Empires, State Building, and Long-Term Legacies in Bureaucratic Organization: The Case of Poland

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Jan P. Vogler, University of Virginia (jv2mc@virginia.edu)

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Abstract

Throughout the Long Nineteenth Century, three European empires—Austria, Prussia, and Russia—ruled the territories of present-day Poland. Those empires built vastly different administrative systems in their respective partition. Because this period of external rule is also considered to be formative for the structures of modern bureaucracies, having wide-ranging long-term implications for administrative organization, I seek to answer the following question: Are there still long-term legacies in public administrative organization across the historical borders of empires? Analyzing data from an original survey of more than 650 Polish public administrations, the results show that there are still legacies in bureaucratic performance and efficiency. Beyond answering this specific research question, the chapter at hand also has the broader purpose of promoting and contributing to an interdisciplinary dialogue between history and political science—a dialogue from which both disciplines can reap significant benefits.

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Introduction

In order to understand the current political-administrative organization of states around the globe, one needs to first examine these countries’ history. The age of imperialism in particular has left a lasting imprint on societies in all world regions. Focusing on developments in Eastern Europe, this chapter aims to answer the following question: Does the historical state building process through three empires—Austria, Prussia, and Russia—in the territories of present-day Poland have long-term consequences for the country’s administrative organization? Poland is an ideal case for studying bureaucratic legacies because, throughout the Long Nineteenth Century, these three “very different Empires” ruled its territories. This also includes the years 1850–1918, which is a time seen as crucial for the development of modern bureaucracies. 

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1 This chapter represents an abbreviated version of the article Imperial Rule, the Imposition of Bureaucratic Institutions, and their Long-Term Legacies, published in World Politics, Vol. 71, No. 4, October 2019, pp. 806-63. Reprinted with permission of Cambridge University Press. Copyright © 2019 Trustees of Princeton University. The maps used in this chapter are partly based on the following source: © EuroGeographics for the administrative boundaries. I thank Mat McCubbins, Georg Vanberg, Eddy Malesky, Erik Wibbels, Jos Raadschelders, and Pawel Charasz for their outstanding support for this research project. I am also grateful to Remigiusz Tworzydło for his support in finding historical statistics and Karolina Jasińska and the Warsaw city administration for their advice on the survey. Helpful comments have been provided by Andrea Beck, Sascha Becker, Pablo Ramonetti, Witold Betkiewicz, Paweł Bukowski, Volha Charnysh, Carl Dahlström, Dennis Dobler, Brett Gall, Krzysztof Gowacki, Irena Grosfeld, Herbert Kitschelt, Christian Kleiber, Dave Lewis, Łukasz Lewkowicz, Jerzy Łukowski, Elliot Mamet, Frits van der Meer, Jakub Olchowski, Anita Prazmowska, Haru Saijo, Katherine Spruill, Damian Szacawa, Guo Xu, and several anonymous reviewers. Moreover, I am thankful to the experts who have participated in interviews. They include Adam Bosiacki, Andrzej Dziadzio, Krzysztof Gluc, Jolanta Itrich-Drabarek, Hubert Izdebski, Marek Krzymkowski, Dorota Małeć, Stanisław Mazur, Marek Pietraś, Grzegorz Smyk, Michal Staniszweski, Dawid Sześciło, Anna Tarnowska, Marcin Zawicki, and two employees of the Gdańsk city administration. The Duke University Graduate School provided generous funding for this research project. Finally, I thank the participants of seminars at Duke University, the University of Warsaw, the Kraków University of Economics, Maria Curie Skłodowska University Lublin, the University of Vienna, and the Institute for Humane Studies.


Despite the long tradition of research on imperial legacies in political economy, few scholars have looked at long-term effects of imperialism on bureaucratic institutions. This is surprising because bureaucratic institutions are one of the most powerful tools for controlling people.\textsuperscript{5} Local bureaucracies are also key to policy implementation.\textsuperscript{6} Existing studies often do not measure bureaucratic characteristics directly, but instead focus on perceptions\textsuperscript{7} or social, political, and economic consequences thereof, including the quality of public goods.\textsuperscript{8}

Figure 1: Imperial Partition of Poland (1815–1914) (This map is partly based on the following source: © EuroGeographics for the administrative boundaries, at http://www.europa.eu/eurostat/web/gisco/geodata/reference-data/administrative-units-statistical-units.)

