

Exploring new dimensions of urban governance: The development of administrative systems in Trieste and Fiume (Rijeka) during the final decades of the Habsburg Empire (1850–1918)

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Abstract

Urban governance is often perceived as a concept that has emerged over the past half-century, evolving from the policy of urban government. The analysis of this shift, known as the “transformation thesis,” has been criticized by recent studies in the field, which focus on the theory of metagovernance. However, both branches of urban governance literature heavily rely on knowledge of American cities, hindering a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. There is a growing demand to broaden the temporal and geographical scope of case studies and conduct more comparative research to better understand the roots and current processes of urban governance. While the fundamental driving forces behind the emergence of modern municipal administration during the 19th century have been adequately explored, various characteristics of different geographical locations might add new dimensions and approaches to understanding urban governance. This study offers a comprehensive insight into the birth and early formation of urban governance systems in the free ports of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, namely Trieste and Fiume (Rijeka in Croatian). By analyzing legal documents and applying a mixed-method approach, this study unravels the institutional structures, electoral systems, and municipal authorities of Trieste and Fiume from the 1848 Revolution until the end of the First World War. In addition to the historical and Central European perspectives, this paper aims to explore rarely considered contextual factors of urban governance, such as legal-administrative, socio-economic, and political elements. The comparative analysis of Trieste and Fiume demonstrates that even within the same empire, a wide range of diverse influences could shape urban governance systems. Despite these varied factors and significantly different administrative contexts, surprisingly similar governance practices could also emerge.

Keywords: Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Trieste, Fiume (Rijeka), urban governance, metagovernance, legal geography, historical geography

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Introduction

Urban governance theory still has many “black gaps” in its empirical background, leading to an unclear definition of the phenomenon. Urban case studies related to the theory have been conducted for nearly half a century since the oil crises in the 1970s triggered a radical change in the governance of American cities,

shifting from a managerial to an entrepreneurial approach (HARVEY, D. 1989). This shift has long been the focus of researchers’ attention and was later termed “transformation thesis” (LO, C. 2017). Recently, another approach within urban governance theory has emerged: the concept of metagovernance, which briefly refers to “... *the governance of governance networks*” (BERG-NORDLIE, M. 2018, 51).

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Researchers studying metagovernance have begun to call their works the “second generation” of urban governance literature, highlighting a shift in focus within urban governance research (Lo, C. 2017). However, neither the “first” nor the “second generation” of the literature addresses critical research aspects necessary to reach a consensual definition of urban governance. There are clear deficits in information regarding temporal and spatial scopes, particularly concerning the birth of modern urban governance and its circumstances from a non-American and non-British perspective. More and more researchers in the field are suggesting broadening the scope of case studies in terms of time and geography to better understand the current processes of urban governance and the historical paths that led to them (PIERRE, J. 2005; DEAR, M. and DAHMANN, N. 2008; DIGAETANO, A. 2009).

The research presented in this paper aims to address and compare case studies that could illuminate some of these “black gaps” in urban governance theory. The late Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which existed between 1867 and 1918, provides an excellent context for such research, offering valuable insights into the circumstances surrounding the birth of modern urban governance in Central Europe. The unique constitutional and administrative structure of this state presents numerous opportunities to study and compare cities within different administrative contexts, yet all under the realm of a common imperial apparatus. Out of hundreds of urban municipalities in the empire, the most compelling cases regarding the birth of modern urban administrative systems are Trieste and Fiume (now Rijeka), which are the subjects of this paper. These cities were highly autonomous free ports for more than a century at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, thanks to privileges granted by the Habsburg dynasty in 1719. Despite a common past, an intriguing rivalry characterized the relationship between Trieste and Fiume, stemming from the complex state structure of the Austro-

Hungarian Monarchy. They were the main ports of the same customs area but operated under different national interests, as Trieste was part of the Austrian half while Fiume was part of the Hungarian half of the empire. Furthermore, both cities had a strong Italian ethnic character that dominated their urban governments, adding another layer of complexity to the governance of the ports.

Most literature on the modernization of urban governance systems in the 19th century focuses on public health, security, and issues related to rapid urbanization which altogether induced the emergence of a new kind of urban administrative system. However, it is unquestionable that geographical factors, including different state structures and local socio-economic dynamics, could also impact this process (HILBERT, B. 2024). This study aims to present and compare the birth and early development of Trieste’s and Fiume’s urban governance systems primarily from a legal-geographical perspective. This means that the study relies exclusively on information from legal documents (patents, decrees, provisional acts, parliamentary acts, etc.) to unravel this pivotal period of administrative reform. The necessary legal documents for this research are available in online databases. Acts passed by the Austrian Parliament (Reichsrat) and the provincial parliament of Austrian Littoral (whose seat was Trieste) between 1850 and 1918 are all available in the online database of the Austrian National Library (Österreichische Staatsbibliothek [ÖNB] ALEX Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte). Acts passed by the Hungarian Parliament (Országgyűlés) between 1867 and 1918 are also accessible online at net.jogtar.hu. However, imperial patents and government decrees regulating the municipal administration of Fiume were not included in this database but can be found in a digital appendix of a Hungarian book (GERGELY, J. 2005). It must be noted that due to the legal-geographical approach, only the logic and content of legal acts will be represented normatively in this research. The analysis of their implementation in practice remains the topic of another scientific study.

Urban governance theories and their (lack of) historic perspectives

The theory of urban governance related to the neoliberal turn starting in the 1970s is relatively new in both geography and public administration science. Research linked to the term governance – extending beyond cities – began in the 1950s, but it truly proliferated in the late 1970s, with studies on the subject steadily increasing ever since. Alongside economics, management, political science, and public administration, geography is also one of the disciplines contributing significantly to the literature on the topic (LEVI-FAUR, D. 2011). Despite many studies and empirical data, there is still no complete consensus on the definition of the concept, and the delineation of the term can even be considered somewhat confusing (RHODES, R.A.W. 1997). Rather, it provides an analytical framework or a set of criteria for topics worth researching, which, in its simplest form, primarily focuses on the multitude of institutions and actors determining urban policy and their interactions (PIERRE, J. 2005). This is reinforced by the definition of one of the leading researchers in urban regime theory, Clarence Stone, who describes urban governance as an extremely complex, fragmented network of institutions and actors, inherently lacking consensus (STONE, C. 1989).

