

Modernization and the re-formulation of parliamentary parties in Croatia at the turn of the century

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Abstract

At the turn of the century, parliamentary life in Croatia confirmed the modernization of society. The composition of the Croatian Diet has laid more stress on elected representatives before the appointed members (*Virilists*). This paper will show how the parliamentary elections influenced the formation of new political parties and mobilized public opinion. It will also examine government manipulation through constituency boundaries to diminish the voting power of the opposing party. The unstoppable change of political power directly affected the political landscape, paving the way for a new type of elite. The national question became a very important topic, bringing together different factors on an ethnic basis. At the same time, the economic transition proved the social stratification of the population that affected the existing political system. The paper seeks to fill the mentioned gap in research, reconstruct the inner-party structures, and analyze its leadership. The topic of this paper also includes two cases of territorial units within the Dual Monarchy with most Croats. The examples of the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia, associated with the lands of the crown of St. Stephen under the Hungarian halves of Monarchy, and Istria as an integral part of Austria presented both how members of parliamentary elites cooperated despite different electoral laws. In this way, the author argues that the various groups and clubs were interconnected. They established political missions based on the integral idea of the modern nation and the perspective of parliamentary affairs as a pillar of constitutionalism.

Keywords: Croatia, parliamentary elections, social groups, voting choice, distribution of Sabor seats, party affiliations

1. Introduction

In terms of Croatian historiography, previous generations of historians have published rich accounts of the relevant political parties in the time of the Habsburg Monarchy and have written about their place in national history, focusing above all on ideological questions. In this regard, pride of place in the dominant narrative belongs to the role of political parties in the process of national integration and the formation of a new civil society, with a particular emphasis on their critique of the Austro-Hungarian political system impeding

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faster development¹. Nevertheless, in contrast to most European historiographies which have already researched the activity of parties in the area of parliamentarianism and the mobilization of social movements, Croatian historians have selectively approached the questions of winning representative mandates and the influence of political modernization. An example of this is the standard work by Ivo Perić, *Hrvatski državni sabor*, vols. 1–2 (Zagreb 2000) which is rife with a general overview of the history of Croatian parliamentarianism in a traditional manner. This type of research for the most part focused on a description of constitutional questions during electoral campaigns and parliamentary sessions. Consequently, parliamentary debates and other political events are generally presented without a systematic analysis of the electoral system and so transitional processes in the economy and their concomitant societal consequences are not tied to parliamentary developments. In this sense, the effects of political changes are above all shown in the context of struggles between individual national parties and their representatives in the state centers of Vienna and Budapest. Thus, it is necessary to pay closer attention to the societal foundation of individual party ideologies and show how problems associated with modernization influenced the formation of the political scene.

2. Overview of economic and social structures

At the beginning of the 1890s, the total population of Croatia and Slavonia as part of the lands of the Hungarian crown was 2.18 million. It rose steadily in succeeding years to 2.46 million in 1900. In 1910, the last census before the First World War, it was 2.62 million. The socio-economic development gave further impetus to the process of demographic transition, which implies the shift from a traditional way of reproduction that takes place with high birth rates and high mortality rates to a modern regime of population reproduction with lower birth and mortality rates². That term is based on ideas from historical demography, arguing that the modernization process stimulated inevitable circumstances for population growth and gave chances for more intensive social mobility.

However, the intensive migration profoundly affected Croatian demographic developments from the 1870s to 1914. The number of overseas emigrants, including Croats from other regions such as Dalmatia and Istria, has been estimated at 500,000. The net migration balance was very high. It was 3.90% of the whole population, which reduced the natural population by 30%³. At the same time, the number of Germans, Hungarians, Czechs,

¹ Mirjana Gross, "Social Structure and National Movements among the Yugoslav Peoples on the Eve of the First World War". In *Slavic Review* 36, no. 4 (1977), 628–643.

² For further information on demographic trends, see: *Statistički godišnjak Kraljevina Hrvatske i Slavonije* (Statistical Yearbook of the Kingdoms Croatia and Slavonija), vol. I (Zagreb, 1913).

³ Jakov Gelo, *Demografske promjene u Hrvatskoj od 1780 do 1981* (Zagreb: Globus, 1987), 189.

Slovaks and Ruthenians in Croatia and Slavonia rose, showing that the demographic changes intertwined social transformation with the power relationship in the Monarchy. For example, the number of inhabitants whose mother tongue was German increased from 83,139 in 1880 to 134,078 in 1910, reaching a share of about 4.7% of the total population. For policymakers, the ethnic markers sparked a permanent debate over national issues. The problems of the ethnic demography caused widespread concern among the elites, who stated that the data collection reflected long struggles between the Slavs and non-Slav peoples.

The social composition of Croatian society at the end of the 19th century presents economic backwardness, which was particularly visible in the statistics of literate citizens. Only after 1900 did the number of illiterates fall below 50%. Even in these transition decades, all territories under the Croatian government kept agricultural characteristics. This assertion, however, allows us to provide some other considerations. The common market, railway network and respective legislative actions began to function. According to a recent study, Croatia started with modern development in the second half of the 19th century despite the consequences of the agrarian crisis and other remarks that have exacerbated political and social tensions in the community⁴. But the highest part of the population was still firmly tied to agriculture with low performances and unstable credit institutions. Farmers had yet to adapt to the modern rules of entrepreneurship and the market economy in which low prices prevailed. That is why Croatia failed to lose the status of a backward country on the European periphery and did not catch up economically with the richest lands of the Habsburg Monarchy. There were, nevertheless, visible signs of increased social mobility. More than 8% of the working population was engaged in trade and industry. The number of intellectuals who worked in industry has almost doubled. In the same period witnessed the gradual spread of government bureaucracy and service sector. Other professions (banking, insurance, commerce, liberal professions, transport) had a relatively low share of the total population with a slight growth tendency. Thus, provided data outlined the gradual division of labour, but as a part of a process that manifests itself in slow evolution towards the industrial society.

Even though social changes occurred during a deep political crisis, Croatia experienced some strengths and advances. In the period from the Croatian Hungarian Compromise to the beginning of the 20th century, the number of the city's population increased by more than 100,000 people. In the late nineteenth century, rapid urban growth affected the larger towns with far-reaching centrality functions, while places with less than 5,000 residents stagnated.

⁴ Vladimir Stipetić, "Stanovništvo Hrvatske u XIX. stoljeću (1800 – 1914)". In *Hrvatska i Europa: kultura, znanost i umjetnost*, ed. Mislav Ježić (Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 2009), 17.

