

## The Many Faces of Yugoslavism: A Case Study of Two Croatian Historians in the Transition from the Habsburg Monarchy to the Yugoslav State\*

*With the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and the establishment of the new Yugoslav state, mainstream Croatian historians found themselves in a changed situation, yet their long-lasting subscription to Yugoslavism proved to be a valuable asset in adapting to novel circumstances. They could assume the same important role in nation-building efforts in the new state just as well as in the old one. Ferdo Šišić and Gavro Manojlović are perfect examples in this regard. By examining their life and work, especially in the transitional period, this article looks at the strategies they used to position themselves in the altered political context. The central question it poses is in what ways and to what purposes did they employ Yugoslav ideologemes and their pre-war Yugoslav loyalties, and in what degree was their historiographical work the result of the expected political role of academic historiography in the historicist tradition. In doing this it supports the views which transcend the simplistic and binary interpretations of Yugoslavism, looking at it as a complex and fluid concept that presented an important political framework for engagement by various historical actors.*

**Key words:** Gavro Manojlović, Ferdo Šišić, nation-building, state-building, historiography, Yugoslavism

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## Introduction

The emergence of modern historical scholarship in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was closely intertwined with nation- and state-building processes.<sup>1</sup> Croatian historiography was no different in that regard. Its professionalization and institutionalization in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was closely connected with national(ist) politics of the time, most importantly the Yugoslav ideology and related cultural and political conceptions. Historians trained in this tradition therefore not only filled the ranks of the political elite, but also produced historical works underpinned with nation- and state-building concerns.

The transition from the Habsburg Monarchy to the Yugoslav state was a tumultuous process which in many aspects brought about profound political, cultural and societal changes. Yet, to underline only the discontinuities of this transition would result in a one-sided and incomplete picture. Continuities were present in the legal framework, the fundamental national concepts, intellectual traditions etc.<sup>2</sup> They are especially revealed when we trace the transitional experiences of individual actors. Historical agency was not only the prerogative of the (emerging or failing) state. Individuals and groups, elite or not, navigated the troubled waters, used their existing capital (not only economic, but also political, symbolic, cultural etc.), pre-war loyalties and connections to better position themselves in the new circumstances.<sup>3</sup> In all of this, they participated in the ongoing nation- and state-building processes, but also in the struggles concerning their hegemonic conception and interpretation.

The interaction of historical actors with Yugoslavism is a particularly interesting and illuminating point in this regard. It was an ideology which predated the emergence of the Yugoslav state by decades, underwent many transformations and existed in several variants. It was, as Dejan Djokić writes, “a fluid concept, understood differently at different times by different Yugoslav nations, leaders and social groups.” Because of that, “there was no single definition of who and what was (or was not) ‘Yugoslav’ [...]”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is no surprise that it was particularly susceptible to battles over its dominant interpretation and that it provided many opportunities for individuals and

1 On this topic, see the many books, articles and collections written and edited by Stefan Berger, e.g. Stefan Berger (with Christoph Conrad), *The Past as History: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Modern Europe*, Basingstoke 2015; Stefan Berger, Chris Lorenz (eds), *Nationalizing the Past. Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, Basingstoke 2010; Stefan Berger (ed.), *Writing the Nation: A Global Perspective*, London 2007.

2 For the main results of the research project “The Transition of Croatian Elites from the Habsburg Monarchy to the Yugoslav State” see: <https://croelite.ffzg.unizg.hr/?p=264>.

3 The approach advocated here could be labelled as Bourdieusian, but it also draws from Michel de Certeau’s concept of everyday, productive “tactics” employed by individuals to navigate the world defined by “strategies” of institutions and structures of power. Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, in: J. G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York 1986, 241–258; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley 1984.