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Beyond answering the specific research question introduced above, the chapter at hand has a broader purpose. In the last decade, political scientists have collected much data and presented rigorous statistical analyses to examine the social, political, and economic legacies of empires.\(^9\) As impressive as their analyses are, these endeavors would have further profited from a continuous dialogue with the discipline of history. This is particularly true with respect to the topic of foreign rule: Historians are deeply familiar with the complex relationship of imperialism, state building, and political development. This chapter represents a contribution to this interdisciplinary dialogue in three ways. First, it extensively draws on scholarly work in administrative history. Second, this research project benefited from the feedback of historians with expertise on the Habsburg state and Poland, including a presentation at the seminar series *The Emperor’s Desk (Der Schreibtisch des Kaisers)* at the University of Vienna. Third, as a part of this collection of research articles, it attempts to further intensify the ongoing conversation between history and political science.

A number of related studies already assess various imperial legacies in Poland, but none of them is focused on bureaucracy. Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya find several discontinuities at the former imperial borders. Specifically, the formerly Prussian parts experience stronger support for anti-communist parties, whereas people in the formerly Austrian parts vote for...

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more conservative and religious parties compared to voting behavior in the formerly Russian area.\textsuperscript{10} Similarly, Bukowski finds that, in the vicinity of the historical borders, 6th-grade and 9th-grade students in the Austrian partition score significantly higher on standardized tests than students in the Russian partition.\textsuperscript{11} Moreover, Ekiert and Hanson analyze communist legacies in Poland and other Eastern European states,\textsuperscript{12} and Pop-Eleches and Tucker discuss different pathways through which those legacies perpetuate.\textsuperscript{13} Furthermore, Cramsey and Wittenberg show that Polish elites forcefully “polonized” minority groups in the interwar period,\textsuperscript{14} and Bernhard investigates the origins of the Polish democratic opposition under socialism.\textsuperscript{15} Further studies on the legacies of historical events include a contribution by Nalepa and Pop-Eleches, who investigate the effects of population resettlements on the ability of the Communist regime to infiltrate the Catholic church,\textsuperscript{16} and research by Charnysh on the influence of historical antisemitism on attitudes toward the EU\textsuperscript{17} as well as population displacements after World War Two.\textsuperscript{18} Finally, von Hirschhausen and Bint as well as von Hirschhausen and colleagues introduce and discuss the general concept of “phantom borders” in Central and Eastern Europe, including in Poland.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{10}Irena Grosfeld and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. “Cultural vs. economic legacies of empires: Evidence from the partition of Poland”. In: \textit{Journal of Comparative Economics} 43.1 (2015), pp. 55–75.
\textsuperscript{13}Grigore Pop-Eleches and Joshua A. Tucker. “Communism’s shadow: postcommunist legacies, values, and behavior”. In: \textit{Comparative Politics} 43.4 (2011), pp. 379–408.
\textsuperscript{17}Volha Charnysh. “Historical Legacies of Interethnic Competition”. In: \textit{Comparative Political Studies} 48.13 (2015), pp. 1711–1745.
This chapter proceeds as follows: First, I provide an overview of the imperial state building processes in the partitions of Poland and generate multiple hypothesis. Then, I investigate different mechanisms of intertemporal transmission. Finally, I discuss my empirical strategy and discuss the obtained results.

**Historical Background: the Case of Divided Poland**

**The Prussian Administrative State**

In the nineteenth century, the Prussian administrative state was characterized by a high level of efficiency and meritocracy.\(^{20}\) A rigorous legal framework governed its operation, a law degree was required for public service, competitive examinations were held, and an independent commission had to approve all applicants.\(^{21}\) Thus, the Prussian bureaucracy was among the most modern in the world.\(^{22}\) Moreover, Prussian bureaucrats enjoyed a reputation of “incorruptibility.”\(^{23}\) Accordingly, Prussia’s bureaucracy was “extremely well organised and efficient.”\(^{24}\)

Beginning in 1794, Prussian administrative structures, including Prussian laws (*Preußisches Landsrecht*), were imposed on Poland’s western territories.\(^{25}\) After 1815, limited auton-
omy was given to the province of Posen (Poznań), including the hiring of Polish administrators. But even Posen was eventually integrated into the Kingdom of Prussia. In 1876, a new policy of germanization began, imposing German legal and cultural institutions and making German the official language of the administration, the courts, and most schools.

