The Study of the Hungarian Elites of the 19th and 20th Century*

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Pál, Judit: The Study of the Hungarian Elites of the 19th and 20th Century

The paper summarizes the latest results of the research conducted by the Hungarian historiography on the Hungarian elites of the 19th and 20th century. Empirical research on the political elite of the Dual Monarchy started as early as the inter-war period. A clarification of the concepts and an initiation of empirical research in the field were attempted at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. After 1989, several scientists have continued studying the political, economic, military, intellectual elite and other elite groups, and it seems that remarkable results have been achieved in the field of elite studies, even though they are not in the main stream of the Hungarian historiography. Research in this field continues to present day.

Key words elite research * historiography * Hungarian elites * 19th and 20th century

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In the paper hereby I intend to make a short summary of the latest results of the research made by the Hungarian historiography on the Hungarian elites of the 19th and 20th century. In a volume published ten years ago the author formulated the following as the main topic of the sociology of the elites: definition, origin and recruiting, education and carrier, types of elites, self-consciousness, self-image, representativity of the elite and the issue of legitimacy and prestige. From among these topics the main emphasis in the research of the Hungarian elite was laid on the empirical study of the various types of elites (education, recruiting, carrier, etc.). While for example the German studies on the elites start with a clarification of the theoretical frame and concepts, the Hungarian ones on the same topic are content to clarify the meaning of the term and a short presentation of the bibliography of the topic.

Paradoxically the study of the elites in Hungary started earlier than the use of the terminology; the empirical research on the political elite of the Dual Monarchy that can be used to our days started as early as the inter-war period. Although in Hungary the

* This study is supported by CNCS-UEFISCDI, which financed the research project PN-II-PCE-2011-3-0040.
1 The emphasis is mainly on the research regarding the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.
3 RUDAI, Dezső: A politikai ideológia, párt szerkezet, hivatás és életkor szerepe a magyar képviselőház és a pártok életében (1861–1935) [The Role of Political Ideology, Party Structure, Vocation and Age in the Activity of the
ideological pressure and control in social sciences was not so intense as in other former Socialist countries, still there was a certain reluctance in using the term elite in the historical studies written before 1989. The term started to be used at the beginning of the 1960s in a fairly small circle (László Márkus, Péter Sipos, Miklós Stier, István Vida, Károly Vörös), then it started to be used more and more frequently in the 1980s, at first rather as a complement to the theory of the classes rather than its alternative – a phenomenon that happened at approximately the same time as the country opening to market economy. For example, in a study of 1983 Miklós Stier dealt with the political elite of the inter-war period, but uncertainty in the use of the terminology is quite distinguishable: the relationship between the elite and the ruling class is not clear (the elite is the top of the ruling class who governs at the moment).

Clarification of the concepts and an initiation of empirical research was attempted at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s by a group of researchers at the Sociology Department of the Eötvös Loránd University lead by university professor Tibor Huszár. Earlier Huszár had been studying the history of the intellectuals. This was a very sensitive topic, since in 1974 Iván Szelényi, the collaborator of the Sociology Department of the Eötvös Loránd University coauthored with the later famous writer, György Konrád a book on the intellectuals as the future ruling class, a book that created a lot of scandal, which lead to Szelényi being forced out of Hungary.

Huszár and his group of researchers – as well as the intellectuals of the socialist era, respectively research on the intellectuals and the elite – were influenced by the works of famous political thinker István Bibó, but also by Max Weber, Anthony Giddens and the great historical researches on the elite conducted in Germany (Ralf Dahrendorf and his followers, Günter Endruweit, Wolfgang Zapf and others). At this time the books of well-

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4 Vera Szabari considers also studies written at the beginning of the 1960s on the ruling class of the Horthy period as an antecedent of the research on the elites, yet the main purpose of these studies was to find the culprits for the role Hungary played in the Second World War, they are strongly serving a certain ideology and there is little in them that would include them as part of the research on the elites. SZABARI, Vera: Társadalmi elit kutatások Magyarországon 1989 előtt [Researches on the Elite in Hungary before 1989]. In: KOVÁCH, Imre (ed.): Elitek a válság körában : Magyarországi elitek, kisebbségi magyar elitek [Elites During the Crisis : Hungarian Elites, Minority Elites]. Budapest 2011, pp. 15–35 (here: pp. 19–20). In fact only László Márkus’s study can be considered part of the research on the elite and even he avoided to clarify and unravel the concept of elite and ruling class. Márkus set apart three classes: the big landowners, the representatives of the financial capital and the bureaucracy of the state and studied the relation to power of these three elite groups. MÁRKUS, László: A Horthy-rendszer uralkodói elitjének a jellegéről [On the Nature of the Ruling Elites of the Horthy System]. Történelmi Szemle 4, 1965, pp. 449–466. The others will be mentioned later.


