

# TO THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN ECONOMIC THOUGHT IN MORAVIA AND THE UNIVERSITY OF OLOMOUC

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## Abstract:

On the basis of archival documentation, period writings and professional literature, the picture of the beginnings of modern economic thought in the Czech lands is composed in the form of cameralism in one of the teaching centers - at the University of Olomouc from 1882 to 1855, when the Faculty of Law at the university was closed. Teaching took place here first in the system of "Police and cameral sciences" (Polizey- und Kameralwissenschaften) and later in the didactic university system in the field of "political sciences" (politische Wissenschaften) to a certain synthesis of cameralism and classical school of political economy in the system of political economy of Karl Heinrich Rau. The paper focuses on the content of teaching, the first theoretical and political clashes between cameralists (they were counted among the enlightened persons) and Catholic circles in Austria, and also on the ideological clash with the ideas of the classical school of political economy. The paper provides an overview of personalities of economic thought at the university and the characteristics of their teaching.

## Keywords

Cameralism, university system of political science teaching, personalities of political science teaching, Department of Political Science at the University of Olomouc

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## Introduction

This paper characterises the development of police and cameral sciences (Polizey und Kameralwissenschaften), later known as political science (politische Wissenschaft), a new field at the University of Olomouc, from its introduction as a subject of study at the University of Olomouc in 1772 to 1855 when the institution closed. The subject consisted of police science (Polizeywissenschaft), business science (Handlungswissenschaft), and financial science (Finanzwissenschaft). It must be noted that the works of early cameralists (such as J. Ch. Dittmar, Simon P. Gasser, G. H. Zincke and others) used the term *Ökonomie* (economy). This term, however, was rejected by Joseph von Sonnenfels, a leading representative of late

(Enlightenment) cameralism and a guarantor of the education in political science in the Habsburg monarchy, and replaced with *business science*. Still, it would be wrong to conclude that research can limit itself to the “science of business” (or financial science), as for example the works of early cameralists incorporated the study of trade balance—a characteristic teaching of mercantilism—into the police science as an administration subject. The term *business science* (*Handlungswissenschaft*) was used by all Sonnenfels’ students and successors in the teaching of political science, such as the professors at the University of Olomouc or Lyceum of Olomouc. Later, it was replaced with *national economy*. National economy, along with financial sciences as a throwback to cameralism, was taught as national-economic theory and politics at e.g. the university in Prague until 1948.

So far, literature has paid little attention to political science or police and cameral sciences at the University of Olomouc. Findings on the topic can be found in the Olomouc branch of the Provincial Archive in Opava, as well as in the archive of the Palacký University Olomouc. Generally speaking, there is a relatively extensive literature available (see e.g. Araujo Lobo, Alice (JAN-JUN 2015), Guerrero-Orozco, Omar (JAN-JUN 2015), Huenniger, Dominik (JUN 20 2018), Priddat, Birger P. (SEP 2008), Szabo, Franz A. J. (APR 2018).

## **1. Construction of police and cameral sciences as a subject of study, and the learning content with respect to the University of Olomouc**

As a subject of study, police and cameral sciences were introduced at Theresianum in Vienna in 1750, and in 1763 at the University of Vienna. Departments of police and cameral sciences were later founded at other Austrian universities. 1772 saw the founding of one such department at the University of Olomouc where the subject began to be taught in January 1773. J. Justi (1717 - 1771) was a major representative of later cameralism; after he left Austria, Joseph von Sonnenfels became the guarantor of the subject’s teaching at the University of Vienna. The departments at other Austrian universities were filled with Sonnenfels’ students. In Olomouc, this applied to Leopold Ludwig Schulz von Strasznicki (1743 – 1814). Christoff von Passy (1763 - 1837), Joseph Rohrer (1769 - 1828), Gustav Franz Schreiner (1793 - 1872), Hieronymus von Scari zu Cronhof (1798 - 1845), and Johann Koppel (1808 - 1866), professors of political science, followed. Political science was introduced at faculties of arts, though it wasn’t a mandatory subject for all students. Studying at a faculty of arts was viewed as a preparation for studying at other of a university’s faculties. The subject tended to be picked by those who

considered having a career as an official. In 1784, J. Sonnenfels' managed to transfer the field to faculties of law.

Karl Anton von Martini (1726 - 1800), a representative of Catholic Enlightenment who was appointed to the Department of Natural and Roman Law at the University of Vienna in 1754, presented natural law as a part of God's creation, not as a code of human laws based on the human nature of the man as interpreted by rational theorists. Thus, he succeeded in reconciling the Empress' Catholic faith with the teachings of natural law. The catholic tradition of the Habsburg monarchy became intertwined with natural law. Police and cameral sciences were an applied field of natural law.

According to the professor L. L. Schulz, the science was established to fulfil the needs of the state, namely to "institute" and "manage" "general welfare" (see Schulz 1772, thesis no. 6). The basis of natural law was used as a groundwork for the individual disciplines of state science. Contemporaries viewed police and cameral sciences, and later political science, as an applied field of natural law.

