



**Hanging Together, Falling Apart:  
Self-Understandings of German Society  
from 1800 to the Present**

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**Abstract**

In recent years, interest in contemporary conceptions and self-understandings of the social order has grown among historians, yet the field of an "intellectual history of society" is little explored for modern Germany. This paper surveys the field and asks how Germans from the early modern era up to the present time of German reunification conceived of the social order they were building and living in, and it provides an overview of the developments of such major concepts as "estate" and "class," "community" and "society," "individual" and "mass," "state" and "nation." Three major points emerge as persistent and distinctive features of German social self-conception in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the intellectual construction of dilemmas between social conformity and social fragmentation; the difficulties of conceiving of society as a political society; and the "futurization" of an idealized, utopian social order of harmony that was hoped would one day replace the perceived social disintegration.

preeminence and steps back to be--as it had been in the early modern period and before--only one element in a multidimensional web of social order. Social and economic historians cannot any longer take the years between, roughly, 1870 and 1914 as a yardstick for more than two centuries of constant change, just because an important generation of social scientists, economists and philosophers between Karl Marx and Max Weber happened to develop their concepts of inequality and modernity during that period of time: However serious they attempted at a general framework of theoretical concepts, their efforts still very much reflect their own contemporary experience, an experience different from our own or from, say, the 1820s.

Before searching for broader and more appropriate concepts that may in the future be able to synthesize nineteenth and twentieth-century social history, it might thus be important to start an inquiry into contemporary experiences and understandings of "society", of social order and social inequality, as they developed since the era of the American and French Revolutions, and that is what this paper, taking the German case as an important example, will be concerned with. In which ways has German society from 1800 up to the present conceived of itself, what concepts of togetherness and difference did it develop from the Napoleonic reform era through reunification? And did it consider itself to be a "society" in the first place? Social history has too much, it seems to me, taken its own subject for granted; histories of German society are being written, and a German society certainly existed around 1900--but did it exist in 1780 or 1840; or in 1960, for that matter? How, then, did this feeling of social togetherness emerge and develop among Germans in the nineteenth century, and what were its main impulses of change in the twentieth? And if "class" and socioeconomic inequality constituted only a part of social experience--around which competing concepts of social bonding and separation have Germans expressed their experiences of social communication and order? From Aristotle and the Greek polis onwards, for example, notions of social order have always been inextricably connected with ideas of political order and domination, thus rendering society a "political society": What kind of political society did Germans envision for themselves since the time when enlightenment and revolution fundamentally redefined the relationship of society and politics?

## I.

The closing of the twentieth century--be it still a few years ahead or already, with the revolutions of 1989/91 and the overthrow of the "old world order", a matter of the past--has in recent years caused historians to ask questions about the nature and underlying principles of this century: How are we to attain a genuinely historical understanding of an era that until very shortly either appeared as our own present or as an appendage of the historical "modernity" which supposedly crystallized in the preceding, in the nineteenth century? Is there such a thing as the unity of the twentieth century, and what does it consist of, compared to the familiar historiographical notions of an "industrial revolution", of "modernization", or of the "formation of class societies", to name only a few of the organizing and uniting principles of the nineteenth century which usually guide historians--and the wider public--through the jungle of specialized research and writing?<sup>1</sup> The ongoing process of "historization" of the twentieth century thus bears immediately upon our conceptions of the nineteenth century--and even of the early modern era--which seemed so comfortably settled for the last three decades or so.

For social history in particular, the dissolution of class societies and the emergence of new structures of social order and inequality, processes which of course had long been apparent before 1989, increasingly undermine the tacit (and often outspoken) assumption that "class formation" can serve as an overarching paradigm for the analysis of nineteenth and twentieth-century western societies, of "modern" societies, as the conventional usage goes.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is now not only doubtful whether "class" constitutes a distinctive and universal mark of "modernity"; it even seems as though "class" (--and one could easily make a similar argument for the concept and process of the "industrial revolution"--) was only the phenomenon of a relatively short transition period, of just a few decades in the late nineteenth and perhaps the early twentieth century. In this perspective, socioeconomic inequality loses its

knowledge opened for the analysis of "everyday thought" again, without, however, going back to the Marxian materialist frame of interpretation. Indeed, in conceiving of society itself as a social and intellectual construction of social actors, Berger's and Luckmann's approach is sometimes coming close to the opposite danger of idealistic reduction. But it offers an excellent starting point for an intellectual history of society, a theoretical starting point of which historians have yet made too little use.<sup>3</sup>

The very phrase "intellectual history of society" denotes a second and very important general aim of this endeavor. It may be regarded as a crucial weakness of current German historiography that it almost completely lacks--despite strong traditions dating back to the nineteenth and early twentieth century--an established field of research in intellectual history, or "Ideengeschichte", as it may be called according to German traditions, at a time when different strands of intellectual history play an important--and often innovative--role in American, French, or British history. While the origins of this development cannot be explored here in detail,<sup>4</sup> an attempt shall be made at giving an example of what a new intellectual history in Germany might look like. It certainly cannot simply continue where Meinecke ended, but has to take into account the developments and achievements of social and cultural history during the past three decades, and from the point of view of social history, strong potential links to a history of ideas have already been provided by the "culturalist turn" which it experienced in Germany as anywhere else in recent years.<sup>5</sup> Yet while a socioeconomic notion of social history has fallen into wide disregard and research into "experience" and "subjectivity" thrives, German statements about cultural history and "Alltagsgeschichte" rarely reveal genuinely theoretical efforts and are strangely unaware of the fact that a modern conception of intellectual history might broaden and strengthen their own enterprise as well as social history in general. This new conception, however, would have to be different from what is sometimes suggested by social historians as a "social history of ideas", a concept that is in danger of falling back to a reductionist, "Ideologiekritik"-notion of "explaining" ideas with their social surroundings and materialist environs. The purpose of this paper is to delineate an "intellectual history of the social" rather than a social history of ideas, and a history of social self-understandings could thus be a

And finally: A critique of broad concepts of modernity, of class formation or industrial revolution also implies an insistence on the uniqueness of "national" societies, or at least, the uniqueness of experience. Even if the overall development of German, American and French society under the auspices of industrial capitalism, urbanization and reluctant democratization may have been very similar, perceptions of society could differ to a great extent and indeed did. What peculiarities, then, characterized German self-understandings of their society, and what were the reasons for those peculiar experiences? The last question, of course, raises the broader and complicated issue of factors contributing to and influencing social self-definitions, and while it may be too early to answer this question in a systematic manner before empirical research on the topic is being done, it is certainly clear that understandings of society only develop in close interaction with the "actual" formation of society, and it is the tensions and discrepancies between both that are of particular interest to the historian.

Apart from the above mentioned concern with the understanding of modernity, there are several important motives and intentions that direct and influence an effort to investigate ideas of social self-description, and I will mention only four of them. Firstly, on a theoretical and methodological level, it may be called an exercise in the sociology of knowledge. It is important to remember that the Marxist idea of "Ideologiekritik" is probably the single most influential root of this discipline: Sociology of knowledge originated with the critique of "false consciousness" by means of a materialist analysis of society. This Marxian argument for the first time provided a systematic, explanatory link between social structure and social consciousness--if in the "negative" sense of "revealing" the alleged inappropriateness of social ideas particularly among the ruling classes. While Karl Mannheim in his conception of a sociology of knowledge tried to avoid the pitfalls and shortcomings of sociological materialism, he moved the field in a problematic direction by defining sociology of knowledge in the framework of a history of ideas (in the Idealist German tradition), and by at the same time conceiving of "ideas" as elaborate and sophisticated structures of thought explicitly developed by a few "great men". Only with Berger's and Luckmann's "Social Construction of Reality", which in many respects radicalized Mannheim's theory, was sociology of

research.<sup>9</sup>

As society is the genuine realm of sociology and as most of the concepts discussed above were developed and first employed by sociologists, an inquiry into social self-understandings is also, fourthly, an historical exploration of the social sciences and their formation of theoretical concepts; it is an attempt at historicizing contemporary social theory from its very beginnings in the late eighteenth century up to the present and at situating it within its own historical and social context. The history of social theory is not so much an immanent process of "progress" achieved by an ever-harder thinking in the loneliness of one's study,<sup>10</sup> but can to a large degree be considered a part of society itself and its history.<sup>11</sup> Descriptions of society as developed in German social theory from Lorenz Stein and Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl to Tönnies, Simmel, and Weber, from the sociology of the Weimar Republic to current (West) German social theory can be used by the historian as a source for contemporary self-understandings of society,<sup>12</sup> and it is only very recently and hesitatingly being discovered as such.<sup>13</sup> This approach at a historicization of social thought is as important for a critical self-reflection of sociology as it is for an intellectual history of society, although the latter cannot rest upon an analysis of social theory alone.

Interest in social self-understandings has in recent years grown among historians, together with an increased attention paid to the history of language and to the relationship between language, social consciousness, and class formation. As previous attempts to analyze societies in terms of macrosociological structure have lost some of their attraction and skepticism regarding the explanatory power of these seemingly "objective" approximations to past societies has mounted, historians realize the importance of self-definitions and social experience for the shaping of social action, social relations, and social structure. In the broader reframing of methodology and historical theory underlying this shift as well as in empirical scholarship in the field, British and American historians have often led the way, starting with the enormously important impulses given by the "reinvention" of political language analysis in the works of Quentin Skinner and John Pocock.<sup>14</sup> The point for an examination of class formation through language and discourse has been made

useful field to explore possible relations between social history and a "new" intellectual history in general.

These relations also extend--and this is my third concern--to important methodological problems of social history and of historical writing on the whole. Because history, and social history in particular, constantly has to cope with the problem of choosing adequate concepts for the description of past realities that conform to the consciousness and experience of the contemporaries and at the same time relate to the conceptual and social horizon of its readers in the present, it has to be aware of the historical origins and usages of its categories--e.g., social categories such as "class," "Bürgertum," or even "society" itself. This concern, of course, has been at the very center of German "conceptual history," or "Begriffsgeschichte", for many years,<sup>6</sup> but it needs to be carried further towards an historical investigation into the foundations of historiographical concepts in order to make social history more self-critical about the concepts and theories it employs. The notion of "class", as discussed earlier, is a case in point; a second one is the idea of a split and antagonism between "state" and "society" in modern Germany that has served as an influential paradigm of nineteenth-century German history, particularly since the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> This concept is now so much taken for granted that it is often being reified as a structural feature of German society, instead of regarding it as a specific contemporary perception in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (--a perception, moreover, which not even all contemporaries shared--) that owed as much to certain intellectual traditions and political developments as to the actual formation of society and its alleged "separation" from the political sphere. By the same token, social historians often define the very term "society" in terms of an economically based order of social inequality, thus again generalizing a specific and limited experience of a few decades in the nineteenth and early twentieth century into a seemingly universal mark of modernity.<sup>8</sup> Yet contemporary conceptions of "society", particularly before the 1840s and after the 1930s, were much more complex and encompassed many realms of social order and disorder that had little to do with economic inequality. For all the important social history that has been carried out in the past three decades, we still lack an intellectual and conceptual history of German society that builds upon and at the same time transcends this

the first half of the nineteenth century, and from then onwards, and gave way to the construction of another fundamental dilemma: The dilemma of either rigidly separating state and society, thus leaving the state without popular constituency, or of conflating state and society to the point of identity of both, thus depriving society of its liberty and heterogeneity. This pattern of social self-understanding took on very different forms, over time as well as in different social groups and sociopolitical contexts. Yet it may have influenced the development of a modern German society as much as patterns and changes in actual social structure and economic conditions, and although the German idea of society in many respects broke apart during the middle decades of the twentieth century, it still lingers on and gives a distinctive shape to problems of German society at the time of social reunification.

most forcefully in Gareth Stedman Jones's studies on Chartism and early English labor history and is now being carried further into studies of the British and American middle classes.<sup>15</sup> For many reasons, some of which (such as the lack of intellectual history traditions) have been mentioned above, German historians have been much more reluctant to follow these ideas, especially in the field of nineteenth and twentieth century German history, whereas in medieval and early modern history important attempts have been made to understand contemporary categorizations of "society", stimulated not so much by Anglo-American intellectual history, but by the French history of mentalités as developed in the "Annales" school.<sup>16</sup> Without explicitly developing a research program in the history of social self-understandings, however, nineteenth and twentieth century social history during the past two decades has implicitly contributed many facets to a subjective history of society, and only this renders the following brief outline of development through two centuries possible. While it may, due to lack of empirical research, be too early to write a comprehensive "history of society from inside", the aim of this essay is, very modestly, to demonstrate the possibility--and the necessity--of research in this yet little-explored field, and to provide suggestions and first impulses for further research.

