

Rediscovering Demography

How research, politics, and the media built awareness around
the “aging society” in Germany

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Abstract

Awareness and political action to address an aging population in Germany have been slow to develop. Germany's history with population policies and the use of research from the field of demography to justify the actions of the "Third Reich" created a unique situation where discussion of such issues was socially unacceptable. Additionally, the long-term nature of demographic projections made it easier for politicians to place the issue low on their agendas. Considering this damage caused to the academic field of demography and recognizing that policy makers, specifically politicians, often think in terms of legislative periods and not long-term, how did policy makers, researchers, and journalists in Germany react to and address the development of the aging German population? The leading hypothesis is that the discussion in Germany did not gain traction until politicians began to acknowledge the implications of aging within the context of a larger policy-related debate, such as pension or health care reform. Thereafter, population aging began to be viewed as a separate issue to be addressed. Documents from research, policy, and print media are collected from 1966-1997 to identify how aging was contextualized and how these groups influenced the spread of information. Realization that they could not continue to ignore the declining birth rate forced policy makers in the 1970s to pay attention, call for more research, and learn this decline was also causing the population to age. All three groups addressed aging throughout this entire period, but the announcement of the government's intention to pursue pension reform in 1983 sparked an increase in interest. The passage of such a significant reform moved the issue to the foreground and by the 1990s, it was viewed more often as a standalone topic and not always secondary to a larger policy-related issue.

Keywords: Demography, science communication, agenda setting, framing, Germany, policy process

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Interview Partners

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Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, Founding Director of the Bielefeld Institute for Population Research and Social Policy

Hans-Ulrich Klose, former member and Chairman of the Social Democrats Party group in the Bundestag

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr, former member of the Bundestag (CDU/CSU) and Federal Minister of Youth, Family, Women, and Health, held the first professorship in Gerontology at the University of Heidelberg, founder of the Institute of Gerontology at the University of Heidelberg

Abbreviations

BBSR	Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (<i>Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung</i>)
BiB	Federal Institute for Population Research (<i>Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung</i>)
BMAS	Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (<i>Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales</i>)
BMBW	German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (<i>Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft</i>)
BMBWFT	Federal Ministry for Education, Science, Research, and Technology (<i>Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Technologie</i>)
BMFSFJ	Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (<i>Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend</i>)
BMFT	Federal Ministry for Research and Technology (<i>Bundesministerium für Forschung und Technologie</i>)
BMFuS	Federal Ministry of Family and Seniors (<i>Bundesministerium für Familie und Senioren</i>)
BMG	Federal Ministry for Health (<i>Bundesministerium für Gesundheit</i>)
BMJFFG	Federal Ministry for Youth, Family, Women, and Health (<i>Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie, Frauen und Gesundheit</i>)
BMJFG	Federal Ministry for Youth, Family, and Health (<i>Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit</i>)
BRD	Federal Republic of Germany (<i>Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i>)
CDU/CSU	Christian Democratic Union of Germany / Christian Social Union (<i>Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands /</i>

	<i>Christlich-Soziale Union</i>
DABW	German Academy for Population Science (<i>Deutsche Akademie der Bevölkerungswissenschaft</i>)
DDR	German Democratic Republic (<i>Deutsche Demokratische Republik</i>)
DFG	German Research Foundation (<i>Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft</i>)
DGBW	German Society for Population Studies (<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft e.V.</i>)
DGG	Germany Society of Gerontology (<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gerontologie</i>)
DZA	German Centre of Gerontology (<i>Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen</i>)
EU	European Union
FAZ	<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>
FDP	Free Democratic Party (<i>Freie Demokratische Partei</i>)
GA	Major interpellation (<i>Große Anfrage</i>)
GOLD	German Old-Age, Longevity, and Demography Database
Grays	The Grays – Gray Panthers (<i>Die Grauen – Graue Panther</i>)
Greens	Alliance 90/The Greens (<i>Bündnis 90/Die Grünen</i>)
KA	Minor interpellation (<i>Kleine Anfrage</i>)
KWI / KWG	Kaiser Wilhelm Institute / Kaiser Wilhelm Society (predecessor to the Max Planck Society)
MPG	Max Planck Society (<i>Max-Planck-Gesellschaft</i>)
MPI	Max Planck Institute (<i>Max-Planck-Institut</i>)
MPIDR	Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research
NRW	North Rhine-Westphalia
Report on the Elderly	First Government Report on the Elderly (<i>1. Altenbericht</i>)
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany (<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i>)

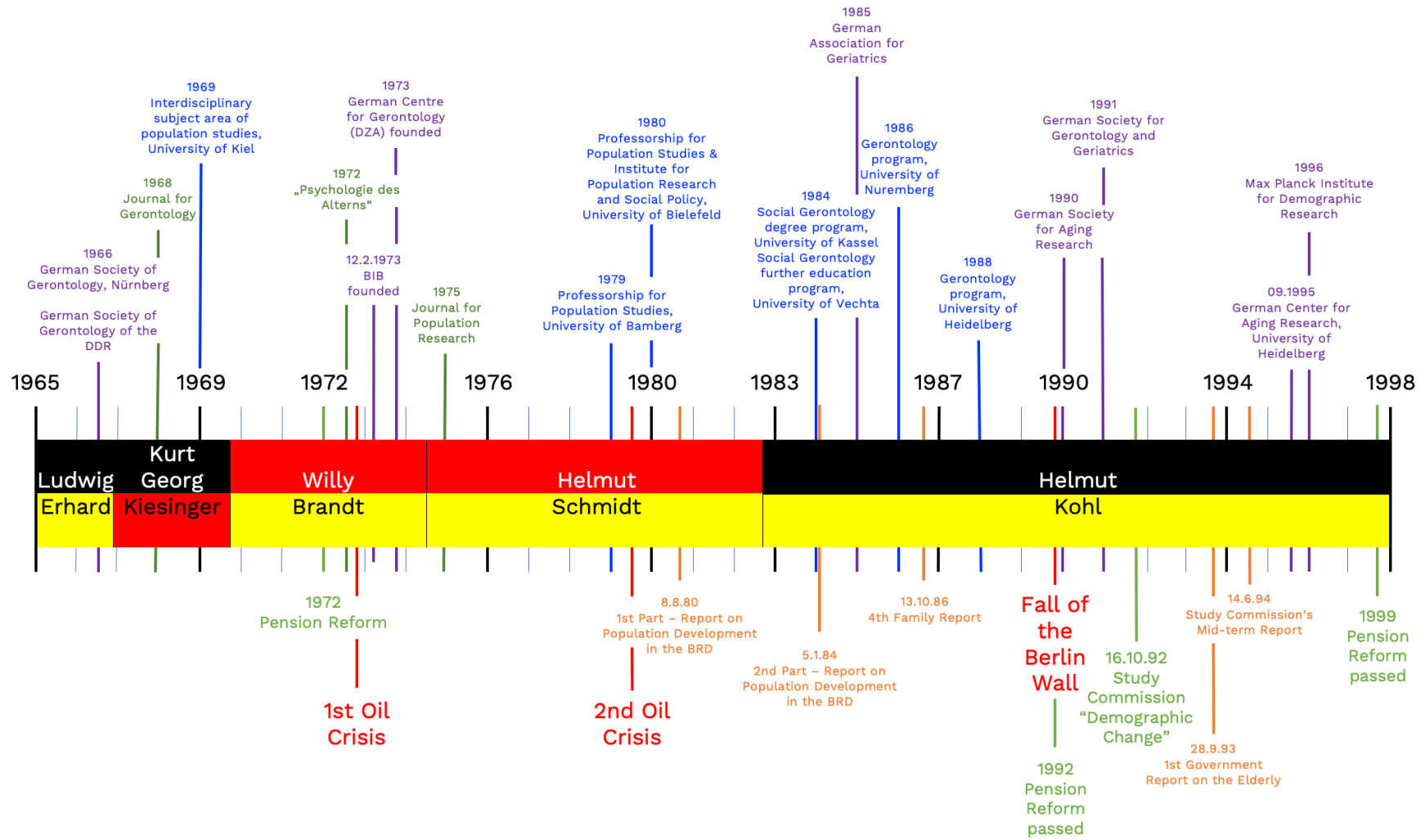
Study Commission “Demographic Change”	Study Commission Demographic Change – Challenges of Our Aging Society for the Individual and for Policy <i>(Enquete-Kommission Demographischer Wandel – Herausforderungen unserer älter werdenden Gesellschaft an den einzelnen und die Politik)</i>
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Translations

Abteilung	Directorate-General
Altenpolitik / Seniorenpolitik	Old-age policies / senior policies
Ältestenrat	Council of Elders
Antrag	Motion
Arbeitskreis / Arbeitsgruppe	Working group
Ausschuss	Committee
Aussiedler	German emigrants
Bericht	Report
Beschlußempfehlung	Report with recommendations
Bevölkerungspolitik	Population policy
Bundesministerium	Federal Ministry
Bundestag	German parliament
Demographiebeauftragte	Representative for demography
Enquete-Kommission	Study Commission
Entschließungsantrag	Motion for resolution
Geriatric	Geriatrics
Geschäftsordnung	Rule of procedure
Grundgesetz	Basic Law
Gutachten	Expert report
Kenntnisnahme	Consideration
Krankenversicherung	Health insurance
Land / Länder	German state
Lehrstuhl	Professorship, includes position of professor, but additional financial and personnel support
Lesung	Reading
Parlamentarische Geschäftsführer	Parliamentary secretary
Pflegeversicherung	Long-term care insurance
Rassenhygiene	Eugenics
Referat	Division
Regierungserklärung	Government policy statement
Rentenversicherung	Pension insurance
Rentnerberg	Mountain of retirees
Sachverständigenrat	German Council of Economic Experts

Seniorenbeauftragte	Representative for seniors
Sozialbeirat	Social Advisory Council
Stellungnahme	Statement
Unterabteilung	Directorate
Unterrichtung	Information, communication
Verband / Verbände	Association(s)

Timeline of Events



Chapter 1: Introduction

The way Germany has discussed the aging society has dramatically changed over the past decades. Whereas in the 1960s, there was almost no discussion about any aspect of demographic change, by the end of the 1980s, researchers, media, and politicians alike were discussing various facets of the aging society. By the 1990s, the government had created the Federal Ministry for Family and Seniors (*Bundesministerium für Familien und Senioren*, BMFuS) and established a Study Commission (*Enquete-Kommission*) to look into the challenges of an aging society. There was an increase in publications about different aspects of population aging, including various events held by academic and civil society organizations to discuss the implications of an aging society. News coverage included reports on the efforts of political parties to appeal more to older voters and how the travel industry was adapting to older travelers.

What led to this change in Germany to cause this growth in awareness? Who first started discussing the aging of the German population and in what context? Taking into consideration Germany's history with population-related research and government policies, how was society able to openly discuss population changes and accept the need to reform? Existing research has looked at the binary relationships between researchers, policy makers, and the media, but there has yet to be research on the relationship and interaction among all three of these groups in Germany. With this in mind, this research sheds light on how researchers, policy makers, and the media addressed the development of the aging society against the backdrop of Germany's history with population research to rediscover the field of demography.

1.1 Research Objective

This project was inspired by the coverage and attention population aging received in the 21st century. Statements that the population was aging seemed like second nature and a commonly known fact among society. All of this coverage led to the questions about why this issue is receiving so much attention now since one would assume it should have been identified decades ago, and how this discussion about aging first developed because it is likely this kind of talk was not always commonplace.

Steps have been taken to address the aging of the population by both policy makers and researchers to determine how to handle this issue in Germany and other European countries.¹ The key to this research is understanding and identifying the

¹ Some examples include: "Overcoming the barriers and seizing the opportunities for active ageing policies in Europe," *International Social Science Journal* 58, no. 190 (2008); Frerich Frerichs and Gerhard Naegele, "Active ageing in employment - prospects and policy approaches in Germany," in *Ageing Labor Forces. Promises and Prospects*, ed. Philip Taylor (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2008);

different relationships and interactions that go on between these spheres – academics, politics, and the media – and to recognize who was involved in talking about aging in Germany. This research will not, however, provide the definitive answer to how information and interest in aging spread since it cannot be said for certain if the events are directly linked. I am also not interested in the specific legislation that resulted from these debates, but my focus will be on the early stages of the policy process to understand how the issue of aging was defined and debated by politicians, as well as researchers and the media.

The methodological and academic inspiration for this research comes from a 2000 study published by Peter Weingart, Anita Engels, and Petra Pansegrau. They look at the individual scientific, political, and media discourses in Germany within the context of climate change, as well as how these groups appear to work together on the issue.² Using the climate change debate, they examine the various communication risks faced by scientists, politicians, and the media. They focus on how these individual groups addressed climate change, which they argue is handled differently by each group. Their study provides insights into how these groups communicate and how information about scientific research is used by politicians and portrayed in the media. A similar study using Weingart et al.'s approach that focuses on the debate about population aging has yet to be carried out.³

My goal is to provide a similar investigation of how the discussion about the aging of the German population has evolved over the years. This topic is comparable to climate change because it is a slow developing issue that researchers cannot be 100 percent sure will happen as predicted and necessary changes to legislation could be controversial, meaning politicians are more reluctant to approach the subject. Unlike climate change, demographic projections, despite being statistical estimations, can provide a clearer image of the future at a certain point because those individuals that will make up the future population will have been born.⁴ Changes to the population may also be easier for people to notice than to the climate.

Therefore, the main objective of this project will be to contribute to the field of communication, especially science communication, to provide a better understanding

Alan Walker and Gerhard Naegele, *Social Policy in Ageing Societies: Britain and Germany Compared* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Paula Aleksandrowicz, "Barriers and Opportunities for European Active Ageing Policies: Results of an Expert Panel Discussion (WP 6); Germany report," (Bremen, 2005); Christoph Müller and Bernd Raffelhüschen, "Demografischer Wandel: Künftige Handlungsoptionen für die deutsche Rentenpolitik," (Bonn, 2011).

² Peter Weingart et al., *Von der Hypothese zur Katastrophe: Der anthropogene Klimawandel im Diskurs zwischen Wissenschaft, Politik und Massenmedien* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2002); "Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media," *Public Understanding of Science* 9, no. 3 (2000).

³ More detailed information about Weingart et al.'s study is presented in Chapter 2.

⁴ It is still possible that an unforeseen dramatic change will happen, such as in 2015 when there was an unexpected influx of asylum seekers to Germany, but overall, a general expectation can be determined for future population development.

of how these fields in Germany were connected and contributed to the increase in awareness about the aging population. It uses the concepts of framing and agenda setting to understand how the debate developed among researchers, policy makers, and the media.

1.2 The Case for Germany

The reason this research focuses on Germany⁵ is related to two aspects: Germany's history with the field of demography research and its advanced population aging. Beginning with Germany's history, the use of demography-based research by the "Third Reich" had a lasting impact that significantly affected the field's development after World War II (WWII). In 1935, Eugen Fischer, a race anthropologist, declared at an international conference for population policy in Berlin that the study of human genotypes was now the center of so-called demographic research. From then on, population science was centered around eugenics (*Rassenhygiene*).⁶ The "Third Reich" used this research to justify the experimentation on and extermination of minority populations, such as the Jewish population, homosexuals, persons with disabilities, and political opponents. The government also strongly supported and promoted pronatalist policies that emphasized the importance of having children for the betterment of the country, specifically those of "Aryan" descent.⁷ Following the fall of the "Third Reich", the former director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute (KWI) for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics, Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer, was linked to the experiments carried out at the Auschwitz concentration camp.⁸ This experience particular to Germany led to a reluctance and unease to address population-related issues by politicians, researchers, and society as a whole.⁹

Demographically speaking, Germany has been facing a declining birth rate and an increasing average life expectancy for some time. Other European and industrialized countries have been facing similar challenges; however, Germany is of particular interest due to the size of their population and how dramatic some of the effects of population change are expected to be on their society. When comparing Germany with the other European Union (EU) member states, Germany has dealt with either a declining or low birth rate since 1966 compared to other member states who

⁵ When Germany is mentioned, this refers to West Germany until official reunification in 1990. References to East Germany will be clearly stated. Following reunification, Germany refers to the entire country, both the former East and West.

⁶ Jürgen Kroll, "Zwischen Prozenten, Pult und Politik," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 15, no. 2 (1989): 171.

⁷ Alison C. McIntosh, "Low Fertility and Liberal Democracy in Western Europe," *Population and Development Review* 7, no. 2 (1981): 184.

⁸ Peter Weingart, "German Eugenics between Science and Politics," *Osiris* 2, no. 5 (1989): 279-82.

⁹ More historical background will be provided in Chapter 4.

did not experience such a dramatic or early decline.¹⁰ In combination with its high average life expectancy, this has contributed to Germany having an aging population. The recognition of this fact contributed to a number of social policy reforms due to its impact on the old-age pension system, a cornerstone of German society.

1.3 Defining Demography and Demographic Change

To make my research objectives clear, it is necessary to define a few terms that will be used throughout this research. The first key term is demography. When I use the word “demography” throughout this research, I am referring to the academic field that studies populations and population dynamics. As defined by Professor Dr. Herwig Birg, former professor of population studies at the Bielefeld Institute for Population Research and Social Policy, demography includes fertility, mortality, and migration.¹¹ Demographers study these three areas to understand how they influence a population’s composition.

Depending on how these three components develop, populations can experience demographic change. The European Commission defines demographic change as caused by population changes related to the aging population, declining birth rate, and migration.¹² For example, a larger older population does not impact the population to the same degree when the birth rate remains at such a high level that the size of the younger population can be maintained. But when both of these changes occur simultaneously, the impact can be much greater. When applicable, this research will also consider how researchers, policy makers, and journalists defined demographic change.

Germany is one country that has been faced with demographic change for quite some time and it is having a noticeable impact on the composition of the German population. As time has passed, the lower birth rates have meant there are fewer people of childbearing age that can contribute to returning Germany’s birth rate to a higher level, and the increasing life expectancy has led to a larger older population. The influx of immigrants to Germany has also played a role in how the population has evolved.

The discussion surrounding each of these components of demographic change is large enough for three separate research projects. Therefore, this research focuses

¹⁰ The World Bank, "Fertility rate, total (births per woman)," <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?end=2014&locations=DE&start=1960&view=chart>.

¹¹ Herwig Birg, interview by Emily Lines, February 1, 2018, Telephone interview, Berlin.

¹² See: DG Employment European Commission, Social Affairs & Inclusion, "Demographic Analysis," <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=502>; "Europe's Demographic Future," (Brussels, 2007); Senioren Bundesministerium für Familie, Frauen und Jugend, "Demografischer Wandel," Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Familie/demografischer-wandel.html>.

specifically on the aging of the population. Because I want to understand the context in which aging is perceived and addressed, I am not considering documents focusing on the physical aspects of aging, specifically what happens to the body when one becomes older, etc. I am more concerned with the discussion about the societal aspects of population aging versus the pure biological and physical aspects.

1.4 Outline of this Book

Considering Germany's history with the field of demography and the nature of population change to be slow developments over a longer time period, this research will work to answer the question of how policy makers, researchers, and journalists framed and addressed the development of the aging population in Germany. The period under question focuses on 1966 until 1997 and will look at documents collected from all the three areas of research, politics, and media.

In Chapter 2, I begin by presenting more information on the study by Weingart et al., the inspiration behind this research. Then, I provide an overview of the concepts of framing and agenda setting that set a foundation to describe how the issue was understood and how its salience evolved over time. Literature exists covering the binary relationships between researchers and policy makers, researchers and the media, and policy makers and the media, which I also present in this chapter. This body of research is helpful in describing the different aspects of these relationships, while also trying to understand how all three of these groups interact and influence each other. The chapter ends with the presentation and explanation of my research questions and hypotheses.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used to collect the data for this research. I discuss the process of selecting the data through a keyword-based search of various academic databases, the German online parliamentary document database, and three news publications (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Zeit*, and *Der Spiegel*). For each of these data collection phases, I use a set of codes to standardize the classification of how aging was referenced, what sources were cited, and if aging had a positive or negative association. Additional data points were collected for the different sectors, which I describe in Chapter 3. All the data collected are a part of the German Old-Age, Longevity, and Demography Database (GOLD Database).

Before I proceed with the presentation of my data, Chapter 4 lays the historical foundation for this research. I provide an overview of the development of population studies in Germany before, during, and after the "Third Reich". Due to my academic and work affiliations, I chose to specifically discuss the process of establishing both the Bielefeld Institute for Population Studies and Social Policy and

the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR). These are two influential research institutions that were created based on different motives and who reflect the evolution of the field of demography in Germany. The chapter also includes a review of the political development in Germany following WWII in order to create an awareness about what was happening in Germany as these debates about the aging population were happening.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the development of the discussion around the aging population among the research community. Research about the aging population was slow to develop and grew in the mid-1980s. As a consequence of the “Third Reich”, there were few universities or research institutions devoted to studying demography-related issues. An interdisciplinary subject area for population studies was established at the University of Kiel in 1969, but similar programs and departments did not begin to grow until the 1980s. As population aging received more attention, it was mainly framed in connection to health, labor, social security, and society-related topics, but there was generally a wide variety of topics and fields covering the issue. Despite the large growth in the late 1980s and 1990s, this was not a direct result of more study programs and professorships being established. This was more a reflection of a growth in conferences, events, and commissioned research addressing the aging population.

In Chapter 6, I focus on the development of the political debate about aging. Much of the focus of the political debate was centered around societal, health, and social security-related issues, specifically pension reform. Attention grew in the 1980s as the 1992 pension reform was debated but declined following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Debate about the aging population was more focused on the overall societal impact and the need for old age policies in the 1990s with the help of the establishment of the German Federal Ministry for Family and Seniors (BMFuS), the publication of the First Government Report on the Elderly (*1. Altenbericht*), and the establishment of the Study Commission Demographic Change – Challenges of Our Aging Society for the Individual and for Policy (*Enquete-Kommission Demographischer Wandel – Herausforderungen unserer älter werdenden Gesellschaft an den einzelnen und die Politik*). The chapter looks at the differences between the major political parties to compare how they each addressed the issue. It was clear that the Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU/Christlich-Soziale Union, CSU*) were the main drivers of the debate about aging from the beginning, but the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD*) became more involved in the 1990s.

For the media debate, Chapter 7 compares the coverage of the three selected publications. The media was interested in aging early on, but like the other two

sectors, there was an increase in coverage in the 1980s. This began earlier and seemed to be in response to the announcement by Chancellor Helmut Kohl in his government policy statement in 1983 that the government would focus on pension reform. Coverage peaked in 1988, the year before the reform was passed, signaling greater interest in the period leading up to the debate, when different proposals for possible reform could be introduced. For the media chapter, I use the news value theory to identify reasons for why aging-related articles were published and then use concepts related to readership to see how the layouts and length of the articles related to increased coverage. The different publications are also compared to see how they differed in their reporting on aging with the result that the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) was able to publish more articles as a daily publication, but *Die Zeit* and *Der Spiegel* published longer, more in-depth articles.

In the final chapter, I bring together the findings from the previous chapters to see how the groups' approach to addressing the aging population fit together. It was clear from examples in the collected documents that all parties were aware of the taboo nature of the field of demography and the lack of interest in society to approach population-related policies. There are also examples of researchers, politicians, and journalists highlighting the long-term nature of the subject and the tendency to avoid taking action. From the findings, it is apparent that it took the debate about the 1992 pension reform for aging to find a place on the various agendas. The increase in research was more of a response to the growth in interest, both in the form of better establishment of research infrastructures and more research funding. I identify a multi-stage process to explain the development of the aging society in Germany and explain the importance of the actors and events in influencing the interest and progress made to address population aging.

Chapter 2: Literature Review, Concepts, Research Questions, and Hypotheses

The overall objective of this research is to understand how the issue of aging among the German population developed, specifically among researchers, policy makers, and the media in Germany. I am seeking to describe the relationship between these three groups and determine how they interact in Germany. In looking at these interactions, some questions that arise are related to the context the issues are discussed (is it the same between the groups or different?) and how issues even become a topic of interest for these groups.

In this chapter, I begin by presenting the different concepts that lay the foundation of this research, such as the study that inspired this research, as well as framing, agenda setting, and news value theory. I then look at the existing research that analyzes how researchers interact with the media, the relationship between policy makers and the media, and how policy makers use research to make policy. Finally, I present my research questions and hypotheses that this research will seek to answer, thereby contributing to this line of research and providing a Germany-centric perspective.

2.1 Research Inspiration: How Did They Handle Climate Change?

The main source of inspiration for this project is the study published in 2000 by Peter Weingart, Anita Engels, and Petra Pansegrau that looked at the scientific, political, and media discourses in Germany within the context of climate change.¹ For science, climate change is a global and complex topic that creates open questions and leads to more research. Its complexity and long-term nature contributed to initial findings being “preliminary, uncertain, and often hypothetical.”² While in the field of policy, this issue cannot always be framed as something that can be easily solved by political decisions. The uncertainty and complexity of the scientific research enables policy makers to just call for more research and delay decision making. For the media, climate change has to appear newsworthy, which can be difficult for science-related news. Based on these ideas, Weingart et al. assume that climate change is handled differently among these three areas, particularly regarding timing, amount of

¹ Weingart et al., *Von der Hypothese zur Katastrophe: Der anthropogene Klimawandel im Diskurs zwischen Wissenschaft, Politik und Massenmedien*; "Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media."

² "Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media," 262.

attention, and framing.³ At first glance, it appears as though researchers successfully communicated a warning about climate change, which was picked up by the media and communicated to the public through increased warnings and urgency, and then policy makers responded by developing climate protection programs.⁴

Beginning with the rationalist-instrumental model⁵, Weingart et al. stated:

We also assume that the character of environmental risk communication is essentially different in each of the distinct spheres that are the focus of our research, and that *disturbances of communication* among these spheres are hence the rule rather than the exception.⁶

To analyze these discourses⁷, the authors look at the amount of attention the topic received (step one), the thematic contexts of the discussion about climate change (step two), and who the communication was addressing, how credibility was established, and how climate change was established as “an arena of political decision making” (step three).⁸ Their focus is on the time period of 1975 to 1995. To analyze the scientific discourse, the authors focus on 23 scientific publications that are chosen based on “centrality of author(s) to the German scientific debate and high citation rates.” The scientific discourse is more difficult to analyze since discussions about climate change, or any scientific topic, occur at various conferences and articles addressing the topic are published in a wide variety of journals, making it difficult to provide a quantitatively accurate picture. For the political discourse, focus is on the minutes of the Bundestag plenary sessions and the meetings of the parliamentary committee “Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.” Attention was also given to other governmental documents, such as resolutions by the ministries, reports by the Study Commission on Preventative Measures to Protect the Atmosphere, and bills. For the media aspect, print articles about climate change published during the selected time in the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, and two newspapers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, were

³ Ibid., 262-63.

⁴ Weingart et al., *Von der Hypothese zur Katastrophe: Der anthropogene Klimawandel im Diskurs zwischen Wissenschaft, Politik und Massenmedien*, 11.

⁵ This model posits that scientific research helps to first identify the problem and potential solutions, then scientists present these solutions, and finally, scientists may try to create public interest in order to encourage political action. It is focused on the flow of information between science, politics, and the public: “[...] it assumes that, ideally, the content of the information passes on unchanged and initiates political action almost automatically, following the ‘rational logic’ of the information obtained. If the information fails to engender action, this model assumes *misrepresentation* of scientific information by the media, the ignorance of policy makers, etc.” See: “Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media,” 262.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The authors go into more detail about the theoretical understanding of discourse. See: Weingart et al., *Von der Hypothese zur Katastrophe: Der anthropogene Klimawandel im Diskurs zwischen Wissenschaft, Politik und Massenmedien*.

⁸ “Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media,” 264.

analyzed. By looking at these specific aspects, Weingart et al. are able to reconstruct the separate discourses.⁹

A unique characteristic of climate change is its long-term nature that may not result in immediate or direct effects on individuals, specifically those in Germany. But in 1986, the issue was announced as a catastrophe and researchers made a call for immediate action. This was picked up by the media and caught the attention of politicians.¹⁰ Weingart et al. argue that when dealing with potential catastrophe-related warnings, it is difficult to know if these warnings will turn out to be true.¹¹ When scientists first began to discuss climate change, no one could say for certain if their predictions would come true and if action really did need to be taken right away to hinder the effects of climate change. For scientists, their believability is very critical in whether or not they are taken seriously.

From their research, they concluded that scientists were the first group to address climate change.¹² Eventually, it was up to policy makers to decide if they wanted to believe the information and how they should react, or if they should react. As the authors argue, policy makers face a risk of losing legitimacy both when they choose to respond to these claims and when they choose to not do anything.¹³ Once policy makers decide to take action and address the warnings by researchers, the general public has to then decide whether they want to accept the new policy measures put forth. Weingart et al. use the example of the increase in gas prices in the fall of 2000 that was heavily criticized and not well received.¹⁴ Even though this measure was necessary to work towards a reduction in greenhouse gases, it upset voters. This kind of response can lead policy makers to be less willing to agree to such reforms since it can be problematic in the short-term for their careers.

For the media, their job is to communicate the scientific and political discourses. Journalists have to take the research findings and translate them into something interesting and easy to understand. This also means they cannot report on uncertainties, which means they may report hypothetical situations predicted by researchers as events that are certain to happen in the future.¹⁵ With climate change, journalists already picked up on the idea of a “climate catastrophe” in the early 1980s but focused even more on the subject after scientists declared it was a catastrophe

⁹ Ibid., 263-64.

¹⁰ Ibid., 268-69.

¹¹ Weingart et al., *Von der Hypothese zur Katastrophe: Der anthropogene Klimawandel im Diskurs zwischen Wissenschaft, Politik und Massenmedien*, 12.

¹² "Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media," 265.

¹³ *Von der Hypothese zur Katastrophe: Der anthropogene Klimawandel im Diskurs zwischen Wissenschaft, Politik und Massenmedien*, 12-13.

¹⁴ Ibid., 14.

¹⁵ Ibid., 16; Weingart et al., "Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media," 274.

in 1986. Media coverage continued talking about climate change as a catastrophe and the uncertainty among the science community was never mentioned.¹⁶ As stated by Weingart et al.:

This supports the observation that sensationalism and simplicity give 'bad' news a high news value. From the media's standpoint, stressing certainties and describing in detail past or impending climate effects make it increasingly difficult for politicians to respond adequately, especially as appropriate reactions should have come much earlier.¹⁷

In the eyes of the media, all scientists agreed that climate change was happening, and policy makers were ignoring the situation and were too late to address the issue.¹⁸

In the climate change debate, it was determined that not all information relayed by scientists was actually agreed upon by the entire scientific community and there were a number of remaining uncertainties. In turn, based on the varying information being disseminated, policy makers decided to take that information from researchers and focus their efforts on CO² emissions reductions. The media, then, reported on the issue in a manner it found to be the most interesting, which in this case, makes climate change a catastrophe and something requiring an immediate response. This can cause "risks of communication" that threaten the credibility of a researcher or research institution; it can harm the legitimacy of policy makers; and it could cause a loss in market share for the media.¹⁹

In the end, Weingart et al. conclude there is no way to improve the communication between research, policy, and media for several reasons. First, it is not possible to control and manipulate communication flows, at least not in the long-term, especially since the media is always changing. Second, the attempts to control and manipulate the communication can also have consequences. In this example, the idea of climate change as a catastrophe could not be retracted and it led to credibility problems for the field of science. Finally, attempts to control communication or research can be seen as an attack on freedom of research, freedom of the press, and the will of the people.²⁰

This study provides insights into how these three groups interact and how information about scientific research is used by policy makers and portrayed in the media. Their findings are useful and can be tested to see if they hold true in the context of a different phenomenon, the aging of the German population. Like climate change, one could argue that researchers issued "warnings" about what the aging of

¹⁶ "Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media," 275.

¹⁷ Ibid., 279.

¹⁸ Ibid., 279-80.

¹⁹ Ibid., 280.

²⁰ Weingart et al., *Von der Hypothese zur Katastrophe: Der anthropogene Klimawandel im Diskurs zwischen Wissenschaft, Politik und Massenmedien*, 144.

the population could mean for Germany in the future. This population change was not argued to be a catastrophe by researchers, but the degree of severity varied, as well as whether it would have a negative or positive impact on society. Policy makers at the time were not sure to what extent this information was true and how necessary it may be to act sooner rather than later. The areas most affected by the aging population are not easily addressed by policy makers and certainly puts them at risk of a loss of legitimacy if the resulting policies are not appreciated by voters, such as changes in the retirement age. It is also difficult for policy makers to willingly address an issue that will not have a major impact until later in the future and action taken now could jeopardize their chances of reelection. The media had to find a way to contextualize the aging of the population into something that readers could relate to and find interest in. Like the work by Weingart et al., this research seeks to understand how the individual discussions developed in the context of the aging debate, but also when the information moved and how it evolved among the groups.

2.2 Guiding Concepts: Framing the Discussion and Setting the Agenda

To understand the development of the debate about the aging of the German population, I identify the ways the issue itself was understood and how salient it was. This ties into the theory of social construction, which is about how individuals interact with each other to establish their understandings of the world. According to James Carey, this involves developing a concept, maintaining the agreed upon social construction to help it remain viable, adjust it as necessary, and completely change it if the societal situation has significantly changed to render it no longer valid. An important part of the construction is the use of language to describe and name the item and to make the item relevant at that point in time.²¹ Social construction can be understood as the overarching theoretical framework for the two concepts that form the basis for my study. The concepts of framing and agenda setting are used to better describe how issues were constructed and why certain issues are addressed, while others are ignored. Originally, these concepts were related to the media and how information is presented in the news. Numerous studies exist using these ideas to describe the evolution of various issues, such as the AIDS crisis, environmental disasters, or other societal issues, but this has expanded to include the political

²¹ Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, "Social Construction of Reality," in *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, ed. Stephen W. Littlejohn and Karen A. Foss (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009), 892-93. For further reading, see: Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966).

debate.²² In the following section, I will introduce the concepts of framing and agenda setting, and explain their relevance in examining how researchers, policy makers, and the media constructed their understanding of the aging population.

Framing

There is a desire to want to be able to understand why something happens, what caused the event, and if there is a way to resolve the issue.²³ This need leads to the creation of frames by different actors (media, policy makers, researchers, etc.), which influence how people understand the issue and what types of opinions they form.

According to Robert Entman:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.²⁴

Frames are what define the problem, determine the cause of the problem, make moral judgments, and suggest solutions. These frames help to prime the public or intended audience by raising the importance of an issue, which then leads people to react in a certain way.²⁵ Through the use of frames, certain aspects of an issue are highlighted, which increase the issue's salience and direct receivers to view the issue a certain way.²⁶

The specific idea of problem definition is an approach to framing used in discussions about the policy process. In this more specific conceptualization, not only is the issue framed so it is understood a certain way, but it is specifically viewed as a problem that needs to be solved. As Janet Weiss explained, problem definition is considered to be the first step in the policy cycle, but there is more to the idea of "definition" in this context:

Definition in this sense is not merely a label for a set of facts and perceptions. It is a package of ideas that includes at least implicitly an account of the causes and consequences of some circumstances that are deemed undesirable, and a theory about how a problem may be alleviated.²⁷

²² For a list of suggested readings, see James W. Dearing and Everett M. Rogers, *Communication Concepts 6: Agenda-setting* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 1996).

²³ David Rochefort and Roger W. Cobb, "Problem Definition, Agenda Access, and Policy Choice," *Policy Studies Journal* 21, no. 1 (1993): 63.

²⁴ Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 52.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; Robert M. Entman, "Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power," *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (2007): 164-65.

²⁶ "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," 53.

²⁷ Janet A. Weiss, "The powers of problem definition: The case of government paperwork," *Policy Sciences* 22, no. 2 (1989): 97.

Deciding how to frame an issue, both as an issue and as a problem, may not be as straightforward and simple as it sounds because it will affect how the issue is viewed.

As John Kingdon argues:

[M]uch of the struggle over problem definition centers on the categories that will be used and the ways they will be used. You may not be able to judge a problem by its category, but its category structures people's perceptions of the problem in many important respects.²⁸

These definitions affect what outcomes are reached in the policy process, as well as how the issue goes on to be perceived by the public and in the future.²⁹ This also means that "most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include, and the omissions of potential problem definitions...may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience."³⁰ When receivers only receive part of the information, they are likely unaware of the other explanations being given of the discussed issue. This gives the group or individual behind the chosen message influence since this typically means a different group's view of the issue was not included.³¹

If, for example, the fact that people are living longer is framed as causing a strain on the pension system, then it will likely lead to the general public to view the issue as something that directly affects them and potentially in a negative way, since most people contribute and do/will receive a pension. What the public does not hear is that this also means average life expectancy has increased, people are able to work longer, and live more active lives in old age. Such a frame may create negative associations with the growing older population, which results in people having generally negative opinions towards aging. Those trying to stress the positives are no longer heard and instead, people focus on the negative consequences.

For many issues, they are defined as problems once advocates or policy makers have found a potential solution they want to propose or believe a solution can be found.³² The solution also has to be realistic in terms of expected costs and feasibility.³³ If politicians think there is a promising solution and it is an issue worthy of their time, then they are more likely to support the efforts to define the problem and place it on the agenda. The types of issues defined as problems usually have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Severity: The seriousness of the problem and its consequences.
- Incidence: A representation of "the overall scope of people affected as well as those groups disproportionately at risk".

²⁸ John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (New York: Longman, 2003), 111.

²⁹ Charles D. Elder and Roger W. Cobb, "Agenda-Building and the Politics of Aging," *Policy Studies Journal* 13, no. 1 (1984): 115.

³⁰ Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," 54.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 55; Entman, "Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power," 164.

³² Elder and Cobb, 123.

³³ *Ibid.*, 124.

- Novelty: The uniqueness of an issue has positive and negative effects. If an issue is too unique, it may be difficult to find a solution and people may become frustrated if it takes policy makers too long to find a solution.
- Proximity: If individuals feel directly affected by an issue, then it will help draw attention to the need for action as those affected may be more vocal in their demands from policy makers.
- Crisis: A dire situation that requires long, overdue action.³⁴

By having one or more of these characteristics, an issue is more likely to be seen as a problem that should be addressed.

Linguistic and visual choices used to describe the issue are also important because they influence how the topic is presented and received by the public. These coined phrases and symbols, then, tend to elicit certain thoughts or ideas when people hear them, which allows them to be used to shape the debate. Roger W. Cobb and Charles D. Elder argue that issues defined in unambiguous and non-technical manners will have a greater chance of reaching a larger audience.³⁵ If the rhetoric changes, which is possible and common, then this can alter the general understanding of the problem.³⁶ In the context of the aging population, for example, non-technical terms were common, such as “war of generations” and “demographic chance/challenge”, which drove the attitude-related associations towards the issue and also created a broad frame in which the issue could be discussed.

Following Entman’s work on the concept of framing, additional research was conducted to contribute to the expansion of this idea. Researchers have identified specific types of frames that should also be considered: Equivalency frames “present an issue in different ways with ‘the use of different, but logically equivalent, words or phrases’”, while emphasis frames “highlight a particular ‘subset of potentially relevant considerations.’”³⁷ The latter is also known as issue framing and like Entman’s original definition, is a process of selecting and highlighting specific aspects of an issue that the audience can understand in order to evaluate the issue or those associated with it.³⁸ Martin Rein and Donald Schön argued that frames have to first be constructed, which means “that from some evidence we must infer interpretations about belief and meaning and implications for action to deal with coping and facing.”³⁹ They

³⁴ Rochefort and Cobb, 64-66.

³⁵ Roger W. Cobb and Charles D. Elder, *Participation in American Politics: The Dynamics of Agenda Building* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 112, 20.

³⁶ Rochefort and Cobb, 56.

³⁷ Wouter van Atteveldt et al., "Associative Framing: A unified method for measuring media frames and the media agenda" (Dresden, 2006), 5.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Martin Rein and Donald Schön, "Frame-Critical Policy Analysis and Frame-Reflective Policy Practice," *Knowledge and Policy: The International Journal of Knowledge Transfer and Utilization* 9, no. 1 (1996): 90.

presented the concept of rhetorical frames, which use policy-relevant texts, e.g., various statements that have been made, to construct a frame, and action frames, which use observations of patterns of action to establish a frame.⁴⁰

Given the myriad of work on the impact of framing, only considering when aging was discussed is not enough. By using, an examination of the materials can highlight differences in how groups either included or omitted certain details regarding the aging German population, and the impact this had on the development and direction of the aging discourse. Additionally, if researchers were producing studies that focused on one specific aspect of aging for several years, but the media or policy makers never acknowledged these studies until the focus of the research changed, then that is a potentially important factor to take into consideration.

Agenda Setting

The way issues are framed or defined can help them gain a place on the agenda, whether it is the political agenda, the media agenda, or the public's agenda. Based on the definition by Cobb and Elder, an agenda refers "to a general set of political controversies that will be viewed at any point in time as falling within the range of legitimate concerns meriting the attention of the polity."⁴¹ To distinguish agenda setting from problem definition, Weiss explained:

Problem definition is concerned with the organization of a set of facts, beliefs and perceptions – how people think about circumstances. Agenda setting refers to the process by which some problems come to public attention at given times and places.⁴²

An important aspect of agenda setting is salience or the extent to which an issue is perceived to be important. The more salience an issue has, the higher up on the agenda it may land.⁴³ An agenda helps to direct everyone's focus to the same problems at that particular moment.⁴⁴ As this research field has developed, the new research suggests that "the media not only tells us what to think about, but also how to think about it, and consequently, what to think."⁴⁵

Research has identified different types of agendas. The media agenda reflects what issues the media sees as most salient, which heavily influences the public's agenda. These agendas then influence the political agenda and if an item is not on the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 90-92.

⁴¹ Cobb and Elder, 14.

⁴² David Dery, "Agenda Setting and Problem Definition," *Policy Studies* 21, no. 1 (2000).

⁴³ Dearing and Rogers, 8.

⁴⁴ Volker Schneider and Frank Janning, *Politikfeldanalyse: Akteure, Diskurse und Netzwerke in der öffentlichen Politik* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 53.

⁴⁵ Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Evolution of Agenda-Setting Research: Twenty-Five Years in the Marketplace of Ideas," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 2 (1993): 65.

agenda, policy makers are unlikely to address it.⁴⁶ Cobb, Ross, and Ross distinguish between the public agenda and the formal agenda. The public agenda consists of issues that are exposed to a high level of interest and visibility, are believed to require action by a large portion of the public, and are recognized as a concern by some members of the government. In comparison, the formal agenda consists of issues that official policy makers have decided to address.⁴⁷ It is the agenda that determines what will be discussed and what policy makers focus on, and if an issue is not on the agenda, then it will probably be ignored. However, according to Cobb and Elder, once an issue reaches the agenda, it will likely always have a place on the agenda whenever it arises. This means it is difficult to put new items on the agenda and for new items to find a spot on the agenda, they must gain a significant amount of attention and support. This is why it is important for issues to be defined within the context of an issue already on the agenda.⁴⁸

One could argue that the larger issue of population aging was not seen to be highly salient and originally had a difficult time finding a place on the various agendas. But once aging was framed and defined within the context of a different issue that was already on the agenda, then it was able to gain a foothold. For example, health care and the pension system are standard issues on the agenda that move up and down over time, depending on how the issue is currently being. Since these issues have a high level of salience and are always somewhere on the agenda, it was easier for aging to receive attention within these frames. These initial debates then introduced the overall issue of population aging, which was later re-framed and re-defined to become its own issue on the agendas. As will be seen in this research, I will look at the research, politics, and media agendas to identify when aging found a place on them and how this evolved over time.

2.3 The Individual Actors

Researchers

Researchers⁴⁹ are the individuals “directly involved in some aspect of the practice of science.”⁵⁰ For the sake of this project, science is a combination of the idea that “science is the systematic enterprise of gathering knowledge about the world and

⁴⁶ Dearing and Rogers, 8.

⁴⁷ Roger W. Cobb et al., "Agenda Building as a Comparative Political Process," *The American Political Science Review* 70, no. 1 (1976): 126-27.

⁴⁸ Cobb and Elder, 158.

⁴⁹ For this project, the terms “research”, “science”, “researcher”, “scientist”, etc. will be used interchangeably.

⁵⁰ T.W. Burns et al., "Science communication: A contemporary definition," *Public Understanding of Science* 12, no. 2 (2003): 184.

organizing and condensing that knowledge into testable laws and theories”⁵¹, and the idea that it also incorporates fields like mathematics, statistics, medicine, and other related fields, which in this specific case includes demography.⁵² Researchers are the ones that gather this knowledge in order to provide answers, likely with the hopes that their work will help improve life for society.⁵³

It is not just enough that researchers conduct this work to find answers, but they also have to find a way to share their work and findings. For most researchers, the central way in which to publicize their work is to write a scientific article that is then published in a scientific journal. As argued by Peter Weingart, research that is not published in an article or another form does not exist in the scientific community based on the assumption that information shared in these scientific publications is seen by the research community. Research that has been cited, according to Weingart, is the clearest indication that the research has not only been seen, but also processed and thought about by the readers. If a publication is not cited, then the process of disseminating this research is essentially over, even if there is still a chance it will be discovered some day.⁵⁴

For one’s research to draw attention, it is crucial that the researcher has a credible reputation. This means that his or her research is seen as reliable and methodologically sound. Since publications in a scientific journal are the main method of dissemination among the scientific community, the peer review process involved in having an article published helps to ensure this credibility. As part of this system, colleagues and other experts in the field review the article in question to ensure the research is original, scientifically sound, and not fabricated. If a submitted article cannot fulfill these requirements, then it is rejected. This review process helps to maintain the trust of researchers in the general process and maintain science’s credibility and legitimacy among the public.⁵⁵

In addition to the necessity of publishing one’s research in a scientific, peer reviewed journal, researchers should also strive to share their findings with the general or lay public. This includes all individuals that are not experts in a specific field, meaning that physicists, for example, would still be part of the lay public when

⁵¹ American Association of Physics Teachers, "What is science?," *American Journal of Physics* 67, no. 8 (1999).

⁵² Burns et al., 185.

⁵³ Gert G. Wagner, "Welche Rolle kann wissenschaftliche Beratung in der Politik sinnvollerweise spielen?," in *Wissenschaftliche Politikberatung im Praxistest*, ed. Peter Weingart and Gert G. Wagner (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2015), 199.

⁵⁴ Peter Weingart, *Die Stunde der Wahrheit? Zum Verhältnis der Wissenschaft zu Politik, Wirtschaft und Medien in der Wissensgesellschaft* (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2001), 100, 04-05.

⁵⁵ "The Lure of the Mass Media and Its Repercussions on Science," in *The Sciences' Media Connection –Public Communication and its Repercussions*, ed. Simone Rödder, et al. (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2012), 19; *Die Stunde der Wahrheit? Zum Verhältnis der Wissenschaft zu Politik, Wirtschaft und Medien in der Wissensgesellschaft*, 284-85.

the topic at hand is related to biology.⁵⁶ Already in 1985, a survey of 800 scientists at the Forschungszentrum Jülich (a research center) found that most believed it was an “ethical obligation” to share scientific findings with the public, especially those that receive funding for their projects from public funds.⁵⁷ This survey was conducted at a time when the movement for scientists to make more of an effort to communicate their findings with the public was beginning in the United Kingdom. The movement was initiated by the Royal Society and known as “The Public Understanding of Science” (PUS).⁵⁸

A similar effort began in Germany in 1999 with the establishment of *Wissenschaft in Dialog* (WiD, Science in Dialogue). The *Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft (Stifterverband)*⁵⁹ founded WiD based on a joint memorandum, which began the German movement of “Public Understanding of Sciences and Humanities” (PUSH).⁶⁰ Leading German research institutes were also a part of this initiative, which included the Max Planck Society, the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, DFG), and the Leibniz Association (*Leibniz-Gemeinschaft*). The goal of WiD and the founding institutions was, and is, to support researchers in their efforts to present their work in an understandable manner for non-specialists.⁶¹ However, this specific research focuses on the period of 1966-1997⁶², which was before the PUSH movement officially began in Germany. Therefore, it is not seen as having played a central role in the coverage of the aging German population. It is possible that researchers in Germany were aware of this movement when it began in the UK and may have tried to make more of an effort on an individual level to reach out to the public. Future research that looks at the time period when this initiative was in practice should have this in mind since it was a conscientious attempt by numerous research organizations and foundations, as well as the German government, to support and foster efforts to share scientific findings with the public.⁶³

The push for better communicating research with the public was a positive development since in Germany, the public’s trust or interest in science was not

⁵⁶ Burns et al., 184.

⁵⁷ H.P. Peters and J. Krüger, "Der Transfer wissenschaftlichen Wissens in die Öffentlichkeit aus der Sicht von Wissenschaftlern," in *Spezielle Berichte der Kernforschungsanlage Jülich*, ed. Kernforschungsanlage Jülich GmbH (Jülich: Zentralbibliothek der Kernforschungsanlage Jülich GmbH, 1985), 11.

⁵⁸ Steve Miller, "Public understanding of science at the crossroads," *Public Understanding of Science* 10, no. 2 (2001): 115.

⁵⁹ As stated on their website, the Stifterverband “is a joint initiative started by companies and foundations – the only one in Germany to be devoted entirely to consulting, networking and promoting improvements in the fields of education, science and innovation.” See: Stifterverband, "The Stifterverband," <https://www.stifterverband.org/english>.

⁶⁰ *Wissenschaft im Dialog*, "Geschichte und Meilensteine," *Wissenschaft im Dialog*, <http://www.wissenschaft-im-dialog.de/ueber-uns/geschichte/#c303>.

⁶¹ "Memorandum: Dialog Wissenschaft und Gesellschaft," (Bonn: *Wissenschaft im Dialog*, 1999).

⁶² See the Chapter 3 for an explanation for selecting this time period.

⁶³ Ulrich Schnabel, "Zeit für einen neuen Push," *Gegenworte* 19 (2008).

overwhelmingly strong. In a 1977 Eurobarometer on science and public opinion⁶⁴, Germany had the lowest support for the notion that science is one of the most important factors in the improvement of life. Germany also expressed some of the lowest interest in scientific information and to discuss scientific information with others.⁶⁵ Therefore, interest in science, particularly social science, which did not seem to be considered in the Eurobarometer survey, was not very high in Germany during this time. This lack of public interest may have played a role in the lack of development in the demography field as there was not strong interest in science overall among the public.

A. Think Tanks and Associations as Sources of Research in Germany: Necessary, but Not without Controversy

An important contributor to research is think tanks. James G. McGann and Erik Johnson argue that policy makers do not have time for in-depth research of all topics they debate, and researchers may not be able to study all the topics covered by policy makers. Therefore, think tanks fill this gap and can research specific topics and provide that information to policy makers in an easy-to-understand manner.⁶⁶

R. Kent Weaver and McGann define think tanks as “policy research organizations that have significant autonomy from government and from societal interests, such as firms, interest groups, and political parties.”⁶⁷ According to their definition, think tanks:

- “[C]arry out basic research on policy problems and policy solutions” similarly to researchers at a university.
- Provide “advice on immediate policy concerns that are being considered by government officials”.
- Evaluate government programs.
- Facilitate “issue networks and the exchange of ideas”.
- Provide personnel to work for the government or are a place for policy makers no longer in power to work.
- Interpret policies and current events for the media.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ These surveys focused on science and public opinion were not conducted on a regular basis, so a change in attitudes cannot be easily tracked.

⁶⁵ Commission of the European Communities, “Science and European Public Opinion,” 1977).

⁶⁶ James G. McGann and Erik C. Johnson, *Comparative Think Tanks, Politics and Public Policy* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 12.

⁶⁷ R. Kent Weaver and James G. McGann, “Think Tanks and Civil Societies in a Time of Change,” in *Think Tanks & Civil Societies*, ed. James G. McGann and R. Kent Weaver (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5–6.

Their definition and concept of think tanks is based on the United States. Weaver and McGann see think tanks as being nonprofit organizations that are independent of the state.⁶⁹ But for this research, think tanks should be classified differently to fit the German context and the authors acknowledge that the U.S. definition cannot be applied in all international contexts.⁷⁰ In Germany, state-sponsored academic research is more common.⁷¹ There are research institutes that are university-based and non-university-based, and these non-university-based institutes can be classified as either state-sponsored or privately funded. State-sponsored research institutes include organizations like the Max Planck Society and the Leibnitz Association, who receive 50 percent of their funding from the federal government and the other 50 percent from the state and “work at the intersection between research and applied research.”⁷² Privately funded institutions tend to be more advocacy focused and are run or funded by trade unions or, for example, the Association of German Industries and German Employers. Studies have shown that in Western Europe, think tanks that rely on corporate funding do not necessarily just produce research that supports the political agendas of these corporations.⁷³

Germany also has a number of political foundations (*Stiftungen*) that are linked to the major political parties. Alan J. Day argues that these think tanks are the closest comparison to “‘full-service’ U.S. think tanks in that they cover a wide policy spectrum and have large financial resources,” however, they receive public funding through state subsidies to political parties and their research divisions.⁷⁴ It is important to stress that these think tanks in Germany are required to be financially and organizationally independent of the parent political party; they cannot participate in political campaigns; their activities and publications must be available to everyone, not just party members; and, they cannot require employees of the think tank to be members of the parent political party.⁷⁵

Another organization that policy makers may turn to for information are associations (*Verbände*). These organizations represent the interests of various groups – from different industries to groups of individuals in a specific line of work.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁰ “However, we also recognize this autonomy is relative rather than an absolute term, and that the operational definition of think tanks must differ from region to region.” Ibid., 5; Alan J. Day, “Think Tanks in Western Europe,” *ibid.*, 103-04.

⁷¹ Peter R. Weilemann, “Experiences of a Multidimensional Think Tank: The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung,” *ibid.*, 169.

⁷² Ibid., 170.

⁷³ Day, 125.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 116-17.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 123-24.

⁷⁶ Examples include *Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie* (BDI), *Deutscher Frauenrat*, *Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (DGB), and *Deutscher Bauernverband* (DBV). Werner Reutter, “Deutschland,” in *Verbände und Verbandssysteme in Westeuropa*, ed. Werner Reutter and Peter Rütters (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2001), 81.

Associations possess a large amount of expert knowledge and policy makers turn to them for information and policy consulting. They view themselves as think tanks and therefore, are also policy consultants.⁷⁷ Researchers join associations because they provide a forum for an exchange among other colleagues working on similar topics. By having all of these experts in associations focused on specific topics, it becomes more economically sensible for policy makers to turn to associations and similar information-producing organizations instead of carrying out the studies and analyses themselves.⁷⁸

Some may argue that associations should participate in political decision-making processes because it allows for societal interests to be integrated into the policies being developed and legitimizes policy-related decisions.⁷⁹ Manfred Mai even claimed they are one of the most important actors in politics; the only difference between associations and political parties is that they are not up for election.⁸⁰ However, the use of information from these groups can be more controversial since the information provided by associations are interest-driven, meaning the underlying message supports a specific stance on an issue, i.e., one that is favorable to the associations. The relationship between associations and politicians has been developed over time and it is not unheard of for politicians to work for unions following their time in office or for association executives to join the government. In addition, the presence of association representatives at events or events held by associations with politicians creates a close relationship among policy makers and associations. These relationships are not always transparent and therefore, even if politicians gain access to a large pool of expertise, this dependency on their knowledge may lead to policy makers being viewed as not independent from the interests of these groups.⁸¹

B. Funding Agencies: The Influence of Financial Support on Research

Funding is an important aspect of research because it is difficult for researchers to conduct their work without appropriate financial support. Adequate funding enables research organizations to offer an infrastructure that will attract other researchers and allow them to carry out the research that interests them. As argued by Dietmar Braun:

Together with the ‘cultural capital’...and the social capital, the economic capital determines the overall capacity of individual scientists, of research

⁷⁷ Manfred Mai, "Verbände und Politikberatung," in *Handbuch Politikberatung*, ed. Svenja Falk, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 269–70.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁷⁹ Reutter, "Einleitung," 18.

⁸⁰ Mai, 268.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 270, 73.

groups, institutions or disciplines to participate within the research process. The scientists and disciplines well equipped with scientific capital (as the sum of cultural, social and economic capital) will predominate within the research process and it will be their line of thought and their cognitive scripts which will be prevalent in the cognitive development of science.⁸²

Researchers can seek out specific funding opportunities that will allow them to research topics of interest to them or they can tailor their interests to the calls published by the funding agencies. This ability of funding agencies to determine who carries out the research and what is researched through the parameters they set gives them an influential role in the development of a topic's discourse.⁸³

Braun created a classification system to categorize various funding agencies. He wrote that most funding agencies are "quasi-public organisations financed by the state in order to define and execute a large part of the science policy."⁸⁴ They may differ in their dependence on political authority, but the majority has the ability to determine their own programs. There are three different types: science-based, strategic, and political. Science-based funding agencies are agencies that specifically "serve the interests of the science community", while strategic funding agencies are created to promote research on a particular topic or in a specific field, such as health or the environment. Political funding agencies serve the interests of ministries. The project agencies of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft*, BMBW) are one example, which provides financial support through its various funding programs focused on a specific topic or area of research.⁸⁵

There are two main types of groups that select which projects receive funding: anonymous scientific referees or scientific peer review groups. In these review processes, the reviewers are mainly responsible for checking the scientific quality behind the proposals. Once proposals have passed the first round of review, scientific boards then review the project proposals, but focus more on whether the project fits with the funding agency's overall mission.⁸⁶ Critics argue that the review process makes it difficult for young or less reputable scientists to receive funding. Cronyism is seen to be a problem among reviewers who award money to researchers they know and the scientific groups that belong to the same network. Reviewers also tend to support the projects that are similar to the fields they work in, rather than proposals submitted from other disciplines.⁸⁷

⁸² Dietmar Braun, "The role of funding agencies in the cognitive development of science," *Research Policy* 27, no. 8 (1998): 809.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 809-10.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 810.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 810-11.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 814.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 816.

This review process highlights the influence funding agencies have over the development of science. Not only do reviewers decide what proposals to accept based on their own interests or their established networks, but the funding agencies themselves decide what topics they are interested in and want to further. They set the research guidelines and requirements that scientists try to fulfill and shape their research around in order to receive financial backing.⁸⁸ Scientists that want to study new topics may have difficulty finding funding and successfully expanding that particular field of science.

When considering how non-researchers approach the findings, funding from public or private organizations does have an impact on how the research is viewed. A study by Christine R. Critchley and Dianne Nicol found that research funded by private institutions is not always as accepted as research funded by public institutions.⁸⁹ For example, research that was funded by the German government to look into aging may be more widely accepted than research that was funded by the Robert Bosch Foundation. This could mean that early research carried out by Robert Bosch Foundation-funded institutions was not given as much attention as research that was later conducted by institutes funded by the German government. Distinctions will be made between private and public funding sources, but this specific research project will not be able to conclusively identify differences and causal relationships in how the research was accepted due to its funding source.

In addition to specific funding agencies, universities and individual research institutions are also examples of public investments in research. The continual funding of such organizations by the public, i.e., the state, are signs of political legitimization.⁹⁰ However, when these same institutions begin to receive additional funding from outside organizations, such as from various industries, then closer attention should be paid since it is possible that research not in support of the views of the funding industry will not be published. This creates pressure on the participating researchers and may influence what results they decide to publish.⁹¹ When looking at the research provided by think tanks, which in most cases should be independent, it should be considered whether the think tank is state-sponsored or privately funded.⁹² Therefore, when available, the source of funding will be considered.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 809-10.

⁸⁹ Christine R. Critchley and Dianne Nicol, "Understanding the impact of commercialization on public support for scientific research: Is it about the funding source or the organization conducting the research?," *Public Understanding of Science* 20, no. 3 (2011): 354, 61.

⁹⁰ Weingart, *Die Stunde der Wahrheit? Zum Verhältnis der Wissenschaft zu Politik, Wirtschaft und Medien in der Wissensgesellschaft*, 94-95.

⁹¹ Ibid., 230.

⁹² See previous section.

Policy Makers

Based on the definition by Diane Stone, Simon Maxwell, and Michael Keating, formal policy makers encompass politicians, civil servants at the senior level and appointed officials, and bureaucrats.⁹³ Specifically, this includes members of the Bundestag, federal ministers, and those leading departments at the federal ministries, members of parliament committees, and leading representatives of the political parties in Germany. Stone et al.'s definition also includes appointees and members of advisory panels, commissions, and cabinets, but for this research, I will continue to classify those individuals based on their original backgrounds. For example, researchers that are members of government committees will continue to be seen as researchers since it is their expertise and knowledge in the field that qualified them to be on the committees. Policy makers are the individuals responsible for creating the legal policies that govern and set the course of societal development. When appropriate, a distinction will be made between policy makers and politicians since the latter may have different motives in their decision-making process than all policy makers due to being elected office holders.

A. The Legislative Process of the German Government

To better understand the policy-making process in Germany, it is necessary to present a brief description of the structure of the German government and how agenda setting works in the German parliament, the Bundestag. First and foremost, Germany is a federal parliamentary republic with an executive, legislative, and judicial branch.⁹⁴ The Bundestag, whose members are elected by the German electorate, and the Bundesrat, which consists of representatives from the German states (*Länder*), are the two bodies that work together to create legislation in Germany.⁹⁵ The President of Germany proposes the Chancellor, who is then elected by the Bundestag. As Chancellor, they nominate the ministers for the various ministries, which are also the members of the Chancellor's cabinet, and is the leader of the federal government.⁹⁶

⁹³ Diane Stone et al., "Bridging Research and Policy" (paper presented at the an international workshop funded by the UK Department for International Development, Warwick University, 2001), 21.

⁹⁴ This research will focus mainly on the legislative branch, but will also include the activities of the executive. No specific attention will be given to the judicial branch. More information about the specific way in which these branches will be analyzed can be found in Chapter 3.

⁹⁵ Bertelsmann Foundation, *Newpolitik: Germany Policy. Translated*. (Washington, D.C.: Bertelsmann Foundation, 2016).

⁹⁶ Die Bundeskanzlerin, "Aufgaben der Bundeskanzlerin," <https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkin-de/kanzleramt/aufgaben-der-bundeskanzlerin>.

A bill can be initiated by the executive branch, a majority in the Bundesrat, and factions or a minimum of five percent of Bundestag members.⁹⁷ Once a piece of legislation has been proposed, it is first discussed by the Bundesrat (step one), who issues a statement (*Stellungnahme*), then moves on to the Bundestag for debate and any editing (step two). The Bundestag holds three readings (*Lesungen*) to debate the proposed legislation. In the first reading, members use the time to present their positions, mainly to the public and media, and not to persuade other members for their support. Following the first reading, the legislation is sent to be more closely discussed by either one or more committee (*Ausschuss*). These committees often hold additional hearings with experts and interest group representatives to gain specialist information about the issues addressed in the legislation, to garner attention for the bill, and to expand participation in the debate. Members usually invite experts that can either provide support for their positions towards the bill or that contradict their opposition's view. Once the committees have completed their work, they publish their recommendations for a decision and a report (*Beschluss-empfehlung und Bericht*). During the second reading of the bill, members can make motions for amendments to the legislation. If no motions are made, the Bundestag moves straight into the third reading to vote as long as two-thirds of members agree. Upon passage, it returns to the Bundesrat (step three), where it is voted on again. The bill can either be passed, rejected, or sent for mediation between a select number of members of both the Bundestag and Bundesrat. If a compromise is reached, then it returns to the Bundestag to repeat steps two and three. If no compromise is reached, then the bill returns to the Bundesrat, where they vote to either accept or reject it.⁹⁸

The Bundestag is comprised of factions of German political parties. During the time period that will be explored in this project, there were six main parties in Germany: the Social Democratic Party (SPD); the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Christian Social Union (CSU), who form the Union faction; the Free Democratic Party (FDP); the Alliance 90/The Greens (Greens), which entered the Bundestag in 1983; and, the Left (DIE LINKE), which used to be known as the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and first entered the Bundestag in 1990. The seats in the Bundestag are allocated to the parties based on the percentage of votes they received during the election, which typically happens every four years, unless the government is dissolved before the election.

⁹⁷ Ulrich Sieberer, "Agenda Setting in the German Bundestag: A Weak Government in a Consensus Democracy," *German Politics* 15, no. 1 (2006): 57.

⁹⁸ Bertelsmann Foundation; Susanne Stasser and Frank Sobolewski, *So arbeitet der Deutsche Bundestag: Organisation und Arbeitsweise die Gesetzgebung des Bundes* (Rheinbreitenbach: NDV GmbH & Co. KG, 2018), 113-32.

B. Official Agenda-Setting Process of the Bundestag

In the Bundestag, the Council of Elders (*Ältestenrat*) is the main body responsible for setting the agenda for the plenary sessions. It also assists the President of the Bundestag in conducting business and ensuring that agreement is reached between the parliamentary groups. This Council consists of the President of the Bundestag and his or her deputies, and 23 members of the Bundestag from the various factions based on their proportions in the Bundestag.⁹⁹

The Council sets the agenda by determining what topics will be discussed, how long the debate will last, and how it will be structured. They deliberate and agree upon the agenda a week in advance of the said plenary session. All of the various items that members, parties, committees, or the cabinet submit for inclusion on the agenda are reviewed in this meeting. It is possible to make additions to the agenda, but to be changed, the President must be made aware of this addition before 6pm the day before the plenary session and it must be agreed upon prior to the first point of the agenda being called to order. There is the option to raise a point of order and try to amend the structure or length of the debate, but this is rare. How much time is allotted to each fraction is determined via a formula that is set at the beginning of the legislative period and is based on the relative strength of the parliamentary groups. It is up to the parliamentary groups to decide who will speak on their behalf.¹⁰⁰

According to Gerhard Loewenberg, in addition to the formal rules in place about agenda setting, there are also informal norms. Before the Council meets to discuss the agenda, the parliamentary secretaries (*Parlamentarische Geschäftsführer*) meet to discuss the potential agenda items and then reach a written agreement prior to the meeting. This is possible because of the work done by the working groups (*Arbeitskreise*) of the parliamentary groups. They are responsible for deciding the substantive positions of the party and making sure their priorities make it onto the parliamentary agenda first.¹⁰¹ The parliamentary secretaries of the various parties communicate with each other to help achieve consensus. By achieving consensus, according to Loewenberg, it helps maintain the joint control over the agenda and keeps the differences between the parties manageable.¹⁰²

One may assume that because the Council of Elders is proportional to the party distribution in the Bundestag, the ruling parties would easily control the agenda

⁹⁹ Gerhard Loewenberg, "Agenda-setting in the German Bundestag: Origins and consequences of party dominance," *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 9, no. 3 (2003): 20; Stasser and Sobolewski, 32; Susanne Linn and Frank Sobolewski, *The German Bundestag: Functions and Procedures*, trans. Language Service of the German Bundestag (Rheinbreitbach: NDV GmbH & Co. KG, 2015), 28.

¹⁰⁰ Stasser and Sobolewski, 32-33; Linn and Sobolewski, 28-29.

¹⁰¹ Loewenberg, 24.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 26.

and make sure their issues are always discussed in a timely manner, and legislation or topics the ruling government does not completely agree with are just delayed. But this is not the case. Instead, it is expected that consensus is reached, and decisions made in regard to the agenda are found to be agreeable by all parliamentary groups. The Rule of Procedure (*Geschäftsordnung*) states that each parliamentary group is entitled to have their bill placed on the agenda and discussed within three weeks.¹⁰³ As of the 18th legislative period, an agreement was made that directs how items are ordered on the agenda, the formats of the debate, and which parliamentary group chooses the topics of the two main timed debates on Thursdays and the first two items on the agenda for Friday.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, it appears that now and in the past, parliamentary groups in the Bundestag, regardless of if they were in the majority or minority, still had the ability to influence the agenda fairly equally. Overall, the minority groups seem to still have the ability to push their issues of interest on the agenda and there are enough checks in place to ensure their concerns are not ignored by the majority parties.

A major observation that can be made in this process is that the executive branch is not involved in the setting of the agenda. It is possible for a junior minister to be at the Council meetings, but they are not permitted to have a say in the final decision. The executive is also only allowed to initiate a bill, as previously mentioned, but they cannot submit any amendments once a bill has been introduced. This ability only lies with individual members of the Bundestag or by a faction.¹⁰⁵ The right of the executive to be heard does give them the ability to direct the actual discussion since they can (re)introduce their problem definitions should the debate be argued in a different direction.

As can be seen by this brief overview of the German government and its agenda setting structure, it is a decentralized and institutionalized process. Consensus is an important and necessary element in order to move forward, whether it is related to adding an item to the agenda or having a piece of legislation pass.¹⁰⁶ This aspect will be taken into consideration when analyzing what issues did reach the agenda in the time frame under question since it is now apparent that if something is

¹⁰³ Stasser and Sobolewski, 112; Linn and Sobolewski, 106. There are several provisions in place that support the minority parties in the Bundestag to ensure their voices are heard: A minority of members (at least five percent) has the ability to block additions to the agenda at the beginning of the session, can have their resolutions added to the agenda no later than three weeks after it was introduced, can have committees report ten weeks after a bill was referred to them, can insist on a first reading debate on a specific bill, and can submit major interpellations to the government, or call for a debate on matters of topical interest (*Aktuelle Stunde*). Loewenberg, 22-23.

¹⁰⁴ Stasser and Sobolewski, 64; Linn and Sobolewski, 58-59.

¹⁰⁵ Sieberer, 57.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 67; Loewenberg, 27.

discussed in the Bundestag, it is likely that at least the members of the Council agree it is a topic that deserves attention.

The Media

Most people turn to the news media¹⁰⁷ to learn about what is going on in their communities, their home country, and around the world. It can be assumed that the news media is the public's main source of information about politics, the economy, sports, and culture. Björn Fjæstad summarizes the main tasks of journalists as the three C's: chronicle, criticism, and commentary. Journalists inform readers about the latest developments, protect them and warn them of potential dangers, and/or explain and interpret information.¹⁰⁸ This includes science-related news since this is likely the only way the public learns about new research.¹⁰⁹

What cannot be forgotten is the fact: The news media/publishers are businesses. They have to consider what is best for them from a business perspective, while simultaneously fulfilling their role as public informers. As Michael Gurevitch and Jay G. Blumler point out, "The aim of serving the public by catering to its immediate tastes and interests is likely to conflict with the aim of providing what the public needs to know."¹¹⁰ Newsrooms also face the challenge of making sure all opinions are represented, especially in the context of the opinions of different political parties.¹¹¹ But not only do journalists have to write about things that are socially important, but they also have to think about their readers' interests. Amber Boydston points out:

While journalistic ideals may often lead news outlets and their shareholders to feel as though they are operating under a 'not-for-profit' business model, news outlets simply cannot function as 'for-loss' outfits. A news outlet's financial obligations have several implications for the news-generation process. Not all of these implications are at odds with the ideals of good journalism. Often, the stories that help sell papers really are stories that citizens *should* know about. And in order to be successful financially, a news outlet must maintain a strong journalistic reputation, as a loss in integrity will swiftly lead to a loss in profits.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ "News media" will be used interchangeably with "media" to describe print media. Audiovisual media will not be included in this analysis and therefore, is not referenced when these terms are used.

¹⁰⁸ Björn Fjæstad, "Why journalists report science as they do," in *Journalism, Science and Society: Science Communication between News and Public Relations*, ed. Martin Bauer and Massimiano Bucchi (New York: Routledge, 2007), 126.

¹⁰⁹ Mike S. Schäfer, "Taking stock: A meta-analysis of studies on the media's coverage of science," *Public Understanding of Science* 21, no. 6 (2012): 651.

¹¹⁰ Michael Gurevitch and Jay G. Blumler, "Political Communication Systems and Democratic Values," in *Democracy and the Mass Media*, ed. Judith Lichtenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 270-71.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Amber E. Boydston, *Making the News: Politics, Media, and Agenda Setting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 46.

To help them maintain financial stability, news outlets have to maintain readership and attract new readers. This is achieved by having high quality news, but also by having news that other outlets do not have, i.e., “to scoop and not be scooped.”¹¹³

In simple terms, journalists and editors heavily impact what items become news and how the public discussion is shaped based on what is printed. As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the media agenda heavily influences the public’s agenda and what the public deems to be important. Therefore, several aspects related to the media’s decisions should be considered, such as the factors considered when deciding what is written about and how an article’s placement in the final publication affects how an issue is acknowledged. The following will present existing research about the news value theory and influential factors on readership.

A. News Value Theory

To understand what stories are selected for publication, there are a variety of theories and concepts that try to explain this process, such as the gatekeeping theory or the news bias theory.¹¹⁴ For this research, I have chosen to apply the news value theory because it strives to understand how events become news and what factors influence the decision to publish a story. This theory, however, does not take into consideration that each journalist also has his or her own opinions and interests. Unless writing an opinion piece, journalists are supposed to provide an objective point of view, but the possibility of personal opinions influencing what is written about or how it is presented cannot be completely forgotten.¹¹⁵ This will be considered when analyzing opinion pieces found for this research.

The overall reason for using the news value theory is that it establishes a basis for explaining why journalists and/or news editors chose to write and publish articles about the aging German population – why the topic was newsworthy. The theory is also particularly useful in understanding the placement and size/length of the story by comparing the other stories that were also published that same day.¹¹⁶ By analyzing the published stories and the context in which they were published, one may be able to understand why that particular story was published when it was and why the specific context it was framed in was of interest. Additionally, the change in the

¹¹³ Ibid., 47.

¹¹⁴ To read more about these two theories, see: Walter Gieber, "Across the Desk: A Study of 16 Telegraph Editors," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 33 (1956); David Manning White, "The 'Gate Keeper': A Case Study in the Selection of News," *Journalism Quarterly* 27 (1950); William P. Cassidy, "Gatekeeping Similar for Online, Print Journalists," *Newspaper Research Journal* 27, no. 2 (2006); Ruth C. Flegel and Steven H. Chaffee, "Influences of Editors, Readers, and Personal Opinions on Reporters," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1971).

¹¹⁵ Hans Mathias Kepplinger, *Journalismus als Beruf* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 125.

¹¹⁶ Joachim Friedrich Staab, "The Role of News Factors in News Selection: A Theoretical Reconsideration," *European Journal of Communication* 5 (1990): 437.

various factors that the story fulfills can be monitored over time, as well as the variance in where the story was placed in the newspaper or magazine, i.e., front page or blurb in the middle of the science section. An early story, for example, may have been printed because it was about a topic not frequently written about, but as time went on, more similar stories were written because the consonance/demand increased, and it related to a greater portion of society.

The news value theory was introduced by Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge in 1965.¹¹⁷ They identified twelve factors that are considered when deciding to publish a story, and each factor acts like a link in the chain. These specific factors are taken into consideration and focus more on the types of stories being published and the other events that are happening simultaneously, which also need to be covered, instead of only looking at who decides to publish an article, e.g., gatekeeping theory. Galtung and Ruge analyzed four Norwegian newspapers and found articles about three different crises. Two of the crises were similar and happened around the same time, while the third crises took place several years later, but was similar to the first two.¹¹⁸ They hypothesized that the more characteristics an event had, the more likely it would become news and those same characteristics would be accentuated in the published story. The first eight factors they considered were:

- Frequency: The time span needed for an event to happen. For example, an event that lasts over a long time period will likely not be reported on each day until it reaches an important milestone.
- Threshold (absolute intensity, intensity increase): The bigger the event, the more likely it will be reported.
- Unambiguity: The more straightforward and easier to understand something is, the better the chances are of it being written about.
- Meaningfulness: An issue or event needs to have cultural proximity or relevance to readers.
- Consonance: A person either predicts or wants something to happen, so they are mentally prepared and receptive to the information when the event happens.
- Unexpectedness: If an event comes as a surprise, then it has better chances of being in the news.
- Continuity: Once something is considered news, then it will continue to be viewed as news.

¹¹⁷ John Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge, "The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers," *Journal of Peace Research* 2 (1965): 64-90.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

- Composition: An effort is made to appear balanced, so if there is a large number of a specific type of story, then the threshold for a different kind of story is lower because of the desire to have variety.¹¹⁹

An additional four factors were related to culture and could at least be applied to western European countries, in the opinion of Galtung and Ruge¹²⁰:

- Reference to elite nations or elite people: Countries or individuals that are deemed to be important, i.e., elite, are likely to be covered in the news more often.
- Personification: If the story specifically refers to an individual, or several people, and is a result of his or her actions, then it is easier to comprehend than always referring to a structure.
- Negative news: A negative story is more likely to be published because it is more unexpected, unlike positive news, which is thought to be the norm.

Based on their additivity hypothesis, the more factors a story meets, the greater the chances are that it will be published and become news. In the same vein, if a story lacks certain qualities, its ability to compensate with other characteristics may enable it to remain a viable story for the news.¹²¹

Franziska Badenschier and Holger Wormer expanded this theory to include factors relevant to science news. As their basis, they used the news factors that had been suggested by Galtung and Ruge, as well as other researchers like Winfried Schulz and Georg Ruhrmann. They narrowed their list of news factors from 29 to 14 factors that applied to science news:

- Actuality (new factor): The reason the event is selected at that moment.
- Astonishment (new factor): How much of an “aha!” reaction a news piece receives.
- Composition (new factor): This is similar to the factor from Galtung and Ruge, but with a focus on the mix of issues addressed in the science section and the entire newspaper.
- Controversy: Differences in opinions.
- Economic relevance: How important the event is for the economy.
- Geographical proximity: How close the event is from the country the news is reported in.
- Intention (new factor): The objective of the author of the piece.
- Personalization: The presence of people in the story and its importance for the story.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 66-67, 71.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 68-69.

¹²¹ Ibid., 71-72.

- Political relevance: How important the event is for politics or legislative decisions.
- Range: How many people are affected by the news.
- Reference to elite persons: This is an adapted factor that looks at the political, economic, cultural, or scientific power of the person, institute, or group being reported on.
- Relevance to recipient/society: The importance of the story to the reader or society as a whole.
- Scientific relevance: How important the event is for scientific progress.
- Unexpectedness: Level to which the event was not expected.
- Graphical material: This refers to whether there were images or graphs available for publication of the story.¹²²

For this project, both versions of the news value theory will be used since the types of articles that mention the aging population are not always pure science news. This concept will help guide the description of the development of the media debate.

B. Factors Influencing Readership – Location, Prominence, and Article Length Make a Difference

In the world of media, the first hurdle for an issue is to reach the threshold where it is even considered news and worthy of a place in the newspaper or magazine. Once it appears in the news, it cannot be guaranteed that the article will be read and will become an issue of interest to readers. In most cases, the average reader does not have the time to read every article in a daily newspaper, meaning articles in a less prominent spot may gain less attention. There may be a greater chance that all articles are read in a weekly magazine or newspaper, but again, this cannot be easily assumed. Studies already exist that seek to understand this phenomenon and to explore the factors that influence readership.¹²³

From the media's perspective, in addition to selecting stories they think will attract readers, they also have to consider space limitations and the other stories that should simultaneously be published as well. Science articles have to compete with a range of stories covering different topics, from foreign affairs to local sports news. Because science news is often about the details and it cannot always be concluded

¹²² Franziska Badenschier and Holger Wormer, "Issue Selection in Science Journalism: Towards a Special Theory of News Values for Science News?," in *The Sciences' Media Connection –Public Communication and its Repercussions*, ed. Simone Rödder, et al. (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2012), 69–79.

¹²³ For example, see: Theresa G. Siskind, "The Effect of Newspaper Design on Reader Preferences," *Journalism Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (1979); Susan E. Middlestadt and Kevin G. Barnhurst, "The Influence of Layout on the Perceived Tone of News Articles," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (1999); Jana Holsanova et al., "Entry points and reading paths on newspaper spreads: comparing a semiotic analysis with eye-tracking measurements," *Visual Communication* 5, no. 1 (2006).

that the findings are indisputable, science news can be a less than ideal news story.¹²⁴ As Tim Radford argues, in most cases, it is very probable that the reader did not buy the newspaper or magazine because of the science articles, but because of the other articles that are either of greater interest or are more relatable.¹²⁵

Tying this back to the news value theory, Joachim Staab argues, the decision that something should be covered in the news is also related to decisions about how long the story should be, where it should be in the newspaper, etc.¹²⁶ All of these visual factors are related to an issue's news value because, for example, even if something meets the necessary threshold to be included, it may still not be considered important enough to be written about extensively, placed on the front page, or include an image¹²⁷. However, even though journalists can determine what issues are newsworthy, readers will decide what to read based on their own value system and whether the story meets their interests.

But to even provide the chance for a reader to decide if a story is of interest, the article needs to be in an advantageous spot. A study by Maxwell E. McCombs, John B. Mauro, and Jinok Son found that whether an article is on the front page of a section is the "most important predictor of readership".¹²⁸ For many, how important a story or its information is may be based heavily on its location. Because the front page of a newspaper or the cover of a magazine are the first things people see, they assume whatever is published there is of utmost importance. This also ties into the length of the story: Many articles on the front page or that are part of the cover story tend to be longer and receive more space in the publication – another important

¹²⁴ Michael S. Teitelbaum, "The Media Marketplace for Garbled Demography," *Population and Development Review* 30, no. 2 (2004): 318.

¹²⁵ Tim Radford, "Scheherazade: Telling stories, not educating people," in *Journalism, Science and Society: Science Communication between News and Public Relations*, ed. Martin B. Bauer and Massimiano Bucchi (New York: Routledge, 2007), 97.

¹²⁶ Staab, 436.

¹²⁷ Images are also important factors in readership. However, I will not spend time on the research about the role of imagery in the news since this will not be considered in my own analysis, but it should be mentioned. For example, a study by Garcia and Stark found that when participants were given a newspaper, they began scanning the newspaper by looking at three-fourths of the images on average. They also found that larger photos received more attention, but whether the picture was in color or black and white did not make a difference. See: Mario R. Garcia and Pegie Stark, *Eyes on the News* (St. Petersburg, FL: Poynter Institute, 1991). For other examples, see also: Prabu David, "News Concreteness and Visual-Verbal Association: Do News Pictures Narrow the Recall Gap Between Concrete and Abstract News?," *Human Communications Research* 25, no. 2 (1998); Rhonda Gibson and Dolf Zillmann, "Reading between the Photographs: The Influence of Incidental Pictorial Information on Issue Perception," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (2000); Silvia Knobloch et al., "Imagery Effects on the Selective Reading of Internet Newsmagazines," *Communication Research* 30 (2003); Nils Lengelsen, "Text-Bild-Kommunikation in Zeitschriften: Eine empirische Untersuchung zu Gestaltungsstrategien und deren Rezeption am Beispiel von Spiegel, Stern und View," in *Interaktionale Rezeptionsforschung: Theorie und Methode der Blickaufzeichnung in der Medienforschung*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Bucher and Peter Schumacher (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2012); Susane Klebba, "Andere Länder, anderes Blickverhalten? Eine interkulturelle Untersuchung zu Akzeptanz und Rezeption von Informationsgrafiken in Tageszeitungen in Spanien, Polen und Deutschland," *ibid.*

¹²⁸ Maxwell E. McCombs et al., "Predicting Newspaper Readership from Content Characteristics: A Replication" (San Antonio, 1987), 10.

predictor of readership.¹²⁹ So according to these authors, research that receives more space and is published on the front page, either of the entire publication or of a specific section (in the case of newspapers), has a greater chance of being seen by the public. Similar findings were found in a 2009 study by Jason Barabas and Jennifer Jerit: Just by moving the story to the front of the newspaper, likely either the front page or the front page of a section, “sizeable gains in policy-specific knowledge can be achieved”.¹³⁰

Another factor to remember is that many readers spend a substantial amount of time scanning the publication, which allows them to see the variety of articles available.¹³¹ Even though they can see the entire article, the selected title of the articles is still crucial since it is the main tool to attract attention. However, knowing that controversial sounding items are more attractive, it is easy for headlines to become misleading, specifically related to science news, in the effort to have a successful article.¹³² With the expansion of online news, readers’ habits and how news is presented has changed. For example, readers are more accustomed to a continuously changing news environment.¹³³ The Internet provides media outlets with more space to report more news, which in this particular situation may mean that the topic of the aging population has been covered more since there is now more space to do so.¹³⁴ *Der Spiegel*, for example, has specific online content that is not always published in the print version of the magazine. Reading habits have also changed, which also means traditional predictors of news selection behavior have changed, since more time is spent scanning the items on the home page of the website. Readers only see a short blurb, if not just the title, and based on that small amount of information, the reader decides if they want to click on the link and read the full article.¹³⁵ Since this research focuses on a period when online media was not in use, focus will be placed on the ideas related to news placement in print media.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Jason Barabas and Jennifer Jerit, "Estimating the Causal Effects of Media Coverage on Policy-Specific Knowledge," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 1 (2009): 80, 82, 86.

¹³¹ The authors found that people spent 45 percent of their time scanning the newspaper and 55 percent of the time reading it. This study goes into detail about what formats of newspapers are read more and other format-related characteristics, such as the use of drop quotes, whether a story is in the right-hand or left-hand corner, etc. Kenneth Holmqvist and Constanze Wartenberg, "The role of local design factors for newspaper reading behaviour—an eye tracking perspective," *Lund University Cognitive Studies* 127 (2005). For additional studies about the influence of the newspaper’s layout, see: Hans-Jürgen Bucher and Peter Schumacher, "The relevance of attention for selecting news content. An eye-tracking study on attention patterns in the reception of print and online media," *Communications* 31, no. 3 (2006); Siskind; Middlestadt and Barnhurst; Holsanova et al.

¹³² Teitelbaum, 318.

¹³³ Eric Klinenberg, "Convergence: News Production in a Digital Age," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 597, no. 1 (2009): 54.

¹³⁴ Natalie Denton, *New Media, Old News: Journalism & Democracy in the Digital Age* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010), 7.

¹³⁵ Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick et al., "Impact of Popularity Indications on Readers’ Selective Exposure to Online News," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 49, no. 3 (2005): 298.

2.4 The Binary Relationships

Research and the Media: Both Public Informers with Different Objectives

As was discussed earlier, it is critical that research is communicated with lay audiences to have public legitimacy in society.¹³⁶ Media coverage helps to inform and build awareness about work in science, and to demonstrate the usefulness and need for this research.¹³⁷ But it is not a simple, straightforward process to have one's research reported on since it must compete with other newsworthy events.

The first, crucial point to remember is that the research community and the media have different roles and information functions.¹³⁸ They both share the objective of informing the public, but their main audience groups are different. Researchers mainly target other researchers and those familiar with the field of study. In comparison, the media address a much larger and diverse public, who they do not know, and create content that would be interesting to them based on analyses of readers.¹³⁹ Journalists have to be selective in what they write about, which means they do not write about all published research. Journalists have to consider, for example, if the issue is relevant, whether it is understandable, or if it concerns people of interest/importance.¹⁴⁰ Unfortunately for scientists, most research is not seen as of interest to the public and therefore is not reported.¹⁴¹

Weingart introduced the concept of the "medialization" in science, which is "based on the assumption that – due to the importance of the mass media in framing public opinion – there is an increasingly tighter coupling of science and the mass media."¹⁴² This idea is based on the theory of coupling from Niklas Luhmann. Coupling refers to the "mutual dependencies between systems and their environments", i.e., science and the media in this specific case.¹⁴³ As Weingart explains, science provides the stream of information to the media and then science relies on the media to focus the public's attention on their research. This, in turn, helps to prove the need for the research and legitimizes its costs. In addition to coupling, resonance, or how much

¹³⁶ Martina Franzen et al., "Exploring the Impact of Science Communication on Scientific Knowledge Production: An Introduction," in *The Sciences' Media Connection –Public Communication and its Repercussions*, ed. Simone Rödder, et al. (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2012), 6; Weingart, "The Lure of the Mass Media and Its Repercussions on Science," 30.

¹³⁷ Peters and Krüger, 11; Hans Peter Peters, "Scientific Sources and the Mass Media: Forms and Consequences of Medialization," in *The Sciences' Media Connection –Public Communication and its Repercussions*, ed. Simone Rödder, et al. (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2012), 220-21.

¹³⁸ Fjæstad, 123.

¹³⁹ Weingart, "The Lure of the Mass Media and Its Repercussions on Science," 19-20.

¹⁴⁰ Galtung and Ruge, 70. There are, of course, more factors that are considered by journalists, but the interest of the general public/their readers is the main, guiding factor.

¹⁴¹ Fjæstad, 123, 26.

¹⁴² Peter Weingart, "Science and the media," *Research Policy* 27, no. 8 (1998): 871. See also: Franzen et al., 4; Weingart, *Die Stunde der Wahrheit? Zum Verhältnis der Wissenschaft zu Politik, Wirtschaft und Medien in der Wissensgesellschaft*, 252.

¹⁴³ "The Lure of the Mass Media and Its Repercussions on Science," 25.

impact the research has, also plays a role. For example, this refers to how much media coverage a new study or specific researchers receive. Weingart refers to the larger scientific journals as examples of publications that strive to achieve media attention by producing pre-publication press releases and other promotional materials to build interest for an upcoming article. This desire for resonance can contribute to researchers being more prone to focus on issues that are more attractive to the public or lead to more exaggerated claims.¹⁴⁴

A. Finding a Place in the News: Relying on PR Support

But as science has come to accept the importance of media coverage, they have had to begin to learn how to reach out to journalists and provide them with material they can use. Since science news competes with other daily news, scientists and science institutions have to be efficient in media communication. Ulrike Felt and Maximilian Fochler created the term “press-packaging research” to describe this process of “communicating one’s research in a brief form adapted to and attractive for a specific public.”¹⁴⁵ At the institutional level, more research institutes now have their own public relations (PR) or outreach departments.¹⁴⁶ For example, the Max Planck Society (*Max-Planck-Gesellschaft*) has press departments for each of its research institutes, as well as the Leibniz Association (*Leibniz Gemeinschaft*). These departments help scientists understand the importance of science journalism and how it operates functions.¹⁴⁷ They also establish direct contact with journalists to build a relationship where the institute becomes a reliable source of information that can be turned to whenever the journalist needs information for an article, which then provides more visibility for the institute.¹⁴⁸ Those responsible for the institute’s PR play an important role in helping to make science-related news more interesting, appealing, and even understandable (i.e., by using less technical vocabulary, but maintaining the scientific message) for journalists and the public.¹⁴⁹ These efforts by the PR departments make research more accessible for the lay public and journalists.

Even if researchers improve how they promote their work, this does not automatically mean their work will be reported on. Badenschier and Wormer put forth the idea of the “passive background effect”, which considers political news to be the

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 25-26, 29.

¹⁴⁵ Ulrike Felt and Maximilian Fochler, "Re-ordering Epistemic Living Spaces: On the Tacit Governance Effects of the Public Communication of Science," *ibid.*, 142.

¹⁴⁶ Brian Trench and Steven Miller, "Policies and practices in supporting scientists' public communication through training," *Science and Public Policy* 39, no. 6 (2012): 723.

¹⁴⁷ Peters, 224.

¹⁴⁸ Manuela Arata, "PR for the physics of matter: Tops...and flops," in *Journalism, Science and Society: Science Communication between News and Public Relations*, ed. Martin B. Bauer and Massimiano Bucchi (New York: Routledge, 2007), 175, 77; Peters, 224.

¹⁴⁹ Arata, 179.

most important and most interesting news that can cause other news to be pushed aside. They argue that most editors-in-chief have a background in politics, which means their interests lie in this field. But, if there is a day where there is not much political news to be reported on, then science news has a greater chance of reaching the front page. Most research is also not time sensitive, making it easier to push aside when more immediate issues arise. Daily newspapers have to focus more on issues happening at the moment. For a weekly newspaper or especially for magazines, they can look at issues that have “latent actuality”. These publications have more time to work on articles and give them a personal, narrative style.¹⁵⁰

B. Conflicts in the Relationship: Dissatisfaction with the Reporting

When research is reported on, researchers are not always satisfied with the published article. Scientists spend years conducting their research, but the pace of the news is fast and does not typically allow journalists to spend much time collecting all the available research for their stories. Dissatisfaction by researchers is often due to how their research was presented – either the results were not seen as important, the research was incorrectly reported, or the focus was placed on long-term goals that scientists cannot directly influence.¹⁵¹ For journalists, they are trying to appeal to a broad audience and tell a story that is easily understood. If a reader does not understand the article, then they will likely not even finish reading and will move on to the next one.¹⁵² To avoid this, the article may omit information so readers have the impression that the scientists are certain of the results or exaggerate the gaps in knowledge, creating uncertainty.¹⁵³ Therefore, their focus is on why the research was carried out, who the scientists were behind it, and what its impact is for society. Journalists are not interested in writing a piece that only states facts and specific details, like a typical scientific article.¹⁵⁴

For journalists to accurately interpret scientific language, they need to understand the science themselves. However, they are likely to not be as well versed in a subject as the researcher behind the study and mistakes by journalists are likely if they do not have time to fully comprehend the science and check its validity.¹⁵⁵ This is not to say that it should be acceptable for journalists to make mistakes, but the

¹⁵⁰ Badenschier and Wormer, 62, 64.

¹⁵¹ Felt and Fochler, 144-45.

¹⁵² Radford, 98.

¹⁵³ Lars Guenther and Georg Ruhrmann, "Science journalists' selection criteria and depiction of nanotechnology in German media," *Journal of Science Communication* 12, no. 3 (2013): 5.

¹⁵⁴ Hans Peter Peters, "The interaction of journalists and scientific experts: co-operation and conflict between two professional cultures," *Media, Culture & Society* 17, no. 1 (1995): 35.

¹⁵⁵ Fjæstad, 130.

demand for news may be a cause for this, which in turn adds to the negative feelings held by scientists towards journalists.

A study of journalists and researchers by Hans Peters identified some of the most important differences between the two groups. Journalists see their work as having more weight and importance, and they accept that their job has an entertainment aspect. Researchers see the mass media in a paternalistic manner and have less of an understanding of why journalists use certain stylistic elements in their writing. They want more support from the media and for the media to do more to influence the public.¹⁵⁶ There is disagreement between the two about what their roles are and how much control each group should have over the communication process. For example, researchers thought interview partners should be allowed to review an article before publication, and researchers do not see the need for journalists to act as translators when reporting their research.¹⁵⁷ These conflicting viewpoints on the roles researchers and journalists have and the apparent difficulty in accepting what each group brings to the table makes it clear as to why science journalism is a contentious topic. As this field has developed since Peters conducted his survey, one could hope that responses and sentiments of the respective parties collected now would be different or be more accepting of the other group.

Overall, these efforts to achieve media attention are helpful in garnering public support and finding more opportunities for funding for future research projects. But as Weingart argues, one has to be careful so that political or economic considerations do not become part of the research evaluation process or staff recruitment since this can affect the validity and credibility of the scientific knowledge being produced. Additionally, by speeding up the publication process, precautions should be made so that the review process of these articles is not compromised. When media attention and the competition for funding begin to take priority, this can “weaken science’s self-direction”, which in the long-term, is not the goal of this relationship.¹⁵⁸ Like the beginning of this section pointed out, this is not a straightforward relationship and despite the potential benefits, there will likely always be something to watch out for.

Research and Policy Makers: The Complexity of Using Research in Policy Making

Researchers do not conduct studies just for their own personal benefit or the benefit of the scientific community. They also do so to provide useful information and

¹⁵⁶ Peters, "The interaction of journalists and scientific experts: co-operation and conflict between two professional cultures," 44-45.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 40-41.

¹⁵⁸ Weingart, "The Lure of the Mass Media and Its Repercussions on Science," 31.

knowledge to the public. As discussed in the previous section, many social scientists pay more attention to how their findings are reported and make a conscious effort to make them understandable to lay audiences.¹⁵⁹ For example, a 1980 survey of 50 social scientists by Carol Weiss found that they intended for their results to be useful to a great extent, while 49 percent believed their research had “clear and immediate implications for action.”¹⁶⁰

Several researchers have put forth suggestions as to what scientists’ roles are when consulted by policy makers. Based on Ortwin Renn (1995), Weingart and Julius Lentsch (2008), and Weiss (1995), scientific policy advice can do the following¹⁶¹:

- Scientific experts can “enlighten” policy makers by providing facts and information to help identify and frame problems and make them more understandable. This information can also serve as an alert to issues that require a response.
- They can offer pragmatic knowledge that allows policy makers to assess and evaluate potential consequences of each policy option.
- Through the interpretive function, scientific experts give arguments and contextual knowledge that will help policy makers think about the situation and improve their judgment.
- Scientific experts provide policy makers with knowledge on how to “design and implement procedures for conflict resolution and rational decision-making”, as well as develop things like regulatory standards.

Weingart and Lentsch also identified the political functions of scientific policy advice, which include consensus building, providing information to help educate the general public and mobilize their support, legitimize decisions, and evaluate policy measures or programs.¹⁶² With the help of science-based policy advice, policy makers are better able to consider social, cultural, institutional, and psychological constraints and opportunities they may have not thought of themselves or based on their pre-existing knowledge.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Carol H. Weiss, *Social Science Research and Decision-Making* (New York: Columbia University, 1980), 203.

¹⁶⁰ These social scientists had received funding from either the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), or the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. By focusing on researchers from these particular institutes, Weiss was able to look at “how earnestly a group of social scientists who have received government funding take the matter of making their research relevant.” She expected these researchers to be more attuned to the importance of relevance. *Ibid.*, 201-02, 04-05.

¹⁶¹ Ortwin Renn, “Style of using scientific expertise: a comparative framework,” *Science and Public Policy* 22, no. 3 (1995): 147-48; Peter Weingart and Justus Lentsch, *Wissen - Beraten - Entscheiden: Form und Funktion wissenschaftlicher Politikberatung in Deutschland* (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2008), 29; Carol H. Weiss, “The Haphazard Connection: Social Science and Public Policy,” *International Journal of Educational Research* 23, no. 2 (1995): 146.

¹⁶² Weingart and Lentsch, 28-29.

¹⁶³ Renn, 148.

A. Making Contact

The first step before research can be used by policy makers is to make sure information reaches policy makers. As discussed in section 2.2, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly how policy makers receive information. There are numerous channels available, many similar to what is available to the general public, but policy makers are also exposed to a wider variety of information sources. Policy makers or their offices can turn to a range of experts for material about issues they are working on, such as consultants, aides, and advisers. They can also talk to colleagues or contact leading experts directly to find the answers to their questions. Outside groups, such as interest groups and politicians' own constituents, provide a continual stream of information as well.¹⁶⁴

"Issue networks", which are informal groups of people from government agencies, think tanks, universities, etc. invested in a particular issue up for debate, also maintain contact with policy makers in order to provide them with information.¹⁶⁵ As one policy maker explained, they receive such a large quantity of information and studies from researchers and research institutes that it is not possible to read it all.¹⁶⁶ Besides finding the time to read all this material, it is even more difficult to take note of it and apply it to their work, so if the information is not of direct interest or immediate use, then it goes unnoticed.¹⁶⁷ Past studies have found that despite social research not being a determining factor in what policies were adopted, policy makers believed they were influenced by policy-oriented research. Due to the consistent flow of information, however, it is difficult for them to specifically name any study or remember where the information originated.¹⁶⁸

With new research being constantly presented to policy makers, it can be tough to be noticed. Obviously, it is more effective if a researcher meets with policy makers to explain and present their research, but this can be difficult to arrange.¹⁶⁹ In most cases, formal or informal bodies have to be relied upon to share the information with policy makers. This can include staff in research and planning offices, consultants, or newsletter editors. However, those responsible for disseminating the information may not be fully aware of the latest research or do not know who would find the research the most useful. The offices may also not be able to effectively

¹⁶⁴ Carol H. Weiss, "Ideology, Interests, and Information: The Basis of Policy Positions," in *Ethics, The Social Sciences, and Policy Analysis*, ed. Daniel Callahan and Bruce Jennings (Hastings-on-Hudson: The Hastings Center, 1983), 227-28; Stone et al., 22.

¹⁶⁵ Weiss, "The Haphazard Connection: Social Science and Public Policy," 144-45.

¹⁶⁶ Stone et al., 21.

¹⁶⁷ Ulla Burchardt, "Braucht das Parlament wissenschaftlichen Rat? - Wie kann Wissenschaft nutzen? Innenansichten einer spannungsreichen Beziehung," in *Wissenschaftliche Politikberatung im Praxistest*, ed. Peter Weingart and Gert G. Wagner (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2015), 222.

¹⁶⁸ Weiss, "The Haphazard Connection: Social Science and Public Policy," 140-41.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

distribute all of the materials they receive daily. Or, if the office is not specifically responsible for providing scientific information to policy makers, they may not see it as their responsibility to take the steps to find out who is the best person to receive this new information.¹⁷⁰

As mentioned above, some research institutes have communications departments to assist in the dissemination of scientific news. Heinrich Tiemann recommends that researchers think of public affairs strategies that will help their information compete with all the other information policy makers are receiving from other actors. He argues that researchers should try to be a step ahead and think about what information could be of use for policy makers and be willing to be a consultant.¹⁷¹ If researchers want their work to be seen and used for decision-making, then they should take steps to actively publicize their research to make it more widely available: When researchers only publish their findings in academic journals, they are not likely to catch the attention of policy makers since these journals are targeted more to other social scientists.¹⁷² If policy makers are not aware of the research, then there is little chance that it will be used to help create new policy.

B. Reasons to Not Use Research in Policy Making: Pre-existing Knowledge and Feasibility

In addition to the possible difficulty of accessing research, there are more factors as to why policy makers may not base their decisions on it. One reason is because it does not align with the prior knowledge they have about the topic. Policy makers are informed about a wide array of topics and have likely been dealing with an issue for so long that they are already well versed in the subject. New research may not fit with their existing knowledge, which leads them to view it skeptically.¹⁷³ Or, they may not understand the research and thus, do not know how to apply it.¹⁷⁴

Second, there are typically numerous people involved in decision-making and for the majority of those policy makers, the research may not be relevant to their concerns about the topic or persuasive enough to change their minds. Similar to the first point, policy makers may have such a strong background in a topic that the new research does not provide enough new information to make it worthwhile. The research may also focus on specific societal aspects that policy makers do not think

¹⁷⁰ Weiss, *Social Science Research and Decision-Making*, 21-22.

¹⁷¹ Heinrich Tiemann, "Im Dickicht der Beratung: Politik und Wissenschaft im 21. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für Sozialreform* 50, no. 1-2 (2004): 50.

¹⁷² Weiss, *Social Science Research and Decision-Making*, 21-22.

¹⁷³ "Ideology, Interests, and Information: The Basis of Policy Positions," 229.

¹⁷⁴ *Social Science Research and Decision-Making*, 19.

need to be addressed because they do not view them as a problem, but rather as an accepted part of life.¹⁷⁵

Additional reasons include the feasibility of carrying out the recommendations put forth by researchers. Due to budgetary constraints or lack of resources, policy makers may not be able to heed the advice of researchers and must find other solutions. Or the recommendations may not align with the ideology of the current administration or are related to an area outside of their jurisdiction. In many cases, time restraints have to be considered because policy makers want to find solutions quickly and do not have the time to wait on a study to conclude, even if it may provide useful information.¹⁷⁶

C. Reasons for Using Research in Policy Making

The simplest explanation as to why policy makers use scientific expertise is for the help it can provide in the decision-making process.¹⁷⁷ Scientific research can provide legitimacy for policy makers. Researchers are viewed by many as reliable and credible sources: A *Special Eurobarometer* from 2013 asked participants who they thought were the best qualified to explain the impact of scientific and technological developments on society and 60 percent of Germans agreed that scientists working at a university or a government laboratory are best suited.¹⁷⁸ A reason for this is that researchers and the information they provide are presented in a clear manner and are based on scientific consensus, which gives the research legitimacy and is needed for the validation of political decisions.¹⁷⁹ This sense of legitimacy is helped by the fact that research institutions are typically based at an institutionalized research organization, e.g., at a university or public research facilities.¹⁸⁰ Policy makers view scientists as reliable sources and count on their research to be accurate and methodologically sound. If the research is sound and politically robust, meaning it could become actual policy and the information can be cited to gather support and convince others of their plans, then it will likely be used.¹⁸¹ This factor of “research quality” is one of the five attributes identified by Weiss associated with the use of and the likelihood of social science research being taken into account.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 21.

¹⁷⁷ Weingart and Lentsch, 43.

¹⁷⁸ European Commission, “Special Eurobarometer 401: Eurobarometer Responsible Research and Innovation, Science and Technology,” 2013): 46.

¹⁷⁹ Werner Eichhorst and Ole Wintermann, “Wie kann wissenschaftliche Politikberatung zu besserer Politik beitragen?,” *Wirtschaftsdienst* 86, no. 4 (2006): 229.

¹⁸⁰ Peter Weingart, “Erst denken, dann handeln? Wissenschaftliche Politikberatung aus der Perspektive der Wissens(chaft)soziologie,” in *Handbuch Politikberatung*, ed. Svenja Falk, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 36-37.

¹⁸¹ Weingart and Lentsch, 51; Weiss, *Social Science Research and Decision-Making*, 90.

¹⁸² *Social Science Research and Decision-Making*, 90, 100.

Additional factors put forth by Weiss included “conformity with user expectations”. In other words, just like research is not used because it does not conform or support prior knowledge, it will be used when it does support prior knowledge or resolve unanswered questions or uncertainties. When the research can provide “direct and practical implications for action and explicitly formulated recommendations”, then it is also more likely to be used (known as “action orientation”).¹⁸³ Finally, in what may seem contradictory, research that does not fit with accepted ideas is also likely to be used because for some, a challenge to the beliefs and ideas of policy makers can help enlighten them and influence their thought processes in the long term.¹⁸⁴

In general terms, researchers and their research help policy makers define the problem by identifying potential problems and then provide advice on how to resolve said problems once it is on the agenda.¹⁸⁵ It should be kept in mind, however, that even if the information provided by researchers leads to more informed and well-versed policy makers on a specific topic, policy makers are still left to make the decisions themselves.¹⁸⁶ As argued by Gert Wagner and Weingart, because researchers are not the ones democratically elected to make these decisions, they should not use their knowledge to persuade politicians in one direction or another.¹⁸⁷

D. Research-related Bodies in German Government

Wissenschaftliche Dienst (WD) and Statistical Agencies

When members of the Bundestag need research, they likely contact the parliament’s Research Services (*Wissenschaftliche Dienst*, WD). The WD is an advisory and assistance body that gathers and prepares data and analyses for parliamentarians and the entire Bundestag, when requested or in preparation of debates.¹⁸⁸ Their objective is to find, organize, and assess topic-specific information to provide scientific-based data and facts that will help parliamentarians make their decisions. Prepared material could be considered more of a summary of current research as the WD does not conduct its own research.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Ibid., 91-92; Weiss, “Ideology, Interests, and Information: The Basis of Policy Positions,” 231.

¹⁸⁴ *Social Science Research and Decision-Making*, 98.

¹⁸⁵ Peter Weingart, “Scientific expertise and political accountability: paradoxes of science in politics,” *Science and Public Policy* 26, no. 3 (1999): 155.

¹⁸⁶ Burchardt, 221.

¹⁸⁷ Gert G. Wagner and Peter Weingart, “Einleitung: Wissenschaftliche Politikberatung zwischen Legitimierungsfunktion und der Rolle des ‘ehrlichen Maklers’,” *ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, “Die Unterabteilung Wissenschaftliche Dienste (WD),” <https://www.bundestag.de/wissenschaftliche-dienste>.

¹⁸⁹ Thomas von Winter, “Die Wissenschaftlichen Dienste des Deutschen Bundestages,” in *Handbuch Politikberatung*, ed. Svenja Falk, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 198-99.

This office acts as a bridge between research and policy and helps find specific information relevant to the topics being debated. Their services are most in demand at the beginning of the opinion forming stage. According to Thomas van Winter, the WD has to find a balance between providing information that is either too academic and therefore, not politically relevant, or not scientifically substantial because it is too political. Generally speaking, their work can be considered as policy advice, while the individual assistants and employees in the parliamentarians' and factions' offices are more policy consultants.¹⁹⁰

In addition to the WD, the national statistics agencies are another source of information for policy makers. The German Federal Statistical Office is not the typical research institute since it is directly connected with the German government. Their objective is to "provide the statistical information required for the development of informed opinions and decision-making processes in a democratic society while ensuring the neutrality, objectivity and scientific independence of our work".¹⁹¹ Unlike the WD, all of their material is available to everyone, both parliamentarians, other members of the government, and the general public, while only select publications by the WD are publicly available.

Advisory Bodies

Direct contact with researchers comes in the form of expert commissions (*Expertenkommissionen*) and study commissions (*Enquete Kommissionen*). In Germany, expert commissions are comprised of scientists, specialists from business, and representatives from interest groups. These commissions are created through a work order (*Arbeitsauftrag*), not a mandate, by either the Federal Chancellery (*Bundeskanzleramt*) or a federal ministry. They are tasked with discussing questions and/or topics they are specifically assigned by a set deadline. By bringing together representatives from various sectors of society, negotiations can already begin with important societal actors to help speed up the future public discussion. These expert commissions are seen as a catalyst for reform and help put an issue on the agenda.¹⁹²

When a politically sensitive topic is up for debate, expert commissions are sometimes created to help find a solution to the topic through the use of science and to help relieve some of the pressure on policy makers.¹⁹³ Once established, these commissions are independent, and its direction is heavily influenced by the members selected to be part of this body. These commissions established by the government

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 203-04, 07, 13.

¹⁹¹ Statistisches Bundesamt, "About Us," <https://www.destatis.de/EN/AboutUs/AboutUs.html>.

¹⁹² Sven T. Siefken, "Expertenkommissionen der Bundesregierung," in *Handbuch Politikberatung*, ed. Svenja Falk, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 215, 21; Weingart and Lentsch, 119, 21.

¹⁹³ , 120-21.

highlight the acceptance of and willingness to use expert knowledge in making decisions and creates a more direct path to make sure policy makers learn about the latest research. However, they may not be as centered around providing scientific policy advice, but as a more direct way to shape policy.¹⁹⁴

The Bundestag can establish study commissions with the support of at least a quarter of the members, but in the majority of cases, there is full agreement.¹⁹⁵ A study commission is composed of scientific experts and politicians selected by the Bundestag to find solutions to long-term problems. These commissions represent a more intense form of political consulting since it facilitates a direct exchange of information and mutual learning process between politicians and researchers.¹⁹⁶ Unlike expert commissions, these groups typically meet over a longer period of time. Their objective is to assess the current situation related to specific developments (i.e., the topic assigned to the commission), highlight future regulatory and development opportunities, and prepare recommendations for political decisions.¹⁹⁷ Commission members collect additional research and materials from scientific institutions; statements from individuals, businesses, agencies, and those affected; and have hearings with additional researchers and representatives from associations. There are additional working groups and reporting groups within the commissions, and other government officials are invited to participate in hearings.¹⁹⁸

The scientific experts on the commission are selected by the political parties and in proportion to the political parties' share in the Bundestag. This leads to the possibility that scientists are selected based on how closely their research supports the positions of the politicians/political parties that have selected them. Researchers may feel pressure to support the position of the party they were invited by, also in hopes of maintaining any level of influence, and feel bound to whatever compromise is made, which could lead to them offering diluted advice.¹⁹⁹ Regardless of the political composition, however, the study commissions are thought to be able to offer alternatives based on facts and decisions on how to address the assigned issues in a consensus-oriented manner.²⁰⁰

This makes the use of scientific research a bit complicated, but it does not imply that policy makers always push aside research that does not support their

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 124-25, 41.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 147.

¹⁹⁶ Wolfgang Ismayr, "Enquête-Kommissionen des Deutschen Bundestages," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 27 (1996): 32.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 29.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 33-35.

¹⁹⁹ Weingart, "Scientific expertise and political accountability: paradoxes of science in politics," 37; *Die Stunde der Wahrheit? Zum Verhältnis der Wissenschaft zu Politik, Wirtschaft und Medien in der Wissensgesellschaft*, 148-49; Ismayr; Weingart and Lentsch, 148.

²⁰⁰ Ismayr, 38.

position. When research does not completely fit with a policy maker's ideas, it can bring other arguments to the fore and may influence how policy makers think about an issue. As argued above, it may cause them to alter their opinions in the long run.²⁰¹ It should be kept in mind that researchers are also invested in this policy process and sometimes may advocate for a specific position because it favors their research community.²⁰²

Compared to the first two bodies described, another expert-based body from the government is an expert advisory council (*Sachverständigenrat*). This council typically has five members that are selected for by either the federal president based on recommendations from the federal government, an inter-ministerial committee, or a specific department.²⁰³ The members typically serve on the council for five years and publish a report once a year.²⁰⁴ What makes this council unique is that its mandate allows it to be very independent; their annual report is not just targeted at the government, but also to the public and those with political responsibility; and, the government is obliged to respond/issue a statement about the annual report.²⁰⁵

Of course, there are other advisory groups that can be created by various governmental institutions, but they are not a main focus of this research. It can be seen there are differences in the groups and how political the information they provide is, but it is clear the information provided by researchers is used by policy makers, either through formal or informal channels.