6 An antecedent to this work can be considered the social strata and mobility research and the research on intellectuals of the 1960s and 1970s.


8 One of the theoretical frames they used as a strating point was how class power and the ruling of the elites was exercised parallelly.

known authors like Vilfredo Pareto, C. Wright Mills, Raymond Aron\textsuperscript{10} have already been translated and available. It is also important to mention Polish sociologist Włodzimierz Wesolowski whose presentation entitled \textit{Ruling class and power elite} delivered at the Sixth World Congress of the International Political Science Association (1964) was also translated into Hungarian. Wesolowski combined Marxism with the theory of the elites and stated that class power and elite power are two different forms of exercising power and the elites have an active role in the decision making process.\textsuperscript{11} Hungarian readers could familiarize with the international and mainly American studies of the elite from the publications of Magda Solymár.\textsuperscript{12} So as far as the theoretic frame of the research was concerned the research group did not distance itself from Marxism, but they significantly widened and refined their research based on the Western specialized literature.

Huszár proposed the plan of research on the Hungarian elites of the inter-war period in 1978. In February the next year a workshop debate was organized where foreign specialists were invited as well. The leaders of the debate were Iván T. Berend and György Ránki, the two famous economic and social historians. Berend was the rector of the Karl Marx Economical University of Budapest at the time, the president of the Association of Hungarian Historians (professor at the UCLA after 1990), while Ránki was the head of the Institution for Historical Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Science.

Inspired by German examples Huszár decided that the Hungarian elite of the inter-war period will be studied according to function, branches and subsystems. And the research began: Péter Sipos, István Vida and Miklós Stier studied the political elite of the inter-war period,\textsuperscript{13} György Lengyel the economic elite, Gyula Vagyi and Sándor Szakály the military elite, Jenő Gergely the elite of the Catholic Church, Dénes Némedi and Gábor I. Kovács the intellectual elite of the same period.\textsuperscript{14} Dénes Némedi (later professor at the Eötvös Lóránd University) was the theoretician of the group who raised theoretical questions and was working on a definition for the concept of the elite that would help the elite structure find a place next to the Socialist class structure. In his definition the elite was the circle of people who took the leading positions of the hierarchical organizations and institutions of the various sectors.\textsuperscript{15} Another important work, which was preserved only as a manuscript was a study of Sipos and Vida written in 1978 at the time when the research group was forming. This study raised several important methodological questions regarding the political elite of the inter-war period relevant among others to the definition

\textsuperscript{10} Wright Mills’s book was first published in Hungarian in 1962 and re-edited in 1972. A study on the ruling elite by Vilfredo Pareto was published in a collection of studies in 1972 as well.

\textsuperscript{11} KOVÁCS, I. Gábor: A magyarországi polgári korszakbeli országos élitek empirikus kutatásának historikumihoz I. [Additions to the History of the Empirical Research of the Hungarian National Elites, 1848–1945]. In: Idem: \textit{Elitek és iskolák, felekezetek és etnikumok : Társadalom- és kultúrtörténeti tanulmányok}. Budapest 2011, pp. 33–74. Kovács who was also part of the research group considered that Hajdu was influenced by Wesolowski’s study, which was being spread as a manuscript.

\textsuperscript{12} SOLYMÁR, Magda: \textit{Az elit : Az elitizmustól a technokratikus hatalomig} [The Elite : From Elitism to Technocratic Power]. Budapest 1982.


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, pp. 179–180.

\textsuperscript{15} NÉMEDI, Dénes: \textit{Oszály, elit, hatalom} [Class, Elite, Power]. Manuscript. 1978.
of the elite. Their starting point was also a kind of positional concept of the elite – a view widely shared by the members of the research group – and they considered that the suitable method of research was prosopography. Occupants of the positions studied were analyzed in two time sections extending the collection of data to demographic and socio-professional data. The authors intended to emphasize the recruiting of the elites, their intergenerational mobility, typical political carrier types and the relationship between the governing elite and the other elite groups. Unfortunately the study of the political elite of the inter-war period was interrupted, the collected data were published much later. Publication of the results of this group of research started after the fall of the Communist regime. The first volume of this series was a bibliography of the elites, while the second volume was a continuation of this research as a study on the MPs of the Party of the Independent Smallholders (Független Kíszgazdapárt).

