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Perceptions of Poverty: The Evolution of German Attitudes towards Social Welfare from 1830 to World War I

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Perceptions of Poverty: The Evolution of German Attitudes towards Social Welfare from 1830 to World War I

Perceptions of Poverty: The Evolution of German Attitudes towards Social Welfare from 1830 to
World War I

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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by

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ABSTRACT

Today's Western European countries have the world's most extensive government social welfare systems, beginning with Germany as the forerunner. Prior to the eventual 20th century German welfare state, Germany was not devoid of distributing aid to combat the effects of poverty. Religious and public benevolent institutions, several centuries earlier, managed local poverty, resulting in an interesting relationship between the German citizens and these charities. The willingness of these institutions to address the poverty issue opened the door for the 20th century German welfare state to emerge.

This study examines the evolution of the attitudes towards poverty in nineteenth century Germany. Utilizing a longitudinal approach, this work demonstrates that perceptions people held toward poverty in turn shaped welfare policy. This work seeks to connect the changes in the perceptions towards poverty in the nineteenth century with the development of the welfare state in the twentieth century. Through a combination of the shifting political, social, and economic climate, the issue of poverty was at the forefront of the German mind from the 1830s to World War I. As the enormity of the problem of poverty developed so did the state's acceptance of civic responsibility of caring for the poor, yet also in conjunction with private and religious charities. The state's acceptance of the obligation to care for the poor allowed for the development of new management techniques with the tradition of private relief in mind. The reasoning behind and the various stages of the transformation of the perceptions towards poverty from the 1830s to World War I is the overarching goal of this work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of Dr. Laurence Hare. Thank you for your guidance and encouragement on this project. And for inspiring me to become a better historian.

Also, special thanks to the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Tricia Starks and Dr. Thomas Goldstein. Your willingness to serve on my committee and insight you brought to helping my work is greatly valued.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, whose constant love, support, and belief in me has allowed me to achieve my goals. Thank you for your wonderful example, unfailing love, and support in all that I do. Also to my aunt, Susan Thornton, who has walked with and supported me through every step of this journey. I could not have made it through without you.

Also, to the memory of my Papa E.P., who instilled within me from a young age a love of history. I hope that he would be proud of this accomplishment.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter of his classic study, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, Eric Auerbach reflected on the notion of fate. Writing from his new home in Istanbul, Auerbach hearkened back to the days of ancient Rome. His commentary on Petronius' Satyricon noted the Roman resignation towards the "wholly extraordinary concatenation of events" lying beyond their control. One might be a wealthy landowner one day and the next a slave, but one can never predict or prepare. "[T]he instability of fortune," he explained, "almost always appears as a fate which strikes from without and affects only a limited area, not as a fate which results from the inner processes of the real historical world."[1] Such observations must have resonated with Auerbach, who had been forced by the Nazis to surrender his teaching position in Marburg and flee his homeland in the 1930s. Auerbach thus entered his own unique variant of an all-too-common German experience. Like so many other Germans of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Auerbach found himself trapped in the throes of fate and standing at the mercy of rapidly changing times. And hovering ominously above the sense of dislocation and uncertainty, as it did for the Romans of his "Fortunata," was the specter of poverty.

What makes Auerbach such an interesting point of departure for the present study is the degree to which his account of the Satyricon conveys an idea that may have seen surprisingly foreign for his contemporaries. The future, of course, remained a concern in the early twentieth century, and the fear of impoverishment all too real. But the vagaries of fate had become increasingly remote in a modern age of technology, material wealth, and the belief in progress. In contrast to Roman stoicism, the unemployed and impoverished of modern Germany could cast

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[1] Eric Auerbach, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western LIterature, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 28-9.

blame to their own environs. As one worker shouted in a heated meeting of workers in Berlin, "If we still had the same worldview as our ancestors, we would see unemployment as a form of punishment…. Times have changed … today it is the negative economic effects of contemporary society and above all the elevated rates of unemployment."[2] Fate, as these workers understood it, had a face. One could cast about and find its roots. But others looked within, at the inborn abilities of individuals as measures of those who might fail or succeed. And still others questioned the motivations and spirit of those fallen into poverty. Auerbach thus captured a lost perspective, which for us reanimates a debate on the meaning and causes of poverty that had gripped Germany during its slow march to modernity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This study examines the evolution of the attitudes towards poverty in nineteenth century Germany. Utilizing a longitudinal approach, this work seeks to connect the changes in the perceptions towards poverty in the nineteenth century with the development of the welfare state in the twentieth century. In essence, the perceptions that people held toward poverty in turn shaped welfare policy. The 1830s, the point at which this study begins, marks a caesura in the history of poverty. The initiation of this break arose from the intersection of several changes. Through a combination of the shifting political, social, and economic climate, the issue of poverty reached a massive scale within Germany in the 1830s and 1840s. The enormity of the problem of poverty developed at a point where the state began accepting the civic responsibility of caring for the poor, yet also in conjunction with private charities such as churches. However, the state's acceptance of the obligation to care for the poor allowed for the development of new management techniques with this in mind. The reasoning behind and the various stages of the

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[2] George, Steinmetz, *Regulating the social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 203.

transformation of individual's perception toward poverty from the 1830s to World War I is the overarching goal of this work.

During the nineteenth century, the concept of poverty assumed a prominent place in the German mind. Heavily influenced by Enlightenment ideas, the causes and solutions to the problem of poverty evolved in the nineteenth century. For many centuries, the perception surrounding poverty remained relatively unchanged, along with those who were responsible for caring and managing the poor. Traditionally the responsibility fell to the family of the poor and to the church. With this traditional management in place, it allowed for the criteria of determining who was poor to remain limited. Yet as the changes of the nineteenth century began to impact individuals, the concept of poverty became part of an intense dynamic. This dynamic encompassed defining who and what conditions characterized those who suffered from poverty, where responsibility lay, and which techniques were effective in combating the problem. Additionally, a key component to this dynamic was the conversation initiated on what it signified to be poor. This study traces this intense dynamic during the nineteenth century in which the conversation about poverty radically evolved. It also focuses on how this dynamic shaped the policy advocated and implemented throughout Germany, which instilled a growing dependency on the state to solve social problems.

It is necessary when discussing an issue such as poverty to establish a functioning definition. This is necessary because poverty can mean many different things to many individuals. Poverty is a "fluid and unstable construct" and it is during the nineteenth century that the attitudes toward the poor underwent a transformation resulting in new way of regarding, understanding, and interpreting the issue of poverty and thus altered the policies and

management techniques associated with it.[3] For this work, poverty will indicate a state or condition lacking the ability to provide basic goods for survival. These goods include food, shelter, and adequate clothing. While it is impossible to have one definition that encompasses all of the idiosyncrasies associated with poverty, this definition reflects the struggles that frequently plagued nineteenth century individuals. By chronologizing the causes and management of poverty in nineteenth century Germany, it is the goal of this work to analyze the discussion surrounding the issue, how people's perceptions changed because of this discussion and most importantly, why these perceptions changed.

Just as poverty can have multiple meanings depending on the individual, so can perceptions. A perception, particularly for nineteenth century Germans, embodied an attitude or feeling often influenced by personal connection, experience, beliefs, and social status. While perceptions exist individually, large groups also hold collective perceptions on an issue. For example, for much of the nineteenth century, the German bourgeoisie understood poverty as a personal moral failing. Although there were variations within this group on this perception, it was overwhelmingly accepted as the opinion associated with the issue and the policies and management techniques pursued are evidence of these perceptions. There is however, a problem with the many personal and group perceptions associated with poverty. This problem for nineteenth century poverty was that perceptions rarely reflected the reality of what it meant to be poor. The bourgeoisie mentality that poverty was a product of moral failings did not reflect the true circumstances of the poor. As will be delineated here, the reality for the lower classes, those most often struck by poverty, was that the causes of poverty had little to do with their moral standing and more to do with the changing and unstable economic, political, and social climate

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[3] Rachel Ginnis Fuchs, *Gender and poverty in nineteenth-century Europe,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 9.

in Germany. It is from the 1830s to WWI where the perceptions of poverty and the reality of the problem evolved to reflect each other more accurately and thus created a new narrative on the understanding of poverty, its causes, and the actors needed to combat it.

Tracing the evolving conversation on poverty throughout the nineteenth century focuses on two points. First, what people agreed on within the issue of poverty. By the 1830s, agreement came when individuals recognized that poverty reached a breaking point through mass pauperization and that the current management practices were insufficient in meeting the demand for poor relief. In addition, individuals agreed that the state, which had for more than thirty years assumed responsibility, along with private charities, such as the church, were to continue to provide the relief and care for the poor. The second point analyzes the ways in which people disagreed on the issue of poverty. Disagreement came in many forms, particularly in discussing the different management techniques. It is from the points of agreement and disagreement that shaped the attitudes and conversation surrounding the issue of poverty. From the 1830s to WWI.

The attitudinal shifts ranging from state institutions, to churches, to individuals are important to analyze for two reasons. First, the nineteenth century bore witness to the creation of modern nation states where the relationship between individual citizens and the government changed. Since the Middle Ages, much of Germany remained under a feudal and authoritarian power structure were lower class individuals had virtually no voice in shaping their social or economic situation in life and where the upper elite or noble individuals ruled based on the premise of maintaining their control. With the growth of Enlightenment ideas and the economic policy of capitalism, the relationship between citizens and government shifted, providing the individual with a level of independence and sense of personal determination unknown during the feudal years.

Along with the developing system of capitalism and a free market economy, nineteenth century Germany witnessed the boom of industrialization. Industrialization had profound positive and negative effects on all areas of social, political, and economic life. For the individual, industrialization's negative effects manifested themselves through poverty. The existing institutions and policies in place to manage poverty were unable to handle massive destitution. Thus, new policies needed to be created and government stepped in to care for its citizens. While this process occurred over the nineteenth century, it is during the latter half of where the characteristics of a modern nation were established in which a state run social welfare system hallmarked the modern state. Therefore, with the modern state, the relationship with citizens changed even further to provide and sustain a quality value of life. The formation the modern nation state during the nineteenth century also provides an understanding of the relationship between citizens, social welfare, and government in the twenty-first century. Despite that this study ends its analysis at the outbreak of WWI, the relationship between citizen and government did not solidify in 1914, but continued to transform dramatically into the twentieth century.

The second reason for analyzing the changing outlooks of poverty is that the attitudes that policy makers held towards poverty influenced the strategy they took to manage its effects. Perceptions are not static, but influenced and shaped by a variety of factors such as religion and the development of new social ideals. The nineteenth century Germany experienced an upheaval of old ideas and replaced older notions with new ones stemming from the concepts of industrialization, the Enlightenment, capitalism, liberalism, communism, and socialism. The perceptions of poverty that evolved from the influences of these concepts were inconsistent and varied depending on where the primary influences came from. For example, Baron vom Stein

and Joseph von Radowitz, both conservative Prussian statesmen were a few of the first individuals who believed it was the states responsibility for solving the social question. The changing atmosphere in Europe produced the social question. This question was the product of industrialization, massive population growth, occupational freedom, and the ineffectiveness of European governments to handle these changes. The answer for the social question was to find a way to manage all those individuals who were impacted by its effects. To say that the social question had an impact on the perceptions of poverty is an understatement. It was the driving force behind the evolution of the opinions towards poverty.

Given that the attitudes policy makers held towards poverty in turn shaped the legislation they created, their motivations behind the policies should also be under consideration. The changing perceptions were often used to the advantage of policy makers, typically to maintain their control within society and politics. This is best exhibited in Prussia under an authoritarian welfare system characterized by conservatives who sought to maintain the status quo or make only minimal changes while keeping their hold on power. The motivations behind policies created also explicate how and why not all strategies were positive in helping the poor eradicate their circumstances. For much of the nineteenth century, the key goal of poor relief was to fight pauperism not to eradicate or prevent poverty. It was not until the end of the century when the elimination of poverty and its causing factors became the primary target for policy makers. This eventual change also highlighted the inadequacies of poor relief. While the poor relief systems employed throughout Germany managed the effects of the social question and industrialization, they proved to be inadequate as attitudes continued to transition. Perceptions were not assigned just to the issue of poverty, but placed on the impoverished as well. The poor embodied the ideas that individuals held towards poverty. In Prussia, for example, the state government tailored their

poor relief legislation upon "an image of a society composed of individuals who were economically rational, or could be treated and made to behave as such."[4]

Not all poverty policy was state sponsored. Dating back to the 16th century, the church held the primary role of distributing welfare and shaping societal attitudes towards the poor. Based on the Christian ideals of charity and the responsibility to care for fellow Christian brothers, the church sanctioned the necessary and appropriate actions towards the poor. Yet, there was no overarching agreement between churches of Germany to decide the quantity or types of welfare distributed. Each local church, either Catholic or Protestant, assisted its local paupers. Typically, churches would first require those who needed assistance to attend mass, Sunday school, or confession. Since being poor was understood as a consequence of choices made by individuals, churches believed that with proper education through church attendance, paupers and beggars would change. Eventually, with the transitional crisis occurring in the nineteenth century and the massive and permanent rather than seasonal effects of poverty due the social question, churches were no longer the primary source of welfare. However, this did not end church involvement; it remained an active participant in the formation of welfare policies and in shaping perceptions of poverty. Evidenced through the work of the Catholic Bishop of Mainz, Wilhelm Emanuel von Ketteler, the church incorporated the changing tides of the nineteenth century into their ideology. Ketteler advocated for social reform in sermons and encouraged the active role of the state in social policy. A more applied example of the churches efforts are displayed in the activity of Adolf Kolping, a Catholic priest who established journeymen associations which provided living accommodations and opportunities to better themselves. At the outbreak of WWI, there were at least 400 associations, known as Kolping

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[4] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 120.

Houses, throughout Germany. The conventional narrative of the welfare state diminishes the role of the church in welfare policies and positions them as giving way to a state run system. Yet in Germany, the church remained an active participant in shaping and carrying out polices.

This analysis on poverty also seeks to explain how social welfare became the core of the domestic agenda in the twentieth century. The nineteenth century marks a point where the relationship between citizens and government radically changed. While the individual gained additional autonomy from the state, the state recognized its obligation to the wellbeing and future of its citizens. These two phenomena are traced back to the issue of poverty, its effects, and people's perceptions of it. The perceptions are also linked to the transformations that occurred in politics and economics during the nineteenth century. The continual unrest from the rising influence of socialism provided an ever present threat to the status-quo social order in which some fought to change and others sought to maintain. Both feeling they would quickly become irrelevant and replaced.

II. HISTORIOGRAPHY

The study of poverty and social welfare in Germany during the nineteenth century has an interesting place within the larger historiography of modern Germany. For many years, social welfare was simply a small part of a larger metanarrative for the nineteenth century. While it is part of this larger overarching story, it has only recently experienced its own independent analysis by historians. This is due in part to the preponderance of social welfare in the politics of twenty-first century governments. Western European countries have established capacious welfare systems. These systems sustain high levels of social spending and are the remains of

"historical political conflicts over states and markets, over religious and cultural identities, and over the territorial reach of the nation state."[5]

Despite the neglect of many German historians in finding the historical value in researching poverty, it has not been a topic that has been completely abandoned throughout the twentieth century. The historiography of poverty in Germany lacks an overarching master account, particularly its history before WWI. Historian Larry Frohman articulated it best when he stated, "there is no single master narrative capable of summing up all the contradictory and asynchronous developments in the welfare sector in the years before 1914…there was no obvious single path along with social policy could have been expected to evolve at either the local or national level."[6] Even with the lack of a larger metanarrative, the historiography of poverty in Germany has several themes that have developed and evolved over time. Initially historians focused on Bismarck and the bureaucratic aspects of social insurance, along with its implementation. Only in the last fifty years, with the rise of social history, has there been a focus on the millions of individuals who interacted with the new system, the effectiveness of its structure, or the church response to the implementation of a radical new system. Even more recently is the growth of globalization as a field of research. Historians are now focusing on how the process of globalization has influenced structures like German welfare and how other nations use Germany as a model. Historians also research the transferring of ideas from one nation to another. To understand any structure, like state run social welfare, it is best to look beyond borders and study the transfers occurring between nations. Despite the many changes over time,

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[5] University of Minnesota Center for German and European Studies, "Class, Church, Community—The Historical Origins of Current European Social Policy," http://cges.umn.edu/fellowships/tasi.htm (accessed April, 1, 2012).

[6] Larry Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany from the Reformation to World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 205.

there are issues present in both older and recent monographs dealing with German social welfare, that have allowed historians to find agreement and discord in attempting to understand poverty policies and the perceptions associated with poverty.

