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People from Paper

German Jews through the prism of registration and census
taking 1812–1943

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Stefan Boberg

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**German Jews through the prism of registration and census taking
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UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Stefan Boberg

This thesis explores how processes of inclusion and exclusion are mediated by devices of oversight. It analyses the role of registration and statistics in the formation of a German state collective from the emancipation of the Prussian Jews to the deportations in the 1940s. The focus of the thesis is on the role of registration and statistics in the identification and localisation of German Jews prior to the deportations in the 1940s. It argues that National Socialists policy regarding concepts of state-membership and the devices of oversight accelerated long-lasting trends in German nation-building.

While the fact that the census 1939 inquired Jewish ancestry is a well known fact in historiography its significance for the identification of individual Jews in the context of the Shoah has been disputed. The thesis argues that a population register introduced in 1939 – the People's Card Index (Volkskartei) – was essential in the identification of German Jews. Consulting new sources it shows that the collation of the census data on ancestry with the Volkskartei was ordered in March 1941 to facilitate the identification and localisation of German Jews in the context of the deportations. Unlike previous research on the issue the long-term approach and the unique vantage point reveal that until 1938 the National-Socialist measures in registration and statistics are a continuation of developments initiated in the Weimar Republic. National-Socialists were unprepared for the implementation of nationwide antisemitic measures. The efforts eventually taken evolved from internal power struggles and the desire to accumulate the required data before Germany entered the war.

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People from Paper

In 1934 administrative lawyer Friedrich August Knost at the *Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung* (Reich Kinship Office) intended to monitor the racial composition of the German population. In order to implement the National Socialist racial policy Knost planned the creation of the first register that was to represent “das ganze deutsche Volk – und bald nicht nur das lebende sondern wirklich de[n] ganze[n] Volkskörper”. Apart from providing a vessel to imagine the *Volkskörper*, the notion of an index comprising the entire population also provides a powerful image of total control in which the National Socialist claim of unrestrained access to the individual materialised. The registrars maintaining such a device would have the entire population at their command, Knost pictured:

Man könnte in 2 Stunden daran vorbeigehen, während das wirkliche Volk, wenn es in Viererkolonnen marschiert, dazu 8 Monate brauchte.¹

Yet, despite these early considerations, Knost’s register was never realised. It took five more years until in 1939 the National Socialist Ministry of the Interior established a comparable device: the *Volkskartei* (People’s Card Index), a card index that registered every German on an individual card.

Today, the card index is a device of the past. Still, forms of registration are ubiquitous. We register not only with government agencies but with a party, a club, services on the internet, the library or the gym. Registration appears to be an essential yet banal practice of social organisation. It produces a reference between an entry in a database and a person. In order to manage the rights and obligations of the registrant and the organisation the reference allows identification and localisation of the person represented by listing relevant features of the registrant. Similarly, the evaluation of these features for personal targeting as well as for statistical analysis are all too familiar to us.

1. Friedrich A. Knost, ‘Staatsbürgerlisten, Familienregister, Reichssippenkartei. Der Weg vom Standesamt zum Sippenamt’, *Zeitschrift für Standesamtswesen. Personenstandsrecht, Ehe- u. Kindschaftsrecht, Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht (STAZ)* (Frankfurt am Main), 1934, 324–331, 329.

Census and registration are the devices of oversight established by modern states over the 19th century to facilitate basic institutions such as taxation and conscription. Changes in the social fabric in the wake of the establishment of the market economy, in particular the increased mobility of the population, required institutions capable of replacing the control mechanisms of the feudal state. Hence, local authorities developed techniques and devices to accumulate, store and access knowledge on the population. Whereas registration documents the individual, the data which is aggregated is used to collate statistical representations of the population as a whole.² Registration forms the backbone of a new relationship between the state and its members. The statistical mode on the other hand fostered the creation of modern state collectives during the formation of a system of nation states. Conversely, registration allows the definition of the margins of state membership by identifying those to whom access to state institutions is denied. The history of these devices of oversight in Germany is deeply entwined with the reweaving of the social fabric that accompanied the creation of the nation state during the 19th century. It is as much a technical as it is a social history.

In this thesis I will analyse these factors of registration and processes of inclusion and exclusion by exploring how changes in concepts of state membership in Germany reflected in the devices of oversight. The focus of this thesis clearly is on the role of these devices during National Socialist rule. However, impeded by such focus, historiography has hitherto tended to overemphasise the technical novelty of the Nazi registration system. In order to differentiate genuine National Socialist measures from general trends in the development of the devices of oversight this thesis traces the relevant moments for the development during the Nazi rule back into the previous century. In this regard, the narrative structure runs the risk of most technically oriented studies as it implicitly conveys a deterministic notion. Yet, instead of constructing a historical necessity, the historical contextualisation will facilitate an assessment of the role of National Socialist politics in the establishment of Germany's registration system.

The periodisation of the thesis is determined by three historical movements that start in the early 19th century and come to a preliminary close in the 1940s. These historical dynamics emanate from the changes introduced when the *Ancient Regimes* were under pressure from the disruption brought about by the French revolution and occupation. They merge again in the 1930s with the National-Socialist attempt to produce a homogeneous *Volksgemeinschaft*.

2. Cf. James C. Scott, John Tehranian and Jeremy Mathias, 'The Production of Legal Identities Proper to States: the case of the permanent family surname', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (The Hague) 44, no. 1 (January 2002): 4–44, 10.

The basal strand of this thesis traces the technical development of modern registration and census investigations. On a material level the documents produced in this process – that evolve from entries for entire households in books or lists to individual index cards – embody both the gradual atomisation of the modern individual that is at the core of the process of emancipation and the formation of a direct relationship between the state and its subjects. Beginning with the shared origins in registration it follows their differentiation into separate institutions with specific methods and concludes with the eventual fusion of these methods in the *Volkskartei* – a comprehensive yet dynamic card index of the German population.

This process was complemented by the concomitant reintegration of the increasingly atomised individuals into modern state collectives. The second thread of this thesis thus recapitulates the development of concepts of state membership in Germany. From the initial introduction of the concept of ‘citizenship’ on the occasion of the emancipation of Prussia’s Jews it traces the development to more exclusive concepts of state membership: the ‘Nation’, the ‘*Volk*’ and the ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’.

Finally, the main thread of the thesis focuses on the margins of state membership as it recognises its dialectic character that simultaneously defines criteria both for inclusion and exclusion and thereby allows members and non-members to be distinguished. My main concern is therefore the analysis of the status of Germany’s Jews in population registers and statistics from the emancipation to ‘emancipation revoked’ – from the inclusion in the state collective to the role these devices had in the exclusion from the *Volksgemeinschaft* by deportation and often murder under National Socialist rule.

The thesis is divided in two parts. The first two chapters organise the existing historiography on the separate topics in a chronological manner and seek to elucidate the general concepts and the historical development. The remaining chapters thoroughly explore the role of the devices of oversight under National Socialist rule in the creation and establishment of a new form of state membership, the ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’.

The first chapter ‘Governing citizenship’ covers the period from 1812 to the outbreak of the First World War. It exposes the conceptual relations of emancipation and registration, the technical development of registration, the onset of standardisation amongst the German states and the genesis of an increasingly ethno-cultural understanding of state membership. The Prussian registration system has been understood as paradigmatic by historians and National Socialists. I will therefore focus on Prussia in the first chapter. With the exception of Holger Mühlbauer’s 1994 dissertation, research on the long-term development of the German registration system is sparse.³ To reconstruct

3. Mühlbauer covers a wider time span and focuses on the development of legal framework and regu-

and analyse the practical implementation of registration I refer to the manuals for the registrars and similar contemporary sources. Over the first chapter I will embed the technical development into the political context.

The chapter ‘The ‘*Volk*’ contested’ takes a closer look at Germany’s census of Jewish soldiers during the Great War from the vantage point of registration and census investigations. In a second part I will analyse hitherto unconsidered sources on Weimar’s attempts to align registration systems on a national level in 1928. The results of these efforts largely informed the registration system introduced in 1937, however the obstacles to the reform resurfaced in the 1940s.

With the third chapter ‘A racial state’ the thesis reaches its very core. It explores the various competing and imperfect attempts to monitor and alter the ‘racial composition’ of the German population. Leaning on existing research that focused isolated initiatives the chapter confronts the competing efforts to show that, besides the institutional and technical difficulties experienced, National Socialists were ill-prepared for the implementation of their key ideologue.

The Nuremberg Laws at the end of 1935 that provided the first clear-cut definition of ‘race’ mark an incision. Over the course of the study I will show that in 1936 the Ministry of the Interior engaged in a consistent initiative to accumulate the data required to identify Jews according to the definition agreed upon in Nuremberg. The fourth chapter ‘Unified registration system’ will then analyse the establishment of a first nationwide registration system in 1937, the genesis of which dates back to the Weimar era. This system provided the framework in which the later efforts to identify German Jews were integrated. It is a well known fact that the 1939 census asked all Germans about Jewish ancestors in the grandparents’ generation. The further utilisation of the data however is disputed.

The *Volkskartei* introduced in 1939 was intended to represent every German citizen and provide ample information including the ‘racial descent’. While neither the census nor the index alone sufficed to identify and localise Jews in Germany, I will argue that the *Volkskartei* was essential in identifying and locating German Jews prior to the deportations. The crucial step overlooked by prior research was the collation of the census data on descent and the *Volkskartei* in early 1942 when the deportation of Germany’s Jews had just been decided upon. This process will be explored in detail in the sub-

lations. Holger Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen und Datenschutz in der DDR: historischer Rückblick; Studie im Rahmen der Forschungsarbeit ‘Kontinuität und Brüche in der Entwicklung des Einwohnermeldewesens - dargestellt am Beispiel Berlins’; juristische und verwaltungsinformatische Untersuchung* (Berlin: Techn. Univ. Berlin, 1992).

sequent chapters ‘The *Volkskartei*’ and ‘*Volkskartei* and deportations’ that thoroughly analyse the genesis, implementation and the collation with the census data of the most ambitious device for monitoring the population – the *Volkskartei*. The ultimate decommissioning of the index in 1943 – which coincided with the last deportations of Jews and ‘Gypsies’ – marks the endpoint of this study.

Several aspects, in particular the details of the 1939 census, which included questions on ‘racial descent’, have been addressed in historiography before. In 1961 Raul Hilberg made a passing reference to the significance of the census for the numeric identification of Jews as defined by the National Socialists.⁴ So did Hans Günther Adler in 1974.⁵

In 1983 Götz Aly and Karl Heinz Roth published the most influential study on registration and statistics during the Nazi rule.⁶ They suggest that the Nazis followed a coherent plan to tighten the grip on the population in general and identify Jews via the census. According to their findings, the census results on descent were immediately compiled into a card index of Germany’s Jews that facilitated the deportations.

Despite its persisting influence Aly and Roth’s study did not remain uncontested. In 2001 Jutta Wietog rebutted their claim. Wietog argued that the Statistical Office withheld the data and that, instead, the data required for the deportations was aggregated elsewhere. Aly and Roth as well as Wietog fail to acknowledge the crucial importance of the registration system for the deportation of Germany’s Jews. Apart from that, the limitation of Aly and Roth on the twelve years of Nazi rule also prevented them from differentiating specific National Socialist measures from those merely inherited from the previous administration. I will instead argue that the early measures introduced by the Nazis were a continuation of Weimar efforts. Only with the *Volkskartei* did registration take on a specific National Socialist form.

But what is more, the limitation affects their assessment with regard to the link of modern administration and National Socialism, not least because they uncritically accept the bureaucrats’ claimed achievements without analysing the actual implementation as Adam Tooze pointed out.⁷ The thorough analysis of formerly unconsidered sources on the test-run of the *Volkskartei* in the Potsdam district will for the first time allow an

4. Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden; 3: Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden Bd. 1-3* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1990), 443.

5. Hans Günther Adler, *Der verwaltete Mensch: Studien zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1974), 281.

6. Götz Aly and Karl Heinz Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung. Volkszählen, Identifizieren, Aussondern im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2000).

7. J. Adam Tooze, *Statistics and the German State: 1900 - 1945: the making of modern economic knowledge*, Cambridge studies in modern economic history 9 (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 36-39.

assessment of the pervasion of the measures both in smaller cities and rural areas.

Beyond clarifying the historical details in registration the results of the study have wider implications for the assessment of the National Socialist era and its relation to the previous development. With regard to the production of the *Volksgemeinschaft* since the turn of the century research has highlighted the performative and participatory aspects.⁸ The vantage point of my study will once again focus on the administrative prerequisites for these acts, maintaining the importance of documents in the process. I will eventually argue that only the collation of the census data with the registration system and the *Volkskartei* in particular allowed the implementation of the negative logic of the Nuremberg Laws that produced the *Volksgemeinschaft* by exclusion.

8. Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung. Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007).

1 Governing citizenship

The political changes brought about by the French Revolution exerted pressure on the Ancient Regimes to modernise. This pressure affected the subject of this study in particular, as it helped introduce ‘citizenship’ as a new form of state membership in Germany. In this chapter I will trace the establishment of new concepts of state membership in Prussia and the concomitant establishment of registration and statistics during the period from 1812 to 1913.

The state’s ‘desire’ to acquire data on its population has been conceptualised by James Scott who coined the term ‘legibility’ to describe the state’s efforts to structure data on its population and territory.¹ In order to produce a clear display of the data, Scott argues, the administration has to reduce and standardise information. This prerequisite for high-modernist schemes like land consolidation, taxation or conscription results in neglect of other qualities which are the reason why such schemes tend to fail.

John Torpey refined Scott’s approach introducing the term ‘embrace’ to underline aspects of legibility present in the German term ‘erfassen’.² Its plethora of connotations range from the idea of complete immersion to that of a rigid grip. Even the creators of the *Volkskartei* – advocates of ‘*totale Erfassung*’ – felt unease with the terminology:

Die Ausdrücke ‘erfassen’ und gar ‘Erfassung’ sind gewiß nicht schön. Aber bis jetzt hat noch niemand ein besseres Wort dafür gefunden.³

Torpey intended the concept of ‘embrace’ to highlight the inclusive as well as the exclusive aspects of state membership. In a world of nation states, he argued, individuals are increasingly understood as bearers of mutually exclusive nationality, which facilitates the states’ efforts “to monopolize the legitimate means of movement.”⁴ Both terms

1. James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*, Yale agrarian studies (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1998).

2. John Torpey, *The invention of the passport: surveillance, citizenship and the state*, Cambridge studies in law and society (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000).

3. Erich Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei*, 1.-3., ed. Artur Kääb (München, Berlin: Jehle, 1939), 48.

4. Torpey, *The invention of the passport*, 12.

evoke strong imagery and present a shortcut to understanding. These metaphors have been quite productive and informed a number of researchers I am relying on during my own research.

I do not completely agree with Scott's analysis. A point limiting Scott's argument, has been put forward in the context of philosophy of language. Given that categorisation is first and foremost a speech act it is valid for our purposes too. Leaning on Wittgenstein I want to emphasise that the *devices of oversight* are utilised to produce a *clear display* of certain aspects considered relevant: "eine Ordnung zu einem bestimmten Zweck".⁵ Notwithstanding the inherent violence in classification that is shown in its exclusive aspect, the concept draws our attention to the purpose of a particular order rather than to the means of its production. Likewise my concern is to locate the technical development of registration and statistics in the political framework and analyse their respective interrelation to evolving concepts of state membership.

Forms of statistics and registration existed before the modern state. However, the year 1812 is marked by two events that present an incision in fields that were otherwise subject to slow change. Berlin introduced a first central registration office that intended to register the entire population of the city, and in the course of the emancipation of Prussia's Jews the concept of citizenship was first introduced in Prussian law. I will analyse the connection of emancipation and registration before elucidating the relation of increased mobility and the 1840s change from *ius soli* to *ius sanguinis* in citizenship law in the chapter 'Concept of 'Staatsbürger''. This change marks a first turn towards closure in the concept of state membership and was accompanied by the introduction of minority censuses. The process of German unification and its impact on statistics and registration will be subject of 'Belonging to the *Reich*'.

1.1 Subject and Citizen

The development of the emancipation in Prussia in particular of Jews in 1812 has been described in detail elsewhere, and no additional summary of events is called for. Yet, reconsidered under the aspect of 'legibility' or the introduction of devices of oversight, the years 1812-1813 form a focal point in the transition of Prussian statehood considering the relation of state and citizen and its concomitant production of documents.

5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus. Tagebücher 1914 - 1916. Philosophische Untersuchungen.*, Werkausgabe Ludwig Wittgenstein 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), PU, §132.

For Prussia the emancipation of Jews marks the beginning transition for all Prussians from subject to citizen, from a direct, personal relationship to an abstract one mediated by documents.⁶

The Prussian Setting

Napoleon's troops had brought a vivid impression of the efficiency and superiority of a modern state and its conscription army to Prussia, triggering a development that would considerably outlast the occupation. The French rule introduced equal civil rights and inspired democrats – to the *Ancien Regime* it brought the tools of modern bureaucracy. The French influence was both setting precedents and mobilising repulsion. While resistance to the French forces acted as a catalyst for the early German national movement, it also prolonged the *Ancien regime's* life by incorporating nationalist opposition in rank and file of the liberation army. Yet, the rupture of the French rule confirmed the need for reform of the marginalised Prussian state in order to restore the *status quo ante*.⁷ Hence, the *Stein-Hardenberg* reforms attempted to muster dormant resources for a Prussian liberation while leaving the feudal system by and large untouched. The reforms were preceded by the emancipation of serfs, the introduction of economic freedom and freedom of movement in 1807 and culminated in the establishment of a Prussian conscription army in 1813 on the brink of the Battle of Leipzig.⁸ In 1808, the municipal ordinance (*Städtereform*) established self-governance of the municipalities and put them in charge of the police. This had a long-lasting effect as it prevented the central government from directly regulating the police.

By decentralising administration and the introduction of census suffrage, the reform allowed for some – albeit limited – citizen participation in which the elected parliaments had only an advisory function.⁹ In a complementary manner, the newly established authorities had to develop a new relationship with their subjects. The newly granted freedom of movement entailed the administration's need to replace the control over the

6. Cf. Oliver Trevisiol, *Die Einbürgerungspraxis im Deutschen Reich 1871 - 1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 25 and Scott, Tehranian and Mathias, 'Legal Identities Proper to States', 16.

7. Cf. Walter Grab, *Der deutsche Weg der Judenemanzipation: 1789 - 1938* (München: Piper, 1991), 17.

8. Cf. Heinz Stübgen, 'Die Wehrpflicht', chap. Die Wehrverfassung Preussens in der Reformzeit, ed. Roland G. Foerster (München: Oldenbourg, 1994), 39–53, 46.

9. Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution: allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848*, Industrielle Welt 7 (Stuttgart: Klett, 1975), 169; Eli Nathans, *The politics of citizenship in Germany: ethnicity, utility and nationalism* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 39.

population, which the dissolving feudal system had ensured via personal bonds by transferring it into corporate knowledge. Scott has described this as “a direct, unmediated relationship to the citizen.”¹⁰ However, this ‘unmediated relationship’ had to first be produced. Registration is thus the administrative counterpart to the freedom of movement and substitute to the knowledge these intermediaries had about their subjects. The new relationship between state and citizen is largely embodied in the forms and documents that are the prerequisites for state activities where (in principle) interchangeable officials had replaced the personal bond. Essential state activities such as taxation and conscription also relied on clear identification of individuals.¹¹

Registration and emancipation

In the feudal state life data – typically birth, marriage and death – was, if at all, recorded by the religious bodies. With the development of modern administration, the documentation was gradually transferred to state institutions.

Registration is a phenomenon of an unwieldy urban society and hence was only reluctantly introduced in rural areas but established early on in cities where even the locals are foreigners.¹² Accordingly, the step in registration from foreigner’s control to citizen control in Prussia was first taken by Berlin. Scott emphasised that these projects tend to spread from centre to periphery.¹³ Over the course of the following chapters, we will see that devices of oversight also tend to be introduced to control marginalised groups before being adapted for the entire population. When French troops took Berlin in 1806, the new administration abolished corporative differences and taxed all inhabitants according to their income. To facilitate taxation and quartering, a first central registration of citizens was introduced in 1807. On a daily basis the local police stations (*Polizei-Commissarien*) had to report newly registered citizens to the *Hauptkontrolle aller Einwohner* which formed a first central register of Berlin’s entire population. Whilst the register was introduced to facilitate administrative requirements of the French, Berlin Police were well aware that registration would also serve as means to control the influx of the mobile poor, who in the course of the formation of a labour market and the resulting increased mobility began to form a new threat to ‘public order’.¹⁴ In acknowledgement of the benefits of centralised registration the police department insisted on the adaption of

10. Scott, Tehranian and Mathias, ‘Legal Identities Proper to States’, 16.

11. Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996), 35.

12. Cf. Walter Siebel, *Die Kultur der Stadt* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2015), 286.

13. Cf. Scott, *Seeing like a state*, 42.

14. Cf. Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 32-33.

a similar device after the French had left. In December 1812 the ‘*Wohnungs-Melde-Amt*’ was established, staffed with seven officials to register all of Berlin’s inhabitants.¹⁵

The *Wohnungs-Melde-Amt* of 1812 maintained data on Berlin’s inhabitants in two separate registers, consisting of single sheets of paper for each entry, stored in cardboard boxes.¹⁶ An entry was made for each head of a family adhering to a patrilineal concept, so that women and children appeared on their husband’s or their father’s sheet. One register organised inhabitants alphabetically by patronyms, the other one spatially. It listed inhabitants according to streets and houses. The registers linked names and addresses – assuming everybody had a fixed name and habitation – and thus the alphabetical register enabled the localisation of a person known by name or the belonging of a person to be documented and proven. The spatially organised register allowed authorities to connect localities to their inhabitants. Authorities could use the registers to address individuals by name or as inhabitants of a specific location. Though the office initially operated without legal basis for the first time Prussian administration had made the shift from alien control to citizen control, albeit limited to Berlin.¹⁷ In 1837 the Prussian Ministry of the Interior made an initial but fruitless effort to establish similar standards of registration in Prussia in order “die Ungleichförmigkeit [...] der Vorschriften [...] zu polizeil. An- und Abmeldungen [...] zu entfernen.” In accordance with Berlin’s regulations, landlords and lessors were obliged to register their tenants. Failure to comply would be penalised either by a fine or 24 hours imprisonment. The regulations were to be implemented “sowohl auf dem platten Lande, als in den Städten.”¹⁸ In Berlin the regulations of January 1813 obliged:

- the landlord to register a tenant on the day of moving in, whereas the latter had to register his family and staff. Husbands had to report marriages and the birth of children.
- deaths also had to be reported either by the head of family or the landlord.
- foreigners had to register at the *Polizei-Fremden-Bureau* if their stay in Berlin exceeded 24 hours.¹⁹

15. Ferdinand Meyer, ‘Zum Jubiläum des Berliner Einwohner-Melde-Amtes’, *Der Bär: illustrierte Wochenschrift für vaterländische Geschichte.* (Berlin), no. 35 (1886): 428–430, 429.

16. H. Dennstedt and W. von Wolffsburg, *Preussisches Polizei-Lexikon*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Moeser, 1855), 773.

17. Cf. Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 33–34.

18. H. Dennstedt and W. von Wolffsburg, *Preussisches Polizei-Lexikon*, vol. 4 (Berlin: Moeser, 1855), 150–151.

19. Cf. Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 34.

Though the regulations were simple, the short time span of a single day made it hard for the unaccustomed public to comply. In the subsequent years central registration failed to be as efficient as envisioned so that registers were usually not current.²⁰ In 1830 central registration was even suspended, only to be reintroduced six years later with additional staff and from now on under the designation of *Einwohner-Meldeamt*.²¹

Statistics evolved from the inherent logic of the data maintained by the registration offices representing the population as uniform sheets of paper in alphabetical order. Germany's first statistical office was founded in 1805. However, it had no influence on data collection and relied on figures provided by the provincial administrations. Hence statistics were initially a delineate function of registration. Nevertheless, statisticians understood the value of registration and used it to ask additional questions. Even though Prussia was not a nation state and consequently had not developed a concept of 'national minorities', in the 1820s registration sheets in particular in East Prussia began asking a question about the spoken language in order to identify Polish-speaking Prussians.²²

In order to register, sort and count the population, individuals had to be identifiable. The prerequisite for all these state activities is therefore the identification of a person by name, meaning that all inhabitants had to adhere to similar name patterns. Again Prussia would follow the French precedent.²³ As Gérard Noiriel has pointed out, the establishment of "fixity of names" was essential in the "*citoyen's* production". Revolutionary France had granted civil status to all citizens but since only Catholics were registered before 1792, documentation was confronted with obstacles relating to Protestant and Jewish French. In some regions Jews did not practice the patronymic naming system. Hence French Jews were obliged to adapt names coherent with the system practised by their non-Jewish compatriots and declare their civil status to the administration to be eventually registered in a special register.²⁴ That Jews were registered separately and the decree was accompanied by restrictions on usury and petty trade – a striking resemblance to charges also brought up against 'Gypsies' – sheds light on the fragility of

20. Meyer, 'Zum Jubiläum des E.-M.-A.', 429.

21. Cf. Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 37.

22. Cf. Morgane Labbé, 'Institutionalizing the Statistics of Nationality in Prussia in the 19th Century: from local bureaucracy to state-level census of population', *Centaurus* 49, no. 4 (2007): 289–306, 290–291.

23. Jane Caplan, 'Documenting individual identity: the development of state practices in the modern world', chap. 'This or That Particular Person': *Protocols of Identification Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Jane Caplan (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), 49–66, 60.

24. Cf. Gérard Noiriel, 'Documenting individual identity: the development of state practices in the modern world', chap. *The Identification of the Citizen: The Birth of Republican Civil Status in France*, ed. Jane Caplan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), 28–48, 36.

emancipation and the narrowness of the universal human rights in France.²⁵ The ‘normalisation’ of the status of Jews was, however, an exceptional issue not only in France but in every European country and – as Katz pointed out – in particular in the German lands.²⁶

During the occupation French legislation was extended to North-Western Germany and “a large number of German Jews had [...] been given a taste of full civic rights”.²⁷ Hence in course of the general liberalisation of Prussia the reformers granted civic rights to the Jewish population exemplifying the new relationship the modernised Prussian state intended to form with its entire citizenry. In order to make individuals identifiable by name, the adaption of the patronymic name system was prerequisite for the access to (partial) civic rights.²⁸ In 1833 all Jews in Prussia – including foreigners without prospect of naturalisation – had to adopt a surname.²⁹ Further regulations in 1816, not limited to Jews, forbade the use of other people’s names. In 1822 changing your name without the authorities’ permission was proscribed. Both measures show how the patronymic system and the “fixity of names” in particular were not fully established amongst non-Jewish Prussians either.³⁰

To enjoy the benefits of the edict, the heads of Jewish families had to register themselves and their dependants at the local police office by 24th September 1812, making them responsible for the implementation of the edict.³¹ As their identities were previously unknown to the authorities, this was the only feasible procedure. Notably, this is an aspect of registration that will remain the main obstacle to producing a seamless

25. Cf. Werner E. Mosse, ‘Paths of emancipation: Jews, states, and citizenship’, chap. From ‘Schutzjuden’ to ‘Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens’: The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany, ed. Pierre Birnbaum (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995), 59–93, 68.

26. Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: the social background of Jewish emancipation, 1770 - 1870* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press., 1973), 7.

27. Cf. Mosse, ‘Paths of emancipation’, 68.

28. Dietz Bering, ‘Das Emanzipationsedikt von 1812 in Preußen: der lange Weg der Juden zu ‘Einländern’ und ‘preußischen Staatsbürgern’’, chap. Namenannahme: nur scheinbar unproblematische Paragraphen im preussischen Emanzipationsedikt, ed. Wissenschaftliche Tagung 2012.03.11 Potsdam Diekmann Irene A., *Europäisch-jüdische Studien 15* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 201–218, 208 and Michał Szulc, ‘Das Emanzipationsedikt von 1812 in Preußen: der lange Weg der Juden zu ‘Einländern’ und ‘preußischen Staatsbürgern’’, chap. Jüdische Staatsbürger in der bürokratischen Alltagspraxis, ed. Wissenschaftliche Tagung 2012.03.11 Potsdam Diekmann Irene A., *Europäisch-jüdische Studien 15* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 167–198. 173.

29. Scott, Tehranian and Mathias, ‘Legal Identities Proper to States’, 17.

30. Caplan, “This or That”, 60.

31. Cf. Michał Szulc, ‘A Gracious Act or Merely a Regulation of Economic Activity? A Daily Life Perspective on the Reception of the Prussian Emancipation Edict of 1812’, *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (Oxford) 59, no. 1 (2014): 23–36, 27.

oversight over the population. All registration measures hinge on the public's compliance. Only after the individual's initiative could the local administration proceed to compile lists of those applying for citizenship and send these to the governments who would – like in France – enter the information into the *General-Juden-Verzeichnisse*. These registers were used to send certificates of citizenship to the applicants.³² The prerequisite for the application was Prussian residency; citizenship was therefore based on the principle of residence or *ius soli*.³³

In contrast to the earlier attempts to equalise the status of Jews brought forward by Jewish representatives Jacob Moses and Daniel Itzig in 1789, the edict of 1812 was initiated from within the Prussian bureaucracy.³⁴ Prussian Minister von Schroetter – in charge of the 1808 *Städtereform* and no friend of Jews – directly linked the emancipation of Jews to the establishment of conscription, thereby hoping to achieve both the limitation of the influx of Jews from neighbouring countries that had previously introduced conscription and the expansion of Prussia's pool of soldiers.³⁵ Scott places the establishment of fixed names and patronyms in general in the context of conscription.³⁶ In the long term Schroetter expected an educational effect of conscription turning Jews away from usury and into “useful citizens”.³⁷ The edict yielded the intended results as it ensured Jewish Prussian loyalties and mobilised Jewish participants for the war – both conscripts and volunteers. Although the exact numbers of Jewish participants during the war of liberation could never be established, even Treitschke had to acknowledge the Jewish contribution to the liberation.³⁸ With the Edict of 1812 Jews were free to choose residence and occupation, apart from state posts, special taxes were revoked and the privileges of jurisdiction and exemption from military service abolished.³⁹ But not

32. Cf. Szulc, ‘Jüdische Staatsbürger...’, 172-173.

33. Cf. Trevisiol, *Die Einbürgerungspraxis im Deutschen Reich 1871 - 1945*, 30.

34. Cf. Marion Schulte, ‘Das Emanzipationsedikt von 1812 in Preußen: der lange Weg der Juden zu ‘Einländern’ und ‘preußischen Staatsbürgern’’, chap. Zu den Reformdiskussionen innerhalb der preußischen Ministerialbürokratie, ed. Irene A. Diekmann, *Europäisch-jüdische Studien* 15 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 103–123, 103.

35. Schulte, 114.

36. Scott, Tehranian and Mathias, ‘Legal Identities Proper to States’, 15.

37. Horst Fischer, *Judentum, Staat und Heer in Preussen im frühen 19. Jahrhundert: zur Geschichte der staatlichen Judenpolitik*, 1st ed., Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo-Baeck-Institute of Jews from Germany 20 (Tübingen: Selbstverlag, 1968), 21.

38. Cf. Fischer, 40-44; and Julius H. Schoeps, ‘Das Emanzipationsedikt von 1812 in Preußen: der lange Weg der Juden zu ‘Einländern’ und ‘preußischen Staatsbürgern’’, chap. Von der Untertanenloyalität zum Bürgerpatriotismus: Preussen, die Juden und die Anfänge des Identifikationsprozesses zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts, ed. Irene A. Diekmann, *Europäisch-jüdische Studien* 15 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 6–19, 13.

39. Cf. Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, 170.

all of the Jews in Prussia would benefit from the improvements since the scope of the edict was limited to the Prussian territories of 1812. Furthermore, though the promise of equal civic rights had encouraged reformers within the Jewish community to promote an understanding of ‘Judaism’ as a religion rather than as an ethno-cultural nation, it was not acknowledged as an official religion.⁴⁰ Jews were granted civic rights, not as Jews but as citizens only. Even after the 1815 promise of Frederick William III, all volunteers would be endowed with state jobs after the war, Jewish volunteers were still denied access, so that positive freedoms were established in the economy only.⁴¹ It is therefore fair to conclude, as Paul Rieger did on the occasion of its centennial, that the edict was

nicht zugunsten der Juden, sondern im Interesse des preußischen Staates erlassen worden. [...] Nur die Entfesselung aller in Preußen ungenutzt ruhenden wirtschaftlichen und geistigen Kräfte konnte dem Staate die Energie zum Aufschwung nach so tiefem Sturze vermitteln.⁴²

This development echoes the theoretical approach of the early reformer Moses Mendelson, who was “[c]onflating the notion of citizenship with the capacity to act as free independent consumers and producers”.⁴³ This conflation of citizenship and the free market led many Jews to believe, that registration for citizenship did not matter. Some believed that being poor and without business they did not have to register since they saw no benefits and had to pay a fee. Others – like the son of Mendelson – had spent time abroad and thus failed to register and he only made up for it in 1816.⁴⁴ Comparable cases can be found well into the forties.⁴⁵ A noteworthy effect caused by the fact the affected had to implement emancipation by registering themselves occurred in the Itzig family in which several members, despite their earlier efforts towards Jewish emancipation, failed to register as they already felt thoroughly integrated.⁴⁶ The civic

40. Cf. Leora Batnitzky, *How Judaism Became A Religion: an Introduction to modern Jewish thought* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2011), 29 and Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, 174.

41. Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, 60.

42. RIEGER, PAUL: *Das Judenedikt vom 11. März 1812. Zur Jahrhundertfeier der Gleichberechtigung der preußischen Juden*, in: *Im Deutschen Reich* 3 (1912), 113–121. As cited in: Tobias Schenk, ‘Das Emanzipationsedikt von 1812 in Preußen: der lange Weg der Juden zu ‘Einländern’ und ‘preußischen Staatsbürgern’’, chap. *Das Emanzipationsedikt: Ausdruck ‘defensiver Modernisierung’ oder Abschluss rechtsstaatlicher Entwicklungen des ‘(aufgeklärten) Absolutismus’?*, ed. Irene A. Diekmann, *Europäisch-jüdische Studien* 15 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 23–76, 24.

43. Gideon Reuveni, ‘Emancipation through Consumption: Moses Mendelssohn and the idea of marketplace citizenship’, *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (Oxford) 59, no. 1 (2014): 7–22, 15.

44. Cf. Szulc, ‘A Daily Life Perspective ...’, 27–28.

45. Szulc, ‘Jüdische Staatsbürger. ...’, 196.

46. Cf. Szulc, ‘A Daily Life Perspective ...’, 32.

equalisation of Jews was a longer process both from legal and administrative perspective. But the Edict of 1812 also had effects on the wider population as it sparked a wider debate over the principles of citizenship.⁴⁷ Emancipation in Prussia was limited, not only for Jews who were partially emancipated, as Mosse put it, “in (and into) a society itself only partially emancipated”.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy, however, that the edict of 1812 is the only document of the reform era to use the term ‘Prussian citizen’, turning Prussia’s Jews – in a process of exceptional normalisation – into the first *preußische Staatsbürger* as Koselleck has emphasised. Only after the creation of a single Prussian market in 1818, with the abolishment of internal tolls and the extension of freedom of movement to all Prussians, was the concept of Prussian citizenship tacitly introduced, avoiding the term and instead speaking of residents and subjects.⁴⁹

Concept of ‘*Staatsbürger*’

In the German states democratisation, state building and nation building occurred separately. These conditions are reflected in distinctive concepts of state membership.

In German, formal state-membership, participatory citizenship, and ethno-cultural nation membership are designated by distinct terms: *Staatsangehörigkeit*, *Staatsbürgerschaft*, and *Nationalität* or *Volkszugehörigkeit* respectively.⁵⁰

Citizenship was a product of ‘German particularism’.⁵¹ The ‘nation’ in contrast was one of the democrats’ claims and, as such, contrary to the *Ancien Régime*’s intentions.⁵² Hence the disparate course of (state-) citizenship and nationality facilitated the development of an essentialist concept of nation that understood the nation as preceding the state. On the other hand the concept of citizenship had been established without a reference to the nation.⁵³ The ‘Germans’, nationalists referred to, were still citizens of separate states. But in spite of its particularist origin, the concept of citizenship was

47. Cf. Andreas Brämer and Gideon Reuveni, ‘Introduction Jews as German Citizens: The Prussian emancipation edict of 1812 and beyond’, *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (Oxford) 59, no. 1 (2014): 3–5, 3. and Szulc, ‘A Daily Life Perspective . . .’, 26.

48. Mosse, ‘Paths of emancipation’, 59.

49. Cf. Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, 59.

50. Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood*, 50–51. Cf. Dieter Gosewinkel, ‘Staatsbürgerschaft und Staatsangehörigkeit’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (Göttingen) 21, no. 4 (1995): 533–556, 544–545.

51. Trevisiol, *Die Einbürgerungspraxis im Deutschen Reich 1871 - 1945*, 27.

52. Cf. Andreas Fahrmeir, ‘Nineteenth-Century German Citizenships: A Reconsideration’, *The Historical Journal* (Cambridge) 40, no. 3 (September 1997): 721–752, 723–724.

53. Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood*, 51–52.

shaped by the mutual influence of these states. The importance of the concept of citizenship grew with the increasing use Prussians made of their freedom of movement and the developing welfare system, since citizenship allowed the restriction of access to these institutions.⁵⁴ But the increase in mobility conflicted with the developing system of poor relief to which access was granted on the basis of the *Heimatrecht*.⁵⁵ German states had a mutual interest in the identification and determination of belonging of their respective citizens or more specifically those who were *Ausländer*. As seen above, the first Prussian citizens were granted citizenship on the grounds of their residency in Prussia, so that citizenship tended to assimilate foreigners. To avoid tacit naturalisation of poor people by way of continuous residency, the basis of state membership was altered.⁵⁶ Brubaker, Fahrmeir and Gosewinkel in varying degrees attribute the development of citizenship in German lands to inter-state regulations concerned with the expulsion of the migrant poor, whose numbers were rising as a corollary of the economic transformation.⁵⁷ Citizenship was not so much an institution of inner cohesion but of ‘domestic closure’ and the desire to control the movement of poor migrants.⁵⁸ But the limitation of immigration was not the only concern in clarifying citizenship, legislators were also addressing those with the intention to leave in order to evade conscription by prohibiting emigration for soldiers and draftees.⁵⁹

1.2 Conceptual change: *Ius Sanguinis*

Starting in the 1830s, the Prussian administration began drafting a new citizenship law, that was finally passed in 1842.⁶⁰ With the further codification of citizenship the territorial *ius soli* was replaced by the *ius sanguinis* based on descent.⁶¹ The *Gesetz über die Erwerbung und den Verlust der Eigenschaft als Preußischer Unterthan* explicitly abstained from the formerly practised *ius soli*: “Der Wohnsitz innerhalb Unserer Staaten

54. Cf. Trevisiol, *Die Einbürgerungspraxis im Deutschen Reich 1871 - 1945*, 26.

55. Cf. Leo Lucassen, ‘Harmful tramps’ Police professionalization and gypsies in Germany, 1700-1945’, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés* (Genève) 1, no. 1 (1997): 29–50, 35.

56. Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood*, 67-70.

57. Fahrmeir, ‘German Citizenships’; Dieter Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen. Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001); Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood*, 70. Cf. Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, 129–136.

58. Cf. Fahrmeir, ‘German Citizenships’, 737.

59. Cf. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 60.

60. Nathans, 55-62.

61. Cf. Gosewinkel, ‘Staatsbürgerschaft und Staatsangehörigkeit’, 547.

soll in Zukunft für sich allein die Eigenschaft als Preuße nicht begründen”.⁶² No one should be allowed to claim Prussian citizenship solely based on residency. But the two concepts were never seen as mutually exclusive by contemporaries as Gosewinkel elaborates. It also has to be stressed that remnants of the *ius soli* remained in force, in particular the loss of citizenship after ten years of absence.⁶³

The 1842 law introduced an oscillating concept of citizenship that lay the groundwork for a long-lasting heritage. The criteria for naturalisation remained in what Gosewinkel considered “the arcane realm of administration” where naturalisation was turned into an act of state grace, preserving a notion of absolutism in the age of bourgeois legal thought.⁶⁴ Henceforth authorities could grant naturalisation to ‘useful’ foreigners referring to *ius soli* and deny it to others, seen as potential burden to society based on the *ius sanguinis*. This was particularly difficult for Jews who had not sought naturalisation and itinerant families, who were not able (or not willing) to produce sufficient documents proving their identities and belonging, and who were increasingly categorised as ‘Gypsies’.⁶⁵ Decisions regarding the settlement of Jews remained a prerogative of Prussia’s Ministry of the Interior instead of the local administration as was the case for all other foreigners.⁶⁶ Otherwise, all special legislation regarding Jews or ‘Gypsies’ was suspended, making them in principle equal Prussian citizens.⁶⁷ Apart from establishing descent as main criterion for citizenship, the 1842 law also introduced a strictly patrilineal concept in which each family member’s citizenship depended on that of the male head of the family.⁶⁸

Oliver Trevisiol maintains that even though *ius sanguinis* replaced the *ius soli* this did not determine Germany’s later route to a ‘*völkisch*’ law of citizenship.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, this change in paradigm would influence the future course of events. Gosewinkel rightfully stresses, that the concept of descent was particularly prone to fostering an ethno-cultural understanding of state membership that imagines the nation as a community based on descent which precedes the state and its institutions.⁷⁰ In these aspects the Prussian

62. As cited in Trevisiol, *Die Einbürgerungspraxis im Deutschen Reich 1871 - 1945*, 31.

63. Cf. Trevisiol, 35.

64. Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 97. Translation S.B.

65. Cf. Jennifer Grana Illuzzi, *Gypsies in Germany and Italy, 1861 - 1914: lives outside the law* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 91.

66. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 68.

67. Marion Bonillo, ‘*Zigeunerpolitik*’ im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1871 - 1918, *Sinti- und Romastudien* 28 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2001), 67.

68. Cf. Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 95.

69. Trevisiol, *Die Einbürgerungspraxis im Deutschen Reich 1871 - 1945*, 31.

70. Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 547.

law was intended, and turned out to be, prototypical for citizenship laws throughout German lands. In particular the vagueness in the process of naturalisation allowed the establishment of a practise that exposed applicants to the subjective judgement of officials.⁷¹

Registration in 1842

To enforce the new rules, authorities had to produce a clear display of the population. Complementary to the clarification of citizenship in 1842 – and closely connected to the law establishing poor relief – the *Gesetz über die Aufnahme neuanziehender Personen* regarding registration came into effect. It was by and large adopted in July 1867 by the North German Confederation and would remain in force until 1937.⁷² For the whole of Prussia, the law introduced the obligation to report moves between municipalities, the so called *An- und Abmeldung* (registration and cancellation of registration).

With regard to this law Leo Lucassen assessed that *Meldepflicht* (obligatory registration) “became one of Prussia’s authoritarian legacies to Germany”.⁷³ Yet, implementation was not monitored and depended entirely on the local administration’s initiative so that on a Prussian scale registration remained far from being comprehensive. Furthermore, only general requisitions were laid down in the law, so that the local police departments would issue police regulations (*Polizeiverordnungen*) tailored to their jurisdiction, resulting in literally thousands of local regulations, subject to frequent renewal.⁷⁴ Hence the data acquired by each department could differ due to the differing demands of the local authorities. As we will see, it still took more than a century until what could be considered ‘stringent’ registration provisions were implemented beyond the local scale.

Difficulties establishing stringent registration were also encountered in Berlin where “[d]as Institut des E.-M.-A. zu Berlin, [...] seiner schwierigen Handhabung wegen schon mehrfach gescheitert war”. But in spite of these difficulties, registration was recognised as “die erste Grundlage einer geregelten Polizei-Verwaltung”. Since, the *Einwohner-Melde-Amt* (E.-M.-A.) sought to tighten its grip on the population through constant changes and adjustments of the registration regulations. The E.-M.-A.’s purpose was

71. Cf. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 62.

72. Cf. Leo Lucassen, ‘Between Hobbes and Locke. Gypsies and the Limits of the Modernization Paradigm’, *Social History* 33, no. 4 (November 2008): 423–441, 434–435 and Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 40.

73. Lucassen, ‘Between Hobbes and Locke’, 435.

74. Cf. Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 39–40.

in jedem Augenblicke und ohne weitläufige Nachforschungen über den Aufenthalt, Stand, Alter, Geburtsort, Verhältniß und Beziehungen einer jeden sich in Berlin aufhaltenden Person vollständige Auskunft zu geben, und das Auffinden der gesuchten Personen zu erleichtern und die bestraften Individuen nachzuweisen.⁷⁵

In order to fulfil this ambitious task, officials depended on the population's compliance. One part of this effort was the establishment of notification obligations of the local police departments to the *E.-M.-A.* for every *An- und Abmeldung* on a daily basis – establishing the first notification obligation (*Benachrichtigungspflicht*) in Prussia – thus making it harder to escape registration, once registered. The other part of these adjustments was that the penalties for non-compliance quintupled from 1837 to 1849. Since 1841 deliberate ‘false registration’ (that is registering a residence with a lessor without actually living there) was also penalised. Though there were no printed forms, registration in writing was mandatory, answering the following questions:

- full name
- day and year of birth
- religion
- place of birth
- former address
- future address
- moving day
- name and address of the registrant⁷⁶

Obligation to register new tenants remained with the landlord, respectively everybody “der einem Neuanziehenden Wohnung oder Unterkommen gewährt” to include all forms of subtenancy.⁷⁷ This illustrates how remnants of the feudal order were still relied upon.⁷⁸ To make registration easier and thereby increase compliance, the respite was extended to six days for moves within Berlin; everyone else was still obliged to register within 24 hours. Another new rule required the *Meldeämter* to report school-age children of new residents to the school department (*Schuldeputation*) on a monthly basis. Compared to 1812 the office had increased the number of staff and introduced more differentiated registers. The *E.-M.-A.*'s 53 employees maintained 6 separate registers.⁷⁹ In addition

75. Cf. Denstedt and Wolffsberg, *Preussisches Polizei-Lexikon*, 772-773.

76. Cf. Denstedt and Wolffsberg, 772-780.

77. As cited in Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 41.

78. Cf. Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, 70.

79. Cf. Denstedt and Wolffsberg, *Preussisches Polizei-Lexikon*, 773-777.

to the *Hauptregister aller Einwohner* and the *Haus-Register*, the *E.-M.-A.* was now in charge of the *Fremden-Register*, the *Gewerbe-Register*, the *Register der Gesuchten* and the *Straf-Register*.⁸⁰ The *Fremden-Register* consisted of two repositories, the *kurrent* and the *reponiertes Register* the first of which listed all registered foreigners currently present in Berlin, while the latter archived those who had left. The *Gewerbe-Register* documented those, who had successfully applied for a trade permission. The *Register der Gesuchten* allowed the listing of individuals whose whereabouts were unknown and who “in irgendeinem polizeilichen Interesse ermittelt werden sollen”. Finally, the *Straf-Register* served to monitor “[j]ede irgendwie bestrafte Person”, separated in a ‘*kurrent*’ and a ‘*reponierte*’ part. The latter comprised those who had moved out of Berlin or died.⁸¹ With the exception of the *Straf-Register* that instead registered the person’s nationality, all registers included a question about either religion or confession. In registration the patrilineal principles present in the concept of citizenship were mirrored. Correspondingly, family members were listed on the male head of family’s registration sheet. Women were thus only registered individually when they moved out of their parents’ home unmarried or their husband died, in which case the deceased’s sheet was kept but his death was registered. The concept of family was explicitly limited to the nuclear family. Relatives other than parents and children had to be registered separately. Registration was thus following a trend towards increasing individuation of the citizens, emancipating them from the social fabric that was increasingly reduced to the nuclear family as Koselleck pointed out.⁸² The registration sheets were organised according to criteria derived from social order or were more precisely a representation thereof. Thus the data maintained in the registers could be analysed to understand the composition of the population.

Nationality and statistics

During the 1830s the first statistics derived from the *E.-M.-A.*’s data would monitor fatalities, births, influx and departure – and thus the overall growth of population.⁸³ The first census was conducted in 1834 after the establishment of the *Deutscher Zollverein*. But the data sets were quite disparate, therefore collation on a state level was near impossible. In an effort to achieve better comparability, the statistical office promoted

80. See chapter ‘Registration and emancipation’, 11.

81. Denstedt and Wolffsburg, *Preussisches Polizei-Lexikon*, 774-776.

82. Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, 70.

83. Cf. Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 43.

the establishment of uniform questionnaires and thus had a first standardising effect on registration. But registration offices started to collect data for purposes other than identification. The eastern Prussian practice, begun in the 1820s, of categorising nationality by asking for the language spoken at home, was being adapted all across Prussia.

With the heightening of national sentiments during the 1848 events, first statistical maps presenting the distribution of nationalities in Prussia were published by laymen. Their access to the sources and their findings depended on the goodwill of the registration offices and were distorted by the heterogeneity of the local sources. Despite this fact, the private initiatives successfully challenged the Statistical Office to publish statistics on nationalities. In 1858 the category of ‘family language’, defined as the language usually spoken at home, was introduced in the census.⁸⁴

However, determining nationality on language alone was contested among statisticians.⁸⁵ So the practise was eventually suspended, as Neumann – statistician in the Poznan district – remarked in 1883:

Auf direkt die Nationalität betreffende Erhebungen ist wie bekannt nicht mehr zurückzugehen. Denn Erhebungen dieser Art sind um ihrer Unzuverlässigkeit willen seit 1861 eingestellt.⁸⁶

Neumann, still interested in the national composition of Prussia, instead tried to extrapolate the very same information from the statistical data on the three major religions. The confessional statistics related religion and vital data of the respective groups, producing tables comparing birth rates, age structure and so forth. Between 1843 and 1861 the compilation of *Judentabellen* had been a regular part of the censuses in Prussia whereas before the *Judentabellen* had been produced from the naturalisation certificates. Only in the brief period between 1868 and 1874 did statisticians stop capturing data on religion. Nevertheless, the local courts (*Amtsgerichte*) maintained local *Judenregister* for the period between 1848 and 1874.⁸⁷ With the introduction of the *Personenstandsgesetz* and the *Standesämter* (Registry Offices) in 1875 data on religion was recorded again, and the evaluation of the censuses included separate tables on Jewish fertility, fatality and origin that were made accessible to the public.⁸⁸

84. Cf. Labbé, ‘Institutionalizing the Statistics’, 291.

85. Cf. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780 : Programme, Myth, Reality*, The Wiles lectures given at the Queen’s University Belfast (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1990), 97.

86. Fr. J. Neumann, ‘Germanisierung oder Polonisierung? (Ein Beitrag zur Nationalitäts- und Grundeigentumsstatistik der Provinz Posen)’, *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik / Journal of Economics and Statistics* (Stuttgart) 7 (41), nos. 4/5 (1883): 457–463, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23852354>, 458. Cf. Labbé, ‘Institutionalizing the Statistics’, 292.

87. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343, Nr. 17 Sonderakten Bd. 1., Bl. 287.

88. Cf. A. Frh. von Fircks, ‘Rückblick auf die Bewegung der Bevölkerung im preussischen Staate

Only after the appointment of Ernst Engel as the new director in 1860 did the statistical office engage in serious efforts to unify the sources and thus produce more conclusive statistics. He did so by establishing four main principles for statistics: “exhaustivity of the census, registration by individuals, self-declaration, and simultaneity.”⁸⁹ The first principle should ensure that the entire population is monitored at one moment in time. The sole survey unit should be the individual, not the family. Self-declaration puts the surveyed in charge of completing the questionnaire. In order to avoid numerous surveys and keep data centralised, simultaneity should ensure that several characteristics (age, occupation, matrimonial status, etc.) were gathered with the census instead of other registers. Engel’s insistence on these principles garnered the respect of his fellow statisticians, despite the fact that exhaustivity, simultaneity and registration of individuals had already been discussed under Engel’s predecessor Hoffmann in the 1840s and self-declaration had successfully been introduced in Belgium during the census of 1846.⁹⁰ With the growing importance of census matters, Engel’s thorough reform of statistics – first proposed in 1861 – was eventually implemented during the 1871 census.

First nationwide registers

Apart from the additional data required by statisticians the police grew increasingly interested in personal data in particular of those who tended to escape registration. The gaps in registration and the resulting lack of comprehensiveness inspired individual police officers to compile lists of alleged itinerant ‘criminals’ and make them available to the interested public across state borders.⁹¹ During the 1840s some of these police

während des Zeitraumes vom Jahre 1816 bis zum Jahre 1874’, *Preussische Statistik (Amtliches Quellenwerk* XLVIII. A. (1879): 1–199, 28. This article, written by one of Engel’s employees, gives a synopsis of the development of the Prussian population from the beginning of official statistics to the introduction of the Personenstandsgesetz in 1874. Special attention is given to Prussian minorities constantly referred to as races. Discussing birth rates for instance, he states “Auch das Religionsbekenntnis ist kein entscheidendes Moment für die Höhe der Geburtenziffer, wohl aber die Rassenmischung . . .”. Fircks, ‘Rückblick auf die Bewegung der Bevölkerung im preussischen Staate während des Zeitraumes vom Jahre 1816 bis zum Jahre 1874’, 20.

89. Labbé, ‘Institutionalizing the Statistics’, 294.

90. Richard Bökh, *Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der amtlichen Statistik des Preussischen Staates. Im Auftrage des Directors des Königlichen Statistischen Bureau Herrn Dr. Engel*, ed. Ernst Engel (Berlin: Königliche Geheime Ober-Hofdruckerei, 1863), 50. Hoffmann retired in 1844 and was succeeded by Dieterici who led the office till Engel took over in 1860. Statistische Bureau vereiniger thüringischer Staaten, ‘Die früheren Volkszählungen und die Volkszählung vom 3. December 1864 in Thüringen. Mittheilung des statistischen Bureau vereiniger thüringischer Staaten’, ed. Statistische Bureau vereiniger thüringischer Staaten, *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik / Journal of Economics and Statistics* (Stuttgart) 3 (1864): 366–376, 370.

91. Cf. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 21.

journals were officially taken under state control. Initially, three-quarters of the listed individuals were described as ‘harmful tramps’, half of which were “listed because of minor offences such as begging, vagrancy, no clear means of identity, and so forth” and comprised mainly “professions in what we nowadays call the service sector”.⁹² The change from *ius solis* to *ius sanguinis* in 1842 and the *Heimatprinzip* the welfare system was based on, brought into existence a new class of migrant poor.⁹³ The significance *Heimat* had gained resulted in a change of function of the *Heimatschein*, from allowing the bearer access to welfare to a factual permit of residence, until in 1862 the duty to be registered with a *Heimatgemeinde* was lifted.⁹⁴ In the second half of the 1840s, however, the police journals, drawing on Grellmann’s 1783 book on ‘Gypsies’, began to introduce the ‘Gypsy’ label to refer to itinerant families that “posed grave identification problems to the police”⁹⁵ resulting in the authorities’ heightened attention to these itinerant families. Lucassen emphasises that the appearance of the people labelled as ‘Gypsies’ was of little importance. Rather, lack of clarity regarding their belonging and the thread of responsibility in the form of poor relief motivated the categorisation.⁹⁶

The development of citizenship in Prussia during the three decades from 1812 to 1842 is characterised by the closure of the concept from *ius soli* to *ius sanguinis*. This legislative closure was accompanied by the rise of nationalism that developed in opposition to the state institutions that had established citizenship as form of state membership. Simultaneously, state institutions like registration and statistics developed and refined their devices to produce oversight – a process in which statistics became increasingly independent from registration. Increasingly, documents like the *Heimatschein* grew in importance, determining state membership and access to its institutions.

While Prussia’s Jews were its first citizens, naturalisation was to be had only at the price of neglecting the notion of a Jewish nation in favour of Judaism as a private confession, anticipating the atomisation of the individual from the communities/estates of the feudal state. Naturalised Jews were denied full citizenship as they remained excluded from state and military positions. In particular Jews from Eastern Europe and itinerant individuals and families remained in a precarious status potentially in danger of being stripped off their citizenship. The initial reforms furthered the establishment

92. Lucassen, “Harmful tramps”, 33-35.

93. Cf. Lucassen, ‘Between Hobbes and Locke’, 434.

94. Cf. Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 151; and Rainer Hehemann, *Die ‘Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens’ im Wilhelminischen Deutschland und in der Weimarer Republik 1871-1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Haag u. Herchen, 1987), 86.

95. Lucassen, “Harmful tramps”, 37-38.

96. Lucassen, 37.

of a single Prussian market and correspondingly an increasingly mobile working class, whose movements would not necessarily conform with state borders. Thus the authorities developed the means to control movement via newly established institutions such as registration offices, fixed identities and documents such as the *Heimatschein* or the naturalisation certificate, all of which serve to facilitate the clarification of belonging to determine who is to be included or excluded, in order to avoid responsibility in the form of poor relief. Those unwilling or unable to produce the necessary documents would inevitably raise suspicion. Inter-state deportations of mobile poor furthered the development of a coherent system of citizenship in German lands during the 1850s.⁹⁷ Though the registration system was intended to comprise the entire population, larger swathes of the population remained undocumented, as registration was a relatively new institution, the public was not accustomed to or intentionally avoided, for instance to evade conscription.⁹⁸ Police in general were chronically understaffed, and local *Meldebehörden* operated largely independently from each other, so that there was little control once someone left the jurisdiction and moved to a different municipality.⁹⁹ The early police journals formed a predecessor of centralised registration and a notification system. The success of registration was thus subject to the public's compliance, as was the case with the naturalisation of Jews before. The increased penalties and the frequent reminders regarding registration are proof of the hiatus that existed between the vision of a clear record of the entire inhabitants and its implementation.¹⁰⁰

1.3 Belonging to the *Reich*

After its creation in 1871 the German Reich would in many aspects follow the paths laid out by Prussia – much to the discomfort of the smaller states, in particular the larger amongst them like Bavaria and Baden, turning them into Prussia's internal adversaries. Regarding citizenship, the North German Confederation had taken the decisive step in 1870, when it adopted Prussian citizen law on the whole.¹⁰¹ Though the National Assembly in Frankfurt had discussed the issue of citizenship and nationality (with an emphasis on the latter), these discussions did not manifest directly in any legislation. It did, however, influence the discourse in favour of an ethno-cultural concept, in particular

97. Cf. Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 149.

98. Cf. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 85.

99. Cf. Lucassen, "Harmful tramps", 32; and: Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 37.

100. See chapter 'Registration in 1842', 20.

101. Cf. Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 96.

after the route to a ‘Lesser Germany’ was taken. Without the multi-national Austrian Empire remaining Germany was far more homogeneous.¹⁰² In this section I will focus on the increased political importance statistics had gained in the discourse on nationality. The 1870 *Gesetz über den Erwerb und den Verlust der Bundes- und Staatsangehörigkeit* was the result of an evaluation and subsequent standardisation of the existing federal laws.¹⁰³ And much like the Prussian law it was motivated not by attempts to produce inner cohesion, but a coherent juridical space.¹⁰⁴ Although citizenship was still tied to the federal states, Germans now enjoyed the same rights throughout the confederation. This was also true for those Germans who were regarded as ‘Gypsies’¹⁰⁵ and Jews, in particular as the new law introduced naturalisation procedures.¹⁰⁶

But with Germany’s unification a process was set in motion, characterised by Gosewinkel as “nationalisation of the state”, in which the ethno-cultural understanding of state membership gained increasing influence.¹⁰⁷ This continuous process of nationalisation of citizenship was, from a legal perspective, only concluded with the law on citizenship in 1913 on the brink of the Great War.¹⁰⁸

The statistical innovations put forward by the Prussian Statistical Office’s new director Engel – exhaustivity, registration by individuals, self-declaration, and simultaneity¹⁰⁹ – were first applied in the census in 1871. This was significant not only because more reliable methods were applied, but all the more as it was the first to take inventory of the new nation. Due to the foundation of the Northern German Confederation and the extension of the German Customs Union (*Zollverein*) to include the southern German states, statistics had gained importance. Reliable figures were at the core of this system since revenue and expenses were distributed among the participating states according to the size of the population. Furthermore, the results of the census were used to determine the number of conscripts the federal states had to contribute to the army, the number of deputies for the Reichstag and the federal parliaments respectively, and the number of

102. Cf. Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 120.

103. Cf. Gosewinkel, 166.

104. Cf. Trevisiol, *Die Einbürgerungspraxis im Deutschen Reich 1871 - 1945*, 36.

105. Hehemann, ‘*Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens*’, 87.

106. Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and strangers: the east european Jew in German and German Jewish consciousness, 1800 - 1923* (Madison, Wis.: Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 38. Cf. Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome strangers: East European Jews in imperial Germany*, Studies in Jewish history (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 13.

