

Surprising similarities?

Food Market Deregulation and the Consequences of Laissez-Faire in Vienna, Paris and New York City, c. 1840–1880

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Abstract

In June 1860, the Gewerbefreiheit was introduced in Vienna, turning baking into a “free trade”. Around the same time, similar policies were realised in, among other urban centres, New York City and Paris. Recognising the commonality of market liberalisation, this contribution adopts a comparative approach to analyse the consequences of laissez-faire politics on the food provision of different agglomerations. Focussing on bread and meat, it compares the pathways to liberalisation and its effects by looking at supply infrastructures and product qualities. The paper argues that despite the local historical, economic and political differences between Vienna, New York and Paris as well as the differences of the materiality of meat and bread, deregulation had comparable, contradictory results. It will be concluded that while the “free market” allowed for an expansion and diversification of retail geographies, it also negatively affected both food quality and the consumers’ abilities to negotiate a more complex food market. Neither in New York nor in Paris or Vienna did the “free market” succeed to generate the common good via low prices and high food quality standards for all.

Introduction

On December 20, 1859, Imperial Patent No. 227 announced the introduction of freedom of trade to most territories of the Habsburg Empire, including the city of Vienna. Effective with June 1, 1860, the *Gewerbefreiheit* would turn baking into a “free trade”. A year later, on September 17, 1860, the k. k. Lower Austrian Provincial Government proclaimed the abolition of the bread assize in Vienna and the surrounding counties from 1 November of that year, leaving the “determination of the prices of all products of the baking industry to free competition”.¹ These laws, issued within just a few months, wiped away almost all regulatory frameworks of bread production and distribution that had governed the bread supply of the residents of the Habsburg capital for centuries. Abolishing far-reaching governmental and municipal restrictions of entering the trade, of its geography, its products and their prices as well as the limita-

1 Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (WStLA), Marktamt A2/1: Brot und Gebäcksverkauf nach Gewicht: k. k. nö. Statthalterei, Aufhebung der Gebäckssatzung in Niederösterreich, 17.9.1860.

tions of the ways, places and times of selling bread, these laws did away with the embedded food market. A dramatic market revolution, over the course of the year 1860 the deregulation of Vienna's food market created a disembedded market for basic food items.

Vienna was not the only agglomeration to liberalise its food market around the middle of the 19th century, nor was it the first. Almost twenty years earlier, in 1843, New York's city council abolished a wide range of market laws regulating the city's meat supply. Meanwhile, in 1858 the bread and meat trades of the French capital were also deregulated.² Recognising the commonality of incisive market liberalisation in the three cities of Vienna, Paris and New York around 1850, this paper adopts a comparative approach to answer the question how these introductions of laissez-faire politics affected the food provision of different urban regions across "the west". Historians have identified two approaches as suitable concepts to engage with questions about the relations of "the local" and "the global".³ On the one hand, members of one strand of the field, probably rather informed by the "cultural turn" of the historical sciences, have underlined "global or trans-regional connection as the principal objects of study of the field".⁴ Put forward by, among many others, William McNeill, in this perspective, "'encounters', 'contacts', and above all 'connexions' with 'outsiders' can be represented as the origins and engine of most economic, social, political, military, cultural, religious, technological and other conceivable types of change".⁵

Therefore, "global history asks how such connections were created by historical agents [...] and how they in turn influenced them in their actions [...]",⁶ enabling historians to "avoid the condescension of cultures, the restrictions of time and the arrogance of nations built into currently dominant styles of history, as well as post-modern incredulities towards meta-narratives of all kinds".⁷ Serving as "mediators" in the sense of Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory, connections "transform, translate, distort, and modify"; their exact analysis allows „to make better assessments of how the character of a connection impacts the people or places that are connected".⁸

On the other hand, a second fraction of historians, probably rather leaning towards a more structuralist interpretation of what the writing of history ought to be,⁹ has highlighted the comparative approach. Surpassing "the complexity and tyranny of local detail, [it] looks into at least two mirrors" and concen-

2 HOROWITZ/PILCHER/WATTS, *Meat for the Multitudes*, p. 1070; BAICS, *Feeding Gotham*; BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*.

3 O'BRIEN, *Historiographical Traditions*.

4 WENZLHUEMER, *The Ship, the Media, and the World*, p. 164.

5 O'BRIEN, *Historiographical Traditions*, p. 4.

6 WENZLHUEMER, *Conceptualizing Connections*, p. 164.

7 O'BRIEN, *Historiographical Traditions*, p. 5. Compare also DE VRIES, *Changing the Narrative*, who contextualizes the dispute over approaches with general movements within (economic) history between "social science history or historical social science".

8 WENZLHUEMER, *Conceptualizing Connections*, p. 165, 186.

9 See DE VRIES, *Changing the Narrative*.

trates to investigate “artefacts, institutions, organizations, social practices, attitudes and beliefs, which are found in dispersed places [...] and which exhibit comparable, but more importantly, dissimilar geographical, economic, political, and social features in other places.”¹⁰

Following Marc Bloch, “the comparative method can elicit from the chaotic multiplicity of circumstances those contrasts which were generally effective”.¹¹ In other words, it seeks to illuminate „commonalities in human affairs [...] to set a much more refined appreciation of what precisely was different about some contexts” and to “offer coherent explanations of change in the past”.¹²

Centrally addressing the eminent struggle between understanding (*Verstehen*) and explaining (*Erklären*), the recent dispute over the approaches to global history is neither new nor confined to that branch of the field; it rather seems to absorb a lasting academic debate.¹³ While this contribution adopts a comparative approach, it does not mean to support a hierarchy between both concepts. Rather, the choice of the approach depends on the questions asked and the sources investigated. While connections highlight, for example, the agency of individuals and their motives and foster the understanding of their actions, comparisons enable to identify local or regional differences and to generate “a sensitivity to the historical agents, forces, and factors at scales above”.¹⁴ Therefore, connections and comparisons can be understood as complementary; „historical change is conceived as an interaction between agency and structures“.¹⁵

In order to investigate the effects of the liberalisation of the food market in the three cities – Vienna, Paris and New York City – and to what extent these effects were similar or different, the paper continues as follows: the state of research forms the first part in which the development and consequences of food market liberalisations regarding meat and bread in New York City, Paris and Vienna are presented. A detailed analysis of the consequences of deregulation concerning bread in Vienna follows in the second part, focussing on the supply-side. While the first part is based upon research literature, the second exploits new archival materials from both the archive of Vienna’s Bakers’ Association, from the city’s *Marktamt* (market bureau) in the Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna as well as newspaper articles. The former sources yield information about the geographic development of the baking trade, which is mapped using historical GIS. Regarding the latter materials, two

10 O’BRIEN, *Historiographical Traditions*, p. 5.

11 See William SEWELL, *Marc Bloch and the logic of comparative history*. In: *History and Theory* 6 (1967), 2, pp. 208–218, cited in: O’BRIEN, *Historiographical traditions*, p. 5.

12 WASHBROOK, *Problems in Global History*, p. 22–23; DE VRIES, *Changing the Narrative*, p. 334.

13 See DE VRIES, *Changing the Narrative*; see also the contributions in BERGHOFF/VOGEL (eds.), *Wirtschaftsgeschichte als Kulturgeschichte*, and ERNST LANGTHALER, *Zeitgeschichte und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*.

14 DRAYTON/MOTADEL, *Discussion*, p. 13.

15 PARTHASARATHI, *Comparison*, p. 77.

collections documenting debates over retail and production standardisation are used to analyse the consequences of liberalisation of Vienna's bread market between 1860 and c. 1885.

Via New York and Paris Back to Vienna¹⁶

New York, an unmonitored System

On January 20, 1843, the New York City Common Council decided to dis-embed the metropolis's food economy. Repealing the city's market laws that restricted the slaughtering and selling of meat to licensed butchers, the urban government "liberalized the food system and left provisioning in the hands of unregulated markets."¹⁷ After the council had abolished the assize for bread two decades earlier, that year's repeal of New York's market laws meant the abandonment of the municipal system of a regulated market for the most important food items, bread and meat.¹⁸ While before "public markets [had] served as privileged spaces [...] bringing together vendors and customers [...] under the watchful eye of the municipal government", now "growing faith in free markets prevailed in the council's decision to deregulate the provisioning system". Whereas licensed butchers and public market places had dominated the city's meat supply and distribution system for over a century and a half, from 1843 "public markets were no longer the exclusive sites for the retail of meat supplies. Instead of limiting the sale of fresh meat to licensed market butchers, the council now permitted anyone to open a private shop".¹⁹ Consequently, New York's food market "became a deregulated commodity market with no exceptions for the necessities of life."²⁰

Deregulation in New York City emerged out of three major, intertwined developments. An "ideological shift in antebellum political economy in favour of open access and free competition" led to the liberalisation of the food market during the first half of the 19th century. After various decades of "wrangling over the pros and cons of unfettered market economies"²¹ the city council had abolished the bread assize already in 1821, followed by the liberalisation of the meat trade two decades later. However, this "did not happen in isolation".²² Besides intellectual changes, the decision to terminate the city's formerly extensive – and expansive – investedness in the public market system was adopted out of very pragmatic problems and considerations caused by dramatic population growth and New York's financial situation. On the one hand, rapid population increase led to an expansion of the urban fabric north of the developed area at a pace at which "by the mid-1830s, the expansion of

16 This headline is obviously inspired by VRIES, *Via Peking back to Manchester*.

17 BAICS, *Feeding Gotham*, p. 2.

18 On the bread assize, see BURROWS/WALLACE, *Gotham*, p. 355–356.

19 BAICS, *Feeding Gotham*, p. 3, 21–22, 24.

20 FULLILOVE, *The Price of Bread*, p. 32.

21 BURROWS/WALLACE, *Gotham*, p. 355–356.

22 BAICS, *Feeding Gotham*, p. 25.

market facilities clearly fell behind the city's growth"²³. As the system of central public market halls failed to expand into the new parts of the city, licensed outside vendors as well as informal, unlicensed retailers came to dominate these areas. They formed a parallel infrastructure to the officially licensed butchers that assumed important proportions of daily meat provisioning. The "council's inattention to its market infrastructure from the mid-1830s on was in part to blame for the proliferation of an informal sector, constituted by unlicensed vendors and customers, a development that undermined the city's traditional public market-based provisioning system." The 1843 decision to deregulate the market was thus also a "formalization of an existing informal economy".²⁴

On the other hand, the reason for the failure of the public market system to expand were public finances. Over the first two decades of the century, the city had acquired land and erected market halls to centralise and municipalise a rather dispersed infrastructure of neighbourhood markets at great costs. This "consolidation as a public infrastructure system" corresponding to the "municipality's broadening public powers and responsibilities under the pressure of accelerating growth" had produced massive public spending, especially during the 1820s.²⁵ As this inhibited the construction of new marketplaces, "the system's fiscal contribution was diminishing considerably", raising more critique.²⁶ At the same time, other primary needs of urban dwellers, housing and water, became ever more pressing. As the Cholera outbreak of 1832 proved, New York was in dire need to expand its water infrastructure. The construction of the Croton Aqueduct between 1837 and 1842 – at ten times the calculated costs – "foreclosed any further large-scale infrastructural improvement" for the time being.²⁷ In this situation, deregulation was also required from below. Facing inadequate and allegedly expensive public market system, citizens grew restive. "The Common Council faced mounting pressure from below in the form of an emerging public consensus that an alternative model of provisioning, defined by open entry and free competition among food purveyors, would benefit consumers." With the expansion of the voting franchise to all white men in 1826 and the direct election of the mayor in 1834, authorities were keen to follow public opinion in an increasingly democratic situation.²⁸

This "transition from a municipally managed to a wholly unregulated food economy [...] had far-reaching consequences for the geography of food access, the daily routines of household provisioning, and the living standards of residents."²⁹ On the one hand, it decisively mobilised the food market in terms of vendors and retail locations. While 530 bakers registered in 1845,

23 BAICS, *Feeding Gotham*, p. 42.

24 *Ibidem*, p. 23.