Besides trying to live up to the theoretical program developed here, the paper will concentrate on a set of two interrelated arguments and theses concerning the historical development of social self-understandings in modern Germany. It seems as if German society during most of the time considered here was unable to conceive of itself as united and varied at the same time; Germans failed to conceptualize unity as multiplicity: They visualized unity as conformity, and they saw multiplicity as fragmentation.<sup>17</sup> This problem again and again caused the intellectual construction of seemingly inextricable dilemmas, of alternatives apparently requiring a decision: between "state" and "society", between "mass society" and "atomization", between "society" and "community", and the conceptualization of society along those lines only led Germans ever deeper into both social conformity and social fragmentation. Germans, secondly, for most of their modern history lacked a convincing idea of society being a "political society", as it developed in other countries during the age of revolution.<sup>18</sup> Seeds of a political society developed, but were submerged during

spheres of interaction: the relationship to the manorial lord, to neighbors, to family. As historical scholarship has long dismissed the notion of a medieval "state", it is equally problematic to speak of medieval "society" in the face of localized and particularistic structures, structures which moreover were not so much based upon units of "individual" persons, but on families and households. More abstract categorizations of social order derived from the idea of three functional "orders" or estates: the clergy, the nobility, and the peasantry, a concept that originated in French theological thought several centuries before the emergence of cities and became widespread in Western and Central Europe.<sup>22</sup> It was later adapted to provide a social place for the urban "Bürgertum",<sup>23</sup> and from then onwards through the early nineteenth century, and in some respect through our own time, concepts of a tripartite order in different forms, inspired by the Christian holiness of the number three as well as by older Greek ideas, have dominated Western thought on societal structuration and have most often served as positive models, as models of a stabilized and balanced order, and were thus also linked to legitimations claims--as opposed to dualistic concepts that were also always present in Western social thought, but tended to stress conflict or, at least, subordination.<sup>24</sup> But in both types of social categorization, the perception of hierarchy was of central importance, the perception of high and low, the perception of estates and of their "appropriate", indubitable place within the larger social order. Men conceived of themselves as belonging to one of those estates, but this did not imply the modern notion of belonging together with other (or even: all) members of the same estate, order, or social "station". On the contrary, it served primarily as a point of reference for relating oneself to persons of higher or lower standing, persons who one either was to meet with "deference" or from whom deference, a kind of natural, unquestioned subordination, could be expected.<sup>25</sup>

During the early modern era, however, particularly from the sixteenth century onwards, national or, rather, "proto-national" differences in the perception of social order began to develop, as nation-states consolidated and national "societies" gradually emerged in Europe and on Europe's Atlantic periphery. This process of social divergence was shaped by a wide array of determining factors that cannot be discussed extensively here, among them the particular

## II.

People living together have always differentiated between "Us" and "Them", "High" and "Low", "Above" and "Below", "In" and "Out",<sup>19</sup> and the most fundamental, primordial, anthropologically based concepts of differentiation have in many cultures tended to originate from family and clan institutions. The establishment of more complex and comprehensive social organizations then induced two important (and interrelated) innovations to these primary self-definitions: Division of labor gave rise to a functional differentiation of "orders" (which could at the same time be conceived of as hierarchically graded), and the emergence of more complex schemes of political domination such as "kingdoms" generated concepts of "nobility", concepts of a group privileged most often by birth to rule over lesser people. All of these elements, including the still family-centered notion of clan allegiance, can be discerned in the ancient societies of classical Athens and Rome,<sup>20</sup> but what set these societies apart were two eventually momentous "inventions" which broke up the traditional framework of social order and social self-understanding within the pre-modern world: First, the concept of "universal" (male) citizenship as present in the isonomia-concept of the Athenian polis as well as in the citizenship provisions of the Roman empire, and second, the social implications of, respectively, "republic" and "democracy", one of which, in the Athenian polis, was the notion of the mesoi, the middling group of citizens, as being of vital importance for the stability and virtue of the community, a notion that--perhaps for the first time--explicitly denied the highest social ranks an "automatic" entitlement to the highest political standing and influence.<sup>21</sup>

In medieval and early modern Europe, perceptions of social order were very much alike in all politico-social formations that would eventually develop into nation-states and "nation-societies" like France, Germany, or England. Horizons of communication were extremely limited, political authority and social relations often were inextricably linked in bundles of distinct and separated

its theoreticians--, between "Obrigkeit" und "Untertanen", between "Herrschaft" and "Landschaft", as Peter Blickle has described this opposition for the southwestern regions of Germany and parts of Switzerland where it was experienced--and resisted--stronger than elsewhere in Central Europe.<sup>27</sup> Thirdly, the interpretive scheme deriving from the Aristotelian tradition was revived in the early modern period: a three-layered scheme of the "one", the "few", and the "many" that corresponded to the classical typology of constitutions, with monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy as the basic forms of government distinguished by the number of people governing. This interpretation, however, was largely confined to political theory--at least through the mid-eighteenth century--and hence influenced "popular" definitions of the social order to a much lesser degree than the two other schemes. A common feature of all three interpretive frameworks was their bearing upon concepts of political authority and domination: Social order could hardly be conceived of as such, but was politically structured in a fundamental way: whether the three-order scheme referred to clergy or nobility as ruling orders, whether the subjects confronted "Obrigkeit", or whether the Aristotelian scheme thought of "social" groups as constituent bodies of types of government. Contrary to a common assumption among modern historians, however, this close intertwinement of what we today call "politics" and "society" was not a specific feature of "pre-modern" society that was bound to disappear with the "modern" "separation of state and society": With few important exceptions, nineteenth- and twentieth-century notions of the social order, as we shall see, retained this intimate link to concepts of politics, of sovereignty and authority.

In many respects, indeed, the sweeping transformations of the "age of revolutions" brought this link only closer to the fore, for all the fundamental change in societal self-understandings that the closing decades of the eighteenth century gave rise to. In the French Revolution, the famous contention of the Abbé Sieyès that the Third Estate was "everything" implied more than the claim of a newly emerged social group to its adequate share in participation; it challenged the whole notion of a state's population being grouped in estates and created the idea of a homogeneous "people" that had been unthinkable before. The older claim to a share in representation was transformed into a demand for a single representation of the people, an idea that possessed an inherent

form of state formation and of the political consolidation of territories; the political and social role of elites, especially of the nobility, in this process of extension of centralized political power; the degree and forms of (internal and external) commercialization in the early modern era; and the development of the religious situation after the reformation and counterreformation had fragmented and "confessionalized" the once homogeneous Christian world. The religious factor proved especially important, because religious factions almost everywhere in Europe precipitated the emergence of political factions and parties and thus introduced a whole new principle of diversity and difference to European societies, a principle of difference which was not based on birth or other "ascriptive" sources, but was increasingly determined by individual preferences. Confessionalization, however, could have integrative as well as pluralizing effects, and whereas the latter prevailed in England, the former predominated, as the historian Heinz Schilling has argued, in Germany.<sup>26</sup> In collaboration with the forces of central European absolutism, the principle of "cuius regio, eius religio" provided for segmentation rather than pluralism, for conformity within each territorial unit; and for similar reasons, the opposition between "Court" and "Country", which was crucial to the institutionalization of heterogeneity in other countries, never fully crystallized in the German states, and the German nobility refrained from building factions and parties, both within itself and against the princes, thus facilitating the practice of tolerance, but also of societal conformity towards the state.

Somewhat generalizing a variety of experiences and patterns, three models of interpreting the social order can be distinguished in early modern Germany: Firstly, the three order-scheme as discussed earlier remained important and was constantly adapted to fit changing social and political circumstances, but it was never fundamentally challenged until the late eighteenth century. Secondly, a dualistic scheme gained prominence during the same time: Against the background of political centralization and state formation, of the "appropriation of political rights", to speak with Max Weber, and of the accompanying restraint of participatory rights among the peasant population, most common people increasingly perceived social reality in the early modern era as being structured by a sharp dichotomy between authority and subjects--the very notion of the subject, the "Untertan", was a creation of the absolutist state and

group with a feeling of togetherness, based on statehood and citizenship, among each other.<sup>32</sup>

While the remarkable effort of reform politicians and ideologues to implement a particularistic, state-centered concept of "national" consciousness was only partially successful--paradoxically, more so in the Southern states, where the more rigid centralizing efforts of state bureaucracies were later complemented by constitutions, and less in Prussia, where regionalist tensions mounted during the Vormärz era and left the idea of a Prussian nation a bureaucratic concept deserted by its social constituency--, new notions of a political society were being developed around the phrase of "bürgerliche Gesellschaft" (civil society), and the two competing concepts of civil society astute reflected the successes and failures of reform policies as well as longer-lasting regional traditions in the perception of social and political order. Hegel's definition of a civil society as the "system of wants" strongly emphasized what he and many contemporaries perceived as an increasing separation of spheres between "state" and "society", a kind of practical division of labor in which civil society, partially in the tradition of Ferguson and the Scottish enlightenment, emerged as a state-free sphere of social differentiation and economic appropriation.<sup>33</sup>

While this concept, particularly after the Revolution of 1848/49, prevailed and, for example, influentially shaped the social and political views of liberalism in the unification era,<sup>34</sup> most people in the Southern and Western parts of Germany through the 1840s continued to conceive of "state" and "society", of political administration, economic pursuits and social differentiation as an indivisible unity, a concept that was most forcefully theoretized by the Baden politician and writer Carl von Rotteck when he maintained that there was "no difference" between civil society and state, because "bürgerlich" for him, very much in the Aristotelian tradition, referred to the common political concerns of citizens.<sup>35</sup> Whereas the Prussian concept separated political and socio-economic spheres so thoroughly as to leave society devoid of claims for political sovereignty, the Southwest German ideal in turn tended towards a strong conformity of politics and society that could inhibit a free bargaining of interests, and the eventual triumph of the "Hegelian" tradition notwithstanding, both attempts to define a relationship between the political and the social

dynamic towards the assertion of popular sovereignty and thus towards the republic. A very similar process had provided the intellectual and social rationale for the invention of American republicanism two decades earlier, where the classical "mixed constitution" with its provisions for the representation of the "one", the "few", and the "many", or monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, was redefined as an institutional separation of powers within which a single "people" controlled all branches of government.<sup>28</sup>

In the German states, the intellectual construction of the "people" and the "nation" developed along different lines, not only since 1800, when it was clear that a repeat performance of the French Revolution, despite considerable upheaval in some western regions, was not to be expected, but for several decades before that heart-stirring event.<sup>29</sup> The notion of a people and a nation that were grounded in common language and common ethnicity, as conceived in eighteenth-century German idealism and, most notably, in Herder's idea of "Volk", was only popularized in the wake of the military confrontation with revolutionary France, thus adding the additional element of a "common enemy" to the definition of "Volk" and nation.<sup>30</sup> Under these circumstances, it was surprising that at the very same time, in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, a competing conception of the people and the nation was developed and propagated, particularly among bureaucratic reformers in Prussia and, to a somewhat lesser extent, in the Southern states of the Napoleonic Rhine Confederation. Facing the rational imperatives of territorial consolidation, state formation, and the legitimation of a reformed yet not revolutionized political authority, politicians like Stein and Hardenberg envisioned the--bureaucratically induced--creation of a "nation", a concept designating the political society of citizens ("Staatsbürger") that would be entitled to representation in an elected parliament and to participation in the state's public affairs.<sup>31</sup> The well-calculated strategy behind this proposal and its accompanying political measures was the presumably stabilizing effect of granting limited participatory rights and of drawing a population together that after the territorial reshuffling of the Napoleonic Era was more heterogeneous than ever. Beyond the ideas and intentions of reformers, the early nineteenth century in Germany witnessed the creation of "state-societies", the transformation of a multiplicity of "subjects" ("Untertanen") that only related individually to the prince, into a single social

"fourth estate", while the group of wealthy businessmen was often referred to as "monied aristocracy" ("Geldaristokratie"). Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, who in his 1850 book on the "Bürgerliche Gesellschaft" clearly acknowledged the rise of a new social order, ironically described these limits in social consciousness when he doubted the designation of the "fourth estate" as an estate and added ironically: "yet in the stubbornness of our corporate conception of society we unfortunately still stick to this."<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, the "language of estate" experienced a forceful renaissance during the middle decades of the century, a renaissance that altered the meaning of estate not only in increasingly conceiving of them as economic units, but also in acknowledging that estates were actual social groups with a feeling of togetherness among their members, instead of mere points of reference for the categorization of individuals (or families). This transformation, which truly revolutionized the perception of social order and was soon extended into the emerging "language of class", marked the dissolution of vertical and hierarchical bonds in society; and it was probably most clearly visible in the changing perception of lower classes, who turned from unorganized, spontaneous, and localized "rabble" into a literally "self-conscious" "proletariat", into what Karl Marx then called a "Klasse für sich".<sup>40</sup> Only in the mid-1840s, with the radicalization of liberalism, was the word "Bürgertum", formerly designating a quality of universalized citizenship and roughly synonymous with "civic virtue", re-invented to denote a social group and, more specifically, an economic class, thus in many respects rendering a bourgeois self-consciousness possible in the first place;<sup>41</sup> and during the same time, the traditional model of a tripartite order came under heavy attack as liberals and radicals feared the vanishing of the "Mittelstand" in a polarizing, dualistic, and conflict-ridden society.<sup>42</sup>

The middle decades of the nineteenth century also were the time of a big push toward the formation of a "national" society in Germany, a society that transcended the boundaries of the individual "state societies" of the reform era. Nationalism became a mass movement and conceived of all Germans as belonging together and, more and more, as deserving a common political framework in a newly established "Reich". The extension and intensification of

continued to be influential in Germany for a long time and often constituted something like the two horns of a self-inflicted dilemma.<sup>36</sup>

Against the background of an accelerated crumbling of the "Ständegesellschaft" in the 1830s and 1840s, with the appearance of both a bourgeoisie of wealthy merchants and industrialists and a large group of pauperized poor, and thus with an apparent threat to the well-established social order, it is not surprising that contemporaries, particularly in the Southern and Western parts of Germany, resorted to a vision of unity that Lothar Gall in his seminal article has named the "klassenlose Bürgergesellschaft", a classless society of citizens (--not, in this case, of "bourgeois"!--).<sup>37</sup> This complex and pervasive image of society stressed the importance of the "middle" in defining and stabilizing society; and it constructed, in a very momentous invention, a future perspective, a futurized horizon of time in the imagery of the social order: Even if the leveled, equalitarian society of middling persons (conceived of as male household heads) was not yet reality, and precisely because its realization seemed more and more endangered by new forms of inequality, an idealized future was thought to provide the eventual fulfillment of this vision. In this sense, the classless society of citizens with its timeless imagination of homogeneity was clearly a response to the perceived challenges of social change, and hence very similar to the Marxian dream of a classless society that would bring class warfare to an eternal end.