Before the rise of 'social history', the historical field was dominated by political history, focusing on major actors and leaders from nations and the political moves nations made. It is under this style that older researchers of German welfare, writing between late 1890s and the 1950s, found their establishment. It is important to note that many of the older monographs dealing with German welfare were not originally written as historical works, but rather as an account and interpretation of political and economic issues that allowed for the creation of social insurance in Germany. Although they never originated as works of historical analysis, they are vitally important to the study of German social welfare. These works help lay the foundation needed to understand the implementation of initial social insurance policies. They also provide historians today with the information needed to analyze the initial response and effectives of the system. Before Bismarck proposed and enacted his insurance policies the conditions of the working class or poor went almost entirely unnoticed by researchers. After Bismarck broke the mold and created a system that revolutionized the way a state interacted with the wellbeing of its citizens, writers were initially draw to what this system could offer. There are two sources that are distinct examples to help demonstrate the larger context of arguments and beliefs of social scientists at this time.

The first writer, and one of the most influential, dealing with German welfare was W.H. Dawson, who dealt specifically with social insurance. An Englishman, he was originally a journalist who saw the benefit that Germany's model provided for England. In each of his publications, he sought to help educate those who read his works in viewing the German system

with as much admiration as he did. In *Bismarck and State Socialism*, Dawson focused on how Bismarck was able to present and pass his social insurance legislation. Another influential writer who wrote similar to the style of Dawson is Walter Sulzbach. In his work, *German Experience with Social Insurance,* Sulzbach presents German insurance policies as a blue print for Americans and his work acts as a fact sheet for what each of Germany's social insurance policies provide for its citizens. Each of these works have similar themes and leave out critical elements to their arguments.

The first common theme between these older works is the encouragement they place on their readers in using Germany as a model in their own country. Dawson does this in his preface, setting up the rest of his work with this in mind. While this is not Dawson's primary argument, it is the backbone of his work. Using Germany as a model for the English system is the reason that Dawson is motivated to write the entirety of his work.[7] Similarly to Dawson, Sulzbach was motivated to write for the American audience. Grounded in anticipation that Americans would use Germany as their model, Sulzbach hoped they would look to his research as the essential information needed to create their own system.[8] It is this aspect of Sulzbach and Dawson's research that allows their work to come full circle. Recent global historians look to them as the initial proponents of the idea to use Germany as a model in other countries.

Another theme that both works have in common is the relationship they have to the larger research and writing trends that were present at the time in the social sciences. Dawson and Sulzbach's sources were written during the supremacy of political history. Dawson was a fervent supporter of Bismarck and focused his research on Bismarck's political and economic moves

[7] W.H. Dawson, *Bismarck and State Socialism* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1891), x.
[8] Walter Sulzbach, *German Experience with Social Insurance* (New York: National Industrial Conference Board, 1947), 2.

rather than the social issues present to allow for the creation of social insurance. From his writing, it is apparent that he found little fault in Bismarck or his policies and instead viewed him as a political genius and an advocate of the worker.[9] Many other writers, such as Frederick Howe and Elmer Roberts, who wrote during this time on Germany's social policies, felt the same way about Bismarck. For Sulzbach, his work is distinct from Dawson's in that it is a presentation of the facts and not the history of how social insurance was established. Sulzbach breaks down each social insurance policy. Focusing on its implementation, organization, who was initially covered, and who participated in the system.[10] However, Sulzbach still gives credit entirely to Bismarck as being the innovator of social insurance. These feelings towards Bismarck as the supreme creator of social insurance would change among historians after the rise of social history.

Dawson and Sulzbach's work ignored any forms of social welfare present in Germany before Bismarck's proposals. Before the formation of state run social insurance, Germany was not devoid of other forms of social welfare. Given for centuries at the state and local level, relief was predominantly distributed by churches or local poor relief boards. These local entities played an important role in the eventual proposal and enactment of social insurance and the management of poverty into the twentieth century. Since an understanding of local social welfare is vital to understanding German social insurance as a whole, the absence of this in their writing is an indicator that the works they produced were missing a crucial element. Larry Frohman stated that, "any narrative that tends to reduce the welfare state to social insurance or to ascribe

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[9] Dawson, *Bismarck and State Socialism,* 23.

[10] Sulzbach, *German Experience with Social Insurance,* 3-58.

its growth primarily to the agency of the central state will produce a foreshortened, distorted account."[11]

In the post-World War II world, the topic of pauperism became a feature of historical investigation. Post-war historians began investigating social history which "focus[es] either on the factors and forces that shape society as a whole or on the lives of ordinary people who are excluded from established centers of power."[12] In German history, this is known as *Gesellschaftgeschichte,* which studies all of the aspects that make up a society, and *Alltagsgeschichte,* which analyzes everyday life. The focus was no longer on those, like Bismarck, who created and shaped poor policy, but rather on those who were affected by poverty and the recipients of the policies created.

Researching the German Socialist movement and the revolution of 1848 drove post-war historians to focus on pauperism. Pauperism struck the lower classes of German society the harshest and these lower groups were key participants in the socialist movement and during the social unrest of the pre-revolution period known as the Vormärz (1830-40s). Widespread poverty and immense impoverishment characterized the Vormärz period, and many German social historians termed it as the 'age of pauperism.' Rudolf Stadelmann and Helmut Bleiber focused on the social makeup of those affected by pauperism and the potential they had to become revolutionaries due to their situation. Research began to compare the newer pauperized masses with those who fell under the category of 'traditional poor,' such as widows, orphans, disabled, and the elderly. Under this comparison, Stadelmann, in *Revolution,* found that "the lower classes

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[11] Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany*, 142.

[12] Gary J. Kornblith and Carol Lasser, "More Than Great White Men: A Century if Scholarship on American Social History," in *A Century of American Historiography,* ed. James M. Banner Jr., (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2010), 11.

were no worse off in the 1830s and 1840s than in previous centuries," and that all that had changed was "their degree of awareness."[13] Employing *Alltagsgeschichte,* Stadelmann came to this conclusion on the lower classes from using items such as "petitions, popular songs, secret diaries, and other sources that provided information on the daily habits of the population."[14] However, other historians such as Hermann Beck have stated that Stadelmann's assessment is too sanguine and that he was "probably more attuned to the new, petty bourgeois self-satisfaction of the *Biedermeier.*"[15]

Werner Conze was one of the first historians to analyze the issue of pauperism through the lens of the German socialist movement. The 'age of pauperism' during the 1830s and 1840s, not only bore witness to mass poverty, but also swift population growth and the inability of the budding industrial sector to provide enough jobs for the growing population. Conze found that the Vormärz period also experienced a decline in the corporative order of society and that certain areas, such as Prussia, where this order declined, saw a high participation in the socialist movement. This corporative structure was the backbone to society and with its deterioration, it caused significant unrest within German society and the lower classes sought solutions for their plight through the socialist movement.

A major dividing point within the historiography on the causes of mass pauperism in nineteenth century Germany is whether it is a product of industrialization or instead a product of high population growth, weak industry, and large agriculture surplus. In the late 1950s, Theodore Hamerow argued this idea in *Restoration,* ascribing Vormärz pauperism to the development of

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[13] Hermann Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State in Prussia: Conservatives, Bureaucracy, and the Social Question, 1815-70,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 5.
[14] Ibid., 5.
[15] Ibid., 6.

capitalism and industry. This idea has traction with other Marxist leaning historians who believe that the horrific social conditions are in direction correlation to the expansion of capitalism. While it would seem logical to attribute mass poverty to industrialization, given the considerable transition it creates within a society, many German historians find that this is not the case. Donald Rohr directly criticized Hamerow's findings saying that he minimized the effect of population growth as a prime factor for social problems. Moreover, a consensus exists amongst most German historians today that industrialization is not the source of social problems in the Vormärz period because industrialization did not take off until the 1850s. This is not to argue that industrialization does not play a vital role in the history of poor relief, because it does. However, industrialization cannot be recognized as the causal factor of mass poverty in the Vormärz period. In fact, historian Wolfram Fischer, in *Armut*, argued that industrialization helped the pauperized masses by providing jobs and higher wages. Thus, Fischer finds, industrialization aided in ending the 'age of pauperism' (temporarily).

There is also a correlation between the history of welfare with that of the *Sonderweg Thesis.* This thesis remains a long-standing debate amongst German historians on the path that Germany took towards modernization in the nineteenth century. First developed in the 1950s and 1960s by historians Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Jürgen Kocka, they argued that Germany took a distinct and separate path to modernization in comparison to other nations such as England. This "special path" predicted the Nazi dictatorship in the twentieth century. According to these historians they "interpret[ed] the political history of the Kaiserriech as an illiberal defense of an aristocratic, antimodern elite out of step with the country's rapid industrial modernization" and

void of a democratic tradition.[16] The correspondence between the *Sonderweg* and the history of social welfare is attributed to the focus of historiography on Bismarck's social insurance policies. David Crew in *Germans on Welfare* articulates it best stating, "concentrating on Bismarck's social insurance policies allowed supporters of the *Sonderweg* thesis to argue that it was the political interests of the preindustrial ruling elites and not those of the bourgeoisie that both produced and profited from the precocious development of the modern welfare state." [17]

While the *Sonderweg* thesis attracted many supporters, historians David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley confronted this argument by positing that, "Imperial Germany was a distinctly bourgeois- and thus modern- political culture."[18] These historians exposed the fallacies of attempting to measure the path of modernity with that of the paths of England, France, and the United States. In relation to the history of social welfare, many historians, such as David Crew, George Steinmetz, and Larry Frohman view the welfare state in the nineteenth century as both modern and bourgeois. As argued by Steinmetz, the welfare state of the nineteenth century was "a unique combination of traditional structural features and decisively modern inventions" to solve the social question.[19]

Along with the issue of the *Sonderweg* thesis, German history is plagued by the ever-present memory of the Holocaust. By accepting the *Sonderweg* as a nascent explanation for the rise of Nazi dictatorship, its relationship with the welfare state is also tainted. Detlef Peukert is one of the strongest adherents of this argument stating, "Nazi eugenics can be traced in part to

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[16] Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 15.

[17] David Crew, *Germans on Welfare: From Weimar to Hitler*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5.

[18] Pence and Betts, *Socialist Modern,* 15.

[19] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 9.

the social policies and doctrines of the late nineteenth century and the Weimar Republic."[20] Peukert's argument is largely based on the premise that the modern welfare state "was inspired by and in turn nourished a utopian view of social policy."[21] David Crew also recognizes Peukert's assertions but finds fault in this idea in that he minimizes the role of WWI and the formidable effects the war had on the Weimar Republic.

Historical research continued to change into the 1970s. The focus switched to the relationship between pauperism and "deviant behavior, crime, and social protest."[22] The enormous levels of poverty that plagued the lower classes of society produced disturbances such as the Silesian weavers uprising in 1844. Another contributing factor to social unrest was mass hunger throughout Germany. Known as "hungry forties," the era witnessed food riots in Prussia and some 50,000 people are to have died from malnutrition and other related diseases. These aspects were not only the focus of historians of pauperism but became a topic of interest for many German historians. The upper classes viewed the social unrest and behavior exhibited by the lower classes as a threat to the social order and the potential the lower classes held in irrevocably altering the status quo. Historians examine the responses of those in power and how they dealt with changes, often exhibiting themselves through the ideas of social discipline and control over the poor. The social, political, and economic impact of the social unrest caused by pauperism in the 1830s and 1840s is a topic analyzed by nineteenth century German and European historians.

Three historians, Larry Frohman, George Steinmetz, and Hermann Beck, are some of the most prominent recent historians of nineteenth century German welfare. George Steinmetz's

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[20] Ibid., 8.
[21] Crew, *Germans on Welfare,* 6.
[22] Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State,* 3.

work, *Regulating the Social,* breaks away from the former traditional political approach to German social welfare, and replaces it with the argument that social insurance was a combination of "traditional structural features and decisively modern interventions."[23] Steinmetz emphasizes the disciplinary components of welfare policy and how the utilization of policies helped regulate the behavior of those in need. He also shows that German social welfare was the product of issues among the working class and the effects of industrialization.[24] Frohman's work, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany from the Reformation to World War I,* takes a different approach by attempting to explain the preexisting social welfare structures in Germany and the attitudes towards those who received the assistance given on the local level. Frohman's primary goal is to go beyond the larger nation state and into the depths of local relations among poor boards, church charities, and the poor.[25] Beck's work, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State in Prussia,* analyzes the development of the social question. Beck focuses on how Prussian social conservatives and the bureaucracy managed the effects of social problems. His approach is vitally important for this history of poor relief because the structure of the Prussian state and the power edifice that influenced its institutions profoundly affected the unification of Germany in 1871.

While each historian has a different goal in their works, a common theme they all share is the research presented on what was occurring in German welfare before Bismarck's policies and each link the formation of the twentieth century welfare state to the traditional forms of poor relief in the nineteenth century. Steinmetz endeavors to show that since Germany had a semi-functional welfare system at both the local and state level many years before Bismarck's

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[23] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 9.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany,* 1-10.

proposals, that social policies in Germany are the result of complex and multifaceted structures. Beck's work concentrates not only on the idea of Prussian conservatives and bureaucrats in a broad sense, but also highlights specific individuals who played an integral part in creating the Prussian welfare state. Given that the perceptions that individuals held towards poverty in turn shaped the policies, Beck's work provides an integral analysis in helping to understand those who created welfare policy and in turn shaped the political attitude towards it.

Frohman looks at the structures present in Germany starting at the Reformation. Frohman brings attention to the church, local poor boards, and other private welfare distributors. Another interesting component to Frohman's study is the individual response to welfare. Frohman's research presents the individual response of those who interacted with welfare from the period of the Reformation World War I. Furthermore, Frohman focuses on those individuals who were excluded from Bismarck's social insurance policies. Initially social insurance dealt only with those who had a job or those disabled from working. The policies left out those who were unemployed, children, or women. Frohman provides a comprehensive study on how local communities viewed individuals who needed assistance and what was required of them. Frohman's contribution is important to the study of history because his longitudinal study provides a thorough account into the lives of those who received welfare and their response to the changes over time made by the German government.

Within the last several decades, a growing trend has emerged dealing with the ideas and issues created from globalization. This trend encourages historians to no longer view events, nations, or people as solitary entities, but rather as products of the larger global context. This new trend influences the study of the German welfare state by allowing historians to view the transfers that one nation gives to another. Historians place Germany and its chancellor Otto von

Bismarck as the pioneer in promoting and passing social welfare legislation. Even though he actually opposed social welfare, this new form of governmental aid spread to other European countries and the United States. While each country developed unique state run welfare systems conducive to their government, the specific historical study of each individualized system has merit; however, this narrow focus causes the historical researcher to miss the larger picture. For example, within the German and English welfare states there are 'transfers' that spread, allowing England to form their own individual welfare systems. Seen best in E.P. Hennock's *British Social Reform and German Precedents,* there is a methodological utility to approaching the foundation of the English welfare system in this way. Hennock argues that the English government used Germany as their model through which it provides an understanding of how transfers crossed over to these countries.[26] Viewing each country's welfare system without borders allows historians to probe into the possibility of the Western world's welfare system being a product of globalization without cultural prejudice. England, for example, interacted with transfers from the German model in a more tangible way in that they both rejected and implemented certain German policies and ideals. It is in Hennock's work that Dawson's ideas come full circle. Hennock references Dawson and his publications often and heralds him as one of the first advocates in England to use Germany as a model for social welfare.[27]

Sebastian Conrad, in *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany*, analyzes Germany's relationship with imperialism as a way to understand nationalism. In relation to the study of the welfare state, Conrad argues that the German notions of work were "at the heart of

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[26] E. P. Hennock, *British Social Reform and German Precedents* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 34.

[27] Hennock, *British Social Reform and German Precedents,* 34.

developing world today."[31] These two most recent examples of historical interest and research attest to the history of poverty's inattention and how this is beginning to change.

Analyzing the changing perceptions towards poverty in nineteenth century Germany is a multifaceted undertaking. Therefore, using the periodization framework of 1830 to WWI, this work will show how the notions of poverty changed amongst social classes and groups such as private and public welfare distributors, each playing an instrumental part in creating the German welfare state. By analyzing the different perceptions towards poverty over time and across social strata, this work brings a new perspective to the historiography. When incorporating the many aspects stated above, a question arises as to whether the management of poverty reflected the many perceptions people held toward it.

To answer this question, this work will focus on three social groups. The first is the lower class, incorporating laborers, farmers, and the non-working poor, for whom poverty was a constant fear or unquestionable reality. As in most social historical studies, the lower class is the most formidable group to study given that we have limited records of their perspectives toward poverty. Given the little historical sources available, this has caused some to assume that the lower classes did not have an attitude toward poverty. Others have chosen to view "the poor as passive, weak victims of economic, social, and cultural forces they could not control."[32] However, this is untrue. As Rachel Fuchs has demonstrated in *Gender and Poverty in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, the poor themselves had agency. "People exercise their individual freedom, or agency within a social order, a culture, community, or a body of laws. The poor, like

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[31] University of Minnesota Center for German and European Studies, "Class, Church, Community—The Historical Origins of Current European Social Policy," http://cges.umn.edu/fellowships/tasi.htm (accessed April, 1, 2012).
[32] Fuchs, *Gender and Poverty*, 1.

others in society, could comply, or not, with that social order, doing what was necessary for their own survival."[33] By taking Fuch's argument that the poor had agency, I will demonstrate that despite the lack of sources establishing their attitude, we can understand their perceptions towards the issue of poverty in the way they responded to the management of poor relief and social welfare. For example, the hunger riots characterizing Germany in the 1840s demonstrates how the lower classes found a way to express their discontentment with the economic and political situation impacting their livelihood.

