Introduction

In late September 1905, a number of leading social reformers and representatives of German heavy industry met in Mannheim at the annual general meeting of the Association for Social Policy (Verein für Sozialpolitik), the preeminent social reform organization in imperial Germany, for a debate over "labor relations in private large-scale industrial enterprises."[1] Against the backdrop of rising labor militancy—especially the recent miners' strike in the Ruhr—and the increasingly aggressive antiunionism of German industrialists, most of the reformers at Mannheim called for fundamental institutional changes to the industrial workplace, changes that would allow for negotiations between employers and employees over the conditions of work and curb the excessive power of German industrialists over their workers. The sociologist Max Weber, responding to the comments of heavy industry spokesman Alexander Tille, focused his criticism on labor relations in the Saar Valley, a region of coal mining and iron and steel manufacturing in the southwest corner of the Prussian Rhine Province. The Saar was best known as the home of the late iron and steel magnate and Free Conservative politician Carl Ferdinand von Stumm-Halberg, once imperial Germany's most vocal exponent of the paternalist factory regime, which combined far-reaching disciplinary and moralizing work rules with extensive company welfare benefits, from wage bonuses to housing. The work rules in Saar factories, Weber maintained in Mannheim, resembled "police jargon." As such, he argued, they reflected "German traditions": the striving for the "appearance of power" rather than real power; the "petty bourgeois thrill of being a gentleman" (*spiessbürgerliche Her-*

renkitzel) revealed in the actions of the industrial paterfamilias, who had to show "those under him" that he "has something to say"; and the authoritarianism inherent in the paternalist "system" generally.

> I myself . . . know very well the Saar region and the suffocating atmosphere which this system has created there—not for you, Dr. Tille, but for others, and not just for workers but for any who dare to be politically active in any way that displeases these men [i.e., Saar employers]. Gymnasium teachers, officials, and all with whom I came in contact at the time confirmed that anyone considered a civil servant—up to and including the *Oberpräsident* [Provincial Governor]—dances to the tune of these men, that any independent point of view risked the threat of transfer or reprimand.[2]

In ways that summarized the views of most liberal reformers, Weber argued that the paternalist factory regime was founded on a "contract of subordination" that violated "modern notions of legality." Much like the "authoritarian" Prussian state, it turned workers into subjects or "rabble" (*Kanaille*) rather than "honorable citizens." In this way, Weber interpreted the labor policies and factory regimes in Saar heavy industry as relics from a premodern or feudal past.

Nevertheless, the defense of employers mounted in Mannheim by industry spokesmen Tille and Eugen Leidig, deputy chairman of the Central Association of German Industrialists (Centralverband Deutscher Industrieller, hereafter CVDI), contained little of the moralizing claims of employers like Stumm or the familiar features of Saar paternalism—its description of the employer as economic and moral "provider" for workers, its repeated invocation of a "personal relationship between employer and employee," and its support for state *Sozialpolitik.* Instead, Tille assailed what he regarded as the unscientific and "social-moral" claims of the reformers, their calls for more state welfare programs and institutional mechanisms for workplace bargaining, and he defended employer prerogative in terms of a scientific and technocratic vision of work relations and economic efficiency. The terms and conditions of work in large industrial concerns, Tille maintained, could not be set according to the inapplicable, artificial, egalitarian, homogenizing, and ethical considerations that motivated state-sponsored welfare and workplace regulation. Rather, they should be determined by natural biological and economic laws, which pit-

ted workers of differing bioracial capacities against each other in healthy competition, and by the quality of a worker's "performance" (*Leistung*) on the job. In a technocratic formulation that stressed the importance of the "entrepreneur" (*Unternehmer*) as a general category of producer, Tille also criticized state-sanctioned arbitration bodies and increasing state regulation of the industrial workplace as threats to "economic freedom"—"our greatest good"—and to the "personal freedom" of employers and workers equally to choose with whom and under what conditions they would work. This departure from the paternalist language of Stumm would be incorporated three years later into a more systematic corporatist discourse about a racially defined social order composed of "occupational estates" (*Berufsstände*), in which a "social aristocracy" of "productive employers" was called on to defend its prerogatives and the conditions of capitalist profitability against trade unions, irresponsible social reformers, meddlesome political parties, and an interventionist welfare state.

Leidig's response to the reformers at Mannheim also departed from the once standard paternalist references and claims of industrialists and emphasized the changed context of labor relations in German heavy industry after 1900. The CVDI deputy chairman defended the freedom of the "purely economic" labor contract and the prerogatives of employers in heavy industry in terms of the organizational and economic imperatives of industrial production in an age of joint stock companies and global markets. He argued that "inside the factory the authoritarian position of the employer should be protected and maintained not . . . in the sense of a tsarist autocracy but in the sense of an organization," which, like any organization involved in a "difficult competition," must be led by a single, "unitary will." In Leidig's view, the employer (*Unternehmer*) was caught in a global competition for markets, bound to a much wider community of capital investors, and thus more restricted than ever in his room for maneuver than paternalist employers who once owned their own factories. Moreover, he found himself increasingly on the defensive—and not at all the "stronger" partner in the wage relationship—in the "new epoch of struggle" between workers and management defined by mass unionism and the regional and national organization of employers after 1900. Leidig identified the encroachments of trade unions, social reformers, and state regulators as looming threats, architects of an impending "socialist state," but he concentrated on two weapons available to workers as the principal threats to employers.