25 *Ibidem*, p. 32.

26 *Ibidem*, p. 45.

27 *Ibidem*, p. 48.

28 *Ibidem*, p. 41.

29 *Ibidem*, p. 22.

807 shops were listed nine years later, spreading all over the urban area. Much less studied, further results of liberalisation to baking are less clear. In the same period, butchers multiplied from 283 to 743 and the number of registered retail grocers grew from 1701 to 2739.³⁰ Then, opening the trade critically deteriorated the quality of food, especially of meat – “with deregulation, the city lost its baseline of provision standards.”³¹ By the 1860s, an extensive report of the Council for Hygiene and Public Health required the “reform of the whole system of supplying animal food” and to “regulate the butcheries and the market system” in order to remove the “sources of evil that are inflicted by [...] the absence of control of the sanitary condition of slaughtered animals and food articles”.³² Unhealthy food was increasingly connected to social differences.

“In a city deeply divided by class, omnipresent food shops lining the ground floor of crowded tenement blocks were less the evidence of well-working provision markets than of highly segmented ones, whereby environmentally disadvantaged neighborhoods were also relegated to the risky terrain of low-end, low-quality food options. [...] The proliferation of food purveyors in these crowded districts was driven by a combination of two factors: booming populations that generated greater demand and lower incomes that pushed local food markets to the bottom end of the scale.”³³

The almost absolute abolition of market laws and municipal market oversight in New York city thus represented a

“retail revolution with contradictory outcomes: one the one hand, a more dynamic food economy, with more access points, offering customers shorter trips and greater flexibility of schedules; on the other hand, a wholly unmonitored provisioning system, with adverse outcomes to food quality, contributing to greater inequality in food access among residents of different socioeconomic status.”³⁴

As a consequence of liberalisation, New Yorkers had to “negotiate a far more complex, uneven, and riskier terrain of provisioning” so that, by the 1860s, public anxiety over these risks led to renewed debates over food liberalisation as well as several moves to reintroduce regulation.³⁵

Moderate Free Trade in Paris

Two decades after liberalisation was established in New York City, the French government introduced a “system of free competition” to the baking and slaughter industries. Similar to the legislation passed in the Austrian and American metropolises, “in one swoop” two consecutive reform acts abolished existing regulations that had fenced off baking and butchering from liberalisa-

30 BAICS, Feeding Gotham, color plate 3.

31 Ibidem, p. 229.

32 Ibidem, p. 195.

33 Ibidem, p. 206, 207.

34 Ibidem, p. 233.

35 Ibidem, p. 228.

tion acts since 1790. While the reform act of February 24, 1858 declared the liberty of the butchers' trade, from 1.9.1863, all limitations of bakers and the assize were abolished in Paris and 165 other cities.³⁶ The temporal result of the ongoing "conflict between laissez-faire politics and state intervention", these laws introduced a "regime of liberty" based on the "free game of competition".³⁷ They established bakers to operate their businesses as they pleased and consumers to "look after their interests themselves" while restrictions on butchers were lifted to "encourage production and hopefully lower the price of the meat".³⁸

In contrast to its American counterpart, one result of Paris's history of popular discontent, riots and revolutions, liberalisation was largely cushioned through municipal interventions. Parisians had already seen drastic acts of deregulation in the second half of the 18th century. During the 1760s and 1770s, the French capital's bread and meat markets had been liberalised from extensive regulation, though only briefly. When the city's bread supply system collapsed, prices rose and large-scale resistance erupted regulations and limitations were reintroduced.³⁹ At the same time, Turgot's liberalisation of slaughtering in 1776 was repealed five months later. Although French and Paris's governments debated over official interventions in the face of severe episodes of rinderpest and increasing complaints over pollution and nuisance in the capital during the 1770s and 1780s, the French Revolution brought full deregulation of both trades. With the genuine "intention to establish the liberty of trade and commerce", the passing of the d'Allarde Law in March 1791 opened baking and butchering to everyone.⁴⁰

As one of the "first bold experiments" with the deregulation, the guilds' trade monopolies were "broken in favour of free competition. Henceforth practically anyone could slaughter and sell meat", and many seized that opportunity. Yet, "while expanding opportunities, free competition also had adverse effects on the trade, the quality of meat, and the city as a whole." Since the revolutionary reforms had eliminated any supervision of quality, the "frenzied marketplace brought a new level of disorder and malfeasance in absence of guilds to regulate the 'unqualified' butchers". Allegedly, during the early 1790s, "Paris was provided with the worst meat of the kingdom."⁴¹ Recognising the negative outcomes of liberty, the re-regulation of butchering in centralised municipal slaughterhouses was already discussed by the National Assembly in 1793, but not realised until Napoleon Bonaparte reintroduced regulation. With limitations of the numbers of butchers and stalls in 1799 and the cre-

36 BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 179; STRENG, *Subsistenzpolitik*, p. 139; STRENG, *Konventionen*.

37 BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 175; STRENG, *Subsistenzpolitik*, p. 194, 195.

38 STRENG, *Subsistenzpolitik*, p. 196; BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 178.

39 KAPLAN, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy*; MILLER, *Politics and Urban Provisioning Crises*; BOUTON, *The Flour War*.

40 BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 75.

41 HOROWITZ/PILCHER/WATTS, *Meat for the Multitudes*, p. 1067; BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 75, 76.

ation of the *Syndicat de la Boucherie* in Paris in 1811, “French experiments with market liberalization ended quickly” as “this regulation all but reinstated the corporations that had been abolished in 1791”⁴². Simultaneously, various legislations passed since the 1790s reinstated market intervention into the baking industry by the state replacing guilds as regulative bodies. Bread and meat were again monitored by a municipal regime that fenced off bakers and butchers from the otherwise general rule of free commerce.

The new regulatory regimes of meat and bread in Paris assumed very different forms. Continuing a direction already debated around 1770, the bloody, stinking and health-risking butchers’ trade was pushed out of the city into several centralised municipal slaughterhouses. *Abattoirs*, institutions “laid out for official interventions”, “opened up a space for the implementation of regulatory networks to discipline the butcher’s trade [...] that placed the municipality in a position of authority”.⁴³ “Over the following decades the municipality further intensified its influence over the butchers”, creating a fundamentally regulated, centralised municipal regime over the capital’s meat market.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, lacking the stench and dirt of production and the severe health risks of spoiled products, baking fundamentally remained a dispersed, decentralised “small-scale private enterprise that did not witness any significant degree of specialisation”.⁴⁵ By the 1850s, some 600 bakeries supplied Paris, still under municipal observation of fixed prices, quality controls, and storage requirements.⁴⁶

Yet, “even with the return of state controls, more circumscribed liberal experiments re-emerged” and regulations “waxed and waned in the 1840s and 1850s”.⁴⁷ While both the police as well as the city council had leaned towards interventionist positions before the 1850s, this changed by the middle of the decade. In contrast to the early years of the decade when the government had still tried to meet rising prices with large-scale market interventions in form of the newly established *Caisse de la service de boulangerie* and the older *Caisse de Poissy*, around 1855 liberal positions grew prevalent.⁴⁸ Whereas earlier the council “linked the notion of order to the restriction of the number of butchers”, in 1857 it decided that “the butchers’ trade should be freed from restrictions because it would encourage production and hopefully lower the price of the meat”.⁴⁹

42 HOROWITZ/PILCHER/WATTS, *Meat for the Multitudes*, p. 1074; BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 85.

43 BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 142, 143.

44 *Ibidem*, p. 144. See also contributions in LEE (ed.), *Meat, Modernity*.

45 BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 133.

46 HUSSON, *Les consommations de Paris*, p. 139.

47 HOROWITZ/PILCHER/WATTS, *Meat for the Multitudes*, p. 1070; STRENG, *Subsistenzpolitik*, p. 139–141.

48 For detailed analyses of the *Caisse de la service de Boulangerie*, see HORII, *La crise alimentaire*; HERMENT, *Les communautés rurales*; STRENG, *Subsistenzpolitik*, p. 150–160; on the *Caisse de Poissy*, see LETEUX, *Les formes d’intervention*.

49 BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 178.

Lacking some years behind, a similar debate, though under very different circumstances was held regarding bread. In the wake of rising complaints by the late 1850s that the *Caisse* increased bread prices in the city vis-à-vis the surrounding communities, state council Frederic Le Play was authorised to conduct a large-scale inquiry into the capital's bread supply system to establish the consequences of regulation and restriction on bread prices in the city.⁵⁰ Against the background of his extensive research developed a general discussion over the regulated bread market in which the liberal side assumed the upper hand by the early 1860s. While the prefect of the police had still argued to “uphold the current organisation without any modification” in an 1857 statement, Le Play's commission came to very different findings by 1860 after large-scale comparative analyses of the bread market in Paris, London and Brussels. It declared intervention into the baking industry “harmful and helpless” and argued for deregulation.⁵¹ Despite strong resistance by Paris's bakers, the council and, indeed, Prefect Hausmann, Le Play and other liberal proponents succeeded to convince Napoleon III and his *Conseil d'Etat* to impose deregulation three years later.⁵²

Compared to New York, the deregulation of bread and meat in Paris was unfinished. On the one hand, the 1863 decree deregulating baking “specifically did not mention bread price controls, and [...] through its silence, appeared to sanction the continuation of the practice”. Explicitly, it only repealed the limits of the numbers of bakers as well as requirements to keep flour storages. Therefore, the “actual effect of the [deregulation] policies was more muted”.⁵³ On the other hand, Paris's municipal council succeeded in securing other exemptions from deregulation for the capital during the summer of 1863 and many other municipalities across the country continued to set bread prices and conduct quality controls of bread. As “bakers throughout France continued to observe the *taxe* and sold their bread in the loaves familiar to their customers” at more or less the former official prices, this was much more a “moderate form of free trade” in which officials maintained efforts to remove “provisioning from the roster of possible threats”.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, due to the centralisation of slaughtering “even if the freedom of the trade was declared, butchers would remain under the auspices of the municipality and the police.”⁵⁵ Therefore, the “removal of trade restrictions did not mean that the state was about to relinquish its power over the practice of butchering. Even though the freedom of the butchers' trade had been ratified by decree, the municipality continued to exercise its control by spatially