When placing the concept in a broader context, its meaning becomes far more complex. The main characteristics of urban governance include the economic restructuring prompted by globalization, the retreat of state involvement, the global competition of cities for capital investments, the flexibility and multi-actor nature of decision-making, and partnerships between the state and the private sector (JELINEK, Cs. and PÓSFAL, Zs. 2013). In contrast, the general urban policy systems before World War II are described as urban government, where “...the governance of the city existed within a closed, hierarchical institutional framework with a few, well-identified actors, providing certain public services to city residents and translating national redistributive policies to the local level” (JELINEK, Cs. and PÓSFAL, Zs. 2013,

145). A lot of researchers of urban governance sharply distinguish these two urban policy systems and draw a clear line between them during the transition period in the 1970s and 1980s, closely linked to the oil crises (HARVEY, D. 1989; OSBORNE, D. and GAEBLER, T. 1992; RHODES, R.A.W. 1997; STOKER, G. 1998; PIERRE, J. 1999; JESSOP, B. 2002; BRENNER, N. 2004; ECKARDT, F. and ELANDER, I. 2009; SLACK, E. and CÔTÉ, A. 2014; VAN DEN DOOL, L. 2015).

More and more studies concerning urban governance are increasingly critical of the research focusing on the shift from urban government to governance, often referred to as the “transformation thesis” (Lo, C. 2017). British experiences suggest that the institutional system of British local governments was quite fragmented and multi-polar in the mid-19th century (ANDREW, C. and GOLDSMITH, M. 1998; GOLDSMITH, M. and GARRAND, J. 2000), making it contemporaneous with urban government itself (PIERRE, J. 2005). British historians and political scientists have pointed out that the changes and processes that began in the 1970s – such as private-public partnerships and different modes of providing public services – in urban governance systems cannot be considered entirely novel, as they were identifiable during the industrial revolutions and the formation of nation-states in the 19th century (MORRIS, J.R. 2000). Based on these insights, Andrew M. Wood’s suggestion of reevaluating the theoretical frameworks of the topic is worth considering (WOOD, A.M. 2004). Partly responding to the defects of transformation theses, another conceptualization of urban governance has recently in the emergence, centering around the idea of metagovernance, which involves “... the governance of governance networks” (BERG-NORDLIE, M. 2018, 51). This approach mostly tries to understand the effects of state legislation on the steering of subnational subjects (BAILEY, D. and WOOD, M. 2017). Studies in this new approach identify themselves as the “second generation” of urban governance literature, but due to their novelty, metagovernance theory also lacks a clear definition and has a wide range of conceptual branches (GJALTEMA, J. et al. 2019).

However, neither the first nor the second generation of literature on urban governance provides answers regarding the path leading to the formation of modern urban governance from a cross-national perspective (DiGAETANO, A. 2009). In addition to the narrow temporal and spatial frameworks of research, several studies have pointed out the lack of comparative analysis in the field (DiGATEANO, A. and KLEMANSKI, J.S. 1999; SELLERS, J.M. 2002; PIERRE, J. 2005; DiGAETANO, A. 2009; SLACK, E. and CÔTÉ, A. 2014). PIERRE and DiGAETANO, in their separate studies, have already identified and connected these defects to the empirical background of urban governance, offering useful suggestions for future case studies on the topic (PIERRE, J. 2005; DiGAETANO, A. 2009). These suggestions are closely related to the concept of metagovernance, highlighting the role of state legislation and the question of the embeddedness of local governments within the state administration.

The beginning of “modern urban governance” is generally linked to the enactment of laws that established the administrative systems of cities – including institutional structures, electoral systems, decision-making mechanisms, and municipal responsibilities – adopted by democratically elected parliaments rather than imposed by exclusive powers (DiGAETANO, A. 2009). These laws first emerged in Western Europe and North America in the early 19th century and later in Central and Eastern Europe in the mid to late 19th century. Literature is scarce on urban governance that specifically examines a city’s administrative conditions during this formative period and evaluates their relevance to current theories. SUTCLIFFE’s work stands out in this regard, as he goes beyond analyzing legal structural changes in cities and situates them within a broader socio-economic context. The British historian primarily examined the urban development and planning activities of large cities in the 19th and 20th centuries, focusing on issues triggered by urbanization – such as unemployment, poverty, crime, and the formation of slums – which necessitated municipal intervention and the expansion

of urban authority (SUTCLIFFE, A. 1995a,b). DiGAETANO’s study outlines the formation of 19th-century urban governance in Boston and Bristol, linking it to the question of the path leading to 20th- and 21st-century urban governance theories (DiGAETANO, A. 2009). In DiGAETANO’s interpretation, democratization is essentially a consequence of the causes of urbanization and economic diversification, at least as observed in Boston and Bristol. The first and most crucial step in the democratization process was the establishment of municipal laws, which determined the electoral system for municipal governing bodies and the scope of municipal institutions’ authority. The governance of cities could be framed by different legal frameworks depending on the state. In the cases of Boston and Bristol, democratization was accompanied by the emergence of problem-oriented urban politics, with the municipal governments initially focusing on the organizational system of local police and the construction of water supply systems. DiGAETANO termed the formation of modern urban governance in Boston and Bristol a “municipal revolution,” following TEAFORD’s expression (TEAFORD, J.C. 1975), and characterized it by the gradual expansion of urban institutional authority and the broadening of public services provided by the city. While DiGAETANO’s research is an excellent example that addresses some of the deficiencies in urban governance theory but remains within the context of the United States and the United Kingdom. There are a few additional examples of urban case studies from a historical viewpoint, which mainly focus on the modernization of urban administrations in light of urban problems (MARCUS, A.I. 1980; FAIRBANKS, R.B. 1999; HANLEY, A.G. 2012).