107. Gosewinkel, ‘Staatsbürgerschaft und Staatsangehörigkeit’, 548 and Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 178.

108. Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood*, 13.

109. See chapter ‘Nationality and statistics’, 23.

coins issued.¹¹⁰ This mutual interest in designing a process that would not put any party at a disadvantage facilitated the introduction of standardised questionnaires during the census of 1867 and the establishment of a “*Kommission für die weitere Ausbildung der Statistik des Zollvereins*” in January 1870 which established unified standards for the 1871 census that introduced questionnaires for individuals instead of households.¹¹¹ A further result was the establishment of the *Kaiserliches Statistisches Amt* as a central Reich Office in 1872.¹¹² Yet, the office remained in a delineate role, processing data it received from the regional offices.¹¹³ The actual survey was conducted by the federal states’ statistical offices. The standardised questionnaires ask for:

- name
- position within the household/family (*Stellung im Haushalt*)
- sex
- place of birth
- year of birth
- family status (*Familienstand*)
- religion
- vocation or occupation
- citizenship
- residency¹¹⁴

While each of the new principles were innovative, the most profound change was the registration of individuals instead of households. Evidence of the general trend towards individuation, this change in paradigm was also mirrored in a new technical procedure for data acquisition, that was introduced in some states. Before, census staff would collect the data on tally sheets – “grossen Bogen, die alle von gleicher Gestalt” – making the process unreliable as the scribes could easily displace a row. Now, individuals could be

110. *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs. Die Anordnungen des Bundesrathes für die gemeinsame Statistik der Deutschen Staaten mit den vorbereitenden Verhandlungen insbesondere den Protokollen und Berichten der Kommission für die weitere Ausbildung der Statistik des Zollvereins*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Kaiserliches Statistisches Amt, 1873), 10.

111. Cf. Friedrich Zahn, ‘Die praktische Bedeutung der deutschen Volkszählung’, *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik: Journal of economics and statistics*, 1900, 577–592, 578–583.

112. Cf. *Anordnungen des Bundesrathes*, 502.

113. Cf. Robert Lee, ‘Bevölkerungslehre und Bevölkerungspolitik vor 1933: Arbeitstagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft und der Johann-Peter-Süßmilch-Gesellschaft für Demographie mit Unterstützung des Max-Planck-Instituts für Demographische Forschung, Rostock’, chap. Official Statistics, Demography and Population Policy in Germany, 1872–1933, ed. Rainer Mackensen (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2002), 253–270, 255.

114. Cf. *Anordnungen des Bundesrathes*, 72–73.

registered on individual *Zählkarten* (counting cards), simplifying the process of counting and control.¹¹⁵ The old process of counting the entries in lists on tally sheets gave virtually no option for checking the results. The counting cards on the other hand could simply be sorted according to a certain feature, like gender, be counted and recounted for control. It was also possible to identify mistakes, like the card of a male person slipping into the female pile. This method had been successfully introduced throughout the Customs Union in 1870 for goods.¹¹⁶ Inspired by a technological transfer that had taken the librarians' card index boxes into the banking sector, numerous institutions began to understand the benefits of the paper-slip-economy as storage for corporate knowledge.¹¹⁷ The concept of representing individual items on single paper cards allowed the organisation of the data in a way, that would allow for easy maintenance, reorganisation according to specific questions and alteration. It would, moreover, make it accessible to different individuals by knowledge of the storing system alone. Finally, these cards could be processed to derive bulk data be it on finances, goods or people. Therefore, in 1871, the method was introduced for the census, albeit on an optional basis, and only Hamburg and Prussia used counting cards to conduct the 1871 census.

During the commission's negotiations, some delegates – most prominently *Regierungsrat* Bökh, member of the Prussian delegation – wanted to include a question for 'language spoken at home' in the census emphasising the distinction of nationality and citizenship. But Labbé notes that for unknown reasons Prussia's Ministry of the Interior prohibited questions on language.¹¹⁸ The findings of the above mentioned Neumann published in 1883 suggest, however, the outcome of such statistics may have been unpleasant to German nationalist interests and thus been prohibited at a time Bismarck was targeting Polish nationalism:

Gegenüber der noch immer sehr verbreiteten Annahme, daß in den früher polnischen Teilen Preußens das Deutschtum in stetigem Vordringen begriffen sei, ist es vielleicht nicht ganz unangezeigt in Kürze darauf zu verweisen, daß unsere allerdings sehr unvollkommenen statistischen Nachrichten hierüber für die neuere Zeit eine Entwicklung in entgegengesetzter Richtung wahrscheinlich machen.¹¹⁹

115. W. Stieda, 'Die Zählkartenmethode und ihre Anwendung bei der Volkszählung in Elsass-Lothringen am 1. Dezbr. 1875', *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik / Journal of Economics and Statistics* (Stuttgart) 31, no. 1 (1878): 49–58 – 50.

116. *Anordnungen des Bundesrathes*, 34.

117. Cf. Markus Krajewski, *Paper machines: about cards & catalogs, 1548-1929*, ed. Peter Krapp (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), 97.

118. Cf. Labbé, 'Institutionalizing the Statistics', 296-297.

119. Neumann, 'Germanisierung oder Polonisierung? (Ein Beitrag zur Nationalitäts- und Grundeigentumsstatistik der Provinz Posen)', 457.

The census would ask for citizenship instead. The final results of the considerations regarding the census were agreed upon on 12th February, exactly one month after the establishment of the commission.¹²⁰ When in 1874 the introduction of the *Personenstandsgesetz* (Civil Status Act) and the successive establishment of *Standesämter* (Registry offices) was discussed to secularise the administration of vital data (birth, marriage and death), Director Engel dedicated a longer article to the possible benefits a nationwide standardisation might have on statistics.¹²¹ Arguing only the combination of meticulous registration and censuses would eventually yield conclusive results on population growth and internal migration, he proposed the addition of a significant number of questions to the forms for all three life events registered.¹²² The Civil Status Act established the registry offices that recorded all vital data in their respective jurisdictions. Engel's proposals, remained marginal and were not taken into account passing the law, however, the registers of the *Standesämter* were to produce valuable data for the statisticians.

Internal closure

The crowning in Versailles in 1871 illustrates vividly how the identity of the young unified Germany hinged on external factors like the opposition to France. But the new nation was not only externally exclusive. In an effort to promote unity, Catholics were targeted for their loyalty to Rome, likewise, Social Democrats for their internationalist politics.¹²³ These exclusive tendencies, characterised by Wehler as '*negative Integration*', gained a stronger foothold amongst conservatives. Danes, Poles, the French in Alsace-Lorraine, Catholics, and Jews were seen as a threat to national homogeneity despite their German citizenship; whereby measures against Poles, Catholics and Jews imbricated.¹²⁴

Bismarck, who in multi-national Prussia had feared the instigation of nationalist sectarianism now nourished national sentiments and linked the issues in the context of the 1884 elections, stating "daß die Juden mit den Polen überall gemeinschaftliche Sache gemacht hätten".¹²⁵

120. Cf. *Anordnungen des Bundesrathes*, 67.

121. RGBI I, 23.

122. Ernst Engel, 'Der Einfluß des Gesetzes über die Beurkundung des Personenstandes und die Form der Eheschließung auf die Statistik des Standes und der Bewegung der Bevölkerung im preußischen Staate', *Preussische Statistik (Amtliches Quellenwerk)*, 1874, 1–29, 7.

123. Cf. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ed., *Deutsche Geschichte; 9: Das deutsche Kaiserreich: 1871 - 1918*, vol. 9, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich: 1871 - 1918* / Hans-Ulrich Wehler (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 108.

124. Cf. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*. 115.

125. As cited in: Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich*, 109–112.

The 1870 law on citizenship and the founding of the Reich produced a coherent market and established growing inner cohesion. Complementary to this, there was increasing closure at the borders of the Reich in particular to the east. The problems with migrant poor, previously predominantly an affair amongst the German states, were temporarily relocated to the Reich's borders and the crossing of foreign 'Gypsies'. Yet, it turned out that the majority of cases still occurred at the internal borders triggering "a new phase in their problematization and criminalization" as Lucassen reports.¹²⁶

Coinciding with the Reich's foundation, migration patterns changed and for the first time Germany registered an increase in population due to migration.¹²⁷ Most of the migrants came to Germany for economic reasons. Yet, not all of them were 'unwelcome strangers'. In particular during harvest season, demand for labour could not be satisfied by the local labour market, so that farmers were ready to compensate by hiring Polish workers, all the more as their labour was cheap.¹²⁸ But not only the agrarian sector was drawing on the central European work force. Faced with a lack of cheap labour industries engaged in the acquisition of foreign workers too.¹²⁹ The conflicts over access to the labour-market and the resulting desire to distinguish 'useful' from 'undesirable' migrants may partially explain why the migrant poor were increasingly categorised 'Gypsies' or, in the case of eastern Europeans, differentiated into 'seasonal workforce' and 'Jews'.

The influx of Russian Jews to Germany triggered by the pogroms succeeding Tsar Alexander II.'s assassination in 1881 had brought attention to Jewish migration. Bismarck began to devise plans "so that an unusual immigration of a Jewish proletariat is prevented".¹³⁰ While the first attempt to evict Russian Jews faltered, in 1885 Bismarck's focus shifted to a group more easily identifiable. As a result, some 32,000 Poles were evicted from Germany, about a third of them Jewish.¹³¹ These evictions were preceded by the collection of respective data ordered by the *Bundesrat* in December 1882. The data required from the District Governments comprised the identities of immigrants naturalised after 1848 including their previous nationality and confession – paving the way for a future inclusion of these questions in the census.¹³² But the "nationalisation of the state" that followed the formation of the Kaiserreich was also accompanied by the onset of a gradual racialisation of the discourse on nationality. Jews had already been

126. Lucassen, 'Between Hobbes and Locke', 473.

127. Cf. Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, 18.

128. Cf. Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich*, 117.

129. Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers*, 19.

130. As cited in: Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 120.

131. Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich*, 113.

132. Cf. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 119.

subject to a conservative strategy during the 1860s, linking Jewish emancipation and democratisation *per se*.¹³³ Nonetheless, the ‘incubation’ – to lean on Katz’s metaphor – of modern anti-Semitism during the panic of 1873 and the subsequent years marks a change in quality.¹³⁴ By the end of the 1870s anti-Semitism had become institutionalised through formation of clubs, parties and journals and developed into a ‘cultural code’ – as Volkov termed it so accurately – during the subsequent decades.¹³⁵ The coining of the term ‘anti-Semitism’ itself reflects the racialisation hatred against Jews had undergone.

Significantly, the new term did not refer directly to Jews or to Judaism. It spelled an opposition to "Semitism" - an abstraction of all the presumed qualities of the Semitic race. [...] The term had, of course, other advantages that made it attractive to contemporaries. Above all it implied a pretentious scientific theory of race, and carried with it the prestige of scientific terminology. From the very outset the link between anti-Semitism and racism was established, together with a claim for objectivity and truth.¹³⁶

Two events marked the turning point when anti-Semitism entered the public sphere: the *Berliner Antisemitismusstreit* brought about by Treitschke and the related *Antisemitenpetition* prominently supported by Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg. To underpin Treitschke’s claims the petition called for a reversal of emancipation, a stop to Jewish emigration in particular from Eastern Europe and the reinstatement of statistics on Jews.¹³⁷ But even though Treitschke was rebutted by Mommsen and the government did not encourage the claims of the petition, the surrounding debate paved the way for the growing acceptance of anti-Semitism on the political stage. The events also show how statistics had become an accepted tool in political debate.

Simultaneously, federal states began to coordinate measures targeting mobile poor. Through the formation of the Kaiserreich, ‘Gypsies’ had become citizens with full civic

133. Cf. Henning Albrecht, ‘Preußen, ein ‘Judenstaat’. Antisemitismus als konservative Strategie gegen die „Neue Ära“ – Zur Krisentheorie der Moderne’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (Göttingen) 37, no. 4 (2011): 455–481, 468.

134. Cf. Jacob Katz, *Vom Vorurteil bis zur Vernichtung. Der Antisemitismus 1700–1933* (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1990), 255.

135. Cf. Shulamit Volkov, ‘Antisemitism as a cultural code: reflections on the history and historiography of antisemitism in imperial Germany’, *Year Book / Leo Baeck Institute Vol. 23*(1978), 25–46 (Oxford), 1978, 25–46, 34.

136. Volkov, 38–39.

137. Cf. Norbert Kampe, *Studenten und ‘Judenfrage’ im deutschen Kaiserreich: die Entstehung einer akademischen Trägerschicht des Antisemitismus*, *Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft* 76 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 23 and Sybilla Nikolow, ‘Wissenschaft und Nation in der europäischen Geschichte’, chap. Die Nation als statistisches Kollektiv. Bevölkerungskonstruktionen im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik, ed. Ralph Jessen and Jakob Vogel (Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus, 2002), 235–259, 243.

rights – at least in principle.¹³⁸ The identification of ‘Gypsies’ and the implementation of measures against them on the other hand, was up to the police, where the ‘*Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens*’ had developed into a specialised branch that was not subjected to any supervision.¹³⁹ In 1883 the *Bundesrat* agreed not to issue licenses for itinerant trading (*Wandergewerbescheine*) to foreign ‘Gypsies’. As a consequence, individuals applying for this license from now on had to prove their nationality.¹⁴⁰ If they could not provide documents, such as a ‘valid’ *Heimatschein*, or a (rare) passport, their status as a citizen was inevitably jeopardised since the officials could easily use the vagueness of the Citizenship Act against them. As there was no obligation to obtain documents that could prove citizenship, this would have brought almost every German into a predicament. The arbitrary decision to label someone a ‘Gypsy’ was documented only locally – authorities in one place might issue permits to people labelled ‘Gypsies’ elsewhere. Illustrating how this categorisation depended on the local official’s personal opinion, in 1899 the *Regierungspräsident* of Trier wrote to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, justifying his extension of a trade permit:

Der Antrag auf Ausdehnung des Wandergewerbescheins ist schriftlich eingereicht worden, so daß auch aus dem Aussehen des Antragstellers ein Schluß auf seine etwaige Zugehörigkeit zu den Zigeunern nicht gemacht werden konnte.¹⁴¹

From now on files on alleged ‘Gypsies’ were marked, to prevent future miscategorisation. Officials made use of the vagueness in the citizenship law to strip *inländische Zigeuner* off of their citizenship, turning them into legal foreigners “so that they could deal with them outside of the constraints of law”.¹⁴² Nonetheless, authorities could not carry on and deport those stripped off of their citizenship, since no other country would take them in because they were officially stateless. The policy basically amounted to increased repression in order to make them leave.¹⁴³ In an effort to end this extra-judicial state, a *Spezialgesetzgebung* for ‘*inländische Zigeuneuner*’ was envisaged and to substantiate claims for an exceptional law Bismarck proposed a census:

Es ist meines Erachtens nicht zu verkennen, daß die Beschaffung eines einigermaßen zuverlässigen statistischen Materials über die Verhältnisse der im

138. Cf. Hehemann, ‘*Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens*’, 87.

139. Cf. Lucassen, “Harmful tramps”, 39–40.

140. Bonillo, ‘*Zigeunerpolitik*’, 104.

141. As cited in: Bonillo, 132.

142. Illuzzi, *Gypsies in Germany and Italy*, 91. See chapter ‘Conceptual change: Ius Sanguinis’, 18.

143. Cf. Bonillo, ‘*Zigeunerpolitik*’, 112.

Lande umherstreichenden Zigeuner für die Beurtheilung der zur Unterdrückung derselben zu ergreifenden Maßnahmen von Nutzen, namentlich aber für den Fall von Wert sein würde, wenn es sich demnächst etwa als notwendig herausstellen sollte, im Wege einer Spezialgesetzgebung gegen diese Landplage vorzugehen.¹⁴⁴

To provide the data on ‘Gypsies’ residing in Prussia, the ‘*Zigeunererhebung*’ of 1886 identified 1057 ‘Gypsies’ – the majority of them sedentary – amongst the roughly 29 million Prussians, which was a number so insignificant it would hardly justify a *Spezialgesetzgebung*.¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, at the end of the 1880s the ‘gypsy-question’ ascended to national level after some of the local governments had demanded the standardisation of removal procedures for foreign ‘Gypsies’.¹⁴⁶ In order to base the discussions on solid data in September 1887 Minister of the Interior Puttkamer ordered a census of ‘resident Gypsies’ in all federal states. Furthermore, he asked for the measures already taken at the local level, and suggestions for those to be implemented on the national level.¹⁴⁷ However, due to the missing definition, the data returned did not produce the desired results, as precisely the question of citizenship was often handled too liberally. The ministry – implicitly foreshadowing the discussion about the definition of the term ‘Gypsy’ – complained to the Trade Ministry in June 1887:

Die Berichte beschränken sich vielmehr auf die Angaben, daß die Betreffenden in Preußen geboren oder, daß sie sich stets im Inlande aufgehalten oder daß einzelne derselben der Militärpflicht genügt hätten, und folgern daraus für dieselben den Besitz der diesseitigen Staatsangehörigkeit.¹⁴⁸

Illuzzi argues that this process illustrates how citizenship was increasingly understood as a consequence of nationality, and not the other way round.¹⁴⁹ It is noteworthy, however, that while all parties agreed that ‘Gypsies’ presented a problem, a coordinated approach presupposes a shared definition of the targeted group. Since all parties shied away from engaging in this discussion, the efforts did not result in legislation. Instead, to decrease the number of *inländische* ‘Gypsies’ it was agreed yet again to check the citizen status more rigorously on the occasion of applications for trade permits.¹⁵⁰ Still

144. As cited in: Bonillo, ‘*Zigeunerpolitik*’, 106.

145. Bonillo, 107-108.

146. Bonillo, 102.

147. Cf. Illuzzi, *Gypsies in Germany and Italy*, 92.

148. As cited in: Bonillo, ‘*Zigeunerpolitik*’, 110.

149. Cf. Illuzzi, *Gypsies in Germany and Italy*, 92.

150. Cf. Bonillo, ‘*Zigeunerpolitik*’, 111.

unsatisfied with the data at hand, Bismarck suggested the use of the 1890 census to monitor Germany's 'Gypsy' population. He was opposed by Prussian Minister of the Interior Herrfurth, insisting registration of 'Gypsies' be administered by the police and the data be maintained in an index, separate from the rest of the population. Once the Statistical Office replied that the small number of 'Gypsies' would hardly justify wasting a whole column of the questionnaires, the affair petered out; instead it was agreed to focus even more on the limitation of itinerant trade and disenfranchisement.¹⁵¹

Yet, at the turn of the century, police efforts to increase control over itinerant individuals resulted in the establishment of the first nationwide police information system. In 1899 Bavaria's police took the lead in 'the fight against the Gypsy nuisance' by institutionalising the systematic registration of 'Gypsies'. The Munich based 'Gypsy Information Service' would centrally collect, compile and disseminate data provided by the local police.¹⁵² All over Germany police departments began introducing the latest technology, like card indices, photography and dactyloscopy to identify and register criminals – a practice immediately adopted in the registration of 'Gypsies'. Hamburg, Berlin and Dresden introduced dactyloscopy in 1903; Saxony followed suit in 1904 and in 1911 it was adapted by Bavaria.¹⁵³ The head of the *Zigeunerzentrale* was Alfred Dillmann. In 1905 he published the data the *Zigeuner Zentrale* had acquired during the first six years in the '*Zigeunerbuch*'. In his analysis of the 3350 names and 613 detailed descriptions listed in Dillmann's book, Lucassen once again confirms his earlier findings that appearance was less important than uncertain belonging.¹⁵⁴ According to Jennifer Illuzzi, Dillman was thus racialising a migrant underclass that had arisen autochthonously from European soil.¹⁵⁵ Due to the severe consequences that every such labelling would entail, Dillmann's definition did not go unchallenged. Examining the publication of the *Zigeunerbuch*, Bavaria's Minister of the Interior proposed a reconsideration of the categorisation:

Bei dieser weit ausgedehnten Auslegung des Begriffs Zigeuner und der weiten Verbreitung, die das Buch finden soll, möchte vielleicht die Gefahr nicht ganz fern liegen, daß einzelne dieser Gewerbetreibenden, die sich bisher von Strafe freizuhalten gewußt haben, Klagen über die Erschwerung ihrer Erwerbstätigkeit vorbringen und da und dort ein geneigtes Ohr finden.¹⁵⁶

151. Cf. Bonillo, '*Zigeunerpolitik*', 129-130.

152. Cf. Lucassen, "Harmful tramps", 40.

153. Cf. Bonillo, '*Zigeunerpolitik*', 151.

154. Lucassen, "Harmful tramps", 41.

155. Illuzzi, *Gypsies in Germany and Italy*, 111-112.

156. As cited in: Bonillo, '*Zigeunerpolitik*', 161.

The result of this intervention was the distinction between ‘*Zigeuner*’ and ‘*nach Zigeunerart herumziehende Personen*’ in the final publication. The accelerated flow of information and the heightened attention brought about by the publication led to numerous decrees and regulations all over the *Kaiserreich* trying to implement the previous measures more stringently: thorough check of identity and nationality when ever itinerant trade permits or extension was sought, with the ultimate goal being to deny issuance or extension whenever possible. Though the number of ‘Gypsy sightings’ reportedly went down, in 1910 the call for a unified approach to the issue reached the *Reichstag*.¹⁵⁷ A year earlier Switzerland had called on its European neighbours to find an international solution to the problem of continuous migration and deportation of the migrant poor across state borders. But Prussia in particular was unwilling to even consider an international approach since this would limit its ability to do away with ‘unwanted strangers’.¹⁵⁸ In 1906 the Munich Office had begun preparing a conference in order to coordinate measures taken by the federal states. In this case Prussia’s objection was informed by the challenge Bavaria posed to her lead. And indeed for Bavaria the key issue during the conference — that finally took place in December 1911 and gathered officials from all the affected federal states as well as the ‘Gypsyologists’ Aichele, Harster and Dillmann — was the centralised registration of ‘Gypsies’, preferably in Munich, and a general obligation to take fingerprints.¹⁵⁹ The other controversial issue discussed during the conference was the definition of the very group in question. Dillmann favoured his broad, rather sociological definition comprising,

ohne Rücksicht auf Rassen- oder Stammeszugehörigkeit alle die Personen [...] die ohne Beruf oder zum Zweck gewerblicher, schaustellerischer oder gauklerischer Leistungen oder zum Zwecke des Handels ohne festen Wohnsitz gewohnheitsmäßig und zwar in der Regel horden- oder bandenweise umherziehen.¹⁶⁰

Bavaria’s Minister of the Interior repeated his objections and was seconded by the envoys from Prussia, Hesse and Württemberg.¹⁶¹ Regarding a binding definition he remarked

157. Cf. Bonillo, ‘*Zigeunerpolitik*’, 164.

158. Cf. Illuzzi, *Gypsies in Germany and Italy*, 113.

159. Cf. Bonillo, ‘*Zigeunerpolitik*’, 204.

160. As cited in: Bonillo, 204.

161. Cf. Bonillo, 205.

Mit Rücksicht [...] auf die Unmöglichkeit einer exakten und erschöpfenden Begriffsbestimmung [...] möchte ich anheimgeben, auch für die Verhandlungen von einer solchen abzusehen [...].¹⁶²

Towards the end of the conference Württemberg's envoy Bechtle coined a phrase that would cement the oscillating concept and would appear again in Bavaria's 1926 'Gypsy-Law':

Zigeuner im polizeilichen Sinne sind sowohl die Zigeuner im Sinne der Rassenkunde als auch die nach Zigeunerart umherziehenden Personen.¹⁶³

Though all participants agreed that coordinated measures were required, the conference could not agree on a closing document. This was mainly due to Prussia's persisting opposition to Bavaria. In spite of Prussia's reluctance to accept Munich's leading role, the *Zigeuner Zentrale* evolved during the subsequent years to function as the central registration of 'Gypsies' in Germany with other Police Departments not only seeking information but also reporting to the office.

The censuses in 1890, 1900 & 1905

Even though the census of 1890 was not used to aggregate data on 'Gypsies', it mirrored the change in concept of nationality and citizenship. Despite the remaining doubts of statisticians the International Statistical Congress in 1873 had – for lack of a better alternative – agreed to recommend the inclusion of a question for language in order to identify nationality. The congress was following Bökh's argument, that language was the only adequate indicator of nationality. As a side-effect, as Hobsbawm has noticed, this forced everybody to choose a 'linguistic nationality' on the occasion of a census.¹⁶⁴

While in the 1860s Bismarck had been reluctant to monitor nationalities in Prussia more closely, now a standardised question about an individual's mother tongue was introduced. The results were published four years later in a table combining the features of mother tongue, citizenship and gender.¹⁶⁵ Figures on confession were published and analysed in detail for the 'three major religions' – Catholic and Protestant Christians, and Jews – including a separate table displaying children born in Christian – Jewish

162. Cf. Bonillo, '*Zigeunerpolitik*', 205.

163. As cited in: Bonillo, 204.

164. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780 : Programme, Myth, Reality*, 99-100.

165. Cf. Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik, 'Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 1. Dezember 1890 im Königreich Preußen', *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* (Berlin), 1894, 102–109, 106.

inter-marriages.¹⁶⁶ While the reintroduction of confessional statistics certainly pleased antisemitic fractions, the criteria applied did not correspond with their racial definitions. Bökh – who had advocated the reintroduction of language statistics since 1860 in support of Engel’s agenda – followed the humanist tradition, linking language and nation, rather than lineage.¹⁶⁷ He considered Yiddish a German dialect and hence subsumed speakers of the language amongst the Germans (thereby inflating their numbers compared to the Polish population).¹⁶⁸ Thus the question about mother tongue was not helping to single out Jews. But also the questions on confession would not produce the results anti-Semites were interested in, since it would ask for the ‘*äußere (rechtliche) Angehörigkeit zu einer Religionsgesellschaft oder Weltanschauungsgemeinschaft*’, again ‘neglecting’ descent.¹⁶⁹ Nonetheless, these changes in census practices not only reflect the shift to an increasingly exclusive understanding of nationality – but rather are its medium, showing how a certain demographic could be isolated from or integrated into the German ‘*Volk*’ by choice of criteria.¹⁷⁰

The decision to reintroduce confessional and language statistics was thus suited to further the exclusive aspects of nationality and an understanding of state membership based on descent. It also correlated with the widened definition of ‘Germaness’ or ‘*Deutschstämmigkeit*’ in the subsequent censuses. In an effort to include every German in the 1900 census, trade ships had to register Germans aboard and report them to the statistical office via the Hamburg trade association.¹⁷¹ However, this was just an intermediate step as Zahn commiserated:

Erwünscht wäre noch eine Feststellung des Bevölkerungsstands für das Größere Deutschland, d. h. für Deutschland und seine Kolonien. Doch dies muß einer späteren Volkszählung vorbehalten bleiben, gegenwärtig läßt sie sich selbst mittels bloßer Schätzungen unserer Kolonialbehörden und Forschungsreisen nicht bewerkstelligen.¹⁷²

Inclusion of the population in German colonies was just one aspect of the broader definition of belonging to the German nation. The population growth in Germany was seen as indicator of Germany’s growing power and influence; consequently, the census of 1905 introduced the category of *Auslandsdeutsche* and registered Germans abroad who did not

166. Cf. Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik, ‘Ergebnisse der Volkszählung 1890’, 109.

167. Cf. Labbé, ‘Institutionalizing the Statistics’, 297.

168. Cf. Nikolow, ‘Statistisches Kollektiv’, 244.

169. Erwin Lind, ‘Die Volkszählungen’, in *Die Statistik in Deutschland nach ihrem heutigen Stand: Ehrengabe für Friedrich Zahn* (Berlin: Verl. für Sozialpolitik, Wirtschaft und Statistik, 1940), 167–184, 179.

170. Cf. Nikolow, ‘Statistisches Kollektiv’, 244–245.

171. Zahn, ‘Die praktische Bedeutung’, 588.

172. Zahn, 590.

necessarily hold German citizenship but were ‘*deutschstämmig*’ (of German descent).¹⁷³ This was widening the hiatus of citizenship and nationality in yet another direction – anticipating the further cementing of citizenship based on the *ius sanguinis* in 1913.

1913 ‘*Volk*’ vs. ‘*Bevölkerung*’

In 1913 the debate about nationality and citizenship that had been ongoing for the past two decades came to a close. The 1870 *Gesetz über den Erwerb und den Verlust der Bundes- und Staatsangehörigkeit* was ambiguously comprising elements of both *ius soli* – remnant of the absolutist territorial state – and *ius sanguinis* linked to the nation state.¹⁷⁴ The debate since had shifted in favour of the principle of descent. Two main factors shaped the debate: migration of mobile poor from the east and the situation in the colonies. And as anticipated by the census in 1900, this change concretised in two ways. The 1913 *Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* made it easier for German expatriates and their offspring to maintain German citizenship by removing the loss of citizenship after ten years of absence. On the other hand it increased hurdles to naturalisation. Notably, even the proponents of elements of *ius soli* on the political left never challenged the idea of descent as the main criterion for citizenship. But the changes in citizenship were also motivated by changing migration patterns. Statistician and chairman of the Pan-German League until 1908, Ernst Hasse, in favour of a proposition backed by conservatives and national liberals, spoke to the *Reichstag*, quoting extensively the statistics on mother tongue and confession. Due to Germany’s population growth, he argued, there was no need for immigration but rather an “Überschuss an Volkskraft”. Immigration of “Sprach- und Rassefremder” – namely Jews and Poles – were believe to be harmful to national homogeneity.¹⁷⁵ He nevertheless had to concede:

Im Gegensatz zu anderen Kulturvölkern, dem französischen, italienischen und englischen, ist ja an sich schon das deutsche Volk sehr wenig homogen gestaltet.¹⁷⁶

But the logic of national homogeneity also included an extension of citizenship to the *Auslandsdeutsche*.¹⁷⁷ The proposal was accompanied by two further legislative initiatives calling for a stop to Jewish immigration, and for expulsion of foreign Jews. A quote from Freiherr von Langen, signatory of Hasse’s initiative, is illustrative for an atmosphere in

173. Cf. Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 179.

174. Cf. Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood*, 115.

175. Cf. Brubaker, 114-119.

176. As cited in: Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 280.

177. Cf. Gosewinkel, 281.

which anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism went hand in hand, when he tried to explain why Jews could not be German:

Ein Zigeuner wird kein Deutscher durch die heilige Taufe, so hoch ich in religiöser Beziehung deren Werth anerkenne; ebenso wenig wird ein Jude durch die Taufe Deutscher.¹⁷⁸

The 1913 law clearly opted for ethnic homogeneity in Germany. The extension of German citizenship to descendants of Germans abroad was meant to strengthen their ties to Germany. But ‘The Preservation of Germandom Abroad’¹⁷⁹ was more complicated in the colonies. When German colonialists had children with local women the patrilineal aspect clashed with the paradigm of ethnic homogeneity.¹⁸⁰ Under the lead of the Pan-Germans, the conservative fractions were advocating a ban on intermarriages and restrictions on the access to citizenship according to racial criteria. Foreshadowing the *Weimarer Koalition*, their move was successfully blocked by a new coalition of social democrats, Catholics and the *Fortschrittliche Volkspartei*. The resulting compromise omitted the question of intermarriages. It maintained patrilineal citizenship in the homeland while it allowed deviations in the colonies.¹⁸¹ Citizenship of women still depended on that of their husbands.¹⁸² The inclusion of *Auslandsdeutsche* also posed questions regarding the *Wehrgerechtigkeit* (fairness of the draft). Since 1812 citizenship and military service were intimately linked; but only few *Auslandsdeutsche* returned to complete their military service. The Navy looked on German seaman aboard foreign vessels as a resource in an upcoming war and favoured their inclusion despite neglected service. However, the army successfully maintained that being lax on Germans abroad would undermine the concept of conscription altogether.¹⁸³ While the citizenship law of 1913 certainly reflects the move towards an ethno-cultural concept of citizenship, it stopped short of being downright racist, as it left the problem of intermarriages unsolved, held onto the patrilineal principle of citizenship and eventually put fairness of the draft over the inclusion of the *Auslandsdeutsche*. And even though the 1913 citizenship law had been designed with war in mind, when the Great War came about it “changed the meaning of citizenship”.¹⁸⁴

178. As cited in: Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 282.

179. Cf. Brubaker, *Citizenship and nationhood*, 115.

180. Cf. Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 303.

181. Cf. Gosewinkel, 305.

182. Gosewinkel, 309.

183. Cf. Gosewinkel, 317.

184. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 185.

2 The ‘*Volk*’ contested

Heute zum ersten Male steht das ganze Volk in Waffen. Und nicht das Heer allein kämpft, leistet und leidet, sondern jede lebende Seele des Landes.¹

This chapter will cover the development of concepts of state membership in statistics and registration over the course of the First World War and the Weimar republic. During the war – marked by first attempts at ‘total registration’ – statistics helped promote the image of the *Volk* as a statistically organised entity. In this context I will reexamine the notorious *Juden-zählung* arguing that it marked the return to the long lasting trend towards an exclusive understanding of German state membership.

2.1 Brief Clearance

With the onset of the war in 1914 the internal front lines, hardened by ‘*negative Integration*’, seemingly became volatile. Emperor Wilhelm II.’s speech to the Reichstag on 4th August, calling for a *Burgfrieden*, ensured inclusion for all those previously ostracised in exchange for their pledge of loyalty. While this move’s main intention was to ensure the Social Democrats’ consent to the war credit bills other groups with a precarious status felt invited to join the new national unity.² Social Democrats voted in favour of the bills. Virtually all German-Jewish organisations called their brothers to arms. Vice versa antisemitic voices were muffled by censorship. In stark contrast to the long-lasting trend towards an ethnically exclusive understanding of Germaness the initial enthusiasm – later referred to as the *Augusterlebnis* and *Geist von 1914* – opened up a more inclusive perspective. Moreover, it helped to mobilise Germans of all convictions and walks of life for the war effort – including Germany’s Jews. Though Katz points out that this newfound unity was never acceptable for the hardline anti-Semites.³ Nevertheless,

1. Walther Rathenau, *Von kommenden Dingen* (Berlin: Fischer, 1918), 275.

2. Cf. Jeffrey Verhey, *Der ‘Geist von 1914’ und die Erfindung der Volksgemeinschaft*, ed. Jürgen Bauer and Edith Nerke (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2014), 208.

3. Katz, *Vom Vorurteil*, 315.

the new inclusiveness manifested in increased numbers of naturalisations during the first years of the war.⁴ And even the military had begun to allow Jews into higher ranks.⁵ In September deputy Reich Minister of War Franz Gustav von Wandel introduced a decree ‘*Ergänzung der Offiziere während des Krieges*’ that opened up an officer’s career to Jews.⁶ This phenomenon occurred in almost all the states involved in the Great War so Sigbert Feuchtwanger summarised the initial perception of the atmosphere as follows:

So schien die Judenfrage nach allen Richtungen gelöst. [...] Des Kriegs hatte es bedurft, um den Sinn der Geschichte endlich klar zu stellen und die sinnvolle Entwicklung von Hemmungen zu befreien: von dem Judentum blieb nichts übrig als höchstens in jedem Staate, in Rußland, Deutschland, Frankreich etc. russische, deutsche, französische etc. Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens.⁷

The new upward mobility for Jews was prominently embodied in Walther Rathenau, who in August 1914 became director of the *Kriegsrohstoffgesellschaften (KRA)* (War Raw Materials Department) within the Ministry of War. This was a seismic change as recalled by his former colleague Otto Goebel 16 years later:

Ein Industrieller und Jude als Abteilungschef in der konservativsten aller Behörden! Nur Ahnung der ungeheuren Gefahr, die der deutschen Kriegführung von der Rohstoffseite her drohte, konnte die Feder des entscheidenden Mannes in jenem Augenblicke der Errichtung der KRA geführt haben.⁸

Fine assesses, that German Jews were overly enthusiastic in the first month of the war.⁹ Jeffery Verhey has convincingly shown, war enthusiasm that purportedly dominated the general public in August 1914 was limited to certain social strata. Similarly, Mommsen describes a new phenomenon in nationalism, an intellectual mobilisation.¹⁰ Verhey argues that although in the initial days crowds filled the streets, it would be a mistake to

4. Cf. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 185.

5. Cf. Wolfgang Michalka and Tagung Rastatt: 2000.10.20-21 Vogt Martin, eds., *Judenemanzipation und Antisemitismus in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: ein Tagungsband*, Bibliothek europäischer Freiheitsbewegungen; 3 (Eggingen: Ed. Isele, 2003), 107.

6. Cf. Jacob Rosenthal, ‘*Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten: die Judenanzahl im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen*’, Campus Judaica 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2007), 58.

7. Sigbert Feuchtwanger, ‘Die wissenschaftliche und die politische Judenfrage’, *Zeitschrift für Politik* (Berlin) 9 (1916): 471–544, 475.

8. Otto Goebel, *Deutsche Rohstoffwirtschaft im Weltkrieg: einschließlich des Hindenburg-Programms*, vol. 8, Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Weltkrieges Deutsche Serie (Stuttgart: DVA, 1930), 22.

9. David J. Fine, *Jewish integration in the German Army in the First World War*, New perspectives on modern Jewish history 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 11.

10. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Die Urkatastrophe Deutschlands der Erste Weltkrieg 1914 - 1918* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002), 19.

interpret their actions as sheer enthusiasm. Instead, his analysis of testimonies attributes a carnivalesque quality to the *Augusterlebnis* in which the public's tension manifested.¹¹

The fragile internal unity was furthermore accompanied by external closure at the borders, setting an end to the liberal era of *laissez faire* that had ubiquitously dominated passport affairs in most of the countries involved. From July 1914 for all German men it was not just entering the country that was restricted. To prevent escape from military service, draftees had to produce exit passports to cross the border. By the end of 1914 everybody crossing the border in either direction had to present a passport including: "a personal description, photograph, and the signature of the bearer, along with an official certification that the 'bearer is actually the person represented in the photograph'."¹²

Simultaneously, the concept of state membership underwent a process of further closure, in which citizenship lost its significance. In Alsace-Lorraine, for instance, 7.000 residents were deprived of their citizenship based on their alleged French nationality.¹³ In general, nationality was used to tell friend from foe and enemy aliens were "expelled, interned or compelled to remain at their jobs depending on the state administration's calculations of German interests".¹⁴

Though the war had led to a postponement of the measures agreed upon by the 1911 Gypsy Conference and the work of Munich's *Zigeunerzentrale* was hampered by the draft diminishing the staff, the tightening of passport regulations made it more difficult for non-German 'Gypsies' to enter Germany. Those already on German territory were – despite their citizenship – suspected by the military as being foreign spies. Hence, in 1917 the Ministry of War ordered their internment.¹⁵

1913's law on citizenship – designed to conscript Germans abroad – yielded few results. Quite to the contrary the threat of expatriation proved to be a favour to German's abroad suffering from the measures introduced against aliens.¹⁶ The draft was organised utilising the data of the *Standesämter* (Registry Offices).¹⁷ Unlike the register offices where individuals were listed alphabetically, these offices – due to their capacity for

11. Cf. Verhey, *Der 'Geist von 1914' und die Erfindung der Volksgemeinschaft*, 48-50.

12. John Torpey, 'Documenting individual identity: the development of state practices in the modern world', chap. The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System, ed. Jane Caplan (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), 257–270, 259.

13. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 189.

14. Nathans, 185.

15. It is however unclear, whether this was eventually put into practice. Cf. Bonillo, '*Zigeunerpolitik*', 222.

16. Factually, an amnesty for desertion and failure to report for duty issued by Chancellor Friedrich Ebert in December 1918 prevented expatriation for most cases. Nathans, *The politics of citizenship*, 189.

17. Erich Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei*, 6., ed. Kurt Daluge (München: Jehle, 1942), 47.

recording life data – were able to list age cohorts, as required for the draft. Yet, since these records were maintained at the place of birth they could not be used to localise individuals. Nevertheless, due to the high compliance with public calls for recruits, Germany did well in mobilising human resources, as was the case with basically any other country during the first phase of the war, in which there were more volunteers than the army was equipped to train.¹⁸

The external pressure helped to introduce a series of interventionist measures and a drive towards centralisation. In 1914 Moellendorff and Rathenau had brought forward the idea of centralised management of raw materials in order to cope with the economic duress caused by the British blockade. In consequence, the administration increasingly relied on statistical surveys to monitor supply and demand. In 1916 Friedrich Zahn, the Director of Bavaria’s statistical Office reported on the impact the war had on statistics:

Seit Ausbruch desselben hat die amtliche Statistik, die zunächst alle ihre bisherigen nicht vor dringlichen Arbeiten zurückstellte, ein so gewaltiges Pensum zu erfüllen, wie wohl in keinem früheren Stadium der Geschichte.¹⁹

The vast majority of these surveys monitored supply of food and raw materials on behalf of the *Kriegsgesellschaften*. Some, on behalf of the military, monitored the population in occupied territories or convalescence of wounded personnel. The statistical efforts were coordinated by the central statistical office and, if published at all, “aus kriegstaktischen Erwägungen natürlich nur in beschränktem Umfang”.²⁰

Only in 1916, when the battles at the Somme and Verdun put supply chains of both men and material at a test and the distribution of labour had been seriously affected by the withdrawal of manpower to the front lines, did the government decide to interfere with the labour market.²¹ To efficiently distribute the German workforce, the *Gesetzes über den vaterländischen Hilfsdienst* (Auxiliary Services Act) obliged all men aged between 17 and 60 and not liable for military service to work in companies graded *kriegswichtig* (‘vital to the war effort’). Hence respective age cohorts had to attend their

18. Holger Afflenbach, “‘Bis zum letzten Mann und letzten Groschen?’ Die Wehrpflicht im Deutschen Reich und ihre Auswirkungen auf das militärische Führungsdenken im Ersten Weltkrieg’, in *Die Wehrpflicht: Entstehung, Erscheinungsformen und politisch-militärische Wirkung*, ed. Roland G. Foerster, Beiträge zur Militärgeschichte 43 (München: Oldenbourg, 1994), 71–90, 76–79.

19. Friedrich Zahn, ‘Die amtliche Statistik und der Krieg’, *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik / Journal of Economics and Statistics* (Stuttgart) 51 (106), no. 1 (1916): 95–103, 95.

20. Cf. Zahn, 100.

21. Cf. David Meskill, *Optimizing the German workforce: labor administration from Bismarck to the economic miracle*, Monographs in German history 31 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 68.

place of residency's *Einwohnermeldeämter* (Register Offices) to rectify registers.²² Once again the population was in charge of the thorough implementation of registration and as a result the effect of the law was limited as Goebel – echoing the antisemitic discourse – judged in 1928:

Der gewohnheitsmäßige Drückeberger und der Kriegsschieber aber fand nach wie vor Auswege genug, sich auch der Wirkung des Hilfsdienstgesetzes zu entziehen.²³

So, more importantly, the Auxiliary Service Act reflected a change in attitudes. For the first time *Totalerfassung* (comprehensive registration) of men and material had become an explicit goal of the administration.²⁴ And while the management of human resources and raw materials during the war was mainly an economic decision in an effort to cope with Germany's economic duress, it helped to promote a perspective on the population as a statistical entity, in which supply with soldiers was just one parameter in the equation of a wider supply chain.²⁵ Thereby the war also helped promote an image of an organised society and a "common economy" (*Gemeinwirtschaft*) as it had informed the opening quotation of Walter Rathenau. While before 1914 this kind of thinking was limited to officials and experts, Meskill has highlighted how it was amplified on both sides of the political spectrum.²⁶

Like the *Augusterlebnis*, the mobilisation was soon to be exploited politically and fused with the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft* brushing aside inequalities within the German society.²⁷ In contrast to the unity displayed earlier, with the defeats on the battlefield fear and suspicion of traditional outgroups increased. In the wake of 'total mobilisation', both Jews and 'Gypsies' were suspected to be 'shirkers'. Those considered '*inländische Zigeuner*' were to be drafted – though Bonillo points out, that the majority of German 'Gypsies' already served in the army – or otherwise held under careful supervision. In Saxony a special *Meldepflicht* for 'Gypsies' was imposed.²⁸

22. Eugen Rüdiger Hägele, *Die Rechtsentwicklung des Paß- und Meldewesens; Nach d. Recht Preußens u. d. Reichs* (Schramberg: Gatzert & Hahn, 1940), 88.

23. Goebel, *Deutsche Rohstoffwirtschaft im Weltkrieg: einschließlich des Hindenburg-Programms*, 80.

24. Cf. Meskill, *Optimizing the German workforce*, 73.

25. Cf. Afflenbach, 'Wehrpflicht', 85.

26. Meskill, *Optimizing the German workforce*, 73.

27. Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich*, 179.

28. Cf. Bonillo, '*Zigeunerpolitik*', 217–219.

2.2 *Juden-zählung*

In the case of Jews in addition to the suspicion of shirking came the accusation of unproportionally profiting from the war. The military's initial permeability for Jewish cadets already staggered when the war came into its second year.²⁹ Despite the calls for a *Burgfrieden*, on 28th August 1914 anti-Semites under the lead of the *Reichshammerbund* demanded Jewish influence be monitored and called for statistics on Jews in the army.³⁰

A fortnight before the *Verband deutscher Juden* had issued quite a similar call, albeit with the explicit task of gathering statistical data on Jewish participants of the war, in order to rebut allegations of 'Jewish shirking' or disloyalty.³¹ By February 1915, backed by 12 Jewish organisations, the *Büro für Statistik der Juden* was established.³² With 1916's change to 'total mobilisation', the heightened attention for the distribution of manpower between army and industry and thus the issue of shirking, voices disputing Jewish loyalty grew constantly louder. In spring 1916 a 'deluge of letters' of complaint – often sent anonymously – regarding 'Jewish shirking' arrived at the War Ministry.³³ In March the *Reichshammerbund*'s Theodor Fritsch and Alfred Roth sent a renewed memorandum to the Kaiser and leading politicians.³⁴ On 11th October 1916 the order for a *Juden-zählung* was disseminated within the military. The results were to be returned to the ministry by 1st November. More than a week later on 19th Matthias Erzberger, member of the Reichstag for the *Zentrum* party demanded a census be conducted among the staff of the *Kriegsgesellschaften* – exempt from serving on the front-lines – to substantiate the allegations of a Jewish over-representation.³⁵ Though his proposal was supported even by the national-liberals, it did not result in a survey – still it created displeasure amongst German Jews. It was only on 3rd November that the ministry informed the *Reichstag*, and thus the public, about its *Juden-zählung*.³⁶ Prompted by several accusations by social democrat and liberal deputies, Wrisberg felt

29. Cf. Rosenthal, 'Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten': die *Juden-zählung* im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen, 83.

30. Cf. Michalka and Vogt, *Judenemanzipation und Antisemitismus*, 110.

31. Werner T. Angress, 'The German army's 'Juden-zählung' of 1916. Genesis-consequences-significance', (Oxford) Year-book / Leo Baeck Institute Oxford, Vol. 23, (1978): 117–137, 123.

32. From autumn 1916 on operating as *Ausschuss für Kriegsstatistik*. Cf. Angress, 123.

33. Angress, 121.

34. Cf. Peter C. Appelbaum, *Loyal sons: Jews in the German army in the Great War* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2014), 246.

35. Cf. Angress, 'The German army's 'Juden-zählung' of 1916. Genesis-consequences-significance', 125. Michalka, obviously unaware of Angress' study, believes Erzberger's Reichstag's speech to have triggered the survey. Cf. Michalka and Vogt, *Judenemanzipation und Antisemitismus*, 111.

36. Angress, 'The German army's 'Juden-zählung' of 1916. Genesis-consequences-significance', 125.

compelled to admit that a *Judenstatistik* had been ongoing to test allegations of ‘Jewish shirking’ even before the issue was brought before the *Reichstag*.

The ministry was heavily attacked for the survey. During the same *Reichstag*’s session some initial allegations against the military were made. Resulting from the decree, Jewish conscripts had been transferred into rear echelons so that they counted amongst the ‘shirkers’.³⁷ Representatives of the *Central Verein* and the *Verband der deutschen Juden* tried to get the ministry to acknowledge the parity of the Jewish contribution to the war effort. Instead, in January 1917 Reich Minister of War Hermann von Stein conceded to quote him saying that the census was not caused by the conduct of Jews during the war.³⁸ In addition to the unease caused by the fact that Jews were singled out, the survey itself was harshly criticised for being ill-devised and inconclusive.³⁹ Divided into the different sections of the army *Feldheer*, *Etappe* and *Besatzungsheer*, the questionnaire asked for the total number of Jewish soldiers, whether they volunteered, the number of fallen and their decorations. For the *Etappe* a separate column was added to specify the numbers of those fit for combat service. The questionnaire was to be completed by the ‘*Batallionsschreiber*’ (clerk of the batallion) and even though the text of the original decree was circulated with the questionnaire, no further instruction as to where and how to retrieve the correct information was given.

A common misconception regarding the *Judenzählung* is the claim that due to Jewish intervention the military did not record the recruit’s confession.⁴⁰ The Prussian War Archives have been destroyed during World War II, so that these assumptions went hitherto uncontested. However, a manual for the maintenance of the *Kriegsranglisten*, that has previously evaded attention, proves this assumption wrong. The *Kriegsranglisten* registered all members of a military unit and its fourth column recorded ‘religion’.⁴¹ A register-based survey would thus have produced more reliable statistics.⁴² The survey did not adhere to the statistical standards established during the previous century. The overall return of results was not monitored.⁴³ Baden for instance refused to return results

37. Rosenthal, ‘*Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten*’: *die Judenählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen*, 64-68.

38. Rosenthal, 73.

39. Angress has published a template of the questionnaire. Angress, ‘The German army’s ‘Judenählung’ of 1916. Genesis-consequences-significance’, 136-137.

40. Cf. Hans-Joachim Becker, *Von der konfessionellen Militärstatistik zur ‘Judenählung’ (1916) – Eine Neubewertung* (Nordhausen: Verlag Traugott Bautz, 2016), 306.

41. Cf. Schmidt, *Die Kriegsstammrolle und ihre Führung. mit einem Anhang: Verfahren bei Sterbefällen und bei Vermissten*, 2. (Oldenburg i. Gr.: Stalling, 1916), 10.

42. Cf. Rosenthal, ‘*Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten*’: *die Judenählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen*, 80.

43. Franz Oppenheimer, *Die Judenstatistik des preußischen Kriegsministeriums*, Fragen der Zeit

altogether.⁴⁴ Considering the numerous statistics produced by official statisticians on behalf of the ministry, it is remarkable that the *Judenzählung* of all surveys was designed without their involvement. After all, it seems not unlikely that, due to these obvious flaws the ministry refused to publish the results – in particular when compared with the standards applied by the statistical office of the Jewish organisations.

The *Büro für Kriegsstatistik*'s collection of data was supervised by Heinrich Silbergleit, the director of Berlin's statistical office, and compiled by statistician Jacob Segall. In contrast to the official statistics these organisations carried on collecting data throughout the war, the registration on counting cards was based on the individual, and hence reproducible.⁴⁵ Their findings are now still the most reliable source if one is to answer the question of 'Jewish shirking' or 'Jewish loyalty'. However, since the private statisticians were denied access to official documents and data from Posen and Alsace-Lorraine was not available after the war, their results were also far from exhaustive.⁴⁶ Jews without connection to Jewish organisations would remain unaccounted for and for the territories not contributing data, figures had to be extrapolated.⁴⁷ Whereas final results were published only in 1921, the figures for East Prussia were already published in a small brochure in 1919.⁴⁸ Neither the 'official statistics' nor the 'Jewish statistics' can claim to be 'correct' – as Appelbaum does for the latter – or even comprehensive, but Segall offers transparency regarding acquisition and compilation of the figures.⁴⁹ Right after the survey was made public, Jewish representatives were quick to announce seeing no malicious intent on the ministry's side, whilst unavailingly advocating for a public declaration by the ministry, recognising Jewish parity regarding the war effort.

Rathenau's initial hopes were shattered even before the *Judenzählung* took place.⁵⁰ In August 1916 he wrote:

The more Jews fall in this war, the more enduringly their opponents will show that they will have sat behind the front and profited from the war. The hate will double and treble.⁵¹

(München: Verl. für Kulturpolitik, 1922), 10.

44. Michalka and Vogt, *Judenemanzipation und Antisemitismus*, 113.

45. Cf. Oppenheimer, *Die Judenstatistik des preußischen Kriegsministeriums*, 11.

46. Cf. Appelbaum, *Loyal sons: Jews in the German army in the Great War*, 270.

47. Cf. Rosenthal, 'Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten': *die Judenählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen*, 119.

48. Walter Leiser, *Die Juden im Heer: eine Kriegsstatistik* (Berlin: Philo, 1919).

49. Cf. Appelbaum, *Loyal sons: Jews in the German army in the Great War*, 300.

50. As cited in Appelbaum, 260.

51. As cited in: Appelbaum, 245.

He had resigned from his post at the *K.R.A.* more than a year earlier. This is to say, even before the census, most Jews were well aware anti-Semitism was not to be abolished by decree – the early establishment of the *Büro für Kriegsstatistik* is a clear indicator of the limited trust the Jewish organisations involved had in the *Burgfrieden*.⁵² Michael Grünwald has observed that testimonies of Jewish soldiers do not mention the survey and concluded the survey was not perceived as turning-point.⁵³ However, it may not be an indicator of the soldiers' equanimity but rather their lack of knowledge. Other than Grünwald reports for the case of Julius Marx,⁵⁴ an actual count of Jewish soldiers was never intended and thus unlikely, since the original decree did not require the presence of those counted; it would furthermore have proven impossible for the fallen.⁵⁵ For many front line soldiers the decree may just have gone unnoticed.

Historiography has identified a number of dispositions that allowed the conduct of the survey, of which I want to highlight a few. In the wake of the *Hindenburg-Programm's* attempts to mobilise the entire population, public attention was brought to the issue of 'shirking'. Wehler has identified a long-standing tradition within the military that linked Jewish emancipation and democratisation and saw the closure of the higher positions for Jews as a last bulwark against the democratisation of the army.⁵⁶ The fear after the war Jewish organisations, presenting their own figures and claiming access to military careers, could jeopardise the military's integrity, compelled the ministry to produce figures of their own.⁵⁷ Even Minister of War von Stein, had to admit the "malicious consequences" of the survey on the occasion of a subsequent attempt to single out Jewish soldiers in Stettin which was immediately stopped due to von Stein's intervention.⁵⁸

52. Cf. Tim Grady, *German-Jewish soldiers of the First World War in history and memory* (Liverpool: Liverpool-Univ.-Press, 2011), 30.

53. Michal Grünwald, 'Antisemitismus im Deutschen Heer und Judenzählung', ed. Michael Berger, (Paderborn), 2012, 143. A similar view is held by Fine, *Jewish integration in the German Army in the First World War* and Grady, *German-Jewish soldiers of the First World War in history and memory* and disputed by Appelbaum with ample evidence. Cf. Appelbaum, *Loyal sons: Jews in the German army in the Great War* 57-207.

54. Cf. Grünwald, 'Antisemitismus im Deutschen Heer und Judenzählung', 141.

55. Marx testimony, which forms the source for Grünwald's conclusions, features a high degree of literarisation as he recalls being asked for his birth date, while the original questionnaire did not entail any such detailed individual questions. Furthermore this process has a serious methodological flaw as it assumed that the Jewish identity of the soldiers was already known to those conducting the census.

56. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Vom Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs bis zur Gründung der beiden deutschen Staaten 1914-1949*, Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte / Hans-Ulrich Wehler; 4. Band (Verlag C.H. Beck, 2008), 129-130. Cf. Appelbaum, *Loyal sons: Jews in the German army in the Great War*, 297, and Albrecht, 'Preußen, ein 'Judenstaat'. Antisemitismus als konservative Strategie gegen die „Neue Ära“ – Zur Krisentheorie der Moderne', 470.

57. Cf. Appelbaum, *Loyal sons: Jews in the German army in the Great War*. 247-248; and Rosenthal, 'Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten': die Judenzählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen, 15-16.

58. As cited in: Appelbaum, *Loyal sons: Jews in the German army in the Great War*, 256. Wehler mentions several similar occasions where the ministry remained idle. Cf. Wehler, *Vom Beginn des*

The original decree made use of antisemitic tropes and its design would inevitably lead to results compromised to Jewish disadvantage. It would thus be inappropriate to claim that the survey was not initiated to cater to antisemitic beliefs.⁵⁹ Gavin Wiens has recently suggested the *Juden-zählung* is best understood in a wider context of measures against national minorities.⁶⁰ On the other hand we can learn from his research that these cases were grounded in existing nationalist tensions. The measures were regionally limited, similar measures were enacted in almost all countries participating in the war and no attempt was ever made to single out any other group in the entire army. Most importantly, none of these measures sparked a public debate comparable with that of the *Juden-zählung*.

2.3 Reich and Republic

Many things can and have been said about the Weimar Republic that officially remained the Deutsche Reich. I will instead focus on two aspects only. I will first briefly cover the continuing discussions on the ‘*Juden-zählung*’ that formed a focal point for the republic’s nationalist opposition. Then I will analyse the first attempts at a nationwide alignment of registration initiated in 1928.

