

Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole in the Years 1871–1918

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The article focuses on a unexplored group of higher officials of the governing presidium in Opole (Oppeln) in 1871–1918. The archives of the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin are used as the primary source for this research. The research is based mainly on the statistical method and the features such as social and regional origin, religion, professional qualifications, and different career paths are examined. The article also deals with the political involvement of officials and the criteria of their selection by higher authorities.

Key Words *Prussia; Administration; Upper Silesia; Opole*

doi.org/10.15452/Historica.2022.13.0006

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Introduction

During the Napoleonic Wars, the Prussian administrative system was reorganized. The previously existing War and Domain Chambers (in Silesia in Glogau [Głogów / Hlohov] and Breslau [Wrocław / Vratislav]) were replaced by governments (*Regierungen*), over which provinces headed by provincial presidents (*Oberpräsidenten*) were established throughout the Prussian state. In the governments, the most important officials were governing presidents (*Regierungspräsidenten*) and senior government councilors (*Oberregierungsräte*), members of the governing presidium. This article characterizes the above-mentioned group of officials for the governing presidium (*Regierungspräsidium*) in Oppeln (Opole / Opoli) from the perspective of a socio-historical research. A group of 50 people was appointed to head the work of the departments and the government itself in the years 1871–1918. It consisted of 39 senior government councilors and eleven governing presidents of the governing presidium in Oppeln. This group was used for quantitative research in a special database created for this purpose,¹ and the results of this analysis are presented in the article. The research refers to the social background of the officials, their regional origin, religion, and further career paths. The choice of these criteria was determined by the characteristics of the main archival source used for this analysis: these were the files of the Secret Civil Cabinet (*Geheimes Zivilkabinett*) of the King of Prussia. In this cabinet, the king exercised his executive prerogatives, including

¹ The database is based on documents from the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin [further: GStAPK], I. Hauptabteilung [further: I. HA], Rep. 89: Geh. Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, Nr. 13701 and GStAPK, I. HA., Rep. 89 Geh. Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, Nr. 13702.

appointing officials. The king briefly characterized these officials on the basis of the exact characteristics mentioned above.

The study results from a prosopographic research with the elements of description of clerical careers. This is to serve the purpose of identifying the group in question and positioning it within the process of governance. However, due to the source material in our possession, which is the primary source of knowledge about this unexplored group, we were unfortunately unable to trace their marital relationships, living conditions, or the family life they led.

The bureaucracy and state administration has become an object of study for many social sciences since they became widespread as a new professional group – much attention was paid to this subject by, among others, the founder of sociology and theorist of bureaucratic functioning Max Weber (1864–1920). He constructed the theoretical foundations for the typology of power in the German Empire. One group of those in power were the representatives of the bureaucracy, which Weber characterized in his work entitled *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*.² In this study, he uses the concept of rational rule, which is based on the division of official powers and the hierarchy between officials. In this system, the petitioner has the right to appeal to a higher authority.

The research on the bureaucratic elites in Prussia East of the Elbe has not been much discussed. In recent years books have been published about the higher civil servants of the governing presidium in the Province of Posen (Poznań / Poznań) and the bureaucratic elites in the governmental district of Oppeln.³ What is more, the Clerical topics have been discussed relatively locally. In the case of the Prussian administration, more recent works on the subject include the work entitled *Lebenslauf und Bürokratie: kleine Formen der preußischen Personalverwaltung, 1770–1848* by Stephan Strunz,⁴ which was published in Germany in 2022.

It should be noted that similar studies are also being conducted in other Central European countries. For example, officials of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy have lived to see such works as an article by historian Waltraud Heindl⁵ or, more recently, a collective work entitled *The Habsburg Civil Service and Beyond*.⁶ Using prosopography to describe the successive civil service groups holding power in their hands in the countries and regions of Central Europe is not exactly a study conducted by various disconnected groups. In the future, it can be used to compare officials from different countries. This would require further individual studies (on the territory of the former Prussian monarchy) and comparative studies.

My research included a comparison of the same groups in other Prussian districts – while abstracting from comparisons of the clerical hierarchies in other countries.

² WEBER, Max: *Economy and society : An outline of interpretive sociology*. London 1978.

³ MYSCOR, Christian: *Wyżsi urzędnicy pruskiej administracji prowincjonalnej w Poznańskim 1871–1918*. Poznań 2014; GRUDNIEWSKI, Jakub: *Pruska elita władzy władzy na Górnym Śląsku (1870–1918)*. Katowice 2020.

⁴ STRUNZ, Stephan: *Lebenslauf und Bürokratie : Kleine Formen der preußischen Personalverwaltung 1770–1848*. Berlin 2022.

⁵ HEINDL, Waltraud: Bürokratisierung und Verbürgerlichung : das Beispiel der Wiener Zentralbürokratie seit 1780. In: STEKL, Hannes – URBANITSCH, Peter – BRUCKMÜLLER, Ernst – HEISS, Hans (Hg.): *Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie, II: „Durch Arbeit, Besitz, Wissen und Gerechtigkeit“*. Vienna 1992, pp. 193–201.

⁶ ADLGASSER, Franz – LINDSTRÖM, Frederik (Hg.): *The Habsburg Civil Service and Beyond*. Vienna 2019.

However, the lack of similar studies is the way of realizing such comparisons. The researchers' area of interest included those working in the Prussian provinces, including the highest-ranking provincial *Oberpräsidenten*⁷ or those with the greatest influence over local communities, i.e. *Landräte*.⁸ Lower officials, i.e., *Regierungsräte*, were also included in this research as statistical compilations would not give the right results.⁹

At the beginning of this article, the development of the Prussian state administration in Upper Silesia in the 19th century and the stages of the career of a Prussian official presented. At the end of this article, there is a description of the features that a member of the presidium of the governmental district of Oppeln had to have as directed by the higher authorities. This article aims to answer the question: what the ideal Prussian civil servant was and which Prussian authorities were guided to selecting such and not the other people for these positions.¹⁰

Establishment of a Separate Prussian Administrative Unit in Upper Silesia

The expansion of Napoleon's army and the new order introduced by Napoleon, albeit for a short time, and the defeat in the battles of Jena and Auerstädt (1806) inspired Prussia to undertake reforms strengthening the unity of the state. The effectiveness of the functioning of the existing administrative organization was questioned. Still, during the French occupation, in 1808, the Prussian government decided to recognize the equal status of Silesia with other provinces in the monarchy by closing a special ministry dedicated to it. The Silesian Province was headed by a provincial president (*Oberpräsident*). In the same year, by the edict issued by Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein dated 26 December, local public administration organs – called chambers – were closed. In their place, districts were established, functioning since the beginning of 1809. The first of them, established at that time, had their seats in Breslau and Liegnitz (Legnica / Lehnice) (the former Glogau Chamber, which remained under French occupation, was subordinate to it). In contrast to the chambers, they lost the jurisdiction.¹¹

⁷ NEUBACH, Helmut: Die Oberpräsidenten von Schlesien 1869–1919. In: SCHWABE, Klaus (Hg.): *Die preussischen Oberpräsidenten 1815–1945*. Boppard am Rhein 1985, pp. 119–131; ROMEYK, Horst: *Die leitenden staatlichen und kommunalen Verwaltungsbeamten der Rheinprovinz 1816–1945*. Düsseldorf 1994.

⁸ NEBERT, Deanna: *Selection Criteria for "Landräte" in the Eastern Provinces of Prussia 1865–1905*. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. University of Indiana 1996; MUNCY, Lysbeth Walker: *The Junker in the Prussian Administration under William II, 1888–1914*. Providence 1944; IDEM: The Prussian Landräte in the Last Years of the Monarchy. A Case Study of Pomerania and the Rhineland in 1890–1918. *Central European History* 6, 1973, pp. 299–338; EIFERT, Christiane: Zum Wandel einer Funktionsebene: Brandenburgische Landräte im 19. Jahrhundert. In: KURT, Adamy – HÜBENER, Kristina (Hg.): *Adel und Staatsverwaltung in Brandenburg im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Ein historischer Vergleich*. Berlin 1996, pp. 41–66.

