

Redefining Citizenship after Empire: The Rights to Welfare, to Work, and to Remain in a Post-Habsburg World*

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In November 1918, the Habsburg Monarchy dissolved and about 50 million people found themselves without a state. By early 1919, politicians, lawyers, diplomats, business elites, and activists at the Paris Peace Conference were discussing plans for replacing the Habsburg imperial complex with future nation-states.¹ At the heart of these negotiations was a liberal vision of rights-oriented citizenship. No one in Paris wanted Bolshevik councils to serve as the basis for the new states: the dominant dream was to set up parliamentary, capitalist, free-market, secular democracies that would protect individual rights of citizens, hasten prosperity, and forestall ethnic violence.² When the first treaties creating the post-Habsburg successor states were signed, they outlined how citizenship in the new states would be determined. Two paths were set up for the post-Habsburg lands. One focused on “legal local belonging”: individuals—irrespective of ethnic, religious, class, or political associations—could achieve citizenship in whatever state formed around where they lived by proving they were legally registered there. Minority

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¹ For an in-depth study of how Eastern Europeans engaged Woodrow Wilson's attention at the Paris Peace Conference, see Larry Wolff, *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe* (Stanford, CA, 2020).

² For a new investigation of how Paris Peace Treaty politicking intersected with on-the-ground plans for successor states' participation in an international world order, see Volker Prott, *The Politics of Self-Determination: Remaking Territories and National Identities in Europe, 1917–1923* (Oxford, 2016); Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley, *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands* (New York, 2020). For a fascinating discussion of the contradictions between theory and practice in how secular-oriented minority-rights treaties played out for Muslim communities in the newly forming Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, see Emily Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe* (New York, 2021).

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rights clauses were inscribed into most of these constitutions to ensure that locals who obtained citizenship this way would not face discrimination if they did not identify with the national culture promoted by their new states. The second means of obtaining citizenship focused on ethnicity: individuals could “opt” to move to a different, newly forming state if they could prove “national belonging” to that successor state. Though it was a far less frequent means of obtaining citizenship than the first path, this second path allowed voluntary transfer for “optants” to a new nation-state where their citizenship was based on how they identified ethnically.³

As we know, the dream of making ethnically inclusive new states out of the Habsburg rubble failed. Historians often attribute that failure to the successor states’ lack of interest in championing ethnic and religious minority citizens. Additional blame goes to the faulty international mechanisms that were supposed to force these new countries to honor the minority rights clauses the Paris Peace Treaties had inscribed in their new constitutions.⁴

But these histories overlook more fundamental problems with how individual rights to successor-state citizenship were conceived, problems stemming from how “legal local belonging” was defined. In none of the Paris Peace Treaties did legal residency or place of birth indicate the right to citizenship. Instead, what gave locals automatic citizenship was a little-known Habsburg legal mechanism that, before 1918, communities used to avoid the costs and presence of persons considered socially undesirable. This legal category was called *Heimatrecht* or pertinency. The peace treaties stipulated that pertinency holders had automatic rights to citizenship in the state whose geographic boundaries included their place of pertinency. Those living in a land where they did not hold pertinency had no right to automatic citizenship.

This article investigates how understandings of the right to receive social benefits, to work, and to remain in one’s place of residency when threatened with expulsion orders changed when the bureaucratic category of “pertinency” became the cornerstone of citizenship. We do so through a case study of the

³ For a new book investigating how the Paris Peace Treaties hammered out citizenship laws for successor states, see Leonard V. Smith, *Sovereignty at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Oxford, 2018). For a useful comparative analysis of how these peace-treaty citizenship regimes played out in the successor states, especially regarding “local belonging” rights and “optant clauses,” see Giuseppe Motta, *Less than Nations: Central-Eastern European Minorities after WWI* (Cambridge, 2013). For a fascinating in-depth look at how unclear “optants” rights were between the lands they left and the new nation-states they joined, see Antal Berkes, “The League of Nations and the Optants’ Dispute in the Hungarian Borderlands: Romania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia,” in Becker and Wheatley, *Remaking Central Europe*, chap. 12.

⁴ See Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2015); Mark Mazower, “Minorities and the League of Nations in Interwar Europe,” *Daedalus* 126, no. 2 (1997): 47.

smallest Habsburg successor state, the port city Fiume (today Rijeka, Croatia).⁵ Analysis of the situation in Fiume reveals that new citizenship regimes in east-central Europe used Habsburg pertinency mechanisms not only to promote ethnic minority disenfranchisement and a more vocal nationalist culture: they also used them to ensure that the most socially vulnerable had the hardest time claiming the rights associated with state belonging. This article shows how making pertinency the pathway to postwar citizenship left far more people—both national majorities and national minorities—at risk of becoming stateless than historians have acknowledged.

PERTINENCY: WHAT IT WAS AND HOW IT WAS (MIS-) USED TO SHAPE CITIZENSHIP

To understand how pertinency preordained many of the injustices of successor-state citizenship regimes, we must first understand what it was. The word comes from the Italian (*pertinenza*) and was used in English-language versions of some Paris Peace Treaties.⁶ Specialists tend to use the German term, *Heimatrecht*, because in Habsburg times that was the most commonly used word for the category. English-language texts often translate *Heimatrecht* as “local citizenship,” “right of residence,” or “right of domicile,” but none of these is accurate. These imprecise terms have been adopted not just out of a desire to avoid using foreign words that can alienate readers, but also because of the misleading nature of *Heimatrecht*’s base words, *Heimat* (home) and *recht* (right).

In the sixteenth century, when *Heimatrecht* was first implemented as a system of vagrancy control, the words “home” and “right” accurately reflected the

⁵ Today’s city, the third largest in Croatia, is called Rijeka. Before 1918, the territory of today’s Rijeka included different administrative units located in different citizenship/pertinency regimes within the Habsburg Monarchy, including the *corpus separatum* semiautonomous Hungarian city-state “Fiume,” the Croatian-held town Sušak, and western peripheral areas within Habsburg Austrian territory, including Kantrida. This article analyzes the experience of the *corpus separatum*, and we use “Fiume” instead of “Rijeka” to indicate this difference, recognizing that Slavic-language speakers often referred to the town as Rijeka before 1918 as well.

⁶ There is a wonderfully rich historiography of early modern and nineteenth-century Habsburg *Heimatrecht*. Must reads include Waltraud Heindl and Edith Sauer, *Grenze und Staat: Passwesen, Staatsbürgerschaft, Heimatrecht und Fremden gesetzgebung in der Österreichischen Monarchie 1750–1867* (Vienna, 2000); Andrea Komlosy, *Grenze und ungleiche regionale Entwicklung: Binnenmarkt und Migration in der Habsburgemonarchie* (Vienna, 2003); Sylvia Hahn, *Migration–Arbeit–Geschlecht: Arbeitsmigration in Mitteleuropa vom 17. bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 2008); Peter Becker, “Governance of Migration in the Habsburg Monarchy and the Republic of Austria,” in *National Approaches to the Administration of International Migration*, ed. Peri E. Arnold (Amsterdam, 2010).

system's logic. As Annemarie Steidl explains, *Heimatrecht* initially established that "the 'hometown' was responsible for taking care of old-age persons and paupers in instances in which there was no private support available."⁷ Conversely, it also permitted hometowns to expel anyone who could not claim native status. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the qualifications for pertinency had changed: an individual's pertinency was no longer based on place of birth, but on patrilineal lineage and sometimes long-term residency or state service.⁸ So, for example, a male citizen of Habsburg Europe could be born in, say, Vienna, and if his father held pertinency elsewhere, say, Prague, he could go to school in Vienna, legally reside there, buy property there, marry there, work there, pay taxes there, be drafted into the military there, raise a family there, go to hospital there, get a pension there, die there, and be buried there, all without holding Viennese *Heimatrecht*. If his father held Prague *Heimatrecht*, so did he and his wife and children. From the 1880s until 1918, it was Austrian or Hungarian citizenship, not *Heimatrecht*, that provided people the freedom to live, work, receive welfare, and travel within Habsburg towns and countrysides as long as they were not a social burden. All pertinency did was indicate which municipality was responsible for covering the costs and providing haven when someone got into financial, legal, or medical trouble and no other payers or options were available.

Essentially, pertinency was a paternalist control mechanism that communities used to deny poor relief and expel people seen as a social burden. If someone without pertinency fell on hard times, the place they resided could charge their place of pertinency for the costs of aid—as long as those costs were low and the need not chronic. For example, if a mother needed to procure a set of eyeglasses for a child but could not afford the cost and resided somewhere where she did not hold pertinency, the place of residency sent a bill to the place of pertinency to cover the costs.⁹ But if the costs for the hosting municipality were high, the need chronic, or someone was considered dangerous, the individual (and their

⁷ Annemarie Steidl, *On Many Routes: Internal, European, and Transatlantic Migration in the Late Habsburg Empire* (West Lafayette, IN, 2021), 36. For more on the early modern invention of the system, see Heindl and Sauer, *Grenze und Staat*, 181–91.

⁸ The rules for the acquisition of pertinency differed throughout the empire in the late nineteenth century. For a concise article outlining the differences between pertinency requirements in late nineteenth-century Austria, Hungary, and Croatia-Slavonia, see Ivan Kosnica, "Croatian Law on Regulation of Local Citizenship (1880)—Context and Change," in *Codification Achievements and Failures in the 19th–20th Century: 7th Conference on Legal History in Szeged*, ed. Mária Homoki-Nagy and Norbert Varga (Szeged, 2018), 83–95.

⁹ This hypothetical is based on a specific example, but countless bills like this were sent between places of residency and places of pertinency throughout the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, usually covering the costs of emergency services at hospitals and short-term treatments. Magistrato Civico di Trieste, April 24, 1918, 22 Gradsko Poglavarstvo Rijeka, Opći spisi L42/1918, Državni Arhiv u Rijeci (hereafter cited as HR-DARI).

dependent family) could be expelled from their place of residency and escorted to wherever they held pertinency. In specialist studies, the expulsion of non-pertinents is usually called by its German name *Schub* (push). It was a routine empire-wide process, with thousands ferried, driven, or marched across Habsburg Europe annually. If the trip was long, those expelled stayed in special way stations (*Schubstationen*) until delivered by authorities to their place of pertinency.¹⁰ The overwhelming majority of people pushed out in this way required poor relief.¹¹ Municipalities had to accept the cost of providing for anyone registered as pertinent to them, regardless of those people's character, ethnicity, politics, gender, age, loyalty, situation, or desire.

Whereas Habsburg citizenships guaranteed welfare and domicile rights, the system of pertinency meant that no matter how desperate a citizen's situation, there was a place where they could access basic relief. In an empire on the move, pertinency was a boon to municipal governments, protecting them against costs that could come along with an influx of migrants. We avoid the misleading German word with its elements of "home" and "rights" and use instead the administratively focused English-language word "pertinency" to describe a legal system that defined municipalities' obligations toward individuals in need of welfare or domicile. Feelings of home and an individual's capability of demanding rights had little to do with it.

The relationship of Habsburg pertinency to citizenship requires a bit more clarification, however. The 1811 Habsburg Civil Code began a gradual process of standardizing and codifying legal rights that culminated in constitutions where all remaining restrictions based on estate, birth, and status were lifted (though those based on sex remained).¹² By the 1860s, citizens had freedom of movement throughout the empire, which was especially important for those eager to seek employment in growing cities.¹³ In 1867, the Austrian Empire became the dual

¹⁰ "During the nineteenth century, the actual number of people forcefully transported to their place of domicile increased. In 1818, for example, only 695 'foreigners' were deported from Vienna in group transports. In the mid-nineteenth century, Vienna had about half a million inhabitants, and on average about 3,000 people without a right of domicile were deported annually. By 1867, the annual number of forcefully transported people had risen to 10,118." Steidl, *On Many Routes*, 39.

¹¹ For excellent descriptions of how *Schub* worked in Habsburg Europe, see Heindl and Sauer, *Grenze und Staat*; Sigrid Wadauer, "Establishing Distinctions: Unemployment versus Vagrancy in Austria from the Late Nineteenth Century to 1938," *International Review of Social History* 56, no. 1 (2011): 31–70.

¹² There is an extensive literature on what Habsburg Austrian/Hungarian citizenship entailed. For a recent work that gives a helpful overview, see Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA, 2016).

¹³ "Beginning in the 1860s, Austria-Hungary's population was allowed to move freely around the empire's territory without identification documents, and even into other Western European cities and overseas." Steidl, *On Many Routes*, 36.

state Austria-Hungary, and by the late 1870s citizenship was divided, with people in the lands represented in the Viennese imperial parliament classified as Austrian citizens and those living in regions ruled by the royal parliament in Budapest as Hungarian citizens.¹⁴ The two parts of the Habsburg Monarchy had different constitutions, laws, administrative systems, and rights regimes. Despite their shared monarch, currency, military, and foreign affairs office, Austrian citizens were foreigners in Hungary, and vice versa.