After the war a ‘battle of statistics’ began, that put a minority-census at the heart of the discussions about a future Germany.⁶¹ The fact that the results of the ‘*Juden-zählung*’ were never officially published gave rise to suspicions on both sides. While anti-Semites saw their expectations sustained, arguing if the survey had rebutted their claims, the ministry, they always had suspected of being too friendly to Jews, would certainly have published them. Jewish organisations on the other hand claimed just the opposite. Though statistics played a major role in these disputes, the general public was not interested in statistical questions but rather in how statistics could be deployed.⁶²

Ersten Weltkriegs bis zur Gründung der beiden deutschen Staaten 1914-1949, 131.

59. Hans-Joachim Becker, *Von der konfessionellen Militärstatistik zur ‘Juden-zählung’ (1916) – Eine Neubewertung* (Nordhausen: Verlag Traugott Bautz, 2016).

60. Gavin Wiens, ‘A Mixed bag of Loyalties: Jewish Soldiers, Ethnic minorities, and State-Based Contingents in the German Army 1914-1918’, ed. Edward Madigan and Gideon Reuveni (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 149–170, 139.

61. Cf. Rosenthal, ‘*Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten: die Juden-zählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen*’, 116.

62. The following publications shaped the post-war discourse: Otto Armin, *Die Juden im Heere: eine statistische Untersuchung nach amtlichen Quellen* (München: München: Deutscher Volksverlag Dr. E. Boepple, 1919) Otto Armin is Alfred Roth’s pseudonym composed of Bismark’s first name and a reference to Arminius, chieftain of the Cherusci. ; In December 1919 the conservative *Kreuzzeitung* published excerpts from Armin’s brochure. Cf. Rosenthal, ‘*Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten: die Juden-*

The first publication that was seriously dedicated to statistical questions focused on the obstacles such an enterprise entails. In 1917, prior to the publication of any figures, May called his study ‘*Konfessionelle Militärstatistik*’ underlining the impossibility of a separate ‘Jewish’ survey.⁶³ He utilised data of the previous censuses to determine the differences in the demographic structure of the three major confessions. In particular Oppenheimer’s critique was informed by May’s preliminary thoughts, but also Segall’s ‘*Die deutschen Juden als Soldaten im Kriege 1914-1918*’.⁶⁴ Even statisticians who disagreed had to acknowledge that the study was “mit seiner umfassenden Beherrschung und meisterhaften Kombination des statistischen Materials ein Musterstück statistischer Feinarbeit”.⁶⁵ Finally, even Otto Armin referred to this study when he wrote: “und keine jüdisch zurechtgebogene Statistik vermag jene Tatsachen [the alleged ‘Jewish shirking’] in der Meinung des Volkes auszulöschen”.⁶⁶ Interestingly, neither the design of the survey nor the public debate brought up the question of converted Jews and thus of ‘race’.⁶⁷ However, beside the methodological shortcomings of the original survey, Armin’s publication features a series of flaws, the biggest of them simple mistakes in calculation that have been analysed in detail by Rosenthal. In addition to the divergent figures, Armin miscalculates to the Jewish disadvantage.⁶⁸ It was these obvious flaws in the data’s compilation that made Oppenheimer utter his frequently quoted judgement:

zählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen, 118; Walter Leiser, *Die Juden im Heer: eine Kriegsstatistik* (Berlin: Philo, 1919); Otto Armin, *Die Juden in den Kriegsgesellschaften und in der Kriegswirtschaft: unter Benutzung amtlicher und anderer Quellen dargestellt* (München: Deutscher Volksverlag Dr. E. Boepple, 1921); Wrisberg, Ernst von, *Heer und Heimat 1914 - 1918*, Erinnerungen an die Kriegsjahre im Königlich Preussischen Kriegsministerium / von Ernst von Wrisberg; 2 (Leipzig: Koehler, 1921); Jacob Segall, *Die deutschen Juden als Soldaten im Kriege 1914 - 1918: eine statistische Studie* (Berlin: Philo-Verl., 1921); Franz Oppenheimer, *Die Judenstatistik des preußischen Kriegsministeriums*, Fragen der Zeit (München: Verl. für Kulturpolitik, 1922).

63. R. E. May, *Konfessionelle Militärstatistik*, Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik 13 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1917).

64. Oppenheimer, *Die Judenstatistik des preußischen Kriegsministeriums*; Jacob Segall, *Die deutschen Juden als Soldaten im Kriege 1914 - 1918: eine statistische Studie* (Berlin: Philo-Verl., 1921). – being published only in 1921 it did not influence the public discussion even though it may up till today be the most conclusive source, if one were willing to discuss ‘Jewish loyalty’.

65. Johannes Müller, ‘Deutsches Reich’, *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik / Journal of Economics and Statistics* (Stuttgart) 58 (113), no. 1 (1919): 89–90, 90.

66. Armin, *Die Juden in den Kriegsgesellschaften und in der Kriegswirtschaft: unter Benutzung amtlicher und anderer Quellen dargestellt*, 4.

67. Michalka and Vogt, *Judenemanzipation und Antisemitismus*, 111.

68. Instead of – according to his own figures – at least 12.78% of the Jewish population he claims only 10% have served. And even the figures he uses for comparison are faulty. Where Armin claims 20% of the average German population had served, the actual proportion was 12.73 %. Cf. Rosenthal, ‘*Die Ehre des jüdischen Soldaten*’: die Juden zählung im Ersten Weltkrieg und ihre Folgen, 120.

Wenn die E r h e b u n g schon verdächtig ist, so ist ihre V e r a r b e i t u n g unbestreitbar die größte statistische Ungeheurlichkeit, deren sich jemals eine Behörde schuldig gemacht hat.⁶⁹

After 1945 the *Juden z ä h l u n g* was usually discussed in the context of the murder of the European Jews. Angress concludes most German Jews were ready to shrug the survey off as yet another manifestation of *Rishes*.⁷⁰ Yet, Rosenthal holds that ‘it was nevertheless a critical point in the continuity that led to the rise of the Nazis and their eventual seizure of power’.⁷¹ It is worth mentioning that Grünwald records a steady level of antisemitic incidents within the army, before and after the survey.⁷² Considering the long-term trend in the concept of German citizenship it seems that rather than representing a rupture the *Juden z ä h l u n g* marks a return from the exceptional period of the *Burgfrieden* back to the ethno-cultural concept of citizenship. Thus the *Juden z ä h l u n g* may not have been perceived as a watershed by the majority of Germany’s Jews but rather, as Julius Marx put it, as “realer Ausdruck der realen Stimmung”.⁷³ More than anything the significance of the *Juden z ä h l u n g* lay in the antisemitic discourse that evolved from it. The combination of the reproach of ‘Jewish’ shirking and profiting and the connectivity to the forming *Dolchstoßlegende* accelerated the exclusive tendencies and pointed them in one direction after Germany had lost most of its minorities.⁷⁴ Its significance was already noticed by contemporaries. Social-Democrat Scheidemann estimated

“about this decree that after the war there will clearly be two separate directions for which the country can fight: a direction of freedom, or one of nationalist demagoguery”.⁷⁵

69. Oppenheimer, *Die Judenstatistik des preußischen Kriegsministeriums*, 14.

70. Angress, ‘The German army’s ‘Juden z ä h l u n g’ of 1916. Genesis-consequences-significance’, 135. *Rishes* Yiddish for anti-Jewish sentiment.

71. As cited in: Grady, *German-Jewish soldiers of the First World War in history and memory*, 14.

72. Cf. Grünwald, ‘Antisemitismus im Deutschen Heer und Juden z ä h l u n g’, 144.

73. As cited in: Wehler, *Vom Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs bis zur Gründung der beiden deutschen Staaten 1914-1949*, 130.

74. Cf. Boris Barth, *Dolchstoßlegenden und politische Desintegration: das Trauma der deutschen Niederlage im Ersten Weltkrieg 1914 - 1933*, Schriften des Bundesarchivs 61 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2003).

75. As cited in Appelbaum, *Loyal sons: Jews in the German army in the Great War*, 259.

2.4 Standardisation of registration and the *Reich-Länder* divide

The Weimar discourse on registration was a marginal topic embedded in a wider one aiming for a general overhaul of the federal system. From early Weimar days the federal system had been looked at by officials and politicians on the national level as an obstacle to the formation of an efficient, centralised modern state and to the finalisation of German nation building. Hence a thorough *Reichsreform* was discussed, while opposition formed among politicians from the federal states. In October 1920 a *Reichskommissar für die Vereinfachung und Vereinheitlichung der Reichsverwaltung* often referred to as *Spardiktator* had been commissioned but his proposals immediately faced opposition and were fruitless.⁷⁶ Consequently, a board representing national and federal governments was summoned, presided from 1923 onwards by a *Reichssparkommissar*, tasked with a reform of the administrative structures that was primarily expected to lower the costs.⁷⁷ But the federal states – Bavaria in particular – saw their competences jeopardised and thus solicited chancellor Wirth to declare that the government respected the federal competences.⁷⁸ Prussia on the other hand understood further centralisation as a means with which to acquire increased influence over Reich politics, so the dualism of national and federal governments was represented by Prussia and Bavaria.⁷⁹ Not only did the discussions widen the gulf between north and south, but also split parties. Two memoranda by the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior sparked a discussion that questioned the general constitution in administration calling for a thorough *Reichsreform*. Despite drawing a lot of public attention, it incited defence of mutually exclusive particular interests, polarising across party lines.⁸⁰ The complex front lines did not further the cause of unification. Instead it produced a deluge of pamphlets that Gerhard Schulz has understood as discourse on the future shape of the republic, but that did not result in constitutional changes.⁸¹ Unification floundered in Weimar's federal system. The peak of discussions about a *Reichsreform* was marked by a federal conference from

76. Cf. Gerhard Schulz, *Zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur: Verfassungspolitik und Reichsreform in der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1960), 522.

77. Schulz, 528.

78. Schulz, 392.

79. Wolfgang Hofmann, *Städtetag und Verfassungsordnung: Position und Politik der Hauptgeschäftsführer eines kommunalen Spitzenverbandes*, Schriftenreihe des Vereins für Kommunalwissenschaften e.V. Berlin Bd. 13 (Stuttgart, Berlin, 1966), 65.

80. Hofmann, 66.

81. Cf. Schulz, *Zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur*, 606.

1928 to 1930 trying to appease the fractions by promoting the ‘*dezentralisierten Einheitsstaat*’ (decentralised unitary state) but to no avail. The efforts towards unification and standardisation of administration were overshadowed by Weimar’s crisis. But the ‘*Gleichschaltung der Länder*’ during the first years of Nazi rule built on the discourse around the *Reichsreform*.

Registration in Weimar

In Prussian, registration had hardly changed since 1836. Attempts towards standardisation were first made in 1902 by the Prussian Ministry of the Interior by issuing a decree on registration but it went unnoticed and petered out. But in 1904 general directives were issued regarding minimum standards for local police regulations, according to which the local registration regulations had to ascertain:

- obligation to notify the local register office when moving away (*Abmeldung*)
- indication of the former address
- issuance of a cancelling of registration form (*Abmeldeschein*)
- registration on arrival (*Anmeldung*)

Furthermore, the registration offices were instructed to inform their counterparts when ever a change of residence was brought to their attention.⁸² This ‘*Rückmeldung*’ (reporting requirement), however, was not formalised and hence had next to no effect. Whether records were maintained in books, lists or registers was still for the local authorities to decide. The Weimar Republic inherited these registration regulations unaffected by the change of the political system.⁸³

Due to its federal structure, the national government could not exercise police sovereignty in the federal states. Registration again was one of the genuine police competences. Hence registration differed throughout the republic. In rural areas, where migration was rare, a mayor – usually in charge of all administrative affairs – possibly saw little need for meticulous registration. Cities on the other hand – often characterised as places where everybody is a stranger – in particular growing cities like Berlin or seaports like Bremen and Hamburg had developed quite advanced registration systems. In addition, the victorious parties of the Great War prohibited the establishment of centrally organised police forces and thus cemented the already existing dichotomy

82. Cf. Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 59.

83. Cf. Mühlbauer, 59.

of national and federal competences which made efforts to standardise regulations by way of passing laws on the national level more difficult. But on 1st June 1931 Prussia passed the *Polizeiverwaltungsgesetz* that introduced standards for registration and cancellation thereof. Still, these standards had to be implemented by police regulations on the municipal level resulting in about 10,000 different decrees in Prussia.⁸⁴ The state of regulations in Prussia can be seen as exemplary for the condition in the entire Reich. Nonetheless, in the course of discussing a *Reichsreform* efforts towards a standardisation – not only of registration but of the entire Weimar administration – were made. Yet, the first results regarding registration were only achieved in Weimar's final years. When Prussia resorted to issuing template regulations in 1930, Prussia's Ministry of the Interior could only decree obligatory standards, hence regulations still differed locally and implementation was not monitored. The Prussian reform was based on directives agreed upon by all federal states at a conference in 1928. Registration was not the focal issue of the event in an inn called *Warburg Gasthof* in Eisenach. Nevertheless, the results deserve closer analysis since they provided the basis for the first initiatives regarding registration by the National Socialist government.

The Eisenach Conference 1928

The *Reichsreform* had hitherto been discussed on a theoretical level only and was mainly motivated by expected savings and increased efficiency. Concrete need for reform was triggered by international agreements to simplify visa affairs at the League of Nations 1926 International Passport Conference and a successive Traffic Conference in 1927 both taking place in Geneva.⁸⁵ To fulfil the obligations, Germany had to standardise visa and passport regulations. Hence, a conference in Eisenach dedicated to the *Pass- und Fremdenpolizeiwesen* gathered upper grade officials from all federal states as well as from the Ministry for the Exterior. It aimed at a standardisation of passport and visa regulations and registration was just a minor aspect of the discussions that started on 31st May 1928 and went on until 9th June. The discussions during the meeting mirror how questions of aliens' control, labour market, citizenship, nationality and freedom of movement were intertwined and overshadowed by the contention over the federal states' competences.

84. Cf. Kurt G. A. Jeserich and Hildegard Bartels, eds., *Deutsche Verwaltungsgeschichte; 4: Das Reich als Republik und in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 4, Das Reich als Republik und in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus (Darmstadt: DVA, 1985), 410-411.

85. Cf. Hägele, *Die Rechtsentwicklung des Paß- und Meldewesens; Nach d. Recht Preußens u. d. Reichs*, 35. Respective sources can be consulted in BArch R 901 74615.

All parties approved an easing of visa regulations for most aliens except Poles and Soviet citizens, some of whom were only transiting Germany to embark in Bremen or Hamburg and leave Europe for good. Others came to work and a fair amount of time during and after the conference was spent discussing conditions for migrant labourers and the protection of Germany's labour market. But two groups in particular were seen as a threat: so-called '*ostjüdische Elemente*' from Poland and Soviet citizens.⁸⁶ The Reich Ministry of the Interior and its Prussian counterpart championed the disestablishment of exit visas and a general extension of validity to six months. The perceived heightened threat by unregistered aliens should thus be counteracted by aliens' police regulation on the federal level.⁸⁷ For better control of these individuals the Ministry for the Exterior recommended the limitation of the duration of their visas. All regulations were based on mutuality. Since all other states adhered to the standards agreed upon in 1927 this measure allowed the targeting the Soviet Union "ohne dass der Wortlaut eine Maßnahme gegen die Sowjetunion erkennen liesse".⁸⁸ On this basis exceptional clauses would permit issuance of limited visas to targeted individuals providing closer oversight by the police. To allow nationwide tracking of these individuals an '*Ausweisungsnachrichtenstelle*' (*A.N.St.*) (central register for expulsion) was established in Berlin's Police Department in September 1928 to which every such expulsion was to be reported.⁸⁹ The final move of these provisions was expected to come from the federal side, required to dispense with their right to extend visas.⁹⁰

Bavaria opposed this, as the Ministry for the Exterior's envoy Dr. Kraske reported to his superior Georg Martius in Berlin:

Die Angelegenheit spielte sich so ab, dass Preußen gemäß den letzten Berliner Vorbesprechungen den Vorschlag der Reichsregierung unterstützte, der alsbald auf den entschiedensten Widerstand des bayrischen Vertreters stieß. Hierfür waren weder Rücksichten auf die Reinheit des "Systems" – Passpolizei : Fremdenpolizei – noch ostjudenfreundliche Neigungen sondern allein die Abneigung maßgebend, sich in fremdenpolizeilichen Angelegenheiten ir-

86. BArch R 901 26070, Auswärtiges Amt an Herrn Martius, 2nd of June 1928, 52. Cf. Hägele, *Die Rechtsentwicklung des Paß- und Meldewesens; Nach d. Recht Preußens u. d. Reichs*, 34.

87. BArch R 901 26070, Der Reichskommissar für die Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung an das Reichministerium des Innern, Betrifft: Aufhebung des Reisesichtvermerks, 26th of April 1928, 10.

88. BArch R 901 26070, Telegramm (Geh.Ch.V.) Moskau, den 27. Mai 1928 15 Uhr, 32-33.

89. BArch R 901 26070, Der Preußische Minister des Innern, Entwurf eines Erlasses an die Oberpräsidenten und die Reg. Präs. über die Einrichtung einer Ausweisungsnachrichtenstelle, approx. August 1928, 273.

90. BArch R 901 26070, Aufzeichnung über die Paß- und Fremdenpolizeikonferenz in Eisenach vom 31. Mai bis 9. Juni 1928. Referent: V.L.R. Kraske, 65-66

gend etwas von Reichsstellen vorschreiben zu lassen oder auch nur freiwillig irgendwelche Bindungen zu übernehmen. Die übrigen Länder hatten der Frage keine besondere Bedeutung beigelegt, wurden aber teilweise natürlich hellhörig, als sie merkten, dass es sich um ihre Hoheitsrechte handle.⁹¹

It is not necessary to follow this controversy in detail but Mayer's report illustrates both the lines of conflict as well as the racial subtext of the discussions. As Mayer estimated, Bavarian opposition was neither sparked by the content of any of the propositions nor by a specific interest apart from preserving their authority. Eventually Kraske could overcome Bavaria's resistance by asserting that the limitation of visas would be targeted to the Soviet Union and as an exceptional measure (*'Kampfmaßnahme'*) only.

Registration *per se* was only one of four items on the conference's agenda and the necessity of nationwide standardisation was uncontested. The attendees agreed upon non-binding provisions. While many aspects of the guidelines were hitherto covered by local legislation, the biggest change was one in principle. The conference's final document sets in: "Die Meldebestimmungen der Länder sollen grundsätzlich in gleicher Weise für Inländer und Ausländer Anwendung finden".⁹² Though the provisions still allowed for exceptions for instance in border regions, the conference agreed that registration in Germany should be extended from alien control to citizen control. The regulations should be both easy comply with for the population and more comprehensive. Looking at the history of registration its biggest challenge had been compliance.⁹³ By extending respites to up to a week and providing the necessary forms free of charge it was expected to obtain more comprehensive registers. Complementary, first – albeit vague – nationwide notification obligations were included. Registration Offices now were instructed to notify their counterparts in all cases in which circumstances suggested that registration had not been cancelled at the last residency to ensure the whereabouts of a given person were continuously documented. Furthermore, the new directives provided for a wider use of the registries. Anticipating the idea of a database of the population the final document stated:

Der Inhalt der Meldungen ist so auszugestalten, dass er auch für andere Zwecke der Verwaltung (z.B. für Wahl- und Steuerzwecke) alle wissenswerten Angaben enthält. Deswegen kann auch in diesen Formularen auf die Spalte 'Staatsangehörigkeit' und 'Religion' nicht verzichtet werden. [...]

91. BArch R 901 26070, BArch R 901 26070, Auswärtiges Amt an Herrn Martius, 2nd June 1928, 51.

92. BArch R 901 26070, Eisenach Conference Closing Document (II B 8106/3.7.) 9th June 1928, 124.

93. Cf. Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 10.

Hinsichtlich der Frage nach der Religion wurde festgestellt, dass diese Frage der Reichsverfassung nicht widerspricht.

Notably, this was the only dissent that surfaced in the records of registration affairs from Eisenach.

One more item on the conference's agenda, though only loosely connected to registration, shall be briefly discussed. It relates to Germans of undocumented citizenship abroad and shows how '*völkisch*' concepts, that had already manifested in the 1913 act on citizenship, were embedded into Weimar politics. Germans in Poland in particular should not be incited to move to Germany in order to maintain citizenship, as they were seen as leverage regarding German claims on Polish territory.

Um die Abwanderung deutschstämmiger Elemente aus Polen zu verhindern, erschienen [...] fremdenpolizeiliche Maßnahmen weder politisch tragbar, noch auch geeignet, das Gefühl der Zugehörigkeit zum deutschen Volkstum zu stärken und zu erhalten.

Hence the conference agreed to go easy on 'ethnic' Germans infringing aliens' law. According to the majority of federal envoys this already was commonly practised. But police could of course apply aliens' law "wenn auch sonstige erhebliche Gründe die Entfernung der betreffenden Person angezeigt erscheinen lassen". Once again, this time for 'ethnic Germans' the question of a definition or criteria was raised. Instead of entering into lengthy discussions, the conference took a practical approach to the issue:

Von einer allgemein gültigen Festlegung des Begriffes der Deutschstämmigkeit wird Abstand genommen. Jedoch soll der deutsch-österreichischen Anschlussbewegung dadurch Rechnung getragen werden, dass Angehörige der Österreichischen Republik ohne weitere Prüfung als deutschstämmig angesehen werden. Auch wird bei Angehörigen der Freien Stadt Danzig die Deutschstämmigkeit im allgemeinen bejaht werden können.

Austrians should generally be treated like legal Germans.⁹⁴ People from Gdansk were to be treated with a little more suspicion. Polish Germans again were not even mentioned, suggesting a subtle ranking. Regarding clear-cut criteria, the conference realised that "offizielle Vorschriften über eine Vorzugsbehandlung der deutschstämmigen Ausländer [...] rechtlich und politisch nicht möglich [sind]."

94. BArch R 901 20670, Eisenach Conference Closing Document (II B 8106/3.7.) 9th June 1928, 124-129.

Implementation therefore mirrored the process of arbitrary exclusion as it was similarly subject to individual officials' judgement.

The conference agreed that all regulations in the final document should be in effect by 1st January 1929. The central register for expulsion (A.N.St.) was established that same year, Prussia's registration regulation template was issued in 1930 but regarding the other agreements even a year later Prussia's Ministry of the Interior stated that "auch jetzt noch nicht alle Hindernisse beseitigt sind, die einer Neuregelung der Passverordnung im ganzen entgegenstehen".⁹⁵ Yet another year later, in August 1931, the Prussian Ministry of the Interior informed the Ministry for the Exterior that

die Vorarbeiten für die neue Arbeitsmarktverordnung, die nach der Eisenacher Paß- und Fremdenpolizei Konferenz von 1928 als ein wichtiger Teil der geplanten Neuregelung auf paß- und fremdenpolizeilichen Gebiet gedacht war, noch nicht abgeschlossen werden konnte.⁹⁶

Due to the entanglement with the various administrative fields discussed with the *Reichsreform*, reform efforts in general remained in gridlock.

Registration in the early 1930s

The Eisenach conference brought the benefits of a unified registration system to the attention of the federal states and brought about a general understanding of the main items. Regulations for registration were seemingly not contested at all, with the exception of the inclusion of a question about religion in registration forms. While this prepared the ground for a more thorough standardisation over the coming years, the directives were all vague and left room for interpretation by the federal authorities. The agreement reached was far from affecting the underlying structure of federal police sovereignty. Due to the complexity of the issues discussed, the need for consultation with the various parties involved (diplomatic missions, police departments, the Ministry for the Exterior and federal ministries, etc.) the conference yielded few results during the Weimar years. For Prussia the conference resulted in template registration regulations in April 1930 adapted in Berlin on 1st July that same year. According to the guidelines it advised:

95. BArch R 901 20670, Der Reichsminister des Innern an die Landesregierungen, Betrifft: Herabsetzung der Passgebühren. 25th April 1929, 327.

96. BArch R 901 25416, Der Reichsminister des Innern an die Landesregierungen, Betrifft: Neuregelung des Paßwesens, 5th August 1931, 8.

- registry offices to be located at the local police departments
- registration on arrival (*Anmeldung*)
- obligation to cancel registration when moving away (*Abmeldung*)
- regulations for registration for secondary residence, inns, hospitals, homeless shelters, etc.
- issuance of a cancelling of registration form (*Abmeldeschein*)
- introduction of the ‘*Großer Meldeschein*’ as the standard form for registration which asked for:
 - first and family name
 - marital status
 - occupation
 - date of birth
 - place of birth
 - religion
 - indication of the former address
 - (sub) tenancy

Thus the ‘*Musterpolizeiverordnung*’ ensured an unprecedented degree of consistency for Prussia. The establishment of the A.N.St. and the Munich ‘*Zigeunerstelle*’ marked the start of centralisation of police administration. The Prussian *Polizeiverordnungsgesetz* (PVG) that came into force in June 1931 authorised the Prussian Ministry of the Interior to decree police regulations for all of Prussia.

3 A racial state

The National Socialists' core promise was to replace the constantly changing modern society with the supposedly more harmonious *Volksgemeinschaft*. The concept of the *Volksgemeinschaft* had been conjured by almost all political parties during the Weimar era, but with the political right it soon got a 'völkisch' interpretation.¹ Analysis of the nexus of statistics, registration and concepts of state membership has thus far shown a long-lasting trend in which further unification and centralisation of the German state was accompanied by an increasingly exclusive understanding of state membership. National Socialists promised to implement the idea of congruency of 'Volk' and 'race' once in power.

Germany was to be turned into the Racial State.² In its 1920 Manifesto the NSDAP had tied citizenship to the concept of 'race'.³ State membership should from now on be based on 'German blood'. It was thus up to the new rulers to endow with meaning the hitherto floating signifiers of *Volk* and *Volksgemeinschaft* and its complementing ideology – anti-Semitism. To transform both from cultural code into (legal) practice and institutions, authorities had to acquire information on the descent of the resident population

Numerous initiatives aimed at producing racial indices of the population, varying in administrative responsibilities as well as in the concepts of race. However, an implementation of any of these initiatives depended on clear-cut criteria of 'race'. Similarly, a reform of the police registration system had to consider 'race' as an important factor. Only when this dispute was decided in September 1935 did efforts for a unified registration system gain momentum.

I will now outline the early attempts towards racial registration and statistics and the difficulties encountered in the period between 1933 and 1937 with particular focus on

1. Cf. Steffen Bruendel, *Volksgemeinschaft oder Volksstaat: die "Ideen von 1914" und die Neuordnung Deutschlands im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Akad.-Verl.).

2. Michael Burleigh, *The racial state: Germany 1933 - 1945*, ed. Wolfgang Wippermann (Cambridge, 1991).

3. NSDAP, '25-Punkte-Programm der NSDAP', 1927, http://www.dfg-vk-darmstadt.de/Lexikon%5C_Auflage%5C_2/NSDAP%5C_%5C-25%5C_Punkte%5C_Programm.pdf, §4.

the intended methods of data acquisition. I will show how these attempts failed, resulting in the 1937 decision to integrate racial aspects in the police registration system. This evolutionary process would eventually lead to the establishment of the *Volkskartei*. But before getting to the issue of race and registration, I will examine the early discussions around the racial concepts and show how their outcome eventually influenced the registration system.

3.1 Prioritising ‘race’

When at the end of 1932 a NSADAP-led government seemed foreseeable, Achim Gercke, director of the *NS-Auskunft* in charge of tracing the descent of party members, and thus familiar with the difficulties of the matter, wrote a memorandum concerning the racial questions a future racial state had to answer. Mainly addressing citizenship of ‘Jews of mixed-blood’ it also included the draft of a ‘*Rassescheidungs-gesetz*’ (Racial Segregation Act). The three main concerns, he argued, were a) the conceptual segregation of races, b) the classification of the population according to a), and c) the legal enactment of segregation.⁴ Any segregation required the respective classification of the entire population.

This, however, proved to be more difficult than anticipated. The new regime’s formative first two years were characterised by serious infighting, with SS and SA as the focal points, directly affecting racial policies. It was a conflict over administrative competence as well as the content of racial policies. Not only was the definition of those to be excluded from the *Volks-gemeinschaft* contended, but the racial differences within it. Dr Lothar Loeffler from the Kiel Institute for Anthropology only observed a common opinion amongst racial scientists, when in 1934 he said:

Das deutsche Volk ist ein Rassengemisch, dessen Gehalt an den verschiedenen an seinem Aufbau beteiligten Rassen in der Geschichte geschwankt hat und noch heute Schwankungen unterliegt.⁵

Racial scientists did not agree on the number of races that formed the European and thus the German population. While Günther posited the existence of six, Fischer found four, Deniker six primary and four secondary races.⁶ Even more contested, however, was

4. Cf. Cornelia Essner, *Die ‘Nürnberger Gesetze’ oder die Verwaltung des Rassenwahns 1933 - 1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), 80.

5. Lothar Loeffler, ‘Grundlagen rassenhygienischer Bevölkerungspolitik’, ed. Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Standesbeamten Fachverbände e.V., (Frankfurt am Main) 17 (1934), 311.

6. Loeffler, 134.

the alleged hierarchy among these races. The fact that Germans could not be considered a homogeneous race posed a severe problem which was tackled in two opposing ways: one approach favoured the idea of a forming 'German race' that would include all the different races identified in Germany with the exception of Jews and 'Gypsies'. Those racists who did not entirely ignore genetics advocated 'Aryan' superiority. Both positions had political implications. The concept of a superior Aryan race was more elitist and thus more appealing to SS circles, whereas the concept of a forming 'German race' was more inclusive and its proponents were thus to be found with the SA.⁷ Any attempt to take inventory of Germany 'racial' composition had to decide which concept of race it would take into account. Furthermore, the treatment of 'Jews of mixed-blood' hinged on the outcome of these discussions since both positions were tied to two competing concepts of anti-Semitism that had formed about the turn of the century. The proponents of a 'German race' also believed in the 'contaministic' paradigm – that was widely publicised by Dinter's novel *'Die Sünde wider das Blut'* – according to which Jewishness was passed on like an infection from male to female during sexual intercourse, so that future children of (non-Jewish) women would be Jewish even if the contact did not result in pregnancy.⁸ The Nordicists on the other hand were influenced by modern genetics and would argue the case for eugenics, that is the *'Aufnordung'* of the German people.⁹ In consequence for Nordicists, Jewishness was acceptable to a certain degree as it could be 'mendelised'. Proponents of the German race concept believed even the slightest trace of 'Jewish blood' spoiled the hereditary factors. The different approaches to the question of the composition of the 'Germans' directly affected the treatment of 'Jews of mixed-blood'.

During the night of the long knives in 1934 not only was the influence of the SA diminished but also that of their racial scientists. In October the director of the *Rassepolitische Amt* (Office for Racial Policy) – established in April 1934 to straighten out racial-policies – sent a confidential letter to all those concerned with racial matters proscribing the use of the term 'German race'. The most outspoken proponents of the concept Merckenschlager and Saller were banned from the party and lost their positions in early 1935.¹⁰ While the SS and thus the Nordicists won the conflict, National Socialist racial policy would keep oscillating between concepts and remnants of the contaministic paradigm would surface again, in particular with the *'Blutschutzgesetz'*.

7. Essner, *'Nürnberger Gesetze'*, 69-72.

8. Essner, 32-40.

9. Cf. Essner, 15.

10. Cf. Essner, 69.

An intricate definition

On the 7th April 1933 the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* introduced a definition of race. In an effort to cleanse the administration of unwanted personnel it introduced several criteria under which former officials could be sent into retirement. While mainly targeting political opponents, its third paragraph read: “Beamte, die nicht arischer Abstammung sind, sind in den Ruhestand zu versetzen”.¹¹ It took three more days until the first implementing provision defined ‘Aryan descent’:

Als nicht arisch gilt, wer nicht von arischen Eltern oder Großeltern abstammt. Es genügt wenn ein Elternteil oder Großelternteil nicht arisch ist. Dies ist insbesondere dann anzunehmen, wenn ein Elternteil oder Großelternteil der jüdischen Religion angehört hat.¹²

Thus the law established the concept of ‘*Vierteljuden*’. Instead of defining ‘Aryan descent’, the provision established criteria for ‘non-Aryans’. According to this definition, officials with one Jewish relative in the grandparents’ generation were sent into retirement. Targeting state employees, its scope was limited to a specific social strata, but more importantly the law still was vague as the ‘Jewish religion’ of ancestors was seen as an indicator rather than evidence. Cases of doubt were to be settled “beim Reichsministerium des Innern bestellten Sachverständigen für Rasseforschung”. The office of the *Sachverständigen für Rasseforschung* (Expert in Racial Science) was filled by Achim Gercke. Being a proponent of the ‘contaministic’ paradigm Gercke – rather dissatisfied by the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* definition – noted:

Dann tun wir so, als sei jüdisches Blut, das z.B. in der Urgroßelternreihe eingedrungen ist, gar nicht vorhanden oder bedeutungslos.¹³

Statistics and racism

But the new law’s terminology also raised the cautious objections of scientists measuring and mapping the subject of modern government. In 1934 Berlin statistician Karl Keller sketched out the obstacles to racial statistics as well as ways to overcome them. As a statistician, Keller was interested in individual features only as they formed a general trend. He defined the task of racial statistics accordingly:

11. **RGBI I**, 1933, 175. Tentatively, exceptions were made for German Jews who had fought at the front lines during the Great War or lost serving family members.

12. **RGBI I**, 1933, 195.

13. As cited in: Essner, ‘*Nürnberger Gesetze*’, 81.

Diese hat es nicht mit einzelnen Merkmalen zu tun, sondern mit festen Verbindungen von Erbeigenschaften, in denen wir das Wesen der verschiedenen Rassen erblicken; sie sucht die Personengruppen, welche Träger dieser Verbindung sind, zahlenmäßig zu erfassen, ihren Bestand und seine Veränderung, ihren inneren Aufbau und ihre Lebensäußerungen.¹⁴

After giving a synopsis of the contemporary positions in racial science, he unequivocally sides with the Nordicists when he directly addressed “diejenigen, welche die Formung einer ‘deutschen’ Rasse als Ziel [...] hinstellen”:

Die Schaffung einer Volksgemeinschaft kann von der Politik ins Auge gefaßt werden; ob dies für die Schaffung einer Rasse möglich ist, erscheint außerordentlich zweifelhaft.¹⁵

Keller observed, that the forming of the *Volksgemeinschaft* did not equate with the long-term racial goals of the Nordicists. Hence, he continued to examine the problem of analysing the racial composition of the German population, with the statistician’s focus on workable definitions:

Also wagen wir es ruhig, mit unseren primitiven Rassebegriffen den Problemen zu Leibe zu gehen! [...] Natürlich müssen wir uns, wenn wir eine deutsche Rassenstatistik einrichten wollen, für eine der Einteilungen entscheiden [...].¹⁶

Opting in favour of Günther’s concept, Keller proposed the establishment of a culminate hereditary index for which data was to be registered on the occasion of draft, appliance for *Ehestandsdarlehen* etc. and from which preliminary data could be extrapolated on a geographical basis in near-time.

Since the cumulative approach would not guarantee a representative sample, for the long-term Keller proposed the establishment of regional hereditary indices located at the registry offices to register the hereditary features of the entire population – a plan that was already pursued by Achim Gercke.¹⁷ Reliable data regarding the racial features of the population, he argued, could only be gathered through registration and examination by specially trained medical personnel. Furthermore, since genotype and phenotype

14. Karl Keller, ‘Zur Frage der Rassestatistik’, *Allgemeines statistisches Archiv (AStA) Journal of the German Statistical Society* 24, no. 2 (1934): 129–142, 135.

15. Keller, 131.

16. Keller, 135.

17. Keller, 140.

of a person differ so that the examination of an individual could not yield conclusive information on the hereditary factors, these examinations had to include ancestry and offspring. In order to produce a clear display of the population's hereditary factors, Keller suggested the individual factors be collated into a single racial-score.

Every thirty years, he reckoned, the quinquennial censuses' counting cards could pass the hereditary index to assign the racial score and thus produce reliable racial statistics. Keller raised important points. The new racial policy required a system for knowledge management to maintain and provide the necessary information. Furthermore, to gather statistical data on the population's racial composition, physical screening of the entire population was required.

Regarding a racial definition of Jews, Keller could be expected to face conceptual difficulties similar to those described above, as he ascertained:

[...] in Wirklichkeit sind die Juden keine Rasse, sondern ein aus mehreren Rassen gemischtes Volk.¹⁸

Producing statistics on Jewish racial composition would prove as complicated as with non-Jewish Germans. But instead of discussing the minutiae of the racial composition of Jews he comes to a pragmatic realisation:

Seitdem in Deutschland der Nationalsozialismus die Macht ergriffen hat, ist damit begonnen worden, auch in der Statistik zwischen 'Ariern' und 'Nichtariern' zu unterscheiden. [...] Wenn das neuere Beamten- und Studentenrecht sich des Wortes 'arisch' bedient, so meint es aber damit etwas ganz anderes, es denkt gar nicht daran, etwa die Deutschen dinarischer Rasse anders zu behandeln, als die nordischer Rasse; hier bedeutet 'arisch' offenbar nur den Gegensatz zu 'jüdisch' [...] oder 'farbig'. Die Unterscheidung zwischen 'Arier' und 'Nichtarier' in der Statistik ist also im wesentlichen mit einer Unterscheidung zwischen Juden und Nichtjuden gleichzusetzen, wobei man auf jeden Fall nicht an die Konfession, sondern an die Abstammung denken muß. [...]

From a racial perspective Germans were racially mixed and hence the majority of Germans could not claim Aryan ancestry. Keller realised that the terminology for instance of the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* was rather blurry and nourished fears in the population racial policies would eventually exclude not only Jews. On the other hand he realised, the antisemitic measures already introduced were – in a strict

18. Keller, 'Zur Frage der Rassestatistik', 136.

sense – not racially defined, but rather aimed at revoking emancipation, as becomes clear from the ending of this paragraph:

Die Feststellung der jüdischen Abstammung bietet deshalb keine besonderen Schwierigkeiten, weil vor der Judenemanzipation die Zugehörigkeit zur jüdischen Konfession und zum jüdischen Volkstum sich im wesentlichen deckten. Mithin brauchen nur die Übertritte der letzten 130 Jahre aus den Kirchenbüchern und Standesamtregistern festgestellt zu werden, um die Abstammung zu ermitteln.¹⁹

Keller observed the inconsistency of the ‘Aryan’/ ‘Non-Aryan’ terminology and realised it was better expressed in the dichotomy of Jewish and non-Jewish, which was easier to apply since it adhered to the clear-cut criteria of religion, albeit claiming otherwise. Compared to the project of breeding a race, he considered revoking emancipation a relatively straightforward affair. Still he estimated a time-span of several decades to fully implement the project. Keller was not the only one who saw decades of thorough screening and cumulative registration ahead in order to realise the preconditions for racial segregation and melioration of the remaining German population.

Path dependencies

The party manifesto had linked German citizenship to ‘German blood’. Yet, regarding the question of citizenship German paperwork was – despite a century’s effort – far from comprehensive. For most Germans determining citizenship proved difficult as Friedrich A. Knost noted in 1934, “kaum irgend jemand, weder sie selbst, noch ein Rechtsberater, noch eine Behörde kann feststellen, welchem Staat sie angehören”.²⁰ Proof of citizenship had thus far only had to be produced in cases of doubt, for those who were doubtlessly German no consistent records existed in that regard.²¹ He thus carried on:

In jedem Staate muß ein K a t a s t e r d e r S t a a t s a n g e h ö r i g e n eingerichtet werden, ein Verzeichnis, in das alle Personen einzutragen sind, die diesem Staate angehören. Es bestehen ja auch Bücher, in die alle Grundstücke eingetragen werden.²²

19. Keller, ‘Zur Frage der Rassestatistik’, 137-138.

20. Knost, ‘Staatsbürgerlisten, Familienregister, Reichssippenkartei. Der Weg vom Standesamt zum Sippenamt’, 325.

21. See chapter ‘Continuance of Eisenach’, 77.

22. Knost, ‘Staatsbürgerlisten, Familienregister, Reichssippenkartei. Der Weg vom Standesamt zum Sippenamt’, 325.

Since citizenship was already based on descent, Knost reasons, to certify an individuals' belonging "muß vielmehr nicht selten auf die Staatsangehörigkeitsverhältnisse des Vaters, Großvaters oder noch weiter zurückgegangen werden".²³ As the *Standesämter* were already recording vital data, he suggested following Wuerttemberg's example and adding a question for citizenship to the forms. Furthermore, he endorsed Wuerttemberg's *Familienregister*, recording health data of entire families, from which conclusions regarding the individuals' 'hereditary value' could be drawn. Achim Gercke who was actively pursuing the establishment of a kinship index at the registry offices and still opposed to the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*' for being too lax, spoke in 1934 to the participants of an administrative congress:

Wer glaubt, daß sich die Rassegesetzgebung bereits auf dem Höhepunkt befindet, der irrt. Ein Anfang ist gemacht worden. Weiterbauen zu können, verlangt ein sehr gründliches Studium und eine vielleicht jahrzehntelange mühsame Kleinarbeit. In dieser Arbeit wird die Reichssippenkartei stehen und vorrausschauend Grundlagen für zukünftige Entwicklung schaffen.²⁴

In particular he argued a reshaped law on citizenship could only be enacted after the necessary data was acquired.²⁵ To realise his plans, Gercke had managed to find high-ranking backers. During the same event Minister of the Interior Frick spoke, sketching a process of massive data collection:

Denn das Wichtigste und Wesentlichste [...] wird die Aufgabe sein, in treuer, fleißiger Arbeit alles zusammen zu tragen, was für die Bewertung des Einzelnen in körperlicher und geistiger Hinsicht, in gesundheitlicher und staatsrechtlicher Beziehung von Bedeutung ist und werden kann. [...] Denn nicht die Gesundheit eines Einzelnen, sondern die Erbgesundheit, den Erbwert einer Sippe wünschen wir festzustellen.²⁶

Gercke had already devised plans to collect the data during a genealogical census ("*auf familienkundlicher Grundlage*"). Professor Scheidt from Hamburg doubted the feasibility of this approach:

23. Knost, 'Staatsbürgerlisten, Familienregister, Reichssippenkartei. Der Weg vom Standesamt zum Sippenamt', 325.

24. Achim Gercke, 'Die Reichssippenkartei. Ihr Wert und ihre Bedeutung', *Zeitschrift für Standesamtswesen. Personenstandsrecht, Ehe- u. Kindschaftsrecht, Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht (STAZ)* (Frankfurt am Main), 1934, 297–300, 300.

25. Cf. Diana Schulle, *Das Reichssippenamt. Eine Institution nationalsozialistischer Rassenpolitik* (Berlin: Logos, 2001), 137.

26. Wilhelm Frick, 'Vom Standesamt zum Sippenamt', *Zeitschrift für Standesamtswesen. Personenstandsrecht, Ehe- u. Kindschaftsrecht, Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht (STAZ)* (Frankfurt am Main), 1934, 377–379, 377.

[...] das wichtige sind die genealogischen Zusammenhänge. Die Bevölkerung im Sinne einer Volkszählung ist kein Volkskörper. Die Volkszählung liefert nur einen Querschnitt durch den Volkskörper, an dem die zentralen Fragen der Genetik nicht untersucht werden können.²⁷

In a central point, however, he agreed with Gercke. To produce an overview of the biological features of the population he suggests the establishment of a '*bevölkerungsbiologisches Reichsarchiv*' to accumulate and process respective data forwarded by doctors, teachers and courts. Combining these 'manifestations of life' in a single index, he expected the archive,

“die gesamte Bevölkerung so zu repräsentieren, daß vom ‘Repräsentanten’ einer jeden Person ohne weiteres die wichtigsten [...] Zusammenhänge zu erfahren sind”.²⁸

He envisaged a paper copy of the people that, frequently updated, would allow the authorities to answer all sorts of upcoming questions and help adjust policies accordingly. Knost also was intrigued by the idea of a single central index, pointedly articulating the vision, shared by many of those concerned with the matter:

[...] daß darin das ganze deutsche Volk – und bald nicht nur das lebende, sondern wirklich der ganze Volkskörper – vertreten, zur Auskunft an einem Ort anwesend wäre. Man könnte in 2 Stunden daran vorbeigehen, während das wirkliche Volk, wenn es in Viererkolonnen marschiert, dazu 8 Monate brauchte.²⁹

Knost and Scheidt were focused on the eugenic aspects a kinship index would facilitate but Gercke was also aware of its potential in terms of providing the data required to bring about racial segregation. To manage the population's racial composition he suggested the establishment of a central '*Reichssippenkartei*' (Reich Kinship Index). Increased internal migration, he argued, influenced the racial composition of the population and had to be monitored from a centralised office.³⁰ Complementary to the central index, on the district and the local level, prospective kinship offices were to maintain hardcover

27. As cited in: Knost, 'Staatsbürgerlisten, Familienregister, Reichssippenkartei. Der Weg vom Standesamt zum Sippenamt', 328.

28. As cited in: Knost, 328.

29. Knost, 329.

30. Gercke, 'Die Reichssippenkartei. Ihr Wert und ihre Bedeutung', 297.

Sippenbücher recording the biological features of individual families.³¹ Instead of establishing a whole new branch of administration the *Standesämter* (registry offices) were designated for a transformation to *Sippenämter* (Kinship Offices).

However, the breadth of the index was controversial. A draft from autumn 1933, in which Gercke and the *Sachverständigenrat für Rassen- und Bevölkerungspolitik* (Committee for Racial and Population Policy) presided by Gütt set out the Kinship Office's responsibilities and procedures, the kinship index was to list German '*Volksgenossen*' only. This implied that the issue of segregation had already been clarified elsewhere.

In a new draft from 1934 the index was intended to comprise the entire population, incorporating information on criminal activity and anti-social behaviour from the police, on the hereditary value provided by the *Gesundheitsämter*, and the *Standesämter*'s genealogical documents.³² In turn the *Sippenkartei* would feed its information into the different branches of administration and also serve to compile a '*Reichsjudenliste*'. With the index Gercke was thus aiming to provide the data required for antisemitic measures and 'racial hygiene' within the *Volksgemeinschaft*.³³ He proposed strict segregation in daily life for a transitional period, and in the long-term – anticipating the approach of the coming years – a centrally directed emigration of Germany's Jewish population. This central kinship index was mainly intended to facilitate the long-term project of a "Neubau des Volkes nach rassischen Gesichtspunkten" within the *Volksgemeinschaft*, for which racial segregation was only a precondition.³⁴ Gercke had also won over the registrars of the *Standesämter*, looking forward to increased importance and a standardised system. Friedrich A. Knost expressed his expectations as follows:

Hoffen wir, daß der Weg vom Standesamt zum Sippenamt bald gegangen, der Traum vom Reichssippenamt, dem zentralen (Reichs-) Zivilstandsamt, der alten Hoffnung der meisten, die als Fachleute mit der standesamtlichen Organisation seit Jahren zu tun gehabt haben, als im Zuge der gesamten staatlichen Entwicklung im neuen Deutschland liegend bald verwirklicht wird.³⁵

Despite the existing differences in racial policies in early 1934 it only seemed realistic that a nation wide *Sippenkartei* would soon be established, functioning as the main index

31. Gercke, 'Die Reichssippenkartei. Ihr Wert und ihre Bedeutung', 298; Cf. Schulle, *Reichssippenamt*, 138-139.

32. Cf. Essner, '*Nürnberger Gesetze*', 88.

33. Essner, 80.

34. Gercke, 'Die Reichssippenkartei. Ihr Wert und ihre Bedeutung', 299.

35. Knost, 'Staatsbürgerlisten, Familienregister, Reichssippenkartei. Der Weg vom Standesamt zum Sippenamt', 324.

to administer the population, form the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and provide data for racial policies both within the *Volksgemeinschaft* as well as identifying those to be segregated.

Position of points

Gercke had fought hard to secure his position that, on sole charge of assessing party member's descent, granted him enormous powers. But other branches in administration saw their influence on racial policy dwindling and began interfering with Gercke's proceedings. From within the Frick ministry overseeing Gercke's office, a competing initiative was launched by Artur Gütt. As in other fields of administration during the Weimar era, there had been a growing call for standardisation of healthcare on the national level. In June 1933 under Gütt's aegis a law drawing on arguments from the Weimar period was drafted that added the new paradigms in racial and population policies. Its attempt to nationalise health care led to the stark opposition of the communal envoys in the *Deutscher Gemeindetag* while the Reich Ministry of Finance stressed, the tremendous costs of such an enterprise rendered it unfeasible. The NSDAP's department for *Volks-gesundheit* favoured the nationalisation of health care, hoping this facilitated the subsequent incorporation into party structures – which again was met by Gütt's refusal, who was not willing to surrender competences to the party. A second draft from October retained the communal competence of the *Gesundheitsämter* but controlled by a state staffed senior consultant. Though it took until June 1934 to put through, the basic design of the second draft was eventually accepted and put into practice. However, it did not result in a more cohesive system but rather permeated the structural conflict of communal and national administration in the sphere of health care.³⁶ Gütt's plan earmarked the *Standesämter* for transformation to *Sippenämter*; but only in subordinate function, collecting and processing documents for the *Gesundheitsämter*, that would conduct examinations and have the final say regarding the individuals' hereditary value.

In October 1934 Gercke was replaced in his function as director of the *NS-Auskunft*, by Gerhard Wagner. Under the pretext of § 175 that prohibited same-sex relations, Gercke was removed from his office as *Sachverständiger für Sippenforschung*. In March 1935 Kurt Mayer was appointed – other than Gercke a Nordacist, *Untersturmführer* of the SS, and head of a department in Himmler's *Rasse- und Siedlungs- Hauptamt*(RuSHA).³⁷

36. Cf. Johannes Vossen, *Gesundheitsämter im Nationalsozialismus : Rassenhygiene und offene Gesundheitsfürsorge in Westfalen 1900 - 1950*, Düsseldorf Schriften zur neueren Landesgeschichte und zur Geschichte Nordrhein-Westfalens 56 (Essen: Klartext-Verl., 2001), 204-222.

37. Cf. Essner, 'Nürnberger Gesetze', 90.

The conflict over the monopoly of knowledge about the population's descent that surfaced after Gercke's removal involved different actors within the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice, but it also touched on the issue of separation of state and party competences. The Ministry of Justice intended to revise the *Personenstandsgesetz* (PStG) (Law on civil status) that had defined the work of the *Standesämter* including matrimonial law since 1875. As eliminating intermarriages was an essential part of segregation, Gütt suggested joining the legislative efforts. Initially, Hitler's Deputy, Heß, supported the merger because it would have left the financial responsibilities with the communes instead of with the party. Both Gercke's ally Knost and the Interior Ministry's *Rassereferent* Bernhard Lösner objected to combining these legislative undertakings for fear of watering down the racial aspects. Moreover, this would have given the Ministry of Justice decisive influence on racial policies.³⁸ The controversy was ongoing for more than a year until in February 1937 this policy saw a sudden shift, when Heß brought all efforts to combine the legal work and transform the *Standesämter* to a halt on behalf of Hitler. Future *Sippenämter*, he stated, were to administer the population of German blood only "unter Ausschaltung von Juden, Mischlingen und Fremdblütigen".³⁹ Since this would decrease the number of individuals registered, the party could afford to take over the administrative competence, whereas the *Standesämter* would certify and maintain the vital data of the entire population. While this did not seal the faith of the *Sippenämter* the decision clarified that the *Sippenkartei* would not be the device to identify those 'of German blood'. Quite to the contrary, the decision presupposed identification of Jews, "Mischlingen und Fremdblütigen" had already been achieved by other means. Obviously, by February 1937, the administration had figured out other ways to identify the unwanted parts of the population. I will come back to this point in the chapter 'Finalising the *Reichsmeldeordnung*'.⁴⁰

Though the project of a grand-scale racial revision of the population indices was never officially abandoned, with the passing of the Nuremberg Laws, the concept of the *Reichssippenamt* as it was envisioned by Gercke became obsolete and the office was for the time being limited to examining cases of doubt and issuing *Abstammungsbescheide* (decisions on descent) and collating archival material.

38. Cf. Schulle, *Reichssippenamt*, 262 and Essner, 'Nürnberger Gesetze', 89.

39. As cited in Schulle, *Reichssippenamt*, 272.

40. 'Finalising the *Reichsmeldeordnung*', 103.

‘Racial hygiene’ or anti-Semitism

With Hitler’s proclamation of the ‘Nuremberg Laws’ in the course of 1935’s party rally, a process was started that led to the separation of the issues of segregation and ‘racial hygiene’ within the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The *Reichsbürgergesetz* established a differentiated concept of state membership.

Das Reichsbürgergesetz unterscheidet zwischen dem ‘Staatsangehörigen’ und dem ‘Reichsbürger’. Durch die Trennung dieser Begriffe wird mit einem Hauptgrundsatz der liberalistischen Zeit gebrochen. Dannach besaßen alle Staatsangehörigen ohne Rücksicht auf Rasse, Volkstum, Konfession u. dgl. gleiche Rechte und Pflichten.⁴¹

Henceforth, only the *Reichsbürger* were to enjoy full political rights, whereas the category of *Staatsangehörige*, in Frick’s words, only served “der Abgrenzung des Deutschen vom Ausländer und Staatenlosen”.⁴² A future *Reichsbürgerbrief* would certify the individuals belonging to the *Volksgemeinschaft* and allow for separate administration of the *Reichsbürger*. Yet, the certificate’s introduction was postponed, and the first paragraph of the implementation provision provisionally extended *Reichsbürgerschaft* to all those ‘of German or kindred blood’ eligible to vote in the *Reichstag* elections.⁴³ But most importantly, in acknowledgement of Germans’ racial inhomogeneity, the law introduced a new terminology, replacing the term ‘Aryan’. The new substitute ‘of German or kindred blood’ allowed the setting aside of the internal inhomogeneity of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and instead enable to focus on the real target of ‘racial’ policies.⁴⁴ Frick laid out this negative logic:

Ausgehend von der Tatsache, daß das Rassenproblem für Deutschland das Judenproblem bedeutet, sollen dannach die Angehörigen des jüdischen Volkes

41. Wilhelm Frick, *Das Reichsbürgergesetz vom 15. September 1935 und das Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 15. September 1935 mit Ausführungsverordnungen vom 14. November und 21. Dezember – mit Übersichtstafeln*, Schriftenreihe des Reichsausschusses für Volksgesundheit (Berlin: Reichsausschuß für Volksgesundheitsdienst, Reichsdruckerei), 3.

42. Frick, 4.

43. Obviously, the *Wahllisten* were considered the most reliable source to determine citizenship. These suffrage registers were compiled by the *Wahlkommission*. But their work was based on the *Meldeämter*’s data that usually registered the declared credentials without further proof – cases of doubt exempt. Cf. Georg Kaisenberg, ed., *Die Wahl zum Reichstag: Führer für die Reichstagswahlen*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Stollberg, 1928), 17–23.

44. Frick, *Das Reichsbürgergesetz vom 15. September 1935 und das Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 15. September 1935 mit Ausführungsverordnungen vom 14. November und 21. Dezember – mit Übersichtstafeln*, 4.

von jedem Einfluss auf das Eigenleben des deutschen Volkes ausgeschaltet werden. [...] Da ein Jude nicht Reichsbürger sein kann, war eine Vorschrift notwendig, die ein für allemal klarstellt, wer als Jude anzusehen ist.⁴⁵

This provision was provided only with the fifth paragraph of the *Erste Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz* dated 14th November 1935. The legislation's underlying logic of a definition *ex negativo* had, however, been present in an earlier attempt to define the members of the *Volksgemeinschaft* or 'Volksgenossen' in the NSDAP's 1920 manifesto:

Staatsbürger kann nur sein, wer Volksgenosse ist. Volksgenosse kann nur sein, wer deutschen Blutes ist, ohne Rücksichtnahme auf Konfession. Kein Jude kann daher deutscher Volksgenosse sein.⁴⁶

Fifteen years later the approach remained basically the same. While only those of 'German blood regardless of religious denomination' were supposed to be included, what it meant to be 'of German or kindred blood' could only be defined by the exclusion of Jews.

To the dissatisfaction of the remaining 'contaministic' hardliners, in 1935 the concept of *Mischling* was limited to that of 'Halbjuden' (the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* instead excluded 'Vierteljuden') that were, political reliability provided, to be absorbed by the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Also differing from the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*, the main genealogical reference for Jewishness was the grandparents' generation, whose Jewish religion was 'ohne weiteres' evidence for Jewishness. In the terminology provided by the implementing provision, one Jewish grandparent would make the offspring in the second generation 'Mischling 2. Grades, who were, according to the provisions of the *Blutschutzgesetz*, allowed to marry *Staatsangehörige deutschen oder artverwandten Blutes* and thus be integrated into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, whereas the descendents of two Jewish grandparents were legally defined as *Mischling 1. Grades*. The group created by this definition was only with special permission allowed to marry *Staatsangehörige deutschen oder artverwandten Blutes*, *Mischlinge 2. Grades* included, while they could marry Jews and *Geltungsjuden* (according to the 1935 acts those with three Jewish grandparents) rendering their own offspring Jewish. Finally, the law banned marriage and extramarital affairs of Jews and *Staatsangehörige*

45. Frick, *Das Reichsbürgergesetz vom 15. September 1935 und das Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre vom 15. September 1935 mit Ausführungsverordnungen vom 14. November und 21. Dezember – mit Übersichtstafeln*, 4-5.

46. NSDAP, '25-Punkte-Programm der NSDAP', §4. The following §5 suggested Jews be subjected to a specially devised aliens law.

deutschen oder artverwandten Blutes. Thus, the *Gesetz zum Schutz des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre* put the Nordacist's approach that to a certain degree Jewishness could be mendelised into legal practice, whilst – with its combination of racism and sexism – catering to the contaminists. For those *Staatsangehörige* destined to form the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the *Gesetz zum Schutz der Erbgesundheit des deutschen Volkes* (*Ehegesundheitsgesetz*) issued on 18th October 1935 set out the basic principles of 'racial hygiene'. Instead of employing the concepts of 'German or kindred blood' it referred to the *Volksgemeinschaft*. It banned marriage when one spouse was incapacitated, had a mental defect or carried a disease that could possibly impair the offspring's health or that was included in the 1933 *Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses*. Once again, the implementation of an obligation to provide an *Ehetauglichkeitzeugnis* (Certificate of Qualification for Marriage) was for the time being limited to cases of doubt and introduction for the entire *Volksgemeinschaft* was postponed.⁴⁷ Thus the Nuremberg laws, the *Erbgesundheitsgesetz*, and the subsequent implementation provisions, deviated from the original plan to combine segregation and internal 'racial hygiene'. Instead, both projects were separated and the implementation of the latter postponed indefinitely.