4 Dejan Djokić (ed.), *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918-1992*, London 2003, 4.

groups to position themselves inside its broad umbrella scope. This perspective once again compels us to critically assess “the dominant strand in the historical thinking about the Yugoslav national idea in interwar Yugoslav politics”, which posits the inevitable clash between the supposedly artificial, insincere and exclusively state-sponsored Yugoslavism and the “natural” and longstanding national identities of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.<sup>5</sup> As Pieter Troch rightfully claims, “Yugoslavism had a tremendous impact on the state’s cultural politics, education system, and intellectual life, transcending that of a cover for Serbian political hegemony and a mere instrument in ethnic nationalist politics.”<sup>6</sup>

The case study presented in this paper deals with the entanglement of historiography, politics and nation-building before, during, and after the transition from the Habsburg Monarchy to the Yugoslav state, with a special focus on the engagement of historical actors with Yugoslavism. In doing so, it aims to support the beforementioned approaches which do not reduce Yugoslavism to abstract binary oppositions, but seek to explore it as a complex and fluid concept used by different historical actors in different contexts and for different purposes. Two Croatian<sup>7</sup> historians were chosen for this case study – Gavro Manojlović (1856-1939) and Ferdo Šišić (1869-1940). Even though they were part of mainstream Croatian historiography, in this analysis they do not stand as its representatives, and the conclusions are not meant to be pertinent to the role of Croatian historians in the Yugoslav nation- and state-building processes in general. Šišić and Manojlović were chosen because of their similar educational and career paths, as well as shared intellectual and political affiliations before 1918, but also because their directions began to diverge after the transitional period and because they soon even found themselves on opposed sides in the academic and political con-

5 Pieter Troch, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia: Education, Yugoslavism and the Balkans Before World War II*, London, New York 2015, 6; Dennison Rusinow, “The Yugoslav Idea Before Yugoslavia”, in: Djokić (ed.), *Yugoslavism*, 11-12. For example, Troch cites the conclusion of Ivo Banac’s book on the national question in Yugoslavia as a perfect example of this dominant approach: “Yugoslavia’s national question was the expression of the conflicting national ideologies that have evolved in each of its numerous national and confessional communities, reflecting the community’s historical experiences. These ideologies had assumed their all but definitive contours well before the unification and could not be significantly altered by any combination of cajolery or coercion.” And also: “Yet, though the demise of unitarism was hastened by the concept’s debasement and misuse, integralist prospects were slim in any case owing to a fundamental weakness: unitarism was plainly opposed to the reality of Serb, Croat, and Slovene national individuality and moreover in contradiction to the empirically observable fact that these peoples were fully formed national entities of long standing.” Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, Ithaca, London 1992, 406-7.

6 Troch, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia*, 7.

7 In this context, the term “Croatian” is used not as a (ethno-)national, but as a geographical, administrative, and political term. The national loyalties of both of these men were complex and irreducible to a single denominator, and their ethnic origins, as far as they are important to national identification at all, mixed. The term “Croatian historians” thus denotes historians who were mostly active in Croatia at the time, who were engaged with Croatian culture and politics, and who were formed in the context of 19th century Croatian historiography.

texts. This allows us to pose questions about the role of pre-war intellectual traditions, ideological assumptions and political affiliations in the agency and strategies employed by historical actors in the new post-war situation. By examining both their political activities and historiographical output, this paper seeks to explore the usages of pre-war Yugoslav loyalties in the new Yugoslav state. The focus is thus on the usage of ideology by historical actors, and not on the ideological relationship of pre-1918 and post-1918 Yugoslavism. The central claim is that while Šišić and Manojlović used Yugoslavism for different, and sometimes even opposed political purposes, as historians they both participated in nation-building processes at the time. The first part of this claim reinforces the view that Yugoslavism was a complex and fluid concept which enabled various actors to interact with it in different ways, while the latter underlines the importance of pre-1918 intellectual traditions for the understanding of the continued role of historians in the state- and nation-building processes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### The Pre-1918 Formative Period

For Šišić and Manojlović, the pre-1918 Habsburg period was formative in professional, as well as in political and ideological terms. These experiences were also multifaceted and ambivalent for both of them. Professionally, in this period they gained their education and established their careers, with very similar paths. Šišić attended the universities in Zagreb and Vienna, where he studied history and geography. So did Manojlović, who obtained his PhD in Vienna in philosophy of history and classical philology in 1896. Upon returning to Croatia, both men began their careers working in various high schools as teachers, before they went on to become professors at the University of Zagreb. Manojlović attained his professorship in ancient history in 1901, and Šišić became professor of Croatian history in 1906. Also, they were both elected members of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, Manojlović in 1908 and Šišić in 1910. They were, therefore, intellectually and professionally fully formed in the late Habsburg period, in the milieu of the burgeoning nationally-oriented, traditional historical scholarship.<sup>8</sup>

