The process of urbanization in Germany at the height of the industrialization period

Wolfgang Köllmann

The process of accelerated urbanization apparent in Germany from the mid-nineteenth century was a phenomenon which accompanied and had its origin in industrialization. Admittedly, in the eighteenth century certain areas had shown a quite considerable growth in urban population due almost entirely in particular cases to the growth of industry in the age of mercantilism.[1] But this earlier increase in urban population remained under the jurisdiction of the 'town' government, still largely medieval in character, which underpinned the social position of the burghers in the narrower sense and that of privileged citizens and protected aliens, and which, thanks to the relatively high financial and social status needed to acquire 'citizenship' and to the rigidity of the guild constitution, to which only those granted special exemption were not subject, impeded progress rather than furthered it; so that the more significant phenomenon of this period was the emergence of industry in rural areas (e.g. Silesia, Saxony, Berg and Mark) which reached the first stages of development into urban-artisan structures.[2] In any case this growth created both conditions of residence and the impulse for 'new' urban development. It was with the developments set in motion by the abolition of the older municipal constitutions – beginning with the reforms of the early nineteenth century under the direct or indirect influence of the French Revolution and the economic doctrines of classical

[1] Cf. Hans Mauerberg's findings on population expansion in Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, Hannover and Munich in *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte zentraleuropäischer Städte in neuerer Zeit* (Göttingen, 1960), chapter I.

[2] Cf. Wolfgang Köllmann, 'The Population of Barmen before and during the Period of Industrialization' in D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley (eds.), *Population in History* (London, 1965), 588 ff.

liberalism which informed the municipal administrations of the middle of the century, culminating in the removal of the old privileges and the establishment of the legal equality of all subjects and the gradual elimination of guild and trade restrictions designed to discourage migration – only with these steps was it possible to remove the obstacles to urban development by the time the 1871 imperial constitution was promulgated, whilst at the same time the older forms of industrial activity gave way to new ones as a result of the transformation of production introduced by the technical revolution.

Gunther Ipsen, developing the ideas of Werner Sombart[3] and Gottlieb Gassert,[4] regarded industry as the true builder of cities of the modern age.[5] Since the town as the industrial centre of primary producers presupposed or necessitated the existence of secondary producers such as artisans, builders, retail and wholesale traders, and services providing banking and transport, cultural activities, catering, etc., as well as the presence of the free professions and administrators, all of them activities which from one centre serve a fairly broad hinterland,[6] this meant a balancing out of industrial and non-industrial employment whereby, according to the 'double job law'[7] valid at least for the period of industrial expansion, every 100 new jobs in the 'primary' sector necessitated another 100 in the 'secondary' sector. If urban growth in Germany in the period of industrialization was governed by this 'law', industry became the chief agent changing the role and function of the city. Although the towns, and especially the large towns, with the exception of a few new and exclusively industrial settlements, continued to exercise their functions as administrative and commercial centres, these became secondary to their function as centres of production. Industry took over the town and reshaped it.

3 Werner Sombart, 'Der Begriff der Stadt und das Wesen der Städtebildung,' *Archiv fur Sozialwissenschaften und Sozialpolitik*, 1907.

4 Gottlieb Gassert, 'Die berufliche Struktur der deutschen Grosstädte nach der Berufszählung von 1907,' D.Phil. thesis, Heidelberg, Greifswald 1917.

5 Gunther Ipsen, article 'Stadt (I V) in *Handwörterbuch der Sozialwissenschaften* IX (Stuttgart, 1956), especially 788 ff.

6 Gerhard Isenberg, *Tragfähigkeit und Wirtschaftsstruktur* (Bremen, 1953), 10.

7 Gunther Ipsen, article 'Bevölkerung I.' in *Handwörterbuch des Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschtums*, I (Breslau, 1933), 437.