The main theoretical approach and question of the study

Responding to the limitations and gaps in urban governance theories, this study aims to uncover the main characteristics of Trieste’s and Fiume’s administrative systems during

the era of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which spanned from 1867 to 1918. This research seeks to gather empirical information outside the traditional geographical and temporal scope of mainstream literature, employing an analytical framework that combines the main points of both the first and second generations of urban governance literature. Examining the legislative roles of the common emperor and the state parliaments in regulating the administrative systems of the two ports, this study relates to the concept of metagovernance. On the other hand, the analytical practices of the transformation thesis which centered around municipal institutional and authority issues are also taking part in the examination. However, this study aims to go further by incorporating factors that are typically unusual in this type of research: historical, legal, socio-economic, and political factors.

The comparison of the two largest ports of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is highly relevant for addressing some of the undiscovered areas of urban governance. There are additional compelling reasons to explore Trieste's and Fiume's administrative structures, which could potentially yield new insights: their special administrative statuses, their complex socio-political scenes, the Italian dominance in their urban administration, and their rivalry for the "gateway" role within the empire. The literature on Habsburg-era Trieste and Fiume is extensive, primarily focusing on ethnic, identity, and economic features (Some examples: GURI, D. 1953; GOVORCHIN, G.G. 1955; RESS, I. 2009; HAJDÚ, Z. 2013; MAKKAI, K. 2013; GRIFFANTE, A. 2015; PELLE, M. 2017). However, comparative studies of these cities during the Habsburg era are much less common in historical-geographical literature, with only a few comparative works mainly from an economic perspective (HELMEDACH, A. 2002; ERDŐSI, F. 2022).

This study aims to fill these gaps while raising new issues and factors that could be integrated into urban governance theory. The following question has been formulated to guide the study's objectives, ensuring its complexity in both approach and methodol-

ogy: How did the *legal structure of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*, as established by the Compromise of 1867, along with the unique intersections of *local historical, socio-economic, and political factors*, influence the early formation of Trieste's and Fiume's urban governance systems in terms of their municipal *institutional structures, electoral systems, and legal and financial authorities*?

By addressing the various components of this comprehensive question, the study will undoubtedly provide extraordinary insights compared to the experiences of American cities.

A brief history of Trieste's and Fiume's free port status before 1867

The two most important seaports of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, located by the shores of the opposite gulfs of the Istrian Peninsula, had always been situated at the boundaries of spheres of interest throughout history. Due to their economic potential, these cities achieved a certain degree of autonomy, often manifested in their autonomous administrative statuses (PELLE, M. 2017). The ports, founded by the Romans, had long competed with each other and with different ports of the Adriatic Sea. In the Middle Ages, Venice was their most significant rival until the Habsburg Empire began expanding in the region. Trieste became part of the Habsburg Empire in 1382, and Fiume after the Battle of Mohács in 1526 (GOVORCHIN, G.G. 1955). The Habsburgs recognized the economic opportunities in maritime trade relatively late, only during the 18th century. Due to its geographical proximity to Vienna, the royal government supported the development of Trieste earlier and more vigorously, with the main goal of making it the focal point of trade between Europe and Asia (GRIFFANTE, A. 2015). Fiume's development stagnated for a while, but later the Habsburgs realized that developing Fiume could bolster the economic life of the empire's lagging eastern part (RESS, I. 2009). In 1719, Charles VI (known as Charles

III in Hungary) declared both Trieste and Fiume free ports and ordered significant developments (HAJDÚ, Z. 2013; ORDASI, Á. 2019). While Trieste's administrative situation stabilized within the empire, Croatian and Hungarian aspirations for the possession of Fiume intensified. In 1775, the municipal council initiated the annexation of the settlement to Hungary, which was partly realized by queen Maria Theresa's patent on the annexation to Croatia in 1776. However, due to emerging Hungarian dissatisfaction, she declared it a "separate body attached to the Hungarian crown", also known as *corpus separatum*, in her 1779 charter (HAJDÚ, Z. 2013). The Act IV of 1807 eventually stated that Fiume's representatives would have seats in the Hungarian Diet, effectively placing the city under Hungarian jurisdiction.

During the Napoleonic Wars, the administrative paths of the two cities briefly diverged as Napoleon annexed Trieste to the Kingdom of Italy and Fiume to the Kingdom of Illyria (GURI, D. 1953; HAJDÚ, Z. 2013). After the ports were reunited under the Habsburg realm, the Italian elites headed the ports faced new challenges in the wake of national movements during the 1848 revolutions. While Trieste became a main target of the Slovenian national movement, Fiume found itself at the center of Croatian-Hungarian conflicts for several decades. After the revolution, both Trieste and Fiume received statutes establishing their municipal administrations. However, the Austrian port received a much more detailed statute as the seat of the Crownland Austrian Littoral that remained in effect until 1918, stabilizing the city's administration for decades. Fiume's situation plunged into complete uncertainty. After the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, the Habsburgs annexed the port to Croatia, which initially became a *de facto* crownland of Austria while Hungary was ruled by military administration (SOKCSEVITS, D. 2011).

However, with the political changes of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867, Fiume's leaders unequivocally advocated for annexation to Hungary (HAJDÚ, Z. 2013).

The negotiations devolved into an eighteen-month-long, fruitless debate between Croatian, Hungarian, and Fiume municipal representatives. Finally, the Hungarian government "solved" the situation in a rather unfair way, which became known as the "Rijeka Patch" in Croatian historiography. When the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) enacted the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement of 1868, later assented to by the emperor, the Hungarian government only discussed it afterward and added a clause on a slip of paper to the paragraph stating the undefined status of Fiume. This clause annexed the port to Hungary without the knowledge of the emperor and the Sabor (SOKCSEVITS, D. 2011). This affair intensified the opposition between Hungary and Croatia-Slavonia for decades to come.

