

Summaries

Chelion Begass/Johanna Singer, Poor Noble Women. New Perspectives of Social Inequality in Nineteenth Century Prussia

Usually the term »nobility« implies elite status and economic prosperity. In the same manner the history of nobility focuses primarily on questions regarding elite formation and elite change, whereas historical research on poverty mainly looks at the lower classes and ignores the nobility, in particular noble women. Based on petitions, a source material seldom used until today, the article foregrounds poor noble women in nineteenth century Prussia. Different approaches of the history of nobility, poverty and gender are combined in a new way in order to contribute to the discussion about the generation and dynamics of social inequality from a historical perspective. The paper firstly presents everyday life experiences and living environments of poor noble women by referring to three case studies. It subsequently describes petitions as a special source material for a new approach to the history of nobility and discusses its value. The fact that noble women lived in poverty and had to earn their living by regular gainful employment – in contrast to previous assumptions – raises the question of how this social group has to be seen in the context of well established concepts of the social structure of nineteenth century German society. Social inequality in regard to poor noble women can only be conceptualised by taking account of several factors generating inequality as well as their interaction and dynamics during the women's lives. By considering the several overlying social fractures a multi-dimensional image emerges, which enables a new perspective on the nineteenth century society as well as a differentiated analysis of social inequality.

Christine Fertig, Social Networks and Class Formation in the Rural Society. A Comparative Micro-Analysis (Westphalia, 1750–1874)

The paper discusses the connection between class limits and social networks in two parishes in Westphalia: Löhne (district of Herford) situated in the cloth-weaving area of Eastern Westphalia, and Borgeln (district of Soest) in the fertile Soest Börde with an increase in the production of cash crops during the period of investigation. In the nineteenth century both parishes were dominated by two different groups: a small stratum of wealthy peasants and small holders on the one hand and a broad unpropertied lower class on the other. Since Jürgen Kocka's seminal works, the nineteenth century is considered the essential period when social classes emerged in the context of the modernisation of economy and society. Following his concept, the process of class formation in rural regions has started already in the eighteenth century supposedly caused both by the industrial penetration of rural areas and a growing importance of relationships within the family. The concept of the rural society as a class society as well as the assumption of the growing importance of relationships within the family in Europe is critically discussed in the article. Statistical methods and formal network analysis provide the tools to examine the relations between different social strata. The acquisition of large databases and the adaptation of new methods, in particular historical network analysis, enable a precise examination of social relations between social groups. Jürgen Schlumbohm in his micro study of the parish Belm in the Osnabrück area, which like Löhne is situated in the textile region of Northwest Germany, has already pointed out that despite a pronounced social inequality there is no indication of class consciousness or even joint class activities. The article shows that there are rudiments of a »rural class society« to be found in the purely agrarian Soest Börde, whereas proto-industrialised Eastern Westphalia was characterised by a

»network community« with profound social relations between members of different social strata.

Eva Maria Gajek, Displaying Wealth. The Yearbook of Millionaires' Assets and Income in Prussia

The »Yearbook of Millionaires' Assets and Income« by Rudolf Martin was a novelty in the history of Imperial Germany. Not only did it for the first time gather data about the pecuniary circumstances of »rich people«, it also revealed their names and addresses. Thus, from the mid-nineteenth century the Yearbook gave the growing assets a face and made wealth visible as an extreme aspect of social inequality. There could not have been a better time to publish a book like this than in spring 1911: The unequal tax burden was keenly discussed in parliament and mass press, the system of the tax state met with a growing opposition and the exchequer wanted to profit by the surplus in the course of industrialisation. The article looks at the social brisance caused by the Yearbook at the beginning of the twentieth century and shows how the Imperial society dealt with wealth by drawing on its history of publication and reception. Based on the analysis of political files, estates and media source material it will show that the contemporary understanding of wealth was influenced by the interaction of statistic database, tax policies and tax limits, social definitions and connotations as well as the influence of a powerful upper class. The article concludes that, on the one hand, the Yearbook supported the argument of unequal taxation among liberal circles of the Prussian Diet. The Prussian government on the other hand saw the book as a breach of personal rights. The rich people, finally, who were subject of the Yearbook, were not concerned about the published information about them but about where they appeared in the ranking list. The Yearbook triggered an intensive debate not only about the validity of its data but also about social differences and the (future) structure of state and society as a whole.

