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# BETWEEN NOSTALGIA AND NATIONALISM: EMIGRANTS FROM THE HABSBURG EMPIRE IN SOUTH AMERICA

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## ABSTRACT

### **Between Nostalgia and Nationalism: Emigrants from the Habsburg Empire in South America**

This article offers four migration narratives from three states—Brazil, Argentina, and Chile—including biographic approaches and group identities, cultural nostalgia and nationalist resentment. The divergent trajectories of the Dalmatian business tycoons Nicolás Mihanovich in Argentina and Pascual Baburizza in Chile, the celebration of inter-ethnic Austrian-ness in Ijuí (Brazil) vs. the symbolic construction of a “second Poland” by Polish immigrants in Paraná (Brazil) seek to open different windows into the highly complex panorama of Austrian-Hungarian emigration to Latin America. Although approximately 300,000 Habsburg subjects sought there their new homeland, the topic remains underresearched.

**KEYWORDS:** Habsburg Empire, South America, nationalism, supranational identity

## IZVLEČEK

### **Med nostalgijo in nacionalizmom: Izseljenci iz Habsburškega imperija v Južni Ameriki**

Članek predstavlja štiri migracijske pripovedi iz treh držav: Brazilije, Argentine in Čila. Vključuje tako biografske pristope kot prikaze skupinskih identitet, analizira kulturno nostalgijo in nacionalistični odpor. Za ponazoritev kompleksne zgodovine avstro-ogrskega izseljevanja v Latinsko Ameriko članek predstavi zgodbe dalmatinskih poslovnih tajkunov Nicolása Mihanovicha v Argentini in Pascuala Baburizze v Čilu, praznovanje medetnične avstrijskosti v Ijuju v Braziliji ter simbolično oblikovanje »druge Poljske«, ki so jo poljski migranti oblikovali v državi Paraná v Braziliji. Kljub temu, da je okrog 300.000 izseljencev iz Avstro-Ogrske novo domovino našlo v Latinski Ameriki, je bila ta tema doslej deležna le skromnega zanimanja raziskovalcev.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** Habsburški imperij, Južna Amerika, nacionalizem, nadnacionalna identiteta

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## INTRODUCTION: HABSBURG IDENTITY VS. ETHNIC NATIONALISM

Nikola Mihanović left Dalmatia in 1868 for Argentina, where he became the owner of the largest shipping company in Latin America. Under the name Nicolás Mihanovich, he employed many fellow countrymen and crowned his career by serving as honorary consul for Austria-Hungary. In neighborly Chile instead, the rich Dalmatian mining tycoon Pascual Baburizza (Paško Baburica Šoletić) expressed his deep resentment against the “prison of nations” by pouring thousands of dollars into the political emancipation process of his Southern Slavic brothers from the Habsburg Empire in World War I. The first two chapters of this essay will examine their roles in Latin America among co-nationals and the repercussions in Austria-Hungary.

The political impact of Mihanovich and Baburizza can be reconstructed, as both Croats have left traces in the papers of the National Archives (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, n. d.) in Vienna. However, thousands of other migrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire have not. Their stories and social environments were often only recorded when emigrants asked the Austro-Hungarian diplomats for assistance. The reasons for their complaints were manifold. They ranged from economic hardship, exploitation by migration agents and landowners, diseases, and indebtedness to the problems of the religious and inter-ethnic quarrels which the migrants had transferred from Austria-Hungary to the New World.

Three narratives of this article are based on diplomatic sources in the National Archives in Vienna. The fourth narrative on migrants from Upper Austria to Ijuí in Southern Brazil is based on Austrian and Brazilian newspapers and secondary sources. While the establishment of Ijuí could be seen as a success story, it played little role in the communication between the diplomatic personnel and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna. Ijuí is worth examining as a case study, as migration history tends to reconstruct emigration movements between specific states, regions, or/and specific ethnic groups. Thus, it is more common to concentrate on the migration of “Germans,” “Italians,” “Poles,” or to perceive a country as identical with a distinct ethnic group than to focus on multiculturally planned places.

The ethnic and religious complexity of a state entity like the Dual Monarchy is one reason why reconstructing migration movements is difficult and why there are thus so few studies on migrations to the Americas. Some 3.5 million migrants had left the Habsburg Monarchy between 1876 and 1910 for the Americas, with the United States and Canada ranking ahead of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile as receiving countries. An estimated 300,000 subjects of the Habsburg Monarchy migrated to Latin America between 1876 (the beginning of emigration statistics) and 1910 (the year of the Austrian census) in the age of accelerating globalization. The governments in Vienna and Budapest jointly established almost one hundred diplomatic posts, named honorary consuls who were merchants and traders in urban centers or transshipment points of cash crops and mineral resources. The diplomats usually addressed those migrants who worked in urban areas but seldom contacted isolated

small farmers on the “frontier.” (Chmelar, 1974; Englisch, 1913: 119; Phelps, 2015; Prutsch et al., 2017: 22).