The administrative structure of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, established by the Compromise of 1867

The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 created a highly unique state structure where "common affairs" which included military, foreign, and financial matters connected mainly Austria and Hungary to each other. This agreement established joint state institutions, such as ministries for each common affair, delegations from both Austrian and Hungarian parliaments, and a common council of ministers headed by the emperor. The constitutions of Austria and Hungary defined the jurisdiction of these common bodies in a "negative form," indicating that they could not interfere in the internal affairs of either half of the empire. Nevertheless, there were occasions when internal matters of Austria or Hungary were addressed within these joint institutions (SOMOGYI, É. 1996). As a result, the empire's state structure was somewhat between a federal state and a confederation: within a single customs area two separate administrative systems coexisted, and both state governments were engaged in various shared responsibilities. Within this customs area, the free movement of labour, services, goods, and com-

panies was allowed, and a common official currency was in use (SZENTE, Z. 2011; KATUS, L. 2012).

Beyond the historical traditions of both Austria and Hungary regarding their state structures, the role of the common emperor significantly influenced the distribution of power across different administrative levels. According to the Compromise of 1867, Emperor Franz Joseph retained near-absolute authority in the legislative process in both parts of the empire, allowing him to maintain the status quo of the dualist state structure (SARLÓS, B. 1976). In Austria, the emperor could govern through emergency decrees without needing the consent of the Austrian parliament (Reichsrat). Consequently, there was no real possibility for any opposition party to threaten the status quo in the Reichsrat, which enabled a broader distribution of power to the crownlands and the municipalities. In contrast, the Hungarian legislative process granted the emperor only the right of pre-Royal assent. This did not afford him the same absolutist power as in Austria, requiring him to negotiate and reach agreements with the Hungarian government and the Hungarian Parliament (Országgyűlés). This arrangement concluded with the thorough centralization of the Hungarian administrative system to eliminate any possible internal opposition, which resulted in the reduction of the authority of subnational subjects (SARLÓS, B. 1976).

The division of municipal governments and their integration into the respective administrative systems differed fundamentally between Austria and Hungary (Figure 1). The Austrian Act on Municipalities of 1862 (AA, 1862), as a federal law, specified basic regulations for Austrian municipalities but allowed the crownlands' parliaments to tailor these regulations to their provincial contexts. Larger municipalities could obtain statutes from provincial parliaments, granting them expanded jurisdiction over institutional and financial matters to better manage municipal tasks. Hungarian urban municipalities were divided into four categories according to Hungarian administrative laws (HA, 1872a,b; HA, 1886a,b): Municipal

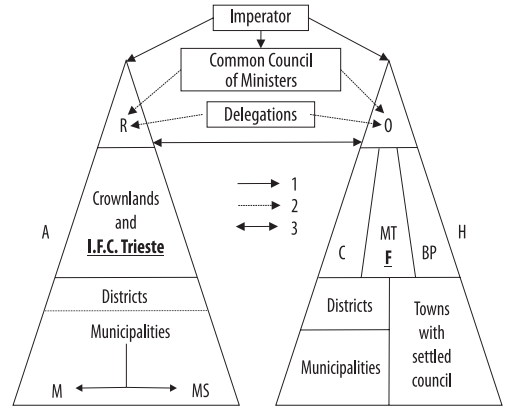


Fig. 1. Schematic representation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's administrative structure and the positions of Trieste and Fiume (marked in bold and underlined font). 1 = direct influence; 2 = indirect influence; 3 = common and jointly managed matters, as well as negotiation of the customs union. A = Austria; R = Reichsrat (Austrian Parliament), I.F.C. Trieste = Imperial Free City of Trieste (Reichsunmittelbare Stadt Triest und ihr Gebiet), M = Municipalities, MS = Municipalities with Statute. H = Hungary; O = Országgyűlés (Hungarian Parliament), C = Counties, MT = Municipal Towns (towns with county rights), F = City of Fiume, BP = Budapest. Source: Author's elaboration based on BRAUNEDER, W. 1994, and MEZEY, B. 2004.

Towns (with county rights), Towns with settled councils (under county supervision), and Budapest and Fiume, which had their own statutes. Croatia-Slavonia gained autonomous status in 1868, which included the regulation of internal administration. However, the division of Croatian urban municipalities largely mirrored the Hungarian model: there were towns with county rights and towns with district rights (ČEPULO, D. 2010).

The administrative positions of Trieste and Fiume within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and their respective halves of the empire shared several similarities: both cities had unique statutes granted by the 1850 statute of Trieste and the 1872 statute of Fiume, which was practically modeled after the former (ORDASI, Á. 2019). They retained their status as free ports, with Italians having

primary control over their administration. Trieste became a city “directly subordinated under the empire” (Reichsunmittelbare Stadt), meaning it was under the supervision of the emperor and the Austrian Parliament (AA, 1850; GRIFFANTE, A. 2015). Similarly, Fiume came directly under Hungarian parliamentary legislation (see *Figure 1*), and both cities were entitled to send representatives to their respective parliaments (HA, 1872a). The status of Trieste and Fiume changed significantly in 1891 when the two cities were integrated into the Monarchy’s customs territory, abolishing their tax-free zones that had existed since 1719 (AA, 1891; HA, 1891). Neither the basic statute of Trieste and Fiume was modified fundamentally until 1918. Only minor paragraphs of Trieste’s statute of 1850 were modified (AA, 1882; AA, 1885; AA, 1908; AA, 1910) while the Hungarian government through its orders modified significantly the governance of Fiume (HA, 1901; HA, 1913; HA, 1916).

Political and socio-economic dynamics during the era of dualism (1867–1918)

Considering the ethnic diversity and autonomous statuses of Trieste and Fiume, it is crucial to examine the broader context of ethnic agreements within the Austro-Hungarian Empire to fully comprehend the situation of these ports. The Compromise of 1867 established and solidified the dualist system within the Habsburg Empire, but it did not preclude the establishment of territorial autonomies or agreements without altering the Compromise itself. Excluding Bosnia-Herzegovina, a total of four provincial and three municipal-level agreements were reached during the period of dualism (*Figure 2*).

