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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

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Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Pokludová, A. (2008). Forming intelligentsia in Moravia and Silesia in the second half of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. *Historical Social Research*, 33(2), 82-95. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.33.2008.2.82-95>

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Forming Intelligentsia in Moravia and Silesia in the Second Half of the 19th and at the Beginning of the 20th Century

Andrea Pokludová *

Abstract: The study reports on the conclusions of a fundamental research devoted to the formation of the intelligentsia (doctors, attorneys, lawyers, engineers, secondary school professors, teachers, state, municipal and company clerks) in Moravia and Silesia in the 2nd half of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. The project was carried out in selected locations: Moravian Ostrava (a new administrative centre of an industrial region), Opava (regional capital city of Austrian Silesia), Olomouc (administrative city, centre of church administration, garrison city), Mistek (stagnating town with textile industry) and Vitkovice (dynamically developing municipality). For all locations, extensive research was carried out from the census of 1857 to 1910, on the basis of which databases were prepared, containing detailed evidence about members of the intelligentsia living in the respective towns for the census concerned. According to the evidence obtained we can draw conclusions not only on the quantitative development of the monitored social groups, but describe more specifically their composition by nationality, confession, professional specialization, territorial mobility as well as their standard of living. Based on other sources we will deal in brief with the typical professional careers of representatives of individual professions. The study also covers the problem of the engagement of intellectuals in municipal politics and associations active in the nationalization process. Attention is also paid to the high proportion of Jews among doctors and lawyers as well as aspects of the everyday life of the social groups under scrutiny.

The study deals with the role played by the intelligentsia in Moravia and Silesia during the modernization and nationalisation process which took place in the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. In the paper, stemming from the results of a fundamental empirical research¹, I will treat the given problems on several levels: first the formation of the intelligentsia as a social group in selected towns and cities, then the share of the intelligentsia in the modernization process of municipal societies, and finally the role of the intelligentsia in local movements of national self-assertion and emancipation.

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¹ Research grants No. 409/05/P042 financed by the Czech Science Foundation

According to the Polish historian Irena Homola,² the intelligentsia (close to the German *Bildungsbürgertum*) comprises the representatives of the free professions, teachers, schoolmasters, engineers, members of the catholic clergy, protestant pastors, rabbis, civil servants and some groups of clerks in the private economy. For reasons of comparability with the former lands of the monarchy, the precise criteria of German studies related to the *Bildungsbürgertum* have not been used.³

And now let us pay attention to the formation of the intelligentsia, a social group belonging to the urban social elite. In order to identify the whole range of relevant problems in this respect, an investigation into the evolution of five cities, representing various types of settlements, has been realized so as to obtain evidence on different local patterns accounting for the historical process of the actual formation of the intelligentsia. The first city surveyed was Moravian Ostrava, a quite insignificant township until the mid 19th century with stagnating industrial arts and crafts which, in the period of industrialization, thanks especially to the development of coal mining, manufacturing, and the tertiary sector linked to industry, had become a modern administrative centre with numerous employment opportunities for professionals in the quaternary economic sector and the civil service as well. Similarly, Vítkovice – near to Moravian Ostrava -, initially a small village, was transformed, due to the foundation of ironworks in 1828, into a modern industrial town offering a number of new opportunities for engineers and other white collars in the ironworks by on the end the 19th century. Opava, a traditional administrative centre, became the regional capital of Austrian Silesia in 1849. Another Moravian city chosen for our research was Olomouc. Just like Opava, it was a traditional administrative city, endowed in the past with a university, the residence of an archbishop and a military fortress of the Austrian army until the 1880s. The last city to be studied in the project was Místek, representing a typical administrative centre

² HOMOLA, I. "Kwiat społeczeństwa..." (*Struktura społeczna i zarys położenia inteligencji krakowskiej w latach 1860-1914*). Kraków: Wydawnictwo literackie, 1984.