The Austrian Administrative State

In the eighteenth century, Austria implemented a series of reforms aimed at creating a more efficient administration. The result was that it had “a relatively well-functioning, respected bureaucracy.” Taylor describes the bureaucracy as hardworking and honest but also points out that it suffered from the production of mountains of paper and other such flaws common to most modern administrations. Although reforms stalled in the nineteenth century and corruption could not be entirely eliminated, the bureaucracy was comparatively meritocratic, offering positions and promotions to non-noble candidates. Accordingly, the Habsburg bureaucracy was relatively efficient but also had certain weaknesses.

In the 1780s and 1790s, Austria introduced its administrative system, staffed with Austrian bureaucrats, to its newly acquired territories in Polish Galicia, also implementing...
political censorship and repression.\textsuperscript{36} In the first half of the nineteenth century, Austria made few concessions to the Poles and its administration put a heavy tax burden on the relatively poor region.\textsuperscript{37}

Despite the initially high levels of repression, not all Austrian bureaucrats had an antagonistic relationship with the local population—instead, some developed strong ties to local elites.\textsuperscript{38} Furthermore, the 1848 revolution led to a first set of progressive reforms by Vienna.\textsuperscript{39} Beyond this first set of progressive reforms, following major military defeats of Austria in 1859 by the Kingdom of Sardinia and France and in 1866 by Prussia,\textsuperscript{40} significant levels of self-governance by the Poles were allowed.\textsuperscript{41} This new strategy included both the local control of bureaucracies and the presence of Galician representatives in Vienna.\textsuperscript{42} Accordingly, the public administration in Galicia was characterized by substantially higher levels of decentralized control, which was appreciated by the Poles.\textsuperscript{43}

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\textsuperscript{1795-1918}, p. 12.
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\textsuperscript{36}Davies, \textit{God’s Playground A History of Poland: Volume II: 1795 to the Present}, p. 104; Prazmowska, \textit{A history of Poland}, p. 132.
\textsuperscript{37}Lukowski and Zawadzki, \textit{A concise history of Poland}, p. 156; Wandycz, \textit{The lands of partitioned Poland, 1795-1918}, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{39}Prazmowska, \textit{A history of Poland}, p. 144.
\textsuperscript{40}Paul Kennedy. \textit{The rise and fall of the great powers: economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000}. Unwin Hyman, London, 1988, pp. 163–166.
\textsuperscript{43}Kennedy, \textit{The rise and fall of the great powers: economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000}, p. 217.
The Russian Administrative State

In direct comparison with Austria and Prussia, Russia had a highly inefficient public administration.\textsuperscript{44} Both social selectivity and patronage were much more predominant than in Prussia or Austria, while aspects of meritocratic recruitment were either underdeveloped or non-existent. Thus, the levels of meritocracy and efficiency were significantly lower than in the Prussian and Austrian bureaucracies, whereas corruption and arbitrariness were omnipresent.\textsuperscript{45} Moreover, the hierarchical, military-like administrative structures systematically undermined personal initiative\textsuperscript{46}, and “[e]specially at the lower levels, the bureaucracy was radiantly corrupt.”\textsuperscript{47} In general, “Russia was [...] characterized by the least efficient administrative apparatus [...] of the three empires.”\textsuperscript{48}

When Russia first acquired territory in northeastern Poland in 1772—and similarly in 1796, after the third partition of Poland—it created new administrative provinces called gubernias.\textsuperscript{49} But due to a “shortage of Russian administrators” and the absence of “a body of codified laws”\textsuperscript{50}—associated with an inability to build a modern public administration—Russia was initially unable to pursue a policy of Russification.\textsuperscript{51} This lack of administrative capacity also meant that the extent and quality of public goods was severely restricted compared to Prussia or Austria.\textsuperscript{52}

The Congress Kingdom of Poland, founded after 1815, initially enjoyed administrative