Croatia-Slavonia was the only territory with legally guaranteed *de jure* autonomy, granting the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) the authority to manage internal administration, cultural and educational matters, as well as the use of the Croatian language in public administration (SOKCSEVITS, D. 2011). However,

the Sabor remained highly dependent on the Hungarian Parliament both politically and financially, allowing Hungarian governments to pursue a centralization policy regarding Croatia-Slavonia. This led to significant changes in Croatian administration and urban governance (HILBERT, B. 2024). In contrast, Galicia’s *de facto* autonomy in Austria was based on concessions that favoured the Poles over the Ruthenians in the governance of the crownland (PERÉNYI, J. and KOVÁCS, E. 1986). Despite this, the Ruthenians were also granted some concessions, including the establishment of a Ruthenian University in Lemberg (MICK, C. 2019). In 1914, an act divided the Galician Diet into Polish and Ruthenian sections, significantly improving the latter’s representation, but the outbreak of World War I prevented the implementation of this system (ZÖLLNER, E. 1998). Beyond Croatia-Slavonia and Galicia, efforts to resolve ethnic conflicts were primarily seen in Austria. Agreements in Moravia and Bukovina established the division of their provincial diets into national sections and recalibrated electoral districts accordingly (KUZMANY, B. 2016). An unusual agreement was also enacted in 1914 in a Bohemian municipality, where the German and Czech leaders of Budweis agreed on a new municipal electoral system based on national sections. The Budweis system went further than the provincial agreements by proposing the division of the city’s tax revenues into two parts, managed by the respective nationality representative groups, mainly for cultural matters. Although the Budweis Compromise was never realized due to World War I, it demonstrated the potential for resolving nationality issues at the municipal level (KUZMANY, B. 2016).

Trieste and Fiume also held special statuses within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, though their unique roles were driven more by economic factors than by ethnic considerations. Between 1867 and 1918, the increasing intersection of ethnic and power conflicts began to significantly influence public politics in the ports. The dynamic change in the ethnic composition of their population played a

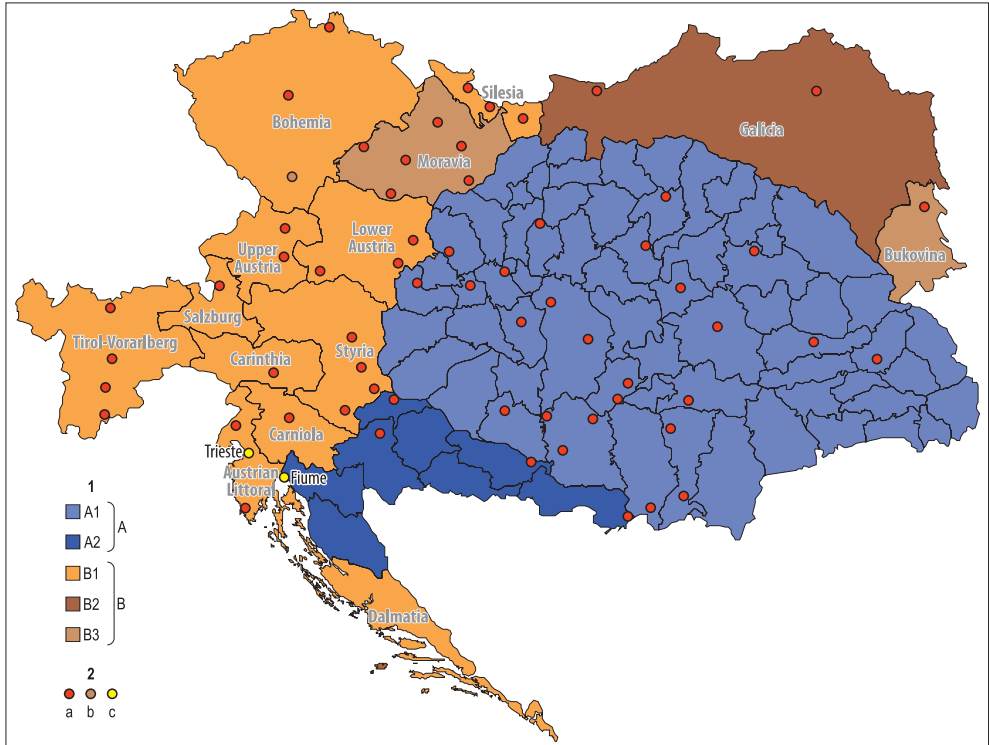


Fig. 2. The administrative divisions, autonomous territories, and other subnational agreements within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1914). 1 – Administrative units of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. A = countries of the Hungarian Crown: A1 = Hungary and its county system, A2 = Croatia-Slavonia and its county system. B = crownlands of Austria: B1 = crownlands with their own parliaments and governments, B2 = the “de facto” autonomy of the Crownland of Galicia, B3 = provincial agreements on national electoral rolls; 2 – Municipalities with special statuses. a = municipalities with statutes in Austria, and municipalities with county rights in the countries of the Hungarian Crown, b = agreement on national electoral rolls in the municipality of Budweis; c = free ports of Trieste and Fiume. *Source:* Author’s elaboration based on BRAUNEDER, W. 1994, MEZEY, B. 2004, and KUZMANY, B. 2016.

significant role in this. The share of the Italian inhabitants in Trieste decreased from 65 to 51 percent between 1880 and 1910, while the Slovenian population increased from 14 to 25 percent. Meanwhile, in Fiume, the Italian population slightly increased from 43 to 48 percent, whereas the Croatian population plummeted from 38 to 25 percent. Notably, the Hungarian population in Fiume surged from 2 to 13 percent, while the shares of the German population remained stable in both cities (HOREL, C. 2023). In light of these statistics, it is not surprising that Trieste’s municipal

administration faced increasing pressure from the Slovenian national movements while simultaneously Italian secessionist movements got also stronger in the city. Trieste’s Italian elites, through municipal regulations, obstructed non-Italian education in the city, which intensified and linked Slovenian and Croatian national movements (GOULD, S.W. 1945).

