

## COUNTY AND GENTRY IN 18TH-CENTURY HUNGARY

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In a quantitative study, the promotion of officials in seven counties of the Kingdom of Hungary is investigated. In the 18th century, some noble office-holders of humbler origins seem to have met difficulties being elected to the office of *ordinarius judex nobilium*, the lowest of the really important positions, while the most elevated gentry families did not even bother to serve in the county administration – or if so, then only for that of the *ordinarius vicecomes*, the leading office-holder. We can even get a glimpse of signs of professionalization among the county officials. An important fact is that the gate was open for some of the leading officials the counties to be appointed by the king to offices with nationwide authority, what testifies for an important link of the central royal bureaucracy and the county administration, the two rival elites of the age.

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As for Polish history, it is argued that it does not make sense to speak about the *sejm* without speaking about the *sejmiki*.<sup>1</sup> It is just the same with Hungary. They counties were the organs of the self-governments of the local nobility, but also represented the state, as – beyond the flimsy and specialized apparatus of the Hungarian Chamber – the ruler had no agents in Hungary on the local and regional levels. As the army could only be relied on exceptionally, the court and the central administrative offices were dependent on the counties' mostly elected official apparatus in implementing their orders. The counties are, therefore, the clue to the political development of Hungary in the 18th and 19th centuries. The fact that they collected taxes made them into a mighty bulwark of the estates' power. As Hungary was left out of the great administrative reforms of the Habsburg Monarchy in the mid-18th century, it was continued to be run by the *bene possessionatus* gentry and not by royal bureaucrats, unlike the other provinces of the Monarchy, as observed by P. G. M. Dickson.<sup>2</sup> It is the system

1 BARAN. Procedure in Polish-Lithuanian Parliaments from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries. In *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, 2002, Vol. 22, no. 1, p. 58.

2 DICKSON. Monarchy and Bureaucracy in Late Eighteenth-Century Austria. In *English Historical Review*, 1995, Vol. 110, no. 436, p. 350.

of counties that hides behind the fact that the path of Hungary's development gradually deviated from that of the western provinces of the Habsburg state, conserving an increasingly outdated dualism of king and estates, which the estates redefined in modern terms by the 1790s, as they came to call their rights and privileges the „constitution” of Hungary.<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly, State Chancellor Wenzel Anton Count of Kaunitz-Rietberg in 1761 and Palatine Archduke Alexander Leopold in 1795 agreed that the system of the counties was the greatest obstacle to reforming Hungary. The latter wrote in a memorandum for his brother, Emperor Francis II (as king of Hungary, Francis I) that the state was powerless in Hungary, it could not enter the counties, and did not even have adequate information on the situation there, so it was unable to protect the taxpaying population. According to Kaunitz, the counties of Hungary could „hardly to be directed to the proper path”, and the state should penetrate them.<sup>4</sup> Joseph II even abolished the counties and replaced them by districts directed by appointed royal officials (1785-1790), but after less than five years he had to acknowledge his defeat and restore the counties.

More than in other countries and provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy, in Hungary landlords preserved much of their power above their serfs well into the 19th century, and the noble self-government of the counties exerted almost all of the power of the state through their elected noble office-holders wielding public authority on the regional and local levels. Thus, behind the strong position of the Hungarian diet *vis-à-vis* the king, the counties can be found. In the eighteenth century, their deputies were in an increasingly strong position at the diet, where crucial political decisions were taken and legislation happened in cooperation with the ruler. Here, by the end of the century, county deputies pushed all the other participants into the background: aristocrats, bishops and the deputies both of the free royal cities and of the clergy.<sup>5</sup>

### Counties and officials

It is, thus, relevant to explore the bureaucracy that ran the counties in the 18th-century. This study will make an attempt at an investigation of the bureaucracies

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3 E. g. Hungarian malcontents asked Prime Minister William Pitt to recognize Leopold II's rule legitimate in Hungary on the condition that he rules in the spirit of the “constitution”, that is, Hungary is acknowledged being a *monarchia mixta* and the estates' consent should be required to decide questions of war and peace. (SZAKÁLY. *Egy vállalkozó főnemes: Vay Miklós báró (1756–1824)*. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2003, p. 124-125.)

4 Quoted by POÓR. *Kényszerpályák nemzedéke, 1795–1815*. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 1988, p. 22., 26.

