zeitzeugen in der politischen Bildung. Kommentar zu einem Spannungsverhältnis," in Christian Ernst, ed., *DDR-Zeitzeugen in Geschichtskultur und Bildungspraxis* (Schwalbach: Wochenschau Geschichte, 2014), 99–107.

relying on the general literature about the respective cultural, professional, and social domains in which refugees translated their ideas, this book draws upon a wealth of other contemporary sources, such as governmental records, records of company archives, contemporary newspaper coverage, and, most importantly, interviews with different people from the same cultural or economic domain.

While relatively small in number, the group of Austrian, predominantly Jewish, World War II refugees added disproportionately to Australia's cultural diversity, as the existing literature indicates. Therefore, a not inconsiderable number of that group must have had an extraordinarily high impact on their Australian contemporaries. Media reports and other sources that expressed the public opinion of the time indicate that the initially negative public perception of the refugees from National Socialism had begun to change a few years after their arrival and Australians increasingly appreciated the economic, cultural, and social value and impact of the people they once had regarded as "unfit" or "undesired."³³ As a 1946 prospectus released by the Australian Ministry of Postwar Reconstruction mentioned,

their [German wartime refugees] knowledge and skills have enriched the culture of the countries ... which received the greatest numbers of them and some new industrial lines have been established by them here and ... a considerable number of refugee technicians have helped the Australian war effort.³⁴

Historical research of the past decades has further stressed the impact of the group on Australian postwar society. Historian Eric Richards described the refugees as "harbingers of a turn toward a more cosmopolitan society" and a cultural and ethnic diversification,³⁵ defining their arrival "as a part of a cultural *renaissance*" that takes place in Australia after the end of the Second World War.

All too often, the escape of refugees has been cursorily described by the phrase "brain drain," meaning a one-way street that brought culture, ideas, and knowledge from the "best minds of a German generation" to other countries that benefited from them—in the sense of the earlier mentioned phrase

33 Konrad Kwiet, "The Second Time Around: Re-Acculturation of German-Jewish Refugees in Australia," *The Journal of Holocaust Education* 10:1 (2001): 34–49, 44.

34 SLV, Mission Bulletin: Migration and the Refugee, P 325.21 M58 A.

35 Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008), 148.

“Hitler’s loss is our gain.”³⁶ As recent research has shown, this concept, which has been persistently used in migration history for decades, does not realistically accommodate the long-term complexity and effects of processes of transnational knowledge exchange. As we will see in the following chapters, many refugees did not simply import cultural capital from one country or one culture to another one, as they did with their financial capital, instead, they rather transformed and adapted ideas to fit them to their new society, ultimately incorporating new elements. By doing so, they created new cultural capital, which, in many cases, even found its way back into the society of origin through their very own transnational networks.³⁷ Consequently, it would rather make sense to advocate and understand their performances of cultural translation as a transnational, reciprocal “circulation of knowledge, ideas, and practices,” which underlay a constant adoption process and—over time—left marks on different countries and cultures.³⁸

It is generally important to understand knowledge as a long-term and fluid process, which underlies constant adaptation, circulation, and transformation. Since the first human civilizations arose and developed, they accumulated and adapted knowledge. Reconstructing the “definite” origins of an anthropological constant such as knowledge can be seen, in many cases, as an impossible task.³⁹ When searching for changes in the appearance of migrating knowledge it is much more promising to focus on the origins of a certain journey and compare knowledge before, during, and after the migration.

Translation and transfer of knowledge, thus, might be best understood according to the concept of entangled histories, as historian Simone Lässig suggests.⁴⁰ The historical development of the cultural practice of skiing can

36 Comp. Ambrose, *Hitler’s Loss*.

37 Philipp Strobl, “Migrant Biographies as a Prism for Explaining Transnational Knowledge Transfers,” *Migrant Knowledge*, last modified October 7, 2019, <https://migrantknowledge.org/2019/10/07/migrant-biographies-as-a-prism-for-explaining-transnational-knowledge-transfers/>.

38 Jan Logemann, “Transatlantische Karrieren und transnationale Leben: zum Verhältnis von Migrantenbiographien und transnationaler Geschichte,” *Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung, Oral History und Lebensverlaufsanalysen* 28, nos. 1–2 (2015): 80–101, 86.

39 Stephanie Zloch, Lars Müller, and Simone Lässig, “Wissen in Bewegung: Migration und globale Verflechtungen in der Zeitgeschichte seit 1945: Einleitung,” in *Wissen in Bewegung: Migration und globale Verflechtungen in der Zeitgeschichte seit 1945*, ed. Stephanie Zloch, Lars Müller, and Simone Lässig (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2018), 1–38, 4.

40 Simone Lässig, “Übersetzungen in der Geschichte—Geschichte als Übersetzung? Überlegungen zu einem analytischen Konzept und Forschungsgegenstand für die Geschichtswissenschaft,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38, no. 1 (2012): 189–216, 194.

serve as a brief example to describe these diverse and individualized processes. The sport developed from the traditional Nordic means of transport of snowshoe walking during the late 18th century, when Norwegian students and guest workers brought the practice to the Alpine regions of Europe. In the mid-19th century, it became adapted to local conditions and a steeper terrain. This changed the whole nature of the sport and created the discipline of Alpine skiing, which was later successfully “re-exported” to Norway and to the rest of the skiable world.⁴¹

It can be helpful to understand knowledge migration and transfer as a process of reciprocal exchange between the countries of origin and refuge, in the sense of “circulation,” rather than “brain drain.” Knowledge circulation, a central concept in the history of knowledge is important for this book, which will take up this perspective and analyse what happened when people raised in one intellectual environment encountered and lived among people imbued with another.⁴² This book’s long-term perspective on knowledge and its constant flux of adaptation confirms some of the central aspects of the concept of circulation.⁴³ Besides the fact that it shows us that knowledge changed while being on the move, it also proves that constructing a definite first source of an idea, or its start and endpoint, is hardly possible. What this study rather offers is a transnational analysis of the paths and the transformations of knowledge and ideas that spread between several regions of the world.

1.3 “Being as Far Away as Possible”: Austrians in Australia?

The Nazi seizure of power in Central Europe led to several waves of forced migration of hundreds of thousands of German-speaking people, first from Germany and later from the Saarland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. As stateless refugees, their primary aim was to find a safe haven, either as a temporary refuge for surviving the Nazi terror or to establish a permanent new life. A big obstacle to their undertaking, however, was the fact that the international

41 Aneta Podkalicka and Philipp Strobl, “Skiing Transnational: Cultures, Practices, and Ideas on the Move,” in *Leisure Cultures and the Making of Modern Ski Resorts*, ed. Philipp Strobl and Aneta Podkalicka (London: Palgrave, 2020), 1–24.

42 Daniel Snowman, “The Hitler Emigrés: The Cultural Impact on Britain of Refugees from Nazism,” *Historical Research* 77, no. 1 (2004): 437–458, 440.

43 Comp. Andreas B. Kilcher and Philipp Sarasin, “Editorial,” *Zürcher Zeitschrift für Wissensgeschichte* 7 (2011): 7–11.

community was very reluctant to offer them support or shelter.⁴⁴ Consequently, refugees began to spread across the world, moving to wherever they could secure some of the rare entry permits.

The March 1938 incorporation of Austria into the National Socialist German Reich triggered a particularly large refugee wave. The vast numbers of people who fled from persecution led to a first major international reaction, when delegates from thirty-two countries congregated at the French resort town of Evian in summer 1938 to discuss an international answer to the refugee crisis. The result was disillusioning, as they were not able to agree on mutual actions. None of the participating countries made larger concessions to accept refugees.⁴⁵ Only the Dominican Republic dictator Rafael Leonidas expressed the willingness to accept between 50,000 and 100,000 refugees. However, by the outbreak of the war, only 3,000 people had migrated to his country.⁴⁶

Between the March 1938 Anschluss and November 1941, when the Nazis shut down the last escape routes through Eastern Europe, more than 2 percent of the population of 6 million Austrians had left the country.⁴⁷ Since the Nazis pursued their own racially motivated concept of “Jewishness,” the majority of the refugees had been classified as “Jewish” regardless of their previous denomination or self-identification. According to the Nuremberg Laws, which provided the legal basis for the dispossession and expulsion of German Jews, they were no longer regarded as citizens and became subject to a legally enshrined discriminatory and later deadly plan of action.⁴⁸ In May 1938, the new Nazi rulers introduced the Reich Citizenship Law of 1935 to Austria—it officially came into force on 1 July. Article 4 section 1 of this law stipulated the position of Jews within the Nazi society of *Herrenmenschen*: “A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He has no political voting rights; he is not allowed to exercise political office.”⁴⁹

44 Comp. Greg Burgess, *The League of Nations and the Refugees from Nazi Germany: James G. McDonald and Hitler's Victims* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

45 Neumann, *Across the Seas*; Strobl, “Medienhistorische Überlegungen.”

46 Frédéric Bonnesoer et al., eds., *Geschlossene Grenzen: die Internationale Flüchtlingskonferenz von Evian 1938* (Berlin: Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung der Technischen Universität Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 2018), 146.

47 Peter Schwarz and Siegwald Ganglmair, “Emigration und Exil,” in *NS-Herrschaft in Österreich: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Emmerich Tálos et al. (Vienna: ÖBV, 2002), 817–851, 817; Jonny Moser, *Demographie der jüdischen Bevölkerung Österreichs 1938–1945* (Vienna: DÖW, 1999), 846.

48 Burger, *Heimatrecht*; Meyer, “Ausgrenzung.”

49 Author's translation (“Ein Jude kann nicht Reichsbürger sein. Ihm steht ein Stimmrecht in politischen Angelegenheiten nicht zu; er kann ein öffentliches Amt nicht bekleiden.”),

As a result of that outlawing process, hundreds of thousands of Austrians actively seized the opportunity to loot the property of their disenfranchised former fellow citizens, as Richard Chesnoff noted in his book *Pack of Thieves*:

For most Austrians, Hitler's invasion was not the destruction of a pluralistic, democratic, and proudly independent nation but a golden opportunity for Austria and its Aryan folk to share in the benefits of a brave new Reich, among them ridding Austria of its troublesome Jews, while holding on to their assets.⁵⁰

Austrian refugees and thus also Austrian cultural capital were scattered all over the world. As an analysis by the historian and Holocaust survivor Jonny Moser shows, most of the Austrian refugees fled to European countries such as the United Kingdom (approximately 31,000), Switzerland (approximately 6,000), France (approximately 5,000), Hungary (approximately 4,400), and Czechoslovakia (approximately 4,000). An estimated 30,000 went to the United States, 15,000 to Palestine, 7,000 to Asian countries, and 7,000 to Latin America.⁵¹ As he also stated, less than 3,000 men, women, and children fled from Austria to Australia, thus managing to be as far away as possible from the Nazi terror, as many refugees in Australia later recalled. An exact figure has not been agreed so far and figures differ from 2,000 to 4,000 people. The Australian historian Konrad Kwiet stated that "more than 2,000 [refugees] came from Austria." Referring to the years of entry to Australia, he further stated that these Austrians who arrived were known in migrant circles as "Thirty-Eighters" or "Thirty-Niners."⁵² A recent comprehensive depiction of Austrian forced migration to Australia speaks about "roughly 2,000 refugees who managed to flee from Austria's Nazi regime" referring to figures in a 1988 publication by the refugee Karl Bittmann.⁵³ As the prosopography in the second chapter of this book will show, the real figures are somewhere in the middle. According to the

see: Reichsgesetzblatt Jahrgang 1938, Teil 1, 594; Gesetzblatt für das Land Österreich, Stück 51, Nummer 150, 420.

50 Richard Chesnoff, *Pack of Thieves: How Hitler and Europe Plundered the Jews and Committed the Greatest Theft in History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 25.

51 Schwarz and Ganglmair, "Emigration," 817; Moser, *Demographie*, 846.

52 Kwiet, "Refugees in Australia," 39.

53 Renate Meissner, "From Austria to Australia: Roads into exile on a far-away continent" in Renate Meissner, ed., *Erinnerungen: Lebensgeschichten von Opfern des Nationalsozialismus: Band 5, Exil in Australien 1* (Vienna: Nationalfonds der Republik Österreich für Opfer des Nationalsozialismus, 2019), 29–43.

book of duplicate certificates of naturalization (series A714 and series A715),⁵⁴ which includes all naturalization certificates issued between 1939 and 1949 to persons born in Austria, 1,509 naturalization certificates were issued in that period to applicants born in Austria before the First World War. A substantial part of the certificates include dependent family members and thus the number of naturalized Austrians during that period totalled 2,655 people. This figure includes the majority of Austrian refugees who left the country before and during the war.

Despite its relatively small size, this group of Austrian refugees affected Australian society in many different ways. As mentioned by linguist and historian Marlene Norst, who was a refugee herself, they “did not come empty handed—they brought with them a rich inheritance, which they delighted in sharing with their fellow Australians in the land of their adoption.”⁵⁵ Historian Michael Blakeney tells a similar story in his book *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933–1948*, describing how they “brought to Australia not only business capital, but also a variety of industrial and technical skills, which formed the basis of a number of new Australian industries” and “provided a stimulus to the cultural and intellectual life of the country, preparing Australian sensibilities for the cultural diversity of the postwar period.”⁵⁶ Konrad Kwiet agreed with that view, when noting that, amongst other things, Austrian-owned companies were “at the forefront in introducing work protection,” and the presence of refugees “changed forever the culinary landscape of Australia.”⁵⁷

Austrian refugee know-how and cultural capital are still visible to this day: traces can be found in a wide range of different cultural, economic, and social domains bearing witness to the significant impact Austrian refugees had on their new cultural environment. Influences are observable in the cultural sector (architecture, music, visual and performing arts), academia (art history), the leisure and sports industry (snow sports), and the economy. Interestingly, however, in contrast to other groups of migrants or forced migrants in Australia, Austrians have rarely been recognized as a distinct ethnic minority. Achievements of cultural translation by Austrian refugees in Australia have rather been regarded as outstanding performances of individuals. Accordingly,

54 NAA, A714, Books of duplicate certificates of naturalization A(1)[Individual person] series; NAA, A715, Book of duplicate certificates of naturalization A(2) series.

55 Marlene J. Norst, “Introduction,” in *Strauss to Matilda: Viennese in Australia*, ed. Karl Bittmann (Sydney: Wenkhart Foundation, 1988), xiii–xviii, xvii.

56 Michael Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees, 1933–1948* (Sydney: Croom Helm Australia, 2001), 184.

57 Kwiet, “Refugees in Australia,” 43.

there is little literature about Austrian refugees from National Socialism to Australia as a social group.⁵⁸ Although there is a small but growing range of biographies and autobiographies about the individual lives of some, predominantly famous, Australians of Austrian origin,⁵⁹ a thorough analysis of their fateful odyssey from interwar Austria to Australia featuring a cross-section of the group and an analysis of their performative cultural translations and adaptations still needs to be realized. At this point, however, it makes sense to refer to a comprehensive undertaking of the Austrian *Nationalfonds* that offers a depiction of 21 biographies of Austrian refugees who fled to Australia, including an introduction to the topic.⁶⁰

There are different reasons why this specific group of refugees was rarely perceived as “Austrian” or as “Australian of Austrian background.” In contrast to other groups of migrants or forced migrants of that time, such as Greeks, Italians, Germans, or Poles, there was very little Austrian presence in Australia prior to the 1938 Anschluss. Newly-arriving Austrian refugees “hardly knew of anyone [from Austria] who had migrated [t]here before them.”⁶¹ They subsequently also formed only very few specific “Austrian” cultural organizations in their new homeland. Among these were the Austrian Cultural Society, formed in 1944 in Heidelberg/Victoria, and the Free Austrian League founded in Sydney the same year, aiming at “demonstrating that concerted efforts were being made by Austrians in the Free World as well as by the resistance in Austria to liberate their country from the Nazis.”⁶² However, these remained exceptions. Another contributing factor may have been the quick integration of some refugees into local Jewish communities, which offered them a much

58 The exceptions being: Marlene J. Norst and Johanna McBride, *Austrians and Australia* (Potts Point: Athena Press, 1988); Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*; Philipp Strobl and Maria Schaller, “From the Danube to the Yarra River,” radio programme broadcast on SBS RADIO from February to April 2017; Philipp Strobl, “Social Networks of Austrian Refugees from the Anschluss in Australia—An Analysis of Meaning Structures,” *Journal of Migration History* 5, no. 1 (2019): 1–27.

59 Some famous examples are: Tim Bonyhady, *Good Living Street: The Fortunes of My Viennese Family* (Crow’s Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2012); Jemma Purdey, *From Vienna to Yogyakarta: The Life of Herb Feith* (Kensington: University of New South Wales Press, 2011); Walter Tonetto, *Exiled in Language: The Poetry of Margaret Diesendorf, Walter Billeter, Rudi Krausman, and Manfred Jurgensen* (Lewiston: Academica Press, 2001).

60 Renate Meissner, ed., *Erinnerungen: Lebensgeschichten von Opfern des Nationalsozialismus: Band 5, Exil in Australien 1–3* (Vienna: Nationalfonds der Republik Österreich für Opfer des Nationalsozialismus, 2019).

61 Norst, “Introduction,” xv.

62 N.A., “Free Austrians Form League in Sydney,” *Tribune*, August 24, 1944, 7; Norst and McBride, *Austrians in Australia*.

more powerful and sustainable marker of identification and community spirit than the few loosely structured Austrian cultural clubs and societies.

Although Austrians in Australia did not form a coherent group and capturing them as a social group consequently proves to be very difficult, they had much more in common than one might expect. Marlene Norst, author of the so far most comprehensive analysis of Austrians in Australia, describes them as “an uprooted urban society with a social cohesion commonly found only in village migration.”⁶³ She further continues: “they belonged, for the most part, to the educated middle class and if they did not know each other personally, they had at least mutual acquaintances.”⁶⁴ Accordingly, Austrian refugees in Australia shared many mutual characteristics. One of them was their identical origin. As Chapter 2 of this book reveals, almost all of them came from Vienna and 82 percent were born there. Most of them had a middle-class background,⁶⁵ shared a similar upbringing, and thus carried very similar “cultural baggage” with them when entering Australia.

Defining Austrian refugees in Australia as a group runs the risk of not delivering fruitful results, because of their wide geographical dispersal within Australia and their lack of ethnic self-identification. However, it still makes sense to do so because, compared to other groups of refugees, such as Displaced Persons in postwar Europe, they shared some crucial common characteristics, such as their past in Vienna and the fact that the very same political act had turned them into what Norst described as a “community of fate,”⁶⁶ marked by common features including that of being refugees, expelled from their former homeland. Researching them as a group also makes sense from a cultural-historical perspective, since, although many of them did not appear publicly as Austrians, the influence of their common “cultural capital” acquired in interwar Vienna is recognizable as it affected not only the ways in which they lived their lives in Australia but directly and indirectly also the lifestyles of many of their fellow Australian citizens.

There are many descriptions of hand-picked professional or cultural achievements of individual refugees and comprehensively describing the different domains of social and professional life in Australia enriched by Austrian refugees would exceed the scope of this introduction.⁶⁷ Therefore, at this

63 Norst, “Introduction,” xiii.

64 Norst, “Introduction,” xiv.

65 Norst and McBride, *Austrians in Australia*, 103.

66 Norst, “Introduction,” xiii.

67 A first list of Austrian refugees who built up a reputation in different areas in postwar Australia is provided by Marlene J. Norst: Norst, *Austrians in Australia*, 107–138; see also: Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*.

point, this book will offer only a few examples which illustrate the complexity of Austrian refugee translations in Australia. Refugees such as Franz Philipp⁶⁸ or Gertrude Langer⁶⁹ played a crucial part in establishing the academic field of art history, which was virtually nonexistent in Australia up until their arrival. Gertrud Bodenwieser and her student Hanny Exiner⁷⁰ (née Johanna Kolm) revolutionized creative dance education in Australia.⁷¹ Other, lesser-known, people established successful businesses based on their interwar Viennese knowledge and skills. Little was known, for example, about the Viennese-born businessman Kurt Selby who had used skills, he had acquired when he worked in Austria for the Czechoslovakian shoe manufacturer Bata, to establish one of the first payment in instalments businesses in Melbourne. There is also not much known about John Hearst and his German-Jewish partner Eckbert Petzall who used their interwar knowledge of architecture and the cabinet-making business to introduce the first insulated honeycomb doors to Australia. It would also surprise many people—especially outside of Australia—to hear about the lively snow and leisure industry in the Australian Alps, which was partially built upon knowledge and ideas from Austria. In this context, it makes sense to refer here to the activities of the Austrian refugee, insurance agent and snowfield developer Charles William Anton (Karl Anton Schwarz) who formed the Australian Alpine Club according to what he had learned as a member of the Österreichischer Alpenverein (Austrian Alpine Club).⁷² Others, such as Richard Tandler, Karl Langer, Kurt Popper, Ernest Fooks, or the

68 Sheridan Palmer, *Centre of the Periphery: Three European Art Historians in Melbourne* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2008).

69 Philipp Strobl, “‘But the Main Thing is I had the Knowledge’: Gertrude Langer, Cultural Transformation and the Emerging Art Sector in Postwar Queensland (Australia),” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* 2, no. 1 (2018).

70 Philipp Strobl and Susanne Korbel, “Mediations Through Migrations: An Introduction on Cultural Translation and Knowledge Transfer,” in *Cultural Translation and Knowledge Transfer on Alternative Routes of Escape from Nazi Terror: Mediations Through Migrations*, ed. Susanne Korbel and Philipp Strobl (London: Routledge, 2022), 1–26.

71 Marie Cuckson and H. Reitterer, “Bodenwieser, Gertrud (1890–1959),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography* 13, no. 1 (2006), National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed May 22, 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bodenwieser-gertrud-9532/text16785> (published first in hardcopy 1993); Dance-Movement Therapy Association of Australia, DTA Quarterly 7 (2008).

72 Philipp Strobl, “Migration, Knowledge Transfer, and the Emergence of Australian Post-War Skiing: The Story of Charles William Anton,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 33, no. 16 (2016): 2006–2025; Philipp Strobl and Aneta Podkalicka, eds., *Leisure Cultures and the Making of Modern Ski Resorts* (London: Palgrave, 2018).

world-famous architect Harry Seidler used their Viennese cultural capital to influence Australian postwar architecture.

This book is written for both an academic and a broader readership interested in the fates and the life stories of Austrian refugees in Australia. This introduction as well as the second chapter are designed to offer an in-depth view into the methodology of this prosopographic and mainly collective biographical study. In these two sections the reader will get an introduction to different academic concepts used in this study, such as the human capital theory, the concept of transnationalism, the school of thought of the history of knowledge and many more. The second chapter also explains how and why the biographical samples have been chosen. Readers who are more interested in the actual stories and the historical background are recommended to skip the following pages and continue with Chapter 3.

1.4 Conceptualizing the Book: Migrant Biographies as a Tool to Explain Transnational Knowledge Transfer and Cultural Mediation

The astonishing degree of cultural translation, adaptation, and knowledge transfer by Austrian refugees in Australia has also left a deep mark on the development and outcome of the research for this book. Initially, the intention was to write a history of the escape and identification processes of a group of racially and politically oppressed people from Austria who migrated to Australia. By the end, this study had become much more: it evolved into a history of displaced knowledge, of knowledge transfer and transformation, and, more widely, into a comprehensive depiction of the cultural and professional footprint a group of initially unwanted refugees had left on their country of adoption, as well as a depiction of the reciprocal effects the experience of living in the new Australian environment had on them.

In migration history, voices of migrants and their agency have become of growing interest.⁷³ They are discussed in increasingly reflexive terms and a focus on refugees' self-expression helps to "relocate refugees to the center of

73 There are multiple books and academic series centring their attention on migrant agency. The series *Studies in Global Social History* (Brill), for example, "emphasizes research that addresses migrants' agency that neither begins nor ends in only one location"; see also: Sebastian Huhn, "Negotiating Forced Migration in the IRO's "Care and Maintenance" (CM/1) Files. One Setting, Three Underlying Aims, (at Least) Four Actors, and Multiple Forms of Human Agency," *IMIS Working Papers* 12 (2021).

historical inquiry.”⁷⁴ A global social, economic, and communicational intermingling process that accelerated during the 1970s, as well as rapid developments in the fields of communication and exchange has led to a drive to explain the complexity of human interactions in this regard. Simplistic traditional patterns of explanation of such terms as “culture” and “society” seem now to be insufficient in terms of understanding human interaction within societies. Triggered by the transnational turn and the postmigrant challenge to methodological nationalism, as well as by rapid changes in international migration,⁷⁵ academic and historiographic research began searching for new approaches and patterns of thought that would be able to explain complex transnational phenomena.⁷⁶ In this context, historians of migration have coined the concept of postmigration.⁷⁷ In a postmigrant sense, traditional notions of societies formed by national historiographies should be revised or extended by including so far marginalized perspectives such as migrant voices.

This book focuses on displaced knowledge transplanted by mobile actors. It offers qualitative snapshots of lives in motion, seeking to enrich and extend research on forced migrants by shifting the focus toward a culturally and identity related postmigrational approach.⁷⁸ It intends to tell history from the migrants’ perspectives thus revealing marginalized, and so far ignored and unheard, stories about fragments of knowledge and cultural capital on the move. It explores the interchanging relations between people, ideas, and structures by means of their ego documents, testimonies, and memories. The category of knowledge thus can be used here as a “chemical reagent that renders legible a history written in invisible ink,” as historians Simone Lässig and Swen Steinberg wrote.⁷⁹

Investigating the history of the marginalized offers contrapuntal interpretations of social conditions. This helps us to comprehend migration as a force

74 Peter Gatrell, Anindita Ghoshal, Katarzyna Nowak, and Alex Dowdall, “Reckoning with Refugeeedom: Refugee Voices in Modern History,” *Social History* 46, 1 (2021): 70–95, 72.

75 Corrado Bonifazi et al., “Introduction,” in *International Migration in Europe: New Trends and New Methods of Analysis*, ed. Corrado Bonifazi et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 9–19, 9; Lauren Banko, Katarzyna Nowak, and Peter Gatrell, “What is Refugee History, Now,” *Journal of Global History* 17 (2022): 1–19, 1.

76 Strobl and Korbel, “Mediations Through Migrations,” 1–26, 12.

77 Comp. Naika Foroutan, Juliane Karakayali, and Riem Spielhaus, eds., *Postmigrantische Perspektiven: Ordnungssysteme, Repräsentationen, Kritik* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2018); Alexander Böttcher et al., eds., *Migration bewegt und bildet: Kontrapunktische Betrachtungen* (Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2019).

78 Comp. Foroutan, Karakayali, and Spielhaus, *Postmigrantische Perspektiven*.

79 Simone Lässig and Swen Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move: New Approaches toward a History of Migrant Knowledge,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 43, no. 3 (2017): 313–346, 321.

that moves, shakes, and forms societies.⁸⁰ In the sense of a “history from below,” this book explores how humans orient themselves along given structures, how they react to those structures, and how they shape and change them.⁸¹ Movement, mobility, and memory are closely intertwined. The past assumes a “particularly prominent role in times of mobility and biographical rupture,” as recent studies have revealed.⁸² This book’s focus on refugee memories allows us to recognize migration-related processes of cultural mediation and knowledge transfer as the mediators remembered them. Individual autobiographical memories are comprised of explicit social components, as they were formed collectively through exchange and conversation with others.⁸³ When handled carefully and analysed against the backdrop of the existing literature and other contemporary sources, memory fragments such as are used in this book are excellent sources for exploring social and material conditions as well as cultural and translational practices.

How does this book work methodologically? New methods based on quantitative, prosopographic, and qualitative collective biographical approaches were developed for the book. First, it offers a compact prosopography of the overall group, based on comprehensive Australian migration records which help to pin down a sample group comprising 1 percent of the overall cohort. Inspired by Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of the forms of capital,⁸⁴ the book subsequently takes an actor-centred perspective, exploring the role refugees ascribed to their own translations and mediations. This allows the tracing and specifying of the import and the transformation of ideas and cultural capital

80 Erol Yildiz, “Ideen zum Postmigrantischen,” in *Postmigrantische Perspektiven: Ordnungssysteme, Representationen, Kritik*, ed. Naika Foroutan, Juliane Karakayali, and Riem Spielhaus (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2018), 19–34, 22.

81 Comp. the concepts of “Lebenswelten”: Heiko Haumann, “Lebensweltlich orientierte Geschichtsschreibung in den Jüdischen Studien: Das Basler Beispiel,” in *Jüdische Studien. Reflexionen zu Theorie und Praxis eines wissenschaftlichen Feldes*, ed. Klaus Hödl (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2003), 105–122; Rudolf Vierhaus, “Die Rekonstruktion historischer Lebenswelten. Probleme moderner Kulturgeschichtsschreibung,” in *Wege zu einer neuen Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1995), 7–28.

82 Jelena Tošić and Monika Palmberger, “Introduction: Memories on the Move—Experiencing Mobility, Rethinking the Past,” in *Memories on the Move: Experiencing Mobility, Rethinking the Past*, ed. Monika Palmberger and Jelena Tošić (London: Palgrave, 2016), 1–16, 1.

83 Comp. the concepts of “conversational remembering”: Katherine Nelson, “Erzählung und Selbst, Mythos und Erinnerung: Die Entwicklung des autobiographischen Gedächtnisses und des kulturellen Selbst,” *Bios* 15, no. 2 (2002): 241–263.

84 Bourdieu, “The Forms,” 241–258.

on the move as the translators remembered them. It ultimately also enables us to locate them in the larger cultural, economic, and social context.

Most of the refugees lived lives “in between.” This “in between” status can be described as transnational: socialized in at least two different cultures and societies, in many ways, they satisfy common definitions of transcultural actors and mediators whose lives were characterized by a large degree of transnational mobility over an extended period, triggering different forms of cultural adaption.⁸⁵

Because of its widespread and sometimes unreflected use, concerns that the analytical category of transnationalism is “in danger of being dismissed as the latest scholarly ‘fad’” should be taken seriously.⁸⁶ When tracing individuals, however, who lived and worked in different parts of the world, who formed networks that stretched over different states and continents, importing, adapting, translating, and exporting cultural practices, skills, and knowledge, transnationalism as a category of analysis appears rather as a common sense descriptor of what they experienced than as a fashionable buzzword. The term emphasizes connections that have preceded, transcended, and exceeded national and cultural boundaries and it applies to regional as well as global scales, and to cultural and social, as well as political and economic ties.⁸⁷

As this book will show, refugees mediated and created new practices, ideas, and know-how in their hybrid position “in between” their sending and receiving societies. The philosopher Homi Bhabha defined this position as a “third space.”⁸⁸ Since friends and family of many refugees were scattered all over the world after their expulsion, many of them built networks that exceeded the borders of their countries of origin and reception. Consequently, in analytical terms, the nation-state on its own is an inadequate category and scale by which to explore the entangled performances of cultural adaption and translation of a group of people socialized in at least two different societies.

Although a popular frame for historical inquiry, the concept of “nation” proved to be an inappropriate category for this analysis, mainly because the “nation” itself is a constructed entity. It is the outcome of discursive and literary strategies⁸⁹ which does not make sense as an analytical category to

85 Logemann, “Transatlantische Karrieren,” 81.

86 Desley Deacon, Penny Russell, and Angela Woollacott, “Introduction,” in *Transnational Lives: Biographies of Global Modernity, 1700–Present*, ed. Desley Deacon, Penny Russell, and Angela Woollacott (London: Palgrave, 2010), 1–14, 3.

87 Deacon et al., “Introduction,” 3.

88 Homi Bhabha, “Introduction: Narrating the Nation,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 1–8.

89 Bhabha, “Introduction,” 1–8.

capture the lives of people transgressing borders and living in hybrid positions “in between” at least two different societies. Instead this book requires perspectives that can explicate how ideas and knowledge spread and how they interact. Thus our biographical journey through the refugees’ memories will reveal “a more transnational or translational understanding of the hybridity of imagined [and artificially created] communities,” as Desley Deacon et al. mention.⁹⁰ This perspective ultimately helps us to overcome the “methodological nationalism” which is still immanent in the historical sciences.⁹¹ In recent years, scholars—not very surprisingly—have come to support and use transnational perspectives in historical and sociological migration studies in the wake of critique of national and nation-state historiography.⁹² Many of them do not seek to put an end to national perspectives, but intend to complement or extend them, or as historian Sven Beckert once put it:

transnational history takes as its starting point the interconnectedness of human history as a whole, and while it acknowledges the extraordinary importance of states, empires, and the like, it pays attention to networks, processes, beliefs, and institutions that transcend these politically defined spaces.⁹³

Analysis of transnational careers and processes of cultural translation, however, also reveals other, less known, aspects of transnational lifestyles. Leaving their homes and resettling in a new society and culture with little support and financial means, and under pressure and suffering from traumatic stress, presented the refugees with a dramatic biographical interruption and a crucial challenge. In addition to recognizing achievements of cultural translation, this book incidentally unearths other more hidden and marginalized aspects of the refugees’ transnational lives. Questioning all too bright depictions of a globalized world, it includes stories of “marginal border crossers,” “failure,”

⁹⁰ Deacon et al., “Introduction,” xiii–2, xiv.

⁹¹ Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser, and Eveline Reisenauer, “Perspektiven der Migrationsforschung: Vom Transnationalismus zur Transnationalität: Kommentar zum Beitrag ‘Warum pendeln Migranten häufig zwischen Herkunfts- und Ankunftsregion’ von Ludger Pries,” *Soziale Welt* 62, no. 2 (2011): 203–220, 203.

⁹² Harders, “Belonging, Migration, and Profession,” 2; Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, “Measuring and Quantifying Cross-Cultural Migration: An Introduction,” in *Globalising Migration History: The Eurasian Experience (16th–21st Centuries)*, ed. Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 17–31.

⁹³ Sven Beckert, “AHR Conversation: On Transnational History,” *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006): 1441–1464, 1459.

“conflicts,” and “breaks” and thus opens new perspectives that could get lost when focusing only on romanticized “hybrid creations, cosmopolitan life stories, and liberating border crossings.”⁹⁴ In this sense the book understands itself also as a critique of scholarship that assesses the success of refugee settlement in terms of the “contribution” they are able to make. Thus, on our journey, we will not only encounter success stories but also ideas and cultural capital that were lost during the translation process. The medium of knowledge is precarious if it can easily be lost or destroyed, as historian Martin Mulsow noted in his book on knowledge in early modern intellectual history.⁹⁵ And consequently, knowledge and its relevance can quickly change or vanish.⁹⁶ The questions of when knowledge is endangered and how people and societies reacted to such losses have been little analysed by historians so far, and need much more investigation.⁹⁷

Since the book’s focus on the transformation and implementation of ideas makes it necessary to focus on the refugees’ translation strategies, it also deals with an important and commonly neglected issue in the history of knowledge: explaining “success” and “failure” of translations. It is crucial for our understanding of knowledge and cultural capital translation processes to consider not only the well-documented success stories of translations but also the fact that many attempts to translate knowledge between different cultural contexts have more or less “failed” and subsequently vanished from the stage of history. In many cases, merchants, industrialists, craftspeople, artists, and academics faced resistance after arriving in a new society, and their efforts to promote their ideas and cultural capital did not succeed. The fragile nature of knowledge in human history thus is very interesting. Knowledge that was accumulated, adapted, and transformed over centuries, in some cases, can become lost simply because of migration or displacement.⁹⁸ Yet not only is

94 Logemann, “Transatlantische Karrieren,” 96.

95 Martin Mulsow, *Knowledge Lost: A New View of Early Modern Intellectual History* (Princeton: University Press, 2022), 5.

96 Benjamin B. Olshin, *Lost Knowledge: The Concept of Vanished Technologies and Other Human Histories* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

97 Lost knowledge is widely unexplored in the history of knowledge. In addition to the works by Mulsow and Olshin, referenced in the previous notes, from 2022 and 2019, respectively, see also David DeLong, *Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Aging Workforce* (Oxford: University Press, 2004). In 2022, a pioneering project that brings together a small group of researchers began to explore neglected and abandoned spaces of knowledge and thus will deliver more substantial research results on these questions, comp. “Lost Knowledge: Approaching Migrant Knowledge After Migration,” H-Soz-Kult, accessed November 1, 2021, www.hsozkult.de/event/id/event-113148.

98 Olshin, *Lost Knowledge*, 1.

analysing the failure of translations difficult in terms of available sources but it is also necessary to rethink what even constitutes “failure” and when we should regard a translation as “failed.” An actor-centred perspective could offer initial guidance on how to approach the topic because translators, in many cases, have precise expectations regarding success and failure in terms of their own translations.

As the complex, entangled stories told in this book show, cultural encounter and the translation of practices, skills, and cultural capital are multidirectional phenomena that lead to the creation of new knowledge. The main interests of this book thus revolve around the concepts of cultural and knowledge translation as well as knowledge transfer. These concepts have been “treated with some reservations” by the humanities, as linguist Uwe Küchler concedes.⁹⁹ Accordingly, this analysis follows a circular understanding of cultural translation focused on appropriation and transfer. Scrapping the traditional idea of the “original” as the core element in translation theories, cultural critic Walter Benjamin showed during the early 1920s that translations never refer solely to an original element, but should rather be understood as the product of transformation processes in space and time.¹⁰⁰ Translation, in this sense, is very much perceived as a process of shifting and transforming ideas and practices between different cultural contexts, as constructed entities of a certain group of people.¹⁰¹ Theories of cultural translation foreground the importance of meaning-making through the mobility and exchange of ideas, values, and practices as a result of encounters between different cultural systems.¹⁰² This understanding allows us to avoid falsification and unidimensional harmonization, as well as all too progress-related notions of transfer processes.

Etymologically, the term “translation” describes an act of changing information from one state to another one.¹⁰³ This applies not only to language but also to ideas and practices. Just like words, ideas can also be moved across different borders. They can be translated from one cultural context into another. Just like the translations of words, translations of cultural content also have to be adapted to fit new contexts. They undergo a productive process of

99 Uwe Küchler, “Knowledge Transfer,” in *The Bonn Handbook of Globality*, vol. 1, ed. Ludger Kühnhardt and Tilman Mayer (Cham: Springer, 2019), 409–417, 409.

100 Boris Buden et al., “Cultural Translation: An Introduction to the Problem and Responses,” *Translation Studies* 2, no. 2 (2009): 196–219, 200.

101 Compare Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

102 Podkalicka and Strobl, “Skiing Transnational.”

103 Buden, “Cultural Translation,” 196.

absorption, adoption, or rejection.¹⁰⁴ While the product of cultural translation is certainly appealing, this study is particularly interested in the surrounding circumstances and the actual processes of transformation and adoption that took place during the translation process. As historian Simone Lässig puts it, the study of cultural translation “is not about the mere process of transferring culture, but rather about processes of transformation; it is not about a takeover of culture, but rather about complex processes of negotiating and adopting ideas and cultural practices and the creation of meaning.”¹⁰⁵

We already know that the influx of Austrian Jewish immigrants affected the development of various cultural, professional, and academic domains in Australian society. However, we do not know how they did so. Apart from a few individual case studies,¹⁰⁶ we know next to nothing about the strategies of refugees from Nazi Germany for exercising agency to promote their ideas, about the problems and difficulties refugees encountered when trying to translate their ideas, as well as about the question of how ideas and knowledge altered while being adapted. This is what this book seeks to change. Its focus on refugees’ memories, on their translation strategies, knowledge practices, and ideas in motion, as well as on the processes of adaption and transformation that took place once they introduced ideas into Australia makes it possible to trace and specify these phenomena as the main protagonists of these processes, the actual “cultural translators,”¹⁰⁷ remembered them. Additionally, the book situates their depictions and memories in the larger cultural, economic, and social context of their specific domains.

As we will see, these individual case studies are by no means “just” a series of microhistoric biographical stories. In their entirety, they offer a pre- and post-migrational *longue durée* perspective that helps us to comprehend the transformations Australian and Central European societies underwent between the 1930s and the end of the 20th century. They reveal how a complex multicultural society emerged out of the mobility of different groups of people and give insights into the reciprocal exchange of ideas, values, and practices. The book ultimately brings to light, explores, and analyses the performances of

104 Philipp Strobl, “Migration,” 2007; Johannes Paulmann, “Internationaler Vergleich und Interkultureller Transfer: Zwei Forschungsansätze zur Europäischen Geschichte der 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 267, no. 3 (1998): 649–685, 676.

105 Lässig, “Übersetzungen in der Geschichte,” 195.

106 For example: Strobl, “Gertrude Langer”; Philipp Strobl, *Charles Anton and Sheridan Palmer, Centre of the Periphery: Three European Art Historians in Melbourne* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2008).

107 Simone Lässig, “The History of Knowledge and the Expansion of the Historical Research Agenda,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 59 (2016): 29–58, 36.

cultural translation of Austrian World War II refugees in Australia, highlighting not only their contribution to Australian and Austrian society but also the sacrifices and challenges of their transnational life through an analysis of the performative aspects of their translations.

Ideas and concepts of the comparatively young academic field of the history of knowledge largely influenced the genesis of this book. The new research field has been described “as one of the most dynamic and productive areas of history research today, especially in German-speaking Europe.”¹⁰⁸ Although still under-researched, topics at the intersection of migration history and the history of knowledge have recently gained momentum. In the past few years, we can observe a growing interest in the history of knowledge triggered not least by recent discussions around the role of modern knowledge societies.¹⁰⁹ Another important trigger for the increased interest is the realization that “knowledge is central to most human practices.”¹¹⁰ Consequently, knowledge has become an important concept in many different academic disciplines. The discipline of history understands the history of knowledge as a new and productive research perspective that exceeds the perspectives of the traditional history of science by turning our interest toward “social processes that include academic and everyday perspectives to create new insights into the nature of our world,” as described by the historians Daniel Speich Chassé and David Gugerli.¹¹¹ In this context, historians who research knowledge are particularly interested in the role of knowledge as a trigger for social change.

Despite these very recent developments of researching knowledge in a migration context, little attention has been given to migrants as carriers, translators, and producers of knowledge, and particularly to their efforts in getting their “alien” knowledge recognized. There was a broad range of different actions, refugees implemented individually or collectively. In academic research, these actions are usually described by the concept of “agency.” This included the ability to claim, appropriate, and use categories, institutions, and other social structures to determine their lives and challenge institutional set-ups¹¹² and is highly influenced by their own abilities and experiences, such as

108 Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move,” 320.

109 Zloch, Müller, and Lässig, “Wissen in Bewegung,” 3.

110 Sarah L. Beringer and Atiba Pertilla, “Knowledge and Copyright in Historical Perspective: Introduction,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* (2018): 21–25, 21.

111 Daniel Speich Chassé and David Gugerli, “Wissensgeschichte: Eine Standortbestimmung,” *Traverse: Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 1 (2012): 85–100, 94.

112 Hamza Safouane, Jünemann, Annette and Göttische, Sandra, “Migrants’ Agency: A Re-Articulation beyond Emancipation and Resistance,” *New Political Science* 42, no. 2 (2020): 197–217, 216.

language accumulation or the existence of a specialized knowledge of the host society.

Due to the lack of research on refugee agency, we still do not know much about the knowledge that individuals and groups of migrants produced directly in the process of migration. When speaking of knowledge, this book uses a broad understanding of the concept. As such, the term “knowledge” encompasses the academic and scientific, as well as the social and the everyday knowledge formed through experience and in close connection with particular cultural practices.¹¹³

What did the refugees as actors and carriers of knowledge do to implement their knowledge and to make it known and appreciated in their new environment? As we know, migration is usually marked by encounters of socially unequal agents of knowledge and by conflicts over the validation and recognition of knowledge. In some cases, knowledge is enthusiastically accepted; in other cases, it experiences devaluation when its carriers cross borders; and there are many variations between these two poles. In contrast to the transnational movement of material commodities that have a relatively stable exchange value, such as gold or silver, the value of cultural capital and knowledge has to be renegotiated after migrants leave their countries of origin. Studies have shown that “favourable historical, social, and psychological conditions” have to be met for the translation and transfer of such knowledge to take place.¹¹⁴ The receiving society, in short, must regard translated cultural capital as necessary and desirable. Knowledge, as historians Andreas Kilcher and Philipp Sarasin pointed out, is linked to existing power structures and guided by the standards, understanding, and conditions of these structures.¹¹⁵

To navigate between these different structures and to become accepted, cultural translators and their translations depend largely on their ability to promote their skills, their knowledge, and themselves. Indeed, researchers are coming to understand the strategies of exercising agency, which migrants employ, as “knowledge in its own right.”¹¹⁶ The specific process of exercising agency, of negotiating and promoting knowledge, requires much more investigation since, in most cases, we know a lot about the actual actions and

113 Comp. Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move,” 320; Strobl, “Migrant Biographies.”

114 Yuri Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 147.

115 Kilcher and Sarasin, “Editorial,” 10.

116 Andrea Westermann, “Migrant Knowledge: An Entangled Object of Research,” *Migrant Knowledge*, March 14, 2019, <https://migrantknowledge.org/2019/03/14/migrant-knowledge/>.

achievements of historical actors as a result of their knowledge translations, but only very little about their translation strategies, their efforts at winning recognition, and about how they transferred and promoted their knowledge in their new homes.¹¹⁷ This is one of the fields in which this study seeks to offer new insights, since refugee memories offer us ample evidence of how they exercised agency to increase the awareness of their cultural capital.

Migration history has been analysing various forms of agency for a while.¹¹⁸ The concept is also an important approach for this book in terms of describing and analysing what refugees did to promote their cultural capital. Agency, as one of its most “intuitive and instructive definitions” (deriving from sociology) suggests, can be seen as “the ability to influence one’s life.” It is “implied in those actions that are intentional, in the sense that [it] leads to actions that are intentionally pursued to exert influence over one’s life.”¹¹⁹ The core features of agency enable people to play a part in their self-development, adaption, and self-renewal with changing times.¹²⁰ Migrant agency specifically intersects with questions of “causation, social continuity and change”¹²¹ and, in that sense, has the potential to transform social structures.¹²² Processes of knowledge translation and circulation, as well as migrations in general, are influenced by the agency of different actors. It is important to comprehend it as a process that is not simply obstructed by states or nations,¹²³ but rather negotiated between different actors with different agencies (including the migrants themselves). This book, therefore, shares the view that migrants are not passive recipients

117 Strobl, “Migrant Biographies.”

118 Zloch, Müller, and Lässig, “Wissen in Bewegung,” 7; Christoph Rass and Isme Tames, “Negotiating the Aftermath of Forced Migration: A View from the Intersection of War and Migration Studies in the Digital Age,” *Historical Social Research* 45/4 (2020), 7–44.

119 Comp. Marcus H. Kristiansen, “Agency as an Empirical Concept. An Assessment of Theory and Operationalization,” *NIDI Working Paper* 9 (2014): 3; Albert Bandura, “Toward a Psychology of Human Agency,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 1 (2006): 164–180; Steven Hitlin and Glen Elder, “Time and Self in the Curiously Abstract Concept of Agency,” *Sociological Theory* 25/2 (2007): 137–160; Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische, “What is Agency?” *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1998): 962–1023.

120 Albert Bandura, “Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 52:1 (2001): 1–26, 2.

121 Kent den Heyer, “Historical Agency: Stories of Choice, Action, and Social Change,” in *The Wiley International Handbook of History Teaching and Learning*, ed. Scott Alan Metzger and Lauren McArthur Harris (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 227–251.

122 Kristiansen, “Agency,” 6.

123 Modern migration history is particularly critical of state-centred approaches of earlier works, see, for example, Lucassen and Lucassen, “Measuring and Quantifying Cross-Cultural Migration,” 17–31.

of the opportunity structures presented to them by a receiving country.¹²⁴ They are “agents of experience” rather than simply “undergoers of experiences.”¹²⁵

As Sarasin points out, knowledge, practices, and ideas are always evolving and changing through circulation between people, groups, and institutions.¹²⁶ Consequently, as he suggests, “the history of knowledge should be about the social production and circulation of knowledge.” To analyse production and circulation processes, Sarasin suggests four analytical levels: “the order of knowledge, the mediality of knowledge, the actors of knowledge, and the genealogy of knowledge.”¹²⁷ The following chapters reveal that the refugees’ particular position “in between” two cultures and societies provided many of them with ample opportunities but also challenges in creating new knowledge and cultural practices by drawing on the existing cultural capital from a different cultural context. It shows that actions and inventions of Austrian refugees in Australia, and later also of Austro-Australian remigrants in Austria, usually affected both, the sending and the receiving societies. Many of the people researched for this book remained in contact with their old homeland, or with other former Austrian refugees in other parts of the world, thus triggering, maintaining, and accelerating a multidirectional circulation between both countries.

One major issue when dealing with the history of knowledge is the ultimate question of how to make historical translations visible and comprehensible or, more specifically, how to trace, detect, and specify knowledge and ideas before, during, and after the translation process. Examining whether and how different forms of knowledge are deemed valid, relevant, and valuable enables us to draw conclusions about the efficiency of mobile ideas, values, and practices in history.¹²⁸ Actor-centred perspectives offer a possible answer. They help us to understand refugees as “subjects” and not as “objects” of history, as

124 Ewa Moravska, “Studying international migration in the long(er) and short(er) durée: contesting some and reconciling other disagreements between the structuration and morphogenesis approaches,” IMI Working Paper 44, (2011) Oxford: International Migration Institute, University of Oxford, accessed online: <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:a0593df2-cb5d-461f-ac88-3223a3516d38>; on opportunity structures, see: Strobl, *Social Networks*, 58.

125 Albert Bandura, “Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective,” 1–26, 4.

126 Philipp Sarasin, “Was ist Wissensgeschichte?” *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* 36, no. 1 (2011): 159–172, 159–165.

127 Sarasin, “Was ist Wissensgeschichte,” 167–171; Johan Östling et al., “The History of Knowledge and the Circulation of Knowledge: An Introduction,” in *Circulation of Knowledge: Explorations in the History of Knowledge*, ed. Johan Östling et al. (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2018), 9–33, 12.

128 Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge,” 320.

well as independent actors, as historian Philipp Ther noted.¹²⁹ Actor-centred approaches have become increasingly popular and from a history of knowledge perspective there is substantial research focusing on the role of “cultural translators” or “transmitters” within the transnational process of producing, translating, and adapting knowledge and culture. When searching for suitable actor-centred perspectives, it makes sense to turn our attention to an academic school of thought frequently employed in migration history—the field of biography.

Much has changed in this field during the past decade and many new sophisticated biographical approaches and methods have been developed. The “new biography” school of thought offers approaches and questions which support our journey through the transformations of refugee knowledge. Turning away from typical chronological master narratives that focus on the histories of white, Western, male subjects, ostensibly “worthy” of a biography,¹³⁰ “new biography” advocates a more complex depiction of diverse, modern individuals.¹³¹ It focuses on the function of biographies within the process of cultural meaning-making and social self-reflection.¹³² It thus offers synergies with the history of knowledge, which itself does not seek to offer any “naïve history of progress but rather [draws] our attention to historical forms of secret, impeded, and ignored knowledge, or to knowledge that was revalued or delegitimized.”¹³³

Applying biography as a method of historical research has major implications for the composition and the outcomes of research studies.¹³⁴ Analysing the biographees’ perspectives and their agency constitutes a specific way of looking at the past, leading to a distinctive framework of historical interpretation. Methodologically, a biographical analysis of different aspects of migration history offers a great opportunity to empirically deploy the concept of

129 Philipp Ther, *Die Außenseiter: Flucht, Flüchtlinge und Integration im modernen Europa* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2018).

130 Levke Harders, “Migration und Biographie: Mobile Leben schreiben,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 29, no. 3 (2018): 17–36.

131 Katharina Prager, “Überlegungen zu Biographie und Exil im 20. Jahrhundert,” in *Exilforschung Österreich: Leistungen, Defizite und Perspektiven*, ed. Evelyn Adunka et al. (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2018), 564.

132 Volker Depkat, “The Challenges of Biography and Migration History,” in *Quiet Invaders Revisited. Biographies of Immigrants to the United States in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Günter Bischof (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2017), 301.

133 Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move,” 320.

134 Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, and Jonne Harmsma, “Introduction,” in *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History*, ed. Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, and Jonne Harmsma (London: Routledge, 2017), 3–11, 4.

transnationalism in the historical sciences¹³⁵ by “reconstructing life paths, motivations and courses of action of mobile people.”¹³⁶ According to Logemann, biographical perspectives on transnational migrants provide the opportunity of analysing at least three aspects of transnational exchange processes:

1. Firstly, they enable us to question the role of migrants, as “actors of knowledge” within the reciprocal transfer of knowledge across borders.
2. Secondly, they cast light on institutional and personal networks and question whether and how they trigger exchange processes.
3. Thirdly, they indicate the central role of achievements of cultural translation within the process of locating and adapting knowledge and cultural, social, and economic practices.¹³⁷

Due to the multidirectional nature of translations, a focus on migrants and their autobiographical memories can also help us detect transformations that occur after ideas are transported from one context to another one. “If comprehended as a cultural practice,” the sociologist Xymena Wieczorek noted, “biography could provide a reliable method of analysing the social practices of mobility thus opening up a new perspective on the movement and exchange of people, knowledge and institutions.”¹³⁸ Linguist Volker Depkat additionally remarked that approaching research from a biographical perspective offers actor-centred perspectives on transnational historical processes, thus mediating between the micro and macro levels of transnational entanglements and highlighting “to what degree seemingly anonymous, transnational processes have affected regional contexts.”¹³⁹ To put it more simply, a biographical perspective leads us to interrogate processes that have not gained much attention so far, such as our core question of how relatively anonymous ideas and individual cultural capital have been transported, transformed, and applied in a new and alien context, thereby affecting the regional context of a society in the receiving country.

135 Logemann, “Transatlantische Karrieren,” 81.

136 Levke Harders, “Migration und Biografie zusammendenken. Ein Plädoyer,” *Migration and Belonging*, accessed January 1, 2022, <https://belonging.hypotheses.org/709>.

137 Logemann, “Transatlantische Karrieren,” 82.

138 Xymena Wieczorek, “Biography En Route: Investigating Mobility Experiences through Biographical Research,” in *Spaces of Difference: Conflicts and Cohabitation*, ed. Ursula Lehmkuhl, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, and Laurence McFalls (Münster: Waxmann, 2016), 101–124, 106.

139 Volker Depkat, “Biographieforschung im Kontext transnationalen und globalen Geschichtsschreibung,” *BIOS—Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung, Oral History und Lebensverlaufsanalysen* 28, nos. 1–2 (2015): 3–18.

As this book demonstrates, a complex but fluid term such as “knowledge,” can be logically approached by focusing on perceptions, understandings, and memories of the translators. Furthermore, our biographical perspective enables us to capture knowledge as well as understand the transfer processes of cultural capital from the point of view of the historical actors who pursued them. The critical, actor-centred view of this book provides us with the tools to reveal and interrogate the strategies migrants used to promote their knowledge in a new context. Doing so demonstrates not only what kind of knowledge they regarded as important for themselves and therefore as worthy of being translated into their new context, it can also permit us to approach the “success” or “failure” of knowledge transfer by asking about the standards translators apply to their translations. Finally, biography as a method can help to sharpen our sense of the constructed character of biographical sources by critically questioning the intentions of a biographical subject.

1.5 What Is Cultural Capital?

So far, this introduction has clarified what this book is about and sketched out what will be analysed. However, there are still some unanswered questions about this book’s terminology. At this point, one could ask how seemingly abstract terms such as “knowledge” and “cultural practices” can be depicted or captured analytically.

The work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu provides answers to these crucial questions. Bourdieu rejected an antagonistic understanding of culture and society, advocating the regarding of culture as a complex system of aesthetic and ethical norms and values that can be institutionalized and can be formed and stabilized through public communication.¹⁴⁰ For this study, I draw on his concept of the forms of capital, a concept he developed during the early 1980s, and which ever since has proved to be a valuable tool in migration studies for exploring the role of capital, assets, and resources.¹⁴¹ Bourdieu described the general “scarcity of resources” as a driving force for human social practice in many different fields of life. As he states, many social phenomena would hardly be explainable if we only consider the uneven distribution of economic

140 Simone Lässig, *Jüdische Wege ins Bürgertum: Kulturelles Kapital und Sozialer Aufstieg im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 26.

141 Bourdieu, “The Forms,” 241–258; for a better translation of Bourdieu’s text (in German), see Pierre Bourdieu, “Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital,” in *Soziale Ungleichheiten*, ed. Reinhard Kreckel (Göttingen: Springer, 1983), 183–198.

capital. Instead of that, regarding capital as the “power of disposal of the scarce resources,”¹⁴² he advocated an extended and more universal understanding of capital that exceeds purely economic factors. In contrast to most of the economic theories of his time which only acknowledge the existence of financial or economic capital, Bourdieu understood capital as commonly appearing in three different forms:

1. *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money;
2. *cultural capital*, which is convertible, under certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications;
3. *social capital*, made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, under certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized (for example, in the form of a title of nobility).¹⁴³

Although some Austrian refugees in Australia had, in one way or another, managed to save at least some of their financial assets from the clutches of the oppressive Nazi emigration authorities who tried to prevent an outflow of money from the German Reich, most of them arrived either without any significant amount of money or with debt. Thus, imported economic capital played only a very minor role for the actions of refugees in Australia. Instead, other forms of capital had more crucial implications for their subsequent lives in Australia and thus will be subject to our analysis.

Social capital, as described by Bourdieu, is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources linked to membership in a group providing each member with the backing of the collectively owned capital, crucial in entitling them to credit, in the various senses of the word.¹⁴⁴ “The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent,” Bourdieu continues, “depends on the size of the network of connections he [or she] can effectively mobilise.”¹⁴⁵ Social capital, as shown in a preceding study,¹⁴⁶ was an essential tool for refugees in integrating themselves into a new social context and accelerating their economic advancement. Therefore, this study will also analyse and portray how the refugees used their social capital to execute their escape and advance their social and economic integration in Australia.

¹⁴² Lässig, *Jüdische Wege*, 27.

¹⁴³ Bourdieu, “The Forms,” 47.

¹⁴⁴ Bourdieu, “The Forms,” 51.

¹⁴⁵ Bourdieu, “The Forms,” 51.

¹⁴⁶ Strobl, “Social Networks.”

Cultural capital, as the third major form of capital, builds the refugees' actual "treasure chest"¹⁴⁷ and thus belongs to the most important assets refugees imported and translated into their new cultural context. According to Bourdieu, it exists in three forms:

1. in the embodied state (long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body);
2. in the objectified state (cultural goods such as pictures or books); and
3. in the institutionalized state (e.g., school or university education).¹⁴⁸

Cultural capital, in this perspective, differs from the other types of capital, since it is the only form that had to be acquired over an extended period of time. Even the existence of an exorbitantly high income and the connection to social networks usually does not allow for a quick acquisition of cultural capital. Social climbers and *parvenus*, as Bourdieu showed, can usually be identified within a social group by the lack of knowledge about social codes and rites, as expressed in the use of language, clothing, or other habits and customs that were common for the social group in which they moved.¹⁴⁹

From a history of knowledge point of view, it is important to differentiate between forced migration and regular migration. Forced migration, in contrast to regular migration, takes place under either direct or indirect constraint. Push factors are more important in the refugees' decision to leave their country. Regular migrants, on the other hand, are driven rather by pull factors, such as the desire to live and work in a new and frequently idealized environment.¹⁵⁰ In the case of forced migration, when people are unwillingly "pushed" into an unfamiliar context, migrants' cultural capital usually experiences devaluation, since norms and values are usually understood differently in their new home contexts and, in many cases, they do not have the chance to prepare themselves for the new environment. Bourdieu observed that refugees have to develop strategies to utilize their capital in a new context. They have to bargain with institutions and people about the value of their capital¹⁵¹ and are forced to exercise agency to press their point to a much higher degree than the members of the host society. Their efforts to make their cultural capital known and appreciated play a crucial role in determining its value. This directly affects the possibilities of translating their knowledge and ideas into their new society. As we will see, for the migrants in this study, their efforts at

147 Umut Erel, "Migrating Cultural Capital: Bourdieu in Migration Studies," *Sociology* 44, no. 4 (2010): 642–660, 649.

148 Bourdieu, "The Forms," 47.

149 Lässig, *Jüdische Wege*, 29.

150 Ther, *Außenseiter*, 17.

151 Erel, "Migrating Cultural," 649.

exercising agency frequently led to an adaption and transformation process, since usually ideas cannot simply be transferred and transplanted into a new context without change. Thus, the process of negotiating the value and acceptance of cultural capital very frequently led to the construction of new forms of migration-specific cultural capital.¹⁵²

1.6 Methodology

This book uses biography to explore the absorption, transportation, and transformation processes of ideas and cultural capital by means of their mediators' ego documents and testimonies. In the sense of a "history from below," it is concerned with how people navigate along given structures, how they perceive those structures, and how they shape and change them.¹⁵³ The focus on the refugees' memories allow us to detect processes of cultural translation and knowledge transfer as the translators remembered them. Of course, when dealing with autobiographical memories in a historiographical study, it is important to recognize the constructed nature of memories as a conceptual framework when dealing with our sources.¹⁵⁴ Thus, the context of this book's sources has to be discussed and clarified against one of the main questions in memory research: How does memory represent experience and knowledge?¹⁵⁵ Findings of memory research have shown that memories changed especially in a transnational context to fit the new background and culture of a narrator. Thereby it is evident that all memories, or at least some knowledge is inferred, most often non-consciously but sometimes consciously.¹⁵⁶ Also, individual autobiographical memories are comprised of explicit social components, as they were formed collectively through exchange with others.¹⁵⁷ If contextualized carefully against the specific backgrounds of the migrants and their cultural

152 Stefan Manz and Panikos Panayi, "Refugees and Cultural Transfer to Britain: An Introduction," *Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora* 30, nos. 2–3 (2012): 122–151, 133.

153 Haumann, "Lebensweltlich orientierte Geschichtsschreibung"; Vierhaus, "Die Rekonstruktion."

154 Martin Conway and Mark L. Howe, "Memory Construction: A Brief and Selective History," *Memory* 30, no. 1 (2022): 2–4, 2; see also: Maurice Aymard, "History and Memory: Construction, Deconstruction and Reconstruction," *Diogenes* 201 (2024): 8–16.

155 Conway and Howe, "Memory Construction," 2.

156 Conway and Howe, "Memory Construction," 2, 3.

157 Nelson, "Erzählung und Selbst."

domains, they are an excellent source for exploring social and material conditions as well as cultural practices.

The book is divided into a quantitative and a qualitative part. In its first, quantitative, section, it introduces a prosopography of Austrian refugees in Australia that allows the categorization of the cohort according to given characteristics. The subsequent qualitative, collective biographical part focuses on the lives of 26 representative case studies, using biographical information to find answers to questions which otherwise could not be answered. It highlights differences and commonalities of a group of cultural brokers by comparing and analysing them in the context of the concepts of cultural translation and knowledge circulation, as well as the wider backdrop of refugee history in Australia. One of my major aims was to find examples representative of the overall group. This ultimately raises questions of inclusion and exclusion: who should be included in the depiction, who will not be mentioned? How can a narrator decide who is “worthy of a biography?”¹⁵⁸

This book was never intended to be restricted to a spotlight approach focusing on so-called “extraordinary” individuals. Instead, it was important that the search for cultural translators did not block the perspective on other, rather marginalized, forms of transnational lives.¹⁵⁹ Since not only a few “great men and women” but rather every single member of the group was involved in processes of cultural translation in one way or another, notions of “greatness” or “worthiness” as a biographical premise must cede to the analysis of lesser-known life stories and aspects of everyday life. This again raises the initial methodological question of how to locate and organize a sample of historical lives which is:

- a) manageable enough in size to be researched and analysed, and
 - b) large enough to represent the overall group of more than 2,600 persons.
- The complex demands and questions of this study required me to develop a mixed method approach, consisting of both collective biographical and prosopographical approaches.

Prosopography, a method initially developed during the 19th century by the classical scholar Theodor Mommsen,¹⁶⁰ has proven to be suitable for analysing larger groups of historical people. It provides the basis for a subsequent qualitative, collective biographical analysis. By collecting data about individuals according to a predetermined list of criteria, formulated with regard to group

¹⁵⁸ Prager, “Überlegungen zur Biographie,” 565.

¹⁵⁹ Logemann, “Transatlantische Karrieren,” 96.

¹⁶⁰ K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, “Introduction,” in *Prosopography, Approaches and Applications: A Handbook*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007), 7.

analysis,¹⁶¹ prosopography offers the essential quantitative tools to extract data from the available sources and to isolate and analyse the typical features of a larger and more anonymous population.¹⁶² Thus, in a first step, this book offers a macrohistorical prosopography of the overall group, analysing rather anonymous details of a cohort of migrants which the Australian authorities defined as a consistent group. The prosopographical analysis allows the capture, specification, and separation of the group of Austrians naturalized in Australia between 1938 and 1948 according to the following criteria:

1. gender
2. demographics
3. place of birth
4. family structure
5. date of naturalization
6. place of residence in Australia (at the time the naturalization certificate was issued)

Based on these criteria, 26 individuals were identified and researched who represent the overall group according to the data collected by immigration authorities. They consequently constitute this book's main research subjects.

In a next step, the book provides a qualitative, collective biographical approach. Collective biographical perspectives, as Levke Harders and Veronika Lipphardt have pointed out, seek to logically relate "extraordinary elements" of a certain group of people with "ordinary elements."¹⁶³ In contrast to individual biographical studies, collective biographies of a group of people offer the tools not only to highlight certain aspects of individual lives but also to analyse and contextualize them against the backdrop of a larger group of people and wider societal and social frameworks.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, this part of the book will not offer "traditional," chronological depictions of "complete" life stories but use biography to compare and analyse predefined criteria, such as elements of knowledge and cultural capital. This pool of data forms the analytical reservoir of this study. By comparison, it evaluates unified data against the backdrop of research about cultural transfer, detecting trends, specifics, and general developments within the process of cultural translation and knowledge transfer. Combined with contextual research on the refugees' specific cultural domains,

¹⁶¹ Keats-Rohan, "Introduction," 16.

¹⁶² Keats-Rohan, "Introduction," 12.

¹⁶³ Levke Harders and Veronika Lipphardt, "Kollektivbiographie in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte als qualitative und problemorientierte Methode," *Traverse: Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 13, no. 2 (2006): 81–90, 81.

¹⁶⁴ Harders and Lipphardt, "Kollektivbiographie," 86.

this book will show the entanglement and weaving of social, cultural, and economic elements initiated by refugees.

Another strength of collective biography is that it allows us to focus our attention on processes of interaction and communication. Therefore, it is well suited for exploring relations among different members of a group, opening up the view on another interesting aspect of transnational refugee lives: the study of their networks. Besides economic and cultural capital, networks, as an important form of social capital, are crucial assets for refugees. During their escape, the existence of networks even became a matter of life and death.¹⁶⁵ Connecting theories from the field of relational sociology¹⁶⁶ with approaches of the field of historical network research,¹⁶⁷ this book uses its collective biographical focus to explore the role of relations in refugee networks during their flights from Austria to Australia. As the author has argued in a recent paper, studying the meaning structure of networks provides a reliable method to analyse historical networks through available biographical data by focusing on forms of meaning that circulate in individual communication and thus can be identified in biographical analyses (such as in stories that were told, or in identities attributed in these stories).¹⁶⁸ This approach shapes our understanding of the nature and the uses of historical refugee networks, and helps us to comprehend migration and integration “not only as an individual decision but rather as a social product, as the outcome of many factors in interaction.”¹⁶⁹

Social structure consists largely of expectations shaping the ways people behave. The same holds true for the expectations people suppose others have about them. This book utilizes the wealth of biographic material gathered for the collective biography to explore networks largely at the level of “mental

165 Strobl, “Social Networks.”

166 Harrison White, *Identity and Control: How Social Formations Emerge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); inspired by White's theories, sociologist Jan Fuhse developed a theoretical framework based on the notion that networks consist of social constructs such as expectations and identities, see: Jan Fuhse, “The Meaning Structure of Social Networks,” *Sociological Theory* 27, no. 1 (2009): 51–73, 53; Jan Fuhse, “Theorizing Social Networks: The Relational Sociology of and Around Harrison White,” *International Review of Sociology* 25, no. 1 (2015): 15–44, 19.

167 In recent years, network analysis has developed from a fringe theory into an established methodology in historical research transcending a purely metaphorical use of the concept of networks, for an overview of the small but growing literature in the field, see Christian Rollinger et al., eds., “Editor's Introduction,” *Journal of Historical Network Research* 1 (2017), i–vii.

168 Strobl, “Social Networks”; Fuhse, “Theorizing Social Networks,” 19.

169 Dana M. Boyd, “Family Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas,” *The International Migration Review* 23, no. 3 (1989): 638–670, 642.

realities" focusing on the foundations of networking processes, and on individual conceptions and expectations refugees had for their networks.¹⁷⁰ This reveals how expectations influenced transactions in refugee networks, how identities and whole networks emerged out of dyadic relationships, which role individuals played in that process, and how the refugees' interwar networks, their derivation, and cultural capital influenced their networking in Australia. The book is particularly interested here in how refugees used their networks to cope with their escape and their integration, and how their forced migration influenced the formation of identities and relationships in their networks.

1.7 Sources

This book explores memories and ego documents of individuals (oral and written testimonies, interviews, letters, autobiographies, memoirs, diaries) to gain insights into the refugees' perception of the impact and use of their cultural capital. Ego documents are crucial sources for exploring experiences, patterns of perception, interpretation, and behaviour of historical subjects.¹⁷¹ Since memories are always constructed and, in all memories, at least some knowledge is inferred, either consciously or non-consciously, they will be contextualized against the backdrop of the translators' cultural and economic domains, and the specific context within which statements were made. Memory construction is about consistency with pre-existing knowledge and only secondly about "what happened"¹⁷² and more information about the context of individual sources will be given before they are introduced for the first time.

As we know, different approaches require the use of different types of sources. Accordingly, the prosopographical section is based on an analysis of complete series of duplicates of naturalization records stored in the National Archives of Australia.¹⁷³ Drawing upon a collective biography, the main part of

¹⁷⁰ The term "mental realities" has been used in sociology and philosophy to describe perceptions and expectations; Charles Tilly described it as "the meaning people assign to their actions," see: Charles Tilly, *Identities, Boundaries, and Social Ties* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2005), 3; John Rogers Searle defined it as "the reality of consciousness and intentionality," see: John R. Searle, "Meaning, Mind, and Reality," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 55, no. 216 (2001): 173–179, 178; Fuhse, "The Meaning," 53.

¹⁷¹ Anke Stephan, "Erinnertes Leben: Autobiographien, Memoiren und Oral-History-Interviews als historische Quellen," *Digitales Handbuch zur Geschichte und Kultur Russlands und Osteuropas* 10 (2004).

¹⁷² Conway and Howe, "Memory Construction," 3.

¹⁷³ NAA, A714, Books of duplicate certificates of naturalization A(1)[Individual person] series; NAA, A715, Book of duplicate certificates of naturalization A(2) series.

this book is focused on qualitative sources. It is firstly based on dozens of hours of semi-structured oral history interviews conducted in Australia and Austria. Most of them were carried out with refugees, or their descendants and friends between 2016 and 2018. In this case, interviews were conducted by the author and were audio-taped. Other interviews were given to the author by relatives of the former refugees. All interviewees agreed to be interviewed and to be identified in this study.

This book also relies upon oral history interviews which Jewish and Australian museums and organizations have conducted from the 1980s onward.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, a wide range of published and unpublished ego documents such as letters, diaries, and autobiographies stored in private collections and public archives has been consulted.¹⁷⁵ The lives of some of the 26 biographees have been regarded as “worthy” of a biography or a public obituary and, at some point in time, texts have been published about some of them. Such biographical texts additionally informed the research of this book, where available. Another important source type for this book were contemporary newspaper articles and letters to the editor. They provide a very good window onto public opinion, although the latter can be seen as problematic because the editors chose which letter to publish.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, they turned out to be surprisingly rich, not only for contemporary public discourses about refugees and all topics related to them but also for the self-conception of refugees, as some of them had already utilized the media as a forum to exercise agency in their new homeland.¹⁷⁷

Further sources that inform about the “outside perspective” of the cultural and economic domain include letters and expert interviews, as well as

174 Information can be found in the National Library of Australia's Oral History Collection, or the Holocaust Survivor Life Stories Collection of the Sydney Jewish Museum and the Holocaust Museum in Melbourne.

175 The public archives consulted for this book include the State Library of Victoria, the State Library of New South Wales, the Jewish Museum in Sydney, the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre in Melbourne, the National Library of Australia, the Special Collection of the Monash University Library, the National Archives of Australia, the Austrian National Library, the Vienna City Library.

176 Kim Richard Nossal, “No Repercussions Down Under? Australian Responses to Kristallnacht,” in *Violence, Memory, and History: Western Perceptions of Kristallnacht*, ed. Collin McCullough and Nathan Wilson (New York: Routledge, 2015), 130–150, 138.

177 Comp. Philipp Strobl, ed., *Die Flüchtlingskrise der 1930er Jahre in australischen Tageszeitungen: Eine medianhistorische Diskursanalyse* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2018); Philipp Strobl, ed., *They trusted us but not too much. Transnationale Transnationale Studien zur Rezeption deutschsprachiger Flüchtlinge in englischsprachigen Medien* (Hildesheim: Universitätsverlag Hildesheim, 2020).

published and unpublished documents about people who were engaged in the same professional and social field as the translators.

Migration records were conducted and carefully preserved by the Australian government, which, at that point, wanted to keep migration low and thus had introduced a rigorous migration system capturing even the smallest details about those who had entered the country as refugees. Those records have proven to be a most valuable source to unearth information about marginalized life stories of people who were not in the spotlight of historiography.¹⁷⁸

1.8 Research Questions and Structure

This study focuses on the transnational absorption, movement, and adaptation or transformation of skills, knowledge, and cultural capital in its various forms as recalled by the translators. The biographical part analyses the *longue durée* of the weaving process of cultural capital and knowledge in the cultural, economic, and social domains, triggered by the influx of the 26 refugees. The research conducted for this book was guided by the following set of open questions:

- What cultural capital did the protagonists recall as important during their time in Austria? What social, cultural and professional elements had influenced them?
- Which elements of their original cultural capital did they perceive as valuable for tackling their lives in Australia? Which elements did they try to translate into their new context?
- How did this book's protagonists or their descendants recall the process of having mediated knowledge and cultural practices between Australia and their homeland? What were the difficulties they encountered?
- Which strategies did they pursue to exercise agency to promote their mediations?
- Which elements of the majority society influenced their further lives, according to their memories, and how did knowledge, cultural capital, and social practices evolve as a result of the mediation process?
- How do they recall being perceived as refugees/migrants by the majority population?

¹⁷⁸ Most of the official public records are currently stored at the different branches of the National Archives in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

- Did they employ specific strategies of identification with the majority population through ethnic/cultural/linguistic framing (e.g., emphasizing shared histories/Germanness/Austrianness/Jewishness) to facilitate their mediations?
- Were they able to use existing networks or establish new ones which facilitated their mediations?

This book does not intend to provide a detailed chronological reconstruction of 26 different lives from birth to death but rather seeks to compare common and diverging aspects in certain periods of the refugees' lives in accordance with the research questions outlined above. It is centred on their memories of "opportunity structures,"¹⁷⁹ defined as key periods which provided them with certain chances and opportunities. This helps to structure the analysis according to shared events and experiences of all the analysed refugees.

In the case of our sample group, whose members had experienced very similar biographical interruptions, collective key periods were easy to define. At first, there was the time when they grew up in Austria before the German occupation of the country. In 1938, the Anschluss and the deprivation of their civil rights was an important biographical disruption for them, as was their escape and arrival in Australia. All of them experienced the war years as a time when they were officially discriminated against and classified as "enemy aliens." Another important period was the last year of the war and/or the postwar years as a time when they officially became British and thus Australian citizens.¹⁸⁰

The structure of this book will mirror these crucial periods. At the beginning is a prosopographical section (Chapter 2) that gives a quantitative overview of the whole cohort of Austrian refugees in Australia and explains the selection of the 26 protagonists through which to illustrate the knowledge transfer. This is followed by Chapter 3, a comprehensive section that outlines the refugees' backgrounds and contextualizes them accordingly to show how the refugees' cultural capital had come into existence and had been shaped by their environment. This aids the understanding of the process of knowledge and cultural capital accumulation by exemplifying what the refugees recalled as being important in this early part of their lives. The fourth chapter of this book depicts the first major biographical disruption in the lives of the refugees. It deals with the Nazi invasion of Austria and shows how these events, in their view, changed their lives dramatically and ultimately forced them to flee their homelands. The fifth chapter describes how they managed their escape and

¹⁷⁹ Fuhse, "The Meaning," 53.

¹⁸⁰ Australia enacted the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 to create its own citizenship, which came into force on 26 January 1949, after the British Nationality Act 1948 became effective throughout the Empire on 1 January 1949.

how most of them used their social capital to facilitate their flight. Chapter 6 brings a change of scene and introduces the reader to Australia. This part will analyse the refugees' first years in Australia, depicting their encounter experiences as they remembered them. We thus see how their first encounters with the local Australian population played out, and demonstrate the dynamics of identity-building and the diverse and complex ways in which encounters impacted the refugees' social relations and their identity formation. Chapter 7 analyses the individual processes of knowledge transfer that took place once the refugees had a firm footing in their new homeland. Separated into different spheres of cultural, social, or professional activities, this comprehensive core section of the book analyses the translations of the members of our sample group in Australia as well as their strategies to exercise agency to promote their ideas and their cultural capital. Chapter 8 offers an analysis of the knowledge and cultural transfers in Australia depicted in Chapter 7. The final chapter provides an overall conclusion to the book. It also discusses further opportunities and possibilities for a cultural approach to analysing the transnational process of translations, adaptations, and transfers.

1.9 State of Research about Jewish Refugees in Australia before and during the Second World War

This book is located at the crossroads of the history of knowledge and the history of migration. It offers a transdisciplinary study that touches upon different methods and ideas of different fields of research, all of which were depicted in different sections of this introduction. In these sections, the book provides detailed insights into the relevant literature with respect to a specific approach. At this point, this introduction will offer a brief insight into the literature about Jewish refugee migration to Australia in the years before and during the Second World War. This refugee movement forms the spatial and topical framework and the context of this book and thus a brief literature review could be useful to give insights into the context of this important part of the book's story. This will also indicate how this book extends and enriches this particular strand of literature.

"Histories of migrants and refugees are having a 'moment' in Australian historiography," as Ruth Balint and Zora Simic wrote in their 2018 field review essay about "Histories of Migrants and Refugees in Australia."¹⁸¹ In general, as they

181 Ruth Balint and Zora Simic, "Histories of Migrants and Refugees in Australia," *Australian Historical Studies* 49.3 (2018): 378–409, 378.

continued, migration sits awkwardly in relation to colonialism as an animating theme in Australian history. As many scholars have pointed out, immigration was for many decades, and particularly during the era under consideration for this book, premised on colonial and governmental fantasies of a “white nation” that was “more British than the British”¹⁸² and Australians developed a “clear concept of themselves as [...] superior to all non-European [high-status] people,” as Andrew Markus has described.¹⁸³ During the past three decades, however, much research has been conducted on the quintessential era of the prewar and wartime refugee migration from Central Europe and its implications for social, cultural, and economic life in Australia, as well as on the changes in the composition of Jewish communities caused by the influx of Jewish refugees. Jewish immigration from Europe to Australia has been frequently discussed in the scholarship and there was a considerable interest in Jewish social and religious life in Australia and the impact pre-war and wartime migration had on Australian Jewish societies.¹⁸⁴

The question of discriminatory (antisemitic) intention on the part of the Australian government was also in the spotlight of research.¹⁸⁵ In particular,

182 Catriona Elder, “Immigration History,” in *Australia's History: Themes and Debates*, ed. Martyn Lyons and Penny Russell (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005), 98–115, 98.

183 Generally, only people from the United Kingdom and northern Europe were seen as high-status immigrants. Migrants from southern or eastern Europe were usually regarded as a distinct racial group. See Andrew Markus, *Australian Race Relations, 1788–1993* (St Leonhard: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 145.

184 Blakeney, *Australia and the Jewish Refugees*; Suzanne D. Rutland, “A Changing Community: The Impact of the Refugees on Australian Jewry New South Wales—A Case Study,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 31 (1985): 90–108; Suzanne D. Rutland, *The Jews in Australia* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005); Philipp Strobl, “Austrian-Jewish Refugees in Pre- and Wartime Australia. Ambivalent Experiences of Encounter,” *Zeitgeschichte* 21 (2021): 253–271; Strobl, “Social Networks”; Ursula Wiemann, “German and Austrian Refugees in Melbourne 1933–1947” (MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1965); Kwiet, “The Second Time Around”; Irene Ebner, *Wartime Shanghai and the Jewish Refugees from Central Europe: Survival, Co-Existence, and Identity in a Multi-Cultural City* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2012); Suzanne D. Rutland, “An Australian Response to No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging,” *Canadian Jewish Studies* 36 (2024): 300–305; Seamus O’Hanlon, “A Little Bit of Europe in Australia: Jews, Immigrants, Flats and Urban and Cultural Change in Melbourne, c.1935–1975,” *History Australia* 11, no. 3 (2014): 116–133; Anna Rosenbaum, *The Safe House Down Under: Jewish Refugees from Czechoslovakia in Australia 1938–1944* (Oxford/Bern: Peter Lang, 2017); Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1991); Margaret Taft and Andrew Markus, *A Second Chance: The Making of Yiddish Melbourne* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2018); Suzanne D Rutland, “Australia and Refugee Migration, 1933–1945: Consensus or Conflict,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 2 (1988): 77–91.

185 Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Migration of Jewish “Displaced Persons” from Europe to Australia after the Second World War: Revisiting the Question of Discrimination and Numbers,”

the issue of discrimination has been controversially discussed in studies of Jewish migration to Australia.¹⁸⁶ On the other hand, there was an increased interest in individual “contributions” of some of the refugees, particularly to the cultural or the economic sector.¹⁸⁷

Australian Journal of Politics and History 67.2 (2021): 226–245, 226; Paul R. Bartrop, “Almost Indescribable and Unbelievable: The Garret Report and the Future of Jewish Refugee Immigration to Australia in 1939,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 46.4 (2011): 549–556; Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933–45* (Kew: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994); Peter Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939–1941* (Sydney: Halstead Press, 1965); Markus, *Australian Race Relations*; Neumann, *Across the Seas*; Richards, *Destination Australia*; Katrina Stats, “‘Characteristically Generous’? Australian Responses to Refugees Prior to 1951,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 60 (2014): 177–193, 179; Joan Beaumont, Ilma Martinuzzi O’Brien, and Mathew Trinca, *Under Suspicion: Citizenship and Internment in Australia During the Second World War* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia Press, 2008).

- 186 Comp. Andrew Markus, “Jewish Migration to Australia 1938–49,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 7.13 (1983): 18–31; Blakeney, “Australia and the Jewish Refugees”; Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia* (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger, 2001); Suzanne D. Rutland, “Waiting Room Shanghai: Australian Reactions to the Plight of Jews in Shanghai after the Second World War,” *Leo Baeck Yearbook* 32.1 (1987); Suzanne D. Rutland, “‘Are You Jewish?’ Post-War Jewish Immigration to Australia, 1945–1954,” *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* 5.2 (1991); A challenge to the prevailing emphasis on discrimination came from W.D. Rubinstein, “Australia and the Refugee Jews of Europe, 1933–1954: A Dissenting View,” *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 10.6 (1989); Charles Price, “Jewish Settlers in Australia 1788–1961,” *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 5.8 (1964); Bartrop, “Australia and the Holocaust”; Klaus Neumann, “Thinking the Forbidden Concept’: Refugees as Immigrants and Exiles,” *Antipodes* (2005): 6–11.
- 187 Karl Bittmann, ed., *Strauss to Matilda: Viennese in Australia* (Sydney: Wenkhart Foundation, 1988); Karen Bond, “Honoring Hanny Exiner: Dancer, Philosopher and Visionary Educator,” in *Dance Education: Essays and Interviews on Values, Practices, and People*, ed. Thomas K. Hagood (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2008), 99–114; Harriet Edquist, “Vienna Abroad: Viennese Interior Design in Australia 1940–1949,” *RMIT Design Archives Journal* 9 (2019): 9–32; Benjamin Genocchio, *The Art of Persuasion: Australian Art Criticism 1950–2001* (St Leonards: Craftsman House Fine Art Publishing, 2002); Richard Haese, *Permanent Revolution: Mike Brown and the Australian Avant-Garde 1953–1997* (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2011); Judith Hamilton, “Provincial Art World,” *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture* 61, no. 3 (2014): 199–210; Birgit Lang, *Eine Fahrt ins Blaue: Deutschsprachiges Theater und Kabarett im australischen Exil (1933–1988)* (Berlin: Weidler, 2008); Palmer, *Centre of the Periphery*; Matthew Rampley, “Art History and the Politics of Empire: Rethinking the Vienna School,” *The Art Bulletin* 91, no. 4 (2009): 446–462; Strobl, “‘But the Main Thing is I had the Knowledge’”; Philipp Strobl, “From Niche Sport to Mass Tourism: Transnational Lives in Australia’s Thredbo Resort,” in *Leisure Cultures and the Making of Modern Ski Resorts*, ed. Philipp Strobl and Aneta Podkalicka (London: Palgrave, 2018), 185–214; Strobl, “Migration, Knowledge Transfer.”

Prosopography of Austrian World War Two Refugees in Australia

Who were those Austrians who came to Australia during the late 1930s? The few works about Austrian World War II refugees in Australia which exist draw a picture of a coherent group. In her book *Austrians and Australia*, the most comprehensive work about Austrian refugees in Australia, published in 1988, Marlene Norst described them as an “uprooted urban community with a social cohesion commonly found only in village migration.”¹ She offered a broad characterization of the cohesion and social structure of the overall group. According to Norst, 2,144 Austrian refugees had arrived in Australia by 1942.² They came mainly from Vienna and most of them were born before the collapse of the Habsburg Empire in 1918. The refugees were, for the most part, middle-class professionals or business people who had mastered at least one second language (in most cases French or English).³ Describing them as a “community of fate” with “shared memories and age-old traditions,” Norst further claimed that the refugees “were either related, knew each other, or had at least some mutual acquaintances.” Her work provides the most comprehensive published information on Austrian refugees in Australia as a social group and provides a valuable starting point for further research on the topic. However, since it was mainly based on assumption, her own experiences as a member of the refugee group, and interviews with randomly selected refugees, rather than on a meticulous analysis of source material, it requires further consideration.

2.1 Prosopography: Opportunities and Limits of an Integrated Method?

One fundamental problem of Norst’s laudable work is that she tends to rather generalize individual and personal information about the refugees’ lives, such

1 Norst and McBride, *Austrians and Australia*, 102.

2 Norst mentioned that she gathered this figure from data from the National Archives of Australia, however, she did not provide any further information or record any breakdown of numbers: Norst and McBride, *Austrians and Australia*, 99.

3 Norst and McBride, *Austrians and Australia*, 103.

as structure, origin, and demographic composition of the group, as well as language acquisition and their use of social capital. In reality, such practices differ greatly from individual to individual and thus cannot be easily generalized or extrapolated from anecdotal evidence. In order to get more reliable answers, these practices could and should be explored qualitatively by examining and comparing individual life stories. Subsequent collective biographical chapters of this book will engage further with that personal level of analysis.

This chapter seeks to question and clarify these impersonal and generalized statements by engaging new sources and employing qualitative prosopographical methods. This will not only offer insights into some structural characteristics of a group of refugees as a whole but will also provide the quantitative foundation of my qualitative collective biographical approach, as my selection of biographees depends on statistical data.

Prosopography, a method, as previously mentioned, initially invented and applied by the classical scholar Theodor Mommsen during the late 19th century,⁴ aims at collecting and analysing large amounts of serial data through the use of standardized databases.⁵ According to historian Hilde De Ridder-Symoens, it specifies the external features of a group of people researchers have determined to have something in common.⁶ In his pioneering work on prosopography, historian Lawrence Stone recommended the use of prosopographies as tools “to describe and analyze the structure of society and the degree of the movements within it.”⁷ What follows from this is that prosopography is impersonal.⁸ In short, prosopography is all about statistics. By employing prosopographical techniques, this chapter, unlike the other sections of this book, is concerned with individual lives only as they relate to the overall group.⁹

To realize a broad prosopographical spectrum analysis of a distinct group of people who share specific common features, this book researched, compiled, and analysed 1,509 biographical dossiers or “biograms”¹⁰ which were created from official naturalization records. The research, more specifically, was based on complete lists of duplicates of naturalization records, stored in the National Archives of Australia, which were analysed according to preformulated

4 Keats-Rohan, “Introduction,” 7.

5 Harders and Lipphardt, “Kollektivbiographie,” 83.

6 H. De Ridder-Symoens, “Prosopografie en middeleeuwse geschiedenis: een onmogelijke mogelijkheid?,” in *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* 45 (1991), 95–117.

7 Lawrence Stone, “Prosopography,” *Daedalus* 100, no. 1 (1971): 46–79, 47.

8 Keats-Rohan, “Introduction,” 16.

9 Keats-Rohan, “Introduction,” 16.

10 Keats-Rohan, “Introduction,” 16.

criteria. This chapter presents the results of this endeavour, providing a quantitative overview of the overall group, which allows me to systematically question those quantitative characteristics of the group that cannot be depicted through qualitative biographical accounts.

This book investigated general trends and common and diverging features of the overall group in order to draw a statistical picture that includes all Austrians who fled to Australia during the period under observation and became naturalized there. In accordance with the “ultimate purpose of prosopography,” as Verboven puts it, this chapter does not target individual stories but rather focuses on common and shared aspects of the lives of members of a group to collect data on phenomena that transcend individual lives.¹¹ It seeks general, connecting factors which aid the understanding of the lives of individuals in a spectrum analysis.¹² This enables us to define Austrian refugees in Australia as a group by indicating who is included and why. It further allows for the specification of common characteristics of the members of this particular group of people, which then enabled me to select my sample for a subsequent qualitative analysis.

