

THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN THE BANAT (1861-1918). STATISTICS. EVOLUTION. PROSOPOGRAPHY*

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Abstract. *The paper offers an overview on the electoral process in the Banat between 1861 and 1918, by analyzing the statistical evolution of the results and the composition of the province's parliamentary elite. The highly mixed ethnic and confessional structure, together with the low level of economic development made this particular geographical area suitable for electoral frauds, gradually transforming it into a traditional election ground for the deputies of the government party, regardless nationality. It is not by chance that one third of the Hungarian prime ministers, along with other members of their cabinets and close relatives, won some of their parliamentary seats in the Banat. Regarding the body of representatives sent into the Hungarian Parliament, while a large majority (ca. 50%) were only elected once, resuming afterwards their bureaucratic careers, there were also prominent local personalities who held their seats for decades. Overall, the mixture between nationalism, government influence and family/group interests makes the region of Banat a most interesting case-study for the election process in the Kingdom of Hungary.*

Keywords: elections, political parties, prosopography, the Banat, Hungary

The Banat is the name given to the geographic territory between the rivers Mureș/Maros (to the North), Tisa/Tisza (to the West) and Danube (to the South), and the Southern Carpathians and Transylvania (to the East), covering 28,523 square kilometres¹. Historically, it belonged to the mediaeval Kingdom of Hungary, and in 1718, after a century and a half of Ottoman rule, became part of the Habsburg Empire, where it was a cameral province. During this period, from 1764/68, border regiments were established as military and administrative structures that lasted until 1873 as characteristic features of the region, marking the mentality of the inhabitants and influencing the electoral geography of the province. In 1778 the Banat was reintegrated into Hungary; between 1779 and 1849, the three counties in the Banat

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¹ Josef Wolf, *Entwicklung der ethnischen Struktur des Banats 1890-1992. Development of Ethnic Structure in the Banat 1890-1892*, Wien, Österreichischen Ost- und Südosteuropa-Institut, 1999, p. 7. Some interpretations, based on ethnographic and linguistic grounds, place the Northern limit of this historical province about 20km on the right bank of the river Mureș, including the Southern part of the counties of Arad and Csanád, but our research will only focus on the geographic and administrative area located South of the Mureș.

(Temes, Torontál and Krassó) were part of Hungary, and during the absolutist era, an administrative structure called the Serbian Vojvodina and Banat of Timiș was established (1849-1860). After the February Patent, the territories of the Banat fell under Hungarian jurisdiction once more and remained so until the collapse of the Dual Monarchy, when they became part of Romania and Serbia².

Table 1

Ethnic distribution of the population of the Banat for each county in 1890³

County	Romanians	Hungarians	Germans	Serbians	Others
Krassó-Szörény	76.38%	2.67%	11.79%	2.91%	6.25%
Temes	37.15%	8.31%	36.86%	14.45%	3.23%
Torontál	14.79%	16.91%	31.31%	31.5%	5.49%
Total	39.08%	10.25%	27.44%	18.2%	5.03%

In 1890, halfway through the dualist period, the three counties of the Banat totalled 1,433,424 inhabitants, with an ethnic distribution as shown in Table 1. We may notice that Krassó-Szörény was mostly made up of Romanians, that in Temes Romanians and Germans made up three-quarters of the population, and that in Torontál equal numbers of Serbs and Germans made up about two-thirds of the population. Hungarians (including the Jewish population) were numerous in Torontál, less numerous in Temes and represented an almost insignificant percentage in Krassó-Szörény. Less than 5% of the population of each of the three counties had the right to vote⁴, with suffrage at around only four-fifths of the national average (which was around 5.5-6.5%)⁵. As for the ethnic structure of the electorate in the Banat, internal reports of the Romanian National Party suggest a balance between this structure and the ethnic composition of the counties. For instance, in 1881, in Krassó-Szörény, for a Romanian population of 77%, the proportion of Romanian voters was about 80%⁶. From this point of view, the situation looks more balanced in the area studied than in the overview given by András Gerő for Hungary in 1906⁷.

² *Ibidem*, p. 20-29.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 193. Since the census used the declared mother tongue as a criterion for ethnic differentiation (defined as the language which the respondent spoke fluently), a large part of the Jewish population was recorded as Hungarian.