Occasionally, commissars from imperial and royal military-geographical expeditions came to visit the colonies. They sought to establish successful trade relations with former subjects of the Habsburg Monarchy. These emissaries were then greeted by the colonists with an inventory of supranational identity, from march music to imperial images, uniforms, and medals, while the visitors donated them scores of the Radetzky March and images of Emperor Francis Joseph. These symbolical acts celebrated persisting transatlantic ties and emotional dependencies but also camouflaged or ignored situations of economic fragility, nationalisms, and anti-Habsburg feelings.

The diplomatic reports that were sent to Vienna seldom reflected the reasons for migration. The diplomatic personnel used to be loyal to the Habsburgs, they had to apply censorship, and the diplomats mostly stemmed from the Austro-Hungarian nobility. Criticisms like that of envoy Baron Hoenning in Buenos Aires, that too few representatives of the Dual Monarchy spoke Croatian, given the strong (South) Slavic migrant community in Argentina, were a rare voice in the elitist self-image of the diplomatic bureaucracy.

The reasons for migration to Latin America were numerous: escape from military service, global modernization processes, the divergence of rich centers vs. socio-economically disadvantaged areas, such as Galicia, Bukovina, Carniola, Küstenland, and Dalmatia. Tenure, geological conditions, and the power of local potentates who did not distribute funds from Vienna “downward” for the development of local businesses, infrastructure, and schools were conducive to emigration. In the peripheries of the monarchy, illiteracy rates were high, and so was the susceptibility to the propaganda of fraudulent emigration agents whose clever strategies alluded to nationality conflicts (Caro, 1909; Fleig Frank, 2007).

The travelogues, memoranda, newspaper reports, and occasional inventories of migrated subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire do not provide an overall picture of emigration movements from the Habsburg Monarchy. They are but fragments of a complex migration history. Many consular archives that would have provided posterity with helpful insights into interethnic coexistence or the search for ethnic identity were never returned to Vienna after the collapse of 1918. Therefore, the reconstruction of a migration history from the pluricultural empire to Latin America is only possible in exchange with other migration researchers from Austria-Hungary’s successor states.

The four narratives presented here are linked together through the topics of transatlantic ties, ethnic nationalism vs. multi-ethnic heritage, tradition, and nostalgia. They are based on the research question, why were some individual actors and ethnic groups interested in maintaining emotional ties, based on nostalgia toward the European Empire, while others saw themselves as agents of an ethnonational mission to punish a hierarchically-structured and socio-economically unjust state from outside, and even contribute to its collapse?

## NICOLÁS MIHANOVICH: THE “KING OF THE PAMPA”

Nikola Mihanović was born in 1844 on the island of Doli near Dubrovnik (Ragusa) into a family of fishermen. Seeking to avoid military service, he migrated to Argentina, adapted his Croatian name to the Spanish-speaking context, and rented a boat with which he piloted larger ships into the river port of La Plata.

In 1874, he caught up with his younger brother Miguel. When both learned that the port of Buenos Aires was going to be expanded, which would make their pilotage services no longer necessary, they found in Gerónimo Zuanich and Octavio Cosulich two Croatian-Argentine partners. After the Triple Alliance war against Paraguay was won and indigenous Argentines were systematically expelled from these territories or killed, they professionalized navigation on the Paraná and Uruguay rivers to transport all the European migrants who had specifically been recruited in Europe as “agents of modernization.” Mihanovich’s group bought powerful steamers and gave them names like Dalmatia and Austria. Likewise, Mihanovich contracted with the Buenos Aires Great Southern Railway for freight transportation. As early as 1887, he offered the first ferry service across the broad delta of the Rio de la Plata between Buenos Aires and Colonia de Sacramento, located in Uruguay. Apart from that, he took over the insolvent La Plata Steamship Company and, at the turn of the century, when he had already been appointed k.u.k. Honorary Consul, he owned fifty steamships and sixty sailing ships. As the owner of the largest coastal fleet in South America, the *Compañía de Navegación Nicolás Mihanovich*, he found his way into the local Austrian press (Agstner, 2012: 130; *Der Schiffspark eines Oesterreicher*, 1896).

His appointment as honorary consul apart from the envoy Raoul Prince Wrede was a reaction to the growing community of Croats in Argentina. Many of them worked for Mihanovich. The *Ostdeutsche Rundschau* of November 30, 1900, reveals that German nationalist trade circles in Austria were irritated by the choice of the wealthy Dalmatian. They publicly wondered what his merits for Austrian interests were and affirmed that Mihanovich was unknown to most Austrians living in Buenos Aires and that he would prefer the migrants of his own nationality: “Our assumption that Mr. Mihanovich has no time to take care of the consulate is confirmed by the fact that in the consulate the German-Austrian and Hungarian are regarded as foreigners, [the] Italians and Dalmatians, on the other hand, as countrymen. This casts a strange light on the view of nationality and patriotism prevailing in this consulate” (*Österreichische Konsularmisswirtschaft*, 1900).