> The one is the universal and equal franchise, which has been put in the hands of workers; the other is public opinion and the press, which is likewise today used in a comprehensive way by the workers. With their silent, steady, pressing authority, these institutions, which redound to the benefit of workers in no other nation in the civilized world to this extent, force all political parties to engage in the struggle for the votes of workers. Their enduring effect is to place German employers under an influence that, each and every time they impose a disciplinary sanction, forces them to consider most carefully the question: is it absolutely necessary to reject the demands of the worker?[3]

Like Tille's, Leidig's arguments about the organization of labor conflict, mass politics, and the growing power of public opinion registered the corporatist restructuring of German political economy—understood here in terms of the increasing interpenetration of economic and party-political spheres—and pointed to a range of new concerns that transformed employer discourses about work and industrial organization in late imperial Germany.

German historians have not yet fully appreciated the changing terms of this debate or political struggle over factory organization and the transformation of employer discourses in Germany during the decade before 1914. Until recently, they had been mainly preoccupied, like Max Weber, with the allegedly "premodern" or "feudal" origins of paternalist or corporatist labor policies in German heavy industry—an interpretation that derived its staying power from the *Sonderweg* (special path) thesis about the long-term origins of Nazism. Consolidated during the 1960s and 1970s by the practitioners of "historical social science" (*Gesellschaftsgeschichte*), a largely Weberian reformulation of modernization theory applied to social historical writing, the *Sonderweg* thesis stressed the fundamental divergence of German sociopolitical development from the developmental trajectories of the "West." It emphasized the fatal disjuncture between a highly advanced industrial economy and a backward, illiberal political system and culture, which prevented the "normal" evolution of parliamentary democracy out of the social energies released by industrial capitalism.[4] The "preindustrial" elites and social groups that prevented this model of development came from the aristocracy, the civil bureaucracy, and the army, but they were joined by industrialists like Stumm and Krupp, as well as a younger "cohort" of Ruhr "manager-entrepreneurs" like Emil Kirdorf, Fritz Baare, or Hanns Jencke, who aped the illiberal

values of traditional elites in political outlook and lifestyle.[5] Their desire to remain "master of the house" (*Herr im Hause*) in the factory, according to Han-Ulrich Wehler, reflected a "residual style of traditional leadership" that rejected capitalist "market rationality" and the economic benefits that came with "modern" managerial practices and the acceptance of trade unions.[6] This traditional attitude, so this argument runs, was also expressed in the new managerial rationalities deployed in the technologically advanced industries of the "second industrial revolution," which drew on "preindustrial" bureaucratic practices and feudal hierarchies,[7] and in employer yearnings for a corporatist order of occupational "estates," which derived from a specifically German tradition of romantic "antimodernism" that rejected modern "liberal, secular, and industrial civilization" or "conservative feudal value orientations" of small retailers, artisans, and industrialists from domestic heavy industry who sought protection from the competitive pressures of a modern capitalist system.[8] From this perspective, paternalist and "corporatist-authoritarian" coal and steel barons stifled the budding prospects of "capitalist democracy" in the Wilhelmine era; contributed to the "willful, planned undermining of the sociopolitical compromises . . . of the Weimar Republic"; and helped to pave the way for the antimodernist, authoritarian appeal of National Socialism during the late 1920s and early 1930s.[9]

During the 1980s, German historians decisively challenged this perspective on the preindustrial attitudes and behaviors of employers and have since emphasized the "modernity" of industrial relations and the economic rationality of paternalist and corporatist labor policies from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[10] Geoff Eley and David Crew were the first to debunk systematically the implicit teleologies of the *Sonderweg* thesis in relation to employers like Stumm and Krupp, especially the a priori normative assumption that employers in modern capitalism would necessarily come to accept the benefits of trade unions and social partnership. They argue that industrial paternalism is best understood as a common and instrumental "way of controlling labor costs by preventing workers from organizing and striking"; maintaining a compliant labor force by providing social benefits and housing, particularly in regions lacking urban amenities and infrastructure; and preempting state welfare and regulatory intervention into the industrial workplace and their associated restrictions on employer prerogative.[11] In this context, according to Eley, the paternalist organization of factory production accorded with a historically "specific form of capitalist rationality" that was "immanent to the

monopoly phase of German capitalism"; it was thus a product not of a "bygone feudal era" but of a "set of relations generated by capitalism itself" during the Wilhelmine era.[12] Subsequently, historians have stressed the "rational market calculation" that inspired paternalist company welfare schemes and antiunion measures and the basic continuity of paternalist policies in heavy industry from the nineteenth century to the Nazi era.[13] Mary Nolan's major study of industrial rationalization during the Weimar era has similarly emphasized the economic function of right-wing corporatist visions of "factory community" and efforts to "engineer" an obedient, antiunion "new worker." If these initiatives were "archaic" or "not the most modern," Nolan argues, they nevertheless served the economic interests of employers by promoting "productivity and profitability."[14]