Since this book uses prosopography as part of a more diversified research strategy based on collective biographical approaches, getting to know the demographics and the structure of the overall group was crucial. The analysis of complete sets of data enables us to specify the criteria required to select samples representative for the whole group. Without the existence of complete sets of data that incorporate standardized information about the vast majority of the refugees, a selection of a representative collective biography would be random.

2.2 A “Culture of Control”: Where Does the Information Come From?

Lawrence Stone summarized the challenges of prosopography 40 years ago:

It is self-evident that biographical studies of substantial numbers of persons are possible only for fairly well-documented groups, and that prosopography is therefore severely limited by the quantity and quality of the data accumulated about the past. In any historical group, it is likely that

11 Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier, and Jan Dumolyn, “A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography,” in *Prosopography, Approaches and Applications: A Handbook*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007), 35–70, 45.

12 Verboven et al., “Short Manual,” 41.

almost everything will be known about some members of it, and almost nothing at all about others; certain items will be lacking for some, and different items will be lacking for others. If the unknowns bulk very large, and if, with the seriously incompletes, they form a substantial majority of the whole, generalizations based on statistical averages become very shaky indeed, if not altogether impossible.¹³

Consequently, one of the major difficulties of every prosopographical study is deficiencies in data. Prosopographies usually offer generalizations based on statistical sets of data incorporating information about each member of a group. When tracing groups of people who lived their lives 70 years ago, we usually do not have the luxury of equally available and comparable information about all the members of those groups. The question that then arises is how to deal with differences or gaps in the availability of data. The answer is somewhat unsatisfying. Applying this method only makes sense if we can rely on complete sets of data which allow for a broad-spectrum analysis of certain aspects of an overall group. Therefore, the question above must be reformulated. We must not ask how to deal with gaps in the availability of data but rather where to find sets of data that evenly include every member of a group. Furthermore, it would be of considerable interest to know which information they can provide us with.

Answers could be found, for example, in census-type surveys: these provide us with a cross section of a society at a given moment, thus providing reliable data for a spectrum analysis.¹⁴ However, depending on the conductor's intention, their scope is very limited. They may not provide answers to all the questions a prosopographer would like to pose. Before conducting a prosopographical study based on census data, it is important to consider what could be gained from such a study. These preliminary thoughts are crucial because they determine the questionnaire, the evaluation period, and basically all further steps in a prosopography.

Immigration countries, such as Australia, have a long tradition of monitoring immigrants, especially of monitoring those migrant groups regarded as "undesirable." In this context, historian Eric Richards noted that "Australia self-consciously designed its population in terms of size and composition," thus maintaining what he described as a "culture of control."¹⁵ These rigorous controlling, monitoring, and surveillance processes came with considerable

13 Stone, "Prosopography," 58.

14 Stone, "Prosopography," 58.

15 Richards, *Destination Australia*, 356.

bureaucratic effort, for migration authorities, as well as for the refugees. Over time, authorities gathered a surprisingly comprehensive amount of data about new citizens. Australia is one of the few states that conducts a commendable policy of archiving and storing such documents. Most of the records of the immigration department were handed over to the National Archives, which rigorously gathered and sustainably archived them.

In recent years, the National Archives of Australia have launched digitization programmes to make immigration data available online. The archives are the first destination for anyone interested in Australian migration history and they also provide the statistical material for this prosopographical study.

Besides comprehensive files of data containing all kinds of information about every migrant who came to Australia during the period under evaluation here, the archives hold complete sets of naturalization certificates, issued between 1904 and 1962. Up until 1949, every Australian was a British subject. Therefore, every foreigner who successfully applied for naturalization in Australia up to 1949 was awarded British citizenship. This changed in 1949 when the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 came into force and introduced Australian citizenship.

The discovery of duplicates of naturalization certificates, after intense engagement with the migration-specific records stored in the archive, provided me with the right kind of data for my research undertaking. They contain brief and basic information about the persons being naturalized: their name, their date of naturalization, their previous nationality, their date and place of birth, their place of residence at the time they were naturalized, and additional information about family members included in the certificate. Duplicates of naturalization certificates, in this case, satisfy the two basic requirements for sources used as a basis for prosopography. They offer sufficient and processable information, and are complete, thus offering information about every member of that group.

The records used for this study derive from sets of naturalization certificates stored in the book of duplicate certificates of naturalization (series A714 and series A715),¹⁶ which includes all naturalization certificates issued between 1939 and 1949 to persons born in Austria. Since they incorporate every Austrian-born refugee who fled before and during the war and applied for naturalization in Australia, these two series have been selected to serve as a data basis for this prosopography.

16 NAA, A714, Books of duplicate certificates of naturalization A(1)[Individual person] series; NAA, A715, Book of duplicate certificates of naturalization A(2) series.

Research studies assume that refugees usually applied for naturalization in Australia.¹⁷ Historian Konrad Kwiet even stated that “the vast majority of German-Jewish émigrés remained in Australia” and only “a few,” whose numbers he estimated to be a few hundred, “decided to leave their exile in Australia.”¹⁸ A 1965 study on quantitative data about German and Austrian refugees in Melbourne, for example, pointed out that “in the case of German and Austrian refugees, naturalization records were particularly representative of the whole group because most of the refugees became naturalized as soon as they could” and that “the vast majority of refugees both became naturalized and stayed on in Australia.”¹⁹ Of course, there were some Austrian refugees who, for various reasons, never applied for naturalization. Their numbers, however, are small. Realistically, the refugees’ legal situation further supports this assumption: most of the Austrian refugees who fled from National Socialism arrived in Australia between 1938 and September 1939. When the war broke out in September 1939, the Australian government introduced the National Security Act, which passed absolute power to the executive.²⁰ There was no negotiation process involving the refugees or their proxies, or even much of a public debate, when the act was introduced. It was an acute security measure, taken after the outbreak of the war. The government simply applied norms and regulations from the First World War, regulating many aspects of community life. In terms of the control of aliens, additional plans had been made for their internment, as well as other measures to control their movements and activities.²¹ Aliens from Germany were labelled “enemy aliens,” regardless of their background. The same fate befell aliens from Austria, since the country was legally a part of the German Reich at that time, as well as people from other countries at war with Australia. Under the National Security Act, not just aliens but all Australians lost many of the civil rights they had been accustomed to exercising; the act gave the government emergency powers that enabled it to govern without recourse to parliament and the legislative process.²² It affected

17 Norst and McBride, *Austrians and Australia*, 112; Wiemann, “German and Austrian Refugees,” 7–8.

18 Kwiet, “Re-Acculturation,” 44.

19 Wiemann, “German and Austrian Refugees,” 7–8.

20 Maria Glaros, “‘Sometimes a Little Injustice Must be Suffered for the Public Good’: How the National Security (Aliens Control) Regulations 1939 (Cth) Affected the Lives of German, Italian, Japanese, and Australian Born Women Living in Australia during the Second World War” (PhD thesis, University of Western Sydney, 2012), 38.

21 Ilma Martinuzzi O’Brien, “Citizenship, Rights and Emergency Powers in Second World War Australia,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 53.2 (2007): 207–222, 207.

22 O’Brien, “Citizenship,” 207.

people in many different ways: enemy aliens, for example, had to report regularly to the police. They were also forced to endure restrictions placed on their travel, movement, and the possession of personal items such as cameras, cars, and maps.²³ Some refugees who were believed to pose a security threat to Australia were even interned. Most importantly, though, enemy aliens were barred from naturalization. An offence against the act was punished with either imprisonment or “a fine of any amount.”²⁴

Officials, in general, had plenty of scope in enforcing the act, which stated: “Any person who is found committing an offence against this Act, or who is suspected of having committed, or being about to commit, such an offence, may be arrested without any warrant.”²⁵ Ironically, the Australian government did not differentiate between regular migrants and refugees who fled from Nazi oppression in Germany. As soon as war was declared, German and Austrian nationals officially became enemy aliens. This created a critical situation for refugees, who had lost their civil rights twice at that moment: first during the Nazi oppression in their old homelands and then in their new homeland of Australia. Social inclusion and exclusion became arbitrary and was rather focused on perceptions of loyalty and disloyalty. Anyone who spoke a foreign language could be regarded as potentially disloyal. Furthermore, authorities frequently argued that “homeland allegiances continued to define the loyalty of the immigrant.”²⁶

Since refugee questions had become more publicly discussed from 1941 onward—also due to increased refugee agency—the attorney general (first law officer of the British crown in Australia) set up the so-called Aliens Classification Committee in early 1943 to deal with refugee questions in greater detail.²⁷ The committee, led by the chairman Arthur Calwell, very soon concluded that “it was both absurd and unjust to treat refugees from Nazi-Germany as enemy aliens.”²⁸ Consequently, in its first interim report, the committee recommended distinguishing between “refugee” and “enemy” aliens. The recommendations

23 Lang, *Eine Fahrt ins Blaue*, 49.

24 Commonwealth of Australia Numbered Acts, National Security Act 1939 (No. 15 of 1939), http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_act/nsa19391501939257/, accessed on February 23, 2023.

25 Comp. National Security Act 1939 (No 15 of 1939), in: Commonwealth of Australia Numbered Acts, http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_act/nsa19391501939257/, accessed on January 31, 2023.

26 O'Brien, “Citizenship,” 210.

27 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 73.

28 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 73.

were accepted and, in October 1943, the National Security Act was amended to include the term “refugee alien” in the sense that it described

an alien who has no nationality, or whose nationality is uncertain, or who is an alien enemy in respect of whom the Minister of State for the Army, or a person authorised by that Minister to act on his behalf, is satisfied (a) that the alien was forced to emigrate from enemy territory on account of actual or threatened religious, racial or political persecution, and (b) that he is opposed to the regime which forced him to emigrate.²⁹

Four years after the first refugees from Nazism had become “enemy aliens,” they were able to apply for reclassification.³⁰ Changing one’s status from “enemy alien” to “refugee alien” was the first and most important step toward naturalization. It frequently led to the lifting of legal restrictions and, in general, also the improvement of the refugees’ position in society. Therefore, most of the refugees applied for the new status.³¹ After having spent five years in the country, which most of them had by 1943/1944, “refugee aliens” were allowed to apply for naturalization. And many of them did so, because naturalization offered them an equal legal status and equal conditions vis-à-vis their Australian compatriots.³² Only a very small minority of the refugees considered remigration to Austria as an option in the postwar period.³³ In any case, immediate remigration was almost impossible because of the lack of civilian transport connections between Australia and Europe. Consequently, a large number of those who fled from Austria to Australia because of the Nazi occupation of their country applied for naturalization and thus were included in the book of duplicate certificates of naturalization (A714–A715).

2.3 Questionnaire and Analysis

To provide a reliable basis for the prosopography, it was necessary to merge key data of every single naturalization document into a database that allowed the

29 Hasluck, *The Government and the People*, 595.

30 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 73.

31 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 49.

32 Norst and McBride, *Austrians and Australia*, 112.

33 Norst and McBride, *Austrians and Australia*, 138. For more information on return-migration from Australia, see: Ruth Balint, Joy Damousi and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds., *When Migrants Fail to Stay: New Histories on Departures and Migration* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023).

refugees to be separated into different statistical entities according to various distinguishing characteristics.³⁴ The nature of existing information in the naturalization records meant that the prosopographical analysis could be structured according to the following questions:

1. How many Austrian refugees were naturalized in Australia between 1939 and 1949?
2. What was the gender ratio of the group? How many men, women, and children were there?
3. How many refugees came alone? How many brought their partners and/or children with them?
4. Where were the refugees born?
5. Where did they initially move to in Australia and what was their place of residence when becoming naturalized?
6. In which year were they naturalized?
7. What did they indicate as their previous nationality? How many of them registered themselves as stateless?
8. What was the demographic of the group? What were the dominant age groups?

Data from the existing certificates with reference to the above questions have been captured and analysed. The results of that undertaking provided a clear overview of the group as a whole, which helped to establish the structure of a vague group that did not obviously display commonalities of identity or distinguishing features in their new homeland and thus usually was not publicly recognized as a cohesive demographic entity.

The following pages provide the answers to the above-mentioned questions. This not only improves our understanding of the overall group but also served as a basis for the selection of the representative sample group and therefore as a starting point for the whole book. The following characteristics and trends will be presented in the form of seven observations, which will be used later on in this chapter to conclude and methodologically justify the selection of this book's representative examples for the collective study.

Observation 1: 2,655 Austrians were naturalized between 1939 and 1949; there was a slight majority of males.

As the existing records indicate, 1,509 certificates were issued between 1939 and 1949 to applicants born in Austria or the Austrian part of the Habsburg Empire before the First World War. If applicants were born outside of present-day

34 Verboven recommends different categories for organizing a questionnaire for a prosopography, see Verboven, "Short Manual," 55.

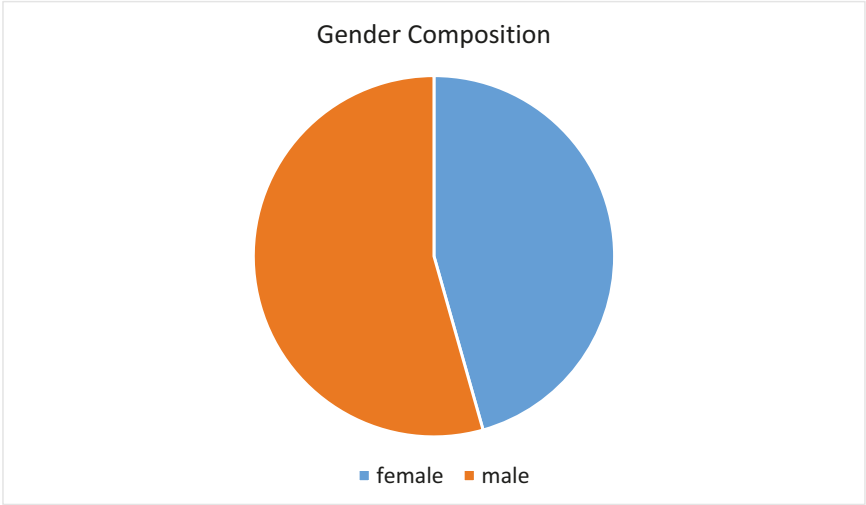


FIGURE 1 Gender composition of the overall group

Austria before the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, they were only taken into account for this study if they had indicated Austria as their country of origin and thus had identified themselves with Austria. Since a substantial part of the certificates include dependent family members, the number of naturalized Austrians during that period totalled 2,655 people. In terms of gender ratio, the 1,302 male refugees (54 percent) slightly outweighed the 1,092 female ones (46 percent).³⁵ This figure includes the majority of Austrian refugees who left the country before and during the war. It does not include postwar migration since the applicants were required to have spent at least five years in the country prior their application.³⁶

Observation 2: Austrian refugee migration to Australia was mainly a migration taking place within the framework of families. Most of the refugees who applied for citizenship had some of their family members included on the naturalization certificate.

Austrian refugee migration to Australia was predominantly family migration: 58 percent of the newcomers arrived with their partners. Altogether, the 1,509 certificates included 885 partners and 261 children. The documents do not usually specify the place of birth of the applicant's partner and children, and could also include partners from marriages with Australians. The partners'

35 A total of 261 children are excluded in this statistic.

36 Except for some members of the British Armed Forces, who in some cases were naturalized earlier.

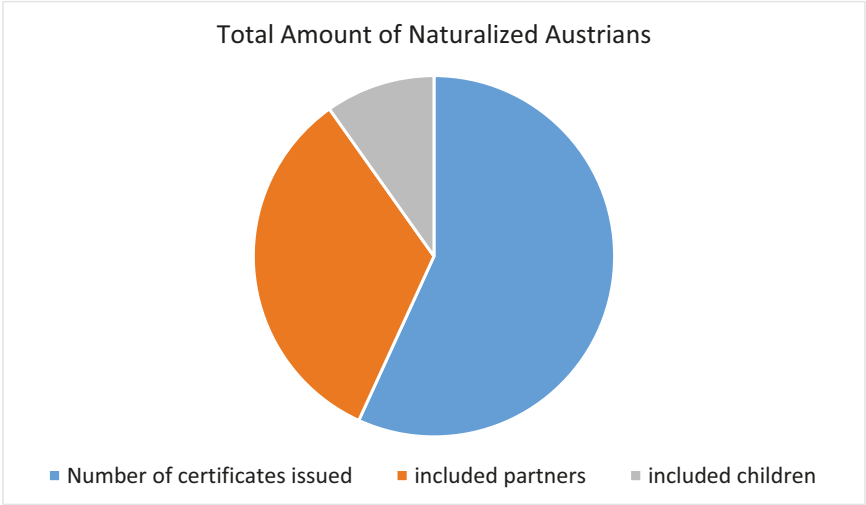


FIGURE 2 Total amount of naturalized Austrian refugees in Australia, 1939–1949, including partners and children

surnames, the date of birth of their children, which was in most cases before the escape to Australia, and the generally low rate of marriages between refugees and Australians during the first years after their arrival, however, indicate that the overwhelming majority of the partners mentioned in the documents came from Austria together with the applicants.

Observation 3: A considerable portion of the refugees were of advanced age. Only a minority were younger than 30 years old.

The analysis provides detailed insights into the demographics of the 1,509 main applicants. The available data shows that by far the largest part of the cohort comprised those who were older than 30 on arrival in Australia. The sources, however, did not offer specific demographic information about the family members included in the certificates. Those persons were only mentioned by their name and their sex.

This study subdivided the cohort into five age groups. The largest group (34 percent) consists of those born between 1900 and 1909 and thus between 30 and 39 years of age on their arrival in Australia. Those between the ages of 40 and 49 comprise the second largest group (22 percent). The third group (19 percent) were born between 1910 and 1919 and thus were between 20 and 29 when they arrived in Australia. The fourth largest group consists of people born in 1899 and earlier (14 percent). Overall, 14 percent of refugees were at least 40 years old when they arrived in Australia. Only 4 percent were born before 1879 and 11 percent were adolescents, born between 1920 and 1921.

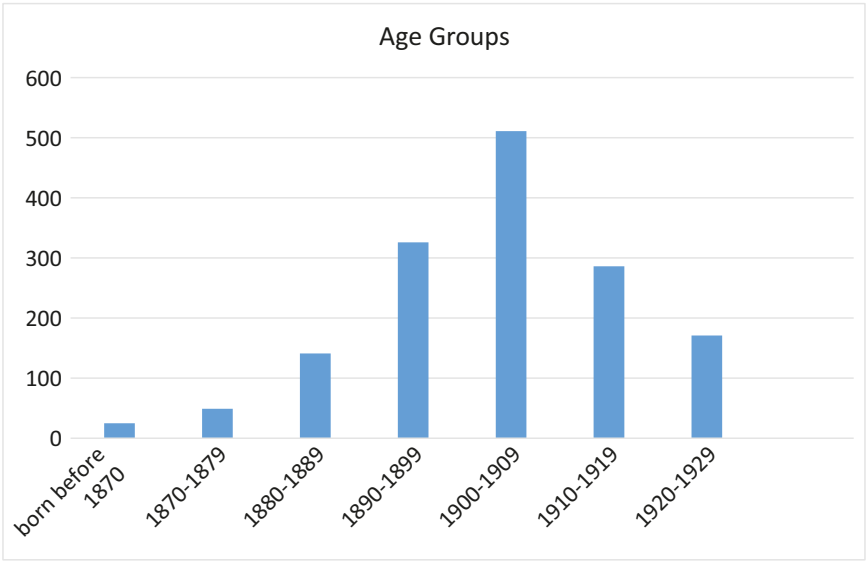


FIGURE 3 Demographics of the refugees who were issued a naturalization certificate (as main applicants)

Observation 4: Before their escape, Austrian refugees lived mainly in cities. Most of them came from Vienna.

This analysis endorses the perceptions of earlier studies that Austrian WWII refugee migration to Australia came predominantly from Vienna. According to the book of duplicate certificates of naturalization, 82 percent of the 1,509 main applicants were born in Vienna. The second largest group (8 percent) consists of people born in the Habsburg Empire outside of the boundaries of present-day Austria. Most of them, however, had moved to Vienna either before or after World War I and therefore can be regarded as coming from Vienna. The third group (about 5 percent) comprises people from the state of Lower Austria. This state surrounds Vienna and was traditionally closely connected to the capital. The city was the centre of administration of Lower Austria during the interwar period. The towns and villages which formed Vienna's greater metropolitan area were mainly located in Lower Austria. Thus, Lower Austria traditionally had a very close relationship to Vienna. The city's predominance as region of origin for refugees in Australia becomes apparent when looking at actual figures. Out of 1,509 certificates issued to Austrian refugees, only 83 certificates were issued to persons from the seven other Austrian states besides Vienna and Lower Austria. Consequently, almost all Austrian refugees were somehow related to the Austrian capital. Most of them were born and raised there, and others either moved to the city or lived close to it before the Anschluss.

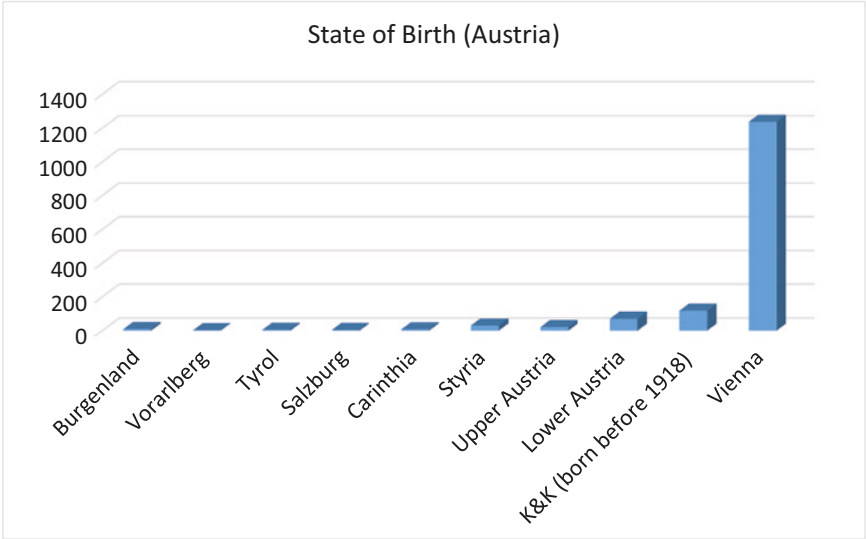


FIGURE 4 Regions of birth of naturalized Austrian refugees in Australia

Observation 5: Austrian refugees remained city dwellers in Australia. More than 90 percent went to Sydney or Melbourne.

Not only did the Austrians who fled to Australia before and during the Second World War come from an urban environment, the overwhelming majority of them settled in the major cities of Australia after their arrival. A huge 90 percent, or 1,358 out of 1,509 main applicants, lived in the greater-metropolitan areas of Sydney (742 persons) or Melbourne (616) at the time of their naturalization. Only 3 percent (44 persons) settled in South Australia, mainly in the area in and around Adelaide, and 2 percent (34 persons) moved to Queensland. Only 73 refugees (5 percent) moved to other Australian states or were listed as members of the Australian Imperial Forces.³⁷

Observation 6: The majority of the refugees were naturalized during the last two war years and the year 1946 (i.e., at the earliest possible occasion).

Australian legislation required everyone who wished to obtain citizenship to spend at least five years in the country before applying for naturalization. The outbreak of the war worsened the situation for the refugees. Between September 1939 and November 1943, Austrian and German refugees were classified as so-called “enemy aliens,” which meant that they, as members of

37 In that case, no place of residence was mentioned in the naturalization certificates.

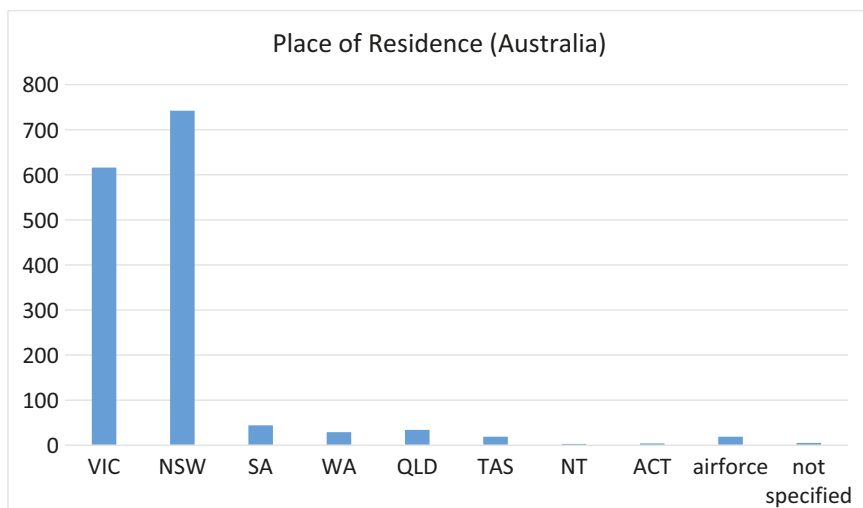


FIGURE 5 Place of residence in Australia at the time the naturalization certificate was issued

an enemy state, had to endure severe personal restrictions, and in many cases also internment. Only in 1943, when an Aliens Classification and Advisory Committee was founded, did the Australian government revise this strict policy which showed no understanding for the refugees' situation. It introduced the new legal status of "refugee alien" in 1943.³⁸ From then on, most of the Austrian refugees applied to change their status from "enemy alien" to "refugee alien."³⁹ This was an important step on their way toward naturalization. Since applying for naturalization as an "enemy alien" was not possible, the annual numbers of naturalizations of Austrians prior to 1944 were very low. There were only 27 naturalizations between 1939 and 1943. In 1944, most of those who arrived in 1938 and 1939 had gained their new status as refugee aliens⁴⁰ and thus were entitled to apply for naturalization after having spent more than five years in Australia. Consequently, a wave of naturalizations started in that year. The consecutive years 1945 and 1946 brought similarly high numbers of naturalizations. About 84 percent of all naturalizations between 1939 and 1949 took place in those three years. The postwar years brought a drop in naturalizations, mainly because of the fact that the bulk of arrivals had already been naturalized by that

38 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 73.

39 Kwiet, "Re-Acculturation," 44.

40 Wiemann, "German and Austrian Refugees," 7–8.

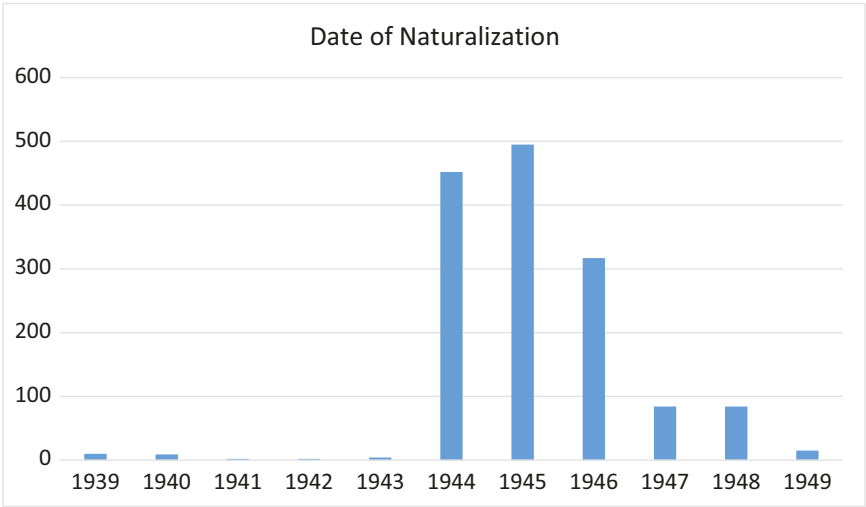


FIGURE 6 Date of naturalization of Austrian refugees in Australia, 1939–1949

time. In the years 1947 and 1948, for example, only 168 Austrian refugees became naturalized (84 per year). This number dropped to 15 in 1949.

Observation 7: Three-quarters of all applicants were registered as “stateless.”
The overwhelming majority of all Austrian refugees who applied for naturalization in Australia was listed as “stateless.” This reflects their status and their desire not to be associated with National Socialist Germany, which had annexed their old homeland, deprived them of their rights as citizens, and consequently forced them into emigration. Only 5 percent were listed as “German Nationals,” although most of them had arrived with a German passport in Australia. An explanation for the low numbers can be found in the fact that most of those who arrived in 1938 still were in possession of an Austrian passport and most of those who arrived later insisted on being classified as “stateless” refugees. Some (11 percent) even managed to become listed as “Austrians,” although Austria did not exist as a state at that time. In these cases, the refugees either held an Austrian passport from the time prior to the Anschluss or they insisted on being classified as “Austrian.”

2.4 Conclusion

This brief quantitative prosopographical analysis of the book of duplicate certificates provides comprehensive data that allows us to capture the indistinct

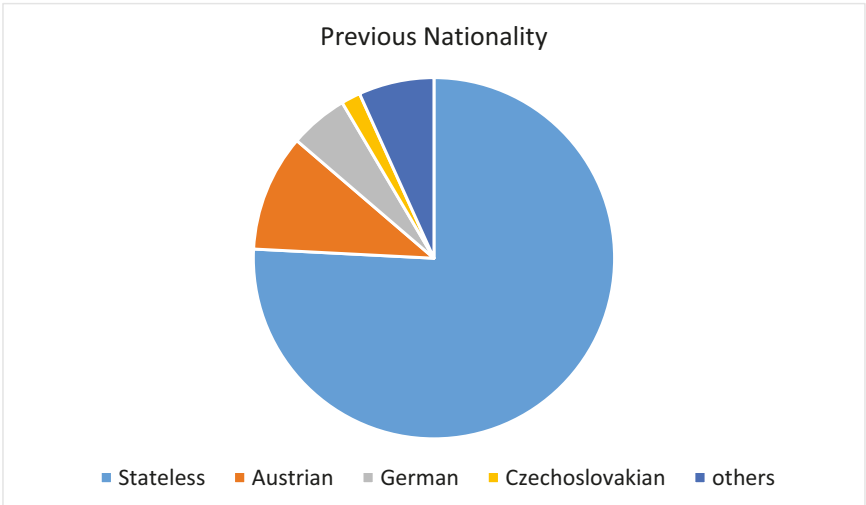


FIGURE 7 Previous nationality of Austrian refugees in Australia

assemblage of Austrian refugees to Australia by using the very same categories the Australian authorities applied to officially categorize them as a group. The analysis makes it possible to provide insights into some statistically common features or differences of this group of people. It is the first of its kind and is of particular value for those interested in the history of this specific cohort, because it is based on complete sets of data and not only on qualitative, randomly-selected samples, which would only allow a vague generalization.

The results help with a reassessment of some of Marlene Norst's theses, which were the only available source of information on the Austrian refugees as a group so far. They support her statement, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, that most of the refugees were born before the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. Furthermore, I was able to show that in terms of demographics, a fairly mature group of refugees arrived in Australia. More than three-quarters of the group were 30 years of age and above on their arrival in Australia. I also showed that Austrian refugee migration was predominantly family migration. Most of the refugees came with at least one family member (children and/or partners) to their new homeland. The analysis also agrees with Norst's assertion that migrants to Australia came predominantly from Vienna. As shown above, almost all refugees had close ties to the Austrian capital city and many were socialized there. The refugees continued to be city dwellers after their flight: in their new Australian homeland, they predominantly settled in the urban environments of Sydney or Melbourne. Less than 10 percent moved to other Australian states, and even there, they almost

exclusively went to cities, such as Adelaide or Brisbane. As shown here, most of the refugees tried to become Australian citizens as soon as possible. The vast majority (84 percent) were naturalized during the last two war years and the first postwar year, which was the earliest possible opportunity according to the strict Australian wartime immigration regulations.

2.5 Bridging Two Methods: Sample Selection

The prosopographical analysis offered information about the structure of Austrian refugee migration to Australia. It provided valuable statistical information about the group's demographic composition, places of birth and of residence, the gender and family structure, and its members' previous nationalities on a quantitative level.

This book, however, aims to delve deeper. Insights into processes of cultural translation can best be gained when leaving the macro level of analysis and turning to individuals as the actual actors of cultural translation, who pursue and negotiate transfer and interweaving processes.⁴¹ As described above, switching methods is necessary at this point since the remaining part of this book will explore the micro level of analysis by questioning and highlighting shared and diverging aspects of the lives of 26 cultural brokers, analysing and contextualizing them against the backdrop of Austrian refugee migration to Australia within the methodological framework of a collective biography.

As the subheading indicates, this section bridges the prosopographical part and the collective biographical chapters that form the core of this book. It is simply not possible to provide a detailed analysis of achievements of cultural translation which deals with all the individuals of that group. Since we can only describe these developments on the basis of a few representative examples, selecting the sample becomes a crucial methodological factor. As mentioned in the introductory section, this raises the question of "inclusion and exclusion." Biographies have been following "spotlight approaches on extraordinary individuals"⁴² for a long time. Thereby, however, they have largely ignored the

41 Christoph Rass and Frank Wolff, "What is a Migration Regime? Genealogical Approach and Methodological Proposal," in *Was ist ein Migrationsregime? What is a Migration Regime?*, ed. Andreas Pott, Christoph Rass, and Frank Wolff (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018), 19–64, 21; Logemann, "Transatlantische Karrieren," 86.

42 Katharina Prager, "Exemplary Lives: Thoughts on Exile, Gender and Life Writing," in *Exil and Gender 1: Literature and the Press*, ed. Charmian Brinson and Andrea Hammel (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 12.

large group of those countless marginalized people who, at first glance, were not regarded as “worthy of a biography.” Processes of cultural translation and knowledge transfer, however, were advanced by every single member of the group, as pointed out in the first section of this book. Subsequently, focusing on a few “great” or “successful” men and women would not make sense as it would distort the picture of the overall group. This study, therefore, does not follow such an approach. Rather, it aims at capturing snapshots of Austrian refugee migration to Australia by focusing on people who, in some way or other, are representative for the overall group. For this reason, a quota sample was opted for. Thus, persons were included in this collective biography with the aim of providing a representative cross-selection of all men, women, and children who fled from Austria to Australia and were naturalized there. Consequently, the data gained in the preceding prosopography is crucial for the selection process.

Two questions arise when planning a collective biography that aims at mirroring a larger group of people. The first and most striking one is how to find and select representative samples. Collective biographies based on arbitrarily selected samples can sometimes be problematic. If samples are chosen randomly, collective biographical studies may lose their claim of being representative and run the risk of offering an unbalanced and distorted picture by not considering the whole spectrum of a group. Representativeness becomes increasingly important if the analysed group is particularly large. In the case of this book, for example, being content with 26 famous Austrian refugees who had successful careers in Australia and whose lives are well documented would have given the impression that the lives lived by Austrians in Australia were all success stories. The second challenge which can be encountered when conceptualizing a collective biography is finding a suitable number of samples. As Harders and Lipphardt stated, “there are no methodological restrictions on how many samples can be included in a collective biography. ... The number of samples is rather determined by practical limitations.”⁴³ For this study, the cross-selection of biographees must be large enough to reflect the diversity of the overall group, but also concise enough to allow the management of the wealth of the biographical material gathered and its presentation in a comprehensible form.

Usually, collective biographical studies of groups of historical actors offer a random selection of life stories chosen according to the existence, availability, and accessibility of data. Depending on the field of application, this approach is

43 Author's translation: Harders and Lipphardt, “Kollektivbiographie,” 83.

useful and offers different advantages, but also has drawbacks. Certainly, a random selection based on the availability of easily accessible data is easy to manage and promises rich findings, simply because of the abundance of historical sources. It can be successfully applied when representativeness does not play an important role (for example, when exploring a very small group of people). When it comes to the analysis of mass phenomena, such as group migration, a random selection of samples seems unsuitable, because its approach is very unlikely to cope with the reality of the process. Such a spotlight selection does not consider the structure of the overall group, since its samples were rather selected according to arbitrary criteria, chosen by the biographer.

Several aspects have to be considered when selecting representative samples for a collective biography. Firstly, comprehensive and complete data must be available for the overall group. This is crucial to define a collection of individuals as a coherent and related entity and thus to define the subject of the analysis. As Harders and Lipphardt noted, “the process of merging individuals into one single group is always problematic ... since allocating individuals into groups barely copes with the reality.”⁴⁴ Using the original certificates of naturalization in this study allowed me to draw on the very same criteria Australian authorities had used 80 years ago to classify incoming Austrian individuals as a group of migrant refugees.

Using contemporary bureaucratic data, however, also limits the scope of the questions that can be posed of the available data. The prosopographical study is based only on data that seemed relevant to the Australian authorities during the 1940s. Many more aspects, such as social status and class, would have been of interest for a prosopography, but did not seem important to the authorities and thus they were not recorded. Consequently, these questions remain open for the qualitative analysis in the collective biographical part of this book.

The following paragraphs explain and justify how the specific 26 men, women, and children were chosen for this analysis. The number amounts to 1 percent of the Austrians naturalized between 1939 and 1949. These 26 different individual life stories, carefully selected according to their representativeness vis-à-vis the overall group, are diverse enough to capture many different aspects of the cohort's composition and offer a broader and more multifaceted picture of Austrian refugee migration to Australia. At the same time, 26 life stories are still manageable for researching, analysing, and presenting in the format of this book.

44 Author's translation: Harders and Lipphardt, “Kollektivbiographie,” 84.

The biographies included in the sample should mirror many aspects of the overall group, all the data gained in the prosopography was evenly used to create a cross-selection of the overall group. In a first step, the absolute numbers were broken down and converted into percentages as shown in Table 1. This allowed the identification of the proportions of refugees who were male and female, and also of those who were children. The table also shows how many of them were listed as stateless, Austrian nationals, Germans, or of another nationality. It further indicates the share of those born in Vienna and shows how many of them were naturalized in a given year between 1939 and 1949, how many moved to a certain state, and how many arrived at a particular age.

This allowed the selection of a group of 26 individuals from the 2,655 people of the cohort according to the main target of matching the statistical composition of the overall group. In short, the sample group of 26 had to approximate the statistical figures of the overall group as closely as possible. Finding the statistically ideal candidates posed a serious challenge. The months-long undertaking of researching and selecting fitting samples in private and public archives created multiple difficulties. This book's method and the methodological goal made it necessary, on the one hand, to exclude some individuals who were obviously ideal candidates for a biographical study (due to their well-documented lives) because they would not match the requirements of the sample group, and, on the other hand, to incorporate people whose pasts were rather unclear and whose lives were very difficult to capture and reconstruct.

This presented another great challenge: how to get enough reliable data about the persons chosen to represent the whole group. In order to answer this, the research journey was extended far beyond the limits of traditional archival research.

As the comparison between the overall and the sample group reveals (Table 1), not every value of the sample group exactly matches the corresponding values of the overall group. An exact match without any variances turned out to be impossible, as each individual obviously would have had to satisfy multiple values (e.g., a combination of gender, age, birthplace, etc.). The results presented in Table 1, however, are satisfying in the sense that they comprise only small and negligible variations between the different figures of the groups. The results of this comprehensive process of finding representative samples can be seen in the two tables listed below. Table 1 shows the actual comparison between the overall group and my sample selection. Table 2 lists the names and places of residence of the people who will be analysed in the following collective biography.

TABLE 1 Statistical depiction of the overall group and the sample group

| Family composition | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | Overall group | Sample group |
| Main applicant | 57 % (1,509) | 65 % (17) |
| Partner | 34 % (885) | 27 % (7) |
| Child | 9 % (261) | 8 % (2) |
| Total | 2,655 | 26 |
| Gender ratio | | |
| Sex | <i>Overall group</i> | <i>Sample group</i> |
| Male | 54 % | 50 % (13) |
| Female | 46 % | 50 % (13) |
| Place of birth | | |
| | <i>Overall group</i> | <i>Sample group</i> |
| Vienna | 82 % | 92 % |
| Other place of birth | 18 % | 8 % |
| Date of naturalization | | |
| <i>Year</i> | <i>Overall group</i> | <i>Sample group</i> |
| 1944 | 30 % (452) | 38 % (10) |
| 1945 | 33 % (495) | 27 % (7) |
| 1946 | 22 % (317) | 23 % (6) |
| 1947 | 6 % (84) | 8 % (2) |
| 1948 | 6 % (84) | 4 % (1) |
| Rest | 3 % (42) | – |
| Place of residence | | |
| <i>State</i> | <i>Overall group</i> | <i>Sample group</i> |
| NSW | 49 % (742) | 40 % (10) |
| VIC | 41 % (616) | 50 % (13) |
| SA | 3 % (44) | 7 % (2) |
| QLD | 2 % (34) | 3 % (1) |
| Rest | 5 % (73) | – |
| Previous nationality | | |
| | <i>Overall group</i> | <i>Sample group</i> |
| Stateless | 76 % (1,144) | 70 % (18) |
| Austrian | 11 % (158) | 11 % (3) |
| German | 5 % (79) | 11 % (3) |
| Rest | 7 % (102) | 8 % (2) |

TABLE 1 Statistical depiction of the overall group and the sample group (*cont.*)

| Family composition | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Demographics | | |
| <i>Decade of birth</i> | <i>Overall group</i> | <i>Sample group</i> |
| Before 1879 | 4 % (74) | 4 % (1) |
| 1880–1889 | 10 % (141) | 4 % (1) |
| 1890–1899 | 22 % (326) | 16 % (4) |
| 1900–1909 | 34 % (511) | 23 % (6) |
| 1910–1919 | 19 % (286) | 38 % (10) |
| 1920 and later | 11 % (171) | 15 % (4) |

TABLE 2 List of the members of the sample group

| Name in Austria | Name change in Australia | Date of birth | Place of birth | State of residence |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Agid, Olga | – | 1879 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Bergel, Johanna | Lynn, Joan | 1935 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Bergel, Marie | – | 1903 | Vienna | South Australia |
| Böhm, Ernst | Bowen, Ernest | 1912 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Böhm, Annemarie | Mutton, Annemarie | 1919 | Munich | Victoria |
| Bratspies, Gustav | – | 1895 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Butschowitz, Bruno | Bush, Bruno | 1915 | Vienna | New South Wales |
| Eckfeld, Reinhold | – | 1921 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Eisler, Hans | – | 1924 | Vienna | New South Wales |
| Felser, Gerhard Richard | – | 1910 | Vienna | New South Wales |
| Herskovics, Johann | Hearst, John | 1914 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Herzfeld, Paul Florian | – | 1919 | Vienna | South Australia |
| Hirsch, Paul | – | 1892 | Vienna | Victoria |

TABLE 2 List of the members of the sample group (*cont.*)

| Name in Austria | Name change in Australia | Date of birth | Place of birth | State of residence |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Kolm, Johanna | Exiner, Hanny | 1918 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Langer, Gertrude | – | 1903 | Vienna | Queensland |
| Raubitschek, Helen | Roberts, Helen | 1916 | Vienna | New South Wales |
| Schwarz, Karl Anton | Anton, Charles William | 1916 | Vienna | New South Wales |
| Silbiger, Kurt | Selby, Kurt | 1907 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Tandler, Richard | – | 1897 | Bad Vöslau | Victoria |
| Tandler, Susanne | Copolov, Sue | 1928 | | |
| Teltscher, Heinrich Michael | Teltscher, Henry Michael | 1921 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Weiss, Irma | – | 1887 | Vienna | New South Wales |
| Watkins, Sylvia | Cherny, Sylvia | 1924 | Vienna | Victoria |
| Wetzelsberger, Margarete | Vanry, Grete | 1908 | Vienna | New South Wales |
| Winkler, Viola | – | 1915 | Vienna | New South Wales |
| Ziegler, Elisabeth | – | 1917 | Vienna | New South Wales |

“A Fabulous Place before the Nazis Came to Power and Ruined Everything”: Knowledge Accumulation in Austria

A study of the lives and performances of cultural translation of Austrian refugees in Australia must logically start by exploring their old homeland and the context of their origin.¹ Austria was the place where they were socialized and had acquired the essential cultural capital (values, norms, lifestyles, and habitual practices) they later brought to Australia as their “cultural luggage.” It helped or hindered them in establishing new and, in many cases, very particular lives in Australia.

There were many similarities between the members of the cohort of refugees that would justify regarding them as a coherent group, even though they took up different ways of life and dispersed geographically throughout Australia after their escape. Many of them pursued very similar hobbies or had similar professional views and attitudes, even after decades in Australia: very many Austrians, for example, shared an enduring love of music and the theatre. Many of them also continued skiing and hiking in Australia, both sports that were “in vogue” in interwar Austria. Some of them teamed up with others who shared the same interests and immersed themselves in sport clubs as well as social and cultural organizations. Others shared their life-long passion for those practices and cultural elements they had taken up in their old homelands. Austrian refugees, for example, were among the most enthusiastic operators of and visitors to the emerging Australian postwar ski fields. Even in 1967, a postwar migrant who built up a business in the Thredbo ski resort in New South Wales noted: “I have met more people from Austria here than anywhere else in Australia.”²

There were many more cultural similarities. Almost all of the people interviewed for this study expressed their enthusiasm for literature, classical music, or the fine arts. Many refugees were also influenced by political ideas that

1 For the title “A Fabulous Place before the Nazis Came to Power and Ruined Everything,” see Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman, “Introduction: Beyond the Coffeehouse,” in *Interwar Vienna: Culture between Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 2.

2 N.A., “The Snowy Country,” *Good Neighbour*, October 1, 1967, 4.

evolved during the interwar years in the “test laboratory” of Austria’s young democracy. Almost all located themselves on the left of the political spectrum, and some even became politically engaged in Australia after their flight.

Those striking similarities are intriguing. Therefore, I believe exploring the refugees’ home context and the society and culture in which they had been educated and socialized is important for finding out which forms of cultural capital, values, and habitual practices they had acquired. Accordingly, this chapter will firstly discuss the cultural, political, social, and economic context of Austria during the interwar years. Since 88.5 percent of the refugees analysed in this study recalled having a Jewish background, or being classified as “Jewish” by the Nazis, this section also offers an introduction to Jewish life in interwar Austria, and specifically its capital city, where most of the Austrian Jews lived. This section will also analyse the refugees’ background and the social and economic context in which the members of the sample group were brought up to indicate and highlight what they regarded as particularly important social and cultural capital they had acquired during their time in Austria. Since the group consists of people from different age categories, this chapter is explicitly not restricted to the interwar years but will also consider social, economic, and cultural aspects of life in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Depictions include analyses of the refugees’ family background and their education, as well as their social and professional lives. I also exemplify the most important professional skills and knowledge they acquired and analyse their social capital, especially with regard to the networks they built up and maintained, as well as the expectations they had of their networks.

Before beginning this analysis, it is useful to take a closer look at the individual members of the sample group. Who were they and where did they come from? As with the overall cohort of expelled Austrians who sought shelter and refuge in Australia and successfully applied for naturalization, the majority (92 percent) were born in Vienna. Only two members of the sample cohort were born elsewhere (Lower Austria and Germany). As the sample group shows, Austrian refugees in Australia lived predominantly middle- and upper-middle-class lives. More than one-third identified their family background as upper middle class. Almost half of them claimed to come from a middle-class family. One-fifth regarded themselves as either working class or lower middle class. In terms of religion, the group seems to be much more diverse. At the time of the Anschluss, the largest portion of them (more than two-thirds) were members of the Jewish community. Two-fifths claimed that their families were not religious. Less than one-third of the self-identifying Jews described their families as religious, identifying themselves either as liberal or as Orthodox. One-fifth later changed their religious affiliation and were baptized either

Catholic or Lutheran during the 1930s. A small number (11.5 percent) were originally baptized Catholic. After the 1938 Anschluss, Nazi laws made almost 90 percent of the members of the sample group “Jewish,” regardless of their previous religion or their personal denominational preferences.

Geographically, most of the refugees came from Viennese middle-class districts or the prestigious inner-city region called “Innere Stadt.” Almost one-third were born and raised in the 19th district, a sought-after middle-class district in the north-western region of Vienna. About one-fifth of them grew up in the inner city of Vienna, where the most respectable addresses, especially for professionals and successful businesspeople, were located.³ The rest were more or less scattered throughout the city’s suburbs, with some people residing in better-off neighbourhoods such as the 9th district and others living in working-class areas such as the 16th district. Surprisingly few people from the sample group (only 8 percent) came from the 2nd district, nicknamed *Mazzesinsel* (matzo island),⁴ which was home to almost one-third of the city’s Jewish population during the interwar years.⁵

Their education generally reflected their middle-class status. Close to one-third (27 percent) had enjoyed the privilege of a university education. Almost half of them were educated to *Gymnasium* or high school level. Slightly more than one-tenth had only completed the compulsory minimum school education. This did not reflect the trends among the general population. Although in 1932 Austria was among the countries with the highest proportion of academics in the world, the vast majority of the population had no possibility of acquiring formal university or high school education. In 1932, there was only one student per 260 Austrian residents, compared to one per 506 residents in Germany, 387 in Switzerland, and 515 in Czechoslovakia.⁶ The share of graduates among the total Austrian population, therefore, was as low as 0.4 percent.

Professionally, the members of the analysed sample group also formed a diverse community. A very interesting aspect is the relatively low proportion of housewives. Only 11.5 percent of the overall group performed house duties prior to their expulsion from Austria. Some 23 percent attended a primary or a high school in 1938/39. One person was enrolled in a university during the Anschluss. Tradespeople formed the largest professional group, amounting to

3 Harriet Pass Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics in Vienna* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 14.

4 Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23.

5 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 13.

6 “Die Überfüllung der akademischen Berufe,” *Heft 9* (1948): 337–343, 338.

15.4 percent. Two members of the group worked as civil engineers. The same number operated their own factories. The group consisted further of a textile designer, a pharmacy assistant, a soldier, a lecturer in art history, an accountant, an industrial chemist, a milliner, and an insurance broker.

3.1 A Doomed Era: *Fin-de-siècle* Vienna

The world the refugees came from differed considerably from their new homeland. Of the people in the sample group, 85 percent were born before the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. Nearly half (47 percent) were born before the year 1910 and thus had spent at least their childhood in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Those people were educated in a country historian William Johnston has labelled as a “melting pot of styles and ideas” and they consequently grew up during a time he described as a “golden age of cultural exchange.”⁷ The Austro-Hungarian state was a unique political construct that had grown out of the centuries-long expansion of the imperial Habsburg family into Eastern and Central Europe. From the year 1867, it consisted of two almost sovereign states. The western part of the monarchy (known to bureaucrats as Cisleithania) hosted 28 million people. It stretched from the Swiss to the Russian borders and was governed from the capital city of Vienna. The other part of the empire, the kingdom of Hungary with its capital city of Budapest, encompassed almost 21 million people.⁸

In contrast to most of the other major states of Europe at that time, the Habsburg monarchy was by no means an ethnically homogeneous nation-state. The country was home to a wide variety of different races, cultures, and languages, including German, Hungarian, Czech, Slovakian, Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, Polish, Italian, Romanian, and Jewish (Hebrew and Yiddish).⁹ Both capitals attracted people from every corner of the empire and consequently grew into metropolises of great diversity. There is no doubt, as William Johnston claims, that “both Vienna and Budapest owed their creativity in part to unheard-of possibilities of cultural transfer,” fostering an

7 William Johnston, “The Political and Cultural Background of Vienna: A Golden Age of Cultural Exchange,” in *Vienna, Art and Design: Klimt, Schiele, Hoffmann, Loos*, ed. Christian Witt-Dörning and Paul Asenbaum (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2011), 15–25.

8 Statistische Zentralkommission, ed., *Die Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910 in den im Reichsrat vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern* (Vienna: Kaiserlich-königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1912), 33–34.

9 Statistische Zentralkommission, *Die Ergebnisse*.

“unprecedented mixing of genes, cultures, and worldviews.”¹⁰ Both cities were booming, economically and culturally. A rapidly emerging industrialization brought wealth and demanded a steady influx of workers. Vienna’s population increased five-fold from 440,000 residents in 1840 to more than two million in 1910.¹¹ The city’s rapid population growth triggered a building boom that was unprecedented in its long history. One of the most notable remnants of that time was the *Ringstraße*, Vienna’s magnificent boulevard around the inner city, where private and public investors sponsored the building of hundreds of luxurious five- and six-story apartment houses as well as dozens of public administrative buildings. Massive-scale, lavish financing made this project uniquely imposing.¹²

The rapid growth of the city and its opulent architectural and cultural development have often dominated the historical research agendas for *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, which have been more or less exclusively concerned with the culture of the elites and were dominated by discussions about the artistic and intellectual avant-gardes, projecting an embellished image of Vienna 1900 as an icon of an innovative multiculturalism.

This picture, however, reflected only a certain part of the city’s life. Vienna was also a place of extreme disparities between the social classes and of spatial and cultural segregation, as well as of nascent antisemitism, race riots, and populist mass politics.¹³ There was also another “typical” Vienna, located in the highly industrialized outer suburbs far beyond the *Ringstraße*. This was a place of poverty, of ethnic and social unrest, but it was also the birthplace of lively working-class cultures. Hundreds of thousands of people were crammed together in the hopelessly congested, infamous *Zinshäuser* (tenement blocks) in the city’s working-class districts, hidden behind a facade of impressive beauty that suggests a homogeneous urban fabric inspired by the classical architectural standards of the *Ringstraße*.¹⁴ As studies of the living and housing conditions in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna indicate, it was common for six or even more people to share a single-bedroom apartment.¹⁵ Many of those

10 Johnston, “Political and Cultural Background,” 18.

11 Peter Eigner, Herbert Matis, and Andreas Resch, “Sozialer Wohnbau in Wien: eine historische Bestandsaufnahme,” *Jahrbuch des Vereins für die Geschichte der Stadt Wien* 55 (1999): 49–100, 53.

12 Johnston, “Political and Cultural Background,” 21.

13 See Wolfgang Maderthaner, “Outcast Vienna 1900: The Politics of Transgression,” in *Spaces of the Poor: Perspectives of Cultural Sciences on Urban Slum Areas and Their Inhabitants*, ed. Hans-Christian Petersen (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), 121–134, 123.

14 Maderthaner, “Outcast Vienna,” 124.

15 Eigner et al., “Sozialer Wohnbau,” 54.

who had left their Eastern European villages to find work in the prosperous and seemingly glorious metropolis did not find their fortune there and were subsequently pushed toward the social margins of the city, ending up in poverty and collective alienation.¹⁶

While almost all of the people analysed in this book did not belong to the working class and thus were obviously not severely affected by the developments in the industrialized working-class suburbs, the horrible living conditions shaped the lives of many others with a less fortunate upbringing. Some of them would later become crucial for the development of the country. Besides the many leading social democrats in Austria's First Republic who used their experiences of the abject poverty after the end of the First World War to develop the world's largest public housing campaign, the poverty and injustice of the Viennese working-class life had also ultimately shaped the thoughts and the ideology of the young Adolf Hitler, who lived in Vienna between 1907 and 1913 in miserable conditions.¹⁷

Despite the sheer poverty of large parts of the population, the booming metropolis offered ample economic opportunities for migrants. There are countless stories of migrants from rural parts of the empire who succeeded economically in Vienna and eventually climbed up the social ladder. Among them were Jews from Moravia, Bohemia, Hungary, Slavonia, Galicia, and the Bukovina, many of whom assimilated very quickly into the Viennese culture and the German language. Some of them eventually managed to establish successful companies in Vienna, and subsequently rose to middle- and upper-middle-class status.¹⁸ As research on Jewish life in Vienna shows, 57 percent of the Viennese *Maturanten*, the city's high school/grammar school graduates, were Jews from the eastern and northern provinces of the empire.¹⁹

Many members of this book's sample group can be located within this environment. A very large proportion of them were descendants of Jewish migrants from different parts of Eastern Europe, predominantly Galicia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Bohemia. More than 46 percent of the members of the group

16 Maderthaner, "Outcast Vienna," 129.

17 For the best and most detailed depictions of Hitler's life in Vienna, see Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Portrait of the Tyrant as a Young Man* (London: Tauris Parke Paperback, 2010); Roman Sandgruber, *Hitlers Vater: Wie der Sohn zum Diktator wurde* (Vienna: Molden, 2021).

18 Björn Siegel, *Österreichisches Judentum zwischen Ost und West: Die israelitische Allianz zu Wien 1873–1938* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2010), 37.

19 Steven Beller, "Soziale Schicht, Kultur und die Wiener Juden um die Jahrhundertwende," in *Eine Zerstörte Kultur: jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus in Wien seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gerhard Botz et al. (Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2002), 67–84, 78.

had parents who were born in either Galicia, Bohemia/Moravia, or Hungary. In many more cases, the grandparents or the great-grandparents had migrated to Vienna at some point during the 19th century. As Robert Wistrich showed in his 1989 study, a “dramatic geographical displacement in the foci of Jewish demography took place within the Habsburg lands during the long reign of Franz Joseph I.”²⁰ In Galicia, for example, the demographic centre for Austrian Jewry, the Jewish population decreased from 73.3 percent to 66.4 percent between 1846 and 1910. Bohemia experienced a decrease in its Jewish population from 15.6 percent to 6.5 percent within the same period. In Lower Austria, in which Vienna was located, on the other hand, the Jewish population increased 14-fold in that time.²¹

Culture in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna flourished, not least because the sons and daughters of assimilated Jewish migrant incomers turned their interest to the arts or literature “as an alternative to more mundane careers.”²² Having benefited from a rigorous secondary education, more than a few secularized Jews aspired to distinguish themselves through intellectual or literary innovation. World-famous intellectuals and artists of Jewish background, such as Sigmund Freud, Gustav Mahler, Karl Kraus, Arnold Schönberg, Arthur Schnitzler, and Theodor Herzl, pursued embattled careers in a city increasingly known for its antisemitism²³ and thus contributed to making the city a “sparkling source of new ideas.”²⁴ Education was one of the core values of the Austrian liberal middle and upper classes. For many it was an important status symbol.²⁵ A great number of the Jewish migrants who had climbed up the social ladder after their arrival in the metropolis agreed with that view and subsequently emphasized the education of their sons and daughters. More than one-third of the students of the prestigious Viennese *Gymnasien* (grammar schools/high schools) had a Jewish family background, although Jews accounted for only 10 percent of the population.²⁶ The predominantly Jewish members of our sample group, of whom 88.5 percent enjoyed the luxury of a sound secondary education, also highlight this bigger picture.

20 Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 41.

21 Wistrich, *Jews of Vienna*, 41.

22 Johnston, “Political and Cultural Background,” 21.

23 Johnston, “Political and Cultural Background,” 21.

24 Beller, “Soziale Schicht,” 67.

25 Beller, “Soziale Schicht,” 69.

26 Beller, “Soziale Schicht,” 69.

When the city grew and the population diversified socially, economically, and ethnically during the 19th century, the liberal educated classes became the social reservoir of the cultural elite.²⁷ Steven Beller has shown that this elite was either largely made up, or heavily influenced, by the city's Jewish population:²⁸ Jews generally shaped or produced middle-class culture in Vienna to an extent disproportionate to their numbers and thus played an important role in Vienna's transformation from a "cosy, secure and well-ordered administrative capital city into a vibrant and innovative centre of central European culture," as social historian Michael Pollak put it.²⁹ Jewish intellectuals and artists were among the main transmitters of an intellectual movement, later dubbed *Wiener Moderne*, which was responsible for ground-breaking developments and inventions in a wide range of social, cultural, academic, and economic spheres, from philosophy, the fine arts, architecture, music, and literature to mathematics, medicine, economics, and law.³⁰ Furthermore, many Jews were among the patrons and sponsors as well as among the artists and academics.

As the life stories of the members of the sample group who were educated in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna show, almost all of them were affected by the cultural development of the *Wiener Moderne*. Modern architecture and design, the fine arts, literature, and Vienna's musical institutions, such as the Vienna Opera or the Burgtheater dominated their childhood memories. In interviews, letters, or autobiographical depictions, many of them even recalled having seen, having talked to, or even having been educated by some of the great cultural figures of that time. Gertrude Langer, for example, who fled to Brisbane, where she subsequently started a career as an art historian and newspaper art critic, recalled in an interview being educated in school by the expressionist painter Oskar Kokoschka: "Oskar Kokoschka, can you imagine? She [her principal in high school] had a talent to engage geniuses in the school."³¹ Langer also recalled in

27 Strobl, "Social Networks."

28 Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 43.

29 Michael Pollak, "Die Wiener Moderne: Verlaufsformen einer Identitätskrise," in *Wissenschaftskolleg, Jahrbuch 1983/84*, ed. Peter Wapnewski (Munich: Siedler, 1984), 299–310.

30 For more information on the *Wiener Moderne*, see Gotthart Wunberg and Johannes J. Braakenburg, eds., *Die Wiener Moderne. Literatur, Kunst und Musik zwischen 1890 und 1910* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981); Carl E. Schorske, *Wien. Geist und Gesellschaft im Fin de siècle* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1982).

31 NLA, Gertrude Langer interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 9.

a 1982 interview being educated in drawing and the theory of avant-gardism by the world-famous graphic art designer Julius Klinger, whom she described as “one of the best poster designers and a marvelous man who had introduced me to Van Gogh and to Beardsley and to just about everything.”³² Born in 1904, Marie Bergel fled to Adelaide after the Anschluss. She recalled that her family was in contact with the composer Gustav Mahler. Having attended the same school as Gertrude Langer, she remembered being educated by renowned teachers such as Arnold Schönberg, Ernst Wagner, and Oskar Kokoschka. The Expressionist writer Paul Hirsch (who used the pen name Paul Hatvani) was in some ways an exception within the group: although he was born in Vienna, he had spent parts of his youth in Budapest. In the metropolis of the Hungarian part of the Habsburg Empire, he encountered the literary genre of Expressionism. In 1975, he recalled in a letter to a friend, “subsequently, literature became increasingly important in my life.”³³ He made contact with famous writers such as Frigyes Karinthy and Mihály Babits, and after returning to Vienna became friends with writers Albert Ehrenstein and Hermann Broch, and joined the coffee house meetings of the famous satirist Karl Kraus, whom he idolized.³⁴ Coffee houses in *fin-de-siècle* and interwar Vienna had been much more than a “characteristic feature of Viennese hospitality,” rather, as semi-public spaces that facilitated sociability and networking, they “were instrumental in the creation of modernist culture.”³⁵ The Viennese architect Richard Tandler, who built up a new career in Melbourne after fleeing with his family from National Socialism, enjoyed the privilege of being educated by the painter, graphic designer, and set designer Alfred Roller, as well as by Oskar Strnad, who made a name for himself as an influential figure of the Vienna School of Architecture.³⁶

32 NLA, Gertrude Langer interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 12.

33 “die Literatur drängte sich bei mir immer mehr in den Vordergrund,” author’s translation: MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Paul Hatvani, letter to Ferenc Karinthy, 1.4.1975.

34 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Paul Hatvani, letter to Ferenc Karinthy, 1.4.1975; Paul Hatvani, “Über den Expressionismus. Vorspruch des Autors,” *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Institutes* 31 (1965): 177–179, 178.

35 Charlotte Ashby, Tag Gronberg and Simon Shaw Miller, eds., *The Viennese Café and Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York/Oxford: Berghen Books, 2013).

36 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

3.2 “A Frenetic, Hedonistic Time, with Trappings of Wealth and Glamour, but Very Little Substance”: Austria’s First Republic

After the First World War, Vienna experienced dramatic changes. With the breakdown of the Habsburg Empire, the metropolis of more than two million people lost its position as an economic, cultural, and administrative hub of a major European empire and became instead the oversized capital of a small state of only six million inhabitants. Many Austrians had no trust in the survival capabilities of the young republic and thus favoured the incorporation of their country into Germany, at least until Hitler took power in 1933,³⁷ when many Social Democrats and Catholic Conservatives began to distance themselves from this idea.³⁸ Economically, the country, and particularly its bloated capital city, experienced times of hardship and structural crises. As studies show, the Austrian economy had massive problems with the transition from a major empire to a small country and ultimately performed worse than most of its eastern neighbours.³⁹

New borders between competing nation-states on the territory of the former Habsburg Empire impeded economic and cultural exchange and ended Vienna’s role as the economic hub for large parts of Central and Eastern Europe. Financial crises, social unrest, unemployment, and hyperinflation subsequently wracked the city. The government tried to solve inflation by printing money. This, together with a ruthless speculation against the Austrian currency, led to an unprecedented currency devaluation, which caused the impoverishment of parts of the urban upper and middle classes who had managed so far to survive the war economically.⁴⁰ The krone, which was the official Austrian currency until 1924, became almost worthless. Before 1914, for example, one US dollar was worth 4.9 Austrian kronen. Eight years and a world war later, one US dollar bought more than 83,600 Austrian kronen.⁴¹ The hyperinflation and financial crises left a deep impression on many Austrians, including most of the members of our sample group. Their memories of those chaotic, exceptional years were very strong, even decades later. Annemarie Mutton

37 Paul Luif, “Forum on ‘Central Europe’: Austria and Central Europe,” *Perspectives* 18, no. 2 (2010): 95–109, 95.

38 Helmut Konrad, *Sozialdemokratie und “Anschluss”: Historische Wurzeln Anschluss 1918 und 1938 Nachwirkungen* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1978).

39 Heinz Fassmann, “Zur wirtschaftlichen und sozialstrukturellen Entwicklung,” in *Handbuch des politischen Systems Österreichs: Erste Republik 1918–1933*, ed. Emmerich Talos et al. (Vienna: Manz, 1995), 11–44, 28.

40 Fassmann, “Zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung,” 28.

41 Philipp Strobl, *Innsbrucker Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2014), 92.

recalled in her unpublished autobiographical memoirs that she wrote for her family members during the 1980s:

Austria was the rump of a former empire. Beggars in the streets were common. The former middle class was impoverished by inflation and shareholding rendered valueless through a variety of reasons. Most people had aunts or other relatives needing help. Tante [aunt] Lisa's flat in the Maysedergasse looked onto the Albertina [a museum in the Innere Stadt of Vienna], but she lived on cigarettes and coffee.⁴²

As Marie Bergel recounted in an interview, conducted during the early 1990s by a friend, her family had lost most of its financial capital during those years. She, however insisted, "of course my family had [financial] resources and *Aktien* [shares], but there was a lot of worries and talk about money. It made an impression [on me]. My children still blame me that money or [having] less money is important to me."⁴³ Gertrude Langer, who was 15 years old when the war ended, also recalled in an interview she gave during the early 1980s to the Brisbane-born author Barbara Blackmann:

The Austrians were very badly off during the war and the aftermath of the war. [...] Of course, after the war there was great trouble and unemployment and all sorts of things. [...] I never knew poverty but, whether you were rich or poor, there just wasn't anything. [...] after the war that was a bad period, very, very bad after the war. That was the time when countries like Sweden and Holland and Switzerland invited Austrian children to come to them as their guests and fed them for several months and clothed them.⁴⁴

Sue Copolov, who left Austria as a teenager, remembered in an interview with the author in 2017 how the economic crisis and the hyperinflation had affected her own family: "We never really felt poor, even after the war. However, my grandmother lived in a very big apartment, but after a while she moved into a small one, because things changed after the war." She further recalled how her family's business was affected by the negative economic developments after the First World War: "They made a lot of good things for royalty [silverware].

42 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

43 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

44 NLA, Gertrude Langer interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 3–4, 8.

But then they lost the war and things went down and then they became poor.”⁴⁵ In one of her father’s job references, one of his former employers gave a good insight into how the newly formed borders between the former crown countries of the Habsburg monarchy affected the business activities of his company: “In 1926, we lost all our export trade as many foreign countries closed down their markets for silverware, hence our manufacturing program had to be reshuffled.”⁴⁶ As the businessman and cabinetmaker John Hearst, who fled to Australia in 1939, recalled in an interview he gave to his son during the 1980s, “a lot of ‘safe people’ lost their jobs and could not meet their payments anymore. [...] This led to the downfall of my father’s first business.”⁴⁷ The life story of the dancer and educator Hanny Exiner, who grew up during the crisis years, as recalled here by her son, allows further insights into how the crisis affected formerly wealthy families:

The family was middle class. Her father was a lawyer, who at one time ran a publishing company [...]. However, it wasn’t an easy time. Austria was struggling economically, politically and socially to come to terms with its post-empire situation. Hanny has told us it was a frenetic, hedonistic time, with trappings of wealth and glamour, but very little substance. The fortunes of the Kolm family [Exiner’s maiden name] reflected this. We know of gambling, numerous affairs, failed businesses and decline of the family’s finances.⁴⁸

It seems obvious that during the volatile years between 1918 and 1938, politics, and economic and social crises hindered activities and investment in the fields of art, literature, and culture. Cultural life, which had occupied a dominant position in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, lost importance in the public mind. Private philanthropists had less money to invest in culture and the arts and state subsidies for the arts were at an all-time low during the 1920s.⁴⁹ Museums and archives had to downsize or merge in order to save money, and the gloomy financial conditions of the young republic even forced the government to sell parts of its art collections to back the currency.⁵⁰

45 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

46 Employment references (in the possession of Sue Copolov).

47 Interview with John Hearst, n.d., (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

48 Ron Exiner, “Commemoration and Celebration of the Life of Hanny Exiner,” *DTAA Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2008): 41–44, 42.

49 Strobl, “Gertrude Langer,” 20.

50 Peter Melichar, “Der Wiener Kunstmarkt in der Zwischenkriegszeit,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtsforschung* 17, nos. 2–3 (2006): 252.

Yet despite the unfortunate economic situation and the drops in funding for culture and the arts, the breakdown of the Habsburg Empire, the social and economic crises, and the reduced role and importance of Vienna did not lead to an abandonment of art and culture. Surprisingly, Vienna managed, rather, to retain its position as a “centre of cultural innovation,”⁵¹ developing new forms and types of expression and reflection in literature, theatre, music, dance, science, academia, and politics.⁵² As historians Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman put it, “much that was culturally significant occurred in Vienna” during the interwar years.⁵³ The literature and publishing scene, for example, produced a thriving culture sustained by a network of small publishers.⁵⁴ Philosophy also continued to flourish, not least through the activities of the so-called *Wiener Kreis* (Vienna Circle). The same was true for the sciences: eight Nobel prizes were awarded to scientists from Vienna between the end of the First World War and the Anschluss.⁵⁵ Vienna managed to retain an important position in other areas too, such as architecture, music, and theatre. Even in the fine arts, new variants of modernism emerged despite the fact that the field had suffered major setbacks after the war caused by the death and the emigration of many pioneers, as well as the severe lack of financial capital.⁵⁶ In other areas, such as photography, film, and modern dance, new avant-garde trends emerged in interwar Vienna, making the city a global centre of excellence. “On balance, one can argue that despite its economic problems, the city sustained a healthy dynamism in all the arts,” historian John Warren concluded.⁵⁷

Politically, the young republic was divided. A constructive cooperation of the three major parties, the leftist Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei (Social Democratic Worker's Party), the Catholic-conservative Christlichsoziale Partei (Christian Social Party) and the German-nationalist Großdeutsche Volkspartei (Greater German People's Party) lasted for only one year.⁵⁸ Despite their very

51 Holmes and Silverman, “Introduction: Beyond the Coffeehouse,” 4.

52 Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5.

53 Holmes and Silverman, “Introduction: Beyond the Coffeehouse,” 4.

54 Edwards Timms, “Cultural Parameters between the Wars: A Reassessment of the Vienna Circles,” in *Interwar Vienna: Culture between Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 21–31, 29.

55 John Warren, “‘Weiße Strümpfe oder neue Kutten’: Cultural Decline in Vienna in the 1930s,” in Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman, *Interwar Vienna: Culture between Tradition and Modernity* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 32–55, 33.

56 Warren, “Weiße Strümpfe,” 33.

57 Warren, “Weiße Strümpfe,” 33.

58 Comp. John W. Boyer, *Austria 1867–1955* (Oxford: University Press, 2022).

short-lived cooperation, the three major parties managed to enact a series of crucial laws that created the foundations of the modern Austrian welfare state. A collectively agreed minimum wage, unemployment insurance, the eight-hour working day, enforced youth protection laws, and the establishment of compulsory chambers of labour are only a few examples of the political and social achievements of the period from 1919 to 1920.⁵⁹ The breakdown of the coalition was the starting point for a growing ideological divide between the major political blocks in Austria, which eventually turned into violent clashes. Most of the member states of the young republic were governed by conservatives, aligned with the Christian Social Party, representing the interests of the rural and provincial elites (farmers, tradespeople, craftspeople, local civil servants), as well as, more importantly, the Catholic Church.⁶⁰ The city of Vienna, where most of this book's protagonists lived before their expulsion, took a different political and social course. On May 4, 1919, the Social Democrats gained a majority in the communal elections⁶¹ and from then on ruled the city for the next 14 years.

Ideologically, most of the members of the sample group identified themselves as supporters of the Social Democratic Party. This reflects the general trend that "a majority of middle-class Jews in Vienna voted for the Marxist, working-class Social Democratic Party, which viewed both religion and nationalism with disfavour."⁶² As historian Harriet Pass Freidenreich described, "The upsurge of right-wing antisemitism and the demise of Liberalism decisively shaped Jewish voting patterns in interwar Vienna."⁶³ Since the political landscape of Austria's First Republic was dominated by political parties that were at least influenced by antisemitic ideas, Jewish voters did not have much choice in their voting decisions. The liberal bloc, which had once dominated late 19th century politics in the western part of the monarchy, was in the process of disappearing or collaborating with German nationalists, and because of their radical clerical Catholic mindset, the Christian Socials held little electoral appeal

59 Barbara Thosold and Helmut Wohnout, "Politische Lager und Zukunftsentwürfe," in *1918–2018: Die Anfänge der Republik Österreich im internationalen Kontext*, ed. Helmut Konrad (Vienna: ÖNB, 2018), 23–26, 23.

60 Thosold and Wohnout, "Politische Lager," 25.

61 Helmut Konrad, "Das Rote Wien: Ein Konzept für eine moderne Großstadt?," in *Das Werden der Ersten Republik ... der Rest ist Österreich—Band 1*, ed. Helmut Konrad and Wolfgang Maderthaner (Vienna: Carl Gerold's Sohn Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2008), 223–240, 229.

62 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 2.

63 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 10.

for Jewish voters either.⁶⁴ Consequently, the majority of Jews found themselves voting for the Social Democratic Party—by default rather than out of ideological conviction.⁶⁵ “My parents were socialists. Jewish people did not have many options. The Viennese Socialists were predominantly Jewish people,” John Hearst told his son in a private interview during the early 1980s about the difficult situation for Jewish voters during the 1920s and early 1930s.⁶⁶ “My father was very left-wing political [...]. However, he did not join any political party,” Joan Lynn stated in an interview with the author.⁶⁷ The Expressionist writer Paul Hirsch offered another explanation for his personal affinity toward socialism in a letter he wrote to a relative in Austria in 1968: “There was also the Austrian Social Democratic Party. We had many friends who were members of the party and we particularly liked its cultural program. Consequently, like many others, we hoped that the party would lead us into a better future.”⁶⁸ Similar factors may have been important for Gertrude and Karl Langer. Both of them benefited from the Social Democratic cultural programme. Gertrude Langer, for example, taught at the Social Democratic *Volkshochschule*, a major Viennese adult education centre founded in the late 19th century to offer affordable education.⁶⁹ A close friend of the Langers wrote years after their deaths in 1988: “The friends who know them the best assert that they were Social Democrats.”⁷⁰

Younger members of the sample group were mainly influenced by the political stance of their parents. In a retrospective and public interview, Marie Bergel briefly described her own process of shifting toward socialism: “I had become a socialist after the war. My family was very much socialist. During the war they bought anti-war literature.”⁷¹ Hans Eisler was in a very similar situation. His

64 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 10.

65 Comp. Margit Reiter, “Die österreichische Sozialdemokratie und Antisemitismus: Politische Kampfansage mit Ambivalenzen,” in *Antisemitismus in Österreich 1933–1938*, ed. Gertrude Enderle-Burcel and Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal (Vienna: Böhlau, 2018), 361–379, 365.

66 Interview with John Hearst, n.d., (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

67 Joan Lynn (daughter of Bergel), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

68 “Es war wohl auch die österreichische Sozialdemokratie da, die Partei, in der wir Freunde hatten und deren kulturelles Programm uns nahestand und von der wir, wie so viele, hofften, dass sie den Weg in eine bessere Zukunft weisen würde.” (author’s translation), Paul Hirsch, letter to Tony, January 1968.

69 Strobl, “Gertrude Langer,” 20.

70 Ian Sinnamon, “Modernism and the Genius loci: Karl Langer and Gertrude Langer OBE,” in *Strauss to Matilda: Viennese in Australia, 1938–1988*, ed. Karl Bittmann (Sydney: Wenkhard Foundation, 1988), 145–160, 152.

71 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

political worldview was also predetermined by his parents' socialist mindset, as he recalled in an interview during the 1980s.⁷² Ernest Bowen, who had taken over the management of his family's company during the 1930s, had also inherited his father's "belief in socialism and as a consequence a humane approach to those who worked for him," as his former wife wrote in her memoirs.⁷³

Even though a majority of the members of the Jewish assimilated or liberal urban middle class were sympathizers of the Social Democratic Party, there were, of course, exceptions. As Harriet Pass Freidenreich showed in her study about Jewish politics in interwar Vienna, there was a "small group of wealthy bankers and industrialists who gave their financial backing to the conservative Christian Social Party," probably "out of rational business reasons," as she puts it.⁷⁴ In his 1997 memoirs that were intended for publication, Henry Teltscher describes his father as someone who would fit into that pattern very well: "Papa worked long hours [...] but came home for lunch every day, driven forward and backward by the AMA [his father's company] chauffeur. He seemed to have great troubles with the trade unions, which no doubt must have been responsible for his rather right-wing political stance."⁷⁵

The three non-Jewish members of the sample group were all politically committed, however, in different political directions. While the adolescent Paul Herzfeld was a member of the clerical organization Catholic Action and a volunteer soldier for the Austrian *Ständestaat*,⁷⁶ Gerhard Felser, who had made a decent living as an accountant, belonged to the conservative camp, serving as a consultant for the Viennese state police during the 1930s.⁷⁷ Working-class Grete Vanry, on the other hand, became a member of the Communist Party and as such was involved in political actions against the clerical *Ständestaat* regime, which even resulted in her imprisonment in 1936.⁷⁸

72 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061.

73 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

74 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 9.

75 Henry Teltscher, *The Glückspilz: Autobiography* (Melbourne: Stirling Crescent Press, 1997), 10.

76 *Ständestaat* characterizes the Austrian clerical and conservative dictatorship between 1934 and 1938. During that time, Austria was a one-party state led by the clerical fascist Fatherland Front.

77 NAA, SP11/5, Felser Gerhard.

78 ÖSta, NIHL, E/1797:25/1; see also Katharina Stengel, *Hermann Langbein: Ein Auschwitz-Überlebender in den erinnerungspolitischen Konflikten der Nachkriegszeit* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2012), 34.

A depiction of interwar Vienna should recognize the importance of the social housing campaign of that era. Altogether, the city of Vienna had built more than 60,000 apartments offering modern and decent living spaces for more than 250,000 people within a period of 14 years.⁷⁹ The housing campaign became “without doubt the symbolic and real centerpiece of Viennese municipal socialism.”⁸⁰ The 400 different large-scale buildings, which are scattered all over the city, left a deep impression on the urban image and are still central to Vienna’s cultural heritage.

The ideological and social split between rural, conservative Austria and its capital city, which diverged from the rest of the country in many different spheres of life, increased during the late 1920s and early 1930s, which complicated the development of a distinctive Austrian identity.⁸¹ Since the new republic was formed only from a few, predominantly German-speaking, crown countries of the former Habsburg Empire, there was much soul-searching about the nature of the state and the nation and, consequently, “there was no consensus about what it meant to be a nationalist Austrian or what the Austrian nation state should be like.”⁸² Together with the country’s reduced political importance and its crisis-ridden economy, this resulted in notions of inferiority in a world that had radically changed⁸³ and a lack of faith in the future of their country which becomes evident in many of the refugees’ depictions. “Vienna started to become a village after the war. You could see the narrowness [...]. Only the *Wasserkopf* [hydrocephalus] of the empire remained,” Marie Bergel recalled in an interview.⁸⁴ She developed a passion for English culture, as she described: “We looked up to everything that was English in ‘Little Austria.’”⁸⁵ Many other members of the sample group also recalled being drawn to either France or England. Ernest Bowen, who fled Austria in 1938, was strongly attached to the English culture, as his wife later wrote: “Ernest was sent to England annually and has many friends there. England was his chosen land.”⁸⁶ Henry Teltscher, who left Austria as a schoolboy and went to

79 Konrad, “Das Rote Wien,” 232.

80 Konrad, “Das Rote Wien,” 232.

81 Helmut Konrad, “Das Rote Wien,” in *1918–2018: Die Anfänge der Republik Österreich im internationalen Kontext*, ed. Helmut Konrad (Vienna: ÖNB, 2018), 47–50, 50.

82 David Lebovitch Dahl, “Antisemitism and Catholicism in the Interwar Period: The Jesuits in Austria, 1918–1938,” *Shoah: Intervention, Methods, Documentation*, no. 3 (2016): 104–114, 106.

83 Steven Beller, *Was nicht im Baedeker steht: Juden und andere Österreicher im Wien der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Vienna: Picus Verlag, 2008), 45.

84 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

85 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

86 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

Australia aboard the infamous *Dunera*, recalled in his memoirs that his anglophile father had “always told me that he wanted me to go to England and live in England as soon as possible.”⁸⁷ Charles William Anton was characterized as “anglophile” by his Australian friends after he came to Australia.⁸⁸ And indeed, his interwar employment record confirms that. One year after graduating from high school, he joined Sun Insurance, a British insurance company in Vienna, which brought him into contact with business partners all over the English-speaking world.⁸⁹ When being questioned by an Australian Aliens’ Tribunal during the early 1940s, interned Paul Herzfeld, who described himself as an Austrian royalist during the questioning, also recalled having had close ties to England: “Where did I learn to speak English? Firstly, at home, and my father was in England for some years before the last war [First World War]; secondly in college, and thirdly I was in England for a few months in 1931.”⁹⁰ Some members of the sample group had also expressed having had a close connection to France and the French culture. “I was very francophile,” Gertrude Langer claimed later in Australia.⁹¹ As Elisabeth Ziegler noted, her family had also had close ties to friends and business partners in France which even helped her sister, after her parents’ early deaths to keep the family shop in business.⁹²

3.3 “Many Left, Of Course Many Left”: The Austrian *Ständestaat* Remembered by the Refugees

Tensions between the major political blocs became increasingly violent during the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Social Democrats and the Christian Socials both operated large paramilitary corps that fought civil-war-like battles. The Great Depression which had started in 1929 worsened the drastic situation. Unemployment rose from 11.7 percent to 27.2 percent between 1928 and 1933. At that time, almost 600,000 Austrians had no job. To make things worse, only half of them were entitled to unemployment pay, due to restrictive

87 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 9. The *Dunera* was a British troopship that transported 2,500 prisoners of war to Australia in 1940 under terrible conditions.

88 Leon Smith (friend of Anton and his successor as president of the AAC), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Sydney, March 2016.

89 Strobl, “Social Networks,” 12.

90 NAA, MP529/3/0 Tribunal 2/Herzfeld.

91 NLA, Gertrude Langer interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 3–4.

92 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview [sound recording].

amendments to the unemployment laws.⁹³ The 1929 crisis featured prominently in all of the memories of the members of the sample group, regardless of when they recalled it and of their intentions. The chemist and writer Paul Hirsch, who had lost his job at that time, is among those with very dramatic memories of the post-1929 years. In one of the letters he wrote in 1968, he recalled the hardship of that time: "It was a horrible time for young people like us. The daily struggle for survival was getting harder and harder and we had so many worries and doubts."⁹⁴ John Hearst, whose family ran a furniture shop in the Viennese working-class district of Floridsdorf, noted decades later in Australia in an interview with his son:

many of our customers had lost their jobs. [...] My family owned a two-story house built by my father. He wanted to build a third floor on his building during the late 1920s. That, however, was not possible because of the bad economic development. The economy went back and back and back [...]. Our business was mainly built upon time payment [payment in instalments] and my father financed it by issuing promissory notes and that brought him more and more into troubles. [...] In other words, what happened is that through the unemployment a lot of people lost their jobs and therefore could not meet their payments. My father was forced into receivership.⁹⁵

The lack of consumer spending in the cities soon affected the rural economies and led to various protests and revolts all over the country. The Christian Socials, who had governed the country continuously since 1920, came under increasing pressure and consequently became more radicalized. From October 1932, the Christian Social party leader Engelbert Dollfuss and his successor Kurt Schuschnigg began to rule the country without the approbation of the parliament by using an emergency decree, a relic from the last war year.⁹⁶ This led to a gradual reduction in democratic rights, social benefits, and—ultimately—to

93 Peter Eigner and Andrea Heilige, eds., *Österreichische Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: 175 Jahre Wiener Städtische Versicherung* (Vienna: Brandstätter, 1999), 171.

94 English translation, original text: "Es war eine für uns junge Menschen schwere und fürchterliche Zeit; der Kampf ums tägliche Überleben wurde immer schwerer und man hatte viele Sorgen und Zweifel," MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Tony, January 1968.

95 Interview with John Hearst, n.d., (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

96 Philipp Strobl, "Thinking Cosmopolitan or How Joseph Became Joe Buttinger," in *Austrian Lives*, ed. Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Eva Maltschnig (New Orleans: UNO Press, 2012), 92–122, 92.

the gradual banning of rival political parties. When government forces finally attacked several buildings of the Social Democratic party in Upper Austria, Styria, and Vienna in February 1934, they unleashed an intensive but short burst of resistance from local armed party members.⁹⁷ Keen to nip resistance in the bud, the government deployed army units and heavy artillery to force the workers to end their resistance, killing at least 89 people and wounding more than 1,000 others.

The violent events of February 1934 constituted a visible transition from a democratic state toward an authoritarian, oppressive dictatorship, euphemistically called *Ständestaat* (corporate state). The German word “*Stände*” or “*Stand*” describes the traditional estates of European feudal societies and here refers to the different socioeconomic sectors of society. This transition featured prominently in the memories of many members of the sample group, which was not surprising considering the fact that the epicentre of the fights was the region around the Karl-Marx-Hof, the bulwark of the Social Democratic movement in Vienna’s 19th district, where most of the members of the sample group lived. Henry Teltscher, who as a teenager lived not far away, recalled:

1934 was a fateful year for Austria. After a series of political provocations, the socialists and the Schutzbund talked revolt. The army moved in artillery formations and started bombarding the Karl-Marx-Hof. There was sporadic fighting in a couple of country towns. Since the Karl-Marx-Hof was only some 3 km from our house, we could, of course, hear the bombardment very clearly.⁹⁸

Marie Bergel lived in the same district, only a few hundred metres away. “I was on the balcony, when I heard them [the shooting],” she later remembered.⁹⁹ Hans Eisler, who later became a member of the Communist Party in Australia, particularly remembered having experienced the fighting as a 10-year-old boy: “I was very well aware about it. I was in Heiligenstadt when the workers’ flats were shelled. My father, being a Social Democrat [...], pointed it out to me.”¹⁰⁰ Annemarie Mutton, who arrived in Vienna from National Socialist Germany the very same year tried to explain the situation to her family in her memoirs: “The right-wing politics of the Catholic country had culminated in

97 Strobl, “Thinking Cosmopolitan,” 104.

98 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 46.

99 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

100 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061.

the open shooting in the worker's housing complexes. Attacks on living standards and support structures to retain these became more ferocious."¹⁰¹ The milliner Grete Vanry is a special case since she was greatly affected by the introduction of the authoritarian regime in Austria. Coming from a working-class family, she joined the Austrian Communist Party very early. Records in the Austrian State Archive indicate that she and her boyfriend Hermann Langbein, who would later survive Auschwitz, were involved in the spring 1934 fighting. There were also people among the members of the sample group who had different memories of that conflict. Paul Herzfeld, who went to Australia in 1939, belonged to the other side of the political spectrum. The son of a Catholic, conservative owner of the famous Viennese coffee house Café Bar was interned as an enemy alien in Australia during the Second World War. In an interview with the Aliens Tribunal in 1941, he claimed to be a "leading member" of the Catholic clerical organization Austrian Catholic Action. He further recalled:

Just before Hitler came in, I was third member of the Viennese staff. In this position, naturally, I was very exposed to political hatred, and in 1934, after two revolutions, one of the Nazis, and the other of the Communists, both times I volunteered for service in the Government Forces; I was only 15 1/2, but I was taken and, on both times, I was at the firing line.¹⁰²

It is unclear whether his memories correspond to reality, since generally no 15-year-old youths were sent on combat missions, however, we can see how present the 1934 events were in Herzfeld's memories. "Although the uprising lasted only four days, the consequences for Austria and its cultural life were disastrous," according to historian John Warren, who started his description of cultural development in post-1934 Vienna with these words.¹⁰³ The years that followed brought ruthless actions against the enemies of the authoritarian Catholic regime, leading to various raids and arrests of members of the Socialist, Communist and National Socialist Parties, as well as to a wave of emigration of political opponents to the Czech Republic, the Soviet Union, and—in the case of Nazi Party members—to Nazi Germany.¹⁰⁴ As an active member of the Communist underground movement, Grete Vanry was personally affected by the governmental actions. In 1936, she was arrested after the police

101 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

102 NAA, MP529/3/0, Tribunal 2/Herzfeld.

103 Warren, "Weiße Strümpfe," 35.

104 Philipp Strobl, "Thinking Cosmopolitan," 108.

found propaganda material, Communist Party correspondence, and a firearm in her house, and was imprisoned for more than a year.¹⁰⁵

Culturally, the six-year reign of the *Ständestaat* regime proved to be “a complicated and unhappy period of Viennese history,”¹⁰⁶ which brought recessions in many sectors. The closing down of 72 libraries and the introduction of “blacklists” indicating banned works, including those by authors such as Arthur Schnitzler, Karl Kraus, Bertha von Suttner, and Hugo Bettauer,¹⁰⁷ set the agenda for the corporate state’s conservative cultural policy. Another major blow was the shutting down of left-wing newspapers and magazines, many of which had been an essential source of income for writers. Because of this situation and the closing down of the German market for many Austrian writers, after the Nazi takeover in 1933, the formerly thriving Viennese literary scene was severely affected. Paul Hirsch, who had made a name for himself as an Expressionist writer between 1910 and the 1920s as Paul Hatvani, recalled years after his escape: “After fascism came to power [in Nazi Germany, and in the Austrian *Ständestaat*], it was increasingly difficult for me to publish my work. And after a while I finally stopped my efforts to find a publisher.”¹⁰⁸ In one of his unpublished letters from the 1930s, he further claimed that the political situation made it “impossible for many Austrian writers to pursue their usual activities.”¹⁰⁹ In addition to the oppression in the literary market, the government also banned socialist cultural associations. Jews had been involved in many of these. Altogether, the atmosphere at the remaining cultural events, such as the Salzburg Festival, became increasingly and openly narrow, xenophobic, and antisemitic.¹¹⁰

For many contemporaries, the logical result of the restrictive social and political climate and the strikingly reduced living conditions and job prospects was to leave the country. Consequently, the migration of several thousand members of the cultural elite preceded the intellectual cull that eventually took place after the 1938 Anschluss. The years 1934 to 1938 brought the migration of some

105 ÖStA, NIHL, E/1797:25/1; see also Stengel, *Hermann Langbein*, 34.