The statement definitely reflects ethno-hierarchical competitive thinking, shaped by prejudices, which sought to see the German-speaking and even German merchants granted a privilege. Mihanovich was not impressed by this insult. In 1908, on the anniversary of the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph, he donated the equivalent of 900,000 euros for the construction of an Austro-Hungarian hospital in Buenos Aires and money for the aid societies *Beneficencia Francisco José I* and *Socorro Mutuo* (Agstner, 2012: 130). His fortune was estimated at two hundred

million euros at the time. His company was listed on the London Stock Exchange; he invested in quebracho wood and wheat mills and acquired 800 km<sup>2</sup> of land in the Argentine province of Chaco, which he named Colonia Dalmacia. With his brother Miguel, he established a social foundation for his hometown of Doli, the *Zaklada-Mihanovic* (Kadic, 1961).

While on August 18, 1911, the Austro-Hungarian Club and the Legation celebrated the birthday of Emperor Franz Joseph with a “*Te Deum*” and a ceremonial act, as they did every year, the supporters of the Club *Zajednica* (Community) thought differently (El Aniversario Austro-Hungaro, 1911). That year, a newspaper of the same name was founded as the successor journal of the weekly *Materinska Riječ* (Mother Tongue) in Rosario de Santa Fé. It claimed to represent all Southern Slavs. The Argentine *Zajednica* was the offshoot of a newspaper launched in the United States. There, nationalist South Slavic groups such as the *Hrvatski Savez* (Croatian League) existed. The cleric Nikola Gršković was particularly active in promoting such associations in North and South America. With its forums, *Zajednica* publicly opposed the House of Habsburg and promoted the independence of Croatia, which—according to Gršković—could also be part of a future Yugoslav state (Martínez-Flener & Prutsch, 2018).

Nicolás Mihanovich, who was awarded the title of Baron in 1912, knew about these nationalist aspirations in Argentina and tried to balance the situation. In return for his title of nobility, he donated a plot of land in metropolitan Buenos Aires to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and built an elegant Art Nouveau palace for the Imperial and Royal legation. Its architect Joseph Markovich stemmed from the Croatian town of Sisak and had built the pavilion of Bosnia-Herzegovina at the Paris World’s Fair in 1900 (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, n. d.).

The new Imperial and Royal Envoy to Argentina, Baron Otto von Hoening, belonged to the minority of Austro-Hungarian diplomats sensitive enough to understand nationalist tones among emigrants. In 1913, he asked the emigrant community for donations to rearm the imperial and royal air forces. His request was met with a series of criticisms. Namely, the Dual Monarchy only cared about its subjects when it needed money but had failed to build schools, hospitals, or other social facilities, as the Germans and Italians had to support their emigrants. Even Hungary would give its subjects of the Hungarian language a hand in the Americas, while the government in Vienna would regard Baron Nicolás Mihanovich as its private paying agent. Hoening’s accounts of the diplomatic dilemma he faced were prescient and reflective. And so, he wrote in July 1913:

It is natural that the large groups of Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes from Austria, as well as from Hungary, come together here on the basis of their language, their same culture, and against this united majority, there is no counterweight available to us here.—So either with them or not at all. To fight against this national current, which, as long as it remains loyal, cannot be denied a certain justification, is no longer

possible; if one ignores our local southern Slavs, the entire colony in Buenos Aires and most of the provinces will be completely lost to us [sic] (Hoenning, 1913a).

Hoenning's conclusions went unheard in Vienna, even when he asked for competent personnel from Austria-Hungary, he lamented "At present not a single concept official in Argentina knows this language [Croatian] and yet the great colony would have some claim to it" (Hoenning, 1913a).

As a counter-strategy to the rising nationalism, Hoenning planned to establish a society of Southern Slavs in Argentina, loyal to Habsburg. An initial name proposal was *Asociación Francisco José*, but the majority Slavic group voted for *Sociedad Eslava Francisco José*, which provoked immediate reactions from the Austro-German-speaking community. The idea of Ban Jelacic was also immediately discarded. Finally, a compromise seemed to have been found with the name *Sociedad Baron Nicolás Mihanovich*, which, however, was again rejected by Hoenning as too personalistic, even though the legation was to be housed in the mansion Mihanovich built (Hoenning, 1913b).

When World War I began, the Mihanovich family donated over two thousand pesos to the Imperial and Royal Air Force (Spenden, 1914). Two years later, Great Britain put pressure on his shipping company, in which the British had shares, because Austria-Hungary was its enemy in the war, although Argentina officially remained neutral. Mihanovich withdrew from his shipping consortium. Probably for war reasons, the property he bequeathed to the Imperial House was not registered in the Buenos Aires Land Registry as property of the Habsburg Monarchy, so Mihanovich revoked the donation in 1918 and dedicated the building to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.

