

The Transition of Croatian Elites from the Habsburg Monarchy to the Yugoslav State

Analysis of selected bibliography

Introductory remarks

Any attempt to compile even a selected bibliography on such a broad theme as Central and Southeastern European history and the transition of Croatian elites from the Habsburg Monarchy to a Yugoslav state, is in itself an ongoing project. The vast number of recent works is sometimes difficult to grasp, although there are a number of bibliographies that offer help.¹ However, we have decided to compile a selected bibliography of recent studies that are in some respects useful for our project theme and to briefly analyse it. Of course, we are well aware that there are several works that we have not (un)intentionally included.

General Synthetic Works on the History and Culture of the Habsburg Monarchy at the Turn of the Century and the History and Culture of the Kingdom of SHS/Yugoslavia (1918-1941)

Our aim is to create a select bibliography on the last phase of the Habsburg Empire, the first Yugoslavia, and elites in general as well as the major research themes of our project (nobility and economic elite in Croatia and Slovenia; Croatian administrative elite; politically-active Croatian lawyers; university professors and

¹ To quote just a few: Derek H. Aldcroft, Richard Rodger, *Bibliography of European Economic and Social History*, Manchester Un. Press, rev. ed. 1993; *The American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies* e.g. for 1994, compiled by Maria Gorecki Nowak, Aaron Trehub. *Bibliography of American Publications on East Central Europe, 1945-1957*. Robert F. Byrnes _ *The Journal of Modern History*_ Vol 32, No 1; *American Bibliography of Slavic & Eastern European Studies (ABSEES Online)* _ *Slavic Regions and Eastern European Research Database* _ EBSCO; *Central and Eastern Europe Bibliography – Monoskop*; *H-Net* _ *H-Net*; www.kakanien-revisited.at; <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweblibrary/ceecbibliography>

historians; physicians; women and women's associations). Thereby we have concentrated more on recent works than on older ones. We are well aware that a bibliography on such major themes is always incomplete, yet we want to provide a first step for further investigations by our team members, as well as by other interested researchers.

This brief analysis presents just a preliminary report on the „state of the art“ since we are going to pursue further the goal of bibliographical meta-analysis. In general it can be said that, as expected, some themes are well researched, whereas others, especially when it comes to Croatian history-writing are wanting. The most researched field is the late phase of the Habsburg Monarchy. The turn of the century literature is immense, with differing interpretations and a broad thematic scope. To be more precise, the famous „fin de Siècle Vienna“ is no longer interpreted (e.g. by J. Le Rider) as the genesis of postmodern intelligentsia in its criticism, plurality or search of identity (e.g. Beller 2011), for other cities and regions of the Empire have now been brought into focus (Budapest, Prague, Zagreb). A number of new works by Hungarian and international scholars have been devoted to the cultural history of Budapest and Hungary, bringing to light some almost forgotten or widely unrecognised artists and scientists. The other relevant line of research is the cultural history of the Empire as a whole, discovering more common and shared cultural elements (e.g. Johnston 2015), from operetta to architecture. The whole Habsburg legacy has also recently been partly reinterpreted with a number of scholars offering a more balanced picture, showing that in many respects the Monarchy, especially Cisleithania, was far from being an underdeveloped and chaotic state with a conservative monarch (e.g. G. Cohen, P. Judson). Another line of investigation highlights the marginocentric cities and areas, which even in the last phase of the Monarchy characterised by rising nationalism, remained multicultural and tolerant (M. Cornis Pope).

Recently the cultural history at the turn of the century has been the area of interest for many Croatian scholars, especially for art and literature historians. Apart from specific themes, there are synthetic works (e.g. Barbarić 1997; Batušić, Kravar, Žmegač 2001; Žmegač 2012; Kraševac, Vugrinec 2017) on the modernist movement in culture and art. The main characteristic of most of these newer articles and books is that they try to present a broad picture, showing the influence and impetus coming from West or Central Europe but also the presenting the specific Croatian environment. The complex issues of culture are thus being

analyzed both in national and transnational context, presenting complex cultural links in the Habsburg Monarchy as entangled histories (Iveljić 2015).