The acknowledgement of "classes", of sheer criteria of economic means as a structuring principle of society not buffered by traditional notions of honor, respect, and status, was a complicated and difficult process of learning for the Vormärz contemporaries, a process of which historical research has just begun to take notice, a process, moreover, that could follow quite different paths in the regional sub-societies of early-nineteenth century Germany.<sup>38</sup> Only with hindsight is it obvious that during that time a fundamental reconstruction not only of the social order, but of its underlying principles occurred--people in the 1830s, however, were accustomed to a society that had always, back to the then much-adored example of classical Greece, consisted of "estates", and why should they have expected anything else for the future? The new (--often actually not so new, but newly perceived--) pauperism was thus termed the

## III.

There used to be a time when the historiography on modern Germany focused very much on the period from the foundation of the Reich in 1870/71 to its eventual demise in 1945, particularly among "critical" social historians who since the late 1960s were interested in the specific structural preconditions for the rise and success of German fascism.<sup>46</sup> While the "Sonderweg" interpretation of German history has long come under heavy attack<sup>47</sup> and has therefore, and for good reasons, largely withered away in the last decade or so, at least in its more crude implications of a "negativized" German version of a "Whig interpretation of history", the questions it had raised have not been completely solved. If there is no sharp break, no decisive turn towards failure, in German history in either "1848" or "1871", how are we to conceive of the problem of continuity and discontinuity in the unification period, from the late Vormärz through the time of the "inner unification" in the late 1870s? And as the notion of a "Sonderweg" grounded in the structure of German society itself--most prominently expressed in the "feudalization thesis"--has been torn apart by empirical counterevidence, what do we make of the rise of fascism and of German "peculiarities" that indubitably existed as much as the peculiarities of any other country? Even if the overall economic and social development of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Germany was fundamentally similar to that of comparable industrializing nations, it may still have been perceived differently by the contemporaries, and the conclusions drawn from these perceptions may have been different.

Indeed, the problem of German society in this period of time seems to have consisted in an ever-widening gap between experience and desire, between "reality" and utopia: The social order did not seem to make sense any more; everything people were used to was apparently coming apart; and society became, paradoxically, too equal and too different at the same time. While the uniformity of a "mass society" was dreaded and the Marxist claim to an end of

communication, particularly since the 1840s when the construction of railroads allowed for easier, faster traveling and the forging of trans-regional social networks, played an important role in this process, as did the Revolution of 1848/49, which in many German regions for the first time created a stronger sense of "national" togetherness beyond elite academics, merchants, and politicians.<sup>43</sup> Communication grew more extensive in its spread across traditional boundaries of space and time, and not accidentally did the modern notion of "society", the "Gesellschaft" as the all-encompassing entity of persons, either within the boundaries of a state or nation or as a more abstract concept of a totality of human relations, crystallize in early social scientist writing around 1850, thus complementing--not eradicating--the older definition as a voluntary, particularistic association such as a club or a joint stock company.<sup>44</sup> While this new concept of society was readily accepted in the entire political spectre, from radicals to conservatives, the next two decades saw an at times fiery controversy over the political implications of "society" and social science, clouded behind the "technical" question of a separation or togetherness of the politically more progressive "Gesellschaftswissenschaft" and the more traditional, conservative "Staatswissenschaft".<sup>45</sup> As the controversy prolonged the eighteenth-century topos of a separation of political and social spheres into the second half of the nineteenth century, it also reaffirmed the German fixation on an apparent dilemma between a society distant from or submerged under the state.

colonial beginnings. The rapid formation of social classes in the middle decades of the nineteenth century was too pervasive not to be acknowledged, but it was never really accepted by most people. The older tripartite schemes of social differentiation gave way to an increasingly dualistic and conflict-ridden perception of social reality as class formation (in a Marxist sense) reached its high point in Germany in the decade before 1900.<sup>52</sup>

At the same time, the segmentation of society along the lines of what M. Rainer Lepsius in his now classic article called "social-moral milieus"<sup>53</sup> furthered a feeling of fragmentation and separation, and while fragmentation was bemoaned, separation could also be welcomed because it guarded against the dangers of class warfare and the interference of other "milieus" and groups in one's own affairs in general. This was true for the "negative integration" of the working class and the formation of its subculture as well as for bourgeois and middle-class groups, but it was the bourgeoisie in particular that increasingly framed its depiction of a hierarchical order with the ideological vision of a pseudo-egalitarian "Volk". As has recently been shown in a perceptive article on celebrations and parades around the famous "Hermannsdenkmal", the imagined "people's community" around 1900 still served as a vehicle for the internal consolidation and external demarcation of the "Bürgertum".<sup>54</sup> The socially inferior working class masses were included in a universal community only to render possible their control and to keep them at a safe distance. And yet the desire for unity was not a rationally adopted ideology of social control, but expressed serious anxieties about social disintegration as well as it paid tribute to the continuing effectiveness of earlier visions of unity in the liberal "bürgerliche Gesellschaft".

On the other hand, a specific vision of a homogeneous society was at the center of labor movement ideology in Germany since its inception, and the striking structural analogies to bourgeois visions of society are less surprising given the social background of the labor movement in artisan traditions, a background that has been the main focus of attention in labor history for the past decade.<sup>55</sup> In this respect, working-class ideology originated as a movement of utopian egalitarianism, much like late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century republicanism and liberalism, and endorsed a specific form of a

a differentiated class society abhorred, Germans equally condemned the consequences of this very class society and longed for an equalitarian "Gemeinschaft", a desire going back to the earlier ideals of "klassenlose Bürgergesellschaft" and reaching in zenith in the widespread appeal of the National Socialist "Volksgemeinschaft". At the same time, German concepts of society were thoroughly depoliticized. The failure to establish popular sovereignty left society devoid of its function as constituency of the political sphere, and the concepts of nation and "Volk" stepped in this vacuum to create pseudo-political notions of togetherness. Yet paradoxically again, the difficulties and the uneasiness Germans felt about their social order to a large degree stemmed from the challenges of forming a truly "national" society in the second half of the nineteenth century, a national society that overcame or at least superseded previously existing local and regional attachments and thus brought the older "island communities"<sup>48</sup> in close connections with each other--connections which often endangered their very identity. This process of national society formation through intensified communication, economic integration, and change of mentalities, although conspicuously neglected by research, gained momentum in the unification era,<sup>49</sup> while on the other hand Germans longed to remain a "nation of provincials" and continued to feel most comfortable within the specific social bonds and rules of their communities of origin.<sup>50</sup> The paradoxes and ambivalences of social self-understandings mounted among all groups and strata of German society, and the visions relief from this pressure were increasingly in discord with the structure of a highly mobile and heterogeneous society.

It has often been noted that German society in the time of the Kaiserreich was marked by a rigid segmentation of sub-societies and by an intense feeling of social fragmentation. It is true that most industrializing societies experienced this "loss" of traditional harmony and homogeneity, and it was an American who gave the perhaps most eloquent expression to this feeling when the historian Henry Adams in his autobiographical "Education" mourned the transition from "unity" to "multiplicity" that left him and others without a sense of orientation and indeed order of any kind.<sup>51</sup> But the sense of disturbance was at least as high in Imperial Germany, where people had been accustomed to a degree of social and geographical stability unheard of in America since the

community that many people otherwise longed for: the notion of "mass society". While it became popular only in the 1890s, its history reached back into the 1830s and 1840s when contemporaries--among them noted philosophers like Hegel as well as ordinary academics and bureaucrats--described their experience of dissolving estates and of an emerging "Pöbel" (rabble) who didn't seem to have a proper place in society and who tended to act--at least so the perception went--in undifferentiated crowds rather than as individuals.<sup>62</sup> While the Vormärz social critics saw the danger of masses within an otherwise still structured and orderly society, the concept was later expanded toward the meaning of "mass society" as a society where everything was just "masses", a society that had completely lost its internal order and boundaries and was characterized by an extreme degree of fragmentation and isolation of individuals from each other.

The somewhat contradictory notions of "Vermassung" (the process of becoming a mass) and isolation thus inherent in the concept tried to give expression to the experience that everything and everyone was becoming more similar, while at the same time similarity did not create bonds, but left people unfamiliar with and uninterested in even their close neighbors or inhabitants of the same town. In this respect, the late-nineteenth-century processes of internal migration and large-scale urbanization<sup>63</sup> rather than the dissociation of estates provided the background for the contemporary feeling of being lost among look-alike strangers, a feeling that Georg Simmel, in his typical impressionist style that fitted the subject matter and the overall impressionist Zeitgeist so appropriately, summed up in his 1903 essay on "The Large City and Spiritual Life".<sup>64</sup> Most notably with Gustave Le Bon's 1895 book on the "Psychology of Masses",<sup>65</sup> descriptions of mass society were often phrased in psychological terms and developed close ties to the then emerging--and fashionable--new science of psychology: Mass societies generated mental disturbances which in turn caused problems in behavior and hence in social relations. This was a widespread assumption around 1900 wherever industrialization, urbanization, and migration reached their zenith--in the United States and in France as well as in Germany-- , but nowhere was it more ubiquitous and laden with fervent fear and romantic ardor at the same time than in Germany, where even socialists like the economist Emil Lederer constantly mourned "Entseelung", atomization, and the

respectable "klassenlose Bürgergesellschaft" that promised security in the face of mounting economic and social pressures.<sup>56</sup> The strength of Marxism in the German labor movement underscored these tendencies; Marx himself liked to envision the future "communist" society as a society without serious conflicts and, even more, without a differentiation of social groups of any kind;<sup>57</sup> he and his followers looked ahead--or rather, backwards--to a society where division of labor, and the inequality it rendered, did no longer exist; and although he was more cautious with contentions about the political "superstructure" of this idealized classless society, he also seems to have preferred a homogeneous, non-partisan, and conflict-free type of politics. Later, in the Kaiserreich, this Marxist flight from reality into the better world of harmony and unity crystallized in a chiliastic, semi-religious belief in the revolution as the coming Day of Judgement that would ring in the new society,<sup>58</sup> and in preparation for this, the German working-class engaged in a cult of equality and comradeship at least among themselves, the "Genossen".<sup>59</sup>

On the other hand, there was the reality of classes and class struggle ("Klassenkampf"), and in a characteristic tension that mirrored the bourgeois gulf between the longing for national community and the experience of fragmentation, socialist labor ideology, again following Marxian theory as well the radical transformation of the liberal language of the middle estate into a language of class,<sup>60</sup> embraced a rigidly dualistic scheme of social order in which the classes of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat were pitted against one another, a perception that first, in the 1860s and 1870s, lagged behind the actual formation of classes among German industrial workers, and later, after 1900 or 1910, was unable to recognize that the forces of dualistic class formation were already weakening again: Caught between the perception of ever-warring classes and the ever-adjourned revolution, classes and milieus remained consistent and stable, as Klaus Tenfelde has persuasively argued, when there was no reason for this consistency and isolation in actual social structure any more.<sup>61</sup>

There was one strong current of social thought, however, that ran contrary to the experience of a rigid segmentation of groups--be it classes, or be it other groups--and that also somewhat belied the positive value of a homogeneous

misunderstandings, and its importance and eager reception in late Imperial Germany and in the Weimar republic owed less to its theoretical subtleties or its foundations in comprehensive historical knowledge--in both regards, Max Weber unquestionably far surpassed Tönnies--but to its affinity to a widespread cultural mood of the time. People were disillusioned and overwhelmed by the complexity of modern life as it took shape during the turn of the century,<sup>70</sup> and a movement to "reform" every aspect of life sprang up that organized in a multitude of "community"-centered clubs and associations, stressing the return to simple and direct social relationships in smaller units.<sup>71</sup> Ideally, however, "Gemeinschaft" should serve as a means to eliminate fragmentation and conflict in the society as a whole: The people, or the nation, should thus form a single community, and in this respect, many Germans were indeed willing to give up, to "sacrifice", individuality for the sake of a congruous community--and they would have briskly denied the irony that this imagined community came very close to the "mass society" which "community", among other things, sought to overcome.

In terms of social structure and differentiation, the advent of socio-cultural modernity around 1900 was marked by the emergence of new social groups, and at the same time, the persistence of older ones which earlier seemed to be doomed for disappearance, thus doubly belying the notion of an unavoidable polarization of society between a small bourgeoisie and an ever-growing proletariat. Already in 1897, the prominent political economist and leader of the "older school" of German "Nationalökonomie", Gustav Schmoller, concerned himself with the question, "What do we mean by 'middle estate' (Mittelstand)?", and pointed toward the statistical fact that the older, self-employed middle classes of small shopkeepers and master artisans had by no means vanished--or been absorbed by the working class--in Imperial and industrializing Germany, but continued to thrive and to contribute a significant share of the working population.<sup>72</sup> This fact indeed came as a surprise to many contemporaries--not only to socialists, who continued to believe in the eventual demise of the middling groups--and unleashed a sincere feeling of relief: After all, stability and order would still be guaranteed in the future, and the "Mittelstand" would be able to further exercise its mediating and balancing function among the extremes; social order, so it seemed, had returned from an

uprooting of the masses in modern society.<sup>66</sup>

During and shortly after German fascism's twelve-year regime, Lederer as well as the political philosopher Hannah Arendt developed theories of totalitarianism that argued for a close connection between mass society and totalitarian politics: Fascism as well as Soviet communism was grounded in a preceding destruction of social groups and exploited this destruction as a "state of the masses"; a classless, unstructured society was thus dangerous to political liberty.<sup>67</sup> But this transformation of a critique of mass society into a plea for social and political pluralism was not the typical consequence for Germans when they lamented masses, and not accidentally were Lederer's and Arendt's books written and first published in the American exile, while German sociological thought about the "problem" of the mass after 1945 rather resembled the Kaiserreich and Weimar Republic discourse.<sup>68</sup>

One way of responding to the dilemma of atomization and "Vermassung" on the one hand, class formation and social segregation on the other hand was the search for more intimate communities in which presumably both equality and a sense of close bonding could flourish. The solution for this problem was the "Gemeinschaft", a closely-knit community where everybody knew everyone else, where social relationships were plain and direct instead of complex and mediated, and where both anonymity and conflict were banished. When the philosopher and would-be sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies introduced his theory of social bonding framed around the polarized concepts of "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft" ("community" and "society"),<sup>69</sup> he certainly did not advocate a simplified notion of moral superiority of the first over the latter, and he would have denied the decidedly conservative implications others saw in what for him was an abstract and analytical theory--Tönnies himself was a Social Democrat, after all. And yet what he hardly could have denied was that the "Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft" concept, which instantly won a popularity the author never had expected, fitted in a continuous line of German social thought and advanced yet another dichotomy, another rigid dualism in a society that was already fraught with constructed contradictions.