Study of the economic elite

The member of the research group with internationally the most well-known results was György Lengyel who studied the economic elite. Lengyel’s approach changed over time, he gradually distanced himself from the class theory of Marxism inspired among others by the society concept of Raymond Aron. Lengyel studied the Hungarian economic elite in an international context. When identifying the studied groups he took into consideration three criteria: position, wealth and prestige or fame. For this reason he included into his research from among the economic actors those persons who were included into the Biographical Encyclopedia of Hungary, then he analyzed this sample in various time sections. He considered as part of the economic elite everybody who had decisional and influential competence over the economic processes. Studying the positions of the decision-makers he mapped a quite closed small “multipositional elite” (the same persons held several important leading positions in companies or banks) who stoutly resisted economical and political convulsions.

In his sample he differentiated three generations. The economic activity of the “fore-runners” (tradesmen, factory owners, aristocrats, craftsmen) was strongly attached to an intense connection to public life, which manifested in their social sensitivity and their patriotic rhetoric. The second generation, the “founders” were mostly industrial entrepreneurs and bankers. In their case, besides symbols of autonomy also integration symbols (titles, ranks, distinctions) are strongly present. The third generation is the “heirs”. 70% of them had been industrial leaders. Many of the managers held leading positions based on their competence. Making a comparison at international level this multiposi-
tional elite is surprisingly well educated, higher than that of the same elite in countries like England or the United States, but even Germany. Two thirds of even those born between 1831 and 1860 have university education and later this percentage improved further. The author considers poor development of the country is the reason for this phenomenon. The more rigid and conservative the system, the smaller the recruiting base of the elite and the more rigid the selection criteria. As far as recruiting is concerned, Lengyel associates Hungary to Germany. Studying the occupation and social standing of the fathers of the elite he concluded that they were coming from the higher or middle strata of society (“from the middle to the top”): the fathers of one third had a similar occupation to their sons, the fathers of another third were craftsmen and finally the percentage of the freelancers continually increased.21

While György Lengyel’s research on the economic elite showed that the Hungarian economic elite was mainly composed all along of a greater percentage of people originating from the higher social strata, Vera Bácskai, Péter Hanák and others considered that in the economic elites the dominant group was rather the self-made man type, at least in the beginning. Bácskai studied the bourgeoisie entrepreneurs in the first half of the 19th century, the “forerunners of the entrepreneurs” as she called them and she studied in particular who made up this strata and whether there was any continuity between this group and the group of later entrepreneurs. The majority of the group of “forerunners” was made up of Jewish crop merchants and other tradesmen, German bourgeoisie living in Hungary, Orthodox tradesmen and foreign immigrant specialists. According to Vera Bácskai there was little continuity between the old and the new group of entrepreneurs.22 Péter Hanák had the same standpoint, although he did not undertake empirical research. He emphasized that not only the families and the persons were different in the two groups, but also worldview, values and position. The main value of the old bourgeoisie was prestige, while that of the new entrepreneurs was profit. The people who changed their position most successfully in the second half of the 19th century were the Jewish crop merchants. The Jewish bourgeoisie who pursued carriers of lower esteem in the aristocratic times was now able to make use of its knowledge of the local situation, of the markets and of the merchandise and to make use of their saved up capital and their international relations. Form the 1860s, but mainly from the 1880s they were the ones who perceived most quickly the long term opportunities that lay in industrialization. Then, at the end of the century these enterprises became also strongly connected to the bank capital. In 1910 the biggest group of the “virilists” (the most important tax contributors) in Budapest was made up of the group of bankers and factory owners strongly connected by business and family ties.23
After 1989 several scientists continued studying the economic elite. It is known from Károly Halmos’s research that in the case of the Jewish entrepreneurs even the forerunners originated from among the most respectable members and from the leaders of the community. He differentiates between two types in the case of the Hungarian entrepreneurs with large enterprises: the first type was characterized by migration within the Habsburg empire, accumulation of capital throughout the generations, specialization, confessional shift and endogamy; the other type came from abroad, accumulated capital within one generation, diversified, his public life generally had a confessional frame and was characterized by confessional exogamy. György Kövér had several papers studying the economic elite as well. He usually concentrated on a person or a family. Regarding the issue of transition he presented rather interestingly the transition from wholesaler to banker. Gyula Szakál presented the transformation of the bourgeoisie entrepreneurs of a rural small town. From among the younger generation Judit Klement’s name should be mentioned who deals both with theoretical and empirical research (studying mainly the entrepreneurs of the milling industry).