The demographic conditions for the process of urbanization can be traced to the initial period of industrialization before the middle of the century, which was marked by a growing discrepancy between labour potential and the availability of work.[8] Despite considerable regional differences, it can be said for Germany as a whole that the increase in population could not be absorbed by the existing agrarian and industrial economy. Even emigration[9] brought no significant relief. The resultant phenomenon of severe over-population and its social consequence of mass poverty (pauperism) were only slowly overcome in the wake of industrialization which began to gather momentum after 1850 and brought relief from the pauper existence of the early industrial worker. However, the existence of an uprooted and propertyless

TABLE I

Urbanization in Germany, 1871–1910

	Urban dwellers as percentage of total Reich population	
	1871	1910
Towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants	4·8	21·3
Towns with 10,000 to 100,000 inhabitants	7·7	13·4
Towns with 5000 to 10,000 inhabitants	11·2	14·1
Parishes with 2000 to 5000 inhabitants	12·4	11·3
Parishes with fewer than 2000 inhabitants	63·9	39·9

Source: W. Köllmann, *Bevölkerung und Raum in Neuerer und Neuester Zeit*, IV (Würzburg, 1965), 92.

[8] My own examination of this problem has now been completed. The results, indicated here only briefly, are published in the 1969 Yearbook of the Research Office of North Rhine-Westphalia.

[9] Germany's population losses through emigration 1841–70 are put at 2·37 million. Cf. Friedrich Burgdörfer, 'Migrations across the Frontiers of Germany,' in Walter F. Willcox (ed.), *International Migrations*, II (New York, 1931), 334.

surplus population increased the willingness to move in search of work. Mass emigration was only one symptom of this new mobility, which also encouraged a far greater measure of internal migration into the industrial centres with their new and constantly increasing opportunities for employment.

Although the process of urbanization began around the middle of the century it reached completion essentially between 1871 and 1910. It brought about a shift in the population which doubled the proportion of city dwellers. In 1871 23·7 per cent of the population lived in communities of over 5000 inhabitants; by 1910 this figure had risen to 48·8, whilst the share of the rural population, including those living in country market towns, fell from 75 to 50 per cent of the population. By far the sharpest was the rise in the population of large cities (+443 per cent), but here it must be remembered that in most cases the town boundaries, once they took in neighbouring parishes, were revised accordingly.[10] These mergers were an attempt to contain the city area within the new boundaries, provided the expanded cities did not themselves become parts of a larger conurbation, as was the case in the Ruhrgebiet. This conurbation, marked off by a provincial boundary, never became one administrative entity, whereas in 1920 the Berlin conurbation became a single municipality by the incorporation of Charlottenburg, Neukölln, Schöneberg, Wilmersdorf – these four were statistically already large towns in 1910 – Köpenik, Lichtenberg, and Spandau, and 56 villages and 29 communities under manorial domain.

Considerable differences appeared in the various regions depending on the existing economic structure. Whereas in 1871 the agrarian east, but also the south-west and Westphalia, showed approximately the same degree of urbanization, but was far below that of the Rhine Province and Saxony, which had progressed farthest during the early period of industrialization, variations were more marked by 1910: urbanization remained highest in the Rhine Province, where almost three-quarters of the population lived in urban centres, and of these over half in large cities. Next came Westphalia, although in this area the tendency was still towards towns of small and medium size. It must be remembered that the

[10] On the amalgamation of parishes cf. Sigmund Schott, *Die grosstädtischen Agglomerationen des Deutschen Reiches* (Breslau, 1912), 92 ff.

process of urbanization here was concentrated chiefly in the west (i.e. the eastern part of the Ruhrgebiet and the ore-bearing and cutlery manufacturing districts of the Sauerland), whilst the equivalent density in the Rhine province was reached in the western part of the Ruhrgebiet, the Bergisches Land, along the banks of the Rhine and in the industrial area of the lower Rhine as far west as Aachen. But it is significant that the proportion of town dwellers in Westphalia already exceeded that in Saxony, although in the latter the number of big-city inhabitants was almost three times as high. In contrast to these three highly industrialized areas the agrarian east, and more especially East Prussia, lagged farther behind. But even in the commercially and industrially advanced south-west urbanization was only half that of the Rhine Province. It is true that the difference between these areas and East and West Prussia had widened, particularly in regard to large and medium-sized towns, but the economic structure of Baden and Württemberg, based principally on small-scale and light industry, caused the proportion of urban population to lag behind.