The history of the first Yugoslavia has not been so vastly researched as late Habsburg history, but recently there are a number of general surveys, as a rule written by international scholars (M.-J. Calic, H. Sundhaussen, D. Djokic). However, the focus is still mostly on political, national and partly economic issues although there are some titles that deal solely with culture (Dimić, Wachtel). Another trend is a comparative approach, covering Yugoslav history as part of the broader theme of South Eastern Europe (e.g. U. Brunnbauer, M.-J. Calic). Croatian historiography has predominantly concentrated on Croatian history in Yugoslavia, neglecting Yugoslav history as a whole. This trend is the result of the fall of communist Yugoslavia and the founding of an independent Croatian state, which brought about a partial reinterpretation of Croatia's own history.

Theories of Elites

Although elites formed the centre of historiographical interest throughout their history, traditional historians have never elaborated a comprehensive theory of elites on which research could be based. Their focus was mainly on individual members, not on elites as such. Elites as groups emerged as a research topic in the late 19th century, mostly in the works of sociologists. Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca, although with considerable differences, formulated the classical sociological theory of elites, later expanded by Robert Michels and Max Weber. The characteristic of this approach is that it conceives of the elite as a fairly homogeneous political group which has the power (and the ability) to make decisions for the whole society in question. Thus constituted, the elites form rather closed entities which can either be modified (through new members) or sometimes experience radical changes (e.g. in a revolution). Although ideologically anti-democratic and especially anti-socialist, these theories formed the base for all subsequent preoccupations with the problem of elites. This strain of research which focuses on elites as political power-holders was continued after the Second World War in the United States (Lasswell, Wright Mills) and also in France (Aron), but

with greater emphasis on the relationship with social formations and especially bringing into focus the role of the intellectual elite as well. Evident here is the influence of Marxist thought, which emphasized the socio-economic basis of the ruling elite (the ruling class) and the role of the intellectual élite of the ruling class as the ideologues of the dominant socio-economic régime (Gramsci). Newer approaches emphasized not the homogeneity, but the heterogeneity and plurality of elites (Schieder). Not only are elites not homogeneous, they are often in conflict, struggling over power, whether political, economic, or symbolic. Furthermore, post-structuralist strains of thought diminished the role of elites as groups and their binary opposition to the majority of a non-elite population by emphasizing the impersonal discursive power which constitutes different symbolic fields, thus blurring the lines between the elite and the non-elite. Cultural approaches also underlined the intertwining of popular and elite culture. Contemporary research thus focuses on elites as heterogeneous and conflicting groups, closely intertwined with their socio-economic and cultural context and relative in their scope, power and influence.

Intellectual, Cultural and Social Elites

Whereas these elites have been rather thoroughly researched at a European level, including overall surveys over longer periods as well as specialised studies (which are presented in other sections of this brief analysis), this cannot be said for Croatian history-writing, which has mostly failed to produce such general syntheses. Intellectual, cultural and social elites have mostly been researched for the modernist period, with the rather obvious prevalence of the intellectual elite, including artists and students, whereas the social aspect has been mostly explored concerning the modern middle-class elite. The activities of these elites have often been analyzed from a national viewpoint or in their relationship with art and culture or politics.

Nobility

Nobility in Europe has been much researched recently, with a proper „revival“ of that topic in some countries like Germany. Since the publishing of Arno Meyer's groundbreaking book in 1981, major trends include a more balanced picture of its relevance in the modern and even contemporary period, with a shift from predominantly political and economic aspects towards culture or everyday-life. Broad historiographical interest has enabled comparative researches, that provide „a big picture“ of the long duree of European nobility. This general trend has also found resonance in Central and Eastern Europe, with a number of relevant monographs or collected essays published recently.

When it comes to the Croatian nobility, however, the literature is wanting, especially any type of synthesis. For example, one can find data on individual families, but almost no survey (exceptions are two articles by M. Gross and M. Kolar). The nobility after the fall of the Monarchy is practically unresearched, although major data can be obtained from the literature concerning the Yugoslav land reform (Šimončić-Bobetko). However, there are signs that this situation is changing, since recently there have been some exhibitions with good catalogues about noble families (Pejačević, Vranyczany) and a number of articles on women, noblemen's representation, and noble estates. Well-researched too are the themes of noblemen's art collections and their castles, manors and palaces.

