THE UNEMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYABLE.

THE WELFARE STATE *and the* 'DEVIANT POOR' IN EUROPE, 1870–1933

edited by

BEATE ALTHAMMER
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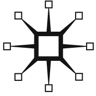

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1
Introduction: Poverty and Deviance in the Era of the Emerging Welfare State

Beate Althammer

During recent decades, the problem of 'social exclusion' has been widely discussed in Europe. Since the early 1990s, when the term first came to prominence in France, it has rapidly gained currency as a key word in a transnational debate on the new challenges faced by highly developed Western societies – a debate that prompted the European Union to proclaim 2010 the 'European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion'.[1] Although modern welfare states have produced a level of affluence unprecedented in history, symptoms of erosion are apparent. The oft-deplored crisis of the welfare state has many different facets, and many causes have been identified. Yet there is a widely-shared assumption that economic factors such as high rates of unemployment and the financial overburdening of social insurance systems cannot alone be blamed. Rather, social exclusion has a cultural side as well. The established mechanisms of social inclusion seem especially to be failing to have an effect on groups on the margins of society that are not only materially disadvantaged but are also in some way 'deviant'. The welfare state aims at inclusion, but has difficulty including groups who do not think, behave and live as the 'normal' citizen does. So social exclusion is, at least in part, related to a (perceived) lack of adaptation to dominant cultural attitudes.

This assumption has been expressed in various forms, often, of course, stimulated by political objectives. In Britain, the justice secretary Kenneth Clarke's diagnosis of the August 2011 riots as due to 'a feral underclass' lacking 'an attitude that shares in the values of mainstream society' may serve as one example;[2] in Germany, the controversy about immigrants' relationship to a 'guiding culture' (*Leitkultur*), stoked up by the Christian Democratic politician Friedrich Merz in 2000,[3] is another. Although such catchphrases say as much about the worldviews of the

speakers as they do about the problems addressed, they highlight the fact that social inclusion is, and always has been, related to norms and attitudes. Societies depend on shared core values, and they constantly wrestle with redefining these values and with achieving the conformity they need. Welfare states, indeed, aim not only at ensuring the material security of their citizens, but also at fostering the appropriate habits and cultural dispositions. Because inclusion is a multidimensional process, welfare states have developed highly differentiated institutions of education, prevention, intervention, assistance, care, therapy and coercion to mould individuals to their requirements. They do this for the sake of the individuals concerned and for the sake of society itself. Sometimes, however, these basically inclusive institutions fail, allowing equally multidimensional processes of social exclusion to evolve. The outcome of such processes that is most feared is the formation of an underclass in which poverty, unemployment, crime and a general defiance of the *Leitkultur* have become chronic.[4]

Recent debates on the crisis symptoms of the welfare state have also contributed to a revival of interest in its historical origins. The ways in which societies perceive, discuss and deal with problems of social inclusion and exclusion reveal much about their self-image; further, they are, to a considerable degree, shaped by deep-rooted traditions. Traces of ancient and medieval Christian notions of poverty can still be detected in current European discourses, as can the persistent early modern differentiation between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. In the decades around 1900, however, social thinking and social policies entered a decisive new stage. For the first time, the state began to take on direct responsibility for the well-being of all its citizens, particularly the poorer ones, thus initiating a dynamic process of expanding government activity. The elimination of destitution became closely linked to ideas of progress, modern civilization, national strength and competitiveness. With the democratization of political rights, the idea gained ground that social rights existed too. Yet at the same time as large amounts of money and energy began to be invested in welfare programmes, pressures on the poor increased. Inclusion through social welfare depended on their complying with more demanding norms, since social rights implied extended obligations towards the nation. But how was the state to deal with those citizens who would not, or could not, live up to the standards it expected? Did the ultimate goal of inclusion justify measures of force? Were there, perhaps, individuals who definitely could not be included because of their inability to adapt to societal norms? And

if there were, what should be done with them? Such questions have always accompanied social policies, but with the rise of the welfare state they became much more fundamental. They referred to groups at the margins of society, yet they were not at all marginal to the discourses and practices of welfare policies. Rather, the 'deviant poor' were a troublesome touchstone for the essentially inclusive self-image of modern European societies.