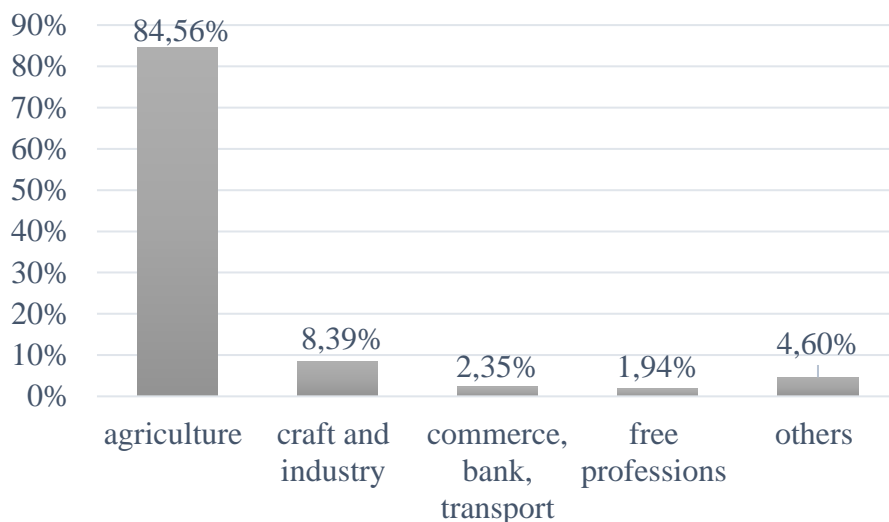


Figure 1: Social composition of population in Croatia-Slavonia, 1900

Urban settlements also attracted immigrants due to the introduction of modern infrastructure (schools, water supply, sewerage, electricity, and gas systems) and industrial enterprises. The increase of municipal revenues indicated approving budgets that stimulated public spending. These shifts had beneficial side effects on social composition, supporting diversification and job creation. Little by little, they gave rise to new organizations which mirrored middle-class interests, and in particular, domestic entrepreneurs. Many of them were recruited from the peasantry. At the same time, social mobility did not endanger the positions of local artisans and merchants. Small-sized towns, on the other hand, hardly grew at all. Until the First World War, there were only ten urban settlements with more than 10,000 inhabitants. So Croatian society generally rested on the rural area, and small proprietors possessed a large share of agriculture. The backbone of the economy was the private land fund distributed among 400,000 properties. The problem lay in the land fragmentation so that smallholders were poor taxpayers without impact on political and economic decisions. The real strength was in the hands of dozens of aristocratic families with large estates over 500 hectares, whose vital interest was to defend a continuation of power. Their members shared anxiety over the social change threats. In other words, the changing anatomy of Croatia still confirmed the socio-political gap in a predominantly rural society, but in opening to new social groups, facing the challenges of modernization.

3. The Legal and Political Framework

In the period under review, the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia (henceforward Croatia) was on the periphery of the Empire, functioning with limited autonomy within the Hungarian part of the Monarchy on the basis of the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise of 1868. The Compromise with the Magyars offered a limited amount of self-administration. Despite this sub-

dualist solution, Croatia was subjected to Budapest in many respects, most especially in financial matters, while diplomatic and joint military affairs were under the purview of Vienna⁵. All in all, in deliberations with Hungary, Croatia obtained autonomy in matters of internal administration, judicial affairs, religion, and education. The Croatian government, within the scope of its authority, was able to enact electoral laws, according to which it carried out elections in conjunction with the approval of the crown and by which it kept an eye on the Magyar leadership. In this manner, a solid foundation was established that provided the legislature a means to intervene in the social transformation and allowed local leaders to formulate specific goals and attempt to bring them into reality.

Table 1: Population in selected cities

City	1890	1900	1910
Zagreb	38.742	57.690	74.703
Osijek	19.778	23.018	28.505
Zemun	12.823	14.517	15.835
Karlovac	12.467	13.454	14.992
Varaždin	11.055	11.494	12.149

On the other hand, based on the Croatian Hungarian Compromise, Magyar statesmen and the Budapest Parliament could control key changes. For example, the Hungarian Minister President had the right to appoint the key representative of the Croatian administration. This is the office of the Ban, who was in fact the president of the Croatian government with the right to appoint the members of his government and the administrative chief of the eight counties that made up the administrative territory of Croatia. The Ban, alongside the Minister for Croatia without portfolio in the central government of Budapest, regularly reported to the Hungarian Prime Minister on the electoral results in Croatia and the conferences of the ruling party. In this manner the Hungarian side insured its status as the stronger partner in statehood on the Transleithanian territory. For this reason, from the outset of the Compromise most of the public opinion in Croatia perceived the agreement to be a diktat from Budapest. Besides this, criticism was directed towards the Emperor and King Franz Josef, who in the conflict between Croatia and Hungary took the position that he would not allow a reform of the Dualist structure of the Monarchy.

As foundational legislation, the Croatian Hungarian Compromise guaranteed the autonomy that, despite all of its limitations, ensured the continued development of a more diverse political life right up to the collapse of Austria-Hungary. Elections to the Croatian Sabor demonstrated the

⁵ For an overview of the Compromise, see Hodimir Sirotković, “Die Verwaltung im Königreich Kroatien und Slawonien 1848-1918” in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, II: Verwaltung und Rechtswesen*, eds. Adam Wandruszka, Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), 469–498 and Dalibor Čepulo, *Hrvatska pravna povijest u europskom kontekstu* (Zagreb: Pravni fakultet, 2012).

appearance of a variety of parties. At the turn of the century, the old parties fractured into various groupings and lost popularity. On the other hand, a sphere was created for the emergence of new parties that sought wider representation among the workers and peasants.

Besides this, the experience during dualism was not limiting political activities merely within the framework of national autonomy. According to the stipulations of the Croatian Hungarian Compromise, the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia had the right to send delegates to the upper and lower houses of the Parliament in Budapest⁶. From the reintegration of the Military Frontier in 1881, the Croatian Sabor selected 40 delegates from its ranks and sent them to a joint Hungarian Croatian parliament. These delegates were exclusively selected from the majority party in the Zagreb Sabor. A significant portion of the opposition was under the influence of the Party of Right, which did not recognize the legitimacy of the Hungarian Croatian Compromise and, for this reason, did not want to be selected to these joint assemblies. Right at the beginning of the twentieth century, this attitude contributed to the dominance of the ruling party – among the Croats this meant the pro-Unionist National Party – which thus took part in the joint assembly without conflicting with the Magyar government. To the Croatian opposition, this was proof of the Croatian government's subjugation to the Magyars and its acquiescence to the constitutional initiatives of the Magyar liberals. Research has shed little light on the status of the Croatian delegates. The opposition often criticized the delegates for lavish spending during their service with the joint assembly, calling them “the stipendists of Budapest”⁷. Changes in the governments in Budapest and Zagreb in 1905-1906 immediately led to attempts to continue the work of the joint assembly. However, the political conflicts surrounding the use of the Magyar language on Croatian railways led to parliamentary obstructionism. In this sense the prestige of the Croatian delegates was raised at home because they were seen as energetic defenders of Croatian interests in the joint assemblies. The chief source of dissatisfaction among the Croatian public from the outset of Dualism lay in the territorial division and administrative fracturing of the lands which historically belonged to Croatia or had Croat majorities (the

⁶ András Cieger, “Croatian representatives in the Hungarian parliament (1868–1918)”, in *Prekretnice u suživotu Hrvat i Mađara. Ustanove, društvo, gospodarstvo i kulture/A horvát-magyar együttélés fordulópontjai. Intézmények, társadalom, gazdaság, kultúra*, eds. Pál Fodor, Dinko Šokčević (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi, 2015), 461–470, and Branko Ostajmer, “Croatian representatives in the joint parliament in Budapest (1868–1918)”, in *Prekretnice u suživotu Hrvat i Mađara. Ustanove, društvo, gospodarstvo i kulture/A horvát-magyar együttélés fordulópontjai. Intézmények, társadalom, gazdaság, kultúra*, eds. Pál Fodor, Dinko Šokčević (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi, 2015), 471–478.

⁷ For criticism of the Croatian delegates in a joint parliament, see Josip Frank's speeches in the Croatian Diet, in *Stenografski zapisnici Sabora Kraljevina Hrvatske, Slavonije i Dalmacije, 1906–1911*, vol.1, 105–110, and vol. 2, 163. See also opposing views by the newspaper reporter from the Budapest parliament in Marija Zagorka, *Kako je bilo* (Belgrade: Zabavna romana, 1953), 36.

Military Frontier, Dalmatia, Rijeka, and Istria). In contrast to this position, however, the representatives of government in Croatia, regardless of their political affiliation, regularly emphasized that the Compromise, despite its shortcomings, established the long-term foundations for stable transformation without involving radical forces and enabled a political consolidation, which allowed for a series of legal reforms and adjustment to a more modern life. According to them, the framework of the Dual Monarchy guaranteed the integration of Croatia in a wider economic sphere which was developed to a higher degree and, as such, could contribute to a more favorable social development⁸. In this sense, it was clear that it would fall to the twentieth century to provide an answer whether it was possible to democratize society and, in that way, transform an established political hierarchy.