5 See SZIJÁRTÓ. *Estates and Constitution: The Parliament in Eighteenth-Century Hungary*. New York; Oxford, Berghahn, 2020, p. 177-206.

in six counties: two in Transdanubia in the west: Baranya and Zala, two in the northern and eastern regions of the Great Hungarian Plain (Heves<sup>6</sup> and Ung), while two more to the south: Békés and Csanád. Their choice is determined by the fact that they have published archontological data about their 18th-century history.<sup>7</sup> We cannot, therefore, claim that they represent the whole of Kingdom of Hungary, as especially the absence of northern territories is a sore spot in this sample. Still, we have here both counties with overwhelmingly Catholic nobility and a county from the Transtibiscan area where Protestantism stood the strongest; we have on the one hand a county like Zala situated in the former belt of military defences against the Ottomans, characterized by continuous warfare in the 16th and 17th centuries, therefore having a high proportion of noble population, and on the other hand counties like Csanád and Békés, lying in the territories formerly occupied by Ottomans, having hardly any noble inhabitants – so we have a colourful mix of different conditions.<sup>8</sup> Thus, we can claim that the lessons of our investigation might have a wider relevance.<sup>9</sup>

As it makes sense to concentrate our investigation on those county office-holders who held real power, the bottom line of the primary group under investigation was drawn by the judicial powers wielded by the *supremus iudex*

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- 6 In this article, this shorter designation will be used. The full form is Heves and Külső-Szolnok county.
- 7 MOLNÁR, ed. *Zala megye archontológiája 1138–2000*. Zalaegerszeg: Zala Megyei Levéltár, 2000; HÉJJA. *Békés vármegye archontológiája és prozopográfiája, 1715–1848*. Gyula: Békés Megyei Levéltár, 2009; BÁN, ed. *Heves megye történeti archontológiája (1681–)1687–2000*. Eger: Heves Megyei Levéltár, 2011; GÁLOCSY. *Ung vármegye főispánjai és tisztviselői a legrégebb kortól 1918-ig*. Ed. Csatóry. Budapest; Beregszász: Hatodik Síp Alapítvány; Mandátum Kiadó, 2000 (originally published in 1908–1909); ÓDOR. A „hivatali elit” Baranya vármegyében, 1711–1813. In *Levéltári Szemle*, 1995, Vol. 45, no. 2, p. 31–34; ÓDOR. A „politikai elit” a 18. századi Baranyában. In *Baranya. Történeti Közlemények*, 1996–1997, Vol. 9–10, p. 110–114; GILICZE and VÍGH. Csanád megye közigazgatása és tisztségviselői a püspökfőispánok idején, 1699–1777. In *Tanulmányok Csongrád megye történetéből* 1986, Vol. 10, p. 41–43.
- 8 According to the categorization employed by Lajos Hajdu, Zala, Somogy and Baranya counties possessed well-developed county administrations, having more and better paid officials, while Ung, Békés and Csanád lacked behind by half a century with their more primitive county administration. Heves was somewhere in between, but closer to the first group. (HAJDU. *II. József igazgatási reformjai Magyarországon*. Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982, p. 22., 486–493.)
- 9 The different archontologies used here give a varied chronological coverage. In this analysis, all the data from the period between 1700 and 1800 were included, but they are not available for Baranya before 1711, for Békés before 1715, and for Csanád after 1777. Needless to say, the lists are not uniform: some offices are not covered in some archontological lists, and several offices were not even filled in some counties in certain periods. About the data in more detail see: SZIJÁRTÓ. *A diéta II: A 18. századi politikai elit társadalom- és kultúrtörténeti megközelítésben*. Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, 2021, p. 80–84.

*nobilium* (or *judlium* for short).<sup>10</sup> He was the official who represented the full powers of the state in one of the districts of the county. In these times, there may have been two districts or even half a dozen of them in a certain county. On the other end of the scale, we can find the *ordinarius vicecomes*, the number one elected official of the county, practically running the county, especially in the – usual but not general<sup>11</sup> – absence of the *supremus comes* appointed by the ruler. Furthermore, in the group of powerful leading county officials we can find the *generalis perceptor*, responsible for collecting taxes and for county finances in general, the *ordinarius notarius*, chief notary, in charge of the county bureaucracy, slowly but steadily on the increase in these decades, and finally maybe also the *magistrualis fiscus* or *ficalis*, representing the county in court cases. Most but not all of the office-holders in this primary group of investigation were elected by the county assembly.<sup>12</sup> (Usually the *notarii* and the *fiscales* were exceptions to the rule, appointed by the *supremus comes* – but local practice could vary from a certain period to another, e. g. the *generalis perceptor* might be also appointed.)

Then, I have added to their ranks some more county officials to have a better understanding of the patterns of promotion. This second, wider circle includes mostly the deputies of the formerly mentioned office-holders: the *substitutus iudex nobilium*, the *substitutus vicecomes*, the *substitutus notarius* (deputy notary) and the *substitutus magistrualis ficalis*. Finally, we can also include into this investigation the lower echelons of the district administration, too: the *jurassor* (originally: *juratus assessor*) and the *commissarius bellicus*, aides to the

10 On the courts of justice of the *judices nobilium* see the footnote by Andor Csizmadia: CSIZ-MADIA, ed. *Hajnóczy József közjogi-politikai munkái*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1958, p. 86.

