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Communication and State Construction: The Postal Service in German States, 1815–1866

Spatial integration, in general, is related to spatial-diffusion processes without barrier effects—that is, without geographical discontinuities between contiguous areas that would indicate regional gaps. Since this article examines the postal structure not as an institution but as a representation of social integration, its primary focus is on location (the geographical distribution of the various offices) rather than administration (the technical and bureaucratic side of the postal delivery system). Therefore, the main sources of information are density maps, which depict the total number of post offices in a particular area. The analysis is based upon the assumption that proximity to a dense web of communication routes correlates with better integration and that discontinuities correlate with state disconnection. Granovetter, for example, claimed that clustered social ties within a region produce a "local cohesion" that leads to national fragmentation. Density maps of postal systems reveal potential fragmentations and threats to state unity. Nevertheless, since these maps do not depict how people actually used the postal system, they can display only the apparent unavailability of communication, not that definite communication occurred. Therefore, they are mainly useful for disproving state integration; the contrary would require additional proof.[1]

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1 Philippe Deboe, Claude Grasland, and Adrian Healy, "Spatial Integration, Strand 1.4," in *Study Programme on European Spatial Planning* (1999), 38. This research, centered in Stockholm, was the result of a cooperative effort between the member states of the European Union and the European Council. Regarding the British colonies in North America, John W. Blassingame—"American Nationalism and Other Loyalties in the Southern Colonies 1763–1775," *Journal of Southern History,* XXXIV (1968), 59—claimed that irregular postal service and nonexistent roads during the first half of the eighteenth century encouraged provincial isolation and local loyalty. Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology,* LXXVIII (1973), 1378.

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In order to analyze the relationship between the postal system and state integration, three parameters are used to connect the geometric structure of the system to the political, social, and geographical environment: (1) orientation (outward-oriented systems were designed to satisfy international communication, whereas inward-oriented systems focused on state communication), (2) the role of the capital city, and (3) system topology (the distinction between cluster-shaped and path-shaped systems). The first two classifications are more sensitive to historical developments, whereas the third is purely locational. A cluster-shaped system is based on extremely dense centers with sparser surroundings; a path-shaped system is based on a specific route, not on a group of neighboring centers. The three parameters allow for a combined analysis of the postal system's role in state construction.

NATIONALISM, STATEHOOD, AND THE MODERN POSTAL SYSTEM

The theoretical connection between patterns of communication and the construction of national and political unity has a long history in the literature concerning the development of nationalism and statehood. In 1953, Deutsch, in one of the earliest and most prominent descriptions of this relationship, viewed the boundaries between national communities as defined by "relative barriers to communication." These barriers, he wrote, have symbolic as well as functional effects, since they transform people into communities, and outsiders into "others." However, a leap is still required in order to form an imagined construction of statehood from immediate social ties. Giddens claimed that this leap required the sense of place to be re-imagined via communication technologies that form "relations between 'absent' others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction."[2]

The modern postal system was the pioneer of these technologies, changing the world and society in a much more dramatic manner than simply "distance shrinking." Johann Jacob Moser equated the invention of the mail to that of the discovery of

2 Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (New York, 1953), 22. For examples, see Brian Weinstein's research on state integration in Gabon—"Social Communication Methodology in the Study of Nation Building," *Cahiers d'etudes africaines,* XVI (1964), 569–589—and James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin's research on interethnic cooperation—"Explaining Interethnic Cooperation," *American Political Science Review,* IV (1996), 718–719; Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, 1990), 18–19.

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America, adding that "the formal postal system . . . had astonishing consequences and cast the world into a different model." Communication changed from being merely verbal exchange into the transport of large quantities of information across long distances. The postal system made the actual location of people less relevant by enhancing the range of their activities. In addition, it expanded the scope of their society beyond their immediate horizon, thus forming an imagined community.[3]

The difference between the postal service and other institutions revolves around the existence of communication routes and the actualization of communication between people. Since the latter is the foundation of human society, especially a modern imagined community, a postal service becomes a link between physical infrastructure and collective identity. Consequently, identifying the geographical formation of its deployment in various states enables a better analysis of the success or failure of state construction.

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN STATES IN THE AFTERMATH OF NAPOLEON After 1815 and following the break-up of the Holy Roman Empire, Germany was roughly divided between two giants in the north and south—Prussia and Austria, respectively; the thirty-five medium-sized states between them created the "Third Germany." These states were large enough to remain independent and foster local patriotism, but they were too small to act in the international arena, This predicament subjected them to a constant internal struggle between state-unifying and state-dividing forces. Hence, they provide a laboratory for research into state construction during the nineteenth century.[4]

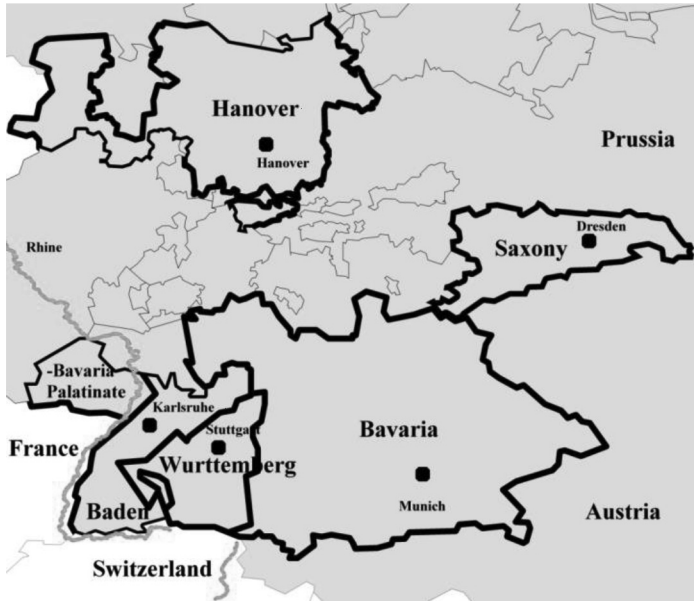
The states discussed herein—Bavaria, Saxony, Hanover, Wurttemberg, and Baden—were the five most dominant within

3 Moser quoted in Wolfgang Behringer, *Im Zeichen des Merkur: Reichspost und Kommunikationsrevolution in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 2003), 19.