⁹ MYSCHOR, Ch.: *Wyżsi urzędnicy; WIEN, Albrecht: Die preussische Verwaltung des Regierungsbezirks Danzig (1870–1920)*. Berlin 1974.

¹⁰ The present research results were funded by the National Science Center granted under the decision number DEC-2013/09/N/HS3/01161.

¹¹ Verordnung wegen verbesserter Einrichtung der Provinzial-, Polizei- und Finanz-Behörden. Vom 26 Dezember 1808. In: *Novum Corpus Constitutionum Prussico-Brandenburgensium Praecipue Marchicarum, Oder Neue Sammlung Königl. Preußl. Und Churfürstl. Brandenburgischer, sonderlich in der Chur- und Marck-Brandenburg, Wie auch andern Provinzien, publicirten und ergangenen Ordnungen, Edicten, Mandaten, Rescripten... Vom Anfang des Jahrs 1751 und folgenden Zeiten...* [Hrsg. S. von Coccejus]. Bd. 12: *Von 1806. bis 27sten Oktober, 1810. als von welchem letztern Zeitpunkte ab die Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preussischen Staaten erschienen ist*. Berlin 1822, pp. 679–704.

As a result of numerous voices saying that the Silesian District occupied an area that was too large, the Oppeln and Reichenbach (Dzierżoniów) governmental districts separated from the governmental district of Breslau.¹² The separation of the governmental district (*Regierungsbezirk*) of Oppeln (1815), as an administrative unit covering the area of Upper Silesia, was necessary because of the Silesian province was perceived, among others by Carl Georg von Massow, as the prefect, culturally significant, religious province. There were also differences between the inhabitants and the province was on an economic level unequal to Lower and Upper Silesia.¹³

The governing president held the highest position in the hierarchy, with a board composed of senior government councilors. The plenum was convened in exceptional cases. The district had two departments – the first dealt with internal, foreign, and military matters, and the second was responsible for financial, trade, construction, and craft issues. The departments were headed by directors, subordinated to government councilors and “technical”, less qualified ones, who held lower positions.

Significant changes in the organization of the governmental districts occurred under the influence of the Congress of Vienna and the new territorial acquisitions of Prussia obtained during it. Again, further action was necessary on the Prussian government’s part to unify the state’s administration. This task was entrusted to chancellor Karl August von Hardenberg, who issued *Orders for the Improvement of the Established Provincial Offices*. (*Verordnung wegen verbesserter Einrichtung der Provinzial-Behörden*) on 30 April 1815, which from then on would form the basis of the administrative organization in Prussia.¹⁴

As a result, the governmental district, as an area, became part of one of the ten Prussian provinces. In very one of them, there were at least two governmental districts. Two further divisions of the presidium were established (1825). According to the new division, departments for internal affairs, Direct taxation, domains, and forests, indirect taxation¹⁵ and church and school affairs were created. The senior government councilors took over the management of these departments. The governing president, together with the senior government councilors, constituted the governing presidium. From 1880 onward, the internal department was the personal prerogative of the governing president, and the latter, had the right to veto collegial votes.¹⁶

The creation of a new type of the governmental district of Oppeln (it was finally constituted on 1 May 1816) according to Hardenberg’s order was led by Count Heinrich Fabian von Reichenbach; who was soon after appointed the first governing president of the governmental district of Oppeln. He drew his knowledge from his previous experience as a vice-president of the governmental district of Breslau. The choice of Oppeln for the seat of the governmental district was not obvious. Also, Gleiwitz (Gliwice / Hlivity) and

¹² KAMIONKA, Roman: *Reorganisation der Kreiseinteilung Schlesiens in der Stein-Hardenbergschen Reformperiode*. Breslau 1934, p. 7.

¹³ Bericht des Oberpräsidenten v. Massow an die Staatsminister des Inneren un der Finanzen. Breslau 1810, Mai 21. In: LOEWE, Viktor: *Oberschlesien und der preußische Staat*, Teil 1: 1740–1815. Mit Anhang: *Dokumente aus der Reformperiode 1807–1815*. Breslau 1930, pp. 123–130.

¹⁴ *Verordnung wegen verbesserter Einrichtung der Provinzialbehörden*. In: *Gesetz-Sammlung 1815*, Nr. 9, pp. 85–98.

¹⁵ In Silesia, as early as 1827, the Directorate of Taxes of the Silesian Province was established in Breslau, which took over all the issues related to indirect taxes to its competence.

¹⁶ SÜLE, Tibor: *Preußische Bürokratiatradition : Zur Entwicklung von Verwaltung und Beamtenschaft in Deutschland 1871–1918*. Göttingen 1988, p. 36.

Ratibor (Racibórz / Ratiboř) had their supporters, as well as Brieg / Brzeg / Břeh (not strictly located in the Upper Silesia, due to the location of the Higher State Court [*Oberlandesgericht*]). Until 1945 the governing presidium in Oppeln was divided into three departments – internal,¹⁷ churches and schools and direct taxes, domains, and forests.

Stages of a Clerical Career in the Prussian State on the Example of the Governing Presidium in Oppeln

People working in the governing presidium in Oppeln followed, with a few exceptions, a traditional civil service career path. Its first step on their career paths was the study of law. The sources do not mention the universities involved in their education, but it is known that it would have been impossible to enter the judiciary and state sphere without them. In eight cases (16 %), the members of the governing presidium in Oppeln held a doctorate in law (Dr. jur.).¹⁸

The next stage of the career was an apprenticeship consisting of preparatory service. Its first element was the so-called first legal exam (*Erste juristische Prüfung*), which was passed before a commission consisting of legal advisors. After passing the first legal exam, one obtained the position of a court apprentice called auscultator, which means lower-level official. This apprenticeship lasted from fifteen months to four years.¹⁹

On the path to get a job in the state administration, the next step was the referendary exam, which took place before court clerks, and the so-called great state exam (*große Staatsprüfung*), which was taken before clerks of the governmental district intended to work.²⁰ To pass the referendary exam, one had to present a secondary school graduation certificate and a document confirming the completion of military service. The exam consisted of a writing assignment, focused on the study of one of the law topics, and an oral exam.²¹

Between 1868 and 1879, the career path through the auscultatur and the court referendary's office was suspended. These years, no new people were accepted to work in the districts as court referendary. In these years, no new referendaries were hired. The shortage of staff was filled, among others, by people who came from the provinces annexed in 1867: Hannover (Hanower), Hessen-Nassau (Hesja-Nassau / Hesensko-Nasavsko) and Schleswig-Holstein (Szlezwik-Holsztyn / Šlesvicko-Holštýnsko). Referendars²² who did not have the money for further education or were not exceptionally talented were not considered for jobs in the government.²³ The financial status, social prestige and individual qualities were important criteria for filling senior positions in administration.²⁴

¹⁷ From 1883 to 1935, it functioned under the name of the Presidium Department.

¹⁸ Of the senior government councilors these were: Georg Meyer, Rudolf Kuester, Arnold Michelly, Albert Marcks, Max Kley. Of the governing presidents in Oppeln: Rudolf von Bitter and Robert von Zedlitz-Trützschler. Cf. Database of the members of the governing presidium in Oppeln.

¹⁹ GRUDNIEWSKI, J.: Pruska elita, p. 145.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 147.

²² Officials higher than auscultators and lower than assessor.

²³ HATTENHAUER, Hans: *Geschichte des deutschen Beamtentums*. Köln – Berlin – Bonn – München 1980, p. 260.

²⁴ HENNING, Hans-Joachim: *Die Deutsche Beamtenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert : Zwischen Stand und Beruf*.