E. Possible Conflicts

Policy makers have to be selective and cautious when using scientific research to make policy-related decisions. By having scientific evidence to support their proposed ideas, they may be able to persuade others and gain more support. But they are probably aware of the ability to find a study that will support their position, either for or against a measure, as well as an actual researcher to act as an advisor.²⁰⁶ If a study contradicts their position, they may ignore or criticize the research, which is not the goal of research; it is not there to just reaffirm one's position, which is how it is often used.²⁰⁷ As Edward Shils argued:

²⁰¹ Weiss, *Social Science Research and Decision-Making*, 98.

²⁰² Weingart, "Scientific expertise and political accountability: paradoxes of science in politics," 156.

²⁰³ Weingart and Lentsch, 102.

²⁰⁴ Gerd Schneider and Christiane Tokya-Seid, "Sachverständigenrat," Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, <http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/lexika/das-junge-politik-lexikon/161585/sachverstaendigenrat>.

²⁰⁵ Weingart and Lentsch, 98.

²⁰⁶ Weiss, "The Haphazard Connection: Social Science and Public Policy," 142; Edward Shils, "Science and Scientists in the Public Arena," *The American Scholar* 56, no. 2 (1987): 201. See also: Ortwin Renn, "Ethikkommission: Wie legitim ist die Legitimation der Politik durch Wissenschaft," in *Wissenschaftliche Politikberatung im Praxistest*, ed. Peter Weingart and Gert G. Wagner (2015), 18-19.

²⁰⁷ Wagner and Weingart, 9-10.

Advisors are too frequently chosen...because they apparently want authoritative support for the policies they propose to follow. It is obvious that in complying with these desires, the legislators and officials are in collusion with the scientists to exploit the prestige that scientists have acquired for objectivity and disinterestedness.²⁰⁸

The public may become skeptical about the use of scientific research if different studies with different results are cited in the same debate. This uncertainty has led the public to become more skeptical of the science cited by politicians.²⁰⁹ Therefore, politicians must be selective and aware that even if research can legitimize one's position, it can also de-legitimize past or future decisions if the research contradicts or ignores existing knowledge about the topic.²¹⁰

This use and demand for research contributes to the politicization of science: To support solutions to issues being discussed, policy makers use an inflationary amount of expertise. They cite research that is still controversial, and no consensus has been reached by the science community.²¹¹ Daniel Sarewitz argued:

This situation gives rise to what may seem like a very surprising conclusion, because we tell ourselves the reason we want science to inform our decisions is so we make the best possible decisions, but in political or policy debates the demand for and the authority of scientists doesn't derive from their capacity to articulate what's known and agreed upon. Rather, scientists are very often valued on the basis of their ability to provide support for one particular fact-based interpretation of the world than another.²¹²

In addition to this idea, the establishment of various working groups or committees to look for solutions to problems may now seem more like a political formality that is carried out to appease the public. This helps give the impression that politicians are taking steps to solve an issue by working with researchers and experts in the field despite knowing what the likely results will be.²¹³

Some researchers still contend that despite their efforts as advisors or authors of government-funded studies, their research is still ignored.²¹⁴ In Weiss' 1980 study, 60 percent of interviewees responded that it was unlikely their research was used or that it was irregularly used.²¹⁵ So even though researchers think their work is useful, they have little faith that policy makers are actually using it.²¹⁶

²⁰⁸ Shils, 201.

²⁰⁹ Peter Weingart, "Science in a political environment," *European Molecular Biology Organization Reports* 5, no. 1S (2004): 55.

²¹⁰ "Erst denken, dann handeln? Wissenschaftliche Politikberatung aus der Perspektive der Wissens(chaft)soziologie," 37.

²¹¹ *Die Stunde der Wahrheit? Zum Verhältnis der Wissenschaft zu Politik, Wirtschaft und Medien in der Wissensgesellschaft*, 168.

²¹² Daniel Sarewitz, "When All Scientists Are Activists," in *Wissenschaftliche Politikberatung im Praxistest*, ed. Peter Weingart and Gert G. Wagner (2015), 71.

²¹³ Renn, "Ethikkommission: Wie legitim ist die Legitimation der Politik durch Wissenschaft," 30.

²¹⁴ Tiemann, 47-48.

²¹⁵ Weiss, *Social Science Research and Decision-Making*, 206.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 212.

As can be seen, this relationship between researchers and policy makers can be helpful in expanding the knowledge of policy makers, alerting them to current or impending issues, and leading to the creation of sound policies that will improve society. But despite the positive aspects, over time, this has become a widely used measure to establish legitimacy among politicians, which has had the opposite effect and created a delegitimization of research among some because of its wide usage and the ease to find contradictory studies to support any and all possible positions.

F. Policy and Demography

Population research generally has a long-term focus, specifically regarding the projections it provides about expected population changes. This makes it easier for policy makers to ignore these types of findings due to the uncertainty associated with them.²¹⁷ Policy makers have to decide if they are willing to create or reform policies based on these potential changes despite the possibility that the projections could be incorrect or the degree to which change is predicted turns out to be much lower, meaning no reforms were actually necessary.²¹⁸ These uncertainties can make it easier for policy makers to delay taking immediate steps to address potential future situations.

At the 1986 international conference of the German Society for Population Studies, Dirk van der Kaa addressed the question of why policy makers do not react or address population projections provided by researchers. He argued that population issues have never been interesting to policy makers and are “usually pretty dangerous to handle”, likely in reference to the “Third Reich”, but he also named several other reasons. For example, the field of demography does not have a (large) lobby to round up support, heterogeneous populations result in heterogeneous policies, age structures change so slowly that it is not seen as a major issue, and there is concern and hesitation by governments to intervene in population-related issues.²¹⁹ Charlotte Höhn argued, however, that demographic research may be used by policy makers, but they just take longer to notice the data. For example, once they recognized the data on the declining birth rate, immigration, or population decline, the government established working groups and commissioned universities or research institutes to produce reports with more information they could use to try and address the

²¹⁷ Charlotte Höhn, *Der Beitrag der Bevölkerungswissenschaft zur Politikberatung*, Materialien zur Bevölkerungswissenschaft Sonderheft: 15 (Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, 1988), 2; Tiemann, 47.

²¹⁸ Ortwin Renn, "Risikosteuerung im Spannungsverhältnis von Wissenschaft und Politik," *Gegenworte*, no. 18 (2007): 16-17.

²¹⁹ Dirk J. van der Kaa, "Politics and Population: The European Setting," in *Demographische Wirkungen politischen Handelns: Internationale Konferenz 1986 der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, ed. Herwig Birg and Rainer Mackensen (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1990).

situation. This can result in inspiration for researchers to look into a new issue while policy makers promote research, in part to support the creation of new information for decision-making.²²⁰

Policy Makers and the Media: A Reciprocal Relationship

Researchers play an important role in helping to shape political decisions, but the media play a significant role in informing citizens about decisions the government is discussing in a condensed and easy-to-understand format. By reporting on certain aspects of the government and political events, journalists enable people to make judgments on what is happening and understand how it relates to them and their interests.²²¹ It should be remembered, however, that policy makers are part of the public and are also consumers of the news. Therefore, for some policy makers, unless an issue, project, or initiative is covered in the media, it may not exist in their minds, which gives the media the role of not just determining what issues are important for the public, but also for policy makers.²²²

Policy makers and journalists have a reciprocal relationship since they rely on each other to further their goals. The government counts on the media to report about what they are doing, while journalists depend on policy makers to grant them interviews and provide information for their stories. Because of this dependence, policy makers must adjust their messages to fit the formats and styles of various media outlets. Political public relations teams are more aware of what journalists are looking for and can easily formulate statements that can be turned into tomorrow's headlines or a sound bite that will be repeated in the news. This may make the job easier for journalists, but it also limits journalists from using their own judgment to report the key aspects of the debate. This awareness of what journalists and the media are looking for has led to public relations experts, publicity advisers, and other similar actors having a more active role in creating political messages.²²³

Even with a greater awareness of what journalists are looking for, policy makers must compete to have their message heard. When an issue begins to receive attention, then it will likely continue to be reported on. Amber Boydstun argues there are eight factors driving the coverage of issues in the news, which includes prior attention, or how much attention the issue has already received.²²⁴ Policy-related news is just like any other news story: Prior attention to a particular policy debate

²²⁰ Höhn, 5-6.

²²¹ Gurevitch and Blumler, 273.

²²² Thomas Leif, "Medien und Politikberatung – kommunizierende und konkurrierende Röhren," in *Handbuch Politikberatung*, ed. Svenja Falk, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 328-29.

²²³ Gurevitch and Blumler, 278-79.

²²⁴ Boydstun, 28.

will mean it will likely continue to be covered. This relates to newspapers having limited resources, so if journalists are already reporting on an issue, then they will continue to cover it instead of finding a completely new issue to write about.²²⁵ But when these shifts in media coverage occur, policy makers also have to be prepared. When attention quickly moves to a new issue, this can be an opportunity to pay more attention to the new issue and put energy towards it and the resulting discussions.²²⁶

It should be remembered there is a limited amount of space in a newspaper, so when certain issues are being covered, other issues are not. For policy makers, this means their policies have limited access to the general public via the media. Even if they do catch their attention during a media explosion, it could be challenging to give readers the chance to process the information and then start a meaningful discussion about the proposed policy.²²⁷ Anke Tresch, Pascal Sciarini, and Frédéric Varone looked at the situation in Switzerland and found that media attention is also related to the stage in the decision-making process. They found the media's interest was highest in the early stages of decision-making, which seems like a reasonable expectation for the media to cover the introduction of a new piece of legislation and the actual debates that occur since these are the stages when readers would want to be made aware of possible (direct or indirect) changes in their lives and where their representatives stand on the issue.²²⁸

This finding also lends itself to the idea that when more media attention is given to an issue, policy entrepreneurs (advocates for proposals or particular ideas) are able to push these new dimensions into the policy debate.²²⁹ Together, this expanded debate attracts more attention from the public and enables policy entrepreneurs to place more resources and attention on the issue. The media's response is to write more articles and therefore, give more of their attention to the issue.²³⁰ It is not guaranteed that more attention means the issue will be solved, but it does mean that it is more likely the issue will be addressed by policy makers.²³¹

2.5 Research Questions

Based on this existing literature, it is apparent that research exists that tries to understand the relationship between research, policy making, and the media;

²²⁵ Ibid., 47-48.

²²⁶ Amber E. Boydston, "How Policy Issues Become Front-Page News" (2008), 19; *Making the News: Politics, Media, and Agenda Setting*, 67.

²²⁷ *Making the News: Politics, Media, and Agenda Setting*, 9.

²²⁸ Anke Tresch et al., "The Relationship between Media and Political Agendas: Variations across Decision-Making Phases," *West European Politics* 36, no. 5 (2013): 909-10.

²²⁹ Kingdon, 122.

²³⁰ Boydston, "How Policy Issues Become Front-Page News," 19-20; *Making the News: Politics, Media, and Agenda Setting*, 43.

²³¹ *Making the News: Politics, Media, and Agenda Setting*, 11.

however, the majority of this research tends to only focus on binary relationships. These studies lay the foundation for my research by providing an explanation of how these one-on-one interactions between the groups function. This research will build off these studies to create a better understanding of how these actors interact together, as well as contribute to the line of research on framing and agenda setting.

Using the work of Weingart, Engels, and Pansegrau as my foundation, I aim to contribute to this line of research. Their focus is on how the discussion surrounding climate change developed in science, politics, and the media, and what differences exist between the groups. I will also examine this relationship between these groups, but in the context of the aging population in Germany, which has not been done before. For this specific topic, historical contextualization will be necessary. I will use both quantitative and qualitative description to illustrate how this information traveled to understand their interactions. Therefore, my main research question is:

In light of the damage caused to the academic field of demography by the “Third Reich” and due to the habit of policy makers to think in terms of legislative periods and not with a more long-term focus, how did policy makers, researchers, and journalists in Germany react to and address the development of the aging German population?

This question can be broken down into several sub-questions:

- Was there a specific event (e.g., a debate about a specific policy change, release of new statistics) that led policy makers to realize they could no longer ignore population aging in Germany?
- How did the three groups interact and influence each other’s work to address population aging?

To answer these questions, I look at these three groups individually to see how each group has discussed the aging population. By determining the approximate time frame when interest began to grow among each group, I can look for similarities or possible correlations between them.

For this project, “researchers” and “research” are represented as those individuals and items that are published in scientific and/or research-based publications (books, journals, etc.).²³² This also includes individuals cited as working in a scientific organization (such as the Max Planck Society, the Leibniz Institutes etc.), universities, or foundations that support research (e.g., *Stiftungen*), and the material created by these organizations. When these individuals were members of government committees or commissions, or were quoted in news articles, they are still considered researchers. “Policy makers” include politicians but are not exclusively politicians. This encompasses all of those involved in the government’s policy-making process,

²³² The term “researchers” and “research” will be used interchangeably with other terms such as “academics”, “scientists”, and “science”.

such as members of the German parliament and those working for the various federal ministries. Politicians refers to those individuals in elected positions that directly represent a specific political party. Think tanks or other non-governmental bodies are not explicitly analyzed, but their work and contributions to the discussion about the aging population will be mentioned as non-governmental contributions. Finally, “media” in this project will only refer to the printed news media and will not include television and any form of advertisements.²³³

Similar to climate change, the aging of the German population is an issue with long-term consequences that are difficult to predict with the level of certainty that policy makers would probably like to have before making a decision to address it. But I would argue that it was not framed as a catastrophe like climate change and does not have the same type of global impact. An aging population is an issue that other countries were dealing with, but whether a federal government reacts does not have as much impact on another country as efforts to combat climate change. Therefore, through my research, I strive to determine how the aging population was framed to make it a more discussed and “popular” topic among the various fields in Germany.

2.6 Hypotheses

The Spread of Information: Politicians Draw More Attention

With these research questions in mind and based on the existing research, my main hypothesis begins with the idea that researchers are the first to start talking about an issue. This is based on the idea of “medialization” introduced by Weingart about the tighter coupling of science and the mass media due to their dependencies on one another.²³⁴ I argue that the main objective of a researcher is to study specific issues and find out more information. They first begin to talk about an issue and their findings are then picked up by the media and written about.²³⁵ Information printed in the news is seen by the newspaper or magazine’s readers, which includes policy makers. After reading about new research in the news, policy makers become interested and decide to either contact the researchers and/or research organizations directly or look into the cited research and/or look for more related research. This information is then used to argue for or against certain policies. However, one should

²³³ In Chapter 3, I will go into further detail about each of these groups being addressed.

²³⁴ See section 2.3; Weingart, “The Lure of the Mass Media and Its Repercussions on Science.”; “Science and the media.”

²³⁵ Journalists may become aware of new research through press releases, for example, but this research will not specifically look into how they became aware of the new material. To answer that question, more personal interviews would be necessary, and the information gathered would still be a more general answer about how they learn about new research. Also, due to such a significant passage of time, this question may be difficult to answer for this specific context since journalists may no longer remember how they received information about new studies from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.

remember, as argued by both Kingdon and Weiss, policy makers receive information from a number of sources on a constant basis, so when the information is referenced, they likely cannot specifically cite where the information originated.²³⁶

But in the eyes of the public, politicians receive more attention from the media once they begin to talk about an issue because they are seen as more relevant and of interest for the public. As argued by Badenschier and Wormer, the “passive background effect” and the high probability of editors-in-chief having a political science background contributes to the affinity to publish political news.²³⁷ This means, policy makers more likely become aware of research applicable to an issue they are currently debating on their own, i.e., not through the media. They either contact the researchers directly or find more related research, which they use in their speeches and debates. Journalists then report on these debates and mention the arguments made, which may or may not include cited evidence, because they think readers will be interested. Researchers are then compelled to make their findings more visible or to continue their research on the topic.

Hypothesis 1: *The discussion around the aging of the population in Germany did not gain traction until politicians began to acknowledge the issue within the context of a significant policy debate (e.g., pension reform or health care). Once this occurred, despite researchers having looked into this issue before, population aging began to stand on its own and was seen as a separate issue that needed to be addressed.*

Media Alerts Policy Makers to Research

When journalists take interest in new research, they may contact the researchers for an interview. This becomes a form of direct interaction between the news media and researchers – one where the media turns to researchers for interviews and more information for their articles. According to Björn Fjæstad, journalists are seen as representatives of the general public and it is their responsibility to analyze and critique the research being reported. Therefore, when researchers receive interview requests, they have to make sure they represent themselves and their research in a positive light.²³⁸ In most cases, the published article is the main source for the general public’s knowledge of this particular issue and will shape their opinion. Also, the role of the media in setting the agenda means their decision to publish an article signifies their belief in the importance of the issue and guides the public and policy makers in arranging their agendas. Consequently, policy makers’ exposure to the research makes

²³⁶ Kingdon, 76-77; Weiss, "Ideology, Interests, and Information: The Basis of Policy Positions," 227-28.

²³⁷ Badenschier and Wormer, 62.

²³⁸ Fjæstad, 126-27.

it more likely that this specific research will be used in a policy context or in their efforts to further their positions on certain issues.

Hypothesis 2: *In the instances where the media reported on research as science news and outside of the context of specific policy discussions, then it was likely that the research was cited in a relevant policy context at a later point. This was either directly in the form of a direct quotation/citation or indirectly by mentioning the same argument from the news article.*

Researchers Seek to be of Assistance in Decision-Making

From the research perspective, as an issue begins to be picked up by the media and policy makers, researchers may respond by focusing their work to be able to provide information to help address the issue. For example, if policy makers were talking more about aging within the context of its impact on the health care system, then more studies in the period during and after this debate should have appeared about the impact on the health care system. Researchers in the field may have been interested in being of use to policy makers, so they tried to tailor their work so it could be used to answer their questions, independent of being specifically tasked by policy makers to provide information. In trying to understand how these groups influence each other, it is of interest to see if research reacted to the policy and media attention the issue was receiving.

Hypothesis 3: *As the political debate grew, researchers made an effort to produce more research that emphasized the effects of an aging population related to the issues with the idea that it could be useful for policy makers and politicians to draft new legislation and during the decision-making process.*

Influence of the Media on Policy Debates

The media is responsible for reporting the issues being discussed by politicians and policy makers. Politicians look to the media to report on their activities, just like academics. Politicians regularly hold press conferences to publicize information like recent findings in a governmental study or their responses to events, such as a response by the opposing party to actions taken by the ruling political party. Without this established relationship between the press and the government, it is possible many people would be unaware of what the government is doing.

For politicians, the media offers a window into their constituents' concerns. Journalists report on what they think the public wants to hear about and interviews with the general public, as well as surveys and general opinion polls, may give

politicians a better idea of how people feel about certain issues. It is important for politicians to be aware of what is being said in the media about them and to know what their constituents think. Because their decisions have an impact on citizens' lives, either directly or indirectly, they are expected to create legislation that will better the lives of the people. This corresponds with concerns about being re-elected and losing voter support if the new legislative measures do not improve voters' situation. Therefore, politicians always have to consider how their decisions will impact their constituents and any potential political fallout.

This makes the relationship between policy makers and the media reciprocal. Policy makers respond to what is being reported on in the news by altering their agenda. Simultaneously, the media bases their agenda on the issues being discussed by policy makers. Therefore, both sides have a big role in determining what is on each other's agenda, which then influences and determines the public's agenda.

Hypothesis 4: *There was an increase in news articles related to an aging population at the same time as politicians were participating in more debates in the Bundestag about policies directly or indirectly affected by an aging population.*

In the following chapter, I define and describe the methodology used to answer these research questions. There I introduce my coding system, explain my selected time frame, and how data was collected for each group. Once my research plan has been laid out, the subsequent chapters look at the individual development of the debate about the aging population among researchers, policy makers, and the media. Chapter 8 provides a complete analysis and synthesis of my findings, which include a re-examination of my research questions and hypotheses.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Time Frame: 1966 to 1997

There is a great deal of information that could be examined for this topic; however, I focus on the time from 1966 to 1997. I begin with 1966 because this is the last year when the birth rate in Germany increased and was still above the so-called replacement rate of 2.1. Following 1966, the birth rate began to decline and did not increase again until 1980, but this increase was not maintained.¹ The reason for basing the start of my time frame on the decline of the birth rate relates to the definition of demographic change. Without the decline of the birth rate, the German population likely would not be aging, at least to the same degree, and therefore, not all components of demographic change would be in play. With this significant trend of decline occurring over multiple years, it was more difficult to ignore the resulting effect of the population aging, contributing to more discussion of the issue.

My time frame ends in 1997 for several reasons. The leading reasons are related to the government and political situation: In 1997, the German government debated and passed the 1999 pension reform. This law not only adjusted the pension formula, but it included a “demography factor”, which was incorporated into the reform due to the declining birth rate and increasing life expectancy.² This law went into effect in 1999, but once the new governing coalition took office in 1998, this factor was removed. It is clear this was a controversial component and a significant sign that the changing population structure was something that policy makers believed should be taken into consideration. Therefore, it was an important event in the course of the debate surrounding the aging of the population. I am interested in seeing what positions politicians took on the issue, specifically the need to include a demographic factor, and how this debate was presented in the media.

A second reason for ending in 1997 is the subsequent loss of control by the CDU/CSU and FDP in 1998, which put an end to their 16-year control of the government. This was partially due to the controversy and lack of support for the 1999 pension reform and the concern by voters about potential cuts to their pensions. The win by the SPD was significant because this was the first time since 1972 that they had won a majority of votes and was the first time the entire government was

¹ In 1966, the birth rate in Germany was 2.53 births per woman and by 1979, it was 1.38. There was a slight increase in 1980 with it reaching 1.44, but it began to decline the very next year. Between 1985 and 1990, there was another slight uptick in the birth rate (1985: 1.37; 1986: 1.43; 1987: 1.43; 1988: 1.46; 1989: 1.42; 1990: 1.45), but it then went back down in 1991 (1.33) and continued to decline until 1996 when it began to slowly increase again. The World Bank.

² Wolfgang Rombach, “Demographiefaktor schafft Verlässlichkeit,” in *Fachaufsätze zur Rentenreform '99*, ed. Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung (Bonn: Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, 1998), 6.

replaced – the CDU/CSU and FDP government was replaced with the governing coalition between the SPD and the Greens.³ There was a clear loss of trust in the previous government, and this was an end to the conservative government in Germany.⁴

Finally, the third reason is the inclusion of the establishment of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) in 1996. Since the Max Planck Institutes are supported and funded by the government, both at the state and federal levels, I would posit that this is a milestone in the field of demography in Germany. The creation of the MPIDR signals the acknowledgement of the need to look at demographic issues, which included the aging population, and could be seen as a turning point in the discussion in Germany surrounding the growing older population.

This selected period mainly focuses on West Germany or both East and West Germany following reunification. Reference to East Germany will be explicitly stated. When referring to West Germany, I will say “Germany”. Future research should consider focusing more specifically on the debate in former East Germany, which also faced an aging population and was referenced in some of the documents examined for this research. I chose to focus mainly on West Germany in part due to the relative ease in finding government documents from this period of time.

Attention will also be given to key events that took place during this selected period. According to Hans-Bernd Brosius and Peter Eps, “key events” have the ability to “either change or create a frame of reference for subsequent news coverage.”⁵ These events help to better define a specific issue for journalists, as well as for policy makers, the general public, and possibly even researchers. Therefore, key events like the pension reform bill mentioned above and the formation of the study commission on demographic change by the German Bundestag in 1992, will be addressed since they likely influenced media coverage and potentially the research published during this time.

3.2 Keyword Search

Despite having a specific time frame and a focus on the aging population, the amount of literature and relevant documents is still vast. To help ease the search process and find the data that is relevant for my research, I used keywords that were more specific to the debate surrounding the aging population when collecting materials.

³ Prior to the CDU/CSU forming a coalition with the FDP, the SPD was also in a coalition with the FDP. In total, the FDP was part of the governing coalition for over 25 years.

⁴ Everhard Holtmann, “Die Bundestagswahl 1998: Wahlergebnis und Wählerverhalten,” *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte* 51, no. H. 2 (2000).

⁵ Hans-Bernd Brosius and Peter Eps, “Prototyping through Key Events: News Selection in the Case of Violence against Aliens and Asylum Seekers in Germany,” *European Journal of Communication* 10 (1995): 394.

The same keywords were used in all three rounds of data collection (research, policy, and media). This allowed me to remain consistent and continue to use the same search parameters. Additional literature and information were collected following the initial keyword searches. For example, related and relevant literature cited in the materials found were also coded. These materials were the basis of the literature examined, while also leading me to additional relevant literature, and were the starting point for each round of data collection.

Since this research concentrates on the debate about the older population, specifically the societal impact of people living longer and the growing number of older people in Germany, the keywords selected reflect this emphasis. The keywords used were:

- *alternde Gesellschaft*
- *Langlebigkeit*
- *Seniorenpolitik*
- *Alterspolitik*
- *Überalterung*
- *Alterslast*
- *Rentnerberg*
- *Altenberg*
- *Vergreisung*

As I was specifically interested in the German situation, the searches were conducted in German. The terms were either too specific in German, making it difficult to accurately translate them into English, or they were too generic once translated, making it difficult to sort through the large number of results.⁶ Only “*alternde Gesellschaft*” was translated to “aging society” for the search of academic databases.⁷

⁶ Attempts to carry out other English searches resulted in large numbers of results. Searches with the term “longevity” (translation of *langlebigkeit*) and “ag(e)ing” (translation of *Überalterung*) resulted in such a large number and wide array of results, it was too large to sort through due to their relatively general nature. For example, a SpringerLink search (longevity AND Germany, within the set time frame) had over 3,000 results, many related to life sciences (biology, ecology, etc.). An even greater number of results were found when “aging” was used as a search term: A SpringerLink search (aging AND Germany, within the set time frame) resulted in over 113,000 articles and book chapters, many of which also had a focus in the life sciences (medicine, biology, etc.). *Alterspolitik*, *Seniorenpolitik*, *Alterslast*, *Rentnerberg*, *Altenberg*, and *Vergreisung* were not translated because they do not have simple, straightforward English equivalents that can be easily used in a search or are not phrases used in English. Therefore, due to these circumstances, it was decided to only conduct these searches in German.

In addition, discussions about the physical aging process were not included, as well as the aging of specific labor groups caused by not enough young people entering the field. Even though this is related to the overall aging of the population and changing demographic structure, these types of discussions were excluded because it was not closely related to the increase in the life expectancy and was more about the lack of young people. Due to this focus on a specific group, typically in the labor market, these arguments were not coded and included in this analysis.

⁷ It was assumed that since all news sources and government documents were in German, there would be no need to use the English translation for these searches.

In numerous cases, the same results were found in multiple keyword searches, but documents were only analyzed once and a note was made that the document had already been found in a previous search.

A downside of the pre-determined keyword search is that it may steer the search in a specific direction and therefore skew my view of how the debate appears to have developed. For example, it is possible certain aspects of the discussions may not have been included because that type of language was not fitting for that specific debate. However, efforts were made to select words that were general and broad enough that they would be used in various contexts but were still specific to this discussion. These words also made it possible to even begin the search and find the materials for the different areas in a consistent manner. Considering how vast the field of demography is and the variety of population-related issues, keywords that were too general would have resulted in the majority of the time being spent sorting through even more materials not related to the explicit topic of aging. Therefore, the use of keywords for the searches was necessary and not such a significant limiting factor that it overly affected how I saw the discourse develop.

3.3 Coding System: German Old-Age, Longevity, and Demography Database

To track these discussions and consistently organize and classify them throughout the entire data analysis process, a coding system was created. With a consistent set of topics used for the analysis, it was possible to better compare the discussions among the groups. These codes were used in the analysis of the research, policy, and media data. This information was compiled into a database, which I will refer to as the German Old-Age, Longevity, and Demography Database (GOLD Database).

The topics were selected based on my previous knowledge of the topic and the initial research that had been conducted to better understand the overall discussion surrounding the aging population in Germany.⁸ An initial set of topics were established prior to beginning the analysis of scientific discussion, but several were added once the data collection began and the need for additional, more specific topics was identified. Once the new codes were introduced, the already-collected material was

⁸ These codes were based on Ruud Koopmans' Codebook for the analysis of political mobilization and communication in European public spheres from the project "The Transformation of Political Mobilisation and Communication in European Public Spheres". Additionally, the codebook originally created by Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, with the support of National Science Foundation grant numbers SBR 9320922 and 0111611, and are distributed through the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin, was used. Neither NSF nor the original collectors of the data bear any responsibility for the analysis reported here.

re-analyzed to ensure that the newer codes were used where applicable.⁹ Altogether, there were a total of ten general topic areas, each with a number of sub-topics used for the classification of the materials. Each topic also included an “other” code in the case the specific sub-topic was not listed, but the material was still relevant to the discussion about the aging population. The general topics covered health; labor, employment, and unemployment; immigration; social security and the social state¹⁰; housing and community development; military; science/research; society; economy; and policy and politics. Each topic had a varying number of sub-topics, ranging from two to 11 (see Table 1).

When coding the documents, a maximum of three topics were selected, depending on the breadth of the document under question. Many coded documents touched upon multiple topics in relation to the aging of the German population. In some cases, it was very clear what the main topic was, but there were cases where all three topics were addressed equally, or it was unclear if the author saw some of the issues as more important than others. There were also cases where more than three topics were addressed, and in those situations, I made the selection based on prominence. However, due to the inability to consistently rank the prominence of the topics addressed, the analysis does not distinguish significance between Topic 1, Topic 2, and Topic 3.

Table 1: List of topics with corresponding codes.

1. Health	
100	Comprehensive health care reform
101	Insurance reforms, availability, and cost
102	Regulation of the pharmaceutical industry
103	Facilities construction, regulation, and payments
104	Health care manpower and training; health personnel
105	Long-term care, home health, terminally ill, rehabilitation services
106	Research and development (i.e., treatment for Alzheimer’s, cancer detection)
107	Health and disease, staying fit
108	Impact on the health care system

⁹ Following the data collection for the scientific discourse section, no new codes were added for the remainder of the project.

¹⁰ The understanding and use of the phrase “social security” is based on the definition provided by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung and refers to statutory social insurance, social care, and social welfare. See: Klaus Schubert and Martina Klein, *Das Politiklexikon*, 7. aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage ed. (Bonn: Dietz, 2020). In addition, I specifically created a sub-topic focused on the pension system, as this was so closely related to the older population.

190	Other
2. Labor, Employment, and Unemployment	
200	Employment training and workforce development; lifelong learning
201	Parental leave and childcare
202	Unemployment
203	Early retirement
204	Labor market reforms (includes change to age of retirement)
205	Labor supply, aging workforce
206	Volunteering
207	Discrimination
208	Retirement
209	Employment (female, older people)
290	Other
3. Immigration	
300	Immigrants in the labor force
301	Immigrants and the social security system
302	Immigrants' role in population maintenance
390	Other
4. Social Security and the Social State	
400	Old-age poverty
401	Social security system (general mentions, not including old-age pensions)
402	Maintenance of the social security system
403	Pension system
404	Living standards, conditions
490	Other
5. Housing and Community Development	
500	Rural/urban decline, shrinking of towns
501	Housing for the elderly
590	Other
6. Military	
600	Manpower, military personnel
690	Other
7. Science	
700	Scientific developments in the study of population aging
701	Contributing factors to demographic change, aging

702	Theories related to aging, population aging, and related concepts
790	Other
8. Society	
800	Overall societal impact (includes when all areas, i.e., health care, pensions, are covered)
801	Change to population/demographic composition
802	Change to life course policies; structure of the life course
803	Intergenerational relations; intergenerational solidarity
804	Number of older citizens in society
805	Challenges and changes, physical and social, associated with old age
806	How older people are viewed; 'neuen Alten'
890	Other
9. Economy	
900	General economic impact
990	Other
10. Policy and Politics	
1000	Altenpolitik
1001	Representation in politics, political participation
1900	Other

Source: GOLD Database

The sources used in the publications, mentioned in the news articles, or quoted by Bundestag members in their plenary speeches, were also a data point that was collected. For example, it was coded if a researcher cited claims from other researchers or a government publication in their argument (Table 2). In the research context, this allows me to see where researchers receive their information and the types of materials they use when carrying out their analyses. Because it is assumed research will cite other sources in their publications, it is of particular interest when the media or policy makers cite an outside source since this is not as common. These instances are examples of knowledge transfer among the actors.

When considering where the information originated from, it was decided that German federal and state-level statistical agencies (e.g., *Statistisches Bundesamt*, *Statistische Landesämter*) were classified as its own type of source. Their close affiliation with the German government meant they could not be considered as a pure research institute. But they are also not a political organization since their task is to

provide “objective, independent, and...high quality” information.¹¹ The data they collect is available to everyone and not only there for the use of the German government. Their data, however, is more likely to be used by government officials since they are likely more familiar with their work. Others, such as journalists, may be more prone to seeking out information from the federal statistical agency, as it is known to be reliable. Therefore, due to their particular role in the dissemination of data, they are a separate citation source. This makes it possible to track when their data was used, particularly when evaluating policy-related data sources, and to see what type of role federal statistical agencies may have in the spread of information.

Table 2: List of citation sources with corresponding codes.

0	No one
1	Researcher(s)
2	Politician(s)
3	Journalist(s)
4	Specific academic publication
5	Specific published study or report
6	Government report
7	Own study results
8	Statistics, numerical data
9	Federal or State-level Statistical Agency (<i>statistisches Bundesamt</i> or <i>Landesamt</i>)
10	Societal actors – Union representatives, etc.
99	Other

Source: GOLD Database

Quotes were taken from the majority of the documents as part of the qualitative data collection. Due to the large quantity of materials, quotes from all documents are not included and the quotes cited in the following chapters are specific examples of the way the discussions were being presented. Most of the quotes were originally in German and have been translated for the sake of the reader.

3.4 Research Data Collection

To collect information for the research section, a total of six databases and library catalogues were used. These databases were searched using the aforementioned

¹¹ Statistisches Bundesamt, "Unsere Aufgaben," Statistisches Bundesamt, <https://www.destatis.de/DE/UeberUns/UnsereAufgaben/Aufgaben.html>.

keywords and included “Germany” to ensure the results included a German focus.¹² Articles that looked at the physical/biological aspect of aging were not considered. The databases used were SpringerLink, JSTOR, and Wiley, and the catalogues of the Berlin State Library and the University of Bielefeld were also searched. There are some relevant journals that are not a part of these databases. When possible, I looked at their online archives or manually searched them.¹³ This applied to the following journals: *Leviathan*, *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*, *DIW-Wochenbericht*, *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, and *Zeitschrift für Sozialreform*.¹⁴ Additional publications were coded that were not found in the keyword searches but were referenced in a different publication or were a part of the overarching publication. For example, when looking at an edited book or a specific issue of a journal, I also checked if the other chapters or journal articles were about aging and if so, they were included.

Publications found in these various databases included those that were not purely science based. For example, there were publications based on the proceedings of academic conferences (i.e., the speeches and presentations given), as well as events held by groups, such as the metal workers union (*IG Metall*) or a series of books published by the SPD. The former included speeches from civil society actors, while the latter included contributions mainly from researchers and some policy makers. These publications were important to include because they were still part of the literature and discussion about the aging population, and they were examples of how and by whom the issue was being addressed. It was noted when publications were not completely scientific in nature and will be taken into consideration in the overall analysis.

Once I had collected the material, using the set of codes that I developed, I evaluated and classified each document. For each article, book, or book chapter, I collected basic information regarding the author, source, and year of publication. The coded information involved the topics addressed in the piece; whether the emphasis frame highlighted a positive or negative association; and who or what was quoted/cited when aging was discussed. Up to three topics and two types of citations could be selected. In many instances, the issue of aging was framed in the context of

¹² Publications that included cross-country comparisons were also coded if Germany was included in the analysis. Publications that focused on the European Union/European level were not as closely examined. This also applied to the evaluation of policy- and news-related materials. Since the cross-country comparisons also looked at Germany and took its demographic situation into consideration, I felt this material should be included in the analysis and coding process.

¹³ This means keyword searches were carried out on the individual publication’s website, or I scanned the table of contents for any relevant articles published within my set time frame.

¹⁴ This selection of journals that were not included in these databases may slightly skew the findings since these were clearly sought out and it was believed that they would contain content relevant to this analysis. It also impacts the findings of what fields were interested in the topic since journals mainly came from the field of social science.

several different topics, but some focused more on aging in one specific context, which is why there is a different number of topic codes compared to overall number of publications coded. Therefore, when aging was placed into the context of more than one topic, the main three topics were coded (Topic 1, Topic 2, and Topic 3) to the best of my ability. In addition to multiple topics, usually one or two sources were also used. Due to the difficulty of trying to rank the topics based on prominence in the publication, this was not included in the final analysis.

Table 3: List of subject areas with corresponding codes

100	Sociology
200	Demography
300	Economics
400	Political Science
500	Medicine
600	Labor
700	Gerontology
900	Other

Source: GOLD Database

Specific to the research materials collected, the subject area of the publication and whether the publication received funding from a specific source was also noted. There was a total of seven subject areas and one “other” category in which the article or publication was classified: Sociology, demography, economics, political science, medicine, labor, and gerontology (Table 3). These were the main subject areas that the publications tended to originate from. The purpose of this classification was to track what fields of research were looking at the issue of aging.

The determination of the field of research was based on:

- the overarching publication (e.g., when the journal stated the research field, it was categorized accordingly),
- the publisher (e.g., *Die ergraute Gesellschaft* was published by the German Centre of Gerontology and therefore, it was categorized as gerontology),
- the topic(s) of the publication if the general publication or publisher did not provide a clear answer.

These classifications are not definitive and could be categorized differently depending on the person carrying out the coding, leaving room for variation. For future research, a more concrete classification system for this specific category should be considered to ensure more reliable and replicable coding.

If the research coded for this project mentioned how the project was funded, then it was noted who or what agency funded the research. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the various types of funding agencies that were found to have supported aging research and categorize them as either a science-based funding agency, strategic funding agency, or a political funding agency. Their status as either a public or private organization was also noted. The specific funding agencies were looked at to see when they began to promote research focused on aging. It is possible the amount of research in this field may not have been significant prior to these agencies becoming interested in supporting such research.

Similar to the question of funding, it was also noted if certain publications came from specific think tanks or associations. For example, the publication *WSI-Mitteilungen* is published by the Institute of Economic and Social Research. This institute is part of the Hans Böckler Foundation (*Hans-Böckler-Stiftung*), which is funded and supported by the German Confederation of Trade Unions. It was also noted when the funding originated from a political foundation. Even though they are supposed to be independent of the political party providing financial support, there is a greater chance that the research they produce reaches the desks of policy makers, at least those from their supporting party, more easily than other researchers. The motivation for the research is likely to provide analytical support for issues being discussed at that time in the Bundestag. This type of information was taken into consideration for the analysis to better understand what types of groups were interested and helping to push the issue in the field of research.

3.5 Political Data Collection

When looking at the political side of the discussion about the aging of the population, I focused on the debates and documents from the federal level.¹⁵ The German federal government is responsible for the social system, which is stated in the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), and is the main legislative area where policies related to the aging population tend to fall under. This specifically includes legislation related to social insurance, e.g., long-term care insurance (*Pflegeversicherung*), pension insurance (*Rentenversicherung*), and health insurance (*Krankenversicherung*).¹⁶

¹⁵ Due to the limits of this research, it was not possible to cover the debate at the state (*Länder*) or regional level since this would involve a significant amount of additional research and time. This is not to say that the issue was not discussed at these levels; it likely may have been better addressed in certain regards due to the more immediate and apparent need to address the situation, for example in regard to housing policy. This also applies to the media debate since local newspapers were also not taken into consideration. Future research should take a closer look at this debate at the state and regional level.

¹⁶ Matthias Geiser, "Alterssozialpolitik: Fragmentierung überwinden - Lebenslagen verbessern," in *Dortmunder Beiträge zur angewandten Gerontologie* (Hannover: Vincentz Verlag, 1996), 44-45.

The main source of policy-related documents was the *Parlamentsdokumentation* (PDok) database, which includes all of the publications and stenographic minutes from the Bundestag. The debates held in the plenary sessions are important because they provide a public stage for Bundestag members to present their positions on a specific issue, as these hearings are “an important source of public information about Parliament.”¹⁷ Also included in these minutes are the Chancellor’s government policy statements (*Regierungserklärungen*), specifically those made when assuming office.

Additional documents analyzed were major and minor interpellations (*Große* and *kleine Anfragen*, GA or KA), and motions and motions for resolutions (*Anträge* and *Entschließungsanträge*). All these efforts have to be submitted by a parliamentary group or at least five percent of Bundestag members, which signifies the recognition by more than just one individual that an issue is deserving of further attention. A major interpellation, GA, is considered the most effective parliamentary instrument to determine the opinion of the federal government on an issue and then publicly debate them. Once a GA is submitted and a response from the government has been received, it is placed on the agenda for debate. This option is usually used by the opposition party as a way to scrutinize the current government’s approach to the issue. The requirement that a public debate is also held helps to bring more attention to the issue and sets it apart from a minor interpellation, KA. Motions are commonly put forth by members of the Bundestag when they want the federal government to either submit a bill that addresses a specific issue, take specific measures, comment on central issues, or report on an event or policy area. They are typically referred to a committee and are then addressed in conjunction with the committee’s recommendation. These motions also have a time limit that is supposed to ensure that the majority party/parties in the Bundestag do not prolong the consideration of initiatives from the opposition. The difference between motions and motions for a resolution is that the latter is submitted as non-autonomous items related to other items of business and are not put on the agenda. Once the related item of business is voted on or the debate is closed, the motion for resolution is voted upon.¹⁸

Other types of documents analyzed were information/communications (*Unterrichtungen*) and reports and recommendations for a decision (*Berichte und Beschlußempfehlungen*). Reports and documents from the federal government with the purpose of providing information to the Bundestag do not have to be debated in the plenary sessions. It is possible this information is passed directly to the appropriate committee and is only be debated if the committee recommends the

¹⁷ Linn and Sobolewski, 107.

¹⁸ Stasser and Sobolewski, 70-76; Linn and Sobolewski, 64-70.

Bundestag makes a decision that goes beyond just acknowledging the information. This implies that when such items are debated in a plenary session, then the addressed issue must have political importance. Looking at reports and recommendations, they typically come from committees and are produced following the discussion of a specific bill. The committee submits a report of their discussions and what committees were asked to give an opinion, as well as why the committee may or may not be in support of a bill, and any minority opinions held by members. The recommendations presented include a decision on whether the bill should be accepted (in its current form or following amendment), rejected, or shelved.¹⁹ For this research, the specific reasons given in the reports and recommendations are of interest to see if the aging of the population was a leading motive for the proposed legislation. By considering what types of documents were published during this period, I can understand by looking at interpellations and motions what issues parliamentary group/members believed should be addressed, and how the aging population was argued in the various reports and communications.

The documents were analyzed in a similar fashion as the academic articles. Keyword searches were carried out to find the sessions when aging was discussed. All the speeches given in a debate session were evaluated, not just the one speech that was found via the keyword search, in the case that aging was also mentioned by other speakers in different terms that were not included in search. Similar to the research data collection, the information collected when analyzing the various policy-related materials included the topics in which the issue of aging was defined; whether the emphasis frame had a positive or negative association; who spoke about the issue (which policy maker and which political party they represent); and, who or what was cited when referring to the aging population, if available or mentioned. The frequency in which aging was discussed was also considered by comparing the number of plenary sessions in which aging was mentioned at least once to the total number of plenary sessions that year.²⁰ The same codes were used for the classification of the topics addressed and the individuals and organizations cited (see Table 1 and 2). Which parties or party members addressed the issue was noted in order to see if one party was more interested in the issue or if one member of parliament was more active in the debate.

Attention was paid to who was in the majority in the Bundestag and who the Chancellor was at the time, as well as the distribution of the various factions over the years. This was noted to have an idea of the size of the majority party, the coalition

¹⁹ Stasser and Sobolewski, 120-27; Linn and Sobolewski, 114-20.

²⁰ Idea to consider the frequency of discussion taken from: Weingart et al., *Von der Hypothese zur Katastrophe: Der anthropogene Klimawandel im Diskurs zwischen Wissenschaft, Politik und Massenmedien*, 25-26.

faction, and the minority parties. Since the formal agenda setting process in the Bundestag is dealt with by the Council of Elders, which consists of members from the various political parties based on the proportions in the Bundestag, knowing the composition of the overall Bundestag will help create a picture of how much additional support from other factions may have been necessary to have an item reach the agenda. Or in other terms, how easy it may or may not have been for a single party to have an item reach the agenda.

In addition to the minutes from the plenary sessions of the parliament, specific reports were given attention. For example, the reports of the Study Commission “Demographic Change”, which was established in 1992, were included if they fell within the time period.²¹ This commission was important to include for several reasons: The establishment of a study commission needs support from a minimum of one-fourth of the members in the Bundestag, which means there is significant support of the decision to look more closely at an issue²²; they are more focused groups that work on specific issues; and their findings are then discussed in the larger plenary sessions, which gives the issue more attention on a more public stage. Other reports given more attention include the First Government Report on the Elderly (*1. Altenbericht*) and the Fourth Family Report (*4. Familienbericht*) due to its focus on older family members.

Outside of the Bundestag, the federal ministries also play an important role in the creation of proposed legislation and in providing necessary information for policy makers to make informed decisions about whether action should be taken to address the aging population.²³ Within the time frame under question, the number of federal ministries (*Bundesministerien*) in Germany ranged from 13 to 18. Originally, it was planned to examine seven federal ministries that were believed to have a clear interest and involvement in issues related to the aging population.²⁴ By understanding which federal ministry was first concerned with this issue, it could be observed if there were any correlations between how the issue was framed in the media and by researchers. Seeing how the issue spread throughout the ministries and how extensively they cover(ed) the topic contributes to the analysis of how the topic grew and evolved at the political level. However, due to the limits of the documents

²¹ The Study Commission officially ended its work in 2002 and published a second preliminary report in 1998, which was not included.

²² Stasser and Sobolewski, 71-72.

²³ Geiser, 59.

²⁴ The federal ministries that were to be examined: *Bundesministerium des Inneren* (Federal Ministry of the Interior); *Bundesministerium für Familien, Senioren, Frauen, und Jugend* (Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women, and Youth); *Bundesministerium für Finanzen* (Federal Ministry of Finance); *Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales* (Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs); *Bundesministerium für Gesundheit* (Federal Ministry of Health); *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie* (Federal Ministry for Economics and Technology); and the *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* (Federal Ministry for Education and Research).

available in the PDok database and the online archives of the federal ministries, extensive and thorough review of their publications were not carried out. It will be discussed how some of the ministries evolved over time, like the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (BMFSFJ), which reflects the change in focus of the governing coalition.

3.6 Media Data Collection

For this project, print media, i.e., newspapers and magazines, represent the news media. Due to the vast amount of information provided by print media, other forms of media were not considered. This includes televised news reports, commercials and advertisements (both print and televised), and movies. It would be interesting to analyze how much airtime was given to topics related to the aging population on television in shows such as *Tagesschau*, a popular German news program, or other German talk shows. Or, to consider how television shows depicted older characters and how advertisers tried to appeal to older consumers. However, this additional analysis would have deviated from the main research questions and analyzing this additional form of media would have required a significant amount of resources and time that was not possible; this is an area for future research.

Instead, keeping in mind the time frame under consideration, it was decided to focus on print media. Three major German publications were selected: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), *Die Zeit*, and *Der Spiegel*. These specific publications were chosen based on the type of publication they are and their availability. The FAZ is a daily newspaper²⁵, while *Die Zeit* is a weekly newspaper. I chose these two types of newspapers because a daily paper is able to react quickly to the latest events and is a bit more current than a weekly publication, which has several days of news to select from and to cover.²⁶ A weekly paper also has more time to research and write in-depth articles about specific issues, which provides more of a variety of perspectives. *Der Spiegel* is a weekly magazine news source that has a format different from newspapers and covers a more selective amount of issues than a typical daily newspaper due to space limitations. Magazines can also have more in-depth articles where more focus can be placed on a specific topic in each edition (typically the

²⁵ The FAZ was originally published Monday to Saturday each week. Beginning on March 4, 1990, the first issue of the regional edition (*Rhein-Main-Zeitung*) of the Sunday FAZ was released. These regional papers were included in the analysis because they were a part of the FAZ database and therefore, the search results.

²⁶ Holger Wormer, "Wissenschaft bei einer Tageszeitung: Fragen zur Vergiftung von Ehegatten und andere Dienstleistungen," in *Die Wissensmacher: Profile und Arbeitsfelder von Wissenschaftsredaktionen in Deutschland*, ed. Holger Wormer (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 26.

cover story) and may try to have a more narrative tone (storytelling) than a normal news article.²⁷

In addition, the archives of these three publications are easy to access and available online with the ability to conduct keyword searches, which was a necessity for this research. For a better representation of the media discourse surrounding aging in Germany, the *BILD Zeitung* should have also been included. Unfortunately, they do not provide an easy-to-access online archive for the specific time period of interest. The only possibility was to conduct a search “by hand” at the Berlin State Library, which would have required looking through each issue published within my 31-year time frame. Such a time commitment was not possible for this project.

Like the research and policy data collection, the information collected from the news articles included the topic(s) referencing the aging population; whether the emphasis frame had a positive or negative association; and, who the author cited when discussing aging. The same coding system was used for the topics. The frequency in which the topic was discussed was determined by comparing the number of issues that included at least one article discussing aging to the number of total issues published each year. By using the same codes and looking at similar characteristics, I could see the growth and change in how these groups discussed the aging German population and whether there appeared to be any connection or correlation in when and how the issue was addressed by the other groups.

Table 4: List of section categories where articles were published

1	Front page/Title story
2	Politics
3	Economics
4	Culture/Society
5	Science/Health
6	Sports
7	Regional/Local
99	Other

Source: GOLD Database

Factors related to readership were also considered. Information about the location of the story in the publication and the length of the story were collected. The idea for collecting this specific information was to see if there was a development or change in the type of attention and focus aging was given over time. As mentioned in

²⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 2, research has shown that these factors play a role in the level of readership an article receives.²⁸ Regarding the location of the story, this was related to the news value theory: I was interested in whether the stories were published on the front page of the entire publication or a specific section (for example, front page of the science section of the newspaper); what section of the publication the story was published (Table 4). As stated above, both *Der Spiegel* and the FAZ provide comprehensive information about each article, which includes PDFs of the actual articles taken directly from the print publication. This made it possible to see the exact location of the article in the publication, the article's layout, and what other articles were surrounding it. The archive of *Die Zeit* is not as comprehensive and the exact location and section of the article in the original newspaper could not be determined. Regarding the length of the story, exact word counts were not provided by *Der Spiegel* or *Die Zeit*, so this information was collected by copying and pasting the texts into a Word document to complete a word count. Therefore, the word counts are estimates and not officially from the publisher.

Even though stories on the front page have higher levels of readership than those in the back of the paper, stories in the back, but on the front page of a specific section, will still have high levels of readership.²⁹ Therefore, with this past research in mind, I try to determine if there was an evolution in where stories about the aging population were placed (when possible) based on the interference that a move towards more front-page stories or longer stories meant that the topic had gained interest or significance, and more readers became more aware and informed about this issue.³⁰

Due to the time frame chosen for this research, online media are not addressed. For the majority of the time covered in my time frame, the Internet did not exist and when it did, it was in its early stages and not commonly used like it is today. Even though the time frame under consideration does not include Internet news sources, the role of Internet news is still an important factor to remember when thinking about how the issue of the aging population has grown in Germany. The Internet may have had an influential role in how well known the topic is in today's society, which is why this is an area that should be further investigated in a later research project. By not having an unlimited amount of space or time to publish new articles multiple times a day, journalists and editors were limited in what they could

²⁸ See: Maxwell E. McCombs and John B. Mauro, "Predicting Newspaper Readership from Content Characteristics," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1977); McCombs et al; Siskind; Barabas and Jerit.

²⁹ McCombs et al., 10-11.

³⁰ For *Die Zeit*, I could only track what sections of the newspaper the stories about aging were placed.

cover in their publications, which may have meant that interesting, but less significant issues, like the aging of the population, were not always covered.

3.7 Data Analysis: Quantitative Frequency and Causation Based on the INUS Condition

From the data collected, I provide a detailed description of how researchers, policy makers, and the media handled the issue of population aging in Germany. As described above, I focus on a specific set of variables that include the context in which aging was referenced, if the individual used an emphasis frame with a positive or negative association with aging, and if anyone was cited. Focusing on the quantitative aspect of this data, I can calculate the frequency in which aging was referenced in a specific context. From the qualitative perspective, the specific examples (e.g., types of publications, quotations from the collected documents) will contribute to determining any potential causation. Full causality cannot be established since these events did not play out in a controlled environment and therefore, there were a variety of potential influencing factors that could not be accounted for. Instead, I am looking at the different factors that contributed to the final outcome. This is guided by the INUS condition, which argues “the so-called cause is an *insufficient* but *necessary* part of a condition which is itself *unnecessary* but *sufficient* for the result.”³¹ In other words, a single condition only provides a partial explanation for the outcome; there are “multiple causal paths” that can lead to the same outcome.³²

Now that the methodology has been explained, the next chapter will present a historical overview to set the stage to better understand the situation in Germany when these debates were occurring, and the research was being published. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 will delve into the data collected and the associated findings. In each chapter, I will present the individual debates (science, policy, and media) to provide an understanding of how the debate developed within its own field.

³¹ J. L. Mackie, "Causes and Conditions," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1965).

³² Martino Maggetti et al., *Designing Research in the Social Sciences* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2012), 44; James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research," *Political Analysis* 14, no. 3 (2006): 232.

Chapter 4: Historical Background

Before I begin with the individual analyses of the three sectors, this chapter will present a historical overview of the situation in Germany in both the research and political sectors. The history of the research field of demography in Germany is an important component of this research due to its controversial development, particularly its use by the “Third Reich”, and the resulting impact on the research field and society as a whole. Much of the background literature collected for this project and the majority of expert interviews conducted referenced the negative impact of the “Third Reich” on the field of demography in Germany and the lasting struggle researchers faced in trying to re-establish the field.¹ It was clear early on in my research that this played a significant role in how the overall debate about aging evolved in German society.

The history of the political development in Germany is focused on the period immediately following WWII and throughout 1966 until 1997. It is important to understand the overall situation in Germany in order to be able to contextualize the debates being held. Without acknowledging, for example, an economic recession happening simultaneously to debates about cuts to the pension system is to show a lack of awareness of some of the driving reasons behind these debates. This historical framework is also relevant to both the research and media sectors since these events were influential in their work as well.

4.1 Historical Review of the Field of Demography

Because demography evolved in the early 1920s to include eugenics and race studies, its use in the justification for the atrocities² carried out by the Nazi government and their pronatalist policies led to a reluctance by researchers and policy makers to take up the subject again. They did not want to be associated with trying to create an “ideal” German population. Continued participation following the war in the field by

¹ For example, see: Rainer Karlsch, "Gab es eine demographische Theorie in der DDR?," in *Herausforderung Bevölkerung: Zu Entwicklungen des modernen Denkens über die Bevölkerung vor, im und nach dem „Dritten Reich“*, ed. Josef Ehmer, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007); Charlotte Höhn, "Demographische Forschung als Teil sozialstruktureller Forschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *Lebenslagen: Sozialindikatorenforschung in beiden Teilen Deutschlands*, ed. Heiner Timmermann (Saarbrücken-Scheidt: Verlag Rita Dadder, 1990); Rainer Mackensen, "Über den deutschen Beitrag zur Bevölkerungswissenschaft und die Leistung von Karl Schwarz im internationalen Kontext," in *Demographie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. Charlotte Höhn, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1988); Hans W. Jürgens, "Zur Lage der Bevölkerungswissenschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 1, no. 1 (1975).

² This includes the extermination of the Jewish population and other minority populations, such as the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, and political opponents.

researchers involved or connected to the Nazis also did not help.³ Josef Schmid stated in 1976 that there was no significant population research in either East or West Germany, just “demographic” and statistical analyses for the purpose of administration and domestic policy.⁴

Pre-1949: Combating the Declining Birth Rate and the Push for Racial Hygiene

A declining birth rate was a longstanding challenge that faced Germany and was already written about in the late 1800s. In 1911, Max Hirsch, a German gynecologist, published an essay about the declining birth rate, which was the first time falling birth rate (*Geburtenrückgang*) appeared in a publication's title.⁵ He focused on understanding the causes for the decline in the early 1900s and compared the German situation with France. Hirsch argued that Germany, unlike France, did not try to understand the cause of the decline, but instead, immediately began to address and alleviate the situation.⁶ He mentioned the decline in the mortality rate and stated that people living longer can help maintain the population, but this decline has a limit and cannot be relied upon to increase the size of the German population. Therefore, the birth rate needed to rise again.⁷

Once World War I (WWI) began, there was an increased interest in the decreasing birth rate, especially in regard to rebuilding the German population. This interest led to the establishment of an expert commission by the Prussian Interior Ministry in 1915 to provide recommendations on how to combat the declining birth rate and explanations as to why a state population policy is important. Julius Wolf, a German economist, founded and led the German Society for Population Policy (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungspolitik*) in 1915. This is significant since it gained support from a wide range of groups including the medical community,

³ Reinhard Nuthmann, "Zum Zusammenhang von Familiensoziologie und Familiendemographie seit 1945 in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *MPIDR Working Paper* (Rostock: Max Planck Institute for demographic Research, 2007), 13.

⁴ Demographic was also quoted in the original text, see: Jürgen Dorbritz, "Die Situation der Bevölkerungswissenschaft in der ehemaligen DDR und die Probleme der Prognose demographischer Prozesse," *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 2, no. 3/4 (1992): 431.

⁵ Thomas Bryant, "Alterungsangst und Todesgefahr – der deutsche Demografie-Diskurs (1911-2011)," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 10-11/2011 (2011): 41.

⁶ Max Hirsch, "Der Geburtenrückgang: Etwas über seine Ursachen und die gesetzgeberischen Maßnahmen zu seiner Bekämpfung," in *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, ed. Alfred Ploetz (Leipzig: Teubner, 1911), 631.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 630, 54. It should be kept in mind that this decline in fertility was not within the same levels as in the late 20th century. The fertility rate had begun a steady decline in the 1880s but did not drop below 4.0 until 1911. Therefore, the fertility rate was still above the so-called replacement rate (2.1) and this meant the population would continue to grow, but not as fast as in previous years. See: Ola Rosling, "Total Fertility Rate," Gapminder, www.gapminder.io/dtfr; Free data from www.gapminder.org.

industrialists, and politicians.⁸ Several committees by the German government, such as the Committee for Population Policy (*(Reichstags-)Ausschuß für Bevölkerungspolitik*) and the Committee for the Questions of Population Growth (*Ausschuß für die Fragen der Volksvermehrung*), were also created during this time period, and prepared pronatalist legislation.⁹ The first German Conference on Population Issues (*Erstes deutsches Kongreß über Bevölkerungsfragen*) was held and according to Josef Ehmer, it was during this time that the term “population policy” (*Bevölkerungspolitik*) took hold in a wide array of policy areas and was viewed as a responsibility of the state.¹⁰

Following the establishment of the German Society, race hygienists (i.e., eugenicists) began to try and introduce the idea of “qualitative population policy” (i.e., creating a sterilization policy) instead of having a quantitative population policy. This effort did not seem realistic at the time since the focus was on finding ways to increase the birth rate and ideas of hindering reproduction seemed counterproductive. But in 1922, race hygienists were able to make another push for this approach thanks to their ties to those in the newly created Committee for Race Hygiene and Population Affairs, which was part of the new State Health Council of the Prussian Ministry of Public Welfare. This daunting task of rebuilding the population, however, led to more willingness by the government to listen to their ideas. It was agreed upon to establish the imperial laboratory (*Reichsanstalt*) for human heredity and demography and had an annual budget of about two million Deutsche Mark. Due to industrialization and a decline in the agricultural sector, it was argued, more research needed to be conducted to fight these threats to the German population. This first research group helped lead to the establishment of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute (KWI) for Anthropology, Human Heredity, and Eugenics in 1927 led by Eugene Fischer, a well-known anthropologist. Despite a 1926 article in which he argued that it was the task of human culture to control and direct human reproduction, he stated a year later, once the institute had opened, that its work was just scientific, and they were not looking to find applicable results.¹¹

This focus on the pure research aspect continued over the years and led to some discontent by race hygienists in the inability to practically apply their research. They wanted more political support of their ideas, which was offered by the National

⁸ Julius Wolf published a book already in 1912 about the declining birth rate entitled *Der Geburtenrückgang: Die Rationalisierung des Sexuallebens in unserer Zeit* (Translation: *The decline of the birthrate: The rationalization of sexual life in our time*). Weingart, "German Eugenics between Science and Politics," 261.

⁹ Kroll, 167.

¹⁰ Josef Ehmer, "'Nationalsozialistische Bevölkerungspolitik' in der neueren historischen Forschung," in *Bevölkerungslehre und Bevölkerungspolitik im ‚Dritten Reich‘*, ed. Rainer Mackensen (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2004), 29.

¹¹ Weingart, "German Eugenics between Science and Politics," 261-64.

Socialists. In particular, Fritz Lenz, a researcher at the KWI for Anthropology, was supportive of the Nazi Party's recognition of race hygiene and the role of the government in this movement. Prior to assuming power, the Nazi Party sent a letter to the institute in search of experts to join their working groups focused on "various subfields of race hygiene" to "secure the future of the seriously threatened existence of the German people quantitatively and qualitatively."¹² Several researchers responded positively to the letter, despite not fully supporting all the positions of the Party, including Fischer, who only offered his personal advice in order to maintain the institute's political independence.¹³

Once the Nazis took control of the government, the work of the KWI of Anthropology changed and the institute became closely tied to the government. Race hygiene "assumed the role of a science serving to legitimate politics", which is evident in the creation and passage of the sterilization law in 1934.¹⁴ The KWI for Anthropology and the overarching Kaiser Wilhelm Society (KWG) was asked to support the government and its efforts in race hygiene research, and they reorganized their governing body (*Kuratorium*) by adding members of the government. More efforts were made to educate public health agencies about eugenics and by 1935, 1,100 students had completed courses in the field. Additional race hygiene laws were passed, and the field grew in political power and influence, which also meant a loss of scientific autonomy. The institute had to carry out the tasks assigned by the Interior Ministry and was tasked with using scientific research to create propaganda.¹⁵

As WWII progressed, the institute expanded and even took credit for contributing "to the 'scientific' legitimation of the selection and destruction of Jews."¹⁶ In 1940, Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer became director of the institute and later became the link connecting the institute with the experiments carried out at the Auschwitz concentration camp through his relationship with Josef Mengele, his former assistant.¹⁷ According to Jürgen Kroll and Weingart, this connection between the atrocities of the Nazi Regime and race hygiene can be considered a significant reason why people began to associate population science with racial issues.¹⁸

When population research began in Germany, it was focused on maintaining and/or growing the German population, particularly after the loss of life during WWI. During the "Third Reich", the focus was not just on increasing the size of the

¹² Ibid., 269.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 270-71.

¹⁵ Ibid., 271-72, 75.

¹⁶ Ibid., 276.

¹⁷ Ibid., 279-82.

¹⁸ Jürgen Kroll and Peter Weingart, "Bevölkerungswissenschaft und Rassenhygiene vor 1930 in Deutschland," in *Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Bevölkerungstheorie in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Rainer Mackensen, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1989), 216.

population, but on creating the “ideal” German population. Even though early population research seems to be heavily focused on the birth rate, there was growth in the field of research specific to understanding the aging process and becoming older. Ignatz L. Nascher is credited as the father of medical aging research since he coined the phrase “geriatrics” (*Geriatric*) in 1909 and incorporated the socio-medical aspect into the study of old age, according to Ursula Lehr.¹⁹ In 1938, the German Society for Age Research (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Altersforschung*) was founded by Max Bürger. This was the first institute to focus specifically on the study of older citizens. They also published the first issue of the *Journal for Age Research* (*Zeitschrift für Altersforschung*) the same year.²⁰ The first issue introduced the journal and laid out its objective to evaluate research findings that are in society’s interest and to place special attention on the phenomenon of aging and the development of treatments of ailments that affect people in old age.²¹ Hans Walter Gruhle, one of the co-founders, sought to introduce psychological aspects into the discussion about challenges in aging, but Lehr argues that successful collaboration between various scientific disciplines did not happen until the 1960s.²²

Despite these strides in the field of aging research, the focus of population research by the 1930s was centered around population growth and the fertility rate.²³ Ehmer argued, by using these demographic and population-related concepts, it was possible to popularize the idea of race policy and the support by these researchers helped to legitimize and spread the Nazi ideology. The pronatalist policies made it possible to combine the quantitative and qualitative aspects of population studies that race hygienists had been advocating for since the research supported the ideas of promoting a larger, superior population, but also preventing the birth of those deemed unworthy.²⁴ By the end of the war and the fall of the “Third Reich”, the term “*Bevölkerungspolitik*” had become synonymous with pronatalism and racism, which included the atrocities carried out against the numerous victims of the Nazi regime. In addition, any other population-related terms were now associated with the other acts carried out related to deportation and resettlement.²⁵ By understanding Germany’s

¹⁹ Ursula Lehr, *Psychologie des Alterns*, 1st ed. (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1972), 24-25.

²⁰ The following year, the organization and the journal were renamed to *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Altersforschung* and *Zeitschrift für Altersforschung* – “age research” became “aging research”. *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, “Zur Geschichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gerontologie und Geriatrie (DGGG),” <http://www.dggg-online.de/wir/geschichte.php>.

²¹ Emil Abderhalden and Max Bürger, “Zur Einführung,” *Zeitschrift für Altersforschung* 1, no. 1 (1938): 2.

²² Lehr, 31.

²³ I argue this contributed to the specific field of gerontology not being as tarnished following the war as demography.

²⁴ Ehmer, 34.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

dark past with population research and policy, it is no surprise there was hesitation and restraint now associated with population-related policies.

Post-WWII: Rebuilding the Image and Field of Demography

The majority of this research focuses on West Germany/the Federal Republic of Germany (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, BRD), but East Germany/the German Democratic Republic (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, DDR) is incorporated in the period following reunification. Thus, references to Germany from 1990 onwards in this research include both East and West Germany. Before presenting an overview of the research landscape in West Germany following WWII, I will address how the field developed in the DDR. This will provide readers with a sense of how this area of research was seen post-WWII, but under Soviet rule. Even following reunification, the views of East Germans on population-related issues likely did not change drastically, which is another reason in favor of presenting the East German perspective.

A. Development of Demography Research in the DDR: Flawed and Generally Unsuccessful

Following the end of WWII and the fall of the “Third Reich”, the division of Germany meant that any continuation in the field of population studies would also be divided. For example, the German Society for Aging Research, which was established in 1938 in Leipzig by Max Bürger, was divided. The institute continued its work in Leipzig and was renamed the Society for Aging Research in the DDR (*Gesellschaft für Altersforschung in der DDR*) and became the Society for Gerontology of the DDR (*Gesellschaft für Gerontologie der DDR*) in 1977.²⁶ They continued to publish the Journal for Aging Research (*Zeitschrift für Altersforschung*) but focused on sharing research from socialist countries.²⁷ After WWII, the field also dealt with a lack of researchers left in East Germany, which made it difficult to continue with such a small labor pool. The damage to the reputation of population studies, which had been transformed into a field focused on race hygiene that was racist and anti-Semitic in nature, resulted in its slow development in the DDR.²⁸

Before demography and population studies became an established field, analytical work and detailed descriptions of demographic trends were available in the DDR. As the government tied social and economic policy together, the demographic

²⁶ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gerontologie und Geriatrie.

²⁷ Leopold Rosenmayr, "Schwerpunkte der Soziologie des Alters (Gerosoziologie)," in *Handbuch der Empirischen Sozialforschung, Band 7, Familie, Alter*, ed. René König (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1976), 280.

²⁸ Karlsch, 307-08.

research provided was politically relevant.²⁹ At the time, demography was understood to be the combination of statistical methods to analyze the composition and movements of a population. Felix Burkhardt from the University of Leipzig focused on population statistics (*Bevölkerungsstatistik*), which he viewed to be the same as demography, and was the only statistician in the 1950s and 1960s in the DDR that had an international reputation. Similarly, health professionals and medical doctors were also interested in the subject but were more focused on ways these scientific findings could help improve the population's health and were not as interested in developing theories related to population studies. Population geography grew and even became an official subdiscipline of geography at the University of Greifswald in the 1970s. Despite this interest in population studies by statisticians, geographers, and medical professionals, demography remained a subdiscipline of statistics and did not have a theoretical aspect.³⁰

In 1965, following the United Nations World Population Conference in Belgrade and discussions in professional journals in the Soviet Union, a push began to reestablish demography. Several leading social scientists, such as Jürgen Kuczynski and Hans Mottek, supported this effort and argued that demography had become its own scientific and theoretical discipline. However, despite these initial efforts, demography continued to be a forgotten science and was seen as a “special discipline” of population statistics.³¹ Through the work of Parviz Khalatbari, Lecturer at the University of Economics in Berlin (*Hochschule für Ökonomie*, HfÖ), on reporting about the world population conference and other events held that year by the federal statistical agency of the DDR (*Staatlichen Zentralverwaltung für Statistik*), the term “demography” was considered socially acceptable again.³²

The first professorship (*Lehrstuhl*³³) in demography was established in the DDR in 1966 at the Institute for Labor Economy at the HfÖ. Unfortunately, Gerhard Nultsch, the first person to hold this position, was not able to complete his responsibilities due to illness, so the professorship did not result in any output in the first few years.

²⁹ Ute Koch and Ulrich Becker, "Sozialforschung in der DDR: Dokumentation unveröffentlichter Forschungsergebnisse," in *Materialien zur Erforschung der DDR-Gesellschaft*, ed. Gesellschaft Sozialwissenschaftler Infrastruktureinrichtungen E.V (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1998), 82.

³⁰ Karlsch, 308-10.

³¹ "Die Etablierung der Demographie in der DDR als eigenständige Wissenschaftsdisziplin 1966–1978," in *Das Konstrukt „Bevölkerung“ vor, im und nach dem „Dritten Reich“*, ed. Rainer Mackensen and Jürgen Reulecke (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005), 551; "Gab es eine demographische Theorie in der DDR?," 310.

³² "Die Etablierung der Demographie in der DDR als eigenständige Wissenschaftsdisziplin 1966–1978," 551.

³³ A professor who holds a *Lehrstuhl* also has additional funds and personnel to help carry out research. If someone holds a *Lehrstuhl*, which I will refer to in this research as a professorship, then they are a professor, but just because an individual is a professor does not mean they hold a professorship/a *Lehrstuhl*.

Khalatbari took over the professorship in 1969 and during this time, the professorship was renamed to “Professor of Socialist Economics (Demography)” with no long-term goals established by the HfÖ. Mottek argued again for the need for demography to become more theoretical and therefore, a professorship in Marxist demography should be created.³⁴ A debate continued about how to develop the position in demography with a suggestion to focus on DDR population statistics. This insistence by the school’s leadership to focus on the DDR was not welcomed by Khalatbari who argued there was no such thing as “demography of the DDR” just like there was no such thing as “medicine of the DDR” – this was a field of research that could not focus solely on one country. This disagreement led Khalatbari to leave the school and join the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HUB) in 1972. This professorship at HfÖ remained vacant until Dr. Kurt Lungwitz took over the role in 1975.³⁵

Khalatbari’s professorship at HUB also faced challenges in establishing its objectives and research focus. Originally, the directors of HUB and the HfÖ agreed that research by both institutions should focus on the demographic problems of socialism, expand the course offering in demography to other fields, organize further training courses, and build up the personnel for their professors. However, Khalatbari wanted to continue to focus on the international aspect of demography. It was not until the Institute for Sociology and Social Policy at the DDR’s Academy of Science (*Institut für Soziologie und Sozialpolitik an der Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR*, ISS) was established that the Ministry for Higher and Vocational Education was willing to accept and approve of HUB focusing on world population problems.³⁶

The establishment of the ISS began as questions arose related to social and job-related mobility, motives for a meaningful family life, and work-life balance due to the birth rate beginning to decline and the working-age population gradually becoming exhausted.³⁷ First, a working group was established to provide “recommendations for the development and coordination of the work in demographic research to plan for population development.”³⁸ The working group highlighted the need for more research in the field of population development and called for the creation of a centralized group to coordinate this work – the “Scientific Council for Questions about Social Policy and Demography.”³⁹ This council was tasked with

³⁴ Karlsch, "Die Etablierung der Demographie in der DDR als eigenständige Wissenschaftsdisziplin 1966–1978," 554–55.

³⁵ Ibid., 557–62.

³⁶ Ibid., 563–67.

³⁷ Gunnar Winkler, "Demographische Forschung als Teil sozialstruktureller Forschung in der DDR," in *Lebenslagen: Sozialindikatorenforschung in beiden Teilen Deutschlands*, ed. Heiner Timmermann (Saarbrücken-Scheidt: Verlag Rita Dadder, 1990), 38.

³⁸ Karlsch, "Die Etablierung der Demographie in der DDR als eigenständige Wissenschaftsdisziplin 1966–1978," 570.

³⁹ Translated from „Wissenschaftlichen Rates für Fragen der Sozialpolitik und Demographie.“

coordinating social policy and demographic research, developing the scientific discussion, working with governmental bodies and working groups, coordinating international collaboration by participating in international demography societies, and providing input in the establishment of educational and training programs in social policy and demography.⁴⁰

The Scientific Council was immediately tasked with establishing the ISS. It was decided this institute would, among other things, analyze basic social processes of the DDR's society, develop objective laws and provide scientific-based information that can be used for party and state leadership, contribute to the development of sociological theory and methodology, and support the use of Marxism-Leninism to confront bourgeoisie ideology. The work was to be completed by 40 to 50 researchers, but by 1986, there were 105 employees at the ISS.⁴¹ Over time, it became the best equipped demographic center in the DDR in regard to its research staff.⁴² However, despite the "demographic environment" in the DDR being favorable, there did not appear to be a direct influence on social policies related to the birth rate.

The debate about finding a socialist-based demographic theory did not occur only among the directors of these institutes. In 1972, Kuczynski published an article that said social scientists had an immediate responsibility to make demography into a theory and a system of laws because since the war, it was clear that scientific-based population policies were needed.⁴³ Partially in response to Kuczynski's call to action, Khalatbari, expanded upon on the demographic transition theory. In his theory, he did not include a "socialist type of reproduction", which did not align with the concepts used by other demographers in the DDR. In the 1980s, another debate began about how to create population laws of varying scope focused on methodology and the transition theory/the periodization of population development in history. Together, this resulted in a critical back and forth between Khalatbari and demographers from the HfÖ. Wolfram Speigner, director of the population department at ISS, provided the moderated position and argued that it had not been possible to create socialist population legislation up until then. However, he thought it was still possible to do so since the characteristics of a socialist society corresponded with the theoretical aspects of a socialist society. He believed the socialist society would have to try to control the demographic conditions, which could be done via the creation of social frameworks for population reproduction.⁴⁴ Despite an attempt to only allow for

⁴⁰ Karlsch, "Die Etablierung der Demographie in der DDR als eigenständige Wissenschaftsdisziplin 1966–1978," 568-73; "Gab es eine demographische Theorie in der DDR?," 311.

⁴¹ "Die Etablierung der Demographie in der DDR als eigenständige Wissenschaftsdisziplin 1966–1978," 575–77.

⁴² "Gab es eine demographische Theorie in der DDR?," 311.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 310.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 314-17.

research on problems specific to the DDR, the multidimensional approach taken among the three research institutes contributed to the period of 1976 to 1985 being the most scientifically productive of DDR demographers.⁴⁵

Speigner later admitted that the ISS produced incorrect information due to pressure to deliver results and a lack of empirical findings caused by restrictions placed on research and data production.⁴⁶ The mismatch between social policy and the actual economic conditions in the DDR created a demand for demographic information but also led to research restrictions. Overall, there was a reasonable amount of data from the government, but specific data was not available: Data about suicides, abortion, migration over the border, and foreign citizens in the GDR. Additionally, research about specific topics was not allowed to be carried out, including topics related to population sociology: People's income situation, indicators of family policy expectations, and assessments of population policy.⁴⁷ Specifically, researchers were not permitted to calculate scenarios that included information about migration projections. It was well known that the DDR suffered from high emigration that led to population decline, which is why such prognoses were important, but the topic was taboo. As a result, these projections had little value. Speigner argued the information was of no use since it did not include internal migration statistics and could not be an accurate tool for economic and societal planning.⁴⁸

In the end, the efforts to establish a credible demographic research field in the DDR was only somewhat successful. Limits placed on research and data collection hindered the effectiveness of the research findings presented. The efforts to further the theoretical side of the field was also hampered by the need to push socialist population policy, which in the long-term was not a legitimate research approach.⁴⁹ Therefore, the efforts in the DDR seem flawed and not as successful as they could have been in re-establishing a trustworthy and positive reputation to the field.

B. Gerontology and Demography in the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD)

Unlike East Germany after the war, West Germany did not have the same situation where their qualified researchers in the field left the country, but they shared the problem of population studies having a negative reputation. The field was damaged by the Nazis and it took time, at least a few decades, before it truly regained its footing

⁴⁵ Winkler, 39; Karlsch, "Gab es eine demographische Theorie in der DDR?," 311.

⁴⁶ "Gab es eine demographische Theorie in der DDR?," 317.

⁴⁷ Dorbritz, 26.

⁴⁸ Koch and Becker, 81-82.

⁴⁹ Karlsch, "Gab es eine demographische Theorie in der DDR?," 318.

in society.⁵⁰ During the “Third Reich”, the country was cut off from the international demography community and the German understanding of population science was no longer associated with a socially reasoned context.⁵¹ This association with eugenics and race and population policies from the Nazis hurt the field. Gerhard Mackenroth, a leading figure in the field of demographic and social-structural research in Germany, published his book *Demography. Theory, Sociology and Statistics of the Population* in 1953 in an attempt to move the field forward.⁵² In the book’s forward, he addressed the impact of the “Third Reich”:

In Germany, everything that is connected to population and population policy is burdened with the odium of being a product of state propaganda, which was the case in the 1930s. Therefore, it should be made clear from the outset that demographers do not want people to do something they do not want to do, and that, like all serious scientists, they view state-recognized and sanctioned doctrines only with the greatest mistrust. However, not everything that was once done and thought of in Germany in the 1930s is wrong and reprehensible, simply because National Socialism dominated the political stage at that time. The population question is by no means a domain of nationalist “*Diehards*” and has never been so outside Germany.⁵³

Unfortunately, shortly after the book’s publication, he passed away and was not able to continue to contribute to the field of demography in Germany and support its development.⁵⁴

Other attempts were made, even before Mackenroth’s book, to bring back population research. Werner Conze, co-founder of modern German historical science, began in the summer of 1949 to teach a course on “exercises on population issues” in Göttingen.⁵⁵ This course and several of the doctoral theses he supported incorporated population history, such as information about population size or natural population movements in a historical context.⁵⁶ It may seem a bit surprising that this return to population-related topics began so soon after the war, but it may have been easier to accept since it was in a historical context.

In October 1952, the German Society for Population Studies (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft e.V.*, DGBW) opened in Munich. This institute was composed of researchers from various backgrounds, such as statistics,

⁵⁰ Mackensen, 23.

⁵¹ Höhn, “Demographische Forschung als Teil sozialstruktureller Forschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” 55-56.

⁵² Original German title (translated by author): *Bevölkerungslehre. Theorie, Soziologie und Statistik der Bevölkerung*.

⁵³ Gerhard Mackenroth, *Bevölkerungslehre. Theorie, Soziologie und Statistik der Bevölkerung* (Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1953), 1. Translated by the author.

⁵⁴ Höhn, “Demographische Forschung als Teil sozialstruktureller Forschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” 56-57.

⁵⁵ Original name of courses: *Übungen über Bevölkerungsfragen*; Wolfgang Köllmann, “Bevölkerungsgeschichtliche Forschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” in *Demographie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. Charlotte Höhn, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1988), 29.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

medicine, sociology, and history, who had gained experience before and during WWII. They were tasked with researching population issues and their relation to current economic, social, and political situations in a German and international context.⁵⁷ The idea for the DGBW originated with historian Erich Keyser, who advocated for the development of population research in Germany with an international perspective. He wanted to enhance the value of population research within academic curricula, and he worked to move the field away from the connotations of national socialism and the “Third Reich” by putting it into perspective. In his opinion, the decline in birth rate, the aging of the population, child poverty, and the inundation of immigrants in the labor force were part of a larger societal crisis and a result of “modernity.”⁵⁸ His call for population research resulted in the creation of a committee responsible for the establishment of the DGBW and he became a member of the executive committee. Keyser’s push to incorporate both an anthropological and historical approach to demography, however, was not supported by Hans Harmsen, chairman of the DGBW. Instead, Harmsen endorsed the implementation of a social hygiene concept (“*sozialhygienische*” *Konzeption*), which he worked on with Hermann Muckermann, the former director of the eugenics department at the KWI for Anthropology. For the 1956 annual conference, questions related to eugenics were to be discussed, but Elisabeth Pfeil, member of the DGBW board, had concerns about what message it would send if they focused too much on racial hygiene issues. In response and as a show of persistence, Harmsen invited Othmar Freiherr von Verschauer, the researcher connected to Menegele, for the 1958 conference. This resulted in internal disagreements about how population research/demography would be defined and how the institute would address political issues.⁵⁹

Harmsen also founded and led the German Academy for Population Science at the University of Hamburg (*Deutsche Akademie der Bevölkerungswissenschaft, DABW*). This academy was to support the DGBW and be a coordination center for research projects about population science issues.⁶⁰ But, due to continued internal strife within the organizations, there were eventually calls for Harmsen to step down following his comments about immigrants and to close the DABW, which happened in June 1975.⁶¹

In addition to the initial struggles with determining how this topic should be addressed, there were also difficulties related to the complicated backgrounds of

⁵⁷ Alexander Pinwinkler, “‘Bevölkerungsgeschichte’ in der ‚Deutschen Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft‘ (1952 bis ca. 1970),” in *Herausforderung Bevölkerung: Zu Entwicklungen des modernen Denkens über die Bevölkerung vor, im und nach dem „Dritten Reich“*, ed. Josef Ehmer, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 283.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 285.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 286.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 291.

researchers involved with the DGBW that could not be ignored. For example, Harmsen was connected to the eugenics efforts of the “Third Reich” and as the head of both the DGBW and the DABW, he employed other social hygienists that were affiliated with the Nazis.⁶² Keyser struggled to be fully accepted by the international research committee due to his ban by the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) for his publication about the history of Germany’s population, which was viewed as racist and anti-Semitic.⁶³ Most of the researchers at the DGBW either began to study or continued their academic careers during this time, but they argued because they were doing this work before the rise of the Nazis, their work was not national socialist.⁶⁴

Turning back towards the overall field of population research in the BRD, beginning in the 1960s, there was increased interest in demographic problems at the university level due to the decline in the birth rate. Researchers interested in the subject provided explanations about the causes and consequences of population decline and began to publish textbooks and edited books, particularly beginning in the 1970s. But despite these developments, Charlotte Höhn, German demographer, argued that this period cannot be seen as having established demographic research since there were no professorships in population research or specialized research institutes.⁶⁵ A similar sentiment was expressed by Hans W. Jürgen, first Director of the Federal Institute for Population Research (*Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung*, BiB). In the first issue of the *Journal for Population Studies* (*Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*) published in 1975, the first German-language journal for population research, he gave an overview of the situation of population research in Germany up until that point. Unlike other European countries where demography developed into its own field, there was a limited amount of expertise available in Germany. He claimed questions related to the population had remained along the periphery of other scientific fields. Despite the establishment of the DGBW, the research conducted by members of this society remained within their own institutes or was published in books and journals related to their individual research field. This demographic research was not located in a central location, like a specific academic journal specialized in demography, making it difficult for others interested in the topic to find. Because the field could not present itself as a closed field of knowledge, it was difficult to convince German universities to include

⁶² Nuthmann, 14.

⁶³ The publication *Bevölkerungsgeschichte Deutschlands* was reprinted three times in the “Third Reich” and was cited by other historians and demographers. However, Pinwinkler argues these authors did not critically approach the text and its methodology.

⁶⁴ Pinwinkler, 287.

⁶⁵ Höhn, “Demographische Forschung als Teil sozialstruktureller Forschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” 57.

demography in its curriculum, create professorships, or departments dedicated to demography. A lack of professorships and university departments also meant a lack of young academics to continue the work, which contributed to the difficulty of developing the field in Germany.⁶⁶

There were attempts to promote demographic research at universities and among researchers through targeted funding with the hopes of it leading to further development. The DFG created a special program in 1968 with the goal of uniting qualified demographic researchers and to institutionalize demography at universities. This program brought together a small group that produced useful research, but they were not able to further the field of demography. The Volkswagen Foundation made another attempt to introduce a second degree program in population studies but was unsuccessful due to the facilities at the participating universities. At the time, this included the University of Bochum and the University of Kiel, which were the only universities offering courses on the topic. Finally, the Stifterverband, an association comprised of businesses, attempted to create a research group to work on pressing questions related to the population, but they were also unable to inspire universities to become more involved in this research field.⁶⁷

Part of the reason for this lack of connection to the universities was the absence of a connection prior to WWII. Most of the classic demographic research was carried out at governmental statistics agencies and other independent institutions that were not affiliated with the university.⁶⁸ The University of Kiel was one of the first universities to offer students the chance to study population studies. In 1969, they established an interdisciplinary subject area for population studies and students could also elect to study population studies, but under the umbrella of the economics department. Students at the University of Bochum also had the option to take courses about populations studies. These courses were originally based in population history, but the variety was expanded to include population and family policies, and population sociology. Students at both universities could complete their doctoral, diploma or master's examinations in demography. At other German universities, students could complete their final papers on the topic of population studies, but they were typically still in the name of another major subject area.⁶⁹ By 1979, a professorship in population studies was established at the University of Bamberg and the number of academic programs and professorships increased during the 1980s.

⁶⁶ Jürgens, 9.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 10-11, 13.

⁶⁸ Nuthmann, 14.

⁶⁹ Jürgens, 13; "Bevölkerungswissenschaft an Hochschulen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 7, no. 1 (1981): 106-07.

Beginning in the 1980s, the University of Bielefeld created a chair in population studies and an institute for population research and social policy.⁷⁰

Looking specifically at the field of gerontology and old age research in the BRD, this field began to grow in the 1950s. Leopold Rosenmayr argued that by the 1960s, sociological old age research could already be considered its own field of research.⁷¹ The Journal of Gerontology (*Zeitschrift für Gerontologie*) was published beginning in 1968 by the Germany Society of Gerontology (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gerontologie*). This institute was the continuation of the original Germany Society for Age Research that was in Leipzig (East Germany) and was newly founded in West Germany.⁷² Following reunification, the two institutes joined together to form the German Society of Gerontology and Geriatrics (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, DGGG). Several other institutions were also established: The German Association for Geriatrics (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geriatrie*) in 1985, the German Association for Aging Research (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Alternsforschung*) in 1990, and the German Center for Aging Research (*Deutsches Zentrum für Alternsforschung*) in 1995.⁷³ The ability to study gerontology at universities also grew, mainly in the 1980s: In 1982, the University of Kassel established a professorship in social gerontology and then a degree program in 1984. The same year, the University of Vechta created a continued education program in social gerontology, followed by degree programs for gerontology at the Universities of Nurnberg and Heidelberg in 1986 and 1988, respectively.⁷⁴ The establishment of these institutes and degree programs reflects the increased interest and effort to promote the study of older generations and to disseminate relevant information.

Bielefeld Institute for Population Research and Social Policy and the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research

Due to my affiliations to the University of Bielefeld and the MPIDR, both institutions were inspirational in my decision to take a closer look at the process of their

⁷⁰ I will go into more detail about the establishment of the institute at the University of Bielefeld later in this chapter. Nuthmann, 16-17.

⁷¹ Leopold Rosenmayr, "Soziologie des Alters," in *Handbuch der Empirischen Sozialforschung II. Band*, ed. René König (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1969), 307.

⁷² In 1939, both names replaced "age research" (*Altersforschung*) with "aging research" (*Alternsforschung*).

⁷³ The *Deutsches Zentrum für Alternsforschung* closed in 2005, but reopened in 2006 as the *Netzwerk Alternsforschung (NAR)* (Network Aging Research). Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geriatrie e.V., "Die DGG," Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geriatrie e.V., <https://www.dggeriatrie.de/ueber-uns/die-dgg>; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Alternsforschung, "Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Alternsforschung (DGfA)," Deutsche Gesellschaft für Alternsforschung, <http://alternsforschung.org/diegesellschaft.html>; Netzwerk Alternsforschung, "Geschichte," <https://www.nar.uni-heidelberg.de/ueberuns/geschichte.html>.

⁷⁴ Eva-Marie Kessler et al., "Gerontologisch orientierte Studiengänge in Deutschland," *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* 50, no. 5 (2017): 399.

establishment. The Bielefeld Institute is of particular interest because it was clear that the political environment at the time was supportive of the establishment of such an institute and was aware of the need and interest to have more information about population development in the region. However, the research environment was less welcoming due to larger, societal movements, i.e., the women's movement, and the concern about how population research would be defined.

In the late 1970s, the government in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) was looking to establish an institute for population policy, but it faced backlash from students and faculty members involved in the women's movement. They argued population research was misogynistic and was only interested in women returning to staying at home and having children. By the time the MPIDR was established in the 1990s, interest in creating the institute originated from the research community and there was little backlash from either the government, researchers, or members of the public. The establishment of both institutes was significant because they represented an awareness of the need for more population research to better understand the ongoing changes, particularly for political decision-making.

A. Bielefeld Institute for Population Research and Social Policy: Supported by the Government, but Contested by the Women's Movement

In December 1978, the CDU faction of the NRW state parliament (*NRW Landtag*) posed a GA about population development in the state.⁷⁵ The debate that followed in January 1980 about the GA and the official government response (Drucksache 8/3922) focused mainly on the declining birth rate and its impact on the NRW population and family policies. In the speech by Minister President Johannes Rau (SPD), he announced the development of an institute for population policy, whose objective would be to shed light on the reasons for the birth rate decline. He stated, "We will create an institute for population policy in North Rhine-Westphalia and with that be the first German state to tackle such issues. Much research is needed here."⁷⁶

Rau could make this declaration since he had already held meetings the previous year with representatives from the University of Bielefeld. In my interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, a government employee – Dr. Harms – was responsible for preparing the response to the CDU's GA. Harms discovered that despite the recent establishment of the BiB⁷⁷, the field of population research had stagnated. This led to his recommendation for a new institute for

⁷⁵ Fraktion der CDU, "Große Anfrage 22: Bevölkerungsentwicklung in Nordrhein-Westfalen," Drucksache 8/3922, Düsseldorf, 1978.

⁷⁶ Landtag Nordrhein-Westfalen, "Plenarprotokolle. Stenographischer Bericht der 123. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode," Plenarprotokoll 8/123, Düsseldorf, 1980.

⁷⁷ Later in this chapter, I go into more detail about its establishment.

population research in order to provide more information that could help policy makers better understand the demographic situation in the region.⁷⁸ Once the decision was made to ask Kaufmann to be the institute's director, the NRW Ministry for Science and Research approached the university. The NRW government agreed to provide the necessary financial means within the 1980 state budget to establish an institute focused on population research, which included a professorship for population studies. Together, Kaufmann and Prof. Dr. Herwig Birg, who filled the professorship position, worked as directors of the institute and found others to fill positions dedicated to research in the field.⁷⁹ The institute that was established in 1980 was the Bielefeld Institute for Population Research and Social Policy.⁸⁰

Despite the seemingly simple process of establishing the Bielefeld Institute from the political and financial side, there was serious pushback from university members and students. At the time, the women's movement was very active at the university: A motion to create a women's research section within the social sciences was submitted in 1976. Two years later, in 1978, a working group of women in social sciences was established and in 1979, a sociological women's group and the LiLi Women's Group (*LiLi-Frauengruppe*) were created.⁸¹ When it was decided to establish the Bielefeld Institute, many of the female students and professors demanded that the money be used to establish an institute for women's research. As explained by Tomke König, the feminist perspective viewed population research as focused on gender roles, the female body, and its role in reproduction. They saw the research as misogynistic and as an attempt to support the idea that women should return to the home to have children and take care of their families; they did not want such research to be supported by the government.⁸² Efforts were made to prevent the establishment of the Bielefeld Institute, for example, by disrupting meetings, distributing flyers, and hanging banners in the university's entrance. The Bielefeld Institute was established despite their efforts, but Kaufmann included in the institute's proposal more consideration towards the working and living conditions of women and included five women (out of a total of nine) in the committee responsible for establishing the institute.⁸³

⁷⁸ Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, interview by Emily Lines, November 27, 2017, Personal interview, Bonn.

⁷⁹ "Chronik der Fakultät für Soziologie auf Grundlage der Fakultätskonferenzen-Protokolle," in »Hochschulexperimentierplatz Bielefeld« – 50 Jahre Fakultät für Soziologie, ed. Volker Kruse and Torsten Strulik (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2019), 444.

⁸⁰ From here on, it will just be referred to as the Bielefeld Institute.

⁸¹ "Chronik der Fakultät für Soziologie auf Grundlage der Fakultätskonferenzen-Protokolle," 437, 42-43.

⁸² Ibid., 447; Tomke König, "Männer, Frauen und die Geschlechtersozioogie in Bielefeld," *ibid.*, 173; Torsten Strulik, "Interview mit einem Mitgründer der Fakultät für Soziologie: Ein Gespräch mit Franz-Xaver Kaufmann," *ibid.*, 99.

⁸³ König, 172-73; Birg; Kaufmann.

With the example of the Bielefeld Institute, it was clear there was political support of its establishment, but the women's movement and their concern that the institute's research would only promote women remaining at home to have children created roadblocks to its creation. The expected resistance due to the association demography had with the "Third Reich" was only referred to in the debate in the Landtag with many members of the SPD clearly stating they were not promoting population policy but were interested in helping ease the situation for families.⁸⁴ This assumption that population policy would only focus on pronatalist ideas highlights the lasting impact on people's perceptions of this research field.

B. Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR): Rebuilding the Image of Demography with Little Controversy

As I began this research process, I posited that the establishment of the MPIDR was a sign by the federal government that they had fully recognized the need for and importance of demography since Max Planck Institutes are primarily funded by both the federal and state governments. However, after speaking with Beatrice Fromm, former consultant and department head at the Max Planck Society (MPG) who was heavily involved in developing the MPIDR⁸⁵, it was apparent this was not the case, at least in this specific situation.

Following reunification, the MPG decided to establish 20 new institutes in the new German states. It was the responsibility of the directors and scientists from the approximately 60 existing institutes to develop possible areas of focus for the new institutes. Karl Ulrich Mayer, then director of the MPI for Human Development, proposed in 1993 an institute focused on demography. According to Fromm, they wanted to use this opportunity to help rebuild this field:

Before [WWII], this field existed and now, I think, it is still called 'population research' in some of the universities, meaning the science of the structure and the development of a nation's population. Back then, the problem in the population was the Jews and during this time, what one could call 'population research' was so corrupted and discredited that no one wanted to touch it after the war. It was frowned upon and rightly so; it was damaged. And I believe it was in the 80s, there were maybe three professors, but no one talked about it much. The MPG used this opportunity to recreate this damaged, sick, and still 'browned' subject. This was only possible because of reunification.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Several members in the Landtag made it clear that they were not promoting population policy and that it was not the responsibility of the government to tell people how many children they should have. Instead, the government should only be involved once a couple has decided to have children. Landtag Nordrhein-Westfalen.

⁸⁵ Not only was she a key figure in the development of the MPIDR, but she helped lead the entire process of founding the new MPI's following reunification – a total of 23 institutes. She received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Verdienstkreuz am Bande des Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) for her work in this process.

⁸⁶ Beatrice Fromm, interview by Emily Lines, October 27, 2017, Personal interview, Berlin.

Mayer argued that such an institute was necessary because following WWII and the misuse by the “Third Reich”, the field of demography in Germany had not been able to catch up with the international community. It was not well represented at universities and past attempts to establish similar research centers had failed. He argued this was because formal expertise in demography did not exist and could not be developed, and the connections to government statistical agencies and therefore, politics, was not conducive to its development. Establishing such an institute would be worthwhile because demography was a highly developed and innovative discipline, which sought to provide answers to questions about, for example, the causes and results of migration, causes and consequences of a volatile age structure, and the development of families and the birth rate. By creating such an institute, it could also provide non-political research that could be useful for scientific policy advice.⁸⁷

The process to establish the MPIDR began with the social and human sciences section⁸⁸ receiving proposals for different institute ideas and then each proposer giving a presentation. Proposals were voted on and demography received the most votes. A commission was established of five to ten people that were responsible for deciding how this institute would be formed and who would be the director. A number of demographers from around the world were invited to give presentations and from this group, they nominated someone to be the institute’s director. According to Kaufmann, at that point in time, they were not able to find someone in Germany that was capable of filling the role of director and therefore, they had to turn to the international demography community.⁸⁹ In Mayer’s proposal, he even suggested finding researchers from outside of Germany to help establish a connection to the international community.⁹⁰ Dr. James W. Vaupel, an American demographer, was selected to be the founding director in March 1996. Their recommendation was given to the section and passed on to the senate of the MPG, who decided to establish the institute.⁹¹ The institute officially began its work in October 1996.⁹²

In addition to selecting the director, a location for the new institute had to be selected. Rostock was chosen, a city in the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and this meant the state, the state ministries, the mayor, and the local university also had to agree to provide support. The University of Rostock had to establish two

⁸⁷ Karl Ulrich Mayer, "Vorüberlegungen zur Errichtung eines Max-Planck-Instituts für Demographische Forschung," (Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, 1993).

⁸⁸ At the time and still to this day, the MPG is divided into three categories/sections – natural sciences, life sciences, and social and human sciences. There were approximately 15 institutes in the social and human sciences section.

⁸⁹ Kaufmann.

⁹⁰ Mayer.

⁹¹ Fromm.

⁹² Eckart Henning and Marion Kazemi, *Handbuch zur Institutsgeschichte der Kaiser-Wilhelm- /Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften, 1911-2011, Teil I*, vol. Erster Band (Berlin: Verlag Duncker & Humblot, 2016).

professorships that would build the cooperation between the university and MPIDR, and they also had to create a study program to help develop the next generation of demographers. What made this situation even more unique was the poor condition of the universities in the new German states. The universities were financially unstable and during DDR times, research was not promoted at the universities, rather only at the Academy of Science.⁹³ With the establishment of the MPIDR, it was possible to also foster the restoration of research at the university.

When asked about how political the process was and how involved the government was, Fromm explained that “politics as such does not have much to do” with the decision-making process.⁹⁴ For example, the senate of the MPG does include ministers and/or undersecretaries from the federal and state-level governments, which is responsible for making decisions, such as the opening and closing of institutes, selecting directors of the MPIs, and agreeing to the budget. However, party politics does not play a role in this decision-making process. According to Fromm, the most involved the states become is when deciding where to locate an institute (fair distribution, etc.) and both the federal and state-level governments make sure the money they provide is spent responsibly.⁹⁵ Therefore, my original idea that the founding of the MPIDR was symbolic of the interests of the government does not hold. In this specific case, it appears that timing and the societal circumstances were more integral in its foundation and was not a reflection of the interests and focus of either the state or federal government.

Both institutions were created under the premise of the need for more research about population changes, but not explicitly due to aging-related developments: The Bielefeld Institute was to provide more insight into the declining birth rate, while the MPIDR was to help rebuild the field of demography in Germany. Vaupel’s influence as founding director of the MPIDR contributed to mortality and increasing life expectancy receiving attention early on at the institute, since this was one of his main research focuses. There was little resistance towards the decision to create a Max Planck Institute dedicated to demography, either from the government or other researchers, unlike in Bielefeld. Currently, the MPIDR continues to exist, while the institute in Bielefeld does not and the subject of population studies has now been moved to the health sciences department, also signaling a shift in interests.

⁹³ Fromm also mentioned the request to incorporate the institutes from the Academy of Science into the MPG, but this idea was rejected by the president of the MPG. Instead, only two of the institutes were incorporated and were restructured.

⁹⁴ Fromm.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

4.2 Historical Review of Germany's Political and Societal Development

This overview of the political and social situation in Germany has been divided based on changes in government and major events, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Pre-1966: Period of Economic Growth and a Redefining of the Pension System

My overview begins prior to 1966 because this was a period in Germany's history characterized by its strong economic growth. In the 1950s, Germany underwent a significant rebuilding process to recover from the physical destruction of WWII and to rebuild the necessary political and economic structures for society. There was a strong influx of immigrants into Germany, many from East Germany, which contributed to the substantial economic development since this meant more consumers and capable workers.⁹⁶ Together, these factors helped the unemployment rate drop from 11 percent in 1950 and remain under 1 percent from 1961 to 1966; led to continuous wage growth; and, the productivity of working hours grew between 1957 and 1966, on average, 6.2 percent per year.⁹⁷ The government also worked to move on from being a "post-war" society to becoming more stable and a normalized state.⁹⁸ These were considerable developments within a relatively short period of time. This intense economic growth, known as the *Wirtschaftswunder*, seemed unique and as though other economic fluctuations could not affect it.⁹⁹

In 1953, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer created the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Familienfragen*; today, it is known as the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Children, *Bundesministerium für Familien, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend*, BMFSFJ). In his speech justifying its creation, he said the "growth of the aging German population was increasing constantly."¹⁰⁰ But, in the same speech, he focused more on the declining birth rate and the impact this could have on Germany's economy and labor market.¹⁰¹ With this speech, Chancellor Adenauer gave the impression that he was aware of the

⁹⁶ Bernhard Löffler, "Rahmenbedingungen," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Michael Ruck and Marcel Boldorf (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2007), 8-9.

⁹⁷ Hans F. Zacher, "Grundlagen der Sozialpolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *ibid.*, ed. Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales and Bundesarchiv (2006), 508.

⁹⁸ Löffler, 3.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰⁰ „Die wachsende Überalterung des deutschen Volkes steigt andauernd.“ – from the „Regierungserklärung Konrad Adenauers auf der 3. Sitzung des II. Deutschen Bundestages am 20.10.1953, in Deutscher Bundestag, „Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 3. Sitzung der 2. Wahlperiode,“ Bd. 18, Bonn, 1953.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

demographic developments in Germany; however, in 1957 he promoted a major pension reform that changed the nature of pensions: Instead of being a subsidy (*Zuschuß*) to one's living subsistence, pensions were expected to replace one's previous income (*Lohnersatz*). Additionally, pensions would be dynamic and based on the development of one's gross earned income. Along with this change came the introduction of the "generational contract" (*Generationenvertrag*). This meant the younger generation (i.e., working generation) would pay into the system via their earned income to fund the pensions of the retired population and then the following generations would do the same (pay-as-you-go system).¹⁰² This proposed pension plan was criticized by both economists and demographers, who pointed out increasing life expectancy, as well as the concern of there being fewer workers to contribute to the pension system that would have to support more and longer living retirees. However, Chancellor Adenauer ignored their claims and argued, "People are always having kids".¹⁰³ This statement seems to contradict statements related to the establishment of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, but it is likely there was less concern because the birth rate at the time was 2.3, which was above the replacement rate, and he may have believed the birth rate would continue to remain at a level to maintain the size of the German population.

Once the understanding of the purpose of a pension was altered, it created an additional hurdle for policy makers to change the pension system since the public would likely not accept changes that would result in a reduced pension, especially if they had been actively contributing to the system to allow older generations to receive a higher pension. As will be seen in this research, this change to the definition of a pension's purpose influenced the discussion surrounding future pension reforms and how policy makers could respond to a changing population structure.

In the early 1960s, some attention was given again to the older population. For example, the SPD submitted a resolution to ask the federal government to publish a report on the living conditions of older citizens. This was debated in conjunction with the GA by the CDU/CSU about the situation of older people. The discussion helped lead to the realization that old age policies are broad and there was a need to determine what departments and ministries should be responsible for addressing and enacting certain policies.¹⁰⁴ Generally speaking, however, the amount of discussion

¹⁰² Peter A. Schröder and Hans-Peter Viechtbauer, *Sozialpolitik Beispiel: Politik für alte Menschen*, ed. Franz Josef Floren, Sozialwissenschaften (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1993), 130-31; Thomas Rahlf, *Deutschland in Daten: Zeitreihen zur Historischen Statistik* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2015), 95.

¹⁰³ Original quote: "*Kinder kriegen die Leute immer*". See: Ulli Kulke, "Kinder kriegen die Leute immer," *Die Welt*, 11.23.2012.

¹⁰⁴ Ursula Münch, "Familien-, Jugend- und Altenpolitik," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Michael Ruck and Marcel Boldorf (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2007), 601.

surrounding old age policies was limited. The 1950s and 1960s was when old age policy was still developing at the federal level and when political parties did not view old age policies as part of comprehensive social policy, but rather as something that fell under the umbrella of care and social assistance legislation. Even though it was recognized that various ministries should address different aspects of old age policy, full acknowledgement that old age policy is part of the overall social policy first began to take shape in the late 1960s.¹⁰⁵

1966-1972: Economic Recession, Rise of the SPD, and the 68er-Movement

Following the economic growth in the 1950s, the German economy faced a temporary economic recession in 1966, which led to a declining growth rate, increase in both the unemployment and inflation rate, and a trade deficit. These economic developments heavily contributed to the resignation of Chancellor Ludwig Erhard in December 1966, since many thought Erhard missed the chance to actively address these economic crises in a timely manner.¹⁰⁶ This led to the formation of a new governing coalition between the CDU/CSU and SPD in the Bundestag. Kurt Georg Kiesinger (CDU) became the new chancellor and emphasized in his government policy statement his concern for stabilizing the German economy and overcoming the budget and economic crisis facing the country. The new government wanted to create a more comprehensive and forward-looking program. Regarding social policies, both parties agreed they did not hold differing positions.¹⁰⁷

To address the economic recession, the government introduced measures to stimulate the economy, but also made cuts in social spending, such as a reduction in government subsidies to pension insurance.¹⁰⁸ With these measures in place, by the end of 1967, the economy began to grow again: The growth rate rose to 5.5 percent (1968) and 7.5 percent (1969), full employment returned, and the monetary value of the Deutsche Mark remained stable.¹⁰⁹ In 1969, when Willy Brandt (SPD) assumed office as Chancellor, the return of a strong German economy helped make it possible for Brandt's numerous reforms to be seen as feasible.¹¹⁰ His assumption into office was the first time the SPD had ruled following WWII and was seen as the beginning of a change. When he assumed office, Brandt expressed in his government policy

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 609.

¹⁰⁶ Löffler, 17, 82.

¹⁰⁷ Hans Günter Hockerts, "Rahmenbedingungen: Das Profil der Reformära," *ibid.*, ed. Hans Günter Hockerts (2006), 10, 12, 14.

¹⁰⁸ Friedrich P. Kahlenberg and Dierk Hoffmann, "Sozialpolitik als Aufgabe zentraler Verwaltungen in Deutschland - Ein veraltungsgeschichtlicher Überblick 1945-1990," *ibid.*, ed. Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales and Bundesarchiv, 139.

¹⁰⁹ Hockerts, 42-43.

¹¹⁰ Kahlenberg and Hoffmann, 143; Hockerts, 71-72.

statement a strong belief in being able to accomplish his goals, was optimistic about the country's progress, and had a strong focus on domestic reform.¹¹¹

Turning the focus to the individual political parties during this time: Despite the relatively quick process of forming this new coalition, not all party members were in support. The SPD faced the most challenges and to help them overcome these internal conflicts, they developed a new party program centered around optimism about progress (*Fortschrittsoptimismus*), growth, and the idea that the modern world was capable of being planned and controlled.¹¹² By the 1969 elections, the results proved that this new focus and branding by the SPD had been effective enough to help them gain 3.4 percent more votes than in 1965.¹¹³ They were able to form a coalition with the FDP and assume the office of Chancellor. In addition to focusing on domestic reform, the government also worked on improving relations with the East, specifically East Germany, which became known as "*Neue Ostpolitik*". Partially due to a lack of support of this new policy towards East Germany, parliamentarians from the governing coalition slowly began to leave and switch parties, which meant a decline in the coalition's mandate. As the CDU gained support in the state level elections, a vote of no confidence was called in April 1972 – a first in German history – to determine if Chancellor Brandt should remain in office or be replaced by Rainer Barzel (CDU). Despite surviving the vote, Brandt called for a vote of confidence in September 1972. With agreements having been made prior to the vote for cabinet members to abstain, the no votes won, and President Gustav Heinemann dissolved the Bundestag and called for new elections in November. In the 1972 election, the SPD actually gained support and claimed the majority in the Bundestag for the first time.¹¹⁴

At the end of the 1960s, the *68er-Bewegung* was happening, which was a student protest movement that led to a larger shift in society. Hans Günter Hockerts characterized it as a "high water mark" of the change in values: It was the end of the Adenauer era and brought in the movement for modernization that resulted in a "fundamental liberalization of Germany."¹¹⁵ It is important to be aware of these types of shifts in societal values because they also influenced media coverage, political debate, and the research community.

¹¹¹ Ostpolitik was the attempt to improve relations between West Germany and East Europe, specifically East Germany.

¹¹² Ibid., 73-76.

¹¹³ Ibid., 65.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 69.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 73-76.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 150-53.

1972-1982: Economic Recessions and the Evolution of Political Parties

The next phase under consideration falls between the end of 1972 and 1982. This phase begins with the beginning of Chancellor Brandt's second term in office, shortly before the oil crisis began in Germany, and was when both the BiB and the German Centre of Gerontology (*Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen*, DZA) were officially founded. This phase concludes in October 1982 with the end of the SPD's role in the governing coalition and the beginning of Helmut Kohl's time as chancellor.

In 1974, Helmut Schmidt (SPD) became Chancellor, replacing Brandt (SPD) who had begun his second term as Chancellor in the fall of 1972. Brandt stepped down due to a loss of support among voters and a worsening of the economic situation, which began even before the oil crisis. Due to inflation, cost of living had risen from 7 percent to 8 percent while the price of food had also risen by 10.6 percent between 1972 and 1973.¹¹⁶ This dissatisfaction in the economic situation was evident in the loss of the SPD's majority during the state-level elections in Hamburg, a state they had held for 17 years.¹¹⁷ A spy scandal in Chancellor Brandt's cabinet in May 1974 was the final straw and Brandt stepped down from office.

Prior to Schmidt's election, many members of the SPD had left the party – almost a third of its members. As discussed by Martin H. Geyer, the loss of members and support were related to a feeling of insecurity caused by the economic recession and due to the poor image of the SPD caused by internal struggles. During the early 1970s, there were a variety of opinions and positions among party representatives, which made it difficult for groups like the labor unions to feel represented. Once Schmidt assumed office, his transition was seen as a shift in politics because of the emphasis Schmidt placed on stabilizing the economy and budget under crisis conditions. The emphasis was no longer on always making things bigger and better.¹¹⁸ Schmidt's position as Chancellor helped the number of members in the SPD rise and by 1976, it had reached over one million members. Their membership also became more diverse: Almost a third of members were under the age of 34 in 1977 and many members of the party worked in the public sector.¹¹⁹

Turning to the CDU, the two federal election losses they suffered in 1969 and 1972 led the party to reflect on their future and the direction they wanted to take.¹²⁰ One change they made was electing Helmut Kohl as Chairman of the party at the

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 119.

¹¹⁷ This loss in Hamburg was followed by a series of losses in other state-level elections: Lower Saxony (June 1974), Hesse and Bavaria (October 1974), Berlin (March 1975), Bremen (September 1975), and Baden-Württemberg (April 1976). Martin H. Geyer, "Rahmenbedingungen: Unsicherheit als Normalität," *ibid.*, ed. Martin H. Geyer (2008), 15.

¹¹⁸ Hockerts, 120-21.

¹¹⁹ Geyer, 15-18.