4 Tim Chapman, *The Congress of Vienna: Origins, Processes and Results* (London, 1998), 45. For state construction in the "Third Germany," see Norbert J. Mayr, *Particularism in Bavaria: State Policy and Public Sentiment, 1806–1906* (Ann Arbor, 1991); Lawrence J. Flockerzie, "State-Building and Nation-Building in the "Third Germany": Saxony after the Congress of Vienna," *Central European History,* XXIV (1991), 268–292; Loyd E. Lee, "Baden between Revolutions: State-Building and Citizenship, 1800–1848," *ibid.,* 248–267; Marion W. Gray, "Modifying the Traditional for the Good of the Whole: Commentary on State-Building and Bureaucracy in Nassau, Baden, and Saxony in the Early Nineteenth Century," *ibid.,* 293–303; Abigail Green, *Fatherlands: State-Building and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York, 2001).

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Fig. 1 "Third Germany" from 1815 to 1866



the "Third Germany" and the largest outside the two German superpowers (see Figure 1). Bavaria had a population of roughly 4.5 million, and each of the other four states had a population of about 2 million. All of these states were restructured in 1815. Historical research on state construction in these states has focused primarily on political, economic, and legal reforms, neglecting the creation of *statehood,* which will be examined indirectly in this article. The Prussian-Austrian war of 1866, the precursor of the German union of 1871, ended, or at least cast aside, these separate projects in favor of a unified German one.[5]

NINETEENTH-CENTURY POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGES IN THE GERMAN WORLD Postal systems were not new in the German

5 For example, see Gerhard Schmidt, *Die Staatsreform in Sachsen in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Eine Parallele zu den Steinschen Reformen in Preußen* (Weimar, 1966); Stewart A. Stehlin, *Bismarck and the Guelph Problem, 1866–1890: A Study in Particularist Opposition to National Unity* (The Hague, 1973); Hans A. Schmitt, "Germany without Prussia: A Closer Look at the Confederation of the Rhine," *German Studies Review,* VI (1983), 9–39; Manfred Hanisch, *Für Fürst und Vaterland: Legitimätsstiftung in Bayern zwischen Revolution 1848 und deutscher Einheit* (Munich, 1991); Ferdinand Kramer, "Bavaria: Reform and Staatsintegration," *German History,* XX (2002), 354–372.

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world; they had been an important means of communication since the fourteenth century. The pioneering postal enterprise was the courier services offered by the Taxis family of Lombardy, which in 1490 received privileges to monopolize the postal services in the territories of the Holy Roman Empire. It was largely reserved for members of the nobility, the wealthy, and the educated. The fall of the Holy Roman Empire, which saw the dismantling of the imperial post, put an end to the once-united, private German system. Earlier signs of trouble had appeared when relatively large German states, such as Bavaria, demanded control of the postal system during the late eighteenth century. Simultaneously, German liberals were claiming, in accordance with the French Revolution, that the imperial post was a feudal relic that needed to be replaced with a new state mechanism. Words had turned into actions by 1806 after the dissolution of the empire; state postal systems were formed across the German world, the most thorough in Wurttemberg (1805), Bavaria (1808), and Baden (1811). In 1810, forty-three German postal authorities were in operation, but when the Vienna treaties of 1815 determined that seceding states had to compensate the house of Taxis, eighteen of the smaller states returned to the Taxis fold, as did Wurttemberg in 1819. The rest of them, including the five medium-sized states covered in this article, retained their postal autonomy.[6]

As a result of these changes, the post quickly became an integral part of the territorialization mechanism of these medium-sized states; the infrastructure was already in place because of the Taxis precedent. Unlike that of other European systems, Taxis post in Germany was highly decentralized. Nonetheless, the private post of the past transformed into a state post. The clients of these new systems changed as well. The mail no longer belonged to just the nobility and the educated class. Compulsory elementary education

6 Frank Postler, *Die historische Entwicklung des Post- und Fernmeldewesens in Deutschland vor dem Hintergrund spezifischer Interessenkonstellationen bis 1945: eine sozialwissenschaftliche Analyse der gesellschaftlichen Funktionen der Post* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), 20; *Rückblick auf das erste Jahrhundert der K. Bayer. Staatspost: (1. März 1808 bis 31. Dezember 1908); mit einer Darstellung der Entwicklung des staatlichen Telegraphen- und Telephonwesens bis in die Gegenwart* (Munich, 1908), 2, 3; Behringer, *Im Zeichen des Merkur,* 632; Kaspar Löffler, *Geschichte des Verkehrs in Baden insbesondere der Nachrichten- und Personenbeförderung [Boten-, Post- und Telegraphenverkehr]; von der Ro?merzeit bis 1872* (Heidelberg, 1910), 307–308. Beginning in the 1820s, the house of Taxis was the official postal authority in the Kingdom of Wurttemberg; the Duchies of Nassau, Kurhessen, and Hesse-Darmstadt; the Principality of Thuringia; and the cities of Frankfurt, Bremen, and Hamburg. Behringer, *Thurn und Taxis: die Geschichte ihrer Post und ihrer Unternehmen* (Munich, 1990), 151, 159.