Pertinency was another element that tied the two Habsburg citizenship regimes together. Anyone living somewhere in Habsburg Europe where they did not hold pertinency—a considerable portion of the population—lived there *conditionally*. Their right to stay was dependent on their economic and political situation. This worked because everyone was required to be pertinent somewhere, so there was always a place responsible for their social welfare. Children's pertinency was determined by their fathers' pertinency, their unwed mothers' pertinency, or the place they were abandoned or orphaned. Wives had to take their husbands' pertinency upon marriage. Only Austrian citizens could hold pertinency in Austria, and only Hungarian citizens could hold pertinency in Hungary.¹⁵ Applicants for Austrian or Hungarian citizenship had to prove that, if granted citizenship, a municipality would give them pertinency. Thus pertinency undergirded both of the Habsburg Monarchy's two citizenship regimes.

In the abstract, the post-1918 Paris Peace Treaties' substitution of pertinency for dissolved Habsburg citizenship seems reasonable. In the absence of Habsburg Austrian and Hungarian citizenships, a locally anchored and omnipresent accountability regime seemed like the perfect structure on which to build smaller states with smaller citizenships. It was particularly appealing to those who wanted to ensure that the roughly one million World War I Habsburg refugees would

¹⁴ The 1867 Austrian constitution delineated the terms of Austrian citizenship. Hungary's citizenship law was formulated later, in 1879. For more information on how and why Hungarian citizenship was formulated later, see Norbert Varga, "The Framing of the First Hungarian Citizenship Law (Act 50 of 1879) and the Acquisition of Citizenship," *Hungarian Studies* 18, no. 2 (2004).

¹⁵ The relationship between pertinency and citizenship in Hungary fluctuated more than it did in Austria, in part because the Hungarian citizenship law was passed only in 1879, twelve years after the Dual Monarchy was created. Until that time, the first and second laws on communes (1871 and 1876) allowed for the acquisition of pertinency at the explicit request of the applicant and required permission from the minister of interior. It was only in 1886 that a clear, lasting legal provision was made stipulating that pertinency of noncitizens was conditional on acquiring citizenship. We would like to thank Gábor Egry for bringing these fluctuations to our attention and for rightly emphasizing the complexity of the Hungarian pertinency system, which changed three or four times in just fifteen years. Habsburg Bosnia's relationship to pertinency and citizenship regimes was even more complicated because of the ambiguous nature of citizenship, pertinency, and *Landesangehörigkeit* regulations; see Mustafa Imamović, *Pravni položaj i unutrašnji politički razvitak Bosne i Hercegovine od 1878. do 1914.* (Sarajevo, 1976).

not be considered citizens of wherever they had ended up. Pertinency promised that those refugees would be considered citizens of the lands they had been forced to leave.¹⁶ But pertinency also appealed to those worried that equating the successor states with nation-states held considerable potential for ethnic exclusions and violence. Since Habsburg pertinency rights did not rest on ethnicity, language use, or religion, using it to determine citizenship seemed to guarantee that minority nationals would have rights in the nation-states forming around them. The minority rights clauses imposed on many successor states assumed that citizenship extended to all peoples in the lands governed by the new nation-states, not simply the majority nationals the states hoped to represent.¹⁷ A pertinency-based postwar citizenship regime in which everyone legally belonged somewhere seemed to ensure that everyone would have citizenship in a country they had ties to, and no one would be stateless.

Unfortunately, what made sense in the abstract could not be realized in lived terms, because pertinency often had little or no relation to an individual's actual connections to community, home, birthplace, or residency. It was a network system for basic welfare responsibilities that was deeply tied to predictions of population mobility within a shared imperial space.¹⁸ It was about stabilizing peoples' connections to places regardless of how much they or their families moved. Every citizen of Habsburg Austria and Hungary held a pertinency so that migrant workers would always have a "home community" that was accountable for them, no matter how far away a large railway network took them from farms to factories, to workshops, and to ports in search of work. As Sylvia Hahn has

¹⁶ The antirefugee aspect of the pertinency category is revealed by the specification that pertinency must have been granted before 1910 in order to provide uncontested rights to citizenship in newly forming Austria, Czechoslovakia, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. It appears that the presence of hundreds of thousands of Galician refugees in the Austrian lands was one of the main reasons why the Austrian delegation at the Paris Peace Treaties pushed for pertinency to determine citizenship. See Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge, 2006); Arnold Suppan, *The Imperialist Peace Order in Central Europe: Saint-Germain and Trianon, 1919–1920* (Vienna, 2019); Edward Timms, "Citizenship and 'Heimatrecht' after the Treaty of Saint-Germain," in *The Habsburg Legacy: National Identity in Historical Perspective*, ed. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms (Edinburgh, 1994).

¹⁷ For a clear summary of how the different Paris Peace Treaties designated pertinency and option clauses, see Monika Ganczer, "The Effects of the Differences between the Austrian and the Hungarian Regulation of the Rights of Citizenship in a Commune (Heimatrecht, Indigenat, Pertinenza, Illetőség) on the Nationality of the Successor States of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy," *Journal on European History of Law* 8, no. 2 (2016): 100–107.

¹⁸ For a succinct presentation of how pertinency represented a form of a social citizenship regime outside and beyond the categories of nation, see Pieter M. Judson, "Citizenship without Nation? Political and Social Citizenship in the Habsburg Empire," *Contemporanea* 22, no. 4 (2018).

beautifully shown, at the core of any history of foreignness and migration stands “a history of work.”¹⁹ Pertinency reduced communities’ fear of outsiders seeking employment; it meant that modern, industrialized employment hubs did not have to provide welfare to those flooding into its boarding houses. “Outsiders” remained outsiders regardless of how indispensable they were to the day-to-day life of a community. This system was relatively sustainable because it operated in a large imperial space, Europe’s biggest single free-trade region. When the empire fell apart, however, this space was fragmented into smaller economic and political units. This was the context in which local communities had to decide what to do with the nonpertinent insider-outsiders whose arrival had been facilitated by the economic insurances of the imperial pertinency system.

Habsburg citizens were not immediately worried about what would become of pertinency after the monarchy dissolved because the war had significantly undermined pertinency’s relevance. As historian Doina Anca Cretu points out, the refugee crisis triggered a flood of on-site “reactive assistance” measures that completely sidelined prior pertinency procedures, like refugee camps and aid stations.²⁰ Rebekah Klein-Pejšová has shown that international relief groups and citizenship regulations, not pertinency designations, determined how and whether refugees received aid.²¹ Tara Zahra has revealed how provincial nationalist associations accumulated power by co-opting programs sponsored by the newly created Austrian Ministry of Welfare and how they considered national affiliations, not pertinency, the most important classifications for securing aid.²² Claire Morelon has emphasized how charity associations provided soldiers, veterans, and widows with much of the welfare relief they sought.²³ And Rudolf Kučera and others have shown that wartime rationing depended heavily on residency documents, employment networks, and grassroots volunteer groups to procure all the subsidies, bread cards, and clothing donations necessary to combat inflation, hunger, cold, and millions of peoples’

¹⁹ Hahn, *Migration–Arbeit–Geschlecht*, 17.

²⁰ Doina Anca Cretu, “Child Rehabilitation in Refugee Camps in Austria-Hungary in World War I,” working paper, Max Weber postdoctoral fellowship, EUI: 5. Cretu estimates that there were approximately “600,000 refugees from the Eastern Front, about 90,000 refugees in Bosnia Herzegovina, and 200,000 refugees from the Southern front,” though she underscores that tracking problems make it almost impossible to know the precise number. The actual number of refugees was probably far greater.

²¹ Rebekah Klein-Pejšová, “Beyond the ‘Infamous Concentration Camps of the Old Monarchy’: Jewish Refugee Policy from Wartime Austria-Hungary to Interwar Czechoslovakia,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 45 (2014): 150–66.

²² Tara Zahra, “‘Each nation only cares for its own’: Empire, Nation, and Child Welfare Activism in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1918,” *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006): 1378–1402.

²³ Claire Morelon, “State Legitimacy and Continuity between the Habsburg Empire and Czechoslovakia,” in *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, ed. Paul B. Miller and Claire Morelon (New York, 2019), 47–48.

sudden fall into wartime poverty.²⁴ Before the war, pertinency would have covered these basic needs. During the war, poverty, homelessness, hunger, and ill health affected the Habsburg world en masse and the pertinency system became ever less relevant for peoples' day-to-day survival.²⁵

But the bigger problem with pertinency as a model for successor-state citizenship was that few realized how much the new states could exploit it to limit access to guaranteed rights. Habsburg citizens often did not know that they were not pertinents where they lived and thus that they were at risk of being denied postwar citizenship. Many people were wholly unaware of their pertinency status because they had never had cause to use a system that was set up mostly for (and against) the poor. Why bother finding out if you had it or collecting the paperwork required to assert its privileges if you did not need it?²⁶ Wartime aid experiences just compounded the existing lack of pertinency awareness.

This widespread ignorance regarding pertinency status was also a consequence of legal complexity. No single law defined how to change pertinency when one changed residency. In nineteenth-century Austria, changing one's pertinency was nearly impossible unless you were affluent or practiced a desirable profession. This meant that in Austrian employment hubs more than 60 percent of residents were nonpertinents.²⁷ Thanks largely to pressure from workers' movements, at the turn of the twentieth century access to pertinency where one actually lived became easier in Austria, requiring ten years' residency and proof of good moral-political behavior.²⁸ But it was still not automatic; it required a willingness to deal with

²⁴ Rudolf Kučera, *Rationed Life: Science, Everyday Life, and Working-Class Politics in the Bohemian Lands, 1914–1918* (New York, 2019).

²⁵ A case in point: already in 1914 Habsburg administrative elites argued in favor of creating refugee camps to combat the “flood flowing into the hinterland [that] created a new social and ethnic problem, the solution of which depended much more than just the individual fate of the individual refugees.” Cited in Doina Anca Cretu, “Securitized Protection: Health Work in Wartime Austria-Hungary and the Making of Refugee Camps,” in *Out of Line, Out of Place: A Global and Local History of World War I Internments*, ed. Rotem Kowner and Iris Rachamimov (Ithaca, NY, forthcoming 2022).

²⁶ This was especially true in Hungary: since pertinency was automatic, no one would collect pertinency documents unless they needed them. Gábor Egry, “De l’ethnisation de la nationalité à l’indigénat transnational: Migration, citoyenneté, paix de Trianon,” *Revue d’Allemagne et des Pays de langue allemande* 52, no. 2 (2020): 341–63.

²⁷ For more on what this overwhelming number of “nonpertinent” workers meant for urban life in employment hubs, see Sylvia Hahn, “Migration, Job Opportunities, and Households of Metalworkers in 19th-Century Austria,” *History of the Family* 8 (2003): 85–102.

²⁸ Before the pertinency laws were eased in 1901, it is estimated that over two-thirds of Austrian citizens did not hold pertinency where they lived. After the changes, there were a few waves of automatic “localizations” that gave long-term resident nonpertinents automatic, retroactive pertinency. For example, over 100,000 long-term residents in Vienna received pertinency automatically by 1902 from “adverse possession” (retroactive) measures. Steidl, *On Many Routes*, 37.

bureaucracy and the ability to pay processing fees. In Hungary, on the other hand, by the 1870s the government had rendered pertinency almost automatic. After two or four years of permanent residency and payment of local taxes (depending on the amount of taxes paid or profession), a Hungarian citizen living in a Hungarian town was automatically considered pertinent to that town. In autonomous, Hungarian-controlled Croatia-Slavonia, however, the rules were completely different. It did not matter how long you lived anywhere; Croatian pertinency was available only upon petition and the requirements were such that few acquired it unless local elites wanted them to have it.²⁹ Because newly annexed Bosnia was jointly administered by Austria and Hungary after 1908, two different pertinency regimes intersected in one space, creating an even more complicated legal patchwork.³⁰ Finally, in the semiautonomous, Hungarian-controlled port city of Fiume, applicants had to pay a fee and prove economic independence, good moral-political behavior, and stable residency of two or five years, depending on income and profession.³¹

²⁹ Croatia-Slavonia's pertinency laws are fascinating and understudied. In practice they continued to utilize pre-1867 Austrian pertinency laws even though after 1867 Croatia-Slavonia was part of the Hungarian Kingdom. Many of these pertinency restrictions were used to secure Croatia's autonomy against possible Hungarian centralization efforts. One of the biggest obstacles to obtaining pertinency was the requirement that people moving to a Croatian town indicate before they moved if they intended to apply for pertinency eventually. For more on this, see Ivan Kosnica, "Hungarians and Citizenship in Croatia-Slavonia, 1868–1918," paper presented at the ATINER'S Conference Paper Series, no. LAW2014-1355, Athens, 2015; Ivan Kosnica, "Zapošljavanje u javnoj upravi u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji (1868.–1918.) s obzirom na državljanstvo i hrvatsko—slavonsku pripadnost," *Hrvatska i komparativna javna uprava: časopis za teoriju i praksu javne uprave* 18, no. 4 (2018); Ivan Kosnica, "Hrvatsko-slavonska pripadnost u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji u nagodbenom razdoblju," *Hrvatska i komparativna javna uprava: časopis za teoriju i praksu javne uprave* 14, no. 2 (2014); Dalibor Čepulo, "Building of the Modern Legal System in Croatia, 1848–1918, in the Centre-Periphery Perspective," in *Modernisierung durch Transfer im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Tomasz Giaro (Frankfurt, 2006). According to Kosnica, people holding pertinency in mainland Hungary and living in Croatia-Slavonia were particularly vulnerable to falling through the cracks of the contradictory pertinency regulations: "Many Hungarian settlers, especially poor ones, did not know about [the] special and different Croatian-Slavonian system. Another problem was that after longer periods of absence Hungarian municipalities refused to recognize these persons as their local citizens, and refused to issue them documents about local citizenship. As persons without documents about local citizenship, they [Hungarian settlers] had additional problems in [the] procedure of acquisition of local citizenship in Croatia-Slavonia." Kosnica, "Croatian Law on Regulation of Local Citizenship, 91.

