

## **Culturally Composite Elites, Regime Changes and Social Crises. Formation and Transformation of Educated and Ruling Clusters in Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Confessional Eastern Europe. (The Carpathian Basin and the Baltics in Comparison - cc. 1900-1950).**

### **Historical and geo-political scope**

Societies and their ruling elites located in the Carpathian Basin, in the Baltic region and a few other parts of East Central Europe can be historically typified by both their multi-ethnic and multi-confessional composition as well as a number of violent - verging on the cataclysmic - transformations they endured in the first half of the 20th century. The culturally composite set-up as sources of collective agency and the historical alterations in the making of their elite groups under evolutionary or revolutionary conditions from post-feudal times till Communism – a development probably unique in the annals of mankind -, this is the target of my project. The regional societies concerned have given rise during the period under scrutiny to for a while independent, then subdued nation states like Estonia and Latvia in the Baltics, Hungary and Slovakia in the Carpathian Basin, or integrated into such, like Transylvania, Partium and Eastern Banat (as North-Western Romania) or Voivodina and Western Banat (as Northern Yugoslavia). The Baltic nations emerged from Russian colonial rule after World War I only to fall back in the state of Soviet satellites temporarily in 1940, for long decades (till 1989) after 1944. Slovakia, Transylvania and Voivodina with adjacent regions had been part of Hungary till 1918 and changed sovereignty afterwards with the transitory resumption of Hungarian rule (in Voivodina) at least on some of their territories (Slovakia and Transylvania) in 1940-1944.

Indeed the Carpathian Basin, from one would-be modern nation state – the Kingdom of Hungary, an exceptionally multi-cultural social formation – was split up after 1918 into regional units of different national-regional societies as parts of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia as well as a Hungarian rump state, in the organisational framework of more or less liberal or authoritarian parliamentary regimes. Two decades later they all fell in the grips of the expansionist policies of Nazi Germany and its allies either as preys or beneficiaries. This resulted in the temporary redrawing of state borders (occupation of Romanian, Czechoslovakian and Yugoslav territories by Hungary) and the first appearance of Slovakian Statehood. The war years concluded in the extermination of the bulk of the Jewish population, an essential provider of entrepreneurial and innovative elite groups in the region. The whole area was eventually occupied by the Red Army or (in Voivodina) indigenous communist militias, only to fall completely under communist rule with or without a period of transition after the defeat of Nazism and its hard liner military allies (among which Hungary and Slovakia). From the late 1940s a new Communist *nomenklatura* reigned supreme in the whole region, formally cut up into close to the same national societies as after 1918 - with the exception of Subcarpathia, united with Soviet Ukraine. This state of affairs continued till the fall of Communism after 1989.

Some other regions in Eastern Europe, among them Latvia and Estonia – earlier provinces of the Russian Empire - lived in many respects through similar destinies. Subject to a culturally patterned landowning class (of Germanic stock) under authoritarian tsarist rule which pursued a policy of intensive Russification since the outgoing 19th century, the indigenous ethnic majorities were embarked on a project of national self-assertion and social emancipation in the midst of more or less large and economically active alien outsiders (Jews, Swedes, etc.). This led to a combined process of social, ethnic and political 'change of the guard' in the ruling elites after 1918, when these regions became nation states proper (Estonia and Latvia). Around 1940 they fell under temporary Soviet rule, before being invaded by Nazi Germany, with which they entered into a forced military alliance during the war years. Complete Sovietization ensued after the victory of the Red Army in 1944-45 with disastrous consequences for former ruling strata (massacres, deportation, social degradation, flight, emigration). By the late 1940s Stalinist type regimes with local party oligarchies were established under the umbrella of the formally federal Soviet state.

Thus, societies in question were marked in the first half of the 20th century by a dual transformation. On the one hand, via industrialisation, embourgeoisement, urbanization and political nation-building they emerged from conditions of the old (feudal or post-feudal) regimes to implement successively various options of societal modernity. On the other hand all these societies and their social, political and intellectual leadership passed through several (three or more) major internal

upheavals in a matter of three decades (from 1918 to the late 1940s), often combined with dramatic shifts of statehood.

The consequences affected elite groups in a number of ways – usually under duress : dismissal of civil servants and those holding power (whether legislative, executive or judicial), expropriation of the landowning classes due to land reforms (affecting all these societies after WW I except the Hungarian rump state), the persecution and extermination of Jews (by Nazi Germany) and some other sectors of the educated elites (by Soviet invaders, their local allies and accomplices), the expulsion or the flight of Germans and other minorities after WW 2, the degradation of the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie both under Nazism (Jews) and Communism, different trends of emigration, immigration and 'population exchanges' (a euphemism for ethnic cleansing), the endowment of new clusters with the functional entitlements of titular elites - accompanied by the downgrading of formerly ruling brackets into the state of oppressed or second rate citizenry. This implied each times not only the 'change of the guard' of the political leadership, but also the partial or global disruption, erosion or shift of all other settled social hierarchies together with the principles governing their constitution. Narratives of these spectacular crisis situations represent a staple target of received historical scholarship.

