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Social Mobility in Germany, 1900–1960

Hartmut Kaelble

In modern German historiography social mobility has remained an underdeveloped field of research, especially in comparison with the United States and her wealth of urban studies.[1] There are various reasons for this which are closely linked to the political crises and breakdowns in German history before 1945 and which resulted in a weak interest in social history among German sociologists and in an unusually long and strong refusal of German historians to utilize social science approaches.

Moreover, the successful exploration of social mobility in American empirical sociology and social history is not likely to stimulate intensive and controversial research on this issue in modern German history. Investigations of mere mobility rates of single towns and cities were and are of high interest in the history of the United States because they attack or back the legend of unbounded opportunities. Germany never was considered a country of unlimited opportunities, so nobody is surprised by low rates of social mobility. Nor did the big issue of postwar sociological mobility research—in the context of economic development and increase in rates of social mobility—challenge research on German history. Bendix and Lipset argued that for developed countries "social mobility becomes relatively high once their industrialization, and hence their economic

[1] Almost all publications on the twentieth century are by nonhistorians, such as R. Mayntz, *Soziale Schichtung und sozialer Wandel in einer Industriegemeinde* (Stuttgart, 1958), pp. 147 ff.; and H. Daheim, "Berufliche Intergenerationen-Mobilität in der komplexen Gesellschaft," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 16 (1964): 32–124. See also K. M. Bolte, *Sozialer Aufstieg und Abstieg* (Stuttgart, 1959), and the more recent debate on the historical development of social mobility in Germany by Karl Ulrich Mayer, Walter Müller, and Gerhard Kleining in the *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, vol. 23 (1971), vol. 24 (1972), and vol. 27 (1975). Research by historians has begun only recently, dealing mainly with the nineteenth century and lagging far behind the amount of research on the United States. See D. Crew, "Definitions of Modernity: Social Mobility in a German Town, 1880–1901," *Journal of Social History* 7 (1973): 51–74; F. D. Marquardt, "Sozialer Aufstieg, sozialer Abstieg und die Entstehung der Berliner Arbeiterklasse, 1806–1818," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, vol. 1 (1975); H. Zwahr, "Zur Konstituierung des Proletariats als Klasse," in *Die großpreußisch-militaristische Reichsgründung 1871*, ed. H. Bartel and E. Engelberg (Berlin, 1971), pp. 501–51; H. Schomerus, "Ausbildung und Aufstiegsmöglichkeiten württembergischer Metallarbeiter 1850–1900 am Beispiel der Maschinenfabrik Eßlingen," in *Soziale Bewegung und politische Verfassung*, ed. U. Engelhardt et al.

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expansion, reaches a certain level."[2] As Germany at first sight does not seem exceptional either in the level of industrialization or in the level of social mobility, there is no reason to believe that years of painstaking empirical work would open up new perspectives and conclusions. However, another question holds greater promise for research on social mobility in modern German history. The most challenging problem is the gap, during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, which separated the German social and political structure from that of France, Great Britain, and the United States. Hence for good reason most social historians dealing with Germany start at this gap and work on the manifold aspects of the German contradiction between rapid, successful, and relatively uninterrupted industrialization, on the one side, and the slow, sometimes impeded development of modern economic and social attitudes and structures and of democratic political institutions and values on the other side. This essay proceeds from this basic question and seeks to trace not only the influence of economic development but also the impact of the specific backwardness of German society and politics with regard to social mobility in the twentieth century. My main purpose is to suggest that research in the history of social mobility could be as important for German as for American historiography, provided it is done in a different way and includes greater attention to political and social conditions.

This essay is just a preliminary attempt in this direction. It is confined to mobility between generations. For lack of data and studies, it does not deal with career mobility. It is based mainly on the almost forgotten prewar state statistics (*Laenderstatistiken*) and on a large number of surveys which were carried out by the productive empirical sociology of pre-Nazi Germany and which are rarely used by social historians. The main focus is on the development of upward and downward mobility. Using occupational data as a point of departure, social ascent and descent are measured, though

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(Stuttgart, 1976), pp. 372–93; J. Kocka, "Bildung, soziale Schichtung und soziale Mobilität im Deutschen Kaiserreich am Beispiel der gewerblichtechnischen Ausbildung," in *Industrielle Gesellschaft und Politisches System*, ed. B. F. Wendt and D. Stegmann (Bonn, 1978). For a research survey and a bibliography, see H. Kaelble, *Historische Mobilitätsforschung: Westeuropa und USA im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 1978); this essay is based on a lecture given in 1973 at Yale University, Rutgers University, Syracuse University, and the University of Maryland. The discussions were very valuable. I am also grateful for comments from Frederick D. Marquardt (Syracuse University) and from the members of the Berlin group on the social history of modernization at the Zentralinstitut fuer sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung, Freie Universität Berlin.

[2] S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959), p. 13.

with qualifications, in two ways: in terms of individual alteration either of the basic socioeconomic situation or of social status. Hence, people who stemmed from economically dependent families, such as blue-collar workers or lower white-collar workers, and who became employers are considered, with some qualifications, as ascending. People who came from lower-class or lower-middle-class backgrounds and reached a higher social class—upper middle class or lower middle class, respectively—are classified as ascending.[3] Social descent is defined as mobility the reverse of the preceding. As each of the two ways of looking at social mobility has severe shortcomings, only the combination seems to be fruitful, provided the original occupational data are presented to the reader in some way.