¹²⁰ In the literature used, the CSU is not heavily addressed, but it is mentioned that the CSU threatened to leave the faction following the losses. In: *ibid.*, 23.

federal level. The newly revised platform of 1973 emphasized the need to integrate new members, help the party move away from its intellectual defensive, and connect it with the “intellectual discussion culture” of the time, which was common during this political culture change of the reform era.¹²¹ Kohl’s election and the appointment of new leaders to the party contributed to the number of CDU members doubling within a five-year period, however, the make-up of the party members still leaned Catholic and many members were self-employed or public officials. In an attempt to win back lost votes, Kohl worked with Kurt Biedenkopf, CDU General Secretary, to focus the efforts of the party on more social problems and a fundamental values commission (*Grundwertekommission*) was also created.¹²²

The discussion surrounding the party’s principles and core values continued at their 1975 political convention in Mannheim. This event began to address the issue of the “new social question” (*Neue Soziale Frage*), which meant the party would dedicate its efforts to helping those who are excluded from the welfare state, question the role of women in society, and take on family policy initiatives. These new foci of the party, as laid out in the *Mannheim Declaration (Mannheimer Erklärung)*, gave it the image of an advocate for the social state, while the federal government was more concerned with money-saving measures. Heiner Geißler, Minister President of Rhineland-Palatinate, expanded on this topic in 1976 in which he named a new form of poverty in Germany that mainly affects women, people of old age, and those with many children.¹²³ He cited the generational conflict that was a result of demographic changes to the population, which would cause younger generations to have to bear the burden of financing a growing pension system. Furthermore, he referred to the gender conflict and the need to give more recognition to women raising children, also in terms of pension benefits.¹²⁴ Finally, he argued that social benefits should target those really in need, should be restructured and in such a way that people are motivated to be socially engaged, and should be organized in a more humane and economical fashion.¹²⁵

This new focus by the CDU and the initiation of the discussion about fundamental values in the party was related to the debate surrounding abortion in the early 1970s and efforts by the SPD and FDP to reform laws related to marriage and

¹²¹ “Diese lange Programmdiskussion sollte auf den Zustrom neuer Mitglieder integrierend wirken, die Partei aus der geistigen Defensive herausführen und an jene ‘intellektuelle Diskussionskultur’ anschließen, die im politischen Kulturwandel der Reformära üblich geworden war.” In: Hockerts, 110.

¹²² Geyer, 23-25.

¹²³ Ibid., 31-32.

¹²⁴ Hans Günter Hockerts, “Abscheid von der dynamischen Rente - Über den Einzug der Demografie und der Finanzindustrie in die Politik der Alterssicherung,” in *Sozialstaat Deutschland - Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Becker, et al. (Bonn: Verlag J. H. W. Dietz Nachf. GmbH, 2010), 262; Geyer, 32.

¹²⁵ 33.

family rights. All major political parties began examining their party platforms and considered a change in their positions due to the overall societal changes. Prior to the CDU's "Mannheim Declaration" (*Mannheimer Erklärung*), the SPD released an intermediate platform/party conception in 1975 titled "Orientation Framework '85" (*Orientierungsrahmen '85*) that was complimentary to the already existing 1959 party platform known as the Godesberger Program (*Godesberger Programm*).¹²⁶ In 1977, the FDP published their Kiel Theses (*Kieler Thesen*), which clearly stated that the FDP was an economic-focused party. These theses also touched upon fundamental values, but it was not as central a topic as it was for the other political parties. The discussion about fundamental values reached its high point during the 1976 elections.¹²⁷

Following the 1976 elections, in which the SPD and FDP maintained control of the Bundestag, the governing coalition remained on course to work on consolidation efforts with specific attention given to increasing health care costs, unemployment, consolidation of federal spending, and the financial restructuring of pension schemes. Another issue that gained traction during the election was the security of the pension system, which will be explored in Chapter 7.¹²⁸

Germany and the international community were faced with a second oil crisis in 1979, which began shortly after it appeared the first crisis had been overcome. This second crisis had an even larger impact on the German economy: The GNP was cut in half to just 2.2 percent between 1973 and 1980 compared to 1960 to 1973, and from 1980 to 1987, it was at 1.4 percent. More businesses filed for bankruptcy and workers had to accept income losses.¹²⁹ Following the first oil crisis and economic recession, unemployment had fallen under the one million mark in 1978 but rose again once the second oil crisis began and reached a high point of over 2,265,000 by 1984.¹³⁰ Naturally, this high level of unemployment meant a large number of people were receiving unemployment benefits provided by the federal government. The increase in people needing benefits while simultaneously collecting less tax revenue meant the government had to find a way to adapt the federal budget.¹³¹ Therefore, the 1970s were heavily driven by a need to stabilize and rebuild the economy.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 27. This addition to the party platform did not include mention of the demographic situation in Germany, but just briefly mentioned that the decline in birth rate may help reduce the demand on supplies and services. In: Hockerts, "Abscheid von der dynamischen Rente - Über den Einzug der Demografie und der Finanzindustrie in die Politik der Alterssicherung," 262.

¹²⁷ Geyer, 27-28.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 47.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 50-51.

¹³⁰ Statistisches Bundesamt, "Arbeitslose und offene Stellen," Statistisches Bundesamt, https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesamtwirtschaftUmwelt/Arbeitsmarkt/HistorischeStatistik/BA/50Arbeitslosigkeit19501990.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

¹³¹ Geyer, 53.

A. Establishment of BiB and DZA: Growth of Government Interest in Population Changes

As seen in the first section of this chapter, the field of demography was not very active in the immediate period following the war. Many of my interview partners referred to the tarnished nature of the field of population studies and the considerable hesitation to pursue the issue.¹³² In particular, policy makers did not want to be seen as pushing a pronatalist agenda or as if they were telling citizens, specifically women, how many children to have for the sake of the country. Any effort to do so was seen as a potential invasion of privacy.¹³³ This fear was confirmed by the resistance to establishing the Bielefeld Institute. But as the birth rate continued to decline, concern rose about the future of the German population. By 1972, the need was recognized for more research on population-related issues that would assist policy makers in creating “forward-looking policy” and simultaneously would be easy for policy makers to access and request. The two institutes that were founded in response to this demand, which were initiated and supported by the state and federal governments, indicated a move towards focusing more on population-related issues.

This began with the German Federal Institute for Population Research (*Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung*, BiB), which was in response to concerns about the declining birth rate in Germany. Questions were posed by members of the Bundestag (in 1971 by members of the CDU/CSU faction and then by Dr. Anton Stark (CDU) in 1972) specifically related to wanting more information about the impact of the declining birth rate.¹³⁴ In his written response to Stark’s question, Interior Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher announced his proposal to establish the BiB.¹³⁵ An additional four-part question was asked by Fritz Baier (CDU) in 1972 about the declining birth rate and its impact on the future development of the labor market and the employment of foreign labor, the Gross National Product (GNP), and the financing of social security from 1990 until 2050. He requested a survey be conducted about the cause of the birth rate decline, which Minister Genscher suggested could be carried out by the BiB.¹³⁶ The institute was officially founded in February 1973 under the umbrella of the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

¹³² This included interviews with Prof. Dr. Ursula Lehr, Prof. Dr. Herwig Birg, Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, and Beatrice Fromm.

¹³³ McIntosh, 184.

¹³⁴ Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, “Bevölkerungsentwicklung - Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Vog, Frau Stommel, Burger, Baier, Frau Schroeder (Detmold), Dr. Götz, Dr. Fuchs, Frau Dr. Henze, Winkelheide und der Fraktion der CDU/CSU,” Drucksache VI/2534, Bonn, 1971; Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 190. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 06/190, Bonn, 1972.

¹³⁵ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 190. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode.”

¹³⁶ “Fragen gemäß § 111 der Geschäftsordnung für Juli 1972. Teil I: Fragen Nr. 1 bis 207 mit den dazu erteilten schriftlichen Antworten,” Drucksache VI/3722, Bonn, 1972.

When the BiB was originally created, its main tasks were to carry out research about demography-related issues, specifically questions about families in Germany.¹³⁷ The main concern of the government at that time was the decline in the birth rate, which had dropped from 2.53 in 1966 to 1.71 in 1972.¹³⁸ As laid out in the government publication *Bulletin*, the main points of interest for the institute were:

- The change in the birth rate and its possible effects.
- The change in the age structure and its relation to the economic and social situation of older people.
- The economic meaning of payments for having children (*Kindergeld*) for families of different social backgrounds and its effects on family burden sharing.
- The relationship between population processes in developing countries and the impact of development help.
- The change in population development via the acceptance of foreign labor and the consequences for the labor market, establishment of additional infrastructure, integration, and assimilation.¹³⁹

Even though the change in the age structure in relation to older people was mentioned as one of the BiB's key points of interest, based on questions from members of the Bundestag leading up to its founding, the main concern was centered around understanding the cause of the decline in birth rate. Currently, the institute is responsible for conducting research on the causes and consequences of demographic change and is tasked with providing scientific information to the federal government and the ministries.¹⁴⁰

Another question answered in the same 1972 collection of written answers as Baier's questions was about the establishment of a research institute on old age and old age problems at the federal level. Parliamentary State Secretary Heinz Westphal announced in his response that the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family and Health (*Bundesministerium für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit*, BMJFG) was working with the states to create a central location for old age questions, which should observe, publish, and if possible, coordinate the work in the fields of gerontology and

¹³⁷ "Regierungsbericht der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Frankreichs, der Niederlande und Österreichs zur Europäischen Bevölkerungskonferenz 1982," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 8, no. 3 (1982): 361.

¹³⁸ The World Bank.

¹³⁹ Charlotte Höhn, *Demographische Trends, Bevölkerungswissenschaft und Politikberatung*, ed. Charlotte Höhn, vol. 28, Schriftenreihe des Bundesinstituts für Bevölkerungsforschung (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1998), 36.

¹⁴⁰ Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, "Das BIB: Aufgaben," <https://www.bib.bund.de/DE/Institut/Aufgaben/Aufgaben.html>.

geriatrics.¹⁴¹ By the end of 1972, the German Centre of Gerontology (*Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen*, DZA) was established. This center was originally financed by the federal government and the state of Berlin. The idea for the DZA originated in 1963 in the second report about the expansion of Berlin as a place for education, science, and art, which made the recommendation to establish a gerontology institute in Berlin.¹⁴² Not until 1968 did the Berlin house of representatives and senate move forward with the initiative. The idea to finance the DZA by the state governments was met with resistance from the Bavarian government because they argued there were already a number of institutions working on this issue. The creation of the DZA was eventually agreed upon in November 1973 and was to be a service of the federal government to the states.¹⁴³ They officially began their work in July 1974.

The reason for establishing the DZA was the lack of a research center that coordinated all scientific and practical efforts to have a modern and continually developing elderly care system. In the DZA's charter, the purpose of the association was to expand, collect, evaluate, prepare, and disseminate the knowledge about the living situation of aging and older people. This included sharing the results of their work with interested individuals, governmental agencies at the federal and state levels, and those working in the public and private sector.¹⁴⁴ Once founded, there was debate about if the institute should conduct its own research, but it was decided they would commission research and focus on dissemination in the field of practical work with seniors and gerontological and geriatric research. In the late 1990s, this began to change, and the institute's work expanded to include empirical research.¹⁴⁵ But, the key observation, as evidenced from its establishment, was the recognition of the need for research. Policy makers realized having an institute to provide expert information was necessary for them to appropriately and effectively create policy to address the needs of the growing older population.

However, in October 1973, the oil crisis began, and Germany shifted its attention to addressing the resulting economic crisis and recession, which became a worldwide recession by 1975. As argued by Lutz Leisering, the oil and economic crises were a turning point for Germany because expansion policies were suddenly stopped

¹⁴¹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Fragen gemäß § 111 der Geschäftsordnung für Juli 1972. Teil I: Fragen Nr. 1 bis 207 mit den dazu erteilten schriftlichen Antworten."

¹⁴² Hans-Joachim von Kondratowitz, "Zur Geschichte des DZA aus sozialwissenschaftlicher Sicht," in *40 Jahre DZA*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 2014), 22.

¹⁴³ Ursula Münch, "Familien-, Jugend- und Altenpolitik," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Hans Günter Hockerts (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2006), 701-02.

¹⁴⁴ „Der Zweck des Vereins wurde in der Satzung mit »Erkenntnisse über die Lebenslage alternder und alter Menschen zu erweitern, zu sammeln, auszuwerten, aufzubereiten und zu verbreiten« (§ 2) festgeschrieben." In: von Kondratowitz, 25.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

and the government began to make cuts.¹⁴⁶ For example, the 1972 pension reform expanded pension coverage to include women who stayed at home and self-employed individuals, while health insurance reform included the elimination of a time limit on hospital care and a legal entitlement to measures to detect illnesses early. Once the oil crisis and economic recession began, the government shifted from expanding social policies and introduced more austerity policies instead.¹⁴⁷ This initial focus on stabilizing the economy or rather, the move away from population-related debates by policy makers, can be seen in Chapter 7 by the lack of results in the keyword search carried out for the years 1973 and 1974.

1982-1989: Stabilizing the Economy and Shifting to Social Issues

The 1970s were heavily characterized by the two oil crises and the resulting economic recessions, which led to high unemployment and a weak economy. This created an uphill battle for Chancellor Schmidt, who was reelected in October 1980. He struggled to maintain support of the FDP, their coalition partner, due to consolidation and saving-related efforts. Chancellor Schmidt's decision to allow the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to place American middle-range missiles in Western Europe was not well-received by German citizens, also contributing to his loss of support. By April 1982, only 25 percent of those surveyed had a positive opinion of the government. Following the resignation of four members of his cabinet, all from the FDP, talks between the CDU/CSU and FDP to form a new coalition began. On October 1, 1982, a vote of no confidence was held, and Helmut Kohl was elected to replace Chancellor Schmidt.¹⁴⁸ Kohl's election is the beginning of the CDU/CSU and FDP era in which they led the governing coalition until 1998.

Even though the Bundestag elected Kohl as Chancellor, this was only seen as a shift in power among the political parties in the Bundestag and not as a decision made by the electorate. Therefore, due to the perceived lack of legitimacy, new elections were held at the beginning of March 1983. The CDU/CSU and FDP were elected to lead the government and for the first time, the Greens were elected into the Bundestag.¹⁴⁹ An additional point of significance in the Greens joining the Bundestag is what it meant for the senior protection alliance, the Grays – Gray Panthers (*Die Grauen – Graue Panther*). This group was established in 1975 and was part of the movement calling on older people to start a rebellion and for politicians to stand up for dignity in old age. To help them further their cause, they reached an

¹⁴⁶ Lutz Leisering, "Der deutsche Nachkriegssozialstaat - Entfaltung und Krise eines zentristischen Sozialmodells," in *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Eine Bilanz nach 60 Jahren*, ed. Hans-Peter Schwarz (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 429.

¹⁴⁷ Kahlenberg and Hoffmann, 151; Leisering, 429.

¹⁴⁸ For more detailed information about this decision, see: Geyer, 87-109.

¹⁴⁹ Manfred G. Schmidt, "Rahmenbedingungen," *ibid.*, ed. Manfred G. Schmidt (2005), 12-15.

agreement with the Greens for them to act as a voice for them, i.e., the Greens would represent the interests of the Gray Panthers and introduce their demands in order to create modern old-age policies.¹⁵⁰

When Kohl assumed office in October 1982, he announced social policy would be an important issue while he was in office: He announced a restructuring and consolidation of social spending and an institutional reform of the social system. This would allow the government to assess the situation, build up the government's finances by collecting revenue instead of more spending, and to learn to be a society that can appreciate and preserve the prosperity it has achieved. Reform efforts to establish more flexibility in the working life, including early retirement, the adaptation of the 1957 pension reform based on changing demographic and economic conditions, and changing survivor's pensions, were also announced.¹⁵¹ In his second government policy statement following election in 1983, he reemphasized these goals with specific mention given to reducing unemployment, the reestablishment of adequate economic growth, further restructuring of public finances, and securing pensions.¹⁵²

Kohl had good reasons for these objectives: At the beginning of his time in office, unemployment was at 1.8 million in 1982, but jumped to 2.2 million the following year and remained at over 2 million throughout the 1980s.¹⁵³ This increase and high level of unemployment was an additional challenge for the social security system due to the high cost of unemployment benefits, which had to be paid out to a growing number of people.¹⁵⁴ Despite these hurdles facing Germany, Kohl was seen as the one to fix the situation. He would ensure that the economic and financial policies of the government would be based on the principles of a social market economy and that the necessary consolidation measures would be taken to improve the economy.¹⁵⁵ This belief in Kohl and the new coalition's abilities made it somewhat easier to pass the necessary reforms since they had the electorate's support. According to surveys conducted at the time, there was a great deal of support among respondents to make cuts to social spending and was preferred over tax increases. For example, when asked about preferred ways to secure the financial situation of the pension system, the option to decrease pension entitlements received twice as much support as the option to increase contribution payments.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ I will touch upon this more in the policy chapter (Chapter 7). This agreement eventually ended and the Gray Panthers established their own party in July 1989. Ursula Münch and Walter Hornstein, "Familien-, Jugend- und Altenpolitik," *ibid.*, 558-59.

¹⁵¹ Schmidt, "Sozialpolitische Denk- und Handlungsfelder," 6, 65-67.

¹⁵² "Rahmenbedingungen," 14.

¹⁵³ Statistisches Bundesamt, "Arbeitslose und offene Stellen".

¹⁵⁴ Schmidt, "Rahmenbedingungen," 51.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

Another point of focus laid out in Chancellor Kohl's 1982 government policy speech was immigration policy. Despite ending the recruitment of guest workers in the 1970s, the number of immigrants had continued to grow. The changes brought to society by the increase in the immigrant population drew the attention of policy makers and the public. As time progressed, more German citizens began to support the statement that guest workers should return to their home countries (in 1978, 38 percent were in support; by 1983, it was 80 percent). Once the CDU/CSU and FDP came into office, they agreed to focus on integrating immigrants living in Germany, promoting their return to their home countries, and preventing further immigration. The latter two aspects created tension between the coalition partners: the CDU/CSU were heavily in favor of return migration and slowing immigration to Germany (including limiting immigrants from bringing their families to Germany) and the FDP was not. Legislation to assist in the return of guest workers to their home countries (*Rückkehrhilfegesetz*) went into effect on December 1, 1983, and despite serious criticism from a variety of societal actors, the government continued to argue that it was successful in reducing the number of foreigners in Germany.¹⁵⁷

The Kohl government was unsuccessful during its first term in establishing new legislation for foreigners (*Ausländergesetz*) and the public's interest in the issue also waned.¹⁵⁸ Despite an overall decrease in the number of immigrants throughout the 1980s, the number of asylum seekers increased, which drove the next round of debate. Policy makers from the CDU began to call for changes to individuals' rights to claim asylum out of concern that Germany would continue to be overwhelmed and without a change, the influx could not be controlled. However, the FDP and Chancellor Kohl were against such a change. As the Soviet Union began to weaken, the number of people coming to Germany from the east was rising, most requesting asylum. Because of the special treatment given to those from Eastern Europe, the number of refugees from Eastern Europe grew considerably. The number of immigrants with a German background (*Aussiedler*) from this region also increased: Between 1986 and 1988, the number of *Aussiedler* quintupled. This sparked discussions about the legal and political reasons for this status and led to debates about German identity. In his 1987 government policy speech, Chancellor Kohl restated the government's goal of passing new legislation for foreigners. Based on the varying positions of the political parties and societal actors, reaching agreement on new legislation was not going to be easy. By the summer of 1988, it seemed possible that a compromise would be reached following increased pressure by the CDU on the

¹⁵⁷ Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn, "Beschäftigung, soziale Sicherung und soziale Integration von Ausländern," *ibid.*, 627-35.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 635-37.

SPD to reform Article 16 of the Basic Law. Draft legislation was presented in September 1989 and went into effect on July 9, 1990, in West Germany (January 1, 1991, for unified Germany). However, even though the government reached a compromise, it was still clear that debate over immigration policy would continue into the 1990s.¹⁵⁹

The imbalance between the generations became more evident due to the decline in the birth rate and the shift in family structure: One-generation households were becoming the norm and the marriage rate was declining with more people opting for partnerships instead. Hans F. Zacher argues that the social security system based on long-term living conditions began to lose support and people were in favor of improving the social security system to better support those caring for children.¹⁶⁰ The declining birth rate was also accompanied by the increasing life expectancy and the growth of the older population. During this time, the ratio of those over the age of 65 remained under 37 percent, but projections estimated it would grow during the 1990s and following the turn of the century. By 2030, it would be over 70 percent. This would also mean those between the ages of 21 and 59 would be faced with the challenge of caring for both their children and their aging parents. However, through a combination of a constant old-age dependency ratio, a declining youth dependency ratio, and a large working age population, the burden on social security funds was lower and consolidation efforts by the government could be financially supported.¹⁶¹

During this phase, efforts were made to improve the situation of women. The CDU/CSU announced it would focus on family policies and this involved focusing on establishing partnerships between equals. Specifically, it needed to be easier for women to combine work and family life. The CDU/CSU tried to establish a solution rooted in the social state, such as creating ways for individuals to claim benefits based on their parental activities. At the start of their term, Geißler was named Minister of the BMJFG, but was only in office for three years and was replaced by Rita Süßmuth, who helped expand the ministry to include women. In 1986, the ministry became known as the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family, Women, and Health (BMJFFG).¹⁶² The expansion to explicitly include women was a sign from the CDU/CSU that it was taking the needs of women more seriously.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 637-51.

¹⁶⁰ Zacher, 564.

¹⁶¹ Schmidt, "Rahmenbedingungen," 52-53; Münch and Hornstein, 555.

¹⁶² 521-24.

¹⁶³ The same cannot necessarily be said for the other political parties, who at the time were not pushing significant reforms to family policies. For example, the SPD did not add anything to their party platform about family policies until 1988. The Green party was more supportive of the idea of moving away from the traditional family structure and argued that a traditional family is no longer a guarantee that a child will have their needs met when growing up. The FDP also had a different

Despite the significant economy-related challenges at this time, much of these difficulties were related to social policy and had ties to population-related issues. With the CDU's shift to focusing more on social policy, such as family policies, this was the chance for them to make those reforms. The party had the opportunity to try and take steps to reform the systems, specifically the pension system, in a way that it was prepared to handle a population comprised of fewer contributors and more older recipients that were living longer. These efforts are evident based on the increase in mentions of the aging population during this time and will be analyzed in Chapter 7.

1989-1992: All Eyes on Reunification

During the same session as the passage of the 1992 pension reform, it was announced that the East German government had opened its borders – the Berlin Wall had fallen. This unexpected event altered everyone's agenda and attention was turned towards rebuilding the entire country following a 40-year division, which is why this phase begins following the announcement of the fall of the wall. The first few years immediately after the fall of the wall were heavily focused on reuniting the two Germanys, which included establishing a free market economy and harmonizing the living conditions between East and West Germany.¹⁶⁴ This phase ends in October 1992, when the Study Commission Demographic Change – Challenges of Our Aging Society for the Individual and for Policy (*Enquete-Kommission Demographischer Wandel – Herausforderungen unserer älter werdenden Gesellschaft an den einzelnen und die Politik*) was established.

The years following reunification caused the government's political agenda to shift immediately. The government could no longer continue down the path they had originally planned due to the unforeseen circumstances of the fall of the wall. This positive development created a number of challenges, which understandably took priority and caused the discussion that had developed at the end of the 1980s about the aging population to slow down. It must be kept in mind, as pointed out by Gerhard A. Ritter, that those leading the German reunification process did not have a set plan on how the process should go. No one knew how to successfully reunify a country. As Ritter argues, there was no script and no schedule for reunification.¹⁶⁵ Progress made between 1982 and 1990 to stabilize the economy, decrease the public debt and deficit, and increase the employment rate was now lost. The social expenditure ratio

position than their coalition partners and were more supportive of the idea of training opportunities for mothers and fathers when they re-enter the labor market. In: *ibid.*, 525-27.

¹⁶⁴ Gerhard A. Ritter, "Rahmenbedingungen der innerdeutschen Einigung," *ibid.*, ed. Gerhard A. Ritter (2007), 4-5.

¹⁶⁵ „Es gab kein ‚Drehbuch‘ und keinen ‚Terminkalender‘ für die Vereinigung.“ *ibid.*, 5.

and public spending rose dramatically. Public debt more than doubled between 1989 and 1995, and unemployment rose again due to a loss of four million jobs in former East Germany and the loss of jobs in former West Germany after the unification boom (increased demand for ‘western goods’) had passed.¹⁶⁶

Regarding social policies, active labor market policies were implemented to try and absorb the economic disruption taking place, and the transfer of the generous social security system was intended to prevent the population from falling into poverty and to help secure the new order. However, instead of continuing on the path to reduce the role of the state, which had been pursued by the CDU/CSU and FDP government, the role of the state actually increased. The German economy suffered due to increasing national debt and labor costs, as well as the inability to adapt to the world economic situation because focus had to be placed on establishing the political and social systems of West Germany in East Germany. This also caused the restructuring of the social state to be delayed even though various impending crises, including the aging of the population, were becoming more evident.¹⁶⁷

In December 1990, the first all-German elections were held and resulted in the continuation of the CDU/CSU and FDP coalition. As part of the coalition agreement, the BMJFFG was divided into three separate ministries: Federal Ministry for Family and Seniors (BMFuS), Federal Ministry for Women and Youth (BMFuJ), and the Federal Ministry for Health (BMG). Some additional points that were agreed upon were the continued flexibilization of working time, expansion of the sharing of the family and children burden, and a reform of the organization and financial structure of public health insurance. Minister Norbert Blüm was assigned to lead a subcommittee on care where he was specifically interested in expanding long-term care insurance.¹⁶⁸ Establishing long-term care insurance as the fifth pillar of social insurance was a leading goal of the governing coalition. The need to improve the long-term care sector was related to the aging of the population, which had caused an increase in the number of people needing care, and the decline in the number of people eligible for home care due to the decreasing birth rate and increasing number of women in the labor force. In his 1991 government policy statement, Chancellor Kohl declared that draft legislation to secure long-term care insurance would be presented in the summer of 1992. In reality, draft legislation was presented at the end June 1993 and eventually, the two parties reached an agreement with the SPD’s support. In April

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 7-8.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 31-32.

1994, legislation to implement long-term care insurance was finally passed and went into effect January 1, 1995.¹⁶⁹

1992-1997: Economic Effects from Reunification and Addressing Immigration

This final period begins in November 1992 following the establishment of the Study Commission "Demographic Change". Despite the demands of reunification, the government was still focused on consolidating costs and reducing the economic burden caused by taxes and social expenditures. But they still pursued efforts to increase benefits for families, reduce social services, and establish long-term care insurance as the fifth new pillar of the social insurance system.¹⁷⁰

Unfortunately, all of these efforts contributed to the 1993 recession. This was closely connected to the ongoing discussion about the extent of and the way to continue financing the reunification process, the consolidation of government finances, and the restructuring of the social state in order to reduce costs and unemployment. The need to restructure the social security system also attributed to the change in the European and international economic frameworks (i.e., globalization). During the CDU party meeting in October 1992, Chancellor Kohl spoke about the reunification process and stated that it would take longer and be more expensive than was originally thought in 1990. The social market economy was being challenged to complete the reunification process, secure Germany as a business location, and adapt its social security systems to the future demographic conditions, despite potential reduction in economic growth.¹⁷¹ Much of 1993 was focused on improving the economic situation of Germany. By the beginning of 1994, a 30-point program was put forth by the coalition government entitled "Action Program for More Growth and Employment". The objectives included a continuation of the consolidation of the public budget, promotion of the creation of small and medium-sized businesses, and a change to labor market policy instruments through the expansion of labor promotion from the new regions to those areas more affected by the structural crisis.¹⁷²

In addition to this weakened economic situation, it was realized that the 1992 pension reform measures were not creating the favorable outcome originally desired. Besides the high transfer payments to East Germany and the recession, the increased use of early retirement led to a jump in the contribution rates for 1994, which

¹⁶⁹ Ritter, "Sozialpolitische Denk- und Handlungsfelder im Einigungsprozess," 264-70.

¹⁷⁰ "Rahmenbedingungen der innerdeutschen Einigung," 8-9.

¹⁷¹ "Sozialpolitische Denk- und Handlungsfelder im Einigungsprozess," 282-86.

¹⁷² Ibid., 294-301.

resulted in a two billion DM deficit. This economic situation, the pressure on policy makers to reduce non-wage labor costs, and the increased media attention on the demographic-related time bomb spurred a new debate about the pension system. Despite efforts by Minister Blüm to assure the public that the pension system was secure, the debate was taken up during the 13th legislative period (1994-1998) and a new pension reform was passed in 1997.¹⁷³ Therefore, it is evident that the 1990s were characterized by efforts to consolidate the economy and social spending. Unlike the 1980s, these reforms and cuts in the 1990s were not solely due to several economic crises but were also heavily influenced by reunification efforts.

Many of the political parties also began to adapt their political programs during this time. The CDU agreed upon a new program in 1994 at their party convention in Hamburg. It focused on the situation of individuals that are not capable of organizing themselves politically and that do not participate in the active labor market, i.e., older citizens, single parents, families with multiple children, those needing care, etc. They wanted to make sure these groups were protected by the state from poverty and social isolation, but they still supported deregulation of the economy, privatization of public businesses, and the reduction of the state's responsibilities and public expenditure quota. The SPD had already created a new political program in December 1989, emphasizing their focus on workers. They believed in the right to work and supported the idea that it is the responsibility of a democratic and social state to care for full employment. The contribution and benefits-based social security system should provide basic, income-based security to older citizens, the disabled, and the unemployed via federal tax revenues to help cover the cost of living and reduce the need for social assistance. They also supported the expansion of preventative health care and for better collaboration between outpatient and inpatient care.¹⁷⁴

Continuing into the 1990s, there were more debates about the guest workers and foreigners that had immigrated to Germany. Already in 1990, a debate began about changing the process for applying for asylum and proposed legislation to change foreigner's rights and the Foreigner Act (*Ausländergesetz*).¹⁷⁵ Efforts also began to change the asylum procedure in the German basic law. The overall debate continued to grow and became a major topic in Germany, especially following attacks against foreigners in cities in East Germany. Politicians began to state their positions on the issue, and several argued that granting asylum cannot continue unregulated,

¹⁷³ This will be discussed in more detail in the following section. Ibid., 258-59.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 312-15.

¹⁷⁵ This was related the increase in asylum applicants and the series of attacks on foreigners.

but Germany cannot afford to be anti-immigrant for demographic reasons, i.e., to help contribute to the pension system and maintain the labor market.¹⁷⁶

This chapter has provided provide the necessary context and historical foundation to better understand the larger situation in Germany as the debate about the aging population was developing among researchers, policy makers, and the media. The background information provided will be referenced in the remaining chapters as I present the discussion about the aging of the population and the increase in life expectancy in the research field, followed by the policy debate and the discussion in the media.

¹⁷⁶ Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn, "Beschäftigung, soziale Sicherung und soziale Integration von Ausländern," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Gerhard A. Ritter (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2007), 951-56.

Chapter 5: The Research Debate

To begin the presentation of my findings, I will start with the scientific and research aspect of the discussion surrounding the aging of the German population, which centered around examining scientific articles and publications that mentioned and discussed aspects of population aging (e.g., the increase in the average age of the population, the growing number of people living longer, etc.). As will be seen, the issue of the aging population began to grow steadily in the mid-1980s, mainly within the context of health, labor, social security, and society-related topics, but there was generally a wide variety of topics and fields covering the issue. Upon first look, I assumed the slow development of the overall research field of demography was due to the lack of departments and professorships for demography, which were only established in the late 1970s, early 1980s. However, based on the evaluation of results collected, the publications from the second half of the 1980s cannot be directly linked to these new departments and institutions. Instead, the increased interest was reflective of a growth in conferences, events, and commissioned research addressing the aging population.

This chapter begins with a presentation of different trends and characteristics of the discussion that occurred in the research community about the aging population and discuss how the context of the research focus evolved over this time period. This includes analyzing the specific subject areas that addressed the issue and briefly discussing the different funding agencies that provided support to the published research. The largest part of the analysis will be dedicated to an in-depth breakdown of how the issue of the aging population was framed among the research community.

The final part this chapter will provide a more overarching analysis of the research debate, which will focus on the research and publications specific to the aging of the population. An in-depth historical overview of the development of population research in Germany following the end of World War II (WWII) was provided in Chapter 5 but will be referenced. Anecdotes from my interviews with individuals active and involved during this time will also be incorporated. This includes Prof. Dr. Herwig Birg, PD Dr. Jürgen Flöthmann, Beatrice Fromm, Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, and Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr.

5.1 Research Debate Development: Growing Interest in the late-1980s Reflected in a Visible Growth in the Literature

In Chapter 4, I presented an overview of the historical development of the field of demography in Germany, which included the periods before, during, and after WWII. It is clear that the efforts by the Nazis to use demography to scientifically substantiate why they carried out such atrocities greatly damaged the field. Almost all of the researchers interviewed referred to the tarnished reputation of the field and researchers' hesitation to approach it: Birg claimed natural scientists were interested in population development because the growth of the world's population was related to climate change, but social scientists were less enthusiastic. In their minds, the Nazis ruined demography, so it should be left alone.¹ Flöthmann claimed scientifically, the field was dead in Germany because no one was working on it and most demographers had either left the country during WWII or those still in Germany had a ruined reputation due to their involvement in the "Third Reich."² Kaufmann, who wrote his dissertation on aging (*Die Überalterung*, 1960) credits being at a Swiss university as to why this was even possible.³ Clearly, the field had a long road ahead of it.

Early research following WWII focused on the birth rate and population size of Germany, which was understandable since Germany had suffered a large loss of life during the war and was concerned about rebuilding the population. But even early publications acknowledged what happened during WWII: A 1950 book by Roderich V. Ungern-Sternberg and Hermann Schubnell⁴ referred to the use of demography by the "Third Reich" and argued for the need to return to just looking at population statistics and not using them for the sake of propaganda.⁵ The book's section on population policy focused on the birth rate and the number of children families should have. They stressed it is up to couples to decide if they want to have children and the government will not be able to coerce people into having children. Demographers can fill the role of answering the question, "How many children do families need to have in order to maintain the population size?" to help guide population policy.⁶ This early definition of population policy and demography was centered around the birth rate, but it was more about providing the information to understand population dynamics and not telling couples how many children they needed to have.

¹ Birg.

² Jürgen Flöthmann, interview by Emily Lines, November 30, 2017, Personal interview, Bielefeld.

³ Kaufmann.

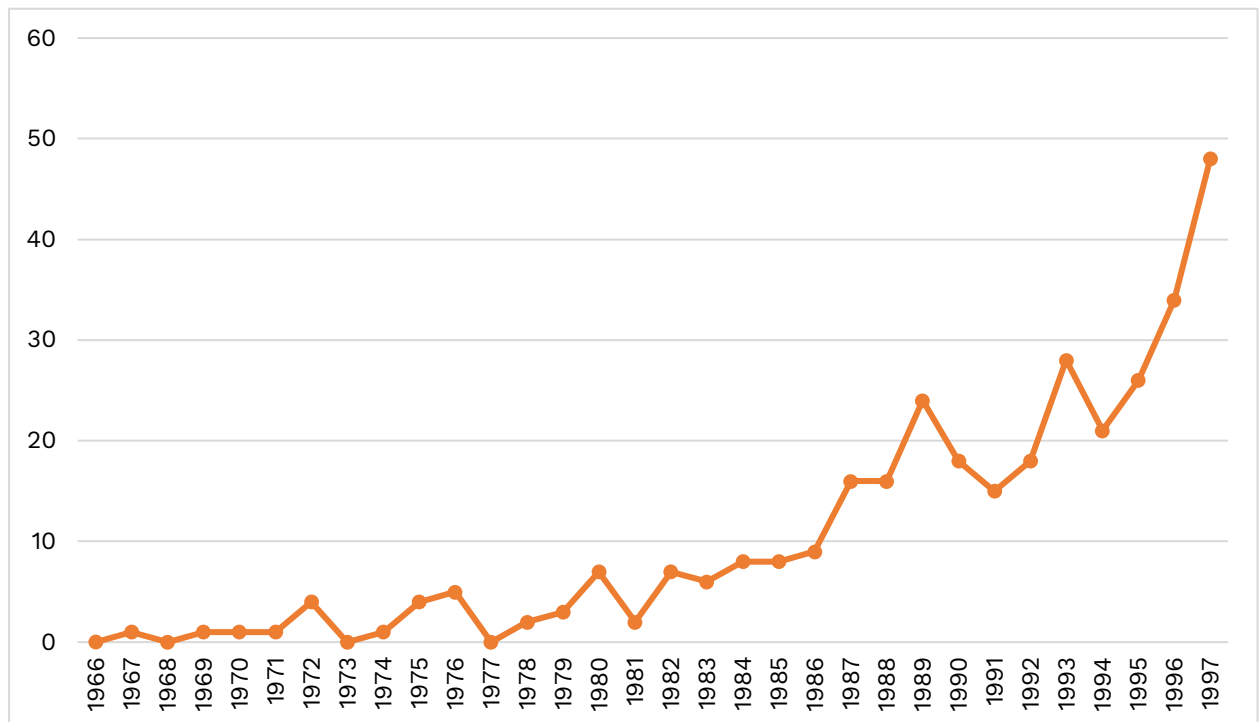
⁴ According to Kaufmann, Schubnell was the only demographer that did not have a tarnished reputation after WWII and was a pioneer in German demography. Ibid.

⁵ Roderich von Ungern-Sternberg and Hermann Schubnell, *Grundriss der Bevölkerungswissenschaft (Demographie)* (Stuttgart: Piscator-Verlag, 1950), 1-2.

⁶ Ibid., 584.

The simplest way to analyze how the topic of aging developed over time was to look at the frequency in which it was discussed. Based on the number of publications coded by year, there is a clear trend of upward growth. Figure 1a shows the number of books and journal issues that included chapters or articles discussing the aging of the population. Only the individual books and journal issues coded are counted by year and does not include each individual book chapter and journal article in the cases where books and journal issues had multiple contributions addressing the issue. There was a general growth trend that began in the mid- to late-1980s that included peaks in 1989, 1993, and 1997. When the data is broken down to include each coded journal article and book chapter, in addition to the books that covered the issue (Figure 1b), there is still a general trend of growth, but it is more punctuated.

Figure 1a: Research Publications per Year

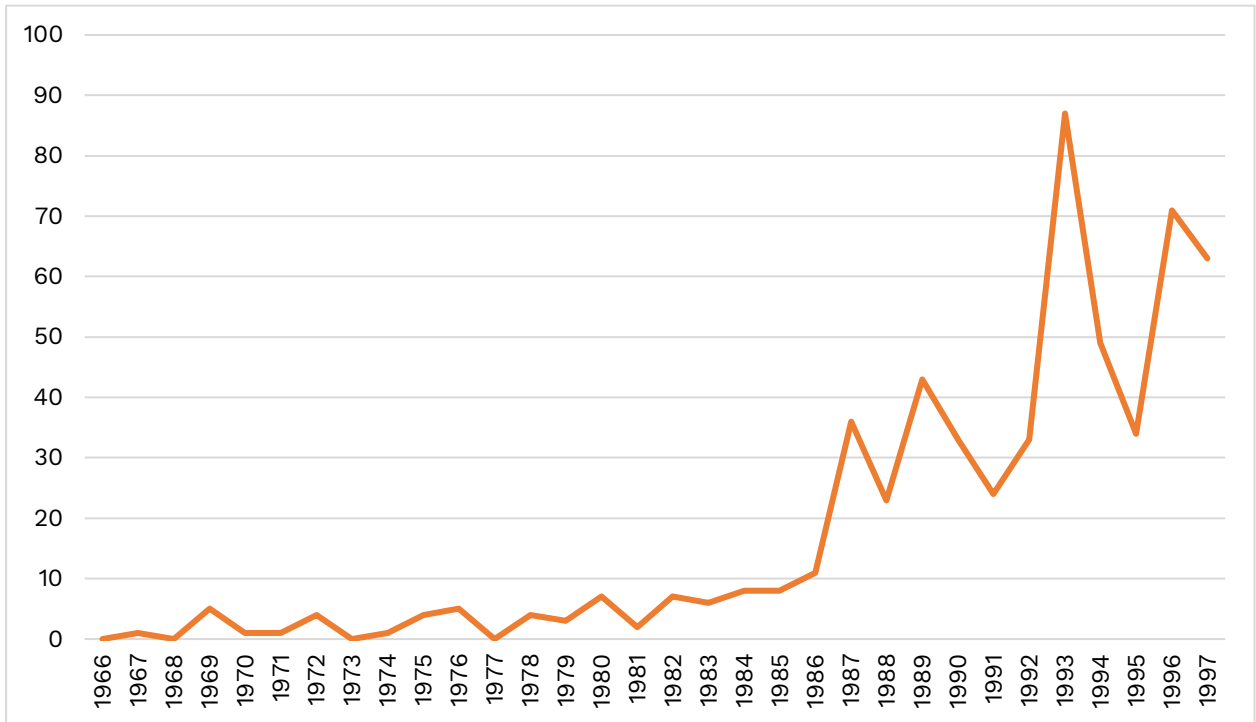


Number of books and journal articles published each year. Books and journal issues are counted once, even if multiple chapters or articles were coded from the same publication. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

These punctuated jumps (Figure 1b) are the result of the publication of more edited books that included several contributions addressing the aging population, as well as journal issues focused on a related topic that resulted in multiple articles in one issue about aging. This growth signals an increase in interest and attention since it means more publications and researchers were addressing the issue, e.g., books

had more than just one chapter, which signaled an expansion in the number of individuals aware of and interested in aging, helping the field grow. The exact distribution of publications between books, edited books, and journals can be seen in Figures 2a and 2b.

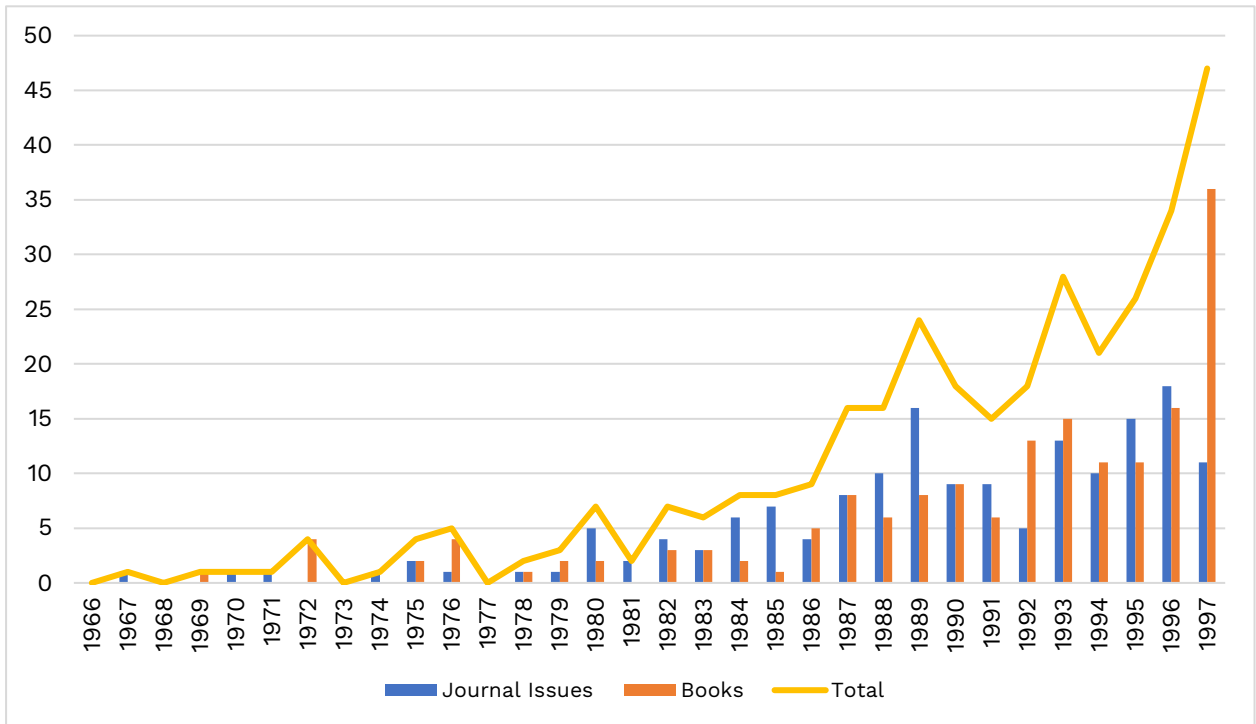
Figure 1b: All Research Publications per Year



Number of all individual journal articles, books, and book chapters collected. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

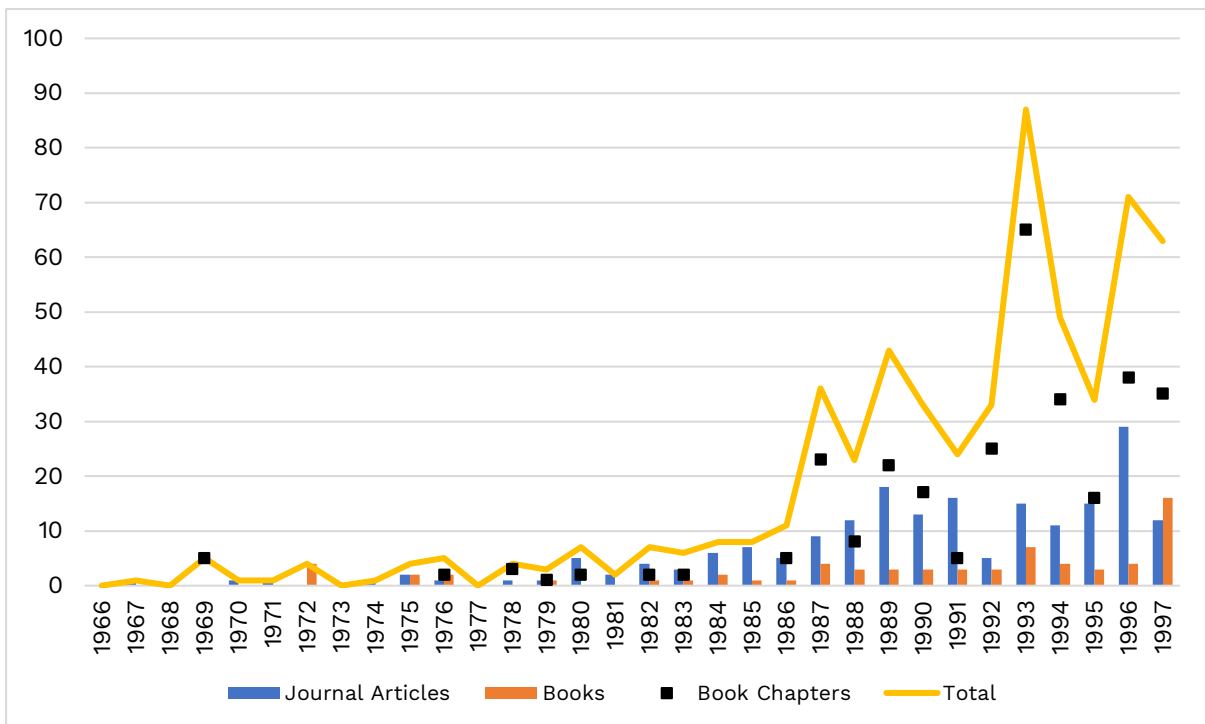
A distinction was made in order to see the impact these edited books and special issue journals made to the research community. Based on the examples and looking at the figures, it is clear these special issue journals and edited books contributed to the increased frequency in which aging was addressed. It also highlighted a growth in the community that was drawing attention to the impact of population aging. Particularly for these conference proceedings, other actors, such as policy makers or civil society actors were also included, which shows the breadth of awareness outside of the research community. The growth in publications that did not originate from academics or academic institutions but were published by civil society and political organizations, also demonstrates the topic's growth. These types of publications, such as the books published by the SPD likely reached the hands of politicians, at least in the SPD, creating a direct link between research and politics about these demographic issues.

Figure 2a: Number of Published Books and Journal Issues



Books and journal issues are counted once, regardless if multiple chapters or articles were coded from the same publication. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Figure 2b: Number of Published Books, Book Chapters, and Journal Articles



Number of publications including all journal articles, regardless if multiple articles from the same issue were coded, number of monographs, and the

total number of book chapters coded. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

An explanation for the spike between 1995 and 1996 is the special issues released by *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, medien + erziehung*, and *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* focusing on the aging population. For example, *medien + erziehung* specifically addressed the presence of the 50+ generation in media. This specific issue of the *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* included articles with the objective of shedding light on the demography discussion and advocating for taking steps now to address the situation caused by population aging. Journal issues centered around a specific topic related to population aging or the older population did not begin until the 1990s. In 1989, there was an issue of *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Versicherungswissenschaft*, which published talks given at an event of the German Society for Actuarial Science (*Deutscher Verein für Versicherungswissenschaft*). This event, however, was not specifically about aging, but it was about a topic closely affected by the aging population – the future of the national economy.

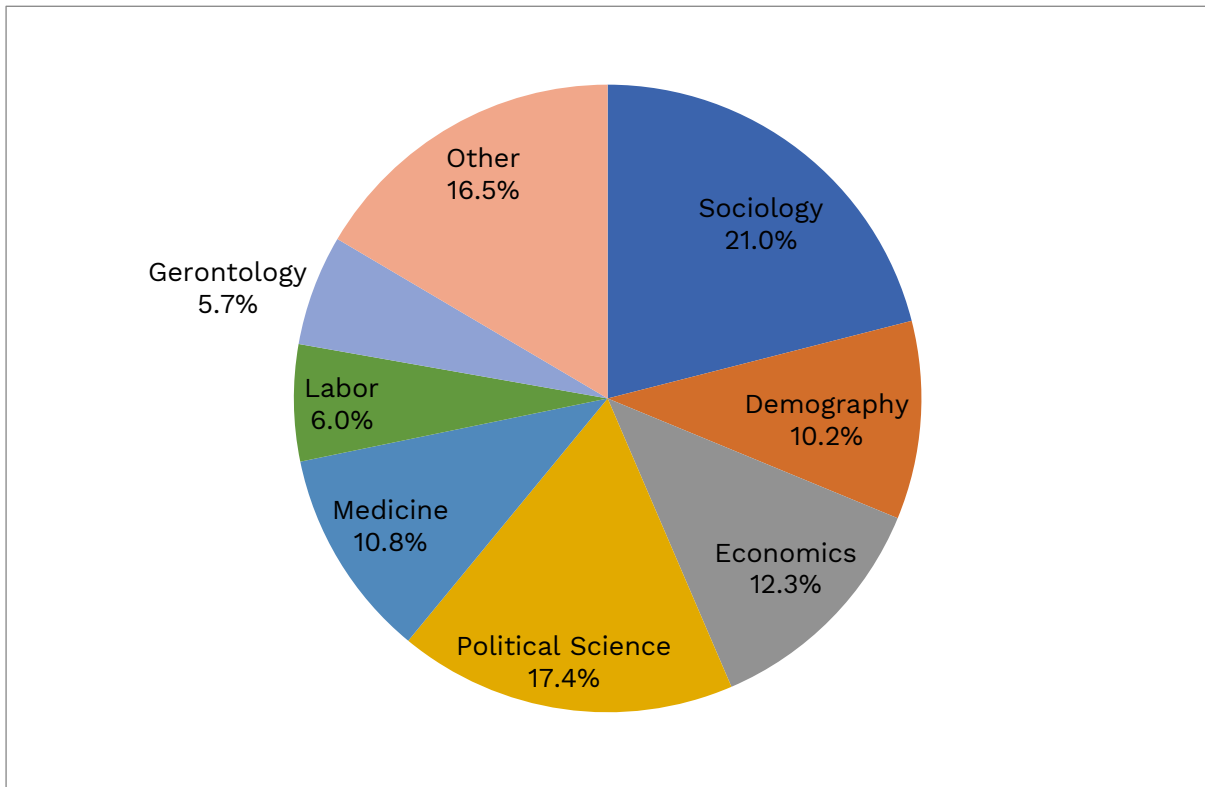
In 1991, there was a minor jump in the number of journal articles caused in part by *Information on Spatial Development* (original title: *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung*), which published an issue on older people and spatial research. This journal is published by what is now known as the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (*Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung*, BBSR). These punctuations are easier to see in Figure 2b, which displays the number of journal articles published each year.

Fields of Research

Moving beyond the basic quantitative aspect of the development of the research dialogue, I also looked at the different subject areas publishing material about the aging population. Most of the research came from the field of sociology (Figure 3).⁷ However, this number is even larger when combined with the publications from demography since demography is usually included under the umbrella of sociology and it is likely some publications could be considered from either subject area. It was important to have the distinction between the two for the data breakdown in order to understand how the field developed over time, specifically in regard to how the demography field addressed population aging. Once combined, the majority of the research originated from these two subject areas.

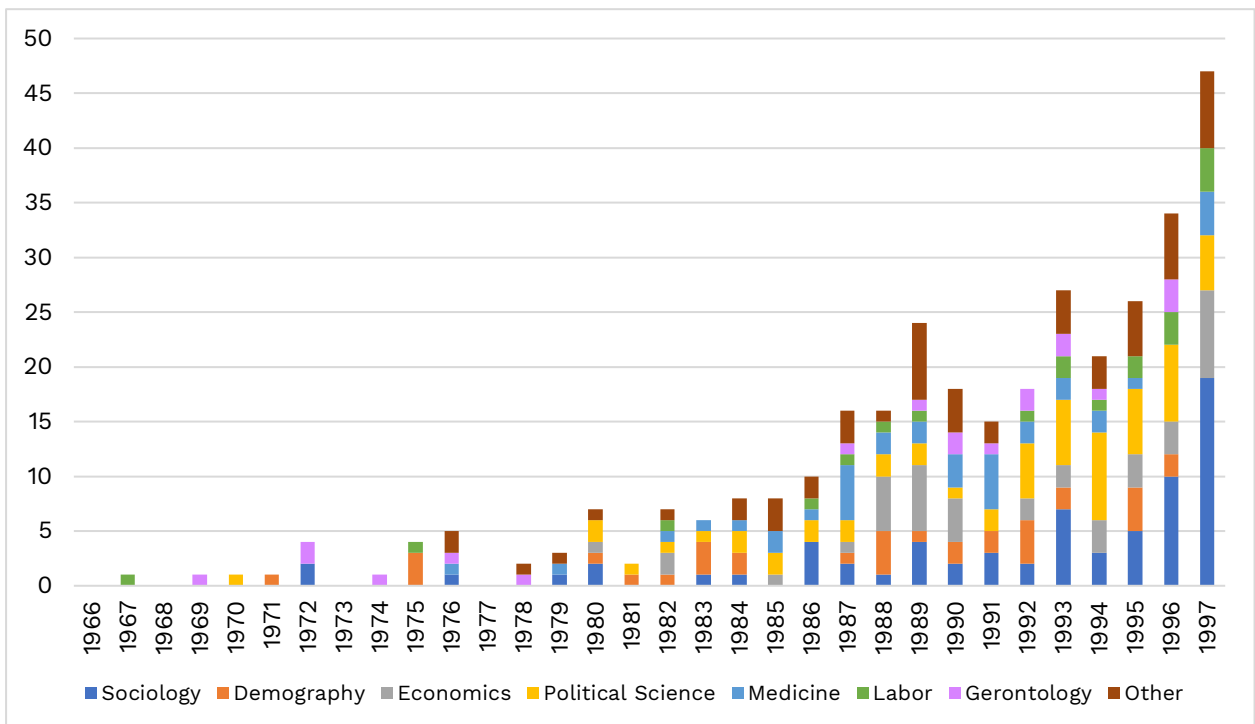
⁷ Books were calculated once, even if more than one chapter was coded, as well as journal issues when multiple articles came from the same journal.

Figure 3: Field of Research



Distribution of publications based on subject area. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Figure 4: Subject Areas by Year



Distribution of publications by subject year and by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

In Figure 4⁸, one can see that sociology-related publications were more common during the second half of this time period. When the debate about the 1992 pension reform occurred, there were more results from the economics field. As interest grew related to the future of the pension and health care systems, there were also more results from political science-related publications. The following subsections will go into more detail about the results found from each of these fields of research.

Overall, there was growth among the research fields over the time period under consideration, but the observed growth does not appear to be significant. The fields of sociology, demography, and political science were the biggest contributors to the discussion about the aging population, while there was a large variety of “other” research fields also contributing a meaningful amount of knowledge and insight.

A. Sociology: Addressing the Impact to the Social State, but Also Expected Changes to Society

I argue that because demography is often categorized under the heading of sociology, it is unsurprising that most of the results were from the field of sociology. However, it appears that interest in the field only began to grow in the mid-1980s, while more publications from the field of demography were slightly more common in the earlier years (Figure 4). Much of the research published in the 1980s was related to social security and the pension system, and the impact the changing population structures would have on these systems.⁹ There were also a number of publications about the living situation of older people and their participation in society in the 1990s, such as their impact on the tourism industry.¹⁰ Like it can be seen for the other research

⁸ Like in Figure 3, journal issues are counted once and the book once, even if there were multiple articles or chapters coded.

⁹ For example, see: Jens Alber, "Der Wohlfahrtsstaat in der Krise? Eine Bilanz nach drei Jahrzehnten Sozialpolitik in der Bundesrepublik," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 9, no. 4 (1980); Richard Hauser, "Alterssicherung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Historische Aspekte, gegenwärtige Situation und künftige Probleme," in *Sozialpolitik in der Bundesrepublik*, ed. Bernhard Schäfers (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1983); Reiner Dinkel, *Die Auswirkungen eines Geburten- und Bevölkerungsrückgangs auf Entwicklung und Ausgestaltung von gesetzlicher Alterssicherung und Familienlastenausgleich* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1984); Frank Nullmeier and Friedbert W. Rüb, "Alter im Sozialstaat. Zur Entwicklung der Alterspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Sozialwissenschaftliche Information* 18, no. 1 (1989); Jürgen Wolf, "Sozialstaat und Grundsicherung: Ein Bericht über den Forschungsstand," *Leviathan* 19, no. 3 (1991); Barbara Riedmüller and Thomas Olk, eds., *Grenzen des Sozialversicherungsstaates* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1994).

¹⁰ For example, see: Martin Kohli, "Altersgrenzen als Manövriermasse? Das Verhältnis von Erwerbsleben und Ruhestand in einer alternden Gesellschaft," in *Innovation und Beharrung in der Arbeitspolitik*, ed. Burkhard Strümpel and Meinolf Dierkes (Stuttgart: Poeschel, 1993); Gerhard Naegele and Hans Peter Tews, eds., *Lebenslagen im Strukturwandel des Alters* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1993); Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V. Abt. Gesellschaftspolitische Informationen, ed. *Die neue Beweglichkeit des Alters: Resümee einer Tagung der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung "Die Älteren Engagement, Produktivität, Macht?" am 3. Mai 1995 in Bonn* (Bonn: 1995); Sigrid Artho, *Auswirkungen der Überalterung im Tourismus: Alter als Chance für die Reiseveranstalter*, vol.

fields, the number of publications from sociology was generally increasing and reached a high point in 1997, a signal that the issue of the aging population had grown in importance in the field.

B. Demography: Overall Population Development and Impact

The most publications about the aging population came from the *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungsforschung* (*Journal for Population Research*), as well as from the books published based on meetings and events held by the German Society for Population Research.¹¹ A few of the early publications addressed the current state of population research in Germany and in Europe¹², while some specifically addressed the decline in the fertility rate.¹³ However, most of the materials published by the demography field were within the context of the overall population development and what impact the aging of the population will have on various aspects of society.¹⁴

C. Economics: Impact of Aging on the Social State and Economic Market

Research from the economics field naturally looked at the economic impact of the aging of the population. This included the Federation of German Industries publishing the proceedings from an event they held about the ability of the economy to remain

29, St. Galler Beiträge zum Tourismus und zur Verkehrswirtschaft. Reihe Tourismus (Bern: Haupt, 1996).

¹¹ Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, "Sozialpolitik und Bevölkerungsprozeß," in *Demographische Wirkungen politischer Handelns: Internationale Konferenz 1986 der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, ed. Herwig Birg and Rainer Mackensen (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1990); Karl Schwarz, ed. *Frauenerwerbstätigkeit - Demographische, soziologische, ökonomische und familienpolitische Aspekte. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft 26. Arbeitstagung vom 19. bis 21. Februar 1992 in Gosen bei Berlin*, Materialien zur Bevölkerungswissenschaft, Heft 77 (Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, 1992); Johannes Otto, ed. *Die älter werdende Gesellschaft: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft 27. Arbeitstagung vom 25. bis 27. Februar 1993 in Bad Homburg v.d. Höhe* (Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, 1993). Several chapters from the series *Acta Demographica* were also coded. This is a publication from the German Society for Population Research.

¹² Jürgens, "Zur Lage der Bevölkerungswissenschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.," Karl Schwarz, "Das deutsche Defizit," in *Keine Kinder - keine Zukunft? Zum Stand der Bevölkerungsforschung in Europa*, ed. Lutz Franke and Hans W. Jürgens (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt-Verlag, 1978).

¹³ "Ursachen und Folgen des Geburtenrückgangs in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *European Demographic Information Bulletin* 2, no. 1-2 (1971); Joachim Kühn and Karl Schwarz, "Modelluntersuchungen zur Beurteilung der Auswirkungen von Veränderungen der Geburtenhäufigkeit und Sterblichkeit auf Entwicklung und Altersaufbau der Bevölkerung," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 1, no. 3/4 (1975).

¹⁴ For example, see: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, ed. *Die ergraute Gesellschaft* (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987); Charlotte Höhn, "Soziale Konsequenzen eines Bevölkerungsrückgangs," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 13, no. 3 (1987); Lincoln H. Day, "Numerical Declines and Older Age Structures in European Populations: An Alternative Perspective," *Family Planning Perspectives* 20, no. 3 (1988); Charlotte Höhn, "Aktuelle Bevölkerungsfragen in Europa und in den anderen Industrieländern," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 18, no. 3 (1992); Eckart Bomsdorf, "Zur zukünftigen Entwicklung von Mortalität und Lebenserwartung der Geburtsjahrgänge 1903 bis 1993," *ibid.* 19, no. 1 (1993-94).

young despite the aging population.¹⁵ Much of the research was centered around old age provisions, specifically the pension system, as well as the health care and health insurance systems.¹⁶ The economics research that addressed the aging population picked up in 1988, with clear jumps in publications in 1988/89 and 1997 (see Figure 4). One could assume these publications were related to the debates in the Bundestag about pension reforms. Upon first glance, there were publications that addressed the pension system and social security system, but particularly in the 1990s, the topics diversified and were not solely about the impact of the aging population on the various governmental social systems.¹⁷

D. Political Science: Clear Focus on Aging's Influence on Social Policies

It was easy to assume that the largest number of publications would come from sociology and demography, but the political science field also had a relatively high number of publications during this time period about the aging population. Many of

¹⁵ Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V., ed. *Unsere Gesellschaft ergraut: Wie bleibt die Wirtschaft jung?* (Cologne: 1989). See also: Klaus F. Zimmermann, "Ageing and the labour market: Age structure, cohort size and unemployment," in *Fiscal Implications of an Aging Population*, ed. Dieter Bös and Sibren Cnossen (Berlin - Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1992); Peter Zweifel and Stefan Felder, eds., *Eine ökonomische Analyse des Alterungsprozesses* (Bern; Stuttgart; Wien: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1996).

¹⁶ For examples of old age provisions and the pension system, see: Burkhardt Müller, *Die Bedeutung der Lebensversicherung im System der Alterssicherung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten bei wachsender Alterslast*, vol. 4, Studien zur Bevölkerungsökonomie (München: Ifo-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, 1988); Bernd Raffelhüschen, "Alterssicherung und Staatsverschuldung," *FinanzArchiv / Public Finance Analysis* 47, no. 1 (1989); Friedrich Breyer, *Ökonomische Theorie der Alterssicherung* (Munich: Verlag Franz Vahlen, 1990); Lei Delsen, "Part-Time Early Retirement in Europe," *The Geneva Papers on Risk and Insurance* 15, no. 55 (1990); Robert K. von Weizsäcker, "Alterssicherung und demographische Inzidenz: Verteilungstheoretische Konsequenzen der Rentenreform 1992," *Finanzarchiv* 48, no. 3 (1990); *Bevölkerungsentwicklung, Rentenfinanzierung und Einkommensverteilung* (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1993); Winfried Schmähl and Jutta Gatter, "Options for Extending the Working Period and Flexibilising the Transition to Retirement in the German Insurance Industry - the Current Situation and Assessment for the Future," *The Geneva Papers on Risk and Insurance* 19, no. 73 (1994); Thomas-Peter Gallon, "Vergreisung als Grund, um die Rente zu senken? Über die Streckung der Lebensrate zum Ausgleich längerer Laufzeit und die Senkung des Rentenniveaus," *Soziale Sicherheit* 46, no. 8/9 (1997). For examples of the health care and health insurance systems, see: Christian von Ferber, "Soziale Krankenversicherung im Wandel: Weiterentwicklung oder Strukturreform," *WSI-Mitteilungen: Zeitschrift des Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Instituts in der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung* 38, no. 10 (1985); Hans Georg Timmer, "Die Stellung der Privaten Krankenversicherung im System der Sozialen Sicherung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *The Geneva Papers on Risk and Insurance* 12, no. 45 (1987); Christian von Ferber et al., eds., *Die demographische Herausforderung: Das Gesundheitssystem angesichts einer veränderten Bevölkerungsstruktur* (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1989).

¹⁷ For example, see: Hans Peter Tews, "Neue und alte Aspekte des Strukturwandels des Alters," *WSI-Mitteilungen: Zeitschrift des Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Instituts in der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung* 43, no. 9 (1990); Peter Czada et al., *Wirtschaftspolitik: Aktuelle Problemfelder* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1992); Erika Schulz, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung in Deutschland bis zum Jahr 2010 mit Ausblick auf 2040," *DIW-Wochenbericht* 60, no. 29 (1993); Schmähl and Gatter; Ulrich Peter Ritter, "Thesen zu Überalterung, Lebensarbeitszeit, Altersgrenze und Ruhestand," in *Wandlungsprozesse in den Wirtschaftssystemen Westeuropas*, ed. Bertram Schefold (Marburg: Metropolis-Verlag, 1995); Zweifel and Felder; Alois Oberhauser, "Zielgerichtete Wohnungspolitik bei staatlichen Haushaltsrestriktionen / Housing Policies Under Tightening Budgets," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik / Journal of Economics and Statistics* 216, no. 4/5 (1997).

the results were from the journal *Sozialer Fortschritt*, which focuses on social policies and within this context, included a number of articles about the pension and health care systems, and the impact of population aging on social policy and the social system.¹⁸ These articles accounted for the majority of publications from the political science field until the 1990s. As there are many policy fields affected by the aging population, this large number of results (30 journal articles in total) emphasizes interest in acknowledging and responding to the aging population through policy reform. This field really began to take noticeable interest in this topic beginning in 1992, which was mainly due to the series of books published by the SPD.¹⁹ Starting in 1994, more publications addressed old age policy, particularly with regard to the community and regional levels and the political engagement of older citizens.²⁰

E. Medicine: The Meaning for the Health Care System and the Medical Field

The majority of the publications from the medical field were from the *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*, which is the official journal of the German Medical Association (*Bundesärztekammer*) and the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (*Kassenärztliche Bundesvereinigung*). Most of the issues addressed the growing older population and its (future) impact on the health care system and the health insurance system. There was concern about increasing costs and the ability to financially support the increased demands on the system.²¹ Other publications looked

¹⁸ For example, see: J. Boese and M. R. Heuser, "Pflegeversicherung — ein Konzept zur Lösung der Versorgungsprobleme im geriatrischen Sektor?," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 31, no. 7 (1982); Gerd Lefelmann and Günter Borchert, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Krankheitskosten," *ibid.* 32, no. 8 (1983); Margarete Landenberger, "Teilzeitarbeit und Alterssicherung: Sozialpolitische Flankierung einer Arbeitsumverteilungsstrategie," *ibid.* 36, no. 9 (1987); Gerda Holz, "Altengerechte Gesundheitsversorgung erfordert den Umbau des Versorgungssystems: Eine kritische Analyse zentraler ordnungspolitischer Determinanten des Gesundheitswesens," *ibid.* 37, no. 2/3 (1988); Gabriele Rolf and Gert Wagner, "Ziele, Konzept und Detailausgestaltung des "Voll Eigenständigen Systems" der Altersvorsorge," *ibid.* 41, no. 12 (1992); Christian Felkner, "Die Zukunft der gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung in Deutschland — ein Paradigmenwechsel in der sozialen Absicherung des Krankheitsrisikos?," *ibid.* 44, no. 10 (1995); Thomas Klein and Ingeborg Salaske, "Strukturen der stationären Altenversorgung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *ibid.* 45, no. 2 (1996); Herbert Jacobs, "Migration und Sozialstaat: Entwicklungstendenzen des Sozialstaates unter dem Einfluß wirtschaftlicher Globalisierung und weltweiter Wanderungsströme," *ibid.* 46, no. 11 (1997).

¹⁹ Hans-Ulrich Klose, ed. *Moderner Sozialstaat und alternde Gesellschaft* (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1992); *Der alte Kontinente* (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993); *Zwischen Teilhabe und Rückzug: Handlungspotentiale der Älteren* (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993); *Altern der Gesellschaft: Antworten auf den demographischen Wandel* (Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1993); *Altern hat Zukunft: Bevölkerungsentwicklung und dynamische Wirtschaft* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag GmbH, 1993); *Alternde Bevölkerung - Wandel der Lebenswelten* (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1994).

²⁰ For example, see: Günter Verheugen, ed. *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994); Walter H. Asam et al., eds., *Wohnen und Pflegen: Neue Wege zur gemeindeorientierten Altenpolitik* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus, 1995); *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 35 (1996).

²¹ For example, see: Bernd Camphausen, *Auswirkungen demographischer Prozesse auf die Berufe und die Kosten im Gesundheitswesen*, ed. S. Koller, et al., vol. 44, *Medizinische Informatik und Statistik* (Berlin Heidelberg New York Tokyo: Springer-Verlag, 1983); *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*, "Dringlich: Krankenversicherung der Rentner sanieren!," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 84, no. 42 (1987); Klaus-Dirk Henke, "Langfristige Finanzierbarkeit der Gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung," in *Public health: Texte*

at the impact on the medical field, such as the need for more medical services and medical and care providers, and the increase in the number of individuals suffering from certain illnesses associated with higher ages.²² There were more publications in 1987 and 1991; however, there are no identifiable trends among the topics these publications addressed.

F. Labor: Changing Composition of the Labor Market

The first publication coded for this research originated from the labor research field and was published in *Arbeitgeber*, which was published by the Confederation of German Employers' Associations and focused on social policy. This article was written by Ernst Schellenberg, a member of the German Parliament and chair of the SPD parliamentary group, highlighting the overlap that exists in the publications coded as part of the research context, which will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.²³ As would be expected, much of the labor-related publications were focused on the labor market and the impact of the aging population on the labor force. Some mentions were made about early retirement – one article being in favor of early retirement and one book chapter identifying the future need to extend working life due to demographic changes.²⁴ That focus ties into the early concern about the ability to continue to finance the social security system and the pension system due to the decline in the labor force.²⁵ By the late 1990s, attention had turned to call for reforms and to look at what the future of the labor market would look like

zu Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Schwartz, et al. (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1991); P. Schölmerich, "Standardisierung in der Medizin," in *Medizin im Wandel: Wissenschaftliche Festsitzung der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften zum 90. Geburtstag von Hans Schaefer*, ed. Volker Becker and Heinrich Schipperges (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1997).

²² For example, see: Hans Franke, *Hoch- und Höchstbetagte: Ursachen und Probleme des hohen Alters* (Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1987); P. M. Lauen et al., "Anästhesie und der geriatrische Patient," *AINS: Anästhesiologie, Intensivmedizin, Notfallmedizin und Schmerztherapie* 24, no. 2 (1989); H.G. Haas et al., "Calcitonin und Osteoporose - Kritische Durchsicht der Literature 1980-1989," *Klinische Wochenschrift* 68, no. 7 (1990); Harald Clade, "Wachsende Herausforderungen an die Geriatrie und Gerontologie," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 88, no. 1/2 (1991); Martin Stockhausen, *Ärztliche Berufsfreiheit und Kostendämpfung: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Beschränkung der (kassen-)ärztlichen Berufsfreiheit zum Zwecke der Kostendämpfung im Gesundheitswesen*, MedR Schriftenreihe Medizinrecht (Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1992); K. Maurer et al., *Alzheimer: Grundlagen, Diagnostik, Therapie* (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1993).

²³ Ernst Schellenberg, "SPD: Die nächsten Aufgaben der Sozialpolitik. Wichtig: die Alterslast darf nicht zur Last der Alten werden," *Arbeitgeber: das BDA-Spezial zur unternehmerischen Sozialpolitik* 19, no. 7 (1967).

²⁴ Hans Gerhard Mendius and Rainer Schultz-Wild, "Betriebs- und sozialpolitische Aspekte und Probleme betrieblicher Personalplanung. Arbeitsbericht 1: Problemaufriss und erste Ergebnisse," (München, 1975); Heinrich Weiss, "Rationalisierung und kürzere Arbeitszeit: Unternehmer und Gewerkschafter zur "Zukunft der Arbeit"," in *Die jungen Alten: Zwischen Arbeit und Rente*, ed. Brigitte Krämer (Berlin; Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf. GmbH, 1986).

²⁵ For example, see: Karl-Heinz Janzen, "Gegen die Privatisierung der Lebensrisiken - für eine solidarische Sozialpolitik," in *Ältere Menschen im Sozialstaat: Für eine solidarische Sozialpolitik*, ed. Industriegewerkschaft Metall, Materialband Nr. 5 der Diskussionsforen "Die Andere Zukunft: Solidarität und Freiheit" (Köln: Bund Verlag, 1988); Kohli.

with emphasis on the change to the participants in the labor market due to an increase in women working.²⁶

G. Gerontology: What Older Citizens Will Need

One could also consider combining the publications from the field of gerontology with the results from sociology and demography, but this field focuses more on the physical process and aspects of becoming and being old. This is clear in the results found for this research: Early on, the findings included the publications of the proceedings of the annual meeting of the German Society of Gerontology, which addressed types of aging and the causes of the increase in older people in the population.²⁷ Other publications focused on understanding old age.²⁸ Beginning in the late 1980s, more research looked at the needs of the older population, how society could provide increased support, and the impact more older people would have for society.²⁹ There were also increased publications starting in 1993 on old age policy.³⁰ By the end of this time period, the *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* released an issue focused on demographic change, which touched upon a wider variety of topics, such as the need for care, job perspectives of older workers, and families and social networks.³¹ Overall, since gerontology is more about the physical aspects of aging and being old, which was not part of my focus, the number of results did not grow consistently over the specified time period nor was there a consistent number of results each year.

²⁶ For example, see: Volker Volkholz et al., "Standort Deutschland," in *Neue Organisationsformen im Unternehmen: Ein Handbuch für das moderne Management*, ed. Hans-Jörg Bullinger and Hans Jürgen Warnecke (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1996); Internationales Institut für Empirische Sozialökonomie gGmbH (INIFES) et al., "Arbeits- und Innovationspotential im Wandel: Thesen und Befunde zur Arbeit in einer alternden Gesellschaft," (Munich, 1997); Doris Beer et al., "Abschlußdiskussion," in *Der ostdeutsche Arbeitsmarkt in Gesamtdeutschland: Angleichung oder Auseinanderdriften?*, ed. Doris Beer, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

²⁷ René Schubert, ed. *Flexibilität der Altersgrenze: Symposium der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gerontologie 1968* (Darmstadt: Dr. Dietrich Steinkopff Verlag, 1969).

²⁸ For example, see: J. C. Brocklehurst et al., "Soziologische und psychologische Aspekte der Gerontologie," in *Geriatrie für Studenten*, ed. J. C. Brocklehurst, et al. (Heidelberg: Steinkopff-Verlag, 1976); Ursula Lehr, ed. *Seniorinnen: Zur Situation der älteren Frau*, vol. 9, Praxis der Sozialpsychologie (Darmstadt: Dr. Dietrich Steinkopff Verlag, 1978); Fred Karl and Walter Tokarski, eds., *Die "neuen" Alten: Beiträge der XVII. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gerontologie, Kassel, 22. - 24.09.1988* (Kassel: Gesamthochschulbibliothek, 1989).

²⁹ For example, see: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen; Oliver Schmidhals, ed. *Die Grauen kommen: Chancen eines anderen Alters* (Bamberg: Palette Verlag, 1990); R. Schmitz-Scherzer et al., eds., *Altern - Ein lebenslanger Prozeß der sozialen Interaktion* (Darmstadt: Steinkopff Verlag, 1990); Paul B. Baltes and Jürgen Mittelstraß, eds., *Zukunft des Alterns und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992); Arthur E. Imhof, ed. *Leben wir zu lange? Die Zunahme unserer Lebensspanne seit 300 Jahre - und die Folgen. Beiträge eines Symposiums vom 27.-29. November 1991 an der Freien Universität Berlin* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag GmbH, 1992).

³⁰ For example, see: Sabine Kühnert and Gerhard Naegele, eds., *Perspektiven moderner Altenpolitik und Altenarbeit*, vol. 1, Dortmunder Beiträge zur angewandten Gerontologie (Hannover: Vincentz Verlag, 1993); Geiser; Hans Peter Tews et al., eds., *Altern und Politik* (Melsungen: Bibliomed - Medizinische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1996).

³¹ *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* 29, no. 1 (1996).

H. Other: Examples of Aging's Range of Impact

The "other" category had almost as many results as the political science field. There were a number of articles from the *Journal of Actuarial Science (Zeitschrift für Versicherungswissenschaft)* and special issues focused on older people from journals about media and regional development.³² Additional publications came from a range of subject areas, such as further education, geography, addiction, technological development, and traffic research.³³ This is significant because it highlights the variety of subject areas discussing the issue. The number of results also grew over time, signaling an increase in awareness and interest throughout the scientific community.

Funding Agencies and Research Motivations: No Clear Supporter of Aging Research

To understand how the topic of aging was discussed in the research field, consideration should also be given to who funded the research. Therefore, another data point collected during the coding of the research documents was about who funded the research and/or what was the impetus behind the publication, when available. Funding agencies provide this necessary financial support to carry out research, but certain funding opportunities may place more guidelines and restrictions on the exact research to be conducted. To improve one's chances of receiving the advertised funding, researchers may tailor their project to meet the necessary guidelines of the agency, which is why the source of the financial support cannot be completely ignored.³⁴ The financial support given by an independent organization or a governmental institution signals their interest and their belief that the topic is of importance, which is why the research should be conducted.

³² *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung*, no. 3/4 (1991); "Die 50plus-Generation: Ohne Präsenz in den Medien?," *medien + erziehung* 40, no. 5 (1996).

³³ For example, see: Josef Nipper, "Zum intraurbanen Umzugsverhalten älterer Menschen," *Geographische Zeitschrift* 66, no. 4 (1978); Johannes Kahl, *Strassenverkehrsdelinquenz Älterer Menschen* (Berlin: Papyrus-Druck GmbH, 1984); Judith Marggraf, ed. *Wie kann Weiterbildung auf das Alter vorbereiten? Bildungspolitische Aspekte und pädagogische Ansätze der Bildungsarbeit mit älteren Erwachsenen: Bericht über eine Tagung der AfeB am 17./18. November 1986 in der Pfalzakademie Lambrecht* (Heidelberg: Vorstand der Arbeitsgruppe für empirische Bildungsforschung e.V., 1987); Rolf Wille, "Zukunftsperspektiven der Arbeit mit Abhängigen von illegalen Drogen: Tendenzen, Arbeitsansätze, Forderungen für die Arbeit der 90er Jahre," *Suchtgefahren* 33, no. 6 (1987); Klaus Gretschmann et al., *Neue Technologien und Soziale Sicherung: Antworten auf Herausforderungen des Wohlfahrtsstaats: Maschinensteuer · Mindestsicherung · Sozialgutscheine* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1989); Charlotte Höhn and Bernd Störtzbach, "Die demographische Alterung in den Ländern der Europäischen Union," *Geographische Zeitschrift* 82, no. 4 (1994); Josef Schmid, "Die Bevölkerung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Aufriß eines demographischen Dilemmas," *Erwachsenenbildung* 41, no. 3 (1995); Carmen Stadelhofer, ed. *Kompetenz und Produktivität im dritten Lebensalter. Der Beitrag der wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung zur Vorbereitung von Menschen im dritten Lebensalter auf neue Tätigkeitsfelder und neue Rollen in Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Bildung. Ein europäischer Vergleich und Austausch*, vol. Band 2, Beiträge zu allgemeinen wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung (Bielefeld: Kleine Verlag GmbH, 1996).

³⁴ Braun.

The majority of research analyzed for this project that received financial support was published during the 1980s and 1990s with just two mentions of financial support in the 1970s. Going back to Figure 1a, there was not a great deal of research prior to the 1980s, but this seeming lack of funding, could be a contributing factor as to why there was so little.

Based on Dietmar Braun's classification of funding agencies, the majority of funding came from strategic agencies, i.e., institutions created to promote research on a particular topic or in a specific field.³⁵ The Hans Böckler Foundation, a foundation of the German Trade Union Confederation that supports research efforts and students, was mentioned the most as a supporter of the research presented in the publications. However, this was the only major example of a specific group being heavily involved in funding research on this topic. Other institutions that provided support during this time included the Volkswagen Foundation, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (affiliated with the German Social Democratic Party), and the German Institute for Business Management (*Das Deutsche Institut für Betriebswirtschaft e.V.*). There were several institutions more specific to the health and insurance industry, such as the Geneva Association, the Foundation of the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians, and the *Beratungs-GmbH für Altersversorgung*, that were also mentioned.

There were a number of political funding agencies like the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS), the Federal Ministry for Youth, Families, and Health (BMJFG), which later became the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (BMFSFJ), the Federal Chancellery, and the Federal Ministry for Education, Science, Research, and Technology (BMBWF). Several state-level ministries and offices also offered their support: Baden-Württemberg Ministry for Labor, Health, Family and Social Affairs; the North-Rhine Westfalen Ministry for Labor, Health, and Social Affairs; the Office for City Development of the City Administration of Ludwigshafen; and the Office of Development Planning, Statistics, City Research, and Elections of Essen. The now called BBSR is responsible for publishing its own journal, *Information on Spatial Development* (original title: *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung*), which published an issue dedicated to older people and spatial research in 1993. In addition to being an opportunity for researchers to reach policy makers better, it also allowed policy makers and other government officials to publish their work.

In regard to science-based funding agencies, the main organization supporting this research was the DFG, as well as the WZB Berlin Social Science Center and the

³⁵ Ibid., 811.

Commission to Research the Social and Political Changes in the New German States (*Kommission für die Erforschung des sozialen und politischen Wandels in den neuen Bundesländern e.V.*, KSPW)³⁶.

In addition to who funded the research, it was also important to know what the possible impulse or occasion was for the given publication. Many of these publications did not explicitly name a funding agency but were related to a conference or workshop held by a specific group. For example, the speeches and presentations given at the annual conferences of the German Society for Population Research, the German Society for Sociology, and the German Society for Gerontology and Geriatrics were among the publications coded. Other organizations that also published speeches and proceedings from their major events included the German metal workers union (*IG Metall*), the German Society for Internal Medicine, the Federation of German Industries, and the German Association for Political Education. Even though these groups did not explicitly fund the research that was presented and discussed, their decision to organize the event signaled this was a topic that they felt compelled to bring individuals together to discuss in more detail. The publication of the results was just as significant because it promoted and disseminated the information outside of the academic community or the small group of individuals in attendance, potentially introducing more people, such as policy makers, civil society actors, and journalists, to the issue of the aging population.

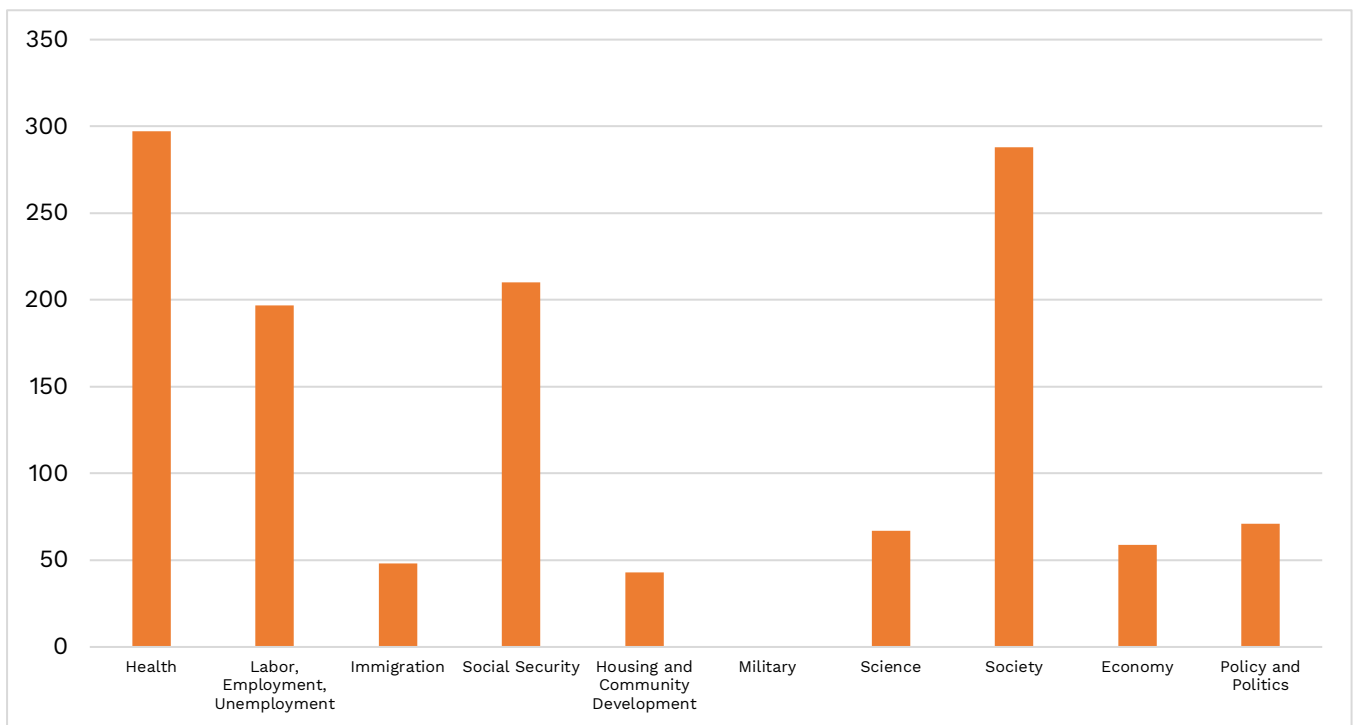
While there was a variety of institutions offering necessary financial support to carry out research that addressed the aging of the population, there was not a leading organization clearly promoting research about the aging of the population. There were, however, a number of bodies holding events about the situation of aging and older people in Germany that published materials that were available to a broader audience. These publications are important for this research since they provide more insight into the actual discussions and topics addressed at these gatherings. What is evident is that the societies for population research, gerontology and geriatrics, and sociology were addressing this topic the most within their research communities.

³⁶ This commission is of interest because it was established following reunification with the objective to systematically research the transformation process occurring in the new German states. It was recognized that it would not be possible for the commission to carry out all of the necessary research in an adequate manner. Therefore, they saw it as their responsibility to encourage research in the transformation process and published a series of books with the findings. These books, however, were not included in the analysis, as they did not appear in the keyword searches; only specific articles and books that included research or summaries of events they funded, see: Hans Bertram, "Editorial," in *Arbeit, Arbeitsmarkt und Betriebe*, ed. Burkart Lutz, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1996).

Framing the Research Dialogue

As I have emphasized thus far, a central element of this research is identifying how the discussions were framed. In the years following WWII, demography was mainly focused on the birth rate and population size. Based on what has been covered thus far, it is clear that the discussion about the aging population among the research community grew over time and began to increase significantly in the mid-1980s. But how did this change over time? It was most often framed within the context of health and society-related topics with social security and labor-related topics following behind (Figure 5). Using equivalency frames, aging was presented in these various contexts, but with the similar argument that the aging population would impact the abilities of these areas to operate as originally designed without any reform. Aging received considerably more attention in these four areas than other topics, such as housing and community development and immigration.

Figure 5: Main Research Topic Categories



Distribution of topics covered by each publication based on the overarching topic. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Even though the topic of social security was the third most common topic category among researchers, this is still significant considering there were fewer sub-categories compared to the health and society categories. Looking at the breakdown in Figure 6, it is clear that the issue of the pension system (403) was the specific context in which the aging of the population was mentioned the most. Other sub-

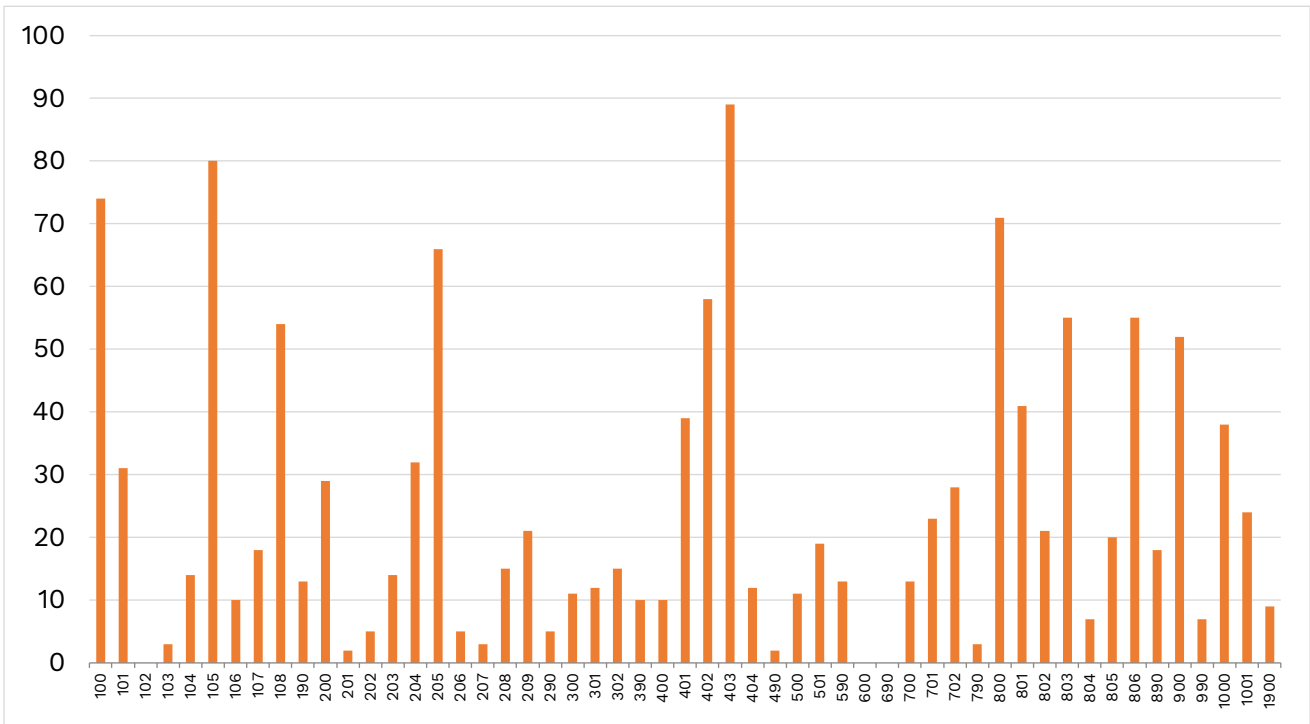
topics that received attention were about the social security system and its maintenance, which is understandable since these population changes heavily affected the system in a variety of ways. Among the topics of health and society, sub-topics that received a significant attention included long-term care, health care reform, the overall societal impact of population aging, and intergenerational relations.

Despite being included in my coding system, military-related topics were not found. As discussed in Chapter 3, discussions about the aging of participants of a specific sector were not included. In turn, this meant that examples of concerns about military personnel becoming older were excluded since this was mainly related to a lack of young people joining the military, resulting in an increase in average age. As will be seen in the following chapters, this topic was also not addressed by policy makers or the media within the parameters set by my research design. This does not mean the impact of demographic change on the military was not discussed, but in this specific context, it did not receive relevant attention.

In Figure 7, the topic codes are grouped by year. This gives a clearer picture of how often the issue of the aging population was addressed over time. In this particular case, aging was addressed within a diverse set of topic areas, evidenced by the large number of colors in each bar, and quite often in the research community. There is a clear jump in interest in the second half of the 1980s, which continued on a general trend of upward growth. In this format, it is difficult to distinguish between all of the different sub-topics. Therefore, the following sub-sections will go into more detail about each topic area. This will include the use of additional figures to highlight the specific growth in these topics and examples of how this issue was specifically addressed.³⁷

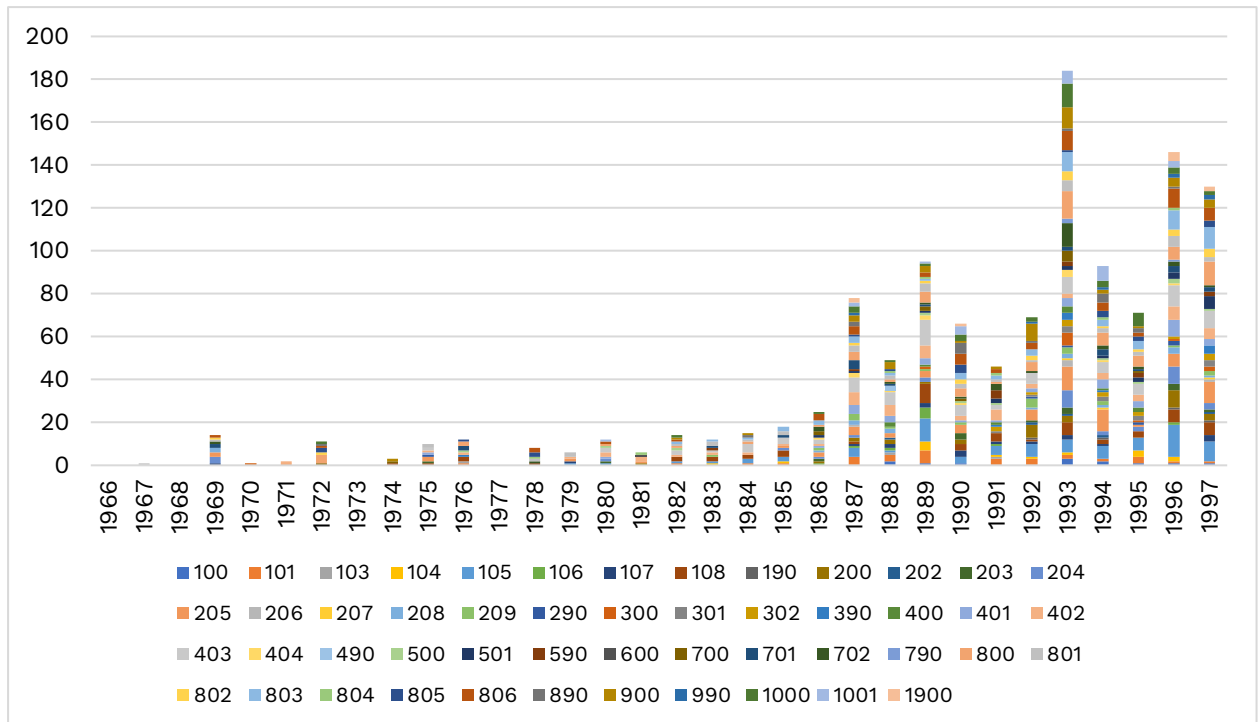
³⁷ Since many of these publications touched upon several issues, I will not mention every instance, but will select the examples that clearly convey the reference to the aging of the population in the specific context.

Figure 6: Sub-Topics in Research



Distribution of sub-topics covered in each coded research document. For the complete list of codes, see Chapter 3. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Figure 7: Sub-Topics in Research per Year

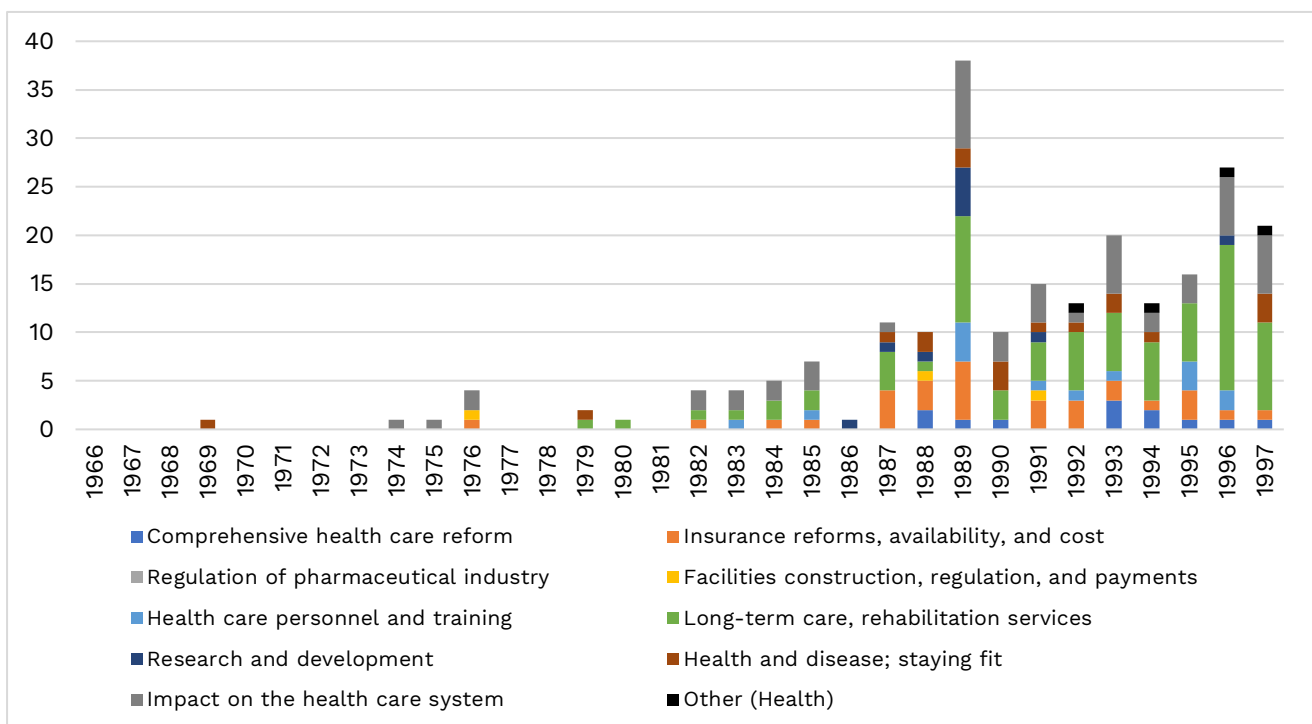


Distribution of sub-topics by year. For the complete list of codes, see Chapter 3. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

A. Health: Major Focus on Long-Term Care Needs and Health Care Reform, But Significant Overlap in Topics

The topic of health covered a variety of sub-topics, but they were closely related. A central aspect to the aging population was the increase in life expectancy. This meant people were living longer and more people were affected by illness, which typically resulted in a need for care. Since more people were reaching this stage in life, this created challenges for both the health care and insurance systems, as well as the care sector, which included the variety of provided services, supply of caregivers and care facilities. These changes also helped to further the push to have more research on the health care needs of older people and helped promote the field of geriatrics. Due to its wide-ranging impact, one can understand why the aging of the population was discussed so frequently within the context of health-related topics (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Health-Related Sub-Topics in Research



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of health by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Beginning with the “other” topic, this included several articles in the 1990s that discussed the connection between increases in the older population and life expectancy with euthanasia/assisted suicide in older age. In a 1997 book by Klaus Feldmann, he credits improvements in medical technology and the increase in the older population for more people opting for life-saving measures compared to in the past. However, due to feeling emancipated, improved education, and the increase in

secularization, older individuals were having more discussions about assisted suicide and being critical of medical decisions.³⁸

There was overlap and common themes acknowledged by many of the researchers regarding the health sub-topics. One specific example was related to the topic of health and disease, which was in close reference to people's health and staying fit. Most researchers recognized that the population's health had improved overall, and this had contributed to the increase in size of the older population.³⁹ There were also publications about the importance of older people remaining in shape⁴⁰, as well as what kinds of illnesses could affect people in old age⁴¹. Walter Tokarski, professor in sports policy, pointed out that because people participate in sports and physical activities at a younger age, the demand for these activities will increase among older people since they will want to continue being active regardless of age.⁴²

The quantitative increase in older people meant that in regard to the topic of research and development, more research on old age and their health and care needs was needed.⁴³ Acknowledgement of this need for more research contributed to an increase in old age research. For example, it was apparent there was more interest in the mental health of older adults⁴⁴ and other illnesses affecting older people, like

³⁸ Klaus Feldmann, *Sterben und Tod: Sozialwissenschaftliche Theorien und Forschungsergebnisse* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997). For another article referring to assisted suicide, see: Hans-Joachim Wagner, "Konsumgesellschaft und Tötungsdelikte an alten Menschen," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 89, no. 14 (1992).

³⁹ For example, see: Klaus-Peter Schwitzer, "Zur sozialen Lage von AltersrentnerInnen in der DDR von der Währungs-, Wirtschafts- und Sozialunion," *WSI-Mitteilungen: Zeitschrift des Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Instituts in der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung* 43, no. 8 (1990); Klaus Jacobs and Martin Kohli, "Der Trend zum frühen Ruhestand: Die Entwicklung der Erwerbsbeteiligung der Älteren im internationalen Vergleich," *ibid.*

⁴⁰ For example, see: Christian von Ferber, "Alter und Gesundheit: Muß das Erwerbsleben mit Frühinvalidität enden?," in *Ältere Menschen im Sozialstaat: Für eine solidarische Sozialpolitik*, ed. Industriegewerkschaft Metall, Materialband Nr. 5 der Diskussionsforen "Die Andere Zukunft: Solidarität und Freiheit" (Köln: Bund Verlag, 1988); Rudolf-Maria Schütz, "Die Aussichten auf ein langes Leben in Gesundheit," in *Die älter werdende Gesellschaft: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft 27. Arbeitstagung vom 25. bis 27. Februar 1993 in Bad Homburg v.d. Höhe*, ed. Johannes Otto (Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, 1993).

⁴¹ For example, see: Hans-Joachim F. Baltrusch et al., "Psychosocial Stress, Aging and Cancer," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 521 (1988); Haas et al.; Andreas Kruse, "Gesundheit und Kompetenz im Alter: Aufgaben der Prävention und Rehabilitation," in *Präventivmedizin: Praxis — Methoden — Arbeitshilfen*, ed. Peter G. Allhoff, et al. (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1997); Gabriele Schmid, "Zur Geschichte der Pflege alter Menschen," in *Beitrag zur Betreuung und Pflege alter und verwirrter Menschen* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 1997).

⁴² Walter Tokarski, "Sport mit Älteren: Realitäten und Perspektiven des Seniorensports," in *Zwischen Teilhabe und Rückzug: Handlungspotentiale der Älteren*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993).

⁴³ Horst Bickel, "Welche Beiträge kann die Epidemiologie zur Altenpolitik leisten?," in *Altern und Politik*, ed. Hans Peter Tews, et al. (Melsungen: Bibliomed - Medizinische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1996). See also: Friedrich Wilhelm Schwartz, "Annahmen und Wissen zum Gesundheitszustand alter Menschen," in *Die "neuen" Alten: Beiträge der XVII. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gerontologie, Kassel, 22. - 24.09.1988*, ed. Fred Karl and Walter Tokarski (Kassel: Gesamthochschulbibliothek, 1989).

⁴⁴ H. Häfner, "Psychiatrische Aspekte: Epidemiologie und Klinik," *ibid.*

cardiovascular disease⁴⁵. At an event by the German Center for Public Health Care, politicians and researchers were called upon to improve the field of geriatrics and strengthen the skills and expertise of doctors treating older patients due to the increase in the older population, which includes both healthy and sick individuals.⁴⁶ Despite this increase in research about the older population, as argued by M. Bergener, a geriatrician, it also shed light on the knowledge that had been missing:

As much as it should be superfluous to mention demographic changes in the world population as a justification for the growing interest in geriatrics in this foreword, it cannot be denied that it was primarily economic and social problems – and continues to be – which have increasingly drawn the attention of the public and the medical profession to issues of aging in general and thus to geriatrics, a discipline which until now has been largely lacking.⁴⁷

Another common topic was the impact of the aging population on the health system, which overlapped with other health-related issues. Due to the increase in the number of older people and the prolongation of life expectancy, early concern was about the rising number of people needing care, which would place additional demands on the health care system.⁴⁸ This growing demand would be a leading reason for why efforts needed to be taken to find ways to maintain the quality and affordability of health care.⁴⁹ But the concern about the financial strain the growing older population would place on the system was common.⁵⁰ For example, Horst Baier argued:

[T]he decisive cost pressure has been triggered and will be further intensified by an irreversible population trend; I mean the increase in the number and demand for health services on the part of pensioners in statutory and private health insurance. The growth of pharmaceutical, inpatient, nursing, and outpatient expenditure has its demographic core here.⁵¹

⁴⁵ K. Ostermann, "Untersuchungen zur geriatrischen Rehabilitation - Rückblick und Veränderungen in der Praxis," *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Clade.

⁴⁷ M. Bergener, "Gleitwort," in *Das späte Alter und seine häufigsten Erkrankungen: Praktische Geriatrie*, ed. Johann Theodor Marcea (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1986), V.

⁴⁸ For example, see: Hans Franke, "Aktuelle Probleme der Gerontologie und Geriatrie," *Naturwissenschaften* 61, no. 4 (1974); Philipp Herder-Dorneich, *Wachstum und Gleichgewicht im Gesundheitswesen: Die Kostenexplosion in der Gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung und ihre Steuerung* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1976); Klaus-Dirk Henke, "Die finanzielle Situation im Gesundheitswesen: Ein quantitativer Überblick," *Finanzarchiv* 47, no. 2 (1989); P. Brandlmeier, "Demographische Entwicklung," in *Geriatrie für die hausärztliche Praxis*, ed. Gisela C. Fischer (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1991).

⁴⁹ Timmer.

⁵⁰ For example, see: H. A. Kühn, "Eröffnungsansprache des Vorsitzenden," in *Verhandlungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für innere Medizin: Zweiundachtzigster Kongreß gehalten zu Wiesbaden vom 25.–29. April 1976*, ed. B. Schlegel (Munich: J.F. Bergmann-Verlag, 1976); Boese and Heuser; Lefelmann and Borchert; Klaus-Peter Möller and Erich Schasse, "Überalterung der Bevölkerung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Universitas: Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur* 40, no. 9 (1985); Günter Buttler and Norman Fickel, "Gesundheit: Steigende Ausgaben bei weniger Kranken?," in *Acta Demographica 1992*, ed. Günter Buttler, et al. (Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 1992).

⁵¹ Horst Baier, "Der Werte- und Strukturwandel im Gesundheitswesen-mit medizinsoziologischem Blick auf die Sozialmedizin inmitten der Erlebnisgesellschaft," in *Medizin im Wandel: Wissenschaftliche Festsitzung der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften zum 90. Geburtstag*

This desire to meet these medical demands may also increase health care costs even more.⁵² K.-M. Braumman, a sports medicine professor, posited it was possible the costs of modern developments in medicine would no longer be met because the morbidity of the population, i.e., the rate of disease, would be too great due to the increased population aging.⁵³

When addressing health care reform, the majority of the references called for a reform of the system due to the increase in the size of the older population and the increase in how long they were living.⁵⁴ For example, Karl Jung, Ministerial Director of the department "Health Care Policy and Health Insurance" of the BMAS, gave a speech in 1988 declaring that health care reform would need to find a solution for the increasing burden on contributors to finance pensioners' health insurance.⁵⁵ Hartmut Radebold, a psychiatrist, emphasized health care should be reformed by orienting more of its services to the older population by 2010 because by then, the 60+ age group would make up a large part of the population.⁵⁶ Gerda Holz, a political scientist, called for quality structural changes in old age health care because a continual expansion of the treatment sector will not be able to solve these problems.⁵⁷ From these examples, it is clear that researchers and members of the government knew that the aging population would have an impact on the health care system and this could only be addressed through system reforms. The next chapter will look to see if and when such suggested reforms were made.

With the growing older population, attention also turned to the need for more trained medical professionals and caregivers to meet increased demand. Martin Stockhausen, a lawyer, argued:

[I]t should be noted that an increase in the demand for medical services with the same scope of services of the statutory health insurance is probably

von Hans Schaefer, ed. Volker Becker and Heinrich Schipperges (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1997), 49.

⁵² For example, see: Sandra Nocera, "Alterung und Gesundheit," in *Eine ökonomische Analyse des Alterungsprozesses*, ed. Peter Zweifel and Stefan Felder (Bern; Stuttgart; Wien: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1996); Jost Bauch, "Läßt sich das Gesundheitswesen politisch steuern?: die Gesundheitsreform in systemtheoretischer Sicht," *Sozialwissenschaften und Berufspraxis* 19, no. 3 (1996); Schölmerich.

⁵³ A. H. Wiesemann et al., "Lebensführung," in *Präventivmedizin: Praxis — Methoden — Arbeitshilfen*, ed. Peter G. Allhoff, et al. (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1997), 1.

⁵⁴ Klaus-Dirk Henke, "Die Kosten der Gesundheit und ihre Finanzierung," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Versicherungswissenschaft* 82, no. 1/2 (1993); Mark J. Hanson, "How We Treat the Elderly," *The Hastings Center Report* 24, no. 5 (1994).

⁵⁵ Karl Jung, "Referat," in *Das Gesundheitswesen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Vorgestellt von Repräsentanten seiner wichtigsten Einrichtungen*, ed. Edwin H. Buchholz (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1988).

⁵⁶ Hartmut Radebold, "Ausdifferenzierung und Vernetzung von medizinischen, pflegerischen und sozialbetreuerischen Leistungen als regional- und strukturpolitische Aufgaben," in *Die demographische Herausforderung: Das Gesundheitssystem angesichts einer veränderten Bevölkerungsstruktur*, ed. Christian von Ferber, et al. (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1989).

⁵⁷ Holz.

unavoidable at least until the year 2000 and will continue thereafter. Accordingly, a continuing need for doctors is to be expected.⁵⁸

This increase in demand for medical professionals is an expected consequence of a growing older population, so it should not come as a surprise. But already in 1989, Willi Rückert cited findings that the formal care system had already been overtaken by demographic development.⁵⁹ The decline in the birth rate was one cause of the growing demand because it meant there would be fewer family members (i.e., adult children) to provide care for their aging parents.⁶⁰ To help combat this, several publications suggested that primary care physicians should be better trained in geriatric care and be more aware of rehabilitation services for older people since they are usually the first professional someone sees when facing discomfort or illness. Through rehabilitation, it may be possible for older people to continue living an independent lifestyle and delay their need for long-term care.⁶¹

As the topic progressed, the need for more professional care providers was even mentioned in the debate about discontinuing the required civil service year. Because many participants worked in the care sector for a minimal wage, the care sector was disincentivized from creating an attractive work environment.⁶² This resulted in concern that it would lead to a possible shortage of care providers, whose demand would only increase as the population became older. In another example, a 1996 article cited the increased demand in the care sector caused by the aging of industrial societies as the reason for an increase in unions representing this sector.⁶³ These two examples are even more interesting because they are also examples of how the topic had reached various subject areas: These articles were published in the

⁵⁸ Stockhausen, 41.

⁵⁹ Willi Rückert, "Die demographische Entwicklung und deren Auswirkungen auf Pflege-, Hilfs- und Versorgungsbedürftigkeit," in *Die demographische Herausforderung: Das Gesundheitssystem angesichts einer veränderten Bevölkerungsstruktur*, ed. Christian von Ferber, et al. (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1989), 141.

⁶⁰ For example, see: Achim André, "Chancen der Verwirklichung der Fortentwicklung sozialer Dienste," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 34, no. 7 (1985); Margret Dieck, "Die Alterspopulation: Unverzichtbar als Konsumentengruppe, aber eine untragbare Last für das Sozialleistungssystem?," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987); Karl Schwarz, "Veränderung der Lebensverhältnisse im Alter - Dargestellt am Beispiel der Männer und Frauen der Geburtsjahrgänge 1912/16, die 1972 55 bis 59 und 1987 70 bis 74 Jahre alt waren," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 15, no. 3 (1989); Stockhausen; Horst Bourmer, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung - Freie Berufe vor neuen Herausforderungen," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 90, no. 18 (1993); Schröder and Viechtbauer; Gerhard Naegele, "Demographischer und sozialstruktureller Alterswandel — Anforderungen an soziale Dienste in der Altenarbeit und -hilfe," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 44, no. 5 (1995); Ulrich Otto, *Seniorenengenschaften: Modell für eine neue Wohlfahrtspolitik?* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1995); U. Schneekloth, "Entwicklung von Pflegebedürftigkeit im Alter," *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* 29, no. 1 (1996).