³⁰ For more, see Benno Gammerl, *Subjects, Citizens, and Others: Administering Ethnic Heterogeneity in the British and Habsburg Empires, 1867–1918* (New York, 2018).

³¹ For a broader discussion of how Fiume autonomy utilized pertinency within the Hungarian Kingdom and thereafter, see Dominique Kirchner Reill, *The Fiume Crisis: Life in the Wake of the Habsburg Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2020), chap. 4.

During the Habsburg period, the loopholes of this complex set of arrangements left vulnerable only those who actually depended on pertinency for aid. In post-Habsburg lands, however, the loopholes were now gaping chasms that left millions without the ability to claim citizenship where they lived because they lacked pertinency documents. And so, in the first years after the war, the states in formation had a novel, if sinister, way to prevent unwanted individuals from obtaining citizenship: states could simply enforce pre-existing pertinency rules and deny new pertinency applications.³² Across post-Habsburg Europe, local administrators now could decide—based on whatever priorities they held dear—whether or not they wanted to make allowances when processing the onslaught of new pertinency applications.

Understandably, attention to how Habsburg pertinency affected postwar Europe has followed Hannah Arendt's arguments about the vulnerability of the stateless, especially refugees and Jews. Important work investigating how local administrative offices rejected the pertinency petitions of nonpertinent Jews in Austria, Romania, and Poland; nonpertinent German-speakers in Czechoslovakia, Italy, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes; nonpertinent Slovenian- and Croatian-speakers in Italy and Austria; nonpertinent Hungarian-speakers in Czechoslovakia, Austria, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes; and nonpertinent Roma everywhere demonstrates that exclusionary, racist, and violent minority politics were already in place well before Hitler took power.³³

In studying how post-Habsburg governments transformed imperial pertinency's ethnic inclusiveness regarding "state identification" into a tool of ethnic-national

³² A good summary of how pertinency acted as a postwar exclusionary measure throughout Habsburg Europe is Motta, *Less than Nations*. For a discussion of how Habsburg pertinency fared in Trieste and Istria once they were occupied by the Italian state, see Ester Capuzzo, "Dalla pertinenza austriaca alla cittadinanza italiana," *Atti dell'Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati* VIII, vol. 10, no. A, fasc. II (2010); Maura E. Hametz, "Uncertain States: Repatriation and Citizenship in the Northeastern Adriatic, 1918–1921," *Acta histriae* 21, no. 4 (2013): 791–808, and Hametz, "Statelessness in Italy: The Post–World War I Citizenship Commission in Trieste," *Contemporanea*, no. 1 (2019): 79–96.

³³ "The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes" was renamed and reorganized as "Yugoslavia" in 1929, though before 1929 nationalists pushing for the formation and strengthening of said state were identified as "Yugoslav" activists. For more on the almost universal exclusion of Jews and Roma in postwar successor states, see Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others*; Tara Zahra, "'Condemned to Rootlessness and Unable to Budge': Roma, Migration Panics, and Internment in the Habsburg Empire," *American Historical Review* 122, no. 3 (2017): 702–26. For a fascinating investigation of Roma communities' vulnerability to the exclusionary techniques involved in using pertinency as the basis for successor-state citizenship, see Vita Zalar, *(Dis)continuities in State Policies towards 'Gypsies': The Case of Austria-Hungary and Its Successor States, in Europe a Century after the End of the First World War (1918–2018)*, ed. Ioan Horga and Alina Sotica (Bucharest, 2018), 249–66, and her dissertation, "Conceptual History of Gypsiness: Habsburg and Post-Habsburg Perspectives" (Postgraduate School ZRC SAZU: Ljubljana, 2022).

exclusion, scholars such as Carole Fink, Aristide Zolberg, Ulrike von Hirschhausen, and Giovanni Motta have focused on the unwanted, the refugees and linguistic and confessional minorities victimized by successor states manipulating the postwar pertinency rules to support nationalist policies.³⁴ Though these “non-national, non-pertinents” received less attention from contemporary international organizations than did Russian, Armenian, Turkish, and Greek refugees after World War I, many were just as stateless.³⁵ The League of Nations offered no help because the nonpertinents’ lack of status was not technically caused by war or revolution.³⁶ They were victims of a bureaucratic loophole created by regime transfer. In fact, many nonpertinents continued to live where they always had. They were at home—they just lacked any rights or protection. Most histories of newly stateless nonpertinent non-nationals have focused on Jewish residents of postwar Austria, a story whose significance for what was to come is great indeed.³⁷

This focus on those nonpertinents who fell victim to post-1918 nationalist campaigns is understandable, but it misses key issues that reveal why citizenship

³⁴ Many excellent studies have considered how pertinency transformed from a category of national “inclusion” to one of “exclusion.” See, for example, Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others*; Aristide R. Zolberg, “The Formation of New States as a Refugee-Generating Process,” *Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science* 467 (May 1983): 24–38; Nick Baron and Peter Gatrell, *Homelands: War Populations and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia, 1918–1924* (London, 2004); Ulrike von Hirschhausen, “Von imperialer Inklusion zur nationalen Exklusion: Staatsbürgerschaft in Österreich-Ungarn 1867–1923,” *WZB Discussion Papers*, no. SP IV 2007-403 (2007); Motta, *Less than Nations*; Wadauer, “Establishing Distinctions; Daniela Luigia Caglioti, “Subjects, Citizens, and Aliens in a Time of Upheaval: Naturalizing and Denaturalizing in Europe during the First World War,” *Journal of Modern History* 89, no. 3 (2017).

³⁵ Hannah Arendt makes explicit reference to a postimperial statelessness that included the nonpertinent in her first notes on conceptualizing statelessness. See Hannah Arendt, “Statelessness,” *HannahArendt.net: Journal for Political Thinking* 1, no. 5 (2009), <http://www.hannaharendt.net/index.php/han/article/view/155/276>.

³⁶ For a fascinating look at why pertinency did not become a category for League of Nations intervention, see Mira Siegelberg, *Statelessness: A Modern History* (Cambridge, MA, 2020).

³⁷ There has been a lot of excellent work tracing how postwar Austrian nationalism and antisemitism manipulated pertinency restrictions to exclude “newly arrived” Jews from citizenship, especially in Vienna and especially for (but not only for) wartime refugees from Galicia. See Beatrix Hoffmann-Holter, “*Abreisendmachung*”: *Jüdische Kriegsflüchtlinge in Wien 1914 bis 1923* (Vienna, 1995). Michael John and Albert Lichtblau, *Schmelztiegel Wien- einst und jetzt: Zur Gesceidlhichte und Gegenwart von Zuwanderung und Minderheiten* (Vienna, 1993); Oliver Rathkolb and Gemot Heiss, eds., *Asylland wider Willen: Flüchtlinge in Österreich im europäischen Kontext seit 1914* (Vienna, 1995). For an in-depth analysis of how pertinency protocols were manipulated for antisemitic purposes in postwar Austria, see Eva Dickerman, “Before the Law Stands a Doorkeeper: Race, National Belonging, and the Quest for Minority Citizenship in Post-Imperial Austria, 1920–1924” (A.B. thesis, Harvard University, 2008).

in the immediate post-Habsburg period was so problematic. This article investigates the consequences of founding new citizenship regimes on a system wholly unlike the two most common bases for citizenship in Europe—*jus soli* (right of birthplace) or *jus sanguinis* (right of blood). How did welfare function when the vast empire that administered pertinency disappeared and employment hubs had fewer resources to deal with people in need? How did limiting citizenship to those with pertinency affect workers when as much as 60 percent of a municipality was not pertinent? And how would communities control who was in and out of their body politic if the expulsion system was short-circuited?

This article adds to the history of how postwar pertinency mechanisms stripped “national unwanted” of rights by examining what happened to local administration and to nonpertinent inhabitants (wanted and unwanted) when the empire-wide system ended. We analyze what happened when Habsburg pertinency had to function without imperial resources and with populations whose linguistic and ethnic diversity was the result of the very mobility pertinency had facilitated. In Fiume—the booming prewar hub that was briefly Habsburg Europe’s smallest successor state—all these elements came to the fore immediately.

HABSBURG FIUME: WHERE PREWAR PERTINENCY BUILT A HUB

As in so much of the world at the turn of the twentieth century, migration affected every aspect of life in the Habsburg Monarchy. While many migrants left Europe entirely, three times as many migrated internally, from countryside to town, from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing and service sectors.³⁸ This kind of employment movement happened everywhere in Europe. What makes the Habsburg story different, however, is that this inner migration meant an explosion in the number of people living without pertinency. Since these nonpertinents were migrating domestically, they maintained their rights of citizenship at the state level, but they and their offspring were bureaucratic outsiders in their new homes. The mobile Hungarians were an exception: if they stayed in Hungary and landed on their feet and paid their taxes, ideally within four years their pertinency designation

³⁸ Steidl, *On Many Routes*, 5. According to Heinz Faßmann, by 1914 circa 15–20 percent of Habsburg citizens had risked the Atlantic waves in search of a better life, but over 62 percent of people in Habsburg Austria and 32 percent in Habsburg Hungary remained in their lands of citizenship, though not where they were born. Heinz Faßmann, “Einwanderung, Auswanderung und Binnenwanderung in Österreich-Ungarn um 1910” (1991), 93, and Faßmann, “European Migration: Historical Overview and Statistical Problems,” in *Statistics and Reality: Concepts and Measurements of Migration in Europe*, ed. Heinz Faßmann, Ursula Reeger, and Wiebke Sievers (Amsterdam, 2009), 22. The best analysis of Habsburg transatlantic migration and how it influenced both European and American domestic politics is Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York, 2016).

would be updated to their new place of domicile, whether they requested it or not. For the rest of the empire, however, being a longtime local and being pertinent were not synonymous.

The towns with the most marked imbalance between nonpertinents and pertinents were not the largest Habsburg cities; they were the midsize towns, especially employment hubs situated along the empire's expanding railway lines.³⁹ In 1910, in the big Habsburg Austrian cities, the percentage of nonpertinent residents hovered around 50 percent, while in the same year, in employment hubs with populations under 50,000—like Innsbruck (today in Austria), Maribor (today in Slovenia), and Bolzano (today in Italy)—the percentage of nonpertinents was closer to 60 percent. Maribor had the empire's highest percentage at 72.5 percent, a figure reflecting how the empire's excellent railway network transported migrants in search of employment from Austrian and Hungarian countryside to the town.⁴⁰

The Hungarian-controlled industrial port-town Fiume replicated these figures for many of the same reasons. A third-tier port in the northeastern Adriatic for the first part of the nineteenth century, after 1867 Fiume was rebranded the Kingdom of Hungary's maritime "jewel," in the hopes that it would rival Austrian-controlled Trieste. Heavy state investment transformed Fiume into an industrial entrepôt connecting the Hungarian hinterland to the global trade that crowded the Mediterranean after the opening of the Suez Canal. Budapest investors and statesmen—aided by eager Fiume elites—expanded and modernized the city's port and built railway lines connecting it to European markets. Tariff incentives brought factories to Fiume's riverside; government contracts lured international firms to the city center. As James Callaway points out, "to Budapest, any trade that traveled through Fiume was good trade."⁴¹

By the 1890s, Fiume had changed almost beyond recognition. The 1893 *Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy in Words and Images* described the city's boomtown atmosphere: "Fiumians live off commerce, navigation, industry, and fishing. . . . Especially the great factories and colossal industrial plants, generously

³⁹ According to Hahn, in 1910 the percentage of nonpertinents in the largest Austrian towns were: in Vienna, over 44 percent; in Prague, 57 percent; in Trieste, over 46 percent. In 1900 Lviv, over 47 percent of the population did not have pertinency; the numbers for 1910 are not available. Sylvia Hahn, "Fremd in eigenen Land: Zuwanderung und Heimatrecht im 19. Jahrhundert," *Pro Civitate Austriae: Informationen zur Statgeschichtsforschung* 10 (2005).