However, the Viennese government managed to control ethnic tensions primarily by maintaining the status quo in the city, while granting several concessions to Slovenians in the crownland of Carniola, where they were

the majority (HOREL, C. 2023). Fiume, on the other hand, faced significant cultural and political pressure from the Hungarian government which sought to erode Fiume's autonomy and strengthen Hungarian cultural influence in the city. The translation of Hungarian laws into Italian often caused confusion, as it took several months, leaving the Fiume Municipal Council poorly informed about Hungarian domestic affairs and matters concerning the city. The enforcement of the Hungarian coat of arms and flag on municipal buildings further fueled local resentment towards Hungarians (SIMON, P.P. 2013). Ultimately, in 1913, the Hungarian government through the enactment of an order abolished Fiume's autonomy, and referring to the failed quorum of the Municipal Council, handing over the absolute power over the whole city to the current governor, István Wickenburg (HA, 1913). The conflict did not subside, as bombs exploded in the Governor's Palace in both 1913 and 1914, but the identity of the perpetrators largely remained unknown (ORDASI, Á. 2018).

In addition to the ethnic factor, further economic and political factors played an important role in the development of Trieste and Fiume. The competition between the two port cities for the "gateway role" of the empire was a crucial point of contention between Austrian imperial and Hungarian national ambitions (ERDŐSI, F. 2005). The primary goal of developing the entire railway system in Austria and Hungary was to connect Trieste and Fiume to their respective capitals. In this context, the Vienna–Trieste line was completed 16 years earlier, in 1857, than the line connecting Fiume to Budapest, which opened in 1873. This competition began with a notable advantage for Trieste due to early Habsburg support during the absolutist era which Fiume could not surpass later on. However, the Hungarian government's efforts led to a substantial increase in Fiume's port cargo traffic (ERDŐSI, F. 2022). Trieste primarily competed with Genoa for the central role in Mediterranean trade from Europe but eventually lagged behind the Italian port (GURI, D. 1953).

Urban governance systems in Trieste and Fiume based on legal documents (1867–1918)

Integration into the administrative system and institutional structure

The free port status of Trieste and Fiume, originating in 1719, was a decisive factor in shaping the administrative structures of Austria and Hungary in 1867. Both cities were incorporated into their respective halves of the empire as "corpus separatum" with separate customs areas. Fiume's 1872 statute, which replaced the provisional statute of 1870 (HA, 1870), was largely based on Trieste's 1850s statute (ORDASI, Á. 2019), making their governance systems similar in many respects. Neither Trieste's nor Fiume's statute was significantly modified until 1918, unlike the statutes of several other urban municipalities in Austria and Hungary during that period. In Austria, only Prague, Görz (now Gorizia, Italy), and Trieste had statutes originating from the provisional era (1848–1867) enacted absolutistically by the emperor (HILBERT, B. 2023). The ports' unique statuses manifested differently in their state administrations: Trieste was elevated to a provincial rank in Austria, while Fiume formed a separate municipal category within Hungary. However, neither municipality could fully detach from the legal structure of their respective halves of the empire, significantly impacting their internal institutional systems.

Trieste's institutional framework mirrored other Austrian cities with statutes but included a provincial parliament due to its crownland status, with the municipal decision-making body fulfilling this role (Figure 3). Trieste became the seat of the unified crownland of the Austrian Littoral, which comprised the Imperial Free City of Trieste, the crownlands of Görz, and Gradisca, and Istria. A common provincial governor, along with the Reichsrat and the emperor, exercised state supervision over the city. The so-called „Fractionen" were unique urban organs within Trieste's administration, serving as territorial executive bodies that complemented the Municipal