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brought literacy, and thus the capability of written communication, to every layer of society. Furthermore, a gradual reduction in the price of paper and stamping regulations combined with an improvement in the speed and accuracy of the provided services enabled the formation of a genuine mass-communication system, a popular post. The new postal system differed from the old one in content, efficiency, and accessibility, operating especially as a letter-distribution service for a wider population under a state umbrella. Although the separate German postal systems of the nineteenth-century had formed connections—even a German postal union—the rationale was purely practical, not under the auspices of a combined German ideological framework. Each state postal system had distinct attributes, which affected the societies that created them.[7]

Because the post was the only system of long-distance communication, the accessibility of post offices had a profound influence on integrating the German-speaking population. In general, all of the offices handled the distribution of private and official letters and packages, but their vast differences in size affected the frequency of their operation and the efficiency of their mail distribution. Although higher-ranked officials managed a group of workers in an organized office, lower-ranked ones were mostly private functionaries who supervised local collecting points for occasional postal deliveries. The following analysis concerns only higher-

7 In Ireland, for example, there was public resentment during the nineteenth century against the inefficiency of the postal system since every postal route had to go through Dublin. See Garry Prendiville, "The Social Magic of Correspondence: Conceptions of the Mails in Early Nineteenth Century Ireland," *Journal of Historical Geography,* XXXI (2005), 459–477. For decentralism in the German world, see *Das Hauptstadtproblem in der Geschichte: Festgabe zum 90. Geburtstag Friedrich Meineckes* (Tübingen, 1952); Theodor Schieder and Gerhard Brunn (eds.), *Hauptstädte in europäischen Nationalstaaten* (Munich, 1983); Bodo M. Baumunk and Gerhard Brunn (eds.), *Hauptstadt: Zentren, Residenzen, Metropolen in der deutschen Geschichte*) Köln, 1989); Uwe Schultz (ed.), *Die Hauptstädte der Deutschen: Von der Kaiserpfalz in Aachen zum Regierungssitz Berlin* (München, 1993); Wolfram Siemann, "Die deutsche Hauptstadtproblematik im 19. Jahrhundert," in Hans Michael Körner and Katharina Weigand (eds.) *Hauptstadt: Historische Perspektiven eines deutschen Themas* (Munich, 1995), 249–260; Andreas W. Daum and Christof Mauch (eds.) *Berlin-Washington, 1800–2000: Capital Cities, Cultural Representation, and National Identities* (New York, 2005). Rupert Kubon, *Weiterführende Mädchenschulen im 19. Jahrhundert: am Beispiel des Grossherzogtums Baden (Pfaffenweiler, 1991), 9; Hans-Martin Moderow, Volksschule zwischen Staat und Kirche: Das Beispiel Sachsen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Köln, 2007), 77; Paul Katzwinkel, *Briefmarken-Katalogisierungs- und Fehllisten-Tabellen: (Basis Michelkatalog); Bayern, Württemberg, altdeutsche Staaten, Deutsche Post im Ausland, deutsche Kolonien und Abstimmungsgebiete* (Hamburg, 1948).

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ranked officials, since they were the ones involved in constant and continuous communication.[8]

SAXONY AND THE RISE OF SMALL URBAN CENTERS The Saxon post had a much longer independent history than its southwestern counterparts in Bavaria, Baden, and Wurttemberg. Unlike them, the Saxon post was formed during the seventeenth century as a result of the rivalry between the Saxon and the Austrian royal houses. Administratively, Saxony's postal structure was unusual in Germany for its centralized organization; the whole state had merely one state superintendent (*Oberpostamt*) in Leipzig and one regional center in Budissin. An additional center in the capital Dresden was declared the "royal court official" (*Hofpostamt*) and hence considered independent and separate from the rest of the system. This double-headed centralism was also apparent in the routes of postal passenger services, which, in 1827, all originated or terminated in Leipzig or Dresden. Paradoxically, in a spatial as opposed to an administrative context, the Saxon post was completely decentralized, evincing a wide and uniform distribution of post offices across the state (see Figure 2).[9]

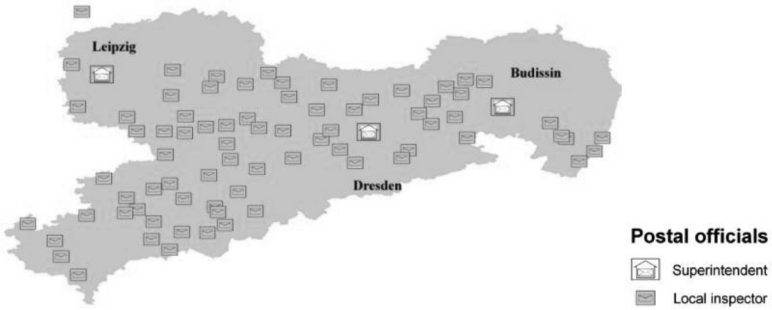
By the year 1866, the number of post offices in Saxony grew fivefold, though the administrative structure remained the same. The new distribution of postal stations, however, was not uniform. As depicted in Figure 3, the focal points of the system shifted from the traditional centers to places once considered peripheral in the southern and western parts of the state. Although the regional centers remained in the large cities of the north (Leipzig, Dresden, and Budissin), most of the sub-stations were placed around the southwestern towns, largely because of the new commercial and industrial centers there. This geographical and demographical change had an immense effect on the economic and educational systems of the state, among others, giving Saxony the appearance of a tripolar entity. But unlike other infrastructural systems, the postal network developed outside the framework of existing political

8 Michael von Meyeren, *Verzeichnisse von sächsischen Orten, Postorten und Postanstalten des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts* (Dresden, 2005), 57; *Rückblick auf das erste Jahrhundert der K. Bayer. Staatspost,* 6.

9 Johann L. Klüber, *Das Postwesen in Teutschland: wie es war, ist, und seyn könnte* (Erlangen, 1811), 24–27; Karl F. Kessler, *Handbuch Des Postwesens Im Königreiche Sachsen: Für Correspondenten, Postreisende Und Post-Officianten* (Dresden, 1827), 33–34.