106 Warren, “Weiße Strümpfe,” 40.

107 Alfred Pfoser, *Literatur und Austromarxismus* (Vienna: Löcker, 1980).

108 Original text: “Mit dem Aufkommen des Faschismus [...] ging es mir mit dem Publizieren immer schwerer. Ich habe es dann ganz aufgegeben”; MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Ferenc Karinthy, 1.4.1975.

109 Original text: “Dies macht es einem Teil der österreichischen Schriftstellerschaft immer schwieriger, die gewohnte Publikationstätigkeit fortzusetzen”; MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, suggestion to found a monthly periodical, unpublished document, [n.d.].

110 Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 172; Gertrude Enderle-Burcel and Reiter-Zatloukal, eds., *Antisemitismus in Österreich 1933–1938* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2018).

of Austria's most progressive figures, such as the polymath Otto Neurath, the writers Ernst Fischer, Elias Canetti, and Stefan Zweig, the pioneer of Vienna's welfare and health reform Julius Tandler, the art critic Ernst Gombrich, most of those philosophers who formed the famous Vienna Circle, as well as most of the members of the Viennese institute for *Wirtschaftssoziologie* (economic sociology), to name just a few. Art historian Gertrude Langer, who fled to Brisbane, later recalled the "brain drain" that took place during those years: "Many left. Of course, many left. I've got many friends in other countries now, sure. Many left. Friends left, relatives left [...] long before Hitler, not because of Hitler at all."¹¹¹ Paul Hirsch offers a good insight into Vienna's rapid decay as a cultural centre during the mid-1930s in one of his letters to the emigrated publisher Emil Szittyä:

As far as I am concerned, I try to carve out a miserable existence, and get older during these horrible monotonous times. [...] You are very lucky not to have anything to do any more with Central Europe. There is nothing left; neither magazines, nor painters, not even coffee houses that offer discussions.¹¹²

3.4 Jewish Life

Jewish life in interwar Austria was largely focused on Vienna. In 1934, some 91 percent of all Austrian Jews lived in Vienna.¹¹³ The other eight states of Austria contained only 15,000 Jews in total. Historian Steven Beller, one of the foremost experts on Jewish life in Vienna, noted in a 2007 speech in the Viennese city hall that "Jewish history up until very recently was not mentioned in descriptions of Vienna's *fin-de-siècle* and interwar culture."¹¹⁴ This picture has changed during the past decade. A considerable number of publications recognize the

111 NLA, Gertrude Langer interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 3–4, 33.

112 Original text: "Was nun mich anlangt: man lebt so dahin, in dieser monotonen Zeit, in der Alles erstickt, und wird langsam älter. [...] Sie sind glücklich, jetzt mit Mitteleuropa nichts zu tun zu haben. Es gibt gar nichts mehr; weder Zeitschriften noch Ideen; keine Maler und nicht einmal Cafés mit Diskussionen"; DLM, A: Szittyä, 80.2060/1, Paul Hatvani to Emil Szittyä.

113 Bruce F. Pauley, "Politischer Antisemitismus im Wien der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Eine zerstörte Kultur: Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus in Wien seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gerhard Botz et al. (Vienna: Czernin, 2002), 241–260, 243.

114 Beller, *Was nicht im Baedeker steht*, 23.

importance of Jewish cultural life now. In her 2012 publication about Jewish life in interwar Austria, historian Lisa Silverman highlighted the fact that “in the years between the World Wars, Jews flourished as creators of culture in Austria,” at least until the late 1920s.¹¹⁵ Cultural historian Alfred Stalzer further pointed out that the extraordinary contribution of Jews to cultural and academic life in 20th-century Vienna only became fully visible because of their expulsion during the Nazi era.¹¹⁶ Comprehending the reasons and motives for the intense Jewish involvement in Vienna’s cultural life requires us to acquire insights into the history and the multifaceted forms of Jewish life in interwar Vienna.

The approximately 180,000 Viennese who were regarded as Jewish during the interwar period formed a very heterogeneous group, ranging from self-professed Jews to converts, from native Yiddish speakers to secular Viennese Jews, regardless of their degree of Jewish self-identification.¹¹⁷ They also formed an extremely heterogeneous group in terms of their social status, varying significantly with respect to wealth, culture, religion, and politics, as well as region of origin.¹¹⁸ Historian Harriet Pass Freidenreich, who analysed Jewish politics in interwar Vienna, characterized the group’s social composition thus: “Although considerable Jewish poverty existed in Vienna, most Jews belonged to the lower middle-class, while a significant minority can be classified as solidly middle or upper middle-class. Unlike the Viennese population as a whole, few Jews were workers.”¹¹⁹ By economic bracket, they ranged from a tiny aristocratic elite of ennobled bankers and industrialists to middle-class businessmen and professionals to destitute Galician refugees.¹²⁰ An analysis of data derived from Viennese communal taxes reveals that among those persons who were listed as Jews and could afford to pay taxes, roughly 40 percent were engaged in commerce, 10 percent were industrialists or artisans, 30 percent were salaried employees or wage earners, 10 percent belonged to the professional class, while the rest were retired or had other sources of income.¹²¹ Their main connecting element, however, was the fact that the National Socialist

115 Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 4.

116 Alfred Stalzer, *Jüdische Intellektuelle und Künstler und ihr Beitrag zur Wiener Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte: Ein Überblick* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2018), 2.

117 Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 4.

118 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 2.

119 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 12.

120 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 2.

121 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 15.

racial laws “made” all of them the very same Jewish second-class citizens after the 1938 Anschluss.¹²²

The Jewish community in Vienna grew rapidly during the second half of the 19th century. A considerable proportion of the Jews in interwar Vienna had their roots in the adjacent regions of Bohemia, Moravia, and western Hungary. Like in Vienna, political emancipation and linguistic assimilation had become cornerstones of Jewish self-awareness in these regions.¹²³ Many liberal Jews had assimilated themselves into the German culture and language, as it was the dominant culture in the western part of the Habsburg Empire.¹²⁴ They identified themselves as Jewish by religion and German by nationality¹²⁵ and established themselves as a vital part of the Viennese bourgeoisie, as historian Björn Siegel states.¹²⁶ Furthermore, Jews can be seen as the “initiators of a European culture,” as historian Michael Gehler noted.¹²⁷ Subsequently, they not only underwent but also shaped sociocultural socialization and acculturation processes, which affected their legal status, their drive for education, their political behaviour, their family life, their empirical worldview, their values, and their general behaviour.¹²⁸ Members of the liberal Jewish middle and upper classes developed a liberal *Weltanschauung* that placed very high value on education and mobility. As a result, their investment in culture, as a tool to shape the contours of their new self-identification as German-speaking Austrians, was particularly strong.¹²⁹

The second major group of Jews in Vienna were Yiddish-speaking Eastern European migrants from Galicia and the Bukovina. Most of them arrived around the turn of the century, or during and after the First World War. They were influenced by classical Orthodox beliefs. By 1918, this group accounted for approximately one-fifth of the Viennese Jewry.¹³⁰ The growing Orthodox faction did not regard themselves as properly represented by the liberal Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, which represented the Jewish community officially. Consequently, disparities and tensions between the two factions

122 For a detailed depiction of the Nazi discrimination after the Anschluss, see Burger, *Heimatrecht*.

123 Siegel, *Österreichisches Judentum*, 37.

124 Siegel, *Österreichisches Judentum*, 37.

125 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 5.

126 Siegel, *Österreichisches Judentum*, 35.

127 Michael Gehler, *Europa: Ideen, Institutionen, Vereinigung, Zusammenhalt* (Reinbek: Lau Verlag, 2018), 36.

128 Lässig, *Jüdische Wege*, 19.

129 Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 5.

130 Freidenreich, *Jewish Politics*, 5.

increased.¹³¹ In a later interview, Helen Roberts, who came from an assimilated Jewish family, drew a picture of the different self-identifications of both groups: “Nothing religious did not mean much to us [*sic*] [...] more intellectual people did not know Yiddish, it was rather confined to certain groups of the Jewish population.”¹³² Marie Bergel offers a similar perspective when describing her first encounter with Orthodox Jews in a *Shtetl*, which she perceived as a “ghetto,” during a stay in Krakow (Poland) in 1930:

I wanted to investigate if anything Jewish touches me. So, I went to the ghetto. And all I saw were these horrible, dilapidated houses where the paint was missing. [...] Oversized women in slippers moving around [...] what I never can forget, it did not anything [*sic*] to find that I had anything to do with it. [...] It was definitely a ghetto, a little township by its own. It was shabby. [...] that put me off more and more of all Orthodox belief.¹³³

The assimilated and liberal faction, as well as their conservative and Orthodox counterparts, were geographically dispersed in the city. While members of the first group tended to live in the more prestigious Viennese districts, or the city centre, and lived scattered across the city, members of the latter moved to Vienna's 21st district or its 2nd district, which offered the infrastructure to live an Orthodox Jewish life. The 2nd district even acquired the nickname *Mazzeinsel*—referencing the unleavened bread eaten during Passover—because of its high share of approximately 60,000 Jewish residents.

The overwhelming majority of this book's protagonists belonged to the first group of liberal and/or assimilated Jews. Many had no religious denomination at all. Of those, 69 percent were registered members of the Jewish community; however, the largest part of them (38 percent of the overall group) claimed that their families were not religious. Asked if religion played a role in her life, the refugee art historian Gertrude Langer responded in a public interview during the 1980s:

[It] played no role whatsoever. I had an extremely liberated education and was just allowed to do what I liked and I just searched for myself. At one stage, I was interested in Catholicism, then I was interested in Protestantism, then I was interested in Buddhism. [...] My father did not

131 George E. Berkley, *Vienna and Its Jews: The Tragedy of Success, 1880–1890s* (Cambridge: Abt Books, 1988), 46–47.

132 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts, Oral History Interview (sound recording).

133 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

sort of believe in bringing us up that way. [...] I remember I was twice in a temple—to a marriage, that's all. Actually, I was always searching for all sorts of beliefs and then in the end I ended up with my own philosophy. But I don't believe in all that business of race, religion, and all that. I believe we're all people. I don't believe in that rubbish.¹³⁴

Joan Lynn, who came to Australia as a four-year-old girl, recalled how her father brought her and her sister up: "We do not believe in 'isms' [Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism]. We learned that from my father."¹³⁵ Henry Teltscher draws a similar picture of his family's religious attitudes: "Both my parents had no interest in religion whatsoever and never set foot inside a synagogue while I knew them. Most of their circle of friends were (non-religious) Jews."¹³⁶ He further continued: "We celebrated all the Christian Holidays—at least their non-religious components—Easter, with coloured eggs hidden in the garden. [...] On the 4th of December St. Nikolo was celebrated [...]. The main interest centred on Christmas, with fairly substantial gifts for everyone."¹³⁷ Viola Winkler, who became a teacher, entrepreneur, and artist in Sydney after her escape, similarly recalled in an interview for the Shoa Foundation Institute: "My parents did not practice religion."¹³⁸ Marie Bergel also mentioned: "My family was not religious. I never went to the Mass."¹³⁹ The depictions of Elisabeth Ziegler also indicate the lack of religious identification: "My father was an atheist; my mother was a believer; to make my mother happy, we went to the synagogue, but had no Jewish education at home because my parents did not know themselves."¹⁴⁰ Sue Copolov remembers a similar situation: "My family was not religious. My mother was a little bit, but my father not! It was normal for us to have a Christmas tree and *Nikolofeiern*."¹⁴¹ Reinhold Eckfeld, who went to Australia as an internee aboard the troopship HMT *Dunera*, described in an interview with the author how his father distanced himself from the Jewish religion after coming to Vienna: "Religion did not play an important role in

134 NLA, Gertrude Langer interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 14, 32.

135 Joan Lynn (Bergel's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

136 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 8.

137 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 23.

138 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134.

139 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

140 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview (sound recording).

141 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

my youth. My paternal grandfather was a famous rabbi in Hungary [his name was Baruch Bernhard Eckfeld], but my father became a liberal Jew in Vienna. [...] He married a Catholic woman.” Eckfeld further noted: “I am not a religious person—religion never meant anything to me, whether I was Jewish or Catholic.”¹⁴² Kurt Selby’s daughter described a similar transformation process: “My mother’s family was Orthodox. My parents, however, became liberal Jews. They were not very religious and just kept the main holidays.”¹⁴³

In the sample group, 19.5 percent of the members claimed to be baptized as Catholic or Protestant and mentioned that they had subsequently lost their connections to the Jewish faith. As Ron Exiner, son of Hanny Exiner, stated: “Hanny was raised in the Protestant faith. Her family was of Jewish origin but converted during the 19th century.”¹⁴⁴ Annemarie Mutton, who was baptized Lutheran as a child, recalled: “My parents were agnostics. [...] Artificial divisions of race, nationality, religion, class had not been a conscious factor [...]. To ask why some were one or the other of religion never occurred to me.”¹⁴⁵

A few members of the group recalled their families practicing Judaism and attending synagogues, at least occasionally. Bruno Bush, who lived in Vienna’s 16th district until his escape in 1940, remembered his parents being involved in local Jewish community life and further stated: “My parents went to the synagogue regularly.”¹⁴⁶ Hans Eisler, who left Austria aged 14, described his Orthodox Jewish education:

My parents were religious; they went into a synagogue most Saturdays. It was the Central Synagogue in Vienna. [...] It was an Orthodox synagogue, Feuchtwanger was the rabbi. It was close to the Hohenmarkt. [...] I started Jewish education when I was eight. I also joined the Jewish Club Blau-Weiß [Zionist youth movement] when I was 11. I had a Bar Mitzvah and learned Hebrew.¹⁴⁷

142 Reinhold Eckfeld, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, January 2017.

143 Eleanor Hart (Selby’s daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

144 Exiner, “Commemoration and Celebration,” 42.

145 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

146 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush Oral history interview (sound recording).

147 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler (sound recording), Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061.

John Hearst, who grew up in the 21st district, which contained a high proportion of Jewish residents, recalled:

Nearly every Jew knew each other. There were 25,000 Jews in Floridsdorf. Everything was controlled by the Kultusgemeinde. You had to pay 10 per cent of your income tax to the Gemeinde, everyone had to pay, it was not voluntary. My parental grandmother [...] was married to an Orthodox Jewish rabbi. [...] My parents were members of the synagogue, but they were no strong believers.¹⁴⁸

Like Hearst's family, other members of the sample group claimed their families practiced the Jewish religion but could not be described as very religious. Sylvia Cherny, who was born into a wealthy industrial family in the state of Lower Austria, recalled being a member of one of the few Jewish families in a small rural town in Lower Austria:

To my knowledge there were only two other Jewish families in Wieselburg—the local draper and the owner of a shoe store. I was certainly the only Jewish pupil in my class. We received religious instructions from Rabbi Solomon Fried who came to us once a fortnight on his bicycle.¹⁴⁹

Describing her religious beliefs, however, she stated:

Jewish tradition was never a priority in our household as Ilse [the nanny] was Catholic. Apart from the High Holidays and Passover, which were celebrated in my grandmother's home, we did not observe anything. We even had a Christmas tree and at Easter looked for coloured eggs in our garden.¹⁵⁰

A brief depiction of Jewish life in Austria also has to include the prominent antisemitism in Austria during the pre- and interwar years.¹⁵¹ As historian Peter Pulzer put it: "If any city in the world may claim to be the cradle of

¹⁴⁸ Interview with John Hearst, n.d., (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

¹⁴⁹ Sylvia Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?* (Caulfield: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2004), 4.

¹⁵⁰ Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 4–5.

¹⁵¹ For a comprehensive overview of the latest research on antisemitism in Austria, see Enderle-Burcel and Reiter-Zatloukal, *Antisemitismus in Österreich*.

modern political antisemitism it is Vienna.”¹⁵² The breakdown of the Habsburg Monarchy changed the political circumstances for Jews in Austria for the worse. The emperor, whom Jews and other minorities regarded as their protector, had resigned and subsequently political leaders governed the young republic of Austria who had to follow a populist course and thus, in a country with a high level of antisemitism, were frequently influenced by antisemitic objectives.¹⁵³ In particular, clerical and nationalist right-wing parties such as the Christian Socials and the *Großdeutschen* (Greater German People's Party) pursued an antisemitic course that included many different forms of antisemitism.¹⁵⁴ Most of the aggressive agitation was directed toward Jewish emigrants from the eastern parts of the former Habsburg Empire, many of them having come as refugees during the war. Having lost most of their fortunes, these people, dismissively called *Ostjuden* (Eastern Jews), formed a very weakly represented group and subsequently offered an easily blamed scapegoat.¹⁵⁵ However, despite the obvious antisemitism, the Austrian constitution provided a certain degree of protection until the March 1938 Anschluss, at least from official discrimination.

Orthodox Jewish migrants were the most affected by the antisemitic climate in interwar Austria. Due to the very heterogeneous structure of the Jewish community, there were quite diverse reactions to the antisemitic activities. Many members of the assimilated Jewish majority tried to deny the antisemitic climate of their environment by “trusting in the protection guaranteed in the constitution and by furthering their assimilation process at all costs,” as historian Thomas Albrich wrote.¹⁵⁶ Since most of the members of the sample group belonged to the liberal or assimilated groups of the Jewish community, which largely tried to deny or downplay the existence of antisemitism, descriptions of antisemitism prior to the Anschluss were rather scarce in their memories. Members of the Orthodox Jewish community would presumably have had entirely different memories of that time and, therefore, different stories to tell. One of those members of the sample group who explicitly remembered antisemitic incidents before the Anschluss was Hans Eisler, who came from a Zionist

152 Peter Pulzer, “The Development of Political Anti-Semitism in Austria,” in *The Jews of Austria: Essays on their Life, History, and Destruction*, ed. Josef Fraenkel (London: Vallentine, 1967), 429–443.

153 Thomas Albrich, “Vom Vorurteil zum Progrom: Antisemitismus von Schönerer bis Hitler,” in *Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert: Von der Monarchie bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. Rolf Steininger and Michael Gehler (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), 309–366, 321.

154 Albrich, “Vorurteil zum Progrom,” 321.

155 Albrich, “Vorurteil zum Progrom,” 321.

156 Albrich, “Vorurteil zum Progrom,” 321.

Jewish family. In a later interview he recalled: “My parents made me aware about antisemitism before Hitler by constantly pointing out my Jewishness and the Jewishness around me. [...] I was beaten up in a park once for being Jewish.”¹⁵⁷ John Hearst, who grew up in Vienna’s 21st district, a working-class neighbourhood with a high proportion of Jewish citizens, recalled “There was always antisemitism: I remember I was learning to play the violin. I had a big case and every time I walked through the streets the other kids bashed me up.”¹⁵⁸ Annemarie Mutton gave an example of a subtler form of antisemitism when she wrote about her former husband’s experiences in working with the Austrian railway service. Ernest Bowen, who was an ardent member of the Boy Scouts, had taken on the task of organizing transportation of hundreds of members of the Boy Scout movement to an international jamboree in Hungary by train. For this challenging task, he received praise from the director of the Austrian railway company, who, however, also noted “that if Ernest weren’t a Jew he would not miss employing him into the management of the Austrian railways.”¹⁵⁹

Antisemitism, in its different forms, was present in all layers of the society. The heterogeneous Jewish population reacted differently to the growing threat of racial German nationalism and antisemitism. As historian Thomas Albrich wrote, the majority of liberal and assimilated Jews trusted in the protection of the Austrian constitution and tried to answer the increasing antisemitism by further assimilating and integrating into the Austrian majority population “without acquiring any further minority rights.”¹⁶⁰ This was reflected by, amongst other things, very high religious conversion rates during the 1920s and 1930s.

3.5 Family Background

Their parental upbringing played a dominant role in the refugees’ memoirs. The childhood and youth of the members of the sample group was a defining period, when they learned how to move within their cultural and social contexts, or as historian Simone Lässig puts it, “how to recognize the respective cultural keyboard and how to easily and safely operate it.”¹⁶¹

157 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061.

158 Interview with John Hearst, n.d., (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

159 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

160 Albrich, “Vorurteil zum Pogrom,” 329.

161 Lässig, *Jüdische Wege*, 29.

As many of the members of the sample group stated, their parental upbringing was responsible for determining their later lives and careers. Particularly often, they appreciated their liberal education. Thus, most of them acquired embodied cultural capital and, as such, values and cultural competences that were essential to operate the “cultural keyboard” of the Viennese middle and upper classes. This was an important ability in a society characterized by the existence of social boundaries. However, as will be shown, it also helped them greatly to build a new life after their expulsion.

As mentioned above, almost all of the members of the sample group enjoyed a privileged upbringing and school education which exceeded the Austrian average. Some 34.6 percent identified their family background as upper middle class. More than 46 percent claimed to originate from a middle-class family and only 19.3 percent regarded themselves as either working class or lower middle class. The families described in many of the individual memories largely matched the picture that research about Jewish life in Austria has drawn of general values of assimilated, liberal Jewish families at that time. Refugees frequently described their parents as liberal and open-minded, with a particular emphasis on culture, arts, and education.

The bourgeoisie, and particularly the members of the Jewish upper-middle class placed high value upon educating their children. This was also true for their daughters.¹⁶² This started already with early childhood education. Almost half of the members of the group mentioned that their parents had hired a governess to be engaged in the education of their children. Hiring governesses, and domestic servants in general, was very common among Viennese middle-class families during the interwar years. Since labour was comparatively cheap, even families who were not so well endowed financially were able to hire domestic staff.¹⁶³ In none of the cases were the governesses of the members of the sample group Jewish. Some refugees mentioned that their governesses were even very religious and brought their charges in contact with Catholic ideas and spiritual beliefs. By and large, the refugees mentioned three types of governesses that were hired by their parents:

1. governesses from Bohemia or Moravia;
2. *Mädchen vom Land* (women who came from provincial Austria);
3. governesses from France or Switzerland (French-speaking).

¹⁶² Helga Embacher, “Middle Class, Liberal, Intellectual, Female, and Jewish: The Expulsion of ‘FemaleRationality’ from Austria,” in Günter Bischof, Anton Pelinka, Erika Thurner, eds., *Women in Austria* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1988), 5–14, 6.

¹⁶³ Anthony Grenville, *Stimmen der Flucht: Österreichische Emigration nach Großbritannien ab 1938* (Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2011), 36.

While the first two types of governesses were hired to help with childcare, the latter was meant to bring the children into contact with another “high culture” and language. During the late 19th and early 20th century, French governesses were widely seen as the “embodiment of respectable femininity and upper-class cosmopolitanism” across Western and Central Europe.¹⁶⁴ Probably being well aware of that fact, Gertrude Langer later noted: “When I was little I had a nanny and later I had a French governess from whom I learnt French so well that at the age of eight I spoke it like my mother tongue.”¹⁶⁵ Marie Bergel remembered having enjoyed a similar situation: “When I was four years old I had a French *Kindermädchen* [nanny]. I spoke French fluently.”¹⁶⁶

Their upbringing and their parental education hold a prominent place in the refugees’ memories. It is not uncommon that positive memories of that time prevailed when people later recalled their youth. Gertrude Langer, for example, described her early years in Vienna as follows:

We had a very sheltered childhood. My parents were well-off and they gave us a very good education [...]. From the very beginning on I had this sort of very democratic outlook, also my father [...]. He always said to me [...] you do not choose your parents or your country [...] you just happen to be born into it and then you have to make something out of that. [...] I had, from both parents actually, nothing but encouragement and whatever I wanted to do I was allowed to do.¹⁶⁷

Marie Bergel described her family education in a similar way:

My family was upper middle class. I had a very liberal upbringing. I was never forced to do something. For example, when I did not want to go to a French Kindergarten, my father said to my mother “do not force her.” When I was older, my parents and I spent many hours in the Kunsthistorische Museum [museum of art history].¹⁶⁸

164 Constance Bantman and Charlotte Faucher. “French Lady Seeks ...”: Finding Work as a French Governess in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (1870–1914),” *Women’s History Review* 32, no. 3 (2023): 271–291, 272.

165 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 3.

166 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

167 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 6.

168 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

She also depicted her mother as a “very liberated woman,” who used to practice many leisure activities independently, such as bicycling and playing tennis.¹⁶⁹ This was not uncommon among the female members of the Viennese Jewish bourgeoisie, who were “inculcated with [...] liberal values” as historian Helga Embacher put it.¹⁷⁰ Richard Tandler, whose family ran the famous Viennese Südfeld silverware factory, also enjoyed a comfortable and sheltered childhood, as his daughter Sue Copolov described:

He had four sisters. They were wealthy people. They lived a good life for those days and enjoyed upper-middle-class status. The family had a big house in the city and Heinrich [Richard Tandler’s father] threw legendary high-society parties there. He was known as the “Silberkönig” [silver king].¹⁷¹

She described her own youth during the 1930s in the same way: “I remember we had a housekeeper. She went to church and took us with her—she was ‘vom Land’ [from the countryside]. We had a beautiful garden and a pool. We had a nice childhood. Very few children had a pool.”¹⁷² The early life of the civil engineer Gustav Bratspies, who fled to Melbourne, was described in a not dissimilar manner by one of his Australian relatives after his death: “Herbert [Gustav’s son] was born into a very comfortable middle-class family in Vienna. [...] Lilly [Gustav’s wife] was at home looking after Herbert.”¹⁷³ As was the childhood of Kurt Selby: “He was an only child. He had a good childhood and was very attached to his parents. Particularly to his mother. They lived a good and sheltered life,” his daughter recalled in a later interview.¹⁷⁴ Helen Roberts also described her upper-middle-class family as “very liberal.” She stressed that her father, with whom she had a “special relationship,” had a great influence on her.¹⁷⁵

169 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

170 Embacher, “Middle Class,” 7.

171 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

172 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

173 Edie Jarolim, “Detention of Jews in World War II: Et Tu, Australia,” on *Freud’s Butcher*, accessed December 2, 2021, <https://freudsbutter.com/genealogy/detention-of-jews-in-world-war-ii-et-tu-australia/>.

174 Eleanor Hart (Selby’s daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

175 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (sound recording).

The Catholic, non-Jewish migrant Paul Herzfeld, who went to Adelaide in 1939 at the age of 20 with the expectation of joining the Australian army to fight Nazi Germany, differed in many respects from the overall group. Herzfeld regarded himself as part of the nationalist, Catholic-conservative class that ruled Austria during the 1930s. Thus, he differed greatly from most of the other Austrian refugees in Australia who belonged to the liberal, educated middle classes. Interrogated during his internment in Australia in 1941, he described how he was brought up in a Catholic, conservative environment. His parents had sent him to a Jesuit boarding school in the western part of the country as he later explained to the Australian authorities: "Stella Matutina; it means Morning Star. It is a Jesuit Father's school, and it led on to an academic gymnasium in Vienna. We called it high school."¹⁷⁶ His parental environment predetermined his further ideological development. Even two years after his arrival in Australia, he stated in an interrogation before an alien tribunal that he had joined the Vaterländische Front at the age of 13, which later would become the ruling political organization of the authoritarian Austrian *Ständestaat*. His ideological and political stance was clearly conservative and nationalist, and he openly described his political attitude as well as the attitudes of his party as "anti-Semitic."¹⁷⁷

In addition to the majority who had happy memories of a carefree childhood and parents who tried to offer their children as many opportunities as possible, there were some refugees who remembered being brought up in rather complicated or reduced circumstances. This reflects to a certain degree general developments in Austrian society. Due to the crisis years of the interwar period and the general economic downturn, many former upper-middle-class and middle-class families had lost their fortunes and experienced social decline. Descriptions by some of the refugees give a good insight into the effects their altered social and economic position had upon their family. Many mentioned that although they were offered ample opportunities, they were lacking shelter and security at home. Hanny Exiner's son described his mother's situation, which he knew from her descriptions, as a young girl who grew up in a family that experienced impoverishment and social decline as follows: "Letters of which there are still many intact show her family as emotional, indulgent, and hedonistic. This was the atmosphere in which Hanny lived as a small child. We have a sense that she was lonely in her family."¹⁷⁸ However, to offer her education and opportunities, her parents enrolled her in a dancing class at

¹⁷⁶ NAA, MP529/3/0 Tribunal 2/Herzfeld.

¹⁷⁷ NAA, MP529/3/0 Tribunal 2/Herzfeld.

¹⁷⁸ Exiner, "Commemoration and Celebration," 42.

the famous Bodenwieser dance academy. Viola Winkler also gave interesting insights into her family life:

My grandmother lived with us and she was always at home when we came from school. My family was unusual. My father was 30 years older than my mother. He was a pensioner and my mother ran a Kindergarten. [...] I always missed what I call a normal home, but I had also lots of opportunities such as skiing, dance education, travelling.¹⁷⁹

Bruno Bush described his life as a child of Jewish liquor store operators in a Viennese working-class district in an interview that was conducted during the 1970s as follows: “[My childhood] was nothing special. [...] My parents worked much, but they made just a living. Quite a lot of living was done in the shop. My mother cooked in the shop.”¹⁸⁰ John Hearst experienced a similar lack of parental attention: “My parents did not pay much attention to their children. They talked business 24 hours a day. [...] Whatever I did, I did on my own. [...] They paid for everything but were not interested.”¹⁸¹ Paul Hirsch described a difficult childhood that included relocation into another language area. After the very early death of his mother, his father moved to Budapest with his new wife and his two children. In a 1975 letter to a friend, he described this first relocation in his life as a radical biographical disruption: “I did not speak Hungarian. [...] I had to live, learn, and think in a new language environment.”¹⁸² This caused him severe problems in building social relations with other children and led to a “feeling of loneliness and isolation.”¹⁸³ Grete Vanry, who came from a non-Jewish working-class family which moved from rural Upper Austria to Vienna, experienced a youth of hardship, without many opportunities. A friend later described:

179 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (sound recording).

180 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush Oral history interview (sound recording).

181 Interview with John Hearst, n.d., (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

182 Author's translation. Original text: “Ich sprach kein Wort Ungarisch. [...] Ich musste leben, denken und lernen in einem fremden Sprachraum,” see: MUL, letter to Ferenc Karinthy, April 1, 1975; Paul Hatvani, “Über den Expressionismus. Vorspruch des Autors,” *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Institutes* 31 (1965): 177–179, 177.

183 Philipp Strobl, “Ich habe nie die Absicht gehabt, autobiographische Arbeiten zu schreiben—Exil und Autobiographie im transnationalen Leben von Paul Hatvani-Hirsch,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 29 (2018): 58–79, 63.

Her family certainly was not well endowed financially. The family was of peasant stock. Coming from the countryside with practically no money before she was born, her father Ullrich Wetzelsberger had been a miller's assistant. In Vienna, he took a low paid job in the bank and learned stenography. Later, he opened up a coffee shop with his wife Maria. As the coffee shop was not prosperous, Grete had to leave school early to earn a living.¹⁸⁴

Her husband Frank Vanry recalled in his memoirs: "[after her father's death] Grete had to help out in her mother's coffee shop located close to the Franz-Josephs Bahnhof [a train station in Vienna]. Besides that job she worked as a dairymaid, delivering bottles of milk very early in the morning."¹⁸⁵

3.6 Hobbies and Leisure

Interwar and *fin-de-siècle* Vienna offered manifold opportunities to pursue hobbies and leisure activities. Since these were highly individualized, this section will offer a snapshot of the most frequently mentioned activities and present them as the members of the sample group recalled them. This will ultimately lead us on a grand tour of the most common leisure activities enjoyed by the middle class in interwar Austria. Interestingly, many members of the sample group had similar interests. As we will see, music and the arts, hiking, skiing, travelling, but also more down-to-earth activities such as mushrooming, were very much at the top of their list of preferred leisure activities.

Music and the arts played a dominant role in the lives of the refugees and can be seen as a defining characteristic of their interwar cultural capital. The intellectual and aesthetic atmosphere in interwar Vienna was indeed pervasive and Vienna's cultural offerings and its *musica viva* (classical music) occupied "an unforgettable place in the memories of those who lived there."¹⁸⁶ Its cultural programme was rather unique and abundant despite the fact that post-war Vienna may not have been able to compete with its earlier Habsburg past, neither strategically nor in terms of social glamour. It nevertheless remained

184 Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*, 265.

185 Author's translation of the original text: "[...] Grete, die im Kaffeehaus ihrer wiederverheirateten Mutter gegenüber dem Franz-Josephs Bahnhof am Alsergrund mitarbeitete und daneben als Milchmädchen frühmorgens mit Flaschen stiegenauf und-ab elite," see Frank Vanry, *Der Zaungast* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1983), 269.

186 Holmes and Silverman, "Introduction: Beyond the Coffeehouse," 3.

a major centre of cultural innovation boasting new forms of expression and reflection in literature, theatre, movies, music, dance, and scholarship.¹⁸⁷ As almost all of the members of the sample group described, they had made intense use of the city's cultural offerings.

Music was particularly frequently mentioned as a dominant aspect of their early lives. Half of this book's protagonists recalled intense experiences of classical music during their childhood. Helen Roberts mentioned the role music played in her life as follows: "Music was everything for us. We were a musical household. I took singing lessons and was singing in a choir. We had concerts in many European cities and sang in different languages, in French, German, and English."¹⁸⁸ Viola Winkler also recalled: "A highlight of my early life was to go to the theater and the opera."¹⁸⁹ Kurt Selby's daughter described her father as a great admirer of music: "My family was very much interested in the arts, especially in classical music. All members of the family played the piano. My father went to the opera almost every day."¹⁹⁰ The Viennese opera held a particularly prominent place in the memories of many refugees in Australia. Sue Copolov, who left Vienna with her parents at the age of 10, remembered her mother's frequent visits to the *Staatsoper* (opera house).¹⁹¹ Gertrude Langer described her first visit to the opera as follows:

But I remember, for instance, when I was five years old I was taken already for the first time to the opera house and my first experience of the opera house was seeing *Coppelia*. [...] It was marvelous. Then of course when we were older we went a lot to the theater, to the opera house and to concerts.¹⁹²

Henry Teltscher described his father's influence on the development of his own taste for music:

He loved music. I remember he went to some of the world premieres of Richard Strauss operas and was enthused over them. My parents

187 Holmes and Silverman, "Introduction: Beyond the Coffeehouse," 4.

188 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (sound recording).

189 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (sound recording).

190 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

191 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

192 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 5, 13.

frequently went to the theatre and to exhibitions. He hated noise and for that reason vetoed against the acquisition of a radio. [...] He did, however, acquire a crystal radio set and listened to broadcasts of concerts and sometimes I was invited to listen with him, which involved one of the two earpieces being turned inside out and I had to sit next to him and press my ear against the earphone. That was how I acquired my first taste for music.¹⁹³

Music was also essential for the writer Paul Hirsch. In a letter, he gave insights into his hobbies during the interwar years. He wrote: "But what was really of interest to us were other, almost impersonal things, it was the music, and especially Gustav Mahler."¹⁹⁴ Sylvia Cherny, who grew up in rural Lower Austria, remembered that her father, because of a lack of cultural offerings in his hometown, had organized private musical events: "My brother and I took fortnightly piano lessons in St. Pölten. [...] Our father set great store by music appreciation: He played the violin and held chamber music evenings once a week."¹⁹⁵

One of the more recent contemporary artistic phenomena in Vienna during the 1920s and early 1930s was Free Dance. After World War I, Vienna became a crossroads uniting East and West, with substantial knowledge transfers taking place between Moscow, Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, and Vienna.¹⁹⁶ Free Dance flourished and was performed in a number of different settings, from intimate variety shows and cabaret theatres to established music venues, such as the *Konzerthaus*.¹⁹⁷ Prominent dancers of world fame, such as Rosalia Chladek, Grete Wiesenthal, and Gertrud Bodenwieser, who later fled to Australia, popularized Free Dance in Vienna and embodied the "internationalism and interdisciplinary that drove the phenomenon as a whole."¹⁹⁸ In this particular field of the art, mainly well-connected middle-class working women participated in the culture of innovation, as so-called *Gestalterinnen*.¹⁹⁹ They had many

193 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 10.

194 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Tony, January 1968. "Aber was uns bewegte waren andere, beinahe unpersönliche Dinge: Es war wieder Musik und in ihr Gustav Mahler, es war Literatur."

195 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*

196 Andrea Amort, "Free Dance in Vienna," in *Interwar Vienna: Culture between Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 117–142, 117.

197 Amort, "Free Dance," 117.

198 Amort, "Free Dance," 120.

199 Elana Shapira, "Professional Women in the Arts and Media in Vienna—Kulturschaffende Frauen in Wien," in *Gestalterinnen: Frauen, Design und Gesellschaft im Wien der*

students; one of them was even among the members of the sample group. Hanny Exiner's son Ron noted: "Hanny had her feet on the ground from a very early age. She started dance lessons at the Bodenwieser Academy at the age of four. We had hand-written programs for little concerts that Hanny and her friends put on at home."²⁰⁰ Hanny Exiner, who later became one of the driving forces for the introduction and development of Free Dance in Australia, mentioned in an interview: "I remember Bodenwieser's classes as sheer joy. We had improvised music by a top-class musician. Everything became alive."²⁰¹ Viola Winkler, who was almost the same age as Exiner, probably met her in one of the Bodenwieser classes. She later stated: "I was allowed to go to a dance class where they taught me expressive dancing. I also learned to play the violin."²⁰²

Another aspect of Vienna's cultural scene during the interwar years was an "explosion of interest in sports," as historian William Bowman puts it.²⁰³ Skiing and hiking were particularly popular activities, especially among the Viennese urban middle class.²⁰⁴ Both activities feature prominently in the refugees' memories and about half of the members of the sample group recalled having skied in Austria.²⁰⁵ The Austrian schooling system was subject to radical reforms during the interwar years. Physical education gained much more importance in the curricula. As part of the growing importance of physical activities, ski courses were introduced in many Austrian schools, which opened the formerly elitist sport up to broader social strata.²⁰⁶ Helen Roberts later recalled having participated in such a school event: "I went skiing. In fact, in school we had ski lessons, but I was a very bad skier."²⁰⁷ Charles William Anton, who arrived in Australia in 1938 aged 22, was among those who

Zwischenkriegszeit, ed. Elana Shapira and Anne-Katrin Rossberg (Berlin/Boston: DeGruyter, 2023), 9–30, 9.

200 Exiner, "Commemoration and Celebration," 42.

201 NLA, 513110, Hanny Exiner interviewed by Michelle Potter (sound recording), 1994.

202 NLA, 513110, Hanny Exiner interviewed by Michelle Potter (sound recording), 1994. USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (sound recording).

203 William Bowman, "Hakoah Vienna and the International Nature of Interwar Austrian Sports," *Central European History* 44, no. 4 (2011): 642–668, 646.

204 Strobl, "Migration, Knowledge Transfer," 2008.

205 For more information about the early development of skiing as a mass leisure activity during the 1920s and 1930s, see Andrew Denning, "Going Downhill? The Industrialisation of Skiing from the 1930s to the 1970s," in *Leisure Cultures and the Making of Modern Ski Resorts*, ed. Philipp Strobl and Aneta Podkalicka (London: Palgrave, 2019), 25–42.

206 Rudolf Müllner, "The Importance of Skiing in Austria," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no. 6 (2013): 659–673, 664.

207 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (sound recording).

had developed a life-long enthusiasm for skiing back in Austria. Anton, as an Australian friend of his later described, who was also a skier in the Austrian Alps during the Interwar period, “discovered the Austrian mountains around Vienna already during his youth” and became “enthused with what ski touring has to offer.”²⁰⁸ The prominent place skiing occupied in Anton’s life can be seen from another statement of one of his friends remembering that “Charles and his friends, with a pack on their backs would finish up almost every night in a different alpine *Hütte* [hut].”²⁰⁹ The importance of skiing in Grete Vanry’s life in Austria is indicated by the simple fact that her skis were among the very few possessions she took with her on her escape from Austria in 1938. A friend of hers later noted: “together with a friend, Hermann Langbein, Grete went by train with a few possessions and their skis.”²¹⁰ Viola Winkler, who “liked to hike in the Wienerwald” and to do “ski trips in the surrounding mountains,” even met her future husband on the ski slopes.²¹¹

Skiing and hiking were also common family activities. Children usually practiced skiing very early, as Henry Teltscher recalled: “In winter, we also went skiing regularly, by taking the tram to the terminus at Grinzing or Sievering and walking up to the slopes in the Vienna woods. [...] We even put on our skis in the garden and practiced walking. [...] Ski tows, of course, were unheard of in those days.”²¹² A relative of Gustav Bratspies later described that his family enjoyed their “holidays in the beautiful Austrian Alps skiing and hiking.”²¹³ Gertrude Langer also had glowing memories of the skiing and hiking trips with her family: “I did a lot of sport, skiing and things like that. Father never let a Sunday pass without taking his two little girls somewhere. It was marvelous. [...] When I just practically started walking a bit stronger, he took me to high mountains and, when I got tired, brought me home on his back, you know.”²¹⁴ Marie Bergel even recalled travelling to Switzerland for their ski vacations.²¹⁵

There were a lot of different organizations for city dwellers that supported hiking and skiing activities in the countryside. From the 1870s, the German

208 Tony Sponar, *Snow in Australia? That's News to Me* (Palmerston: Tabletop Press, 1995), 24.

209 Sponar, *Snow in Australia*, 24.

210 Grete Vanry, “Of Rocks and Little Stitches,” in *Strauss to Matilda: Viennese in Australia*, ed. Karl Bittmann (Sydney: Wenkhart Foundation, 1988), 266.

211 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (sound recording).

212 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 35.

213 Jarolim, “Detention of Jews.”

214 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 13, 26.

215 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

and Austrian Alpenverein (Alpine Club) and other alpine societies established a dense network of *Hütten*—"simple huts offering security and shelter"—across the Alps and thus offered an excellent infrastructure for those interested in mountaineering.²¹⁶ Charles William Anton made extensive use of the Alpenverein's infrastructure and acquired knowledge of the organization's structures and the value of a dense network of shelter huts in alpine areas.²¹⁷ The Social Democratic organization Naturfreunde pursued a similar goal. John Hearst recalled in a later interview with his son: "My greatest wish was to travel. I was a member of the Naturfreunde. When I was 10 we did a tour to the Tropfsteinhöhlen in Brno [Czechoslovakia] with the Naturfreunde. I later joined the Boy Scouts."²¹⁸

The Scouting movement was another association that organized leisure activities and the social lives of interwar middle-class adolescents.²¹⁹ It brought them together to practice various activities, such as hiking. At least five members of the sample group had joined the Boy Scouts during their time in Vienna. Two of them even belonged to the leading circles of the Scouting movement in interwar Austria. Ernest Bowen's daughter remembered her father's engagement in the movement: "He was an enthusiastic Boy Scout. [...] Supposedly, he was the second highest-ranking Boy Scout in 1938."²²⁰ An Australian friend of his, who wrote a letter of recommendation for Bowen's application for naturalization in 1943, even noted: "Ernest was a very active member of the Scouts [in Vienna], and on account of his good English was frequently called on to act as *cicerone* to visiting English-speaking scouts."²²¹ A letter Gerhard Felser wrote from Sydney in 1963 to the editor of the Austrian Boy Scout newsletter *Der Kreis* indicated his interwar commitment to the movement: "You do not know how much joy it brings to me to receive a copy of *Der Kreis* here in Australia. It brings back old 'campfire-memories' of those happy days that unfortunately are so far away now. The old friendships of those days do not come back later. At our age, you usually make acquaintances, but real friendships are those we

²¹⁶ Strobl, *Charles Anton*.

²¹⁷ Leon Smith (friend of Anton and his successor as president of the AAC), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Sydney, March 2016.

²¹⁸ Interview with John Hearst, n.d., (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

²¹⁹ For more information on the Boy Scouts, see Philipp Lehar, "'Da hab ich mich schon zuhause gefühlt': Österreichische PfadfinderInnen im Exil," *Zwischenwelt: Literatur/Widerstand/Exil* 12 (2017): 9–15.

²²⁰ Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017, author's translation, original: "Er war begeisterter Pfadfinder. [...] Er war angeblich der zweithöchste Pfadfinder damals im Jahr 38."

²²¹ NAA A446, Bowen Ernest born 12 September 1912.

made back then.”²²² Paul Herzfeld belonged to a branch of the Boy Scouts—apparently the Catholic St. Georgs Pfadfinder—which regarded themselves as Austrian nationalist. His depiction of his activities in the Boy Scout movement mirrors the social tensions that were omnipresent in interwar Austria:

One of my leaders told me that if he [his history teacher] was interested I should invite him as an instructor. So, I did so. He [the teacher] asked me about the movement and I told him it was Austrian. I said “We are only Anti-Nazi.” He asked whether we would take Jews. I said “No.” Later it was disclosed to me that he was a member of the Socialist Party and a Jew.²²³

3.7 Education

Most of this book’s protagonists who were able to finish their schooling or university education before the Anschluss frequently recalled the high quality of education they had received in Vienna. As we will see, many of them were proud of their education and later in Australia highlighted the high quality of their institutionalized cultural capital. As mentioned above, the members of the sample group generally enjoyed a high level of education. In contrast to large parts of the Austrian population, almost one-third (seven out of 26) of this book’s protagonists had earned a university degree. In 1932, only 0.4 percent of the overall Austrian population had done so.²²⁴ Even more members of the sample group (46.2 percent) had earned a grammar school or high school diploma.

School education underwent significant changes and improvements in Austria after the breakdown of the Habsburg Empire. In 1919, the Social Democratic secretary of state, Otto Glöckel, initiated a school reform that was subsequently adapted and extended over the following years.²²⁵ The school

222 Author’s translation. Original: “Du weisst gar nicht, welche Freude ich habe, wenn wieder einmal ‘der Kries’ hier in Australien einlangt, Alte Lagerfeuer-Erinnerungen und das Gedenken an frohe Tage, die leider so weit zurück liegen, steigen herauf, Freundschaften, die man damals schloss, wiederholen sich nicht mehr im Leben. In unserem Alter wird man nur mehr ‘gut bekannt’ aber der wirkliche Freundeskreis bleibt ja doch immer nur der gute alte,” see Gerry Felser, “Auszug aus dem Brief von Gerry Felser (Kf 11) aus Sydney,” *Der Kreis—Rundbrief an alte Pfadfinderfreunde* 5 (1963).

223 NAA Melbourne, MP529/3/0, Tribunal 2 Herzfeld.

224 “Die Überfüllung der akademischen Berufe,” *Heft* 9 (1948): 337–343, 338.

225 Ludwig Wohlgenuth, “Das österreichische Schulwesen,” in *50 Jahre Republik: 1918–1968*, ed. Institut für Österreichkunde Österreich (Vienna: Verlag Ferdinand Hirt, 1968), 349–360, 350.

reform included new curricula, textbooks, and teaching methods, as well as improved teacher training.²²⁶ It also opened high schools to broader strata of the population and gave female students the right to attend most of the high schools that were previously exclusively accessible to boys. This led to increases in the number of female students. By 1933, the proportion of female students in the whole of Austria had increased from less than five percent in 1905 to over 30 percent.²²⁷ In his memoirs, Henry Teltscher recalled why he went to his particular school:

I don't think there was any doubt which secondary school I would like to go to. Non-state schools were almost non-existent in Austria and there was the choice between a *Gymnasium* (high school), *Realschule* (technical school), and *Realgymnasium* (a hybrid of the other two). The BG19, the Döblinger Bundesgymnasium, I think had a very good reputation and it was about 10 minutes' walk from home and that's where I went to. [...] the system certainly provided very broad and, I think, on the whole, good education.²²⁸

As Teltscher mentioned, private schools, other than those operated by the Catholic Church, were rather uncommon in interwar Austria. In some cases, education in private schools was remembered as being of doubtful quality, as Elisabeth Ziegler recalled:

I went to a private school housed in an apartment [...]. They [her parents] made a big mistake. [The school provided only] very little education. There was only one teacher and she was a Nazi. The class consisted of 10 to 12 children of different ages, all of us hated the teacher. [...] With 9 years, I switched to public school. [...] I was very happy there.²²⁹

The Austrian *Gymnasium* traditionally provided broad general education. Its main aim was to prepare students to enter university. Besides the more theoretical, general education of a *Gymnasium*, Vienna boasted a series of highly reputable, state-led professional schools, which provided specialized technical

226 Deborah Holmes, *Langeweile ist Gift: Das Leben der Eugenie Schwarzwald* (St. Pölten: Residenz Verlag, 2012), 271.

227 Austria-Forum, "Bildungssystem in Österreich," *Austria-Forum*, accessed on January 26, 2022, https://austria-forum.org/af/AustriaWiki/Bildungssystem_in_Österreich.

228 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 28.

229 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview (sound recording).

or commercial skills in addition to a general education. Many members of the sample group (or their parents) had opted for this type of school and later described how the unique, specialized education they gained had offered them many professional advantages after their escape to Australia. John Hearst recalled his father's decision to take him out of the *Gymnasium* for practical reasons:

I was a very good pupil. My teachers recommended me to attend a *Gymnasium*, not a *Bürgerschule*. After a while I had to leave *Gymnasium*. [...] My father wanted me to learn a trade. He said that there were thousands of professional people (lawyers, doctors, architects) who were unemployed. So I started an apprenticeship as a cabinetmaker in another company at the age of 16. I worked five days and went to school one day per week. [...] My father told me: "If I would put you in my own factory you would learn nothing, because you would do nothing." After the apprenticeship I went to the *Handelsakademie* [commercial high school] and made up my *Matura*.²³⁰

From about 1900, middle-class and upper-middle-class women increasingly enjoyed the benefits of education. Many biographical sources show that a growing segment of the liberal Jewish bourgeoisie had "quite positive attitudes toward higher education for women" and placed "high value upon educating their daughters."²³¹ We can also see this development among the members of our sample group. Viola Winkler described her school education at the Bundeslehranstalt für Textilindustrie, a specialized high school that focused on industrial textile design. The school had prepared her very well for her future career as textile designer, as she recalled: "I went to the *Hauptschule* and to the *Gymnasium* afterwards. I went to an *Oberstufe* [last four years of a high school] for girls with a special focus on textile design—I finished it with a special diploma in arts design."²³² Ernest Bowen, whose parents wanted him to be prepared to take over the family-run textile factory, had attended a commercial high school, as his granddaughter remembered: "My grandfather attended a Montessori Kindergarten, which reflected my grandfather's social worldview. [...] Afterwards, he attended a 'regular' school and later on he went

230 Interview with John Hearst, n.d., (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

231 Embacher, "Middle Class," 6.

232 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (sound recording).

to a commercial school in Vienna's 8th district."²³³ Charles Anton also stressed the excellent specialized education he received in a Viennese technical high school. In his application to join the Royal Air Force in 1940, he argued that he was particularly well prepared for a job as a mechanic because after finishing ordinary school, he had studied mechanical engineering at the Technical High School in Vienna, obtaining his leaving certificate in 1935.²³⁴ Richard Tandler, who worked as an industrial designer and architect, had benefited greatly from the good education he received at the specialized *Kunstgewerbeschule* (high school for applied arts), as his daughter recalled: "He went to primary school and then to the *Kunstgewerbeschule*. After the war [First World War], he was allowed to continue his studies. [He] studied with very famous architects, such as Oskar Strnad and Alfred Roller, who had an influence on him."²³⁵ His student card indicates that Tandler was enrolled in Strnad's masterclass and thus came in intense contact with his progressive ideas of design.²³⁶

Annemarie Mutton, who was born to Austrian parents in Munich and fled to Austria after the 1933 Nazi accession to power in Germany, offered an interesting outside perspective on the liberal social life in Viennese high schools:

I went to a *Gymnasium* in Vienna's 18th district. The girls at school laughed at me. Whenever a teacher entered and I had to introduce myself, I stood up, straight, and with a clear voice said my name, age, and last school. Vienna was free from the military rigour with which I had been trained since entering the St. Anna lyceum in Munich. [...] Girls in school in Munich were years behind those I now encountered. Their clothes were fashionable. I met no one who had been as protected as I had been.²³⁷

In contrast to the city of Vienna, it was rather difficult for students who lived in the countryside to attend a high school. Growing up in the small town of Wieselburg in Lower Austria, Sylvia Cherny recalled the problems she faced when searching for a suitable school:

²³³ Marianne Schulze (Bowen's granddaughter) in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017: original: "Mein Großvater ist in den Montessori Kindergarten gegangen der sozusagen Teil dieses sozialen Verständnisses meines Großvaters war. [...] er ging in eine normale Schule, später dann in die Handelsschule im 8. Bezirk."

²³⁴ NAA, A12217, Charles William Anton.

²³⁵ Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

²³⁶ Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

²³⁷ SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

When I was 10 years old, I was enrolled in a lyceum in Vienna and we rented an apartment in Hietzing [a suburb of Vienna]. My father began commuting between Kimmelbach and Vienna [90 km away] which proved to be too strenuous and the following year, in 1936, we returned to Wieselburg where I did the second-year high school by correspondence. [...] The school years 1936–1937 were very stressful for me since I attended morning classes in Wieselburg, followed by a lunch, an hour-long walk and homework for both schools in Vienna and Wieselburg, as well as piano practice. [...] After each semester, I went to Vienna to sit for exams.²³⁸

A school that stood out particularly in the memories of many refugees was the Schwarzwaldschule, a private girl's high school, founded and led by the pedagogic social reformer and women's rights activist Eugenie Schwarzwald.²³⁹ Many of her students belonged to the educated Jewish middle classes and had to flee the country after the Anschluss. Consequently, they became involuntary transcultural transmitters of the revolutionary, liberal ideas and worldviews taught at the Schwarzwaldschule. Gertrude Langer described her time at the school as a very positive experience and a crucial factor in forming her cultural capital: "As soon as I went to that school, there was a sense of incredible happiness, and freedom, and joy. [...] I am just so grateful to my school, you've no idea. My parents and my school made me. I know that," she later stated.²⁴⁰ Tolerance and openness were basic principles that accompanied the teaching at the Schwarzwaldschule. This matched the liberal values with which many members of the sample group were brought up. The school placed high value on "artistic articulateness." Openness to the arts and creativity were meant to be a part of daily life in the Schwarzwaldschule, as historian Deborah Holmes wrote in her biography of Eugenie Schwarzwald.²⁴¹ By employing some of the leading figures of the Viennese art scene, such as the architect Adolf Loos, the painter Oskar Kokoschka, the composer Arnold Schönberg, and the dancer Grete Wiesenthal, the school placed a strong emphasis on promotion of the arts.²⁴² Eugenie Schwarzwald was a remarkable character and most of her

²³⁸ Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 6–7.

²³⁹ Eugenie Schwarzwald was a progressive Austrian philanthropist, writer, and pedagogue. She developed education for girls in Austria and was one of the most educated women of her time.

²⁴⁰ NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript).

²⁴¹ Holmes, *Langeweile*, 135.

²⁴² Strobl, "Gertrude Langer," 19.

students were impressed by her appearance. Marie Bergel, who attended the Schwarzwaldschule a few years before Gertrude Langer, recalled:

I went to a private primary school in the Hödlgasse. Then, I came into the Schwarzwaldschule. Schwarzwald was very, very well known. She was the first woman that had short hair. I had very famous teachers, such as Kokoschka, Schönberg, Ernst Wagner. Adolf Loos was my idol.²⁴³

The few Austrian refugees in Australia that did not belong to the Jewish Viennese liberal middle classes had a different educational background. Grete Vanry, who fled Austria because of her activities in the Communist Party, came from a working-class Viennese family. She did not enjoy the privilege of a profound secondary school education. Instead, she made use of the broad choice of additional education for members of the working classes the Viennese socialist city government had facilitated after the First World War. The Viennese *Volkshochschulen* were among the most important institutions that provided affordable education for broad layers of the population. Founded in the late 19th century with the aim of educating the working classes, the *Volkshochschulen* quickly expanded their network of branches throughout the whole city. During the interwar years, they had established a wide range of schools and libraries in almost all Viennese districts. A friend of Vanry's recalled:

As the coffee shop [her father's business] was not prosperous, Grete had to leave school early to earn a living. Though she had no particular inclination for that kind of work, she was apprenticed as a milliner in a small ladies' hat factory. [...] On advice of a friend, she attended the *Volkshochschule* at Ottakring, an outer suburb of Vienna. Here, she spent her free time avidly studying music and literature. A political consciousness was also formed by attending special courses on political economy.²⁴⁴

Although antisemitism was not institutionalized in Austria until the Anschluss and Jewish students were granted the same rights by law, at least in theory, many members of the sample group reported having experienced antisemitism in their schools. As many different studies on interwar Vienna show,

²⁴³ Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

²⁴⁴ Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*, 265; Pauley, "Politischer Antisemitismus," 256.

antisemitism was common in Austria in many different forms. And there was a big gap between the constitution and reality.²⁴⁵ Further, antisemitism was tolerated by the authorities and increased steadily after the Dollfuss regime took over the country in 1933.²⁴⁶

Antisemitism was observable in primary schools. At that early stage, it was usually triggered by the different forms of religious education which created feelings of otherness. Viola Winkler recalled:

I went to a local primary school in the 18th district. When I was asked for my religion, and every other child was Catholic, I and another boy were the only ones who were Jewish. I had to attend Jewish religious instructions. That made me different—but I wanted to be like my other classmates.²⁴⁷

Sylvia Cherny, who attended a primary school in a rural town in Lower Austria, remembered having experienced similar forms of religious antisemitism that set her apart from the other children in her class: “I went to a primary school in Wieselburg. As the teachers usually stressed, Jews were responsible for the murder of Jesus Christ. As a reaction, all the other students usually turned around and looked at me. This was a very uncomfortable experience.”²⁴⁸

Antisemitism became less subtle and more aggressive in the secondary schools and was often supported or even initiated by teachers, as Hans Eisler recalled of attending the prestigious *Gymnasium Stubenbastei* in Vienna’s inner city, which traditionally had a high proportion of Jewish students.²⁴⁹ “I went to the *Gymnasium*—Stubenbastei. I also had a Jewish teacher, but many teachers referred to me as ‘the Jew’.”²⁵⁰ Henry Teltscher, who attended a high

245 Gertrude Enderle-Burcel and Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal, “Einleitende Streiflichter,” in *Antisemitismus in Österreich 1933–1938*, ed. Gertrude Enderle-Burcel and Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal (Vienna: Böhlau: 2018), 17–36, 21.

246 Comp. Enderle-Burcel and Reiter-Zatloukal, *Antisemitismus in Österreich*.

247 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (sound recording).

248 “Ich besuchte die Volksschule in Wieselburg. Die Lehrer stellten für gewöhnlich fest, dass die Juden für den Tod von Christus verantwortlich seien, woraufhin sich alle umdrehten und mich anschauten. Eine sehr unangenehme Erfahrung.” Comp. Katherina Winkler, “In Einem Augenblick ist unsere ganze Welt zusammengestürzt,” in *A Letter To the Stars. Holocaust—Die Überlebenden. Schüler schreiben Geschichte*, ed. Verein Lernen aus Zeitgeschichte (Vienna: author’s edition, 2005), 311.

249 Ernst Nowotny, ed., *Festschrift 100 Jahre Gymnasium Stubenbastei. 1872–1972. Elternverein des Bundesgymnasiums Wien I* (Vienna: N.V., 1972).

250 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (sound recording).

school in Vienna's 19th district, described many of his teachers as ardent anti-semites and Nazis:

I also see from the annual reports that in the school, as a whole, more than a quarter were Jewish and in my former class more than a third were Jewish (or agnostic and these were Jewish too). [...] The teachers were called "Mittelschulprofessoren" and were addressed as "Herr Professor" [...] I have a feeling that about half of them were of Czech origin, not so much by their names (like Janicek or Hruby) but by accent. My class teacher was Anton Müller, a gnomish man and our German teacher. He was one of the most active and unconcealed Nazis among many like-minded colleagues and, unhappily, instead of teaching us German, he spent most of the time spouting Nazi propaganda, or perhaps more correctly pan-Germanic panegyrics. [...] Müller's greatest sin was, that instead of introducing us to German literature, he talked about the destiny of Germany and the cultural role of "Germanisms."²⁵¹

Seven members of the sample group completed a university degree before they fled to Australia. Some of them had benefited from the opening of the universities for female students in 1900.²⁵² All of them later mentioned the high quality of the education they received, which offered them institutionalized cultural capital that they could take with them after their expulsion from Austria. By and large, the members of the sample group tended to choose rather "practical" studies from which they expected a quicker and smother entrance into the labour market and thereafter a better professional position. Consequently, the group consists of two architects, one textile technician, one economist, one chemist, and one student of medicine. Two members of the group were also enrolled in a second study programme, which rather reflected their personal interests. Gerhard Felser studied theatre studies and history at the University of Vienna in addition to his main degree in economics at the University of Economics in Vienna.²⁵³ The enthusiastic dancer Hanny Exiner worked on two degrees at the same time. Besides her study of medicine, she was also enrolled in the Academy of Performing Dance of the world-famous dancer and choreographer Gertrud Bodenwieser.²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 24.

²⁵² Embacher, "Middle-Class," 6.

²⁵³ NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

²⁵⁴ NLA, 513110, Hanny Exiner interviewed by Michelle Potter (sound recording), 1994.

Gertrude Langer, who completed a PhD in art history and ethnology at the University of Vienna, was one of the great exceptions among the members of the group. Her parents had owned parts of a large textile factory and were able and willing to finance her university education in a field where stable employment was more difficult to get. In a 1982 interview, Gertrude Langer stated that she was well aware of the scarce job opportunities in the field of art history: "It was not an existence really, being an art historian."²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, her parents gave permission, because of her enthusiasm and her talents, as Langer later noted:

The parents always consulted a little bit with the teachers and the teachers gave a bit of guidance in what the child is gifted and so forth, and it was quite clear to the teachers that I was a very artistic child and that I had to do something with art, either write or study art history, but definitely something to do with art. By the time I was 18 and left school I had made up my mind that I wanted to go to university and study history of art.²⁵⁶

At the time Langer was enrolled, the University of Vienna had established itself as "a leading site of art historical scholarship."²⁵⁷ Since the appointment of a first lecturer in art history in 1847, 25 Viennese art historians had developed rigorous and "scientific" activities through the introduction of systematic methods of analysis,²⁵⁸ and formed what later became known as the Vienna School of Art History. Attracting experts and knowledge from all regions of the Habsburg Empire and Germany, the school had already been recognized as "having played a crucial role in the development of the discipline."²⁵⁹ Langer studied with the professor of art history Josef Strzygowski, who tried to change the horizons governing his colleagues' understanding by comparing art throughout the course of history in different areas of the world. He has frequently been described as an "early champion of world art history."²⁶⁰ His approach left a deep impression on Langer and led her to develop a profound

255 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 34.

256 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 18.

257 Rampley, "Art History and the Politics of Empire," 446.

258 Rampley, "Art History," 446.

259 Strobl, "Gertrude Langer," 19.

260 Julia Orell, "Early East Asian Art History in Vienna and its Trajectories: Josef Strzygowski, Karl With, Alfred Salmony," *Journal of Art Historiography* 13, no. 1 (2015): 1–32, 1.

interest in and a first-hand knowledge of modern art. She also embraced the Expressionist philosophy that art was for everyone and should elevate the mind and spirit.²⁶¹ “We have to really absorb it all, and Strzygowski was the choice,” Langer later claimed.²⁶²

Gustav Bratspies and Richard Tandler were among those who enjoyed a top-notch architectural education in Vienna, thus acquiring specialized cultural capital. Considering that Vienna was one of the cultural centres of Europe, architectural education in the interwar period was stirred up by dynamic concentrations of avant-garde movements.²⁶³ Both were greatly inspired by their teachers. Bratspies studied architecture at the University of Vienna, graduating as a civil engineer and architect.²⁶⁴ After finishing his studies, he made a name for himself as a “practising architect, constructing buildings and working on railways around Europe,” as his granddaughter later described.²⁶⁵ Richard Tandler, on the other hand, graduated in 1920 from the *Kunstgewerbeschule*, a technical college known for its modern approaches offering a well-founded theoretical and practical education over a period of three years.²⁶⁶ Before his studies, he learned the craft of silversmithing in his family’s silverware factory. In June 1933, after having worked as a designer in the family business for 13 years, he set up his own architectural business, specializing in interior design.²⁶⁷ Influenced by his mentor Oskar Strnad, a member of the so-called *Wiener Schule der Architektur* (Viennese school of architecture), who pursued a modernist approach to architecture, Tandler’s architectural style was inspired by elements of Viennese modernism. As the Austrian architectural journal *Österreichische Kunst* noted in 1936, “Architect Tandler has designed the rooms of the [Viennese] fashion house ‘Elegance’ with discreet but generous elegance.”²⁶⁸

261 Karen Fisher, “From Vienna to Brisbane and a Life of Art: Dr Gertrude Langer” (unpublished BA Hons thesis, University of Queensland, 2006).

262 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 19.

263 Mirjana Lozanovska, and Julia McKnight. “Émigré Architects and the Australian Architecture Establishment,” in *SAHANZ 2015. Architecture, Institutions and Change*, ed. Paul Hogben and Judith O’Callaghan (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2015), 351–365, 353.

264 NAA, B884, Bratspies Gustav; NAA, A997, Bratspies Gustav.

265 Jarolim, “Detention of Jews.”

266 Private records (written documents), in the possession of Sue Copolov.

267 Private records (written documents), in the possession of Sue Copolov.

268 “Mit diskreter großzügiger Eleganz hat Arch. Richard Tandler die Räume des Modehauses Elegance ausgestattet.” See N.A., “Modehaus: Eine Arbeit von Arch. Richard Tandler,” *Österreichische Kunst* 7 (1936).

Ernest Bowen's education differed from those of the other members of the sample group since he received education abroad. After finishing at a commercial college in Austria, the Anglophone son of the owner of a Viennese cotton factory was sent to Manchester to do an internship and take classes in technical textiles.²⁶⁹

3.8 Professional Life

In terms of their work, the members of the sample group covered a wide spectrum of different professional positions. One-third of them were salaried employees. Here, again, the range of jobs was diverse. This subgroup consists of an insurance broker, a druggist, a chemist, a lecturer, a salesman in leather goods, a milliner, a textile designer, and a soldier. Self-employed entrepreneurs formed another grouping of the same size, with businesses including a foot care trade agency, a textile factory, a furniture shop, an artificial flower company, an import agency, and two architectural practices, as well as an accounting agency. Ten members of the sample group (38 percent) did not work at the time of their escape. Three of them were either individuals who did not work or homemakers, another seven were university, high school, or primary school students.

In interwar Austria, the members of the sample group had to prevail in a very competitive market that included not only a lack of financial capital and fierce competition but also unfavourable governmental regulations.²⁷⁰ While the interventionist Austrian government "tortured Austrian businesses" with "unimaginative regulations" aimed at balancing the national deficit, thereby forcing many of the country's "best heads" to leave the country, as historian Günter Bischof described,²⁷¹ smaller companies, in particular, had to develop innovative plans to keep their business going despite the overall unfavourable economic conditions. Such risky undertakings could be achieved much more easily by small companies which did not need much capital to implement

269 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter) in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

270 Günter Bischof, "Schumpeter vs. Keynes: Der Marshallplan und der Wiederaufbau der österreichischen Wirtschaft. Motor der Innovationsförderung und Modernisierung?," in *Die vielen Gesichter des wirtschaftlichen Wandels: Beiträge zur Innovationsgeschichte—Festschrift für Dieter Stiefel*, ed. Peter Berger, Peter Eigner, and Andreas Resch (Vienna: LIT, 2011), 161–168, 164.

271 Bischof, "Schumpeter vs. Keynes," 165.

changes. As research shows, larger companies were hardly able to use existing potential for innovation due to the rampant lack of capital.²⁷² The almost nonexistent potential for economic growth generally slowed down innovation in the country's industry. However, there were some branches of the economy that were able to develop a higher potential for innovation. Besides those businesses that belonged to the so-called creative industries (movie and music industries, architecture, publishing houses, graphic design),²⁷³ the electronic industry managed to retain an innovative position within the country's economy.²⁷⁴ Many of the entrepreneurial members of the sample group were either owners of small businesses or belonged to the city's creative industries, a group of businesses in interwar Vienna that were considered to be particularly inventive.

The resourceful entrepreneur Marie Bergel offers a good example of the importance of adapting her cultural capital and her business plans in order to cope with the challenges of the economic uncertainty during the interwar years. Thus, she can be seen as a typical "Gestalterin," a middle-class working woman within the economy of production and consumption who offers a good example for women's active participation in the culture of innovation.²⁷⁵ Born in 1904, Bergel experienced her family's financial impoverishment after the First World War. This experience may have fostered her entrepreneurial spirit. Already as an adolescent she was aware of the advantages of being connected to a large international company. She therefore persuaded her reluctant father, who had never been involved in the foot care industry before, to accept an exclusive contract as agent for Scholl Foot Care, a major American corporation. "I went down on my knees and told him: Please, it is an international firm; it is a gift for us. This is what I want to do," she recalled.²⁷⁶ After her father agreed, she ran the agency as if it was her own business. "It was my project," she later proudly stated. Bergel established a network of business relations with her supplier and private clients in Vienna. She maintained good relations with Frank Scholl, who ran the company's overseas ventures from its London branch and provided his advice in building up her agency. "The agency

272 Andreas Rech and Reinhold Hofer, *Österreichische Innovationsgeschichte seit dem 19. Jahrhundert: Indikatoren des Innovationssystems und Muster des Innovationsverfahrens* (Vienna: Studienverlag, 2010), 33.

273 Peter Mayerhofer, Philipp Petzl, and Andreas Resch, eds., *"Creative Industries" in Wien: Dynamik, Arbeitsplätze, Akteure* (Vienna: LIT, 2008).

274 Rech and Hofer, *Österreichische Innovationsgeschichte*, 33.

275 Shapira, *Professional Women*, 9.

276 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

became a full success. It was exactly what Scholl wanted," she later noted.²⁷⁷ Bergel built up a large network of clients mainly through personal contacts. During the first years, she went "from door to door, selling products out of a suitcase."²⁷⁸ "After a while, there was enough demand to open up a shop in the inner city," as she later claimed.²⁷⁹ She ran an extensive marketing campaign, advertising her business in Austrian lifestyle and culture magazines such as *Die Bühne* and *Österreicherin*.

As John Hearst described, a similar willingness to adopt ideas and adapt existing business plans had made his family's cabinetmaking business successful during the crisis years. "My father managed to establish himself very well," Hearst later remembered. He introduced some innovative ideas. The introduction of instalment payment plans, as well as the additional establishment of a small factory that produced exclusively for the shop, making it independent from suppliers, were ideas which set the business apart from its competitors. After his father's death in 1935, John Hearst joined the company. He recalled: "It became quite successful, despite the bad economic conditions."²⁸⁰ Later in Australia, Hearst would adopt some of those ideas he had seen during his time in Vienna.

The cotton-wadding factory of the Böhm family in Vienna's 16th district was another example of progressive entrepreneurship during the interwar period. In this case, the company's owner, Adolf Böhm, and his son Ernst (Ernest Bowen), who were both influenced by Social Democratic ideas, tried to create an inclusive working environment for their employees. Ernest Bowen had become the company's managing director at the age of 24.²⁸¹ His former wife, Annemarie Mutton, described his and his father's leadership in her memoirs:

The company was led in a very progressive way: To the Böhms it was natural to restrain their lifestyle in order to extend some of the benefits to the employees. Adolf Böhm bought *Schrebergärten* [small plots of land for agricultural and leisure use] for his workers.²⁸²

²⁷⁷ Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

²⁷⁸ Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

²⁷⁹ Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

²⁸⁰ Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

²⁸¹ Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter) in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

²⁸² SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

She also noted that the Böhms had built a greenhouse on the company's premises, which they used to grow food for their workers.

Richard Tandler, who had been successfully employed in his family's business during the 1920s and early 1930s, had decided in 1933 to open up his own architectural practice. In his letter of recommendation, his employer, the Südfeld Silberwaren factory, described his activities as follows:

We gave him a leading position in our firm. In this position he has earned our praises by his practical work of organization and by the excellent designs which he produced for the manufacture of silverwares. [...] In 1926 we lost all of our export trade as many foreign countries closed their markets against silverwares, hence our manufacturing programme had to be reshuffled. With this task, we entrusted Mr. Tandler. Again he succeeded in executing it to the best of our satisfaction, thanks to his circumspection and his technical skills. [...] He leaves our firm in order to take up an independent position in conformity with his high qualifications.²⁸³

Tandler's architectural business focused on modern interior and exterior design, inspired by the so-called *Wiener Schule der Architektur* (Viennese school of architecture). The company made a name for itself. Three years after he had opened his business, an Austrian architectural journal praised his style of design.²⁸⁴

Irma Weiss, who was born in 1887, is another example of a resourceful entrepreneur who was able to develop new ideas, which in turn helped her to enter new business fields. She worked as a milliner for seven years after finishing high school.²⁸⁵ In 1910, she married her husband, Hans, who had worked as an accountant for 25 years at that point. After their marriage, the couple decided to start a business as artificial flower makers, relying upon her skills as a milliner. The new idea was successful and the business went well until the Nazi occupation of Austria.²⁸⁶ The life of Elisabeth Ziegler gives another impressive insight into how necessity begot ingenuity in those times of hardship and deprivation. When she was 16 years old, both of her parents died, leaving her and her sister on their own. Ziegler described how the two sisters managed to cope with their lives as follows:

²⁸³ Private records (written documents), in the possession of Sue Copolov.

²⁸⁴ "Mit diskreter großzügiger Eleganz hat Arch. Richard Tandler die Räume des Modehauses Elegance ausgestattet," see N.A., "Modehaus."

²⁸⁵ NAA, A12217, Weiss Hans.

²⁸⁶ NAA, A12217, Weiss Hans.

My father had taught my sister a little bit about the business. My sister was very enterprising, she was 19 when he died and she tried to pick up that little business and she made something beautiful out of it. She managed to import French buttons. And that wasn't easy because you had to have an import licence and you had to buy the goods first in France. It was pretty complicated but she managed and she wanted to send me back to school. [...] She managed growing this little business up to something that we could live on.²⁸⁷

As these examples show, many of the self-employed entrepreneurs among the members of the sample group had developed innovative business ideas and "unorthodox" plans to prevail in the market. Due to the poor economic situation, the lack of capital, and the Schuschnigg regime's failed economic policy it was very difficult to be economically successful and, in many cases, businesses had to be innovative to succeed. Some of this book's protagonists had developed a strong affinity for innovation and a willingness to adapt ideas to a changing environment. The experiences the members of the sample group had during those years of economic hardship, as this book argues, provided them with ultimate advantages for a new start in a different cultural context after their expulsion.

The majority of the group were employed white collar workers. Some of them even worked for international companies, thus they were able to acquire valuable innovative and international business knowledge and contacts. Their knowledge of foreign languages was in many cases helpful in obtaining one of the rare international jobs. In some cases, the contacts they made with their business partners abroad helped them escape after the Anschluss. The anglophile Charles William Anton managed to get a job at the Austrian branch of the British Sun Insurance Company in Vienna. His job allowed him to improve his English language skills.²⁸⁸ The British company had branches in different parts of the world but focused its business activities on English-speaking areas. There is ample evidence that Anton maintained intense contact with business partners abroad. During the two years with the company, he had gained an excellent command of the English language. His Austrian passport shows that he had travelled to many different European countries during that time.²⁸⁹ After graduating from school, Kurt Selby began to work for the innovative Czechoslovakian leather goods manufacturer Bata. At that time, Bata

²⁸⁷ SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview.

²⁸⁸ Strobl, *Charles Anton*, 2008.

²⁸⁹ NAA, A435, 1944/4/1110, Anton Charles William.

was the world's biggest export-oriented shoe manufacturer.²⁹⁰ "He was a sales representative and showed products to people," his daughter noted in an interview.²⁹¹ Thus he was involved in Bata's innovative distribution network²⁹² and acquired valuable state of the art knowledge in the field of sales and distribution. While working for the company, he extended his cultural capital and his business knowledge of various new models of distribution, such as instalment payment, which he later adapted for his own shop in Australia.²⁹³ Gertrude Langer eventually found employment in education, a position that was very hard to obtain. Even before she took up her studies, she knew that her chances of employment as an art historian "would not be very great."²⁹⁴ The situation was tough, particularly for women, and Langer supported her husband in his architectural practice after finishing her studies. It took her more than four years after her graduation from the university to find a job as an occasional lecturer at the *Volkshochschule*.²⁹⁵ During that time, she became accustomed to speaking in public and to delivering lectures to large audiences.

The non-Jewish working-class woman Grete Vanry experienced an economic ascent during one of the worst phases of economic development in Austria. After losing her job as a milliner due to the 1929 economic crisis, the Viennese *Arbeitsamt* (Labor Office) mediated a new position for her in a small workshop that produced ladies' hats. The "small hat-making business [...] became one of the leading lady's hat shops in Vienna" due to her technical skills and the owner's expert management.²⁹⁶ It was particularly "her expertise, that stimulated many new ideas in hats which helped to take the business to prosperity,"²⁹⁷ as a friend of hers later stated. Since her employer, who became a personal friend, managed to relocate her business to Australia and took Vanry with her,

290 Jana Gerslova, "Der Schuster der die Welt erobert: Die tschechoslowakische Firma Bata als Paradebeispiel eines innovativen Unternehmens (1894–1948)," in *Die vielen Gesichter des wirtschaftlichen Wandels: Beiträge zur Innovationsgeschichte—Festschrift für Dieter Stiefel*, ed. Peter Berger et al. (Vienna: LIT, 2011), 277–295, 294.

291 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

292 Gerslova, "Der Schuster," 289.

293 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

294 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 34.

295 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 88.

296 Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*, 264.

297 Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*, 264.

her career was another example of transnational business relations formed in interwar Vienna.

Some members of the group, however, did not mention their work experience as being particularly important for their later lives in Australia. Paul Hirsch, who had worked as a chemist for several years after graduating from the University of Vienna, for example, did not tell much about his professional experiences. The same was true for Bruno Bush who had worked as a pharmacist during the 1930s for more than eight years and barely mentioned this fact in a later interview.

3.9 An Inspiring Environment

The tension that was caused by the many contradictions of a country and its capital city in the midst of cultural, ethnic, and economic change left a deep impression on those who grew up or lived there. Almost all of the members of the sample group described Vienna as an inspiring environment which had, in one way or another, affected their later lives in Australia. In his memoirs, Henry Teltscher recalled the importance of his cultural capital. According to him, his Viennese education and values “were both more significant in shaping my interests and my life in general.” He noted: “Many of my interests and attitudes were formed at an early age and haven’t changed a great deal.”²⁹⁸ Interwar Vienna offered a special environment full of contradictions. Even after the breakdown of the Habsburg Empire, the city remained a multicultural metropolis. The glamour and glory of the imperial days were still apparent. Many members of the sample group were born before the empire’s breakdown and thus had experienced life in the monarchy. After the war, Vienna was about to lose its political and economic position as a hub for Central Europe. The “hydrocephalus of Austria,” as the residents of the newly founded republic of Austria used to call their capital city, still had much to offer in terms of culture and innovation. Its main problem, however, was a lack of financial capital and, related to that, a lack of economic opportunities. Politically, the city was a testing ground for new social experiments: the Social Democratic city government implemented substantial changes that altered the life in the city and brought a *renaissance* in certain sectors such as housing, education, and the arts.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ Henry Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, i.

²⁹⁹ Holmes and Silverman, “Introduction: Beyond the Coffeehouse,” 1.

There were some recurring elements that had left a deep impression on most of them. The cultural capital they acquired was highly individual, however, this chapter has been able to highlight and summarize some of the patterns that surfaced throughout the recollections of their Viennese past and core values they had acquired that had formed their cultural capital.

For almost all the members of the sample group, education played an important role. Many regarded themselves as belonging to a middle-class intellectual elite which saw education as a status symbol. This was something most of them had acquired from their parents, who in the majority of cases had placed a high value on the education of their children. Vienna, as shown above, was a city that had developed a very high standard of schooling, particularly due to reforms in the early interwar years. The city had hosted some of the world's most progressive schools, such as the world famous Schwarzwald high school. The high value placed on education by the members of the sample group was expressed by their good level of education: 88.5 percent had completed secondary education, 27 percent had even achieved a university degree. Their school or university education played an important role in most of their memories of their time in Vienna.

The majority of the members of the sample group recalled their family as belonging to the middle or upper middle class, strata of society that were responsible for much that was happening in the cultural field. As children, many of them had enjoyed education in music, painting, writing, or dance. Subsequently, they developed a great interest in the culture which shaped their childhood and adolescent memories. Not surprisingly, almost all of them located their cultural interest in the fields of classical music, painting, literature, and modern dance.

Leisure activities, especially skiing and hiking, were among the most frequently remembered interests of almost all the people interviewed for this book. Corresponding to the *Zeitgeist* of interwar Vienna, many of them (including the few members of the working classes) were active skiers, had undertaken regular holidays in the countryside, or were members of one of the different organizations that fostered skiing or hiking in Austria.

Exceptionally, many people who were interviewed for this book remembered being brought up in a multilingual, cosmopolitan environment open to exchange across national borders. This included intense contact with friends and relatives in different regions of Europe (mainly France, England, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary). Almost all of them spoke a foreign language (in most cases French or English) and had frequently travelled or even lived in other European countries.

The vast majority, 23 out of the 26 members of the group, had a Jewish background, or were persecuted as Jews after the Anschluss. For most of them, however, religion and religious traditions did not play an important role in their lives. Thus, they did not consider themselves part of a religious community that had in some ways influenced their further background and development.

Politically, the largest part located themselves on the left of the spectrum. However, most of them were not actively involved in any party politics and described themselves as politically moderate. Interestingly, the two interviewees who belonged to the Communist and the Conservative Parties and had participated in their violent struggles during the 1930s were non-Jewish.

A final feature many of the members of the sample group remembered as important was the difficult economic situation in Austria that required many of them to develop innovative and unorthodox ideas and plans to develop businesses which prevailed in the unstable market—a situation that can be best described by the German proverb “Not macht erfinderisch” (necessity is the mother of invention). Having had these experiences and having developed these types of cultural capital would later support their efforts at building a life in Australia.

These few points summarize the main experiences and values the refugees remembered as having particularly shaped them during their time in Vienna. These experiences would later—after their escape to Australia—affect their future activities in their new homeland in many different ways.

“In that Moment, Our Whole World Collapsed”: Life in Nazi Austria

This section analyses the most decisive part of the lives of the people interviewed for this book. It shows how their lives changed dramatically after Austria's incorporation into National Socialist Germany and thus offers additional explanations for why those Austrians who fled to Australia in 1938 and 1939 have been described as a “community of fate.”¹ We will see why they had to leave their homelands and how most of them were deprived of their family fortunes by Nazi emigration laws. We will also see how their cultural and social capital in the form of their prewar networks helped them to plan and realize their escape.

On March 11, 1938, National Socialists seized power in Austria. One day later, German troops invaded the country. As historian Rolf Steininger has described, the reaction of large parts of the Austrian public was surprising—not only in the eyes of external observers but also in the eyes of the German authorities: “The Austrians’ cheering and enthusiasm for the German invasion on the morning of 12 March exceeded all expectations on the German side and contributed to Hitler’s decision to carry through the Anschluss immediately and completely.”² Foreign observers were stunned by the enthusiasm the Austrian population showed vis-à-vis the German occupiers. On March 14, 1938, the Australian newspaper *Newcastle Morning Herald* reported:

Herr Hitler had a triumphal progress through the 60 miles of Northern Austria, from the bridge at the river Inn, at his birth place Braunau, where he was greeted by 20,000 people, amid the pealing of church bells, to Linz. The crowds were so great in many places that his car was forced to proceed at walking pace. The demonstrations slowed down the Führer to such an extent that an enormous assembly waited in the bitter cold at Linz four hours longer than it was expected. The people passed the time watching the arrival of German tanks and troops who paraded alongside the Austrian soldiers in the central square and elsewhere. Broadcasters

1 Norst and McBride, *Austrians in Australia*.

2 Rolf Steininger, *Austria, Germany and the Cold War: From Anschluss to the State Treaty 1938–1955* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 8.

in the city hall, where the reception to Herr Hitler had been arranged, held the attention of the multitude by numerous fiery speeches and constant repetition that the Führer was approaching and would arrive in a few minutes.³

On March 15, Adolf Hitler announced to a crowd of approximately 200,000 jubilant Viennese that Austria had joined the German Reich. The vast majority of Austrians welcomed the unification with Germany with “unbridled enthusiasm.” Many tried to take advantage of the new situation.⁴ A month later, on April 10, the new rulers sought to retroactively legitimize their actions by means of a referendum,⁵ which was preceded and accompanied by a massive exertion of influence. The Nazis started an unprecedented propaganda campaign. Additionally, about 8 percent of the population—mainly Jews and people who belonged to rival political parties—were not allowed to vote. And the secrecy of the ballot was de facto nonexistent.⁶ Furthermore, the Nazis received support from some parts of society that would usually have been regarded as strong supporters of Austrian independence: the Catholic bishops announced a few days before the referendum “that through the efforts of the National Socialist movement, the danger of godless Bolshevism, that destroys everything, was repulsed.” They further emphasized “the blessings on these efforts in the future.”⁷ Karl Renner, the former Social Democratic chancellor of Austria, on the other hand, publicly declared eight days before the referendum:

Although not achieved with methods of which I would approve, the Anschluss that has now been effected is a historic fact; and I consider that true amends for the humiliations of 1918 and 1919, for St. Germain and Versailles [...]. As a Social Democrat and therefore as a proponent of nations’ right to self-determination, as the first chancellor of the Republic of Austria I will vote “yes.”⁸

3 *Newcastle Morning Herald*, March 14, 1938, 7.

4 Chesnoff, *Pack of Thieves*, 24.

5 Strobl, *Innsbrucker Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 123.

6 Sandra Paweronschitz, *Zwischen Anspruch und Anpassung: Journalisten und der Presseclub Concordia im Dritten Reich* (Vienna: Steinbauer, 2006), 21; Gabriele Holzer, *Verfreundete Nachbarn: Österreich–Deutschland. Ein Verhältnis* (Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau, 1995), 84.

7 Steininger, *Austria, Germany*, 10.

8 Steininger, *Austria, Germany*, 10.

Unsurprisingly, the referendum's outcome was almost unanimous. According to official German statistics, 99.59 percent of the Austrian voters opted for an incorporation of their country into the German Reich.⁹ However, as many historians have pointed out, the massive German influence and propaganda cannot be held exclusively responsible for the outcome of the plebiscite.¹⁰ It can be taken for granted that a considerable part of the population was in favour of incorporating their country into a larger German state. Historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler made the assumption that the results would have been only slightly different under "fair conditions and international supervision."¹¹

The events following the occupation, commonly known by the German word *Anschluss*, changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Austrians, including all of this book's protagonists. Like many assimilated Viennese Jews, most of the members of the sample group did not regard themselves as Jewish until National Socialist racial laws classified them as such and consequently deprived them of their civil rights.¹² After the Anschluss, the National Socialist rulers implemented laws they had enacted over a period of five years in Germany within a short period of a few months. For Austrians identified as Jewish, the Anschluss brought a time of unending humiliation, insecurity, and pain, including incarcerations, torture, and dismissals from governmental positions.¹³ The early weeks after the Anschluss brought a wave of uncontrolled, privately executed plundering of Jewish properties. During this time, Viennese antisemites and Nazi sympathizers carried out thousands of illegal house searches. Many used the lawless, chaotic time to steal cash, jewellery, clothes, art, and furniture from their Jewish neighbours.¹⁴

In those early days of uncontrolled plundering and excessive violence, the authorities had not even officially and legally defined whom they considered as Jewish. The mob simply decided who could now be considered as falling outside of the protection of the law and thus could be harassed. On May 20, 1938, more than two months after the Anschluss, the Nazis legally enacted their

9 Otmar Jung, *Plebiszit und Diktatur: die Volksabstimmungen der Nationalsozialisten. Die Fälle "Austritt aus dem Völkerbund" (1933), "Staatsoberhaupt" (1934) und Anschluß Österreichs (1938)* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), 119ff.

10 Jung, *Plebiszit und Diktatur*, 119ff.

11 Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, Bd. 4: Vom Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges bis zur Gründung der beiden deutschen Staaten 1914–1949* (Munich: Beck, 2003), 622.

12 Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 147.

13 Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 146.