The second social group is the middle-bourgeoisie class. The nineteenth century saw the creation and development of this social class as a product of both capitalism and industrialization. E.P. Thompson argued in *The Making of the English Working Class*, that as the middle class was developing, its social lines were not solid. Thompson contended that class was a social and cultural construct with steadily changing lines. As was the case for the English, the German middle class could at any moment, with the downturn of the market or natural disaster, be plunged into the lower classes or become poverty stricken themselves. Given this, the middle class would often formulate their distinctiveness in opposition to that of the poor. Using this idea, I will demonstrate how the middle class used this opposition identity to shape their perceptions of poverty.

The final social group being analyzed is that of the "upper" elites. This consisted of authoritarian, landed nobility, also known as Junkers (particularly in Prussia). Before unification, Germany was divided into many states, ruled by local princes coming from the feudal past. As the feudal construct began to break down in the nineteenth century, the social order shifted away from a corporate and segmented society toward that of a market driven one. However, the

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[33] Fuchs, *Gender and Poverty,* 1.

German nobility did not lose their powerful influence. The new social order of the nineteenth century created an epoch of opposition between modernity and tradition. While the upper elite supported tradition, many of them understood the benefit of using the massive transformation of the century to their advantage. They saw social welfare as a way of maintaining their control over society or ensuring the support of the lower classes, which would in turn support their hold on power. Given the major influence of the upper elite in shaping and implementing welfare policy, it is their perception towards poverty that is most prevalent and thus requires inquiry.

One of the most neglected perspectives within the historiography of social welfare is the role of the church in the nineteenth century. This is because of the reduced role of the church within society in the nineteenth century, and the fact that social welfare became a more secular and state oriented sphere. However, it will be presented here that the church and church leaders still played a vital role in the perceptions and responses individuals held toward social problems. For years, the church required the impoverished to fulfill certain requirements, such as church attendance, to receive goods. These requirements held underlying motivations, such as transforming the attitude and way of life of the poor, since poverty was understood as a product of poor life choices. This concept of using poverty management to obtain a certain outcome is an idea that state social welfare obtained from the church and sought to force the poor to change their way of life. There is also a concomitant between politics and religion. "Political views were often articulated in religious language and religious disputes and allegiances could easily take on political character." As historian John Breuilly has stated, "The enthusiasm of religion as an autonomous social force was arguably greater during this era than at any time since the late

seventeenth century."[34] This connotes the importance of analyzing the role of the church in creating perceptions towards poverty and social welfare.

The analysis of the various perceptions of poverty on the different social levels will also be understood by considering them in their geographical region. Before and after unification in 1871, cities and towns in Germany remained influenced by the state that ruled them. In the nineteenth century, thirty-nine sovereign states made up the German Confederation, a loose association of independent entities. This work will focus on those areas that would eventually make up unified Germany in 1871. The geographic aspect to poverty management is important given that each state managed poverty in its own way, while also containing various similarities. Influencing poverty management also depended on the economic industry. If an area's dominant industry was agriculture, its welfare distribution reflected meeting the needs of agricultural workers. As industrialization spread within a geographic region, aid allocation evolved to reflect the needs of industrial workers. Special attention will be given to the largest state to become eventually part of Germany, the kingdom of Prussia. Its Junker class and political makeup dominated German politics and legislation after 1871. Utilizing a comparative approach, this work will compare the Prussia form of poverty management to that of other German states in an effort to understand the differences that influenced poverty management before and after unification.

This study focuses on why the perceptions towards poverty shifted from the 1830s to the outbreak of World War I and thus initiated the beginnings of the welfare state. Using this periodization provides a framework to chronologically analyze the broad evolutions to poverty in

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[34] John Breuilly, *Nineteenth-century Germany: politics, culture, and society 1780-1918,* (London: Arnold, 2001), 60.

the nineteenth century. During the 1830s and 1840s, known as the 'age of pauperism,' the impact of social upheaval and instability reached a breaking point after years of devastating economic conditions, hunger riots, and volatility. The age of pauperism launched a first set of responses emphasizing the shortcomings of the current poverty aid system. This period culminated with the revolution of 1848, carried by the lower classes and prompted directly from their discontentment of the economic and social crisis. The aftermath of the revolution caused the upper levels of society to fear the continued unrest from the poor lower classes, and saw it as the state's responsibility to help ensure peace, thus the upper classes did what was necessary to aid the impoverished.

In the 1850s, Germany experienced the growth of industrialization. Industrialization took off later in Germany compared to England, but its effects were no less extreme. Industrialization transformed the 'social question' into the 'worker question.' It is through this transition that the perceptions of poverty also radically changed. Given the irregularity of the capitalist market, the high rates of accidents in factories, along with a large migration of workers to cities, social welfare became a focal point for politics and society to attempt to manage. Also during this period, the understanding amongst the middle and upper classes on the causes of poverty began its gradual shift away from moral failings to factors outside the control of individuals. The escalation of the labor and socialist movements in Germany along with the creation and development of Bismarck's social insurance policies in the 1880s and 1890s manifest this shift and its importance within German society.

The culmination of the changing perceptions of poverty in the nineteenth century begins in the 1890s and continues until World War I. Bismarck's social insurance policies continued to develop during this time, and workers became accustomed to the benefits and assurances they

provided. Yet the attitude and understanding of poverty shifted again when it was understood that despite the measures provided by insurance, poverty continually plagued society, particularly among lower class workers. In the 1890s, the development of social work and related disciplines transformed the understanding of poverty with the influence of the ideas of health, hygiene, and education. Preemptive welfare rather than reactionary measures and the idea that poverty could be eradicated distinguish this period.

Methodologically this work utilizes a blend of social and cultural history, focusing on the representation and the struggle over the meaning of poverty. Poverty is a term weighted with meaning and in the postmodern world, often escapes definition. Whether in nineteenth century Germany or today, the issue of poverty holds many assumptions and associations. Analyzing the suppositions surrounding what it meant to be poor enables this work to understand the shifts in the attitudes towards poverty and thus the management techniques and legislation produced from these perceptions. Combining social and cultural history enables this work to apprehend how the impoverished understood their world, agency, and how they fashioned out a way to sustain their livelihood. It also demonstrates how the poor relied on various communities, such as family, the church, and the state for their survival. Other members of society, such as the bourgeoisie, are analyzed with this concept, understanding how they used various structures to implement policies towards the poor. In addition, this work will incorporate an analysis of political structures and ideas such as the influence of liberalism, conservatism, and socialism in the formation of social welfare. Those who lauded state sponsored social welfare policies all held specific attitudes on the poor and on how the state should respond.

Taking all of the organizational components into consideration, this work will chronologically trace the perceptions of poverty from the 1830s to the outbreak of WWI. I will

begin by providing an analysis on poverty and social welfare in Germany up to the 1830s, since many of the attitudes people held toward poverty in the nineteenth century were established during this period. I will then trace the transformation of perceptions and management of poverty during the 1830s and 1840s. The next section will begin its analysis during the 1850s, focusing on industrialization and the implementation of the Elberfeld system. From here, I will analyze the creation and struggle for implementation of Bismarck's policies, the motivations behind the legislation and its limitations. Concluding the analysis on the perceptions of poverty will focus on the 1890s to WWI. This period witnessed the most radical changes in attitudes towards poverty in the nineteenth century and was the most influential of twentieth century social welfare policies. The final section will address the impact of WWI on the issue of poverty and social welfare. It will summarize how perceptions of nineteenth century poverty are helpful in understanding the welfare state of the twentieth and twenty-first century welfare states.

III. POVERTY AND CHARITY TO 1830

For centuries, the distribution of poor relief remained at the state and local level typically dispersed by churches or local poor relief boards. The assistance individuals received consisted of materials such as food, clothes, firewood, or shelter. These were known as the basic necessities an individual needed to survive. The oldest recorded German welfare association "is the hospital foundation in Wemding in the Ries, which has been operating as an old-age and nursing home for indigent residents with funds donated back in 917."[35] Dating back to the Middle Ages the church along with "fraternities, orders, gilds, corporations, and brotherhoods, which had…religious, ritual, economic, and political meaning" were the primary distributors of

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[35] Michael Stolleis, *Origins of the German Welfare State*: *Social Policy in Germany to 1945,* trans. Thomas Dunlap, (Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2013), 24.

welfare.[36] These associations were typically voluntary or were a corporation, but despite their classification, they provided a certain level of social protection for its members. Associations also ran hospitals and poor houses along with providing its members funds for sickness or widows and orphans for the men who belonged to the association. Historian Michael Stolleis found that many of these associations "were largely still in existence in the nineteenth century and were incorporated into the process that gave rise to social insurance."[37]

Within the social welfare tradition, Germany is also home to the oldest social settlement. A family of wealthy merchants, the Fuggers, established the social settlement known as the Fuggerei in Augsburg, Germany. Dating back to the fourteenth century, the business moguls Jakob and Anton Fugger were enormously wealthy and their company held immense economic and political power. Often equated with the De Medici family in Italy, the Fuggers operated a trading, conveyance, and investment business, and because of Augsburg's location as the most efficient way of crossing the Alps, it became a center for trade. Along with the Fugger's merchant business, the family became very successful bankers who "financed the rise to power and the imperial crown of the Habsburgs, minted coins for the popes and paid their Swiss Guard," and subsidized the election of Spain's King Charles V as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 1519.[38] Jakob Fugger came to be known as the wealthiest man in Europe.

While the Fugger wealth and business dominated its reputation during the Middle Ages, it is the family establishment of the Fuggerei that epitomizes its standing today. From 1516 to 1523, Jakob Fugger commissioned the construction of fifty-two houses consisting of 106

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[36] Ibid., 7.
[37] Ibid., 7.
[38] Martin Kluger, *The Fugger Dynasty: the German Medici in and around Augsburg: history and places of interest,* trans. Christa Herzer, (Augsburg: Context Verlag, 2008), 13.

apartments. The community eventually included streets, several squares, a church, and was surrounded by a gate. Through these various constructions, the Fuggerei essentially became a small town within Augsburg. The settlement was "established [as] a housing estate for citizens of Augsburg who had become poor through no fault of their own."[39] This consisted of the elderly, widows, disabled, and orphans who for various reasons were unable to work and sustain life's necessities. Residents paid one Rheinischer Gulden per year, which is equivalent to 0.88 Euros or $1.23, as rent but were also required to say three prayers (the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary and the Apostles' Creed) a day for Jakob Fugger and the Fugger family. The most fascinating aspect of this settlement is that almost 500 years later, the settlement is still functioning as a place of refuge for 150 of Augsburg's poor, and retain similar requirements. Despite the eventual loss in the Fugger wealth of business and trade, the settlement continues to be the financed by the Fugger Foundation Fund.

While the Fuggerei represents an exception to the rule of church management of poor relief, this social settlement, with its three prayers a day requirement, held a deep connection to the church. The Fuggers were deeply devoted Catholics and used their massive wealth to aid the Pope. However, they were not immune to criticism. Their main critic was the Protestant reformer Martin Luther who asked, "How can it be the will of God or justifiable that in such a short time one man can become so rich that he has kings and emperors under his control?"[40] Another source of criticism came from the belief that the Fugger business practices of "charging interest constituted immoral 'usury'" along with the church prohibiting business monopolies.[41] As one

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[39] Ibid., 23.
[40] Kluger, *The Fugger Dynasty,* 21.
[41] Mike Esterl, "In This Picturesque Village, the Rent Hasn't Been Raised Since 1520," *Wall Street Journal,* December, 26, 2008.

writer on the Fugger family has noted, these criticisms and non-sanctioned church practices motivated Jakob Fugger to establish the Fuggerei.

For the churches, there was no overarching agreement between various denominations in Germany to decide what kinds or how much welfare was distributed. Each local church, either Catholic or Protestant, assisted its local paupers. Often, churches would first require those who needed assistance to attend mass, Sunday school, or confession. Understood as a consequence of choices made by individuals, churches believed that through proper education and church attendance the paupers and beggars would change and thus promote themselves outside the realm of poverty. Eventually churches gave up on requiring attendance in a religious service to receive handouts because of a lack of change on the pauper's part. Poverty was primarily a product of the lower classes and those who did not need to receive welfare viewed poverty as the result of poor decisions made by individuals rather than an outcome of circumstances such as illness, old age, or job loss. There were instances were an artisan or bourgeois family would become destitute. Since it was such a disgrace and embarrassment for individuals to receive public welfare, these families found care through private welfare institutions. These private welfare distributors provided loans, financial assistance or admittance into an institution if it was needed. The discriminatory effects of private welfare were minimal compared to public relief because it was seen as charity and not a handout.

In the late sixteenth century, the state began asserting a more active role within the realm of poor relief. This occurred for several reasons. First, the state saw that their interaction with the poor was a way of maintaining order over society. The relationship between the state and welfare was grounded in Christian ideals but also incorporated the secular desire to control the lower and potentially unruly classes. The state would incorporate Christian terminology in its management

of poverty, never abandoning the Christian duty and obligation people had for caring for the poor. The idea of maintaining order within society was furthered by the Reformation and religious wars of the sixteenth century, and continued during the seventeenth century by the Thirty Years War, which caused massive disturbance within society. The Reformation and religious wars initiated a confiscation of church property and the beginning of a secularization of society. "With this, the responsibility for social problems also shifted. It was now the city authorities and the territorial ruler who were admonished by theory and urged by praxis to take the initiative against poverty, and to make sure that the burden of poverty was diminished and transformed into productive labor."[42]

From the mid-seventeenth century moving into the Age of Enlightenment, a new idea emerged, not only in Germany but also in Europe that changed how society viewed the individual. A transformation in the collective consciousness of society allowed for the idea to develop of the person as a sovereign individual. This autonomy transformed the responsibility placed on individuals in that they, despite class and gender, were accountable for their conduct to both fellow humans and to God. Along with increased responsibility, the individual became "master of his own fate in both this life and the next…should he fail to walk the straight and narrow path, he must bear the consequences, and should he fail, all he can hope for is mercy."[43]

These ideas about the sovereign individual had a tremendous impact on the perceptions toward poverty in two primary ways. First, the idea of work transformed into a reflection of ones self-worth. Working hard meant that an individual was staying on the straight and narrow and was fulfilling Christian ideals of hard work. This idea held the premise that work would ensure

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[42] Stolleis, *Origins of German Welfare State,* 10.
[43] Stolleis, *Origins of the German Welfare State,* 10.

protection from poverty. Second, the idea of the autonomous individual allowed the indigent to be understood as having become poor as a direct consequence of unscrupulous life choices. Since the individual was now in control of his own fate and his actions were to determine this fate, he was expected to take charge of his conduct. Yet, this idea left little room for poverty being a consequence of circumstances out of the individual's control. This idea remained an enduring notion well into the nineteenth century. During the age of pauperism in the 1830s and 1840s and continuing on into industrialization, many of those impoverished were thrust into misery not by choices but by factors out of their control, such as fluctuations in free markets, increases in population, and factory accidents. It was only after Bismarck's social insurance policies and the rise of social work at the turn of the century that this idea of poverty being a direct consequence of a person's poor life choices or actions would breakdown. Due to the pervasiveness of the autonomous individual's life choices being central to their relationship to poverty, the majority of nineteenth century poverty management would in turn reflect this idea.

The state's more assertive role within the realm of poor relief was also furthered by the economic and political practice of cameralism, the German variant of mercantilism. Taking hold in the late sixteenth century and developing into the eighteenth century, cameralists were either bureaucrats or university professors who were trying to aggrandize the states potential for revenue and authority. Along with this, there was also an essential aspect of cameralism that was concerned with the common good of the people. This concept emphasized substantial government intervention and "the object of all social theory was to show how the welfare of the state might be secured. They saw in the welfare of the state the source of all other welfare. Their key to the welfare of the state was revenue to supply the needs of the state. The whole social

theory radiated from the central task of furnishing the state with ready means."[44] The implementation of cameralist philosophy in relation to poor relief did so with heavy regulation of the poor. These regulations, known as *Polizeiordnungen,* were enacted within Germany and dealt with coordinating "poverty, alms-giving, and the expulsion and punishment of foreign beggars."[45] While much of the cameralist ideology desired to increase the wealth and productivity of the economy, its focus on the welfare of society and promoting the common good demonstrates a transformative idea that "the state existed for higher goals than its own enrichment."[46] While the concept that the state existed to ensure the welfare of society did not bring about massive changes, it was radical enough to instill the idea of the state's responsibility to its citizens at an early stage, which would remain as the nineteenth century German welfare state took form.

