

The main objective of this dissertation is to analyze the bourgeoisie formation process in the town of Kalisz in the years 1815–1867. In this particular period, Kalisz not only became a border town, but also changed its administrative status following its incorporation into the Russian partition, and as such made attempts to take advantage of the new situation. In order to fulfill this objective, the paper has been divided into three main chapters (and further into subchapters dedicated to particular subjects), in which specific facts and their interpretations are presented. The bibliography and appendices remain a fundamental part of this paper — they include details of the source materials used, which mainly consist of the files of notary offices from Kalisz, and the relevant literature.

The paper focuses on the motivations and values of craftsmen and manufacturers which were at the heart of their decision to migrate to Kalisz in large numbers. Social and geographical factors determining the recruitment of new members of the group also turned out to be crucial. Professional activity, daily life (including social activity), values and moral norms have been analyzed, taking into consideration the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of this social group. Once the research problem was identified, I posed several fundamental research questions:

- which social groups, individuals, institutions, decisions and actions played the decisive role in the bourgeoisie formation process in the urban community of Kalisz?
- to what extent were the administrative authorities of Kalisz province/Kalisz governorate and the government of the Kingdom of Poland responsible for encouraging and driving (more or less deliberately) the mobility of the Polish society by creating a new political and legal reality, and how did the activities of the authorities affect the quality and continuity of economic and civilizational transformations in the Kingdom of Poland and in Kalisz?
- how did the bourgeoisie formation process in Kalisz differ from the model outlined in Polish historiography, and did it include elements characteristic for a provincial border town the size of Kalisz?
- what was the contribution of national and ethnic minorities in the great industrialization/modernization that Kalisz underwent until the 1870s?

- to what extent were national minorities active in non-economic fields and how did they cooperate with other social, ethnic and professional groups?
- Considering the later economic history of Kalisz and its residents, one must also ask: why did Kalisz — a promising, prosperous town in the years 1815–1830 — lose its position and become a county town of little significance in the years 1840s–1860s?

With these questions in mind, the structures of Kalisz bourgeoisie in the years 1815–1867 have been identified and analyzed. Particular attention was paid to social, professional and ethnic factors behind the “recruitment” to the bourgeoisie; quantitative changes; as well as professional and ownership structure. Kalisz bourgeoisie was also analyzed in terms of its wealth structure, and divided into four categories on this basis: very high, high, medium and petty bourgeoisie. Religious affiliations among the members of this class have also been analyzed.

The economic activity of Kalisz bourgeoisie was described based on professional and ownership criteria. As a result, the following four areas of activity were identified: trade, industry, investments and licenses (which included tenants of various kinds, suppliers, entrepreneurs and rentiers), and services (which included e.g. hotel and restaurant owners, confectioners etc.).

The last part of the paper outlines the daily lives of Kalisz bourgeoisie. A substantial part of the analysis is devoted to their material culture: living conditions, the architectural style of buildings and their technical condition, housing equipment, as well as fashion and leisure activities of the period. Family and social life, as well as matters related to education have also been discussed. Being part of the economic elite also involved social activity, e.g. in Masonic lodges, charity associations and economic organizations. My academic investigation also includes the issues of acculturation and assimilation of minorities living in Kalisz in the first half of the 19th century. This thorough analysis of bourgeoisie formation in Kalisz allowed me to fully answer the questions posed in the introduction. In the bourgeoisie formation process, the activity of innovative individuals played a crucial role. These individuals came to the Kingdom of Poland for their own personal reasons and started their careers with the support of the protectionist policy of the government in the Kingdom of Poland. These individuals were in charge of not only their own fates, but also the character of transformations taking place in the town. The combination of their determination, decisions and actions determined the direction of economic transformations and promoted entrepreneurial spirit in other groups in the town.

The administration and government of the Kingdom of Poland created a specific legal and administrative framework, which, in my view, played a considerable and sometimes even decisive role in facilitating the activity of these innovative individuals and, as a result, in shaping the character and quality of economic and social life. By implementing the popular protectionist policy, the authorities created conducive conditions for the development and transformation of the town and for the creation of its financial elites. The organizers and creators of the economic life played a crucial role at the level of a town, province or governorate. Unfortunately, in the end, the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland did not manage to achieve all their goals, which was certainly related to the fall of the November Uprising. From then on, the Russian authorities took over the role of the coordinator of economic transformations. As the authors of the law, they also defined the rules of social life. At lower levels of administration, despite continuous Russification, Poles still worked and often had a major influence on the economic life of the town.

The bourgeoisie formation process in Kalisz was to a large extent unique — its professional, religious and ethnic structure (partially resulting from historical and geographical factors) was specific for this town. In order to prove this hypothesis, the 19th century history of two Polish towns — Lublin and Płock — was recounted. They were similar to Kalisz in terms of size, administrative position and economic role in the early days of the Kingdom of Poland. The presence of ethnic minorities in the economic life of Kalisz was strong. The German minority created the foundations of industry in Kalisz, while Jews were in charge of trade and banks. In the discussed period, Poles constituted only 50% of the residents and were practically invisible in the economic life. Religious and ethnic minorities actively participated in social work, though they made little contribution to the cultural and intellectual aspects of the Polish society. To a large extent, they adopted the lifestyle of the Polish gentry. In my view, the style of public behavior was imposed by Poles; the rhythm of social life in Kalisz was similar to other Polish towns. I believe that the Polish government and authorities put an enormous effort to introduce and maintain certain patterns of behavior and norms by asking certain groups that had a real power in the Polish society (which included the Polish gentry and the new-born intelligentsia) to join them in cooperation, and assigning certain tasks to them. Also the Russian authorities, with no real support in the Kingdom of Poland, were forced to cooperate with the Polish elites, who demonstrated varied attitudes towards this cooperation.

Despite an excellent start and economic prosperity in the years 1815–1830, after the fall of the November Uprising, Kalisz lost its prominent position in the mid-1840s and became a

county town. The following factors contributed to the economic degradation of Kalisz: the Russian imperial policy, which did not take into account the needs of the Kingdom of Poland; the specific, border location of the town; the historic urban planning scheme of Kalisz; and a lack of charismatic leaders, similar to Rajmund Rembieniński, the chairman of the Mazowieckie Province Commission.

In the described period, Kalisz experienced both successes and failures, which were often beyond the control of local elites — who, however, still managed to gradually become an important part of the town. The present dissertation is dedicated to this issue, and is an attempt to demonstrate the process whereby a local elite was created, from their first economic successes to the time when they enjoyed a real influence on the town's social life.

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