The growth of urban population in the phase 1871–1910 shows that one part of the south-west region was advancing towards the level of the industrially most developed regions, and although it did not reach that level, the urban population in Baden at least had increased in the same proportion as in the areas of older industrial concentration, that is in Saxony and the Rhine, whereas in the east it was considerably lower and Württemberg also lagged behind. The highest figures were reached in Westphalia, where mining and heavy industry accelerated the process of urbanization. This bears out Ipsen's view that the decisive factor for the course of urbanization and the growth of large cities was large-scale industry.[11] But in all areas the town absorbed almost the entire population surplus of the region. In Saxony, the Rhine Province, and Westphalia the urban population of 1910 was even greater than the total population of the Reich in 1871. At the same time this meant stagnation among the rural population. In the countryside, including rural market towns with fewer than 5000 inhabitants, the population had already declined by 1871; jobs in the country, including those in local government and public utility undertakings,

[11] Ipsen, 'Stadt', 789.

TABLE II

	Total population (000's)			Urban population (000's)			
	1871	1910	% increase	1871	1910	% increase	As % of total population increase
East Prussia	1,822·9	2,064·2	13·2	217·2	554·2	155·2	139·7
West Prussia	1,314·6	1,703·5	29·5	208·8	533·7	155·6	83·5
Saxony	2,556·2	4,806·7	88·2	832·2	2,902·6	236·8	92·0
Westphalia	1,775·2	4,125·1	131·9	373·2	2,617·1	601·2	95·5
Rhine Province	3,579·3	7,121·1	99·2	1,387·4	4,806·7	246·5	96·5
Baden	1,461·6	2,142·8	46·6	224·8	811·3	260·9	86·1
Württemberg	1,818·5	2,437·6	34·6	300·9	872·2	189·9	92·3

Source: 1871 Statistik des Deutschen Reiches, II, 16 ff., 56 ff.

1910 Ibid., 240/II, 57 ff.

were already filled, so that the natural population increase necessarily made their way to the towns.

If the growth rate of the population for the period 1871–1910 for the Reich as a whole is compared with the population of the individual regions in 1871, we should get a rough idea of the growth rate of their population. In the case of Westphalia, to quote just one example, the increase between 1871 and 1910 was approximately 2·8 million, which means that not even half the increase in urban population could have come from the area itself. The corresponding calculation for East Prussia would show that the loss through migration from the agrarian north-east after 1871 was greater than its natural increase, although a small part of this increase did serve to develop its own urban areas.

To what extent and with what speed the development of an industrial complex was possible can be seen in the (extreme) example of Gelsenkirchen in Westphalia. As a town it did not exist before 1903, when it was formed by the amalgamation of seven parishes which around the middle of the eighteenth century had been farming villages centring on a country market town (Alt-Gelsenkirchen). In 1856 the Hibernia and Shamrock mining company sank its first shaft. The result was a sudden and striking increase in population, by 400 per cent in the 13 years 1858–71, and by 300 per cent in the following 14 years. Then the rate slowed down: it took 25 years to treble again, when the increase at least after 1895 was basically due to the expansion of the local light and service industries. These were confined to Gelsenkirchen itself. Services for the surrounding area were supplied by the older centres of urban life in the Ruhrgebiet.

The population of Gelsenkirchen grew tenfold between 1871 and 1910. No other town in this period recorded such an increase in size, except the suburbs of Berlin which expanded to city proportions. Of the 37 cities examined by Schott it was Kiel, developed from 1871 onwards as the German empire's naval base, which showed the highest growth rate with a ratio of 1:5·5.[12] Then, with a ratio of between 1:5·0 and 1:4·0, came the Saxon textile town of Plauen im Vogtland; the Rhineland metropolis of Düsseldorf, an offshoot of the Ruhrgebiet with its emphasis on steel smelting and heavy industry; at the same time it housed the

[12] Schott, *loc. cit.*, table I, 89 ff.