50 STRENG, Subsistenzpolitik, p. 185–189.

51 Ibidem, p. 190.

52 For a more detailed discussion, see BRANTZ, Slaughter in the City, p. 175–180; STRENG, Subsistenzpolitik, p. 184–194.

53 MILLER, Mastering the Market, p. 296.

54 Ibidem, p. 296–297.

55 BRANTZ, Slaughter in the City, p. 179.

restricting slaughter.”⁵⁶ At the same time as deregulation was made into law, public control over Paris’s butchers was on the way to reaching its zenith. Less than ten years after liberalisation, la Villete, Paris’s city of blood concentrating the nation’s trade and slaughter of cattle was opened in 1867.⁵⁷ This enabled the authorities to keep a close eye on the forms and quality of meat and to elaborate “an administrative categorization of meat cuts and their relative prices” as well as “a movement of standardization of transactions and products” between the 1850s and 1880s.⁵⁸

Despite these efforts by Paris’ authorities to keep the food market embedded, liberalisation did have decisive effects. The attempt to re-establish “a systematic classification of meat cuts for retail” was a contested process.⁵⁹ To tackle this more complex retail environment and to end the “calculated disorder for retail prices”, government bodies, consumer cooperatives and butchers “renegotiated and imposed new norms in terms of transactions” like “the practice of a fixed price associated to definite pieces” of meat.⁶⁰ Standardisation was deeply opposed and contested by butchers who “had no interest in the diffusion of the artisan-related terminology for meat cuts. Having their own specific terminology, they were unlikely to relinquish their principal advantage in transactions.”⁶¹

Even with centralisation and municipal oversight, abolishing the capped numbers and fixed prices of meat retailing changed the every-day realities of residents’ meat supply. Grossly dividing the trade into wholesale butchers and meat vendors, freedom of commerce also induced a sharp increase in the number of retail locations. While some 600 butchers had practised the trade before liberalisation, this number doubled quickly and reached 1400 in 1873, 1649 in 1883 and 1914 by 1890.⁶² Opening the trade also created a much more complex geography of buying meat as it fostered the differentiation of retailers. While under the regulatory regime in 1855 most of Paris’s butchers had been middle-sized operations, their share decreased at the benefit of small vendors. By 1888, the prefecture classified the profession into seven groups according to their weekly production; half of all vendors sold only small amounts of meat while the percentage of large producers had remained stable.⁶³ A consequence were increasingly “socially differentiated purchase practises” in the various parts of the city.⁶⁴ Now

“sales strategies [varied] by neighborhood. For example, butchers in wealthy neighborhoods [sold] mainly selected pieces [...]. Conversely, butcheries located in the lower-income

56 BRANTZ, *Slaughter in the City*, p. 179.

57 Kyri W. CLAFLIN, *La Villete: the City of Blood, 1867–1914*, in: LEE (ed.), *Meat*, p. 27–45.

58 LHUISSIER, *Cuts and Classification*, p. 192, 197.

59 *Ibidem*, p. 197.

60 *Ibidem*, p. 198.

61 *Ibidem*, p. 197–198.

62 STANZIANI, *La construction institutionnelle*, p. 98; ATKINS, ‘A Tale of Two Cities’, p. 29.

63 STANZIANI, *La construction institutionnelle*, p. 99.

64 LHUISSIER, *Cuts and Classification*, p. 191.

neighborhoods favor[ed] the second and third categories. [...] This gradual differentiation [was] part of a framework in which two general trends stand out: the decline in profit margins and the lesser skill of butchers.”⁶⁵

Akin to meat shops, deregulation also mobilised the number of bakeries, from 600–700 around 1854 to over 1400 by 1873.⁶⁶ Although bakers tended to continue to follow older regulations of form, weight and prices, they were not compelled to under the regime of liberty, in which also customers were to negotiate purchases and to “look after their interests themselves”.⁶⁷ While officials noted that free market prices stood above those of the fixed prices before 1863, the main elements of debate were the growing asymmetry of information between bakers and customers as well as an erosion of “implicit conventions” of the quality of bread.⁶⁸ While under the fixed-price system, official information on prices and weights had provided buyers with crucial shopping knowledge, in the new environment this had ceased, putting especially poor customers in a disadvantaged position. In 1864, for example, several bakers were sentenced of fraud for selling underweight bread that due to its “traditional form and appearance” led customers to expect higher weights. As similar cases were still discussed in 1866, instructions were issued by the French Ministry of Trade and Agriculture to oblige bakers to put up visible boards informing about the prices and wages of their products in order to bring back a certain level of transparency to the bread market.⁶⁹

Summarising, in contrast to New York City, legislative liberalisation of bread and meat was much less thorough in Paris, and the effects less drastic as the state continued to intervene decisively into both trades, especially into slaughtering. Consequently, the consumers in the French capital appear to have been spared the very serious negative implications on food quality experienced in New York. Nevertheless, like in New York liberalisation fostered the socio-economic and topographic stratification of food access and created a more complicated terrain of purchasing food particularly for low-income inhabitants.

Vienna between competition and concentration

Between both these poles of radical liberalisation in New York City and continuing intervention cushioning deregulation in Paris, the capital of the Habsburg Empire assumed an intermediate position. While, like many other cities,⁷⁰ Vienna created large-scale institutions to centralise and municipalise slaughter, baking was decidedly left a “free” trade. Similar to Paris and New

65 STANZIANI, *La construction institutionnelle*, p. 99.

66 HUSSON, *Consommationes*, p. 111, 140.

67 STRENG, *Subsistenzpolitik*, p. 199, 200.

68 STRENG, *Konventionen der Brotqualität*, p. 176.

69 STRENG, *Subsistenzpolitik*, p. 200.

70 See the special section on *Meat and the Nineteenth-Century City*. In: *Urban History* 45 (2018), 2.

York, intense debates over the “right” policies to secure bread and meat supplies of the growing city had been fought in Vienna since the last third of the 18th century. Closely connected to the liberalisation efforts in France during the 1760s and 1770s, Vienna’s bread and meat markets had been thoroughly deregulated during the 1780s, climaxing in 1788, when Joseph II had abolished all regulative interventions. Although the impressions of the French Revolution brought back far-reaching regulation and impeded liberalisation for the next two decades, after 1815, the struggle over embedded versus disembedded food markets continued throughout the first half of century. While negotiations over freedom of commerce were deadlocked between adherents of the traditional order and proponents of free trade before 1848, economically liberal perspectives prevailed in the governments after the March Revolution.⁷¹ The 1847 deregulation of meat market stalls, the 1850 lifting of the assize on meat as well as several acts during the 1850s that deregulated intermediate trade and petty retailing represented successive steps towards total liberty of 1860.

However, a little later than in Paris, the meat supply of the Austrian capital had entered a path of centralisation and municipalisation by the 1830s, when the city council increased its efforts to implement control and regulation in the wake of the 1832 cholera epidemic and rising prices. The foundation of Vienna’s *Marktamt* in 1839 created a centralised municipal bureau that assumed sole authority to monitor markets and replaced a formerly decentralised, heterogeneous system of various manorial competences. By the 1840s, after he had visited Paris’s abattoirs in 1845, Mayor Ignaz Czapka drew plans to concentrate the 151 private slaughterhouses into municipal facilities and to find a *Fleischkassa* after the model of the *Caisse de Poissy* in order to enable smaller producers to enter the capital-intensive trade. Opened in 1851, two municipal slaughterhouses inaugurated the urban policy of control and competition that climaxed in the expansion of the St. Marx slaughterhouse into large-scale facilities with railway connection during the 1870s.⁷² As in Paris, the municipal regime increasingly organised and disciplined animal slaughter in the slaughterhouses and established product quality standards for the meat retail sector.⁷³ Although debates over spoiled meat continued to occupy urban authorities, a segment of the trade was nevertheless sheltered from the free market. Effectively, while freedom of commerce lifted the restrictions on the numbers and qualifications of retailers and butchers in 1860, slaughterhouses and market overseers ensured quality controls, at least to some extent.

Yet, as in New York or Paris, liberalisation did alter the structure the trade, especially in terms of selling meat. When freedom of commerce was

71 ALBRECHT, The Struggle for Bread; ALBRECHT, Ringen des Freihandels; ALBRECHT, The Need for Wheat; BARYLI, Konzessionssystem; MATIS, Leitlinien.

72 OPLL, Studien zur Versorgung Wiens.

73 NIERADZIK, Der Wiener Schlachthof, chapter 6.

introduced in 1860, it led to increasing differentialisation of the butchers' profession, albeit in the framework institutionalised by the urban government. While the numbers of butcheries rose from some 479 in 1860 to 720 in 1873 and 2637 in 1914, the occupational structure of the trade also changed profoundly.⁷⁴ Like in Paris, the result was a general separation between specialised slaughtering wholesale butchers who worked in the urban abattoirs, and rather de-skilled meat retailers who held shop all over the urban area selling meat products. Differences between large vendors and small purveyors also increased. At the same time as the city regulated and standardised the killing of beasts and the sanitary and health aspects connected, selling meat became more complex as retailers differentiated increasingly into those selling beef for better-off customers and those retailing pork to poorer inhabitants.⁷⁵ Although an analysis of the topographic development of meat retailing is yet to be undertaken, a socio-geographic separation of (pork and beef) butchers appears very likely in the light of an increasing spatial segregation and "social distance" between bourgeois and proletarian strata of the urban society.⁷⁶ Further, rising cattle prices and increasing competition aggravated the business situation especially for small butcher-retailers with possible effects on the quality of meat sold. Generally, between the 1860s and 1880s, meat became more expensive as meat prices increased more and fell less relative to cattle prices, a development noted by authorities and customers alike.⁷⁷

The geography of baking and the bread question in Vienna, 1860–1886

In contrast to meat, the liberalisation of Vienna's bread market in 1860 brought an unprecedented break with provisioning tradition: total liberalisation. Despite of its radicality, comparable to meat the deregulation of bread had been a heavily debated process for almost a century that had left its mark on the city's bread supply system. Most importantly, the liberal experiments of the 1770s and 1780s had granted bakers in the rural surroundings of the capital rights to bring bread not subjected to the assize into the urban area, though under a very tight regime that restricted them to certain market days and limited retail options. As these liberties were perpetuated during the *Vormärz* period, by the middle of the century outside bakers had caught an important share of the city's bread market. Exploiting a competitive advantage over the urban bakers, country bakeries came to specialise on supplying rye bread at lower production and raw material costs. As a reaction, urban bakers increasingly turned towards baking wheat products for which the assize's built-

74 NIERADZIK, *Der Wiener Schlachthof*, p. 70.

75 *Ibidem*, p. 93–96.

76 MADERTHANER/MUSNER, *Die Anarchie der Vorstadt*, p. 87.

77 NIERADZIK, *Der Wiener Schlachthof*, p. 96, 101–102.

in cross-subsidisation granted them higher profits compared to rye bread. At the same time, successive acts had liberated intermediate trade and hawking during the 1850s. In fact, the 1860 liberalisation ended a grown dualistic supply system composed of a regulated urban wheat-bread part and a less-regulated rural rye-bread part that both increased to rely on intermediate petty distributors.⁷⁸ Still, the deregulation of bread was extreme. Very different from the municipalisation of meat, it ended almost all regulatory frameworks of production and retail. The only exceptions were criminal code laws regarding the sale of noxious, hazardous products, which remained liable to prosecution. The final repeal of the assize in 1860, already abolished on wheat bread in 1849, withdrew all interventions into the determination of prices or the forms and weights of bread. It also abolished quality controls in form of the so-called *Brotstuffer*, an individual number each baker needed to mark their product with. Freedom of commerce terminated the municipal regulation of the geography of baking as well as the guild-determined entrance limitations connected to formal education and job experience. It also eradicated requirements to keep a month's supply of flour stored at all times. In short, from 1860, anyone was allowed to open shop anywhere to produce any bread out of any sort of flour at any price.