11 A resident bishop, e. g. in Heves and Baranya counties, acting as *supremus comes* could exert dominant influence to the affairs of his county, in contrast to absent aristocrats serving as *supremi comites* in Somogy county for example.

12 Practice was different from one county to another, and it was also fluctuating. For example, in 1790 the county assembly of Somogy did not only elect the *vicecomes*, the *judices nobilium*, the *jurassores* and *commissarii bellici*, but in contrast to earlier practice also the *generalis perceptor*, the *ordinarius* and *substitutus magistrualis ficalis*, so for the *supremus comes* only the *ordinarius* and *substitutus notarius* were left to be appointed. The legitimate process of election was nominating four candidates from which the county assembly chose one. This rule was observed in the eighteenth century in Somogy county: always observed when electing the *vicecomes*, mostly observed when electing the *ordinarii judices nobilium*, and generally observed in the second half of the eighteenth century when electing the *substituti judices nobilium*. For the county assembly referring to the relevant Act 56 of 1723 on election rules see A Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Somogy Megyei Levéltára IV.1.b. [Somogy vármegye nemesi közgyűlése és albizottsága iratai, 1454–1855. *Protocolla congregationum*, 1659–1848] P 1774 30 [Közgyűlési jegyzőkönyv 1770-ből], p. 405, for the elections in 1790 see *ibidem* P 1790 77, p. 3-8.

*ordinarius* and *substitutus iudex nobilium*, engaged in the various tasks of local government or, as far as the *commissarius bellicus*, war commissioner, was concerned, in solving the problems raised by the army units billeted in or passing through the district.<sup>13</sup> The hierarchy of these offices are best demonstrated by the lists of salaries they were paid. (See Table 1.) Some offices, especially but not exclusively lower ones, provided a living for the officials, while others, mainly the most prestigious offices entailing significant power, were held as *nobile officium* by members of the rich gentry with big landholdings.<sup>14</sup>

From the archontological publications, a data base comprising their office-holding was built,<sup>15</sup> offering us a chance to conduct a quantitative investigation. Our questions will concern the inner dynamic of the county administration as well as the career possibilities offered within the county and beyond – but in a close correspondance with the social structures of the county gentry, and especially of its elit, the well-to-do gentry, that is, the *bene possessionati*.<sup>16</sup>

### **Gates of entry, glass ceiling, and those too highborn**

First of all, we can observe the fact that some offices functioned as points of entry into the county administration while others were typically filled by already experienced officials. (See Table 2.) Unsurprisingly, the lower echelon of offices was a typical gate of entry into the county administration: those of the *substitutus notarius*, the *substitutus magistratualis fiscalis*, and the *substitutus iudium*. It is, however, somewhat surprising that the office of the *ordinarius magistratualis fiscalis* was similarly a typical first office, filled by barristers who represented the county in law cases while also pursuing their private legal practice parallelly.<sup>17</sup> In all these offices, the newcomers' number was higher than that of those officials that had been holding other county offices earlier. (This also means that serving

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13 For a useful overview see VÖRÖS. A feudális megye bürokráciája. In *História*, 1988, Vol. 10, no. 1, p. 14-16.

14 See e. g. HUDI. A Veszprém megyei politikai elit a 18–19. században. In Á. VARGA ed. *Rendi társadalom – polgári társadalom 1. Társadalomtörténeti módszerek és forrástípusok. Salgótarján, 1986. szeptember 28–30.* Salgótarján: Hajnal István Kör – Társadalomtörténeti Egyesület, 1987, p. 99-109.

15 See the 1559 records as part of the database <http://szijarto.web.elte.hu/diaeta-index.html>.

16 For an overview of the stratification of the county gentry see e. g. VÖRÖS. A társadalmi fejlődés fő vonalai. In EMBER and HECKENAST, ed. *Magyarország története 1686–1790*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989 [= PACH, ed. *Magyarország története* vol. IV], p. 680-692; SZIJÁRTÓ. Komitatsadel und Landtag in Ungarn in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts. In TÖNSMEYER and VELEK, eds. *Adel und Politik in der Habsburgmonarchie und der Nachbarländern zwischen Absolutismus und Demokratie*. München: Martin Meidenbauer, 2011, p. 143-147.