4. Transformation of social conditions

Parliamentary life at the turn of the century confirmed the first manifestations of societal modernization which came into being in the spring of 1848 and then, following that fateful year with varying intensity, finally took shape in the 1870s through a series of legal changes leading to political autonomy⁹. At the time of Ban Ivan Mažuranić (1873-1880), a compromise was reached with the Hungarian government, which ensured more systematic reforms in the areas of administration, justice and education. Most laws followed the Austrian model which brought civil equality to Jews and members of other legally recognized religions. Inexorable changes in the economic sphere directly affected the political landscape, creating the pathways for the formation of a new type of elite tied to domestic entrepreneurs who would come into their own at the time of the collapse of the Monarchy and during the interwar period. At the same time, it was revealed that the national question remained important, tying together various elements on an ethnic basis. The Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Hercegovina (1878) and the massive protests in Croatia (1883) against the use of the Magyar coat of arms on public buildings, which ended with the introduction of a commissariat, revealed the sources of political crisis in the dualist structure of Austria-Hungary, but also the strength of national unrest, which cut deeply across broad spectrums of society.

Several changes emphasized Croatia's transformation into a civil society at the end of the nineteenth century. The appearance and development of modern society, which encompassed the beginning of an industrial working class, was evident in the growth of urbanization. In this period, the increase in tertiary industries was also shown by the development of credit institutions, commerce and transportation. For this reason, it is stated that at this time

⁸ Arnold Suppan, "Die Kroaten", in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918, III: Die Völker des Reiches*, eds. Adam Wandruszka, Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980), 626–733.

⁹ Čepulo, "Building of the Modern Legal System in Croatia judiciary 1848-1918", *Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu* 56, no. 2-3 (2006), 47–91.

emerged a “democratic-progressive oriented domestic core of industrial entrepreneurial society”, which began to assert itself in political life¹⁰. At the same time, a liberal intervention occurred in the prevailing type of peasant family. The aim of the Croatian government was to replace the autarchic agrarian society with a modern market-oriented agriculture. This was a key issue at the turn of the century because it was aimed at completing the social emancipation of the peasantry, which made up 84% of the economy and whose economic production was tending toward mild decline¹¹. The decline of collective households was leading to the fragmentation of the peasant family – the peasant commune. As a result of this fragmentation, which increased rapidly during the agrarian crisis of the 1870s, peasant landholdings were decreasing in size and a portion of the peasantry emigrated. Some of the rural population left for the towns of Croatia.

The long-awaited dissolution of the Croatian-Slavonian Military Frontier zone (*Militärgrenze*), whose population numbered just under 700 000 inhabitants, led to its reintegration within Croatia in 1881¹². The transformation from a military to a civilian system forced its adaptation to new conditions. In other words, a military society, despite the social unrest created by the introduction of direct taxes, gradually converged with the civilian areas of Croatia. Thus, in 1883, special elections were held in the former territory of the Military Frontier in conjunction with the administrative boundaries of the old regiments. After that, with an amendment of the electoral law, new electoral districts were created, which directly elected representatives to the Croatian Sabor from the territories of the former Military Frontier. According to the experts on the Military Frontier, the reintegration of the territory did not lead to any larger issues, except for the peasant households who had to accept the new tax burden.¹³ However, there were disturbances among the peasants in the Kordun region in 1897 because the population there felt the local administration was oppressive. Violent unrest was quickly suppressed, demonstrating that state authority could easily deal with dissatisfaction in the peasant communes¹⁴. In this way, elections

¹⁰ Igor Karaman, *Hrvatska na pragu modernizacije, 1750–1918* (Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2000), 247.

¹¹ Rene Lovrenčić, *Geneza politike “novoga kursa”* (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Institut za hrvatsku povijest, 1972), 25.

¹² Concerning the fate of the Military Frontier in the second half of the nineteenth century, see Ben Rothenberg, *The Struggle for Jerusalem: A Picture Story* (Tel-Aviv, 1950), 63–78, and Mirko Valentić, *Vojna krajina i pitanje njezina sjedinjenja s Hrvatskom 1848-1881* (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Centar za povijesne znanosti, Odjel za hrvatsku povijest, 1981).

¹³ Karl Kaser, *Slobodan seljak i vojnik. Povojačeno drušvo 1754-1881*, 2 (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1997), 208.

¹⁴ On the specific mentality of society in the Military Frontier, see Stefano Petrunaro, *Kamenje i puške. Društveni protest na hrvatskom selu krajem XIX. Stoljeća* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2011).

from the early 1880s to the end of the nineteenth century revealed the long-term alignment of political forces in Croatia, which suited the ruling parties in the state, guaranteeing them over these two decades more than two thirds of the seats in the Sabor. According to the 1888 electoral law, Croatia consisted of 90 electoral areas. In actuality, the Parliament consisted of only 88 seats, because the two representatives from the city of Rijeka sat in the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest instead of the Croatian Parliament as the electoral law prescribed. The Sabor was to sit for five years. The electoral law was based on the majoritarian system. In contrast to the earlier electoral law, the number of representatives was reduced by 20 mandates. About 2% of the population had the right to vote. The reason for this limited franchise was the high barrier set by the tax qualification. The 1888 law introduced property qualifications for *virilists*, that is, the delegates who were seated in the Sabor based on an invitation from the Ban. These representatives, who were not elected, were members of the male elite (titled aristocrats) and high Church dignitaries from the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Greek Catholic Churches. Each of the eight County Chiefs (*župani*) of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia, who together headed the local administrative structures, also had a vote in the Sabor. Thus, some obtained their seats in Parliament by occupation and service, others through inheritance. The appointed delegates or *virilists* had to be fluent in the Croatian language. The number of these parliamentary members could not exceed half the number of elected delegates. About 20 *virilists* sat in the Sabor. The system of appointed delegates was a holdover from the old estates system where privilege by birth reigned. Indeed, a historical representation of interest took place which led to a modernization of the parliamentary system.

More profound changes to the electoral system took place on the eve of the First World War. A new electoral law in 1910 kept the number of electoral mandates to 90, but significantly broadened the franchise, so that about 10% of the population could vote. Namely, a reduction in the tax qualification increased the number of voters from 48 586 to 190 043. Along with a four-fold increase in voters, indirect voting was also eliminated. Nevertheless, this reform was not sufficient to meet the expectations of public opinion, so in 1917 the government introduced legislation that was to open the road to true democratic principles. The new law anticipated an increase from 90 to 122 electoral districts. The new law did not come to fruition, however, as the War's end came quickly, and, with it, the secret ballot too did not come to be in Croatia under the Habsburg dynasty.

From the point of view of social structures, attention should be paid to the rise of certain influences at the turn of the century, which were not so apparent at the time of the first modern elections to the Sabor. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, the bureaucracy, which on average made up one third of the mandates to the Sabor, expanded. From a historical point of view, bureaucracy was one of the carriers of modernization to 1868. However, its members were not always loyal to party-political factions. Pragmatism was the bureaucrats' primary consideration. During the 1860s, its members were part of the offices of the court (*kroatisch-slawnische*

Dikasterium and the *Hofkanzlei*) and were characterized by their support for the notion that Croatia should rely on Vienna. Following the compromise with Hungary in 1868 they saw Croatia's future as best assured by orderly relations with Hungary, though with a reduced sphere of intervention from Budapest. The Unionist starting point was the executive branch of government's strict adherence to the terms of the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise. Traditional historiography has painted them as a vital link in the compromise between reactionary circles and the liberal-conservative elite which slowed progress by protecting its privileged position. Yet, this assessment neglects the role the bureaucracy played in creating new electoral law, administrative reform, and the advances the state made in many areas of public life, such as supporting the development of national culture and economy and fostering modern civil society. On the other hand, the political unrest brought about by the crisis in Dualism (1895–1905, led to a movement in which the domestic entrepreneurial class became a relatively important factor in a land which increasingly yearned for economic independence¹⁵. From then on it became clear that, due to a growing modernist transformation, the bureaucracy alone was no longer a reliable support for the regime.