This study critically interrogates this emphasis on the continuities of work relations and production regimes in German heavy industry from the Kaiserreich to the Third Reich, by means of a case study of discourses about work and social order in the industrial Saar, the focus of Max Weber's critique and a common reference point for much subsequent social-historical interpretation. In an attempt to make sense of the new vocabulary of Tille and Leidig and of the wider assumptions that informed their statements at the Mannheim conference, it identifies an important discontinuity in industrial discourses or ideologies of workplace and social organization during the Wilhelmine era: namely, the shift from a paternalist discourse of work and social relations, structured in a moralizing and gendered metaphor of a factory "family" and anchored in rigid work rules and extensive company social programs, to a corporatist discourse of industrial social organization, which linked a bioracial schema of technocratic management to a wider vision of sociopolitical order based on representation by occupational groups or "productive estates" (*Berufsstände*). As this study demonstrates, this corporatist discourse framed a new and forward-looking authoritarian understanding of industrial-capitalist society, an understanding that converged with core elements in the ideological configurations of the radical Right in late Wilhelmine Germany and anticipated subsequent discourses about industrial work and social organization under National Socialism.

In view of its broader scope and relevance, therefore, this study of Saar factory regimes and political cultures enters into recent historiographical debates over the onset of "modernity" and the generative contexts of right-wing ideologies of work and social order in Wilhelmine Germany. The social science historians understood employer discourse and

labor relations in heavy industry in terms of the continuity of "preindustrial" traditions, and revisionist critics interpret them in relation to the continuity of capitalist imperatives and rationalities. This study offers a cultural-historical reading of multiple and competing industrial discourses—including paternalism, social Catholicism, Protestant-liberal reform, social democracy, and corporatism—and their historically specific productivity, that is, their varying capacity to shape work relations and production regimes in Saar heavy industry. In this way, it offers two challenges to existing historiographical interpretations of employer ideology in German heavy industry. First, in response to arguments about either the "feudal" nature or strictly economic logic of paternalist labor relations, which have focused on figures like Stumm and Krupp in particular, this study seeks to demonstrate the bourgeois character of company paternalism as both a rational way to conceptualize and organize capitalist production and a moralizing discourse about workers' comportment and familial order. Second, its focus on the rise of corporatist schemes of industrial and social order not only emphasizes an important transformation of heavy industrial labor policy and workplace organization during the late Wilhelmine era; it also calls attention to the generative ideological context and emergence of right-wing constructions of the economic "modern" in German heavy industry: namely, the increasing penetration of technocratic assumptions, scientific design, and racist intentions within managerial thought and practice; the greater reliance on impersonal norms and internalized disciplinary technologies, rather than overt managerial injunctions, in the regulation of factory labor; and the turn to wider schemes of corporatist social reorganization in response to organized conflict over the shape of the industrial workplace, more comprehensive forms of state labor regulation and social policy, and global economic competition.[15]

In this way, this study identifies a set of historical articulations revealed in the prewar activities of industrialists from Saar and other German locations, with important consequences for German history. It reveals connections between capitalist managerial practices, technocratic models of workplace organization, comprehensive forms of collective industrial interest representation, and antidemocratic and racist corporatist schemes of sociopolitical order that were forged in the ideological common ground between important sectors of German heavy industry and the radical Right on the eve of war in 1914. These schemes were disseminated more broadly during the Weimar era and ultimately taken up

and rearticulated by the National Socialists during the 1930s. In exploring these broader consequences, therefore, this study attempts to reinvigorate the rather dormant efforts to explore the historical genealogies of Nazism in relation to industrial conflict, employer politics, and the development of industrial capitalism in Germany after 1890.

Debates over the connections between heavy industry and the German Right and between capitalism and Nazism were vibrant from the late 1960s to the 1980s, but interest in historical genealogies of this kind has been muted by two historiographical trends during the last two decades. The first is the general reluctance of social and cultural historians since the 1980s to formulate explicit arguments about the causal connections between the politics and labor policies of German heavy industry and the political Right during the late Wilhelmine period, the Weimar Republic, and the Third Reich, in the wake of the successful critique of the *Sonderweg* thesis. For the most part, they have not gone beyond emphasizing the role of industrialists in undermining the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic, identifying the similarities between Weimar-era managerial strategies focused on the "factory community" (*Werksgemeinschaft*) and Nazi labor policies during the 1930s, or redefining fascist industrial policy as part of a generalized cultural "crisis of modernity."[16]