14 For more information, see Gerhard Botz, *Nationalsozialismus in Wien: Machtübernahme, Herrschaftssicherung, Radikalisierung 1938/39* (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2008), 126–136.

racially discriminating laws in the first amendment of the *Reichsbürgergesetz* thereby making Jews second-class citizens without any voting rights or the right to hold a governmental position (the law came into force in July 1938).¹⁵ The Nuremberg Laws, which were implemented at the same time, also defined who was regarded as Jewish. The Nazis differentiated between two categories of Jews. Those who belonged to the Jewish faith, or had at least three Jewish grandparents, were defined as *Volljuden* (fully Jewish), while those who had fewer than three Jewish grandparents were defined as first- or second-degree *Mischlinge*.¹⁶ Those regarded as *Mischlinge* occupied a better legal position than those regarded as *Volljuden*.¹⁷

Even the Austrian Nazi officials were surprised by the scope and intensity of the uncontrolled, illegal house searches and the plundering that started with the Anschluss. In order to reduce these unofficially conducted raids, the city administration enacted a series of laws in April 1938 aimed at restoring its control over the processes of dispossessing Jewish citizens.¹⁸ By April 27, 4,710 Jewish Austrians had already left the country.¹⁹ Another important step in the process of dispossessing Jewish citizens was the rigorous recording of Jewish property and financial assets that started in April 1938.²⁰ By June 30, 1938, Jews had to officially declare all of their financial assets and property worth more than 5,000 Reichsmark.²¹ Some 47,768 people did so.²² In July 1938, the Nazis introduced an identification card for Jewish citizens, one month later, they made it obligatory for Jews to adopt the additional first names “Sara” or “Israel.” In October 1938, Jewish passports were labelled with a red “J.”²³

15 Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 147.

16 Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 147. *Mischling* was a pejorative legal term which was used in Nazi Germany to denote persons of mixed Aryan and non-Aryan, such as Jewish, ancestry, as they were classified by the Nuremberg racial laws of 1935.

17 Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 147; Evan Burr Bukey, *Jews and Inter-marriage in Nazi Austria* (Cambridge: University Press, 2010).

18 GBfLÖ 80/1938, Bestellung von kommissarischen Verwaltern und kommissarischen Überwachungspersonen vom 13. 4. 1938; GBfLÖ 589/1938, Bekanntmachung der Verordnung über die Einziehung volks- und staatsfeindlichen Vermögens im Lande Österreich vom 18. 11. 1938.

19 Dietmar Walch, *Die jüdischen Bemühungen um die materielle Wiedergutmachung durch die Republik Österreich* (Vienna: Geyer-Edition, 1971), 2.

20 GBfLÖ 102/1938, Bekanntmachung der Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden vom 26.04.1938.

21 Walch, *Materielle Wiedergutmachung*, 2.

22 Walch, *Materielle Wiedergutmachung*, 3.

23 Wolfgang Benz, *Der Holocaust* (Munich: Beck, 1999), 24.

These discrimination processes led to an exodus of people from Vienna, as many realized that they had no future in Nazi-ruled Vienna. Increasing incidences of police arrests of Jewish people, including brutal inquisitions and torture, further convinced a growing number in the Jewish community to escape the country. The fast application of a German interwar tax called the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* (taxes which had to be paid in order to leave the country) for those who wanted to escape, however, left them with only a fraction of their former wealth.²⁴ Nazi officials supported the emigration of “unwanted” people such as Jewish citizens: on August 20, 1938, the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung (Central Agency for Jewish Emigration) was founded as the official department in charge of the emigration and escape of large parts of the Jewish community. Its head, Adolf Eichmann, claimed to have invented a “particularly efficient system” of handling emigrants.²⁵ As a result of these measures, Vienna’s centuries-old Jewish community dwindled to nonexistence. By June 1938, 16,416 (about 10 percent of the Jewish population) had fled the country.²⁶ According to records of the city’s Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, 116,994 Jews (about 70 percent of the city’s Jewish population) left Vienna between May 1938 and December 1939.²⁷

4.1 Recalling the Anschluss

The events around the Anschluss caught most of the members of the sample group by surprise. There was only very little time between Chancellor Schuschnigg’s radio announcement of the capitulation of Austria and the first appearance of the German Wehrmacht in Austria. Three major events held a prominent place in the memories of many former refugees:

1. Chancellor Schuschnigg’s resignation speech from March 11, 1938;
2. The presence of German soldiers and the disturbing and frightening atmosphere once German troops had arrived;
3. The mob’s violent reactions toward anyone supposed to be Jewish and, more generally speaking, notions of helplessness.

As 19-year-old Viola Winkler noted, she had not had much information about the political developments in Germany before the Anschluss: “I knew only

²⁴ Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 150.

²⁵ Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 150.

²⁶ Walch, *Materielle Wiedergutmachung*, 3.

²⁷ UNHCR, 5/4–14, Kullmann papers, [Mission to Lisbon July–August 1941] [1941–1941] [Fonds 5, series 4, box 7].

very little about the Nazis. That [Germany] was a different country. I thought I would not be affected.” She further recalled the moment she heard of the German invasion on the radio: “I was boarding with a couple in the city because it was closer to work. I came home from work. The door was open, and I heard the announcement of Schuschnigg who said that the Nazis just marched into Austria and that he had to resign. [...] I felt absolutely helpless.”²⁸ Years later, she recalled in an autobiographical text: “Shortly afterwards, we saw the first German planes over Vienna. In that moment, our whole world collapsed. How can I describe how it felt? Incredible desperation, all of my hopes were suddenly gone. I was 19 years old and surrounded by fear, grief and insecurity.”²⁹ She added in another interview:

I saw people in brown shirts walking through the streets. Airplanes flew over the city. At that time, I hoped someone would declare war on the Germans. I tried to get in touch with my mother. When I came to my mother’s place there was a large black car and we learned that some of the neighbors had disappeared.³⁰

Marie Bergel recalled that she did not see the Anschluss coming. She was on a skiing trip when the German troops marched in:

We went skiing for a long weekend and while we were in Mürzzuschlag—it wasn’t very far but mountainous—we heard that Hitler took over. So instead of even taking the train, I met some people, I knew they had their own car and we drove back with them [to Vienna] and then the tragedy started.³¹

Helen Roberts was also caught by surprise:

I was in the city with my mother and there were different districts in Vienna and it was the first time, I think, Hitler made his speech. And I was: ‘where is my mother’ because we did not realize what was going on

28 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (sound recording).

29 Winkler, “Augenblick,” 311.

30 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (sound recording).

31 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

at that time. We did not know anything. And we went home and then it started all [*sic*].³²

In a later interview, Reinhold Eckfeld recalled the Anschluss as follows:

There was always a certain amount of anti-Semitism in Austria, but of course once the Nazis marched in, it became much worse. Jews got sacked from their jobs, like my father. He was a journalist for the *Neue Freie Presse* newspaper in Vienna. He lost his job.³³

Sylvia Cherny, who was born into the industrialist Mahler family who ran a chain of paper factories in Upper and Lower Austria, remembered how the Anschluss suddenly changed her entire life:

The year 1938 was to change our lives dramatically. The political climate was very unsettled [...]. Luithlen [her school] had a large percentage of Jewish students and for the time being we felt reassured. However, in March 1938, the Nazis took over and Austria became part of the German Reich. Overnight, the persecution of Jews started with shops boycotted and Jews were made to scrub the footpaths. Young people paraded in the streets shouting slogans and abusing anyone who did not obviously belong. In those days, children led a sheltered life, but I was well aware that all was not well with many of our relatives. My father's cousins Beppo and Willie Mahler were arrested and sent to Dachau concentration camp near Munich. On March 17, 1938, during a private lesson in my room, the Gestapo raced through our apartment looking for my father. My father came home at midday and we told him to go out again and stay away. By evening the Gestapo had not returned and during the night my father took his life.³⁴

Hans Eisler experienced the Anschluss as a 13-year-old boy. As he explained years later, he was in his family's apartment in Vienna's inner city when the first German troops appeared: "I saw German troops marching in from the balcony and I knew they were bad. However, my parents and I did not feel threatened. At last we were good Austrians, but we felt pity for the Jews in the

32 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (sound recording).

33 Reinhold Eckfeld, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, January 2017.

34 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 13–14.

poorer districts.”³⁵ Years later, Henry Teltscher recalled how daily life in the city altered overnight: “Vienna had changed its appearance on the night of the 12th of March. Notwithstanding the fact that the swastika had been illegal, overnight practically every house blossomed with swastika flags and everybody sported a swastika in their button-hole.”³⁶

The hours and days that followed the Anschluss constituted a period full of uncertainty and chaos. Many Austrians used the time to enrich themselves by stealing and robbing from their Jewish fellow citizens, who overnight became de facto outlawed and unprotected. Annemarie Mutton’s memories offered a moving picture of the day that followed the Anschluss:

The picture that presented itself in the morning in town where noisy crowds gathered round the Ballhausplatz and the scenery was reminiscent of what I had read of the French Revolution. Masses of people streamed and screamed, armed themselves from somewhere, ran and stampeded. Only a bit later did we realize that many went into the Leopoldstadt, the 2nd district, mostly inhabited by Jews, to destroy, to rummage, to frighten. Planes kept on circling the city, the noise mixing with the general upheaval. And men marching, men in uniform, men along the magnificent avenue, the Ringstraße, circling the city. In such circumstances [...] the atmosphere became electrified for us all, uncertainty as to what would happen next almost paralyzed us. Our lives were being unhinged. Our accounts were being controlled, the bankers must have preceded the army. The currency was being devalued. So the Germans could buy Austrian goods with their German marks. [...] It all happened easily amidst turmoil, shouting, noise, speeches, crowds, devastation of synagogues, graffiti, house searches. Shops were being vandalized, people were being harassed.³⁷

As Ernest Bowen’s sister, Elisabeth Kirsten, remembered, the process of being outlawed started immediately after the Nazi troops had marched into the country:

You know, 1938 I can remember March 13th [...], I went into a street car—the streetcar you took every day, you knew the conductor and all the

35 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

36 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 52.

37 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

people there—nobody looked at me. Nobody looked [...] the conductor did not even say hello and 95% of the people had either a tie with a swastika on or a swastika on a pin for the ladies. Since I did not have anything, I was sort of an outcast and that was very scary, right on the 13th of March 1938, unbelievable.³⁸

An anecdote from the life of 20-year-old Charles William Anton, told by one of his closest friends, offers another insight into how people remembered having dealt with the chaos of those days:

After the Nazis moved into Vienna, they took over all the hotels on the ring. [...] and outside every hotel they had guards of honor all the way from the front door of the hotel to the gutter. [...] Anyone walking along the ring would have to then go out on the roadway to walk round, they wouldn't break ranks. And Charles came along wearing his Austrian military uniform, which in those days would have been probably something very fancy. And they saw him walking on the road and the officer in charge said, 'I don't know what this is,' called the troops to the attention, they broke ranks, so that he could walk straight through and they gave him a Nazi salute on the way. So, for a Jewish boy [...].³⁹

4.2 The Perspectives of the “Others”: The Decline of Jewish Professional Life

The days, weeks, and months following the Anschluss brought an escalation of the situation for Jewish citizens. Life became increasingly unbearable and they found themselves systematically marginalized and oppressed because of their Jewishness. It is particularly ironic that the rigorous National Socialist laws “made” many people “Jewish” who did not actually belong to the Jewish faith and would not have regarded themselves as Jewish. As described in the preceding chapter, 60 percent of the sample group's members stated they did not regard themselves as Jewish. Most of them were either not religious or had converted to Catholicism or Protestantism. In some cases, desperate people even tried to change their religion in order to deal with the new situation.

38 LBI NY, Austrian Heritage Collection, Interview with Elisabeth Kirsten [AHC 1639] (sound recording).

39 Leon Smith (friend of Anton and his successor as president of the AAC), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Sydney, March 2016.

However, since the Nazi rulers pursued their own purportedly “racial” understanding of Jewishness, this did not affect how they were treated at all. The son of a Jewish father and a Catholic mother, Reinhold Eckfeld was 17 years old at the time of the Anschluss. He recalled in a later interview:

My father was Jewish and my mother was Catholic, and I could not see any way of getting out of the country. I did not have much of a connection anywhere. So, I left the Jewish faith and became a Roman Catholic on 29 April 1938. I thought that could be useful. But of course, as we all know, that would have been no help at all.⁴⁰

As one of the first measures, the Nazis removed Jews and political opponents from public office. On 15 March, legal measures were announced that made it impossible for Jews to remain in state or government positions.⁴¹ Every civil servant was required to swear an oath to Adolf Hitler. Jews were specifically denied the oath, which made it impossible for them to remain in their positions. As a consequence, thousands of public servants who could not or did not want to swear an oath to Hitler lost their jobs immediately after the Anschluss. Charles William Anton, then aged 21, held the commission of a light horse regiment of the Austrian army when the German troops marched into Austria.⁴² A few days afterwards, he was dismissed from the army because of his being Jewish according to Nazi standards.⁴³ In his memories, the required oath played an important role. In his 1942 Australian mobilization attestation form he claimed that he had refused to take the compulsory “oath of allegiance to Hitler.”⁴⁴ Paul Herzfeld was also a member of the Austrian army. He remembered being thrown out and arrested because of his politically conservative stance:

In Austria at a very early stage in my youth, I was in the Austrian Catholic Action Movement known as the Boy Scouts, and after 1933 I was a leading member. Just before Hitler came in, I was third member of the Viennese staff. [...] I was in the Austrian Air Force. In this position, naturally I was very exposed to political hatred. [...] In March, 1938 we were invaded [...]

40 Reinhold Eckfeld, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, January 2017.

41 GBfLÖ, Jg. 1938, 2. Stück, ausgegeben am 15. März 1938.

42 NAA, B883, NX181034, Anton, Charles William.

43 NAA, B883, NX181034, Anton, Charles William.

44 NAA, B883, NX181034, Anton, Charles William.

I was detained for two days, arrested by the Gestapo and taken to the police court, where I was kept for about 35 days.⁴⁵

Gerhard Felser, another member of the sample group, had made a name for himself as an accountant and economic consultant and had also worked as an expert investigator for the Federal Police of Austria and the Criminal High Court in Vienna during the *Ständestaat* regime. Due to his political contacts as a member of the unitary party *Vaterländische Front*⁴⁶ as well as because of his wife's Jewish origins, he resigned this position after the Anschluss. In his Australian immigration records, the officer in charge of his case summarized Felser's situation after the Anschluss as follows:

Felser was informed by the police in Vienna, where he had a business as a Public Accountant, immediately after Austria was usurped by Germany that he would have to divorce his wife as she was a Non-Aryan, but before any further action was taken in this regard he made arrangements and got out of the country as soon as possible.⁴⁷

Jewish public servants were the first to feel the consequences of the Anschluss. The legal and medical professions were soon to follow: on September 30, 1938, the Nazi government prohibited Jewish physicians, lawyers, and notaries from practicing their professions.⁴⁸ Helen Roberts, who was married to a Viennese Jewish physician, recalled: "My husband was a doctor. He had a private practice and he was a 'police doctor' when the Nazis took over. He was not allowed to keep his practice open any longer."⁴⁹ Marie Bergel described how the Nazis, in April 1938, had taken over her uncle's private hospital about 40 kilometres south of Vienna:

I tried to ring them, but the lines were cut off. The Nazis flew down to the Sanatorium Wienerwald with a plane, threw all the patients into the snow and gathered all employees into the lounge like prisoners. My uncle hid in a room and then committed suicide. They made the sanatorium a place for pregnant Aryan woman.⁵⁰

45 NAA Melbourne: MP 529/3/0, Tribunal 2/Herzfeld.

46 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

47 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

48 Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 149.

49 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (sound recording).

50 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

Employed workers who did not fit the Nazi perception of “desired” people were the next to suffer from rigorous exclusion measures. As a member of the Communist underground movement and a trade union activist, Grete Vanry had no chance of pursuing her career as a milliner in National Socialist Vienna. A friend of hers later wrote: “While her social conscience found an outlet in trade union activity, it put her in danger and after Hitler’s annexation of Austria, in March 1938, she fled with few possessions via Switzerland to France.”⁵¹ Another friend of hers later added: “She was elected to the management committee of the Clothing Industry and Allied Workers’ Union. This trade union activity was considered dangerous by the Nazi State Police, and after the Anschluss, Grete knew, she had to leave Austria immediately.”⁵² Bruno Bush was employed as a druggist in the Viennese district of Ottakring and had finished three years of an apprenticeship just prior to the Anschluss. He remembered losing his job immediately afterward: “I was sacked from the job in March 1938. I was told to leave the organization because they don’t want any Jews there.”⁵³ Kurt Selby was forced to quit his job as a leather goods salesman and to leave the country. His employer, who was also forced to flee the country and to abandon his company, wrote him the following letter of recommendation:

I confirm that Mr. Kurt Silbiger, born on July 19, 1907, in Vienna has worked for my company from May 15, 1928, to the present day as a salesperson and leather manipulator, during which time he has proved to be dutiful, trustworthy and industrious and performed in all respects to my greatest satisfaction. He leaves, after having received all paychecks, only because of his emigration. I wish Mr. Silbiger all the best for his future and hope he will find the life he deserves in his new homeland.⁵⁴

51 John Low, “Down the Wallaby Track—a backward glance with John Low: From Vienna to Sublime Point,” *Hut News*, no. 269 (2010): 1–16, 7.

52 Winkler, “Augenblick,” 266.

53 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush Oral history interview (audio recording).

54 Author’s translation: “Ich bestätige, dass Herr Kurt Silbiger, geboren am 19.07.1907 in Wien, seit 15.05.1928 bis zum heutigen Tage als Platzvertreter und als Ledermanipulant in meinem Hause tätig war, sich während der ganzen Dauer pflichtgetreu, eifrig, ehrlich und anständig benommen hat und sich stets zu meiner vollsten Zufriedenheit in jeder Art bewährte. Sein Ausscheiden erfolgt lohnbefriedigt nur aus dem Grunde seiner Auswanderung. Ich wünsche ihm auf seinem weiteren Lebenswege alles erdenklich Gute, er möge sich in seiner neuen Heimat eine baldige Lebensmöglichkeit beschaffen, die ein hartes Schicksal ihm hier verweigerte.” Private letters to Selby, 1938 (in the possession of Eleanor Hart).

From the very beginning, the Nazis intended to use the economic potential and wealth of Jewish companies. They therefore enacted concrete measures to evaluate the financial and intellectual assets of Jewish citizens. Up to June 30, 1938, all Jewish estates worth more than 5,000 Reichsmark had to be declared.⁵⁵ In his memoirs, Henry Teltscher recalled the apparatus the Nazis installed as follows:

The Nazis brought into being a whole battery of new and interlocking offices, concerned with evaluating one's possessions, determining the taxes, which had to be paid on that basis and deciding which of these possessions could be sold rather than be confiscated by the Nazis.⁵⁶

In addition to the financial assets, the Nazi administration acquired an overview of the professional knowledge of Jews and Jewish businesses. A circular note of the Viennese branch of the Austrian Industrial Association gives a good insight into how information about Jewish citizens was secretly gathered and how people were prompted to denounce their fellow citizens: "Esteemed company, if a company should receive notice that Jewish employees or former Jewish employees had acquired important knowledge about industrial secrets, they are required to notify us with further details."⁵⁷ In May 1938, the Nazis installed the so-called Vermögensverkehrsstelle, an agency responsible for the Aryanization and compulsory acquisition of Jewish businesses and property.⁵⁸ By November 1938, most of the Jewish companies in Austria had been taken over by "Aryan" owners. There were numerous profiteers of that comprehensive process of theft. The most profitable companies were taken over by large German corporations, such as IG Farben.⁵⁹ The Nazis were very well aware of the rapid success of their restrictive measures, as a letter from the appointed *Reichskommissar* for the Reunification of Austria with the German Reich, Joseph Bürckel, to Hermann Göring from March 26, 1938, shows:

55 Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 150.

56 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 50.

57 Author's translation: "Geehrte Firma, wenn einer Firma bekannt ist, dass jüdische Angestellte oder noch im Inlande befindliche ehemalige jüdische Angestellte über wichtige Industrie- und Gewerbegeheimnisse Kenntnis besitzen, möge uns dies unter Angabe näherer Einzelheiten bekanntgegeben werden." See Private records (written documents) in the possession of Sue Copolov.

58 Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 150; Ulrike Felber et al., eds., *Ökonomie der Arisierung: Teil 1: Grundzüge, Akteure und Institutionen* (Vienna: Oldenburg, 2004).

59 Philipp Strobl, *Innsbrucker Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 136.

It seems logical that my directions will trigger another wave of boycott against Jewish businesses. Because of the massive pressure against them, Jews will be willing [...] to sell their business for the cheapest prices. I think that it will be possible very soon to bring most of the Jewish property into Aryan hands.⁶⁰

The discriminating actions against Jewish entrepreneurs by and large followed similar patterns. First, the Nazis detained entrepreneurs and interrogated them about their companies and their financial assets. As soon as all the necessary information was gathered, they organized a takeover of these companies by a Nazi sympathizer for only a fraction of the company's value. To force Jewish entrepreneurs into selling their companies cheaply, the Nazis frequently detained them in concentration camps for an indefinite time.⁶¹ If a company was not "attractive" or profitable enough to be taken over by an "Aryan" owner, the business was brought down financially step by step and the owner was driven into exile. Marie Bergel recalled that the police imprisoned her father—the head of their family company—and tried to force them into selling it to an "Aryan" buyer.

My father was picked up in the middle of the night and was imprisoned. I went to Scholl [she had asked her main trade partner for advice] and there appeared a gentleman from the Scholl Frankfurt factory. He wanted to take over our agency for almost nothing and that is why they imprisoned my father.⁶²

The industrial factory of Ernest Bowen and his father Adolf Böhm was also forced into "Aryan" ownership through similar methods. In a later interview, Bowen's sister described the well-established family business as follows: "My

60 Author's translation: "Es ist anzunehmen, daß aufgrund meiner Anordnung eine erneute, sehr starke Boykottbewegung gegen die jüdischen Geschäfte einsetzt. Die Juden werden angesichts der Unsicherheit der Verhältnisse u. der Erklärung, die Sie, sehr verehrter Herr Generalfeldmarschall, heute zur Judenfrage abgeben wollen und die meine Ausführungen von vorgestern unterstreicht, voraussichtlich bereit sein, ihre Geschäfte u. Unternehmungen zu billigsten Preisen abzustoßen. Ich glaube, daß es so möglich sein wird, unter den wirtschaftlich günstigsten Voraussetzungen einen großen Teil jüdischen Besitzes in arische Hände überzuleiten." In Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes, ed., *"Anschluß" 1938. Eine Dokumentation* (Vienna, 1988), 485–555.

61 Arno Herzig, "1933–1945: Verdrängung und Vernichtung," *Informationen zur politischen Bildung* 307 (2010).

62 Marie Bergel, personal communication, n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

father's company was a textile factory in Ottakring, producing cotton goods for manufacturing products such as stuffing for winter coats or automobiles, for which foam rubber is now used."⁶³ Ernest Bowen's wife, Annemarie Mutton, recalled the situation after the Anschluss and how her husband and she had lost touch with her father-in-law because he was intensely beaten down by the Nazis:

Due to the respected position Adolf Böhm held in the [Jewish] community, the Nazis were anxious to win him over for their own purposes. It was suggested to him that he should work together with the authorities to give the Jews "trust." He was necessary to pacify the excited atmosphere. He had no choice, but he said no. They sealed his bookshelves and cut off his lifeline. He became paranoid within a short time. He closed the bank accounts, he lost his reasons [*sic*]. He entered a clinic. We lost touch.⁶⁴

Adolf Eichmann, who led the Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung in Vienna, an agency tasked with organizing Jewish emigration, was personally involved in the harassment of Adolf Böhm. Shortly after the Anschluss, Eichmann appeared in Böhm's office and ordered him to compile a list of influential members of the city's Jewish community. Adolf Böhm's granddaughter described how the family remembered the takeover of their company:

they took over the company very quickly [...]. Adolf Böhm had a nervous breakdown after six weeks. This must have been in about mid-April. The public records show us that he was incapacitated and then this Aryanizer called Wilner took over. So, his breakdown was used to dispossess his company.⁶⁵

Some Jews were incarcerated in concentration camps for several weeks or even months. They were tortured and therefore prepared to leave the country.

63 LBI NY, Austrian Heritage Collection, Interview with Elisabeth Kirsten [AHC 1639] (sound recording).

64 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

65 Marianne Schulze (Bowen's granddaughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017; author's translation: "Die Fabrik ist dann übernommen worden [...]. Adolf Böhm ist dann zusammengebrochen, nach etwa 6 Wochen, also irgendwann Mitte April. In den Akten findet sich dann auch seine Entmündigung und dann hatte dieser Ariseur mit Namen Wilner auch im Firmenbuch übernommen."

The civil engineer Gustav Bratspies, who operated an architectural studio in Vienna, was among them.⁶⁶ Official records show that Bratspies was sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp on May 31, 1938, and was kept there until September 22. One of his relatives described what happened after his release: "All of the Bratspies' money was seized and they were given a week to leave the country. His mother-in law did not wish to leave the country because of her age or illness, she later died in a concentration camp in 1942."⁶⁷ Hans Eisler's parents were also victims of a radical Nazi dispossession strategy, as he later recalled:

Nothing at all happened to us until the 10th of November. The shop was kept open until that date. Things were relatively quiet until the *Kristallnacht*. Early in the morning at 6am they broke up the door, they beat up my brother for being accused of sleeping with an Aryan girl, they took my parents away to a hotel at the Schwedenplatz. [...] My parents returned a few days later and within a week, they had to sign over their company to a *Verwalter* [administrator]. I believe his name was Leopold Skopelik. He had worked for my father for many years and turned out to be a Nazi sympathizer.⁶⁸

As this story shows, many Germans or Austrians used the Anschluss and the dispossession process of hundreds of thousands of their fellow citizens to gain advantage. This could also explain why a large part of the population did not oppose the mass dispossession, expulsion, and later murder of their neighbours. Thousands of "Aryan" citizens used the situation to enrich themselves by taking property or businesses for a very cheap price from Jewish citizens. The consequences for the Viennese economy were fatal. As a stenographic protocol of a November 1938 meeting led by Hermann Göring indicates, out of 17,000 Jewish businesses, only 3,000 to 3,500 were expected to be taken over and the businesses maintained. The others were expected to be shut down.⁶⁹ A commission of historians which analysed the Nazi dispossessions in 2003, however, has recommended that the official Nazi figures concerning the

66 NAA, B884, Gustav Bratspies.

67 Jarolim, "Detention of Jews."

68 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (sound recording).

69 Stenographische Niederschrift (Teilübertragung) der Besprechung über die Judenfrage unter Vorsitz des Reichsluftfahrtministers und Beauftragten für den Vierjahresplan, Hermann Göring, am 12. November 1938, o.D. inin: IMT, Bd. XXVIII, Dok. 1816-PS.

numbers of Jewish businesses in Vienna be dealt with cautiously, since there were significant disparities between the different official records.⁷⁰ According to a November 1939 report of the Vermögensverkehrsstelle, there were 33,263 Jewish businesses in Austria at the time of the Anschluss. The most valuable 8,863 of them had an overall value of 201 million Reichsmark.⁷¹

The architect Richard Tandler is another typical example of how Jewish businesspeople were systematically deprived of their economic basis. In November 1938, his lease contract was officially cancelled, as a notice of termination issued on July 30, 1938, shows.⁷² The official reason for the termination was noted as follows: "The renter is a Jew. According to §19, Abs.1 of the tenancy act of 1929 this is an important reason for the cancellation." As a consequence, Tandler tried to escape the country with the help of an Australian friend, who happened to reside in Vienna at the time. In a letter this friend wrote to the Australian government to get support for Tandler, he described the situation as follows:

The Jewish shops are empty, their business under special control of the state, and a big lot of trades and shops passed yet in other hands—sold for a ridiculous sum of money! The number of suicides is horrendous. I finish. Mister Tandler himself has suffered very much—and therefore I implore you to help him.⁷³

An Australian friend of Irma and Hans Weiss, who had run an artificial flower making business in Vienna, described their situation in similar terms:

Prior to their arrival in Australia the year mentioned [1939], they were in business in Austria, had been cruelly treated, their business and money on hand taken possession of and were driven from their place of business. [...] All of their property was confiscated by the Nazis, about 2,000 pounds in all.⁷⁴

70 Clemens Jabloner et al., eds., *Veröffentlichungen der Österreichischen Historikerkommission. Vermögensentzug während der NS-Zeit sowie Rückstellungen und Entschädigungen seit 1945 in Österreich: Band 1* (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 2003), 97.

71 Walch, *Materielle Wiedergutmachung*, 6.

72 Termination notice, 1938 (in the possession of Sue Copolov).

73 Letter from Prof. Dr. Greitemann to A. Behrend, May 13, 1938 (in the possession of Sue Copolov).

74 NAA, A12217, Weiss Hans.

As mentioned in the letter above, the number of suicides was extraordinarily high among Jewish entrepreneurs. On April 28, 1938, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency sent out the alarming announcement that more than 2,000 Jewish Austrians had committed suicide since the Anschluss.⁷⁵ Sylvia Cherny's father, Robert Mahler, owned the company Gebrüder Mahler, a business holding consisting of five paper mills in Lower and Upper Austria. Because of the company's size and economic importance, he was threatened with imprisonment in Dachau just one week after the Anschluss. In her memoirs, Sylvia Cherny described the tragic events around March 17, 1938:

In those days, children led a sheltered life but I was well aware that all was not well with many of our relatives. My father's cousins Beppo and Willie Mahler were arrested and sent to Dachau Concentration Camp near Munich. On 17 March 1938, during a private lesson in my room, the Gestapo raced through our apartment looking for my father. They looked in cupboards and under beds and finally said they would return. My father came home at midday and we told him to go out again and stay away. By evening, the Gestapo had not returned and during the night, my father took his life. My brother and I were not told the truth but that he had left the country.⁷⁶

After his suicide, an "Aryan" person declared as capable of directing the business, a so-called Aryanizer, took over the company.⁷⁷ The bigger and wealthier the company, the quicker and more rigorous were the actions undertaken by the Nazis. Annemarie Mutton's family owned the Hotel Metropole in Vienna, one of the biggest and most modern hotels in the city. The Nazis, who needed suitable space for their growing administration, confiscated the Metropole in March 1938 and used it as the headquarters for the Gestapo, the secret state security police. Mutton described the confiscation process as follows:

The Metropole was taken over by the Nazis. It was the only hotel built in recent times, so it had an adequate number of escalators, was spacious, had apartments, cellars, lofts, cool rooms. I was required to clear my mother's apartment and the two storerooms in the loft within 24 hours.

75 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, April 28, 1938, 1–2.

76 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 13.

77 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 15.

All the goods were confiscated by the forwarding agents as by rights belonging to the 3rd Reich.⁷⁸

All of the rigorous measures were aimed at outlawing Jewish companies. The government even criminalized and punished every form of support for Jewish entrepreneurs. An official decree, enacted on April 22, 1938, made it clear that every form of support for Jewish companies, particularly cooperation with Jewish partners would be “punished with jail or an expensive fine.”⁷⁹

4.3 A Cycle of Violence and Outlawing: Attempts to Survive in National Socialist Vienna

As soon as the Nazis seized power in Austria, they began to oppress and outlaw everyone they regarded as opponents of the state or as racially inferior. Austrian Jews were hit particularly hard since the Nazis implemented all the regulations and discriminatory laws they had developed in Germany over a period of five years within only a few weeks. The process of outlawing encompassed all areas of society and Jews were gradually pushed out of public spaces. In addition to the restrictive actions against Jewish workers and entrepreneurs described above, the Nazi government enacted a series of measures to prevent Jewish citizens from living normal lives.

The following official measures are just a small selection of the many restrictions and acts of discrimination and persecution Jews had to suffer in the first year of the Nazi occupation. On May 2, 1938, the University of Vienna prohibited Jews from entering the campus.⁸⁰ Eighteen days later, the Nazis officially introduced the Nuremberg Laws in Austria. This brought an end to traditional school or university education for Jewish students, since they were then no longer allowed to attend learning facilities together with “Aryan” students. Instead, they were ordered to attend specially established Jewish schools, segregated from other pupils, where only Jewish teachers were allowed to teach.⁸¹

78 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

79 Verordnung gegen die Unterstützung der Tarnung jüdischer Gewerbebetriebe, 22.4.1938, in Werner Hoche, ed., *Die Gesetzgebung Adolf Hitlers für Reich, Preußen und Österreich, Heft 27, 16. April bis 15. Juli 1938* (Berlin: F. Vahlen, 1939), 321.

80 DÖW, Kundmachung des Rektorats der Universität Wien, 2. 5. 1938, UA Wien, 662 ex 1937/38, E 18.988.

81 Verordnungsblatt für den Dienstbereich des Österreichischen Unterrichtsministeriums bzw. des Ministeriums für innere und kulturelle Angelegenheiten, Abt. IV: Erziehung, Kultus und Volksbildung, Jg. 1938, Wien 1939, S. 35.

Regulations enacted on June 24 prohibited Jews from entering public parks. From July 6, they were prohibited to wear traditional Austrian clothing and costumes. September 30 brought an employment ban for Jewish doctors. From October 5, German-Jewish passports had to be marked with the infamous “J” stamp indicating the alleged Jewishness of their holder. On November 11, Jews were prohibited from possessing firearms. One day later they were no longer allowed to visit cinemas, theatres, concerts, and public exhibitions. One month later, the Nazis began to seize Jewish drivers’ licenses and registrations. On December 21, Jewish midwives and nurses were prohibited from practising.

Although these were only some of the measures taken against Jewish citizens, they give some impression of how life changed for them within a very short period of time. It is thus not surprising that the members of our sample group remembered the months they had to stay in National Socialist Austria as a sad, dangerous, and most of all incredibly insecure time. In May 1938, an Australian who was residing in Austria to undertake research in Austrian archives had met Richard Tandler who asked him to support his emigration. He subsequently wrote a letter of recommendation in which he described the situation of Jews in Austria in spring 1938:

Since the annexation of Austria by Germany, the situation of the Austrian Jews is insupportable. What I have heard and seen with my own eyes in Vienna is impossible to describe. I am a Roman-Catholic and no Jew, but I am, and many other Christians with me, ashamed, that these and such vexations and torments of the Jews are possible in a Christian state. I am ashamed to confess, that the vexations of the last times in Vienna seem to be repetitions of the Jewish persecutions in the Middle Ages. Their Christian friends in Vienna cannot help them, because the terror is very strong, and hard and every work or act of a Christian to support a Jew is regarded as revolution and must be paid also by vexation and often by incarceration. Jews are compelled to scrub streets. It is forbidden for a Christian to buy in a Jewish trade: No Jew can visit yet a theatre, the opera or a musical performance.⁸²

The younger members of the sample group who were students during their last months in Austria almost unanimously described the cold wind of change

82 Letter from Prof. Dr. Greitemann to A. Behrend, 13 May 1938 (in the possession of Sue Copolov).

the Nazi occupation brought to their situation. Reinhold Eckfeld was about to graduate from a *Gymnasium* in 1938 and recalled his situation as follows:

They evicted me from the *Gymnasium* [grammar school] that I went to in Döbling, when Hitler moved in. Anyhow, I had to leave in year seven in March 1938 and I was allowed to finish year seven in a school where all the other non-Aryan pupils were accommodated. But I was not allowed to enter year eight to do the matric, which was a pity.⁸³

Henry Teltscher was the same age as Eckfeld and recalled being in a similar situation:

After the Nazi takeover, Müller [one of his teachers] and pretty much all the other teachers and boys came to school bearing their swastikas. He said, it was the policy of the new regime that all Jews had to leave the country and it was important to be frank about this and try to achieve this in a cooperative way. [...] I only made it to the seventh of the eight years of secondary school.⁸⁴

He continued by describing how his parents wanted him to spend the time being in Austria acquiring practical skills that could be useful during his expected emigration: “there was the abrupt expulsion from my school and the hurried plans to learn something useful, something which might have helped us in making a living in our emigration to an as-yet unknown country.”⁸⁵ He further explained: “I did three courses: I learned to type [...]. I did a crash course in bookkeeping and propitiously, as turned out later on, a course in a medical diagnostic laboratory, run by a Doctor Löwy, a Jewish doctor.”⁸⁶ Hans Eisler recalled: “I went to Stubenbastei and stayed there until 1938 and then was transferred to a private school in Grinzing. It was a private school to which many Jewish boys went because they could no longer attend the *Gymnasium*.”⁸⁷

Most of the members of the sample group recalled the process of being socially ostracized and remembered how they and their families soon after

83 Reinhold Eckfeld, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, January 2017.

84 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 31.

85 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 51.

86 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 51.

87 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

the Anschluss realized that they could no longer participate in most of their social activities. In an interview, Hans Eisler noted: "My parents had lots of social contacts. And we used to go out often into the traditional Viennese coffee houses and all that ceased because of the restrictions when Hitler came."⁸⁸ For Elisabeth Ziegler, "the atmosphere in Vienna was impossible" after the Anschluss. She recalled:

I felt, I could not breathe anymore. I went to a park with my sister and the Nazis threw us out [...]. It was a terrible situation. At one stage, I was hit across the face by a Nazi officer.⁸⁹

In her memories, Viola Winkler connected the time after the Anschluss to an "absolute loss of security and feelings of helplessness. [...] There was nowhere you could turn to," she later recalled:

You could not do anything; you could not say anything. I saw my mother cleaning the streets. The other thing I also learned very quickly is that people we had known all of our lives were suddenly quite openly anti-Jewish and said nasty things and told the Nazis, "This is a Jew." [...] We trusted no one, because we did not know whom to trust. Fear was the main thing.⁹⁰

The Expressionist writer Paul Hirsch, who fled Vienna in 1939 at the age of 47, dealt intensively in his later writing with the outlawing and stigmatizing processes he suffered after the Nazis took over in Austria. His former homeland, he wrote in 1968, "had become a country, where the law turned into a system of coordinates with a deadly destination in which you were stuck." "The process of thinking," he continued, "had become an activity whose laws became externally determined."⁹¹ He also pointed out how friends and acquaintances suddenly distanced themselves from him. "There was just fear, and particularly loneliness. If you met a friend on the streets, he turned away, seeming to try to tell you with his eyes: 'Please, do not ask to talk to me [...].'"⁹² Hirsch also

88 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

89 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview (audio recording).

90 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

91 Paul Hatvani, "Zwei Prosastücke," 71–72.

92 Paul Hatvani, "Das Ameisenfragment," *Literatur und Kritik* 4 (1969): 336–350.

described how the Nazi rulers changed common linguistic policies and created their unified language, thus preventing counter voices and arguments from coming up. He stated, the “incubus of a ‘strange’ language had overcome us in the Nazi state and we were forced to adopt the language of the mighty.”⁹³ The only thing he could do, as he recalled, was to accept his fate “like a thunderstorm.”⁹⁴ Reinhold Eckfeld also described the strange situation when he met acquaintances on the street: “On the Lannerstraße, I encountered two of my former schoolmates, M. and E., both of them in SS uniforms. I had met M. just a day earlier, when we were seen together by an SS man entering his flat. I took a look at both of them. M. avoided looking me in the eye.”⁹⁵ The art historian Gertrude Langer, who generally did not talk much about her life in National Socialist Vienna, recalled the consequences of the Anschluss for artistic life in Vienna: “Before Hitler, there was a lot, but once Hitler took power, of course you know what happened. He declared everything as degenerate art and the Expressionists were thrown out of museums and things like that.”⁹⁶ Annemarie Mutton recalled how her domestic help turned away from her because of her alleged Jewishness: “After the Anschluss, our maid ‘Poldi’ stopped sleeping in our flat. [...] her Aryan presence was too good for us.” She continued: “if her actions then outraged me, now I see them in the light of my own subsequent experiences. For her, the Nazis must have seemed hope for change, hope that she may be the lady of the house, that she might be giving orders.”⁹⁷ Mutton also recalled the physical punishment and the degrading process of scrubbing the pavements that the Nazis ordered randomly selected Jews to do: “Jews were made to scrub anything and crowds stood round laughing, jesting, kicking. Solutions used were strong, biting into their skins. I immediately changed clothes to be appropriately dressed for such an ordeal.”⁹⁸ In a later interview,

93 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Paul Hatvani, “Beschreibung der Angst,” 1968 (unpublished manuscript).

94 Paul Hatvani, “Damals. Besinnung auf die Zeit des Dritten Reiches,” *Konfigurationen* (1970): 19–20.

95 “Die Lannerstraße herauf kommen meine beiden ehemaligen Schulkollegen M. und E., beide in SS-Uniform. Mit M. war ich noch tags vorher spazieren und des Abends in seiner Wohnung, wo ich dann von einem seiner ‘Kollegen’, einem SS-Mann gesehen wurde. Ich sehe den beiden entgegen und schaue recht unbekümmert und unbeteiligt drein. M. vermeidet verlegen meinen Blick.” (author’s translation): Martin Krist, ed., *Reinhold Eckfeld: Letzte Monate in Wien. Aufzeichnungen aus dem australischen Internierungslager 1949/41* (Vienna: Turia & Kant, 2002), 19.

96 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript).

97 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

98 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

Marie Bergel described the life-threatening situation for her and her family after March 1938: “In the meantime, my father was called up in the middle of the night and was imprisoned. My mother came to me the next morning and gave me some pearls to hide. I knew that the Nazis made Jews wash the pavements. And I knew I was not going to be doing that.”⁹⁹ She went on to describe how her mother reacted to her father’s incarceration: “my mother was like a statue. She became white and pale overnight. She did not talk anymore.”¹⁰⁰

4.4 Disaster Approaching: Remembering *Kristallnacht*

The restrictions against Jews were reason enough for many members of the Austrian Jewry to leave the country. About 80,000 people left between March 1938 and November 1938. Many more followed after the riots and the pogroms that peaked on the night of November 9/10, 1938. Encouraged by the success of their fast territorial expansion, the Nazi leadership increasingly ceased to care about the opinion of the international community. Consequently, they increased violent assaults against the Jewish population. The assault on a German diplomat in Paris on November 7 gave them a reason to enact a state-wide raid against the Jewish population. The ensuing pogroms that peaked on November 10/11¹⁰¹ were unique in German history. Never before and never afterward was the population confronted with an open and simultaneous enactment of antisemitic violence in all parts of the country.¹⁰² The events were euphemistically described as *Kristallnacht* (in English: the Night of Broken Glass) in reference to the large number of Jewish businesses and synagogues that were destroyed all over the country. They can be seen as a major “stepping stone from discrimination and exclusion of German and Austrian Jews to persecution and violence.”¹⁰³ “After this terror attack,” as historians Ulrich Baumann and François Guesnet noted, “Jews in the reach of the Nazi regime ceased to be (second class) citizens worthy of political or moral consideration,

99 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

100 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

101 Hans Mommsen, “Die Pogromnacht und ihre Folgen,” *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte* 10 (1988): 591–601, 592.

102 Nadine Deusing, “Die Reaktion der Bevölkerung auf die Judenverfolgungen in der Reichspogromnacht,” *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 10 (2008): 77–106, 79.

103 Ulrich Baumann and François Guesnet, “Kristallnacht—Pogrom—State Terror: A Terminological Reflection,” in *New Perspectives on Kristallnacht*, ed. Steven Ross (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2019), 1–24, 1.

but had become mere objects of police and Gestapo measures.”¹⁰⁴ The attacks convinced the remaining Jews in the Nazi state of their serious and dangerous situation. The consequences of the violent actions that took place that night were fatal: in the Nazi state overall, about 30,000 people were abducted and incarcerated. In Vienna alone, 27 people died, 88 were severely injured, 6,547 were imprisoned and 3,700 were taken to the Dachau concentration camp close to Munich.¹⁰⁵ All of the Jewish synagogues were destroyed, except for the synagogue in the Seitenstettengasse, which remained undamaged only because of the extreme fire hazard for the adjacent buildings.¹⁰⁶ The hatefulness and brutality of the actions against Jewish citizens during those two days was unprecedented and not only ranked prominently among the memories of the members of the sample group but also even engendered resistance among parts of the Nazi administration. As historian Hans Mommsen stated, the “criminal lynching actions against totally innocent people provoked a general indignation. Even high-ranking Nazi officials criticized them unreservedly.”¹⁰⁷ Evidence from Viennese Nazi circles supported that perspective. The protocols of a meeting of the Gauwirtschaftsamt (Gau Economic Office) dated November 12, 1938, for example, showed a great deal of unhappiness with the brutality of the actions:

The participants’ opinion about the consequences of the actions are unanimously rejection and despair about the scandalous scenes, which will severely harm the reputation of the Reich and the party. At least two high-ranking office holders have declared that every decent citizen should support another political party [than the Nazi Party], if one existed today. All the people congregated here today have ensured that pogroms and vandalism cannot be the right means to solve the “Jewish question.” Also, they noted that robbery and plundering would only increase the people’s and party members’ disgust and resistance. [...] It was declared in this meeting that the political leadership has interfered in the most brutal

104 Baumann and Guesnet, “Kristallnacht,” 7.

105 Erinnern.at, “Das Novemberpogrom in Wien—zwei Brüder sahen sich zum letzten Mal,” accessed January 26, 2022, <https://www.erinnern.at/bundeslaender/wien/bibliothek/dokumente/der-novemberpogrom-in-wien-zwei-brueder-sehen-sich-zum-letzten-mal>.

106 Walch, *Materielle Wiedergutmachung*, 2.

107 Mommsen, “Die Pogromnacht,” 599.

manner during the recent time and that the *Kreisleiter* [Nazi Party district leaders] do not see and know what great damage they cause.¹⁰⁸

Most of the 26 members of the sample group were lucky enough to have left the country before the pogroms. The part of this book which follows will delve deeper into the memories of those who experienced the events first-hand and thus reveal how they remembered what happened in November 1938. Only two years after the events, Reinhold Eckfeld described impressively in the comprehensive memoirs he wrote in 1940 in an Australian internment camp how he recalled the events that followed *Kristallnacht*.¹⁰⁹ First, he was arrested on the street and taken to a police station in Vienna's 19th district. As Eckfeld recalls, the police station was crowded with people. During their wait, many of them described where they were arrested. He continued: "they were dragged out of their apartments, their beds, their businesses, or the tram. Many of them were forced to tear down the Dollinger synagogue, others were forced to do other manual work or exercises. They were beaten, kicked, insulted. Their money and valuables were stolen."¹¹⁰ The imprisoned Jews were declared *Schutzhäftlinge* (protective prisoners). Since they came to power in 1933, the Nazis had used that legal expression to incarcerate political enemies or people who did not match their racial criteria, officially to "secure" them against any public threats. Eckfeld further described how the Nazis treated their *Schutzhäftlinge* during the night of November 10. After being kept at a local police station, Eckfeld was taken to a larger camp, located in a Viennese police riding arena.

108 "Über die stimmungsmäßige Auswirkung der Aktion herrschte unter den Teilnehmern nur eine Meinung: Ablehnung und Erschütterung über die Tatsache, daß bei der Durchführung Skandalszenen vorgefallen sind, die das Ansehen der Partei und des Reiches aufs schwerste schädigen. So haben u. a. zwei Hoheitsträger erklärt, daß, wenn es heute eine andere Partei im Reiche geben würde, es Pflicht eines jeden anständigen Menschen sei, diese andere Partei zu unterstützen. Die Versammelten gaben einmütig ihrer Überzeugung dahin Ausdruck, daß Pogrome und Vandalismus nicht die Mittel sind, um die Judenfrage zu lösen, und daß Schändungen, Raub und Plünderung in der Bevölkerung und in weiten Kreisen der Parteigenossenschaft nur Abscheu hervorgerufen haben. [...] In der Sitzung wurde festgestellt, daß in letzter Zeit überhaupt seitens der politischen Leitung in rohester Form in das Wirtschaftsleben eingegriffen wird, daß die Kreisleiter herumfuhrwerken und nicht imstande sind, zu übersehen, welches Unheil sie anrichten." (author's translation): Aktennotiz des SS-Hauptscharführers Seliger über die Sitzung im Gauwirtschaftsamt wegen der Vorfälle am 10.11.1938, 12. 11. 1938, in Tuviah Friedmann, "Die Kristall-Nacht," *Haifa* 18 (1972).

109 See Krist, *Reinhold Eckfeld*.

110 Krist, *Reinhold Eckfeld*, 22.

“Run, run,” they shouted at us. We ran through an illuminated hallway and were herded across a courtyard 30 metres long. Soldiers beat us from both sides [...]. One could hear the suppressed screams of the beaten, the clattering of shoes on the stones of the courtyard and at the back of the corridor the dull blows to the back [...]. As I was in the middle of the courtyard, I suddenly received a strong blow on the middle of my nose, and blood ran down immediately.¹¹¹

The German police had arrested Bruno Bush the very same day. He experienced similarly cruel treatment. However, in contrast to the case of the younger Reinhold Eckfeld, the Nazis sent him to Dachau concentration camp after he had spent a few days in Viennese police stations. He described his suffering during those days as follows:

I was loathing [*sic*] around and on the 10th of November was the big roundup from all the Jews. I came to the police. I was arrested in my parents' shop. They took me. After we was two days in the police station [*sic*], from there, we was transferred to these old riding school [*sic*]. From there, I was sent to the Elisabethpromenade—this is a very big city jail. And after, I was transported under fixed bayonets by the ss to the [railway] station and from there directly to Dachau. I was transported in cattle trains to Dachau. It was a horrible trip. We were squashed like sardines. When we arrived in Dachau, some Jews got *meschugge* [crazy] and some played up *meschugge*.¹¹²

Those imprisoned in Dachau experienced violence that was hitherto unknown. Within a very few weeks, the number of deaths in Dachau rose to 185.¹¹³ Bruno Bush recalled his time at Dachau concentration camp as sheer horror: “The ss punished us with *Ochsenziemer* [bullwhips]. After that, we had to stay in long

111 Author's translation: “Laufschritt, Laufschritt, brüllt man uns entgegen. Wir laufen durch einen erleuchteten Hausflur, werden weitergetrieben über einen Hof, 30 Meter lang. Man schlägt von beiden Seiten auf uns ein. [...] Man hört das unterdrückte Schreien der Geschlagenen, das Klappern der Schuhe auf den Steinendes Hofes und hinten im Hausflur die dumpfen Schläge in den Rücken [...]. Wie ich in der Mitte des Hofes bin, erhalte ich plötzlich einen starken Schlag mitten auf die Nase, und das Blut rinnt sofort hinunter.” Krist, *Reinhold Eckfeld*, 26.

112 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush Oral history interview (audio recording).

113 Myrah Adams, Benigna Schönhagen, and Thomas Stöckle, eds., *Die Nacht als die Synagogen brannten: Texte und Materialien zum Novemberpogrom 1938* (Stuttgart: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1998), 23.

lines. They put us in barracks, changed our clothes to blue and white striped pajamas and shaved our heads. We had no mattresses, just hay.”¹¹⁴ After a while, Bush got sick because of the terrible conditions in the camp: “I got an abscess on my lung which was not properly treated.”¹¹⁵ It took seven months until Bush was released from Dachau. In June 1939, he was allowed to leave the camp. He described how his caretaker did not recognize him after his return. He was taken to a Jewish hospital, where he remained for another three months.¹¹⁶

Hans Eisler remembered the violent happenings as follows:

Things were relatively quiet until *Kristallnacht*, November 10th. That was when, early in the morning at five o'clock, the Nazis, the brown shirts broke up the door, they beat up my brother. They accused him of having slept with an Aryan girl. They made me fetch money from where my father said it was in the safe. I had to count it, and they then took my parents away to—I think it was a Hotel on the Schwedenplatz. They were put under custody in a hotel on the Schwedenplatz. I got pistol whipped—I still have a sign on the back of my head. My brother was taken away to Dachau. My parents were put into the hotel for interrogation. I was left on my own in the apartment, scared stiff. I hid in the toilet and the janitor downstairs in a Nazi uniform came and supplied me with food. And I remember, for three or four days, he brought me food. [...]. My parents returned after about a week. They had to sign over all decisions to a person named Leo Skopilik. He turned out to be a Nazi and he was made in charge of the Firma Ludwig Eisler [his father's company]. He had worked for my father for many years. My father got no compensations.¹¹⁷

Sylvia Cherny, who was with her younger brother at their parents' house in the village of Wieselburg in Lower Austria, recalled the events of *Kristallnacht* as follows:

On *Kristallnacht*, the local policemen in Wieselburg came to arrest my brother and me. Fortunately, Dr. Trierenberg, the firm's Aryan partner, who had taken over the running of the factories, happened to be in

114 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush Oral history interview (audio recording).

115 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush Oral history interview (audio recording).

116 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush Oral history interview (audio recording).

117 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

Wieselburg on business. He reassured the policemen that we would not leave the house and we were left alone.¹¹⁸

Henry Teltscher, who had managed to flee just a few days earlier when the first organized and violent assaults began to take place, summarized the horrors of *Kristallnacht* he had narrowly managed to escape:

I finally left on the evening of the third November. Six days later "Kristallnacht" took place, the night when throughout Germany Jewish shops were smashed and looted, synagogues burned down and the majority of Jewish males were arrested; some went home fairly soon, some were taken to concentration camps. They came to get me too [...]. Actually, rather surprisingly in view of the very thorough record keeping of the Nazi apparatus; the appropriate authorities no doubt had recorded the fact that I had left, but a lot of these actions were left to local bands, so they could give expression to their own levels of bastardy and sadism.¹¹⁹

4.5 A Community of Fate

The memories of the members of our sample group indicate why authors such as Marlene Norst had called Austrian refugees in Australia a "community of fate." Despite their widely comparable upbringing and the fact that most of them belonged to the urban middle classes (allowing for apparent social and educational differences), the Anschluss was the main event responsible for turning them into a community. For all of them, the German annexation of Austria changed life dramatically. They all described the events that followed March 11 as unreal and staggering. As their memories showed, they became discriminated against, oppressed, assaulted, dispossessed, and outlawed, most of them because of their Jewishness, others, because of their political convictions. What dominated all depictions in this chapter was a clear and frightening feeling of insecurity and hopelessness. The members of this group recognized that they had no basis for existence in the Nazi state. For all of them, emigration was the obvious choice for continuing, if not saving, their lives. Another striking observation that surfaced through all these depictions was the fact that friends, colleagues, and neighbours had suddenly turned away from them.

¹¹⁸ Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 15.

¹¹⁹ Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 56.

The members of this group experienced a dramatic blow to their lives: they lost their status as members of civil society and experienced a devaluation of their knowledge and cultural capital. This must have been a profound and distressing experience for most of them. Traditionally, education, as we saw in the last chapter, had been a most valuable guiding principle in their lives. Many of them had held respected professional positions and thus had a high social status. The fast introduction of the Nuremberg Laws changed that. Thus, besides the dispossession of their financial capital, their valuables, their companies and their financial assets, the Nazis indirectly devalued their cultural capital by prohibiting them from attending schools and universities or by preventing them from operating their businesses and participating in most social activities.

“I Am Not Going to Stay Here a Minute Longer”: Escaping the Nazis’ Clutches

Between March 1938 and December 1939, all of this book’s protagonists managed to escape the country, by very different routes. These months were the most dangerous time of their lives. As we saw in the last section, they had lost their jobs and houses, they were abused by the Nazi authorities, mobs on the street, and even their neighbours and friends. All of them were deprived of most of their financial capital due to Nazi regulations, leaving them with only their cultural and social capital with which to affect their escape.

During their time in the Nazi state, the most pressing issue for this book’s protagonists had become leaving the country. However, without significant financial means, achieving this goal had become very difficult. At the same time, finding a safe country willing to accept them became increasingly difficult, since the dramatic actions against hundreds of thousands of Jews in Nazi Germany that unfolded during the course of 1938 had triggered major waves of refugee migration and an increased pressure on host destinations. As a result, many countries that had offered at least limited protection to German refugees until March 1938 closed their borders, which led to an increased illegalization of refugee migration. Many of those who wanted to leave Austria had to do so without legal documents. Out of our sample group, a significant share of 27 percent had no choice but to leave the country undocumented and thus “illegally.”

Connections to people abroad and, more generally speaking, networks, and the refugees’ social capital turned out to be crucial assets for survival during this time. This section highlights the questions of whether and how the book’s protagonists used existing networks and their social capital to facilitate their escape. It also analyses how they built up new networks to get out of the country. In this context, it will also look at the quality of their networks, show the types that were used for their escapes, and clarify how they recalled the process of their escape. This includes the search for triggering experiences which could explain exactly why they finally left.

5.1 "How Could I Stay Here, When My Wife Isn't Allowed to Sit on a Park Bench?": Experiences That Triggered the Escape

As the previous chapter revealed, life in National Socialist Austria had become unbearable for this book's protagonists. It was clear to all of them at a certain point between the Anschluss and the outbreak of the war that they had to leave their homeland. In the following pages, I would like to analyse the specific, individual reasons the members of this group recalled as triggering factors for their escape. This will give insights into the many different individual reactions to the Nazi oppression and can also help to explain why some left earlier and others later.

Out of this book's 26 protagonists, a majority of around 70 percent left Austria in 1938. Only one-third (eight people) left in 1939. Almost all of them stated their reasons for escape either in interviews or in their memoirs. Their motives ranged from experiences of violence and abuse they had personally suffered to feelings of insecurity that made their situation in Austria unbearable. Some described the violent assaults of the November pogroms as the ultimate trigger for their escape, others noted that the Nazis had forced them to leave, threatening them with death or incarceration.

Most of the members of the sample group fled because they had experienced violence in Austria. Charles Anton left in summer 1938. A friend of his later described the events that triggered his flight as follows: "Charles, and his family saw the writing on the wall when Hitler appeared to be unstoppable."¹ Another friend added: "When they had heard about former Jewish Austrian army officers who had been imprisoned in concentration camps and consequently 'were kicked to death,' emigration had become the only reasonable solution."²

Kurt Selby, who left Austria at the same time, decided to escape for the same reasons, as his daughter recalled during an interview: "When my father saw that Jews were attacked in the tram, he decided to get out quickly. That was the deciding point."³ Sylvia Cherny, who left in 1939 on a *Kindertransport*,⁴ recalled being abused and attacked by neighbours and the local population

1 Sponar, *Snow in Australia*, 24.

2 Leon Smith (friend of Anton and his successor as president of the AAC) in discussion with the author (sound recording), Sydney, March 2016.

3 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

4 Gerda Hofreiter, *Allein in die Fremde: Kindertransporte von Österreich nach Frankreich, Großbritannien und in die USA 1938–1941* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2010).

in her hometown, the village of Wieselburg in the state of Lower Austria. She described how her family and her nanny were already trying to get her and her younger brother out of the country in summer 1938:

Eventually, we had to return [from a summer stay with relatives in Vorarlberg] with Ilse [her nanny], our cousin Georg and our grandmother's cook Anna. There, we spent our time doing some schoolwork at home, playing the piano and not venturing very far afield, because of attacks from the locals. [...] In the meantime, Ilse tried unsuccessfully to get us to England.⁵

Marie Bergel had similar reasons to leave the country. "In those days they started to make the Jews kneel down on the pavement and wash the pavement. And I knew I was not going to do that. I won't. And it did not happen to me," she stated in a later interview.⁶ She also mentioned how her father was threatened by Nazi authorities: "He came home from prison. When he came home [...], they [Nazi authorities] said, you know, by the first of July you have to leave the country. And he said, I have nowhere to go. And the answer was to jump into the Danube, without a visa. And that was the only thing, he ever told us."⁷ Elisabeth Ziegler even recalled being physically attacked, as she later stated: "The atmosphere in Vienna was impossible. I felt I could not breathe anymore. I went to a park with my sister and the Nazis threw us out of that park. It was a terrible situation. At one point, I was hit across the face by a Nazi."⁸ For John Hearst, being physically abused was the trigger for his decision to leave the country. In a later interview, he recalled:

The moment I got out [of a Nazi prison], the next Sunday the Nazis organized Jew-chasings. Everybody that they could get hold of was arrested and beaten. Anyway, I was dragged into the streets and then we had to march into a brewery, where they put us into cellars and bashed us up. They kept us there all day, at 5 o'clock they miraculously asked us to get out and to go home. On the way out one of the ss-men said to me: "Did you get hurt?" I said no, no, no. I did not get hurt. [...] My back was bruised

5 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 15.

6 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

7 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

8 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview (audio recording).

from top to bottom. Anyway, I was glad to get out and in this particular moment, I decided "I am not going to stay here a minute longer."⁹

Viola Winkler, who managed to leave the country with her mother in 1939, recalled her overwhelming desire to leave Nazi Austria after members of her family were abused and even deported:

Nazis in uniforms appeared virtually everywhere. You saw black cars on the street, parking in front of houses, their inhabitants were taken away. One of those who "disappeared" was my grandmother. They brought her to Theresienstadt, where she later died. Sometimes people were forced to clean the streets with caustic soda that burned their skin. One of them was my mother. [...] I had a feeling of absolute helplessness. I knew we could not live under these conditions, but how could we get out?¹⁰

For others, the sense of insecurity became unbearable at different points of their lives in the Nazi state. As a member of the underground Communist Party and of the Worker's Union, Grete Vanry belonged to a group that had to expect immediate Nazi oppression. Like many left-wing activists, she had to leave the country right after the Anschluss in March 1938. Only two days after German troops had marched into Vienna, Vanry crossed the border to Switzerland without a passport or any other form of legal documentation. A friend of hers later recalled the reasons for her escape:

Union activity was considered dangerous by the Nazi State Police and after the Anschluss Grete knew she had to leave Austria immediately, but getting a passport was impossible. Passports could be issued to Jewish citizens—stamped with a "J" of course—but no passports were allowed to non-Jews, and certainly not to people known to entertain left-wing ideas.¹¹

Hanny Exiner left Austria in June 1938 for similar reasons.¹² "Out of a need for security," as she later explained, she dropped her medical studies in Vienna and followed a call from her mentor Gertrud Bodenwieser to tour through South

9 Interview with John Hearst, n.d., (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

10 Winkler, "Augenblick"; USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

11 Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*, 266.

12 NAA, A434, Miss Johanna Kolm—Admission of relatives.

America with the Bodenwieser Ballet.¹³ Ernest Bowen and Annemarie Mutton were exposed to immediate threats in Vienna and thus decided to leave the country. "There were several house searches. Valuables had been confiscated and the maid had told the Nazis where they hid their jewellery. They decided to escape although they had no passports," as her daughter later described their situation in summer 1938.¹⁴ Paul Hirsch, who managed to get out of the country in summer 1939, recalled how he had withdrawn from all public and most social activities. He mentioned in one of his autobiographical works that "it was most important not to be recognized in public"¹⁵ and that he had tried "to accept his fate."¹⁶

Other members of the sample group made it clear that the Nazi authorities had directly forced them to leave the country. Gerhard Felser, who left in summer 1938, later mentioned in a letter, written in 1968, his reason for emigrating: "I left Austria after the German occupation because of my belief in democracy and the Jewish descent of my wife and arrived in Australia on 24th September, 1938."¹⁷ The protocols of a 1940 Australian police investigation, however, reveal further information about the circumstances of his escape and show that he was pressured by the Nazis to divorce his wife, which he refused to do, and thus decided to leave:

Felser was informed by the police in Vienna, where he had a business as a Public Accountant, immediately Austria was usurped by Germany that he would have to divorce his wife as she was non-Aryan, but before any further action was taken in this regard he made arrangements and got out of the country as soon as possible.¹⁸

The architect Richard Tandler was also forced to leave the country after his lease contract was cancelled and his license to operate his business was terminated because of his Jewish heritage.¹⁹ Paul Herzfeld and his family were forced to flee because of their Catholic, conservative political stance. In a 1940

13 NLA, 513110, Hanny Exiner interviewed by Michelle Potter, 1994 (audio recording).

14 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

15 Paul Hatvani, "Zwei Prosastücke," 71–72.

16 Paul Hatvani, "Damals: Besinnung auf die Zeit," 19–20.

17 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

18 NAA, A12508, FELSER Gerhard R born 24 March 1910; Ema Maria aged 29; nationality German; travelled per NIAGARA arriving in Sydney on 24 September 1938.

19 Private letter (written documents), 1938 (in the possession of Sue Copolov).

Australian police interrogation, he revealed the immediate reasons for his escape:

My father was in the Catholic Action and a member of the Austrian League. In March 1938, we were invaded. The third day after the invasion, my father was arrested, and taken away to prison, where he remained until July. He came out almost a broken man. I was detained for two days with him, arrested by the Gestapo, and taken to the police court, where I was kept for several weeks, for about 35 days. Then my father and I had to sign that we were prepared to leave the country, and we had to leave everything behind. My mother would have been allowed to stay, but naturally she followed us and so we went out of Austria.²⁰

Despite her advanced age of 60 years, Olga Agid was also driven to escape. Not much is known about the circumstances of her flight. Immigration records indicate that she arrived in Australia on May 1, 1939, and that "she had to leave Austria immediately" and "she could not even bring any personal papers with her."²¹ The same holds true for Irma Weiss, who arrived in Sydney in 1939, aged 52. Immigration records indicate that the Weiss family's company and their property was seized by the Nazis and that they were given only a short period of time to organize their escape and leave the country. These records, based on an interrogation of Irma Weiss and her husband, Hans, stated the circumstances of their flight as follows: "They were in business in Austria, had been cruelly treated, their business and money on hand taken possession of and were driven from their place of business."²² A friend of hers, who was interrogated by Australian police about the Weiss family, further stated of Hans Weiss: "All of his property was confiscated by the Nazis, about 2,000 pounds in all and he was forced to flee his native country owing to his Jewish origin."²³

The architect Gustav Bratspies even had to sign a declaration that he would leave the country immediately. This practice was not unusual for the Nazis, who at the time wanted to force Jews out of the country. Usually, undesired persons, whom the regime wanted to remove from the country, were kept in concentration camps for a considerable duration. They were only set free after they had signed a declaration that they would leave the country within a certain period of time. One of Bratspies' relatives later explained his critical

20 NAA, MP529/3/0, Tribunal 2/Herzfeld.

21 NAA, A435, Olga Agid.

22 NAA, A12217, Weiss Hans.

23 NAA, A12508, Hans and Irma Weiss.

situation as follows: “He was interned in the KZ Buchenwald [concentration camp] and after his release was given one week to leave the country.”²⁴ Bruno Bush had a similar and life-threatening experience. As he noted in an interview, he was only released from Dachau concentration camp after his parents were able to produce tickets for his emigration to Shanghai.²⁵ However, due to his bad medical condition caused by his months-long stay in Dachau, he was not able to leave the country but had to spend two months in a Jewish clinic to recover. In an interview conducted with him in Australia, he depicted the critical situation that led to his escape as follows:

The most significant part was to walk from the camp to the railway station. That was horrible—imagine I had over 40-degree fever. And suddenly I had to march *im Gleichschritt* [in lockstep]—one-two—to the station. And of course, I made a few steps and then I started to collapse. And there was an SS-man with a bicycle and he followed us, and he said to the others: “Take him, help him so we get to the station.” When I was back in Vienna, I took the tram and went home. And when I came home, there was in front of the house the caretaker. He looked at me but he could not recognize me. Then I saw my mother walking and I called out “Mutti” and she did not recognize me. And on the next day, we went to the Rothschild-Spital in Vienna. They had a special examination and they reserved a bed for me straight away. I stayed there over three months. Then the SS wanted me to leave the country. Every *Jude* [Jew] in a KZ [concentration camp] became automatically *ausgewiesen*—meaning that they forced me to leave the country. However, I got a certificate from the doctor that I am still in hospital so I can’t move out. My name was on a list of an illegal transport out of the country.²⁶

The pogroms of November 1938 were another crucial element that convinced many Jewish Germans and Austrians of the necessity of leaving. Three of this book’s protagonists recalled those events as a trigger for their decision to leave. “My father was held in high regard by many non-Jewish persons. They [his parents] felt protected until *Kristallnacht*,” Hans Eisler recalled in a later interview.²⁷ On the night of November 10/11, Nazi party members raided his family’s

24 Jarolim, “Detention of Jews.”

25 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush Oral history interview (audio recording).

26 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush Oral history interview (audio recording).

27 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

apartment. He was beaten and left alone in the apartment, his parents were incarcerated and his brother was sent to Dachau concentration camp. Eisler further noted that his parents, after returning from the police station, had organized his and his brother's escape. However, he continued, "My parents did not try very hard to escape Austria. My father was 77. They thought they would be left in peace."²⁸ Gertrude and Karl Langer also left the country after the pogroms had taken place. In Australia, Karl Langer later recalled his motives for leaving: "How can I stay here, when my wife isn't allowed to sit on a park bench?"²⁹ A friend of the Langers later recalled: "Following the *Kristallnacht* outrages, they managed to leave their beloved Vienna."³⁰ Gertrude Langer, however, described that she would have liked to have left earlier. Due to her husband's strong roots in Vienna and Austria more generally, however, they waited until the pogroms convinced them of leaving:

I was very apprehensive long before Hitler marched in, that one really should not speak. I felt very strongly that the conditions for architects in Austria were not very good anyhow and I mentioned a couple of times to Karl that it might be a good idea to go elsewhere where the opportunities are better, like America, for instance. But Karl just wouldn't hear of it. It was even difficult for me because, after all, we loved our country. I mean, we just loved Vienna and Karl was very rooted in Austria. It was just sort of talked of a little but not taken seriously. But before Hitler marched in, I became serious about it and Karl still did not believe it would happen.³¹

Reinhold Eckfeld also found strong words to describe how his decision to leave Austria came into being:

One thing became totally clear to me after the events around 10 November. If anybody in the future would develop the plan of killing Hitler or another high party leader, this would cause the most dreadful bloodshed much crueler than what happened on 10 November. Every Jew who was be found in the street would be immediately kicked to death, regardless of whether they were men, women, or children. [...] From this

28 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

29 Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*, 153.

30 Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*, 153.

31 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 32.

moment on, I became very much interested in emigration. November 10 left no doubts that I had to leave under any circumstances.³²

5.2 Social Capital and the Different Networks Used by Refugees to Get Out of the Country

We have just learnt why this book's protagonists decided to leave the country. However, the question of how they managed to get out remains. Social networks, ties, and relationships played an important role for this step and existing research shows that networks, as an important form of social capital, were crucial assets for refugees.³³ Consequently, the study of networks as connecting elements between migrants and non-migrants has gained a prominent position within migrant studies. However, not much work has been done to describe historical networks. Studying these, therefore, presents significant challenges. Firstly, the broad range of networks existing in different locations and during different phases of the refugees' lives are difficult to capture. Secondly, most of the sources for a historical study are neither uniform nor equally available. Thus, when analysing historical networks, we need to "find ways to demonstrate connections empirically, even when direct evidence is not there."³⁴

Social structure consists largely of expectations. They shape the ways in which people behave. The same holds true for the expectations people think others have of them. In this sense, this analysis takes a look at the different forms and qualities of networks, analysing the basis of networking processes, of individual expectations refugees had of their networks.³⁵ This approach, as shown in an earlier work,³⁶ forms our understanding of the nature and the uses of historical refugee networks and aids the comprehension of migration and integration not only as an individual decision but rather as a "social product" and the outcome of the interaction of many factors.³⁷

32 Krist, *Reinhold Eckfeld*, 49, 52.

33 Strobl, "Social Networks"; Bourdieu, "The Forms," 47.

34 Susie J. Pak, "Writing Biography as a History of Networks: Why the Story of J. P. Morgan Needs Jacob H. Schiff," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 55 (2014): 69–75, 73.

35 The term "mental realities" has been used in sociology and philosophy to describe perceptions and expectations; Charles Tilly described it as "the meaning people assign to their actions," see Tilly, *Identities, Boundaries*, 3; John Rogers Searle defined it as "the reality of consciousness and intentionality," see: Searle, "Meaning, Mind and Reality," 178; Fuhse, "The Meaning," 53; Strobl, "Social Networks," 53–79.

36 Strobl, "Social Networks," 53–79.

37 Boyd, "Family networks," 642.

Although there is a long research tradition on social networks in sociology and anthropology dating back to the 1950s,³⁸ the "emerging domain of historical network research is still in its formative phase," as described in the 2017 inaugural issue of the *Journal of Historical Network Research*.³⁹ Sociologist Harrison White, one of the pioneers of network research, described the whole social world as consisting of meaningful structured networks. He situated the relational definition and negotiation of the identities of the involved actors at the heart of social networks.⁴⁰ White's thoughts inspired sociologist Jan Fuhse to develop a theoretical framework to explore the interplay of structure and meaning in networks. His thoughts are based upon the idea that networks are "composed of social constructs such as expectations or identities."⁴¹ In contrast to quantitative studies of social network analyses, which treat social structures as mechanically evolved and dedicate less space to individual experiences, this part of the book is focused on individual expectations and the meaning individuals attributed to their networks, in order to analyse the types, quality, and behaviour of networks beyond a systemic level. This chapter is particularly concerned with forms of meaning that "circulate in communication" and thus can be identified in biographical memories and in stories that were told, or in identities attributed in these stories.⁴² I analyse the level of "meaning structures," which allows us to question why something happened in social networks.⁴³ Meaning structure can be analysed through definitions of identities and the refugees' expectations of their networks. Expectations are guided by relationships or ties among people and networks evolve through the nurturing of relationships.⁴⁴ As the sociologist Charles Tilly claims, social networks as complex social phenomena are best understood as the structure of interrelating ties "creating memories, shared understandings, and recognizable routines."⁴⁵

38 For an overview about the early development of the concept, see J. Clyde Mitchell, "Social Networks," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 3 (1974): 279–299.

39 Christian Rollinger et al., "Editors' Introduction," *Journal of Historical Network Research* 1 (2017): i–vii, iv.

40 White, *Identity and Control*, 31.

41 Fuhse, "The Meaning," 51.

42 Fuhse, "Theorizing Social Networks," 19.

43 Fuhse, "The Meaning," 52.

44 Douglas Gurak and Fe Caces, "Migration Networks and the Shaping of Migration Systems," in *International Migration Systems: A Global Approach*, ed. Mary M. Kritz, Lin Lean Lim, and Hania Zlotnik (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 150–176, 152.

45 Tilly, *Identities, Boundaries*, 7.

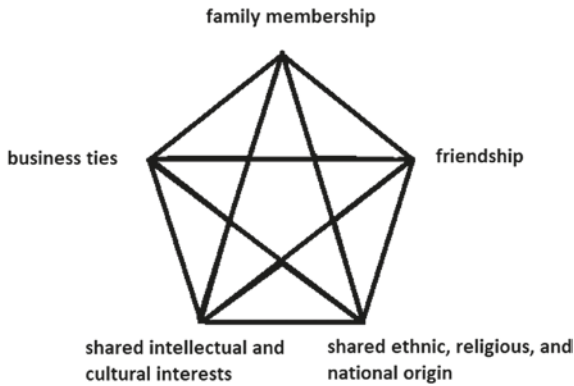


FIGURE 8 Different categories of ties that played a significant role in this book's protagonists' networks

An analysis of meaning structures in networks must ideally be based on models of ties (or relationships) and on the construction of identities in networks⁴⁶ to identify what people expected from their networks. In our case, the expectations of persecuted people in Vienna seem clearly identifiable, in contrast to, for example, historical actors in less life-threatening situations: they had to get out of the country under any circumstance. There is a large body of literature emphasizing the importance of kin and friendship networks in shaping and sustaining migration, and in his work, Fuhse recommends relationship models such as love, kinship, and friendship.⁴⁷ Sociologist Marko Valenta offers additional relationship models that could be of use for this analysis. He describes immigrant and refugee networks as based on different categories, from ties based on family membership, and friendship, to ties based on shared ethnic, religious, and national origin.⁴⁸ This analysis added two more categories that played a significant role in networks during the Second World War: business ties and ties based on shared intellectual and cultural interests.

This will also be the point when the book's perspective transgresses the Austrian—or at that time German—border to take a look at what happened more generally on the world stage and specifically in Australia. Since the international community was reluctant to take in refugees, tens of thousands were

46 Jan Fuhse and Gondal Neha, "Networks and Meaning," *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences* 16 (2015): 561–565, 564.

47 Gurak and Caces, "Migrant Networks," 150; Fuhse, "The Meaning," 53.

48 Marko Valenta, "Family Ties, Female Dependence, and Networking in Exile," *Dve Domovini/Two Homelands* 30 (2009): 7–28, 9.

stuck in Vienna, waiting desperately for a visa to any country that would offer them refuge. For the first time, countries as remote as Australia became a significant destination for Central European refugees.

Within the first three weeks of the Anschluss, the Australian consulate in Vienna received an estimate of 10,000 visa applications.⁴⁹ Urged by Jewish organizations, the Australian government gradually relaxed its strict immigration policies and allowed organizations, such as the Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS), to act as a guarantor for incoming refugees.⁵⁰ Very soon, however, the AJWS had exhausted its capacity as it received many desperate letters from refugees beseeching it to help secure them landing permits.⁵¹ In 1938, the organization acted as sponsor for about one-tenth of all incoming Jewish refugees. Like almost all of this book's protagonists, the majority of those who arrived before the war managed to obtain official landing permits without a sponsor by producing at least 200 pounds of so-called "landing money."⁵²

International responses to the humanitarian catastrophe in Germany were fairly toothless. The League of Nations, for example, tried to formulate agreements to provide protection for refugees, however, its activities never exceeded the scope of ad hoc measures without a substantial impact. Moreover, the international community was not even capable of agreeing upon a term that would recognize the vulnerable situation of refugees. Consequently, during the 1930s, no general definition of refugee status, nor any standardized measure of international protection, existed.⁵³ It would not be till July 1951, when the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees took place, that the United Nations principally governed international refugee law and clarified the term "refugee."⁵⁴ In July 1938, Australian delegates participated in a conference in the French spa town of Évian-les-Bains to discuss an international response to the refugee crisis. The conference turned out to be a "dismal failure," as historian Klaus Neumann put it.⁵⁵ Australia, like most of the other participants, maintained its negative position on the liberalization of its immigration policy.⁵⁶

49 Blakeney, *Jewish Refugees*, 90.

50 Rutland, *Jews in Australia*, 57.

51 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 36.

52 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 41.

53 John Vrachnas, Kim Boyd, Mirko Bagaric, and Penny Dimopoulos, *Migration and Refugee Law: Principles and Practice in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 173.

54 Comp. Andreas Zimmermann, *The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol: A Commentary*, Oxford Commentaries on International Law (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

55 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 36.

56 Rutland, *Australia*, 57.

Jewish and political refugees had become a growing issue for the country's migration policy makers, despite their comparatively small numbers.⁵⁷ For the first time, the Australian public was involved in a vigorous debate about the merits of resettling refugees, according to Neumann.⁵⁸ Potential asylum-seekers (to use a modern term) had to meet strict requirements influenced by antisemitic and racist criteria. In late 1937, a report of the Department of the Interior outlined the Australian government's stance on dealing with refugees. The report stated that the government did not distinguish between ordinary migrants and refugees. All refugees were regarded as regular migrants, able and willing to produce enough financial capital to cater for their own needs.⁵⁹ Additionally, all non-British nationals had to be in possession of a landing permit when entering Australia. Finally, as the memorandum highlighted, the government was wary of the "inherent difficulty of complete assimilation of people of Jewish race, who always retain their identity as Jews."⁶⁰

The arrival of refugees coincided with a negative economic environment and a general distrust of non-British immigration.⁶¹ The influx of refugees fuelled the "electorate's latent xenophobia [...] as much as the government's own anti-alienism," Neumann wrote.⁶² At that time, the Australian government regarded Jews as a separate race, as a 1938 governmental memorandum in favour of emigration restrictions indicates:

[Jews are] highly intelligent as a class and usually make a success at whatever occupation or business they follow; but in view of their religious views and strict rules as regards marriage, they remain a separate race and this failure to become properly assimilated in the country of adoption appears to create difficulties in any country where they form a considerable proportion of the population.⁶³

By and large, the general public mood was not in favour of the admission of large numbers of refugees, particularly if they were Jewish.⁶⁴ Some key

57 Comp. Paul Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933–45* (Kew: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1994), 115ff.

58 Klaus Neumann, *Refuge Australia: Australia's Humanitarian Record* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2004), 23.

59 Strobl, "Austrian-Jewish Refugees," 260.

60 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 32.

61 Comp. Strobl, "Experiences of Encounter."

62 Neumann, *Refuge Australia*, 25.

63 As cited in Markus, "Jewish Migration to Australia 1938–49," 20.

64 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 57.

Australian professional organizations and labour groups even openly opposed immigration to protect their own members.⁶⁵ Many Australians were afraid of the competition of migrants in the labour market and the "transfer of unemployment from one side of the world to another."⁶⁶ Subsequently, many refugees, including most members of our sample group, had initial difficulties finding a job. Since there was no governmental support, incoming refugees relied on charity organizations, relatives, and friends to cover the initial period after their arrival.⁶⁷

In their particular situation, refugees had little choice in selecting their country of destination. Most of them had to go wherever they got a visa for. Therefore, few of this book's protagonists specifically intended to move to Australia. None of them had been there prior to their flight. "We did not know much about the country. To hesitate and consider our options any longer was not wise," Paul Hirsch later summarized the position of many of his "fellows in misery."⁶⁸ In many cases, members of their prewar network had suggested they go to Australia. These connections also helped ease the difficult transition phase after their arrival, which was particularly important since the refugees faced a tight labour market and increasing animosity toward enemy aliens after the outbreak of the war.

As mentioned above, the people studied in this book relied on different types of networks. Often, different categories of ties played together in the complex process of getting people out of the country. Just over a third of them managed to get out of the country due to ties based upon shared ethnic, national, or religious origin. The second largest group—about one-quarter—came because of ties based on friendship. Another quarter of the escapes were facilitated through business ties. The remainder of the members of the sample group arrived in Australia due to the intervention of family members (11.5 percent) and as a result of the intervention of people who shared the same intellectual or cultural interests (7.7 percent).

Ten people from our sample group received support due to religious or ethnic community networks. Since there was no refugee status in most of the destination countries, including Australia, and refugees were to be seen as regular immigrants, refugee aid rested mainly in the hands of private aid organizations. In Austria, the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (Jewish Community) in Vienna helped tens of thousands of Jewish people with their emigration.

65 O'Brien, "Citizenship, Rights and Emergency Powers."

66 Richards, *Destination Australia*, 138.

67 Strobl, *Ambivalent Experiences of Encounter*; Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 52–53.

68 Paul Hatvani, "Nicht da nicht dort Australien," *Akzente* 6 (1973): 564–571, 564.

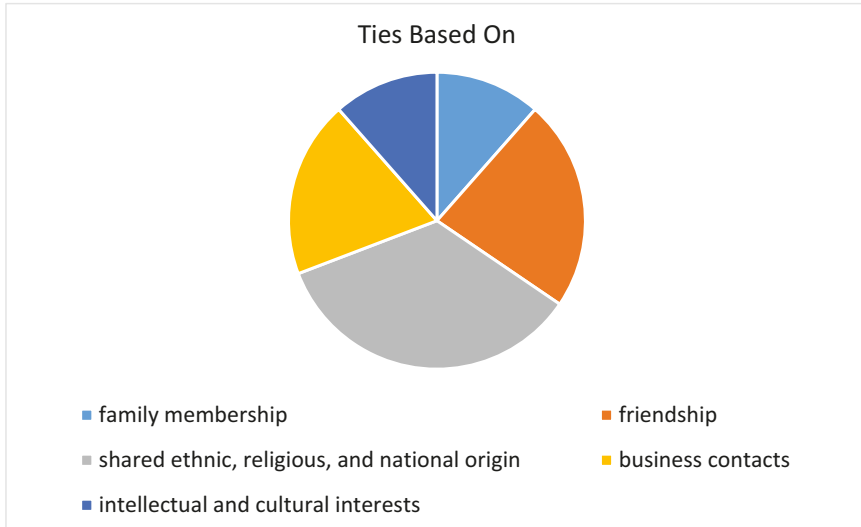


FIGURE 9 Depiction of the different types of relations that helped the members of the sample group to leave the country

Non-Jewish people, or Jews who had converted to other faiths, were able to contact the Aktion Gildemeester, which helped about 4,000 people to get out of the country⁶⁹ or the American and the British Society of Friends, which brought another 4,500 people out of the country. Reinhold Eckfeld was one of them. In his 1940 diary, which he wrote during his internment in Australia, he noted:

I was highly interested in emigration after the occurrences on November 10 had convinced me that I had to leave this country under any circumstances. Mama had registered me very early with the Society of Friends (Quakers), Vienna 1, Singerstraße 16. I walked down there almost daily in January 1939 to ask for any news concerning my emigration. I was told that a farming scheme would be the most promising for me. I registered for that and was told to expect a message in February 1939.⁷⁰

69 Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes, ed., *Österreicher im Exil: Großbritannien 1938–1945: Eine Dokumentation* (Vienna: n.p., 1992), 8–9.

70 Krist, *Reinhold Eckfeld*, 52, original text: “Für Auswanderung begann ich mich von dem Moment an heftigst zu interessieren, als der 10. November bei mir keinen Zweifel übrig gelassen hatte, daß ich gehen mußte, unter allen Umständen. Mama hatte mich und uns alle schon recht früh bei der Society of Friends (Quäker), Wien I., Singerstraße 16, angemeldet. Im Jänner 39 ging ich öfters nachfragen hin, ob sich nicht irgendwo eine neue

Eckfeld described in detail the impressions he had when waiting in the Quakers' offices. In his diary, he noted he would like to give the organization the recognition it deserved:

The offices were always crowded. There were people on the stairways, in the halls, in the waiting rooms, chatting, asking for advice and exchanging information, talking about passports, visas, forms that confirmed payment of taxes, immigration visas, consulates, embassies, currency exchange regulations, tax offices, police stations, etc. etc. Every single sentence I heard reminded me of my own plight and of the hours of waiting in front of different offices and all the horror and desperation I had experienced.⁷¹

Eckfeld further described the uncertainty, desperation, and fear he and his family endured while waiting for the visa:

Weeks and months passed by and after the Quakers always told us to wait for another fortnight and another one, I became desperate and came to the realization that the Society of Friends would not be able to help me. So, I wrote to other English organizations. None of them responded positively. I even wrote to a Catholic priest in Londonderry [...], but received neither answer nor help from him.⁷²

Chance für mich zeigen könnte. Man hielt ein Farmingscheme für aussichtsreich und ich registrierte dafür, man versprach Anfang oder Mitte Februar Nachricht für mich zu haben."

71 Krist, *Reinhold Eckfeld*, 52–53, original text: "Der Parteienverkehr ist ständig sehr stark, Leute eilen die Treppe auf und ab, stehen in den Gängen und Warteräumen, sprechen miteinander, fragen um Rat, tauschen Erfahrungen und Erlebnisse aus, sprechen über Pass, Steuerunbedenklichkeit, Visa, Einreisebewilligung, Konsulate, Devisenbestimmungen, Reichsfluchtsteuer, Rathaus, Finanzamt, Polizeikommissariat, etc. etc. Jeder einzelne dieser Sätze ruft in einem die Gedanken an die eigenen Wege, Laufereien, Stunden des Anstellens, der Verzweiflung, des Hoffens wach."

72 Krist, *Reinhold Eckfeld*, 61; original text: "doch wie Wochen und Monate vergehen und ich immer wieder auf noch 14 Tage, noch drei Wochen abwarten, etc. vertröstet werde, beginne ich langsam aber sicher verzweifelt zu werden und komme zu der Überzeugung, daß die Society of Friends nicht imstande sein wird, mir ein Visum zu verschaffen. Ich versuche nun, an verschiedene andere englische Committees zu schreiben, erhalte jedoch überall abschlägige Bescheide. [...] Ich schreibe an einen katholischen Pfarrer in Londonderry: Rev. McLaughlin, St. Patricks Church, Londonderry, erhalte aber von ihm weder Antwort noch Hilfe."

Finally, after two months, Eckfeld, his mother, and brother received their visa through the Society of Friends.⁷³ The desperate waiting was at an end and they could hardly believe their luck, as Eckfeld wrote: “Mama told me, out of breath, that she was told to pick up a permit for England issued in her, my own, and my brother’s name. We could not believe our luck. Those hours were the luckiest ones we had for months.”⁷⁴

Most professional bodies and labour unions in destination countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, or Australia, feared competition from educated migrants from Germany and restricted the intake of skilled labour. However, there were other ways to get a visa. There were, for example, no restrictions for refugees taking jobs in domestic service, if they had an offer of employment, and, consequently, the majority of female refugees immigrating to the United Kingdom came as domestic servants or nurses.⁷⁵ This, of course, led to further problems, as many of the refugees came from the upper and middle classes and had difficulty fitting into their new situations, as Elisabeth Ziegler described:

My sister packed her bag and went to Paris three days before the Anschluss. So, there I was, left on my own. I just battled along, I was in my family flat and I tried to get somewhere to go. My mother’s oldest sister came and cooked in our place every day, she took good care after me. When I knew I had to leave I made connections to the Jewish welfare society to get a job in London, as a housemaid, and some Jewish people sent applications to help and so I got a permit to go to England. And on 13th of August 1938, I left for London via Paris. I was there for six weeks. I hated every second of it because I was 20 then and I had never done any housework like that.⁷⁶

73 Reinhold Eckfeld, in discussion with the author, Melbourne, January 2017.

74 Krist, *Reinhold Eckfeld*, 82; original text: “Mama erzählt mir noch etwas außer Atem vor Eile, daß mit der Morgenpost ein Brief von der israelischen Kultusgemeinde, I, Seitenstetengasse, eingetroffen sei, in dem Mama aufgefordert wird, eine dort eingelangte Permitskarte lautend auf Mamas, Waldis und meinen Namen abzuholen. Wir wissen noch immer kaum unser Glück zu fassen, und es sind diese Stunden sicher die Glücklichsten, die wir seit vielen Monaten erlebt haben.”

75 Rachel Pistol, “Refugees from National Socialism Arriving in Great Britain 1933–1945,” *Refugees, Relief and Resettlement: Gale, a Cengage Company*, 2020, accessed December 2, 2021, <https://www.gale.com/intl/essays/rachel-pistol-refugees-national-socialism-great-britain-1933-1945>.

76 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview (audio recording).