Among the members of the governing presidium in Oppeln, this can be seen in the example of Hermann von Borries and Georg Karl Hüpeden. The former (coming from Westfalen) was employed in 1876 in the department of direct taxes, domains, and forests. Before that, he had been a councilor of the domains department in the Hanoverian province since 1868.²⁵ The latter working in Danzig (Gdańsk / Gdańsk) since 1878 at the head of the most important internal department, came from the Kingdom of Hanover, where he worked precisely until the change of regulations in 1868. Then he moved as a government councilor to Danzig, and the next stage of his career was as a senior government councilor in Oppeln.²⁶

In 1879, the referendary office was re-regulated. It was then divided into two two-year phases: during the first phase, one had to work in the courts of the first and second instance, as well as with a notary, lawyer, and public prosecutor. During the second phase, they had to learn about the administrative court and municipal government work. In 1906, the second phase was extended to three years at the expense of the first phase (henceforth annual).²⁷

During the referendarium, candidates were familiarized with different jobs. There was the possibility of transferring to work in the government as a government referendary. However, this depended on the decision of the governing president of the district, who did not have to give reasons for his decision. In addition, to enter the preparatory service, one had to prove that he could support himself. This was often a more effective bigger obstacle, especially for poor people than a failed law exam.²⁸ Such obstacles were considered by contemporaries as a selection criterion for the clerical profession.²⁹

The preparatory service ended with taking the so-called great state exam. Since 1770 it had been passed before a special examination commission subordinated directly to the minister of internal affairs. This exam was very extensive and consisted of an oral and written part. From 1879, before taking the exam, one it had been compulsory for one to prepare two comprehensive papers on a topic chosen by the commission, and from 1906 it had been necessary to pass a written exam on law instead. After passing this exam, one became a civil servant – an assessor.³⁰ Depending on where you worked, you could be a court assessor or a government assessor (state administration). One could move to the highly prestigious state administration directly from the position of a court assessor.³¹

It was also possible to get to the state administration, to the position of a government councilor (*Regierungsrat*) directly from the position of a court assessor.³² However, it was more difficult this way, among other reasons because of the lack of connection of the

Stuttgart 1984, p. 102.

²⁵ GStAPK, I. HA., Rep. 89 Geh. Zivilkabinet, jüngere Periode, Nr. 13701, k. 35–36.

²⁶ Ibidem, k. 48–49.

²⁷ GRUDNIEWSKI, J.: Pruska elita, p. 148; MYSCHOR, Ch.: Wyżsi urzędnicy, p. 133.

²⁸ GRUDNIEWSKI, J.: Pruska elita, p. 148.

²⁹ HENNING, H.-J.: Die Deutsche Beamenschaft, pp. 78–79.

³⁰ Ibidem, pp. 149–150.

³¹ They were: Friedrich Wilhelm Raffel, Hermann von Borries, von Doernberg, Karl von Westhoven, Hermann Trusen, Paul Grundmann, Karl Ludwig Wilhelm Wetzel, Georg von Heydebrand und der Lasa, Heinrich Kurtz, Johannes Grunewald, and Wilhelm August Martin Horn. Cf. Database of members of the governing presidium in Oppeln.

³² Assessor, higher official in German administration system.

court assessors with a specific registry office where they could prove themselves. After passing the state grand examination, judicial assessors had to serve as justices in such cases which could lead to a decernate³³ in the governmental district. However, this was done in emergency cases when the governing president of the governmental district lacked people suitable for the position.³⁴ In the case of the examined group, there were three such cases.³⁵

It was possible to become a government councilor or senior government councilor (*Oberregierungsrat*) without an assessor. The condition, however, was to have previously held the function of Landrat for at least five years and to pass the so-called first legal exam.³⁶ Surprisingly many of the study group had experience in being a Landrat. It was seven people from among the senior government councilor³⁷ and six governing presidents of the governmental district of Oppeln (the majority).³⁸

In the case of senior government councilors, moving from the position of Landrat was not the most popular way of promotion. The senior government councilors in Oppeln were almost exclusively Landräte from the Silesian province. That may indicate the influence that the governing presidents in the governmental district of Oppeln had in the elections for this position. The great advantage was the knowledge of the local (Silesian) situations. In the case of the governing presidents in the governmental district of Oppeln, who had to know the local specifics very well, being a Landrat beforehand was an additional advantage. Two interesting cases should be mentioned here. The first one was the Landrat of Kattowitz (Katowice / Katowice) between 1878 and 1883, Paul Grundmann, who was transferred to the position of a senior government councilor at his request after the necessary five years.³⁹ Unfortunately, we do not know the reasons for his sort of surprising decision (the function of Landrat was very prestigious). Max von Pohl, on the other hand, before he became the governing president in the governmental district of Oppeln, had been Landrat of Ratibor district for 30 years. Considered an excellent official, he repeatedly rejected proposals for promotion to the position of a police director in Danzig and Posen and the senior government councilor in Königsberg (Królewiec / Královec).⁴⁰

The choice of both senior government councilors and governing presidents for a particular position was move to the beginning a formal decision by the members of the Secret

³³ Decernate = part of an office, smaller than department.

³⁴ GRUDNIEWSKI, J.: Pruska elita, pp. 150–151.

³⁵ Julius Eduard Ballhorn (governmental district of Breslau), Georg Seler (governmental district of Oppeln), and Georg Meyer (governmental district of Marienburg). Cf. Database of members of the governing presidium in Oppeln.

³⁶ GRUDNIEWSKI, J.: Pruska elita, p. 151.

³⁷ The place where a given person was a landrat is given in brackets: Carl August Wilhelm Heinrich von Neeff (*Preußisch Stargard/Starogard Gdański*), Baron von Doernberg (Siegen), Paul Grundmann (Kattowitz), Georg von Heydebrand und der Lasa (Breslau), Peter Junker Jürgensen (Süderdithmarschen, Schleswig), Artur Bartels (Glatz/Kladsko/Kłodzko), Georg von Stosch (Militsch/Milicz). Cf. Database of members of the governing presidium in Oppeln.

³⁸ See previous footnote: Robert Eduard von Hagemeister (Franzburg), Konstantin von Quadt und Hüchtenbruck (Hamm), Friedrich Ludwig Elisa von Moltke (Tost-Gleiwitz), Max von Pohl (Ratibor), Ernst Holtz (Kattowitz), Friedrich Ernst von Schwerin (Tarnowitz/Tarnovské Hory/Tarnovskie Góry). Cf. Database of members of the governing presidium in Oppeln.

³⁹ GStAPK, I. HA., Rep. 89 Geh. Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, Nr. 13701, k. 107–108.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, Rep. 77: Ministerium des Innern, Tit. 1157, No. 3, adh. 1, Bd. 1, k. 94.

Civil Cabinet (*Geheimes Zivilkabinett*). The interior and finance ministers, in the case of the department of churches and schools, the minister of education. However, it is difficult to imagine that the president of a governing presidium did not influence the selection of his closest associates.⁴¹

As the preserved sources indicate, it was between the ministers that the positions of the governing presidents in the governmental district of Oppeln were decided. For example, in 1880, the Minister of the Interior, Count F.A. zu Eulenburg, and the Minister of Finance, Robert Lucius von Ballhausen, initiated the promotion of the former Landrat of Waldenburg, Robert von Bitter, to a position of the Ministerial Commissioner for Upper Silesia, created specifically for him. It was a reward for his exemplary attitude during the flood that hit Silesia and the district he managed. The creation of a new political function caused anxiety and nervousness for the governing president in the governmental district of Oppeln, Baron Konstantin von Quadt und Hüchtenbruck. He accused Bitter, in confidential letters, of ignoring the governing president and the senior government councilor of the Silesian Province when preparing a report on the state of Upper Silesia. In the end, the ministerial authorities did not resolve this conflict, as von Quadt und Hüchtenbruck died unexpectedly in June 1881.⁴²