For all his theoretical intentions, Tönnies' concept was prone to

until then had largely been separated--, Theodor Geiger in 1932 attempted a scientific description of social structure and inequality in Germany on the basis of the census of 1925, systematically stressing for the first time the concepts of "Schicht" and "Lagerung" (social positioning).<sup>79</sup> His elaborate schemes of social differentiation and sub-differentiation gave expression to the widespread feeling that it was increasingly inappropriate to distinguish simply between two to four social classes.

Perhaps more important still, as Geiger employed the concept of "Schichtmentalität", of social mentalities specific to certain strata of society, he introduced a subjective component to the analysis of society and thus acknowledged the shaping of social structure by mentality and social consciousness. Geiger's approach to this problem can be seen as a scholarly answer to a mounting confusion about the character of Weimar society, as nearly every major group conceived of itself--and of society as a whole--within a specific framework that legitimized its own social and political aspirations, but was incompatible with the schemes of other groups. Weimar society certainly was a "split society", as Heinrich August Winkler has called it,<sup>80</sup> but the problem was not simply that it was deeply split into classes, or estates, nor that people severely felt, and suffered under, these divisions, as indeed many did. The peculiar feature of German society during this period of time was rather that the perceived splits were different and irreconcilable: For workers, and communist workers in particular, a dualistic class society invariably persisted; the old Mittelstand, the peasantry, and parts of the new Mittelstand saw a "ständisch" order at the heart of German social structure; other white-collar employees favored an image of themselves and society as "Schichten", while academic professionals stressed the notion of "Berufsstand" (occupational estate) as properly fitting their perception of order and inequality. The diversity of interpretive frameworks thus markedly underscored the sense of alienation and fragmentation in Weimar society.

Generally, the 1920s witnessed a renaissance of the "language of estate", and "Stände"-models of society and of corporatist, authoritarian politics at the same time flourished among rightist sociologists and philosophers.<sup>81</sup> White-collar workers still cultivated a social self-consciousness based on the notion of estate

agonizingly dualistic to a calmer tripartite scheme.

There were, however, more than these conservative and traditional notions to the perception of a new strength of middle classes in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even more striking than the persistence of the "old", self-employed "Mittelstand" was the rise of the "Angestellten", of white-collar employees with clean and respectable office occupations;<sup>73</sup> and while sociologists and economists, in an amazingly fast-growing body of literature that bore witness to the particular German obsession with the coming or not-coming of class society argued about the categorization of white-collar employees as "workers",<sup>74</sup> the "Angestellte" were by many, particularly during the 1920s, hailed as harbingers of modernity, as the first social group that had truly adapted to the challenges of life in the big city, namely in the buzzing metropolis of Berlin.<sup>75</sup> New means of transport and communication facilitated mobility, and new mass media institutions like movie theaters and, particularly, radio broadcasting (which officially started in Germany in 1923) sparked a positive notion of "mass" society, of a society in which boundaries were wiped out and still-persisting "island communities" (Wiebe) were incorporated into national audiences, into national clusters of communication that extended beyond elite groups, for the first time in history.<sup>76</sup>

Despite new anxieties over a vanishing or impoverishment of the middle classes in the wake of the German hyperinflation in the early 1920s--anxieties which continued to be an important theme of social perception through the beginning of the Third Reich<sup>77</sup>--, it was clear to most people that a more complex class society, if a class society at all, had emerged and was there to stay. While Max Weber in his enormous compendium on "Economy and Society" stayed within a framework of "class" analysis and tended to see classes as an evolutionary goal of modern society, he nevertheless advocated a plurality of class concepts and, more specifically, differentiated between four, rather than two, major "social classes" in late-Wilhelmine Germany.<sup>78</sup> Only a few years later, other sociologists went one step further, in some cases encouraged by the national occupational census ("Berufszählung") of 1925 and the comparison of its figures to the previous census of 1907. In his innovative combination of empirical social research and social theory--two fields which

conformist, apolitical unity; it was even particularly popular with the Social Democratic Party in the 1920s and early 1930s. When Franz von Papen, in his accession speech as Chancellor in June 1930, condemned the "wretched community-damaging class-struggle", the official SPD party paper "Vorwärts" replied that the struggle between the barons and the people had first to be fought, before a "true 'Volksgemeinschaft'" would then be rendered possible.<sup>84</sup>

The "egalitarian" appeal of National Socialism, as crystallizing in the "Volksgemeinschaft" idea, has been at the center of a lively debate about the--intentional or incidental--social effects of the Third Reich ever since Ralf Dahrendorf and David Schoenbaum advanced their theses about a German "social revolution" between 1933 und 1945, a rigorous break that, for all the atavisms in Fascist ideology, supposedly succeeded in finally melting down the "pre-industrial" cleavages still lingering on in German society.<sup>85</sup> While the nature of those cleavages now appears less certain than almost thirty years ago, the recent controversy over "modern" elements and modernizing effects in National Socialism has underscored the leveling consequences particularly of Nazi social policies and, less unanimously, the significance of equalitarian intentions and ideas in Nazi ideology.<sup>86</sup> This revisionism has developed in close connection with a minute re-examination of the NSDAP constituency in Weimar elections, research that has now all but destroyed the older notion of the NSDAP as a party of the radicalized "Mittelstand" and instead stressed its widespread appeal among workers and indeed nearly all major groups of German society.<sup>87</sup> The NSDAP even emerges as the first true "people's party", the first German party not to cater to a specific class, estate, religious or regional segment of the German people, and it is now widely accepted that the Nazi pledge for social unity and community constituted a major element of the movement's attraction and reflected a genuine, if deeply ambivalent desire to overcome traditional barriers and cleavages perceived to be dominating, and harming, the social order.

As for a tendency toward more egalitarian--or rather, equalitarian, which might in this case not be the same--views of society during the twelve years of the Third Reich, it is certainly true that the hierarchical "estate" element which competed with the "Volksgemeinschaft" idea in the earlier history of National

that should help to further set them apart from the working classes. More specifically, the idea of "Berufsstand" gained an enormous prominence, partially a reflection of an increasing functional specialization in the job market and of the pervading influence of self-employed academic professionals--most notably, lawyers and physicians--in twentieth-century society. Society as a whole did not break down into two classes or three estates of four strata, but in a multiplicity of functionally differentiated occupations: This was an experience most western nations underwent at about the same time. German social discourse, however, did not lay particular emphasis on the "functional", and hence implicitly egalitarian, element of occupational differentiation, but stressed the estate-like stability of occupational order, in which the specifically German idea of "Beruf" as a divine "calling" for one's lifetime of course played an important role. When Emil Lederer mused about the effects of the "Berufsgedanke" for the integration of modern society, he wondered whether a "hierarchical order" of occupations might emerge as a major social principle.<sup>82</sup> In his perceptive analysis of the language of political discourse in the Weimar Republic, Thomas Childers found that bourgeois parties in their campaign brochures and posters addressed society in terms of occupational estates, or rather: They did not address the unity of society at all, but adhered to a special-interest orientation that followed the lines of "Berufsstände".<sup>83</sup> This was certainly a way to conceptually avoid class conflict, but it left society fragmented (--if in "ordered" fragmentation--). It was only the ingenuity of the National Socialists, and one of the major sources of their widespread appeal, that managed to transcend the estate order with the unifying notion of "Volksgemeinschaft", thus pledging an end to class conflicts without endangering the material and status positions of their voting clientele.

The idea of "Volksgemeinschaft" combined the experience of mass nationalism, as it had emerged in Germany in the 1890s and undergone its ordeal in the First World War, with the repudiation of social segmentation, and both with the utopian vision of a homogenized, if also thoroughly depoliticized, society modeled in part after the socialist ideal of classless society. Indeed, the rhetoric of "Volksgemeinschaft", as recent research has indicated, not only found widespread support and was embraced by many Germans beyond the immediate Nazi constituency, as it expressed a romanticized longing for

## IV

The transformation from Nazi Germany to the Federal Republic--and I will, for practical reasons, concentrate on West Germany in the following remarks on social self-understandings in the second half of the twentieth century--has long been discussed within the framework of "restauration or new beginning?",<sup>91</sup> and the same question can of course be asked with regard to dominant patterns in the interpretation of German society: Have older notions of social order fundamentally been reestablished after a short period of turmoil and uncertainty, or have older and specifically "German" notions of society given way to an adaptation to a "Western" idea of social order (--if that ever existed--), thus causing a sharp break in modern German social and intellectual history? Recent research, however, has increasingly abandoned the concept of a "Stunde Null" inherent in either side of the "restauration or new beginning"-alternative, stressing instead a period of transition that reached from the last years of wartime experience through the first phases of stabilization of a new (West) German polity and society, a period characterized by the disruption of everyday lives, the dissolution of order, and the geographical displacement of millions of Germans--experiences which other European peoples, and indeed many Germans for their religious or ethnic affiliation, had to endure since the 1930s, but were new for most of the "ordinary" Germans in the core society of the "Volksgemeinschaft" that had survived the rigid application of exclusionary principles by the National Socialist regime. The 1940s, now often somewhat metaphorically labeled as the time "from Stalingrad to 'Währungsreform'",<sup>92</sup> probably were the period of the most fundamental and densest transformation of society in modern German history, far surpassing the comparatively slow changes that accompanied the rise of industrialism in the mid-nineteenth or the internal migration processes in the late-nineteenth century.<sup>93</sup> The close examination of these changes by social historians has just begun, and if it is hence difficult to assess precisely the transformations wrought by flight and expulsion, by economic disintegration, by life in the bombed out cities, and

Socialism did not win a firm grip on either perceptions or political practices;<sup>88</sup> and it is also now confirmed by many studies that Nazi social policy was particularly eager to make blue and white collar workers more similar, thus cracking the rigid division between both. This attempt was successful not only in institutional terms, but also regarding the social consciousness of the respective groups: White collar employees felt less as a "Stand", and, more important still, workers were endowed with a sense of being an important and respected group in the very center of German society, rather than a fringe group integrated only "negatively" towards themselves.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, Germans in 1933 achieved a clearly pseudo-universalistic unity, a community without both pluralism and political society--admittedly, exactly the kind of unity many, and at some points perhaps even the majority, of them wanted--, a community that had in many respects only changed, not abolished, the rules and principles of hierarchy and exclusion: Jews, Communists and deviating groups of any kind were intellectually extinguished from imagined social orders before their physical liquidation. And even within the confines of the "Volksgemeinschaft", the limits of homogenization could be reached quickly and became perhaps--further research is necessary on that--more pronounced during the economic and psychic hardships of the war on the home-front. "Es ist alles wie früher auch", was reportedly the prevailing opinion among the population in Württemberg in 1941, "hier Bonzen, Plutokraten, Standesdünkel und Kriegsgewinnler und dort das gutmütige, dumme schaffende Volk. Was heißt hier noch Volksgemeinschaft?"<sup>90</sup> The legacy of National Socialism for German self-understandings of their society is ambivalent at best, and while it facilitated the breakdown of some long-lasting and pervasive notions of fragmentation and difference, it left others untouched, implemented new differences, and once more prolonged a questionable meaning of social unity.

crucible,<sup>98</sup> and a few years later, the noted Münster sociologist Helmut Schelsky summed up what he saw as the new distinctive features of West German society in the well-known expression "nivellierte Mittelstandsgesellschaft" (literally, "leveled middle-estate society"),<sup>99</sup> a phrase that was immediately criticized for not taking continuing inequalities into adequate account, but that nevertheless became popular because Germans seemed to feel comfortable with this notion: The ever-hated class conflict, indeed conflict and particularism of any kind, could be conceptually abandoned, while the idea of "Mittelstand" (rather than "middle class" or even a "middling mass society") promised security of one's individual social position against the much-feared downward mobility into a proletariat as well as stability of the social order as a whole. At last, Germans had found an understanding of their society which they felt content with and on which a majority could agree. For all its obvious simplification of a complex social reality, Schelsky's concept (which in many respects only reflected and summarized similar concerns among other scholars, writers, and politicians) was important and innovative in its implications for a democratized society. Segmentation, estates and fragmented "milieus" were gone, an equalitarian order emerged in which a reduced form of inequality was conceived in terms of social layers, of "Schichten"--a term that also gained prominence in the 1950s and soon replaced "Stände" and "Klassen" as central categories of empirical social research. The "Wirtschaftswunder" experience of consumption, the accessibility of cars and refrigerators, and the triumphant advance of the branded and thus "equalized" product in the West German economy provided an important background to the feeling of a universalized society in which long-standing barriers of status and distinction were coming down and where everybody could advance to a respectable middling status.<sup>100</sup>

On the other hand, the "nivellierte Mittelstandsgesellschaft" retained memories of a longing for social conformity that only a few years earlier had been expressed with "Volksgemeinschaft", and the idea of an "estate"--and be it a universal one--still clung to traditional notions of a harmonious order where every individual was assigned their "proper" place. This was perhaps less the case with Schelsky himself, but with more politically conservative adaptations and variations of his interpretation. Ludwig Erhard, father of the "economic

later by the integration of expellees and refugees, it is even more difficult to evaluate changing perceptions of the social order during this period of time.