Ziegler further described how she left London and how friends and her ties to relatives helped her to make her way to Australia despite her unfavourable status as an undocumented refugee:

My boyfriend had managed to get to Belgium. [...] But he had nowhere to go, so we had to find something. There was a guy at the embassy who told me he could get a visa to Norway—for a certain amount of money. So, I gave him that and he put a false visa into it [her passport]. There was no such thing as a visa to Norway—Norway did not want any Jews. So, he then gets a plane ticket. It was difficult. The flight went through Prague—as soon as he got to Prague, he was arrested because of the false ticket. However, the police were very kind and allowed him to ring his cousin in Brno, who bailed him out and took him to Brno. He managed to get him another false visa to Uruguay and a ticket to Uruguay. With that ticket, he went to Antwerp. However, he was very *weltfremd*—naïve—and took a train from there to Brussels where he joined a refugee camp. He met another cousin who took him to a Jewish aid organization. I was sitting in London, I could not support him there. So, we decided I should ask my employer to let me go to Brussels for a week. But I stayed there of course and did not return. We made many friends there and everybody was the same—everybody was illegal. My husband was lucky, because he had the Red Cross helping him the get a short time visa to stay in Brussels. Then we met a Polish man who resided in Sydney. He said, "If you need anything just let me know and I will try to do something to help you." He offered a permit for my husband, my sister, and me. My brother-in-law rejected the offer because he only wanted to go to the United States. He—this guy Star—saw an ad in the Sydney Morning Herald that described that there was a war coming and Australia would need doctors. And what he did was amazing. He took this little paper to Canberra to the department of immigration and a couple of weeks later he got a permit for Dr. Erich Ziegler and wife. And that's why we came to Australia. We got the permit in November 1938 and we arrived here in June 1939—because we had no money and we had to organize that first. My husband had a cousin, whom he wrote and asked him to lend him the money.⁷⁷

77 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview (audio recording).

The Society of Friends was responsible for sponsoring the escape of Gustav Bratspies and his family to Singapore, from where he was later deported to Australia, as one of his relatives described:

The family left Austria with only a trunk full of belongings. Their fares were paid by American charity benefactors. They arrived in Singapore in April 1939 on the ss *Conte Biancamano*. Gustav was able to find work with the Singapore Improvement Trust after a chance meeting with someone he knew who was boarding the boat to meet a friend in Singapore.⁷⁸

The more time passed, the more pressing the living situation for people in Germany became. Life was now unbearable for those persecuted by the Nazi state, and refugee organizations began to think about rather unorthodox undertakings to save at least the youngest of those unfortunate people in Hitler's Reich. From December 1938, under pressure from refugee organizations and British public opinion, the British government agreed to offer refuge to an unspecified number of children under the age of 17 from Germany and German-occupied territories. Every child had to have a personal or institutional financial guarantor in Britain and the expectation was that the children would return to their parents once the immediate crisis was over.⁷⁹ Sylvia Cherny and her brother were among those nearly 10,000 children who escaped as part of the so-called *Kindertransport* scheme. She recalled how her flight from Nazi oppression came to pass:

In time, we moved to Ybbs and stayed with the Weissenberg family since Ilse [the nanny] was busy winding up our affairs in Vienna. [...] We were well cared for and felt at home. One day in February 1939 we were told that we would leave with a *Kindertransport* to France to a Rothschild sponsored home. This had been arranged by the Wozaseks who knew someone in the Vienna Jewish Community Organization, "Kultusgemeinde." In addition, we probably had some element of priority because we were technically orphans. Grandmother Lore had us fitted out with the necessary clothes and I went to Vienna to try on dresses with big hems to allow for the fact that I was growing and we did not know when we would see each other again. My cousin Georg Wozasek was to leave with us, and finally the day came in March when we went to the railway station in

78 Jarolim, "Detention of Jews."

79 Pistol, "Refugees from National Socialism."

Vienna and left our relatives and home to start a new life. Ilse came with us to the border where she had to leave us and we would not meet again until 1960.⁸⁰

During late 1938 and 1939, various organizations tried to establish schemes whereby young men and adolescents could receive training in the United Kingdom which would enable them to emigrate to regions in need of agricultural workers. Ultimately, many of those able to enter the country did so on transmigration visas, issued on the understanding that Britain was only a stop on their journey to the Americas, South Africa, or Australia.⁸¹ Hans Eisler was one of them. He benefited from a farming scheme of the Society of Friends, which took a group of 16 young Austrians and Germans to Australia after they had received agricultural training in Britain. Decades later, he described the unbelievable circumstances of his escape as follows:

My parents arranged it, but how I do not know. I remembered the last time my mother kissed me goodbye and that was it. They brought me to the plane. I arrived in London on the 16th of December. A Mr. Meier picked me up, looked for me, took my hat off. He took something out of the hat. I remember that quite good, but I do not know what it was. He took me to his home and I stayed there for two or three nights, then he threw me out. He told me that I read too late and that needed too much electricity and he can't afford to keep me. I did not speak any English and I went into the city. I was at Piccadilly and I was picked up by the police at midnight because I played at the slot machines. And the next thing I found myself in the hands of the Quakers. I had nothing with me—all I had was a suit and a case. I was brought to a farm in Buckinghamshire, where I found myself with some 20 German boys all doing farmwork. They came on the auspices of the Quaker movement. Lady Wedgewood had the plan to send Jewish boys to Australia to do farmwork.⁸²

Bruno Bush experienced a rather unusual escape that was supported by a Jewish organization. Since he had become seriously ill after his experiences in the Dachau concentration camp, he was still in Germany when the war broke out. He was one of the members of the so-called *Kladovo Transport*, an illegal

80 SLV, ME 1453, Sylvia Cherny untitled (manuscript).

81 Pistol, "Refugees from National Socialism."

82 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

Jewish refugee transport, which started on November 25, 1939, in Vienna, with the aim of bringing 822 people to Palestine. The rescue transport was organized by the Jewish youth organization Youth Aliyah. The group consisted of approximately one-third children and adolescents up to the age of 17, of whom half were accompanied by their parents and the rest were in the care of youth associations. Others were 18- to 35-year-old members of the Jewish Hechaluz youth organization. Bush, who was one of them, described his escape as follows:

There were about a hundred people in the camp. Hechaluz had organized transports from Vienna to Palestine via Bratislava and Rumania. I arrived in a camp in Bratislava in an old factory (GW Petronka). There was just a little bit of hay on the ground. The camp was supervised by the Hlinka guards. They looked like the Nazis (black uniforms). There was a reception office and two guards. We were not free. It was a closed camp. If you want to go out into the city you had to get an approval. We waited for the boats that should bring us to Romania and from then on to Palestine. I stayed there nearly a year—from October 1939 to summer 1940. This was done with the knowledge of the Nazis. We waited for Hitler to send boats down the Danube to bring home the *Auslandsdeutschen* (ethnic Germans from the Balkans). Then we could use the empty boats [on their way down the Danube]. During that year, we had no occupation and no money. [He received some support from members of the Jewish community in Bratislava]. I went because it was the only way out of Austria. Three ships from the Donaudampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft brought us to Romania.⁸³

John Hearst, who left only a few weeks after the Anschluss, told a different story. He managed his undocumented escape through Switzerland on his own, however, he had actively sought the help of local Jewish organizations while on the run. In an interview, Hearst described the various steps that were necessary for him, his wife, and a friend to cross the border illegally. In May 1938, he asked his father-in-law to book train tickets to the Swiss border for them, since “we did not want that anybody would have the slightest clue about our plans—nobody was with us at the railway station. We just pretended to go on a hike into the mountains. So, the three of us went to Salzburg and so forth, and the next morning we arrived in Lörrach on the border.”⁸⁴ After the arrival at the border, he prepared for the crossing:

83 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush oral history interview (audio recording).

84 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

When we got into Lörrach, we thought we must find some people that could help us here. We found somebody who referred us to the rabbi. He was a very progressive, understanding man. The first thing he asked us is: Where do you sleep? We told him that we had booked into a hotel. He told us: I don't want you to be in any hotel because there are police rallies every day and night. I want you to get out of it and stay with us. Then he told us about the best ways to cross the border. The best way would be to jump off a train. When we went on the train, Alice was the first one to jump. She walked out on the gangway and she wanted to jump, she walked right into a German ss man. She went back and acted as if nothing had happened. We went back to Lörrach, and found another train that was a very slow train. As soon as we got into Riehen, Alice jumped on one side and I jumped from the other side. Luckily nobody saw us and we met in front of the Badische Bahnhof [train station in Basel].⁸⁵

After his arrival, Hearst had to find support and shelter. He had been in Basel before and thus had contacts to the Jewish community, where he went straight after his arrival, as he stated:

Anyways we finally got together, and I knew of course the Jewish welfare society, I knew the people there very well, because every time during the past I came to Basel, I went to the welfare society. We went all into a tram; I knew exactly where to go. One thing I must tell you, the rabbi warned us not to take any money with us. So, we donated all our money to the synagogue. If you would have been caught with money than it would have been terrible, because you would have become a smuggler—on top of it—you would be Jewish, an illegal refugee and a smuggler. [...] So, we settled with the Jewish welfare society. We started out of gratitude we asked them if we could do any work. We got something to do: Alice started in the kitchen and I was cleaning. At that time there were quite a lot of refugees in Basel and the Jewish Welfare Society rented a whole house to house the people. Later on, it became so big that they had to rent a whole theater. People were very friendly to us. We were invited every week at a certain family, we had Friday night dinners and so.⁸⁶

85 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

86 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

After a few months of their undocumented stay in Basel, Hearst and his wife, thanks to the support of a Jewish sponsor, finally received a permit to enter Australia. As he described, all the costs for the permit, the fare, and the landing money were covered by Jewish aid organizations.⁸⁷

Ties based on friendship played another important role in getting people out of the Nazi state. Many of this book's protagonists had contacts to friends and acquaintances abroad, and some of them could activate their contacts to get support from a friend in a host country, since the easiest way to get a visa to Australia was to have a local resident to vouch for the applicant's "good character" as well as for their financial situation. Visa applications backed up by friends were frequently successful. This would probably also explain why those members of our sample group who had obtained their visas through friends had not recalled that the process of getting them was particularly agonizing. In her memoirs, Annemarie Mutton offered a colourful depiction of how ties to friends had brought her and her former husband Ernest Bowen out of the country and, ultimately, into Australia:

On the 21st of June 1938 we were rung early in the morning. The lawyer who hated Jews morning, noon, and night, nevertheless attended to their affairs when it suited and paid him. Friends had offered and lent us money, we had no longer access to our own. This lawyer offered us our passports IF we could and would leave that noon. Because we had geared ourselves for the last few weeks toward escape, we had two suitcases, hand luggage packed at Tante Lisa's in the Mayeredersgasse. We also had letters from our English friends guaranteeing us their financial support. Ernest knew the consul. The consulate was closed on Saturday morning. He was able to enter through the front door, given the visa. The plane from Budapest was able to accept our booking. There were no farewells, only rush. We met in town, I locked the flat, went out with nothing, as if I went to town. Frau Zezulack who still owned the house had sharp eyes. We went upstairs to Tante Lisa, she was the only one who knew we were leaving. We came down in the lift, one at a time, not together. We walked round the corner to a taxi stand. We drove to the airport. We got onto the plane. We eventually took off. We flew over the city, we held our breath, we did not cry. We did not speak.⁸⁸ [...] We were immensely busy during that time [in London]. Our letters to Australia still from Vienna yielded results, Dr. Bill Wishart

87 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

88 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

and his wife Olive obtained entrance permits for us. This information we received the same day on which Ernest was offered a job in a cotton mill in Lancashire with an employer whose son was not interested in the mill and Ernest seemed to answer all the requirements. Ernest was also able to obtain a work permit. To decide to come to Australia, so far away, so comparatively unknown to us, was a horrendous decision. Although we had been offered an affidavit to the United States by Ernst and Illse Toch, related to us through my grandmother [...] neither of us have ever felt drawn to the States. An English country seemed good to us, a country that was said to have a good climate, space, a language we knew and that was far away from the imminent threat of war. Many of our friends and acquaintances tried to persuade us from so drastic a departure. I can only ascribe our decision to brave such a step to our youth and optimism for a future we might have.⁸⁹

In many cases, the expulsion of Jews from the Nazi state triggered a so-called chain migration: migrants who came first organized visas and permits for those still trapped in Germany. Gertrude Langer recalled how a friend who had migrated to Sydney earlier had helped them with getting a visa for Australia:

Some [of our friends] went ahead. There was one friend actually who helped us get there. He was a barrister and he went to Sydney. He helped us very much getting the entry permit. That's sort of a long story. That's a separate tape. It's a long story. We didn't come directly to Australia. It was very dangerous for Karl to leave because he was of military age, you know, and when we left there was just that danger looming with Sudeten Germany [Czechoslovakia]. You know about that, don't you, where Hitler was marching into Sudeten Germany? It could have been war if the Allies [...] at the time they could have stopped Hitler if the Allies had been clever enough to honor the obligations of Czechoslovakia and all that, you see. The danger was very great and Karl did not get a normal passport at all when we left. We went to Greece first. We had a chance to go to Greece and Karl under some quite incredibly clever pretext got a visa to Greece for both of us and pretended that he's going to Greece for some commission, some architectural job. They swallowed that and we fled to Athens with hardly any money in the pocket, no money at all really. We had [...] that was funny because the Germans couldn't have

89 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

been too thorough. Before we left we had all our belongings, furniture, silver, carpets, very precious things, all packed. My husband's father looked after the whole thing and when we arrived in Australia [...] in fact the war was coming. We wrote him to send it immediately and it just arrived two months before the war broke out actually, or we would have lost it. It was packed in two vans but, when we left of course, we just went with our suitcases and nothing. We just took Greece as the place from where we arranged our Australian affairs because it was too dangerous to do it from Vienna. He was not supposed to leave, you see, so we arranged all that once we were in Athens.⁹⁰

Richard Tandler, who realized early in 1938 that he and his family would have to flee the country, had contacted an Australian university professor who just happened to be doing research in Vienna at the time of the Anschluss, as his daughter Sue Copolov recalled. A member of Tandler's network of friends helped him to establish this life-saving contact, as is shown by a letter which the Australian university professor sent to Australia in order to get the Tandler family out of Austria:

For a few days I came back from Vienna where I studied at the National Library for my scientific investigations. I am professor of oriental philology and lived in the house of my Viennese friend, where I made knowledge with the family Tandler. They asked me to write to you from Holland, because from Vienna yet it is impossible to explain the real situation. All the letters are opened and nobody can describe what the Austrian Jews have to suffer now. [...] In a few days Mr. Tandler will send to you a request for emigration into Australia. The meaning of this my letter is that you will insist upon the Australian government to give the permission for emigration. Mr. Richard Tandler asked me to write that he does not expect any financial support but only your moral support to make it possible that he can get the permission. You can be sure that this is the only demand. Mr. Tandler is young and talented enough to find his own way once arrived in Australia. I implore you therefore to make all efforts, that Mr. Tandler, his wife and two children can emigrate.⁹¹

90 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 35f.

91 Private letter, 1938 (in possession of Sue Copolov).

The letter was dated May 13, 1938. According to Tandler's immigration records, Felix Behrend, the Australian who received the letter, launched an application to admit relatives or friends only a month after having received the letter. Two months later, the British Passport Control Office in Vienna had issued the Tandler family a permit to enter Australia.⁹²

Gerhard Felser and his Jewish wife were among those early arrivals who got involved with helping other refugees, as a 1938 report of an immigration officer reveals. The couple took an active part in the chain migration of Jewish refugees from Austria to Australia. This document, however, also shows that, in some cases, authorities preferred family migration over the migration of friends:

Applicant arrived in Australia in 1938. Permit has been issued in respect of Erwin Starkl and Erhard Starkl in 1939 but have since lapsed. Nominees are friends of the applicant. [...] No security objection would be raised to the grant of landing permits but it is thought that priority should be given to relatives of persons already residing in Australia.⁹³

Chain migration played an important role within networks of *family ties*. Three of this book's protagonists came to Australia because of family members who had already migrated there. In Kurt Selby's case, a cousin who had already come to Melbourne in 1929 was able to help him out with a permit early in 1938.⁹⁴ In many cases, those who arrived earlier received heartbreaking letters from friends and relatives who were desperately trying to get out of Austria. A series of letters that is still in the possession of Selby's daughter bear witness to the desperate situation in which many people found themselves in 1938 and 1939. A letter Selby received from a friend who had illegally migrated to Paris gives insights into his situation, particularly through the desperate language the letter writer used:

Since your departure from Vienna much has changed and you can see from my letter to where fate has driven me. I had to endure much to arrive there. I left Vienna immediately before the Czech ultimatum when everyone believed war to be imminent. Unfortunately, I had the bad luck to be caught at the border which resulted in a month's jail. And now I am living

92 NAA: A261, 1938/161 Applicant Behrend Felix; Nominee Tandler Richard.

93 NAA, A6119, Felser, Gerhard Richard.

94 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016; NAA, A261, 1939/1044, Selby Kurt.

here [Paris, France] illegally and see no prospect of getting away from here. You can't imagine what it is like living as an emigrant and yet it is better than being in Vienna. I lived through a terrible time during which I had no letter from my folks for 10 days. Thank God nothing happened to my relations and I am happy to be getting good news from them so far. However, my current situation is not tenable. Dear Kurt, I would like to recall our last discussion and ask you to write me at once whether you can do anything for me. Please inquire, whether any business, no matter in what area, could organize my immigration, i.e. get the necessary permit. So, Kurt, show whether you are a real friend. I know that you won't have the necessary contact yourself. Ask your cousin, who is known in the city, perhaps she could undertake something.⁹⁵

Another letter Selby received paints a similar picture. The most pressing issues in the letter were obtaining information about visa and job opportunities in Melbourne:

Since lucky you doesn't have to think about such things anymore and you are my only friend in the wide world, don't be annoyed that I am troubling you. I believe that our friendship and the time we spent together in our childhood gives me the right. My dear Kurt, I beg you, do your utmost to get a permit for me. Perhaps you can find someone who would sponsor me. If necessary, I would in the meantime come alone. You know, I can turn my hand to anything and am not afraid of hard work. Please investigate possibilities as your time and circumstances permit. If you do hear of anything write me and I will send you a detailed application or cv if you require it. I beg you to consider the matter as **most urgent!**⁹⁶

Selby also received a letter asking him to find jobs and organize visas for the children of one of his friends:

Perhaps you could find an opening for my son. He is 18½ years old, an outstanding orthopedic shoemaker, having spent 3½ years working mornings as apprentice and attending the Knöfl school in the afternoons [...]. He is also a first-rate violinist but due to our circumstances could only perform as an amateur. My daughter is 15½, very strong. She has done

95 Private letter to Selby, 1938 (in the possession of Eleanor Hart).

96 Private letters to Selby, 1939 (in the possession of Eleanor Hart).

courses in cooking, patisserie, belt and artificial flower making. I would be most grateful if you could enable her to come to Australia—her fare would be paid for by the committee, the 50 pounds landing money surely, I would provide.⁹⁷

Paul Hirsch and his wife were lucky enough to have had the support of his sister-in-law, who had migrated to Australia early in 1938 and built a life there, in Melbourne. Hirsch described his feelings of resignation after having to live in National Socialist Vienna for 14 months. He recalled the loss of his "familiar language" and mentioned that it was most important "not to be recognized in the public."⁹⁸ He further noted that he ceased all of his networking activities, isolated himself, and tried "to accept his fate."⁹⁹ His wife's family network, however, gave him the opportunity to leave Nazi-ruled Austria a few months before the outbreak of the war, when visas to safe countries were very hard to obtain. His sister-in-law offered him and his wife a place to live and organized their journey to Australia.¹⁰⁰ Hirsch managed to bring the considerable sum of 2,000 pounds with him and thus was not required to have a sponsor.¹⁰¹ He subsequently recalled his relief at the prospect of being able to leave: "We were all tired of Europe," he later wrote.¹⁰²

Viola Winkler was among those many who initially managed to obtain a visa as a domestic servant in an English household. After having spent six months in the United Kingdom, however, her boyfriend, who in the meantime had managed to get to Sydney, invited her to follow and marry him. She described the circumstances of her journey to Australia as follows:

At that time [summer 1938], my sister was in Italy with a dance group and it became clear to my mother that it was way too dangerous for us to stay in Vienna for any longer. That was why my mother spent countless hours in front of different public offices to get a visa to another country. Finally, we received information that people in England were searching for domestic servants and—overnight—my mother became a cook and

97 Private letters to Selby, 1938 (in the possession of Eleanor Hart).

98 Hatvani, "Zwei Prosastücke," 71–72.

99 Hatvani, "Damals: Besinnung auf die Zeit," 19–20.

100 Frank Pam (Hirsch's nephew), in discussion with the author (audio recording), Melbourne, October 2016.

101 NAA, A435, 1945/4/500, Hirsch Paul—born 16 August 1892—Stateless.

102 Hatvani, "Australien," 568.

I became a servant. We packed everything together in a large suitcase and went to England two months after the Anschluss.¹⁰³

Winkler continues her story and tells how she saw her life in England and how she finally, through the intervention of her former boyfriend, arrived in Australia:

I will never forget how it felt to be on the other side of the border. I was alive, I was safe. I have never forgotten how incredibly important it is to be alive. My mother and myself, we worked in a large English house in the countryside [Maidstone, Kent]. I had to wear a uniform with a black dress, a white apron, and a white hairband. Our employers belonged to a different social class, but they were friendly to us.¹⁰⁴

In another interview, she provided further information about how her life had changed in the United Kingdom:

Suddenly we were servants: we saw another way of life. It was interesting to be a fly on the wall and watch the family. Quite apart from the fact that we felt this wonderful relief at being alive, it was difficult. Once you lose a language you lose any form of communication. She [her mother] was sure that this was only a very temporary stage. We received no news about what happened in Austria, we were cut off from information [they did not speak English and could not read any newspapers].¹⁰⁵

103 Winkler, "Augenblick"; original text: "meine Schwester war gerade mit einer Tanzgruppe in Italien, aber es stand fest, dass es für meine Mutter und mich viel zu gefährlich war, noch längere Zeit in Wien zu wohnen. Deshalb verbrachte meine Mutter unzählige Stunden vor sämtlichen Ämtern, um eine Einwanderungserlaubnis in ein anderes Land zu bekommen. Endlich erhielten wir die Information, dass in England Hausdiener gesucht werden und über Nacht wurde meine Mutter zur Köchin und ich zu einem Dienstmädchen. Wir packten alles, was wir mitnehmen konnten, in einen großen Koffer und wanderten zwei Monate nach der Nazi-Ankunft in Wien nach England aus."

104 Winkler, "Augenblick"; original text: "Ich werde nie vergessen, wie es sich angefühlt hat, auf der anderen Seite der Grenze zu sein. Ich war am Leben, ich war sicher. Ich habe nie vergessen, wie wertvoll es ist, am Leben zu sein. Meine Mutter und ich arbeiteten in einem großen englischen Haus am Land. Ich musste eine Uniform tragen mit schwarzem Kleid, weißer Schürze und weißem Haarband. Unsere Arbeitgeber gehörten einer ganz anderen Gesellschaftsschicht an als wir, aber sie waren immer freundlich zu uns."

105 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

"After six months," she described "a letter from him [her former Viennese boyfriend] arrived. He told me that there would be an opening to get to him in Australia, provided we would marry within the first three months after my arrival."¹⁰⁶

In later interviews, Winkler further described the uncertainty that plagued her during this time: "do I really want to marry Kurt? I know him only so little."¹⁰⁷ She also described how, since she and her mother did not have enough money to pay for the fares, she was able to get her costs covered by the Quakers (Society of Friends), who had also supported some other members of our sample group.¹⁰⁸

Another important type of tie that helped people get out of Nazi Austria was relationships based upon business activities. Five protagonists, or about one-fifth of the overall group, used their business ties to facilitate their escape. Grete Vanry was among the first who left Austria, only a few days after the Anschluss. She had multiple reasons to leave, as she was a member of the Communist Party and a labour union representative, and she also worked for a Jewish businesswoman who was forced to shut down her company and had emigrated to Australia. As her husband later described: "Together with Hermann [her then boyfriend], she came to Paris via different detours. After a few months, her former Viennese boss invited her to Sydney and organized a permit for her."¹⁰⁹ Her former boyfriend described the circumstances of her escape: "Grete and I had to hand over our passports to the Austrian authorities after a conviction in 1937. In March 1938, we therefore crossed the border to Switzerland illegally."¹¹⁰ After their escape, her boyfriend Hermann Langbein enlisted in the International Brigades to fight Francisco Franco's fascist regime in the Spanish Civil War, while Vanry found temporary shelter and employment in a French socialist labour union home. Some of the letters from that

106 Winkler, "Augenblick," original text: "Nach sechs Monaten kam ein Brief von ihm, dass es die Möglichkeit für mich gäbe, zu ihm nach Australien zu gehen, wir müssten allerdings innerhalb der ersten drei Monate heiraten."

107 Winkler, "Augenblick."

108 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

109 Frank Vanry, *Der Zaungast* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1983), 271; original text: "Mit Hermann kam sie auf Umwegen nach Paris und nach Monaten, von ihrer Wiener Chefin angefordert und mit einem permit versorgt nach Sidney [sic]."

110 Hermann Langbein, *Pasaremos: Briefe aus dem spanischen Bürgerkrieg* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1982), 49; original text: "Sowohl Grete als auch mir waren nach einer Verurteilung im Jahr 1937 von der österreichischen Polizei die Pässe abgenommen wurden. Im März 1938 sind wir deshalb illegal über die Grenze."

time which were published by Vanry's former boyfriend give insights into the difficult and emotional situation. "You will have to decide, if you will continue your life with me or without me. You have to make a decision, if not Stella [her boss] will have come to a better decision of what to do with you."¹¹¹ In another letter Langbein stated: "I can understand that the lack of work here must be terrible for you. [...] According to my calculations, you will earn a lot of money there [in Australia]. How expensive is it down there? What are the costs of the journey to Australia? You have to save money just in case."¹¹²

Charles Anton, who left in August, had very early begun to use his business ties to get to Australia. In March 1938, he "saw the writing on the wall," as one of his friends recalled.¹¹³ He secured a job with a Sydney-based insurance broker company only one month after the Nazi takeover. This suggests that he maintained close contact with members of his company's business network. Having found an employer before applying for a visa smoothed and accelerated the process of obtaining an entrance permit. As his family had managed to transfer some of their financial assets to a Swiss bank account before the Anschluss, he had no problems raising the required landing money; as early as August 1938, Anton was allowed to enter the country.¹¹⁴

Marie Bergel also used her business contacts to get her family out of Austria. A few days after the Anschluss, she closed her bank accounts.¹¹⁵ She realized her precarious situation and began to use her networks to organize her family's escape. She succeeded simultaneously in getting support from two different networks. "I sent a long telegram to Frank Scholl [a business partner] in London and asked him to come to Vienna," she later stated.¹¹⁶ She explained that she could not run her trade agency in Vienna any longer and that she had to leave the country as soon as possible. Knowing of the demand for podiatrists in Australia, he suggested she should go to London and offered her podiatric training in his company's foot clinic with the subsequent prospect of opening

111 Langbein, *Pasaremos*, 49; original text: "Hier wirst du dich—fürcht ich—entscheiden müssen, ob du dein Leben lieber für Dich, oder mit mir leben willst. Ich weiß, dass dir diese Entscheidung schwerfallen wird. Mußt dich aber doch durchringen, falls sich Stella inzwischen nicht zu etwas Gescheiterem durchgerungen hat."

112 Langbein, *Pasaremos*, 57, 59; original text: "das Fehlen der beruflichen Arbeit, das kann ich dir wirklich nachfühlen. [...] Nach meinen Umrechnungen wirst du ja einen Haufen verdienen. Wie teuer ist es unten? Und was kostet die Überfahrt? Musst halt fest sparen unten für alle Fälle."

113 Sponar, *Snow in Australia*, 24.

114 NAA, A435, 1944/4/1110, Anton Charles William.

115 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

116 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

her own foot clinic in Sydney.¹¹⁷ Scholl personally secured a visa for her at the British embassy in Vienna, as Bergel later recalled: "Frank Scholl got them [the visas] on the spot."¹¹⁸ At the same time, Bergel had written a letter to a friend who had fled Germany for Australia in 1934. She explained her situation and asked him for his help. He told her to come to Australia and promised to organize a job for her husband, which supported her efforts to obtain visas. "This is the country to live in: there are no beggars, everybody has a job, ideal climate, eternal sunshine," he described.¹¹⁹ After reading the letter, Bergel knew she would like to go there.¹²⁰ Since she did not have any sponsors, she was legally required to possess at least 200 pounds at the time of her entry into Australia.¹²¹ She later explained, "I sold a diamond brooch to get the landing money."¹²²

Henry Teltscher's escape was likewise made possible due to business connections. Like many other young men and women, he went on a student visa to Britain,¹²³ which in his case was backed by a British supporter from his father's network, as he later described:

Very rapidly, one country after another foresaw the likely flood of refugees about to descend on them and made entry more and more difficult. Then days after the Nazi-takeover, Mama wrote her first letter to Sir James Morton [a business partner of the family in England], asking in rather general terms, whether he might be prepared to help me to get to England. [...] An agreement was reached that Henry Bachrach, with uncle Hans' help would make available 250 pounds and the same sum was to be deposited by Sir James, for my use. The British consulate in Vienna was notified with a request to provide a visa. [...] At the same time things were progressing painfully slowly in trying to get my English visa. There had been a good deal of further correspondence between my mother and the Mortons. [...] On 6 October, he received a letter of acceptance—a twelve months' visa for study purposes was issued. [...] The last couple of weeks passed in an atmosphere of almost disbelief. I finally left on the

117 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

118 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

119 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

120 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

121 Rutland, *Australia*, 57.

122 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

123 Pistol, "Refugees from National Socialism."

evening of the 3rd of November. Six days later *Reichskristallnacht* took place.¹²⁴

In an interview, Helen Roberts recalled how she and her husband had established new contacts based upon her husband's professional skills as a physician:

I put an ad in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, for my husband and myself. We were desperate. We did not know where to go because nobody wanted us. I said nothing particular, of course that my husband was a doctor and that we were married [...] and I got one answer. We got a letter from a man who said he was a doctor, a dentist. He can send us a permit. We said it was fantastic.¹²⁵

Her immigration records also indicate that the Roberts family received support from the Maccabi Section of the Jewish National World Organization in Vienna. Additionally, an Austrian, who had emigrated earlier had also acted as a guarantor for them.¹²⁶

The last group to be mentioned here comprises people who received help from members of networks based on shared intellectual and cultural interests. In this context, the role of the Boy Scout movement cannot be underestimated. The Boy Scouts, as an international organization, were pivotal in the exchange of information and the formation of ties across national boundaries and thus many Boy Scouts received help from their fellow Scouts in getting out of the country.¹²⁷ One of them was Paul Herzfeld, who found a guarantor in Adelaide through his Boy Scout contacts, as he described in a 1940 Australian police interrogation:

I came to Australia because I wanted to get to a country where it was possible for me to join the Forces, and to work at liberty; and secondly to a country, where I was permitted to stay. In Jugo Slovia [*sic*], I was not permitted to stay forever, as the Aliens Control does not permit a continued permanent stay. You have to go to the police every fortnight. The best place would have been France, and I got in touch with the French

124 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 49ff.

125 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (audio recording).

126 NAA, C123, 2994, Roberts or Raubitschek Richard.

127 Comp. Philipp Lehar, "Pfadfindergruppen in österreichischen und deutschen DP-Lagern nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Selbstermächtigung und Anschluss an ein globales Netzwerk," *Zeitgeschichte* 2 (2020): 231–256.

authorities in Jugo Slovia [*sic*], but France was full of political refugees, hundreds of thousands of them, they did not want any more and I did not get permission. The next best place would have been England. It was just as impossible to go to England so I had to come here. [...] In January 1939, I received a letter from Mr. Dawe in Adelaide. He said he made an application for me to get a permit to come here. As I knew it may have success, I decided to take the chance. [...] I did not have any intentions for a certain [professional] position, but it was understood from the letters of Mr. Dawe that he was going to bring me into some farm business. [...] [but] I came with the intention to make immediately after my arrival an application to join up.¹²⁸

In a letter from 1940, the guarantor described his relationship with Herzfeld: "I first became interested in this case in my official position as Head Quarters Commissioner for Scouts in South Australia, on the representation of the International Scout Commissioner in Budapest."¹²⁹ This also shows how contacts were communicated and exchanged on a global level within the Boy Scout network.

The young professional dancer Hanny Exiner was part of a different network. When she was forced to leave because of her Jewish heritage, she had not only finished two years of medical studies but also completed a four-year diploma from the Vienna Academy of Music and Performing Arts (*Akademie für Musik und Darstellende Kunst*) with her mentor, the world-famous professor of modern dance Gertrud Bodenwieser. She was also teaching dance at the Bodenwieser Akademie and the Viennese *Volkshochschule*. After the Nazis marched into Austria, Bodenwieser lost her job because of her Jewish heritage, and she fled to France.¹³⁰ Mediated by a diplomat friend, she was invited to organize a group of her former Viennese students and colleagues to perform at the Centennial Festival of Bogotá, Colombia.¹³¹ Knowing of Exiner's uncertain future in the Nazi state, Bodenwieser invited her to join the dance troupe. Out of a "need for security," as Exiner later noted, she dropped her medical studies and went to South America with the Bodenwieser Ballet.¹³²

128 NAA, MP529/3/0 Tribunal 2/Herzfeld.

129 NAA, MP529/3/0 Tribunal 2/Herzfeld.

130 Bond, "Honoring Hanny Exiner," 100.

131 Emmy Steininger, "The Emigration of Gertrud Bodenwieser and her Dancers," in *Gertrud Bodenwieser and Vienna's Contribution to Ausdruckstanz*, ed. Bettina Vernon-Warren and Charles Warren (London: Routledge, 1995), 101–104.

132 NLA, 513110, Hanny Exiner interviewed by Michelle Potter, 1994.

5.3 Networks as Crucial Form of Social Capital

Networks, as an important form of the refugees' social capital, played a pivotal role in their survival. Without their manifold transnational ties to people outside of the German Reich, it is unlikely that this book's 26 protagonists would have been able to escape from Nazi persecution. This section of the book highlighted those memories they had of the circumstances of their flight and thus provided us with insights into different types of networks used by refugees from Nazi Germany. It has also been shown, once more, how important the non-financial forms of human capital (cultural and social capital) were—particularly in exceptional situations such as forced migration.

As the above analysis shows, this book's protagonists remembered having taken advantage of the activities of five very different types of networks. Ties based on shared ethnic, religious, and national origins turned out to be of the utmost importance during those exceptional times. This does not come as a surprise, as most destination countries did not acknowledge refugee status during 1938 and 1939, and refugees were treated as migrants. They had to prove that they could provide for themselves, that they would not become a burden to the country of refuge, and they, of course, had to pay for their fares as well as—in some states, such as Australia—having to produce a certain amount of financial capital, the so-called landing money, as a security deposit. Given the refugees' tight financial situation after being robbed of most of their wealth by the Nazi state, aid organizations, which were mainly based on ethnic or religious ties, were the main point of contact for many of those desperate people, even if the levels of their self-identification with the Jewish, Protestant, or Catholic faith were low.

Most of this book's protagonists came from families with either personal or business ties to people and companies abroad. As we saw in Chapter 3, England, France, and Czechoslovakia were states where this book's protagonists had particularly many contacts. These ties became crucial for almost half of the group when the Nazis marched in; a quarter of them could mobilize friendship ties to help them get out of the country and another quarter drew on members of their business networks to facilitate their escapes. Many refugees received help from family members abroad. In the case of our sample group, the comparatively low figure of only 11.5 percent of refugees who made it out to Australia because of the help of family members does not come as a surprise: until 1938 Australia was not on the radar of many migrants from Austria, or Central Europe generally. The country was simply too far away and too unknown to trigger larger waves of immigration from Central Europe. Thus, not many members of our sample group had relatives who had gone to

Australia prior to the Anschluss. We can see, however, that a chain migration was set in place as soon as the first refugees arrived in Australia and many applications to act as a guarantor for family members were placed by refugees themselves. The smallest group analysed above consists of people who relied on networks based on shared intellectual and cultural interests. The Boy Scouts, as a transnational organization had played a crucial role in mediating guarantors for refugees, as Paul Herzfeld's example indicates.

This analysis was also interested in the experiences that triggered this book's protagonists' decision to leave the country. Altogether, their memories of these days produced a rather consistent picture. Most of them described how they had suffered physical abuse, or at least knew people who had been abused. Others were even imprisoned and tortured. Some recalled a terrible lack of security and stated that the extreme restrictions under the Nazi government and the loss of their livelihood had triggered their decision to leave the country. Those who had not fled the country prior to November 1938 almost unanimously described the Nazi pogroms of 9/10 November 1938 and the subsequent increasing circle of violence against Jews as the final trigger for their decision to escape.

Ambivalent Experiences of Encounter

After they escaped the clutches of the Nazis, this book's protagonists were scattered throughout different parts of the world before they finally came to Australia. Some of them took extended stays in other countries, such as Switzerland, Greece, France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, or Portugal, as we saw in the last section. During that time, they had managed to get a visa, the funding necessary to finance the long ship journey, and the landing money required of non-British citizens without a sponsor to enter Australia.¹ Their journeys brought them to Australia via different routes. The majority of them (18 out of 26) came through British or French ports, using the British Orient Steam Navigation Company, which provided the most frequent connections to Australia through the Suez Channel and over the Indian Ocean. Five of them took a different route through the Americas and the Pacific Ocean. The most frequently used connections on these routes were provided by the New Zealand Union Steamship Company. Sylvia Cherny, who arrived in 1941, shortly before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, travelled on board one of the ships of the American Matson Line. The Italian Lloyd Triestino shipping company brought two of this book's protagonists to Australia on a route through the Indian Ocean. Intercontinental travel was almost exclusively by ship. Only one of them used the services of airlines. Starting from the early 1930s, Dutch, British and, Australian companies were attempting to provide regular air connections to Australia.² Helen Roberts came to Sydney with an aircraft of the Royal Dutch Indies Airways. In 1938/1939, the average travel time between the United Kingdom and Australia was about six weeks. A flight may have cut the time to about 10 to 16 days with multiple layovers in Asia.

The refugees remembered the weeks aboard the ships as being very monotonous. There was not much for them to do. Most of them had booked one of the tourist class cabins, which separated men and women. Annemarie Mutton described her journey as follows:

We came in a so-called one-class liner, *Ormonde*. We were very much downstairs. Ernest shared a cabin with 3 other men, I shared a cabin

1 Nossal, "Australian Responses," 135; Kwiet, "Re-Acculturation," 39; Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 32.

2 Robin Higham, *Britain's Imperial Air Routes, 1918–1939* (Strout: Fonthill Media, 2016).

with 5 other women and a baby. We were separated and shared inadequate facilities with a large number of British migrants from the North of England and some Italians. We met each morning to wander around fairly aimlessly.³

Sylvia Cherny also described the loneliness she felt during her journey in her memoirs: "As I spoke very little English, I felt very timid to go to the restaurant [...] and so, for most of the journey, I lived on sandwiches [...]. We travelled cabin class with strict instructions from our mother, not to leave the ship on route."⁴ Marie Bergel recalled her reactions when immigrants on her ship played Viennese folk songs, however, she also mentioned that she had earned her first British currency aboard the ship: "There were seven other refugee families on board of the *Anchises*. At Christmas eve they played 'Wien, Wien nur du allein.' I cried bitterly. I still felt as a Viennese. I did the feet of an officer at the ship. That was my first earning in a foreign country."⁵ Sometimes the five-to six-week journey brought people closer together and some of the refugees made their first Australian friends on the boats, as John Hearst recalled: "We got on to the *Orama* and we met Jury and Rosie Kabosch and we were friends ever since we had the boat trip together."⁶

When the refugees finally arrived in Australia after their long journey, a new part of their life started with them facing an unknown living situation. None of them had previously been to Australia, and the culture and society of the British semicolonial country was unknown and strange to all of them. What they did and whom they met and socialized with during those early days was essential for how they continued their future life paths "Down Under." Subsequently, these experiences frequently determined whether and how the refugees applied their cultural capital in their new homeland. This section of the book investigates this initial and determining phase of their lives. It examines everyday intercultural encounters in so-called contact zones—a term coined in 1991 by the linguist Mary Louise Pratt to describe social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power.⁷ These considerations are informed by an extended multilayer concept of identity formation, which is a useful tool

3 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

4 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 32.

5 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

6 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

7 Marie Louise Pratt, "Art of the Contact Zone," *Profession* 91 (1991): 33–40, 33.

TABLE 3 Information about the refugees' journeys (author's compilation)

| Nationality of the transport company | Name | Name of vessel | Company | Port of arrival | Year of arrival |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| United Kingdom | Charles William Anton | ss Orford | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Sydney | 1938 |
| | Grete Vanry | ss Otranto | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Sydney | 1939 |
| | Joan Lynn | ss Anchises | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Adelaide | 1939 |
| | Marie Bergel | ss Anchises | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Adelaide | 1939 |
| | Paul Hirsch | RMS Otranto | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Melbourne | 1939 |
| | Annemarie Mutton | RMS Ormonde | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Melbourne | 1938 |
| | Irma Weiss | RMS Strathmore | Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company | Sydney | 1939 |
| | Ernest Bowen | RMS Ormonde | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Melbourne | 1938 |
| | Kurt Selby | RMS Orontes | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Melbourne | 1938 |
| | Reinhold Eckfeld | HMT Dunera | Royal Navy | Sydney | 1940 |
| | Henry Michael Teltscher | HMT Dunera | Royal Navy | Sydney | 1940 |

TABLE 3 Information about the refugees' journeys (author's compilation) (*cont.*)

| Nationality of the transport company | Name | Name of vessel | Company | Port of arrival | Year of arrival |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| New Zealand | Gustav Bratspies | HMT Queen Mary | Royal Navy | Sydney | 1940 |
| | John Hearst | SS Orama | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Melbourne | 1939 |
| | Bruno Bush | SS Moreton Bay | Aberdeen & Commonwealth Line Ltd | Fremantle | 1946 |
| | Elisabeth Ziegler | RMS Strathaird | Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company | Sydney | 1939 |
| | Hans Eisler | SS Orama | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Sydney | 1939 |
| | Olga Agid | RMS Ormonde | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Melbourne | 1939 |
| | Viola Winkler | RMS Orontes | Orient Steam Navigation Company | Sydney | 1939 |
| | Gerhard Felser | RMS Niagara | Union Steam Ship Company | Sydney | 1938 |
| | Hanny Exiner | TSS Maunganui | Union Steamship Company | Melbourne | 1939 |
| | Sue Copolov | RMS Aorangi | Union Steamship Company | Melbourne | 1938 |
| | Richard Tandler | RMS Aorangi | Union Steamship Company | Melbourne | 1938 |

TABLE 3 Information about the refugees' journeys (author's compilation) (*cont.*)

| Nationality of the transport company | Name | Name of vessel | Company | Port of arrival | Year of arrival |
|---|--------------------|---|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Italy | Gertrude Langer | Remo | Lloyd Triestino Soc.Anon.di Nav., reg. Genoa | Sydney | 1939 |
| | Paul Herzfeld | Esquilino | Lloyd Triestino Soc.Anon.di Nav., reg. Genoa | Adelaide | 1939 |
| | Sylvia Cherny | SS Mariposa | Matson Lines | Sydney | 1941 |
| United States | Helen Roberts | Lockheed 14-WF62 Super Electra | Royal Dutch Indies Airways | Sydney | 1939 |
| Netherlands | | | | | |

for reconstructing and comprehending the dynamic and “hybrid” patterns of identities involved in migration processes.⁸

As “strangers”⁹ in a new land, this book’s protagonists experienced what has been described as “everyday otherness,” a form of “cultural crisis—reflecting both danger and opportunity—as long-term regional residents and new ‘visible migrants’ engage in the challenges of intercultural interaction.”¹⁰ Their first

8 This section is closely informed by a paper I published in 2021 in the journal *Zeitgeschichte*, see Philipp Strobl, “Austrian-Jewish Refugees in Pre- and Wartime Australia. Ambivalent Experiences of Encounter,” *Zeitgeschichte* 21 (2021): 253–271; Mario De La Rosa, “Acculturation and Latino Adolescents’ Substance Use: A Research Agenda for the Future,” *Substance Use & Misuse* 37 (2002): 429–456; Hani Zubida et al., “Home and Away: Hybrid Perspective on Identity Formation in 1.5 and second Generation Adolescent Immigrants in Israel,” *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation* (2013): 1–28.

9 Alfred Schuetz, “The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology,” *American Journal of Sociology* 49 (1944): 499–507.

10 David Radford, “Everyday Otherness’—Intercultural Refugee Encounters and Everyday Multiculturalism in a South Australian Rural Town,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2016): 2128–2145, 2130.

experiences of encounter are of particular interest for this analysis since they shaped their sense of belonging and subsequently affected the dynamics of their identity formation process, the ways in which they imagined their future lives in Australia, and, ultimately, the ways in which they applied their cultural capital. A focus on the interactions between the refugees and the local population can help to analyse everyday intercultural encounters¹¹ between Austrian refugees as “the strangers” and Australians as “the locals.”¹² Thus, this section uses refugee memories to discover and question their everyday-life situations, such as encounters in the workplace, or the neighbourhood grocery store after their arrival. Influenced by the “new biography” school of thought,¹³ it observes these sources in their context of origin and considers the fact that their “genuine truth” is not constituted by historically secured facts but rather by the pictures and fragments of the past they offer. Then, it categorizes and compares refugees’ memories and contextualizes them against the literature on identity formation. This allows the demonstration of the dynamics and hybridity of self-identities, as well as the complex ways in which encounters impacted upon their social relations and their acculturation.

Researching memories of everyday encounters offers reliable insights into the intercultural, social coexistence of people. Encounters with “everyday otherness” can be difficult because they imply the possibility for conflict, misunderstanding, and antagonism.¹⁴ They constitute important situations in the lives of this book’s protagonists that “may facilitate, or impede mutual understandings and integration” during a crucial phase within the migration process.¹⁵ The researching, comparing, highlighting and analysing of the memories of selected key moments in the arrival process of refugees of the Second World War in Australia has not yet received much scholarly attention. More research on these processes is needed and will improve the understanding of the complexities, challenges, effects, and strategies of encounters between refugees and members of a host society. Upon their arrival in Australia, all the members of this book’s sample group had no previous personal experience

11 The concept of “interculturalism” emphasizes processes that take place between culturally different individuals during their encounter, see Aleksandra Winiarska, “Intercultural Neighbourly Encounters in Warsaw from the Perspective of Goffman’s Sociology of Interaction,” *Central and Eastern European Migration Review* 4 (2015): 43–60, 44.

12 Schuetz, “The Stranger.”

13 See Prager, “Überlegungen zu Biographie”; Strobl, “Ich habe nie die Absicht gehabt,” 58–79; Levke Harders, “Migration und Biographie: Mobile Leben schreiben,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 29 (2018): 17–36.

14 Radford, “Everyday Otherness,” 2131.

15 Winiarska, “Intercultural Neighbourly Encounters,” 44.

of Australia and thus occupied positions of “strangers” in the sense that they “observed specific behaviours, habits, and lifestyles” and experienced “norms of conduct which might [have been] surprising or strange to them, both in a positive and negative way.”¹⁶ Memories of their encounter experiences offer a reflective judgement of the meaning of their experiences. They show how refugees recalled their experiences of “everyday otherness” upon their arrival, a process that, as has been shown in an earlier study, sustainably affected the formations of their identities in Australia.¹⁷

6.1 Refugees in Australia: A Brief Historical Introduction

Refugee migration to Australia has a short history compared to other states. Many factors are responsible for this, not least the fact that most of the refugees of the 19th and early 20th century may have “perceived the country to be too remote,” as historian Klaus Neumann put it in his recent book about Australia’s responses to refugees.¹⁸ The country was barely touched by the major refugee movements of the late 19th century. During that time, no distinction was made between forced and unforced migrants and there were no humanitarian provisions for the former, who instead often relied on the assistance of family, friends, and volunteer organizations. Refugees had to meet the standard immigration criteria.¹⁹ Among the few refugees that came during the 19th century were German Lutherans, who fled religious persecution in Prussia and settled in South Australia during the 1830s and 1840s, Lebanese escaping civil conflicts during the 1860s and 1890s, and Russian Jews escaping pogroms during the 1890s.²⁰

When the first Australian parliament convened on May 9, 1901, refugee issues were not to be found on any agendas. Three-quarters of a century would pass before a comprehensive refugee policy was announced in parliament: until the 1970s, refugees were regarded as regular immigrants. Once arrived in Australia, “they were supposed to leave behind their experiences of suffering, and their allegiances to their native countries.”²¹ The Jewish refugee

16 Marinus Ossewaarde, “Cosmopolitanism and the Society of Strangers,” *Current Sociology* 55 (2007): 367–388.

17 Strobl, “Austrian-Jewish Refugees.”

18 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 5.

19 Stats, “Characteristically Generous,” 179.

20 Stats, “Characteristically Generous,” 178.

21 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 1.

crisis of the 1930s was vital in raising an awareness of refugees as a special and vulnerable group. And between 1936 and 1939, because of a growing awareness of the Nazi terror against the Jewish population as well as because of a slow recovery of the Australian economy, there was a gradual relaxation of alien immigration policies.²² However, there was still no such thing as a “refugee” status and refugees were still regarded as regular migrants. Only during the early 1940s did the Australian government explicitly consider its obligation toward refugees.²³ From its very inception, Australia’s immigration policy was “highly selective, tightly controlled and carefully managed.”²⁴ The fact that the country neglected to implement a refugee policy after federation, however, “was not mere oversight.”²⁵ It was “necessary to preserve its discriminatory immigration policies and desired cultural homogeneity, which would, by definition, be compromised by agreeing to accept refugees on an unpredictable humanitarian basis,” as historian Katrina Stats has written.²⁶

According to Andrew Markus, Australians, from the turn of the 19th century, developed a “clear concept of themselves as [...] superior to all non-European [high-status]²⁷ people.” Thus, as he claims, “discrimination on the grounds of race became normal, accepted behaviour.”²⁸ From its first foundational meeting onward, the Australian parliament designed laws such as the Immigration Restriction Bill or the Pacific Island Labourers Bill to exclude those who were regarded as “undesirable.” As a result, Australia’s population became more racially homogeneous during the first four decades of the 20th century.²⁹ Until 1948, Australian residents were British subjects. They originated overwhelmingly from the British Isles, either by birth or by descent. Australia’s Chinese-born population, which constituted the largest non-indigenous, non-European minority, for example, shrank from 29,000 to 6,400 during those four decades.³⁰ This, however, should not overshadow the fact that the predominantly British-Australian settler society developed its own sociocultural specifics, for example, through contacts between the British and the indigenous population

22 Rutland, “Refugee Migration,” 80.

23 Stats, “Characteristically Generous,” 179.

24 Stats, “Characteristically Generous,” 180.

25 Stats, “Characteristically Generous,” 181.

26 Stats, “Characteristically Generous,” 181.

27 Generally, only people from the United Kingdom and northern Europe were seen as high-status immigrants. Migrants from southern or eastern Europe were usually regarded as a distinct racial group. See Markus, *Australian Race Relations*, 145.

28 Markus, *Australian Race Relations*, 111.

29 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 15.

30 Neumann, *Across the Seas*.

or other marginalized groups, often under highly asymmetrical relations of power, which also affected identity formation.³¹

When the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees introduced identity certificates, so-called Nansen passports, as emergency passports for people displaced in Communist Russia, Australia—protected as it was from obligations toward refugees by distance—regarded refugees as an exclusively European problem.³² When the 1926 intergovernmental conference was convened by the League of Nations, Australian prime minister Stanley Bruce avoided addressing the refugee issue, as he expected “great difficulties.”³³

Racial prejudices and negative attitudes toward immigration increased further during the Great Depression of the 1930s and reinforced the already dominant assumption “that Australia should remain as British as possible.”³⁴ At that time, even informed opinion was still cautious about the number of immigrants Australia could absorb, and it was repeatedly stressed that immigration should be on a “modest scale.”³⁵ Various professional associations strongly opposed the intake of refugees. Representatives of doctors and dentists, architects, engineers and accountants, as well as lawyers, were among the main groups working to prevent refugees with professional qualifications from entering Australia, because of their fear of competition.³⁶ Furthermore, refugees were accused of working under conditions of “sweated labour” and of establishing “backyard industries, where industrial awards were not observed.”³⁷ These strong negative public reactions are crucial in understanding the government’s reserved response to the refugee crisis, as Suzanne Rutland wrote.³⁸ And accordingly, the Lyons government tried to avoid making any commitments toward refugee protection. Prime Minister Lyons, for example, declined to sign the 1933 League of Nations Convention Relating to the International Status of Refugees,

31 For more information on Australian settler colonialism, see Fiona Paisley, “The Italo-Abyssinian Crisis and Australian Settler Colonialism in 1935,” *History Compass* 15 (2017): 8–11; Georgine Clarsen, “Mobile Encounters: Bicycles, Cars and Australian Settler Colonialism,” *History Australia* 12, no. 1 (2015): 165–186; Lisa Slater, *Anxieties of Belonging in Settler Colonialism: Australia, Race and Place* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

32 Stats, “Characteristically Generous,” 182.

33 Stats, “Characteristically Generous,” 182.

34 Wiemann, “German and Austrian Refugees,” 4.

35 Wiemann, “German and Austrian Refugees,” 45. For more information on media reactions to Jewish refugees who came to Australia during the 1930s, see Philipp Strobl, *Die Flüchtlingskrise der 1930er Jahre in australischen Tageszeitungen. Eine medienhistorische Diskursanalyse* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2019).

36 Rutland, “Refugee Migration,” 83.

37 Rutland, “Refugee Migration,” 83.

38 Rutland, “Refugee Migration,” 84.

which enshrined the key principle of refugee protection, non-refoulement, and would later serve as a model for the UN Refugee Convention. Because of this, Australia was not bound to refugee protection.³⁹ The right-wing government of Robert Menzies followed this direction. Additionally, Canberra's bureaucrats resented an immigration policy being thrust upon them by circumstances over which they had no control, with large sections of the public concerned about "labour displacement and racial blending."⁴⁰

The events of the spring 1938 Anschluss, when Nazi Germany occupied Austria and triggered a large wave of refugees, thus coincided with a general atmosphere of mistrust toward migrants in Australia. Increased numbers of refugees from Nazi oppression prompted the international community to consider their response to the refugee crisis in July 1938. The Evian Conference was portrayed as a concerted, global effort to cope with the problem of displaced minorities, however, it was not successful, because of the lack of interest of its members in taking refugees.⁴¹ Australia's participation was based on the premise that no country would be expected to receive a greater number of immigrants than was already permitted by their existing immigration legislation.⁴² Like most of the other participating states, Australia, maintained a negative position on the liberalization of its immigration policy,⁴³ and potential asylum-seekers faced strict requirements influenced by antisemitic and racist criteria.⁴⁴ The Australian delegate summarized the official Australian stance vis-à-vis the intake of refugees as follows: "it would no doubt be appreciated that as we have no racial problem we are not desirous of importing one."⁴⁵

Antisemitism existed in Australia, although in a different form than it took in the Nazi state or in Eastern Europe countries. As Rodney Goutman has described in his study about antisemitism in Australia, the phenomenon existed and it can be argued that "while in this epoch the problem of

39 Stats, "Characteristically Generous," 182. Under international human rights law, the principle of non-refoulement guarantees that no one should be returned to a country where they would face torture, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment and other irreparable harm.

40 Binoy Kampmark, "'Spying for Hitler' and 'Working for Bin Laden': Comparative Australian Discourses on Refugees," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19.1 (2006): 1–21, 2; Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust*, xii.

41 Kampmark, "Spying for Hitler," 6.

42 NAA, A461, M349/3/5, Cable from High Commissioner Bruce to PM Joseph Lyons, 5 April 1938.

43 Rutland, *Australia*, 57.

44 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 41.

45 *Southern Cross*, October 21, 1938, 10.

antisemitism in Australia never approached the virulence experienced elsewhere, the fear that this odious prejudice could break out at any time also had a profound and defining effect on the behaviour of Australia's Jews."⁴⁶ It manifested itself amongst other things in the requirement for a quick assimilation of newcomers and "Non-Anglo," or "foreign" Jews who arrived in Australia were required to assimilate immediately into an Anglo-Jewish population. This often overlooked fact is particularly interesting, since their effect upon Jewish attitudes and behaviour, both towards the Gentiles among whom they live and within their own community is frequently a missing element in the study of antisemitism.⁴⁷ However, despite the pressure Jewish communities put on newly arriving Jewish refugees in terms of assimilation, since Jewish refugees from Russia had already arrived during the 1920s, anecdotes about discrimination of Jews in professional life, government departments, clubs and large retail stores mounted.⁴⁸ Hilary Rubinstein and Suzanne Rutland have provided lists of agents of antisemitism, ranging from different individuals, and organizations, to fringe and mainstream media.⁴⁹ Antisemitism, as Rodney Gouttman has shown, was expressed mainly in three forms during the 1930s. Some left-wing labour politicians, such as Frank Anstey, took up such themes when depicting Jews as "arch bloodsucking capitalists."⁵⁰ Furthermore, anti-Jewish animus turned up in the rhetoric of the Labor Premier of New South Wales Jack T. Lang during the 1930s and 1940s.⁵¹ Xenophobic nationalists and racists also had their version of the "evil Jew." Such views were regularly published in *The Bulletin* with its emblematic fat capitalist John Bull Cohen, *Smith's Weekly*, and *The Truth*.⁵² *The Bulletin*, for example, regularly stressed that "the refugees would form unassimilable colonies in the already overpopulated cities of Sydney and Melbourne," fearing that they would become "foci of disorder and racial tension."⁵³ In the second half of the 1930s, there was a certain but limited spread of pro-Nazi propaganda, particularly in South Australia,⁵⁴ while

46 Rodney Gouttman, "Was It Ever So? Anti-Semitism in Australia 1850–1950?," *Humanities Research* 12 (2005), 55–65, 56.

47 Gouttman, "Was It Ever So?," 55f.

48 Gouttman, "Was It Ever So?," 58.

49 Rubinstein, *Jews in Australia*; Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*.

50 Peter Love, "'The Kingdom of Shylock': a case study of Australian labour anti-Semitism," *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* 12.1 (1993): 54–62.

51 Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora*, 197, 230.

52 Gouttman, "Was It Ever So?," 59.

53 Rutland, "Australia and Refugee Migration," 82.

54 Rachael Kohn, "Lutherans and Jews in South Australia, 1933/ 45," *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* 9.1–2 (1995): 45–61.

only one year after the outbreak of the war, the small xenophobic and clearly antisemitic Australia First Party was established.⁵⁵

Indeed the question of Australia taking large numbers of refugees became most poignant in 1938, when more than 20,000 visa applications matched the strict Australian requirements.⁵⁶ One year later, Australia restricted the annual number of "Jewish migrants" to 5,000 over a period of three years.⁵⁷ But even the announcement of that figure generated a public outcry, as letters written to politicians and stored in the National Archives of Australia that refer to an "invasion" by refugees and to "Jewish refugees" as "exploiters of humanity" indicate.⁵⁸

Immigration to Australia came to an abrupt halt when the war broke out in September 1939. Only two days after Australia declared war on Germany, the government declared a freeze on all immigration.⁵⁹ Despite its own restrictive regulations, however, the country showed in the years to follow that it was willing to accept non-Jewish migrants, even while the war was in progress. As far as Jewish refugees were concerned, however, Australia remained relatively unaccepting.⁶⁰

After the outbreak of the Second World War, in September 1939, the Australian government introduced the National Security Act.⁶¹ It was an acute security measure that passed absolute power to the executive. Additional plans had been made for the internment of aliens, as well as other measures to control their movements and activities.⁶² Migrants from Germany were labelled "enemy aliens" regardless of their background. The same fate befell people from Austria, which was legally a part of the German Reich at that time, as well as people from other countries at war with Australia. Under the National Security Act, not only aliens but all Australians lost many of their civil rights. The act gave the government emergency powers that enabled it to govern without recourse to parliament and the legislative process.⁶³ Enemy aliens had to report regularly to the police. They were also forced to

55 Gouttman, "Was It Ever So?," 59.

56 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 41.

57 Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust*, 115ff.

58 NAA, A445, 235/5/6, Department of Immigration, "Protests re Jewish Immigration"; NAA, A433, 1943/2/4588, Department of the Interior, "European Refugees—Views of Public Readmittance."

59 Bartrop, "Almost Indescribable and Unbelievable," 555.

60 Bartrop, "Unbelievable," 555.

61 Glaros, "Injustice," 38.

62 O'Brien, "Citizenship," 207.

63 O'Brien, "Citizenship," 207.

endure restrictions placed on their travel, movement, and the possession of personal items such as cameras, cars, and maps. Those who were believed to pose a security risk to Australia were even interned. Most importantly, however, enemy aliens were banned from naturalization. An offence against the National Security Act was punished with either imprisonment or “a fine of any amount.”⁶⁴

Officials, in general, had plenty of scope in enforcing the act, which stated that “any person who is found committing an offence against this Act, or who is suspected of having committed, or being about to commit, such an offence, may be arrested without any warrant.”⁶⁵ The Australian government, however, did not distinguish between regular migrants and refugees. As soon as war was declared, German and Austrian nationals officially became enemy aliens. This created a critical situation for refugees, who had lost their civil rights (or parts of them) twice at that moment: first, during the Nazi oppression in their old homelands and, second, in their new homeland of Australia. Furthermore, social inclusion and exclusion were rather focused on perceptions of loyalty and disloyalty. Anyone who spoke a foreign language could be seen as potentially disloyal and authorities frequently argued that “homeland allegiances continued to define the loyalty of the immigrant.”⁶⁶

In this early phase, after the outbreak of the war, there was only limited possibility for refugees to exercise agency and make themselves publicly heard. The majority had just arrived and their most important goals were to secure their living and to learn the English language. In general, the Australian public was not receptive to the refugees’ difficult situation. Antisemitism was present in the labour movement and among the labour unions. There were also orchestrated campaigns against refugees by some branches of the Returned Sailors’ and Soldiers’ Imperial League of Australia, and various municipal and shire councils and government ministers received numerous letters and petitions demanding mass internment.⁶⁷ A number of letters from the general public indicate attitudes toward people of non-British origin. In 1940, community organizations urged the Australian prime minister to “give harsher treatment

64 Commonwealth of Australia Numbered Acts, National Security Act 1939 (No. 15 of 1939), http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_act/nsa19391501939257/, accessed on February 23, 2023.

65 Comp. National Security Act 1939 (No 15 of 1939), in Commonwealth of Australia Numbered Acts, http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_act/nsa19391501939257/, accessed on January 31, 2023.

66 O'Brien, “Citizenship,” 210.

67 O'Brien, “Citizenship,” 212.

to those of alien origin.”⁶⁸ A representative of the Korong Vale Soldiers’ Welfare Committee even demanded that the prime minister “immediately intern all aliens of enemy origin in Australia, who have become naturalised during the last ten years, as well as those not yet naturalised.” The Constitutional Association of New South Wales urged the government to “intern forthright all persons of enemy origin—whether naturalised or not—who have entered Australia since 1st January 1920,”⁶⁹ Also, the Security Service in Sydney was convinced, “a person born and bred in in Germany, of German parents, will never be anything but a German at heart. [...] in the event of an invasion, such a person would unhesitatingly resume his German obedience.”⁷⁰ Even the Labour politician Arthur Calwell, who became Australia’s first immigration minister in 1945, justified the strict regulations as follows: “for the war as the democracies wage it is largely an affair of improvisation, and in urgent situations which demand prompt and effective action, there is little time to weigh the niceties of human rights.”⁷¹

6.2 Hybrid Identity Formations: A Theoretical Framework

The classic expectation of immigrants and refugees, often also portrayed in older literature, was that they make their home in a foreign place, adapt to another environment, and then assimilate to the culture of the receiving country.⁷² They are expected to reduce and finally terminate their links and ties with their home country.⁷³ This picture has lost much of its relevance since research has shown that transnational ties in many cases remain important determinants of identity-shaping processes. The increased research on migration, and the realization that migrations are complex, reciprocal, and dynamic processes, has led to the understanding that assimilation theories are inappropriate for explaining the interacting identities that migration processes create. Recent research particularly stresses the role of imported and adapted cultural capital as the migrants’ and refugees’ “treasure chest”⁷⁴ and increasingly reveals

68 O’Brien, “Citizenship,” 211.

69 O’Brien, “Citizenship,” 211.

70 Quoted in Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 58.

71 Noel Lamidey, *Aliens Control in Australia, 1939–1946* (Sydney, 1974), 1.

72 Strobl, “Austrian-Jewish Refugees,” 258.

73 Kenneth D. Madsen and Ton van Naerssen, “Migration, Identity, and Belonging,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 18 (2003): 61–75.

74 Strobl, “Gertrude Langer.”

migrants and refugees as “cultural translators” and “agents of knowledge” who live, work, and think between at least two different spaces.⁷⁵ Building on ideas of multiple and diverse identities, political scientists Hani Zubida, Liron Avi, and Robin Harper suggest a theoretical approach to the topic based on sociologist Mario De La Rosa’s conceptual framework of identity formation. They identified four modes of identity:⁷⁶

- 1) “Neither here nor there”: Low level of cultural identification with the refugees’ culture of origin and low level of cultural identification with the prevailing host society’s mainstream values;
- 2) “Here and not there”: Low level of cultural identification with their culture of origin and high level of cultural identification with the prevailing host society’s mainstream values;
- 3) “There and not here”: High level of cultural identification with their culture of origin and low level of cultural identification with the prevailing host society’s mainstream values;
- 4) “Both, here and there”: High level of cultural identification with their culture of origin and high level of cultural identification with the prevailing host society’s mainstream values.

Assigning a non-directional and multidimensional meaning to these four terminological modes is crucial, since labels alone are insufficient to shape our understanding of how refugee identities are formed.⁷⁷ Thus, a more open perspective that recognizes the hybrid nature of identities allows us to understand and question the processes in which ties to the host country, the country of origin, both of them, or neither of them create dynamic patterns of identity. This helps us to gain insights into the “hybrid” nature of identities, showing that refugees can hold different, even contradicting, identities with loose boundaries. Hybridity, as related to migration, is usually conceived as the process of cultural mixing in which immigrants and refugees “adopt aspects of the host culture and rework, reform, and reconfigure them in production of new hybrid cultures or hybrid identities.”⁷⁸ It can, therefore, be promising to envisage the

75 Zloch, Müller, and Lässig, “Wissen in Bewegung”; Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move,” 313–346; Simone Lässig, “The History of Knowledge,” 29–58; Strobl, “Migrant Biographies”; Westermann, “Migrant Knowledge”; Strobl, “From Niche Sport to Mass Tourism.”

76 Zubida, “Home and Away,” 3–4.

77 Zubida, “Home and Away,” 4.

78 V.S. Kalra, Raminder Kaur, and John Hutnyk, *Diaspora and Hybridity* (London: Sage, 2005), 71.

process of identity formation as “hybrid” in order to understand the complexities emerging from the encounter experiences of different cultures.

6.3 Encounter Situations

Until the refugees had formed their own associations (the Association of Jewish Refugees in 1942 and the Association of Refugees in 1943) to exercise more efficient collective agency, there were only very few organizations in Australia that dealt with the refugees during the late 1930s and the Second World War period.⁷⁹ Apart from a few denominational organizations such as the Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS), the Jewish communities of Melbourne and Sydney, and some Christian churches and organizations, refugees who made it to Australia had little official, institutionalized support.⁸⁰ Those who were allowed to enter the country technically arrived as migrants: the government expected them to produce enough financial capital and the necessary skills to provide for themselves, thus it did not see any need to support and assist them. Due to the official refusal to treat refugees differently from regular migrants, most of the new arrivals, particularly those who were not members of a religious community, were on their own. To make things worse, public discourse was largely against them and they were widely perceived as a threat to the labour market, as well as to the homogeneity of the “British” society.⁸¹ Consequently, “Jewish refugees encountered enormous difficulties in gaining a foothold in their new Australian environment,” as Konrad Kwiet put it based on his observation of different refugee stories.⁸²

In this context, it seems particularly promising for this book to examine refugee memories of encounter experiences during their initial contact phase after the refugees’ arrival to see how they remembered and depicted “everyday otherness.” It is important to understand how locals and refugees responded to each other and how their individual response to the challenges of their intercultural encounters affected their identities. After arriving in their new

79 Philipp Strobl, “Collective Refugee Agency and the Negotiation of Migration Laws in Wartime Australia, 1939–1943,” *Historical Journal* (under review).

80 Nossal, “Australian Responses,” 137.

81 Wiemann, “German and Austria Refugees,” 48; Eva Knabl, Sarah Petutschnig, and David Röck, “But sympathy cannot go so far as to permit them to pour into Australia like a cataract”—Die negative Rezeption von Flüchtlingen in australischen Medien,” in *Die Flüchtlingskrise der 1930er Jahre in australischen Tageszeitungen. Eine medienhistorische Diskursanalyse*, ed. Philipp Strobl (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2018), 81–90, 81.

82 Kwiet, “Refugees in Australia,” 39.

host countries, many refugees tried to establish social ties in order to counter notions of “otherness” and promote themselves and their cultural capital. Their strategies of establishing such ties are also highly relevant for this study. The fact that almost all of them had hastily escaped into a different social and cultural context without any prior time for preparation and that they, as well as the members of the host society, had diverging ideas of how they ought to behave in everyday life situations, further affected the formation of their identities.⁸³

Class affiliation was another important factor that determined the procedure of making contacts among the members of the host society. Most of this book’s protagonists belonged to the educated Viennese upper and middle classes, as shown in Chapter 3. A substantial number of them had pursued middle-class professions in Austria. Many worked as doctors, artists, lawyers, or tradesmen before coming to Australia. Their escape, in most cases, represented a considerable biographical disruption. In Australia, refugees were expected to fully assume the predominant values and norms and to gratefully carry out the jobs Australians did not want to do themselves. In most cases, they ended up doing low-paid casual and domestic work that differed greatly from their former middle-class professions.⁸⁴ These different expectations caused difficulties and tensions in gaining a foothold in their new and alien environment,⁸⁵ as the analysed memories show.

Depending on the refugees’ needs and interests, as well as on the expectations of local Australians, the process of making contacts was highly dynamic and hybrid, and turned out to be different in every single case. As we will see, refugees had very ambivalent experiences when interacting with their new fellow countrymen, ranging from friendly support and sympathy, tolerance, rejection, bullying, antisemitism, to violent assaults. In many cases, they described more than one different type of experience. By and large, three everyday life situations of encounter with their new fellow citizens dominated almost all depictions:

- Immediate encounters after their arrival;
- Everyday neighbourly encounters;
- Encounters in the workplace.

83 Winiarska, “Intercultural Neighbourly Encounters,” 46.

84 Wiemann, “German and Austrian Refugees,” 147.

85 Kwiet, “Refugees in Australia,” 39.

6.3.1 *Immediate Encounters after Arrival*

The experiences the members of our sample group had upon their arrival after their long journey around the world were particularly important for the ways they imagined their future in their new homeland. It was a time when they gained their first impressions of Australia. Therefore, it is not surprising that the moment of arrival dominated the refugees' depictions of their past. Most of them were in a precarious financial situation. Their sudden escape from Austria had left them with scarce resources. By the end of 1938, it was practically impossible to take more than 10 Reichsmark out of Germany due to discriminatory Nazi taxation laws.⁸⁶ Consequently, refugees generally arrived in Australia either with very little financial capital or with debts because of the high cost of the passage to Australia and the fact that most of them had borrowed the so-called landing money required to enter the country. "Those who arrived before the outbreak of the war had great difficulties to find a job. Their slender financial resources dwindled dangerously," as one refugee put it.⁸⁷ Since there was virtually no financial backing from the government, some of the refugees depended on the support of denominational aid organizations (such as the Jewish Welfare Society, or local Jewish communities). Many, however, were left entirely on their own, especially those who were not members of a denominational organization.

Some had distant relatives or casual acquaintances who supported them and helped them settle in. Some mentioned that Australians supported them by picking them up at the port or assisting them with accommodation. Marie Bergel, who arrived in Adelaide in 1938 with her husband and her two daughters, recalled: "A Ms. Solomon picked us up with her car and wanted to show us the Synagogue. [...] We were welcomed by the rabbi. He offered us his help and support. Ms. Solomon organized accommodation for us."⁸⁸ Annemarie Mutton, who arrived with her husband in 1938, recalled being picked up at the port by acquaintances:

We arrived in Melbourne for disembarkation very early in the morning. We were met at the ship by Dr. Bill Wishart and his wife Olive, who had guaranteed for us. They took us in their car to their house in Auburn

86 For more information see Burger, *Heimatrecht*, 150.

87 Bittmann, *Strauss to Matilda*, 15.

88 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

Road, Hawthorn. They gave us a room with a double bed. [...] They had arranged a sort of housekeeping job for us [...] not far from them.⁸⁹

As the Viennese art historian Gertrude Langer described, she and her husband were welcomed at the port “with open arms.” She even recalled having had “the most wonderful time socially, really immediately.”⁹⁰ Australians also supported the Langers’ search for jobs. In her case, a local professor of architecture arranged a job in an architectural company for her husband. Elisabeth Ziegler, who arrived in Sydney in June 1939 together with her husband, had similar experiences: “We came to Sydney and Mr. Starr was there waiting for us. [...] We were lucky that Mr. Starr had friends who lost their housemaid. And I started to become a housemaid with them. They were very nice.”⁹¹

Others had no personal contacts and received no support from aid organizations or private supporters. In their cases, memories of isolation and loneliness were particularly dominant. Viola Winkler, who arrived in Sydney, described her feelings of alienation: “Everything was strange in Australia: the landscape, the language, no one was friendly, and no one attempted to help us. I had the greatest difficulties finding a job.”⁹² Arriving in mid-1938, Kurt Selby was not welcomed at the port by anyone and had to organize accommodation by himself. He even suffered occasional antisemitism, as his daughter recalled: “He lived alone in a boarding house when he arrived. He was attacked for being Jewish and went to the police.”⁹³ Helen Roberts, who had organized a job for herself in Sydney prior to her escape, had to find out after her arrival that the job was already taken by someone else. “I put an ad in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. We got a letter from a man who said he was a doctor and he can send us a permit. When we came here there was nothing. And he said there was everything here for us but there was nothing,” she later stated in an interview.⁹⁴ John Hearst, who arrived in Melbourne together with his wife, gave insights into another aspect of the treatment refugees in search of a job had to accept:

89 State Library of Victoria, MS12651, Mutton Annemarie, Papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], c. 1930–1987.

90 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 37.

91 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview.

92 Winkler, “Augenblick,” 311.

93 Eleanor Hart (Selby’s daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

94 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (audio recording).

In March 1939 we arrived here. The next day they [members of the Jewish Welfare Society] picked us up and brought us to the boarding house and then we were invited to go to the office of the Jewish Welfare Society and then they will see that they get us some employment. The easiest way to get employment was to work as a married couple. [...] It was a fantastic thing. You should have seen how we were examined. There came a bloke named Joseph. He looked at Mummy [his wife] and touched her arms and said: Oh, she is quite strong—should be alright. Looked at me: Oh, he's quite alright too. Could be quite useful. I felt like on a slave market—it was terrible.⁹⁵

6.3.2 *Everyday Neighbourly Encounters*

The neighbourhood was a very important place for encounters with the local population. The experiences of encounter of the refugees varied greatly depending on their specific situation and the neighbourhood they chose. Some described coming into a very friendly and supportive neighbourly environment. "As a corollary we appreciated the instant assistance, given us from all of our neighbours when a grass fire broke out in our back garden," Annemarie Mutton recalled in her memoirs and further stated:

In Hawthorn, we had already established an image of ourselves as people, not only just aliens, or, colloquially, bloody reffos. [...] The Australians, we met through letters of introduction and then by being handed around a bit were hospitable and kind. An Australian friend even lent us his car.⁹⁶

After her arrival in provincial Brisbane, Gertrude Langer described the fast and instant support she received from some of her neighbours:

I was still in my room thinking what to do, not knowing quite where to turn, when all of a sudden, I was told to come down into the hall, there was a young lady there asking for me. So, I said, "Well, that can't be so because I do not know a single soul in Brisbane." "Oh, yes. She said she wants to meet Dr Langer." So, I said "all right," so I went down and there stood a very tall woman, young, there with a bunch of flowers. [...] Well, anyhow, Margaret and I became friends almost immediately and I had

95 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

96 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

my first friend in about 24 hours. She couldn't do enough for me. She said "What can I help you with first?" I said, "Finding a place where to live."⁹⁷

Elisabeth Ziegler, who moved into a small town in the Hunter Valley, north of Sydney, described some initial difficulties when she encountered her new neighbours:

When we came to this little town, we were like a wonder to them [the neighbours]. They had never seen a Jew or a foreigner before. It was much harder for them than for us, [they were] a little bit suspicious at first probably but it worked out well.⁹⁸

Before she moved to the small town, she had lived, rather isolated, in Sydney, as she described.⁹⁹ The isolation they encountered in their neighbourhoods was a dominant issue in many memories. After his arrival in Melbourne, John Hearst described initial difficulties in finding local friends: "We had not many Australian friends—only one neighbour."¹⁰⁰ The Viennese writer Paul Hirsch, who arrived in Melbourne aged 47, stated in one of his autobiographical post-war writings: "At first, there were not many Australians around when we [a group of German-speaking refugees] met." He further wrote in a letter to a friend in the United States: "We have been living here in complete isolation. There are almost no people to have at least some kind of interesting conversations with."¹⁰¹

Some refugees described that they encountered an atmosphere of hostility and rejection in their neighbourhoods. Viola Winkler recalled:

People were not used to refugees and kept away. There were no English classes and no welcoming things. I had to be on my own. People used to abuse me in the bus: "reffo go home to where you came from" [...] From September 1939 on we became enemy aliens. We were treated as if we were one of the Nazis. [...] We were outcasts.¹⁰²

97 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 51.

98 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview (audio recording).

99 SJM, AU006, title: Liesel Ziegler Oral History Interview (audio recording).

100 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

101 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Fritz Czuczka, 20.10.1966.

102 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

Annemarie Mutton recalled antisemitic encounters in her neighbourhood and the suspicious behaviour of governmental officials toward them:

Emil [a friend] and I were attacked by a stranger after leaving the office after hours. The police came and asked: "Did he attack you because you are a Jew?" We were kept over an hour to answer questions of our origin. [...] We confirmed the same story but were listened to with suspicion.¹⁰³

Making local friends was a key event that featured prominently in the refugees' memories. Again, we can see from the recollections that this game-changing event usually happened faster in the case of refugees who had someone to support them, as the above-mentioned story of Gertrude Langer showed. If refugees were left on their own and thus felt isolated in their neighbourhood, making local friends took them much longer. Viola Winkler recalled such a pivotal experience which substantially affected her future life in Australia:

After some years in Australia, I met a painter who introduced me to local people and artists in Sydney. This woman changed my entire life in Australia. She showed me the best places in Sydney—sometimes it just needs a kind-hearted person to make the world a better place for others.¹⁰⁴

Another space of encounter, which concerned the refugees' children, was school. Joan Lynn, who arrived in Adelaide aged three, recalls: "I do not remember any insults from Australians except for one boy in school. There was this kid who did not want to sit next to me because he claimed I was a Nazi."¹⁰⁵ Others felt isolated because of language and ethnic barriers: "My sister and I at first had only one friend in school. She was a German girl to whom we spoke exclusively German. We had problems learning English during the first years," Sue Copolov, who arrived in Melbourne in 1939 at the age of 10, remembered.¹⁰⁶ Annemarie Mutton recalled the xenophobia that she and her husband encountered when they attended an open day of a local school:

103 SLV, MS12651, Mutton Annemarie, Papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], c. 1930–1987.

104 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

105 Joan Lynn (Bergel's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

106 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

It had been announced by a note to the parents to make an effort to come and see the school, if possible fathers also. Ernest [her husband] made a valiant effort to desist from going to the office early but to come with me to see Muriel's school and meet her teachers. The headmaster was introduced to us, or we to him. He looked at Ernest and said: 'Well, thanks for coming Mr. Bowen, of course our men, our fathers have to go to work, they can't come.' Ernest was so devastated, so enraged, so hurt, he left at once. He never again came to any single function of any of the children's school or activities.¹⁰⁷

Mutton's memories give an interesting insight into the differing gender roles between Australia and Austria refugees had been confronted with. Coming from a Jewish upper-middle class background where much value was placed upon education and *Kultur*,¹⁰⁸ supporting their children's education by getting to personally know their school environment was most likely essential to Bowen. In Australia, however, the emerging rituals of a male- and companion-centred leisure and professional culture created a different *habitus* that "gave men a social territory away from women and children," which was an important part of their identity.¹⁰⁹ Women, as Jill Conway described, thus were relentlessly assigned to marriage and motherhood.¹¹⁰

Some of the refugees settled in ethnic or religious communities which offered them a place to live together with people who shared the same fate and ethnic or religious background. This helped them to overcome feelings of isolation, as Kurt Selby's daughter recalled: "He settled in a Jewish community and had most of his contacts with other members of his group. It was a safer little world he created for himself and his wife."¹¹¹ Bruno Bush, who arrived in Sydney after the war, also described that he found a home in a Jewish community in Sydney: "We spoke Yiddish at home. My children went to a Jewish Kindergarten and got a Jewish education."¹¹²

107 SLV, MS12651, Mutton Annemarie, Papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], c. 1930–1987.

108 Embacher, "Middle class," 6.

109 Jill Conway, "Gender in Australia," *Daedalus* 114 (1985): 343–368, 351.

110 Conway, "Gender in Australia," 353.

111 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

112 SJM, C007, title: Bruno Bush oral history interview (audio recording).

6.3.3 *Encounters in the Workplace*

The workplace was the third major place where refugees encountered local Australians. For many of them, their place of employment offered the most intense opportunities to make new social contacts. Viola Winkler's description of her hasty and unspectacular wedding three months after her arrival in Sydney, with only two of her husband's "workmates" in attendance, indicates the importance of contacts made at the workplace: "We married in a registry office. He [her husband] brought two workmates with him as witnesses, they brought along a sponge cake, we had this for lunch, there was nothing else, my husband went back to work."¹¹³ Marie Bergel opened up a grocery store in Adelaide with her husband in 1941. She recalled: "Many people came to see the new strangers with their strange accent. In the end, it [her shop] was like a club. We made many friends."¹¹⁴

The workplace, however, also offered a framework for tensions and negative encounters, especially during the first months after the refugees' arrival. John Hearst, who had managed a furniture store in Vienna, for example, had found employment as a domestic servant along with his wife after his arrival in Melbourne. He recalled being exploited by his employer: "We found a job as housekeepers: Alice [his wife] had to cook and I had to mow the lawn and wash the car. We got accommodation and very little pocket money. [...] I felt like on a slave market. Alice was crying all day, 'we are treated like slaves!'"¹¹⁵ Helen Roberts, who also worked as a domestic servant after her arrival in Sydney, described similar conditions: "I had to go there and do the sewing for them. They treated me like the last servant. I remember I was so hungry because they did not give me anything to eat. The things I had to sort of go through were just incredible."¹¹⁶ Hans Eisler, who found a job on an agricultural farm, described even worse conditions:

That's probably the worst four months of my life because the people I worked for on the poultry farm were very cruel. They made me sleep in the barn. I was bitten by rats [...] They gave me food once or twice a day and if I asked for more, they refused it. No meat. One egg, and jam on Sundays was the big treat. They were the meanest people I have ever met. They were supposed to pay me five shillings a week. I did get it a

¹¹³ USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

¹¹⁵ Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

¹¹⁶ SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (audio recording).

few times but certainly not weekly. I was completely dependent on them. I could not speak English. I did not know what to do.¹¹⁷

Besides poor working conditions, some refugees recalled being bullied by their workmates. In an interview, Hans Eisler, again, recalled:

They were rather cruel, particularly to me because I was younger. It was bastardization exercises—having to shove pears with your nose through cow dung. I remember very distinctly the day war was declared—I'd only been there about a month. It was Sunday night, the fire was going, and Menzies [Australian prime minister] declared war on Germany. And I felt so good. They played the national anthem, "God save the King." I stood up and they all laughed at me. Then, when I sat down, they removed the chair and I fell [...]. They had a lot of fun at my expense, and that hurt at the time [...]. Then came the Jewish holidays and I remember asking to be excused [...] and that sort of set me aside from the rest.¹¹⁸

During the First World War, xenophobic debates about the restriction of immigration as "the most insistent of all our problems" rose and continued to rise during the 1920s and 1930s, "including bolstering White Australia through immigration while excluding 'undesirables', and maintaining the 'White Australia' policy in the face of geopolitical opposition."¹¹⁹ Some parliamentarians, especially those associated with labour ideas, also resisted the mass immigration from Europe, because they feared "that the fewer workers there are in Australia the more work there is for those who are here."¹²⁰ Since all governments during the 1920s and 1930s repeatedly gave assurances that refugees would not occupy jobs Australians could do, elements of the public generally reacted very emotionally on that issue.¹²¹ Bullying and negative public reactions whenever well-qualified refugees tried to obtain one of the more prestigious jobs were widespread. Thus, refugees faced considerable difficulties when trying to re-establish a sound economic existence in their former professions.¹²² The

117 Glen Palmer, "Reluctant Refugee: Unaccompanied Refugee and Evacuee Children in Australia, 1933–45" (PhD diss., University of Adelaide, 1995), 277.

118 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

119 Anna Dunkley, "The Immigration Debate in Australia: World War I and Its Impact," in *Parliamentary Library Research Paper Series* (2015): 1–17, 13.

120 Dunkley, "Immigration Debate," 13.

121 Stats, "Characteristically Generous," 182.

122 Kwiet, "Re-Acculturation," 43.

country's labour unions were fiercely protectionist and among the main agents to oppose migration. Fearing exacerbation of Australian unemployment and preferential treatment for immigrants, labour unions in Victoria, for example, repeatedly called for limiting and controlling migration.¹²³ In general, they claimed that immigrants would "drive down wages" by having "six men competing for one job" so that "working men [would] fight ... for jobs like dogs for a bone."¹²⁴ Ernest Bowen's wife remembered the uproar caused by her husband's appointment as a foreman in a woollen mill:

Ernest was introduced to the Laycocks, owners of Laconia Woollen Mills. They employed him as a foreman. He was a well experienced, well trained textile man and well qualified to reorganize this or that procedure. However, the Depression still left many people unemployed and the factory workers went on strike because they said this sort of job should be given to an Australian. It had not been proved that Ernest had qualifications not obtainable in Australia of an Australian born citizen. The case came to court.¹²⁵

Gertrude Langer's husband, the architect Karl Langer, encountered similar reactions when he was appointed town planner for Brisbane (Queensland), as his wife described:

The returned soldiers made such a campaign against him that he declined the job before he even started it. They pulled his name through the papers and I do not know what all, even through parliament, and Karl nearly lost his health over it. It was so upsetting; you have just no idea. [...] It was so absolutely terrible what they did to him.¹²⁶

123 University of Melbourne Archives, The Victorian Trades Hall: An Archival History, <https://bpeddlesdenweds2.omeka.net/items/browse?collection=6>, accessed on 02.05.2024.

124 University of Melbourne Archives, The Victorian Trades Hall: An Archival History, <https://bpeddlesdenweds2.omeka.net/items/browse?collection=6>, accessed on 02.05.2024.

125 SLV, MS12651, Mutton Annemarie, Papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], c. 1930–1987.

126 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript).

6.4 Analysing Experiences of Encounter

The Australian government expected refugees from National Socialism to cater for their own needs and deal with their own costs of living: they were “expected [...] to adapt in record time to the norms and values in their new country,” as historian Konrad Kwiet noted.¹²⁷ All in all, not much was done to support their acculturation. There was generally little public knowledge about the refugees’ sensitive situation. Some of them were able to gain support from Jewish communities. Non-religious refugees and those who belonged to different faiths, however, in most cases did not receive any support at all. These factors complicated this book’s protagonists’ settling in process and, in many cases, influenced their level of identification with their new host society. This was also important for shaping the ways in which they exercised agency and applied their cultural capital in their new host environment.

“Class” was a key factor that affected refugee encounters and offered an additional source of conflict. The members of our sample group had left a society characterized by a marked class distinction and came into one that was much less segmented socially.¹²⁸ At the same time, most of them had belonged to the educated upper and middle classes and suffered an intense biographical disruption. They had pursued middle-class professions in Vienna and, after their escape to Australia, were expected to do the jobs that Australians did not want to do. Consequently, many recalled being exploited as cheap labour, or even as “slave labour,” as John Hearst put it. This sometimes led to tensions with the local population, which also affected encounter situations.

Refugees recalled that encounters with locals during that phase took place mainly in three different contexts: immediate encounters after their arrival, everyday neighbourhood encounters, and encounters in the workplace. The experiences they had on these occasions affected the nature of their cultural identification with their host society and the ways in which they applied their cultural capital and exercised agency to promote their knowledge. The first phase of encounters, immediately after the refugees’ arrival, carried the most diverging memories. Some of the refugees recalled being welcomed at the port and having found shelter and accommodation. They even mentioned that their hosts had organized jobs for them. In those cases, the initial arrival phase was not remembered as a time of isolation and desperation but rather as a new, challenging but positive experience. Interviews with Marie Bergel,

¹²⁷ Kwiet, “Refugees in Australia,” 39.

¹²⁸ Elaine Thompson, *Fair Enough: Egalitarianism in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1994).

Annemarie Mutton, Gertrude Langer, and Elisabeth Ziegler, who recalled having enjoyed local support, show that they engaged themselves more intensely with their new host society and generally identified more positively with their host culture, at the same time either keeping up ties to relatives and friends in their country of origin, or to other members of the exile community. Others recalled the first weeks and months after their arrival as a period of isolation and alienation. As John Hearst's memories show, they sometimes also felt exploited: many regarded themselves as helpless and felt that they were at the mercy of Australians. Prevailing negative reports on their early encounters and their isolated living situations indicated an initial low level of identification with Australian society. As we can see, encounter experiences were highly individualized. In general, there were no apparent class or age-specific differences: all of those interviewed for this paper came from an upper-middle-class background. Roberts and Hearst had even established contact with Australians before coming to Australia, however, they nevertheless perceived their initial encounters as rather unsupportive.