⁴ Magyar Országgyűlési Könyvtár, *Sommás kimutatás az ország összes választókerületeiben összeírt országgyűlési képviselőválasztók száma között mutatkozó különbségről és a végleges névjegyzékbe felvett választók számáról 1878-1916 években*, Budapest, Állam Ny., 1878-1916 (handwritten).

⁵ András Gerő, *The Hungarian Parliament (1867-1918). A Mirage of Power*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 50.

⁶ Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale București, Fond Partidul Național Român (Consiliul Național Român Sibiu), dosar 6, f. 10, 49-57.

⁷ A. Gerő, *The Hungarian Parliament (1867-1918)*, p. 52.

In the Banat, the electoral legislation of Hungary was applied, which differed from that in Transylvania, and law V/1848 was in force until 1874⁸. The right to vote was granted to: landowners, handicraftsmen, owners of industrial facilities, merchants, graduates of institutes of higher education and those whose direct incomes surpassed a certain threshold. Voters were men over the age of twenty. By and large, the situation remained unchanged even after the electoral laws of 1874 and 1899, the amendments having a minor positive impact. The electoral law of 1914, including considerable amendments aiming at a general franchise, was not applied because of the outbreak of the war. People voted for a candidate, not for a party, and the vote was cast orally in front of a commission that recorded each voter's choice. The electoral process could take several days if major disturbances or violence occurred⁹.

Between 1861 and 1873 there were 27 constituencies in the Banat, among which 4 were urban – Timișoara/Temesvár, Vrșac/Versec/Vârșeț, Kikinda/Nagykikinda/Kikinda Mare, Zrenjanin/Nagybecskerek/Becicherecul Mare – and the others rural. In 1873, three more were created on the territory of the former border regiments, and starting with the 1878 elections, there was also a thirty-first constituency centred at Uzdin/Ozora, also on the former military border¹⁰.

Between 1861 and 1918, fifteen elections took place in Hungary¹¹, and the Banat sent deputies to the Budapest Parliament for all these terms. 525 mandates were won, 451 (85%) at the general elections and the others at the by-elections triggered by the resignation or death of a deputy. From mandates won at the general elections, 385 were carried out. In 66 cases there was a runoff election, and in 6 of the cases a third round was also needed. Statistics show a high stability of elected members, who served successive terms in over 85% of cases. The proportion would have surpassed 90%, had it not been for the high rate of interruptions between 1910 and 1918, caused by the length of this parliamentary term as well as by the exceptional situation created by the war.

The results of elections in the Banat constantly favoured the parties in power, as shown in Figure 1. Overall, the situation is not uncommon for dualist Hungary, since the electoral system was designed so as to allow parties in power to reach a comfortable majority¹². Nevertheless some moments highlight the governing party's profound influence in the counties between the Danube, Tisa and Mureș. In 1892, with its popularity eroding, the Liberal Party (Szabadelvű Párt) only obtained 60% of

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 12-15.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 57-105.

¹⁰ Adalbert Toth, *Parteien und Reichstagswahlen in Ungarn 1848-1892*, München, R. Oldenbourg, 1973, p. 152.

¹¹ For more in-depth analyses on other regions of Hungary and Transylvania, together with a wider bibliographical overview see the studies in Judit Pál, Vlad Popovici (eds.), *Elites and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe (1848-1918)*, Frankfurt am Main etc., Peter Lang, 2014, p. 175-248.

¹² Robert William Seton-Watson, *Corruption and Reform in Hungary. A Study of Electoral Practice. With Numerous Documents*, London, Constable&co. Ltd., 1911, p. 1-33.

seats in Parliament, but 95% of those in the Banat¹³. Even more relevant is the situation in 1905, when the same party, abandoned by its allies and incapable of managing internal political crisis, only obtained 38% of mandates in Hungary as a whole, but double that in the Banat: 78%¹⁴. If we also add the impressive 97% of the National Party of Work (Nemzeti Munkapárt) in 1910¹⁵, we have a clear image of an area traditionally attached to the Liberal, pro-Compromise orientation, where the mechanisms to influence voters were well implemented after 1875 (nationalist deputies disappear and the number of Liberal Party mandates increases by 50%) and perpetuated throughout four decades.