The situation after his death is another proof of the crowning role of the ministers of the interior and finance in selecting the governing presidents. In surviving correspondence, the minister of finance evaluates candidates for the vacant post. The following senior government councilors were involved: Hermann von Borries from Oppeln, Otto Steinmann from Marienburg (Malbork), Count Traugott von Baudissin from Magdeburg and Gustav Zimmermann from Danzig. The Minister of Finance, Karl Hermann Bitter, spoke about each person. In his opinion, the advantage of H. von Borries was his knowledge of the unique conditions prevailing in the governmental district of Oppeln, while the disadvantage was that he *did not grow up to the special requirements that are now facing the governing president in Oppeln and elsewhere*. Other candidates were also assessed critically by the Minister of Finance. T. von Baudissin was said not to have enough energy and ideas to deal with the problems of Upper Silesia. Bitter was pushing the candidacy of O. Steinmann and G. Zimmermann. However, the minister did not mind that the latter candidate was supposed to have liberal views, especially *in church relations*. However, it is evident that the minister of the interior did not like any of the candidates and an entirely new candidate became the governing president of the governmental district of Oppeln – the former Oberlandeshauptmann of Silesia and President of the Provincial Committee (*Provinzialausschuss*), Count Robert von Zedlitz-Trützschler.⁴³

Social Origin of the Civil Servants

Thanks to the information contained in the sources, it was possible to reconstruct the social background of 43 senior government councilors and governing presidents of the governmental district of Oppeln, which accounts for 86 % of all people in these positions. The social origin of seven chief administrative officers (14 % of the group) could not be

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² Ibidem, Rep. 151: Finanzministerium IB, Nr. 2024, [o.S.]; Grudniewski, J.: Pruska elita, p. 161.

⁴³ GStAPK, I. HA, Rep. 151: Finanzministerium IB, Nr. 2024, [o. S]. Wilhelm I of 29 August 1881; GRUDNIEWSKI, J.: Pruska elita, p. 162.

determined. Among the people whose information we have, the sons of officials predominated – 49 % of the respondents. There were eight governing presidents and thirteen senior government councilors (21 people). The second place was taken by the sons of the knights' estates (nobility) – 30 % of the respondents: this origin corresponded to two governing presidents and eleven senior government councilors. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that some sons of the nobility may have belonged at the same time to official families, but sources have not confirmed it. We suppose that the sons of officials chose their father's profession because of social prestige.⁴⁴ Only one governing president of the governmental district of Oppeln and as many as eight senior government councilors belonged to bourgeois families, accounting for 21 % of the examined population (e.g. the sons of bank directors or factory owners).⁴⁵

Table 1: Social Origin of Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole in the Years 1871–1918

	Governing presidents of the governmental district of Opole (Regierungspräsidenten)	Senior government councilors (Oberregierungsräte)	Total
Sons of officials	8	13	21
Sons of knights' estate owners	2	11	13
Sons of bourgeois families	1	8	9

Source: Database of Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole

As far as Prussia as a whole is concerned, in 1910, of the 36 district presidents, 23 belonged to the nobility and thirteen were of bourgeois origin. Out of the 141 district superintendents, only 32 were of noble origin and as many as 109 were of bourgeois origin.⁴⁶

Bourgeois appeared in the Prussian bureaucracy thanks to Frederick William I, who wanted to use the bourgeoisie to eliminate the privileges of the nobility. The domination of the nobility in the Prussian civil service remained intact. The bourgeoisie, which had distinguished itself in the service of the state, joined its ranks by ennoblement.⁴⁷ Within the General State Law framework, a new concept of the so-called state class (*Staatsstand*) was created, which was supposed to unite people working for the state beyond state divisions. After the Napoleonic Wars, people with academic backgrounds and preparatory for the administrative service were used to rebuild the state, but the nobility remained dominant in power circles, especially in the provinces. From the mid-1820s, the proportion of the nobility in the total number of civil servants in Prussia began to increase again. In general, however, in the state's field of work, the nobility and the bourgeoisie cooperated.

As far as the bourgeoisie is concerned, *education was its founding myth and object of identification*.⁴⁸ Civil servants representing the people had to be “enlightened” persons, which could only be achieved with proper education. In the first half of the 19th century,

⁴⁴ HENNING, H.-J.: Die deutsche Beamtenchaft, p. 60.

⁴⁵ Database of members of the governing presidium in Oppeln.

⁴⁶ SÜLE, T.: Preußische Bürokratietradition, p. 194, tab. 29; Henning, H.-J.: Die deutsche Beamtenchaft, p. 37.

⁴⁷ MYSCHOR, Ch.: Wyżsi urzędnicy, p. 47. In the examined group of officials we also have cases of ennoblement. One of them was Hermann von Eichhorn in 1856. Cf. GStAPK, I. HA., Rep. 89 Geh. Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, Nr. 13701, k. 10.

⁴⁸ Quoted in: Myschor, Ch.: Wyżsi urzędnicy, p. 50.

almost half of the civil servants came from bureaucrat families. During the crisis of the 1840s, they mostly lost their economic status and clung even more tightly to administrative work, thus blocking jobs for young officials. During the revolution of 1848, many young law graduates supported the revolutionaries as they could not wait for their first job in the administration. After 1848 the conservatism of the bureaucracy strengthened, which eventually stifled the revolution. The growing representation of the nobility, which added luster to the status of the civil servant, acted as a magnet for other social groups, including representatives of the bourgeoisie: the free professions, the sons of factory owners and others.⁴⁹ In the 19th century, the Prussian civil servant had a strong work ethos. Hence a high percentage of people would come from families of bureaucrats. The work of a Prussian clerk, even though it was not very profitable, was a dream of many people from the noble estate.

People from all social classes could become higher officials in the governmental district of Oppeln. Typically, becoming a clerk meant the possibility of gaining education and practice as a clerk, which at the same time was even more connected with the work ethos.

Regional Origin of the Civil Servants

The regional origin of the higher officials of the governmental district of Oppeln is very diverse. More than half of the senior government councilors whose origin was possible to determine (it was impossible in eleven cases) came from the western Prussian provinces (eighteen people, 46 %). To the western provinces, from which the Oppeln's senior government councilors came from Westphalia (four persons, 11 %), Hanover (four persons, 11 %), Schleswig-Holstein (four persons, 11 %), and Saxony (five persons, 13 %). One person came from the duchy of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen (3 %). Almost as many as twenty people (54 %) came from the so-called eastern provinces of Prussia.⁵⁰ These were: East Prussia (Ostpreussen / Prusy Wschodnie) and West Prussia (Westpreussen / Prusy Zachodnie) (three persons, 8 %), Brandenburg (Braniborsko / Brandenburgia) (four persons, 11 %), Pomerania (Pommern / Pomorze / Pomořansko) (three persons, 8 %), Silesia (five persons, 13 %), Province of Posen (Provinz Posen (Poznańsko / Prowincja Poznańska) (one person, 3 %) and Berlin (four persons, 11 %).⁵¹ In the case of the governing presidents of the governmental district of Oppeln, there was an almost similar ratio: five came from the western provinces (46 %), four from the eastern provinces (54 %), including two from Silesia.⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 37.

⁵⁰ Database of members of the governing presidium in Oppeln.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² Ibidem.

Table 2: Regional Origin of Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole in the Years 1871–1918

	Governing presidents of the governmental district of Opole (Regierungspräsidenten)	Senior government councilors (Oberregierungsräte)	Total
Western Prussian provinces, including:	5	13	18
Westphalia	4	-	4
Hanover	3	1	4
Schleswig-Holstein	2	2	4
Saxony	3	2	5
duchy of Schwarzburg-Sonderhausen	1	-	1
Eastern Prussian provinces, including:	4	16	20
East and West Prussia	3	-	3
Brandenburg	3	1	4
Pommern	1	2	3
Silesia	3	2	5
Province of Posen	1	-	1
Berlin	3	1	4

Source: Database of Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole

This diversity indicates that there were no geographical criteria in the selection of civil servants. The geographical origin could not be a factor while choosing people for higher official positions in the governmental district of Oppeln. The decisive criteria of where a given civil servant could come from was the size of the social base of the region. It can be seen that the city of Berlin, the capital and social center of Prussia, stands out. It is also worth noting the important role western provinces, such as Westphalia and Hanover, played in the formation of the bureaucratic elite in Upper Silesia. As many as eight people came from areas that became part of Prussia only in 1866: Hanover and Schleswig-Holstein.⁵³ That proves bureaucratic elites' rapid integration with the rest of Prussia. A considerable percentage of people born in the Silesian province testifies to the desire to use the potential of the local bureaucratic elites as much as possible.