The literature about the nobility in the Slovenian territory until 1918 is relatively scarce. Ever since the second half of the 19th century the nobility was pushed out of Slovenian society and out of the scientific discourse as well, as it was considered to be foreign, German and unfavourable - even hostile - towards the Slovenian national movement. Consequently it was not an object for academic research, at least not in any systematic form. As far as the 19th century is concerned, the nobility was dealt with only marginally, mainly in connection with national struggles where the nobility was generally (with few exceptions) placed in the ‘German camp’. After 1918 the nobility mostly surfaced in the literature in connection with the agrarian reform carried out by the new Yugoslav authorities, whereas its political and social role was overlooked. Only in the last few years, books and articles by Slovenian historians have been published, analytically presenting some of the most important “Slovenian” noble families, but a broader synthesis of noble society as a whole is yet to be conducted.

Foreign (i.e. non-Slovenian) academic literature has also ignored the nobility on Slovenian territory. The reason for this lies mostly in the fact that the material about former Carniola (as the most Slovenian Habsburg province) is kept in Slovenian archives which are rarely visited by foreign researchers, or it is written in the Slovenian language, unknown to foreign visitors. It is therefore characteristic, that academic works by non-Slovenian (mostly Austrian or Czech) historians, dealing with the decline of aristocracy in the Habsburg Empire, generally include only the current non-Slovenian territory, whereas the central Slovenian territory (former Carniola) remains a “tabula rasa”.

Economic elite

The economic elite is generally well researched, with a number of works dealing not just with the economic activities and results, but also the elite's ideological and political views, its culture and everyday existence. This segment of the social elite, especially in multiethnic states like the Habsburg Monarchy, was often heterogeneous (ethnically, religiously), with an overrepresentation of some ethnic and religious minorities such as Jews. In addition, the members of the economic elite had a widespread net of business and political contacts, and were thus well connected outside national boundaries. These businessmen, accustomed to responding quickly to major and minor changes in economic conditions, were probably the most adaptable part of any social elite.

Croatian economic historiography after 1945 was predominantly under Marxist influence, yet in the 1970s and 1980s it produced good synthetic works on modernization – industrial take-off, banking, commerce, and transport infrastructure, especially railways, urbanisation, demographic transition etc.

Even though there are a number of works on economic history, Croatian history writing has recently neglected synthetic aspects (present in the older works by R. Bićanić, M. Despot, or I. Karaman) producing mostly works that deal with particular aspects (banks, commerce). However, in the past decade new light has been shed on urban history encompassing its economic elite (Zagreb, Osijek); or the economic elite has been analysed from a socio-cultural approach (Iveljić); or as part of the history of ethnic or confessional minorities in Croatia such as the Jews.

The Serbian elite (including economic) has been subject of prosopographically based research (N. Rumenjak).

Economic elite in Slovenia

In previous Slovenian economic historiography, economic elites received little attention in research agendas. This is quite surprising because economic elites are positioned at the centre of strategic decision-making on social and economic development. For this reason, their structure and origin also influences decisively the modes of social and economic modernization. Given their role, they would therefore be expected to be the subject of research. But the economic historiography in Slovenia has been notably built up since the 1960s (i.e. during the communist regime), and this has determined the parameters of the historiography as a whole. Since communist authorities had no understanding for economic history, historians did not have much freedom in their research or interpretation. The interpretation of history, provided by the authorities, was very clear regarding the prewar economic elites. The elite existing before 1945 as a group, or as individual entrepreneurs, were stigmatized and excluded from historical memory.

With social changes at the beginning of the 1990s, a conceptual change emerged in economic historiography as well. Entrepreneurship as a research problem has become an integral part of the interpretation of economic development. The books on individual entrepreneurs, their life paths and business successes, have gradually become a part of academic work attracting younger researchers or even amateur writers. It should be noted that most of these studies do not provide methodological or any other conceptual novelty, but their authors insist on proven descriptive positivism. There is also a lack of criticism, of any analysis of comparative economic efficiency or of studying how entrepreneurial initiatives were financed.

The literature analysis shows that case studies are dominant. Only rarely do these studies attempt to contextualise entrepreneurship in the wider environment of economics or enterprise structures. Nevertheless, these studies are important because they bring together a lot of empirical material that was not yet known or even publicly accessible. These works also show an additional characteristic. All derive from the claim of entrepreneurship as active ownership of the company. Only one study of Slovenian bankers has exceeded the classic concept of

entrepreneurship as personal ownership and management of the company (Žarko Lazarević-Jože Prinčič 2005). This study put to the fore the bank directors, and the leading personalities of banking joint stock companies. It raised questions about the quality of structures and techniques for managing joint stock companies and the relations between the administration and the diffused ownership structure.