This book discusses the shifting perceptions, representations and treatments of the 'deviant poor' in the crucial formative phase of modern welfare policies, between the 1870s and the 1930s, that in many ways set the course for future developments. The chapters are based on papers given at an international conference at the German Historical Institute, London in February 2010, which was organized jointly with the Collaborative Research Centre 'Strangers and Poor People: Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion from Classical Antiquity to the Present Day' at the University of Trier, Germany. Much has already been written about the founding period of European welfare regimes, but this book opens up distinctively new perspectives by focusing on the margins of society associated with deviance. The period under consideration was generally an era of social optimism, of rising living standards and a widespread belief that the masses should, and could, be integrated into the nation. With regard to the deviant fringes, however, things seemed less clear, and society's ambivalent dealings with them form the common theme of the case studies presented in the following chapters. In geographical scope these studies extend from the Netherlands, Germany and Austria to England, Scotland and Ireland; and some of them use an explicitly comparative and transnational approach. Although various national particularities become apparent, the book generally underlines similarities and entanglements. The invention of modern welfare policies was a common European achievement, and the intellectual deliberations about social rights and obligations, norms and deviance, as well as the possibilities of inclusion and their limitations were basically transnational ones.

The remaining pages of this introduction attempt to provide a framework for reading the chapters that follow. The first section offers a brief discussion of the theoretical concepts of 'deviance', 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. The second surveys the historiography of European welfare policies in the era around 1900 and the role the 'deviant' poor have so far played in it. Finally, a third section outlines how the volume is structured.

Concepts of deviance, inclusion and exclusion

'Deviance', 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' were not common expressions in the time period under consideration: they are more recent sociological concepts. Nevertheless, they prove useful for historical analysis. 'Deviance' basically designates a difference in relation to a norm. The term was coined in the 1960s as a generic concept for a wide variety of attitudes, behaviours and lifestyles that are socially banned, threatened with punishment, or at the least disapproved of, because they depart from the 'normal' in an unacceptable manner. Violations of the criminal law are covered by the concept, but also offences against unwritten codes of conduct in various social settings. From the 1960s onward, sociological deviance theory has evolved into many sub-theories that offer greatly differing, and often conflicting, explanations.[5] Roughly, these can be divided into two camps. The 'positivist' perspective, rooted in early, turn-of-the-century sociology, conceives deviance to be an objectively existing measurable social fact and explores its causes and consequences. The alternative 'constructionist' perspective, which thrived especially from the 1960s to the 1980s, understands deviance as a phenomenon not existing per se, but produced by societal definitions attached to perceived differences; and it enquires into the symbolic interactions that result in, and from, such 'labelling'. While the positivist approach starts its analysis at the point where some type of deviance is detected as a social problem, the constructivist one asks how this deviance came to be regarded as a social problem at all and how sets of knowledge work on the interpretation of actions. Positivists also see norms as societal facts – although they may be disputed and altered over time. Constructivists, by contrast, ask how and why norms become meaningful in specific situational contexts.

Within the positivist camp, two broad lines of thought may be discerned. The first searches for causes of deviance in societal structures and processes. Emile Durkheim, who linked increases in crime and destructive behaviour to states of *anomie*, the erosion of norms in times of rapid change, was the major forerunner of this school of thought. In Durkheim's structural–functionalist theory, a high intensity of norm-breaking points to a pathological state of society; but deviance has, nonetheless, a basically stabilizing function because it helps society clarify and reinforce its rules. This insight has also inspired constructivists, since it recognizes that societies may stigmatize outsiders in order to tighten their inner cohesion. The second positivist line of thought searches for the causes of deviance not in the pathologies and

necessities of society, but in the pathologies of individuals and their immediate environments, especially the family. In recent decades, micro-sociological, psychological and neurobiological approaches have tended to gain ground in deviance theory, thus putting the focus more on individual offenders than on the wider societal contingencies of norms and norm-breaking.