⁴⁰ Exact 1910 figures of representative midsize Austrian employment hubs include Wiener Neustadt, 78.2 percent in 1900 and 63.2 percent in 1910; Innsbruck, 75.8 percent in 1900 and 64.6 percent in 1910; Klagenfurt, 76.5 percent in 1900 and 67.8 percent in 1910; Bolzano, 82.8 percent in 1900 and 69.9 percent in 1910. Hahn, "Fremd in eigenen Land."

⁴¹ Tyler James Callaway, "Hungary at the Helm: Austria-Hungary's Global Integration during the Age of Empire" (PhD diss., New York University, 2019).

supported by the State, contribute to the prosperity of the lower classes."⁴² These "lower classes" were mostly "pulled into" Fiume by state-subsidized building and manufacturing.⁴³ In 1890, the census reported 29,494 individuals living in Fiume. By 1910, the city was 68 percent more populous, with 49,806 residents.⁴⁴ The new arrivals came from all over the Habsburg Empire and beyond, with Fiume's body politic replicating the multinational qualities we expect from Habsburg Europe. In 1910, 49 percent of Fiume city dwellers declared their mother-tongue Italian, 26 percent Croatian, 13 percent Hungarian, 5 percent Slovenian, 5 percent German, and 2 percent an amalgamation of other tongues. Fiume was not just filled with many mother-tongues; it was also populated by polyglots, with most locals reporting they felt comfortable speaking multiple languages.⁴⁵ Confessionally, there was a distinct majority, with 92 percent baptized Roman Catholics. However, Fiume's Sephardic, Ashkenazi, Christian Orthodox, and Protestant communities flourished alongside their Catholic neighbors, neither hidden nor marginalized.⁴⁶ Overall, Fiume was a typical bustling medium-size multilingual Habsburg boomtown.

The last census before World War I showed that of about 50,000 Fiume residents, around 34 percent were pertinents and the other 66 percent held conditional status.⁴⁷ While the ratio of Fiume's pertinents to nonpertinents was unexceptional, two things set it apart. First, Fiume was a maritime port on the border between Habsburg Austria and Habsburg Hungary, giving it a particularly wide array of citizenship and pertinency regimes. Much of Fiume's growth was fed by the Austrian countryside around Trieste and in Istria, Dalmatia, the Kvarner islands, Carniola, Carinthia, and Styria; the Hungarian-Croatian countryside

⁴² Erzherzog Rudolf, ed., *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild: Hungary (3)* (Vienna, 1893), 12:578–79.

⁴³ Rudolf, *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild*, 569.

⁴⁴ *Guida di Fiume* (Fiume, 1915), 2.

⁴⁵ According to the 1910 Habsburg censuses, of the 26 percent who declared Croatian as their mother tongue, only one-third were monolingual, with 54 percent of the rest indicating that they knew Italian, 13.4 percent German, and 7.6 percent Hungarian. Less than one-quarter of those whose mother tongue was German claimed they were monolingual: 48 percent knew Italian, 32.8 percent Croatian, and 30.5 percent Hungarian. Among those whose mother tongue was Hungarian, 39 percent were monolingual, with 41.5 percent knowing German, 33 percent Italian, and 23 percent Serbian and Croatian. Since individuals whose mother tongues were Italian or Slovene were not widespread in the Hungarian Kingdom, they were put in the composite category of "other." In this category, 45 percent were monolingual, 42.5 percent said they knew Croatian and Serbian, 17.7 percent knew German, and 6.2 percent knew Italian (meaning that 54.7 percent of native Slovene speakers in this category knew Italian). Ivan Jeličić, "Nell'ombra dell'autonomismo: Il movimento socialista a Fiume, 1901–1921" (PhD diss., Università degli studi di Trieste, 2016), 50.

⁴⁶ For Fiume census data, see Ilona Fried, *Fiume città della memoria 1868–1945*, Del Bianco editore (Udine, 2005), 73–75.

⁴⁷ Reill, *The Fiume Crisis*, 148–49.

surrounding Sušak, Bakar, Senj, Gorski Kotar, and Lika; and the Italian regions of Friuli and Veneto. Not only was 66 percent of the city's population nonpertinent, over 70 percent of these nonpertinents were not Hungarian citizens.⁴⁸ Almost all came from nearby Austrian-held lands, which meant they would have to obtain Hungarian citizenship before they could apply for pertinency. Even Hungarian citizens had a difficult road to pertinency because Fiume's procedures differed from those in mainland Hungary. Few bothered to apply, either because they did not anticipate that pertinency would be relevant or because they incorrectly assumed that it was transferred automatically, as in Hungary.

The second exceptional aspect of Fiume pertinency was how much autonomy the city had over it. Fiume was the only city in the empire that set its own pertinency rules. This rule-making exception was a perk of its strange position as *corpus separatum* within Habsburg Hungary's Crown of Saint Stephen.⁴⁹ As Ljubinka Toševa Karpowicz insightfully puts it, *corpus separatum* Fiume wielded its semiautonomy in hopes of consolidating itself as a "closed commercial state."⁵⁰ The "closed commercial state" philosophy was not about keeping people from pertinency, but choosing which people to give it to. Fiume pertinency requirements were not much stricter than other Habsburg lands. It required just one more year of stable residency than the rest of Hungary, and its residents could apply for pertinency five years sooner than those of Austria and Croatia-Slavonia.⁵¹ What

⁴⁸ Fiume, according to Steidl, was "the city in the empire with the highest number of foreign nationals. . . . Most of these individuals originated from Imperial Austria, but the numbers of people from other European countries were also exceptional." Steidl, *On Many Routes*, 95.

⁴⁹ Ágnes Ordasi, "Társadalom és állam viszonya Fiumében a Dualizmus korában: A magyar állami hatalomgyakorlás lehetőségei, eszközei és korlátai Fiumébe" (PhD diss., Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem, 2022); William Klinger, "Dall' autonomismo alla costituzione dello Stato, Fiume 1848–1918," in *Forme del politico: Studi di storia per Raffaele Romanelli*, ed. Emmanuel Betta, Daniela Luigia Caglioti, and Elena Papadia (Rome, 2012); Ljubinka Karpowicz, "Riječki corpus separatum 1868–1924" (PhD diss., Univerza Edvarda Kardelja v Ljubljani, 1986); Raoul Pupo, *Fiume città di passione* (Rome, 2018).

⁵⁰ Ljubinka Toševa Karpowicz applies the definition from the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte's *The Closed Commercial State*, Karpowicz, "Riječki corpus separatum 1868–1924," 68.

⁵¹ Until 1908, pertinency requirements were less strict. To apply for Fiume pertinency an applicant had to (1) prove legal and financial independence, (2) have no criminal record, and (3) live at least one year uninterrupted within the city while simultaneously either (a) proving adequate means, (b) owning property within Fiume city limits, (c) owning long-distance ships, or (d) conducting one of these professions: independent merchant, independent commercial agent, long-distance ship captain, long-distance ship lieutenant, university graduate, lawyer, notary, engineer, architect, teacher, surgeon, pharmacist, or any other profession considered valuable by city authorities. In 1910, requirements were toughened: applicants now had to prove they had had a stable domicile in Fiume for at least five years before applying, or for two years if they had considerable economic means or practiced a

opened the doors of Fiume pertinency was capital—whether social, technical, or, economic. After just two years of uninterrupted residency, wealthy applicants with assets in the city could be fast-tracked for pertinency. Running a successful commercial enterprise, owning long-distance ships, or having a profession requiring significant education (doctor, lawyer, pharmacist, engineer) made Fiume pertinency easily obtainable. Religious and national affiliations were not prerequisites—applicants were not even asked about them. What mattered was money, commercial networks, and administrators’ assessment of “good moral-political” behavior.

That Fiume’s pertinency regime favored the wealthy did not mean unwealthy nonpertinents faced obstacles. Just like other parts of commercially oriented Habsburg Europe, Fiume needed workers and encouraged them to make a life in its hub.⁵² In fact, pertinency probably neutralized some of the xenophobia that extreme work migration patterns often produce. Nonpertinents were legal and participated in public life.⁵³ Meanwhile, insiders (especially wealthy ones) were assured that nonpertinents had no voice in the political inner workings of the city and did not threaten the city’s fiscal soundness. To obtain permission to reside and work legally, nonpertinents just had to go to the police station and register proof of a permanent address. Both pertinents and nonpertinents paid taxes in Fiume. Children of nonpertinents attended the city’s schools free of charge. Pertinency or its lack did not affect salaries, pensions, subsidies, ration cards, or wartime protections.⁵⁴ In short, *corpus separatum* Fiume used pertinency to promote its liberal, capitalist, merchant-state agenda: immigrants were included, while the political and financial risks of that inclusion were contained.

POSTWAR FIUME: WHERE PERTINENCY HELPED TURN MULTINATIONAL NATIONAL

Throughout the autumn of 1918, as the Habsburg Monarchy’s bureaucracy and army gradually collapsed, Fiumians responded much as people elsewhere in the empire did. Locals formed provisional governmental councils and leaders called

listed profession. *Statuto della libera città di Fiume e del suo distretto e regolamenti interni per la rappresentanza e delegazione municipali di Fiume* (Fiume, 1908), 5–9.

⁵² For a fascinating glimpse at the vibrant world of workers’ cultures in Fiume and their strong connections with the rest of Central Europe, see Ivan Jeličić, “The Typographers’ Community of Fiume: Combining a Spirit of Collegiality, Class Identity, Local Patriotism, Socialism, and Nationalism(s),” *Austrian History Yearbook* 49 (April 2018): 73–86.

⁵³ Laws regarding pertinency requirements for local voting and state service varied throughout the Empire. In Fiume, certain levels of state service did not require or provide access to pertinency. Local voting did require it.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of Hungarian social welfare policies, see Susan Zimmermann, *Divide, Provide, and Rule: An Integrative History of Poverty Policy, Social Reform, and Social Policy in Hungary under the Habsburg Monarchy* (Budapest, 2011).

for the formation of new states based on either national or socialist ideologies.⁵⁵ Internationally, Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes fought over Fiume, each defining it as a “natural” part of their expanding national territories. In hopes of neutralizing this situation until diplomats in Paris decided who would be awarded Fiume, Inter-Allied (Italian, French, British, and American) troops were sent to Fiume.⁵⁶ The troops immediately replaced the Habsburg-Hungarian administration with a locally formed Italian National Council—not the Slovene-Croat-Serb one that had previously claimed the right to rule.⁵⁷ The city remained under Inter-Allied supervision for almost a year, until, in September 1919, the Italian nationalist poet-soldier Gabriele D’Annunzio led a paramilitary band of Italian veterans and nationalists to Fiume to claim it for Italy. D’Annunzio and his followers supplanted the Inter-Allied troops, but the Italian National Council still administered day-to-day life.⁵⁸ By January 1921, D’Annunzio had been defeated and the

⁵⁵ For a stimulating article about how and why “National Councils” popped up simultaneously throughout Europe, see William Klinger, “Le origini dei Consigli nazionali: Una prospettiva euroasiatica,” *Atti: Centro di Ricerche Storiche—Rovigno* 40 (2010). For information on the Workers Council that initially existed in Fiume in the early days of Habsburg dissolution, see Ivan Jeličić, “Uz stogodišnjicu riječkog Radničkog vijeća: Klasna alternativa nacionalnim državama na sutonu Monarhije,” *Časopis za povijest Zapadne Hrvatske* 12 (2017): 63–85, and Jeličić, “Repubblica con chi? Il movimento socialista fiumano e il giallo Sisa nel contesto post-asburgico fiumano,” *Qualestoria*, no. 2 (December 2020): 73–93.

⁵⁶ For background on the diplomatic battles over Fiume, see Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World*, 1st ed. (New York, 2002); Marina Cattaruzza, *Italy and Its Eastern Border, 1866–2016* (New York, 2017); Paolo Alatri, *Nitti, D’Annunzio e la questione adriatica*, 1st ed. (Milano, 1976); Pupo, *Fiume città di passione*.