Expansion

On August 19th 1860, *Fleischselcher* Georg Breitenbücker acquired a trade license to operate the bakery in 951 Karolinengasse, a recently developed area near Belvedere Palace in Vienna's fourth district, Wieden. Although he named one Johann Friedrich Gerlinger to run the business in his name, Breitenbücker's is an early documented precedent of the new, liberal era. The butcher was probably neither the only nor the first to access the bread trade without being trained a baker, but he is the first person explicitly identified as such in the guild's registers.⁷⁹ While further information on his business is hard to come by, his case represents the first of two main effects of liberalisation in the Austrian capital: the decisive mobilisation of the bread market.

Like in Paris or New York, the elimination of entrance regulations opened the trade and enabled the infrastructure of baking to expand decisively. While a total just short of 400 urban and rural guild bakers had provided the city with bread by the late 1850s, this number exploded after 1860 and reached nearly 650 by the late 1870s (Figure 1). More precisely, the most intensive

78 ALBRECHT, Ringen des Freihandels; ALBRECHT, The Struggle for Bread. On cross-subsidisation, see DE VRIES, The Price of Bread, p. 208–212. For a thorough description and analysis of Vienna's bread assize before 1860, see Part III of my dissertation, ALBRECHT, Between Moral and Market Economies of Food.

79 Archiv der Bäckergenossenschaft in Wien, HS 16/2: Innung der bürgerl. Bäckermeister in der k. k. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien (Bäckerinnung), Gesetze und Verordnungen von 1853 bis 1868. Exhibiten, [1870] Mag. Dekret 19.8.1860 Nr. 50. A *Fleischselcher* was a butcher licensed only to produce sausages and smoked (*geselchtes*) meat. Vgl. NIERADZIK, Der Wiener Schlachthof, p. 72.

increase of bread producers did not take place in the urban area proper, but rather in the city’s outskirts. Whereas the number of urban bakers (dark grey line) grew rather slowly from about 160 to a peak of 320 by the late 1860s, most new production sites were opened in areas of fast population growth beyond the urban core. In the three years after 1858, over one hundred “country bakeries”, as they were called, were opened in Vienna’s surroundings. By 1870, 120 more had started business.

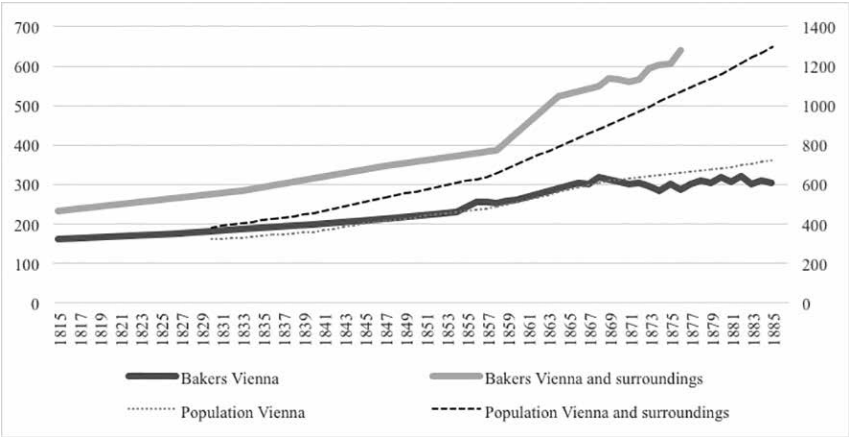
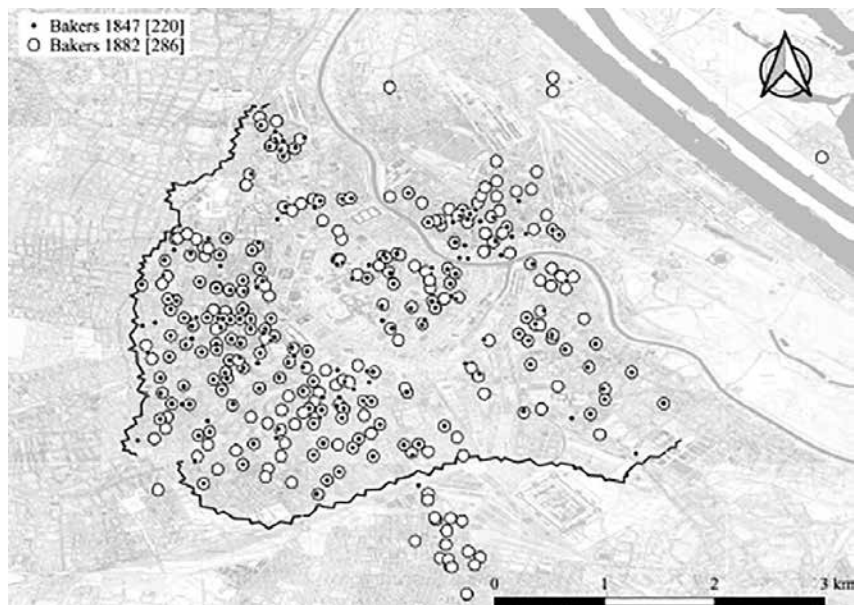


Figure 1: Registered Bakers in Vienna and surroundings (left axis) and Population (right axis), 1815–1885.⁸⁰

Concurring with the fast increase of population growth, the opening of the trade enabled the bread infrastructure to expand into the evolving immigration hotspots outside the densely populated area. As the city outgrew its former urban limits, the deregulated baking industry followed suit, providing crucial bread access points to the new residents in the expanding settlements in Vienna’s environs. The differences in taxation and production costs between urban core and urbanising outskirts represent a second explanation of infrastructural expansion. Compared to the less taxed surroundings, Vienna’s *Verzehrssteuer*, a city toll comparable to Paris’s *Octroi*, was levied on a wide range of products delivered into the city. Collected at the *Linenwall* that separated the urban from the rural area, it increased an urban baker’s production costs in form of higher prices for flour, firewood and other raw materials. Consequently, baking bread outside the city proper was much cheaper. Additionally, the successive deregulation of the retail trade in bread further fostered the accelerating expansion of the city’s outskirt baking infrastructure.

80 Sources: Bericht der Handels- und Gewerbekammer für das Erzherzogthum Oesterreich unter der Enns an das k. k. Ministerium für Handel, Gewerbe und öffentliche Bauten über den Handel, die Industrie und die Verkehrsverhältnisse des Kammerbezirkes. Wien, 1852–1885; Archiv der Bäckerinnung in Wien, Innung der bürgerl. Bäckermeister in der k. k. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien (Bäckerinnung), Kalender für das Gremium der bürgerl. Bäckermeister in der k. k. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien, 1818–1885. Population from Friedrich Hauer, see HAUER (ed.), *Die Versorgung Wiens*.

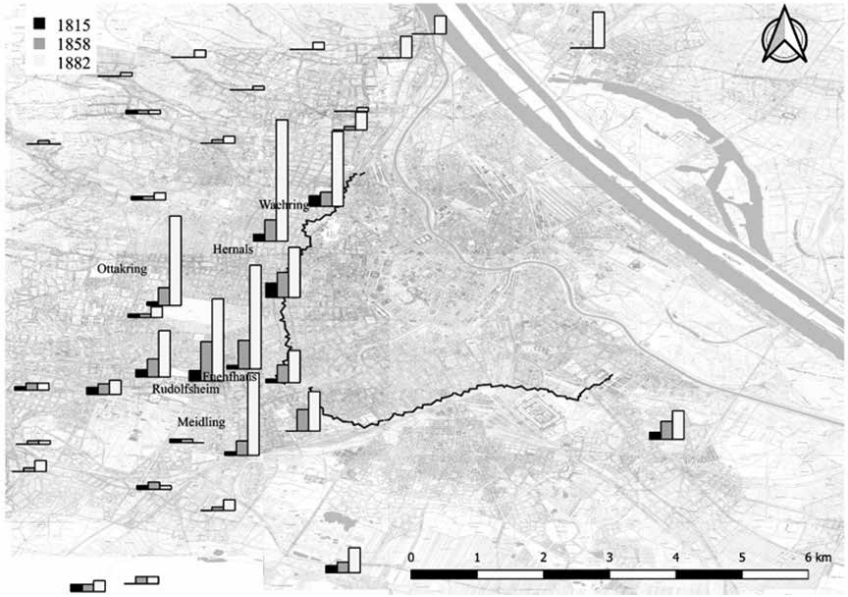


Map 1: Urban bakers 1847 and 1882 within the *Linienwall* and in Favoriten district.⁸¹

As indicated in Maps 1 and 2, liberated from municipal spatial regulation and retail limitations, the geography of baking expanded, especially outside the traditional urban core area. Inside the taxed area surrounded by the *Linienwall*, almost 70 new bakeries were opened after 1847, particularly in the developing parts of the south-west (districts four and five) and north-east (districts two and 20) as well as in the wake of the development of the *Glacis* and the construction of the *Ringstrasse* around the medieval core city. At the same time, a strong continuity of bakery locations is visible. Although the *Gewerbefreiheit* of 1860 ended the municipality's control of where a new bakery could be opened deregulation had little effects on the topography of the *existing* infrastructure. Many of the places that had hosted a bakery in 1847 continued to do so by 1882. Additionally, by the latter year some 17 bakers had quickly opened shop in Favoriten, outside the tax wall. In many parts of the capital, customers in 1882 might have visited the same bakery their parents had bought their bread at 35 years earlier. Given the large investment needed to build a bakery, this is not surprising. By the early 1880s, one author estimated the price to buy an average, operating bakery at 12 000 to 16 000 fl., a sum that might have purchased over 20 000 working days of a mason's handyman at an average daily wage of 0.62 fl.⁸²

81 Source: Bäckerkalender, based on Generalstadtplan 1912 provided by Wien Kulturgut, URL: <https://www.wien.gv.at/kulturportal/public/grafik.aspx> [15.2.2021].

82 MATERN, Licht in der Brodfrage, p. 26; wages from ALLEN, Consumer price indices.



Map 2: “Country bakers” per Parish, 1815–1882.⁸³

Meanwhile, outside the tax border, the growth of the numbers of bakers was the largest, and it was quickest after 1858. Most importantly, bakeries were set up in the unfolding industrial area of Meidling with the communities of Gaudenzdorf, Rudolfstheim, Fünfhaus and Sechshaus close to the Wien River just to the southwest of the urban core. Whereas a total of six official bakers had provided bread to this area around 1815, 34 production sites existed by 1858. With deregulation, this number swiftly rose to 90 in 1870 and 95 by 1882, nearly trebling over the two decades following liberalisation. A similar development can be observed in the other areas of drastic population growth in the north-west (Neulerchenfeld, Hernalis, Ottakring, Währing). While the combined number of bakeries in the western communities grew from ten to 22 between 1815 and 1858, it reached 54 and 94 in 1870 and 1882 respectively.