The conclusion is clear. The economic elites as influential interest-related groups have not yet been subject to any in-depth research. There is not much research that would present the integration of individual entrepreneurs into groups, depending on interests or capital interconnection. In one study, a definition of (economic) elites was emphasized. According to that study, elites are groups of people who, due to their social position, property or education, have a real power and influence in directing social development. An integral part of this definition is also the fact that society recognizes the importance and therefore the wider social impact of these groups (elites). In addition to the definition, research has highlighted the mechanisms of elite formation during the interwar period. The basic finding is that members of the economic elites were a small group of industrial, commercial and banking companies or business and professional associations. This group of owners and directors was scarce and, through capital and other business connections, quite interconnected. According to fairly realistic estimates, it would amount to about 300 individuals, but actual power was held by a significantly narrower group of owners and directors based around twenty industrial and commercial enterprises and banks (Žarko Lazarević 2010). These findings are complemented by another study that followed capital flows within business networks (Žarko Lazarević-Jože Prinčič 2000). The capital connections were revealed by three power centres, bringing together large entrepreneurs, joint-stock companies and high-ranking government officials. At the heart of these networks, three banks were the source of capital (power): *the Ljubljanska kreditna banka, Kreditni zavod* and *Zadružna gospodarska banka*.

Mitja Sunčič has supplemented this model with a detailed study of the origin and structure of economic elites. The average Slovenian entrepreneur (and member of elite) appears as a man in his late thirties or early forties, originating from a craft or a commercial family. This finding shows the importance of family and professional origin and the values that individual entrepreneurs took on within their family and social environment. This characteristic explains the relatively high level of education of the entrepreneurial community, which, according to survey data, ranks between middle and high school. Entrepreneurs as a community therefore

significantly exceed Slovene average levels of education, which were at the level of basic literacy. The economic space represents the local environment with all the benefits of the social network. Only after the First World War were there slow changes as the economic space of Slovene entrepreneurs expanded in the new Yugoslav economic area.

The Croatian Administrative Elite

So far research in Croatia has provided only partial insight into the topic of the administrative elite. In historical literature this topic is mostly elaborated in the context of 19th century political and social history (eg. M. Gross, I. Iveljić, N. Rumenjak) or in works of legal history (e.g. I. Beuc, D. Čepulo, H. Sirotković). There are several studies of the counties and the great county prefects as representatives of the administrative elite and their position in Croatia. These works also take into account the political, social and economical status of county prefects at the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. B. Vranješ-Šoljan 1991). A conference proceedings has been published on the development of county administration and self-government (ed. D. Pavličević, B. Vranješ-Šoljan 1996). As far as newer literature is concerned, there are useful data in a work of Željko Holjevac (2009) as well as in an exhibition catalogue – *Veliki župani bjelovarski* [Great county prefects of Bjelovar] (2011) which brings short biographies of the great county prefects of some Croatian counties. Ž. Karaula (2009; 2012) has analysed and published the memoirs of the great county prefect B. Budisavljević. These works provide a factual basis for further research of the Croatian administrative elites. Literature on the administrative elite in the transition period after the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy is contained in several historical syntheses (e.g. D. Bilandžić, H. Matković, B. Petranović) as well as analytical works (e.g. I. Banac, T. Cipek). They provide information about members of the governing elite from the Habsburg Monarchy – individuals who became members of the social, economic or cultural elite in the SHS Kingdom. In this regard, recent works are particularly useful, for example, *Jugoslavija u istorijskoj perspektivi* [Yugoslavia in historical perspective] (2017) and the bibliographical lexicon *Senatori kraljevine Jugoslavije* [Senators of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia] (2016).

Croatian Physicians

The secondary literature about physicians is predominantly connected to particular figures and their contributions to various institutions and specialisms. A few important books have been published about prominent medical institutions such as the Medical faculty in Zagreb (Pećina, Klarić), the School of Public Health in Zagreb (Zebec, Vuletić, Budak, Dugac), and other hospitals and medical institutions (Mihaljević-Pleša). In the last few years some international publications have also concentrated on public health in interwar Croatia – Yugoslavia as an important area that influenced international public health (Borowy, Grunner, Hardy, Promitzer, Trubeta, Turda). Generally the secondary literature can provide some information about the constitution of important medical institutions and the work of some prominent physicians, as well as about the formation of an internationally recognizable public health system. At the same time, recent literature has been characterized by a lack of attention to precise connections between medical elites and their influence on the various social, cultural and economic agendas (in terms of medicine and medical specialization, but also in the public health sector).