headquarters of many large industrial concerns, and the two Rhineland coal and steel centres of the Ruhrgebiet, Essen and Duisburg. Then, with a ratio of between 1:4 and 1:3.5 came the inland port of Mannheim, also the centre for the south-west German engineering industries; the Westphalian coal and steel town of Dortmund; Saarbrücken, centre of the Saarland mining industry; and Nuremberg with a variety of medium-scale industries. Among these nine fastest growing towns there were then four centres of mining and heavy industry, four more dependent on iron and engineering, and only one textile town. This indicates the relative importance of the various industries for urbanization during the height of industrialization. Mining, heavy industry, and engineering predominated over the other branches of industry as factors promoting the growth of urban population. Of the textile towns only Plauen, and Chemnitz especially, received new and decisive impulses from the expansion of the engineering industry, whilst the other west German textile towns of Elberfeld (1:2·3), Barmen (1:2·25), Krefeld (1:2·1) and Aachen (1:1·8), where industry continued largely as medium and small-scale enterprises, were incapable of further growth on such a scale.

Urbanization results from internal migration; it became possible only through the high proportion of population released from the agrarian surplus before the middle of the century. The total movement between town and country can be measured only in a few censuses. Particularly revealing is the 1907 census, which also covers the professional and industrial distribution of the population.

It gives us a picture of the state of urbanization towards the end of our period. Even though, in accordance with the census definition of 'town', the inhabitants of market towns with 2000 to 5000 people are included in the urban population and cannot be assessed separately, the exodus from country to town is clearly perceptible. The data showing the movement into the country of those born in the towns and vice-versa give a balance in favour of country-to-town migration of around 8·3 million people. The ratio varies in the different regions. Rhineland-Westphalia, the area of most intensive urbanization, shows the smallest degree of town-to-country migration but the highest degree of country-to-town migration, whilst east Germany shows the highest degree of

migration to the country together with the lowest degree of migration to the towns. Pomerania, Mecklenburg, and East Prussia, the areas with the smallest urban population of all, show that the ratios in east Germany were determined above all by movement between rural market town and village. Here no medium or large-scale enterprises were developing to attract the people of the surrounding area, whilst in the Rhine Province and Westphalia urban expansion dictated the degree of migration by the rural population. Just so the growth of Greater Berlin spread far beyond the boundaries of the city of Berlin (defined only in 1920) to include the large number of migrants from the rural areas of Brandenburg, while Saxony emerged in second place in respect of intensive urbanization.

In this way the town drained people not only from its immediate hinterland (in so far as the agglomeration did not overspill into this), but also from a wider area, stretching at times roughly to the boundaries of the province or state; it also attracted migrants from further afield, and even from foreign countries. For the large towns in 1907 – statistics are available only for these – the ratios between natives, those born in neighbouring parishes and adjacent regions, and those born further afield or abroad, vary between 6·5:2·5:1·0 for Aachen and 3·7:4·0:2·4 for Bochum.[13] In general it can be seen that where the industrial city is less able during its expansion to draw upon a surrounding area of a similar commercial or industrial pattern, its proportion of long-distance migrants and immigrants will be correspondingly higher. This was the case in the north-western ports of Kiel, Altona, Hamburg, and Bremen, and in the cities of the Rhine-Main area, Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, and Mannheim, and a number of industrial centres in agrarian areas such as Kassel, whereas the central German towns of Dresden, Leipzig, Chemnitz, Plauen, and Halle, as centres of a sprawling industrial belt, had the smallest proportion of long-distance migrants, and the towns of the Ruhrgebiet, despite the extreme case of Gelsenkirchen, had only an average intake of long-distance migrants.

Not only did the town absorb the population surplus of the

[13] Cf. Wolfgang Köllmann, 'Industrialisierung, Binnenwanderung und "Soziale Frage": Entstehungsgeschichte der deutschen Industriegrosstadt im 19. Jahrhundert', in *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1959, 63 ff.