The application of this pattern of upward and downward social mobility to German history between 1900 and 1960 calls forth three primary objections which should be discussed in advance. First, this scheme is very rough, and many cases of upward and downward mobility remain undetected. The mobility from unskilled to skilled worker, from a small depressed shopkeeper to a well-to-do owner of middle-sized building firm, from a country doctor to a top civil servant, is not considered. However, the materials used here do not fit a more differentiated set of categories and can only be supplemented by very extensive work in unprinted sources. Second, the sources and data used here are limited to occupational categories and lead to conclusions on how people moved between different socioeconomic situations rather than on what has been considered historically to be social ascent and descent. Again, the historical perception of social mobility has rarely been investigated and hence cannot be covered here. Finally, one may wonder whether the same pattern of social stratification can be applied to the whole period

[3] Two schemes of categorization may be utilized. (1) Class of employers: entrepreneurs including top executives, landlords, independent professionals, independent craftsmen and merchants, farmers; class of employed: blue-collar workers, white-collar employees excluding top executives, civil servants excluding higher ranks (*hoehere Beamte*). (2) Lower class: blue-collar workers, lower white-collar employees and civil servants, small peasants, domestics; lower middle class: independent craftsmen and merchants, farmers, middle-ranking white-collar workers and civil servants; upper middle class: higher civil servants, professionals, entrepreneurs including top executives, army officers, landlords. Apart from the shortcomings mentioned above, the first of the two schemes has the disadvantage that the socioeconomic situation of substantial small employers is not superior to that of some white-collar employees, or even blue-collar workers. The most incisive weak point of the second scheme is the category "lower middle class," which includes very heterogeneous occupational groups. These problems can be reduced by using both schemes at the same time.

between late Imperial Germany and the early Federal Republic. In spite of political upheavals and alterations of the occupational structure, differences in socioeconomic situation and social prestige, in the broad sense used here, very rarely vanished and were never reversed. To be sure, the structure of the German upper class, which is not covered here, changed drastically, the landed aristocracy, army officers, and high civil servants losing prestige and power in favor of politicians and businessmen. Furthermore, in postwar West Germany the passage from blue-collar occupations to lower white-collar jobs, and from there to some professions, might not have been as large a step as in Imperial Germany in terms of income, social values, style of life, and political orientation. However, research on the history of social stratification—for example, on the distribution of income or educational opportunities—does not show any strong long-term trend toward more social equality in the period covered here. The social hierarchy between the broad social groupings has not disappeared.[4] Therefore, what had been upward and downward mobility in Imperial Germany seems to have kept its basic character, though with modification, in postwar West Germany.

The following essay proceeds in three stages. First, it traces the development and changing rates of social mobility from late Imperial Germany to early postwar West Germany. Second, it briefly covers the impact of economic development on social mobility. Third, it deals extensively with the influence of social and political structure and decisions on social mobility; since this can be done only by investigating those individual social groups that are quantitatively the most important ones, this final part will go into detail about the recruitment of university students, higher civil servants, entrepreneurs, white-collar employees, and lower civil servants.

Development of Social Mobility

The long-term development of upward and downward social mobility in twentieth-century Germany has been explored only in sociological studies, which differ in both methods and conclusions. Daheim's survey of the city of Cologne, based on marriage license files of 1906–13 and 1949–53, gives the optimistic impression that upward social mobility increased between the late Empire and early postwar West Germany. The proportion of blue-collar workers' sons in

[4] See, for literature, H. Kaelble, "Social Stratification in Germany in the 19th and 20th Centuries: A Survey of Research since 1945," *Journal of Social History* 10 (1976): 144–65.

Cologne who became white-collar employees or small businessmen was much higher after the Second World War than before the First World War.[5] The share of white-collar workers who stemmed from blue-collar backgrounds seems to have increased as well. To be sure, because we lack other urban studies, these conclusions cannot be generalized. By contrast, Kleining, after one of the largest general surveys of social mobility in postwar German society, came to the conclusion that the rate of vertical mobility "in the last fifty years" has stagnated.[6] This conclusion has been heavily criticized by Mayer and Müller, two other sociologists, and was subsequently revised several times by the author. As far as the direction of change in postwar Germany is concerned, social scientists now seem to agree that social mobility rates somewhat increased.[7] But the trend in the earlier period remains unclear and open to further research. Based on the older surveys and statistics mentioned above, it is possible to calculate estimates of upward and downward social mobility in the nonagrarian sector of German society during the late Empire (1904–13) and during the Weimar Republic (1925–29). These estimates can be compared with surveys in early postwar West Germany (1955) (see tables 1–3) and lead to the conclusion that, in the long run, vertical mobility increased. The proportion of lower-class children who entered middle-class jobs expanded from the late Empire to the Weimar Republic and grew again by the 1950s. Middle-class Germans who originated in blue-collar families became less rare. Possibly the chances for members of the lower and lower middle classes to enter the upper middle class increased as well; the upper middle class may have been recruited less exclusively in the Weimar Republic and even less so in the Federal Republic.[8]

[5] Daheim. Frau Mayntz does not cover vertical social mobility in her study of the town of Euskirchen.

[6] G. Kleining, "Struktur- und Prestigemobilität in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 23 (1971): 29.

[7] See K. U. Mayer and W. Müller, "Progress in Social Mobility Research?" *Quality and Quantity* 5 (1971): 141–78, "Trendanalyse in der Mobilitätsforschung," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 23 (1971): 76–88; G. Kleining, "Soziale Mobilität in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 27 (1975): 37–121, 273–92.

[8] The omission of the agrarian sector does not really affect these arguments. As it is highly probable that upward social mobility is relatively low in the agrarian sector, the inclusion of the agrarian sector would make for a steeper rise of upward mobility. However, rates of downward mobility may be heavily influenced by omission, as many sons of peasants seemingly moved down to the urban lower classes (assumptions based on the data of Kleining, "Prestigemobilität," "Die Veränderungen der Mobilitätschancen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 23 [1971]: 797 ff.). Therefore, this essay does not go into detail about downward mobility.

TABLE 1
UPWARD AND DOWNWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY
IN GERMANY, 1904–13
(Inflow and Outflow in %)

	Sons						
	Upper Middle Class		Lower Middle Class		Lower Class		Sum
Fathers	Out-flow	In-flow	Out-flow	In-flow	Out-flow	In-flow	(Out-flow)
Upper middle class	...	*53*	...	8	...	0	...
	29	...	*72*	...	*0*	...	100
Lower middle class	...	46	...	*74*	...	28	...
	2	...	*56*	...	42	...	100
Lower class	...	*1*	...	18	...	72	...
	0	...	*11*	...	*89*	...	100
Sum (inflow)	...	100	...	100	...	100	...