Sarah Haßdenteufel, Precarity Newly Discovered. Debates on »New Poverty« in France, 1981–1984

With the advent of the catchphrase »New Poverty« at the beginning of the 1980s, the topic of poverty re-entered the arena of public discourse in France after having been absent for decades. The article analyses the debate on the so called *nouvelle pauvreté* in three steps: It firstly enquires after the actors involved, examines afterwards the content of the phrase and finally focuses on the social political reactions caused by this debate. It shows that the phrase »New Poverty« was primarily coined by municipal actors supported by the opposition party who caught the attention of the media by starting to discuss this topic publicly. The image of poverty dominating the 1980s differed significantly from the one of the *Trente Glorieuses*, which became obvious in the debate culminating in autumn 1984, for instance regarding the causes of poverty, its social importance and the at-risk groups. The article argues that the traditional understanding of poverty collapsed in particular against the backdrop of the structural problems of the labour market in France at that time and the failure of the welfare state to address these issues. It finally shows that the new understanding of poverty initially did not trigger a change in poverty policies. Instead the French government reacted to the debate by drawing on traditional methods to tackle poverty.

Sonja Matter, Poverty and Migration – Class and Nation. Welfare for »Strangers in Need« at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

At the end of the nineteenth century cities in Switzerland faced new challenges: In the wake of industrialisation a growing number of people migrated into cities and towns where

their livelihoods were insecure in case of illness, accidents and unemployment. These »strangers in need« – who were either ›non-local‹ Swiss or foreign nationals – were at the lower end of the social hierarchy and were not entitled to claim benefits in their place of residence. The article explores how the categories of »class« and »nation« shaped the poor relief of »strangers in need«. In what way did the attempts to tie social rights and citizenship closer together affect structures of social inequality? New practices established in Switzerland during the first two decades of the twentieth century were groundbreaking: Exclusion measures towards Swiss people decreased, whereas at the same time foreign nationals in need were excluded even more rigorously. The formation of a nation state based society was accompanied by social exclusion: Welfare experts and state authorities considered social inequality not as a problem of the industrial capitalist society. In the context of a discourse on »Überfremdung« (infiltration by foreigners) which gained more and more strength, they problematised and addressed the distribution battle of persons with or without Swiss citizenship.

Jenny Pleinen, »Health Inequalities« and Health Care Policy in the United Kingdom during the »Thatcher Era«

The Thatcher era is considered a period of profound transition by researchers and the public alike due to privatisations and the weakening of the unions. The article firstly looks at the health care policy in the 1980s, a policy area with a relatively high consistency: The role of the state in the UK health care system remained strong compared with other democratic countries – even though at a relatively low level of funding like in previous decades. Furthermore, by drawing on the debates on »health inequalities«, the article focuses on how British society dealt with the fact that health and life chances were unequal despite an egalitarian health system.

Christiane Reinecke, Disciplined Housing Shortage. Urban Spatial Planning and New Social Marginality in France and West Germany

In the immediate post war period solving the housing shortage and improving the urban environment for all social strata were key promises in Western European welfare states. All the more shocking was the fact in the 1960s that the number of families living in hut camps and emergency accommodation was increasing instead of decreasing. In both France and West Germany the issue of »poorly accommodated« and »homeless« people was a pivotal aspect of the debate on questions of equality and inequality. For a better understanding, the analysis combines a history of knowledge perspective with the investigation of administrative practices and focuses on the interrelationship between government housing policy and the changing constructions of social problems. It shows the similarities between French and West German social services in their attempts to discipline families without regular accommodation by establishing staggered housing conditions. In France this hierarchised policy was closely related to a (post)colonial logic. In West Germany, on the other hand, it was mainly German families with many children who were seen as the ›dangerous class‹ of migrants. However, in both countries a profound change in the debate on emergency accommodation became apparent: From the perspective of knowledge production on housing issues the view of a primarily self-imposed disadvantage lost ground around 1970 and the social conditionality of societal marginality with aspects such as inclusion and participation came to the fore.