Ideas were to be implemented mostly through the administrative process, with the economic process being viewed as an administrative process by cameralists. Based on the court decrees of 1770 and 1771, all those interested in holding a territorial, estate, or municipal office had to complete a political science course. Thus, from the perspective of the state which cameralists considered to be the centre of the economic system, officials occupied key positions in the system. Officials needed to be trained in order to be able to fulfil their tasks. This was the purpose of political science. The goal of political science was to prepare professional students for their future occupation, i.e. to serve as an (mostly senior) official.

Leopold Ludwig Schulz exemplified the model enlightened official, testifying to the purport of the new field. An exemplary professor and enlightened official, he was appointed by Joseph II to be a Moravian-Silesian gubernial councillor and the hauptmann of Brno Region. L. L. Schulz proved successful in settling conflicts between the nobility and subjects in the Brno region, and approached the relationship between government authorities and the subjects in newly acquired Galicia territories in an exemplary fashion. As a reward, he received the predicate von Strazsnitz.

L. L. Schulz contributed to the field's development. He published several works, see, Schulz, L., L. (1776,1777) *Tabellarischer Entwurf über die Grundsätze der Polizei-, Handlungs-, und Finanzwissenschaft*, three parts, Olmütz., Schulz, L., L. (1768) *:Auszug aus den*

*Polizeigesetzen des Herrn v. Sonnenfels*, Klagenfurt, Schulz, L., L. (1772) *Ueber die Verminderung der Feiertage*, Klagenfurt, Schulz L. L. (1774), *Lehrsätze und Fragen aus der Einleitung in die Staatswissenschaft und der sammtlichen Polizei*, Olmütz, Schulz, L., L. (1772) *Lehrsätze aus der Einleitung in die Staatswissenschaft und der sämmtlichen Polizey*. Klagenfurt. Printed by Ignatz Aloys Kleinmayer Landich Buchdr., where he expanded upon the ideas of Joseph von Sonnenfels, contained in the officially prescribed textbook (Sonnenfels, 1763 to 1767). The publication is worth mentioning as it deals with free days and holidays in the spirit of populationism.

*Von den Pflichten ..*, a speech to the students of political science in Olomouc, as published in Brno in 1777, was viewed as an official service book. The speech highlighted the dignity and esteem of those aspiring to pass a police science exam. The text includes theses of the “science of police”. It is signed by Madrowski, though L. L. Schultz is believed to be the actual author. Treatises were usually written by professors and defended by those applying for official posts.

It is necessary to highlight a key category of political science—the population principle which united all branches of political science into an integral whole. It can be said that “the state science was defined by the population principle”, see (Reinhalten, 1988, p. 25). Hence the name of the relevant school of thought—populationism. Cameralists viewed population growth as the “end goal” (Endzweck) of political science (theory) and of state policy (praxis). A keystone, it combined the theoretical equipment of the bureaucracy with the fulfilment of practical requirements. In business science, the end goal of state science was reflected in the “end goal” of business science, coinciding with efforts to achieve maximum employment. See also (Schulz, 1772).

## **2. Political science, disputes, and conflicts**

Despite the consensus between natural law and Catholic catechism, political science as an applied field of natural law encountered sharp resistance among the representatives of the Catholic church. The cameralist view of religion as a political tool was considered to be especially unacceptable. Martinus Thadeus Slawiczek (1719–1796), a clergyman and the rector of the University of Olomouc, declared political science, primarily the science of police, to be heresy which needed to be fought with all available means.

Political science began to be taught early in 1773. The very first class by L. L. Schulz was intentionally interrupted and needed to be adjourned. The rector dismissed Schulz's

complaint. Schulz was similarly bullied by Baron F. Šubíř (1713-1790), university director. In the end he left the university due to concerns about informers from the monastery, chapter, and other church institutions, and taught political science in his flat. He was prevented from taking part in the university life.

With his poor governance, director F. Šubíř paralysed the university to such a degree he became a subject of complaints raised by, along with L. L. Schultz, F. Karpe and J. Monse, teachers of other new fields. The investigation began only after Šubíř's death in 1777 and was one of the reasons the university (i.e. political science education) moved from Olomouc to Brno. The investigation was led by de Ville, the president of a court committee, a gubernial councillor, and the subject of a 1777 publication.