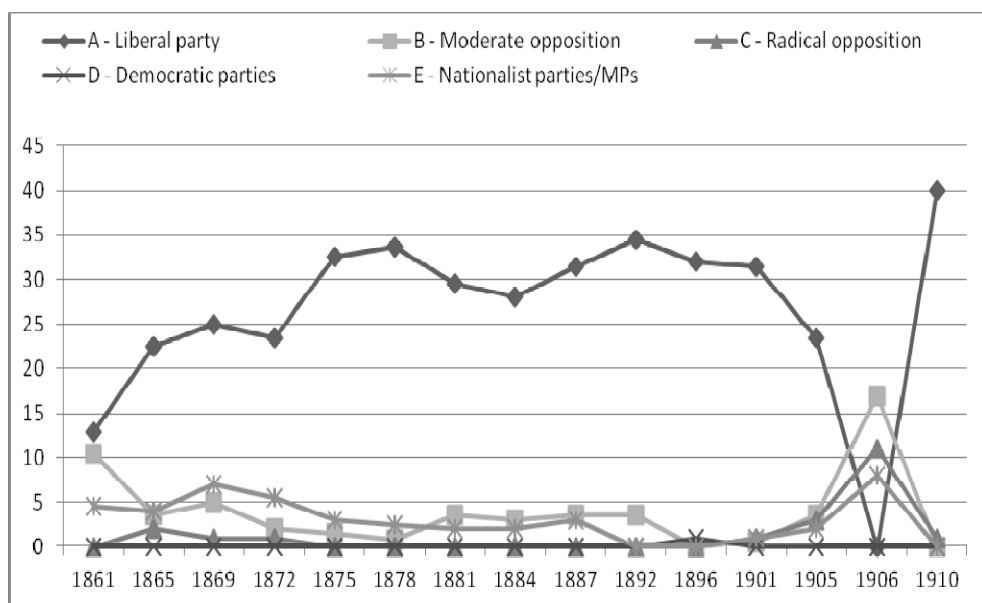


Figure 1. Statistics of election results in the Banat (1861-1910).

Between 1861 and 1918, the body of deputies in the Banat was made up of 241 persons, representing about 8% of the total number of deputies in the Budapest

¹³ László Katus, *Hungary in the Dual Monarchy 1867-1914*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2008, p. 394; Kreith Béla, *Magyar orsz. képviselő-választó-kerületek-térképe az 1892-1897 évi országgyűlési képviselők, pártok és választó-kerületek kiüntetésével*, Bécs, Freytag G. és Berndt, s.a. [1892] (map).

¹⁴ Ervin Pamlényi (ed.), *A History of Hungary*, London&Wellingborough, Collet's, 1975, p. 387-391; Gustav Freytag, *Térkép az 1905-i évi országgy. képviselőválasztások eredményéről*, Wien, Freytag G. és Berndt, 1905 (map).

¹⁵ Ferenc Végváry, Ferenc Zimmer (eds.), *Sturm-féle Országgyűlési Almanach 1910-1915*, Budapest, s.n., 1910, p. 471-483.

Parliament¹⁶. Considering that the 31 local constituencies represent 7.5% of the 413 electoral districts in Hungary (excluding Croatia), we may say that the Banat had much the same ratio of deputies to seats as the rest of the kingdom.

The average number of terms/deputy was 2.17, but half of those elected (119) only served one term, and almost a quarter (53) served only two terms. 52 deputies served between 3 and 5 terms and only 15 (6%) served more than 6 terms. Among the deputies with a long career, the most notable were Vincențiu Babeș, Traian Doda, Gusztáv Frölich, Frigyes Harkány, Mátyás Ónossy, Gedeon Rohonczy, Béla Szende (Frummer) (6 terms), Károly Hieronymi, Sándor Janicsáry, János Ronáy (Oexel) Jr., Imre Vargics (7 terms), Béla Csávossy, George Szerb (9 terms), Pál Dániel (10 terms) and Ernő Dániel (11 terms). Most were born in the Banat and were civil servants or owned large estates in the region. The only notable exception was Károly Hieronymi, who spent the first part of his parliamentary career here, between 1875 and 1892¹⁷.