The second historiographical trend has involved the gradual acceptance of the "primacy of politics" thesis, which has encouraged interpretations of the collapse of Weimar, the rise of National Socialism, and histories of the Third Reich that no longer assign causal significance to labor and class relations, employer politics, and capitalism. The most influential formulation of this thesis came from Tim Mason, who argued as early as 1966 that Nazi leaders "broke the economic and political supremacy of heavy industry" by means of political decisions about rearmament and state intervention into the economy; became "independent of the influence of the economic ruling classes" and even devised policies that "ran contrary to" the interests of those classes; and prevented industrialists and their representatives from having any "decisive" influence on Nazi foreign diplomacy, war aims, and efforts to create a "new imperial order in Europe."[17] Studies of individual German firms and "businessmen" during the Weimar and Nazi eras have since portrayed the majority of industrialists as opponents of Nazism, as ineffectual political actors who were powerless to influence events leading to the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazis, or as unethical businessmen opportunistically and self-interestedly, rather than ideologically, complicit in the social and

economic policies of the Third Reich.[18] General analyses of the dirigiste "Nazi economy" also tend to downplay the significance of the private sector and capitalist developments to the fate of the Nazi regime, and some even emphasize what they regard as the fundamental contractions between the "Nazi economy" and capitalism.[19] Only very recently have historians once again begun to acknowledge the apparent "congruity of interests between state and economy," the "room for independent activity" (*Betätigungsspielräume*) left to German industrialists during the Third Reich, and the disturbing conjunction of racial and economic imperatives in the Nazi genocide.[20]

This study will respond to these two larger historiographical trends as it attempts to rethink the historical connections between industrial class relations, employer discourses, and right-wing politics in the genealogies of Nazism. It will do so by drawing on the theoretical frameworks of cultural theory and the insights of the "cultural turn" in labor history in order to explore the changing ideological discourses about work and sociopolitical order in the prewar Saar region. In particular, this study will draw attention to the conditions of emergence of the racially charged corporatist project in Saar and German heavy industry and its subsequent connections to the racist labor policies and wider corporatist social imaginary of the National Socialists in the 1930s.

The Cultural Turn and Ideological Discourse

The linguistic or cultural turn has emerged from a wide variety of often divergent theoretical developments across the human sciences during the last two decades, including Gramscian Marxism, women's history and feminist theory, cultural anthropology, cultural studies, historical sociology, literary deconstruction, and poststructuralist philosophy. In a highly overdetermined way, it produced a critique of the "materialist model of social determination," which treats political languages as the more or less entailed outcomes of autonomous material-economic processes, and turned instead to analysis of the constitutive role of the discourses, languages or representations of labor, the meanings of work, market cultures, and political factors in the very formation of economic order, factory organization, workplace struggles, labor movements, and processes of class formation.[21] In German historiography, the cultural turn arrived belatedly, via feminist history and "the history of everyday life" (*Alltags-*

geschichte).[22] But during the last ten years, it has inspired numerous studies of working-class formation, the political languages of workers, regionally varied production regimes or "industrial orders," the "micropractices" of factory production, and the factory as a "field of action" (*Handlungsfeld*). These studies emphasize the cultural or discursive dimensions of economic practices and social relations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[23]

Nevertheless, this emphasis on the constitutive role of discourse has been largely absent in debates among German historians over the meanings and import of industrial paternalism and corporatism and the relations between ideology and the economy from the Kaiserreich to the Third Reich. Despite their fundamental and productive differences, social science historians and their critics who study industrial relations and employer politics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries share certain analytical claims and ontological assumptions about the binary relationship between language or discourse and material reality: they tend to treat languages as relatively fixed systems of meaning that (should) reflect underlying or extralinguistic economic conditions or social structures. In this way, they interpret the meaning of employer discourse in terms of the extent to which it "rationally" corresponds with the general trajectory of capitalist industrialization, understood as an objective material process occurring outside the realm of representational practice or language. This kind of approach neglects the historical productivity or effectivity of discourse and imputes an intrinsic logic to economic and social development, which calls forth cultural or ideological responses; it thereby measures the actions and languages of historical actors in specific "social settings" against an "endogenous directionality or *a priori* definition of rational action" and thought.[24]

By contrast, recognizing the different and competing languages of industrial social order in the Saar, this study draws on the insights produced in discussions about discourse and ideology within Gramscian cultural studies, which treat discourse as a social activity and thus recognize its historical productivity and variability.[25] In the wake of Althusser's theory of ideology and Bakhtin's reflections on "dialogism," practitioners of cultural studies proposed a definition of ideological discourse as a historically evolved and socially organized ensemble of material signifying practices—a "connotative field of reference" that interpellates subjects and defines their relation to social order.[26] This definition offers a number of advantages for this study of labor relations and industrial politics. First,

by coupling the term *ideology* to the term *discourse,* this definition draws attention to the differential workings of power in language and the hierarchical relations between discourses in different historical and social settings.[27] Second, it points to the relational or "dialogical" dimensions of discourses, their necessary orientation toward and implication in other discourses. In these ways, this definition offers a useful way of analyzing the historical dynamics of discursive articulation—understood here in terms of both expression in language and connection (or linkage) between linguistic elements—as the ongoing and contingent process of hegemonic struggle and repositioning that takes place within and between discourses as they seek to define subjects and order the social world.[28]