## **PASCUAL BABURIZZA, CROATIAN NATIONALISM, AND YUGOSLAV IDENTITY IN CHILE**

Paško Baburica Šoletić stemmed from the same region as Mihanovich, although he belonged to a different generation. He was born in 1875 in the settlement of Donje Celo on the island of Koločep near Dubrovnik into a family of fishermen. After his father's death, the eldest brother took over the business. The underage Paško migrated with his younger brother in 1892 via Buenos Aires to the northern Chilean province of Iquique, where saltpeter production was booming. In Iquique, he seemed to have quickly connected with the small group of Croats who worked in commerce. He found a job in a hardware store owned by Nicolás Gjik, then moved to a large haberdashery named *La Culebra*, run by two Croatian immigrants named Stancic and Dobrevic (Torres Dujisin, 2003: 27).

Eventually, he gained a reputation by supplying the saltpeter workers with unspoiled meat and fish that he transported from the coastal region to the



inhospitable Atacama Desert. He befriended the railroad owner Remigio Gazzari, who transported saltpeter to the pacific ports Iquique, Taltal, and Antofagasta, where Austria-Hungary also had diplomatic representations. By 1910 at the latest, Paško Baburica, had Chileanized his name to Pascual Baburizza, owned a transport company, and entered the saltpeter business as a shareholder.

The same year, a spectacular railroad line was inaugurated as part of the centennial celebrations of the wars of independence against Spain. The Ferrocarril Transandina Los Andes-Mendoza, or Transandino, ran from Valparaiso north along the coast and east to Mendoza, Argentina, covering more than three thousand meters in altitude. For Baburizza, who settled in Valparaiso, the railroad raised his profits. For many young Croats, railroad construction meant not only work but also a symbol of progress and modernity, which they missed in Dalmatia.

A few years earlier, the small Croatian-speaking community in Antofagasta had begun printing anti-Habsburg articles in Spanish. In *El Mercurio* (The Mercury), they declared Croatia and Dalmatia a “pariah of Europe.” The Habsburg monarchy would neglect the Slavic peoples, while the Germans from Austria would play up their sense of superiority, but not invest in the imperial territories:

The Slavic peoples are one of the most interesting of Europe because of their cultural customs and because of the serenity and resignation that characterizes them; in this, they are comparable only to that of the Blessed. [...] The Slavs of Europe live in a condition that we could well call semi-barbaric, given the simplicity with which they develop their thoughts since they cannot even clearly distinguish between truth and lies, between good and bad. It is true that they have the Catholic creed, but the great diversity of faiths of the peoples with whom they live, among which there are Jews, Greek Uniate, Greek Orthodox, Mohammedan, etc., has caused such disorder and confusion among them [...] and our people are literally dying of hunger and misery. [...] Those Austrians, Germans, Hungarians, and the renegades who Germanize them – do they even know their unfortunate Slavic subjects? [...] But everything has an end [...] must have an end, and therefore the day of revenge will come for those too (Los Parias de Europa, 1903).

The bitter complaint in *El Mercurio* can be interpreted as a reaction against the neglect Croatia and Dalmatia suffered, as money from Vienna or Budapest for infrastructure and education did not arrive there. The archival material in the National Archives in Vienna illustrates that anti-Habsburg feelings and arguments were a reaction to the Magyarization policy of the Hungarians against the Croats, against the policy of the Hungarian Ban Károly Khuen-Héderváry a year prior. The violent protests in 1902 in Zagreb against the Ban were known to South Slavic emigrants in Latin America, as was the formation of a Serbo-Croat coalition, which repeatedly criticized demands in the monarchy that all state railroad employees speak Hungarian (Judson, 2016; Martínez-Flener, 2017: 176–183, 192).

The Austro-Hungarian community in Chile was smaller than that in Argentina. Austro-Hungarian diplomats estimated them at five to six thousand. According to the Chilean census of 1907, there were 3,813 (Comisión Central del Censo, 1908). They worked as sailors, cowboys, saltpeter miners, and small entrepreneurs. In solidarity with the victims of the uprising against the Ban Khuen-Héderváry in Zagreb, Croats in Iquique raised the Croatian flag, which upset the Austro-Hungarian authorities. Subsequently, nationalist Croats raised their flag at every available opportunity. After the outbreak of war, they used to sing “La Marseillaise” to it (Braun, 1915).

In *El Mercurio*, the Habsburg Monarchy was accused not only of failure in its ethnic policies but also of neglecting the needs of its peripheries. When the article in *El Mercurio* was published, the railroad construction for the Transandino was already underway, and from a geographical perspective, it was obvious to compare Dalmatia with Chile. Thus, the group of Croats critical of the Habsburgs noted that a central European state had not even managed to establish a solid railroad connection in Dalmatia. Embittered Croatian migrants in Santiago left the Austro-Hungarian Society of Mutual Help in 1910 and founded their own. In the same year, when they sponsored the asphaltting of a square for the 100th anniversary of Spanish-American independence from Spain, they named themselves *La colonia croata* on the commemorative plaque after clearly rejecting the version *La Colonia Austro-Croata*. They were not Austrians, they explained, because when you say “Austrian,” you don’t understand a nationality or a language (*Materinska Riječ*, 1910).