⁵⁷ In effect, the Italian National Council supplanted the Hungarian governorship over Fiume, leaving the city’s municipal administration intact. For more information on how this worked, see Karpowicz, “Riječki corpus separatum 1868–1924”; William Klinger, “Negotiating the Nation. Fiume: From Autonomism to State Making (1848–1924)” (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2007). For more information on the destiny of Fiume’s former Hungarian officials, see Ágnes Ordasi, “‘Scale e Serpenti’? Le condizioni dei rappresentanti del potere dello Stato ungherese dopo la Grande Guerra,” *Qualestoria* 48, no. 2 (December 2020): 93–112, and Ordasi, *Egan Lajos naplója—Impériumváltások Fiumében a kormányzóhelyettes szemével (1918–1920)* (Budapest, 2019).

⁵⁸ For a gendered account of pro-Italian and pro-Yugoslav activism, see Francesca Rolandi, “A Never Requested Triumph? Reframing Gender Boundaries in Fiume and Sušak after 1918,” *Italia contemporanea* (Yearbook 2020): 11–36; Francesca Rolandi, “Women’s Organizing in a Contested Borderland: The Case of Pro-Yugoslav Associations in Sušak and Fiume in the Interwar Period,” in Jelena Milinković and Žarka Svirčev, *Ženski pokret (1920–1938): Zbornik radova* (Beograd, 2021), 51–66. There are countless books on D’Annunzio’s time in Fiume. For the most recent and/or most cited, see Lucy Hughes-Hallett, *The Pike: Gabriele D’Annunzio, Poet, Seducer, and Preacher of War* (London, 2013); Marco Mondini, *Fiume 1919: Una guerra civile italiana* (Rome, 2019); Giordano Bruno Guerri, *D’Annunzio* (Milan, 2008); Tea Perinčić, *Rijeka ili smrt! (D’annunzijeva okupacija Rijeke 1919–1921.)* (Rijeka, 2020); Pupo, *Fiume città di passione*; Renzo De

“Fiume Crisis” was resolved by an Italo-Serb-Croat-Slovene agreement that upgraded Fiume’s *corpus separatum* status to full independence.⁵⁹ More an unhappy compromise than a solution, Fiume became a Mediterranean Danzig/Gdańsk, an independent city-state set between antagonistic nation-states.

The Italian National Council that administered Fiume from 1918 to 1920 had dedicated tremendous energy to avoiding this fate: its guiding mission was to enable Fiume’s annexation to Italy. The best way to achieve this, the Council thought, was to dispel any impression that the city was a typical multinational Habsburg Babylon. The game was on to rebrand Fiume as the “most Italian of towns,” one whose rights to self-determination demanded that Great Power diplomats give the city to Italy. Censuses were distorted; nationalist propaganda flooded newspapers and telegraph wires; language laws were changed; Italian flags waved; and one parade after another celebrated how Italian the city was and always would be. As was the case in most of post-Habsburg Europe, Fiume’s Italian nationalists also looked to their pertinency regime to help Italianize their body politic.

When the Dual Monarchy dissolved in October 1918, Fiume’s Italian National Council had not proclaimed all legal residents “citizens” of Fiume. Just as was the case almost everywhere, the provisional government continued using the category of “pertinency,” but now pertinency supplanted Habsburg Hungarian citizenship instead of undergirding it. In April 1919, Fiume’s government “decreed the obligation of Fiume pertinency in place of Hungarian citizenship.”⁶⁰ Pertinency now determined who could obtain state services, subsidies, pensions, work, and equal treatment before the law. Anyone without it had to try to survive at the discretion of the Fiume municipality that now functioned as a state.

Replacing citizenship with pertinency was not straightforward. For one thing, as we have seen, only 34 percent of Fiume’s inhabitants held pertinency. And since prior pertinency rules had not prioritized national affiliation, many of the city’s pertinents did not identify as Italian, which was problematic for the Italian National Council’s aims. This was especially true of Fiume’s state employees, many of whom were from the Kingdom of Hungary. To resolve these problems, the Italian National Council did what almost all the post-Habsburg National Councils did: they recast pertinency by expanding it while simultaneously nationalizing it, or in this case Italianizing it.

Felice, *D’Annunzio politico: 1918–1938* (Rome, 1978); Michael Arthur Ledeen, *The First Duce: D’Annunzio at Fiume* (Baltimore, 1977); Claudia Salaris, *Alla festa della rivoluzione: Artisti e libertari con D’Annunzio a Fiume* (Bologna, 2002).

⁵⁹ For more on the international, geopolitical, and local nationalizing conflicts over the future of postwar Fiume and its relationship to protofascism, see Reill, *The Fiume Crisis*, chaps. 1 and 5.

⁶⁰ Consiglio nazionale italiano di Fiume, April 2, 1919, 3 Privremene vlade u Rijeci, 1 Bollettino Ufficiale del Consiglio nazionale, k. 1, HR-DARI.

One way to eradicate traces of Fiume's Habsburg past was to revoke pertinency from those who had gained it by serving the pre-1918 government, a tactic used everywhere in post-Habsburg Europe. In August 1919, Fiume officials introduced the concept of "transitory pertinency," which meant that "all employees and personnel of the former Hungarian Government whose service was not reconfirmed by the [Italian] National Council" no longer had Fiume pertinency.⁶¹ Judges, administrators, bureaucrats, railway employees, port staff, and others hired by the prior government would lose pertinency (and their jobs) unless they convinced the Italian National Council to rehire them. For these former state employees and other Fiume residents, the new reality was that pertinency based on employment was transitory, while pertinency based on "being Fiumian" was forever.

At the same time, Fiume's government was opening up pertinency to many locals who supported the Italian National Council's political agenda. Fiume administrators instituted essentially the same pertinency regime as before, but with fewer obstacles and some new priorities. The new rules retained the requirements for five years' stable residency and a good moral-political record but revoked the need for Hungarian citizenship and many of the financial requirements, thus making many more nonpertinents eligible, including many more Italian speakers, particularly former Austrian citizens from Trieste, Istria, and Dalmatia. Everyone still needed to apply (and provide the necessary paperwork), though application fees were waived for low-income candidates. But as was true almost everywhere in post-Habsburg Europe, the provisional government still had final say over who was in and who out. Nothing was automatic; everything was discretionary.

These changes transformed the content and tone of post-1918 pertinency requests. Before 1918, petitioners made no mention of their personal or national affiliations. After 1918, all of them did. Everyone knew pertinency was for locals and preferably Italian nationals, and petitioners now worked hard to prove they belonged to either or both categories.

Before 1918, Habsburg bureaucratic processes did not question or consider emotional reasons for pertinency. Afterward, almost every petition included a sentence or two underscoring that Fiume was the applicant's home. Druggist Federico Pfeffinger emphasized that though born in Trieste, he had lived in Fiume for over thirty years—since his "tender infancy"—and that Fiume was his "true and only patria, because its ways and customs corresponded to my own."⁶² Pfeffinger added that he assumed he held pertinency in Mödling (in today's Lower Austria), but "had never bothered to check."⁶³ Sea captain Stefano Peterdi did not just point out

⁶¹ Sezione Anagrafi, December 5, 1919, cass. 36, prot. 7341, Vittoriale-Archivio Fiumano (hereafter cited as VAF).

⁶² Federico Pfeffinger, September 10, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, L13/1919: Pfeffinger, Federico, HR-DARI.

⁶³ Federico Pfeffinger, September 10, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, L13/1919: Pfeffinger, Federico, HR-DARI.

that he had lived in Fiume for forty years and “formed family and raised children” there; he also emphasized that with Habsburg Hungary dissolved he would be “without a patria and without a real domicile” unless Fiume accepted him.⁶⁴ Widowed postal worker Anna Turk expressed annoyance when applying for pertinency for herself, her schoolteacher daughter, and her underage son, as she and her deceased husband had been born and lived their entire lives in Fiume, and she had “never doubted that it [her pertinency] was in order.”⁶⁵ These applications and hundreds more like them contained a message that would have fallen on deaf ears before 1918: pertinency to Fiume should be awarded because it was where applicants felt at home. Once a document to secure poor relief, pertinency was now about culture, feeling, and having nowhere else to go.

Another new feature of post-1918 pertinency petitions was national loyalty. Under the Habsburgs, national affiliations were not considered in pertinency applications.⁶⁶ After 1918, they were. When applicants mentioned anything about their national identification, they stressed that they spoke Italian, felt Italian, or wanted to be part of Italy. Trieste-born Ugo Pick—who worked at Fiume’s Rations Office and held pertinency in Náchod (in today’s Czech Republic, formerly Austrian Bohemia)—emphasized that he had “always nurtured sincere Italian sentiments.”⁶⁷ Painter Matteo Selko—registered pertinent in Šmihel pod Nanosom (in today’s Slovenia; formerly Austrian Carniola)—did not just point out that he was Fiumian born, educated, and raised and had fought in Fiume’s military regiment: he also mentioned his love “for the Italian language.”⁶⁸ Widow and store owner Adele Lichter née Rossi emphasized that she lost Fiumian pertinency when she married her deceased husband and that she wanted “to belong again to the cultivated and gentle Italian city that saw me born.”⁶⁹ After waiting six months for his pertinency application to be approved, Fiume-born clerk Stefano Bursich—pertinent in Pula (in today’s Croatia; formerly Austrian Istria)—wrote the local

⁶⁴ Stefano Peterdi, December 4, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, L13/1919: Peterdi, Stefano, HR-DARI.

⁶⁵ Anna Turk, December 12, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, L13/1919: Turk, Anna, HR-DARI.

⁶⁶ As Ulrike von Hirschhausen correctly shows, before World War I some townships where nationalists were particularly active within the Austrian half of the empire did try to use pertinency rules to exclude national unwantededs (especially Jews), but these attempts proved unsuccessful. For more on this, see Ulrike von Hirschhausen, “From Imperial Inclusion to National Exclusion: Citizenship in the Habsburg Monarchy and in Austria, 1867–1923,” *European Review of History* 16, no. 4 (2009): 551–73, esp. 557–59.

⁶⁷ Ugo Pick, June 28, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, L13/1919: Pick, Ugo, HR-DARI.

⁶⁸ Matteo Selko, October 2, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, L13/1919: Selko, Matteo, HR-DARI.

⁶⁹ Adele Rossi, April 5, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, L13/1919: Rossi, Adele, HR-DARI.

government to underscore that he “had never professed ideas against his Patria [*sic*], Italy” and he “promised a priori that I would never do it.”⁷⁰ As Bursich hoped, within a few weeks the Italian National Council informed him his pertinency documents had been approved.

Bursich knew what everyone in Fiume knew: the Italian National Council was committed to annexation to Italy and was using the pertinency regime to consolidate its power and make Fiume sound, feel, and look more Italian. No pertinency application listed any language other than Italian, though many who applied and were granted pertinency spoke other tongues and thought of themselves as members of other national groups. Police were regularly consulted on pertinency applications to ensure that those actively working against annexation to Italy were blocked. Members of the Italian National Council often noted their endorsement or veto on applications, but official rejections rarely explained the outcome. Much more common was what happened to Fiume native Amato Puhar—who held pertinency in Kastav (in today’s Croatia; formerly Austrian Istria): his application was ignored “while hundreds and hundreds of other such applications were approved.”⁷¹ The government wanted people who shared its nationalist agenda. Everyone else could wait, leave, or be denied.

So far, Fiume’s pertinency regime seems like what we already know: before successor states were formalized, pertinency was the first step in nationalizing belonging. But the narrative too often stops here, functioning as the preamble to a linear story of successor states trying to denaturalize national minorities before being forced to accept minority rights clauses. This is an important element of the post-1918 pertinency story, but it tells us little about how pertinency affected people’s day-to-day lives. In Fiume alone, tens of thousands of people—rich, poor, and everything in between—were newly vulnerable. A deep dive into how the postimperial pertinency regime affected welfare, work, and expulsion offers a glimpse of how all kinds of people, not just those considered national minorities, were affected.

WELFARE: HOW PERTINENCY MADE LOCALS MORE VULNERABLE THAN EVER

In the immediate postwar years, paralyzed consumer markets, spiraling inflation, currency crises, and a maritime blockade damaged the Fiume economy.⁷² As in

⁷⁰ Stefano Bursich, January 29, 1920, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, L13/1919: Bursich, Stefano, HR-DARI.

⁷¹ Amato Puhar, March 31, 1920, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, L13/1919: Puhar, Amato, HR-DARI.

⁷² For more information on economic downturns in Fiume and the general region, see Giuseppe Parlato, *Mezzo secolo di Fiume: Economia e società a Fiume nella prima*

the rest of Europe, the state's ability to help people obtain enough food and money to tread water until peace settled in and jobs (hopefully) returned was crucial.⁷³ In Great Britain, France, and Italy, these demands mobilized ever greater numbers of people into political activism; in the lands of the former Habsburg Monarchy, a prior question had to be addressed: was there a state at all?⁷⁴ And if so, where?

Initially, the answer in Fiume was clear: the "wheres" of the state were where they had always been. Ration markets continued as they had since 1914. The hospital kept accepting people regardless of their status. People accepted that Habsburg aid-distribution centers would act as their new state's offices. Fiume—formerly just the local face of Habsburg-welfare—became the welfare state *in toto* for its residents.