Independent of the research group presented above Károly Vörös started to study the urban elite from Budapest in the 1960s. He studied mainly a phenomenon typical to the era of the Dual Monarchy, i.e. the group of the most important tax contributors (the “virilists”). In 1873 the most determinant basis of taxation among the main tax contributors in Budapest was real estate ownership; the income tax percentage was higher only in the case of the less important category of the virilists. Therefore the preferred method for capital accumulation was real estate, even though as also Vörös suggests taxable mobile capital was easier to conceal. Besides real estate owners another important group was that of wholesalers, mainly crop and cattle merchants. At this time factory owners, bankers and building trade owners had a greater share of the total virilist owned capital, but there were quite few of them and there were also quite few intellectuals compared to the number of intellectuals in rural towns.

If we look at the tendencies it can be seen that at the turn of the century the sum considered as the basis for taxation which qualified a person as virilist was significantly raised. As a consequence also the occupational structure of the virilists changed: by the end of the era craftsmen completely dropped out, but also the hotel industry and even economic

trade fell strongly back. During the whole period the number of people earning from real estate and rent continued to be great, but besides them the group of freelancer intellectuals also strengthened. Analyzing personal and family stability of the virilists Vörös concluded that by 1910 “the old bourgeoisie” dropped out almost entirely from the group of main tax contributors. Fluctuation is high also among the new economic elite; the most stable positions were held by those owning real estate, building companies and having intellectual occupations and – by the turn of the century – besides them by the factory industry and by the big trade companies. A stable nucleus formed that played an important role not only in the management of the town, but also in the national economic and social, respectively political life.

Several researchers followed in Vörös’s footsteps and in the 1980s and 1990s similar studies were conducted on several rural towns29, thus study of the town elites in the era of the Dual Monarchy became an important branch of the historical research on the elites. The history of the topic was summed up by Károly Halmos in a study, which presented the various meanings of virilism, the formation of virilism and its representation in public writings and literature.30 The bourgeoisie of the first half of the 19th century started to be studied by Vera Bácskai and her students. The two most extensive of these studies was authored by Árpád Tóth and Gábor Czoch regarding the bourgeoisie of Bratislava (Pozsony), respectively Košice (Kassa).31 I shall not detail research on urban elite, since I have already presented that in an earlier study.32

Study of the virilists of the counties started as well, although nobody has written a summary study on this research up to this day. The research conducted by György Feiszt and László Kosján showed there was a change in structure in the group of county virilists by the First World War. In the north-western and western parts of Hungary great landowners gradually lost ground before the First World War (but never dropped under 50 %) and their place was taken by entrepreneurs, rent house owners, tradesmen, factory owners, intellectuals and clerks.33


Study of the Military Elite

Another, rather specific group of the elites was that of the officers. This type of elite was studied – initially as part of the governing elite – by Sándor Szakály, one of the members of the group of researchers formed at the Sociology Department of the Eötvös Lóránd University. He delimited the group that could be considered the elite from among the officers of the inter-war period according to rank and position, although in most of the cases these were overlapping.34 A similar research was conducted by Tibor Hajdu on the Hungarian officer corps serving during the monarchy.35 Only 10–12 % of the officer corps of the Austro-Hungarian army was of Hungarian origin. Hajdu’s research shows that there was a high level of self-recruiting (a quarter) and besides that the main basis for recruiting was the body of public officers (another quarter). An interesting and also surprising discovery is a significant decrease in the percentage of officers of noble origin, a fact gaining even more emphasis if we break down the phenomenon to generations: before 1867 67 % of the officers were of noble origin, but among the officers born between 1897 and 1913 only 20,8 % had noble origin. Also an interesting processing of the entire officer corps of the Monarchy was performed (on the data of 1,200 randomly chosen officers) by American historian of Hungarian origin István Deák. He discusses both recruiting of the officers and their social background, carrier and also their mentality and life circumstances.36

Study of the Ecclesiastical and Intellectual Elite

Returning to the research group at the Sociology Department of the Eötvös Lóránd University another important area in their work was the study of the intellectual elite. However in this research they faced serious methodological problems from the very beginning, since this was a less homogenous group compared to the other elite groups. Therefore they decided to narrow their study to those who played the most important role in carrying on their class. At the beginning (1978) they designated five different areas of research: church, education, sciences, professional, culture and the arts and communication.37 From among these finally only the first two were studied by the group. And even in the circle of the ecclesiastical elite only the elite of the Catholic Church was researched by Jenő Gergely. In these circumstances he studied only the clerical members of the Catholic church, of course, although the plan was to conduct a research also on the secular members of the bodies of self-governance of great importance in the Protestant churches.38 Gergely did not use samples and time sections in his study as the other researchers did, 34 Initially he studied only the period 1938–1945 and he published the conclusions of his study of the military elite of the period 1919–1945 much later: SZAKÁLY, Sándor: A magyar katonai elit 1938–1945 [The Hungarian Military Elite 1938–1945]. Budapest 1987; Idem: Honvédség és tiszti kar [The Honveds and the Officer Corps]. Budapest 2002.