The liberalisation of the infrastructure did not only unleash its expansion, it also accelerated an increasing geographic differentialisation of production that had begun in the first half of the century. Given the reduced costs of bread production and their location just out of the city’s tax limits, the expanding number of country bakers not only provided their immediate neighbourhoods with bread. Exploiting a competitive advantage over their urban counterparts, country bakers had increasingly focused to deliver rye bread into the city since the early half of the century.⁸⁴ By the middle of the century, country bakers had largely taken over the city’s provision with rye bread while urban produc-

83 Sources: see Map 1.

84 ALBRECHT, Ringen des Freihandels.

ers leaned towards baking more expensive wheat bread and rolls. As shown in Table 1, compared to the late 18th century when wheat had accounted for about two thirds of the flour stocks of the city's 138 bakers, by 1856 the share of wheat had increased to over four fifths of the now 233 producers. In the meantime, rye stocks within the *Linienwall* halved from about one third to one sixth, a fact that is also confirmed by the city's *Verzehrungssteuer* toll registers.⁸⁵

Year	1793		c. 1856	
	Muth	%	Muth	%
Flour				
Wheat, finest	323	18	1245	28
Wheat, middle	226	12	445	10
Wheat, lower	596	33	2056	46
Wheat, subtotal	1145	63	3746	84
Rye	678	37	700	16
Total	1823	100	4446	100

Table 1: Total Bakers' flour stocks in the City, 1793–1856, in Muth.⁸⁶

Already by 1857, the Lower Austrian chamber of Commerce noted that “the complete liberalisation of bread deliveries [...] induced a great number of *Schwarzbäcker* [rye bread bakers] to settle in the parishes just outside the Linien[w]all who seek their outlets in Vienna”.⁸⁷ „It is known,“ a member of the city's magistrate argued in a large-scale *Enquête* about the capital's food supply in 1870, “that most of Vienna's demand for [rye] bread is supplied by so-called country bakers”. “We bakers in the city produce only little [rye] bread”, agreed Ferdinand Boos who ran a bakery in the city centre while the bakers' chairman Rudolf Plank confirmed that “the country bakers close to Vienna [...] largely produce the city's [rye] bread supply”.⁸⁸

Finally, returning to the example of Georg Breitenbücker, liberalisation not only opened the trade in terms of geographic expansion and specialisation, it also opened baking to actors who had previously been hindered to become a baker. Most obvious, this was especially true for women. In contrast to slaughtering, the abolition of guild-related job training and education requirements and the decentralised character of the trade opened female producers a window that had not existed for at least the previous half-century. Although women's

85 ALBRECHT, *The Need for Wheat*, p. 110–111.

86 Sources: WStLA, Marktamt A2/1: Bäckergewerbe: Dekrete: Verzeichnis der gesamt-hiesigen Bäcker und Ausweiß wie viel jeder derselben an monatlichen Mehlvorrath haben soll., 1793; WStLA, Innungen und Handelsgremien 1/B1: Bäcker: Bücher: Bäckerverzeichnis 1, 1857. 1 Muth corresponds to between 1116 lb and 992 lb, depending on type of grain. See SANDGRUBER/HOFFMANN/MATIS, *Österreichische Agrarstatistik 1750–1918*, p. 20–30.

87 Handelskammerbericht, 1856, p. 53.

88 k.k. Handelsministerium, *Enquête über die Approvisionnement Wiens, II Theil: Lebensmittel (ausgenommen Fleisch), Brennholz und Mineralkohle*, 2 vols., Wien 1871, p. 6, 17, 22, 31.

share as bakery owners during the 1830s and 1840s had risen formally, it remains to be analysed whether female entrepreneurs were really enabled to operate a bakery under the tight, male-dominated structure of the guild. In any case, free commerce did offer new prospects for women to take over sometimes long-established bakeries both in the city proper as well as outside. This appears to be especially true for the period after 1860, when the share of women as shopkeepers in the city rose from about five to over ten percent. Examples like Anna Liebig in the city centre, Christina Franz in Vienna's fourth district or Franziska Luckner in the northern area of the ninth district, all of whom were registered as shopkeepers in 1864, are all cases in point.

Year	1815	1833	1847	1858	1864	1870	1882
Within the Linienwall							
Men	157	171	200	220	247	250	254
Women	4	15	15	8	14	32	32
Total	161	186	215	228	261	282	286
Women, %	2	8	7	4	5	11	11
Outside the Linienwall							
Men	65	90	113	142	244	263	311
Women	3	5	18	12	17	19	41
Total	68	95	131	154	261	282	352
Women, %	4	5	14	8	7	7	12

Table 2: Share of Women named as shopkeepers in the city, 1815–1882.⁸⁹

The bread question

In the autumn of 1861, Josef Petzl, director of Vienna's *Marktamt*, was sceptic about baguettes.

„In Paris, we hear wheat bread is not sold in the form of round rolls but in an elongated shape from which pieces of varying weights are cut according to the customer's demand. The introduction of this practice in Vienna would certainly cause irritation among the population since it is accustomed to the old tradition to buy bread in whole rolls at fixed prices. It also needs to be noted that whole rolls and bread in whole loafs are much more delicious than these cut-up Parisian-style bread pieces which dry out easily and lose much of their appearance.”

In this belated response to a motion proposed to the city council to authorise the sale of bread “according to weight” half a year earlier, Petzl expressed sincere doubts if changes in the way bread was sold in Vienna would be “in the interest of the customers”. What is more, the superintendent of the city's markets added,

⁸⁹ Source: Bäckerkalender, 1818–1882.

any introduction of such a regulation would be in conflict with the abolition of “all limitations of the production and sale” of bread issued in the previous year.⁹⁰

Almost immediately after the liberalisation of the bread market in Vienna, Petzl’s assessment represents the start of a complicated, heated debate among politicians of different parties, producers and retailers that would span the next decades. In general, in these discussions lawmakers were less worried about external shocks in raw material supplies rather than being concerned with the day-to-day practices of baking and selling bread in the city. Crucially interconnected, the key issues of the “bread question” involved question about retail practices as well as bread prices, the physical forms and quality of bakery products and the struggle between politicians, bakers and eventually customers over knowledge and conventions.

What had happened? In a session in late June 1861, members of the city council had called attention to unusual high prices of bread in relation to the market prices of flour. In a period of a more general price increase, after 1860 the ratio of silver bread and cereal prices had indeed increased very quickly. While one kilogram of bread had usually costed around 1.4 to two times the price of one litre of grains over the previous two decades, in the immediate years after liberalisation bread became much more expensive vis-à-vis grain, nearly reaching a ratio of 3:1 in 1864. Bread would remain expensive compared to grains throughout the next decade; only after 1875 did this ratio assume a rather “normal” proportion. However, this was not due to sinking bread prices but rather to quickly rising cereal prices. In absolute terms, bread prices continued to maintain a very high level throughout the following twenty years.

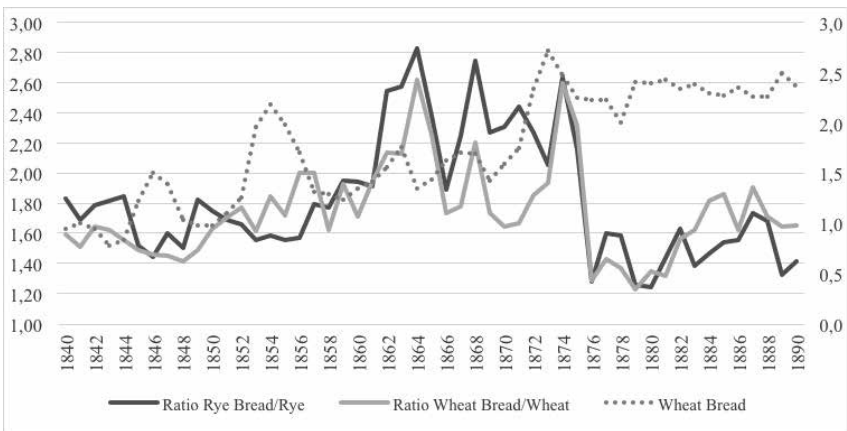


Figure 2: Bread and Cereal Price ratios (left axis) and absolute Wheat Bread Prices in Grams of Silver (right axis), 1840–1890.⁹¹

90 WStLA, Marktamt A2/1: Brot und Gebäcksverkauf nach Gewicht, Z. 68143: Marktamt, Äusserung der Direktion des Marktkommissariates Über den bei dem löblichen Gemeinderathe gestellten Antrag, den Gebäcksverkauf in Wien nach dem Gewichte betreffend, 12.9.1861.

91 Data from ALLEN, Consumer Price Indices and CVRCEK, Austro-Hungarian Prices and Wages. Note: bread=1 kg, cereal=1 l.

Not only was the city council perplexed about this development, it was fundamentally divided over the causes and possible solutions of the *Theuerung*. While a wide range of topics connected to the production and retail practices of bread were discussed, similar to debates in Paris the issue of conventions and knowledge would come to be the most prominent matter for the better part of the next decades.

On behalf of a left-wing fraction Joseph Kleyhonz, a successful carpenter, had suggested introducing new regulation requiring the sale of bread at fixed weights and variable prices in the summer of 1861. Kleyhonz had recently visited Paris “for business purposes” where he might have learned about the French way of selling bread.⁹² Instead of the common mode of selling whole rolls and loafs at fixed prices and varying weights, bakers should be compelled to produce standard-weight loafs at moving prices, from which poorer consumers could also buy cuts. Simultaneous to discussions in France, the central aim was to remove what Kleyhonz perceived as growing information asymmetry between consumers and bakers, caused by liberalisation. Before 1860, under the assize the price of bread had been fairly transparent as prices, weights and variations in the cost of bread in periods of price shocks were regulated, officially calculated and publicised. In this system, monetary bread prices had remained fixed at, for example, one Kreuzer per wheat roll. In times of rising prices, it was the weight of the roll that would diminish at officially calculated degrees while the price remained one Kreuzer. One of the core functions of the assize had therefore been price transparency.⁹³

However, liberalisation and the abolition of the assize in 1860 had removed this important institution of market information. Now, under the liberal free market regime, the pricing of bread had become much more opaque. As bakers had been instructed to maintain the production of bread at fixed prices and variable weights in the liberalisation act of 1860,⁹⁴ the custom to reduce weights in times of high prices remained – only now bakers could legally reduce bread weights freely. Kleyhonz considered this a quite obscure situation for consumers. In practice, neither would they recognise small weight reductions nor would they be able to make a case against a baker whom they depended on for their daily bread. More generally, even if they would identify weight reductions, consumers also lacked information on raw material prices, production costs, flour-to-bread yields etc., and could not tell if the amount of reduction in bread weights corresponded to increases in production costs. In Kleyhonz’s esteem, this was the true reason for high bread prices. In the liberal environment, bakers either obscured reduced bread weights or overcompensat-

92 Sitzung des Gemeinderathes. In: Ost-Deutsche Post Nr. 186, 10.7.1861.

93 For a detailed description, see DE VRIES, Price of Bread.

94 WStLA, Marktamt A2/1: Bäckergerwebe: Kundmachungen: k. k. n.ö. Statthaltereie, Kundmachung, den Verkauf des Brodes nach Gewicht betreffend, 27.3.1872.

ed rising cereal costs by inappropriate weight reductions to maximise profits. That way, he claimed, “the poor masses are constantly deceived by the bakers”.⁹⁵ Changing this practice into selling fixed-weight loafs at varying prices would make it impossible for bakers to impose hidden increases by baking smaller loafs. It would make price movements easily detectable and the purchase of bread transparent, again.