3.2 Indexing the 'Volk'

As a consequence of the decisions in the course of the *Parteitag* neither the *Standesämter* nor the *Gesundheitsämter* acquired their designated functions. However, authorities were not planning to loosen their grip on the population. Though the discussions on the registration of racial descent and the pending state of the *Reichsreform* had a dilatory effect, when the decision was taken at the end of 1935, efforts to standardise the registration system picked up pace. However, the 'traditional' ways of recording data on the population had not been neglected. Two major projects of the Weimar era were realised in 1933: the long-expected census and registration regulations that implemented the results of the Eisenach agreement in Prussia. Bringing this chapter to a close I will discuss these developments.

Census 1933

The republic had intended to adapt the quinquennial rhythm for censuses established during the Kaiserreich, but the census of 1925 was the last one taken. For the next one

47. RGBI I, 1246, § 8.

it was intended to extend the questionnaire now asking for citizenship, religion, mother-tongue and former residence. It also introduced cohort analysis to produce reliable projections of future population growth or shrinkage. But when the preparations for the 1930 census increased in pace, several federal states began questioning the relevance of censuses in general. In October 1929 Württemberg's Minister of Finance argued, in absence of conscription, that there was no need to determine the number of conscripts each state had to contribute. The equalisation payments of the (*Länderfinanzausgleich*) did not depend on a census since sufficient results could be produced by analysis of the financial ministries' annual tax-related *Personenstandsaufnahme* and the migration statistics, avoiding the costly censuses altogether. Finally, he argued, the federal states – having to bear the costs – did not see any gain in a census:

Ausserordentliche Ausgaben, die wie bei der Volkszählung, im hauptsächlichlichen Interesse des Reiches gemacht werden, sollten auch von Reich übernommen werden.⁴⁸

Yet, the representatives of the *Städte tag*, though equally in financial distress, were pressing hard for a timely implementation.⁴⁹ The data from the 1925 census had clearly shown a dramatically increased population for all city states, with the exception of Königsberg. For the territorial states it had registered an overall decrease in numbers. These figures did not show in the population registers. Since the internal migration patterns were not likely to change and tax revenues were shared out in proportion to the population, every new census directly entailed a financial loss for the territorial states. Due to the related costs, the Ministry of Finances favoured a postponement whereas the interior and financial ministries, both depending on accurate data, were unwilling to accept any delay. Instead they accepted the limitation of the scope of the survey.⁵⁰ The quinquennial array was internationally adapted and allowed for comparison with other nations; leaving the cycle was only possible at the expense of comparability. Even more importantly, the staff compiling the census had been hired in 1925 and until 1930 paid from the 1925 census' coffer. The subsequent census was expected to cover the cost for the next five years. When the census was eventually postponed the statistical office had thus claimed special expenses. As a result of these complex patterns of competing interests and the general dead lock in Weimar's politics the census was postponed twice and eventually

48. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Nr. 3962, Württ. Finanzministerium an das Reichsfinanzministerium, 28th October 1929, 81.

49. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Nr. 3962, Reichsstädtebund an den Herrn Reichswirtschaftsminister, 6th June 1931, 165.

50. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Nr. 3962, Minister des Innern, Auf das Schreiben vom 21.10.1929, betreffend Bereitstellung der für die Volkszählung 1930 erforderlichen Mittel, 13th November 1929, 11.

scheduled for 16th June 1933. It combined population, vocational, trade and agricultural statistics and introduced family statistics. And even though the new questions of the family statistics fit well into the policy of the new regime, that introduced the *Ehestandsdarlehen* in September 1933 to increase birth rates, they were, like the entire census, laid out in the years before. However, this did not prevent Friedrich Burgdörfer from praising the “Regierung der nationalen Erhebung” for overcoming

im Wege der durch das Ermächtigungsgesetz ermöglichten vereinfachten Form der Gesetzgebung die bisherigen Hemmungen und Widerstände einzelner Länder,

and to enable what he considered “die Durchführung einer neuen Inventur des deutschen Volkes”.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the 1933 census was not the first to be ordered centrally. Whereas prior to 1919 censuses had been agreed upon by the *Bundesrat* and implemented by legislation on the federal level, the subsequent counts were based on national law.⁵² But like prior ones, the 1933 census still required separate implementation orders in each federal state.⁵³ Furthermore, the federal statistical offices were also in charge of preparing the questionnaires, organising the conduct of the census and the analysis. The method of processing was also a decision of the federal offices. During the 1925 survey Saxony and Prussia had been the first to compute the census utilising punch card machines from different manufacturers operated by the offices’ staff. In 1933 only Prussia used machines, provided by the German branch of IBM, DEHOMAG. By leasing the machines, providing the punch cards and most importantly organising the count’s analysis, DEHOMAG had successfully managed to exclude its competitors.⁵⁴ DEHOMAG’s organisers chose a 60-column punch card that left 11 empty columns, in case it was decided “aus irgendwelchen staatspolitischen Erwägungen heraus weitere Angaben der Haushaltungslisten auf die Lochkarte zu übernehmen”.⁵⁵ Aly and Roth concluded in 1984: “Solche ‘staatspolitischen Erwägungen’ gab es tatsächlich, es waren die Sonderauszählung

51. Friedrich Burgdörfer, ‘Die Volks-, Berufs- und Betriebszählung 1933’, *Allgemeines statistisches Archiv (AStA) Journal of the German Statistical Society* (Heidelberg) 23 (1933): 146–155, 146.

52. Cf. RGBl 1919, 652; RGBl I, 19.

53. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Nr. 3963, Der Präsident des Statistischen Landesamtes Berlin an den Herrn Präsidenten des Statistischen Reichsamtes in Berlin, 4th March 1933, 85.

54. The Berlin based POWERS GMBH producing the machines and EULER paper mill producing punch cards filed complaints with the Reich Ministry of the Interior. In order to refute their complaints DEHOMAG agreed to use ‘German’ raw material only and ascertained most of the machine parts were made in Germany. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Nr. 3963.

55. Ludwig Hümmer, ‘Die Aufbereitung der Volks- und Berufszählung 1933 im Hollerith-Lochkartenverfahren’, *Hollerith-Nachrichten* (Berlin) 28 (August 1933): 343–355, 345.

der Juden und Ausländer”.⁵⁶ However, the correspondence of Berlin statistical offices’ director Dr Saenger and Burgdörfer does not suggest an extension was even considered. Quite to the contrary Saenger remarked, that “in den letzten Wochen in außerordentlich starkem Maße an den Tabellen gekürzt worden ist,” and that “fernere Abstriche am Auszählungsprogramm” were unfeasible “es sei denn, daß man auf eine der vier Erhebungen vollkommen verzichtet”.⁵⁷ Beyond that, the 1933 census did consider ‘racial’ aspects, to the extent possible at that time. As Friedrich Burgdörfer explained retrospectively:

Eine statistische Erfassung des gesamten im Reich ansässigen Judentums (der Rasse nach) war nicht möglich, da bei der Erhebung nicht nach der Abstammung gefragt worden war. Eine entsprechende Frage hätte damals auch nicht gestellt werden können, da zur Zeit der Zählung 1933 der Begriff der deutschen bzw. jüdischen Abstammung noch nicht gesetzlich festgelegt und abgegrenzt war.⁵⁸

But the data aggregated on ‘confession’ was analysed excessively. Parameters like sex, age, vocation, citizenship, place of birth were collated and thereafter published in separate tables, which Burgdörfer related to the ‘*Judentabellen*’ of the previous century. While the census was used to gather statistical data on German Jews, there is no record that the data was used to identify individuals.

Continuance of Eisenach

As with the census, in the field of registration, the period after the change of the political order was marked by great continuity. The *Polizeiverordnung über das Meldewesen* of 22nd April 1933 adopted most paragraphs of 1930’s template verbatim.⁵⁹ The only addition was § 22 regulating registration of volunteers in the labour service.⁶⁰ And even though the *Gesetz zur Gleichschaltung der Länder* allowed the implementation of nationwide legislation, the fact that registration was a competence of the municipalities and the

56. Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*, 23.

57. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Nr. 3963, Der Präsident des Statistischen Landesamtes Berlin an den Herrn Präsidenten des Statistischen Reichsamtes in Berlin, 4th March 1933, 85.

58. Friedrich Burgdörfer, ‘Die Juden in Deutschland und der Welt. Ein statistischer Beitrag zur biologischen und sozialen Struktur des Judentums in Deutschland’, in *Forschungen zur Judenfrage. Sitzungsberichte der Dritten Münchner Arbeitstagung des Reichsinstituts für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands vom 5. bis 7. Juli 1938*, vol. 3, Schriften des Reichsinstituts für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands (München: Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des Neuen Deutschland, 1938), 152–170, 152.

59. Cf. Hägele, *Die Rechtsentwicklung des Paß- und Meldewesens; Nach d. Recht Preußens u. d. Reichs*, 90.

60. See chapter ‘Trials in registration’, 92.

pending state of the *Reichsreform* detained the establishment of a new nationwide registration system. Based on the June 1931 *Polizeiverordnungsgesetz* the regulations were limited to Prussia and had to be effected by local police regulations. All previous regulations were suspended. The first state-wide obligations for *Abmeldung* on the occasion of moving from a registration district (that is a district with an independent registration office), *Anmeldung* when moving into a registration district or *Ummeldung* moving within a district were established. The new form ‘*Großer Meldeschein*’ required all the data agreed upon in 1928, including religion and adding a question for vocation – that was expected to be answered as precisely as possible – and citizenship.⁶¹ Regarding this question an additional note was required as to whether citizenship was verified providing a passport, naturalisation certificate, *Staatsangehörigenausweis* or *Heimatschein*. Further, the issuing authority had to be specified. Changes or rectifications of citizenship had to be reported to the registration offices by the respective authorities. Nevertheless, authorities stressed that the data on citizenship in the index remained unreliable since the administrative authority in the field of citizenship lay with the federal police departments while the local registration offices depended on the registrant’s information.⁶² As provided by the 1928 templates, the respite for registration was extended to a week in order to increase the populations’ compliance and the registrars were expected “dem Publikum die Ausübung der Meldepflicht durch höfliche Belehrung und bereitwillige Hilfe zu erleichtern”.⁶³ The obligation to register lay in the case of families with the (male) head of the family, including domestic workers and / or subtenants, or otherwise with the moving individual. Since these measures did not help to increase the populations compliance, within a year many municipalities resorted to issuing police decrees on the local level, which reintroduced the lessor’s liability under penalty of 50 *RM* or a week imprisonment.⁶⁴ From the registrant’s side, the new regulations did not discriminate nationals from aliens – but it did on the side of substantive law. The implementation provisions required every registration of aliens to be reported to the *Ortspolizeibehörde* or the “mit der Bearbeitung der Ausländerangelegenheiten beauftragten Stelle der Polizeiverwaltung”.⁶⁵ In addition, registration forms for aliens had to be marked with a

61. See page 58.

62. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 105 Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Regierungspräsident Oppeln Herrn Preuss. Minister des Innern, 20th October 1933, 9.

63. Heinz Steffens, *Polizeiverordnung über das Meldewesen vom 22. April 1933: mit e. Anhang: Vorschriften über d. Einrichtung u. Führung von Meldekarteien*, Kommunale Schriften 1 (Berlin: Dt. Gemeindeverl., 1935), 23.

64. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd. 1, Ausschnitt Schlesische Zeitung No 258, 18th September 1934, 33.

65. MBl. 1933, 603.

black, triangular label in the upper right corner. In order to produce migration statistics for immigrants and emigrants alike, counting cards had to be completed and filed or if existent, send to the respective *Zentralmeldestelle*. A copy of each registration had to be immediately forwarded to the tax authorities. Other branches of administration were obliged to feed their data into the registration offices' indices respectively. *Standesämter* had to report changes in civil status to the registration offices in order to rectify records; the criminal police, wanted suspects, whose index cards were then marked with a note in red ink and coloured tabs. On the material side, the implementation provision for the first time specified that records had to be kept in the form of card indices, detailing the size of the cardboard cards and a colour code. Male individuals and their respective families were registered on 'chamois' cards, female divorcees and widows on 'light-blue' and unwed women on 'orange' cards. The concept of 'family' was limited to that of the nuclear family comprising the parents, legitimate, and foster children. Stepchildren were registered on individual cards, as were domestic workers and / or subtenants. A special field for remarks should be used to clarify the family connections between the index cards once the children were registered on individual cards.⁶⁶ The obligatory move from list-based registration to card indices that – with the exception of the nuclear family – registered one individual per card had several merits. It made it far easier to locate individuals by name, to update existing data and trace their places of residence.

Prussia's Ministry of the Interior defined rules for disclosure of personal details. Private individuals were allowed to access some personal details of every other person including former residence, date and place of birth, religion and citizenship against payment of a fee. Other branches of the administration were provided with all information free of charge. Apart from that the ministry stated: "Über sonstige Verhältnisse von Personen sind Auskünfte an Privatpersonen nicht zu erteilen".⁶⁷

The matter of disclosure was frequently addressed in reports from Prussia's *Regierungspräsidenten* after the provisions were passed. In order to expose marriage swindlers, it was suggested to include the marital status among the data possibly disclosed. Furthermore, a number of *Regierungspräsidenten* objected to the disclosure of citizenship. Answering in writing the *Meldestelle* would produce documents on citizenship even though the data in the registers might be faulty and only the *Regierungspräsidenten* (in their capacity as *Ortspolizeibehörde*) were authorised to issue such documents. After stating that requests were particularly common "wenn die Vermutung besteht, dass der

66. RdErl. des Pr. MdI 'Bestimmungen über die Neueinrichtung und Führung der staatlichen Melderegister vom 11. Juli 1929.

67. RdErl. des MdI vom 8. Juni 1933.

betreffende Ausländer ist”, the rapporteurs of Oppeln’s *Regierungspräsidenten* argued, such disclosures appeared “bedenklich, weil sie gewöhnlich zum Nachteil des Gemeldeten ausgewertet werden wird.” Why higher ranking officials would care about some aliens’ privacy becomes clear when the rapporteurs specified their concern:

Noch schlimmer würden sich Auskünfte aus den Melderegistern über die Staatsangehörigkeit in den Fällen auswirken, die von einer höheren Verwaltungsbehörde durch ausweichende Auskunft verdeckt wurden. Und solche Fälle sind gerade im hiesigen Grenzbezirk gegenüber den fast alles erfassenden polischen Anfrage, denen meistens militärische Interessen zugrundeliegen, besonders leicht möglich.⁶⁸

During the 1920s Polish consulates had started to investigate the citizenship of Prussians of Polish descent, whose Prussian citizenship was questionable as a consequence of the Vienna or Geneva peace treaties. Cases of doubt were settled by the Polish-German conciliation committee. The new regulations facilitated these attempts. Furthermore, a report from Hannover, mainly dealing with cases of ‘Polish’ workers in the industrial regions, also voiced concern for those Germans abroad with dual-citizenship, not only because “die betroffenen Personen schwere persönliche und wirtschaftliche Nachteile erleiden können, sondern auch aus politischen Gründen”.⁶⁹ Since population and migration statistics utilised the registration offices’ data these changes would alter the ratio of national minorities on either side of the border to Germany’s disadvantage. The *Regierungspräsidenten*’s objections to the disclosure of citizenship were thus not so much motivated by concern for the affected. Rather the individual’s citizenship was a token in a wider *Volkstumspolitik* for which statistics provided the arguments. In order to curb unwanted corollaries from respective requests, the district presidents ordered subordinate offices to forward suspicious request to their offices.

Apart from that, registration offices noticed an increase in requests as a result of the political change. Various party branches showed interest in personal information. Their members often failed to adhere to the party’s internal registration regulations.⁷⁰ More importantly, the introduction of *Arierparagrafen* in a number of laws demanded proof of descent as precondition for certain positions. Kinship researchers increasingly made use of the registers to complete family trees revealing both the new importance registration had gained as well as the downsides of a system of case-to-case assessments.

68. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 105 Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Regierungspräsident Oppeln Herrn Preuss. Minister des Innern, 20th October 1933, 10-11.

69. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 105 Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Regierungspräsident Hannover an den herrn Preussischen Minister des Innern, 12th July 1933, 2.

70. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 105 Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Polizeipräsident in Berlin an den Herrn Minister des Innern, 11th November 1933, 25.

4 Unified registration system

The following chapter will analyse the genesis of the *Reichsmeldeordnung*. Two factors impeded the introduction of a standardised system: the insufficiency of the Prussian registration system and the discontinuation of the efforts for a *Reichsreform* that was to provide the legal framework for nationwide police regulation.

4.1 *Reichsreform* and *Gleichschaltung*

The NSDAP's manifesto stated that, once in power, the party would create a '*starke Zentralgewalt*'. In spite of Hitler's sparse utterances regarding a *Reichsreform* making clear that centralisation, the *Führerprinzip* and the *Volksgemeinschaft* undoubtedly formed the corner stones, various actors in Reich Ministry of the Interior, the party and the federal governments had various, often conflicting ideas for the state's future structure. The prospective reform comprised a territorial reorganisation and one of administration. The reform of registration was only a minor part of this larger *Reichsreform* that was discussed from the very beginning of the Weimar Republic. As much as the discourse evolving around this reform was motivated by expectations of a more efficient administration it was also fused with the notion that a unified administration was the finalisation of German state-building.

The early measures that helped disrupting Weimar protocol and consolidate the Nazi rule leaned on the previous discourse about centralised administration and the *Reichsreform*. The March 1933 *Ermächtigungsgesetz* allowed the new government to deviate from the constitution. With the *Vorläufiges Gesetz zur Gleichschaltung der Länder* and the finalised second version of April 7th the office of a *Reichsstatthalter* was established, to act as an intermediary between Reich and federal governments, turning the Weimar era office of the *Kommissar* into a steady one.¹ At the end of January 1934 the *Gesetz über den Neuaufbau des Reiches* and the successive implementation order surrendered the federal state's sovereign rights to the *Reich* thereby legally establishing the *Einheitsstaat*

1. RGBI I, 173.

long called for by bureaucrats.² As it transferred sovereign rights of the federal states to the Reich it provided the legal basis for further centralisation. In consequence, for the first time it established all-German citizenship.³

But within the Reich Ministry of the Interior the act was only seen as the starting point “das gesamte öffentliche Recht zu vereinheitlichen, d.h. reichsrechtlich zu regeln”. In May 1934 the Reich Ministry of the Interior thus approached all Reich ministries to propose fields of law for standardisation.⁴ One of these fields was registration. Beginning in summer 1934 on the Ministry of the Interior’s *Abteilung Verwaltung und Recht (VuR)* (Department for Administration and Law) planned the nationwide implementation of the Prussian registration system and had delegated the handling to Arthur Kääb and Ferdinand Kerstiens, who both had already been involved with the reform of registration system in the republic’s administration.

The reform touched on issues of registration as the centralisation of the police was legally based on the transferral of federal sovereign powers to the Reich. In some districts registration was a competence of the police and a privilege of the municipal authorities in others.⁵ A coherent system of registration and consistent competences had required a reorganisation of the fundamental administrative structures. Hence, besides the standardisation of regulations, a thorough reform of the administrative structure was discussed. In an article for the National Socialist Lawyer’s journal ‘*Deutsche Verwaltung*’ that Kääb had excerpted and filed, the author argued in favour of centralisation of registration on the municipal level. The central registration offices were to register any changes in personal data and report it to all authorities involved. The benefits of such a centralised system lay, according to the author, in the clarity of display, that would in return help reduce the tedious duplicate work of several authorities registering personal data independently. Resulting from this clarity, statistical evaluation of the data present in the register would lead to more current and reliable statistics resulting in “Wegfall der mit großen Kosten verbundenen Volkszählungen, Personenstands- und Betriebsaufnahmen”.⁶

2. RGBI I, 75.

3. RGBI I, 85.

4. BAArch R4901 181, Der Reichsminister des Innern an die Herren Reichsminister 25th May 1934.

5. In Prussia the registers were maintained by the communal administration. Except for the bigger cities with police departments, where police and city administration each maintained a copy of the registers. In Saxony, Baden, Hessen, Braunschweig, Hamburg, Bremen and Lübeck the police departments were in charge of the records. Whereas in Thuringia and Bavaria registration was communal in general with the exception of Bavaria’s bigger cities Munich, Nuremberg and Augsburg. Cf. GSTA HA I Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 17 Sonderakte Bd 2, 163.

6. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd. 1, Abschrift aus “Deutsche Verwaltung”

The replacement of surveys by card indices, however, was not so much a result of the efforts towards a *Reichsreform*, but a general trend in statistics as Adam Tooze has shown for the economic branch of German statistics, in which specific questionnaires were replaced by the aggregation of raw data in card indices. In the mid-30s Walter Grävell planned to establish decentralised statistical offices to which all firms had to report business data regularly. The raw data was to be collated to decentralised, constantly updated card indices forming a data base, from which statistics could be generated comparatively quickly and without prior knowledge of the question. This system, however, was not uncontested as other statisticians favoured more and increasingly complex centralised censuses for their high degree of comparability.⁷ These competing approaches were part of a process of ‘self-destruction of the statistical office’ in the late 30s, caused by competing factions dissociating from the office, instead cooperating more closely with party organisations.⁸ But during the consolidation of the Nazi system, the statistical office was first affected by a merger, when in the wake of *Gleichschaltung* and *Neuaufbau des Reiches* Prussian administration and ministries were fused with their Reich counterparts. By October 1934 the Prussian Statistical Office merged with the Reich Office.⁹

During the phase of consolidation, efforts towards a *Reichsreform* proceeded quickly, as they provided the means to secure the party’s grip on power. But after passing the *Neuaufbau* act, efforts stagnated since more detailed plannings for a National Socialist *Reichsreform* did not exist. Furthermore, the territorial reorganisation met with resistance from the federal governments, so that it was never followed through – in spite of changes to some federal districts and Labour Service and the *Wehrmacht* anticipating a territorial reorganisation when laying out the districts of their organisations. This decision would soon cause problems with the draft because the incongruence of administrative districts of civil and military administration hampered inter-agency exchange of information.

Despite the legal changes towards centralisation, the Reich ministries’ ability to implement nationwide legislation was still limited, not least because of the strengthened position of the *Reichsstatthalter* that had at the same time strengthened the federal administration. In March 1935 a meeting of the Reich Ministry of the Interior’s state

vom 20. August 1934, Organisationsfragen im Lichte der Gleichschaltung zwischen Reich und Ländern, Präsident Dr. Boenicke, Berlin, 97-99.

7. Tooze, *Statistics and the German State: 1900 - 1945: the making of modern economic knowledge*, 243, 223-251.

8. Cf. Tooze, 244-245.

9. Tooze, 185.

secretaries on the issue of a nationwide reorganisation of education concluded, “[...] daß die derzeitigen Befugnisse der Reichsregierung nicht ausreichen, um den Ländern gegenüber das Erforderliche durchzusetzen”.¹⁰ In this particular case resistance to the changes came from Hamburg and Munich. But a mounting number of similar complaints reached the Reich Ministry of the Interior from several places, so that Frick felt compelled to press deputy Heß on Hitler’s further plans. This resulted in an unpublished circular from April 1935 banning further public discussions on a *Reichsreform*.¹¹ In early December 1935 and by proxy of state secretary Pfundtner, Hitler informed the Reich Ministry of the Interior,

daß er den Zeitpunkt der Weitertreibung der Reichsreform selbst zu bestimmen wünsche. Wenn unter diesen Umständen Wesentliches und Grundsätzliches nicht zu erwarten ist, wird jedoch andererseits dafür Vorsorge getroffen werden müssen, daß im Falle neuer Weisungen des Führers alles vorbereitet ist, um die einschlägigen Arbeiten schnell und zielsicher fortzuführen.¹²

To the civil servants involved, this vague statement indicated they should proceed with their work in order to be prepared for sudden changes of heart. But this pending state did not last for long. By the end of January 1936, Hitler had decided against any territorial changes. All offices involved were furthermore informed:

Der Führer und Reichskanzler hat sich scharf gegen jede Zentralisation ausgesprochen und ausdrücklich festgestellt, daß die Verantwortung für die Verwaltung nach wie vor bei den Leitern der Länderregierungen läge.¹³

While this was not the end of discussions, it took the momentum off the efforts and those fields of administration expecting centralisation could not rely on a grand-scale initiative to bring it about. The legal situation for nationwide initiatives remained ill-defined. By and large the reform efforts were left unfinished when Germany engaged in war.¹⁴ After a period of halfhearted centralisation the power balance began shifting back to the periphery.

10. BAArch R4901 276, Abteilung Z II (Graf Rantz) a 1228/35 m, E III, E V An den Herrn Reichs- und Preuß. Minister des Innern, 28th of November 1935, 219.

11. BAArch R4901 180, Der Reichs und Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, Abschrift: Erörterungen über die Reichsreform 18th of January 1936, 4.

12. BAArch R4901 276, Abteilung Z II (Graf Rantz) II a 3599, 3335/35 M an den Herrn Reichs- und Preuß. Minister des Innern, 222.

13. BAArch R4901 277, Reichs- und Preußischer Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, Z II a Nr. 7/36, Reichsreform, Behandlung von Entwürfen für Reichsgesetze, 31st January 1936, 66.

14. Cf. Walter Baum, ‘Die "Reichsreform" im Dritten Reich’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (München) 3, no. 1 (1955): 36–56, 37.

Hitler's change of heart must be viewed on the backdrop of the eroding trust in the established institutions of the state to bring about the anticipated unity of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, that showed in Frick's demotion and Himmler's placement as head of the German police later in 1936.¹⁵ The initiative for centralisation of the police had hitherto been taken by the Reich Ministry of the Interior and thus Frick; the change in policy now paved the way for Himmler's approach that will be subject of the chapter entitled 'Second planning stage'.

4.2 Prussian registration as national standard

In 1935 Ministry of the Interior still intended to base national legislation on the Prussian precedent. But the nationwide draft for the Labour Service revealed that a simple adaption of the Prussian provisions in the entire nation would not provide a seamless registration system.

Attempts at standardisation

One of the administrative fields determined for nationwide standardisation was registration. To officials such as Arthur Kääb and Christian Kerstiens working in Prussia's Police Department's *Abteilung Verwaltung und Recht (VuR)* (Department for Administration and Law) and in charge of the future *Reichsmeldeordnung*, the authoritarian system promised a much-anticipated, unified approach to the registration of residents in the *Meldeämter* (Register Offices) formerly hampered by the federal states' insistence on their competence. Rather than emphasising the needs of total mobilisation and the seamless tracing of individuals, Kääb deployed the language of Weimar's discourse on the *Reichsreform*.

Eine weitere Verbesserung von nicht zu unterschätzender Bedeutung kann jetzt nach Gründung des Einheitsstaates vollständig durchgeführt werden, d. i. die Zentralisierung und Verheineitlichung des Listen- und Meldewesens. [...] Außerdordentliche Ersparnisse und verwaltungsmässige Verbesserungen sind dadurch möglich.¹⁶

15. Thomas Childers, Jane Caplan and Charles M. Maier, eds., *Reevaluating the Third Reich* (New York: Holmes & Meier), 107.

16. GStA, HA I Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a Sonderakten Bd. 1, Arthur Kääb, note for the file 1935, 96.

The main objective of the reform was thus a nationwide standardisation of registration that would help save costs and streamline administrative tasks, including of course a widened control of the population. The nationwide implementation was not expected to differ significantly from the Eisenach agreement. On 1st February 1935 Frick had announced that he intended a nationwide standardisation of registration regulations, based on the Prussian provisions from 1933.¹⁷ In that regard he expected proposals from the local departments. Similar requests had been sent to the federal governments before by the civil servants in charge of the reform, but with few results. Frick had ordered the return of the requests by mid-March and in particular requested, “die Erfahrungen der größeren Meldebehörden zu verwerten”. As a result, the *Abteilung Verwaltung und Recht* started receiving reports from the *Regierungs-* and *Polizeipräsidenten* from March on that illustrate the disparate situation of registration in the federal states. A more detailed report was expected by the end of March from Berlin, Düsseldorf and Königsberg. While Düsseldorf and Königsberg replied almost in time, the Berlin police department asked for additional respite of a month but eventually returned the report only in October 1935. Preparing the combined *Wehrmacht* and Labour Service draft had occupied the office’s staff so that other activities were put aside.

When Berlin finally handed in its report in response to Frick’s call in spring it included the experience of the summer’s draft. The 15 -page report listed and extensively commented the existing faults and gaps in the 1933 decree in detail. A main concern was one of principle. In accordance with the Eisenach standards, the Prussian registration decree of April 1933 was informed by the realisation that seamless registration depended on the population’s compliance, and thus tried to keep the registrants obligations to a minimum. The registrars had thus to complete the forms and forward them to the relevant authorities. The police department strongly advised a shift of this balance, as it increased the workload for the registrars without necessarily increasing the accuracy of the registers.¹⁸ In that regard the department insisted registrants attend in person in order to immediately reject illegible forms and if need be provide missing information. Like so many others, the department favoured the involvement of the landlord in the registration process. Further issues remained with the registration of interim residencies of labourers, youth groups in hostels or camps, the Labour Service and the *Wehrmacht*, hospitals etc. For all these cases Berlin’s police suggested requiring the respective organ-

17. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd1, Der Reichs- und Preussische Minister des Innern an die Landesregierungen 1st February 1935, 74.

18. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Polizeipräsident Berlin an den Herrn Reichs- und Preußischen Minister des Innern, 17th October 1935, 80-87.

isation to register their members when the stay exceeded a month. The register office of the former residence would then be informed via the notification system.

Prior to 1935 the Ministry of War was not directly involved in the considerations regarding a unified registration system and there is no evidence of correspondence. However, in January 1935 the Traffic Minister, on his ministry's behalf and that of the War Ministry, enquired about the possible inclusion of a question regarding car ownership on the registration forms in connection to the register offices' obligation to notify the respective vehicle registration office.¹⁹ While the notification obligation would keep the vehicle registration offices' data up to date, the War Ministry was interested to know the identities of car owners and holders of driving licenses. This matter remained a cause for regular correspondence and was only settled with the passing of the *Reichsmeldeordnung*.

The reports from Mecklenburg and Bremen are representative for the disparate state of registration in the city states and rural areas. While most of the incoming reports endorsed the general idea of a '*reichseinheitliche Regelung*' based on the Eisenach agreement, most of them also stressed the deficits of the Prussian regulations compared to the ones they already had in place. The timely report from Mecklenburg, however, voiced concerns, that might represent the reluctance to registration in rural areas most articulately. In reply to Frick's request from 1st February, Schwerin's *Staatsministerium* doubted the demand for detailed provision on the national level suggesting

nur kurze Rahmenbestimmungen seitens des Reiches zu geben und im übrigen die Ausführung in Anpassung an die Verhältnisse des Landes den Landesregierungen, Regierungspräsidenten usw. zu überlassen.

While making clear that Mecklenburg officials saw no need for a unified system, they also maintained that the same regulations had to apply for citizens and aliens alike. But the most important concern was the Prussian provision that prescribed registration in writing, since "erfahrungsgemäss die Ausfüllung umfänglicher Formulare dem Publikum, besonders auf dem Lande und in kleineren Städten, Schwierigkeiten bereitet". Mainly arguing that self declaration of registrees rendered the documents illegible, this quote addressed the Achilles' heel of registration, that of compliance. In particular in – albeit not limited to – rural areas, people resented completing forms. Thus Mecklenburg proposed that the officials fill in the forms. This was an approach that, as the *Staatsministerium* conceded, may not be feasible for bigger cities with a higher occurrence of registrations.

19. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 17, Sonderakte, Bd. 2, Der Reichs- und Preußische Verkehrsminister an den Herrn Reichs- und Preußischen Minister des Innern, 12th March 1936, 69-70.

With regard to §23 of the Prussian *Meldeverordnung* regulating registration obligations of ‘Persons of no fixed address roving from place to place’ Mecklenburg doubted the feasibility of the measure and remarked: “In der Regel werden derartige Personen diese Meldepflicht doch nicht innehalten”. However, the reply from Mecklenburg also records differences within the state’s administration. The bigger cities demanded that future registration forms contained information on the registree’s parents in order to cater to future kinship research. While reporting the demands for inclusion of the parents credentials, the ministry once again underlined that these demands could only be met if the regulations abstained from making registration in writing mandatory.²⁰

The reply from Bremen addressed the issue of registration in writing from quite a different perspective. Bremen had developed a meticulous registration system with a *Zentralmeldestelle* at its core. Nevertheless, it criticised the Prussian requirement to register in writing as well. But Bremen’s main concern was to ensure that the registree had to show up at the registration office instead of postal registration that was possible in Prussia. Much like the counterparts in Mecklenburg, the rapporteur favoured registration in person. However, rather than the population’s reluctance to complete forms, his main concern was the administrative benefits. While conceding that postal registration was legally possible, the report highlighted the benefits of registration in person: “Die üblichen Rückfragen, die bei schriftlichen Meldungen oft erforderlich werden, fallen bei persönlicher Meldung fort”.

In general, however, the report found the Prussian provisions far too lenient. Both with regard to the coherence of the system as to the practice of disclosure. With regard to the latter, the report from Bremen makes a point for privacy, unparalleled in the entire correspondence on disclosure. Current practice in Bremen generally refrained from disclosing any personal details to private individuals, except “wenn triftige Gründe vorgebracht werden können”. The data disclosed in these exceptional cases was limited to place and date of birth and matrimonial status. But before disclosure the arguments were closely examined, as the report carries on: “Bei der Prüfung dieser Gründe wird auch bedacht, ob die nachgefragte Person mit dieser Auskunftserteilung einverstanden sein würde”. Notably, the author of the document refrains from using the language of the ‘*nationalsozialistische Einheitsstaat*’ instead remaining within the referential frame of the Eisenach agreement. The reasoning behind Bremen’s disclosure practice also seems to rest on a liberal understanding of a relationship between citizen and state, based on mutual rights and duties.

20. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd1, Mecklenburgisches Staatsministerium, Abteilung Inneres an Herrn Reichs- und Preussischen Minister des Innern zu Berlin, 8th March 1935, 139-141.

Die Aufgabe der Polizei ist es, das öffentliche Interesse wahrzunehmen; sie ist nicht berechtigt, noch verpflichtet, privaten Interessen zu dienen. [...] Den Meldepflichtigen ist auch nur zu diesem Zwecke eine Meldepflicht auferlegt und diese haben daher grundsätzlich Anspruch darauf, daß über den Inhalt des Melderegisters Amtsverschwiegenheit beobachtet wird.

However, when the report mentions the benefits of Bremen's system it uses the same factual tone to slip into genuine National Socialist subjects. Registration in Bremen had always asked for the registree's parents' credentials in order to ensure clear identification of eponymous individuals. With the changed political paradigms the aggregated data had gained new value. Bremen's rapporteur explained, not without pride:

Beim jetzigen Aufleben der Rasseforschung sind Melderegistraturen mit umfangreichen Personalangaben kaum entbehrlich. Die bremische Melderegistratur geht bis 1885 zurück und die toten oder ausrangierten Jahrgänge der Registratur sind jetzt schon eine wahre Fundgrube für Familienforschung geworden.

Though Bremen and Mecklenburg argue from almost opposite perspectives, they do have some points in common in terms of rejecting the extension of the Prussian regulations over the federal states. In particular, they opposed the establishment of a single registration system for the entire nation. Much like the report from Mecklenburg, Bremen petitioned

die zu erwartende Reichsmeldeordnung so zu gestalten, daß sie als Mantelgesetz den Ortspolizeibehörden noch die Möglichkeit gibt, durch Ortspolizeivorschriften den besonderen örtlichen Verhältnissen – auch in Bezug auf die vorhandenen Melderegistraturen – Rechnung zu tragen.²¹

But once again the Bremen perspective was quite different from that of Mecklenburg. Bremen had directed enormous resources into its meticulous registration system. The introduction of a nationwide index system with possibly lower standards seemed to jeopardise the 'Hanseatic' systems.

The 'Hanseatic' system

As port cities, Bremen and Hamburg experienced a high fluctuation of inhabitants, which led to an increased need for control, so both established centralised registration relatively

21. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd1, Der Regierende Bürgermeister Bremen an den Herrn Reichs- und Preußischen Minister des Innern, 13th March 1935, 147-151.

early.²² Furthermore as city states both were characterised by an administrative particularity, missing “die hemmende Teilung zwischen Reichs-, Landes- und Gemeindebetrieben [...]”.²³ These particular administrative responsibilities allowed centralised registration operated by specially trained staff.²⁴

Two principles governed the Hanseatic registration system: all data that would enter the registration sheets had to be verified by other documents; this *Ausweiszwang* ensured the registers’ high degree of reliability. Furthermore, registration was centralised. During the Weimar era both cities had mechanised their registration system “unter erheblichem Kostenaufwand”. The core element of this system was an index of zinc plates. Each plate represented one individual and had the personal details engraved. These zinc-plate indices were centrally maintained by the statistical bureau in Hamburg, the police department in Bremen respectively. Utilising so called ADREMA Machines – ADREMA being an acronym for ‘*adressiere maschinell*’ – the zinc plates were used to print forms, in order to provide “alle in Frage kommenden Stellen mit Material (Meldungen über Zuzug, Umzug, Abzug, über kirchliche, steuerliche, gewerbliche und andere Veränderungen)[...]”. In both cities the ADREMA device formed the central *Bevölkerungskartei* to which all changes in a person’s status were reported. In turn the updated information was disseminated to the relevant authorities. The Hanseatic system thus established a clear system of notification that, at the same time, spared the registrants from the obligation to register with different branches of the administration. This simplified registration and thus increased compliance rates. Moreover, the centralised maintenance of the registries combined with the comparatively strict regulations had made the financial authorities’ annual tax survey *Personenstandsaufnahme* (tax survey) obsolete.

But it had also made registration more complex as it increased the number of questions asked on behalf of the financial authorities.²⁵ Similar achievements had been made by Nuremberg, Frankfurt a.M. and Kiel. In the early 1930s Berlin and numerous other cities had introduced the ADREMA-system for taxing and electoral lists.²⁶ While these systems acquired their data from the register offices, they were not centrally maintained as in the

22. 1885 in Bremen and 1891 in Hamburg.

23. GStA, HA I Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a Sonderakten Bd. 1, Arthur Käab, note for the file 1935, 96.

24. GStA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Polizeiherr in Hamburg an den Herrn Senator der inneren Verwaltung, Betr. Neuregelung des Meldewesens 4th March 1935, 126.

25. GStA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Polizeiherr in Hamburg an den Herrn Senator der inneren Verwaltung, Betr. Neuregelung des Meldewesens 4th March 1935, 126.

26. GStA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd. 1, Entwurf (Jeske) zur Umorganisation des polizeilichen Meldewesens 16th December 1934, 58-59.

Hanseatic cities but on district level.²⁷ Aly and Roth stated that the *Reichsmeldeordnung* was based on this ‘Hanseatic model’, but as we will see the core elements of this system, the centralised and mechanised maintenance of data and the *Ausweiszwang* in particular, were not adapted for the nationwide registration system, that refrained from regulating the material side of registration.²⁸

Inter-agency exchange

The Ministry of the Interior encouraged participation of all relevant authorities while drafting the *Reichsmeldeordnung*. Besides consulting the police departments and district presidents it was in contact with other ministries on the Reich level and the Statistical Office. When Kääb intended to achieve extraordinary savings by a reform of registration, he expected these to result from making the tax offices’ annual *Personenstandsaufnahmen* obsolete. Each October the tax offices would compare their data with that of the police registration system in a labour-intensive, hence costly, process in order to deliver the tax forms. The Ministry of Finances favoured a registration system that would provide independent information. Bremen and Hamburg had established a registration system so comprehensive and accurate it could reliably be used for taxation and the inter-agency exchange of data in general.

When, in 1934, the system of national taxes had been revised, the Ministry of Finance introduced a separate registration obligation with the tax office in order to cope with the disparate state of registration throughout the nation. Clearly this was onerous for the public as well as the administration. Well aware that the introduction of a system comparable to that of Hamburg on a national level was unfeasible since it required costly mechanisation, the ministry proposed including an obligation for the registry offices, to forward a copy of the registration form to the local tax office and furthermore to include the relevant question on the registration forms. In the long term, the ministry would readily refrain from the annual tax survey.²⁹ Since the Ministry of the Interior did not reply in time, the provisions for tax registration remained unchanged. Only in February did a reply promise the unified registration regulation would be in force within the year.³⁰

27. Details to the tax survey’s can be found in: BArch R 36 646

28. Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*, 52.

29. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Reichsminister der Finanzen an den Reichsminister des Innern, 25th October 1934, 70-71.

30. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Reichs- und Preussische Minister des Innern an den Herrn Reichsminister der Finanzen 18th February 1935, 100.

Trials in registration

Since the regulations had been passed in 1933, it was intended to standardise national procedures by adapting them in the other German states. However, on the occasion of the 1934 referendum on merging the offices of chancellor and president in succession of Hindenburg's death, the election lists (*Wahllisten*) were synchronised with the population registers (*Melderegister*). The process revealed several flaws in the Prussian system since both the *Wahllisten* and the registers contained faulty and out-of-date data. Berlin, with its high fluctuation in population, was particularly affected by non-compliance of the ordinary population. But various authorities also failed to comply with the registration regulations, as the Berlin police department reports:

Hierbei stellte sich heraus, daß zahlreiche Personen die sich bereits im Arbeitsdienst oder zur Arbeitsleistung, zum Besuch von auswärtigen Schulen und Lehranstalten, in Kranken- Irren-, Heil-, Bewahr- oder Fürsorgeanstalten und in Schutzhaft oder Konzentrationslagern außerhalb Berlins befinden, in den Berliner Melderegistern geführt werden, ohne daß es der für die bisherige Wohnung zuständigen Meldestelle bekannt ist, seit wann und wo sich die Personen außerhalb Berlins aufhalten.³¹

Criminologist Ernst Liebermann von Sonnenberg reported several cases in which fugitive youths managed to go unregistered for weeks or month by joining party organisations. Both Hitler Youth and the SA had unwittingly allowed wanted individuals to escape registration by providing accommodation.³² Rostock filed a similar complaint regarding hospitals.³³ As the only noteworthy deviation from the Eisenach guidelines, Prussia's 1933 registration regulations added a 22nd paragraph regarding the voluntary labour service (*Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst* / *FAD*). Based on the provisions for youth hostels, hospitals and 'lunatic asylums', labour camp leaders had to report volunteers to the relevant registration office on a weekly basis. To that end, supervisors had to maintain records of their volunteers in the form of books, lists or an index.³⁴ Similar regulations had been adapted in the other federal states.

31. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Der Polizei-Präsident Berlin an den Herrn Reichs- und Preußischen Minister des Innern, Betrifft Neuregelung des Meldewesens, 17th October 1935, 81.

32. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Der Polizeipräsident in Berlin an den Herrn Preussischen Minister des Innern, 14th August 1934, 171-173.

33. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Der Generalstaatsanwalt beim Mecklenburgischen Oberlandesgericht in Rostock an den Herrn Reichminister der Justiz, 21st March 1935, 204.

34. Cf. Steffens, *Polizeiverordnung über das Meldewesen vom 22. April 1933: mit e. Anhang: Vorschriften über d. Einrichtung u. Führung von Meldekarteien*, 14.

The lax provisions of §21 and §22 presented a major loophole and similar reports reached the Ministry of the Interior from all regions. And while all these cases were problematic from the stance of seamless registration, many reports highlighted the labour service as a particular nuisance. The mayor of the town Hagen, for instance, complained: “In diesen Formationen wird die polizeiliche Meldepflicht nicht einheitlich, sondern auf verschiedenste Weise oder gar nicht ausgeübt”.³⁵ Since the labour service operated on the national level the *An- und Abmeldung* of its volunteers unintentionally turned into a test case for the nationwide registration system that was in continuous planning at the Reich Ministry of the Interior.

Unlike in the other fields discussed, where the first year of Nazi rule was marked by great continuity, the Labour Service was undergoing a drastic change in character since Weimar times. The new leader of the service Konstantin Hierl was securing his influence over the service replacing proven Labour Service leaders by ‘*alte Kämpfer*’ from the NSDAP ranks. While this helped to secure the service from an ideological standpoint and even more importantly secure a position within the NSDAP’s internal power struggles, it did not further a professionalisation of the Labour Service. Instead, internal investigations uncovered corruption and abuse of power. Camp leaders often featured an anti-statist attitude and believed they were beyond legal trivia, registration regulation included.³⁶ Apart from cases of non-compliance, the regulations could not ensure seamless tracing of residence. For the time a volunteer remained with the labour service he could not be located through enquiry at the last known residency’s registration office, since the service’s registration offices did not report back.³⁷ Local police at the former place of residence were thus unable to know whether, when and whereto a volunteer had left residence in order to join the Labour Service. Similarly, once volunteers had served their term and registered elsewhere their abode could not be seamlessly reproduced, since the Labour Service’s registration office was not notified. The service occurred in a time of heightened mobility in the draftees’ biography and often volunteers did not re-register with their former residency’s register office. As things were, service with the Labour Service potentially provided a way to evade registration, rather than tightening the authorities’ grip on the volunteers.

35. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Der Polizeipräsident in Berlin an den Herrn Minister des Innern 22nd September 1934, 65.

36. Cf. Kiran Klaus Patel, *Soldiers of labor: labor service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933 - 1945*, Publications of the German Historical Institute (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press / German Historical Institute, 2005), 85.

37. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Arbeitsgauleitung 20 a Westfalen Nord an die Gruppen des Arbeitsgaues 20a Westfalen-Nord, 15th March 1935, 4.

Municipalities all over Prussia could not help but notice the insufficiencies of §22 and numerous requests reached the Reich Ministry of the Interior inquiring whether and when a ‘*reichsrechtliche Regelung des Meldewesens*’ would plug these gaps. Alternately, respondents suggested this could be achieved by issuing local directives. *Oberregierungsrat* Kääb, responsible for the revision of a nationwide registration system persistently answered all sorts of requests regarding a future unified registration system with a brief answer: “Der Zeitpunkt des Erlasses reichsrechtlicher Meldevorschriften ist derzeit noch nicht vorauszusehen”.³⁸ While the development of the public registration system stagnated, unintentionally the registration system of the labour service offered a testing ground for registration and draft, unhampered by bequeathed federal structures. Despite, out of diplomatic considerations, publicly announcing otherwise, the labour service had always been looked on by party officials as a vessel for underlying military goals. In preparation for the introduction of compulsory labour and military service Hierl started a second overhaul of the service. In consequence, about 80% of the service’s leaders were replaced in 1934. Hierl was promoted Reich Commissioner for the Labour Service. The service – now dubbed *NS-Arbeitsdienst* – was revised on an organisational level and gained independence from the *Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung* and established independent registration offices. These *Meldeämter für den Freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst* introduced a new registration procedure that had been planned in coordination with the Reich Ministry of the Interior and the Berlin police department. Hierl introduced the new system in a letter to the Reich Ministry of the Interior by first criticising the shortcomings of the Prussian registration system’s provisions in § 22 that obliged the camp leaders to forward lists of volunteers on a weekly basis.

Diesen Listenmeldungen kann daher nur ein ordnungspolizeilicher Wert beigemessen werden, schon der kriminalpolizeiliche Wert dieser Meldungen ist ein sehr beschränkter [...] Dagegen ist durch die Neuordnung der Statistik der Reichsleitung des Arbeitsdienstes ein Meldeverfahren eingeführt, das durch seine karteimässige Verwendungsmöglichkeit und den amtlichen Charakter der An- und Abmeldung (die Meldestellen sind Reichsbehörden) die Gewähr bietet, dass sowohl ordnungspolizeiliche, wie die kriminalpolizeiliche, als auch bevölkerungsstatistische Auswertung durchgeführt werden kann.³⁹

38. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Reichs-u.Pr.Min.d.Innern an Herrn A.R. Schuster Buchbinderei, 7th August 1935, 2.

39. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Der Reichskommissar für den freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst – Reichsleitung – an das Reichsministerium des Innern 24th May 1934, 7.

The new system was, according to Hierl, introduced to facilitate the service's own statistical requirements. Like the entire economy, the Labour Service attached considerable importance to evaluability, sustaining an independent statistical office to monitor the service's productivity and if need be underscore its relevance. Moreover, the Labour Service attached considerable importance to assign what was considered the right composition of volunteers to each camp. These decisions were based on detailed information such as confession (catholic or protestant), political and *landesmannschaftlicher* background etc.⁴⁰ The most important change in that regard was the establishment of card-based registration, that allowed for reorganisation of the individual cards in order to serve tasks like sorting the groups for certain camps or statistical evaluations. For the registrant, the Labour Service had designed a new form. The *Meldebogen für den Freiwilligen Arbeitsdienst*, had to be completed by the local registration offices by providing the personal details including proof of former residences, vocation, citizenship, religion, place and country of origin, and family status. From the registration offices, the form had to be forwarded to the police's department for criminal investigations inquiring possible former convictions. The latter would forward the form to the political police, who noted potential misdemeanours before forwarding it to the labour services' registration offices. Promoted to a *Reichsbehörde*, the labor service also had (other than most party branches) gained official clearance for disclosure of these personal details. For the time in service, the *Arbeitsdienstbuch* was meant to provide prove of residence. While the new system was facilitating the labour service's internal demands and addressed the problem of subsequent tax registration by providing an extra copy of the cancelling of registration form to be forwarded to the financial authority, it did not address the issue most pressing for the police registration system – that of seamless registration. The registry offices at the last place of residence were still unable to determine the whereabouts of volunteers despite forwarding their own information to the labour service's offices. During the second half of 1934 officials at the Reich Ministry of the Interior and the Labour Service agreed that the volunteers had to cancel the registration with the local offices. Once again the population was put in charge of the thorough implementation of registration, but the new provisions introduced a coercive mechanism. To register with the labour services' registration office, volunteers had to provide a cancellation form, that was filed away with their registration card, and only handed back once their service term had officially ended. Now the service was in a position to insist:

40. BArch R2 RfM 4521, Der Reichsarbeitsführer an den Herrn Reichsminister und Chef der Reichskanzlei 12th February, 1935.

dass die polizeilichen Meldestellen keine polizeilichen Anmeldungen, insbesondere solcher Personen, die sich im Arbeitsdienstpflichtigen Alter (17-25 Jahre) befinden, entgegennehmen, die nicht durch gleichzeitige Vorlage eines polizeilichen Abmeldescheins einen ununterbrochenen Nachweis über ihren Aufenthalt führen.⁴¹

In 1935 compulsory military service was introduced in March and compulsory labour service in June. The close link between labour and military service, that had always been intended, was underlined when fulfilment of labour service was made a prerequisite for military service. The *Reichsarbeitsdienstgesetz* issued on 21st May formalised the new registration procedures.

Meanwhile, Arthur Kääb varied his reply to the frequent requests regarding the state of the reform of registration:

Die Vorarbeiten für die reichsrechtliche Regelung des Meldewesens sind mit Absicht zurückgestellt worden, um größere Aufgaben, die die Meldebehörden im Laufe der nächsten Monate zu bewältigen haben, nicht zu gefährden.⁴²

And indeed, registrars all over the nation were occupied preparing for the draft of the cohorts born in 1914 and 1915. During the First World War the draft had been prepared by the *Standesämter* as their data was organised by cohorts. The downside of this approach was that once people moved the *Standesämter* lacked the means to locate them. Due to generally increased mobility, this approach was not considered feasible anymore. Instead, the enlistment now relied on the police registration system. The cohort of 1914 would first serve their term with the *Wehrmacht* and the Labour Service successively, the cohort of 1915, vice versa. Candidates were examined by a joint draft commission so that the Labour Service's registration offices acted as enlistment offices for both services.⁴³

But despite the organisational changes, lack of compliance remained a problem. The *Deutscher Gemeindetag* approached the *Reichsarbeitsdienstführer* “[u]m zu vermeiden, dass sich Unzuträglichkeiten besonders bei der Erfassung der Heeresdienstpflichtigen ergeben”. A number of cases were brought to his attention, including some in which:

41. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Protokoll über die Verhandlung zur Neuregelung des polizeilichen An- und Abmeldewesens des Arbeitsdienstes zwischen Herrn Oberregierungsrat dr. K r a u s e vom Reichsministerium und des Arbeitsführers T i e m a n n sowie Feldmeister S c h r o p p von der Reichsleitung, Dienstamt 2. 2nd June 1934, 26.

42. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Note to the files, Arthur Kääb, 8th March 1935, 175.

43. BArch R2 4533, Vermerk Betrifft: Reichsarbeitsdienstgesetz, March 1935, 15.

[...] der Lagerleiter die Arbeitsmänner trotzdem diese einen Meldeschein abgegeben haben, der Ortspolizeibehörde nicht anmeldet mit dem Bemerken, dass eine polizeiliche Meldung nicht erforderlich ist. Desweiteren melden sich die zum Arbeitsdienst eintretenden Arbeitsmänner vielfach nicht polizeilich von ihrem letzten Wohnort ab. Es ist selbstverständlich, dass dadurch die Einwohnermeldelisten große Ungenauigkeiten aufweisen.⁴⁴

In consequence, police and the Labour Service instructed their officials to strictly abide by the new regulations. The public was informed of their obligations through announcements in newspapers. With the draft notice, draftees received a new form, the '*Anweisung zur polizeilichen Anmeldung*', that also featured an excerpt of the relevant registration regulations. The form had to be completed by the recipient and signed by the local registry office. The registry office would then single out the draftee's index cards or add a note to their registry, specifying the relevant Labour Service's registry office. With the end of service the former conscripts were subject to several additional registration obligations, devised to ensure the subsequent draft by the *Wehrmacht*. Within three days of moving, former conscripts had to register with their local registry office and inform their former Labour Service register office about their new residence in writing. The cohort of 1915 was subject to these tightened regulations until they were drafted. The cohort of 1914, first drafted by the military, were informed that failure to register would immediately trigger a tracing procedure. As a result of the varying local registration regulations they were moreover obliged to enquire which other authorities they had to register with.⁴⁵ Laying out the military districts the *Wehrmacht* had anticipated a territorial reorganisation, expected as a core element of a future *Reichsreform*. The Labour Service's districts were almost identical to the *Wehrmacht*'s districts. Since the political map remained unaltered, administrative districts differed from those of Labour Services and the military.⁴⁶ As a result, conscripts of the same enlistment office could be subject to different registration regulations at their place of residence.

The registration procedure developed for the Labour Service and the *Wehrmacht* in 1935 highlighted the need for a unified registration system. It established initial unified registration procedures and a unified registration form. The case also shows how, in order to maintain a clear display of the population, different authorities had to sustain

44. BArch R 36 1950 (87183), Deutscher Gemeindetag an die Reichleitung des Arbeitsdienstes, Berlin Juni 1935.

45. BArch RFM 4521, Merkblatt: Meldepflicht im Herbst 1935 aus dem Arbeitsdienst entlassener Wehrpflichtiger bei Wohnungswechsel.

46. Cf. Patel, *Soldiers of labor: labor service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933 - 1945*, 116.

a system of mutual notifications. In the case of the cohorts of 1914/15, this problem was transitionally solved by substituting notification obligations for increased duties for the registrant. Nevertheless, a future registration system had to serve various branches of the administration and organise a regulated flow of information.

The development of the Labour Service's registration system shows how achieving the necessary compliance proved difficult even on a limited field. Volunteers, recruits and camp leaders had to align with the *normative state's* formalities in order to guarantee a seamlessly working flow of paper. Besides familiarising the male adolescents with military order, the Labour Service also made them accustomed to the paper-work required to implement a strict regime of registration. Registration was made the prerequisite for further steps. As part of the coercive mechanisms the *Wehrpass* or *Arbeitsdienstbuch* were handed back to former recruits only after successful registration. As these documents acted as proof of former residence, they were required when applying with other authorities, in particular the labour office. So Patel concluded: "Given the increasingly perfected system of registration and punishment, it was nearly impossible to avoid the Labor Service altogether after 1935."⁴⁷ But the enlistment process of 1935 still revealed blatant loopholes in registration as *Regierungspräsident* of Arnsberg reports:

Nach den bisherigen Beobachtungen – insbesondere bei der diesjährigen Musterung der Jahrgänge 1914/15 – hat sich herausgestellt, daß sowohl in den Städten, als auch auf dem Lande ein Großteil der Dienstpflichtigen meldeamtlich nicht erfasst war. In einer Anzahl von Fällen konnten die Gestellungsbefehle wegen unbekannter Wohnung nicht zugestellt werden.⁴⁸

Due to the patchwork of regulations and practices the notification of the relevant registration offices and the return of the documents often failed to the former recruits' disadvantage.⁴⁹ The transition from Labour Service to the *Wehrmacht* proved to be problematic, as the Labour Service's registry offices were often too slow to process the cancelling of registration with the Labour Service. The army had to turn down recruits who showed up at the right draft office at the right time, but were unable to provide a seamless proof of residence.⁵⁰ Rather than establishing a complete and functioning

47. Patel, *Soldiers of labor: labor service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933 - 1945*, 128.

48. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg an den Herrn Reichs- und Preuß. Minister des Innern, Betrifft: Änderung der Polizeiverordnung über das Meldewesen 11th September 1935, Bl. 216.

49. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd 1, Der Regierungspräsident in Aurich an den Reichs- und Preussischen Minister des Innern, 3rd July 1936, 239.

50. GSTA I HA Rep. 77. Tit. 343, Nr. 17, Sonderakte Bd 2, Der regierungspräsident in Wiesbaden an den Herrn Reichs- und Preußischen Minister des Innern, 30st November 1935, 52.

system of registration, the combined draft in 1935 helped reveal the weaknesses of the provisions in place. However, the registration and cancelling registration forms provided by the labour service introduced the first unified registration form in Germany.

4.3 Second planning stage

After the draft, planning for a *Reichsmeldeordnung* resumed. On 8th November 1935, Kääb informed Frick that he had finished a first draft of the *Reichsmeldeordnung*.⁵¹ Only a few more details were to be agreed during consultations set for late 1935 and the *Reichsmeldeordnung* was expected to come in force in early 1936. During a meeting of Kääb and *Oberregierungsrat* Lichter on behalf of the Reich Ministry of the Interior with the statistical office's expert for population statistics Burgdörfer and Dr Schnieber in December 1935, the statisticians had only few demands regarding a future registration system. Tourism- and migration statistics depended on continuous proof of residence regarding internal migration and data on place of origin or destination in case of immigration or emigration respectively. Statistics on tourism were compiled from the entries in hotels and hostels, which were obliged to register and report the number of tourists and the country of origin. Further issues were not discussed.⁵²

In January Kääb met with *Oberregierungsrat* Hoffmann and *Amtsrat* Schulz, representing the Ministry of Finances. The ministries' main concern, the omission of a separate obligation for tax registration, was already solved. During the meeting Schulz and Hoffmann brought up the issue of a lack of legal basis for nationwide police decrees, an issue that was expected to be solved by the *Reichsreform* and thus postponed for later consideration. Regarding the basic design of the registration system the financial officials clearly favoured the ADREMA-based system, that had so successfully been adapted by various cities throughout the Reich, pointing out the possible the omission of the annual tax survey. If a similar system could, due to the associated costs not be established on a nationwide scale, registration forms should at least be typed to spare the civil servants the tedious and time-consuming task of deciphering handwriting.⁵³ Otherwise, Kääb and the financial officials agreed the future registration system had to be "umfassend, aber so einfach wie möglich und mit möglichst wenig Belästigung für

51. GStA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd 1, Vorentwurf Verordnung über das Meldewesen Herrn ORR.Dr.Kääb 12th November 1935, 275-286.