### **Problem areas in historical setting**

Our project, while not ignoring its achievements, will break with this rather traditional path of historical wisdom and lay the stress on hitherto largely (in most societies observed, indeed completely) neglected in-depth developments withing the given regional-national elite brackets. The focus will be put on the substantial modifications of the standards commanding professional mobility (together with various trends of forced downward and sponsored upward mobility), the reorganisation (notably 'renationalisation' or ideological reorientation) of the educational provision, the renegotiation of social allegiances and the redistribution of authority, income and prestige among sectors of the ruling class and the educated clusters, the general reallocation of intellectual, economic and social capital (in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu) together with their promotional efficiency. The project should particularly address the problem of inequalities as to chances to acquire such capital, since they were concomittantly transformed and collective identities and loyalties redefined – especially among those invested with roles of leadership or ascendancy on the strength of their social assets – that is the elite : those with educational credentials, wealth, symbolic distinction and patrimony – like noblemen -, recognized professional competences, prestigious or powerful kinship and mutual support networks, influential political positions, or otherwise acquired fame (by gift, talent or chance). Our focus will extend over the fact that at each upheaval some (if not all) criteria of access to and justification of elite status were called into question and/or brutally replaced.

Emanating from a post-feudal historic kingdom, the Hungarian partner state of the Habsburg Empire (before 1918), the Carpathian Basin illustrated an exceptional pattern of cohabitation of a big number of sub-cultural brackets marked by ethnic diversity (with Croats, Germans, Jews, Romanians, Serbians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Armenians – to cite only the largest and best identified nationalities), religious multiplicity (with Roman and Greek Catholics, Oriental Orthodox, Calvinists, Lutherans, Unitarians as well as 'rabbinical' Askenazi, Hassidic /and in Voivodina even some Sephardi/ Israelites as the main religious communities) and a set of firm regional loyalties – sometimes predicated upon historic institutions (like the *Universitas Saxoniensis* of Germans in Transylvania, settled in the late Middle Ages, having turned Lutheran in the 16th century). Pre-1919 Hungary was the only European state in modern times *without* an ethnic or a religious majority in its population. Though the Magyar ruling class (made up mostly of descendants of the *hungarus* nobility – itself a composite cluster by ethnic background, religion and established regional networks) continued to dominate politically and acted ere 1918 as a nation building titular elite, it represented only a qualified minority of the population in terms of mother tongue (the gauge of national identity). Some minorities experienced Hungarian domination as a colonial rule, others responded with a voluntary or strategic investment in power sharing and participation. Among other means, the largely Magyarized secondary school network (with 7 Lutheran-Saxon, only 5 Romanian and 1 Serbian gymnasium out of 165 in 1910) and the fully Magyar system of higher education (with the second

Hungarian university in Kolozsvár/Cluj – since 1872 – and a third one in Pozsony/Bratislava – since 1912) served the needs of the Magyarization of such minority elites. Some of the latter (often constituting local majorities in counties or cities) – Armenians, Germans, Jews and many Slovaks – adopted the project of a Magyar nation state, looking for and often finding ways of integration in its ruling strata. Other ethnic clusters – like most Romanians, Serbians, Carpatho-Ukrainians (Ruthenians) and a number of Slovaks – kept their distance from or rejected the project outright and developed movements to advance their own national and social options. Hence the then would-be national society, based on an official policy of more or less forceful assimilation of the non Magyar constituents masterminded by the governments in Budapest, was torn apart by centrifugal forces. Following the revolutionary crises and the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1918-1919 this was conducive to a new configuration of nation state formations in the Carpathian Basin under new elites with different national identities and claims. This was spectacularly exemplified by the immediate Romanisation of the University in Cluj/Kolozsvár and the Slovakisation of the University in Bratislava/Pozsony (becoming Comenius University) - after their detachment from Hungary in 1918.

Latvia (and to some extent Estonia) appear to be the closest to the Carpathian Basin in terms of multi-ethnicity and multi-confessionalism – with Germans, Jews, Russians, Bielorrussians, Swedes, Lithuanians and Poles besides the majority ethnic stocks on the one hand, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Israelites on the other hand - within their changing historical elites. The University of Dorpat/Tartu (refounded in 1802 as a German university) as well as the Riga Polytechnics (since 1862) performed essential functions in local elite formation for both regional societies ere 1918, though their area of student recruitment exceeded largely the Baltic region. Both were Russified as of the 1890s and became national training institutions only after independence, following World War 1 and the ensuing civil war. Tartu even operated temporarily as a German *Landesuniversität* in 1918 under German occupation. The Latvian University in Tallin joined the set of national institutions of higher education in the region since 1919. The Soviet (1940) and the ensuing new German occupation left their often tragic marks on both (with the exclusion and extermination of Jews, the enrollment of many students in the *Wehrmacht*) : Tartu operated actually as the *Ostland Universität in Dorpat* (1942-1944) before being renationalized in Soviet Estonia.

Given this historical starting point in various culturally composite regional-social formations, our project will focus both upon highly specific developments rooted in local social and political history as well as upon some pre-defined general problem areas following strictly coordinated methods. By the same token it will concern a number of both long term and short term changes in the constitution and the functions fulfilled by elites.

Long term developments regard, among other things, the growth, structural transformations, inclusiveness and intake (clientèle) of the school system, together with its ideological implications (like ethno-nationalism) and institutional practices (like segregationist, discriminationist or otherwise preferential admission policies), the extraction, selection or recruitment of elite groups by social class, regional origins, ethnicity and denomination, shifts in the composition of educated and ruling elites by branches of activity (professional set-up), the selective appearance of women in markets of elite education and self-assertion, alterations of the definition, perception and social qualification of elite groups (gentlemanly middle class, ruling stratum, titular-national elite, intelligentsia, *nomenklatura*) as well as, obviously enough, changes in their ideological references and loyalties.