An excellent example of how this continuity in welfare distribution played out and deteriorated can be seen in terms of food provisioning. In November 1918, Fiume city officials replaced Hungarian services immediately, with little pause and few changes. In December 1918, new ration cards and subsidy provisions were made available to all who could prove legal residency, regardless of pertinency or ethnic affiliation. But just as quickly, the limitations of the municipal budget became apparent, and to cover costs Fiume administrators tried desperately to get loans, besieging the Red Cross with aid requests.⁷⁵ As the currency crisis worsened and food costs doubled, these measures were not enough. Fiume state coffers were not big enough to replace those of its Hungarian-controlled precursor.⁷⁶ In November 1919, Fiume's Rations Department informed city officials that "only one month of food reserves of primary necessity remain." If nothing was done, "disastrous consequences would result in the suspension of

metà del Novecento (Siena, 2009); Stefano Petrunaro, "Una cruciale periferia: Fiume," in *Porti di frontiera: Industria e commercio a Trieste, Fiume e Pola tra le guerre mondiali*, ed. Laura Cerasi, Rolf Petri, and Stefano Petrunaro (Rome, 2008).

⁷³ For more on the spike in the importance of welfare after World War I, see Susan Pedersen, "Gender, Welfare, and Citizenship in Britain during the Great War," *American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (1990); Young-Sun Hong, *Welfare, Modernity, and the Weimar state, 1919–1933* (Princeton, NJ, 1998); Maria Sophia Quine, *Italy's Social Revolution: Charity and Welfare from Liberalism to Fascism* (Basingstoke, 2004).

⁷⁴ For more on how postwar need mobilized Western European citizenries, see Chris Wrigley, *Challenges of Labour: Central and Western Europe, 1917–1920* (London, 1993); Helen McCarthy, "Party, Voluntary Associations, and Democratic Politics in Interwar Britain," *Historical Journal* 50, no. 4 (2007); Fabio Fabbri, *Le origini della guerra civile: L'Italia dalla Grande guerra al fascismo (1918–1921)* (Torino, 2009); Tyler Stovall, *Paris and the Spirit of 1919: Consumer Struggles, Transnationalism, and Revolution* (New York, 2012).

⁷⁵ For more on Fiume's relationship with the Italian Red Cross, see Parlato, *Mezzo secolo di Fiume*.

⁷⁶ For information on the currency crisis, see Reill, *The Fiume Crisis*, chap. 2.

food distribution to the population.”⁷⁷ In February 1920, the Rations Department informed the government that “the public must be warned . . . further food supplies are uncertain.”⁷⁸ Within a few days, the police announced that all nonpertinents who had arrived after November 1918 “must leave the city by March 8, 1920,” depositing “their rations booklet, their March bread tickets, and their residency papers at the police station” before leaving.⁷⁹ In one fell swoop, baseline survival in Fiume—the ability to get food—changed. Welfare initiatives were now limited to those with pertinency (or who were likely to get it); other city inhabitants would have to fend for themselves.

Locals were not surprised by the 1920 order; they had expected it, which is why many of the 66 percent of Fiumians without pertinency had rushed to register for it when the Habsburg Monarchy fell. As it took up the mantle of its Habsburg predecessor, the city government had increasingly signaled its intent to give preference to Fiume pertinents in currency management, subsidies, pensions, insurance, and poor relief. Step by step, day by day, the government redefined the breadth and content of city services. Meanwhile, as we saw above, who counted as “pertinent” changed, with some removed from the list, many more added, and a great many left waiting to hear.

Together, these two moving parts—a changing welfare regime and a changing roll call of pertinents with a claim on it—created something like a “discretionary rights” system: since so many people eligible for pertinency had not yet received it, the government decided when to require pertinency documents for welfare aid and when not to. So, for example, when the two retired sailors Michele Pondrini and Carlo Scotti—both seventy-four years old and Fiume-born—applied for an “extraordinary subsidy,” the government immediately authorized a monthly subsidy for both, even without proof of pertinency.⁸⁰ In their applications, Pondrini and Scotti had proclaimed they were proud Italians of long standing, which probably helped their cause.

But nationalist loyalties were not a guarantee that Fiume officials would extend welfare to nonpertinents. Consider thirty-four-year-old unemployed Emanuele Craincevich. On paper, Craincevich seemed like someone who would receive an unemployment subsidy immediately while waiting for his pertinency application to be accepted. Born and raised in Fiume, he was an outspoken Italian nationalist and a member of the government’s Italian National Council. He was married, had a young son, and was anchored in Fiume’s civic life. Nonetheless,

⁷⁷ Magistrato Civico—Sezione di approvvigionamento, November 29, 1919, cass. 36, prot. 7248, VAF.

⁷⁸ Magistrato Civico—Sezione di approvvigionamento, November 29, 1919, cass. 36, prot. 7248, VAF.

⁷⁹ Vice-Questore, February 28, 1920, cass. 39, prot. 1203, VAF.

⁸⁰ Carlo Scotti, May 6, 1919, cass. 32, prot. 3062, VAF.

Craincevich's subsidy request was denied because he did not hold Fiume pertinency and he was told he would not receive a subsidy until his new pertinency application was approved.⁸¹ It took three more months before he got pertinency and unemployment subsidies. In his case, Fiume officials played by the books; in Pondrini's and Scotti's they did not. It was all up to local administrators' discretion.

Most likely, personal or political relations influenced these decisions. But the logic behind such decisions matters less than the fact that the fluctuating pertinency regime permitted these inconsistencies and made the government less accountable. People of good standing with the local authorities could find leniency. People unpopular with government officials—for their politics, ethnicity, class standing, or other reasons—could be made to follow procedures that could take months or years.

Fiume's discretionary welfare-pertinency practices undoubtedly made life in the postimperial state feel more vulnerable, perhaps making locals more willing to toe the line of anything government elites demanded. But it also made it almost impossible for welfare offices to regulate or limit services. In fact, one reason for the declaration that newly arrived nonpertinents should be expelled was that the Fiume postimperial state had lost control of its welfare distribution. Fiume police urged government officials to help them weed nonpertinents out of the city's welfare budget, stating that "many people are illegally receiving unemployment subsidies, [and therefore] we request your help in inducing the Unemployment Subsidies Office to transmit as soon as possible a list of everyone subsidized, indicating their pertinency, profession, and home address."⁸² The government tried to comply, but generating accurate data proved difficult.

The evolving pertinency list helps explain why the government had such a hard time providing up-to-date information. But another problem was that post-1918 Fiume lacked the resources of its Habsburg-Hungarian predecessor. Many staff had not been reinstated for nationalist reasons, and since money for salaries was scarce, not all vacancies were filled. The Unemployment Office shows the problems this situation caused. Officials there begged the Italian National Council to allow them to hire more qualified office staff, stating "it is neither tolerable nor admissible that a public fund, with a monthly transfer of 550,000 crowns, is manned by a 17-year-old teller and a young lady acting as 'Controller,' who is 18 years old!"⁸³ Five months later, things had not improved. An internal investigation (apparently triggered by local gossip) revealed that the office had been "infested for months and months now by a well-organized band

⁸¹ Emanuele Craincevich, August 25, 1919, cass. 34, prot. 5445, VAF.

⁸² Vice-Questore, February 27, 1920, cass. 39, prot. 1116, VAF.

⁸³ Director of Unemployment Subsidies Office, March 29, 1920, cass. 39, prot. 1713, VAF.

of delinquents, who have been cheating the State and public with impunity.”⁸⁴ The lack of oversight meant staff could pay subsidies to ghost applicants and keep the money for themselves. This corruption is further proof of how ill-equipped this provincial office was to take over imperial administration.

Fiume’s postwar hospital archive shows that difficulties in taking over the Habsburg welfare regime were not just about the number and quality of post-imperial office staff. Another problem was that the entire pertinency welfare system was based on an empire-wide accountability network between places of residence and places of pertinency. Where before 1918 anyone could use the city’s state-of-the-art hospital with minimal cost to the city since bills for nonpertinents could be sent to the towns where they held pertinency, after 1918 employment hubs like Fiume had to foot the bills for everyone. In 1919, the Fiume hospital wrote the Italian National Council to explain how it had tried to bill fourteen different places of pertinency for indigent patient care and not one of the bills had been paid.⁸⁵ A year later, hospital officials informed Fiume’s city government that Poland’s consul in Trieste had suggested “the possibility that at least part of the costs to this hospital for citizens of Poland might be covered.”⁸⁶ No evidence suggests that this happened. Croatian officials informed Fiume they could not reimburse their pertinents’ hospital costs given their state’s currency and diplomatic situation.⁸⁷ The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, after all, was another new state trying to figure out its structures and citizenship policies.⁸⁸ Meanwhile, Fiume’s hospital told the city government that it desperately needed a drastic increase in funding because it serviced “a region,” not just a city, and the pertinency system no longer covered extra-municipal costs.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Director of Unemployment Subsidies Office, July 19, 1920, cass. 41, prot. 3648, VAF.

⁸⁵ Director of the General Civic Hospital, August 14, 1919, cass. 34, prot. 5283, VAF. The cities that were contacted by the Fiume hospital in search of payment included Pazin, Zagreb, Budapest, Prague, Lviv, Brno, Chernivtsi, Vienna, Linz, Opava, Graz, Klagenfurt, Ljubljana, Zadar, Innsbruck, Bregenz, and Salzburg.

⁸⁶ Director of the General Civic Hospital, August 7, 1920, cass. 42, prot. 4321, VAF.

⁸⁷ Sanitary Department of Croatia-Slavonia, August 4, 1920, cass. 42, prot. 4070, VAF.

⁸⁸ For some fascinating new work on how the pressure of postimperial state making around welfare issues affected communities in the future Yugoslavia, see John Paul Newman, *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State Building, 1903–1945* (Cambridge, 2015); Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe*; special issue “Voluntary Associations in Yugoslavia (1918–1941)/Le fait associatif en Yougoslavie (1918–1941),” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* 26 (2019), issue 1, esp. Stefano Petrunaro, “Soup Kitchens and Yugoslav Poor Relief between the Two World Wars,” 141–62.

⁸⁹ Director of the General Civic Hospital, July 31, 1920, cass. 41, prot. 3810, VAF.

After 1918, there was no imperial network or coffers to protect local budgets from the costs of nonpertinent residents. If the relationship between pertinency and welfare encouraged locals to say what officials wanted to hear, it also left the city exposed to the responsibilities of a defunct empire, responsibilities it could not fulfil. In this situation, many government officials decided that the best way to avoid a total breakdown was to use pertinency designations to exclude everyone they could from welfare initiatives. A race to salvage the budget was on, and Europe's smallest successor state handled it as other states did: by trying to shrink the number of people its was responsible for.

**WORK: HOW PERTINENCY REFRAMED THE "RIGHT TO WORK"
IN A BOOMTOWN THAT LOST ITS BOOM**

Before 1918, pertinency had no significant role in limiting the right to work. In the private sector, jobs, business licenses, and investment opportunities were generally open to anyone with the legal right to be in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. After 1918, this changed, and newly "liberated" successor states used pertinency rules to promote economic nationalism, notably state intervention over labor and capital formation. But in a city whose economy was based on global import-export trade with a workforce from everywhere, how could national and local interests cohere?

In the economic crisis of the immediate postwar period, pertinency was used mostly to determine who kept jobs and who lost them. Internal and external communications made clear that pertinents had priority for job retention. City officials told factories to give preference to Fiume pertinents for "obvious reasons of social politics."⁹⁰ Hungarian railway workers and Croatian sailors were targeted for replacement by Italo-Fiumians.⁹¹ As these policies made more people in Fiume apply for pertinency, interested parties like the Fiume Club of Maritime Machinists encouraged city offices "not to favorably receive" new pertinency requests.⁹² When Fiume's police force was ordered to supply nationality information for its employees, the police captain reported that "employees in general refuse to divulge their nationality," though pertinency and birthplace information could be supplied immediately.⁹³ No one knew better than the police that pertinency could protect their jobs, while having the wrong nationality could endanger them.

⁹⁰ Consiglio nazionale italiano di Fiume, May 31, 1919, cass. 241–1919, prot. 3582, VAF.

⁹¹ Railwaymen caused much administrative worry in the immediate postwar period. See Giuseppe Korich, December 1, 1919, cass. 36, prot. 7279, VAF; Consiglio nazionale italiano di Fiume, March 16, 1920, 45; 3 Privremene vlade u Rijeci, 2 Bollettino ufficiale Consiglio nazionale e Reggenza italiana del Carnaro, k. 1, HR-DARI.

⁹² Club fra macchinisti marittimi–Fiume, April 1, 1920, cass. 39, prot. 1839, VAF.