### **3. Political science in the first half of the 19th century**

Christoff von Passy, Joseph Rohrer, Gustav Schreiner, Hieronymus von Scari zu Cronhof, and Johann Koppel—successors to L. L. Schulz—shifted their professional focus from political science to other subjects and fields, as important for the education and preparation of public officials as political science was. see for example Rohrer, J. (1797) *Das neueste Gemälde von Wien*. Wien: Doll., Rohrer, J. (1804) *Abriss der westlichen Provinzen des österreichischen Staates*. Wien: Heubner, Rohrer, J. (1804) *Bemerkunden auf einer Reise von der türkischen Grenze über die Bukowina durch Ost- und Westgalizien, Schlezien und Mähren nach Wien*. Wien: Eichler, Rohrer, J. (1798) *Ueber die Cilorer*. Wien, Rohrer, J. (1804) *Versuch über die deutschen bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie*. Two parts, Wien: Heubner, Rohrer, J. (1804) *Versuch über die jüdischen Bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie*. Wien, Rohrer, J. (1804) *Versuch über die slavischen Bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie*. Wien, Rohrer, J. (1806) *Der k. k. Galerie*. Wien, Rohrer, J. (1827) *Statistik des österreichischen Kaiserthums*. I. part. Wien, Schreiner, G., F., von (1844) *Grätz. Ein naturhistorisch-statistisch-topographisches Gemälde diesel Stadt und ihrer Umgebungen*. Gratz. These subjects had a different basis. The population principle was disturbed by a “relative overpopulation” in the real economy. Its dominant standing in teaching increasingly supported the notion of its fabrication.

In the time of the growing influence of Adam Smith, political science was seen as a “fabricated” science, derived from a fabricated principle (population) which was introduced into political science seemingly out of nowhere. The teachings of Adam Smith were presented

as a science which studied and discovered natural laws and did not allow the principles of economic policy to be formulated until these natural laws were discovered. Rules to govern the conduct of public administrators could be derived from the discovered natural laws of economic science. In German Leipzig, publications would be influenced by Smith's teachings, see (Aehrenthal 1819, Buquoy 1815). Compared to Germany, the ideas spread rather slowly.

In Germany, Karl H. Rau (1792–1870) successfully synthesised cameralism and classical economy see par exemple (Rau 1833). Teaching aids produced by this synthesis were used at the university in Prague in the second half of the 19th century, or served as a model for education. At the university in Prague, Wenzel Gustav Kopetz (1781–1857) taught Handlungswissenschaft—industrial policy, partly consisting of Handlungswissenschaft and partly of Smith's teachings. At the lyceum and later at the university, political science professors shifted their professional focus to such subjects as “gross police violations” (Schwere Polizeiübertretungen) or “political jurisprudence“ (Politische Gesetzkunde), conceived as a systematic, commented overview of regulations. The concepts they offered would not be more suitable and useful for administrative practice. Studies of statistics and history also were of supporting nature in regard to political science studies, based on an encyclopaedic “accumulation of current facts”. Any search for internal context was pushed to the background. The concepts of political science were faced with a different ideological position.

This shift in education, from political science to political jurisprudence and statistics, was especially noticeable at lyceums. In Olomouc, political science professors pursued these substitute fields, remaining unknown to professional literature as political science teachers or representatives of economic thought. There is some legitimacy to this as their literary production did not concern the issue of national economy. Von Passy published in the field of statistics, or the map of Moravia and Silesia. According to his own textbooks, he taught general history. Meanwhile, Johann Koppel published *Über Vergehen und Übertretungen* and *Handbuch der österreichischen Strafgesetzes*, already using the term “Volkswirtschaft”. The same went for other political science professors whose professional activities, related to non-economical fields, were truly remarkable when it comes to the amount of publications. There was a theatrical aspect to disputations. The decline of cameralism, associated with protectionism and the regimentation of economy, contradicted the teachings of the representatives of the classical school of thought, as well as the notions of economic liberalism.

The era when cameralism faded out to lay the groundwork for the development of the classical school and German historical school. This, however, occurred when the faculty of law

at the University of Olomouc closed, ending the era when political science was taught at the institution. Political science stopped being taught at the University of Olomouc in 1855. To replace it, the university in Prague founded its second department of political science. In 10 August 1855, the Austrian government closed the Faculty of Law and Policy at Francis University as of the academic year 1855/1856.

## Conclusion

In 1772, a new university subject was introduced at the University of Olomouc, with classes starting in January 1773. Police and cameral sciences, later known as political science consisting of police science, business science, and financial science, were viewed as an applied branch of natural law. The field was introduced in order to better prepare graduates for the holding of administrative posts. Cameralists viewed the economic process as administrative. Administrative activities were supposed to implement the ideas of natural law in practice. L. L. Schulz was an exemplary political science professor and a model enlightened official, a testament to the usefulness of the new field.

From the very beginning, the course encountered resistance on from the Catholic church. Its representatives in Olomouc, especially rector Slavíček and director baron Šubíř, disagreed with the learning content of police and cameral sciences (primarily with the population principle and the view of religion as a political tool), placing obstacles to education. Šubíř would prune theses (they couldn't graduate), Slavíček would interfere with the learning content and prevent L. L. Schulz from teaching at the university. This resulted in, among other things, the university's relocation to Brno and its degradation to a lyceum. The university was restored in 1827.

In the first half of the 19th century, political science declined in significance. Professors shifted their focus to such subjects as statistics and gross economic violations. The population principle was seen as contradicting reality, i.e. the so-called relative overpopulation. It seemed fabricated. The increasing influence of the teachings of Adam Smith resulted in the notion that if reality was governed by natural laws, economic science needed to discover these laws and base tenets of economic policy on them, i.e. refrain from "fabricating" tenets as 1830's and 1840's thinkers interpreted Sonnefels' textbook to have done.

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