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SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND MOBILITY IN WEST GERMANY¹

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ABSTRACT

By means of a nation-wide sample survey, the social stratification and patterns of social mobility of West Germany were investigated as well as the consequences of social mobility on selected aspects of social and political behavior. These data underline the continuity of the present social structure with that of the prewar period but also record the extensive upward and downward personal social mobility of individual Germans. West Germany has a social structure similar to that of other Western industrialized countries, but, as compared with the United States, its unique circumstances has produced distinctive features. The consequences of social mobility in West Germany seem to be at least temporarily contributing to greater social consensus.

The drastic social changes in Germany resulting from war, military defeat, occupation, mass refugee movements, and, finally, economic recovery raise underlying questions. What modifications in social stratification and social mobility have taken place since 1939? How do changes in social structure relate to and help explain the apparent stability that characterizes postwar West German society?

Theoretical and empirical analysis of social stratification was long at the center of pre-Nazi sociological work in Germany. Marxian and socialist theory required a continuing concern with changes in the class structure, since here was to be found the crucial index of emerging political change. As early as the 1920's sociological critics of the traditional Marxian position on social stratification had produced a number of empirical studies on the changes in German social structure under increased industrialization which were unanticipated by orthodox socialist thinkers. As was to be expected for that period, these studies were based on limited methodology and highly selective samples. Nevertheless, they documented the expansion of opportunities for social mobility and the transformation of the middle class from predominantly entrepre-

¹ The author wishes to acknowledge his gratitude to the directors of DIVO, Frankfurt, A.M., for placing at his disposal their field staff. Without this facility it would have been impossible to collect the empirical data on which this paper is based. Klaus Liepelt has been actively associated in the collection of these data.

neurial occupations toward more bureaucratic ones.²

In the gradual rebuilding of sociological research after 1945, systematic research on social stratification and social mobility did not emerge as a central concern in Germany. The only comprehensive effort was undertaken by Professor G. Mackenroth and Dr. Karl M. Bolte, Kiel University, for the province of Schleswig-Holstein, where the influx of East German refugees and "expellees" was heavily concentrated.³

² See Pitirim Sorokin, *Social Mobility* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1927), for a review of the literature of that period.

³ G. Mackenroth and Karl M. Bolte, "Bericht über das Forschungsvorhaben 'Wandlungen der deutschen Sozialstruktur (am Beispiel des Landes Schleswig-Holstein),' " *Transactions of the Second World Congress, International Sociological Society* (1954), II, 91-102; cf. Karl M. Bolte, "Ein Beitrag zur Problematik der sozialen Mobilität," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, VIII (1956), 26-45, and "Some Aspects of Social Mobility in Western Germany," *Transactions of the Third World Congress of Sociology, International Sociological Society* (1957), III, 183-90.

In an effort to free themselves from an overemphasis on philosophical and speculative traditions, postwar German sociologists appear to have selected immediate and pressing social problems—family disorganization, youth problems, industrial relations, and community organization—on which they could collect empirical data. More general and more historically oriented topics like social stratification and social mobility were given lower priorities. In fact, the one study on social mobility, by Mackenroth and Bolte, was in good part generated by an immediate concern that the refugees were becoming a discriminated minority.

Therefore, in the spring of 1955, a comprehensive effort was made to investigate social stratification and social mobility for the whole of West Germany. This paper reports briefly on some of the findings from this empirical study based on a representative sample of 3,385 interviews.

Three main types of data on social stratification in postwar West Germany are included. First, data will be presented supporting the general hypothesis that, despite the historical events since 1939, the over-all shifts in the occupational structure in West Germany by 1955 have hardly been dramatic. Second, however, there is a difference between relative over-all stability in occupational structure and the amount of personal mobility within a society. Because of the types of data collected, it is possible to report with some precision on the considerable amount of both upward and downward social mobility in West Germany. While our data reveal fundamental similarities in the occupational structure of Germany and the United States, because of a similar technological base and economic organization, these data also highlight the differences that exist in social stratification and mobility. Third, the correlates of social mobility—such as education, religion, and refugee status—as well as the social consequences of social mobility were also investigated in terms of these broad social strata.

Since the sample of 3,385 adult men and women interviewed was selected by the procedures of area probability sampling, the optimum methodological conditions were available. The design of the interview schedule made it possible to obtain for 95.1 per cent of the sample the occupation of the "head of the household"—the respondent himself, the respondent's husband, or the major income-earner, as the case required. *Intragenerational mobility* was measured by changes in occupations between 1939 and 1955. (If the man was too young in 1939 to be in the labor force, his father's occupation was obtained, and for women the occupation of their husbands or fathers.)⁴

Intergenerational mobility was measured by comparing the occupation of the head of the household in 1955 with that of the respondent's father (or head of the household) when he or she was growing up. Thus the data of this research are not limited to the mobility of sons but, rather, present findings for the whole adult population.

TRENDS IN OCCUPATIONAL STRATIFICATION

The emerging pattern of occupational stratification in West Germany in 1955, that is, after economic recovery, parallels strikingly the prewar 1939 social structure. The changes that have been wrought are those directly linked to the typical modifications in occupational stratification that come with increased industrialization in a country already highly industrialized. This is not to overlook the fact that a small percentage (4.9 per cent) of our sample were categorized "unclassifiable" as to occupation in 1955—the war-disabled, war widows, and other such war casualties whose lives were so disrupted and whose rehabilitation so limited that our definitions of occupation based on household affiliation were not applicable.⁵ Nevertheless, the West German population is now fitted into an economic system in which the degree of industrialization, the balance of industry to agricul-

⁴ Women were defined as head of the household when they were the major income earners, that is, for those cases where the husband was dead or missing, or when they were unmarried and constituted a separate household. For the young student, the temporarily unemployed worker, and those on war or social security pensions (social renter) the functionally equivalent family structure data on the occupation of the head of the household are also necessary. Special questions were included for persons whose husbands were dead.

⁵ It has been estimated that the total number of persons receiving some form of social pension in West Germany was about 5,700,000, or approximately 10 per cent of the adult population. This figure is comparable to the findings of our sample, since half of these receiving some form of social pension (approximately 5 per cent) could be classified into the occupational structure. These are persons receiving old age insurance, whose last occupation was obtained, and those who have regular occupations in addition to their pensions.

ture, and the extent of governmental coordination do not break sharply with the past.