Šišić and Manojlović belonged to the Croatian intellectual elite, which was largely embedded in the Yugoslav ideology as formulated by Franjo Rački and Josip Juraj

8 For an overview of the development of historical studies in 19th century Croatia see Mario Strecha, "O nastanku i razvoju moderne hrvatske historiografije u 19. stoljeću" [On the Emergence and the Development of Modern Croatian Historiography in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century], *Povijest u nastavi*, 6, 2005, 103-116. A good synthesis of the life and work of Šišić is given in Stjepan Antoljak, "Ferdo Šišić", *Arhivski vjesnik*, 32, 1989, 125-141. Also in Jaroslav Šidak, "Šišić, Ferdo", *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, 8, 1971, 250-251 and Viktor Novak, "Ferdo Šišić", *Ljetopis Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti za godine 1946.-1948.*, 54, 1949, 362-443. The literature on Manojlović is scarce. See, for example Jaroslav Šidak, "Dr. Gavro Manojlović", *Historijski zbornik*, 9, 1956, 253–255 and Bosiljka Janjatović, "Shvaćanje povijesti u Gavra Manojlovića" [The Understanding of History by Gavro Manojlović], *Jugoslavenski istorijski časopis*, 10, 1971, 178–188.

Strossmayer after the restoration of public political life in 1861. This elite had been dominant in Croatian cultural and scientific institutions in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but its grip on political power was not so strong, especially after 1883, which brought about the rule of Count Khuen Héderváry (1883-1903), who managed to stabilize the (sub)dualist political framework in Croatia, while serving the political and economic interests of the Hungarian ruling elite and their dependent groups in Croatia-Slavonia.<sup>9</sup> The professionalization and the institutionalization of Croatian historiography was thus ideologically and politically closely intertwined with the Yugoslavism of Rački and Strossmayer and the historians of this tradition formed the mainstream of Croatian historiography at the time. Its political role was to legitimize the claims for Croatian autonomy inside Austria-Hungary, as well as to construct historical narratives to support nation-building processes. The other major characteristic of this historiography was its theoretical and methodological affiliation with romanticist idealism and historicism (the “Rankean school”).<sup>10</sup>

It is thus no surprise that both men were politically linked with the opposition in Croatia-Slavonia. They were members of the Croat-Serb Coalition, which came into existence in 1905 after a change of strategy of the oppositional forces in Croatia. Šišić and Manojlović were elected members of the Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*) in 1908. Because of their political activities and affiliations, they suffered some undesirable consequences, even in the professional sphere. In 1908, Manojlović was suspended and then prematurely retired from his university post because he signed an open letter addressed to Ban Pavao Rauch criticizing his slander of the Serbian members of the Croat-Serb Coalition. This was actually a political attack on the oppositionally-inclined intellectuals at the University.<sup>11</sup> Although Šišić was also threatened with the same measures, he fared better, partly because he was more open to compromise. This became evident a couple of years later, when he briefly flirted with the government party of Ban Tomašić.<sup>12</sup> Even though the public pressure was very strong, Manojlović was only reinstated to his post after the fall of Ban Rauch in 1910. During the First World War, moreover, Šišić was under government surveillance as a member of the Croat-Serb Coalition, and the same could be assumed for Manojlović.<sup>13</sup>

9 For an overview of Khuen's rule in Croatia see Jaroslav Šidak et. al., *Povijest hrvatskog naroda g. 1860-1914*. [History of the Croatian People, 1860-1914], Zagreb, 1968, 119-159. A good analysis of the Croatian opposition at the time is Rene Lovrenčić, *Geneza politike “novog kursa”* [The Genesis of the “New Course” Politics] (Zagreb: Institut za hrvatsku povijest, 1972), 53-101.

10 Strecha, *O nastanku i razvoju moderne hrvatske historiografije*, 105-107.

11 For a comprehensive account of this episode see: Tihana Luetić, “Studentski štrajk na Sveučilištu u Zagrebu 1908. godine” [The 1908 Student Strike at the University of Zagreb], *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti HAZU*, 30, 2012.