⁶¹ Clade; H.P. Meier-Baumgartner, "Rehabilitation im Alter," in *Präventivmedizin - Praxis — Methoden — Arbeitshilfen*, ed. P.J. Allhoff, et al. (Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1995).

⁶² Ekkehard Lippert, "Allgemeine Dienstpflicht als sicherheits- und sozialpolitischer Ausweg?," *Sicherheit und Frieden (S+F) / Security and Peace* 13, no. 2 (1995).

⁶³ Martin Sebaldt, "Wissenschaft und Politik. Zur organisierten Interessenvertretung von Forschung und Lehre in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Historisch-Politische Mitteilungen* 3, no. 1 (1996).

journals *Security and Peace* and *Historical-Political Communications (Historisch-Politische Meinungen)*, respectively – journals not typically associated with demography or the health care sector.

The increase in the number of older people and resulting increase in those needing care led to discussions about reforming the health care system and coincided with the need for more medical professionals and care providers. All of these concerns came together to contribute to the discussion about the health insurance system. This greater demand for health services would also lead to higher costs and spending, directly affecting the insurance system. Therefore, it was important to find solutions to ensure that the health insurance system was financially stable, and the costs would be covered since there would be fewer people paying into the system.⁶⁴ As Hans Georg Timmer, then-Chairman of the Board of Management for the private health insurance provider *Deutsche Krankenversicherung AG*, summarized:

The population's cost problem is certainly one of the main tasks of the coming years and decades, a task facing the entire health and health insurance system. In view of the emerging expansion factors – the increasing aging of the population, the increase in chronic diseases, the further development of medical advancements, the overabundance of doctors – it will be urgently necessary to look for ways to ensure the quality and affordability of the German health care system.⁶⁵

A major actor in the calls for health insurance reform came from the German Medical Association and its publication, *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*. Beginning in 1985, the then-President, Dr. med. Karsten Vilmar called for the need to determine how the health care costs for older individuals would be covered since there was a significant difference in how much pensioners were contributing to the health insurance system versus how much financial benefit they received.⁶⁶ In 1987, several articles from the *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* quoted both the managing director, Dr. Eckart Fiedler, and the first chairman, Prof. Dr. Siegfried Häußler, of the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians in calling for a reform of the health insurance system for pensioners.⁶⁷ These calls for reform by leaders in the medical field may have contributed to the creation and passage of legislation to reform to the structure of

⁶⁴ Christina Tophoven and Jürgen Wasem, "Bevölkerungspolitische Steuerung als Aufgabe einer familienpolitisch orientierten Sozialpolitik?," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 33, no. 2 (1984); J.-Matthias Graf von der Schulenberg, "Verteilungswirkungen demographischer Verschiebungen," in *Die demographische Herausforderung: Das Gesundheitssystem angesichts einer veränderten Bevölkerungsstruktur*, ed. Christian von Ferber, et al. (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1989); Gerhard Brenner, "Konfliktpotential im Jahr 2000," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 88, no. 4 (1991); Christian von Ferber, "Strukturreform des gegliederten Sozialleistungssystems als Antwort auf die demographische Entwicklung," in *Die demographische Herausforderung: Das Gesundheitssystem angesichts einer veränderten Bevölkerungsstruktur*, ed. Christian von Ferber, et al. (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1989).

⁶⁵ Timmer, 324.

⁶⁶ Karsten Vilmar, "Gesundheitspolitik 1985 - ohne Wende?," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 82, no. 22 (1985).

⁶⁷ *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*; "Keine "Vermarktung" der gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 84, no. 21 (1987).

the health care system in 1989. This legislation was seen as a move forward to help limit cost increase and keep contribution rates stable in the long-term as the strain from the older population would first be felt in the mid-1990s and would rapidly increase in 2020, which could cause a “cost avalanche” for the system.⁶⁸

Other publications focused on the health insurance system discussed the impact of the growing number of older people on private health insurance. The older population was seen to be more of a threat to the public health insurance system than to the private system as the degree of impact would be much smaller in the private sector. It was suggested this difference would create more competition between the two and could even lead to more people switching to private health insurance.⁶⁹

The most referenced issue related to the aging population/growing older population was long-term care. Like the topics mentioned already, this issue overlapped with many of them and was related to calls for health care reform, personnel in the health care sector, insurance reform, and the impact of the aging population on the health sector. The main reason why there was so much overlap is because the need for long-term care is related to increasing age: As one becomes older, one’s chance of needing care also increases. Much of the research, especially in the 1980s touched upon the fact that because the prevalence rate of many illnesses associated with severe long-term care are higher at increasing age, it must be expected the number of those needing care and assistance will increase.⁷⁰ Beginning in the late 1980s, but mainly throughout the 1990s, the already mentioned concern about who would provide this needed care persisted. It had been fully recognized that

⁶⁸ Dieter Bräuninger, "Mehr Markt in die gesetzliche Krankenversicherung," *Deutsche Bank Bulletin* Heft September (1988).

⁶⁹ For example, see: Heinrich Frommknecht, "Die demographische Herausforderung aus der Sicht der privaten Krankenversicherung," in *Die demographische Herausforderung: Das Gesundheitssystem angesichts einer veränderten Bevölkerungsstruktur*, ed. Christian von Ferber, et al. (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1989); Henke, "Die finanzielle Situation im Gesundheitswesen: Ein quantitativer Überblick."; "Langfristige Finanzierbarkeit der Gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung."; Jürgen Behne, "Anmerkungen zu den Rechnungsgrundlagen in der deutschen Privaten Krankenversicherung," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 44, no. 2 (1995).

⁷⁰ Rückert. See also: Beate Gross and Michael Wissert, "Ambulante Rehabilitation älterer Menschen: zum Konzept eines Modellprojektes des Sozialwerks Berlin e.V.," *Soziale Arbeit: Deutsche Zeitschrift für soziale und sozialverwandte Gebiete* 38, no. 1 (1989); Peter Oberender, "Wieviel Markt im Gesundheitswesen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist nötig und möglich, um der demographischen Herausforderung zu begegnen?," in *Die demographische Herausforderung: Das Gesundheitssystem angesichts einer veränderten Bevölkerungsstruktur*, ed. Christian von Ferber, et al. (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1989); Gerhard Naegele and Waldemar Schmidt, "Zukünftige Schwerpunkte kommunalpolitischen Handelns in Altenpolitik und Altenarbeit vor dem Hintergrund des demographischen und soziostrukturellen Wandels des Alters," in *Perspektiven moderner Altenpolitik und Altenarbeit*, ed. Sabine Kühnert and Gerhard Naegele, Dortmund Beiträge zur angewandten Gerontologie (Hannover: Vincentz Verlag, 1993); Wolfgang Nentwig, *Humanökologie: Fakten — Argumente — Ausblicke* (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1995); Stefan Felder and Peter Zweifel, "Gesundheits- und sozialpolitische Implikationen des Alterungsprozesses," in *Eine ökonomische Analyse des Alterungsprozesses*, ed. Peter Zweifel and Stefan Felder (Bern; Stuttgart; Wien: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1996).

more people would need care, but the trend to have smaller families put this traditional care structure into question.⁷¹ As argued by Peter Gitschmann, Directorate-General Head at the Hamburg Office for Labor, Health, and Social Affairs, and Udo Bullmann, political scientist:

For the growing number of older people that do not only live alone, but are also single, i.e., do not have a family environment, then the situation will be particularly dramatic. But there is also an urgent need for additional support and relief for older people who are cared for by their families – often by spouses, daughters or daughters-in-law.⁷²

It was eventually recognized that the family members providing care, which were typically the women, were having to do so while working full-time.⁷³ But it was also mentioned that expectations or sense of obligation had changed over time so adult children were not always willing or able to provide necessary care.⁷⁴ Together, these factors influencing the long-term care sector in Germany contributed to the growth of this specific topic over time and was a leading reason why the growing older population could not be ignored:

The increasing proportion of older people and the associated increase in older people in need of care and mentally ill, the growing number of one-person households, the decline in willingness and ability of the next generation to provide care, together with rising expectations in the quality of care, care-related poverty in old age – these are the parameters in which new ways for providing for and covering the risk of long-term care need to be found, not just in Germany, but all of Europe.⁷⁵

B. Society: The Population Composition is Changing, but the “New Old” Means Society Needs to Adapt

References to society/social-related topics began to grow beginning in the mid-1980s. Much of the focus centered around the overall impact of the aging population, intergenerational relations, how older people are viewed and the changes to the population's composition (Figure 9). Topics were often connected to the general

⁷¹ See footnote 94 for examples.

⁷² Peter Gitschmann and Udo Bullmann, "Kommunale Altenpolitik," in *Kommunalpolitik: Politisches Handeln in den Gemeinden*, ed. Roland Roth and Hellmut Wollmann (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1994), 560.

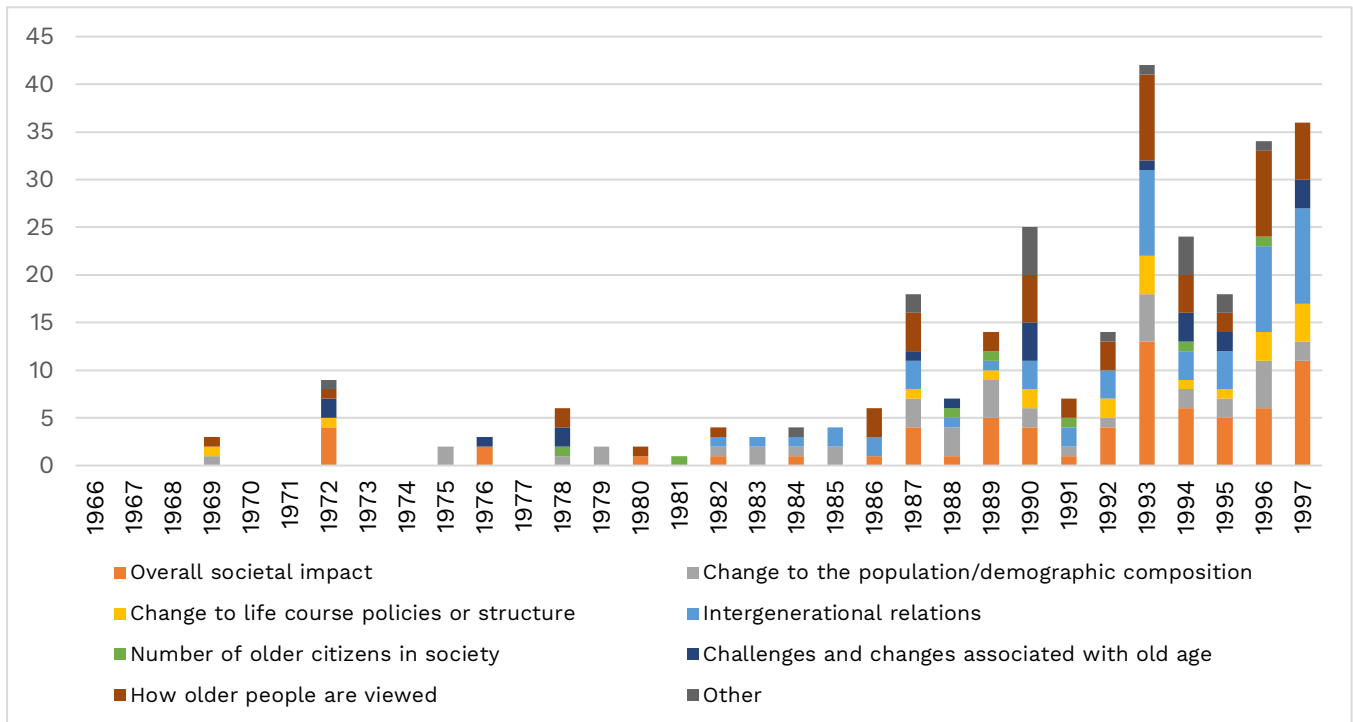
⁷³ Monika Reichert, "Vereinbarkeit von Erwerbstätigkeit und Hilfe/Pflege für ältere Angehörige: arbeitsplatzbezogene Belastungen und Bewältigungsstrategien," in *Altern und Politik*, ed. Hans Peter Tews, et al. (Melsungen: Bibliomed - Medizinische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1996); Ursula Dallinger, *Ökonomie der Moral: Konflikt zwischen familiärer Pflege und Beruf aus handlungstheoretischer Perspektive* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

⁷⁴ Ingeborg Langen and Ruth Schlichting, "Selbsthilferessourcen und Laienhilfe - Aspekte ihrer Funktionsweise und Bedeutung für die Lebenssituation älterer Menschen im Wandlungsprozeß des ländlichen Sozialgefüges," in *Die demographische Herausforderung: Das Gesundheitssystem angesichts einer veränderten Bevölkerungsstruktur*, ed. Christian von Ferber, et al. (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1989).

⁷⁵ Rudolf Bieker, "Gesetzliche Pflegeversicherung in Deutschland - Neuer Wind in der (Alten-) Hilfe?," in *Die Herausforderung des Alters: Antworten der Sozialen Arbeit in Europa; Bericht zum 2. Europäischen Symposium für Soziale Arbeit*, ed. Wilhelm Klüsche (Mönchengladbach: Fachhochschule Niederrhein, Fachbereich Sozialwesen, 1996), 311.

sentiment that the meaning of being old had changed so that the life course could evolve, new activities were necessary for active retirees, and there would be a wide-ranging impact on society. Much of this research seemed interested in drawing attention and building awareness about what an aging population means for society.

Figure 9: Society-Related Sub-Topics in Research



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of society by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

There was also growth in the mid-1980s and 1990s in the amount of research focused on the overall impact of the aging population on society. These documents either addressed or presented the different areas that would be affected by the aging population or discussed its overall impact. The main reason for this specific classification was due to the limitations on the number of codes given to one document and the numerous documents that would touch upon multiple different areas. For example, research documents that were more focused on the general issue of the aging of the population and not a specific sector such as the pension system typically referenced more than one topic.⁷⁶ Arguments were often made that were

⁷⁶ For example, see: Hans-Ulrich Klose, "Die Zukunft hat schon begonnen. Überlegungen zur Bewältigung des demographischen Wandels," in *Altern der Gesellschaft: Antworten auf den demographischen Wandel*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1993); Anton Amann, "Soziale Ungleichheit im Gewande des Alters - Die Suche nach Konzepten und Befunden," in *Lebenslagen im Strukturwandel des Alters*, ed. Gerhard Naegele and Hans Peter Tews (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1993); Sabine Reichertz, *Ältere Menschen: Eine Gruppe mit wachsender gesellschaftlicher Bedeutung*, vol. 14, Beiträge zur Stadtforschung (Essen: Amt für Entwicklungsplanung, Statistik, Stadtforschung und Wahlen, 1995); Günter Mertins,

based on the fact the aging population would have a large impact. For example, Hans-Olaf Henkel, Chairman of Executive Board of IBM, argued:

A "graying society" is an issue for all of us. Because of pensions, because of the infrastructure and costs of health care, because of the need to discuss working life, to distribute education more throughout life, but especially because of the need to redefine the role of individuals considered "gray".⁷⁷

Hans Franke also argued that because the change to the age structure would be associated with the older population and would have more "weight", then it would heavily burden social policy in many ways.⁷⁸ Other documents made similar references to the overall impact or the consequences aging would have for social policy.⁷⁹ This larger recognition that the aging population would impact different facets of society is an important development. This particular sub-topic seemed to reach a high point in 1993, which was during the time the SPD was publishing its book series on demography and policy. This suggests that awareness had grown so much that the early 1990s was when the wide-ranging impact of population aging had become well recognized.

Regarding the challenges and chances faced in old age, older women were specifically addressed. Since they tend to live longer than men, not only was the older population growing, but the number of older women was also growing. For example, Lehr published several books that specifically addressed how older women are viewed and Gisela Notz, historian and social scientist, mentioned the challenges they face, such as discrimination due to being widowed or living alone in a society that, in her opinion, favored couples and families.⁸⁰ Additional literature on this sub-topic were related to the challenge of transitioning to retirement and the need to offer

"Demographischer Wandel in der Europäischen Union und Perspektiven," in *Demographischer Wandel in der europäischen Dimension und Perspektive*, ed. Karl Eckart and Siegfried Grundmann (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1997).

⁷⁷ Hans-Olaf Henkel, "'Unsere Gesellschaft ergraut: Wie bleibt die Wirtschaft jung?'," in *Unsere Gesellschaft ergraut: Wie bleibt die Wirtschaft jung?* (Cologne: Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V., 1989), 26-27.

⁷⁸ Franke, *Hoch- und Höchstbetagte: Ursachen und Probleme des hohen Alters*, 11.

⁷⁹ For example, see: Gretschmann et al; Malte Ristau and Petra Mackroth, "Eine neue Landkarte des Alters. Daten, Hinweise und Adressen," in *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren*, ed. Günter Verheugen (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994); Wilhelm Mader, "Altwerden in einer alternden Gesellschaft? - Auf dem Wege zu pluralen Alterskulturen," in *Altwerden in einer alternden Gesellschaft: Kontinuität und Krisen in biographischen Verläufen*, ed. Wilhelm Mader (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1995); Dieter Berkefeld, "Eröffnungsvortrag: Demographischer Wandel und Wohnungspolitik," in *Forschungsprojekt Umzugswünsche und Umzugsmöglichkeiten älterer Menschen: Handlungsperspektiven für Wohnungspolitik, Wohnungswirtschaft und Dienstleistungsanbieter*, ed. Tobias Robischon (Darmstadt: Schader-Stiftung, 1997); Dieter Claessens and Daniel Tyradellis, *Konkrete Soziologie: Eine verständliche Einführung in soziologisches Denken* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

⁸⁰ Lehr, *Psychologie des Alterns; Seniorinnen: Zur Situation der älteren Frau*, Gisela Notz, *Arbeit ohne Geld und Ehre: Zur Gestaltung ehrenamtlicher sozialer Arbeit* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1987), 58.

more options for retirees to remain active.⁸¹ Horst W. Opaschowski, educationalist, argued that retirees want to feel needed and therefore, strategies need to be developed to help them transition to prevent any conflicts or crises during that process.⁸² In connection with how older people are viewed, publications also emphasized that not all older people do age well and there are still individuals that require assistance and care.⁸³ One book that also touched upon the challenge of caring for oneself in old age from 1997 mentioned the potential benefit of teleshopping, which was still relatively new at the time. It briefly addressed the aging population and how this new shopping method may allow more older people to remain independent longer since they could order necessary items from the comforts of home.⁸⁴ This is a good example of the range of topics in which aging was discussed, at least in the research field: In an effort to address teleshopping, the author was cognizant of the concern about caring for the growing older population and how this could be a way to relieve the situation.

As the topic was viewed with a wider perspective, it is not surprising that there was also an effort to view aging and being older differently. This topic similarly began to grow mainly in the mid-1980s and 1990s. However, as early as 1969, René Schubert, an internist, was advocating for the need to move away from relating increased life expectancy with aging (*Überalterung* or *Vergreisung*): "The *shift in life expectancy* is all too often equated with an *obsolescence*, some even speak of an *aging* of civilizations. This form of interpretation is downright discriminatory..."⁸⁵ The majority of research emphasized the need to realize that older people are still capable,

⁸¹ For example, see: Jörg Calließ, "Lebensplanung und gesellschaftlicher Diskurs. Möglichkeiten und Erfahrung der Erwachsenenbildung," in *Erfüllt leben – in Gelassenheit sterben: Geschichte und Gegenwart; Beiträge eines interdisziplinären Symposiums vom 23. – 25. November 1993 an der Freien Universität Berlin*, ed. Arthur E. Imhof and Wein (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1994); Hans Peter Tews, "Alter zwischen Entpflichtung, Belastung und Verpflichtung," in *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren*, ed. Günter Verheugen (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994); Gundolf Meyer-Hentschel and Katharina Frings, "Seniorengerechte Lebenswelten," in *Alternde Bevölkerung – Wandel der Lebenswelten*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1994).

⁸² Horst W. Opaschowski, *Einführung in die Freizeitwissenschaft, 3. aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997), 159, 66.

⁸³ For example, see: Baltrusch et al; K. Härringer, "Konzepte integrativer Altenarbeit: Das Heinrich-Hansjakob-Haus Freiburg," in *Altern – Ein lebenslanger Prozeß der sozialen Interaktion*, ed. R. Schmitz-Scherzer, et al. (Darmstadt: Steinkopff Verlag, 1990); Gerhard Bäcker, "Altersarmut – Frauenarmut: Dimensionen eines sozialen Problems und sozialpolitische Reformoptionen," in *Sozialpolitische Strategien gegen Armut*, ed. Walter Hanesch (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1995).

⁸⁴ Peter Rohrbach, *Interaktives Teleshopping: Elektronisches Einkaufen auf dem Informationhighway* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitätsverlag, 1997), 160.

⁸⁵ René Schubert, "Verschiedene Formen des Alterns," in *Flexibilität der Altersgrenze: Symposium der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gerontologie 1968*, ed. René Schubert (Darmstadt: Dr. Dietrich Steinkopff Verlag, 1969), 1. Max Wingen also was in favor of not using the word *Überalterung* due to its negative connotation, see: Max Wingen, "Generationensolidarität in einer alternden Gesellschaft," *Die Ersatzkasse* 86, no. 9 (1986).

competent, and active; the majority do not fit the stereotype of being frail and ill.⁸⁶ Sigrid Artho, in an article as part of a series on tourism, summarized it well in 1996:

With the increasing importance of older people in society, the image of old age - which is still negative today and associates old age with reduced mental performance, impaired health, disability, and the need for help and care - must also change, just as the lives of older people have changed. Aging is to be seen in connection with activity and new self-fulfillment. Increasing self-confidence, better health, and increasing activity enhance old age and positively change the role of the older generation.⁸⁷

One aspect in viewing older people differently includes how they are viewed as a consumer group or in the media. There were calls to realize their potential for the economy and to consider how they are portrayed in the media.⁸⁸ For example, a special edition of *medien + erziehung*, as well as several earlier publications, addressed these necessary changes to the portrayals of older people in television and marketing to their interests because they will have more spending power.⁸⁹ In the same article, Artho addressed the potential of older people for the tourism industry:

There will be many old people who have more money and more time and who will put their enjoyment and consumer orientation and increased leisure values into practice. Economically speaking, seniors in 2010 will become an extremely interesting target group.⁹⁰

It is clear researchers saw the importance of having a different outlook on the older population. The acknowledgement of their economic power and the realization that

⁸⁶ For example, see: Notz; Theodor Bergmann, "Socioeconomic Situation and Perspectives of the Individual Peasant," *Sociologica Ruralis* 30, no. 1 (1990); Margot M. Baltes, "Perspektive Alter: Überlegungen zu einer neuen Alters-Kultur," in *Die neue Beweglichkeit des Alters: Resumee einer Tagung der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung "Die Älteren Engagement, Produktivität, Macht?" am 3. Mai 1995 in Bonn*, ed. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V. Abt. Gesellschaftspolitische Informationen (Bonn: 1995); Christian Carls, "Altenhilfe als Begegnungsraum: passé?," *Theorie und Praxis der sozialen Arbeit* 45, no. 2 (1995); Peter Jarvis, "Weiterbildung und die Rolle der Universitäten für ältere Menschen in der postmodernen Gesellschaft," in *Kompetenz und Produktivität im dritten Lebensalter. Der Beitrag der wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung zur Vorbereitung von Menschen im dritten Lebensalter auf neue Tätigkeitsfelder und neue Rollen in Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Bildung. Ein europäischer Vergleich und Austausch*, ed. Carmen Stadelhofer, Beiträge zu allgemeinen wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung (Bielefeld: Kleine Verlag GmbH, 1996); Charlotte Höhn, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung und demographische Herausforderung," in *Die westeuropäischen Gesellschaften im Vergleich*, ed. Stefan Hradil and Stefan Immerfall (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997); Joachim Braun and Frauke Claussen, *Freiwilliges Engagement im Alter: Nutzer und Leistungen von Seniorenbüros*, vol. 10 (Bonn: Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren Frauen und Jugend, 1997).

⁸⁷ Artho, 29, 20.

⁸⁸ Roland Berger, "Referat," in *Unsere Gesellschaft ergraut: Wie bleibt die Wirtschaft jung?* (Cologne: Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V., 1989).

⁸⁹ Hans W. Jürgens, "Ältere Menschen in deutschen TV-Sendungen: Zerr- oder Spiegelbilder?," *medien + erziehung* 40, no. 5 (1996); Susanne Kayser, "Ältere Menschen als Zielgruppe der Werbung," *ibid.* See also: Horst Reimann, "Bedeutung von Medien und neuen Medien im Alter," in *Aktive Mediennutzung im Alter: Modelle und Erfahrungen aus der Medienarbeit mit älteren Menschen*, ed. Gerald A. Straka, et al. (Heidelberg: Roland Asanger Verlag, 1990); Jörg Ueltzhöffer, "Ältere im Spiegel der Gesellschaft: Wandel von Selbstbildern und Lebensstilen, neue Ansprachen in der Werbung," in *Moderner Sozialstaat und alternde Gesellschaft*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1992); Volker Nickel, "Das vergilbte Bild der Älteren in der Werbung," in *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren*, ed. Günter Verheugen (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994).

⁹⁰ Artho, 29, 298.

being old has a new meaning than in the past highlight a shift in the research towards a more positive outlook

Naturally, with talk about the need to view aging differently, there were also mentions of the need to change how the life course is framed. Not only were people living longer, but the time spent in education was also being prolonged while the time spent raising children was decreasing. These changes to the life course meant the traditional stages of the life course were not as relevant. Karlheinz Blessing, Executive Director of the SPD, supported the idea of moving away from this traditional division and not uniformly dividing the life course for all.⁹¹ Within the context of the field of law, Karl-Heinz Koch, member of the Landtag in Hesse, argued in favor of a more specific change to the life course, i.e., a reduction in time spent in training/education:

[G]eneral demographic development is moving in the direction of an aging population, which is why the division of life into thirds – education, active work, and retirement, as is currently the case with academic courses – will not be sustainable in the long term...⁹²

Hans Peter Tews, Vice President of the German Society of Gerontology, argued there was a “new age” because of the changing quantitative and qualitative cuts in the life cycle that were the result of the widening of society’s view of aging and the extension of the period spent in old age.⁹³

Another aspect of changes to the life course included the change to intergenerational relations and the growing need for family members to care to older family members. The good news, as argued by researchers, was that people were living longer, which meant more generations were coexisting simultaneously⁹⁴, more children were growing up with grandparents and great-grandparents⁹⁵, and the relationship among families was better than ever before⁹⁶. This was in part because families were closer due to their smaller size:

Intergenerational relationships will only become more important because individuals will have fewer relatives within one’s own generation and more relatives that belong to another generation. Simultaneously, the length of the

⁹¹ Karlheinz Blessing, "Zukunft der Erwerbsarbeit unter den Bedingungen demographischen Wandels. Der sozialdemokratische Denkansatz," in *Altern hat Zukunft: Bevölkerungsentwicklung und dynamische Wirtschaft*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993).

⁹² Karl-Heinz Koch, "Die Juristenausbildung braucht neue Wege," *Zeitschrift für Rechtspolitik* 22, no. 8 (1989): 281-82.

⁹³ Tews, "Neue und alte Aspekte des Strukturwandels des Alters," 491.

⁹⁴ Kees Knipscheer, "Perspektiven für die Mehrgenerationenfamilie in einer sich wandelnden Gesellschaft," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987).

⁹⁵ Andreas Lange and Wolfgang Lauterbach, "Multilokale Mehrgenerationenfamilien als Kontexte kindlichen Aufwachsens," in *Differenz und Integration: die Zukunft moderner Gesellschaften; Verhandlungen des 28. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie im Oktober 1996 in Dresden; Band 2: Sektionen, Arbeitsgruppen, Foren, Fedor-Stepun-Tagung*, ed. Karl-Siegbert Rehberg (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1997).

⁹⁶ Ursula Lehr, "Demographischer Wandel: Herausforderungen einer alternden Gesellschaft," *Forschung & Lehre* 4, no. 2 (1997).

relationships between (adult) children and their parents increases as the overall life expectancy increases.⁹⁷

But with parents living longer and fewer people around to provide care, as already discussed, there was a growing demand on family members to provide care for their aging parents.⁹⁸ These demands on younger family members, who may be providing care to their own children simultaneously, may create tensions among the generations, as argued by sociologist François Höpflinger:

Under today's demographic conditions (longevity), ambivalent role combinations sometimes arise, for example when middle-aged women simultaneously assume the role of daughters of aging parents and mothers of adolescent children. If elderly parents are cared for, the established role structures are reversed (which often leads to underlying tensions).⁹⁹

The growth of intergenerational caregiving was not the only cause for concern regarding generational relations. Earlier in the 1980s, intergenerational relations was commonly associated with how the social security system would be maintained due to the growing older population and the shrinking younger population that would have to financially support it and the older generations.¹⁰⁰ By the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s, several researchers suggested how this problem could be solved in order to improve the generational contract.¹⁰¹ Overall, researchers addressing intergenerational relations were in favor of strengthening relations and not making them worse.¹⁰² There were some publications concerned about generational relations

⁹⁷ Marc Szydlik, "Die Enge der Beziehung zwischen erwachsenen Kindern und ihren Eltern - und umgekehrt," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 24, no. 2 (1995): 75. See also: G. M. Backes, "Familienbeziehungen und informelle soziale Netzwerke im sozialstrukturellen und demographischen Wandel," *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* 29, no. 1 (1996).

⁹⁸ For example, see: Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, "Apparate pflegen nicht. Zur Zukunft des Alters," in *Altern der Gesellschaft: Antworten auf den demographischen Wandel*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1993); Dallinger; François Höpflinger, "Haushalts- und Familienstrukturen im intereuropäischen Vergleich," in *Die westeuropäischen Gesellschaften im Vergleich*, ed. Stefan Hradil and Stefan Immerfall (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

⁹⁹ "Entwicklung der Elternschaft in europäischen Ländern," in *Familienleitbilder und Familienrealitäten*, ed. Laszlo A. Vaskovics (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997), 185.

¹⁰⁰ For example, see: Bernd Ziegler, "Zu den Auswirkungen der langfristigen Bevölkerungsentwicklung auf den Generationenvertrag in der Rentenversicherung," in *Verteilungsprobleme in Industriegesellschaften* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1982); Hauser; Richard Pieper, "Selbständigkeit im Alter - Selbstorganisation in der Nachbarschaft. Zur Konzeption des Projekts 'Nachbarschaft Georgenschwaige'," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987).

¹⁰¹ For example, see: Reiner Dinkel, "Das Äquivalenzprinzip in Privat- und Sozialversicherung — eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit der herrschenden Orthodoxie," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Versicherungswissenschaft* 74, no. 2 (1985); von Weizsäcker, "Alterssicherung und demographische Inzidenz: Verteilungstheoretische Konsequenzen der Rentenreform 1992.," Ritter; Winfried Hain et al., "Von Renditen, Gerechtigkeit und Reformvorschlägen," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 46, no. 9/10 (1997).

¹⁰² For example, see: Euro-Advertising Düsseldorf, "Die Folgen der Überalterung: Generationskonflikte," *Viertel-Jahreshefte für Media und Werbewirkung*, no. 4/91 (1991); Gertrud Höhler, "Produktives Altern. Acht Thesen zu innovativer Unternehmenskultur und Unternehmensstrategien," in *Altern hat Zukunft: Bevölkerungsentwicklung und dynamische Wirtschaft*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993); Martin Kohli, "Von Solidarität zu Konflikt? Der Generationenvertrag und die Interessenorganisation der Älteren," in *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren*, ed. Günter Verheugen (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994).

worsening¹⁰³ and others that did not see any problems¹⁰⁴. Some researchers also argued in favor of lowering the voting age to improve generational relations and allow more young people to have a voice as the older population grows.¹⁰⁵ Hans Hattenhauer, historian of law, for example, argued:

If we are to take those citizens seriously who, with increasing aging, are more and more concerned with just having a filled plate on the table on time, then those who are to fill these plates also have to be taken seriously. Our aging society has created a policy which favors the elderly and which in turn threatens to age.¹⁰⁶

The majority of research about intergenerational relations happened in the 1990s, but not necessarily in conjunction with a focus on the social security system. Like the other sub-topics, the awareness had grown about the impact of the aging population on society, but in this context, there were more suggestions by researchers on how to improve the situation and to focus on the positive aspects, such as more generations living simultaneously.

C. Social Security: Clear Recognition of the Need to Reform the System for Its Maintenance in the Future

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the German social security system, particularly the pension system, was a cornerstone of society. This dates to Otto von Bismarck, who created the social state (*Sozialstaat*), and the first disability and old age insurance that was established in 1889, which was the start of the German pension system. Originally, the system provided very low benefits, making it difficult to have a stable standard of living, and most people did not reach the qualification age of 70. Over time, the pension and pay-as-you-go system remained, but reforms were undertaken, such as decreases in retirement age, to make it accessible to more citizens.¹⁰⁷ But in the 1957 pension reform, the system went through a major change that redefined pensions to be an income replacement and not just a supplement.

¹⁰³ For example, see: Vern L. Bengtson and Yvonne Schütze, "Altern und Generationenbeziehungen: Aussichten für das kommende Jahrhundert," in *Zukunft des Alterns und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung*, ed. Paul B. Baltes and Jürgen Mittelstraß (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992); Christoph Behrend, "Krieg der Generationen statt Generationenvertrag - Ein realistisches Szenario?," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 45, no. 11 (1996).

¹⁰⁴ Lehr, "Demographischer Wandel: Herausforderungen einer alternden Gesellschaft."

¹⁰⁵ For example, see: Christoph Knödler, "Wahlrecht für Minderjährige – eine gute Wahl?," *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 27, no. 4 (1996); Ingo Richter, "Frühe Rechte – späte Chancen: Die Absenkung des Wahlalters als symbolische Politik," *Soziale Welt* 48, no. 2 (1997).

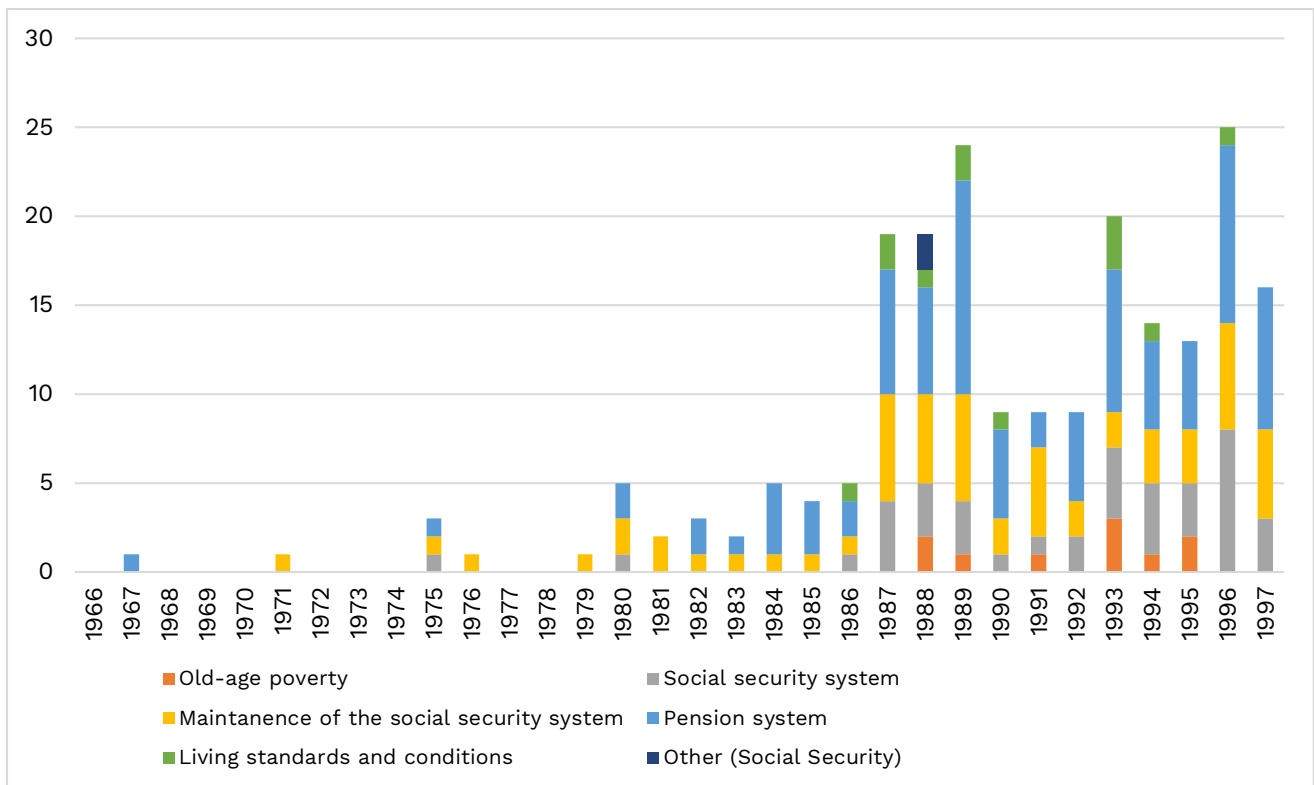
¹⁰⁶ Hans Hattenhauer, "Über das Minderjährigenwahlrecht," *JuristenZeitung* 51, no. 1 (1996): 10.

¹⁰⁷ Gerhard Bäcker and Ernst Kistler, "Bismarcks Sozialgesetze," Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, <https://www.bpb.de/politik/innenpolitik/rentenpolitik/289619/bismarcks-sozialgesetze>; "Die Entwicklung bis 1945," Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, <https://www.bpb.de/politik/innenpolitik/rentenpolitik/289633/die-entwicklung-bis-1945>. For additional information on the history of the German pension system, see: "Geschichte der Rentenversicherung in Deutschland," Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, <https://www.bpb.de/politik/innenpolitik/rentenpolitik/289604/geschichte-der-rentenversicherung>.

Therefore, there was a great amount of importance placed on the stability of the pension system and explains why there was so much research about the pension system and its future in an aging society. This tied into the general concern about maintaining the overall welfare system.

Based on the results, there were continual acknowledgements of the impact these population changes would have on the system (Figure 10). However, I did not find a great amount of discord among researchers in their opinions about the impact of the aging population on the social security system and specifically the pension system. Regarding the pension system, the referrals to the aging population commonly included calls for reform to make sure the system could continue to accommodate all contributors and beneficiaries with a few exceptions for calls to move more towards private pension savings.

Figure 10: Social Security-Related Sub-Topics in Research



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of social security by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Old-age poverty in the context of the aging population did not receive a great deal of attention. When it was discussed, it was either in the context of establishing a guaranteed pension or minimum benefits system, or its connection with the need for long-term care in old age. For example, in 1988, Walter Hanesch, economist and social

scientist, mentioned Meinhard Miegel's idea of a basic income for older people as a way to combat poverty during the unemployment crisis. According to Miegel, due to future expected lower economic growth rates and projected demographic changes, e.g., the worsening of the age structure, it would not be possible to accumulate private capital at the same level if the current statutory old-age provision was maintained. Therefore, to expand private savings, the volume of old age provision should be reduced.¹⁰⁸

In connection with long-term care, contributions from Christel Bals and Martina Kocks, as well as Corinna Bäcker, political scientist, and Gerhard Naegele, economist and social scientist, discussed the growth in old-age poverty due to an inability to cover the costs of one's care needs. As life expectancy increased, more people would need care services for an extended period, which is not always covered by their pensions. This was leading to a new form of poverty that causes people to be dependent on social assistance in old age.¹⁰⁹ But not all research that mentioned old-age poverty saw it as an issue. Andreas Motel, sociologist and gerontologist, and Michael Wagner, sociologist, found via the Berlin Old Age Study that not as many older people were suffering from poverty as previously believed, while Stefanie Wahl, political scientist, said the economic success in West Germany had resulted in many older people being financially well-off, so being old should no longer be automatically associated with being poor.¹¹⁰

Regarding one's living situation and conditions in connection to the aging of the population, to note were the calls for more research: Social scientist Ingeborg Langen and Ruth Schlichting called for more research on the living situation of older people since they were growing in number¹¹¹, while economist Juliane Roloff called for research to help effectively develop and organize the necessary new social policies for older people. Roloff argued that analyzing the living situation and the subjective wellbeing of older people was a prerequisite for developing these policies.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ It should be noted that Hanesch was not in support of this idea. Walter Hanesch, *Armutspolitik in der Beschäftigungskrise: Bestandsaufnahme und Alternativen* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitätsverlag, 1988), 189-90.

¹⁰⁹ Christel Bals and Martina Kocks, "Armut und Alter in historischer Perspektive und in der Gegenwart," *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung*, no. 3/4 (1991); Corinna Barkholdt and Gerhard Naegele, "Armut durch Pflegebedürftigkeit: Das ungelöste Problem deutscher Sozialpolitik," in *Sozialpolitische Strategien gegen Armut*, ed. Walter Hanesch (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1995).

¹¹⁰ Andreas Motel and Michael Wagner, "Armut im Alter? Ergebnisse der Berliner Altersstudie zur Einkommenslage alter und sehr alter Menschen," *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 22, no. 6 (1993); Stefanie Wahl, "Der materielle Wohlstand vieler älterer Menschen in Deutschland," in *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren*, ed. Günter Verheugen (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994).

¹¹¹ Langen and Schlichting.

¹¹² Juliane Roloff, "Zur Lebenssituation Älterer in Ostdeutschland," in *Zwischen Teilhabe und Rückzug: Handlungspotentiale der Älteren*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993).

Turning to the general sub-topic of the social security system, within the context of the aging population, Hermann Schubnell, former director of the BiB, cited the changing population in 1975, which included the increase in older people, as a reason for why it was necessary to reform the social security system.¹¹³ Beginning in 1986, the issue was more consistently addressed. This topic is very close to the issue of maintaining the social system, so there was some overlap in the items that were coded under both topics. When looking at references specific to the social security system, the majority were in relation to either the need to reform the system or the impact of the aging population on it. For example, starting in 1987, Albrecht Goeschel, economist, called for the need to examine the impact of the growing number of older people on regional social budgets due to the increasing number of problems they were creating for pensions, health insurance, and social security.¹¹⁴ Sociologist Bernhard Badura also argued that demographic developments were some of the most important influencers on the social budget, so analyses of the interactions between demographic and social change were necessary for the development of the social security system because demographic change will impact the entire social security system in the future.¹¹⁵ The trend throughout the literature was to discuss the impact the aging population would have on social policies and the social security system. There were general calls for changes to social policies in response to the aging population¹¹⁶, as well as more specific calls for active, structured social policies that showed solidarity¹¹⁷, were sustainable¹¹⁸, and modern¹¹⁹.

Two specific topics that received the majority of attention in this category were related to maintaining the social security system and the pension system. When referring to maintaining the social security system, this was focused on the idea of

¹¹³ Hermann Schubnell, *Gesetzgebung und Fruchtbarkeit* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1975).

¹¹⁴ Albrecht Goeschel, "Die Bedeutung der Älteren für die Regionalverteilung und Regionalwirkung der Sozialtransfers," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987), 307.

¹¹⁵ Bernhard Badura, "Sozialer Wandel und neuer sozialpolitischer Handlungsbedarf," in *Sozialstaat 2000: Auf dem Weg zu neuen Grundlagen der sozialen Sicherung. Ein Diskussionsband*, ed. Rolf G. Heinze, et al. (Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft GmbH, 1987).

¹¹⁶ For example, see: Franz Steinkühler, "Einführung," in *Ältere Menschen im Sozialstaat: Für eine solidarische Sozialpolitik*, ed. Industriegewerkschaft Metall, Materialband Nr. 5 der Diskussionsforen "Die Andere Zukunft: Solidarität und Freiheit" (Köln: Bund Verlag, 1988); Kurt Vogler-Ludwig, "Sozialpolitik, Beschäftigung und Wettbewerb," *Ifo-Schnelldienst* 49, no. 17-18 (1996); Hans- Jürgen Krupp and Joachim Weeber, "Die Zukunft des Sozialstaates vor dem Hintergrund der zunehmenden Globalisierung," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 46, no. 11 (1997).

¹¹⁷ Janzen.

¹¹⁸ Lutz Leisering, *Sozialstaat und demographischer Wandel: Wechselwirkungen, Generationenverhältnisse, politisch-institutionell Steuerung*, ed. Herwig Birg and Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, vol. 17, Forschungsberichte des Instituts für Bevölkerungsforschung und Sozialpolitik (IBS) (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1992).

¹¹⁹ Christoph Hüttig, "Diskurs der Generationen in der alternden Gesellschaft: Vorwort und Einführung," in *Graue Zeiten? Zur Zukunft sozialstaatlicher Alterssicherung und Alterspolitik*, ed. Christoph Hüttig (Rehburg-Loccum: Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 1996).

how to maintain the pay-as-you-go system while the topic of the pension system included discussion of the need for pension system reforms, and pension and retirement benefits.

Early on, researchers differed in their arguments about whether they should already be concerned about being able to maintain the social security system: As early as 1971, demographer Karl Schwarz, in discussing the causes of the birth rate decline, mentioned the difference in the number of people paying into the system versus the number receiving pension benefits, but stated this was not something to worry about at that point in time.¹²⁰ However, by 1980, as the country was still dealing with the economic crisis from the second oil crisis, researchers were expressing concern about the social security system. Peter Hampe, economist and political scientist, contended that regardless of economic growth, the pension system would face financing challenges, especially because the number of older citizens would greatly increase in the future:

It is true that the financing of old-age pensions poses considerable problems as the population develops, but both at a time of rapid and slowing growth. [...] Whatever the case may be, with an unchanged relationship between pensioners and the working population, the 'pension burden' remains relatively constant, whether with or without economic growth, with or without a reduction in working hours.¹²¹

It is evident that researchers were already beginning to draw attention to the need to look at the future viability of the social security system due to the growing population of older citizens. A policy maker seminar held in 1980 by the Society for Social Progress (*Gesellschaft für Sozialen Fortschritt*) discussed whether the social security system could continue to function in the future due to the change in the age structure. At the event, it was apparent all participants saw the importance in considering these demographic changes when creating future policy, but they differed in how it should be viewed.¹²² Even though this is not a purely scientific-based article, it is an example of how the research field was beginning to address the concern about maintaining the social security system due to the growing older population.

This issue gained more attention in 1987 with concerns and questions continuing to be raised about the sustainability of the social security system. In a chapter by economist Klaus Gretschmann et al., they argued:

The prolongation of the average life expectancy and the decline in the birth rate are leading to an age structure that will at least put pensions and health insurance under financial pressure. That leaves the question of if the wage-

¹²⁰ Schwarz, "Ursachen und Folgen des Geburtenrückgangs in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland."

¹²¹ Peter Hampe, "Ist Rasches Wirtschaftswachstum Systemnotwendig?," in *Politikfeld-Analysen 1979: Wissenschaftlicher Kongreß der DVPW 1.-5. Oktober 1979 in der Universität Augsburg*, ed. Thomas Ellwein (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1980), 561.

¹²² H. Eichner, "Überlegungen zur Neuregelung der Altersgrenzen: Ein Seminar der Gesellschaft für Sozialen Fortschritt," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 29, no. 11 (1980).

related financing of social security services is still sustainable with an upcoming disproportionate population structure.¹²³

The research continued to stress that demographic changes will create financial problems and the need to determine how the social security system can be adapted to the aging population, which mainly concerns the financing of the pension system.¹²⁴ However, there were arguments that the system could not be maintained in the long-term. For example, Walter Kannengießer, an economics journalist, claimed the “aging of society will dramatically strain the pension and health insurance systems,” and that it was “foreseeable that the current service level of the social security system could not be maintained past 2020.”¹²⁵ Sociologist Lutz Leisering argued that demographic change (mainly the aging of the population) had created a situation for the social security system. It could no longer continue to be an issue of cost that would be improved through reforms, but decisions had to be made related to the role of the social security system and the actors involved: State, economy, and family.¹²⁶ Then in 1997, Axel Börsch-Supan, economist, published a paper arguing the European pay-as-you-go system was not flexible enough to adapt to the aging of the population and was not capable of anticipating these strains awaiting it.¹²⁷ Throughout this debate, researchers drew attention early on to the impact the large older population would have on the social security system. This eventually turned into calls for reform and warnings that if changes were not undertaken, then the system would not be able to maintain itself in the future.

Looking at the discussion specifically surrounding the pension system, the beginning of this discussion seemed to go back and forth between the need for action

¹²³ Klaus Gretschmann et al., "Durch die Krise zur Reform: Finanzierungs- und Leistungsalternativen in der sozialen Sicherung," in *Sozialstaat 2000: Auf dem Weg zu neuen Grundlagen der sozialen Sicherung. Ein Diskussionsband*, ed. Rolf G. Heinze, et al. (Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft GmbH, 1987), 17.

¹²⁴ Nullmeier and Rüb; Hans Adden, "Perspektiven eines künftigen gesamtdeutschen Alterssicherungssystems," in *Acta Demographica*, ed. Günter Buttler, et al. (Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 1991); Winfried Schmähl, "Finanzierung sozialer Sicherung bei einer alternden Bevölkerung in Deutschland," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 3-4 (1991); Charlotte Höhn and Karl Schwarz, "Lebenserwartung in Deutschland heute und morgen – und die Folgen," in *Erfüllt leben – in Gelassenheit sterben: Geschichte und Gegenwart; Beiträge eines interdisziplinären Symposiums vom 23. – 25. November 1993 an der Freien Universität Berlin*, ed. Arthur E. Imhof and Rita Weinknecht (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1994); Hans Braun, "Verantwortung für Sozialpolitik im Geflecht der Zuständigkeiten," in *Sozialpolitik: Aktuelle Fragen und Probleme* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

¹²⁵ Walter Kannengießer, "Der Pflegefall als politisches Risiko," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 87, no. 34/35 (1990): A-2523.

¹²⁶ Lutz Leisering, "Alternde Bevölkerung – veraltender Sozialstaat? Demographischer Wandel als "Politik"," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 35 (1996).

¹²⁷ Axel Börsch-Supan, "Privatization of Social Security in Europe (Working Paper)," (Universität Mannheim, Fakultät für Rechtswissenschaft und Volkswirtschaftslehre. Abteilung Volkswirtschaftslehre, 1997), 8. He also made a similar argument in a book chapter also published in 1997 in which he questioned if the system could continue if the younger generation had to almost completely finance the older generation. See: "Sozialpolitik," in *Springers Handbuch der Volkswirtschaftslehre 2: Wirtschaftspolitik und Weltwirtschaft*, ed. Jürgen von Hagen, et al. (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1997).

or not. In 1967, Schellenberg's article in *der arbeitgeber* recognized that experts had argued in favor of changing the contribution rate because it cannot remain at its current level due to the worsening age structure. Despite this acknowledgement, he expressed his uncertainty about when and how much of an increase should be made.¹²⁸ Returning to Schubnell's arguments from 1975, he was not concerned about the future of the pension system and said that it was not in danger in the coming three to four decades; in the future, there would be other factors impacting it besides demographic-related ones.¹²⁹ Then in 1980, Hans-Jörg Ehler proposed a reform to the pension system, but acknowledged it was difficult to find satisfactory solutions. How to address the challenge of financing the system would be an ongoing debate in the coming decades.¹³⁰ This pronouncement appeared to be true based on the amount of research that followed.

Prior to the 1992 pension reform, most of the research highlighted the burden the aging population would place on the pension system and the need to find a solution.¹³¹ The number of publications also picked up in the years leading up to the 1992 reform, beginning in 1987. This research argued in favor of reform with some publications suggesting how this could be achieved.¹³² This was possible since discussions about potential pension reform had already begun. In the following year, there were publications by *IG Metall* that discussed the pension reforms they would accept and an article by economist Marcus Lübbering explained how the Federation of German Insurance Providers (*Verband Deutscher Rentenversicherungsträger*) would approach the issue.¹³³ These publications are examples of how civil society actors tried to reach a larger audience, most specifically policy makers, by publishing their positions. Additional publications in 1989 reemphasized the need for the pension

¹²⁸ Schellenberg.

¹²⁹ Schubnell.

¹³⁰ Hans-Jörg Ehler, "Zur Rolle der betrieblichen Altersversorgung und der Lebensversicherung im Drei-Säulen-Konzept bei wachsender Alterslast," in *Betriebliche Altersversorgung im Umbruch*, ed. Beratungs-GmbH für Altersversorgung Steuerberatungsgesellschaft Dr. Dr. Ernst Heissmann and Deutsches Institut für Betriebswirtschaft e.V. (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1980).

¹³¹ Franz-Xaver Kaufmann and Lutz Leisering, "Demographische Veränderungen als Problem für soziale Sicherungssysteme," *Internationale Revue für soziale Sicherheit* 37, no. 4 (1984); Deutsches Ärzteblatt, "Die Rentenversicherung bleibt im Gerede," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 82, no. 13 (1985); Helmut Schneider, "Können wir durch Sparen die Alterslast künftiger Generationen vermindern?," *Finanzarchiv* 46, no. 2 (1988).

¹³² G. Möllhoff, "Die "gesetzliche Rentenversicherung" in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - gestern, heute und morgen," in *Neue Entwicklungen in der Dermatologie*, ed. O. P. Hornstein, et al. (Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1987); Gerhard Bäcker, "Der Wertschöpfungsbeitrag zur Rentenversicherung. Kein Königsweg auf der Suche nach neuen Finanzierungsfundamenten des Sozialstaates," in *Sozialstaat 2000: Auf dem Weg zu neuen Grundlagen der sozialen Sicherung. Ein Diskussionsband*, ed. Rolf G. Heinze, et al. (Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft GmbH, 1987); Landenberger.

¹³³ Peter Kirch, "Vorschläge und Forderungen der IG Metall zur Reform der Alterssicherung," in *Ältere Menschen im Sozialstaat: Für eine solidarische Sozialpolitik*, ed. Industriegewerkschaft Metall, Materialband Nr. 5 der Diskussionsforen "Die Andere Zukunft: Solidarität und Freiheit" (Köln: Bund Verlag, 1988); Marcus Lübbering, "Mehr Selbstverantwortung bei der Altersvorsorge," *Deutsche Bank Bulletin* Heft September (1988).

reform to react to the growing unfavourability of the ratio of contributors to beneficiaries and the need to increase the contribution rates, either now or in the future.¹³⁴ Other calls supported the idea of promoting more private pension savings.¹³⁵ In a speech given to the German Association for Actuarial Science, Robert Schwebler, economist and insurance scientist, called on economic and social policy to take the necessary action to respond to the expected changes in the population. As an example, he cited the report from the German Council of Economic Experts:

The situation of future pensioners will also be improved if the active generation makes more provision for their old age through its own capital formation. The population should therefore be encouraged to behave in this way. The solution of the problems of the old age security systems cannot be left to the future because it is only reasonable to tell young people to provide for themselves if it is done in a timely manner.¹³⁶

Not only were researchers making the case to move away from sole reliance on the public pension system, but even government-affiliated bodies were doing so as well. This highlights a major point in the discussion that seems to recognize the aging of the population and other structural changes to the population were so dramatic that in the long run, the cornerstone of the German social state would not be able to fully adapt to continue to operate at the same level as in the past.

Once the 1992 pension reform was passed, the calls for reform did not stop. Already a month after its passage, an article by Kannengießer in the *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* argued the reform did not go far enough and new reforms would have to be made in 15 years, at the latest, to account for the dramatic population change expected in 2015.¹³⁷ Economist Peter Czada et al. continued to acknowledge that the pension system would face financial challenges in the future due to the population development and the ignored fact that people were receiving their pensions longer. They also called for more attention to be paid to the pensioner ratio, which would be 1:1 by 2030 (equal number of contributors to pensioners).¹³⁸ Others, such as Bert Rürup, economist, argued for more governmental reforms, stating that demographic developments were a threat to the security and abilities of the pension system and

¹³⁴ Alexander Roßnagel et al., *Die Verletzlichkeit der 'Informationsgesellschaft'* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1989); Tyll Necker, "Begrüßung," in *Unsere Gesellschaft ergraut: Wie bleibt die Wirtschaft jung?* (Cologne: Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V., 1989); Raffelhüschen; Werner Tegmeier, "Die gesetzliche Rentenversicherung in der Gesamtwirtschaft," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Versicherungswissenschaft* 78, no. 4 (1989).

¹³⁵ For example, see: Axel Holzwarth, "Langfristig erzielbare Leistungen aus der Lebensversicherung in einzelwirtschaftlicher Betrachtung," *ibid.*; Hans-Ulrich Klose, *Revolution auf leisen Sohlen: Politische Schlußfolgerungen aus dem demographischen Wandel*, ed. Petra Mackroth and Malte Ristau, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1996).

¹³⁶ Robert Schwebler, "Die Lebensversicherung in der Gesamtwirtschaft," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Versicherungswissenschaft* 78, no. 4 (1989).

¹³⁷ Walter Kannengießer, "Rentensystem und Beamtenversorgung werden von 1992 an erheblich geändert," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 86, no. 49 (1989).

¹³⁸ Czada et al.

would best be dealt with via political means. If the situation was not addressed, then it would become worse.¹³⁹ Additional calls for change involved the need to take caregiving into consideration when calculating one's pension, specifically when a family member is not working in order to provide care, either for a child or a parent, which was becoming more common due to the increase in older people.¹⁴⁰

During this time, there were only a few publications in my results that had a different view on the pension system and its future: Peter Rosenberg echoed the sentiments of Kannengießer that changes to the pension system would likely need to be made in the future, however, he believed the 1992 reform had gone far enough for the time being and argued the situation was currently better than when the reform was passed in 1989. Once it was time for these reforms to be made, the decision would need to be based on updated demographic data, and the economic and labor market situations.¹⁴¹ Several other researchers did not see the aging of the population as the cause of the problems facing the system. For example, it was more about how people receive a pension or how they qualify based on time spent working¹⁴², or it was related to how many people are actually working because it is more important to have enough people paying into the system, which is unrelated to who is paying. The latter was argued by Cora Stephan, political scientist, who went on to say:

If the pension system fails, it is definitely not because of the changed relation between young and old. The German pension system has nothing to do with the unwillingness of someone to reproduce or with the life expectancy of someone else, that is to say it has nothing to do with biology, but it is a product of political decisions meaning it can be changed under other circumstances.¹⁴³

D. Labor, Employment, and Unemployment: The Future of an Older Labor Force

The impact of the aging population and longer life expectancy on the labor market was, like the other topics, addressed mainly during the second half of the period under consideration, beginning in the mid-1980s (Figure 11). There were eleven labor-

¹³⁹ Bert Rürup, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung und soziale Sicherungssysteme. Prognosen und Optionen," in *Altern hat Zukunft: Bevölkerungsentwicklung und dynamische Wirtschaft*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993); "Anforderungen an das gesetzliche Alterssicherungssystem vor dem Hintergrund des demographischen Wandels," *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* 29, no. 1 (1996).

¹⁴⁰ Gert Wagner, "Gesellschaftliche Veränderungen und Rentenversicherung - Ein Plädoyer für eine eigenständige Alterssicherung," in *Lebenslagen im Strukturwandel des Alters*, ed. Gerhard Naegele and Hans Peter Tews (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1993); Ralf Feucht, "Lasten der umlagefinanzierten Altersrente vor dem Hintergrund eines demographischen Wandels," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 20, no. 2 (1995); Hans-Joachim von Kondratowitz, "Der Generationenvertrag und die Zukunft generativer Politiken," *Transit*, no. 11 (1996).

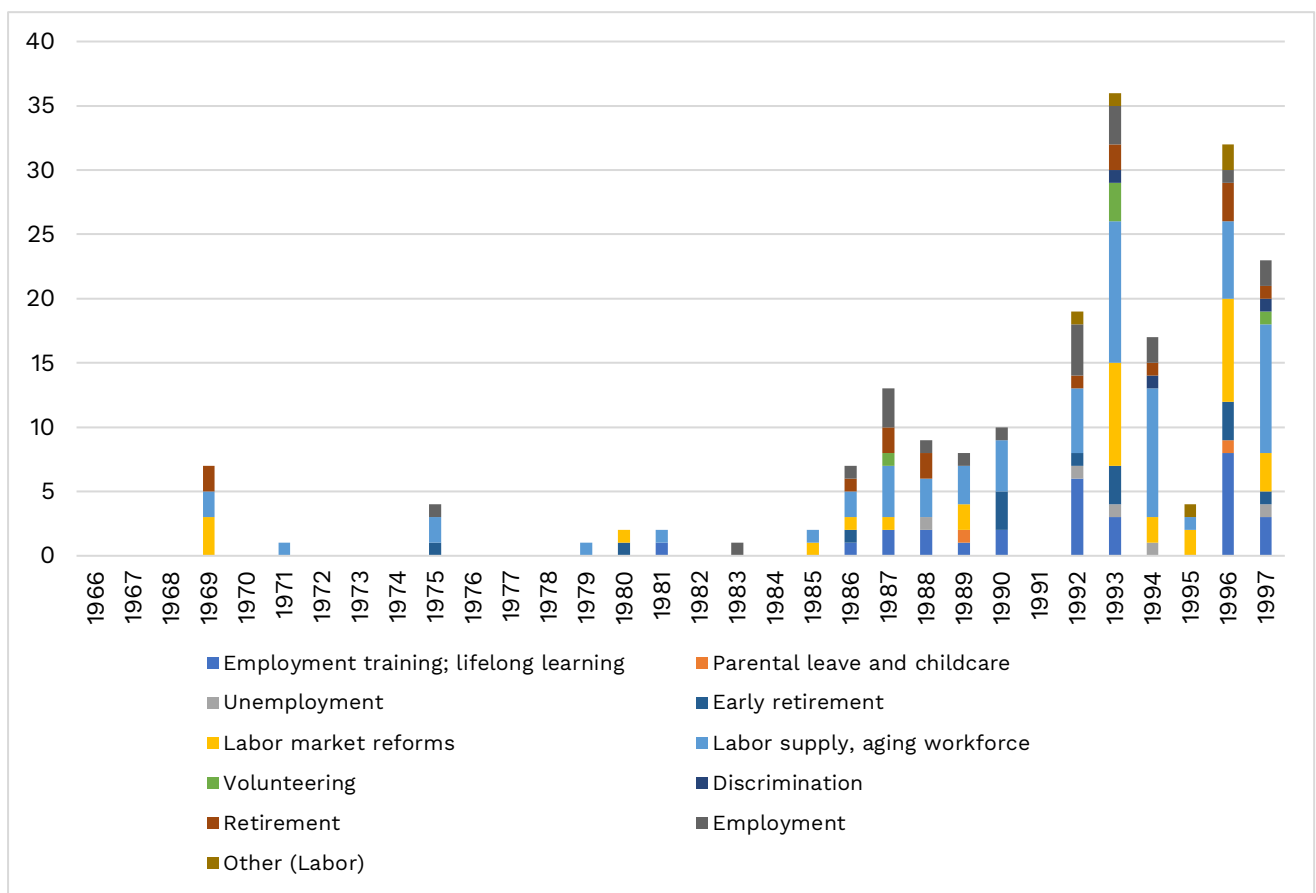
¹⁴¹ Peter Rosenberg, "Ökonomische Entwicklung und materielle Situation der älteren Menschen in der Zukunft," in *Altern und Politik*, ed. Hans Peter Tews, et al. (Melsungen: Bibliomed - Medizinische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1996).

¹⁴² Karl Ulrich Mayer, interview by Michael Zick, //, 1993, interview 4.

¹⁴³ Cora Stephan, "Krieg der Generationen? Die alternde Gesellschaft und die Folgen," *Universitas. Orientierung in der Wissenswelt. Deutsche Ausgabe* 50, no. 7 (1995).

related sub-topics considered during the coding of these publications, many of which overlapped and resulted in multiple sub-topics being addressed in the same publication. The majority of labor-related topics addressed were related to recognizing that the labor market was becoming older and how to address this via labor market reforms and providing more educational and training opportunities to older workers. The publication of the book series in 1993 by Klose/the SPD was the main contributor to the large uptick in publications that year. The high number of publications in 1996 and 1997, particularly related to labor topics, were likely due to the high unemployment that Germany was facing at that time.

Figure 11: Labor-Related Sub-Topics in Research



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of labor by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

A common theme among most of the labor-related discussions was the aging of the workforce. As Hans W. Jürgens, then-Director of the BiB, argued in 1975, the aging of the population is related to the decline in the birth rate, which together create problems that impact all areas. This included the then-current problems facing

the labor market caused by the changes in the population's age structure.¹⁴⁴ As the population aged, the labor force would also become older and there would be fewer young people to replace them when they retire.¹⁴⁵ In the long-run, the whole economy would have to adjust to a decrease in the labor force potential of younger workers, and the middle aged and older working generations would have to contribute more to the innovation transfer in the future.¹⁴⁶

In response to the decline and aging of the work force, researchers promoted the employment of women and older people. Beginning in 1983, Höhn called for women to participate in the labor force to combat the higher number of people in retirement.¹⁴⁷ Similar arguments were made in favor of women's employment throughout the 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁴⁸ For example, Werner Tegtmeier, State Secretary of the BMAS, argued for the state to make it easier for individuals to combine work and family life, which would at least allow women to participate more in the labor market and therefore reduce the impact of the decline in the labor force.¹⁴⁹ But even with the increased participation of women, others argued that this would still not be enough to prevent a complete aging of the labor force.¹⁵⁰ Wolfgang Klaunder, Director of the institute for Employment Research, argued:

The increasing propensity of women to work cannot prevent the aging effect of the labor force, which is to be expected despite immigration, and thus the risk

¹⁴⁴ Jürgens, "Zur Lage der Bevölkerungswissenschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," 14.

¹⁴⁵ For example, see: Schwarz, "Ursachen und Folgen des Geburtenrückgangs in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.," Delsen; Jobst R. Hagedorn, "Arbeitsmarkt- und Beschäftigungstrends in Europa bis zum Jahr 2000 und darüber hinaus," in *Internationales Personalmarketing: Konzepte, Erfahrungen, Perspektiven*, ed. Hans Strutz and Klaus Wiedemann (Wiesbaden: Gabler Verlag, 1992).

¹⁴⁶ Johann Fuchs, "Welche Wirkungen gehen von der demographischen Entwicklung auf den Arbeitsmarkt aus?," in *Statistische Informationen zum Arbeitsmarkt. Konzepte und Kritik, Anwendung und Auslegung. Beiträge zum wissenschaftlichen Kolloquium am 14./15. November 1996 in Wiesbaden* (Stuttgart: 1997), 68.

¹⁴⁷ Charlotte Höhn, "Frauenerwerbstätigkeit und soziale Sicherheit," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 9, no. 4 (1983).

¹⁴⁸ For example, see: Gert Wagner, "Die Strukturreform der gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung und Strategien der Arbeitsmarktpolitik: — eine zusammenhängende Betrachtung ist erforderlich," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 35, no. 11 (1986); Frieder Naschold et al., "Zum Zusammenhang von betrieblicher Personalpolitik und staatlicher Sozialpolitik," in *Spaltungen der Gesellschaft und die Zukunft des Sozialstaates: Beiträge eines Symposiums aus Anlaß des 60. Geburtstages von Hans-Hermann Hartwich*, ed. Udo Bernbach, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1990); Gerd Gidion, "Zukunft der Frauen in Familie und Erwerbstätigkeit: Betriebliche Folgen soziodemographischer Veränderungen und Frauenerwerbsbeteiligung," in *Frauenerwerbstätigkeit: Demographische, soziologische, ökonomische und familienpolitische Aspekte. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft, 26. Arbeitstagung vom 19. bis 21. Februar 1992 in Gosen bei Berlin.*, ed. Karl Schwarz (Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, 1992).

¹⁴⁹ Tegtmeier, 655. This was also the one of two examples of research related to the aging population addressing the need to create family-friendly policies, such as improvements to childcare and parental leave.

¹⁵⁰ For example, see: Gretschmann et al; Friedrich Buttler and Manfred Thon, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Arbeitskräftepotentiale," in *Der alte Kontinent*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993); Dorit Köhler and Ernst Kistler, "Subjektive Komponenten des Arbeitsangebots - Zu Gegenstand und Vorgehensweise des INIFES-Projekts," in *Arbeits- und Innovationspotential im Wandel: Thesen und Befunde zur Arbeit in einer alternden Gesellschaft* (Munich: INIFES - ISF - SÖSTRA, 1997).

of an age-related reduction in the innovativeness, performance, and adaptability of the economy.¹⁵¹

As seen in this example, the loss of innovation and performance due to the aging labor force was also referenced. There was concern that due to the decline in younger generations, there would be fewer people entering the labor market and therefore, fewer people to bring in new ideas to help businesses continue to innovate. Economists Jürgen Wahse and Reinhard Schaefer argued that the economic impact of the aging population on Germany's ability to innovate is not given much attention since it is a more long-term issue, making it easier to ignore. But more focus should be given to finding long-term measures for preventative labor market policies and innovation strategies.¹⁵² This research was part of a report about research funded by the BMBWF as part of its focus on "Demographic Change and the Future of Gainful Employment in Germany". Economists Nick Kratzer, Volker Döhl, and sociologist Dieter Sauer argued against this concern about innovation. They stated it is not about if there is quantitatively and qualitatively a sufficient innovative labor force, but about matching supply and demand structures related to performance. They went on to argue that the concern demographic developments would impact the potential of the labor force to meet innovation demands and endanger the innovation potential of Germany as a business location, were flawed due to their lack of recognition that there is more involved in the innovation process.¹⁵³

Regardless, researchers supported the employment of older people, which included arguments that older workers were necessary to maintain the various social security systems or to fill positions in the service sector.¹⁵⁴ There were some instances early on in which arguments were made in favor of early retirement, mainly in response to the baby boomer generation entering the labor market: Hans Gerhard

¹⁵¹ Wolfgang Klauder, "Wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Bedeutung der Frauenerwerbstätigkeit heute und morgen," in *Frauenerwerbstätigkeit: Demographische, soziologische, ökonomische und familienpolitische Aspekte. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft, 26. Arbeitstagung vom 19. bis 21. Februar 1992 in Gosen bei Berlin.*, ed. Karl Schwarz (Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, 1992), 31.

¹⁵² Jürgen Wahse and Reinhard Schaefer, "Zum Wandel der Alterspyramide der Erwerbstätigen in Ostdeutschland und Transformationsprozeß," in *Arbeits- und Innovationspotential im Wandel: Thesen und Befunde zur Arbeit in einer alternden Gesellschaft* (Munich: INIFES - ISF - SÖSTRA, 1997), 24-25.

¹⁵³ Volker Döhl et al., "Im Schatten der Innovation: Aspekte einer anderen Standortdebatte," *ibid.*, 105-06; Nick Kratzer et al., "Methodische und inhaltliche Aspekte einer Analyse heterogener Arbeitsstrukturen," *ibid.*, 112-13.

¹⁵⁴ For example, see: Karl Ulrich Mayer, "Bildung und Arbeit in einer alternden Bevölkerung," in *Zukunft des Alterns und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung*, ed. Paul B. Baltes and Jürgen Mittelstraß (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992); Gert Wagner, "Drei Thesen zur ökonomischen Bedeutung von Dienstleistungen in einer demographisch alternden Gesellschaft," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987); Annette Niederfranke and Mechthild Weidmann, "Gesellschaftliches Potential älterer Menschen. Brauchen wir neue Handlungsfelder?," in *Erfüllt leben - in Gelassenheit sterben: Geschichte und Gegenwart; Beiträge eines interdisziplinären Symposiums vom 23. - 25. November 1993 an der Freien Universität Berlin*, ed. Arthur E. Imhof and Rita Weinknecht (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1994).

Mendius and Rainer Schultz-Wild, researchers at the Institute for Social Science Research (*Institut für Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung*) suggested in 1975 that past initiatives, such as early retirement, be implemented as a way to create opportunities for younger generations to help reduce “mountains of old age people.”¹⁵⁵ During a seminar held by *Sozialer Fortschritt*, labor union representatives emphasized that they did not want to prolong working life and they were working to help workers retire early and in good health so they could enjoy a long retirement.¹⁵⁶ In East Germany, early retirement was also used to help decrease the unemployment rate, which was a common reason why early retirement was supported.¹⁵⁷ The benefits of early retirement were seen again in the 1990s when Germany faced high unemployment following reunification, but several researchers simultaneously advocated for its end. Naegele and gerontologist Frerich Frerichs argued in 1996:

The promotion of employment in old age is called for at a time when mass unemployment still prevails, and older people form a relevant mass for maneuvering in employment policy. This contradiction is too obvious to be overlooked. In the short to medium term, the situation of older workers threatened by unemployment must not be further jeopardized by a general increase in age limits. In the medium to long term, the conditions must be improved for older workers to be able to integrate productively into working life.¹⁵⁸

Jutta Gatter, economist and political scientist, made a similar argument the following year that the current practice of early retirement was rational, but in the long-term the resulting costs would be problematic.¹⁵⁹ Earlier in the 1990s, economist Lei Delsen also argued in favor of ending early retirement since in the future it would be difficult to finance due to the smaller working population and lack of young people to fill the positions left vacant by early retirees.¹⁶⁰ Economist Klaus Jacobs and sociologist Martin Kohli were also in favor of ending early retirement, but without offering alternatives, this would not automatically lead people to stop retiring early.¹⁶¹ This would be a process that would take time and would not happen overnight.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ Mendius and Schultz-Wild, 66.

¹⁵⁶ Eichner, 242.

¹⁵⁷ Jochen Ernst, "Alterserwerbsarbeit und Frühverrentung in den neuen Bundesländern und einige sozialpolitische Konsequenzen," in *Perspektiven moderner Altenpolitik und Altenarbeit*, ed. Sabine Kühnert and Gerhard Naegele, Dortmund Beiträge zur angewandten Gerontologie (Hannover: Vincentz Verlag, 1993).

¹⁵⁸ Gerhard Naegele and Frerich Frerichs, "Situationen und Perspektiven der Alterserwerbsarbeit in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 35 (1996).

¹⁵⁹ Jutta Gatter, "Personalpolitik bei alternder Bevölkerung - Probleme und erste Lösungsansätze," *ZeS-Arbeitspapier*, no. 12/97 (1997): 6.

¹⁶⁰ Delsen, 139.

¹⁶¹ Jacobs and Kohli. See also: Joachim Rosenow and Frieder Naschold, "Ältere Arbeitnehmer — Produktivitätspotential oder personalwirtschaftliche Dispositionsmasse? Bundesdeutsche Unternehmen im Vergleich zu Schweden und Japan," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 42, no. 6/7 (1993).

¹⁶² Gerhard Naegele, "New Trends in Gradual Retirement in Germany," *The Geneva Papers on Risk and Insurance* 21, no. 81 (1996).

Related to calls to end early retirement, the most common labor market reform suggested were calls to change the age of retirement. There were only a couple of arguments against changing the retirement age: One in 1969 by a representative from the Federal Ministry of Health (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheit*, BMG) at a symposium on the flexibilization of the retirement age and then again in 1980 when representatives from the labor unions stated they were working to help workers retire early and would work to prevent a prolongation of statutory working life.¹⁶³ However, by the mid-1980s, the majority of research was calling for the retirement age to be increased.¹⁶⁴ Kohli stated in 1993:

The main limiting condition for all attempts to change the lifetime distribution of gainful employment is the development of the labor market. In all aging societies, the supply of potential young entry candidates into the labor market is rapidly declining. It is usually argued that this will soon lead to a shortage of labor and also to a financial crisis of the pension and health care system. The easiest way out of this demographic trap seems to be to raise the age limit.¹⁶⁵

Other suggestions included creating more flexibility in retirement.¹⁶⁶ For example, Winfried Schmähl, economist, and Gatter argued that the workforce would have to rely more on older workers in the future to deal with labor decline, but there was a lack of information about how companies were addressing demographic change and how they were keeping older workers in employment longer. Therefore, they carried out their own study and found that flexibility and individualization of retirement were seen as desirable, but little action had been taken thus far; only the problem had been recognized.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Helmut A. Paul, "Die Flexibilität der Altersgrenze aus der Sicht des Bundesgesundheitsministeriums," in *Flexibilität der Altersgrenze: Symposium der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gerontologie 1968*, ed. René Schubert (Darmstadt: Dr. Dietrich Steinkopff Verlag, 1969); Eichner, 242.

¹⁶⁴ For example, see: Wagner, "Die Strukturreform der gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung und Strategien der Arbeitsmarktpolitik: — eine zusammenhängende Betrachtung ist erforderlich.," Wolfgang Klauder, "Arbeitsmarkt und Ausscheiden älterer aus dem Erwerbsleben: — gegenwärtige und zukünftige Tendenzen und Probleme," *ibid.* 38, no. 4 (1989); Gerhard Bäcker and Gerhard Naegele, "Alternde Gesellschaft und Erwerbsarbeit im Alter. Anforderungen an Beschäftigungssicherung und -förderung," in *Altern der Gesellschaft: Antworten auf den demographischen Wandel*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1993); Gerhard Bäcker, "Generationskonflikt oder Solidarität der Generationen - Die sozialpolitische Dimension der Bevölkerungsentwicklung," in *Die Herausforderung des Alters: Antworten der Sozialen Arbeit in Europa; Bericht zum 2. Europäischen Symposium für Soziale Arbeit*, ed. Wilhelm Klüsche (Mönchengladbach: Fachhochschule Niederrhein, Fachbereich Sozialwesen, 1996); Burkart Lutz, "Die mühsame Herausbildung neuer Beschäftigungsstrukturen," in *Arbeit, Arbeitsmarkt und Betriebe*, ed. Burkart Lutz, et al. (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1996); Krupp and Weeber.

¹⁶⁵ Kohli, "Altersgrenzen als Manövriermasse? Das Verhältnis von Erwerbsleben und Ruhestand in einer alternden Gesellschaft," 203.

¹⁶⁶ For example, see: Gerhard Naegele, "Arbeit, Berufsaufgabe und arbeitsfreie Zeit im Alter in vereinten Deutschland," in *Moderner Sozialstaat und alternde Gesellschaft*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1992); Werner Korintenberg, "Strategisches Personalmanagement für die öffentliche Verwaltung: Erfolgs- und Mißerfolgskriterien im Reformprozeß," in *Strategisches Personalmanagement für die öffentliche Verwaltung: Erfolgs- und Mißerfolgskriterien im Reformprozeß* (Wiesbaden: Deutscher Universitätsverlag, 1997).

¹⁶⁷ Schmähl and Gatter, 466.

The increased calls for changes to the age of retirement appears to coincide with the growth of the sub-topic about lifelong learning and adult education. To make it easier for older people to work longer, it would be necessary for (older) employees to continue to develop their skills. This research commonly called for the creation of more opportunities for older people to participate in continued education/lifelong learning¹⁶⁸ and a study in 1986 looked at the number of opportunities available to older people at that time¹⁶⁹. Researchers argued one reason for the need for more options was the increased life expectancy and the improved health of older people enabling them to continue working.¹⁷⁰ Wolfgang Pechhold, President of the University of Ulm, made the important argument in 1996 that the increase in the proportion of older people in the population made continued education necessary due to the rapid changes in technology. If these older workers were to remain active, in the development of society, they would need to obtain the necessary scientific skills and knowledge.¹⁷¹ A similar argument was already made in 1981 by statistician Günter Buttler during an event by the Society for Social Progress to present the results of a report requested by the BMJFG on population development and future generations. Buttler argued that the loss of efficiency by workers should be prevented by intensifying lifelong learning to help workers be better educated and flexible.¹⁷² But despite the calls for more further education opportunities, people continued to retire early due to the high unemployment rate in the mid-1990s. Gatter argued that in the short term, that may be alright, but in the long-term, training and further education will be important to keep older people in the labor force longer. She went on to write:

The readiness and ability for further education (also from the business side) cannot be established overnight. In addition to the development of appropriate educational concepts, a culture of lifelong learning must be developed among those affected, which in turn requires the topic to be considered at the earliest possible point.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ For example, see: Tegtmeier; Bernd Steinhoff and Jürgen Eierdanz, "Bildung durch Studium - Eine Lebensform im Alter?," in *Zwischen Teilhabe und Rückzug: Handlungspotentiale der Älteren*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993); Gerhard Breloer, "Die Bildung älterer Erwachsener als kulturelle Modernisierung," in *Erwachsenenbildung in der Moderne: Diagnosen, Ansätze, Konsequenzen*, ed. Rainer Brödel (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

¹⁶⁹ Judith Marggraf et al., *Weiterbildung zur Vorbereitung auf Alter und Ruhestand (VAR)* (Heidelberg: Vorstand der Arbeitsgruppe für empirische Bildungsforschung e.V., 1986).

¹⁷⁰ For example, see: Carmen Stadelhofer, "Einführung in die Tagung," in *Kompetenz und Produktivität im dritten Lebensalter. Der Beitrag der wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung zur Vorbereitung von Menschen im dritten Lebensalter auf neue Tätigkeitsfelder und neue Rollen in Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Bildung. Ein europäischer Vergleich und Austausch*, ed. Carmen Stadelhofer, Beiträge zu allgemeinen wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung (Bielefeld: Kleine Verlag GmbH, 1996); Christoph Linzbach, "Eröffnung der Tagung und Grußworte," *ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Wolfgang Pechhold, *ibid.*, 20.

¹⁷² "Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Diskussion: Eine Veranstaltung der Gesellschaft für Sozialen Fortschritt löst erhebliches Echo aus," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 30, no. 3 (1981): 55.

¹⁷³ Gatter, 6.

This is another example of the recognition that these labor market changes to adapt to the evolving age structure could not be made overnight.

Two other sub-topics that tie into the ideas behind prolonging the working life include volunteering and age discrimination. If people can work longer because they are in better health and are living longer, then it is likely retirees may also want to remain active in retirement. Some researchers drew attention to the importance of finding ways for them to volunteer and stay active. They argued that by providing them with these opportunities, it may contribute to improved overall health because they feel a sense of purpose and happiness.¹⁷⁴ Age discrimination was briefly addressed in some of the literature with employers doubting the abilities of people to continue to work at older ages.¹⁷⁵ This tied into the concerns about the innovation capabilities of an older workforce. Older people need to be viewed in a positive light and as individuals that can continue to contribute both physically and mentally to the labor market in order for labor market reforms to be successful.

E. Economy: Need to Respond to This Growing Sector of Consumers

The frequency of articles and contributions related to the economic impact of the aging population was low and the variety of economic-related sub-topics was also minimal. Focus centered around either a general analysis of how the economy would be impacted, or it presented the importance of looking at the older population as a consumer group (Figure 12).

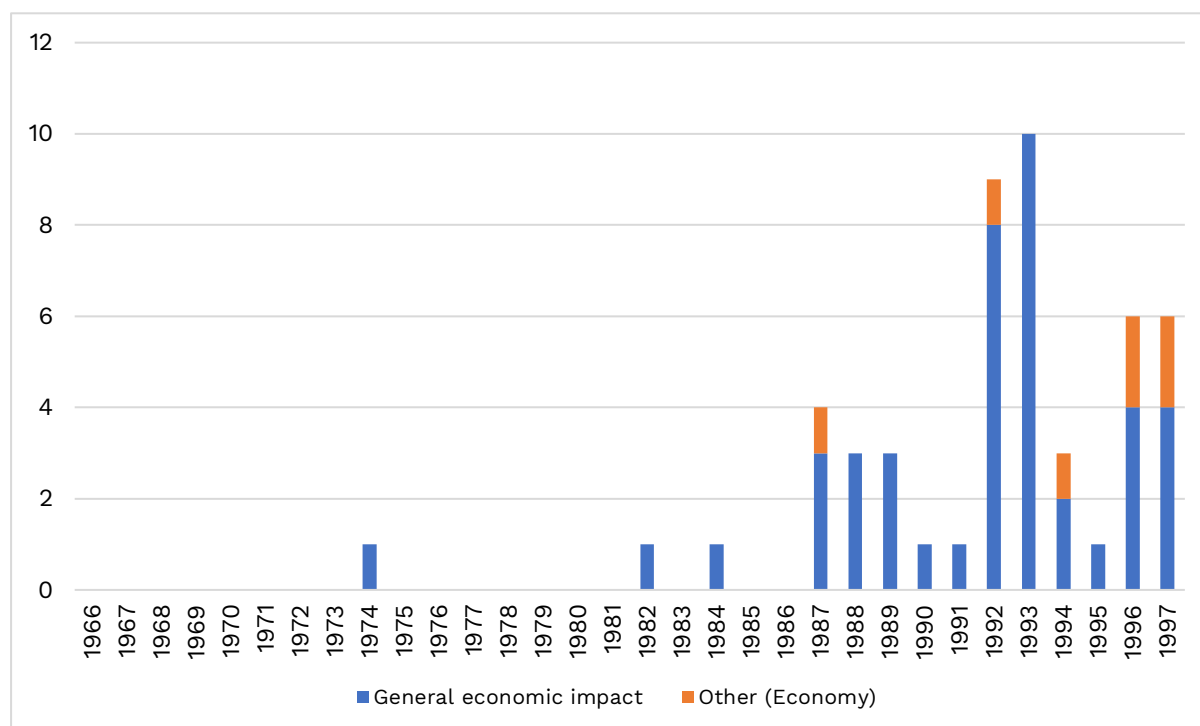
Similar to what was discussed in the previous section, there was concern an older population would mean a lack of willingness to take risks or to adapt both economically and politically, which would have a negative impact within the context of international interdependence.¹⁷⁶ However, early on, economist Rudi Kurz looked at traditional economic growth theories and concluded that these theories cannot be used to make usable statements about the connections between population and economic growth.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ For example, see: Ernst; Martin Kohli et al., eds., *Engagement im Ruhestand: Rentner zwischen Erwerb, Ehrenamt und Hobby* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1993); Helmut Schröder, "Über den Zusammenhang zwischen Aktivitäten und Zufriedenheit: eine kommunale Seniorenbefragung," (Mannheim, 1993).

¹⁷⁵ For example, see: Gundolf Meyer-Hentschel and Katharina Frings, "Chancen durch ältere Mitarbeiter im Betrieb," in *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren*, ed. Günter Verheugen (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994); Barbara Koller, "Lebensalter, Leistungsfähigkeit, Arbeitsmarkt," in *Demographischer Wandel in der europäischen Dimension und Perspektive*, ed. Karl Eckart and Siegfried Grundmann (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1997).

¹⁷⁶ Eberhard Umbach, "Bedeutung demographischer Veränderungen in heutigen Zukunftsszenarien und -modellen," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987), 46.

¹⁷⁷ Rudi Kurz, "Wirtschaftswachstum bei stagnierender und schrumpfender Bevölkerung / Economic Growth with Zero Population Growth and with Declining Population," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik / Journal of Economics and Statistics* 197, no. 3 (1982): 244-45.

Figure 12: Economy-Related Sub-Topics in Research

Distribution of sub-topics under the category of economy by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Much of the economic-related research referred to the general economic impact an aging population would have.¹⁷⁸ Naturally, some saw this as having a positive impact on the economy¹⁷⁹, while others had a more negative outlook¹⁸⁰. Martin Textor, educationalist, presented both sides of this impact well: On the one hand, the decline in the population will lead to a decrease in sales of certain consumer goods, factories will not operate at full capacity, fewer homes and roads will be built, investment targeted at expansion will decline – all of which could contribute to the shrinkage of the German economy. Due to this decline, the pessimistic outlook was

¹⁷⁸ For example, see: Hans-Ulrich Klose, "Zukunft ist, was wir daraus machen. Innovative Optionen für unsere alternde Gesellschaft," in *Altern hat Zukunft: Bevölkerungsentwicklung und dynamische Wirtschaft*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993); Tyll Necker, "Wie wir die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit unserer alternden Gesellschaft erhalten wollen," *ibid.*; Eckhard Lübke, *Ersparnis und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung bei alternder Bevölkerung: Entwicklung und Anwendung eines dynamischen Allgemeinen Gleichgewichtsmodells* (Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag HD, 1997).

¹⁷⁹ For example, see: Gunter Steinmann, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung und wirtschaftlicher Fortschritt: Ein Plädoyer für mehr Zukunftsoptimismus," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 10, no. 3 (1984); Siegfried Mann, "Referat," in *Unsere Gesellschaft ergraut: Wie bleibt die Wirtschaft jung?* (Cologne: Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V., 1989).

¹⁸⁰ For example, see: Franke, "Aktuelle Probleme der Gerontologie und Geriatrie.,"; Timothy M. Smeeding, "Poverty, Affluence, and the Income Costs of Children: Cross-National Evidence from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS)," *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics* 11, no. 2 (1988); P. M. Wilderom et al., "Services for the Elderly in Europe," *Journal of Aging & Social Policy* 4, no. 1-2 (1992); Angelika Riemer, "Die Wohnungsunternehmen zu den Wohnwünschen älterer Haushalte," in *Forschungsprojekt Umzugswünsche und Umzugsmöglichkeiten älterer Menschen: Handlungsperspektiven für Wohnungspolitik, Wohnungswirtschaft und Dienstleistungsanbieter*, ed. Tobias Robischon (Darmstadt: Schader-Stiftung, 1997).

that investment would decline, labor productivity would slow, there would be less technical advancements, and companies may even relocate. But, on the other hand, a demand will grow for services and products older people need, such as medical equipment, services providing assistance in the home, and education. To address this impending situation, Textor argues good economic policy can prepare the economy of the challenges in the coming decades.¹⁸¹ A similar argument was made almost a decade earlier by Norbert Walter, economist, in 1988 that collective bargaining policies, immigration policies, and general economic policies are needed for the economy to be able to adapt to the new challenges that will arise as a result of the aging and shrinking population. Walter argues that economic and social policy typically only focuses on the influence of the birth rate, which does not go far enough, and market-oriented policies will actually be important to voters, like environmental protection policy, because of the impact of the baby boomer generation on the economy in the 1990s.¹⁸²

The second aspect of the economic impact of an aging population centered around older consumers. There were a small number of mentions already in the late 1980s about the role of older consumers and how the market will need to adapt based on their needs, but this specific aspect picked up more in the 1990s.¹⁸³ Part of this adaption included the need for businesses to consider older people more in their marketing strategies as they will make up a significant portion of the consumer population and have greater buying power.¹⁸⁴ This demographic development was seen as a sign that seniors should be viewed as a group with demands for certain products and services in more sectors of society.¹⁸⁵ For example, the growth of the older population also means a shift in demand for housing that meet the needs of older residents and help generations coexist. Therefore, as argued by Rainer Wiedeck, project leader of a construction company, and Andreas Reidl, business economist, it

¹⁸¹ Martin R. Textor, "Bevölkerungsentwicklung: Konsequenzen für Gesellschaft und Politik," in *Sozialpolitik: Aktuelle Fragen und Probleme* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997), 19, 26.

¹⁸² Norbert Walter, "Demographie und Wirtschaftsdynamik: Vor einer Gründerwelle in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Deutsche Bank Bulletin* Heft September (1988): 1, 9.

¹⁸³ For example, see: Berger; Ulrike Schneider, "Auswirkungen der Bevölkerungsdynamik auf die Konsumgüternachfrage: Bisherige Entwicklung und zukünftige Tendenzen," (Wiesbaden, 1991); "Alternde Gesellschaft - Konsum im Alter: Perspektiven für die Entwicklung des privaten Verbrauchs vor dem Hintergrund des demographischen Reifungsprozesses," in *Alternde Gesellschaft - Dynamische Wirtschaft?*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1992); Peter Carlberg, "Lebensalter und Konsumverhalten: Versuch einer Übersicht," *ibid.*; Wahl; Rohrbach.

¹⁸⁴ For example, see: Margret Dieck, "Impulse gesellschaftlicher Gestaltung von und für Alterssituationen: Zur Bedeutung von Problemdefinitionen und Wissensbeständen," in *Leben wir zu lange? Die Zunahme unserer Lebensspanne seit 300 Jahre - und die Folgen. Beiträge eines Symposiums vom 27.-29. November 1991 an der Freien Universität Berlin*, ed. Arthur E. Imhof (Köln: Böhlau Verlag GmbH, 1992); Nickel; Kayser; Judie Lannon et al., "Europa ergraut - Europa erblüht," *Viertel-Jahreshefte für Media und Werbewirkung*, no. 3/90 (1990); Ueltzhöffer.

¹⁸⁵ Artho, 29, 31.

would be worthwhile for construction companies to consider older consumers when marketing their services.¹⁸⁶ This is one example of how the impact of the growing group of older citizens was gaining awareness in more sectors of society and how multiple areas addressed the issue at once.

F. Policy and Politics: The Growing Political Influence of Older Voters

As people began to realize the economic potential of the growing older population, they also started to notice their political influence. This included the impact of their increased participation in the political process, as well as the need to address policies that were pertinent to their needs and interests (Figure 13). As older citizens became more politically active, the groups advocating for them grew and there was a higher demand for politicians to represent their interests, which then contributed to more attention being given to old age policies (*Altenpolitik* or *Seniorenpolitik*). Therefore, political participation and interest in old age policies were closely connected.

A few publications included arguments related to generational issues, i.e., calls to lower the voting age and the importance of ensuring that the interests of both young and old were represented.¹⁸⁷ From my results, these issues were not really discussed until the 1990s. The concern about the interests of younger generations varied: Peter Franz, for example, argued that due to the increase in the older population, it may no longer be possible for political parties to make decisions just based on coalition lines, but they would have to make sure they represented the interests of both young and old.¹⁸⁸ Several years later, Kohli stressed the need to make sure the generational conflict was not worsened: This could be accomplished by politicians not overdramatizing the situation and by the labor unions making a concerted effort to develop and determine how they can address the growing older population, their growing interests, and the interests of all their members.¹⁸⁹ Then in 1997, as a way for younger generations to counter the effects of the older population, it was suggested that they become more active in the political process.¹⁹⁰

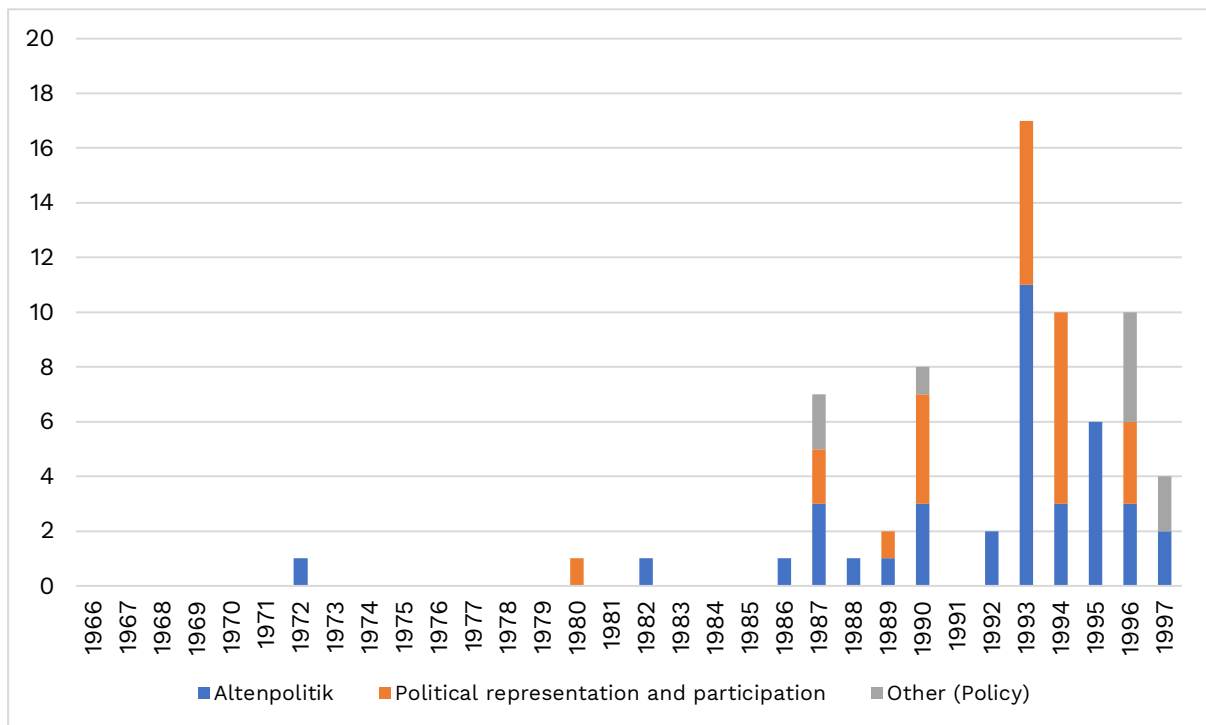
¹⁸⁶ Rainer Wiedeck and Andreas Reidl, "Wohnen im Alter — Wohnraumanpassung und ihre konsequente Umsetzung," in *Zukunftssicherung für die Bauwirtschaft: In vier Schritten aus der Krise*, ed. Steffen Schwarz, et al. (Wiesbaden: Gabler Verlag, 1997), 257, 75.

¹⁸⁷ See the previous section "Society" when intergenerational relations were discussed for the specific examples of arguments about lowering the voting age.

¹⁸⁸ Peter Franz, "Das neue Selbstbewußtsein der Alten in Öffentlichkeit und Lebensstil," in *Die Grauen kommen: Chancen eines anderen Alters*, ed. Oliver Schmidhals (Bamberg: Palette Verlag, 1990).

¹⁸⁹ Kohli, "Von Solidarität zu Konflikt? Der Generationenvertrag und die Interessenorganisation der Älteren."

¹⁹⁰ Dietmar Kress, *Zum Aufbau der Jugendhilfe und Jugendarbeit in den neuen Bundesländern: Eine soziologische Analyse ausgewählter Beispiele* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

Figure 13: Policy and Politics-Related Sub-Topics

Distribution of sub-topics under the category of policy and politics by year.
Source: GOLD Database, author's calculations.

There was concern about the growing political influence of the older population. Over time, as posited by Charlotte Nusberg, the older population would be encouraged to be politically active because many would have a high level of education, a higher group consciousness, and would be willing to work to claim their rights.¹⁹¹ Some were concerned about this larger voting bloc realizing its power and using that influence to push the agenda that best supports their interests.¹⁹² With the growth of this group, there were a few articles that looked specifically at the groups representing the interests of older citizens, which included the establishment of the political party for older people, the Gray Panthers (*Die Grauen Panther*).¹⁹³ Karl-Heinz Mayer posed the question of why older people were receiving more attention from the

¹⁹¹ Charlotte Nusberg, "Die Mitbestimmung der Senioren: Eine Wachsende Tendenz in den Westlichen Ländern," *Ageing International* 7, no. 1 (1980): 34-35.

¹⁹² For example, see: Roßnagel et al; *Digitalisierung der Grundrechte? Zur Verfassungsverträglichkeit der Informations- und Kommunikationstechnik* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1990); Erika Neubauer, "Graue Zeiten? Zukunft des Alters und Alter der Zukunft," in *Graue Zeiten? Zur Zukunft sozialstaatlicher Alterssicherung und Alterspolitik*, ed. Christoph Hüttig (Rehburg-Loccum: Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 1996).

¹⁹³ "Politik mit und für Senioren. Das Beispiel der Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Seniorenorganisationen (BAGSO)," in *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren*, ed. Günter Verheugen (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994); Mechthild Veil, "Die Graue Partei - Sprachrohr einer Altenbewegung?," in *Die Grauen kommen: Chancen eines anderen Alters*, ed. Oliver Schmidthals (Bamberg: Palette Verlag, 1990).

parties and argued it was likely due to being a significant portion of active voters.¹⁹⁴ But with their increasing participation in elections, there was concern this would lead to a more conservative government since older voters were known to vote conservatively.¹⁹⁵ Jens Alber, sociologist and political scientist, expressed specific concern for the SPD and the future challenges this may create for them to remain in power since they were traditionally the more liberal party.¹⁹⁶ However, social scientists Malte Ristau and Petra Mackroth argued the SPD could use this as a chance to start an initiative now to identify the demands of this new and developing target group and therefore, either maintain or gain the support of individuals as they age:

In the SPD headquarters, this danger was recognized: A targeted, innovative program called 'Alliance of the Future with Seniors' was instituted from the top to promote initiatives from below, in which active new older members are encouraged to speak up within the party. Evaluations of party campaigns and election campaigns, as well as regional evaluations, make it clear that seniors are assets for the party beyond the topics that concern themselves.¹⁹⁷

The need to pay more attention to the demands of the growing population of old age citizens also led to a push for policy specific to older citizens (*Altenpolitik*). Early on, most references to old age policy were about how *Altenpolitik* had developed in Germany and the need to continue developing such policy.¹⁹⁸ This also included discussing the different aspects of *Altenpolitik* and how it should be addressed. For example, *Altenpolitik* includes a variety of policy fields related to family, education, health, and labor, and should, therefore, be tackled by more than just one ministry in order for the issues to be taken seriously and be successful.¹⁹⁹ A

¹⁹⁴ Karl-Heinz Mayer, "Bildung und Förderung von Seniorenvertretungen. Ein Gebot der politischen Vernunft," in *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren*, ed. Günter Verheugen (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994).

¹⁹⁵ For example, see: Wilhelm Bürklin, "Alte Wähler morgen: 'Graue Panther' oder konservative Stammwähler der CDU?," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987); Dieter Kent and Thomas Emmert, "Wahlchancen bei den Senioren," in *Zwischen Teilhabe und Rückzug: Handlungspotentiale der Älteren*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993); "Wahlverhalten der Senioren," in *60 plus: die wachsende Macht der Älteren*, ed. Günter Verheugen (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1994); Petra Mackroth and Malte Ristau, "Senioren als politischer Nachwuchs? Neue Muster von Engagement und Partizipation," *ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Jens Alber, "Soziale Integration und politische Repräsentation von Senioren," *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Malte Ristau and Petra Mackroth, "Latente und aktive Altenmacht: Seniorenorganisationen, Gewerkschaften und Parteien," in *Zwischen Teilhabe und Rückzug: Handlungspotentiale der Älteren*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993), 126.

¹⁹⁸ For example, see: Hans Peter Tews, "Die Alten und die Politik," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987); Nullmeier and Rüb; Wilderom et al; Margret Dieck, "Entwicklungslinien der Altenpolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *Altern der Gesellschaft: Antworten auf den demographischen Wandel*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1993); Peter Guggemos, *Gemeinwesenorientierte Altenpolitik. Band 2: Vernetzung von Lebens- und Systemwelten am Beispiel der Leitstelle "Älter werden" in Augsburg* (Augsburg: Verlag für Gerontologie, 1993).

¹⁹⁹ For example, see: Ursula Lehr, *Zur Situation der älterwerdenden Frau: Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven bis zum Jahre 2000*, vol. 3, Perspektiven und Orientierungen: Schriftenreihe des Bundeskanzleramtes (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1987); Gerhard Braun, *Das Alter hat Zukunft: Neue*

1993 book from the “Dortmund Articles on Applied Gerontology” series focused on modern old age policy and included several articles specifically looking at the municipal level.²⁰⁰ Naegele and Schmidt argued because the spectrum of problems related to old age policy was becoming more complex, the municipalities were facing new tasks with regard to local-level social policy.²⁰¹ Through old age policy at the local level, older people could be more engaged in their communities and, similar to the argument put forth by Lehr and Gerhard Braun, founder and chairman of the CDU’s senior working group, communal old age policy should also be cross-sectional and not just addressed by social policy.²⁰² Overall, research recognized the political significance of the growing older population. Researchers, including those commissioned for the SPD’s book series, argued that as a voting bloc, they would be a critical group that politicians could not ignore due to their large numerical influence and their growing lobbying efforts. This shift in political demand and interests could have a significant impact on both future policy and the entire political direction of the country if older voters continued to vote conservatively.

G. Immigration: Compensation for the Aging Population, but Also a New Group of Older Individuals to Consider

Within the context of the aging population, the role of immigrants was mainly to help Germany maintain its current population size, level of productivity in the labor market, and continue to be able to run the social security system (Figure 14). It was acknowledged that this would not completely solve the challenges facing Germany, but immigration was a necessary means of action to help alleviate the situation created by the aging population. As seen in Figure 14, the majority of these articles were published in the 1990s. The likely reason is due to reunification and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which resulted in increased immigration, including the return of

Wege der Seniorenpolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Berlin: Verlag Bock & Kübler, 1990); Harald Clade, "Aktionismus oder mehr?," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 87, no. 30 (1990).

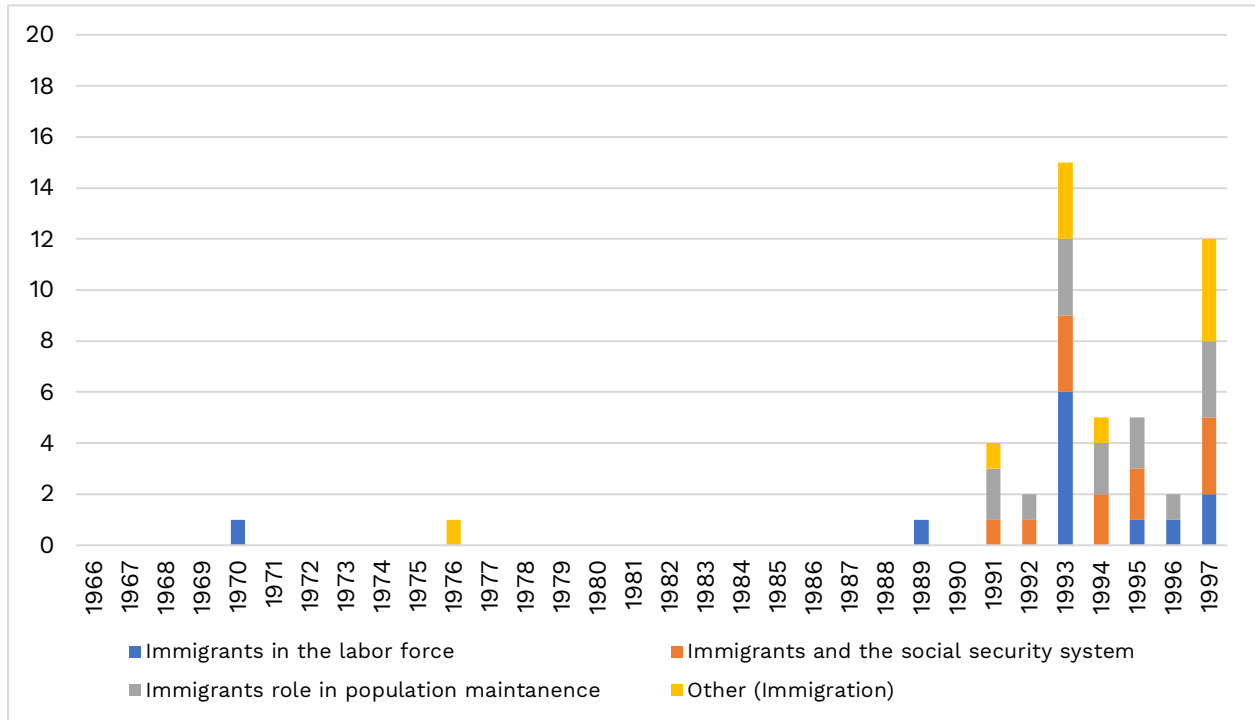
²⁰⁰ For example, see: Gerhard Naegele, "Standards in der kommunalen Altenplanung - Die Zeit der "einfachen Antworten" ist vorbei!," in *Perspektiven moderner Altenpolitik und Altenarbeit*, ed. Sabine Kühnert and Gerhard Naegele, Dortmunder Beiträge zur angewandten Gerontologie (Hannover: Vincentz Verlag, 1993); Jutta Stratmann and Elka Korte, "Aspekte der Entwicklung von Bedarfsrichtwerten für soziale Dienste und Einrichtungen der örtlichen Altenarbeit und ihrer kleinräumigen Planung," *ibid.*; Gunnar Winkler, "Zur Praxis der kommunalen Altenplanung in den neuen Bundesländern - Erfahrungen aus einem ostdeutschen Landkreis," *ibid.*

²⁰¹ Naegele and Schmidt, 5.

²⁰² Lehr, *Zur Situation der älterwerdenden Frau: Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven bis zum Jahre 2000*, 3; Braun; Schröder; Gerhard Naegele, "Örtliche Altenpolitik auf der Suche nach Visionen," in *Sozialpolitik: Aktuelle Fragen und Probleme* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997). For other examples of publications addressing the municipal level, see: Gitschmann and Bullmann; Walter H. Asam, "Altenpolitik in der Gemeinde: Eine Verortung der neuen Kultur des Helfens," in *Wohnen und Pflegen: Neue Wege zur gemeindeorientierten Altenpolitik*, ed. Walter H. Asam, et al. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus, 1995); Johannes Fuchs, "Der ältere Mensch im örtlichen Gemeinwesen: Die Rolle der Kommune bei der sozialen Daseinsvorsorge zugunsten älterer Mitbürger," *ibid.*

German emigrants (*Aussiedler*). None of these publications expressed negative positions towards immigration as a way to help combat these demographic-related challenges facing the country.

Figure 14: Immigration-Related Sub-Topics in Research



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of immigration by year.
Source: GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Regarding the role of immigration in securing the social security system, most of these mentions were in the mid-1990s. These references were more explicit in arguing that this type of immigration is characterized as demand-oriented, i.e., immigrants are recruited so the social security system can continue to be financed, and it was important that these immigrants were integrated into society.²⁰³ Steffen Angenendt, political scientist, pointed out that up until 1997 there had been no immigration policy created explicitly based on the need to address demographic challenges, but this could change due to the impending aging crisis and the need to secure the pension system.²⁰⁴ Putting this into the societal context, the 1990s

²⁰³ Friederike Behringer and Gert Wagner, "Zuwanderung: Dialog der Sozial- und Bildungspolitik ist notwendig," in *Der alte Kontinent*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993); Günter J. Friesenhahn, "Multikulturelle Gesellschaft als pädagogische Aufgabe?," in *Aufbruch zur Demokratie: Politische Bildung in den 90er Jahren Ziele Bedingungen Probleme*, ed. Kurt Franke and Herbert Knepper (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1994).

²⁰⁴ Steffen Angenendt, "Migration und Flucht: die Problemlagen," in *Deutsche Migrationspolitik im neuen Europa*, ed. Thomas Kutsch and Fritz Vilmar (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997), 41.

included a great deal of debate about immigration, specifically asylum policy, which may be why these authors were more explicit in their arguments for more immigration.

Another point brought up and already touched upon in the discussions about long-term care was the growing population of older immigrants. This issue accounts for the majority of “other” codes in 1993 and 1997. It was emphasized that many of these immigrants that came to Germany as guest workers were now older, retiring, and opting to stay in Germany. Therefore, steps should be taken to determine how the needs of this heterogeneous group can be met, as was argued by Naegele, sociologist Elke Olbermann, and educationalist Maria Dietzel-Papakyriakou:

In order to guarantee needs-based care in the future, special considerations and strategies are necessary, which would have to be oriented to the life and everyday world of the older migrants and take their specific situation into account. It must be borne in mind that older foreigners are by no means a homogeneous group, but are characterized by considerable cultural, religious, linguistic and other differences, which in future will differentiate more than become more similar.²⁰⁵

H. Housing and Community Development: Creating More Age-Appropriate Cities and Housing

Quantitatively speaking, the sub-topics related to housing and community development were not heavily discussed and were mainly addressed in the 1990s (Figure 15). The research contributions found were centered around the need to adapt cities and create more housing that is appropriate and meets the needs of older residents.