country, but the birth-rate of migrants from the country helped further to accelerate the growth of the urban population. A fall in the birth rate, characteristic of the new industrial population, did begin in the industrial centres, but the mortality rate also fell due to the relative predominance of the younger age-groups and perhaps also to better conditions of hygiene and supply services available earlier and more extensively, so that in general the surplus of live births was probably above the average for the total population.[14] These facts put the proportion of natives to migrants within the urban population in a somewhat different light. The only insight into this is given by the national census of 1900 which reveals the approximate age composition for the native and non-native born. In the towns selected the migrant population exceeded the native born by proportions varying from 12·5 to 17·6 per cent, and of these Krefeld, where the migration period had virtually ended fairly early, showed the lowest proportion, whilst Dortmund at a period of most active migration showed the highest. Even clearer criteria for measuring the impact of migration can be found by projecting the growth of a given population and then comparing it with the population count of a later census. To cite here two examples: the population of Barmen, excluding migrants and applying the rate of population growth for the Reich between 1871 and 1910, would have risen from 75,074 to 115,924, whilst in reality it rose to 169,214. The population of Gelsenkirchen would have risen from 16,023 to 24,742, whereas in reality it grew to 169,513. In the case then of Barmen and Gelsenkirchen an estimated increase of 53,290 and 144,771 respectively can be traced to migration. In Barmen (the increase through migration for Gelsenkirchen cannot be measured) this is more than three times the increase of 16,555 which came from migration alone. Only in comparisons of this kind does the high mobility of the German population fully reveal its importance for urbanization.

In interpreting the urbanization process as a whole as a shift of population from country to town, it should be remembered that internal migration was not confined to country-to-town migration,

[14] This question requires further investigation. Exact figures are available only for Barmen, where they refute this theory (Köllmann, *Population*, 599 ff.), but Heberle agrees that migration exerted this kind of influence. Cf. Rudolf Heberle and Fritz Meyer, *Die Grosstädte im Strom der Binnenwanderung* (Leipzig, 1937), 53.

but that this movement continued in migration from one town to another. The investigations of Heberle and Meyer emphasise the importance of these migratory processes 'in particular for the chief towns in densely populated areas'. The readiness for mobility was further increased by the unsatisfactory nature of the circumstances in which the newcomers frequently found themselves at first, for the only jobs immediately open to them were those rejected by the native inhabitants, and also by the competition in production which led to the ruthless ousting of those less suitable or less willing. From this it is clear that the population turnover of the towns was considerably higher than their gains through migration, so that the degree of mobility and that of the gain through migration were independent of each other. Thus, of the towns of the Rhineland and Westphalia, the cities in the Ruhrgebiet showed a far higher mobility than those of the Rhine, whilst the gains through migration in the Westphalian towns of this zone – Dortmund and Bochum – were up to three times greater than those of the Rhineland towns of Essen and Duisburg. A similar difference is seen between the Rhine towns of Düsseldorf and Cologne, whilst Krefeld and Aachen at the end of their industrialization period – Aachen having registered only minimal gains through migration and Krefeld actual losses – showed a far smaller turnover of migration. The special position of Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhrgebiet might be explained not least by its mono-industrial structure, whilst it is important to note that the migrants from north-eastern Germany, recruited for the mining industry and provided with living accommodation in the town of their destination, were presumably more inclined to settle down in the first town they moved to than those who had come without such advance guarantees.

The peak period of industrialization meant a shifting of the population of Germany in favour of the town and above all the large town, by migration and the regrouping of communities whose status was changed because of their population growth. Thus between 1882 and 1907 the large towns increased by 8·5 million inhabitants, and the rural, small, and medium-sized towns increased by 8·4 million, whereas the rural population in 1907 had decreased by 0·4 million.[15] These changes were accompanied by

[15] *Statistik des Deutschen Reiches*, vol. 211, 42 ff.

social changes – greater horizontal mobility (internal migration) and greater vertical mobility (social rise and fall). It was in the town, above all in the large town, that this new social order took shape, so that consideration of the process of urban growth must include an understanding of the changes in social as well as economic structure. In this sense industrial urbanization is to be understood as 'a cumulative process with rising incidence and more differentiated structures'.[16] Here too it resulted from the instability of rural conditions after the reforms of the early nineteenth century and was a consequence of rural overpopulation. This rural population surplus, poverty-stricken and propertyless, threatened the stability of the agrarian social structure at its foundations, a process of disintegration in agrarian society which the new capacity of industrial society for integration was able to check.[17] The basic conditions of 'isolation and solidarity' which gave rise to 'essentially functional structures of a new kind'[18] were responsible for the reshaping of a society whose structure was determined by performance and availability.