Encounters in the neighbourhood were remembered with similar variety. As many interviewees pointed out, social capital and networks played a substantial role in overcoming feelings of isolation. Many stressed the importance of having been introduced personally or by letter to their neighbours. Therefore, as they described, personal reference was essential for them to extend their social contacts in their neighbourhoods. In general, older refugees sometimes felt stuck "in between two worlds" thus keeping a lower level of cultural identification with their new host society. A good example of this is the experience of the writer Paul Hirsch (pen name Paul Hatvani), who came to Australia at the age of 47 and later described his feelings of identification and belonging with the words "neither here, nor there."¹²⁹ In contrast, others, such as Kurt Selby, who decided to settle into ethnic or religious neighbourhoods created a "new home away from home" for themselves, incorporating many aspects of their old home context in Australia, including culture and language.

The workplace was the last space of encounter analysed in this section. In most cases, refugees were initially unable to find employment in Australian companies since there were only few jobs available due to the difficult economic situation. Consequently, most of them started their own businesses, based on their European knowledge and cultural capital. In some cases, they made a living by referring to and identifying with their Austrian or European culture. The Adelaide-based refugee Marie Bergel, who opened a European

129 Paul Hatvani, "Australien," 564–571.

deli, or Charles William Anton, who founded the first Austrian-style ski club in New South Wales inspired by the Austrian Alpine Club (Alpenverein), are only two of many examples of refugees who identified themselves professionally with elements of their former home culture. In these cases, ties with the old home country remained strong and the refugees at the same time developed a high level of cultural identification with their new host society. Refugees who were able to compete on the labour market because of their sought-after professional know-how usually had different experiences. They almost unanimously faced waves of resistance and hostility directed toward foreigners who were suspected of taking away high-level jobs from Australians in times of economic tension, as the life trajectories of Karl Langer and Ernest Bowen show.

Cultural Transfer and Knowledge Translation/ Adaption after Arrival

Once this book's protagonists had entered Australia, they had—willingly or unwillingly—begun to transfer ideas and knowledge from their former “homeland” to their new “hostland.” Some of these transfers were successful, others less so. However, all of them introduced at least some kind of new cultural, social, or professional elements to their new society. Austrian refugees in Australia “showed enormous enthusiasm and initiative in promoting and participating in all kinds of cultural and sporting activities,” as historian Marlene Norst wrote almost 40 years ago.¹ Although, as previously stated, Australian public opinion largely opposed the influx of new arrivals, voices became louder that publicly advocated the positive cultural and professional achievements of refugees.

The refugees themselves played an important role in influencing and negotiating their reception within society and within Australian politics.² By 1942, many of them had been able to establish themselves as a part of the Australian society. They had managed to settle down in their new homeland: they found jobs, acquired English language skills, and became accepted as a part of their new country.³ Consequently, some of them ventured the step of becoming engaged in some forms of public life and public discussions to raise awareness about their situation. A 1942 article written by a Jewish refugee art historian from Vienna in the journal *Australian Quarterly* gives an insight into how refugees saw their own role and position within Australian society:

Despite all the said difficulties, the refugees could make some contributions towards Australia's progress. They have established, or helped to establish, several new industries, such as the manufacture of optical and chemical products, leather bags, accessories, hand woven cloth, model frocks, chocolates, etc., and influenced slightly the general taste towards European styles and taste. In the cultural sphere they contributed towards

1 Norst, “Introduction,” xvi.

2 For a comprehensive depiction of refugee agency in Australia, see Strobl, “Collective Refugee Agency.”

3 Kwiet, “Re-Acculturation.”

establishing a more tolerant and progressive attitude to art. Some cooperated in awakening a greater consciousness and feeling of responsibility among Australian Jewry. But the progress has to be brought about almost against the wishes of the Australians and is accepted only as a present, but not against cash, without which a refugee finds it hard to live. [...] It might also be mentioned that some kind of European touch was added to Australian city-life through the establishment of Viennese coffee-houses, nicely decorated, with music, and magazines on the tables; in the window-display of refugee fashion shops; through the presence of the Viennese ballet-mistress Bodenwieser; by the work of European interior-decorators and lending-librarians; and in beauty-culture.⁴

Although personal refugee agency had increased by 1942, more coordinated steps needed to be taken at the institutional level and by the refugees themselves. Even members of parliament spoke out about the necessity of refugees exercising collective rather than proxy agency:

There appears to be a determined effort by the existing body, the Jewish Welfare Society, to retain under its control the large body of Refugees in this state. Again, I ask Why? Among the refugees here, we have many capable men and women. People with culture and ability. People who are not children or backwards. They know what they want. They would prefer to ask for it themselves and not through or with the approval of another society.⁵

The “long-standing demand in refugee circles for self-representation”⁶ finally resulted in the establishment of independent, refugee-led associations. In late 1942, the Association of Jewish Refugees was founded in Victoria, as an organization separate and independent from the AJWS.⁷ The organization was led by refugees and consisted only of refugees. It was furthermore funded by membership fees and had greater room for manoeuvre since it did not depend on other organizations. This step increased the refugees’ own abilities to exert influence on the government and to appear as one collective actor. The organization’s

4 George M. Berger, “Australia and the Refugees,” *Australian Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1942): 65–76, 66.

5 *Sydney Jewish News*, 9 July 1943, p. 7.

6 *Australian Jewish Herald*, September 3, 1942, 3.

7 Suzanne D. Rutland, “A Changing Community: The Impact of the Refugees on Australian Jewry New South Wales—A Case Study,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 31 (1985): 90–108, 97.

establishment followed “negotiations with the authorities”⁸ and “approval by the Deputy Director of Security”⁹ and was itself the product of a negotiation process collectively initiated by the refugees themselves. Many refugees, who had not had proper representation and were dependent on personal or proxy agency, joined the new body, as a newspaper article indicated:

Refugees have warmly welcomed the formation of the Association of refugees. Numerous applications for membership have already been received. [...] A number of matters in connection with the Aliens' Control Regulations have already been taken up and assurances of sympathetic review of these have been given. The attention of the authorities has been drawn to certain anomalies and whilst it is not desired unduly to raise the hopes of refugees it is likely that not unfavourable results will follow from these representations.¹⁰

At that time, the Association of Jewish Refugees was the only organization for refugees consisting solely of refugees and “where the spokesmen themselves were refugees.” A member of parliament described the association as a “vital force,” whose “submissions have been treated seriously by the authorities.”¹¹

While in 1942 the Association of Jewish Refugees in Victoria had begun to successfully influence authorities and to lobby politicians and members of parliament, refugee agency in New South Wales, the other major Australian refugee destination, was still in the hands of the AJWS and its Migrant Consultative Council. Developments in Victoria, however, triggered a change in New South Wales as well and in 1943 public demand for an independent organization that allowed refugees to exercise collective agency themselves grew steadily. “The necessity for a united and independent organization of all refugees has become obvious during the last few months,” the *Sydney Jewish News* claimed in September 1943.¹² Roughly a month later, the Association of Refugees was formed in Sydney. In contrast to the Association of Jewish Refugees in Victoria, the New South Wales organization regarded itself as more inclusive, aiming “to represent all European refugees from Nazi oppression as a united

8 *Australian Jewish Herald*, September 3, 1942, 3.

9 N.A., “An Independent Association For Refugees WHY NOT?,” *Sydney Jewish News*, July 9, 1943, 7.

10 *Australian Jewish Herald*, September 3, 1942, 3.

11 N.A., “An Independent Association For Refugees WHY NOT?,” *Sydney Jewish News*, July 9, 1943, 7.

12 N.A., “Association of Jewish Refugees,” *Sydney Jewish News*, September 3, 1943, 2.

independent body [...] irrespective of creed and denomination,” as the association assured the prime minister in a letter.¹³ Another goal the organization set itself was “to foster the absorption of its members into the Australian community.”¹⁴ Although this inclusive policy was heavily criticized by some members of the organization, who feared it would soon be exclusively focused on internal issues, instead of on the support of Jews in Europe, the organization kept its inclusive course until the end of the war.¹⁵ “The necessity for a strong Association is obvious. Every genuine refugee must enroll immediately,” proclaimed an organization leaflet.¹⁶

Both organizations, the Association of Jewish Refugees and the Association of Refugees, had managed to make refugee issues publicly visible by promoting themselves at different political levels. The outbreak of the Pacific War and the military expansion of the Japanese army further affected the status of many European refugees. As historian Michael Blakeney noted, Australia began to rethink its restrictive migration policy, in the sense that it “accepted the strategic role of population growth in the defense of the nation, and immigration’s central role in that growth.”¹⁷ The reconsideration of migration as a strategic factor furthered the acceptance of aliens in Australia.

Since refugee questions had become more publicly discussed, the attorney general (first law officer of the British crown in Australia) set up the Aliens Classification Committee in early 1943 to deal with refugee questions in greater detail.¹⁸ The committee, led by its chairman Arthur Calwell, very soon concluded that “it was both absurd and unjust to treat refugees from Nazi Germany as enemy aliens.”¹⁹ Accordingly, in its first interim report, the committee recommended distinguishing between “refugee” and “enemy” aliens. The recommendations were accepted and, in October 1943, the National Security Act was amended to include the term “refugee alien” in the sense that it described

an alien who has no nationality, or whose nationality is uncertain, or who is an alien enemy in respect of whom the Minister of State for the Army, or a person authorised by that Minister to act on his behalf, is satisfied

13 NAA: M1415, 268, Personal Papers of Prime Minister Curtin.

14 NAA: M1415, 268, Personal Papers of Prime Minister Curtin.

15 For more information about the resistance vis-à-vis the inclusive direction of the association, see the following contemporary article: *Australian Jewish News*, December 10, 1943, 5.

16 NAA: M1415, 268, Personal Papers of Prime Minister Curtin.

17 Blakeney, *Jewish Refugees*, 47.

18 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 73.

19 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 73.

- (a) that the alien was forced to emigrate from enemy territory on account of actual or threatened religious, racial or political persecution, and
- (b) that he is opposed to the regime which forced him to emigrate.²⁰

Four years after the first refugees from Nazism had become “enemy aliens,” they were able to apply for reclassification and thus have reached a certain degree of official recognition.

This section of the book highlights refugee agency and particularly elements of the processes of cultural translation between Austria and Australia that had become important for the refugees as “cultural translators” and “agents of knowledge” and subsequently held a prominent position in their or their descendants’ memories. This will be crucial in order to shed light upon these highly individualized processes of knowledge transfer. It will reveal which elements of their cultural capital the refugees regarded as important, and will indicate what knowledge they tried to introduce into their new society. Furthermore, we will see, how they adapted their translations. Most of the translations were not successful, or only became broadly recognized after they had undergone an extensive adaption and deformation process in order to become more suitable for their new environment. Since there were great differences between the Austrian and the Australian culture and society during that time, ideas and concepts that might have been highly successful in continental, metropolitan Europe were not necessarily welcomed in Australia.

Some of the ideas and concepts the refugees sought to introduce only became successful after the war, because of modernization and multiculturalization processes that took place in Australia once the country had introduced a large scale migration programme that brought hundreds of thousands of new people into the country who would not have fitted the strict Australian immigration criteria before the war.²¹ Among them were many so-called Displaced Persons with a Central and Eastern European background, whose cultural capital did not differ much from the Viennese prewar refugees. Highlighting the sometimes long-lasting adaption process of ideas and knowledge will provide particularly interesting insights into parts of the discipline of the history of knowledge which are not very well researched yet.

Many social and economic domains benefited from the exchange of refugee knowledge between two very different societies, despite or probably

20 Hasluck, *The Government*, 595.

21 Jayne Persian, *Beautiful Balts: From Displaced Persons to New Australians* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2017); Jayne Persian, *Fascists in Exile: Post-War Displaced Persons in Australia* (London: Routledge, 2023).

even because of the cultural differences and the diverging value knowledge and ideas had in the different societies. Modern arts may serve as one good example of this gap between both cultures at that time. While *fin-de-siècle* and interwar Vienna had been a hotspot for different developments in the field of contemporary arts, Australia at that time was frequently described as a “predominantly conservative, isolated, pastoral society”²² and subsequently lacked the organizations and the structures that could have promoted modern developments in the arts sector.²³ As a result, Australians were only peripherally in touch with modernist developments in the arts, hence the demand for these art forms was relatively low. Due to what has been described as a “comparative vacuum” of organizations promoting the arts and the lack of a cultural debate in Australia, there was a “perceived backwardness—in terms of Australia’s connectedness with contemporary currents.”²⁴ As many refugees described, similar differences could be observed in a wide range of other cultural domains, from the gastronomy and the hospitality sector, the field of education and academia, to the leisure industry. As the refugees encountered a different society with different values and a different “cultural keyboard”²⁵ to operate, their memories indicate that a “culture shock” affected many of them after their arrival.

In order to translate and adapt their knowledge, it became crucial for them to promote themselves and their cultural capital to bridge the gap between the “cultural keyboard” of their “hostland” and that of their “homeland.”²⁶ In order to master this process, they needed some time to acculturate in their new environment. Understanding how these acculturation processes worked, how they dealt with these differences and how they exercised personal and collective agency and promoted their ideas is of great interest and will help to clarify the complex and understudied processes of translation of knowledge and ideas between different cultures and societies. The biographic perspective on this book’s protagonists ultimately reveals what historical actors did to make the implementation of their knowledge and ideas successful. Not only will this be of interest from a history of knowledge perspective but the results can also be fruitfully used to learn from the past more generally by observing how refugees successfully or unsuccessfully implemented their cultural capital. In

22 Palmer, *Centre of the Periphery*, 1.

23 Strobl, “Gertrude Langer.”

24 Richard Haese, “Civilizing Australia,” *Thesis Eleven* 106 (2011): 121. See also Haese, *Permanent Revolution*.

25 Lässig, *Jüdische Wege*, 29.

26 Lässig, *Jüdische Wege*, 29–30.

addition, this study contributes to our understanding of important present-day questions through an analysis of the past by “viewing the present from the perspective of the long term.”²⁷

Regardless of the cultural, professional, or social domain in which translations took place, and regardless of their success and impact, all migrant translations share one major common feature—something the historian Peter Burke pointedly summarized with the word “deprovincialization.”²⁸ More precisely, as he further describes,

the encounter between the exiles and their hosts led to a process of double deprovincialization. The exiles were deprovincialized by the movement from one culture to another. They also helped to deprovincialize their hosts by presenting them not only with different knowledges but also, still more important, with alternative ways of thinking.²⁹

This holds particularly true for the translations of ideas and culture undertaken by this book’s protagonists from their highly urbanized Central European avant-garde culture which placed high value on education, arts and culture, into a society that was about to replace its semicolonial British settler identity focused on the idea of a companionship-centred, “workman’s paradise” through the formation of a more multicultural collective postwar identity.³⁰ As we will see, the result of this clash of ideas and views produced some very interesting results in many different fields of social, cultural, and economic life.

Since this book’s 26 protagonists came from a wide variety of different backgrounds, a very important task of this section is to present their cultural translations in a clearly arranged way. There are different ways to organize such an extensive analysis: one could be to arrange the data according to the relevance this book’s protagonists placed on their own translations. We could order them according to their own assessments of how they recalled them: as a “success,” a “failure,” or something in between. A different form of organization, which this book chooses, is to arrange their translations according to the cultural or professional domain the protagonists located them in. Such a topical order makes sense, as it aids the identification of different types of translations—both successful and unsuccessful ones—within the same field and thus allows us to compare them. It is also important to keep in mind that many of this book’s

27 Burke, *Exiles and Expatriates*, 3.

28 Burke, *Exiles and Expatriates*, 16.

29 Burke, *Exiles and Expatriates*, 16.

30 Conway, “Gender in Australia,” 353.

protagonists translated cultural capital in different domains at the same time. Translations were not usually restricted to innovations in the protagonist's respective line of work, they also occurred in many different fields of their social and private domains. To do justice to the different nature of translations, this section identified the following most frequently mentioned domains in which refugees remembered their translations taking place and subsequently arranged the analysis according to those categories:

- entrepreneurship
- cultural activities and academia
- education
- community service and political activism

Since, as mentioned, many of this book's protagonists translated knowledge in more than one field of their social and professional life, their translations will also be described in more than one of these categories. Additionally, a perspective on knowledge that has been lost has been added to analyse some of the translation attempts this book's protagonists remembered as being unsuccessful.

7.1 Entrepreneurship

Many translations took place in the refugees' professional environment. Frequently, their flight changed their social position. Most of this book's protagonists had lost their financial livelihood and their middle-class status on entering a society with a different language and different social codes, rites, and other habits and customs. Since their fellow Australians were accustomed to playing on a different "cultural keyboard," in many cases, the worth of the cultural capital the refugees had earned in Vienna was questioned and had to be renegotiated. To use an obvious example: it was hard to succeed, even for an accomplished and renowned artist or an art historian, in a new host culture that put no particular value on contemporary arts. The same held true for many professional fields, as we will see.

As this analysis shows, a devaluation of all three types of the refugees' cultural capital (i.e. in its embodied, objectified, and institutionalized forms) occurred once they had left their territory of origin. Therefore, it became the primary aim for those people who "struggled desperately to make a living," as the Austrian-born refugee child and historian Marlene Norst noted, to establish themselves in an initially strange and new environment. Besides securing their financial livelihood, they also sought to replicate or regain their former

middle-class status.³¹ Consequently, economic advancement and social integration was prioritized in their new homeland much more than it had been in Vienna.

In addition to the devaluation of their cultural capital, the refugees had the disadvantage of being a “stranger” in a new land,³² arriving in a more or less isolated society, either with reduced financial means or even without any financial capital at all. Not recognizing a “refugee status” until 1942, the Australian government regarded them as regular immigrants and ultimately expected them to provide for their own needs and their own costs of living.³³

Furthermore, the refugees had been disadvantaged on the labour market, since the Australian government pursued a strict Australia-first policy and never tired of repeating that no Australian-born citizen would lose their job because of an immigrant. In one of many similar statements aiming at reducing the heat of public feelings about migrants on the Australian job market, minister of the interior, John McEwen declared in March 1939, “if it’s found that alien migrants were affecting the job of Australians, the Federal Government would not hesitate to shut down on the granting of entry visas.”³⁴

A 1942 report on the situation of refugees in Australia written by a refugee mentions the refugees’ desperate initial situation when starting business:

If it was said that businessmen in general were well off, this statement should be qualified. Those who were accustomed to speculate in stocks and shares found Australia a hard field. Those who would deal in landed estates and properties cannot do so, because they are not allowed to buy properties. Many branches of business are so monopolized that newcomers have no chance of getting in.³⁵

Charles William Anton’s life provides us with interesting insights into how a migrant used his European cultural capital centred on a typical Central European hobby and leisure pursuit to create an entirely new type of business in his host society, which furthermore benefited his professional development in Australia. It shows how he promoted his knowledge and how he adapted it to fit the needs of his Australian fellow citizens, thus creating new demand. In Austria, he acquired institutionalized and embodied cultural capital,

31 Kwiet, “Re-Acculturation,” 43; Strobl, “Social Networks,” 77.

32 Schuetz, “The Stranger,” 499–507.

33 Stats, “Characteristically Generous,” 179.

34 *National Advocate*, March 8, 1939, 2.

35 Berger, “Australia and the Refugees,” 66.

which he translated to Australia: after graduating from the Technologisches Gewerbemuseum, a renowned Viennese technical high school, he had gained international work experience at the Austrian branch of the British Sun Insurance Company. He was among the few young Austrians during the 1930s to work for an international company. His job allowed him to gain a good command of the English language, far beyond basic school English.³⁶

During his youth, Anton had discovered the Austrian mountains around Vienna and had very soon become “enthused with what ski touring had to offer.”³⁷ He therefore became closely involved with the German and Austrian Alpenverein (Alpine Club)³⁸ and enjoyed the benefits of its dense network of *Schutzhütten*—“simple huts offering security and shelter”³⁹—across the Alps. From around 1900, mountaineers began to tour the Alps on skis during the winter. Subsequently, the Alpenverein lured ever more enthusiasts and established a ski suborganization in 1906.⁴⁰ In order to realize its ambitious hut-building schemes, the governing body of the Alpenverein transferred single projects to independent chapters, whose members raised most of the costs by selling shares.⁴¹ Anton made extensive use of the Alpenverein’s infrastructure and acquired knowledge of the organization’s structures and the value of a dense network of shelter huts in alpine areas.⁴² He learned where suitable locations for huts could be found, how they were built, and how they were maintained. As one of his acquaintances later wrote, “Charles and his friends—with a pack on their backs—would finish up almost every night in a different alpine *Hütte*.”⁴³

After the March 1938 Anschluss, Anton had used his contacts to English companies to find a job with the Australian Jewish insurance broker company Bennie S. Cohen & Son Pty Ltd.⁴⁴ He spent his last months in Europe travelling

36 Leon Smith (friend of Anton and his successor as president of the AAC), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Sydney, March 2016.

37 Sponar, *Snow in Australia*, 24.

38 An increasing number of different sections of the Alpenverein introduced antisemitic regulations especially after the end of the First World War. Anton, obviously was not affected by these discriminating regulations. On the one hand, he was a baptized Catholic and did not identify himself as Jewish, on the other hand, the Alpenverein consisted of many different sections with much independence. Many of them did not, or only hesitantly, introduce the antisemitic regulations, known as the *Arierparagraph*, and even in 1938, there were still some sections left that had not introduced it.

39 Anneliese Gidl, *Alpenverein: Die Städter entdecken die Alpen* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), 113.

40 Gidl, *Alpenverein*, 249.

41 Gidl, *Alpenverein*, 147.

42 Gidl, *Alpenverein*, 147.

43 Sponar, *Snow in Australia*, 24.

44 NAA, Charles William ANTON, SP11/15, Anton Charles William.

to different countries and rigorously preparing his and his parents' escape.⁴⁵ Thanks to his efforts, foresight, and international contacts, his parents had opened up a bank account in Switzerland and were able to secure some of their financial capital. Anton arrived in Sydney on December 6, 1938.⁴⁶ During the following months, the 22-year-old quickly settled into his new environment. He started his own insurance broker business in Sydney by at first relying on customers from Sydney's growing Jewish migrant community.⁴⁷ Only two months after his arrival, he changed his name by deed poll from Karl Anton Schwarz to Charles William Anton.⁴⁸ His assimilation was smooth and quick, as many of his friends later remembered. Described as "fairly anglicized,"⁴⁹ he frequently sought to impress Australians with "fancy words," intending to show that he had mastered the language.⁵⁰

Like many other Austrian refugees, Anton sought to join the Australian army after the outbreak of the war. For him, this step was a crucial move toward his new identification as an Australian citizen. "I sincerely hope that you will give me the chance to do my bit in this war," he wrote to a recruiting officer in 1940.⁵¹ In contrast to the United States, Australia did not admit foreigners into its army at that time. However, in 1942, the country loosened its stance vis-à-vis so-called aliens in the army—undoubtedly spurred by the need for manpower and labour. It established 39 unarmed "employment companies" or "labour companies," 11 of them largely comprised of non-British citizens. They were established to ensure that the Australian Defense Force had enough manpower dedicated to essential labour tasks to maintain the war effort and support the fighting forces.⁵² In total, about 1,200 refugees served in those companies during the war.⁵³

In March 1942, Anton joined the 3rd Australian Employment Company in New South Wales.⁵⁴ After the outbreak of the war, resentment toward "enemy

45 NAA, ANTON Charles William, A435, 1944/4/1110.

46 NAA, Charles William ANTON, SP11/15, Anton Charles William.

47 Strobl, "Social Networks," 75.

48 NAA, Charles William ANTON, SP11/15, Anton Charles William.

49 Warren Peck (friend of Anton and former president of the AAC), in discussion with the author, Melbourne, June 2016.

50 Leon Smith (friend of Anton and his successor as president of the AAC), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Sydney, March 2016.

51 NAA, Stella Schwarz and Charles William, A12217, L1.

52 June Factor, "Forgotten Soldiers: Aliens in the Australian Army's Employment Companies during World War II," The Birstein Project, accessed January 21, 2022, http://www.yossellbirstein.org/pdf/eng/other/Forgotten_Soldiers.pdf.

53 State Library of Victoria, P 325.21, M58, Migration and the Refugee.

54 NAA, Anton Charles William, B883, NX181034.

aliens" increased rapidly. There was an emotional public discourse around the question of whether foreigners should be allowed to serve in the army. Here, again, Anton joined the debate and exercised agency: in November 1942, Private Anton published an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, stating that refugees escaping from Hitler's oppression viewed the discourse "with sorrow and consternation." He further added: "They [foreign soldiers in the employment companies] are all volunteers. They have taken the oath of allegiance to the King and are sharing the risks, sacrifices, and privileges of all Australian soldiers."⁵⁵

After the end of the war, the Allied powers held an "inter-Allied ski race" in New South Wales. Servicemen from different countries participated in this major event.⁵⁶ Anton joined the Australian team and experienced his "first taste of Australian skiing," as he later recalled.⁵⁷ After his demobilization in December 1945, he continued to work as an insurance broker and later established a successful business in Sydney. The ski races, however, had reawakened his passion for ski touring.⁵⁸ In spring 1946, he started to explore the main range of the Australian Alps, finding "superb runs, comparable to some of the best in the European Alps," and "began to dream of opening it [that country] up for others."⁵⁹

Up until the 1940s, skiing in Australia was widely regarded as a sport of the so-called elite.⁶⁰ Because of the very low number of skiers, infrastructure was very underdeveloped and many criticized the "backward state" of skiing in the Australian Alps.⁶¹ Anton had recognized that there was "a demand for touring lodges in the heart of the Alps"⁶² and developed plans to establish a

55 Charles William Anton, "Alien Labour Companies," *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 1, 1942, 3.

56 Peter Southwell-Keely, *Out on the Tops: The Centenary of the Kosciuszko Alpine Club* (Gordon: NSW Perisher Historical Society, 2009), 109.

57 Charles Anton, "Brief History and Aims of the Australian Alpine Club (Incorporating Ski Tourer's Association of Australia)," brochure, February 1963 (in the possession of Leon Smith).

58 Wendy Cross, *Australian Skiing: The First 100 Years* (Sydney: Walla Walla Press, 2012).

59 Charles Anton, "Brief History and Aims of the Australian Alpine Club (Incorporating Ski Tourer's Association of Australia)," brochure, February 1963 (in the possession of Leon Smith).

60 Leon Smith (friend of Anton and his successor as president of the AAC), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Sydney, March 2016.

61 Jill MacDonald, "Our Backward State," *Australian Ski Year Book* (1950), 44; and N.A., "We Have Neglected Our Snowfields," *Sunday Herald*, September 28, 1952, 7.

62 Charles Anton, "Brief History and Aims of the Australian Alpine Club (Incorporating Ski Tourer's Association of Australia)," brochure, February 1963 (in the possession of Leon Smith).

mountaineering organization similar to the Alpenverein. The realization of his plans took years of preparation and public campaigning: he finally convinced local state park authorities to provide land for a hut and approached different ski clubs as well as “members of the skiing fraternity.”⁶³ “He had a gift for organizing people and it was that gift that underpinned the success of the STA,” a sports journalist later recalled.⁶⁴ When Anton held the first meeting to discuss his ideas in October 1950, he had gathered some of the major figures of the New South Wales skiing community, as well as high-ranking “representatives of the State Park Trust, the Government Tourist Bureau, and the Ski Council of New South Wales.”⁶⁵ According to the *Australian Ski Yearbook*:

Support for the project was unanimous and [...] the meeting felt confident that it could look forward to practical assistance from the trust [...] Finance was arranged [...] and [...] the site has been tentatively chosen [...] During this meeting, [the] Ski Tourers Association [STA] came into being.⁶⁶

When he founded the STA, Anton used his knowledge of the structures of the Alpenverein to establish an inclusive organization that differed greatly from existing exclusive Australian ski clubs. Following the business pattern of the Alpenverein,⁶⁷ he established a cooperative concept whereby autonomous clubs affiliated to form an association with a common constitution.⁶⁸ Sixty members initially joined the association's first hut project, many of them were migrants themselves.⁶⁹ Here, again, Anton showed his ability to create business networks that helped him “[translate] his plans into action.”⁷⁰ He approached local entrepreneurs who offered tools and supplies, such as a bulldozers,

63 Wendy Cross, *Twenty-One Years of the Australian Alpine Club* (Melbourne: Massina Print, 1972), 26.

64 Jim Darby, *Thredbo 50: 1957 to 2007* (Mount Macedon: TSM Publishing, 2006), 12.

65 Don Richardson, “The Lake Albina Project,” *Australian Ski Yearbook* (1950), 37.

66 Richardson, “The Lake Albina Project,” 38.

67 Charles Anton, “Brief History and Aims of the Australian Alpine Club (Incorporating Ski Tourer's Association of Australia),” brochure, February 1963 (in the possession of Leon Smith).

68 Leon Smith (friend of Anton and his successor as president of the AAC), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Sydney, March 2016.

69 Leon Smith (friend of Anton and his successor as president of the AAC), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Sydney, March 2016.

70 Cross, *Twenty-One Years*, 4.

timber, snowmobiles, packhorses, and so on,⁷¹ and gained support from volunteers, including many migrants. The Czech refugee Tony Sponar gave a colourful description of how Anton had recruited him for the Lake Albina project:

On our first weekend at the Chalet, a short, noisy man appeared. In no time, he had introduced himself as Charles Anton and just as fast he had told me that I should be the one to help him with his current project. He had organized a few other volunteers along with two of the Kosciusko State Park Trust's Land Rovers.⁷²

Anton was always looking for new ideas that helped him exercise agency and promote his knowledge. As he described in the *Australian Ski Yearbook*, he discovered in 1946 "that there was snow—and we could ski on it—[...] in the summer."⁷³ Only a year after the STA was founded, Anton established summer ski races,⁷⁴ which for many years, attracted "larger numbers of visitors" and thereby succeeded in promoting his ideas, the STA, and skiing in general.⁷⁵ Anton was convinced that the "freakish nature" of the races would "produce a welter of favorable publicity," as he put it.⁷⁶ In 1953, he established the Golden Eagle Run, a high-speed downhill run that was expected to be the fastest course in Australia. Here, again, knowledge from Austria was used to support the project's success. Anton, as he later stated, was inspired by "famous international courses including the Chamois Run in Kitzbühel and the Kandahar Run in St. Anton."⁷⁷ The former Czech Olympic downhill racer and St. Anton ski instructor Tony Sponar helped him to develop and set the course according to European Alpine standards.

Anton's enthusiasm and commitment, combined with active marketing and an inclusive policy of being open to anyone interested in ski touring, very quickly turned the STA into the largest ski club in Australia.⁷⁸ His marketing

71 N.A., "New Alpine Cabin to Be Highest House in Australia," *Sydney Morning Herald*, December 8, 1950, 2.

72 Sponar, *Snow in Australia*, 21.

73 Margaret Anton and Charles William Anton, "Drift Skiing in Mid-Summer," *Australian Ski Yearbook* (1949), 57.

74 Charles Anton, "Summer Slalom," *Australian Ski Yearbook* (1952), 57.

75 Leon Smith, "Charles W. Anton" (unpublished essay, Sydney, 1986) (in the possession of Leon Smith).

76 Cross, *Twenty-One Years*, 13.

77 Charles Anton, "STA-Report," *Australian Skiing Yearbook* (1954), 82.

78 Leon Smith, "Charles W. Anton" (unpublished essay, Sydney, 1986) (in the possession of Leon Smith).

strategies were essential to promoting his cultural capital and they relied largely upon “Austrian” elements. As shown in an article about Anton, he used Austrian elements to stand out from others and to create publicity. This was possible, because Austria was very fashionable among Australian skiers at that time, given the fact that much of Australia’s ski know-how derived from Austria.⁷⁹ Anton used Austrian paraphernalia as often as possible and his plans to attract publicity worked out well: the media characterized the STA huts as being designed in a “Tyrolean style,”⁸⁰ and there are media reports about his apartment in the Sydney suburb of Randwick, which he had designed and furnished “like an Austrian Alpine peasant’s home,”⁸¹ as well as about his infamous Austrian *Glühwein* (mulled wine) and *Lederhosen* (leather pants) parties.⁸²

In addition to his ski projects, Anton had always maintained his insurance business. During the 1950s, his main focus switched from the Jewish migrant community toward new customers from the ski trade. He was able to connect his business to the needs of an emerging Australian skiing industry and a nationwide Alpine ski club and attracted many clients from the skiing community, as one of his friends later stated.⁸³ Another friend of his described his “tireless commitment to working 15 hours or more per day in order to come along with the high demands of two full-time jobs.”⁸⁴ One and a half decades after his arrival in Australia, Charles William Anton had become an established name in the Australian skiing community. He was president and founder of a major Australian ski club and a member of the Ski Council of New South Wales, the state controlling body of the Australian National Ski Federation.⁸⁵

During the mid-1950s, the ski industry changed in Australia: new environmental and safety policies were making the erection of new huts on exposed mountainous terrain more difficult. Skiing in general had also changed dramatically, turning from a leisure activity for a handful of affluent people into a mass industry.⁸⁶ Ski tows, hotels, and private lodges had mushroomed in the original

79 Philipp Strobl, “Charles Anton, Cultural Agent,” *Inside Story*, accessed November 25, 2020, <https://insidestory.org.au/charles-anton-cultural-agent/>.

80 N.A., “Tyrolean Ski Hut at Kosciusko,” *Australian Women’s Weekly*, September 9, 1953, 23.

81 N.A., “Young Couple Furnish Flat as Chalet,” *Australian Women’s Weekly*, September 23, 1950, 44, 45.

82 Charles Anton, “Kareela Hutte,” *Australian Ski Yearbook* (1959), 98.

83 Leon Smith, “Charles W. Anton” (unpublished essay, Sydney, 1986) (in the possession of Leon Smith).

84 Warren Peck, “In Memoriam Charles Anton” (unpublished eulogy, in the possession of Warren Peck).

85 N.A., “Lifesavers—In the Snow,” *Australian Women’s Weekly*, August 23, 1961, 5.

86 Strobl, “Migration, Knowledge Transfer,” 2006.

ski resorts and Australian skiers had higher expectations of their ski accommodation.⁸⁷ The Australian Alps were no longer underdeveloped terrain, and Anton's initial idea needed to be adapted to the new conditions. Anton had observed international trends and established contacts with experts in Austria, where skiing had turned into a major branch of the economy and an engine of economic growth. In 1962, he took a vacation to Austria where he visited modern ski resorts and made contacts among Austrian skiers and representatives of the Austrian skiing community.⁸⁸ He had learned about the importance of mass winter tourism and became increasingly aware of the demand among the emerging middle class for readily accessible ski accommodation. Having seen and learned from these developments, Anton decided to change the direction of his club, adapting the plan to keep opening up the Alps solely to mountaineers through a network of shelter huts. Instead, he focused, in his own words, on luxurious "accommodation lodges in promising ski resorts,"⁸⁹ which he strove to keep open to a broad cross-section of postwar skiers. Inevitably, though, the nature of his ski club changed. By adapting an idea, originally developed for the European Alps, Anton created new organizational patterns and thus opened the club to the growing numbers of Australian postwar leisure skiers. In one of his writings, he mentioned that he had always dreamt of opening "a ski carousel á la Kitzbühel [a famous ski town in Austria]"⁹⁰ and from the late 1950s until his death he immersed himself in the foundation of new ski resorts. He was one of the founders of Thredbo, Australia's "most international ski resort," according to the ski historian Peter Southwell-Keely, and he developed plans to establish a second ski resort in Victoria. At a tourism conference in Hobart in 1961, he suggested Australia should extend its market and focus on the estimated ten million American skiers and should "cash in on that trade by providing first-class facilities."⁹¹

During his later years, he was focused on the expansion of Australia's winter sports industry. He unilaterally renamed the STA as the Australian Alpine Club to emphasize its national significance. Along with the new name came an

87 Strobl, "From Niche Sport to Mass Tourism."

88 Leon Smith, "Charles W. Anton" (unpublished essay, Sydney, 1986) (in the possession of Leon Smith).

89 Charles Anton, "Brief History and Aims of the Australian Alpine Club (Incorporating Ski Tourer's Association of Australia)," brochure, February 1963 (in the possession of Leon Smith).

90 Charles Anton, "Brief History and Aims of the Australian Alpine Club (Incorporating Ski Tourer's Association of Australia)," brochure, February 1963 (in the possession of Leon Smith).

91 N.A., "Offer for Thredbo Company Accepted," *Canberra Times*, November 10, 1961, 26.

expansion into other Australian states: by the time of his unexpected death in 1966, he had built the largest ski and alpine club in the country, with more than 1,000 members and six lodges.⁹²

Anton's life's work in Australia is an interesting example of how a refugee successfully portrayed and advertised his cultural capital as unique and exotic in his new host society. Drawing on his experiences and his derivation as a member of the "Alpine nation of Austria," the marketing expert and actual city dweller Anton had, after years of persuasion, managed to convince his Australian environment of the need for an Alpine ski and touring club, as well as of the uniqueness of his cultural capital to realize his plans. He had exercised intense public agency and also knew how to get newspaper coverage for his projects.

Marie Bergel and her husband, *Otto*, are further examples of migrant entrepreneurs who used their cultural capital to succeed economically by introducing various elements from their former home society into their new host society. In Vienna, Bergel had acquired crucial embodied and institutionalized cultural capital in the field of trade. Her family's impoverishment after the First World War may have fostered her entrepreneurial spirit, which would later become of great importance when she escaped to Australia. She built up a footcare agency in Vienna during the 1920s and 1930s, despite being married and raising two children.⁹³ The breakdown of the Habsburg Empire and the negative economic development she experienced in the small-state republic of Austria drove her to seek an affiliation with Scholl, a major American company.⁹⁴ She subsequently persuaded her reluctant father to accept an exclusive contract as an agent for Scholl Footcare. "I went down on my knees and told him: Please, it is an international firm; it is a gift for us. This is what I want to do," she later recalled.⁹⁵ After her father agreed, she ran the agency as her own business. "It was my project," she later proudly stated. As this example shows, her family must have belonged to the liberal and progressive Jewish middle, or upper middle class. Obviously, the family had pursued more open gender roles that allowed a daughter to become active and independent within the framework of the family business. At first, she established a large network of customers by going "from door to door, selling products out of a suitcase,"⁹⁶ a type of work that was not considered appropriate for a young woman from the

92 Warren Peck, "In Memoriam Charles Anton" (unpublished eulogy, Melbourne, 1966).

93 Strobl, "Social Networks," 61.

94 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

95 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

96 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

upper middle classes. She ran an extensive marketing campaign and advertised her business in lifestyle and culture magazines. After a while, she was able to rent a shop in Vienna's inner city and took charge of the renovation, subsequently building up a large clientele and maintaining good relations with Scholl's European headquarters in London.⁹⁷

After her forced escape to Australia, she moved to Adelaide, because she was told of better job opportunities there. A German friend of hers, who had moved to Sydney in 1933, had written in a letter to "get into a smaller city, because migrants are pouring down from the ships by the thousands in Melbourne and Sydney, looking for work there."⁹⁸ And indeed, Melbourne and Sydney had become the main hubs for incoming refugees from the German-speaking areas in 1938 and 1939. More remote and provincial cities, such as Adelaide, Perth, or Brisbane, had not received larger shares of refugees at that time and the competition for low-income jobs was ultimately not as intense there as it was in the two largest Australian metropolises.

Her strategy of moving to Adelaide due to better job opportunities worked out. Shortly after her arrival, she found a job in a department store. However, after a few months, she realized that she wanted to work again in the field of chiropody, where she could draw upon her cultural capital, her knowledge, and her skills. Since her financial capital was not sufficient to open up her own clinic, she made a plan to work independently for another business: "I went to a hairdresser and suggested [...] to work with them as a chiropodist," she mentioned in an interview.⁹⁹ In October 1939, one month after the beginning of the Second World War, she had quit her previous job and started a cooperation with a local hairdresser, offering "foot treatments in his shop in return for a commission."¹⁰⁰ Like in Vienna, she engaged intensely with customers and advertised her business in local newspapers, promoting it as "foot service and orthopedic chiropody and massage from London and Vienna," as a newspaper advertisement still in the possession of her daughter shows.¹⁰¹ Another advertisement from October 1940 announces her as "Madame Bergel of Dr. Scholl's Foot Hospital, London. Chiropodist."¹⁰² Contact with her clients mainly took place on a personal level. The nature of her business supported this practice. In Austria, Bergel had primarily led an import agency. Her business had focused

97 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

98 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

99 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

100 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

101 Newspaper advertisement (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

102 N.A., "Advertising," *The Advertiser*, October 22, 1940, 3.

not only on foot treatments but also on the import and sale of products. Thus, she maintained close ties to Scholl's European headquarters in London. In Adelaide, her business activities were focused on foot treatments, and she was supplied by another distributor. Consequently, her strong ties to the company's headquarters loosened. Bergel maintained her chiroprapist activities her whole life.

During the war years, the Bergels were searching for additional opportunities to earn a living. After their arrival, her resourceful husband, Otto Bergel, who had worked in Vienna as the manager of a wine trade business and had described himself as an "expert in wines,"¹⁰³ used his European knowledge to open up a fruit juice production company, Pomelle Fruit Juice Cellars, in Adelaide with an Australian partner, "who wanted to make apple juice, however could not succeed with it," as Bergel's daughter recalled.¹⁰⁴ This was mainly because of a lack of knowledge of the demands of the Australian market. The product was obviously not very well known in Adelaide at that time. Everybody asked us "were you making cider? And we said, no apple juice," Bergel recalled in an interview during the 1990s.¹⁰⁵ The venture was not successful and soon Otto Bergel withdrew from it. After having "sold goods from door to door," and having not felt "well" doing so, as Marie Bergel later mentioned,¹⁰⁶ Otto and his wife opened up a grocery store in Adelaide's suburb of Unley in October 1941. "We decided that the only possibility [to create a successful business] with this pending war is to have a grocery shop," she later mentioned probably pointing toward their memories of the food shortages in Vienna during the First World War.¹⁰⁷ They used the shop to offer all kinds of different continental European food Australians were unaccustomed to. Besides providing coffee, a drink that was difficult to acquire at that time in a society mainly accustomed to drinking tea, Marie Bergel prepared and sold some typical Austrian products such as *Liptauer* (a spicy cheese spread made with sheep's milk cheese, goat's cheese, quark or cottage cheese) and cottage cheese from skimmed milk. In contrast to their first juice company, her ideas were successful, and "at the end it [the store] was like a club," she noted. They had many Australian customers who got used to buying the exotic products the Bergels offered their clients.¹⁰⁸ In order

103 NAA, D4880, BERGEL Otto born 1903, Marie age 35, Annemarie age 7 1/2, Johanna age 3—Nationality: German—Arrived Adelaide per Anchises 22 January 1939.

104 Joan Lynn (Bergel's daughter), in discussion with the author, Melbourne, February 2016.

105 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

106 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

107 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

108 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

to promote their goods, they worked together with other migrants: “I knew a doctor from Hamburg and he recommended his patients to eat cottage cheese. As it was not available, he asked me to supply them,” she later mentioned.¹⁰⁹

The entrepreneurial Bergel family remained economically active and innovative in Australia: after having sold their grocery store, they founded a candy factory in 1958. Here, again, Otto Bergel’s knowledge of the food and beverages industry along with Marie Bergel’s knowledge of the retail business proved to be valuable. The company succeeded—at peak times the Bergels employed 11 people, as their daughter recalled in an interview.¹¹⁰

The Bergel family offer yet another interesting example of how European knowledge was successfully employed and adapted to fit the needs of the Australian society. They had witnessed the housing shortages in Vienna before and after the First World War and had seen how the municipal Viennese government had reacted by building multistorey apartment houses. Also, they were used to the high-density housing of European cities, where most people lived in apartments. The architecture of Adelaide at that time was entirely different. There were only very few apartment buildings. Most houses were single-story homes.¹¹¹ The lack of building material during and after the Second World War created a significant housing shortage in Australia. This was exacerbated by rapid population growth through immigration and the high birth rates of the “baby boom” that began during the 1950s.¹¹² Medium-density housing, and therefore apartment buildings, became more common in this period.¹¹³ During the late 1950s, Otto Bergel became interested in the real estate market, as Marie Bergel mentioned in a later interview. During the early 1960s, he had gathered former Viennese and German refugees around him to form a company that bought investment houses and properties. “They built up the first three-story unit house in Adelaide,” as his wife later stated.¹¹⁴ The company became successful and by the time of Otto Bergel’s death in 1962, it had grown considerably. Here again, the introduction of ideas from Central Europe was facilitated by a cooperation among migrants, who set the idea in motion and thus served as drivers of innovation.

109 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

110 Joan Lynn (Bergel’s daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

111 Compare Susan Marsden, *Twentieth Century Heritage Survey, Stage 1: Post Second World War (1946–1959). Overview History* (Keswick: Adelaide, 2004), 43–44.

112 Marsden, *Twentieth Century Heritage Survey*, 43.

113 Marsden, *Twentieth Century Heritage Survey*, 44.

114 Interview with Marie Bergel, n.d. (sound recording), n.d. (in the possession of Joan Lynn).

Bergel and her family were amongst the few refugees who had moved to areas other than the main migration destinations of Sydney and Melbourne, because they expected better job opportunities there. Once they arrived, they successfully established different business models based on their Central European knowledge. Not unlike Charles Anton, the Bergels found economic niches, highlighting the uniqueness of their cultural capital, either when offering “foot services [...] from London and Vienna,” or when providing Australians with “exotic” Austrian and Continental European goods in their grocery store.

We will encounter *Gerhard Felser* more than once in this chapter since the graduate of the Viennese college *Hochschule für Welthandel* was actively translating Viennese cultural capital in different social and professional domains. Before escaping Vienna in 1938, due to the persecution of his Jewish wife by the Nazi authorities, the entrepreneurial cost accountant described by the German newspaper *Die Woche* as a “Vollblut-Wiener”¹¹⁵ (someone who sees himself as Viennese through and through) had secured himself a job as an accountant and secretary for the Australian company H. & E. Sidegraves in Sydney, which was engaged in work for the Ministry of Ammunition.¹¹⁶ Since his employer Harold Sidegraves had also sponsored his and his wife’s visa application, the couple did not have any problems in getting to Australia.¹¹⁷ Thus Felser had a crucial advantage over many other refugees, especially in the field of accounting, as he had the backing of an Australian businessman who acted as his sponsor and employer. As a 1942 article shows, German and Austrian refugee accountants were usually unable to find a job, even if they “had passed their Australian accountancy examinations” and many of them were “driven into work as pedlars, canvassers, insurance agents, and bad debt collectors, jobs,” as the author of the article pointed out, “Australians would not like.”¹¹⁸

Felser clearly prioritized acquiring the language of his hostland and mastered English very quickly. He also enrolled in accountancy studies to complete the Australian accountancy examinations, since his Viennese degrees were not recognized in Australia. His Viennese professional education and his years of business experience in accounting gave him a head start vis-à-vis other, less experienced, students. He began studying for an accountancy degree immediately after his arrival, as one of his CVs from the 1960s indicates, and qualified within 12 months with the Association of Accountants of Australia, taking first

115 N.A., *Die Woche*, November 19, 1969.

116 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

117 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

118 Berger, “Australia and the Refugees,” 67.

place in the final examination.¹¹⁹ Felser was very engaged in seeking access to the important institutions in his professional field. Within the following two years, he qualified with the Commonwealth Institute of Accountants, the Institute of Secretaries, and the Australasian Institute of Cost Accountants.

A 1944 report by the Commonwealth Investigation Service (CIS)—which kept a file on Felser—shows that his work for H. & E. Sidegraves was regarded as very successful, not least because he had introduced a method of accounting from Vienna that was new to his Australian work environment: “Applicant is very well regarded by H. & E. Sidegraves who state that the system of accountancy, etc. which he put into operation in their firm is a distinct improvement on other systems used by previous accountants employed by them.”¹²⁰

While working in his first job in Australia, Felser used his spare time to acquire Australian degrees and to extend his network of business contacts in Australia. As he had done in Vienna, he built up professional networks and joined various professional bodies, such as the Australian Society of Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Secretaries, and exercised agency to promote his cultural capital and his knowledge. In 1940, he pursued the next step in his professional career and applied for the position of a full-time lecturer in accountancy at Melbourne University.¹²¹ He did not succeed against the Australian competition. One year later, however, he was offered a teaching assignment in Cost Accounting for the postgraduate research group of the Association of Accountants—a direct result of his personal engagement with this organization.¹²² In addition to his lecturing activities, he started researching and publishing in the field of accountancy. The same year, one of his research papers was awarded the Greatrex Prize for the Best Essay on Accounting Research of the Association of Accountants.¹²³ Felser continued with his publishing activities for decades and over the years published articles and books on taxation and wages in German and English.¹²⁴

Obviously Felser was very successful in promoting his cultural capital and convincing his new environment of his capabilities as an accountant. The year 1941 brought another major professional step for him. After having finished his Australian accountancy examinations, he was legally qualified to open his own accounting practice. By November 1941, he had saved enough financial capital

119 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

120 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

121 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

122 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

123 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

124 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

to buy an existing accounting practice in Sydney. As a CIS report on Felser's professional activities reveals, "he purchased the practice of one, Eisler, and subsequently developed it considerably."¹²⁵ At this time, there was a marked shortage of accountants in Australia¹²⁶ and his practice had a good starting position. As a certified accountant with Australian institutionalized cultural capital, Felser was able not only to take over the client stock of his predecessor but to extend the reach of his company by entering new markets. Here, again, his professional knowledge gained in Vienna and his contacts and networks with other refugees helped him considerably. Felser's primary clientele were refugees who were about to start their own businesses in Australia and therefore needed an accountant and a financial adviser, as he suggests in a later piece of writing: "Through my activities as Accountant, Cost Accountant, and Financial Adviser, I helped many newcomers to build up what have now become large industries exporting to the whole world."¹²⁷ Official reports stating "he has a large circle of friends but these friends are mainly aliens and naturalized subjects," contributes to this picture.¹²⁸

Additionally, due to his wife's Jewish roots, Felser managed to get access to Sydney's Jewish community, and "the Jewish community in and around Sydney brought their work to him," as one of the managing partners in his company later confirmed.¹²⁹ Felser's engagement with his fellow Austrian refugees and the Jewish community had opened his business to a growing market. In fact the Jewish community in Australia had more than doubled its size due to the prewar and postwar refugee migration from Europe and had risen to 48,436 people by 1954.¹³⁰ In 1943, he intended to hire a skilled cost accountant with training in "factory organization," however, he later complained that such a person "of course, at the present is unobtainable."¹³¹ At that time, he mentioned in a letter, his practice kept all the books for around thirty firms and he had about 100 clients on his record.¹³² He also described the workload he and his employees faced at that time: "As I cannot let down my clients, which are all, in one way or another connected to Australia's war effort, I work now—as well as my staff—up to 15 hours a day."¹³³

125 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

126 Berger, "Australia and the Refugees," 67.

127 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

128 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

129 Aaron Watson, "Speaking in Tongues," *Acuity Magazine* 05 (2016).

130 Rutland, "Australia and Refugee Migration," 77.

131 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

132 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

133 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

Since the practice grew rapidly, he took up a partner in his business on 142 Philipp Street in downtown Sydney. Felser's concept of focusing on the niche market of Central European migrants played out very well. The country began a large-scale immigration programme in 1948 which brought about 200,000 Central and North-Eastern European Displaced Persons to Australia. Among them were many ethnic Germans. Between 1949 and 1951, 4,600 Germans came to Australia to work on the country's largest construction site, the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. Census records show that altogether 65,422 migrants from Germany had arrived by 1954. Many more German-speaking migrants arrived from Austria, Switzerland, and Eastern Europe.¹³⁴ Thus with the growing migration from Central Europe, Felser's clientele and business grew considerably. The number of migrant businesses he consulted for increased—and some of them became great economic success stories, as he later described:

I only mention as an example Protector Safety Industries Ltd. (of which I am director), which I have helped to nurse for 25 years and which, from very small beginnings has grown into a public company with branch factories in Auckland, Johannesburg and London and with over 50 resident expert representatives in the whole world.¹³⁵

After the war, when tens of thousands of expelled Austrians tried to regain their robbed assets, he temporarily expanded his company and opened up a branch in Vienna "to assist refugees regain lost possessions," as a CIS report from November 1946 revealed. Another report indicates that his Viennese branch remained active at least until 1949.¹³⁶

During the following decades, Felser's focus on German-speaking migrants helped him to expand his company into a growing niche market: "Felsers Chartered Accountants maintained a German-speaking desk and built up a portfolio of immigrant European businesses," as one of the managing partners in his company confirmed decades later.¹³⁷ In 1954, he employed more than 16 people in his business.¹³⁸ He not only worked for migrant companies in

134 Jürgen Tampke, *The Germans in Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 141.

135 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

136 NAA, A6119, Felser Gerhard Richard.

137 Watson, "Speaking in Tongues."

138 Gerhard R. Felser, *Die Kammerspiele Sydney und deren Vorgeschichte: Ein Kapitel zum Theater in der Emigration—Ein Vierteljahrhundert deutschsprachiges Theater in Sydney, Australien 1941–1968* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), 13.

Australia but also began to make closer connections to the Republic of Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany in order to support transnational cooperation and the German and Austrian inbound-market in Australia. In 1959, he was appointed Honorary-Consul of Austria and in February 1963, he became Honorary Consul-General.¹³⁹ In this voluntary role, Felser maintained “an office at the rear of the practice.”¹⁴⁰ He was one of the principal founders and chairman of the Austrian-Australian Cultural Society in 1962 and its Austrian sister society, the Australian-Austrian Society five years later.¹⁴¹ In 1977, Felser was engaged in the founding of the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce.¹⁴² Even today, his company is still in business and—under the name of Accru Felsers—still focused on “Austrian, Swiss, and German-based subsidiary companies,” which constitute “a large proportion of the company’s audit and outsourcing work.”¹⁴³ As described by the company’s webpage, the niche market Felser had targeted from the very beginning remains the company’s main field of activity:

Accru Felsers has been advising German-speaking businesses in Australia for 78 years, ever since we started as one ourselves. As a result, we lead the German inbound mid-market today. Our many longstanding clients from Germany and Austria include some of the world’s largest and most successful high-tech manufacturers. Our strong and valuable European partnerships include Advantage Austria, the German-Australian Chamber of Commerce, Roedl & Partner accountants in Germany, and international outsourcers. Accru Felsers partners also participate in German business delegations and speak on issues affecting German business in Australia.¹⁴⁴

Felser’s economic success relied to a certain degree on his focus on an ethnic niche market. He had quickly accepted the devaluation of his Viennese institutionalized cultural capital and thus had completed the Australian accountancy examinations, which allowed him to practice as an accountant in Australia.

139 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

140 Watson, “Speaking in Tongues.”

141 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

142 Accru+, “The Accru Felsers Story,” *Accru+*, accessed January 24, 2022, <https://accrufelsers.com/international-business/the-accru-felsers-story/>.

143 Watson, “Speaking in Tongues.”

144 Accru+, “The Accru Felsers Story,” *Accru+*, accessed January 24, 2022, <https://accrufelsers.com/international-business/the-accru-felsers-story/>.

He had also identified the considerable niche market of German-speaking migrants during and, even more so, after the war and had specialized his quickly growing company in that market. To do so, he continuously and successfully adapted his ideas and his offering to suit the changes in the market.

Irma Weiss is an example of how refugees used their professional knowledge and their cultural capital to build a life in a new and unfamiliar environment, even at a more mature age and without exercising much agency. The trained milliner Irma Weiss arrived in Australia with her husband, Hans, in May 1939. The couple had run an artificial flower making business in Vienna, where they had acquired a certain degree of wealth through their work and moved into the 1st district, Vienna's prestigious inner city.¹⁴⁵ Like many others, they had been deprived of their financial capital—altogether the equivalent of about 2,000 pounds—by the Nazis and forced to shut down their company, as they later claimed in an application to buy a property in Australia.¹⁴⁶

After their arrival in Australia, they restricted themselves to a frugal lifestyle, aiming at saving capital to build up a business and to buy a house.¹⁴⁷ For the first two years after their arrival, they lived in a boarding house in Sydney's suburb of Bondi together with other German and Austrian refugees.¹⁴⁸ They managed to set in motion the first part of their plan the same year they arrived. In late 1939, Hans and Irma Weiss opened up their own small factory in Sydney's Pitt Street with the help of their daughter and son-in-law, who was also a refugee.¹⁴⁹ The company, called Greenwood Artificial Flowers, was built upon decades of experience with their business in Vienna. Official reports described it as a "similar business" to the one they had "previously operated in Vienna."¹⁵⁰ They grew their new family business despite the fact that the war had begun just when they founded their company. Like other refugees, they faced initial resistance, in their case from the association of the manufacturers of artificial flower makers, who feared pressure from introduced European competition.¹⁵¹ Official reports described their business as a "very small factory,"¹⁵² in 1940; they had only very few assets, totalling 20 pounds of worth in property

145 NAA, A12508, Weiss Hans born 19 April 1885; Irma age 51; nationality German; travelled per STRATHMORE arriving in Sydney on 16 May 1939.

146 NAA, A12217, Hans and Irma Weiss—purchase of property Ashfield NSW.

147 NAA, A12217, Hans and Irma Weiss—purchase of property Ashfield NSW.

148 NAA, A12217, Hans and Irma Weiss—purchase of property Ashfield NSW.

149 NAA, A12217, Hans and Irma Weiss—purchase of property Ashfield NSW.

150 NAA, C123 Weiss, Irma (Austrian—naturalised British subject) [Box 134].

151 Richards, *Destination Australia*, 148.

152 NAA, C123 Weiss, Irma (Austrian—naturalised British subject) [Box 134].

and three pounds in cash.¹⁵³ Only three years later, they wanted buy a house, thus setting in motion their second goal. At that time, they had acquired at least 1,300 pounds in cash for a down payment on a house in Sydney's Ashfield suburb.¹⁵⁴ Since they were classed as "enemy aliens" at that time, they were ultimately prohibited from finalizing the transaction, as there were strict restrictions on what enemy aliens were allowed to acquire. In a statement regarding the Weiss family's attempt to acquire property, the mayor of Ashfield remarked that he was "voicing the sentiments of the whole council in saying that they are opposed to aliens being allowed to acquire property by purchase during the war period." He further remarked that he "felt that the council could see no harm in leasing a property for agricultural or market purposes to aliens and in some cases business sites," but that "the men of the fighting services should, on their return have preference in the selection of the choice sites now being acquired by aliens."¹⁵⁵ Since they were not allowed to buy a house, they commenced saving and in 1948, after nine years in Australia, Irma Weiss stated that her "assets were valued at 5,000 pounds" and her yearly income was around 700 pounds.¹⁵⁶ Thus, in Australia they had managed to acquire almost three times as much financial capital within only nine years than they had in Austria up to 1939, when the Nazis had deprived them of the entirety of their financial means of 2,000 pounds.¹⁵⁷

In contrast to other refugees, the Weiss family did not seem to exercise much personal agency to promote their cultural translation. They transferred their business from Vienna to Sydney, without changing much of its nature. They did little advertising for their business, except for a very few job advertisements in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. They were not known to have had many contacts to other Australians. Most of the time, they stayed within the close social framework of their family. In a 1940 immigration report, the Bondi postmaster mentioned "they were frequently visited by married daughters and sons-in-law (all Austrian refugees)."¹⁵⁸ Despite their Jewish denomination, they also did not engage much with Jewish or refugee communities. Another report indicates that "they were registered as a member of the Jewish Welfare Society, but never attended meetings,"¹⁵⁹ while a further report noted, "they belonged

153 NAA, A12217, Hans and Irma Weiss—purchase of property Ashfield NSW.

154 NAA, A12217, Hans and Irma Weiss—purchase of property Ashfield NSW.

155 NAA, A12217, Hans and Irma Weiss—purchase of property Ashfield NSW.

156 NAA, A261, Applicant—WEISS Irma; Nominee—KORNFEIN Else; nationality Austrian.

157 NAA, A261, Applicant—WEISS Irma; Nominee—KORNFEIN Else; nationality Austrian.

158 NAA, C123 Weiss, Irma (Austrian—naturalised British subject) [Box 134].

159 NAA, A12217, Hans and Irma Weiss—purchase of property Ashfield NSW.

to the Jewish faith, but were not religious. [...] and are not known to the parish priest.”¹⁶⁰ Apparently, the cultural capital and business know-how Irma and Hans Weiss imported to Australia was known and/or sufficiently accepted in Australia to be implemented without significant problems and much need for adaption.

Ernest Bowen's career in Australia is another good example of how Viennese knowledge and cultural capital was successfully transferred in the field of trade and commerce. Bowen was born in 1912 into a wealthy family of Jewish-Viennese industrialists. He had enjoyed a good technical education in Austria and England and was well prepared to take over the family business. When he was in his twenties, he took over the family's cotton wadding factory started by his great-grandfather in Vienna's 16th district. Due to Bowen's manifold connections in the English-speaking world, he managed to get a job shortly after his escape to Melbourne. His wife at the time, Annemarie Mutton, later recalled that process:

Eventually, Ernest managed to get a job. We had many letters of introduction, we met a lot of people. Ernest was introduced to the Laycocks, owners of Laconia Woolen Mills. They employed him as a foreman.¹⁶¹

After getting hired, Bowen experienced huge resistance from his Australian co-workers, like many other well-qualified refugees who were lucky enough to start their professional career in Australia in what their Australian fellow citizens would consider a “good position” that “should be occupied only by Australians.” Annemarie Mutton continues her depiction of her former husband's first job in Australia:

However, the depression still left many people unemployed and the factory workers went on strike because they said this sort of job should be given to an Australian. It had not been proofed that Ernest had qualifications not obtainable in Australia of an Australian born citizen. The case came to court. The Laycocks won, and Ernest was installed as a foreman.¹⁶²

The strike took place in August 1940 and was one of many examples for the discrimination of (particularly Jewish) refugees because of employment

160 NAA, C123 Weiss, Irma (Austrian—naturalised British subject) [Box 134].

161 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

162 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

reasons.¹⁶³ It was even mentioned in some of the country's major newspapers. As the *Herald* reported, 200 employees of Laconia Woolen Mills in South Melbourne went on strike "because of their objection to working under a certain foreman."¹⁶⁴ In Bowen's case, his employer defended him against the accusations. As the newspaper reported, the resistance was only because of Bowen's migrant status: "The employees' representative had told the Conciliation Commissioner (Mr. Murray Stewart) that the foreman was a 'perfect gentleman' and their only objection when the strike occurred was that he was an alien."¹⁶⁵

After eventually starting to work in his position as a foreman, Bowen managed to gain the trust and appreciation of his fellow employees, particularly because "he introduced new working rights," as his daughter later remembered.¹⁶⁶ His education and his knowledge of workflows helped him to rise up the career ladder, as his daughter further recalled. Only a year after the strike, he managed to buy a newly built house in the suburb of Blackburn.

Shortly after that, Bowen gave up his job at Laconia Woolen Mills and, together with a partner who had also escaped the Nazi Reich, opened an import agency for an Indian textile company called SAPT. Here again, his prewar networks proved to be essential. He had already been in contact with this company in Austria before his escape, when he had managed the family factory, as his daughter recalled.¹⁶⁷ In his new entrepreneurial occupation, he travelled frequently to India. The business became successful and Bowen operated two offices, one in Melbourne's Collins Street and another one in Sydney's George Street.¹⁶⁸ One of his strengths in building up this new business in Australia may have been his eloquence, which formed part of his cultural capital, as his daughter recalled: "He had much safety in dealing with other businessmen of different backgrounds. That was part of his upbringing."¹⁶⁹ Besides that, he had access to valuable contacts among members of his pre-escape business

163 Comp. Gouttman, "Was It Ever So?," 58.

164 N.A., "Strike Over Alien Foreman," *Herald*, August 29, 1940, 3.

165 N.A., "Strike Over Alien Foreman," *Herald*, August 29, 1940, 3.

166 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

167 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

168 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

169 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

networks. His anglophone education may also have helped to have him and his cultural capital accepted in his new environment.

Bowen's company succeeded financially and only seven years after he had bought his first house in Blackwood, the Bowen family moved into a villa in the sought-after address of Grange Road, Kew.¹⁷⁰ Ernest Bowen, however, never wanted to cut off the ties to his old *Heimat*, despite the horrors he and his family had experienced during the Nazi occupation. After a new Austrian law, the so-called 3. *Rückstellungsgesetz* (3rd restitution law), enabled some of those who had been robbed by the Nazis to reclaim some of their possessions, he began to work on getting his former Viennese family business back. Finally, in 1949, he was able to travel to Europe and to buy back for about 300,000 Austrian schillings what was left of the Watterfabrik Moritz Böhm & Sohn, the family's cotton wadding factory, as his daughter recalled.¹⁷¹ The restitution of his company bolstered his sense of belonging to his former Austrian *Heimat*. Most of his employees were still working for the company¹⁷² and as his ex-wife put it:

His old, loyal workforce welcomed him back with warmth and affection, sharing with him their terribly meagre rations of butter or fat. His sense of belonging was rekindled and in spite of deprivations he felt he had gone home and was accepted as belonging. Other businesses, he managed to keep in effect benefited from his partner [in Australia].¹⁷³

For the next few years, Bowen travelled back and forth between Europe and Australia, managing the operation of his Austrian and his Australian businesses. As his daughter recalled, "his wife also wanted to return to Austria with the children, however, he vetoed it because he feared National Socialism could return to Austria."¹⁷⁴

During the 1950s, like many people who had experienced the cruelty of Nazi persecution and expulsion, Bowen increasingly suffered from depression. As studies show, the experience of being powerless, of helplessly facing

170 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

171 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

172 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

173 SLV, Annemarie Mutton, papers, ca. 1930–1987. [manuscript], MS BOX 2685/9–10.

174 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

the despotism of the Nazi system, and of losing the safety of one's home and livelihood created a void that caused a break in the communication between a person and their environment, which sometimes led to trauma.¹⁷⁵ In 1953, he divorced his wife, Annemarie Mutton, who remained in Melbourne with their children, and relocated to Austria permanently. During that time, he may have ceased his Australian business activities, as his daughter recalls. She also noted: "Our father was sick more often, but he came to Australia every year to visit us children."¹⁷⁶ During the 1960s, Ernest Bowen had sold the restituted cotton wadding factory and started a trading agency in Vienna, using contacts to Eastern Europe to buy and sell products for the rubber and tire company Pirelli.

Bowen is a good example of a refugee who could not entirely break with his past and his old homeland. He had used his specialized cultural capital to build up a decent existence in Australia, relying on his interwar connections and his transcultural experiences to become engaged as a mediator in the long-distance trade between Asia and Australia. Despite his anglophone education, however, Bowen was one of only two members of our sample group to move back to Austria, after having the opportunity of buying back his family's factory, which the Nazis had robbed him of in 1938/39.

Kurt Selby was one of those refugees who started his own business in Australia because of a lack of job opportunities. He had no previous experience as an entrepreneur and, as his daughter recalled, believed that "it would have been better to be employed by a company because of different benefits such as superannuation, pensions, etc."¹⁷⁷ In Vienna, Selby, or Silbiger as his original German birthname was, had worked as a tradesman in leather goods for the Jewish leather wholesaler Arnold Reininger.¹⁷⁸ He had worked there for 10 years, from 1928 to 1938, until the Nazis forced Reininger to shut down his shop and flee the country.¹⁷⁹ Reininger's company worked, amongst others,

175 Martina Kopf, *Trauma und Literatur: das Nicht-Erzählbare erzählen—Assia Djerbar und Yvonne Vera* (Frankfurt/Main: Brandes & Apsel, 2005); Strobl, "Ich habe nie die Absicht gehabt," 67.

176 Dymia Schulze (Bowen's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Vienna, March 2017.

177 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

178 NAA, A12508, 21/4033; A certificate of employment from his Austrian employer described his occupation as "Platzvertreter und Ledermanipulator" which would translate best as a salesman in leather goods and sales representative, employment references (in the possession of Eleanor Hart).

179 N.A., "Steuersteckbriefe und Vermögensbeschlagnahmen," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, November 9, 1938, p.a.

for the innovative Czechoslovak shoe manufacturer Bata, which had adapted management principles of large enterprises in the United States and had begun a progressive policy of transnational expansion, despite the unfavourable economic situation during the postwar years.¹⁸⁰ Bata's leadership was particularly interested in an approach called "Taylorism," developed by Frederick Winslow Taylor, an American mechanical engineer who sought to improve industrial efficiency.¹⁸¹ When working for Bata, Selby may have come in contact with many of the company's progressive ideas and may have brought some of them with him to Melbourne, as we will see.

Selby arrived in Melbourne in late October 1938 with only a suitcase and five pounds of financial capital, as his daughter recalled.¹⁸² He was in the fortunate situation that a cousin who had migrated to Australia in 1929 supported his visa application and launched an application for admission of relatives to Australia only two months after the Anschluss.¹⁸³ His cousin, furthermore, helped him to settle in Melbourne. During the first weeks after his arrival, he stayed with her.¹⁸⁴ Later he moved into a boarding house. His cousin had helped him organize a job in the knitting mills in Melbourne's suburb of Collingwood, where many of the refugee arrivals found their first employment. The job, however, did not last for long and for unknown reasons, he lost it only two days after he started it.¹⁸⁵

After this setback, he started to build his own business as an underwear and garment wholesaler. At first, he went from house to house, but was soon ready to open his own shop. In February 1939, he wrote to his fiancée, Pepi Juris-Barth, who had fled to England and was waiting there to get a visa for Australia:

I have saved 35 pounds so far. Have to borrow 35 pounds from M. Kohane [his cousin]. I need 10 pounds for my work. I will focus my business activities on women's stockings and underwear. I have many customers now. I hope it will continue this way. My plan is to open up a stockings shop and you will run it. I have already familiarized myself with the business very well.¹⁸⁶

180 Sanjeev Kumar, *The Bata Shoe Company, 1876 to 1970: Appraisal of Strategic Global Choices* (Toronto: Rotman, 2017), 15.

181 Kumar, *The Bata Shoe Company*, 15.

182 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

183 NAA, A261, 1939/1044, Selby Kurt.

184 NAA, A12508, 21/4033, Selby Kurt.

185 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author, Melbourne, February 2016.

186 Letter from Selby to his fiancée (in the possession of Eleanor Hart), translated by the author. Original text in German: "Habe jetzt 35 P. erspart. Muss mir von M. Kohane

His successful business enabled him to normalize his life in Australia quickly. First, he was able to save the 50 pounds that was required as official landing money to get his fiancée to Australia in February 1939. Four months later, he unsuccessfully attempted to get his parents to Australia. In this application from June 1939, he stated that he had saved 22 pounds in financial capital and that he had built up a stock of goods for his business worth around 300 pounds. He also estimated his annual income at around 300 pounds.¹⁸⁷

Selby's early economic success was linked to his focus on and his engagement with a certain target group: initially, he exclusively concentrated his activities on migrants and the Jewish community. "Many of his clients and his environment consisted of German speakers and Jewish refugees," as his daughter later recalled. Since it was possible for him to focus on the target group of German-speaking, Jewish refugees—people who had similar values and had learned to play on a similar cultural keyboard—it was much easier for him to get his cultural capital and his ideas recognized and appreciated, especially since his knowledge of English was at first very limited, as his daughter remembered: "He had severe problems learning the language. He used to point at the goods he wanted to buy. [...] He learned the language always with an accent and he found it hard. He was a people's person but he linked in with people from the same background."¹⁸⁸ Moreover, it was much simpler to exercise agency within the framework of his target group, as the refugee community in Melbourne consisted of no more than a few thousand people and thus information about new migrant businesses spread quickly and without widespread and costly advertising efforts. "It was a lot safer for him (personally and economically), working within the Jewish community," his daughter recalled. "For him, Australia was a wonderful place. It was backward but a place of opportunity."¹⁸⁹

On August 29, 1939, Selby and his wife, who by then had arrived from England, changed their name by deed poll from Silbiger to Selby. Two days later, the Second World War started with the German attack on Poland. Despite their name change, the Selby's maintained intense contact with German-speaking

30 P. borgen. 10 P. brauche ich zum arbeiten. Ich arbeite nur mehr mit Damenstrümpfen und Unterwäsche. Habe schon viele Kunden. Hoffentlich wird es weitergehen. Mein Plan ist ein Damenstrumpfgeschäft und du wirst es führen. Habe mich schon schön eingearbeitet."

187 NAA, A261, 1939 1044, Selby Kurt.

188 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

189 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

refugees and the Jewish community. Selby's daughter explained, "All of their friends were refugees. They spoke much German. Being in a community was very important to my parents. They transported a little bit of being home into being here. They could not have managed it without it."¹⁹⁰ Selby eventually succeeded with his plan of opening up his own shop. In April 1939, the couple married in the St Kilda synagogue and established a shop in Melbourne's suburb of Elsternwick. As Selby had written to his fiancée in early 1939, she took over the underwear shop, while he started another garment business. Again, his contacts to the refugee community helped, as many German-speaking refugees started garment and textile production companies during and after the war. In her pioneering 1988 work about Austrians in Australia, Marlene Norst noted that the majority of Austrian refugees went into manufacturing or trade, had specialized in family businesses, and tended to target a special area of the market, such as the "clothing industry."¹⁹¹ A study about refugees from the 1960s observed that "manufacturers of clothing form the largest single group within the category of self-employed [refugee] businessmen" in Melbourne.¹⁹² Selby used his status and his contacts as a member of the refugee group to connect with refugee garment and textile producers. "He bought his garments and made friends with different people and they always turned out to be German speakers," his daughter recalled.¹⁹³

Very likely inspired by what he had learnt in Europe when he had worked for Bata, Selby sold his garments—mainly ladies' dresses and jackets—through an instalment payment system. Instalment payment had boomed in Europe and even more in the United States during the interwar period. It was partly responsible for the consumer revolution that took place in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s and had brought many new goods such as telephones, refrigerators, and radios to many new customers.¹⁹⁴ The system

190 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

191 Norst and McBride, *Austrians in Australia*, 127.

192 Ursula Wiemann, "German and Austrian Refugees," 120.

193 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

194 For an overview of the history of instalment payment, see Philipp Strobl, "Creating Consumers—Globalgeschichte der Teilzahlung bis 1939," *Historia Scribere* 2 (2010): 185–198; Martha L. Olney, "When your Word is not Enough: Race, Collateral, and Household Credit," *The Journal of Economic History* 58, no. 2 (1998): 408–431; Johannes Bähr and Andrea H. Schneider, *Teilzahlung im Wandel der Zeit. Von der Kreditanstalt für Verkehrsmittel AG zur Diskont und Kredit AG 1924–1951* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 2006); Marie-Emanuelle Chessel, "From America to Europe: Educating Consumers," *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 2 (2002), 165–175.

worked out for Selby. "He ran a business on time-payment for garments long before they invented credit cards. He had a regular clientele. He did nicely," his daughter recalled. Selby spent most of his time building up and developing his businesses and soon managed to succeed financially. Soon after the war, the Selby family moved into a newly built house in the suburb of Oakleigh. In addition, Selby managed to buy himself a new car every two years, which is likely an indicator of his financial success. "We had a decent life," his daughter Eleanor, who was born in 1946, recalled, "they came with nothing, and bought a house. My mother stopped working in the shop."¹⁹⁵

Selby's economic success story in Australia confirms the old German proverb "Not macht erfinderisch" (necessity is the mother of invention). Selby managed to build up two successful companies, although he had no previous experience as an entrepreneur. Like some of the other refugees, he initially used his connections to the refugee community and the Jewish community to start his business. As shown, his focus on this group helped him greatly. The shared cultural ties between him and the other members of the refugee community made the start of his business smoother and helped him to exercise agency to gain appreciation for his knowledge. From this position, he consequently expanded his clientele to also address Australian-born clients and all of those who came to Melbourne as Displaced Persons after the war.

Kurt Selby was not the only member of our sample group to establish a successful garment retail business in Australia after their escape. *Helen Roberts*, who moved from Vienna to Sydney, also became successful in this field, despite having no previous experience in the garment business. In Vienna, Roberts had lived a sheltered, middle-class life. After having finished a *Hauswirtschaftsschule*, a high school that prepared young middle-class women for household duties, she had married a Jewish dentist, who was 13 years older. "We moved into a very nice apartment," she later recalled.¹⁹⁶ The daughter of Jewish-Christian parents, she was regarded as a *Mischling* by the Nazis and since she was married to a Jew, she had "no protection," as she later noted. She thus had to flee the country. In March 1939, Helen Roberts and her husband, Richard, arrived in Sydney by plane. Upon their arrival, they discovered that he was not allowed to practice in Australia and would have to requalify in order to be able to work as a dentist. "That was ridiculous because he had fantastic qualifications as a doctor, but they were not accepted," Roberts recalled of their situation in 1939.¹⁹⁷

195 Eleanor Hart (Selby's daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

196 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (audio recording).

197 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (audio recording).

Her husband enrolled in medical studies at Sydney University and the couple's financial capital dwindled rapidly. Helen Roberts took up various odd jobs and became the main provider during their first years in Australia. "I did everything. We did not have much money at all. Once, I worked for a butcher. I took the orders from door to door and I delivered the meat. Then, I did some sewing. [...] Life was hard for me when I arrived in Sydney, but when you are young, you can take those things," she later recalled.¹⁹⁸ After her husband had requalified in 1943, their economic situation improved. They bought a house and Helen stopped working. This comfortable situation, however, did not last for long. Helen and Richard divorced after the war and Richard moved to Queensland, where he became a "superintendent at a hospital," as Roberts recalled. She had to move on and to manage her life on her own. Again, she did various odd jobs: "I worked in a factory that made handbags. I always liked sewing," she mentioned in an interview. In the course of her tailoring work, she came into contact with a Polish-Jewish migrant family who managed a chain of dress shops in Sydney and she took up a job in one of their shops in Sydney's Castle Ray Street.¹⁹⁹ She worked there for a number of years and acquired a good overview of what Australian customers were looking for.

In 1957, she took a rather big step when, on a trip to Vienna with her second husband, she agreed to buy a sportswear shop in the Sydney suburb of Mascot from a Viennese couple that wanted to move back to Vienna. In a 2007 interview, Helen Roberts described her initial years as an entrepreneur as follows:

A friend of mine had a shop in Mascot and we bought it because he was moving to Vienna. It was a sportswear shop, Mascot Fashions it was called. I ran the shop for quite a number of years. And then one day, after six years, somebody came and said he wanted to buy the shop. And from then on, I had various shops in the city.²⁰⁰

Roberts clearly succeeded in establishing Mascot Fashions. When she sold it, she was able to invest in new businesses in the garment retail industry. Similar to Kurt Selby's story, Helen Roberts used her connections and her involvement with the refugee community to build up a solid business which she, in later years, expanded and grew. She came into contact with garment retail while working for former Jewish refugees and took over her first business from other former Austrian refugees, the handover of the purchase price even took place

198 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (audio recording).

199 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (audio recording).

200 SJM, AU022, Helen Roberts Oral History Interview (audio recording).

in Vienna, as Roberts recalled. Her expertise in sewing and the education she acquired in the Viennese *Hauswirtschaftsschule* may also have helped her to settle into the garment retail business.

Architecture was a professional field that introduced particularly many ideas and a great deal of knowledge from Central Europe into Australia. A lot of architects who were inspired by interwar Viennese modernism were expelled from Austria. Some of them went to Australia. Among them was *Richard Tandler*. Educated at the Viennese *Kunstgewerbeschule* and influenced by his mentor Oskar Strnad, Tandler made a career in Vienna as a proficient architect and industrial designer. After his arrival in Australia, he encountered the same problem many of his contemporary refugees faced: at the age of 41, he had to establish a new life and a new career in an alien environment. His initial position in Australia, however, was better than that of many others, since he received support from an Australian, who had also acted as guarantor for him. "Felix Behrend was the person who brought us out. [...] He had organized a job for him [Tandler]," his daughter recalled in a later interview.²⁰¹ Due to his experience and skills as a designer of light fittings, he was offered a job at a company that manufactured metal- and glassware. Before the war, however, there was fierce competition for such jobs and Tandler suffered the fate of many other well-qualified refugees. He lost his job after a while because his company gave his position to an Australia-born worker. The reference letter, issued by his employer, Kempthorne, in Collingwood on 3 March 1939 describes the situation as follows:

Mr. Tandler was in the employ of this firm for only a very limited period. During that time we found him to be all that one could wish to have in their employ, but unfortunately for Mr. Tandler, we have on our staff a designer who is capable of filling all our requirements in that direction and it was not possible for us to make use of his ability.²⁰²

The same month he lost his first job, he was hired by a Melbourne-based company called Platers, a firm that produced silverware. Tandler had plenty of experience in that business field and was able to establish himself as one of the company's top designers. He introduced designs he had learnt and developed in Vienna and adapted them for Australian buyers. "He is a man of considerable ability as an architect, designer, pattern maker, draftsman and skilled

201 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

202 Letter of reference from Kempthorne (in the possession of Sue Copolov).

sheet metal worker. He has been responsible for creating many new designs for this company that have proved to be successful,” his superior wrote in March 1942.²⁰³ Already one year after his arrival in Australia he pursued his goal of establishing his own architectural practice and thus was on the way to fulfilling a dream he had previously realized in Austria during the 1930s. In 1940, one of his first Australian projects was the reconceptualization and modification of a retail shop in Melbourne’s Fifth Avenue. Pictures of the project show the influence of design patterns he had acquired in Vienna. He was able to start his work again because he had brought with him objectified cultural capital in the form of most of his drawing tools, sketch books, publications, furniture, and various other objects, including a stereoscopic 3D-projector with hundreds of glass slides that allowed him a 3D view of pictures he had taken of different architectural highlights in Central Europe during the 1930s.²⁰⁴ This aided him in resuming his pre-escape work as an architectural designer. The building of houses in Australia—particularly the building of family homes—was mainly the business of contractors, thus architects were rather seldom asked for their advice and designs.²⁰⁵ As a consequence, architecture was mainly seen as a practical craft rather than a form of art. Like other refugee architects in Australia, Tandler’s education, perspective, and his Viennese modernist approach suited Australia, as the architectural historian Harriet Edquist wrote, since it “advocated the informality and flexibility, Australians were used to in their homes.”²⁰⁶ Richard Tandler’s reach and success as an architect in Australia, however, was limited, since he was never registered with the Architects Registration Board and thus was not allowed to work as an independent architect. Therefore, his options for exercising agency were also limited. Like many other refugees, Tandler decided to focus on the refugee population and on the members of the Jewish community, and consequently acquired additional orders, designing interiors and furniture mainly for Jewish and émigré clients.²⁰⁷

As his daughter confirmed, he worked in various positions as a designer and draftsman for different companies. Between 1942 and 1944, he was employed in the drawing office of a company that had acquired “large war contracts.” He designed “jigs and tools [...] and special machines and equipment for the

203 Letter of reference from Platers Proprietary Ltd. (in the possession of Sue Copolov).

204 The stereoscopic 3D-projector and the glass slides are still in the possession of his daughter Sue Copolov.

205 Berger, “Australia and the Refugees,” 72.

206 Edquist, “Vienna Abroad: Viennese Interior Design in Australia,” 30.

207 Edquist, “Vienna Abroad,” 29.

factory,” which were “operating satisfactorily,” as a letter of reference stated.²⁰⁸ In 1944, following his naturalization in Australia, he left the company, considering that the work offered “no prospects for his advancement.”²⁰⁹ He took a job at a silverware factory after that. “He did pretty well there. He designed brooches, bracelets, and bangles,” his daughter recalled in an interview.²¹⁰ During that time, however, he was also “busy, planning interior design for private people” on his own, as she also mentioned.²¹¹ In 1947, he teamed up with the registered architect Frederick Rosenbaum, which allowed him to realize projects as an architect. In that year, he designed an office fit-out in Windsor and started the conceptualization of a modernist two-story house on an elevated site in suburban Kew for a Jewish client. His contacts to Central European Jewish refugees allowed him to get the contract.²¹² During the 1950s and 1960s, Tandler mainly worked on designer furniture and interior design. His work, like that of other émigré architects and designers during the 1940s and 1950s, promoted a view of living which was built upon the theoretical writings and practice of architects such as his mentor Oskar Strnad, Adolf Loos, Josef Frank, and others.²¹³ It was well received in Melbourne, particularly among the migrant and the Jewish community and, together with the work of others, “gave form and spatial identity to postwar Jewish life in Melbourne’s southern and southeastern suburbs,” combining different elements from Europe and Australia.²¹⁴ “He never really stopped working [...] and was always busy,” his daughter recalled of his work ethic.²¹⁵

Richard Tandler successfully used his Viennese cultural capital to foster his career in Australia, which followed similar patterns as in Austria. First, he started working as an employee and established himself as a designer. Once he was settled, he opened his own business. His Viennese cultural capital and his objectified cultural capital played an important role in that process, since he could rely not only upon knowledge but also upon objects, such as drawing tools, sketch books, publications, or furniture, to realize his work in Australia. He exercised agency mainly within the framework of the Jewish community. This helped him with getting orders, however, it also, together with the fact

208 Letter of reference from Mitchell & Co (in the possession of Sue Copolov).

209 Letter of reference from Mitchell & Co (in the possession of Sue Copolov).

210 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

211 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

212 Edquist, “Vienna Abroad,” 9.

213 Edquist, “Vienna Abroad,” 9.

214 Edquist, “Vienna Abroad,” 30.

215 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

that he had never registered with the board of architects in Melbourne, limited his clientele, his order situation, and his public profile.

Tandler's cultural capital sustainably affected the life and career of his daughter *Sue Copolov*. Born in 1928, she spent the first 10 years of her life in Vienna, before escaping to Australia with her parents and her twin sister. Influenced by her father's cultural capital and his professional habitus and probably also by what she had seen and learned in the family's silverware factory in Vienna, she became interested in drawing, sketching, and design very early. After her family's escape to Melbourne, she had initial "problems communicating in school" and it took her "about three years to learn the language," she claimed.²¹⁶ After the settling in process, however, she finished her high school and studied commercial arts at Prahran Technical Art School,²¹⁷ a late-secondary and tertiary art school with a long tradition dating back to the mid-19th century.²¹⁸ Asked how she came to choose her profession, she stated: "my father has influenced me very much. He used designs and design techniques that were unique in Australia. He was a very gifted man."²¹⁹ Her career development thus highlights the pivotal role that sociologist Pierre Bourdieu accorded to the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital, by which children—and particularly migrant children—are endowed with parental cultural capital during the process of socialization.²²⁰ Inspired by her father, Copolov chose to become an industrial designer. Probably due to the booming textile industry in postwar Australia, she focused her education and her future work on textile design. After graduating, she started a job in the dress fabric division of Prestige, a large Melbourne-based fabric mill. During that time, she developed design patterns combining influences from her Viennese cultural capital and what she had learnt and acquired from her father with her Australian education and the influences she took up in her new homeland. The mix of different influences turned out to be successful and her work was awarded with several prizes during the 1950s. Contemporary newspaper articles mentioned "the charming re-arrangement of Australian flora and fauna,"²²¹ that brought her the first prize in a 1955 Australia-wide design competition. After having married her

216 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

217 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

218 N.A., *Australian Jewish Herald*, February 25, 1955, 7.

219 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

220 Swen Sieben and Clemens Lechner, "Measuring Cultural Capital Through the Number of Books in the Household," *Measurement Instruments for the Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (2019): 1–6, 2.

221 *Argus*, February 14, 1955, 8; N.A., *Australian Jewish Herald*, February 25, 1955, 7.

Jewish husband, Raul Copolov, in 1952, she settled down and, in 1956, gave up her job and opened her own textile design studio. Here, again, contacts in the Jewish community proved to be very supportive. "I took up different jobs [...]" Most customers came from Flinder's Lane—it's mostly a Jewish area," Copolov recalled later.²²² Her later business activities profited greatly from her cultural identity and her language skills: on a trip to Austria, in 1984, Copolov managed to get in contact with the Austrian branch of the Swiss yarn spinning manufacturer Wollgarn Spinnerei Schoeller in Hard, in the western part of Austria.²²³ During the following years, she established a trade agency, importing wool and fabrics from Austria and selling it to retailers in Australia. The business became successful, as Copolov recalled: "It went very well, I had employees for different tasks. We had salesmen walking around with sample books, taking orders."²²⁴

Copolov's career shows how refugee children successfully used their and their parent's cultural capital and combined it with what they learnt and saw in Australia. The development of her professional career highlights how the adaption and entanglement of her former and her new homelands played out successfully. Due to her incorporated and institutionalized cultural capital, Copolov was able to become an award-winning designer in a large and prestigious Australian company. When she left that company to start a business on her own, she received support from Melbourne's Jewish community, where she found customers and could exercise agency more easily. Her language skills and her Viennese cultural capital ultimately supported her efforts to establish contact with an Austrian textile and wool manufacturer, leading the way to the establishment of a trade company during the 1980s.