In recent decades the further industrialization of an already industrialized society has generally implied a continued decline in

TABLE 1

TRENDS IN OCCUPATIONAL STRATIFICATION IN WEST GERMANY
(BASED ON SAMPLE SURVEY DATA)

	YEAR	
	1955	1939
Non-manual:		
Self-employed:		
Entrepreneurs.....	10.7	10.9
Professionals.....	2.9	2.6
Total.....	13.6	13.5
Salaried:		
Officials, managerial, technical.....	9.4	9.9
Clerical, sales.....	9.4	9.4
Total.....	18.8	19.3
Total non-manual.....	32.4	32.8
Manual:		
Skilled.....	13.3	13.7
Semiskilled.....	30.8	29.9
Service.....	4.1	3.1
Total manual.....	48.2	46.7
Farmers:		
Owners.....	10.6	14.9
Laborers.....	3.8	3.9
Total farmers.....	14.4	18.8
Unclassifiable*.....	4.9	1.8
No. of cases.....	(3,385)	(3,385)

* Includes those war and social pensioners to whom no occupational position could be meaningfully assigned.

the size of the agricultural stratum and, simultaneously, an increase in the proportion of the non-manual workers (white-collar occupations), while the manual or industrial workers remain relatively stable. However, as the "tertiary" aspects of economic processes become more and more elaborated, the greatest proportional increase in the urban occupations are in the professional, clerical, and service occupations.⁶ West Germany is no exception.

The gradual *intragenerational* shifts in

⁶ Colin Clark, *The Conditions of Economic Progress* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1951).

occupational structure from 1939 to 1955 can be seen in Table 1, where trends in the concentration of farmers, non-manual, and manual workers are presented.⁷

By a comparison these data with those comparable for the United States, the special features of West German social structure begin to emerge (see Table 2). First,

TABLE 2

CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON OF OCCUPATIONAL STRATIFICATION, WEST GERMANY AND UNITED STATES, 1954-55

	West Germany 1955	United States 1954*
Non-manual:		
Self-employed:		
Entrepreneurs.....	10.7	6.0
Professionals.....	2.9	1.4
Total.....	13.6	7.4
Salaried:		
Officials, managerial, technical.....	9.4	11.3
Clerical, sales.....	9.4	19.5
Total.....	18.8	30.8
Total non-manual.....	32.4	38.2
Manual:		
Skilled.....	13.3	13.6
Semiskilled.....	30.8	27.0
Service.....	4.1	11.1
Total manual.....	48.2	51.7
Farmers:		
Owners.....	10.6	5.9
Laborers.....	3.8	4.1
Total farmers.....	14.4	10.0
Unclassifiable†.....	4.9	.....
Total.....	100.0	100.0

* Adapted from *Current Population Reports*, Series P-50, No. 59 (April, 1955), Table III, p. 4.

† Includes those war and social pensioners to whom no occupational position could be meaningfully assigned.

⁷ Since the 1939 social stratification data are collected from persons alive in 1955, it could be argued that the results are not strictly comparable, since they would be influenced by differential death rates. However, this does not seem to be a relevant factor for trend analysis, since the sample survey data on the decline in the concentration of agricultural occupations from 1939 is almost identical with the comparable official census results (Statistisches Bundesamt, *Wirtschaftskunde der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [Stuttgart and Köln, 1955], p. 60).

the consequences of the relatively larger industrial base in the United States can be seen from the somewhat lesser United States concentration in the agricultural occupations. In the United States 10 per cent of the occupational structure is involved in agriculture; the percentage in West Germany is 14.4.⁸

Another manifestation of industrialization in the United States is the higher proportion of non-manual workers. Even more relevant is the difference in the composition of the non-manual group. The degree of industrialization of the United States is reflected in the greater growth of the "new middle-class" occupations. Thus the concentration of self-employed entrepreneurs—one important, older, middle-class group—in West Germany is greater than in the United States. And, conversely, the clerical and sales group—the salaried employees of public and private bureaucracies—in West Germany is half the percentage of that in the United States. Finally, differences in the manual group arise mainly from the larger concentration of service workers in the United States. The number of skilled workers in both countries is roughly the same, while the semiskilled-unskilled category in West Germany is somewhat larger than in the United States. However, the service workers—a manifestation of tertiary industrialization—are much more developed in the United States.

Thus a projection of the trends in West German occupational stratification points to a convergence with the present pattern in the United States. One can speculate that, in some sectors, the differences will grow smaller, for example, in the agricultural populations. But this cannot be said for all categories. The proportion of self-employed entrepreneurs is a function of social and economic policy, while the relative size of

the professional group is a function of educational policy and social custom.

PATTERNS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Analysis of occupational trends does not encompass the problem of social mobility. Shifts in occupational structure only partially describe the patterns of personal mobility, the upward and downward movement of individuals and families. Fortunately, the sample survey which seeks to trace the occupational careers makes possible an analysis of personal social mobility.

One's chances for social mobility are conditioned by (1) the gradual changes in occupational stratification; (2) social characteristics such as age, education, religion; and (3) psychological attitudes and motives as well as constitutional vitality. It can be assumed that changes in the occupational structure in West Germany have been creating new opportunities for social ascent. But during the process of industrial expansion some persons suffer downward mobility as specific skill and age groups are displaced. In West Germany the need to integrate a great mass of refugees and "expellees"—more than one out of four persons—meant that there were additional strong pressures toward downward social mobility. Thus, despite the relative over-all stability in occupational structure, it is necessary to discover just how much personal social mobility—both upward and downward—has taken place.

For our purposes it was not meaningful to measure social mobility by means of a detailed list of occupations. Instead, we needed a more comprehensive and analytic view of social structure. We were concerned with measuring social mobility between broadly defined social strata or, if you will, social classes. Thus social strata were categorized on a two-step basis. First, it was assumed that social structure is basically differentiated by occupation and by relations to the means of production. Therefore, a person's occupation and his relations to the means of production could be used to dis-

⁸ For an analysis of the occupational structure of the United States see Kurt Mayer, "Recent Changes in the Class Structure in the United States," *Transactions of the Third World Congress of Sociology* (1957), III, 66–80.

tinguish between manual and non-manual occupations, that is, between the lower and middle classes. Second, within the lower and especially within the middle classes, differentiation into lower and upper strata involved additional criteria, such as income,

it is possible to categorize our sample of West German households into four hierarchical social strata: upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower, and lower-lower (Table 3). The very small percentage of persons (less than 1 per cent) who might be classified within the upper stratum are included in the upper-middle stratum.

TABLE 3

SOCIAL STRATA IN WEST GERMANY, 1955

	PER CENT	
	Present Generation	Father's Generation
Upper-Middle Strata: Professionals, managers and proprietors of larger establishments, and upper civil servants...	4.6	3.0
Lower-Middle Strata: Minor officials, clerical and sales persons, small businessmen, and independent artisans.....	28.0	24.6
Upper-Lower Strata: Skilled workers and employed artisans.....	13.3	12.4
Lower-Lower Strata: Semiskilled and unskilled workers.....	34.9	31.6
Farmers.....	10.6	22.0
Farm workers.....	3.7	4.6
Unclassifiable*.....	4.9	1.8
No. of cases.....	(3,385)	(3,385)

* Includes those war and social security pensioners to whom no occupational position could be meaningfully assigned.

On the basis of these categories, the matrix of *intergenerational* mobility is derived by comparison of the present social stratum (*sozialschicht*) of the head of each household, or unattached adult, with that of the father's (Table 4). We can then see the proportion of descendants who remained in the social stratum of their father and the proportion who shifted into different strata. Thus we are comparing the social destination of men and women of similar origins. If the farmowners are equated to the lower-middle stratum and the farm workers to the lower-lower stratum, the *gross* amount of personal mobility can be noted in the summary in Table 5, where social mobility is defined as a movement from one stratum into at least the next.