37 SZABARI, V: Társadalmi elitkutatások, p. 27.

but he included in his study every member of the high clergy in the period 1919–1945 and several other persons (e.g. members of the clergy who were MPs) (a total of 100 persons). The results of his study show that the main basis for recruiting of the catholic high clergy in the inter-war period was the yeomanry and the lower middle-class. Later a summary on the elite of the Reformed Church was also made by collaborators of the Sociology School for PhD Students.39

Intellectual Elite was studied by Gábor I. Kovács, but he published his results much later in collaboration with Gábor Kende. His emphasis in the course of this research was on the university professors as the defining group of the intellectual elite. Initially the study researched a larger group, the collection of data targeting everybody owning major „intellectual capital”, a total of 4,500 positions for the three sample years.40 A very thorough study presented a research exclusively on the recruiting of the university professors.41 The collection of data was so thorough that they managed to have a nearly 100 % success rate in obtaining data relatively difficult to obtain (e.g. religion, occupation of the father). In order to obtain such data they studied or had studied also the registry office documents and archive documents. Their results show that the vast majority (three quarters) of the university professors of the inter-war period had middle-class background and approximately a quarter had lower middle-class background.

Data was collected for a larger period of time (between 1848 and 1945). During this period 1,044 university professors were appointed. Kovács and Kende started to publish their excellent, accurate and rich collection of data,42 which dealt with many aspects, e.g. occupational circumstances, financial situation, state assignments, memberships in various associations, honours awarded and family: parents, grandparents, wife and children. When speaking of the importance of this work Gábor I. Kovács formulated thus: Universities had a defining role in creating, controlling, spreading knowledge, in managing intellectual capital. University professors were on the highest position of the intellectual hierarchy and therefore were able to directly or indirectly control also the institutional channels of entering the middle-class.43 Tibor Huszár published a study dealing also with a part

of the inter-war intellectual elite, i.e. the members of the Hungarian Academy of Science in the inter-war period.44

Studies to be presented from this point forward used a wider conception of the elite. In the Library and Archive of the Eötvös Lóránd University a large research was started on the history of peregrination lead by László Szögi. The aim was to create a data bank of all the Hungarian students studying at a foreign university in the period 1790–1918. This is an essential tool for further studies of the intellectual elite.45

In fact research on peregrination was started even earlier than that by Transylvanian historians: Sándor Tonk first published the list of Transylvanian students who attended the courses of a university abroad before 1526, then he continued collecting and processing the data of the Transylvanian students studying abroad (the peregrines) together with Miklós Szabó at the research center of the Romanian Academy of Sciences in Târgu Mureș.46 This research was inspirational both to Hungarian and Romanian colleagues, since the institution continued and continues up to this day the research on this topic after Sándor Tonk left (and after his early death) and also after Miklós Szabó retired. Miklós Szabó published the collected data together with László Szögi from Budapest. Another example of such collaboration is the publication of the lists of students of the main denominational schools, a research published at the initiative and support of a group of researchers of the Department of Early Hungarian Literature at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Szeged headed by Bálint Keserű.47

The other important workshop was created around Viktor Karády, a professor at the Central European University. Karády is a well-known sociologist and social historian, he was fellow and director of research of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and fellow of the Centre de Sociologie Européenne from Paris, later, after 1992 he became professor at the CEU. The school system, the educated elite and denominational inequalities had earlier been main research topics with Karády as well.48

In the course of an extensive project entitled Multi-Confessional Culturally Composite Elites, Regime Changes and Social Crises in Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Confessional Eastern Europe. (The Carpathian Basin and the Baltics in Comparison – cc. 1900–1950) spon-
sored by the European Research Council data of several hundred thousand university graduates were collected in a large data bank. The project and its antecedents are well summarized by Péter Tibor Nagy. As an antecedent to this large project Viktor Karády and Péter Tibor Nagy had already done a large research on the elites and presented it in a study entitled Recruiting, Education and European Network of Relationships of the University Graduate Intellectual Elite in the 20th Century. The two authors also summarized the results of the research conducted on two different regions. This was also combined with a research on the reputational elites. Members of this group of reputational elites were selected based on the articles of the general encyclopedias. Besides the two above-mentioned authors also other researchers joined this study, such as Lucian Năstasă from Cluj-Napoca who conducted a research on the students of the University of Cluj-Napoca.

