

THE SOCIAL AND LEGAL STATUS OF MAIDS IN OSIJEK (A REVIEW OF THE SECOND HALF OF 19TH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY)

SUMMARY

The authors begin by outlining the development and transformation of Osijek into a strong economic and social centre, emphasizing the emergence of a modern bourgeois society. They analyse population growth and the number of domestic servants, as well as the *Servant Regulations for Cities* during the specified period and provide an overview of the social and economic conditions in the city of Osijek. The paper also describes the reflection of modernization processes within Osijek's bourgeois elite and the growing demand for domestic servants, predominantly women. The authors examine the social and legal status of maids in Osijek, initially presenting, based on preserved population censuses conducted in the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia in 1890 and 1910, the share of domestic and economic servants within the intellectual workforce, crafts, trade, banking, and transport sectors. Using preserved archival material, they attempt to reconstruct the origins of the maids who came to serve in Osijek, their (co)existence with the families they served, and the nature of their position and the treatment they received from their employers. In the concluding section, the authors establish that by the beginning of the 20th century, the position and legal status of domestic servants had not improved in Croatia, including in Osijek, as no regulation had been passed to guarantee them rights in the event of accidents, illness, or old age—protections that industrial workers had more or less already acquired.

Keywords: maids, social and legal status, Osijek, late 19th and early 20th century