



Volume 4. Forging an Empire: Bismarckian Germany, 1866-1890

Occupation of Fathers of Illegitimate Children Born in Leipzig (1884 and 1891)

In 1870-1871, 10-12% of all births in Germany were illegitimate; five years later this figure stood at about 8-10%, roughly where it remained until 1914. As was the case for centuries, illegitimate births occurred more frequently in garrison towns and seaports. Other differences are more difficult to explain, including those based on religious confession or the degree of urbanization. The tables in this and the following document indicate the social class from which parents of illegitimate children were drawn. Craftsmen [*Handwerker*] were over-represented among Leipzig fathers, and this did not change much between 1884 and 1891. By contrast, the proportion of civil servants with illegitimate children was halved over the same period, while the proportion of factory workers in that position doubled. The table in the next document shows that mothers of illegitimate children born in Berlin were most likely to be workers, although occupational data are missing for many other mothers. Although such statistics provide one gauge of sexual behavior among different classes, they say more about the economic situation of social groups than about their individual or collective moral behavior.

Occupation of Fathers of Illegitimate Children Born in Leipzig (1884 and 1891)

	In 1884 (%)	In 1891 (%)
Craftsmen	29.9	28.2
Merchants, traders	14.3	11.1
Market helpers, manual workers	9.2	15.0
Carpenters, bricklayers, coachmen	7.1	10.9
Servants, waiters	6.7	3.7
Soldiers	5.9	7.9
Civil servants	5.9	2.7
Factory workers, cigar makers, printers, etc.	4.6	9.5
Teachers, scholars, physicians, lawyers	4.2	0.9
Students	2.9	2.8
Sergeants, sergeant-majors, non-commissioned officers, officers	2.5	2.9
Economists	2.5	1.8
Artists	2.1	0.9
Persons of independent means	1.6	0.7
Restaurateurs	–	0.7

Source: Max Taube, *Der Schutz der unehelichen Kinder in Leipzig* [*The Protection of Illegitimate Children in Leipzig*]. Leipzig, 1893, pp. 16, 17, 33.

Original German data reprinted in Gerhard A. Ritter and Jürgen Kocka, eds., *Deutsche Sozialgeschichte 1870-1914. Dokumente und Skizzen* [*German Social History 1870-1914. Documents and Sketches*], 3rd ed. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1982, p. 251.

Translation: Erwin Fink