From these data it can be noted that,

TABLE 4

INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY, WEST GERMANY, 1955
(Comparison of Heads of Household: Father's Generation and Present Generation)

SOCIAL STRATA— FATHER'S GENERATION	SOCIAL STRATA—PRESENT GENERATION, 1955							TOTAL (PER CENT)	TOTAL NO. OF CASES
	Upper- Middle	Lower- Middle	Upper- Lower	Lower- Lower	Farm- owner	Farm Worker	Unclasi- fiable		
Upper-middle....	50.6	27.1	9.4	4.7	2.4	...	5.8	100	(85)
Lower-middle....	8.3	55.6	12.0	17.6	2.0	0.9	3.6	100	(845)
Upper-lower....	3.6	32.9	31.5	21.5	3.1	1.7	5.7	100	(420)
Lower-lower....	0.7	14.5	12.4	61.5	2.6	3.6	4.7	100	(1,065)
Farmowner.....	2.1	17.3	7.9	25.1	39.3	3.9	4.4	100	(747)
Farm worker....	0.6	8.3	10.2	43.4	4.4	25.5	7.6	100	(158)
Unclassifiable....	3.0	20.9	14.9	37.3	1.5	7.5	14.9	100	(65)
No. of cases.....	(155)	(941)	(458)	(1181)	(361)	(125)	(164)		(3,385)

social prestige, and power. The distinction between the self-employed and the salaried person, crucial as it is for occupational analysis, is not a clear index to relative position within the middle social strata. Instead, income, bureaucratic rank, and social prestige were used to distinguish the upper-middle occupations from those in the lower-middle strata. On the basis of such analysis

despite the apparent over-all stability of German social structure, there has been a considerable amount of both upward and downward personal mobility (intragenerationally 73.7 per cent remained stable, while intergenerationally the stable group was only 55.4 per cent). What is most striking is that the amount of personal social ascent was balanced off by social descent for both

time periods. Where these data are analyzed below in terms of refugee status, it will become clear that internal migration and disruptions of the war contribute to these patterns of downward mobility.

The question can be raised whether these data, which include the agricultural strata, compound the consequences of both industrialization and urbanization. Is it possible to fit the farmowners and farm laborers into the same hierarchy of social strata as the urban population? We have data to indicate

downward into the strata of manual workers. Evidence for this may be seen in Table 4; one-third of the farmowners had sons who became manual workers, most of them unskilled. By contrast, Table 4 also shows the extensive amount of upward individual mobility among the offspring of the urban population. These data on intergenerational social inheritance underline that the process of social ascent is not a one-generation shift from the working strata into the middle strata. Rather, social ascent involves, in

TABLE 5
SOCIAL MOBILITY IN WEST GERMANY, 1955

	INTRAGENERATIONAL (1939-55)		INTERGENERATIONAL	
	No. of Cases	Per Cent	No. of Cases	Per Cent
No mobility.....	2,495	73.7	1,876	55.4
Upward mobility.....	322	9.5	622	18.0
Downward mobility.....	381	11.3	668	20.2
Unclassifiable.....	187	5.5	219	6.4
Total.....	3,385	100.0	3,385	100.0

TABLE 6
SOCIAL MOBILITY IN WEST GERMANY, 1955
(WITHOUT FARMING STRATA)

	INTRAGENERATIONAL (1939-55)		INTERGENERATIONAL	
	No. of Cases	Per Cent	No. of Cases	Per Cent
No mobility.....	1,997	76.3	1,302	58.9
Upward mobility.....	280	10.6	530	24.0
Downward mobility.....	344	13.1	379	17.1
Total.....	2,621	100.0	2,211	100.0

that the self-conceptions of the farm worker are working-class and that those of the farmowner tend with considerable consistency to be lower-middle class. Nevertheless, it is important to observe the pattern of gross personal mobility after the farming occupations have been eliminated (Table 6). Without the farming strata, for the intergenerational period, upward social mobility exceeds downward; here the increased opportunities traditionally ascribed to industrialism are manifested at least for the urban population.

For farmowners urbanization and entrance into the urban occupational structure seems often to involve an initial social move

good measure, a two-stage process, with movement into the middle class depending on whether one's father was in the upper-lower or the lower-lower stratum. About one-third of the descendants of fathers who were in the upper-lower stratum reached the lower-middle stratum (i.e., the bottom of the middle class); while for the descendants of households from the lower-lower stratum the percentage reaching the lower-middle stratum was much lower, only about 15 per cent. Likewise, entrance into the upper-middle stratum depended heavily on having a father who already was in the lower-middle strata. Thus these data indicate the danger inherent in analyzing personal social

mobility on the basis of an oversimplified, two-strata system of manual and non-manual.

How do these patterns of intergenerational social mobility in West Germany compare with those in the United States? Such cross-national comparisons are most hazardous, since the results are conditioned by the number of social strata employed by differing definitions and especially by the classi-

the United States on the basis of the data contained by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) study, "Jobs and Occupations: A Popular Evaluation," completed almost a decade ago.¹¹ For this purpose it was necessary to combine the categories of "farmowner" and "farm worker" in the German data to create a stratification scheme equivalent with the American study (Table 7). The five strata employed in the

TABLE 7
WEST GERMANY-UNITED STATES COMPARISON OF
INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY

SOCIAL STRATA— FATHER'S GENERATION	SOCIAL STRATA—PRESENT GENERATION					Unclassi- fiable	TOTAL (PER CENT)	No. OF CASES
	Upper- Middle	Lower- Middle	Upper- Lower	Lower- Lower	Farmers			
Upper-middle								
United States . . .	49.6	29.8	5.7	12.4	2.5	...	100	(315)
West Germany . . .	50.6	27.1	9.4	4.7	2.4	5.8	100	(85)
Lower-middle								
United States . . .	37.0	40.8	6.5	12.0	3.7	...	100	(106)
West Germany . . .	8.3	55.6	12.0	17.6	2.9	3.6	100	(845)
Upper-lower								
United States . . .	26.0	26.9	22.9	21.6	2.6	...	100	(231)
West Germany . . .	3.6	32.9	31.5	21.5	4.8	5.7	100	(420)
Lower-lower								
United States . . .	19.5	19.1	18.7	37.4	5.3	...	100	(246)
West Germany . . .	0.7	14.5	12.5	61.5	6.2	4.6	100	(1,065)
Farmers								
United States . . .	19.3	10.8	11.8	21.6	36.5	...	100	(434)
West Germany . . .	1.9	15.7	8.3	28.4	40.8	4.9	100	(905)
Total								
United States . . .	....	....	....	....	....	...	..	(1,332)
West Germany . . .	....	...	....	....	....	...	..	(3,320)

fication of the farming occupations. Lipset and Rogoff argue that all Western industrialized countries tend to have similar rates of intergenerational social mobility because of the similar occupational structure that industrialism imposes.⁹ Their ingenious analysis involves comparing the rates of social mobility between the three strata, farm occupations, manual and non-manual. Our data confirm their stress on the importance of focusing attention on the opportunities for social mobility in western European countries, an emphasis which has tended to be neglected. By employing a five-strata scheme, we are able to carry further the cross-national comparison of the United States and Germany.¹⁰

Comparisons of patterns of intergenerational social mobility can best be made with

NORC study were: professionals, proprietors and managers (upper-middle strata);

⁹ Seymour Lipset and Natalie Rogoff, "Class and Opportunity in Europe and the United States," *Commentary*, December, 1954.