³ CONZE, W. [Hrsg.] *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Bildungssystem und Professionalisierung in internationalen Vergleichen*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1985; GALL, L. [Hrsg.] *Stadt und Bürgertum im Übergang von der traditionellen zur modernen Gesellschaft*. München : Oldenbourg, 1993; KOCKA, J. [Hrsg.] *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich*. Band. 1-3. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988; LUNDGREEN, P. [Hrsg.] *Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte des Bürgertums. Eine Bilanz des Bielefelder Sonderforschungsbereich (1896-1997)*. Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000; STEKL, H. [Hrsg.] *Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie II. „Durch Arbeit, Besitz, Wissen und Gerechtigkeit.“* Wien: Böhlau, 1992; KOCKA, J. [Hrsg.] *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert, Teil IV. Politischer Einfluss und gesellschaftliche Formation*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1989; SIEGRIST, H. [Hrsg.] *Bürgerliche Berufe. Zur Sozialgeschichte der freien und akademischen Berufe im internationalen Vergleich*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988.

of county importance with usual manufactures, retail trade and some textile factories.

Formation of the intelligentsia for the individual cities has been derived from the results of census,⁴ city directories⁵ and parish registers. Based on large data files, it has been ascertained that in all examined cities a significant growth of the intelligentsia can be attested in the second half of the 19th century as it is demonstrated in the table on the *Formation of intelligentsia in the towns under scrutiny in the period 1857-1910* graph (attachments). Namely around 1900 a significant growth ratio of the groups concerned as compared to the total population in all cities under scrutiny can be observed, a consequence of several evolutionary processes taking place in the given local environments. This situation led at the end of the century to growing misgivings among professionals about the insufficiency of employment opportunities for the still growing number of university graduates, as it was actually publicized in many articles of professional periodicals for physicians and lawyers.⁶ Attractive employment opportunities, as perceived by university graduates, arose really at the end of the 19th century only in the industrial cities observed, where, according to contemporaries, the number of professional positions were on the rise at a fast progressing pace (so called "American pace"). It was so because the demand for professionals had not yet been saturated in these cities.

As we can see from the following graphs on the *Structure of the intelligentsia in the towns under scrutiny according to their professional clusters in the year 1910* the functioning of the city was affected to some extent by the rela-

⁴ Regional archive Opava, branch State district archive Opava: census 1857-1910, signature No. 1072-1075, 1090-1093, 1182-1185, 1294-1297, 1410-1413, 1053-1056; Regional archive Opava, branch State district archive Olomouc: census 1857-1910 Olomouc town, signature No. 2139-2153, 2154-2163, 2181-2206, 2207-2232, 2233-2267; Regional archive Opava, branch State district archive Místek: census 1890-1910, signature No. 1044, 1007, 1068, 1110; Municipal archive Ostrava: census 1900-1910, signature No. 1-31, 82-107.

⁵ KRÄMER, O. *Vollständiges Adreß- und Geschäfts-Handbuch der Landeshauptstadt Troppau 1901*. Troppau : Adolf Drechsler, 1901; KRÄMER, O. *Vollständiges Adreß-, Geschäfts- und Personal-Handbuch der Landeshauptstadt Troppau 1911*. Troppau: Adolf Drechsler, 1911; *Vollständiges Adress- und Geschäfts-Handbuch der Landeshauptstadt Troppau 1891*. Troppau : Alfred Trassler, 1891. WATTOLIK, F. *Adressbuch der Stadt Mährisch Ostrau und ihrer Nachbarschaft für das Jahr 1889*. Mährisch Ostrau: 1889; LANYI, L. *Adressbuch und Wohnungs-Anzeiger von Mährisch Ostrau und Umgebung*. Mährisch Ostrau : 1900. KURKA, J. *Handels- und Gewerbe Adressbuch des Ostrauer-Karwiner Reviers*. Mährisch Ostrau: 1910; *Hudecžek's Adress-Buch der königlichen Hauptstadt Olmütz für das Jahr 1882*. Olmütz : 1882; HUDECŽEK R. J. *Adressbuch der königlichen Hauptstadt Olmütz als Führer durch die Gebiete des Gewerbes, Handels, Rechtes, der Kunst und Sanität*. Olmütz: 1896-97; *Adress-Buch der königl. Hauptstadt Olmütz und ihrer Vororte*. Jhrg. 1895, Olmütz: Hölzel's Buchhandlung, 1895; *Adress-Buch der königl. Hauptstadt Olmütz der Stadt Neue Gasse und der Vororte*. Jhrg. 1909, Olmütz: Hölzel's Buchhandlung, 1895.