52. GStA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Reichs- u.Pr.Min.d.Innern, Betrifft:Reichsrechtliche Regelung des Meldewesens, Vermerk, Arthur Kääb, 16th December 1935, 287.

53. The ministry estimated to process the data of Berlin's more than 4 million inhabitants, ten machines were required, costing up to 6000 RM each.

das Publikum”.⁵⁴ Contrary to Berlin’s police department, the Ministry of Finance and Kääb’s Department Administration and Law (*Abteilung Verwaltung und Recht*) were willing to trade a higher workload for the registrars for higher compliance rates. The authorities involved and the issues discussed above are characterised by an almost linear continuity from Weimar’s last years and in early 1936 it only seemed a matter of months until the *Reichsmeldeordnung* finally be effected.

To date, registration had been a marginal topic for most ministries, but towards the end of 1935 interests in the matter were voiced by parties formerly uninvolved indicating that a simple extension of the Prussian registration system would not suffice to fulfil the needs of National Socialism for they surpassed the scope of a registration system as it was currently planned. The draft of the summer had made the Ministry of War aware of the registration issues. In July 1935 the ministry had contacted Kääb in order to address the need to combine data from registry and register offices (*Standes- und Meldeämter*), to facilitate the draft. On 6th September 1935 Minister of War Werner Blomberg commented on Kääb’s draft. The notification system between register offices of the civil administration, the Labour Service and the *Wehrmacht* had to be tightened. He furthermore criticised § 23 of the Prussian regulations on ‘roving persons’ clearly employing the anti-gypsy clichés of espionage brought up during the First World War and before, describing them as “lichtscheues Gesindel, dass nicht selten Handlangerdienste in Verrats- und Ausspähungsfällen leistet”.⁵⁵ But most importantly Blomberg repeated the demand of a conjunction of the registry and the register offices’ data to facilitate the draft process. In late 1935 the revision of the Law on Civil Status and the function of the *Standesämter* was still under consideration. An additional merger of register and registry offices would have influenced a future law on civil status and linked the progress of both projects. Yet, beyond mutual notification obligations such linkage was intended by neither of the offices involved.

Nevertheless, the Ministry of War had made clear the current Prussian system was unfit for a coming war, as it still required the combined effort of four different authorities: the registry offices (*Standesämter*) and civil or police *Einwohnermeldeämter*, the Labour Service’s and the *Wehrmacht*’s registration offices. This system that had proven to be inefficient and prone to mistakes. To make this coordination obsolete, the registration

54. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd. 1, Der Reichs- u.Pr.Min.d.Innern, Vermerk, Arthur Kääb, 30st January 1936, 293.

55. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd1, Der Reichskriegminister und Oberbefehlshaber der Wehrmacht an den Reichs- und Preussischen Minister des Innern 6th September 1935, 212-213.

offices had to organise their data in age cohorts rather than alphabetically. But the coordination of register and registry offices or the introduction of a nationwide filing system considerably surmounted existing plans for registration. As shown earlier, the transformation of the *Standesämter* was eventually stopped in 1937 and their function not significantly altered.⁵⁶ A comprehensive population index based on age groups thus had to be established elsewhere.

The second important initiative influencing the further development of registration reached Kääb's office the day after the proclamation of the Nuremberg Laws. The note to the files dating 16th September 1935 cited the subject: *Judenfrage; Erhebung über Rassezugehörigkeit und Verwertung der Ergebnisse durch die polizeilichen Meldebehörden*.⁵⁷ Notably, the document still employed the racial terminology predating the Nuremberg definitions, as the implementation provisions were not yet published. The document reviewed possible ways to collect data on 'race' (*Rassezugehörigkeit*) and add it to the files of the registration system. Earlier considerations by Lösner's office and Daluege in July 1935 resulted in two alternatives: a grand-scale survey or the utilisation of the population registers as cumulative data base. To implement the latter, new registration regulations would simply add a question on descent to the forms, obliging the registrant to disclose Jewish descent up to the grandparents' generation. On the occasion of registration or cancelling of registration, the registrars would mark the index cards or registration forms of 'Non-Aryans' with a specific label. But the document also lists the downsides of this approach. It would add to the work load of the registrars and put them in the position to produce documents on descent, albeit this being the sole privilege of the *Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung*. The second approach, considered more feasible, was to include a question on descent with the financial ministry's annual tax survey (*Personenstandsaufnahme*) and collate the results with the population registers. The document attributes the proposal to Kerstiens who in 1933 had been involved in the utilisation of the Prussian tax survey to identify medical personnel and was hence aware of the possibility. A simple addition of the relevant question to the tax survey would solve the problem of the lack of legal framework, as the tax act of October 1934 already admitted the inclusion of additional surveys.⁵⁸ On the other hand the ministry's

56. See chapter 'Position of points', 70.

57. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd. 1, Zu den Verhandlungen über das polizeiliche Meldewesen, Vermerk Kääb, Betr. Judenfrage; Erhebung über die Rassezugehörigkeit und Verwertung des Ergebnisses durch die polizeilichen Meldebehörden, 198-201.

58. See chapter 'A Survey of medical personnel', 123 and GSTA I HA Re. 77. Tit. 343, Polizeisachen Bd. 12-13, RdErl. d. MdI v 23.8.1933 — III a 958/33, 304 and Der Minister des Innern Karlsruhe an den Herrn Preussischen Minister des Innern, 1st March 1934, 356.

surveys were known to produce unreliable results and comprised only the taxable population. The initiative regarding this survey remained with Lösner's office and did not occupy Kerstiens or Kääb in the further planning of the *Reichsmeldeordnung*. These new demands for a registration system voiced in autumn 1935 initiated a process that eventually resulted in the *Volkskartei* and I will return to the further development of the efforts to identify Germany's Jews in the chapter 'Identifying 'the Jews''.⁵⁹

The implementation of the nationwide registration system was slowed down once again. A *Reichsreform* was officially postponed in January 1936, posing the question of the legal basis for nationwide police decrees. In consequence, standardisation of registration had to be implemented without a wider legal framework.

Nevertheless, a week after Himmler's appointment as *Chef der deutschen Polizei* on 17th July 1936, Kääb was proud to report: "Mit dem Abschluß der Vorbereitungen für die reichsrechtliche Regelung ist in absehbarer Zeit zu rechnen".⁶⁰ But in September he expected several more months to conclude the groundwork.⁶¹ The main reason for the suspense in late 1936 were changes in personnel. The appointment of Himmler had a direct impact on the Department of Administration and Law, as its head, Kerstiens, was deemed "politisch nicht mehr tragbar". It is not exactly clear what caused the antagonism, but the head of the German police insisted:

[...] daß M. R. Dr. Kerstiens, auch sachlich, nicht die Erkenntnis und den Blick gehabt hat, der für die nat. sozl. Aufbauarbeit, auch auf seinem Spezialgebiet des Polizeirechts, als selbstverständlich verlangt werden muß.⁶²

When it came to develop a National Socialist police law and in particular to Daluege's and Himmler's negotiations over their respective competences in the future structure of the police, Kerstiens – despite his contribution to the question of identifying Germany's Jews – had become an obstacle. Kerstiens was pressured several times to retire but since he refused he was eventually sent back to a minor post in the administration of Münster on the basis of the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*.⁶³ Kerstiens died in January 1942 in Münster at the age of forty-eight.

59. 110.

60. GSTA I HA Rep. 77. Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd 1, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern, Ref O.R.R. Dr.Kääb an den Herrn Oldenburgischen Minister des Innern, 24th July 1936, 241.

61. GSTA I HA Rep. 77. Tit. 343, Nr. 107a, Sonderakte Bd 1, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern, Ref O.R.R. Dr.Kääb an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Darmstadt, 10th September 1936, 243.

62. BArch R 1501 207893, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei, Chef des Hauptamtes Ordnungspolizei an Herrn Ministerialdirektor Dr. Schütze, July 1936, 214.

63. BArch R 1501 207893, Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei Gauleitung Westfalen Nord, Der Gauleiter an Herrn Ministerialdirektor Dr. Schütze, 24th Decmber 1936, 247.

Finalising the *Reichsmeldeordnung*

When Himmler was appointed *Chef der deutschen Polizei* in 1936, police forces were reorganised and Gestapo and criminal police were combined to form the *Sicherheitspolizei* under Heydrich as the *Chef der Sicherheitspolizei*. The office of *Verwaltung und Recht* remained under Daluege as head of the *Ordnungspolizei*. In January 1937 Erich Liebermann von Sonnenberg was deposed from the criminal police in a corruption scandal and instead joined the Department for Administration and Law to replace Kerstiens.⁶⁴

In late 1936 the decision to disentangle the alignment of registration regulations from the introduction of a unified filing system was taken. The *Reichsmeldeordnung* would largely continue the legacy of Weimar's *Reichsreform*. Only in a second step would a unified card index be established, providing for the demands of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, that is the organisation of military and economic mobilisation, and the segregation of Jews as required by the 1935 *Reichsbürgergesetz*.

After the reorganisation of the police the Department Administration and Law was headed by Werner Bracht as part of the Daluege's *Ordnungspolizei*. Käab was put in charge of trade inspectorates, while Sonnenberg continued the reform of the registration system and the design of the card index.⁶⁵ Simultaneously, the interdependence of the *Personenstandsgesetz*, (*PStG*) (Law on Civil Status) and *Reichsmeldeordnung* was lifted, when in February 1937 the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda reported that Hilter, in the course of his general decision to abandon the plans for a *Reichsreform*, did not support a transformation of the registry offices into kinship offices.⁶⁶ This brought about a change in dynamics allowing for the swift implementation of a legal reform of the registry offices. On 3rd November 1937 a new Law of Civil Status was introduced that did not significantly alter the registry offices' function as they still maintained the records of civil status while the Health Departments were in charge of controlling marriages.⁶⁷ The decision pointed several authorities to the question of racial segregation, since the issue of reliable determination *Reichsbürgerschaft* remained unsolved.

But the changed approach also opened up a way for the reform of registration, unimpeded by further dependencies. The reform had hitherto been a marginal part of the

64. Cf. Patrick Wagner, *Volksgemeinschaft ohne Verbrecher: Konzeptionen und Praxis der Kriminalpolizei in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik und des Nationalsozialismus*, Hamburger Beiträge zur Sozial- und Zeitgeschichte 34 (Hamburg: Hamburg, Christians, 1996), 234-235.

65. BArch R 19 5/f, Geschäftsverteilungsplan Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei 1937, 172.

66. See chapter 'Position of points', 70. Cf. Schulle, *Reichssippenamt*, 271.

67. RGBl I, 1146-1152.

Reichsreform and when this project lost momentum registration was not a priority to Frick. With the reorganisation of the police, though, registration fell into Himmler's sphere of influence. Several enquiries about the state of the reform over the course of the coming years as well as visits to Berlin's main registration office show, how Himmler took personal interest in registration issues, in particular, the project of a unified card index, dubbed *Volkskartei* in early 1937. As consequence, the *Reichsmeldeordnung*, a precondition to the establishment of the *Volkskartei*, was finalised within a year, and effected early 1938.

Despite the previous efforts and the recent disentanglement of the administrative reform's different aspects, several problems of the *Reichsmeldeordnung* remained unsolved. After Frick's call in early 1934 to comment on the Prussian system of April 1933 numerous replies had demanded the reintroduction of the landlords duties vis-a-vis the tenants and harsher punishment for non-compliance. Yet, as it was clear that registration depended on compliance of the public, new regulations had to be reasonable. Also, the new regulations had to bring about standardisation while keeping advanced registration like the 'Hanseatic system' intact. The Prussian regulations from 1933 – still in the liberal spirit of the republic – did not discriminate between alien and citizen; under the conditions of Nazi rule several instances demanded these provisions be changed again. During 1937 new issues surfaced: secondary residence, possible entries in the field for religion and the issue of registering car holders. These issues were discussed by the head officials and ministers. During July 1937 several *Chefbesprechungen* took place in order to settle these last issues. Since secondary residences and religion were mainly connected to taxing, these issues were negotiated with the Ministry of Finance. The registration of car holders and their cars was of concern to the Traffic Ministry and the military, who both favoured a solution in which the police register offices registered car holders and forwarded the results to the vehicle registration office – an extra duty for the registrars the Reich Ministry of the Interior tried to avoid. The question of religion was treated by Globke's office in charge of the law on civil status; the results were adapted for the *Reichsmeldeordnung*. Numerous party members who had left the churches to join the various religious cults that had flourished as a part of the *völkisch* life-reform movement. Many of them – who refrained from being registered '*Dissident*' as well as from being subsumed among one of the official churches in order to avoid church taxes – had begun to fill in '*gottgläubig*' or '*deutschgläubig*' or variations of the sort. Eventually one was allowed to enter the specific name of a religious community (*Religions- oder Weltanschauungsgemeinschaft*), '*gottgläubig*' or '*glaubenslos*'. Provisionally registration

of cars and their holders remained with the traffic ministry; the question of a possible inclusion on the *Volkskartei*'s index cards was postponed.⁶⁸ In August 1937 Daluege could eventually send a draft of the future *Reichsmeldeordnung* to Himmler for perusal, remarking:

[...] wie bei der Volkskartei, dass der Entwurf selbstverständlich noch manche Änderung erfahren wird, weil er zunächst nur vorbesprochen und jetzt erst zur Stellungnahme an die [...] Reichs- und Staatsstellen geschickt wird.⁶⁹

On 10th September Frick was eventually able to send the final draft to Hitler's Deputy and all ministries.⁷⁰ With only minor changes this draft was accepted and passed in 1938.

The *Reichsmeldeordnung*

Since the Prussian police decree on registration in April 1933, almost five years passed until nationwide registration system was eventually established. Had the original plan been to extend the Prussian provisions over the Reich, the first combined draft of 1935 had revealed several loopholes in these provisions so that a thorough revision was initiated. At about the same time, the requirements of the *Wehrmacht* and the Ministry of the Interior's will to identify Germany's Jewish population highlighted the demand for an index system that was capable of serving the various authorities' needs. While most of the groundwork was done by Kerstiens, with his removal and replacement by Liebermann, the aspects of registration and filing were separated. The efforts gained momentum. What had started out as one aspect of a *Reichsreform* was eventually realised as part of the National Socialist reorganisation of the police. The textual structures of Prussia's 1933 provisions and the *Reichsmeldeordnung* are completely different. The draft versions of 1937 are already characterised by the same outline of the law eventually passed. The 1938 *Reichsmeldeordnung* fused elements of various registration systems with the experiences of the introduction of compulsory work and military service as well as recommendations from various authorities and the public in a process that did not significantly differ from the Weimar era.

68. BAArch R 19 431, Ministerialdirigent Bracht to Daluege 10th July, 1937.

69. BAArch R 19 407, Chef der Ordnungspolizei an den Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern, Herrn Heinrich Himmler, 12th August, 1937.

70. BAArch R2 12199, Vorentwurf, Verordnung über das Meldewesen, Reichsmeldeordnung, 10th September 1937.

Before turning to the genesis of the *Volkskartei* in following chapters I will take a closer look at the changes that came with the *Reichsmeldeordnung* as well as the remaining differences in registration, in order to have a clear understanding of the registration system the *Volkskartei* was eventually meant to be included within. Since the incomplete state of the *Reichsreform* had left the implementation of a unified registration system without legal basis, in May 1937 the *Gesetz über das Paß-, das Ausländerpolizei und das Meldewesen sowie das Ausweiswesen* authorised Frick to carry out a nationwide reorganisation of the specified areas of law.⁷¹ It provided the legal basis for the *Reichsmeldeordnung* that came to effect on 1st May 1938. It suspended all existing regulations.

The most basic regulations defined the subjects of registration and affected the entirety of the German inhabitants with the exception of children under 15 and members of foreign nations' diplomatic corps. Prussia's 1933 regulations required registration when a 'continuous residency' (*dauernder Aufenthalt*) was established, but the definition of 'continuous residency' had proven to be vague and depending on subjective factors. With the *Reichsmeldeordnung*, presence on German territory required registration. Adapting the Bavarian provision from the late 1920s, moving into a new home triggered the obligation to register. More importantly, the *Reichsmeldeordnung* established the individual's obligation to register instead of the head of family's from the age of fifteen upwards. Nevertheless, in accordance with the principle of easy compliance the head of the family was still allowed to register his children on their behalf. Unlike in 1933, the *Reichsmeldeordnung* reintroduced obligations for the lessor or landlord in the tenants registration process. However, the respites for registration remained unchanged. Even when registration was tightened with the onset of the war, a respite of 3 days was granted for Germans – aliens had to register within a day. Kääb and Liebermann explained the rationale that had led to this comparatively lenient provision was based on the fact that a respite of 24 hours was easy to miss. Once in default, most would refrain from registering altogether in apprehension of penalty. Compliance, they argued, depended on the public after all:

Polizeiliche Vorschriften, die sich an eine unbeschränkte Zahl von Personen wenden, sind auch durch Strafandrohungen und Strafen nur durchzusetzen, wenn die Bevölkerung sie als notwendig anerkennt und als tragbar empfindet.⁷²

71. RGBI I, 589-590.

72. Erich Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Reichsmeldeordnung (Verordnung über das Meldewesen)*, 5th ed., ed. Kurt Daluege and Artur Kääb (München: Jehle, 1942), 19.

Hence, the *Reichsmeldeordnung* was still characterised by the effort to find a balance of simplicity and complaisance on the one and rigour on the other hand. Complementary to upholding the respites agreed upon in 1928, the penalties for non-compliance were raised to 150 RM or six-week imprisonment compared to a maximum charge of 150 RM or two weeks imprisonment before. Deliberately registering at a false address or participation therein was generally penalised with detention. The reintroduction of the landlords as an accountable supervisory body for their tenants responded to the multiple demands in that regard and definitely made the paper work involved when moving more difficult as both the landlord of the new residence (or a representative) as well as the one of the former residence (or a representative) had to confirm the cancellation and registration respectively. The provision of free forms, expected to increase compliance, was not adopted for the *Reichsmeldeordnung*.

Aly and Roth considered the attempt to balance requirements and hurdles to registration prototypical for National Socialist administration.⁷³ Admittedly, the concept fits well into National Socialist ideology. However, the rationale of this provision predates the Nazi era and was grounded in more than a hundred years of lacking compliance on the side of the registrants. Compared to the standards of Eisenach the *Reichsmeldeordnung*'s registration provisions were rather harsh. Unlike the Prussian regulations from April 1933 and similar provisions in other federal states, the *Reichsmeldeordnung* did not merely provide the frame work for local police decrees but regulated the details of registration and unified forms were established for all registration offices.

The vision of a truly seamless registration depended not least on the registrars observance of filing and notification regulations. Most crucial to the entire system therefore was the notification system which clearly defined the occasions that triggered notifications as well as the mandatory forms. The notification obligations and the provisions for disclosure were regulated by the *Zweiter Runderlass des R. u. Pr. M. des Innern vom 10 April 1938 über die Reichsmeldeordnung*.⁷⁴ With the *Reichsmeldeordnung*, after transferring the data from the form to the register office's filing system, the registration form was sent to the tax office, which forwarded it to the statistical office. From July 1939 on, in an additional step the form passed through the labour office before being sent to the statisticians. On a monthly basis, the NSDAP *Ortsgruppenleiter* had to be informed about all moves in his district in separate lists for registration and cancellation of registration. The unified registration form also asked about car ownership so that the

73. Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*, 49.

74. RMBIIV, 689.

move of a car-owner would be reported to the vehicle registration office. In addition to the notification system, register offices had to confirm re-registration (*Rückmeldung*) to the registration office of the former place of residence, even though this aspect of the Prussian regulations from 1933 had been heavily contested during the planning stages for increasing the work-load of the registrars. But the draft of 1935 had highlighted the essential role this confirmation of re-registration played achieving seamless registration. Registration of aliens always triggered a notification of the local police department's *Ausländeramt*. The report sheet to the *Ausländeramt* also asked descent (*Jüdische Rassezugehörigkeit*), albeit without any direction as to how to retrieve or verify the indication.⁷⁵ The provisions for youth hostels, hotels, hospitals and the like were tightened. The hosts had to register their visitors within a day, completing an individual form for each person. Groups over ten individuals did not have to register each person; instead the tour guide would give her or his credentials and the number of participants. Like all other registrations, those of tourists had to be checked by the local registry office and compared with the police's wanted persons lists on arrival. Individual travellers or tour guides had to disclose the following data:

- first and family name; married women had to additionally add their maiden name
- marital status
- vocation, specifying the exact occupation and employment relationship;
- date of birth
- place of birth
- citizenship (aliens had to provide their ID-number and date of issue)

The unified registration form – to be used in all other cases – asked the following supplementary questions:

- new address
- proof of former address (by providing the cancellation of registration form)
- designation of religious confession
- military status, service number and selective service board
- participation in civil air raid protection

75. Sonnenberg, *RMO*, 130.

The questions were more specific than before.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Hamburg's earlier request for *Ausweiszwang* was introduced only for aliens. Otherwise the *Reichsmeldeordnung* authorised the register offices to subpoena individuals and to require them to furnish documents proving their credentials. Beyond that, the limitation of the need to provide documents to certain 'cases of doubt' made the *Ausweiszwang* once again dependant on individual registrar's 'intuition'. The question for confession was altered to include the various cults of the *völkisch* circles. A question for race as defined in September 1935 was not included.⁷⁷

Notably, the question asking for an exact description of profession was not intended to facilitate individual job placements but statistics on internal migration.⁷⁸ This further underlines the tendency to fuse registration and statistics in order to make grand-scale surveys obsolete. The data maintained in the system was not only stored to administer the individual, but to draw conclusions on the development of the population as a whole. In cases where individuals were designated to specific tasks, as in the case of civil air raid protection or military status, the respective authorities were informed via the notification system and took over. The respective authorities quickly developed independent index systems, better suited for their specific tasks and organised to specific internal criteria a general registration system could not provide for.⁷⁹

Despite the above, the *Reichsmeldeordnung* did not remove regional differences in registration altogether. The third decree regarding the *Reichsmeldeordnung* included various permissive provisions and recommendations. The administrative structure of registration remained inconsistent so that the *Reichsmeldeordnung's* § 28 defined administrative responsibilities for the individual federal states. The concurrent existence of municipal and police registration remained intact. While this certainly was a concession to the federal states, Kääb and Liebermann argued:

76. Compare chapter 'Registration in the early 1930s', 58.

77. I will discuss this decision in 'Identifying 'the Jews'', 110.

78. Sonnenberg, *RMO*, 54.

79. As Henry Marx has recently shown for indices of the labour offices. Cf. Henry Marx, *Die Verwaltung des Ausnahmezustands: Wissensgenerierung und Arbeitskräfte lenkung im Nationalsozialismus, Geschichte des Reichsarbeitsministeriums im Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2019).

Dieser Regelung liegt die Absicht zugrunde, die unterste mit polizeilichen Aufgaben betraute Behörde als Meldebehörde zu verwenden. Diese [...] liegt dem Meldepflichtigen räumlich am nächsten.⁸⁰

For municipalities that had not already established a registration system, the *Reichsmeldeordnung* introduced a unified index card (*Einheitsregisterkarte*). Smaller municipalities were still allowed to maintain a list of inhabitants. Registry offices were asked to organise their registration similarly to Prussia, where in addition to the *Personenregister* organised in alphabetical order, a *Hausregister* granted access to individuals based on a spatial search. But all existent filing systems remained unaltered. In case one of the above questions was missing they were to be added in handwriting or by seal. Additional question could be added to meet local requirements.⁸¹ The *Reichsmeldeordnung* refrained from altering the systems that had proven successful and otherwise introduced minimum standards in registration. Apart from that, the unified organisation of the index system was disentangled from the introduction of a nationwide filing system. By and large the *Reichsmeldeordnung* realised the unified registration system that had been laid out by the Eisenach conference. But the establishment of the unified card index in a second step was not yet decided upon. And while Kääb and Liebermann had both been involved in finalising the *Reichsmeldeordnung*, Liebermann's main task was to design a card index that would fulfil the additional demands voiced by the *Wehrmacht* and the Ministry of the Interior.

4.4 Identifying ‘the Jews’

The *Reichsmeldeordnung* left racial issues and thus an important National Socialist concern aside. Since late 1935, measures to identify and register Germany's Jews were under consideration. At the time Kerstiens had made his proposal to use the tax survey to aggregate the data, other projects – like the *Reichssippenkartei* – were still considered. In early 1937 the ministry still had to identify those eligible for a *Reichsbürgerbrief*. I will argue that the *Volkskartei* was largely designed to identify and locate Germany's Jews by providing a database to collate information on Jewish descent from various sources. To this end I will first cover the reasons for a survey compared to a cumulative approach and the suitability of the different approaches. The annual tax survey and the census scheduled for 1938 were discussed as alternatives. I will examine the respective cap-

80. Sonnenberg, *RMO*, 48.

81. 2. RdErl des RuPrM. des Innern vom 10 April 1938 über die Reichsmeldeordnung, IV 2-4.

abilities and limitations of each of the surveys. Simultaneously, the party's *Sicherheits Dienst (SD)* investigated ways to compile a nationwide *Judenkartei*. The respective discussions will help to substantiate the argument that the 1939 census' measures to identify German Jews were closely linked to the planning of the *Volkskartei*.

In February 1937 the Reich Ministry of the Interior's *Ministerialrat* Krause discussed ways to determine *Volkszugehörigkeit* during the coming census with the statistical office. Considering both the point in time as well as the inherent logic of the Nuremberg laws that essentially defined the *Volksgemeinschaft* by exclusion, it stands to reason that the initiative for a "einmalige Gesamtzählung des Juden, jüdischen Mischlinge und sonst fremdblütigen" was devised to discriminate *Staatsangehörige* from *Reichsbürger*.⁸² This notion is validated by a document from late 1937 in which Hagelmann summarises the existing sources for the SD subsidiary offices, explaining "die endgültige Durchführung des Reichsbürgergesetzes" necessitated a *Judenkartei*.⁸³ Other authorities had also considered using a survey to identify German Jews. Liebermann had adopted the idea for the *Volkskartei*. In order to close the existing gaps in registration, Liebermann considered a nationwide survey the most promising approach. By obliging everyone to complete the questionnaires during a given respite, a survey would speed up the process of data accumulation considerably and be more comprehensive. Compared to the cumulative registers of the registration system that would add an entry only if the registree complied to the regulations, a survey would guarantee the registration of everyone present on the surveyed territory at the time of the screening – the statistical principle of simultaneity. The survey-based approach furthermore allowed the circumvention of the problem of competences regarding decisions on racial descent. Since the information was based on personal disclosure this method did not infringe the *Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung*'s monopoly. Yet, it did allow the collection of the information in a brief time span without the need of individual evaluation.

Meanwhile, Liebermann's colleague at the Department for Administration and Law, Kääb, was working on regulations to introduce ID-cards. On the same legal base the *Reichsmeldeordnung* had been passed on, the *Verordnung über Kennkarten* dated 22nd July 1938 had authorised the Reich Ministry of the Interior to introduce the obligation

82. GStA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 17, Sonderakte Bd. 2, Abteilung I B² 13505/5012, Mit einer Anlage dem Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei, Bl. 272.

83. Sonderarchiv Moskau 500/3/322, Hagelmann, "Die derzeitige Erfassung der Juden in Deutschland durch die verschiedenen Behörden, Institute, Ämter und ihre Auswertungsmöglichkeit bei der endgültigen Aufstellung der Judenkarteien.", cited in: Michael Wildt, *Die Judenpolitik des SD 1935 bis 1938* (München: Oldenbourg, 2010), 153.

to carry ID cards for certain groups of citizens (*Staatsangehörige*).⁸⁴ The respective plans were devised by Kääb. In addition to the established credentials like name and address etc. the new ID card featured fields for ‘biometrical data’: fingerprints, a picture and a signature. By producing duplicates that remained with the police departments, this collection would over time form an cumulative data-base of those obliged to carry ID cards. One day after the initial *Verordnung über Kennkarten* three additional decrees specified the groups subject to *Kennkartenzwang*: conscripts, the population in border regions involved in local border traffic and Jews.⁸⁵

Only with the onset of the war on 10th September 1939 did the *Verordnung über den Paß- und Sichtvermerkszwang sowie über den Ausweiszwang* extend the obligation to carry ID cards to the entire population above the age of 15.⁸⁶ However, none of the related decrees sanctioned non-compliance so that Himmler was still dissatisfied with compliance rates in December 1942.⁸⁷ Jews according to the Nuremberg definition had to apply for an ID card at the local police department by the end of 1938. From then on they were obliged to present their *Kennkarten* on every contact with authorities disclosing “ihre Eigenschaft als Jude”.

Nevertheless, in October 1936 Heydrich’s *Sicherheitspolizei* – obviously unaware of the Reich Ministry of the Interior’s and Order Police’s plans – had noticed Jews converting and moving in order to alter their entry in the field of religion on the registration forms. As the negotiations of the *Reichsmeldeordnung* where still ongoing at that time, Heydrich demanded:

geeignete Maßnahmen zu treffen, nach denen der Anmeldepflichtige neben der Religion anzugeben verpflichtet ist, ob er Jude im Sinne der Nürnberger Gesetze ist. Eine solche Maßnahme würde die staatspolizeilichen Ermittlungen sowie die Überwachung des Judentums erheblich erleichtern.⁸⁸

Back in February Daluege had told the Head of the Security Police to suspend these efforts since the coming census would analyse the “blutmäßige Zusammensetzung der deutschen Bevölkerung”. Daluege and Lösner had considered this approach already in summer 1935 eventually decided against it. They agreed that the registrars were not in a position to produce documents on descent so that a respective question had necessitated

84. RGBl. 913-915.

85. RGBl. 921-922.

86. RGBl. 1739.

87. Cf. Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*, 64.

88. GStA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 17, Sonderakte Bd. 2, Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei an den Chef der Ordnungspolizei, Betrifft: Überwachung des Judentums, 12th of October 1936, 269.

the introduction of ‘*Ausweiszwang*’ (the obligation to prove credentials by providing respective documents). Moreover, the head of the Order Police tried to quickly end this discussion arguing cumulative registration would remain “auf lange Zeit hinaus doch nur lückenhaft”. But it took several meetings until in June 1937 both concluded that “sich die Zugehörigkeit zur jüdischen Rasse im polizeilichen Meldeverfahren nicht in erschöpfender Weise feststellen läßt”. Instead, the data of either the questionnaires for the *Volkskartei* or the census 1938 could be collated with the index cards of the registry offices.⁸⁹

Independently, the SD examined ways to create a card index of Jews. Since April 1937 SD staff investigated ways to collect the necessary data and considered a survey by the party’s local groups a feasible approach.⁹⁰ However, the issue of registration of Jewish citizens was not only discussed in Berlin’s ministries. In 1936 the city of Leipzig introduced new registration forms that featured the question “Arischer oder nichtarischer Abstammung?”. As this question clearly collided with the Nuremberg definition, Leipzig-based lawyer Helmut Runge had informed Lösner about the occurrence. Lösner, who approved of the initiative, forwarded the complaint to Liebermann and Kääb. The related correspondence of Lösner and the Ministry of the Interior’s Department Administration and Law clearly shows that a possible inclusion of a question for descent in the *Reichsmeldeordnung*’s unified registration form was discussed until summer 1937. The main reason for eventually deciding against this approach was neither the fear of interfering with the *Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung*’s competences nor the unreliability of the particulars furnished by the registrants but the “erhebliche, ihnen wesensfremde Mehrarbeit” for the registrars, that would jeopardise the offices’ smooth operation.⁹¹ The Leipzig police department was told to stop using the forms and wait for future nationwide regulations to solve the problem.

Census and segregation

It is a well established fact in historiography that the 1939 census’ supplementary cards (*Ergänzungskarten*) asked whether the respondent’s grandparents were Jewish. The data aggregated could thus be used to compile lists of all Germans who were Jewish according to the Nuremberg definition. Whether and how the aggregated data was used to create card indices is on the other hand disputed. Though I will cover the detailed arguments

89. GStA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Nr. 17, Sonderakte Bd. 2, Der Chef der Ordnungspolizei an den Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei, Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei, 3rd July 1937, 275.

90. BArch R 58 544, II 112 Wi./Hrt: Vermerk an II 1, Betrifft: Judenkartei 12th June 1937, Bl. 90.

91. GStA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 343, Sonderakte Bd. 2, Der Reichsführer SS usw. ORR. Dr. Kääb, Ref.: Reg Direktor Liebermann von Sonnenberg, MR. Dr. Lösner, 29th April 1937, Bl. 304.

of each side at the appropriate places I want to juxtapose the main arguments briefly, for they inform this research. The entire issue was first brought up by Aly and Roth's 1984 book on registration as a precondition of the murder of European Jewry.⁹² Aly and Roth sum up their main thesis in the preface of this edition as follows:

In 1939, German Jews and "Jewish half-breeds" were registered by name during the course of the census and with the cooperation of the Reich Main Office for Security (Reichssicherheitshauptamt). Information about the religion of all four grandparents, which was mandatory under penalty of law and ostensibly protected as "secret" by the state, was immediately transferred to police files under the category of "descent" if even one grandparent was listed as Jewish. German archivists at the Secret Prussian State Archives created a Reichskartei ("Reich registry") for German Jews from the original census data.⁹³

Their findings were initially widely accepted and relied upon to be confronted only in 2001 by Jutta Wietog's research on the Reich Statistical Office in the Nazi era. Focusing on the statisticians' involvement with the Nazis' racial policy, Wietog points out several flaws in Aly and Roth's interpretation of the sources – in particular the alleged immediate transferal of the data on descent to the police – and ultimately doubts that the 1939 census supplementary cards were used to identify previously unregistered Jews. As other surveys included a question for descent as well, Wietog reasons:

Unter der Voraussetzung, daß die Personenstandsaufnahme 1939 wirklich durchgeführt wurde [...] gab es mit der dort enthaltenen Frage nach der rassistischen Einordnung zusammen mit den statistischen Unterlagen der Reichsvereinigung der Juden und der [...] Volkszählung allein 1939 drei Versuche zur reichsweiten Erfassung von Juden und z. T. 'jüdischen Mischlingen'. [...] Die Möglichkeiten Juden zu erfassen – auch 'jüdische Mischlinge' und sogenannte 'Geltungsjuden' – waren also auch ohne die Volkszählung vielfältig.⁹⁴

Notably, the three surveys Wietog refers to for 1939 are, with the exception of the census itself, different to those of the SD and the Ministry of the Interior discussed in

92. As Edwin Black put it: "In fact, the crucial minutiae of registration are barely mentioned in any of thousands of books on the Third Reich. Aly and Roth were the first." Götz Aly, *The Nazi census: identification and control in the Third Reich*, ed. Karl Heinz Roth and Edwin Black (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 2000), ix. Cf. Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*.

93. Aly, *Nazi census*, xi.

94. Jutta Wietog, *Volkszählungen unter dem Nationalsozialismus. Eine Dokumentation zur Bevölkerungsstatistik im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), 79.

the previous section above for 1937. Over the course of the following chapters I will examine Wietog's objections, starting with a clarification of the scope and statistical value of the tax surveys. The genesis of the questions on descent during the 1939 census will be addressed next. Whether the survey conducted by the *Reichsvereinigung* in 1939 sufficed to identify previously unregistered 'Rassejuden' will only be addressed in the section '*Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*'.⁹⁵

This chapter will first reconstruct the process that led to the inclusion of questions on race and ethnicity in the 1938/39 census. Based on the chronology of the decisions, I will eventually argue, all relevant authorities had agreed to use the census data to identify those amongst the population not of 'German or kindred blood' by the end of September 1937. As we have just seen, in early 1937 the decision for a survey-based approach to the issue had been taken. At that time, the initiative for a new census was already on the way. While the various efforts to provide the informational basis for segregation proceeded, on the Ministry of Economy's behalf the *Statistisches Reichsamt* had begun scheduling a census for 1938. On the 22nd December 1936 the office had sent a memorandum arguing in favour of an extended census in 1938. The 1933 census – in particular the industrial and vocational census – had been severely reduced to save costs. In addition to the demand for a thorough census the office, preemptively, argued against a possible delay of the survey:

Da die Ergebnisse von 1933 infolge der Aufbauarbeit und Neuordnung in der Wirtschaft bereits jetzt vielfach überholt sind, würde in den kommenden Jahren ein außerordentlicher Mangel an zuverlässigen statistischen Unterlagen auf allen Gebieten eintreten.⁹⁶

The statistical office insisted that in order to draw meaningful conclusions from censuses a quinquennial succession of survey had to be reestablished. Like in 1933 it was planned to finance the entire survey from the Reich's coffers. Resistance against a census thus came from the Ministry of Finance that for financial reasons favoured a register-based census to a survey. The ministry did not outright contradict a new census but it did contest the point in time and doubted the statistical office would manage to find the required personnel. It therefore proposed a delay of the census until 1940. Mainly, however, the ministry argued that the estimated costs of about 12 million RM were only justified if the results were valid for a longer period of time, which would not be the case

⁹⁵. '*Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*', 179.

⁹⁶. BArch R2 57003, Statistisches Reichsamt, Notwendigkeit einer Volkszählung, 22nd December 1936, Bl. 182.

since the German economy was going to undergo drastic changes in 1938 in the course of the implementation of the *Vierjahresplan*.⁹⁷ Similarly, advocating for 1938 to conduct the survey, the statisticians employed the *Vierjahresplan*'s time frame in their argument. But unlike the Ministry of Finance, their reference was the point in time the results were available which they expected to match the end of the second four-year-plan.⁹⁸ The statisticians' memorandum focused on the industrial and vocational aspects of the census as these were considered most important and made up the biggest proportion of the census. But in the section concerned with 'population policy' two paragraphs dealt with *Minderheitenpolitik*, *Ausländerfragen* and the *Judenfrage*. With regard to minority policy the statisticians pointed out that the 1933 census' results were of little significance since the questions about language affiliation (*Sprachzugehörigkeit*) had been axed. A new survey would have to analyse parameters like age and religion in combination with the language affiliation in order to draw conclusions on demographics of aliens. The paragraph entitled '*Judenfrage*' initially discusses the possibilities of monitoring the effects antisemitic policy has had on Jews (*Glaubensjuden*). By comparing the results with those of 1933 it could quantify the number of Jews that had left Germany.

Had the memorandum thus far been underpinned by stressing the necessity of a census in almost every aspect of social life, with regard to a survey that would identify Jews as defined in 1935, the statistical office did not seem too enthusiastic:

Ob die Erfassung des gesamten Judentums und der Judenmischlinge, auch soweit sie der mosaischen Religion nicht angehören, noch erforderlich ist und im Rahmen einer allgemeinen Volkszählung oder besser im Anschluß an eine Personenstandsaufnahme durchzuführen ist, bedarf noch besonderer Erwägung.⁹⁹

The tax survey

Obviously, in December 1936 it was still undecided whether the census or the *Personenstandsaufnahme* (tax survey) were better suited to collecting the data on descent and ethnicity. The respective discussion is not reflected in the relevant sources. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the tax survey had several deficits compared to a census. First and foremost, the tax survey was register-based. It relied on the register offices'

97. BArch R2 57003, Referat III/1 dem Referat Kühne, 9th January 1937, Bl. 180.

98. BArch R2 57003, Bl. Statistisches Reichsamt, Notwendigkeit einer Volkszählung, 22nd December 1936, 182.

99. BArch R2 57003, Statistisches Reichsamt, Notwendigkeit einer Volkszählung, 22nd December 1936, Bl. 199. Cf. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 82.

data and was thus unfit to discover individuals previously unregistered or of unknown racial status. As it was directly connected with costs for the surveyed, it was known to produce unreliable data. Furthermore, as we have seen above numerous cities had replaced the tax surveys by the ADREMA system.¹⁰⁰ Hagelmann's list of sources for a *Judenkartei* does not mention the *Personenstandsaufnahme*.¹⁰¹ By May 1938 the *Reichsmeldeordnung* introduced a unified notification system. On the occasion of registration the register offices had to forward the registration form to the tax authority. This should have made the tax survey obsolete.¹⁰² Nevertheless, a circular decree dating July 1939 ordered the nationwide *Personenstandsaufnahme* for October 1939.¹⁰³ The decree also introduced new question and municipalities could only be relieved of the survey if their existing system already contained the respective data. These new questions asked for racial descent, religion, marital status and the day of marriage. The respective correspondence of the *Deutsche Gemeindetag* on the matter show that the only question that caused a problem for the ADREMA systems was the one asking for the day of marriage.¹⁰⁴ The Adrema system had already considered the question for 'race' and reserved the second row on the plates for the labels 'DR' (*Deutsches Reich*), 'A' (*Ausländer*) or 'N' (*Nichtarier*).¹⁰⁵ Eventually those administrations that managed to include the date of marriage in their machine systems were exempt from the survey. Notably, the label '*Nichtarier*' still employed the terminology prior to the Nuremberg Laws, and was not as fine-graded as required by these laws. Berlin's tax office believed the informative value of the tax survey to be limited to the use as "Beweismaterial für die Willenskundgebungen der Betroffenen hinsichtlich ihrer Religionszugehörigkeit" in cases of so-called *Geltungsjuden* who applied for racial re-classification.¹⁰⁶

100. The scope and locally differing practise of the *Personenstandsaufnahme* is well documented in BArch R36 645 and BArch R 36 646. Jutta Wietog based her argument on a newspaper article according to which the 1939 *Personenstandsaufnahme* also asked a question for descent. Cf. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 76.

101. Sonderarchiv Moskau 500/3/322, Hagelmann, "Die derzeitige Erfassung der Juden in Deutschland durch die verschiedenen Behörden, Institute, Ämter und ihre Auswertungsmöglichkeit bei der endgültigen Aufstellung der Judenkarteien", cited in: Wildt 2010, 153.

102. However sources also refer to a *Personenstandsaufnahme* with respect to the distribution of the tax declaration forms

103. RMBliV, 1353.

104. BArch R36 646, Der Oberfinanzpräsident Weser-Ems in Bremen an den Herrn Minister der Finanzen in Oldenburg, 6th July 1939.

105. BArch R36 646, ADREMA Maschinenbaugesellschaft an den Herrn Oberbürgermeister in Wilhelmshafen, 6th July 1939.

106. BArch R 1509 1528, Hauptsteueramt Reichshauptstadt Berlin an den Herrn Reichsminister des Innern, Betrifft: Auskunftserteilung aus den Haushaltslisten der Verwaltungsbezirke der Reichshauptstadt in Verbindung mit der Rassischen Eingliederung von Juden bzw. jüdischen Mischlingen, 13rd of November 1939.

When in 1942 the *jüdische Kultusvereinigung zu Berlin* compiled a paper listing all available sources to determine Jewish descent it stressed the limited use of the tax survey's data. It only revealed information on those both tax-paying and identifying Jewish (*Glaubensjuden*).¹⁰⁷ The *Personenstandsaufnahme* in 1939 was conducted. But it was unsuited to provide data on 'Rassejuden' – 'Mischlinge' in particular –, notwithstanding its utilisation in individual cases of racial re-classification.

The census

The further development suggests that after the decisions of February 1937 which indefinitely postponed the project of a *Sippenkartei* and instead intended to acquire the required data by means of a grand-scale survey; considerations to that point had resulted in favour of the integration of the respective questions with the next census. On 19th July the Ministry of Economics in charge of the census' design and legal framework announced that the schedule for the 1938 census was almost completed. In a letter to the Ministry of Finance the differences to the 1933 survey are listed. Most of the question were economic in nature. With the exception of the second point in the list, which recorded that in order to implement the '*Judenpolitik*' "ist die Erfragung der Abstammung und die Auszählung der Juden- und Judenmischlinge auf Verlangen des Herrn Reichs- und Preußischen Ministers des Innern vorgesehen".¹⁰⁸ As we have just seen, already in December 1936 the Reich Statistical Office had intended to conduct an extended survey on minorities. With the limitation of the project of the kinship index to 'Germans and those of kindred blood' this analysis received a *völkisch* twist as the Reich Ministry of the Interior now expected results on *Volkszugehörigkeit*. As before, the statistical office would rely on "eine Auszählung der Muttersprache, die sachlich mit der Erfragung der Volkszugehörigkeit zusammenhängt" to identify those of foreign folkdom.¹⁰⁹ Combined with the data on Jews the census would thus provide the data necessary for the production of the *Volksgemeinschaft* by exclusion and thereby implement the negative logic of the Nuremberg laws.

107. BArch R 8150 32, Abschrift: Statistische Erfassung der Juden in Berlin, 1942.

108. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 151, Nr. 347, Der Reichs- und Preußische Wirtschaftsminister an den Herrn Preußischen Finanzminister, Betrifft: Programm der für 1938 in Aussicht genommenen Volks-Berufs- und Betriebszählung, 19th July 1937, Bl. 9.

109. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 151, Nr. 347, Der Reichs- und Preußische Wirtschaftsminister an den Herrn Preußischen Finanzminister, Betrifft: Programm der für 1938 in Aussicht genommenen Volks-Berufs- und Betriebszählung, 19th July 1937, Bl. 10.

In August 1937 the first draft for a census law was circulated.¹¹⁰ In § 4 the survey's scope was defined including the data to be disclosed: *Volkszugehörigkeit*, civil status, mother tongue, descent (*blutmäßige Abstammung*) and religion. Furthermore, the draft explicitly allowed test runs in smaller districts to optimise the questionnaires. After a brief period reserved for severe objections in October, it was passed unaltered.¹¹¹ The Reich Statistical Office was put in charge of the analysis, but allowed to delegate specific tasks to the federal states' offices. False declarations were punishable by a years detention. The census was to be conducted on 17th May 1938. In early 1938 in order to prepare the interested public for the census Burgdörfer reported details on the coming survey pointing out:

Außerdem ist mit der Volkszählung erstmalig eine A b s t a m m u n g s e r -
h e b u n g verbunden, durch die zuverlässige Unterlagen über die Zahl der
Juden und jüdischen Mischlinge gewonnen werden können.¹¹²

When Burgdörfer was writing this article the questionnaires had already been designed, printed and sent to their destinations. But March 1938 brought a drastic change to the map as Germany invaded Austria and incorporated it into the Reich. On 21st April 1938, the Ministry for Economy informed all *Reichsminister* that the census was postponed for one year exactly in order to extend the survey to the newly annexed territory.¹¹³ During the summer of 1937 the decision to aggregate the data to implement racial segregation with the census was taken. On behalf of the Reich Ministry of the Interior, the draft from August 1937 explicitly extended the scope of the survey to include questions on descent and ethnicity. The option to use the tax survey was not discussed in the accessible sources beyond late 1936.

110. GSTA I HA Rep. 77, Tit. 151, Nr. 347, Der Reichs- und Preußische Wirtschaftsminister an den Herrn Staatssekretär der Reichskanzlei, Betrifft: Gesetz über die Durchführung einer Volks- Berufs- und Betriebszählung, 26th August 1937, Bl. 89.

111. RGBL. I, 1053.

112. Friedrich Burgdörfer, 'Die Volks-, Berufs- und Betriebszählung am 17. Mai 1938', *Allgemeines statistisches Archiv (AStA) Journal of the German Statistical Society* (Heidelberg) 27 (1938): 462–464, 463.

113. GStA I HA Rep. 77. Tit. 151, Nr. 347, Der Reichs- und Preußische Wirtschaftsminister an die Herren Reichsminister, Betrifft: Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Änderung und Ergänzung des Gesetzes über die Durchführung einer Volks-, Berufs-, und Betriebszählung vom 4. Oktober 1937, 21st April 1938, Bl. 97.

The SD index on Jews

Widely unimpeded by the Reich Ministry of the Interior's plans, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) considered the *Überwachung des Judentums* one of their most important fields. According to Aly and Roth on behalf of the SD the results on descent were compiled to a single *Reichskartei der Juden und Judenmischlinge* soon after the census. Before looking into the details of the census processing in the chapter 'Volkskartei and deportations' this section first assesses the SD's own efforts to ensure the registration of Jews.¹¹⁴

Founded in 1931, in the time span leading up to the war, the *Sicherheitsdienst* evolved from the party's intelligence service tasked with observing political enemies to an elite of the Security Police cultivating a self-image "als Vollstreckerin einer völkischen Neuordnung Europas".¹¹⁵ Consequently, the SD did not limit its actions to 'political enemies' but included the observation of Jewish organisations amongst their core tasks as an internal paper from 1937 pointed out: "Das Judentum ist für den Nationalsozialismus der Gegner schlechthin".¹¹⁶ Despite its initially marginal role in the National Socialist power structure, the SD was eventually in a position to shape policy against Jews.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the SD's 'systematic treatment' of the 'Jewish enemy' only had started in June 1935. The focus at this time was the registration of Jewish organisations.¹¹⁸ Attempts to register individuals were only prompted from outside the *Judenreferat* after the plans for the Reichs Kinship Index were abandoned. On 30st April 1937 the SD's II 112 Winsliceny was contacted by the *Zentralabteilung* asking whether the department occupied monitoring Jews were prepared for an oncoming war. In reply, Winsliceny reports that no proceedings in that regard existed.¹¹⁹ Beginning in May, department II 112 started to plan the establishment of a 'Judenkartei' a card index on Jews and ordered material to organise and maintain the index such as card index cabinets.¹²⁰ In early May Winsliceny drafted a questionnaire, the 'Personalfragebogen für Juden in Deutschland'. It illustrates that the SD's priorities were focused on what they called 'Jews of influence' be it political or economical. Of its 24 questions, eleven enquired the economic situation. Eight questions asked about racial and family status, and six

114. 'Volkskartei and deportations', 162.

115. Cf. Wildt, *Judenpolitik SD*, 11.

116. BArch R 58 544, II 112 Wi./Hag., Vermerk an II 1,etr.: Richtlinien und Forderungen an die Oberabschnitte, 21st April 1937, Bl. 31.

117. Cf. Wildt, *Judenpolitik SD*, 59-62.

118. BArch R 58 544, II 112 Wi./Hag., Vermerk an II 1,etr.: Richtlinien und Forderungen an die Oberabschnitte, 21st April 1937, Bl. 34.

119. BArch 58 544, Zentralabteilung II 1 an II 112 SS-Untersturmführer Winsliceny, Betr.: Mobbefehl Nr. 2, Bl. 44 and II 112 Wi./Hrt. an II 1, Betr.: Mobbefehl Nr. 2., Bl. 45.

120. BArch 58 544, Bl. 56.

questions regarded political and social connections.¹²¹ It is not quite clear though who was supposed to complete the form. Questions like the one inquiring the ‘former political views’ and ‘personal conduct’ were unlikely to produce any valid information when answered by the subject. The questionnaire thus seems unsuited for the acquisition of new data. It is more plausible that the questionnaire was supposed to be filled with information excerpted from files present at SD and Gestapa (*Geheimes Staatspolizei Amt*) by the SD’s staff.¹²²

During a meeting on 7th June it was agreed to start collecting and organising knowledge on ‘important Jews’ living abroad in three separate indices. The indices should then be used as a basis for further investigation into their links to other individuals or organisations. One was to contain information on ‘important Jews abroad’ in general with special attention given to familial, scientific or commercial ties to Germany. A second index should comprise information on emigrés. It was supposed to be copied from a similar index already maintained by the Gestapa. The third index was to collect the data of all Austrian Jews possibly including ‘*Mischlinge*’ and ‘*Geltungsjuden*’, yet without indicating how to capture the data.¹²³

About a week later on 12th, a meeting took place in the Secret Police Department (Gestapa) gathering Gestapa’s *Regierungsrat* Dr. Haselbacher and *Assesor* Flesch and II 112’s Wisliceny, who discussed the further proceedings with respect to a comprehensive *Judenkartei*. The minutes of the meeting reveal the narrowness of the ongoing approach, for gathering data from membership rosters of Jewish organisations limited the reach to individuals identifying as Jewish in the first place. The SD acknowledged this existing gap in the available sources: “Diese Verzeichnisse umfassen ca. 80% der in Deutschland lebenden Volljuden”. In addition to the estimated 20% of ‘*Volljuden*’ unidentified came an unknown number of the various degrees of ‘*Mischlinge*’. It was this unidentified group that had to be registered in order to put the *Reichsbürgergesetz* into practise. The current approach was therefore unsuited to accomplishing a comprehensive *Judenkartei*.

Here Haselbacher informed the others that a thorough screening of the entire population was initiated by the *Chef der Sicherheitspolizei* and the Ministry of the Interior. Meetings to discuss the matter were set for August. Hasselbacher summed up the project

121. BArch R 58 544, An II 1, Betrifft: Personalfragebogen für Juden in Deutschland, 27th May 1937, Bl. 59-61.

122. Cf. Klaus Dobrich, ‘Die Judenreferate des Geheimen Staatspolizeiamtes und des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1933 bis 1939’, in *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*; 2, 1st ed., ed. Wolfgang Benz, vol. 2 (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1993), 230–254, 242.

123. BArch 58 544, II 112 Hg/Pi an II 1 z.H. SS-Sturmabführer Dr. Six, Betr.: Erweiterung des Abreisgebietes von II 112, Bl. 66-67.

auf Grund einer Volkszählung eine Kartei des Deutschen Volkes aufzustellen. Bei dieser Volkszählung, die für 1938 festgesetzt ist, sollen eingehende Erhebungen über die rassische Zusammensetzung und konfessionelle Bekenntnisse angestellt werden. Nach Abschluss und Auswertung der Volkszählung wird also bei jeder Ortspolizeibehörde eine Kartei der Juden, Halbjuden und jüdisch versippten stehen.

Haselbacher obviously understood the forthcoming census and the establishment of the *Volkskartei* as intrinsically linked projects. Despite the fact that the *Volkskartei* was not yet officially sanctioned, by end of June 1937, the planned collation of census results and population registers was common knowledge among the departments involved. The note continues:

In Anbetracht dieser Tatsache vertrat Dr. Haselbacher den Standpunkt, dass es unzweckmäßig sei, sofort durch Parteiorganisationen Erhebungen über die Juden anstellen zu lassen. Es bestände absolut keine Gewähr, dass die Block- und Zellenleiter der Partei einwandfreies Material heranbrächten. Außerdem würde der SD durch die Aufstellung einer solchen Kartei zu einer Auskunftsstelle für die Partei.

Haselbacher set out the implications of this project for the SD card indices, in particular the utilisation of the coming census and the *Volkskartei* by the SD:

Die Auswertung der Volkszählung durch den SD. soll folgendermaßen vorgenommen werden: Die Polizeireviere geben ein Doppel ihrer Juden- und Mischlingskarteiblätter an die SD-unterabschnitte. Der UA*-Referent ergänzt dann diese Angaben nach SD-mässigen Gesichtspunkten.¹²⁴

This clearly shows that the SD did not intend to aggregate data if avoidable and rather relied on sources maintained by other authorities. These data sets could be merged or enriched according to the SD's needs.

The minutes of this meeting are widely referenced in historiography. Wildt's and Dobrich's conclusion that the minutes document the SD's decision to wait for the census' results to finalise a comprehensive *Judenkartei* is certainly plausible.¹²⁵ In particular as the file concludes: "Noch ehe die Judenkartei des SD. fertig sein könnte, käme die Volkszählung". The efforts to compile a comprehensive *Judenkartei* – including '*Mischlinge*'

124. BArch 58 544, II 112 Wi./Hrt. an II 1 Vermerk, Betr.: Judenkartei, 12th July 1937, Bl. 90-91.

* *Unterabschnitt*

125. Cf. Dobrich, 'Die Judenreferate des Geheimen Staatspolizeiamtes und des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1933 bis 1939', 242; Wildt, *Judenpolitik SD*, 37. Whereby Wildt quotes from Sonderarchiv Moskau 500/1/495 which seems to an identical file.

and ‘*Geltungsjuden*’ – were postponed. Instead the SD’s focus was shifted to evaluate the sources on ‘*Volljuden*’ accessible by copying the membership rosters of the Jewish organisations currently maintained at the Gestapo.¹²⁶

However, Wietog situated the document differently. She maintained, the SD was falsely relying on an obsolete plan:

Auch Ende 1937 ging der SD noch immer davon aus, daß die Volkszählung entsprechendes Material für die Judenkartei liefern würde.¹²⁷

Instead, Wietog argued, rather than the census, the crucial surveys for the identification of Germany’s Jews were eventually conducted by Jewish organisations, most importantly the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* among its members in October 1939.¹²⁸ I will thoroughly scrutinise these assumptions in chapter ‘*Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*’.¹²⁹ But when the SD’s Hagelmann reported on the registration of Jews to the SD’s 1937 *Novemberkonferenz*, he maintained that the SD remained occupied “bis zur Abwicklung der Volkszählung, mit der Erörterung der der in jüdischen Organisationen organisierten Juden”.¹³⁰

A Survey of medical personnel

Early on, the SD had begun to see the solution to the ‘Jewish Question’ in driving Jews into exile. As an integral part of this effort, since 1936 the SD’s priority had shifted to removing Jews from the German economy.¹³¹ And while the Ministry of Economy was in charge of balancing the effects on the economy, the Reich Ministry of the Interior was concerned with the population’s well being. Discussing the draft for a further implementation decree regarding the *Reichsbürgergesetz* in April 1938, the Ministry of the Interior informed the ministries involved about the preconditions for a segregation of Jews in the medical sector.¹³² Both scope and the point in time of the implementation hinged on a crucial question:

126. BAArch 58 544, II 112 Wi./Hrt. an II 1 Vermerk, Betr.: Judenkartei, 12th July 1937, Bl. 91.

127. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 71.

128. Wietog, 75.

129. ‘*Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*’, 178.

130. As cited in: Wildt, *Judenpolitik SD*, 154. For details on the *Novemberkonferenz* see Wildt, 45-52.

131. Cf. George C. Browder, *Hitler’s enforcers : the Gestapo and the SS security service in the Nazi revolution* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 190-191.