¹⁰ It is unfortunate that no comparisons can be made with the recent comprehensive British study of social mobility, because that investigation classifies skilled manual workers and lower-level, white-collar employees in the same occupational strata. Therefore, shifts occurring across the manual-non-manual categories are not reported as social mobility (David Glass [ed.], *Social Mobility in Britain* [Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954]).

¹¹ *Opinion News*, September, 1947, as adapted by Joseph A. Kahl, *The American Class Structure* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1957), pp. 259-61. Although the number of cases in the American study are relatively small, the sampling procedures render the data useful for the type of analysis for which they are used in this research.

clerks, salespersons, etc. (lower-middle); skilled workers and foreman (upper-lower); unskilled and semiskilled (lower-lower); and farming occupations. The percentage distribution of father's social position shows a marked difference in that for the United States data; the concentration in the upper-middle strata is very much greater than that for West Germany. In fact, it is so much greater that the comparability of underlying definitions becomes questionable. However, we can make comparisons of the West German and the United States data (e.g., as in Table 7), when the data are arranged to show comparative amounts of social inheritance. On three different measures the amount of intergenerational personal mobility in the German stratification system emerges as somewhat less than that in the United States.¹²

First, comparison on the basis of the amount of structural change shows greater structural change in the United States than in Germany, with 22 per cent change in stratification opportunities in the United States as compared with 12 per cent in Germany.¹³

Second, when the Goldhamer-Rogoff in-

¹² These data on West Germany reveal less intergenerational mobility than those reported by Lipset and Rogoff. Their analysis is based on a sample of unreported size from the files of the German Institut für Demoskopie and is calculated on the basis of mobility between the categories of non-manual, manual, and farm. The different results from the two bodies of data are probably due in part to sampling procedure, since it is presumed that the Institut data are based on a quota sample, in contrast to the probability sampling procedure used to collect these data. In addition, the use of three instead of five categories in the social stratification scheme influenced the results obtained.

Whatever effect might be traced to the fact that the United States data were collected earlier than West German data would only serve to reinforce the encountered differences in mobility between the two samples. All the previously reported data on the differences in social stratification indicate that the German social system is evolving in the direction of the United States, and, in effect, these comparisons increase the comparative amount of mobility for Germany by allowing almost a decade in which these changes could have taken place.

dex of social distance mobility, which measures the amount of personal mobility *without regard to direction*, is applied to the data, the mean index for the United States is greater than for West Germany.¹⁴ For the United States it is .92 and statistically exceeds that for West Germany, which is .63.

Third, the details of the matrix of social inheritance, in Table 7, comparing the United States and West Germany show the social strata which make contributions to the greater upward social mobility in the United States. The percentage of descendants from lower-lower, upper-lower, and lower-middle households who remained in the same stratum, respectively, is greater in West Germany than in the United States. Similarly, apart from the farmers, the upward mobility of the offspring from these strata is in excess in the United States over West Germany for all categories except the Germany offspring of the upper-lower stratum who enter the lower-middle group. Perhaps the greatest difference in mobility is the much greater opportunity for ascent into the upper-middle strata in the United States than in West Germany. In the categories of downward mobility, again omitting the farmers, the German experience does not uniformly reflect greater social descent than the United States (in three categories West Germany exceeds the United States; two are roughly balanced; and one is greater for the United States).

In part, the differences in the amount of personal mobility encountered must reflect some differences in how specific occupations were classified in the two studies, that is, in social definitions that cannot be considered standardized. In part, German social structure has great pressure to incorporate the refugees, which temporarily increases downward mobility. More fundamentally, Germany is somewhat less industrialized, and,

¹³ Even when the data are combined into a three-strata system—non-manual, manual, and farming—the change in the United States is in excess of that for West Germany: 19 per cent to 12 per cent.

¹⁴ Rogoff, *op. cit.*, chap. ii, pp. 29–33.

therefore, the proliferation of selected types of structural opportunities for social ascent are somewhat behind those of the United States. In addition, the occupational structure is influenced by social policies in each country. The economic and trade-union definition of the skilled worker in Germany is perhaps somewhat narrower than in the United States. Access to higher education, and the entrance into the professionalized occupations of the upper-middle stratum, is more limited in West Germany. However, considering all these structural reasons for less mobility in West Germany than in the United States, the empirical data indicate that the mobility differences between these two countries can easily be overemphasized.

CORRELATES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

The link between social stratification, social mobility, and the integration or consensus of a social system is indeed a complex matter. It might be argued that the data presented on the essential continuity in West German social structure indicate sources of stability. Dislocation that results from social descent, and even social ascent, would be minimized, since personal mobility has taken place within a relatively stable social structure. In this respect contemporary German social structure is very different from that of the Weimar period.

In general, the sheer rate of social mobility, contrary to the expectations of economic determinist theory, tells little about the consequences of social mobility for a social system. Consequences of social mobility are conditioned by the continuity and discontinuity of the fundamental institutions as well as *by the patterns of social mobility* into elite groups. Consequences depend also on the fundamental value systems of a society and on the expectations of the population. A highly equalitarian society whose members desire personal achievement requires high rates of social mobility for societal integration. Such a society might even be able to tolerate a considerable but temporary social descent if expectations for future advancement remained unchallenged. On

the other hand, a hierarchical social system with traditional values would be disrupted by the same amount of social ascent and social descent. It is in terms of such differences in values and expectations that the consequences of mobility in the United States and Germany need to be compared.

But, again, West Germany and the United States have been developing greater similarity in fundamental value systems. West Germany, like other highly industrialized Western societies, is increasingly a society in which social stratification is based on achievement rather than on ascription. In an achievement-oriented society more and more universalistic criteria for social differentiation are necessary; social consensus requires widespread acceptance of the belief that each individual should have an "equal" opportunity for ascent. This is no utopian goal but rather a realistic and pragmatic acceptance of the importance of skill as compared with social inheritance. Traditional ascriptive and socially inherited background must be tempered by a system in which the criteria for social mobility are achievable through individual effort and, particularly, through education. Moreover, in an achievement-oriented social system, equalitarianism is not the fundamental demand; for in an equalitarian social system nobody would have the opportunity for social ascent. Rather, the demand is for a set of stable rules by which persons can learn to be mobile.