At election times, the loyalty of bureaucrats to the regime was a common cause of debate. The elections show that public servants often supported the regime by electing candidates friendly to the regime and even running for office themselves. Since elections did not take place by secret ballot, it was always public knowledge how someone voted. Thus, the state could easily control the political behavior of public servants. If public servants did not vote for the government, they could be subject to demotion, dismissal, forced retirement, and so on. Thus, the opposition considered bureaucracy to be part of the group of voters who the government could coerce to support the ruling government's party.

An example of the significant influence of bureaucracy on elections can be seen in the 1906 parliamentary elections, when the results favored the opposition. In these elections, the bureaucracy was allowed to vote freely. New winds had blown because the new government in Budapest openly allowed a group of public officials who were employed in joint Croatian Hungarian administrative affairs (such as finance and rail transportation) to vote freely. Another step was to ignore the previous practice of coercing urban and local bureaucrats to support the government party. The result was the defeat of the National Party, which had been the main bulwark of Dualism for the previous two and a half decades. This key change had major effects. First, the Hungarian government gave the green light to the opposition to form a majority in the Croatian Parliament. Second, opposition parties appeared in Croatia grouped around the Croat Serb Coalition, or HSK, who were prepared to cooperate with the Hungarian government under the condition that Ban Károly Khuen-Héderváry be removed. In practice, this meant that the bureaucracy had supported the HSK, which would go on to win convincing majorities in Sabor elections right at the end of the First World War. In this way, the bureaucracy kept its influence. It showed that the coalition model

¹⁵ Lovrenčić, *Geneza politike "novoga kursa"*, 22–24.

was an advantage at a time when parties were forming. On the other hand, the policies of the Hungarian government, which was once again interpreting the Compromise in a centralist spirit, were creating a new division in Croatian Hungarian relations and dissatisfaction with the court which would not support reforms favoring wider Croatian autonomy. In this context, the HSK adopted a compromising stance, avoiding an open conflict with the Hungarians all the way up to the end of 1918, when it was included in the process of the disintegration of Austria-Hungary. Through this firmer endorsement of the old Unionist idea, the HSK guaranteed good relations and cohabitation with the Bans that enjoyed the support of the Hungarian government and court.

Alongside this, a social restructuring took place as the old professions, such as the clergy, gave way to a new intelligentsia made up of the free professions (lawyers, doctors, apothecaries, journalists, writers, and engineers). The political position of the clergy largely weakened in favor of secular power. Bishops and patriarchs were no longer in the leading political ranks as they had been in the earlier period. Regardless, the Catholic and Orthodox Churches continued to have a certain amount of political power that could not be ignored. Many clergymen were involved in the elections as either candidates for various parties or as agitators in political campaigns. Priests regularly won seats in various periods. At the turn of the century, the Catholic hierarchy attempted to mobilize its internal forces and thereby weather the storm. In the case of the Catholic Church, the bishops attempted to form the Croatian Catholic movement, or HKP, in order to mobilize the lay youth and create a new elite to withstand the liberalization of public life. As it was the case with other Croatian parties, outside political sources had a significant influence on Christian socialism. The encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII and the formation of organized political Catholicism in other parts of Europe spurred a response to secularization in Croatian Catholicism. The success of the *Christlichsoziale Partei* in Austria led by the Vienna mayor Karl Lueger and the Catholic association in Slovenia were an impetus to the creation of the HKP. Following the split in the strongest opposition party, the Party of Right, in 1895, many ties between the Rightists and the Christian socialists became apparent. Furthermore, the turn of the century saw the departure of key political figures. The leaders of the first modern political parties, men such as Ante Starčević, Franjo Rački, and Josip Juraj Strossmayer, passed away. They were hard to replace. Their successors did not have the same stature and influence. The process of fragmentation among the opposition created a vacuum in which the desire for unity between Croatian national ideology and political Catholicism could be expressed. The year 1900 is taken as the beginning of the HKP, when the first Croatian Catholic congress was held in Zagreb¹⁶. During the following years, the main role was played by bishop

¹⁶ For a discussion of the political catholicism in this period, see Jure G. Krišto, *Hrvatski katolički pokret: 1903–1945* (Zagreb: Glas Koncila: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2004) and

Antun Mahnić, who was instrumental in starting many Catholic associations and journals. Independent of his activities, an organization known as the Croatian Workers Association was established on Croatian territory. Its main aim was to block the spread of social democratic ideas and win the workers' sympathies for their ideas. Besides this short-lived organization, a Christian socialist group was centered around the journal *Hrvatstvo*, which was made up of members of the lower and upper clergy and the Catholic laity. This group did not develop into a party – it never put forward candidates for Sabor elections – so its future success depended on creating an alliance with another, more established party on the political stage. As a result, the Christian socialists united with a faction of the Party of Right. Nevertheless, this connection did not bear much fruit, because this entity could get no more than ten mandates and thus was only the fourth largest party by strength in parliament on the eve of the First World War. Moreover, the clergy was active in the ranks of other parliamentary parties so it could never claim dominance over the Catholic political movement.

As far as members of the free professions are concerned, they increasingly took over the most prominent positions in political life. Regardless of party differences, the urban intelligentsia became leaders in political organization, demonstrating that the city would play a leading role in the mobilization of public opinion. Lawyers, with their broad education, were the most influential group. In the last elections to the Croatian Sabor in 1913 they accounted for 25 seats or 30% of the available mandates. Their knowledge linked them to a wide range of practical activities, enabling them to represent numerous groups in politics¹⁷. Thus, they could be found in the ranks of many parliamentary parties. From the end of the nineteenth century, lawyers who had completed their study of law at the University of Zagreb, which was founded in 1874, were more and more apparent. Though the government could in part limit the influence of young lawyers because they required licenses to establish their practices (*stallum agendi*). The other free professions were less represented, but they constantly appeared in the list of occupations of parliamentary representatives. In most analyses, this is explained by the relative economic underdevelopment of Croatia. For example, engineers were more commonly found among Hungarian parliamentarians, as in Hungary there were more opportunities to find work in this field due to large public projects underway for the regulation of rivers, building of dams and railways, and so on. Croatia did not have such large public works. For this reason, only one architectural engineer was elected in the last prewar elections of 1913. On the other hand, some well-known writers and journalists were elected to the Sabor. For the most part they belonged to the opposition and, as such, played an important role in creating electoral

Mario Strecha, “*Mi smo Hrvati i katolici...*”. *Prvi hrvatski katolički kongres 1900* (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2008).

¹⁷ Sarah Kent, “Hrvatski odvjetnici i politika profesije: dilema profesionalizacije 1884-1894”, *Historijski zbornik*, 43 (1990), 249–269.

propaganda, by showing their talent for public speaking and writing press announcements.

The introduction of a representative system did not completely impede the influence of traditional social elements. Above all, this refers to the members of the nobility (*populus politicus*), who for centuries were the main political leaders of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia. Scions of the noble families, for the most part the landed aristocrats, men such as Rauch, Pejacsevics, Erdődy, Hellenbach, Eltz and others, managed to preserve their earlier privileges based on their large estates. They continued to have close political ties to the Hungarian government and court, which supported agricultural protectionism. The main success of the elite was that its members were regularly chosen for the office of the Ban right to the collapse of Austria-Hungary, the only exception being Ivan Mažuranić (in office between 1873–1880), who was not a nobleman. Nonetheless, nobility no longer dominated public discourse as it had before the end of the 1860s, when it began to have to share political power with urban groups. The nobility wanted agriculture to remain the mainstay of the economy. However, in principle it had difficulty in doing so because the return on investment was greater in industry, it did not modernize the operations on its estates, and it failed to create a commercially successful agriculture; this led to the nobility's economic weakness. Even though the nobility was represented in the administration of large economic associations, its influence decreased systematically.¹⁸ An example of this is the Croatian-Slavonian Economic Society. It was established in 1841, and most of its founders were made up of nobility. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the president of the society continued to be a noble – Count Miroslav Kulmer, but its administration was dominated by middle class experts on economic matters and lawyers.¹⁹ Furthermore, the nobility was absent from Croatian cities, so economic initiative was taken over by the middle classes. The Alliance of Industrialists, established in 1904, demonstrated the predominance of entrepreneurs, as no nobles belonged to it.