NOTE—Tables 1 and 2 are calculated from about thirty surveys and official statistics on the social origin of members of numerous occupational groups. For the list of sources and the method of calculation, see H. Kaelble, "Soziale Mobilität in Deutschland, 1900–1960," in *Probleme zur Sozialgeschichte der Modernisierung in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Opladen and Wiesbaden, 1978), pp. 235–327. These tables do not include the agrarian sector for total lack of data. Table 3 is calculated from Morris Janowitz, "Soziale Schichtung und Mobilität in Westdeutschland," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 10 (1958): 11. For comparative purposes, I have deleted the agrarian sector in the 1955 survey. Each cell of tables 1–3 contains outflow data (lower left corner) and inflow data (upper right corner). Numbers in italics are estimates based on the occupational censuses of 1907 and 1925 and on the assumptions that zero percent of the lower classes stemmed from the upper classes (1907 and 1925) and that the rate of downward mobility in late Empire was similar to that in the Weimar Republic (1925).

TABLE 2
UPWARD AND DOWNWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY
IN GERMANY, 1925–29
(Inflow and Outflow in %)

	Sons						
	Upper Middle Class		Lower Middle Class		Lower Class		Sum
Fathers	Out-flow	In-flow	Out-flow	In-flow	Out-flow	In-flow	(Out-flow)
Upper middle class	...	*54*	...	5	...	0	...
	36	...	*64*	...	*0*	...	100
Lower middle class	...	44	...	*72*	...	*21*	...
	2	...	*68*	...	*30*	...	100
Lower class	...	2	...	23	...	*79*	...
	0	...	*16*	...	*84*	...	100
Sum (inflow)	...	100	...	100	...	100	...

TABLE 3
UPWARD AND DOWNWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY
IN WEST GERMANY, 1955
(Inflow and Outflow in %)

	SONS						
	Upper Middle Class		Lower Middle Class		Lower Class		SUM
FATHERS	Out-flow	In-flow	Out-flow	In-flow	Out-flow	In-flow	(Out-flow)
Upper middle class	...	31	...	3	...	1	...
	51	...	27	...	14	...	100
Lower middle class	...	51	...	59	...	20	...
	9	...	57	...	32	...	100
Lower class	...	17	...	37	...	77	...
	2	...	21	...	72	...	100
Sum (inflow)	...	100	...	100	...	100	...

NOTE.—If numbers do not add up to 100, this is because of unclassified respondents.

This optimistic view must be qualified in two respects. Obviously, the short-run development of vertical social mobility in critical and controversial eras such as the two wars, the great depression, the Third Reich, and the years of enforced geographic mobility immediately after 1945 remains unknown. Much more massive and precise data would be necessary for clarification; in general, the short-run analysis of social mobility is a very neglected field. Beside this qualification, it is clear that, even in the long run, Germany did not become a new land of unbounded opportunities: the large majority of working-class sons did not leave their class; the majority of the lower middle class continued to come from lower-middle-class origins (again, see tables 1–3). International comparison mutes the optimistic view as well. At first sight, the development of social mobility in twentieth-century Germany differs positively from the United States and Great Britain, where the rate of mobility remained stable. But a closer look shows that this development was caused only by a narrowing of the gap between the chances of social ascent in Germany and the much better chances in the United States and Great Britain.[9] Thus, social opportunities in Germany did not be-

[9] For the United States and United Kingdom, see P. M. Blau and O. D. Duncan, *The American Occupational Structure* (New York, 1967), pp. 81 ff.; S. Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973); Robert M. Hauser et al., "Temporal

come superior to those in other industrial societies. Nevertheless, for the Germans themselves, in the long run, they seem to have slowly improved. Hence the question arises if this has been due to economic development or to changes in the equality of opportunities, social structure, and the character of politics.

Economic Development and Social Mobility

Most social scientists who have dealt with the impact of economic development on social mobility suggest that occupational differentiation (e.g., the rise of low white-collar workers or later of scientific workers) and occupational change (e.g., the shift from farmer, craftsman, and landlord positions to entrepreneurial, white-collar, and civil servant positions) have led to a large increase in upward and downward mobility.[10] For this purpose, they distinguish between two kinds of social mobility: (1) enforced or structural mobility, which is caused by changes in the occupational structure that force people to leave declining occupations and enter expanding ones—in all societies structural mobility is lower than actual social mobility; (2) pure or circulation mobility, which is the difference between actual social mobility and structural mobility. The concept of pure mobility is a sort of empty box. It does not suggest any of the factors that cause it. The development of these two kinds of social mobility in twentieth-century Germany is shown in table 4. Obviously, structural mobility fluctuated. It was large in periods of high economic growth, such as during the late Empire and the early Federal Republic. It was low in periods of stagnating economy, such as during the Weimar Republic. At any rate, it was not structural mobility, depending mainly on economic development, that led to the continuous increase of upward and downward social mobility.

Change in Occupational Mobility: Evidence for Men in the United States," *American Sociological Review* 40 (1975): 279–97; D. V. Glass and J. R. Hall, "Social Mobility in Great Britain: A Study of Inter-Generation Changes in Status," in *Social Mobility in Britain*, ed. D. V. Glass (London, 1954), pp. 177–217. For historical comparisons, see Thernstrom, pp. 256 ff.; Crew, pp. 54 f.; W. H. Sewell, "Social Mobility in a 19th Century European City," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 7 (1976): 217–33; H. Kaelble, "Sozialer Aufstieg in den USA und in Deutschland, 1900–1960," in *Sozialgeschichte Heute*, ed. H. -U. Wehler (Göttingen, 1974), pp. 525 ff.

[10] See, for theoretical approaches, S. M. Lipset and H. L. Zetterberg, "A Theory of Social Mobility," *Transactions of the Third World Congress of Sociology* 3 (London, 1956): 155–71; K. Svalastoga, *Social Differentiation* (New York, 1965), pp. 36 ff.; T. G. Fox and S. M. Miller, "Economic, Political and Social Determinants of Mobility: An International Cross-sectional Analysis," *Acta Sociologica* 9 (1966): 76–93; S. M. Miller and H. Bryce, "Soziale Mobilität, wirtschaftliches Wachstum und Struktur," in *Soziale Schichtung und soziale Mobilität*, ed. D. V. Glass and R. König (Cologne-Opladen, 1961), pp. 303–15; F. F. Mendels, "Social Mobility and Phases of Industrialization," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 7 (1976): 193–216.

TABLE 4
INDICATORS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY
IN GERMANY, 1904–69 (%)

Indicators	Germany 1904–13	Germany 1925–29	West Germany 1955	West Germany 1969
Share of mobile persons	28	24	30	44
Structural mobility	12	4	2	13
Pure mobility	16	21	28	31

NOTE.—The indicators are computed from tables 1–3; program MOBAT by W. Müller and W. Schwenzer.