Thus the relationship between social background variables and patterns of social mobility had to be investigated. It was important to know the extent to which these variables conditioned social mobility. Of the possible correlates of social mobility, religion, age, education, and refugee status were selected as relevant for understanding the consequences of mobility on social consensus in West Germany.

Religion.—Strikingly, in the transformation of West German social structure into an achievement-oriented society, Protestant-Catholic affiliation is of slight importance in a person's contemporary chances

for social mobility. In the classic writings of Max Weber the thesis has been offered that the Catholic ethic stood opposed to the capitalist ethic and therefore inhibited Catholic social ascent by means of capitalistic venture. Research in Germany around the turn of the century documented the relatively lower social status of Catholics and their more limited chances for social ascent.¹⁵

Households of Catholic affiliation tend to occupy a slightly lower position in the social structure than Protestant households (Table

historically weakened social consensus. Aside from the transformation of the content and organization of religion, the fact that the German social system has become an achievement society for both Protestants and Catholics is a development of bureaucratization which implies that mobility is not merely capitalist entrepreneurship but also the result of the routinization of careers.

Education.—In an achievement-oriented social system, education becomes a crucial device for social mobility as ascriptive criteria of status weaken. Educational oppor-

TABLE 8
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, SOCIAL MOBILITY, AND
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION, WEST GERMANY, 1955

SOCIAL STRATA— PRESENT GENERATION	RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION (PER CENT)	
	Protestant	Catholic
Upper-middle.	5.3	3.2
Lower-middle.	29.8	25.8
Upper-lower.	13.7	13.5
Lower-lower.	32.1	37.3
Farmowner	10.1	11.9
Farm worker.	4.0	3.6
Unclassifiable.	5.0	4.6
No. of cases.	(1,748)	(1,516)

INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY	PER CENT				TOTAL NO. OF CASES
	Protestant	Catholic	Other	None	
No mobility.	55.7	56.4	41.7	39.8	(1,876)
Upward mobility.	18.7	17.5	14.6	31.5	(622)
Downward mobility.	19.2	19.6	29.2	23.3	(668)
Unclassifiable.	6.4	6.5	14.5	5.4	(219)
No. of cases.	(1,748)	(1,516)	(48)	(73)	(3,385)

8). The difference is greatest at the very top of the social pyramid—the upper-middle stratum—where the Protestants are, in terms of percentage, almost twice that of the Catholics. However, intergenerational patterns of upward and downward social mobility among Catholics approach very closely those of Protestants. The same is true of intragenerational mobility, 1939–55. Clearly, this lack of a difference between Protestant and Catholic reflects the disappearance of a form of stratification in Germany which

tunity and educational achievement are, of course, closely associated with a person's position in the social structure. But, these data emphasize, upward movement from one social stratum to the next is facilitated by educational attainment (Table 9).

Moreover, in Table 9 the interaction of education and intergenerational mobility is shown for the male respondents in the sample, since it is for men that education serves most critically as a precondition for mobility. Of the men with grammar-school education, only 15.5 per cent experienced upward intergenerational social mobility, while, of those with university education, half (52.8 per cent) had upward social mobility. And,

¹⁵ Martin Offenbacher, "Konfession und soziale Schichtung," in *Volksw. Abhandlungen der Badischen Hochschulen* (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1900), pp. 409–510.

conversely, university education, and only university education, operated as insurance against downward social mobility.

These data give meaning to the great importance attached to a university education by wide sectors of the German population. Since opportunity for education is so sharply class-bound, these data imply that the requirements for mobility based on achievement—in which education is a crucial element—are yet to be met in West Germany.

up through the fifty-year age group. Interestingly enough, the trend is interrupted for the forty to forty-nine-year age segment, which had its education and its opportunities for upward social mobility interrupted by the dislocations of the war. By contrast, for downward social mobility, the proportions remain relatively constant after the third decade of life, that is, after a man has had an opportunity to try out his life-chances. An exception is the higher proportion of persons with downward social mo-

TABLE 9
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, SOCIAL MOBILITY,
AND EDUCATION, WEST GERMANY, 1955

SOCIAL STRATA— PRESENT GENERATION	EDUCATION OF RESPONDENT (PER CENT)				No DATA	TOTAL
	Grammar School	"Middle School"	<i>Abitur</i> *	Uni- versity		
Upper-middle.....	1.5	16.0	23.9	65.9	...	
Lower-middle.....	23.4	53.8	56.7	22.7		
Upper-lower.....	14.0	11.0	10.4	6.9		
Lower-lower.....	39.8	9.8	4.5	4.5		
Farmowner.....	12.0	4.0	3.0	...		
Farm worker.....	4.3	1.1	...	...
Unclassifiable.....	5.0	4.3	1.5	...		
No. of cases.....	(2,845)	(426)	(67)	(44)	(3)	(3,385)

INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY	MALES ONLY (PER CENT)			
	Grammar School	Middle School	<i>Abitur</i> *	University
No mobility.....	61.4	58.7	45.2	38.9
Upward mobility....	15.5	22.1	33.3	52.8
Downward mobility..	19.9	16.3	21.5	8.3
Unclassifiable.....	3.2	2.9	...	...
No. of cases.....	(1,211)	(172)	(142)	(36)

* College-preparatory high school.

Age.—Social mobility in an achievement-oriented social system is linked to the age cycle. During the first decades of life a person is not likely to achieve his full potential for upward mobility. He merely reflects the status of the household into which he was born. By the fourth decade of life a person's potential for upward mobility is fully manifested. And again when he is sixty, downgrading of social position begins to operate, especially into the unclassifiable category. These relations can be seen in Table 10, in which intergenerational social mobility by age groups is presented for the males only. Upward social mobility increases with age

in the thirty- to thirty-nine-year age segment, which is due to the impact of the younger refugees. Finally, the changed pattern after sixty, the decrease in percentage of upward social mobility, reflects the decline in changes for social ascent among older persons and the shift from employment to the unclassifiable social pensioner category.