12 The pre-war political activities of Šišić are analyzed in Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, “Povjesničar dr. Ferdo Šišić kao saborski zastupnik 1908.-1911. godine” [The Historian Ferdo Šišić as a Member of Parliament 1908-1911], *scrinia slavonica*, 3, 2003, 413-433.

13 Antoljak, *Ferdo Šišić*, 128.

These formative experiences informed many of the political decisions and career choices Manojlović and Šišić made during the ensuing transitional period. Their political and ideological alignment with pre-1918 Yugoslavism led them into taking active roles in building the new state. Yet, their political paths started to diverge as they aligned themselves with different, and sometimes even opposed institutional actors. As a result of this, they both employed Yugoslav ideas, but for very divergent political purposes, and used their pre-war Yugoslav affiliations as symbolic capital for strengthening their respective positions. At the same time, however, as historians, both Šišić and Manojlović were engaged in nation-building practices. In the sections that follow, I will explore these two aspects of their activities in the new Yugoslav state as an example of the practical usage of political and ideological concepts, as well as the continuities stemming from their formative experiences which were manifest especially in their history-writing.

### State-Building Efforts and Disputes

In the fall of 1918, the formerly oppositional Yugoslav-oriented elite became the ruling elite of a new state. This shift in the structural position was evident in the careers of Manojlović and Šišić. In the aftermath of the First World War, they actively participated in the efforts to build the emerging Yugoslav state. Manojlović was a member of the Central Committee of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, and a member of the Temporary National Representation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS), the highest parliamentary body of the new state. After this initial period of political activity, however, his later career was predominantly linked with the academia. In 1924, he was elected president of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, which he remained until 1933. On the other hand, Šišić, though less oppositionally inclined than Manojlović before 1918, was now even more embroiled in the new state-building efforts. He was a member of the delegation of the Kingdom of SHS at the Paris peace conference, where his task was to provide historical argumentation in defence of the interests of the new state, especially regarding the territorial disputes on the Adriatic coast. For this purpose, he produced numerous texts and pamphlets, such as the *Jadransko pitanje na Konferenciji mira u Parizu* [The Adriatic Question at the Paris Peace Conference] (Zagreb, 1920), *Abridged Political History of Rijeka (Fiume)* (Paris, 1919), *Rijeka i Zadar* [Rijeka and Zadar] (Beograd, 1921), and *The Fraud of Rijeka* (Paris, 1919). Furthermore, in the debates on the Constitution of the new Yugoslav state, Šišić endorsed – alongside Jovan Cvijić, Ante Trumbić, Jovan Banjanin, Josip Smodlaka and others – a centralized conception regarding both the political administration and the national question. These intellectuals advocated for the abandonment of the “tribal names” (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), which represented historical divisions, and the adoption of the single Yugoslav name of the state and the (political)

nation, just like the British denominator which politically unites the English, the Scots etc. In cultural matters, however, it should be left to natural evolution to decide whether this political Yugoslavism should supersede the “tribal” identities regarding language and personal national identification.<sup>14</sup>

While Šišić moved ever closer to the regime and its politics, Manojlović remained closely involved with the pre-war cultural and scientific institutions: the University of Zagreb and the Yugoslav Academy, also located in Zagreb. Since 1922, tensions were rising between the University of Zagreb and the Government. A dispute emerged over the right of the Government to appoint professors without the approval of the governing bodies of the University. The majority in the University Senate and the Council of the Faculty of Philosophy (the Assembly of Professors) opposed this government practice and condemned it as a breach of the autonomy of the University and an attempt to take over the University by the forces loyal to the regime.<sup>15</sup> In this dispute, Manojlović stood with the majority, and Šišić with the minority, i.e. those more closely aligned with the Government. The dispute soon became a public scandal and polemics ensued riddled with political and ideological accusations. The Provincial Governor of Croatia, Juraj Demetrović, accused the oppositional professors of being a “Bastille of tribal reaction”, ignoring the “state and national character” of the University and fighting for the autonomy on the basis of Khuen’s and Franz Joseph’s laws, instead of being in favor of the modern Serbian University law, a stance which was characterized as anti-Serbian.<sup>16</sup> The polemic thus assumed broader political connotations in the context of the struggles between centralism and federalism. One of the episodes of this scandal involved a direct confrontation between Šišić and Manojlović. Manojlović was elected delegate of the University of Zagreb at the International Congress of Historians, to be held in Bruxelles in 1923, instead of Šišić, who was planning to present his paper “on the historical foundations of the unification of Yugoslavs”. This decision was labelled a Frankist<sup>17</sup>, separatist, and anti-Yugoslav political persecution of Šišić.<sup>18</sup> Manojlović had criticized Šišić’s proposed topic as “not purely scientific”, but also political, and because of this he was subsequently accused of having Great-Serbian sentiments against Yugoslavia. (Being of Serbian descent, he could hardly have been called a Frankist.) To further discredit him, it was also said that he had thrown out the picture of Bishop