Structurally, German society (in the East as well as in the West) became more homogeneous after 1945 with the severance of the Eastern provinces and the vanishing of their particular landed elites, and the influx of migrants further loosened traditional German regional structures and the "milieus" that had been so pervasive in the decades before.<sup>94</sup> This homogenization served as a structural advantage in the early history of the Federal Republic, and West German society was only established as such through the integration of the refugees,<sup>95</sup> while this integration, on the other hand, was facilitated by the disruptions of everyday lives among the indigenous population, who often felt as "strangers at home" during the mid-1940s.<sup>96</sup> Food shortages and the rationing of basic commodities produced a feeling of commonality in being dispossessed and disprivileged,<sup>97</sup> and this experience of a more equalitarian order was carried into the 1950s with the popular myth of everybody starting with the same forty German marks of cash that were provided in the "Währungsreform". In a preliminary balance, it seems to me that change, and often fundamental change, prevailed in the development of conceptions of society from the 1940s onwards to our present time: West German society freed itself from many ambivalences and dilemmas that had been central in the "Reich" era from 1870 to 1945 (and present for a much longer time); and it will also probably emerge that changes both in the structure of German society and in its perceptions were less due to the alleged "social revolution" and "equalitarian" impulse of the Third Reich than they owed to developments that were based in the eventual exterior and interior breakdown of the Nazi empire. Yet for all the predominance of change, self-understandings of German society also remained specifically German and retained some of their peculiar features and characteristic problems, such as the continuing precariousness of political society and the enduring desire for a leveling of differences without the destruction of a secure order.

Both change and continuity are discernible in favorite 1950s and early 1960s notions of society that were coined by sociologists, but became unusually widespread and familiar among a wider public. Already in 1949, Theodor Geiger had described traditional class society as being melted down in a

population and asked them where on that scale they would locate themselves.<sup>105</sup> Although a considerable percentage in these surveys still considered themselves as "working class" or, rather, "lower stratum" ("Unterschicht"), as the appropriate category was mostly called, usually at least fifty per cent chose a "Mittelschicht" self-rating, and from both above and below so many people pushed into the "middle stratum" in terms of their social self-consciousness that the "middle"--once again in the history of the topos--became a metaphor for mainstream society that excluded only its most obvious fringes. Equally important, the now dominant notion of social strata or "layers" provided a "gradualistic", instead of a "categorical" (dualistic or tripartite) scheme of social interpretation,<sup>106</sup> a scheme that provided for easy transitions between layers and offered no place for conflict of any kind between social groups.<sup>107</sup>

Both the preference for a gradualistic scheme and the propensity toward the "middle" found a popular imagery in the so-called "onion-model" of West German society that soon every school textbook on social studies furnished (most often in direct contrast to the equally prominent "feudal pyramid" of social order): a thick tummy of the "middle stratum", tapering off in a small elite or "Oberschicht" at the top and a slightly thicker, though still reassuringly small bottom of "lower stratum" and the "socially contemptible", as the somewhat (but tellingly) odd contemporary expression went. The swinging boundaries of the onion created the impression of an integrated, "contained" society, of a softly rounded society, of a society that still knew some inequality but in which Germans could feel at ease with themselves.<sup>108</sup>

It is much more difficult to grasp changes in the "micro-structure" of German society in the second half of the twentieth century: social transformations in the realm of private relationships, within families, and generally in the ways individuals perceived each other, in the patterns of social expectations and behavior toward persons of supposedly "higher" or "lower" social standing. These are subjects that have hardly even been noticed by historians in Germany as worthy of serious historical research--particularly for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and perhaps less so for the early modern era--, as they elude conventional Marxian or Weberian categories of social structuration. There is also a problem of sources and a difficulty with periodization, because these are

miracle" and in his speeches and published writings also an eloquent spokesman for a reorganized German society, saw the "classless society" he fundamentally endorsed as causing a "spiritual lability" which required the political construction of "social stabilizers" that would help fighting the isolation ("Vereinzellung") of the individual, and he mourned the "absorption of the people in mass societies" as a negative corollary of classlessness in much the same way as cultural and social criticism had done in Germany for the past seventy years.<sup>101</sup>

"Classes" indeed experienced a process of disintegration and dissolution in early West German society,<sup>102</sup> both in the stricter sense of socioeconomic units and, perhaps even more, in the historically German sense of estate-like orders that encompassed a totality of social, cultural, and political structures and experiences. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the working class and its "milieu", and while Josef Moosers assertion that the working class in West Germany became more homogeneous as a "social class" (in a Marxian or Weberian sense) during the 1950s and 1960s may be doubted, he is certainly right in his observation that its milieu as well as the meaning of belonging to a class was in rapid decline.<sup>103</sup> With a growing income and the possibility of joining the mainstream society of consumption and leisure for the first time, workers--as well as members of lower-class service occupations--began to consider themselves as belonging to a broad "middle stratum" of society. The successful institutionalization of class conflict in the West German model of corporate bargaining for the distribution of a fast-growing gross domestic product facilitated this perception, as did the tendency toward a greater legal and social assimilation of working class and white-collar employees as "Arbeitnehmer" who shared many elements of status and economic performance.<sup>104</sup>

The collective advancement of formerly disadvantaged groups was such a pervasive experience during the 1950s and 1960s that people kept comparing themselves to their neighbors, and the corresponding mentality of "keeping up with the Joneses" found an adequate scholarly expression in the popularity of models of social self-assessment in contemporary sociology. Again and again, social researchers presented a scale of social categories to samples of the

Both individualization and the decline of deference were expressions of a subtle yet sweeping transformation in the Germans' understanding of social order.

At the same time, they were closely related to changes in the "macro-structure" of society and its perception. The grand social groups, mostly defined in some sort of economic terms, be they rigid classes or the already loose "layers" of society within the "onion-model", seemed to fall apart or, at least, to become increasingly irrelevant in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>112</sup> In the wake of the students' revolt and the intellectual mood of Neomarxism, the language of class experienced a brief renaissance, but failed to persuade ordinary people of the appropriateness of its categories and soon withered away completely. As the understanding of society was "de-economized", "hyphenated society"-phrases flourished that did not refer any longer to a differentiation of society in groups: the "Dienstleistungsgesellschaft" and the "postindustrielle Gesellschaft",<sup>113</sup> among others, became popular expressions in the 1970s, while in the following decade, after the experience of "Chernobyl" and the ecological crisis, Germans eagerly embraced the notion of "Risikogesellschaft" ("society at risk"),<sup>114</sup> and no politician would have dared to speak of "the German people in its groups and strata", as Ludwig Erhard did in 1960, fifteen or twenty years later.<sup>115</sup>

From the perspective of an individualized society, "estates" and "classes", and thus what used to be called "traditional" and "modern" society, seemed to be mere variants within a single pattern of vertically structured social orders rather than oppositions, so that, with hindsight, the 'Vormärz' contemporaries were proved correct when they used a "language of estate" to describe the emerging "classes". Yet on the other hand, as the traditional reliability of the group order, which had provided security and a sense of belonging, faded away, the desire for social distinction was in the 1980s again increasingly expressed through life-style, modes of consumption, and forms of symbolic behavior (-- "Lebensführung", in Max Webers still--or rather, again, apt phrase--) much like in a "ständisch" society, and German sociologists since the mid-1980s began to resort to phrases like "Lebensstile" (life-styles), "Lagen" (social positions), and "Milieus" to describe and analyze what they perceived to be the now dominant pattern of social structure and inequality.<sup>116</sup> A striking feature common to most of these concepts is their lack of any political content: They describe an

long-term processes that are probably even less correlated to established political cesuras than are changes in the "macro-structure" of social estates, classes or strata, and yet they are of enormous significance for the actual, day-to-day fabric of society. In the 1960s and 1970s, a long-standing gradual development accelerated in two important respects.<sup>109</sup> To begin with, society was thoroughly "individualized". It may seem self-evident to us that the units of society are individual human beings,<sup>110</sup> but this is a relatively recent notion and an even more recent pattern of perception and action. Traditional types of society consisted of families and households, usually represented by their male heads (--which could create a fiction of a society of individuals--). Since the 1960s, however, society began to be less dependent on families, for a variety of reasons that cannot be discussed here, and more as an entity in which each individual person--male or female, young or old--related directly to other persons rather than in a mediated way through social superiors.

As single-person households became widespread and divorces a more or less regular feature of the life-cycle, as women went to work and were not any longer addressed as "Frau Wilhelm Müller", perhaps the last remnants of a hierarchical, "ständisch" society, the structuration of society along patriarchal family circles, broke apart.<sup>111</sup> Secondly and closely related to this, German society (as Western societies elsewhere) became more egalitarian as the decline of "deference" gained an enormous momentum during the middle decades of the "old" Federal Republic. Germans had long been known to be peculiarly prone to deferential behavior, and for all the recent critique of a too simple cliché of "Untertanengeist", social behavior in modern Germany had been characterized by reverence and acquiescence in a much stronger way than in the United States and probably in other European societies. From the mid-1960s, this traditional deference rapidly disintegrated in all kinds of social relationships: between segments of society like the military and civil society; between orders and classes, "above" and "below" (for example, in the fading of the habit to lift your hat when greeting superiors); between the sexes; and, in a true revolution of social behavior, between the generations, as children were no longer expected to behave deferentially toward their own parents and toward strangers: The boys' "Diener" (a bowing when greeting adults) and the girls' "Knicks" (curtsy) largely disappeared, probably at some point in the 1970s.

"Gastarbeiter" ("guest worker") and "Ausländer" (literally, just "foreigner", but laden with specific, untranslatable connotations in German) since the beginning of massive immigration from Italy, Turkey, and other, mostly southern European countries into the Federal Republic around 1960. Only the recent debate about naturalization and the virtues--or alleged dangers--of a "multicultural" society has brought the fact to a wider attention in the German public that not only were "Ausländer" somehow excluded from most definitions of a "German" society, but that they also were largely unable to fully join this society because of the continuity of a ius sanguinis-definition of citizenship in Germany.<sup>118</sup> What for a long time appeared to be a genuine and new problem of the post-1945 Federal Republic now emerges, in historical perspective, as a striking continuation of exclusionary principles only shortly after the most devastating application of the principle of German "blood" and the "Volksdeutsche" in the Third Reich. For all the remarkable changes in the intellectual construction of a German society after 1945, for all the jettisoning of traditional notions of order and disorder that had thrived in the century before, the propensity toward homogeneity and conformity still permeated the self-understanding of society in the Federal Republic,<sup>119</sup> of a society that did not provide space for "sub-societies" that could be independent without being refused integration. Germans in this respect continued to construct a dilemma, a false alternative of "either--or": They expect complete assimilation that includes the disavowal of older identities, or else integration will be denied.

German unification has opened a new chapter in the history of German society as well as in the history of its perceptions, but it is not likely to change this basic pattern. Political discourse on the social consequences of unification has been obsessed from the very beginning with the idea of making not only the two parts of Germany, but even the chances of individuals on both sides of the former border as soon as possible as equal as possible. The idea of "Angleichung der Lebensverhältnisse" is taken for granted in East Germany as well as, somewhat grudgingly as it involves higher taxes and slower-growing paychecks, in the West, but it is unimaginable in other countries and owes very much to the persistent mentality of conformed, state-induced equalitarianism that apparently survived in both parts of the divided nation.

unpolitical society at least as much as an "uneconomic" one, and as they gave expression to a hedonistic, self-assured and consumption-oriented society, they accurately reflected a predominant feeling among the West German population during the last of the "fat years" of the "old" Federal Republic. The vengeance came in 1989, when the idea of a "civil society" and the accompanying emphasis on the virtue of "Bürgersinn" served as a reminder that social order still demanded political foundations and could not survive in permanent separation from the "state".<sup>117</sup>

Still, principles of exclusion continued to exist in the West German idea of society, and in many respects they retained older notions of distinction, of "in" and "out", that had pervaded German history during most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a reaction to mass unemployment and to new forms of poverty (--which, in turn, sprang up as a consequence of the "individualization" of inequality--), the idea of the "Zweidrittelgesellschaft" ("two-thirds society") gained enormous prominence in the 1980s. It acknowledged the relative affluence of a great majority as well as the structural poverty of a minority, and it combined a new "class" dichotomy with the contention of a prevailing equalitarianism among the upper two thirds. Both elements, however, were highly problematic as depictions of social reality, for the tacitly assumed sharp boundary between the two main blocks was actually a broad and blurred zone of transition; and the economic differences among the well-off were at least as strong as inequality between, say, the middle and the lower third. But this may exactly have been the function of the "Zweidrittelgesellschaft"-concept: It allowed for contentedness with the virtues of welfare capitalism without completely forgetting its "victims"; it legitimized (or rather, concealed) continuing inequalities among the majority while at the same time soothing a bad conscience about the exclusion of a minority, and maybe for this reason the concept was particularly popular among liberal academics.