⁶ *Časopis lékařů českých*. Praha : Nakladatelské a tiskové středisko ČLS JEP, 1862-1910; *Právnícké rozhledy: orgán spolku českých advokátů v Král. českém*. Praha : Leschinger, 1900-1912; *Technický obzor*. Praha: [s.n.], 1897, 1898 and 1900.

tive proportions of the size of individual professions within the global social cluster of the intelligentsia. The largest group was always represented by clerks and executives, in the administrative centres mostly by civil servants, moreover, in industrial cities, by those active in the secondary and tertiary sector. In the latter places the engineers had a much larger share, while the relative numbers of the teaching staff and the free professions were approximately equal everywhere with the exception of Vítkovice and Olomouc, the latter providing more positions in Church service due to the existence of the archbishopric.

Let us have a look at the intellectual clusters as regards historical demography. Censuses organised at the time attest to a high degree of territorial mobility, since only very few of the educated men were making a professional career in their hometown as it is shown in the table *The territorial mobility of the intelligentsia by native land in 1910*. Although those were times of growing secularisation, let us refer here also to the increasing discrepancies in the confessional composition of the educated cluster as presented on the table on *The confessional composition of intelligentsia in the towns under scrutiny in 1890 and 1910*. Though predominantly consisting of Roman Catholics, like the population of the regions concerned, the intelligentsia gained towards the end of the 19th century a large input of Jews. The latter were above all lawyers and physicians, so much so that in 1910 for example, in Moravian Ostrava 68% of all lawyers were of Jewish denomination as well as 56% of the physicians practising in the town.⁷ With regard to the long historical process of nation-building in the Czech lands, the composition of the local intelligentsia by nationality or ethnicity is also worth to be taken into account. According to the criterion of the first spoken language (*Umgangssprache*), most of the professionals usually adopted German identity in the monarchy. But the share of Czech speaking men had started to grow significantly if not sharply at the turn of the 20th century as shown on the table: *The development of the composition of the intelligentsia by nationalities in the towns under scrutiny according colloquial language in 1890 and 1910*. The initial prevalence of the German intelligentsia was grounded in numerous aspects of the historical development of urban society, as e.g. the stronger economic position of Germans in Moravian and Silesian cities and, for a long time, the absence of elite training Czech secondary schools and universities. The knowledge of German was also considered for a long time as the status symbol of educated clusters in every social strata of municipal society (indifferently of national background). All Jewish professionals were German speakers, considering this language to belong to the culturally and economically most advanced strata of the Dual Monarchy.

⁷ POKLUDOVÁ, A. Představitelé židovského Bildungsbürgertum v Moravské Ostravě v letech 1890-1910. In *Wieki stare i nowe T2. Práce naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego nr. 2125*. Katowice : Uniwersytet Śląski, 2003, p. 118-135.