14 “Pariški predlog” [The Paris Proposal], in: Ferdo Šišić, *Dokumenti o postanku Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca 1914.-1919.* [Documents on the Genesis of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes 1914-1919], Zagreb 1920, 326.

15 Hodimir Sirotković, “Sveučilite između dva rata (1918-1941)” [The University Between the Two Wars (1918-1941)], in: Jaroslav Šidak, *Spomenica u povodu proslave 300-godišnjice Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*, Zagreb 1969, 137-139.

16 Albert Bazala et al., *Sveučilište i politika: prilog našoj savremenoj prosvjetnoj politici* [The University and Politics: A Contribution to Our Contemporary Education Politics], Zagreb 1923, 21, 23.

17 Frankism is a term denoting the Croatian exclusivist nationalist ideology advocated by the radical Pure Party of Rights, whose founder in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was Josip Frank (1844-1911).

18 *Ibid.*, 26.

Strossmayer from the Osijek Gymnasium while serving as the high school principal during the Habsburg era in the 1890-ies.<sup>19</sup> Manojlović, however, countered that Šišić was notorious for his opportunism and that he would also be delivering his paper in Berlin or Vienna if the outcome of the war had been different, “the historical moments of the national unification having dawned on him abundantly in the fall of 1918.”<sup>20</sup> We can thus see how pre-war Yugoslav affiliations were employed as symbolic capital in the new state. In a polemic, it was desirable to establish oneself as being true to the Yugoslav idea before 1918 and to castigate the opponent for their opportunism and insincere loyalty to Yugoslavism.

The other major conclusion that can be drawn from these disputes is that the political positioning in the new state was more dependent on particular interests, whether personal or corporate, than on previously held ideological assumptions. One’s allegiance to Yugoslavism before the emergence of the Yugoslav state did not necessarily predetermine their political affiliations in the new circumstances. Of course, neither pre-war nor post-war Yugoslavism was a homogeneous ideological edifice. If most of the actors agreed on the desirability of the establishment of the Yugoslav state, its concrete form, constitutional framework, political system, administrative division etc. were all open questions. After the establishment of the Yugoslav state, the battles over the “true” meaning of Yugoslavism (re)surfaced. Although these can be abstractly subsumed under the tension between the two dominant strains or visions of Yugoslavism – the unitarist and the federalist one – they also underline the importance of the institutional positions of historical actors employing ideological claims.<sup>21</sup> One other example may be illuminating. In 1929, after the inauguration of the royal dictatorship in Yugoslavia, Manojlović, as the president of the Yugoslav Academy in Zagreb, publicly fought against the idea of establishing a centralized, unified Academy in Belgrade, which would presuppose the abolishment of the Yugoslav Academy in Zagreb. Defending against the arguments set out in an article in the Belgrade newspaper *Pravda*, which proposed merging the Zagreb and Belgrade Academies, as well as adding a Slovenian section to them, into one Yugoslav Academy in Belgrade, Manojlović summoned many arguments, including those that underlined the Zagreb Academy as one of the birthplaces of Yugoslavism, quoting Rački’s motto of “unity amidst diversity”.<sup>22</sup> Pre-war Yugoslav ideas could thus also be employed as a strategy of anti-centralist politics in the new Yugoslav state. This complicates the narrow and simplified outlook which reduces the ideological intricacies of the Yugoslav state(s) to binary oppositions between seemingly “natural” nationalisms of the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes (depending on the particular interpretation) and the allegedly “artificial” Yugoslavism imposed almost exclusively from above. In reality, historical actors engaged with Yugoslavism just as

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19 Ibid., 34.