The deputies elected in the constituencies of the Banat between 1861 and 1918 came from three generations, which we have differentiated by combining the chronological factor with references to the major events of the era. Given that the average length for a generation is about three decades, we can infer that the first generation was made up of people born between 1800 and 1830, namely those old enough to have been actively involved in the events of 1848-1849¹⁸. The second generation was made up of deputies born between 1831 and 1860, and the third one

¹⁶ The data used in the analyses found in this study were taken from: Sándor Halász (ed.), *Országgyűlési Almanach 1886*, Budapest, Athenaeum, 1886; Albert Sturm (ed.), *Új Országgyűlési Almanach 1887-1892*, Budapest, s.n., 1888; Idem, *Országgyűlési Almanach 1892-1897*, Budapest, Pesti Lloyd-Társulat, 1892; Idem, *Országgyűlési Almanach 1897-1901*, Budapest, Pesti Lloyd-Társulat, 1897; Idem, *Országgyűlési Almanach 1901-1906*, Budapest, Pesti Lloyd-Társulat, 1901; Henrik Fabro, József Ujlaki (eds.), *Sturm-féle Országgyűlési Almanach 1905-1910*, Budapest, Pesti Lloyd-Társulat, 1905; Idem, *Sturm-féle Országgyűlési Almanach 1906-1911*, Budapest, s.n., 1906; Károly Tassy (ed.), *1906-1911. országgyűlés képviselőinek sematizmusa*, Budapest: Pesti könyvnyomda, 1906; F. Végváry, F. Zimmer. (eds.), *Sturm-féle Országgyűlési Almanach 1910-1915*; A. Toth, *Parteien und Reichstagswahlen in Ungarn 1848-1892*; Gabriella Ilonszki, *Képviselők és képviselőlet Magyarországon a 19. és 20. Században*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2009; Ovidiu Iudean, *Deputați guvernamentali români în Parlamentul de la Budapesta 1881-1914*, unpublished PhD thesis, Cluj-Napoca, "Babeș-Bolyai" University, 2012; ***, *Hungary Funeral Notices, 1840-1990* (scanned images), available at: <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1542666>, accessed between December 2012-May 2013.

¹⁷ A. Toth, *Parteien und Reichstagswahlen in Ungarn 1848-1892*, p. 256.

¹⁸ The generation division is not ideal, but allows the systematization and cross-sectional analysis of a relatively heterogeneous group, as can be seen in what follows. As is the case in any scholarly endeavour, exceptions did spring up, especially in the generation of '48: some deputies, such as Béla Wodiánér and Imre Vargics, though only 17 and 14 at the time, fought during the revolution years in units of Honved soldiers, so that by this criterion they could be assigned to the first generation – which we have not done. Also, it is difficult to justify placing those born in 1830 and 1860 in a different generation from those born in 1831 and 1861. Even though particular situations breach the rule, we have strictly complied with the criterion of chronological delineation as the only way to maintain the coherence of the research methodology and prosopographic analysis.

was born after 1861, entering politics from 1892-1896, when the political system in Hungary showed its first signs of instability¹⁹.

Table 2, below, shows a quantitative overview of the generation distribution of deputies. Naturally, the middle generation was most populous, mainly because they had the opportunity to become politically involved under more favourable conditions than those in the first generation, and for a longer period than those in the third generation.

Table 2

Distribution of deputies according to generations and geographic origin

	1st generation (1800-1830)	2nd generation (1831-1860)	3rd generation (1861-1881)	Unknown (1st/2nd gen.)	Total
Natives	45	61	27	9	142
Settled foreigners	14	20	7	0	41
Neighbouring Counties	1	8	5	0	14
Foreigners	14	20	9	0	43
Deputies	74	110	48	9	241
Mandates	183	252	79	11	525
Mandates/MP Ratio	2.47	2.52	1.64	1.2	-

The political accomplishments of the first generation were to have sparked the 1848-1849 Revolution in Hungary, but also to conclude the 1867 Compromise. The second generation grew up in the shadow of the first, inherited the dualist system and was divided by ideological conflicts between those who upheld the *status quo* and those who wanted an independent Hungary. The third generation started out in an already unstable political system, its balance threatened by the increasing popularity of independentist ideas, by the profound social changes of the emerging twentieth century and by the ever more virulent political manifestations of the nationalities²⁰. The body of deputies in the Banat obviously echoes some characteristics of each generation, and prosopographic analysis allows us to see the changes which the Hungarian political class underwent over half a century.