Here the lines of horizontal and vertical mobility converge. Socially, migration from country to town almost always meant divorce from the agrarian structure and integration into an artisan-industrial order. Social rise or fall within this order frequently entailed a change of town; and inter-town migration too has to be seen as a result of this kind of social mobility. The exodus from the country served still further to restore the stability of the agrarian structure. The village, relieved of its population surplus, recovered the self sufficiency it had had under the older order whose survival and security continued to be guaranteed by the continuing capacity for absorption of the constantly expanding industrial sector.

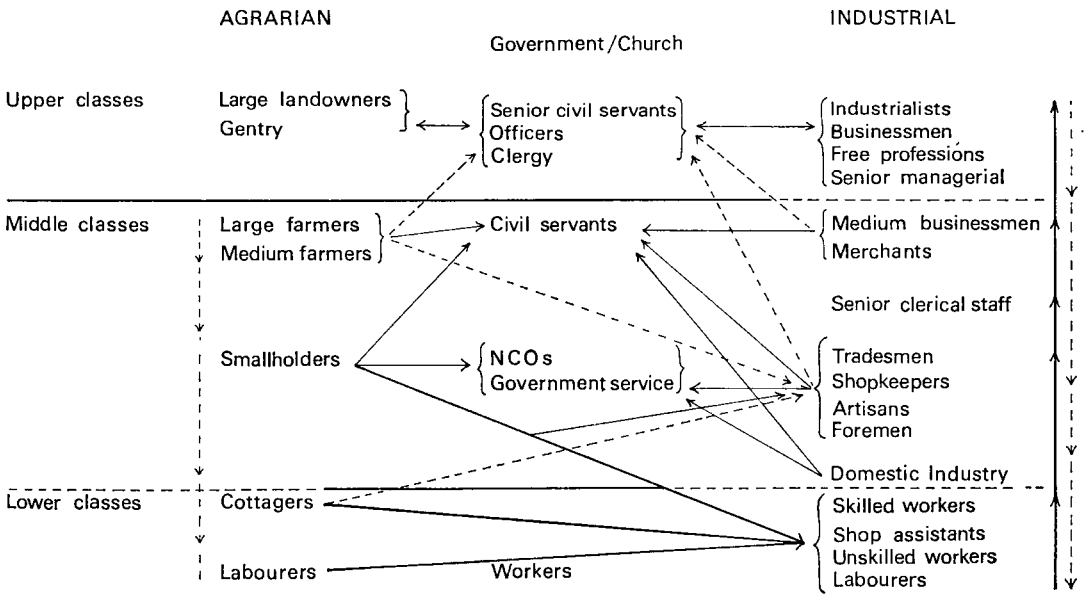
The social composition of the German nation as it developed in the peak industrialization period revealed three occupational hierarchies: the agrarian order of the countryside and the industrial order of the town, both held together by the third, the public sector, which covered national and local administration

[16] Eric E. Lampard, 'Historical Aspects of Urbanization', in Philip M. Hauser and Leo F. Schnore (eds.) *The Study of Urbanisation* (New York, 1965), 547.

[17] Cf. Wilhelm Brepohl, *Industrievolk Ruhrgebiet* (Tübingen, 1957), especially 138 ff.

[18] Ipsen, 'Stadt', 790.

DIAGRAM OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND MOBILITY AT THE HEIGHT OF INDUSTRIALISATION



and the churches. The distinctive feature of this social structure, in addition to the multiplicity of its groups, was the freedom of movement between them, for rigid barriers existed only between the agrarian upper and middle classes, and between the different ranks of the bureaucracy, demarcated by education and official position. The structure of the village remained relatively inflexible, whilst the industrial structure may be seen to reflect that of the mobility of society. At least the chances of social betterment, despite the equal danger of a fall in social position, were in each individual case a reality, from the possibility of promotion within the company to the chance of independence or an expanding sphere of authority right to the most senior posts. Not infrequently a rise of this sort coincided with the emergence of the new generation who were able to take advantage of the many kinds of educational opportunity offered by the town.