Third, this approach permits analysis of the ways in which ideological discourses articulate to other material practices and institutions in response to both previous social-historical and recent cultural-historical paradigms. If social historians and many cultural historians still reify conceptual distinctions between the "material" and the "discursive" and thereby fail to interrogate the constitutive role of discourse in the very creation of the "economic structures" of "capitalist development," other cultural historians attempt to subsume all material practices and institutions into their definition of discourse without distinguishing between what are more usefully understood analytically as different dimensions of social life.[29] They do so by insisting, with Joan Scott, that there is no "opposition between material life and political thought" and by then proceeding to examine published texts as instantiations of discourse.[30] But this kind of approach cannot fully explain two aspects of ideological discourse crucial for the historian of industrial class relations in Germany in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries: namely, why some discourses about industrial work and social order became dominant while others remained subordinate or even disappeared in particular historical eras or conjunctures, as well as how such discourses came into being and were transformed over time.[31] To understand these aspects of paternalism and corporatism in the Saar, this study relies on an analytical distinction between discourses and other material practices and recognizes the imperative to examine their necessary interarticulations in any lived social context. It proposes that the signifying power of an ideological discourse is best understood in terms of both its connotative resonances and its materialization in other social practices and institutions.

This study therefore questions assumptions about the semantic fixity and logical coherence of ideological discourses over time and fixed onto-

logical distinctions between the economic and the ideological. Following Stuart Hall, it argues that our interpretations of ideological discourses about work and social order, particularly the meanings of Saar paternalism and corporatism, should avoid a priori assumptions about their necessary "'logics' of arrangement" and approach them instead as historically contingent formations whose connotative references and principles of articulation were variable. From this perspective, rather than identifying stable discourses and their long-term semantic unities, it makes more sense to explore how different linguistic "elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse" and "how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects" and institutional forms.[32] To suggest that discourses, as modes of social activity, are made in the course of social struggles and therefore undergo processes of "modification and development" over time is not to claim that they are ephemeral or permanently in flux.[33] Rather, this study argues that precisely the extent to which certain discourses became articulated to other social practices secured their connotative power and allowed them to become structurally and "materially effective" in the Saar in ways that other discourses were not. It thereby proposes a model of cultural historical practice that attempts to analyze social and political change in the Saar by tracing dynamic and mutually determining relations between discourses and other practices and domains of social life over time: that is, the historical processes by which a dominant paternalist discourse about economic and social order was forged in practices of speech and writing; materialized in social relations, public institutions, and built environments in ways that set the main parameters for political-ideological struggle in the region; subsequently challenged by alternative discourses about work and social order; and ultimately supplemented and replaced by a new corporatist discourse with its own semantic articulations and range of material connections and effectivities during the prewar decade.

The Public Sphere and the State

A wider focus of this kind requires paying attention to what Bakhtin referred to as the "social life" of discourses—in this case, their articulations and deployments across a range of sites, which go far beyond the industrial workplace and into the translocal "public sphere" and the agencies of the imperial German state.[34] This study explores the formation of

ideological discourses about work in a wide range of texts and institutions—including factory work rules; management circulars; workplace rituals; company brochures; and the statutes, speeches, meeting minutes, and memoranda produced by voluntary associations, city and town councils, social reform organizations, and trade unions—as well as the everyday activities, organizational structures, social relations, and modes of political deliberation that characterized the industrial workplace, social clubs and voluntary associations, local governmental bodies, and political organizations across the Saar region. In addition, it examines the role of the state—as a locus and framework of workplace regulation and social welfare and a repository of legal-constitutional guarantees of political rights—in the organization of work and the modalities of politics in the Saar. It thus explores the transformation of factory regimes and relations of class hegemony in the Saar in the complex interplay between the arenas of the industrial workplace, the public sphere, and the state. This perspective emerges from two sets of debates related to Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere and the role and function of the German state.

Historians have increasingly been drawn to Habermas's theory of the bourgeois public sphere in order to explore vital and once neglected forms and arenas of political activity and association, outside of the domains of the state and economy, from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. In the process, they have critically but sympathetically challenged Habermas's idealized theorization of the bourgeois public sphere—especially its normative investment in a domain, characterized by universal access, of self-correcting rational-critical discourse beyond or outside of politics—and proposed its redefinition as, in Geoff Eley's words, "the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics takes place."[35] This important reworking of the public sphere as a plural domain, or set of multiple and interconnecting public spheres in which various social groups articulate identities and stake political claims, registers both the historically specific exclusivity of the bourgeois public sphere and its democratic possibilities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[36] This study will similarly examine the formations of *Öffentlichkeit* across the cities and small towns of the Saar as the crucial arenas in which the organization of work and the balance of social forces in the Saar were secured but also contested by Saar workers. It thus enters into a sustained critical engagement with production-centered studies in labor history by relocating the struggle over labor relations and social order to the arenas of the public sphere.