The life story of *John Hearst* is an excellent example of how migrants, through their imported Central European specialized knowledge, facilitated innovation and economic success in postwar Australia. Hearst, formerly Herskovics, was a member of a family of Jewish-Viennese entrepreneurs and had already been closely involved with the family's furniture manufacture and retail business during the 1930s. His parents "talked business 24 hours a day,"²²⁵ as he recalled during the 1990s of his youth, when being interviewed by his own son. Despite his passion for music and the arts, his father sent him to a *Bürgerschule*, a middle school, where he acquired a rather practical basic education. Combined with a subsequent apprenticeship as a cabinetmaker, he became prepared for the family business. Following the apprenticeship,

222 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

223 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

224 Sue Copolov, in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, August 2017.

225 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

he attended a trade college, a so-called *Handelsakademie*, which gave him a more advanced knowledge of business processes and further prepared him for taking over the business after his father's death in 1934. During that time, he acquired a practical hands-on mentality, which, as his son later described, would become crucial for his professional career after his flight.²²⁶ Following his arrival in Melbourne, he and his wife did various odd jobs during the first years to make a living and to establish themselves in their new homeland. Only three months after his arrival, he changed his name from Herskovics to Hearst. In March 1944, he was drafted into the Labour Corps and became a member of the 6th Australian Employment Company.²²⁷ During his service, he not only became a naturalized British (Australian) citizen in 1945 but also made a lifelong friendship with Eckbert Petzall, a Jewish architect from Berlin who had escaped the Reich shortly after the Nazi takeover in 1933. Petzall and Hearst became close friends and business partners and complemented each other very well professionally. After their demobilization in February 1946,²²⁸ they opened a cabinetmaking shop as a joint business. "They started it because of their skills and their knowledge," Hearst's son later recalled. "Eckbert was designing furniture and they both were building them."²²⁹ At first, they worked mainly for European refugee clients and the Jewish community. Therefore, they rented their first shop in Melbourne's suburb of St Kilda,²³⁰ one of the hot-spots of migration from Central Europe at that time. Hearst was deeply rooted within the German and Austrian refugee and Jewish community, not only professionally but also socially and privately, as his son later recalled: "They had mainly Jewish friends and spoke much German."²³¹ At the time Hearst and Petzall opened their shop, Australia was in midst of a building boom. The economic crisis was long gone, the war was over, and returning soldiers were founding their families and building their homes. The high birth rates of the "baby boom" that began, along with the migration of about 200,000 Displaced Persons, dramatically increased the housing demand. Building materials and furniture were in short supply and Hearst and his partner went into business at a very fortunate point in time. Their business grew quickly. In the early 1950s, "they decided they needed bigger premises and then moved to Abbotsford,"

226 Gary Hearst (John Hearst's son), in discussion with the author, Melbourne, March 2017.

227 NAA, A435, 1945/4/1812, Hearst John.

228 NAA, B884, Hearst John.

229 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

230 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

231 Interview with John Hearst, n.d. (sound recording) (in the possession of Gary Hearst).

as his son recalled.²³² The industrialized inner-city suburb of Melbourne was attracting many new migrants and experienced significant population growth. Due to the increasing demand, Hearst and his partner decided to extend the range of their products. They started manufacturing kitchens and around the same time had begun to produce plywood doors. They introduced a new patent to Australia that became very successful and would be sold all over the country, as Hearst's son recalled:

Now, they introduced to Australia the first honeycomb door. At that time there were only two types of doors, the first was made of solid timber, the second consisted of a timber frame with a sheet of plywood on either side. So, what they were doing was they had taken out a patent. They were using eggshell cases to put them between the sheets and that would serve as an insulation against the noise.²³³

In developing their business idea, Hearst and his partner were drawing on designs invented in prewar Germany: the so-called chipboard and lightweight honeycomb doors were the two main innovations that changed the global market for doors after the Second World War. Both were invented and patented in Germany during the 1930s, where either Hearst or his German partner Petzall may have learned about them.²³⁴ Introducing this Central European innovation to Australia turned out to be a great success: "They opened a company called the Door King Company of Australia and they were sending their doors all over the country," his son later described.²³⁵

Additionally, Hearst was always eager to extend his business. In Vienna, Hearst's family had established their own factory to supply their shop and thus become independent from external suppliers. Hearst picked up on that idea and opened a large storage yard and a sawmill in the Victorian town of Healsville, where he and his partner not only manufactured their own timber but also refined imported wood to sell this highly sought-after building material

²³² Gary Hearst (John Hearst's son), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, March 2017.

²³³ Gary Hearst (John Hearst's son), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, March 2017.

²³⁴ Comp. James Campbell and Michael Tutton, eds., *Doors: History, Repair, and Conservation* (London: Routledge, 2020).

²³⁵ Gary Hearst (John Hearst's son), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, March 2017.

to companies all over the country.²³⁶ “They were importing a lot of timber and were supplying builders and construction companies at that time,” his son recalled.²³⁷ Hearst’s business profited from his innovation as well as from the economic and building boom the country enjoyed during the late 1940s and 1950s. His transnational import business, however, was highly dependent on macroeconomic factors: the country’s inability to control inflation led to periodic credit squeezes that affected his business dramatically. According to his son, who entered the company in 1973, the first two “squeezes” in 1952 and 1961 “hit the business very hard” because Hearst and his partner had bound up much of their capital in the import trade:

But they managed to survive. [...] After the second squeeze, they had to consolidate everything. They relocated their production facilities. They set up a new factory and then the business started to grow again and then there was another building boom. [...] They had lost their property during the credit squeeze, but we bought it back again and redeveloped it.²³⁸

During the late 1970s, Hearst and his partner had started another innovative branch of their business, which grew extraordinarily during the following decade. So far, they had supplied building companies with timber, but had not focused on private consumers. “Up until then, 90 percent of the market was generated from trade with building companies,” his son recalled. During the late 1970s, however, the DIY market for homebuilders emerged and Hearst recognized it as a quickly growing market. His son summarized later how this section of the company was developed:

And then we decided to get into the DIY market. So we redeveloped the site and we built the first market—as a sort of a precursor to Bunnings superstores²³⁹—with only 20,000 square feet. But it was a start. It was a model business. And in 1988 we built another huge premises out in

²³⁶ Gary Hearst (John Hearst’s son), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, March 2017.

²³⁷ Gary Hearst (John Hearst’s son), in discussion with the author, Melbourne (sound recording), March 2017.

²³⁸ Gary Hearst (John Hearst’s son) in discussion with the author, Melbourne (sound recording), March 2017.

²³⁹ Bunnings is an Australian chain of large hardware stores.

Tullamarine, in Gladstone Park. And there we built a store with 40,000 square feet. It was called "Tradesman's Entrance."²⁴⁰

John Hearst's businesses can serve as a good example of how imported migrant knowledge affected economic development in postwar Melbourne. He and his partner had brought with them very specialized embodied cultural capital: Hearst was a businessman and a trained cabinetmaker, Petzall an architect with experience in furniture design. Their business development was highly influenced by what they had learnt and seen in Europe, from the designs of their furniture to their patented honeycomb doors to the practice of becoming independent from external suppliers, a practice Hearst learnt in his parent's company in Vienna. At first, Hearst and Petzall started their business as a typical migrant business in the financial safety of the migrant community. As they expanded, however, their business quickly began to operate statewide and nationwide. By 1982, when Hearst passed away,²⁴¹ the different businesses he and his partner had built up had become a large-sized venture that employed more than 100 people.²⁴²

7.2 Cultural Activities

German and Austrian refugees left a very sustained and consistent footprint in Australia's cultural life. Many refugees became prominent in the sphere of culture and entertainment. In particular, Austrian refugees "provided decisive impulses to music, theatre and dance," as historian Konrad Kwiet observed.²⁴³ Refugees furthermore transformed and enhanced Australian aesthetics in a range of art and design disciplines.²⁴⁴ As of 1942, most refugees were still in the process of settling in and establishing themselves, the greatest part of their cultural footprint only became visible later, particularly after the end of the Second World War, when most of them were naturalized. As we have

²⁴⁰ Gary Hearst (John Hearst's son), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, March 2017.

²⁴¹ N.A., "Family Notices," *The Australian Jewish News*, May 14, 1982, 29.

²⁴² Gary Hearst (John Hearst's son), in discussion with the author, Melbourne, March 2017.

²⁴³ Kwiet, "Re-Acculturation," 43.

²⁴⁴ Steven Cooke and Anna Hirsh, "Somehow the Ill Winds of War Have Been Favourable to Me: Travel, Training and Trauma in the Life and Works of Louis Kahan," in *Cultural Translation and Knowledge Transfer on Alternative Routes of Escape from Nazi Terror: Mediations Through Migrations*, ed. Susanne Korbel and Philipp Strobl (London: Routledge, 2022), 199–216, 199.

seen earlier, they came from a different cultural environment and had different cultural preferences to their new fellow citizens. Consequently, “many of them faced ‘culture-shock’ and some of the newcomers soon came to regard Australia as a barren waste and a cultural void,” migration historian Eric Richards wrote.²⁴⁵ As soon as they had secured their livelihood in their new homelands, many refugees began to exercise agency on very different personal or collective levels to introduce their cultural capital and to create new opportunities for them to maintain their European prewar hobbies, social tastes, and cultural interests. Only shortly after the war, official bodies found clear words to describe the impact refugees had on the arts and science in Australia, as an undated Army Education Service Bulletin that wanted to set the mood for the country’s large-scale postwar immigration programme reveals: “many first-class scientists, writers, musicians, and artists had to flee from totalitarian Europe and their knowledge and skills have enriched the culture.”²⁴⁶ Austrian refugees were active in different parts of the cultural domain. They enriched the country’s musical life, the applied arts, literature, and the fine arts, as well as the field of art criticism. The refugees’ extraordinarily intense involvement in and furthering of arts and culture were triggered by their Central European upbringing and their cultural capital, which was deeply affected by a sense for culture, music, dance, and the arts, as most of the members of our sample group had mentioned.²⁴⁷

Many refugees encountered a country with different values, and different customs and traditions. “They were grateful the country had accepted them and offered them shelter, however, at the very beginning could not really identify themselves with the Australian lifestyle and customs. Particularly the Australian cultural life was a ‘cultural wasteland’ for many of them,” as linguist Birgit Lang puts it in her book about the German-language theatre in Australian exile.²⁴⁸ Many of the refugees, including some of this book’s protagonists, congregated to jointly practice and support some of the cultural activities they knew and liked from their time in Vienna. The most frequently found cultural interest groups were private German-language theatres that “satisfied the refugees’ hunger for entertainment and culture.”²⁴⁹

At this point, we will encounter the life story of *Gerhard Felser* again. Like many refugees from Vienna, Felser had developed a deep interest in and a

245 Richards, *Destination Australia*, 147.

246 SLV, P 325.21, M58, Migration and the Refugee.

247 For more information, see chapter 3.

248 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 8.

249 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 9.

passion for the performing arts. His commitment, however, went even further: Felser was not only a regular and passionate visitor to the Viennese theatres and the opera, he also extended his knowledge by studying "Theatrical Research and History" at the University of Vienna. In 1941, shortly after his arrival in Sydney, Felser, his wife, and a friendly refugee couple from Austria, Elsa and Alfred Baring, were making plans for opening their own German-language theatre due to a lack of comparable cultural offerings in Australia. Elsa Baring had a background as an actress at various well-known Viennese theatres, such as the Volkstheater and the Theater an der Josefstadt, before her escape to Australia.²⁵⁰ In an autobiographical work, Felser wrote about his involvement in the creation of a German-language theatre in Australia. He recalled the origins of his cultural involvement as follows:

It was May 24, 1941. My wife, Erna Felser, and myself had just moved into our new apartment at 21a Billyard Avenue, Elisabeth Bay, close to the port. We wanted to give a housewarming party for our Austrian refugee friends. When we planned that party with a friendly couple, Alfred and Elsa Baring, we developed the idea of hosting a series of short theater plays to bring back memories to our lost homeland in a funny way, at least for one night.²⁵¹

The play appealed to the refugees and to their feelings toward their old home. He describes the audience's reaction as follows:

The success we had proved us right. When the curtain lifted in the very last scene and the audience saw the panoramic picture we drew from Vienna, including the Great Bear Constellation, they, at first, became entirely silent. What followed then were standing ovations. We heard the

²⁵⁰ Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 12.

²⁵¹ "Es war am 24. Mai 1941. Wir, d.i. meine Frau Erna Felser und ich, hatten kurz vorher mit mühsam erkämpfter Bewilligung der zuständigen Behörde unsere Wohnung gewechselt und waren vom Vorort Dover Heights in die Stadtnähe in eine Wohnung am Hafen, 21a Billyard Avenue, Elisabeth Bay, übersiedelt. Wir wollten nun eine Handvoll Freunde aus unserem österreichischen Einwandererkreis zu einer „Housewarming Party“ einladen. Diese „party“ besprachen wir mit einem befreundeten Ehepaar, Alfred und Elsa Baring, und da entstand plötzlich die Idee, eine kleine Aufführung von kurzen Szenen zu veranstalten, die uns die verlorene Heimat für einen Abend in lustiger Wiese wiederbringen sollte." [author's translation], in Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 13.

audience sob and there was no one who did not have to wipe away their tears.²⁵²

Due to the success they had among their refugee friends, they decided to repeat the programme and subsequently staged it in Felser's apartment and other refugee homes. The audience consisted exclusively of refugees from a Jewish Austrian background. Most of them had a middle- or upper-middle-class background and had lived a good life in Vienna. Many lived in a "depressive atmosphere," had not fully mastered the English language at that point, and in their jobs had to be satisfied with "lower positions," as Felser described it. Thus, a theatre that promised to take them back to the good old *gemütliche* (comfortable) Vienna was very much welcomed by many of them.²⁵³

Despite the considerable acceptance of Felser's idea among the members of the refugee community, they faced a serious legal problem that threatened to end the successful execution of their idea. Like most of the other refugees from Germany or Austria, the Felsers and the Barings were classified as enemy aliens and thus had to follow strict restrictions, including the prohibition on private gatherings, which made them feel like third-class citizens, as Felser later recalled.²⁵⁴ In order to get permission to continue with their private shows,

252 "Der Erfolg am Abend gab uns dann recht: Als in der letzten Szene, dem Heurigenabend, der Vorhang aufging, und sich das ganze Panorama darbot, samt von rückwärts beleuchteten Fenstern und Sternen, bei denen der schon jahrelang nicht mehr gesehene Große Bär prominent zu sehen war, da war es zunächst vollkommen still, dann brach ein stürmischer Applaus aus, und man hörte die Zuschauer schluchzen und es war keiner, der sich nicht Tränen abwischen musste. Dies wiederholte sich an jedem der drei Abende, an denen wir diese Vorstellung aufführten." [author's translation], in Felser, *Die Kammerspiele Sydney*, 13–14.

253 "Das Groß dieser Gruppe bestand aus gutem, meist auch intellektuellem und gebildetem Mittelstand, Menschen, die in guten Verhältnissen gelebt hatten und die ihre Heimat meist mit nichts in der Tasche über Nacht verlassen mußten. Wenn manche auch von Ressentiments zerrissen wurden, und nach außen hin geistigen Kontakt (einen anderen konnte es ja während der Kriegsjahre nicht geben) ablehnten, so hatten doch alle, eingestandenmaßen oder unterdrückt Heimweh nach der alten Heimat und den alten Zeiten. Hier in Sydney waren sie zwar vor Verfolgungen sicher, aber durch die politischen Gegebenheiten Bürger nicht zweiter, sondern dritter Klasse. Unter dieser Situation litten alle seelisch, und ein Theater, das das alte gemütliche, lustige Wien bot, war ein willkommenes Ventil, dem seelischen Druck dieser aufgezwungenen Umstände wenigstens für einen Abend zu entrinnen. Dazu kam noch, dass die wenigsten die Landessprache wirklich beherrschten und dass sie sich mit minderwertigen Arbeiten als Verkäufer, Fabrikarbeiter, o.ä. zufriedengeben mussten. [...] Man lebte mehr oder weniger in einer depressiven Atmosphäre und lief daher unseren Aufführungen in Scharen zu." [author's translation], in Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 15.

254 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 15.

they hired a lawyer, who, after a year, finally convinced the authorities of the “harmless nature” of their performances. In 1942, they received permission to host “performances in a language such as was spoken in Switzerland.”²⁵⁵ However, they were not allowed to perform in public and were prohibited from taking money as recompense.

In order to play in front of larger audiences but still in a private framework, the Felsers and the Barings decided to move their performances out of the Felsers’ apartment into the backyards of the houses of refugees who were willing to host them. At that point in time, their audience was still restricted to German-speaking Jewish refugees, mainly from Austria. Like Felser, some of them had already had financial success with their jobs or businesses and had moved into houses with gardens and backyards large enough to host the performance of the travelling theatre. “For this purpose, we had to build a travelling stage that was made of wood,” Felser later recalled of the beginnings of his theatre.²⁵⁶ In order to fit their audiences’ expectations, they called their theatre Wiener Kleinkunsthöhne (Vienna Cabaret Stage). On November 24, 1942, they had their first official performance in front of an audience of about 30 people.²⁵⁷ Felser had decided to perform typical Viennese popular plays, such as *Das Märchen* written by Curt Goetz and *Anatols Hochzeit* by Arthur Schnitzler.

One of the problems they encountered was obtaining copies of the original texts of the plays. To a certain extent, they could draw on their private libraries, or the libraries of refugee friends, thus on objectified cultural capital the refugees had saved from the Nazis’ clutches.²⁵⁸ Their first season was a great success. Together with a group of volunteers, the Felsers and the Barings delivered several performances in private backyards that attracted growing audiences. At peak times, they played in front of up to 114 people.²⁵⁹

The legal situation of Felser’s Wiener Kleinkunsthöhne improved dramatically in 1944. In late 1943, the Australian government introduced a new classification, the so-called “refugee alien status.”²⁶⁰ Most of the refugees applied for the new status.²⁶¹ Since they were no longer classed as “enemy aliens” but

255 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 16.

256 “Für diesen Zweck mussten wir eine Art Wanderböhne schaffen. Wir konstruierten aus hölzernen Vierkantstangen ein Bühnenportal,” see Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 17.

257 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 18.

258 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 17.

259 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 18.

260 Neumann, *Across the Seas*, 73.

261 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 49.

as “refugee aliens,” they were able in 1943/44 to apply for naturalization, after having spent five years in the country. Felser, who was very active in promoting refugee rights, recalled that crucial event in Jewish-Australian refugee history as follows:

Thanks to the efforts of the Association of Refugees and my own efforts for Austrian refugees, the Aliens’ Classification Committee had finally realized that we were not “enemy aliens.” They gave us the new status of “refugee alien” which provided us with practically the same rights Australian residents had. The most important thing was that this new status offered us the opportunity to apply for Australian citizenship.²⁶²

Freed from official restrictions, Felser and his partners began to work on the expansion of their theatre. They hired technical staff, searched for “gifted amateur actors” and developed the legal framework for their theatre by founding an association called the Viennese Theater Guild which operated the Kleines Wiener Theater (Little Viennese Theatre), as they renamed their venture.²⁶³ Felser became the president and one of the directors of the organization and remained in that position until he withdrew from it in 1957.²⁶⁴ They ended the travelling existence of their stage and rented a small theatre in Sydney’s Phillip Street. Due to the amateur character of their venture, they relied very much on voluntary work. At first, however, they were not able to guarantee the full operation of their theatre due to staff shortages. Felser later described their involuntary break as follows:

The reasons can be found mainly in our changed position in Australian society which came together with new professional opportunities. Many of us worked hard to build up our economic existence during those years. When most of us had become financially stable, our passion for

262 “Dank der unermüdlichen Bemühungen der ‘Association of Refugees’ für Hitlerflüchtlinge im Allgemeinen und von meiner Seite für die Österreicher, hatte das ‚Klassifizierungskomitee für Ausländer‘ endlich eingesehen, daß wir keine ‚feindlichen‘ Ausländer waren und einen neuen Status des ‚Flüchtlingsausländers‘ geschaffen, der uns alle Privilegien der ‚freundlichen‘ Ausländer gab, uns also praktisch mit Inländern gleichstellte. Das Wichtigste daran war, dass wir über Antrag die Australische Staatsbürgerschaft erwerben konnten.” [author’s translation], in Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 25.

263 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 25.

264 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 25.

the theater rose again and we were able to dedicate many hours to our hobby.²⁶⁵

With more time and financial means at their disposal, Felser and his partners decided to expand and to move into a larger theatre: the Independent Theatre in North Sydney, which provided them with 380 seats for an increased audience. They still addressed Central European migrants as their main clientele. As Felser described, they had gained a "loyal core audience of about 1,000 people" that consisted mainly of "prewar migrants from Austria, Germany, and Hungary."²⁶⁶ They sold their tickets in the migrant community and in migrant shops in the city, which served as "booking offices." However, they also introduced the Australian habit of preselling their tickets for one season in advance. This adopted practice led to them selling half their tickets in advance.²⁶⁷ Because of the fact that the audience consisted mainly of refugees from Austria and Germany, their programme was still centred on "unproblematic plays that reminded their audience of 'the old days back home,'" as Felser put it.²⁶⁸

The mainstream media perceived the activities of the Kleines Wiener Theater largely positively. In 1951, the *Sun*, for example had praised the remarkable growth of the theatre, which, by then, was even occasionally operating in Melbourne, the only other Australian city with a comparably high share of German refugees:

The Little Viennese Theatre, which presents its works, in German, is doing well. More than 4200 people saw their last offering, the continental operetta *Pardon my Love*, in six evening performances and one matinee. Ten years ago, the group would give only one performance of a play, and didn't attempt more than two shows a year. Now they give seven performances of each production and their policy is to give six shows a year—two comedies, two operettas and two serious plays. All profits, incidentally, go to Australian charities. In September the company will fly

265 "Die Gründe hierfür waren hauptsächlich darin zu suchen, daß sich durch unsere veränderte Stellung in der Gesellschaft nunmehr für jeden von uns beruflich und geschäftlich bisher verschlossene Wege öffneten und jeder die sich ihm bietenden Möglichkeiten zur Gründung einer beruflichen Existenz ergriff. Dies erforderte aber auch intensive Arbeit und erst im Jahr 1948, als die meisten ihre Existenz konsolidiert hatten, erwachte wieder die Lust zum Theater und bot sich wieder die zeitliche Möglichkeit, viele Stunden einem Hobby zu widmen." [author's translation], Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 26.

266 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 27.

267 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 27.

268 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 27.

to Melbourne at the invitation of the Melbourne community for a brief season at the Melbourne University Union theatre.²⁶⁹

The *Sunday Morning Herald* also wrote favourably about Felser's theatre:

One of the least-known and-on-the-box-office-count-most-successful of Sydney's little theatres is Das Kleines Wiener Theater (The Little Viennese Theatre), a group which started doing German language plays about three years ago. The theatre does five performances of each play—mainly light modern comedies—at the Independent on Sunday nights, and every show is booked out—the group claims a regular audience of 3,000.²⁷⁰

There were, however, also voices that claimed that the gathering of the German-speaking minority in the form of a club or a theatre would hinder assimilation. An extensive article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* entitled "Sydney Now has its Minority Problem" suggested that the "best way to assimilate the migrants, would be to get them out of their clubs and into our own."²⁷¹

During the 1950s, the Kleines Wiener Theater developed its repertoire according to the needs of its main clientele—German, Austrian and Hungarian Jewish refugees in Sydney. Exile and migration and the situation "in between" the cultures were pervasive. The theatre centred many of its plays on the identity bias between Austria and Australia and a comparison of the cultures, as Birgit Lang noted.²⁷² In 1957, Felser's engagement in his theatre came to a halt due to tensions with the Barings over the question of how the quickly growing operation could best be handled. Felser, who favoured a "serious professionalization of the stage," as he later stated, decided on December 10, 1957, to resign as president and director of the Kleines Wiener Theater and to turn his attention to other tasks.²⁷³ After that, the theatre, which survived off its German-speaking core audience, successfully continued its existence until it lost its *raison d'être* "when the Jewish Austrian refugee generation became older or died," as Felser put it.²⁷⁴

269 N.A., "Arthur Polkinghorne's Sydney Diary," *The Sun*, August 28, 1951, 11.

270 N.A., "Stage Whispers," *The Sunday Herald*, July 30, 1950, 12.

271 N.A., "Sydney has now its Minority Problems," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 2, 1950, 11.

272 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 21.

273 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 33.

274 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 33.

In 1950, Felser, who had made a name for himself as a successful cultural manager even outside the German-speaking community, had become a member of the board of directors and the treasurer of the newly formed National Australian Opera. In this position, he was able to get insights into an English-language opera performance. However, he did not remain in that position for long. Three years later, he “resigned together with Sir Erik Langker and several other members of the board,” as he recalled, due to controversies over the future handling of the venture.²⁷⁵

In 1954, three years before Felser resigned from the Kleines Wiener Theater, he had become a member of the board of directors and the financial director of the Independent Theatre in North Sydney. With this move, he extended the range of his cultural activities beyond migrant circles. His new voluntary occupation can be seen as another important step toward his public recognition and appreciation in Australia, since “his peers in the board of directors were mostly Australian-born professionals with a university background or a background in the dramatic arts,” who were “mostly invited to join the board because of their good connections to the government or the industry,” as he later recalled.²⁷⁶ After his resignation from the Kleines Wiener Theater, Felser sought to bring to the Independent Theatre his knowledge of German theatre productions and suggested the board open up its own German-language section.²⁷⁷ His idea was accepted and, in 1958, Felser became the director of the newly founded Kammerspiele Sydney, which operated as a branch of the Independent Theatre. Felser relied on supporters who had previously worked for him at the Kleines Wiener Theater, such as the university lecturer Kurt Hommel from the Institute of Germanic Studies at the University of Sydney, as well as former or active members of the Kleines Wiener Theater, whom Felser could persuade to participate.²⁷⁸ During his involvement, he developed an excellent relationship with Erik Langker, a renowned Australian painter who was also active in supporting Sydney’s music scene and can be seen as “one of the fathers of the Sydney opera house.”²⁷⁹

One of the main problems of the newly founded Kammerspiele was their direct competition to the rival Kleines Wiener Theater, whose clientele was limited to German-speaking Jewish prewar migrants. In an autobiographical

275 NAA, A1209, Professor Gerhard Felser—Honour.

276 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 46.

277 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 49.

278 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 49; Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 69.

279 “Langker, Erik,” Design & Art Australia Online, accessed November 30, 2021, <http://www.daaao.org.au/bio/sir-erik-langker/>.

work about his role in the German-language theatre in postwar Australia, Felser described how he extended the programme of the Kammerspiele to new audiences:

However, there was another reservoir of potential audience which was never even tapped by the Kleines Wiener Theater—namely those post-war migrants of the late '40s and early '50s. This was a group of people comprising 10,000 Austrians alone, who came to Sydney, not to mention the large wave of migration from Germany.²⁸⁰

In order to meet the demands of that group of people, which consisted mainly of working-class or rural migrants, whose cultural capital differed strongly from that of the middle-class, urban prewar migrants who were forced to leave their homes. "Some of them were people who had never been to a theatre before. Thus, we had to pitch the idea of attending a German-language theatre first," as Felser recalled.²⁸¹ In order to gain access to his new customers, Felser got in contact with German migrant organizations and the German Goethe Association. He organized pieces of their repertoire to be played in gyms and public halls in the suburbs, where many of the new arrivals lived. Alongside that, he advertised his theatre in various German-language newspapers, such as *Die Woche*, *Die Woche in Australien*, and *Der Anker*.²⁸² Felser's focus on migrants also went beyond the German-language audience. With a friend and journalist from Poland, he organized plays in languages other than German. In 1959, the Kammerspiele hosted three Polish plays, but was unable to develop the plan further because of a lack of financial capital.

Despite the venture's difficult financial situation, Felser managed to guarantee a continuous regular performance. Due to his excellent business relations with German and Austrian partners, he secured financial support from the Federal Republic of Germany in 1960. When he became Honorary Consul-General for the Republic of Austria, he used a business trip to Vienna, as he

280 "Es gab aber noch ein Reservoir an potentiellern Publikum, das vom Kleinen Wiener Theater bis dahin nicht angesprochen worden war—nämlich die in den späten vierziger und dann in den frühen fünfziger Jahren vehement einsetzende Nachkriegsemigration, die allein an Österreichern 10.000 Personen nach Sydney brachte, von der großen Welle der deutschen Einwanderer ganz zu schweigen." [author's translation], in Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 54.

281 "Zum Teil handelte es sich um Menschen, die bisher überhaupt noch nie in einem Theater gewesen waren, und denen erst die Idee eines deutschsprachigen Theaters schmackhaft gemacht werden musste." [author's translation], in Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 55.

282 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 55.

recalled, to persuade the minister of education, Dr. Heinrich Drimmel, whom he knew well, to grant an annual donation to the Kammerspiele.²⁸³

Felser's involvement with the Kammerspiele lasted a decade. In 1968, when he was about to extend the theatre's repertoire to English-speaking audiences, with an English-language performance of Arthur Schnitzler's *Anatols Hochzeit* (translated as *The Affairs of Anatol*), the sudden death of his wife, Erna, brought an abrupt halt to his engagement, which resulted in the end of the Kammerspiele Sydney.²⁸⁴

Gerhard Felser's intense cultural activities bear witness to the urgent need of the German and Austrian prewar refugees to satisfy their cultural demands. The dramatic arts, the theatre, and the opera were part of the cultural capital of most of them. Their displacement to Australia had created a void, which a few people such as Gerhard and Erna Felser, Elsa and Alfred Baring, Karl Bittmann or Peter Watkins were able to successfully fill. As the main driving force behind his own passion for the theatre, Felser mentioned the following: "The main point was that we were able to offer a certain group of people something that brought their old homeland a bit closer to them—namely serious theatre in their own language."²⁸⁵ Starting from this initial intention, with the help of many different refugees and their own ideas and cultural capital, Felser and others managed to create several long-lived institutions that had—after initial local resistance—even gained the recognition of their new host society and become an accepted part of Australia's multicultural postwar life. The success, especially of Felser's second venture, the Kammerspiele, was due in no small part to his intense efforts to exercise public agency, to organize funding, and to extend the core audience to other (language) groups.

Sylvia Cherry (née Sylvia Mahler) was 17 years old when she arrived in Melbourne. In Austria, she and her brother had lived with their father, the Jewish industrialist Robert Mahler, in a rural town in western Lower Austria. "My father set great store by music appreciation: he played the violin and held chamber music evenings once a week," Cherry later recalled.²⁸⁶ Her father's passion ultimately spread to his children and Cherry had developed a deep passion for music and the dramatic arts during her youth in Austria. In the years prior to her escape, she had attended piano and singing lessons.

283 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 71.

284 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 72.

285 "Vor allem sprach aber dafür, daß wir einer bestimmten Gruppe von Menschen etwas bieten konnten, das ihnen die Heimat wieder näher brachte, nämlich seriöses Theater in ihrer eigenen Sprache." [author's translation], in Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 154.

286 Cherry, *Who is Sylvia?*, 6.

After the Nazis had forced her father into committing suicide, Sylvia Cherny and her brother experienced a dramatic escape on a *Kindertransport* to France, then Portugal, and the United States. After a period of waiting, they were finally sent to Australia to their mother, who after divorcing her husband had married again and had fled to Australia in 1938. During the first years, the Watkins family, as they had called themselves after having changed their names by deed poll, lived a frugal lifestyle. There was only enough money to send her younger brother, Peter, to high school. Sylvia and her mother took up odd jobs in the textile manufacturing sector to increase the household income and support her stepfather, Peter Watkins, in building up a trade agency.²⁸⁷ On the cultural side, Sylvia Cherny's new home was as fascinated with music as her old home in Austria. She later recalled attending her first concerts in Melbourne: "Our mother took out a subscription to symphony concerts at the Melbourne Town Hall, which we attended regularly. There was a boom after the war when famous musicians came to Australia because of the lack of opportunities to perform in war-torn Europe."²⁸⁸ During these performances, Cherny came more and more into contact with English plays, for which she developed a great interest, as she recalled in her memoirs: "The Little Theatre in St. Martin's Lane, South Yarra, put on excellent performances and introduced us to plays by English authors. I also remember a visit by the Old Vic Company with Laurence Olivier and Vivienne Leigh, for which we queued up all night to get the tickets."²⁸⁹

The Watkins household celebrated the music scene. In her memoirs, Sylvia Cherny described that her home "became the scene for many parties and social occasions, which Peter and my mother organized to perfection. Many of their friends had artistic talent and performed sketches they had written themselves."²⁹⁰ Thus the Watkins family had begun to organize refugee gatherings in a similar way to the Felsers and the Barings had done in Sydney: "This was a major form of home entertainment during our early years and led to Peter forming a German-speaking theatre group, which performed plays in rented theatres and exchanged visits with a similar group in Sydney."²⁹¹ The "German-speaking theatre group," Cherny was referring to was an organization called the Theaterfreunde (Friends of Theater). Sylvia Cherny's stepfather had founded the organization together with the migrant Peter Halphen, who had gained some experience as an actor at the Viennese Kainzbühne before moving to

287 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 34.

288 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 36.

289 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 36.

290 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 40.

291 Cherny, *Who is Sylvia?*, 40.

Australia. Similar to the Kleines Wiener Theater in Sydney, the Theaterfreunde were formed as a voluntary amateur theatre that played in private homes and after gaining success moved to a professional theatre. It also served the same purpose of satisfying the cultural needs of the prewar refugees. It was clearly successful therein: during the 13 years of their existence, they had become the “center of the exile theater scene in Melbourne,” as linguist Birgit Lang put it.²⁹²

Sylvia Cherny’s memories of her early cultural preferences indicate again the role of the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital, by which children—and particularly migrant children—are endowed with parental cultural capital during the process of socialization. Cherny had developed a fondness for music and theatre during her youth and had developed this passion supported by her new family in Australia. We also see, however, how the different cultural elements of her old and her new homelands intertwined when she came in contact with new forms of English theatre play while her mother and her stepfather were rather engaged in building a German-language exile theatre scene in Melbourne.

The field of art criticism was a part of Australia’s cultural domain that was only developed after the entry of migrants from Europe to the country. For decades, *Gertrude Langer* played a substantial role in establishing modernism in Queensland’s cultural and artistic scene. Originating from a wealthy Jewish industrialist family, Langer was a student of the progressive art historian Josef Strzygowski, who tried to switch the horizons governing his colleagues’ understanding away from a Euro-centric perspective to a broader view that compared art throughout the course of history in different areas of the world.²⁹³ He has thus been described as an “early champion of world art history.”²⁹⁴ His alternative geography of art emphasized affinities and lines of descent that went completely against the grain of contemporary art-historical opinion and, crucially, “turned Europe into a province within a much larger global artistic territory.”²⁹⁵ Despite his increasingly nationalist and antisemitic language,²⁹⁶ which ironically contradicted his global outlook, Strzygowski managed to become “a major figure on the art-historical landscape.”²⁹⁷ He

292 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 73.

293 Strobl, “Gertrude Langer,” 19.

294 Orell, “Early East Asian Art,” 1.

295 Mathew Rampley, *The Vienna School of Arts History: Empire and the Politics of Scholarship, 1847–1918* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 2013), 185.

296 For a chronological description of Strzygowski’s increasingly antisemitic tirades, see Rampley, “Art History,” 462.

297 Rampley, *Vienna School*, 214.

lectured widely at various European, American, and Asian universities, and his institute became a centre of study and teaching for scholars from various countries and disciplines, a fact that had impressed Langer, who later recalled that more than half of her fellow students came from England and America.²⁹⁸ Strzygowski also embraced abstract avant-garde art and was the first Viennese art historian to write a book that dealt at length with modern art and architecture.²⁹⁹ Langer was clearly attracted by Strzygowski's approach, which she had adopted as a basis for her further studies and work: "We had to really absorb it all, and Strzygowski was the choice," she later explained.³⁰⁰ He insisted that his students acquire an overall knowledge of the world's art before choosing to specialize: "That I found so alluring and so fascinating because that again fitted completely with the ways I was brought up," she stated, and continued, "naturally I could not be tied down to a teaching that made something unique and the only thing out of the Italian *Renaissance*. I could only believe in a teaching where all the arts had their place."³⁰¹ By the time she graduated from the University of Vienna in 1933 with a dissertation that compared medieval column statues to Chinese-Buddhist and Iranian parallels,³⁰² she had acquired a universal understanding of the multifaceted, global nature of the arts. She had developed a deep interest in, and a firsthand knowledge of, modern art, and embraced the Expressionist philosophy that art was for all people and should elevate the mind and spirit.³⁰³ Despite the desperate job situation for art historians in interwar Austria, Langer was hired in 1937 to lecture at the Wiener Volkshochschule, a major Viennese adult education facility founded in the late 19th century to offer affordable education.³⁰⁴ During that time, she became accustomed to lecturing in public and in front of large audiences.

After her escape to Brisbane, she found herself in a cultural domain that differed greatly from *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Australia, at that time, was regarded as "predominantly a conservative, isolated, pastoral society."³⁰⁵ Art history as

298 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 19.

299 Rampley, *Vienna School*, 159.

300 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 19.

301 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 19.

302 "Wiener Kunstgeschichte Gesichtet," accessed July 25, 2017, https://www.univie.ac.at/geschichtegesichtet/g_langer.

303 Fisher, "From Vienna to Brisbane."

304 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 88.

305 Palmer, *Centre of the Periphery*, 1.

an academic discipline and art curatorial scholarship did not exist before the late 1940s. Before that time, art historicism was largely grounded in connoisseurship and a scholarly amateurism. Due to the “comparative vacuum” of art historical scholarship and cultural debate in Australia, there was a “perceived backwardness—in terms of Australia’s connectedness with contemporary currents.”³⁰⁶

The first scholars to constitute official art scholarship in Australia were migrants from Europe. British art scholar Joseph Burke was appointed inaugural professor of Fine Arts at Melbourne University in 1947 and almost immediately hired the Viennese refugee art historian Franz Philipp to assist in preparation for undergraduate teaching.³⁰⁷ Four years earlier, German refugee art historian Ursula Hoff was appointed Assistant Keeper of Prints at the National Gallery of Victoria.³⁰⁸ Brisbane, however, was not affected by those early modernist developments. Culturally, Queensland was homogeneous and conformist, and its capital city was viewed as a “big country town.” There was very little immigration, resulting in a lack of cosmopolitan flavour.³⁰⁹ Until the 1950s, cultural activities in Queensland were primarily organized by amateurs.³¹⁰ At the time Langer arrived, Brisbane’s small art world consisted of only four organizations: the Royal Queensland Art Society, the Half Dozen Group of Artists, the Queensland National Art Gallery, and the Central Technical College. There were no professional identities that might have shaped and given direction to the tiny art world.³¹¹ Consequently, European modernism, which had started to “infiltrate into the visual arts in Sydney and Melbourne” after the First World War, became apparent in Brisbane only after the Second World War.³¹² “Brisbane in 1939 was prim, set in its ways, and sure of its ways [...] [it] had a blind prejudice against women improving their station,”³¹³ the Brisbane-born former director of the National Gallery of Australia Betty Churcher stated

306 Richard Haese, “Civilizing Australia,” *Thesis Eleven* 106 (2011): 118–127, 121.

307 Haese, “Civilizing Australia,” 118.

308 Haese, “Civilizing Australia,” 118.

309 “Breaking New Ground: Brisbane Women Artist of the Mid Twentieth Century,” Queensland Art Museum, accessed July 25, 2017, <http://www.artmuseum.qut.edu.au/downloads/BNG-Education-kit.pdf>.

310 For a depiction of Queensland’s cultural life up to the 1940s, see M. J. Richards, “Arts Facilitation and Creative Community Culture: A Study of Queensland Arts Council” (PhD diss., University of Queensland, 2005), 90.

311 Hamilton, “Provincial Art World,” 201.

312 Helen Fridemanis, *Artists and Aspects of the Contemporary Art Society Queensland Branch* (Brisbane: Boolarong Publications, 1991), 1.

313 Betty Churcher, “Betty Churcher on the Impact of the Art Critic Gertrude Langer,” *Art and Australia* 30, no. 4 (1993): 514.

decades later. In an interview, Langer also delivered a damning indictment of her new hometown:

Well the landscape was the least that worried me. What worried me was rather the city. I mean, the architecture worried me very much and [...] just the lack of culture. I mean, I could not believe it that there wasn't a professional theater and things like that. The orchestra was something dreadful at that time [...]. Except for a few visiting companies, things were pretty bad. The art gallery in those days [...] was something dreadful, you know, it was nonexistent.³¹⁴

Soon after her arrival, Langer tried to become involved in the cultural life and make herself known in her new hometown. However, despite her obvious qualifications, she could find neither a job nor a voluntary position in the art sector. Her status as an enemy alien and a woman did not support her position. Initially, she encountered what was described as a “boycott by the establishment” serving to keep her out of the few existing voluntary and professional positions.³¹⁵ A few months after her arrival, she therefore started to exercise agency and to promote herself. She gave salon-style lectures in “art history” and “art appreciation” in her private home,³¹⁶ and initiated a media campaign in local newspapers. Langer and her husband had saved their important objectified cultural capital in the form of their comprehensive art library, and she centred her teaching on the “reproductions, prints and books of her library.”³¹⁷ Langer’s lectures filled a vacuum and stimulated public interest³¹⁸ and, consequently, her popularity grew from lecture to lecture, as did her audience, which consisted of “all sorts of people.”³¹⁹ “I might start with six people and all of a sudden have 12 and then I had about 18 and I took them in two groups,”

314 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 39.

315 Ute Heinen, “Gertrude Langer als österreichische Kunsthistorikerin und Emigrantin in Australien,” in *Grenzen überschreiten: Frauen Kunst und Exil*, ed. Ursula Hudson-Wiedenmann and Beate Schmeichel-Falkenberg (Würzburg: K & N, 2005).

316 Queensland Art Gallery, ed., *In Memory of Dr. Gertrude Langer O.B.E.* (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1985), 4.

317 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 45.

318 Heinen, “Langer,” 199.

319 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 45.

she recalled in an interview.³²⁰ When she designed her courses, she drew on Strzygowski's teaching approach, which she had studied at the University of Vienna, offering a comparative, instead of chronological, analysis of single aspects of the arts, supported by different global examples: "And that is how I taught because I think the system was marvelous," she is quoted as saying.³²¹ Already in her first year, some social organizations, such as the Business Professional Women's Club, the Women's Graduates, and the Queensland Art Fund, asked her to deliver lectures.³²² Soon, others followed.³²³ The local media viewed Langer's activities largely favourably: "Dr. Gertrude Langer has an attractive personality, which is certain to enhance the interest of the first public lecture she is to give," the *Brisbane Courier Mail* reported in March 1940.³²⁴

The nodes that formed the city's small art world in the late 1930s were all products of a sealed-off community that shared congruent ideas, prejudices, and values, and made the introduction of new ideas "highly unlikely."³²⁵ The same people operated in all existing spheres of art and fostered conservative values within the community.³²⁶ Since Langer was excluded from those circles, she had to find ways to make herself known and to promote her views, which she found "most undignified."³²⁷ Langer used her lectures and public appearances to introduce existing European art systems. Thus, she was among the first people in Brisbane to advance change and promote contemporary values in art.³²⁸ Her stories of artists' groups such as *Die Brücke*, a collective of architecture students who set up an Expressionist artist studio to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the state of German art early in the 20th century, influenced three local artists to form Miya Studio, Brisbane's first cooperative art studio, in 1945. This represented a first change toward modernism in Brisbane's

320 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 45.

321 Churcher, "Langer," 514; NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 45.

322 Heinen, "Langer," 193.

323 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 45.

324 "First Lecture on Art," *Brisbane Courier-Mail*, March 30, 1940, 9.

325 Hamilton, "Provincial Art World," 202–203.

326 Judy Hamilton, "Influencing the Modern in Brisbane: Gertrude Langer and the Role of Newspaper Art Criticism," *Queensland Review* 20, no. 2 (2013): 203.

327 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 67.

328 Hamilton, "Influencing the Modern," 205.

artistic culture.³²⁹ Consequently, Langer opened their first exhibition.³³⁰ She also used her lectures to educate people toward the appreciation of modern arts. In one of her earliest lectures, about “The Abstract in Art,” she advocated an interpretative view:

As we approach music, we do not ask what sounds in nature correspond with the sound in the sonata [...] We do not take in the single sounds separately, but try to find the theme. We feel in the first instance [...]. And here is the beginning for an understanding [...] Art is not and never must be imitation of nature, but interpretation.³³¹

Since existing conservative institutions of Brisbane’s art world did not appreciate her engagement, most of her early attempts to become involved with official organizations failed; her efforts with the Queensland Arts Council were blocked for some years, as she recalled.³³² She also tried, unsuccessfully, to become a trustee of the Queensland Art Gallery. In an interview, she later claimed, “the art gallery never made use of me. My brain was a little bit picked in the background.”³³³

Langer had become a prominent figure in Brisbane’s art scene during the early 1950s, despite the fact that she was not affiliated with any organization, mainly because of her successful actions to exercise agency. However, in a later interview, she admitted that she felt she had not fully used her knowledge, and remembered being “very frustrated” because she was “given no opportunities whatsoever.”³³⁴ Langer’s private lectures were in high demand. During the 1950s, the number of her regular students increased to over 100, attending 30 lectures per year. Although she had become a prominent lecturer, she never managed to teach at a university. The art school at the Central Technical College had long been criticized as “old hat” and only introduced a Fine Arts diploma in 1970, long after Langer had introduced her salon-style lectures.³³⁵ “That is really what I would have liked, to lecture at the university, but there

329 Hamilton, “Influencing the Modern,” 205.

330 “Miya Exhibition Opening,” *The Telegraph*, September 17, 1946, 8.

331 “The Better Understanding of Art,” *The Telegraph*, April 12, 1940, 5.

332 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 105.

333 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 75.

334 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 72 and 96.

335 Fridemanis, *Artists and Aspects*, 20.

was no chance. By the time the chance sort of came, I was too old," Langer recalled.³³⁶

Autumn 1952 brought a first change in Langer's situation when the Brisbane daily newspaper *Courier-Mail* hired her to become its official art critic. Traditionally, newspaper art reviewing in Queensland was a minor piece of journalism and did not require any specific training. Prior to her appointment, reviews were written by a variety of journalists, literary critics, music critics, and even poets, but never by someone trained in art.³³⁷ Initially reluctant, because of the "terrible state of art criticism" at that time, Langer hesitated to accept the offer.³³⁸ But finally, on March 16, 1953, her first two art critiques were published.³³⁹ To succeed in her new job, Langer had to develop new techniques and styles to present her knowledge to a broad audience largely unfamiliar with the topic. "Not that I was trained for critiques [...] I hadn't written critiques before but the main thing is I had the knowledge," Langer justified the move.³⁴⁰

When reviewing art, she benefited from her knowledge of methods of analysis and comparison that she had acquired at the University of Vienna.³⁴¹ The translation and adaption process was not always easy. She later claimed she had the biggest problems with the "popular" style of writing that she felt "wasn't worthy of an art historian" because she "was constantly trying to coax people to have a look at it [art]."³⁴² The lack of space for her reviews, as well as the "many misprints" in the newspapers, further worried her.³⁴³ However, her new position advanced her popularity in Queensland and cemented her role as an opinion leader. It not only helped her achieve her aim of "gaining a wider public to educate toward the arts"³⁴⁴ but also provided a quintessential

336 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 72.

337 Hamilton, "Influencing the Modern," 206.

338 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 66.

339 "Gertrude Langer, The Courier-Mail's New Art Critic, Found Dalgarno's Art Stimulating," *Courier-Mail*, March 16, 1953, 2; "Gibson Art of 'Even' Quality," *Courier-Mail*, March 16, 1953, 2.

340 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 68.

341 Hamilton, "Influencing the Modern," 205.

342 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 62.

343 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 62.

344 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 62.

platform to promote her knowledge and have it accepted and valued by the local art institutions. When reviewing art exhibitions, Langer sought more than pure skill in the handling of materials.³⁴⁵ She was looking for evidence of creativity in art, which for her meant an originality of ideas as well as a personal interpretation of the subject by the artist.³⁴⁶ This view reflected her interwar education. Thus she differed from most of the other local art critics, who were “restricted to subjective statements about overall composition and color harmonies because of a lack of formal art education.”³⁴⁷ Following her aim of educating people with regard to the arts, she used her articles as a media forum to promote awareness of contemporary values in art.³⁴⁸ In a 1954 review, she rallied against an exhibition of paintings from traditional Australian painters such as Richard Godfrey Rivers and Thomas W. Couldery: “Bad art is of two kinds, that which is merely inefficient, dull or stupid, and that which is a lie and a sham. The paintings in the exhibit fall into one or other of these categories.”³⁴⁹ In other critiques, she praised the works of younger painters such as John Thomas Rigby, Helge Jon Molvig, and Sidney Nolan, the latter of whom she characterized as a “Master of Suggestion”.³⁵⁰

Without any hesitancy I class the following artists not only as outstanding [...] but also as really fit to compete in this important Australia-wide contest [...]. [While] John Rigby, from promising beginnings has developed into a fine artist with that characteristic manner of expression which one calls style and I feel sure, he soon will win wider recognition ... [and] Molvig is an interesting painter. His semi-abstract “Landscape Arrangement” and “Burnt Landscape” are strong and impressive.³⁵¹

Her divisive reviews placed her further in the public limelight, but also provoked opposition: “In the beginning, actually it was a terrible job [...] because whenever I wrote something unfavourable about a painter [...] I got the most

345 Hamilton, “Influencing the Modern,” 205.

346 Hamilton, “Influencing the Modern,” 205.

347 Hamilton, “Influencing the Modern,” 208.

348 Hamilton, “Influencing the Modern,” 205.

349 Gertrude Langer, “A Chance to Reconsider those Old Favourites,” *Courier-Mail*, September 30, 1954, 2.

350 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 73.

351 Gertrude Langer, “Art Society Exhibition,” *Courier-Mail*, September 7, 1954, 2.

nasty letters,” Langer claimed.³⁵² Various letters to the editor in contemporary newspapers bear witness to the broad range of public reactions to her criticism: “In my opinion, that kind of criticism is worthless. It indicates bias and a biased judge gives no true judgement,” an upset reader wrote in a letter to the *Courier-Mail’s* editor in 1953.³⁵³ Another reader wrote in 1953: “If a criticism is given, please let’s have a fair criticism, giving due credit to some of the old fashioned, but artistic school, not over crediting pictures, which at most could be termed ‘utter rubbish’ and an ‘absurd waste of paint.’”³⁵⁴ Strong criticism also came from traditional artist circles, as the following article by the painter Harold Chester shows:

The latest opus from the sneering pen of Gertrude Langer was directed at that capable brush Robert R. Jackson who portrays the Australian landscape as it is, not through the jaundiced and perverted vision which Gertrude Langer seems to delight in. For some time now the vapourings of this lady, claiming to be an ‘expert’ on modern art, have been carefully analysed by a group of conscientious artists who see nothing wrong in ‘giving recorded beauty’ of nature to the people.³⁵⁵

Over time, Langer’s reviews became a fixture of the *Courier-Mail*. She continued to write them until the week before her death in 1984,³⁵⁶ thus becoming the longest serving modern art critic on a newspaper in Australia.³⁵⁷ Langer improved her writing by learning from others. She actively sought out the advice and writing of art critics in other states or abroad, and she became a foundation member of the International Association of Art Critics Australian Division.³⁵⁸ Her appointment as art critic made her “the authority” in Brisbane’s art world and she was described as “feared and respected.”³⁵⁹ The most important changes in her professional career, however, took place in 1960 when

352 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 68.

353 “Art Critic Criticised,” *Courier-Mail*, October 8, 1953, 2.

354 “A Waste of Paint,” *Courier-Mail*, October 13, 1953, 2.

355 “Criticism of Art Critic,” *Queensland Times*, October 29, 1954, 7.

356 Sinnamon, “Modernism and the Genius loci,” 160.

357 Genocchio, *The Art of Persuasion*, 12.

358 Heinen, “Langer,” 196.

359 Nancy D.H. Underhill, “Langer, Gertrude (1908–1984),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed June 20, 2017, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/langer-gertrude-14095/text25084> (published first in hardcopy 2012).

Dorothy Helmrich, founder of the Arts Council of Australia, asked her to take over presidency of the Council's Queensland Division. This marked the end of her longtime struggle for official recognition. Again, Langer initially hesitated, being aware of the very time-consuming nature of this voluntary position. Helmrich, however, managed to convince her, and in 1961 she was appointed president of the Queensland Arts Council. At the same time, she became involved in the establishment of another art association, the Contemporary Art Society, as an executive founding member.³⁶⁰

The very same year, she ceased her lecturing activity, knowing that her new task would require her full attention. When she took over, the organization was *de facto* nonexistent.³⁶¹ "It was going badly," Langer stated, "all that happened was what New South Wales Division of the Arts Council brought across the border."³⁶² Langer had no experience in managing arts; however, she commenced her new appointment with commitment: "I just wanted to do this exciting work, because it fulfilled me so much doing something for all the arts."³⁶³ Although she had never worked as a cultural administrator, she possessed the skills to become successful: "Everything I had learned fell into place. I knew what was a good poster for publicity. My interest in the theatre and all that strong influence from seeing the best in Vienna and Paris and places like that made me very discriminating in my choices and only promoting the very best."³⁶⁴ Langer knew her plans would require sufficient funding. The organization had only 500 pounds in its bank account when she took over the presidency. She started a series of fundraising events, hired volunteers, and organized media support through her newspaper connections, thus dramatically increasing the available financial means.³⁶⁵ She later claimed that her success was connected to her publicity: "Through writing for the paper and lecturing I had made a name, so people even in the country knew who I was. I think it really helped."³⁶⁶ Her appointment gave her the unique opportunity of combining her two major

360 Fridemanis, *Artists and Aspects*, 3.

361 For more information, see Richards, "Arts Facilitation," 66.

362 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 98.

363 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 124.

364 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 15.

365 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 106.

366 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 124.

aims: the promotion of contemporary art and the education of a wider public toward the art. She adapted her knowledge of contemporary art to her work in arts management and fostered cultural change in Queensland. Her first activity for the Arts Council was to organize a modern art exhibition, entitled "Sydney Contemporary Painters."³⁶⁷ Being familiar with art exhibitions, she was very assured of her existing knowledge: "That is something I can do myself, because to arrange an exhibition would be no major problem for me."³⁶⁸ Her second project aimed to bring art to rural Queensland. She arranged an art exhibition for children to tour the country, proving that there was interest in art exhibitions in rural Queensland. As a follow-up project, she gathered contemporary paintings from local painters and toured them through the country.³⁶⁹ Then she extended the programme and established a wide range of cultural activities, including ballet, opera, theatre, and art exhibitions.³⁷⁰ Organizing a touring programme in Australia's largest state was a challenging task which required sophisticated logistics. Langer not only supported and encouraged the establishment of rural branches of the Arts Council, she also organized private funding to build up the necessary infrastructure.³⁷¹

Langer remained president of the Queensland Arts Council until she retired in 1975.³⁷² During that time, she managed not only to extend her imported cultural capital and adapt her knowledge to new conditions but also to create new migration-specific knowledge by combining practices and ideas from two cultures. During her 14 years of presidency, the Queensland Arts Council grew from a practically nonexistent body with a budget of 500 pounds to the largest arts touring organization in Australia with 15 regular staff members, 50 rural subbranches and an annual turnover of 1.2 million dollars.³⁷³

Langer's professional career in Australia is an exceptional example of how a translator's continuous struggle to exercise agency can become successful over a long period of time. Langer had brought with her institutionalized, embodied, and objectified cultural capital that had not existed in Queensland at the

367 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 98.

368 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 100.

369 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 124.

370 Underhill, "Langer, Gertrude (1908–1984)."

371 Richards, "Arts Facilitation," 110.

372 "Obituary," *The Canberra Times*, September 21, 1984, 6.

373 Heinen, "Langer," 198; NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 133; Richards, "Arts Facilitation," 66.

time of her arrival. Due to her persistent efforts to exercise agency, she managed to overcome the resistance she faced from the official members of the arts sector. Additionally, of course, time was on her side since modernism in the arts was spreading to Australia. Her continued public presence and her activism for the arts, however, along with her unique cultural capital finally enabled her to use her knowledge to effectively influence not only the local art world but also the “larger story of art in Australia.”³⁷⁴

Hanny Exiner, née Johanna Kolm, came from a Viennese family of Jewish heritage. The Kolm family had suffered from the consequences of the First World War and a subsequent economic depression. Despite the family's difficult financial situation, however, education was important to her parents. Exiner had acquired a first-class education. Very early on she had entered one of the leading schools for modern dance, the so-called Bodenwieser Academy. In Germany and Austria, *Moderner Ausdruckstanz* (modern expressive dance) appeared during the late 19th and early 20th century. Vienna, where Exiner grew up, was one of the hotbeds of that development. Influenced by gymnastics, modern dance sought to shape the ideal body control necessary for a creative movement. Priority was given not only given to bodily development but also to artistic dance.³⁷⁵ In a later interview, Exiner recalled her early dance lessons as follows:

I remember them as sheer joy [...] it was much more dynamic than a classic ballet has to be. We had improvised music by a top-class musician. Everything became alive in a dance-like fashion. So, the dancing started the moment you got into the classroom. We had also training, because at that time in Vienna the Swedish gymnastics had entered the dance scene and we had to train stomach muscles as well as body movements in a certain style. The body had to develop in a healthy way through gymnastics. Bodenwieser was a person who never put herself into the foreground. For her dance was what it was all about.³⁷⁶

Exiner continued her dance education during her school years and ultimately completed it with a four-year diploma at the Vienna Academy of Music and Performing Arts, where Bodenwieser was a professor of dance.³⁷⁷ She described the education and the choreography taught by Bodenwieser

374 Strobl, “Gertrude Langer,” 28.

375 Virginia Stewart and Merle Armitage, *The Modern Dance* (New York: Dance Horizon, 1970).

376 NLA, 513110, Hanny Exiner interviewed by Michelle Potter, 1994.

377 Bond, “Honoring Hanny Exiner,” 99; Strobl and Korbel, “Mediations Through Migrations,” 11.

as a “total experience.”³⁷⁸ She was also enrolled in medical studies at the University of Vienna and thus had acquired an additional background in medicine. This would later affect her professional development toward combining the aesthetics of dancing with therapeutic elements.³⁷⁹ When she escaped to Melbourne, she had already started her professional career as a dancer in Bodenwieser’s ballet troupe. Additionally, she had gained experience as a teacher at the Bodenwieser Academy and the Viennese Volkshochschule. Therefore, at that point in time, she had acquired specialized embodied and institutionalized cultural capital in one of the world’s leading environments for modern dance.³⁸⁰

Bodenwieser had lost her occupation because of her Jewish heritage after the Anschluss, and subsequently fled to France.³⁸¹ Through a diplomat friend, she was invited to organize a group of her former Viennese students and colleagues to perform at the Centennial Festival of Bogotá, Colombia.³⁸² Knowing of Exiner’s insecure and dangerous future in the Nazi state, Bodenwieser invited her to join the dance troupe. Out of a “need for security,” as Exiner later mentioned, she dropped her medical studies and joined the Bodenwieser Ballet.³⁸³ Six months later, her unusual route of escape brought her to Australia where she accepted the invitation of a friend who had fled there earlier and the two opened a dance studio called the Studio of Creative Dance together.³⁸⁴

At first, Exiner dedicated much time to amateur performances in different locations all over Melbourne.³⁸⁵ The press perceived her activities largely positively:

Viennese Dance Recital. A novel and artistic performance was presented by Misses Daisy Pirnitzer and Hanny Kolm at the Union House Theatre, within the University, on April 23, in an exhibition of Viennese creative dancing, given by them and their students. To music by Bach, Ravel, Rachmaninoff, Chopin, and others, as well as two original compositions by the accompanist, M. Lorber, interpretations which aimed at faithful and sympathetic presentation of the musical compositions in a

378 Johanna Exiner and Denis Kelynack, *Dance Therapy Redefined: A Body Approach to Therapeutic Dance* (Springfield: Charles C., 1994), xx.

379 Strobl and Korbel, “Mediations Through Migrations,” 11.

380 Strobl and Korbel, “Mediations Through Migrations,” 11.

381 Bond, “Honoring Hanny Exiner,” 100.

382 Steininger, “The Emigration of Gertrud Bodenwieser,” 101–104.

383 NLA, 513110, Hanny Exiner interviewed by Michelle Potter, 1994 (audio recording).

384 N.A., “Advertising,” *The Argus*, July 28, 1944, 28.

385 Meredith Bowman, “Tributes,” *Ausdance* (2007): 27.

corresponding dance medium, interested and delighted a large audience. The technique differs from that of the familiar ballet [...]. The work of Misses Pirnitzer and Kolm was most accomplished, both in their many individual items and in the work of their pupils.³⁸⁶

After a while, however, she realized that she could not simply transfer and implement what she had learnt in Vienna and began to adapt her cultural capital. She felt that performing professional dance, although positively received in her new homeland, did not provide enough income as she later recalled, and she developed the plan of starting a career in teaching dance. Thus, she applied what she had learnt and later practiced at the Bodenwieser Academy in Vienna. "We had to teach to earn a living," Exiner said of her switching focus toward teaching.³⁸⁷ At first, she gave classes for adult women, but soon provided education for children, working as a teacher in movement and dance in primary and secondary schools.³⁸⁸ Her publicity may have helped her in taking that step. In addition, she started a media campaign, advertising her studio in local newspapers, particularly in the *Argus* and in the *Australian Jewish News*.³⁸⁹ This work, as she later noted, "led to invitations by teachers' colleges to offer the then still novel creative approach to dance to their students."³⁹⁰ This was also the period when she started her own family. On February 7, 1949, she married the Austrian migrant Robert Exiner, with whom she had three children.³⁹¹ Knowing the value of education and the importance of having her cultural capital officially "institutionalized" and thus acknowledged, Exiner finished teachers training at the Mercer House Teacher's College in Melbourne's suburb of Malvern, where she subsequently worked as a lecturer.³⁹² During that time, she began to distance herself from her previous focus on technical training and increasingly embraced a creative approach to dance that could be used to foster children's development.³⁹³ In 1960, she was appointed senior lecturer in movement and dance at the State College of Victoria in Kew. In

386 N.A., "Viennese Dance Recital," *Advocate*, May 2, 1940, 28.

387 NLA, 513110, Hanny Exiner interviewed by Michelle Potter, 1994.

388 NLA, MS Acc05.022, Papers of Hanny Exiner, 1939–1995 [manuscript].

389 See, for example, N.A., "Advertising," *the Australian Jewish News*, February 4, 1955, 11; or N.A., "Advertising," *The Argus*, January 16, 1954, 42.

390 NLA, MS Acc05.022, Papers of Hanny Exiner, 1939–1995 [manuscript].

391 N.A., "Family Notices," *The Argus*, February 7, 1949, 10.

392 NLA, MS Acc05.022, Papers of Hanny Exiner, 1939–1995 [manuscript].

393 Bond, "Honoring Hanny Exiner," 101.

that capacity, and with knowledge of what she had learnt in Vienna, she established a diploma in music and dance, the first of its kind in Australia.³⁹⁴

Another important factor in advancing her career was her willingness to embrace a global mobility. She always extended her knowledge and cultural capital by learning from different methods and approaches in various regions of the world. In 1961, she travelled to Europe. In London and Vienna, she studied Rudolf von Laban's work on "Modern Educational Dance" and adopted it for her own purposes. Exiner later recalled studying and adapting Laban's ideas as a "proverbial turning point in her style of teaching."³⁹⁵ During the 1970s, she did some study and research in Europe and the United States. Through this, she came into contact with dance as a form of therapy.³⁹⁶ She continually improved her knowledge by learning from her transnational contacts and, eventually, became involved in dance as therapy. She collaborated with leading Australian psychologists and was invited by psychiatric hospitals to provide dance therapy for dysfunctional patients. As one of the few professionals with transnational knowledge and contacts in Australia, she ultimately became one of the leading figures in dance therapy. She published broadly in the new field and created some highly recognized works. In 1982, she opened a dance studio in Fitzroy, Victoria and developed a graduate certificate in dance therapy for the University of Melbourne. Due to her interdisciplinary and multifaceted education, which was unique in postwar Australia, as well as her willingness to improve and adapt her knowledge, Exiner left a deep impression on the Australian dance scene. When she died in Melbourne in 2006, she was a leading figure in developing and teaching dance therapy and advancing modern dance in Australia. She not only brought her prewar knowledge and education to Australia but also acted as a transnational mediator of cultural capital by building and maintaining networks with dancers and educators in Australia, Europe, and the United States, creating new knowledge, ideas, and university curricula.

Like Gertrude Langer, Hanny Exiner came to Australia with highly specialized cultural capital that was unique in her new homeland. She was able to get a foothold in Australia through the invitation of a friend and consequently managed to import and adapt her knowledge. Unlike Langer, however, Exiner encountered much less resistance. The media accepted her quickly and received her work largely positively almost as soon as she arrived. Her career shows the importance a lifelong development of cultural capital and expertise

394 NLA, MS Acc05.022, Papers of Hanny Exiner, 1939–1995 [manuscript].

395 NLA, MS Acc05.022, Papers of Hanny Exiner, 1939–1995 [manuscript].

396 NLA, MS Acc05.022, Papers of Hanny Exiner, 1939–1995 [manuscript].

had for the professional success of a translator. One of her keys to success was that she developed and reinvented her cultural capital and thus produced new specialized knowledge. Another was her mobility and her transnational networks which allowed her to acquire new ideas on a global level and helped her import ideas from Europe and the United States to Australia, even after she had established herself in her new homeland.

Paul Hirsch possessed knowledge in a cultural field that was particularly difficult to transfer to Australia. Using his pen name, Paul Hatvani, he had made a name for himself as an Expressionist writer in pre- and interwar Central Europe. Growing up in Vienna and Budapest before the First World War, Hirsch learnt very early to deal with ruptures and conflicts deriving from transcultural migrations. He had also realized how to use these differences to extend his knowledge, his cultural capital, and—more generally—his experiences as a writer.³⁹⁷ When he moved to Budapest in 1904, the 12-year-old felt very alienated: “I did not speak a word of Hungarian. I had to live, think and learn in an alien language area,” he later wrote.³⁹⁸ Due to his school education, he came into contact with the young and just developing literary genre of Expressionism, which he began to develop a lifelong passion for.³⁹⁹ At the age of 16, he translated Hungarian writers into German.⁴⁰⁰ At this time, one of his teachers had recommended he use the Hungarian pen name “Hatvani” in order to become more accepted by a Hungarian readership.⁴⁰¹ Despite his young years and his migration background, he became well connected in the Hungarian literary scene and established contacts with Expressionist writers such as Frigyes Karinthy and Mihály Babits.⁴⁰²

In 1911, Hirsch moved back to Vienna to study mathematics and chemistry. Here, again, he described feelings of alienation, which he combatted by focusing on writing and seeking connections to the large writer’s scene in Vienna. He regularly met other people and engaged himself in Viennese and German literary circles. He made friends with Albert Ehrenstein and Hermann Broch⁴⁰³ and got in contact with the editors of the literary journals *Der Sturm* and *Die*

397 For more information see: Strobl, “Ich habe nie die Absicht gehabt,” 59.

398 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Paul Hatvani, letter to Ferenc Karinthy, 1.4.1975.

399 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Paul Hatvani, letter to Ferenc Karinthy, 1.4.1975.

400 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Stephen Jeffries, letter to Mr. Rozsics, 10.4.1984.

401 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Hans Tramer, 25.4.1966.

402 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Ferenc Karinthy, 1.4.1975. See also Strobl, “Social Networks.”

403 Hatvani, “Expressionismus,” 178.

Fackel.⁴⁰⁴ He participated in the Viennese *Kaffeehauskultur*. Coffee houses were the places where he regularly socialized with other members of his network. He was proud of his good relationship with his idol Karl Kraus. The famous satirist even invited him to his home as well as to his regular network meetings which took place in the famous Café Central.⁴⁰⁵ Communication among the members of his network occurred on a personal level. New relations were usually made through personal reference. "Kraus introduced me to [the journalist and writer] Richard Weiner as well as [the screen director and writer] Berthold Viertel," Hirsch later mentioned.⁴⁰⁶ "Fritz Lampl, who belonged to the *Brennerkreis* [people who published in a publication called *Der Brenner*] introduced me to Albert Ehrenstein whom I befriended," he further stated.⁴⁰⁷ Ehrenstein, in turn, introduced him to other important figures of the German writers' scene, such as the journalist Siegfried Jacobsohn and the publicist and editor Franz Pfemfert, who published Hirsch's only monograph in 1913.⁴⁰⁸

During the First World War, Hirsch was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army and was sent to serve in an industrial chemical factory in Moravia. During that time, he continued writing for Bohemian newspapers and, like his idol Karl Kraus, produced different pieces that showed his anti-military ideology and more particularly his "critique of the barbarization of the language caused by war propaganda."⁴⁰⁹ After the war, he returned to the newly founded Republic of Austria, finished his studies, and took a job in industry.⁴¹⁰ "My interest in the writing, however, remained unbroken," he later wrote.⁴¹¹ He published prodigiously during the 1920s in different Expressionist journals,⁴¹² mainly using his existing literary repertoire (biographies, critiques, poems, theoretical pieces), but also extending it with texts with a transnational profile. He travelled a lot during these years: these experiences were reflected in works such as "Der russische Mensch" [The Russian man], or "110 Prozent" [110 percent],

404 N.A., "Paul Hatvani," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 24, 1966; Wilhelm Haefs, "Der Expressionismus ist tot... Es lebe der Expressionismus. Paul Hatvani als Literaturkritiker und Literaturtheoretiker des Expressionismus," in *Expressionismus in Österreich: Die Literatur und die Künste*, ed. Klaus Amann and Armin Wallas (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994), 453–485, 457.

405 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Victor Suchy, 1968.

406 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Victor Suchy, 1968.

407 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Victor Suchy, 1968.

408 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Victor Suchy, 1968.

409 Strobl, "Exil und Autobiographie," 63; MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, "neither here nor there," exhibition, 1990.

410 Hatvani, "Expressionismus," 178.

411 Hatvani, "Expressionismus," 178.

412 Haefs, "Expressionismus," 459.

in which he offered insights into Russian or Hungarian culture.⁴¹³ The takeover by the National Socialist Party in Germany (1933) and the Christian-Social regime in Austria (1934) brought his publishing activities to a halt, as he later wrote: "When fascism spread through Europe, I had more and more difficulties finding a publisher. Finally, I just stopped trying."⁴¹⁴

After his escape from Vienna with his wife Marianne, he arrived in Melbourne ten days before the outbreak of the Second World War.⁴¹⁵ Like most of the other refugees, Hirsch arrived in a strange land without having had the time to prepare himself ideologically for his new homeland. "We knew little about this country, neither about everyday life, nor about opportunities, advantages and disadvantages," he later recalled.⁴¹⁶ His flight to Australia was another major rupture in his life. Again, he had to learn a new language and had to integrate himself into a new language area.⁴¹⁷ But there was a big difference between his escape to Australia and his earlier relocations. His 1939 escape was involuntarily and brought him into an area that differed much in terms of the culture from his earlier locations in Central Europe.

During his initial years in Melbourne, Hirsch received much support from his sister-in-law. She offered accommodation for the first three years after his arrival and introduced him to her friends and to members of the migrant community.⁴¹⁸ At first, he made new contacts and acquaintances mainly among the German-speaking migrant community. "At the beginning, when we [he and acquaintances] met there were no Australians around," as he later recalled.⁴¹⁹ Due to his background in chemistry, another migrant had asked him to join him in opening up a textile factory, a professional field where migrants had been particularly active.⁴²⁰

Hirsch had severe difficulties with his latest relocation. Like many refugees from Vienna, he regarded his new environment as a "cultural wasteland."⁴²¹ As he later complained, Melbourne's literary and cultural life was only of "local importance and the sparse intellectual elite" was mainly focused on technical

413 Paul Hatvani, "Der russische Mensch," *Die Waage* 4 (1923): 296–300; Paul Hatvani, "110 Prozent," *Der Querschnitt* 10 (1930): 474–475.

414 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Ferenc Karinthy, 1.4.1975.

415 NAA, A12508, 21/2086, Hirsch Paul.

416 Paul Hatvani, "Australien," 567.

417 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Hans Tramer, 25.4.1966.

418 NAA, A12508, 21/2086, Hirsch Paul.

419 Hatvani, "Australien," 571.

420 NAA, A435 Hirsch Paul.

421 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 8.

and material values.⁴²² “What remained was disappointment about the primitivism of my new environment,” he concluded.⁴²³ Socially, he had major problems establishing connections, not only to other writers but to anyone he could have intellectual discussions with. A friend of his stated after his death: “When, in conversation with fellow-refugees, he told stories about his contacts with famous writers, it was classed as a manifestation of typical emigrant boasting and magniloquence.”⁴²⁴

His situation worsened with the outbreak of the war. As the language of the enemy, Hirsch’s passion, the German language, became more and more taboo in public. As a citizen of the German Reich, Hirsch, like most other refugees was declared an “enemy alien.” The German philologist Stephen Jeffries, who studied Hirsch and his literary remains, noted: “In Australia, given the atmosphere of mistrust and hostility during the war, there was no question of writing or publishing at all. [...] In all likelihood, he [Hirsch] assumed that his public critical activity had come to an end.”⁴²⁵ Hirsch confirmed that assumption in a letter to a friend in which he wrote that he had no opportunity to think about literature in Europe, because he was too much focused on integrating himself into the structures of his new homeland.⁴²⁶ Instead, he increasingly focused on modern English-language literature. He subscribed to the weekly *Times Literary Supplement*, which he described as the “best literature journal in the world” and began to study contemporary English and American authors, such as Lawrence Durrell, Saul Bellow, John Steinbeck, Henry Miller, Cornelius Ryan, Erich Heller, and also the Australians Patrick White and Morris West.⁴²⁷ Nevertheless, his feelings of alienation increased during the 1950s and early 1960s, as his nephew confirmed in a later interview.⁴²⁸

The lack of like-minded people with similar interests in cultural activities led to his social seclusion. Letters he exchanged during these years give an insight into this process of isolation: “Unfortunately, I have to confess that, for years, we get more and more isolated here. There are hardly any people to have

422 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Paul Hatvani, n.d. (paper about the intellectual development of Australia), unpublished manuscript.

423 Hatvani, “Australien,” 569.

424 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Leslie Bodie, unpublished manuscript, “Paul Hirsch-Hatvani—As we know him,” n.d.

425 Stephen Jeffries, “Confronting the Void. Paul Hirsch-Hatvani’s Writing in Australia,” *Antipodische Aufklärungen: Festschrift für Leslie Bodie*, ed. Michael Clyne (Frankfurt/Main: Springer, 1987), 165–173, 166.

426 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Hans Tramer, 25.4.1966.

427 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Fritz Czuczach, 20.10.1966.

428 Frank Pam (Hirsch’s nephew), in discussion with the author, Melbourne, October 2016.

a proper and interesting conversation with.”⁴²⁹ “This made me withdrawn and slow, and it is probably because of this sluggishness that I cannot say what I want to say,” he revealed in another letter.⁴³⁰

Economically, Hirsch experienced dramatic times. His involvement in the textile factory may have caused him financial difficulties and between the 1950s and his retirement in 1964, Hirsch muddled through professionally with various odd jobs. In 1962, he wrote ironically to a friend: “As you may have noticed, I am an expert in losing jobs.”⁴³¹

The death of his friend, the writer Hermann Broch, who had fled to the United States, may have refreshed his interest in writing and he wrote a biographical article about him. This piece, which is extant in his literary estate at the Monash University library, is special in two ways: it is the first and one of the very few articles that Hirsch wrote in English, and it is the very first piece he published in Australia. During the 1950s, he continued writing, “however only for myself and as a hobby,” he noted.⁴³² He had also started to read German contemporary classics and ordered from Vienna complete issues of the journals *Die Fackel* and *Die Aktion*.⁴³³ His passion for writing German-language texts may have also returned and he tried to publish again. Due to his isolation, however, he faced major obstacles. In 1954, the German-language journal *Der Monat* published his first biographical postwar publication, about his idol Karl Kraus.⁴³⁴ Despite being published under his previously well-known pen name “Paul Hatvani,” the article did not receive much attention. This is not surprising, since the German restorative and conservative literary climate of the mid-1950s did not support the modernist development Expressionism had introduced during the 1920s.⁴³⁵ Furthermore, there was not much interest in

429 “Ich muss ja leider gestehen, dass wir hier seit Jahren vollkommen vereinsamt leben und dass es kaum Leute gibt, mit denen man ein irgendwie interessantes Gespräch führen könnte.” [author’s translation], see: MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Fritz Czuczka, 20.10.1961.

430 “Vielleicht hat mich dies fremd gemacht und schwerfällig, und vielleicht ist dies schuld daran, dass ich nur schwer sagen kann, was ich sagen wollte” [author’s translation], see MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Fritz Czuczka, 26.5.1962.

431 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Fritz Czuczka, 31.3.1962.

432 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, “neither here nor there,” exhibition, 1990.

433 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Kohn, 28.10.1967; MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Leslie Bodie, Neither here, nor there; not here, not there. Paul Hirsch-Hatvani, unpublished manuscript, n.d.

434 Paul Hatvani, “Karl Kraus und die Nachwelt,” *Der Monat* 70 (1954): 411–412.

435 Ernst Fischer, “Kaum ein Verlag der nicht auf der Wiederentdeckungswelle der Verschollenen mitreitet’: Zur Reintegration der Exilliteratur in den deutschen Buchmarkt nach 1945,” in *Fremdes Heimatland. Remigration und literarisches Leben nach 1945*, ed. Irmela von der Lühe and Klaus-Dieter Krohn (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005), 71–93, 78; Klaus

engaging with exile literature during the 1950s. Consequently, the market for Hirsch's writing—both in Australia and abroad—was very small. The absence of any reaction to his writing and the obvious lack of publishers increased Hirsch's isolation. There are no texts to be found in his literary estate which were written between 1955 and 1964. The letters he exchanged with a friend in the United States also did not indicate any literary writing activity during that time. Hirsch mentioned in a letter that he isolated himself ever more from what happened around him: "I cannot follow the things that happened in the world. I usually do not read newspapers any more. If I do so, I restrict myself to the headlines, which leads to the fact that I do not remember much."⁴³⁶ Up until that point, Paul Hirsch's forced migration to Australia may in many ways be described as a "lost translation," whereby cultural capital and knowledge was lost during its relocation. Until the early 1960s, he was not able to build on his prewar career as a writer, although he had tried several times. He sought to use his prewar knowledge of famous figures of the Viennese writing scene, namely Karl Kraus and Hermann Broch, to write biographical pieces in English and German, aiming at bringing their *vitae* closer to a postwar readership. His efforts failed and consequently Hirsch gave up and ceased his literary activities—at least for a time.

Hirsch's retirement in 1964 was one of the crucial turning points in his life. However, not for the reasons one might suspect. A friendly fellow migrant and painter, who was in charge of designing the annual desk diary for the National Gallery of Victoria asked him to write its text and its labelling.⁴³⁷ Hirsch delivered the work, which was his second postwar publication under his real name, not his pen name. The diary received praise from the press and helped Hirsch to appear in public again for the first time since the early 1930s. Because of his work, he was asked to join the National Gallery Society. It also helped to end the isolation which he had described in numerous letters. From then on, Hirsch increasingly participated in the cultural programme of his hostland, as he wrote in a letter in late 1965: "You see, we started a kind of a slightly bohemian social life (auf meine alten Tage) [in my old age]."⁴³⁸

Clearly unnoticed by Hirsch, the German literary scene had changed during the late 1950s and 1960s, when Expressionist authors and texts experienced a gradual *renaissance*.⁴³⁹ The first studies of Expressionism, as well as

Amann and Armin Wallas, "Einleitung," in *Expressionismus in Österreich: Die Literatur und die Künste*, ed. Klaus Amann and Armin Wallas (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994), 9–18, 11.

436 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Fritz Czuczka, 1.7.1961.

437 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Willi Braun, 10.9.1974.

438 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, handwritten notice from Paul Hirsch, 12.11.1965.

439 Frank Krause, *Literarischer Expressionismus* (Göttingen: Isd, 2015), 53.

printed collections and editions, were published, triggering the demand for Expressionist authors and literature. Six years after Hirsch had published his first postwar text about Karl Kraus, the literary archive in Marbach in Germany published three of his earlier texts in a comprehensive edition, entitled *Literatur-Revolutionen*. The editors, however, did not know anything about Hirsch and thus there was only a short note stating that his biographical data were unknown.⁴⁴⁰

Encouraged by the success of the desk diary, Hirsch increased his writing activities. In October 1965, he sent an article about Expressionism to a pen pal of his in New York. His friend forwarded it to the Germanist Harry Zohn at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, who may have been very surprised to find an article about Expressionism written by an Expressionist writer in his hand. This development triggered a chain reaction that was very well described in a letter Hirsch wrote 10 years later, in 1975:

This person [Professor Zohn] referred me to the German Literature Archive in Marbach. The head of the institution, Dr. Paul Raabe, immediately wrote back to me and informed me that they had urgently sought me, or rather “Paul Hatvani,” since 1945. They have also published some old texts of mine, etc., etc. Dr. Raabe immediately took care of the publication of my Expressionism article and brought me into contact with different publishers. [...] Since then, I have—more or less—become a writer again.⁴⁴¹

His article, entitled “Über den Expressionismus” [On Expressionism], was his second postwar publication in a German literary journal. Unlike his 1954 article about Karl Kraus, the text received a great public response and publishers began to take an interest again in the writer Paul Hatvani. This development also reflects the changes in the literature market. There was an increased demand for Expressionist literature and authors during the mid- and late 1960s.⁴⁴²

440 Haefs, “Expressionismus,” 454.

441 “Dieser [Prof. Zohn] wies mich dann an das deutsche Literaturarchiv in Marbach: postwendend erhielt ich von dessen Leiter, Dr. Paul Raabe, Antwort: Ich, respektive ‘Paul Hatvani’ wird seit 1945 dringendst gesucht, man hat alte Arbeiten von mir nach 1945 wieder gedruckt, etc., etc.. Dr. Raabe veranlasste sofort, dass mein ‘Expressionismus Artikel’ publiziert wird, brachte mich mit diversen Zeitschriften in Kontakt [...], und seither bin ich wieder mehr oder weniger Schriftsteller geworden [...]” [author’s translation], see: MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Ferenc Karinthy, 1.4.1975.

442 Christiane Dätsch, *Existenzproblematik und Erzählstrategie. Studien zum parabolischen Erzählen in der Kurzprosa von Ernst Weiß* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009), 7.

Hirsch's professional *renaissance* as a writer also led to a revival of his personal and social life, as his nephew later described.⁴⁴³ He increasingly engaged in the social life around him, which led to the end of his self-isolation.⁴⁴⁴ An analysis of the themes and contents of his personal letters reveal this change. Instead of "isolation" and "health or illness," Hirsch increasingly described how he got in contact with different people from the literary scene or the German department of Monash University. He also frequently described his spare time activities, such as visits to the theatre or the cabaret.⁴⁴⁵ The literature archive in Marbach established contact between Hirsch and the newly founded German department at Monash University. This allowed him to regularly meet with other German-language writers and literature experts. In the years that followed, Hirsch again succeeded in establishing networks to editors, publishers, academic experts, and writers in Germany, Austria, the United States, France, New Zealand, and Israel, as the letters in his literary estate show.

The following decade was a very productive time for the writer Paul Hatvani. Between 1965 and 1968, he published 11 articles. He mainly used text forms he had used before his flight (biographies, theoretical texts, reviews, poems). However, he also included his exile experiences in his writings. Texts such as "Der Intellekt und seine Feinde" [The intellect and its enemies],⁴⁴⁶ written in 1967, or "Australien ist heute ganz anders" [Australia is today quite different]⁴⁴⁷ show a first critical intellectual engagement with his hostland, as well as his position as a cultural mediator and translator who wished to explain his new homeland to a German readership. Stimulated by the demand in the literature market for exile authors⁴⁴⁸ and animated by Paul Raabe of the Marbach archive, Hirsch began to extend his repertoire toward an analysis of his own expulsion experience. This led to the most important transformation of his writing. Like other exile authors, Hirsch used an essayistic biographical style to write short stories, in which he mixed abstract stories and facts.⁴⁴⁹ In one of his letters, he stressed his intention not to mention the names of

443 Frank Pam (Hirsch's nephew), in discussion with the author, Melbourne, October 2016.

444 Strobl, "Ich habe nie die Absicht gehabt," 71.

445 Strobl, "Ich habe nie die Absicht gehabt," 71.

446 Paul Hatvani, "Der Intellekt und seine Feinde," *Literatur und Kritik* 2 (1967): 584–590.

447 Comp. Paul Hatvani, "Australien ist heute ganz anders," *Neues Österreich*, November 1, 1966.

448 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, Leslie Bodie, Neither here, nor there; not here, not there. Paul Hirsch-Hatvani, unpublished manuscript, n.d.

449 Richard Critchfield, "Einige Überlegungen zur Problematik der Exilbiographik," in: *Exilforschung: Ein internationales Jahrbuch* 2 (1984): 41–55, 41.

the people he wrote about.⁴⁵⁰ His 1968 article “In Feindesland” [In enemy territory], for example, describes the process of deprivation of rights he had experienced in Nazi Vienna, without identifying anyone by name. During this time, Hirsch benefited from two literary trends: firstly, the increased interest in Expressionist writers and, secondly, the booming demand for writing about National Socialism. Consequently, he published several articles reflecting his experiences in National Socialist Austria.⁴⁵¹ All of them were abstract depictions of events he had actively experienced.

The early 1970s brought another transformation of Hirsch's literary repertoire, triggered by the demand from the market. The newly formed academic exile research led to an increased interest in the life stories of exiled authors. Publishers became more daring and identified an audience for autobiographical exile writing.⁴⁵² In 1972, Hirsch had been introduced to Hans Bender, the editor of the journal *Akzente*, who encouraged him to write down his exile experiences in Australia. Hirsch, who was at first reluctant to write “from an autobiographical and thus a personal and quirky perspective,” as he wrote, overcame his reluctance and started an intense two-year reflection process about his situation and the exile in Australia.⁴⁵³ As a result of his reflection, he published in 1973 his most famous autobiographical text “Nicht hier nicht dort: Australien” [Neither here nor there: Australia].⁴⁵⁴ At this point, his writing style had changed considerably in order to fit the needs of the contemporary literary market. Instead of abstract short stories, his last works were clearly autobiographical, undoubtedly reflecting his own experiences, with himself as the main protagonist.

Paul Hirsch's forced migration to Australia is a fascinating example of how knowledge and cultural capital runs the risk of being lost during a relocation process. However, it also shows how cultural capital and skills can be enriched and extended by transcultural migration experiences and by the mediator's hybrid position in between the cultures. For decades, Hirsch had severe problems making new contacts in Australia. Due to the difficult political position the German language had and the virtually nonexistent market for German literature in Australia, he ceased his writing activities for years. Nevertheless, we can see the importance of the migrant community for Hirsch. All of his

450 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Hans Bender, 6.7.1973.

451 For example: Hatvani, “Damals: Besinnung auf die Zeit”; Paul Hatvani, “Irrwege,” *Akzente* 18 (1971): 71–75; Paul Hatvani, “Die erste Nacht,” *Wiener Kunsthfte* 7 (1974): 109.

452 Fischer, “Kaum ein Verlag,” 82.

453 MUL, ef 830.912 H669.1 A6/C, letter to Hans Bender, 27.11.1972.

454 Hatvani, “Australien.”

activities, from the time immediately after his arrival up to his late “rediscovery” in 1965, were triggered or supported by members of the German-speaking migrant community. Hirsch’s attempts to exercise agency did not succeed as long as there was no demand in the literary market for Expressionist and later exile literature in Germany and Austria. Only when the market changed was he able to continue his former career. Thus, he occupied a very special position. He was one of the few migrants in Australia who managed to become successful as a cultural mediator not by focusing on a target audience in Australia. Hirsch regained his former success by writing for an Austrian or German readership.

7.3 Political Activism, Community Service, and Education

There were also other cultural and social domains some of the refugees had become actively involved in as cultural translators or mediators. Most of this book’s protagonists located themselves to the left of the country’s political spectrum. Some even became involved in Australian political or social movements and thus expected to participate in the shaping of their community. An extraordinarily high proportion of six out of 26 members of our sample group worked as school teachers in Australia. This might be related again to their cultural capital: members of the Viennese Jewish middle and upper classes, as we have seen, developed a liberal worldview that placed a particularly high value on education.⁴⁵⁵ Chapter 3 showed that the social class most of this book’s protagonists came from had a strong regard for education. Almost all of them had enjoyed the privilege of an excellent school education far exceeding the Austrian average. In Australia, they carried on the positive picture of learning and the value they ascribed to education. This might also have helped them in forming stronger identifications with their hostland, as studies about migrant teachers have shown.⁴⁵⁶ There was also an increased need for teachers due to Australia’s rapidly increased postwar population. However, it was not only the growing population which was responsible for the increased need for education and teachers, increasing diversity and prosperity, furthermore, created and sustained a demand for a prolonged education, as historian Geoffrey Sherington stated.⁴⁵⁷ And especially in the rapidly growing suburbs,

455 Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 5.

456 Elin Ennerberg and Catarina Economou, “Migrant Teachers and the Negotiation of a (New) Teaching Identity,” *European Journal of Teacher Education* 44, no. 4 (2021): 587–600.

457 Geoffrey Sherington, “Citizenship and Education in Postwar Australia,” *Paedagogica Historica* 34 (1998): 329–342, 333.

a middle-class culture developed that gained importance on the care and education of children.⁴⁵⁸ In no case did Austrian institutionalized cultural capital suffice to work as a teacher in Australia and all of this book's protagonists who eventually became teachers had to acquire Australian certifications.

Viola Winkler (née Viola Anneliese Hübsch) became a teacher by chance in Australia. The daughter of a Jewish pensioner and his 30-years-younger wife, who operated a kindergarten, came in contact with education very early through her mother's occupation. After graduating with a diploma in art and design from the Bundeslehranstalt für Textildesign, a technical high school for textile design in Vienna,⁴⁵⁹ she took a position as a designer and draughtswoman for an industrial company close to Vienna.⁴⁶⁰ During that time, she perfected her skills in drawing and painting and additionally worked as an award-winning artist. Among other things, she was commissioned by publishing companies to draw illustrations for their books.⁴⁶¹ As described in Chapter 5, Viola Winkler's career came to an initial halt after she fled to Sydney because of antisemitic persecution. Despite her excellent incorporated and institutionalized cultural capital, Winkler had considerable trouble finding a professional occupation in prewar Sydney. She arrived with high expectations, as she later explained, but soon realized that she would have to accept a devaluation of her capital in her new environment. "I thought I would find work in some art fields. I found out that no design company exists. Everything was imported. People were not used to refugees and kept away," as she recalled.⁴⁶² In a later interview, she noted: "I had the greatest difficulties finding a job, especially as a draughtswoman in the textile field."⁴⁶³ After months of studying the job announcements in the newspapers and travelling to job interviews all over the city, she finally found employment in her line of work. She recalled that process as follows: "After a long struggle I found work. I read the newspapers job announcements and had no knowledge about the geography of Sydney and travelled much through the whole city to different job interviews. Finally, I found work as a commercial

458 Jill Conway, "Gender in Australia," 350.

459 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

460 Winkler, "Augenblick," 308–311.

461 *Der Wiener Tag*, October 4, 1936, 12.