5. Main political currents

The old governing party of notables centered around the National Party dominated representative bodies in terms of party politics right up to the beginning of the twentieth century. This was thanks to the strong hand of Ban Khuen-Héderváry, who directed the main legislative initiatives, including the electoral law. The electoral geometry supported by the government produced Sabors structured to assist the ruling party. The eclipse of the opposition parties revealed the weakness of anti-government forces. A significantly changed Croatian political map was put in place to weaken the opposition, which for the next two decades could never win more than a third of the seats in the Sabor.

¹⁸ Iskra Iveljić, *Očevi i sinovi: Privredna elita Zagreba u drugoj polovici 19 stoljeća* (Zagreb: Leykam International, 2008), 12.

¹⁹ *Hrvatski kompas, Financijski ljetopis za 1913/1914*, 353–354.

The course of elections to Sabor was followed closely by a regime that did not shy away from repression. The security forces of the state were prepared to employ violence to curtail the agitation of the opposition, often leading to bloodshed, especially in the provinces. The most well-known instance occurred in 1897 in Bošnjaci, a small district in the eastern part of Croatia, when the army shot at the local population killing eight civilians.²⁰ Electors favoring the opposition parties were regularly abused. It was a common practice to not verify the election of opposition candidates or to besmirch opposition party members who were newly elected to the Sabor. Members of the opposition reported that they were excluded from the committees that created electoral lists, that influential opposition candidates were disallowed from running, that political gatherings were disbanded, that public speeches were prohibited, that opposition members were kept from staying overnight in electoral districts, and that registered electors were removed from electoral lists. On the other hand, the regime found many reasons to complain against the opposition. The regime claimed that oftentimes the opposition drummed up electoral agitation to the point of near violence through false accusations levelled at the Ban and his government to win the sympathy of public opinion. Most representatives at the turn of the century belonged to one of the political parties which could trace its roots to the early 1860s or who had formed because of the division of these first modern parties (the National Party, the Independent National Party, the Party of Right, the Serbian Independent Party). The National Party enjoyed an absolute majority in the Sabor for the 20 years during which Ban Khuen-Héderváry successfully transformed it into an organization loyal to himself. This was a so-called regime party, which was characterized by a strict pro-Unionist stance. Its main political objective was to carry out policy in strict conformity with the Croatian Hungarian Compromise, that is, preserve the Union of Civil Croatia with Hungary. Because of this stance, opponents of the National Party referred to its members as “Magyarones”, maintaining that they were too subservient to the influence of Magyar statesmen. On the other hand, these “Unionists” continually claimed that Croatian prosperity was only possible within the framework of the legitimate system which was tied to the long tradition of Croatian Hungarian relations. In this sense, they carried out a policy of “groomed autonomy”, which was based on maximizing all the resources the Compromise afforded for the promotion of Croatian interests.

Khuen-Héderváry took the position of Ban at the very moment Civil Croatia was suffering from widespread unrest (1883). Because of this, it is assumed that his main task was to pacify the “rebellious” Croats²¹. Most of the public opinion believed that his main function was to settle short-term

²⁰ Stjepan Matković, “Izbori za Hrvatski sabor 1897. godine, afirmacija Khuenove autokracije”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 29, no. 3 (1997), 481.

²¹ For a recent scholarship on the Khuen era in Croatia with a focus on its eastern parts, see Ostajmer, *Narodna stranka u Slavoniji i Srijemu 1883 –1903* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2018).

passions and that, due to his inexperience (he was only 34 years old), he would be unable to win wide-spread support in the country. Time proved something different. Khuen-Héderváry was a close relation of the Magyar Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal Party, Kálmán Tisza, which helped him to rise quickly in the political hierarchy and foster excellent relations with leading Magyar politicians. The new Ban lucidly consolidated the National Party and attracted many capable men to it. Deftly, he drew to himself enough qualified bureaucrats who loyally supported his government. Without their support, he would not be able to rule Croatia long or carry out the concept of modern Unionism. He succeeded in winning for the National Party a political elite made up of members of the aristocracy and landowners, university professors, some of the clergy, wealthy businessmen, lawyers and public notaries. Khuen-Héderváry also found allies among the Serb representatives who formed the Serbian club within the National Party²².

The opposition was made up of two main parties. The Independent National Party (NNS) was formed in 1880 by politicians surrounding the Bishop of Djakovo, Josip Juraj Strossmayer, who felt the ruling National Party had become a tool in the hands of Magyar politicians who were interested in furthering the cause of Dualism. The NNS accepted the legitimacy of the Compromise but wanted it revised to strengthen Croatian autonomy. In an ideological sense this party supported moderately liberal ideas under the slogan “freedom through education” ‘. One of its ambitions was to make Zagreb the South Slavic center of the Habsburg Monarchy. The social structure of the leadership shows that it was composed primarily of middle-class individuals, among whom university professors, lawyers and businessmen were the most prominent. An important role was also held by higher clergy of the Catholic Church. In this sense the NNS represented the urban elite which could independently seek elections to Sabor. The main organ of the party, the daily *Obzor*, was considered a leading media source and influenced the formation of the Croatian intelligentsia. At the beginning of the twentieth century the NNS found itself on the verge of collapse. Successive defeats in parliamentary elections and the inability of its leadership to mobilize mass support showed that the party no longer had a stable basis and that its financial resources were exhausted. The reason for its failure could be seen in part in its platform, which was too moderate for a large part of the public. The problem was its support for the program of a “clean” Compromise, which already had its adherence in the more successful policies of the ruling National Party. In this situation, its only remaining

²² For an analysis of the Serbian Club, see Nives Rumenjak, *Srpski zastupnici u Banskoj Hrvatskoj: okvir za kolektivnu biografiju 1881 – 1892* (Zagreb: Srpsko Kulturno Društvo Prosvjeta, 2003). This is to date the only study which systematically researched the social origin of parliamentary delegates, in this case Croatian Serbs. For the earlier period, see the two volume monograph by Agneza Szabo, *Središnje institucije, Središnje institucije Hrvatske u Zagrebu 1860–1875* (Zagreb: Zavod za Hrvatsku Povijest, 1987–1988) which statistically researches the composition of the Sabor.

option was to join forces with other opposition parties who were prepared to consider coalition, but this meant adopting a more radical stance. Their salvation came from a coalition with none other than the leading representatives of Croatia's Serbs.

The ideology of the Party of Right at the end of the nineteenth century was the most popular political idea among Croats. Numerous demonstrations showed that a substantial portion of the population rallied to that party²³. The ideological foundation of the Party of Right was Ante Starčević's belief in an independent Croatia based on the bilateral compromise between Croats and the dynasty. Adherents of his ideology had the aim of gathering sympathizers around the principles of historical rights and universal franchise for Croats. They raised consciousness of Croatian statehood which had existed in the Middle Ages. In this sense, the Party of Right advocated for an open struggle for emancipation from the prevalent influence of the Hungarian state on Croatian politics and economic life. The social mentality of the Party of Right responded to the interests of the lower and middle classes of society. The names of merchants and craftsmen began to appear on the electoral lists of the party. The party was especially attractive to students and the youth due to its radical nature. Following the division of the Party of Right in 1895, one group under the leadership of a lawyer, Josip Frank, strove to defend its heritage as well as modernized its organization. In this regard, the Party founded workers' and peasants' associations. The other advantage of the Party of Right in relation to other opposition parties was the appeal of its type of national ideology. By the end of the nineteenth century, this had helped the Party of Right establish affiliate organizations in other lands with Croatian population, such as Dalmatia, Istria, and Bosnia and Hercegovina, according to their local conditions. In terms of tactics, by the early twentieth century the Party of Right went through significant changes because it began to turn its attention to Vienna to find the key to weakening Hungarian domination. It reached its peak in the 1908 elections, winning 24 mandates or 27% of the vote, which made them the party with the most seats in Sabor. Shortly afterward, in the same year, the official split in the party took place. The Party of Right would never match this success again and its tally of seats would be cut in half. Regardless, by number of votes, the Party of Right would still be numbered among the most popular parties.