Yet these revisions to Habermas's theory tend to treat the public sphere as a self-contained and even social space (to which historical actors attempt to gain access) and thus to obscure the extent to which *Öffentlichkeit* was structured in relations of social hierarchy and economic inequality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even those studies attuned to the uphill struggle of subordinate groups seeking access to "public" debate have not fully appreciated the inequalities and limitations intrinsic to the bourgeois public sphere, its constitutive (not incidental) relation to the "material sphere of everyday life, the social conditions of production" and reproduction.[37] By contrast, this study pays attention to the material and social-structural parameters of the public sphere: the matter of who owned or controlled the principal media of public communication and who was allowed to participate in its deliberations, as well as the processes by which hegemonic definitions of *Öffentlichkeit* became embodied in certain kinds of institutions, deliberative routines, and discursive norms. This emphasis is vital for any analysis of public life in a region where the owners and directors of heavy industrial concerns, figures like Stumm in particular, deployed their considerable economic and financial power to curb or even silence the expression of oppositional or alternative speech and activity.

Moreover, these reworkings of Habermas's theory generally adhere to a social or "spatial" model of the public sphere, as a domain of institutions and organizations, which tends to overlook a crucial second definition of *Öffentlichkeit:* the collective subject or "public" forged in political debate. As Harold Mah perceptively argues, they have neglected analysis of the process by which the multiple voices of political life are transformed into a "phantasmatic" unity, the fiction of a unified public. This kind of analysis would refocus our attention on the central discursive strategy of legitimation intrinsic to the bourgeois public sphere: namely, the claim to speak in the name of "the public." When political actors invoke the public as collective subject in this way, they presume not the copresence of multiple subjects and rationalities in formation but the fantasy of an already existing, unitary mass subject in possession of universal reason.[38] Accordingly, this study examines the public sphere in the Saar not as a neutral, independent domain of public reason but as a highly contested ideological construction, not only forged in struggles over the public as a social domain, the conflict between employers and workers over the formation of new associations, the renting of meeting halls, and the right to speak publicly, but also wrought in debates over who counted as "the

public" and what the public could be said to authorize. It examines thereby the actual references to and the struggle over the meaning of the term *Öffentlichkeit* in the Saar during the Wilhelmine period. In this context, the public sphere emerged as a complex and often contradictory "cross-citational field" of discursive interaction, a general "criterion" of openness, and a collective political subject, toward which employers, social reformers, state officials, and many workers oriented themselves and through which the terms and conditions of industrial work and the shape of labor relations were contested in the Saar after 1890.[39]

Finally, by contrast with Habermas's influential treatment of the bourgeois public sphere as a discrete domain of discursive interaction, this study explores the complex and generative interconnections between the industrial workplace, the public sphere, and the imperial German state.[40] This requires drawing on recent developments in state theory in relation to German historiography on the Kaiserreich. German historians, like Habermas, have long treated the state as a discrete, unitary, autonomous, and overwhelmingly repressive entity, composed of an identifiable set of institutions and actors, whose concerns about governance and "policing" extend back to the late medieval and early modern periods and constituted the premodern core of the antidemocratic Wilhelmine state. Drawing on the Marxist theory of Nicos Poulantzas, Göran Therborn, and Bob Jessop, Geoff Eley has questioned this interpretation of German "backwardness" and has sought to redefine the imperial German state in terms of its relative "autonomy" in relation to social groups, its particular organization as the "outcome of much wider political struggles," and its status as both an "institutional complex" and "permeable arena in which contending social and political forces interact."[41] This perspective has informed the important recent studies of George Steinmetz on the welfare state and Kathleen Canning on labor legislation in imperial Germany, both of which have moved decisively away from assumptions about the German state as a long-standing autonomous and homogeneous entity, toward analysis of its heterogeneous structure as an outcome of contingent historical processes.[42]

Recent theoretical discussion even more comprehensively challenges analysis of the state that presupposes its ontological essence as a "free-standing" power that is separate from other domains of social life and subject to various forms of seizure and deployment and that intervenes in society or economy from outside. Poulantzas defines the "institutional materiality" of any capitalist state as the outcome of a historically contin-

gent and "specific material condensation of a relationship of forces among classes and class fractions," as a "strategic field and process of interconnecting power networks," including the organization of "processes of thought" in the context of state discourse.[43] In a more explicitly Foucaultian formulation, Timothy Mitchell argues that the presence of the state derives from the "complex of social practices" that constitute modern forms of "governmentality"—the dispersed political rationalities and disciplinary technologies that are deployed locally "around particular [social] issues," ranging from crime to public health to working-class radicalism, and institutionalized in prisons, clinics, schools, asylums, workhouses, welfare programs, and factories. From this perspective, the modern state emerges as a "structural effect," which appears to be a discrete entity removed from other realms of economic and social life. The boundary separating the state and other realms of economic and social life should be viewed not as a "boundary between two discrete entities but as a line drawn internally, within the network of institutional mechanisms through which a social and political order is maintained."[44] Consequently, the state is integral to the formation of workplace regimes, markets, modes of regulation and "governance," and regimes of capital accumulation that structure economic practices; it is not a freestanding body that intervenes in their "normal" workings from outside.[45] This cultural turn in state theory offers important insights for the study of political culture in the Saar region, where the state owned most of the coal mines, shaped the structures of industrial work by means of welfare and regulatory policy, and provided the legal frameworks for public political activity. It also allows new perspectives on the transition from paternalism to corporatism during the decade before 1914 and on the connections between state (re)formation and the development of corporatist ideological projects in Germany after 1914.

