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### **The Intersection of Economic Nationalism and Politics: Financial Institutions in Lower Styria**

Economic nationalism played a central role in shaping the national cultures of these regions and served as an alternative path to modernisation. Before World War I, economic nationalism operated mainly below the state level, but it was sometimes integrated into official state policy after the war. Economic nationalism was linked to the pursuit of tangible protection to support cultural and political reconciliation. It is often seen as a national economic strategy that promotes the development and mobilisation of domestic resources while serving as a means of defence. Many institutions became embroiled in conflicts between national movements, putting them under considerable political and economic pressure. In addition, these national movements led to the creation of parallel financial systems that facilitated modernisation and significantly promoted the desired industrialisation. The need for financial services in urban and rural areas grew. This demand was primarily met by secondary credit sectors, which consisted of several new types of financial institutions, including credit cooperatives and savings banks. However, economic nationalism changed from a grassroots factor to an official state policy. The end of the war significantly changed the political and economic map of Central and South-Eastern Europe. The article deals with the question of the development of a financial network in Lower Styria up to the beginning of the First World War in the light of economic nationalism and its transformation in the first years of the existence of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

*Projected paper title:* **(Re)building a prehistory of varieties of capitalism in Central and Eastern Europe: Employers**

While an increasingly voluminous literature dissects the creation of post-communist dependent market economies, comparatively little has been said regarding the historical interaction of business elites and policymakers in CEE states. The present paper offers an exploratory case-study of employers' consent and protest in the development of the interwar Romanian welfare state. Firstly, I argue that Romanian employers were less interested in coupling insurance benefits with wage hierarchies and financing welfare bureaucracies, as predicted by conventional Western-centric studies, and more interested in policymakers' public recognition of their dissent as a gateway to potential coalitions with labor. This was seen by employers as a crucial safeguard against the potential socio-economic collapse brought about by top-down, disembedded welfare reforms. Secondly, I show that above and beyond an interest in protecting skills investment, as predicted by conventional Western-centric studies, Romanian employers supported or opposed emerging welfare reforms in so far as they reduced the scope of spurious political decision-making vis-à-vis taxation. This was seen as a crucial developmental step in a late industrializing country where, for all its attempts at fomenting capitalist markets, the paternalistic state was ultimately hap-hazard in supporting markets, leaving employers exposed to the ebb and flow of global capitalism. By focusing on employers' ideational debates rather than on macro-structural conditions of late development, the paper uses an under-researched case-study to shed new light on the historical basis of cross-class coalitions underpinning CEE varieties of capitalism.

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## **The national councils and the birth of Yugoslavia: a fresh perspective on the end of Austria-Hungary?**

The Habsburg state apparatus collapsed due to the military defeat at the end of 1918. In the final months of 1918, before the new states were established, numerous regional “assemblies” and local “councils” emerged in the Habsburg territories. This paper aims to chart the main strands of the complex dynamics that influenced the decision of the South Slav population in Austria-Hungary to support the establishment of a new Yugoslav state at the end of 1918. In recent decades, literature has increasingly questioned the notion that the 1918 transition was “inevitable,” thus rejecting earlier depictions of the shift to nation-states as “natural.” However, these key studies on nationalism in the Habsburg Empire primarily focused on Cisleithania. In the context of evolving perspectives on 1918, the broad support for the 1918 transition in Yugoslavia has remained understudied. The historiography of the Habsburg Empire and its successor states often struggled to distinguish between national politics conducted in the name of a particular group and national politics aimed at creating a separate state for that group. The last weeks of Austria-Hungary offer a rare opportunity to analyze peoples’ choices when a stark opposition of loyalty to the old empire and the creation of a new state appeared on the ballot. The assemblies provided a straightforward method for grasping population dynamics, as their creation at the end of 1918 marked, in most cases, the introduction of general suffrage for the first time. If contrasted with histories of nationalism in longer periods, this approach allows us to pinpoint the exact hierarchy of pressures that motivated actual decisions to support the creation of a new state and to compare different reasonings that pushed the population to support the change.