The theme of national integration opened the question of the relationship between the Croatian opposition parties and the parties of the other ethnic groups in Croatia²⁴. The Sabor assemblies of 1861 brought up the

²³ For studies of the Party of Right, see: Gross, *Izvorno pravaštvo: ideologija, agitacija, pokret* (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 2000); Jasna Turkalj, *Pravaški pokret 1878–1887* (Zagreb: Hrvatski Institut za povijest, 2009) and Matković, *Čista stranka prava 1895–1903* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2001).

²⁴ On the role of Croatia's Serbs, see Nicholas Miller, *Between Nation and State: Serbian Politics in Croatia before the First World War* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997).

Serbian question. In an obviously fraught atmosphere, during discussions about constitutional definitions and the future relations of Croatia to other parts of the Austrian Empire, most of the Orthodox representatives expressed their adherence to Serbian national consciousness. The problem laid in their negative stance toward Croatian state right, which became the root of deep conflict. Serbian politicians developed two attitudes which determined their long-term orientation to Croatian politics. One orientation tended to support the Croatian government, while the other orientation seen in the Serbian Independent Party (SSS) favored the opposition. Following the unification of the Military Frontier with Civil Croatia, the Serbian population grew by 364,000, which impacted the make-up of party politics in Croatia. From then on, one of the main features of the government of Ban Khuen-Héderváry was the support it relied on from the Serb representatives. Gathered around the Serbian Club which, established in 1884, pragmatic in their approach and supportive of the unpopular regime, the Serb representatives traded their loyalty for political, economic, and cultural gains for the Serbian community of Croatia. Serbian loyalty to the Dualist system was also influenced by the fact that the ruling Obrenović dynasty in the Kingdom of Serbia was an ally of Austria-Hungary. Following the nomination of Khuen-Héderváry to the role of Hungarian Prime Minister in 1903, a new direction for the SSS, now under the leadership of Svetozar Pribičević, came to the fore; he agreed to cooperate with other opposition parties in Croatia under certain conditions. With the publication of the Rijeka and Zadar Resolutions of 1905, the groundwork for a Croat Serb Coalition was laid in which members of the SSS played a very important role. On the Croatian side, the dominant role was played by the Party of Right, which had been formed out of moderates from the Rightist party and members of the NNS. This party believed that more civil freedoms could be gained from recognition of the Compromise. Prominent among its members was the Bishop of Zagreb, Antun Bauer, who through his circulars and pastoral letters could influence the votes of the clergy and believers. The other important component strategy was cooperation with the Serbian parties. Thus, the Croat-Serb Coalition (HSK) was active in formulating “national oneness”, which attempted to link the interests of Croats and Serbs. The historiography speaks about a pact among representatives of the Croatian and Serbian middle classes which rested on the protection of mutual economic interests and democratic principles²⁵. In the merger of the administrations of the leading banks – the First Croatian Savings Union and the Serbian bank – its members supported the direction of the HSK, demonstrating the cooperation of capital and politics. At the same time, Pribičević was able to protect Serbian national ideology, maintaining ties with the government of the Kingdom of Serbia after the Karađorđević dynasty returned to the throne. The success of the Kingdom of Serbia in the Balkan Wars only strengthened the desire to increase Pan-Serbian concept,

²⁵ Gross, *Vladavine hrvatsko-srpske koalicije, 1906–1907* (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, 1960), 23–47.

which brought a new dimension to the South Slav Question in Croatia as well as outside of it. Serbs in Croatia also founded a National Radical Party, which was less successful than the SSS. The Radicals were based in Srijem (county of Syrmia), which was the only area where its representatives' won election to the Sabor. Their greatest success was the election of three candidates in the 1911 campaign.

The success of the HSK brought into question the future of the once dominant pro-Unionist National Party. From 1906 onward it failed to win most parliamentary mandates. Attempts to reform itself (Constitutional Party, The Party of National Progress, and other smaller fractions) did not translate into electoral victory. Its main success was in Slavonia, where it was shown that the "Magyarones" could win in certain electoral districts, thanks to the influence of large Slavonian landholders and political support from the government in Zagreb and Budapest. In other words, "Magyarones" (or old "Unionists") continued to be the most loyal supporters of Croatian Hungarian cooperation and, as such, put pressure on the other parties to preserve the political status quo. On the other hand, the Croatian Ban and the Hungarian Prime Minister reached an agreement with the leaders of the HSK by which the threat of breaking the constitutional ties between Croatia and Hungary was put to the side. In this way, it was guaranteed that the Sabor would continue to operate within the spirit of Unionism. If relations broke down, the government introduced emergency measures which forced HSK to opportunistically accommodate itself to political realities.

During the 1890s, a new movement appeared on the Croatian political scene known as the Progressive Youth, which confirmed a socio-economic transformation. Usually, the catalyst for its appearance is taken to be the burning of the Hungarian flag during King Franz Josef's visit to Zagreb in 1895. The consequence of the expulsion of many students from the University of Zagreb was their departure to other universities in the Monarchy, especially Vienna and Prague, where they encountered new ideas, made them their own, and attempted to apply them in their own lands²⁶. Among the ranks of the Progressive Youth were other students who had studied at faculties throughout Austria-Hungary and had gained awareness of movements known under the term "modern". A group of students who put questions of arts and literature at the center of their studies in Vienna became especially prominent. This decision reflected a departure from the political crises that were unfolding in Civil Croatia at the turn of the century, especially those situations in the opposition's ranks characterized by unsuccessful interpersonal dialogue among their leaders and the clearly powerless stances adopted to constitutional issues which continued to relegate Croatia to a peripheral status. In this context, a special direction was taken by leaders of the students from Prague who saw in these exact political themes their main tool for public

²⁶ For the most detailed study of the Anti-Hungarian demonstration in 1895 and the relegation of students, see Šimetin Filip Šegvić, *Patriotizam i bunt: Franjo Josip I. u Zagrebu 1895. Godine* (Zagreb: Srednja Evropa, 2014).

affirmation, believing that democracy and the promulgation of the idea of national oneness among Croats and Serbs would correct the unfavorable situation in their homeland. A good number of Prague students came under the influence of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, accepting his emphasis on social activism, a critical view of the past, and the theory of positivism.

Despite differences in relation to political and cultural-literary questions, the members of various youth associations tied similarities in world view and generation to solidarity. Following the lines of future development, at the end of the nineteenth century a “spiritual brotherhood” was created, which would inescapably result in the creation of a new party. When the students returned home, they first created an organization called Progressive Youth and began to take up influential positions in political life. They critically examined traditional political ideologies and found a way to draw support from several intellectual circles as well as the middle classes generally. Out of their ranks, the Croatian Progressive Party was formed in 1904. Even though this party did not win many mandates in the Sabor elections, it had good potential to ally with other parties of liberal persuasion. Thus, it became a stable partner in the HSK and, as such, was permanently represented in the Croatian Sabor right to the collapse of the Monarchy. Alongside this, progressive ideologies continued to be well represented among students at the University of Zagreb so that at elections in academic associations they were often successful over other ideologies, and this pointed to the capacity for long-term success on the political scene.