A few articles (coded as “Other (Housing)”) argued for the need to adapt and incorporate older people into the community²⁰⁶ and several articles discussed the immigration patterns of older people.²⁰⁷ Other articles (coded as “Rural decline,

²⁰⁵ Gerhard Naegele et al., “Älter werden in der Migration: Eine neue Herausforderung für die kommunale Sozialpolitik,” *Sozialer Fortschritt* 46, no. 4 (1997). For other examples, see: Detlev Samland, “Alt werden in der Fremde: Migranten in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft,” in *Der alte Kontinent*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1993); Maria Dietzel-Papakyriakou, “Die älteren Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - Soziodemographische Aspekte,” in *Die älter werdende Gesellschaft: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft 27. Arbeitstagung vom 25. bis 27. Februar 1993 in Bad Homburg v.d. Höhe*, ed. Johannes Otto (Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, 1993); Bernd Eggen, “Familiale und ökonomische Lage Älterer Deutscher und Ausländer,” in *Demographischer Wandel in der europäischen Dimension und Perspektive*, ed. Karl Eckart and Siegfried Grundmann (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1997); Gerhard Naegele and Elke Olbermann, “Ältere Ausländer - Ihre Lebensbedingungen und Zukunftsperspektiven im Prozess des demographischen Wandels,” *ibid.*

²⁰⁶ For example, see: Pieper; Dagmar Schlapeit-Beck, “Neue Alterspolitik in den Kommunen,” in *Die neue Beweglichkeit des Alters: Resumee einer Tagung der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung “Die Älteren Engagement, Produktivität, Macht?” am 3. Mai 1995 in Bonn*, ed. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V. Abt. Gesellschaftspolitische Informationen (Bonn: 1995).

²⁰⁷ For example, see: Hansjörg Bucher and Martina Kocks, “Aus- und Übersiedler und alternde Bevölkerung: Wird die ‘ergraute Gesellschaft’ nicht kommen?,” *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung*,

shrinking of towns”) centered around younger generations moving away or older people moving into the suburbs and areas surrounding cities, both of which contribute to the aging of towns.²⁰⁸ Many of these articles about populations simultaneously declining and growing older also mentioned the need to adapt local infrastructures to improve accessibility for older residents.²⁰⁹ This modification ties into the discussion about housing for the older generations. Hansjörg Bucher, advisor at the then-Federal Research Institute for Regional Geography and Regional Planning (*Bundesforschungsanstalt für Landeskunde und Raumordnung*, BfLR), argued that towns are becoming older, which impacts housing and city planning. This is why housing policies need to be reformed so older people can remain mobile, but not have their housing security threatened.²¹⁰ For example, as stated by Bernd Breuer and Manfred Fuhrich, both advisors at the BfLR:

Demographic developments and qualitative and quantitative changes in the housing and leisure sector already require consequences for a future-oriented housing and urban development policy. Housing, the neighborhood, and the urban district must be adapted more closely to the needs of older people than in the past.²¹¹

This is characteristic of much of the literature found about housing for the elderly with the common theme of creating age-appropriate housing for older residents.²¹²

no. 3/4 (1991); Helmut Janich, "Die regionale Mobilität älterer Menschen: Neuere Ergebnisse der Wanderungsforschung," *ibid.*; Nipper.

²⁰⁸ For example, see: G. Küppers et al., "Die Universität Trier: Die nationale Planung im Dienste der Regionalen Bedürfnisse," *Paedagogica Europaea* 11, no. 2 (1976); Uwe-Jens Walther and Wendelin Strubelt, "Ergraute Gesellschaft und Stadtkultur: Thesen," in *Kultur und Gesellschaft: gemeinsamer Kongreß der Deutschen, der Österreichischen und der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Soziologie*, ed. Hans-Joachim Hoffmann-Nowotny and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (Zürich: Seismo Verlag, 1989); Reichertz, 14; Katja Zierold, "Veränderungen von Lebenslagen in ländlichen Räumen der neuen Bundesländer," in *Regionale Strukturen im Wandel*, ed. Annette Becker (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

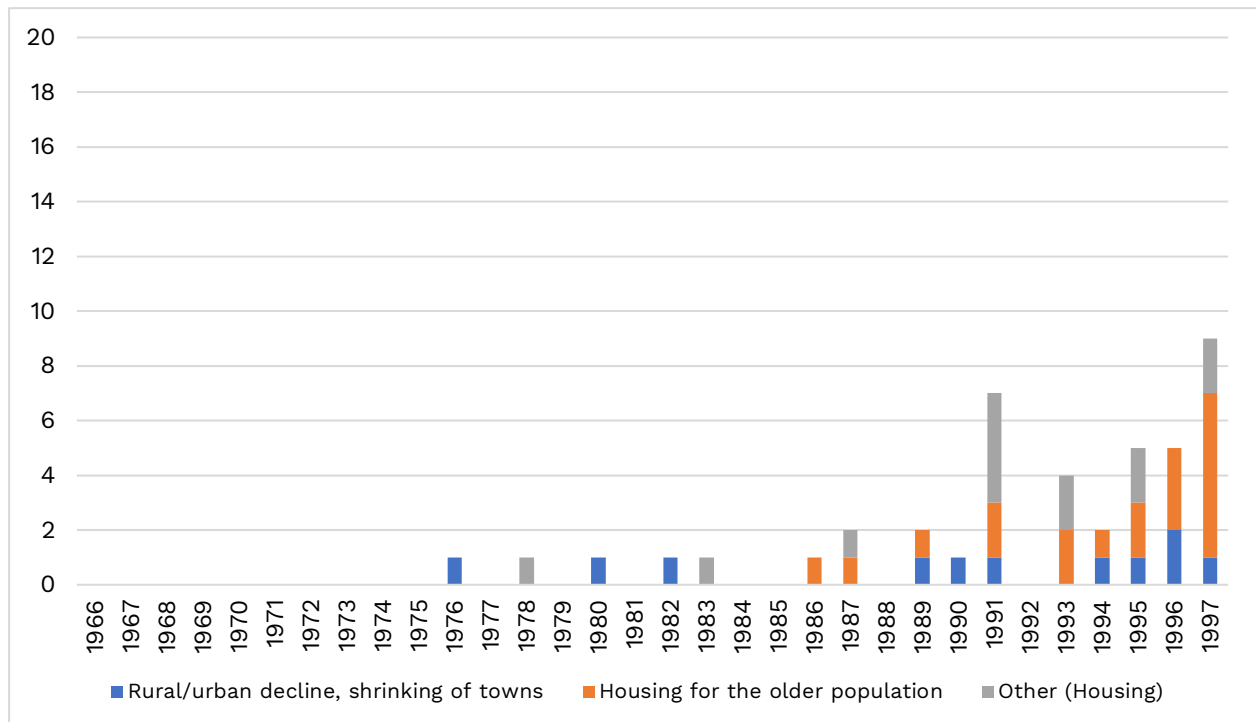
²⁰⁹ For example, see: Welf Selke, "Zum Stand der bevölkerungspolitischen Diskussion in Raumordnung und Landesplanung," *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* 40, no. 5-6 (1982); Joachim Lorenz, "Altersgerechte Stadtplanung und Architektur - Eine Utopie?," in *Die Grauen kommen: Chancen eines anderen Alters*, ed. Oliver Schmidhals (Bamberg: Palette Verlag, 1990); Hansjörg Bucher, "Regionales Altern in Deutschland," *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* 29, no. 1 (1996).

²¹⁰ "Die räumliche Dimension der Alterung," in *Alternde Bevölkerung - Wandel der Lebenswelten*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1994).

²¹¹ Bernd Breuer and Manfred Fuhrich, "Städtebauliche Konzepte und Projekte zur Verbesserung der Lebenssituationen älterer Menschen," *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung*, no. 3/4 (1991).

²¹² For example, see: Vjenka Garms-Homolová, "Entfaltungsraum oder Idylle im Kiez? Zur Bedeutung räumlich-sozialer Verankerung alter Menschen," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987); Marie-Therese Krings-Heckemeier and Ulrich Pfeiffer, "Wohnen im Alter," in *Alternde Bevölkerung - Wandel der Lebenswelten*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1994); Asam; Peter Gitschmann, "Altenpolitik und Altenhilfepolitik im Wandel in Bund, Ländern und Gemeinden," in *Altern und Politik*, ed. Hans Peter Tews, et al. (Melsungen: Bibliomed - Medizinische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1996); Engelbert Kerkhoff, "'Wohnen im Alter' - zwischen Sozial- und Wohnungsbaupolitik," in *Die Herausforderung des Alters: Antworten der Sozialen Arbeit in Europa; Bericht zum 2. Europäischen Symposium für Soziale Arbeit*, ed. Wilhelm Klüsche (Mönchengladbach: Fachhochschule Niederrhein, Fachbereich Sozialwesen, 1996); Riemer.

Figure 15: Housing and Community Development-Related Sub-Topics in Research



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of housing and community development by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Another observation often made was that many older people tend to live alone, which should also be considered when creating housing for them.²¹³ This included promoting the establishment of more multi-generational housing or shared apartments.²¹⁴ By creating new housing opportunities, as argued by Volker Eichener, political scientist, older residents will move into more appropriate housing and then affordable housing will become available to those in a weak economic position. This adaptation of housing policy to demographic change and the promotion of older people being mobile would help to address several issues at once:

First, we provide housing for older people that meets their needs and enables them to maintain an independent lifestyle through early provision, even if their abilities diminish. Second, we mobilize low-cost housing for low-income families. And third, we save on public subsidies, which the federal government, the *Länder* and communities can use more efficiently from a socio-political point of view.²¹⁵

²¹³ For example, see: Höpflinger, "Haushalts- und Familienstrukturen im intereuropäischen Vergleich."

²¹⁴ For example, see: Irene Steiner-Hummel, "Fellbach - Lugano und zurück: Wege und Umwege zu intergenerativen Beziehungen und Altenwohngemeinschaften," *Blätter der Wohlfahrtspflege: Deutsche Zeitschrift für Sozialarbeit* 133, no. 9 (1986); Elmar Wallerang, "Deutschland - bald eine Republik der Greise? Unterbringungsfragen zwingen zur Zusammenarbeit zwischen Architekten und Gerontologen," *VDI-Nachrichten: Technik, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft*, no. 10 (1989).

²¹⁵ Eichener worked for the Institut für Wohnungswesen, Immobilienwirtschaft, Stadt- und Regionalentwicklung GmbH. Volker Eichener, "Einleitung: Handlungsempfehlungen für Wohnungspolitik und Wohnungswirtschaft," in *Forschungsprojekt Umzugswünsche und Umzugsmöglichkeiten älterer Menschen: Handlungsperspektiven für Wohnungspolitik*,

However, like with so many other issues, as mentioned by economist Alois Oberhauser, policy makers need to first be convinced of the need to reform housing policy.²¹⁶ The next chapter on the political debate will address whether researchers were successful in directing the attention of policy makers to reform housing policy.

I. Science: A Call for More Research and Understanding the Theoretical Aspects of Aging

As this research was not specifically interested in the biological aspects of aging, the number of results related to science and scientific aspects of aging was relatively low. The results that were coded were interested in the scientific development in fields related to aging or old age, theories that could be applied to understand aging, or exploring the contributing factors of population aging (Figure 16). Unlike the other topic fields that had more visible growth over time, science-related topics remained at a fairly consistent level. 1993 was the one year with a larger number of articles, many of which gave attention to the theoretical interest in the aging population. The articles calling for more research, specifically for the purpose to help create old age policies, were published mainly in the second half of this time period. Despite the minor growth in articles, there was some evolution in the arguments presented.

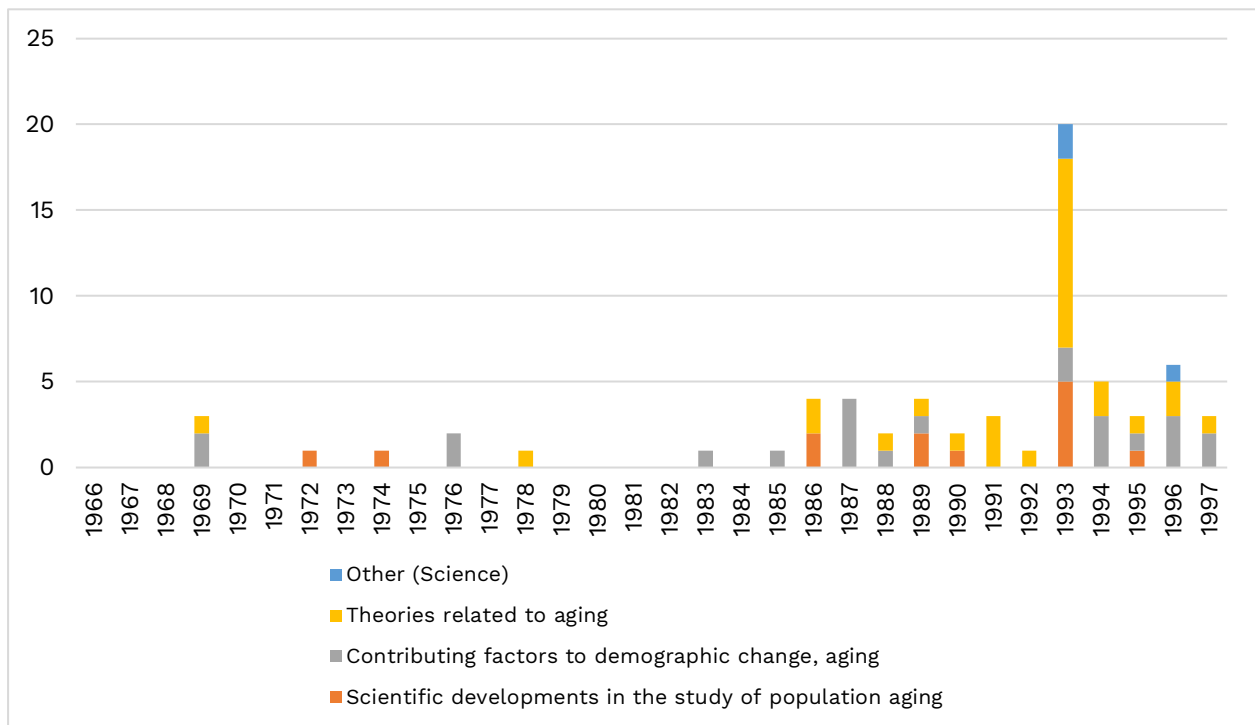
Most of the publications coded stated in some form that the population was becoming older and people were living longer. However, there were publications that either dedicated the entire article to or gave significant attention to describing and discussing the reasons for demographic change and/or population aging, e.g., medical advancements, decline in the birth rate, decline in (infant) mortality, etc.²¹⁷ One example is an article by Roloff that explained why population aging was occurring by providing overviews of the development of the fertility, mortality, and migration rates over time and then offering a projection about the structure of the aging population.²¹⁸

Wohnungswirtschaft und Dienstleistungsanbieter, ed. Tobias Robischon (Darmstadt: Schader-Stiftung, 1997), 46.

²¹⁶ Oberhauser.

²¹⁷ For example, see: Schubert, "Verschiedene Formen des Alterns."; Karl Schwarz, "Ursachen der Zunahme des Anteils der älteren Menschen und voraussichtliche weitere Entwicklung," *ibid.*; Brocklehurst et al; Höhn, "Frauenerwerbstätigkeit und soziale Sicherheit."; Günter Hirsch and Wolfram Eberbach, *Auf dem Weg zum künstlichen Leben: Retortenkinder — Leihmütter — programmierte Gene...* (Basel: Birkhäuser Basel, 1987); Reinhard Spree, "Die "epidemiologische Übergang" in Deutschland. Konkretisierende und differenzierende Anmerkungen," *Demographische Informationen* (1988/89); Schütz; Karla Gärtner, "Sterblichkeitstrends in ausgewählten Industrieländern," *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft* 20, no. 1 (1995); Rudolf Gross and Markus Löffler, *Prinzipien der Medizin: Eine Übersicht ihrer Grundlagen und Methoden* (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1997).

²¹⁸ Juliane Roloff, "Alternde Gesellschaft in Deutschland: Eine bevölkerungsstatistische Analyse," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 35 (1996). For additional examples, see: Josef Kytir, "Demographische Veränderungen in den vergangenen zwei Jahrhunderten: Quantitative und qualitative Folgen für die Altersphase," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987); Höhn and Störtzbach.

Figure 16: Science-Related Sub-Topics in Research

Distribution of sub-topics under the category of science. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

There were also articles citing the growth of the fields related to aging, specifically gerontology, due to the increasing number of people living longer.²¹⁹ But even with the development of these research fields, there were still calls for more research. For example, F.W. Schwartz, health scientist and doctor, argued it was known that people have the chance to become older, but there was a lack of empirical evidence from an epidemiological point of view that this older generation of older people were better off in terms of age-specific health.²²⁰ Other articles called for more gerontological research and general research on old age, but for the purpose to help create old age policy.²²¹ Monika Reichert, sociologist, and Jutta Stratmann, gerontologist, called for a report on old age, which they defined as “the systematic, continuous, and regionally comprehensive observation, analysis, and interpretation of

²¹⁹ For example, see: Lehr, *Psychologie des Alterns*; Franke, "Aktuelle Probleme der Gerontologie und Geriatrie."; Herwig Birg, "Die demographische Zeitenwende," *Spektrum der Wissenschaft* (1989); Anton Amann, "Gerontologie - Beitrag zur Humanisierung des Alters?," in *Die Grauen kommen: Chancen eines anderen Alters*, ed. Oliver Schmidhals (Bamberg: Palette Verlag, 1990); Fred Karl, "Alter in Entwicklung: die 'positive Aufhebung' der Gerontologie," *Psychologie und Gesellschaftskritik* 17, no. 2 (1993).

²²⁰ Schwartz, 78.

²²¹ For example, see: Naegele, "Standards in der kommunalen Altenplanung - Die Zeit der "einfachen Antworten" ist vorbei!."

demographic, social, political, and cultural processes with significance for old age policy and work."²²²

However, the majority of results were about theories related to aging. There were many examples of applying existing theories or concepts to understand different aspects of aging or being old, such as using the disengagement theory to understand satisfaction and activity among older people or looking at structural change in old age (*Altersstrukturwandel*).²²³ One example is a 1997 book by Gertrud M. Backes, sociologist and psychologist, in which she applied a sociological perspective to create a framework for the systematic description and analysis of the relation between old age and society. She argued there was much discussion about old age/aging and social development, but the relationship between the two had not been explored comprehensively.²²⁴ The limit of research and the areas where information was lacking was acknowledged as time progressed. For instance, the concept of old age was examined, and arguments were made in favor of creating more distinction and division among the older age cohorts as this age group grew and became more heterogeneous.²²⁵ A few articles questioned whether there was a limit to life expectancy, suggesting that life expectancy had reached an unexpectedly high level.²²⁶

²²² Monika Reichert and Jutta Stratmann, "Altenberichterstattung: Aufgaben, Probleme und Forderungen," *ibid.*, 218.

²²³ For example, see: Lutz Leisering, "Demographischer Wandel und Wohlfahrtsstaatstheorie oder Was die soziologische Theorie von der Beschäftigung mit demographischen Prozessen im Wohlfahrtsstaat lernen kann," in *Sozialpolitische Bilanz II, Tagung der Sektion Sozialpolitik der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie am 2. bis 3. Mai in Bielefeld*, ed. R. Bauer and Stephan Leibfried (Bielefeld: Universität Bremen, 1986); Wolfgang Clemens, "Soziologische Aspekte eines 'Strukturwandels des Alters'," in *Lebenslagen im Strukturwandel des Alters*, ed. Gerhard Naegele and Hans Peter Tews (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1993); Gerhard Naegele, "Solidarität im Alter: Überlegungen zu einer Umorientierung in der Alterssozialpolitik," *Sozialer Fortschritt* 42, no. 8 (1993); Gerhard Naegele and Hans Peter Tews, "Theorieansätze und -kritik zur Altersentwicklung - Neue und alte sozialpolitische Orientierungen," in *Lebenslagen im Strukturwandel des Alters*, ed. Gerhard Naegele and Hans Peter Tews (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1993); Schröder; Klaus-Peter Schwitzer, "Theorie und Praxis des Alters und Alterns in Ostdeutschland," in *Lebenslagen im Strukturwandel des Alters*, ed. Gerhard Naegele and Hans Peter Tews (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1993); Mader.

²²⁴ Gertrud M. Backes, *Alter(n) als ‚Gesellschaftliches Problem‘? Zur Vergesellschaftung des Alter(n)s im Kontext der Modernisierung* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1997).

²²⁵ For example, see: Elke Olbermann and Monika Reichert, "Hochaltrigkeit und Strukturen gesundheitlicher und pflegerischer Versorgung," in *Lebenslagen im Strukturwandel des Alters*, ed. Gerhard Naegele and Hans Peter Tews (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1993); Hans Franke, "Neuartige Probleme des menschlichen Höchstalters," *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* 29, no. 1 (1996).

²²⁶ For example, see: Rudolf Gross, "Die Lebensverlängerung und ihre Grenzen," *Deutsches Ärzteblatt* 88, no. 17 (1991); Friedrich Wilhelm Schwartz and Andreas Seidler, "Zur Prognostik der zukünftigen Entwicklung der Lebenserwartung in Deutschland," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Versicherungswissenschaft* 84, no. 4 (1995).

5.2 Conclusion: A Slow Beginning, but a Beneficiary of the Increased Interest in Society

The impact of the “Third Reich” on the image of the field of demography was a great detriment because it made it difficult for researchers and research to continue following the end of the war and the field essentially had to start from the beginning. Not only was the image of demography and population studies damaged, but researchers involved in any way during the war often had tarnished reputations. The lack of institutions or university departments made it additionally challenging to educate younger researchers and support the next generation of demographers. By the end of the 1970s and during the early 1980s, new departments for population research at universities were established and by the mid-1980s, more universities were offering degree programs in gerontology. The growth in opportunities to study population aging and the older generations were clear signs that this was an important topic. Many of these institutions and research programs were connected to a growing interest in population issues, which included more projects being proposed and funded that focused on aging. One would think the increase in publications in the mid-1980s was a result of the growing interest, as well as the byproduct of more research departments and institutions being established. However, based on the individuals producing materials and their affiliations, a direct connection cannot be made that these institutions and research programs were the main contributors to the growth in publications about aging in the 1980s. It appears that there was an overall growth in interest by a variety of individuals, researchers, and organizations that led to more opportunities to publish relevant materials.

In the period leading up the 1980s, as the field was still slowly rebuilding, the books published focused on presenting the older generation and explaining what it meant to be old and to become old. For example, psychologist Georg Sieber published *The Old Age Revolution* (original title: *Die Altersrevolution*) in 1972, which analyzed the various stereotypes and clichés associated with old age and simultaneously presented facts on Germany’s demographic development.²²⁷ Historian and sociologist Hans Peter Bleuel also published a book in 1972, *Old People in Germany* (original title: *Alte Menschen in Deutschland*), that observed that political parties now recognized the older population, which was why they proposed pension reform right before the election. Because researchers must depend on funding from outside sources, they must rely on these organizations having an interest in the older population. Their lack of interest was a reason why there was a lack of research and thus, little awareness about the living conditions and problems facing older people in society. Another

²²⁷ Georg Sieber, *Die Altersrevolution* (Zürich Köln: Benziger Verlag, 1972).

reason was the non-existence of professorships in gerontology and geriatrics at German universities.²²⁸ Bleuel does not solely focus on the growing number of older people in Germany, but he covers a variety of aspects related to being and becoming old. Another book published in 1972 was by literary scholar Rudolf Schenda, *The Adversity of Older People* (original title: *Das Elend der alten Leute*), which advocated for educating young people on becoming older. Being old is not just related to one's calendar age, but to biological circumstances and functional aspects.²²⁹ He also mentioned the lack of professorships in gerontology and geriatrics but focused most of the book on aspects related to aging.

Of particular interest is the publication of Lehr's book *Psychology of Aging* (original title: *Psychologie des Alterns*). It was first published in 1972 and presented different aspects of becoming older, both physical and social, and how gerontology has developed.²³⁰ Most recently, the 11th edition was released in 2007. By the publication of the 7th edition in 1991, there was an additional section on the demographic changes in Germany's population structure, which gave an overview of the development of life expectancy over the years and explicitly stated that "we live in a graying world".²³¹ It continued by discussing the changing demographic relationship between the generations and the change to the life course. This addition to the book highlights a clear recognition by Lehr of the importance of these changes. The 7th edition was published in 1991, following her time as minister, supporting the idea that she was a strong advocate for addressing issues related to the aging population while minister and during her time as a member of the Bundestag.

Compared to the 1970s, books from the 1980s tackled more specific topics. Books continued to present a comprehensive picture of older people, but also looked at them within the framework of specific issues, such as their impact on health care costs, traffic accidents by older drivers, the "young" old, and the oldest old. Beginning in 1980, articles and books were published that were part of or results of projects specifically about population development or aging. This included the results of a 1980 seminar that was part of the beginning of a project on "Demographic, Biomedical and Economic Influences on Future Retirement Age Policies" and a presentation of a report requested by the BMJFG in 1981 about population development and the next generation.²³²

²²⁸ Hans Peter Bleuel, *Alte Menschen in Deutschland* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1972), 7-8.

²²⁹ Rudolf Schenda, *Das Elend der alten Leute: Information zur Sozialgerontologie für die Jüngeren* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1972), 8.

²³⁰ Lehr, *Psychologie des Alterns*.

²³¹ *Psychologie des Alterns*, 7. Auflage / ergänzt und bearbeitet von Hans Thomae ed. (Heidelberg, Wiesbaden: Quelle & Meyer Verlag GmbH & Co., 1991), 43-44.

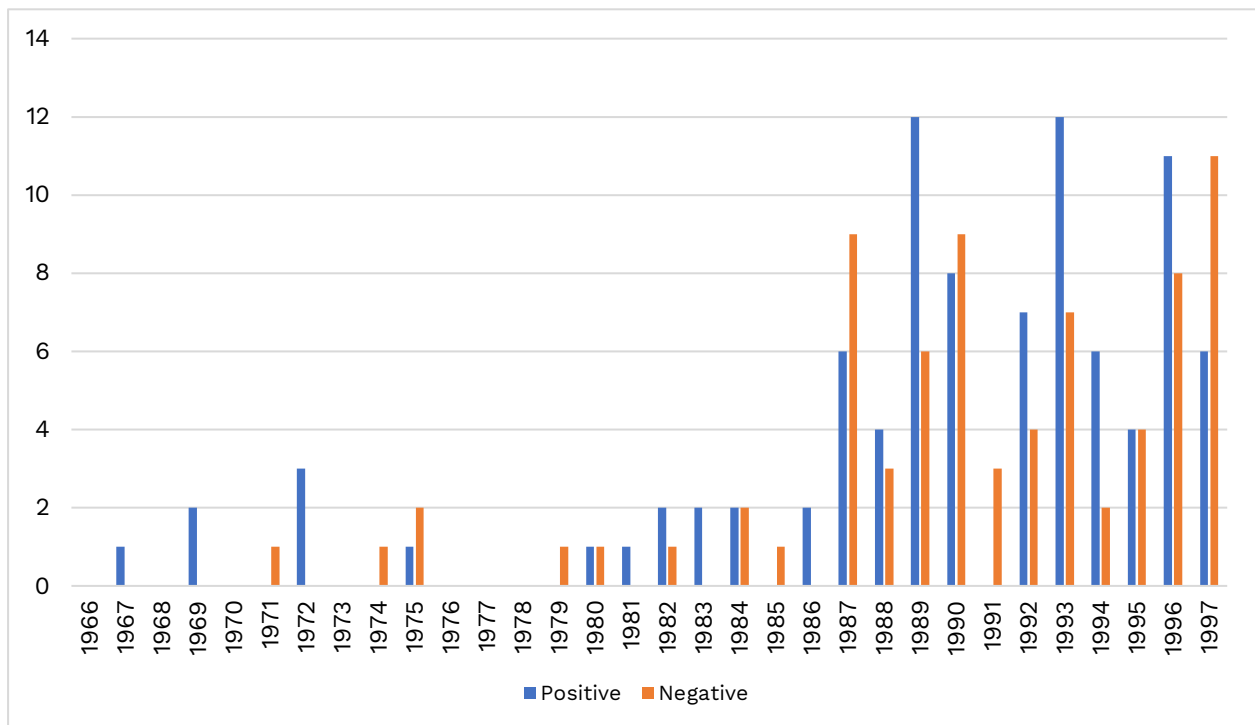
²³² Eichner; "Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Diskussion: Eine Veranstaltung der Gesellschaft für Sozialen Fortschritt löst erhebliches Echo aus."

These publications increased in the 1990s, which included more publications that received third-party funding to look into issues specific to older generations and the aging population. For example, two conferences held in 1991 and 1993 discussed an interdisciplinary project on the increase of life expectancy over the past 300 years and its challenges and chances in an aging society, which was funded by the Federal Ministry for Research and Technology (*Bundesministerium für Forschung und Technologie*, BMFT).²³³ Based on the number and year of release of these publications, as well as relating this to the overall numerical growth in publications, an important aspect of the topic's growth included more groups addressing the aging population in specific events or research projects. This involved an increase in the number of conferences held that either specifically focused on the aging population or that addressed it in some way beginning in the mid-1980s, such as the annual conferences of the various societies for gerontology or sociology.²³⁴ Recognition by both non-research focused groups and by conferences was an important observation and development because it emphasized the growth in acknowledgement of the (impending) situation and the variety of audiences that were discussing and addressing it.

Another data point that was collected included identifying positive or negative associations with aging in a publication (Figure 17). Overall, there were more positive associations, but the vast majority of publications did not state or insinuate a specific sentiment – 71 percent were considered neutral. Of the publications coded, only 92 were considered to have positive associations (16 percent), while 77 were considered to have a negative association (13 percent). Negative associations included the use of terms like “problem”, “strain”, “challenging”, “overwhelming”, or “grave” when describing the situation. Positive associations included positive outlooks on becoming older, claiming the situation can be overcome or addressed, or using “chance” to describe the situation.

²³³ Imhof; Arthur E. Imhof and Rita Weinknecht, eds., *Erfüllt leben – in Gelassenheit sterben: Geschichte und Gegenwart; Beiträge eines interdisziplinären Symposiums vom 23. – 25. November 1993 an der Freien Universität Berlin* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1994).

²³⁴ For example, see: Leisering, "Demographischer Wandel und Wohlfahrtsstaatstheorie oder Was die soziologische Theorie von der Beschäftigung mit demographischen Prozessen im Wohlfahrtsstaat lernen kann."; Karl and Tokarski; Kaufmann, "Sozialpolitik und Bevölkerungsprozeß."; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V. Abt. Gesellschaftspolitische Informationen; Christoph Hüttig, ed. *Graue Zeiten? Zur Zukunft sozialstaatlicher Alterssicherung und Alterspolitik* (Rehburg-Loccum: Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 1996).

Figure 17: Attitude-Based Associations in Research

Publications by year based on sentiment towards population aging. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Beginning with the negative associations, it was common for concerns to be raised about the sustainability of the social security system.²³⁵ For example, Kaufmann and Leisering argued, "It is this increased demand of older people on public social services that will make the aging of the population a problem for the social security systems."²³⁶ This included concerns by others of pension system's ability to be maintained as the number of contributors decreased while the number of recipients simultaneously grew.²³⁷ In addition, the health care system was discussed including long-term care and the ability to support the needs of the growing older population.²³⁸ Heinrich Frommknecht, Chairman of the private insurance company *Signal Versicherungen*, for example, claimed:

²³⁵ For example, see: Bernhard von Rosenblatt, "Die Alterssicherung der nächsten Rentnergeneration," in *Die ergraute Gesellschaft*, ed. Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen (Berlin: Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen, 1987); Roßnagel et al., *Digitalisierung der Grundrechte? Zur Verfassungsverträglichkeit der Informations- und Kommunikationstechnik*, Wolf; Angenendt.

²³⁶ Kaufmann and Leisering, 435.

²³⁷ For example, see: Kühn and Schwarz; Alber, "Der Wohlfahrtsstaat in der Krise? Eine Bilanz nach drei Jahrzehnten Sozialpolitik in der Bundesrepublik.;" Ziegler; Bäcker, "Der Wertschöpfungsbeitrag zur Rentenversicherung. Kein Königsweg auf der Suche nach neuen Finanzierungsfundamenten des Sozialstaates.;" Kannengießer, "Der Pflegefall als politisches Risiko.;" Stefan Hradil, "Sozialstruktur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel," in *Die EU-Staaten im Vergleich: Strukturen, Prozesse, Politikinhalt*, ed. Oscar W. Gabriel and Frank Brettschneider (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1992); Börsch-Supan, "Privatization of Social Security in Europe (Working Paper)."

²³⁸ For example, see: Gerhard K. Heilig and Christopher Prinz, "Modellrechnungen zur Gliederung der Bevölkerung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland nach dem Familienstand: 1970–2030," in *Acta*

Due to the different calculation methods of public and private health insurance, the expected demographic developments would bring the public health insurance system with its pay-as-you-go method into serious difficulties.²³⁹

There were also doubts about Germany's ability to maintain economic and innovative development as the labor market aged²⁴⁰, like was mentioned in the previous sections, and concern about generational relationships. This was related to the change in the ratio of contributors to beneficiaries and the worry the younger generation would have to take on a higher financial burden to maintain the various social security programs. There was also concern the larger older population would have an additional negative impact on the younger generation because it would be easier for politicians to ignore the needs of younger people if they were outnumbered by the older generation, which was why some authors favored lowering the voting age.²⁴¹ The phrase "war of generations" was used to describe these potential conflicts between generations, implying a dramatic and negative situation.

Turning to the positive associations, common sentiments were related to the need to view aging and old age differently, understand that the challenges the aging population created could be addressed, and seeing these changes as a chance. Beginning in 1969 and continuing in the early 1970s, the effort to view old age differently had begun with calls to allow people to continue working at higher ages, to not see age as based solely on calendar age, and to recognize the negative connotations associated with certain terms.²⁴² There were numerous researchers beginning in 1980 that argued if policy makers began to take steps to address the situation, then the aging of the population did not have to result in negative outcomes.²⁴³ In 1981, as part of a report commissioned by the BMJFG, the Society for Social Progress drew the conclusion:

Population development brings with it problems for the financing of old-age provision. However, based on our current state of knowledge, these problems can be solved by variations in factors that were already subject to political

Demographica: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft e.V., ed. Günter Buttler, et al. (Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag HD, 1990); Brenner; Wagner; Ernst Heuß, "Die Deformation der Marktwirtschaft durch die Wohlfahrtspolitik," *ORDO: Jahrbuch für die Ordnung von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* 48 (1997).

²³⁹ Frommknecht, 424.

²⁴⁰ For example, see: Franke, "Aktuelle Probleme der Gerontologie und Geriatrie.," Umbach; Peter Rosenberg, "Soziale Sicherung bei demographischem Wandel: Alternative Thesen," *ibid.*; Wilderom et al.

²⁴¹ For example, see: Behrend; Hattenhauer; Kress.

²⁴² For example, see: Schubert, "Verschiedene Formen des Alterns.," Bleuel; Schenda.

²⁴³ For example, see: Philip Selby and Mal Schechter, *Aging 2000* (Lancaster: MTP Press Limited, 1982); Camphausen, 44; O. Schröder, "Festvortrag: "Altenpolitik 2000"," in *Die "neuen" Alten: Beiträge der XVII. Jahrestagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gerontologie, Kassel, 22. - 24.09.1988*, ed. Fred Karl and Walter Tokarski (Kassel: Gesamthochschulbibliothek, 1989); Mann; Necker, "Wie wir die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit unserer alternden Gesellschaft erhalten wollen.," Klose, *Revolution auf leisen Sohlen: Politische Schlußfolgerungen aus dem demographischen Wandel*.

control. The necessary scope of change lies within what is politically feasible.²⁴⁴

Similar sentiments were expressed in 1989 by Schwebler:

The serious demographic changes that are to be expected in the coming decades will, of course, have an impact on the economy and society. I do not want to give the impression that we can wait and see this develop in peace and trust in painless self-regulation. On the contrary, economic and social policy must act in good time to prepare the economy and social systems for the impending changes in demographic conditions.²⁴⁵

And in 1993, Karl Ulrich Mayer stated, "There is no unavoidable demographic time bomb, but rather organizational tasks for the individual and for policy."²⁴⁶ Looking at these examples, it is evident members of the research community supported the idea that demographic change and population aging did not leave Germany on a path of decline. As argued over time, it was feasible to address if policy makers and other societal actors were willing to make the necessary reforms in a timely manner.

This framing began to slowly shift in the mid-1980s to include arguments in favor of viewing these demographic changes as a chance – either as a chance to make needed reforms and modernize society²⁴⁷ or as an economic chance²⁴⁸. As Schmähl contended in 1989, "Recognizing demographic challenges opens up the chance to prepare and make fundamental decisions at an early stage."²⁴⁹ Even almost ten years later, Wiedeck and Riedl were still arguing that "the aging of our society is not only a social-political challenge," but, "it also offers great economic chances."²⁵⁰

²⁴⁴ "Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Diskussion: Eine Veranstaltung der Gesellschaft für Sozialen Fortschritt löst erhebliches Echo aus," 54.

²⁴⁵ Schwebler, 671-72.

²⁴⁶ Mayer, ""Es gibt keine demographische Zeitbombe": Krieg der Generationen oder Solidargemeinschaft?," 56.

²⁴⁷ For example, see: Gert Wagner and Reinhold Thiede, "Eine integrierte Sozial- und Arbeitsmarktpolitik weist den Weg in die Zukunft des Sozialstaats," in *Sozialstaat 2000: Auf dem Weg zu neuen Grundlagen der sozialen Sicherung. Ein Diskussionsband*, ed. Rolf G. Heinze, et al. (Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft GmbH, 1987); Day; Landenberger; Oberender; Robert Schwebler, "Die Funktion der Lebensversicherung in der Gesamtwirtschaft — ein Beitrag zur Aktualisierung des Drei-Säulen-Konzepts," *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Versicherungswissenschaft* 79, no. 4 (1990); Barbara Riedmüller, "Umbau des Sozialstaats. Die Krise als Chance nutzen," in *Altern der Gesellschaft: Antworten auf den demographischen Wandel*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Köln: Bund-Verlag, 1993); Hans-Ulrich Klose, "Entlastung unserer Zukunft," in *Deutschland kann erfolgreich altern: Impulse für Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose (Bonn: Projekt Demographischer Wandel des SPD-Parteivorstandes, 1994).

²⁴⁸ For example, see: Wagner, "Drei Thesen zur ökonomischen Bedeutung von Dienstleistungen in einer demographisch alternden Gesellschaft.,"; Jürgen Kühl, "Die Relativierung der Angst vor der Alterslast BA-Tagung "Erwerbstätigkeit und Generationenvertrag"," *Arbeit und Beruf* 40, no. 5 (1989); Hans-Ulrich Klose, "Alternde Gesellschaft: Optionen für den Standort D," in *Alternde Gesellschaft - Dynamische Wirtschaft?*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Klose, Forum Demographie und Politik (Bonn: SPD-Parteivorstand, 1992); Meyer-Hentschel and Frings, "Chancen durch ältere Mitarbeiter im Betrieb.,"; Rolf Hofberg, "Altenpolitik im Ländervergleich: Baden-Württemberg," in *Altern und Politik*, ed. Hans Peter Tews, et al. (Melsungen: Bibliomed - Medizinische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, 1996).

²⁴⁹ Winfried Schmähl, "Perspektiven sozialer Sicherung in einer alternden Gesellschaft," in *Der Rückgang der Geburten - Folgen auf längere Sicht*, ed. Horst Claus Recktenwald (Düsseldorf: Verl. Wirtschaft und Finanzen, 1989), 267.

²⁵⁰ Wiedeck and Reidl, 253.

Returning to the conferences held in 1991 and 1993, the official title of the BMFT-funded project was “The Increase in Life Expectancy for 300 Years and Its Consequences. Challenges and Chances of an Aging Society. Or: Won Years – Lost Worlds: How Do We Achieve a New Balance?”²⁵¹ This is a clear example of a movement towards a more positive outlook, but also not ignoring that challenges will continue when dealing with this developing situation. In the coming chapters, I will look to see if a similar shift in mindset began around the mid-1980s among policy makers and the media to see these changes as a chance.

Based on Figure 17, negative associations remained throughout the entire time period, but it must be reemphasized that the overall number of publications expressing either a positive or negative sentiment was not large. Looking specifically at 1997, even though there were more negative than positive associations, there were only eleven publications that were classified as negative (63 publications coded in total) and these concerns varied in each article, i.e., no common theme was identified. This may be more of a reflection of the overall increase in the number of publications and therefore, increased opportunity to express a particular sentiment. I conclude that despite the negative concerns and classifications of the situation created by the aging of the population, there was a more positive sentiment overall with researchers offering reassurance that the situation could be addressed and the effects, therefore, lessened and less dramatic than expected.

From my research, there are several important conclusions that I have drawn:

- Growth in interest began in the mid-1980s as evidenced by the steady increase in mentions by researchers about the aging of the German population.
- The field of sociology published the most on the subject, followed by the fields of political science, the “other” category, and economics. Demography accounted for about ten percent of the results, but these could be combined with sociology since they are closely related fields.
- Aging was discussed within the context of a variety of topics, but mainly related to health, labor, the social security system, and society.
- More specifically, the issue of the aging population was discussed most frequently in the context of the sub-topic of the pension system. Other common sub-topics included comprehensive health care reform, long-term care, overall societal impact of the aging population, and the aging labor force.
- Despite the establishment of more professorships and research institutions focused on population studies and gerontology in the 1980s, the increase in

²⁵¹ Imhof; Imhof and Weinknecht.

publications beginning in the mid-1980s is not explicitly a direct result of this expansion of the field.

- Conferences and projects that addressed the aging of the population grew over time, slowly beginning in the 1980s and becoming more frequent in the 1990s, contributing to the pool of available publications.

Chapter 6: The Political Debate

Politicians and policy makers were aware of the population aging from an early point in time, but it was not until the 1980s when there was a more active effort to respond to the effects of population aging through pension system reform. Under the leadership of Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the CDU/CSU and FDP coalition, the topic moved up the political agenda and became a point of interest for all political parties. Society, health, and social security-related topics received the most attention by policy makers, with the specific sub-topic about the pension surpassing the other sub-topics in these categories. By 1992/1993, it was clear politicians were interested in addressing the wider needs of the older population through the establishment of the Study Commission “Demographic Change” and the additional debates held to discuss the First Government Report on the Elderly.¹ In the political debate, major influencing factors were related to who was in office and was in a position to make sure the issue was placed on the agenda.

Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter will begin with evaluating the frequency in which politicians and policy makers discussed the issue each year. Most of the chapter will be devoted to the variety of topics and sub-topics that addressed the issue. Unique to this chapter is the evaluation of how the political parties differed in their stance on the issue and how they evolved. I will examine what political parties addressed the issue early on and what context these debates were typically had, and I will include anecdotal information from expert interviews conducted with Hans-Ulrich Klose, former member and Chairman of the SPD group in the Bundestag, and Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr, who, in addition to being a leading researcher in gerontology, was a former member of the Bundestag (CDU/CSU) and Federal Minister of Youth, Family, Women, and Health.

Before presenting my findings, I want to mention a previous study by Jens Rohland that was based on expert interviews to identify how different socio-political actors approached the debate about demographic change.² Like I found in my interviews with Klose and Lehr, the politicians he interviewed viewed the start of this debate to be between the beginning of the 1980s and 1990s. In my interview with Lehr, she cited the 1982 World Assembly on Aging in Vienna as a major turning point when 140 countries came together and established an action plan on active aging. She

¹ This will be referred to as the “Report on the Elderly” for the remainder of this chapter.

² Jens Rohland, “Demographischer Wandel in der sozialpolitischen Debatte: Diskursstrategien politischer Akteure zwischen Verdrängung und Dramatisierung” (Diplomarbeit, Universität Bielefeld, 2001).

saw this as an “aha” moment for those in attendance.³ Klose named the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s and said it was also discussed in many publications.⁴ In the responses gathered by Rohland, the interviewees often referred to the debates surrounding the pension system as the beginning.⁵ In this chapter, I determine if my findings support the personal accounts, which seems to be the case on first glance.

6.1 The Development of the Political Debate: Awareness Grew in the 1980s, but Aging Became a Standalone Issue in the Early 1990s

Compared to the research documents collected, there were markedly less policy documents coded. This does not mean the topic was of less interest, but it reflects the smaller pool of documents available. What can be concluded is that the amount of attention given to the issue steadily grew over time. The period from 1992 to 1994 was the high point when the issue received the most attention. Figure 18 illustrates the growth in the topic based on the number of individual documents and all the speeches from the plenary debates that were coded. By distinguishing between the number of documents, regardless of the number of speeches, and then including each speech, one can see how and when more members of the Bundestag began to speak about the aging population.

Early on, there were not as many instances of multiple speeches being given in one plenary session and therefore, there being more speeches than the overall number of documents (Figure 18). As time progressed, particularly starting in 1985, the number of speeches grew and, in some cases, there was visibly a larger number of politicians addressing the issue than before. Most of the documents leading up to 1975 were actually not related to the plenary sessions, but were references made in reports or responses to major or minor interpellations (*große* and *kleine Anfragen*, GA or KA). The speeches in 1966 were about an amendment to the pension insurance of salaried worker, while the 1971 speeches were during a debate about the most recent health report. In 1975, the only references made to the aging population were in the debate related to the health care system and the further development of health insurance. These speeches were few and far between, indicating that aging had not quite reached a high level on the political agenda. As the number of documents grew, reports and responses to major and minor interpellations were the main source of non-speech references. But as seen in Figure 18, by 1985, the number of plenary

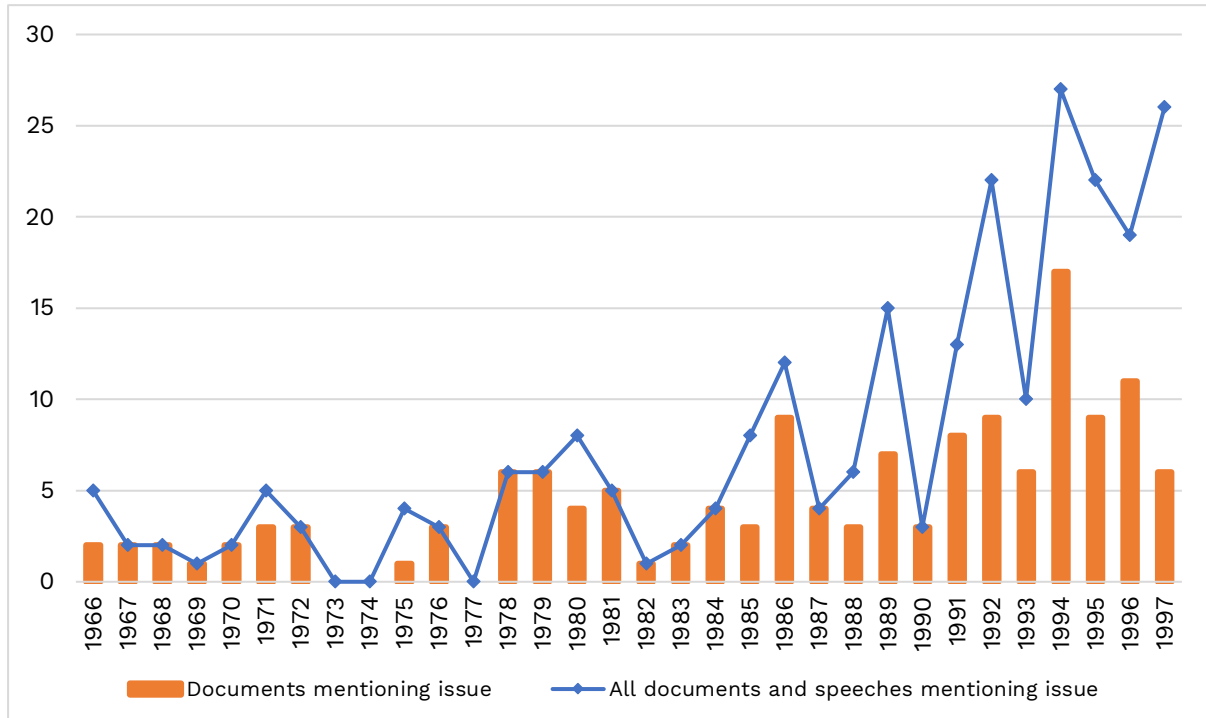
³ Ursula Lehr, interview by Emily Lines, November 27, 2017, Personal interview, Bonn.

⁴ Hans-Ulrich Klose, interview by Emily Lines, December 11, 2017, Personal interview, Berlin.

⁵ Rohland.

sessions that included mentions began to rise, specifically as debate about pension reform slowly began.

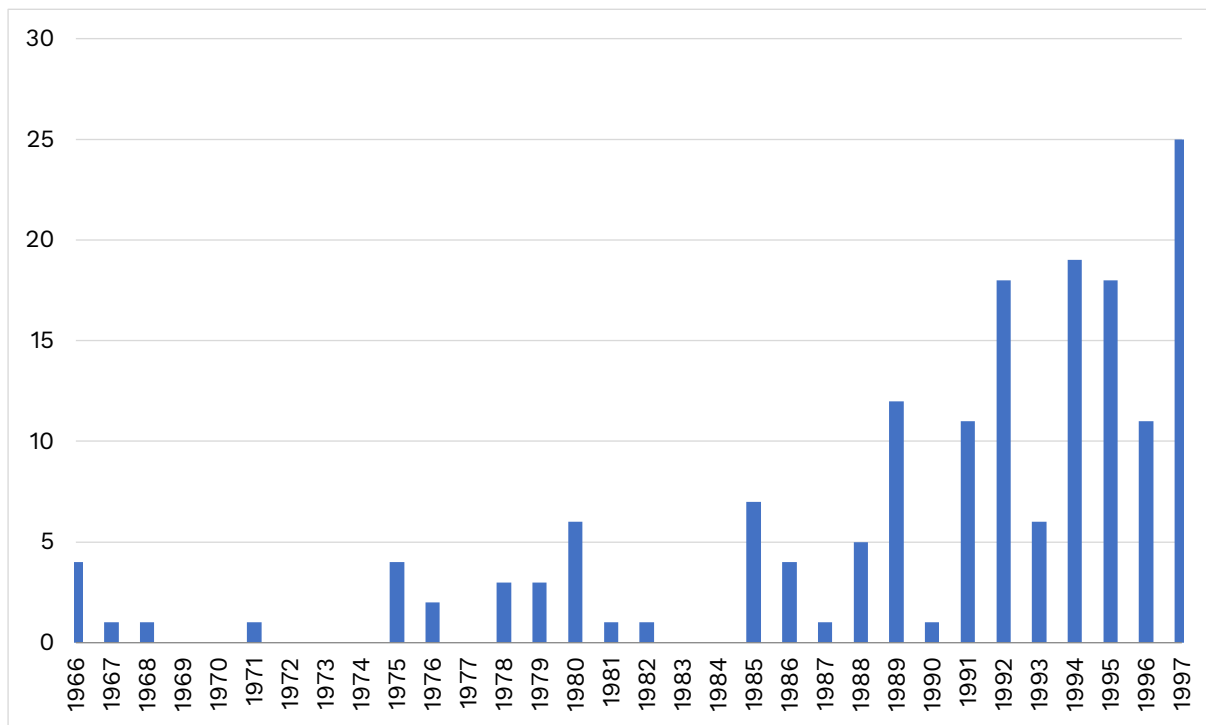
Figure 18: Political Mentions per Year



Total number of policy documents (bars) and total number of individual speeches given in the Bundestag combined with total documents by year (line). **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Even though the number of documents is low, just like with the distinction among the research documents, it is important to also focus on the number of speeches (Figure 19). The speeches reflect the interest/awareness among politicians; the more speeches given, the more politicians there are publicly recognizing the aging population. Particularly in 1992 and 1997, the number of documents was minimal, but the number of speeches given convey a large increase in the acknowledgement of the issue by politicians (Figure 18). I argue that the number of speeches is a better depiction of how well-known population aging was since the politicians themselves were speaking in a forum that is also a way to present one's position to the public and the media. Also, when politicians give speeches in the Bundestag, other members are present to hear their arguments and therefore, they learn about an issue. It can be inferred that print documents do not receive the same amount of attention and are not acknowledged by as many politicians.⁶

⁶ This is not to say that there was or is always full attendance for all sessions of the Bundestag, but when one considers the allotment of time to speak in the Bundestag. If someone chooses to take

Figure 19: Number of Plenary Speeches

Number of speeches given in the Bundestag by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

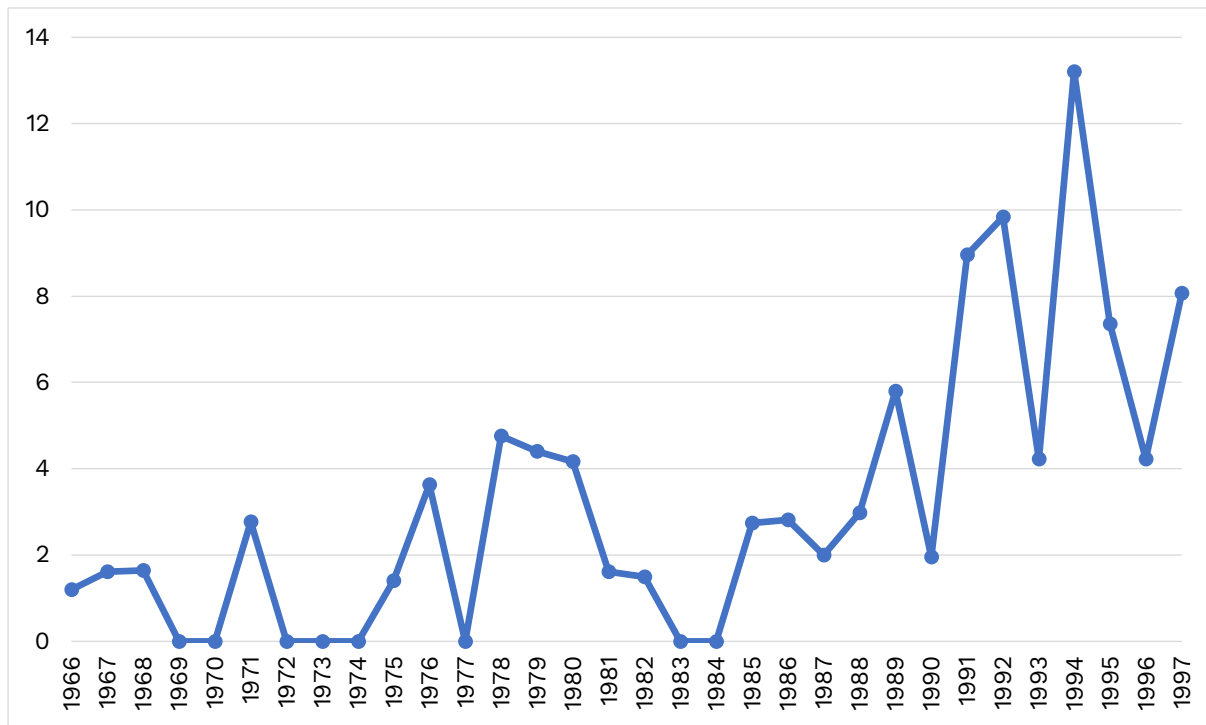
First looking at a few of the higher frequencies in speeches, 1989 was mainly the result of the debates about the 1992 pension reform legislation, but it also included the annual budget debate. Minister Lehr announced in her speech the government's plan to focus on older people, which led to multiple speeches making related references. The jump in speeches in 1992 are a result of the speeches about the establishment of the Study Commission "Demographic Change." There was a decrease in speeches the following year, but this is likely due to politicians waiting on the midterm report by the Study Commission and the release of the Report on the Elderly (*Altenbericht*), which was delayed due to the decision to include former East Germany; the drop is not because interest suddenly shifted. Once the midterm report and the Report on the Elderly were published in 1994, there was another jump in speeches. During the debate, Lisa Seuster (SPD) declared that the issue of demographic change was unanimously recognized by the members of the Commission – a clear sign of how far the issue had come over the years.⁷ In 1995, there was an additional debate held to discuss the work of the Study Commission. This small handful of debates in 1992, 1994, and 1995 are also examples of when aging was a

their limited time to discuss aging, then it is likely seen as an important point that more people should be aware of.

⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/236, Bonn, 1994.

stand-alone issue, meaning that policy makers had a debate dedicated to the aging of the population. In most instances, aging was indirectly debated within the context of a larger debate. For example, the debates about the 1999 pension reform, which sought to incorporate a demographic factor into the pension formula, explain the jump in speeches in 1997, as well as serve as an example of indirect references.

Figure 20: Percentage of Plenary Sessions

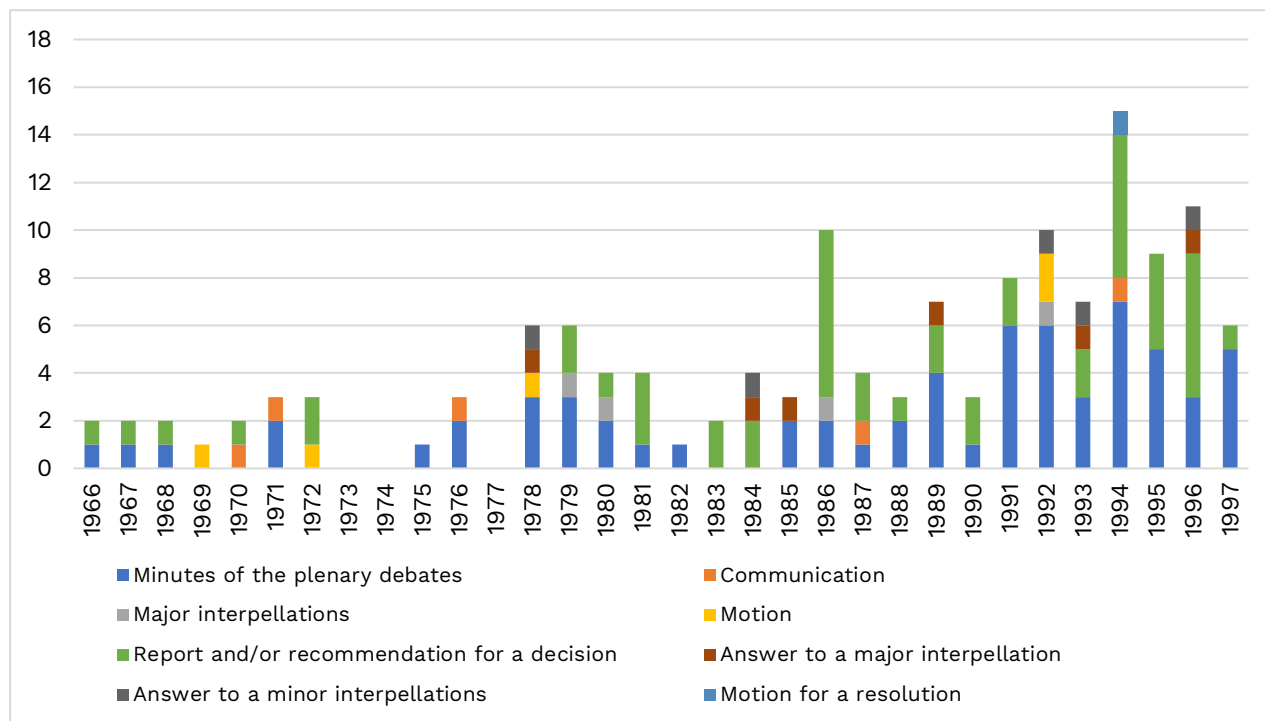


Overall portion of plenary debates held mentioning the aging population in relation to the total number of plenary sessions a year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

I do not dispute that aging received more attention over time, but it is important to place this growth in perspective. This means comparing the number of plenary debates that mentioned the aging population to the overall number of plenary debates held each year (Figure 20). Even though the growth in awareness is still visible, the highest point was in 1994 with 11.3 percent of plenary debates mentioning aging. The overall percentage was on the rise and supports my argument that by the 1990s, aging had found a secure place on the political agenda. However, during the time under question, it did not reach a point when it received consistent amounts of attention. For comparison, looking at the same measure by Weingart et al. in their

study about climate change, the attention was not always consistent, but climate change was debated more often than aging.⁸

Figure 21: Type of Government Document



Number of government documents published by year based on type. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Another characteristic explored was the types of government documents that were coded. The issue of aging was not just discussed during official Bundestag debates, but the issue was also brought to the plenary agenda via reports or interpellations submitted by committees and parliamentary groups (Figure 21). The majority of other documents analyzed were reports, which did not always result in a debate in the Bundestag (not required). These reports included *Gutachten*, which are reports issued by expert groups, such as the German Council of Economic Experts (*Sachverständigenrat*) and the Social Advisory Council (*Sozialbeirat*).⁹ In a few cases, the reports were paired with recommendations from a specific committee. 1986 saw a jump in the number of published documents mentioning aging, particularly the number of reports. As this was the beginning of the debate about the need for pension reform, there were several reports published, including the report by the Social Advisory Council about structural reforms for long-term financial consolidation

⁸ Weingart et al., "Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics, and the mass media," 25.

⁹ The reports can be debated in the Bundestag if the issuing committee would like to recommend a decision that goes beyond what is mentioned in the report. Stasser and Sobolewski, 70.

and systematic development of the public pension system, that discussed aging in the context of its impact on the pension system. Additionally, there was the Fourth Family Report that focused on the older generation and their evolving role in the family and the mid-term report of the Study Commission “Demographic Change”. Of the 52 reports analyzed, my search only found three that were debated in the Bundestag at a later point. There were an additional seven debates that took place about other reports that were not coded. This is not to say debates about the other 49 reports did not take place, but if they happened, they may not have mentioned the same aspects related to the aging population as in the reports.

When examining the interpellations posed and debated during this period, the parliamentary group and/or individuals asking the question were typically from the opposition party. This is because interpellations are one of the few tools the opposition has to receive a detailed response from the government/governing coalition about a specific issue. Looking over the various interpellations put forth, it is possible to gain an understanding about what areas were of interest to the parliamentary group posing the question regarding the aging population. For example, in the late-1970s, several of the interpellations posed by the CDU/CSU were focused on the younger generation – securing the long-term generational contract for the pension system and providing them with future opportunities in education and the labor market.¹⁰ Beginning around the same time and continuing in the mid-1980s, they posed more interpellations about the living conditions of older people and general population development.¹¹ Once Kohl became chancellor in 1982, the CDU/CSU posed only a few interpellations about the aging population, but by the late-1980s, the majority came from the SPD. The SPD focused their interpellations on specific groups, such as older women or foreign retirees and seniors in Germany.¹² In the 1990s, they

¹⁰ For example, see: Deutscher Bundestag, “Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Bürger, Frau Dr. Wex, Frau Geier, Franke, Köster, Kroll-Schlüter, Frau Schleicher, Dr. George, Bühler (Bruchsal), Neuhaus, Hasinger, Dr. Rose, Frau Karwatzki, Frau Dr. Neumeister, Frau Verhulsdonk, Niegel, Braun, Geisenhofer, Dr. Köhler (Duisburg), Schartz (Trier), Böhm (Melsungen) und der Fraktion der CDU/CSU,” Drucksache 8/478, Bonn, 1977; Bundesregierung, “Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Franke, Müller (Remscheid), Müller (Berlin), Zink, Bürger, Frau Geier, Schedl, Frau Schleicher, Kroll-Schlüter, Pohlmann, Höpfinger, Neuhaus, Geisenhofer, Hasinger, Bühler (Bruchsal), Frau Karwatzki, Dr. Blüm, Frau Verhulsdonk, Dr. George, Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohenstein, Frau Dr. Wex, Niegel und der Fraktion der CDU/CSU,” Drucksache 8/1982, Bonn, 1978; Gerd Langguth et al., “Große Anfrage: Grundprobleme der Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” Drucksache 8/3069, Bonn, 1979.

¹¹ For example, see: Gerhard Braun et al., “Große Anfrage: Lebenssituation älterer Menschen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” Drucksache 8/2031, Bonn, 1978; Langguth et al.; Kurt Biedenkopf et al., “Große Anfrage: Probleme der Strukturschwäche, Arbeitsplatzentwicklung, Energiesicherung, der Wohn- und Wohnumwelt und Zukunftsentwicklung im Ruhrgebiet,” Drucksache 8/3575, Bonn, 1980.

¹² For example, see: Bundesregierung, “Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Frau Dr. Däubler-Gmelin, Frau Fuchs (Köln), Bachmaier, Buschfort, Frau Blunck, Catenhusen, Dr. Diederich (Berlin), Egert, Frau Fuchs (Verl), Glombig, Frau Dr. Hartenstein, Heyenn, Frau Huber, Immer (Altenkirchen), Jaunich, Kirschner, Dr. Kübler, Kuhlwein, Frau Dr. Lepsius, Frau Luuk, Lutz, Frau Dr. Martiny-Glotz, Frau Matthäus-Maier, Müller (Düsseldorf), Frau Odendahl, Peter (Kassel), Frau Renger, Frau Schmedt (Lengerich), Frau Schmidt (Nürnberg), Frau Simonis, Frau Dr.

asked about health insurance and the financial situation of the pension system.¹³ One of the last interpellations included in this research was about those affected by dementia, which is a more specific topic about the aging population.¹⁴ Seeing how the interpellations evolved over this time period, it is apparent that the parliamentary groups began to view the issue in a more defined manner as they learned more and became more aware of its various impacts. By posing these questions, the debate around the aging population became more defined and – as is the idea behind posing an interpellation – forced attention to be brought (back) to the issue of aging.

The Significance of the Federal Ministry for Family and Seniors

Before moving on to the in-depth evaluation of the debate about the aging population, it is important to address the significance of the establishment of a federal ministry that was responsible for issues related to older citizens. Today, this ministry is known as the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth. Over time, this ministry has undergone around eight changes to its overarching structure and areas of responsibility. The reason this is of interest is because these changes signify how the aging debate evolved in Germany. In 1970, when the ministry was established as the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family and Health, a division (*Referat*) entitled “Help for the Old/Problems of the Older Generation” (*Altenhilfe/Probleme der älteren Generation*) was created, which was the first time such a division had been created. By 1977, there were three divisions looking at age issues. In 1989, the ministry was known as the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family, Women, and Health, and there was a Directorate (*Unterabteilung*) for “Non-Statutory Welfare Sector/Older People” (*Freie Wohlfahrtspflege/ältere Menschen*).

In 1991, the ministry was divided into three separate ministries and the newly created Ministry for Families and Seniors had ten directorates within the Directorate-General (*Abteilung*) “Seniors – Older People” (*Senioren – Ältere Menschen*). As argued by Matthias Geiser, the creation of a ministry with “seniors” in the title was a clear

Skarpelis-Sperk, Dr. Soell, Frau Steinhauer, Stiegler, Frau Terborg, Frau Dr. Timm, Frau Traupe, Frau Weyel, Frau Zutt, Dr. Vogel und der Fraktion der SPD - Drucksache 10/1738 - Lebensumstände älterer und hochbetagter Frauen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” Drucksache 10/1807, Bonn, 1984; Gerd Andres et al., “Große Anfrage: Situation ausländischer Rentner und Senioren in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” Drucksache 12/4009, Bonn, 1992.

¹³ For example, see: Bundesregierung, “Antwort der Bundesregierung der 12. Wahlperiode auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Lieselott Blunck (Uetersen), Angelika Barbe, Ingrid Becker-Inglau, Hans Gottfried Bernrath, Peter Büchner (Speyer), Dr. Ulrich Böhme (Unna), Dr. Marliese Dobberthien, Monika Ganseforth, Lothar Ibrügger, Dr. Uwe Jens, Dr. Karl-Heinz Klejdzinski, Walter Kolbow, Rolf Koltzsch, Horst Kubatschka, Brigitte Lange, Michael Müller (Düsseldorf), Doris Odendahl, Dr. Eckhart Pick, Dr. Sigrid Skarpelis-Sperk, Antje-Marie Steen, Dr. Peter Struck, Uta Titze-Stecher, Gudrun Weyel, Verena Wohlleben, Hans-Ulrich Klose und der Fraktion der SPD — Drucksache 12/4156 — Private Krankenversicherung II: Senientarif,” Drucksache 12/4851, Bonn, 1993.

¹⁴ Regina Schmidt-Zadel et al., “Große Anfrage: Situation der Demenzkranken in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” Drucksache 13/3343, Bonn, 1995.

symbol, both internally and publicly, that the government was taking the issue of demographic development and the related social-structural changes seriously. Since 1979, the number of units related to societal integration, old-age policy, and old-age research has grown. Even the focus on topics like prevention, societal participation, and preparation for retirement indicate an effort by the ministry to look at the aging process in a more positive light. When the three separate ministries were recombined in 1994 to form the BMFSFJ, the Directorate-General for Seniors was maintained and continued to have two directorates: “Senior Policies” (*Seniorenpolitik*) and “Help for Seniors” (*Hilfe für Senioren*). Each directorate had five divisions.¹⁵

The evolution of this ministry reflects the growth in interest in the issue of aging and older generations, and it provides a concrete example of when the government made a conscientious effort to place more focus on the older population. As I will argue throughout this chapter, the decision to establish a ministry specifically focused on issues concerning older citizens was an indication that old age and aging-related issues were on the political agenda and there was an intention for them to remain in some form. Even though the ministry is now under the same roof as youth and women’s affairs, it remains a main area of concern. Having a minister and government officials responsible for these issues on a continual basis ensures that aging-related issues are always being addressed.

Defining the Problem

When evaluating how aging was framed in the political debate, I will refer to problem definition, as this is a more common concept related to the policy process because an issue must first be defined and identified as a problem before reaching the political agenda.¹⁶ This section will look at the various contexts in which the topic was defined and identify changes in how politicians and policy makers discussed aging. Figure 22 divides the results based on the topic area (e.g., health, economy, society). Figure 23 depicts the general distribution of sub-topics in which the aging population was addressed, but Figure 24 breaks this down by year to emphasize the variance in the debate over time.

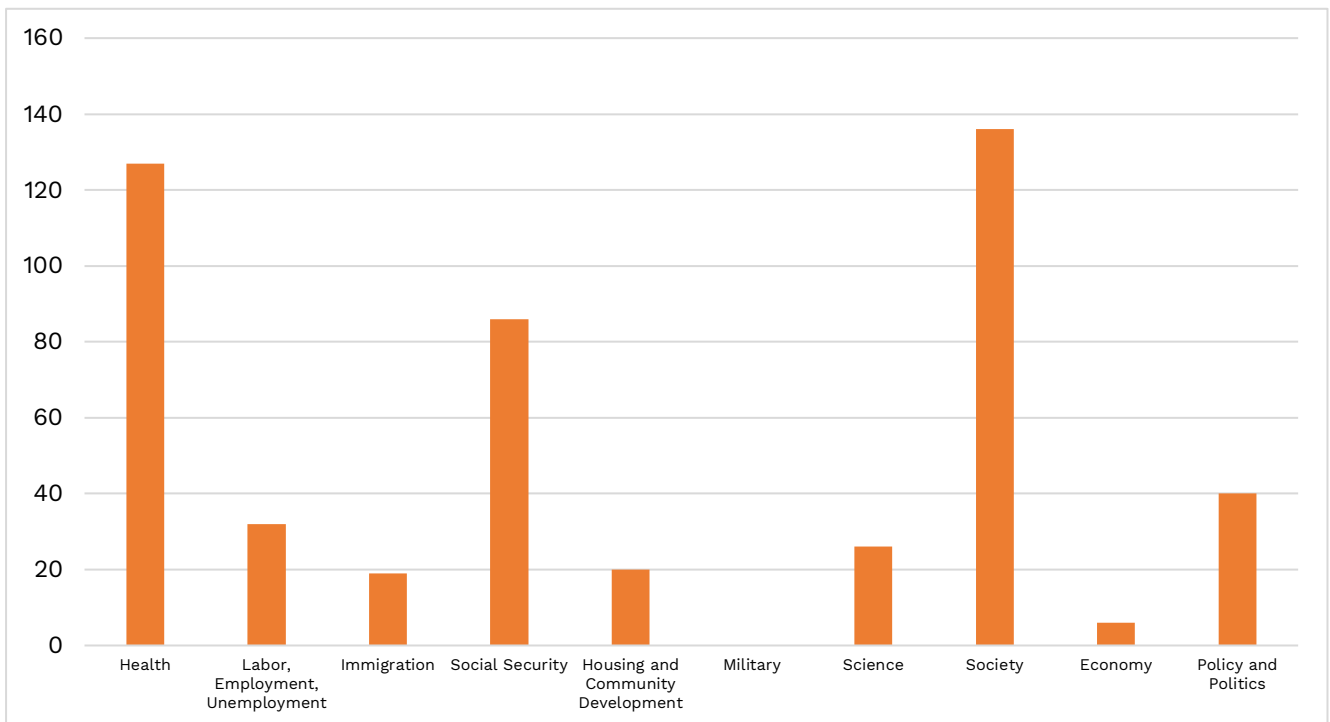
Using different legislative and government options, policy makers created rhetorical frames to define the problem. Based on the overarching topic, population aging was most commonly defined within the context of society and the health sector (Figure 22). The social security category seems lower than one may expect since this topic includes the pension system sub-topic. However, this is related to the fewer sub-topics in the category of social security compared to the number of sub-topics

¹⁵ Geiser, 60-62.

¹⁶ See definition by Janet Weiss in Chapter 2, section 2.2 on framing.

for health and society. Not as much attention was given to aging within the context of the economy, immigration, housing and community development, and science. Like the research results, there were no results related to aging and the military. Again, this is not to say there were not demographic-related concerns about the military and its personnel, but in this specific context and within the parameters of my research, I did not find any relevant documents. Labor-related topics were also not as well covered as they were in the research literature, while policy and politics-related results were mainly focused on the improvement of old age policies.

Figure 22: Main Policy Topic Categories



Distribution of topics covered by each publication based on the overarching topic. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

When breaking down the topic distribution by each sub-topic (Figure 23), it is clear the specific issue of “403: Pension system” received the most attention: Policy makers commonly defined the aging of the population as an issue affecting the pension system, which is similar to the findings from the research collection. Since the pension system is heavily influenced by the older population and is seen as a cornerstone of the German social security system, it is unsurprising that it received so much attention. With the shift to make the pension system an income replacement or substitute in 1957, the role and importance of the system grew. Once that expectation was set, it became difficult for reforms to be implemented, especially what could be seen as drastic changes. Likely due to reelection concerns, politicians were not eager

to take steps that would, in the constituents' mind, negatively impact their pensions. This resulted in several rounds of pension reforms and an ongoing reminder in debates and reports about the need to reform the system so it could remain stable in the future as the population continued to live longer and become older. Looking at this exact topic in Figure 24, in the years when pension reforms were debated and passed, a significant portion of the column is attributed to the pension system.

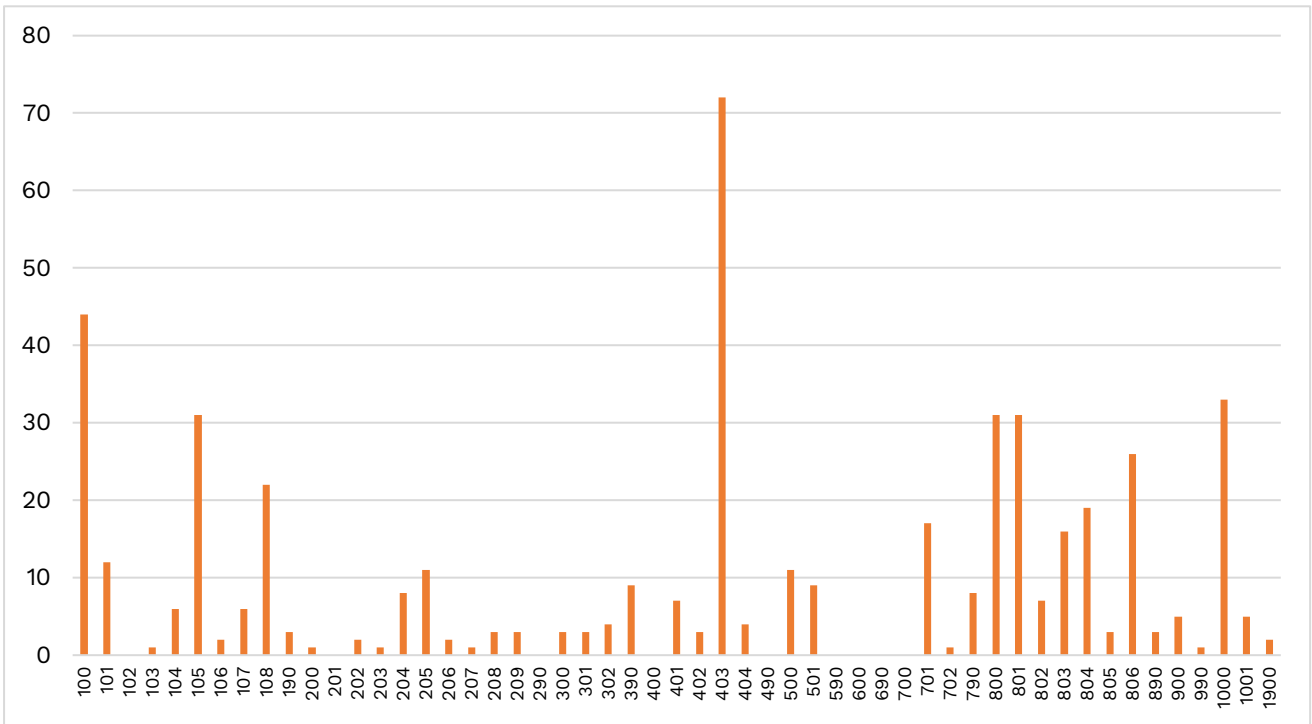
Population aging was also often defined as a reason for the need for comprehensive health care reform ("100: Comprehensive health care reform"). Like the focus on the pension system, this is unsurprising since there was much debate and concern about the ability of both the health care and health insurance systems to provide the necessary services an older population would need. The need for reform was also related to the worry about the increased health care spending that occurred in the early 1990s. During this time, there were additional debates about the need to improve the long-term care system, specifically old age care, and the overall impact the aging population would have on the health care system. This was reflected in the relatively high number of references to the topics "105: Long-term care, home health, terminally ill, rehabilitation services" and "108: Impact on the health care system".

Naturally, the context of old age policy also commonly used the aging population to frame the reason for its necessity. But when looking at this topic in Figure 24, one will notice that this subject area was mainly applicable in the 1990s with minor exceptions in the second half of the 1980s. This relates to the statement by Minister Lehr in 1989 that the government's new focus would specifically be on old age policy.¹⁷ 1991 and 1992 were the years when old age policy was discussed the most and it was typically within the context of the BMFuS annual budget debates. As I argued before, the establishment of this ministry was integral in keeping the issues of older citizens on the agenda of policy makers and based on the results of this research, contributed to defining the concept of old age policy. Prior to this, the concept was not commonly found in the analyzed documents. *Seniorenpolitik*¹⁸ was also used in the keyword search and all results were from 1991 or later. This supports my argument that the establishment of a specific ministry to focus on the issues of older citizens contributed to the development of the concept of old age policy and played a role in broadening the understanding of their needs and concerns.

¹⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 157. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 11/157, Bonn, 1989.

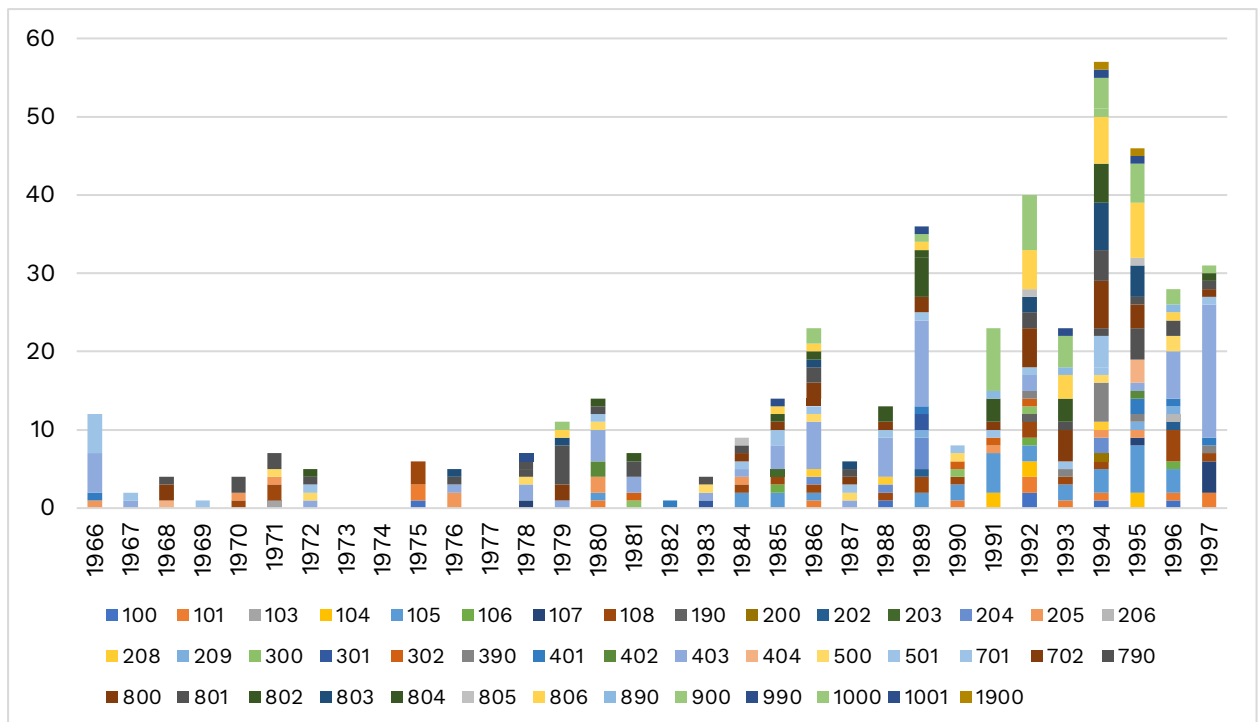
¹⁸ This term can be translated to policies for seniors.

Figure 23: Sub-Topics in Politics



Distribution of sub-topics covered in each coded research document. For the complete list of codes, see Chapter 3. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Figure 24: Sub-Topics in Politics per Year



Distribution of sub-topics by year. For the complete list of codes, see Chapter 3. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Finally, the fourth area that received considerable attention from policy makers was within the societal context. There were a number of results that fell under the categories of “800: Overall societal impact”, “803: Change to generational relations, intergenerational solidarity”, and “806: How older people are viewed”. This mainly occurred in the 1990s when the debate began to broaden its problem definition to acknowledge the wide-ranging effect population aging would have on society. I attribute this to the debates specifically about how the aging population would affect Germany as a whole. Society-related topics also grew as more attention was given to intergenerational relations and how older people are viewed/the idea of the new old (“*neuen Alten*”). As expected, the contexts of long-term care and health insurance reform were also more prominent in the 1990s, particularly as the Bundestag debated care and nursing home reforms. This increase in these specific sub-topics in the 1990s can also be attributed to the BMFuS, as well as the efforts of the Study Commission “Demographic Change” and the publication of the Report on the Elderly.

Both Figures 23 and 24 highlight the contexts in which the aging population was debated among policy makers, but Figure 24 shows when this happened. To answer one of the main questions about how aging was first defined in the policy debate, it was mainly within the framework of the pension system and through recognition of the causes of the growth in the older population in Germany in 1966. As the issue grew, the variety of contexts in which it was debated also grew.¹⁹ Overall, based on the results of this research, the topic was defined in a variety of policy-related contexts with specific contexts generating more debate and attentions.

One final aspect relates to whether politicians and policy makers used emphasis frames with a positive or negative association to population aging. Many of the statements collected did not classify the aging population in either a positive or negative context, but sentiment did evolve over time from mainly being negative to being viewed in a more positive light as time passed (Figure 25). Examples of the negative sentiment include Peter Keller (CSU) saying in a 1980 debate, “Overall, we are in a situation in which the German population is threatened by strong decline and an aging process,”²⁰ or the German Council of Economic Experts saying the “foreseeable demographic development will greatly intensify the existing problems”, which existed in the care sector and pension system.²¹ These negative sentiments were not as

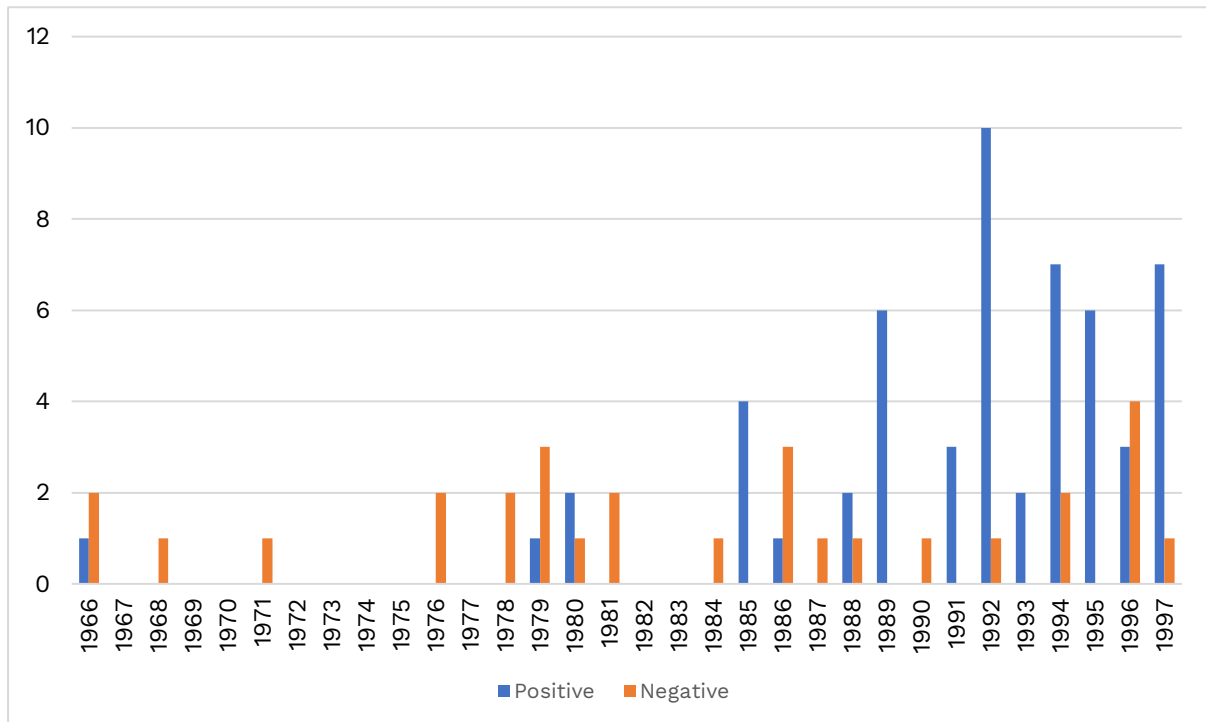
¹⁹ There were, however, a handful of topics that were not mentioned in the policy discussion, based on my keyword search: Debates surrounding regulation of the pharmaceutical industry, parental leave and childcare, old age poverty, issues related to the military, and scientific developments in the study of aging.

²⁰ Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 37. Sitzung der 9. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 9/37, Bonn, 1981.

²¹ Der Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, “Jahresgutachten 1986/87 des Sachverständigenrates zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung,” Drucksache 10/6562, Bonn, 1986.

common as time went on and instead, more policy makers expressed their support of the positive developments that people were living longer and could have healthier and active lifestyles in older age. Sentiments of this nature were common throughout the 1990s, especially in 1992 during the debate about establishing the Study Commission “Demographic Change”. These positive statements seemed to be a way to preface the need for reforms and action to address the impending effects of an aging population.

Figure 25: Attitude-Based Associations in Politics



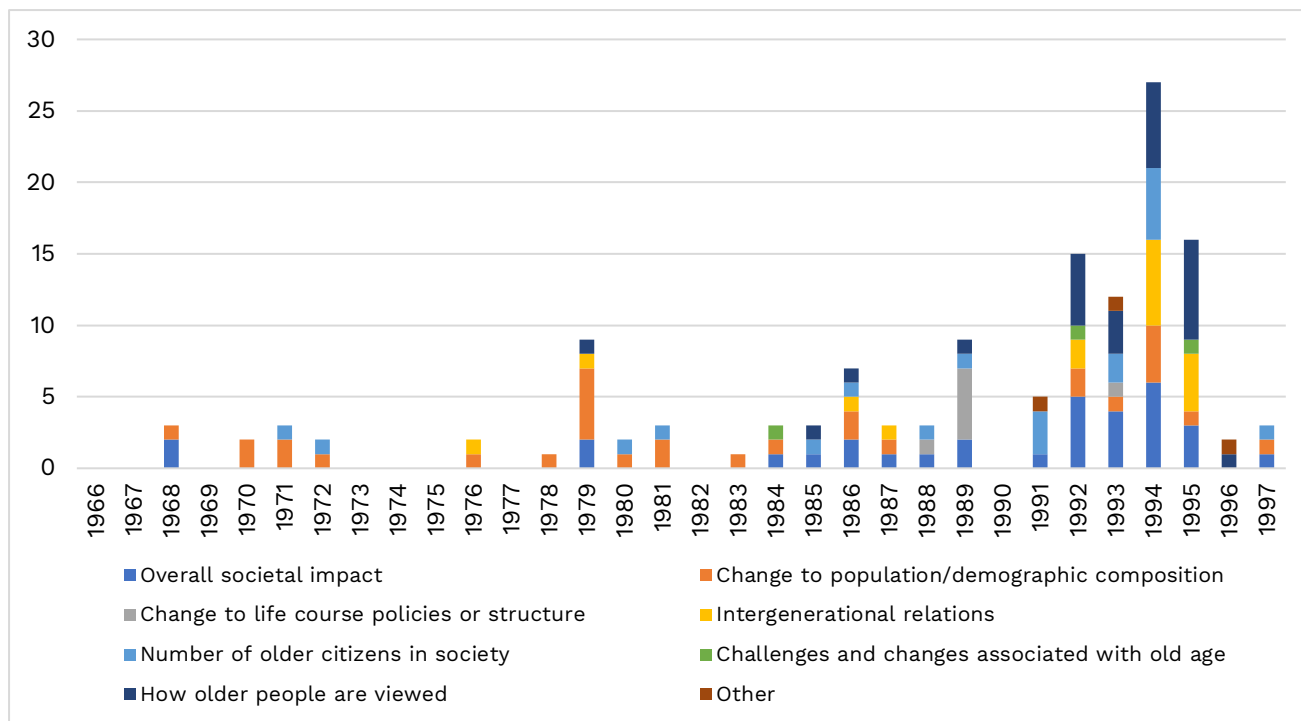
Publications by year based on sentiment towards population aging. **Source:** GOLD Database, author’s calculations.

A. Society: Early Reference to Changing Population Composition with More Focus on Intergenerational Relations and Old Age Stereotypes Later

Society-related topics were the most common among politicians and policy makers. The attention the older population received over time became more specific: General statements about the overall change to the population composition evolved to include an awareness of the wide impact aging would have on a multitude of areas in society and grew to include the importance of intergenerational relations and the need to view older people differently. Seen in Figure 26, the discussion around society-related topics was most active in the 1990s. All of the sub-topics were addressed in varying levels of frequency with overall societal impact, change to the population/demographic composition, and intergenerational relations being referenced the most. Prior to the 1990s, much of the focus was on the change to the population’s

composition. This did not just include talking about the changing size of the older population, but also how other parts of the population would change.

Figure 26: Society-Related Sub-Topics in Politics



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of society by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

In the early years, as the topic was developing, most of the mentions centered around the general sub-topic of changes to the population composition. References to these changes typically came from policy documents (either interpellations or reports). They referred to the aging population as a reason for the change to the population's (age) structure or as a result of demographic changes. For example, the First Family Report in 1968 highlighted the expected population changes that would result in an increase in the older population in the coming 13 years.²² Other reports referred to expected shifts in the population being related to general population development or, more specifically, to the birth rate decline that was causing a shift in the old-age dependency ratio.²³ There were a few early examples of specific

²² Bundesminister für Familie und Jugend, "Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Lage der Familien in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," Drucksache V/2532, Bonn, 1968.

²³ For example, see: Bundeskanzler, "Gesundheitsbericht," Drucksache VI/1667, Bonn, 1970; "Raumordnungsbericht 1972," Drucksache VI/3793, Bonn, 1972; Bundesregierung, "Die Lage der Familien in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - Dritter Familienbericht. Bericht der Sachverständigenkommission der Bundesregierung - Zusammenfassender Bericht," Unterrichtung durch die Bundesregierung, Drucksache 8/3120, Bonn, 1979; "Bericht der Bundesregierung über die gesetzlichen Rentenversicherungen, insbesondere über deren Finanzlage in den künftigen 15 Kalenderjahren, gemäß §§ 1273 und 579, der Reichsversicherungsordnung, § 50 des

politicians mentioning these expected changes: During the debate about the 1970 health report, Dr. Gerhard Jungmann (CDU/CSU) expressed his concern about the drastic and unexplained change in the birth rate, the continued decline in the already small working age population, and the growth of the older population.²⁴ Chancellor Schmidt also addressed the question of whether the declining number of young and working-age people would be able to support the large number of older people in his 1979 government policy speech, but called these projected changes speculation.²⁵

Even though most of the results from the early years discussed the changes to the population composition, there was not a consistent flow of policy documents. As a greater understanding of overall population development was established, the examples began to not just come from policy documents but were mentioned by more politicians during plenary debates. Statements from politicians highlighted the expected shift in the population structure, including the change in the ratio of young to old (e.g., the population pyramid will turn upside down).²⁶ They also looked at more specific aspects of the aging population. For example, Konrad Gilges (SPD) mentioned how the larger older population also meant an increase in the number of older immigrants, contributing to changes in the older population's composition.²⁷

Closely related to this sub-topic was reference to the number of older people in the population. The main difference between these two was the latter focused more on the older population (did not mention the breakdown among the other age groups) and typically included numerical data. Since it was specifically related to data, these references were mostly found in policy documents or occasionally in debates about specific reports.²⁸ There were not as many examples citing the number

Angestelltenversicherungsgesetzes und § 71 des Reichsknappschaftsgesetzes (Rentenanpassungsbericht 1979) und Gutachten des Sozialbeirats," Drucksache 8/2709, Bonn, 1979; "Bericht über die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. 1. Teil: Analyse der bisherigen Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Modellrechnungen zur künftigen Bevölkerungsentwicklung," Drucksache 8/4437, Bonn, 1980; Ausschuss für Wirtschaft, "Erster Bericht der Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften über die soziale und wirtschaftliche Lage in den Regionen der Gemeinschaft," Drucksache 9/1040, Bonn, 1981; Sozialbeirat, "Gutachten des Sozialbeirats über langfristige Probleme der Alterssicherung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," Drucksache 9/632, Bonn, 1981; Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, "Jahresgutachten 1983/84 des Sachverständigenrates zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung," Drucksache 10/669, Bonn, 1983; Bundesregierung, "Raumordnungsbericht 1986," Drucksache 10/6027, Bonn, 1986.

²⁴ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 108. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 6/108, Bonn, 1971.

²⁵ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 154. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 8/154, Bonn, 1979.

²⁶ For example, see: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 174. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 11/174, Bonn, 1989; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode.," "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 185. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/185, Bonn, 1997.

²⁷ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

²⁸ For example, see: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 108. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode.," Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Bundesregierung über die gesetzlichen Rentenversicherungen, insbesondere über deren Finanzlage in den künftigen 15 Kalenderjahren (Rentenanpassungsbericht

of older people in the population, which may be related to a lack of specific data on population projections emphasizing the aging population or because policy makers saw them as too speculative to cite. As more debates were held about issues specific to the older population, there was a slight increase in politicians referring to numerical increases. For example, in 1991, as the government was improving efforts to give more attention to old age policy, Minister of Family and Seniors, Hannelore Rönsch (CDU/CSU), referred to the expected growth in the older population when emphasizing the importance of old age policy.²⁹ By 1994, there was another slight increase due to the debate about the Report on the Elderly with a handful of politicians citing the number of older people in the population, which can be expected since this data was likely included in the report.³⁰

Observing the development of the society-related topics over time, the focus was more on the fundamental understanding of the population becoming older and raising awareness of the situation during the period prior to 1985. Even though the statements may seem generic, it was still an important step that attention was given to highlighting the basic fact that the population was becoming older and the age structure was changing. If this change was not acknowledged, then it would not be possible to understand the kind of impact this would eventually have on different aspects of society, and it would delay any attempt at addressing the situation.

Tied into the recognition that the population composition was changing was the observation that this would have an overall impact on society. Like the previous two sub-topics, early references to the overall impact were in published reports, but there were only occasional references by politicians or in submitted questions to better understand the situation. For example, Dr. Kurt Schober (CDU/CSU) stated in a 1968 speech that he hoped life expectancy would continue to increase, but the

1972) und Gutachten des Sozialbeirats zu den Vorausberechnungen und zu den Rentenanpassungen 1973," Drucksache VI/3254, Bonn, 1972; "Bericht über die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. 1. Teil: Analyse der bisherigen Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Modellrechnungen zur künftigen Bevölkerungsentwicklung.," Der Sozialbeirat der Bundesregierung, "Gutachten des Sozialbeirats über eine Strukturreform zur längerfristigen finanziellen Konsolidierung und systematischen Fortentwicklung der gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung im Rahmen der gesamten Alterssicherung," Drucksache 10/5332, Bonn, 1986; Bundesregierung, "Raumordnungsbericht 1993," Drucksache 12/6921, Bonn, 1994; Deutscher Bundestag, "Entschließung zu Maßnahmen zugunsten der älteren Menschen," Drucksache 12/7079, Bonn, 1994; Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen über die Lage der Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," Drucksache 13/9484, Bonn, 1997.

²⁹ For example, she stated, "There are 16 million people living in Germany over the age of 60. Their proportion is rising and by 2000, every one in four citizens will be over 60-years-old." Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 14. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/14, Bonn, 1991. See also, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 38. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/38, Bonn, 1991.

³⁰ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 211. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/211, Bonn, 1994.

resulting older population would create extensive problems that had to be solved.³¹ Over ten years later in 1979, the CDU/CSU faction posed a GA about basic problems of population development in Germany. They asked the government what effects population decline and the shifting age structure would have on families, the social security system, economic development, the labor market, infrastructure, and city/rural development.³² The latter example is more explicit in the areas that will be affected by population aging, but the former example also implies that the problems created would be wide ranging.

By the mid-1980s, the discussion about the overall societal impact began to become more consistent. The second part of the report on population development touched upon the living situation, care services and facilities, and the pension system in relation to the older population, while the Fourth Family Report focused specifically on older family members and the different areas of family life that are affected.³³ In the government's response to the CDU/CSU and FDP's GA on the living situation and future perspectives of older people, they recognized that:

In the view of the Federal Government, this growing proportion of older people also represents a major challenge for social and family policy with regard to income security, the pension system, and assistance for those in need of long-term care.³⁴

Additional examples support the conclusion that it was also during this time when politicians not only realized that aging would have a broad impact, but that it was necessary to start taking steps to address it. Wilfried Böhm (CDU/CSU) stated in 1986 that demographers had done their job of providing the information and now it was the responsibility of those in politics to not be "blinded" by the current situation, but to take action for future generations. In his opinion:

The greatest impact will be on the labor market, where new forms of employment for older jobseekers and adaptation to new production methods

³¹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 152. Sitzung der 5. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 05/152, Bonn, 1968.

³² Langguth et al.

³³ Bundesregierung, "Bericht über die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. 2. Teil: Auswirkungen auf die verschiedenen Bereiche von Staat und Gesellschaft," Drucksache 10/863, Bonn, 1984; "Die Situation der älteren Menschen in der Familie - Vierter Familienbericht," Drucksache 10/6145, Bonn, 1986.

³⁴ "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Abgeordneten Braun, Kroll-Schlüter, Frau Augustin, Breuer, Dolata, Dr. Hoffacker, Link (Diepholz), Frau Männle, Sauer (Stuttgart), Schlottmann, Werner, Frau Dr. Adam-Schwaetzer, Cronenberg (Arnsberg), Eimer (Fürth), Frau Dempwolf, Frau Verhülsdonk, Dr. Olderog, von Schmude, Müller (Wesseling), Biehle, Eylmann, Lenzer, Krey, Dr. Kunz (Weiden), Schulze (Berlin), Dr. Jobst, Schemken, Sauer (Salzgitter), Weiß, Dr. Möller, Kittelmann, Schmitz (Baesweiler), Lowack, Jung (Lörrach), Frau Roitzsch (Quickborn), Dr. Hüsch, Dr. Riedl (München), Dr. Rose, Schreiber, Dr.-Ing. Kansy, Dr. Schroeder (Freiburg), Dr. Pohlmeier, Dr. Czaja, Link (Frankfurt), Frau Geiger, Pohlmann, Zierer, Dr. Miltner, Spilker und der Fraktionen der CDU/CSU und FDP," Drucksache 10/2784, Bonn, 1985.

need to be offered. Pension reforms, rising health care costs and changes in the education system will require new responses by the public sector.³⁵

Chancellor Kohl also acknowledged the new set of tasks that had to be addressed and due to the variety of areas that would be affected, he emphasized the need to set priorities, so the issues are addressed in a timely manner.³⁶

In the 1990s, the issue picked up for several years during the period when the Federal Plan for Old Age (*Bundesaltenplan*) was implemented; the Study Commission "Demographic Change" was proposed, debated, and established; the Report on the Elderly was published and debated; and, the Study Commission released its first mid-term report. These items were interested in studying and addressing the different aspects related to aging and being older.³⁷ This emphasizes a clear point in this debate when politicians saw the need to understand the bigger picture and learn what the needs are of this growing segment of the population. In the motion submitted by the SPD to establish the Study Commission, they explicitly stated:

The commission's task is to analyze social framework data in the context of demographic change. Its task is to analyze and foresee the societal, economic, and social consequences of demographic change for all generations, particularly for the older generation. It should identify the foreseeable need for action and make recommendations for necessary political decisions.³⁸

The Study Commission released its first mid-term report in 1994, which provided this wide overview of how demographic change would impact, for example, the family, the economy, and the labor market, as well as addressed questions of how old age will look for the generation currently in their 40s and how the older generation will want to live.³⁹ Politicians stated the importance of understanding the various effects,

³⁵ Die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates, "Unterrichtung durch die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates über die Tagung der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates vom 21. bis 25. April 1986 in Straßburg," Drucksache 10/5540, Bonn, 1986.

³⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 4. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 11/4, Bonn, 1987.

³⁷ For example, see: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 14. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode.;" "Antrag der Fraktionen der CDU/CSU, SPD und F.D.P. "Einsetzung einer Enquete-Kommission "Zukunft der älter werdenden Generation",," Drucksache 12/3461, Bonn, 1992; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/114, Bonn, 1992; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 122. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/122, Bonn, 1992; Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Zukunftssicherung des Standortes Deutschland," Drucksache 12/5620, Bonn, 1993; "Erster Altenbericht der Bundesregierung," Drucksache 12/5897, Bonn, 1993; Deutscher Bundestag, "Entschließung zu Maßnahmen zugunsten der älteren Menschen.;" "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode.;" "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 242. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/242, Bonn, 1994; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/44, Bonn, 1995.

³⁸ Fraktion der SPD, "Einsetzung einer Enquete-Kommission "Zukunftssicherung unserer älter werdenden Gesellschaft — Herausforderungen des demographischen Wandels",," Drucksache 12/2272, Bonn, 1992.

³⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Zwischenbericht der Enquete-Kommission Demographischer Wandel - Herausforderungen unserer älter werdenden Gesellschaft an den einzelnen und die Politik," Drucksache 12/7876, Bonn, 1994.

including the long-term effects, that population aging would have on society. For example, during the debate about the Report on the Elderly in 1994, Minister Rönsch stressed the need for all areas of society and policy to take action to respond to the needs of older people to ensure they have a happy and satisfactory life in old age.⁴⁰ During the early 1990s, with the establishment of this Study Commission and the publication of the Report on the Elderly, it was apparent that policy makers had come to define population aging as having a wide impact on multiple areas of society.

Over time, other topics began to touch on more specific society-related issues. For example, the small number of “other” categorizations were from the 1990s once population aging had grown on the political agenda. This increase in awareness and discussion is likely why some politicians thought the issue was receiving too much attention and taking focus away from other issues, for example, initiatives to support couples wanting children.⁴¹ In 1996, Dr. Jürgen Rüttgers, Minister of the BMBWF, argued that despite population aging, it cannot be ignored that the size of the younger generation will actually rise in the immediate future and not decline, which included a rise in the number of students, and was why education needed to be discussed.⁴²

These concerns are related to the sub-topic of intergenerational relations. Already in 1976, Kohl, as Minister President of Rhineland-Palatinate, addressed the future financial burden facing the younger generation to cover the pension needs of the older generation. He cited his concerns about the pace of population decline and the alarming rate in which the aging process was accelerating.⁴³ Roswitha Verhülsdonk (CDU/CSU) was worried about the social and psychological effects of the “forced” aging of society caused by the decline in the birth rate and the threat of generational conflict.⁴⁴ Naturally, the Fourth Family Report also addressed the potential challenges facing these relationships caused by population structure shifts, the need by certain groups for more services (e.g., improving education for younger generations), and the lack of recognition of care provided by specific groups (e.g., women having to provide child care and care for older parents).⁴⁵

During Chancellor Kohl’s time in office, the government took a more prominent stance on the importance of maintaining generational solidarity. In his 1987

⁴⁰ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 211. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

⁴¹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 172. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/172, Bonn, 1993.

⁴² "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 98. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/98, Bonn, 1996.

⁴³ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 255. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 7/255, Bonn, 1976.

⁴⁴ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 193. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 8/193, Bonn, 1979.

⁴⁵ Bundesregierung, "Die Situation der älteren Menschen in der Familie - Vierter Familienbericht."

government policy statement, Kohl stated that older people provide wisdom and knowledge that should be used:

A country becomes impoverished when it loses its sense of the dignity of old age. The wisdom and life experience of the elderly are a great asset that we should use. Without the willingness to be balanced and to coexist between the generations, we will all find no real home in our society.⁴⁶

Despite the first call for generational solidarity in 1987, it was not until the 1990s when these efforts picked up. Beginning in 1992, Minister Rönsch stressed the need for structural change to make sure the generational contract was maintained, and the generations were not divided.⁴⁷ A few months later, she announced a campaign by the government to ensure the integration of the older generation into the family and prevent exclusion from society.⁴⁸ Renate Diemers (CDU/CSU) called for the integration of older generations in the classrooms so generations can learn from each other. She argued that social policy that unites the generations can be successful if everyone fulfills their responsibilities and people learn at an early age that the key to success is generational solidarity.⁴⁹ Following the restructuring of the BMFuS, the new minister of the BMFSFJ, Claudia Nolte (CDU/CSU), also continued to emphasize the need for solidarity among and between the generations on several occasions as the ministry continued to focus on the integration of the older population.⁵⁰

This integration of older people included changing the basic structure of the life course to allow them to continue to participate in society. Most of this discussion centered around an increase in retirement age during the debate about the 1992 pension reform since more people were able to work longer. This was associated with a general shift in the life course structure as people were also spending more time in education and entering the labor market later.⁵¹ It was recognized that the expertise

⁴⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 4. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

⁴⁷ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 104. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/104, Bonn, 1992.

⁴⁸ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 122. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

⁴⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

⁵⁰ For example, see: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 9. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/9, Bonn, 1994; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 30. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/30, Bonn, 1995; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode.," "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 67. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/67, Bonn, 1995.

⁵¹ For example, see: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 61. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 11/61, Bonn, 1988; Ausschuss für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, "Bericht des Ausschusses für Arbeit und Sozialordnung (11. Ausschuß) zu dem Gesetzentwurf der Fraktionen der CDU/CSU, SPD und FDP: Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Reform der gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung (Rentenreformgesetz 1992 — RRG 1992)," Drucksache 11/5530, Bonn, 1989; Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 132. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 11/132, Bonn, 1989; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 174. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

and knowledge older people had accumulated should not be thrown to the side, but solutions should be found so that it can continue to be used.⁵²

The realization that the life course should be changed so that retirement is not an immediate end to older people's participation in society related to a shift in how older people were viewed. This shift in views began in 1985 when Gerhard Braun (CDU/CSU) – newly named representative for seniors of the CDU – declared:

Politicians will have to answer for whether in the future the older generation will be labeled as a problem group that accounts today for a quarter, soon a third, of the population, or whether it will be possible to integrate the older generation into the dynamics of our modern industrial society for the benefit of all.⁵³

Discussions of the aging populations and references to the overwhelming old age burden (*“vergreisenden Gesellschaft”* and *“erdrückenden Alterslast”*) lent themselves to creating horror scenarios that were discriminatory, unrealistic, and created negative expectations about growing old, according to Minister Lehr.⁵⁴ Therefore, it was important for efforts to be made to discuss population aging in a more positive light. Throughout the 1990s, it was often stated that the definition of being old had changed and more time was now spent in old age than in the past due to the increase in life expectancy. There are differences among the older population but being old should not just be associated with illness and frailty. Some older individuals want to remain active in society and continue to contribute their skills.⁵⁵ Several politicians emphasized the importance of what words are used to describe the older population. Instead of using terms like old age burden (*Alterslast*), mountain of retirees (*Rentnerberg*), and over-aging (*Überalterung*), more neutral phrases should be used. This was important because, as Minister Rönsch pointed out, the way politicians discuss aging influences how society views old age. She recommended:

Memorable buzzwords such as "pensioner mountain", "age burden", "war of generations", etc. refer directly or indirectly to economic burdens that may be associated with the aging of people and their growing share of the population, but they are by no means inevitable...[T]he majority of older and old people are

⁵² Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Zukunftssicherung des Standortes Deutschland."

⁵³ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 166. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 10/166, Bonn, 1985.

⁵⁴ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 157. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

⁵⁵ For example, see: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 111. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/111, Bonn, 1992; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 122. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Zukunftssicherung des Standortes Deutschland."; Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 172. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 211. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 9. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."; Bundesregierung, "8. Sportbericht der Bundesregierung," Drucksache 13/1114, Bonn, 1995; Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 138. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/138, Bonn, 1996.

not a financial burden on society. We should be careful with blanket statements. [...] I believe that this will enable us to trigger fears of burdens...among the younger generation in the future. But we should not do that under any circumstances. These words and concepts exaggerate the problems. I think we must encourage the younger generation in particular to work with the older generation, to communicate with them, and not to see them as a burden.⁵⁶

Even though there was a push to view older generations in a different light and to not perpetuate negative stereotypes, there were reminders that not everyone ages well; some individuals still have difficulties with becoming older. For example, older women faced more challenges since they typically lived longer, which meant they lived alone, tended to be in poverty, and needed care. A main reason why older women were often in poverty was because the time spent providing childcare was not included in their pension payment. This result and these other factors were the basis for the arguments for the inclusion of this time in pension payments in order to help improve their situation.⁵⁷ Politicians also pointed out older individuals needing care or that were in poverty, as well as older immigrants, faced challenges.⁵⁸ Exclusion from society, which was related to improving generational relations, was a consequence of not being able to communicate or missing social relationships, having limited mobility and therefore, declining capabilities.⁵⁹ Therefore, even with the improvements in old age, it was important for policy makers to recognize the heterogeneity of the older population and recognize both the outstanding challenges and the current improvements that comes along with it.

B. Health: An Unignorable Need for Health Care Reform

Early on, debate and attention towards health-related topics was sparse and did not receive consistent attention by politicians and policy makers, but like other topic areas, it grew in the 1990s (Figure 27). It reached a high point in 1992 as legislation for health care reform was debated. Most of these discussions centered around long-

⁵⁶ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode." For other examples, see: Senioren Ausschuss für Familie, Frauen und Jugend, "Beschlußempfehlung und Bericht des Ausschusses für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (13. Ausschuß) zu der Unterrichtung durch die Bundesregierung," Drucksache 13/1900, Bonn, 1995.