While in this case exclusion and distinction were deliberately constructed as a lever for a mixture of reassurance and social criticism, a second type of social exclusion was for many decades in the history of the Federal Republic so much taken for granted that most people--and even social scientists--hardly noticed and acknowledged it at all: the social and legal construction of the

history of perceptions of German society. This is not simply trivial, but follows from a crucial "meta-transformation" in concepts of social order from the early modern era through our present time: the loss of future visions in the shaping of social perception and action. While concepts of social order until the early modern era were principally stable and envisioned as unchangeable both through human intervention and through the activity of abstract forces like progress and development, "horizons of expectation", as Reinhart Koselleck called it,<sup>123</sup> opened up in the eighteenth century--with predecessors reaching back to utopian thought in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries--with regard to visions of society and social order as well as in other realms of human thought and consciousness. The nineteenth century was the high time in the futurization of society, for hopes as well as for apprehensions, in bourgeois ideology as well as in socialism. While most projections of social order crumbled in the early decades of the twentieth century, they survived, if in a shrunk form, in totalitarian visions of a society molded and homogenized by the state--in this sense, the last remnants of utopia in Germany tumbled in 1989, when the "entwickelte sozialistische Gesellschaft"<sup>124</sup> came to an abrupt end. The opening of horizons of expectation now appears to be less a trademark of "modernity", as Koselleck claimed, but rather the distinguishing feature of a relatively short period of transition. We have not, however, come full circle to the limited social consciousness of medieval and early modern societies, for though the direction is uncertain, we know that society is ever-changing, and there was enough negative experience accompanying "futurized" visions of society, particularly in Germany, to deliberately abandon those visions for good.

Notes

1. Cf., e.g., Klaus Tenfelde, "1914 bis 1990: Die Einheit der Epoche", in: M. Hettling et al. (eds.), Was ist Gesellschaftsgeschichte?, München 1991, pp. 70-80. - This paper was conceived and written at the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University, whose support and inspiring atmosphere I gratefully acknowledge. I also wish to thank the audiences of two talks at Harvard University and at Brown University for their critical comments and questions, and I am especially grateful to John Breuilly, Richard Wetzell, Jeffrey Verhey, Charles Maier, and Volker Berghahn.

2. This is especially true for European social history, whereas the situation in the United States is in many respects different: While the concept of class has never been as prominent here as it was (and continues to be) in Europe, it has also, and particularly in the last decade, come under a "pluralist" attack which largely abandoned "class" for the three-layered notion of "gender-class-race/ethnicity".

3. Cf. Karl Mannheim, "Das Problem einer Soziologie des Wissens", in: idem, Wissenssoziologie, ed. K. Wolff, Neuwied 1964, pp. 308-387; Peter L. Berger/Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, Garden City, N.Y. 1966 (German trans. 1970). In the context of a historical application of a sociology of knowledge, the work of Niklas Luhmann is also very important; see, among others, Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik. Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft, vol. 1-2, Frankfurt 1980-1981; for the more recent radicalization of Luhmann's "constructivist" epistemological position see idem, Die Wissenschaft der Gesellschaft, Frankfurt 1990; idem, Beobachtungen der Moderne, Opladen 1992.

4. The emigration of the "Meinecke school" of intellectual historians--among them Hans Baron and Felix Gilbert, who then provided important contributions to the development of American intellectual history, is, of course, one important reason. These circumstances, however, do not fully account for a certain contempt with which the new social history, relying very much on "materialist" presuppositions, tended to look upon history of ideas as one strand of the "old" history it was trying to overcome; these apprehensions of German

social historians were much less shared by their colleagues in England and America, let alone France. - The latest assessment of the problem is still provided by Ernst Schulin, "Geistesgeschichte, Intellectual History und Histoire des Mentalités seit der Jahrhundertwende", in: idem, Traditionskritik und Rekonstruktionsversuch, Göttingen 1979, pp. 144-162.

5. See the now classic article by Hans Medick, "Missionare im Ruderboot'. Ethnologische Erkenntnisweisen als Herausforderung an die Sozialgeschichte", in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 10, 1984, pp. 295-319; for the most recent overview of the debate, see Winfried Schulze (ed.), Sozialgeschichte, Alltagsgeschichte, Mikrohistorie, Göttingen 1994. - Jürgen Kocka has recently warned against alleged dangers of embracing a "linguistic turn" in German historiography: "Sozialgeschichte der neunziger Jahre", in: Die Neue Gesellschaft/Frankfurter Hefte 40, 1993, pp. 1125-1129.

6. Cf. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck (eds.), Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland, 7 vols., Stuttgart 1975ff., which contains many articles on social groups or concepts of society and social order. For the theoretical ambitions of "Begriffsgeschichte" see, most notably, Reinhart Koselleck, Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik historischer Zeiten, Frankfurt 1979; for a discussion of "Begriffsgeschichte" against the background of Anglo-American intellectual history, see Melvin Richter, "Zur Rekonstruktion der Geschichte der politischen Sprachen: Pocock, Skinner und die 'Geschichtlichen Grundbegriffe'", in: H.E. Bödeker/E. Hinrichs (eds.), Alteuropa - Ancien Régime - Frühe Neuzeit, Stuttgart 1991, pp. 134-174; idem, "Begriffsgeschichte and the History of Ideas", in: Journal of the History of Ideas 48, 1987, 247-263.

7. Cf. especially Werner Conze (ed.), Staat und Gesellschaft im deutschen Vormärz 1815-1848, Stuttgart 1962; Reinhart Koselleck, Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution. Allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848, Stuttgart 1967.

8. Cf., very typically for the mood of the 1970s, the definition of "society" given by Jürgen Kocka in his Sozialgeschichte: Begriff - Entwicklung - Probleme, Göttingen 1977, pp. 98, 209f. - For the problems of employing the term "class" in historical analysis, with an explicit warning against the "historization" of the concept that I try to ask for, cf. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Max Webers Klassentheorie und die moderne Sozialgeschichte", in: idem, Aus der Geschichte lernen?, München 1988, pp. 152-160.

9. For a (preliminary) attempt at a "conceptual history" of "Gesellschaft", see Manfred Riedel, "Gesellschaft, Gemeinschaft", in: Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, Vol. 2, Stuttgart 1975, pp. 801-862. See also idem, "Gesellschaft, bürgerliche", in: *ibid.*, pp. 719-800. It is important, however, not

to conflate the meaning of "Gesellschaft" and of "bürgerliche Gesellschaft" (civil society) or to reduce the first to the latter. See also Eckart Pankoke, "Soziologie, Gesellschaftswissenschaft", in: *ibid.*, Vol. 5, Stuttgart 1984, pp. 997-1032; and Wolfgang Hardtwig, "Verein", in: *ibid.*, Vol. 6, Stuttgart 1990, pp. 789-829. - An important recent attempt, dealing with a limited period of time, is James van Horn Melton, "The Emergence of 'Society' in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Germany", in: P.J. Corfield (ed.), Language, History, and Class, London 1991, pp. 131-149.

10. This perspective, however, continues to dominate the history of social theory, as conceptualized and written by sociologists themselves, typically in the form of setting up the historical foundations for one's own social theory, the model du genre of which still is Talcott Parsons: Cf. Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, 2 vols., New York 1937; Jürgen Habermas, Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, 2 vols., Frankfurt 1981; Jeffrey Alexander, Theoretical Logic in Sociology, 4 vols., Berkeley 1982-83. The "historization" of social theory would, of course, critically damage the notion of logic and progress upon which these and similar efforts rest. - A second approach to the history of sociology centers on the history of institutions--for instance, in the very important book by Dirk Käsler, Die frühe deutsche Soziologie und ihre Entstehungsmilieus 1909-1934, Opladen 1984--but hardly deals with the "contents" and intellectual history of sociology.

11. This notion is again indebted to the sociology of knowledge and to "constructivist" sociology; cf. Berger/Luckmann, Social Construction; and the recent work by Niklas Luhmann, particularly his Die Wissenschaft der Gesellschaft, Frankfurt 1990; *idem*, "Selbst-Thematisierung des Gesellschaftssystems", in: Soziologische Aufklärung 2, Opladen 1975, pp. 72-106; and, by a Luhmann disciple: Peter Fuchs, Die Erreichbarkeit der Gesellschaft. Zur Konstruktion und Imagination gesellschaftlicher Einheit, Frankfurt 1992.

12. This statement rests on a problematic methodological premise, namely, that understandings of society as worked into elaborate social theory by sociologists do in some way reflect social conceptions among a broader population. It hardly needs to be stressed that this is a complicated relationship and that it has to be proved empirically.

13. Cf. the recent edition of important texts in German social theory under this perspective by Eckart Pankoke (ed.), Gesellschaftslehre, Frankfurt 1991; and Pankoke's (rather disappointing) interpretive essay in this volume: "Moderne Gesellschaftslehre 1700-1900", pp. 815-856.

14. Cf. Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas", in: History and Theory 8, 1969, pp. 3-53; idem, "Motives, Intentions, and the Interpretation of Texts", in: New Literary History 3, 1971/72, pp. 393-408; J.G.A. Pocock, Politics, Language, and Time. Essays on Political Thought and History, New York 1971; idem, The Machiavellian Moment. Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition, Princeton 1975.

15. Cf. Gareth Stedman Jones, Languages of Class. Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982, Cambridge 1983; Geoffrey Crossick, "From Gentleman to Residuum: Languages of Social Description in Victorian Britain", in: Corfield (ed.), Language, History, and Class, pp. 150-178; Andreas Wirsching, "Bürgertugend und Gemeininteresse: Zum Topos der 'Mittelklassen' in England im späten 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert", in: Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 72, 1990, pp. 173-199; Stuart M. Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1750-1900, Cambridge/New York 1989; for Germany, cf. Paul Nolte, "Bürgerideal, Gemeinde und Republik: 'Klassischer Republikanismus' im frühen deutschen Liberalismus", in: Historische Zeitschrift 254, 1992, pp. 609-654; idem, Gemeindebürgertum und Liberalismus in Baden 1800-1850. Tradition - Radikalismus - Republik, Göttingen 1994, pp. 209-223. - In a brilliant recent article, Sheila Fitzpatrick has tried to bring these perspective into the study of East European history by examining "ascriptions" and political constructions of "class" in the Stalinist Soviet Union: "Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia", in: Journal of Modern History 65, 1993, pp. 745-770.

16. Namely by Otto Gerhard Oexle, who also explicitly draws upon sociology of knowledge for conceptualization of his research. Cf. his "Die funktionale Dreiteilung der 'Gesellschaft' bei Adalbero von Laon. Deutungsschemata der sozialen Wirklichkeit im früheren Mittelalter", in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien 12, 1978, pp. 1-54; idem, "Deutungsschemata der sozialen Wirklichkeit im frühen und hohen Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Wissens", in: F. Graus (ed.), Mentalitäten im Mittelalter, Sigmaringen 1987, pp. 65-117; cf. also Georges Duby, Les trois ordres, ou, L'imaginaire du féodalisme, Paris 1978 (english trans. The Three Orders. Feudal Society Imagined, Chicago 1980) - For early modern history, cf. Winfried Schulze (ed.), Ständische Gesellschaft und Mobilität, München 1988; Paul Münch, Lebensformen in der frühen Neuzeit, Berlin 1992, esp. pp. 65-77.

17. This argument, as indeed the whole paper, is indebted to the brilliant considerations by John Higham on the nature of unity in American history: "Hanging Together: Divergent Unities in American History", in: Journal of American History 61, 1974, pp. 5-28. Cf. also Robert H. Wiebe, The Segmented Society: An Introduction to the Meaning of America, New York 1975.

18. Cf., e.g., Edmund S. Morgan, Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America, New York 1988.
19. From a theoretical point of view, cf. Peter A. Berger, "Ungleichheitssemantiken. Graduelle Unterschiede und kategoriale Exklusivitäten", in: Archives européennes de sociologie 30, 1989, pp. 48-60; Reinhart Koselleck, "Zur historisch-politischen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe", in: idem, Vergangene Zukunft, pp. 211-259. See also the explorations on the border between anthropology and history in Wilfried Nippel, Griechen, Barbaren und Wilde, Frankfurt 1990.
20. For Imperial Roman society, cf. Rolf Rilinger, "Moderne und zeitgenössische Vorstellungen von der Gesellschaftsordnung der römischen Kaiserzeit", in: Saeculum 36, 1985, pp. 299-325, who stresses "linear-hierarchical" relationships as being central for contemporaries, as opposed to the estate-concepts developed by Geza Alföldy, Römische Sozialgeschichte, Stuttgart 1975 (or, even more flagrantly anachronistic, the "class" model of Roman society presented in the work of Michael Rostovtzeff).
21. This concept was theoretically developed in Aristotle's Politics, but Aristotle here to a large extent reflected the very social foundations and mechanisms of the Athenian polis in the fifth century B.C. Cf. Peter Spahn, Mittelschicht und Polisbildung, Frankfurt 1977; Werner Conze, "Mittelstand", in: Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, Vol. 4, Stuttgart 1978, pp. 49-92.
22. Cf. Duby, Les trois ordres, and the works of Oexle cited in note 16.
23. Cf. Wojciech Iwanczak, "Mittelalterliche Dilemmata. Die Stadt und die Lehre von den drei gesellschaftlichen Ständen", in: Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 74, 1992, pp. 49-81.
24. This paper does not allow for a closer look at the development of different schemes of a dualistic and a threepartite social order since the middle ages, but it would be a very worthwhile endeavor. - For concepts of a "middle estate" in a three-layered order in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see sections III and IV.
25. For the concept of "deference", see J.G.A. Pocock, "The Classical Theory of Deference", in: American Historical Review 81, 1976, pp. 516-523. An exceptionally brilliant description of this mode of social behavior and expectations in pre-modern monarchical societies is provided by Gordon Wood in his The Radicalism of the American Revolution, New York 1992, Pt. I, pp. 11-92.