The birth records of Opava and Olomouc for the period 1848-1905 show clearly, that most educated men were born in the families of city craftsmen, traders and real estate owners, where investments into the sons' education had won recognition as a new way of thinking. Approximately only one third of educated men actually descended from intellectuals themselves, and even prestigious professions like physicians and lawyers showed no greater rate of professional reproduction in the families concerned.⁸ More frequently than it could have been earlier assumed, sons of smallholders and farmers also appeared in the intelligentsia. The first generation of lawyers and physicians of Czech nationality often originated from those social strata of rural society. According to the memory of a Czech lawyer, a farmer's son, the parents often financed their son's secondary education in the expectation that he would become a priest, regarded as the most esteemed learned professional in provincial lower classes. Later the sons' decisions to study law, medicine or philosophy were often met with resistance in those traditional families. In the period under scrutiny, thus, though to a limited extent, social mobility to the higher intellectual professions from below became possible. Birth records also offer evidence on new marriage patterns. Members of the intelligentsia would get married usually rather late, after thirty, and exclusively with women of the upper middle class of municipal society. In families of the intelligentsia, the number of children was restricted to two or three, so as to provide an education of quality to the offspring. Sons were particularly expected to continue their education in some of the domestic universities, after having passed successfully the final examination of a secondary school. At the end of the century it started to be common that also daughters would be provided with higher education. Daughters especially from teachers' and clerks' families belonged to the first graduates from girls' grammar schools and quite many of them actually became teachers.

Members of the intelligentsia, despite the fact that their share of the population of the examined cities varied merely in the range of 1 to 4 % - i.e. in Moravian Ostrava in 1890 the 286 intellectuals represented 1 % and in 1910 the 1 030 intellectuals 3 %, in Vítkovice in 1890 they were 171 (2 %) and in 1910 416 (2 %), in Opava in 1890 722 (3 %) and in 1910 1 174 (4 %), in Olomouc in 1890 515 (3 %) in 1910 938 (4 %), in Místek in 1890 67 (1 %) and in 1910 122 (1 %), - they would have a significant impact upon the modernization process in the cities in many directions due to their professional position. It is certainly impossible to specify the contribution in this respect of particular professional clusters as compared to others, but aspects of modern mentality was obviously more common among the educated than elsewhere in urban milieux: they saw advanced education as essential for their offspring, they believed in incessant

⁸ POKLUDOVÁ, A. Sňatková politika představitelů inteligence v Opavě na přelomu 19. a 20. století. In *Sociálně a národnostně smíšená rodina v českých zemích a ve střední Evropě od druhé poloviny 19. století do současnosti*. Opava : Slezský ústav SZM, 2003, p. 124-134.

scientific and technological progress, they adopted the political ideal of pluralistic democracy and the affirmation of citizen's rights, they also distinguished themselves with their involvement in community affairs.

The expansion of education had become one of the collective priorities in most highly developed industrial societies. Primary school had turned, due to state arranged school reforms, into an educational institution for all strata of society. Primary school represented for most population of the monarchy the only educational institution they had a chance to complete. The impact of teachers on schoolchildren was at that time certainly much broader than nowadays, as teachers would not only convey to children basic skills like reading, writing and arithmetic, but even social rules and hygienic habits. For many pupils the teacher represented the first adult who required, besides discipline, a highly normalized public behaviour on which later the successful inclusion of young people in society depended. The teachers would be daily confronted with the often miserable life of working class children living in the surrounding low class districts, where youngsters could be regularly sent out by parents to work for minimal wages instead of attending school. Therefore the teachers demanded the ban of children's work during the school year, admitting only easy occupations for children during school vacations. Together with the clergy they were enforcing pre-school education of the children of working mothers, they supported girls' education and were founding the first public libraries. In respect of the nation building process, the Czech teachers were pursuing the education of the new generation in its native language, at least in the first classes, though they would not refuse teaching German in higher classes, as this was considered essential for the practice of the more qualified professions. A slightly different role was played by the schoolmasters who were preparing students of secondary schools (including even girls from the very end of the 19th century) for difficult university studies or for positions of a clerk, respectively. Many times, as frequently reflected in published memories, the schoolmasters had a more formative function than the family thanks to their moral dispositions and political opinions. Students anyhow remained separated during their studies from their families, thus future representatives of the intelligentsia and the entrepreneurial class owed often more to their teachers than to their families in terms of ideological, moral or intellectual socialization.