Parallel to these developments was the appearance of a party whose ideology was centered on the working classes. The Social Democratic Party of Croatia and Slavonia, or SSHS, was founded in 1894 based on the Erfurt program of the German Social Democrats. It came into being in conjunction with the changes in Croatian social structure which were tied to industrialization in certain sectors of production (forestry, textiles, chemical and food processing). At the beginning of the twentieth century, less than 9% of the population worked in these industries. Otherwise, a large basis of the SSHS's support were landless agricultural workers who worked as day laborers on the large estates in eastern Croatia. The key platforms in the SSHS's political activity were an amelioration of the social conditions of the impoverished workers in the market economy, the organization of trade unions, the introduction of universal suffrage, and a critical stance toward to the role of the Catholic Church in society. Like the Progressive Party, the Social Democrats were critical of the conflict between Croats and Serbs and supportive of the idea of national oneness. These two parties also shared an anti-clerical stance, but they were divided in their attitude to capitalism because the Social Democrats put the interests of the working classes first and had no empathy for the owners of national capital. Symmetrical to the proportion of workers in the overall demographic picture, the Social Democrats occupied a modest portion of the political scene. In this way, their value was expressed through their rhetoric, which could successfully draw

workers to it, but with no noticeable results in terms of parliamentary mandates. The SSHS managed to win only one seat prior to the demise of the Habsburg Monarchy. The only hope for future success was the broadening of the electoral franchise to include the workers. Much of the Croatian population belonged to the category of the peasantry. About 80% of the population was thus tied to agriculture. Despite the emancipation, which was brought about by the post-feudal reforms in 1848, the peasantry only got its first political representatives at the beginning of the twentieth century, when an easing of the on-going agrarian crisis could be felt. Though the peasantry was essentially disenfranchised, this did not stop a part of the young intelligentsia from launching a party to harness the peasantry's lack of trust in the urban classes. Brothers Stjepan and Antun Radić organized the Croat People's Peasant Party, or HPSS, in 1904 which promoted resistance against the dominance of the large landowners and the urban elites represented in the traditional parties, believing that the real political goal was the introduction of the principle of national democracy²⁷. For this reason, the Radić brothers are prominent examples of populism. In conjunction with peasant identity, they prepared the groundwork for the election of the first peasants who, together with the founders of the party, were able to win seats in the Sabor. However, the limited franchise prevented the HPSS from winning many seats. Thus, prior to the outbreak of the First World War, the party had its greatest success in the 1911 elections, when it won eight seats, somewhat less than 10% of the seats in the Sabor. But the prospects of this ideology tailored to the most numerous groups in society were good. Immediately after the introduction of the universal franchise in 1918, the HPSS became the leading political force and a mass movement among Croats, which would make it by far the largest party in the interwar era in the Yugoslav Parliament.

Table 2: Number of Parliamentary Parties in Election Year

Election Year	Number of Parliamentary Parties
1897	3
1901	3
1906	6
1908	8
1910	6
1911	7
1913	7

Source: Project IP-2019-5148-Mappar

²⁷ The most exhaustive study in English on the authentic movement of the peasantry in Croatia is Mark Biondich, *Stjepan Radić. The Croat Peasant Party, and the Politics of Mass Mobilization, 1904–1928* (Toronto Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

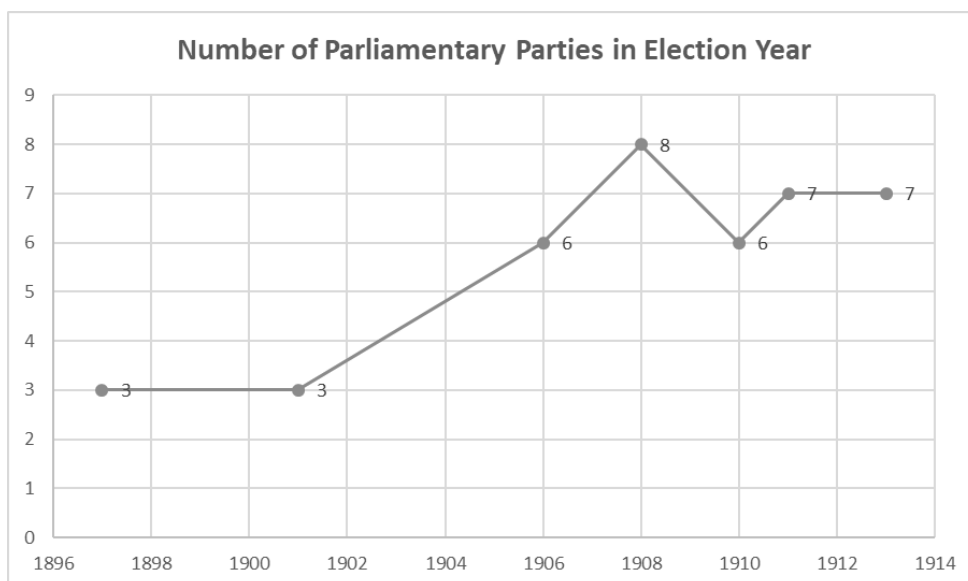


Figure 2: Number of Parliamentary Parties in Election Year
Source: Project IP-2019-5148-Mappar

Table 3: Croatian Diet after the 1897 election – Number of Mandates by Professions

Professions	Number of Mandates
Landowners	25
Lawyers	19
University Professors	9
Catholic Priests	7
Orthodox Priests	5
Judges	4
Journalists and Writers	4
Head of Government Departments	3
Physicians	3
Bureaucrats	3
Pharmacists	2
Merchants	2
Croatian Minister in the Hungarian Government	1
Artisan	1

Source: Project IP-2019-5148-Mappar

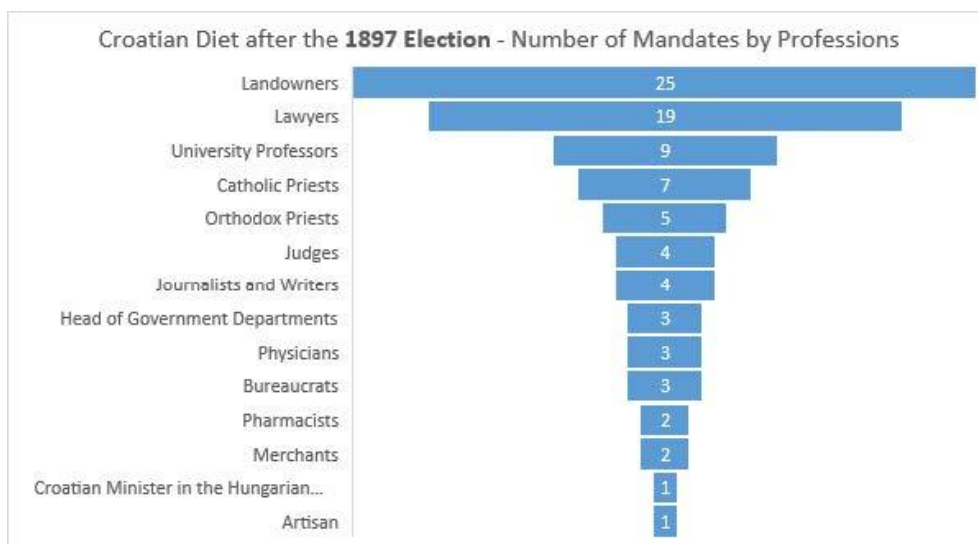


Figure 3: Croatian Diet after the 1897 election – Number of Mandates by Professions
Source: Project IP-2019-5148-Mappar

Table 4: Croatian Diet after the 1913 election – Number of Mandates by Professions

Professions	Number of Mandates
Lawyers	24
Landowners	11
Catholic Priests	8
Orthodox Priests	6
Journalists	7
University Professors	5
Civil and military retired officials	4
Head of Government Departments	3
Physicians	3
Merchants	3
Mayors and local authorities	3
Entrepreneurs	3
Pharmacists	1
Judge	1
Banker	1
Industrialist	1
Architect	1
Peasant	1
Ban	1
Secretary of the Croatian-Slavonian Economic Society	1