⁹³ Servizi pubblici, October 25, 1920, cass. 49, prot. 637, VAF.

On the surface, this is precisely what we would expect of a nationalizing post-imperial state, where the multinational Habsburg cosmos was replaced by the tactics of nation building. But beneath the surface, the lived reality of the pertinency regime was much more discretionary, especially where profits were involved. In part this was because of the specific local structures pertinency rights implied; in part it was because of the way local interests and nationalist politics conflicted in a global-capitalist port city like Fiume.

Looking at which post-1918 entity judged a pertinency applicant's "moral-political good behavior" clarifies how economically motivated pertinency was. Before the war, local police provided information on an applicant's "moral and political" character for pertinency applications. During the war, Hungarian royal police took over that role. In the first months after the dissolution of the Monarchy and the resulting disappearance of the Hungarian state police, Fiume's Chamber of Commerce stepped in to assess applicants, deeming itself the only body that could "perfectly distinguish people, opportunities, and necessities."⁹⁴ Pertinency meant access to wages, business licenses, networks, and employment opportunities, and the business elite of Fiume's Chamber of Commerce made sure that the economic concerns around rights prevailed.

New laws limiting new licenses for employment and business enterprises only to pertinents brought immediate pushback from large segments of Fiume's population. Remember: only 34 percent of Fiumians held pertinency. When pressure on the Chamber of Commerce to provide license opportunities for nonpertinents proved futile, locals appealed to the Italian National Council to overturn decisions blocking them from work. Most of the successful appeals for business licenses included some variation of tavern-owner Giovanni Kucich's attestation: "The undersigned is Fiumian: his political-moral conduct is well known. What's more I have a large family to support."⁹⁵ Grocery-store owner Maria Pasqualis's appeal was more irate, indicating that she was "shocked and pained" to learn her business license petition had been denied, especially since she knew "other foreign shopkeepers, not to mention actual CROATS [*sic*], received this permission that has been denied to me, being of an old Fiumian family and purely Italian sentiment."⁹⁶ No political body in Fiume wanted to antagonize outspoken Italo-Fiumians, and both Kucich and Pasqualis were ultimately granted licenses, although neither held pertinency. But the petitions had to be made, because nonpertinents did not automatically have the right to work.

In making their appeals, locals who did not identify as Italian emphasized their long-standing connections to the city. Restaurant owner Giuseppe Borsich stressed

⁹⁴ Consiglio nazionale italiano di Fiume, March 16, 1920, 45, 3 Privremene vlade u Rijeci, 2 Bollettino ufficiale Consiglio nazionale e Reggenza italiana del Carnaro, k. 1, 45, HR-DARI.

⁹⁵ Giovanni Kucich, June 26, 1919, cass. 33 prot. 4051, VAF.

⁹⁶ Maria Pasqualis, August 9, 1919, cass. 34, prot. 5097, VAF.

his “Fiumianness” by reminding the powers-that-be that he was born in Fiume, “had gone to the Italian schools, [and] the only time I’ve ever left the city was for my military service.” Pertinent in Zagreb, Borsich emphasized the absurdity of his predicament by underscoring that “I’ve never been there, nor do I have any interest in going there because for me it is a foreign city and I consider only the city of Fiume my native city.”⁹⁷ Shoemaker Tomaso Blažic responded to the rescission of his business license by lamenting that the “authorities are prohibiting me from exercising my trade because I am of Croatian nationality. . . . I believe, however, that the law does not provide for such motivations to accord or refuse an industrial license.”⁹⁸ Matteo Pečanić’s appeal went further. After explaining his belief that he was denied pertinency “because I’m Croat,” he added: “While Austria-Hungary, so reactionary and tyrannical, always provided great freedoms for every merchant and industrialist of the Monarchy, who would have ever thought that the authorities that run the city of Fiume would exceed the sad impressions of Austria and Hungary?”⁹⁹ For Borsich, Blažic, Pečanić, and many others, Fiume’s state efforts to Italianize itself via pertinency laws seemed not only unjust, but unfathomable. How could these policies represent the interests of a diverse, capitalist-driven merchant town like Fiume?

The outrage locals felt at being fired or denied licenses was fed by a sense of both lost rights and inconsistent policies. Not every nonpertinent was denied the right to work. The Czech tailor Ludwig Malik could apply, be denied, appeal, and be awarded a license, even without pertinency. On the face of it, Malik seemed a less desirable applicant than the restaurateur Borsich: Malik had not lived in Fiume his whole life (he arrived in 1911), he had few ties to the city, and he did not attend the local Italian schools.¹⁰⁰ The rules were not only discretionary: they also reflected the diplomatic crisis over Fiume’s future. Whereas the Czech tailor was seen as an innocuous outsider, the Fiume-born, Zagreb-pertinent, Croatian restaurateur was considered threatening because the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was making diplomatic efforts to prevent Fiume from being annexed to Italy. Pertinency not only served as a blunt instrument to restrict opportunities for non-nationals or nonlocals: it also worked to aid the city in its diplomatic battles.

Maintaining Fiume’s broader business networks was also a priority, however, and sometimes economic stability concerns clashed with the emerging pertinency regime. Just months after the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, the Italian National Council encouraged businessmen to travel to different regions of

⁹⁷ Giuseppe Borsich, June 21, 1919, cass. 32 prot. 3968, VAF.

⁹⁸ Tomaso Blažic, July 15, 1919, cass. 33, prot. 4647, VAF.

⁹⁹ Matteo Pečanić, June 3, 1919, cass. 32, prot. 3598, VAF.

¹⁰⁰ Ludwig Malik, May 22, 1919, and Consiglio nazionale italiano, August 22, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, Q26/1919: Malik, Lodovico, HR-DARI.

Croatia, Bosnia, and Dalmatia to ensure that lines of trade stayed open.¹⁰¹ The city's economic elites agreed that although nation was important, now "would be a good time to focus on different issues, especially financial ones . . . so that [Fiume] can be as strong in capital as possible."¹⁰² Plans to rebuild a capital-rich future always focused on keeping Fiume firmly fixed in broader regional, if not global, networks of trade. Using economic tools to Italianize the city was a priority, but so was staying linked to non-Italian markets, producers, and consumers.

Analyzing the postimperial world shows that there was no single driving force behind local and state policies. Nation did not mean everything; pertinency did not determine everything; money did not explain everything. For example, two nonpertinent Jewish merchants of foodstuffs, Adolfo Goldfinger and Adolfo Waizen, applied to have their industrial licenses renewed. Neither held pertinency; neither identified as Italian. Goldfinger was rejected, because, he was told, he was a nonpertinent.¹⁰³ Waizen, however, was approved, because he had strong business contacts in the city and had served "in this Chamber [of Commerce] as a delegate to the Mercantile Stock Exchange."¹⁰⁴ Widowed tobacco seller Mattea Paulovatz was a Fiume pertinent, but lost her business license after participating in "Yugoslav agitations."¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, the city-run gas company hired many Fiume nonpertinents, some even registered in "enemy" Croatia.¹⁰⁶ Locals felt real turbulence and vulnerability in this shifting mechanism, especially as the costs of exclusion were high. Nationalist administrators faced difficult trade-offs between trying to create "national" political unity while filling jobs and promoting economic internationalism. And even people we normally think of as benefiting from nationalism in the immediate postwar period—"majority nationals" linked to the business world—could also

¹⁰¹ For examples of Chamber of Commerce petitions to let Fiume businessmen travel to Zagreb in order to consolidate their permissions to travel and work throughout Croatia, Bosnia, and Dalmatia, see Camera di commercio e d'industria, December 5, 1918, 179 Trgovačko-Obrtnička Komora, Opći spisi, Minute 1918, k. 231, spis 2635, HR-DARI; Camera di commercio e d'industria, December 7, 1918, 179 Trgovačko-Obrtnička Komora, Opći spisi, Minute 1918, k. 231, spis 2643, HR-DARI. Antonio Grossich, November 27, 1919, cass. 241–1919, prot. 626, VAF.

¹⁰² Consiglio nazionale italiano, April 22, 1919, cass. 31, prot. 2799, VAF.

¹⁰³ Adolfo Goldfinger, September 4, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, Q15/1919: Goldfinger, Adolfo, HR-DARI.

¹⁰⁴ Adolfo Waizen, June 20, 1919, 541 Općina Rijeka, Opći spisi, Q15/1919: Waizen Adolfo, HR-DARI. For more information on the Waizen family and its most famous son, Leo Valiani, see Ivan Jeličić, "The Waizen Family and Young Leo Valiani in Fiume," *Časopis za povijest Zapadne Hrvatske* 10 (2015): 25–42.

¹⁰⁵ Consiglio nazionale italiano, June 21 1919, cass. 33, prot. 4488, VAF.

¹⁰⁶ Over a year later, in August 1921, just twelve out of the fifty-eight employees of the municipal gas company were Fiume pertinents. Employment Placement Office letter to Gas company, August 12, 1921, 50 Rettorato del Lavoro 1921, Kutija 25, HR-DARI-3.

face precarity. Local and national economic interests around pertinency were filled with contradictions that were particularly hard for everyday Fiumians whose affiliations were now in disfavor. This frustration and the potential detriments of being denied pertinency surely cemented for many people the idea that pertinency went hand in hand with the right to work, which it had never done before.

EXPULSIONS: HOW PERTINENCY FAILED TO MAKE A POSTIMPERIAL COMMUNITY NATIONAL

Before 1918 nonpertinents lived conditionally in their places of residency. The poor, criminals, vagrants, socialists, anarchists, extreme nationalists, and labor organizers were the most likely to be forcibly escorted back to where they held pertinency. Initially this practice continued after 1918. In August 1919, Fiume police figures indicated that out of the 1,220 people “distanced” from Fiume between January and August 1919, 75 percent had no money or stable domicile, 18 percent lacked proper documentation, 5 percent were “clandestine prostitutes,” and 2 percent were considered “dangerous in terms of public security.”¹⁰⁷ Not much had changed: the goal, as a January 1919 police statement clarified, was still to expel “unemployed non pertinents . . . who represent a constant danger to public safety and wealth.”¹⁰⁸

What these reports do not show, however, is that new groups of people considered un-Italian were added to the “dangerous to public security” category. Like officials across post-Habsburg Europe, Fiume’s officials realized they could manipulate pertinency measures to remake their postimperial world as they saw fit. And so, in June 1919, the city’s Italian National Council encouraged police to expel nonpertinent “Croatian lawyers” who protested against the newly required loyalty oaths to the Italian nationalist administration.¹⁰⁹ A month later, Fiume police received direct orders to expel all Hungarians who were nonpertinents on the train arriving from Budapest.¹¹⁰ In early September 1919, police suggested the

¹⁰⁷ Questura, August 8, 1919, cass. 34, prot. 5156, VAF. For more on Habsburg prostitution laws, enforcement, and how legal (for state-supervised registered “sex workers”) and clandestine prostitution overlapped, see Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Devil’s Chain: Prostitution and Social Control in Partitioned Poland* (Ithaca, NY, 2015); Nancy M. Wingfield, *The World of Prostitution in Late Imperial Austria* (New York, 2017). Apparently the police were expelling far more people than they had before the war, as in January 1919 they requested an additional 1,000 crowns for the expulsion fund. See Questura, January 31, 1919, cass. 29, prot. 869, VAF.

¹⁰⁸ Questura, January 15, 1919, cass. 29, prot. 325, VAF.

¹⁰⁹ Delegato all’amministrazione della Giustizia–Consiglio Nazionale, June 21, 1919, cass. 241, prot. 3970, VAF.

¹¹⁰ Questura, July 7, 1919, cass. 33, prot. 4356, VAF.

immediate “distancing” of Leopoldo Ofner—pertinent of Vukovar (in today’s Croatia, formerly Hungarian-controlled Croatia-Slavonia) because he was “a foreigner.” In his police file, under the box “political and moral behavior,” the investigating officer listed: “Croatian, businessman.”¹¹¹ Before 1918, neither “Croatian” nor “businessman” would have been considered problematic “political and moral behavior.” If anything, they would have made Ofner a desirable addition to mercantile Fiume. But in the post-1918 era, financial agents from Croatia were considered threatening. Even if police statistics made things appear normal, much had changed. Poverty could always get you kicked out of Fiume, but before 1918 “nationality” would not have served as an official criterion. After 1918, it did.