Short term developments include changes of sovereignty and geo-political allegiances, the direct consequences of foreign occupation, turbulence due to war or invasion, outbursts of persecution and mass violence, alterations of socio-political regime or state policies related to elite reproduction (like radical land reforms after WW I, authoritarian or dictatorial policy turns (as in Latvia in 1934, in post-1919 Hungary – academic *numerus clausus* – and after 1938 with the anti-Jewish legislation, in Romania during the 1930s following ethnic-nationalist protectionism instituted by the *lex vallachicus*, etc.). But political issues proper will be dealt with in the project only as far as they had impact on the state of elites in concrete terms.

Contrary to most (almost all) historical studies of regime change in the societies under scrutiny, the project will deliberately avoid the trappings of narratives and interpretations of controversial political events. The focal topics will point at the socio-professional, ethnic, religious, regional and gender related inequalities and disparities observable in the transformations of elites

which are, in part, highly specific of some of the societies observed and, in part, comparable among them.

### **Scholarly references and antecedents**

Elite studies go back to a rather long past, the theoretical foundation work having been accomplished by founding fathers of political sociology in the late 19th and early 20th century (like Vilfredo Pareto, Roberto Michels or Gaetano Mosca). They proposed theories of elites, elite transformations and 'circulation' related, essentially, to political ruling clusters, but without empirical underpinning. This would come with the first prosopographical studies, starting from the 19th century, and initially applied to ancient history (T. Mommsen on elites in the Roman Empire, 1897), later to modern times (L. Namier, 1930, on British political elites). But contemporary and empirically based elite research can be more closely inspired by distinguished authors of the French *Annales* school (F. Furet, D. Richet, 1969) and sociology of education (P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Passeron, 1970), giving rise to substantial prosopographical studies on large elite strata not only in France but in most Western societies, including Britain, Germany, the United States and – more recently – Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Austria. The study of entrepreneurial bourgeoisies, liberal professions and educated middle class clusters have proliferated in the last three odd decades in West European social history with some studies regarded as classical by J. Kocka and U. Frevert (*Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*, 1988), C. Charle (*Les élites de la République*, 1987), H. Best (*Die Männer von Bildung und Besitz*, 1990) or D. Augustine (*Patricians and Parvenus. Wealth and high society in Wilhelmine Germany*, 1994).

A special branch of this line of studies concerned more specifically the intellectual professions in general in one society, M. Malatesta (*Society and the Professions in Italy*, 1995), C. Charle's *Naissance de 'intellectuels'* (1990) or his *La République de universitaires* (1994) as well as, more specifically, those dedicated to individual intellectual or artistic categories. Among the latter some brilliant collective biographies can be cited, like my late mentor P. Bourdieu's groundbreaking works *La noblesse d'Etat* (1989) or *Homo academicus* (1985), G. Sapiro's *La guerre de écrivains, 1940-1953* (1999) or L. Boltanski's *Les cadres* (1984) – if I am allowed to stress the topical contributions of the Parisian research group in which I had the personal chance of being a member since its very inception. But one can also add well known country wide studies of academics (Ringer, 1969) or processes of professionalization and the liberal professions in Germany by K. Jahrausch (*The Unfree Professions*, 1990, and *German Professions*, 1990).

In this respect we can already refer to important topical studies on Eastern European intellectual clusters as well. This is the case for Maria M. Kovács' socio-political overview of the growing illiberalism of the main professions (lawyers, physicians, engineers) in old regime Hungary (1994), or V. Scerbanski's prosopographical research on Latvian lawyers in the inter-war years (2007) – accompanied by the study of a family of 'swarn lawyers' by E. Jekabsons. These authors, prospective partners in our project, have also published historical-prosopographical studies on Latvian diplomats (2003), army officers (1998) and politicians (2006). Comparable studies are available for Estonian elite groups too. Our prospective partner Lea Leppik has produced substantial essays on the career of Estonian intellectuals in the Russian Empire (2008) as well as on patterns of social mobility among employees in the University of Tartu/Dorpat ere 1918 (2006). Important recent studies are also due to T. Karjahärm and V. Sirk on ethnic Estonian intellectuals since 1850 up to 1987 (1997, 2001, 2007). T. Hiio has elaborated on students and student organizations of Tartu University (1996, 2007). A student of mine at the History Department of the CEU, Martin Jaigma, chose for the topic of his MA thesis the prosopographically grounded analysis of social and educational characteristics of Jewish and other students of the Tartu University in the inter-war years (2002). ). One can also cite the book by L. Trgovcevic on the 'planified elites' due to studies abroad sponsored by the Serbian state in the pre-1914 period of nation building (2003). B. Simunovic-Beslin, a possible partner in our project, touches upon similar topical areas in his quite recent overview of educational policies in the Danubian district of Yougoslavia in the inter-war years (2007), corresponding to the Voivodina region included in our project.