On the website of the project the list of data banks are listed: this large data bank contains the data of the Hungarian students who graduated from practically all universities, universities of law and all colleges of all profiles in Hungary and from all universities in Austria. Besides this also there are found elite groups like free masons of Hungary and Transylvania and the students who received a scholarship from the Gojdu Foundation, which supported the formation of the elite of the Orthodox Romanians in Hungary. The goal of the project is the study of the transformation and ‘circulation’ of educated and ruling elites in several uniquely composite (both multi-ethnic and multi-confessional) East European regional or national societies (Hungary, after 1918 also Slovakia, Transylvania, and Voivodina; Latvia and Estonia in the Baltics). As the official website of the project presents it: The study draws upon sociological survey methods applied to historically successive elite brackets in form of exhaustive or quasi-exhaustive computerized prosopographical data banks, based on standardized individual biographies of elite members (as permitted by mostly archival sources to be exploited). The main targets would include secondary school graduates, students and graduates of higher education, the main intellectual professions (like doctors and lawyers), the political power elites as well as ‘reputational elites’ — those cited in biographical dictionaries. The information fed into our data banks help to clarify thanks to various procedures of multi-varied statistical schemes the contrasting socio-cultural selection and recruitment of elite members, their educational path from primary to higher education, their professional career, intellectual creativity as well as socio-political standing and orientation. This is the first time that large region- or country-wide elite clusters are submitted to systematic socio-historical analyses, covering simultaneously all or most markets of activity and self-assertion of educated clusters in a vast international and comparative perspective related to culturally composite societal formations.

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50 See the description of the project and the studies of the members of the research group on the topic so far on the project’s website: http://temka1991.uni.hu/ (3. 5. 2014).


52 So far only research on the students of the Faculty of Medicine was published: KARÁDY, Viktor − NASTASĂ, Lucian: The University of Kolozsvár/Cluj and the Students of the Medical Faculty. Budapest – Cluj 2004.

53 http://elites08.uni.hu/ (3. 5. 2014).

54 http://elites08.uni.hu/ (3. 5. 2014).
This is probably the largest project of this kind not only in Hungary, but in the entire region. Its advantages were formulated by Péter Tibor Nagy this: *This study immediately demonstrates that prosopographic research recording also the names has more advantages compared to even the most detailed sociological data bank without names: this data bank containing the three most important moments of a student’s life path can be connected to other materials, it can help reconstruct life path and demographic basic data regarding a person present in one part can be used to complete data on the same person lacking in other parts of the data bank.*

After this large material is processed we will have a more accurate picture of the elites: beginning with recruiting to the issue of elite replacement. And the data bank is also of great help for every other research on the elites. In the meantime the data bank is being processed and various volumes are being published related to it.

A volume compiled by György Kövér and mentioned several times in the study hereby set as a goal to clarify the relationship of the middle-classes to education and to clarify the concept of the various middle-class groups. In recent years also social history studies of several occupations considered to be typical to the elite were written. Erika Szívós wrote about the social history of the graphic artists. Mária M. Kovács studied mainly how the situation of doctors, engineers and lawyers of Jewish origin changed between 1867 and 1945. She also published an abridged study on the public officials in the inter-war period.

### Study of the Administrative and Political Elite

As far as the study of the economic elite is concerned: government public officials of the 19th century have been revealed by the studies of Gábor Benedek. He started to study the topic in the 1980s and created a large database on both the civil servants of Neoabsolutism and of the Dual Monarchy in 3 time sections each. Unfortunately this database was only partially evaluated and published. Data on the civil servants of the local public adminis-

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57. KÖVÉR, G. (ed.): *Zsombékok*.


tration during Neoabsolutism were processed by József Pap. Using several counties as an example he presented convincingly the weak points of the myth of the so-called “passive resistance”, since despite the fact that during the Neoabsolutism there was a great number of civil servants moved to Hungary from several parts of the Monarchy, most of the middle rank civil servants were still of Hungarian origin.62 Continuity was studied by István Kajtár following the political changes at the middle of the 19th century.63 A comprising study on the lord-lieutenants of the period of the Dual Monarchy was written by Magdolna Balázs. She presented the evolution of the main indicators from samples taken every ten years, the local ties of the lord-lieutenants and attempted to define various types.64 Several studies on the structure and relations of the middle rank administrative elite of the north-eastern region now belonging mainly to the Ukraine were published by András Cieger and on the Transylvanian civil servants and lord-lieutenants by the author of the paper hereby.65