26. Cf. Heinz Schilling, "Die Konfessionalisierung im Reich. Religiöser und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in Deutschland zwischen 1555 und 1620, in: Historische Zeitschrift 246, 1988, pp. 1-45; Winfried Schulze, however, argues more in favor of "pluralizing" effects of the Reformation in Germany: See his Deutsche Geschichte im 16. Jahrhundert 1500-1618, Frankfurt 1987, and, especially, idem, "Concordia, Discordia, Tolerantia. Deutsche Politik im konfessionellen Zeitalter", in: J. Kunisch (ed.), Neue Studien zur frühneuzeitlichen Reichsgeschichte, Berlin 1987, pp. 43-79. - For a general and comparative perspective on religion and early party formation in early modern Europe, cf. Helmut G. Koenigsberger, "The Organization of Revolutionary Parties in France and the Netherlands during the Sixteenth Century", in: idem, Estates and Revolutions, Ithaca 1971, pp. 224-252; idem, "Dominium Regale or Dominium Politicum et Regale. Monarchies and Parliaments in Early Modern Europe", in: idem, Politicians and Virtuosi, London 1986, pp. 1-25; Robert Forster/Jack P. Greene (eds.), Preconditions of Revolution in Early Modern Europe, Baltimore 1970.

27. Cf. Peter Blickle, Landschaften im Alten Reich. Die staatliche Funktion des gemeinen Mannes in Oberdeutschland, München 1973; idem, "Kommunalismus, Parlamentarismus, Republikanismus", in: Historische Zeitschrift 242, 1986, pp. 529-556; now see the overview in Lothar Gall, Von der ständischen zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, München 1993, pp. 54ff.

28. Cf. Morgan, Inventing the People; Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787, Chapel Hill 1969; Patrice Higonnet, Sister Republics. The Origins of French and American Republicanism, Cambridge, Mass. 1988; Paul Nolte, "Die Amerikanische Revolution als Bruch des gesellschaftlichen Bewußtseins. Politischer, ökonomischer und soziokultureller Mentalitätswandel von 1750 bis 1800", in: Zeitschrift für historische Forschung 17, 1991, pp. 425-460.

29. Cf. Bernd Schönemann, "'Volk' und 'Nation' in Deutschland und Frankreich 1760-1815. Zur politischen Karriere zweier Begriffe", in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 24, 1989, special issue, pp. 275-292; Reinhart Koselleck et al., "Volk, Nation, Nationalismus, Masse", in: Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, vol. 7, Stuttgart 1992, pp. 141-431. For this and the following, see also the theoretical perspectives in Peter Fuchs, "Vaterland, Patriotismus und Moral. Zur Semantik gesellschaftlicher Einheit", in: Zeitschrift für Soziologie 20, 1991, pp. 89-103; L. Hoffmann, "Das 'Volk'. Zur ideologischen Struktur eines unvermeidbaren Begriffs", in: *ibid.*, pp. 191-208.

30. See Michael Jeismann, Das Vaterland der Feinde. Studien zum nationalen Feindbegriff und Selbstverständnis in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1792-1918, Stuttgart 1992; Lisa Abendroth, Untersuchungen zum Volksbegriff in der Publizistik von 1913-1819, Diss. Marburg 1947.

31. Cf. the memoranda reprinted in: Georg Winter (ed.), Die Reorganisation des preußischen Staates unter Stein und Hardenberg, vol. I/1, Leipzig 1931. See also Paul Nolte, Staatsbildung als Gesellschaftsreform. Politische Reformen in Preußen und den süddeutschen Staaten 1800-1820, Frankfurt 1990, pp. 25-39.

32. See the excellent article by Werner K. Blessing, "Staatsintegration als soziale Integration. Zur Entstehung einer bayerischen Gesellschaft im frühen 19. Jahrhundert", in: Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte 41, 1978, pp. 633-700.

33. Cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse (1821), Frankfurt 1986; on Hegel's concept, see Shlomo Avineri, Hegel's Theory of the Modern State, Cambridge 1972; on the notion of "civil society", with an emphasis on the Hegelian tradition (and sometimes a neglect of competing strands), see the important work by Manfred Riedel: "Der Begriff der 'bürgerlichen Gesellschaft' und das Problem seines geschichtlichen Ursprungs", in: idem, Studien zu Hegels Rechtsphilosophie, Frankfurt 1969, pp. 135-166; idem, "Gesellschaft, bürgerliche", in: Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, vol. 2, Stuttgart 1975, pp. 719-800.

34. As, for example, in Hermann Baumgarten's famous treatise of 1866 Der deutsche Liberalismus. Eine Selbstkritik.

35. Carl von Rotteck, Lehrbuch des Vernunftrechts und der Staatswissenschaften, Stuttgart 1829-1834, vol. 2, p. 86. Cf. Nolte, Gemeindebürgertum, pp. 151ff., 188-209; idem, "Bürgerideal". - for an innovative international comparison of concepts of "civil society", see Reinhart Koselleck et al., "Drei bürgerliche Welten? Zur vergleichenden Semantik der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft in Deutschland, England und Frankreich", in: H.-J. Puhle (ed.), Bürger in der Gesellschaft der Neuzeit, Göttingen 1991, pp. 14-58.

36. See Christian Graf von Krockow, "Staat, Gesellschaft, Freiheitswahrung", in: E.-W. Böckenförde (ed.), Staat und Gesellschaft, Darmstadt 1976, pp. 432-483; Karl Dietrich Bracher, "Staatsbegriff und Demokratie in Deutschland", in: idem, Das deutsche Dilemma. Leidenswege der politischen Emanzipation, München 1971, pp. 11-40.

37. Lothar Gall, "Liberalismus und 'bürgerliche Gesellschaft'. Zu Charakter und Entwicklung der liberalen Bewegung in Deutschland", in: Historische Zeitschrift 220, 1975, pp. 324-356. It is important to remember that "klassenlose Bürgergesellschaft" was not a contemporary expression and could actually hardly be conceived before the late 1840s because contemporaries until then (and often into the second half of the nineteenth century) phrased their visions of society in a language of "estate", not of "class" (or, in this case,

the dismissal of class).

38. For this and the following, see the examination of a South West German example in Nolte, Gemeindebürgertum, esp. pp. 209-223. For the history of the concept of "class" in Germany, cf. Horst Stuke, "Bedeutung und Problematik des Klassenbegriffs. Begriffs- und sozialgeschichtliche Überlegungen im Umkreis einer historischen Klassentheorie", in: idem, Sozialgeschichte - Begriffsgeschichte - Ideengeschichte, Stuttgart 1979, pp. 167-203; Werner Conze et al., "Stand, Klasse", in: Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, vol. 6, Stuttgart 1990, pp. 155-284. After 1860, it became conceivable to discuss "Klassen" and "Stände" under the same entry in a political encyclopedia: Cf., e.g., Johann Caspar Bluntschli, "Kasten, Klassen, Stände", in: idem/K. Brater (eds.), Deutsches Staats-Wörterbuch, vol. 5, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1860, pp. 520-526.

39. Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, "Der vierte Stand" (1850), reprinted in: Pankoke (ed.), Gesellschaftslehre, pp. 554-571; quotation p. 555.

40. This process is perceptively described, including its "subjective" dimensions, in Werner Conze, "Vom 'Pöbel' zum 'Proletariat'. Sozialgeschichtliche Voraussetzungen für den Sozialismus in Deutschland", in: H.-U. Wehler (ed.), Moderne deutsche Sozialgeschichte, Königstein 1981<sup>5</sup>, pp. 111-136. See also the methodically interesting new approach in Karl Heinz Metz, "Die Entdeckung des Neuen in der Gesellschaft: Antworten auf die soziale Frage. Ein Versuch", in: Wolfgang Hardtwig/Harm-Hinrich Brandt (eds.), Deutschlands Weg in die Moderne, München 1993, pp. 63-73. - For an excellent general overview on the processes (and "deficiencies" of class formation in nineteenth-century Germany, see Jürgen Kocka, "Stand - Klasse - Organisation. Strukturen sozialer Ungleichheit in Deutschland vom späten 18. zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert im Aufriß", in: Hans-Ulrich Wehler (ed.), Klassen in der europäischen Sozialgeschichte, Göttingen 1979, pp. 137-165.

41. See Nolte, "Bürgerideal", pp. 626-635; Willibald Steinmetz, "Die schwierige Selbstbehauptung des deutschen Bürgertums. Begriffsgeschichtliche Anmerkungen in sozialhistorischer Absicht", in: R. Wimmer (ed.), Das 19. Jahrhundert, Berlin 1991, pp. 12-40. There is no empirical evidence for Kocka's contention that "Bürgertum" was used as a description of the middle classes (or any social group) in Germany before that time; see Jürgen Kocka, "Bürgertum und Bürgerlichkeit als Probleme der deutschen Geschichte vom späten 18. zum frühen 19. Jahrhundert", in: idem (ed.), Bürger und Bürgerlichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 1987, pp. 21-63.

42. See Conze, "Mittelstand", for the problem of Mittelstand and middle classes in international comparison, now see the excellent article by Willibald Steinmetz, "Gemeineuropäische Tradition und nationale Besonderheiten im Begriff der Mittelklasse. Ein Vergleich zwischen Deutschland, Frankreich und

England", in: Reinhart Koselleck/Klaus Schreiner (eds.), Alteuropäische und moderne Bürgerschaft, Stuttgart 1994.

43. These aspects have hardly been explored in the historiography on the "Vormärz" and the Revolution and deserve much more attention in the future. For an excellent paradigm of a history of communication, see Richard D. Brown, Knowledge is Power. The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865, New York 1989.

44. This is the preliminary result of an ongoing investigation of concepts and definitions of "society" in nineteenth-century dictionaries and political writings. An example for the older definition of "Gesellschaft": Carl von Rotteck, "Ueber den Begriff und die Natur der Gesellschaft und des gesellschaftlichen Gesamtwillens", in: idem, Sammlung kleinerer Schriften, meist historischen oder politischen Inhalts, Vol. 2, Stuttgart 1829, pp. 5-41. On the origins of social science and its concepts of society in Germany, see the fine books by Eckart Pankoke, Soziale Bewegung, soziale Frage, soziale Politik. Grundfragen der deutschen "Sozialwissenschaft" im 19. Jahrhundert, Stuttgart 1970; Erich Angermann, Robert von Mohl 1799-1875. Leben und Werk eines altliberalen Staatsgelehrten, Neuwied 1962.

45. Lorenz von Stein, Robert von Mohl, and Heinrich von Treitschke were the main protagonists in this debate. The most concise introduction is Treitschke's Die Gesellschaftswissenschaft. Ein kritischer Versuch, Leipzig 1859, an ardent plea for submerging the new social sciences into the conservative "Staatswissenschaften"; for Mohl see, above all, his "Gesellschafts-Wissenschaften und Staats-Wissenschaften", in: Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft 7, 1851, pp. 3-71.

46. Arguably the seminal and most important work in this historiographical strand has been Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918, Göttingen 1973 (english trans. The German Empire, 1871-1918, Leamington Spa 1973).

47. Cf., most prominently, David Blackbourn/Geoff Eley, Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung. Die gescheiterte deutsche Revolution von 1848, Frankfurt 1980, which in Germany has been more influential than the extended English version, The Peculiarities of German History, London 1984.

48. Cf. Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920, New York 1967, with a somewhat similar argument for the history of the United States during the Gilded Age.

49. This--as well as the lack of research on this subject--has been stressed in recent articles by Dieter Langewiesche; cf. "Reich, Nation und Staat in der

jüngeren deutschen Geschichte", in: Historische Zeitschrift 254, 1992, pp. 341-381 (esp. p. 366); idem, "Revolution von oben? Krieg und Nationalstaatsgründung in Deutschland", in: idem (ed.), Revolution und Krieg, Paderborn 1989, pp. 117-133.

50. The continuity of German localism (which Mack Walker had so aptly described for the time through German unification: see his German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate, 1648-1871, Ithaca 1971) into the Kaiserreich and the Weimar Republic has recently been stressed, mostly in studies by American historians of Germany. See the fine book by Celia Applegate, A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat, Berkeley 1990; and, with regard to politics and the rise of fascism, Rudy Koshar, Social Life, Local Politics, and Nazism: Marburg, 1880-1935, Chapel Hill, N.C. 1986.

51. Cf. Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams (1907), Boston 1974.

52. See Gerhard A. Ritter/Klaus Tenfelde, Arbeiter im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1871-1914, Bonn 1992; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, Vol. 3: 1850-1914, München 1995.

53. M. Rainer Lepsius, "Parteiensystem und Sozialstruktur: zum Problem der Demokratisierung der deutschen Gesellschaft", in: Gerhard A. Ritter (ed.), Deutsche Parteien vor 1918, Köln 1973, pp. 56-80.

54. Cf. Charlotte Tacke, "Die 1900-Jahrfeier der Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald 1909. Von der 'klassenlosen Bürgergesellschaft' zur 'klassenlosen Volksgemeinschaft'", in: Manfred Hettling/Paul Nolte (eds.), Bürgerliche Feste. Symbolische Formen politischen Handelns im 19. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 1993, pp. 192-230.

55. In Germany as elsewhere, particularly in England and the United States. For a good summary of German research perspectives, see Jürgen Kocka, "Traditionsbindung und Klassenbildung. Zum sozialhistorischen Ort der frühen deutschen Arbeiterbewegung", in: Historische Zeitschrift 243, 1986, pp. 333-376.