This was a quest for transparency, knowledge and equal bargaining power between bakers and consumers that was contested from the beginning. On the one hand, the Bakers’ Association publicly denied all accusations made by Kleyhonz, who allegedly “did not know cordial parliamentary behaviour or even correct German”.⁹⁶ Moreover, council Johann Schmidtkunz – a baker – practically denied that bread prices were disproportionately high. Instead, meat was too expensive!⁹⁷ Next to the bakers’ rather clumsy red herring, several councils raised stark ideological opposition to the imposition of new regulations on the other hand. Led by Wilhelm Frankl, a respected philanthropist, elected representative of Vienna’s Merchants’ League and president of the Jewish Community, a liberal fraction argued that only the deregulation of retail restrictions and a general permission of hawking with bread would produce lower prices.⁹⁸ While this tripartite confrontation apparently continued debates within the city council through 1863, the *Approvisionnement*-*Sektion* and the *Marktamt* were appointed to investigate facts and solutions.⁹⁹

An extensive report did not arrive before 1865. When speaker Johann Heinrich Steudel delivered the committee’s assessment in the sittings of January 21 and 24, however, the message was clear. Only the “absolute liberalisation of hawking with bread”, Steudel opined, would deliver lower bread prices. Not only would consumers benefit from the “great convenience” of door-to-door deliveries, peddling was also considered to be much cheaper than other forms of retail and would reduce prices. Any intervention into the practises of bread production and sale as suggested by Kleyhonz, the report’s result read, needed to be avoided; “only concurrence” would yield lower prices. Following Steudel’s advice, magistrate and city council saw “no reason for complaints against the bakers who cannot be held responsible for these high bread prices”.¹⁰⁰ Under this impression and despite Kleyhonz’s furious opposition to pass his motion or to reinstate the assize “as the only cure, in God’s name”, the city council voted in favour of the liberalisation of hawking and against new regulation.¹⁰¹ A year later, on 28 January 1866, the k. k. Ministry

95 Vorstand der Bäcker-Genossenschaft, Zur Abwehr. In: Morgen-Post Nr. 231, 24 Aug. 1861.

96 Ibidem.

97 Gemeinderath. Sitzung vom 24. Jänner. In: Fremden-Blatt Nr. 25, 25.1.1865, pp. 4–5.

98 Wiener Gemeinderath. Sitzung vom 27. Mai. In: Die Presse, Nr. 145, 28.5.1863, p. 44.

99 Gemeinderath. Sitzung vom 5. November. In: Fremden-Blatt Nr. 305, 6.11.1861.

100 Sitzung des Gemeinderathes. vom 27. Mai. In: Morgen-Post Nr. 145, 28.5.1863

101 Die Brodfrage im Gemeinderathe. In: Morgen-Post Nr. 22, 22.1.1865, p. 1–3.

of Trade announced the permission of hawking under the condition that all retailers were to keep written information on weights and prices.¹⁰²

However, neither did bread prices yield nor was the bread question solved. On the contrary, stark increases in the costs of bread were back on the menu around 1870, as wheat bread prices approached an all-time peak. This time, the initiative to reform came from the bakers. Interviewed about the bread prices in Vienna compared those “in foreign cities”, chairman of the Bakers’ Association Rudolf Plank suggested to introduce a new form of buns. Instead of the traditional *Einkreuzersemmeln*, worth one Kreuzer and corresponding to number 2 in Figure 3, bakers should produce *Baunzeln*. Costing two Kreuzer apiece and represented by numbers 4 and 5, these were to be formed in a way they could be sliced in two and thus sold whole or in halves.



Figure 3: *Baunzeln* and *Kreuzersemmeln*, early 20th century.¹⁰³

The leitmotif for Plank’s proposal was economic. Against the background of continuously diminishing weights – Plank claimed the average bun weight was down at 35 grams by then – the production of these very small rolls had become uneconomic due to high unit labour costs and spoilage. While baking small *Semmel* rolls required trained staff, “every day-labourer” could make

102 k. k. Handelsministerium, Enquête, p. XLVI.

103 KIRKLAND (ed.), *The Modern Baker*, Vienna Fancy Bread I, between p. 200 and 201.

simple-formed *Baunzeln*. “France or England do not know small forms” of bread, Plank maintained;

“I believe in economic terms our procedure cannot be endorsed. Larger forms can easily be adopted which allow for substantial savings in labour and are beneficiary to the customers [...] The taste of the bread would only improve [...] If it is possible in France to cut a whole loaf of bread and sell it [in pieces], it can be done in Vienna.”¹⁰⁴

Next to the general debate about changing the way bread should be sold, the Association’s plan to eliminate *Einkreuzersemmeln* represented another drastic abandonment of the city’s provision tradition. One-kreuzer rolls had been the backbone of the bread economy for at least a century, their production and availability had been compulsory under the assize before 1860; after liberalisation, bakers had originally continued “our traditional custom to always make bread that costs one Kreuzer”.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, twelve months after the interview, the Association would announce the replacement of one-Kreuzer buns through *Baunzeln*.¹⁰⁶

Yet, Plank’s thrust backfired. While the Association had tried to lobby for these changes in production allegedly facilitating lower bread prices, they had not intended to tackle the fixed-prices-variable-weight system of bread retail; Plank had himself argued against such a change.¹⁰⁷ This, however, became one of the main takeaways the *Enquete* produced. Establishing that misleading or even fraudulent weights were widely used by bakers and hawkers, it suggested to lawmakers that “bread is to be sold according to weight, bakers and hawkers have to visibly inform about weight and prices” in its eleventh proposal.¹⁰⁸ Instructed by the city council to comment, the *Marktamt* stated “the introduction of bread retail according to weight should be implemented” in late October 1871. Bakers and hawkers needed to be compelled to inform publicly about weights and prices and to weigh products if demanded; both should have calibrated scales at their disposal. Importantly, the statement added, “the implementation of this measure, which is not at all impeded by technical difficulties, is all the more advisable in the interest of the consumers”.¹⁰⁹ Following these recommendations, in a political climate that had grown less enthusiastic towards *laissez-faire* the majority opinion within the city council shifted to the detriment of the bakers. Effective with 1 May 1872, the magistrate introduced the legislation to sell standard-weight loafs of quarter, half and full pounds at shifting prices “to meet the evils created by hawking” and liberalisation.

104 k. k. Handelsministerium, *Enquête*, p. 8, 10.

105 *Ibidem*, p. 10.

106 WStLA, Marktamt A2/1: Bäckergewerbe: Kundmachungen: Magistrat der Stadt Wien, Kundmachung Erzeugung 1 und 2 Kreuzer Semmeln, 14.05.1870.

107 k. k. Handelsministerium, *Enquête*, p. 11.

108 *Ibidem*, p. 445, 528.

109 WStLA, Marktamt A2/1: Brot und Gebäcksverkauf nach Gewicht 1106/1871: Marktamt, Durchführung des Antrages XI. der Approvsg. *Enquete*, 31.10.1871.

Although remaining free to “choose the form” of products, the legal requirement for bakers and hawkers to weigh out loafs for customers as well as to keep standardised price information was corroborated distinctively.¹¹⁰

As the officials’ opinion towards the bakers had shifted for the latter’s worse, the 1872 legislation of new retail standards incited a hassle between administrators and bakers comparable to the procedures in Paris. On the one hand, this was a struggle over legislation in the first place; on the other hand, it was a fight about expert knowledge of baking. Throughout the 1870s and early 1880s, the bakers practically resisted to observe, and agitated against the new retail law. In a “passionately worded” appeal against this regulation “deeply intervening into the nature of the bakers’ trade”, the Bakers’ Association petitioned the city council as well as the Minister of Trade in 1875. Maintaining the population’s “obsession with customs” and “antipathy towards purchasing cut-up bread loafs”, they argued changing the way of bread retail according to fixed weights was not advisable.¹¹¹ “With fixed prices, it is certain, one knows what one’s money buys”, baker Ferdinand Boos argued in an attempt to turn the officials’ point on customer information around.

“The labourer knows, if he has a Kreuzer, he will get a roll [...] It makes a tremendous impression if bread is more expensive and the weight is smaller. However, at what rate can bread weight diminish? Probably half a Lot [...]. I believe the child will not notice if it has one bite less; I believe neither child nor adult will notice”.¹¹²

This point, however, found no sympathy with the *Marktamt*. Replying, future director Karl Kainz considered “any repetition & refutation” unnecessary since the “disadvantages of the traditional retail practice, and the advantages [of the new regulation] have been elaborated exhaustively”. In his view, the bakers’ petition represented a “request precisely contrary to decisions taken” and would mean a “reintroduction of the irrational sales practise” of fixed-prices.¹¹³ The bakers had resisted observing the new retail law for the past three years anyhow, as the reissuing of a ministerial decree repeating the regulation to sell bread according to fixed weights in July 1875 as well as a note from Kainz in November of that year indicate.¹¹⁴ Arguing the legislation would only be successful if the bakers were “imperatively obliged” to adopt it, Kainz underlined again that they were “to be obligated to bake bread in forms of certain weights, in loafs of 1 K[ilogram], 50 D[ecagram], 20 D, 10 D” and to clearly inform about weights and prices.¹¹⁵

110 Kundmachung Verkauf, 27.3.1872.

111 Nochmals die Einrede der Bäcker. In: Morgen-Post Nr. 303, 2.11.1875; Die armen Bäcker. In: Aussiger Anzeiger, Nr. 90, 10.11.1875, p. 1–2.

112 k. k. Handelsministerium, Enquête, p. 18.

113 WStLA, Marktamt A2/1: Brot und Gebäcksverkauf nach Gewicht 2035/1876: Marktamt, Eingabe der Bäckergenossenschaft über die Modalitäten des Brodverkaufes nach Gewicht, 19.6.1876.

114 HKB 1872-1874, p. 93.

115 WStLA, Marktamt A2/1: Brot und Gebäcksverkauf nach Gewicht 4381/46: Marktamt, Regelung des Brodverkaufes nach Gewicht, 24.10.1876.