462 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

463 "Ich hatte große Schwierigkeiten, eine Arbeit zu finden, vor allem als Musterzeichnerin für Stoffe." [author's translation], see Winkler, "Augenblick," 308–311 (audio recording).

artist, designing scarfs and some outfits.”⁴⁶⁴ After a while, she tried to gain additional skills in the field of applied arts in order to broaden her appeal to the labour market. Eventually, she managed to get a job at a local pottery, which she recalled as crucial for her further career development: “I acquired many skills there that would become important for me later on. I learned how to model, to enamel, and to fire ceramics and pottery.”⁴⁶⁵

After her husband lost his job as an engineer due to his status as an enemy alien and his short-term internment in the Tatura internment camp, the Winklers had to look for further means to stay afloat financially. For that, they relied upon Viola Winkler’s cultural capital as an artist, as well as her newly acquired skills as a potter, as she recalled: “My husband rented a small workshop, which I used to create little figures out of clay. We sold hundreds of these figurines and made a living out of it. This was crucial, because it was only after the end of the war that my husband was allowed to take up his job as an engineer again.”⁴⁶⁶

By combining her design skills and her newly gained knowledge of pottery she acquired in Australia, Winkler managed to access a niche market. The business went well and Winkler continued it after her husband got his job as an engineer back. She was even able to expand her production. After the war, she built a larger workshop and employed two people who worked for her, “making hundreds of copies of my sculptures,” as she later stated.⁴⁶⁷

The most important change in her professional life, however, was perhaps the least anticipated. In an interview, Winkler recalled decades later, how she became a teacher:

When Judi [her youngest daughter] was five years old [in 1951], Kurt read in the newspaper that schools were searching for young people from abroad who had acquired a knowledge of the arts to employ them as art

464 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

465 “Dort habe ich viel gelernt, das mir später noch sehr viel weiterhelfen sollte: modellieren, glasieren, Waren im Ofen brennen,” [author’s translation], see Winkler, “Augenblick,” 308–311.

466 “Er hat eine kleine Werkstatt gemietet, in der ich Figuren aus Ton hergestellt habe. Wir haben Hunderte dieser kleinen Figuren verkauft und damit unseren Lebensunterhalt verdient. Erst nach Kriegsende durfte Kurt wieder als Ingenieur arbeiten.” [author’s translation], see Winkler, “Augenblick,” 310.

467 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

teachers. Actually, I did not want to apply, because I was not a teacher and had enough to do raising our four children. However, because of Kurt, I finally applied, mainly because I was convinced that they would not hire me. But I got the job and, for 22 years, I worked in a position that made me incredibly happy.⁴⁶⁸

Her new position as a teacher enabled her to take up a role as a cultural mediator, translating and mediating knowledge between two cultures. Asked what she liked the most in her job, she stated: "I was not only able to work with children, which was great fun for me, but I was also privileged to show them the beauty of art as well as my experience abroad."⁴⁶⁹ Due to the shortage of teachers, especially in schools with a high proportion of migrant children, Winkler, as a professional and recognized artist, was allowed to temporarily work without a degree in teaching. She then enrolled at the University of New South Wales to acquire a diploma in education, which allowed her to be fully recognized as a teacher in Australia.⁴⁷⁰

Winkler started her teaching career with big reservations. "Becoming a teacher was the most unthinkable thing for me because of my foreign accent and lack of teaching experience," she later recalled. The first school where she taught was a "very underprivileged high school" with a very high share of migrants. She noted, "75 percent of the students were migrants."⁴⁷¹ She learned a great deal from this experience. As recent studies show, Winkler's new position may have shaped her own as well as her students' identifications, since migrant teachers are frequently "regarded as being able to contribute by acting as role models for migrant students—they take on the role of bridge-builders between migrant parents and the school system or language translators."⁴⁷² In

468 "Als Judi fünf Jahre alt war, hat Kurt in der Zeitung gelesen, dass die Hochschule junge Leute aus dem Ausland mit Kunstwissen als Kunstlehrer suchte. Ich wollte mich zuerst nicht bewerben, weil ich keine Lehrerin war und eigentlich schon genug mit der Erziehung unserer vier Kinder zu tun hatte, doch Kurt zuliebe habe ich mich dann doch beworben, vor allem weil ich dachte, sie würden mich ohnedies nicht nehmen. Doch ich bekam die Lehrstelle und arbeitete 22 Jahre lang in einem Job, der mich unglaublich glücklich machte." [author's translation], see Winkler, "Augenblick," 311.

469 "Ich durfte nicht nur mit Kindern zusammenarbeiten, was mir schon immer Spaß bereitet hatte, sondern konnte ihnen auch noch die Schönheit der Kunst und meine Erfahrung im Ausland näherbringen." [author's translation], see Winkler, "Augenblick," 311.

470 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

471 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

472 Ennerberg and Economou, "Migrant Teachers," 589.

a later interview, Winkler revealed that one of the most important things she learnt during her work with migrant children was the insight that “children need encouragement to build self-confidence.” She continued, “From then on, I really enjoyed it.”⁴⁷³ The mix of her cultural experiences and her role as mediator made her a successful teacher, who worked at different schools for 22 years.

Winkler’s professional achievements and the adaption of her cultural capital again demonstrate the necessity of adapting life paths and knowledge, especially during times of displacement. When she felt that working in textile design would be unlikely to be possible, because of the low demand for textile designers in Australia, she expanded her knowledge and became a potter. This allowed her, despite her status as an enemy alien, to become economically successful and get her knowledge accepted in her new society. From that position, she took a further step and became an art teacher, which allowed her to mediate her cultural capital and her own experience abroad, as she specifically recalled.

Henry Teltscher was among those young refugees who were born in Austria and came to Australia as adolescents or young adults. He is a good example of how young refugees could quickly rise to high positions within the education system and of how that rise was benefited by their intercultural experiences. Although his family’s background as industrialists in the textile printing industry had predetermined his future professional path, as he mentioned in his autobiography, he came to teaching at college level because of entirely new opportunities posed by his forced displacement to Australia. As he later wrote, “there had been a general understanding that I would follow in Papa’s footsteps and work in the textile printing industry.”⁴⁷⁴ All of his educational efforts were directed toward that aim and in his autobiography he described the importance his cultural capital acquired in Austria had for him. According to him, education and the values he acquired in his homeland “were both more significant in shaping my interests and my life general. Many of my interests and attitudes were formed at an early age and haven’t changed a great deal. I am thinking of such diverse things as my interests in science in general and in biology in particular.”⁴⁷⁵

His professional journey reveals the unique opportunities that would have not been there without his displacement to Australia. After the Anschluss,

473 USHMM, USC Shoah Foundation Institute testimony of Viola Winkler, Oral History, VHA Interview Code: 5134 (audio recording).

474 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 146.

475 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, i.

Teltscher was not allowed to finish high school. In preparation for his escape, he did a crash course in medical diagnostic laboratory work to learn something which, he noted, “might help us in making a living in our emigration to an as yet unknown country.”⁴⁷⁶ After his successful escape to England, he was interned as an “enemy alien” in 1940 and shipped to Australia on board the infamous troopship *HMT Dunera*. In Australia, he became a member of the 8th Australian Employment Company⁴⁷⁷ and from there was transferred to the medical corps, because of his existing “expert knowledge on laboratory work,” as he later wrote.⁴⁷⁸ In his medical occupation for the army, he was offered the opportunity of acquiring practical knowledge in different departments of medical facilities, such as Heidelberg Hospital, which he described as the “hub of medical research and technological advances of these days.”⁴⁷⁹ He also finished a chemistry course at Melbourne Technical College, the predecessor of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, which offered him his first institutionalized cultural capital in his new homeland. During his time in the military, Teltscher even came in contact with medical research studies.⁴⁸⁰ After the war, when he was demobilized, he was able to benefit from the government’s Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, designed to provide training for ex-servicemen. In February 1946, Teltscher was enrolled again at the Melbourne Technical College, finishing one year later with a diploma in applied chemistry.

Due to his desire to follow in his father’s professional footsteps, Teltscher looked out for a job in the textile industry. “Even though I had found medical laboratory work in the army enormously satisfying and even though biochemistry clearly was the subject that interested me most in my Melbourne Technical College course, I still thought in terms of looking for a job in the textile industry,” as he later recalled.⁴⁸¹ Despite the fact that he had acquired specialized, institutionalized cultural capital from an Australian college, he struggled at first to find a job.⁴⁸² After a while, as he wrote, he managed to follow his father’s path and started a position as a laboratory assistant with the company Silk and Textile Printers of Rushcutters Bay, New South Wales.⁴⁸³ Teltscher, who in the

476 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 51.

477 NAA, MP1103/1, E40801, Teltscher Henry.

478 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 126.

479 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 132.

480 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 140.

481 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 146.

482 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 146.

483 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 146.

meantime had married and started a family, a year later applied for another position in the textile printing industry. Out of the blue, one of his teachers at Melbourne Technical College invited him to move with him to New Zealand and become his assistant lecturer. This offer led to an intense rethinking process, since Teltscher, as he said, had “never even considered the possibility of an academic career [...] before.” Instead, he “had more or less accepted that his future lay in the textile industry.”⁴⁸⁴ He declined that offer, since he did not want to move away from Australia, however, this offer sparked his interest in an academic career and he subsequently applied at Melbourne Technical College, where he had finished his diploma. Here, again, we can see the importance of the right timing. He knew that a position was open, since his former teacher had left Melbourne and, at the same time, as he later heard, another Australian candidate who had been offered the job had taken another position. The outcome of this was that Melbourne Technical College employed Teltscher as a lecturer in biochemistry. Having gotten a foot in the door of Australian academia, Teltscher managed what many other Viennese refugees could not: he established himself as a lecturer at an Australian university. In 1951, he finished his undergraduate studies, two years later he acquired his Master’s degree from the University of Melbourne.

Despite an offer to start a PhD at the University of Melbourne, Teltscher decided against a career in research in order to continue teaching at the Melbourne Technical College. Soon after his decision to remain at the college, he was approached by the principal to form and build up a new department of applied biology, mainly “because I was the only one in the Department with biological interests,” as he later stated.⁴⁸⁵ This fact indicates that Teltscher, with his migrant and Australian knowledge, was obviously fully accepted by his new environment. Teltscher remained at the Melbourne Technical College for the rest of his professional career. He rose there to the position of the head of the department of applied biology in 1968. When he retired in 1980, he headed a department consisting of 25 full-time and 40 part-time lecturers, and 25 technical staff, as well as 1,300 students.⁴⁸⁶

As Teltscher’s example shows, there were also opportunities for migrants to rise within academia in the country and its administration. Since the country was in midst of a process of growth and diversification, experts were needed to fill certain positions. Thus it was easier, particularly for younger migrants who had acquired specialized and institutionalized cultural capital from Australian

484 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 149.

485 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 163.

486 Teltscher, *The Glückspilz*, 163.

universities, to get into one of those sought-after positions. In his autobiography, however, Teltscher, also mentioned the importance of his Viennese cultural capital, particularly in forming life-long interests which later influenced his life path in Australia.

Hans Eisler was another one of this book's protagonists who had come to Australia at a young age "busting to join the army to fight Hitler," as historian Glen Palmer wrote.⁴⁸⁷ He enlisted in one of the labour companies and after his release profited from the government's Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. Like Teltscher and Winkler, he became a teacher after having tried out various jobs. He was also one of those refugees who became politically involved in their new homeland. After a short period of two years, from April 1940 to December 1942, when the party was banned, the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) had experienced a quick upward development. The party's membership ballooned and by 1945, the CPA controlled 275,000 of the 1.2 million registered trade unionists. It was estimated that the Party had the support of between 25% and 45% of trade union members at that time.⁴⁸⁸ After his release from the army, where he served from 1941 to 1946 as an ordnance officer, 22-year-old Eisler had also joined the Australian Communist Party, where he met his first wife, a union representative.⁴⁸⁹

"When I was demobbed, I lived in Glebe Point Road in a house owned by the [Communist] Party. I did some work for the Party. I was distributing literature. I wrote articles for Party publications," Eisler stated. This step can be explained in terms of his Viennese cultural capital, as it was triggered by the socialist mindset of his parents, as he later mentioned.⁴⁹⁰ On the other hand, the Communist Party had become popular at that point in time and Eisler used his membership to socialize and to get social recognition in his new environment: "I found new friends in the Communist Party. There finally were Australians who accepted me. I met my wife through that work. I met Jim Healy and Lance Sharkey⁴⁹¹ and all those

487 Glen Palmer, "Reluctant Refugee," 277.

488 Alistair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia: A Short History* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1969), 93.

489 Glen Palmer, "Reluctant Refugee," 277.

490 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

491 "Big" Jim Healy and Lawrence Louis (Lance) Sharkey were trade unionists and leaders of the Communist Party. For more information on the Communist Party and how they used refugees to extend their reach and exercise agency, see Stuart Macintyre, *The Party: The Communist Party of Australia from Heyday to Reckoning* (London: Allen & Unwin, 2022); Maria Döring, "Die 'Flüchtlingskrise' der 1930er Jahre als Propagandamittel der in Australien erscheinenden kommunistischen Zeitung 'The Worker's Weekly,'" in

people.”⁴⁹² He found additional support in the Party and the trade unions, when he was fired from his first job only a few months after his release from the army in December 1946. He recalled this support as particularly important for reinforcing his notions of belonging. He described what happened as follows:

At first, I worked for a place called E G Cramen in Ross Street/Glee [New South Wales]. I did some processing work there. Then, I got the sack the day before we got married [December 1946]. I guess that was politically motivated. My English was not so good at that time. [...] However, I was in the union and they got me the Christmas pay.⁴⁹³

After that experience, he decided to reskill himself. Like Henry Teltscher, he was eligible to apply for the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme for ex-servicemen. He was able to obtain a scholarship to get his Australian leaving certificate. Additionally, he took up a night job to earn money. He recalled this important step in his life as follows: “So while my wife was pregnant in 1947, I studied. I worked at night and studied during the daytime I went to Sussex Street Tech. It was a technical school for ex-servicemen. I studied there and suddenly I realized that I could learn.”⁴⁹⁴ Eisler increasingly placed value on education and joined a local college, the Associate of the Sydney Technical College, later on, from where he subsequently received a diploma.

During that time, his sociopolitical commitment developed further. He became interested in trade union activities and was subsequently elected representative for his company, a paper manufacturer in Ascott, New South Wales.⁴⁹⁵ In 1951, he decided to leave and become a teacher. “I did a one-year course and in 1952 I started teaching. I started off at [a high school at] Gardner’s Road,” as he later recalled. During his first year in his new position, he, together with others, organized a strike against the headmaster, as he described: “I was involved in the first teachers’ strikes in 1952. I was striking about the conditions

“*They Trusted Us—But Not Too Much*”: *Transnationale Studien zur Rezeption deutschsprachiger Flüchtlinge in englischsprachigen Medien in den 1930er Jahren*, ed. Philipp Strobl (Hildesheim: Universitätsverlag Hildesheim, 2020), 99–114.

492 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

493 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

494 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

495 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

at Gardner's Road. Particularly because of the headmaster, who was a cruel man. He accused us of being communists. He did not want any people on his staff who belonged to the teacher's federation."⁴⁹⁶ Eisler also recalled being abused by the headmaster for not being of Australian descent: "The headmaster walked into his class and said: He, boys, this Mr. Eisler here, he is a foreigner, we want to show these foreigners that we Australians can behave ourselves. This was by the end of 1952."⁴⁹⁷

Eisler increasingly began to involve himself in his community and started several different clubs and organizations throughout his life. In 1952, at Armadale, he ran a football club and also played in the local rugby league. In 1953, after his wife died, Eisler had to take care of his three young children. He did not seek contact with Jewish organizations, as he felt that he had found his home in the Communist Party in those years, as he mentioned later. His cultural capital and his upbringing might again have influenced him here: he had described that the Jewish faith did not play a big role during his childhood in Vienna.

In that situation, in 1953, however, Jewish welfare organizations, who had heard about his tragic circumstances, approached the single father of three and offered him a place in the Jewish Chip Chase migrant hostel, which had been founded just three years earlier.⁴⁹⁸ This offered Eisler security and a new home as well as a new sense of belonging for himself and his children. He later recalled the community spirit he encountered there: "I stayed at Chip Chase for two years, in 1954 and 1955. I got every help there. In return of teaching English to the migrants—I met many of them there, they looked after the kids. We were like a big family."⁴⁹⁹ Over the following years, he was able to consolidate his life. He remarried and focused on his career as a teacher. In 1962, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of New England (Armidale, New South Wales).⁵⁰⁰ After finishing his university education, he increased his engagement in community projects. He taught maths

496 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

497 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

498 Suzanne D. Rutland, "The Transformation of a Community," *Israel and Judaism Studies*, accessed November 30, 2021, <https://www.ijs.org.au/jewish-immigration-after-the-second-world-war/>.

499 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

500 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

classes to prisoners, working with the Community Restorative Centre (CRC), which provided a range of services to people involved in the criminal justice system and their families. As he later stated, he found that work “very rewarding,” and continued his activities even after his retirement.⁵⁰¹ He also took up voluntary positions as the secretary of the Junior Football League and started to work as a rugby referee in his spare time. Additionally, he engaged himself as “a publicity officer for the Church Cricket Association of New South Wales.”⁵⁰²

The year 1965 brought a promotion in his teaching career: “I got promoted to subject master at Parramatta High School. I was in charge of both math and science. I had 15 teachers under my care.”⁵⁰³ Only one year later, he experienced the most dramatic step in his career, when the Australian government appointed him “senior education officer,” not least because of his university education, and sent him to the then newly founded African state of Malawi, which was about to build up its education system. This step allowed him to directly combine his professional and his social work and commitment. He described his tasks as follows:

I was in charge of much of the teacher education and organizing the structure of schools. I started 64 schools. I did that in conjunction with a Scotsman. We were the heads. They wanted to have an independent school system and my job was to design a “Malawi certificate.” I was there for two years.⁵⁰⁴

He described his work in Africa and the experiences he had as mostly rewarding. However, after two years, in 1968, he returned to the Sydney area because his “marriage broke down,” as he later recalled.⁵⁰⁵ After a divorce and a custody lawsuit, he went back to being a teacher. He was appointed subject master for math at various high schools and kept up his social engagement as a referee and sports coach. He also publicly advocated reforms to divorce law and even

501 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

502 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

503 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

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505 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

became the president of the Divorce Law Reform Association.⁵⁰⁶ “I felt for men who lost their children. But I finally did it to get my children back,” he described of his motives.

Eisler’s diverse career and his social commitment was the product of the melding of different forms of cultural capital and opportunities. In Vienna, he had enjoyed a good school education but had to leave school without having it institutionalized, because of the Anschluss and his subsequent flight. In Australia, he joined the army and had, like Henry Teltscher and other young migrants, benefited from a scholarship of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme that allowed him to take his leaving certificate and acquire university education and, ultimately, gain cultural capital, institutionalized in Australia. Like Teltscher, Eisler also decided to become a teacher. His social engagement was also influenced by his Viennese cultural capital. Because of his upbringing, he had an affinity with political socialism. In Australia, after his arrival, he found a temporary home in the Communist Party, where, as he recalled, he finally found acceptance from Australians.⁵⁰⁷ After a while, he reduced his political commitment and began a life-long engagement with different social projects. He recalled that he was very enthused about his teaching position. “I did it because of my passion for teaching. The money has never worried me,” he later mentioned in an interview.⁵⁰⁸

506 N.A., “Divorce Change Welcomed,” *The Canberra Times*, August 9, 1973, 13.

507 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

508 USHMM, Oral history interview with Hans Eisler, Accession Number: 2009.214.61 | RG Number: RG-50.617.0061 (audio recording).

Analysing Refugee Translation Strategies and Displaced Knowledge in Australia

This chapter reviews the information gained in the preceding section. It seeks to locate, highlight, and analyse recurring patterns within the different translation processes that allow us to draw conclusions from the information gained from refugees' memories and the other sources. This can help to create a better understanding not only of the performances of translation, adaption, and mediation of knowledge but also of the refugees' strategies for exercising agency, which became crucial to their identifications and the ways in which their new society appreciated their capital. Our historic examples may also be used to increase the understanding of migration processes as shaping forces for a society.

When people migrate, as this book has shown so far, they never come empty-handed. Regardless of the existence or nonexistence of financial or economic capital, they bring at least their cultural baggage with them, which consists of their cultural and their social capital. This inflow subsequently leads to a process of knowledge transfer and, ultimately, as Peter Burke has shown, to a deprovincialization process of the migrants and the new host society.¹ What a society, and not least of course the refugees themselves, make of that situation—what they make of that clash of ideas and cultural elements—is a crucial question that affects not only the refugees' but also the host society's future development.

During the late 1930s, Australia had regarded migration from non-British regions as a threat to the “British” nature of the country's society. Consequently, non-British migration was restricted by all means. The country did not recognize a refugee status and migrants trying to enter the Australian labour market faced severe problems, especially when trying to enter professional positions which Australians regarded as “more sophisticated” and thus as unsuited to aliens. Moreover, the mostly Jewish group of refugees encountered different forms of antisemitism, frequently motivated by a real or imagined fear of a shortage of jobs and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, Austrian

¹ Burke, *Exiles and Expatriates*, 16.

migrant knowledge and cultural capital found its way into many different parts of the Australian society.

Why was that so? Why did this book's protagonists and their fellow migrants leave such a noticeable footprint over the years? The answer can be found in their cultural capital and the timing of their appearance in Australia: they came with the right ideas at the right time. When they arrived, they encountered a culture and society that differed considerably from what they had known. Their urbanized, densely populated, and culturally as well as economically developed, but also war- and crisis-torn, Central European home society was quite unlike the semicolonial British settler society focused on companionship and equality they encountered "Down Under." A good example that surfaced through many biographies was the different perception of the value of education, which the refugees experienced in Austria and in Australia. Gender roles also differed between the two countries. Many refugees, such as Paul Hirsch, Viola Winkler, and Gertrude Langer, remembered the "culture shock" they experienced when entering a country that seemed to be so different in many ways from the life they were familiar with.

What they could not have known, however, at the time they arrived, was that Australia was about to experience a modernization and a multiculturalization process that sustainably changed the whole country and formed the basis of its diverse present-day society. When that development started after the war, the refugees could adopt a position as mediator between the traditional parts of the society, with which they had identified over the preceding years and the hundreds of thousands of Central and Eastern European Displaced Persons who came after the war. The stories of the cultural and professional engagement of most of this book's protagonists, particularly Gerhard Felser, Charles Anton, Ernest Bowen, Annemarie Mutton, Sylvia Cherny (and respectively her stepfather Peter Watkins), John Hearst, and Marie Bergel, not to mention Gertrude Langer, show impressively how they had taken up such middlemen positions as cultural mediators.

At the time of their arrival, the striking gap between the urbanized Central European avant-garde society and the semicolonial British settler society had frequently presented them with many difficulties, especially when they tried to apply some of their ideas very quickly after their arrival. As they found out, their Australian compatriots were in many cases not ready to appreciate what had been widely accepted cultural capital in Central Europe. Values and cultural elements that this book's protagonists held dear were in many cases novel and strange to their new fellow countrymen, who were accustomed to playing on a different "cultural keyboard." Consequently, early attempts at translating cultural capital were frequently unsuccessful; it had rather to be

adapted over time to become accepted by the majority population. As we have seen, it took people such as Gertrude Langer, Hanny Exiner, Paul Hirsch, and Charles William Anton years to convince their new environment of the need to make use of their cultural capital, as well as of its value. And in many cases, their ideas only became successful because the society had changed due to the large-scale postwar migration that brought a new level of cultural mosaic to the Australian society.

Business models and ideas that did not differ much from what the local Australian population had known were some of the rare exceptions, as the example of the Weiss family's artificial flower making business showed. Little adaption or advertising was necessary to quickly integrate their business into the local market. There was an obvious demand for artificial flowers, which the Weiss family managed to meet.

Most others had a much longer and more complex struggle for public recognition. Many ideas only revealed their full potential when Australian society was about to transform itself and when it developed a multicultural collective identity with the beginning of Australia's postwar mass migration scheme during the late 1940s. At that point, however, Central European cultural capital introduced by the refugees unfolded its full potential and left a vital imprint on many fields of social, cultural, and economic life Down Under.

In which domains were most of the translations located? The greatest part of this book's protagonists' translations, mediations, and adaptations took place in various professional domains, where numerous Central European ideas were successfully or unsuccessfully applied, ranging from the instalment payment system for garments and insulated doors based on German interwar patents to Alpine ski clubs and entire Tyrolean-style ski resort villages in the mountains. This high degree of professional translations can be explained by the fact that most refugees were forced to become entrepreneurs due to their initially discriminated against position on the Australian labour market, which left many of them no choice but to start their own business. Few of those who became successful entrepreneurs in Australia had operated their own businesses in Austria, and some of them did not actually want to become entrepreneurs, as Kurt Selby's example showed. However, the lack of opportunities on the labour market had forced them to do so and they started businesses by relying on their Central European know-how and on what they had seen or learned in Europe, according to the German saying "Not macht erfinderisch" (necessity is the mother of invention).

The most lasting and noticeable influence of Austrian refugee knowledge and cultural capital can be located in the cultural domain. The highly developed cultural life of *fin-de-siècle* and interwar Vienna, where all of this book's

protagonists acquired their cultural capital, as well as the Viennese middle and upper classes' affinity for cultural activities, especially the performing and visual arts, explain the extraordinarily high share of cultural translations and mediations undertaken by Viennese refugees. Further explanations can be found in the state of the Australian cultural landscape at that time, which was in the midst of a transformation process. The importance of modernist tendencies in the visual and the performing arts, as well as in literature, increased during the late 1940s and 1950s, and modernism became more broadly accepted during that time. In this crucial transformation phase, the refugees brought in some highly specialist knowledge and their understanding of an appreciation of art and culture that suited the long-term development during the postwar years and thus affected the future development of the Australian cultural sector in many different ways.

What did this book's protagonists do to promote their knowledge? We know that favourable historical, social, and physiological conditions have to be met for a translation to take place.² If the members of the host society do not regard imported capital as valuable and necessary, devaluation or even a process of neglect takes place that could in some cases lead to the destruction and loss of knowledge. Accordingly, the relevance of specific bodies of knowledge can change fast and its fragile nature is a particularly interesting phenomenon. Knowledge that has been accumulated, adapted, and transformed over centuries can in some cases become lost in just one generation—even without displacement.³ Frequently, however, migration, and particularly forced migration, is responsible for such essential losses. Therefore, as Bourdieu suggested, migrants develop strategies to utilize their capital, if they want to become successful translators of knowledge and ideas, since the acceptance of cultural translators depends largely on their ability to promote their skills and knowledge in their new host society. This promotion process is also highly transcultural, as it usually led to the production of new forms of migration-specific cultural capital.⁴ As our examples reveal, only in very few cases did the British-Australian majority population accept imported Central European knowledge immediately and without hesitation or change. As we have further seen, the acceptance, appreciation, and, ultimately, the success of imported knowledge depended on the refugees' very own willingness to exercise agency: this means that whether and how they made their capital known to the members of their host society was crucial for their translations' success or failure. How refugees

2 Podkalicka and Strobl, "Skiing Transnational"; Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, 147.

3 Olshin, *Lost Knowledge*, 1.

4 Manz and Panayi, "Refugees and Cultural Transfer," 133.

located themselves and their professional or cultural role within their new homeland and how they interacted with and reacted to their new fellow countrymen was vital. Some of them very much mastered the practice of promoting themselves over time and thus exercised intense personal agency. Gertrude Langer and Charles William Anton's biographies, for example, showed us two different ways of successfully promoting one's own cultural capital by locating oneself in a specialized niche within one's cultural or economic domain. Others used different strategies to make their cultural capital known in their new homeland. Operating within the secure but limited sphere of local migrant or Jewish minority communities was another framework many refugees, such as Richard Tandler and John Hearst, had used to implement their ideas. Others, such as Gerhard Felser, located their ideas in between the migrant communities and the general Australian society.

In some cases, this book's protagonists did not succeed with the import of their ideas and, consequently, knowledge and cultural capital that was valuable and appreciated before their escape did not retain its value in Australia. Paul Hirsch's relocation to Australia was almost an example of how knowledge could be forgotten and lost. There seemed to him to be no demand for his literary skills in Australia. Despite several unsuccessful attempts to exercise agency to promote his knowledge publicly, Hirsch neither managed to live up to his former success as a German-language writer nor received any public reaction to his attempts for almost 26 years in Australia. Only a change in demand in the German postwar literature market and an increased interest in Expressionist and exiled authors led to his *renaissance* as a German-language writer and subsequently allowed him to reestablish himself in the position of a cultural mediator, who explained his experiences and his Australian environment to a German readership. Gustav Bratspies's forced relocation shows in a tragic way how even specialized and institutionalized knowledge can be lost through multiple forced displacements. Bratspies, who had been a renowned "practicing architect, constructing buildings and working on railways around Europe," as one of his relatives later stated, fled Austria with his wife and his son because of his Jewish heritage.⁵ In April 1939, he arrived in Singapore and, due to his sophisticated institutionalized and incorporated cultural capital, managed to get a job as a city planner for the local government there. After the war broke out, he and his family were deported to Australia, where they were interned as enemy aliens in the Tatura internment camp in rural Victoria.⁶ Bratspies was

5 Jarolim, "Detention of Jews."

6 NAA, MP1103/1, Prisoner of War/Internee: Bratspies, Gustav; Date of birth—23 November 1895; Nationality—Austrian.

clearly not able to cope with this last forced migration. While he had managed to achieve professional and social recognition in Singapore, where he and his family were able to build a decent existence within a very short period of time, his forced relocation from Singapore to Victoria and his detention as an enemy alien considerably affected his future life. After his release, in 1942, "Lilly [his wife] and Gustav were never the same," his granddaughter later recalled. She continued the description of Bratspies's life and social decline in Melbourne as it is remembered in her family: "although Gustav was an architect and engineer, it must have been hard for him to find work. He spent a lot of time smoking and playing cards [...] in the evenings."⁷ As Bratspies's official immigration records show, he was briefly employed as a draftsman for Hume Steel after his release from the internment camp. However, it may not have been easy for him to keep his position. Two years later, he changed employer and worked for a "Power Gas Corporation in Stockton," New South Wales.⁸ With the end of the war, he lost his occupation and started his last job in a local post office, while his wife worked as a finisher in the clothing factory of a relative.⁹ When he died in 1948, aged 53, Bratspies had not been able to make successful use of his professional cultural capital in Australia and had not lived up to his former success in Austria or in Singapore.

For this book's protagonists, creating an awareness of themselves and their knowledge and ideas was crucial to increase the value of their cultural capital. As we have seen, there were many different ways in which they managed to anchor themselves in their new society. Every refugee pursued a different strategy of creating awareness of their cultural capital and the personal agency exercised by refugees is highly individualized.¹⁰ This section highlights and summarizes patterns that became apparent when researching, analysing, comparing and writing down this book's protagonists' memories of their imported, translated, and transformed cultural capital. Altogether, four wider strategies stand out that refugees used to implement ideas within a certain target group, as depicted in Figure 10.

When this book's protagonists arrived in Australia, their most urgent task was to get a first economic and social foothold in their new country.¹¹ Many translations faced initial resistance from the local British-Australian majority population, who did not see the value of introduced alien cultural capital. To

7 Jarolim, "Detention of Jews."

8 NAA: A997, 1944/54.

9 Jarolim, "Detention of Jews."

10 Strobl, "Collective Refugee Agency."

11 Comp. Strobl, "Social Networks," 77; Kwiet, "Re-Acculturation."

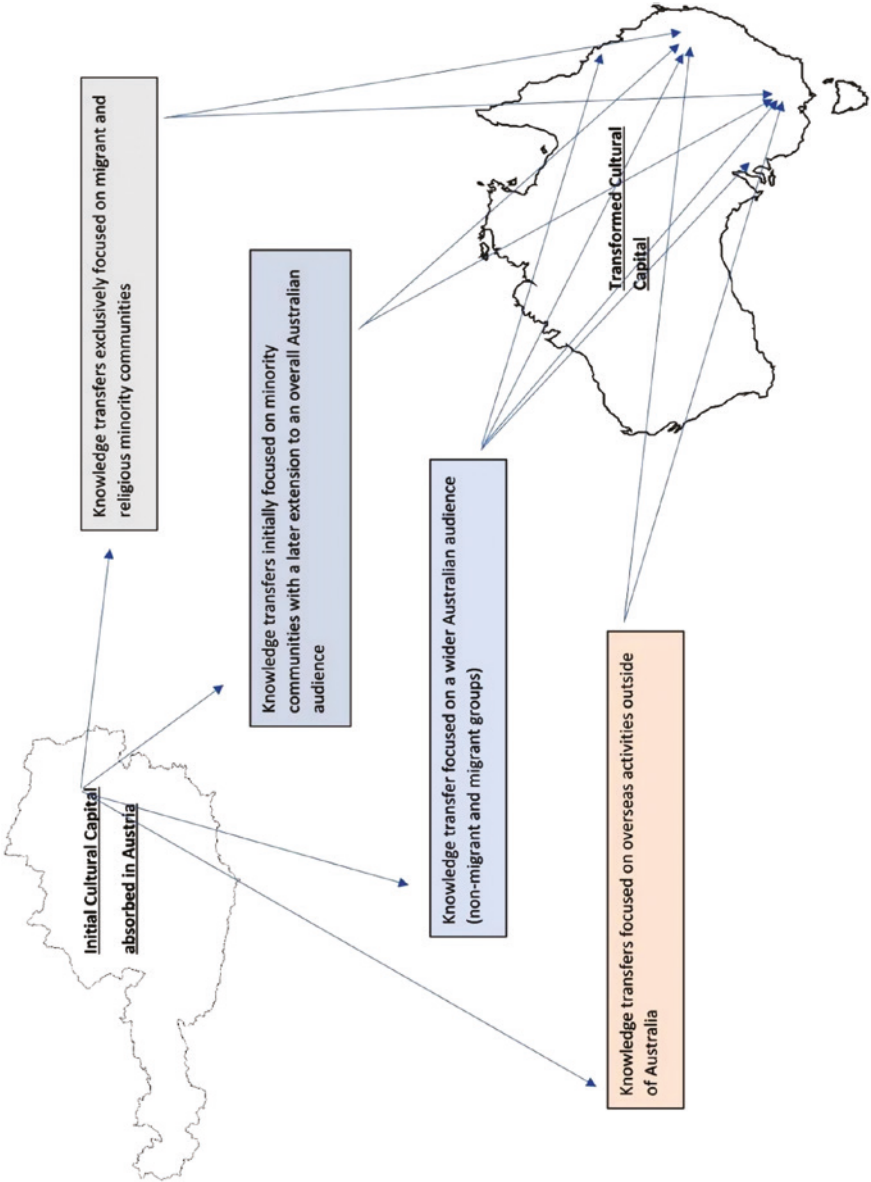


FIGURE 10 Refugee strategies of knowledge implementation in Australia

get round this initial resistance, many refugees focused their translations and their professional and social activities on local migrant or Jewish minority communities. Those communities consisted of people who shared the same fate and had the same, or at least comparable, experiences. In short, they consisted of people who had learned to operate the same “cultural keyboard.” Within their community of like-minded and similarly socialized people, refugees did not have to explain, negotiate, or justify their cultural capital. As the daughter of Kurt Selby mentioned, being in Melbourne’s Jewish refugee community “was a safer world for him.”¹² Within these communities, people knew each other. Consequently, information spread quickly and Selby soon knew his clients and their needs and—equally importantly—they knew him. He did not have to exercise much agency to make himself or his business and his idea of instalment payment accessible to his customers. The same holds true for Richard Tandler, who realized his plan of working as an architect exclusively within the framework of Melbourne’s Jewish community. This was a good arrangement for him, since, coming from the interwar Austrian or German middle classes, most of his clients understood his cultural capital and what he had to offer them in terms of design: they knew and appreciated the modernist styles he had learned in interwar Vienna and they wanted him to realize them in Australia. John Hearst had also started his cabinetmaking business with a German Jewish refugee partner and an initial focus on the tastes of Central European migrant customers. As we have seen, many very unique ventures in the cultural field had originated from a need of refugee migrant audiences for cultural entertainment, such as Gerhard Felser’s *Kleines Wiener Theater* in Sydney, or Peter Watkins’s Melbourne-based *Theaterfreunde* theater. Without the refugees’ input, the entire existence of a German-language theatre in Australia would have been unthinkable.

An exclusive focus on migrant communities and the migrant market may have helped many refugees to establish themselves and their ideas in their new homeland, since it was easier this way to get their knowledge more quickly and more readily appreciated, at least by a minority of their new homeland’s population. However, it also led to severe self-inflicted restrictions in terms of the scope of their clientele and their market. As Richard Tandler’s example shows, his exclusive focus on migrant society helped him to get orders for his architectural business, although he was never really able to live up to his professional situation in Vienna in terms of his business activities. Another

12 Eleanor Hart (Selby’s daughter), in discussion with the author (sound recording), Melbourne, February 2016.

interesting phenomenon is that much less change usually happened with the initial translation if realized exclusively within the migrant community over a long period. This can be explained by the fact that the demand of a smaller, more isolated group is much more static and thus changes much more slowly. In many cases, the migrant target group frequently did not want ideas to change. Gerhard Felser's Kleines Wiener Theater serves as a good example of that. Its activities were restricted to German, Austrian, and German-speaking Hungarian refugees, a rather limited audience, as Felser stated. The audience, as well as most of the operators, did not desire changes in the repertoire. The theatre was thus not able to expand its activities and became outdated as soon as it lost its *raison d'être*, when the Central European Jewish refugee generation "became older or died," as Felser later recalled.¹³

Most of this book's protagonists extended their core market after a while and were increasingly addressing the needs of a general Australian target audience. Businesses such as that of Helen Roberts are good examples of how refugee entrepreneurs started their activities within the framework of a migrant community and extended them to reach a bigger market as soon as they had established themselves economically. Their ideas and their knowledge necessarily had to be transformed and changed as they were adapted to fit a bigger and more diverse target audience. As soon as John Hearst had grown his cabinetmaking business and started also to supply the growing Australian middle classes and the young home builders of the baby boomer generation, he focused on the much more profitable business of making kitchens and producing doors, and thus extended his product range considerably. The theatre repertoire Gerhard Felser offered after he had founded the Sydney Kammerspiele also underwent transformation and change when he extended his core audience to non-Jewish German postwar migrants, Polish Displaced Persons, and finally also an English-Australian audience. Most of this book's protagonists had successfully pursued this strategy to get their ideas and their knowledge appreciated in Australia. The patterns of the transformation of their knowledge are frequently very similar. At first, the focus on the members of a minority community helped them to establish themselves. As soon as they were consolidated, they extended their reach. When they extended their clientele, they adapted their initial idea and opened it to a growing market or an extended audience. By doing so, many migrants became increasingly publicly visible, be it through public appearances, such as Helen Roberts or Annemarie

13 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 33.

Mutton, or through increased media advertising activities, such as John Hearst or Marie Bergel.

Other refugees had begun to address a wider audience after their arrival in Australia and thus tried to establish themselves outside the migrant community. As mentioned earlier, this was particularly difficult, because of the initial resistance of the local majority population. As Gertrude Langer's example has shown, it sometimes took decades of convincing and exercising agency to get cultural capital fully recognized. Charles Anton also spent some years convincing his Australian environment of the value of his idea of an Austrian-style, alpine ski club in New South Wales.

Others possessed cultural capital institutionalized by an Austrian university but faced the problem that their degrees were not recognized in Australia. Gerhard Felser and Hanny Exiner were among those who reskilled themselves in their new home. They completed an Australian university degree, and thus institutionalized their cultural capital again.

All of the members of the sample group who immediately started to address a wider Australian audience ultimately succeeded with their plans—some earlier than others. Their success rested mainly on their strategy of highlighting the “uniqueness” of their cultural capital. Felser, Exiner, Langer, and Anton, for example, positioned themselves in a niche market, centred on their very own specialized knowledge. They strongly advertised and advocated their cultural capital as a unique and exclusive “import” from Central Europe, thus convincing their compatriots to accept and make use of it. In all cases, refugees had exercised intense agency and had worked with local media to make themselves and their knowledge known and available. Charles Anton, for example, advertised himself and his snow projects by relying upon seemingly Tyrolean or Austrian elements, such as mulled wine, roof raising, or *Lederhosen* parties, and Gertrude Langer and Hanny Exiner constantly highlighted their top-notch Central European education, thus seeking to convince their environment of the superiority of their cultural capital.

Another strategy some of this book's protagonists used to implement their ideas within a certain target group was to focus their translations and mediations on overseas activities outside of Australia. They used their hybrid position in between the cultures and their cultural experiences to mediate or negotiate between different cultures. Some of the German or Austrian refugees in Australia, like Ernest Bowen and Sue Copolov, used their language and cultural skills as well as their interwar contacts to companies overseas to get into the transnational long-distance trade, importing goods from Europe or Asia to Australia. This sample group also consists of other examples of transcultural mediation processes: Paul Hirsch is a very rare example of someone who lived

in Australia but worked and wrote mainly for an overseas audience, in his case for a German readership in Europe. Like the other protagonists of this book, he worked as a mediator and a translator of cultural capital and ideas. Unlike most of the others, however, he mainly translated his Australian experiences to an overseas audience.

As we have seen in all the examples, new knowledge originated from the transcultural “clash” of different meanings societies ascribed to different forms of cultural capital. How knowledge was accepted by a society was important. It is notable that the younger members of our sample group, particularly, managed to have their cultural capital accepted much faster. In many cases, service in the army helped them achieve that goal. Teltscher and Eisler, as we have seen, even benefited from a government education programme for ex-servicemen, the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. In their cases, they received a scholarship that allowed them to finish university education. This even enabled them to acquire respected teaching positions in colleges or high schools. Hanny Exiner and Viola Winkler also had to take up university degrees in Australia to have their Viennese institutionalized cultural capital fully accepted, which finally enabled them to gain a position in the Australian education system. This was much harder to achieve for Viennese refugees who did not have their cultural capital institutionalized in Australia, as Gertrude Langer’s decades-long struggle for a position at a university in Queensland showed.

As we have seen, the types and natures of this book’s protagonists’ translations differed greatly, as did the transformations of cultural capital, ideas, and knowledge after being applied in a new context. The analysis of displaced knowledge has shown us the fluid nature of ideas and knowledge. It also reveals how values and intellectual achievements that were regarded as crucial in one culture suddenly lost their importance when being displaced and moved to another context. How this book’s protagonists reacted to these difficult intercultural challenges and how they dealt with a devaluation of their cultural capital were the main issues to be highlighted on the preceding pages. Studying this book’s protagonists’ reactions to their displacement and the displacement of their knowledge has indicated the enormous importance of finding a market and a demand for their ideas. The most important task for all of them was to get their knowledge recognized and accepted. From an exclusive focus on minority communities, which offered a quicker appreciation of cultural capital because of shared values within those communities, or a focus on transnational markets, to the attempts to pitch ideas and knowledge “as unique” to a larger Australian target audience, this book’s protagonists implemented their cultural capital in very different ways.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the 26 protagonists of this book imported, translated, and adapted knowledge and cultural capital on very different levels and in very diverse ways. Finding models for capturing, comprehending, and analysing the multitude of abstract information is one of this final chapter's most fruitful tasks. The journey through this book's protagonists' memories showed us how people were socialized, how they operated their "cultural keyboard," and how their upbringing and their environment created and formed their cultural and social capital. It furthermore showed how knowledge and cultural capital were moved from one continent to another. The particular perspective on fragmented memories of knowledge thereby allowed us to highlight the difficulties and chances of the process of moving knowledge between different societies and cultures.

All of this book's protagonists, however different their upbringing and social status may have been, had one thing in common: they were forced out of the country after the Nazi takeover in Austria. When they left their homeland, they were deprived of most of their economic capital and, additionally, lost their social status. Nevertheless, all of them managed to build lives and careers in the new hostland. In many cases, refugees who had lost all of their material possessions because of their displacement started afresh in Australia and, from their new position, even managed to build quite specialized careers. In some cases, their career development or their cultural or social achievements would have been impossible for them to realize in Austria, as Gertrude Langer recalled. Like many members of the group of displaced Austrians in Australia, some of this book's 26 protagonists left a social, economic, or cultural footprint in their new home society. Finding answers to how they did so is one of this book's key tasks. More importantly, this belongs to the foremost questions in the field of history of knowledge. Acquiring more information about this process will increase our understanding of how knowledge can be successfully moved, negotiated, and applied. This issue has become increasingly important in our 21st-century global knowledge and information society, which is more than ever characterized by migrations.

The biographical accounts of this book's 26 protagonists provided us with valuable insights into those elements of knowledge transfer which they, with the wisdom of hindsight, regarded as important. As the journey through their memories has shown, there were many different ways in which displaced people

relied upon their social and cultural capital to, firstly, escape their oppressive homeland and, secondly, build lives in their new Australian home. Also, once they had arrived in Australia, they used very different approaches to negotiate and promote their knowledge and to exercise agency, as shown in Chapter 8.

The following concluding pages summarize the most important overall findings of this book in the form of questions and answers. These insights can be of particular interest in comprehending the complex and so far grossly under-researched processes of knowledge circulation, translation, and adaptation undertaken by refugees.

9.1 What Is Displaced Knowledge?

This book introduced and analysed knowledge in various forms and shapes. As historian Martin Mulrow recently noted, “when speaking of ‘knowledge’—especially in composite terms like ‘cultures of knowledge,’ the history of knowledge, or knowledge management—it becomes essential to clarify whether we are speaking of knowledge in a broad or narrow sense.”¹ This book uses a broad understanding of the concept that includes different forms of knowledge. This practice has become relatively common and is employed in many different recent studies on the history of knowledge and on migration history.² Since it analysed the translation experiences of a diverse group of people, it does not make sense to restrict this study to a specific form, such as professional or academic knowledge. Consequently, the term “knowledge” in this book encompasses the academic and scientific, as well as the social and the everyday knowledge formed through experience and in close connection with particular cultural practices.

With his concept of the different forms of capital, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has introduced effective terms to cope with this broad understanding of knowledge. Additionally, his differentiation of incorporated mental, economic, and social forms of possessions is of great interest in explaining people's immaterial and material acquisitions in their different forms. The importance of immaterial forms of human possessions becomes apparent through the application of his concept, particularly when dealing with displaced people, who, in many cases, are unable to take their economic capital with them. This whole book relies upon his ideas of human capital to identify the different forms of this

¹ Mulrow, *Knowledge Lost*, 2.

² Comp. Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move,” 320; Strobl, “Migrant Biographies.”

book's protagonists' accumulated possessions and to highlight their processes of knowledge acquisition, translation, or adaption. This furthermore enabled the indication of the role that performative aspects of knowledge played for the refugees, as well as showing the cultural, economic, and social footprint they left in their new homeland.

A complex but fluid term such as "knowledge" can be logically approached by focusing on perceptions, understandings, and memories of the actual translators. In this sense, the memories analysed here have demonstrated that the cultural capital the refugees brought with them was essential in building their careers and their social and cultural existence in Australia. In addition to cultural capital in its immaterial form, such as ideas or education, or in its material forms, such as personal libraries or tools, refugees also profited from their social capital, particularly when trying to leave Austria. The least important form of capital, from the point of view of this book's protagonists, was economic capital. Most of them arrived in debt or without any money at all that could have supported their efforts at building a new life. Cultural capital, as we have seen, was also very diverse. All of this book's protagonists brought cultural capital in its embodied form with them to Australia. Here, we can detect the most interesting tensions and differences, triggered by the diverging expectations of people who had learnt to operate different "cultural keyboards." The differences in incorporated cultural capital led to initial tensions, known as "culture shock" and, not surprisingly, most of this book's protagonists had very pronounced memories of their encounter experiences. Cultural capital in its objectified form was among the few accumulated valuable and material possessions some of this book's protagonists could take out of Nazi Germany. In many cases, it helped the members of our sample group to establish new careers and lives in Australia. The libraries of Gertrude Langer and Paul Hirsch, for example, enabled them to continue their work in Australia. The same holds true for Richard Tandler's drawing and photographic equipment, which he used to rebuild his career as an architect in Melbourne. Cultural capital in its institutionalized form, on the other hand, was more difficult to transfer to Australia. As most of our examples show, Austrian university degrees were not, or at least not fully, recognized in Australia and thus this form of capital experienced devaluation. Members of certain occupational groups, such as physicians or accountants, were not allowed to practice their profession. In other cases, university degrees, such as Gertrude Langer's PhD in art history, were mostly unknown and therefore not appreciated in their new environment. Nevertheless, some of this book's protagonists reskilled themselves in Australia, gained Australian university degrees, and managed to get their knowledge institutionalized for a second time. Thus they had it fully accepted and recognized. In these cases,

having an Austrian degree as well as an Australian one turned out to be a valuable asset, as Hanny Exiner's career in Australia shows.

As knowledge can be understood as socially transmitted meaning and meaning is mainly derived from society, that is, adopted, stored, and classified by others, knowledge can be understood as meaning that has become social. In this context, the initial "value" of migrated knowledge depends on how it was perceived in a new society. As most of our case studies showed, the disruption that knowledge experienced when being displaced presented this book's protagonists with crucial challenges. In the long run, however, the opportunities displaced knowledge offered its mediators outweighed the initial difficulties: many of this book's 26 protagonists, after a time in Australia, managed to profit from the fact that they introduced their Austrian knowledge into their Australian environment and that they implemented it in different forms after an initial orientation and adaption phase.

9.2 How Did the Refugees Use Their Social Capital?

Social capital, in the form of networks and interhuman relations, was crucial for this book's protagonists to get out of the country and build a new existence in Australia. Here, again, non-material forms of capital turned out to be particularly important, especially since we observed and analysed the plight of forced migrants, who were usually not allowed to transfer their financial resources out of their homeland and thus were left with only their cultural and social capital.

As we have seen in many cases, the existence or nonexistence of social capital was the decisive point that made the difference between life and death in 1938 and 1939. The existence of networks and ties to people abroad at the very least simplified the escape, as the stories told in this book showed. It was much easier for Richard Tandler, for example, who enjoyed the support of an Australian (who was temporarily resident in Vienna at the time of the Anschluss) to get a guarantor for his visa application, or for Richard Bowen, who had many contacts to people in the United Kingdom and even knew the British consul in Vienna, than it was for many others who had no one abroad to back their much-needed visa application. Reinhold Eckfeld's depiction of his agonizing and depressing daily routine of waiting in front of different consulates or refugee organizations showed us the enormous difficulties of obtaining a visa without the existence and support of social capital. Grete Vanry's undocumented escape through the Austrian and Swiss Alps and her subsequent desperate situation as an undocumented and thus illegal migrant in France offers

another example of the importance of networks, particularly since she managed to get out of her desperate situation only because her former Viennese employer, who had escaped to Australia, finally sent her a visa for Sydney.

The 26 members of the sample group relied upon different types of networks. Chapter 5 identified five overall categories of networks that became important to our refugees. Most of the people who fled National Socialist Vienna escaped due to the help of denominational aid organizations and, therefore, ties based on religious or ethnic origins were crucial for the escape of most of this book's protagonists. Given the fact that the largest part of those at least 60,000 people who fled Vienna up to 1941 comprised Austrians of Jewish faith, or at least those who were made "Jewish" by the Nazis, Jewish aid organizations played a pivotal role in saving Austrian refugees during that time. A number of this book's protagonists recalled having received money or other support from Jewish organizations or influential Jewish donors such as the Rothschild family. Some also mentioned having received sponsorship from a Jewish organization to get a visa for Australia. Others recalled that Christian refugee organizations, such as the Quakers, were crucial for their escapes. Further important forms of social capital were ties based on friendship or ties based on business relations. Chapter 5 also offered some interesting examples of refugees who made it out of Austria because they had a friend abroad or a business partner who supported their escape and their visa application. Other forms of social capital that were used to facilitate escapes were ties based on family membership and those based on shared intellectual and cultural interests. Paul Herzfeld's example illustrated how the Boy Scouts operated a global network of ties to their members to get some of their people out of the Nazi-occupied territories. Paul Hirsch's escape, on the other hand, was organized by his sister-in-law and thus was based solely on ties of family membership.

The analysis of this book's protagonists' social capital also revealed some interesting insights into their networking behaviour and the significance of their networks at different stages of their lives: as we have seen, they used the networks for different activities. Before their escape, many of their network activities were aimed toward organizing and facilitating their spare-time pursuits. During their escape, many of this book's protagonists mobilized all of their contacts, particularly those abroad, to get out of the country. Social capital was also of particular importance for the refugees in building a new existence in Australia. This was the most difficult part, since most of this book's protagonists did not know many people in Australia before their escape and thus had very limited local networks. After a time, when many of them had managed to establish themselves economically, they again used their networks

to pursue their hobbies and also their cultural engagement, as Gerhard Felser's example has shown.

9.3 How Did Knowledge Change during the Process of Being Displaced?

As a general pattern, this book has shown that the refugees' knowledge and their cultural capital almost always underwent a process of devaluation after leaving its home territory. This can best be explained by the cultural, economic, and social differences between their Central European homeland and their semicolonial British-Australian hostland. People in Australia had learned to operate different "cultural keyboards" than their Austrian contemporaries. Consequently, they did not initially see much need for ideas introduced by Austrian refugees. Furthermore, the social position of the Austrians as refugees and "strangers," who apparently came without any resources, was very weak. Refugees were expected to assimilate themselves gratefully and silently into their new environment and therefore the majority population did not expect any innovative inputs from them and thus was rather averse to imported cultural, economic, and social ideas. Additionally, many of this book's protagonists had to overcome a language barrier, which weakened their position as cultural mediators even further. Many of them had to learn a new language, as Paul Hirsch, Viola Winkler, and Hans Eisler described, or had to increase their proficiency in it to strengthen their position as mediators of knowledge.

It was not surprising to see that most of the initial translations were not accepted and that it frequently took the refugees several attempts to introduce their ideas. This process took some of them years, as Gertrude Langer's or Charles Anton's long-term struggle over the acceptance of their ideas and cultural capital exemplified. In general, several similar patterns stood out here: after their arrival, many of this book's protagonists had tried to implement their ideas very quickly. They were not known to their environment and likewise did not know their environment when first introducing their knowledge. More importantly, some of them had initially tried to import their ideas without adaption and without fitting them to their new Australian environment. Marie and Otto Bergel's idea of a company that produced apple juice in Adelaide was one such example. As Marie Bergel recalled decades later, locally produced apple juice was virtually unknown in Adelaide and most people had confused it with cider. Consequently, there was not enough demand to keep the business running and the Bergels shut it down after a while. There was also some initial hostility toward refugees in certain positions that were regarded

as more high-level, as exemplified by the public protests that occurred when Ernest Bowen started his position as a foreman at a Melbourne-based textile company.

In most cases, knowledge and ideas underwent a transformation and adaptation process after being introduced to Australia. As we have seen, most of this book's protagonists' successful translations took place after they had settled in, and after they had connected and identified themselves with their new environment. In order for a translation to be accepted by the majority population, cultural translators usually had to be able to operate the cultural keyboard of their host society. If able to do so, they had a much more accepted and appreciated position as translator, since they knew the market and the demand for their social, cultural, or economic inputs. A few years after their arrival, they knew much better what their new fellow citizens would be able to accept as a translation and, consequently, they were able to adapt their ideas accordingly. Gertrude Langer, for example, only managed to become an accepted part of Queensland's cultural scene, after having taken a job as a newspaper art critic and after having worked as a private tutor in the field for over a decade. In order to get that position, she had to adapt the ways she presented art. These adaptations were not easy for her; she later claimed she had the greatest problem with the "popular" style of writing that she felt "wasn't worthy of an art historian," which she used because she "was constantly trying to coax people to have a look at it [the art]."³ The same holds true for Hanny Exiner, who increasingly adapted her idea of performing and lecturing in modern dance toward teaching dance as a therapeutic method. Exiner even took a university degree in Australia in order to have her cultural capital institutionalized.

In some cases, knowledge transformations and adaptations even found their way back to the refugees' country of origin in the sense of a circulation of knowledge. Gerhard Felser's business activities as an accountant for Austrian refugees who attempted to have their stolen possessions restituted after the war is one example of the importance of displaced knowledge in the process of leading Austria back to normality after the war. Another interesting example was Felser's commitment to strengthening Australian-Austrian relations, which culminated in the foundation of the Austrian-Australian Cultural Society in 1962 and its sister society the Australian-Austrian Society in Vienna five years later. Charles Anton's activities in the snow leisure industry also intensified connections between Australia and his former homeland of

3 NLA, Gertrude Langer Interviewed by Barbara Blackman [sound recording], Oral TRC 1171 (transcript), 62.

Austria, resulting in Australian investment in Austrian ski technology as well as the exchange of ski teachers and an increased transfer of specialized know-how between both countries. Others, such as Sue Copolov and Ernest Bowen, strengthened business exchange between the two countries by engaging in the import-export trade. The work of Paul Hirsch and Hanny Exiner also offers good examples of specialized and transformed knowledge that found its way back into the society of origin. Hirsch's most popular and successful German-language written works originated in Australia and—enriched by new styles and ideas—became significant pieces of the German postwar exile literature. Hanny Exiner's knowledge transformations toward dance therapy also found their way back to Austria through academic exchanges.

9.4 What Were the Main Problems Displaced Knowledge Encountered and What Strategies Did the Refugees Rely Upon to Promote Their Knowledge?

The main concern for this book's 26 protagonists with respect to their knowledge and ideas was how to deal with the devaluation of their displaced knowledge after they had left Austria. All of them had varied encounter experiences, as described in Chapter 6, ranging from friendly support and sympathy, through tolerance, rejection, bullying, and antisemitism to violent assault. The experiences they had upon their arrival affected the degree of cultural identification they had with their host society and, subsequently, the ways in which they applied their cultural capital.

In terms of their position as mediators of knowledge, this book's protagonists by and large faced a rather precarious initial situation, since there was almost no public awareness of their plight, and a considerable number of them even recalled being mistaken for National Socialists because of their by then officially German descent.⁴ Legally, they did not arrive as refugees, but rather as migrants, whom the Australian government expected to provide for their own needs. The lack of support complicated their difficult financial situation. Some of them, such as Viola Winkler and Helen Roberts, did not receive any support, which, as Chapter 6 showed, affected their levels of identification and the ways they used and applied their cultural capital and exercised agency. To make things worse, public discourse was largely against them and they were widely perceived as a threat to the labour market as well as to the homogeneity

4 Since Austria was occupied in March 1938, the refugees were legally regarded as Germans.

of the “British” society.⁵ Also, Australians were not accustomed to encountering large numbers of strangers.

As the memories analysed in Chapter 6 revealed, the ways this book’s protagonists had been welcomed and treated after their arrival affected their level of identification and thus also the points in time at which they decided to apply their knowledge and exercise agency. We have furthermore seen that all of them largely relied upon four wider strategies to implement their ideas and their cultural capital within different target groups. Therefore, the question of how, when, and to which target group this book’s protagonists decided to pitch their cultural capital was crucial not only for the success or failure of their translations but also for the degree of their adaptations and transformations. As we saw in the preceding section, many refugees focused their translations and their professional and social activities on local ethnic or religious migrant communities. Since most of the members of those communities had suffered a similar fate, had similar origins, and had similar experiences, they had also learned to operate a similar “cultural keyboard.” As a consequence, they were much more receptive to introduced cultural capital. This leads to the fact that, within their own community of like-minded people, cultural imports or translations did not have to be intensely explained, negotiated, justified, or significantly adapted. Applying translations within such a context necessarily eased and reduced the efforts of exercising agency. Jewish or migrant communities were accessible in terms of size and scope and as a result, members knew each other. Therefore, information about introduced ideas circulated much more quickly and steadily, as shown by the example of Richard Tandler, who acquired his customers mainly within the Jewish migrant community, where members were more likely to appreciate the modernist turn-of-the-century architectural style he had adopted in Vienna.

However, the initial advantages of having a smaller but more closely related target group that allowed the introduction of imported ideas more quickly turned out to be an obstacle after a while. Many of this book’s protagonists extended the range and scope of the group of people they applied their knowledge to, after having established themselves economically. Focusing on wider cultural or economic markets (in most cases with adapted ideas) helped people such as John Hearst, Gerhard Felser, Marie Bergel, Helen Roberts, and others to grow their businesses considerably.

5 Wiemann, “German and Austria Refugees,” 48; Knabl, Petutschnig, and Röck, “But Sympathy Cannot,” 81.

Some of the members of our sample group had begun to introduce their Central European ideas and to promote them to a wider Australian market right after their arrival. Eventually, all of them became successful in realizing their ideas or adapted versions of their ideas. However, as the examples of Charles Anton and Gertrude Langer showed, it usually took them longer to establish themselves publicly and to convince their new environment of the necessity of their translation. As mentioned in the preceding section, their success relied mainly upon their strategy of highlighting the uniqueness of their cultural capital. Felser (theatre), Exiner (modern dance), Langer (art criticism), and Anton (leisure industry) had managed to specialize in different niche markets that allowed them to present and sell their Central European knowledge as unique and important. In all of these cases, our refugees had exercised agency intensely and cooperated with local media to make themselves and their knowledge broadly available.

Focusing their translations and mediations on overseas activities was another strategy some of this book's protagonists used to apply and promote their cultural capital. Here, again, the social capital of the transcultural refugees and their ability of operate the "cultural keyboards" of different societies played an important role for their mediations.

How they exercised agency and where they applied their knowledge affected the level of transformation of their cultural capital. Consequently, who the mediators addressed was important for the development of cultural capital. As shown in the preceding section, ideas and knowledge required a lesser degree of adaption if applied within the framework of smaller groups of like-minded people (such as minority communities). Gerhard Felser's *Kleines Wiener Theater* was a good example of this process. The members of his theatre, like his audience, were all part of Sydney's German-speaking refugee community and had no interest in changing the theatre's repertoire or in expanding its activities. Therefore, the introduced idea of providing theatre plays for the specific group of German-speaking forced migrants that centred "around the identity bias between Austria and Australia and a comparison between the cultures"⁶ and reminded its audience of "the good old days back home"⁷ did not change for decades. In this and in other similar cases, knowledge underwent a low level of transformation. Other mediators transformed their ideas much more intensely: out of the initial idea of establishing a cabinetmaking shop for his predominantly Jewish migrant clientele in

6 Lang, *Fahrt ins Blaue*, 21.

7 Felser, *Kammerspiele Sydney*, 27.

St Kilda, John Hearst and his partner built a large business venture, consisting of various companies, centred around the construction and building industry. The transformation of Hanny Exiner's professional career from dancing and teaching modern dance toward developing and providing academic curricula for dance therapy was another example of high levels of change within refugee knowledge transformations. The same holds true for Charles Anton's efforts at developing Australia's snow fields, which transformed distinctly from his original idea of establishing a mountaineer and ski touring club following the example of the Austrian Alpenverein toward the development of ski resorts for holidaymakers in the mountains.

9.5 What Can We Gain from Studying Displaced Knowledge?

This is the vital question that remains to be answered at the end of this book. Why is it important to gain information about displaced knowledge? What can we learn about past dealings with the migration, transformation, and adaption of knowledge? Answers to all these questions can be found in the political and social challenges and the debates within many modern societies. For at least four decades, our world has been characterized by a heavily intensified process of coming together and entanglement that creates connections and increased information flows throughout the planet.⁸ As a consequence, knowledge and access to knowledge, as well as the understanding of its underlying processes, has become increasingly important. Some scholars have even gone so far as to announce the beginning of an "Age of Knowledge."⁹ It is broadly accepted that we live in an information society and therefore the general value of knowledge and information had been rising for decades, triggered by current social and political debates. Today, more than ever, it is increasingly important to understand how processes of migration-related knowledge acquisition and production work. In this sense, the historical sciences have been addressing the analysis of knowledge, particularly since the so-called "cultural turn" of the 1990s. Thanks to these developments, the history of knowledge has grown into

8 Comp. Philipp Strobl, "The Dawning of a Global Age: Globalization and Global Cities 1600 to 1900" (PhD thesis, University of Innsbruck, 2014); Philipp Strobl, "Defining the 'Indefinable': World Cities as Indicators for the Process of Globalization," in *The Phenomenon of Globalization: A Collection of Interdisciplinary Globalization Research Essays*, ed. Philipp Strobl and Manfred Kohler (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Academic Research, 2013), 39–54.

9 James Dzisah and Henry Etzkowitz, eds., *The Age of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Universities, Knowledge and Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

a modern and productive academic discipline in recent years. Despite all the interest in knowledge, however, little research so far has been located “at the intersection of migration history and the history of knowledge and the debate on the scope of knowledge as a frame for analysis and how this approach might enrich historical research in general has only just begun,” as historians Simone Lässig and Swen Steinberg noted.¹⁰

This book has elaborated further on these aspects. Analysing the memories this book’s protagonists had of their migration-related knowledge translations was crucial, not so much to highlight knowledge as a static product that was brought into a new environment, but rather to increase our understanding of knowledge as an immaterial value—a form of cultural capital—which is mobile, fluctuating, and has a large potential for transformation and change. Focusing on the performative aspects of their knowledge has helped us to understand the complex practices and processes involved in the creation, the adaption, and the dissemination of knowledge. It has furthermore helped us to question and understand a phenomenon that has recently been gaining in importance in modern societies. It has encouraged us to rethink displaced knowledge by understanding it not as an abstract entity but rather as a tangible value that has been crucial for displaced people in rebuilding their lives and careers, as many of the diverse examples mentioned in this book have shown.

A further essential insight this book has offered is a new perspective on how displaced people recalled dealing with their displacement by using what were frequently the only valuables they had left: their cultural and social capital. This, again, boldly underlined the importance of the non-material forms of human capital. It also showed the different approaches migrants as carriers, translators, mediators, and producers of knowledge had taken to get their “alien” knowledge recognized and appreciated in a foreign environment. Learning about these processes can be a first step in finding answers to the current challenges and opportunities offered by migration in our modern society, particularly as historical processes can help us to see the present in a new light. In this sense, this historical perspective will probably also encourage us to rethink migration in terms of its conception as a phenomenon that brings problems, burdens, and hurdles to a host society. As this long-term perspective has shown, initially unwanted people, of whom many Australians did not expect anything but quiet assimilation and gratitude, in “record time”¹¹ turned

10 Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move,” 319.

11 Kwiet, “Re-Acculturation,” 39.

out to be a major stimulus and an influx factor for ideas and know-how—values that proved to be of vital importance for the postwar development of the country, its economy, and its culture. Hence, it is important, as this book has demonstrated, to capture and analyse such complex phenomena as migrations from a *longue durée* perspective to show its overall effects.

This book can be understood as an attempt to illuminate an emerging area of research by offering a comprehensive analysis of the displaced knowledge of a cohort of people. It seeks not only to depict individual performances of translation but rather explains them by highlighting the voyage of their underlying ideas from Austria to Australia (including their transformations). The field of history of knowledge has rarely dealt with migration, despite the potential for rich results of focusing on migrants as mobile actors of knowledge. Herein, however, lies very promising research agendas for a future actor-centred history of knowledge that explores not only academic knowledge embodied in books but also knowledge rooted in experience.

The following paragraphs will point to important future topics and research desiderata at the intersection of the history of knowledge and migration history to encourage future research into actor-centred forms of knowledge and cultural capital that is created and culturally translated during forced migrations. As mentioned above, much more work requires to be done at this intersection to broaden our understanding of how knowledge was displaced, imported, translated, and adapted. Studies about how displaced people in different regions of the world and at different times applied and translated their knowledge are needed to increase our understanding of those complex and accelerating processes at the point where migration and knowledge interact. Studying the performative aspects of knowledge can be particularly fruitful in providing us with crucial answers on how displaced people developed knowledge which was not available to the receiving society and which gave them an advantage in establishing themselves in their new host societies.¹²

Another important field of interest might be the essential question of refugee agency. We do not know much about what displaced people did to exercise agency and about “how they interacted with and conducted to implicit or explicit power formations.”¹³ However, since we know that migration is marked by encounters and the interplay and negotiations between socially unequal

12 Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move,” 336.

13 Rass and Wolff, “What is a Migration Regime?,” 20.

agents of knowledge and by conflicts over the validation and recognition of knowledge, there are many discoveries to be made in this promising area of research. Analysing how refugees have dealt with these conflicts is necessary to understanding when translations have been applied and how they have changed over time. This, as Lässig and Steinberg put it, “is a potentially rich area of study for the history of knowledge.”¹⁴

Long-term studies comparing processes of knowledge acquisition, translation, and adaption are particularly valuable. The historical perspective helps us to understand those processes in their full dimension and this could potentially change commonly held expectations of migration and of migrants. During different times and in different countries, people have commonly regarded migrations as a burden to “their” society. As this book and other long-term analyses of migrations have shown, exploring the *longue durée* effects of migrations often reverses that initially negative picture. Studying migrant knowledge from a long-term perspective could thus enrich our understanding of migration processes in general.

Last but not least, there is a topic that has been widely untouched by researchers. Migrations did not only trigger circulation of knowledge and the creation of new knowledge. In many cases, knowledge experienced devaluation and, in some cases, it even got lost in the process of being displaced. Unearthing these marginalized and lost aspects of history by examining displaced knowledge and the actors behind these processes allows us to “draw conclusions about once effective ideas, values, and practices that were subsequently forgotten, suppressed, or superseded.”¹⁵ Here, again, a transnational perspective that considers not only the hostlands but also the homelands of displaced people could be very fruitful.

This is one of the first comprehensive studies of the knowledge acquisitions, translations, and transformations of a group of displaced people. Naturally, it is far from being complete. However, it shows that it is not only promising but crucial to analyse complex phenomena such as migrations through the lens of a long-term perspective. It also sought to sketch out and debug perspectives and approaches that can be used to grasp abstract terms such as knowledge and cultural capital, and bring them into the spotlight to analyse them. Many more studies are required to shed much-needed light on the complex processes of knowledge transportation and translation—developments we are

14 Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move,” 322.

15 Lässig and Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move,” 320.

only starting to explain. The more research there will be to rely upon, the more it will be possible to put together different pieces of the bigger puzzle of how displaced knowledge works and can be understood. Ultimately, interdisciplinary approaches of larger groups of researchers would be ideal to capture the universal element of displaced knowledge over time and space.

APPENDIX

Photographs



PHOTO 1
Lilly and Gustav Bratspies in
September 1922
WITH PERMISSION OF
FREUDSBUTCHER.COM



PHOTO 2
Charles Anton at Perisher Valley in
December 1956
DOUGLAS BAGLIN PRIVATE
COLLECTION



PHOTO 3 Austrian passport of Charles Anton
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA:
NAA: A435, 1944/4/1110 - CHARLES WILLIAM ANTON



PHOTO 4 Charles Anton and Tony Sponar, another migrant from Central Europe, were the major figures behind the development of the ski resort at Thredbo. They are shown here at the site in summer 1956
GEOFFREY HUGHES PRIVATE COLLECTION

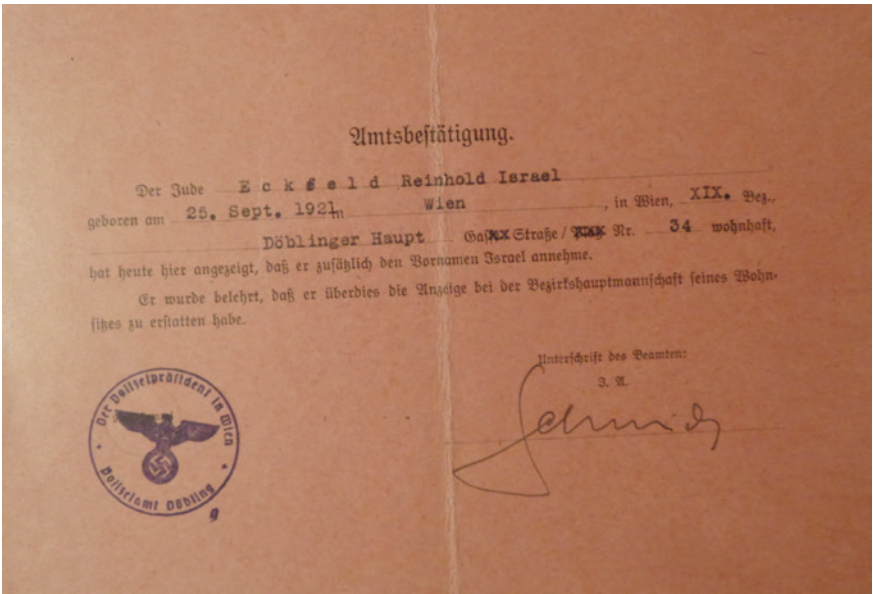


PHOTO 5

The Nazi administration forced male Jewish citizens to take "Israel" as a second given name. This is an official confirmation that Reinhold Eckfeld received about his name change in 1938

REINHOLD ECKFELD PRIVATE COLLECTION

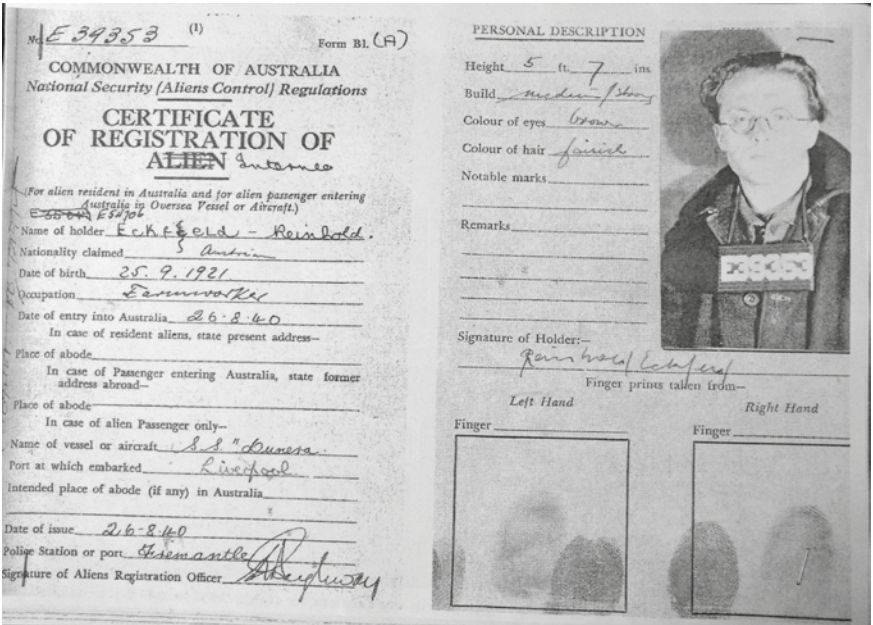


PHOTO 6

Certificate of Registration of Internees

REINHOLD ECKFELD PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 7
Reinhold Eckfeld during the 1940s
REINHOLD ECKFELD PRIVATE COLLECTION

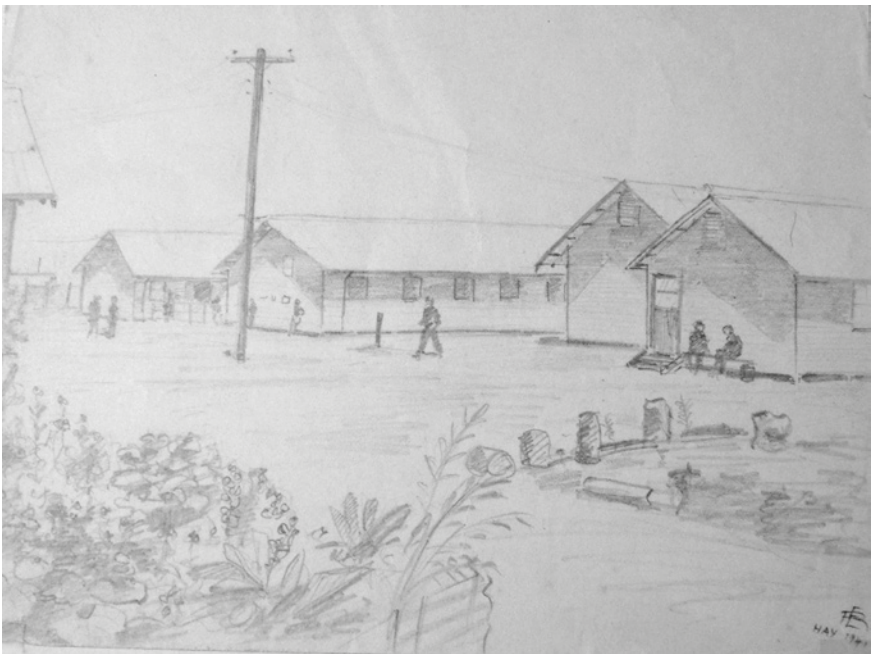


PHOTO 8 A painting of the Internment Camp by Reinhold Eckfeld during the year 1941
REINHOLD ECKFELD PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 9 Passport of Elisabeth Ziegler and her husband, dated 16.02.1939
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA: NAA: A435,
1944/4/5543 - ELISABETH/ERICH ZIEGLER



PHOTO 10 The Langer's house in Brisbane
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS CC0 1.0 UNIVERSAL



PHOTO 11

Gertrude Langer inspecting a local art show in 1941

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS CC0 1.0 UNIVERSAL



PHOTO 12 Hanny Exiner performing on a stage
in Vienna

NATIONAL LIBRARY CANBERRA, EXINER,
JOHANNA, 1918–2006 / 3313996



PHOTO 13 Hanny Exiner teaching children
NATIONAL LIBRARY CANBERRA, EXINER, JOHANNA, 1918–2006 / 3313996



PHOTO 14
Hanny Exiner during the 1980s
NATIONAL LIBRARY CANBERRA,
EXINER, JOHANNA, 1918–2006 /
3313996

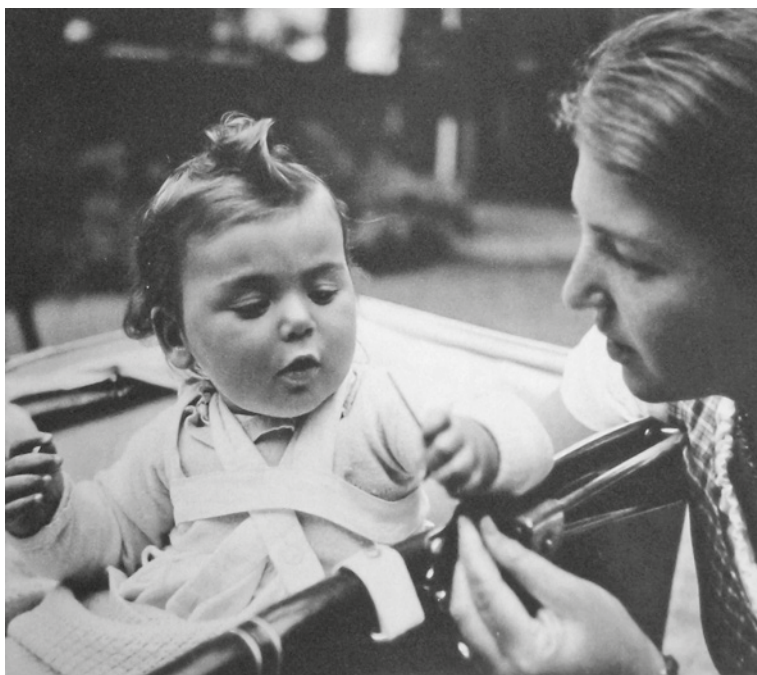


PHOTO 15 Joan Lynn in Vienna in 1935
JOAN LYNN, PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 16 The Bergel family's grocery store in Adelaide during the war
JOAN LYNN, PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 17 The deck of the SS *Anchises* in 1939
JOAN LYNN, PRIVATE COLLECTION

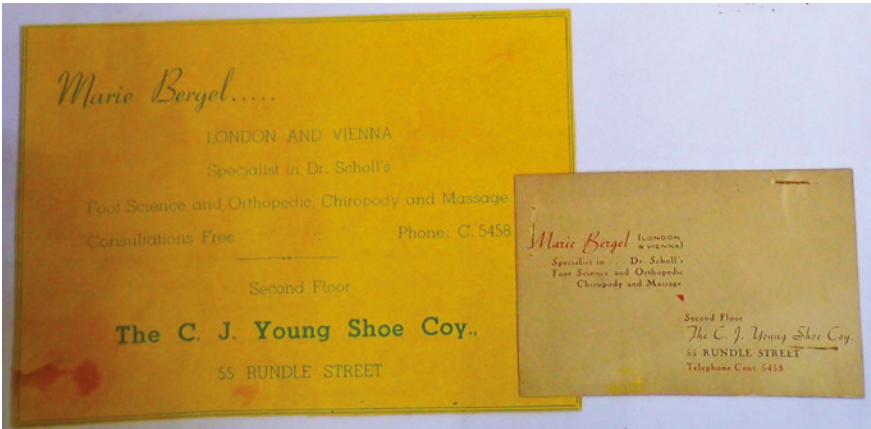


PHOTO 18 Advertising for Marie Bergel's first job in Australia
JOAN LYNN, PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 19 Advertising for the Bergel family's apple juice company in Adelaide
JOAN LYNN, PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 20
Advertising for Marie Bergel's footcare store in Vienna in 1929
ANNO/AUSTRIAN NATIONAL LIBRARY

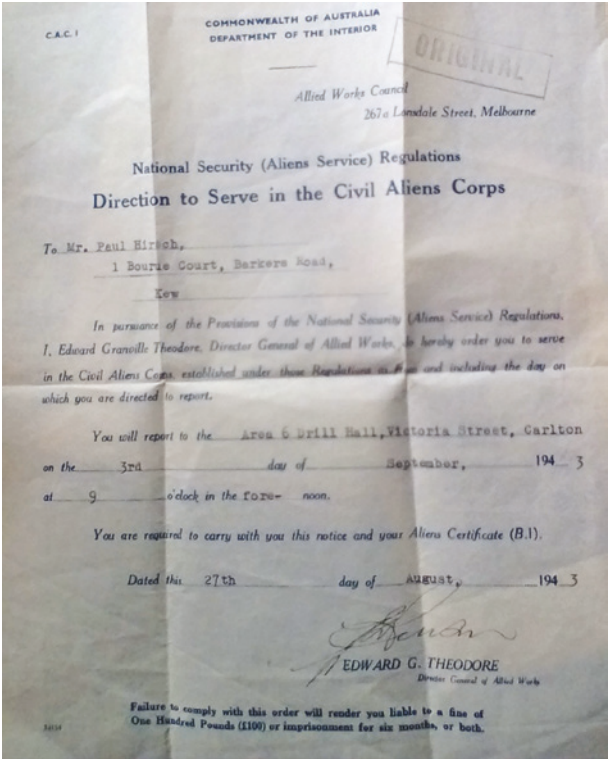


PHOTO 21 Direction to Serve in the Civil Aliens Corps
FRANK PAM PRIVATE COLLECTION

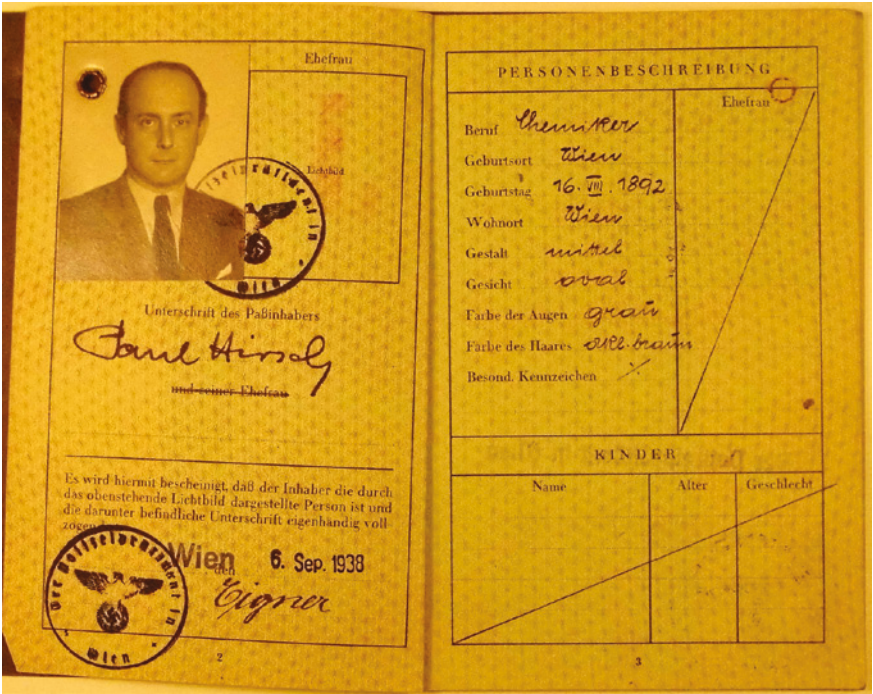


PHOTO 22 Passport of Paul Hirsch
FRANK PAM PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 23
Paul Hirsch
FRANK PAM PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 24 Richard Tandler's family business, the Südfeld Company in Vienna during the 1930s
SUE COPOLOV PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 25
Richard Tandler in 1938
SUE COPOLOV PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 26 St Nicolaus visits the Tandler family during the early 1930s
SUE COPOLOV PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 27 The Tandler family in Vienna before the war
SUE COPOLOV PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 28 Viennese styles in Melbourne, one of the first architectural works of Richard Tandler in Melbourne in 1940
SUE COPOLOV PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 29 SS Ormonde, a steamer that was used by many refugees to come to Australia
ELEANOR HART PRIVATE COLLECTION

Finanzamt Leopoldstadt Wien
2, Schiffamtsgasse 3
(Dienststelle)
ZIM.22
(Altenseiden)

10.209 Wien, 15. NOV. 1938
(Ort und Datum)
A, Schiffamtsgasse 2
(Straße)


Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung
(Gültigkeitsdauer: 2 Monate ab Ausstellung)

Gegen die Ausreise des(r) Kurt Selby (Beruf Georg. Vor- und Zunahme)
ix. Bndery. 4/28 (Wohnort), geboren am xi. 1908 in Borschar
und seiner Ehefrau, geboren am _____
in _____, und seiner Kinder, geboren am _____
_____, geboren am _____, geboren am _____

habe _____
_____ (Unterschrift)

Finanzamt Leopoldstadt Wien
A 4 (Stempel) 6. BR. — 5000. — Österreichische Staatsdruckerei. (St.) 3897 38

PHOTO 30 “Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbestätigung” of Kurt Selby’s wife. This was a taxation form that was required from the Nazi authorities for everyone who wanted to leave Germany
ELEANOR HART PRIVATE COLLECTION


 A (1) No. 14345
 COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION.

WHEREAS Kurt SELBY.....has applied for a Certificate
 of Naturalization, alleging with respect to ^{himself}~~herself~~ the particulars set out on the back
 hereof, and has satisfied me that ^{he}~~she~~ has fulfilled the conditions laid down in the
Nationality Act 1920-1936 for the grant of a Certificate of Naturalization :

AND WHEREAS the said Kurt SELBY,.....
 a Stateless person,
 has sworn allegiance to His Majesty King George VI., his heirs and successors :

NOW THEREFORE I, the Minister of State for Immigration, hereby grant,
 in pursuance of the said *Nationality Act* and the *British Nationality and Status of Aliens*
Acts, 1914 and 1918 of the United Kingdom, to the said Kurt SELBY.....
this **Certificate of Naturalization** whereby, subject to
 the provisions of the above-mentioned Acts, and of any other law affecting the rights
 of naturalized persons, the said Kurt SELBY.....
 becomes entitled to all political and other rights, powers and privileges, and becomes
 subject to all obligations, duties and liabilities to which a natural-born British subject
 is entitled or subject and, as from the date of these presents, has to all intents and
 purposes the status of a natural-born British subject.

DATED this thirty-first day of May,
 One thousand nine hundred and forty-six.


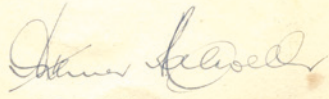


 Minister of State for Immigration.

PHOTO 31 Certificate of Naturalization of Kurt Selby
 ELEANOR HART PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 32 Sue Copolov and her friend Sylvia Watkins on a ski trip to Mount Buller during the 1950s
SUE COPOLOV PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 33 Sue Copolov on a visit in Austria
SUE COPOLOV PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 34 Sue Copolov and her sister in front of a Christmas tree during the early 1930s in Vienna
SUE COPOLOV PRIVATE COLLECTION



PHOTO 35 Sue Copolov and her sister with their first bicycles in Australia during the early 1940s
SUE COPOLOV PRIVATE COLLECTION

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This book follows ideas and knowledge that migrated in the cultural baggage of Austrian refugees, who fled to Australia in 1938 and 1939 because of National Socialism. By telling and comparing the stories of twenty-six different lives, it highlights the processes of acquisition, transportation, translation, and adaption of ideas, knowledge, and cultural capital. This provides a unique and colourful insight into the impact of a group of refugees on their host society over several decades.

As the book shows, there were many different ways in which displaced people relied upon their social and cultural capital to first escape their oppressive homeland and then build new lives. Once they had arrived in Australia, they used very different approaches to negotiate and promote their knowledge and to exercise agency.

PHILIPP STROBL, PhD (2014), University of Innsbruck, is a historian at the University of Vienna, focusing on the intersection of the history of knowledge and the history of migration. He has published monographs, edited volumes, articles, radio plays and podcasts on the history of migration, and in particular on migrating knowledge and its impact on societies in Europe, the United States and Australia.



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