20 Ibid., 27.

21 Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Idea*, 25-26.

22 Gavro Manojlović, *Jedna akademija ili tri*, Zagreb 1929, 17.



they engaged with other ideological frameworks. They did so in a creative and appropriate manner, diving into the pool of its many and often contradictory ideas, and employing them in their specific contexts, granting them new meanings and usages by doing so. Far from being a stillborn ideology only forcefully imposed from above, Yugoslavism was, as it also had been before the First World War, one of the favourite ideological tools of Croatian intellectuals and politicians (and not only them), navigating the complex political environment of the interwar Yugoslav state, even if they fought for different interests, like in the case of Šišić and Manojlović.

### Nation-Building and Historiography

The differences in employing Yugoslav ideas fade when we look at the historiographical oeuvres of our actors. Both Šišić and Manojlović had been embroiled in broader nation-building processes and activities which surpass the ideological contestations of the political arena. This stems from the close relationship between nation-building projects and processes and the romanticist-historist tradition of history-writing, originating in 19<sup>th</sup> century European developments. We now turn to the analysis of the usage of Yugoslav ideas and the construction of national narratives in the historiographical works of Manojlović and Šišić.<sup>23</sup>

Even though his main area of research was ancient history and Byzantine studies, Manojlović found room to incorporate Yugoslav ideologemes in his works. For example, in the editorial text “Le millénaire de l’ancien royaume croate (Essai sur les questions historiques respectives)”, written for the collection of papers published on the occasion of the millennial celebration of the establishment of the Croatian kingdom in 1925, he presented the medieval Croatian king Tomislav as some kind of a precursor to modern Yugoslav unification, because he gathered around himself “the representatives of all the countries of our nation.”<sup>24</sup> Of course, it was still too early, because “one had to wait for all the faculties especially of the Croatian and the Serbian race to form and develop, so that the political unification of our days could take place.”<sup>25</sup> But all of the “moving forces” of history worked teleologically in the same direction, towards the formation of a unified Yugoslav state, which presented the high point of history. This concept was theoretically elaborated in his book *The Moving*

23 Further research is needed to evaluate the role of historiography in Yugoslav nation- and state-building processes. Its significance is undeniable, but we should also consider the reconfigurations in the symbolic order of scientific discourses in the first half of the 20th century. For example, see the illuminating study by Vedran Duančić on the nation-building role of interwar Yugoslav geography: Vedran Duančić, *Geography and Nationalist Visions of Interwar Yugoslavia*, Cham 2020.

24 Gavro Manojlović, “Le millénaire de l’ancien royaume croate (Essai sur les questions historiques respectives)”, in: *Zbornik kralja Tomislava u spomen tisućugodišnjice Hrvatskoga kraljevstva*, Zagreb 1925, LXX.

25 *Ibid.*, LXXI.

*Forces and Regularities in Universal History* published two years later, in which he put forward a Hegelian/historist view of history, proclaiming the state as “the most perfect, if the most complicated, fruit of human association” and the “framework of every other history.”<sup>26</sup>

We can thus see that teleology centred around the formation of the state (in this case the Yugoslav state) presented one of the key narrative frameworks of this kind of history-writing. It was Šišić, however, who constructed one of the most elaborate Yugoslav national teleological narratives at the time.<sup>27</sup> Starting out essentially as a medievalist, after 1918 he worked more and more in modern history. This shift is in itself suggestive, because the concept of ‘Yugoslav liberation and unification’ started to play an important role in Šišić’s works. In his overview of Croatian history published in 1916, he established a periodization in which the fourth and final era was delineated by the death of Emperor Joseph II in 1790, and it ran up “until today.”<sup>28</sup> After 1918, however, this fourth era was resolved with the creation of the Yugoslav state on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918. On that day, writes Šišić, “I have concluded Croatian history, because with this date begins the Yugoslav one.”<sup>29</sup>