Baburizza, who had risen to become one of Chile’s saltpeter kings in the year before World War I, thought similarly. He now was the director of the Progreso saltpeter company, which had several sites in the country’s north. He brought on board the Croatian José Lukinovic and an engineer named Augusto Bruna. One of his company’s locations was the important transshipment center of Valparaíso, located not far from Santiago de Chile. At the beginning of the war, the southern Slavs living there refused to donate to the imperial and royal monarchy. A newspaper article stated that those Slavs who had served in the Austro-Hungarian Army fought against their Serbian, Montenegrin, and Russian brothers, thus against their French, English, and Belgian friends. Therefore, they formed a committee to collect money for their Slavic brothers. Baburizza was the main financier of the local Croatian national politics (Torres Dujisin, 2003: 102; Martínez-Flener & Prutsch, 2018: 328).

Similar to the case of Argentina, Baburizza’s group was influenced by the European South Slavic movement and its propagandistic activities in both North and South America. In November 1914, South Slav politicians from the Habsburg territories gathered in Rome to devise strategies for “liberating the Yugoslavs.” The Serb government initially rejected their idea of integrating Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as equals in a single state and advocated the primacy of the Serb nation instead. Finally, the group came to an agreement with the Serb authorities and established a Yugoslav Committee in Paris, with Ante Trumbić as its president. The committee also organized a congress in Chicago, where envoys from Chile participated (Stokes, 1980).

At the beginning of 1916, the South Slav anti-Habsburg community in Antofagasta, supported by the Committee in London, organized the First Congress of South Slavs in South America, which gathered delegates from Chile, Peru, Argentina, Bolivia, and Uruguay. They formed a Jugoslavenska narodna odbrana (Yugoslav Defense Committee), which in turn established local subdivisions in some coastal cities. In addition, a senate was formed which, apart from Baburizza, included Miguel Mihanovich, Nicolás's brother from Buenos Aires. It may well be that at that time, the Mihanovich family was acting with duplicity, officially still representing the interests of the Habsburg Monarchy but at the same time adjusting to new times. The nineteen members of the Senate of the South Slav Congress were all entrepreneurs. In their political program, they stated that Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs were "one people" united by the common language, common cultural practices, mentalities, and "ethnic strength" (Böös, 1915). The Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Washington, DC, Konstantin Dumba, and consul Ernst Ludwig in Cleveland found explanations for the emerging nationalist "dilemma" much more in the uncensored press of the United States and the "half-education" of emigrants who fell for money-grabbing nationalist agitators than in the socio-economic failures of the Dual Monarchy (Ludwig, 1914).

Baburizza and other Croats donated eagerly to the Croatian and Serbian Red Cross, widows and orphans, and the Yugoslav Committee in London, which also sent emissaries to South America from 1915 onwards. Pascual Baburizza paid for the trip of Ljubo Leontić, the South Slav youth movement representative. In 1916, the Jugoslavenska narodna odbrana declared in Chile that it was severing relations with the Habsburg monarchy and accepting the London Committee as the only legal representative of "the captured Yugoslav territories" (Stokes, 1980: 51).

Pascual Baburizza alone sent about 15,000 pesos a month to the Yugoslav Committee in London and founded a Yugoslav high school in Chile, the first of its kind in Latin America. In 1917, Baburizza established a branch of Banco Yugoslavo in Antofagasta (Torres Dujisin, 2003: 51). Among other things, it financed the expansion of its port. After the end of the war, he also supplied the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes state with saltpeter and founded the Compañía Navegación Yugoslava-Americana. Baburizza was decorated by King Alexander for all his services and was offered a diplomatic post in Paris, which he did not accept.

He continued to donate to political and cultural causes after the creation of Yugoslavia (Torres Dujisin, 2003: 106) and resided in his palace overlooking the port of Valparaíso. The beautiful mansion was built by two architects of the Austro-Hungarian school, Arnaldo Barison, and Renato Schiavon, who had studied in Vienna and worked in Trieste. But the imperial and royal architecture and art were known to be above ethnic-national policies or resentments. Today the Palacio Baburizza is a museum of the Chilean and European art the millionaire had gathered throughout his life.

## CELEBRATING AUSTRIANITY VS. LOOKING FOR A NATIONAL DREAM IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

At the end of December 1892, ninety-three families from Steyr in Upper Austria boarded the steamer *Arno* in the port of Genoa. They arrived at the southern Brazilian port of Porto Alegre on January 13, 1893. Five children had died on board. Steyr was home to one of the largest arms forges in the monarchy and had a strong influx of workers from Bohemia and Moravia. In 1890, almost ten thousand workers made arms at the factory of the *Österreichische Waffenfabrik Steyr*, whose Steyr-Mannlicher weapons were sold to various Latin American countries, especially to Chile. In 1891, as a result of the worldwide recession and entrepreneurial wrong decisions, production collapsed. Seven thousand workers were laid off, and over ninety families emigrated to Brazil to the just-established colony of Ijuhy (now Ijuí) in Rio Grande do Sul. The territories to be colonized were inhabited by indigenous Guarani, whom the Brazilian government expelled to offer the “emptied” land to second-generation Germans and Italians from Rio Grande do Sul and settlers from Europe (Haiske, 2017; Stögmüller, 2012: 294).