Sociologists try to prove the validity of their favoured theories and disprove others. This is not generally the aim of historians and is certainly not the aim of this book. Consequently we do not advocate any specific version of deviance theory. Instead we adopt the sociological concept of deviance in a more summary sense, and do so for two purposes. The first is to integrate different types of norm-deviation which historiography usually treats separately. Of the many conceivable types of deviance, the contributions in this book deal with three: (1) transgression of penal laws (delinquency or crime); (2) non-compliance with fundamental socio-moral norms – primarily people's obligation to work and to support their families; and (3) divergence from mental normality (insanity or 'mental deficiency'). These types cannot be strictly separated in any in-depth consideration of the ways social issues were discussed in the decades around 1900. In fact, social and penal experts of the time were convinced that delinquency, 'workshyness' and mental abnormality were, to a considerable extent, overlapping phenomena. To express their supposed common ground, they coined terms such as 'anti-sociality' or 'a-sociality'. In historical exploration, however, the more neutral expression 'deviance' is certainly to be preferred. It bundles various phenomena under one generic term but keeps its distance from the contemporary language whose workings we analyse.

Secondly, sociological deviance theory is useful because it offers interpretative models that can be adopted to categorize the manifold interpretations that circulated in the historical contexts under scrutiny. As outlined, there are three main models. One explains deviance in the light of societal strains and imbalances; another focuses on individual and familial factors; and the third points to the production of norm-breakers through labelling. In rudimentary form, these explanatory models were already being used by commentators in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when they tried to make sense of the social problems they observed. The breakdown of established bonds and normative controls was a widespread concern among Europeans who experienced the upheavals of rapid industrialization and urbanization. Many were also aware of the strains produced by sharp material inequalities and believed that these threatened social cohesion. Structural

interpretations of poverty and deviance were the main incentive for turning to new, structurally oriented welfare policies aiming primarily at prevention.

Focusing on the individual and his/her micro-environment was a more traditional approach. Poor child-rearing, the bad influence of 'depraved' relatives, and a general lack of moral standards – factors like these had long played a dominant role in explaining poverty and the vices associated with it. Many historians have claimed that the explanatory model based on the individual was largely replaced by the structural one in the course of modernization, and that this shift is what most characterized the birth of modern welfare states. Yet, so far as marginal groups of society were concerned, such a shift is not at all evident. Moreover, individualizing explanations were supported by the rising natural sciences, which seemed to prove that character defects were often rooted in a person's biological constitution. Individualizing approaches were able to explain why preventive welfare policies did not succeed in eliminating the deviant margins, and therefore they remained attractive.

Constructionist interpretations of deviance were much less common among social experts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but they were not completely lacking. Many reformers were well aware of the devastating effects labelling processes could have on the future prospects of individuals. Inappropriate forms of assistance and inappropriate methods of punishment, they knew, could mark people so deeply that both their reputations and their self-esteem were ruined; as a result, they could be pushed even further into deviant ways of life. In particular, the stigmatizing effect of institutions – prisons, workhouses, borstals, asylums – was often deplored: instead of 'adjusting' their inmates to social norms, as was their intended goal, they frequently produced only hardened offenders. At the same time, however, such stigmatizing effects seemed essential because they served as a deterrent and thus stabilized the borderline between conformity and deviance. In their different ways, both lines of argument showed an awareness of the functions and mechanisms of social labelling.

For the most part, those who reasoned and wrote about poverty, delinquency and crime in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had no grand theoretical ambitions. They were experts in a more practical sense – poor relief administrators, philanthropists, prison chaplains, police officers and judges. Sociology was still in its infancy around 1900. Jurisprudence was certainly long established, but it was more concerned with systematizing and interpreting law than with understanding why

law-breaking occurred. Economics, the academic discipline that had so decisively shaped perceptions of poverty issues in a previous phase, was shifting its focus away from the indigent and marginal. Medicine and psychiatry, by contrast, took an increasing interest in these groups, laying claim to an explanatory competence that went well beyond the diagnosis of specific illnesses. And, at the intersection of medical science and penal theory, the new discipline of criminology emerged. Above all, the public and the voluntary agencies involved practically in dealing with social problems expanded rapidly from the late nineteenth century onward. It was mainly the staff of these agencies who generated the discourse about the roots of deviance, drawing selectively on traditional beliefs, everyday experience and knowledge of various scientific disciplines. Deviance theory can help bring some order into the wide array of opinions that were voiced, and it can help us detect fundamental shifts in attitudes. What makes the concept particularly interesting is that it does not focus either on the centre or the margins of society, but rather on the interdependency between the two. Here deviance theory is closely related to sociological concepts of inclusion and exclusion, which have supplemented and partly replaced the former within scholarly debates in the past two decades.