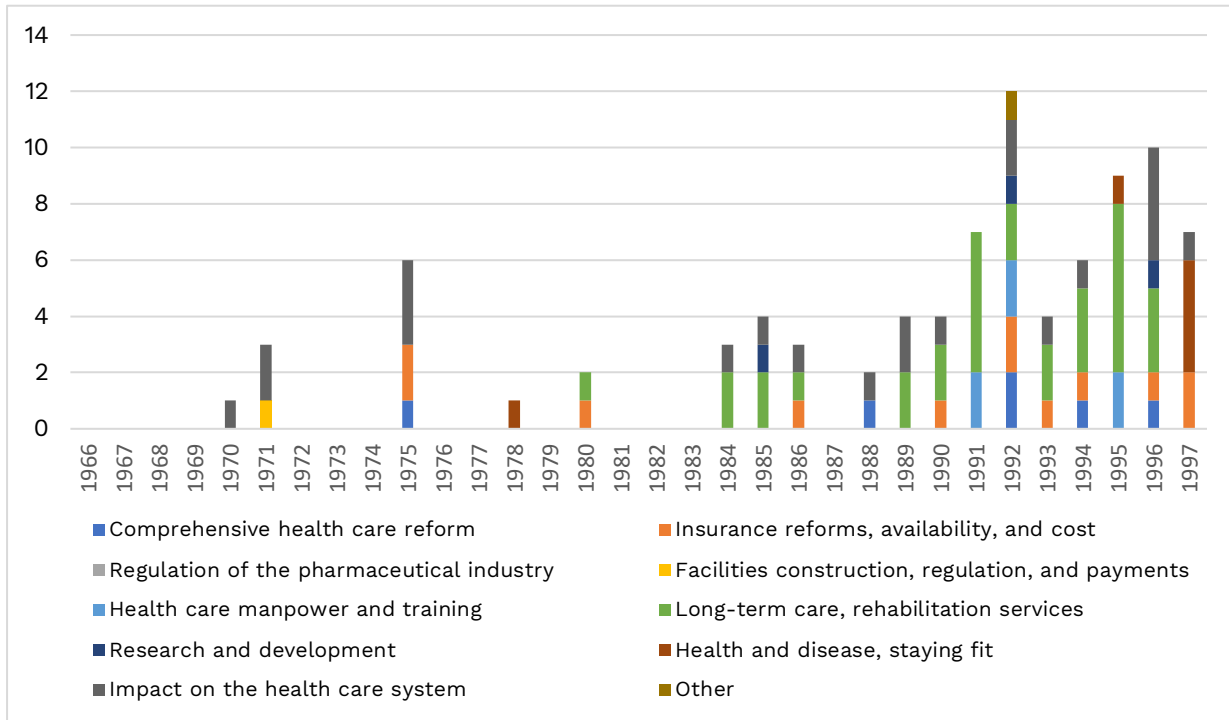
⁵⁷ Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Frau Dr. Daubler-Gmelin, Frau Fuchs (Köln), Bachmaier, Buschfort, Frau Blunck, Catenhusen, Dr. Diederich (Berlin), Egert, Frau Fuchs (Verl), Glombig, Frau Dr. Hartenstein, Heyenn, Frau Huber, Immer (Altenkirchen), Jaunich, Kirschner, Dr. Kübler, Kuhlwein, Frau Dr. Lepsius, Frau Luuk, Lutz, Frau Dr. Martiny-Glotz, Frau Matthäus-Maier, Müller (Düsseldorf), Frau Odendahl, Peter (Kassel), Frau Renger, Frau Schmedt (Lengerich), Frau Schmidt (Nürnberg), Frau Simonis, Frau Dr. Skarpelis-Sperk, Dr. Soell, Frau Steinhauer, Stiegler, Frau Terborg, Frau Dr. Timm, Frau Traupe, Frau Weyel, Frau Zutt, Dr. Vogel und der Fraktion der SPD - Drucksache 10/1738 - Lebensumstände älterer und hochbetagter Frauen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland."

⁵⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

⁵⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

term care, which is also related to the debate about legislation to standardize training to become professional caregivers. Regulation of the pharmaceutical industry, construction of more health care facilities, and research and development were sub-topics that were either not addressed or only received minor attention.⁶⁰

Figure 27: Health-Related Sub-Topics in Politics



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of health by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Minor attention was given to the construction of facilities in 1971 by Dr. Ferdinand Schmidt (SPD), who cited the changing age structure of the population and emphasized the increasing number of older people while debating the recently released health report (*Gesundheitsbericht*):

The aging of the population has certain consequences for planning, also with regard to hospitals and therapy. Additional beds must be available for older people. Geriatric treatment options must be available for older people. This must also be included in future legislation.⁶¹

The sub-topic of research and development also received minimal attention, generally related to calls for more research on the subject. During the debate about the GA about the living situation of older people in Germany, Dr. Karl Becker (CDU/CSU) stated, "Research into gerontology and geriatrics is far from complete and

⁶⁰ The "other" category also did not have any results, but it is not mentioned above since it is not related to a specific topic.

⁶¹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 108. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode."

must continue to be supported in view of demographic trends and the aging of our population.”⁶²

Some years later, Walter Link (CDU/CSU) named several areas where more research needed to be carried out, which should be studied by the proposed Study Commission “Demographic Change”. This included epidemiological studies about the distribution of disease among older people and the aging process itself.⁶³ By 1996, the calls for further research were more focused as the government addressed the ongoing importance of supporting research about dementia.⁶⁴ This interpellation was a sign that politicians were becoming more aware and informed about specific aspects of the situation: In addition to having recognized the growth of the older population, they were acknowledging its connection to the rise in cases of dementia and the potential challenges this could pose in the future. It was their responsibility to establish the necessary framework to help reduce the burden for those with dementia and those providing care.⁶⁵ In the response and during the debate in the Bundestag, the government said it was taking steps to improve the quality of life of those with dementia and their families in light of the impact of demographic change.⁶⁶

Impact on the health care system

Similar to the sub-topics identifying expected changes to the population composition or the number of older people in society, the sub-topic about impact on the health care system was a more general reference that could be applied in most cases. This typically involved statements like the one in the 1970 health report about the impact increased life expectancy would have on outpatient care and the response by Kurt Spitzmüller (FDP) to the report in the plenary session:

The orientation data within the third section, the stocktaking, force us to draw conclusions from which we must not avert our eyes. This is the development of our population. Its age structure, life expectancy, changes in the structure of employment, changes in the structure of households, and other factors place explosive demands on the whole health care system.⁶⁷

In 1975, there were several politicians during the debate of a GA about health care and a suggested health insurance reform for retirees that mentioned the growing

⁶² "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 166. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode."

⁶³ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

⁶⁴ Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Abgeordneten Regina Schmidt-Zadel, Ingrid Becker-Inglau, Dr. Ulrich Böhme (Unna), weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der SPD," Drucksache 13/5257, Bonn, 1996.

⁶⁵ Schmidt-Zadel et al.

⁶⁶ Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Abgeordneten Regina Schmidt-Zadel, Ingrid Becker-Inglau, Dr. Ulrich Böhme (Unna), weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der SPD.," Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 198. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/198, Bonn, 1997.

⁶⁷ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 108. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode."

demand on health care due to the larger older population.⁶⁸ The 1984 report about Germany's population development by the working group on old age questions also touched upon the variety of health care areas that will be impacted by the aging population:

With the increasing proportion of elderly people in the population, a large part of whom will live alone, it will be necessary to expand outpatient social services and assistance for families caring for the elderly, as well as to increase the number of places in housing, hospitals, and nursing homes for older people, with a corresponding impact on staffing and investment needs.⁶⁹

Challenges to finance the health care and pension systems were also discussed and the report stated that all areas of old-age provision would be affected. The effects of these changes related to adults would begin to be felt in the next 20 years, while it would take even more time for effects related to older people to be felt by organizations. Overall, this report was more comprehensive and relevant to policy makers because it explained the impact these population changes, including the aging population, would have on numerous aspects of the social system, like the health care and health insurance sector, public and private pension systems, and the labor market.⁷⁰

As time progressed, the reference to the impact on the health care system was often connected with other health-related issues. For example, Horst Seehofer (CSU), Minister for Health, mentioned in the debate about the reform of the public health insurance system, the need for reform due to increasing life expectancy. This increase typically meant more people will need some type of care in older age, which will also increase health insurance spending and the government wanted to make sure this reform would make it possible for them to continue to receive the care they need.⁷¹

Long-term care

Long-term care was often connected to impact on the health care system; these were the most common topics among policy makers related to health care. Particularly in the 1990s, the topic was consistently discussed and reached a high point in 1995 when the first round of debate to change nursing home laws occurred. There were occasional references to the topic beginning in the 1980s, usually related to the increasing demand for care services. In 1980, Braun (CDU/CSU) brought attention to the need to control the costs for care in nursing homes to ensure that people have

⁶⁸ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 176. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 7/176, Bonn, 1975.

⁶⁹ Bundesregierung, "Bericht über die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. 2. Teil: Auswirkungen auf die verschiedenen Bereiche von Staat und Gesellschaft."

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 166. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/166, Bonn, 1997.

humane living conditions in old age. As more people reach these higher ages, it would be essential to ensure a balance in the age and employment structure so these services can continue to be financed.⁷² The 1984 annual report from the German Council of Economic Experts mentioned the growing number of taxpayers that will be “burdened” with having to pay for care for older parents in the future due to aging.⁷³

Around this time, there was more focus on the need to expand care services: A 1984 response by the government to a KA about the living situation of older women and women requiring care highlighted the need to expand outpatient care due to the increasing number of older people, specifically women.⁷⁴ In the debate about the GA on the living situation and future perspectives of older people, Eberhard Bueb (Greens) emphasized improving outpatient care because women were the ones usually left to care for older people and the simultaneous increase in demand and strain on women will only grow in the coming years. Karl Delorme (SPD) cited statistics that more than 80 percent of older people needing care were cared for by family members, which was why he stressed the need to provide more assistance to care providers and access to care facilities.⁷⁵

The debate about the 1990 budget included calls to address the care needs of older people, which were only going to increase as time passed and life expectancy continued to increase. Rudolph Dreßler (SPD), then-Deputy Chairman of the SPD parliament group, called for a reform of the care system because of the growing number of people needing care. But these reforms could not just be left to the health insurance system. The changes in the age structure also created a need to find new ways to provide social security to those requiring long-term care, as well as provide more support for those acting as caretakers, both financial and tangible, to prevent caretakers from also needing care in the future. Hans-Gerd Strube (CDU/CSU) added to this by calling for improved rehabilitation services to prevent the need for long-term care.⁷⁶ In the 1991 federal budget debate, Minister Rönsch stated the governing

⁷² “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 205. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 8/205, Bonn, 1980.

⁷³ Der Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, “Jahresgutachten 1984/85 des Sachverständigenrates zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung,” Drucksache 10/2541, Bonn, 1984.

⁷⁴ Bundesregierung, “Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Frau Dr. Daubler-Gmelin, Frau Fuchs (Köln), Bachmaier, Buschfort, Frau Blunck, Catenhusen, Dr. Diederich (Berlin), Egert, Frau Fuchs (Verl), Glombig, Frau Dr. Hartenstein, Heyenn, Frau Huber, Immer (Altenkirchen), Jaunich, Kirschner, Dr. Kübler, Kuhlwein, Frau Dr. Lepsius, Frau Luuk, Lutz, Frau Dr. Martiny-Glotz, Frau Matthäus-Maier, Müller (Düsseldorf), Frau Odendahl, Peter (Kassel), Frau Renger, Frau Schmedt (Lengerich), Frau Schmidt (Nürnberg), Frau Simonis, Frau Dr. Skarpelis-Sperk, Dr. Soell, Frau Steinhauer, Stiegler, Frau Terborg, Frau Dr. Timm, Frau Traupe, Frau Weyel, Frau Zutt, Dr. Vogel und der Fraktion der SPD - Drucksache 10/1738 - Lebensumstände älterer und hochbetagter Frauen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.”

⁷⁵ Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 166. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode.”

⁷⁶ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 157. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode.”

coalition's goal was to expand outpatient care for older and disabled citizens, modernize nursing homes, and promote geriatric counselling, especially in the new German states.⁷⁷

In February 1990, the Study Commission "Structural Reform of Public Health Insurance" (*Enquete-Kommission "Strukturreform der gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung"*) released its final report.⁷⁸ It cited the long-term demographic change of the population structure and its impact on geriatric and psychiatric care, and care of chronically ill older patients. This was all related to the increase in risk of illness at older ages, which more people were reaching. The special needs of older people and the chronically ill with consideration of the demographic development and change in morbidity structures meant this would also need to be considered by inpatient care facilities. Specifically, the demand for inpatient care was expected to increase in the coming years due to the decline in the mortality rate and the birth rate. However, the report also cited empirical data that showed higher average age and a longer life expectancy did not have to mean an increase in inpatient care.⁷⁹

One factor that contributed to long-term care receiving so much attention in the 1990s was the effort to implement long-term care insurance. In the early 1990s, it was first announced by the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Norbert Blüm (CDU/CSU) that the government would work to create legislation to establish long-term care insurance. Starting in 1992, during the 1993 budget debate, Irmgard Karwatzki (CDU/CSU) cited the need to try and prevent citizens from needing long-term care as a remaining socio-political challenge facing the government, which would be solved by introducing long-term care insurance.⁸⁰ Minister Rönsch showed her support in her speech about the 1994 federal budget by citing the increasing risk of needing care in old age and the large number of those being cared for by family as reasons for long-term care insurance.⁸¹ As discussed in Chapter 4, the CDU/CSU faced a long road to pass this legislation, but was eventually able to come to an agreement with the FDP and the SPD by April 1994. However, even immediately after its passage, the legislation was not perfect, which was why Chancellor Kohl stated in his

⁷⁷ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 14. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

⁷⁸ This commission was initiated by the SPD in May 1987 with the argument that a structural reform of the health insurance system was necessary and it was important to have a large majority support the proposed reform in the future because this is a key aspect of the social security system. The Commission was agreed upon and established in June of that same year. See: "Endbericht der Enquete-Kommission "Strukturreform der gesetzlichen Krankenversicherung"," Drucksache 11/6380, Bonn, 1990.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 122. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

⁸¹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 172. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

government policy speech they still needed to solve how to finance long-term care insurance due to the continually growing number of older people needing care.⁸²

Another major legislative effort was to standardize training for professional caregivers. The resulting debates were sometimes coded with “health care labor force and training”. Following reunification, there were a number of areas that had to be addressed due to preexisting differences between the systems in the East and West. This included the care sector and how caregivers were trained. In 1991, Minister Rönsch declared her main goal was to strengthen and better support the independent lifestyle of older people, which included improving their living and care situation. She also mentioned reintroducing draft legislation for senior care (*Altenpflegegesetz*) that would improve the profession of caregiver and help make the caregiving sector more attractive.⁸³ During debate about the 1991 federal budget, she reiterated the new legislation was a main point for the BMFuS and that it was more than just improving the actual care facilities, but also about making sure there were enough professional caregivers to fill the demand. This would involve standardizing training and education for these positions to ensure that all older citizens received comprehensive care.⁸⁴

A debate about proposed legislation regarding caregiver training by the SPD and the PDS/Linke Liste was held in October 1992. Not all speakers referenced the increasing older population, but Erika Reinhardt (CDU/CSU) supported the idea of the nationwide standard care training because demographic developments proved that in the long-term, the country would have to deal with more people needing care. She also stressed the importance of creating the framework for comprehensive assistance services in a timely manner because it needed to be securely established.⁸⁵ This debate continued in 1995 with discussion about proposed legislation from the Bundesrat, as well as proposals for changes to the nursing home law. As stated by Minister of State Barbara Stolterfoht (SPD):

In view of demographic and social developments, it is imperative to structurally consolidate the profession of elderly care, to financially secure it, to further develop it professionally in line with the changing needs of the practice, and finally, to upgrade it in such a way that it is on an equal footing with care for the sick.⁸⁶

Parliamentary State Secretary Gertrud Dempwolf (CDU/CSU) repeated the need for more trained caregivers who have a standardized education, but she also stated the

⁸² “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 5. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 13/5, Bonn, 1994.

⁸³ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 6. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 12/6, Bonn, 1991.

⁸⁴ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 26. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 12/26, Bonn, 1991.

⁸⁵ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 111. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode.”

⁸⁶ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 58. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 13/58, Bonn, 1995.

need to continue negotiations and discussion of the details of this legislation within the parliamentary committees.⁸⁷ This statement is representative of the ongoing struggle that faced the parties to come to an agreement on this matter, which was eventually agreed upon in 2000. In part due to this difficulty to reach consensus about professional care training, the discussion around long-term care shifted to be centered more within the context of nursing home legislation.⁸⁸

Health insurance and health care reform

Other common health-related sub-topics were about health insurance reform and cost and comprehensive health care reform. In 1975, a debate was held about a GA from the CDU/CSU about the situation of the public health care system in conjunction with the first reading for legislation to reduce health insurance costs. Due to the economic recession, options were explored as to how to reduce government spending on the pension system, which tied into the health insurance system. The increasing health care costs and the growing number of pensioners meant that the expenditures for pensioners' health insurance had drastically risen. Therefore, the decision was made to carry out simultaneous cost control measures for both the health insurance and pension systems.⁸⁹ When these efforts were first discussed, several speakers mentioned the increasing number of older people that were contributing to this need for reform. Of the 21 members that spoke on this topic that day, only four mentioned the aging of the population. For example, Minister for Labor and Social Affairs Dr. Walter Arendt (SPD) claimed that the assumption should be made that health care costs will increase disproportionately to the development of income and costs, which is caused by the increased demands of pensioners and the change in the age structure.⁹⁰ In Spitzmüller's (FDP) argument, he had a more direct line of reasoning as to why changes need to be made:

[...] every day of extended life expectancy costs X D-Mark more than the previous one. We cannot and must not and do not want to change this dynamic. But neither should we sweep this dynamic under the rug. We must recognize and address it and must also recognize it as one of the reasons why this cost dynamism and cost explosion can be observed.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ For example, see: Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 138. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

⁸⁹ Aurelio Vincenti and Gerhard Igl, "Gesundheitswesen und Sicherung bei Krankheit und im Pflegefall," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Martin H. Geyer (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2008), 526-27.

⁹⁰ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 176. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode."

⁹¹ Ibid.

This debate about the consolidation of health care costs continued for the next several years and a final health care law was approved and passed in June 1977.⁹² Despite the handful of references to the aging population in the original debate in 1975, none of the following debates about the law, in either its original or amended form, were found in the results of the original keyword searches. Based on this, I argue that most politicians at that point in time did not attach importance to the impact of the aging population for the health care system. Instead, their focus was on the urgent need to reduce costs to the system in the short-term, not on what additional challenges the system could face in the future.

The 1986 report from the German Council of Economic Experts concluded that the expected demographic development would make the problems in health care worse. This was due to older people requiring more care and health insurance expenditures for pensioners being one and a half times higher than the average expenditure for a regular public health insurance user. As a result, in the future, there would be challenges to finance the system, just like the pension system. They recommended that either benefits decrease or become cheaper, otherwise the contribution rates would have to greatly increase.⁹³

By the 1990s, debates about long-term care insurance and public health insurance began: In 1992, legislation was put forth to structurally reform the health care system due to continually rising costs, but the government wanted to avoid increases that would lead to further income reductions.⁹⁴ Of the four speeches evaluated from the first round of debate, all speakers agreed that the current health care system needed reform due to these dramatic increases in expenditure. Both Health Minister Seehofer (CSU) and Wolfgang Lohmann (CDU/CSU) argued this spending increase was not due to the increasing older population, at least in the short-term. But Seehofer stated that within the next decade, the system would not be able to cope with the challenges related to demographic change and medical advancement. Dreßler (SPD), however, named the unfavorable demographic structure of society and the higher and still growing life expectancy as reasons for changing the health care system since these trends themselves cannot be changed. Christina Schenk (Greens) said the public health insurance revenue is dependent on demographic developments and the labor market. Due to continued mass unemployment and an increasing number of older citizens, the level of care and

⁹² Vincenti and Igl, 530. This was not the original law which was debated in 1975.

⁹³ Der Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, "Jahresgutachten 1986/87 des Sachverständigenrates zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung."

⁹⁴ Jürgen Wasem et al., "Gesundheitswesen und Sicherung bei Krankheit im Pflegefall," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Gerhard A. Ritter (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2007), 670-71.

contribution rates can only be maintained if the government also contributes.⁹⁵ The 1993 Social Report (*Sozialbericht*) called upon the need to consolidate public health insurance due in part to increased life expectancy. To better understand what steps needed to be taken, the BMG established a Committee of Experts for the Concerted Action in the Health Sector (*Sachverständigenrat für die Konzertierte Aktion im Gesundheitswesen*).⁹⁶

There were similar concerns about the ability to finance the private health insurance sector due to the increasing costs associated with increasing life expectancy, expressed by the government in a response to a KA posed by the SPD.⁹⁷ In a 1996 report by the independent expert commission looking at the increasing contributions to private health insurance in old age, they credited the Bundestag for acknowledging the problem of growing contributions, which had grown in the previous two decades due to rising life expectancy and health care costs. They stated the private insurance system would be able to cope with this change in life expectancy as long as updated data was used in their contribution rate calculations.⁹⁸

During a debate about the 1997 budget for the BMG, the need to find a way to make the health care system affordable and stable in the long-term was emphasized. This would require a reform of the system in part due to increasing life expectancy and demographic developments.⁹⁹ These ongoing debates about the need to reform the health insurance system led to legislation to reorganize the public health insurance system. In the final debate, Minister Seehofer argued they wanted to continue to be able to provide older citizens with access to quality care and services, while not excluding them from accessing public health insurance benefits. But increased life expectancy and the associated increased demand in health care services had led to the need for significant reforms that included more “cost sharing”, i.e., higher contribution rates by citizens for their health insurance.¹⁰⁰

It is clear that in these debates about health care, politicians were well aware of the impact increased life expectancy and a larger older population were having or

⁹⁵ Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 105. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 12/105, Bonn, 1992.

⁹⁶ Bundesregierung, “Sozialbericht 1993,” Drucksache 12/7130, Bonn, 1994.

⁹⁷ “Antwort der Bundesregierung der 12. Wahlperiode auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Lieselott Blunck (Uetersen), Angelika Barbe, Ingrid Becker-Inglau, Hans Gottfried Bernrath, Peter Buchner (Speyer), Dr. Ulrich Böhme (Unna), Dr. Marliese Dobberthien, Monika Ganseforth, Lothar Ibrügger, Dr. Uwe Jens, Dr. Karl-Heinz Klejdzinski, Walter Kolbow, Rolf Koltzsch, Horst Kubatschka, Brigitte Lange, Michael Müller (Düsseldorf), Doris Odendahl, Dr. Eckhart Pick, Dr. Sigrid Skarpelis-Sperk, Antje-Marie Steen, Dr. Peter Struck, Uta Titze-Stecher, Gudrun Weyel, Verena Wohlleben, Hans-Ulrich Klose und der Fraktion der SPD — Drucksache 12/4156 — Private Krankenversicherung II: Seniorentarif.”

⁹⁸ “Gutachten der Unabhängigen Expertenkommission zur Untersuchung der Problematik steigender Beiträge der privat Krankenversicherten im Alter,” Drucksache 13/4945, Bonn, 1996.

⁹⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 140. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 13/140, Bonn, 1996.

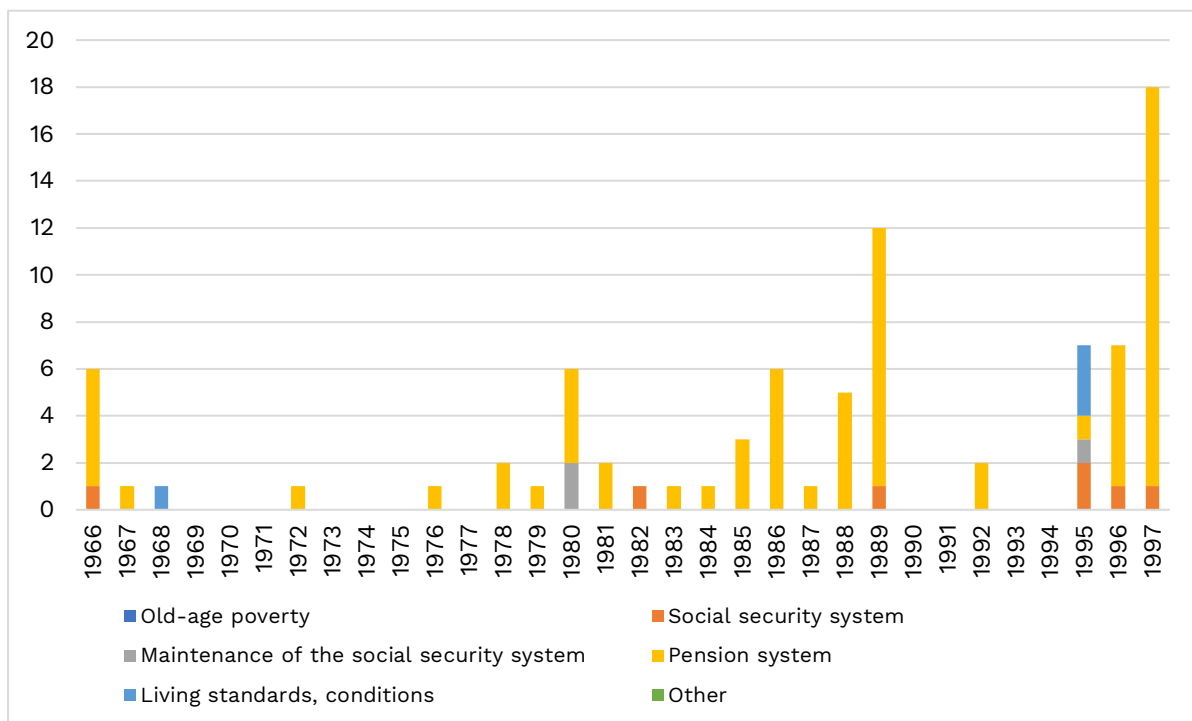
¹⁰⁰ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 166. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode.”

would have in the future. This tied into a range of reforms, from standardized training for professional caregivers, to improving long-term care and introducing long-term care insurance. Much of the attention went towards issues related to long-term care as this was heavily affected due to a growing demand for services. The growing health care expenditures by the government made it difficult for them to ignore.

C. Social Security: All About the Need to Reform the Pension System to Ensure Future Stability

The pension system is an important topic for politicians and policy makers (Figure 28). As mentioned in the last chapter, the pension system dates back to Bismarck and citizens expect the government to maintain the systems that are a cornerstone of society. Individuals are typically not interested in giving up or losing benefits once they start to receive them, making reforms an even greater challenge. This creates pressure and gives additional significance to the political decisions made about these issues. Therefore, this is an area that receives a great deal of attention, which is evident in this analysis of the debate surrounding the aging population and the social security system, specifically the pension system.

Figure 28: Social Security-Related Sub-Topics in Politics



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of social security by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

In this context of the aging population, old-age poverty did not receive attention. As with other sub-topics that were not addressed, this does not mean it was not discussed by policy makers, but within this context of the aging population and based on my keyword search, it was not addressed. Little attention was also given explicitly to the overall issue of the social security system. Alfred Dregger (CDU/CSU) mentioned in a 1982 debate the need to identify what is still possible for social policy and what aspect is the most important. In his opinion, this was ensuring phases of risk – unemployment, illness, and old age.¹⁰¹ During the agreed upon debate about the Study Commission “Demographic Change” in 1995, brief references were made by Link (CDU/CSU) about the need for the commission to check the social security system due to demographic and economic developments. Doris Barnett (SPD), however, claimed that the social security system was more dependent on the employment rate/unemployment rate, so focus should be placed on reducing unemployment in order to secure the social security system.¹⁰²

In 1995, the living conditions of older people were briefly addressed. BMFSFJ Minster Nolte reaffirmed the importance of one’s living environment on one’s attitude towards life, which was why the government was introducing a model program to develop future housing concepts that allow people to live independently in older age. She referred to the suggestion by the parliamentary committee for family, women, seniors, and youth to include the topic of housing in old age in the upcoming Report on the Elderly.¹⁰³ This model project was also referenced by the BMFSFJ Parliamentary State Secretary Dempwolf during the first round of debate about reforming nursing homes and old age care.¹⁰⁴

Beginning in 1966, the pension system and concerns about a *Rentnerberg* were addressed in the debate about the draft legislation for the third pension insurance amendment act (*3. Rentenversicherungs-Änderungsgesetz*) and was mentioned in the 1966 Social Report. Both focused on the increased financial strain the system would face as the number of older people increased. However, the reason for this increase was accredited to the impact of the two world wars on the population.¹⁰⁵ These early examples acknowledged the population was becoming older, but the concern in

¹⁰¹ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 127. Sitzung der 9. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 9/127, Bonn, 1982.

¹⁰² “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode.”

¹⁰³ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 30. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode.”

¹⁰⁴ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 58. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode.”

¹⁰⁵ This will be addressed in further detail in the section “Immigration, housing and community development, and science.” Bundeskanzler, “Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Entwicklung der wirtschaftlichen Leistungsfähigkeit und der Produktivität sowie die Veränderungen des Volkseinkommens je Erwerbstätigen und über die Finanzlage der gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung (Sozialbericht 1966) sowie das Gutachten des Sozialbeirats über die Rentenanpassung,” Drucksache V/940, Bonn, 1966; Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 62. Sitzung der 5. Wahlperiode,” Drucksache 05/62, Bonn, 1966.

relation to the pension system did not continue since the cause of the growing population was seen to be the two world wars (i.e., the impact would be temporary), not the increasing life expectancy, as stated by Arthur Killat (SPD).¹⁰⁶

There were a few mentions of the aging population in connection to the pension system during the 1970s. When addressed, the main concern was the ability to financially maintain the pension system as the older population grew and the younger population declined. These concerns were related to the decline in the birth rate and the burden facing younger generations to support the growing retired population.¹⁰⁷ The result would be an unfavorable ratio between workers (i.e., contributors) and pensioners (i.e., recipients) for the pension system.¹⁰⁸ Michael Glos (CDU/CSU) claimed in 1978 that the aging of the population is the result of an “anti-family” position, which had led to a continually shrinking number of working age contributors in relation to those receiving benefits:

Who will pay for the pensions of our generation? Who should pay for the pensions of the 20- and 30-year-olds? That’s what I am asking myself here. The burden of social security contributions and taxes on those in the labor market will become even more intolerable than it already is today. This can lead to young people leaving this country and turning their backs on it because they have less and less of their earned income.¹⁰⁹

This line of argumentation and concern was reiterated throughout the early 1980s.¹¹⁰ In the 1983 annual report by the German Council of Economic Experts, they expressed the need for reform because the old age burden would make it difficult for the social security system to function.¹¹¹ However, potential benefits from a declining younger population were also named. The decline in the younger population would mean

¹⁰⁶ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 62. Sitzung der 5. Wahlperiode."

¹⁰⁷ For example, see: Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Bundesregierung über die gesetzlichen Rentenversicherungen, insbesondere über deren Finanzlage in den künftigen 15 Kalenderjahren (Rentenanpassungsbericht 1972) und Gutachten des Sozialbeirats zu den Vorausberechnungen und zu den Rentenanpassungen 1973."; Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 255. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode."; Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Bundesregierung über die gesetzlichen Rentenversicherungen, insbesondere über deren Finanzlage in den künftigen 15 Kalenderjahren, gemäß §§ 1273 und 579, der Reichsversicherungsordnung, § 50 des Angestelltenversicherungsgesetzes und § 71 des Reichsknappschaftsgesetzes (Rentenanpassungsbericht 1979) und Gutachten des Sozialbeirats."

¹⁰⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 243. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 7/243, Bonn, 1976; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 104. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 8/104, Bonn, 1978; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 131. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 8/131, Bonn, 1979; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 193. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

¹⁰⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 104. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

¹¹⁰ For example, see: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 199. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 8/199, Bonn, 1980; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 205. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."; Sozialbeirat.

¹¹¹ Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung.

decreased spending in benefits, such as *Kindergeld* and education, which would help compensate for the increased expenditures related to the older population.¹¹²

Beginning in 1985, the movement to reform the pension system began with the first debate in the Bundestag on the adjustment of the pensions, the proposed pension reform law by the SPD, and proposed legislation by the government to change survivors' pensions and to recognize years spent raising children in the pension calculations. Minister Blüm opened the debate by emphasizing the need to ensure the security of the pension system. This included creating a system that can regulate itself based on changes to the population structure, e.g., an increase or decrease in the ratio of contributors to recipients. Through her response and introduction of the proposed legislation by the SPD, Anke Fuchs explained an important aspect of their proposal was changing the pension formula so there was equal distribution of the financial burden caused by a change in economic development and demographics. Ulf Fink, Senator for Health, Social Affairs and Family in Berlin (CDU) also agreed that the pension formula should have a demographic component; however, despite acknowledging that such burdens cannot be completely avoided, the distribution burden on groups in society should be prevented through family policies or changes in retirement age since life expectancy was increasing: "Much can be contributed to the consideration that in the long run, it cannot be right for people to retire earlier and earlier as life expectancy increases."¹¹³ Ultimately, this first attempt at pension reform by the SPD was rejected by the Bundestag in 1985.

The following year, a report was released by the Social Advisory Council about the long-term financial consolidation and systematic further development of the public pension insurance system. It cited the high level of unemployment, the lack of wage increases, and the unfavorable ratio between length of contribution and the length receiving a pension (due to a longer education period, early retirement, and longer life expectancy) as reasons for the current financial problems facing the statutory pension. But the biggest contributing factor was the growing older population. Even if the birth rate increased in the near future, it would only begin to have an impact 20 years later. The report mentioned the finances of the pension system were already being affected by these demographic changes and would only worsen in the future. Part of the council called for the prolongation of the working life, for example by limiting early retirement, which would help improve the long-term financial situation of the pension system. The council argued it should not fall on just

¹¹² For example, see: Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 205. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."; Bundesregierung, "Bericht über die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. 2. Teil: Auswirkungen auf die verschiedenen Bereiche von Staat und Gesellschaft."

¹¹³ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 115. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 10/115, Bonn, 1985.

one group to deal with this burden, but it was important that it was equally shared among all, like was argued in the 1985 debate. Regardless of the steps taken, the council did not agree with creating a sense of panic surrounding the topic, but efforts to address the situation should not be further delayed.¹¹⁴

In July 1986, the SPD submitted a GA about structural reform of old-age provisions. The SPD claimed that the steps taken by the CDU/CSU and FDP faction thus far had not provided long-term solutions to stabilize the pension system and therefore, the financing of the pension system was not secured for the future. It cited the important need for reform due to the presumed demographic developments in the coming decades that would result in a doubling of the old age burden. Additional burdens would come from continued high unemployment and increasing life expectancy.¹¹⁵ Minister Blüm's response to this GA was not coded because it did not specifically mention the issues being looked at for this research. However, he stressed that the government planned on reforming the pension system following the 1987 election, but at that time, believed the measures taken up to that point had created a more stable system that allowed for reforms in the coming years.¹¹⁶ This is mentioned because it provides context about the governing coalition's concern about pursuing pension reforms prior to an election; clearly, the party was more focused on securing re-election before addressing this longer-term issue.

Prior to the elections, the annual report from the German Council of Economic Experts published in November 1986 mentioned that the demands on the social system caused by demographic developments¹¹⁷ in the coming decades had yet to be addressed. Their report clearly stated there needed to be reform.¹¹⁸ These developments would create problems with security in old age and in the event when one falls ill or needs long-term care. Therefore, even though the full effects of demographic changes may not be felt right away, they should be addressed now. Potential improvements in Germany's demographic situation would only have minimal effects. Regarding the pension system, either contribution rates would have to

¹¹⁴ Der Sozialbeirats der Bundesregierung. During the discussion in the Bundestag of the findings of the report, Dr. Irmgard Adam-Schwaetzer (FDP) supported the findings and recommendations of the report, including the need to increase the period of contribution to the pension system due to people retiring earlier and living longer. She was also in favor of ensuring that the burden is shared among all members of society. See: Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 220. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 10/220, Bonn, 1986.

¹¹⁵ Fraktion der SPD, "Große Anfrage: Strukturreform der Alterssicherung," Drucksache 10/5857, Bonn, 1986.

¹¹⁶ Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Fraktion der SPD: Strukturreform der Alterssicherung," Drucksache 10/6294, Bonn, 1986.

¹¹⁷ Mainly attributed to a declining birth rate, which is the cause of the population aging.

¹¹⁸ The title of the section under question in the report was "Social Insurance – Time for Reform" (*Sozialversicherung – Zeit für Reform*). In: Der Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, "Jahresgutachten 1986/87 des Sachverständigenrates zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung."

increase, pension payments would have to decrease, or a combination of both to address the situation.¹¹⁹ This report was a call to action for the government to reform the social security system to support and address the impending demographic changes, specifically the increase in older people, Germany was to face in the future.

Following the re-election of the CDU/CSU and FDP in 1987, Chancellor Kohl recognized the need for a long-term plan that would help the nation deal with the consequences of demographic developments in his government policy statement. The country was confronted with new challenges due to impending population aging and the inversion of the population pyramid. In his speech, he said structural reform of the pension system was unavoidable due to demographic developments. Therefore, he announced that legislation would be proposed at the beginning of 1988 to reform the pension system.¹²⁰ The impact of this declaration to reform the pension system and the concerted efforts by the government to follow through on this reform are evident in the keyword search results beginning in 1988.

In the first debate about the 1988 pension adjustments¹²¹, Minister Blüm said the pension system had been secured, but only until the early 1990s. Thus, reforms were still needed because the age pyramid would begin to have a negative effect on the pension system, but they were in the process of working on them. He saw the increase in life expectancy as a positive development but acknowledged it would have financial consequences: “When the age pyramid of a society changes decisively, the pension system is most directly affected.”¹²² He called for a reform involving all members of society and believed that all citizens should share in this burden – a sentiment also echoed by his colleague Elmar Kolb (CDU/CSU).¹²³

The need for pension reform also arose in the debate about the 1989 budget. Gerda Hasselfeldt (CDU/CSU) continued to argue for a shared distribution among all citizens to help manage the impact of demographic developments on the pension system. She emphasized that the population was becoming older while the number of contributors was declining, but this specific older population included those that helped rebuild the country after the war, so it was important that everyone made sure their retirement was secured. Dieter-Julius Cronenberg (FDP), Vice President of the Bundestag, however, argued that because the basis of most retiree’s old age provision is their pension, it is important to not undertake measures that cause

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 4. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

¹²¹ This adjustment involved a suggested three percent increase in pensions and was approved by the Bundestag on March 10, 1988. "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 67. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 11/67, Bonn, 1988.

¹²² "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 61. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

¹²³ Ibid.

people to lose trust in the system. He agreed that both contributors and recipients share in the burden of stabilizing the system, but in the short-term, that meant increasing government subsidies, not contribution rates, in part because:

Since the actual demographic problems do not arise until after the year 2000, I think it is wrong to use the already limited scope for contribution rate increases too early. I hope that financial policy makers with the long term in mind will not be able to avoid such a consideration.¹²⁴

The 1988 annual report by the German Council of Economic Experts discussed the importance of the proposed reform to consider the long-term demographic development. This referred to the projection that by 2030, the number of pensioners was expected to be twice as high as the then-current number of pensioners. The council stated it was worth considering raising the age of retirement step-by-step since people were entering the labor market later – leading to a decrease in the time spent contributing to the system – and because people are living longer, they are receiving pensions longer. They also stressed that the change to the age structure would not just affect the pension system, but other areas:

This real economic problem associated with the change in the age structure of our population is independent of the form of old-age provision. There will also be serious consequences for other areas of social life.¹²⁵

The council mentioned the economic impact local governments would face because there would be an increase in older people needing care, but an inability by these individuals to afford the services they need. Therefore, social entitlements spending would increase because they would require more financial support in addition to actual care. As the number of pensioners increase and pension payments decline, the number unable to afford care services would continue to rise. The council warned that it was necessary to ensure that whatever restructuring took place in all areas of the social system (pensions, public health care, etc.) did not prevent economic growth, nor create any additional tax burdens.¹²⁶

Finally, in March 1989, the first round of debates about the proposed 1992 pension reform was held. This proposed legislation was put forth by the CDU/CSU, FDP, and SPD. In the three speeches coded, all speakers agreed that the increase in life expectancy was a positive development, but reforms were necessary. As part of the reform, Minister Blüm proposed creating more flexibility for workers to decide when they want to retire and to incrementally increase the retirement age. The reason was the rising life expectancy, which necessitated increased pension spending.

¹²⁴ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 91. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 11/91, Bonn, 1988.

¹²⁵ Der Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung, "Jahresgutachten 1988/89 des Sachverständigenrates zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung," Drucksache 11/3478, Bonn, 1988.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

If there were no changes made to the retirement age, then the other option would be to decrease benefits by up to 20 percent in the coming decades. In his speech, Cronenberg (FDP) represented a slightly altered position from the previous year by supporting an increase in the contribution rates and government subsidies. He also lauded the proposed increase in retirement age. However, he reminded the audience that it was still possible for projections to change, particularly due to immigration from the European single market or foreign countries. Horst Günther (CDU/CSU) began by immediately citing the need to tackle future demographic developments as the reason for pension reform. But, in his opinion:

The pension system would be the inappropriate system to respond to the aging of the population. The task must be to relieve the pension system of the consequences of an aging society. It should not be made to bear additional burdens due to aging.¹²⁷

Chancellor Kohl also supported this joint legislation due to the foreseeable difficulties that will be the result of the aging of the population. As he argued, this reform was about securing the later life years of a population that had already been through a lot and deserved additional affection from the government.¹²⁸

The first round of debate and Chancellor Kohl's comment show that consensus had been reached among all the political parties that the population was aging, and it needed to be addressed. The general viewpoint was that the increasing life expectancy and aging was a positive development. A report by the Committee for Labor and Social Affairs (*Ausschuss für Arbeit und Sozialordnung*) on the various proposed pension reforms made it clear that demographic developments were a leading reason behind the need for reform. The reasons why the various political parties supported the legislation was also included in the report.¹²⁹ For example, all the parties were concerned about securing the pensions and adapting the system based on economic, demographic, and social developments. The CDU/CSU was worried about maintaining the framework and principles established by the 1957 pension reform that enabled retirees to maintain their standard of living in retirement and prevent the older, retired generation from being pushed out of society. Members of both SPD and FDP faction cited the necessity to financially stabilize the pension system due to the future demographic burdens and to equally distribute this burden among all participants. The SPD also saw the need for consensus for a reform that

¹²⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 132. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

¹²⁸ "It is about securing the twilight years of a generation, especially now and today, which has experienced enough agitation and infestation in their lives and which thus deserves our special affection." In: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 156. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 11/156, Bonn, 1989.

¹²⁹ This also included proposals by the Greens and various reports by the government.

wanted to restore trust and reliability in generational solidarity, while the FDP saw the importance of a solution that received broad consensus in the Bundestag.¹³⁰

In addition, this report by the Committee for Labor and Social Affairs recognized that:

Despite the uncertainty as to whether the labor market situation would allow the age limits to be raised, decisions had to be made already to provide the insured with the necessary orientation data for their life planning.¹³¹

This statement is evidence that policy makers were aware of the need to act, even if the main consequences of these changes to the age structure were in the future. By reaching a consensus, a sense of political security was created among the parties so that no single party could be targeted if the proposed legislation was unpopular among the general public, making it possible for the reform to pass.

During the second and third readings of the draft legislation, the long-term nature of the problem and the need for a long-term solution were reiterated. Günther (CDU/CSU) stressed that this proposed legislation would be valid past 1995:

We are not creating a pension reform until 1995, but rather, we are creating a pension reform which will be valid starting in 1992, but which will not really take effect until 1995, particularly because of demographic developments.¹³²

He went on to argue that the government needed to address the working lifetime because the trend of education taking longer/delaying entrance into the labor market and the increasing life expectancy was likely to continue. Therefore, changes should be made now when the effects seem minimal, before they increase in the future. Cronenberg (FDP) made similar arguments that the pension reform was necessary because of the need to adjust the system to these demographic developments in a timely manner, which again deviates from his original stance in 1988.¹³³

The legislation was officially passed on November 9, 1989, shortly before the announcement that the German border had opened, with only two abstentions. In the years following this reform, the amount of attention given specifically to the pension system dramatically decreased. The debate picked up again in 1996 because of the new need for reform and uncertainty about the system's future stability. This started with a debate held after the SPD posed a GA about the financial situation of the pension system, and the Social Advisory Council published a report on the 1995 pension system (*Rentenversicherungsbericht 1995*). Dreßler (SPD) claimed it had been known for some time – even in 1989 when the last pension reform was debated –

¹³⁰ Ausschuss für Arbeit und Sozialordnung.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 174. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode." This specific debate included more speakers that mentioned demographic change; however, they were not coded because they did not specifically mention the aging of the population when referring to demographic change.

¹³³ Ibid.

that demographic developments would require additional adjustments to the system. However, in the same speech, he argued there were still unsolved issues related to financing the system that would start after 2010, but due to the steps taken in the 1992 reform, the system was secure for the next 15 years. His speech acknowledged the need to make more changes, but also gave the impression that he would rather wait to make these changes. Petra Bläss (PDS) had a similar argument that though these challenges would begin in 2010, they should begin to take steps to address them. During this early discussion, the majority of speakers already agreed that the aging population was a big contributor to the need for another pension reform.¹³⁴

In 1997, the CDU/CSU and FDP introduced legislation for a new reform. A leading concern behind the proposed reform was the increase in life expectancy, which resulted in people receiving pensions longer and increased strains and costs on the system. When introducing the bill, Minister Blüm argued:

At the center of our proposals is intergenerational justice, the fair burden-sharing between young and old. We live longer. That is welcome. Pensions will therefore also be paid longer. In 1960, the average period of pension entitlement, i.e. the period during which someone received a pension, was 10.1 years. In 1996, it was 15.9 years, so almost six years longer. Everyone is allowed that. We're striving for this ourselves.¹³⁵

Therefore, a formula was introduced that would serve to compensate for this rise in life expectancy. According to Minister Blüm, the increase in life expectancy and associated increase in time receiving a pension would be addressed by distributing the earned pension payment over a longer period of time, meaning the pensions would not increase as fast as in the past. This suggested demographic-based component to the pension formula was a strong indication that there was a need to take the increases in life expectancy into greater consideration. However, Dreßler (SPD) disagreed and continued to argue the pensions were fine for the next 15 years, so there was no need to make cuts in payments. He was skeptical of this proposed demographic factor, arguing that demography is more than just life expectancy, but also includes the birth rate and migration.¹³⁶

Between the two debates about the proposed legislation, the debate about the 1998 budget was held, which included discussion about the work of the BMAS and its efforts to reform the pension system. Minister Blüm used his speaking time to make the case again for his proposed pension reform. He argued for the need to respond now to the challenges facing the system instead of waiting:

¹³⁴ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 138. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

¹³⁵ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 185. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

¹³⁶ Ibid.

If you reply: "We will not respond to demographic change until 2015", then I say: I don't understand that at all. It's not like life expectancy will not rise until 2016; the issue is arising now. It's like if you said in the face of rising tides: "We are building the dams in 2015." [...] An answer must now be given.¹³⁷

Gisela Babel (FDP) also argued that the government could not put off reacting to the improved life expectancy because a lack of action will catch up to them. In addition, the objective of the pension reform was to stabilize the contribution to the pension system below 20 percent in order to achieve a new and fair generational agreement.¹³⁸

This emphasis on the generational aspect was continued during the final debate about the proposed pension reform. Wolfgang Vogt (CDU/CSU) made the argument that the older generation was aware of the increased life expectancy and the need to receive a pension longer since they were currently experiencing it. The need to share the burden equally among the generations, according to him, was understood and accepted by the older and younger generations since this was discussed between families. Other speakers on behalf of the CDU/CSU continued to argue the importance of maintaining equity between the generations and sharing the costs. The FDP, as coalition partner, was also in favor of this legislation: Babel acknowledged the effect of demographic change and agreed that longer receipt of a pension means that it should not increase as quickly. She called on citizens to take it more upon themselves to establish personal retirement savings. The SPD was the main voice of opposition and continued to argue there was still time to find other solutions to address the situation. Ulrike Mascher (SPD) even cited experts from an official hearing, who agreed that a demographic factor would lead to a decline in pensions:

The DGB [German Trade Union Confederation], the social associations, the women's organizations, but also the chairman of the Social Advisory Council of the Federal Government, Professor Schmähl, and other respected scientists consider the lowering of the pension level to be problematic and socially irresponsible.¹³⁹

Once the final votes were cast, the vote fell along party lines with the CDU/CSU and FDP voting in favor of the legislation and the SPD, the Greens, and the PDS voting against it.¹⁴⁰ Unlike the 1992 pension reform, consensus was not achieved, which, at least in the case of the SPD, was because of the addition of the demographic factor to the pension formula and the belief there was still time to find a long-term solution to financing the pension system. This was a shift in their position

¹³⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 189. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/189, Bonn, 1996.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 198. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

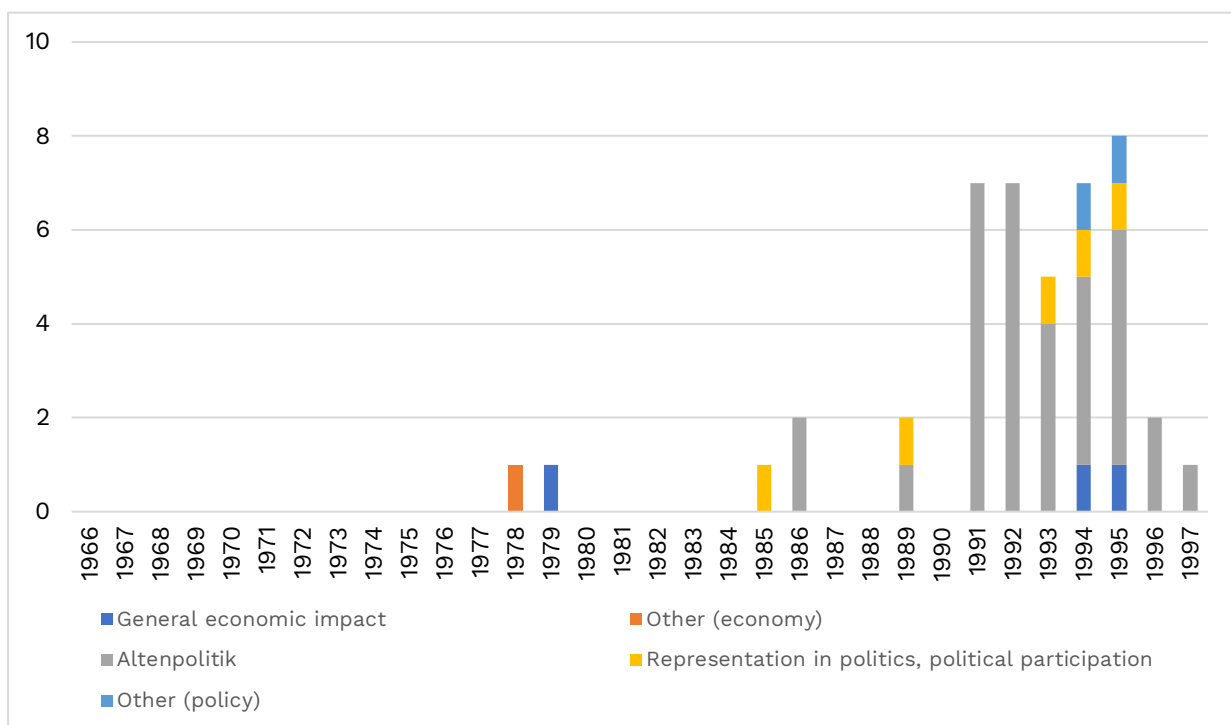
¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

as they argued during the debate about the 1992 pension reform that action need to be taken sooner rather than later.

D. Economy, Policy, and Politics: Old Age Policy Reached the Political Agenda in 1989, While Economy-Related Concerns Remained at a Minimum

The German economy was a major topic during this time due to the recession(s) that were sparked by the two oil crises. However, as Figure 29 clearly illustrates, the aging population within the economic context was not heavily discussed in the political realm. But as one could expect, attention was given to old age policy with minor reference to the political participation and representation of older people in politics. Since old age policy was related to all policy areas addressing the older population, the observation by Klose that the issue of the aging population reached the agenda by the late 1980s, early 1990s is visible in Figure 29.

Figure 29: Economy, Policy, and Politics-Related Sub-Topics in Politics



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of economy by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Starting with the economic debates, in 1978, as the economy appeared to have overcome the first oil crisis, Franz Josef Strauß (CSU) spoke during a debate about the annual budget where he criticized the government for its high level of debt. To help ease the situation, he called on a greater willingness by the people to be independent, to take initiative, and to be proactive, but in his mind, the government

had weakened these abilities due in part to the aging of the population.¹⁴¹ The following year, during the ongoing debate to finalize the annual budget, Kohl (CDU/CSU) cited the obvious economic impact the declining birth rate, the aging population, and the change to the population structure were having as why the government should not hide information about the population's development.¹⁴² This latter example is a more specific reference to the aging population and its economic impact than the former. But, as previously stated, the economic impact was not referred to often and was not mentioned again until a 1994 debate about the Report on the Elderly and the midterm report of the Study Commission "Demographic Change". In this debate, Hans A. Engelhard (FDP) acknowledged the economic power the older population:

Older citizens will, however, not only receive more and more weight in public elections, but also as consumers in the economy. By the year 2000, a quarter of all financial and property assets will belong to those over 65. This economic power will then use its purchasing power to force production to be oriented towards their needs.¹⁴³

His observation ties in with research making similar arguments at that time that the economy would need to adapt to the needs and demands of older consumers.

Compared to the economy-related sub-topics, policy and political-related sub-topics were more commonly discussed. However, these issues were not addressed until the mid-1980s, which could be due to the early belief that the aging population in the 1960s was of a result of the two world wars (i.e., temporary impact and something that would eventually be overcome)¹⁴⁴ and the need to focus on rebuilding the economy after the two oil crises. In this context, the topic grew slowly and received significantly more attention during the 1990s.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, politicians started to recognize the increased participation of older people in politics. In the government's response in 1985 to the GA on the living situation and future perspectives of older people, they praised older people for becoming more involved in publicly representing their needs, as well as efforts by political parties to recognize their needs by appointing a representative for older people and addressing their concerns in the party platforms.¹⁴⁵ Minister Lehr

¹⁴¹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 69. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 8/69, Bonn, 1978.

¹⁴² "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 131. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

¹⁴³ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

¹⁴⁴ I will discuss this line of argumentation more in the science section below.

¹⁴⁵ Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Abgeordneten Braun, Kroll-Schlüter, Frau Augustin, Breuer, Dolata, Dr. Hoffacker, Link (Diepholz), Frau Männle, Sauer (Stuttgart), Schlottmann, Werner, Frau Dr. Adam-Schwaetzer, Cronenberg (Arnsberg), Eimer (Fürth), Frau Dempwolf, Frau Verhülsdonk, Dr. Olderog, von Schmude, Müller (Wesseling), Biehle, Eylmann, Lenzer, Krey, Dr. Kunz (Weiden), Schulze (Berlin), Dr. Jobst, Schemken, Sauer (Salzgitter), Weiß, Dr. Möller, Kittelmann, Schmitz (Baesweiler), Lowack, Jung (Lörrach), Frau Roitzsch (Quickborn), Dr. Hüsch, Dr. Riedl (München), Dr. Rose, Schreiber, Dr.-Ing. Kansy, Dr. Schroeder (Freiburg), Dr.

expressed a similar sentiment in 1989.¹⁴⁶ In the 1990s, there was a greater impetus by politicians to improve how well they address the needs of older people. This was in part due to the realization of their growing political influence, as exemplified by a statement by Konstanze Wegner (SPD):

Ladies and gentlemen, the elderly are not a marginalized group; they are about to become the largest group in society. In the future, they will have a much greater say in politics than they have had in the past. Therefore, I believe that politics at all levels is called upon to secure the framework conditions for humane aging.¹⁴⁷

Engelhard also recognized the growing interest in politics by older people but wondered if they actually felt represented by the Bundestag since the number of older parliamentarians was relatively low.¹⁴⁸ The following year, Minister Nolte also stressed the need to make sure policy is for older people and includes them.¹⁴⁹ From these examples, it is clear that politicians recognized that older people were becoming more active to make sure their needs were addressed, but they also realized their growing size would impact elections, making them an even more important group that deserved ample attention.¹⁵⁰

Related to this recognition of the growing interest in politics by older people, there was also acknowledgement of the need to address the needs of older citizens. For Germany, the discussion specifically about old age policy began in the mid-1980s. The first two references in 1986 were during meetings of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe where discussions were held about the economic and social consequences of the aging European population. The assembly called on the member states to take steps to deal with the consequences of an aging population.¹⁵¹ In 1989, during the debate about the 1990 budget of the BMJFFG, Minister Lehr announced that the government would focus more on old age policy:

Overcoming the problems that will arise in the coming years and decades from the profound changes in the age structure of our population is one of the major socio-political challenges of the near future. Today, every fifth German citizen is older than 60. In about ten years, it will be more than every fourth. At the beginning of the next millennium, policy for the elderly will affect a good third of our entire population.¹⁵²

Pohlmeier, Dr. Czaja, Link (Frankfurt), Frau Geiger, Pohlmann, Zierer, Dr. Miltner, Spilker und der Fraktionen der CDU/CSU und FDP."

¹⁴⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 157. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

¹⁴⁷ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 193. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/193, Bonn, 1993.

¹⁴⁸ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

¹⁴⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 67. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

¹⁵⁰ There was some pushback to this notion, i.e., the motion for a resolution put forth by the Green party about the situation of young people. This was addressed in the previous society section.

¹⁵¹ Die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates.

¹⁵² Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 157. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

To carry out these efforts, she called for the BMJFFG budget to be doubled to 18 million Deutsche Mark in 1990. This was a significant moment because following this announcement, the topic grew. Here declaration seemed to mark the point in time when old age policy reached the political agenda.

Even though the issue was not discussed in 1990 – likely due to focus on reunification efforts – the conversation picked back up in 1991. By then, the BMFuS had been established. Minister Rönsch announced in 1991 the establishment of the Federal Plan for Old Age, which was to be similar to the Federal Plan for Young People (*Bundesjugendplan*). The goal was to stimulate potential policy for the older population: Helping them participate and remain independent in old age, reforming long-term care and international old age policy, and improving the situation of older people in the new German states.¹⁵³ Despite the declaration by Minister Lehr in 1989 and the announcement of the Federal Plan for Old Age, the opposition thought the governing coalition was not doing enough to adequately address the situation of older people. Wegner (SPD) claimed the government did not address older people in the coalition agreement or in its government policy statement.¹⁵⁴ In addition, she criticized the reduction in spending for socio-political measures for older people in the 1991 federal budget:

The appropriations for the measures for the older generation – I believe this was Mrs. Lehr's former favorite child – are now being cut, even though the number of elderly people in our society – at least according to my information – is constantly increasing.¹⁵⁵

The budget for the following year included an increase in spending for the Federal Plan for Old Age, which Minister Rönsch argued was a good approach to combat the demographic challenges expected in the coming years and decades. However, even though Wegner was in favor of this budget increase, she was skeptical of the government's ability to implement clear old age policy:

What is needed is a policy for the elderly that takes account of the change in the concept of age, takes account of demographic change, ensures the equal participation of the elderly in society, and attempts to defuse the potential conflict between generations. If this should also be the goal of a future government old age policy, it will find the support of the opposition, but so far there have been no clarifications, only more or less nebulous slogans.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Irene Gerlach and Walter Hornstein, "Familien-, Jugend- und Altenpolitik," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Gerhard A. Ritter (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2007), 853-54.

¹⁵⁴ For example, see: Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 14. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 26. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

¹⁵⁵ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 14. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

¹⁵⁶ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 61. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/61, Bonn, 1991.

Minister Rönsch continued to refer to the Federal Plan for Old Age as the main driver of the government's old age policy and members of the SPD continued to argue the government was not doing enough for old age policy.¹⁵⁷

Even as debate continued about the effectiveness of the government's old age policies, debate also included discussion around what are the various aspects of old age policy. Points were made emphasizing the need for old age policy to be diverse and to consider the differences among the older population, specifically the growing number of older immigrants retiring and living in Germany.¹⁵⁸ Others stressed that responsible old age policy addresses population development early and it is not just about (long-term) care. It should also include services that allow retired citizens to remain active and educate older people about their rights.¹⁵⁹ It was clear that the need for old age policy was recognized by policy makers. Through the Study Commission "Demographic Change", policy makers would be able to gain more insight into the issue and receive necessary recommendations for future-oriented, old age policy.¹⁶⁰ Following the mid-term report of the commission and the debate about the prolongation of the commission, the number of references to old age policy declined in 1996 and 1997.

E. Labor, Employment, and Unemployment: A Push for Longer Working Lives and More Flexible Retirement

The majority of mentions of labor-related sub-topics were focused on the labor supply (e.g., the aging workforce) and labor market reforms (Figure 30). Particularly in the policy debates, retirement was closely related to the pension system, but it was still categorized as a labor topic. Based on the evidence, the discussion around labor-related issues and the aging population was mainly centered around encouraging and making it possible for older people to work longer. It was clear that policy makers

¹⁵⁷ For example, see: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 172. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 193. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 211. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

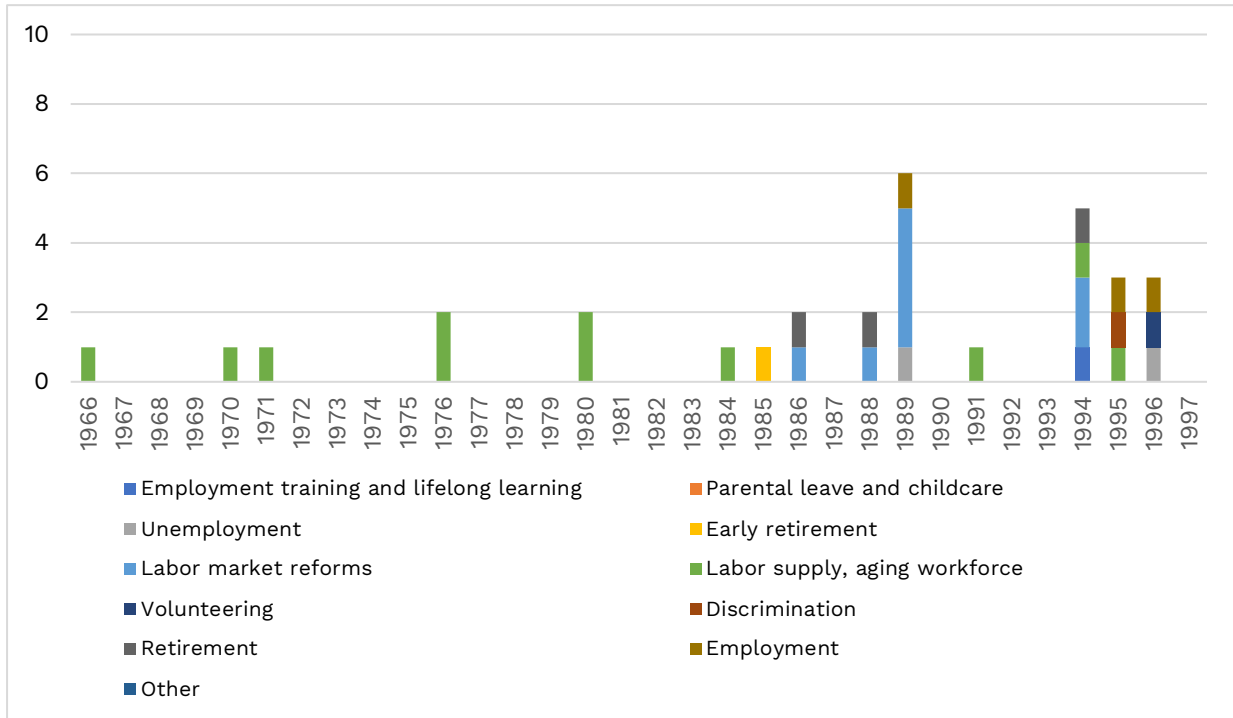
¹⁵⁸ For example, see: Andres et al; Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Abgeordneten Gerd Andres, Konrad Gilges, Gerlinde Hämmerle, weitere Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der SPD," Drucksache 12/5796, Bonn, 1993; Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 235. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/235, Bonn, 1994; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 9. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

¹⁵⁹ For example, see: Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Erika Reinhardt, Marlies Pretzlaff, Michael Wonneberger, Dr. Manfred Lischewski, Dr. Winfried Pinger und der Fraktion der CDU/CSU sowie der Abgeordneten Roland Kohn, Dr. Irmgard Schwaetzer, Dr. Helmut Haussmann und der Fraktion der F.D.P.," Drucksache 13/5246, Bonn, 1996; Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 52. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 13/52, Bonn, 1995; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 67. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 138. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

¹⁶⁰ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 58. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 67. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

understood the need, at least in the late 1980s and early 1990s, for people to work longer due to the aging population.

Figure 30: Labor-Related Sub-Topics in Politics



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of labor by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Discussions about labor-related issues occasionally took place in the early years, but mainly involved mentioning the aging labor supply. These changes in the labor supply were accredited to changes to the population structure caused by aging. For example, the 1966 Social Report stated:

The decline in the employment rate, which is also likely to continue in the coming years, is not a consequence of changes in the behavior of people of working age, but above all, is a result of the demographic structural changes of the German population, which can be summarized as an expression of – in all likelihood temporary – "over-aging".¹⁶¹

These eventual changes would contribute to potential labor shortages, which was a concern for policy makers.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Bundeskanzler, "Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Entwicklung der wirtschaftlichen Leistungsfähigkeit und der Produktivität sowie die Veränderungen des Volkseinkommens je Erwerbstätigen und über die Finanzlage der gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung (Sozialbericht 1966) sowie das Gutachten des Sozialbeirats über die Rentenanpassung."

¹⁶² For example, see: "Aufzeichnung über die Regionalpolitik in der Gemeinschaft," Drucksache VI/1397, Bonn, 1970; "Materialien zum Bericht zur Lage der Nation 1971," Drucksache VI/1690, Bonn, 1971; Bundesregierung, "Entwurf der Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften für das vierte Programm für die mittelfristige Wirtschaftspolitik," Drucksache 7/5851, Bonn, 1976; Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 243. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode.";

The majority of the reforms suggested were related to increasing the age of retirement with the objective of keeping people in the labor force longer. Senator Fink (CDU/CSU) mentioned early retirement during a debate about pension reform in 1985, but he argued that in the long-term, people should not continue to retire early when life expectancy continues to rise.¹⁶³ Due to the increase in life expectancy and later entrance into the labor market caused by longer periods spent in education, people should be encouraged to work longer. It was not feasible for the pension system to maintain itself if people spent more time in retirement, but less time contributing to the system. Particularly during debates about changes to the pension system, a prolongation of working life was a common suggestion.¹⁶⁴ For example, a report by the Committee for Labor and Social Affairs on the proposed 1992 pension reform used this argument to support the incremental increase in retirement age, which was eventually agreed upon and included in the approved legislation.¹⁶⁵

Having people work longer led to the discussion about how to make it possible for older people to remain in the labor force. Irmingard Schewe-Gerigk (Greens) argued that policy was best suited for 35-year-old males and labor market policy needed to eliminate measures that excluded people from working based on their age. Instead, measures should be implemented that restructured the labor market in an age-appropriate manner.¹⁶⁶ In the Fifth Family Report, it discussed the impact an older labor force would have on the demands of both young and old employees. To balance the performance requirements among the generations, an exchange of new knowledge and experience should be facilitated. Therefore, lifelong learning and training were suggested as tools to help ensure that knowledge does not become outdated and help workers remain up to date.¹⁶⁷

In addition to prolonging working life, Hans-Joachim Fuchtel (CDU/CSU) suggested greater flexibility in how long an individual works:

"Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 205. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."; Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Abgeordneten Dr. Lammert, Wissmann, Dr. Unland, Dr. Freiherr Spies von Bullesheim, Müller (Wadern), Kittelmann, Hinrichs, Schulze (Berlin), Borchert, Frau Fischer, Pesch, Frau Roitzsch (Quickborn), Dr. von Wartenberg, Dr. Jobst, Dr. Hornhues, Dr. Hüsch, Dr. Olderog, Herkenrath, Daweke, Dr. Möller und der Fraktion der CDU/CSU sowie der Abgeordneten Dr. Haussmann, Grünbeck, Beckmann, Dr.-Ing. Laermann, Gattermann, Hoffie, Cronenberg (Arnsberg), Dr. Solms und der Fraktion der FDP," Drucksache 10/2629, Bonn, 1984; Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

¹⁶³ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 115. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode."

¹⁶⁴ For example, see: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 61. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 132. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 174. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

¹⁶⁵ Ausschuss für Arbeit und Sozialordnung.

¹⁶⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

¹⁶⁷ Bundesregierung, "Fünfter Familienbericht: Familien und Familienpolitik im geeinten Deutschland - Zukunft des Humanvermögens," Drucksache 12/7560, Bonn, 1994.

The average retirement age is constantly getting lower, life expectancy is getting longer – despite the environmental hysteria. Of course, I am not ignoring the tension between the retirement age and the existing level of unemployment. But after a medium-term period, this aspect will become less and less important. The pension period – or, to put it another way, the pension volume over the whole period – will then have to decrease. Under these conditions, flexible transitions from working life to retirement will become much more important.¹⁶⁸

This option for more flexibility in deciding when to retire was included in the 1992 pension reform through a combination of part-time work and part-time retirement. Link (CDU/CSU) praised this measure as a way to change how retirement was viewed: Instead of going from working full-time to a complete stop, it was easier to transition into retirement. He argued that this option was necessary for better future-oriented old age policy and it helped to humanize the move to retirement.¹⁶⁹ Eberhard Bueb (Greens) supported more flexibility in the decision to retire, but he was the only one to disagree with raising the retirement age.¹⁷⁰ But as the unemployment rate increased in the 1990s, a simple solution to create jobs was to remove older workers from the labor market; however, Diemers (CDU/CSU) argued this was not a long-term solution. She recommended labor market policy that unites the generations and provides more opportunities for older people to continue to work. This tied into the previously mentioned labor market reforms, such as lifelong training, flexible working arrangements, and easier entrance to part-time retirement.¹⁷¹

F. Immigration: The Potential to Ease the Demographic Situation, but Also a New Challenge for Old Age Care

Discussions related to immigration were not a heavily addressed topic among policy makers. There were a handful of mentions about the roles immigrants could play in population maintenance, the labor market, and the social security system, but not all references saw their presence as a positive (Figure 31). It is clear the issue of aging had grown among policy makers, but especially the examples coded as “other” show a growing awareness of the diversity of the older population and the difference in needs of this group in the future. This shift in 1992 to more positive attitudes began following attacks in Rostock, Germany on a building housing asylum seekers. This event and the changing sentiments in the country towards immigrants in the period leading up to the attack were likely a major influence on the discussions carried out during this time. Politicians were likely more apt to make public statements

¹⁶⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 61. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

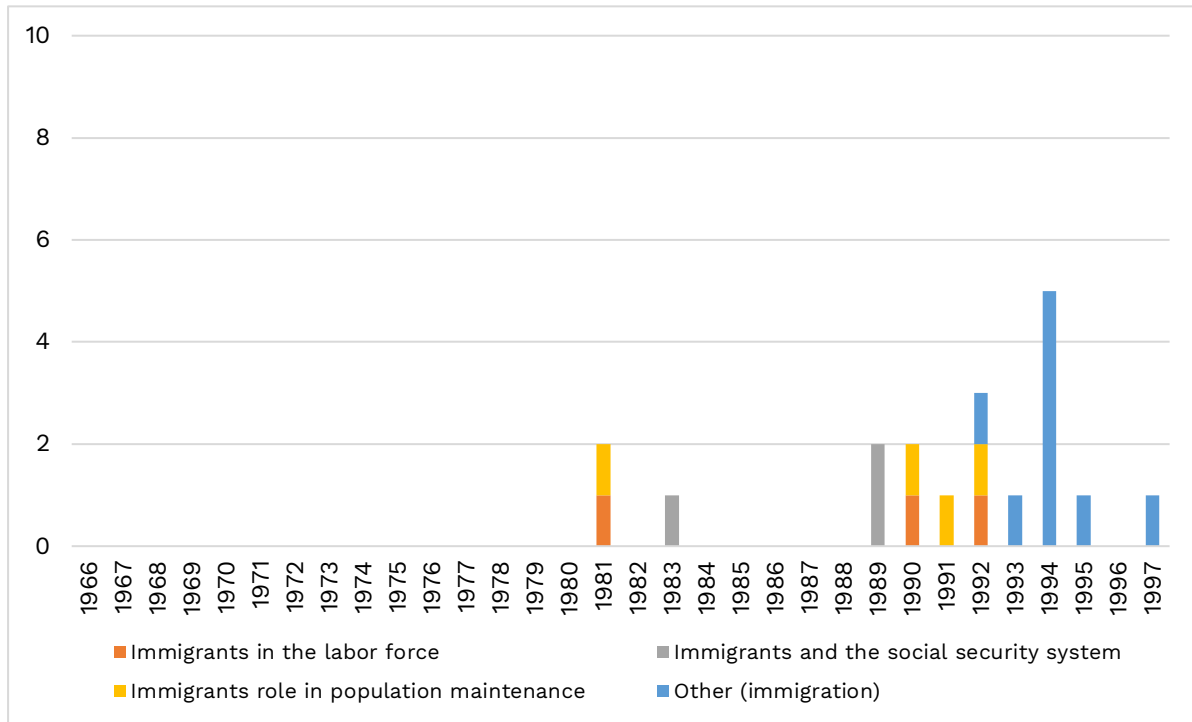
¹⁶⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 9. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

¹⁷⁰ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 220. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode."

¹⁷¹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

recognizing the contributions immigrants bring to Germany as a show of support. Additionally, since these debates were taking place, older immigrants could not be ignored, especially as the guest workers entered retirement.

Figure 31: Immigration-Related Sub-Topics in Politics



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of immigration by year.
Source: GOLD Database, author's calculations.

In 1980, a change to the employment promotion act (*Arbeitsförderungsgesetz*) was debated with the objective of officially setting the amount of time an asylum seeker must wait before entering the German labor market. Keller (CDU/CSU) argued the influx of immigrants and asylum seekers into Germany was creating problems for the social infrastructure. Even though the native German population was declining, it was still growing overall due to immigration and the already existing problems facing the labor market were not being alleviated by all of the immigrants looking for a job.¹⁷² The debate picked up again in 1990 when amendments to the asylum and foreigners acts were discussed. Dr. Cornelia Sonntag-Wolgast (SPD) claimed the CDU/CSU just wanted to protect Germany from having an aging population and fill undesired positions with cheap labor. However, this was only a brief mention, and she turned her focus to finding a way to improve the treatment of immigrants in Germany.¹⁷³

¹⁷² "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 37. Sitzung der 9. Wahlperiode."

¹⁷³ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 207. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 11/207, Bonn, 1990.

By 1992, the tone changed and the few examples where immigrants were mentioned were in a more positive light. For example, during the debate about the establishment of the Study Commission "Demographic Change", Fuchs (SPD) emphasized the future need for immigrants because without them, Germany would be even older and poorer by 2030.¹⁷⁴ Chancellor Kohl also recognized the role of immigrants in fulfilling positions in the labor market that others did not want. This included caregiving jobs of seniors and the sick, which had become important and necessary jobs within the last few years. Without them, the country would not be as prosperous as it was.¹⁷⁵

Within the context of immigrants and the social security system, the first statement in 1983 in the Germany Council of Economic Experts' annual report claimed the immigrant population could help ease the pension system and the rising contribution rates. Unfortunately, this would not solve the problems of the system and reforms were still necessary.¹⁷⁶ In 1989, references were not about the general immigrant population, but focused more on emigrants from the European Community and former German settlements. An argument by Cronenberg (FDP) stated immigrants were beneficial for the pension system, while Dreßler (SPD) saw their contribution as secondary to the burden they would create in the future when they aged.¹⁷⁷

In the 1990s, the "other" sub-topic referred to the discussion related to aging immigrants in the country. Many guest workers that had come to Germany chose to remain in the country following retirement, which was creating a new set of challenges in regard to how to provide them with necessary care. The SPD posed a GA in December 1992 about the situation of foreign retirees in Germany. They cited the expected growth of the older population, which included those that came to Germany 30 to 40 years ago, and they wanted to know what kinds of rights they have as seniors who are no longer working.¹⁷⁸ In response, the government acknowledged the general need to improve the living conditions and future perspectives of older people, but to also take older immigrants into consideration when creating this old age policy.¹⁷⁹ During the Bundestag discussion about the Report on the Elderly, Minister Rönsch addressed the aging immigrants in the country:

Foreign senior citizens are thus the most rapidly growing population group in Germany. Just as we have to find answers to the different needs of older German citizens, we have to take care of these seniors, these older workers

¹⁷⁴ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

¹⁷⁵ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 123. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/123, Bonn, 1992.

¹⁷⁶ Sachverständigenrat zur Begutachtung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung.

¹⁷⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 174. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode.," "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 132. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

¹⁷⁸ Andres et al.

¹⁷⁹ Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Abgeordneten Gerd Andres, Konrad Gilges, Gerlinde Hämmerle, weitere Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der SPD."

from different cultures and religions. We must create and expand offers, and we must also live up to the expectations of older foreigners in Germany at the end of their lives.¹⁸⁰

When both the Report on the Elderly and the SPD's GA about older immigrants were discussed again in the Bundestag in 1994, Gilges (SPD) reiterated the need to understand what it will mean for Germany if a quarter of the 60+ population is foreign-born.¹⁸¹ Link (CDU/CSU) acknowledged the financial challenges facing the growing population of older immigrants to support themselves, which will pose additional challenges due to their resulting reliance on old age care facilities.¹⁸²

The government named Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen (FDP) as the representative responsible for questions related to foreigners (*Beauftragte für Ausländerfragen*). She was responsible for producing a report on the situation of immigrants in Germany, which included a designated section about older immigrants. In speaking about the findings of the 1993 report, Schmalz-Jacobsen mentioned the challenge this population change will create for counselling services and the structuring of retirement homes.¹⁸³ The 1997 report cited the increase in the number of immigrants that want to remain in Germany following retirement (compared to 1985) and the need for facilities for older people to prepare for a larger clientele of older immigrants.¹⁸⁴

G. Housing and Community Development: Effects of the Berlin Wall and the Need for Improved Living Options in Old Age

The discussion around housing and community development was originally influenced by the division of the two Germanys and the challenges that it created, particularly for West Berlin, but also the area surrounding the border between East and West Germany. During the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the issues were related to migration since in this context, the aging populations were partially a result of young people moving away from areas or older people moving back to rural areas upon retiring. As the older population grew, there was also more recognition of the need to plan for the development of age-appropriate housing to meet this future demand and to enable older people to live independently longer. There was awareness about the housing needs of older people, as well as what impact the growing older population

¹⁸⁰ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 211. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

¹⁸¹ This was also a reason why the SPD submitted their GA. "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

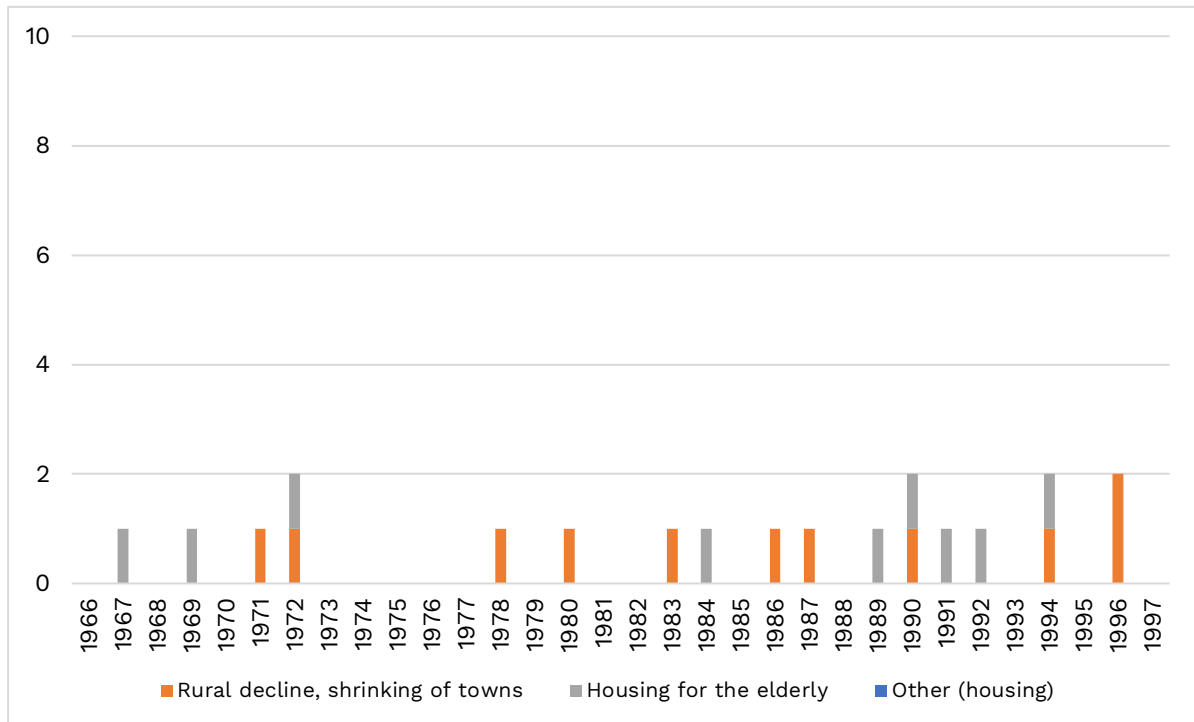
¹⁸² "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 9. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

¹⁸³ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 235. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

¹⁸⁴ Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen über die Lage der Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland."

would have on future planning. However, the amount of attention it was given was still minor in comparison to other topics discussed thus far. More of the concern seemed to lie with the changing population structures in towns and cities/in rural and urban areas, and the need for age-appropriate housing was one form of response to the changing infrastructure needs of these areas (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Housing and Community Development-Related Sub-Topics in Politics



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of housing and community development by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

The early references to housing and the shrinking of towns due to the aging population were centered around the debate about regulating the housing market (*Wohnungszwangwirtschaft*). More specifically, policy makers were concerned about the population situation in Berlin. Due to the unique situation facing Berlin caused by the division of the city into east and west, and because West Berlin was cut off from West Germany, there was discussion around how to meet the demand for housing. The building of the Berlin Wall created a limitation on the space available for housing and made it impossible for people to commute into the city for work. Therefore, Berlin had to rely on people immigrating to the city and living within this limited space, creating a strain on the housing market. In addition, Berlin had an unfavorable population structure: It was becoming older and there were a large number of single

women, all who needed individual housing.¹⁸⁵ There was also concern about removing the rent control in place since this would likely cause an increase in rent and would make it difficult for people to be able to afford housing since they did not have the option to move outside of the city and due to population aging, the size of the population with a limited income was quite high.¹⁸⁶ The area located along the border between East and West Germany (*Zonenrandgebiet*) also faced an aging population, which led to a written question from Franz Weigl (CSU) to the SPD-led government about what the government was doing to combat this. In their response, the government mentioned ways it could improve the area to encourage younger people to stay in the region, which was the original reason why the areas were aging.¹⁸⁷

The division of Germany and Berlin created a particular situation that contributed to the aging population in Berlin and the need for these debates. Had the country and the city not been divided, it is possible that this issue would not have arisen when it did. But the debates about population aging did arise during this time as part of regional planning discussions. The concerns included the aging population, but this was seen as a result of migration, either young people moving away from a specific area or older people moving into an area. In most of these references, the aging of these populations seemed to be seen as a bad development for the area. For example, the 1972 regional planning report (*Raumordnungsbericht*) highlighted the acceleration of the aging of the population caused by the migration of older people to “weakly structured areas” and its effects on population growth in these areas.¹⁸⁸ In 1978, the CDU/CSU faction submitted a motion (*Antrag*) in which they called for improving the living conditions in large cities to prevent or slow down the aging of the cities due to the migration of younger individuals to the suburbs and outskirts of the cities.¹⁸⁹ A similar problem was cited in a GA posed by members of the CDU/CSU

¹⁸⁵ For example, see: Raumordnung Ausschuss für Kommunalpolitik, Städtebau und Wohnungswesen, “Schriftlicher Bericht des Ausschusses für Kommunalpolitik, Raumordnung, Städtebau und Wohnungswesen (9. Ausschuß) über den von den Abgeordneten Frau Berger-Heise, Borm und Genossen eingebrachten Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Änderung des Gesetzes zur Änderung des Schlußtermins für den Abbau der Wohnungszwangswirtschaft und über weitere Maßnahmen auf dem Gebiete des Mietpreisrechts,” Drucksache V/1393, Bonn, 1967; SPD Die Fraktionen der CDU/CSU, FDP,, “Entwurf eines Dritten Gesetzes zur Änderung des Schlußtermins für den Abbau der Wohnungszwangswirtschaft und über weitere Maßnahmen auf dem Gebiete des Mietpreisrechts im Land Berlin,” Drucksache VI/3598, Bonn, 1972.

¹⁸⁶ FDP Die Fraktionen der SPD, “Antrag der Fraktionen der SPD, FDP: Entwurf eines Zweiten Gesetzes zur Änderung des Schlußtermins für den Abbau der Wohnungszwangswirtschaft und über weitere Maßnahmen auf dem Gebiete des Mietpreisrechts im Land Berlin,” Drucksache VI/46, Bonn, 1969.

¹⁸⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 108. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode.”

¹⁸⁸ Bundeskanzler, “Raumordnungsbericht 1972.”

¹⁸⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, “Antrag der Abgeordneten Frau Pack, Dr. Dollinger, Dr. Jahn (Münster), Dr. Schneider, Dr. Möller, Sauter (Epfendorf), Sick, Dr. Ritz, Dr. Waffenschmidt, Nordlohne, Francke (Hamburg), Kolb, Niegel, Eymer (Lubeck), Dr. van Aerssen, Dr. Freiherr Spies von Bullesheim, Burger, Dr. Warnke, Dr. George, Schedl, Dr. Unland, Frau Hoffmann (Hoya), Milz, Dr. Jobst, Feinendegen,

faction in 1980 about the Ruhr area (*Ruhrgebiet*), which was facing a large structural crisis that included the aging of its population due to younger people moving away.¹⁹⁰ This issue changed in the beginning of the 1980s, with older people tending to move out of urban areas, particularly Berlin and the Ruhr area, and into more rural areas according to the 1982 regional planning report.¹⁹¹

In the 1986 report, it described the general decline in the regional populations that was expected but stated the more problematic development awaiting these populations was the change in the age structures. The number of younger people was expected to decline while the number of older people increased.¹⁹² In the recommendations by the parliamentary Committee for Regional Planning, Building, and Urban Development (*Ausschuss für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau*), they recognized the report's finding that the change in the age structure would be even more serious than the decline in population size. They emphasized the impact this change would have on infrastructure and on the agriculture sector. With the support of the CDU/CSU and the FDP, the committee supported the findings and recommendations of the original report.¹⁹³

In the 1990 report on the renewal of villages and small towns (*Dorferneuerungsbericht*), the aging of rural areas due to the immigration of younger individuals to more urban areas was mentioned specifically in relation to the impact this would have on rural infrastructures. This change in age structure, especially in suburban areas where the older population was projected to increase up to 20 percent, would contribute to a change in demands regarding age appropriate housing, care services, and even public transportation.¹⁹⁴ The phenomenon of young people moving out of rural areas and older people moving back was the general theme of the debate in the 1990s; this process had already begun in the 1980s as young people moved out of villages and small towns in former East German states.¹⁹⁵

Looking at the debate surrounding housing for the elderly, this began again in 1984 when the SPD faction posed a KA about the living conditions of older women. Their reason for these questions was the decline in the living situation of older women since the government began implementing its saving and redistribution

Geisenhofer, Biehle, Neuhaus, Müller (Berlin), Susset und der Fraktion der CDU/CSU," Drucksache 8/1656, Bonn, 1978.

¹⁹⁰ Biedenkopf et al.

¹⁹¹ Bundesregierung, "Raumordnungsbericht 1982," Drucksache 10/210, Bonn, 1983.

¹⁹² "Raumordnungsbericht 1986."

¹⁹³ Bauwesen und Städtebau Ausschuss für Raumordnung, "Raumordnungsbericht 1986," Drucksache 11/1173, Bonn, 1987.

¹⁹⁴ Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Erneuerung von Dörfern und kleinen Orten (Dorferneuerungsbericht)," Drucksache 11/6346, Bonn, 1990.

¹⁹⁵ "Raumordnungsbericht 1993." See also: "Europa 2000+: Europäische Zusammenarbeit bei der Raumentwicklung," Drucksache 13/3577, Bonn, 1996; "Städtebaulicher Bericht 1996: Nachhaltige Stadtentwicklung," Drucksache 13/5490, Bonn, 1996.

policies and these were the women active in rebuilding the country (*Trümmerfrauen*). They argued the current government was ignoring the needs of older people, which involved increasing spending in order to secure their means of existence. As a result, older women and their needs were being pushed to the side.¹⁹⁶ In his response, Minister Heiner Geißler of the BMJFG began by stating that the government cares about improving the situation of older people, both women and men, and reiterated their role in helping to rebuild the country. Because women have a higher life expectancy than men and due to the war, there were a significantly higher number of older women in Germany than men. The questions raised and answered covered a variety of issues, such as their family status, whether they are living alone and if so, the living conditions, the level of pension benefits they receive, and how the government provides assistance.¹⁹⁷

In 1989, Marieluise Beck-Oberdorf (Greens) criticized the government for not following through on the promises to provide more age-friendly living options or increasing outpatient care services. She highlighted the importance of providing older people with the option to grow old in their own homes and not have to immediately move into a care facility if they could not be self-sufficient:

These [outpatient social care services] are missing, as are the large-scale projects for housing in old age, be it sufficient subsidies for the conversion of apartments, be it the promotion of old-age housing or housing communities, or of life in a generational network. A policy which would have a really forward-looking view of the changes in age structure would also ensure, in a different way from what is happening now with the pension reform, that every old person – I say every person – has a sufficient income to be able to be old with dignity.¹⁹⁸

In 1991, Minister Rönsch announced the expansion of independent living and individual competence of older adults as one of her main goals, including improving the living situation of older people. This goal was tied into the old age care legislation the government was working on at that time.¹⁹⁹ Engelhard (FDP) also expressed his support for creating an age appropriate and age friendly environment for older people

¹⁹⁶ Hermann Bachmaier et al., "Kleine Anfrage: Lebensumstände älterer und hochbetagter Frauen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," Drucksache 10/1738, Bonn, 1984.

¹⁹⁷ Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Frau Dr. Däubler-Gmelin, Frau Fuchs (Köln), Bachmaier, Buschfort, Frau Blunck, Catenhusen, Dr. Diederich (Berlin), Egert, Frau Fuchs (Verl), Glombig, Frau Dr. Hartenstein, Heyenn, Frau Huber, Immer (Altenkirchen), Jaunich, Kirschner, Dr. Kübler, Kuhlwein, Frau Dr. Lepsius, Frau Luuk, Lutz, Frau Dr. Martiny-Glotz, Frau Matthäus-Maier, Müller (Düsseldorf), Frau Odendahl, Peter (Kassel), Frau Renger, Frau Schmedt (Lengerich), Frau Schmidt (Nürnberg), Frau Simonis, Frau Dr. Skarpelis-Sperk, Dr. Soell, Frau Steinhauer, Stiegler, Frau Terborg, Frau Dr. Timm, Frau Traupe, Frau Weyel, Frau Zutt, Dr. Vogel und der Fraktion der SPD - Drucksache 10/1738 - Lebensumstände älterer und hochbetagter Frauen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland."

¹⁹⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 157. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

¹⁹⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 6. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

through, for example, barrier-free living arrangements.²⁰⁰ He also praised the Report on the Elderly for the attention it gave to housing and living arrangements:

In the chapter "Housing and the residential environment", the demands on politicians are particularly numerous. I mean, that is right. It is logical for future construction that planning and execution should be geared to the needs of an aging society.²⁰¹

H. Science: Recognition of the Causes for Population Aging and Eventual Calls for More Research

Unlike the science-related codes applied to the research analysis, not all the examples from the policy debate are purely based in scientific fact or research. In particular, the sub-topic "Contributing factors to demographic change, aging" included all reasons given for why the population was changing, such as arguing it was just a result of the two world wars. Most of the results were related to references to the fact that life expectancy had increased, which was why the population was becoming older. There is a distinct shift among policy makers focusing on recognizing the increase in life expectancy and the factors contributing to the aging of the population to more of a push for old age research in the 1990s. This aligns with the creation of the Study Commission "Demographic Change" and the publication of the Report on the Elderly, both of which brought more attention to the situation and shed light on the lack of research available to help address the situation of population aging.

The focus on the impact of the two world wars on the German population was the cause for the "high" number of results in 1966 (Figure 33). The Social Report was released by the government in 1966 in which the results of the war were mentioned as a reason for the aging of the population and the strain on the pension system. Only a small mention was given to medical advancements for the ability to reach a higher age in life. The report from the Social Advisory Council that accompanied the Social Report also credited the wars for the expected increased financial demands on the pension system.²⁰² Shortly after the release of this report, the *Sozialenquete* published their final report.²⁰³ It cited the large loss of life in the world wars, as well

²⁰⁰ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

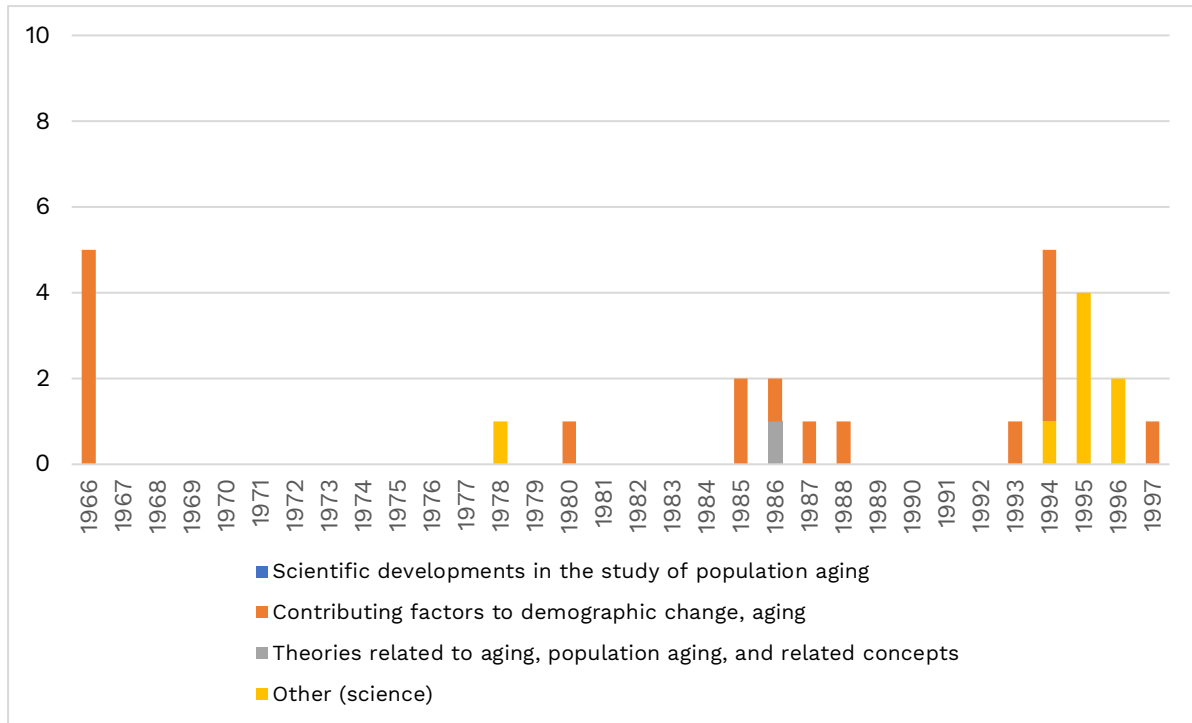
²⁰¹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

²⁰² Bundeskanzler, "Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Entwicklung der wirtschaftlichen Leistungsfähigkeit und der Produktivität sowie die Veränderungen des Volkseinkommens je Erwerbstätigen und über die Finanzlage der gesetzlichen Rentenversicherung (Sozialbericht 1966) sowie das Gutachten des Sozialbeirats über die Rentenanpassung."

²⁰³ During his government policy speech in 1963, Chancellor Erhard mentioned the expected change to the population's age structure and called on the need to thoroughly look at current social legislation. He then announced the creation of a *Sozialenquete*, whose tasks included looking at questions related to the pension system. In: Winfried Schmähl, "Sicherung bei Alter, Invalidität und für Hinterbliebene," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Michael Ruck and Marcel Boldorf (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2007), 329.

as the birth rate deficit as the reason for the gaps in the age pyramid and why the ratio of contributors and recipients in the pension system was so poor.²⁰⁴

Figure 33: Science-Related Sub-Topics in Politics



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of science. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Following the release of these reports, a debate was held in the Bundestag about pension reform.²⁰⁵ Schellenberg (SPD) argued:

In a discussion about the federal subsidies ..., [...] it must be considered that the worsening age structure is a consequence of both world wars. The Federal Statistical Office has established that the pension insurance system is lacking 3 million contributors as a result of both wars. At the same time, the number of pensioners has increased by millions due to the effect of the wars.²⁰⁶

The argument that the *Rentnerberg* was a result of the world wars was also used by the Hans Katzer, Minister for Labor and Social Affairs, and Arthur Killat (SPD):

²⁰⁴ Walter Bogs et al., "Sozial Sicherung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Bericht der Sozialenquete-Kommission," Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz, 1966; Hockerts, "Abscheid von der dynamischen Rente - Über den Einzug der Demografie und der Finanzindustrie in die Politik der Alterssicherung," 261.

²⁰⁵ It has also been noted that during the meeting of the Parliamentary Committee for Social Affairs (*Ausschuss für Sozialpolitik*), they argued that federal grants to the pension system could not be reduced because the burden on the system was due to the loss of life in the world wars and it was the responsibility of all to participate and contribute. See: Winfried Schmähl, "Sicherung bei Alter, Invalidität und für Hinterbliebene," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Hans Günter Hockerts (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2006), 418-19. This is not included in the documents that were coded for this analysis.

²⁰⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokol. Stenographischer Bericht der 62. Sitzung der 5. Wahlperiode."

This mountain of pensioners is not just the result of an increase in life expectancy, but it is the result - as my colleague Mr. Schellenberg said - of the fact that over 3 million contributors have lost their lives or shot out [...] as a result of the losses of two wars and the lower birth rates.²⁰⁷

These early examples show an awareness that the population was becoming older, but not specifically within the context of a more long-term shift in population dynamics in Germany.

Throughout the 1980s and in the early 1990s, most science-related references continued to be acknowledgements of the contributing factors to demographic change, mainly the increase in life expectancy. For example, Gerhart Baum (SPD), Minister of the Interior, pointed out the importance to looking at other factors of demographic change and not solely focusing on the declining birth rate during the debate about the GA on basic problems of population development:

When discussing demographic trends, the discussion is often prematurely reduced to the development of the birth rate, and the other two components of our population development, namely the decline in mortality and migration gains, are not taken into account. [...] Once again, I would like to point out: Please, do not just stare at the birth rate, but also consider the other components.²⁰⁸

The other comments found related to this specific sub-topic mentioned the (positive) increase in life expectancy and the result that people are living longer as reasons for population aging. Even Chancellor Kohl acknowledge the advancements in medicine as a contributing factor to why it was possible for more people to live longer.²⁰⁹

The Fourth Family Report in 1986 was the one example of discussion about concepts related to aging as it addressed what the role of the government and society/the family was in providing for the older population and what old age policies and family policies should cover. It also addressed the changes that have occurred over time in the aging process, such as people living longer and also being active and healthy longer than in the past. This report provided a more thorough analysis of various aspects related to the aging population within the context of the family, but also on a large societal level.²¹⁰

Attention to the field of old age research and gerontology was slow to develop. In 1978, one of the questions included in a GA from the CDU/CSU was about what

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 205. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

²⁰⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 4. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode." See also: "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 166. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 247. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 10/247, Bonn, 1986; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 61. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 193. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 211. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

²¹⁰ Bundesregierung, "Die Situation der älteren Menschen in der Familie - Vierter Familienbericht."

importance the government placed on old age research and if it supported creating a professorship in gerontology. In response, Minister Antje Huber of the BMJFG said the government would take advantage of the biological gerontological research that was available in health care and health education efforts to help prolong active life years and prevent premature aging.²¹¹ By the 1990s, praise was being expressed for funding old age research. Both BMFSFJ Parliamentary State Secretary Dempwolf and Link (both CDU/CSU) acknowledged and praised the establishment of the German Institute for Old Age Research at the University of Heidelberg (*Deutsches Zentrum für Altersforschung*).²¹² In 1995, Siegrun Klemmer (SPD) agreed that it was important to carry out research on demographic change, but called for coordination in how this research was funded and carried out.²¹³ The following year, during the debate about the annual budget, criticism was expressed regarding the cuts in spending on old age research. Despite the continuation of the Study Commission “Demographic Change”, Heidemarie Luth (CDU/CSU) did not support the cuts in old age research because the work of the study commission would not provide the needed research on the current situation since it was focused on the future development of the population.²¹⁴

6.2 The European and International Debate: Clear Awareness and Interest in Population Issues at the European and International Levels

The European bodies were an additional voice that brought light to the aging population structure in Germany. Several reports from the European Commission were found in the keyword searches since these reports were introduced to the Bundestag for their consideration (*Kenntnisnahme*). Overall, these mentions of the issue facing Germany and Europe were minor and are not clear examples of debates that resulted in legislation specifically addressing the increasing older population. Yet, they are examples of how the issue had reached the European and international levels and were another opportunity to address the aging population in Germany.

The first instance was in 1976 with the Commission’s draft of the *Fourth Medium-Term Economic Policy Programme*, which emphasized the impact of the aging population on the labor market. It recognized that the high unemployment in

²¹¹ “Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Abgeordneten Braun, Burger, Geisenhofer, Franke, Müller (Remscheid), Dr. Möller, Zink, Frau Geier, Frau Verhulsdonk, Hasinger, Kroll-Schlüter, Frau Hürland, Dr. Hoffacker, Dr. Hüscher, Dr. Hammans, Köster, Höpfinger, Frau Karwatzki, Bühler (Bruchsal), Dr. George, Ruhe und der Fraktion der CDU/CSU: Lebenssituation älterer Menschen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” Drucksache 8/2303, Bonn, 1978.

²¹² Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 52. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode.”

²¹³ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 67. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode.”

²¹⁴ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 140. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode.”

the member states was due to the economic recession, but it would be possible to reduce it in the short-term as more people reached working age. But beginning after 1980 until 1985, it would be more difficult to reduce unemployment since the working population would start to age as a result of the declining birth rate. The Commission argued this future change in the working age population was a reason for great concern and consideration about how to address it was necessary.²¹⁵ In 1981, a report on the social and economic situation in the member states placed more focus on what changes the population structure would undergo. Specifically, the age index had risen in most of the member states due to the decline in the youth population and the overall aging of the populations, especially in Germany.²¹⁶ Both of these reports contextualized and mentioned aging of the populations and their future impacts, but what is of interest is that Germany was mentioned as the country that was experiencing these changes the strongest.

In April 1986, the German delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe released its report of a meeting that discussed the economic and social impacts of an aging population in Europe. In the speech given by Böhm (CDU/CSU), he cited the various areas that would be affected by an older population and called on the European countries to take on the challenge of addressing the aging population in order to maintain strength on the international stage:

It is important to recognize that the next ten years still offer relatively favorable preconditions for achieving a transition to a more balanced population development. Whether Europe, as a result of lower birth rates, will become the world's semi-occupied retirement home and whether its freedom and democracy will be threatened by an aging population because the social tensions that result from this will entail obvious dangers, or whether we will succeed in overcoming these problems: This is the question of the ability of our democratic states to act.²¹⁷

The recommendations provided by the assembly acknowledged the growing older populations as a result of medical improvements and increases in life expectancy. They called on member states to strive to integrate older citizens into the communities to help them continue their independent lives; improve health care services for older citizens, such as long-term and outpatient services; make cities more age friendly; and provide financial assistance to support families caring for older family members.²¹⁸ In the following year, the assembly discussed the activity report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Due to the continued high levels of unemployment, together with the aging of the population, the

²¹⁵ Bundesregierung, "Entwurf der Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften für das vierte Programm für die mittelfristige Wirtschaftspolitik."

²¹⁶ Ausschuss für Wirtschaft.

²¹⁷ Die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

financial capabilities of the pension system and the social security systems in the OECD member states were threatened. Therefore, the assembly argued the recommended economic policies to reduce unemployment were ineffective and there were not enough new proposals that would address a problem they believed threatened “the social fabric of its member countries.”²¹⁹

The Parliamentary Assembly issued a resolution in 1991 recognizing the aging of the population and the declining birth rate in the industrialized countries would lead to a shortage of labor and, consequently, would increase pressure around immigration.²²⁰ In the German delegation’s report on the Parliamentary Assembly in 1994, they discussed population development, but with more focus on the global level. There was still mention of the need to consider the aging of the European population to build up the equality in the relationship between the generations.²²¹ In the 1995 report on the OECD’s annual report, the Parliamentary Assembly encouraged the OECD to look at the economic impacts of the aging population in the OECD member countries. The same report the following year encouraged the OECD to provide a report to all member states about unemployment but should consider youth unemployment and aging.²²² The European Commission also made recommendations of ways to provide support for older people and to allow them to be more active in society once they have retired. These recommendations from the Commission were included in a report by the Bundestag Committee for Families, Seniors, Women, and Youth, who called on the government to place priority on projects promoting the participation of older people in society. A point was also made in the report to reject the use of “over aging” (*Überalterung*) in the Commission’s proposal and instead, use a more neutral term to describe the demographic situation.²²³

The European Union (EU) designated 1993 as the European Year of the Elderly and Solidarity Between Generations (EY1993). The objectives of a European Year are to raise awareness about the selected topic, and it is a sign from the EU institutions that

²¹⁹ Die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates, “Unterrichtung durch die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates über die Tagung der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates vom 1. bis 8. Oktober 1987 in Straßburg,” Drucksache 11/1398, Bonn, 1987.

²²⁰ “Unterrichtung durch die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates 18. bis 25. September 1991 in Straßburg,” Drucksache 12/1834, Bonn, 1991.

²²¹ “Unterrichtung durch die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates vom 28. Juni bis 1. Juli 1994 in Straßburg,” Drucksache 12/8302, Bonn, 1994.

²²² “Unterrichtung durch die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates über die Tagung der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates vom 25. bis 29. September 1995 in Straßburg, Debatte der Erweiterten Parlamentarischen Versammlung über die Aktivitäten der OECD am 28. September 1995,” Drucksache 13/3275, Bonn, 1995; “Unterrichtung durch die deutsche Delegation in der Parlamentarischen Versammlung des Europarates vom 23. bis 27. September 1996 in Straßburg und die Debatte der Erweiterten Parlamentarischen Versammlung über die Aktivitäten der OECD am 25. September 1996,” Drucksache 13/6576, Bonn, 1996.

²²³ Ausschuss für Familie.

the issue will receive more attention for future policy making.²²⁴ Several months after the end of the EY1993, the European Parliament released a resolution on “measures in favor of the elderly.” This resolution recognized the growing older population and their potential to continue to contribute to society, but also mentioned the challenges posed by an aged society. It listed a number of recommended actions related to pensions, independent living in old age, care of older people, improvement of older people’s participation in the labor market, and social integration.²²⁵ The dedication of the EY1993 to the older population, as well as the aforementioned acknowledgments of the aging population illustrate the awareness among the European community of this issue, which was not just affecting Germany.

In 1994, the United Nations (UN) held the International Conference for Population and Development in Cairo. This conference was heavily focused on developing countries, family planning, and family-related measures, but in the German government’s report and position paper, they mentioned the continuation of the aging of the population in the coming decades, which was related to the declining birth rate. The government stressed their position on ensuring that older people can live independent lives, to study the living conditions of older people, and to support the togetherness between generations. In addition, the improvement of long-term care was referenced when addressing the conference’s action program about senior policies. The report stressed that the increases in the older population motivated them to intensify their efforts regarding old age policies.²²⁶ Even though the focus was on developing countries, the German delegation made sure to bring awareness to the situation of aging they and other industrialized countries were facing.

6.3 Key Moments: Awareness Building in the 1980s Contributed to More Specific Action in the 1990s

There were several key moments in the policy debate that focused the attention of policy makers to issues impacted by and affecting the older population:

- 1980 and 1984 Reports on Population Development in Germany
- Fourth Family Report
- Federal Old Age Plan
- First Government Report on the Elderly
- Creation of the Study Commission “Demographic Change”

²²⁴ European Union, "European Years," European Union, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/european-years_en.

²²⁵ Deutscher Bundestag, "EntschlieÙung zu Maßnahmen zugunsten der älteren Menschen."

²²⁶ Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Bundesregierung über die internationale Konferenz für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung (ICPD) vom 5. bis 13. September 1994 in Kairo," Drucksache 13/2520, Bonn, 1995.

- 1999 Pension Reform

These moments were clear focusing points in the political discussion surrounding the aging population. They mainly occurred during the 1990s, which is reflected in the increase in results during the 1990s and supports the claims by Lehr and Klose that the issue of the aging population reached a spot on the agenda by the 1980s and 1990s. Most of these moments were based on a directive of the government but required all policy makers to take note of the aging population and what that meant for society as a whole. Therefore, these events were important moments for securing the aging population's place on the political agenda.

It has been well established in this chapter, as well as Chapter 4, that politicians first seemed to focus on population-related issues when it was clear the birth rate was on a continual downward trend. The fear about what this would mean for the future German population helped drive politicians to ask what the government was planning on doing to address this situation. Even though the government was not in favor of supporting anything that resembled pro-natalist policies, the population was following a trend that could no longer be ignored. This was the driving impetus for the establishment of the BiB in order to have more information to understand why the birth rate was declining. Concerns remained after BiB's creation, so an unofficial committee was established by Interior Minister Werner Maihofer (FDP) known as the "Bad Sodener Kreis". Members of the committee included Hans Jürgens, Director of the BiB; Karl Schwarz, Department Head at the Federal Statistics Agency; and Karl Martin Bolte and Max Wingen, members of the board of trustees for the BiB.²²⁷ The committee prepared a report, which was classified as confidential, that argued the future population would look much different in part due to the aging population. They claimed that in 50 years, the low birth rate would impact the pension system and with the growing number of older people, the provisions for old age care would be strained. Any problems arising from the birth rate decline would first be felt in 25 years, but the issues needed to be addressed now.²²⁸

The work of the group led to the creation of an official working group on population questions chaired by the Federal Interior Ministry that produced two, in-depth reports about the population development in Germany in 1980 and 1984.²²⁹ Work on the reports began in 1978 and the first report presented the demographic situation of Germany and provided projections about how the population would look

²²⁷ Höhn, *Demographische Trends, Bevölkerungswissenschaft und Politikberatung*, 28, 67.

²²⁸ "Baby-Baisse: Staat im Schlafzimmer," *Der Spiegel*, March 21, 1977.

²²⁹ See: Bundesregierung, "Bericht über die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. 1. Teil: Analyse der bisherigen Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Modellrechnungen zur künftigen Bevölkerungsentwicklung."; "Bericht über die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. 2. Teil: Auswirkungen auf die verschiedenen Bereiche von Staat und Gesellschaft."

in the future. This report projected a decline in the population, which would increase in intensity beginning at the turn of the century. The second report published in 1984 focused more on the effects of population development on different areas of society. This was an important step in recognizing the reality of the aging population since detailed reports of this nature on population development and demographic changes had not been published before. The concern about the declining birth rate led to a willingness to take a closer look at population-related issues and in the beginning, at least become aware of the situation in Germany.

Another key moment was the release of the Fourth Family Report in 1986. This report was confirmation that a main objective of the government was to bring more focus to the older population. The government requested that the report focus on the lives of older people and their families by drawing attention to the role and impact of older family members, specifically in relation to their need for care, existence of more multi-generational families, and the need to address the desire of older people to remain independent as long as possible. It looked at the changes families, society, and the aging process were undergoing, as well as the health and housing problems faced by older people and their families.²³⁰ The report highlighted the role of the family in providing care and the need to provide more assistance, either from the government or professional care services, to these families and family members caring for their older relatives. It emphasized the idea that families were now more than just parents and their dependent children, but they may consist of three or four living generations.²³¹ This was the first time the situation of older people in families was analyzed and was a major effort by the government to bring more awareness to the impact a larger older population will have on society.

Beginning in January 1992, the Federal Plan for Old Age went into effect, which was another sign that the government was paying more attention to the older population. Minister Rönsch announced the Federal Old Age Plan during the debate about the 1993 federal budget. The reasons for the Federal Old Age Plan were the need for structural change and the need to put more effort into maintaining the generational contract so that the generations did not become disconnected. The possible enrichment older citizens could bring to society should be considered, which was why *Seniorenbüros* (offices for seniors) were created with this plan. These offices would help seniors find ways to remain active in the community.²³² The Federal Old Age Plan still exists today, and its creation was a key moment since it showed the government's interest in engaging older members of society. Its continuation reflects

²³⁰ "Die Situation der älteren Menschen in der Familie - Vierter Familienbericht."

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 104. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

the government's ongoing interest in the matter, but another factor may have been the potential challenges to end the program and explain the reason for no longer actively engaging the older population.