At this time, social Darwinism was greatly influencing migration policies, also in Latin America. Thus, the Europeans were welcomed as “actors of progress” who should help “whiten” a population shaped by indigenous and Afro-Brazilian inhabitants. Newspapers in Europe had regularly reported since the 1850s about yellow fever and the exploitation of migrants in the coffee plantations of São Paulo. As a result, several regions of Brazil had lost much of their attraction at the end of the century. Thus, the families from Steyr sought to avoid the state of São Paulo and chose Ijuí in Rio Grande do Sul instead. They became small farmers and artisans and received influxes from other parts of the Habsburg Empire and Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the German Reich, and Russia. Ijuí quickly grew as a pluricultural microcosm when it was connected to the railroad network. Apart from that, its multi-ethnic structure reflected the federal government’s guidelines around 1900. It wanted to avoid further single-ethnic settlements shaped by Europeans who celebrated their ethnic superiority within a world of “virgin woods” and “backward” natives. Around 1912, the colony of Ijuí proudly called itself *Babel do Novo Mundo* (Babel of the New World) (Cuber, 2002).

Already in 1898, the emigrants from Steyr had founded a school society. That they—in contrast to Slavic migrants in Chile and Argentina—preserved their feeling of cultural belonging to the Habsburg Empire has to do with the fact that the emigrants came from Upper Austria and from the German-speaking areas of Bohemia and Moravia, which had a greater linguistic and cultural proximity to the Habsburg family and the metropolis of Vienna than peripheral areas such as Dalmatia and Galicia. The emigrants did not blame the Austrian government for their fate, as they were victims of neither ethnic superiority nor governmental economic failures. Another factor for their emotional loyalty to the Habsburg Empire must have

been the Jewish Prager, Robert Löw, who settled in Ijuí. In May 1911, he founded the newspaper *Serra-Post*, which printed local and European news and circulated among German-speaking immigrants in Rio Grande do Sul.

In 1917, Brazil entered World War I on the side of the Entente, which resulted in a ban on German-language media and anti-German resentments. This ban may have been a reason for the Austrian immigrants to distance themselves from any German nationalism and refer to their Austrian-ness. Löw's wife saved the *Serra-Post* from closure by publishing it in Portuguese as *Correio Serrano* and bilingually from 1918 to 1938. Nevertheless, German-Brazilian historian Regina Weber analyzed the emergence of ethnonational self-descriptions in the *Serra-Post* (Weber, 1994: 107), with "Deutschtum" identity spilling over into Ijuí in the 1930s and celebrated in the Clube Alemão (German Club). German-ness was explained as industrious, intelligent, strong, progressive.

Apart from the Clube Alemão, the Clube Polonês was established in Ijuí. It represented Polish workers' identities, while the Clube Ijuí presented itself as an upper-middle-class circle of high-brow culture. Although such associations represented distinct ethnic groups, interethnic marriages were not uncommon (Haiske & Praher, 2021). By 1938, the Brazilian government under Getúlio Vargas prohibited all political parties and followed a consequent strategy of ethnic nationalization. Consequently, schools were nationalized, and Brazilian Portuguese had to be the dominant language used in class. As the government declared war against the Third Reich in 1942, German newspapers and associations were closed down for a second time. While looking for their European roots, some Ijuí residents discovered their former Austrian origins and decided to capitalize on this interculturality. Every year since 1981, the traditional Festival of Diversified Cultures takes place, reflecting the micro-history of the small town but also celebrating its multicultural origin and tradition. In the premises of the Centro Cultural Austríaco, a Tyrolean-style house founded in 1987, are dance events at the Viennese Restaurant with "Sissi evenings." For an immigration story that had its roots in the late-nineteenth century, the recourse to "Austria" is rare.

A contrast to Ijuí was the migration policy in Brazilian Paraná, which Polish nationalists propagated as one crucial nucleus for Polish-speaking migrants from Russia, the Habsburg Monarchy, and Germany. As Poland had been torn apart in 1772 and divided by the three empires, Polish politicians and migration propagandists fostered the idea and utopia of a possible reunification, at least in "America."

Edmund Saporski, who had fled Prussian military service, played a crucial role in propagating Brazil as a heaven for Polish settlers. He worked as a teacher in Brazil and, from 1869 onwards, fostered Polish immigration. The colony of Pilarzinho, which he founded in 1871, was paradigmatic for his visions. Helped by a Polish priest, Saporski spread the "promised land" narrative for future Polish settlers, who were attracted by the utopias of one's own soil beyond the ocean. The often-repeated metaphor of accessible and fertile land for members of the Polish diaspora was frequently used in

travel narratives, propaganda brochures as well as Saporski's messianic activism. He published the first Polish newspaper in Paraná, and as a deputy in the local Congress, he dreamt of transforming Paraná into the center of the Polish diaspora (Janik-Freis, 2020: 34, 143, 395). His goals were taken up by the Polish national politician Roman Dmowski, who spoke of Paraná as a "new Poland." Saporski's nationalist policy led to the foundation of 167 Polish primary schools only in Paraná but came to a radical end in the late 1930s due to Vargas's homogeneous nation-building policy.