In the broadest sense, declaring someone deviant is already a form of exclusion: it asserts that an individual does not come within the boundaries of normality. Yet, actual societal reactions to diagnosed deviance can vary greatly. On an imaginary scale of possible reactions, one extreme would be radical forms of elimination from society such as expulsion, permanent incarceration or execution. The opposite end of the scale is less obvious: it could be either unconditional tolerance or positive action intended to reassimilate deviants into mainstream society through education, assistance, therapy or rehabilitative modes of punishment. But measures aimed at re-inclusion do not always attain their goal, and they can even result in further exclusion, as can tolerance that turns into indifference. Moreover, alleged deviance is not the only starting point for processes of exclusion: being deprived of essential resources such as paid employment or decent housing can easily set off an alternative vicious circle that ends with an individual being marked as deviant. The recent sociology of social exclusion, indeed, usually begins with an analysis of material deprivation. While in its early days – the 1960s and 1970s – this branch of research was primarily interested in minority maladjusted groups on the margins of affluent Western societies, it has subsequently shifted its focus to the core of these societies.[6] What has largely preoccupied sociologists of social

exclusion since the early 1990s is the apparent increasing insecurity of integral and 'normal' parts of the population, faced by rising rates of unemployment, demographic change and painful welfare state reforms.

Just like theories of deviance, theories of inclusion and exclusion are heterogeneous. The terms 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' have varying meanings in the various models of different schools of the social sciences, not to mention how they are used in political and everyday language, where they have become popular too. A broad range of social disadvantage has been studied under the term 'exclusion', not least because exclusion is generally taken as a multidimensional phenomenon: it frequently involves material poverty, but also implies a lack of chances, capabilities and relationships. Exclusion has an objective, measurable side, but also a subjective one of experiences and feelings. It can be the result of deliberate actions or the unintended side effect of anonymous mechanisms. Exclusion can be abrupt and definitive, or it can come upon a person more subtly and flexibly. Individuals can be victims of exclusion, but they can also choose self-exclusion. The concept of social exclusion is, in sum, highly versatile; and in current debates it is sometimes extended in use to be a catch-all term almost interchangeable with 'social inequality'. The stellar career of the more dramatic term 'exclusion' may partly reflect a growing uneasiness among intellectuals about a core dilemma of modern European societies: on the one hand, these societies cherish the ideals of competition and meritocracy; on the other, it is hard to justify the reality that, even if organized fairly, competition must necessarily produce losers as well as winners.

It would be anachronistic to transfer such an all-encompassing concept of social exclusion to bygone times in which sharp social inequalities were assumed as an obvious and not necessarily unacceptable fact. In the decades around 1900, the main preoccupation of social thinkers and reformers was not that a previously attained high level of inclusion might decline, but rather the question of how a new level of inclusion might be achieved by attenuating, but not abolishing, social inequalities. The general expectation of the times was that this was going to be achieved through expanding social welfare measures. The emerging European welfare states were not indiscriminately inclusive, however. They were nation-based, and hence drew boundaries between citizens and aliens; they also drew boundaries between the respectable working classes, who seemed ready for full inclusion, and a 'residuum' that seemed to lack the qualifications required. This volume deals with the second set of boundaries: it explores how distinctions between 'normal'

and 'deviant' citizens were constructed and negotiated, and how they shifted through socio-political discourses and practices in the era between 1870 and the 1930s.