\textsuperscript{44}Davies, \textit{God’s Playground A History of Poland: Volume II: 1795 to the Present}, Ch. 2; Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya, “Cultural vs. economic legacies of empires: Evidence from the partition of Poland”, p. 56; Raphael, \textit{Recht und Ordnung: Herrschaft durch Verwaltung im 19. Jahrhundert}, pp. 67–75.
\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., p. 78.
\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., p. 78.
\textsuperscript{48}Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya, “Cultural vs. economic legacies of empires: Evidence from the partition of Poland”, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{49}Davies, \textit{God’s Playground A History of Poland: Volume II: 1795 to the Present}, p. 65; Wandycz, \textit{The lands of partitioned Poland, 1795-1918}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{50}Prazmowska, \textit{A history of Poland}, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{51}Lukowski and Zawadzki, \textit{A concise history of Poland}, pp. 136–137.
\textsuperscript{52}Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya, “Cultural vs. economic legacies of empires: Evidence from the partition of Poland”, p. 60.
autonomy but this status ended when an uprising occurred in 1830/31, leading to a period of repression.\textsuperscript{53} Russia maintained the Kingdom as an administrative unit of its core state but simultaneously “abolished the constitution, the Sejm [parliament] and the Polish army”.\textsuperscript{54} This was a major defeat to Polish desires for self-governance. Subsequently, the Russian army policed Poland with the aim to prevent another military uprising.\textsuperscript{55}

**Measuring Efficiency and Meritocracy**

Accordingly, stark differences in both the level of efficiency and the level of meritocracy can be observed in the historical administrations of Prussia, Austria, and Russia. This section focuses on how we can measure these concepts in the present day.

**Measuring Efficiency:** When measuring efficiency, we can focus on input or output factors. In the case of present-day Polish communes (gmina), a focus on input factors is more appropriate for the following reasons. With the exception of county-level (powiat) cities, municipalities in the territory of present-day Poland have the same legally required set of outputs (organizational tasks) in terms of public goods and services. Those include, for example, waste management, the maintenance of roads, and fire protection. County-level cities provide additional services to citizens, such as issuing vehicle registration certificates. Given the uniformity of expected outputs that public administrations are required to deliver in the present day, I use the number of public administrators per 1,000 inhabitants as a measure of inputs (of human resources). From an input-centered perspective, a more efficient public administration needs fewer employees to fulfill the standard set of organizational tasks.

**Measuring Meritocracy:** In line with the argument that meritocracy has a strong


\textsuperscript{54}Łukowski and Zawadzki, *A concise history of Poland*, p. 162.

\textsuperscript{55}Kennedy, *The rise and fall of the great powers: economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000*, p. 172.
impact on bureaucratic efficiency, several studies imply that larger (or less efficient) bureaucracies could also suffer from patronage recruitment. But how can I more directly measure meritocracy? Meritocracy is associated with the level of selectivity in the application process. Therefore, I use the number of applicants relative to the number of job openings at the level of the clerk (urzednik). More candidates per job increase the competitiveness/selectivity of the recruitment procedure. This measurement reflects both (1) the efforts of the public administration to find qualified candidates and (2) the attractiveness of working there. In places where efforts to find qualified candidates are low and in places where the public administration is seen as inefficient/not prestigious, it attracts fewer candidates.

**Accounting for Interwar Germany**

I need to account for an important historical development that could have an influence on my analysis. After World War Two, many borders shifted. These changes included the boundaries of Poland and Germany. Formerly Prussian lands with German majorities were given to Poland. Associated with these transfers were massive population resettlements, primarily from the eastern parts of Poland (the Russian partition and Eastern Galicia) to communes that had been part of interwar Germany (1918–1939).

Due to these comprehensive resettlements, I cannot simply treat communes of interwar Germany in the same way as the Prussian communes that became independent after World War One (which typically had a Polish population majority). We would expect significant

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differences between the communes of Prussia that belonged to interwar Poland and those that belonged to interwar Germany.

**Summary and Hypotheses**

The low levels of meritocracy and efficiency in the Russian administration led to a comparably low level of legitimacy of Russian bureaucratic institutions. This likely had a negative impact on citizen perceptions and the self-selection of qualified applicants into administrative jobs, potentially resulting in long-term and self-reinforcing decreases in bureaucratic efficiency.

**Hypotheses 1 and 2:** Compared to communes in the formerly Russian parts, we expect the local public administrations in the formerly Austrian or Prussian parts of Poland to have fewer public employees per 1,000 inhabitants (H1) and to have a larger pool of applicants for administrative jobs (H2).