The Saar Region

The presence of the state, large-scale manufacturing, and a regional public sphere dominated by some of Germany's most powerful industrialists suggest the possibility of exploring developments in the Saar as a point of departure for understanding some of the wider social and political transformations of imperial Germany and early twentieth-century Europe. The Saar, one of Germany's leading industrial regions, witnessed dramatic

increases in the size and output of its coal mining, iron and steel production, and glass manufacturing after 1870. Its concentration of large-scale industry, increasingly expanding unskilled and semiskilled labor forces, paternalist disciplinary and social policy regimes, and managerial and organizational changes after 1900 had parallels in other parts of Germany and Europe, but the political-cultural trajectory of employer politics in the Saar region during the prewar decade was also distinctive in its systematic elaboration and precocious development. In this way, it anticipated subsequent corporatist political-economic realignments in the rest of Germany and Europe during the early twentieth century.

The Saar Valley was once an isolated agrarian enclave, ruled by the Count of Nassau-Saarbrücken before the French invasion and occupation from 1792 to 1814. After the defeat of Napoleon, it was divided between Prussia and Bavaria, though the bulk of the coalfields went to Prussia. The Prussian state took over administration of nearly all Saar mines, which were placed under the direction of the Prussian Mining Office (Bergwerksdirektion). That office, located in Saarbrücken, was subordinated to the Upper Prussian Mining Administration (Oberbergamt) in Bonn and ultimately responsible to the Prussian Ministry of Public Works (Ministerium für öffentliche Arbeiten) in Berlin. If the mining industry nearly collapsed from the loss of French markets after 1815, the creation of the German Customs Union in 1834 opened up southern markets for Saar coal and led to a dramatic increase of coal output from the region. This occurred after the 1840s, when the Mining Office turned to a policy of labor recruitment that attracted increasing numbers of peasant migrants from the surrounding region, but especially after the 1850s and 1860s, when state officials introduced a series of economic reforms that removed restrictions on managerial prerogative and the "free" movement of labor, including the miners' traditional privileges and corporate or "estate" status.[46] In 1875, the Prussian Mining Office was the largest industrial enterprise in the region and employed nearly 23,000 miners. That figure rose to 30,376 in 1890 and to 42,418 in 1900. By 1910, its twelve "inspectorates" or collieries employed 53,055 miners. The Mining Office's production rose in similarly continuous fashion: in 1875, Saar mining was producing 4.5 million tons of coal annually; in 1900, just under 9.4 million tons; and in 1910, over 10.8 million tons.[47] By 1913, when its collieries were producing 18 million tons of coal, Saar mining constituted 8.6 percent of the coal industry in Germany.

The increasing output of the Saar mines took place within an expanding regional network of industrial concentration, involving especially the

iron and steel mills and glass and ceramics foundries, with their demand for coke, as well as evolving regional markets in a range of industrial products. After French authorities privatized the iron and steel industry in the early nineteenth century, ownership of the major mills passed to the bourgeois Stumm family, originally from the Hunsrück region. These mills were located in Neunkirchen, Halberg, and Dillingen and employed only about 1,100 workers in 1846.[48] In 1852, the construction of a regional rail network made ore from Lorraine accessible to local factories and increased the efficiency of the shipment of iron products out of the Saar, enabling the subsequent expansion of the iron and steel industry. When Carl Ferdinand Stumm became a codirector of the firm Gebrüder Stumm in 1858, there was only one competitor in the region, the Burbach steelworks, under Belgian and Luxembourgeois ownership. But in 1873, another local industrial family, the Röchlings, built a steelworks in Völklingen, and by 1878, the Saar iron and steel industry employed 5,627 workers.[49] In subsequent decades, despite temporary downturns, the Saar iron and steel industry expanded dramatically: the number of workers employed by the five main concerns—the Stumm steelworks in Neunkirchen, the Röchling concerns in Völklingen, the Burbach steelworks in Malstatt-Burbach, the Brebach steelworks (formerly of Halberg), and the Dillingen steelworks—rose from 11,932 in 1890 to 17,830 in 1900 and 24,943 in 1910. Overall output of raw iron increased from 105,350 tons of raw iron in 1878 to 442,824 in 1890, 554,597 in 1900, and 1,197,688 in 1910. By 1913, the iron and steel mills in the Saar were producing 11.2 percent of all raw iron and 14.5 percent of all raw steel in Germany.[50] These developments were paralleled by the growth of a third major industry, glass and ceramics manufacturing. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, nearly all of the glass foundries were purchased by a handful of bourgeois families—the Vopelius, Reppert, Wentzel, Köhl, and Wagner families—and the ceramics industry was led by the Villeroy and Boch families, which joined their enterprises in Wallerfangen and Mettlach in 1842. By 1860, Saar glass foundries employed 1,500 workers; these figures rose to 2,500 in 1880 and 5,000 in 1906, when the largest concerns had workforces of some 250 employees. Its overall production figures never came close to the coal and steel industries, but the Saar glass industry was responsible for nearly one-quarter of all glass production in Germany by 1913.[51]