17 HAJDU, II. József, p. 26.

as a *jurassor* or a war commissioner was not a necessary step to start a career on the district level.) In a second group of offices (that of the chief notary, the *generalis perceptor* and the several *supremi iudices nobilium*) we find newcomers and seasoned county officials in more or less equal numbers. In a difference to the other two offices in this group, that made special knowledge necessary and entailed very bureaucratic official activities, the *supremi iudices nobilium* were representing the state in their person in their districts and even had limited judicial powers there. Their office was therefore coveted, and it is an important fact that half of the applicants were elected into this office without prior experience in office-holding. Finally, on the other end of the scale, we can find the *vicecomites*. They were typically seasoned office-holders when elected. But also here, we can register an interesting fact: the *ordinarius vicecomes* was significantly more often a newcomer than his deputy, the *substitutus vicecomes*. We can conclude that there were certain social layers of the local gentry, among the members of which it was an expectation to be elected a *supremus iudex nobilium* or even an *ordinarius vicecomes*, as a natural corollary of their status, without any prior proof of their capabilities, without any previously earned experience.

If we look at a wider range of data than that provided by the archontological lists of our six counties, we can find proof of how social standing and county office-holding interacted. This is made possible by an investigation all the 18th-century elections in Somogy county (in Southern Transdanubia, close to Zala and Baranya counties), and the collection of data not exclusively on elections but also on nominations as well as on participation at the county assemblies at which elections took place.<sup>18</sup> What we can learn from this second quantitative analysis is, first, that there seems to have been a kind of a glass ceiling effective for most of those office-holders coming from a modest noble background.

18 See the relevant 1496 records as part of the database <http://szijarto.web.elte.hu/diaeta-index.html>, built on the following sources: P 1658–1726 2, p. 57., 62., 86., 196., 330–334/333–337. (old/new page numbering), 472.; P 1717–1722 3, p. 173/168., 199., 354/349–355/350., 468/465.; P 1724–1731 4, p. 1–6., 554–569.; P 1732–1736 5, p. 1–8., 842., 907., 921., 1118–1119., 1494., 1523.; P 1736–1741 6, p. 1–8., 153., 243.; P 1744–1746 8, p. 1103–1109.; P 1746–1748 9, p. 652.; P 1748–1752 10, p. 13–16., 1217.; P 1752–1755 11, p. 721–754., 1494.; P 1757–1759 13, p. 110.; P 1759–1761 14, p. 2–3., 620–665.; P 1766–1767 20, p. 197., 941–962.; P 1770 23, p. 687–688., 1786.; P 1774 30, p. 403–409.; P 1785 60, p. 1–2.; P 1786 64, p. 1., 209., 449.; P 1787 68, p. 35., 49., 458., 506–507.; P 1787 69, p. 653.; P 1787 70, p. 21., 26., 404.; P 1788 71, p. 638.; P 1789 75, p. 232.; P 1790 76, p. 1.; P 1790 77, p. 1–9.; P 1795 90, p. 1–14.; P 1800 102, p. 1–2., 347–349.; *Acta congregationalia*, 1715–1791 (this is a fascicle of restored documents originating in the *Acta congregationalia*); NAGY. *Levéltári kis tükör. Manuscript*. Vols. I–III. Kaposvár, 1870 (this manuscript can be found in the Somogy County Archives, Kaposvár, Hungary); KANYAR. Somogy megye közgyűlése a hódoltság idején és a felszabadító háborúk utáni első évtizedekben (1658–1718). In *Somogy megye múltjából. Levéltári évkönyv* 1986, Vol. 17, p. 101–102.

Members of the Stephaits family, for example, were holding the office of the *substitutus iudlium* four different occasions, but they hardly got nominations for the next step of the ladder, the office of the *ordinarius iudex nobilium* – and they were never elected to serve as one. György Bárány was three times elected to *substitutus iudex nobilium*, but both of his two candidacies to *ordinarius iudlium* were unsuccessful. László Hunkár was twice candidate to this office, but he was elected by the county assembly of Somogy only after 27 years of serving as *substitutus iudlium* – elected he was, but not to be the boss in his district, an *ordinarius iudex nobilium*, but only to be a county tax collector (*exactor*). Miklós Fonyó must have been an able administrator as he was twice confirmed as *substitutus iudex nobilium* – but both his candidacies to become an *ordinarius iudlium* were unsuccessful.

Only exceptional cases can be found of talent breaking through this “glass ceiling.”<sup>19</sup> István Vörös came from a relatively humble background, he served as *substitutus iudlium* from 1767 on, his aspirations to be elected to the office of the *ordinarius iudex nobilium* were twice thwarted, but when in 1795 he appeared at the general county elections as already holding this office as the result of a provisional commission, he was finally elected.