It was partially Saporski's activism that made Paraná an almost mythical homeland not only for Polish but also for Ukrainian or Ruthenian migrants from Austrian Galizia. The crownland was shaped by feudal structures, massive economic inequality, small-scale agriculture, and unfavorable inheritance law that barely ensured the majority of the population's survival. It was characterized by hunger and ethnic conflicts between Poles and Ruthenians, with the latter at a disadvantage. At the end of the nineteenth century, this interweaving of economic, ethnoreligious, and political motives led to a real "emigration fever" to Brazil. Resourceful agents took advantage of the national yearnings of Polish emigrants by promising land and freedom in the New World for each of the two groups. Thus, the rumor circulated that Crown Prince Rudolf had not died but had emigrated to Brazil and become emperor there to support his "favorite Polish subjects." (Pollack, 2010; Prutsch, 2001). A comparable rumor circulated in Polish areas of Germany. Namely, that Otto von Bismarck's son, Herbert, had converted to Catholicism and was particularly committed to the interests of the Poles (Janik-Freis, 2020: 158).

Although Galicia offered fertile ground for migration propagandists, Elisabeth Janik-Freis analyzed in her thesis that, around 1899/91, when the "Brazil fever" had broken out, most emigrants were well aware of the destinations they were aiming for, through private correspondence, guides, institutions specialized on emigration issues such as the *Polskie Towarzystwo Emigracyjne* (Polish Emigration Society) (Janik-Freis, 2020: 160).

Paraná alone received about "50,000 Austrians, mostly Poles and Ruthenians, who have founded large colonies in various places," reported Consul Julius Pisko in 1903. When he arrived in the state capital of Curitiba with a delegation, "more than six thousand people were gathered in and around the station" and expressed pro-Habsburg sentiments (Agstner, 2014: 194). Vice-Konsul Karl Bertoni traveled to the "Galizian colonies" Tomás Coelho, Lucena, and Abranches, where—as he reported—"our Austrian nationals live together with other nationalities" (Agstner, 2014: 196). His perception differed from those shaped by Polish nationalist interests. For Saporski, Tomás Coelho was another symbol of Polish national aspirations. But back home, Bertoni reported that his delegation passed triumphal arches with inscriptions such as *Viribus Unitis*, *Willkommen*, *Witajcie* (*Welcome*) and *Long live the emperor Francis Joseph I* in German and Polish. The reception convinced the delegation that the subjects of the Habsburg Monarchy had lost none of their loyalty to the House of Habsburg (Agstner, 2014: 194). The documents in the Austrian

National Archives also suggest that Tomás Coelho, Lucena, and Abranches were not inhabited only by Poles.

From today's perspective, it cannot be reconstructed whether this pro-Habsburg nostalgia was honest or a camouflage. The Austrian government reacted to the strong influx of migrants from Galizia by founding an Austro-Hungarian consulate and a Society of Mutual Aid in the capital of Paraná, in Curitiba. The possibility of contact persons, the organization of cultural events may have bound the sense of belonging to the former Habsburg Empire for a while, especially in the city. But it may have been different in the villages in the then sparsely populated hinterland. Moreover, the Poles' goal of sending compatriots to Brazil continued after the establishment of the independent Polish state.

## CONCLUSION

Emigration was part of the life strategies in different regions of the Habsburg Monarchy. Migrants transferred ethnic belongings, their religious beliefs, and political convictions to the New World. There, the confrontation with the respective "others" could have a formative effect, strengthening the consolidation of one's own identity, especially through political influences from outside. The case study of Paraná illustrates that a strong nationalist Polish impact from Europe, fostered by local agents, helped strengthen the perception and the practice of ethnic nationalism that aimed to build a "New Poland." Supposedly this policy was easier to realize in rural colonies than in urban centers.

On the contrary, the reports that Austro-Hungarian delegations sent to Vienna reflect sentiments of loyalty and nostalgia. Both attitudes did not have to exclude each other. Habsburg nostalgia conveyed the past and the dream of the Polish state the future. It is also possible that some settlers, influenced by emigration propaganda, believed that members of the House of Habsburg like Rudolf had made the promised land possible for them. Whether settlement was possible in more ethnically homogeneous structures also depended heavily on the migration policies of the respective Brazilian states. While Paraná intervened little in local settlement practices until the 1930s, the state of Rio Grande do Sul tried to be much more attentive to multi-ethnic settlements. This attention also has to do with the fact that the southernmost state received European settlers as early as the early nineteenth century, initially mainly German or German-speaking and Italian. Since ethnically rather homogeneous villages with corresponding names were formed throughout the nineteenth century, the state and federal governments made efforts to diversify migration policy around 1900.