It was pure mobility that really and steadily increased and pushed ahead vertical mobility.[11]

This conclusion is by no means surprising. Social scientists have dealt with the same problem in comparative perspective. Here too differences in the social mobility rates of industrial societies could only partly be explained by differences in the rate of economic growth or the stage of economic development, although much better data and methods were available than in historical studies.[12]

So the question arises, what other factors conditioned the long-term growth of vertical mobility in Germany? Since there is no way to analyze noneconomic factors on the level of the whole society, we will consecutively examine the recruitment of the quantitatively most important occupational classes in twentieth-century Germany.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY

The recruitment into five occupational and social groups is crucial in accounting for the increase of upward and downward mobility in twentieth-century Germany: (1) university students, since even in Imperial Germany academic training was the major means of access to the upper middle class; (2) higher civil servants and (3) top business executives, who constituted a large share of the upper middle and upper classes even before the First World War; and

[11] These conclusions are corroborated by various social mobility indicators such as Cramer's V, Kruskal-Goodman's λ, Yasuda's Y, the Boudon index, and the Matras index. All these indicators show growing rates of vertical mobility. There is no space to give, or above all to explain, these indicators here; see R. Boudon, *Mathematical Structures of Social Mobility* (London, 1973); Kaelble, "Soziale Mobilität." It should be stressed that these conclusions depend very much on the definition of social ascent and descent. Possibly another set of categories would show a stronger impact on structural mobility.

[12] See S. M. Miller, "Comparative Social Mobility," *Current Sociology* 9 (1960): 29 ff.; Fox and Miller; K Svalastoga, "Gedanken zu internationalen Vergleichen sozialer Mobilität," in Glass and König, eds., pp. 284–302; Miller and Bryce, in ibid.; K. Svalastoga and Tom Rishoy, "Social Mobility: The Western European Model," *Acta Sociologica* 9 (1966): 175–81.

holders of middle-rank positions in (4) business administration and (5) public administration, who came to be the predominant segment of the lower middle classes. The recruitment of farmers and small businessmen into industry and trade would be of high interest, too. Though the share of these occupational classes declined from about 25 percent (1907) to about 17 percent (1925), and further to about 12 percent (1960), they still shaped social opportunities in the Empire and even in the Weimar Republic. Unfortunately, no reliable data on the social origin of these occupational classes exist.

1. In contrast to the overall development of vertical mobility, the social origins of German university students between 1900 and 1960 did not change in favor of more open recruitment. As can be seen from table 5, there were some changes in the social origins of students: The share of students from families of independent craftsmen, shopkeepers, and farmers clearly dropped; the proportion of students from white-collar and professional backgrounds increased. But these shifts mainly reflect changes in the occupational structure of German society and do not indicate any deterioration or improvement of educational opportunities.[13]

The same is true for the falling share of students from the families of employers; their proportion dropped mainly because this economic class shrank in the twentieth century. Obviously, academic training in Germany even in the late Empire was by no means confined to the upper or upper middle classes. Sons and daughters of small businessmen, lower white-collar employees, and above all middle civil servants had some or even a good chance at university training. But the educational deprivation of farmers, of blue-collar workers, and—to a smaller degree—even of middle white-collar employees was not abolished or even ameliorated until the early Federal Republic.[14] Only after 1960 did West Germany witness a reduction of educational inequalities and so join the trend to improving opportunities which had marked British, French, and probably North American secondary education a long time before.[15] The lack

[13] For lack of space I omit association indices which show more clearly the link between students' social origins and occupational structure. They are computed in: H. Kaelble, "Chancenungleichheit und akademische Ausbildung in Deutschland, 1910–1960," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 1 (1975): 128.

[14] As table 5 is based on statistics of several statistical bureaus, it may contain artificial, merely statistical changes. Hence, fluctuations of less than 5 percent are not taken into account.

[15] J. E. Floud, A. H. Halsey, and F. M. Martin, *Social Class and Educational Opportunity* (London, 1955); A. Little and J. Westergaard, "The Trend of Class Differentials in Educational Opportunity in England and Wales," in *Family, Class and Education*, ed. M. Craft (London, 1970); C. Peyre, "L'Origine sociale des élèves de l'enseignement secondaire en France," in *Ecole et société*, ed. P. Naville (Paris,

TABLE 5
SOCIAL ORIGINS OF GERMAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, 1902–60 (%)

Occupation of Fathers (Social and Economic Class)	Prussia (1902–03)	Germany (1911–13)	Germany (1924–25)	Germany (1931)	Germany (1941)	West Germany (1951–52)	West Germany (1959–60)
Higher civil servants	16	16	17	14	18	15	17
Professional	5	5	9	6	9	9	10
Army officers	1	1	1	2	2	1	1
Landlords	2	2	2	1	...	...	...
Business elite	10	15	14	12	11	13	14
Small businessmen	24	19	17	15	12	13	10
Farmer	9	9	7	3	4	5	4
Middle-ranking civil servants	23	24	24	28	23	22	17
Middle and lower white collar employees	3	3	7	6	10	15	19
Lower civil servants	...	...	2	3	3	...	...
Small peasants	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
Blue-collar workers	...	3	2	2	3	4	5
Other occupations or unclassified	6	2	6	6	5	3	3
Sum	100 (N=16,467)	100 (N=39,984)	100 (N=62,694)	100 (N=125,072)	100 (N=43,000)	100 (N=102,097)	100 (N=155,228)
Upper middle class	...	39	43	35	36*	38	42
Lower middle class	...	55	55	52	58*	55	50
Lower class	...	4	4	4	4*	4	5
Employers	...	50	49	37	42*	40	38
Employed	...	31	28	41	38*	41	41

NOTE.—The social origin of students (universities and technical universities) is broken down as much as possible, although the pattern of statistics changed. Higher civil servants include priests, university professors and high school teachers, and judges. Small businessmen include independent craftsmen and shopkeepers. The social and economic classes of the fathers of the students on the lower part of the table are calculated from occupational data in the way indicated in n. 3 above. For the list of sources and the calculations, see Kaelble, "Chancenungleichheit," pp. 124 ff. In this and the following tables, "—" = no cases; "..." = classification not used in these materials; "0" = less than 0.5.