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Fig. 2 Postal Officials in Saxony in 1819



SOURCE *Königlich Sächsischer Hof-, Civil- und Militär-Staat* (Leipzig, 1819).

norms, favoring the dense urban region of the southwest in more of a unipolar operation, as depicted in the cluster around the newly ascendant small towns (see Figure 3).[10]

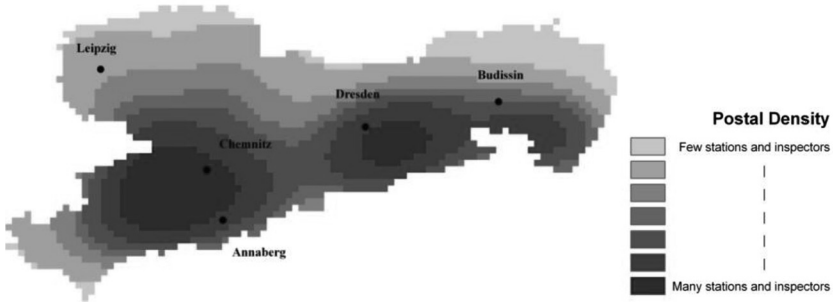
Although it would be a mistake to describe Saxony as isolated, its postal system, unlike those in such states as Baden and Hanover, did not incline toward international linkages. Theoretically, external communication should have been important there, since its economy depended on active international commerce, but it had few post offices along its borders, except for the western border, which had old ties to the principalities of Thuringia, especially the Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg, which was even added to the Saxon postal system in 1854. These western ties, however, were neither politically nor economically significant (Saxony had far fuller trade relations with Prussia in the north). To a great extent, the Saxon postal system was relatively indifferent to the larger German world.[11]

The Saxon post facilitated state integration by connecting the whole state. The relatively homogeneous distribution of postal stations across the country reflects widespread internal networks, or at least the possibility of them. The system's homogeneity correlated with the distribution of other integrating factors, such

10 Segal, "Representation and Practices of the State Space: The Medium Sized German States in the Years 1815–1866," unpub. Ph.D. diss. (Tel Aviv University, 2013), 26–124; *Staats-Handbuch für das Königreich Sachsen* (Dresden, 1866); Francesco Cinnirella, "On the Road to Industrialization: Nutritional Status in Saxony, 1690–1850," *Cliometrica,* II (2008), 229–257.
11 *Staats-Handbuch für das Königreich Sachsen* (Dresden, 1854).

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Fig. 3 Density Map of the Saxon Postal System in 1866



NOTE In the calculation of the density of the post offices, superintendents have a value of 10, inspectors at sub-stations a value of 7, inspectors with no sub-stations a value of 5, and all other postal stations a value of 1. The value at every point is the sum of all offices in its vicinity, using the "kernel density" function on ArcGIS software.
SOURCE *Staats-Handbuch für das Königreich Sachsen* (Dresden, 1866).

as educational facilities and railways. The communication infrastructure might not have been the main integrating factor of Saxony, but it certainly aided in the formation of a genuine Saxon statehood.[12]

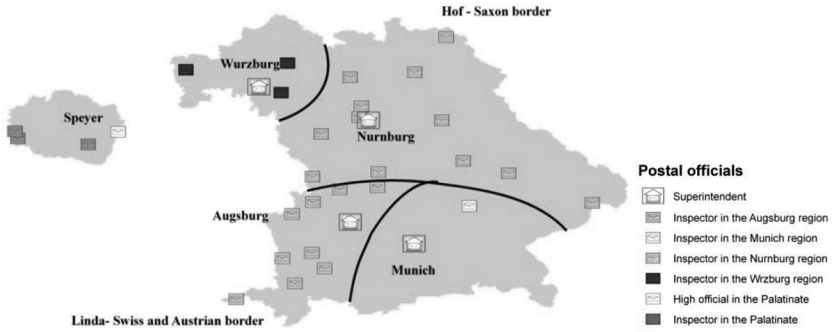
BAVARIA: A DETOUR AROUND THE CAPITAL CITY Unlike the Saxon postal system, which favored internal state communication, the Bavarian post followed the inter-German communication route from the north and middle (Saxony and Hesse) to the south (Austria and Switzerland)—the traditional commercial route through the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century centers of Augsburg, Nuremberg, and Wurzburg. Surprisingly, it did not include the capital Munich, despite its otherwise political, economic, cultural, and demographic centrality. This exclusion, however, enabled the consolidation of the postal system without the traditional distinction between the Protestant north and the Catholic south, which existed in almost every other Bavarian institution.[13]

The system was extremely decentralized. Accordingly, the state was divided into six districts, each headed by a superintendent:

12 Segal, "Representation and Practices of the State Space," 26–166; Flockerzie, "State-Building and Nation-Building"; James N. Retallack, *Saxony in German History: Culture, Society, and Politics, 1830–1933* (Ann Arbor, 2000).
13 Segal, "Representation and Practices of the State Space," 26–166.

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Fig. 4 Bavarian Postal Officials in 1827, Including Regional Authority Boundaries



SOURCE *Hof- und Staatshandbuch des Königreichs Bayern* (Munich, 1827).

Munich (south), Augsburg (west), Nuremberg and Regensburg (center), Wurzburg (northwest), and Speyer (Palatinate). The exact demarcation of each district changed throughout the years, until stabilized in 1851. These districts, although equal in authority, were not equal in size or dominance. The least important was the Speyer center; its postal head was demoted in 1826 to the rank of an ordinary official (*postamt*), thus perpetuating a general discrimination against the isolated western region, which was also reflected in the Bavarian educational, economic, and political institutions.[14]

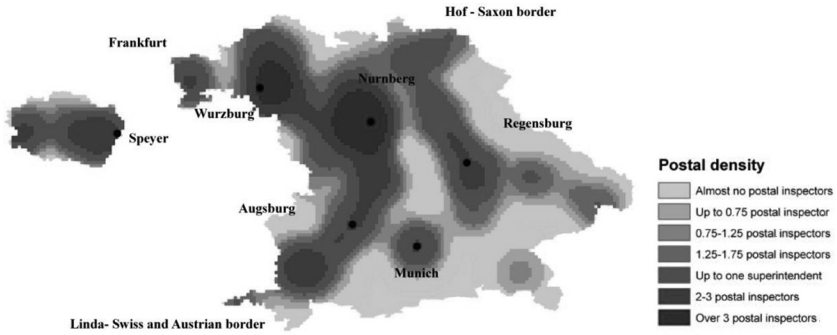
Differences are also evident in the mainland, especially between the central route and the rest of the state. Figure 4 shows that most of the offices in 1827 were under the authority of the Nuremberg and Augsburg officials; Munich was responsible for only two major post offices. This difference might not look so significant for communication as for administration. Figure 5, however, shows a clearly defined path of densely situated post offices leading from Hof in the northeast to Lindau in the southwest, passing through Augsburg and Nuremberg. The only possible inference is the inferiority of Munich within the postal system.