In his syntheses of Croatian history written after 1918, Šišić constructed a teleological national narrative in which the official ideologeme of ‘Yugoslav liberation and unification’ was profusely used and in which 1918 served as a focal point in the narrative construction of history. His story follows the parallel processes of the disintegration of the supposedly *ancien régime*, anachronistic and oppressive Habsburg Monarchy and the advancement of the modern idea of nationalism and the national movement, culminating on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918 in the creation of the Yugoslav state. With this date he concludes his overview of Croatian history because this is the beginning of a “common Yugoslav history”<sup>30</sup> Šišić was especially explicit in his book *Jugoslovenska misao: istorija ideje jugoslovenskog narodnog ujedinjenja i oslobođenja od 1790-1918* [The Yugoslav Thought: History of the Idea of Yugoslav National Unification and Liberation 1790-1918], published in Belgrade in 1937:

“And thus the dream of so many centuries and generations was finally accomplished, and with the complete victory a great saga of Yugoslav patriots that ran through the whole course of history, especially that of the 19th century, was put to an end. In this saga

26 Gavro Manojlović, *Sile pokretnice i pravilnosti u univerzalnoj historiji*, Zagreb 1927, 2.

27 For a more detailed analysis of Šišić’s nation-building narrative see my upcoming article “Nacionalno-teleološki narativ u djelu Ferde Šišića: naslijeđe i kontekst” in the collection of papers from the conference “Ferdo Šišić i hrvatska historiografija prve polovice 20. Stoljeća” held in Zagreb and Slavonski Brod on November 28-29<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

28 Ferdo Šišić, *Pregled povijesti hrvatskoga naroda od najstarijih dana do godine 1873* [Overview of the History of the Croatian Nation from the Oldest Days until 1873], Zagreb 1916.

29 Ferdo Šišić, “Periodizacija jugoslovenske istorije. B. Hrvatska historija” [The Periodization of Yugoslav History. B. Croatian History], *Jugoslavenski istoriski časopis*, 1, 1935, 326.

30 Ferdo Šišić, *Pregled povijesti hrvatskoga naroda od najstarijih dana do 1. decembra 1918*, Zagreb 1920, foreword [s.p.].

the Yugoslav national dynasty of Karađorđević had always led the way. It is true that it [the dynasty, N.T.] does not proud itself with a pedigree of hundreds of years, but it is instead adorned with the true love and loyalty to the whole Yugoslav nation, from which it originated, as well as untarnished honesty, high morality and a full sense of justice and truth.”<sup>31</sup>

Just like in the case of Manojlović, Šišić’s national teleological narrative was not simply the result of his political affiliations. It also stemmed from his intellectual formation as a historian in the Rankean idealist, historian tradition. This is clearly evident in the general features of his history-writing, such as the predominant national perspective, the focus on ‘great men’ and the political and diplomatic history of the state, and the usage of the concept of Providence.<sup>32</sup> For example, in his *Handbook of Sources for Croatian History*, Šišić writes that one “should of course first and foremost study the history of his nation as a patriot. Patriotism helps this study: sanctus amor patriae dat animum!”<sup>33</sup> In another instance, he wrote that the

“patriotic citizen would do good if he rose in such occasions above the complicated matters of today and soared into the free and fair heights of impartiality, so that he can discern, from the paths through which God’s Providence has up to that point led his nation, the real tasks of national calling in the present and its true goals in the future.”<sup>34</sup>

Šišić’s historiographical narrative that centres around the creation of the Yugoslav state is therefore not (only) a reflex of his political and ideological subscription to Yugoslavism, especially after 1918, but also the logical outcome of his professional formation as a historian. The creation of the Yugoslav state in 1918 provided the *telos* for the national teleological narrative which was in the works even before that event, and which had its roots in the basic philosophical outlooks of the 19<sup>th</sup> century idealist historian tradition. This is why Šišić and Manojlović could employ Yugoslav ideas for different political purposes, and yet, at the same time, contribute rather harmoniously to the nation- and state-building processes as historians. Their formation within the Hegelian/Rankean idealist, historian tradition was crucial for their fundamental assumptions about the role of historiography within the new state and their understanding of the nature of historical narratives.

31 Ferdo Šišić, *Jugoslovenska misao: istorija ideje jugoslovenskog narodnog ujedinjenja i oslobođenja od 1790-1918*, Beograd 1937, 272.

32 Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, Hanover, London, 1997, 23-31.

33 Ferdo Šišić, *Priručnik izvora hrvatske historije*, Zagreb 1914, 4.

34 Ferdo Šišić, “O stogodišnjici ilirskoga pokreta” [On the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Illyrian Movement], *Ljetopis Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti za godinu 1935/1936*, 49, 1937, 99.