* These entries are actually from 1939.

or ineffectiveness of school reforms and educational policies are the main reasons for the constant inequality of educational opportunity in Germany. The first great chance for educational reform immediately after the revolution of 1918 was only partly taken. The traditional separation between primary and secondary education was somewhat reduced by the establishment of comprehensive grades for the first four years of schooling. Some minor possibilities of transition from primary to secondary school even after the age of ten were introduced. Secondary schools for girls were improved. On the whole, the effects of these reforms on educational opportunities were small, first because they were incomplete and second because they lasted no longer than the duration of the Weimar Republic. The Nazi government not only abstained from any effective educational reform in favor of more open general schools but even reduced opportunities by drastically cutting down educational investments and student enrollments, at least in the first years after the seizure of power. The second great chance for educational reform, after the Second World War, was even less seized upon, in spite of the initial proposals of the American occupation authorities, trade unions, primary school teachers, and some liberal and leftist political parties. The separation between primary and secondary schools remained untouched; reforms in some states were even rescinded. A program of financial aid for students from low-income families was not established before 1955 and so did not change the social origin of students before the sixties. Within the Western European context, educational reforms in Germany were behind the times partly because of the effects of the Nazi catastrophe, such as the gap in educational investment during the Nazi period and the need to reconstruct educational facilities after the war. In addition, social scientists (with a few exceptions such as Dahrendorf, Picht, and Edding) upheld elitist, inegalitarian traditions up to the late fifties. In the conservative Adenauer era, equality of educational opportunity was not a major issue in political publicity and decision making.[16]

1959), p. 10; C. A. Anderson, "Access to Higher Education and Economic Development," in *Education, Economy, and Society*, ed. A. H. Halsey et al. (New York, 1965), pp. 252–65.

[16] See F. K. Ringer, "Higher Education in Germany in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 (1967): 128 ff.; *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 67 ff., 269 ff., 367 ff.; *Education and Society in Modern Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1978); H. Milberg, *Schulpolitik in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft. Die politischen und sozialen Aspekte der Schulreform in Hamburg 1890–1935* (Hamburg, 1970); D. Hagener, *Radikale Schulreform zwischen Programmatik und Realität* (Bremen, 1973); H. Scholtz, *Nationalsozialistische Ausleseschulen* (Göttingen, 1973); C. Kuhlmann, *Schulreform und Gesellschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1946–1966* (Stuttgart, 1970); M. Klewitz, *Berliner*

2. The recruitment of higher civil servants more closely coincides with the long-term trend of upward social mobility in German society. A selection of surveys in table 6 shows that, in the long run, access to higher-ranking positions in German public administration has become slightly more open. If the early Federal Republic is compared with Imperial and Weimar Prussia, higher civil servants less often stemmed from the same occupational group. Self-recruitment decreased. Probably the share of higher civil servants from landowning backgrounds shrank too. This diminution of higher civil servants from upper-middle-class families was almost entirely compensated for by a dramatic rise of families from the middle ranks of public administration. Thus higher civil servants came, to a slightly growing degree, from lower-middle-class backgrounds and economically dependent families. The chances of access for sons of nongovernment white-collar employees, farmers, and blue-collar workers increased only marginally or not at all.[17] There are various reasons for this slight amelioration of opportunities. First, it was partly the later effect of earlier changes at law schools, which were the predominant place for the academic training of higher civil servants. In the late nineteenth century, the proportion of law students from the upper middle class, especially from landlord and higher civil servant families, clearly and sharply declined. By and large, this change affected the social origin of higher civil servants. In Imperial Germany, there were few educational reforms; they could have brought about only a small part of this incisive shift. It is most probable that the rapidly growing demand of government agencies and business firms for academically trained people exceeded the number of young men from the upper middle class. The growth of income of the middle class and the declining prospects for small businessmen during the great depression may have reinforced the inclination to academic training at the same time. Second, some political and social barriers in public administration were reduced during the Weimar Republic. The total exclusion of Social Democrats and the strong barriers erected against liberals, Catholics, and

Einheitsschule 1945–1951 (Berlin, 1971); Kaelble, "Chancenungleichheit"; A. J. Heidenheimer, "The Politics of Educational Reform: Explaining Different Outcomes of School Comprehensivization Attempts in Sweden and West Germany," *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 18 (1974).

[17] Only administrative positions are covered here. Other higher civil servants such as judges, teachers in secondary education, and university professors are probably recruited in a socially more open way. The social origin of these groups (excluding university professors) has rarely been investigated. Neither are top civil servants included here, as the social origin of this group does not influence mass upward mobility. For these omitted groups (except judges), see Kaelble, "Soziale Mobilität" (see note to table 1).

TABLE 6
SOCIAL ORIGIN OF HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS AND OF BUSINESS ELITE IN GERMANY, 1903–69 (%)

	HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS				BUSINESS ELITE				
OCCUPATION OF FATHERS (Class)	Prussia (Regierungs-referendare) 1903	Bavaria (Referendare) 1898	Prussia (Regierungs-referendare) 1927–28	West Germany 1962	Germany 1914	Germany 1922	Germany 1935	West Germany 1965	West Germany 1969
Higher civil servants	30	19	19	16	8	13	11	6	8
Professional	4	10	8	...	3	5	4	7	7
Army officers	15	2	2	...	1	2	1	2	...
Landlords	22	...	6	...	4	4	3	...	1
Business elite	16	19	22	24	66	51	67	21	18
Small businessmen	...	7	7	13	7	9	4	15	10
Farmers	...	6	...	4	2	2	1	3	3
Middle-ranking civil servants	4	24	26	30	6	6	6	24	24

Middle and lower white-collar employees	...	5	4	8	1	1	2	13	16
Lower civil servants	...	...	2	...	1	0	—	...	1
Blue-collar workers	...	0	1	4	0	2	—	5	7
Unclassified	9	6	3	1	3	7	1	5	4
Sum	100 (N=201)	100 (N=263)	100 (N=5,449)	100 (N=738)	100 (N=312)	100 (N=670)	100 (N=471)	100 (N=537)	100 (N=1,528)
Upper middle class	87	50	57	40	81	75	86	45	34
Lower middle class	4	42	37	55	15	18	13	49	53
Lower class	...	...	3	4	1	2	—	5	8
Employers	38	42	43	41	82	71	79	46	39
Employed	4	31	33	42	8	9	8	42	48