It is also interesting to note that most interviewed people had experience working in the Silesian province. Their previous job was in the province, or they employed in the province in the past. Seven governing presidents of the governmental district of Oppeln had experience working in the province (four did not). The same was true for sixteen senior government councilors (thirteen had no experience working in Silesia).⁵⁴

Evidence of the central government's concern in Berlin for local, specific conditions was, in the words of the of the Interior Minister Bill Drews, who in 1917 commented on the competence of the future governing president of the governmental district of Oppeln, the attitude of Walther von Miquel, as follows: *His experience as a Landrat in the difficult industrial district of Saarbrücken and his knowledge of police administration acquired*

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

*there, as well as in his present important activities in Upper Silesia, make him seem particularly suitable for the responsible post of governing president in Oppeln.*⁵⁵

Religion of the Civil Servants

Since 1817 the Prussian state and the Protestant Church have been closely connected. It was then that the so-called Prussian Union was concluded, which not only united the Evangelical-Augsburg and Reformed churches but also the King of Prussia was to be the highest bishop for both. The consistory was to exercise ecclesiastical authority not concerning theology itself. Therefore, the Protestant Church resembled, in its arrangement. After 1848 the union of the Protestant Church and the state progressed, which manifested itself, among others things, in the creation of the Supreme Protestant Church Council (*Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat*). The entire time protestantism was faithfully on the side of the Prussian state, in contrast to Catholicism, which contested the existing order through ultramontanism.⁵⁶

Only after the end of the so-called Kulturkampf⁵⁷ did the state begin to change its attitude towards Catholicism. That was also connected with a change in state policy regarding the Centre Party, which was no longer in absolute opposition to the state. At the same time, since the 1890s, it had been proclaiming the slogan of parity in the employment of Catholics in state offices.⁵⁸ It should be added that the demands of Catholics were not unfounded, as Catholics accounted for 36,3 % of the population in the Prussian state (while Evangelicals accounted for 61,8 %), but in terms of representation among officials (excluding teachers), in 1910 there were only 17,9 % of officials-Catholics, and as many as 78,8 % of officials-Evangelicals.⁵⁹

The domination of Evangelicals among the higher Prussian officials is apparent. Among the eleven governing presidents of the governmental district of Oppeln, which were examined, there were ten Evangelicals (90 %). Among the 33 supreme administrators whose information we have (in the case of six people whose information we do not have), as many as 31 were Evangelicals (94 %), and only two were Catholics (6 %).⁶⁰ Significantly, however, the first Catholics in the governing presidium in Oppeln appeared many years after the end of the Kulturkampf: the first Catholic was Max von Pohl, who became governing president of the governmental district of Oppeln in 1900.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Original: *Seine Bewährung als Landrat des schwierigen Industriekreises Saarbrücken und seine dort sowie in seinem gegenwärtigen Wirkungskreise erworbene Kenntnis der Polizeiverwaltung, die für Oberschlesien von großer Bedeutung ist, lassen ihn für den verantwortungsvollen Posten des Regierungspräsidenten in Oppeln besonders geeignet erscheinen.* Cited by: GStAPK, I. HA., Rep. 89 Geh. Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, k. 146–147.

⁵⁶ CZAPLIŃSKI, Marek: Śląsk od wojen napoleońskich napoleońskich i reform pruskich do Wiosny Ludów (1806–1850). In: CZAPLIŃSKI, Marek – KASZUBA, Elżbieta – WAŚ, Gabriela – ŻERELIK, Rościszlaw (Hg.): *Historia Śląska*. Wrocław 2007, p. 307.

⁵⁷ The policy of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and the German government to subjugate the Catholic Church by means of administrative orders in the 1870s.

⁵⁸ PATER, Mieczysław: *Duchowieństwo katolickie wobec sprawy polskiej na Górnym Śląsku (1891–1914)*. Katowice 2004, pp. 86–87.

⁵⁹ SÜLE, T.: *Preußische Bürokratietradition*, p. 195, tab. 30.

⁶⁰ Database of members of the governing presidium in Oppeln.

⁶¹ GStAPK, I. HA., Rep. 89 Geh. Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, Nr. 13701, k. 193–194.

Table 3: Confession of Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole in the Years 1871–1918

	Governing presidents of the governmental district of Opole (Regierungspräsidenten)	Senior government councilors (Oberregierungsräte)	Total
Protestants	10	31	41
Catholics	1	2	3

Source: Database of Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole.

People went to work in the governing presidium in Oppeln, as government councilors from the position of consistorial councilors and at the same time members of the Evangelical consistory. Karl von Westhoven worked in judicial administration between 1867 and 1873. He was a district judge in Dortmund and then between 1873 and 1880, he was a consistory councilor and a member of the consistory in the Brandenburg province, and between 1880 and 1886 he held the same function in the consistory of the Westphalian province in Münster.⁶² Hermann Trusen had a very similar career path: between 1876 and 1878, he worked at the district court in Wreschen, and between 1878 and 1888, he was a member of the consistory of the Province of Posen.⁶³ There was also a different case. In 1874, the experienced senior government councilor Julius Eduard Ballhorn left his job in the governmental district of Oppeln because he was appointed president of the consistory in Königsberg.⁶⁴ Those situations testify to close connections between the Church (Evangelical) and state administration. Evangelicalism was strongly connected with Prussian ideas of power. It was generally believed that Evangelicals were more reliable and could be relied upon, especially during the Kulturkampf, when Catholics became a “suspicious element”.

Further Career Paths of the Civil Servants

According to sources, working in Upper Silesia, where the Catholic Church held a powerful position and the Polish National Movement was also present there, was extremely difficult. It can be argued that such work could also have been an opportunity for higher civil servants to advance in their careers.⁶⁵

The promotion was the reason for the resignation of four people (36 %), the same number was transferred to the same position in another district (36 %), and three people retired or passed away while being governing presidents (28 %). As for senior government councilors, as many as fifteen were promoted (50 %), and ten (33 %) were transferred to the same position (only five retired or passed away, 17 %).⁶⁶

⁶² Ibidem, k. 93–94.

⁶³ Ibidem, k. 104–105.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, k. 11.

⁶⁵ Such a thesis was present, for example, in the determination of merit for orders. Cf. Ibidem, k. 125.

⁶⁶ Database of members of the governing presidium in Oppeln. We do not have such information about the nine senior government councilors.

Table 4: Further Career Paths of Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole in the Years 1871–1918

	Governing presidents of the governmental district of Opole (Regierungspräsidenten)	Senior government councilors (Oberregierungsräte)	Total
Promotion	4	15	19
Transferred to the same position in another district	4	10	14
Retired or died	3	5	8

Source: Database of Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole.

Among the promotions of senior government councilors from the governmental district of Oppeln, we it is worth mentioning such spectacular careers as the career of Hermann von Eichhorn, who became governing president in Minden in 1872, or Karl von Neefe und Obischau, who was the governing vice-president in Koblenz, and in the years 1878–1881, and in the years 1881–1889 the governing president in Potsdam. Transferring a senior government councilor as a secret councilor (*Geheimer Rat*) to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Trade and Commerce is also considered a promotion (four cases). The career could be continued in central institutions such as Evangelical consistories or institutions of justice (*Oberverwaltungsgericht*) or finance (*Oberrechnungskammer*).⁶⁷

It is important to mention the promotions of the governing presidents of the governmental district of Oppeln: Robert Eduard von Hagemester first became the president of the Düsseldorf governing presidium in 1877, and from 1883 to 1889, he was the provincial president of the Westphalian Province. Count Robert von Zedlitz-Trützschler was promoted in 1886 to a provincial president of the Poznan Province and Chairman of the Colonization Commission. Later he was the provincial president of the Province of Silesia (years 1903–1909). Ernst Holtz became the Undersecretary of State in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior in 1907 and the president of the *Oberrechnungskammer* in 1914. Finally, Oskar Hergt, the governing president of the governmental district of Oppeln in 1916–1917, is interesting. Earlier, in the years 1904–1914, he was already an official in the Prussian Ministry of Finance, and he became the governing president probably due to staff shortages during the First World War (in the years 1915–1916, he was still the governing president in Liegnitz). In 1917, he became the Prussian Minister of Finance. After the regime change in 1918/1919, he was still (as a monarchist and opponent of the republic) the Reich Minister of Justice and Vice-Chancellor from 1927–1928.⁶⁸

Attitudes towards Prussian Government Policies on the Part of Civil Servants

Before 1848, state officials were practically not politically controlled by the Prussian government. That may explain the incredible power of liberalism in the civil service, also in Silesia. The loyalty of officials to the state and the king was enshrined in the *Allgemeine Land-Recht*, which was in force before and after the revolution of 1848. In this system of control of officials' political views, the supporters of subversive tendencies,

⁶⁷ Ibidem. It should be added that in these central institutions, salaries were higher than in the position of senior government councilors. Cf. MUNCY, L. W.: *The Junker*, pp. 86–88.