### Conclusions

The case study presented above exemplifies the claims that Yugoslav ideology was a fluid and complex concept irreducible to the binary oppositions of artificiality vs. naturalness, deception vs. sincerity, or top-down vs. bottom-up agency. By focusing on the ways in which historical actors operated with its ideologemes, we can see that it functioned as an important framework for political agency. Šišić and Manojlović, both intellectually formed within the Croatian pre-war Yugoslavist political and cultural milieu, engaged with post-war Yugoslavism in different ways, and for different purposes. There was no simple ideological causality connecting pre-1918 Yugoslav loyalties and the opinions and positions of the historical actors in the new Yugoslav state. They could be used to solidify one's rapport with the new regime (Šišić), but could also be employed as strategies of defying the pretensions of the government and of advocating different state policies, e.g. anti-centralism and anti-unitarism (Manojlović). As a malleable concept, its deployment depended on the political context and the envisaged goals.

At the same time, the historiographical output of Šišić and Manojlović paints a more unified picture. Although 1918 proved to be a breaking point in many areas of life, historiography did not seem to be one of them, at least when Yugoslavia was concerned. Surely, the specific content of mainstream historiography adjusted to the new political reality, but its fundamental conceptions essentially remained the same as in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The historians' intellectual formation in the historicist and idealist tradition represented a continuity in both theory and practice of their history-writing in the new political context. Because of this, it was possible for them to employ Yugoslav ideologemes differently in the political arena, and at the same time use them harmoniously in their historiographical nation-building projects, a picture very familiar when the national role of Croatian historical studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is concerned.

SAŽETAK

**Višestruka lica jugoslavenstva: studija slučaja dvojice hrvatskih povjesničara u tranziciji iz Habsburške Monarhije u jugoslavensku državu**

Profesionalizacija i institucionalizacija hrvatske historiografije u drugoj polovici 19. stoljeća bile su tijesno povezane s nacionalnom politikom i procesom stvaranja nacije (*nation-building*). Glavna struja hrvatske historiografije djelovala je u okviru jugoslavenske ideologije i znanstveno-kulturnih institucija povezanih s njom, dok je historistički idealizam predstavljao dominantnu intelektualnu tradiciju. Raspadom Austro-Ugarske i osnivanjem jugoslavenske države hrvatski povjesničari našli su se u novim okolnostima. Ipak, njihova dugotrajna privrženost jugoslavenstvu pokazala se kao vrijedno sredstvo u prilagodbi novoj situaciji. Hrvatski su povjesničari tako u novoj državi mogli zauzeti istu važnu ulogu u procesima stvaranja nacije koju su imali i u okviru prethodnog poretka.

Ferdo Šišić i Gavro Manojlović savršeni su primjeri u tom pogledu. Obojica su se obrazovali i intelektualno formirali u bivšem habsburškom kontekstu. Ipak, u novoj su jugoslavenskoj državi postigli velike karijerne uspjehe i zauzeli važne pozicije. Ispitujući njihov život i djelo, posebice u tranzicijskom razdoblju, ova studija slučaja stoga sagledava strategije koje su upotrebljavali kako bi se pozicionirali u novom političkom kontekstu. Središnje pitanje koje se postavlja jest na koje su načine i u koje svrhe koristili jugoslavenske ideologeme i predratnu privrženost jugoslavenstvu, te u kojoj je mjeri njihov historiografski opus bio rezultat očekivane političke uloge akademske historiografije u okviru historističke tradicije. U širem teorijskom smislu, ovaj rad podupire one pristupe koji nadilaze pojednostavljene i binarne interpretacije jugoslavenstva koje ga tretiraju kao neiskren i artifičijelan projekt inherentno suprotstavljen navodno prirodnim nacionalizmima Hrvata, Srba i Slovenaca. Umjesto toga, jugoslavenstvo se sagledava kao kompleksan i fluidan koncept koji je predstavljao važan politički okvir za angažman različitih povijesnih aktera.

**Glavne riječi:** Gavro Manojlović, Ferdo Šišić, stvaranje nacije, stvaranje države, historiografija, jugoslavenstvo