The ranks of the industrial lower classes were expanded chiefly from the agrarian lower classes, the industrial middle classes from the industrial lower classes, and the industrial upper classes from the industrial middle classes. The latter, however, also came into close contact with the administrative and agrarian upper classes, and a change of employment in the civil service afforded at every level the possibility of a change in social status. But despite such possibilities, and despite continuing family ties between the rural migrant and his people at home, the majority necessarily had to find their place in the industrial world and accommodate themselves to it. This was how the decisive changes in social structure brought on by urban growth occurred, whilst it was precisely the isolation of the individual and the depersonalization of relationships, so often lamented by social critics, which provided the impulse for the new independence and self-assertion which made change of social position possible and helped to further it. This again applied principally to the large town, whilst in small and medium-sized towns older social patterns based on rank and privilege and on closer personal contact frequently continued to prevail over more material considerations. This kept social conflict at a low level, whereas in the large towns it found full expression in industrial and political disputes, and in social and political agitation. The growing dualism between social mobility and social antagonism was from the first inherent in the urbanization process seen as the process of social change and the

emergence of new social structures, whilst at the same time it marked the instability of these new structures and the will to change them.

Only crude categories can be deduced from statistics. Even so, in the rather short span of 1895–1907, a relatively late phase of the peak industrialization period, they trace for us the essential changes in the main groups: the decline in numbers of those employed in the country in agriculture and forestry and the increase in industrial occupations even in small and medium-sized towns. Here the vacuum left by the loss of rural labourers was filled by the increased help given by members of the family. The number of relatives who did help, shown by statistics as increasing from 1·7 to 3·4 million – in other words doubling – was attributable not only to better statistical records and improved census methods but to the fact that 'more work must have been done by relatives'.[19] This makes it clear that migration from the country had passed beyond the point of relieving the rural population by releasing its surplus; the growing shortage of rural labour necessarily meant increased pressure at the other end of the scale on the family.

The decline in numbers of those self-employed in agriculture and forestry can be explained partly by the change in status of many communities as a result of population growth, and by fundamental structural changes in the economy and society, for in the two urban spheres the number of self-employed rose by 33,000, partly because small-scale economy passed from being a primary to a secondary occupation, just as in general such marginal forms of activity can bring changes without radically altering the social position. In contrast the decline of those self-employed in industry and handicrafts points to processes of industrial concentration, and the change in the ratio of self-employed to dependent workers points the same way: in the countryside it widened between 1895 and 1907 from 1:2·5 to 1:3·8, and in the towns from 1:4·1 to 1:6·0. Trade and transport show the same change to a lesser extent, from 1:1·2 to 1:1·15 in the country and from 1:1·8 to 1:2·4 in the towns. A particularly large part was played in this development by the above-average increase in the number of white-collar workers as a new but not independent group within the middle classes; the differences in

[19] *Statistik des Deutschen Reiches*, vol. 211, 35, 38.

TABLE III

SOCIAL-OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION 1895, 1907

(selected groups)

		1895		1907		
		000's	%	000's	%	% increase + or decrease −
		in the countryside				
Agriculture & forestry	Independent	2,232	25·7	2,131	24·6	−4·5
	labourers	3,342	37·4	2,930	33·8	−9·6
Industry & crafts	Independent	692	8·0	579	6·7	−16·3
	clerical	45	0·5	85	1·0	+88·9
	workers	1,707	19·7	2,100	24·2	+23·0
Trade and transport	Independent	215	2·5	216	2·5	+0·5
	clerical	20	0·2	34	0·4	+70·0
	workers	230	2·7	290	3·3	+26·1
Casual labour		65	0·7	64	0·7	−1·5
Public service and professions	Independent	143	1·6	147	1·7	+2·8
	clerical	32	0·4	43	0·5	+34·4
	workers	45	0·5	47	0·5	+4·4
Total		8,668	100·0	8,666	100·0	—
		in small and medium towns (from 2000 to 100,000 inhabitants)				
Agriculture & forestry	Independent	326	5·1	354	4·3	+8·6
	labourers	460	7·2	434	5·2	−5·7
Industry & crafts	Independent	788	12·4	762	9·2	−3·3
	clerical	143	2·2	345	4·2	+141·3
	workers	3,013	47·4	4,287	51·7	+42·3
Trade and transport	Independent	391	6·2	456	5·5	+16·6
	clerical	114	1·8	188	2·3	+64·9
	workers	519	8·2	748	9·0	+44·1
Casual labour		226	3·6	203	2·4	−10·2
Public service and professions	Independent	193	3·0	246	3·0	+27·5
	clerical	104	1·6	149	1·8	+43·3
	workers	81	1·3	118	1·4	+45·7
Total		6,358	100·0	8,290	100·0	+30·4