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

such as national minorities, social democracy, and the Centre Party (especially in Kulturkampf), were not tolerated.⁶⁹ Admittedly, in lower civil servants' positions, people with oppositional views were allowed there (on the condition that they did not question the state order). However, essential functions were given only to declared supporters of the Prussian government policy, which was equivalent to having conservative views.⁷⁰ Members of the governing presidium were responsible for implementing the decisions of the Prussian government in internal and external policy. They were therefore required to be particularly loyal and committed to implementing government policy.

In Upper Silesia, the struggle against Catholicism in the Kulturkampf period was closely linked to the suppression of the Polish Movement, which had its allies in the Catholic clergy and the Centre Party. It was more important that the civil servants at the head of the governing presidium in Oppeln were fully trusted. That was the case with the first governing president of the governmental district of Oppeln in the period discussed Robert Eduard von Hagemester. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Friedrich Albrecht zu Eulenburg, and the Minister of Finance Otto von Camphausen wrote all wrote the Emperor on 17 December 1871: *Because of the peculiar circumstances of Upper Silesia, whose industry is developing rapidly but whose poorly educated population has for some time been the object of ultramontane and Polish agitation, we consider it particularly important that the government in Oppeln should be headed by a man who, with a strong but tactful hand, will be able to strengthen the original loyal spirit of the population and to remove the obstacles which people are trying to put in the way of the progress of German education. We think that we have found such a man in [...] von Hagemester.*⁷¹

This particular remark during the Kulturkampf period was repeated by the Minister of the Interior, Count Eulenburg, on the occasion of his appointment of Karl von Neeffe und Obischau as head of the interior department in August 1872: *In this position, he has distinguished himself both by his excellent business ability and masterly zeal for duty and his loyal attitude. The fact that large part of the population of the district's population entrusted to his management belongs to the Polish nationality gave him a thorough knowledge of Polish national aspirations, in settlement of which he showed both thorough participation and a tactful and, if necessary, energetic speech.*⁷²

It should be noted that Karl von Neeffe und Obischau de facto became the most important (apart from the governing president) official in Upper Silesia after the outbreak of Kulturkampf combined with the Polish Movement.

⁶⁹ SÜLE, T.: Preußische Bürokratietradition, p. 166.

⁷⁰ MYSCHOR, Ch.: Wyżsi urzędnicy, pp. 260–261.

⁷¹ Original: *Bei der eigenthümlichen Verhältnissen Oberschlesiens, dessen Industrie sich in rapider Weise entwickelt, dessen wenig gebildeten Bevölkerung aber seit einiger Zeit zum Gegenstande ultramontaner und polnischer Agitationen gemacht wird, glauben wir einen besonderen Werth darauf legen zu müssen, that a man will be appointed to the Head of Government in Oppeln who, with a brighter but tactful hand, will be able to defend the fundamental loyalty of the people of Oppeln and to understand the difficulties that we want to overcome in the course of German education. Einen solchen Mann glauben wir in [...] von Hagemester gefunden zu haben.* Quoted after: GStAPK, I. HA., Rep. 89 Geh. Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, Nr. 13701, k. 7–8.

⁷² *In dieser Stellung hat derselbe sich durch vorzügliche geschäftliche Befähigung wie durch beherrschenden Dienstes und loyale Haltung ausgezeichnet dadurch, daß ein nicht unerheblicher Theil der Bevölkerung des seiner Verwaltung anvertrauten Kreises der polnischen Nationalität angehört, hat er eine genaue Kenntniß der polnisch nationalen Bestrebungen gewonnen, bei deren Behandlung er ebenso wohl ein einsichtsvolles Antheil, wie ein tactvolles und, soweit erforderlich, energisches Auftreten bethätigt hat.* Ibidem, k. 18–19.

A fundamental issue during the Kulturkampf was the problem of compulsory education with the state and separating it from the control of the Catholic Church. Such had a bearing on choosing the right man to head the Department of Churches and Schools. In 1874, this man became Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Raffel, the former president of the police in Posen. Minister of the Interior – F. A. Eulenburg, finance minister O. Camphausen, and education minister Adalbert Falk wrote about his qualities to the Emperor: [...] *in the course of his official activities in the governmental district of Posen, he had the opportunity to become acquainted with the manner and means by which the identification of national-Polish interests with Catholic interests is promoted among the Polish population and with the cooperation of the Catholic clergy, constantly opposing governmental intentions, conditions are created which are detrimental to the common good, the development of which is becoming increasingly noticeable also in the governmental district of Oppeln.*⁷³

The state's control over civil servants tightened more and more over the years. As late as 1872, Kaiser Wilhelm, I refused to personally punish Landräte, who voted against one of the Kulturkampf laws.⁷⁴ In 1882, however, the same Emperor issued a decree in which he obliged “political officials”, that is, in practice, among others, members of the presidium of the governmental districts, including the governmental district of Oppeln, to give the state government active support in the elections (from the rest of the officials neutrality was at least required). Behind this decree, which was a sign of the “conservative era” of the minister of the Interior, Robert von Puttkamer, promoted the idea of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck that civil servants should stop supporting the liberal party, as was the case in the 1860s. However, the discontent caused by these attempts to restrict liberty was so great that Bismarck limited the royal directive to *officials to keep away from all manifestations of anti-government agitation.*⁷⁵ Bismarck failed in this way by forcing the administration to obey, but it was gradually being rebuilt in a conservative spirit. In the following years and decades, similar conditions were no longer dictated, except in special situations: the struggle between Chancellor Leo von Caprivi and the Agrarian Union in 1893 (as part of the customs debate) and the conflict between the government and civil servants in the parliamentary discussion on the Inland Canal in 1899.⁷⁶ At the time, the Agrarians opposed the project to link the Rhine and Elbe canals for fear of an influx of cheap American wheat. During a vote in the House of Assembly, most Conservative and Centre MPs opposed funding the project. They also included 18 officials: two district presidents and 16 Landräte. These civil servants were retired, but most returned to work after a year, though they were not eligible to run for parliament again.⁷⁷

The Agrarians' Union (*Bund der Landwirte*) wanted to maintain customs duties on agricultural products imported from other countries (the government intended to reduce or abolish these duties). The aim was to protect the interests of East German wheat

⁷³ Original: [...] *als er während seiner amtlichen Thätigkeit bei der Regierung in Posen Gelegenheit gehabt hat, kennen zu lernen, in welcher Weise und mit welchen Mitteln dort in der polnischen Bevölkerung die Identifizierung der national-polnischen und der katholischen Interessen gefördert, und, unter Mitwirkung der katholischen Geistlichkeit, in unausgesetzter Opposition gegen die gouvernementalen Intentionen für das Gemeinwohl unzutragliche Zustände geschaffen sind, deren gleichsortige Entwicklung auch im Regierungsbezirk Oppeln mehr und mehr die Aufmerksamkeit in Anspruch nimmt.* Ibidem, k. 32–33.