During this era, Munich's status as a communications center

14 From 1826 to 1834, there were temporary changes in the roles of Regensburg and Wurzburg. *Rückblick auf das erste Jahrhundert der K. Bayer. Staatspost,* 8, 10; Erwin Probst, *Behördliche Raumorganisation seit 1800: Grundstudie 3, Postorganisation* (Hannover, 1977), 33; Jonathan Sperber, *Rheinland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848–1849* (Princeton, 1991), 42.

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Fig. 5 Density Map of the Bavarian Postal System in 1847



SOURCES *Königlich Sächsischer Hof-, Civil- und Militär-Staat* (Leipzig, 1819); *Hof- und Staatshandbuch des Königreichs Bayern* (München, 1847).

was declining even as its status in economic, political, demographic, and educational areas was strengthening because of the extent to which the northeast to southwest route had grown in importance, especially after the introduction of the first railway lines. Despite the fact that the number of post offices grew from 290 in 1834 to 813 in 1851, most of the growth was in the north, empowering the central route. The new system, as depicted in Figure 5, expanded the central route only toward Wurzburg in the northwest, while remaining extremely scarce around the capital city. In some respects, the postal system gave rival centers in Bavaria an opportunity to compete with the political and economic power of Munich.[15]

By the end of the era, most of the state was integrated in a uniformly distributed postal system. Munich was not the center but merely on a southern branch off the main route. Thus did the postal system succeed in integrating the Bavarian space—an exceptional achievement, since other well-known measures of state construction—for example, educational, religious, and cultural reforms—maintained the schism between the northern and southern parts of the state. While governmental plans for state integration were focused on emphasizing the political center, thereby relegating the northern part of the state to the periphery, the postal system was much less ideologically and politically determined.

15 *Rückblick auf das erste Jahrhundert der K. Bayer. Staatspost,* 8, 11.

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The result was a growing connection between northern and southern Bavaria, which occurred outside Bavaria's much-researched plan of nation-building. Even the old ties between the northern Protestant cities and Prussia had long since disappeared by the war of 1866, replaced by Bavarian patriotism. In contrast, the isolated region of the Palatinate remained alienated, both institutionally and socially, due, in large part, to its physical separation from the mainland, which was never bridged by communication routes.[16]

BADEN: FROM EXTERNAL OUTLOOK TO INTERNAL UNIFICATION In many respects, the Badenese and Bavarian posts were alike; both of them were oriented toward international communication and were formed around a central route connecting an otherwise separated north and south. However, the postal system of Baden was not based on as ready a foundation as Bavaria's was; it developed from a dramatic change in the traditional structure. This older structure, which persisted until the late 1820s, had two commercial centers—the first in the northwest around Mannheim and the capital Karlsruhe, and the second in the southeast around Constance. These centers were not at the same level. All of the major post offices (in Mannheim, Karlsruhe, and Kehl) were situated in the northwestern region; the southeastern region had numerous lower-ranked post offices even though it had no higher-ranked ones (*oberpostmeister* and *postmeister*). This deployment suggests that the southeastern region, despite a lack of administrative prestige, was making distinct progress in communication.[17]

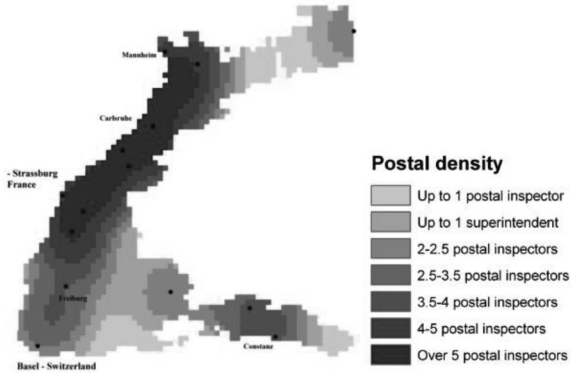
This division, a relic of the old Taxis network, changed during the 1830s. The new situation reflected the weakening of Constance and the creation of a new southwestern center at the university town and archbishopric of Freiburg. The result was a cultural division—a Protestant cultural hub in the north and a Catholic cultural one in the south. The disappearance of the southeastern postal center was a direct result of the economic and political deterioration of Constance, south Baden's equivalent of Mannheim,

16 Christoph Klessmann, "Zur Sozialgeschichte der Reichsverfassungskampagne von 1849," *Historische Zeitschrift,* CCXVIII (1974), 283–337, 313; Manferd Hänisch, *Für Fürst und Vaterland: Legitimätsstiftung in Bayern zwischen Revolution 1848 und deutscher Einheit* (Munich 1991), 142; Mayr, *Particularism in Bavaria.*

17 Löffler, *Geschichte des Verkehrs in Baden,* 311; Probst, *Behördliche Raumorganisation seit 1800,* 29.

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Fig. 6 Density Map of the Badenese Postal System in 1846



SOURCES *Königlich Sächsischer Hof-, Civil- und Militär-Staat* (Leipzig, 1819); *Hof- und Staats-Handbuch des Grossherzogthums Baden* (Karlsruhe, 1865).