Back in 1989, Minister Lehr commissioned the First Government Report on the Elderly to be compiled by an expert committee. Since this report was a government report and not just from *one* ministry, it had to be approved by the cabinet. Minister Lehr cited resistance from several members of the cabinet (Jürgen Warnke, Minister of Transportation; Ignaz Kiechle, Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Forestry; and Friedrich Zimmermann, Minister of the Interior) and argued their lack of support was not due to concerns about the cost of the study, but a lack of interest in older people.²³³ Despite the lack of unanimous support by the cabinet, the report was approved unanimously by the Bundestag. Following reunification, its publication was delayed due to the decision to include the new member states, which allowed experts from the new states to provide information about the situation of older people in former East Germany. Not only was the inclusion of the situation of all older people in Germany important, but so was the acknowledgment of the importance of having evidence-based information to create old age policies:

A careful analysis of the situation of older people in their respective living environment is the basis for needs-oriented political measures. The First Government Report on the Elderly submitted by the independent commission of experts improves information about and understanding of older people.²³⁴

These demographic changes meant the older population was becoming more important in society, which had been recognized by the government, and this report was an attempt to take "these changes into account" and contribute "to strengthening the change in awareness and the associated independence of the policy field of 'old-age policy'."²³⁵ The report was a success and following its publication, the Bundestag agreed that such a report would be compiled during each legislative period.²³⁶

Both the Federal Old Age Plan and the Report on the Elderly were big steps by the government to specifically recognize the older population. These efforts are part of the larger movement to give more attention to this population group, which included the establishment in 1991 of the BMFuS that was discussed at the beginning of the chapter. Another key moment was the establishment of the Study Commission "Demographic Change" in 1992. Beginning in March 1992, the SPD, led by Klose, proposed the creation of the Study Commission "Securing the Future of Our Aging

²³³ Lehr, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr."

²³⁴ Bundesregierung, "Erster Altenbericht der Bundesregierung," 4.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²³⁶ Lehr, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr."

Society – Challenges of Demographic Change.”²³⁷ The objective of this commission was to determine what societal, economic, and social consequences demographic change has for all generations, but specifically the older generation. It would look at a variety of issues related to becoming old and the older population. Based on the commission’s findings, it would provide recommendations for policy decisions related to the aging population. They cited the need for data and research for future political decisions, confirmation of whether social transfers can be maintained, understanding what the working life and labor market will look like with a growing number of older workers and a shrinking number of younger workers, and how to provide older citizens with the opportunity to have a quality and active lifestyle.²³⁸ Their proposal was not officially debated until the plenary session in October.

A few days before the debate in October 1992, members of the CDU/CSU and FDP also proposed the creation of a Study Commission entitled “Chances and Future Perspectives of the Aging Society”.²³⁹ Similar to the proposal by the SPD, their proposed commission would provide recommendations based on an analysis of the current situation for policy decisions. They argued the shift in the age structure not only gave the older population more weight numerically, but also changed their living situation and their role in society. Their suggested commission was to be tasked with providing recommendations so aging could be seen as an opportunity and demographic change could be overcome. They wanted to focus on creating an age-based work environment, providing a smooth transition from working life to retirement, understanding the opportunities available for older people to maintain an active lifestyle, improving prevention and care services, creating a barrier-free environment, and improving generational relations.²⁴⁰

The proposals were debated in the Bundestag a couple of days following the submission of the CDU/CSU and FDP’s proposal and another proposal by all three parties. Many issues related to the aging of the population were touched upon, reconfirming that this was viewed as a wide-ranging issue. With the submission of the proposal by all three major parties and the inferred overwhelming votes for the creation of the commission, it was apparent that the majority were on board with addressing the aging population in a comprehensive manner.²⁴¹ Several speakers

²³⁷ English translation from author, German title „Zukunftssicherung unserer älter werdenden Gesellschaft — Herausforderungen des demographischen Wandels“.

²³⁸ Fraktion der SPD, "Einsetzung einer Enquete-Kommission "Zukunftssicherung unserer älter werdenden Gesellschaft — Herausforderungen des demographischen Wandels".

²³⁹ German title „Chancen und Zukunftsperspektiven der älter werdenden Generation“

²⁴⁰ Maria Michalk et al., "Einsetzung einer Enquete-Kommission „Chancen und Zukunftsperspektiven der älter werdenden Generation“,“ Drucksache 12/3460, Bonn, 1992.

²⁴¹ It appears a voice or hand vote was held (based on the plenary minutes) in which only members of the PDS/Die Linke did not vote in complete solidarity (some for, against, and some abstentions).

praised these efforts for already starting the process of addressing this long-term issue: Fuchs (SPD) argued that this initiative was about research of and precautionary steps for the future (*Zukunftsforschung und Zukunftsvorsorge*); it was about taking action to “win back a bit of believability” by showing the younger generation that politicians were thinking past tomorrow. A similar remark was made by Engelhard (FDP) about the inability of politicians to look past the current legislative period, even though this issue had a long-term dimension (*“Jahrhundertdimension”*), which was why they needed to act.²⁴²

The overall debate put the aging population in a positive light. Many of the speakers addressed the importance of changing the way aging is viewed by society. Speeches also covered a wide variety of issues that were related to the growing older population: Labor market, societal change, living arrangements and housing needs, and the need to better understand the actual process of aging. Lehr²⁴³ argued that the then-current older population was doing well and better than past generations, but it was still important to address the remaining needs of those older individuals that were still struggling. The debates highlighted the consciousness of politicians of the variety of areas the older population was affected by and that needed to be looked at more closely. Following the debate, the Study Commission “Demographic Change” was approved on the same day, October 16, 1992.²⁴⁴

The Study Commission “Demographic Change” published its first mid-term report in 1994, which was discussed in the Bundestag. This debate was already addressed in the previous sections. Looking at the report, the commission members acknowledged their inability to address all of the requested topics in the breadth and detail originally agreed upon within the first year and a half. Therefore, this first report provided an overview of the agreed topic areas: Family structure and life, the situation of the economy and labor market, income and asset development of retirees (including old-age poverty), active aging, living and housing conditions, and the health situation and care needs. Most importantly, it began by presenting up-to-date data about the current demographic situation and the projected future development of the population.²⁴⁵ Based on the findings of the mid-term report, Arne Fuhrmann (SPD) stressed the importance of the scope of political action to be balanced and precise. The government has to be willing to address the challenge that is posed, and

Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ She was no longer a minister at this point, only a member of the Bundestag.

²⁴⁴ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

²⁴⁵ "Zwischenbericht der Enquete-Kommission Demographischer Wandel - Herausforderungen unserer älter werdenden Gesellschaft an den einzelnen und die Politik."

demographic change should be recognized, accepted, and seen as an enrichment and not just an inevitable fact.²⁴⁶ Once the 13th legislative period began, the Study Commission was renewed so it could continue its work, as well as study the situation of old age immigrants and the social security system.²⁴⁷ This motion to renew the commission was supported by all parties and illustrates a continued show of interest and an understanding of the need to thoroughly address this large issue with evidence-based information.

A final key moment in this period was the debate in 1997 about the latest pension reform. This debate was already discussed in detail in the social security section, but it should be re-emphasized because it was heavily influenced by the increasing life expectancy. The impact of this increase and the resulting extra time individuals spent receiving a pension had led the pension system into a situation that could no longer be ignored. For the first time, it was proposed that an addition be made to the pension formula that took the changes to average life expectancy into consideration. The arguments in favor of the reform cited included the reduction of non-wage labor costs, as well as the need to respond to demographic change and the aging population and to stop waiting. Those against the reform were concerned about cuts to pension payments and argued other factors besides life expectancy should be considered. In the end, the proposed reform was passed along party lines, but once the SPD took control of the government in 1998, the factor in the pension formula was removed.²⁴⁸ A final solution to adapt the pension system to the changing population structure was, therefore, still not achieved.²⁴⁹ It is likely the objection to this factor was more about the resulting cuts in pension payments for recipients, i.e., voters, than about the principle behind the factor. This seems likely since a similar component was later introduced by the new government as a “sustainability factor”. Regardless, this was an important debate since it was the first time an explicit demography-based component was included in a suggested pension reform. This was a clear acknowledgement that increasing life expectancy was an impacting factor on the pension system that could no longer be ignored if the system was to be maintained. The eventual addition of such a factor later on confirms that politicians

²⁴⁶ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

²⁴⁷ Fraktion der CDU/CSU et al., "Einsetzung einer Enquete-Kommission "Demographischer Wandel - Herausforderungen unserer älter werdenden Gesellschaft an den einzelnen und die Politik", Drucksache 13/1532, Bonn, 1995.

²⁴⁸ Axel Börsch-Supan, "Lehren aus den Rentenreform seit 1972," *Wirtschaftsdienst* 95, no. 13 (2015): 18.

²⁴⁹ This is not to say the inclusion of the demography factor would have completely solved the problems facing the pension system. Since it was removed before it came into force and was not replaced with a similar tool, then it is unknown how it would have exactly impacted the situation.

knew this was a necessary step but was politically unpopular due to greater concerns about re-election.²⁵⁰

6.4 The Evolution of the Political Parties

Throughout this chapter, I highlighted the various positions presented – mainly in the plenary debates – by the different political parties. There were clear distinctions between the parties, specifically the SPD and the CDU/CSU, in how they defined the situation. Beginning in 1969, either the SPD or the CDU/CSU was the majority party in a coalition with the FDP, 13 years and 16 years, respectively. Prior to this, the two parties were in a coalition together for almost three years. Looking specifically at the role of chancellor, the CDU/CSU spent more time as chancellor (19 years versus nearly 16 years for the SPD) during this time. Even though the SPD held the office of chancellor less, I do not think this was why significant action regarding the older population was not taken. Even if the party did not control the chancellery position, being a member of the coalition still put the party in an influential position to push one's agenda. What does matter is the overall situation in Germany at the time of their respective coalitions. This can explain why more or less action was taken. Overall, I conclude that the CDU/CSU was the most active party during this period in regard to participating or leading the debate on the issue of aging in Germany.

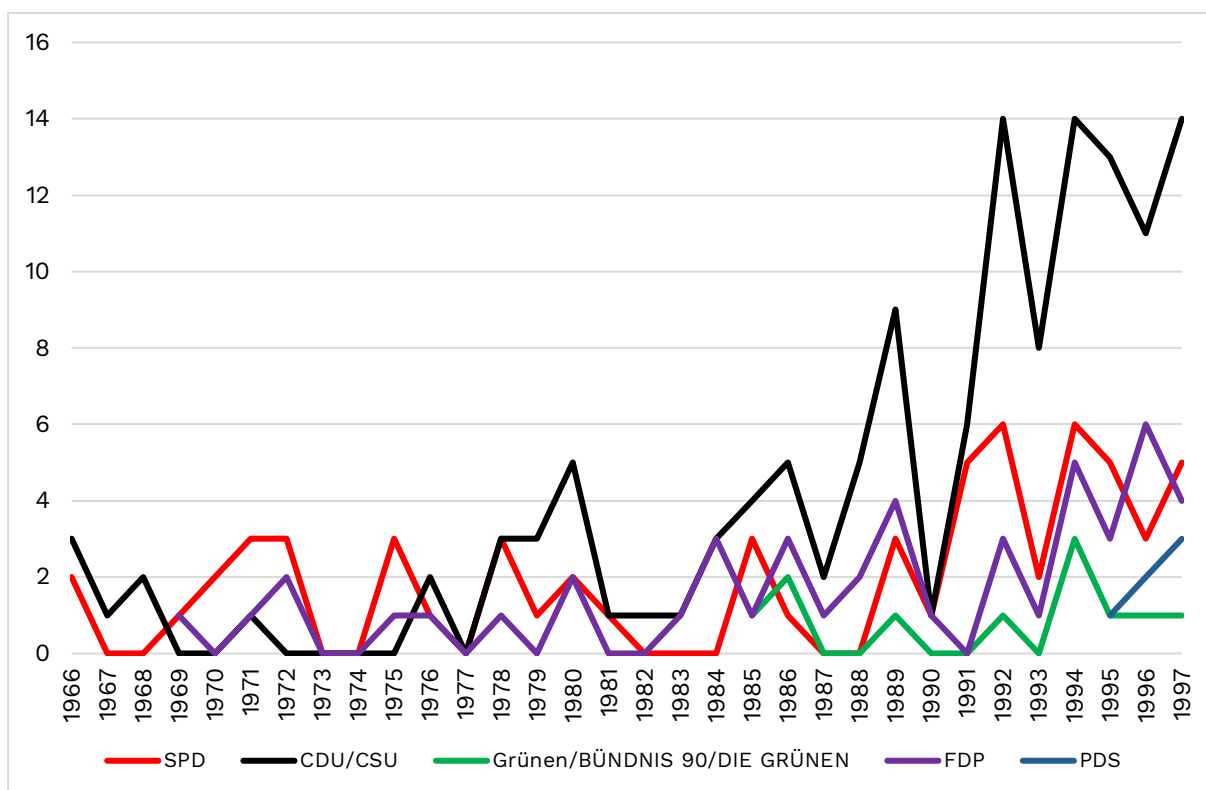
There was a basic level of awareness of the aging population during the entire time under consideration. Figure 34 represents the number of times either a GA or KA, for example, were submitted from a party and the number of speeches given by a member of the party in the Bundestag. There was usually at least one party addressing the issue in some way every year in the analysis. The distinction between the parties that has to be made, however, is how the parties defined the issue, such as what they attributed the cause to and whether it was of importance, and how their opinions and stances evolved over time.

In addition to how politicians and their parties presented their position on the aging population and the older community, an important motivating factor must be remembered: The growth of the older population as a voting bloc and thus, their influence on elections. The seemingly clear connection between a growing aging population and a resulting growing proportion of older voters was an important realization for politicians. There was an observed trend in Germany that older voters (60 years and older) participated in elections more than younger voters – a trend that

²⁵⁰ During Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's time in office, a sustainability factor (*Nachhaltigkeitsfaktor*) was introduced, which served a very similar purpose as the demographic factor originally introduced. See: Börsch-Supan, "Lehren aus den Rentenreform seit 1972," 18.

continues.²⁵¹ In addition to their high level of voter participation, there was also an observed increase in the participation and engagement of retired citizens in political activities. There was a growth of senior citizen organizations and working groups within labor unions and political parties to represent the interests of older members.²⁵² This high level of voter participation and increased political activism by retired citizens meant the political parties had to adjust what issues they focus on and how they address voters.²⁵³ The following section will take note of when politicians began to address the older electorate more specifically and the ways in which they tried to become more inclusive of their needs.

Figure 34: Political Party Activity



Number of government documents (plenary minutes, GA, KA, etc.) found that were put forth by a specific political party and, in the case of plenary minutes in the Bundestag, number of speeches given by specific party members. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

²⁵¹ Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, "Ältere Wähler beeinflussen immer stärker den Wahlausgang," https://www.demografie-portal.de/SharedDocs/Informieren/DE/ZahlenFakten/Wahlbeteiligung_Alter.html; Sighard Neckel, "Altenpolitischer Aktivismus: Entstehung und Variation eines Politikmusters," *Leviathan* 21, no. 4 (1993): 541.

²⁵² 541.

²⁵³ Manfred G. Schmidt, "Altern und politische Partizipation," in *Altern: Familie, Zivilgesellschaft und Politik, Altern in Deutschland, Bd. 8*, ed. Jürgen Kocka, et al. (Halle: Nova Acta Leopoldina, 2009), 277.

CDU/CSU: Consistent Supporters of Old Age Policy and Recognizing the Aging Population

When looking at the position of the CDU/CSU over this period under question, their interest and desire to address the areas affected by the aging population seemed generally consistent. They held the office of the chancellor the most during this specific period and were the majority party of the governing coalition from 1966 to 1969 and then from the end of 1982 until 1997. The party defined the issue early on as affecting the pension system and intergenerational relations but expanded the definition to include its wider societal impact. It seems the aging population was on its agenda from an early point in time. As the economy slowly recovered following the oil crises, Chancellor Kohl placed more attention on issues related to it, such as pension and care reform. The party established the BMFuS, which was the start of seniors having a central focus in a federal ministry. There was a shift over time that led to the issue having a more positive association and aging no longer being viewed as a negative process or a negative stage in life. Overall, the CDU/CSU's decision to focus more on the aging population in the late 1980s and the 1990s was the main contributing factor to this issue having a place on the political agenda.

In the 1960s, the party began to draw attention to the aging population by defining it within the context of the pension system and economic growth. They did cite the loss of life in the two world wars as the main cause of the aging population in the 1966 debate about increasing contribution rates to the pension system, but they claimed this increase should not be delayed since the aging of the population had already begun to create pressure on the population.²⁵⁴ During these early years, the party was supportive of the need to act and to recognize the situation. For example, Jungmann argued that these facts cannot be suppressed because of how important they are.²⁵⁵ A decade later, in 1976, Helga Wex argued the aging process was accelerating and if no changes were made, then the working-age generation would decline and it would be difficult to maintain economic growth.²⁵⁶ In addition to Wex, Glos (1978) and Verhülsdonk (1979) also believed aging was due to anti-family and anti-children policies and this would have negative consequences.²⁵⁷

These calls for action tied into arguments related to intergenerational relations. Beginning with Kohl, he argued that the aging of the population would cause the generational contract to be put into question and the government needed to

²⁵⁴ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 62. Sitzung der 5. Wahlperiode."

²⁵⁵ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 108. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode."

²⁵⁶ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 243. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode."

²⁵⁷ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 104. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 193. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

create policy that looked further into the future and was more long-term.²⁵⁸ Langguth also called the aging of the population a serious problem and claimed the government was not willing to accept that this could lead to a worsening of generational conflicts.²⁵⁹ By the time the CDU/CSU reassumed chancellorship, it was apparent that in the years leading up to that, they had defined the aging of the population as something that would have an impact on a variety of sectors, such as the housing and health care sectors, as well as the pension system.

Once Chancellor, Kohl laid out in his government policy statement in 1983 his goal to secure the pensions.²⁶⁰ He reemphasized the need to set priorities to deal with the aging of the population and the inversion of the population pyramid. He called for a long-term plan that was geared towards the future to overcome the challenges associated with the population's development.²⁶¹ Chancellor Kohl was a key figure in advancing the issue of the aging population by explicitly addressing it in his government policy statements. He also appointed Lehr to be Minister of the BMJFFG. As she explained, he became aware of her work after reading her book, which was part of a book series from the Federal Chancellery, about becoming older as a woman. This led him to ask her to fill the minister position because he was looking for someone to focus on aging. By 1988, he had realized that Germany was an aging society and there was a need to add authority to old age policy. She then agreed to establish a ministry focused on older citizens within the coming years.²⁶²

As Minister, Lehr announced in 1989 that the government would have a new focus on policy for older people, which included doubling the BMJFFS's budget for efforts focused on old age policy.²⁶³ This effort seems to have been successful as the First Government Report on the Elderly was commissioned, and both the BMFuS was established and the Federal Plan for Old Age was announced in 1991. However, as described in section 6.3., in the process of commissioning the Report on the Elderly, she faced some pushback from fellow ministers who questioned the need for such a report, but once it was published, the Bundestag decided that such reports should be conducted each legislative period.²⁶⁴

The period immediately following reunification resulted in a sharp decline in the debate in 1990, which was made even more drastic since 1989 was such a high point from the pension debate. However, the issue stayed on the CDU/CSU agenda,

²⁵⁸ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 255. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode."

²⁵⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 205. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

²⁶⁰ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 5. Sitzung der 9. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 9/5, Bonn, 1980.

²⁶¹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 4. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

²⁶² Lehr, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr."

²⁶³ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 157. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

²⁶⁴ Lehr, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr."

and they continued to be the party that addressed the issue the most during the 1990s. Throughout the 1990s, aging was still defined as affecting intergenerational relations and there was a push to change the definition of aging. For example, members pushed for a change in the language and terminology used when defining the situation. Diemers argued for schools to introduce and teach students about becoming older and to learn to be accepting of older people.²⁶⁵ Many members of the party, especially Minister Rönsch, were very supportive of the need to make it possible for older people to lead healthy, active, and independent lives and to remain active members of the community. In her speech during the debate about the Report on the Elderly and the mid-term report of the Study Commission “Demographic Change”, she said Germany’s chances for the future lie in taking advantage of the diverse set of skills and competences of the older generation.²⁶⁶ Minister Nolte continued the ministry’s support of these efforts: She claimed Germany would have a good future when solidarity between the generations was maintained, which is why older people should be viewed as equal partners in society.²⁶⁷ These signs of support by the ministers of the BMFuS and then BMFSFJ not only highlight the positive views of the members of the aging society, but also the more positive outlook of the CDU/CSU that older citizens do not just create challenges for society.

The CDU/CSU also argued that the situation of the aging population should not be ignored, in part because it had already begun. As mentioned earlier in this section, already in 1976, Kohl was arguing for policy that had a more long-term reach to appropriately address the aging population. The argument during the pension debate in the 1980s was also that they needed to find a long-term solution. Parliamentary Secretary Dempwolf claimed that responsible *Altenpolitik* addresses population development early, which in the context of the debate was what the continued work of the Study Commission would help achieve.²⁶⁸ Minister Blüm criticized the SPD during the 1997 pension debates for not wanting to respond until 2015 and argued that the increase in life expectancy was already happening, which is why they could not wait any longer to take action.²⁶⁹ Whether or not the resulting CDU/CSU policies were better equipped to address the situation in the long-term must still be answered, but it is apparent based on their public statements that they were aware of the need to already address the aging of the population.

²⁶⁵ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 236. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 9. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

²⁶⁸ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 52. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

²⁶⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 198. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

Looking specifically at the efforts of the CDU as a political party, they established a group for its older members (*Senioren-Union*) in 1988, but it took a while before a national-level group was established: Beginning in 1978, CDU's General Secretary Geißler published a strategy paper that recommended creating a group for the older generation in the party. At the 1978 party convention, it was decided the executive committee of the CDU should look into how the concerns of the older generation could be addressed by the CDU's policies. In the following year, the first senior union was created in Baden-Württemberg. Despite this first step, conversation continued about establishing a national-level group with one argument in favor being to react to the SPD's recently established representative for seniors (*Seniorenbeauftragte*). However, due to the change in government in 1982 and the need to focus on improving the economy, the party's efforts at the federal level to establish a senior group were put on hold.²⁷⁰ In 1985, the party named Braun the representative for seniors in part in reaction to the changing age structure of the population. The large success of the events organized by Braun led to the CDU's executive committee to submit a motion to establish the *Senioren-Union*, which was approved during the 35th party convention in 1987.²⁷¹ As can be expected, the establishment of this group, as argued by Jan Philipp Wölbern, was heavily driven by the recognition by the party of the importance of older voters, especially since a larger share of older constituents were voting for the CDU as time progressed. There were still concerns and hesitations by party members regarding the potential negative impact such a group could have, but in the end, the idea of providing representation for a large segment of the voting population helped to lead to its establishment.²⁷²

The party's campaign platforms were naturally a clear reflection of the party's focus and help identify when the party began to recognize demographic change and population aging. There were usually references to the older sector of the population (old-age policy): Early on, references were fairly minor and simplistic, referring to their right to have a place in society, the right to self-determination, and providing them with adequate care.²⁷³ The changing age structure was first mentioned in the 1987 campaign platform and addressed a wider variety of areas related to the older

²⁷⁰ For a detailed account, see: Jan Philipp Wölbern, *Die "neuen Alten" der CDU: Geschichte der Senioren-Union* (Sankt Augustin/Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2018), 9–32.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 33–38.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 9–10, 37–38.

²⁷³ For example, see: Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, "Wahlprogramm der Christlich Demokratischen Union Deutschlands," (Bonn, 1969); "Regierungsprogramm: "Wir bauen den Fortschritt auf Stabilität"," (Wiesbaden, 1972); "Wahlprogramm: "Aus Liebe zu Deutschland: Für die Freiheit, die wir lieben. Für die Sicherheit, die wir brauchen. Für die Zukunft, die wir wollen."," (Köln, 1976); "Wahlprogramm der CDU und CSU für die Bundestagswahl 1980: "Für Frieden und Freiheit in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in der Welt"," (Köln, 1980); "Das Wahlprogramm der CDU/CSU: "Arbeit, Frieden, Zukunft. Miteinander schaffen wir's"," (Köln, 1983).

population than in past platforms.²⁷⁴ Interest in the matter in the 1990 platform was missing, but the 1994 platform was the first to mention demographic change, which was within the context of securing the social state. It also acknowledged the need to reform the health care system so it can remain financeable due to the increasing number of older people and medical advancements. In the section about seniors, they called for an intensification of old-age research and its use in developing old-age policy.²⁷⁵ As the debate grew in the Bundestag and following the establishment of the *Senioren-Union*, the increased attention to the older population and the related issues was reflected in the party's platform.

SPD: Not a High Priority While in Office, But More Engaged with the Help of Klose

Despite not having a great concern for the aging population early on, the SPD recognized its impact in its party platforms before the CDU. The party was a part of the governing coalition with the CDU/CSU from 1966 until 1969 and held the office of chancellor from 1969 until 1982, meaning they were in office when the two major oil crises occurred. As a result, they had to respond to a major economic recession that caused high unemployment. The immediate need to restructure the economy and help the country regain stability took priority on their political agenda, making it difficult for issues like the aging population to receive much attention. During the 1970s, focus was also on the baby boomer generation entering college and the labor market, which created concerns about making sure their needs could be met.

Compared to the CDU/CSU – at least early on – they tended to see the debate as exaggerated. Like the CDU/CSU, they attributed the aging population structure mainly to the two world wars and the declining birth rate, but they argued the situation would improve in the coming years. By the 1990s, the members of the party seemed to have changed their opinions and started to demand more action to address the situation. They also turned their focus to address older voters with the establishment of their 60+ working group. When it came to the 1999 pension reform, which included an increase in the retirement age and the addition of a demographic factor to the pension formula, the party was not in support, likely because such efforts were not in the interest of the so-called workers' party. Therefore, their arguments against the reform were likely driven by concern to maintain political support, particularly with the impending election in 1998, and were more focused on the short-term instead of the long-term development of the population.

²⁷⁴ "Das Wahlprogramm von CDU und CSU für die Bundestagswahl 1987: "Weiter so, Deutschland. Für eine gute Zukunft", (Bonn, 1987).

²⁷⁵ "Regierungsprogramm von CDU und CSU: "Wir sichern Deutschlands Zukunft", (Köln, 1994): 36-38.

Early on, the SPD acknowledged the population was aging. Beginning with the 1975 debate about legislation to further develop the health insurance system, Minister Katharina Focke (BMJFG) and Minister Arendt (BMAS) saw the aging population as placing increased demand on health services and leading to increased costs compared to income and cost development. Minister Arendt added that he believed other politicians would agree that the working generation should cover these costs out of solidarity with the older generation.²⁷⁶ But, in the late 1970s and into 1980, members of the party did not agree that population aging was a pressing issue. In his 1976 government policy statement, Chancellor Schmidt recognized the decline in birth rate and the changes to the population's structure; however, instead of focusing on the older generation, his focus was on the baby boomer generation and their entrance into the labor market expected in the 1980s once they reach working age. Therefore, his attention was directed more towards the younger generation, specifically expanding and improving the education system to make it easier for younger people to enter the labor market.²⁷⁷

Eugen Glombig, Chairman of the Committee for Labor and Social Affairs, argued the CDU/CSU used population development as a reason to disseminate "catastrophic warnings" about the future of the pension system and in reality, these changes would not affect Germany until 2000. For him, this meant there was no reason to think the issues were not solvable.²⁷⁸ Chancellor Schmidt also argued these projections were just speculation, so there was no need to dramatize the situation. He said the situation would improve in the coming years; these changes were still at a point where they could be addressed by a modern society with an adaptable social system and flexible economy, in a timely manner, and in various decision-making areas.²⁷⁹ Both of these viewpoints have the positive outlook that the issue can be addressed in due time, but do not see the overall development as positive. The use of "*Alterslast*" by Chancellor Schmidt hints at more of a negative characterization of the issue since he is referring to it as a burden.

This attitude that this was a long-term issue that did not require immediate action lasted for a few more years.²⁸⁰ A 1979 report by the government on the pension

²⁷⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 176. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode."

²⁷⁷ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 5. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode," Drucksacht 8/5, Bonn, 1976.

²⁷⁸ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 95. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 8/95, Bonn, 1978.

²⁷⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 154. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

²⁸⁰ The influence of not wanting to address an issue so far in the future, which may turn out differently than projected, will be addressed in more detail later in the section. When Udo Fiebig was asked if he understood the need to respond to the change in the ratio of contributors and recipients, specifically in regard to the pension system, he argued the bigger problem facing the government was ensuring the baby boomer generation had enough employment

system and its financial status in the coming 15 years mentioned the most serious effects of the aging population would not be felt until 2020.²⁸¹ The concern about reforming social security systems in ways unfavorable to constituents may have been a reason behind their decisions and increased unemployment caused by the economic crisis did not contribute to an atmosphere where changes to social benefits would have been more accepted than during non-crisis times.

By the mid-1980s, however, the SPD took the position that reforms should begin to be made. Helga Schmedt, in response to the GA posed by the CDU/CSU and FDP about the living conditions and future perspectives of older people, stated that it is no longer a question that the number of 60+ individuals will greatly increase by 2030. She went on to say that one could at least expect the government to adequately prepare for this situation.²⁸² More calls for reform came from the SPD during this time, including a GA posed by the SPD emphasizing the necessity for a comprehensive structural reform of old age provisions.²⁸³ This continued throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s. With the CDU/CSU focusing more on the aging population and explicitly on reforming the pension system (in the 1980s), the SPD, as the opposition, was forced to take a stance on these issues, which may be why they called for more reform.

The 1990s was the time when the SPD began to take a more active role in this topic. One major contributing factor is the presence and efforts of Klose. While Klose was mayor of Hamburg, his interest in the aging population began when he realized the population of Hamburg was on the path to shrinking due to the decline in birth rate and the increase in older people. He recognized that more older people also meant more older voters with a larger influence. He established the SPD's working group "60 Plus" that continues to serve as an interest group within the party for members over the age of 60.²⁸⁴ This working group was a response to the CDU's creation of its senior union, but the party's representative for seniors had already been established in the late 1970s.²⁸⁵ As the group's leader, he was also editor of a

and training opportunities in the 1980s when they would reach working age. "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 199. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

²⁸¹ Bundesregierung, "Bericht der Bundesregierung über die gesetzlichen Rentenversicherungen, insbesondere über deren Finanzlage in den künftigen 15 Kalenderjahren, gemäß §§ 1273 und 579, der Reichsversicherungsordnung, § 50 des Angestelltenversicherungsgesetzes und § 71 des Reichsknappschaftsgesetzes (Rentenanpassungsbericht 1979) und Gutachten des Sozialbeirats." Another report in 1981 by the Social Advisory Council (*Sozialbeirat*) said the effects would not be felt until 2030, but it was already possible to recognize future population changes since the population that will be over 60 by that time are already alive. Sozialbeirat.

²⁸² Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 166. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode."

²⁸³ Fraktion der SPD, "Große Anfrage: Strukturreform der Alterssicherung."

²⁸⁴ Klose, "Interview with Hans-Ulrich Klose."

²⁸⁵ Oliver D'Antonio and Bettina Munimus, "Die Graue Koalition," in *Patt oder Gezeitenwechsel? Deutschland 2009*, ed. Felix Butzlaff, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 246.

book series about demographic change and specifically the aging of the population. Through his book series, the SPD gained credibility and prominence in the debate about the aging population. By redefining the problem, they recognized they needed to examine the question, “How does an entire society develop when the age cohorts change?”, which allowed the SPD to draw more attention to the various problems associated with an aging population. This helped them become a part of the conversation and prior to this, in Klose’s opinion, the SPD had overlooked the issue. However, Klose also mentioned there was a lack of support by the leaders of the SPD to pursue the issue since some did not see its relevance: Oskar Lafontaine, Chairman of the SPD from 1995 to 1999 and candidate for chancellor for the SPD in 1990, and Hans-Jochen Vogel, Party Chairman of the SPD and Chairman of the SPD party group in the Bundestag, were not interested in addressing the issue of old age.²⁸⁶

Despite this initial lack of interest by some leaders, the 1990s can be generally characterized by the efforts and work of Klose and the expert commission, and the SPD accepting there will be more older people in society that will be active and capable of living independently longer. They called for reforms of both the health care and pension systems, and they recognized the need to have more scientific research about demographic change. The overall debate during this time became more detailed and the SPD began to pay attention to the growing number of older immigrants, who may require more differentiated policies to address their specific needs. In March 1992, the SPD submitted the first motion for the Study Commission “Demographic Change”. Because they were not a part of the governing coalition at the time, they were not able to have their motion debated in the Bundestag immediately. Once the CDU/CSU and FDP submitted their own motion for a Study Commission, their original motion was also included in the debate.²⁸⁷

In the 1995 debate about the work of the Study Commission, Fuhrmann argued that they had found there was no ideal populations size or age structure, i.e., the idea of an aging population was not valid. This meant there was a need for newly formulated policy that accepted population change as an enrichment and to take on the challenges it presented.²⁸⁸ This call for more reforms continued during these final years of the period under consideration and included criticism from the SPD that not enough action had been taken by the government to address the situation.

As the debate about the 1999 pension reform began, it was evident the SPD was not in favor of another reform. Dreßler argued the demographic and economic

²⁸⁶ Klose, "Interview with Hans-Ulrich Klose."

²⁸⁷ This cannot be stated with certainty since more information regarding the debates about the agenda for the plenary sessions is not available and because when the motion was finally debated, there was an additional motion from all three parties.

²⁸⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 44. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

developments had not fundamentally changed and Germany had been on the same path since 1989. What had changed was the CDU/CSU's positions on the issue.²⁸⁹ When the proposed pension legislation, which included the addition of a demographic factor to the pension formula, was debated, many of the SPD members were against it and the suggested change to the pension formula. Past arguments that there was enough time to address the issue re-emerged: Dreßler argued in both the first reading and during the second and third reading that there was more time to find a better solution since the pensions were secure for at least the next 15 to 20 years.²⁹⁰ Other members were against the addition, like Gerd Andres who argued that the 1992 reform was supposed to have already considered demographic development.²⁹¹ Regardless of whether the proposed formula change was appropriate or necessary, the SPD was unwilling to fully accept a likely unpopular step that would cause pension payments to be based on demographic developments.

Looking at the SPD's campaign platforms, they were also reflective of the party's interest and focus on the aging population, but they acknowledged the changing age structure earlier than the CDU did in their platforms. As with the CDU, the platforms always recognized the older population in some manner (old-age policy), largely in the context of improving care and making it possible for older people to remain in their homes longer, even when in need of care.²⁹² But in 1983, the party emphasized the need to secure old age provisions in the long-term due to the unfavorable economic development and changing age structure.²⁹³ A similar point was made in the 1987 platform that mass unemployment and changes to the age structure should not threaten security in old age, which is why old-age provisions needed to be reformed.²⁹⁴ The topic was not addressed in 1990, but the party addressed a wider variety of issues in their 1994 platform, even stating that society is becoming older. They touched upon ideas related to the general societal view of the older population, i.e., that old age does not just mean weak and ill, and efforts should be supported that enable older people to enrich culture, society, and the economy, as well as encourage older people to represent their own interests.²⁹⁵ Based on the SPD's campaign platforms, they were aware of the aging population and saw a need to not

²⁸⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 138. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

²⁹⁰ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 185. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode.;"

"Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 198. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

²⁹¹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 198. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

²⁹² For example, see: Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, "Regierungsprogramm der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands," (Bonn, 1969); "Wahlprogramm der SPD: Mit Willy Brandt für Frieden, Sicherheit und eine bessere Qualität des Lebens," (Bonn, 1972); "Regierungsprogramm für 1976-1980: "Weiter arbeiten am Modell Deutschland", (Bonn, 1976); "Wahlprogramm 1980: "Sicherheit für Deutschland", (Bonn, 1980).

²⁹³ "Das Regierungsprogramm der SPD," (Bonn, 1983).

²⁹⁴ "Das Regierungsprogramm der SPD 1983 - 1987 " (Bonn, 1987).

²⁹⁵ "Das Regierungsprogramm der SPD: "Reformen für Deutschland", (Bonn, 1994): 41-42.

just address the policy-dependent needs of the older population, but to also acknowledge changes that have to be taken by the greater public to improve their situation.

CDU/CSU and SPD Comparison: Once Aging Was on the Agenda, It Became a Debate About Who Was First

It is clear there were differences in how the two parties viewed the issue, but much of the differences and critiques that came during the later years seemed to be based more on the dynamics of being opposing political parties. It seems that the CDU/CSU was more proactive during its time as head of the government. But, again, I argue the weakened economic situation in the 1970s from the oil crises made it difficult for the SPD to do more in this area related to aging. Chancellor Kohl did have to deal with its aftermath when he took office in the early 1980s, but this did not consume all of his time in office as was the case for the SPD. For the CDU/CSU, the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification was a significant event that automatically jumped to the top of the political agenda once it occurred. The resulting economic, political, and social impact this dramatic change had for the country had never been dealt with before and could have derailed all previous effort to address the aging population by the CDU/CSU-led government. But by then, since the foundation had been laid to focus more on the aging population, it was only a matter of time before the CDU/CSU was able to take the issue up again and give it more attention.

The actions of one party were very influential on the actions and reactions of the other. Specifically related to older voters, both parties were influenced by each other to establish groups within their parties for older members. When the SPD named its representative for seniors in 1979, the CDU took action to show that it was interested in its senior members. Once it finally established the *Senioren-Union*, the SPD made sure it represented its older voters by creating its working group “60 Plus”. Another influencing factor was the Gray Panthers, a political party representing the interests of older citizens that had developed from the Seniors’ Protection Association Gray Panthers (*Senioren-Schutz-Bund Graue Panther*). The development of the Gray Panthers and the active participation of Trude Unruh, the head of the association, in the Bundestag as a non-party member of the Greens was another sign of the growing interest and influence of the older population that could not continue to be ignored. Therefore, both major parties were motivated to take action to show their interest in their older constituents.

It should also be remembered that the SPD is the proclaimed workers’ party. This focus on supporting policies in favor of the worker means they are more likely to

not support increases in working age, for example. They would also be more hesitant to agree to reforms of the social security system that would result in reduced benefits for workers. Even with an understanding that such changes were necessary, their concern about voter support likely hindered the party in taking an active role in promoting action to address population aging. In addition, their party typically had a young membership, so they probably assumed there was reduced interest in old age policies and their focus should be on the working age population.

By looking at quotes from the same year or same debate from each party, it is easier to identify the similarities and differences in how the two major parties viewed population aging. Beginning in 1966, both parties seemed to agree that the stability of the pension system was affected by the significant loss of would-be contributors, creating a challenge to fund the pensions for the current group of retirees.²⁹⁶ By arguing that the demands on the pension system were only due to the loss of contributors in the wars, this implied that both parties defined the problem as temporary and something that would eventually improve. Therefore, in their minds, action did not need to be taken to address what was seen as a temporary situation.

Differences between the parties became more apparent in the 1970s: In 1979, during a debate about the annual budget for the Chancellery, Kohl (at the time MP) called on Chancellor Schmidt to publish the findings of the Bad Sodener Kreis on the demographic situation in Germany, so the government's response was known. Kohl argued:

With every year, Mr. Chancellor, in which the birth rate continues to decline, the structure of our population is further distorted, the aging and decline of our population become more pronounced, the negative consequences for economic development become obvious and the consequences for the general standard of living become undeniable. The burdens on the working generation, on external security and on the international importance of the country are increasing.²⁹⁷

But the Chancellor did not directly respond to Kohl's statements but claimed that he did not see the reason to present a negative picture of the population's development. He did mention the decline in the birth rate and continued to focus on this aspect.²⁹⁸ Several months later, Chancellor Schmidt addressed the demographic development and the aging population in his speech about the state of the nation. He argued:

In my opinion, as far as the demographic development can be very roughly estimated – and that means: At the very most until the last decade of this century; what goes beyond that is just speculation –, there is no reason for dramatization. By the end of this century and the beginning of the next, the so-called old age burden will be even lower than in the middle of the present

²⁹⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokol. Stenographischer Bericht der 62. Sitzung der 5. Wahlperiode."

²⁹⁷ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 131. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

decade. Overall, the changes are within the range in which a modern state with an adaptable social system and a flexible economy can control.²⁹⁹

While the CDU/CSU pushed for recognition of the issue, the SPD supported the idea that these projections were just speculation and since the so-called old age burden would be lower by the end of the decade/beginning of the next decade (1980s), the situation could be addressed in a timely manner. Looking at the following years while the SPD was still in office, there were not many attempts to start tackling issues related to the aging population. Since the CDU/CSU took over as chancellor in 1982, it cannot be said if the SPD would have pursued these suggested changes, but when comparing the two parties, there were distinctions in their early views on the need to address the aging of the population.

By 1985, after the CDU/CSU had assumed majority control of the government, members from the governing coalition, led by Braun (CDU/CSU), posed a GA about the living situation and the future perspectives of older people. A similar question was already posed in 1979, also by Braun, that did not focus on the future perspectives but acknowledged the increase in the coming years of the number of older people in Germany.³⁰⁰ During the debate of this newly posed question, Braun stated that the government's response provides the opportunity to discuss the problems facing older people and to begin to find solutions to these questions. He argued politicians would need to start deciding if this growing sector of the population will be considered a problem group or if it will be possible to integrate them into the modern society, which would benefit everyone.³⁰¹ This statement gives the impression that the governing party was ready and willing to tackle the issue of the aging population. Braun also called for more awareness to be raised about the situation of older people since more focus was being placed on the younger generations. In a sign of the change in the SPD's position, Schmedt argued the government can at least be asked to prepare accordingly for the sharp increase in those aged 60+, which was no longer a questionable fact.³⁰² This statement is like the previous one from Chancellor Schmidt, but it is more affirmative in the fact that the number of people over the age of 60 will dramatically increase versus calling this speculation. Based on the ministry's response to the question from the CDU/CSU and FDP faction, as well as the remarks given during the deliberation about the answer in the Bundestag by CDU/CSU members, it is apparent the CDU/CSU maintained its strong position about addressing the older population's needs and making sure they remain active members of the

²⁹⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 154. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

³⁰⁰ See: Braun et al.

³⁰¹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 166. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode."

³⁰² Ibid.

community. However, how well they actually carried out and implemented these efforts was questioned by the other parties in the Bundestag.

Over time, the position of the SPD, as discussed in the previous section, evolved and they took a more proactive stance in calling for action to address the situation. In the early 1990s, once the BMFuS was established, members of the SPD began to challenge the CDU/CSU by arguing there were no clear signs of old age policy being carried out by the government. During a debate about the 1991 budget for the BMFuS, Wegner argued:

I cannot think of anything good about the government's policy on seniors because it does not appear in the government policy statement, and it does not even exist in outlines. In the budget, the funding for socio-political measures for the older generation has been reduced by 2.5 million DM compared to the 1990 budget, and many of the research projects listed in the documents are still marked NN. This is all the more astonishing as there would actually be plenty of tasks in this area.³⁰³

Similar arguments were made in the debate for the 1992 budget that followed a few months later. Margot von Renesse (SPD) also called upon Minister Rönsch to address policy for older individuals that was "worthy of the name".³⁰⁴ In response, Minister Rönsch criticized von Renesse for giving the issue such a small amount of attention in her speech since there are so many older people in society and they deserve more.³⁰⁵ This back and forth among the parties is another sign of how their views on the issue had changed since the SPD was now arguing in support of more attention and action on the issue. As mentioned before, it is important to keep in mind their role as the opposition party and the need to have a response to the proposals put forth by the governing coalition.

During these debates, when members of the SPD would question why the CDU/CSU had not achieved more, the CDU/CSU would respond with questions about why the SPD did not act when they were in control. For example, returning to the discussion about which party was responsible for establishing the Study Commission: During the debate of the Report on the Elderly in February 1994, Fuhrmann (SPD) – who chaired the Study Commission from 1993 to 1994 – emphasized that the SPD was responsible the commission's establishment, and that the SPD was the party that first pointed out the effects of demographic change. Seuster (SPD) supported this claim and went further by saying it was her party that was working to address the challenges and questions related to demographic change, not the federal ministry. Link (CDU/CSU), however, argued that his party gave special attention to older

³⁰³ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 26. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

³⁰⁴ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 38. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

citizens since they established the BMFuS and they were the party for seniors. In an exchange in the middle of the debate with Seuster, Link questioned why the SPD did not take action or establish such a ministry during their time as head of government. He was only met with a response by Fuhrmann that they were only discussing the last twelve years.³⁰⁶

By 1997, when the parties were debating the 1999 pension reform, they were no longer in complete agreement about the immediate need for action. Members of the CDU/CSU argued that because the age structure had changed and people were living longer, therefore receiving pensions longer, they were looking for a reasonable solution to the challenge.³⁰⁷ They were presenting a “balanced concept” that would create “clarity in the pension issue and therefore confidence in a proven pension system.”³⁰⁸ The SPD, however, did not agree and argued when the previous reform was passed, it was agreed that the system would be secure until 2015. Therefore, there was no need to debate a new reform when the system would be secure for some time to come.³⁰⁹

For most of the 1990s, it was clear both parties agreed action needed to be taken to address the situation of older people in Germany. It reached a point in which the parties were criticizing each other for not having done something sooner. This evolution in the debates can likely be contributed to the role of Klose in promoting the issue among the SPD and the establishment of the BMFuS, which helped maintain the issues related to the older population on the agenda. Despite the criticism between the parties, Lehr remembers working with Klose and the SPD on the issue. She even said the parties worked in parallel and there was not much resistance.³¹⁰ It is possible that the criticism expressed in the plenary debates was more for political show, and the parties were actually willing to work together to address the issue, but this cannot be stated with certainty.

FDP: Supportive Coalition Partner in Favor of Action, but Not Overreacting

The FDP was a continual coalition partner in the government for most of the time considered. This does not automatically mean that they held the exact same opinions on aging as their governing partner, which seems true on a few occasions. There was an early awareness by Spitzmüller of the aging population and the impact things like Germany’s age structure and increasing life expectancy would have, specifically on

³⁰⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 211. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

³⁰⁷ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 185. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

³⁰⁸ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 198. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

³⁰⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 185. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 198. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

³¹⁰ Lehr, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr."

the health system.³¹¹ The party released its 32 theses about old age provision ("*32 Thesen zur Alterssicherung*") in 1979 and then a concept for a liberal old-age policy (*Konzept für eine liberale Altenpolitik*) the following year. Unlike the theses, the "concept" included a wider variety of areas the party wanted to focus on, such as creating adult education programs, helping older people maintain their health, improving medical care, and having compulsory public insurance cover nursing care in old age.³¹²

During their time as coalition partner to the SPD, Baum argued that there was no need to create alarm about the situation of the aging population as the CDU/CSU faction was doing, but one should be prepared to take these population changes into consideration once further analyses had been completed:

Premature conclusions and measures are more damaging than useful. In no other political field is there as much political abuse conducted with unfinished situation analyses and unfinished assumptions as here. There is no reason for dramatization.³¹³

This argument by the FDP for the need to take action, but to not overreact continued. In 1986, as part of the CDU/CSU coalition, they pushed for an increase in working life due to the increase in how long people were receiving a pension, but this should happen at the earliest in the mid-1990s.³¹⁴ Support for not taking action immediately continued as the debate about pension reform began in the late 1980s: Cronenberg argued that it seemed too early to talk about increasing contribution rates since demographic problems will not appear until 2000.³¹⁵ He also said that projections can change and there are many other important factors that should be considered. But he argued that adjustments need to be made in a timely manner.³¹⁶

Throughout the 1990s, the party did not lead the debate about the aging population. Their view of the situation seemed relatively positive (it was a good development that life expectancy had increased) and they supported the need to acknowledge older people and to not see them as a problem. By default, the aging of the population was on the FDP's agenda due to their role in the governing coalition, but this was not an area of specific interest as they were not responsible for the ministries that were known to be most impacted by the aging population.

³¹¹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 108. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 176. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode."

³¹² Kurt Hirche, *Die Alten kommen: Überlegungen beim Älterwerden* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1984), 59-60.

³¹³ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 205. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode."

³¹⁴ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 220. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode."

³¹⁵ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 91. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

³¹⁶ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 132. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."; "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 174. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode."

BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN: An Ally to the Gray Panthers

The Greens were not very active in the debate about the aging population early on in its time in the Bundestag. They included a small section about older people in their 1980 founding party platform, which focused on providing humane conditions for people in old age. This included creating an environment for the generations to live together, a flexible retirement age, a tax-free income for retirees, improved care services, and a type of old-age daycare.³¹⁷ However, subsequent party platforms did not include the older generations nor mention demographic change.³¹⁸

In 1994, the Greens put forth a motion for a resolution regarding the situation of young people in Germany. They argued for lowering the voting age and claimed the needs of young people were being pushed to the side due to the focus on the older generation and the aging of the population.³¹⁹ As the party was largely comprised of young members and supporters, it is unsurprising that they defined the issue within the framework of how younger generations were impacted by the aging population.

Despite their young members, they included Trude Unruh, the Chairwoman of the Gray Panthers, as a non-party member in the late 1980s. During her time as a non-party member, she continued to represent the Gray Panthers, which was part of the agreement that the Greens would be the representatives of their interests. She eventually left the party to run as a member of the Grays. Despite the contentious relationship between Unruh and the Greens, her inclusion gave a voice for the older generation and also acted as a voice in a party did not heavily focus on old-age issues.³²⁰ Her speeches did not appear often in the keyword search, likely because she spoke specifically about old-age policies and not just the aging of the population, but she was vocal during the speeches of other members. Without having been a non-party member in the Greens, Unruh would have probably not been able to represent the Gray Panthers in any form in the Bundestag and there would not have been a consistent voice reminding other members to consider the needs and interests of the older population. Therefore, her participation as a non-party member gave the Greens credibility among the older population, but also contributed to keeping attention on these issues since Unruh had a platform to speak out.

³¹⁷ Schröder and Viechtbauer, 154.

³¹⁸ For more information, see: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, "Programmtexte Bündnis 90/Die Grünen," BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN, <https://www.boell.de/de/navigation/archiv-4289.html>.

³¹⁹ Die Gruppe BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN, "Entschließungsantrag der Gruppe BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN der 12. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 12/7685, Bonn, 1994.

³²⁰ "Unabhängig, zack," *Der Spiegel*, May 29, 1989.

PDS: A Minor Contributor to the Debates

Looking at the position of the PDS in the 1990s, they supported taking action in regard to the older/aging population. Bläss proposed doing this sooner rather than later since the more severe problems were still to come, such as the changes to the labor market.³²¹ Heidemarie Lüth was outspoken in her criticism of how the government was handling the situation of older citizens. For example, during the annual budget debate in 1996, she criticized the budget cut for the BMFSFJ, arguing that despite everyone talking about demographic developments and the need to give more attention to the aging population, the government was going to cut funding for central measures for older citizens.³²² However, their overall participation in these debates was minimal based on the results in my searches.³²³

6.5 Conclusion: Calls for Pension Reform Moved Aging Up the Political Agenda and by the 1990s, It Was a Standalone Issue

All parties eventually had the aging of the population on their political agendas. With the CDU/CSU and FDP government in favor of doing more to address the situation, this created an environment beginning in the mid-1980s that pushed parties to take a stance on the issue. Whether or not these parties were as interested in the aging of the population as they had to be cannot be stated for certain. The interest and attention given to the issue clearly grew over the period under consideration. This is largely due to the ever-growing sense of immediacy to find solutions to potential problems defined within the contexts of securing the pension system or stabilizing the health insurance and care system. There are several important takeaways and conclusions that I have drawn from this analysis:

- There was a steady increase in the mentions by politicians and in government documents about the aging of the German population.
- My research shows that the issue achieved a secure spot on the agenda by the mid-1980s with the debate about the 1992 pension reform. Despite the impact of German reunification on the entire political agenda, it quickly reappeared in a high spot on the agenda beginning in 1992.
- The period of 1992-1995 was when population aging and the older population was a clear stand-alone issue on the political agenda and thus,

³²¹ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 138. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

³²² "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 140. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

³²³ I would argue this does not absolutely mean they did not have the aging population on their agenda. It may have just had a lower position, but they were clearly aware of the situation through the other debates in the Bundestag.

was the high point in the debate about the various aspects of the growing older population.

- Debate about the pension system most frequently referenced the aging population.
- The establishment of the Ministry for Families and Seniors (BMFuS) greatly contributed to the issue of aging maintaining a high place on the political agenda during its existence.
- The growth of the Gray Panther organization and political party also contributed to motivating the political parties to act by establishing their own groups for seniors.
- By the end of the period under question, both main political parties (SPD and CDU/CSU) agreed that the population was becoming older and overall, steps should be taken to address it. However, by the time they reached this shared opinion, politics began to take a more prominent position as politicians began to argue about who was first to address the issue.

Chapter 7: The Media Debate

The media's coverage of aging and increases in the number of articles published were related to the political agenda and debates in the Bundestag. There was a steady increase in coverage throughout the 1980s that reached a high point in 1988. Coverage dropped significantly the following few years but picked up again in 1991, once the excitement of reunification had begun to die down. Unlike policy makers, the media touched upon a wider variety of sub-topics. There is also a distinction in coverage based on the publication with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) publishing more articles than *Die Zeit* and *Der Spiegel*. The latter two, as a weekly newspaper and magazine, respectively, have more limitations in the space available to publish material, while the FAZ is a daily publication and based on publication frequency, has more opportunities to cover a wider variety of topics. Overall, the media started covering issues related to the aging population sooner and more frequently than researchers and policy makers.

Like the previous two chapters, this chapter will identify and evaluate the media's approach to addressing the aging population and the increase in life expectancy. It will begin by presenting the quantitative development of the topic among all three publications followed by a more in-depth look at the articles that either focused on or mentioned the aging population. The chapter will conclude with a comparison of the different publications and how they addressed the issue.

A unique feature of print media is the ability to see how their coverage evolved. As was presented in Chapter 2, the location and length of articles are important factors in how many people actually see and read an article. The front page is the first thing readers see and ensures high visibility since readers do not have to work to find the information. Longer articles have also been found to be a significant factor in readership.¹ Agenda setting research has found the media's agenda and presentation of items heavily influences the public's perception and awareness, which is why it is important to evaluate how the issue was presented in the media. This also influenced policy makers since they are consumers of the news, too, and see it as a gauge of how positions are being presented and accepted by constituents. Therefore, a section will be devoted to looking at readership factors, such as the location and length of the articles in the publications, to see if articles became longer or moved to more prominent locations as interest grew.

¹ McCombs et al.

7.1 The Development of the Media Debate: Reactive to the Political Agenda, But Ahead of the Policy Process

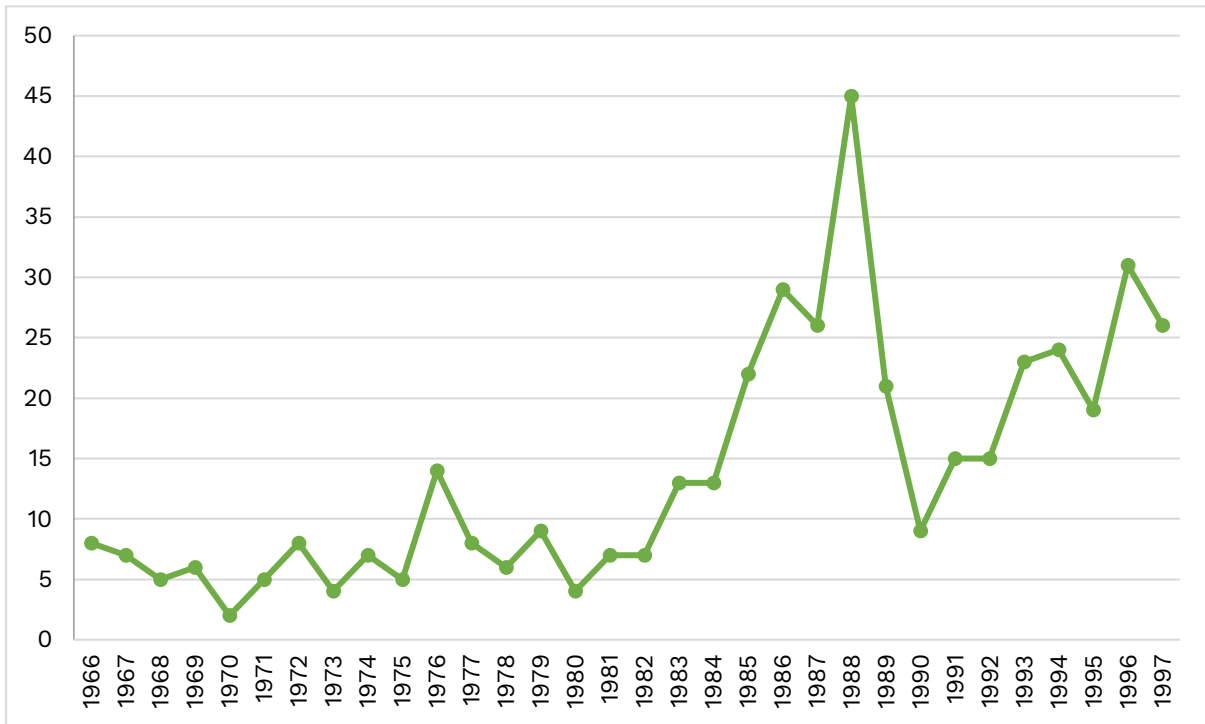
In terms of the overall number of results from the three media sources, there was a total of 442 articles coded. The FAZ published the most articles, but it is a daily newspaper that had more opportunities to publish relevant articles. Looking at Figure 35, one can see the clear increase in the frequency of articles about aging over time. The first jump was in 1976 but was minor and the articles did not have a direct relation to any specific legislation being discussed or a specific event. The birth rate had already begun to decline, which may be why the articles often referred to the declining birth rate or the decline in population size.

There was steady growth in the number of articles beginning in 1983 until 1988, when it reached a high point. Chancellor Kohl assumed office in October 1982 and in both of his government policy statements, he emphasized restructuring and reforming the social security system, which included securing the pension system. This declaration of the new government's objectives spurred an increase in coverage about the ongoing debates and recommended reforms being put forth by various policy makers and civil society organizations, as well as led to a number of opinion pieces critiquing the government's efforts. Calls for additional pension reforms in the 1990s contributed to the renewed growth in articles in addition to talk about health care reform, the role of immigrants in the population, and other society-related topics.²

Figure 36 breaks down publication frequency by publication. It is apparent that the FAZ was the leading contributor to the increase in articles in the second half of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Again, this is closely related to their status as a daily newspaper, which makes it possible for them to address the topic more since they have more opportunities to publish articles about aging. Due to the weekly publication status of *Die Zeit* and *Der Spiegel*, editors must consider what issues were of the most importance or were the most newsworthy from the last week and not just from the day of publication. Therefore, while the high number of articles published by the FAZ are significant, the large amount of material that articles have to compete with to be published in *Die Zeit* and *Der Spiegel* cannot be forgotten.

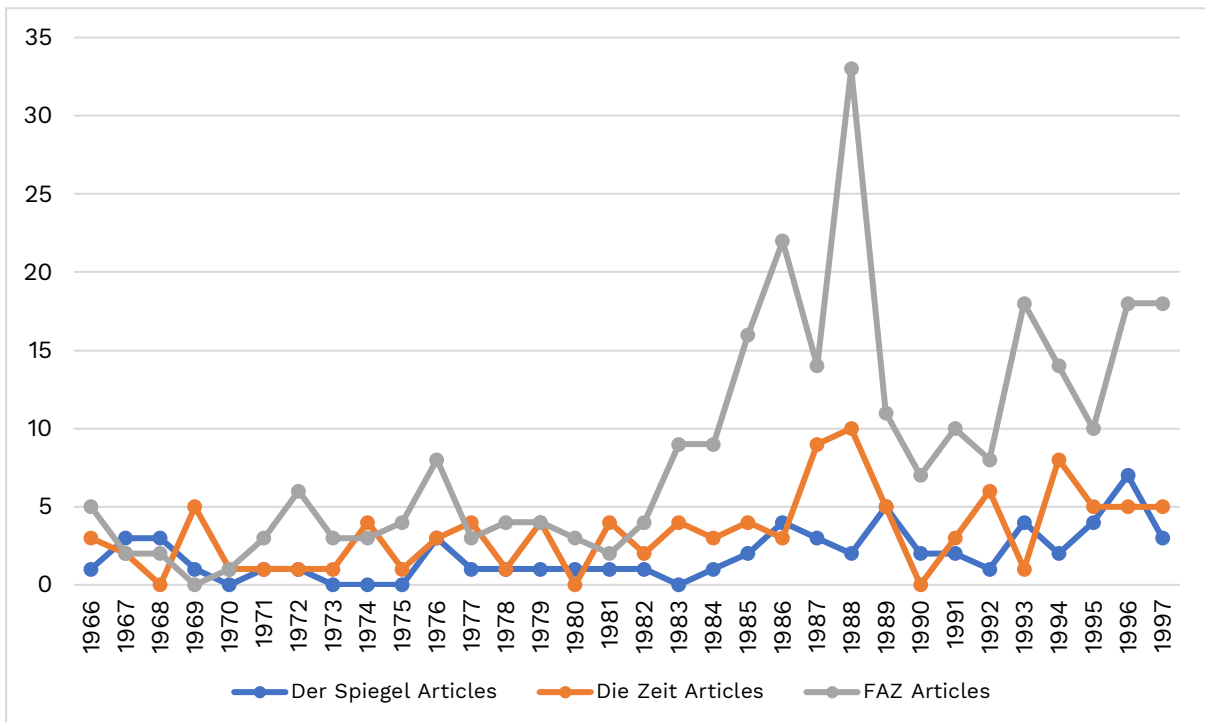
² See the following sections for more detailed analysis of the content covered in the coded articles.

Figure 35: News Articles per Year



Total number of articles published in the three selected publications by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

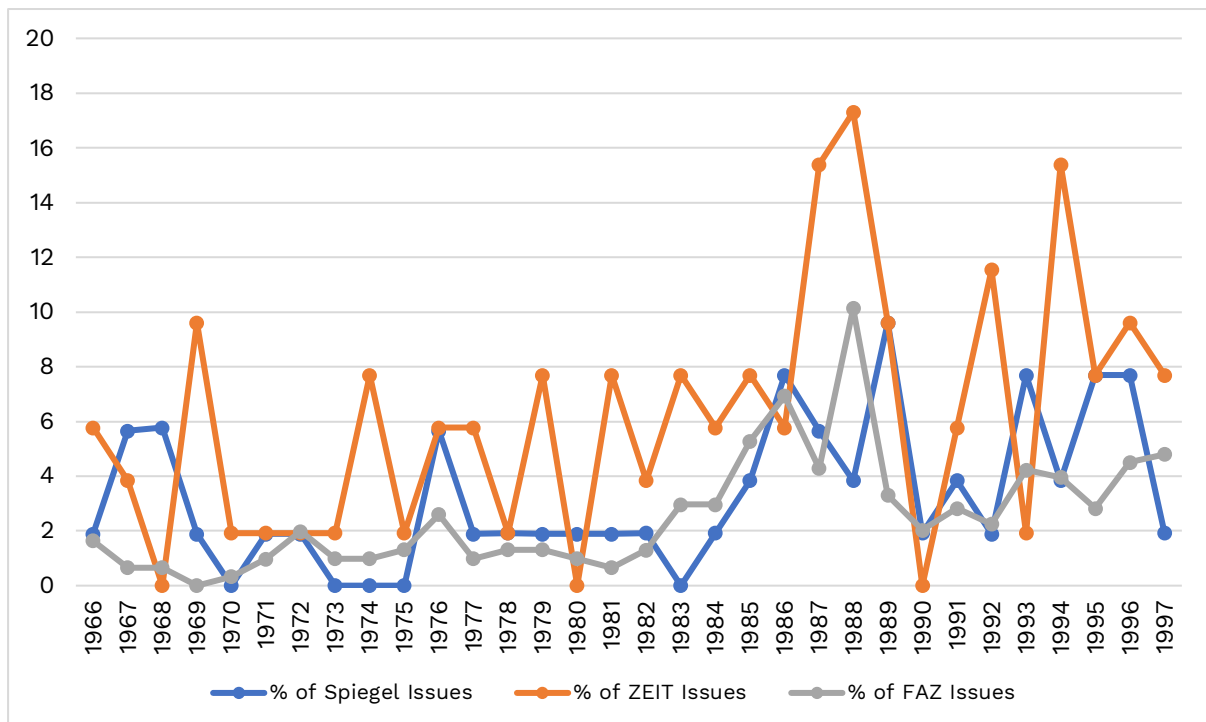
Figure 36: News Articles per Year by Publication



Distribution of articles published in the FAZ, *Die Zeit*, and *Der Spiegel* by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

To make it easier to compare coverage, it is useful to look at the percentage of issues published each year that included at least one article about the aging population. When viewing the data, this image of overall steady growth is not as easy to identify (Figure 37). The FAZ comes the closest to replicating the growth seen in Figure 36, while *Die Zeit* displays a more reactionary response through the greater fluctuations over the years. *Die Zeit* also had a greater percentage of issues that published articles on aging compared to the other news publications. Even though the number of articles published by the FAZ was higher, it was a relatively small share of issues that included articles about aging compared to the overall number of issues published each year and when considering how many articles are published on an annual basis. *Der Spiegel* had greater fluctuation between the years than the FAZ but was still fairly consistent and tended towards publishing more articles over time.

Figure 37: Percentage of Issues per Year by Publication



Overall portion of issues published with an article mentioning the aging population in relation to the total number of issues published a year.

Source: GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Unlike the development of the number of research publications about aging, the development of news articles covering the issue was not as smooth. There was a clear shift in attention following 1988, even though the final version of the 1992 pension reform was not passed until late 1989. While the research field cannot react as quickly to a shift in interest among the public, the media is much more reactive to

the events of the day, which is why the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification were likely major reasons why attention declined in 1990. These big events consumed the political agenda and shifted the concerns and interests of the public and together, contributed to the media also turning away from the topic. *Die Zeit*, for example, did not publish a single article that touched upon the aging population in 1990 based on my findings. There were also more articles indirectly referencing the aging population (e.g., mentioning aging in an article about automation) than articles that focused directly on the older population and what it means to age, but there was growth over time in the number of articles explicitly about aging. However, indirect references do not mean they were less significant, particularly when readers are likely very interested in articles about changes to their pension or health insurance coverage. When the aging of the population is mentioned in these articles, the information is still seen and consumed, since these articles are also more likely to be on or near the front pages, which helps increase readership.

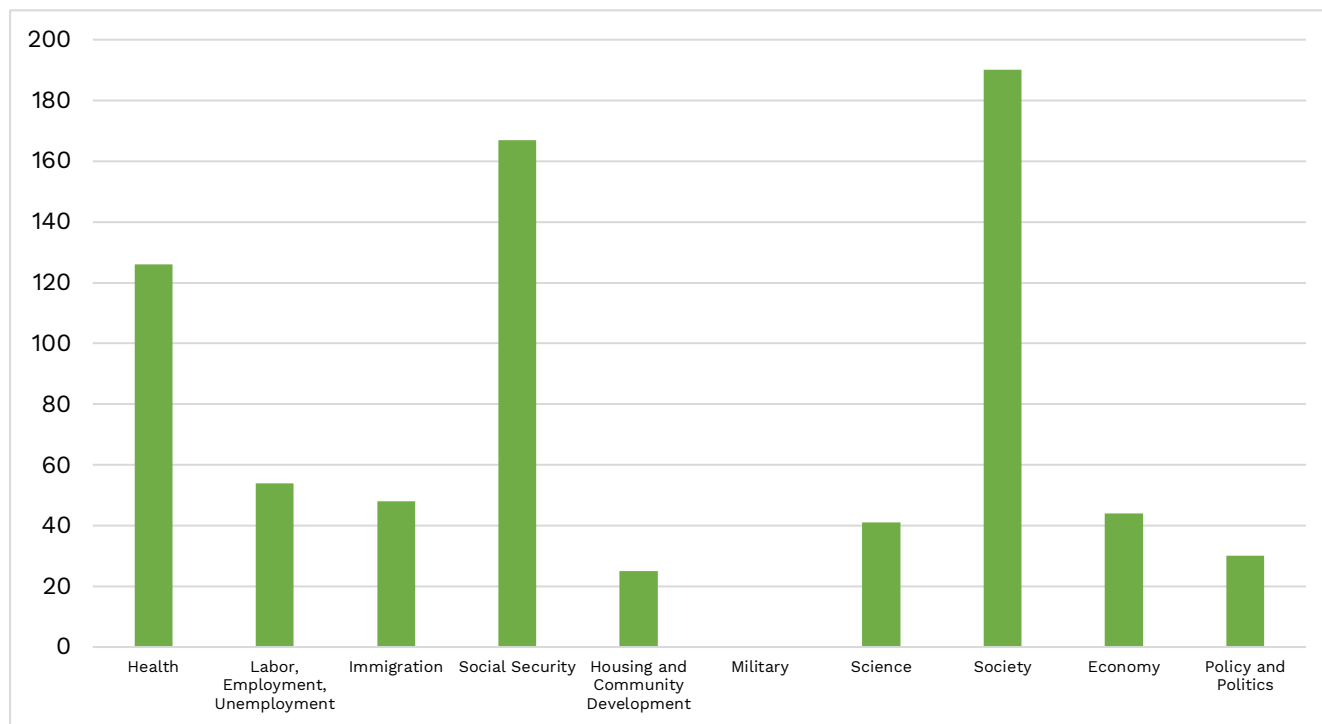
Framing the Media Debate: Pension Reform and Negative Associations with Aging were Common Themes of Articles

Like the research and political fields, society-related topics were the most common frames used to discuss and emphasize the impact of population aging, but unlike the research and political sectors, social security topics were more common than health-related topics (Figure 38). The pension debate received by far the most attention and was seen as having a high news value while health care, despite the larger number of sub-topics, did not receive the same level of attention at any point. Labor-related topics were covered significantly less than in the research field and the topics of immigration, economy, and science received somewhat equal attention.

It is clear the sub-topic “403: Pension system” received the most attention in the media (Figure 39). The next most addressed sub-topic was “801: Change to population/demographic composition”, but there were almost half as many articles about that topic compared to the pension system. The policy field also discussed the issue of aging in the context of the pension system, but there were several other sub-topics that received a somewhat considerable amount of attention; few sub-topics came close in the media field. For example, despite health-related sub-topics receiving a significant amount of attention from policy makers, there was minimal attention given by the media. Considering the news value factors, major reform of the pension system (threshold) is highly relevant for most readers (meaningfulness) and relatively easy to understand, i.e., benefits must change (unambiguity). Even though it was reported on for a while, this type of reform makes it necessary to keep people

updated so that it does not come as a surprise (consonance) and this debate will always be considered news (continuity). Therefore, it is understandable that this issue received so much coverage.

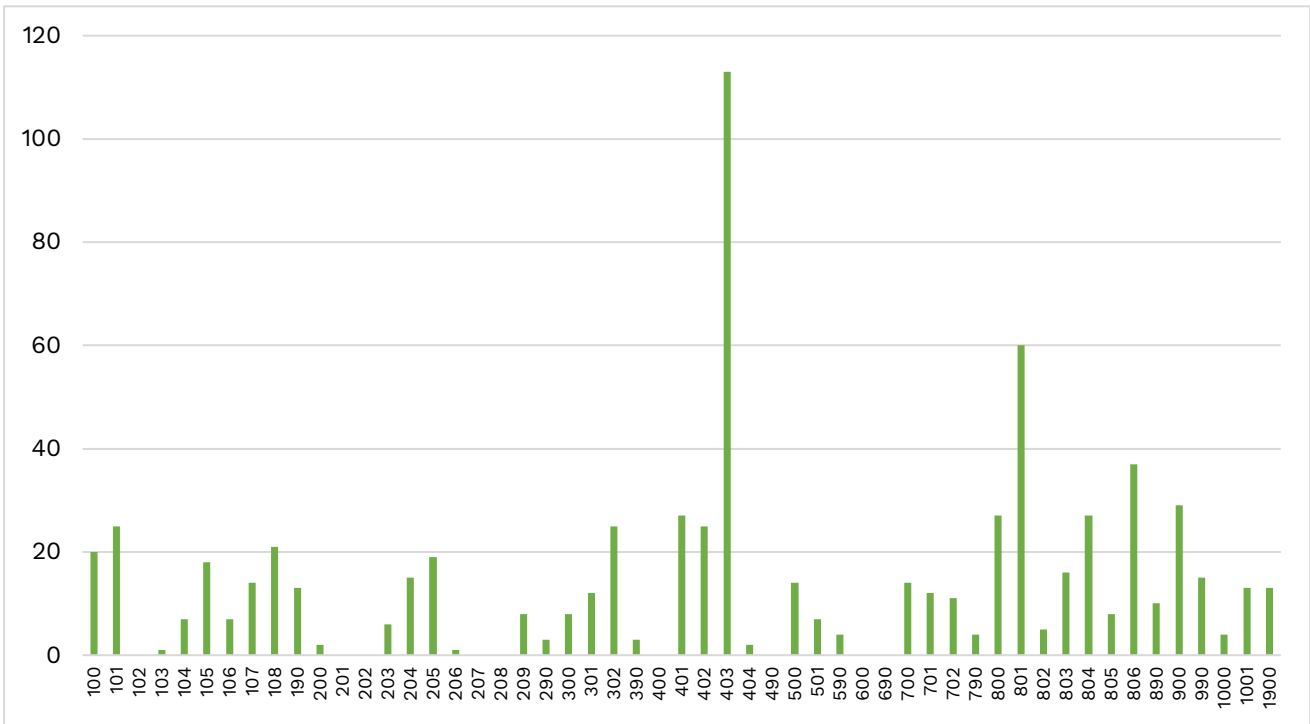
Figure 38: Main Media Topic Categories



Distribution of topics covered by each article based on the overarching topic. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

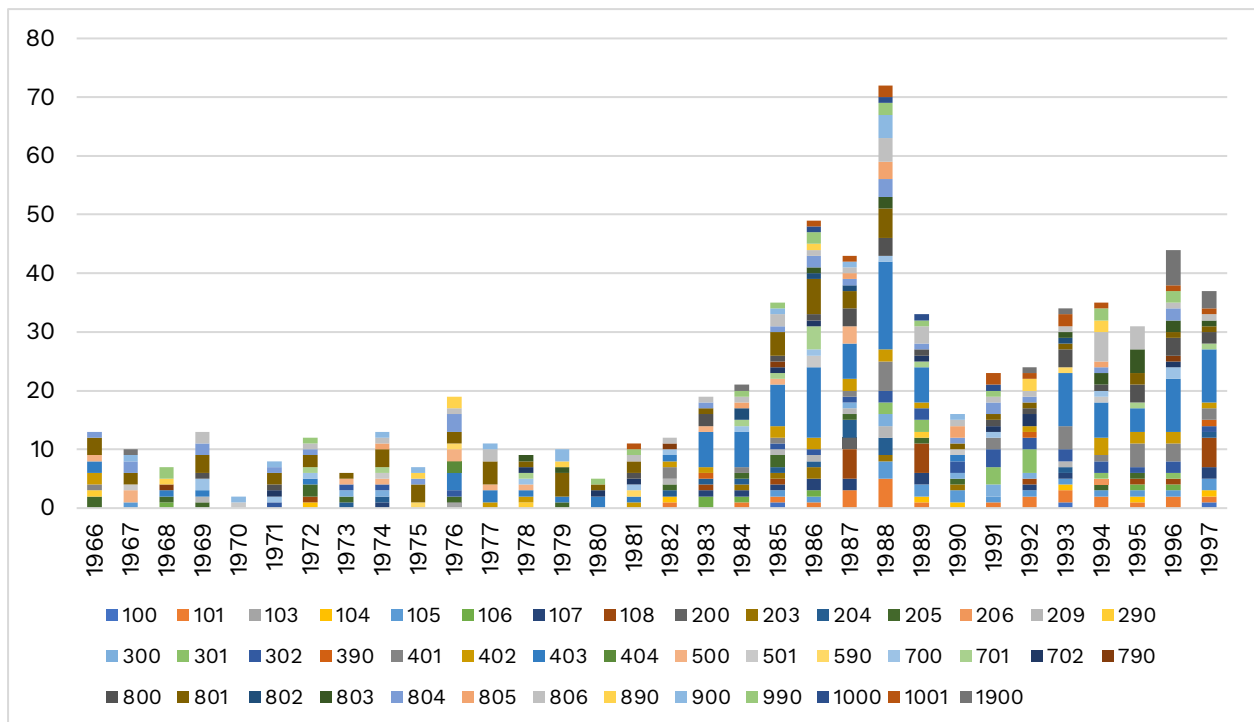
Despite this general focus on the pension system, there was still diversity in the articles published each year that referred to the aging population (Figure 40). The sub-topic of the pension system received a great deal of attention, mainly from 1983-1989 and again from 1993-1997. Reference to the changing population composition was also relatively consistent in the early years with society-related topics receiving consistent attention from the beginning. Over time, a variety of health and labor topics entered the discussion and in the 1990s, articles about immigration began to appear. Once the issue of aging became more common in the news by the mid-1980s, despite the drop in coverage between 1988 to 1990, it continued to receive more coverage than it did before 1985. This supports the idea of continuity and the thought that once an item is considered news, it will continue to be viewed as such. To increase the types of articles about aging (composition), a greater variety in the topics covering aging began to appear.

Figure 39: Sub-Topics in the Media



Distribution of sub-topics covered in each coded news article. For the complete list of codes, see Chapter 3. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Figure 40: Sub-Topics in the Media per Year



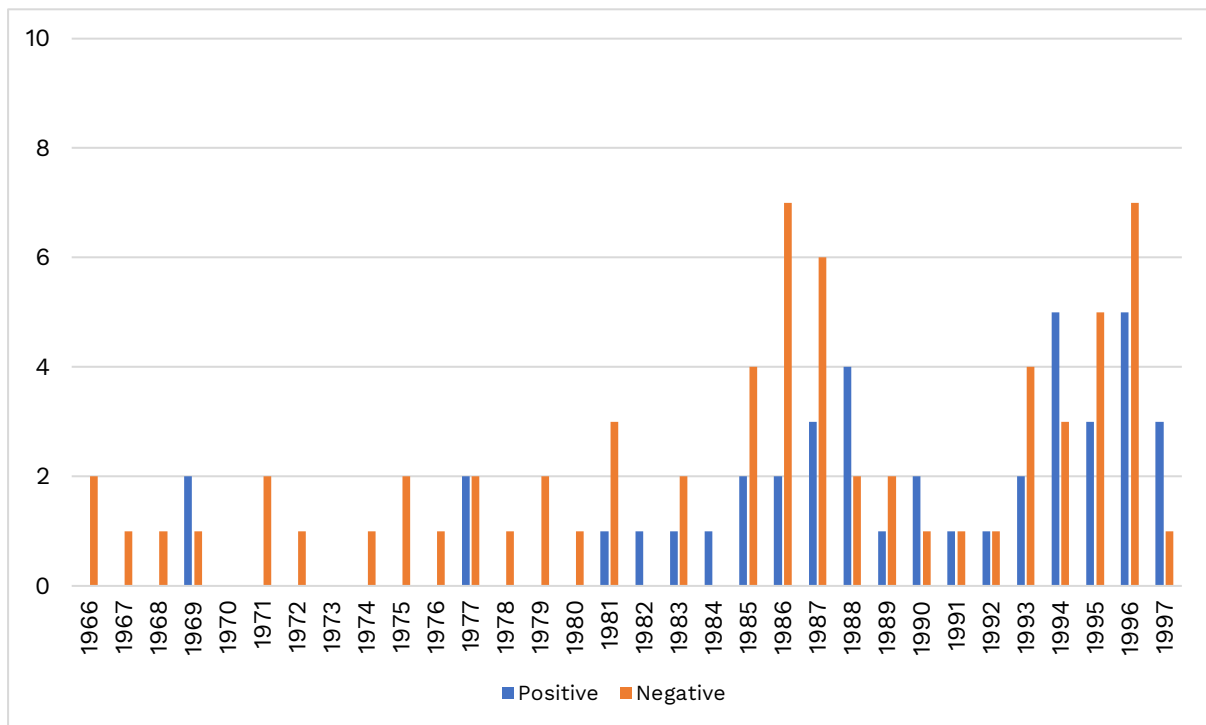
Distribution of sub-topics by year. For the complete list of codes, see Chapter 3. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Compared to the other two fields, there was not a clear shift in the frames emphasized by the media regarding their attitude towards the aging of the population, which is to say there was not a clear shift from aging being negatively associated to being positively associated with other issues. Based on Figure 41, there were more positive associations with aging presented over time, but there was also not a period of growth in either direction related to positive and negative sentiments towards aging. Of all the articles that were coded, the vast majority presented a neutral tone or position (333 articles). In a few instances, there were still more negative arguments presented in the late 1990s than positive. The majority of positive associations presented were centered around arguing for a shift in how old age or the aging process was viewed.³ This included reporting on individuals that supported changing the descriptive terminology used for older people, such as policy makers like Minister Lehr and Klose (SPD), as well as a short article in the FAZ's current events section that explored the meaning of the word "Überalterung".⁴ Some articles also saw the aging population as beneficial to certain sectors, specifically the care industry and the pharmaceutical industry due to the increased demand this would create for long-term care and medicine to treat age-related illnesses.⁵

³ For example, see: "Die positive Provokation ist erwünscht", *Der Spiegel*, May 30, 1977; Stefan M. Gergely, "Die Not der späten Jahre," *DIE ZEIT*, July 23, 1982; Maria Frisé, "Alt, das sind die anderen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 30, 1983; Klaus Natorp, "Immer mehr Alte und immer weniger Junge," *ibid.*, November 12, 1987; Ike., "Altwerden dauert ein Leben lang", *ibid.*, January 30, 1990; Klaus Natorp, "Gesellschaft des langen Lebens," *ibid.*, May 18, 1996.

⁴ For example, see: Jörg Brenner, "Der alte Hassel! Erinnerst du dich noch?," *ibid.*, November 28, 1986; Nt., "Überaltert?," *ibid.*, October 24, 1988; Maria Frisé, "Ermutigende Idee," *ibid.*, November 30, 1988; cy, "Eigeninitiative fördern," *ibid.*, May 3, 1990; Eckhard Fuhr, "Wie gewinnt man die Senioren?," *ibid.*, June 20, 1991; Günter Bannas, "Frischer Wind von den Älteren," *ibid.*, October 27, 1993; Konrad Adam, "Zikadenmusik," *ibid.*, May 7, 1994; E.F., "Wo ist die Zukunft?," *ibid.*, March 13, 1995.

⁵ For example, see: Michael Psotta, "Auch für findige Therapeuten ein hürdenreicher Wettbewerb," *ibid.*, August 7, 1987; vo, "Trauerfall," *DIE ZEIT*, November 4, 1994; J.Rh., "Die Altenpflege wird zum Wirtschaftszweig," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 26, 1997; Rita Syre, "In der Pharmabranche stehen Übernahmen bevor," *ibid.*, April 25, 1997.

Figure 41: Attitude-Based Associations in the Media

Articles by year based on sentiment towards population aging. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Many of the negative arguments presented centered around viewing the aging population as a burden on various parts of society, ranging from the health care and insurance sectors to the pension system, which was related to the idea of the old age burden.⁶ For example, an article from 1971 about an expert meeting in Switzerland declared that a slight increase in life expectancy would create “unforeseeable difficulties” for western industrialized countries.⁷ Numerous articles also emphasized that the larger older population would create a burden for the younger generations and could lead to strains on intergenerational relations.⁸ During the 1970s and 1980s,

⁶ For example, see: Walter Kannengießer, "Versorgt wie die Beamten," *ibid.*, October 28, 1966; Heinz Kirchhoff, "Wann wird es soweit sein: Mehr Opas als Enkel?," *ibid.*, December 21, 1976; Walter Hamm, "Fragwürdige Mineralölsteuer-Pläne," *ibid.*, February 3, 1981; Hans Tietmeyer, "Freiheit und sozialer Ausgleich," *ibid.*, February 23, 1985; kpk, "Das Gesundheitswesen auflockern und entregulieren," *ibid.*, September 19, 1985; Ullrich Pfeiffer, "Schrumpfkultur für die Landwirtschaft," *DIE ZEIT*, October 17, 1986; Helmut Schlesinger, "Der Bürger ist für seine Rente verantwortlich," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 9, 1985; Meinhard Miegel, "Vom Kopf auf die Füße," *DIE ZEIT*, November 13, 1987; Walter Kannengießer, "Ökonomen befürchten Riß im sozialen Netz," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 16, 1988; "Seehofer auf der Suche nach Geld," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 11, 1993; Hans Herbert von Arnim, "Wenn der Staat versagt," *ibid.*, July 13, 1993; nf, "Das Sozialversicherungssystem wird kollektiv mißbraucht," *ibid.*, May 2, 1995; "Wir prüfen und siegen," *Der Spiegel*, April 15, 1996; "Ein Luftschloß zerfällt," *Der Spiegel*, May 13, 1996.

⁷ "Immer rüstiger," *Der Spiegel*, September 13, 1971.

⁸ For example, see: Helmut Anders, "Sind langfristige Unternehmenspläne noch zeitgemäß?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 3, 1979; Konrad Adam, "Wer wählt, der zählt," *ibid.*, December 16, 1986; Wolfgang Gehrman, "Ein chronisches Leiden," *DIE ZEIT*, February 20, 1987; "Die Rente - sicher? (III)," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 24, 1993; Walter Hamm, "Die Last des öffentlichen Dienstes," *ibid.*, July 4, 1994; Warnfried Dettling, "Diktatur der Alten?," *DIE ZEIT*, March

particularly in articles by Arno Surminski for the FAZ, concern about the negative impact the aging population would have on the economy were presented. For example, Surminski continuously argued that a larger older population would hurt the economy because they would be less willing to take risks and to invest.⁹ In other articles, the aging of the population was referred to as age-related sclerosis (*Alterssklerose*)¹⁰, a looming dark cloud on the horizon¹¹, and as a threat.¹²

Considering the news factor theory, negative news has a greater chance of being published than positive news, which would explain why there were relatively more articles that presented a negative sentiment towards aging. These types of arguments were more interesting since they brought attention to possible difficulties society could face and to the (lack of) work being done by policy makers to address the situation. It is unlikely that publications would publish more articles that only argued that the various social security systems in Germany were doing fine, and the aging population would not create any challenges for the future. This need to publish stories that would catch readers' attention and pose potentially controversial or thought-provoking ideas was a likely driver behind the decisions to publish articles with a negative outlook or tone.

A. Society: Consistent Reference to the Changing Population Composition and Controversial Positions on Intergenerational Relations

Articles covering society-related sub-topics addressed a variety of issues throughout the entire period under analysis. The early focus on the changing population structure and the increasing number of older people was important to remind and help the public become accustomed to the notion of the changing population structure. As awareness and interest grew, more specific sub-topics were discussed, which contributed to expanding the discussion surrounding the impact of population aging on society. Like the political analysis, even if articles did not go into great detail about specific aspects of the aging population, it was still important for the basic facts of the situation to be presented. Looking at Figure 42, it is apparent this was done early on since many of the articles leading up to the 1990s addressed the change to the

10, 1995; "Ausbeutung der Jungen," *Der Spiegel*, April 17, 1995; Walter Hamm, "Die Mär vom Kaputtsparen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 19, 1996; "Fatale Verdrängungsstatistik," *ibid.*, December 11, 1996.

⁹ For example, see: Arno Surminski, "Resigniert die Wirtschaft?," *ibid.*, October 15, 1977; "Was ist Arbeit?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 1, 1978; "Wer baut mit 60 Jahren Häuser?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 4, 1985.

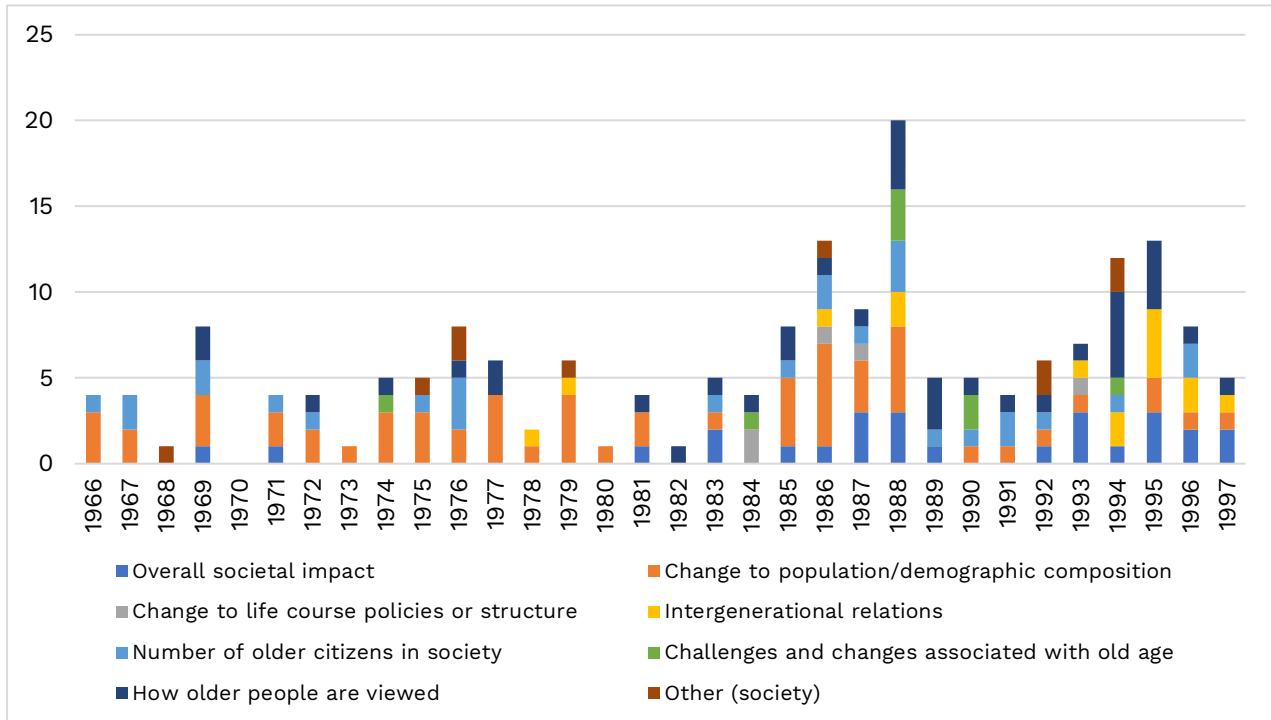
¹⁰ Heiner Geißler, "Meise zu Meise?," *Der Spiegel*, March 26, 1990.

¹¹ Jens Friedemann, "In der Altersversorgung muß mit spitzem Stift gerechnet werden," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 19, 1986.

¹² For example, see: Christoph Uleer, "Private Krankenversicherung nicht unsozial," *ibid.*, October 16, 1986; Arne Daniels, "Heim und reich?," *DIE ZEIT*, April 14, 1989; "Pleite im Paradies," *Der Spiegel*, May 13, 1996.

population or the number of older people in society. By the late 1980s, the focus on society-related topics shifted to cover intergenerational relations and how older people are viewed more.

Figure 42: Society-Related Sub-Topics in the Media



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of society by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Beginning with the few articles that fell under the "other" category, they addressed a variety of society-related topics. For example, the transportation sector referred to the increased number of older drivers, as well as the need to consider the changing composition of populations in rural and urban areas when planning public transportation.¹³ Airlines also had to consider the needs of their passengers, which included more older passengers, specifically on flights to Berlin due to its aging population. Publishing houses discovered the growing older market and was beginning to publish books about aging and targeting older readers more.¹⁴ The aging of the population brought along a rise in crimes committed by older citizens, which was likely a surprise development, hence why it was reported about (unexpectedness).¹⁵ In 1992, in a short article that discussed possible options for the "non-word" of the year

¹³ Kb, "Überalterung," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 7, 1968; Kurt Leibbrand, "Städte für Menschen - Planung für Verkehrsteilnehmer," *ibid.*, May 2, 1975; Roland Kirbach, "Ältere Fahrer, sichere Fahrer?," *DIE ZEIT*, January 17, 1986.

¹⁴ Ruth Gerisch, "Dankbar für ein bißchen Anteilnahme," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 20, 1976; Ernst Klee, "Zu viele Lügen über das Alter," *DIE ZEIT*, June 11, 1976.

¹⁵ Arthur Kreuzer, "Mit siebzig auf die schiefe Bahn?," *ibid.*, August 28, 1992.

(*Unwort des Jahres*), the phrase “old age burden on society” (*Alterslast der Gesellschaft*) was suggested since it had been widely used and was a sign that people saw older people as a burden.¹⁶ This short article recognized the increased attention the topic had received and the significance of the discussion surrounding the aging population.

Many of the articles referencing society-related topics talked about changes to the population’s composition, with consistent attention given during the 1970s and a period of increased attention in the mid-1980s. This continual recognition of the population changing was important since it increased readers’ exposure to this developing change. Early articles from the late 1960s were focused on either the population in East Germany or West Berlin. In East Germany, the aging population was mainly due to mass emigration, which was acknowledged to be a future problem for West Germany.¹⁷ Most articles, however, focused on West Berlin and the weak economic situation it was facing, which contributed to people leaving the city.¹⁸ Attention grew in the 1970s, mainly as a result of the signing of the Four Powers Agreement in 1971, which renegotiated how the four occupying powers (United States of America, France, United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union) handled West Berlin. Included in the agreement was an improvement of the ability to move between West Germany and West Berlin, which led to early speculation about the potential increased immigration could have for its aging population.¹⁹ Despite this supposed ease of movement, the city continued to face challenges meeting its labor demand and concerns remained about its ability to maintain its population size.²⁰

Most of the articles addressing the change to the population composition were mentioned in the larger context of providing an overview of the current and future population situation in Germany, or its impact on society. In the 1970s, articles centered around the declining population size, but addressed its connection with

¹⁶ lat, "Dem Unwort auf der Spur," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 30, 1992.

¹⁷ For example, see: Müller-Haeseler, 69; Zukunft der DDR, 69; Neuvereinigung 69

¹⁸ This is likely also related to the publications being considered for this research being West German publications. For example, see: "Das Glitzerding," *Der Spiegel*, October 3, 1966; Kai Hermann, "Die "Rote Garde" von Berlin," *DIE ZEIT*, December 30, 1966; "Berlin sucht eine neue Rolle," *DIE ZEIT*, September 22, 1967.

¹⁹ For example, see: Joachim Nawrocki, "Wenn die Berliner Rechnung aufgeht," *ibid.*, September 3, 1971; Peter Hort, "Deutsche gehen, Ausländer kommen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 29, 1971.

²⁰ For example, see: "West-Berlin hat hohen Einwohnerverlust," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 23, 1972; "Betroffenheit," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 23, 1972; "Berlin ist keine Pleite wert," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 13, 1974; Joachim Nawrocki, "Seid nett zu Berlin," *DIE ZEIT*, December 27, 1974; "Viel Wind vor der Wahl," *DIE ZEIT*, November 22, 1974; "Berlin - eine Nummer kleiner?," *DIE ZEIT*, September 26, 1975; bt, "Landkreistag: Raumordnung schon überholt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 27, 1975; ""Die positive Provokation ist erwünscht"."; Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, "Berlin: Pleiten und kein Ende," *DIE ZEIT*, January 23, 1981; Sibylle Wirsing, "Die ambivalente Hauptstadt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 23, 1981.

population aging.²¹ For example, in 1975, Surminski wrote about the close connection between population decline, which was mainly caused by the decline in birth rate, and the aging of the population.²² While Joachim Nawrocki presented the argument in 1979 that changes to the population structure were the reason to be concerned, not the fact it was shrinking.²³ Other articles looked at the situation in specific regions in Germany, such as the Ruhr region, which was dealing with unemployment, a weak economy, and emigration of young people from the region, leaving it with an aging population.²⁴

Throughout the 1980s, articles focused more on the declining fertility rate and the resulting declining German population.²⁵ An article summarizing an event held about the future of the Europe, Former Chancellor Schmidt said Europe was facing a "vitality crisis" most evident in the declining birth rate, but that would lead to an aging population. In line with his position during his chancellorship, he started by saying this was speculative and the situation could still change.²⁶ A few articles, however, did not see a shrinking population as a negative nor as a reason to worry about a demographic catastrophe.²⁷ It was not just the declining birth rate, but also the retirement of the baby boomer generation that would lead to an increase in the retired/older population in 2030.²⁸ Following reunification, an article about the German Society for Population Research's conference reported that population issues, such as aging, would not be solved by reunification.²⁹ Other articles in the 1990s addressed the changing population composition within the larger context of social policies, such as family and pension policies.³⁰

Closely related to the change in the population composition were references to the number of older people in society. These references were also important since they brought attention specifically to the growing size of the older population. Most of the articles referred to either the current or projected size of the older population.

²¹ For example, see: Klaus Natorp, "Sterben wir aus?," *ibid.*, August 25, 1977; Michael Astroh, "Älter werden, weiter lernen," *ibid.*, November 21, 1978.

²² Surminski 75 Arno Surminski, "Die demographische Wachstumsbremse," *ibid.*, September 10, 1975.

²³ Nawrocki 79 Joachim Nawrocki, "Kalte Arme und ein dürrer Busen," *DIE ZEIT*, February 9, 1979.

²⁴ For example, see: Buhl 79 Dieter Buhl, "Das Revier will sich Luft machen," *ibid.*, May 11, 1979; "Rettung des Reviers," *DIE ZEIT*, March 2, 1979.

²⁵ For example, see: Renate Merklein, "Den Altersklassen ein Baby schenken?," *Der Spiegel*, December 23, 1985; Hermann Glaser, "Der fatale Regelkreis," *DIE ZEIT*, October 23, 1987; Dieter Oberndörfer, "Die offene Republik," *ibid.*, November 13, 1987; Karl Otto Hondrich, "Zukunftsvisionen für die Industriegesellschaft," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 30, 1988.

²⁶ Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, "Mit Grips, Geld und Gremien," *DIE ZEIT*, January 4, 1985.

²⁷ For example, see: Schubnell 86 Hermann Schubnell, "Das Lamento um den Geburtenrückgang," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 3, 1986; Klaus Natorp, "Droht eine demographische Katastrophe?," *ibid.*, March 4, 1985; Karl Hoche, "Abgrund hinter dem Tellerrand," *ibid.*, June 28, 1988.

²⁸ Klaus Natorp, "Eine schrumpfende Bevölkerung schreckt nicht alle," *ibid.*, May 18, 1988; Harald Thiessen, "Wieso Katastrophe?," *ibid.*, September 6, 1988.

²⁹ Hubert Spiegel, "Wo Mao bluffte, machen Millionen Ernst," *ibid.*, March 19, 1991.

³⁰ For example, see: fy, "CDU-Politiker für "Familienwahlrecht"," *ibid.*, July 30, 1992; von Arnim; Arnulf Baring, "Der Sozialstaat - teuer und enttäuschend," *ibid.*, February 24, 1995; Udo Perina, "Der konstruierte Konflikt," *DIE ZEIT*, May 26, 1995.

Those focused on Berlin mentioned the number of older people in West Berlin or East Germany.³¹ Many articles just referred to expected growth in the older population's size, which would make it larger than the youth population.³² In the mid-1970s, statistics were released that said one in five citizens would be over the age of 65 by 1985, which was cited several times, and was a common statistic used in other articles to explain the growing older population.³³ This projection was later updated to one in three citizens and became the new commonly cited figure.³⁴ This highlights the importance of easy-to-comprehend statistics, particularly for the media, since they will continue to be referenced once they have been introduced.

Mentions of the overall societal impact of the aging population were seldom in the early years. The articles coded in 1969 and 1971 were within the larger context of a medical and biological discussion about the increase in life expectancy. This increase would, for example, result in economic burdens and substantial social tensions, or would impact the pension system, the influence of older people's power in society, and the economy.³⁵ Beginning in the 1980s, such references became more common and they were often about the aging society and how this will be the cause of a variety of challenges and problems for society.³⁶ Karl Otto Hondrich, a professor of sociology at the University of Frankfurt, wrote in an 1986 essay for *Der Spiegel* that "the deeper problem of aging societies...lies in the fact that their self-transformation underhandedly attacks the core, their socio-cultural ties, traditions, and hopes."³⁷ In 1987, several reports and studies were reported on that found the aging population will be a dominant problem in 20 years, including a report from the Federal Interior Ministry that claimed there would be no area that would not be impacted by these

³¹ For example, see: "Wird Berlin zum Altersheim?," *ibid.*, July 7, 1967; Hermann, "Berlin sucht eine neue Rolle.," dpa, "Rentner in der DDR," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 31, 1971; Peter Hort, "Die DDR erhöht Renten für 3,4 Millionen Bezieher," *ibid.*, September 1, 1972; Nawrocki, "Berlin - eine Nummer kleiner?."

³² For example, see: Erwin Lausch, "Herren über das Leben," *ibid.*, July 18, 1969; Klee; Jens Alber, "Verankert in der Gesellschaft...," *ibid.*, July 15, 1983; Annelies Furtmayr-Sehuh, "Zerbrochene Gene machen uns alt," *ibid.*, April 11, 1986; Natorp, "Immer mehr Alte und immer weniger Junge.," "Droht eine demographische Katastrophe?,"; Rolf G. Heinze et al., "Wer hilft, dem wird geholfen," *DIE ZEIT*, December 9, 1988.

³³ For example, see: Brigitte Jeremias, "Utopia für Senioren," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 18, 1976; Hans H. Götz, "'Kinder: Investitionen der DDR'," *ibid.*, October 26, 1976; Gerhard Seehase, "Die sportlichen Alten," *DIE ZEIT*, August 30, 1985.

³⁴ What was considered "old" was not always specified. By 1994, it was projected one in three citizens would be 60+ by 2030. For example, see: Ralf Zundel, "Die neuen Alter - eine Goldader," *ibid.*, April 29, 1988; Geißler; Bernhard Borgeest, "Drehen an der Uhr des Lebens," *DIE ZEIT*, January 25, 1991; fy; Ralf Frädtke, "Was Senioren wünschen," *DIE ZEIT*, December 22, 1994.

³⁵ Lausch; "Immer rüstiger."

³⁶ For example, see: Michael Jungblut, "Wechsel auf die Zukunft," *DIE ZEIT*, September 11, 1981; Walter Kannengießer, "Mit Mutterschaftsgeld soll die Alterspyramide vom Kopf auf die Füße gestellt werden," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 20, 1983; Walter Hamm, "Zu Lasten kommender Generationen," *ibid.*, February 13, 1988; Kannengießer, "Ökonomen befürchten Riß im sozialen Netz."

³⁷ Karl Otto Hondrich, "Die Verwandlung," *Der Spiegel*, December 8, 1986.

changes.³⁸ These articles (re)introduced readers to how the German population was changing and was expected to change while also drawing attention to the impact it would have on society as a whole.

Several articles also emphasized the need to take action and the lack of preparedness by the government or society to address the situation.³⁹ For example, Hans-Joachim Schöps, editor at *Der Spiegel*, made the claim, "The demographic downturn is unique in the history of mankind, but neither the state, nor the municipalities, nor the political parties are prepared for the impact."⁴⁰ These dramatic statements related to other arguments made by Klose about the significance of the aging population to Germany. Klose was quoted as saying that aging will change the country and the population more than reunification when he announced the publication of his SPD book series.⁴¹ In an article he wrote a year later, he continued by saying demographic processes are long and silent. Despite these somewhat sensationalist statements, he argued the country could adapt to these challenges through innovation, unlike in earlier articles.⁴²

There were only two mentions in 1996 and 1997 that were part of a larger argument about the changes society was undergoing. The articles implied that an aging population was something mature economies experience.⁴³ Due to the aging of society, globalization, reunification, and automatization, what used to be societal guarantees, such as secure jobs and increasing pensions, no longer existed. The government now had to determine how it was going to fulfill its responsibilities and uphold these expectations.⁴⁴ These social states were not suited to handle the challenges, and this could lead to their downfall, as posited by political scientist Fritz W. Scharpf.⁴⁵ While these articles brought attention to the larger impact of the aging population, they did so with a profound sense of importance to take action to maintain society's overall expected way of life.

Attention was given to the need to change the life course due to the increase in life expectancy. Calls were made to completely restructure the life course so that it took into consideration the prolonged period spent in education and the resulting

³⁸ Robert Leicht, "Computer - aber kaum noch Kinder," *DIE ZEIT*, May 29, 1987; "Augen öffnen," *Der Spiegel*, February 23, 1987.

³⁹ For example, see: Natorp, "Immer mehr Alte und immer weniger Junge.," Ursula Lehr, "Vom Achtstundentag zum Nullstundentag?," *ibid.*, March 24, 1988; "Die Republik der Alten," *Der Spiegel*, August 30, 1993; Arnulf Baring, "Im Niemandsland der Seele," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 11, 1995.

⁴⁰ Hans Joachim Schöps, "'Es wird erbarmungslose Kämpfe geben'," *Der Spiegel*, July 31, 1989.

⁴¹ "Rebellen mit Krückstock," *ibid.*, January 18, 1993.

⁴² Hans-Ulrich Klose, "Törichtes Vergreisungsgerede," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 19, 1994.

⁴³ Uwe Jens, "Protektionismus hilft nicht aus der Krise," *ibid.*, May 2, 1996.

⁴⁴ Dieter Buhl, "Schluß mit der Harmonie?," *DIE ZEIT*, February 7, 1997.

⁴⁵ Fritz W. Scharpf, "Nötig, aber ausgeschlossen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 5, 1997.

reduced time spent working.⁴⁶ Particularly for the sake of the social security system, if the trend of entering the workforce later and retiring early continued, then the system would have to change so that current benefits could be enjoyed by the next generation.⁴⁷ Due to the projected increase in the number of retirees to working age people, people were thinking more about the second half of life and how this period was structured. This was the main topic of a 1987 event about how workers aged 50 and older could remain in the labor market longer. Instead of only focusing on changing the social security system, the discussion acknowledged that people would have to work longer.⁴⁸ With these changes to the population, Bernhard Borgeest and Udo Perina saw this as a chance for society to break away from these rigid structures and to change the life course.⁴⁹

Regardless of calls for changes to the life course with the general belief that time spent in old age had improved, it was not always easy for everyone. The challenges and changes associated with old age were touched upon in a few articles. For example, the transition into retirement could be difficult since retirees might feel a loss of purpose or a role in society.⁵⁰ As Ernst Klee argued, it places people on the outside of society, and they become social nobodies. He ended his article by posing the question of whether it was worth it for people to live to be so old.⁵¹ Other challenges were related to health and care needs in old age, specifically not being able to carry out certain tasks and the increased need for care, which clashed with a desire to be autonomous in old age.⁵² A 1988 article in *Die Zeit* argued that most countries had not adequately addressed the care needs of older people and ensuring their human rights in old age. This had resulted in care facilities that make the old age experience unenjoyable. The author argued the general public and politicians have ignored trying to improve this situation and are only concerned about how to finance it and the pension system.⁵³

Recognizing these challenges is also related to the way in which older people are viewed. Most articles that touched upon how older people or aging were viewed focused on the general concepts and ideas of old age. This largely centered around the argument that being old no longer just meant that one was inactive, weak, and ill,

⁴⁶ Paul B. Baltes, "Gerontologie," *DIE ZEIT*, August 3, 1984.

⁴⁷ Theo Sommer, "Mit fünfzig Jahren: Gnad' dir Gott?," *ibid.*, April 6, 1984; Konrad Adam, "Der blinde Staat," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 19, 1986.

⁴⁸ Carl Graf Hohenthal, "Die Schule holt den Menschen wieder ein," *ibid.*, October 20, 1987.

⁴⁹ Bernhard Borgeest and Udo Perina, "Die graue Revolution," *DIE ZEIT*, March 26, 1993.

⁵⁰ Sommer.

⁵¹ Ernst Klee, "'Die Oma auf dem Nachttopf...'," *ibid.*, May 17, 1974.

⁵² Heinze et al; Ike; cy; Werner D. Bockelmann, "Nicht jeder Ältere fährt so gut, wie er sich fühlt," *ibid.*, November 29, 1994.

⁵³ Reiner Luyken, "Am Ende ohne Würde," *DIE ZEIT*, January 22, 1988.

but increasingly, realizing they were still active and fit.⁵⁴ For example, a 1982 article quoted the Director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) who argued, "The idea of the old person who is staggering towards the grave, weakened by illness and hollowed out by suffering, unable to care for himself, is wrong."⁵⁵ This change in mindset that once one reaches the age of 50, they are old was also a driver for the German Gymnastics Association to recruit more members over the age of 50. It was reported that Minister Lehr and the BMJFFG also supported these efforts.⁵⁶ Following the publication of a 1995 article by Cora Stephan, a number of readers submitted comments, including arguments for rethinking how society treats older people: "30 percent of the population cannot be sidelined. In socio-political and economic terms, it is completely irrational. We have to make use of the skills of older people and preserve them."⁵⁷ Following the SPD's loss in the 1990 elections, several articles also focused on the party's efforts to adjust their strategy to appeal more to older voters. They emphasized Klose's push to view older people in a different, more positive light, as active and engaged individuals.⁵⁸

Arguments in favor of viewing older people differently also tied into articles about how older people view themselves.⁵⁹ There were several studies published during this time that addressed this issue and were subsequently reported on.⁶⁰ For example, a 1969 study from the Cologne Institute for Empirical Social Research found that older people view their situation more favorably than society does.⁶¹ A 1988 book review suggested that the findings from a study in the United Kingdom could be applied to the older population in Germany: Older people are happier and healthier than people think and the age at which one goes from being young to old should increase to 75.⁶² Other articles cited researchers who emphasized the older portion of the population was not homogenous: A 1969 *Spiegel* article quoted a number of old-age researchers who agreed with the idea that older people and the aging process are not the same for everyone, and it cannot be assumed that all people undergo the same changes in the same progression.⁶³ In an interview with gerontologist Paul

⁵⁴ For example, see: Klee, Frise (83), Schöps 87, Frise 88, Ilk 90, Bockelmann 94, Baring 95, Alte auf Abstellgleis 95

⁵⁵ Gergely.

⁵⁶ Angelika Müller, "Die Chance Sport nutzen zu wenige ältere Menschen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 29, 1989. Müller 89

⁵⁷ "Alte aufs Abstellgleis? Cora Stephan: "Droht ein Krieg der Generationen", ZEIT Nr. 41," *DIE ZEIT*, October 27, 1995.

⁵⁸ Fuhr; E.F.

⁵⁹ For example, see: Baltes.

⁶⁰ For example, see: Anke Messinger, "Der junge Markt der alten Menschen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 22, 1989; Bernhard Borgeest, "Bergauf im Alter," *DIE ZEIT*, October 2, 1992.

⁶¹ Gerhard Prause, "Schluß mit der Abwertung der Alten," *ibid.*, April 25, 1969.

⁶² J.Rh., "Neu auf dem Markt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 8, 1988.

⁶³ "Um einen längeren Tag," *Der Spiegel*, December 22, 1969.

Baltes about the Berlin Old Age Study, the study's findings that the aging process is not homogenous was cited as the most important finding by the researcher.⁶⁴

Additional articles presented arguments for the need to use different terminology when describing the older population. In a 1977 interview, the Berlin Mayor was asked about the aging of the city's population using the term *Überalterung* and he responded by saying this was a discriminatory term and more respect should be given to the older population.⁶⁵ Similar sentiments were expressed in later years about the negative connotations associated with *Überalterung*, *Alterslast*, and *Vergreisung*.⁶⁶ Minister Rönsch wrote a piece in 1994 that argued those that talk about the aging of society (*Vergreisung der Gesellschaft*) were also supporting old age discrimination, which should no longer be tolerated.⁶⁷ These articles contributed to reshaping society's mindset towards older people and received more attention in years corresponding to the big debate about the 1992 pension reform and in years when the work of the Study Commission "Demographic Change" was discussed.