The same applies to my prospective Romanian partners in the project. L. Nastasa's study on the morphology of the Romanian academic field (2004) or 'the lords of Romanian universities' (2007)

– inclusive of Transylvania - exemplify this trend, together with M. Lazar's original prosopographically grounded historical sociology of Romanian cultural elites (2002) and Z. Pálffy's seminal *National controversy in the Transylvanian Academe* (2005). Though it concerns the school system and only indirectly teachers and educationalists, J. von Puttkamer's book *Schulalltag und nationale Integration in Ungarn* (2003) is important for our research too, due to its implications on state policies of forced assimilation of minorities via schooling in Slovakia and Transylvania under the Dual Monarchy. Further on the present project can also draw, at least indirectly, upon studies of modern 'national' universities, elite training and student populations. This classical historiographical line of research has been utterly renovated and reoriented towards social history in recent publications, as attested by W. Rugg's edited books on pre-1914 universities in Europe (2004), M. Kulczykowski on Jews in the Jagellonian University in Cracow (1995), G. Cohen's book on the Austrian higher education under the Dual Monarchy (1997) or my own work on the modernization of the Napoleonic *Université* (2005). But this project can use more directly data, information and insights from equally recent prosopographical studies on peregrinations of East-Central European students in the West since the 1890s, like the ones initiated by H. R. Peter and N. Tikhonov (2001) with my own contributions. In this field L. Szögi has brought out with his team in the University Archives of Budapest a number of fundamental publications on students from Hungary abroad before 1919, covering institutions of higher education of the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Britain and Italy. Similar contributions have been made by Romanian colleagues as well (like L. Nastasa and C. Sigmirean).

Some of these collective biographies have already an in-built comparative (inter-societal) dimension. This applies already to the above cited books by J. Kocka and U. Frevert as well as by H. Best or studies like Y. Cassis' *Big Business : the European Experience in the Twentieth Century* (1997), H. Siegrist's *Sozialgeschichte der Rechtsanwälte in Deutschland, Italien und der Schweiz* (1995) or H. Kaelble's precious *Social Mobility in the 19th and 20th century* (1985). The large overview of the emergence of the intellectuals as a self-reflecting social strata, active in political opinion-making and mobilization in Europe by my colleague C. Charle (1996) is a well known case in point with several other international studies. Among the latter one can refer to Gerbel C. et al. (*Urbane Eliten und kultureller Wandel*, 1996), J.E. Myhre's *The Scandinavian Middle Classes* (2004) or K. Jarausch's edited book on the growth of student populations since the 19th century in the United States, Germany, England and Russia (1983). A similarly comparative enterprise is represented by *Anciennes et nouvelles aristocraties de 1880 à nos jours* by M. de Saint-Martin (2007) as well as by some promising recent research on Central and Eastern Europe. One can cite in this context collective works like edited by C. McClelland et al. *Professions in Modern Eastern Europe* (1995), M.-D. Gheorghiu's *Littératures et pouvoir symbolique* (2005), the 'Central European landmarks' on intellectuals published in several languages by C. Sigmirean (2007) or the intriguing *Le communisme et les élites en Europe Centrale* (2006) by N. Bauquet et al.

Nevertheless, none of the works cited - or those liable to be mentioned - offer a globalizing approach of the main elites groupes, let alone the interpretation of their occasional culturally multiple dimensions, like the one I wish to implement in this project. In this sense hardly any initiative appear to have been ever attempted. One can cite though a Norwegian study on students of the unique university in the country by V. Aubert for 1720-1950 („The Professions in Norwegian Social Structure", 1964) or – closer to us – C. Sigmirean's prosopographical work on educated Romanians in Transylvania and Banat (2000). Though it is not based on prosopography, one has to cite here a unique investigation of overall socio-historical changes of patterns of social mobility in inter-war Hungary by the late R. Andorka (1982) grounded in survey data of the 1920s in Budapest and census results from 1930). Other precedents include Hungarian publications on top members of ruling elites (Church hierarchy, army generals, university professors) in the interwar years due to the research group founded by Tibor Huszár in the Sociology Department of the ELTE University in Budapest. Among Hungarian initiatives, covering the historic kingdom, T. Hajdu's work on officers of Franz-Joseph's *Honvéd Army* (1999) must be also referred to, as well as his earlier essay, particularly significant for our project, on the consequences of the quantitative increase of the proportion of intellectuals before and after World War I (1980).

All these initiatives are lacking though the comparative scope both in the intra-societal and the inter-societal sense, as proposed in the present project.

In this sense the preliminary outcome of large scale prosopographic and statistical studies of educated and 'reputational' elites I have organised with my partner Peter Tibor Nagy over the last decades on Hungarian elite groups between 1867 and 1948 can be considered as the only substantial precedent to the present project, all the more because they cover concomitantly Slovakia, Transylvania and Voivodina for pre-1918 times – together, obviously, with territories of the later 'Trianon Hungary'. Our project will draw direct benefits from scholarly, methodological and technical insights gained from these all but exhaustive, country-wide elite surveys. Though for the moment we lack the financial means necessary for the full fledged exploitation of our survey results, some of the latter are being targets of ongoing publications. (See especially [www.wesley.extra](http://www.wesley.extra), Peter Tibor Nagy's and my own homepage as well as the bibliography of both of us in the last ten years attached to this application.)

The surveys already achieved are based on mostly archival sources but also on a number of printed materials in four interrelated procedures :

1. **Survey of 'reputational elites'** in Hungary including all those having entries in major national biographical dictionaries, encyclopaedias and bibliographies and born after 1750 till today : cc. 26 000 individual cases registered electronically in one unified data bank from encyclopedic sources printed between 1895 and 2005.

2. **Prosopographical survey of students and graduates of higher education** in Hungary identified as such between cc. 1867 and 1948 via the exploitation of archival sources (inscription files, diplomas, lists of degree holders, exam protocols) with an inventory intended to be exhaustive for graduates, representative for the rest of the academic population concerned as far as it was permitted by the sources available. Some sources in several institutions (among them most Roman Catholic theologies) could as yet not be exploited. The survey concerned the clientèle of universities, Law academies, vocational institutions of higher education (agricultural, commercial, diplomatic, forestry and mining), schools of art and Protestant theological academies and seminaries as well as students abroad - notably in Austria, Bohemia, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Italy (1867-1918) - born in the territory of Hungary. Size of the computerized prosopographical data bank produced : over 210 000.