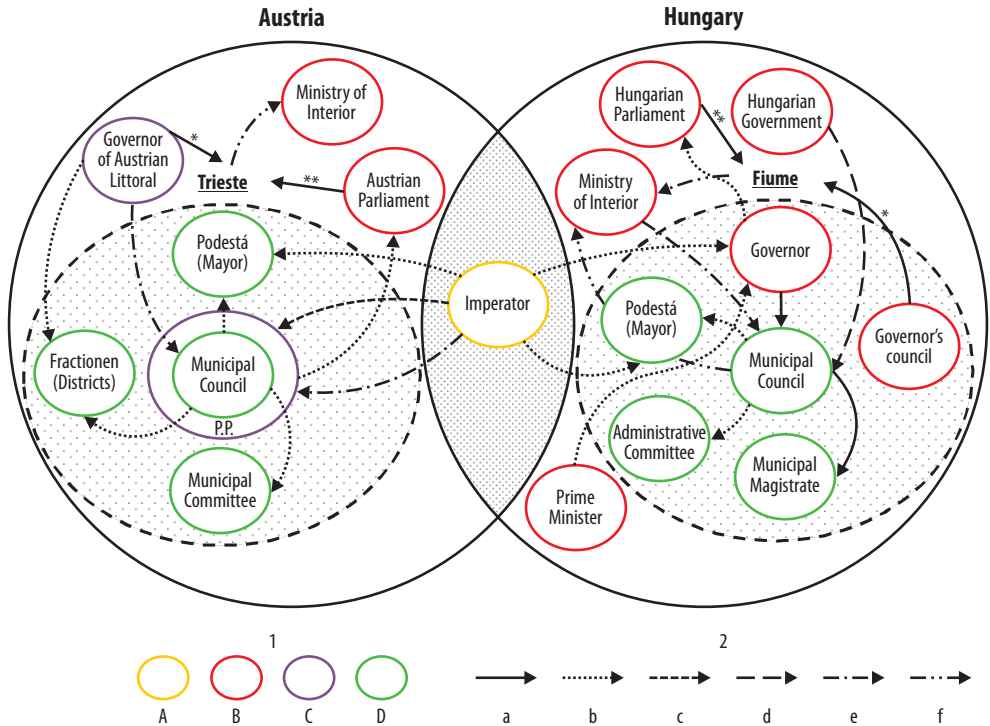


Fig. 3. Schematic figure of the institutional structure of Trieste and Fiume and their positions within the administrative system of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1914. 1 – Actors involved in urban governance systems: A = The common imperator of Austria-Hungary; B = State body or body appointed by the common imperator and/or the state government; C = Provincial body; D = Body elected by local residents possessed voting rights or body elected by the municipal council. 2 – Official relations between the organs participating in the urban governance system: a – It could uphold, amend and cancel decrees and resolutions, as well as dissolve municipal councils; b = Elected, appointed, consented to the appointment of one or more members; c = It could dissolve a plenum of a body and dismiss an official from his office; d = Before issuing decrees on certain matters, it must consult with the relevant body; e = The body’s permission was required for the adoption of certain or all of its decrees; its decisions concerning an appeal or complaint case were binding to the concerned urban organ; f = It could appeal against the decree of another body. P.P. = Provincial Parliament. *The provincial governor/council of governors can suspend the decree or decision of any body in Trieste/Fiume. The Municipal Council could appeal against the decision to the Minister of the Interior. **Since Trieste and Fiume were directly subjected to the state government, they had to apply the laws of their respective parliaments, against which there was no room for appeal. Source: Author’s elaboration based on the following acts: AA, 1850; AA, 1861; HA, 1870; HA, 1872a; HA, 1901; AA, 1908.

Council. In Fiume, the most significant institutional differences from Trieste were the positions of the Governor and its council which was equivalent to the lord-lieutenants in the Hungarian Municipal Towns and the Lord-Mayor in Budapest. Due to the port’s persistent struggle for autonomy, the Governor’s and its council’s supervisory powers in

Fiume were narrower than those of the lord-lieutenants, primarily responsible for communication between the Hungarian government and the municipality. Fiume’s statute also included the Administrative Committee, which took on tasks from the Municipal Council and could be granted decision-making power. The complex integration into state

administration, along with specific bodies, rendered the governance of the cities fragmented: Trieste had more decision-making and executive bodies, while Fiume had more supervisory bodies (see *Figure 3*).

Electoral system

The electoral systems of Trieste's and Fiume's urban organs showed both similarities and differences in nearly equal measure (*Table 1*). The method of electing members to the cities' representative bodies differed significantly, while the election of the city's mayor (*Podestà*) was entirely identical. In Trieste, as in other Austrian cities, a curial system was in effect, uniquely operating with four curiae without a tax census for the lowest curia since 1850. Fiume's municipal council's electoral system was completely different, based on a voting register. However, Fiume's election system also differed significantly from that of Hungarian Municipal Towns, as it did not introduce virilism, which allowed the highest taxpayer residents to enter the Municipal Council without a vote.

Another voting instrument absent from Fiume's system was the appointment committee. With a state-elected majority, this committee proposed three nominees for the position of mayor in every Hungarian Municipal Town, from which the municipal councils had to elect one. This organ was a tool of centralization by the Hungarian government (SARLÓS, B. 1976). The voting age in Fiume also differed from that in Hungary and was identical to the one in Austria. Although the mayors (*podestà*) of the two cities were elected in the same way (voted by the municipal committee and assented by the emperor), in Fiume, the Governor was the head of the executive power, appointed by the emperor with the Hungarian Prime Minister's agreement, indicating the city's greater exposure to state control. Nonetheless, the absence of virilism and the appointment committee made Fiume's voting system more democratic than Hungary's and more similar to the Austrian one.

Municipal authority

The special legal status of Trieste and Fiume and their differing integration into their respective state administration systems brought the two port cities closer together regarding their municipal authority (see *Table 1*). Paradoxically, Trieste's elevation to provincial rank significantly limited its municipal powers, as it fell directly under the supervision of the Reichsrat and the emperor. This change required royal assent to establish the municipal institutional system and the adoption of the annual budget which was not the case in other Austrian cities. Fiume also required higher approval for these jurisdictions, but unlike other Hungarian Municipal Towns, issuing building permits and securing local security were solely the rights of the Municipal Council in Fiume, making it more similar to Trieste. Beyond these, the municipal councils of Trieste and Fiume even had a more significant power: the authority to approve any changes to their urban statutes before they were enacted by the state or provincial parliament. This right was not unique across the empire, as Cracow also possessed a similar right (AA, 1866). Both cities could deal with national affairs and could send two representatives to their respective national diets. Additionally, Fiume alongside Budapest and the Hungarian Municipal Towns had a stronger instrument to influence national affairs: the so-called „right to address”, allowing the Municipal Council to object to and detain a government order. However, this right was easily eluded by the state government, and after 1901, the expanded jurisdiction of the Governor's Council rendered it ineffective for the Municipal Council (SARLÓS, B. 1976). The most significant difference between the port cities' authorities concerned financial matters, specifically regarding the rates of municipal surtaxes, the management of marketable municipal properties, and the terms of borrowable loans. Fiume's Municipal Council did not have the authority to manage these financial matters independently; it required approval from the Minister of the Interior. Trieste had authority over these mat-

Table 1. *The main features of the electoral system and municipal authority in Trieste and Fiume compared to Austrian cities with statutes (A.C.S.) and Hungarian Municipal Towns (H.M.T.) (1850–1918)*