Sanitary conditions had also acquired great importance, as success on professional labour markets required not only advanced learning but good health too. The second half of the 19th century was at least at the cities investigated the period of the elaboration of the modern system of public health care and sanitary infrastructure. The physicians in the service of the community, the land and the state pioneered in the introduction of several prophylactic measures concerning infectious diseases, compulsory vaccination of children and youth, preventive medical examination of schoolchildren, etc. The installation of consulting rooms for the school physician funded by public sources was first

established in Opava in the whole Cislathania (Austria outside Hungary). Physicians in their capacities of administrative workers in the health departments had been enforcing renovation of old city districts, build up water mains and sewage networks as well as modern hospital facilities. They endeavoured to control and regulate prostitution (successfully in case of Opava and Moravian Ostrava) and they also fought against the spread of venereal diseases by means of health education. They also committed themselves in the struggle against alcoholism, which was widespread especially in the working classes.

In the eyes of contemporaries engineers were considered to be front line representatives of modernisation, engaged as they appeared to be in the daily practice of their profession in the improvement of living conditions for all social strata. Construction of railways, bridges, water-conduits and sewerage networks, river regulation and town-planning could not be realised without the technological knowhow of engineers. Mechanical, metallurgical and mining engineers realized technical innovations in manufacturing processes, rationalised productive activities in the manufactures, iron works and mines. As it is generally known, the organisation of big factories had entirely changed labour relations and working conditions. Patriarchal relations between masters and journeymen had been replaced first by labour rules and then by labour contracts, which defined among other things the position occupied by engineers as specially qualified employees. Engineers strove, as one of the first employees hired via labour contracts, to limit the length of working hours and make earnings formally correspond to work performance. They were instrumental in the gradual generalization of the grant of some social benefits, enjoyed by them due to their managerial positions, among skilled workers and other white collars. They supported the setting-up of pension funds and sick funds for manual workers. They initiated the foundation of workers' associations and newspapers, naturally only those which abstained from spreading socialistic ideas. As managers and supervisors, they required from workers the respect of working hours, the observance of labour duties and high quality working performance, that is, modern work ethics. These university trained learned technicians also strove for the modernization of everyday way of life in workers' settlements (housing, nutrition, the uses of leisure time). This proved to be extraordinarily successful in Vítkovice.

Community involvement on the local level was typical for representatives of the intelligentsia.⁹ Professionals often ran as candidates in local elections in all examined cities with relatively strong chances of success. Particularly at the end of the 19th century, when cities experienced the most dynamic transformations and were confronted with a number of new problems, the share of professionals was growing fast in urban governments. Elected councillors from the

⁹ POKLUDOVÁ, A. *Obecní rada Opavy 1850-1912. Komunální samospráva zemského hlavního města a její reprezentanti.* Opava : Slezské zemské muzeum, 2007.

ranks of intellectuals, most frequently lawyers as compared to other professionals, supported in all the cities investigated the construction of modern municipal infrastructures and amenities. The realization of the projects, approved by the city self-governments, was ensured by the communal bureaucracy. In the given era we can undoubtedly consider the construction department, led by the city planner, as one assuming the greatest responsibility for architectural improvements in the city districts. The importance of the health and educational departments should not be overlooked neither, nor that of the accounting office supervising the application of public financial means and the management of community property.

A brief outline of the representation of the intelligentsia in the self-government of cities leads us to problems concerning the involvement of the intelligentsia in the nation-building process. In all examined cities at the turn of the 20th century political movements and mobilizations were supported concurrently in all cities by representatives of the intelligentsia, as front spokesmen of German, Czech as well as, occasionally, Polish and Jewish interest groups. It was their initiative which led in all our cities to the construction of national houses, hosting more and more intensive associative activities together with often stormy pre-election agitation in the eve of elections for representatives in communal, land-wide and imperial matters. Especially during the time of communal elections the nationalistic attitudes of city populations were sharpened since the 1880s, when, on the one side, the Czech spokesmen progressively achieved the right of national self-determination for Czechs, while German spokesmen sought to maintain their dominant position within the constitutional framework of the dual monarchy.