⁷⁴ At issue was a law taking school supervision away from the clergy. Cf. MYSCHOR, Ch.: Wyżsi urzędnicy, p. 261.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 262.

⁷⁶ Ibidem.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, p. 265.

producers, including those from Silesia. This union also fought against initiatives to modernize Prussia's social and political relations. The main center of this organization was the area east of the Elbe River, traditionally associated with Junker. The members of the Agrarians' Union were close to conservative views, and many of them were civil servants at various levels, including members of governing presidiums.⁷⁸ One such person was Georg von Heydebrand und der Lasa. He was the brother of the Landrat of Millitsch, Ernst, who resigned from his state service in 1895 to pursue parliamentary activity on the forum of the German Conservative Party. Ernst was also associated with the ultra-conservative organization, the Agrarians' Union. These family connections and the potential political opposition of the future member of the governing presidium in Oppeln did not escape the attention of the Prussian Council of Ministers: *Landrat von Heydebrand und der Lasa is the brother of the former Landrat of Millitsch of the same name, who last year received the claimed exemption from the civil service, and who also made himself known in the House of Representatives as an ardent advocate of the agrarian movement. From the latter, however, he differs essentially in his whole personality. Just as, according to his declaration, he considered it incompatible with the duties of his office to seek a parliamentary seat, which, after all, he might have obtained, so I am convinced that in all situations and all relations, he will remain fully conscious of his duties as a public servant, and will loyally endeavor to carry out the views of the State Government without regard to his personal opinions. There is no reason to suppose that Landrat von Heydebrand's inner convictions would incline him to extreme undertakings in the spirit of the agrarian movement. Unlike his brother in Millitsch, his activity is concentrated on zealous administrative work. Although he has a decidedly conservative and Christian outlook, he has not shown himself to be a one-sided party member, especially in the agrarian field. On the contrary, as far as these matters are concerned, he has from time to time expressed himself in a manner which indicates that, despite all his benevolence and readiness to help agriculture in its distress, he regards the demands and tactics of the agrarians calculated to affect the broad masses of society as a grave danger and incompatible with his conservative ideals. Not being a landowner like his brother, he also has less reason to support the agrarian aspirations, taking into account that in the governmental district of Oppeln [...] the interests of the industry come to the fore.*⁷⁹

⁷⁸ SHEEHAN, James J.: Political Leadership in the German Reichstag 1871–1918. *American Historical Review* 74, 1968, p. 518.

⁷⁹ Original: *Der Landrath von Heydebrand und der Lasa ist ein Bruder des früheren Landraths in Militsch gleichen Namens, welcher im vergangenen Jahr die nachgesuchte Entlassung aus dem Staatsdienste erhalten hat und als eifriger Vorkämpfer der agrarischen Bewegung auch im Abgeordnetenhanse hervorgetreten ist. Von diesem ist er indessen seiner ganzen Persönlichkeit wesentlich verschieden. Wie er es nach seiner eigenen Erklärung schon für unvereinbar mit den Pflichten seines Amtes gehalten hat, ein Landtagsmandat, welches er wohl hätte erlangen können, zu erstreben, so wird er, wie ich dessen überzeugt bin, sich in allen Lagen und Beziehungen seiner Pflichten als Staatsbeamter vollauf bewußt bleiben und die Ansichten der Staatsregierung ohne Rücksicht auf seine persönliche Anschauungen loyal zur Durchführung zu bringen sich bemühen. Es liegt über kein Grund zu der Annahme vor, daß der Landrath von Heydebrand seiner inneren Ueberzeugung nach etwa extremen agrarischen Bestrebungen zugeneigt wäre. Im Gegensatz zu seinem Bruder in Militsch findet er den Schwerpunkt seiner Thätigkeit in eifriger Verwaltungsarbeit und ist, obwohl von gefestigter konservativer und christlicher Grundanschauung, doch ein als einseitiger Parteimann hervorgetreten, insbesondere auch nicht auf agrarischen Gebiet. Vielmehr hat er, was diesen Punkt anlangt, gelegentlich Äußerungen fallen lassen, welche darauf hindeuten, daß er bei allem Wohlwollen und jeder Hilfsbereitschaft für die Nothstände der Landwirtschaft die extraraganten Forderungen und die auf die breiten Massen berechnete Taktik der Agrarie als eine ernste Gefahr und mit seinen konservativen Grundsätzen nicht für vereinbar betrachtet. Nicht, wie sein Bruder, mit Grundbesitz angesessen, hat er auch weniger Anlaß agrarischen*

Loyalty, doubtful from the point of view of Prussian government interests, of people linked to the political pressure group that was the agrarian movement, was not, as can be seen, an obstacle to occupying very high state positions. Georg von Heydebrand und der Lasa left his prominent position in the governing presidium in Oppeln in 1900 and was succeeded by Peter Junker Jürgensen. This date seems not accidental due to the conflict in the previous year between the Agrarians' Union and the Prussian government. It can be speculated that the senior government councilor, under various pressures, decided not to pursue a career in administration. However, there is no direct evidence of this connection in the sources examined.

There is further evidence that the right attitude in the Agrarians' Union-Prussian government conflict may have allowed a career in administration. The Landrat in Meseritz (Międzyrzecz) in the province of Posen, Max Kley, who had already been a member of the Agrarians' Union while working in Greater Poland (1904–1914), had to resign from the organization.⁸⁰ In 1914 he became a senior government councilor in the governing presidium in Oppeln. He was there until the fall of the monarchy in Prussia and even later (he eventually became an employee of the Reich Ministry of Provisions and Agriculture). The ultraconservative worldview represented by this office followed him even after 1933, when Kley was a member of the NSDAP.⁸¹

Ethos of a Prussian Civil Servant on the Example of Members of the Governing Presidium in Oppeln in the Years 1871–1918

Now, it remains to answer the question of what character traits among high-ranking civil servants (besides loyalty) were desired by governmental factors in Prussia. Among such characteristics were resourcefulness, reliability and experience. When Max von Pohl was promoted to the post of governing president of the governmental district of Oppeln in April 1900, his competence in managing Ratibor district as Landrat was praised: *For 30 years, von Pohl has been at the head of the most populous district in the Oppeln administrative district, the administration of which presents special difficulties not only because of this but also because of its location on the state border. At all times, he has fully met all the requirements placed upon him. He has always shown himself to be an experienced, prudent, and energetic official in all branches of administration, who has gained a high reputation in the province by his management and his proper and pleasant appearance in personal dealings. His trustworthiness, also in ecclesiastical and political matters, is not in doubt.*⁸²

Aspirationen Vorschub zu leisten, wobei überdies in Betracht zu ziehen sein dürfte, daß in dem Oppelner Bezirk [...] die Interessen der Industrie im Vordergrunde stehen. Quoted after: GStAPK, I. HA., Rep. 89 Geh. Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, Nr. 13701, k. 169–170.

⁸⁰ MYSCHOR, Ch.: Wyżsi urzędnicy, pp. 283–284.

⁸¹ GRUDNIEWSKI, J.: Pruska elita, pp. 416–417.

⁸² Original: *Von Pohl steht seit 30 Jahren an der Spitze der bevölkertsten Kreise im Regierungsbezirke Oppeln, dessen Verwaltung nicht allein um deshalb sondern auch wegen seiner Lage an der Landesgrenze besondere Schwierigkeiten bietet. Er ist allen an ihn herangetretenenen Anforderungen jederzeit in vollem Maße gerecht geworden und hat stets als ein auf allen Gebieten der Verwaltung wohl erfahrener, umsichtiger und energischer Beamter erwiesen, der sich durch seine Geschäftsführung sowie durch sein angemessenes und gefälliges Auftreten im persönlichen Verkehr ein hohes Ansehen in der Provinz. Seine Zuverlässigkeit, auch in kirchenpolitischer Beziehung steht außer allem Zweifel.* Cited after: GStAPK, I. HA., Rep. 89 Geh. Zivilkabinett, jüngere Periode, Nr. 13701, k. 193–194.