3. **Initiation of a large scale prosopographical survey of secondary school graduates** (1867-1918) in Hungary with electronic registration of personal data on family background of pupils as well as their scholarly performance (marks) in various subjects. It consisted of two approaches. One of these exploited in selected years before and after World War I (including the 1920s for Budapest) archival sources (immatriculation files of pupils of the 1st, 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes) of a number of schools with Latin (*gimnázium*) or without Latin (*reáliskola*) in decades preceding 1914 in the capital city as well as in Pozsony/Bratislava, Nagyszombat/Trnava, Eperjes/Presov, Lőcse, Debrecen, Miskolc, Pécs, Szeged, Kassa/Kosice, Kolozsvár/Cluj, Arad, Temesvár/Timisoara, Lugos) specially chosen for hosting multi-ethnic and/or multi-confessional school clienteles. (N = cc. 14 000.) The other part of the survey resorted to student lists of the outgoing graduating classes (with marks, indication of religion and, occasionally, graduation results and professional or study plans for the future) in published yearly reports of 58 randomly selected secondary schools for 1867-1918. (N = cc. 34 000.)

4. Systematic collection and computerization in electronic data banks of **statistical overviews** of professional stratification, surveys on intellectuals, schooling (on all levels), graduates of universities and vocational higher education, educational level of the population in various regions of Hungary and dates (both before and after 1918). Some of these have been extracted from archival sources and published in the course of our work. (See the educational data bases published in collaboration with Peter Tibor Nagy in our respective bibliographies, attached to this application.)

The present project would thus extend and complete the previous operations on Hungary and give it a new comparative dimension by the inclusion of relevant problem areas of elite formation in territories detached from Hungary after 1918 as well as in two comparably multi-cultural Baltic countries. The extension over successor states or regions of erstwhile empires becoming parts of new nation states would permit the quasi experimental study of the re-stratification of elites over a set of socio-political crises occurring during the process of the development of industrial civilisation up to Communism.

## **The construction of a complex, inter-societal comparative project**

To my knowledge, no comparative socio-historical enterprise of such size and similarly global ambition as ours has been undertaken ever before, related as it is to the long period of half a century - including several changes of political regime - and covering the main elite clusters in five national or extended regional societies, specially chosen for their uniquely multi-cultural set-up.

We may and certainly will gather useful insights to carry out our project from classical studies of social stratification and comparative social mobility, like H. Kaelble's earlier work, R. Erikson's and H. Goldthorpe's *Inter-generational Mobility in Three Western Society* (1979) or D.J. Treiman's *Occupational prestige in comparative perspective* (1977) as well as such empirical reflections on established social hierarchies as H. Ganzeboom et al.'s *Standard International Socio-Economic Index of Occupations* (1992), but our focus is decisively on inter-cultural differentials in East European elite groups – a topical issue all but ignored in the above mentioned studies, just like in the rest of the relevant literature (except for – even if very rarely – the opposition of Jews and Gentiles in schooling and in social structure). Exactly the same applies to old types of 'cross-cultural studies' initiated for example in the 1960s by Stein Rokkan, or to the quite recent literature expressing the growing interest for inter-societal comparisons, as in the works of my Berlin colleagues J. Schriewer, *Theories and Methods in Comparative Education* (1990) or H. Kaelble et al., *Gesellschaften im Vergleich* (1998), followed by another statement of his on inter-societal history (*Der historische Vergleich*, 1999).

My starting point reflected a long personal research experience on the past of East Central European elite education, including extended studies (much beyond those cited above) on student populations in pre- and post-1918 Austria (Vienna University and Polytechnics students), Hungary at large, Germany (Berlin and Leipzig universities and secondary schools), as well as in pre-1918 Poland (Galicia), Transylvania (Romania), Slovakia, the Ukraine (Lviv and Czernovitz) – in the latter regions on secondary school clienteles. The problem area concerned modernization processes of the schooling provision as well as that in various elite strata during the outgoing period of feudalism and the birth of industrial societies in this part of the world. The main focus of these studies, in part published in Bourdieu's *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, had to do with confessional and other particularistic disparities in the educational chances of populations, which commanded more and more the socio-professional structure of regional societies, the prevailing patterns of social mobility, the self-perception of elite groups as well as the assigned status of alien clusters (like Jews, Germans, Armenians and others) in various national environments.

Such insights have been duely transposed and fed into the conception of the present project via the focus on culturally composite educated strata. The other aspect of the project related to the observation of elite groups following their historical transformations over several radical changes of political regimes, this was a historical given in East Central Europe. All have passed from late feudalism to Communism in a matter of a few decades in the 20th century, via initial integration in different national societies, mounting right extremism (as in Romania and Hungary) or local dictatorships (as in Latvia after 1934) and a stint of Nazification everywhere, before the establishment of a Stalinist dictatorship under various disguises of formal statehood. This rather strictly common (often tragic) historical experience of local elites contributes to the large measure of comparability of societies involved in the project.