beginning in the 1830s, along with the whole south eastern region.[18]

As a result of the further integration of central Baden, the two centers merged into a united route during the 1840s, encompassing all of the central offices from Manheim in the north to Basel in the south, as depicted in Figure 6. This consolidation reflected the union of Freiburg and the southwestern Catholics with the cities of the north, but it also indicated the neglect of Constance and the whole southeastern region, which did not have any high-ranking postal officials until the 1870s.[19]

The reason for the creation of a central western route lies in the location of two additional offices of the Badenese post—those of French Strasburg and Swiss Basel, situated on the international border, which were responsible for communications between the states. These two foreign outposts demonstrated the importance of economic and social communication with the neighboring states, France and Switzerland. In contrast, the lack of such centers on the eastern side implies the relative insignificance of communication with neighboring German states, such as Bavaria, Wurttemberg,

18 *Hof- und Staats-Handbuch des Grossherzogthums Baden* (Karlsruhe, 1834); Gert Zang, "A Region on the Way to the Periphery: The Town and District of Constance in the Second Half of the 19th Century," in Hans-Heinrich Nolte (ed.), *Internal Peripheries in European History* (Göttingen, 1991), 155–156.

19 *Hof- und Staats-Handbuch des Grossherzogthums Baden* (Karlsruhe, 1846).

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and Austria. The Badenese postal system's inclination toward the west evinced a decidedly non-German vision. Paradoxically, this more international-European bias eventually led to internal state integration. Stronger ties were gradually formed as the flow of trade and communication between north and south began to thrive. This trend did not result in Badenese statehood; Baden was too weak and too dependent on external powers to maintain an independent identity. Moreover, much of its communication targeted neighboring states, thus hindering the postal demarcation of Baden.[20]

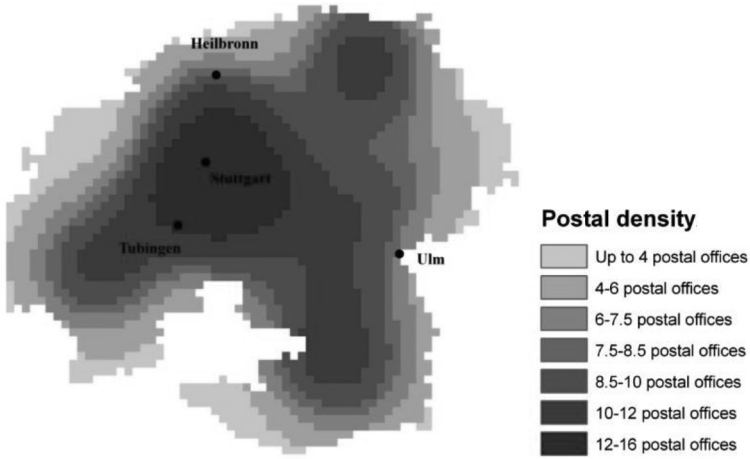
WURTTEMBERG: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ISOLATION The Wurttembergian postal system changed three times during the period under discussion, beginning with an early eponymous version from 1807 to 1819, reverting to the private guidance of the Taxis family from 1819 to 1851, and finally resuming its own administration from 1851 to 1866. Each of these iterations had to deal with the central communication problem of the kingdom—the lack of exit points from the state—since its geopolitical status allowed Baden and Bavaria complete control over its access routes. This handicap suggested two options, either to create stronger southwestern regional ties or to rely on internal unification, while remaining isolated. Until 1851, while under the direction of the Taxis, the system exhibited the first option. Thereafter, however, it shifted from a decentralized, geographically widespread structure to an administratively and geographically centered post, focused inward.

One of the first activities of the initial Wurttemberg post was the establishment of agreements with Bavaria (1810), Switzerland (1813), and Baden (1817). This policy affected not only the external relations of the system but also its internal structure, leading to the homogeneous deployment depicted in Figure 7. Nonetheless, control centers were distributed mainly around the capital city of Stuttgart. Accordingly, three of the four state superintendents who took their positions in 1807 after the establishment of the Wurttemberg post were located within a radius of 45 km from the capital (Stuttgart, Tubingen, and Heilbronn). The fourth su-

20 Löffler, *Geschichte des Verkehrs in Baden,* 321; Segal, "Representation and Practices of the State Space," 296–359; Florian T. Ploeckl, "The zollverein Formation and Impact of a Customs Union," unpub. Ph.D. diss. (Yale, 2009), 110–154.

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Fig. 7 Density Map of the Wurttembergian Postal System in 1818



SOURCES *Königlich Sächsischer Hof-, Civil- und Militär-Staat* (Leipzig, 1819); *Königlich-Württembergisches Hof- und Staats-Handbuch* (Stuttgart, 1818).

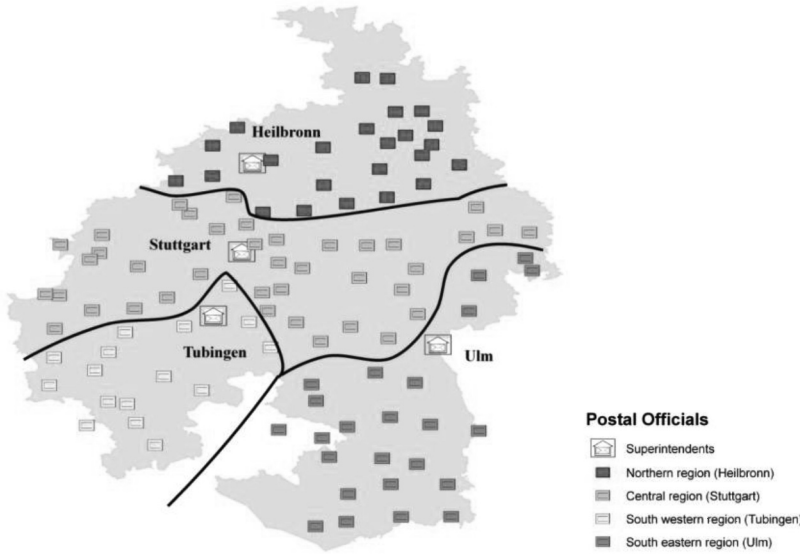
perintendent, who was responsible for the southeastern region, was first situated in Biberach but later moved to Ulm. In spite of the return to the Taxis post, the locations of the superintendents and the number of post offices remained almost unchanged during the next three decades. As depicted in Figure 8, the immense density along regional and state borders indicated Wurttemberg's active communication lines between different regions and between neighboring states.[21]