When compared to Prussia, the higher levels of local autonomy and decentralization in the Austrian administration led to a higher perceived legitimacy of Austrian institutions by the Poles. Consequently, interactions between bureaucrats and citizens were less antagonistic, which may have beneficial long-term consequences for the public’s view of bureaucracies and the self-selection of qualified applicants into administrative jobs, perpetuating bureaucratic efficiency.

**Hypotheses 3 and 4:** Compared to communes in the formerly Prussian parts, we expect the local public administrations in the formerly Austrian parts of Poland to have fewer public employees per 1,000 inhabitants (H3) and to have a larger pool of applicants for administrative jobs (H4).
Mechanisms of Intertemporal Transmission

Which specific mechanisms of intertemporal transmission could be responsible for persistent imperial legacies in Poland’s public administration?

When considering the historical period of Interwar Poland (1918–1939), it is important to note that the nascent Polish state was slow to develop a new and unified legal framework to govern its public administration. Despite a process of (formal) unification in administrative procedures, for several years, the former partitions of Poland maintained distinct legal-administrative traditions—based primarily on the former empires’ systems. This means that the quasi-experimental “treatment” of distinct historical administrative systems persisted well into the 1920s.

Because human capital and administrative culture matter for bureaucratic organization as well, a relevant fact is that there was significant continuity in personnel after the disintegration of the empires. Historical statistics from the year 1923 reveal that, in each of the partitions, approximately one third or more of all civil servants had been working at the public administration since the period of external rule. Specifically, the Central Statistical Office of Poland provided the following numbers on civil servants who had been working at the public administration for 6 or more years in 1923: 32.7 percent of civil servants in “Central Poland” (formerly under control of Russia), 32.1 percent in “Western Poland” (formerly under the control of Prussia), and 70.3 percent in “Southern Poland” (formerly under the control of Austria). Accordingly, both formal and informal aspects of bureaucratic organization persisted well into the 1920s, extending the distinct administrative systems into the Second Polish Republic and contributing to the perspective that administrative culture was

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a key aspect of intertemporal stability in bureaucratic organization.

Since Poland did not have a unified legal framework in 1923, a comparison of the relative number of employees per capita is less meaningful than in the subsequent communist and post-communist periods. But if we simultaneously compare differences in outputs, that is, public goods and services, such an analysis can reveal important patterns. Most importantly, even though the Russian administrative state had been significantly less extensive in the provision of public goods and services, historical statistics about the number of province (voivodeship) and county administrators show that the former Russian partition approximated the former Austrian and Prussian partitions in personnel size. While Austria and Prussia had provided vastly more outputs, in the years after the disintegration of the empires there was only a small difference between the formerly Russian parts of “Central Poland”—with an average of 0.16 administrators (per 1,000 inhabitants)—and the formerly Austrian and Prussian partitions—with 0.25 and 0.29, respectively.

Even though World War Two and the transition to communism were highly disruptive to the Polish political system, the latter also meant a homogenization of legal-administrative frameworks across Poland. If path dependence in bureaucratic organization holds, the suggested patterns in personnel size—as a measure for efficiency—should be fully observable in this period due to a streamlining of expected outputs.

Specific numbers regarding the employees of local public administrations are available

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61Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya, “Cultural vs. economic legacies of empires: Evidence from the partition of Poland”, p. 60.
62For example, with respect to both infrastructure (in terms of the paved roads per capita) and medical services (in terms of the number of doctors per capita), provision was much less extensive in the Russian partition (amongst many other public goods and services). See: K. Kumaniecki and A. Krzyżanowski. Statystyka Polski [Statistics of Poland]. Polskie Towarzystwo Statystyczne, Krakow, 1915, pp. 228–230, 253–258.
for the year 1968. When combined with population statistics, we observe the following patterns: The province Krakowskie, which overlaps with the former Austrian partition, had a relatively low number of 1.58 local public administrators per 1,000 inhabitants. Similarly, the province Katowickie, which was split between all three empires, with a substantial Austrian part, had 1.51 local administrators. Only the mostly Austrian province Rzeszowskie is an outlier with 2.04 administrators, leading to an average of 1.71 in these three territories. The provinces that overlap with the Prussian partition to the greatest extent had an average value of 1.77. Finally, the provinces that primarily overlapped with the Russian partition had an average of 1.93 administrators. These significant relative differences, which can be observed despite a unification in formal institutions, are mostly in line with my expectations. They also provide support for the view that persisting differences in informal institutions are constitutive for divergence in bureaucratic efficiency. Considering the previous operationalization, the unification of the legal frameworks and the associated streamlining of expected outputs mean that we can more directly compare the number of local administrators as a possible measure of efficiency. Accordingly, in an input/output framework of efficiency, the administrations in the formerly Russian partition perform substantially below their counterparts in the communist period as well.