They also paid attention to diligence and efficiency in fulfilling their duties. Those same qualities were pointed out by Prussian Minister of the Interior, von der Recke, in 1896 when retiring the long-standing (since 1880) deputy governing president in Oppeln, Georg Hüpeden. He was to be awarded the Order of the Red Eagle with Oak Leaves on his retirement.⁸³ The next head of the internal department, Peter Junker Jürgensen, on the other hand, was characterized as: *an efficient public servant with excellent work skills, a practical outlook, sharp judgment, and a good education.*⁸⁴

It was pointed out that managing the work of the departments of the governing presidium in Oppeln required special character traits from the people who were to hold these positions. In 1893 Rudolf Glasenwald was appointed the Head of the Department of Churches and Schools. The ministers for internal affairs and finance wrote about him as follows: *He is an eminently capable public servant, possessing a good knowledge of the law, practical ability, firmness of character, and a full understanding of the tasks of church and school administration, and all those qualities and abilities which are essential to the carrying out administrative functions entrusted to him in the government of Oppeln.*⁸⁵

Other desirable characteristics were contacts among the local landowning elite. Such a person was the president of the governmental district of Oppeln and later provincial president of the Posen province, Robert von Zedlitz-Trützschler, who was the only one from the surveyed group who did not have a university degree but held the post of the head of the Silesian provincial parliament (*Landeshauptmann*).

*With great natural talent and an unusually pleasing outward appearance, he combines the comprehensive knowledge acquired through the autodidactic route, which many years of work in public life, especially in local government offices, have allowed him to apply and put into practice. He has a fantastic oral and written presentation gift and has always enjoyed considerable success as a public speaker. These qualities, as well as his appearance, which is distinguished by courteous manners, loyalty, and nobility of character, have over the years secured for him an exceptional position of trust in his native province, so much so that when in 1879, the Imperial and Royal Majesty agreed to appoint the present Provincial Board von Seydewitz as provincial president, Count Zedlitz was from the beginning the only serious candidate for this [President of the Provincial Department] position.*⁸⁶

⁸³ Original: *Da der Genannte sich während seiner langjährigen Dienstzeit durch Fleiß und Geschäftstüchtigkeit hervorgethan und ein politischer Beziehung eine zuverlässige Haltung bethätigt hat, so glauben wir uns für die Berücksichtigung dieses Antrages aussprechen zu dürfen.* Ibidem, k. 163–164.

⁸⁴ Original: *Er ist ein tüchtiger Beamter von hervorragender Arbeitskraft, praktischen Blick, scharfem Urtheil und guter allgemeiner Vorbildung.* Ibidem, k. 171–172.

⁸⁵ Original: *Er ist ein hervorragend tüchtiger Beamter, welcher gute juristische Kenntnisse, praktische Befähigung, Entschiedenheit des Charakters und volles Verständniß für die Aufgaben der Kirchen- und Schulverwaltung sowie überhaupt alle diejenigen Eigenschaften und Fähigkeiten besitzt, welche zu einer gedeihlichen Verwaltung der ihm zugeordneten schwierigen Stellung bei der Regierung in Oppeln erforderlich sind.* Ibidem, k. 142–143.

⁸⁶ Original: *Mit großer natürlicher Begabung und einer überaus gewinnenden äußerern Erscheinung verbindet er ein umfassendes auf autodidactischen Wege erworbenes Wissen, welches im practischen Leben anzuwenden und zu verwerthen ihm seine langjährige Beschäftigung im öffentlichen Leben, namentlich im Aemtern der Selbstverwaltung die Gelegenheit geboten hat. Er besitzt in ganz hervorragenderen Grade die Gabe der mündlichen und schriftlichen Darstellung, und hat auch als öffentlicher Redner stets bedeutende Erfolge erzielt. Diese Eigenschaften, sowie nicht minder sein durch verbindliche Umgangsformen ausgezeichnetes persönliches Auftreten, seine loyale Haltung und die Ehrverhaftigkeit seines Charakters, haben ihn im Laufe der Jahre innerhalb seiner heimatlichen Provinz eine hervorragende Vertrauensstellung in dem Maße erworben, daß, als Er. Kaiserliche und Königliche Majestät im Jahre 1879 den derzeitigen Vorsitzenden des Provinzial-Ausschusses von Seydewitz zum Ober-Präsidenten zu ernennen geruhten, Graf Zedlitz von vornherein als der einzige ernstliche Kandidat für jene Stelle in Frage kam.* Ibidem, k. 69–72.

Conclusion

In the case of officials of the governing presidium in Oppeln, it is easier to identify a model official than in the case of the Prussian Landrat. While among the Landräte there were often people who at the beginning of the 20th century still traditionally represented the local gentry in “their” district, the situation was quite different. The authorities in Berlin did not consider social origin (in places where nobility used to prevail) or regional origin in their selection of officials. Apart from the nobility, many representatives of the “clerical state” (sons of clerks) were people of the bourgeois origin. State origin did not play an important role. However, it was connected to the possibility of a career in administration, so this path was closed to those who could not afford a proper education. Regional origin was also significantly differentiated. Although the dominance of people from the so-called eastern provinces of Prussia can be seen (which can be explained by the fact that those provinces were the traditional personnel base for civil servants in this part of Prussia), the most important positions in the governmental district of Oppeln were often given to people from the West, for example from Westphalia or Hannover. The authorities chose experienced civil servants so that they had a chance to prove themselves in a rather difficult management area. The ministerial authorities welcomed experienced people for work in Silesia. Among the officials, the majority were almost evangelicals, which the more significant trust evangelicals can explain had in the government in Berlin and the traditional, in this case, alliance of “the altar and the throne”. Catholics struggled to break through and make an administrative career in high places. That brings us to the core of the question of what was most important to the authorities in selecting officials, which are the fidelity to the king and the monarchy as well as appropriate character traits. A close attention was paid to these traits when the officials were considered for promotion.

A career as a civil servant was reserved mainly for representatives of certain social groups, such as the nobility or the bourgeoisie, but especially the descendants of Prussian officials. This is a direct result of the difficult and expensive education that was required in order to get this work position. In addition, it was necessary, elusive in the sources, to support a particular candidacy; that is, to have connections. No attention was paid to their regional background, as other criteria determined the predisposition of becoming an official. It should be noted that the prevailing ethos among officials possession of the clerical virtues became a goal for many to achieve. Those of Protestant faith felt more connected to the Prussian *raison d'état*, as they felt cared for by the Protestant Hohenzollern state.

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Summary

Members of the Governing Presidium in Opole in the Years 1871–1918

The governmental district of Opole, established in 1815, was a Prussian administrative unit in Upper Silesia. The authority that administered Opole was the government headed by the presidium. The senior government councilors and the governing president managed the presidium. These officials were qualified, educated Prussian officials who were guided by the clerical virtues of resourcefulness, reliability, and experience.

In nationally mixed Upper Silesia and during the period of political struggle (Kulturkampf), it was particularly important to implement state policy. Among such important officials, there could be no attempt at going against the interests of the Prussian government. The interests consisted of fighting the Church and centrifugal movements, such as the Polish movement.

Members of the governing presidium were recruited from the sons of officials, holders of knights' estates and the bourgeoisie (the governing presidents were mainly (more than 60 %) the sons of officials, while the senior government councilors, in addition to these, were also the sons of the holders of knights' estates and the bourgeoisie by a similar percentage).

For the authority (Ministry of the Interior) which supervised the work of the governing presidium, the regional origin of these officials did not matter much. They are almost equally divided as being born both in the western provinces of Prussia and east of the Elbe River.

The entire group was distinguished by a predominance (more than nine out of ten) of members of the Evangelical faith. This is understandable since the Protestant Church was strongly linked to the Prussian state and its ideas of power. Protestantism was the religion of the ruling dynasty since the Reformation.

Upper Silesia, as a region considered difficult to govern, was in many cases a Stepping stone to higher positions in the Prussian officials' hierarchy (such as provincial presidents or even ministerial positions). This was the case in almost half of the cases studied. All this adds up to a general, prosopographical picture of some of the most important people in the Prussian administration in the governmental district of Opole.