University and University Elites

The Croatian, Serbian and Slovenian literature about university professors of history and historians, university elites or other intellectual elites, still clearly shows a lack of transnational or comparative perspectives. In contrast to international researchers, the majority of Croatian, Serbian or Slovenian historians in this field are predominantly focused on national issues and, with rare exceptions, conduct their research with little attention to the Habsburg or Yugoslav context. For example this means that Croatian historians are often analysed separately from Serbian or Slovenian historians, even though they intensely cooperated with each other, and were intertwined through professional and personal ties, that continued

even after the new Yugoslav state was established. The same statement generally applies also to the literature on university and intellectual elites.

Women's Associations and Movement

Research on women's organizations in Croatia in the first half of the 20th century can be divided into three categories: analysis of specific women's organizations before or after the First World War; papers dealing with a certain category of women's associations (for example, professional women's associations) over a given period; and syntheses of the Yugoslav women's movement. The bibliography on this topic mostly consists of shorter articles, chapters in books, master theses or doctoral dissertations. These works provide a factual basis for further researches that certainly bridge the gap of the transition period after the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy and thereby contextualize women's organizations in the political and cultural processes which created a new state and a Yugoslav women's movement.

Croatian Lawyers

There is little historical research on the subject of the Croatian legal profession either in the late Habsburg monarchy or in the early years of the Yugoslav kingdom. A rare study is the doctoral dissertation (1988) by an American historian Sarah Kent but she only covers the late 19th century. However, there are a number of classic studies about Croatian law (e.g. Nikola Ogorelica, 1899), and some general works about the history and mindset of lawyers in the Croatian or Yugoslav context: essays by the Novi Sad lawyer Milorad Botić (1991), and the (Serbian-focused) *Istorija Jugoslovenske Advokature* (1998/2000) which deals in passing with Croatian territory. These, together with Croatian legal journals such as *Odvjetnik* (from 1927) provide a basic framework for researching the subject. The detailed material on the topic comes however from the individual memoirs of key 'political' lawyers such as Hinko Hinković (1927) and Franko Potočnjak (1921), and above all from archival material in Zagreb and Belgrade. In Zagreb, the lawyers Radivoj Walter, Ivo Politeo, Hinko Hinković, Viktor Aleksander and

Dušan Popović have all left personal papers, with Walter's manuscripts especially illuminating on the transition of this elite and its changing social organization. In Belgrade, most useful are the records of the Yugoslav Ministry of Justice which deal with Croatian lawyers' participation in formulating the new Yugoslav penal code in the 1920s.

The Croatian legal elite was of course never a united body: some lawyers were more politically engaged than others and held fundamentally different political viewpoints. This is clear from the recent biographies of Ivo Politeo (2015) or the Bjelovar lawyer Ivša Lebović (2007), and from the way that lawyers might evaluate state centralization after 1918 (e.g. the tension in 1920 between ex-lawyers Matko Laginja and Franko Potočnjak). However, it is possible from surviving material to explain the various career trajectories of different lawyers. Some continued to play a very influential political role in the new state after 1918 (Trumbić, Laginja, Lukinić). Some simply continued their previous legal role in upholding an impartial judiciary in Croatia (e.g., supreme state prosecutor Viktor Aleksander). Others chose to retire or were dismissed since they were too compromised by their Habsburg loyalties (Milan Accurti, former state prosecutor in Zagreb). The archival material also shows well how the evolving organization of lawyers was both regional and centralized: for example, an especially lively lawyers' society existed in Osijek well before 1914, while in Zagreb lawyers only slowly began to be more protective of their interests and to envisage a Croatia-wide organization. This Croatian organization was then slowly reactivated in the 1920s, and by the end of the decade had a more confident profile in the state. The research so far has uncovered the real diversity of Croatian lawyers as an elite: firstly in how they interacted with the political state (Habsburg or Yugoslav), and secondly in how their legal training and experience might inform their moral stance towards 'state injustice', whether in Austria-Hungary or in Yugoslavia. In 1914 one lawyer (Robert Siebenschein) expressed publicly his desire that Croatian lawyers would finally begin to feel some pride in their profession. The evidence suggests that a certain transformation – a professionalization of the judicial elite – did indeed accelerate during the transition period from the Habsburg into the Yugoslav regime.