But the conception of the project had to be governed by more pragmatic considerations as well. One was to identify regional or national societies not only satisfying criteria of the above mentioned problem setting, but small enough for the feasibility of a global survey of their elite groups. The biggest of these is Hungary with a population close to 8 millions in the inter-war years, endowed with the quantitatively highest proportions of educated clusters, due to the fact that post-Trianon Hungary represented the economically most developed territories of the former historic kingdom. But a good part of the empirical surveys planned in the project has been completed for Hungary, thus its obvious choice. Slovakia (with some 3,3 million inhabitants in 1935) and Transylvania (with a population of some 2,5 million) were important because they developed new national elites after the break with Hungary, to the extent of possessing universities and other facilities of elite education of their own. Voivodina (with a population of cc. 1,3 million in the inter-war years) was in this respect an interesting counter-example without institutions of higher education of its own. The two Baltic states were among the smallest in Europe with less than 2 millions of inhabitants in Latvia and a mere 1,1

million in Estonia in the 1930s. They both had national universities as well as Polytechnics of their own after 1919, but the University of Tartu and the Polytechnics of Riga had served as central places of advanced elite training in the Baltic region and much beyond ere 1919 too.

Beyond size, all these societies offered an essential supplementary advantage of exceptionally rich, well organised and accessible archival and printed documentation on their student populations and other elite clusters. I could explore details of these documentary evidences of the internal set-up of elite groups during a number of research trips and contacts with local scholars, some of them having become prospective partners in the present project. (We are about to publish the prosopography of students of the pre-1919 university in Kolozsvár/Cluj with Dr Nastasa. Dr Scerbinski has already brought out several volumes of elite prosopographies on Latvia, just to illustrate the level of preliminary work accomplished for our project, besides that we could realize on Hungary with my colleague Peter Tibor Nagy). All our other prospective partners have done extended research on elite training in their region. Thus a global set of surveys, as planned here, has become conceivable thanks to this duely explored documentation, most of which would be actually inexistent in most Western countries (even if – which is certainly not the case - the mere size of elites in these countries would allow the implementation of such projects).

For the identification of local research objects in concrete terms I have followed essentially pragmatic principles in order to save, as much as possible, the comparative nature of each operation and draw upon identical or very similar source materials, while raising strictly identical problems in respective studies on local societies. This pragmatism led to the understanding that for feasibility's sake I had to identify concrete research topics liable to be pursued in at least three of our societies concerned, but not necessarily in all of them. For example, documentation on secondary school graduates appear to be far too poor in the Baltics, while it is very rich in the Carpathian Basin, so that this part of the project will be limited to Hungary, Slovakia and the Voivodina.

As to the definition of elite groups to be studied, I also adopted pragmatic principles. We will try to involve in the project the social sectors performing essential 'elite functions' of social control (domination, management of societal institutions, administration, domestication of the lower classes), social reproduction via education (including self-reproduction and securing ways of educational mobility of lower class elements), creativity (whether intellectual, artistic, scientific or even economic – due to entrepreneurship), the definition of the ideological legitimation of the given political order, the representation of the whole society (vis-a-vis insiders and outsiders, in government and other representative bodies), the provision of specialised public or market oriented services (law, medicine, education, engineering, arts, etc.). If the notion of elite refers in modern societies to a social hierarchy grounded on wealth (property, income, economic capital), power (as well as influence and authority), prestige (distinction, assigned status – like nobility) and education (including objectified assets of intellectual creativity) for reasons of empirical feasibility we are going to explore preferentially educated elites and – additionally – power elites. Economic and other elite clusters will enter into consideration as parts of educated groups or in the framework of the special research on 'reputational elites'.

Methodologically, as exposed above, the project is dedicated to the overall empirical study of elite groups and their reproduction, exposed as they were to long term processes of economic and institutional modernization, nation building, industrialization, urbanization, etc. as well as by cataclysmic regime changes. The focus of the study concerns the **nature of elite groups** at large, their alterations and transmutations as social clusters – size, professional composition, public standing and behaviour -, their **recruitment or selection** in social space (by criteria of regional, ethnic-national, denominational and social background, extraction or origin), their **formation path** in terms of schooling, advanced learning and careers, finally their public activities, especially the **forms of creativity and performances** they have displayed (be it intellectual, socio-political, scientific, artistic, journalistic or other). For this we will resort to the nominative identification of members of major elite groups – starting with those having gained certified reputation, academic titles or degrees of advanced secondary or/and higher education. This will be done by resorting to prosopographical data banks of vast dimensions, that is, as exhaustively as permitted by the sources for societies and historical junctures under scrutiny.

This is a multi-disciplinary venture based on survey methods. Its focal scheme, the **comparative historical sociology of elites**, is strongly connected to the **social history** of new national



societies sharing a common past (including problems of emigration, student peregrinations, population exchanges and expulsions, power and property distribution, etc.), **historical statistics** (an abundant source in both big regions concerned for the study of local demography, professional stratification, schooling, residential and social as well as symbolic status mobility - as realized via nationalization of surnames, language shifts, multi-lingualism, strategic confessional conversions, etc.), the **intellectual history** of particular professional or/and creative elite brackets, the **institutional history** of educational systems and markets, the **social geography** of emerging new regional societies (particularly for indicators of levels of modernization) as well as analyses of official policies (related to citizenship, language use, ethnic borders and status, schooling, staffing the civil and military service, etc.) via methods of **political science**.

The project is meant to be a fundamental research, intended to serve as a model for large scale socio-historical studies of elites elsewhere, but also to provide raw materials for more detailed or otherwise oriented studies of elite groups in the regional or national societies concerned. Such further studies may focus on local elite circles (in sub-regions, cities, townships, etc.), specific professional branches, learned societies or other 'trans-class' elite clusters (such as – for example - Freemasonry, Catholic congregations, staff and constituency of political parties and movements, agencies of civil society, persons holding officially awarded distinctions, cultural, artistic or literary chapels, etc.)