The first time the state officially took responsibility in caring for the poor was in 1794 through the General Law Code for the Prussian States (*Allgemeine Landrecht).* This law system consisted of both public and private law and was a product of Enlightenment ideas. Enacted by Frederick II, the General Law Code sought to establish a basic law standard and equality before the law for Prussian citizens. In its writings, the Code indicated "the laws of the state apply to all members of the state, without regard to class, rank, or gender."[47] The civil code covered a variety of laws, including civil, penal, family, public, and administrative laws. One section is devoted to the management of the impoverished. It is in this section where the state claims the responsibility of caring for the poor. This code ensured that the local states would provide necessities such as

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[44] Albion W. Small, *The Cameralists: The Pioneers of German Social Policy,* (1909; repr., Ontario: Batoche Books, 2001), 4.

[45] Stolleis, *Origins of the German Welfare State,* 11.

[46] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 63.

[47] *Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preußischen Staaten von 1794. Textausgabe*, trans. Ben Marschke, ed. Hans Hattenhauer, (Frankfurt/Berlin: Metzner, 1970), 51-54.

food and other living resources to the indigent. The Prussian provisions to the poor worked alongside existing charitable institutions within communities. These institutions included both private almshouses and the church. The enforcement of the code system, in its entirety, occurred as long as it did not conflict with local customs. For poor relief, this requirement insured that someone with the means was to take responsibility for those who were in need.

While the Prussian civil code assumed the responsibility for the poor, it also encompassed many stipulations of how and who received goods from those distributing resources. For example, the code distinguished between deserving and non-deserving poor. The deserving poor were typically those who were widows, orphans, elderly, or physically handicapped. While the state took responsibility in meeting basic needs, responsibility also fell onto families. If an extended family or the children of the elderly were able to provide resources, the state would look to them to do so before they stepped in and provided goods. This shared responsibility allowed the state more freedom to help those without family aid. Un-deserving poor were described as "those who are [poor] only out of laziness, love of idleness, or other disordered inclinations."[48] The code called for these individuals to be stopped by use of force or punishment and be put to work with proper supervision. The state took interest in finding work for those citizens who were able. Those able-bodied individuals, who chose not to work often begged on the streets, which the code prohibited. Providing employment for these individuals would ensure that the impoverished did not litter community streets. Foreign-born individuals who fell into poverty were equated with those as un-deserving poor. Often stigmatized as those who begged, the code called for their removal from the state and return to their country of origin. The Prussian code also required that each local state contribute to the poor relief fund through

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[48] Ibid.

taxes. This ensured that the fund would remain solvent, meet the needs of the poor, and maintain good order with the community. Churches and charitable institutions also provided their funds for assistance within the community. The close association between local church and state eliminated the overlapping distribution of goods within a community. The relationship also guaranteed support for the needy and reduced abuse of the system.

Although enacted at the end of the eighteenth century, the Prussian General Code remained in effect until the end of the nineteenth century. Even after German unification in 1871, the Prussian code was extended to encompass all of Germany. However, for the poor laws, the exception was made for other forms poverty management, such as the Elberfeld system. Many areas of Germany practiced this system of poverty management and the Prussian Code did not prohibit these states from doing so. Instead, the code remained as a rudimentary set of laws, claiming obligation for meeting the needs of the poor. While several changes, extensions, and specifications were made during the nineteenth century, the Prussian General code remained the core regulation for poverty management for over one hundred years.

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed a transitioning atmosphere within Germany. Due to the Napoleonic Wars, Germany's geography began to take a more solidified shape in recognizing where its boundaries existed. The outcome of the Napoleonic wars transformed Germany from consisting of several hundred small distinct states into several dozen. There also developed a growing sense of German nationalism and German identity in the aftermath of the wars. In 1815, the establishment of the German Confederation answered the newly recognized German identity question and was the commencement of a new beginning for Germany. As historian Abigail Green stated regarding the newly formed German confederation, "the onus on many German governments was to reinvent the state for this new context,

reforming its institutions, refining its relations with its neighbors, and redefining the identity of its inhabitants."[49]

As the new confederation began establishing its power, Germany also witnessed the expansion of a free market economy. The new economic system produced a law guaranteeing the freedom of occupation (*Gewerbefreiheit).* This policy, while not directly intending to, influenced how poverty was managed and perceived within German society. Freedom of occupation allowed individuals to practice whatever trade or craft they desired and removed the regulations placed on them by the guild system. By the nineteenth century, the guild system was a key element within the economy. Yet, the freedom of occupation policy changed the guild's dominance and it entered a time of crisis. Before the enactment of this policy, artisans found their place in society amongst the petty bourgeoisie and held a solid sense of security. The freedom of occupation policy and the developing free market plunged many of these artisans into wage dependency in addition to increasing the number of workers in various trades.

A policy that went hand in hand with the freedom of occupation was freedom of movement. This law enabled those who were now capable of entering any trade to live or move wherever they desired. Previously, the feudal and absolutism ideology confined individuals to living in the same area where they were born. People were tied to their land of origin and had little or almost no opportunity to move. The poor relief system maintained under the Prussian General Code favored the restricted mobility of individuals. Since local communities and families were responsible for caring for the poor, the state did not have to worry about caring for those who were not part of their community or about finding their family. The lack of mobility

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[49] Abigail Green, *Fatherlands: State-building and Nationhood in nineteenth-century Germany,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5.

ensured that a local poor board would be able to distinguish its poor from the foreign vagrants. After the enactment of the freedom of movement policy, flaws in the poor management system became apparent. "Such a system of poor relief could function only in a socially and geographically immobile society, where subjects remained tied to the soil, where fertility was checked by marriage consents granted by manorial lords, and where town burghers rarely felt tempted to venture beyond familiar walls."[50] Taking into account the effects of the new free market, freedom of occupation, freedom of movement, along with the elimination of marriage restrictions, the issue of poverty became one of vast proportions reaching the developing working class. Thus, nineteenth century Germany began its immense transformation in dealing with the issue of poverty.

It is important to note that while the enactment of the freedom of occupation and freedom of movement policies occurred in 1815, the presence of their impact lasted much of the nineteenth century. In the late 1840s, the State Encyclopedia (*Staats-Lexikon)* characterized the freedom of occupation policy as being the "best suited to reestablishing the natural relationship of supply to demand destroyed by compulsory guilds. Competition expands where the opportunity for sales increases, or because products are perfected and prices become cheaper, and it can be extended even further through increased work and skill; it is more easily reduced where the tradesman is not confined to his craft but can easily shift to other kinds of business the moment his own no longer supports him."[51] This viewpoint clearly supports the freedom of occupation policy, recognizing that with a free market economy and the factors of supply and

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[50] Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State,* 150.

[51] "Freedom of Occupation": Excerpt from the *Staats-Lexikon:* "Trade and Manufacturing" (1845-1848), a document by Carl von Rotteck and Carl Welcker. In *From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815-1866,* edited by Jonathan Sperber, volume 3, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

demand, the policy works best for all industrial workers to make their own wealth and secure their own future. However, Leipzig economist Friedrich Bülau (1805-1859) commented that the greater amount of freedom placed on society caused for a greater amount of need. He stated, "the needs of all have increased, and what is now a need for the poorest was once not even so for the richest."[52] While the needs of society increased, Bülau still accepted that market oriented solutions were the answer to meet these needs and to combat the issue of poverty.

The relationship between guilds, artisans, workers, and the free market economy became a battleground in determining which system was more advantageous. Industrialization tended to exacerbate the issue of guilds and the independent worker. Opponents of the guild system were those former artisans and journeymen who lost their security with the freedom of occupation policy. However, opponents also included those who understood freedom of occupation as a policy that promoted the growth and potential unpredictability of the proletariat. "The specter of the "proletariat" is cast in the leading role. It hovers like a dark shadow over what is for most people the rather dim idea of the condition of occupational freedom. The rest of the cast is constituted by: giveaway prices, starvation wages, the decline of the middle class, the exploitation of the poor by the rich, the domination of capital, murderous competition, unsound, fraudulent labor, and demoralization."[53] This excerpt indicates the developing concern for the new working class due to the effects of industrialization. While the freedom of occupation and

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[52] "Friedrich Bülau's Call for a Market-Oriented Solution to the Problem of Poverty in Germany during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century (1834)", a document by Friedrich Bülau. In *From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815-1866,* edited by Jonathan Sperber, volume 3, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).
[53] "Victor Böhmert's Critique of the Traditional and Restrictive Nature of Guilds (1858)", a document by Victor Böhmert. In *From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815-1866,* edited by Jonathan Sperber, volume 3, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

freedom of movement policies were necessary for the emerging industrial society, apprehension arose out of its impact on society. As the list from the excerpt specifies, concerns about wages, the stability of the middle class, and the demoralization of society encouraged opponents of the policies. These concerns held a deep connection with the perceptions about poverty. The Age of Pauperism during the 1830s and 1840s, followed by the take-off of industrialization in the 1850s, caused the widespread presence of poverty within Germany and instigated the transformation of the issue. Academics, politicians, church leaders, and economists began to understand policies and economic principles as negatively effecting people's lives. Also instigated was a gradual transformation in understanding that while the individual still held his autonomy, he could fall into poverty based on circumstances outside of his control. This premise would fully evolve with industrialization and into the second half of the nineteenth century, along with the impact of the freedom of occupation and movement policies.

VI. THE AGE OF PAUPERISM 1830s-1840s

While the freedom of movement and occupation policies characterized the economic relationship with poverty in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Prussian Poor Laws of 1842 dealt practically with the social and political implications of these policies. The nature of poor management with the Prussian General Code worked under the basis that society was geographically immobile. When the policy changed, the flaws within the code system were manifested. Thus, the Prussian state enacted Poor laws that attempted to deal with the uncertainty of the new societal freedoms and "facilitate the freedom of movement that was necessary if labor were to be transformed into a commodity that could be bought and sold within a national or

territorial market."[54] The main obstacle that the poor laws needed to overcome was establishing who was eligible for relief. While the local state was responsible for poor management, the now mobile society caused various local communities, particularly more industrial ones, to become overwhelmed by the amount of new resident workers in their communities. When coupled with population growth and the labor market, which often resulted in periods of unemployment, local states were unable to manage the monetary or 'in kind' demands placed upon them. To fix the burden on local states, the poor law required that if an individual left their home of residence within a two-year period they lost their residence status and were thus forced to relinquish their entitlement to welfare. In moving to a new town, the law required that individuals must live in the area for at least three years before they can begin to claim their relief benefits. If an individual fell into need, the community was required to help the individual but could also seek reimbursement from the pauper's original place of residence, which would offset the cost of maintaining large numbers of the poor. The law required that states form a network of local relief intuitions, but failed in delineating those worthy of relief. This remained a function of the existing local intuitions and customs. Individuals who lost their residence were known as "*landarm* (land poor), [and] had to wear an 'L' on their cap, and were sent to an institution for the 'land poor' where they were forced to work."[55] While the German workhouse was not a fundamental institution in poor relief when compared to England, officials were determined to keep beggars, vagrants, and the work-shy from polluting cities and towns.

The church also felt the brunt of the new mobile society. Since local churches worked alongside local poor boards and relief institutions, they too were overwhelmed when industrial cities blossomed with newly arrived workers in their areas. The church held limited amounts of

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[54] Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany,* 83.
[55] Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany* 105.

resources and funds to aid local poor. While the church understood its obligation to care for the poor in their communities, it also struggled coupling this with its Christian duty to help all fellow believers in times of need. Therefore, church leaders usually supported those policies that would lessen the burden placed upon them while also still attempting to fulfill their responsibility.

While Prussian policies endeavored to meet the new challenges caused by industrialization, population growth, and a free market economy, the poor laws remained a reactionary measure to fight poverty. At this point, the attitudes that individuals held towards poverty were only slowly changing. Many ideas regarding poverty were still based on the premise that the individual was autonomous, in control of his or her own future, and falling into poverty was a direct consequence of poor life choices.

As the free market economy developed, the idea that individuals, particularly industrial workers, were left to the insecurity of the laws of supply and demand and were thus not always responsible for their descent into poverty began to take hold. Unhurried in accepting this premise, it took almost the entirety of the second half of the nineteenth century for policies to implement this idea. It was only toward the end of the century when ideas on preventative poverty management replaced reactionary welfare. The working and lower classes transitioned into this idea first, primarily because it affected them first. They experienced the harsh realities of industrial life including job insecurity, meager wages, and deprived living conditions causing diseases and malnourishment. Eventually, the other members of society accepted this notion such as economists, politicians, church leaders, and academics.

The attitude towards poverty radically transformed with the rise of the 'social question' and the intensified political tensions within Germany leading up to 1848. The social question, a product of the massive transition occurring within the economic and political spheres in

Germany, essentially asked how should Germany respond to growing social concerns. Namely, the social question focused on how Germany could potentially deal with the massive population growth and in turn, the poverty produced from the transitional crisis. Social reformers, intellectuals, church leaders, members of the bourgeoisie, and political actors all sought answers to figuring out what should be done with the large number of lower and potentially unruly classes. Friedrich Bülau, a Leipzig economist, advocated free markets and the removal of government regulation, which would in turn remedy poverty, stagnation, and the lack of productivity. Bülau's account details the perspective that the rich had on overpopulation and the inability of the poor to provide for basic needs.

> "In our time, a sudden anxiety has spread among the rich, and they would like to safeguard themselves at any price against the danger they fear from the growing misery of the poor. If they were to take the most natural measures and make it easier for the poor to lift themselves up through their own efforts to a higher level of physical and spiritual welfare, this would help both them and the whole of society. But they are merely trying to look after themselves at the cost of the poor, and they believe that they have removed the danger when they have used new restrictions to entrench themselves against the working classes, consequently intensifying the cause of the danger."[56]

The restrictions he references were specifically to prohibit marriage amongst those without means. The upper classes hoped this idea would stifle overpopulation. Bülau responds adamantly against this idea stating that it affronts "human dignity most insolently."[57] While legislation never developed to support this idea, it does reveal the upper class ideas behind poverty, and that their concern focused on themselves and not the well-being of others.

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[56] "Friedrich Bülau's Call for a Market-Oriented Solution to the Problem of Poverty in Germany during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century (1834)", a document by Friedrich Bülau. In *From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815-1866,* edited by Jonathan Sperber, volume 3, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).
[57] Ibid.

The development of the social question demonstrates the continued evolution on the issue of poverty in the nineteenth century and the movement of social issues to the forefront of the nineteenth century German mind. However, as Bülau's account demonstrates, this awareness was not always from a place of consternation for the impoverished, but rather to protect the existing social order. By 1848, with revolutionary ideas rampantly becoming more attractive to lower poverty-stricken classes, German liberals, conservatives, the bourgeoisie and upper classes all held their own ideas about how to answer the social question.

As German society became increasingly more mobile and industrial focused, along with the advances in machinery, many individuals discarded their agrarian roots and transitioned into an urban lifestyle. While the policies of freedom of movement and occupation transformed the traditional way of life for the lower and middle classes, there also began an abolition of marriage restrictions and an increase in the amount of land that was available for cultivation. These two conditions had profound effects on the demographics of Germany. The primary effect was the massive population growth. In 1816, at the establishment of the German Confederation, the population consisted of approximately 32.7 million people. In 1865, that number rose sixty percent to 52.2 million.[58] This growth was predominantly a rural occurrence and occurred amongst the lower levels of society "who lacked property and a secure place in the social order."[59] For example, in the northwest German community of Lippe-Detmold the population of land owning farmer in 1784 was 5,700. The number of landless laborers was 3,500. By 1848 the land owning farmers population had only risen to 7,600 in contrast to the landless laborers whose population grew to 8,000 individuals. The lower classes were the least economically secure group within Germany and thus experienced the impact of mass population growth most acutely.

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[58] Breuilly, *Nineteenth Century Germany,* 57.
[59] Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany,* 61.

By the 1830s and 1840s, population growth created a fundamental change in the perception of poverty by its impact economically, socially, and politically.

Economically, the newly established market oriented system within Germany was fragile. Still in its formative stage, the economy slowly transitioned from an agrarian dominated system to an industrial one, but had yet to reach its point of industrial boom that would come in the 1860s. As John Breuilly stated, "the growth in the labor supply was not matched by a corresponding demand for manufactured products."[60] While underproduction was not chronic, it was coupled with an overproduction of agricultural goods in the 1830s. This resulted in a domino effect that created a depression of agricultural prices, the fall of agrarian incomes, which corresponded to a decline in the demand for manufactured goods. In the 1840s, the overproduction from the agricultural sector ended and, because of failed crop cycles, caused what historians have termed 'the hungry forties.' The economic circumstances of the 1830s and 1840s had a tremendous social impact on Germany.