At the same time, bakers and officials struggled over expert knowledge of bread production. While the former went to great lengths to protect their exclusive know-how and to “prove” they did not realise excessive profits, the latter struggled to gain professional insights in order to find the right policy to solve the bread question. The key issues were questions about production costs, profit margins, techniques and, crucially, how much bread could be baked from a given volume of flour. In a flood of various publications throughout the 1870s, detailed indications about the costs and profit margins involved in running a bakery were publicised to show the bakers’ virtuousness. “A small baker”, one author claimed already in April 1870, “only produces for hawkers and innkeepers” eating up the entire profits. Huge competition and the “hunt for customers at every price” would add vending costs of some 900 000 fl. each year, allegedly a third of the urban bakers’ entire turnover. “This way, an unjust increase in the prices of bread is produced and small bakers perish”.¹¹⁶ Tackling the question of “expensive house bread”, another “expert” article several years later came to a similar result. Offering in-depth data of production costs – including flour-bread yields, wages, raw material prices, provision to hawkers and spoilage – the author calculated a profit margin so thin prices could not decrease. Only if the number of bakeries and hawkers would be re-regulated and the “hunt for customers” stopped could bread become cheap again. “Not the hawkers or bakers are to be blamed for high prices but our legislation, which expanded freedom of commerce to the food industry”.¹¹⁷ Then, in their 1875 petition, the Association went on to lament that the whole baking trade was “barely profitable” and that most bakers were “poor devils” close to “total ruin”. Not the bakers’ “lust to enrich” and cheat the customers but high wages and production costs as well as the “cancer of hawking” were the cause of all evils.¹¹⁸

While feeding their own arguments to the press, the bakers actively attempted to prevent the magistrate from gaining expert information, most importantly regarding baking techniques. Technically, the production of standard weights was not at all conceivable, as representatives of the trade had yet argued several years earlier trying to deny standardisation as a feasible option. „It is impossible to produce standard loafs. Standard amounts of dough are used, but the rush makes it impossible to have equal loafs”, chairman Rudolf Plank had argued back in 1870 while Ferdinand Boos had added “it also depends on the quality of the flour. Dry and strong flour will yield more bread than fresh flour.” Flour quality, however “is different from one bakery to the other, it depends on the taste of the customers and is not easy to determine.” Finally, he claimed, “not even the producers” could always make sure the final

116 Zur Brodfrage. In: Das Vaterland. Zeitung für die österreichische Monarchie. Nr. 99, 10.4.1870.

117 Das theuere Hausbrod. In: Neues Wiener Tagblatt Nr. 179, 30.6.1875.

118 Die armen Bäcker. In: Aussiger Anzeiger, 10.11.1875.

products would be “in accordance with the quality of the flour used”.¹¹⁹ Thus attempting to protect the “‘mysteries’ of the bakers’ craft”,¹²⁰ the association proved reluctant to cooperate with the officials. In a round of negotiations in late June 1875, for example, it accused the *Marktamt* to have collected wrong price materials, leading one observer to believe “the magistrate will not reach any conclusion by way of an amicable settlement”.¹²¹ Anyhow, by then the *Marktamt* had come to consider the bakers’ information “not in compliance with other experiences”. As it suspected bakers to have provided exaggerated data on operating costs that would only allow for a profit “when bread prices are very high”, the *Marktamt* decided to carry out baking try-outs at different bakeries in spring 1876 to finally “establish the costs of bread production”.¹²²

Even these practical attempts to establish common knowledge proved difficult. Carried out six weeks later at the bakery of Franz Buhlheller, the try-out established that 100 kg of wheat flour yielded, for example, 110 kg of wheat rolls. Consequently, these numbers were accepted to represent baking standards and came to be used for the magistrate’s survey of “should-be” prices against which market prices were compared for the following years.¹²³ Yet, by 1885, a brochure titled “Light on the bread question” raised sincere doubts about these standards. Arguing that 100 kg of wheat flour would rather yield 135 kg wheat rolls – nearly a fourth more than previously calculated – the author accused the bakers to have contributed “obscurisation rather than explanation”.¹²⁴ Quickly captured by the press, this “proved that the 1876 baking try-out was a mistake, or rather: a fake”.¹²⁵ In order to finally bring clarification – again – the magistrate issued a new baking try-out, this time at the k. k. Military Bakery and without presence of the bakers. Conducted by “men of the technical sciences in the most exact manner”, this “neutral” test confirmed the higher results of 135 kg wheat rolls per 100 kg flour.¹²⁶ Since the Bakers’ Association continued to fundamentally oppose these outcomes, the magistrate agreed to yet another test baking at the bakery of August Riedl. Enforced by the bakers, the test was run without observation by the magistrate. Now, “baking was done not in the way Vienna’s bakers usually do, but essentially the way they do not”, another newspaper report claimed. Accordingly, it was conducted

119 k. k. Handelsministerium, Enquête, p. 14, 21, 22.

120 DE VRIES, *Price of Bread*, p. 185.

121 Unterhandlungen mit Bäckern und Fleischern. In: Neues Fremden-Blatt Nr. 176, 27.6.1875, p. 9–10.

122 WStLA, Marktamt A2/1: Probebackung: Marktamt, Marktdirektion Äusserung Probebackung, 3.4.1876.

123 WStLA, Marktamt, A2/1: Brotfrage: Magistrat der Stadt Wien, Magistrats-Referat betreffend: Vorschläge zur Regelung der Brotfrage, 2.7.1885, p. 4.

124 MATERN, *Licht in der Brotfrage*, p. 4, 17.

125 Die gegenwärtige Lage der Brotfrage. II. In: Das Vaterland. Zeitung für die österreichische Monarchie. Nr 118, 30.4.1885, p. 1–3.

126 Magistrats-Referat, 2.7.1885, p. 4.

“against all technical rules, with the open tendency to produce rolls as small as possible, for example, too little water was added and the dough was baked very long in a very sharp heat [...]. During the process, two boys were caught in an attempt to dispose of some quantities of dough [...]. With this try out, the bakers themselves proved their 1876 result a fraud.”¹²⁷

Diplomatically considering these as “inadequacies”, the magistrate agreed to a final test, conducted at chairman Tobias Ratz’s bakery on 2 June 1885, this time in the presence of a magistrate delegation observing the process. Even though Ratz “used less water” compared to the military’s test run, now the results came close enough to the “neutral” numbers and thus confirmed these as a standard yield. In opposition to the bakers’ claims, it had become clear that “the weight of bread is in the baker’s hands” and baking bread at standard loafs of pre-determined weights was possible.¹²⁸

On this basis, the magistrate concluded “the realisation of sales according to weights has been impeded by the opposition of the bakers and the refusal of the customers to buy loafs in pieces”. Siegl, the rapporteur, was certain about the reasons: “The resistance [...] can be explained by the fact that the sale of bread at fixed prices and variable weights enables to obscure price increases from the customers”.¹²⁹ In the following vote, the city council passed Siegl’s motions: the eventual change of the retail system, the obligation of bakers to produce standard loafs of predetermined weights, the liability to clearly inform customers about products and prices, the calculation of official “norm” prices for consumers to judge if a baker’s prices were high or low, and a fortnightly survey and newspaper publication of the bakers’ individual prices.¹³⁰ After over twenty years of debate, Vienna’s city council finally decided to reintroduce price information techniques and regulation as well as Paris-style bread vending.

Conclusion

Though the timing varied, during the period of the *Sattelzeit* (Reinhart Koselleck) the liberalisation of food markets was a commonality in Vienna, Paris and New York City. In the context of „two intertwined developments“ – “increased difficulties of ensuring supplies for a growing population, and public dissatisfaction with protected cartels”, in several metropolises of both North America and Europe, urban authorities and city dwellers debated over, and experienced, the deregulation of their supply of primary necessities.¹³¹ On the one hand, local settings differed profoundly and produced very particular reasons for and manifestations of deregulation. New York City represents an example of extreme liberalisation. There, massive population growth, a partly failed,

127 Die gegenwärtige Lage der Brodfrage. III. In: Das Vaterland. Zeitung für die österreichische Monarchie. Nr 119, 1.5.1885, p. 1–3.

128 Ibidem.

129 Magistrats-Referat, 2.7.1885, p. 8.

130 Ibidem, Abstimmungs-Protokoll, p. 12–14.

131 HOROWITZ/PILCHER/WATTS, *Meat for the Multitudes*, p. 1067.

expensive infrastructure policy, ideological changes towards *laissez-faire*, growing public resentment of underfunded municipal markets and the expansion of the voting franchise combined so that liberalisation was demanded from below and above. In contrast, deregulation in Paris was much less absolute. To prevent the negative experiences regarding food market liberalisation made in the wake of the French Revolution, the municipality created and maintained important institutions before and after 1850 that kept the market for both commodities enclosed. Simultaneously, compared to New York the struggle over regulation versus deregulation was institutionalised quite differently; in Paris, the central government was importantly involved in deciding over the food supplies of the capital's residents. Meanwhile, Vienna constitutes something of a middle course between drastic liberalisation of baking and strong intervention into slaughtering. Like in Paris, the introduction of liberty was a contested process that had begun around the end of the 18th century and involved both municipal as well as central state institutions. While, as in Paris, the liberalised meat market was largely cocooned through municipal infrastructure projects and regulative interventions, almost no interventionist efforts were made regarding the bread market before the 1870s. Then, however, the municipality struggled decisively to reintroduce regulation and, in part, to undo changes caused by liberalisation. Moreover, in the course of these debates Paris's experiences with liberalisation were routinely referred to by Viennese authorities and artisans.

On the other hand, although local settings differed profoundly and despite the fact that bread and meat experienced quite different histories of (dis-) embeddedness based on their materiality, the effects of liberalisation were astoundingly comparable in all cases. For one thing, deregulation allowed the trade infrastructures to expand geographically and diversify in terms of producers and vendors as well as products. In both Vienna and New York, the infrastructure expanded after liberalisation, offering more access points to consumers especially in developing areas and immigration hotspots. Therefore, liberalisation secured the new urbanites' ability to buy bread and meat from a retailer nearby and facilitated a comprehensive supply network over the urban territories. On the downside, wiping away traditional regulation had notable negative effects on food quality and on consumers' abilities to negotiate a more complex food market, especially for poor inhabitants. With the abolition of regulations, product information had also become much more opaque. To sum up, under the "chaotic liberal experiment[s]" of the mid-19th century, Vienna, Paris and New York City "each saw a dramatic increase in the number of retailers under their liberal experiments, but this did not initially translate to any real benefits in quantity, price, or quality, stimulating renewed political pressure for a return to regulation."¹³²

132 HOROWITZ/PILCHER/WATTS, *Meat for the Multitudes*, p. 1079, 1080.

Consequently, soon after liberalisation in all three cities municipal authorities and other public actors struggled to reintroduce food quality as well as price standards and to return to certain measures of public intervention into the market. In both Paris and Vienna, this led to intensive debates over the standardisation of bread loafs and meat cuts by the 1860s and 1870s. In the wake of liberalisation, traditional forms of bread were contested and partly abolished, in Vienna new forms of loafs were introduced. There, the “free” market directly inscribed itself into the bodily appearance of bread. By the mid-1880s, “free market bread” would assume different forms compared to the customary loafs and rolls produced before liberalisation.

Concluding, on another level the comparative approach adopted in this paper has shed light on the establishment of free market relations regarding food in mid-19th century western metropolises as “generally effective” forces, to use Marc Bloch’s words. By highlighting local differences, this text has shown that despite comparable “global” structural developments regional settings and actors continued to assume important roles in shaping local developments, e.g. with regard to the form and retail modes of bread. Then, by outlining similar consequences of liberalisation as a commonality to all three places considered, this text can also be read as a contribution to the history of (free market) capitalism. On this level, the result proposes a sceptical outlook concerning (neo-)liberal free market theories. In this perspective, around the middle of the 19th century a wave of decisive market liberalisation failed to achieve what its adherents continue to argue, the generation of the common good. In the decades around 1850, neither in New York nor in Vienna or Paris did the “free market” succeed to generate the common good via low prices and high food quality standards for all. In all three cities, regulation was introduced relatively shortly to cushion the results of *laissez-faire*. In these metropolises, the legacy of the “free” market can be identified as contradictory, at the best. Still, by affecting retail methods and the materiality of bread and meat, *laissez-faire* left lasting visible imprints on the food items concerned.