NOTE.—Col. 1: Prussian minister for the interior, in *Sten. Ber. preuss Haus d. Abg., 1903*, vol. 1, col. 206 (March 22, 1903); col. 2; *Deutsche Richterzeitung* (1912), 4:218–19; col. 3: calculated from *Der deutsche Referendar* 2 (1928): 19; col. 4: W. Zapf, "Die Verwalter der Macht," in *Beiträge zur Analyse der deutschen Oberschicht*, ed. Zapf, 2d ed. (Munich, 1965), pp. 82 ff.; col. 5 and 7: collected and calculated from "Wer ist's," 1914 and 1935; col. 6: *Sozialer Auf- und Abstieg im deutschen Volke*, Beiträge zur Statistik Bayerns (Munich, 1930), 117:136–37 (based on "Wer ist's," 1922); col. 8: H. Pross and K. W. Boetticher, *Manager des Kapitalismus* (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 33, 43; col. 9: M. Kruk, *Die großen Unternehmer* (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 44, appendix table 12. For comments on these surveys, calculation, and further data, see Kaelble, "Soziale Mobilität" (see note to table 1).

Jews, which probably had prevented some ascending men from entering the higher ranks of public administration, were reduced in 1918. The preferential appointment of candidates from well-to-do backgrounds, witnessed (and supported) by a social scientist such as Otto Hintze, was ended. The existence of a nonconservative government in Prussia discouraged young landed aristocrats from entering careers in public administration and so eased the pressure of aristocrats on the job market for higher civil servants. In some states such as Prussia the government tried to achieve a more equal distribution of social opportunities in the higher ranks of public authority, even if success was very limited. Third, the weaker influence of Prussian traditions in West Germany may have further improved social opportunities. In Imperial and Weimar Germany the social origins of young higher civil servants in Bavaria and in Wurttemberg were very similar to those of West German higher civil servants in general and clearly contrasted to the more elitist Prussian civil service. After 1945 in West Germany this non-Prussian mode of selection probably became more influential. On the whole, political and social factors largely determined the development of the social origin of this part of the upper middle class. On the one hand, more modern modes of selection led to a modest improvement of opportunities in the higher ranks of public administration. On the other hand, political factors such as the persistence of severe stratification in the public service and unequal access to academic training clearly restricted this improvement of opportunity far more than was the case in Great Britain and the United States.[18]

3. The development of the German business elite better helps to explain the overall increase in upward mobility. The recruitment of this part of the upper middle class changed above all in two respects (see table 6). First, the share of the business elite stemming from the families of large or small entrepreneurs dropped decisively over the long run. In connection with this, business leaders from the upper middle or upper class became somewhat less common. Second, the

[18] J. C. G. Roehl, "Higher Civil Servants in Germany, 1890–1900," *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 (1967): 101–21; J. J. Sheehan, "Conflict and Cohesion among German Elites in the 19th Century," in *Modern European Social History*, ed. R. J. Bezucha (Lexington, Mass., 1972), pp. 3–27; W. Runge, *Politik und Beamtentum im Parteienstaat* (Stuttgart, 1956), pp. 169 ff.; R. Morsey, "Zur Beamtenpolitik des Reichs von Bismarck und Brüning," *Demokratie und Verwaltung* (Berlin, 1972), pp. 104 ff.; H. Fenske, "Monarchisches Beamtentum und demokratischer Staat," in ibid., pp. 123 ff.; "Preußische Beamtenpolitik vor 1918," *Staat* 12 (1973): 350 ff.; Otto Hintze, "Der Beamtenstand," in his *Soziologie und Geschichte*, ed. G. Oestreich, 2d ed. (Göttingen, 1964), p. 101. For international comparison with early West Germany: Zapf, "Verwalter der Macht, pp. 91 ff. (table 6, n. *a*); J. A. Armstrong, *The European Administrative Elite* (Princeton, N.J., 1973).

proportion of the business elite which came from families of civil servants grew dramatically and became probably as important as the segment with a business background. The fathers of this new type of business leader often worked, not in the higher, but in the middle ranks of public administration, so a somewhat enlarging proportion of the German business elite ascended from the lower middle class. Again, this increase of social opportunities was limited in an important respect. Neither farmers, nor white-collar employees in business, nor blue-collar workers profited from the change. Their sons did not face significantly better chances of achieving top business positions.

The growth of social mobility in this group seemingly was conditioned by the rise of large corporations, which has gradually marked the German economy since the late nineteenth century and has transformed the function of entrepreneurs. Managers, who controlled but did not own enterprises, became by and large predominant in the large corporations. This factor basically changed the conditions for entering top business positions. Capital, and hence a wealthy and business-oriented family background, was no longer absolutely necessary. Well-trained, gifted men from other parts of society had growing chances to join the business elite.

Two factors limited change of opportunities. First, there was no way back to the classic career of the self-made entrepreneur of the industrial revolution. Men like Borsig, Siemens, and Schering, who started with little capital as owners of small firms and who by rapid business expansion within one generation became large industrialists, would not have been as successful in twentieth-century Germany. Since in the long run productivity grew, more capital was needed to establish a firm, and fewer people could start or at least complete the classic entrepreneurial career. Second, the proportion of business leaders trained at universities increased in Germany as well as in other countries. This development was partly related to the growing impact of universities in industrial technology and business administration and was partly due to the social prestige linked with higher education. As a result of the changing educational background, the inequality of opportunities in German academic training marked the social origins of German business leaders. The middle-ranking civil servants, by far the most privileged group of the lower middle class in academic training, in many cases could enter the business elite. Sons of white-collar employees, farmers, and blue-collar workers were kept away from top business careers as early as the stage of higher education, where they did not have fair and equal chances. The different development of educational opportunities and

the more open access to the economic elite at the beginning of the twentieth century in the United States explains why the recruitment of the American business elite during this century remained more open than the German one, although it did not change.[19]