It is worth to remember that until the end of monarchy the governments of the cities under scrutiny were placed under exclusively German direction, with only German councillors in various governmental instances, regardless of the fact that a Czech majority prevailed in Místek with a minority German population, while in Moravian Ostrava and Vítkovice the national structure had radically evolved at the end of the 19th century, switching from a Czech to a German majority due to immigration. In Olomouc two thirds of population remained German and rest was Czech, while Opava there was a majority German population of as much as 90%. In each of these cities Germans constituted the economically more successful and better off strata of the society within the city community. German political prevalence or leverage could be conserved thanks to the election system, which recognized the right to vote only to relatively wealthy tax payers and to selected groups of educated professionals, thus excluding large population sectors from elections, and that concerned generally mostly Czechs. German candidates had always enjoyed the support of a guaranteed majority in the given election system.

The admission of Czech councillors in city governments in the examined cities constituted since the eighties of the 19th century one of the proclaimed

objectives of spokesmen of the Czech national movement. In the case of Moravian Ostrava, Olomouc and Opava, Czech lawyers became the leading personalities of the Czech constituency, who would develop together with physicians, teachers and schoolmasters of Czech conviction the associative, cultural and economic life of Czechs, the retardation of which was limited in comparison with those of Germans. The attitudes of the German and Czech intelligentsia towards nation-building can be documented best by the history of communal politics in Opava and Olomouc.

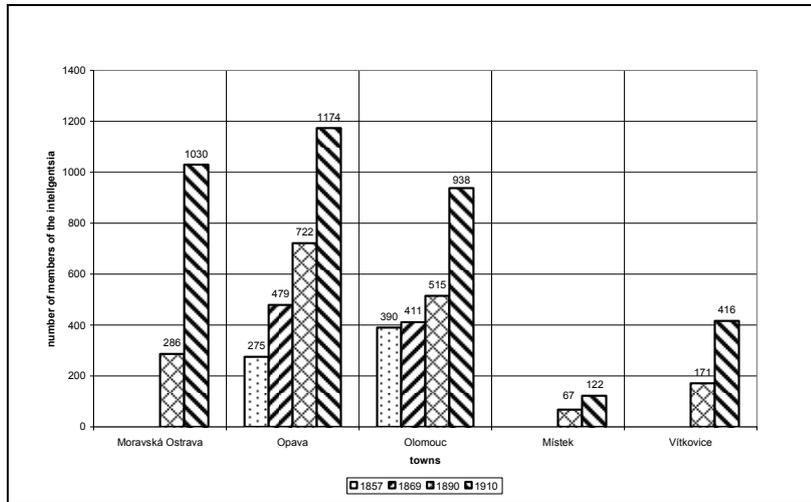
In Opava exclusively councillors from the German bourgeoisie and intellectuals, whose political views corresponded to those of German liberals, participated in sessions at city-hall. Local elections were taking place usually with the participation of very few voters and election campaigns and the activities of the local council were rarely reported upon in the local press. This idyllic atmosphere in the city hall began to change before the election of 1888 when both on the pages of the German and the Czech press sharp critics of local politics and politicians began to appear. The hitherto united German councillors splitted ideologically between German liberals and nationals. The latter surprisingly won the election in 1892, hence Opava became one of the first cities in the Dual Monarchy with a majority of German nationalists in the city council. One must remind of the fact that Czech voters had also voted for candidates of the German nationals, following the slightly idealistic expectations of the Czech nationalists that the newly established German-national councillors would change their minds and support the Czech movement of emancipation. The former city council had adamantly opposed all Czech activities and agitations, refused to accept letters written in Czech, patronized petitions rejecting the establishment of a Czech secondary school, and showed reservation as to the founding of Czech cultural associations. But the attitude of the local government did not evolve after the election. In subsequent elections the German nationals acquired all mandates in the council and defined henceforth the orientation of local politics up to end of monarchy. Who were the most prominent spokesmen of the German nationals in Opava? They were above all lawyers graduated at Vienna university, who publicly professed and spread on the ground of political affiliations xenophobic opinions of Georg von Schönerer, Dr. O. Steinwender and the Vienna mayor Karl Lueger. The ideas of anti-Semitism had found a rich breeding ground among Opava aldermen with no exception among intellectuals. The representatives of Czech intelligentsia tended to withdraw from communal politics after the triumph of the German nationals. Their intervention in the political field of the Czech Lands was much more successful since representatives of the intelligentsia of Czech conviction would be elected as deputies of the Land diet, where they could enforce the interests of their ethnic compatriots.

