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Workshop
**Boundary Demarcation and Local Politics
in the 19-20 Centuries in Alpen- Adriatic Borderland**
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The Option (1939-) in South Tyrol and the Reaction of Local Inhabitants:
Rethinking the Nationalization in Local Society

1. *The Option* (1939-)

Vote for German nationality and leaving for Reich or maintaining Italian nationality
and remaining at home until December 31. 1939

Optanten / Dableiber, 86% opted for German but mainly stayed at home,

2. Description of *the Option* in Historiography

The characteristics of *the Option* in (South)Tyrolean Historiography

-Mainly focuses only on process of nationality-voting, not on process of
migration by the local inhabitants Cf. “Deutsch oder Italienisch”

- As the result of nationalization by Italy

⇒Question1 :” Failure of nationalizing German speaking people”

Existence of not nationalized (Italianized) people

-“Nation making” by Nazi Germany in South Tyrol:

⇒Question 2:Majority stayed at home ⇔ „völkische Flurbereinigung“

Recent studies about nationalizing local inhabitants in borderlands of the former
Habsburg-Monarchy: not nationalized population after WWII?

Judson (2014), Ballinger (2012), Pergher (2012)

Cole, L. (1996) ←on tyrolean historiography

3. Process of Voting and Migrating of the Inhabitants

3.1 Attempts to Manipulate *the Option* and migration the by Italy and Germany

3.2 Reaction of local Inhabitants against migration: various forms of *the Option*

Delaying of migration, decision of whole migration in Valley of Gröden,

Italians who voted for German citizenship

4. Conclusion:

By states: *the Option* as arena for recruiting nation.

By local inhabitants: *the Option* as a tactic for survival by individual,

for maintaining local economy, adopting to regional economic changes