One index that best highlights the internal changes within this elite group is the age at which deputies obtained their first parliamentary mandate. For the generation of '48, the average age at first mandate was 44, relatively high given that many of its representatives were first elected in 1848, when they had not yet turned 40. However, the suspension of parliament between 1849 and 1861 partially explains this figure. The average age for the first mandate in the second generation was 41, reflecting the favourable political context rather than major structural

¹⁹ L. Katus, *Hungary in the Dual Monarchy 1867-1914*, p. 389 sqq.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 428 sqq.

changes distinguishing them from their predecessors. The situation is different with the third generation, where the average age approaches 35, heralding structural changes and adaptation to the spirit of the time. Admittedly, this figure is partly due to an almost complete lack of elections after 1910, but the trend is obviously downward and can be interpreted as a manifestation of the professionalization of the Hungarian political class, when the political elite began to be differentiated from the administrative-bureaucratic elite as more and more young members of Parliament were rapidly promoted. This downward trend in age, and the marked differences between the first two generations on the one hand and the third generation on the other, are easily observed in Figure 2, below.

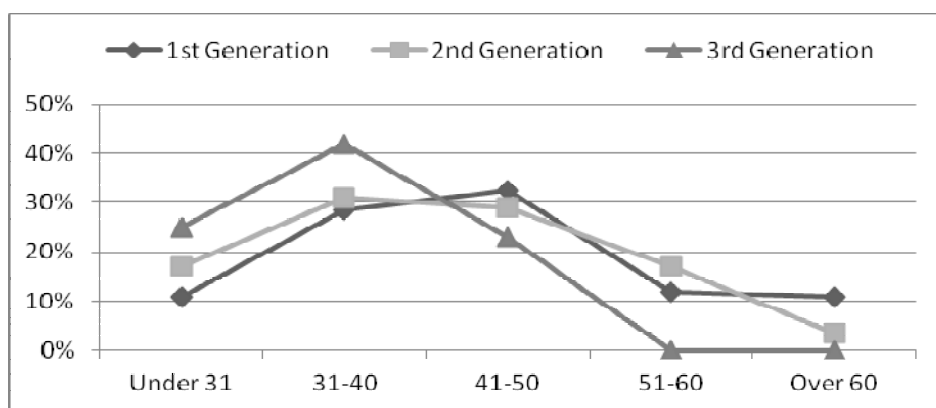


Figure 2. Distribution according to the age of entering Parliament.

Another relevant indicator is the geographical origin of the MPs from the counties of the Banat. Here, the overall image is that of an area dominated, naturally, by locals (either born in the region or having moved to the Banat to become civil servants or landowners). What is interesting is that the percentage of foreign deputies – candidates imposed by the centre – remains steady. The profile of the “exogamous” candidate remains unchanged during the period studied, for all three generations. The candidate was usually a minister or a high ministerial official (Menyhért Lónyay, Géza Fejérváry, Károly Khuen-Héderváry, Gyula Szapáry, Boldizsár Horvát, Károly Kerkápoly, Lajos Láng), sometimes a university professor, man of letters or diplomat (Mór Jókai, Ágost Pulszky, Tamás Vécsey). In the case of those in the first and second generations, in about 70% of situations, the candidate imposed by the centre had electoral experience and had already served at least one other term in another constituency and, in some fewer cases, continued his parliamentary career in other counties. By contrast, those in the third generation, though career politicians, had not been elected before and only one (László Szapáry) has previously held a parliamentary mandate. For most, the seat for a Banat constituency was their first experience of elected office.

Table 3

Situation of mandates in and outside the counties of the Banat

	Banat-only mandates	Previous mandates	Later mandates	Mixed mandates
1st generation	55	11	4	4
2nd generation	88	11	4	7
3rd generation	43	3	2	0
Unidentified	9	0	0	0

Another aspect that should be noted is the percentage difference between the first and second generation in candidates from neighbouring counties (Arad, Csanád, Csongrád, Bács-Bodrog). Given the high percentage of candidates from the liberal professions, especially lawyers, this intermediary category could be rather associated with locals, since its representatives were clearly well-known and probably active in the Banat. Therefore we believe that this difference between generations was due to the exponential rise in the number of free professionals in the latter nineteenth century and the development of transportation and communication links (including the press), which allowed certain individuals to develop various activities and build their image in neighbouring counties far more easily than people could have hoped for several decades before.