We do not claim that everyone marked as deviant suffered from social exclusion. Strictly speaking, it was impossible to exclude citizens totally from the European societies under consideration – unless they had committed capital crimes, which are not within the scope of this volume. Rather, we are interested in the complex interrelationships between reforming aspirations of achieving social inclusion, diagnoses of deviance, and partial or temporary exclusions – although we also ask if, and to what extent, total exclusion was considered an option. We understand inclusion and exclusion to be a conceptual pair, and this helps us analyse the junctions and turning points of different strategies for improving society. By looking more closely at the exclusionary side of early welfare states, this volume broadens our knowledge of a crucial phase of socio-political modernization, stamped by optimistic reform enthusiasm, scientific faith in progress and endeavours to humanize traditional pauper policies – but also by pessimistic fears of degeneration and disorder, which provoked calls for more rigorous intervention into the lives of the 'deviant' poor.

Histories of poverty, welfare and deviance

For several decades after the Second World War, the development of the modern welfare states in Europe could largely be told as a success story. This story was usually told as one of progressive social inclusion, which began in the late nineteenth century, when the working classes were first granted minimal protection against the main hazards of life, and continued with successive initiatives greatly increasing the material security, health, education and general prospects of all citizens. Of course, changing economic contexts were an essential precondition: without major growth in national wealth, welfare for the masses would not have been possible. But the master narrative of the welfare state has also been told as a story of shifting perceptions of poverty: instead of blaming the vices of the poor, as in earlier times, progressive social reformers identified structural and environmental causes. As a consequence, countermeasures moved away from moralizing and the disciplining of individuals, towards reducing social risks and compensating for social disadvantage. Moreover, welfare was gradually acknowledged to be an individual right, constituting an inherent part of modern democratic citizenship.

The decades around 1900 have commonly been identified as the take-off phase in this development. In this era, the longstanding principles of poor relief, granting only a minimum of assistance to the completely destitute under conditions deliberately intended to deter, came under massive attack. British reformers campaigned for a 'break-up of the Poor Law', and this slogan could also sum up the general thrust of many German reform initiatives.[7] Innovative social welfare programmes were designed to prevent workers and their families from falling into abject poverty and into dependency on traditional poor relief with its harsh rules and degrading stigma. Historians of the welfare state have frequently focused on the social security systems established at the national level; and the active socio-political interventionism of state governments was indeed a new phenomenon that still provoked many objections. This interventionism also manifested itself in the regulation of labour conditions and the labour market to a degree that went far beyond what political economists of earlier decades had considered prudent. But the state was not the sole progenitor of the welfare state; local governments and a host of voluntary and professional organizations also participated in the laying of its foundations. The large cities, in particular, became laboratories for new public services and welfare provisions that led the way for later national policies. In short: the decades around 1900 were 'a Progressive Age'[8] in which the Social Question ranked extremely high in public awareness and in which enormous efforts were made to improve the living conditions of the masses.

In many respects these developments were similar throughout the industrializing world. At their root lay common experiences of socio-economic transformations, in the light of which classical laissez-faire liberalism lost its persuasiveness. Among these experiences were the upheavals caused by unleashed capitalist industrialization, the infrastructural problems of rapidly growing cities and industrial agglomerations, and the instability of the market economy, which produced dramatic crises, such as the crash in the mid 1870s. The rise of mass labour movements and of more or less democratic elections also goaded the ruling classes into rethinking traditional social policies. Moreover, the emergence of new scientific disciplines and the expansion of scientifically trained elites of 'experts' fostered an intellectual atmosphere in which it became conceivable that social issues could be solved in a systematic manner.[9]

Common underlying developments, however, can only partly explain the general shift to interventionist social policies in the era around 1900; cross-national transfers of socio-political ideas must also be taken

into account. Social reformers in the leading industrial countries were acutely aware that their neighbours were confronted with similar challenges to their own, and there was a great eagerness to learn about how other nations coped with them. In 1897, the editor of the new French social reform journal *Revue Philanthropique* even declared that 'no science is more international than that of welfare'.[10]