Ijuí in Rio Grande do Sul is an antithesis to the Polish colonies in Paraná. Because Germany was one of Brazil's enemies during World Wars I and II, the German-speaking emigrants from Austria distanced themselves from German national affiliations and

insisted on their autonomy. Finally, the inhabitants of Ijuí understood that after the end of the military dictatorship in Brazil and the increase in European tourism, they could successfully present themselves as a multicultural cosmos on a small scale.

The biographies of the two Croatian self-made men Nicolás Mihanovich and Pascual Baburizza show that the positioning between ethnonationalism and Habsburg pluriculturalism could be very different. One left for Argentina to pursue shipping business, the other to Chile to profit from saltpeter mines. But Baburizza was a generation younger than Mihanovich. He absorbed the nationalism that had advanced in the Habsburg Monarchy much more than Mihanovich. The latter was made honorary consul of the Dual Monarchy after becoming a successful millionaire and had the opportunity to show that Slavs, historically marginalized by the Viennese government, could also represent the agendas of the monarchy. Baburizza increased his fortune at the beginning of the twentieth century when nationalism and South Slavic political interests were advanced and constantly received and reflected among Slavic migrants in Chile. His mission, unlike Mihanovich, was to contribute to the disintegration of the monarchy.

The cases presented here are snapshots of a fascinating, multi-layered migration history that, despite their diversity, exhibit relationships to the country of origin, whether nostalgically discursive or ethno-nationalistically pejorative. All in all, the history of migration from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to Latin America still allows for many exciting analyses.



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## POVZETEK

### MED NOSTALGIJO IN NACIONALIZMOM: IZSELJENCI IZ HABSBURŠKEGA IMPERIJA V JUŽNI AMERIKI

Ursula PRUTSCH

Članek predstavlja štiri migracijske pripovedi bivših državljanov avstroogrske monarhije, ki so zapustili svoje domovine in se odpravili v Brazilijo, Argentino oziroma Čile. Analiza vključuje tako vizije kot samoopredelitve posameznih migrantov, etničnih manjšin, pa tudi političnih subjektov, ter tako rekonstruira njihov odnos do nekdanje domovine. Priseljenci so nihali med nadnacionalno nostalgijo in nacionalistično jezo, v kombinaciji s protihabsburško politiko. Prvi dve pripovedi primerjata različni poti dalmatinskega poslovnega tajkuna Nicolása Mihanovicha v Argentini in Pascuala Baburizze v Čilu. Mihanovich je vzpostavil največje ladjarsko podjetje v Južni Ameriki, s sedežem v Buenos Airesu. Na drugi strani je Baburizza svojo kariero zgradil z dostavljanjem hrane rudarjem v rudnikih solitra ter z naložbami v rudarstvo, pa tudi v infrastrukturo, ki je boljše povezala Čile s Kraljevino Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev. Baburizza je nacionalizem, ki je naraščal v habsburški monarhiji, posvojil precej bolj kot Mihanovich, ki je po uspešni poslovni karieri postal tudi častni konzul Avstro-Ogrske. Mihanovich je svoj diplomatski položaj izkoristil za to, da je pokazal, da bi lahko tudi Južni Slovani, ki jih je dunajska vlada zgodovinsko marginalizirala, zastopali politično agendo monarhije v tujini. Baburizza, ki je pripadal mlajši generaciji, je svojo kariero ustvaril v času, ko je med priseljenci v Čilu prišlo do razmaha nacionalizma in stalnih razprav o južnoslovanskih političnih interesih.

Tretja in četrta pripoved, ki sta predstavljeni v tretjem poglavju članka, se osredotočata na različne migracijske politike v južni Braziliji. Študija primera o zvezni državi Paraná kaže, da je močan nacionalistični vpliv Poljakov iz Evrope, ki so ga spodbujali lokalni akterji, pripomogel h krepitvi percepcije in prakse etničnega nacionalizma, katerega cilj je bila izgradnja »Nove Poljske«. Medtem ko so v zvezni državi Paraná do 1930ih let le malo posegali v lokalne naselitvene prakse, so se v zvezni državi poskušali precej bolj posvečati večetničnim naseljem. Ta država je migracijske politike podpirala precej prej kot Paraná in se je soočala s kolonizacijskimi praksami, na katere so močno vplivale nemške in italijanske etnične skupine. Zato so si okoli leta 1900 lokalne oblasti prizadevale za diverzifikacijo svoje migracijske politike, da bi se tako izognile homogenemu naseljevanju Evropejcev. Kolonijo Ijuí v zvezni državi Rio Grande do Sul je mogoče razumeti kot antipod poljskim kolonijam v Parani. Ker je bila Nemčija med prvo in drugo svetovno vojno eden izmed sovražnikov Brazilije, so se nemško govoreči priseljenci iz Avstrije distancirali od nemške nacionalne pripadnosti in so vztrajali pri svoji avtonomiji. Končno so tudi prebivalci kolonije Ijuí razumeli, da se bodo lahko po koncu vojaške diktature v Braziliji in razmahu evropskega turizma uspešno predstavljali kot multikulturni svet v malem.