56. The overall best interpretation of an early labor movement and its ideology within this interpretive framework probably is Sean Wilentz, Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850, New York 1984. Good studies in German working-class ideology are lacking, both for the first and the second half of the nineteenth century. But compare, for the enduring importance of artisan traditions and consciousness in the Kaiserreich, Rudolf Boch, Handwerker-Sozialisten gegen Fabrikgesellschaft, Göttingen 1985.

57. The classical account is, of course, the description of a future society in the Deutsche Ideologie (1845). See also Thilo Ramm, "Die zukünftige Gesellschaftsordnung nach der Theorie von Marx und Engels", in: Marxismusstudien, Vol. 2, Tübingen 1957, pp. 77-119; Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx, Cambridge 1968.

58. See Lucian Hölscher, Weltgericht oder Revolution. Protestantische und sozialistische Zukunftsvorstellungen im deutschen Kaiserreich, Stuttgart 1989.

59. See, for example, Vernon L. Lidtke, The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany, New York 1985.

60. On precisely how that happened, see, with a regional example, Nolte, Gemeindebürgertum und Liberalismus, pp. 209-223, 348-351.

61. Tenfelde, "1914 bis 1990", pp. 76-78.

62. The history of the concept of "Masse" (mass, crowd) in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany has recently been addressed in Helmut König, Zivilisation und Leidenschaften. Die Masse im bürgerlichen Zeitalter, Reinbek 1992; and in Reinhart Koselleck et al., "Volk, Nation, Nationalismus, Masse", in: Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, Vol. 7, Stuttgart 1992, pp. 141-431. For a brief account, see Eckart Pankoke, "Masse", in: Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, Vol. 5, Basel 1980, pp. 825-832.

63. Cf., e.g., Rüdiger vom Bruch, "'Der Zug der Millionen'. Massengesellschaft im Aufbruch", in: A. Nitschke et al. (eds.), Jahrhundertwende. Der Aufbruch in die Moderne 1880-1930, Vol. 1, Reinbek 1990, pp. 92-120; Dieter Langewiesche, "Wanderungsbewegungen in der Hochindustrialisierungsperiode", in: Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte 64, 1977.

64. Georg Simmel, "Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben", in: T. Petermann (ed.), Die Großstadt, Leipzig 1903. See also idem, Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung, München/Leipzig 1908.

65. Published in German translation in 1908: Gustave Le Bon, Psychologie der Massen, Leipzig 1908.

66. Emil Lederer, "Die Gesellschaft der Unselbständigen. Zum sozialpsychischen Habitus der Gegenwart" (1919), in: idem, Kapitalismus. Klassenstruktur und Probleme der Demokratie in Deutschland 1910-1940, Göttingen 1979, pp. 14-32 (quotations: 20, 22).

67. Emil Lederer, State of the Masses. The Threat of Classless Society, New York 1940; Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, New York 1951; German trans. Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft, München 1955.

There is an interesting tension in the contradiction of this argument to the notion of a too rigid separation of German society in groups, classes and "milieus" as a major social root of National socialism.

68. Cf., e.g., Theodor Geiger, "Das Problem der Masse in der modernen Gesellschaft", in: Politische Studien 11, 1960, pp. 217-224.

69. Ferdinand Tönnies, Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (1887), Darmstadt 1979. See also idem, "Zur Einleitung in die Soziologie" (1899), in: Pankoke (ed.), Gesellschaftslehre, pp. 798-811; idem, "Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft", in: A. Vierkandt (ed.), Handwörterbuch der Soziologie, Stuttgart 1931, pp. 180-191. For this and the following, see also Manfred Riedel, "Gesellschaft, Gemeinschaft", in: Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, Vol. 2, Stuttgart 1975, pp. 801-862; idem, "Gemeinschaft", in: Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, Vol. 3, Basel 1974, pp. 239-243; Cornelius Bickel, Ferdinand Tönnies. Soziologie als skeptische Aufklärung zwischen Historismus und Rationalismus, Opladen 1991.

70. Only very recently and reluctantly does German historiography recognize and acknowledge the turn-of-the-century period as a time of important social and cultural transformations, as the crystallization years of "classical modernity", as Detlev Peukert, in an adaptation from art history, called it. Cf. his Die Weimarer Republik. Krisenjahre der klassischen Moderne, Frankfurt 1987; in the same vein: Nitschke et al. (eds.), Jahrhundertwende.

71. See, e.g., Wolfgang R. Krabbe, Gesellschaftsveränderung durch Lebensreform. Strukturmerkmale einer sozialreformerischen Bewegung im Deutschland der Industrialisierungsperiode, Göttingen 1974. - This movement was, as is well-known, very much a generational movement clustering around the so-called "Jugendbewegung". It would be an important aspect of a history of social perceptions in Germany to trace the discovery of "youth", and of age and generation in general, during this time; the discovery, in other words, that society was not only structured in layers of status or economic performance, but also in "layers" of age-specific experiences. The classic--and almost contemporary--approach to the problem remains Karl Mannheim, "Das Problem der Generationen", in: Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Soziologie 7, 1928/29, pp. 157-185. From the point of view of social history, the problem of youths between 1880 and 1945 (focusing on male youths) has been dealt with extensively in the work of Detlev Peukert.

72. Gustav Schmoller, Was verstehen wir unter dem Mittelstand?, Göttingen 1897.

73. For an overview, see Jürgen Kocka, Die Angestellten in der deutschen Geschichte 1850-1980. Vom Privatbeamten zum angestellten Arbeitnehmer, Göttingen 1981; as well as many other works by the same author; Hans Speier, Die Angestellten vor dem Nationalsozialismus. Zur deutschen Sozialstruktur 1918-1933, Göttingen 1977.

74. See, e.g., Emil Lederer, Die Privatangestellten in der modernen Wirtschaftsentwicklung, Tübingen 1912.

75. See Kracauers brilliant impressionist depiction of "Angestellten"-life in Berlin: Siegfried Kracauer, Die Angestellten. Aus dem neuesten Deutschland (1930), Frankfurt 1971. In many respects, Kracauer is still unsurpassed, for there is no modern historical study on the culture and life-style of office workers in Germany, both at work and in their leisure activities, that would compare to the growing number of studies on American white-collar employees in the first decades of the twentieth century.

76. See, generally, Lawrence W. Levine, "The Folklore of Industrial Society: Popular Culture and Its Audiences", in: idem, The Unpredictable Past, New York 1993, pp. 291-319 (esp. 315); for Weimar Germany: Heinrich August Winkler, Der Schein der Normalität. Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik 1924 bis 1930, Berlin 1985, pp. 138f.

77. For the problem of "Mittelstand" and inflation, now see Gerald D. Feldman, The Great Disorder. Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914-1924, New York 1993, esp. pp. 513-575, 857f.; Heinrich August Winkler, Weimar. Die Geschichte der ersten deutschen Demokratie, München 1993, pp. 144f., 244f.

78. Max Weber, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie, Tübingen 1972<sup>5</sup>, pp. 177-180. Cf. Wehler, "Max Webers Klassentheorie".

79. Theodor Geiger, Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes. Soziographischer Versuch auf statistischer Grundlage, Stuttgart 1932; on Geiger, cf. Rainer Geißler, "Die Schichtungssoziologie von Theodor Geiger. Zur Aktualität eines fast vergessenen Klassikers", in: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 37, 1985, pp. 387-410; Winkler, Schein der Normalität, pp. 166ff. - See also Georg Neuhaus, "Die berufliche und soziale Gliederung der Bevölkerung im Zeitalter des Kapitalismus", in: Grundriß der Sozialökonomik, Vol. IX/1, Tübingen 1926, pp. 360-459.

80. Winkler, Weimar, Ch. 10: "Die gespaltene Gesellschaft", pp. 285-305.

95. This has recently been stressed once more in Timothy Garton Ash's In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent, New York 1993. - In the now burgeoning empirical research on the integration of refugees and expellees into West German society, good case studies are Paul Erker, Ernährungskrise und Nachkriegsgesellschaft. Bauern und Arbeiterschaft in Bayern 1943-1953, Stuttgart 1990; idem, Vom Heimatvertriebenen zum Neubürger. Sozialgeschichte der Flüchtlinge in einer agrarischen Region Mittelfrankens, Stuttgart 1988. See also Klaus Megerle, "Die Radikalisierung blieb aus. Zur Integration gesellschaftlicher Gruppen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland während des Nachkriegsbooms", in: H. Kaelble (ed.), Der Boom 1948-1973, Opladen 1992, pp. 107-126.

96. See the evidence of oral history-research in the Ruhrgebiet presented by Alexander von Plato, "Fremde Heimat. Zur Integration von Flüchtlingen und Einheimischen in die Neue Zeit", in: L. Niethammer (ed.), "Wir kriegen jetzt andere Zeiten", Berlin 1985, pp. 172-219.

97. See, e.g., Rainer Gries, Die Rationen-Gesellschaft: Versorgungskampf und Vergleichsmentalität: Leipzig, München und Köln nach dem Kriege, Münster 1991.

98. Cf. Theodor Geiger, Die Klassengesellschaft im Schmelztiegel, Köln 1949.

99. Helmut Schelsky, "Die Bedeutung des Schichtungsbegriffes für die Analyse der gegenwärtigen Gesellschaft" (1953), in: idem, Auf der Suche nach Wirklichkeit, Düsseldorf 1965, pp. 331-336; see also idem, "Die Bedeutung des Klassenbegriffes für die Analyse unserer Gesellschaft", in: Jahrbuch für Sozialwissenschaften 12, 1961, pp. 237-269; idem, Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart, Stuttgart 1957 (english trans. Changing Family Structures under Conditions of Social and Economic Development, The Hague 1958. - For the social background of Schelsky's concept and the reasons for its success, see Hans Braun, "Helmut Schelskys Konzept der 'nivellierten Mittelstandsgesellschaft' und die Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre", in: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 29, 1989, pp. 199-223; for an important critique of Schelsky, see Ralf Dahrendorf, Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland, München 1965.

100. The "consumption" aspects of West German economic and social history have only very recently found attention among historians. See Michael Wildt, "Konsum und Modernisierung in den fünfziger Jahren", in: F. Bajohr et al. (eds.), Zivilisation und Barbarei, Hamburg 1991, pp. 322-345; idem, In jeden Haushalt einen Kühlschrank. Konsum in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren (Ph.D. Diss., forthcoming); Axel Schildt, "'Wiederaufbau' und 'Modernisierung'. Zur westdeutschen Gesellschaftsgeschichte in den fünfziger Jahren", in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte B 6-7, 1989, pp. 18-32; and

Schildt's as yet unpublished Habilitationsschrift on culture and consumption in the early Federal Republic (Hamburg, 1993).

101. Ludwig Erhard, "Wirtschaftspolitik als Teil der Gesellschaftspolitik" (1960), in: idem, Deutsche Wirtschaftspolitik, Düsseldorf 1962/1992, p. 481; idem, "Das Handwerk hat Zukunft" (1960), *ibid.*, p. 492.

102. For an excellent overview on the development of social structure and inequality in the first two decades of the Federal Republic, see M. Rainer Lepsius, "Soziale Ungleichheit und Klassenstrukturen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Lebenslagen, Interessenvermittlungen und Wertorientierungen", in: H.-U. Wehler (ed.), Klassen in der europäischen Sozialgeschichte, Göttingen 1979, pp. 166-209; see also Gerold Ambrosius/Hartmut Kaelble, "Einleitung: Gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Folgen des Booms der 1950er und 1960er Jahre", in: Kaelble (ed.), Der Boom, pp. 7-32.

103. See Josef Mooser, Arbeiterleben in Deutschland 1900-1970. Klassenlagen, Kultur und Politik, Frankfurt 1984; idem, "Abschied von der Proletariat. Sozialstruktur und Lage der Arbeiterschaft in der Bundesrepublik in historischer Perspektive", in: Conze/Lepsius (eds.), Sozialgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, pp. 143-186; idem, "Auflösung der proletarischen Milieus", in: Soziale Welt 34, 1983, pp. 270-306.

104. See Kocka/Prinz, "Vom 'neuen Mittelstand'". In this particular case, the continuity of post-1945 developments to social trends in the "Third Reich" and indeed to deliberate Nazi policies is very obvious; see Prinz, Vom neuen Mittelstand.

105. For this and the following, see Harriett Moore/Gerhard Kleining, "Das Bild der sozialen Wirklichkeit. Analyse und Struktur eines Images", in: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 11, 1959, pp. 353-376; idem, "Das soziale Selbstbild der Gesellschaftsschichtung in Deutschland", in: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 12, 1960, pp. 86-119; Heinrich Popitz et al., Das Gesellschaftsbild des Arbeiters. Soziologische Untersuchungen in der Hüttenindustrie, Tübingen 1957; Renate Mayntz, Soziale Schichtung und sozialer Wandel in einer Industriegemeinde. Eine soziologische Untersuchung der Stadt Euskirchen, Stuttgart 1958; Hansjürgen Daheim, "Die Vorstellungen vom Mittelstand", in: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 12, 1960, pp. 237-277; M. Rainer Lepsius, "Sozialstruktur und soziale Schichtung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (bis 1970) (1974)", in: idem, Demokratie in Deutschland, Göttingen 1993, 145-174; idem, "Zum Wandel der Gesellschaftsbilder in der Gegenwart", in: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 14, 1962, pp. 449-458.

122. As persuasively described and put in a historical perspective by Hartmut Kaelble, Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen Gesellschaft. Eine Sozialgeschichte Westeuropas 1880-1980, München 1987.

123. Reinhart Koselleck, "'Erfahrungsraum' und 'Erwartungshorizont'. Zwei historische Kategorien", in: idem, Vergangene Zukunft.

124. This ("developed socialist society") was the last stage the society of the GDR had reached, according to official proclamations, before it would eventually realize the perfect "communist" society.



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