The comparative history of welfare states is, by now, well established. The similarities and differences between the social policies of many countries have been carefully analysed in the last few decades, as well as their entanglements. But the German and the British examples – which also figure most prominently in this volume – are certainly among those that have attracted the keenest attention.[11] This is no coincidence. Great Britain and the German Empire were the two economically most advanced and powerful European nations of the late nineteenth century; and they had become fierce rivals since Britain saw its previously uncontested lead in the world massively threatened by the rapidly industrializing continental newcomer. The competition between the two nations also gave their respective social policies a special relevance, since a healthy and productive population was increasingly regarded as a crucial factor for augmenting national efficiency and strength. German and British social reformers observed each other carefully, and their initiatives also became points of orientation for reformers in many other countries. At the same time, Britain and Germany have frequently been viewed – both by contemporaries and by historians – as representing two alternative policy models. The German Empire was, among other things, the pioneer of state-controlled, compulsory insurance schemes for workers against the risks of sickness, industrial accidents, old age and invalidity – a concept widely and controversially debated from the 1880s onwards. For many foreign observers of social issues, Germany was an admired source of inspiration, while others denounced its policy model as authoritarian and intrusive. Britain, on the other hand, was often regarded as a liberal alternative, although its status as a role model faded on the eve of World War I, when it also set out on a path of obligatory state-regulated insurance.[12] This path eventually became the one most taken in twentieth-century European welfare states, and it has generally been depicted as extremely successful in guaranteeing an unprecedented degree of social inclusion.

From the start, there have also been more critical perspectives on these developments. Many historical studies have recounted the political and class conflicts involved in the making of modern welfare policies, showing how hard the working classes had to fight before they

were granted full inclusion in the nation. The German model of welfare state development has come in for particular criticism. It has frequently been described as being thoroughly conservative in its motivation, and some historians have even gone so far as to denounce the German social insurance legislation of the 1880s as a ploy inspired by industrial employers, and actually detrimental to workers' interests.[13] Taking a theoretically more sophisticated perspective, other interpretations point to the intrinsic interrelationship between 'social security' and 'social discipline',[14] and this approach has gained ground considerably since the 1970s. Although more routinely employed in critiques of traditional poverty policies – particularly of early modern innovations such as the workhouse – the paradigm of 'discipline' has been applied to modern social work and social security systems as well. Seen within this theoretical framework, modern welfare policies developed techniques, both more subtle and more effective, to adjust individuals to social norms. The problematic potentials of modern welfare policies have, however, been exposed most drastically of all in studies on the origins of Nazi 'racial hygiene'. Although there is still controversy over the exact degree to which continuities can be traced, research of the last three decades has clearly shown that the radically discriminatory National Socialist concept of welfare aimed at weeding out 'strange' and 'inferior' elements from the German *Volkskörper* (body of the nation) cannot be understood without taking into account earlier developments. And it has also become clear that National Socialist methods of 'solving' social problems did not derive solely from German conservative–authoritarian traditions, but had roots in distinctly modern and 'progressive' visions of improving society.[15]

The troubling insight that progressive welfare policies are not necessarily linked to liberal and humanitarian values but might, in some circumstances, turn into a murderous policy of selection between 'desirable' and 'undesirable' elements of the population has greatly increased interest in the history of modern biomedical sciences and social technologies such as hygiene, psychiatry and eugenics. These sciences and technologies were, of course, not specific to Germany, and the international dimensions of the eugenic movement have been especially closely scrutinized in the last few decades.[16] It is now well recognized that eugenic thinking flourished equally in liberal and democratic societies such as Britain, the United States, Switzerland and Scandinavia, and that even left-wing reformers were fascinated by the idea of bettering society by improving the biological stock of humankind. The same can be said of modern criminology, which drew heavily on psychiatric

and eugenic concepts (though comparative and transnational studies are still rather rare in this field). Social reformism or progressivism, as has become widely accepted by now, is not free of ambivalence. It was, and is, compatible with most political ideologies. It fits in with divergent visions of a good society and with varying degrees of readiness to encroach on individual liberty.