The best concise work about Parliamentarism in the Eastern part of the Monarchy was published by Dániel Szabó,66 but Jean Béranger and Károly Keskméti also have an interesting approach.67 Sándor Pesti surveys the development of Parliamentarism as an institution.68

Various contemporary publications appeared on the MPs after 1790, first in Latin, later in Hungarian, but these became regular publications including the short biographies of the MPs only after 1884. This tradition was discontinued after the Second World War and continued only after 1989. Historian György Szabad who was the President of the Parliament after 1990 initiated the publication of an almanac series.69

69 See PÁLMÁNY, Béla: Új módszerek – új lehetőségek: A prosopográfia új módszerei és kapcsolata a hagyományos genealogiával, archontológiával a reformkori magyar országgyűlés almanachja alapján [New Methods – New Opportunities: Prosopography’s New Methods and Its Relation to Traditional Genealogy and Archontology Based on the Almanac of the Parliamentary Sessions of the Reform Era]. 3 volumes of the Országgyűlés
There was an idea to create a database of the MPs of 1848–49 to the 150th anniversary of the Revolution of 1848 and the creation of the first Parliament of public representation. Finally an almanac with ample narrative biographies was published in 2002. The editor, Béla Pálmány’s work was assisted by 48 historians and archivists from Hungary and the surrounding countries. Béla Pálmány also created – this time alone – a historical almanac of the MPs of the Reform Era (between 1825 and 1848). 3,100 persons participated to the 6 Parliamentary sessions of this period. Sometimes it was difficult even to identify all of them. The almanac having data from an ample archive research presents besides the usual data (family, studies, carrier, wealth) also short characterizations from the reports of the plainclothes-men of the age.

The first sociological studies on Hungarian MPs in the Dual Monarchy date back to the inter-war period and the Second World War, and until recently these underlay all further work on the issue. After several decades when the study of the political elites in Hungary was neglected for ideological reasons, an important work about MPs in Hungary was published in Germany, written by an emigrant. Adalbert Toth’s book – based on his PhD thesis defended at the University of Heidelberg in 1969 – is a very useful tool in the study of political parties and elections, and also comprises databases of deputies between 1848 and 1892. In Hungary András Gerő published a book at the end of the 1980s, in which he detailed also the structure of the MPs of the Dual Monarchy.

Only after 2000 did construction of a comprehensive database start with a collective project led by political scientist Gabriella Ilonszki, compiling biographical information about deputies between 1884 and 2000. Besides these analyses, several books were published containing a comparative perspective on the development of MPs in Hungary. In recent years several historians continued this study, since the database created by Ilonszki and her team dealt only with the period after 1884, on the one hand and they collected


their data exclusively from the Parliamentary almanacs of the period, on the other hand, and these data were incomplete and sometimes even unreliable. In Hungary mostly József Pap’s research is worthy of mentioning.\textsuperscript{76} MPs of the regions annexed to Romania after the First World War are being studied in a project by a group of researchers coordinated by the author of the paper hereby.\textsuperscript{77} Besides this there are several researchers who worked on a partial topic regarding the administrative and political elites.\textsuperscript{78}

Research on the House of Magnates is even more difficult, since before the reform of 1885 practically every male member of age of the aristocratic families was invited to join the Parliamentary session; after that a census was introduced and the emperor appointed to the House of Magnates also persons who were not of aristocratic origin. Research on the MPs of the House of Magnates was also started. By the inter-war period Levente Püski already published the results of the research.\textsuperscript{79} On the period of the Dual Monarchy we have just several introductory studies yet.\textsuperscript{80}

Gábor Gyáni undertook to shortly present the elite groups of the inter-war period – mainly based on the above-mentioned research – in a handbook used also as a university manual.\textsuperscript{81} Tibor Valuch did the same by the second half of the 20th century. He presents in his work the transformation of the social structure of the elite groups after the Second World War and the change of elite after the fall of 1947. After that year the main criteria for belonging to the elite was loyalty to the Party and not individual abilities, specialized knowledge or performance. During the 1970s and 1980s a slow professionalization took place and the law of “the same persons retaining the same position” prevailed. After 1989 a new realignment followed.\textsuperscript{82}