His career can be contrasted to the behaviour of those distinguished members of well-to-do gentry families for whom county office-holding seemed unattractive, at least below a certain level – even if this attitude practically excluded them from participating in the management of the affairs of their county. Members of the Póka family feature in these sources exclusively as candidates to the office of the *ordinarius iudlium* – albeit unsuccessfully each single time: Miklós Póka in 1724, 1727, 1732 and 1736, Ádám Póka in 1746 and 1753. They both were granted the title of *assessor*, judge of the county court of justice (*sedes iudiciaria*, or *sedria* for short). This award demonstrates the fact that Miklós and Ádám Póka might have been very much right about the prestige of their family. They seem to have been on the level where nobles started office-holding when being elected *ordinarii iudices nobilium*. Candidacies of the Rosty and Szegedy families seem to provide corroborative evidence for this.

And we can make one more step higher: members of the elite gentry families seem to have been reticent to serve at all – save as *ordinarii vicecomites*. We can see the candidacy of Károly Bezerédj (twice, both unsuccessful, but he did not aspire to any other office, and he was decorated with the title of an *assessor*), of

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19 Talent is mentioned here, but without detailed sources we shall never know if promotion was not rather due to the well-timed intervention of a patron, as in this society the relationship of patrons and clients was still of decisive importance. See e. g. SZEMETHY. *Katonabárók és hivatalnok grófok: Új arisztokraták a 18. századi Magyarországon*. Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, 2022, p. 184-200.

the member of the Lengyel family in 1746, 1748, 1753 (Gáspár Lengyel), 1760 (Lajos Lengyel) and 1800 (Imre Lengyel) – all unsuccessful, but they did not try to serve in any other county office. János Inkey was *ordinarius vicecomes* in the neighbouring Zala county and *substitutus vicecomes* in Somogy county. Then, he was a candidate to be *ordinarius vicecomes* in Somogy in 1727, and members of his family in 1760 and 1767 (Boldizsár Inkey) and 1800 (Károly Inkey). Of these attempts, only the very last one proved to be successful.

Other sources let us identify the *crème de la crème* of the gentry society in Somogy county.<sup>20</sup> The Zichy, Festetics, Niczky, verebi Végh, szentgyörgyi Horváth and pribéri Jankovich families had no aristocratic titles, but they were great landowners just like the great aristocratic families. Among their members, we can often find members of the national elite, holding offices of nationwide authority by royal appointment. While some members of the first three families mentioned, especially their minor branches, can pop up from time to time in Somogy county offices, the last three families seem to be just too rich and too distinguished to be interested in county office holding, including the office of the *ordinarius vicecomes*: as if it was below their dignity.<sup>21</sup>

### **Royal appointments and the signs of professionalization**

We happen to find a surprisingly high percentage of Somogy county office-holders being promoted to a central royal office, including both administrative positions at the Council of Lieutenancy or the Hungarian Chamber (first in Pressburg [Bratislava, Pozsony], later in Buda) as well as the Hungarian Chancellery in Vienna, and judicial positions at the Court of Appeals (*Tabula Septemvialis*) or the Royal Court of Justice (both in Pest) or the four district courts in Kőszeg, Trnava (Nagyszombat), Presov (Eperjes) and the last one first in Oradea (Nagyvárad), later in Debrecen. Three *ordinarii vicecomites* and one *ordinarius notarius* who had served in Somogy county were subsequently promoted to offices with a nationwide authority. For the group of the ten *ordinarii vicecomites* in eighteenth-century Somogy, this gives a surprisingly high promotion rate of 30%. As we have just seen the colourful patterns of relations between social status and county office holding, the question can be asked if the *ordinarii vicecomites* who were appointed to royal administrative or judicial positions on the national level were those who had worked their way up the ladder of the county offices to this top position or were those of their colleagues who had been elected to *ordinarii vicecomites* on the basis of their belonging to the elite of the

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20 SZIJÁRTÓ. *Nemesi társadalom és politika. Tanulmányok a 18. századi magyar rendiségről.* Budapest: Universitas Kiadó, 2006, p. 102.

21 SZIJÁRTÓ, A diéta II, p. 76-78.



Somogy county *bene possessionatus* gentry, without prior experience in county office holding.

Instead of giving a reply to this question on the basis of the scarcely three cases in Somogy county, we can widen the scope of the investigation, make use of the published archontological lists again and draw up a matrix of promotions for all our seven counties with all known offices included. (See Table 3) Here, we can track various promotions (defined on the basis of salaries paid out) for all the offices held in Somogy, Zala, Baranya, Heves, Ung, Békés and Csanád counties in the 18th century. What we first learn from this is that not many county office-holders were given royal appointments in nationwide administrative or judicial authorities in the complete 18th century: only four from both Somogy and Heves, three from Zala, and none from Baranya, Ung, Békés and Csanád.