Against the backdrop of these critical research approaches, the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion in the formative phase of modern welfare states become quite evident. Progressive social policies aimed at including the masses in the nation, while developing new methods for treating those who deviated from images of normality. Innovative social programmes, such as the new insurance schemes, defined the standards for gauging what was a 'normal' and nationally 'valuable' working life in a new way. Those who failed to meet these standards – who fell through or evaded the safety nets – became all the more conspicuous as a problematic and burdensome residuum. The treatment of these 'deviant' people could go as far as radical exclusion by forced sterilization, euthanasia or outright extermination, although this was the exception. Usually, deviance was treated much more subtly and in a less draconian way than in earlier times, as the criminal law reforms of many countries in the decades around 1900 show. The main strategy of modern welfare states was not radical exclusion, but socio-therapeutic intervention designed to make the burdensome groups function in the manner expected of 'normal' citizens. However, there were potential tipping points at which the curative aim could turn into elimination.

Despite this trend, it must be borne in mind that modern social policies developed only very gradually, and that, in everyday life, both the harshness of traditional poor relief and the sporadic generosity of traditional charity often remained much more tangible realities than the bold visions of social reformers. What is more, even most reformers were loath to abandon established principles altogether, believing that the harshness of poor relief was a deterrent still needed to ensure the labouring classes did not drop out of a 'normal' working existence.

The birth of modern welfare policies as a supplement to traditional poor relief, and the rise of scientifically based psychiatry, eugenics and criminology, were simultaneous developments in the decades around 1900. Each has been studied closely; but the links and interdependencies between them have not yet been sufficiently explored. It has, of course, been noted how a background of fears of degeneration and national decline formed something like a common denominator. But the historiographies of poverty and poor relief, welfare state formation,

crime and criminology, and psychiatry are nevertheless still mostly written separately, and they have all developed their own specific methods, approaches and master narratives. The recent history of poverty and poor relief is strongly oriented towards micro-studies that explore local interactions and individual experiences; the history of the welfare state is still basically told as a narrative of social inclusion that transformed potential paupers into citizens; the histories of psychiatry, eugenics, criminology and specialized fields of social work have each turned to analysis of specific 'epistemic communities' and their respective target groups, often with a major focus on discourse, 'discipline' and the exclusionary potentials of modern social interventionism. The purpose of this volume is to bring these different fields of research together in a multifaceted approach to the history of the emerging welfare state. It uses the concepts of deviance, inclusion and exclusion as a unifying framework.

Structure of the volume

The starting point for the project this book represents was the hypothesis that the 'deviant poor' were marginal in society but that they did not constitute a marginal issue in the construction of early welfare states. Contemporary Poor Law administrators, social reformers and legislators perceived them as a central problem because they supposedly hindered social progress. The notion that the undeserving poor lived at the expense of the truly deserving and thus undermined the whole system of poor relief was, of course, very old. With the rise of modern welfare policies this notion was gradually transformed, but the core assumption that the deviant had the power to obstruct the functioning of social institutions remained essentially the same. In fact, many observers in the early twentieth century explicitly declared that controlling the deviant was a prerequisite for the further evolution of welfare. The British government official William Dawson, for example, expounding in 1910 on the topic of 'social parasites' such as 'loafers', proclaimed: 'Only when they cease to obstruct the path of the social reformer will it be possible to view in its true proportions and relationships the momentous question of society's obligation to the unemployed and the helpless poor.'[17] Similarly, with a more medico-scientific thrust, the German psychiatrist Karl Wilmanns argued:

> The more the state and public welfare does for those blameless workers who are physically and mentally high grade [*vollwertig*, of full

> value] and are unemployed because of age, illness, crises or bad business situations, the less possible it is to avoid withdrawing welfare from the low-grade elements [*minderwertig*, of inferior value] who, for some reason, work only as an exception or not at all and live mostly or constantly on alms, institutionalizing them permanently or indefinitely. This is the absolute precondition for a thriving welfare system in support of the high-grade unemployed.[18]

To these, and to many other observers, the social inclusion of the masses through welfare and the control, or even exclusion, of the deviant poor were but two sides of the same coin.