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Jonas M. Albrecht, Überraschende Ähnlichkeiten? Deregulierung des Lebensmittelmarkts und die Folgen des *laissez-fair* in Wien, Paris und New York City (ca. 1840–1880)

Am 1. Juni 1860 wurde die *Gewerbefreiheit* in Österreich-Ungarn eingeführt und damit das Bäckergewerbe auch in Wien in ein „freies Gewerbe“ transformiert. Mit der Abschaffung der Brotsatzung in der Hauptstadt am 1. November desselben Jahres wurden innerhalb weniger Monate die meisten Regularien der Brotproduktion und -verteilung eliminiert und der „freien Konkurrenz“ überlassen.

Wien war weder die einzige noch die erste Stadt des 19. Jahrhunderts, in der die Lebensmittelversorgung dereguliert wurde. Beinahe zeitgleich wurden 1858 in Paris die Brot- und Fleischsatzung abgeschafft, in New York City wurden ähnliche Regularive bereits 1821 und 1843 aufgehoben. Sowohl

die Gründe für eine Liberalisierung als auch deren Durchschlagskraft unterschieden sich jedoch beträchtlich. In New York als Beispiel weitgehender Deregulierung trugen das dramatische Bevölkerungswachstum, eine zum Teil fehlgeleitete und das städtische Budget stark belastende Infrastrukturpolitik öffentlicher Marktplätze sowie eine populärer werdende Ideologie des *laissez-faire* maßgeblich zur Deregulierung bei. Paris hingegen repräsentiert ein Beispiel deutlich weniger drastisch umgesetzter Reformen. Aufgrund der negativen Erfahrungen mit marktliberaler Politik während den 1790er Jahren wurden in der französischen Hauptstadt municipale Institutionen gegründet, die die Produktion und den Handel vor allem mit Fleisch weiterhin in gewisse Kontrollmechanismen einbetteten.

Als Objekt intensiverer Analyse stellt Wien einen Mittelweg zwischen New York und Paris dar: Während die öffentliche Hand ähnlich wie in Paris unter anderem durch Gründung städtischer Schlachthöfe in die Fleischversorgung intervenierte, wurde das Backen und Verkaufen von Brotprodukten ähnlich weitgehend dem freien Markt überlassen wie in New York.

Die Deregulierung des Bäckergewerbes in der österreichischen Hauptstadt hatte unterschiedliche Konsequenzen. Einerseits veränderte die Abschaffung von Gewerbsbeschränkungen die Geographie der Brotversorgung. Die Öffnung des Gewerbes ermöglichte die schnelle Zunahme von Bäckereien auf dem Gebiet der Agglomeration, Neugründungen nahmen besonders stark in den Außenbezirken Wiens zu, den Hotspots des durch Zuwanderung getriebenen Stadtwachstums, und sicherte damit den Zugang zu Brot in geographischer Perspektive auch in diesen Stadtgebieten.

Gleichzeitig beschleunigte die Deregulierung allerdings die Differenzierung der Brotproduktion zwischen Bäckern in der Stadt und solchen in den Außenbezirken. Getrennt von den Innenbezirken und dem Stadtzentrum durch den Linienwall senkte der Wegfall der Verzehrungssteuer, einer Importsteuer vergleichbar mit der Pariser *Octroi*, die Produktionskosten der Bäcker in den Außenbezirken im Vergleich mit ihren besteuerten Gewerbsgenossen innerhalb der Steuergrenze. Den komparativen Kostenvorteil ausnutzend hatten sich diese Bäcker bereits im frühen 19. Jahrhundert auf das Backen von Roggenbrotprodukten spezialisiert, während die innerstädtischen Bäcker zunehmendes Weizengebäck produzierten, nachdem durch den Wegfall der Brotsatzungen für sie keine Produktionsvorgaben mehr galten.

Schlussendlich ermöglichte die Liberalisierung auch Akteuren den Eintritt ins Gewerbe, denen dies zuvor weitgehend nicht möglich war. Insbesondere Frauen profitierten hiervon.

Auf der anderen Seite führte die Abschaffung der Brotsatzung und damit verbundener Preis- und Qualitätskontrollen zu einer weitgehenden Veränderung des Brotmarktes für Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten. Hatte die Satzung noch für eine relativ transparente Preisgestaltung und grund-

legende Qualitätsvorgaben gesorgt, fielen diese wichtigen institutionellen Informationen nun aus. Da dies bereits ab den frühen 1860er Jahren sowohl zu Preissteigerungen als auch zu Veränderungen der traditionell bekannten Bäckereiprodukten und insbesondere der Brotformen führte, bemühte sich der Wiener Magistrat und das Marktamt bis in die 1880er Jahre intensiv, erneut Wissen über das Bäckereigewerbe zu erlangen, um diverse Regularien wieder einzuführen. Dem hingegen widersetzten sich die städtischen Bäcker mit dem Ziel, berufsspezifisches Wissen um die Broterzeugung zu schützen und zum eigenen Vorteil zu nutzen. Negative Auswirkungen der Deregulierung für die Bevölkerung feststellend, führte die Stadtregierung 1885 schließlich weitgehende Regularien wieder ein, um die Folgen der Liberalisierung abzdämpfen.

Zusammenfassend hatte die Abschaffung von den Markt einbettende Regularien und Institutionen in New York, Paris und Wien vergleichbare und widersprüchliche Auswirkungen. Während sie eine Expansion der Versorgungsinfrastrukturen forcierte und die Spezialisierung von Produzenten beschleunigte, hatte sie negative Auswirkungen auf Produktqualitäten und Marktinformationen der Verbraucher. Es wird daher resümiert, dass der „freie Markt“ in den Dekaden um 1860 in keiner der drei Städten das Gemeinwohl in Form von leistbarer und hochwertiger Nahrung für alle generierte.

Jonas M. Albrecht, Sorprendenti somiglianze? La deregolamentazione nel mercato alimentare e le sue conseguenze a Vienna, Parigi e New York tra il 1840 e il 1880 ca.

Il 1° giugno 1860 nell'Impero asburgico fu introdotta la libertà di commercio e impresa (*Gewerbefreiheit*) e pertanto anche a Vienna la panificazione fu liberalizzata. Il 1° novembre dello stesso anno fu abolito il relativo ordinamento cittadino e la maggior parte delle norme che regolavano la produzione e la distribuzione del pane furono eliminate nel giro di pochi mesi: l'intero settore fu lasciato alla "libera concorrenza".

Nell'Ottocento Vienna non fu né l'unica né la prima città a deregolamentare il suo approvvigionamento alimentare. Quasi contemporaneamente, infatti, a Parigi erano stati aboliti gli ordinamenti sul pane e sulla carne (1858) e normative analoghe erano state abrogate a New York già nel 1821 e nel 1843. Tuttavia, molto diversi furono sia i criteri alla base della liberalizzazione sia la forza del suo impatto. A New York, esempio di deregolamentazione di vastissima portata, vi contribuirono molti fattori: il drammatico incremento demografico, una politica infrastrutturale di mercati pubblici in parte sbagliata e che gravava pesantemente sul bilancio della città e un'ideologia del *laissez-faire* sempre più diffusa. Un esempio di riforme meno drastiche è rappresentato invece da Parigi. Sulla base dell'esperienza negativa delle politiche di libero

mercato dell'ultimo decennio del Settecento, nella capitale francese erano state create istituzioni municipali che continuarono a sottoporre la produzione e il commercio, soprattutto di carne, ad alcuni meccanismi di controllo.

Vienna, che in questo contributo è oggetto di un'analisi più approfondita, rappresenta una via di mezzo tra New York e Parigi. Da un lato, la mano pubblica intervenne nella fornitura di carne in modo simile a Parigi, ad esempio con la creazione di macelli comunali. Dall'altro lato, la panificazione e la vendita di prodotti da forno fu lasciata al libero mercato in modo simile a quanto avvenne a New York. Per la popolazione della capitale austriaca la deregolamentazione del settore dei prodotti da forno ebbe effetti diversi, positivi e negativi.

Per quanto riguarda i vantaggi, essa cambiò certamente la geografia dell'approvvigionamento del pane. L'apertura alla libera impresa portò a un rapido incremento dei forni in tutta l'area dell'agglomerato. I nuovi stabilimenti aumentarono particolarmente nei distretti periferici di Vienna, le aree più coinvolte dalla crescita urbana prodotta dall'immigrazione. In prospettiva geografica, quindi, si ottenne il risultato di garantire l'accesso al pane anche in queste aree urbane.

La deregolamentazione contribuì inoltre ad accrescere la diversificazione tra la panificazione in città e quella in periferia. Esisteva, infatti, un'imposta sulla produzione (*Verzehrungssteuer*, paragonabile all'*octroi* di Parigi) a carico delle attività svolte all'interno della cinta muraria (*Linienwall*). La liberalizzazione del mercato panario veniva così a favorire ulteriormente la panificazione nei distretti esterni. Rispetto ai loro colleghi del centro, i fornai all'esterno di questo confine fiscale avevano costi di produzione minori. Approfittando di questo loro vantaggio in termini di costi, già nel primo Ottocento essi si erano specializzati in prodotti panari di segale. Dal canto loro, i fornai del centro cittadino approfittarono dell'abolizione degli ordinamenti sul pane per produrre sempre più dolci di frumento.

Infine, la liberalizzazione consentì l'ingresso nel settore ad attori che in precedenza non ne avevano avuto la possibilità. Ne beneficiarono soprattutto le donne.

Considerando invece gli svantaggi, l'abolizione degli ordinamenti sul pane e i relativi controlli sul prezzo e sulla qualità determinarono cambiamenti di vasta portata nel mercato panario per consumatori e consumatrici. Gli ordinamenti precedenti, infatti, avevano garantito prezzi relativamente trasparenti e criteri minimi di qualità. Ora queste importanti informazioni istituzionali venivano completamente a mancare. Ciò portò, già dai primi anni sessanta dell'Ottocento, ad aumenti dei prezzi e cambiamenti nei prodotti tradizionalmente conosciuti (in particolare nelle forme). Per questo il Magistrato e l'Ufficio del mercato di Vienna si impegnarono a fondo, fino agli anni Ottanta, per acquisire le conoscenze necessarie in merito alla panificazione al fine di

reintrodurre alcune regolamentazioni. A ciò si opposero, però, i panettieri cittadini, con l'obiettivo di tutelare, a loro vantaggio, le specifiche conoscenze della loro professione. Prendendo atto degli effetti negativi che la deregolamentazione aveva avuto sul benessere della popolazione, il governo cittadino si risolse infine a reintrodurre un'ampia regolamentazione (1885) per attenuare le conseguenze della liberalizzazione.

In conclusione, l'abolizione dei regolamenti e delle istituzioni di controllo sul mercato a New York, Parigi e Vienna ebbe effetti comparabili e contraddittori. Se da un lato contribuì a incrementare le infrastrutture di approvvigionamento e accelerare la specializzazione dei produttori, dall'altro ebbe effetti negativi sulla qualità dei prodotti e sulle informazioni di mercato a disposizione dei consumatori. Si può quindi concludere che il "libero mercato" nei decenni intorno al 1860 non generò in nessuna delle tre città un pubblico vantaggio in termini di diffusa accessibilità riguardo a prezzi e qualità.