Characterized as 'the age of pauperism,' German citizens during the 1830s and 1840s began a new relationship with the idea of poverty. With substantial population growth and the economy unable to respond to support, poverty during this period became a mass phenomenon. Many of those individuals dealing with poverty before the age of pauperism depended upon specific incidents such as sickness, death of spouse, injury, or natural disaster and would often be seasonal. By this point, poverty became a permanent fixture for many families, and it encompassed entire social groups, even those who had previously been economically secure, such as artisans. It was a collective and structural issue within society and people could not maintain their same understanding of the problem of poverty.

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[60] Breuilly, *Nineteenth Century Germany,* 58.

The phenomena became so widespread that a new term, *pauperismus*, was coined to explain and understand the new occurrence. In 1846, the Brockhaus German lexicon and encyclopedia defined *pauperismus* as:

> "a condition where a numerous class of people can secure through the most strenuous work at most the most minimal subsides (and cannot even be certain of this), a class whose members are- even before they are born- doomed for their entire lives to such a condition, a class that has no prospects of improvement and that, in fact, sinks deeper and deeper into lethargy and brutality, temptation, drink, and animalistic vices of all kinds, that supplies a constantly increasing number of recruits to the poorhouse, workhouse, and jails, and that yet still manages to replenish itself and increase its numbers with great rapidity."[61]

This definition explicates the change on the issue of poverty. While pauperism characterized those experiencing unemployment, this definition shows that even working would not guarantee security from poverty. The depression of wages prohibited workers from providing life's necessities for themselves and their families. The definition indicates that even strenuous work, which indicates long hours and or multiple jobs, would not ensure helping those affected by pauperism. This definition also identifies that pauperism impacted individuals even before birth, indicating that through no fault of their own, groups of people were plunged into poverty with little possibility of improvement. This factor, along with engulfing whole classes of society, was unlike anything ever known in Germany, or in Europe. Many of the flaws within the poverty management system were identified primarily due to the enormous scope of the problem.

The definition from the lexicon also provides an explanation for the consequences of pauperism within society. Stating that it leads to moral decay, pauperism instigated the flourishing of idleness, drunkenness, and other animalistic vices. In an account on the effects of pauperism in Leipzig, a writer stated "society and private property is threatened by the growing encroachments of poverty," and that society would "soon recognize that much crime is only the

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[61] "Pauperismus," *Brockhaus' Conversations-Lexikon der Gegenwart,* (Leipzig, 1840), IV:65.

consequence of too great of poverty and that many become criminals only after he lacked the funds to satisfy the hunger of his family."[62] Due to this, the poorhouse and workhouse began its pronounced presence in the second half of the nineteenth century. Also as a result of these consequences, a developing threat to the social order began consuming the minds of the more durable spheres of society. The mass group of paupers held a formidable amount of unruly presence, which given their unstable place in society, could become volatile at a moment's notice. While the term *pauperismus* defined the characteristics of those in poverty, they were also termed *die Eigentumlosen,* people without possessions. This characteristic feature for most of the lower class also indicates their potential for disrupting the social order. Being a people without possessions, the poverty-stricken had nothing to lose by rising up and demanding better conditions or leading the nation into a revolution. To stave off disaster the other groups in society responded by constructing ways to manage the developing social question.

The placement of pauperism at the forefront of the German mind produced a plethora of writings known as pauperism literature. The literature manifested itself by means of books, tracts, and pamphlets. Pauperism literature became a topic of historical analysis in the twentieth century. Hermann Beck recognizes three of the historians, Paul Mombert, Liselotte Dilcher, and Ruth Hoppe who each examined the literature from various points of view. Some focused on the industrial proletariat in the writings, others avoided interaction with those written by socialist authors, and some focused on the geographic region where they were written. Despite the differences, these three historians work explored approximately 600 pieces of pauperism literature.[63] Their analysis and interaction with so many examples proves the pervasiveness of this literature and the concern over the issue of poverty in the nineteenth century. What is

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[62] *Die Armuth und die Mittel ihr entgegen zu wirken,* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1844).
[63] Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State,* 11-12.

important to note is that pauperism literature took off in the 1830s and 1840s and continued throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. It often reflected the changing character of the social or worker question and responded to various social developments within society, such as the proliferation of the socialist and labor movement.

Analyzing Mombert, Dilcher, and Hoppe's work provides a narrative of those writing pauperism literature and the avenues they sought to have their work published. University graduates who studied "Staatswissenschaft, jurisprudence, philosophy, medicine, or theology typically wrote the literature. Few had known poverty through personal experience, but they were interested in the fate of the lower classes by dint of their positions as professors, teachers, doctors, or high-ranking civil servants."[64] Another historian, Klaus-Jürgen Matz found that many authors were "civil servants, judges, officers, writers, merchants, doctors, and parsons."[65] The professions of the writers of pauperism literature display the change in attitudes towards poverty. Their concern and awareness of the lower classes demonstrates "a sort of sea change in mentalities, at least in the mentalities of the people who held political power and whose views were recorded or expressed in print."[66]

The avenues of publication also demonstrate an increasing awareness of social conditions amongst the various levels of society. Beck finds that much of the pauperism literature publications "originated as submissions to public prize questions promoted by royal academics of different states of the German Confederation."[67] One illustration is that of the Royal Academy of Erfurt, which in 1835 sought writings on answering the question "of whether complaints about

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[64] Ibid., 12.

[65] Klaus-Jürgen Matz, *Pauperismus und Bevölkerung,* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), 62.

[66] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social*, 56.

[67] Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State,* 10.

increasing impoverishment and lack of nourishment in Germany were justified and how the evil could be redressed."[68] This prompting produced merely seventeen submissions, demonstrating how the issue of poverty on a massive scale and the pursuit to find solutions was in its early stages within the nineteenth century German mind. Comparing this example to one incited by the King of Bavaria following the 1848 revolution, it produced a response of over 650 literature submissions. The revolution heightened the awareness of social problems amongst the bourgeoisie and upper levels of German society.

The lexicon definition of pauperism is just one of many examples of pauperism literature. The entry into the lexicon demonstrates the developing trend for individuals to try to understand the developing social problems, comprehend their origin and the characteristics associated with them. Pauperism literature provided potential solutions to the problem of poverty, and the exploration of various avenues for management.

Another example of pauperism literature is the work by Bettina von Armin (1785-1859) who is most famous for her work as a writer of German Romanticism. Armin was deeply concerned for the welfare of those living in poverty and the underprivileged. In 1843, Armin wrote *Dies Buch gehört dem König* ("This Book Belongs to the King") for the King of Prussia, Frederick William IV. In this work, Armin elucidates the unspeakable, overcrowded living conditions in which poor industrial workers were living in Berlin. Her work details numerous examples of wage earners, ranging from weavers to shoe makers to industrial workers. Armin describes their living situation and how many were suffering from illness, injury from work, or were widows trying to support their families alone. While most of those she encountered worked in some capacity, the meagerness and inconsistency of wages affirms the lexicon definition in

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[68] Ibid., 10.

stating that even working could not eradicate a family or individual from the grips of poverty.[69] As the title indicates, Armin anticipated that her work would bring much needed attention to the plight of those suffering from pauperism, and was appointed to the King, and given his means, could do something about it.

This is what much of the pauperism literature sought to do, inform the bourgeoisie, local government and church leaders, and even in Arnim's case, the king to respond fervidly to escalating social problems. A piece of pauperism literature written in 1844 from Leipzig states that its goal for writing on the topic of poverty is to find a way to eradicate it and it implores "philanthropists" to find this endeavor a worthy and "fruitful" cause.[70] Detailing the circumstances surrounding those who were archetypally thrust into poverty, the author warns readers to not make quick judgments on the impoverished. He also asserts that when individuals encounter the poor, they often assume that these individuals hold an aversion to work and never take the trouble to investigate whether their reproach is founded or what obstacles the indignant hold to acquire work. In an effort to make the process of pauperization relatable to readers, the author equates the paupers experience to that of those from "higher levels of society," where a hardworking family man striving to find work can also suffer, from no fault of his own, the inability to find or keep work and is thus thrown into poverty.

This example of pauperism literature demonstrates an important aspect of the changing perceptions towards poverty in the second half of the nineteenth century. The technique of making the issue relatable to its readers validates the author's goal to encourage the ending of poverty within society. By showing that poverty is not an issue restricted to the lower classes, it

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[69] Bettina von Arnim, *Dies Buch gehört dem König,* (Berlin: Schröder, 1843).
[70] *"Die Armuth und die Mittel ihr entgegen zu wirken,"* (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1844), 13.

encourages readers, presumably members of the bourgeoisie, to view the issue as one that can affect anyone at any point. It also demonstrates that the poverty-stricken were not in that place due to poor life choices or mismanagement of resources. Instead, citizens were inextricably tied to the market economy and forces out of their control, such as the success or failure of a crop cycle or the proliferation of mechanization. Two examples, one from Erlangen and another from Nuremberg, describe the attitudes of those now effected by factors out of their control. In Erlangen, a master stocking knitter described how the placement of three wool spinning machines had caused many to lose their jobs, saying they were a "destroyer of households, the ruination of the youth, the inducer of luxury, the despoiler of forests, the populator of the workhouse, the exploiter of the royal treasury, and soon the companion of general upheaval."[71] According to this artisan, every problem facing society could be indissolubly linked back to mechanization. In Nuremburg a writer stated "if we should enter the home of a craftsman we should see at once the bitterest want, so anxiously concealed and kept secret. The lack of orders and of markets and low prices frequently bring the most industrious man into such distress that he and his family must suffer more than a public beggar."[72] As industrialization took off in the 1850s, the social and labor movement also dramatically took shape and transformed the discussion on pauperism.

With the proliferation of pauperism literature, a question arises as to why members within the various realms and professions of society were concerned for the plight of the pauperized masses. This is due to the emerging notion of the social sphere. The social realm existed between the spheres of the economy and state. "As the liberal theorists, Robert von Mohl argued in 1851,

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[71] Eda Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany: 1648-1914,* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1977), 399.
[72] Ibid., 399.

the social sphere was "both independent of the state and above the interests of individuals."[73] Given that this idea took shape during the age of pauperism, the characteristics associated with the social were the competition of those associated with the poor (unstable, crime ridden, and moral failures), with those of the bourgeoisie (work, thrift, and family responsibility). The social became a new way for individuals to map out the various sections of society, understanding which qualities belonged to specific spheres. For example, the bourgeoisie formed their identity in opposition to that which made up the lower classes and poor. The poor became "constructed as the Other in which the bourgeoisie self could see its own virtues mirrored and affirmed."[74] Although, what is interesting about this idea is that much of the middle class during this period were not economically secure. While they lived lives of frugality, they would often do what was necessary to keep up appearances that they were more economically stable. Ernst Dronke (1822-1891), a socialist writer, chronicled this premise stating,

> "In the areas inhabited by the petty bourgeoisie, the houses are lovely and look almost the same as the houses of the nobles, but they are standing on bad ground; it is marshy and swampy, and not infrequently, wall of buildings sink. They thing either fall down or have to be torn down after a few years. This situation also reflects the life of the so-called middle class in Berlin. On the outside they glitter while the pursue pleasures in public places, full of opulence and splendor, while their homes are crumbling. You can never be sure if the families you see at concerts and around town in fine velvet and silk had to skip meals and sacrifice necessities like beds and furniture to enable their lifestyle."[75]

As this account states, the middle classes were determined to set themselves apart from the lower masses, willing to starve or live in shambles in order to distinguish themselves as part of the upper classes.

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[73] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 56.

[74] Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany,* 63.

[75] "Excerpts from *Berlin* (1846)", a document by Ernst Dronke. In *From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815-1866,* edited by Jonathan Sperber, volume 3, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

In searching for the motivation of pauperism literature authors, many of the authors analyzed the issue of poverty because of the threat to the social order and wanting to preserve the status quo. While some authors genuinely cared for the plight of the lower classes, this was not a motivating factor for most authors. "What concerned most contemporary observers was less the level of absolute material deprivation than the social consequences of economic change and what they perceived as the moral degeneration of the impoverished masses, whose alienation from and hostility toward society made them less an object of charity than one of fear."[76]

The anxiety over social concerns and the social order existed on several different levels. Class, such as being a member of the bourgeoisie or the Junker class, political affiliations, and religion, influenced perceptions on social issues. Politically, both conservatives and liberals held distinct views on social problems. Another influencer was religion, and how the church fit into managing social concerns. Given that the church was historically the main source of charity and relief to the poor for many centuries, their view on the age of pauperism provides another aspect to understanding the larger perception of poverty. The church, like public poor relief, was overwhelmed by the magnitude of pauperization and concerned with the moral decline of society that many conservatives and liberals were also preoccupied with. Each of these variants (class, politics, and religion) played into how Germany should answer the social question and in turn they each say something important on the evolving perception of poverty.

Conservatives in mid-nineteenth century Germany were those belonging to the higher land owning Junker class, nobles, and bureaucrats. Historian Klaus Epstein's *The Genesis of German Conservatism,* identifies three types of German conservatives in the nineteenth century. The first were status quo conservatives who resisted any sort of change and sought to maintain

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[76] Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany,* 60.

the power and affluence they held within society. The second group were reactionary conservatives. Characteristically antagonistic to new changes in society, they desired to undo all the changes and romanticized the past where their place in society occurred without question. The third and final group were reform conservatives. These individuals understood that change was inevitable but they wanted to guide the changes to sustain their control.[77] Many state officials, and civil servants who were not liberals, belong to the group of reform conservatives.

What can be deduced from these three categories is that few conservatives viewed change in a positive light, given that it would potentially remove their hold of power. "Until 1866 conservatives were for the most part antinational in orientation, opposed to the creation of a nation state, opposed to all foreign policy adventures, and staunchly clinging to an alliance with Austria and Russia."[78] It is conservative ideas and rule of power that the leaders of the 1848 revolution were driven to defeat. The revolutionists sought representative government, a constitution, a unified Germany, and guaranteed rights such as freedom of speech, press, and the right to vote. While the overthrow of German society did not occur from the revolution, it did make the issues an immutable factor conservatives had to face if they wanted to retain with their power.

Liberals in nineteenth century Germany were in a broad definition "opposed to tyranny and defenders of liberty" and were typically members of the bourgeoisie.[79] Many characteristics for liberals included an opposition of privilege by birth and they necessitated that the state's

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[77] Klaus Epstein, *The Genesis of German Conservatism,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 3-29.
[78] Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State,* 34.
[79] Breuilly, *Nineteenth Century Germany,* 51.

power be circumscribed by a constitution and laws. The platform of the German Progressive

Party, founded in Prussia in 1861, describes the basic principles of liberal politics.

> "For our domestic institutions we demand a solid liberal government, which sees its strength in the respect for citizens' constitutional rights and understands how to strictly enforce its principles at all levels of the state service, and which, in this way, shall earn and maintain the respect of the other German tribes. In the legislative field, it appears to us that a strict and consistent realization of a constitutional state is a primary and unconditional necessity. We therefore especially demand legal protection by way of truly independent judges. No less necessary, it appears to us, for Prussia's honor and for the consolidation of the Constitution, is the establishment of municipal [local], district [county], and provincial constitutions based on principles of equality and self-administration, which would require the abolition of administration based on a society of orders and of the manorial police."[80]

Along with guaranteeing rights and establishing a representative and constitutionally based

government, liberals wanted education, economic, and social reform. In an article published by

the *Deutsche Zeitung* in 1847 summarizing a meeting of German liberals stated that "the

assembly devoted time and attention to the means for combating impoverishment and suffering,

as well as the associated question of the tax system."[81]

Just like conservatives who understood that the social question posed a viable threat to

the social order, liberals recognized that steps would be necessary, by the state, to maintain

order. However, liberals did not view the individuals as inherently sinful, but instead claimed

they lacked the needed education and culture that would stave off poverty, immorality, and social

chaos. They understood poverty as a product of poor planning on wage earners part to plan for

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[80] "The Liberals: Founding Program of the German Progressive Party (June 9, 1861)", a document from Wolfgang Treue, *Deutsche Parteiprogramme seit 1861*, 4th edition Göttingen: Muster-Schmidt Verlag, 1968, pp. 62-63. In *From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815-1866,* edited by Jonathan Sperber, volume 3, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

[81] "The Liberals: Heppenheim Program of the Southwest German Liberals (October 10, 1847)", a document from the *Deutsche Zeitung*, Heidelberg, October 15, 1847. In *From Vormärz to Prussian Dominance, 1815-1866,* edited by Jonathan Sperber, volume 3, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

future incidents such as sickness, layoffs, or old age. This of course is an unrealistic and misconceived notion of poverty on the part of liberals. Yet it displays a shift in perceptions of poverty in that external factors rather than internal ones were understood as contributing to the problem of poverty. Many wage earners, particularly those hit by poverty, could only think about life day by day, never week to week or month to month. With poor wages and insecurity in the job market, most individuals were fortunate to have a job to return to each morning. There was no concept of long range planning, or job security for the laboring classes, and the liberal idea that there could be is a fundamental flaw in their own perception of the issue.