Especially the Czech representatives in Olomouc played an important role in Czech nation-Building activism. Within the framework of the Czech move-

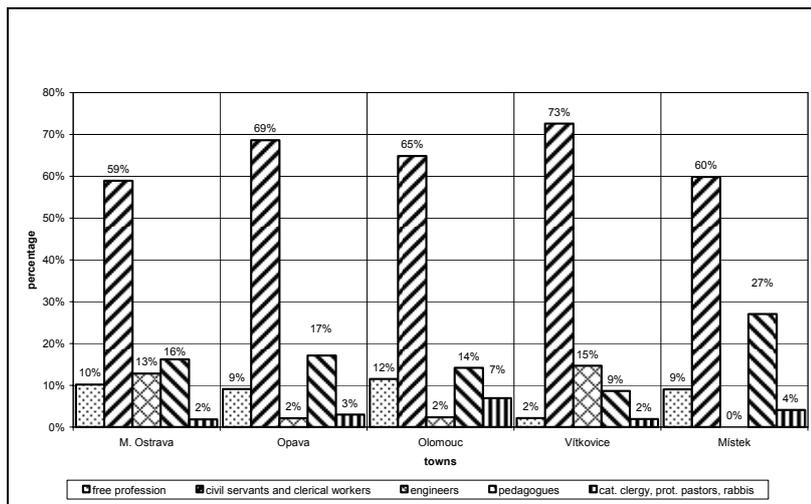
ment, which was more advanced and numerous than in Opava, a split occurred in the Czech political camp: Old Czechs were losing positions, however the People's Party, founded by the Olomouc lawyer Dr. M. Hurban, gathered a strong support in the city and its surrounding within a few years. At the turn of the 20th century some radically active Young Czechs asserted themselves and imposed their views. Dr. R. Fisher, who had become a Young Czech spokesman, was - we can say legitimately - called by Olomouc Germans „the Moravian Garibaldi”. But the Czechs did not succeed in Olomouc neither to acquire seats in the city-council, while representatives of the local Czech intelligentsia ran successfully in the Land- and Empire-wide elections, so as to enforce Czech requirements, especially in the Moravian Land diet. Contrary to Opava, the clashes between partisans between the two national clusters did not take place only on the pages of Olomouc newspapers, but they were extended to the streets where demonstrations and ceremonial marches of both groups turned often into street rows. The two camps, implacably opposed to one another, unable to carry a sensible dialogue in almost any matter around 1900, were unfortunately united though in their anti-Judaism that grew into political anti-Semitism and, like in Opava, involved even representatives of the intelligentsia.

In conclusion, I can say that around 1900 the intelligentsia became integral part of urban elites in Moravian and Silesian cities and, by performing their highly qualified professions, contributed substantially to the modernization of city life and the living conditions of urban populations. But somewhat more problematic appears, from the point of view of historical evolution, the assessment of the role of the intelligentsia as spokesman of the national movements.