4. Numerically, upward mobility in Germany was much more strongly affected by recruitment for lower white-collar jobs. Here, the access to the middle ranks of public administration depended largely on political decisions. Though rarely covered by social history research, it can be assumed that the social origins of middle civil servants distinctly changed during the twentieth century (see table 7). The number of middle civil servants with blue-collar backgrounds clearly increased. Socially ascending men became more frequent in this layer of public administration. The partial modernization of public administration was probably a main reason for the change. Furthermore, the total exclusion of Social Democrats and trade union members from the middle ranks of public administration, which likely debarred candidates from the lower class, was ended in 1914. The Imperial "Militäranwärtersystem," which reserved up to half the positions of the middle administrative ranks for former sergeants, was restricted in the Weimar Republic. This system not only brought about the militaristic attitude of German civil servants, but also preserved the middle ranks of public administration for men who to a disproportional degree came from the families of farmers and small businessmen and who relatively rarely were the sons of blue-collar workers.[20]

[19] See J. Kocka, *Unternehmer in der deutschen Industrialisierung* (Göttingen, 1975), pp. 88 ff.; "Entrepreneurs and Managers in the German Industrial Revolution," in *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. 7 (in press); R. Tilly, "The Growth of Large-scale Enterprise in Germany since the Middle of the 19th Century," in *The Rise of Managerial Capitalism*, ed. H. Daems and H. van der Wee (The Hague, 1974); W. Stahl, *Der Elitekreislauf der Unternehmerschaft* (Frankfurt, 1973); T. Pierenkemper, "Die westfälischen Schwerindustriellen: Eine Modelluntersuchung zur historischen Unternehmerforschung" (Ph.D. diss., Münster, 1976); H. Kaelble, "Long-term Trends of the Recruitment of the Business Elite: Germany Compared to the U.S. and Great Britain since the Industrial Revolution," in "Le Patronat de la seconde industrialisation" (preliminary title), ed. M. Lévy-Leboyer and M. Aymard (forthcoming); H. Pross and K. W. Boetticher, *Manager des Kapitalismus* (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 31 ff.; Kaelble, "Soziale Mobilität," table 1, n. *a* (with additional data). United States: Lipset and Bendix, pp. 114–43 (see n. 2 above). Great Britain: H. Perkin, "The Recruitment of Elites in British Society since 1880," Xerox (unpublished essay, 1976), German version: "Die Rekrutierung der Eliteu in der britischen Gesellschaft sein 1880," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 3 (1977): 485–502; P. Stanworth and A. Giddens, "An Economic Elite: Profile of Company Chairmen," in *Elites and Power in British Society*, ed. Stanworth and Giddens (London, 1974).

[20] See Hintze, pp. 104–5; Fenske, "Beamtenpolitik," pp. 346–47; Henning, *Westdeutsches Bürgertum*, pp. 141–42, 184–85; Kaelble, "Soziale Mobilität" (see note to table 1).

TABLE 7

SOCIAL ORIGINS OF WHITE-COLLAR EMPLOYEES AND MIDDLE-RANKING CIVIL SERVANTS IN GERMANY, 1904–19 (%)

OCCUPATION OF FATHERS (Class)	MIDDLE-RANKING CIVIL SERVANTS				WHITE-COLLAR EMPLOYEES		
	Westfalia (1890–1914)	Rhineland (1890–1914)	Baden (ca. 1920)	West Germany (1970)	Germany (ca. 1910)	Germany (1929)	West Germany (1959)
Higher civil servants, professionals, army officers, landlords, business elite	17	16	12	17	3	3	3
Small businessmen	17	20	21	7	40	29	11
Farmers	14	11	32	7	6	4	10
Middle-ranking civil servants	40	34	12	14	17	19	...
Middle and lower white-collar employees	2	6	...	15	12	20	23
Lower civil servants	...	...	13	14	...	...	14
Blue-collar workers	10	14	6	21	20	25	31
Unclassified	...	...	3	5	3	—	8
Sum	100 (N=?)	100 (N=?)	100 (N=75)	100 (N=1,728)	100 (N=...)	100 (N=99,695)	100 (N=147)
Upper middle class	17	16	12	17	3	3	3
Lower middle class	11	71	65	43	75	72	44
Lower class	2	14	9	35	20	25	37
Employers	46	45	...	26	49	33	21
Employed	44	54	...	64	49	64	68

NOTE.—Cols. 1 and 2: Henning, *Westdeutsches Bürgertum*, pp. 141, 185; col. 3: P. Mombert, "Zur Frage der Klassenbildung," *Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Sozialwissenschaften* 1 (1921): 42 ff.; col. 4: H. Hofbauer and H. Kraft, "Materialien zur Statusmobilität bei männlichen Erwerbspersonen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Mitteilungen aus der Berufs- und Arbeitsmarktforschung* 5 (1972): 214–15; col. 5: Kaelble, "Soziale Mobilität," table 17, pp. 214–15; col. 6: *Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage der Angestellten* (Berlin, 1931), p. 43; col. 7: Daheim, "Intergenerationen-Mobilität," pp. 123–24. See, for the calculation, comments, and further data: Kaelble, "Soziale Mobilität" (see note to table 1).

5. Finally, the recruitment of white-collar employees in business firms was by far most important for the total volume of vertical mobility. Various surveys partly indicated in table 7 show that in the long run a growing share of white-collar employees came from the lower classes, from families of blue-collar workers. More differentiated data indicate that this was true of various types of white-collar employees, such as the better trained and paid technicians, clerks, foremen, and female white-collar workers.[21]

Though the proportion of white-collar employees expanded very rapidly from 5 percent of the working population in Imperial Germany (1895) to 24 percent in the Federal Republic (1961), this occupational change was not likely the main factor in the shift in social origins. If it really were the dominant factor, the rapid occupational expansion would have led to shrinking self-recruitment and to a general increase of social origin from nonwhite-collar backgrounds. Except for those of blue-collar background, what happened was quite the opposite. Several other reasons explain much better the growing share of white-collar employees who came from blue-collar backgrounds. First, for ambitious men from the working class, the main alternative to a white-collar position, the small businessman, was not as promising as in the nineteenth century. The number of independent craftsmen and shopkeepers declined and so decreased the share of workers' sons entering these positions. In this way, white-collar jobs became relatively more attractive. Second, urbanization, industrialization, and the rise of large corporations stimulated social ascent from blue-collar families to white-collar jobs. Educational institutions, information on vocational training, occupational and geographical mobility, variation of job opportunities, the relation of white-collar and blue-collar jobs, and promotion to white-collar positions were much more frequent and favorable in industry, cities, and large corporations than in agriculture, villages, or small workshops. Third, and above all, the sharp contrast between blue-collar and white-collar subcultures in Imperial Germany had frequently led to a proud disdain of workers toward social ascent, or had at least enhanced the social costs of social ascent, since the passage to white-collar jobs necessitated significant changes in life-style, occupational values, social contacts, and political attitude. Special insurance laws for white-collar employees; purposeful privileges and preferential treatment by employers; a belief in pseudoentrepreneurial, nonmanual functions of the white-collar employees; an occupational orientation toward the independent mer-