Refugee status.—Refugee status, as was expected, emerged as an important determinant of the chances for both intragenerational and intergenerational social mobility. Over the short run, refugee status is an ascriptive characteristic which, if it operates

as a barrier to social mobility, weakens social consensus. In Table 11 the social strata of the heads of the household in the refugee and the non-refugee population as of 1955 is shown. It can be seen that the distribution of social position of the refugee households is somewhat inferior to that of the resident population. As has been claimed, the refugee population has an equivalent concentration in the upper-middle strata to that of the

resident population. The social stratification of the refugees is modified most in the case of the farmowners, for whom refugee status frequently meant the loss of their ownership position (12.2 per cent in the resident population as compared with 4.3 per cent in the refugee population). This modification appears to be an acceleration of the process of urbanization which tends to occur with refugee status and which brings with it a de-

TABLE 10
SOCIAL MOBILITY AND AGE GROUPINGS IN WEST GERMANY, 1955, MALES ONLY

INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY	AGE OF RESPONDENT (PER CENT)					
	Under 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and Over
No mobility.....	83.4	62.8	51.8	63.6	55.0	58.8
Upward mobility.....	8.3	15.4	20.5	16.2	22.5	17.6
Downward mobility.....	8.3	19.2	25.0	18.6	19.9	16.8
Unclassifiable.....	....	2.5	2.7	1.6	2.6	6.8
No. of cases.....	(60)	(285)	(224)	(371)	(267)	(250)

TABLE 11
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, SOCIAL MOBILITY, AND REFUGEE STATUS IN WEST GERMANY, 1955

SOCIAL STRATA—PRESENT GENERATION	PER CENT	
	Non-Refugee (Per Cent)	All Types of Refugees (Per Cent)
Upper-middle.....	4.4	5.4
Lower-middle.....	29.2	22.4
Upper-lower.....	13.3	14.7
Lower-lower.....	33.9	39.2
Farmowner.....	12.2	4.3
Farm worker.....	3.0	6.4
Unclassifiable.....	4.0	7.5
No. of cases.....	(2,658)	(719)

INTRAGENERATIONAL MOBILITY	PER CENT				
	Non-Refugee	Expellees	Refugees	Foreigners*	Total
No mobility.....	77.9	61.9	57.0	...	73.7
Upward mobility.....	9.8	6.9	10.0	...	9.5
Downward mobility.....	7.4	23.9	21.7	...	11.3
Unclassifiable.....	4.9	7.3	11.3	...	5.5
No. of cases.....	(2,658)	(487)	(232)	(8)	(3,385)

INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY	PER CENT				
	Non-Refugee	Expellees	Refugees	Foreigners*	Total
No mobility.....	57.9	46.6	43.6	...	55.4
Upward mobility.....	19.1	14.8	18.1	...	18.0
Downward mobility.....	17.0	32.2	25.4	...	20.2
Unclassifiable.....	6.0	6.4	12.9	...	6.4
No. of cases.....	(2,658)	(487)	(232)	(8)	(3,385)

* Too few cases for statistical breakdown.

cline in position in the social structure as many of these farming persons moved into unskilled and semiskilled occupations in industry. The lower-middle strata—especially the self-employed—among the refugee population has suffered, as witnessed by the 22.4 per cent in this stratum in the refugee group as compared with 29.2 per cent among the non-refugees.

The non-resident population in West Germany is of two varieties: the “expellees,” who were forced to return to German territory immediately after 1945, and the “refugees,” who came subsequently, mainly from East Germany. Again in Table 11, the more advantageous mobility position of the resident population, as compared with either

tional mobility. Thus the refugees were able to partake of upward mobility where their skills were appropriate but suffered greater downward mobility where this was not the case. And, as mentioned above, it was the farmers who contributed heavily to the pattern of downward mobility, as they shifted from the rural to the urban occupation system.

When the resident population is compared with the total displaced persons, the mobility patterns of the Protestants and the Catholics are similar (Table 12). However, when the displaced-persons population is broken down into expellees and refugees, it can be seen that, for the refugee group only, the Catholics experienced a higher proportion

TABLE 12
SOCIAL MOBILITY, RELIGION, AND REFUGEE STATUS
WEST GERMANY, 1955

INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY	Non-Refugee		PER CENT Expellees		Refugees	
	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic
No mobility.....	57.5	59.5	48.4	44.9	49.7	30.8
Upward.....	20.2	17.6	12.7	17.3	16.8	15.4
Downward.....	16.8	16.6	32.9	30.3	18.5	44.2
Unclassifiable.....	5.5	6.3	5.6	7.5	15.0	9.6
No. of cases.....	(1,318)	(1,236)	(252)	(225)	(167)	(52)

the expellees or the refugees, is shown. It is important that there is an absence of any marked difference as far as realized opportunity for upward social mobility. Both on the basis of intragenerational and intergenerational mobility the resident population and the refugees had approximately equal amounts of upward mobility, while the expellees experience a somewhat lower percentage of upward mobility. Intergenerationally, for the resident population the figure was 19.1 per cent, compared with 14.8 per cent and 18.1 per cent for the two types of refugees, respectively. However, both types of refugee populations had much more downward mobility than the resident population. Intergenerationally, for the resident group the figure was 17.0 per cent, while for the refugees it was 32.2 per cent and for the expellees 25.4 per cent. The same pattern repeats itself for intragenera-

of downward mobility than the Protestants, although, of course, the refugees coming mainly from East Germany were predominantly Protestant (18.6 per cent of the Protestant refugees were downwardly mobile, while 44.2 per cent of the Catholics in this status were downwardly mobile). To some degree this again is the specific result of the consequences of downward mobility of Catholic small farmowners who, as refugees, were mobilized into the urban manual labor force or became farm laborers. We had expected the reverse, namely, that the Protestant refugees would have had as much or more downward mobility, as that of the Catholic refugees. Therefore, the absence of religious differences in West German social mobility would have in part been due to the specific contribution of downwardly mobile Protestant refugees, thereby counterbalancing their traditional social status advantage

over the Catholics. These data indicate that the absence of a religion difference in mobility patterns, as reported above, is not the result of the assimilation of refugees—Protestant or Catholic—but represents a more fundamental change in West German social structure (see Table 8).

CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

The relative importance of religion, age, education, and refugee status in regulating personal mobility has, by inference, consequences for social consensus in West Germany. These consequences are not necessarily uniform. The decline in the importance of religious differences in regulating chances of personal mobility could be inferred as contributing to consensus. On the other hand, the consequences of age grading on social mobility, especially on the downgrading of older persons, seems likely to create disruptive strains. The handicaps of refugee status, although real and significant, have not created a significant minority with permanent disability for social mobility. Refugees were able to achieve a considerable amount of upward mobility, along with the greater social descent that they experienced. Thus, of the social characteristics investigated, educational background and access to higher education emerge as crucial variables in adjusting the consequences of social mobility to social consensus. To the extent that access to education remains unequally distributed, to this degree a strain is placed on consensus in an achievement-oriented society.

But these observations are speculative inferences. It was possible to test more directly a number of hypotheses about social stratification, social mobility, and social consensus in West Germany. Our general orientation was that the contemporary patterns of social mobility in West Germany, although they imply important elements of social strain, have contributed fundamentally to social consensus and stability. Schelsky and other sociologists have commented on the transformation of the form

and content of the prewar "class struggle" in West Germany.¹⁶ To what extent has an undifferentiated middle-class orientation developed in West Germany? To investigate the leveling of social stratification is hardly to assume that the present differences are not at the center of social change. If sectors of the working class have achieved short-term goals of income and social security, it may mean that rivalries between skilled and unskilled workers have increased or that occupational struggles within the middle classes have become more important.

Assuming this general orientation, a decline in older forms of social stratification conflict, we require empirical data to describe the limits and extent of this modification in greater detail and to trace some of its implications. Three topics were selected as important for investigation: income distribution of the social strata, subjective feelings of social class identification, and political party affiliation.