		1895		1907		% increase + or decrease −
		000's	%	000's	%	
			in large towns			
Agriculture & forestry	Independent	11	0·4	16	0·3	+45·5
	labourers	22	0·8	25	0·5	+13·6
Industry & crafts	Independent	293	11·0	389	8·5	+32·8
	clerical	76	2·9	256	5·6	+236·8
	workers	1,180	44·4	2,073	45·1	+75·7
Trade and transport	Independent	238	9·0	340	7·4	+42·9
	clerical	128	4·8	283	6·2	+121·1
	workers	373	14·0	660	14·4	+76·9
Casual labour		141	5·3	204	4·4	+44·7
Public service and professions	Independent	96	3·6	166	3·6	+72·9
	clerical	59	2·2	105	2·3	+78·0
	workers	41	1·5	72	1·6	+75·6
Total		2,658	100·0	4,589	100·0	+72·6

Source: Statistik des Deutschen Reiches, vol. 211, table 23, 216 ff.

their rate of growth as between the smaller and the larger towns were greater than the corresponding differences for the industrial workers. The same was true of the growth in the public services and free professions.

Migration and regrouping also caused a decline in the numbers of those engaged in agriculture and forestry amongst the wage-earning rural population as a whole. This decline corresponded to the expansion of industry and handicrafts. It was chiefly the rural crafts which suffered most from that expansion; in the country trade and transport also gained ground, whilst their proportion in the urban population remained almost unchanged. In the small and medium-sized towns the declining proportion of workers in agriculture and forestry was fully balanced by an increase of those employed in industry and handicrafts, which in these towns accounted for the large majority of the wage-earning population. This may be due to the fact that many of the medium-sized towns owed their expansion to the development of a few large-scale concerns in one industry but lacked the capacity to provide more than local services for the hinterland. This was the case in the Ruhr towns of Herne, Wanne-Eickel, Oberhausen, Hamborn, or the textile towns of Saxony. These services were responsible for the higher proportion of those in the cities employed in trade and transport, but also in the public services and professions.

If these occupational ratios are interpreted in their social aspect, the importance gained by the industrial sector through the decline of the agrarian sector becomes clear, although there is little differentiation within the upper and middle classes. As early as 1895 the agrarian sector employed altogether less manpower than the industrial sector, but 12 years later it accounted for a full third less than the industrial lower classes alone. The ratio of the upper and middle to the lower agrarian classes shifted slightly in favour of the upper and middle classes (1895 1:1·45 and 1907 1:1·35), an indication of the newly achieved relative stability, whereas in industry we can distinguish somewhat greater shifts in favour of the lower classes (1895 1:2·51 and 1907 1:2·71). These however were not large enough to be seen as a fundamental change. The social structure of the German nation in this phase of the industrial age was fully formed by the first decade of the twentieth century.

The process of urbanization, inseparable from the development of industrial society, provided the framework for a decisive change in the life of the individual and of social groups. Stage by stage, as industrialization encroached on the agrarian sector, the entire population was engulfed by urban ways of life and more especially the life of the big city. The romantics who criticized the city for its apparent anonymity, its equally apparent coincidence of isolation and human concentration, and the allegedly dwindling vigour of the urban population, obscured understanding of the significance of this transformation.[20] These critics saw agrarian ways of life in the initial period of industrialization as unchanged and stable, since they judged from the new and relative stability which followed from the migration of the population surplus into the town. This view misinterprets the importance of the urbanization process in contemporary development. It not only led to ever greater centres of human concentration, but also provided the frame for the new social structures of the industrial age; these structures never became too rigid to prohibit change, but by their very flexibility and adaptability offered the individual greater opportunities for development and advancement, and for making his own way in society – perhaps for the first time in history.

20 Hans Paul Bahrdt, *Die moderne Grosstadt; Soziologische Überlegungen zum Städtebau* (Hamburg, 1961), 17. Cf. 12 ff. for a convincing critique of the city critics.