The project should be completed in four years, but some partners – following their personal share, individually negotiated – may participate for periods of various duration (even less than one year), as demanded by the specific tasks of which they will take charge.

### **The thematic organisation of the project**

For each region under scrutiny our project should include some of the following investigations, which should be strictly coordinated and conducted in a comparative perspective as far as permitted by available sources.

#### **1. The study of the school system.**

This part of the project should be carried out in all the regions covered in our project. It would focus on institutional transformations (the supply of schooling) since the 19th century, but more specifically on the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (for the demand of schooling), since Communism introduced a radical break in data sources related to users of the educational system (no information on religion, poor or unreliable data on social origins, obsolete references – if any - on ethnicity).

Schooling was the main institutional provision destined to the production of the educated strata. The investments made in schooling, its structural arrangements, organisational patterns, preferential admission and promotion policies (via grants, fee exemptions, dormitory facilities, etc.) were directly responsible for the supply side of the educational market – a service agency indeed often dominated by the supply. In this investigation a special case should be made of the supply of schooling in different languages, given the multi-ethnic nature of the population in all the regional societies concerned and the fact that the linguistic supply of schooling proved to be a decisive vehicle of the denationalisation or renationalisation of upcoming generations and would-be elite clusters. The same applies to the role of public and private agencies, the functions of which should be closely investigated, notably those of the Churches – given the multi-denominational composition of potential school clientele.

The study should also focus on the **nature of the educational demand** incidentally on the primary but heavily on the secondary levels, the springboard for elite training : graduates of secondary education represented in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (moving from less than 1 % up to 3 % of the age groups concerned, differently in various regions) the pool of selection of educated elites. The preliminary surveys I have conducted for the pre-1918 decades in several Central European regions and towns (Hungary, Slovakia, Transylvania, Lemberg/Lvov/Lviv and Czernovitz) has concluded on clear patterns of social, ethnic, denominational, regional and gender related inequalities of schooling frequencies and performances. Differences in frequencies and academic excellence appeared to be striking between Jewish and German-Lutheran pupils on the one hand, those belonging to national

majorities on the other hand. Such dimensions of schooling inequalities must be tested together with others in Voivodina, Estonia and Latvia too in our project.

The following investigations should be included here in concrete terms, to be completed as a first step, during the very first year of the project :

- Historical development of the organisation chart of institutions of primary, secondary and higher schooling (types of institutions, regional distribution, number of staff, pupil/teacher ratios, etc.).
- Evolution and changes of educational policies of admission and sponsorship : preferential selection and promotion of students, *numerus clausus* arrangements, tuition fees, frequency and conditions of distribution of fee waivers, scholarships, grants and other forms of educational support.
- Statistical analyses of the size of the intake of primary education (regionally) with possible sub-focus on group specific drop-out rates between levels (from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the outgoing class), as it changed from the early to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Similar analyses applied to levels of literacy by gender and age as well as ethnic, regional, denominational and social clusters following - when available - census or survey data.
- Statistical analyses of the size and intake of secondary education, more specifically as far as drop-out rates, age and gender specific proportions of those reaching 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes as well as graduates are concerned.
- Statistical analyses of the same in higher education, especially as far as age and gender specific entry rates and graduation rates are concerned, completed by the study of social group specific data of enrolments in various branches of advanced learning.
- Study of educational budgets: evolution of public spending on primary, secondary and higher education, possibly – when sources permit – by institutions, population units, sub-regions and students.

## **2. Large scale (possibly exhaustive) survey of graduates of secondary schooling as the basic pool of selection of the highly educated for the years 1900-1948.**

The focus should be on schools leading to universities, polytechnic institutes and vocational colleges of post-secondary education, like *gymnasiums* (with Latin) and *Realschulen* (without Latin) in Central Europe. This is going to be a central and a most voluminous piece of our project for Hungary, Slovakia and Voivodina, where archival and published sources are regularly available to this effect. In Latvia and Estonia similar sources appear to be scarce and less informative. The historical boundaries of this part of the project should cover periods for which there is precisely a continuity of sources to be exploited. Archival sources should include student inscription files (matricula) and yearly lists of pupils in the outgoing classes in each institution. Published sources comprise essentially printed yearly reports of secondary schools. The topical foci of the prosopographical survey in form of computerized data bases should include :

- o the types of *gymnasiums* and ‘*real schools*’ (without Latin) and other institutions, whether run by the State, municipal governments, the Churches or private entrepreneurs
- o surname and first names with titles attached (for identification of noblemen, dr. or those with other status distinctions)
- o pre-secondary education
- o father’s profession, titles (if applicable) and place of residence
- o religion
- o mother tongue : besides this, the appropriate coding of the national character of surnames should also provide an indication of ethnic background
- o place and date of birth, age of graduation (if applicable)
- o marks obtained in different subjects, separately (possibly in the outgoing school class, if graduation grades are not supplied in the sources)
- o planned profession or further studies (when available)