Income distribution.—First, when the total net family income after income taxes for each of the four urban strata is examined, the new patterns of consumption can be seen (Table 13). Within the total range of family income, in essence, there has emerged a broad middle-income group which overlaps social strata distinctions. The similarity in the pattern of income distribution of the lower-middle strata and the upper-lower is most prominent. The percentage of households earning very low incomes (less than DM. 300 after taxes per month) is 18.7 in the lower-middle stratum and is close to 21 in the upper-lower stratum. In the middle-income range, between DM. 400 and 699 per month, the percentage is roughly equal in both strata (about 36). Here the relatively high wages of the skilled workers become apparent. Moreover, even at the high end of the range (DM. 700 and over), there is an elite of the "proletariat," the master craftsman plus working-class family with two wage-earners (8.9 per cent in the upper

¹⁶ Helmut Schelsky, "Elements of Social Stability," in *German Social Science Digest* (Hamburg: Classen Verlag, 1955), pp. 113–23.

working group and 16.3 per cent in the lower-middle group).

The emergence of a middle-income group which encompasses the lower-middle and upper-lower strata, while it means the weakening of a traditional "class" boundary, hardly implies that, for the whole social structure in West Germany, economic distribution is equalitarian. The lower-lower strata income is markedly below that of this middle-income grouping. Thus, 42 per cent of the lower-lower strata had family incomes of less than DM. 300 after taxes per month and over two-thirds of them had incomes under DM. 500. Conversely, the upper-middle stratum presents a pattern of

consciousness. People place different amounts of emphasis and concern on their subjective class identifications, and the rhetoric for expressing social class identifications varies from group to group. What we employed was a simple and rather direct approach to charting these basic commitments which neglected the more complex overtones.

The sampled population was asked: "In which of these social classes would you place yourself?" ("In welche von diesen Gesellschaftsklassen würden Sie sich einstufen?"). Each person was presented with a card which bore the labels: *Oberschicht*, *Mittelschicht*, *Arbeiterschicht*, and *Unterschicht*. The results, as in the case of the income distribu-

TABLE 13
TOTAL FAMILY INCOME IN WEST GERMANY, 1955
(AFTER INCOME TAXES)

	Upper- Middle	Lower- Middle	Upper- Lower	Lower- Lower
DM. 900 and over . . .	29.0	7.2	2.7	1.8
DM. 700-899	13.5	9.1	6.1	2.9
DM. 500-699	18.7	21.8	15.2	8.4
DM. 400-499	4.5	15.3	20.8	16.4
DM. 300-399	12.2	19.9	29.1	26.4
DM. 150-299	10.3	13.5	12.8	28.8
DM. 149 or less	5.2	5.2	8.2	13.2
No data	6.6	8.0	5.1	2.1
No. of cases	(155)	(941)	(458)	(1,181)

marked differentiation, with 29 per cent earning over DM. 900 per month, or 42.5 per cent earning over DM. 700. This is not to overlook the fact that in the upper-middle stratum there is a group whose social position is based on occupation and status position without equivalent income (15.5 per cent earned less than DM. 300 and 27.7 per cent earned less than DM. 400). Thus, while there has been an emergence of a middle-income group which encompasses a small majority of the households of West Germany, the upper-middle and lower-working strata remain differentiated from this group in terms of income.

Class identification.—Patterns of class identifications parallel to a considerable extent the emergence of a middle-income grouping. Subjective feelings of class identification reveal social ideology and social con-

tion, showed a tendency to converge toward the middle in subjective class identification (Table 15). Only 1.9 per cent classified themselves in the upper class, and merely 5.3 per cent responded that they were in the lower class. Nearly all the rest divided themselves into middle class (41.2 per cent) and working class (48.5 per cent).

Interpretation of these data is enhanced by two comparisons. First, as can be seen from Table 14, a national sample of persons in the United States produced a very similar pattern of responses. The United States, with its presumed emphasis on middle-class orientations, reveals on this question no less working-class identification than West Germany. This assumes particular significance, since, as we have noted, the actual opportunities for social mobility in West Germany are less than those in the United States. In

a world of mass media and mass culture perhaps common identifications and common aspirations anticipate rather than follow actual changes in the social structure.

Second, in Table 15, social class identifications are classified by the objective social stratum of the household head. Thus it is possible to examine the degree to which these two aspects of social stratification converge. The tendency for members of the lower class to consider themselves in the middle class should be noted. Even 15.0 per cent of the lower-lower stratum said that they were middle class; while 37.1 per cent, or more than one-third of the upper-lower strata class, claimed middle-class identifications. Conversely, in the lower-middle class only 20 per cent—one out of five—placed themselves in the working strata. The consequence of social stratification and social mobility, regardless of the social reality, seems to have produced a wide middle-stratum self-identification, at least as an aftermath of a decade of employment prosperity.

Political party preference.—Finally, what are the political party preferences of the different social strata and how has social

posing them to National Socialism and in developing political extremism. (Such theories fail to account for the penetration of National Socialism into sectors of the working class, although the threat and actuality of unemployment operate with similar effect.) Clearly, in the postwar period, domestic German political orientations seem closely linked to the emerging patterns of social stratification.

Two hypotheses seemed relevant to help link social structure to the particular kind

TABLE 14
SOCIAL CLASS SELF-IDENTIFICATION, WEST GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES

	PER CENT	
	West Germany*	United States†
Upper class	1.9	3.0
Middle class	43.2	43.0
Working class	48.5	51.0
Lower class	5.3	1.0
No data	1.1	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0
No. of cases	(3,385)	(1,097)

* "In welche von diesen Gesellschaftsklassen würden Sie sich einstufen?"

† Richard Centers, *The Psychology of Social Classes* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1949), pp. 76-77.

TABLE 15
SOCIAL CLASS SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVE SOCIAL STRATA
WEST GERMANY, 1955

SELF-IDENTIFICATION	OBJECTIVE SOCIAL STRATA (PER CENT)							TOTAL
	Upper-Middle	Lower-Middle	Upper-Lower	Lower-Lower	Farm-owner	Farm-Laborer	Unclassifiable	
Upper class	18.7	1.9	0.6	0.2	2.8	0	1.2	1.9
Middle class	70.3	75.3	37.1	15.0	59.3	12.1	42.7	43.2
Working class	7.7	20.0	57.7	76.6	30.4	75.8	42.7	48.5
Lower class	1.9	1.6	3.3	7.3	5.8	11.3	13.4	5.3
No opinion; no data . . .	1.4	1.2	1.3	0.9	1.7	0.8	0	1.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
No. of cases	(155)	(941)	(458)	(1,181)	(361)	(125)	(164)	(3,385)

mobility influenced political behavior? Political behavior, in both Marxist and non-Marxist theory, represents a crucial area in which to probe the consequences of social stratification and social mobility. A great deal of weight has been given to the consequences of downward social mobility among persons in the lower-middle class in predis-

of political stability and the absence of political extremism found in postwar West Germany. These hypotheses are not explanations of political behavior in West Germany; they deal specifically with the impact of social stratification. First, it should be the case that neither of the two major parties (Christian Democratic Union

[CDU/CSU] and Social Democratic party [SDP]) would draw its strength from a narrow strata of the social structure; or, in order to increase their marginal strength, both parties must offer themselves as coalitions which cut across differing strata of the social structure. Thus the major parties must avoid extremist appeals in order to accommodate differing social segments within their ranks and in order to attract new recruits. To a considerable extent it was expected

had a concentration of upwardly and downwardly mobile persons among its adherents; and, to help explain the relative stability of German political behavior, our hypothesis was that no one of the major parties would have a predominant concentration of the downwardly mobile persons (and that each party would have a minority of its adherents in this group). However, the small parties of the extreme right would have the highest concentrations.