132. Vierte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 25 Juli 1938, RGBl. 969-970.

Kann bei völliger Ausschaltung von rd. 4000 jüdischen Ärzten bei einer Gesamtzahl von rd. 55 000 im alten Reichsgebiet und von rd. 3300 jüdischen Ärzten von insgesamt 7200 in Österreich in Friedens- und in Kriegszeiten eine ausreichende ärztliche Versorgung an allen Orten sichergestellt werden?¹³³

In addition to the replacement of Jewish physicians that was deemed indispensable, it was uncertain to what extent the removal would include the entire Jewish medical personnel and ‘*Mischlinge*’. However, conclusive statistical overview of the Reich’s medical personnel did not exist. In 1931 the Prussian Ministry of the Interior had mandated the notification of the district medical officer (*Kreisarzt*) on the occasion of a physician’s or dentist’s registration in Prussia in order to gain and execute oversight.¹³⁴ Prior considerations to include a wider circle of medical personnel like nurses, dental technicians and midwives were only adapted in August 1933 when the *RdErl. d. MdI Polizeiverwaltung, Aufgaben der Polizei, Polizeiliche Meldung von Zahntechnikern, Heil- und Pflegepersonen usw.* introduced notification obligations for the groups mentioned above and various non-medical practitioners.¹³⁵ Still, this measure once again suffered the disadvantage of cumulative registries since the “polizeilichen Meldungen nur künftig stattfindende Veränderungen im Zu- und Abgang des oben genannten Personenkreises, nicht aber dessen Bestand erfassen könnten”. Thus, the data of October 1933’s tax survey (*Personenstandsaufnahme*) was analysed to gather the respective information. Municipalities that had already replaced the tax surveys “weil sie anderweitig über ein vollzähliges Adressmaterial verfügen” were explicitly advised to use these registers to acquire the respective information.¹³⁶ Yet, for reasons unknown, the *Reichsmeldeordnung* did not extend these provisions to the entire Reich and the nationwide supply of medical personnel remained uncertain. The removal of Jews from the medical sector in summer 1938 faced incalculable risks regarding the supply of health services to the population. The 25th July implementation decree nullified Jewish physicians’ licence to practise.¹³⁷ Further-reaching measures depended on the capture of the required statistical data – a precondition that was only to be fulfilled with the *Volkskartei*’s initial survey in summer 1939 and the subsequent analysis of the data.

133. BAArch R 1501 5519, Bl. 117. Reichs- und Preussischer Minister des Innern an: Preußisches Staatsministerium, Reichswirtschaftsministerium, Reichsfinanzministerium, Reichsjustizministerium, Stellvertreter des Führers und Reichskanzlei, 13. April 1938.

134. Cf. RdErl. v. 28.7.1931 — II D 165, MBliV, 769.

135. MBliV. I, 1007.

136. RdErl. d. MdI. V. 20.1.1934 — III a I 2351/33, MBliV. Nr. 5. This once again underlines that a Reichs-wide survey based on the tax survey was impracticable.

137. Vierte Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz vom 25. Juli 1938, RGBI. 969-970.

5 The *Volkskartei*

The previous chapters have shown how the need for a unified index system evolved from the priorities of the National Socialist government. The *Reichsmeldeordnung* had left several demands towards registration unconsidered: cohort-based registration, a standardised card index system, the accumulation of data necessary to bring about racial segregation and an inventory of medical personnel. The Reich Ministry of the Interior expected the *Volkskartei* to be the panacea solving all these problems at once.

Over the course of the remaining chapters I will first reconstruct the basic design of the *Volkskartei* before examining the conditions of the implementation. In order to understand the priorities that governed the decisions on the index I will analyse the ample – previously unconsidered – sources that resulted from a test-run of the *Volkskartei* in the district of Potsdam in 1938 and compare the approaches tested to the nationwide implementation a year later. With regard to the eventual utilisation of the index, I have split the analysis in two parts. I will first evaluate the significance the index had for measures that targeted the *Volksgemeinschaft* – that is conscription and enrolment in the party's youth organisations. In a separate chapter I will discuss the *Volkskartei*'s role in the identification of German Jews, arguing that the index was the device that facilitated the segregation of Germany's Jews – which by the time of implementation meant deportation and physical annihilation. The final chapter analyses the political power struggle that evolved around the issue of administering the German workforce and eventually led to the *Volkskartei*'s decommission in 1943.

However, I will begin with a brief digression into some of the memoranda regarding registration that have informed the index' design. In early 1937, when Liebermann was studying Kerstiens' files and excerpted comments and proposals from the various authorities involved, he had taken a particular interest in the numerous memoranda that had reached the Interior Ministry's Department Administration and Law over the past years as some of them had anticipated the development registration would take in the National Socialist state.

5.1 Panoptic phantasies

Es handelt sich hier um Gedanken, die mich seit bald 30 Jahren beschäftigen. Ich habe das Gefühl, dass diese jetzt nicht mehr als Phantasterei abgetan werden, sondern dass jetzt die Zeit für sie gekommen ist.¹

From autumn 1933 onwards private individuals began sending memoranda concerned with registration issues to the official bodies they believed to be in charge. Given the willingness of the recipients, these memoranda were forwarded to the *Abteilung Verwaltung und Recht* where at least the cases that made it to the files were seriously considered and usually answered. Unlike the piecework at the Reich Ministry of the Interior's Department Administration and Law some of these proposals laid out a grand vision for a future registration system. Others made rather detailed proposals for filing systems or notification obligations etc. The authors shared the belief that with the new political order a more stringent registration system was inevitable and displayed readiness to offer their service to the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Furthermore, all of them expressed the feeling their contribution would be welcome under the new political conditions as the opening quotation of Erwin Cuntz, a lawyer from the town of Freiburg im Breisgau vividly illustrates. In November 1934 in a letter that was addressed to "den Reichskanzler und Führer" Cuntz proposed the establishment of a *Deutsche Kartei*. A 25-storey tower located in a central place in Germany was to contain the centralised card index of the entire German population. Each story of the circular tower was to be divided into 12 rooms, one for each month, in which index cards were to be organised in age cohorts, place of birth, gender and then alphabetically.² Besides the monumental architectural proposal the most significant novelty of Cuntz' memorandum was this age-based organisation of the index cards.

In February 1935 Kääb compiled a document listing all proposals worth further consideration and did not omit Cuntz' proposal, despite pointing out its impracticability.³ The circular structure of the tower with its conical rooms has a structural resemblance to Bentham's panoptical prison, the design of which allowed a single person positioned in a central tower to monitor a huge number of prisoners in the surrounding cells.⁴

1. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd 1, Erwin Cuntz Rechtsanwalt an den Führer und Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler, 27th November 1934, 52.

2. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd 1, Cuntz' Proposal 'Deutsche Kartei', 53-54. The entire proposal is quoted in: Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*, 48.

3. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd 1, Kääb, Neuregelung des Meldewesens, Anordnungen, Anträge und Anregungen, 13th February 1935, 77.

4. Cf. Michel Foucault, *Überwachen und Strafen: die Geburt des Gefängnisses* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), 251-291.

Unlike in the prison, however, with a card index there is no one to monitor. What is similar though is the vantage point of those operating the index. Given that the modern relationship between authority and subject depended on the mediation by documents, the aggregation of index cards for each individual of the population in a single building was the closest approximation to an unmediated relationship possible. Related to the ‘altar room’ in Kehrl’s *Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung*, in which the Reich’s entire industrial statistical data was displayed in 21 ‘altars’ each comprising 145 tables, Tooze suggested that “[t]he concentration of knowledge in a single location was also an expression of power. [...] A man standing in this unique space could feel himself to be in direct command of all of German industry”.⁵ Similarly Cuntz’ ‘*Deutsche Kartei*’ put the entire population at the registrars’ disposal. The intriguing aspect of Cuntz’ concept consists in its claim of complete oversight from one single point. Despite its obvious disfunctionality, the design best illustrates this claim of omnipotence over a comprehensively registered population that had earlier fascinated Knost when planning his *Reichssippenkartei* as a central index in which “das ganze deutsche Volk [...] wirklich der ganze Volkskörper vertreten, zur Auskunft an einem Ort anwesend wäre”. A truly seamless registration, whether centralised or not, on the other hand would have a similar effect on the population as the centralised tower had on the inmates in Bentham’s prison as it would accustom the public to a certain degree of constant, albeit remote, surveillance. Contrary to Cuntz’ aspirations central maintenance of millions of files was still a ‘folly’ (*Phantasterei*) and Kääb may have included Cuntz’ memorandum in his report precisely to make this point. Another aspect of Cuntz’ proposal was more sustainable but not included. Regarding the aggregation of the data, he suggested simply using the general census results, thereby being the first to propose a survey-based registration system.

About a month later, the Berlin-based party member Ulrich Jeske sent his memorandum to Frick. His contribution also sheds light on the state of registration in Berlin during the 1930s. Jeske had joined the Berlin Wilmersdorf electoral office in 1933 in a subordinate role and just witnessed the futile production of 14,000 tax cards in the course of the transition to the ADREMA system. The recipients had moved without cancelling registration or reregistering at their new residence. Jeske’s proposal is characterised to a great extent by his frustration with the daily work.

5. Tooze, *Statistics and the German State: 1900 - 1945: the making of modern economic knowledge*, 267-268.

Deine ganze Arbeit und die deiner tausend anderen Arbeitskameraden in den Polizei-Revieren und Bezirksämtern erzielt nicht die Genauigkeit, die nun eben mal in unserem dritten Reich als selbstverständlich erreicht werden muss. Ausserdem muss das Meldewesen vergrößert werden und sich nicht auf die Person beschränken, sondern auf die Ausbildung zur Abwehr und Hilfeleistung bei Bedrohung der deutschen Volksgemeinschaft.

He proceeds to list examples from his daily experience highlighting the flaws of the Prussian registration system beginning with the fact that registrants usually were asked to complete the forms in handwriting. “Man bekommt einfach die Wut über ein solches Geschmiere, aber, damit sinkt auch die Arbeitslust.” His second complaint relates to the compilation of the *Wahllisten* from the registration data. As shown above the *Wahllisten* were considered the best source to make enquiries into citizenship. Since Prussia had not adopted the policy of *Ausweisungszwang* practised in the Hanseatic system, Jeske complained:

Jeder verlauste Ausländer kann sich auf seiner polizeilichen Meldung als deutscher Reichsangehöriger bezeichnen, ein kleines – D – genügt. Seine Adrema-Platte erhält im Wahlamt die Signale und, er wählt.

In a similar tone he proceeds to complain about numerous forms of non-compliance. For most of these problems Jeske offered no solution. But he proposed the establishment of a more stringent registration system by increasing the landlords’ accountability for the registration of the tenants. Jeske proposed the main device of a future registration system be the house book, kept in each house by the landlord or a delegate. The keeper of the book (*Hausbuchführer*) would also be in charge of notifying authorities.⁶

In January 1936 party member Max Prodell suggested the introduction of a unified index card for the entire Reich, naming two main benefits from such a system.⁷ A unified system would ensure “dass es noch nach hunderten von Jahren [...] mit Leichtigkeit möglich ist, über die Vorfahren jeden nur erdenklichen Aufschluss zu erhalten”. Furthermore, he stresses the possibilities of the statistical evaluation of a unified card-based system. Several other proposals dealt with the issue of identity theft or fraud and thus suggested including a personal description, fingerprints or a photo in the files.⁸ Cuntz’s

6. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd 1, Entwurf (Jeske) zur Umorganisation des polizeilichen Meldewesens, 58-61.

7. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd 1, Max Prodell an das Reichsministerium des Innern, 4th January 1936, 221-222.

8. E. g.: GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 343 Polizeisachen Bd. 12-13, Der Polizeipräsident Berlin dem Herrn Preußischen Minister des Innern, 2nd January 1934, 352-353.

central index was inspiring yet unfeasible, apart from that aspects of these proposals, in particular Prodell's proposal for a unified card index, inspired the *Volkskartei*.

5.2 Comprehensive registration

The experience of the First World War had influenced the German society as a whole and the discourse around the *Volksgemeinschaft* in particular. Mobilisation had broadly relied upon the recruits' adherence to the public appeals. The only available data that could be consulted to identify missing recruits was maintained at their respective place of birth by the *Standesämter*. A coherent registration system did not exist. Hence, objectors easily escaped the administration's attention. When Kääb and Liebermann introduced the *Volkskartei* in an extensive manual for the registrars, the Great War and its 'total mobilisation' were the main point of reference.⁹ The registration system of the labour service and even more the first combined draft in summer 1935 had revealed the loopholes in the German registration and notification system, in particular when employing recruits beyond the federal states' boundaries. The *Reichsmeldeordnung* was introduced to mend these shortcomings.

The *Volkskartei* was to introduce this unified system as well as an entirely new organisation of the index cards. The cohort-based organisation of the index first and foremost served basic military needs. It was designed to provide comprehensive lists of entire cohorts at their respective place of residence. As the military principle of recruiting entire cohorts was adapted in the Labour Service and the party's youth organisations it affected a growing number of people, including women.

Historiography has understood Göring's announcement of the *Volkskartei*'s establishment on 18th November 1938 in front of the Reich Defence Council (*Reichsverteidigungsrat*) as the index's point of origin.¹⁰ Considering that the initial survey to capture the necessary data was conducted in August 1939, this dating leaves little time for forward planning. Mühlbauer dates the initiative in late 1936 as he understands it to be connected to the first *Vierjahresplan* announced in September of that year, albeit stressing that the exact date cannot be established.¹¹ The definite decision in favour of the nationwide establishment of the index was certainly taken only briefly before the meeting of the

9. Cf. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Volkskartei* (1942), 47.

10. Cf. Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*, 54; Robert M.W. Kempner, 'The German National Registration System As Means of Police Control of Population', *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 36 (1946): 362–387, 367. Though Aly and Roth do mention the test-run in 1938.

11. Cf. Mühlbauer, *Einwohnermeldewesen*, 77.

Reich Defence Council in November. Neither can a connection to the *Vierjahresplan* be denied as both projects were linked to the mobilisation effort and were intended to put material as well as human resources at its disposal.

However, the specific difference of the *Volkskartei* is the organisation in age cohorts. It is this feature that fulfilled the demands voiced by the *Wehrmacht* during the first draft in 1935 and which allows the dating of the *Volkskartei*'s origins to as early as July 1935.¹² While the project was initially referred to as “nach Geburtsjahrgängen aufgestellte Einwohnerkartei”, from spring 1937 – that is after Liebermann's transferral to the Order Police – the term *Volkskartei* is frequently found in the files. On 20th July 1937 Himmler informed the *Regierungspräsidenten* of the Potsdam district a test run of the index was planned for 1938. Liebermann had been appointed to design the *Volkskartei*, but discussions to align population indices had already begun when Kerstiens was in charge. In February 1938 Liebermann had been working on the proposal for an index system for over a year and had sent first drafts to Daluge and Himmler as well as the government in Potsdam and the district commissioners.¹³

The *Reichsmeldeordnung* itself had defined the conditions of registration for the public. Only April 1938's second implementation decree regarding the *Reichsmeldeordnung* governed the substantial side of registration regulations and refrained from prescribing a card index system. Nevertheless, for those municipalities that had not previously introduced such devices, the *Reichsmeldeordnung* and the related implementation decrees provided the regulations and form layouts for a complete registration system. While the use of some of these forms was obligatory, like the postcard-sized standardised notifications forms, others were meant to be used in case no equivalent solution was in place. The *Einheitskarteikarte* – or *Personenregisterkarte* – existed in two forms: in blue for women, in white for men each on A 5 paper. Both cards contained questions beyond those asked in the registration form (*Anmeldeschein*). Unlike the registration form, the index card featured an additional field next to the question on citizenship in which documents provided as proof could be specified. This allowed a potential introduction of *Ausweisungspflicht* later on. A further row provided space to note prior convictions. The third row of the index card was reserved for the parents' personal details, including religion. The following one for the credentials of possible spouses. The last row asked for the children's credentials leaving space for a reference to their individual files. A box was left to list special licences or other remarks. A new feature of the form was the

12. See chapter ‘Second planning stage’, 100.

13. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343 Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd 1, Reichsführer SS usw. O-VuR. III 3013/38 an das Oldenb. Staatsministerium, 26th January 1938, 383.

header. As the index cards were stored in index boxes in an upright position, the header would be visible at a glance when browsing the index boxes. On the right side of the card it featured 16 numbered fields that could be coloured or tabbed in order to highlight specific cards. Left of the header's 16 fields was an extra box that contained one word only – ‘*Abstammung:*’ – succeeded by an empty space.¹⁴ Yet, neither the extensive instructions for the use of the index cards by Kääb and Liebermann explain the purpose of this field nor is it referred to elsewhere.¹⁵ As the introduction of the *Volkskartei* was not uncontested, the unified register card provided a fall-back version for the census data in case it was decided to abandon the project of the *Volkskartei*. However, both projects were neither alternatives nor mutually interchangeable.

5.3 The concept

The *Reichsmeldeordnung* had refrained from introducing a unified index system and thus left disparate registration in place. The *Volkskartei* was meant to make up for that. The most important feature of the *Volkskartei* was its organisation in age cohorts. The ‘traditional’ population registers of the police or civil registration offices had always been organised alphabetically since they usually had to locate and identify individuals by name. In the *Volkskartei* alphabetical order remained relevant only within the age cohorts. But both indices would also differ in scope as the correspondence of Heydrich and Daluge in February 1937 reveals. After the *Chef der Sicherheitspolizei* had enquired as to what extent comprehensive lists of residents existed, the Ministry of the Interior's Department Administration and Law replied:

‘Übersichten der ortsansässigen Einwohner’ fehlen auch in den Städten und bei den staatlichen Polizeiverwaltungen. Sie sind auch nicht zu beschaffen.¹⁶

The only lists available, the letter sets out, comprise the registered residents. A follow-up from February informed Heydrich that a coming “Kartei aller Einwohner vom 14. Lebensjahre ab” was intended to fill the existing gaps in registration.¹⁷ More than a

14. Cf. Ralf Zeitler and Hans Schlempp, eds., *Die Reichsmeldeordnung vom 6. Januar 1938 mit der VO. vom 6. September 1939, dem Volkskarteierlaß, den Vorschriften über Paß- und Ausweiswesen, den Ausländerpolizeirecht sowie den einschlägigen gesetzlichen Bestimmungen und Erlassen*, 7. (Berlin: Deutscher Gemeindeverl., 1940), 142-143.

15. Cf. Zeitler and Schlempp, 114-117.

16. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343, Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd 1, O-VuR.R III 394 Hrrn Oberregierungsrat von Wigandt 23rd December 1936, 267.

17. GSTA I HA Rep. 77 Tit. 343, Nr. 107a Sonderakte Bd 1, Der Chef der Ordnungspolizei O-VuR.Org.R 208/37 an den Chef der Sicherheitspolizei, 11th February 1937, 268.

mere device of registration on the occasion of establishing a new home, the new card index was intended to comprise the entire population. To achieve that, the new index could not just be another cumulative data base, instead, the data was to be captured by an independent survey. What made the approach to capturing the data by a survey so intriguing were the benefits of the ‘principle of simultaneity’ statistician Dr Engel had established in the previous century.¹⁸ By requiring every person in every household to answer the questionnaires simultaneously a ‘static picture’ of the entire population could be produced. The traditional registration offices were by their very nature maintaining cumulative data-bases and even the nationwide standardisation and the notification system introduced with the *Reichsmeldeordnung* could not compensate for the inherent ineptitude to comprise the unregistered population. A survey-based register would help closing the existing gaps without suffering the disadvantage of the data quickly becoming obsolete usually connected with surveys. Through the integration of the index with the existing registration and notification system, the deficits of the ‘static picture’ a survey provided could be compensated, and turn the *Volkskartei* into a dynamic data base, frequently updated by the registrars. On the occasion of change of residency, cards were to follow their holders to be integrated into the local indices. As the number of surveys were growing not least as a result of the increasingly managed economy and the concomitant management of human resources, the establishment of a data-base that provided the basic information of the entire population was only an obvious next step. The concept of the new card index was associated with the attempt to identify ‘*Rassejuden*’ by means of a grand-scale survey at an early stage since the idea was brought up by Kerstiens at about the same time the *Wehrmacht* had made their requirements for registration known to the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Once this index was established, new queries could easily be included. By tabbing the index cards of a given group of individuals, the index could quickly provide an overview of a given segment of the population. Despite the earlier Prussian effort to identify medical practitioners via the tax survey, nationwide their number remained uncertain. The *Volkskartei* was supposed to mend this gap in registration of medical personnel left by the *Reichsmeldeordnung*. In order to limit the number of statistical requests to the municipalities, local registries were combined on the district level. Hence, for every registrant, two copies of the *Volkskarteikarte* would be produced. The original was to be kept at the local registration office forming the ‘*Urkartei*’ while the copy be sent to the district’s police department where a *Kreiskartei* was to allow evaluation of the

18. See chapter ‘Nationality and statistics’, 22.

index to produce oversight over the district's population. Surveys could thus be easily conducted on the local level for direct implementation or on a national scale evaluating the *Kreiskarteien*. The registration system's notification obligations were to guarantee both copies featured identical information, thereby introducing grand-scale double-entry accounting for the entire population. A somewhat similar design had been proposed by Gercke for the *Reichsippenkartei* back in 1934, albeit with the local register on the district level and a single central kinship index.¹⁹ Conversely, Kääb and Liebermann were well aware a central index was unfeasible as it would “alsbald an seiner eigenen Papierfülle ersticken” and measures like the draft were implemented on the district level anyhow. They considered the decentralisation in *Kreiskarteien* a workable compromise of oversight and swift operation.²⁰

Yet, despite attempting to close all gaps in registration, the *Volkskartei* could not simply replace the traditional registration devices for several reasons. As individuals were usually identified by name and frequently the date of birth was unknown, the index could not be operated without a separate alphabetical name-index. In municipalities where card-based registration was already in place, these cards could provide a reference system; otherwise a separate name index had to be established. Furthermore, index cards were only produced for the section of the population aged from 5 to 70 years that constituted the “staatspolitisch und polizeilich in erster Linie interessierende Großteil der Bevölkerung.”²¹ For those ageing above 70 a separate system had to be maintained. As the *Volkskartei* was to register *Reichsangehörige* exclusively, the presence of aliens also required a separate registration system. Hence, as the index was unsuited for the replacement of the existing registers, it required the operation of several population registers by the local department's in addition to the double-entry accounting established on the district level with the *Kreiskartei* which also depended on a separate name index. While this might not overstrain trained civil servants of the larger *Einwohnermeldeämter* in the cities, the requirements that were introduced with the *Reichsmeldeordnung* had already led to several complaints by the honorary mayors in charge of registration in the smaller municipalities. With the introduction of an additional index, their duties increased once again. As the *Volkskartei* was integrated with the system the *Reichsmeldeordnung* had established, the decree did not introduce new institutions or offices, hence it left the split in administrative responsibilities between municipal and police registration intact.

19. See chapter ‘Path dependencies’, 69.

20. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Volkskartei* (1942), 16.

21. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei* (1939), 47.

The *Volkskarteikarte* With the format A 5 (145 x 210 mm) size the index cards were comparatively small. This was owed to the fact that cellulose was one of the restricted raw materials Germany had to import. On the other hand durable 200 gs paper was chosen to guarantee the card's longevity. Cards for women were green and the cards for men were orange (*chamoise*). Either version featured eleven questions and two additional fields for regulatory remarks (*behördliche Vermerke*) and change of residency. Due to the card's size each of the fields was relatively small and required careful completion.

Like the *Einheitsregisterkarte* the *Volkskarteikarte* was headed by a row of 14 tabs. Included in the header was a field for the date of completion preceded by the notice "Nur von Reichsangehörigen, nicht von Ausländern auszufüllen". Other than Daluge and Heydrich's correspondence suggested, the *Volkskartei* was limited to the population of German citizenship – including any cases of doubt – but clearly not aliens and hence not the entire resident population.

The first field, identical for women and men, asked for year, day, place and district of birth. The second asked questions on the registrants vocation both trained and practised. While men had to specify their employment relationship, women were asked for their husband's profession. The next row asked whether the person was in possession of a *Arbeitsbuch*. Field number four asked for physical handicaps. The fifth field at the top of the centre column asked for names and marital status and if married the spouse's credentials. Women also had to list all children below the age of fifteen. The subsequent box contained questions on any form of education beyond primary school (*Volksschule*) and was succeeded by questions on stays abroad and knowledge of foreign languages. While field number eight on the cards for men asked for special qualifications in industry, agriculture, technology or the sciences in general, the respective field on the women's card asked quite specifically for qualifications in typewriting, accounting, shorthand, sewing, cooking, gardening, factory work or the sciences. Question number nine was identical for women and men and the first on the reverse side of the card. It asked for medical qualifications and potential driving or pilot licences. The following field asked questions related to military and labour service. As women were excluded from the military, the field on the green cards was accordingly smaller. Only the last field to be completed by the registrant enquired about the current place of residency.

5.4 A test run

Before nationwide establishment of the *Volkskartei* was decided upon, the creation of the index was put to a test. The administrative district of Potsdam enclosed the *Reichshauptstadt* and was presumably chosen as a testing ground for its proximity to the central administration. Spanning from Wittenberg at the Elbe river in the west to Schwedt at the Oder and from Jüterbog in the south to Pasewalk up north, and characterised by growing industrial cities like Oranienburg with an enormous increase in population on the one hand and sparsely populated regions like the Uckermark on the other, it provided an appropriate testing ground for the index.²² By secret decree dated 20th July 1937 the *Regierungspräsident* of Potsdam announced the establishment of a *Volkskartei* on a trial basis for the administrative district of Potsdam for 1938.²³ The announcement was supplemented by the draft version of the regulations for the *Volkskartei*, that had also been subject of Daluge's correspondence with Himmler in August 1937.²⁴

I will examine the exchange between the *Regierungspräsidenten* of the Potsdam district and its district commissioners (*Landräte*) and mayors that resulted from a test run of the index in the Potsdam district. These previously unconsidered sources allow an insight into the obstacles encountered at the different stages of implementation that do not exist for the national level.

In the month leading up to the test run, the *Regierungspräsident* ordered the district commissioners to report on the current state of registration. Only few of the reports were as concise as the one from the Jüterbog-Luckenwalde district, whose district commissioner replied in a single sentence: "In sämtlichen Gemeinden des Kreises werden Meldekarteien in Karteiform geführt".²⁵ Although some communities had introduced the ADREMA system in the late 1920s, by far the majority of municipalities still relied on lists or books to register their population. Yet, one month after the *Reichsmeldeord-*

22. Cf. Frédéric Bonnesoeur, *Im guten Einvernehmen: die Stadt Oranienburg und die Konzentrationslager Oranienburg und Sachsenhausen 1933-1945*, ed. Metropol-Verlag, Forschungsbeiträge und Materialien der Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten Band 22 (Berlin: Metropol, 2018), 19-22.

23. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat von Angermünde an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 24th of July 1937, Eingangsbestätigung. Betrifft: Verfügung vom 20. Juli 1937 - I Pol.R.V.1.322

24. BArch R 19 407, Bl. 1. Daluge to Himmler on the 12th of August. Like similar holdings this file is characterised by a gap stretching from summer 1937 to 1943. The entire correspondence on the index's test-run is marked *Geheime Reichssache* suggesting the respective documents were handled with a high degree of secrecy.

25. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Landrat des Kreises Jüterbog-Luckenwalde an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 20th June 1938.

nung came into force about 60 municipalities still did not keep registers at all.²⁶ Given that the *Reichsmeldeordnung* was not the first attempt to standardise registration within Prussia these reports prove the rural areas were still a major problem for registration. Similar conditions may well have prevailed in other places, in particular the rural and less densely settled areas in the southern federal states.

On 25th July 1938 Himmler instructed Potsdam's *Regierungspräsidenten* in his capacity as head of the *Oberste Verwaltungsbehörde* and thus the district's police forces and registration offices to establish the *Volkskartei* in order to test the stages of implementation. The document was – as was the entire correspondence on the test-run – marked classified. It included detailed instructions and proposals for collecting the data, the establishment and the maintenance of the index and sample index cards. The trial was set for August. The municipalities' reports about the screening were expected at the police departments by 30th September 1938 who would compile summary reports for the *Regierungspräsidenten* in Potsdam by 15th October.²⁷ That left the brief time-span of about three months for the entire project and its evaluation.

The *Regierungspräsident* started receiving comments from the district's commissioners and mayors soon after the plan had been announced in 1937. While all recipients of the decree acknowledged possible benefits of the new index, the fact that it introduced double-entry accounting of the population caused disquiet amongst them. Three days after the plan had been announced Oberbarnim's district commissioner proposed: "Meines Dafürhaltens brauchen nur die Kreispolizeibehörden die Volkskartei zu führen".²⁸ Over the course of the year commissioners realised that the two identical indices would depend on further, separate indices for the elderly, foreigners and an alphabetical index so that the commissioner in Teltow argued for the "Wegfall aller anderen Karteien, die Volkskartei muß eine Universalkartei sein".²⁹

Their objections were motivated by the apprehended increase in workload during the index' compilation and the later operation. The Reich Ministry of the Interior had

26. 22 Municipalities in the district of Teltow BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat des Kreises Teltow an den Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 27th June 1938, and 42 in the Rathenow district, BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702 Der Landrat Rathenow an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten, 24th June 1938.

27. BAArch R 1501 1300008, Bl. 2-7, Bracht on behalf of: Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern O-VuR. / a g Nr 13 III/38 an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 25th July 1938.

28. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Landrat des Kreises Oberbarnim an den Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, Betreff: Errichtung einer Volkskartei — Verfügung vom 20. Juli 1937; eine Anlage. 27th July, 1937.

29. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Landrat des Kreises Teltow an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, Betrifft Volkskartei 11th August 1938.

promised an additional position per 50,000 inhabitants financed by the states. But due to the high employment rates, it was hard to fill the vacancies as the commissioner of Oberhavel laid out:

Da der Kreis Oberhavel z. Zt. rund 120 000 Einwohner hat und von diesen in der Volkskartei etwa 90 000 erfaßt werden sollen, würde die Ausstellung der Karten in Maschinenschrift etwa 600 Werktag in Anspruch nehmen. Da die Herstellung der Kartei bei der Kreispolizeibehörde in 3 Monaten erfolgen soll, müßten 8 gute Arbeitskräfte während dieser Zeit ausschließlich mit dieser Arbeit beschäftigt werden. Eine derartige Anzahl von Arbeitskräften steht mir nicht zur Verfügung. Bei der Lage des Arbeitsmarktes würden sie auch auf keinen Fall hier zu bekommen sein.³⁰

Similar concerns were voiced all over the district.³¹

While the situation in the district towns was dire, it was even more problematic in municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants where the entire administration was in the hands of honorary mayors. The district commissioner of Ostprignitz had already noticed growing unease amongst the mayors in his district. He pointed out, “daß die Bürgermeister meines Kreises durch die ständig zunehmende Arbeit unlustig werden und mich wiederholt gebeten haben, sie nunmehr von ihrer ehrenamtlichen Tätigkeit zu entbinden”.³² He was seconded by the commissioner of Beskow-Storkow, who pointed out the dependence on the mayors’ goodwill and added: “Bei Zwangsmaßnahmen wird es zu Amtsniederlegungen kommen”.³³ Teltow’s commissioner, in whose district 22 mayors had failed to implement the *Reichsmeldeordnung* anticipated “daß das Proberverfahren unter Mitwirkung der Bürgermeister zu einem völligen Fehlschlag führen muß”.³⁴ Inaccuracy on the local level, he argued, would not only affect the local registries:

30. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Oberhavelland an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten, z. Hd. von Herrn Honig oder Vertreter im Amt in Potsdam, Betrifft: Volkskartei, 6th August 1938.

31. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Landrat des Regierungsbezirks Potsdam an die Herren Landräte des Bezirks, 10th August 1938, Betrifft: Volkskartei.

32. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Landrat des Kreises Ostprignitz an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 10th August 1938, Betrifft: Volkskartei.

33. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Landrat des Kreises Beskow-Storkow Herrn Regierungspräsidenten, Herrn Regierungsvizepräsidenten Dr. Honig oder Vertreter in Potsdam, Betreff: Volkskartei, 6th of August 1938

34. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Teltow an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 11th August 1938.

Da nach diesen Erfahrungen die ordnungsgemäße Führung der Karteien bei den Bürgermeistern scheitern dürfte, scheitert auch die auf einer ordnungsgemäßen Führung der Gemeindekarteien beruhende Kreiskartei.³⁵

Thus he proposed a workable solution for the lack of police registration in the smaller municipalities where registration had remained a communal competence: “Die Schaffung von Amtsbürgermeistereien ist meiner Auffassung nach eine dringende Voraussetzung für das Gelingen des großen Planes”.³⁶ A professionalisation of administration in the smaller municipalities was briefly discussed again in 1940 but they faced the same opposition as the discontinued *Reichsreform*.³⁷

The problem of staffing was subsequently addressed by involving more volunteers. Daluege enquired to the SS Head Office’s Heißmeyer whether the formation was willing to supply volunteers.³⁸ Himmler agreed to have the district’s “schreibgewandte SS-Männer” volunteer to the task of producing the *Kreiskarteien*.³⁹ To win the support of the local SS, the respective notification sent to the ‘*SS-Oberabschnitte*’ (districts) the same day highlighted that in addition to military and policing the new index would directly serve the party’s interests as it would figure as “Erfassungsgrundlage für das Jungvolk, die HJ und den BDM”.⁴⁰ Similarly, the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Culture had promised the teachers’ help compiling the index. To that regard the district commissioner in Zauch-Belzig commented: “die Parteiorgane und auch die Lehrer sind bereits mit anderen Arbeiten sehr in Anspruch genommen”.⁴¹

The survey itself faced several difficulties in logistics as well as external obstacles. The trial was overshadowed by the *Sudetenkrise* in course of which significant parts of the male population were absent.⁴² The district of Angermünde and the Ostprignitz suffered an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease that rendered their mayors immobile as their farms were put into quarantine. Angermünde had to deal with floodings so

35. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat des Kreises Teltow an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 27th June 1938

36. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Teltow an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 11th August 1938.

37. BArch R 19 395, Der Chef der Ordnungspolizei an Herrn Ministerialdirektor Bracht, 7th December 1940.

38. BArch NS 31 132, Chef der Ordnungspolizei an den Chef des NS-Hauptamtes, SS-Obergruppenführer Heißmeyer, 12th January 1939.

39. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2703, Der Regierungspräsident des Kreises Ostprignitz an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 19th of January 1939.

40. BArch NS 31 132, Der Chef des SS-Hauptamtes an den SS-Oberabschnitt Ost, 19th of January 1939.

41. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Zauch-Belzig an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, Betr. Volkskartei, 8th August 1938.

42. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Polizeipräsident von Potsdam an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 21st October 1938.

that the district's available workforce was employed securing the levees and rescuing the harvest from the polders inland. In the areas affected, the survey was postponed until November.⁴³

Logistical problems surfaced when not all municipalities were supplied with a sufficient number of index cards. Difficulties arose in the communes where the officials had to report the amount of required cards, and sometimes underestimated the increase in population since the last census. More often, the lack of raw fibre to produce the cards on the side of the *Reichsdruckerei*, the only printing house authorised to print the cards, created a bottleneck.⁴⁴

While the general schedule of the trial and the respites were ordered centrally from the Reich Ministry of the Interior, the method for distributing and collecting the cards, as well as the actual production of the index was left to the local authorities, in order to adapt to the local conditions. Depending on the mayors' and commissioners' priorities, three different approaches developed. Where the establishment of the index was left to volunteers and honorary mayors, often both cards were handed out to the population, who had to complete them within ten days. This approach was chosen not necessarily because it was considered the best method. Weighing his doubts regarding the rural population's ability to correctly complete the questionnaires, against the honorary mayor's existing duties, Teltow's district commissioner concluded, "daß die Ausfüllung der Karten im Großen und Ganzen der Bevölkerung wird überlassen werden müssen".⁴⁵

In contrast, Templin's commissioner considered due to high rates of illiteracy in some regions that the survey takers would have to complete the questionnaires.⁴⁶ Sometimes the survey overburdened even these volunteers. Beeskow reported:

Die Karten enthalten [...] überhaupt Fragen bei denen die Zähler, selbst Lehrer, kaum wissen, was und wie sie zu antworten haben.⁴⁷

43. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Angermünde an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, Betrifft: Volkskartei, 13th September 1938.

44. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2703, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichministerium des Innern an den Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, Nachrichtlich an: Die Herren Landräte des Bezirks, Den Herrn Pol.-Präsidenten in Potsdam und den übrigen kreisfreien Städten des Bezirks, Die Staatspolizeistelle in Potsdam, 23rd September 1939.

45. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Teltow an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 11th August 1938.

46. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Templin an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 6th August 1938.

47. BLHA Rep. 8 Beskow 3546, Der Bürgermeister in Beskow an den Herrn Landrat, 3rd October 1938.

In order to produce an accurate index some districts produced paper questionnaires and intended to complete the index cards by typewriter.⁴⁸ Yet, the unreliable supply of cards forestalled this approach and municipalities that had planned to produce both copies of the cards by typewriter and carbon copy in a single step found their work almost doubled. Furthermore, the card lay-out made completion with a typewriter all the more difficult. The choice of high-quality paper required powerful typewriters to produce a legible carbon copy. Smaller machines were reportedly broken while producing the *Volkskartei*. Furthermore, the spacing of the cards' rows was not adjusted to conventional typewriter's spacing so that the scribes had to target the individual rows manually. The poor use of available space made it impossible to complete the lower rows with a typewriter as the cards would simply fall off the platen roller.

Erkner, Glienike and Oranienburg – all located in the Niederbarnim district – were allowed to test the integration of the *Volkskartei* with their ADREMA systems. Erkner – bypassing the Ministry of the Interior – had specifically designed cards compatible with the machines and as a result could enormously speed up the index production. The other cities had resorted to printing labels that were eventually attached to the cards. This proved impracticable since it took more time and resulted in thicker and bent index cards.⁴⁹ The integration of the *Volkskartei* and ADREMA-system was dismissed for the nationwide implementation.

The third approach, that was eventually adapted for the nationwide implementation, was to hand out the card intended for the local index to the public for completion and to produce the one for the police department's *Kreiskartei* by typewriter.

Forms of non compliance, like loss of the form or return of incomplete or only partly legible forms were practised everywhere – often exceeding the 10% margin already taken into account by the *Reichsdruckerei*. As had been expected by many civil servants, cards distributed to the population were rarely returned intact. The report from Ruppın district highlighted: “[...] durch die Belassung der Karteikarten bei den Volksgenossen geht eine Menge Karteikarten verloren oder wird derart verschmutzt, dass sie in jedem Fall erneuert werden müssen”.⁵⁰

As the entire planning of the index' test-run had been classified, local authorities were not allowed to officially announce the survey prior to its actual conduct whereas traditionally censuses and other surveys had been accompanied by press coverage and public

48. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Oberbarnim an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 6th August 1938.

49. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Niederbarnim an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 5th November 1938.

50. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Ruppın an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 2nd November 1938.

announcements. Prior to the distribution of the cards, the mayor of Brandenburg an der Havel had suggested linking the project with the tax survey, “weil die Bevölkerung [...] bei einer außerterminlichen Ausfüllung der Bogen für die Volkskartei sicherlich stutzig werden würde”.⁵¹ During the survey, several reports mention different degrees of resistance or unwillingness to complete the questionnaire. The commissioner of Zauch - Belzig noted in this regard, “daß teilweise bei den Volksgenossen eine recht große Abneigung dagegen besteht, ihre Fähigkeiten usw. mitzuteilen [...]”.⁵² The same reasoning that had made some reluctant to disclose their vocational qualifications led others to provide misleading information as they understood the index to be a potential stepping stone for their (or their children’s) careers. A survey taker from Beskow reported:

In einigen Fällen ist bewußt die Unwahrheit gesagt worden! Bei Frauen sind oft ‘höhere Schulen’ angegeben worden [...] In einem anderen Fall hat der Vater den Sohn aus eigener Machtvollkommenheit aus einer höheren Schulklasse entlassen.⁵³

Due to the lack of legal basis, neither of the above was punishable. To identify and rectify false information, an additional process of verification was required, but its implementation depended on the local authorities. The head of the Potsdam police department, who had involved volunteers from the local party branch to conduct the survey, seems to downplay the incidents in his district, sharing an interesting observation:

Unvermeidlich waren natürlich auch einzelne wenige Zusammenstöße zwischen den politischen Leitern und Volksgenossen, da sich letztere teilweise grundsätzlich weigerten, die Karten auszufüllen, hauptsächlich in der Meinung, die Karten seien für Parteizwecke, nicht aber für den Staat selbst bestimmt.⁵⁴

This suggests that readiness to disclose personal data also depended on the institution asking for disclosure and the intended use. To that regard trust in the state institutions differed from that in the party. The commissioner of the Ruppiner district, where party

51. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Oberbürgermeister als Kreispolizeibehörde in Brandenburg (Havel) an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 10th August 1938.

52. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Landrat des Kreises Zauch-Belzig an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 25th February 1939.

53. BLHA Rep. 8 Beskow 3546, Kurt Müller (Zähler) an den Herrn Bürgermeister in Beskow, 3rd November 1938.

54. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Polizeipräsident in Potsdam an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 21st November 1938.

members distributed and collected the cards in Neuruppin, reported “Dieses Verfahren ist aber nicht zu empfehlen”.⁵⁵

The mayor of Birkenwerder had to deal with high levels of non compliance. To diffuse respective fears in the population the mayor had Niederbarnim’s district commissioner issue an announcement claiming the use of the new index was limited to the “zahlreichen Aufgaben, die der Polizei in der Betreuung der Bevölkerung obliegen”.⁵⁶ A similar announcement was made in Rüdersdorf. Upon sending the announcement, the commissioner informed Birkenwerder’s mayor to maintain confidentiality and refrain from publishing the announcement via the local press in order to avoid wider attention.⁵⁷ In his report Niederbarnim’s commissioner summarised:

Diese Riesenarbeit [...] hätte sich bedeutend leichter durchführen lassen, wenn für rechtzeitige und ausreichende Aufklärung vorbereitend hätte gesorgt werden können. [...] Man wollte wissen, weshalb “diese und jene Angaben” verlangt wurden, und nur dem einsichtsvollen Verhalten der Helfer ist es zuzuschreiben, daß ernsthaftere Angstpsychosen nicht zum Ausbruch kamen.

Without going into further detail, the commissioner reported several cases in which mayors involved police to enforce compliance.⁵⁸ Judging from the drastic language employed in the report, distrust was relatively widespread and obviously the intrusion into privacy presented by the index recognised by parts of the population. As a result the data was often incomplete so the head of Potsdam’s police department had to admit in his final report:

Auch heute noch befinden sich in der Kartei Karten, die nicht alle erforderlichen Angaben enthalten, die also späterhin noch einmal gesichtet und durch die Polizeireviere vervollständigt werden müssen.⁵⁹

After the survey both copies had to be organised in cohorts then alphabetically and kept safe. As the commissioner of the district Ruppín illustrated the situation of the honorary mayors to his superior in Potsdam:

55. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Ruppín an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 2nd November 1938.

56. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Landrat des Kreises Niederbarnim, Bekanntmachung, 10th October 1938.

57. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Der Landrat des Kreises Niederbarnim an den Herrn Bürgermeister als Meldebehörde in Birkenwerder, 10th October 1938.

58. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Niederbarnim an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 5th November 1938.

59. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Polizeipräsident in Potsdam an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 21st November 1938.

Das Amtszimmer ist zugleich Wohnzimmer und mit allem möglichen Mobil-
iar angefüllt. Für den Karteikasten ist tatsächlich kein sicherer Platz vor-
handen.⁶⁰

Police departments often had to rent additional rooms to accommodate the index con-
soles. The furnishing of all register offices in the Potsdam district remained incomplete
even in November 1938.⁶¹ Without the proper equipment, operation of the index was
tedious and oversight was not guaranteed. The *Kreiskarteien* easily comprised some
10,000 cards or more. Once again, the commissioner of Niederbarnim was addressing
this aspect most tangible in his report:

Namentlich in den grossen Gemeinden türmen sich die losen Karten überall
auf den Tischen und Ablageplätzen und erschweren die Übersicht. Infolge
der täglich eintretenden Veränderungen müssen die Karten schon bei der
Erstellung nachgesehen und ergänzt werden, wobei sie arg in Mitleidenschaft
gezogen werden.⁶²

The most meaningful step in the *Volkskartei*'s creation was its evaluation. By adding
tabs to the card header, the index was turned into a tagged and hence searchable data
base. Evaluation of the index was ordered for the district of Potsdam on 7th August 1939
by Himmler and accompanied by extensive instructions.⁶³ Cards of medical personnel
were marked with a white tab and the *Volkskarteibehörde* was tasked with informing
the local health department about every registration or cancellation thereof involving
medical personnel, hereby closing the gap in registration the *Reichsmeldeordnung* had
left. Cards of those who held any sort of driving licence were marked with a red tab and
a blue tab was to mark those who owned an *Arbeitsbuch*.

However, this revealed just another technical problem. Since the majority of the
working population turned out to own an *Arbeitsbuch*, almost all cards, in particular
in the consoles for men were tabbed. Instead of producing oversight over the working
population, the measure increased the volume of the index – the commissioner of Teltow
noticed his index of some 100,000 cards had grown three more metres – so that once

60. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Ruppın an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in
Potsdam 24th June 1938.

61. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Polizeipräsident in Potsdam an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in
Potsdam, 21st November 1938.

62. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Niederbarnim an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten
in Potsdam, 5th November 1938.

63. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2703, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsmin-
isterium des Innern an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 7th August 1939.

again the registration offices had to order new consoles to house the larger index.⁶⁴ Due to orders from all over Germany that had meanwhile been placed and the onset of the war, the delivery period for new consoles and cabinets had been extended to up to an entire year.⁶⁵ Some registration offices tried tabbing only those cards whose owners did not own a *Arbeitsbuch*. While this cleared the view in the male part of the index, the female consoles were now crowded with tabs.

A further step was the attachment of the duplicate ID cards (*Kennkarten*) that had previously hitherto been collected separately. In the summer of 1939, when the district of Potsdam was ordered to combine both data sets, only conscripts and Jews were required to carry ID cards. By combining the ID card duplicates with the *Volkskartei* their biometrical data was added to the index. The existence of the ID card was to be noted on the *Volkskarteikarte*. Furthermore, the order from August 1939 instructed:

Bei dieser Gelegenheit sind die Kennkarten von Juden [...] dadurch zu kennzeichnen, dass ein viereckiger schwarzer Reiter über der Zahl 14 auf der Volkskarteikarte befestigt wird.⁶⁶

During the completion of the *Volkskarteikarte* the survey takers had been told to pencil the cards of those they knew or suspected to be Jewish with a ‘J’ in the card’s upper left corner. The attachment of the *Kennkarten* to the index cards provided an additional way of collating data on race with the population registers. Cards that labelled a person Jewish but without an ID card or *vice-versa* were supposed to trigger further enquiries.

The earliest district to finish compilation of the local copy (*Urkartei*) was Jüterbog-Luckenwalde, whose commissioner reported nine days after the original respite expired. Nevertheless, he did not expect the *Kreiskartei* to be completed within the year. Regarding the operation of the index he remarked: “Weiter kann auch die Gewähr für eine ordnungsgemäße Führung der Kreiskartei mit dem vorhandenen Personal nicht übernommen werden”.⁶⁷ With the exception of Angermünde most districts reported the finalisation of the *Urkartei* during November 1938. Due to the delays in the Potsdam district, the decision for the nationwide implementation of the *Volkskartei* was taken before the

64. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2703, Der Landrat des Kreises Teltow an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 10th October 1939.

65. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2703, Hinz Organisation für Büro, Betrieb und Verwaltung G.M.B.H. an den Herrn Landrat in Prenzlau, 14th November 1939.

66. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2703, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 7th August 1939.

67. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2702, Landrat der Kreises Jüterbog-Luckenwalde an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 24th October 1938.

trial in Potsdam had come to an end and despite the enormous difficulties the establishment had to face. The fact that the Ministry of the Interior still insisted on the index shows the importance it attached to the *Volkskartei*.

During the trial's initial phase only the cohorts between 1869 and 1925 were registered. But the *Volkskartei* was intended to shape the future, i. e. the youth. Hence, in a second phase that was to begin after the compilation of the *Kreiskarteien* was supposedly finished, the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Culture had ordered the registration of the remaining children ageing from five to fourteen years on 18th of January 1939.⁶⁸ However, this time the decree was not limited to the Potsdam district.

The survey of school children was conducted simultaneously in the Potsdam district and the entire Reich – being the last step in data acquisition in Potsdam and the initial stage for the Reich. The Ministry for Education had both ordered the creation of the index for school children as well as guaranteed the cost-neutral creation of the *Urkartei* by offering the teachers to volunteer in its initial compilation and the long-term maintenance. In turn, the ministry included its questions on vocational training and higher education in the survey.⁶⁹

Registration was carried out in school mainly by the teachers, though the instructions pointed out:

Größere Kinder können unter Aufsicht der Lehrer die Karten sauber, ordentlich und in leserlicher Schrift mit Tinte selbst ausfüllen.⁷⁰

The *Reichsdruckerei* had printed a significant number of the index cards to prepare for the nationwide establishment, but resulting from the trial, the design was altered so that the existing stock was distributed during the first screening of school-children – the inappropriate questions were simply left out. Although the registration offices in the Potsdam district were almost a year ahead of their counterparts in other regions, the onset of the war had a direct impact on them. On 18th September 1939 the district commissioner of Templin sent an inquiry to the district government in Potsdam:

Ich bitte um Verfügung, ob bei dem erschütternden Personalmangel, der inzwischen eingetreten ist, die Weiterführung der Volkskartei bei den Landräten und Gemeinden ausgesetzt werden kann.⁷¹

68. RMBliV, 115.

69. Cf. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Volkskartei (1942)*, 11.

70. BLHA Rep. 8 Beeskow 3546, Der Landrat des Kreises Beeskow an die Herren Bürgermeister des Kreises, 7th February 1939.

71. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2703, Der Landrat des Kreises Templin an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam, 18th September 1939.

Himmler's reply which was forwarded to all district commissioners and the heads of the police departments suggests that similar considerations had been made elsewhere, too. Thus the reply began conceding that the mobilisation had been challenging the registration offices, "so daß der Aufbau der Volkskartei hier und dort zurückgestellt worden sein mag". Nevertheless, Himmler's reply once again stressed the importance of the index "für die Landesverteidigung und die wirtschaftliche Mobilmachung" and ordered the rigid implementation of the necessary steps. On a local basis authorities were asked to publish announcements obliging those who were unregistered to complete the forms. On the occasion of the *Personenstandsaufnahme*, data that had been forwarded from the registration offices to the tax office beforehand was to be tallied with the local *Volkskarteien*.⁷²

Trial and implementation

Before turning to the survey of 1939 I will address the changes resulting from the trial as they allow the reconstruction of the priorities governing the decisions during the *Volkskartei*'s nationwide establishment. In contrast to the ample correspondence related to the index' test-run, detailed reports stemming from the nationwide implementation do not exist. The analysis of the implementation thus primarily has to rely on the respective laws and regulations. A meaningful source previously not consulted by researchers are the discussions regarding the decommissioning of the index in 1943 – in particular when compared to the reports coming from Potsdam's civil servants in the late thirties. Regarding the initial survey, the best source is provided by the *Volkskartei* manual first published in 1939 prior to the nationwide implementation, which was almost entirely written by Liebermann.⁷³ The manual is divided into two parts. The first of which, after laying out the *Volkskartei*'s purpose, provides detailed instructions for the different steps required for its creation. The instructions address individual stages of the indices production – the aggregation of data, the organisation of the indices (*Ur-* and *Kreiskartei*), the evaluation and tabbing of the index cards, as well as the operation of the indices. The second part gathers all relevant laws and decrees. The entire first part is characterised by a colloquial tone and numerous remarks on practical issues and objections show how Liebermann was well acquainted with the difficulties that had surfaced during the trial.

72. BLHA Rep. 2A I Pol 2703, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern an den Regierungspräsidenten in Potsdam. 23rd September 1939.

73. BArch R 19 5376, Ministerialrat Käab an Ministerialdirektor Bracht, 27th August 1942. Erich Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei*, 1.-3., ed. Artur Käab (München, Berlin: Jehle, 1939).

The most obvious change concerned the lay out of the index cards, which now allowed the processing of the entire card by typewriter as the spacing was adjusted accordingly. The card for women that had previously asked for the husband's profession twice was altered and allowed more space for the maiden name that had before been considered too small.

Most notably, all methods that had led to a higher quality of the index cards, like the distribution of paper questionnaires and the production of the *Urkartei* by typewriter, were explicitly forbidden. Exceptions were only admitted in small rural communities where illiteracy was common; elsewhere the completion of the cards by the population in handwriting was mandatory. Liebermann addressed the problem in the index' manual employing the anti-statist sentiment nurtured by National Socialists:

Der echte Bürokrat (und solche soll es noch immer geben) wird allerdings die Hände über dem Kopf zusammenschlagen. [...] Die schriftliche Beantwortung von Fragen ohne behördliche Überwachung übersteigt die Wahrheitsliebe und das Begriffsvermögen des deutschen Publikums keineswegs. Auf alle Fälle wäre es ein Widerspruch wenn Behörden [...] sich auf der einen Seite wegen Personalmangels außerstande erklären wollen, [...] dann aber auf der anderen Seite sich die im Erlaß zum Grundsatz gemachte Vereinfachung der Arbeitsgänge nicht zu nutze machen wollten.⁷⁴

Of course, this was a reaction to the lack of personnel that had become obvious during the trial. Producing the index with the existing staff would have delayed the completion of the index and increased the costs. And indeed, the entire decree is characterised by the willingness to surrender neatness and accuracy to ensure the quick creation of the index. Several regulations for the nationwide creation of the index underline this approach. The survey takers were instructed to check the cards for completeness but explicitly not to ask for proof of the answers, once again referring to the principle of simplicity.⁷⁵ But most importantly, a process of verification would have severely impeded the swift creation of the *Volkskartei* as it would occupy the registrars “auf Jahre hinaus”.⁷⁶ For the case that incomplete cards were returned despite the survey takers insistence, the creation of the index was once again prioritised over the cards completeness. Only when the *Kreiskartei* had been established, registrars were told to approach the card-holders to complete individual cards. As we have already seen, it took the authorities in the Potsdam district more than a year to bring the indices to

74. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei* (1939), 4-5.

75. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, 5.

76. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, 15.

usability. Aware of the imminent war the Ministry of the Interior simply had no time left to create an accurate index. But on the other hand, the index was intended to create the most comprehensive register possible and the ministry was unwilling to trade speed for comprehensiveness. The establishment of a nationwide index system refrained from introducing mechanised registration and thus still fell behind the standards set by the ‘Hanseatic’ system. The case of Erkner had shown how cards designed to be processed by the ADREMA machines helped to reduce the time needed for the creation of the index enormously. Yet, to prevent local administrations from simply copying the existing data sets instead of conducting the survey, the new design of the index cards deliberately left the ADREMA system’s requirements unconsidered.⁷⁷

Once again this underlines that the *Volkskartei* was intended to close the gaps in registration by adapting the procedure developed for the censuses – a simultaneously conducted survey targeting the entire population. In the later discussions to decommission the index in 1943 Himmler claimed the index had increased registration of the population by up to 25%.⁷⁸ Given the state of registration in rural areas prior to the establishment of the index this is entirely possible, in particular when the children were taken into account. But none of the holdings consulted during this research contain material to substantiate this claim.

But as individuals might have escaped the *Volkskartei* survey, register offices were held to tally the *Volkskartei* with the existing registers to identify and close remaining gaps. However, it was impossible to prescribe a unified procedure as these registers still differed throughout Germany. Possible data could be provided by the *Hauslisten*,⁷⁹ the data of ADREMA systems or the tax survey.

During the trial the comprehensiveness of the index had been jeopardised by chaotic conditions in the registry offices that had to check the cards, produce the duplicates and keep track of the occurring changes at the same time. In order to avoid the loss of cards, the manual gave clear instructions on how to proceed in case the consoles were not delivered in time or in the event of any other interference with the integrity of the index. Eventually Liebermann reminded the registrars:

77. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei (1939)*, 6.

78. BAArch R 58 254, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern an den Leiter der Parteikanzlei z.Hd. Herrn Staatssekretär Dr. Klopfer, 27th February 1943.

79. See chapter chapter ‘Registration and emancipation’, 11.

Jede Karteikarte bedeutet einen Menschen. Ihr Abhandenkommen kann bei einem notwendigen Einsatz das Fehlen dieses Menschen bedeuten.⁸⁰

Hence, more important than accuracy or neatness was the comprehensiveness of the index and “rasche Erstellung”.⁸¹ Most importantly, however, the changes resulting from the test-run did not address what has explicitly been considered the system’s fundamental weakness: its dependence on volunteers. As the trial in Potsdam had shown, when compiled by paid workers, the establishment entailed costs and occupied workers. Addressing the SS Head office’s Heißmeyer asking for the contribution of volunteers from the SS for both the establishment and the long-term operation of the indices in March 1939, Daluge indicated:

Der Führer legt im Hinblick auf den bestehenden Mangel an Arbeitskräften Wert darauf, daß der Personalbedarf für die Volkskartei auf ein möglichst geringes Maß beschränkt wird.⁸²

While the *Wehrmacht* and both branches of the police pushed for the index, they were facing Hitler’s headwind that manifested in a lack of funding for the project so that the head of the Order Police concluded in the same letter:

Die Errichtung der Kartei im ganzen Reich wird einen großangelegten Versuch darstellen, eine bedeutsame und sehr umfangreiche staatliche Maßnahme zu einem großen Teil mit Hilfe ehrenamtlich tätiger Kräfte durchzuführen.

Obviously Daluge was aware of the obstacles the index was facing and expected the help of Himmler’s SS, once again stressing the demand for “schreibgewandte SS-Männer.” In reply, Heißmeyer once again ascertained the help of his organisation.⁸³ Baldur von Schirach had also offered the help of the Hitler Youth with the distribution and collection of cards.⁸⁴ Apart from the ‘volunteer’ teachers and SS men who were supposed to help

80. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei (1939)* 20.

81. Liebermann von Sonnenberg 20.

82. BArch NS 31 132, Der Chef der Ordnungspolizei an den Chef des SS-Hauptamtes, SS-Obergruppenführer Heißmeyer, 26th March 1939.

83. BArch NS 31 132, Der Chef des SS-Hauptamtes an den Chef der Ordnungspolizei SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Polizei Daluge, Betr.: Mitwirkung der Allgemeinen SS bei Errichtung und Führung der Volkskartei, 5th April 1939.