Of the *ordinarii vicecomites*, István Orczy from Heves was promoted to the Royal Court of Justice, later also into aristocracy; Mihály Sággy, also from Heves, was serving first at the same court of justice, later at the Court of Appeals; József Sigray from Zala went first to Pest to the Royal Court of Justice, than to Vienna to the Hungarian Royal Court Chancellery, finally to the Council of Lieutenancy in Pressburg – he was later promoted to baroncy and returned to his home county as *supremus comes*; György Niczky, also from Zala, was appointed to the Royal Court of Justice – being an *ordinarius vicecomes* in Zala, he had earlier served as *ordinarius notarius* in Somogy;<sup>22</sup> Kristóf Festetics from Somogy was promoted to the Council of Lieutenancy, from which he moved on to the Court of Appeals, his son got the title of a count later, his great-grandson that of a prince; Antal Somssich also from Somogy was appointed to the Chancellery; and finally János Tallián, similarly from Somogy, got a position at the Royal Court of Justice. As far as the *substituti vicecomites*, István Gosztonyi from Heves was appointed to the Council of Lieutenancy; and Ádám Vay, also from Heves, to the Royal Court of Justice. His two sons were promoted into aristocracy, becoming barons in Transylvania. György Nagy, *ordinarius notarius* of Zala county, was promoted to the Royal Court of Justice and Antal Tallián, *ordinarius notarius* of Somogy, was appointed to the district court of Kőszeg.<sup>23</sup>

That is, seven of the most successful members of the county administrations of our seven counties served as *ordinarii*, two as *substituti vicecomites* and two more as *ordinarii notarii*. Although the first is the largest sub-group, the success rate is fairly low: the sobering fact is that from 73 *ordinarii vicecomites* only

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22 The reason for this is the closeness of Zala and Somogy counties: their administrations were united in times of the long Ottoman occupation of Central Hungary. They were only separated by the Act 86 of 1715.

23 SZIJÁRTÓ, A diéta II, p. 67-69., 93-100., 349-350.

seven were promoted to a national office, which is less than 10%, a far cry from the significant proportions found in the case of Somogy county.

The hypothesis that those were given royal appointments who came from the most prestigious gentry families (that aspired to the office of the *vicecomes* but not to anything below that) may hold for István Orczy and Ádám Vay, who bore no county office before being elected *ordinarius* and *substitutus vicecomes* of Heves respectively, and for Kristóf Festetics, *ordinarius vicecomes* of Somogy county, but not for the rest: they all held lower county offices earlier, eight out of eleven representing an overwhelming majority. On the one hand, this proves the importance of personal performance, that of being an efficient office-holder, instead of being just born into a prestigious family, while on the other hand, it brings us to the last point.

The Somogy county data suggest a strong correlation between serving as the deputy of an office holder and being elected (appointed) to this official itself later. Four out of the 11 *ordinarii notarii* were *substituti notarii* earlier, ten out of the 24 *ordinarii iudicum* were *substituti iudicum* earlier, four out of nine *ordinarii magistratuales fiscales* were previously *substituti magistratuales fiscales*. In these cases, the proportion of this type of a promotion is around 40%, which is really impressive. May we for this reason claim that the special knowledge and the necessary skills learned as deputy office holders contributed to a significant extend to their promotion, even if these were not necessarily enough in themselves to guarantee that? May we perhaps catch a first glimpse of professionalization here? Professionalization was a process that was definitely going on in the higher echelons of the administration in the Habsburg Monarchy,<sup>24</sup> but it has not yet been detected on the level of the counties of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 18th century.

Fortunately, we can use our matrix of promotions in seven counties to investigate this special type of promotion, namely when a deputy is elected (or promoted) to occupying his former boss's position. Unfortunately, these data, covering a much wider range than those of Somogy county only, seem to refute the alluring hypothesis on the beginnings of professionalization in Hungarian county administration. True, in Zala, a similar rate the one detected in Somogy can be found for the *ordinarii iudices nobilium*, 34% of which were prior *substituti iudicum*, and among the *ordinarii magistratuales fiscales*, as five out

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24 E. g. ХАВАНОВА. Усердие, честолюбие и карьера: Чиновничество в монархии Габсбургов в эпоху просвещенного абсолютизма. Москва: Индрик, 2018; KHAVANOVA. Maria Theresia's monarchy: between inheritable merit and remunerable loyalty. In SZIJÁRTÓ; BLOCKMANS and KONTLER, ed. *Parliamentarism in Northern and East-Central Europe in the Long Eighteenth Century: Volume I: Representative Institutions and Political Motivation*. London; New York: Routledge, 2023, p. 177-198.

of six had served earlier as *substituti magistratuales fiscales*. In Heves county, it is among the *ordinarii vicecomites* that a high percentage of this type of a promotion can be observed (in opposition to Somogy or Zala): ten out of 13 of them were *substituti vicecomites* earlier. But apart of these three, in no other case did the relevant rates come close to 40%.