By the last third of the nineteenth century, heavy industry dominated the social landscape of the Saar Valley. The increasing pace and scale of industrial expansion and concentration produced larger and larger enter-

prises, and the major branches of Saar heavy industry employed increasing numbers of semiskilled and unskilled laborers. Consequently, the population of the Prussian Saar rose from 176,158 in 1843 to 652,294 in 1910.[52] It was concentrated in the urban industrial triangle bounded by Neunkirchen, Saarbrücken, and Völklingen and was disproportionately proletarian in relation to national averages. By 1909, Saarbrücken and St. Johann merged with Malstatt-Burbach to form a single large city [*Grossstadt*] with a population of just over one hundred thousand. Smaller industrial towns like Dudweiler and Malstatt-Burbach also witnessed rapid growth and highly mobile populations from the 1850s to 1914, though many *Saarländer* lived in small to medium-sized communities of between two thousand and thirty-two thousand inhabitants, and the region was home to a large number of so-called worker-peasants during this period.[53] Nevertheless, by the 1870s, few inhabitants of the region remained unaffected by the sprawling infrastructure of collieries, iron and steel concerns, metalworking plants, and glassmaking and ceramics foundries, as well as the communications networks (railroad, canals, and thoroughfares), municipal institutions and services, and communities that developed in their proximity to facilitate their operation.

These transformations helped to forge the distinctive political geography of the region, which was anchored in the local and regional dependencies of "company towns," notable politics, and the prominence of economic and political figures of national importance. The two leading political parties of the Saar, the National Liberal Party and the Free Conservative Party, were led by local industrialist notables from the iron and steel, glass and ceramics, machine-making, and coal industries and were challenged only by the Center Party after the 1890s. In this context, Saar industrialist notables attained levels of national preeminence and political influence that far exceeded the relatively small geographical size of the Saar after 1870: Stumm, a CVDI leader whose businesses extended to coal and ore fields and steelworks in Lorraine and Luxembourg, was a Free Conservative member of the Reichstag from 1867 to 1881 and from 1889 to 1901, a member of the Prussian Landtag from 1867 to 1870 and of the Prussian Upper House from 1882 to 1901, and a personal friend of the kaiser; Richard Vopelius was a Free Conservative member of the Prussian Landtag from 1876 to 1879 and from 1882 to 1903 and was chairman of the CVDI from 1904 to 1908; and Karl Röchling, owner of the Röchling steel concerns in Völklingen, was one of Germany's leading industrialists, with possessions in Lorraine, Aachen, and the Ruhr. As the leaders of regional

employer associations and as national spokesmen for German heavy industry, Saar industrialists and their representatives were able to influence the formulation of state welfare and industrial policy during the 1870s and 1880s and to set the tone for much of the proposed antisocialist and antiunion legislation of the "Stumm era" during the middle to late 1890s.

After 1900, when new challenges from trade unions and social reformers brought on a crisis of paternalist hegemony and when local industrial enterprises entered into a process of technical-organizational transformation, a new generation of Saar employers and industry representatives of national prominence came to the fore. Alexander Tille, a former university professor and assistant to the chairman of the CVDI before he took over the Saar industry organizations in 1903, became the most prolific spokesmen for heavy industry in imperial Germany. Max Schlenker, Tille's replacement after 1912, became a leading industrial representative before the First World War and, after 1925, the managing director of the influential Langnamverein (Association for the Protection of the Common Economic Interests of the Rhineland and Westphalia), the main employer organization in the Ruhr. And Hermann Röchling, a son of Karl Röchling and technical director of the Röchling steelworks in Völklingen after 1901, became a leader of the national company union movement as member of the executive council of the German League of Company Unions (Bund Deutscher Werkvereine), leader of the German-Saarland People's Party (Deutsch-Saarländische Volkspartei) during the 1920s and early 1930s, and a leading Nazi industrialist after 1936. In these capacities, Saar employers and their representatives became the most systematic exponents of corporatist economic-social and political-constitutional change after 1908, up to and including attacks on universal male suffrage and the parliamentary system itself. They were thus crucial to the formulation of a new "fascist" ideological paradigm of industrial social order, with important consequences for the subsequent histories of industrial relations and political culture during the Weimar and Nazi eras.