Religion plays an important but interesting role on the perception of poverty and social issues at this transitional point in the nineteenth century. First, the church itself held its own ideas on the mass pauperization experienced throughout Germany. While each state had its own local poor laws and poor boards who managed the qualifications and distribution of aid, they worked in conjunction with the charity handed out by the church. Just as the age of pauperism overwhelmed local poor boards, so was the church in meeting the needs of its parishioners and townspeople. Many church leaders saw it as their duty to speak out and take action against the developing social problems.

Given that many of the causes or effects of poverty led to moral decay in the nineteenth century mind, the church and its leaders saw themselves as paragons of moral living. The most conspicuous example of faith based social awareness that demonstrate religion's active role in encouraging society to reclaim its religious and moral roots is through the Protestant Inner Mission. Conservative Protestants viewed social problems as a direct consequence of the original sin and the rejection of God. They viewed the family as the essential social institution to answer the social question. Even other institutions, such as the church, community, and state, "mirrored

the structure and function of the family."[82] In 1848, the Protestant church implemented this idea of family centered social relief through the "house of salvation" (*Rettungshaus).* From here, Johann Hinrich Wichern transformed the houses of salvation "and expanded it into a broader program for the religious renewal of the nation" known as the Inner Mission. Seeking to bring Germany as a nation back to God, the Inner Mission sought to create a coalition of German Protestant churches and by the 1850s it had succeeded in doing so. In relation to the perception of poverty, Wichern and the Inner Mission believed that "material destitution and immorality were simply the external expressions of an inner distress that could be overcome through spiritual means."[83] They "insisted that material assistance was a vital element of church relief, though only insofar as it could be made into a mechanism for the inner spiritual elevation of the poor."[84] This Protestant organization did not accept the notion that individuals were subject to factors outside of their control and pushed into poverty through no decisions of their own. Since the Inner Mission understood poverty and the eradication of it from society to be a spiritual undertaking, the lower and working classes did not typically respond well to their mission. While the mission lasted well into the twentieth century, their perception of poverty made the mission's social welfare goals ineffective.

Although the Inner Mission was a religiously based organization, the spheres of church and state were not independent from one another in nineteenth century Germany. In the years leading up to and during the 1848 revolution, the church and politics were closely intertwined and much of the political rhetoric and views were expressed in religious language. Both conservatives and liberals understood that uprisings from the lower classes were byproducts of

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[82] Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany,* 65.
[83] Ibid., 69.
[84] Ibid.

moral decay, and that religion held the forces necessary to cease the growing tensions amongst that class. They also both feared that the handing out of relief would elicit a feeling of entitlement amongst the impoverished. Faith based and public forms of welfare embodied a collective responsibility to care for the poor, however they feared that an expansion or increase in assistance would hinder the lower classes work ethic, have them try and make a claim on someone else's property, or even ensue a class uprising.[85] This fear kept poor relief management stagnant through the age of pauperism into the 1850s when industrialization took off.

The revolution of 1848 was the apex of rising tensions amongst the lower classes of society. Traditionally the German historical approach to the revolution characterized it as a middle class sponsored and democratically motivated revolution. However, in the events leading up to the revolution, at least a third of them were agrarian in nature. Farmers and the middle class rarely held the same goals. Farmers desired freedom from their landlords, but still acknowledged the authority of local princes and rulers. The middle class desired freedom of the press, yet farmers understood this freedom as removing the oppression of their landlords. Another third of the revolutionary participants were members of the urban lower classes, consisting of laborers, apprentices, journeymen, impoverished tradesmen, and factory workers. Therefore, the majority of those involved with the revolution and those who carried it were the ones directly impacted by the social and economic crisis.[86]

During the 'hungry forties,' the pauperized masses were those who felt the effects most. In 1844 the Silesian weavers uprising was one of the first demonstrations that initiated concern for the standing social order and one of the first upheavals amongst the lower levels of society.

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[85] Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany,* 72-78.
[86] Breuilly, *Nineteenth Century Germany,* 62.

Silesia had a flourishing textile industry for over a century, yet due to changes in international market competition from England, the unwillingness of Junkers to support protective tariffs to ensure job security for weavers, and limited exports caused prices and in turn the wages of the weavers to diminish greatly. Diminished wages assured that families would enter poverty, unable to meet necessities such as food, clothing, or keep their residence. The plight of the weavers became known throughout much of Prussia. Hermann Beck finds that "reporting was very realistic," persistently highlighting the plight of the weavers. "There hardly seemed to have been a voice that did not urge swift action to help the poor."[87] Several private and local associations sought to help the weavers, and sent their own members to seek out the situation. One distressing account, from Alexandar Schneer, describes "the paupers' clothing often consist[ing] of rags, their dwellings were in a state of dilapidation, their nourishment was made up of black flour and inferior potatoes, normally fed to livestock, and due to recent harvest failures, things seemed to be getting even worse." Schneer went so far as to state that prison convicts were better off than the weavers.[88]

Despite the urging of the press, the one individual who held the authority to bring aid to the weavers, the *Oberpräsident* Friedrich Theodor von Merckel, did nothing. Because poverty and periods of starvation was not an uncommon phenomenon amongst the weavers, their plight seemed inexorable. The *Oberpräsident* chose to believe that the press embroidered the desolation of the weavers, and eventually, even after learning more about the weavers' situation, still did nothing. Merckel's inaction toward aiding the weavers has been an issue for interpretation, and it is still unsure why he chose to remain stagnant. His inaction displays the inexperience of leaders to deal with the effects of poverty on a large scale at this point in the nineteenth century. While

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[87] Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State,* 171.
[88] Ibid., 172-173.

periodic poverty and starvation may have been common for weavers in Silesia, the massive scale of the problem was unlike anything state officials had managed previously.

In June of 1844 all of the factors pinnacled when the weavers were rejected their continued request for higher wages. From their denial, the weavers, along with allies that were tile makers, carpenters, coopers, day laborers, and servants, attacked the Zwanziger brothers (harsh factory owners and entrepreneurs) and their estate. While the laborers ravaged the Zwanziger brothers' estate, the brothers did escape. However, the revolt did not end, and the number of participants expanded and moved to another town to ravage another industrial estate. It was during this move to another town that the Prussian military suppressed the revolt and in turn killed eleven people while attempting to reestablish order within the area.

Despite the quick suppression from the Prussian military, the Silesian weavers revolt signaled a turning point in German history. It is not the only example of civil unrest within the pre-March period. In 1846 and 1847, Germany experienced a downturn of the business cycle and crop disease causing over 150 food riots in Prussia alone, and other uprisings in Hamburg, Braunschweig, Baden, and Württemberg. In Silesia, an estimated 50,000 people died from diseases related to malnutrition.[89] Given the many uprisings and the effects of food depravation, every level of society was well aware of the social ills plaguing Germany. The response of the poverty stricken to revolt demonstrates that the lower classes had begun to recognize that poverty primarily plagued their class. With this new awareness also came the recognition of class interests and one effective method of getting those interests across was uprising.

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[89] Breuilly, *Nineteenth Century Germany,* 59. David Blackbourn, *History of Germany: 1780-1918 The Long Nineteenth Century,* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 105.

Revolting or uprising had a great influence on the formation of German working-class consciousness. As the notion of class-consciousness solidified, so did the understanding that membership within a group afforded a greater amount of protection. This developing notion does influence the perception that people have on poverty, particularly those who were the impoverished. They understood that united together their presence was something that could not be ignored; they held within them an awareness of agency, which had never before happened amongst this group in Germany. "The poor survived by fashioning a culture of expediencies. They sought creative and expedient ways to manage situations, adapting behavior as they went along…the poor were usually aware of social and cultural rules, but by exercising their agency, they challenged and sometimes broke them, when doing so was expedient for their well-being."[90] However, at this stage, the impoverished failed to demonstrate major strength or resourcefulness. It would take industrialization and the growth of the labor and socialist movements for the lower working classes to become effective in exercising their agency.

The revolution of 1848 was in essence, a failure. While the specific causes, other than the heightened social concerns, and results of the revolution will not be outlined here, it does mark a transitional period for Germany. In the post-revolutionary phase, Germany experienced industrialization and the alleviation of mass pauperization that characterized the 1830s and 1840s. The period from 1850 to 1871, often referred to as the 'age of capital' experienced a triumph of liberal ideals. The German economy began to integrate itself into the British dominated system by participating in free trade throughout the European continent and by establishing partnerships between business owners and the state. There was also significant infrastructure building, such as railroads, canals, and ports. Infrastructure building allowed

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[90] Fuchs, *Gender and Poverty*, 5.

Germany to make use of its coal and steel reserves and thus make it more competitive against the British market.

While the age of capital did alleviate many impoverished citizens from living destitute lives, industrialization created a new set of social concerns. Given the past relationship between the lower classes and their uprisings, the focus on disruption and potential overthrow of society remained a vital concern for political and business leaders after 1848. The industrial proletariat developed and the socialist labor movement became increasingly attractive to the unstable sectors of society. Fear of the socialist movement and self-preservation prompted many political leaders to respond to the distresses of the industrialized working class. Historian Eda Sagarra makes a profound statement on the relationship between social instability and the revolution of 1848. The "deep-seated anxieties among ordinary people prompted many to give their support initially to the revolution of 1848, hoping to achieve a restoration of an earlier reactionary social order by radical means. The failure of the revolution to provide a panacea for the social evils of the time brought such people back to the traditional attitude of the German burger: to look for protection and security from the state."[91] This response by German citizens to look back to the state to solve its social concerns is unique to the German experience. The reliance on state sponsored cures to social aliments is what characterizes the latter half of nineteenth century.

V. INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE ELBERFELD SYSTEM-1850s-1880s

In the aftermath of the revolution through the onset of industrialization in the 1850s little changed in the management of poverty. In fact, many of the inefficiencies within the poor relief system manifested themselves as industrialization expanded throughout Germany. In most instances, the relief system was inadequately managed, lacking checks on who qualified for

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[91] Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany*, 399.

relief or proper follow up after receiving assistance. This allowed for many abuses of the system, causing a strain on meeting the needs of paupers. One account by social reformer and industrialist Ludwig Friedrich Seyffardt (1827-1901) illustrates many of the shortcomings of the poor relief system based on the Poor Laws of 1842 that the majority of German states employed.

> "The approval of alms would not take place according to the degree of need, but rather as a kind of compensation in order to be rid of the burdensome applicant. Once a person had received this assistance, he regarded this support as a personal right since it was seldom withdrawn and even then only under unusual circumstances. This distribution of assistance in money and bread took place weekly in the office of the poor relief administration and frequently led to tumultuous scenes among the idling crowd. The result of this system was that many of those whose need was only temporary were labeled permanent alms recipients, the sense of honor among the lower classes was alarmingly damaged, and the genuinely needy who were sick or unable to work were forced to beg because the alms they received did not suffice to meet their daily needs. Almost every family of the middle and upper bourgeoisie designated one day of week when a small amount was given to every beggar, and in the more affluent districts a crowd of tattered figures gathered almost every day on the street corners to beg for charity two or three times at the same house, according to circumstances. Children were trained how to beg, and in many cases they had to bear the larger share of the burden of supporting their debauched parents."[92]

With the poor relief system unable to meet the needs of society as they were supposed to, it caused many citizens, who still feared the potential social threat of lower classes, to find alternative and adroit ways to manage poverty.

The Elberfeld poor relief system transformed poor relief into an efficient structure that seemed to resolve the problems associated with the old poor relief system. In 1853, the system was established named after the town who first introduced it. From 1853 to 1914, most German cities adopted the Elberfeld system as their poor relief management plan. Table 1 details the various locations throughout Germany who accepted the system and when they enacted the program. Before, and even after, unification in 1871, the different German states held autonomy

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[92] L.F. Seyffardt, *Bericht der Städtiche Armen-Deputation zu Crefeld über ihrer zehnjärige Wirksamkeit seit Einführung des Elberfelder Systems der Armenpflege,* (Crefeld, Germany: Kramer and Baum, 1873), 3.

in managing their poor, the larger state government only ensured that the state was required to provide some form of relief. Despite states' autonomy, it was the effective strategy, careful resource use, and diligent supervision of the poor that prompted many cities to accept the program.

The implementation of the Elberfeld system to a host of German cities provides key information to understanding the problem of poverty at this time. First, it is evident that many towns in Germany, varying in geography and in industry were all suffering the same inadequacies and ineffectiveness in their poor relief system. Second, while the Elberfeld system was the model for other cities, they would tailor the program to fit the specific needs of an individual city. For example, if one location held a larger agriculture base or immigrant population, the management of the system would reflect these characteristics in the town. Third, the Elberfeld system became a model for not only Germany, but for other countries. Both England and Australia sent emissaries to Germany to inquire and analyze how the Elberfeld system worked in application. With detailed analysis, these delegates would interact with the systems administrators and welfare recipients to understand how the system worked, and in what ways they could improve their own systems back home. Their analysis is one of the best resources available to historians today in comprehending the basic functions of the system and how they were carried out.[93] This transfer of ideas from one nation to another is a leading example of the developing notion of globalization and transnational history. Therefore, the Elberfeld system was both a successful model for Germany and other nations because of its efficiency and its malleability to meet the diverse needs of numerous communities.

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[93] Catherine H. Spence, *The Elberfeld System of Charity: A Study of Poverty,* (Adelaide: W.K. Thomas and Co., 1906).

Table 1: Adoption of the Elberfeld Poor Relief System in various towns, 1853-1911[94]

Year	City	Year	City
1853	Elberfeld	1880	Leipzig, Dresden, Mühlheim
1862-63	Barmen, Krefeld, Duisburg, Halberstadt		
1864	Essen	1881	Kassel, Rostock, Bremerhaven
1865	Altona	1882	Magdeburg, Potsdam, Stralsund,
1867	Ruhrort	1883	Frankfurt, Fulda, Zwickau
1868	Hagen	1884	Gotha, Halle
1870	Neuweid	1885	Posen, Greifswald
1871	Keil	1888	Cologne
1874	Dortmund	1889	Aachen, Bielefeld
1875	Elbing, Stuttgart, Bremen	1893	Hamburg, Erfurth
1876	Siegen, Darmstadt	1895	Mainz, Münster, Breslau,
1877	Düsseldorf, Oldenburg, Naumburg	1898	Mannheim, Danzig
1878	Königsberg, Landsberg, Hanau	1911	Lübeck

The specific intricacies of how the Elberfeld system worked will not be discussed in detail, but a particular component of the system will be because it directly influences the perception individuals had on the issue of poverty during this industrial period. The Elberfeld system operated under a hierarchy of leaders, where each individual would report to someone above them on their interaction with the poor. Under this system, the administration broke the city into districts, and each district was then broken down into sections. Each district would have an overseer and each section a visitor. For example, the town of Elberfeld was divided into 26 districts, and each of these into 14 sections. There were 26 overseers and 364 visitors. These numbers were determined based on population density and the number of visitors could increase to reduce overwhelming the visitor's responsibilities and ensure that duties were correctly

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[94] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 97. Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany,* 159.

performed. The jobs of the overseer and visitors were unpaid positions, and in 1871, the Prussian Law made the task compulsory. The law stated, "every inhabitant who has a right to vote in municipal affairs, is bound to undertake an unpaid office in the poor law administration of the municipality and to fulfill its duties for three years, or for such longer period, as may be prescribed by the constitutional law of the municipality."[95] For those who chose not to volunteer in the administration, they had to forfeit their right to vote for three to six years, and had to pay higher taxes to the local government. This compulsory component to the German poor relief system caused German citizens to come face to face with poverty. Visitors were required "through a careful and personal examination, make himself acquainted with the condition of the applicant."[96] This required visitors to go to the homes of the poor, seek to understand their situation, and then determine whether they were eligible for relief. With this close interaction, the perception that many people had toward poverty transformed. As visitors began to understand the plight of the indignant, they found that many of them suffered in poverty from no moral failings or unfortunate life choices, but instead suffered as a result of the free market economy and industrialization.

The takeoff of industrialization inevitably initiated its effects on German society. Positively, industrialization alleviated mass pauperization from the 1830s and 1840s and provided jobs for the potential workers. However, most of Germany was poor and "a large percent of the population lived a life of frugality, even of need."[97] In the 1860s, Germany began evolving from a rural to urban society with an initial mass exodus of the lower classes to cities where jobs were available. After the 1860s, the transition occurred gradually indicated by the

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[95] Aug. F Henewinkle, *The Elberfeld System of Poor Relief, As Applied in Various German Towns: Report of an Inquiry*, (Liverpool: D. Marples and Company, 1887), 8.
[96] Ibid., 9.
[97] Sagarra, *A Social History of Germany,* 401.

occupational breakdown of Germany's population. In 1871, about 49% of the population still worked in agriculture. In 1882, this number declined to 42%, but it was higher than the 35% of the population working in industry. It was not until the turn of the century that industry jobs dominated the German work force. In 1907, 42% worked in industry, and 28% worked in agriculture.[98] Characteristically, the move from rural to urban cities caused overcrowding, people lived in dwellings with poor sanitation and disease and worked in unsafe environments. One account on the rapid socioeconomic changes within Germany details the town of Lübeck and its transformation into an urban industrial center.