Source: Project IP-2019-5148-Mappar

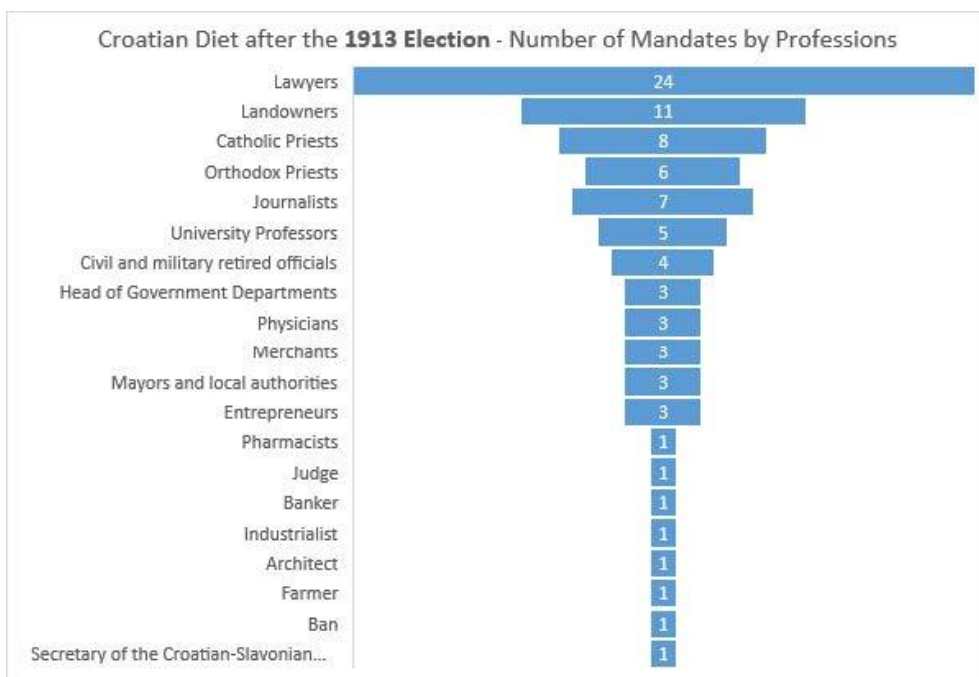


Figure 4: Croatian Diet after the 1913 election – Number of Mandates by Professions
Source: Project IP-2019-5148-Mappar

Table 5: Development of the most represented professions in the Croatian Diet

Election Years	Number of Mandates according to Professions			
	Attorneys	Landowners	Priests	Journalists
1897	19	25	12	4
1908	28	14	13	9
1910	29	13	14	7
1913	24	11	14	7

Source: Project IP-2019-5148-Mappar

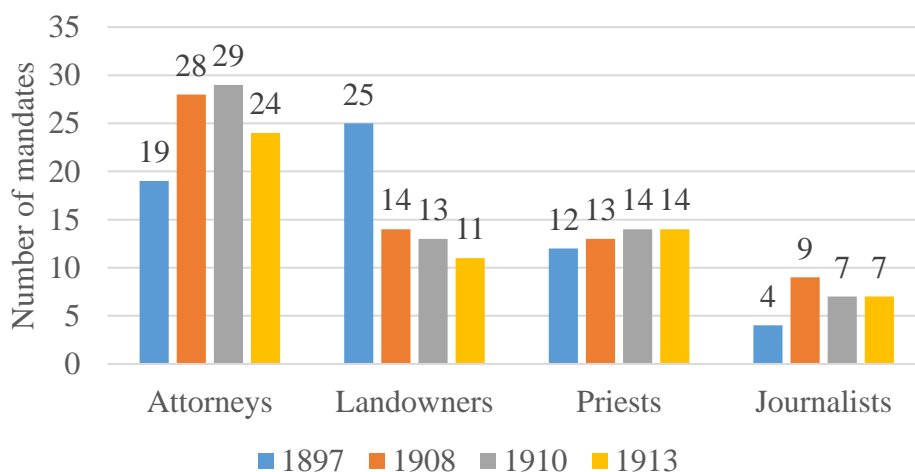


Figure 5: Development of the most represented professions in the Croatian Diet
Source: Project IP-2019-5148-Mappar

6. Conclusion

The turn of the century showed that overcoming traditional societal lines was on-going, which created space for the development of civil society and a gradual transformation of political terrain. Croatia had entered the era of pluralism, the likes of which could not have been seen previously. Despite all the deficiencies in terms of a stunted democracy and a limited electoral franchise, social and economic transition provided the basis for political modernization. The growth of civil and economic development during the second half of the 1890s stimulated transformations which brought about new forms of competencies.

The beginning of the twentieth century illustrated the dynamic side of political developments. New political parties emerged, which changed the traditional composition of the Croatian Sabor. Elections brought forward an ever-growing number of candidates. At the same time, they demonstrated various ideological conflicts: from a defense of the multi-national Monarchy and loyalty to *Ausgleich* principles to support for various types of nationalisms which sought radical changes in conjunction with conventional nationalist narratives. Most political parties and organizations right to the First World War leaned toward greater autonomy within a reformed Habsburg Monarchy, and not complete independence. Only a small group of young Yugoslav nationalists, mostly from intelligentsia, under the influence of external political developments and heightened internal tensions around the national question, openly demanded the unification of all Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes and the demise of the Monarchy. In this way, the political scene ranged from constitutional legitimists to radical oppositionists. Nonetheless, political leadership could only be held, within the framework of the electoral law and constituencies, by loyal adherents of the Compromise. However, changes to the composition of society, economic development, and the influence of broader political opportunities within Austria-Hungary and Europe led to a significant increase in the number of parties with more complex political organizations. Thus, the Croatian political scene evolved from the era of the domination of the old elites and their three political parties toward a more modern political era wherein political parties played the key role in mobilizing political action and became the instrument of political elites that represented the new realities in Croatian society. Political parties became the competitive key and springboard for the launch of political careers.

The composition of delegates to the Sabor shows that the traditional influence of the landowners from the ranks of the aristocracy, who were less successful at the ballot box, were confronted by the rise of new social groups. However, their ties to other aristocrats in other parts of Austria-Hungary proves that they continued to have an influential role in political life, by which they clung to the status of important members of the social elite. On the other hand, space was open for members of the lower social orders. The biographies of individual delegates bear witness to a vertical mobilization that was not apparent in other eras. Even though there is no comprehensive research to

date on the age of delegates, at the beginning of the twentieth century the younger generation was coming-of-age. A growing number of representatives were in their 30s, creating a new dynamic in parliamentary life. Among them were prominent leaders of the new political parties of a predominantly liberal orientation, many of whom were sons of influential urban families, and some of whom were even from poor rural families. Regardless of their social origins, the leaders of the young generation were successful in winning parliamentary mandates and in this way ensure the effectiveness of their political parties based on a transformed political culture. The success of these new politicians occurred in urban, suburban, and rural areas. On the other hand, the older parliamentarians were drawn from the ranks of retired military officers and bureaucrats who were ending their careers in parliament. It is obvious that loyal servants were thus being rewarded for their service. The composition of the Parliament also showed that independent delegates could not compete with party delegates who were supported by the machinery of the party. All the political parties had newspapers which promoted their platforms. Party led election councils were the carriers of campaigns which linked party candidates to the electors through meetings and regional assemblies. Finally, the key element of political modernization at the beginning of the twentieth century was the issue of universal electoral franchise. The electoral reforms of 1910 expanded the franchise by lowering the taxation requirements for the right to vote, but this did not change the electoral status fundamentally. Gerrymandering continued to play a key role in determining electoral results. A wider electoral franchise and a redrawing of electoral districts would create an entirely new realignment of political parties and meaningfully expand the participation in politics. These kinds of changes were favored by the advocates of the interests of the peasantry and the workers, who were becoming ever more numerous in society. The spirit of the time prior to the onset of the First World War introduced the issue of the right of women to vote, but the conservative establishment continued to hold the opinion that Croatia was not yet ready for a suffragette movement. The collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy hastened the changes to the structure of parliamentary political parties. Nevertheless, the reorganization of the parties was the culmination of a process which began well before 1918.

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