Wurttemberg's withdrawal from the Taxis orbit and the foundation of its own post in 1851 created a much more centralized and inward focus, both administratively and spatially. Administratively, with the cancellation of regional division, two mobile supervisors took charge of the 122 small offices around the country. Consequently, the whole postal system came under the direct supervision of the postal department in Stuttgart, and all of the postal interactions were concentrated in the state center. An extra superintendent was installed in the vicinity of the capital (Reutlingen), thus raising the share of high officials in the state center from 66 percent

21 Friedrich Weber, *Post und Telegraphie im Königreich Württemberg: Denkschrift aus Anlass des Ablauts der fünfzigjährigen Verwaltung des württembergischen Post- und Telegraphenwesens durch den Staat* (Stuttgart, 1901), 97; Probst, *Behördliche Raumorganisation seit 1800,* 23.

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Fig. 8 Wurttembergian Postal Officials in 1843, Including Regional Authority Boundaries



SOURCE *Königlich-Württembergisches Hof- und Staats-Handbuch* (Stuttgart, 1848).

to 80 percent. Western and eastern border stations were abolished, and many new ones emerged in the center, as depicted in Figure 9. The cluster-shaped structure around the capital city diverged dramatically from the old system, which made no distinctions between center and periphery or between border and internal region. The shift to a "national" post divided the center from both the periphery and the neighboring states.[22]

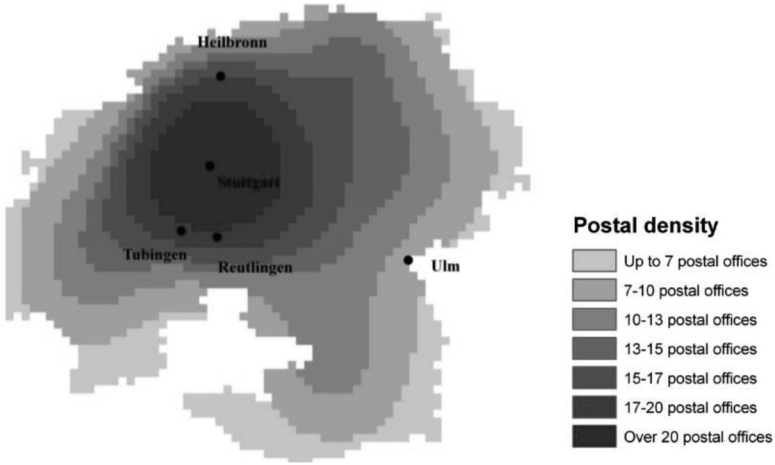
HANOVER: INTERNAL DIVISION AND REGIONAL UNITY The structure of the Hanoverian post was based on two distinct and isolated centers—a southeastern center around Hanover-Hildesheim-Tubingen, which constituted "old-Hanover," and a northwestern center in East Frisia. On the surface, it seemed hardly propitious for state integration. As a result the system favored regional ties over national ones, thus creating the possibility for integration on a larger scale in northwestern Germany.[23]

22 Weber, *Post und Telegraphie im Königreich Württemberg,* 154.

23 This division was also an economic, educational, cultural, and political division. See Stehlin, *Bismarck and the Guelph Problem, 1866–1890,* 46.

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Fig. 9 Density Map of the Wurttembergian Postal System in 1865



SOURCES *Königlich Sächsischer Hof-, Civil- und Militär-Staat* (Leipzig, 1819); *Königlich-Württembergisches Hof- und Staats-Handbuch* (Stuttgart, 1865).

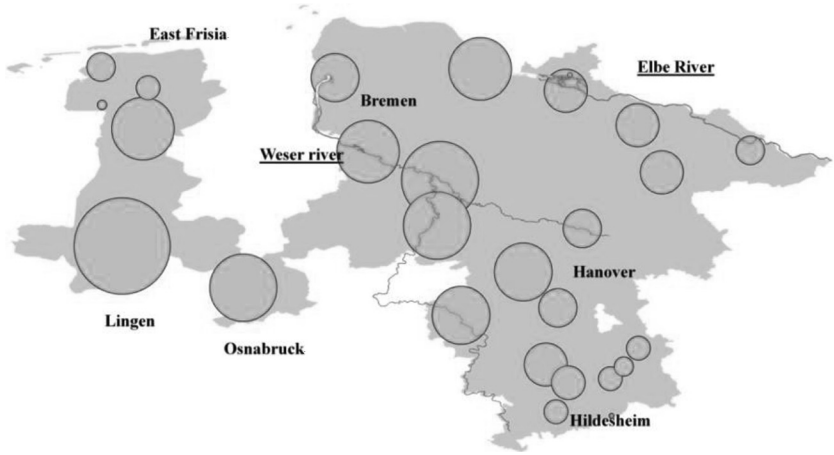
In general, the system underwent almost no changes between 1815 and 1866. Apart from the previously mentioned centers, the northern and southwestern regions had few post offices, although deployment in each region differed. The north was significant economically because of the rivers connecting the North Sea and Bremen to southeastern Hanover and the rest of Germany. The few stations operating in northern Hanover were along the rivers Elbe and Weser at the expense of the towns across the region. In contrast, the dearth of stations in southwestern Hanover, which represented the only connection between the western and eastern parts of the kingdom, seriously hampered cross-country communication. As a result, two isolated sub-systems were formed—a dense southeastern one connected to the North Sea along the Weser River and a dense northwestern one. This alignment reflected a regional rather than a national communication bias.[24]

Figure 10, depicting the number of sub-stations that each postal inspector handled, exhibits important regional differences. Unlike old, decentralized Hanover in the southeast, those regions that were once nearly devoid of postal service saw the policy reversed, permitting a few large isolated centers to be established. In

24 *Hannoverscher und Churfürstlich-Braunschweigisch-Lüneburgischer Staaskalender* (Hanover, 1818).