Starting from this general observation, this volume aims at deepening our understanding of how these two sides were linked. The book explores if, and to what extent, established demarcation lines between 'normal' and 'deviant' behaviour changed in the decades around 1900, how deviance was explained by contemporary social experts, in what ways they proposed to handle it, and also how those labelled deviant experienced their situations and reacted to the normative pressures put on them. Although the volume cannot offer a comprehensive analysis of these complex interrelationships and their multiple varieties in place and time, the case studies it presents highlight their workings in a range of different settings, located mainly in the national contexts of Germany and the United Kingdom. The studies are grouped into three sections, which stand for three ideal–typical grades of deviance.

The first section consists of contributions that deal with conceptions and perceptions of poverty as such. The opening essay, by Christina May, adds enriching insights into what might be called the conventional narrative of the emerging welfare states, emphasizing the paradigm shift from moralizing and individualizing explanations of poverty towards socio-structural approaches and consequently towards preventive social policies aimed at combating the structural and environmental causes of poverty. To explain why this shift did not take place equally in Germany and the Netherlands, she points out differences in political culture and the division between 'statist' and 'non-statist' European societies. German social experts, she argues, formed the vanguard in a seminal change of attitude towards poverty, effectively discarding concepts of individual fault – concepts which remained much more in vogue in the Netherlands. Although May's line of argument goes somewhat against the central proposition of this volume, it offers a valuable basis from which to approach the following chapters.

The three other contributions to the first section all emphasize the persistence of much more traditional attitudes at the level of local poor relief administration. Here, poverty remained closely associated with notions of deviance, although in an ambiguous and constantly disputed manner, and the authors describe the various ways in which indigent people tried to cope with their precarious situations on the margins of respectable society. Olwen Purdue shows that, despite all resolves to exclude the undeserving poor from poor relief, the Belfast workhouse was in fact extensively used by those officially considered deviant. Megan Doolittle discusses the important role the male breadwinner had as a normative figure in English Poor Law provision, and she recounts experiences of fatherhood and fatherlessness amongst the poor themselves. Finally, Tamara Stazic-Wendt analyses a local administrative initiative in interwar Germany which literally marginalized poor families by pushing them off to a barrack camp outside town – a place that quickly became associated with deviance.

The second section of our volume turns to a category that, for centuries, had been both stigmatized as undeserving and increasingly criminalized: the vagrant poor. Begging and vagabondage were punishable offences in most European countries during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and penniless wanderers were constantly at risk of being prosecuted as delinquents. Nevertheless, societal attitudes remained highly ambivalent, since there was no denying that many destitute people were forced to beg and roam in order to eke out a living. Vagrancy was thus situated on the borderline between poverty that could be acknowledged and deviancy that was to be condemned. It became an intensely debated social issue in the decades around 1900, with significant implications for Poor Law reform, early unemployment policies and criminology. The first paper of the section, by Beate Althammer, analyses the development of these expert debates in a broad transnational context. In the second paper, Sigrid Wadauer takes a close look at the practical everyday dealings the police and courts had with offenders against the vagrancy laws in interwar Austria. Then Edward Snyder describes the evolution of a German Protestant charity initiative which aimed at saving poor wanderers from becoming habitual vagrants; and he shows how attitudes toward this category of the poor changed with the rise of eugenics.

The last section focuses on groups among the poor regarded at the time as unequivocally and severely deviant: the mentally abnormal and the criminal. Jens Gründler analyses how psychiatric concepts of hereditary degeneration and imbecility impacted on the perception

and treatment of 'troublesome' individuals, taking the poor relief administration of Glasgow as an example. Désirée Schauz traces how German charities for the aid of ex-convicts lost faith in their original aim of rehabilitation, as they embraced pathological explanations of recidivism and started to endorse reform initiatives that called for the permanent detention of 'incorrigible habitual criminals'. This section, it might be argued, is somewhat biased in its strong emphasis on tendencies towards the radical exclusion of deviants from society, and certainly counterbalancing case studies could have been included. Yet these impulses to exclude were significant tendencies that cannot be ignored in any comprehensive history of modern welfare states.

A concluding chapter summarizes the findings of the case studies and attempts a comparative synthesis. It also flags up unresolved questions that offer opportunities for further research.