**3. Large scale (possibly exhaustive) prosopographical survey of graduates of higher education,** including alumni of universities, vocational colleges, schools of creative arts and theological academies and seminaries, whenever the necessary - mostly archival - sources permit (1900-1948). The historical boundaries are destined to cover periods for which identical or at least similar data sources can be counted upon. This is the absolutely central part of our project, the prosopographical study of certified intellectuals, to be accomplished in all the regions under scrutiny. It has been already largely advanced for Hungary, (without though the completion of multi-variate analyses of the data banks produced). The Hungarian survey may serve as a model for the rest. Archival sources (inscription files, student lists, exam protocols, lists of graduates, etc.) should be exploited here together with published sources (especially in university and academic yearbooks). The foci of the study include for each student and graduate concerned the following personal data :

- surname and first name, together with occasional titles of nobility or other (dr. 'vitéz', nobility particle, etc.), including changes of surname (if applicable)
- place and date of birth
- father's (mother's or guardian's) name, address (place of residence), professional status, titles
- religion, together with changes of confessional status (if applicable)
- mother tongue : besides this the appropriate coding of the surname (together with the region of birth) should provide an indication of ethnic background
- secondary studies : place of secondary school graduation as well as type of school
- date and age of entry to the University or other institution of higher education
- choice of study track within the institution (faculty, branch of study, if applicable)
- date and age of graduation (if applicable)
- qualification at graduation (mark or marks obtained at exit *rigurosa*)
- supplementary titles obtained (professional + doctor's degree, if applicable)
- grants, scholarships, fee exemptions
- occasional indications of professional positions occupied at later dates (if applicable).

**4. Serial monographic studies of individual intellectual professions and the main clusters of the educated middle class :** access conditions, career patterns and internal disparities of career chances and options, income hierarchies, regional and residential distribution, liability to achieve political power positions (1900-1956).

These studies should draw upon large professional samples (if data are absent for the whole professional population) in various periods. The sources would include, obviously enough, the results of the preceding surveys as well as professional lists with members of professional chambers, etc. The topical foci may concern the break-down of observations by ethnic background, religion, gender, regional and residential origins, political and social affiliations (with special emphasis on noble origins for the early 20<sup>th</sup> century). The main professional clusters touched upon should include :

- lawyers (for each region concerned)
- medical doctors (for each region concerned)
- engineers of various specializations (in Hungary, Slovakia and Latvia, endowed with local Polytechnics)
- teaching staff of secondary schools, vocational higher education and universities (including members of academe at large, together with elected members of the Academy of Sciences and prominent national or regional learned societies) – for Hungary, Slovakia and Voivodina
- members of artistic elites (to be defined following local criteria via prizes and public distinctions obtained, membership in artistic academies, etc.), for Hungary, Latvia and Estonia
- members of church hierarchies (to be defined differently, following specific criteria applicable to the various confessional communities) – for each regions concerned
- staff of military headquarters (to be defined locally, approximately above the rank of major or colonel or even below) – for each national society concerned, that is Hungary, Slovakia, Latvia and Estonia

## **5. Special study of power elites during and between crises of socio-political transition (1900-1956)**

This should be a direct survey based on prosopographical sources of the decision making personnel appointed by or achieving high positions in changing political regimes (down to the level of city or district party *nomenklatura* under Communism). It should be accomplished in all the regions concerned thanks to publicly accessible lists of the political leadership (even if the useful recruitment data are unequally relevant). The chronological boundaries have been chosen so that the staff of all types of regimes typifying the main political disruptions experienced in the Carpathian Basin and in the Baltics during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century could be touched upon and investigated thanks to a relatively unified gamut of personal data usually available for at least the most prominent political actors throughout the whole period. Type and level of education, the family's socio-professional standing, ethnic and denominational origins as well as political affiliations and commitment of those concerned should be listed. The research could draw upon various results of the surveys on 'reputational elites', secondary school graduates, students and degree holders of higher education, members of liberal professions and other educated clusters as well as necrologies, death or burial announcements, obituaries published in the press, parliamentary yearbooks as well as inventories (*schematisms*) of state employees, etc. No initial estimations of the quantitative size of the surveys can be made at that stage.

The survey targets should include the following categories :

- members of government
- members of parliament
- staff of the political administration and high standing civil servants appointed by the government on ministerial, regional or county level
- high ranking leaders of ruling parties (on state, regional, county and city level)
- magistrates and city judges
- personalities officially distinguished by various regimes (holders of state prizes, recipients of medals of merit, etc.)

## **6. Integrated study of various elite hierarchies ('elites of elite groups') in terms of reputation, certified influence and/or creativity.**

This may be the most risky part of our project and the less liable of standardisation. It concerns the identification and registration (in form of electronic data banks) of prosopographical data related to persons empirically defined as members of 'reputational elites' : those having been designed as 'famous' by public opinion objectified in entries in national biographical dictionaries and encyclopaedias on the one hand, those who can prove a high level of creativity certified in various ways on the other hand : publication of a number of books, studies in authoritative scholarly journals, citations in almanacks of creative or performing arts, elected positions in learned societies, artistic circles, agencies of civil society, etc. This part of our project may have different targets or scope in societies concerned following the availability and the relevance of indicators liable to application and sources open to exploitation.

The study would focus on the social selection process of 'people of fame' via the meticulously personalized confrontation of those selected by criteria of reputation to the rank and file body of students and/or graduates of higher or secondary education. Correlations should be thought here too between 'independent' background variables (ethnicity, religion, social and regional extraction), 'semi-independent' variables (like the educational path, ideological, political, artistic or scholarly options leading to intellectual status or positions of influence), and factors defining the achieved standing of leadership, power or authority (prestige) in respective intellectual, economic, artistic or other clusters of the educated middle class.