Which concrete mechanisms related to informal institutions could be responsible for the intertemporal stability of administrative organization in Poland? Theoretically, at least two possible channels of transmission exist.

First, the intergenerational transmission of cultural values (historically imposed by the public administrations of the three powers) could have a persistent impact on administrative norms and behavior. Second, historically formed attitudes toward the state may influence

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the relationship of individuals with public authorities.⁶⁷ Bustikova and Corduneanu-Huci argue that such historically formed views of the state can constitute a long-term equilibrium and have a decisive impact on state-citizen interactions, specifically in terms of clientelism.⁶⁸ Additionally, a robust positive perception of public bureaucracies could persistently lead to the self-selection of more highly qualified applicants, creating a self-reinforcing dynamic of higher efficiency and better public attitudes.⁶⁹

Comprehensive empirical evidence demonstrates that cultural legacies of imperial rule persisted throughout the communist time period. Hryniewicz shows that, after the disintegration of the communist regime, people in western and southern territories of Poland, which had primarily belonged to Prussia and Austria, had substantially stronger beliefs in meritocracy and the market as an allocation mechanism. People in territories that primarily belonged to the Russian partition were more likely to view work as a source of financial security rather than as a personal achievement.⁷⁰ Additionally, Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya find that democratic capital and beliefs in decentralized governance are greatest in the formerly Habsburg parts.⁷¹

These substantial regional differences in norms and values support the position that

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⁶⁹For a similar argument related to the American context, see: Amy E. Lerman. Good enough for government work: The public reputation crisis in America (and what we can do to fix it). University of Chicago Press, Chicago/Illinois, 2019.


⁷¹Grosfeld and Zhuravskaya, “Cultural vs. economic legacies of empires: Evidence from the partition of Poland”.

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persistence in culture is likely a driving force in the path dependence of administrative organization, connecting the time of imperial rule to subsequent periods. Stronger beliefs in the market and meritocracy in Poland’s west and south make a selection based on patronage and personal connections less likely. Moreover, since corruption had been a key aspect of regional administrative culture in the Russian partition, it is possible to have amplified corrupt behavior by public officials both in the Second Polish Republic and under communism.

Furthermore, Majcherkiewicz argues that “[present-day] attitudes [toward the public administration] [...] were formed during the long Partition period that began in 1795 and ended in 1918.” However, since there were significant differences in efficiency, corruption, and legitimacy between the bureaucracies of the three occupying powers, those views likely differ across the partitions. In this respect, Becker and colleagues present empirical evidence that there is path dependence in perceptions of state institutions across the historical Habsburg border, including in Poland. Persisting positive views of the public administration could lead to the self-selection of more and more highly qualified candidates into the applicant pool, also reinforcing higher levels of efficiency.

Searching for the Legacies of Imperial Bureaucracies: the Empirical Test

I conduct an empirical analysis at the level of the commune. A commune is comparable a municipality—a more common term in countries in which English is the official language. For this purpose, I have used a database of Polish government institutions to identify as many public administrations at the commune level as possible.

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73 Becker et al., “The Empire Is Dead, Long Live the Empire! Long-Run Persistence of Trust and Corruption in the Bureaucracy”.
My central data collection effort was an electronic survey on various aspects of bureaucratic efficiency and performance. Questions were on the size of the public administration (in terms of administrators), the number of job openings at the level of the clerk in 2014-2015, the number of applicants for these positions, the number of distinct channels of advertisement for these positions, and other measures of efficiency.

In January 2017, the survey was sent to approximately 2,300 public administrations and received approximately 740 responses by late April. Due to missing answers, only 500-680 responses can be used for the empirical analyses.

In addition to the data that I have collected through the survey, I have obtained additional data to control for confounding factors, including variables such as tax revenues, population density, migration levels, unemployment rates, and so on.