In the first year after the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, nationalist-inspired expulsion orders were nominally under the radar. After Gabriele D’Annunzio’s arrival in September 1919, nationalist reasonings for pertinency expulsions took center stage, while socioeconomic ones were pushed under the rug. Now most expulsion papers looked like those served to Giovanni Kovacevich, who was removed because he was “very hostile to the Fiumian cause,” “a very dangerous propagandist of the Yugoslav cause,” “had no stable employment,” “worked as a money-lender,” “frequented politically questionable company,” and “was once a teacher of Slavic languages at the Berlitz school.”¹¹² To the dismay of local authorities, D’Annunzio’s forces even targeted rival nationalists who were Fiume pertinents: “Fiumian or not Fiumian, they [Croatian agitators] were enemies of the cause, they were dangerous people, and they needed to be distanced.”¹¹³ Conversely, D’Annunzio’s command regularly tried to override expulsion orders for nonpertinent Italian nationalists, at one point demanding Fiume police revoke expulsion orders of the port worker Giovanni Matas because his patriotic Italian credentials were so strong that he even named his two children “Italia” and “Romano.”¹¹⁴ Fiume elites repeatedly objected to D’Annunzio’s tactics of prioritizing nationalist politics over the city’s pertinency regulations. They insisted that “in modern times no modern state exiled its own citizens.”¹¹⁵ Sometimes this argument worked, sometimes it did not; but needing to explain that pertinency should trump nationality was new.

Croatian historiography has shed light on the forced expulsion of Croats as a consequence of Fiume’s and D’Annunzio’s Italian nationalizing ambitions.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Questura, September 3, 1919, cass. 242, prot. 5574, VAF.

¹¹² Questura, March 6, 1920, cass. 39, prot. 1463, VAF.

¹¹³ Delegato degli Interni, July 18, 1920, cass. 41, prot. 3597, VAF.

¹¹⁴ Eugenio Coselschi, April 25, 1920, cass. 40 prot. 2136, VAF.

¹¹⁵ Eugenio Coselschi, April 25, 1920, cass. 40 prot. 2136, VAF.

¹¹⁶ Mihael Sobolevski, “D’Annunzijeva vladavina u Rijeci (rujan 1919.–siječanj 1920.),” in *Talijanska uprava na hrvatskom prostoru i egzodus Hrvata (1918.–1943.): Zbornik radova s Međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa, Zagreb 22.–23. listopada 1997*, ed. Marino

What is usually ignored, however, is how postwar expulsion orders retained many of their Habsburg-era socioeconomic impulses. In Fiume, for instance, it is clear that nonpertinents received expulsion orders for both Italian nationalist reasons and social ones. In December 1919, when Fiume's port workers demanded an increase in pay, the government called for the "immediate expulsion . . . of all those involved who were not pertinent."¹¹⁷ After the February 1920 order mandating the expulsion of nonpertinents because of limited food resources, D'Annunzio's Command reported that in the city "voices spread that only those expulsions decreed against poor devils would be effected, while those of means and connections would succeed in remaining."¹¹⁸ As everyone in Fiume knew, poverty, class, and connections mattered enormously—maybe even more than nation. And the nonpertinent poor were undoubtedly the most vulnerable.

Another important thing to note is that orders made and orders realized were two very different things. The lived realities of those the state served with expulsion orders and those who actually left Fiume (and stayed away) were not the same. For example, the city government made clear in February 1920 that only individuals served with expulsion papers for non-economic reasons were allowed to appeal and thus remain while awaiting a response.¹¹⁹ Those allowed to appeal, like ex-high-school teacher Stefano Orbán, emphasized that they had the means to stay and would not become an economic burden; they would not endanger Fiume politically; and that leaving would cause them great hardship. Orbán noted that if expelled from Fiume he would lose everything and that since his city of pertinency, Arad (now in Romania; formerly Habsburg Hungary), was currently under Romanian control, "expulsion from Fiume would be the equivalent for me of being expelled from the civilized world."¹²⁰ Economic marginals, by contrast, could never make an appeal like Orbán's; their expulsion orders were non-negotiable. Nationalist-inspired expulsion orders, on the other hand, could be, and sometimes were, annulled.

Even unappealable expulsion orders were not always final: new states like Fiume lacked the resources and networks to permanently remove their unwanted. The systems that had allowed people to be moved out no longer existed. Train

Manini (Zagreb, 2001), 287–99. For a forthcoming book published by the Croatian national archives in Rijeka that includes new material that tracks the plights of Slavic speakers in the wake of D'Annunzio's expulsion tactics, see Goran Crnković and Mladen Urem, eds., *Izbjeglice i štete za D'Annunzijeva režima 1919.–1921. Zbornik radova* (Rijeka-Zagreb, 2022).

¹¹⁷ Capitaneria di Porto-Fiume, December 5, 1919, cass. 36, prot. 7318, VAF.

¹¹⁸ Alceste De Ambris, March 4, 1920, cass. 39, prot. 1243, VAF.

¹¹⁹ "Legge sugli sfratti," *Bollettino Ufficiale del Consiglio Nazionale di Fiume* (Fiume), February 5, 1920.

¹²⁰ Questura, February 10, 1920, cass. 38, prot. 818, VAF.

and shipping lines were interrupted; borders had changed; and other governments were less than interested in accepting people who required state protections and aid. In Fiume, this meant that a post-1918 expulsion order might just entail an officer walking an expellee five or ten minutes past Fiume city limits and telling them not to return. Obviously, many just walked right back to their Fiume homes after the officer left.

In short, expellees were not as firmly ousted from Fiume's body politic as the paper trail of legal mandates and police orders would have us believe. Fiume was still a city full of nonpertinents with a range of political visions, mother tongues, and class backgrounds. The potential for expulsion created a greater sense of vulnerability among nonpertinents, but with somewhat paradoxical results. Who ended up leaving or staying was a reflection less of state priorities than of the resources (or lack thereof) individual expellees had to start a life elsewhere.

The people most likely to stay out of Fiume after being expelled were the many business owners and merchant families chased out by Italian nationalists after the anti-Croat riots of the summer of 1920. Sparked by news of Italian soldiers being killed by Croatian locals in Split (now in Croatia, formerly Austrian Dalmatia), local Italian nationalists and D'Annunzio followers terrorized Fiumians of Croat, Slovene, or Serb heritage. Seamstress Sofija Zaklan reported that her business was ransacked and her space given to "Italians," leaving her "with no further means to work."¹²¹ When Zaklan and her family were expelled from Fiume in August 1920, they moved to the Croatian mainland. Zaklan described her experience of violence and expulsion to demand not reentry into Fiume's civic life but restitution for the losses caused by the city's brutal expulsion policy. The 160,000 crowns she hoped to receive would go to rebuild a new life in Croatia, not to begin again in a Fiume where she was clearly not wanted.

Zaklan's story is similar to those of the many who were subject to the post-imperial state's unjust treatment. People like Yugoslav activist Viktor Eros or working-class family man Jakov Linić moved on from Fiume to places they believed offered the hope of a better future.¹²² Many nonpertinent store owners, financial elites, and salaried workers decided that a life hostage to the caprices of a malevolent Italian nationalist state was not worth fighting for. As merchant Francesco Rolich put it when explaining why his brother did not resist expulsion from Fiume in July 1920, "he decided to abandon his own house, stores, in

¹²¹ Sofija Zaklan, May 10, 1921, 79 Zemaljska vlada, Odjel za unutarnje poslove, Odsjek za Istru 1918.–1921., k. 5467, Hrvatski Državni Arhiv (hereafter cited as HR-HDA).

¹²² Jakov Linić, August 14, 1920, 79 Zemaljska vlada, Odjel za unutarnje poslove, Odsjek za Istru 1918.–1921., k. 5464, HR-HDA; Viktor Eros, September 8, 1920, 79 Zemaljska vlada, Odjel za unutarnje poslove, Odsjek za Istru 1918. – 1921., k. 5464, HR-HDA.

a word everything he owned, just so he no longer had to live in this kind of fear.”¹²³

Unemployed day workers, the homeless, and women practicing prostitution without the necessary paperwork, on the other hand, had nowhere to go if expelled. Fiume was where they had made their homes and formed their networks. Their only hope was to keep hanging on in the familiar urban center big enough to offer food or money to those living on the fringes. The prostitutes—young women from the mostly Slavic-speaking territories surrounding Fiume whose clients were mainly the many soldiers stationed in Fiume—were particularly visible examples of how the most desperate among those expelled were the most likely to return. Fiume hospital records abound with cases of nonpertinent women repeatedly treated for syphilis, many of whom had been expelled several times.¹²⁴ Investigations into illegal prostitution in Fiume note that prostitutes often found “a protector in the guise of some military man” in order to remain in the city that had just kicked them out.¹²⁵ Expulsion did not remove the most desperate non-pertinents like these women; it just made them bureaucratically invisible and more vulnerable to exploitation.

Here lies the social paradox of postwar pertinency expulsion. Fiume lost many of the nonpertinent non-Italians who contributed to its economic stability, but it could not rid itself of the poor and needy who in Habsburg times would not have been able to stay. The postwar expulsion of nonpertinents made the city poorer, but not—despite the nationalizing efforts—wholly Italian. The prewar regional metropole of multinational capitalism was mutated by the discretionary, exclusionary pertinency-expulsion regime into a hub occupied by the most desperate individuals with a variety of national affiliations.

POSTWAR PERTINENCY: THE DANGERS OF ANCHORING CITIZENSHIP ON A SYSTEM DESIGNED TO MANAGE THE MOBILE POOR

As this analysis shows, pertinency was a powerful tool for excluding people from citizenship in the postimperial world. But it worked differently than we tend to think. Yes, by preemptively excluding “national minorities” from citizenship rolls, the postwar pertinency regime worked around the protections minority rights

¹²³ Francesco Rolich, February 3, 1921, cass. 56, prot. 504, VAF.

¹²⁴ Fiume’s newspapers abound with reports of women who “escaped” from the hospital after receiving treatment for venereal diseases. For specific examples within the archive records of known illegal, nonpertinent prostitutes who had a ongoing relationship with Fiume’s hospital services, see Tribunale, May 20, 1920, 761 Okružni sud Rijeka, Krivični predmeti 1920: 106 spis 19, HR-DARI; Questura, March 13, 1919, 1108 Riječka kvestura, 1919, 809, spis 1, HR-DARI.

¹²⁵ Questura, November 29, 1920, cass. 243, prot. II/b/b/3, VAF; Questura, June 8, 1920, cass. 40, prot. 2822, VAF.

clauses would impose. Because these nonpertinent “national others” would not be made citizens, the League of Nations would have no authority. But this is not the only dynamic. Economically strapped governments also adapted and used the pertinency system to limit who received welfare or work. At the local level, postwar pertinency was also a history of state weakness, with provincial governments trying to cut needy people from their rolls as they struggled to provide services once supplied by the empire.

In his rich analysis of post-Habsburg pertinency regimes in the lands between Hungary and Romania, Gábor Egry has argued that we should not accept the national exclusion narrative at face value. After World War I, pertinency decisions were often the result of mundane pragmatism, not nationalist extremism.¹²⁶ Egry also reveals that in the post-Habsburg transition, individuals demonstrated a surprising level of agency in working around and between systems, in large part because pertinency regimes were so convoluted that few government officials knew how to enforce the rules. Our investigation into Fiume supports this, but underscores how the system worked differently for different classes. The postwar pertinency world was most hostile to those the prewar pertinency regime was built to control: the mobile poor. By creating a system of discretionary rights based on local whims and socioeconomic goals, without the buy-in of all the former places of pertinency, the postwar pertinency regimes created new classes of impoverished and vulnerable people. Non-pertinents with means, in contrast, had other options even when classified as “national unwanted.” They could either opt for citizenship in other countries or choose emigration. Many did not want to leave, however, and for them the struggle against pertinency exclusion measures rendered their lives newly vulnerable.

For the nonpertinents who wanted to stay, manipulation of nationalist politics could justify a place in the postwar pertinency regime. As the imperial system collapsed and national rhetoric escalated, locals understood that nationalist arguments could help them in a pertinency-based rights regime that was suddenly trying to deny them the citizen-rights they had had. Many tried to improve their chances of obtaining pertinency by using ethnicity and professing loyalty to new nationalizing states. In Fiume, we see this in pertinency petitions and appeals for welfare subsidies and business licenses, as well as in protests against expulsion orders. Nation became a shortcut into the new post-1918 pertinency world as pertinency became states’ favored means of keeping unwanted minorities, political opponents, and the impoverished off citizenship rolls.

We set out to investigate what happened when a social insurance mobility system was rebranded as the cornerstone of stable citizenship. The results are fairly grim, especially since Fiume was just one among many former Habsburg employment hubs with a population of more than 60 percent nonpertinents. Basing

¹²⁶ Egry, “De l’ethnicisation de la nationalité.”

citizenship rights in a nation-state world on a system built to protect against the costs of caring for the mobile poor created a situation where far more people faced potential statelessness than historians have acknowledged. The discretionary powers of weak successor states exposed many Habsburg Europeans (both majority and minority nationals) to the possibility—and often the reality—of losing welfare, work, and the right to remain because they were no longer recognized as legally belonging in the new states formed around their homes. This system would be perpetuated by weak states in the 1920s and 1930s, profoundly shaping the interwar European order for the worse.