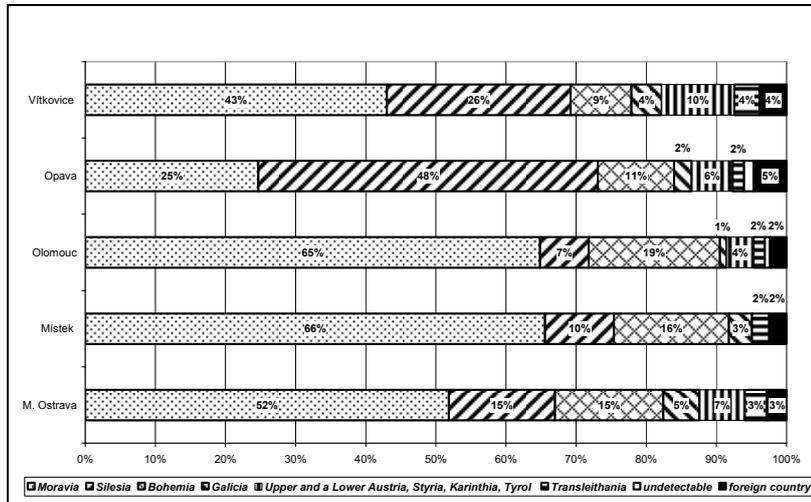
Formation of intelligentsia in the towns under scrutiny in the period 1857-1910



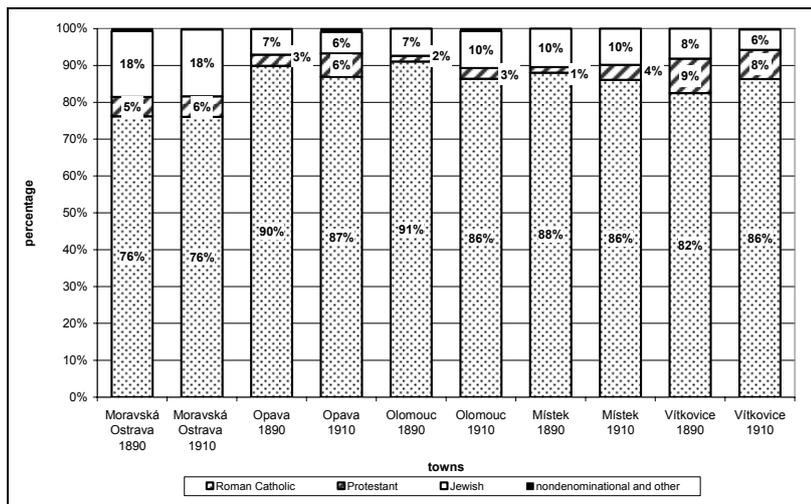
Structure of the intelligentsia in the towns under scrutiny according to their professional clusters in the year 1910



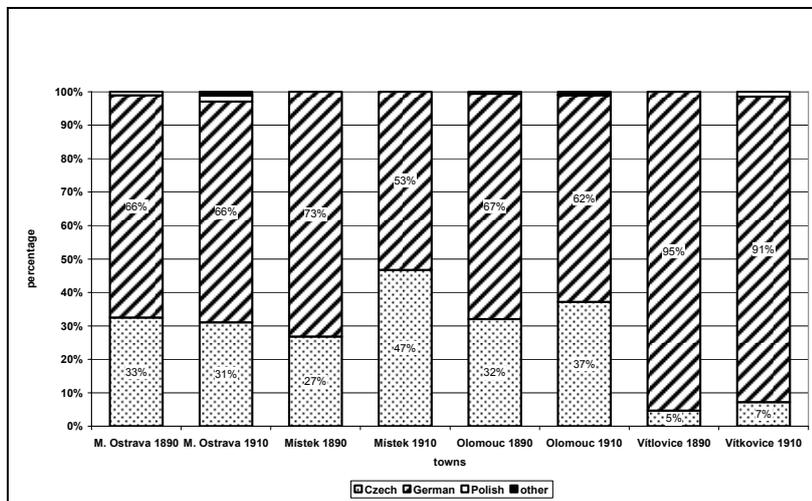
The territorial mobility of the intelligentsia by native land in 1910



The confessional composition of intelligentsia in the towns under scrutiny in 1890 and 1910



The development of the composition of the intelligentsia by nationalities in the towns under scrutiny according colloquial language in 1890 and 1910



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