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Fig. 10 Hanoverian Postal Officials in 1865



NOTE The size of the symbol reflects the number of substations.
SOURCE *Hof- und Staatshandbuch für das Königreich Hannover* (Hanover, 1865).

some respects, this arrangement was similar to the one in Bavaria, which placed far fewer inspectors in Munich than in the north and the west. But, whereas the Bavarian policy led to a weakening of the capital, thus creating a central route equally servicing the whole country, the Hanoverian deployment reduced connectivity by increasing the distance between stations and stultifying active communication lines between the various centers. The existence of two densely populated centers with no connecting line of active postal offices—that is, no postal inspectors—signified the limited communication between them.

Despite the great divide between east and west and the lack of internal postal routes, the opening of cross-border communication was a primary target of the Hanoverian post. The importance of international commerce led to treaties of cooperation with Holland, Belgium, and Britain as early as 1815. As the emphasis shifted from non-German states to Hanover's neighbors in northwestern Germany, postal stations were established in the free cities of the north (Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck) and in the neighboring principalities (Braunschweig and Schaumburg Lippe). Although some of these offices had existed since the eighteenth century, almost half of them emerged during the late 1840s and the early 1850s, suggest-

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ing a rising interest in regional ties. The Hanoverian infiltration into neighboring states was completed in 1856 with the transfer of postal authorities from Hamburg, Bremen, Schaumburg Lippe, and Braunschweig to the Hanoverian post. The postal system served as both a foundation for regional unity in northwestern Germany and a cause for the growing split between the eastern and western parts of the state, affecting not just communication within state borders but also the people's attitude toward the state as a whole. Although the king enjoyed broad popular support during the late 1860s, the populace tended not to view Hanover as a united political entity.[25]

The German postal systems were based on a mixture of old and new components. On the one hand, reliance on the imperial post run by the Taxis prevented extreme centralism as well as a distinct localism, at least at first. On the other hand, nothing in their formation showed any reference to a united "German space." In general, the post broke the old regional strangleholds and created inner ties between different parts of a state, thus serving, inadvertently, as a major integrating factor. The various postal systems served a wide range of economic interests, such as those along the commercial routes in Bavaria, Baden, and Hanover and in the evolving industrial centers in Saxony. They also lessened the effect of certain geographical barriers, such as the rivers in Hanover and the mountains in Wurttemberg and south Bavaria, though not necessarily political ones.

Based on the five postal systems examined herein, a distinction can be made between an inner-German, an outer-German, and an isolated form. The first one, exemplified by Hanover and Bavaria, operated as a regional German network—in this case, in northwestern and southeastern Germany, respectively. The second form, instantiated by Baden, was oriented primarily toward such non-German polities as France and Switzerland. The third form, manifested by Saxony and Wurttemberg, was much less affected by foreign connections than by inner state changes and internal developments.

25 Werner Steven, *Inhaltsübersicht der postalisch relevanten hannoverschen Circulare, Gesetze und Verordnungen von 1810 bis 1866* (Hanover, 1998), 21; Probst, *Behördliche Raumorganisation seit 1800,* 43; Steven, *Inhaltsübersicht der postalisch relevanten hannoverschen Circular,* 98; Evan B. Bukey, "The Guelph Party in Imperial Germany, 1866–1918," *Historian,* XXXV (1972), 43–60.

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The distribution of post offices in the five systems falls into two categories—a path-shaped distribution, communication centers along a particular route, and a cluster-shaped distribution, decentralized communication within a certain region. The Badenese and Bavarian posts were both constructed along routes that connected their states' access and exit points, while integrating internal space in the process. The Saxony and Wurttemberg versions were both cluster-shaped, leading to contradictory results. Hanover was split into two sub-systems, both of which were cluster-shaped. The effect of the shape on state integration derives from, among other things, the ratio between the size of the route or the cluster and the size of the whole state. The larger the route, the better it serves the purpose of state integration, by providing access to a broader population. A cluster, however, usually implies disintegration and regional isolation, unless it is large enough to obviate such an outcome.

Of the three parameters mentioned earlier—orientation, topological shape, and centrality of the capital city—the third was most critical in enabling integration. Whereas the orientation and the shape of the systems varied according to geographical and economic circumstances, a postal system had to maintain political independence from a center to create a unifying structure. The shape of a central route determined the influence of a capital city on a postal system; when a capital was only one center of many along the route, as in Bavaria and Baden, strong state integration was possible. The cluster shape signifies the tendency of capitals to accumulate power, thus inhibiting general integration, as in Hanover and Wurttemberg. In Saxony, the decentralized structure formed a cluster shape in the periphery, thus strengthening the weaker parts of the state, at the expense of the capital of Dresden, and enabling state integration.

A postal system, in itself, is not a sufficient condition for state integration and the formation of statehood—terms used in this article interchangeably. But the existence of an appropriate communication infrastructure is certainly a necessary precondition. Therefore, the failures of Hanover and Wurttemberg could have been foretold by their decentralized postal systems. The existence of a widespread postal infrastructure, however, implies only the *possibility* of a strong internal communication, not its realization, which depends on the actual modes of communication between people—

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letter correspondence, newspaper distribution, etc. Nevertheless, the deployment of post offices is a good indication of how well communication had developed in a particular place. The creation of strong Bavarian, Saxon, and, to some extent, Badenese identities, which still persist, is largely attributable to their communications infrastructure as represented by the post.

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