84. RdErl. des RFSSuChdDtPol. im RMdI vom 17. July 1939, betr. die Regelung der den Kreispolizeibehörden durch Beschaffung des Karteigeräts entstandenen Kosten, Errichtung der Volkskartei. RMBliV 1531.

establish and operate the local *Urkarteien*, for the maintenance of the *Kreiskarteien*, the federal states had to finance a civil servant for every 50,000 cards. The Reich had to bear the costs of the index consoles and the first set of index cards.⁸⁵

Yet, as the establishment of the index was only decided at the end of 1938, the necessary resources were not included in 1939's budgets so that over the year several states reported being overrun and requested help based on the federal fiscal equalisation. Liebermann forwarded requests to the Ministry of the Interior.⁸⁶ Since registration had remained a federal competence, costs that resulted from the operation of the index such as the staff and the occasional renewal of the index card stock were to be covered by the states, so that the Ministry of the Interior simply brushed these requests off.⁸⁷ But despite the solution which reduced staff on the lowest local level, employing volunteers and the limitation of additional staff to each 50,000 cards, lack of available personnel was commiserated even before the initial survey or the war had started. In that respect, in March 1939 the district commissioner of Saarlautern complained to Saarland's *Reichskommissar* about the dire situation. Forwarding the complaint to Liebermann, the *Reichskommissar* amended, "die übrigen Landratsämter des Saarlandes leiden unter ähnlichem Personalmangel".⁸⁸ In the case of Saarlautern, additional staff previously admitted for other tasks had not been supplied or instead been employed by superior offices so that according to the commissioner "eine Entlastung im Interesse des Dienstes und der Gesundheit der Gefolgschaftsmitglieder" was paramount.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, of the three positions requested, only two were granted by the ministry.⁹⁰ Though the reports regarding the nationwide establishment of the index are sparse, these cases from different regions show that the *Volkskartei* encountered the same staffing problems that had already occurred during the trial. Yet, unlike the trial, the nationwide implementation was poorly funded. Both problems were addressed by local administrations prior to the survey. However, the central ministries remained adamant in their denial of financial responsibility for the index beyond the initial supply of the 'hardware' reflecting Hitler's objections to the index.

85. Only for federal states under home rule (*reichsunmittelbar*) like Hesse and the Saarland, and Alsace, Lorraine and Luxemburg, the central government covered the entire expenses.

86. BArch R 1501 1300008, von Liebermann an Abteilung IIa des Reichsministerium des Innern, 11th January 1940.

87. BArch R 1501 130008, Der Reichsminister des Innern, Referent ORR Dr.Kernert an die Badische Staatskanzlei, 19th January 1940.

88. BArch R 1501 1300008, Der Reichskommissar für das Saarland an den Herrn Reichsminister des Innern, 28th March 1939.

89. BArch R 1501, Der Landrat des Kreises Saarlautern an den Herrn Reichskommissar für das Saarland, 18th March 1939.

90. BArch R 1501 1300008, Der Reichminister des Innern an den Herrn Reichsminister der Finanzen, 9th May 1939.

Hence, the Reich Ministry of the Interior's efforts to make the costs disappear by sourcing out the bulk of the workload to 'volunteers' had even been increased after the trial despite all warnings to the contrary. This fundamental reliance on thousands of volunteers whose availability was yet uncertain had made Daluege characterise the project as a "großangelegter Versuch", indicating his awareness of the precarious state of the index prior to its establishment. Considering that the trial only resulted in minor changes that provided for the swift conduct of the survey, and Göring's early announcement of the index on 18th November 1938 prior to the final reports it seems plausible that the trial did not serve to assess the evaluation of the index but rather the feasibility of the previous survey.

5.5 The nationwide implementation in 1939

The nationwide establishment of the index only started with the survey on 13th August 1939 that was ordered by the Ministry of the Interior. The establishment of the *Urkartei* was expected to be reported to the Reich Ministry of the Interior by 15th of October 1939. As numerous administrations failed to report, a separate circular decree pressed those in default for "sofortige Erledigung" employing "alle zu Gebote stehenden Mittel." The reports were expected by the end of January 1940.⁹¹

Before the cards were handed out to the population for completion on 13th August 1939, in May the census that will be subject of the subsequent chapter had been conducted.⁹² In several places the distribution and collection of the index cards for the *Urkartei* was carried out by the former census takers, who were thus more acquainted with the matter than the survey takers in Potsdam had been. As in the previous year during the test run, the *Reichsdruckerei* encountered shortages in supply and the official respites for the establishment of the index had to be postponed.⁹³ Once again the distribution of the cards was facing the absence of parts of the male population as it overlapped with the covert mobilisation for the attack on Poland. The *Wehrmacht* was exempt from registering recruits as the completion of their cards was expected to be part of the re-registration process once their service had ended. Still, the military's registration offices were required to register active personnel but failed to do so. Martin Bormann, Head of

91. RdErl. d. RMdI. v. 28.12.1939 — Pol VuR 14g (7a) Nr. 309/39.

92. See chapter 'Volkskartei and deportations', 162.

93. RdErl. des RFSSuChdDtPol. im RMdI vom 17. July 1939, betr. die Regelung der den Kreispolizeibehörden durch Beschaffung des Karteigeräts entstandenen Kosten, Errichtung der Volkskartei. RMBliV 1531.

the *Parteikanzlei*, arguing in favour of the index decommissioning in 1943, maintained “Diese Männer sind zum grossen Teil bis heute nicht nacherfasst”.⁹⁴

The nationwide screening was accompanied by a row of implementation decrees. The *Verordnung über die Errichtung der Volkskartei vom 21. April 1939* penalised untruthfulness and refusal to complete the cards with 150 *RM* or six weeks’ detention.⁹⁵ Despite the existence of numerous incomplete cards, there are no known cases of proceedings in that regard. Compared to the test run, the nationwide establishment of the index attached high priority to its cheap, fast, yet comprehensive compilation, therefore sacrificing accuracy and neatness.

As in Potsdam, the *Volkskartei*’s survey takers were expected to mark individuals they knew or suspected to be Jewish with a ‘J’ in pencil in the upper left corner. And they were encouraged to do so liberally.

Der Helfer wird meistens die in seinem Abschnitt wohnenden Juden kennen. Die Kennzeichnung wird ihm also keine Schwierigkeiten machen. Sollte jedoch in einem Falle ein Zweifel bestehen, so wird der Helfer am besten auf den Zweifel aufmerksam machen, indem er – ebenfalls mit Bleistift – ein Fragezeichen hinter das ‘J’ setzt (J?).⁹⁶

The manual for the *Volkskartei* would downplay possible consequences of wrongly labelling a person as Jewish: “Die Kennzeichnung der Karte durch den Helfer mit einem ‘J’ enthält kein endgültiges Urteil”. While taking responsibility off the aides by postponing a finite decision to a later verification, aides should provide as much of their ‘knowledge’ as possible – even if the quality of data was questionable. I will thoroughly discuss the utilisation of the *Volkskartei* in the identification of Jews in the chapter ‘*Volkskartei* and deportations’.⁹⁷

The initial survey had coincided with the attack on Poland and the subsequent unfolding of the Second World War. During the establishment of the index in the so-called ‘*Altreich*’, Germany occupied and incorporated new territories. But 1938’s annexations had posed a problem and neither in Austria nor in the ‘*Sudetenland*’ had the index been established in 1939.⁹⁸ Austria’s *Einwohnerverzeichnis* was a card index. Albeit organised alphabetically it provided the same functionality as the *Volkskartei* since it

94. BArch R 19 407, Bormann an den Herrn Reichsminister Dr. Frick, 28th May 1943.

95. RGBI I, 823, § 5.

96. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei (1939)*, 10.

97. ‘*Volkskartei* and deportations’, 162.

98. The RdErl. d. RFSSuChdDtPol im RMdI vom 17. Juni 1939, RMBliV 1531, lists all districts in which the index was established and only lists territories of the ‘*Altreich*’.

was complemented by an age-based index. Its index cards (*Stammbblätter*) were of about the same size and registered similar data as the *Volkskartei*'s cards. This sufficed to organise the draft. Due to the different administrative structure in Austria, the Ministry of the Interior had abstained from introducing the index in Austria. In the *Volkskartei*'s manual Liebermann promised the later alignment.⁹⁹ Only in March and April 1943 did the unpublished decrees Pol O-VuR III 3424/43 ordered the immediate establishment of the *Volkskartei* for Austria (*Alpen- und Donau-Reichsgaue*), the administrative districts of Oppeln, Zichenau, Kattowitz, Danzig-Westpreußen and the Wartheland.¹⁰⁰ By tacitly introducing the index in these territories Himmler hoped to dismiss the growing criticism the index received.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the decree repeated the order for Gumbinnen, Aachen and Allenstein, although these districts were part of the 'Altreich' and had been allocated funding for the index in 1939.¹⁰² While in the administrative districts of Danzig-Westpreußen and the Wartheland the index' creation was ordered only in 1943, the city of Danzig had started preparing for its establishment 1th January 1940.¹⁰³ There, compilation of the *Urkartei* began in July but encountered enormous difficulties in staffing.¹⁰⁴ Similar to Danzig, in Königsberg the introduction of the index had been delayed by the hostilities during Poland's occupation so that it was begun with a comparatively minor delay of about a fortnight. Due to the lack of personnel, in Danzig the *Urkartei* was maintained by a central registry office without maintaining duplicates elsewhere.¹⁰⁵ A similar solution had been allowed for Bremen and the other cities that practised the 'Hanseatic system'. This once again shows that the coverage of the *Volkskartei* differed depending on time and place.

99. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei (1939)*, 55.

100. BArch R70 POLEN 155, Bl. 9, Ausschnitt aus dem Ministerial-Blatt des Reichs- und Preussischen Ministerium des Innern, and RdErl.D.RmDI.v.15.4.1943—PolO-VuRRIII3433/43, Einführung der Volkskartei in weiteren Reichsgauen und Reg.-Bezirken.

101. This matter will be treated more detailed in the chapter 'Decommissioning of the *Volkskartei* in 1943', 184.

102. RdErl. d. RFSSuChdDtPol im RmDI vom 17. Juni 1939, RMBliV 1531.

103. BArch R70 Polen 155, Der Polizei-Präsident, Danzig, an die Reichsdruckerei – Auftragsannahme, December 1939.

104. BArch R70 POLEN 155, Abteilung II an P[olizei]präsident in Danzig], 4th July 1940.

105. BArch R 70 POLEN 155, Der Polizeipräsident in Königsberg an den Polizeipräsidenten in Danzig, 20th October 1939.

5.6 Utilisation of the *Volkskartei*

Zu welchen Zwecken die Volkskartei nutzbar gemacht werden kann, läßt sich heute noch nicht in vollem Umfang voraussehen; sicher aber kann die Volkskartei zu zahlreichen und ganz verschiedenartigen Zwecken genutzt werden.¹⁰⁶

Liebermann thought of the *Volkskartei* as a future *Universalkartei* that presented a solution to problems not yet existent. The *Volkskarteierlass*, on the other hand, was very clear in defining its purpose: “Der Einsatz der Gesamtbevölkerung im Kriege”, that is first and foremost the organisation of the military draft as the organisation by age cohorts shows.

Diese Verwendung der Kartei als Erfassungsmittel stellt ihren eigentlichen Zweck dar. Dieser Zweck ist sofort mit ihrer Erstellung und der sich anschließenden laufenden Berichtigung der Personenstands und Wohnungsveränderungen erfüllt. Alle weiteren Verwendungsmöglichkeiten stellen nur Nebenzwecke dar, welche die Bedeutung der Kartei zusätzlich erhöhen.¹⁰⁷

But the index was not limited to the male population. As we have seen, the *Volkskartei* was designed to register the entire population and the military draft was only one side of the mobilisation for the war. Once again the historical reference for the *Volkskartei* was the previous war:

Im Kriege 1914/18 zeigte sich schon bald die Notwendigkeit, die im Felde [...] stehenden Millionen Soldaten im wirtschaftlichen Arbeitsprozess, dem sie entzogen waren, [...] insbesondere durch Frauen, zu ersetzen. [...] Große Schwierigkeiten entstanden dadurch, daß kein Namensverzeichnis der für einen Arbeitseinsatz verfügbaren Frauen bestand [...]. Für den nicht arbeitsbuchmäßig erfaßten Teil der Bevölkerung, bildet aber die Volkskartei dieses Register, also gerade für den Teil, aus dem eines Tages der Zusatzbedarf an neuen Arbeitskräften geschöpft werden muss.¹⁰⁸

To ensure the full employment of the available workforce, the index was intended to provide oversight over the remaining human resources, women in particular. Apart from the military draft, the index should be consulted in the same manner to register

106. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Volkskartei* (1942), 56.

107. RdErl. des RMdI vom 15. Februar 1939, RMBliV, 321.

108. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Volkskartei* (1942), 53-54.

cohorts for non-military purposes. Liebermann lists compulsory vaccination and education, the party organisations and the labour service among these secondary purposes. Announcing the coming *Volkskartei* to the federal governments, Frick explained the *Kreiskarteien* would allow the district's register offices, "ohne zeitraubende Umfragen bei den Gemeinden [...] Anfragen und Anforderungen militärischer und anderer Behörden schnellsten nachzukommen".¹⁰⁹ The index should be used to compile register-based surveys. This included both comprehensive surveys as well as surveys targeted at a specific demographic. In the manual for the index this principle is exemplified by a hypothetical survey amongst graduates who could be identified in the *Kreiskarteien* and directly contacted at their home address. This principle could be applied to any other feature registered in the index, Liebermann set out,

gleich ob man nun an die akademisch Vorgebildeten oder z. B. an die Inhaber von Kraftfahrzeug- oder Flugzeugführerscheinen, an Fremdsprachenkundige, an ehemalige Auslandsdeutsche oder an besondere Gruppen von Spezialisten herantreten will.¹¹⁰

In addition to the potential the index had for queries from central authorities, the manual encouraged the local authorities to add locally relevant information to the system according to their needs. Being linked with the registration system to keep the index updated and have the cards follow their holders on the occasion of a change of address, the *Volkskartei* finally introduced a unified system of record-keeping. Furthermore, the index would give the police unprecedented access to personal data of the population that simplified cases of uncertain identities. In that regard the manual remarked: "Die Volkskarteikarte wird vor allen Dingen dann ein ideales Erfassungsmittel sein, wenn ersteinmal die Kennkarte in Deutschland allgemein verbreitet ist".¹¹¹ The obligation for all citizens to carry ID cards had been introduced on 10th September 1939, yet without penal provisions, so that the diffusion was expected to increase only slowly. By adding the ID cards to the index cards, the data set was enriched with a photograph, signature and fingerprints. Beyond the comparatively rich data set, the *Kreiskarteien* facilitated the localisation of individuals whose precise address was uncertain.

109. BAArch R 1300008, Der Reichminister des Innern an die Herren Reichsstatthalter und Landesregierungen (außer Preußen), 17th February 1939.

110. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Volkskartei* (1942), 52.

111. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, 58.

Evaluation of the data

The ‘*reichseinheitliche*’ evaluation of the index was ordered on 14th March 1940. Before going into the details of the instructions, the decree once again sets out the purpose and function of the index starting with the issue of distribution of the available workforce. Turning to the draft, the decree recommended:

Soweit Wehrbezirkskommandos und Arbeitsämter sich mit der Einrichtung der Volkskartei noch nicht vertraut gemacht haben sollten, empfehle ich den Volkskarteibehörden, sie ihrerseits auf dieses Hilfsmittel aufmerksam zu machen und ihnen Gelegenheit zu geben, die Einrichtung und Führung der Volkskartei zu besichtigen.¹¹²

It is certainly noteworthy that the draft commissions had to be reminded of the existence of the index even though it had been the *Wehrmacht*’s request for an age-based index that had inspired the *Volkskartei* in the first place. Finally, the decree emphasises:

Das Interesse der Reichsverteidigung erfordert es aber, daß alle Hilfsmittel, die dem Ziele der siegreichen Beendigung des Krieges mittel- oder unmittelbar dienen können, voll eingesetzt werden.

Modest in tone, the decree tried to attach urgency to a consistent use of the index. To that end, the register offices were told to enforce the use of the index. A central decree that obliged the labour offices or the draft commissions to utilise the index was never issued.

The initial analysis of the index consisted of tabbing the index cards of specific groups as it had been tested during the trial. Of the index card’s 14 tabs the first four were reserved for local purposes, for instance tabbing the members of voluntary fire brigades in the rural areas. The remaining tabs were reserved for the ‘*reichseinheitliche Auswertung*’ that was ordered in March 1940 by circular decree. For the nationwide tabbing it was decided to mark the cards of those without *Arbeitsbuch* with a light-blue tab in the fifth field. But the decree had to admit that this might prove difficult.

Der RAM [Reichsarbeitsminister] hat die Arbeitsämter infolge ihrer Überlastung für außerstande erklärt, den Volkskarteibehörden die Ausstellung eines Arbeitsbuches jedesmal mitzuteilen. Die Arbeitsämter können auch

112. RdErl. des RFSSuChdDtPol. im RMdI. über Auswertung der Volkskartei vom 14. März 1940, MBliV, 497.

die Volkskarteibehörden nicht darüber unterrichten, wer seit der Errichtung der Volkskartei ein Arbeitsbuch erhalten hat. Diese Kenntnis müssen sich deshalb [...] die Volkskarteibehörden selbst beschaffen.

From the Labour Ministry's perspective the denial of cooperation was more than reasonable as the management of the national workforce was at the heart of their institution. During the discussions concerning the decommission of the index in 1943, Frick recalled:

Die Reichsarbeitsverwaltung hat vor allem der Aufstellung der Volkskartei widersprochen, weil sie befürchtete, daß die Polizei damit ihr die Erfassung und den Einsatz der Arbeitskräfte aus der Hand nehmen wollte.¹¹³

It is remarkable that the March 1940 decree openly addressed the Labour Ministry's refusal to cooperate and did not offer a solution. And once again this shows that the introduction of the index met with serious resistance from within the administration. To close the resulting gap, the registry offices had to rely on the cumulative approach of occasional rectification of the respective data. Cards of medical personnel had to be marked with a white tab and the card owners listed and reported to the Health Department or the District Veterinary Doctor (*'beamteter Kreistierarzt'*) respectively. Cards of those with driving licences were tabbed in red.

The last step in the initial evaluation of the index was the attachment of the ID card duplicates to the *Volkskarteikarten*. The most important effect of this measure was the tabbing of the index cards of Jews.

Anläßlich der Einordnung der Kennkarten von Juden (Jüdinnen) [...] sind gleichzeitig ihre Volkskarteikarten dadurch zu kennzeichnen, daß auf ihnen über der Zahl 14 ein schwarzer Karteireiter befestigt wird.¹¹⁴

On 22nd August 1942 the requirement to combine the ID card duplicates was lifted.¹¹⁵ Duplicates of cards of Jews were successively transferred to the Reich Kinship Office's department in the Oranienburgerstraße. The federal governments were to report the successful tabbing by 15th June 1940 to Himmler's office. But numerous registry offices failed to meet the respites, which were adjusted to 1st November that same year.¹¹⁶

113. BArch R 19 407, Der Reichsminister des Innern an den Leiter der Parteikanzlei Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, 17th June 1943.

114. RdErl. des RFSSuChdDtPol. im RMdI. über Auswertung der Volkskartei vom 14. März 1940, MBliV, 497.

115. RdErl. 'Entlastung der Volkskarteibehörden', MBliV. 1731.

116. BArch R 70 155, Ausschnitt aus dem Ministerialblatt des Reichs- und Preussischen Ministerium des Innern, RdErl. d. RFSSuChdDtPol im RMdI v. 14.3.1940. Auswertung der Volkskartei, and RdErl. d. RFSSuChdDtPol im RMdI v. 25.7.1940, Auswertung der Volkskartei.

The reports on ‘Gypsies’

In October 1941 a circular decree by Himmler titled ‘*Eintragung der Zigeunereigenschaft in der Volkskartei und den Melderegistern*’ ordered that the results of the reports (*rassebiologische Gutachten*) produced by Rudolf Ritter and his team at the *Rassebiologische und bevölkerungspolitische Forschungsstelle* in Berlin Dahlem and associated with the *Reichsgesundheitsamt*, were transferred to the registry offices (*Melde- und Volkskarteibehörden*).¹¹⁷ Since the 1890s, the concept of ‘the Gypsy’ had oscillated between sociological and ethnic – respectively racial – definitions. The Nuremberg Laws were intended to target Gypsies as well as Jews. But unlike Jews, where the documented religion of the ancestors allowed a comparatively simple discrimination of Jew and non-Jew, there was no single criterion that had allowed a similar procedure to identify ‘Gypsies’. Only in December 1938 did Rudolf Ritter establish a system comparable to the one that categorised Jews to categorise Gypsies as ‘*Zigeuner*’, ‘*Zigeunermischling*’ or ‘*Nicht-Zigeuner*’.

However, the method still required that the evaluated individuals had been identified as possible ‘Gypsies’ before, since Ritter relied on the data of the Criminal Police. Karola Fings has highlighted that Ritter could not provide a clear-cut definition. Rather than developing a method to identify ‘Gypsies’, Ritter had monopolised the subjective judgement traditionally practised by the police. And although the procedure defied standardisation, Fings considered it the final step in the racialisation of ‘Gypsies’.¹¹⁸ By August 1941 Ritter and his racial scientists had formalised their reports in a way that they were ready to enter mass screenings and forward the reports to the Gestapo and from there to the *Volkskarteibehörden*. By labelling individuals ‘Gypsy’ in the registers of the police registration system and the *Volkskartei*, it made the information available to all branches of administration, thereby enabling an unprecedented unity in administrative measures against those classified as such.¹¹⁹

117. RdErl. D. RFSSuChdDtPol. im RMdI v. 3-10.1941, RMBliV. 1767.

118. Karola Fings, ‘„Rasse Zigeuner“. Sinti und Roma im Fadenkreuz von Kriminologie und Rassenhygiene 1933–1945’, in *„Zigeuner“ und Nation : Repräsentation - Inklusion - Exklusion*, ed. Herbert Uerlings and Iulia-Karin Patrut, Inklusion, Exklusion 8 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2008), 273–310, 301–302.

119. Karola Fings, ‘Die „Gutachtlichen Äußerungen“ der Rassehygienischen Forschungsstelle und ihr Einfluss auf die nationalsozialistische Zigeunerpolitik’, in *Zwischen Erziehung und Vernichtung. Zigeunerpolitik und Zigeunerforschung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Michael Zimmermann (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2007), 425–459, 437–439.

Draft and enrolment

The *Volkskartei*'s fundamental quality was its organisation in age-cohorts. The *Wehrmacht* had demanded the connection of the register- and registry offices' data in 1935 in order to facilitate the process of identifying the draftees. Göring had announced the eventual establishment of the index to the *Reichsverteidigungsrat* in November 1938. So the new index was expected to primarily help fulfil tasks connected to the distribution of human resources for the war effort. However, during the first covert mobilisation in summer 1939, the joint draft commissions relied on the procedure developed in 1935. The *Verordnung über das Erfassungswesen* dated 15th February 1937 remained in place unaltered. This required the registry and register offices' cooperation, in order to check the drafts' comprehensiveness that should have been replaced by the *Volkskartei*. As the decree predates the announcement of the index, it is not mentioned in the text. A 1939 manual for the draft compiling all relevant laws and decrees does not mention the *Volkskartei* at all, but speaks of "*polizeiliche Meldescheine, Einwohnerlisten u. dgl.*".¹²⁰ This of course could include the *Volkskartei* once the *Kreiskartei* was successfully established, but its utilisation was not mandatory. Only the 2nd edition from 1943 mentions the index on two pages. The introduction briefly lists the index among other registers and a footnote to the sentence quoted above added:

Eine besonders wertvolle Unterlage ist, soweit erstellt, die *Volkskartei*.¹²¹

In case of an incomplete or non-existent *Volkskartei* a further footnote on the same page advised the registrars to add the information about the recruits' assignments that was to be registered with the index to the registration system in use. Despite the lack of sources regarding the nationwide establishment of the index, the constraint regarding the nationwide completion and the provision of make shift solutions in this semi-official manual show that the establishment of the index was not accomplished in all regions by 1943, more than three years after the initial survey. I will discuss these difficulties when we come to the *Volkskartei*'s decommissioning in 1943.¹²² For now it suffices to see that the *Volkskartei* did not achieve its main objective, the nationwide facilitation of

120. Karl Otto and Wolfgang Güldenpfennig, eds., *Ersatzwesen: 1. Erfassungsverordnung. 2. Musterungsverordnung. Textausg. zu den Erfassungs-, Musterungs- u. Aushebungsvorschriften mit Anm. u. Sachreg.* (Berlin: Vahlen, 1939), 15.

121. Karl Otto and Wolfgang Güldenpfennig, eds., *Ersatzwesen: 1. Erfassungsverordnung. 2. Musterungsverordnung. Textausg. zu d. Erfassungs-, Musterungs- u. Aushebungsvorschriften einschl. VO über d. Wehersatzwesen bei bes. Einsatz mit Anm. u. Sachreg.*, 2. (Berlin: Vahlen, 1943), 16. The index also is not listed in the compilations headword register.

122. In chapter 'Decommissioning of the *Volkskartei* in 1943', 184.

the draft. This is not to say the index was not used to that end anywhere. In particular the cities that had previously introduced the ‘Hanseatic system’ quickly adapted to the new index and integrated it in the daily routine including the organisation of the draft, yet it did not release them from the obligation to check with the births places’ registry offices for missing draftees.

Enrolment in youth organisations

The *Volkskartei*’s capacity as an index of the youth differed from that for the adult population. Its creation had been ordered by a separate decree. Since the children were registered by their teachers, who had comparatively intimate knowledge of their pupils, the children’s index was both more accurate and comprehensive. Moreover, the children’s index was irreplaceable as no other index comprised this demographic on individual index cards. With the exception of the administrative district of Potsdam, the creation of the children’s index had preceded the survey of the adult population. This was due to practical reasons in order to register those who were to finish school that summer. By contrast, in school they were still easy to locate and register. Afterwards they were likely to change their place of residency. Neither the military nor the labour service were obliged to register short term recruits during the summer’s *Volkskartei* survey. For the time until they registered again on the occasion of establishing a new place of residency, they would be absent from the index. Since this cohort was of paramount importance for the war effort, it was decided to conduct the school survey early in the year.¹²³

Unlike the military draft, the draft for the Hitler Youth had been tested in Potsdam prior to the nationwide implementation of the index and both methods, the compilation of lists by the register offices as well as the use of the index by the local HJ leaders under the registrar’s supervision had proven successful. As the children’s index had been compiled prior to the adult index it was also completed earlier and, in October 1941, a decree ordered the first nationwide enrolment process relying on the *Volkskartei* for both female and male cohorts of 1924 to 1928 and those born before the middle of the years of 1929. In January 1942 the NSDAP in Mark Brandenburg, whose *Gauleiter*, Stürtz, appreciated the index in general, reported that they had to involve the local register offices during the draft since they found “daß die Unterlagen bei den Volkskarteibehörden nicht mehr zutreffend bzw. unstimming sind”.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, the decree had to admit excep-

123. Cf. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei (1939)*, 63.

124. BLHA Rep. 2 A Pol. 2703, Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, Hitler-Jugend, Gebiet Mark-Brandenburg, Stabsleiter des Gebietes an den Herrn Regierungspräsidenten der Regierung in

tions for the territories where the index had not yet been established, namely, Austria – now dubbed the Ostmark – and the Sudetenland. Registration with the *Staatsjugend* was to be marked on the index cards in order to avoid duplicate registration.¹²⁵

Potsdam, 1st January 1942.

125. RdErl. d. RFSSuChdDtPol. im RMdI v. 10.10.1941 — OVuR III 4245 II/41.

6 *Volkskartei* and deportations

Even after the establishment of the *Reichsmeldeordnung*, the problem of identifying those eligible for *Reichsbürgerschaft* remained. The logic of the Nuremberg Laws anticipated the production of the *Volksgemeinschaft* by exclusion. Regarding statistics on Jews Friedrich Bürgerdörfer had observed a particular nuisance in 1938:

Brauchbare zahlenmäßige Unterlagen stehen bis jetzt nur für den Teil des Judentums zur Verfügung, der sich zur mosaischen Religion bekennt oder ihr rechtlich zugehört, nicht aber für Juden und Judenmischlinge, die außerhalb der mosaischen Religionsgemeinschaft stehen und die durch den Austritt aus ihrer angestammten Religion ihre blutsmäßige Abstammung verdecken.¹

Over this chapter I will assess the function the *Volkskartei* had in the negative formation of the *Volksgemeinschaft* by facilitating the identification and localisation of Jews in Germany prior to deportation. I will initially trace the decision to include a question on descent in the census on separate questionnaires before discussing the existing historiography on the issue. In order to probe objections made to the relevance of the census results in the identification of individual Jews brought forward by Jutta Wietog, I will then reconstruct the processing of the census data and evaluate the informative value of other sources on Germany's Jews.

When Liebermann introduced the concept of the *Volkskartei*'s secondary purposes in 1939, he listed a number of demographics whose members could be easily identified and located since the required feature was registered with the index. Despite giving ample examples of possible use, he omitted its potential to identify Germany's Jews. Yet, in 1937 the *Sicherheitsdienst*'s Hasselbacher had understood the *Volkskartei* as intrinsically linked to the census' survey on descent.

The *Volkskartei* provided the infrastructure to organise knowledge on the population. The data it contained initially was based on personal disclosure, with the exception that cards of suspected Jews were labelled by the survey takers. Of the numerous

1. Bürgerdörfer, 'Die Juden in Deutschland und der Welt', 152.

complaints that had reached the *Regierungspräsidenten* in Potsdam, a single one had addressed the issue of labelling the cards of Jews. *Oberregierungsrat* Stegemann from Potsdam addressed Liebermann in January 1939 to discuss some recommendations for the nationwide establishment of the *Volkskartei*. Just before closing his letter he notes:

Für ganz besonders bedenklich halte ich aber die Kenntlichmachung der Karteihaber als Juden durch die Helfer, [...] Die Möglichkeit, dass Personen ohne es zu wissen in den Karteien als Juden geführt werden ist durchaus vorhanden. Dies könnte zu ausserordentlichen Schädigungen und unter Umständen Regressklagen der Betroffenen gegen die Behörde führen.²

But the designers of the *Volkskartei* were well aware the pencil markings would not necessarily provide reliable data, in particular, as the label did not reflect the categories introduced by the Nuremberg laws. Liebermann addressed the labelling of Jews and possible unease about the categorisation by the survey takers. A collation of data from various sources should finally lead to the identification of ‘the Jews’:

Deshalb wird die Nachprüfung der Fälle nicht zu 100 Prozent ein richtiges Ergebnis liefern. Daran braucht man sich aber nicht zu stoßen; denn die Erfassung der Juden ist bereits auch von anderer Seite in die Wege geleitet. [...] der für die Volkszählung verwendete Fragebogen enthält auf einem Anlagebogen Fragen nach der Zugehörigkeit zur jüdischen Rasse. Die Überprüfung wird aber noch auf einem anderen Weg getroffen. Juden müssen für sich Kennkarten als ihren ständigen Inlandsausweis beantragen, und ein Doppel jeder ausgestellten Kennkarte wurde auch an die Volkskartei gegeben. Auf diese Weise wurde die Kennzeichnung der Juden in den Volkskarteikarten beinahe automatisch herbeigeführt.³

The *Volkskartei* combined three sources to identify Jews: the pencil markings of the survey takers, the ID cards that Jews had to carry and the disclosure of the religious status of the grandparents in the census 1939.

2. BLHA Rep. 2 A I Pol 2703, Oberregierungsrat Stegemann an Herrn Regierungsdirektor Freiherr Liebermann von Sonnenberg, 6th January 1939.

3. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Volkskartei* (1942), 37.

6.1 1939 census: supplementary cards and the identification of jews

The attachments (*Anlagebogen*) Liebermann was referring to are also known as the 1939 census supplementary cards (*Ergänzungskarten*). The census in 1939 was taken on 17th May, before the *Volkskartei* survey. While the main questionnaire of the census was almost identical to the one in 1933 a separate *Ergänzungskarte* would ask new questions on descent and higher education. The Reich Statistical Office, while not objecting to the questions about ‘*Volkstum*’, was not too enthusiastic about the inclusion of the questions on descent, that targeted Jews in the census.⁴ As Jutta Wietog elaborated, these objections were not motivated by concerns about Jews in particular – the statisticians had taken a similar stand in 1936 on the issue of disclosing farmer’s livestock to the tax-offices. But the interest of the financial authorities in statistical data had existed already during the times of the republic. So had the statisticians refusal. That individuals should not suffer any detriment as result of disclosing information was a longstanding principle statisticians had defended before. It was grounded on the conviction that the public’s trust was the precondition for the survey’s acceptance and the aggregation of meaningful data.⁵ However, for the coming census the respective paragraph of the census law was altered. The 1933 census had limited the census’ questions on marital status, place of birth, religion, citizenship, mother-tongue, real estate, vocation and employment. More importantly the law guaranteed:

Über die bei der Zählung über die Persönlichkeit des Einzelnen [...] gewonnenen Nachrichten ist Amtsgeheimnis zu wahren; sie dürfen nur zu statistischen Arbeiten, nicht zu anderen Zwecken benutzt werden.⁶

For the 1939 census the same paragraph had amended *Volkszugehörigkeit* and *blutmäßige Abstammung* to the possible questions, and removed the limitation of the data’s use.⁷ Instead, the implementation orders obliged the survey takers to maintain confidentiality.⁸ This concern for privacy stands in stark contrast with the fact that in October that very same year often the same personnel was incited to label alleged Jews during the *Volkskartei*’s survey. So while the statistical office had successfully stopped earlier

4. See chapter ‘Census and segregation’, 113.

5. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 106-117.

6. RGBI. 199-200.

7. RGBI. I, 1053-1054.

8. Cf. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 113-114.

attempts on their data they failed to do so for the 1939 census. However, the objection in itself confirms the statisticians' awareness of the plan to identify individuals using the information collected. In contrast to Wietog's assumption that the *Volkskartei's* survey and the census collided, they appear closely connected and well attuned.⁹

Yet, the questions on descent were not included on the questionnaire for the census, but were part of the so-called *Ergänzungskarte* that was to be returned to the survey takers in a separate and closed envelope that even suggested a heightened level of privacy. But the questionnaire also contained an excerpt from the census law to remind those questioned that false declarations would be penalised. The supplement provided 14 lines to list the members of a household including those temporarily absent and asked for the name, date of birth and place of birth of each. The way the cards were designed promised to register entire (nuclear) families at once. The question on descent (*War oder ist einer der vier Großeltern der Rasse nach Volljude?*) provided four boxes to complete asking specifically for each grandparent on the mother's and the father's side. Beyond that, the questionnaire contained only two more questions. The first enquired as to whether or not the individual had finished a university degree the second inquired the university. Judging from the limited use that could be made of the sparse declarations that went beyond the individuals' descent, in particular compared to the respective question in the *Volkskartei's* survey later that year, it is safe to conclude that these additional questions were not added on behalf of the Ministry of Education. Regarding the origins of the supplementary cards' little is known.

I see two plausible explanations for the fact that the questions on descent were not included with the census questionnaire. For once, as the statistical office had insisted on some standards of privacy, the additional questionnaire may have resulted as a compromise from the negotiations with the Ministry of the Interior so that the questionable questionnaire was not directly part of the census. On the other hand, a more technical problem may have led to the separate questionnaire. As had been the case with the previous census material, the questionnaires were archived at the statistical offices for several years. Separate analysis of the data or collation with other registers would have required duplication. Separating the questions of descent from the general census' questionnaires thus facilitated separate processing.

This prompts the question of why a declaration of descent had not been included with the *Volkskartei's* survey later in the year. As the sources remain silent in that regard, this once again is a matter of plausibility. The Reich Ministry of the Interior may have

9. Cf. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 159.

‘borrowed’ from the statistical offices’ credibility. During the test run the index had raised suspicion as to its utilisation. The inclusion of the question on descent in the *Volkskartei*’s survey that was clearly designed to register individuals might have incited the provision of misleading declarations. Censuses, on the other hand, traditionally produced summarising results that did not imply individual targeting. The inclusion of the questions on descent with the census certainly has a deceptive side. But moreover, there were technical reason for this decision. The annual tax survey had proven inadequate due to its limited scope. The census and the *Volkskartei*’s survey were meant to screen the entire population. But factually, the index was limited to German citizens while the census comprised the entire resident population (*ortsansässige Bevölkerung*) and thus included resident aliens. The census hence promised more comprising results than any of the other measures.

Supplementary cards in historiography

Before retracing the process of tabulation and its implications for the interpretation of the events, I need to clarify some of the controversy that evolved on the subject of the *Ergänzungskarten*. I have already juxtaposed the main positions in the section ‘Census and segregation’. In 1984 Götz Aly and Karl-Heinz Roth considered the census supplementary cards crucial in the identification of Jews in Germany as they were immediately compiled into a *Judenkartei* – a hypothesis disproven by Jutta Wietog in 2001. Instead she argued that the Statistical Office withheld respective data and that several other sources, in particular the tax surveys and a survey by the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland*, provided similar information.¹⁰

That same year two other books relevant to the processing of the supplementary cards were published; Diana Schulle touched on the issue of the supplementary cards in her work on the Reich Kinship Office.¹¹ Edwin Black’s *IBM and the Holocaust* focused solely on IBM’s (or more precisely DEHOMAG’s) involvement with the census. Both rely on Aly and Roth in those parts of their research regarding the *Ergänzungskarten*.¹²

10. See chapter ‘Census and segregation’, 113. Cf. Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*; Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*.

11. Diana Schulle, *Das Reichssippenamt. Eine Institution nationalsozialistischer Rassenpolitik* (Berlin: Logos, 2001).

12. Edwin Black, *IBM und der Holocaust. Die Verstrickung des Weltkonzerns in die Verbrechen der Nazis* (München: Propyläen, 2001). Black has not contributed to a better understanding. In crucial points his line of argument depends either on Aly and Roth or more puzzling on Kistermann, whose article replies to Milton and Luebke’s “Locating the Victims” and is explicitly called “Locating the victims. The nonrole of punched card technology and census work”. Kistermann argues convincingly,

Black's interest in the topic evolved from an article by Milton and Luebke from 1994 in which they focus on IBM's involvement with the identification of Jews and Roma.¹³ Their article was heavily contested by former IBM employee Kistermann holding the view that "at the occasion of the 1939 German Census, every step had already been taken to identify and locate the German Jews", thereby coming to a similar conclusion Wietog arrived at four years later.¹⁴ Jutta Wietog has first identified and clarified Aly and Roth's misinterpretation of a circular from the Reich Ministry of the Interior in which the *Volkstumskartei* (Folkdom Card Index) was introduced to the authorities.¹⁵

Auf meine und des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD gemeinsame Anregung hat das Statistische Reichsamt aus dem Urmaterial der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939 eine Kartei der Reichsangehörigen nichtdeutscher Volkszugehörigkeit (Volkstumskartei) erstellt. [...] Die mir unterstehende Publikationsstelle, die diese Kartei verwahrt, ist angewiesen, auf Anfrage einzelne Auskünfte daraus zu erteilen.¹⁶

Obviously unaware of the decision to produce indices on ethnic groups other than Jews, Aly and Roth confused the *Volkstumskartei* and the *Ergänzungskarten*. This led them to believe that the *Ergänzungskarten*, after being analysed in the Reich Statistical Office, were sent to the '*Publikationsstelle Dahlem*' where the cards were purportedly used to produce the '*Volkstumskartei*' comprising data on the entire German Jewery including Jews defined as being mixed-blood by the Nuremberg laws.¹⁷ While it is correct that the *Volkstumskartei* was compiled from census data and maintained by archivists at the *Publikationsstelle Dahlem*, this index did not comprise data on German Jews but of citizens of the German Reich of 'foreign folkdom' (that is Czechs, Ukrainians, Croats or Poles).¹⁸ This data, however, did not stem from the *Ergänzungskarten* but from the question on mother tongue asked in the census questionnaire.

that the supplementary cards were not processed with punch cards but manually. Cf. Friedrich W. Kistermann, 'Locating the victims. The nonrole of punched card technology and census work', *Annals of the History of Computing, IEEE* (Los Alamitos) 19, no. 2 (1997): 31–45, 39.

13. David Martin Luebke and Sybil Milton, 'Locating the victim: An overview of census-taking, tabulation technology and persecution in Nazi Germany', *Annals of the History of Computing, IEEE* (Los Alamitos) 16, no. 3 (1994): 25–39.

14. Kistermann, 'Nonrole', 41.

15. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 167.

16. As cited in: Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*, 95.

17. Aly and Roth, 95.

18. Cf. Ingo Haar, 'Bevölkerungspolitische Szenarien und bevölkerungswissenschaftliche Expertise im Nationalsozialismus. Die rassistische Konstruktion des Fremden und das 'Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtum'', in *Das Konstrukt 'Bevölkerung' vor, im und nach dem 'Dritten Reich'*, ed. Rainer Mackensen (Wiesbaden: Verl. für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005), 340–370, 358; Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 167.

Gerlinde Grahn, who based her summary on the Federal Archive's holdings of the Reich Kinship Office on Aly and Roth's findings, happened to make a further important slip, turning the Folkdom Registry ('*Volkstumskartei*') into the People's Card Index ('*Volkskartei*').¹⁹ In succession Diana Schulle considered the *Volkskartei* to be identical with the *Ergänzungskarten* and believed that the data on Jews derived from the census was duplicated.²⁰ She is correct in stating that the *Ergänzungskarten* – with the exception of the cards from Austria – eventually went to the Reichskinship Offices' archive at Oranienburger Straße 28-29, in the cellar rooms of the '*Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden*' in Berlin where the Kinship office also maintained their '*Fremdstämmigenkartei*' – but the sources do not mention duplicates of any sort.

Beyond that, Wietog made some interesting objections to Aly and Roth's findings which need to be considered. Wietog points out that the collation of the *Ergänzungskarte* and the *Volkskartei* and the Police Registration System only started 31st March 1941 – 22 months after the census.²¹

This led Wietog to suggest the compilation was deliberately delayed by the Statistical Office in order to render the results useless once they were finally transferred to the Reich Kinship Office.²² However, besides alluding to the office's long standing-tradition of respect for privacy she refrained from laying out a possible motivation to do so.

Instead, Wietog argued, the necessary data was provided by Jewish compulsory representatives.²³ Haar has doubted these findings, arguing the summarised data published in early 1940 already sufficed to facilitate deportations.²⁴ Despite Haar's early objections Wietog's work presents the current state of research so that the Federal Archive in Lichterfelde holding the supplementary cards today concludes:

Ob das Material wirklich für die Vorbereitung der Deportationen benutzt wurde, wie oft vermutet wird, ließ sich bislang trotz einzelner Verletzungen des Statistikgeheimnisses nicht nachweisen und ist aufgrund der Tatsache, dass das Material erst im April/Mai 1941 in den Meldestellen und ab Januar 1942 im Reichssippenamt vorlag, eher unwahrscheinlich.²⁵

19. Gerlinde Grahn, 'Der Teilbestand des Reichssippenamtes im Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Potsdam', ed. Deutschland Archivverwaltung, *Archivmitteilungen (AM); Zeitschrift für Archivwesen, archivalische Quellenkunde und historische Hilfswissenschaften* (Potsdam-Bornim) 41 (1991): 269–274, 272.

20. Schulle, *Reichssippenamt*, 230.

21. BArch R 19317; Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 161.

22. Wietog, 191.

23. Wietog, 192.

24. Haar, 'Szenarien', 357.

25. Nicolai M. Zimmermann, 'Die Ergänzungskarten für Angaben über Abstammung und Vorbildung der Volkszählung vom 17. Mai 1939', <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Content/Publikationen/>

Moreover, Wietog's research informs public perception of the 1939 census. An article on the thirtieth anniversary of the 1987 census reported that Aly and Roth's influential interpretation of the census "inzwischen von der Historikerin Jutta Wietog widerlegt wurde".²⁶

The main questions Wietog leaves us with are whether a) the statistical offices released the *Ergänzungskarten* in March 1941 and b) this can be rightfully considered a deliberate delay and c) whether this date can be considered too late to have facilitated the deportations. Furthermore, the question is raised as to whether the cards really arrived at the *Reichssippenamt's* archive in January 1942. I will discuss Wietog's objections over the course of the following sections.

I will argue that the collation with the *Volkskartei* was the essential step in the identification and localisation of Jewish deportees. The creation of a single index – a central *Judenkartei* – was neither necessary nor planned. To understand how the statistical offices could have delayed the processing of the *Ergänzungskarten* I will first take a closer look at the mechanics of tabulation before placing the release date in its historical context.

Mechanics of tabulation

The analysis of the census was overshadowed by the attack on Poland that immediately impacted the administration. To adapt to the altered conditions on the 6th September 1939 a meeting in Berlin's Statistical Office gathered all parties involved with the census. In the face of the war authorities had to prioritise those aspects of the census most important to them given the labour-intensive processing. The *Reichsnährstand* and the *Reichsernährungsministerium* (Reich Food Agency and Reich Ministry of Food) demanded to first process the general census data on the population's order by gender and age. This data was deemed important to provide the statistical base to ensure food supplies for the population. The second priority was set by the Ministry of the Interior and Himmler in his capacity as *Reichsführer SS* who demanded the swift processing of data on citizens of alien countries for the '*Ausländerkartei*', German citizens of foreign descent for the *Volkstumskartei* and of Jews and 'Jews of mixed-blood'. The *Wehrmacht's* Supreme Command and the Labour Ministry had to accept a delayed processing of the

Aufsätze/aufsatz-zimmermann-ergaenzungskarten.pdf?__blob=publicationFile, 1.

26. Detlef Borchers, 'Vor 30 Jahren. Die letzte große Volkszählung', 2017, <https://www.heise.de/newsticker/meldung/Vor-30-Jahren-Die-letzte-grosse-Volkszaehlung-3725371.html>. The German Wikipedia page on the 1939 census also references Wietog's findings: 'Volkszählung im Deutschen Reich 1939', https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volksz%C3%A4hlung_im_Deutschen_Reich_1939.

vocational census. The agricultural workplace data's analysis was reduced and that of other industries was postponed for a later decision. This so-called '*Sofortprogramm*' (Immediate Program) was agreed upon and put into practice while other parts of the census such as the processing of data regarding higher education from the *Ergänzungskarten* were postponed indefinitely.²⁷

Regarding the data on Jews, research seemingly has overlooked an important detail. Not only did the *Ergänzungskarten* for the first time allow quantification and identification of 'Jews of mixed-blood' as defined by the Nuremberg Laws, but the general census questionnaire allowed the identification of intermarriages of Jews and non-Jews too.

Auf der Zählkarte für die Eheschließungen ist eindeutig für Mann und Frau danach gefragt, ob die Eheschließenden deutschen oder artverwandten Blutes sind, oder ob sie Mischling 1. bzw. 2. Grades oder ob sie Volljuden (Gelungsjuden) seien. Die Auswertung dieser Angaben ist in einer Sondertabelle über die Eheschließungen, bei denen nichtarische Personen bzw. Mischlinge beteiligt sind, gegeben.²⁸

As questions on descent were only asked on the *Ergänzungskarten*, the data had obviously been correlated with the general census data in order to produce the tables on intermarriage.

While the *Ergänzungskarten* were processed manually, it was different with the data on intermarriages derived from the main census questionnaire. Since these questions were part of the general census, the data was processed by machines.²⁹

I will now examine the processing of the census in the Statistical Offices in more detail. Josef Griesmeyer, involved with the census for the Württemberg Statistical Office, described the processing of statistical data in great detail for a publication honouring Friedrich Zahn in 1940:

Bei der Aufbereitung ist zunächst zu unterscheiden: 1. die Prüfung auf Vollständigkeit des Erhebungsmaterials und die Prüfung und Berichtigung der Antworten im Zählpapier, 2. die Gruppierung und Auszählung des Inhalts

27. BArch R 43 II 591a, Sofort-Programm, Statistisches Reichsamt, 6th September 1939.

28. Josef Götz, 'Rasseforschung und Statistik', in *Die Statistik in Deutschland nach ihrem heutigen Stand: Ehrengabe für Friedrich Zahn* (Berlin: Verl. für Sozialpolitik, Wirtschaft und Statistik, 1940), 185–191, 191. Cf. Roderich Plate, 'Die erste großdeutsche Volks- Berufs- und Betriebszählung', *Allgemeines statistisches Archiv (AStA) Journal of the German Statistical Society* (Heidelberg) 28 (1939): 421–436, 429.

29. Cf. 'Hollerith-Tabelliermaschinen Type D11 und Type D9', *Hollerith-Nachrichten* (Berlin) 74 (June 1937): 1022–1024.

der Zählpapiere. Der Auszählung schließt sich die Summenbildung mit der Aufstellung von Tabellen an. [...] Bei Individualfragebogen besteht die weitere Arbeit nach der Auszeichnung in der ‘Sortierung’ oder ‘Auslegung’, d. h. die Fragebogen werden nach Gebieten (Gemeinde, Kreis usw.) wie auch nach bestimmten Merkmalen, nach Gruppen, Klassen, Arten, Größen usw. zu besonderen Packen sortiert (gruppiert). [...] Nach jedem Sortiergang werden die dabei angefallenen Packen von Zählkarten ‘abgezählt’ und die Ergebnisse in eine Hilfsliste eingetragen[...].³⁰

Most of the processing consists of physically grouping census cards according to territory or trades. These stacks of cards comprising individual cards sharing one or more trades are then counted to summarise the findings. The process remains the same whether done manually or using punch-card technology, “hier tritt dann an die Stelle des handgeschriebenen Zählblättchens ein mechanisch gelochtes Zählblättchen, die sog. Lochkarte”.³¹ In an article on the use of punch cards during 1939’s census, Franz Hieß summarises:

Nach dem letzten Sortiergang liegen schließlich die Lochkarten in jenen Teilgesamtheiten vor, welche den auszuzählenden Merkmalsgruppen oder Verbindungen von solchen entsprechen. Die Auszählung dieser Teilgesamtheiten hat einen logischen Sinn und erfolgt gleichzeitig mit der Sortierung.³²

The above is true for all statistical investigations, regardless of its objects – be it commodities or people. Its results are stacks of cards and lists summarising the items. Usually cards are primarily organised in stacks for certain territories and only then according to certain criteria. Each sorting process hence results in smaller stacks sharing the trades from the above while adding new ones.

The questionnaires of the census were sorted and ‘signiert’ (classified) in the local statistical offices and then sent to the Reichs Statistical Office to be processed with punch card machines.³³ However, this was different to the *Ergänzungskarten* which were processed by the Reich Office for Prussia, Oldenburg, Lippe, Schaumburg Lippe and the Saarland while elsewhere the local statistical offices were in charge. After comparison with the census schedules they were sorted in three categories: non-Aryans, people

30. Josef Griesmayer, ‘Erhebungs- Aufbereitungs- und Tabellierungstechnik’, in *Die Statistik in Deutschland nach ihrem heutigen Stand: Ehrengabe für Friedrich Zahn* (Verl. für Sozialpolitik, Wirtschaft und Statistik, 1940), 126–36, 131.

31. Griesmayer, 134.

32. Franz Hieß, ‘Mechanik der statistischen Aufbereitung’, *Allgemeines statistisches Archiv (AStA) Journal of the German Statistical Society* (Heidelberg) 31 (1943): 311–329, 319.

33. Cf. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 135.

with higher education, and others.³⁴ The cards of the last two categories remained unprocessed and were soon deleted while the further processing of the *Ergänzungskarten* of Jews was documented by yet another statistician:

Zunächst erfolgt eine weitgehende regionale Aufgliederung der Zahl der Juden und Mischlinge 1. bzw. 2. Grades unter Berücksichtigung ihres Religionsbekenntnisses, ebenso eine Aufgliederung nach Geschlecht, Alter und Familienstand.³⁵

The first step in the sorting process was formed by an ‘extensive regional sorting’ which then was gradually refined. To summarise the nationwide number of Jews and Jews of mixed-blood, all the *Ergänzungskarten* were organised in stacks of cards comprising the data of Jews of different racial degrees in separate stacks for each region. The summarised data was reported to the Berlin Office by 11th November 1939.³⁶ Due to the small number of the cards and the fact that the local statistical offices had no access to punch card or sorting machines, the *Ergänzungskarten* were processed manually. So when the results of the census regarding Jews were circulated on 15th January 1940³⁷ and published in the journal of the Reich Statistical Office in March 1940³⁸ these separate stacks were available at the respective statistical offices. Yet, Wietog argued:

Im Februar 1940 lagen die vorläufigen Endergebnisse der Judenzählung vor. Die Statistiker brauchten noch ein volles Jahr, um die Ergänzungskarten zum Melderegisterabgleich freizugeben. In der Zwischenzeit hatte es die ersten Deportationen gegeben. Als die Karten schließlich im April/Mai an die Meldestellen gingen, waren die Daten zwei Jahre alt.³⁹

From a technical point of view, Wietog’s assumption that final results were deliberately withheld by the Reich Statistical Office until March 1941 is not convincing as the compilation of the summary figures for the districts was finished in November 1939. Thereafter, the stacks of cards remained idle until they were finally sent to the registry offices.

34. Kistermann, ‘Nonrole’, 39.

35. Götz, ‘Rasseforschung und Statistik’, 190.

36. Kistermann, ‘Nonrole’, 39.

37. BAArch 1501 5519, Circular of the Reich Ministry of the Interior, 15th January 1940, 407.

38. Statistisches Reichsamt, ed., *Wirtschaft und Statistik; Sonderhefte*, vol. 20 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, March 1940), 84–87.

39. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 191.

Volkskartei and Ergänzungskarten

By the end of July 1939 the Reich Statistical Office had gathered the statisticians involved in the census in Berlin to discuss the state of the survey. All of them – including Burgdörfer and Griesmeier – complained about attempts by the administration and party to access the *Ergänzungskarten* prior to or during processing. Griesmeier also reports in October 1939 that his Württemberg Statistical Office was approached by the mayor of Stetten, who demanded the supplementary cards of his district in order to complete his *Volkskartei*.⁴⁰ At the time, these advances were stopped so as not to delay the compilation of the summary figures. Nevertheless, the advances illustrate how various actors considered the respective data to be valuable information. After the summarised data was reported to Berlin and published, stacks of *Ergänzungskarten* were kept at the statistical offices.

Only on 31st March 1941 was a letter sent to all administrative authorities (with the exception of Danzig and Marienwerder) and to all existing *Volkskarteibehörden*. On behalf of Himmler, it informed the recipients that the statistical offices would start sending *Ergänzungskarten* of “Personen mit zwei oder mehr jüdischen Großeltern” to the district commissioners or head mayor (in charge of the *Kreiskarteien*) who would forward them to the mayor’s *Urkarteien* to be collated with *Volkskartei* and Police Registration System (*Karteien des polizeilichen Meldewesens*). Hereby, the information on descent was added to the *Volkskartei*. The notification system that was designed to allow seamless tracing of individuals would ensure that persons who had moved in the period between the census and collation were identified and their cards labelled at their current address. The cards would follow the card-holders on the occasion of change of residency and thus allow swift identification and localisation. The return of the cards was expected after four weeks from smaller municipalities and eight weeks from cities with over 10,000 inhabitants.

Contrary to Wietog’s understanding it was not the Statistical Office but Himmler in his capacity as Head of the German Police who had ordered the release of the *Ergänzungskarten*. The circular stressed the informative value of the cards and informed the registry office that, after being returned, the cards were to be transferred to the Reich Kinship Office.⁴¹ But on the issue of the collation of the two data sets – the *Ergänzungskarten* and the *Volkskartei* – Wietog’s argument remains vague at best. Wietog

40. Cf. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 131.

41. BAArch 19 317, Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern, An die Höheren Verwaltungsbehörden (ausser eingegliederte Ostgebiete, jedoch Reg. Präsidenten in Danzig und Marienwerder, 31st March 1941, 319-320.

even points out that the process had led to several corrections in both data sets, and concludes on the issue of data collation:⁴²

Für die Deportationen des Jahres 1940 standen die Angaben aus den *Ergänzungskarten* nicht zur Verfügung, doch für die im Oktober 1941 einsetzenden systematischen Judentransporte, [...] zwischen dem 1. Oktober 1941 und dem 1. Januar 1943 [...], können über die Volkskartei und die Melderegister Informationen an die Gestapo gelangt sein, um Deportationslisten zu erstellen. Die Melderegister werden auch immer wieder als eine Basis für die Deportationslisten genannt. Und auch die Volkskartei soll für die Zusammenstellung der Transporte genutzt worden sein.⁴³

Nevertheless, when summarising her findings Wietog maintains, albeit vague:

Über die Volkskartei und die Melderegister haben aus der Zählung ab Mitte bis Ende 1941 Daten für die Judenverfolgung zur Verfügung gestanden, ohne daß gesagt werden kann, wie weit sie tatsächlich benutzt wurden. Die Übergabe der Unterlagen an das Reichssippenamt hat wahrscheinlich für die Deportationen ebenfalls keine große Rolle gespielt [...].⁴⁴

This reasoning conveys the notion that the *Ergänzungskarten* were not relevant for identifying Jews for deportations. The argument is eventually based on the chronology of events and tainted by Wietog's inaccurate treatment of dates.⁴⁵ Before contextualising the processing of the *Ergänzungskarten* in the chronology of the deportations, I will thus examine the further processing of the cards in the *Reichssippenamt* (Reich Kinship Office).

Reichssippenamt

Himmler's decree of 31st March 1941 announcing the transferral of the *Ergänzungskarten* to the registry offices also ordered that after collation the cards were to be sent to the Reich Statistical Office, which would eventually forward the cards to the *Reichssippenamt*.⁴⁶ The *Reichssippenamt* was not informed and enquired about the details in

42. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 163.

43. Wietog, 168.

44. Wietog, 194.

45. Himmler's announcement that the supplementary cards was issued 31th March, in Wietog's summary this moved to 'mid 1941'.

46. BAarch 19 317, Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern, An die Höheren Verwaltungsbehörden (ausser eingegliederte Ostgebiete, jedoch Reg. Präsidenten in Danzig und Marienwerder), 31st March 1941, 319-320.

June 1941, prompted by a letter from Düsseldorf's *Landessippenamt*.⁴⁷ Back in May the regional office had informed its superior office in Berlin that the collation of the *Ergänzungskarten* and the *Volkskartei* was proceeding swiftly and expected to finish before schedule. Thus it enquired to the *Reichssippenamt* whether these cards could pass through their office in order to complete a local *Fremdstämmigenkartei* that comprised information on 'Juden und Judenmischlinge' before transferral to Berlin. Gerhard Kayser, head of the department in charge of hereditary documents, sent a dilatory reply in June in which he offered to temporarily transfer the cards back to Düsseldorf after receiving them from the statistical office.⁴⁸ But his superior Knost approved of the procedure and instructed the Head of the Düsseldorf Police to comply with the request, as the local *Fremdstämmigenkartei* "von wesentlicher Bedeutung für die Durchführung bestimmter bevölkerungspolitischer Maßnahmen ist".⁴⁹ Meanwhile, Kayser had discussed the issue with *Regierungsassessor* Baethge overseeing the collation process in Berlin's Police Department and *Regierungsinspektor* Pöhlmann of the Reich Statistical Office who did not approve. Kayser thus informed the *Landessippenamt*:

Es [the Reich Statistical Office] will bei Ihnen auch keine Ausnahme machen, wobei darauf hingewiesen wird, daß ja ein Teil der örtlichen Polizeibehörden im Rheinland die Ergänzungskarten sowieso schon zurückgesandt hat, sodaß Sie das Material also mit Ihren derzeitigen Maßnahmen doch nicht vollständig erhalten würden. Unter diesen Umständen bleibt nur übrig, daß Sie sich noch 2-3 Monate gedulden, bis mir die Karten vom Statistischen Reichsamt übergeben worden sind. Ich werde Ihnen danach diejenigen Karten, die von Ihnen noch nicht ausgewertet worden sind zustellen. Soweit die örtlichen Polizeibehörden ohne Kenntnis der Absicht des Statistischen Reichsamtes bereits überlassen haben oder noch überlassen wollen, wird nichts im Wege stehen.⁵⁰

Obviously the process of copying the data was already underway in Düsseldorf's *Landessippenamt* and the Berlin office did not object. As promised the central office provided the missing cards, but only in December 1943.⁵¹ In May 1944 the *Landessippenamt*

47. BAArch 1509 1729, Kayser (Reichssippenamt) an den Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern, 26th June 1941.

