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The impact of the border on the border regions of South Moravia and Lower Austria before

and after the year 1989

After the Second World War, the neighboring regions of the Czech Republic and Austria

were divided by the Iron Curtain and evolved independently. The aim of this military

protected border was to stop the Czechoslovak people from leaving the country and to

prevent cross-border contacts. Despite some exceptions, the Iron Curtain managed to

stop the movement of the people, but not the one of the environment. This thesis follows

how the environmental processes enabled contacts between these border regions and

how did the activities of one state affect the other even over the tightly closed border.

The aim of this thesis is to question the limits of the Iron Curtain in an area, where a

political border existed, but not a natural one. The thesis argues that the interplay of

central development and local conditions enabled the regions and their inhabitants to

establish contacts in the field of the environment already in the 1980s. After the opening

of the border, however, it became clear that long-term interruption of relations between

the regions and the different interests of central politics in the early 1990s caused a

decrease in the intensity of cross-border cooperation. The regional development of

cross-border contacts is followed in three selected cases from the environmental field –

cooperation in the process of the village renewal, mutual protection of nature along the

border and the cross-border pollution. By analyzing this development, the thesis brings

a regional perspective to the existing historical research of the Czech-Austrian relations

before and after 1989.