The aggregate data of the seven counties are decisive. (See Table 3.) Only 22% of the *ordinarii notarii* were *substituti notarii* earlier, 24% of the 24 *ordinarii iudlium* served prior as *substituti iudlium*, and a mere 18% of the *ordinarii magistratuales fiscales* were previously *substituti magistratuales fiscales*. Somogy is atypical both as for high chances of the leading county officials to be appointed to royal office later and as far as the tendencies are concerned that seemed to point in the direction of professionalization. The general picture is closer to the one painted by Lajos Hajdu:

*“It may not be valid for all cases, but we can say that those leading the county administration around 1780 are first of all lords [...]”* who did not wish *“to become Beamter observing regulations, working punctually and conscienciously instead of being very powerful lords.”*<sup>25</sup>

As we see, Hajdu allows for exceptions to this rule, and I claim that these are not at all merely sporadic in the 18th century. The tendency of professionalization is at least making itself felt – although not everywhere and presumably not with the same pace.

R. J. W. Evans argues that the history of Hungary in the first half of the 19th-century can be explained by reference to the opposition of two rival administrations: the loyal royal bureaucracy on the one hand, and the county officials on the other, inclined towards opposition, and sending their deputies to the diet, too.<sup>26</sup> In the 18th century, the county was the power-base of the Hungarian gentry, and this power was mostly exerted through a group of mainly elected noble county officials. In this quantitative analysis, we could see how the different strata of the gentry were active in the county administration, and we could also observe its connections to the royal bureaucrats filling in national offices. There were no walls separating these two elites. And in the new, increasingly bureaucratic order of things, office-holding and wielding power were not two distinct options, but the former was rather a precondition of the latter.

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25 Hajdu, II. József, p. 16.

26 EVANS. *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs. Essays on Central Europe, c. 1683–1867*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 183-185.

Table 1.  
Annual salary of certain county office-holders (forint)<sup>1</sup>

	( <i>ordinarius</i> ) <i>vicecomes</i> <sup>2</sup>	( <i>ordinarius</i> ) <i>substitutus</i> <i>vicecomes</i> <sup>3</sup>	( <i>ordinarius</i> ) <i>notarius</i> <sup>4</sup>	( <i>generalis</i> ) <i>perceptor</i> <sup>5</sup>	( <i>ordinarius</i> ) <i>judex</i> <i>nobilitum</i> <sup>6</sup>	<i>substitutus</i> <i>notarius</i> <sup>7</sup>	( <i>ordinarius</i> ) <i>magistratus</i> <i>fiscalis</i> <sup>8</sup>	<i>substitutus</i> <i>magistratus</i> <i>fiscalis</i> <sup>9</sup>	<i>substitutus</i> <i>judex</i> <i>nobilitum</i>
Csanád 1744 <sup>10</sup>	306		90	120	100				
Zala 1750 <sup>11</sup>	600	300	400	450	150	200	150		40
Zala 1758 <sup>12</sup>	600	300	400	600	200	200	150		50
Csanád 1759 <sup>13</sup>	400		186	160	150		100		
Csanád 1767 <sup>14</sup>	400 <sup>15</sup>		250	200	200		100		
Ung 1769 <sup>16</sup>	600	300	400	450	150	150–300	120	100	75
Somogy 1770–1771 <sup>17</sup>	600		450	350	200	200	100		100
Zala 1774 <sup>18</sup>	700	400	500	500	300	150–250	300	150	150
Zala 1780 <sup>19</sup>	800	400	600	600	400	200–300	200	150	200
Békés 1794 <sup>20</sup>	600		450	450	300	225	300		150

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the figures published for Pest–Pilis–Solt county for the years 1717–1718, 1727, 1742 és 1750, published by Anita Kiss. (KISS. Pest-Pilis-Solt vármegye archtörténelméje (1715–1750). In *Tanulmányok Pest Megye Műltjéről* IV. Budapest : Pest Megyei Levéltár, 2012, p. 30.)

<sup>2</sup> According to Lajos Hajdu, the salaries of the *ordinarii vicecomes* in the various counties of the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of Joseph II's reign were between 500 and 800 forints. (Hajdu, II. József, p. 24.)

<sup>3</sup> According to Lajos Hajdu, the salaries of the *substituti vicecomes* in the various counties of the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of Joseph II's reign were between 250 and 400 forints. (Hajdu, II. József, p. 24.)