Wilfried Rudloff, Unequal Education Opportunities, Ability and Selection. The Discovery of Social Inequality by Federal Education Policy and the Boom of the »Dynamic Concept of Ability« (1950–1980)

Educational careers and qualifications are fundamental determinants of social inequality. The article uses the concept of ability as a testing probe to explore the discovery and changes in the perception of social inequality between 1950 and 1980. It shows that older discourses were newly framed by the advancing paradigm of inequality which substantially changed its political direction. According to an understanding of ability foregrounding individual aptitudes, social inequality is the expression of human inequality. Yet when conceiving ability as primarily determined by environmental conditions, human inequality is the expression of social inequality. The adjustment of the concept of ability along the lines of milieu theory – first by scientists, then by politicians, teachers and the media – was an essential condition of the expansive educational policy of the 1960s and early 1970s. Unlike the concept of ability based on aptitude, whose pioneers assumed a parallel divide between the social stratification hierarchy and the level of ability, the »dynamic« concept of ability from the period of the education boom suggested the search for new models of mobilisation, support and control of ability; it focused primarily on underprivileged social strata and groups. Methods of transition selection were changed, the model of a transition and orientation stage was tested, and the idea of the integrated comprehensive school was given a fresh impetus due to the new concept of ability. Yet along with the increasing party political polarisation during the 1970s the pendulum swung the other way regarding the concept of ability, and the topic of social inequality of education lost its importance.

Jan Stoll, »Disability« as Category of Social Inequality. Formation and Development of the Association »Lebenshilfe für das geistig behinderte Kind« in the Federal Republic of Germany during the 1950s and 1960s

The article investigates how social inequality of people with so-called mental disabilities was addressed in the Federal Republic of Germany during the 1950s and 1960s. Against the backdrop of the social political support for disabled ex-servicemen in the post war period and the power of their interest group, other groups of disabled people were largely ignored. Thus, people with mental disabilities frequently encountered exclusion and discrimination. The association »Lebenshilfe für das geistig behinderte Kind«, founded in 1958, for the first time offered parents and experts the possibility to act as an interest group for mentally disabled children in order to confront unequal treatment and to improve the situation of parents and children. On the basis of the work of this new lobby group for people with mental disabilities the article explores the efforts made for the participation of mentally disabled children in the education system, for the improvement of material resources and for social acceptance. Pedagogical and education policy experts developed concepts to educate mentally disabled children in special institutions. Other concerns were financial compensation for the parents and the funding of these education institutions. Public relations of the association finally aimed at social acceptance of mentally disabled people and at the reduction of discrimination. From this perspective, the »Lebenshilfe« association became the starting point of changing views on social inequality in the Federal Republic.

Dietmar Süß, »Fair Wages for Fair Work«? Reflections on the History of Minimum Wage

Wages, wage-setting and the demand for a minimum wage are parts of the social structure of inequality and political concepts which effect what is considered as sufficient to »secure one's living« at a given time. Thus, the controversy on »fair wages« is both old

and up to date. The article explores the debates on minimum wage from the nineteenth century until the present and embeds them into the discussion on the globalisation of social rights. It looks at Germany and the United Kingdom as well as at the policy of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It will be shown that minimum wages depend on changing logics of justice. The central assumption of the paper is: The debates on minimum wage reveal a basic tension in industrial, specialised societies and their modi of social integration.

Christoph Weischer, Social Inequality 3.0. Social Differentiation in a Transformed Industrial Society

The article reconstructs the development of social inequalities in the Federal Republic of Germany from the 1980s onwards. Based on a first systematisation of the transformation process it explores the development of inequality in several arenas relevant to distribution (production, state, private households). It then summarises and reconstructs the main currents of the transformation of inequality. Finally, it elaborates and substantiates the theorem of »Social Inequality 3.0«.

Mareike Witkowski, A Relict of the Nineteenth Century? Housemaids from 1918 until the 1960s

According to a view long held by researchers, the number of housemaids has declined from 1918 onwards and since 1945 at the latest the profession has finally disappeared. The article follows a different assumption: The occupational group of housemaids did not cease its existence but adapted to social change even if delayed in time. Today's cleaners have to be seen in the tradition of servants of the nineteenth century and housemaids of the first half of the twentieth century. Based on this assumption the article looks at inequalities of those employed in private households. Living in the household of the employer – which was still common during the period of investigation – clarified, established or broke open inequalities and caused many conflicts in particular. Apart from putting up with everyday life inequalities, housemaids were also legally disadvantaged for a long time. No other employment relationship was statutorily regulated as late as that of housemaids. Only in 1955 a labour agreement was reached to regulate working hours.