[21] See, for additional surveys, Kaelble, "Soziale Mobilität."

chant; and the conservative, antisocialist orientation of white-collar workers, on the one hand, and political oppression, a tradition of underground parties and trade unions, and strong class links among blue-collar workers, on the other hand, slowly disappeared or at least were reduced during the First World War and after the collapse of the German Empire. Above all, during the First World War and the early Weimar Republic white-collar privileges were partly reduced for lack of money or efficiency; white-collar employees became more aware of their status as wage earners; white-collar organizations became more trade union oriented and partly cooperated with blue-collar trade unions; exclusively blue-collar class linkages loosened; and the Social Democrats and trade unions became more powerful under the condition of parliamentary democracy. These long-term alterations, though temporarily halted or even reversed in the late Weimar Republic and the Nazi era, probably facilitated the social ascent of blue-collar children and reduced its social and psychological costs.[22]

Conclusion

Upward and downward social mobility slightly but distinctly increased in twentieth-century Germany. A long-term change took place at least in the nonagrarian part of German society from the late Empire to the Weimar Republic and again from the Weimar Republic to the early Federal Republic. Although this argument is based on estimates, and although further research is needed for more precise, short-term, and differentiated knowledge, this seems to be the most plausible conclusion from published material and investigations. This optimistic assessment should not be overdramatized, however. Social opportunities, especially for lower-class Germans even in post-

[22] J. Kocka, "Zur Problematik der deutschen Angestellten 1914–1933," in *Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. H. Mommsen et al. (Düsseldorf, 1974), *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg* (Göttingen, 1973), pp. 71 ff., *Angestellte zwischen Faschismus und Demokratie. Zur politischen Sozialgeschichte der Angestellten: USA 1890–1940 im internationalen Vergleich* (Göttingen, 1977), "Bildung" (n. 1); H. Speier, *Die Angestellten vor dem Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen, 1977), pp. 44 ff.; H. Steiner, *Soziale Strukturveränderungen im modernen Kapitalismus. Zur Klassenanalyse der Angestellten in Westdeutschland* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 135 ff.; S. Braun, "Die sozialen Traditionen der Angestellten," *WWI-Mitteilungen* 13 (1960): 121–23; N. Kadritzke, *Angestellte—Die geduldigen Arbeiter. Zur Soziologie und sozialen Bewegung der Angestellten* (Frankfurt, 1975), pp. 156 ff.; S. J. Coyner, "Class Patterns of Family Income and Expenditure during the Weimar Republic: German White-Collar Employees as Harbingers of Modern Society" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1975), "Class Consciousness and Consumption: The New Middle Class in the Weimar Republic," *Journal of Social History* 10 (1967/77): 310–31.

war Germany, still were very limited and probably were worse than in many other parts of Western Europe and the United States. Nevertheless, the question arises of why social mobility in German society in the long run probably increased in contrast to the stagnation in Great Britain and the United States. Economic development and occupational change only partially explain the gradual improvement of social opportunities. The decline of classic capitalist society, the rise of large corporations, and the slow fading of the petty bourgeoisie increased vertical mobility but could not lead to such a marked difference between industrial societies. Political and social factors seemingly were very important. Political and social barriers that were closely linked to preindustrial value patterns, the belated democratization of political institutions, and inegalitarianism in politics impeded vertical mobility in Germany much more than in other countries. The change in social mobility in twentieth-century Germany was very much influenced by the change of these barriers, such as the less restrictive selection of higher civil servants with regard to Jewish, liberal, Catholic, socialist, and not-well-to-do candidates; the somewhat easier access to top business positions by the rise of managers; the more open recruitment of middle-ranking civil servants; and finally and above all the clear increase of white-collar employees from blue-collar family backgrounds, conditioned not only by occupational change but also by alteration in the political and cultural relations between white-collar and blue-collar workers. The abolition or slow reduction of these barriers explains to a large degree the increase of vertical mobility in Germany and has led, by a dissimilar process, to a social structure that is more similar to Western Europe.

In general terms, this essay tries to illustrate a proposal for modifying historical research on social mobility. It stresses the need for a stronger consideration of political structure, political decision making, and social attitudes. From this essay, it seems to be clear that the ommission of political factors would lead to defective conclusions, at least in the German case. This is not a rejection of economic analysis, but of pure and plain economic analysis. Partly, social mobility research with politics left out is the product of the rapid expansion of urban studies. Though very advantageous and fruitful on the technical side of quantification, urban studies rarely cover political factors, as urban politics rarely deal with the impact of political decisions on social mobility.

Hence this essay emphasizes the usefulness of three other types of historical social mobility approach. (1) Social class as a unit of investigation: Such study provides good access to political, social,

and economic factors, though mostly linked and limited to a single social class. There is no way of explaining the increase of upward social mobility in twentieth-century Germany without going into details about single social and occupational classes, such as civil servants, the business elite, and white-collar employees and blue-collar workers, as I have tried to do here. (2) Research on the historical development of educational opportunities: This type of approach also leads to important political and social determinants of social mobility, although just a segment of individual careers is covered. (3) Studies on occupational promotion in business and public administration: These improve our knowledge of how political and business decision making actually influenced social mobility after school and university training. Above all, case studies of business firms are almost totally lacking and are badly needed for a better understanding of the history of social mobility. All this is no complaint against urban studies, but instead a plea for support of a combination of such studies with a more diversified strategy of historical social mobility research. The more important politics and social attitudes are for social mobility, the more helpful is this proposal. This may not be true for nineteenth-century America. But it does apply first in countries where industrialization is combined with a traditional social structure and elitist politics and where the impetus of industrialization toward an increase of vertical mobility is countered by retardative social and political factors. This was clearly true for Germany, but it may also have applications to other European countries. Second, it concerns social mobility in the twentieth century more generally, when the expanding impact of government influences social mobility in all industrial societies more strongly.