Table 4

Geographical origin of deputies in the Banat

	1st generation (1800-1830)	2nd generation (1831-1860)	3rd generation (1861-1881)	Unknown (1st/2nd gen.)
Natives	61%	56%	56%	100%
Settled foreigners	19%	18%	14.5%	0
Neighbours	1%	7.5%	10.5%	0
Foreigners	19%	18%	19%	0

The distribution of mandates and political choices within generations may in its turn reveal a series of regional particularities. The only substantial difference between the first and second generation is the drop in the number of deputies representing the nationalities' parties (Romanians and Serbs). As can be seen in Figure 1 above, this trend starts slowly in 1869 and becomes more pronounced after 1875, against the background of the Tisza government's electoral policies. The former nationalist deputies either moved to the Hungarian Liberal agenda, or withdrew from active politics. Statistical perturbations seem to indicate deeper changes within the third generation, but these are directly linked to the general political context: the rise of independentist radicals and the dissolution of the Liberal Party.

The Liberal losses of around 20% can be traced back to the moderate opposition Constitutional Party (Országos Alkotmánypárt) and the radical Independence Party (Függetlenségi Párt), and very little to the deputies for the nationalities, or to representatives of the Catholic Popular Party (Katolikus Néppárt). However, this loss of 20% at party level is only half reflected in the election of new members, since the deputies of the moderate opposition had either been part of the Liberal governmental group before 1903, or joined it after 1910. Moreover, their socio-professional profile as a subgroup is almost identical to that of the Liberal governmental subgroup, most of the members, prior to the mandate, having had a career in the county administration and owned large estates. The only notable innovation at this level was the background of the Independence Party deputies, who were mainly professional men (lawyers) – only János Baross²¹ and Károly Bohus²² had previously had longer careers in administration.

Table 5

Electoral results by generation

	Liberal party	Moderate opposition	Radical opposition	Other parties	Nationalities' parties
1st generation	76%	10%	2.5%	0	11.5%
2nd generation	79%	11.5%	2.5%	0	7%
3rd generation	56.5%	21.5%	12.5%	2%	7.5%
Unidentified	100%	0	0	0	0

If the ethnic structure of the electorate seemed to be, as we have shown, relatively representative of the ethnic composition of the region, the structure of the body of deputies appears to have been disproportionate from the very beginning. Hungarians made up 59-67% of each generation (meaning 40-45% of deputies originally from or having careers in the Banat, the other 20% being deputies imposed by the centre). The percentage of Romanian and Serbian deputies was constantly declining, but the trend is much more obvious in the case of Romanians. Interesting here is the increase in the number of Germans within the second generation, a possible proof of the orientation of Liberal governments towards German candidates, to the disadvantage of Romanian ones. As for the geographical distribution of mandates, Romanians won most seats in Krassó-Szörény and Temes, the Serbs were especially present in Torontál, and Germans in Temes and Torontál – from this point of view, the results of elections reflected the ethnic composition of each county. If we draw a parallel between the ethnic structure of the voters and the ethnic structure of the elected, we cannot but conclude that the majority, made up of Hungarian deputies, was constantly elected by voters from

²¹ F. Végváry, F. Zimmer (eds.), *Sturm-féle Országgyűlési Almanach 1910-1915*, p. 226-227.

²² H. Fabro, J. Ujlaki (eds.), *Sturm-féle Országgyűlési Almanach 1906-1911*, p. 69.

the nationalities – another argument for a more in-depth analysis of the manifestations of national feeling at the time, and of its oscillations between theory and discourse on the one hand and the daily and political-electoral practice on the other hand.