Response Locations

Figure 2 shows the communes that responded to the survey on a historical map with the imperial borders of 1815-1914. We see a geographically balanced sample of responses. Communes that were in interwar Germany are represented by light grey boxes. Geographic data was obtained from a large number of different sources.

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Empirical Techniques

To estimate the magnitude of diverging outcomes between the parts of Poland that were historically ruled by different empires, I use multiple statistical techniques, including (1) simple dummy variable analysis and (2) a regression discontinuity design. A description of the results can be found below.

Empirical Test: Results

Simultaneous Comparison of All Partitions

Figure 3 shows the results of the first set of regressions when all partitions are compared simultaneously. Russian communes have approximately 6-9 percent more employees than
Prussian communes. I obtain a very similar result for communes that were part of interwar Germany (5–10 percent more employees than Prussian communes that did not belong to interwar Germany). This is interesting because most people who were relocated to communes of interwar Germany came from the formerly Russian parts (although some also came from Eastern Galicia), meaning that the results are compatible with the imperial legacies perspective. Austrian communes appear to be the most efficient with approximately 8 percent fewer employees than Prussian communes in the model without covariates.

Furthermore, Russian communes have approximately 17-28 percent fewer applicants per job than Prussian communes. Similarly, Austrian communes have approximately 19-21 percent fewer applicants than Prussian communes. Without covariates, communes in interwar Germany show a similar pattern, but the results are no longer statistically significant when covariates are included.

These results provide initial (limited) evidence in favor of imperial legacies with respect to public administrations. With the exception of the lower number of applicants in the Austrian partition and the nonsignificance with respect to channels of advertisement, the results of
all models are in the theoretically expected direction. Austrian communes appear to be the most efficient, strengthening the argument that decentralization can positively affect bureaucratic efficiency in the long run. The models with covariates need to be interpreted with caution due to the substantial possibility of posttreatment bias.

Direct Graphical Comparison of Empires

In this section, I directly compare differences across the borders of pairs of empires. We begin with Prussia and Russia. In this comparison, as shown in Figure 4, we observe the strongest legacy effect in terms of applicants per job. It appears that communes on the formerly Prussian territories have significantly more applicants, indicating higher levels of competitiveness and meritocracy in the recruitment process.

![Figure 4: Prussia/Russia Comparison (Full Sample): Applicants per Job (Log)](image)

When comparing the formerly Austrian and Russian parts, as shown in Figure 5, the most striking differences are in the number of employees. The results indicate that communes in the formerly Austrian parts are significantly more efficient as they need fewer human resources to conduct the same set of organizational tasks.
In the final comparison of Prussia and Austria, as shown in Figure 6, we again observe marked differences in terms of the number of employees. The graphic shows that Austrian communes are superior even to Prussian communes when it comes to their overall efficiency.

**Conclusion**

This chapter underscores that the disciplines of political science and history can strongly benefit from entering a constructive dialogue. In very practical terms the underlying research project has already profited from such a conversation throughout its development, and—as part of this volume—it further advances an ongoing interdisciplinary exchange.
Beyond its interdisciplinary ambition, this chapter also addresses several major issues in existing political economy research on imperial legacies. Among others, it is one of the first studies to examine bureaucratic legacies in a rigorous research design. My analyses show that historical patterns still affect some aspects of contemporary public administration in Poland, whereas there also is little to no effect in some other comparisons. I find that Russian communes perform worst on measures of efficiency and meritocracy (H1 and H2). There is also (more limited) evidence for a positive long-term Habsburg effect on bureaucratic efficiency (H3). An analysis of historical data from the interwar and communist periods suggests that the observed differences are deeply rooted and have survived various historical regimes. As existing studies, survey data, and expert interviews show, this persistence can be explained with (1) the endurance of culture, affecting administrative norms, and (2) attitudes towards the bureaucracy, influencing recruitment patterns.

All in all, this chapter provides an optimistic perspective on the possibilities for future collaboration between political scientists and historians. Indeed, scholars from both disciplines can learn a lot from each other. In particular, historians’ extremely detailed and comprehensive knowledge of specific cases and time periods can benefit political research. In turn, political scientists may uncover patterns of (long-term) development that have not been identified in historical research yet. Furthermore, historical research may profit from the statistical toolkit that political scientists have acquired in the last decades. As this chapter demonstrates, future collaboration between political science and history can benefit both disciplines in many and possibly surprising ways.