After 1989 the study of the elites was even busier. It aimed mostly the elite transformations after 1945 and the new elite groups formed after the fall of the Communist regime of 1989. However most of these investigations are empirical researches often based on


\textsuperscript{82} VALUCH, Tibor: Magyarország társadalmi története a XX. század második felében [Social History of Hungary in the Second Half of the 20th Century]. Budapest 2005, pp. 121–148. At the end of both summaries a selected bibliography assists to pursue further interests.
questionnaires of the various contemporary elite groups. Another popular topic characterized mainly by a theoretical approach and timely immediately after the fall of the Communist regime was the change of the elite. There were several international researches dealing with this topic, mainly focusing on the Socialist nomenclature in Hungary and the new political elite after the fall of the Communist regime. From among the most important summaries published in Hungarian the latest volume of the series initiated by the group of researchers lead by Tibor Huszár entitled *Történeti elitkutatások – Historical Elite Research* dealing with members of the Socialist nomenclature before 1989 should be mentioned. The volume was written as a continuance of the research entitled *Elites of the Hungarian Society in the Inter-War Period* also lead by Tibor Huszár. Most of the studies are based on empirical research and was studying the rules of decision-making, analyzing the appointments and making life path interviews with several leading officials of the Hungarian Socialist Worker’s Party. In the introductory study Huszár presents the conceptional dilemmas the research group faced during this research – for compared to the research on the inter-war period both methods, categories and conceptional frames needed to be reinterpreted. And when market economy and the party system was eliminated, relations were completely changed and this meant more that the old elite losing their leading position. The new system while having centralized relations of dependence, that eliminated selection based on merits, circulation within the ruling social strata and free entrance and exit to/from the group also helped the rulers of the central body of the Party to exercise complete control over the entire nomenclature. Therefore according to Huszár this should not be considered a type of elite, but rather a nomenclature: the elite and the nomenclature is not the same thing – the elite is selected, its members rise above – at least ideally – according to authority based on knowledge or performance, this is the source of their sovereignty, while members of the nomenclature are appointed, their appointment to well-defined bodies – apart from exceptional cases – is formal and a post festa approval of the appointing body based on a prior decision (emphaizes in the original text).

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87 Ibid, p. 38. An earlier study on the topic: SZAKADÁT, István − KELEMEN, Gábor: Karriertípusok és mobilitási csatornák a Magyar Kommunista Párton belül (1945–1989) [Carrier Types and Channels of Mobility Within...
The results of another large study conducted as a continuance of an international collection of data was summed up in a volume edited by Imre Kovács – quoted above several times – and published in 2011.\(^88\) This volume contains also historiographical studies. Interviews were made in 3 time sections with members of the political, economical and cultural elite (immediately after the fall of the Communist regime, around 2000 and later in 2009/2010) and completed with interviews with the elite of the minorities from Hungary and the economic and cultural elites of the Hungarian minority from Romania and Slovakia. Besides questions regarding life path, this ample study enquired also alter wealth, lifestyle, consumption habits, political and party preferences, values and identity. Thus an interesting, varied image is created regarding the structure and recruiting of the elites in the post-Communist period, their change, their power relations, their consumption, their lifestyle. It was also studied how the elites reacted to the challenges of the financial crisis: what is this elite capable of at a time when it is truly needed that they not only accumulate their financial, cultural, power, relationship and symbolic capital, but also use it for the common good? The answers are not exactly promising.\(^89\) The reaction of the elite to challenge was to close. The hierarchy of the elites is evident: having a higher status also means having a larger network of relations within the elite, too and this network is not defined by performance as it could be expected within a legitimately functioning system of institutions and rules.\(^90\) As a woman it is very difficult to become part of the elite. The cultural elite is the oldest and the most reserved. The political elite becomes more and more professional, being a politician becomes more and more a carrier for life, however they have the most confused identity from among all the elite groups, their political values are described by researchers as confusion ruling in their mind. Other interesting results are related to the elites of the minorities, for example regarding the degree of their homogeneity and integration. But the evaluation of the data has not been completed yet and a comparative analysis will be probably published in a later volume.

Even though the situation is not very bright as research on the contemporary elite shows, it seems remarkable results have been achieved in the field of the elite studies – even though they are not in the main flow of the Hungarian historiography – and researches continue even at present time. Many scholars agree that one of the main problems in this research is integrating the results of the studies regarding partial elites, although it was also discussed at what extent some of the partial elites integrated from an economic, social and other points of view.\(^91\) There is a tendency that shows that in the future collaboration will be even more important and even bigger groups of researchers, larger resources and better international integration will be needed.

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90 Ibid.