48. BAArch R 1509 1729, Kayser an den Herrn Oberpräsidenten der Rheinprovinz (Verwaltung des Provinzialverbandes) Landessippenamt, 9th June 1941.

49. BAArch R 1509 1729, Der Direktor des Reichssippenamtes dem Herrn Polizeipräsidenten in Düsseldorf, 26th June 1941.

50. BAArch R 1509 1729, Kayser an den Herrn Oberpräsidenten der Rheinprovinz (Verwaltung des Provinzialverbandes) Landessippenamt, 26th June 1941.

51. BAArch R 1509 1729, Kayser an das Landessippenamt Düsseldorf, Betr.: Ergänzungbogen zur Volkszählung 1939, 15th December 1943.

informed Kayser – who had previously asked when to expect the return of the cards – that the process of copying the documents was proceeding only slowly due to the “augenblicklichen anormalen Verhältnisse”.⁵² Despite the unusual circumstances, the *Ergänzungskarten* were still considered a valuable source.

Similarly, in September 1941 the *Gausippenamt* in Vienna expressed the intent to copy the data before forwarding the *Ergänzungskarten* to Berlin. This time Kayser objected to the plan

Schließlich befürchte ich, daß bei einer auch nur vorübergehenden Abgabe der Karten an andere Stellen der jetzige Bestand nicht unversehrt bleibt. Das hat sich, wenn auch nur in vereinzelt Fällen, schon bei der kurzfristigen Überlassung der Karten an die Bürgermeister und Staatlichen Polizeiverwaltungen zur Vervollständigung der Karteien des polizeilichen Meldewesens und der Volkskartei gezeigt.⁵³

The document suggest that Kayser had already received some regional cards or was otherwise well informed about their current state. But in spite of Kayser’s objections, the Austrian *Ergänzungskarten* were never transferred to the *Reichssippenamt* in Berlin. In August 1942 the *Reichssippenamt*’s Jahnke noted:

Die Ergänzungskarten aus dem Altreichs-Gebiet und dem Sudetengau liegen bereits bei Herrn Arndt in der Oranienburgerstraße vor. Die Ergänzungskarten der Reichsgaue der Ostmark stehen noch aus.⁵⁴

According to Exner and Schimany, who by and large follow Wietog’s line of argument, the Austrian *Ergänzungskarten* remained in Austria and were destroyed in 1945.⁵⁵ Their findings that in Austria the *Ergänzungskarten* were not used to identify Jews⁵⁶ deserve renewed scrutiny in the light of the Vienna *Gausippenamt*’s request for the cards, in particular as they confirm the existence of an Austrian *Judenkartei*.

The mode and point in time of the cards’ transferral from the Reich Statistical Office to the *Reichssippenamt* is still uncertain. Some cards were sent to the statistical office

52. BArch R 1509 1729, Landessippenamt Düsseldorf an den Herrn Direktor des Reichssippenamtes Abt. III, 6th May 1944.

53. BA R1509 1040, Kayser an den Herrn Reichsminister des Innern, Betrifft Ergänzungskarten über die Abstammung aus der Volkszählung 1939, 14th October 1941.

54. BArch R 39 803, Note to the files, Jahnke, 5th August 1942.

55. Cf. Gudrun Exner and Peter Schimany, ‘Die Volkszählung von 1939 in Österreich und die Erfassung der österreichischen Juden’, in *Bevölkerungsforschung und Politik in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Rainer Mackensen (Wiesbaden: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 137–160, 104.

56. Cf. Exner and Schimany, 116.

in June 1941, as we have seen above. Whether the statistical office collected all cards to send them over to the *Reichssippenamt* at once or transferred complete regional stacks in several instances is unclear. In September 1941 the statistical office reminded the districts in default to comply by 25th of the same month. The cards from Württemberg were transferred only in January 1942.⁵⁷ The cards' presence in their entirety – with the exception of the Austrian set – in the *Reichssippenamt* is documented in August 1942 at the latest – but possibly earlier since the document seems unrelated to the receipt of the cards by the *Reichssippenamt*. Whether the time in between was used by other *Gau-* or *Landessippenämter* than Düsseldorf (and possibly Austria) also remains unresolved. Wietog believes the cards in their entirety were transferred to the *Reichssippenamt* in early 1942 and argues with regard to their possible further utilisation:

Geht man davon aus, daß das Reichssippenamt die Informationen auf den Ergänzungskarten zunächst mit den eigenen Daten verglichen hat, so dürfte dies bei über 330 000 Angaben nicht von heute auf morgen möglich gewesen sein. Ehe auch hier – falls man das überhaupt wollte – nochmals die Adressen auf den neusten Stand gebracht waren mußten Monate vergehen. Aber war das für die Gestapo und ihrem Ziel, die Juden nach dem Osten in die Vernichtungslager zu deportieren, noch von Interesse? Die Deportationen waren um diese Zeit schon voll im Gange. [...] fast alle Informationen, die die Gestapo brauchte, hatte sie um diese Zeit schon zusammen. Und sie hatte sich dabei auch des Wohl perfidesten Mittels bedient, das man sich vorstellen kann: der Mitarbeit der Opfer, die zum Teil die Deportationslisten selbst zusammenstellen mußten.⁵⁸

This conclusion is based on the assumption that the *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* had the required data available in their indices. It furthermore implies that the local representatives of the *Reichsvereinigung* were willing to expose individuals who had previously escaped registration by the pursuers. To evaluate this conclusion, the next section analyses the sources the *Reichsvereinigung* could access to identify previously unidentified '*Rassejuden*'.

57. Cf. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 163-164.

58. Wietog, 192.

Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland

In September 1933 the most important Jewish organisations in Germany joined forces in order to efficiently respond to the threats presented by the new rulers and founded the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden*. But in July 1939 the organisation lost its voluntary and independent status. Now dubbed *Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland* the Berlin office was to take orders from the Reichs Ministry of the Interior – and thus from the Reichssicherheitshauptamt and the Gestapo – and coordinate the *jüdische Kultusvereinigungen* that were designated to its local branches. Aside of exception for couples in childless mixed marriages, all *Geltungsjuden* were by act of the decree members of the new organisation. And while schooling and welfare remained part of its responsibilities, the main purpose was “die Auswanderung der Juden zu fördern”.⁵⁹ In the course of the 1938 pogroms, the *Reichssippenamt* had moved its archive into the building of the Jewish community in Berlin, so that by 1939 both archives resided in the building on Oranienburgerstraße.⁶⁰ Here, the *Reichsvereinigung* in succession of the previous organisations maintained the Berlin membership roaster. Likewise, the local *Kultusgemeinden* did this for their respective jurisdictions. In Berlin the register called ‘*Katatster*’, was alphabetically organised and limited to the members of the *Kultusvereinigung*. Due to the organisation of the register Diana Schulle concluded:

Mögen in einem frühen Stadium der Berliner Transporte jüdische Stellen noch einen gewissen Einfluß auf die Zusammensetzung der Transportlisten gehabt haben, ist dies später, als nach Straßenzügen und Häusern deportiert wurde, mehr als unwahrscheinlich.⁶¹

Despite the regional differences in the organisation of the deportations, in many places the Gestapo tasked the local *Kultusgemeinden* with compiling the lists.⁶² From the Gestapo’s perspective the focus of the planning for the deportations was a logistical problem. The local *Kultusgemeinde* were usually given a quota that they had to meet

59. RGBL. 1097.

60. The *Kultusvereinigung* also maintained indices on Jews that had exiled and those deported. But these were maintained in the organisations office in the Kantstraße and only transferred to the Oranienburgerstraße in 1943, after the *Kultusvereinigung* was liquidated. Cf. Schulle, *Reichssippenamt*, 359.

61. Schulle, 357.

62. Beate Meyer, ‘Handlungsräume regionaler jüdischer Repräsentanten 1941-1945’, in *Die Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland: Pläne - Praxis - Reaktionen; 1938 - 1945*, ed. Birthe Kundrus and Beate Meyer, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus 20 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004), 63–85, 66.

by choosing individuals. As Ingo Haar has pointed out, in order to address these logistical issues, the summary results from the *Ergänzungskarten* published in 1940 sufficed to estimate the scope of deportations and assign quotas to individual communities.⁶³ Beate Meyer has analysed the room for manoeuvre the local representatives of the *Kultusgemeinden* had when it came to the compilation of deportation lists. Her study lists several cases in which deportations were organised without the involvement of the *Kultusgemeinden* and explicitly names the registration system in general as the data source for the deportation lists.⁶⁴ For the city of Mainz, Meyer states that the local Gestapo had acquired the data of the *Ergänzungskarten* in 1940. This once again suggests that prior to the collation with the registration system, the *Ergänzungskarten* had been accessed and collated with other indices. The *Reichsvereinigung*'s representative in Mainz, Michel Oppenheim, is quoted saying:

Die Reichsvereinigung wurde nur aus Bequemlichkeit mit der Anfertigung [...] beauftragt. Sämtliche Listen dieser Art hätten gerade so gut bei der Gestapo angefertigt werden können.⁶⁵

For Berlin the sources used by the *Kultusvereinigung* are well documented. In December 1942, Dr Ernst Rosenthal, head of the legal department of Berlin's *Kultusvereinigung*, presumably on the *Reichssippenamt*'s order, summarised the sources at hand to identify Jews in Germany. His report listed all measures to identify Jews that had been initiated since 1933.⁶⁶ In October 1939 – after the census – the *Kultusvereinigung* conducted a similar survey in order to identify 'Geltungs-' and 'Rassejuden' previously unregistered. It is the survey Wietog suggested had eventually led to the identification of Germany's Jews.⁶⁷ But as *Kultusvereinigung* lacked the means to enforce compliance, there was a poor response to the survey. Thus, in order to complete their index, in late 1939 the *Kultusvereinigung* turned to the Statistical Office, requesting access to the census results. Yet, the *Ergänzungskarten* were still being processed so that eventually the Gestapo agreed to forward the registration sheets of Jews moving within or to Berlin to the *Kultusvereinigung*. Furthermore, the *Kultusvereinigung* had inquired with the Gestapo

63. Cf. Haar, 'Szenarien', 364.

64. Cf. Meyer, 'Handlungsräume regionaler jüdischer Repräsentanten 1941-1945', 71 and 76.

65. As cited in: Meyer, 80.

66. BAarch R 8150 32, Die Katastermäßige Erfassung der Juden in Berlin, Dr. iur. Ernst Rosenthal, 23th December 1942.

67. Wietog, *Volkszählung NS*, 79.

zur vollständigen Erfassung amtliche Quellen zugänglich zu machen, was sich bisher jedoch nicht ermöglichen ließ.⁶⁸

So, in December 1942, the ‘*Kataster*’ comprised the data of the self-identifying Jews including those ‘*Geltungs-*’ and ‘*Rassejuden*’ who had answered the calls for registration. A second document appended to Rosenthal’s report, most probably from the same author, addressed a particular problem in Berlin at the end of 1942. In November the *Jüdische Nachrichtenblatt* had published an announcement obliging all Berlin Jews to register with the *Kultusgemeinde*. But the number of registrations did not tally with the number of Jews estimated to be present in the city. Thus, the legal advisor investigated the sources available to identify the unregistered persons. As a first measure he suggested tallying the existing ‘*Kataster*’ with the new registration sheets. In a second step, he suggested checking with the register offices. For complicated cases like Jews in mixed marriages who were exempt from many measures that had led to the registration with *Kultusgemeinde* there was only one way to access the missing data: “Vergleich der Kartei mit dem Verzeichnis der in Berlin abgegeben Kennkarten bzw. der Volkskartei”.⁶⁹ Since the report stresses that the other sources at hand were limited to the members of the *Kultusgemeinde*, the *Volkskartei* presented the most complete index on Germany’s Jews. Beyond these empirical points, there is a logical argument. If, as Wietog implies, the *Reichsvereinigung* and its representatives alone were in possession of comprehensive indices on Germany’s ‘*Rassejuden*’, the Gestapo would have had to completely rely on their cooperation whilst lacking the means of control.

***Volkskartei* and Deportations**

To close the argument I will now summarise the existing research on the development of the decision in favour of grand-scale deportations from the ‘*Altreich*’ and sketch the course of the deportations in order to contextualise Himmler’s announcement of the beginning collation process on 31th March 1941.

The regime’s early antisemitic policy intended to force Jews out of Germany by limiting access to work and depriving civil rights. But this ended in deadlock when the number of those who could afford exile stagnated, leaving behind an increasingly pauperised Jewish population.⁷⁰ With the entry into war and the subsequent occupation of

68. BArch R 8150 32, Die Katastermäßige Erfassung der Juden in Berlin, Dr. iur. Ernst Rosenthal, 23th December 1942.

69. BArch R 8150 32, Abschrift: Statistische Erfassung der Juden in Berlin, 1942.

70. Cf. Wildt, *Judenpolitik SD*, 57 and 63.

new territories, the number of Jews under German control increased whilst chances to escape drastically reduced.⁷¹ However, the new territories also offered the opportunity to deport Jews from the 'Altreich'. In October 1939 about 4,000 Austrian Jews were deported to Nisko in the Subcarpathian Province. According to Gruner, the lists for these deportations were compiled by the Jewish community under order of the Gestapo.⁷² The deportations were soon stopped, but not because the point of destination was completely unprepared and lacked the most basic facilities to accommodate the deportees. Rather shifting priorities among the NS-leadership had led to the postponement of the deportations in order to allow the deportation and accommodation of *Volks-* and *Auslandsdeutsche* agreed upon with the Soviet Union.⁷³ In February and March 1940, under the harsh conditions of winter, about one thousand people from Pommerania were deported to Lublin. These deportations were organised by the Gestapo and assisted by the local party offices. Reportedly non-Jews and Jews in mixed marriages were mistakenly included.⁷⁴ But, once again, the subsequent transports were stopped soon after, mainly due to the objections of Generalgouverneur Frank.⁷⁵ Over the summer 1940 the so-called '*Madagaskar-Plan*' was devised that considered grand-scale deportations for the first time. The idea of the deportation of the entire European Jewry to a remote island, given France's defeat and a possible peace treaty with Britain, proved unrealistic by the end of 1940. Nevertheless, the plan informed the further decisions regarding the deportations on a European scale.⁷⁶ In October 1940 the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA) organised the deportation of some 6,000 Jews from Baaden and Saarpfalz to France.⁷⁷ An intervention of the Vichy regime ended deportations to France. These early deportations illustrate how the regime's antisemitic policy was subject to shifting priorities. Each deportation raised objections at the respective destinations. Nevertheless, the Gestapo had used the experience of each transport to adjust the organisation of

71. Saul Friedländer, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden; Bd 1-2: Die Jahre der Verfolgung 1933 - 1939* (München: Beck, 1998), 109-118.

72. Wolf Gruner, 'Von der Kollektivausweisung zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland 1938-1945', in *Die Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland : Pläne - Praxis - Reaktionen ; 1938 - 1945*, ed. Birthe Kundrus and Beate Meyer, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus 20 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004), 21-62, 33.

73. Cf. Peter Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung: eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung* (München: Piper, 1998), 259; Götz Aly, *Endlösung: Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1995), 95.

74. Cf. Gruner, 'Von der Kollektivausweisung zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland 1938-1945', 38.

75. Cf. Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung: eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung*, 267-269.

76. Aly, *Endlösung: Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden*, 167.

77. Cf. Friedländer, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*, 119-120.

transport and the concomitant expropriation of the deportees.⁷⁸ Wietog had correctly stated that for these early deportations the *Ergänzungskarten* were not available and therefore the identification and localisation depended on other sources. In October 1939 Eichmann wrote a note, based on which Gruner concluded that the early deportations were planned centrally in the Berlin office: “Listen sämtlicher erfaßter Juden ordnen u. zw. nach Altreich, Protektorat und Ostmark”.⁷⁹ Notably, Eichmann refers to ‘lists of registered Jews’, suggesting he knew of the deficits in the registration of ‘*Rassejuden*’ in 1939. The lists were to be related to individual Jewish communities in order to tally with the membership rosters. Eichmann was obviously aware that the Gestapo could not solely rely on information provided by the Jewish communities. This suggests the early deportation lists were compiled from the data available in the Gestapo registers.

Over the turn of the years 1940 to 1941, the decision to attack the Soviet Union over the coming summer was taken and influenced the further development. Over the next month Heydrich, tasked with the implementation of the ‘*Lösung der Judenfrage*’, proposed and revised several plans in that regard.⁸⁰ Since the dominant naval power of Britain remained hostile, a dislocation of Europe’s Jews to Madagascar was impracticable. Instead, the future deportations were redirected to unspecified areas of the Soviet Union where harsh conditions and forced labour were expected to kill most deportees.⁸¹ A meeting of Göring and Heydrich on 26th March 1941 in which Göring approved of Heydrich’s proposal is widely considered to have resulted in the decision to deport Jews from the ‘*Altreich*’ to these unspecified territories in the Soviet Union.⁸² Likewise, in March, Eichmann’s department in the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA), now dubbed IV B 4, was reorganised and henceforth officially in charge of ‘Deportations and Jewish Affairs’. On 17th of that month, the RSHA informed representatives of the *Reichsvereinigung* about the imminent “Gesamtauswanderung der siedlungsfähigen jüdischen Bevölkerung” and the related financial burden for the organisation that was expected to cover the costs.⁸³ What is considered the first ‘regular’ transport of Jews

78. Gruner, ‘Von der Kollektivausweisung zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland 1938-1945’, 41-42.

79. As cited in: Gruner, 31-32.

80. Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung: eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung*, 285-292.

81. Cf. Aly, *Endlösung: Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden*, 273.

82. Cf. Friedländer, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*, 161; Aly, *Endlösung: Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden*, 271; Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung: eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung*, 290; Gruner, ‘Von der Kollektivausweisung zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland 1938-1945’, 44.

83. Gruner, 45.

left Vienna on 15th October 1941, destined to the overcrowded and undernourished Łódź Ghetto, succeeded by transports from Prag, Berlin, Hamburg and Frankfurt. During this first stage, the deportations that ended on 5th November had dislocated about 20,000 Jews and about 5,000 'Gypsies'. From then on 'Gypsies' were frequently deported with numbers peaking in 1943. According to Karola Fings, the racial-biological reports of Ritter's office and their inclusion in the *Volkskartei* were practically irrelevant for the deportations of 'Gypsies' from Germany as they were in many cases only produced during the deportation process, for which identification relied on the long existing police registers.⁸⁴

The second stage started on 8th November and ended in February 1942. During this time span, about 30,000 people were deported to the Baltic cities Minsk and Riga.⁸⁵ From March into the summer of 1942 frequent deportations from the *Altreich* dislocated another 17,000 Jews, mostly to Lublin. In March 1942 the annihilation camps of the 'Aktion Reinhardt' in Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka became operational, where about 1.35 million people were murdered. From May on transports from Germany directly headed to Auschwitz.

In early 1943 about 51,000 Jews had remained in Germany, about 20,000 of them employed in forced labour. On 27th February 1943 more than 10,000 of these forced labourers were arrested during the notorious 'Fabrik-Aktion' and deported. Subsequently, remaining work-camps for Jews were closed and the work-force was deported. From June 1943 representatives of the *Reichsvereinigung* were deported. From early 1944 Jews in mixed marriages were targeted and deported in case of divorce or death of the Non-Jewish partner. During the last year another 2,600 Jews were deported from Germany. When Germany was defeated in 1945 of the approximately 500,000 German Jews the census in 1933 had registered, about 15,000 Jews had managed to survive in Germany.⁸⁶

The development of the regime's measures against Germany's Jews between 1939 and 1941 was characterised by trials and changing plans. But the attack on the Soviet Union promised the prospect to act unsupervised in what was understood as the 'vast space to the East', furthering the decision to deport Germany's Jews after a victory, which was expected by autumn 1941. Considering that the decision to deport Jews from the 'Altreich' was taken around 26th March 1941, the argument, that the statistical offices

84. Cf. Fings, 'Erziehung und Vernichtung', 450-51.

85. Cf. Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung: eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung*, 448-450.

86. Cf. Gruner, 'Von der Kollektivausweisung zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland 1938-1945', 56-59.

(deliberately) delayed the processing of the *Ergänzungskarten* until 31st of March lacks plausibility. Quite to the contrary, I would argue, the transferral of the *Ergänzungskarten* from March 1941 onward – in particular the collation with the registry system and the *Volkskartei* – is evidence of their significance in the process of identification and localisation of Jews that was precondition to deportation. Thus, the cards were not requested before that point in time since the respective data was only required once the faith of the registered people had been decided upon. When in June 1941 Knost remarked to the head of Düsseldorf's Police Department that the *Ergänzungskarten* were “von wesentlicher Bedeutung für die Durchführung bestimmter bevölkerungspolitischer Maßnahmen” he was referring to the forthcoming deportations.⁸⁷

6.2 Decommissioning of the *Volkskartei* in 1943

The *Wehrmacht* had demanded the connection of register and registry offices in 1935 to facilitate the draft process. The *Volkskartei* in its eventual form that adapted the *Wehrmacht*'s proposal and connected it with several demands from other sides had been proposed and promoted by Frick's Reich Ministry of the Interior. The *Reichsmeldeordnung* started off as part of the wider reform efforts towards a centralised authoritarian state as envisioned by Frick.

With Himmler's takeover of the police forces and Kerstien's replacement by Liebermann von Sonnenberg, the *Volkskartei* began to take shape in 1937 whilst the *Reichsmeldeordnung* was finalised. Its establishment was announced and thus sanctioned by Göring. Its main objective was to register the entire population in order to put them at the government's full disposal for the war effort both on the combatant and the productive side. While Himmler and Daluge both considered the new index indispensable, it met with disregard or indifference from other parts of the administration. The Labour Ministry had denied cooperation. Hitler did not appreciate the index. It was thus denied proper funding, making it to a large extent dependent on volunteers. This was a fact Daluge had commiserated, aware of the difficulties this would present to the integrity of the index in the long term.

Due to the limited funding the Reich financial contribution only covered the costs for the initial supply with the necessary hardware. The long-term operation of the index was to be covered by the state governments. Hence the central government lost its influence

87. BAarch R 1509 1729, Der Direktor des Reichssippenamtes dem Herrn Polizeipräsidenten in Düsseldorf, 26th June 1941.

on the further operation and maintenance. Yet, the data presented by the index was to serve mainly the Reich's need to execute oversight over the nation's human resources and put the local workforce at the central administration's disposal.

Lack of personnel had already been a problem staffing the positions that resulted from the establishment of the index. However, this was a major problem for all industries. As a consequence, local authorities were unwilling to share knowledge with central authorities and hence give them access to the local workforce.⁸⁸ The *Volkskartei* thus presented a threat to their control over the local workforce. For similar strategic reasons the labour offices had denied any cooperation with the *Volkskarteibehörden* – apart from retrieving data. However, the initial survey and evaluation had been conducted on a nationwide scale despite the immense obstacles and had helped to identify parts of the population previously unregistered – in particular children. The initial evaluation had produced data on the nation's medical personnel, comprehensive registration of which had remained a desideratum of the 1938 registration system. The *Volkskartei* was established in the entire 'Altreich' – including Danzig and Königsberg where the onset of the war caused a delay of about three months. Himmler's orders in early 1943 to establish the index in the territories since incorporated into the 'Reich' that were issued secretly, were certainly a preemptive move to refute ongoing advances against the index that had escalated in January 1943.⁸⁹

The decision in favour of the *Volkskartei*'s establishment had been taken at the height of the National socialist efforts towards centralisation when the local powers in the federal states were at their weakest. With Germany entering the war, the power balance began to shift once again towards the 'periphery'. Not only did the situation on the ground make it increasingly difficult to centrally control the local powers, the *Gauleiter* position had also been reinforced as many of them had been appointed in the new position of *Reichsverteidigungskommissar*, responsible for organising defence measures during the war. This position, equipped with extensive powers, had remained marginal while German troops were advancing. With the campaigns in gridlock and even more with the beginning retreat it became increasingly important.⁹⁰ The *Gauleiter* formed the

88. Cf. Michael Ruck, 'Partikularismus und Mobilisierung – traditionelle und totalitäre Regionalgewalten im Herrschaftsgefüge des NS-Regimes', in *Der prekäre Staat: Herrschen und Verwalten im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Sven Reichardt and Wolfgang Seibel (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2011), 74–120, 100.

89. BArch R 70 POLEN 155, Bl. 9, Ausschnitt aus dem Ministerial-Blatt des Reichs- und Preussischen Ministerium des Innern, and RdErl.d.RMdI.v.15.4.1943—PolO-VuRRIII3433/43, Einführung der Volkskartei in weiteren Reichsgauen und Reg.-Bezirken.

90. Cf. Peter Hüttenberger, *Die Gauleiter: Studie zum Wandel des Machtgefüges in der NSDAP*, Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 19 (Stuttgart: DVA, 1969), 155.

local back-bone of Bormann's influence, who after Heß's flight to England, had acquired a similar position.

Meanwhile, Himmler had managed to secure a growing influence establishing an '*SS-Staat*' with control over the police forces, the SS including its combat units and an increasing number of inmates of the concentration camps supplying a considerable work force.⁹¹ In particular via the control of the police forces, Himmler was able to exert influence or at least execute oversight on the local level.

Oversight over Germany's idle human resources was a crucial aspect of securing future influence and hence, in early 1943, the struggle for power between Bormann and Himmler was negotiated on the field of registration. On 13th January 1943, the '*Erlass des Führers über den unfassenden Einsatz von Männern und Frauen für Aufgaben der Reichsverteidigung*' marked the onset of 'total mobilisation'. The explanatory paragraph stated:

Der Bedarf an Kräften für Aufgaben der Reichsverteidigung macht es notwendig, alle Männer und Frauen, deren Arbeitskraft für diese Zwecke nicht oder nicht voll ausgenutzt ist, zu erfassen und ihrer Leistungsfähigkeit entsprechend zum Einsatz zu bringen. Das Ziel ist, die wehrfähigen Männer für den Fronteinsatz frei zu machen.⁹²

The decree ordered the *Wehrmacht*'s supreme command to review all personnel in reserved occupation (*Uk-Stellung*) and release all non-essential staff for the *Wehrmacht*'s disposition. Keitel, *Oberbefehlshaber der Wehrmacht*, and Göring in his positions as *Beauftragter für den Vierjahresplan* were to give general orders in connection with this were to be implemented by the *Reichsverteidigungskommissare*. Similarly, Bormann was appointed to free personnel from the party and its subsidiary organisations. Thus, on 6th February, Sauckel issued the decree '*Meldungen von Männern und Frauen für die Aufgaben der Reichsverteidigung*' in which he specified the group of persons the labour offices were to register. It targeted mainly unemployed people, small enterprises with less than 5 employees and employees in marginal employment, but first and foremost women:

91. Cf. Ruck, 'Partikularismus und Mobilisierung – traditionelle und totalitäre Regionalgewalten im Herrschaftsgefüge des NS-Regimes', 90

92. BAarch 43II/652 a, Erlass des Führers über den unfassenden Einsatz von Männern und Frauen für Aufgaben der Reichsverteidigung, 13th January 1943.

Diese Gruppe ist die zahlenmäßig weitaus bedeutendste. Ihre Mobilisierung bildet den Hauptteil der zu leistenden Arbeit.⁹³

Notably, the decree appointed the labour offices and not the police – and thus the *Volkskarteibehörden* – as the responsible authority for the registration process, despite having the exact same purpose for which the *Volkskartei* had originally been devised. This certainly predetermined the future faith of the index as a number of *Gauleiter* now started creating so called *Gaukarteien*.

In order to free up personnel, the decree furthermore stipulated that all work that did not directly serve the war effort should be immediately suspended and personnel released. The decree had once again strengthened the position of those *Gauleiter* who were installed as *Reichsverteidigungskommissare*. On the same day Sauckel issued the registration decree, the Reich Ministry of the Interior gathered the parties involved to discuss the *Volkskartei*'s decommissioning in the course of the implementation of Hitler's decree from January 13th. The main opponent to the index was Düsseldorf's *Gauleiter* Florian, who had claimed "[...] daß die Volkskartei sich bei der praktischen Inanspruchnahme [...] nicht bewährt habe". Hence Bormann was delegated to approach Himmler in the matter of the decommissioning of the index.⁹⁴

In a first reply Daluege, who answered Bormann on Himmler's behalf, deemed the index irreplaceable, arguing that even a temporary immobilisation of the index would render its data obsolete and result in its complete decommission.⁹⁵ When it became known to Himmler that an unspecified number of *Gauleiter* had established independent indices for their territories, he had Daluege issue a circular in which all heads of the SS and police were ordered to approach those *Gauleiter* holding the position of *Reichsverteidigungskommissar* and inform them "über die Wichtigkeit der von der Polizei eingerichteten Volkskartei" with the objective of stopping the establishment of independent indices. In that regard, the circular underlined a possible extension of data made available by the index. Arguing that the creation of a completely new index would require more work than an extension of the *Volkskartei* to the *Gauleiter*'s needs, the heads of the SS and police were instructed to offer the SS' support stressing:

93. BArch 4901 12603, Der Beauftragte für den Vierjahresplan. Der Generalbevollmächtigte für den Arbeitseinsatz. Meldungen von Männern und Frauen für die Aufgaben der Reichsverteidigung, 6th of February 1943.

94. BArch R 58 994, Vermerk Dr. Ficker, Betrifft: Durchführung des Führererlasses vom 13.1.1943. Verwaltung. Volkskartei. 6th of February 1943.

95. BArch R 58 254, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichministerium des Innern an den Leiter der Parteikanzlei z. Hd. v. Herrn Staatssekretär Dr. Klopfer, 27th February 1943.

Der Reichsführer hat nochmals angeordnet, daß die Volkskartei auf jeden Fall bestehen bleibt und weitergeführt wird wie bisher. Sie soll aber für die Aufgaben der Reichsverteidigungskommissare zur Verfügung gestellt werden.⁹⁶

Himmler refrained from an outright confrontation in the matter, delivering his message by proxy of the local heads of the SS and the police. The offer of cooperation combined with his renewed insistence that the index remain in place, illustrates Himmler's defensive position in the matter. On 28th May 1943 Bormann wrote a personal letter to Frick informing him without much ado that in the course of measures for the rationalisation of the administration (*Verwaltungsvereinfachung*) the decommissioning of the *Volkskartei* had been examined and reached a damning verdict:

Diese Prüfung, die sich auf die Erfahrung von 4 Jahren und die Stellungnahme zahlreicher Gauleiter stützt, ergab eindeutig die Unbrauchbarkeit der Volkskartei in ihrer gegenwärtigen Form. Der Grund dafür liegt in ihrer Unzulänglichkeit überhaupt und in ihrer immer noch bestehenden Unvollständigkeit.⁹⁷

Over the five pages of the letter, Bormann lists five major shortcomings of the index which he characterised as “einen sich aus den damaligen Ressortschwierigkeiten ergebenden Kompromiss” that could not be considered “das auch für die Zukunft wegweisende allgemeine Erfassungsmittel”. Most points Bormann brings up are familiar from the trial period in Potsdam. The completion of the cards by the population had resulted in inaccurate and incomplete cards, rendering the index unreliable. Under the headline ‘*Schwerfälligkeit des Verfahrens*’, Bormann reports the failing integration of the index with the registration system's notification system (and hence the failure of the registration system). A further concern was the duplicate *Kreiskarteien*. These indices, Borman states, were often outdated since the honorary mayors failed to forward changes in time. This resembles very much what the district commissioner of Teltow had anticipated during the test run in the Potsdam district when he judged that the index would turn into a ‘complete failure’ if maintained by the honorary mayors.⁹⁸ Overall Bormann regarded the *Volkskartei* as completely unserviceable.

96. BArch R 19 407, Chef der Ordnungspolizei an die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer, 25th February 1943.

97. BArch R 19 407, Bormann, Parteikanzlei an Frick, 28th May 1943.

98. See chapter ‘A test run’, 137.

Insbesondere die restlose jahrgangsweise Erfassung bestimmter Altersklassen (Jugendliche, Kleinkinder, Kleinstkinder) war mit der *Volkskartei* unmöglich. [...] Für die Wehr- und Arbeitsdiensterfassung genügen auch die polizeilichen Melderegister vollauf.

This remark proves Bormann's ignorance regarding the registration system since both the *Volkskartei* and the registration system relied on the same notification system. For almost an entire page Bormann lists registration measures that did not utilise the index at all, ascertaining that, even where it was used in the enrolment process of the *Wehrmacht* and the Hitler Youth, it merely increased the required work as it usually entailed follow up investigations to locate missing draftees, concluding:

Besonders aufschlussreich ist die Tatsache der Nichtbenutzung der Kartei bei der jetzt laufenden Erfassung im Rahmen der Aktion Sauckel.

Bormann omitted that Sauckel had deliberately refrained from using the index. His last point was the incompleteness of the index. The index, Bormann continued, was not completed when Germany entered the war, and "konnte infolge des Personalman-gels in den weitaus meisten Gebieten nicht vervollkommnet werden". When Bormann considered the index incomplete he referred to the incomplete index cards, the part of the male population that due to the 1939 draft had remained unregistered and to the territories in which the index was not yet established – Austria in particular. With regard to Himmler's secret order to establish the *Volkskartei* in these territories, Bormann informed Frick:

Durch die Erlasse vom 31. März und 7. April 1943 wurde ohne vorherige Beteiligung der Partei-Kanzlei die Volkskartei auch in den Alpen- und Donau-reichsgauen sowie in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten eingeführt. Um den schwebenden Ermittlungen über die Stillegung der Volkskartei nicht vorzugreifen, habe ich [...] um vorläufige Aussetzung der Durchführung der genannten Erlasse gebeten. Inzwischen haben sich die beteiligten Gauleiter durchweg gegen die Einführung der Volkskartei ausgesprochen.

In effect, Bormann's intervention had stopped the establishment of the index in the respective regions for good. Throughout the letter Bormann puts the index in the most unfavourable light, targeting existing weak spots as well as bringing up entirely new demands like the registration of toddlers or of the card holders' party membership, which had been explicitly forbidden by his predecessor Heß who had maintained that only

the party was in a position to register its members. In addition, Bormann overstated the number of workers needed to maintain the *Volkskartei*. Hence, the head of the *Partei-Kanzlei* concluded that the insignificant benefits of the index did not justify the required workload. He favoured the decommissioning of the index whilst proposing that a completely new index be established after the war, thereby rebutting Daluege's strongest argument for maintaining the index.⁹⁹ Though Bormann addressed Frick in the matter, the target of this move was more likely to be Himmler. Nevertheless, Frick forwarded the letter to Daluege, who had recently suffered a heart attack. Daluege compiled a letter to thoroughly repudiate the reproaches made by the *Partei-Kanzlei* that he sent Frick for revision, accompanied by a personal letter to Frick, to whom he admitted "Daß es für mich nicht leicht ist [...] solche Briefe zu erhalten werden Sie wohl selbst [...] verstehen". He states:

Ich habe so etwas an Kritik über eine große Kriegsaufgabe, die mit den schwersten Verhandlungen durchgesetzt worden ist, niemals in irgendeiner Aufgabe meiner bisherigen Kriegseinstellungen erlebt. [...] Eine Aufgabe, die ich auch bereits vor dem Kriege erkannt habe und die auch durchgeführt worden ist, bis auf einzelne Gaue [...].¹⁰⁰

In his official position statement, Daluege maintained the *Volkskartei* was put to good use in several states, in particular the Prussian territories. Nevertheless, he had to admit the lack of compliance of some registrars: "Die Arbeit für die Volkskartei ist eine Frage der reinen Erziehung der Sachbearbeiter [...]."¹⁰¹ Frick, in a letter to Bormann, defended the index: "Der weitaus überwiegende Teil der Polizeidienststellen hat die Volkskartei tadellos in Ordnung [...]". Only the recent discussions regarding the index decommissioning have, Frick argued, posed a threat to the index as they had become known in wider circles of the registrars. "Damit haben aber die mit der Führung der Volkskartei befassten Dienststellen und Kräfte in ihrem Eifer und ihrer Gewissenhaftigkeit nachgelassen". In June 1943 Frick was still supporting the *Volkskartei* as the best available index. Nevertheless, he had started his letter to Bormann admitting: "Auch ich weiss, dass eine allgemeine Erfassungskartei für alle Einwohner Großdeutschlands nach dem Kriege sofort geschaffen werden muss".¹⁰² Officially, Daluege responded

99. BArch R 19 407, Bormann, Parteikanzlei an Frick, 28th May 1943.

100. BArch R 19 407, Der Chef der Ordnungspolizei an Herrn Reichsminister Frick, 12th June 1943.

101. Chef der Ordnungspolizei, Stellungnahme zum Schreiben des Leiters der Parteikanzlei vom 28. Mai 1943 an Reichsminister Dr. Frick, 12th June 1943.

102. BArch R 19 407, Der Reichsminister des Innern an den Leiter der Parteikanzlei Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, June 1943.

with a ten-page position statement defending the *Volkskartei*. However, compared to the initial reasoning, the focus had shifted from its utilisation for the draft to its use as an identification and control device for the police. His main argument was the connection of the police registration system and the *Volkskartei*. Those who appreciated the registration system could not dispense with the index, Daluege argued. Furthermore, of the 43 *Gauleiter*, only six had favoured so called *Gaukarteien* – which had to be newly established – over the *Volkskartei*. He maintained that despite the known deficits of the index it was the best available source and was used in most districts to organise the draft for the *Wehrmacht*, the Labour Service and the Hitler Youth.

Die Frage der Volkskartei oder Gaukartei ist also im gesamten Reichsgebiet noch nicht einheitlich entschieden. Es muß nur eines nochmals festgestellt werden, daß die Volkskartei der Polizei niemals ersetzt werden kann, da die Volkskartei allein auf dem Polizeimeldewesen aufgebaut ist, das von keiner anderen Dienststelle übernommen oder auch nur ersetzt werden kann.¹⁰³

Regarding the workload Bormann had estimated, Daluege corrected his numbers and pointed out what he had formerly considered a deficit: most of the personnel involved were volunteers and of those who were payed, many were women. Nevertheless, support for the *Volkskartei* began to dwindle. In May, Frick had noted on his copy of Bormann's initial letter: "Ich war von vornherein skeptisch über den Wert der Karte".¹⁰⁴ Daluege meanwhile had ordered Werner Bracht head of the Order Police' department *Verwaltung und Recht* to inquire the state of the index and provide up to date information. In the course of this reevaluation of the *Volkskartei*, Bracht inspected the register office in Klein-Machnow in the Potsdam district. In spite of some minor irregularities the respective report noted: "Die Angestellte, welche das Einwohnermeldeamt und die Volkskartei zusammen [...] führt, hat ihre beiden Karteien sehr in Ordnung. [...] Die Volkskartei enthält ca. 12 000 Karten und ist vollständig auf dem Laufenden. Rückstände sind nicht vorhanden."¹⁰⁵ But this report had no effect – nor had the support of the *Gauleiter* of Berlin, Mark Brandenburg, Pommern and Mecklenburg, who completely relied on the *Volkskartei* in their administration and supported Daluege.¹⁰⁶ Even though only few

103. BArch R 19 407, Chef der Ordnungspolizei, Stellungnahme zum Schreiben des Leiters der Parteikanzlei vom 28. Mai 1943 an Reichsminister Dr. Frick. 12th June 1943.

104. BArch R 19 407, Abschrift der auf dem Schreiben der Parteikanzlei vom 28. Mai 1943 befindlichen handschriftlichen Vermerke.

105. BLHA Rep. 2AI Pol 2703, Abschrift, Aktenvermerk, 14th July 1943.

106. BArch R 19 407, Chef der Ordnungspolizei, Stellungnahme zum Schreiben des Leiters der Parteikanzlei vom 28. Mai 1943 an Reichsminister Dr. Frick. 12th June 1943.

Gauleiter, namely, Düsseldorf's Friedrich Karl Florian, had spoken against the *Volkskartei*, Sauckel's move to put the labour offices in charge of the mobilisation effort had sealed the faith of the index and secured the Labour Offices' oversight over Germany's work-force.

In contrast to the *Volkskartei* and similar to the measures during the Great War, the labour offices resorted to public announcements obliging individuals to register. Once again the population was in charge of the thorough implementation of registration. Yet, the objective of the '*Aktion Sauckel*' to significantly increase the number of deployed women did not achieve the desired effect. Dietmar Petzina estimates an increase of three to four percent of women working for the time between May 1942 and May 1944.¹⁰⁷ This, however, was also because plant managers tended to prefer forced labourers to German women as they were not protected and could be deployed more rigidly.¹⁰⁸ On 18th August Himmler issued a circular decree, in which he decommissioned the index for the time being, except for the alphabetical reference indices, which were used as replacements and only decommissioned in September 1944.¹⁰⁹ The index cards were to be stored in a safe place to protect them from air raids. Two days later – depriving the other authorities from access to the data – he ordered the evacuation of all police registers (*Einwohnermeldekarteien*), both those in use as well as archived registers.¹¹⁰ The decommission of the *Volkskartei* was thus not an isolated case. As Hitler's decree highlighted, all branches of administration, the party and private enterprises were subject to renewed scrutiny. On the other hand, Daluge's argument that a new index was unlikely to require less registrars and wasted tons of paper was valid, in particular as the index cards for the *Gaukarteien* differed only in one aspect from the *Volkskarteikarten*. They provided an extra field for party membership that could have been easily added to the latter.

107. Dietmar Petzina, 'Die Mobilisierung deutscher Arbeitskräfte vor und während des Zweiten Weltkrieges', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (Oldenburg) 18, no. 4 (1970): 443–475, 450–454.

108. Cf. Marc Buggeln and Michael Wildt, eds., *Arbeit im Nationalsozialismus* (München: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2014), 85–86.

109. BArch R 70 POLEN 212, RdErl RFSSuCHdDtPol Im RMdI vom 18.8.1943, and 8.9.1944.

110. BArch 1509 1470, Der Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei im Reichsministerium des Innern an die höheren Verwaltungsbehörden, die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer etc., Betr.: Sicherung von Einwohnermeldekarteien und kulturell wichtigen Archiven gegen Zerstörung bei Luftangriffen. 20th August 1944.

6.3 ‘*Volk*’ and index

Before embedding the development of the devices of oversight during National Socialist rule in the wider historical context I want to cover the most important arguments of the existing historiography on the issue and my major findings for this period. When Aly and Roth’s book on registration and statistics was reissued in 2000 they maintained that the introduction of a nationwide registration system was a genuine National Socialist enterprise.

More importantly their argument linked the census of 1939 to the deportations of German Jews, suggesting the compilation of a central *Judenkartei* from the census data. In 2001 Jutta Wietog noted that such index never existed and concluded the data on descent of the 1939 census was irrelevant for the deportation of German Jews. This thesis has shown that the *Ergänzungskarten* were the only source for identifying Germans of Jewish descent as defined in 1935. Contrary to Wietog, this study by and large confirms Aly and Roth’s hypothesis regarding the relevance of the census and the registration system for the identification of German Jews. Regarding the details of the events and their interpretation, however, my investigation draws different conclusions altogether.

The identification of Germans of Jewish descent was achieved through the collation of the *Ergänzungskarten* with the *Volkskartei* and not through the compilation of a central *Judenkartei* maintained by the SD. Contrary to Aly and Roth, I argue that only this ‘racial’ aspect of the *Volkskartei* addressed the genuine National Socialist issue of ‘race’ and thus deviated from the general historical trend in registration – increasing comprehensiveness and standardisation on the national level.

They furthermore understand the long genesis of the system as a premeditated and deliberate ten-year-project cautiously implemented so as not to alienate the public.¹¹¹ This interpretation, however, can not be backed by the sources analysed for this thesis. The early National Socialist measures were a continuation of the efforts initiated in the context of the Weimar Republic’s *Reichsreform*. Both the nationwide census and the Prussian registration regulations of 1933 were initiated in the previous years. Apart from that, the registration system was not a priority for Minister of the Interior Frick. The early years of racial politics were, on the other hand, marked by serious infighting over definitions of ‘race’ and required forms of knowledge management. The plans devised at the time intended to maintain the data relevant for both ‘racial hygiene’ and segregation at the *Standesämter*. In consequence the reform of the registration system could leave

111. Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*, 161.

‘racial’ questions unconsidered. This changed only when the plans for a transformation of the *Standesämter* were abandoned in February 1937.

On the occasion of the first combined draft of the Labour Service and the military in 1935, the *Wehrmacht* requested the fusion of the vital and residential data to facilitate the identification and localisation of draftees. After the Nuremberg Laws had defined the *Volksgemeinschaft ex negativo*, the Ministry of the Interior required the information to discriminate *Reichsbürger* from *Staatsangehörige* – which primarily amounted to the identification of those Germans who were Jewish according to the new definition. Furthermore, the ministry intended to prepare for total mobilisation by producing oversight over the employable population. These demands initiated a shift towards a genuinely National Socialist policy in registration and census taking that eventually led to the establishment of the *Volkskartei*.

But Frick lost influence and only with Himmler’s appointment as Head of the German Police in the summer of 1936 did the initiative gain momentum. Still, the pending state of the *Reichsreform* impeded detailed planning. In February 1937 all efforts towards a comprehensive *Reichsreform* – including the transformation of the *Standesämter* – were postponed until after the war. Yet, the implementation of the *Reichsbürgergesetz* still required a device to manage the necessary information. In 1937 the Ministry of the Interior decided against the inclusion of respective questions in the registration forms because it had required a process of verification and – more importantly – the aggregation of data in a cumulative data base would not provide comprehensive results quickly. In consequence, the *Reichsmeldeordnung* by and large implemented the Eisenach agreement. It left the administrative competences of the federal states untouched and the issues of mobilisation and ‘race’ unconsidered so that these had to be solved by the *Volkskartei*. Devised and implemented by a coalition of the Reich Ministry of the Interior, Himmler, as Head of the German Police, and the Ministry for Education, the index was contested. It lacked the support of Hitler and met with adamant resistance from the Labour Offices who feared the loss of their genuine competences. But on a fundamental level even the structure of the *Volkskartei* adhered to the logic of the *dezentralisierte Einheitsstaat* (‘decentralised unitary state’) which had been discussed and called for by national politicians and administration over the Weimar period. As it depended entirely on the administrative structure determined by the *Reichsmeldeordnung* it implemented a unified, yet decentralised, index system.

The index was ill-funded and poorly staffed and due to the temporal and financial limits, the planners of the index decided to sacrifice accuracy for comprehensiveness.

Therefore, the eventual establishment of the *Volkskartei*, despite the long period of planning, appears to be a make shift solution on the brink of war rather than the keystone in a larger design. National Socialist registration policy is characterised by competing interests and policy shifts in which, after a long process of standardisation and centralisation peaking with introduction of the *Volkskartei*, control returned to the local administration when the index was decommissioned and replaced by local *Gaukarteien*.

Regarding the decommissioning of the index in 1943, Aly and Roth claim that the system failed at the end of the war only because technology at the time could “die einmal erhobenen Informationen nicht adäquat speichern”.¹¹² Several times in the book they insinuate that the National Socialists lacked the technology introduced in the 1980s to fully implement the vision of seamless registration. This is, however, more a contemporary political intervention at the time their book was first published than a historical conclusion. Index cards were certainly reliable data carriers. Problems arose on the side of data processing and transferral in the form of shortage of staff. Despite occasional inaccuracies, the project did not fail due to technical difficulties. The decommissioning of the *Volkskartei* in 1943 can best be understood as a token in a power struggle which revived the antagonisms of the federal state under the conditions of a purportedly centralised state.¹¹³

The assessment of the *Volkskartei*'s impact on the population has to consider three different aspects. Its function in the mobilisation and organisation of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the complementary function in the process of segregation and its role in the context of the wider National Socialist registration measures. Furthermore, as the index was integrated with the registration system, its impact on the German population cannot be assessed in isolation from changes in registration in general.

Contrary to the expectations of its designers, the *Volkskartei* did not turn out to be the device that organised the *Volksgemeinschaft* as a unified whole – nor did any other single measure. When ‘total mobilisation’ was eventually ordered in 1943 the decommissioning of the index was a deliberate, politically motivated move to secure the labour offices’ control over the workforce. Contrary to the expectations of the Ministry of the Interior, a grand-scale deployment of German women in the industries did not take place – instead increasingly foreign, often forced labour was imported to keep up productivity.

112. Aly and Roth, *Die restlose Erfassung*, 161.

113. Cf. Ruck, ‘Partikularismus und Mobilisierung – traditionelle und totalitäre Regionalgewalten im Herrschaftsgefüge des NS-Regimes’, 100.

Despite its marginal role in military and economic mobilisation, the index did increase registration rates and granted an unprecedented access to personal details to the police and the administration in general. Both the *Reichsmeldeordnung* and the *Volkskartei* established a coherent system of registration regulations for the population. Moreover, the various registration measures during the National Socialist era accustomed the German population as well as the civil servants to a comparatively strict regime of registration.

The Ministry of the Interior had invested an enormous amount of resources in the *Volkskartei*. While it remained irrelevant for the economic mobilisation of the *Volksge-meinschaft*, regarding the significance of the index in processes of exclusion its impact differed considerably. The *Volkskartei* and the 1939 census *Ergänzungskarten* can only be considered a closely coordinated effort to identify Jews and *Fremdstämmige* in Germany in order to implement a *völkisch* understanding of state membership.

Unity and exclusion

Jede Karteikarte bedeutet einen Menschen.¹¹⁴

Concluding this thesis I want to return to the wider historical movements that organised this thesis. Concepts of modern state membership had always implied a direct – in Scott’s terms ‘unmediated’ – relationship between the state and its members. Guided by the notion that this relationship materialises in the records the state keeps of its members, this thesis explored the evolution of German devices of oversight from the registration of Prussian Jews in the course of emancipation to the identification of German Jews via index cards as a precondition to ‘emancipation revoked’ by deportation and often murder. The inclusion of Jews in the ‘German people’ was documented in a separate register – their exclusion required a register of all Germans.

When, in 1812, Jews had to apply for Prussian citizenship, no population register existed in which the new status could simply be recorded. To keep a record of these state members a dedicated register was required. Defined as a police task and therefore a competence of the municipalities, registration regulations were disparate all over Prussia. And despite being widely acknowledged as the backbone of modern administration it was never a priority to political rulers. As the survey taken during the preparations for the test run of the *Volkskartei* in Potsdam has shown, even after the introduction of the *Reichsmeldeordnung*, regulations were often not implemented at the local level. The call for nationwide alignment in registration originated from the criminal police and the ‘Gypsy’ departments in particular. In order to track moving suspects towards the turn of the century these departments developed the first, initially informal, notification system beyond state boundaries. On the brink of the First World War these systems were institutionalised. Over the Weimar period the need for an alignment of administrative procedures – registration included – became obvious. In spite of the uncontested Eisenach agreement, implementation was hindered by conflicting interests on other fields and the political crisis. As we have seen in this study the decisive incisions in the de-

114. Liebermann von Sonnenberg, *Die Volkskartei* (1939) 20.

velopment of the German registration system are not the familiar dates that organise German history. Neither the German unification in 1871, the disruption of the First World War and the subsequent transition to democracy nor its replacement by National Socialism immediately affected the political agenda regarding the devices of oversight. Particularly the last transition is marked by continuity rather than rupture. The transition of power to the National Socialists, in particular the ‘*Gleichschaltung der Länder*’, disrupted bequeathed power balances and was expected to centralise administration. But the new rulers had no coherent vision of the administrative structure of a future German state so the initial momentum got lost. The *Reichsmeldeordnung* was instead realised without wider administrative reform and thus left competences untouched.¹¹⁵ The law followed and brought an administrative logic of alignment and standardisation that originated in the previous century to a preliminary close. The tracing of the mobile poor and criminals required interstate cooperation in the form of a notification system. In 1935 the heightened mobility caused by the introduction of compulsory labour and military service had highlighted its importance for the remaining population. With the 1938 *Reichsmeldeordnung* these measures and techniques to guarantee seamless tracing of individuals – initially devised to monitor the movement of aliens, the mobile poor and criminals – were for the first time adapted nationwide and for the entire population. The *Volkskartei* that was hastily compiled at the brink of the war established a unified index system and centralised registration on the municipal level. As early as at the onset of the war the power balance began to shift towards the local administration in the form of the *Gauverwaltungen* once again.

The development of modern statistics and census taking in particular has seen a steady development and nationwide standardisation. Initially dependent on registration data, statistics exerted some pressure for standardisation of registration practice. But in the process of German unification censuses gained direct political significance and developed into an independent branch of administration. The first nationwide census in 1871 used standardised questionnaires and already understood the individual as survey unit. Towards the turn of the century calls for minority censuses of ‘Gypsies’ and Jews were raised. But the attempts made in the case of ‘Gypsies’ foundered because of lack of criteria. Increasingly the trend towards an ethno-cultural understanding of state membership began to show in statistics. From 1890 on, censuses asked a question on language to determine nationality. Confessional statistics were reintroduced. The 1905 census an-

115. Only in 2013 the *Bundesmeldegesetz vom 3. Mai 2013*, (BGBl. I. 1084) established registration as competence of the national administration.

anticipated changes in the law of citizenship in 1913 by including *Auslandsdeutsche* who were not necessarily German citizen, but of 'German descent'. During the First World War, statistics played a prominent role in organising the war economy and nourished the understanding of the nation as an organic entity that was at the heart of the following discourse on a *Volksgemeinschaft*. In this context, the 1916 *Juden zählung* stands out. It was not conducted by the statistical office, did not adhere to the standards that had been established for official censuses and the results never were published. Still, it was of political significance as it soon was fused with the *Dolchstoßlegende* and evolved into a cornerstone of a *völkisch* interpretation of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Due to the post-war turmoil and the crisis in the late 1920s the Weimar government only conducted a single census in 1925. It was succeeded only in 1933 when the National Socialists were already in power. And, even though it introduced new questions, it was entirely based on work of the previous administration. While all these censuses were used to monitor the population and adjust policy accordingly the census of 1939 differed significantly as it was the first to identify individuals as members of a given group. Like previous surveys it contained a question about language that was not used not to indicate nationality this time but to identify '*Fremdvölkische*'. Unlike previous surveys it included the *Ergänzungskarte* that allowed the identification of Jews according to the Nuremberg definition. It thus provided the data required to implement a *völkisch* understanding of state membership and alter the composition of the German population.

This brings me to the historical development in which the previous threads convene. German concepts of state membership over the period which has been examined are characterised by an increasingly ethno-cultural understanding of belonging. The incidental introduction of the concept of citizenship on the occasion of the emancipation of Prussian Jews in 1812 had been based on residency. A first closure was marked by the introduction of citizenship based on descent in 1842 in Prussia that was also adopted in other German states. At the same time procedures for naturalisation provided deliberate leeway for officials who could arbitrarily doubt a person's citizenship. Initially devised to curb the naturalisation of Jews, this legal vagueness was increasingly applied against those classified as 'Gypsies'. It is noteworthy that the lack of coherent citizenship registers was often to the disadvantage of those who lacked official documentation to prove otherwise. Furthermore, the vagueness allowed law-makers to avoid providing a definition of the targeted groups.

The German unification had no consequences for legislation that defined state membership apart from granting equal rights to member-states' citizens. But it was accom-

panied by a new nationalism that aimed at producing cohesion by *negative Integration*. The 1913 law on citizenship extended the aspects of *ius sanguinis* to persons born abroad but of ‘German descent’ and altered the concept of German state membership as it eliminated the remains of *ius soli* for this group. At the onset of the war the official course briefly shifted towards a more inclusive understanding of belonging but it met with growing resistance that manifested, in particular, in the *Juden-zählung*. Over the Weimar period legislation on citizenship remained unaltered. Only in January 1934, the *Gesetz über den Neuaufbau des Reiches* transferred sovereign rights of the federal states to the Reich, thus establishing German citizenship. While this could be understood as the keystone in the process of German unification, the more important incision in legal concepts of state membership is marked by the passing of the *Reichsbürgergesetz* in 1935 as part of the Nuremberg Laws. It divided the German population into *Reichsbürger* and *Staatsangehörige* and constructed the *Volksgemeinschaft* by exclusion primarily of German Jews and Germans of Jewish descent. As this thesis has shown, religion had always been registered so that the identification of self-identifying Jews never presented a difficulty to the authorities. Difficulties arose identifying those who had only been defined Jewish by the Nuremberg Laws. The implementation of the negative logic of the Nuremberg Laws was facilitated by several overlapping measures. Most importantly, the census of 1939 identified German Jews and Germans of Jewish descent. The *Volkskartei* provided the system to manage the information while its integration with the registration system that allowed seamless tracing ensured the localisation of the individuals.

While the process of emancipation affected the entire population it was exemplified in Prussia and elsewhere with the Jewish population. The National Socialist endeavour to reverse emancipation affected the entire population but was executed with unmatched rigour against Jewish Germans. Since its first introduction, registration had provided the means to counter the effects of emancipation and regain control over the individuals set free in the process. Hence, the attempt to revoke emancipation fundamentally depended on these techniques.

With the *Volkskartei*, the wider historical movements came to a preliminary close. The index reflects the atomisation of the individual by representing everyone with an individual index card and simultaneously facilitated the production of a new state collective. The National Socialists had promised to overcome modernity and its atomisation by forming a new community based on an presumably ‘natural’ ontological certainty – a community of common blood – the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Faced with the impossibility of providing a positive definition for this collective it was produced by ‘removing the

margins', applying a negative logic that defined criteria for exclusion rather than for inclusion.

Registration regulations in place for the *Volkskartei* specified that index cards of persons who had moved or died were transferred into the *reponierte Register*. In accordance with these regulations, the *Volkskarteikarten* of those who had been deported were removed from the *kurrent* register. The cards that stayed in the index represented the members of the German *Volksgemeinschaft* – a people from paper.

Archives

GSTA Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Berlin

BLHA Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv, Potsdam

BArch Bundesarchiv Lichtenfelde, Berlin

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