Table 6

The ethnic structure of the body of deputies in the Banat

	Hungarians	Germans	Romanians	Serbians
1st generation	61%	4%	19%	16%
2nd generation	59%	10%	15.5%	15.5%
3rd generation	67%	6%	12.5%	14.5%
Unidentified	56%	22%	0%	22%

The general picture of the intellectual background and academic training of deputies representing the Banat in the Hungarian Parliament is shown in Table 7, below. For those who attended courses in several faculties, we have considered the subject that subsequently became their career (usually the second subject studied); such deputies most commonly attended law and philosophy courses simultaneously (and later practised law), or gave up theology in favour of more mundane issues (usually law-related). The high percentage of law graduates is no surprise, according perfectly with the stereotype of the “nation of lawyers”²³. What is interesting is the peak reached during the second generation and the stark decrease (13%) of law graduates in the third generation. Nevertheless, considering the high proportion of cases in which courses of study could not be identified (around 20%), as well as the fact that the third generation’s political expression was considerably diminished after 1914, we believe that this statistical anomaly probably has little or no basis in reality. Besides, as emphasised below in the discussion of career tracks, the marked increase in the number of professional men (mostly lawyers) in the third generation is yet another argument to support the hypothesis.

Apart from the impressive number of law graduates, analysis of academic tracks along the three generations also indicates a few structural shifts that point to important changes in society and mentality. On the one hand is a constant increase in the number of deputies who studied theology, which shows the ever more active involvement of middle clergy in politics, and on the other hand, a growing percentage of deputies who studied economics and agriculture. The latter were great landowners, and their choice indicates adaptation to regional economic realities, as well as the adoption of a capitalist mindset in accordance with the spirit of the time. In addition to these developments, there is a marked decrease in the number of military studies graduates.

²³ Victor Karády, *Une « nation des juristes ». Des usages sociaux de la formation juridique dans l’Hongrie de l’ancien régime*, in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 86-87 (March 1991), p. 106-116.

Table 7

Academic studies of deputies in the Banat

	Law	Theology	Military	Technical	Humanities	Economics, Agriculture	Medicine, Pharmaceutics	Unidentified
1st generation	63.5%	1.5%	6.5%	2.5%	2.5%	1.5%	1.5%	20.5%
2nd generation	67.2%	3.6%	4.5%	2.7%	0%	5.5%	1%	15.5%
3rd generation	54.2%	8.3%	0%	2%	4.1%	8.3%	2%	21.1%
Unidentified	44.5%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	44.5%

Deputies-to-be studied a wide range of universities, covering all of Austro-Hungarian territory and stretching beyond to the West and North of Europe. Those who graduated from law school mostly did so at the University of Pest, although a great many of these had previously studied law in other universities (Cluj/Kolozsvár) or academies (Zagreb/Zágráb/Agram, Bratislava/Pozsony, Košice/Kassa, Eger, Kecskemét, Győr, Pécs, Debrecen, Oradea/Nagyvárad, Sibiu/Nagyszeben/Hermannstadt). The percentage of those who continued law studies in centres outside Hungary (Vienna, Graz, Prague, Heidelberg, Berlin, Paris, Louvain) is low (about 10%), as is the percentage of those who studied at only one law academy (about 8%). Those who studied theology did so at local institutes (Arad, Timișoara/Temesvár, Bratislava), at the University of Chernivtsi/Cernăuți/Czernowitz and, to the greatest extent, at the University of Vienna. Those who studied economics and agriculture did so at Magyaróvár, and abroad at Hohenheim and Halle; technical studies, mostly at Budapest and Banská Štiavnica/Schemnitz/Selmechánya, and abroad at Vienna, Liege, Heidelberg or Stuttgart. All deputies who chose military studies graduated from the Academy of Wiener Neustadt. Among this diversity of educational establishments, the University of Pest stands out as the *alma mater* for 70% of all deputies from the Banat; over half of all Banat members in the Hungarian Parliament graduated from its Law School. In the broader picture of courses taken at the University of Pest in the last decades of the nineteenth century,²⁴ these percentages show the natural integration of the Banat parliamentary elite into the social segment of higher education graduates in Hungary.

One last point of interest in our research is the analysis of the socio-professional composition and career track of Banat deputies. Given their intellectual background and the common practice of the era, it is only natural that deputies overwhelmingly had a background in administration along the three

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 108.

generations. It is not by chance that the second generation, which overlaps the heyday and greatest stability of the dualist regime, saw a maximum of deputies from public administration and a minimum number of free professionals. The abrupt shift away from this trend after 1892 (10-15%) was engendered, as has been mentioned, by the entry into Parliament of Independence Party deputies in 1906, few of whom previously had administrative careers. The corollary of this shift is the exponential increase in the number of free professionals in the same generation. We may also notice that the total number of theology graduates (see Table 7) does not correspond completely to the number of deputies from the clergy, a proof of subsequent retraining. The complete absence of military graduates has also been explained previously; as for landowners, we notice that their number slowly decreases, but that those remaining are better prepared from the point of view of specialist studies than their predecessors were.