> "They were droves of workers-the kind who differ from rural and skilled tradesmen at first sight, because they had no training except for in a few mechanical tasks, because they felt no occupational spirit, because they belonged to that class which was subsequently called proletarians…The first meager apartment houses were put up. Tall, bare, multi-floor buildings stood isolated in the middle of fields. Poor families lived there side by side in squalor, without any comfort; an unkempt, quickly dilapidating backyard adjoined directly. The space between the houses was teeming with children. But they were the children of a new population. The poverty of these people was different from the poverty of the village farm worker; their dirt was different, everything was uglier and, in its ugliness, cheekier. The industrial worker seemed to be degenerate, even when they were doing well; if they were really poor, it seemed as though foul-smelling poverty was their natural element."[99]

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[98] "Occupational Breakdown of Germany's Population (1882-1907)", a document from Gerd Hohorst, Jürgen Kocka, and Gerhard A. Ritter, editors, *Sozialgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch: Materialien zur Statistik des Kaiserreichs 1870-1914*. Munich, 1975, volume 2, p. 66. The statistics were compiled by the editors and drawn from the following sources: (for 1882) *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs* [*Statistics of the German Reich*], new version, vol. 2 (1884) and new version, vol. 4, 3 (1884); (for 1895) *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs*, new version, vol. 111 (1899); and (for 1907) *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs*, vol. 203 (1910). In *Wilhelmine Germany and the First World War, 1890-1918,* edited by Roger Chickering, Steven Chase Gummer, and Seth Rotramel, volume 5, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

[99] "Urbanization of Village Life near Lübeck after 1870", a document by Karl Scheffler. In *Forging an Empire: Bismarckian Germany, 1866-1890,* edited by James Retallack, volume 4, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

This is an extremely harsh account of the poor, and yet provides a realistic picture of how the poor were perceived. This account also redefines the industrial poor as the proletariat. Associated with Karl Marx's communist ideology, the proletariat was the class of workers who did not own capital or property and sold their labor to survive. Before industrialization, the working class consisted of artisans who held a specific skill set. As society transitioned from rural to urban, work became mechanized, and the skill set was no longer in demand. Needing only little to no particular skills, industrialization provided the lower pauperized masses with jobs, but gave them no security if anything happened to that job. The unstable job market for the industrial proletariat caused them to suffer long periods of unemployment, injuries on the job, and sickness resulting from poor living conditions. The state also lacked regulation over the free markets for the protection of workers. These problems within the working class solidified their cohesiveness as a group and thus began the labor movement.

It is impossible to separate the poor from the working class. While there are many distinctions between the two, poverty often hit individuals and families abruptly and without warning. Socialist writer Ernst Dronke stated, "His work must be perfect if he doesn't want to lose everything; a single illness, baptism, or death of a child can put him in a position of hopeless misery without any bread whatsoever."[100] Therefore, the line between the poor and the working class was continuously fluctuating. Table 2 details various male jobs and the number of months per year they were out of work. This table displays an average number of months, where some years the number of months could increase or decrease depending on the market and demand. A few months off work could send a family into destitution. Also, families could not plan or save for these months without work. This is because the months off would vary and workers did not

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[100] Dronke, *Berlin.*

get paid enough to try and save, there also lacked the notion of saving money for 'rainy day' situations.

Table 2: Men's Job Occupations and Number of Months per year without work, Berlin, 1846[101]

Men's Job Descriptions	Number of Months without work per year
Jeweler	4 months
Arms Maker	3 months
Butcher	2 months
Carpenter	5 months
Coppersmith	4 months
Shoemaker	3 months
Roofer	6 months
Mason	5 months
Wagon Maker	2 months
Leather Worker	2 months
Designer	3 months
Printer	2 months
Cabinetmaker	3 months
Pattern Maker	2 months
Plumber	3 months
Type Founder	3 months

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[101] Dronke, *Berlin.*

Brass Founder	3 months
Iron Founder	2 months
Stone Mason	4 months
Painter	4 months
Bookbinder	3 months
Saddler	3 months

What is important to note here is that at the end of the age of pauperism and through the development of the Elberfeld poor relief system, the management of poverty remained focused on those considered potential workers: mothers, orphans, elderly, and disabled. Given that industrialization did not escalate until the 1850s and 1860s, the working class was not the focal point of poverty management, and thus did not combat the problems of industrialization. Traditional poverty management understood the family as the main organ in need of aid and tailored its resources to doing so. The working class took a more fundamental place in Bismarck's social insurance policies when the social question is transformed into the '*arbeiter frage'* or worker question.

VI. BISMARCK'S SOCIAL INSURANCE-1880s

The enactment of social welfare policies in Imperial Germany was a difficult and lengthy process. Kaiser Wilhelm I in the *Royal Proclamation of November 17, 1881* first announced the social welfare reforms. It is through the work of Wilhelm's Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, who saw the need for social welfare in Germany.

In 1870 the Reichstag, Germany's representative body, "ruled that although local poor boards would only be responsible for people either born in the community or resident for at least three years, they were also to support those who did not legally fall under their responsibility."[102] The Reichstag's ruling also provided a decision for the cost, stating that it would be the concern of the local poor board and if they had to assist individuals not belonging to that particular community, the charge would be given to the community that the individual did belong to. The main downfall between the political intentions of the poor law and the reality of its administration became apparent in Reichstag's inability to administer the law because they did not have control over the local boards. This poor law also created a heavy financial burden on industrial towns and cities that possessed large populations and an inordinate need for assistance.

There were several factors present in the political, economic, and social climate of Germany that paved the way for the establishment of social insurance. For the first time in 1871, Germany became a unified nation under the leadership of Otto von Bismarck. Bismarck ruled Germany in an unconventional way. He detested government run by the people and favored a strong monarchy instead. However, Bismarck understood the value of having the people's support and he knew that keeping their support was the surest way of keeping himself in power. It is this attitude of Bismarck that encouraged him to promote the social insurance programs that he hoped would be a substitute for government by the people.[103] While having the popular support of the people was a goal for Bismarck it was not his ultimate one. Since coming to power, Bismarck always created a 'Reich enemy,' a group of people he could use to marginalize and create unity amongst other groups who would not normally favor him or his political ideas.

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[102] Heide Gerstenberger, "The Poor and the Respectable Worker: On the Introduction of Social Insurance in Germany," *Labour History* 48, (May 1985): 71.

[103] Sulzbach, *German Experience with Social Insurance,* 4.

His first enemy was the Catholic Church in which Bismarck led an attack on them from 1871-1878. In response to this attack, Catholic voters in Germany turned out in huge numbers to increase their presence in the Reichstag. With their amplified representation, Bismarck could no longer afford to paint them as an enemy of the Reich.

In 1878, Bismarck found a new target in the Social Democrat Party (SPD). After several attempts on Kaiser Wilhelm's life, conspiracy and blame fell on members of the SPD. This allowed Bismarck to attack the SPD as the new 'Reich enemy.' While their representative numbers were growing in the Reichstag, they were a small group who were establishing themselves throughout the political sphere in Germany. The SPD in Germany had two primary goals, although not all members agreed on how to accomplish their goals. First, the SPD wanted to increase the welfare of the working class throughout Germany. The massive increase of workers in Germany due to industrialization allowed for the needs of the workers to become a central theme in politics. The other goal for the SPD was to create a true revolution in which the lower working classes of Germany would rise up, overtake the system in Germany, and create a true socialist society. It was this proponent that caused Bismarck to fear the SPD and he used this goal to create the opposition towards them from other major parties in the Reichstag.

In 1878, the Reichstag passed a legislation that made the SPD illegal to help diminish the influence that this party could possibly have in Germany. Bismarck understood the draw of the working class to the SPD party. In an effort to keep their support, Bismarck pushed for the social insurance programs to show the working class that it was his government who valued the welfare of the worker and their family. The irony of Bismarck's proposal was the fact that he really did not care about the average worker. He saw them only as a way to maintain support in Germany and keep the SPD's influence at an extreme minimum. In an interview, years after the social

insurance programs had been enacted, Bismarck stated that his "idea was to bribe the working classes, or shall I say, to win them over, to regard the state as a social institution existing for their sake and interested in their welfare."[104] While Bismarck hoped that the proposed plan would benefit the working class, the SPD opposed Bismarck's social insurance believing that the plan "did not attack the causes of misery but dealt only with its results."[105] Every proposed social insurance plan proposed between 1881 and 1911 passed without the concurrence of the SPD. Bismarck attacked the SPD for their lack of support on social insurance stating that their lack of endorsement proved that the SPD were not an advocate of the worker as they claimed to be.

In the years before and during the passing of social legislation, Germany experienced a major economic depression. Beginning in 1873, the depression caused the number of welfare recipients to grow. This put pressure on both the local poor boards and churches and on the resources they could provide. Their inability to handle the depression continues to show how the traditional forms of poverty management were insufficient in meeting the effects of industrialization. The depression brought with it unemployment, scarcity of resources, and a lowering of the standard of living for most working class citizens. In response, many Germans sought refuge by leaving Germany and immigrating to other countries such as the United States in an effort to better their circumstances. This flux of people out of the country caused Bismarck to worry. He felt that those Germans who would leave Germany would lose their German identity and nationalism. Bismarck viewed both as sacred and he hoped that social insurance would curb the effects and show the average German worker that the government cared about their needs and was willing to do what was necessary to meet them.

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[104] Elmer Roberts, *Monarchical Socialism in Germany* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 119.
[105] Sulzbach, *German Experience with Social Insurance,* 4.

Bismarck's policies were also the product of a social climate in Germany that was a direct result from massive industrialization and urbanization. In the 1850s, Germany experienced the first wave of the Industrial Revolution causing the nations workers to move away from its agrarian society. Industrialization took root through infrastructure building, mainly creating the railway system, and better developments in science and chemistry that had a direct effect onto the textile industry. The Industrial Revolution caused a change in the class system in Germany that created the working class. This new working class left rural towns and villages and moved into large cities to get jobs in the new industrialized sectors. As industrialization grew, so did the amount of workers needed to meet the new demand of goods. As cities grew, the workers needs changed dramatically. Working conditions, living conditions, health, old age, and the family began to show themselves more clearly to the German government in the form of the social question. The German government was forced to ask themselves, what do we do with all of these people? While Bismarck's policies are not introduced until the 1880s, they are the direct product of the social changes present in Germany in the years leading up to its announcement.

Now that the stage was set to allow the idea of social insurance to develop, it was first introduced in Kaiser Wilhelm I's *Royal Proclamation on Social Policy* in 1881. After the official announcement, Bismarck began fighting with the Reichstag on passing the laws and he had no majority in the Reichstag that he could rely on to pass it. Although he fought vigorously to achieve his goal of seeing the social insurance programs succeed, Bismarck never considered social insurance his principal achievement.[106] There are three parts to the proposed social insurance plans that were eventually passed in Germany. Each was passed individually and underwent several revisions before officially being implemented into the German system.

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[106] Sulzbach, *German Experience with Social Insurance,* 6.

The first social insurance program passed by the Reichstag in 1883 was health insurance and it became operational in December of 1884. This piece of insurance covered those employed in factories, mines, workshops, quarries, and transportation.[107] "The 1883 law did not cover homeworkers, domestic servants, and other non-wage workers. Total enrollment was therefore lower than in other branches of social insurance."[108] While the initial plan did not cover certain workers such as household servants, coverage was included within the next several years. What is important to note about not only the health insurance but also all of the social insurance policies was that both the employer and the employee paid into the system. None of the services rendered by these policies were handouts given out by the government. Those insured were entitled to cash benefits and to medical care in cases of sickness. This included surgery, hospital treatment and supplies, and sick pay.[109] Initially, the health insurance policy covered only the insured worker, which left other family members, such as wives and children, without any form of medical care. The citizen approval to the new policies was gradual. In 1885, one year after implantation, the German population was 46.7 million and of that, 4.7 million were insured against sickness.[110] By 1900, the population rose to 56 million and those insured raised to 10.2 million. The success of the health insurance program was not instant but once individuals were able to experience the benefits themselves, many German workers became insured.

The next social policy proposed by Bismarck was an accident insurance law. It was this law that had to be drafted three times before the Reichstag would pass it. Most common to today's workers compensation law, this legislation provided a way for workers to be recompensed in the event that they were hurt on the job. There had been a previous law in effect

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[107] Frederic C Howe, *Socialized Germany,* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), 194.

[108] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 25.

[109] Howe, *Socialized Germany,* 194.

[110] Sulzbach, *German Experience with Social Insurance,* 13.

since 1871 that allowed employees who were hurt on the job to take it to the courts and make the employer pay for the cost of the damages done to the person. However, the court cases were ineffective and very costly to the worker.[111] In the original proposition for this law, Bismarck wanted the German government to subsidize a portion of the fee in an effort to show the worker that the government was truly behind them in meeting their needs. The Reichstag was vehemently against this part of the insurance plan and it was only passed when Bismarck conceded and removed the policy that stated that the government would help pay. Accident insurance officially passed in 1884 only covering the same individuals that the health insurance policy covered until it later extended to other non-wage workers. In 1886, 3.7 million people were insured against accidents and in 1900, the number rose to 17.4 million. The employers were the sole contributor to the insurance fund and organized themselves "into a series of industry wide joint liability associations."[112]

The third and final social insurance policy put forward by Bismarck was an old age and disability insurance bill passed in 1889. This policy provided "insurance of workpeople against the time of incapacity and old age."[113] Before this law was enacted, those who were of old age or were disable usually fell under the jurisdiction of poor boards. This law would provide for those who could no longer work due to old age or disability, given in the form of a pension. Similar to the health insurance program, employees had to pay into the system so that one day they could receive a portion of a salary to live on. The amount of the pension distributed was considered low but it was never supposed to be an income replacement. Individuals could start receiving their pensions when they reached 70 years of age or if they became disabled and were no longer

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[111] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 26.
[112] Ibid., 26.
[113] W.H. Dawson, *Bismarck and State Socialism,* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1891), 123.

able to work. Unlike health and accident insurance, in its initial proposal, this policy included all areas of workers and the government subsidized parts of fees.

There is a large hole in the historiography of the beginnings of the German welfare system. There has been very little, until recently, research done on how the average citizen interacted with the social insurance system. Many of first works created portrayed the worker as being in absolute approval of the new system and agreed that all of the new policies had great value in contributing to the efficiency of the working classes.[114] However, recent historians describe the workers as "unenthusiastic about the new social insurance programs of the 1880s…[and] workers did not see the three great social insurance laws…as unequivocal improvements."[115] This feeling did eventually change amongst workers and after 1890; they slowly became more accepting of the programs after realizing the benefits and security it provided. Another large hole in the historiography is the church response to the enacting of the social insurance laws. Most of the historiography on churches focusing on this period concentrates on how the church is helping to provide poor relief. The reason for this lack of focus on church response is that the three social insurances legislations deal only with those individuals who have or have had a job. Churches remained fixated on helping those who are unemployed, beggars, vagrants, elderly, sick, or disabled individuals. Since Bismarck's social insurance policies did not deal with those individuals, the church did not see a reason to involve themselves in these matters by either protesting or endorsing them. Many church leaders understood the benefits that social insurance would provide, especially to those who were disabled or unemployed due to an industrial accident and the states intervention would surely lessen the burden placed on the local churches and poor boards.

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[114] Howe, *Socialized Germany,* 170-171.
[115] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 32.

VII. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK-1890s-WWI

By the mid to late 1880s, Germany had both a comprehensive social insurance system for workers, unlike anything the world had ever seen, and also a functioning welfare system aimed at helping non-working poor (widows, orphans, disabled, elderly). Yet, the many problems caused by industrialization showed that the poor relief system carried out in Germany was insufficient in removing people as recipients after they began receiving aid and did little to combat the problems associated with poverty, such as disease, malnutrition, and low birth rates. These inadequacies led a final evolution of the perception of poverty in the nineteenth century, which occurred after 1890, and is known as social work.

This new notion of social work had several key components. First, social work was preventative in nature. It sought to curb disaster before it could strike rather than dealing with issues retroactively. This preventative idea was radically new to social welfare, and no other forms of poor relief acted in this manner. The poverty management systems in effect before social work, functioned under the Biblical premise that "The poor you will always have with you."[116] This premise viewed poverty as a social problem that could never cease to exist. Instead, the new focus with social work was that poverty and its related problems (whether physical or moral) could be eradicated. "Simple relief of the needy was now to be complemented by prophylactic activities, which were to prevent the needy condition in the first place."[117] This new preemptive attitude toward poverty was radically distinct for German thinkers. While many

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[116] Mark 14:7 (NIV).