<sup>4</sup> According to Lajos Hajdu, the salaries of the *ordinarii notarii* in the various counties of the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of Joseph II's reign were between 400 and 600 forints. (Hajdu, II. József, p. 25.)

<sup>5</sup> According to Lajos Hajdu, the salaries of the *generales perceptores* in the various counties of the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of Joseph II's reign were between 400 and 600 forints. (Hajdu, II. József, p. 25.)

<sup>6</sup> According to Lajos Hajdu, the salaries of the *ordinarii iudices nobilitum* in the various counties of the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of Joseph II's reign were between 100 and 400 forints. (Hajdu, II. József, p. 31.)

- <sup>7</sup> According to Lajos Hajdu, the salaries of the *substituti notarii* in the various counties of the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of Joseph II's reign were between 150 and 250 forints. (Hajdu, II. József, p. 25.)
- <sup>8</sup> According to Lajos Hajdu, the salaries of the *ordinarii magistratuales fiscales* in the various counties of the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of Joseph II's reign were between 200 and 400 forints. (Hajdu, II. József, p. 26.)
- <sup>9</sup> According to Lajos Hajdu, the salaries of the *substituti magistratuales fiscales* in the various counties of the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of Joseph II's reign were between 100 and 200 forints. (Hajdu, II. József, p. 26.)
- <sup>10</sup> GILICZE and VÍGH, Csanád megye, p. 34.
- <sup>11</sup> MOLNÁR, Zala megye, p. 57.
- <sup>12</sup> MOLNÁR, Zala megye, p. 57.
- <sup>13</sup> GILICZE and VÍGH, Csanád megye, p. 38.
- <sup>14</sup> GILICZE–VÍGH, Csanád megye, p. 38.
- <sup>15</sup> The data is probably missing from the list because it was unchanged.
- <sup>16</sup> GÁLOCSY, Ung vármegye, p. 92–93.
- <sup>17</sup> MNL SML IV.1.b P.1770.23, p. 1935–1936.
- <sup>18</sup> MOLNÁR, Zala megye, p. 57.
- <sup>19</sup> MOLNÁR, Zala megye, p. 57.
- <sup>20</sup> HÉJJA, Békés vármegye, p. 92.

Table 2  
Entering certain county offices (Zala, Heves, Békés, Ung, Baranya and Csanád counties, aggregate data)

	<i>ordinarius vicecomes</i>	<i>substitutus vicecomes</i>	<i>ordinarius notarius</i>	<i>generalis perceptor</i>	<i>ordinarius iudex nobilium</i>	<i>substitutus notarius</i>	<i>ordinarius magistratus fiscalis</i>	<i>substitutus magistratus fiscalis</i>	<i>substitutus iudex nobilium</i>
without earlier office-holding	24	13	38	38	120	56	43	26	141
promotion from another office	39	40	32	38	113	15	14	3	65

Table 3  
Promotion of certain county office holders (Somogy, Zala, Heves, Békés, Ung, Baranya and Csanád counties, aggregate data)

From	to national office <sup>1</sup>	ordinarius vicecomes	substitutus or surrogatus vicecomes <sup>2</sup>	ordinarius notarius	generalis perceptor	ordinarius iudex nobilitium	substitutus notarius	ordinarius magistratus fiscalis	substitutus magistratus fiscalis	substitutus iudex nobilitium
ordinarius vicecomes	7		1	2						
substitutus or surrogatus vicecomes <sup>3</sup>	2	19		1	1			1		
ordinarius notarius	2	12	14		3	1	2	1		
generalis perceptor		5	6	1		5				
ordinarius iudex nobilitium		5	16,5	8	18		3	2		4
substitutus notarius		2	3	18	6	16				4
ordinarius magistratus fiscalis		1	1,5	3	2	2	1			
substitutus magistratus fiscalis			1		1	2		12		2
substitutus iudex nobilitium					6	61	2	1	1	1
without any or without know prior office		29	17	47	51	170	80	49	36	254
Total	11	73	60	81	88	257	88	66	37	265

<sup>1</sup> Both administrative office held at the Council of Lieutenancy, the Chancellery, the Hungarian Chamber or judicial office held at the Court of Appeals (*Tabula Septemviralis*), the Royal Court of Justice or one of the four district courts.

<sup>2</sup> In Heves county, János Csöke was both *perceptor* and *magistratus fiscalis*; András Dévay both *perceptor* and *iudex nobilitium*. In these cases I have put 0,5–0,5 into the relevant category.

<sup>3</sup> Sometimes deputies were sent out to replace the *ordinarius vicecomes* temporarily. These *surrogati vicecomes* are included into this category.

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