Table 8

The socio-professional distribution of deputies in the Banat

	Administration, Justice, Diplomacy	Army	Church	Liberal professions	Landowners	Unidentified
1st generation	56%	5.5%	1%	18%	16.5%	3%
2nd generation	60%	1%	3.5%	11%	18%	7%
3rd generation	44%	0%	4%	27%	14.5%	10.5%

As for the previous careers of deputies, the most interesting segment is that of civil servants. We notice the existence of a standard track that started with the position of district constable (*szolgabíró*) and reached that of a county commissioner (*alispán*) or Lord Lieutenant (*főispán*) before becoming deputy. In the meantime, the civil servant could also be active in the judiciary, or could advance to ministerial level before entering Parliament. More than 50% of all civil servants who became deputies in the Banat followed such a career, more or less abiding by the stages. This percentage also includes those who did not become county commissioner, and settled for a chief county clerk (*főjegyző*) position before winning a parliamentary mandate. Within the first generation, 30% of MPs who had worked in administration also held the position of Lord Lieutenant or county commissioner before being elected deputies. The percentage decreases in the following generations, dropping to 16% in the second and near 10% in the third generation. Other deputies from the ranks of state employees generally followed a career within a ministry or in the judiciary (a lower percentage). Among the most common administrative positions, we may count the presidency of a court of wards and the post of railway manager.

For some deputies, a post as mayor of an important town was also a step on the way to Parliament. There were only five of these but their particular cases

highlight the pre-eminence of person over political orientation; we are referring here to Zsivkó Bogdán and Kristóf Tellecsky, mayors of Kikinda²⁵, Constantin Burdia, mayor of Caransebeş/Karánsebes²⁶, Svetozar Miletic, mayor of Novi Sad/Újvidék²⁷, János Seemayer, priest in Mehadia/Mehádia and mayor of Vršac.²⁸ They were all locals, and with the exception of Miletic all won their seats on the lists of the governing party, especially because of their popularity in their original constituencies.

The brief analysis offered above prompts us to see the Banat as a region characterised electorally by a pragmatic conservatism. The governing parties were so well supported, that the three counties became a pool for the election to Parliament of a considerable number of high officials, ministers and even prime ministers (one-third of the prime ministers of dualist Hungary held mandates in the Banat). The proof of the region's loyalty towards the Liberal Party and the National Work Party lies in the majorities obtained in 1892, 1905 and 1910. On the other hand, the percentage of local representatives in Parliament remains constantly high. In other important indicators, the Banat conforms to the general characteristics of Hungary: the number and frequency of mandates by number of deputies, the intellectual background and career track of those elected, the career track before entering Parliament. The deputies of this region served, on average, two terms, and most had finished law studies and came from the ranks of civil servants, great landowners and lawyers.

The composition of the three generations that made up this elite body underwent several changes throughout half of a century – not major ones, but significantly linked to historical developments. The period of economic and political stability in the second half of the century was reflected in the high number of deputies in the second generation who had careers in bureaucracy prior to their mandates: much less tempted to pursue liberal activities, they aimed for state positions in administration and justice very early, even though they were qualified to practise as independent lawyers. The spirit of the time and the changes at the end of the century could be felt in the Banat as well, though to a lesser extent than in other parts of the country as shown in the constant increase in the number of priests sent to Parliament, the mandates held by representatives of the parties with a Christian Socialist agenda, the growing number of deputies from the ranks of the free professions, and the decrease in the number of great landowners.

²⁵ F. Végváry, F. Zimmer (eds.), *Sturm-féle Országgyűlési Almanach 1910-1915*, p. 245, 444.

²⁶ O. Iudean, *Deputați guvernamentali români în Parlamentul de la Budapesta 1881-1914*, p. 48 sqq.

²⁷ A. Toth, *Parteien und Reichstagswahlen in Ungarn 1848-1892*, p. 287.

²⁸ A. Sturm (ed.), *Országgyűlési Almanach 1901-1906*, p. 357.