[117] Wolfgang Krabbe, "Von der Armenpflege zur lokalen Sozial- und Gesundheitsverwaltung Wandlungen im kommunalen Pflichtaufgabenbereich unter dem Druck der Modernisierung am Beispiel westfälischer Städte 1800-1914," *Beiträge zur Geschichte Dortmunds und der Grafschaft Mark 76/77,* (1985): 197, cited in Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 199.

social reformers in the past desired to see the eradication of poverty from society, none of them believed that the policies they advocated for held the potential for bringing it about.

A second key component to social work, which also explains how the preventative notion of poverty came about, is what historians Christoph Sachβe and Florian Tennstedt call "scientifization of the social."[118] Sceintifization relied heavily on the natural sciences of biology, eugenics, and medicine to find solutions to social problems. In turn, this produced an upsurge of scientific professionals within society. These professionals included doctors, paid social workers, and social reformers. In fact, many of the social reformers who carried out the ideas behind preventative social work possessed training in the medical profession. Utilizing the natural sciences allowed reformers to understand that certain problems, such as the proliferation of disease, or low birth rates was because individuals had poor hygiene, lived and worked in dirty atmospheres, and did almost nothing to help keep themselves well. The lack of these notions caused individuals to be susceptible to a host of problems. Reformers advocated for the lower classes to become educated on what they could do to enrich their own livelihoods. One account from social reformer Otto Rademann pleads, "It is important that the workers be shown how to nourish themselves better and sufficiently- and still save money in the process- and that the purchase of nutritious yet affordable goods (fish from the sea!) be made easier for them."[119] Social workers desired to teach and inform all individuals ways to prevent the onset of problems. However, the idea this reformer advocated, saving money and buying better goods, could never be implemented without the support of national regulation. While increasing wages would enable

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[118] Christoph Sachβe and Florian Tennstedt, *Geschichte der Armenfürsorge in Deutschland,* Vol. 2, *Fürsorge und Wohlfahrtspflege 1871-1929,* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1988).
[119] "The Unhealthy Nourishment of Urban Workers as Depicted by a Bourgeoisie Social Reformer (1890)", a document by Otto Rademann. In *Forging an Empire: Bismarckian Germany, 1866-1890,* edited by James Retallack, volume 4, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

workers to save and buy better goods, employers were not interested in raising wages for their employees.

The notion of saving money was a foreign concept to the working classes, along with the idea of thriftiness. These ideas were foreign because like buying better goods for themselves and their families, the working class never had an excess supply of money. Yet, bourgeoisie critics of the working class felt that workers needed to apply bourgeoisie virtues (thriftiness, hard work, morality) to improve their station. One critic stated, "Through practice of thrift, the worker would be saved from wastefulness and specifically from drunkenness; and later on, he would have funds in the form of savings that could be used in hard times to supplement any reduced income resulting from loss of wages."[120] This mentality is extremely skewed to praise the values of the bourgeoisie without actually understanding the hardships of the lower classes. By the 1890s, society understood that external factors were the primary causes of poverty not internal ones. Yet the skewed mentality of the bourgeoisie demonstrates that despite accepting external causes as poverty's instigator, the notion of 'othering' remained as the middle class validated their practices against those of the lower working classes. While social reformers understood that certain values would aid the working classes, they were careful to understand that without support from employers or the national government, this idea would remained limited.

How social reformers implemented their reform ideas is the third component to social work. The lower classes remained the targeted group for traditional poor relief, and Bismarck's

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[120] "Uneconomic Lifestyles of Workers, as Reported by Bourgeois Critics (1884 and 1889)", a document from a circular to factory managers, April 19, 1884, in *Amtliche Mittheilungen aus den Jahres-Berichten der mit der Beaufsichtigung der Fabriken betrauten Beamten*, vol. 9 (1884) Berlin: 1885, pp. 687-88. In *Forging an Empire: Bismarckian Germany, 1866-1890,* edited by James Retallack, volume 4, *German History in Documents and Images,* German Historical Institute, Washington, DC (www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

social insurance policies focused on the industrial working class. Social work sought to discard the distinctions of policy labeling and create general policies to aid all of society. Social work defined 'new' social problems and the risks associated with them. While social problems were not necessarily new, the ideas and perceptions surrounding them were. Social work also created new social agencies to carry out and monitor their development. Policies focused on combating disease, educating youth, housing inspections, and health programs for mothers, infants, and schoolchildren. The administration of social agencies shifted from a volunteer based system, as in traditional poor relief, to paid social workers. Again, many of these paid workers held training in the medical field and were involved in the creation and planning of social policy.

A fourth component to social work is that it while nationally the ideas of social work spread through Germany, it was a locally carried out phenomenon. The local focus had both positive and negative aspects. Positively, the local concentration of social work allowed for the tailoring of ideas to fit a specific community with specific needs. If a particular community suffered from malnutrition or problems amongst their juvenile population, social workers could form particular policies to meet those needs. Larry Frohman addresses how the inability of the national government to accept social work actually allowed the local level implementation to succeed. Stating, "political paralysis at the national level created a space for municipal social policy and for voluntary social initiatives which thrived either because of local circumstances or because their voluntary nature left interested local groups free to proceed even in the absence of a favorable local constellation."[121] This locally based management system was not new for Germany, given that their traditional poor relief management was also carried out at the local level. The Elberfeld system is primary example of traditional poor relief molded to fit needs of

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[121] Frohman, *Poor Relief and Welfare in Germany,* 205.

various communities. Despite the lack of national legislation and support, the ideas behind preventative social work were effective. Yet it would be after WWI when the ideas behind scientific social work became nationally implemented.

Social work held a deep association with the women's movement occurring at the turn of the century. The policies of social work focused both towards women and were carried out by women. The participation of middle class women in educating lower class women through the avenues of the women's movement demonstrates the changes in perception held toward poverty and its effects. This change is attributed to the growth of the women's movement. The use of biology in promoting hygiene, higher birth rates, and better nutrition all came back to focus on the family. For social workers, the family needed regulation and support to construct a better society to end poverty and its problems. "Since women's bodies were at the center of the family, the war on poverty focused on them. The politics of social welfare reform reflected the desire of reformers to protect mothers, children, and the family in the context of related national concerns."[122] At the turn of the century, Germany witnessed consistent low birth rates, particularly among the working classes. Officials and social reformers understood that unless there was a change in the mentalities of working class families the future of Germany's military and economic capability was endangered. Therefore, policies for women included improving mother and infant hygiene, proper education in breastfeeding, and proper nutrition. By focusing on women and children, social workers hoped to instill a renewed desire to have children and to change the environment in which they were raised.

The relationship between the woman's movement and social work manifested itself by having middle class women teach the lower class women the ways of implementing the ideas

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[122] Fuchs, *Gender and Poverty,* 211.

behind better infant care, breastfeeding, and hygiene. "During the first decade of the twentieth century most German cities installed infant-welfare offices, patterned after the French well-baby clinics, to teach working class women the benefits of breastfeeding. The decrease in infant mortality in Germany can be ascribed at least in part to the hygiene movement that middle class women undertook."[123] Middle class women became mangers of the new social agencies established by social work. They were either paid workers or volunteers, but their service came from the encouragement of the women's movement. From 1898 to 1913, there were estimated 12,000 women social workers in Germany.[124] The agencies where women served included child-labor committees, housing inspectors, caretakers for alcoholics and fallen women, school boards, and infant-care offices.[125] Without the support from the women's movement and the action by middle class women, it is doubtful if many of these policies would have succeeded.

While birth rates, better hygiene, and nutrition were goals for social workers, the issue of eugenics and race hygiene also gained traction. The idea of eugenics ran antipodal to the social workers policy. While social workers wanted to increase the birthrate of the lower classes, eugenics and those who supported racial hygiene felt that it "exacerbated the growth of defective individuals."[126] Eugenics believed that the problems that plagued the lower classes were irremediable and therefore it was concerned for the general welfare of Germany's population. Some social workers who agreed with race hygiene desired the creation of polices that would limit the number of children the working class could have, and advocated sterilization, isolation, and abortion. While these policies were unrealistic, it nevertheless demonstrates a new perception of poverty and the lower classes. The flawed idea that the poor had on a genetic level

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[123] Ibid., 213.
[124] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social,* 200.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid., 200.

attributes that were negative to society is profound, along with the fact that those who held this belief, used science and reason to validate their ideas. Overall, eugenics had little impact on social policy and those who did support its ideas only implemented their ideas by increasing the birth rate of the higher levels of society.

It is impossible to discuss the issue of eugenics and race hygiene without addressing the connection to Nazism. While eugenics and racial hygiene completely inundated Nazi policy and provided the scientific reasoning needed for their crimes, there is not a direct connection with the policy of pre-WWI eugenics. The evidence in support of this idea is that many nations, in both Europe and in America, embraced the ideas behind racial hygiene but never evolved these ideas into policy as the Nazis would in the 1930s. It demonstrates that many nations, other than Germany, developed racially based ideas and policy and yet it took Nazism and its ideology to adopt this pseudoscience to support its ultimate goals.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Poverty is a concept that lacks definitive structure. Its causes and the solutions implemented to combat it shift over time, reflecting the changing notions surrounding it. The ancient Roman idea, explored by Auerbach, believed that fate played a significant role in determining the outcome of a person's life, and that if poverty struck it did so from an extraordinary series of events outside the control of an individual. Moving forward to nineteenth century Germany, poverty became less a factor of fate and more a factor of internal elements, placing the individual as the determinant of poverty. Grounded in the Enlightenment ideas that individuals were rational and responsible for their conduct, poverty became associated with a moral failing and the consequence of choices. As the nineteenth century progressed and Germany experienced the impact of a changing economy and social makeup, poverty shifted

again, this time away from the connection to moral failings and moved to external factors. These included bouts of unemployment from a downturn within the job market, accidents causing disability from industrial accidents, and poor health and nutrition from being unable to sustain a quality value of life. As the causal factors of poverty changed in the nineteenth century, so did the perception associated with it. Tracing the evolution of nineteenth century German perceptions on poverty provides analysis of how attitudes informed welfare policy on a local and national level, and how the traditional structures of private and local poor relief influenced the development of the welfare state.

The period from the 1830s to World War I, frames the majors evolutions of poverty within German society. It is through the massive changes that prompted the evolution of perceptions towards poverty. With society transforming, attitudes could not remain the same. Chronologically, the first indication of change began during the 1830s and 1840s as a response to mass pauperization caused by overpopulation and the new laws of freedom of movement and occupation. The main changes in the conversation on poverty during this period were the recognition of an issue that was no longer manageable in its current system and that the state held the responsibility for dealing with the problem. This period also observed the development of the social realm, an entity that existed beyond the economy and politics. It was understood as an area in need of regulation to prevent social unrest. The conversation within the lower classes also shifted as they began to realize their place within the social realm and the agency utilized for making their desires known.

The persistent transformation of poverty perception occurred in the 1850s and continued through Bismarck's social insurance policies in the 1880s. This period is characterized by the expansion of industrialization. Many of the social problems created by pauperization transferred

into problems associated with the free market economy and the laws of supply and demand. The social question evolved into the worker question, and thus the conversation on poverty became irrevocably linked to the labor force. The industrial proletariat characterized the working class, those individuals whose only commodity was their own labor. Because the line fluctuated between the poor and the working class, it is impossible to separate the two groups. Workers would often find themselves on either side of the line at any given moment. The formation of the working class conscience enabled the establishment of the labor movement and the growth of the German Social Democratic Party. Bismark's social insurance policies that were enacted during this period would not have been possible had the tradition of state intervention and requirement to care for the misfortunate been a pillar of German society. As the welfare state in the twentieth century grew, it did so based on the accepted premise of the state's assumption of responsibility for its citizens, workers, and poor.

The final indication of changing perceptions in the nineteenth century began in the 1890s until the outbreak of WWI. The development of scientific social work and the notion of preventative care epitomized this final change. Reformers now understood that the problems associated with poverty, such as disease, poor living conditions, overcrowding, and high infant mortality, could be suppressed with the proper care and education to those suffering. For the first time the welfare of women concerned society and they became the focus of the new scientific social work.

Periodization provides the framework in order to combine the changing perceptions of poverty and the changing nature of German society. Individual perceptions on the issue of poverty inform the shaping of welfare policies. The fragmentation of perceptions reflects the diverse ways that local poor relief and charities managed their poor. Pauperization transformed

society because of its enormous scale resulting in various societal groups demonstrating a growing concern and awareness of social issues. Displayed within the writings on pauperism and the intensification of the social question, perceptions informed policy in that they were more concerned about maintaining the status quo of society rather than preventing or understanding the plight of the poor. However, the Elberfeld system aided the conversation on poverty through the requirement of poor relief volunteers to become personally acquainted with the poor. Perceptions on poverty and its association with moral failings changed throughout Germany as the Elberfeld management principles became the poor relief model for the majority of German cities.

With the growth of industrialization, the lower class began to recognize their agency and become actively involved in the social and labor movement. This allowed them to collectively use their voice to place their perceptions into policy. In response, reformers, policy makers, and the upper class sought policy that mitigated the potential power of the lower class. Chancellor Bismarck responded to the concerns by lobbying and passing the social insurance programs for workers. Social insurance is the result of two perceptions merging, yet with different motivations. Germany's innovative way of managing its working class and the acceptance of the idea that the state had a responsibility in caring for its most vulnerable citizens allowed this system to lead the way for all other forms of worker aid in the world.

While social insurance focused on the worker, the growth of scientific social work focused on society as a whole. Attitudes began to shift through the influence of education. No longer was poverty morally judged, as it was now preventable. Thus, the concepts of health, hygiene, nutrition, and education became welfare policy. Despite the fact that this change utilized science negatively through the promotion of racial hygiene, it did dramatically alter

welfare perceptions leading into the twentieth century. All welfare reform since the growth of social work operates under the premise that welfare can and should be eradicated.

The changing perceptions on poverty in nineteenth century Germany shows how the traditional poor relief structures of municipal and private charities impact the formation of the welfare state. The language used within the local setting is diverse over time in that it allows us to trace the changing ideas toward the poor. For private church based welfare, there is a circular narrative to its poor relief that ultimately reflects the notions of the twentieth century welfare state. The oldest notions of charity were founded on the ideas of Christian brotherhood and responsibility; however, this diminished with the enlightened idea of the modern individual ethos. Poverty was now internal, yet the church's ethic of responsibility continued. The religious community sought to meet this new ethos with morally reforming those in need of aid. As the state assumed an active role in the management and distribution of welfare, there becomes a distinction from the older forms of charity. The state used welfare as a means of maintaining social order. Yet for the church, this concept was not embraced. Instead, the church continued to operate on the basis of Christian responsibility. At the end of the nineteenth century, with the emergence of the welfare state, the circular narrative completes itself with a new secular vision of charity. The state run humanist idea of carrying for your fellow man and poverty as a result of external sources is a compatible and realigned notion of Christian ideals.

At the outbreak of World War I, every aspect of German life radically changed. In terms of social welfare, the war initiated a break with the long held notion that the lower classes were the main recipients of welfare. The war ravaged the German economy, its political structure, and its society. There was no social group left untouched by the effects of war. Because of the war's destruction, it created two new groups of social welfare recipients, the war wounded and war

widows. The war created the last major evolution on the perception of poverty. It caused the issue to become one that everyone, even those who at one time were economically secure, to feel the effects of destitution. These individuals came from every class of society, and after the war, they looked to the state to meet their needs. The structures of nineteenth century welfare proved to be inadequate in meeting the massive displacement and insecure future of most German citizens.

This study only scratches the surface on the changing perceptions of poverty in nineteenth century Germany. Further areas of research will include comparatively analyzing the idiosyncrasies of private and local poor relief from various regions throughout Germany. Taking into account the dominant religious influence in areas, demographics, and an area's job market (whether agrarian or industrial based) further explains the developing relationship between citizens, welfare, and the entities that worked in aid distribution during the nineteenth century. Given that the German welfare state is influenced by the many varying concepts and ideas from the local level, a comparative but focal study will answer many of the lingering questions of how the local and private welfare traditions aided in shaping the welfare state.

After WWI, the notion of a welfare state, run by comprehensive policy at the national level developed in Germany and in most areas of Europe. However, without the evolution on the perceptions and attitude of poverty in the nineteenth century, and the manifestation of those perceptions through policy, it would have been impossible for the state to create a welfare system in the twentieth century. Ideas needed continual progression and without the experiences of local states, private charities, municipalities, and the work of social reformers, the system that authorities created after the war would have been ineffective. The post war welfare state worked in conjunction with many of the pre-existing welfare entities, particularly private ones such as

the church. It also expanded the social insurance policies and created an unemployment system. The success of the twentieth century welfare state hinged on the evolving attitudes, perceptions, and policies of poverty in the nineteenth century.

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