

The author of this paper researches a subject new to Czech historiography – that of Czech life peers in the Austrian parliament between 1879 – 1918. He attempts to do it not only on the level of archive research, but also parliamentarism (the idea, foundation and operation of the House of Peers), political strategies (nominating candidates for peers), social stratification (social classes represented), social promotion (acquiring symbolic capital), political culture (perception of politics and the position of the peers by themselves and the society), and methodology.

The author asks the question of what approach to choose for the research of the peers' lifestyle and their parliamentary identities. The latter differed from the political thinking and political behaviour of the members of the lower house in the following respects: less active up to completely uninvolved parliamentary career, apolitical activity in one's own occupation, office and one's own nation, appreciation of the individual's career and his merits to the society by being awarded an order, becoming a nobleman, and gaining political power in the form of the peer's prestige.

Attention is drawn to the introduction of the general, equal and direct voting rights in Cisleithania in 1906, which remarkably increased the House of Peers' political activity. Finally, the author attempts to look at the House of Peers membership from the timeless point of view of the history of ideas and the concept of thick and thin culture. He considers the membership in the upper house of parliament to be a new social role, characterised not only by a quick career, but also adapting the behaviour and virtues of aristocracy.