	A.C.S.	Trieste	Fiume	H.M.T.
	Electoral system			
Governor	–	Appointed by the emperor for the proposal of the Hungarian Prime Minister / the Minister of Interior.		Elected through the appointment committee.
Mayor (Podestà)	Elected by the municipal council which assented by the emperor.	Elected by the local voters based on a voting register.		Elected through the appointment committee.
Members of the Municipal Committee	Elected by the local voters in a curial voting system.	Elected by the local voters based on a voting register.		Elected through the appointment committee.
Voting age, year	Elected by the municipal council.	24	16	20
Tax census, gulden	Variable (0–25)	–	16	20
Virilism		No		Yes
		Municipal authority		
Municipal representatives in the state parliaments:	No		Yes	No
Legal right to deal with supra-urban matters...	is not allowed.	is allowed indirectly through the municipal representatives seated in the Austrian parliament.	is allowed directly through the „right to address“ and indirectly through the municipal representatives seated in the Hungarian parliament.	is allowed directly through the „right of address“.
Approval of the municipal council to change urban statute by the state/provincial parliament...	is not needed. (except Cracow)	is needed. (The municipal council of Trieste could also initiate a modification of the statute through the provincial parliament.)		is not needed.
Approval of a higher administrative body to by-law-making...	is not needed at all.	is needed in certain matters.		
Approval of a higher administrative body to adopt a budget and to manage urban organs...	is not needed.	is needed.		
Issuing building permit...	is in the jurisdiction of the municipal council. (In Fiume, the Municipal Council delegated this authority to the jurisdiction of the Administrative Committee. This right was abolished in Fiume in 1913.)			is in the jurisdiction of the Administrative Board.
Control over the local police...	is in the jurisdiction of the municipal council (In Fiume until 1913).			is in the jurisdiction of state bodies.
Municipal surtax, %	25–500	25	0	0
Marketable municipal properties, 1000 gulden	0–150	100	0	0
The amount of borrowable loan, 1000 gulden	Variable figures. A few examples: Vienna: 2000 Linz: 100 Klagenfurt, Bmo: 50 Graz: 25	The average of total yearly budgetary income from the last three years.		0

Source: Based on the information of AA, 1850; AA, 1861; AA, 1908; HA, 1870; HA, 1872a; HA, 1872b; HA, 1886a; HA, 1886b; HA, 1901, and the author.

ters, but compared to other Austrian cities, its Municipal Council had a relatively limited or average scope of action.

However, the statutes of the cities had not been modified over time but Fiume's autonomy was torpedoed through state governmental decrees. However, the Hungarian port city could defend its authority for a long time compared to the Hungarian Municipal Towns. A specific governmental decree came into force in Fiume in 1901 that had been enacted in Hungary in 1876. This act empowered the Governor's Council with comprehensive supervision over delegated state powers at the municipal level and stricter oversight of municipal jurisdictions. In 1913, citing the unceasing chaos of the urban administration, the Hungarian government eliminated the special status of the port and later took over the management of the local police (HA, 1916). Meanwhile, Trieste's statute was not significantly modified, allowing it to retain its authority. Compared to Fiume, this was definitely an advantage. However, compared to other Austrian cities, it could be considered disadvantageous, as the jurisdictions of many Austrian cities expanded over time (mainly in financial authorities), and ethnic conflicts were mitigated by electoral reforms.

Conclusions

This research aimed to explore urban governance systems beyond the experience of American cities after the 1970s, focusing on two Central European cases from a historical perspective. The study analyzed the first urban statutes of Trieste and Fiume during the era of the Late Habsburg Empire, revealing that numerous historical, legal-administrative, and socio-economic-political factors shaped their early institutional structures and municipal authorities.

The comparative research showed that these factors significantly influenced both cities' institutional structures and municipal authorities. A crucial *historical factor* was Trieste's and Fiume's special statuses which

were maintained for almost 150 years before the Compromise of 1867. Undoubtedly, this historical fact secured the continuation of the special statuses but at the same time, the newly established *legal and administrative factors* complicated the formulation of their governance systems. Trieste got simultaneously rights of a municipality and crownland with reduced autonomy compared to other Austrian cities. In contrast, Fiume, directly submitted to the Hungarian parliament, had unique jurisdictions not shared by other Hungarian municipalities. The study revealed that *socio-economic-political factors* also played a crucial role in formulating the governmental structure of the cities. Both ports, as key sea trading gateways, were significant from the perspectives of Austrian imperialism and Hungarian nationalism. These perspectives, along with socio-economic factors, differently affected the governmental systems of Trieste and Fiume. The ports' initial statutes favoured Italians, and the curial electoral system in Trieste and the lack of virilism in Fiume maintained Italian dominance. However, growing Slovenian and Croatian national movements paired with Austrian and Hungarian political ambitions disrupted local politics and resulted in different solutions from the Viennese and Budapest governments. The status quo was sustained in Trieste, even amid provincial agreements throughout Austria, while Hungarian governments increasingly opposed Croats and Italians in Fiume and Croatia-Slavonia. Despite Fiume's effective resistance to Budapest's centralization policies, its authority quickly diminished after the turn of the century.

The cases of Trieste and Fiume demonstrated that both the transformation thesis and metagovernance perspectives were applicable not only in combination but also within a historical spectrum. The perspective of metagovernance in this study showed that the legislative and political roles of state actors in urban governance systems were decisive in the cases of Trieste and Fiume. The analytical framework of the transformation thesis also yielded useful results. Several factors indicated that both urban government's and ur-

ban governance's characteristics were present in the municipal administration systems of these port cities. Their highly fragmented urban governance scenes, the right to approve state acts regulating their administration, and their participation in national matters through their representatives in the national parliaments resembled the philosophy of urban governance. However, the strict supervision of their municipal matters, especially the narrow financial authority and the gradually reducing overall autonomy of Fiume, pointed to the idea of urban government.

Based on these results, this study aligns with the conclusions of British experiences mentioned in the theoretical section (ANDREW, C. and GOLDSMITH, M. 1998; GOLDSMITH, M. and GARRAND, J. 2000; PIERRE, J. 2005). However, this research extends beyond them by including and analyzing the effects of additional dimensions (historical, administrative-legal, and socio-economic-political) on the formation of early urban governance systems in the 19th century. Geographical context proved highly relevant in researching urban governance, as DIGAETANO presumed (DIGAETANO, A. 2009). Even within a single state formation, geographical location and administrative position were crucial. The comparison of Trieste and Fiume highlighted the importance of rethinking analytical frameworks of urban governance, showing that different historical times combined with different geographical contexts could create unique circumstances for the formation of urban governance systems.

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