TABLE 16
POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE AND SOCIAL STRATA
WEST GERMANY, 1955

Social Strata	Socialist	Christian Democrats	Free Democrats	Right* Groups	Communist†	Other†	None or No Opinion
Upper-middle.	1.6	6.1	13.7	5.8	...	...	3.6
Lower-middle.	18.4	33.2	46.0	26.6	...	...	26.2
Upper-lower.	18.4	11.8	10.6	10.1	...	...	12.8
Lower-lower.	50.8	26.9	13.7	31.7	...	...	35.6
Farmer.	7.5	18.3	12.8	18.7	...	...	15.0
Unclassifiable.	3.3	3.7	3.2	7.1	...	...	6.8
No. of cases.	(767)	(953)	(238)	(147)	(11)	(62)	(1,207)

Intergenerational Mobility	Socialist	Christian Democrat	Free Democrat	Right* Groups
No mobility.	53.8	57.5	55.3	48.6
Upward mobility.	18.6	18.4	24.1	15.5
Downward mobility.	22.8	18.8	11.7	27.4
Unclassifiable.	4.8	5.3	8.9	8.5

No. of cases. (767) (953) (238) (147)

* German party (DP), National German party (DRP), and Union of Refugees and Disenfranchised (BHE).

† Too few cases for statistical breakdown.

that this would also be true for the third party, the Free Democratic party (FDP). Second, if a political party is likely to be driven to an extremist position by the disruptive pressure of adherents who have suffered downward mobility, it is important for a competitive democratic political system that no one of the parties have an overwhelmingly high concentration of these downwardly mobile persons. Rather, they should be found to some extent in all parties. Under these conditions, no party would be able to neglect the legitimate self-interests of the downwardly mobile, and no party would make a special point of extremist appeals to these persons. Thus we wanted to investigate the extent to which each party

Political party preference was ascertained by the question "Would you tell me which political party you prefer?" ("Würden sie mir sagen, welche politische Partei Ihnen am besten gefallt?").¹⁷ The responses to the question classified by social strata of the household head are presented in Table 16. First, these data show the clear-cut link between social composition and political party preference. Comparing the SDP to

¹⁷ For those who responded, "Keine oder, keine meinung" ("None, no opinion") the following question was asked: "Angenommen, morgen wäre eine Wahl, welche Partei würden Sie wählen?" ("Assuming that there were an election tomorrow, for which party would you vote?"). The follow-up question increased the number of persons with a party preference but in no way altered the results.

the CDU/CSU to the FDP, the percentage of working-strata adherents declines while the percentage of middle strata increases, progressively. The working-class component of the SDP is 69.2 per cent; of the CDU/CSU, 38.7 per cent; of the FDP, 24.3 per cent. Conversely, the middle strata, excluding the farmers, rises from 20 per cent for the SDP to 39.3 per cent for the CDU/CSU to 59.7 per cent for the FDP.

Second, however, the composition of the party adherents shows the extent to which each party is a coalition of social strata and thereby confirms our hypothesis. The CDU/CSU represents the widest social coalition; the division between middle and working is roughly equal (39.3 per cent of middle strata background and 38.7 per cent of working strata). In addition, among those who chose the CDU/CSU party, the farmers constituted an important group (18.3 per cent). By contrast, the SDP draws its support more heavily from one group, the working strata; 69.2 per cent of its adherents were from the working class, and, in fact, 50.8 per cent from the bottom of the working class. Nevertheless, these data show that almost one out of every five persons oriented toward the Social Democratic party came from the middle class (20 per cent), while another 7.5 per cent were farmers. These are the marginal strength groups for the SDP whom an extremist position might alienate. Conversely, the FDP represents almost the same level of reliance of the middle class as the Socialist have on the working class; 59.7 per cent of those who selected the FDP were from the middle strata, with 24.3 per cent from the lower strata. Thus, while the SDP and the FDP are constituted more clearly by their respective social strata, they cannot be thought of as narrowly based and without important elements of social coalitions in their ranks.

Moreover, from these data the link between social mobility and party preference can be seen (Table 16). The SDP and the CDU/CSU present a rather similar picture. Both have the same percentage of adherents

in the upward mobility category (around 18); while the SDP has somewhat more than the CDU/CSU in the downward mobility category (22.8 per cent as compared with 18.8). But, as between these two groups, it cannot be said that one attracts the downwardly mobile to a disproportionate degree. The FDP, however, presents a markedly different picture. The concentration of downwardly mobile in its ranks is rather small, 11.7 per cent, while almost one-quarter (24.1 per cent) are upwardly mobile. As anticipated in our hypothesis, the right small parties as of 1955 (DP, DRP, and BHE) had the highest concentration of the downward mobility category (27.4 per cent), confirming the link between downward mobility and political extremism. But, obviously, downward social mobility does not invariably result in political extremism, since the bulk of the downwardly mobiles in West Germany are not to be found in the extremist right parties but are distributed in the rest of the political spectrum.

Thus what inferences can be drawn from the analysis of the group characteristics influencing social mobility chances and the consequences of social mobility on social consensus? The weight of the evidence rests on the side of the conclusion that the consequences of social stratification and social mobility are now operating to decrease traditional class-consciousness and to increase social consensus concerning internal matters. The decline of differences in social mobility between Catholics and Protestants is striking as well as the relative success of the refugees in upward mobility. As Germany becomes more and more an achievement-oriented society, access of education emerges as a crucial factor in social mobility and thereby on social consensus. The patterns of income distribution reveal considerable overlap between the top of the working class and the bottom of the middle class. Social class identifications in West Germany also are no more "proletarian" than in the United States. Sharp social dif-

ferentiation operates as between the upper-middle and the lower-lower strata. What data we have on political affiliation seem to indicate that the essential three-party system of West Germany has a social composition basis which enhances compromise within a competitive political system.

These are in part general trends of most advanced industrial societies, modified by particular German circumstances. Yet the social class system as it operates on social consensus is clearly different from the

Weimar period. There is reason to believe that the social system could respond to internal economic strains with political orientations differently from that period. However, our data do not deal with social stratification in relationship to such fundamental problems as nationalism, ethnocentrism, and foreign policy orientation. These data are required to round out the analysis of the consequence of social mobility on contemporary West Germany.

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