The potential for generational conflict was covered in the media, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. For the media, the idea of a conflict or "war" between generations is an example of a topic that could be framed in various ways and could attract the attention of readers due to its controversial and potentially negative nature. For example, a 1978 letter to the editor argued the older generation was favored and the younger generations were discriminated against, largely due to the political influence of the older voting bloc. It went on to argue the older generation should take a step back and accept they are no longer the most important; the younger generation was facing greater problems.⁶⁸ The strong statements made in this article are a perfect example of the controversial nature of this topic. Both ideas presented – (1) more focus is given to the older generations because (2) they have greater political influence – continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Konrad Adam argued that due to the large number of older voters, families would suffer because the needs of older voters would be prioritized. This could create a cycle where people opt to have no children due to lack of support and then the political influence of families declines even more.⁶⁹ In another article, he made a similar argument that both benefits and burdens are not shared equally, and the older population is favored. He believed something would have to give in order to avoid a conflict between the

⁶⁴ Ada Freese, "Wenn ich alt bin, färbe ich mir die Haare lila," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 3, 1994.

⁶⁵ "Die positive Provokation ist erwünscht".

⁶⁶ For example, see: Nt; Adam, "Zikadenmusik."; "Das Alter," *ibid.*, April 4, 1997.

⁶⁷ Hannelore Rönsch, "Wir sollten die Erfahrungen der Älteren mehr nutzen," *ibid.*, October 9, 1994.

⁶⁸ Elfriede Wütig, "Brief an eine alte Dame," *DIE ZEIT*, June 23, 1978.

⁶⁹ Adam, "Wer wählt, der zählt."

generations.⁷⁰ Schöps stated the “state of war” between the generations was a consequence of the rapidly aging population, and in the end, the older generation would decide elections.⁷¹ Later arguments included limiting the maximum age of voters since the future of the young generation was being sacrificed and it was important the younger generation fights for their needs.⁷² Klose argued that older voters just needed to be persuaded to participate in a “future alliance” that worked in the interest of all society. He cited studies that older people do care more about solidarity than people assume.⁷³

Additional letters to the editor, which did not explicitly refer to generational conflict⁷⁴, claimed politicians were not representing the interests of young people: In a 1994 letter to the editor, a reader argued the interests of the older generation were well represented because older politicians were on their side since they were simultaneously promoting their own interests. The lack of younger politicians and cabinet officials meant that the needs of the younger generation were ignored.⁷⁵ In another letter, a reader also argued the government was ignoring the needs of families and this neglect, in addition to the aging population and its consequential financial impact on health insurance and pensions, was one of the most dangerous challenges for Germany.⁷⁶

Much of the generational conflict was assumed to be about governmental benefits. With an increase in the older population and the decline in the working-age population, i.e., a decline in the number contributing to the social security system, there would be less resources to go around, which would lead to an unavoidable generational conflict.⁷⁷ The same went for the pension system and the need to find a solution to financing the system.⁷⁸ According to a 1995 article, the Young Liberals (*Junge Liberalen*), young members of the FDP, wrote to Minister Blüm claiming his policies were leading to pensioners living off of the costs of the younger generation. The article went on to pose the question of whether this was true and if the aging of society was at the expense of the young generation.⁷⁹ Again, the ideas and arguments presented about generational conflict were controversial and often solicited

⁷⁰ "Harte Jugend, süßes Alter?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 25, 1988.

⁷¹ Schöps.

⁷² Dettling.

⁷³ He did not name the specific studies that support this argument. Hans-Ulrich Klose, "Auch Ältere blicken in die Zukunft," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 16, 1996.

⁷⁴ These articles were coded as "other".

⁷⁵ Anke Pötschke, "Wo ist die Lobby für Kinder?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 13, 1994.

⁷⁶ Alfred Theisen, "Verhinderte Selbstverwirklichung als Mutter," *ibid.*, March 29, 1994.

⁷⁷ "Die Republik der Alten."

⁷⁸ For example, see: "Ausbeutung der Jungen.," "Auf Kosten der Jungen," *Der Spiegel*, February 3, 1997.

⁷⁹ Perina.

responses from readers, which likely encouraged news providers to publish additional articles on the topic.

A few articles argued that such a conflict would not happen. According to Walter Hamm in 1988, because the future retirees of 2010 and 2020 were already alive, as well as those that will support them, talk about threats of an impending generational conflict were groundless speculation.⁸⁰ In another article, Baltes claimed there would not be a conflict because the younger generations would not want to treat older generations poorly since they would not want to be treated that way once they reached old age.⁸¹ Stephan argued the debate about generational conflict was a distraction from the actual issues and undermined the relationships between old and young. In her opinion, since this debate is usually based around the pension system, which is the result of political decisions, the focus should not be on the ratio of working age and non-working age, but rather the ratio of those actually working to not working. It was not generational conflict that was posing the threat, but limited access to the labor market. She called for a society that was not fixated on the young and that does not forget the old.⁸² As mentioned above, this article received a number of responses, supporting the idea that this specific topic caught the attention of readers, even leading some to publicly respond, helping to continue the debate and draw more attention to the issue.⁸³ Regardless of whether these concerns of conflict were correct, many of the articles discussing this issue coincided with periods when pension reforms were debated in the Bundestag.

B. Social Security: Popularity of Pension Reform and Offerings of Reform Recommendations

Like the research and policy fields, the sub-topic of the pension system received the most attention by the media, but because this is a particularly salient issue for the general public, it is not surprising (Figure 43). Since the media reports on current political discussions, the increased coverage in the 1980s reflected the discussion about reforms by politicians and was the focus of numerous opinion pieces. It should also not be forgotten that such a reform had not taken place in some time and there was a pressing need to improve the economic situation, which may be why it received so much attention compared to the reform from the 1990s.

The discussion around the pension system centered around the need to improve and reform the system. Readers were constantly reminded of the changing

⁸⁰ Hamm, "Zu Lasten kommender Generationen."

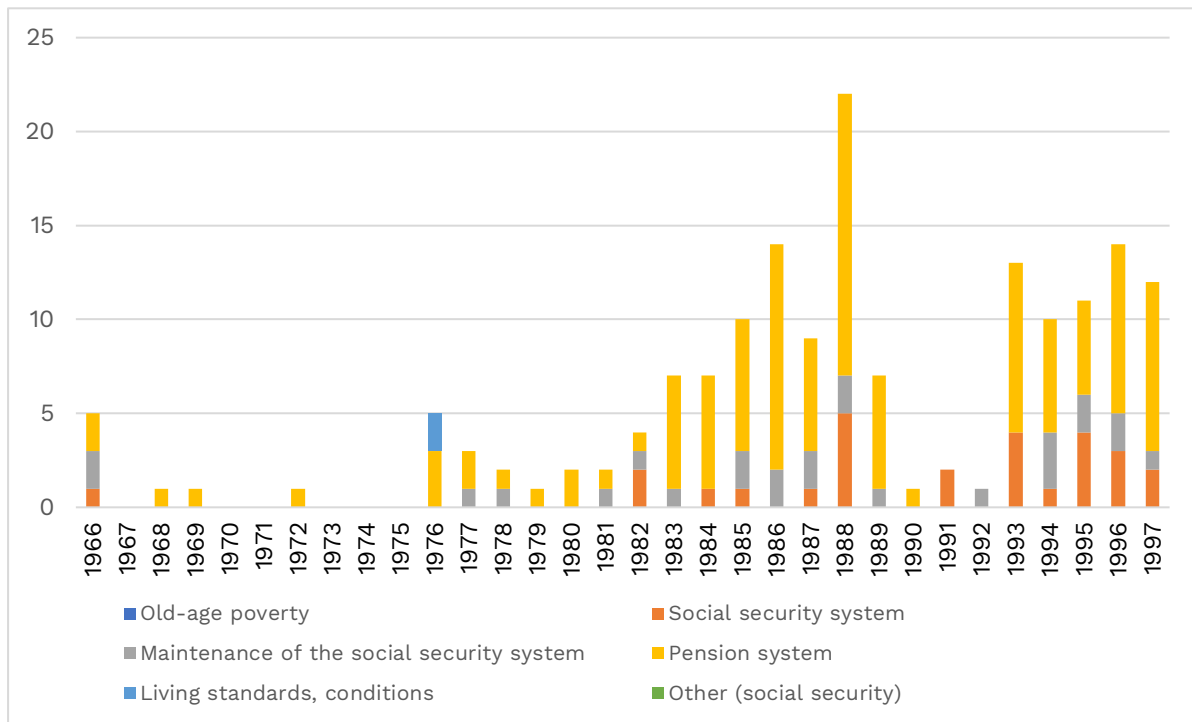
⁸¹ Freese.

⁸² Cora Stephan, "Droht ein Krieg der Generationen?," *DIE ZEIT*, October 6, 1995.

⁸³ Reference to these responses can be found in the earlier part of this section. "Alte aufs Abstellgleis? Cora Stephan: "Droht ein Krieg der Generationen", *ZEIT* Nr. 41."

population dynamics that would lead to more beneficiaries than contributors to the system through the higher number of articles and their central placement in the publications. Even following the passage of the 1992 pension reform, calls for reform did not stop. During these periods of debate, coverage was consistent, emphasizing the high level of meaningfulness this issue had for readers, which appeared to negate the amount of continual coverage it was receiving.

Figure 43: Social Security-Related Sub-Topics in the Media



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of society by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

During the 1976 elections, living standards and conditions received brief attention from Kohl, then Chancellor candidate for the CDU: In two separate interviews, he mentioned that both the young and older generations were the two priority groups for domestic policy. Due to the shift towards a substantial aging process, the social standards of the older generation needed to be secured:

The second is to safeguard social standards, especially those of our old fellow citizens. We are moving towards a considerable aging process. I believe that smart politics must now tell the citizen this, must think about it now; and this has enormous implications for family policy, child-friendliness and much more.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Kurt Becker and Carl-Christian Kaiser, "Ich bin ein Mann der Mitte," *ibid.*, July 16, 1976.

In a later interview with *Der Spiegel*, Kohl made a similar statement that was summarized by the interviewers as Kohl referring to *Überalterung*.⁸⁵ Besides these two references, the focus was on the social security system with specific attention given to the pension system.

Articles about the social security system were primarily published beginning in the 1980s.⁸⁶ Up until the early 1990s, they mostly emphasized the challenges the social security system would face due in part to the aging population.⁸⁷ Around 1988, as part of a series in *Die Zeit* calling for new concepts for the social security system, there were several articles that proposed reforming the entire system.⁸⁸ In 1993, the media reported on the CDU's announcement that it wanted to restructure the system because it was beginning to reach its limits due to the increasing older population.⁸⁹ But as the population continued to age and unemployment grew, the social security system faced challenges, such as overextending its abilities caused by the large number of people needing support.⁹⁰ Thanks to improved medicine and hygiene, life expectancy had greatly increased, but the social system was suffering because it was not meant to support people for so long.⁹¹ Even at the European level, there were concerns about the aging of the European population and the threat of increasing costs for the pension and health insurance systems.⁹²

The articles about the social security system were closely tied to articles addressing the maintenance of the system, mainly regarding its financial stability and whether there would be enough contributors to the system. Early in 1966, two articles by Michael Jungblut focused on the role of automation in the labor force but emphasized that the real issue was the number of retirees that would have to be supported by fewer people in the labor market. To maintain the system, either contribution rates would have to increase, or benefits would have to be cut.⁹³ Articles related to the maintenance of the system picked back up in the late 1970s and either

⁸⁵ ""Mit einer Stimme Mehrheit oder weniger", *Der Spiegel*, August 23, 1976.

⁸⁶ One article from 1966 about the situation in Berlin mentioned their aging population required above average social services. Joachim Nawrocki, "Salz auf alte West-Berliner Wunden," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 23, 1966.

⁸⁷ For example, see: Dieter Piel, "Erst mit 70 aufhören?," *DIE ZEIT*, April 16, 1982; Ss, "Einen Teil des Risikos selbst tragen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 19, 1982; Walter Kannengießer, "Blüm auf gefährlichem Weg," *ibid.*, February 22, 1984; Schlesinger; "Vermögen statt Rente," *DIE ZEIT*, September 30, 1988; Klaus-Peter Schmid, "Ein Volk von Invaliden," *ibid.*, November 8, 1991; Horst Baier, "Die Despotie des Gesundheitsstaates," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 16, 1991.

⁸⁸ Wernhard Möschel, "Soziale Abrüstung tut not," *DIE ZEIT*, November 18, 1988; Heinze et al.

⁸⁹ fy, "Weniger verdienen, mehr arbeiten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 8, 1993; Walter Kannengießer, "CDU-Mittelstand: Sozialsystem vom Arbeitsvertrag abkoppeln," *ibid.*, April 23, 1993.

⁹⁰ For example, see: Dettling; Jan Fleischhauer and Gabor Steingart, ""In den Hintern treten", *Der Spiegel*, April 3, 1995; nf.

⁹¹ Helmut Schmidt, "Forschen geht über alles," *DIE ZEIT*, December 6, 1996; Theo Sommer, "Globalisierung, nein danke - ab ins trotzige Idyll," *ibid.*, January 3, 1997; Scharpf.

⁹² ""Wir prüfen und siegen"."

⁹³ Michael Jungblut, "Die Zukunft verschlafen?," *DIE ZEIT*, May 6, 1966; "Mehr Rentner - mehr Maschinen," *DIE ZEIT*, September 30, 1966.

voiced concerns about the future of the system or called for reforms to make it more sustainable. For example, a 1978 article about the Bad Sodener Kreis' report on the declining birth rate mentioned Chancellor Schmidt's interest in the population's decline within the context of whether the pension system was secure past 2000.⁹⁴ Later articles expressed concern about the need to make changes to the system now since it had reached its limit and could not continue to support the changing population.⁹⁵ An article about the situation facing farmers and their increased reliance on state support questioned whether such a system could be sustained:

Considering the inevitable increase in general social costs due to gradual aging, rising care or sickness costs and rising pension entitlements, it is completely unlikely that a system of income transfers can be sustained in the long term.⁹⁶

The author went on to suggest that young farmers should consider whether to continue in this field if such a system could not be maintained.

Other articles pointed out that a financial burden was being placed on the younger generation, creating a situation where the older generation was living off of the younger generation.⁹⁷ These claims helped support the call for reform of the system and were published around the time when debates were taking place among politicians about social security reforms.⁹⁸ Without the suggested reforms, there would be either significant increases to the contribution rates or drastic cuts to recipients' benefits.⁹⁹ Following the 1994 elections, differences between members of the CDU arose regarding their approach to the social security system during coalition negotiations. For example, Kurt Biedenkopf, Minister President of Saxony, did not think the system could be financed due to the large number of retirees/beneficiaries compared to contributors. Others, such as Minister Seehofer and Minister Blüm argued economic reserves could secure the system against the aging population.¹⁰⁰ As the discussion around these reforms continued, the FAZ published part of the 1996 report from the German Council of Economic Experts that had a specific chapter on social security reform.¹⁰¹ The publication of an excerpt from this report in the

⁹⁴ The article did not explicitly name this working group, but based on other research, it can be inferred the journalist is referring to this informal group. "Gefährliche Sache," *Der Spiegel*, November 6, 1978.

⁹⁵ For example, see: Surminski, "Wer baut mit 60 Jahren Häuser?"; Burkhard Strümpel, "Arbeitsplätze sind teilbar," *Der Spiegel*, July 25, 1988; Wilfried Herz and Nikolaus Piper, "'Der Staat ist an seine Grenzen gekommen'," *DIE ZEIT*, May 6, 1994; nf.

⁹⁶ Pfeiffer.

⁹⁷ For example, see: Hamm, "Fragwürdige Mineralölsteuer-Pläne."; Adam, "Harte Jugend, süßes Alter?"; "Mit dem sozialen Netz im trüben fischen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 7, 1992.

⁹⁸ kpk, "'Der Sozialabbau ist eine Legende'," *ibid.*, December 13, 1985.

⁹⁹ Bert Rürup, "Auf die Frauen kommt es an," *DIE ZEIT*, April 24, 1987; Leicht.

¹⁰⁰ "Letztes Dogma," *Der Spiegel*, October 31, 1994.

¹⁰¹ "Solidarität und Subsidiarität in ein tragbares Verhältnis bringen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 16, 1996.

newspaper underscores the importance of this issue and the perceived need to expose the general public to the expert recommendations being given to politicians.

Tying these concerns into the pension system, similar concerns were expressed about whether this type of generational contract and pay-as-you-go system to fund the pension system can last in the long-term.¹⁰² Walter Kannengießer wrote in a 1994 article that the Social Advisory Council was aware of the need to improve the 1992 pension reform due to the declining birth rate and increased life expectancy.¹⁰³

As seen in Figure 43, by far the majority of articles focused on the pension system. Early articles in the 1960s and 1970s already began to raise attention about the future of the pension system and how it can continue to be financed. These early examples often used the phrase *Rentnerberg* to describe the impending situation facing the country and how the ratio of contributors to beneficiaries would worsen over time.¹⁰⁴ Some articles called for planning for the future and not being short sighted when discussing the pension system.¹⁰⁵ By the 1980s, it was acknowledged that it was time to start taking action:

The time is approaching when the age structure of the population will continue to deteriorate. Fewer and fewer contributors will have to finance more and more pensioners. [...] The earlier the pension formula is corrected, the easier it is to overcome the next "pension mountain".¹⁰⁶

This was a time when the government also emphasized reduced social spending, specifically improving the financial situation of the public pension system and the overall economic situation in Germany. Many articles in the first half of the 1980s stressed that the situation would not improve, which was why a reform was necessary.¹⁰⁷ The pension system was a key component of this: Beginning in 1983 and 1984, calls were made for Minister Blüm to announce his plans to reform the pension system and articles were already presenting other proposals to reform the system.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² For example, see: Dieter Piel, "Zielstrebig in die nächste Krise," *DIE ZEIT*, February 11, 1977; Renate Merklein, "Den Altersklassen ein Baby schenken?," *Der Spiegel*, January 13, 1986.

¹⁰³ Walter Kannengießer, "Renten-Rezepte," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 5, 1994.

¹⁰⁴ For example, see: Kirchhoff; Piel, "Zielstrebig in die nächste Krise."; Albrecht Müller, "Geburtenrückgang: Wer zahlt die Rechnung," *Der Spiegel*, September 17, 1979.

¹⁰⁵ For example, see: "Renten: Vor Wohltätern wird gewarnt," *ibid.*, August 9, 1976; "Baby- und Rentnerboom," *DIE ZEIT*, September 16, 1977.

¹⁰⁶ Walter Kannengießer, "Die Renten sicher machen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 11, 1983.

¹⁰⁷ For example, see: Ss, "Spekulationen auf das Jahr 2030," *ibid.*, March 8, 1980; "Die Bundesbank warnt vor einer Verkürzung der Lebensarbeitszeit," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 21, 1982; Alber, "Verankert in der Gesellschaft...."

¹⁰⁸ For example, see: Walter Kannengießer, "Fragen an den Arbeitsminister," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 13, 1983; "Blüm prescht vor," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 10, 1983; "Ein liberales Sozialgesetz wird ausgehöhlt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 11, 1984; "Blüm auf gefährlichem Weg."; "Sozialversicherung: Verhältnis Beiträge zu Leistung wird ungünstiger," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 25, 1984; "Zwischenbericht für ein neues sozialpolitisches Programm der SPD," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 27, 1984; "Das unbezahlbare "Babyjahr"," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 9, 1984; "Ein neues Modell für die Teilhaberente,"

Der Spiegel published a series of articles that centered around the declining birth rate, but questioned whether the pension system could be financed in the future, especially with the number of older people increasing.¹⁰⁹ The issue also popped up in other areas, such as in an article about the future of the automobile industry, which asked if people could afford cars due to having to finance the pension system.¹¹⁰ It was clear by this point, as argued by Wilhelm Seuss, that the public pension system was a constant topic of conversation.¹¹¹

By mid-1986, articles – both opinion pieces and news articles – about the pension reform debate picked up again particularly before the 1986 election. Articles addressed the 1986 report by the Social Advisory Council, which did not advocate for pension reform, and was also criticized by Kannengießer, who disagreed with their assessment.¹¹² The plans of the CDU/CSU for structure reform were also reported on and included a letter to the editor from Adolf Bauer, FDP member of the Federal Committee for Social Policy, who advocated that either contributions would have to increase or benefits would have to be cut in order to solve the age problem facing the pension system.¹¹³ Other groups, such as the Association of Pension Providers (*Verband der Rentenversicherungsträger*), and representatives from unions and employer associations publicized their positions on pension reform.¹¹⁴ 1988 was a high point in the media coverage with a number of articles on the political debate taking place, as well as opinion pieces encouraging structural reform and also reform regarding pensions for public officials.¹¹⁵ Naturally, once Minister Blüm released his proposed reform, Kannengießer reported on and offered his critique of the proposal,

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, December 3, 1984; "Renten und Lasten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 19, 1985; "Den Rentnern nichts vormachen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 31, 1985; "In einem Boot," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 12, 1985.

¹⁰⁹ Merklein, "Den Altersklassen ein Baby schenken?"; *ibid.*, Nr. 2/1986.

¹¹⁰ Wolfgang Peters, "Baby-Boom als Nachfragefaktor," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 26, 1985.

¹¹¹ Wilhelm Seuss, "Entlastung durch Sparen," *ibid.*, April 3, 1986.

¹¹² Walter Kannengießer, "Rentenplan reicht nicht," *ibid.*, April 19, 1986; "Altersversorgung muß Vorrang haben," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 10, 1986.

¹¹³ *fy*, "Ein selbstbewußter Bundeskanzler dankt den Koalitionspartnern," *ibid.*, October 8, 1986; Walter Kannengießer, "Die Steuerreform soll "alle Berufstätigen" entlasten," *ibid.*, October 30, 1986; Adolf Bauer, "Beiträge und Leistungen in der Rentenversicherung," *ibid.*, December 16, 1986.

¹¹⁴ For example, see: Walter Kannengießer, "Reformvorschläge für das Rentensystem," *ibid.*, June 23, 1987; "Die Renten ohne Erhöhung der Beiträge und der Zuschüsse des Bundes nicht zu sichern," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 24, 1987; "Fehlschüsse," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 24, 1987; Miegel; Walter Kannengießer, ""Quellensteuer verteuert Versicherungen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 11, 1988.

¹¹⁵ For example, see: "Den Streit über die Vorruhestandsregelung nur vorläufig entschärft," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 4, 1988; Hamm, "Zu Lasten kommender Generationen."; "Oxer mit Graben," *Der Spiegel*, March 28, 1988; Walter Kannengießer, "Die Rentenversicherung reicht zur Altersversorgung nicht aus," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 14, 1988; "Blüm und Stoltenberg über Rentenreform einig," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 6, 1988; "Blüm weist Forderung nach Verschiebung der Rentenreform zurück," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 19, 1988; "Die Privilegierten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 26, 1988; ""Beamtenversorgung reformieren"," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 17, 1988; "Die Union sucht einen Weg bei den Renten und bei der Arbeitslosenversicherung," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 19, 1988; "Suche nach Konsens," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 24, 1988.

which he believed did not go far enough to really address the impending situation facing the pension system in the future.¹¹⁶ Looking at the media coverage from the 1980s, which was a high point for pension coverage, the FAZ and Kannengießer were active in contributing to the discussion, providing both information about the political debate taking place, but also offering an opinion on the measures (not) being proposed. These articles were usually on the front page or front page of a specific section, with opinion pieces also centrally located next to the news articles, making them easy for readers to find.

Despite Minister Blüm insisting the pension system was secure, it was clear from the media coverage in the 1980s that many did not agree and there was need for more reform already, just several years after the passage of the 1992 pension reform. Articles questioned whether the 1992 reform went far enough, and many advocated for more reform and private savings to make sure one was financially secure in retirement.¹¹⁷ As is apparent from the inclusion of a demography factor in the pension formula in the 1997 pension reform, the change in the population's age structure was of clear importance when discussing the fate of the pension system. This was reflected in the news articles through the increased mention of the burden the larger older population would be for the younger generation and potential generational conflict that could result.¹¹⁸

C. Health: Concerns About the Impact on the Health Care System and Long-Term Care Demands

Articles addressing health-related issues were not very common in the 1960s and 1970s. There were fluctuations in the number of articles over the years particularly when health care reform was on the political agenda. Many of the articles centered around the growing expense created by the aging population and medical advancements (Figure 44). Throughout this period, articles continued to pose moral and ethical-based questions about society's role in contributing to the prolongation of life expectancy. These types of questions were not commonly found in either the

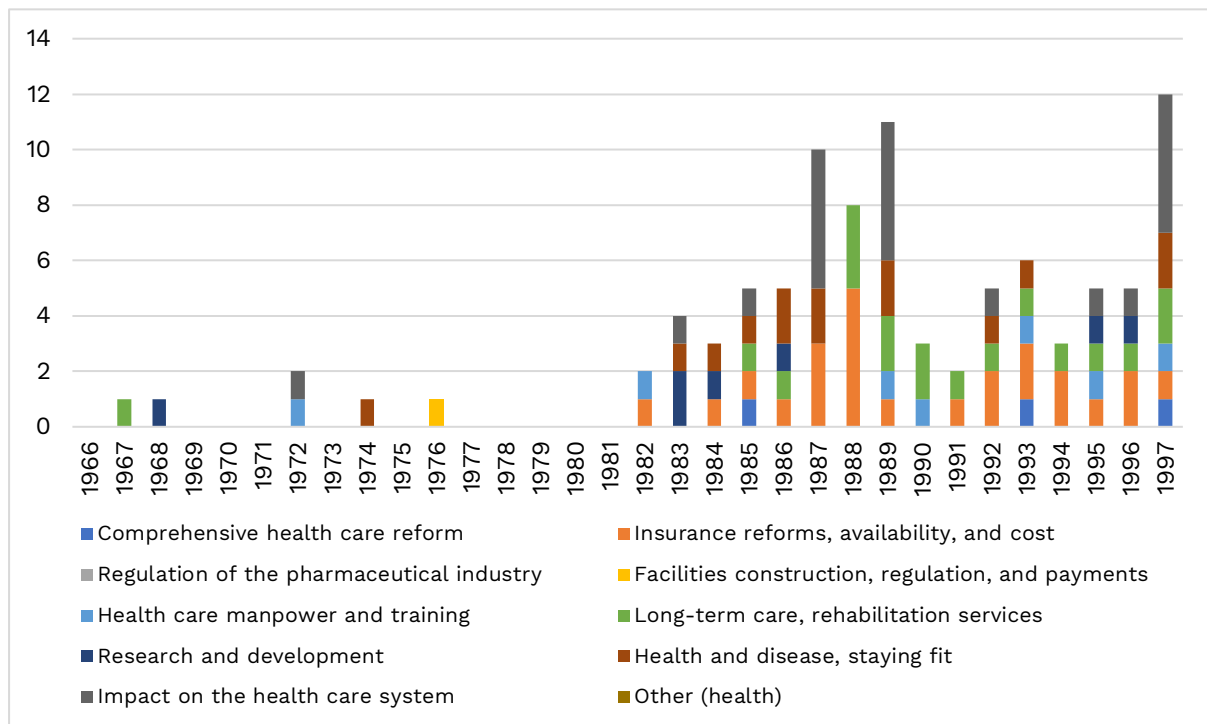
¹¹⁶ "Die Rentenreform greift zu kurz," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 26, 1988; "Vermögen statt Rente.," Walter Kannengießer, "Blüm hofft bei Rentenreform auf Verständigung mit SPD, Gewerkschaften, Arbeitgebern," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 15, 1988; "Die Fehler der Rentenreform," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 14, 1989.

¹¹⁷ For example, see: von Arnim; "Tiefer Riss im Kabinett," *Der Spiegel*, August 23, 1993; "Die Rente - sicher? (I)," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 24, 1993; per, "Mit Gewicht," *DIE ZEIT*, October 7, 1994; Walter Kannengießer, "Der CDU-Wirtschaftsrat verteidigt das Arbeitgeber-Papier," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 21, 1994; wvp, "Die Rentenversicherung allein reicht nicht," *ibid.*, September 3, 1995.

¹¹⁸ For example, see: Perina; Wolfgang Schäuble, "Gibt es einen Ausweg aus der Wohlstandsfalle?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 26, 1996; Oliver Schumacher, "Der Aufstand der Jungpolitiker gegen den Generationenvertrag," *DIE ZEIT*, October 25, 1996; Marie-Luise Hauch-Fleck, "Gefangen im System," *ibid.*, August 2, 1996; "Pleite im Paradies.," "Ein Luftschloß zerfällt".

research or policy results. Early on, there were moral questions raised about the role of health providers in helping older people remain healthy, e.g., carrying our costly procedures to prolong their life since they were the source of the majority of health care expenditures.¹¹⁹ But by the end of this period, particularly as a result of trying to reign in the high health care costs, the discussion seemed to shift towards finding a balance between helping people live longer, but within the realm of what was considered a basic medical procedure. Emphasis had moved towards fair, but controlled spending – a common concern of citizens interested in ensuring their benefits remain protected, but not at too high of a cost. This makes the topic of high interest to readers and is a reason why it received so much coverage.

Figure 44: Health-Related Sub-Topics in the Media



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of society by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

The sub-topic "facilities construction, regulation, and payments" was not referenced often. My results found one mention in 1976 relevant to this research: Because hospitals were not being used to capacity, the costs were rising since less people were paying for the fixed costs. It was suggested that the aging population's typical increased use of hospitals was a possible way to fill hospitals, but due to

¹¹⁹ For example, see: Renate Schostack, "Darf der Arzt aus Mitleid töten?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 15, 1985; Hartmut Diessenbacher, "Sind die Alten noch finanzierbar?," *ibid.*, August 18, 1989; Dirk Kurbjuweit, "Tödliche Grenzen," *DIE ZEIT*, October 9, 1992; Deutscher Ärztetag, "Gefahr für den Lebensschutz," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 10, 1996. 6

Germany's economic situation at the time, its effect might be neutralized.¹²⁰ The aging population, however, was not the focus of the article.

A similar sub-topic – health care manpower and training – was discussed a bit more and it was evident there were distinct changes over time. First in 1972, there was concern based on a 1969 projection that there would be a significant shortage of doctors since demand for health care would increase due to higher life expectancy, population growth, and improved medical technology.¹²¹ Despite arguments that this projection was incorrect, worry continued about a shortage of medical personnel in the 1980s, particularly in small towns.¹²² For some small towns, they were faced with a dilemma caused by the need to cut jobs to save money, but a simultaneous need to hire more health providers to care for their aging populations.¹²³ By the mid-1990s, articles proclaimed the aging population was “reinvigorating the labor market” because of all the jobs added to meet the care demand and there was no need to worry about the care sector declining.¹²⁴ These few articles highlight how the population was changing over time and how concerns of the medical sector seemed to be more focused on the short-term and concern about the future of the supply of medical personnel was not mentioned.

There were a few articles referring to research and development. The earliest articles touched upon the role of doctors in prolonging life expectancy. For example, *Der Spiegel* interviewed a doctor who had performed a heart transplant, Professor Christian Barnard, and asked what his role was in a society dealing with aging and overpopulation.¹²⁵ A later article presented the points raised by philosopher Hans Jonas at a conference held by the German Medical Association of whether doctors should prolong life.¹²⁶ These early examples suggest that society was still grappling with the idea of life expectancy continually increasing, particularly if it was a result of medical advancement and intervention leading to an older population. Later articles moved away from this focus and looked at more concrete research on Alzheimer's Disease and other illnesses since an older population would mean more

¹²⁰ Arno Surminski, "Das kostenbewußte Krankenhaus," *ibid.*, February 24, 1976.

¹²¹ "Das Geschäft mit der Krankheit," *Der Spiegel*, March 20, 1972.

¹²² "In den Zentren knubbeln sie sich," *Der Spiegel*, September 13, 1982; Dietrich Höffler, "Kein Geld mehr für das Leben?," *DIE ZEIT*, March 24, 1989.

¹²³ mih, "Vier Prozent für Angestellte im öffentlichen Dienst gefordert," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 3, 1993.

¹²⁴ Winand von Petersdorr, "Vergreisung" der Gesellschaft belebt den Arbeitsmarkt," *ibid.*, March 25, 1995; J.Rh., "Die Altenpflege wird zum Wirtschaftszweig."

¹²⁵ "Drei Monate sind viel für einen Sterbenden," *Der Spiegel*, February 5, 1968.

¹²⁶ epd, "Kritik an aufwendiger Medizintechnik," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 15, 1983.

people suffering from age-related ailments, which was also related to the sub-topic "health and disease, staying fit".¹²⁷

Other articles about health touched upon the increasing cases of multimorbidity.¹²⁸ Medical improvements meant fewer people were dying from infectious diseases, but chronic illness was rising, and it had to be realized that multimorbidity was becoming more common.¹²⁹ As some people recognized that people were living longer, there were gradually more efforts to help people remain active in old age. Ernst Klee quoted the statistic that only a quarter of the working population reached retirement age at that time, while the majority had to retire early due to disability. He put forth Rudolf Schenda's proposal to already teach young generations in school about how to defend one's self against old age and that more people should learn about being active in old age.¹³⁰ In the 1980s, there were several articles citing interest by older people to remain active and to take up sports: Since many retired early, they considered themselves to be too young for retirement, but were seen as too old to work (start new jobs), so they took up new sports instead.¹³¹ Several actions were also initiated to promote an active lifestyle, such as by the German Gymnastics Association and in Rhineland-Palatinate.¹³² These articles emphasize the shift in society among the older population to not confine themselves to the stereotype of being old and inactive, as well as society recognizing the potential to appeal to this group and offer them opportunities.

Articles that mentioned long-term care were common in the second half of the 1980s and 1990s. A few articles mentioned the debate about assisted suicide/euthanasia in old age with concern initially being raised that such practices would be seen as a valid option in an aging society.¹³³ For example, the German Medical Association released a statement in 1996 that explained their position against euthanasia, which was being debated in the Netherlands at the time. They argued the economic and social factors created by rising health care costs and an aging society may link the demand for euthanasia to the material interests of a younger and healthier society, but these concerns should not be the reason for using it.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ For example, see: Silvia Schattenfrol, "Das schreckliche Vergessen," *DIE ZEIT*, April 22, 1983; Rainer Flöhl, "Das Einpflanzen von Kunststofflinsen birgt Risiken," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 29, 1984; "Geröll im Gehirn," *Der Spiegel*, February 20, 1995.

¹²⁸ For example, see: Heinz Häfner, "Das Altsein bewältigen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 24, 1986; Hans Harald Bräutigam, "Eine klassische Berufskrankheit," *DIE ZEIT*, July 3, 1992; Hans Schuh, "Was sich aus dem ersten gesamtdeutschen Krebsatlas lernen läßt," *ibid.*, October 31, 1997.

¹²⁹ Hans Harald Bräutigam, "Sie wissen fast alles und können fast nichts," *ibid.*, May 5, 1989.

¹³⁰ Ernst Klee, "Das Geschäft mit den alten Leuten," *ibid.*, May 24, 1974.

¹³¹ Seehase.

¹³² haf, "Aktion in Rheinland-Pfalz animiert ältere Bürger," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 17, 1986; Müller.

¹³³ Schostack; Klaus Dörner, "Geh'n wir Kranke vergiften...," *DIE ZEIT*, April 21, 1989.

¹³⁴ Deutscher Ärztetag.

Most of the concern related to long-term care, however, was about the growing need for care by the growing older population. As was already stated in a 1967 article, there was always a challenge to have nursing homes that met the needs of the older population but was even more pressing with the aging population.¹³⁵ This sentiment that society and the government had never thoroughly addressed the care needs of the older population continued, some arguing society was not prepared to address the aging population's needs and that they just do not want to deal with older people.¹³⁶ Whether or not this was true is difficult to determine, but a number of articles pointed out that the increasing number of older people will create challenges for the long-term care sector due to higher demands for nursing homes and services, which also meant higher expenditures.¹³⁷ As Hartmut Diessenbacher declared, in addition to the increase in life expectancy and the growing very old population, the change in illnesses facing the older population had exposed a weakness in Germany's insurance sector due to its lack of consideration for old-age care.¹³⁸ A few articles cited the inability of many older people to cover the costs of care with their pensions alone, but also argued long-term care insurance would create an additional financial burden on the young, working-age population that was already dealing with the costs of the pension system.¹³⁹ This all tied into the debate at the time for establishing long-term care insurance.

The focus on health care reform and health insurance received the most attention due to its high relevance for the general public. In the 1980s, discussion began about the need for comprehensive health care reform. There were reforms made during the 1970s, but major reform to the system, specifically the health insurance system, was achieved in the late 1980s. Finding a way to take control of the increasing costs of health care was a focus of the government and was a motivating factor behind the major health care reforms of 1989 and 1993. Articles on these topics ranged from reports on events to opinion pieces about the state of the health care system and longer analyses about the impact of the proposed reforms. Reports about events held by different groups, such as the economist day of the Association for Social Policy (*Verein für Sozialpolitik*) and the German Medical Association, highlighted the events' efforts to find ways to improve the health care system. For example, the former argued that it was important to not just focus on stable contribution rates,

¹³⁵ Heddy Neumeister, "Nicht jeder möchte "Oma" heissen," *ibid.*, January 24, 1967.

¹³⁶ Luyken; Gertrud Rückert, "Gedanken einer alten Frau zur allerletzten Seite der ZEIT," *ibid.*, December 16, 1994.

¹³⁷ For example, see: Häfner; Wolfgang Gehrman, "Gewaltkur ohne Wirkung," *DIE ZEIT*, April 22, 1988; "Blüm läßt den kleinen Mann bluten," *Der Spiegel*, March 6, 1989.

¹³⁸ Hartmut Diessenbacher, "Der Tod und die Pflege," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 8, 1992.

¹³⁹ Eckhard Fuhr, "Vorsorgen oder versichern?," *ibid.*, July 10, 1991; Walter Hamm, "Armut in der Wohlstandsgesellschaft," *ibid.*, November 4, 1995.

but to look at the long-term picture and the increasing burden caused by the growing older population since this would be a time bomb for the health care system.¹⁴⁰ At the 100th annual meeting of the German Medical Association in 1997, the participants called for comprehensive system change in order to finance medical advancements and the growing demand for service by the aging society.¹⁴¹ In another example, the annual convention of German surgeons discussed how to avoid additional spending increases and recommended creating a new definition of health and disease, which could be used to create a new catalog of services covered by public health insurance.¹⁴² The articles on these groups' events gave exposure to the opinions and positions of civil society and expert organizations on this issue, which provided a different perspective for readers, as well as policy makers.¹⁴³

The commonly cited cause for these increasing costs was the aging population since older people tend to use and need health care services more. Increased costs for treatment due to medical technology improvements were also leading to growing expenditures for the health insurance system.¹⁴⁴ These growing costs meant increases to health insurance contribution rates had to be expected.¹⁴⁵ The higher contribution rates would affect the younger generations most, which was mentioned in several articles.¹⁴⁶ To deal with these expenses, the government introduced several reforms, which, of course, was reported and written about. Kannengießer criticized the proposed 1989 reform (*Gesundheitsreformgesetz*) because the suggested expansion of the services covered by public health insurance would specifically cause health insurance contributions to rise, as well as other compulsory non-wage labor costs. As he argued, the services that would be covered are "in an area where spending is particularly dynamic due to the increasing aging of the population and the growing number of single people."¹⁴⁷ To cover these services, contribution rates would have to be raised or other services cut. Emphasizing its importance, *Der Spiegel* published a cover story critiquing the newly passed reform. The article ended by posing the question of how a system can continue in which a large percentage of health

¹⁴⁰ kpk, "Das Gesundheitswesen auflockern und entregulieren."

¹⁴¹ Heinz Stüwe, "Die organisierte Ärzteschaft besinnt sich auf ihre Anfänge," *ibid.*, May 28, 1997.

¹⁴² Margot Behrends, "Gegen schonungslose Wahrheit und fromme Lüge," *ibid.*, April 7, 1988.

¹⁴³ This is true for all articles about specific events.

¹⁴⁴ For example, see: Walter Kannengießer, "Krankenkassen halten am System des Gesundheitswesens fest," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 5, 1987; "Angebot von Gesundheitsleistungen prüfen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 11, 1987; Walter Hamm, "In die Zwei-Klassen-Medizin," *ibid.*, September 1, 1994.

¹⁴⁵ For example, see: "Interventionsspiralen im Gesundheitswesen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 24, 1982; Ss, "Wohin gehört die Betreuung von Pflegefällen?," *ibid.*, July 26, 1985; Uleer; Walter Hamm, "Was die Freizeit kostet," *ibid.*, January 21, 1987; "Vermögen statt Rente.," Walter Hamm, "Sieben Illusionen der Gesundheitspolitik," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 16, 1992; "Ausbeutung der Jungen."

¹⁴⁶ For example, see: Adam, "Harte Jugend, süßes Alter?," Gehrman, "Ein chronisches Leiden."

¹⁴⁷ Kannengießer, "Die Rentenreform greift zu kurz."

insurance spending goes towards the older population, which was projected to grow.¹⁴⁸

The next round of reform proposed by Minister Seehofer in the early 1990s was also critiqued in the press, one arguing that this reform was just a search for new sources of funds since the aging population and medical advancements were (still) creating burdens on the health insurance system.¹⁴⁹ A suggestion in a letter to the editor was to reduce the services covered by public health insurance and to require people to cover additional treatments privately.¹⁵⁰ By the end of the 1990s, more articles focused on the financial strain the system was facing due to the aging population and increased life expectancy made similar arguments in favor of cutting the variety of services covered by insurance, such as only covering basic medical needs and not covering services that were for the purpose of improving one's wellbeing.¹⁵¹

D. Labor, Employment, and Unemployment: Building Awareness of the Need to Work Longer

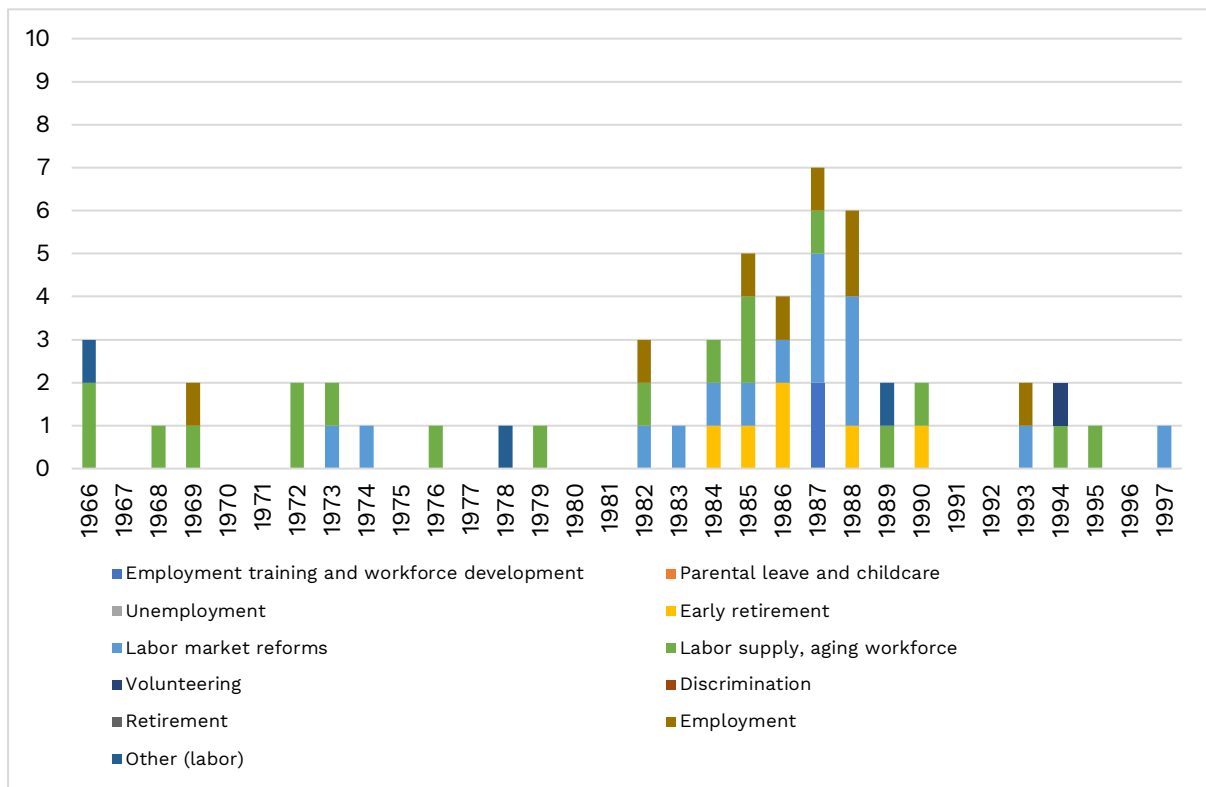
Labor market-related topics received the most attention in the 1980s (Figure 45). This was following the two oil crises and as the government was focused on improving the economic and social situation in Germany, including tackling high unemployment. Many of the articles overlapped in general themes about the labor market, such as the impact of the aging population on the work force and measures that are either improving or worsening the situation like early retirement. They consistently discussed how the aging population would lead to a smaller working population and therefore, people would need to expect to have to work longer or for early retirement measures to be reduced or removed completely. Overall, articles in favor of working longer and this fairly consistent presentation of this argument to readers was a reminder that society would have to eventually make adjustments to their working lives to accommodate demographic changes (consonance). The idea of changing people's retirement plans is also controversial since people do not typically support initiatives that remove or limit existing benefits, so articles about having to work longer than planned will attract attention since it would affect a large sector of the population (meaningfulness) and is not an overly complicated reform (unambiguity). Therefore, the issue of the aging labor market and the need for labor market reform were the two labor-related sub-topics that referred to the aging population.

¹⁴⁸ "Blüm läßt den kleinen Mann bluten".

¹⁴⁹ For example, see: Georg Paul Hefty, "Kuriere am kranken System," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 12, 1992; Kannengießer, "Seehofer auf der Suche nach Geld."

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Wolf, "Der 'Fünf-Minuten-Medizin' Vorschub geleistet," *ibid.*, September 23, 1993.

¹⁵¹ For example, see: "Schneller nach Hause," *Der Spiegel*, May 13, 1996; "Pleite im Paradies.," G.H., "Vom Kopf auf die Füße," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 21, 1997.

Figure 45: Labor-Related Sub-Topics in the Media

Distribution of sub-topics under the category of society by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

There were several sub-topics that did not receive a great deal of attention. Falling under the "other" sub-topic, an interview with Lothar Späth, Minister President of Baden-Württemberg, included his argument in which he cited the aging population as one reason why more environmentally friendly jobs with high added value should be created.¹⁵² There was also a call for more automation since machines could take over the physical tasks and help Germany maintain its economic competitiveness.¹⁵³ This tied into lifelong learning: An article from *Die Zeit* explained that companies would need to prepare for an aging population and labor force. Because of an increase in automation to complete the more physical tasks, lifelong learning would help combat any related economic decline, and enable older workers to continue working.¹⁵⁴ The benefit of lifelong learning was also emphasized in an event held by Hewlett-Packard to discuss the second half of one's working life. With more people living longer, companies would need to view older workers differently and make sure they stayed up to date with their skills to continue to be successful.¹⁵⁵ Both of these examples framed the aging population in a positive light and saw how the labor

¹⁵² Olaf Petersen and Klaus Wirtgen, "'Eine letzte Warnung'," *Der Spiegel*, February 6, 1989.

¹⁵³ Jungblut, "Mehr Rentner - mehr Maschinen."

¹⁵⁴ Erika Martens, "Klasse statt Messe," October 9, 1987.

¹⁵⁵ Hohenthal.

market could respond to it. In 1994, the calls for lifelong learning tied into volunteering as Minister Rönsch suggested offering retirees the opportunity to volunteer through a social year that allows them to continue to use their knowledge and skills in society.¹⁵⁶

In addition to realizing their ability and need to work longer, attention was brought to the negative impact of early retirement. With the introduction of flexible retirement in the 1972 pension reform and the removal of financial penalties for those that retire before reaching the legal retirement age, the pension system was under financial strain.¹⁵⁷ More people were retiring early – essentially making the early retirement age the normal retirement age –, contributing to the pension system for a shorter period of time, and receiving a pension longer. When the 1984 early retirement legislation was introduced, the situation did not improve, leading to calls to end early retirement.¹⁵⁸ By the end of the 1980s, the efforts of a working group of the coalition partners was reported on, which was tasked with discussing if this early retirement legislation should be prolonged or ended. The Confederation of German Employers' Associations (*Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände*) was cited for arguing a reduction in the retirement age would send a wrong signal due to the aging population. It was not certain if there would be enough votes within the party to put an end to early retirement by the end of the year, but Chancellor Kohl emphasized that this measure was supposed to be temporary, and it was necessary to extend retirement age in the 1990s to stabilize the pension system.¹⁵⁹

Like this example, most articles that referred to labor market reforms were connected to early retirement and the need to prolong working life since people were living longer and working lives were being shortened due to more time spent in education. Prior to the 1984 early retirement legislation, the International Labour Organisation of the UN recommended increasing retirement age, which was counter to the discussions in Germany at the time when unions and political parties were supporting shorter working lives.¹⁶⁰ Throughout the 1980s, arguments were made to extend working life and the need to prepare for future labor market and population

¹⁵⁶ Rönsch.

¹⁵⁷ For example, see: Kannengießer, "Ein liberales Sozialgesetz wird ausgehört."

¹⁵⁸ For example, see: Schlesinger; Merklein, "Den Altersklassen ein Baby schenken?."; Arno Surminski, "Der fatale Verzicht auf Vorsorge," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 17, 1986.

¹⁵⁹ Kannengießer, "Den Streit über die Vorruhestandsregelung nur vorläufig entschärft." When it was passed, the legislation for early retirement was to only go until the end of 1988. For more detailed information, see: Günther Schmid and Frank Oschmiansky, "Arbeitsmarktpolitik und Arbeitslosenversicherung," in *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*, ed. Manfred G. Schmidt (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2005), 257-58.

¹⁶⁰ Piel, "Erst mit 70 aufhören?."

situations.¹⁶¹ Politicians were cited for acknowledging or questioning the need to raise the retirement age, such as the State Secretary for the Federal Ministry of Finance, Hans Tietmeyer, who suggested creating more opportunities for people to work longer, and Chancellor Kohl, who argued for a more flexible retirement age at the CDU's party convention to allow those to work longer that wish to do so.¹⁶² In one example, which was contradictory to the other arguments at that time, the Chairman of the Building and Construction Union (*Gewerkschaft Bau, Steine, Erden*) called for a shorter work week so as to not wear out the shrinking labor force.¹⁶³ However, labor market reforms mainly focused on prolonging working life and were heavily discussed in the 1980s with only a few examples in the 1990s. By 1997, the Dresdner Bank presented findings and suggestions that posited an increase in retirement age would not be effective if people continue to spend more time in education and retirement benefits remain the same.¹⁶⁴

These suggested reforms and debate about early retirement tied into the overall issue of the labor market and the aging workforce. Early focus on the (aging) labor market was centered around West Berlin, which had a shrinking labor force due to its aging population and emigration from the region.¹⁶⁵ The DDR also faced a stagnating labor market that would eventually shrink due to increased aging.¹⁶⁶ Projections for the DDR expected the size of the working-age population to be smaller by 2000, which did not change following reunification.¹⁶⁷ Other articles focused on the declining size of the work force as the population aged.¹⁶⁸ In one article, it was argued that automation was not the real concern but the shrinking working age population that would have to support a growing retired population; it was a race between automation and aging.¹⁶⁹ A few articles mentioned how to deal with this aging workforce, such as having a more qualified work force or including more women and

¹⁶¹ For example, see: Walter Kannengießer, "Renten-Palaver," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 23, 1983; Sommer, "Mit fünfzig Jahren: Gnad' dir Gott?."; Hamm, "Was die Freizeit kostet."; Martens; Miegel.

¹⁶² Tietmeyer; fy, "Ein selbstbewußter Bundeskanzler dankt den Koalitionspartnern." See also: Lehr, "Vom Achtstundentag zum Nullstundentag?."

¹⁶³ Konrad Carl, "'Wir brauchen die Arbeitszeitverkürzung'," *ibid.*, March 3, 1988.

¹⁶⁴ hst, "'Das Rentenniveau kann nur durch Kapitaldeckung gehalten werden'," *ibid.*, June 20, 1997.

¹⁶⁵ For example, see: UPI, "'Deine Chance ist Berlin'," *ibid.*, July 5, 1966; Peter Hort, "Mehr Arbeitskräfte für Berlin," *ibid.*, August 3, 1972; "Weniger Arbeitskräfte aus dem Bundesgebiet nach Berlin," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 28, 1972; "West-Berlin hofft auf Westdeutsche und Türken," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 24, 1973.

¹⁶⁶ Peter Christian Ludz, "Die Zukunft der DDR," *DIE ZEIT*, October 10, 1969; "Vager Ausblick," *Der Spiegel*, May 24, 1976.

¹⁶⁷ Geißler.

¹⁶⁸ For example, see: Heinz Brestel, "Bilanz einer Krise," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 23, 1968; Ss, "Die Bundesbank warnt vor einer Verkürzung der Lebensarbeitszeit."; Michael Jungblut, "Angst vor dem Ansturm," *DIE ZEIT*, March 23, 1984; Js, "Erwerbsbevölkerung sinkt trotz Zuwanderung," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 13, 1988.

¹⁶⁹ Jungblut, "Die Zukunft verschlafen?."

older people in the workforce longer.¹⁷⁰ Later on, articles specifically looked at the situation facing the population of public officials. There were more public officials reaching retirement age and fewer people to take their positions, which was creating another set of challenges.¹⁷¹ The main issue, though, for the labor market was the increasing number of older workers and the resulting shortage in the working-age population to fill these jobs being vacated. To deal with the declining labor force, articles promoted making the labor market more accessible to all and encouraged the inclusion of women and older people in the labor force.¹⁷² As argued by Borgeest and Perina in 1993, “[D]emographic change can only be overcome if we succeed in opening up meaningful work opportunities for all in old age.”¹⁷³

E. Economy, Politics and Policy: How Businesses and Political Parties Responded to the Aging Population

Despite the economic challenges Germany faced during this time, the media coverage of the aging population within the context of economy-related issues was minimal. Policy and politics-related topics were not addressed until the mid-1980s and were also slow to develop. Articles about both topic areas centered much of their attention on the impact of the larger older population (Figure 46). For example, how the older population would grow to become an important consumer group that would influence the way businesses market their products and cause political parties to address the needs of older constituents more. Some attention was given to old age policy, but interest was more related to societal impact or, in other words, how readers may be impacted through changes in how products are marketed to consumers or how political parties formulate their party platforms (meaningfulness).

When discussing the general economic impact of the aging population, many articles focused on the new market power of the older population. Because their numbers were increasing, the importance of businesses recognizing the consumer power of this section of the population was highlighted. As Erwin Thomas wrote in 1967, “The strong change in the population structure based on age groups does not only confront social policy but also the sales industry with completely new tasks.”¹⁷⁴ Businesses need to target their marketing to their needs and interests since they will

¹⁷⁰ For example, see: “Was getan werden könnte,” *DIE ZEIT*, February 15, 1985; Renate Merklein, “Den Altersklassen ein Baby schenken?,” *Der Spiegel*, December 30, 1985; Martens.

¹⁷¹ “Lebenslang Fürsorge und Schutz,” *Der Spiegel*, July 3, 1989; Hamm, “Die Last des öffentlichen Dienstes.”

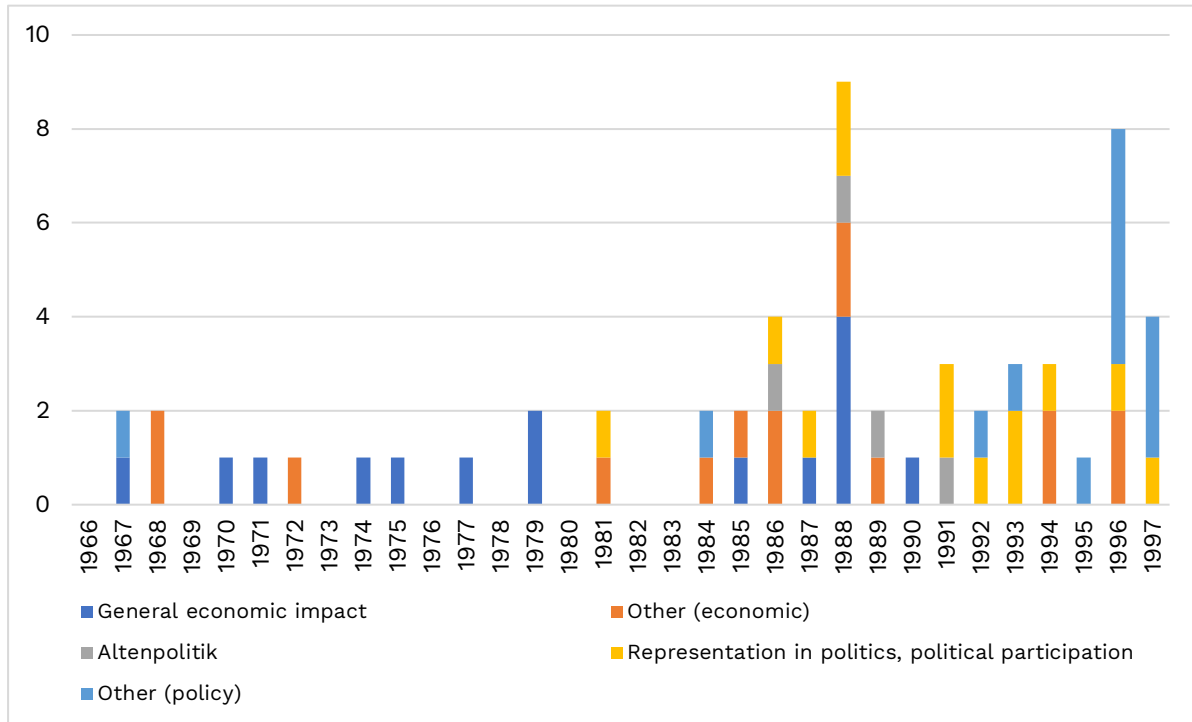
¹⁷² For example, see: Wolfgang Müller-Haeseler, “Der vertagte Wohlstand,” *DIE ZEIT*, March 21, 1969; dpa, “Über das Rentenalter hinaus arbeiten,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 13, 1982; Jungblut, “Was getan werden könnte.”; Cora Stephan, “Die Männer müssen Defizite abbauen,” *Der Spiegel*, June 30, 1986; Lehr, “Vom Achtstundentag zum Nullstundentag?.”; Strümpel.

¹⁷³ Borgeest and Perina.

¹⁷⁴ Erwin Thomas, “Der wachsende Markt der Alten,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 23, 1967.

have significant buying power.¹⁷⁵ In addition to focusing more on the older population, Prognos AG, an economic research and consulting firm, recommended addressing the needs of single households, in part due to aging populations and a decline of the under 20 population, since they will determine buying behaviors in the future.¹⁷⁶

Figure 46: Economy, Policy, and Politics-Related Sub-Topics in the Media



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of economy by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Another aspect of the economy affected by the aging population was the savings market. For example, the Berlin Sparkasse (a local bank) presented their annual financial statement in 1984 in which the differences between it and other banks were becoming unclear due to the demographic structure of Berlin, population aging, unique inheritance situations, and changes to savings behaviors. These changes were why Sparkasse needed to adjust their business practices.¹⁷⁷ Several years later, Deutsche Bank announced it was creating a life insurance association with its own life insurance products as a result of the growing importance of old age and basic savings caused by the aging population and the changes in savings behaviors.¹⁷⁸ The travel industry was also affected by the aging population through the increase in older

¹⁷⁵ For example, see: Hans Otto Eglau, "Nicht für die Erben sterben," *DIE ZEIT*, April 3, 1970; Klee, "Das Geschäft mit den alten Leuten.," Norbert Walter, "Mit weniger Staat ins nächste Jahrtausend," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 2, 1979; "Neue Sicht," *DIE ZEIT*, July 30, 1988.

¹⁷⁶ U.F. and kai., "Solo für vier oder Dinner for one," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 30, 1988.

¹⁷⁷ Gz, "Ohne SMH ein "Traumabschluss",," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 19, 1984.

¹⁷⁸ B.K., "Deutsche Bank gründet eigene Lebensversicherung," *ibid.*, December 15, 1988.

travelers.¹⁷⁹ For the automobile industry, they were indirectly affected since they were concerned the older population and the need to finance the pension system would mean people would not be able to afford a car.¹⁸⁰

There were articles with a negative outlook on the economic impact of the aging population. Surminski wrote several articles for the FAZ arguing population aging and shrinkage would not help economic growth since consumers would be missing and older people were less likely to take economic risks, such as start a business or build a home. In his opinion, the population becoming older would result in a loss of drive and an enterprising spirit.¹⁸¹ Other arguments were that population aging would cause Germany to lose its position as a leading economic power and slow the growth of traditional business. This would expose the country to the threat of younger, more dynamic populations and competition from neighboring countries.¹⁸²

Likely due to the economic hardships Germany faced during this time, some called for more efforts to improve the economy: Hamm argued the government's austerity measures were not enough to reduce the large budget deficit in 1981, which was creating an additional burden for the next generation that already had to deal with population aging.¹⁸³ In 1990, a *Spiegel* article called for states to reduce their debt because it was clear that reunification had not changed the trend of aging and the impact of an older population could only be dealt with if state budgets were not restricted due to high interest expenditures.¹⁸⁴ Later on, former Chancellor Schmidt described the German economy as being ill due to high unemployment and an over extension of the social safety net caused by the aging population, which had created a strain on public finances.¹⁸⁵ In another article, Hamm differentiated between the various groups relying on social security, which included the increasing number of older people that are not able to pay for their care services with their pensions. In his opinion, the budget deficits facing the country were due to structural shortcomings:

Because the political power to eliminate them has been lacking in all local authorities for years, we are living unashamedly at the expense of the next generation, which is supposed to pay interest and repay the national debt accumulated today. And yet everyone knows that our children and grandchildren are in danger of being overburdened because of the steep increase in the old age burden.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁹ Frädtker.

¹⁸⁰ The traffic scientists and planners at the reported event calmed immediate concerns by saying this would not be a major issue until 2020. Peters.

¹⁸¹ Surminski, "Die demographische Wachstumsbremse."; "Resigniert die Wirtschaft?."; "Wer baut mit 60 Jahren Häuser?."

¹⁸² Jens Friedemann, "Mit Allfinanz auf Kundenfang," *ibid.*, April 2, 1988; Natorp, "Eine schrumpfende Bevölkerung schreckt nicht alle."

¹⁸³ Hamm, "Fragwürdige Mineralölsteuer-Pläne."

¹⁸⁴ "Es muß bezahlt werden," *Der Spiegel*, November 19, 1990.

¹⁸⁵ Schmidt.

¹⁸⁶ Hamm, "Armut in der Wohlstandsgesellschaft."

The challenges resulting from the aging population on the economy were used to argue for economic reform.

Since the funeral industry is also part of the economy, there were a few specific mentions related to it and the aging population: Economic expert Professor Gerhard Kade in *Der Spiegel* referred to the structural crisis facing Berlin caused by businesses leaving. He concluded the interview by saying, "But let me say, if I may be sarcastic, that the situation in Berlin, particularly in terms of population structure, makes only one entrepreneurial initiative worthwhile for the future: funeral services."¹⁸⁷ A piece in *Die Zeit* focused on the trend to be more environmentally friendly, including in death, which was the inspiration behind a press conference held by the Federal Association of the Coffin Industry (*Bundesverband Sargindustrie e. V.*), but the article turned its focus on the decline in sales of the industry due to the decrease in the mortality rate. The article concluded by saying these businesses have to make it another 20 years until the population will have aged.¹⁸⁸ The former example was not directly related to the funeral industry, but the latter does illustrate how clearly the aging population can have simultaneously positive and negative influences.

Turning to the political aspect of the discussion, it first developed in the 1980s. Early on, in a 1967 interview with Rudi Dutschke, a political activist and leader of the student movement in Germany, he cited the aging of the population as one starting point for politicizing certain groups of the population outside of the university.¹⁸⁹ This reference, however, was brief and the attention to political and policy aspects did not continue in the years immediately following (Figure 45). In addition, as shown in the previous two chapters, there were articles at the end of the selected period that supported the idea of lowering the voting age. To help the voices of younger people be heard, Eckhard Jesse, a professor in political science, argued in favor of this measure in a time when society was threatened by population aging.¹⁹⁰

Most articles, however, focused on the efforts of the two main parties to either gain or maintain the support of older voters. The President of the Hamburg Assembly, Peter Schulz, raised the point in 1981 of whether the political parties were capable of allowing older citizens to actively participate in politics. He cited the decline in older representatives in the city's assembly as concern that older people were being pushed out of having political responsibility in the parties and in parliaments.¹⁹¹ But

¹⁸⁷ "Konjunktur für Bestatter," *Der Spiegel*, June 10, 1968. See also: "Cher ami," *Der Spiegel*, October 2, 1967.

¹⁸⁸ *vo.*

¹⁸⁹ "Wir fordern die Enteignung Axel Springers", *Der Spiegel*, July 10, 1967.

¹⁹⁰ Eckhard Jesse, "Wahlrecht und Mündigkeit," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 4, 1997. See also: Margit Gerste and Hans Schueler, "Sollen Sechzehnjährige wählen dürfen?," *DIE ZEIT*, November 1, 1996.

¹⁹¹ "Holt Euch bei den Alten Rat!," *ibid.*, March 6, 1981.

this concern was unique. Instead of continuing to focus on older people being members of the political bodies, attention first moved to addressing the needs of the older population. For the CDU, this began by discussing old age policy: At an event for seniors held by the CDU in 1986, Gerhard Braun, the party's representative for seniors, stated that old age policy was about more than social policies, but also included issues like housing, city planning, and employee training measures. He emphasized becoming older and being active was a central topic for the party.¹⁹² An article two years later reported on what the CDU was doing to meet the needs of older people since their population was growing and that meant the need for care would also increase and diversify. The reporter found the party was trying to determine if this growing group could be provided for by the government's social services.¹⁹³

In addition to the policy side, focus centered around how parties could win the support of this large voting bloc. An analysis of voting behaviors by Rolf Stadié from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation was cited in the FAZ for its findings that older people tended to vote more conservatively and had high political engagement and voter participation. He alluded that these characteristics made it likely the then-current CDU/CSU/FDP government had good chances of remaining in office past 1991.¹⁹⁴ The CDU received the majority of the vote in 1990, including a structural majority from voters over the age of 60. This victory, according to Adam, would result in the establishment of old age policy, which the party was happy to do since this group helped them stay in power.¹⁹⁵ In 1997, Adam questioned the seriousness of Minister Blüm to secure the pension system since he may only be motivated to give preferential treatment to the older section of the population because they are the majority of their voters. If that were the case, then it may be more in his interest to not completely solve the problem.¹⁹⁶

During this time, the SPD was also working to find ways to attract these voters. Eckhard Fuhr acknowledged the need for political parties to adapt their strategies to not only recognize the quantitative increase in older voters, but also the qualitative change. He covered the efforts of the SPD to adapt their party and establish a new strategy that did not just focus on younger voters and being modern. Fuhr quoted an SPD strategy paper that argued, without receiving near-average results with older voters, then the party would continue to receive less than 40 percent of votes, which was the strategic majority margin needed to win the election.

¹⁹² Brenner.

¹⁹³ Zundel.

¹⁹⁴ Arnulf Baring, "Die unübersichtliche Parteienlandschaft," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 17, 1987.

¹⁹⁵ Konrad Adam, "Die Partei als Vehikel der Macht," *ibid.*, November 30, 1991; "Mit dem sozialen Netz im trüben fischen."

¹⁹⁶ "Die Pausenfüller," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 5, 1997.

As part of their efforts, the party discussed the establishment of a working group for older members and the work of Klose began to be featured. Klose emphasized the need for the party to not view population aging as a negative development, but to focus more on creating an active older population.¹⁹⁷ Articles also reported on the publication of a series of books by Klose that analyzed what impact more older people would have on society. Klose held a conference in 1994 where he stated that older people were the new power group in society and their power will continue to grow. He posed the question of how an aging country could win its future (“*[W]ie ein alterndes Land seine Zukunft gewinnen könne?*”) in which the author translated as code for how a people’s party wins older voters.¹⁹⁸ In a 1996 article by Adam, he claimed that Klose was no longer interested in younger voters and since they were not in the majority, they would only suffer in the future. Klose’s responded by countering these claims, which was included in the letter to the editor section and argued that older people were still interested in making sure the needs of young people were met.¹⁹⁹

Other aspects of policy addressed were in the context of family policies. *Der Spiegel* published a report in 1984 on the state of family policies in Germany and claimed the conservatives were driven by fear of Germany dying out. This fear of the population becoming older was why Chancellor Adenauer established the family ministry and had led to family policies being replaced by population policy, e.g., benefits being issued to families that have children.²⁰⁰ Almost a decade later, an article quoted Jürgen Liminski, a German journalist, for arguing the government’s anti-family policies were undermining the security of the pension system and speeding up the aging of the population.²⁰¹ Of course, when asked about the claims that the CDU was spreading disinformation about the extent of future risks caused by society’s aging, the General Secretary of the CDU, Peter Hitze, refuted the accusations.²⁰² Articles reporting on the relationship between Japan and Germany also referred to the agenda agreed upon by the foreign ministers of the two countries. They decided there would be more exchange between the two countries about their experiences dealing with unemployment, population aging, and challenges to the social security

¹⁹⁷ Eckhard Fuhr, "Modernisierung mit Bodenhaftung," *ibid.*, May 23, 1991; "Wie gewinnt man die Senioren?"

¹⁹⁸ "Rebellen mit Krückstock.," Bannas; Adam, "Zikadenmusik."

¹⁹⁹ "Standort Seniorenheim," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 11, 1996; Klose, "Auch Ältere blicken in die Zukunft."

²⁰⁰ "Für schöne Worte können wir nichts kaufen," *Der Spiegel*, May 7, 1984.

²⁰¹ Arnulf Baring, "Die Krise des Sozialstaates," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 18, 1993.

²⁰² "Längst im Gange," *Der Spiegel*, June 12, 1996.

system. This relationship and agenda agreement received much attention because its larger objective was to establish a relationship between Europe and Asia.²⁰³

F. Immigration: Attention to the Immigration and Asylum Debates

The main focus of articles related to immigration and the aging population were connected to arguments in favor of immigrants being a way to maintain the population, contribute to financing the pension system, or provide labor to the labor market (Figure 47). This argument was even mentioned in an interview with the prime minister of Turkey in 1987, who argued that the labor Turkey could provide Western Europe would help them compensate for population decline and aging.²⁰⁴ Like other topic areas, the attention surrounding the issue reflected the political discussions happening at the time and was influenced by the debates about new immigration legislation. As the media's focus on immigration grew, so did the number of opportunities to refer to their role in population and labor market maintenance, which explains the corresponding jumps in articles.

During the early years of the period under consideration, several articles centered around the situation facing Berlin's population. Peter Hort, FAZ journalist in Berlin who wrote a number of such articles in the early 1970s, recognized the importance of immigration for the maintenance of the Berlin population:

Berlin, more than any other German city, has to welcome its new foreign citizens, even embrace them. The urban torso can only survive in the long run if as many people as possible who are willing to work and live, regardless of their nationality, move to the Spree. This has to do with the aging of the city. [...] Whether you like it or not, without foreigners, Berlin would continue to lose substance, there would be less prosperity, and less economic growth.²⁰⁵

In an article he wrote several years later in 1974, he explained that the number of immigrants needed each year for the labor force in Berlin had slightly decreased, but the gaps caused by the aging population still had to be filled, which immigrants could do since they were so young.²⁰⁶ Other articles during the early 1970s addressed the role of immigrants in supporting the labor market in an aging DDR and an article by Ulrich Pfeiffer, Undersecretary in the Federal Ministry for Regional Planning, Building,

²⁰³ The two countries also agreed to work together on development aid, disarmament and arms control, and stabilizing the world economy in the United Nations. C.G., "'Agenda' für die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Deutschland und Japan," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 21, 1996; Uwe Schmitt, "Die ungepflegte Freundschaft," *ibid.*, October 31, 1996; itt, "Eine 'neue Qualität' der Zusammenarbeit mit Japan," *ibid.*, November 2, 1996; pen, "Besuch zur Zeit der Kirschblüte," *ibid.*, April 5, 1997.

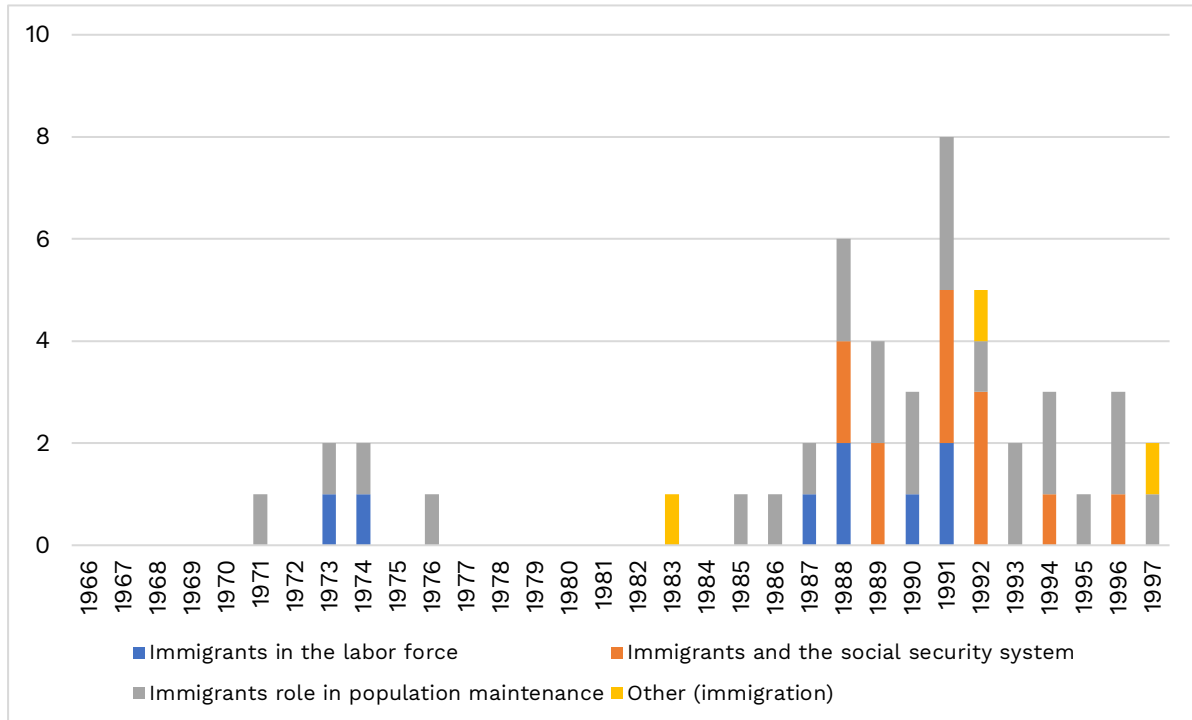
²⁰⁴ The Prime Minister of Turkey used this as a reason why they should be included in the European Union. Kostas Tsatsaronis and Hans Gerhard Stephani, "'Wovor haben die Europäer eigentlich Angst?'," *Der Spiegel*, March 16, 1987.

²⁰⁵ Peter Hort, "Wenn Luigi und Rahmi Berliner werden," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 7, 1971.

²⁰⁶ "Berlin braucht 'Arbeits-Berliner'," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 15, 1974. See also: "West-Berlin hofft auf Westdeutsche und Türken."

and Urban Development (*Ministerium für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau*) briefly mentioned how immigration weakens the impact of population aging, but does not compensate for population decline.²⁰⁷

Figure 47: Immigration-Related Sub-Topics in the Media



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of immigration by year.
Source: GOLD Database, author's calculations.

As discussed in the Chapter 5, the 1980s was a time of major debate about Germany's immigration policy. The debate that began in the early 1980s was not well reflected in the media results but picked up in the latter half of the decade.²⁰⁸ These first few articles touched upon the need for immigrants to counter the aging of the population, but also claimed this influx of immigrants within the past 30 years had allowed for population aging to be ignored and had become a problem about there being too many foreigners.²⁰⁹ As the political debate focused on asylum seekers developed, there were more articles that either questioned the proposed position of the government or that presented information on the impact of immigrants. For example, Dieter Oberndörfer raised the question in *Die Zeit* about whether Germany

²⁰⁷ Marlies Menge, "In der DDR heißen sie Freunde," *DIE ZEIT*, August 10, 1973; Ullrich Pfeiffer, "Werden unsere Städte zu Slums?," *ibid.*, December 10, 1976.

²⁰⁸ In their review of the debate, Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn claimed the immigration debate lost interest following the immediate years after Kohl took office. See: Herbert and Hunn, "Beschäftigung, soziale Sicherung und soziale Integration von Ausländern," 637.

²⁰⁹ dpa, "Deutsche werden immer älter," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 11, 1985; Hondrich, "Die Verwandlung."

would actually “turn their backs” on immigrants from the developing world or Eastern Europe and accept that infrastructures would collapse, homes would stand empty, and nursing homes would fill up due to population aging.²¹⁰ In an article in *Die Zeit*, the findings of the Dresdener Bank’s economic report found that motivated immigrants capable of integration were a potential for growth for the aging and shrinking German population. In the long-term, these immigrants would increase prosperity through their contributions to the labor market and as consumers.²¹¹ Manfred Rommel, former mayor of Stuttgart, also explained that it was inevitable that the populations of major cities in Germany would shrink due to aging and a declining birth rate. Therefore, it was imperative that Germany accepts the role of immigration in countering this:

I cannot imagine that the large economic areas of the Federal Republic of Germany will shrink and languish due to an aging population and a lack of inhabitants. I think that we must reckon with considerable migratory movements in Europe and that the population of densely populated areas, which cannot grow back from these areas, will be supplemented and balanced by immigration.²¹²

Overall, the articles from the 1980s and early 1990s were supportive of immigration and emphasized the benefits of immigrants in combating the falling birth rate and maintaining population size, contributing to the labor market, and sustaining the pension system.²¹³ Arguments were also presented that supported welcoming immigrants, but under more controlled circumstances. This began in 1989 when Hartmut Diessenbach, a professor at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Aging Research at the University of Bremen, called on ethical societies to open their borders in a controlled manner in order to provide job opportunities to the labor surplus from developing countries. These individuals would be able to contribute to the pension systems to the benefit of society.²¹⁴

Similar articles continued throughout the early 1990s, which coincided with efforts by the government to change the article regarding asylum in the Basic Law and sparked major political debate between 1990 and 1993.²¹⁵ In addition to controlling the overall number of immigrants, suggestions were made to control the

²¹⁰ Oberndörfer.

²¹¹ Wolfgang Hoffmann, "Bonner Kulisse," *ibid.*, November 18, 1988.

²¹² Manfred Rommel, "An Weltoffenheit gewinnen," *ibid.*, February 17, 1989.

²¹³ For example, see: Hondrich, "Zukunftsvisionen für die Industriegesellschaft.;" gla, "Plädoyer für "geordnete Zuwanderung"," *ibid.*, August 30, 1989; Geißler. Js; Daniels; Heiner Geißler, "Kein Grund zur Angst," *Der Spiegel*, October 7, 1991; Roland Kirbach, "Ausländer raus - was dann?," *DIE ZEIT*, February 7, 1992; Peter Grubbe, "Angst vor Ausländern," *ibid.*, April 3, 1992; Borgeest, "Bergauf im Alter."

²¹⁴ Diessenbacher, "Sind die Alten noch finanzierbar?."

²¹⁵ Herbert and Hunn, "Beschäftigung, soziale Sicherung und soziale Integration von Ausländern," 950-60.

types of immigrants that came to Germany.²¹⁶ For example, Georg Paul Hefty pointed out that during the debates about the changes to the asylum law, the SPD commonly cited the aging population and the associated need to secure the pension system. But they did not mention the importance of finding immigrants that were high performing to maintain Germany's high level of economic competition.²¹⁷ In an opinion piece for the FAZ, Schmalz-Jacobsen, the government's Integration Coordinator, called for immigration policy that considered the growing need for controlled immigration due to population aging.²¹⁸

Other articles highlighted the opinions of various politicians. When Geißler, Deputy Chairman of the CDU, published his book, an article about the book focused on the debate surrounding legislation for foreigners (*Ausländergesetz*). Geißler quoted Wolfgang Schäuble and his argument that it would be unavoidable to not rely on immigrants to deal with the shrinking population, but he expressed his disagreement with this idea and did not believe immigrants would prevent the population from aging in the long term.²¹⁹ Edmund Stoiber (CDU) echoed a similar sentiment during an interview with Schröder (SPD) about immigration in 1993: He did not agree with the statement from the German Institute for Economic Research that 300,000 immigrants were necessary in the future to counter the aging of the population.²²⁰ In 1996, following the passage of new legislation to require *Aussiedler* to stay in the cities they are assigned to if they wanted to receive governmental assistance, an interview with Manfred Püchel, Interior Minister of Saxony-Anhalt (SPD), was published. As a reflection of the weight of his statements, they were also cited in an article in the FAZ the day after the original interview was published. He argued in favor of the *Aussiedler* and against the comments of the leader of the party, Oskar Lafontaine, who wanted to stop *Aussiedler* from entering Germany. Püchel believed they could help stop the aging and shrinking of the populations in the new German states.²²¹

G. Science: Why We're Living Longer and Asking What the Implications Are

Articles in the media that addressed science-related sub-topics either reported on, for example, events that discussed the aging population or went more in-depth to present new research or a summary of various theories about how aging is viewed

²¹⁶ For example, see: Heiner Geißler, "Wir sind ein Einwanderungsland," *DIE ZEIT*, November 15, 1991; "Böse Deutsche, gute Ausländer," *Der Spiegel*, November 18, 1991; bhr, "Der Pforzheimer Oberbürgermeister für eine geordnete Einwanderungspolitik," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 3, 1993.

²¹⁷ Georg Paul Hefty, "Vier Knoten in der Asylrechtsdebatte," *ibid.*, August 10, 1991.

²¹⁸ Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, "Wir kommen an einer Neuorientierung der Ausländerpolitik nicht vorbei," *ibid.*, May 8, 1994.

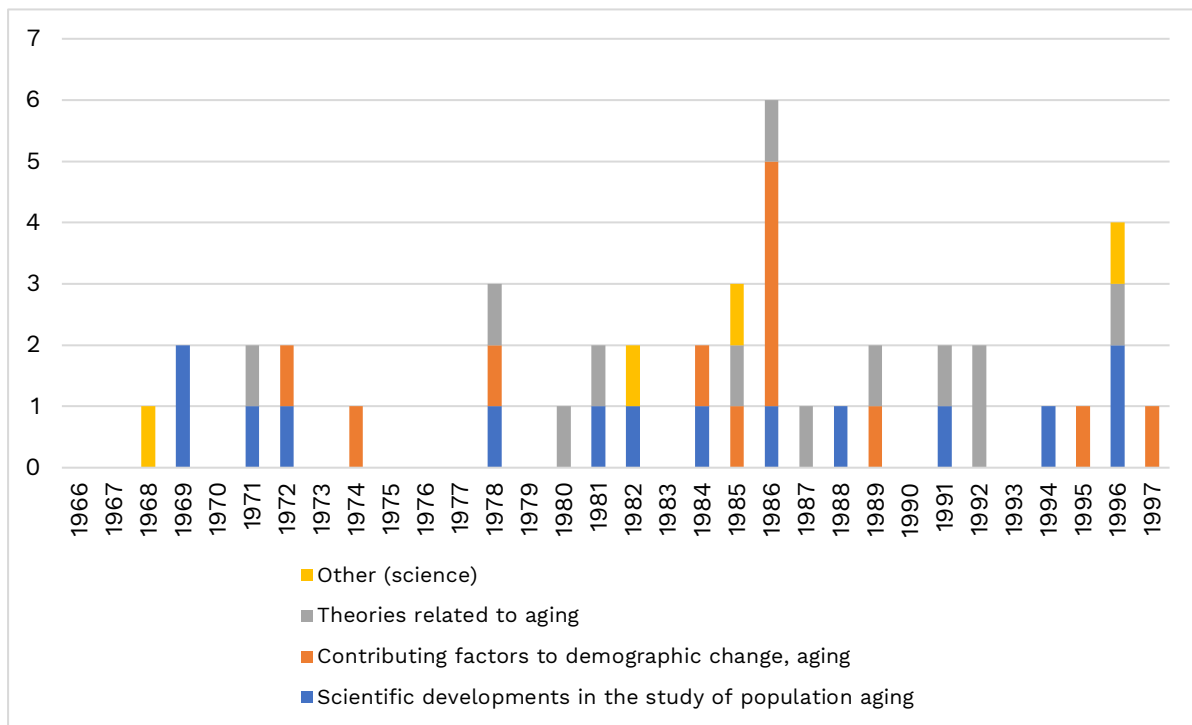
²¹⁹ Günter Bannas, "Geißler fürchtet den 'Volksgeist'," *ibid.*, March 28, 1990.

²²⁰ "Die Fahne des Blutes," *Der Spiegel*, April 5, 1993.

²²¹ "Wir wollen, daß sie bei uns bleiben," *Der Spiegel*, March 11, 1996; ban, "40 000 Aussiedler nach Ostdeutschland," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 12, 1996.

(Figure 48). Similar to references to the population's changing composition, it was useful and important for articles to mention the contributing factors of demographic change, specifically the growth in the older population. The large reach of the publications made it an effective tool to shed light on the scientific research happening in the field. Several of these articles were short summaries of various conferences or meetings, such as the international conference about human life expectancy in Italy in 1980 in which almost all speakers agreed average life expectancy would not significantly increase in the future.²²² However, the majority of articles had longer formats and were considered background articles that provided more information about theories or research related to aging and life expectancy.

Figure 48: Science-Related Sub-Topics in the Media



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of science. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

The articles from the 1960s and early 1970s presented aging in a theoretical and abstract context. For example, the interview in *Der Spiegel's* interview with Professor Barnard about the role of doctors in saving people's lives by conducting life-saving procedures that were seen as moral dilemmas in the context of the population aging and potentially becoming too large at the international level.²²³ Similar questions were raised in Erwin Lausch's book review of *The Biological Time*

²²² dpa, "Arme und Arbeiter sterben früher," *ibid.*, May 31, 1980.

²²³ "Drei Monate sind viel für einen Sterbenden."

Bomb (original title: “*Die biologische Zeitbombe*”) in 1969. In the book, the author addressed the possibilities of increasing life expectancy, but Lausch posed the question of what the consequences would be if people were able to live longer. He argued economic burdens and social tensions caused by the aging of the population would be the result of well-intentioned biological improvements.²²⁴ In 1971, *Der Spiegel* reported on an international conference in Switzerland about managing the human aging process, which discussed ways to prolong life expectancy, as well as potential problems that may result in the future. The researchers in attendance emphasized their fear about the consequences of an aging population, but since the research was still in its early stages, argued there was time to determine what potential risks aging posed.²²⁵ These early examples show an awareness of the aging of the population, but see the influence of science in contributing to the extension of life expectancy as interfering in a natural process and creating additional challenges due to the large older population that cannot be supported.

A 1974 article by Klee was the first to touch upon the contributing factors to why people were living longer: Decrease in infant mortality, improved medical treatments, and safer working conditions.²²⁶ But as the birth rate continued to decline and did not show signs of growing, this was emphasized as another reason for the growth in the older population. As part of an article about the Federal Interior Ministry’s report on the consequences of the birth decline, it mentioned that the CDU/CSU blamed the SPD and FDP government for introducing a law legalizing abortion and divorce, which contributed to the decline of the family in Germany and accelerated the aging of the population.²²⁷ When citing contributing factors to the aging population, the declining birth rate, particularly during the 1980s, continued to be mentioned, as well as mortality decline, increase in life expectancy, and lower infant mortality.²²⁸ There was an increase in the birth rate in 1986, but the article pointed out that even if the number of newborns continued to increase, due to the aging population, the population would still decline, at least in the short- to mid-term.²²⁹

The 1980s included more articles that presented a more detailed discussion about aging or increasing life expectancy. During this time, both the German Society

²²⁴ Lausch.

²²⁵ “Immer rüstiger.”

²²⁶ Klee, ““Die Oma auf dem Nachttopf...”.”

²²⁷ “Gefährliche Sache.”

²²⁸ For example, see: dpa, “Deutsche werden immer älter.”; Furtmayr-Sehuh; Peter Hort, “Die Bevölkerung Europas stagniert,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 23, 1986; Schubnell, “Das Lamento um den Geburtenrückgang.”; Arnulf Baring, “Bröckelnde Fundamente und Sprengstoff in Zahlen,” *ibid.*, July 29, 1995; Sommer, “Globalisierung, nein danke - ab ins trotzige Idyll.”

²²⁹ Lothar Julitz, “Wieder mehr Kinder in deutschen Familien,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 25, 1986.

for Gerontology, which was seen as a breakthrough in German research on aging, and a professorship in gerontology at the University of Heidelberg were established.²³⁰ Baltes published an article in *Die Zeit* in 1984 that addressed why the topic was receiving more attention and explained what the field researches:

So far, there is no clearly defined, established knowledge base for the last third of life. Such knowledge is currently in the making, and so far, it is understood primarily as personal, not socially regulated knowledge. Similarly, there are so far only a minimum of roles and positions in late life that could represent a possible reference point for allocation and selection processes. It is precisely the rolelessness of aging, not the striving for new public status and rank, that social scientists describe as the essential characteristic of old age.²³¹

Der Spiegel published in 1987 a long article about the new “young old” generation and cited a number of leading researchers in the field of gerontology. This article touched upon the theoretical questions that remained about if there was a limit to life expectancy and if there were ways to prolong one’s life.²³² Many of these early articles played a role in explaining these different aspects of aging, which were important since the field was in its early stages.²³³

Baltes was also part of a working group of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (formerly *Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*) that explored the future of aging and societal development. The review of the group’s report highlighted the findings of aging research and their efforts to include research from other fields about older people and not just from the field of medicine.²³⁴ These articles showcased Baltes’ works, who also received additional attention in the media for the Berlin Old Age Study (*Berliner Altersstudie*, BASE). In 1994, BASE was published and several articles highlighted its findings. In particular, the study found that old age did not automatically mean people were less intelligent or were less happy.²³⁵ Several years later, Baltes wrote about the theory of the fourth stage of life, which was now considered “young old age” as older age was being seen in a more positive light.²³⁶ He cited the findings about the physical and psychological functioning of older people in the Berlin study and called on more research to establish a better foundation for this fourth phase.²³⁷ In a submission to the FAZ section “Youth Writes” (*“Jugend Schreibt”*), the young author cited the study and highlighted the finding that

²³⁰ Gergely; mib, "Erster Lehrstuhl für Gerontologie?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 2, 1985.

²³¹ Baltes.

²³² Hans Joachim Schöps, ""Die haben einen Drang zum Leben!"," *Der Spiegel*, September 28, 1987.

²³³ For example, see: Alfred Rommel, "Lob der Großmutter," *DIE ZEIT*, January 2, 1981; Rosemarie Stein, "Altern ist keine Krankheit," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 23, 1988; Borgeest, "Drehen an der Uhr des Lebens."

²³⁴ "Bergauf im Alter."

²³⁵ Freese.

²³⁶ This was published more than ten years after his article in 1984 that mentioned the third stage of life, highlighting an advancement in the research field of how their view of the life course and old age had also changed.

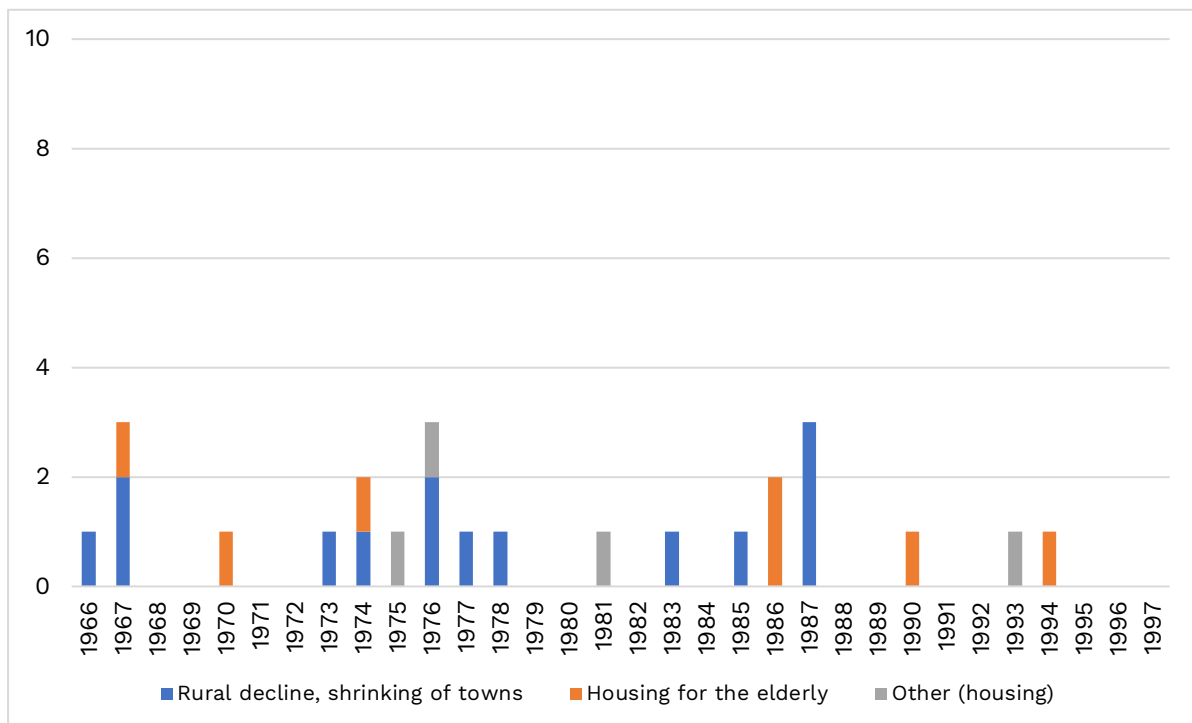
²³⁷ Paul B. Baltes, "Alter hat Zukunft," *DIE ZEIT*, August 23, 1996.

many older people feel just as good as they did when they were younger.²³⁸ These findings were likely why Adam argued gerontologists had given the older population courage to do the things they had never done before since they had convinced them that old age does not mean you can no longer be active and happy.²³⁹

H. Housing and Community Development: Addressing Cities in Decline and Creating Age-Appropriate Housing

Topics related to housing and community development did not have a clear and significant role in the media's discussion about aging. The majority of the coded articles centered around the shrinking of specific cities or towns (Figure 49). Early on, Berlin was the main focal point. At the time as the former capital of Germany, it was facing challenges that were mainly consequences of the construction of the Berlin Wall. Despite this unique situation, these articles were still considered because this was an example of urban decline, i.e., a city declining in population size.

Figure 49: Housing and Community Development-Related Sub-Topics in the Media



Distribution of sub-topics under the category of housing and community development by year. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

²³⁸ Anne Reumann, "Die jungen Alten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 29, 1996.

²³⁹ Adam, "Standort Seniorenheim."

A 1966 cover story for *Der Spiegel* focused on the “weird” characteristics of and fascination with Berlin (“Berlin: Die unheimliche Hauptstadt”). The Berlin Wall threatened the city’s liveliness, according to a professor quoted in the article, because it was the cause of the aging of the city’s population, which was resulting in a high mortality rate. The Wall made immigration to the city difficult, which would mean the population would decline in the long term.²⁴⁰ This was such a well-known problem that in the *Spiegel* section “Personnel” (*Personalien*), a short exchange between Federal President Heinrich Lübke, Berlin Mayor Heinrich Albertz, and Bremen Mayor Willy Dehnkamp was highlighted: Dehnkamp replied to a comment by Lübke that him moving to Berlin would not help with their aging population.²⁴¹ This is an example of the prominence of this issue since it was mentioned in a short exchange between politicians with little to no context and given space in the magazine.

In the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the articles that focused on the decline of cities due to aging populations shifted their focus away from Berlin. Many cities were facing similar challenges: Young people were moving, older people were left behind, and as a result, the areas were becoming older. Young people were opting to leave to find jobs, but this was making the towns less attractive due to qualified labor shortages and providing little incentives for businesses to move there.²⁴²

During this time, there were occasional articles referring to the discussion about age-appropriate housing for the older population. It was first recognized that more housing and care facilities were needed to accommodate this growing sector of the population: In 1970, the federal government announced that it would address the aging of the population by increasing the budget to build housing for older people.²⁴³ It was often recommended that these old age housing options should make it possible for older people to still take part in society, but also receive necessary care in their own home.²⁴⁴ A 1990 article reported on a speech by Minister Lehr in which she foresaw an increased demand for inpatient care due to smaller families and increased life expectancy. She emphasized the need to improve the image of these

²⁴⁰ "Das Glitzerding."

²⁴¹ "Personalien," *Der Spiegel*, January 16, 1967.

²⁴² For example, see: Knut Barrey, "Kann das pfälzische Falkenstein etwas aus sich machen?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 30, 1973; Horst Kerlikowsky, "Eine Stadt am Rande - Selb," *ibid.*, October 19, 1974; Wilfried Ehrlich, "Wenn eine Straße erst einmal geplant ist...," *ibid.*, October 8, 1976; Pfeiffer, "Werden unsere Städte zu Slums?"; Alfred Behr, "Die Nordhessen sprechen und reden anders," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 6, 1977; Barbara Lehnig, "Alte Wurst und junge Wein," *DIE ZEIT*, September 23, 1983; Frank Gotta, "Von der Retortenstadt bröckelt der Putz," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 23, 1985; Viola Roggenkamp, "Gar nischt ohne die Bürger," *DIE ZEIT*, January 30, 1987; Jörg Bremer, "Hameln brauchte einen Rattenfänger, der die Jungen zurückbringt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 8, 1987.

²⁴³ vvd., "Mehr Geld für Altenwohnungen," *ibid.*, September 18, 1970. See also: Neumeister.

²⁴⁴ For example, see: Klee, "Das Geschäft mit den alten Leuten.," Häfner; Ih., "Bauen für die Gesellschaft der Greise," *ibid.*, April 29, 1986.

facilities and their quality so that older citizens would not be afraid to move into them when it becomes necessary.²⁴⁵

Other issues addressed within the context of the aging population included efforts to rebuild and update city centers where many older people live, such as in Mainz and Lübeck. In Lübeck, the poor living conditions in the city center were causing young people to leave the area and if action was not taken, the population in that area would become older and decline.²⁴⁶ In Mainz, as part of the process to renovate the city center, the city planners discovered that many of the people living there already were over the age of 60, which would impact how the area would be designed.²⁴⁷

Unlike the majority of articles with examples of towns becoming older because younger people moved away, there was one example of towns near the Alps becoming more populated because many retirees were moving into the area. This was not seen as a positive development since it was placing financial strain on the towns and the locals.²⁴⁸ A slightly different point was addressed in 1993 in an article about the Leipzig housing and construction company. To address the problem of many buildings in danger of collapse, they wanted to privatize more of the apartments, but typically those over the age of 60 were not interested in privatization. Since the population was aging, this was creating an additional challenge in trying to privatize and improve the housing conditions in Leipzig.²⁴⁹

7.2 Comparing the Media Coverage

All three publications fulfilled the task of chronicling, criticizing, and commenting on the issues being reported about.²⁵⁰ The articles always touched upon current events happening in society, whether in the political realm or in civil society, such as reporting on recent conferences held by large associations. There were a significant number of opinion pieces and articles written by guest authors that critiqued and commented on the situation, particularly the policy debate that was happening at the time. Many of the in-depth background articles were able to provide an explanation about the situation of the aging population and the ways in which it would impact people's lives.

²⁴⁵ cy.

²⁴⁶ Jan Herchenröder, "Hinter fotogener Altstadt-Romantik ein trostloses Leben," *ibid.*, May 12, 1975.

²⁴⁷ "Virtuos gehandhabt," *Der Spiegel*, June 29, 1981.

²⁴⁸ Claus Lafrenz, "Alpentäler mit allen Merkmalen der Großstadt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 22, 1976.

²⁴⁹ him, "'Wir können den Verfall der Häuser nicht stoppen'," *ibid.*, July 7, 1993.

²⁵⁰ Fjæstad, 126.

News Value: Aging was a Topic that Met the Necessary Criteria

After identifying and presenting the ways aging was presented in the news, this section will evaluate what factors may have been contributed to the issue being covered based on the news value theory.²⁵¹ The decision by the media to cover the issue is significant because based on the agenda setting concept, the media's agenda heavily influences the public's agenda.

Overall, news explicitly about or referring to the aging of the population met a number of news factors that contributed to it receiving so much coverage over these years.²⁵² In the majority of articles, the subject matter was *meaningful* for readers because they could easily relate to a population becoming older since they were likely experiencing this in their own lives through relatives, particularly parents or grandparents, living longer. The *range* of individuals that were already or would be affected by the aging population was large and arguably could be the entire population of Germany. This also made the subject matter *unambiguous* since it could easily be explained in simple, straightforward terms: Because people are living longer and people are having less children, there are fewer people working who contribute to the social security system that provides necessary support this growing sector of the population will need. Through personal experiences of seeing the care needs of other family members, it helps make this overall situation easier for people to understand. The scientific findings that identified and projected population aging in Germany also had relevance for various sectors of society, evidenced by the variety of articles published (*economic relevance, political relevance, relevance to recipient/society*).

Over time, the aging population was established as an interesting and viable news story on its own (*continuity*). Journalists continued to write about it directly and it continued to be used as supporting arguments in other articles. Especially in the longer, more in-depth articles focused on aging, such as cover stories in *Der Spiegel*, journalists included more anecdotal stories that provided a personalized touch to understand the direct implications of people living longer (*personification* or *personalization*). Many articles also emphasized that eventual need to reform various systems, such as the health care and pension systems, which helped prepare readers for inevitable changes to their benefits (*consonance*). Articles that either reported on specific events, such as conferences or symposiums, or unique sectors, like sports or automobile, provided a different type of story that still addressed the aging population. Since the articles still touched upon the impact of the aging population,

²⁵¹ See Chapter 2 for the list and explanations of the different news value factors.

²⁵² I will include the news factors from Galtung and Ruge, as well as those from Badenschier and Wormer as they still seem applicable since the information regarding the fact the population was aging is science-based.

which had been established to be news, the variety in overall subject matter they could provide gave them an advantage when deciding what to publish (*composition*).

Changes to the population do not happen suddenly or are not *unexpected*, the surprise factor was not very relevant for this subject matter. The same can be said for social security reforms, which also needed more time to be finalized and reported on, but since these reforms were meaningful to readers, this likely outweighed the frequency factor. What was unexpected was the fall of the Berlin Wall, which clearly had an impact on the coverage population change received, as evident by the decline in articles in the years following this surprise and momentous event.

Influences on Readership: Location and Length of Articles Were Not as Reflective of the Growth in Interest as Expected

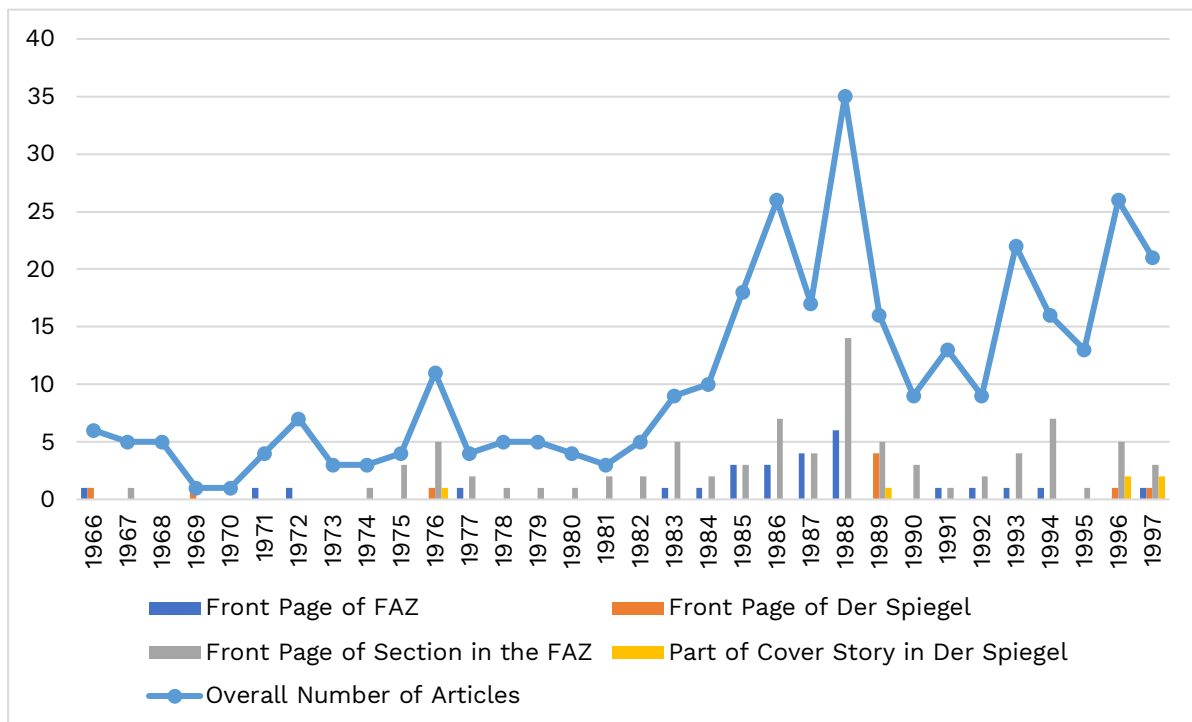
As I did not include extensive research on opinion polls or other measures to determine the awareness level or interest of the general public in the topic of aging, I chose to focus on changes in the how the media determined the importance of a topic based on its location in the publication (readership-related factors). How the media presented the issue is reflective of how interested the public was in the issue and how they likely contextualized it or would in the future. Only *Der Spiegel* and FAZ provided information regarding the location of the article, so this section will not include analysis of the content from *Die Zeit*.

Overall, as expected, the articles from the FAZ and *Der Spiegel* centered around the ongoing political debates at the time. The FAZ published significantly more articles than *Der Spiegel* on the topic, which heavily influences the distribution of articles in the different sections. Cover stories from *Der Spiegel* either focused on broader topics like the older population in Germany or concerns related to the social security system, while the FAZ used the front page to report on the most important developments and to provide critique of proposed reforms, which also underscores the differences between a daily newspaper and a weekly magazine. More of what evolved over time was the number of articles and the number of articles on the front page (of a section), but the variety in the sections where these articles were published and the article length did not noticeably change.

As described in Chapter 2, the location of articles is an important factor in improving the chances that readers will consume the information. The publisher's decision to place an item in a prominent location underscores their belief that a topic is important. While the issue of the aging population grew over time, Figure 50 shows that this growth did not go hand-in-hand with more prominent placement. This is based on the years where increases in cover stories or articles on the front pages did

not correspond with overall increases in articles on aging. Because there does not appear to be a consistent or clear trend in Figure 50, I do not conclude that article location was directly related to increased coverage. The number of articles on the front pages of the FAZ generally reflected the growth and decline in the number of total articles over the years. Cover stories in *Der Spiegel* were not just one longer article, but they included additional articles that were still classified as front page coverage. They were usually intertwined or placed right before or after the larger cover story article.²⁵³ Not only were these cover stories prominently featured, but they were also quite long (average length over 5,000 words). Most of them indirectly discussed the aging population, with more of a focus on the stability of the social security system and health care.

Figure 50: Articles on the Front Page



Number of articles either on the front page of the FAZ or cover of *Der Spiegel*, and number of articles on the front page of a section in the FAZ compared to overall number of articles in the two publications. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Of the nine cover stories from *Der Spiegel*, two focused directly on demographic-related issues, while one was focused on the pension system within the context of generational conflict. Early on, a 1969 cover story looked at the changing characteristics of the aging process and being old, such as more older people living

²⁵³ These articles were usually labeled as part of the cover story.

alone or having more active lifestyles. The article quoted a number of researchers, including Lehr and the findings of the Bonn Study on Old Age.²⁵⁴ Even though the article did not focus on the growing size of the older population – only mentioning concern of the population consisting of more older people and citing population researchers and sociologists who declared a decline in the older population beginning in 1980 – it still drew attention to the changes associated with being old and the fact that people were living longer. In 1989, *Der Spiegel* published another cover story that looked at the concern of generational conflict caused by the larger older population and an unfair distribution of benefits and services. Even though the article was more about many of the same points covered in the 1969 article about the physical aging process and changes in what being older means, the cover page created a dramatic image with its title “War of the Generations – Young versus Old” (*Kampf der Generationen – Jung gegen Alt*).²⁵⁵ In 1997, a cover story focused on the proposed changes to the pension system, but the title, “At the Expense of Youth” (*Auf Kosten der Jungen*), framed it within the context of a possible generational conflict due to the large older population. It did not dwell on this factor much throughout the article but based on its title and general framing that a generational conflict may arise due to changes to the pension system, it used demographic change as an eyecatcher. The other cover stories from *Der Spiegel* mainly centered around social security services, such as health care, intensive care, and the pension system.²⁵⁶ These are important issues for all readers since they are impacted in some way, which make them ideal subject matter for cover stories and for attracting readers.

In comparison, there were more cover stories found in the FAZ addressing the older population, but these articles were more indirect, centering around policy debates about the pension system and health care. As a daily newspaper, cover page status did not mean the same amount of in-depth coverage as the cover stories in *Der Spiegel*. There were only a few articles that referred to demographic-related topics in the title, but they were still not solely focused on the aging of the population. They used more startling headlines like “Are we dying out?” (*Sterben wir aus?*) or “Is a Demographic Catastrophe Looming?” (*Droht eine demographische Katastrophe?*) to draw people’s attention. These articles were editorials located along the side of the front page. Both articles, written by the same author, only briefly mentioned the aging population, one arguing that the challenges associated with aging

²⁵⁴ “Um einen längeren Tag.”

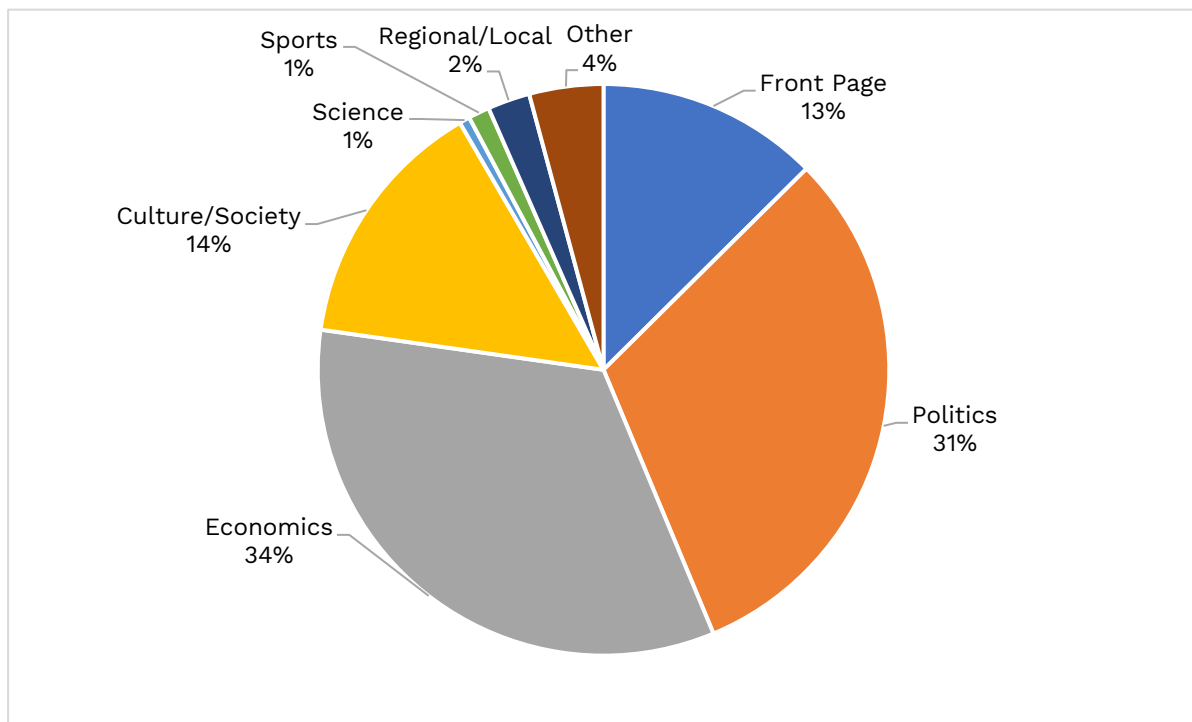
²⁵⁵ Schöps, ““Es wird erbarmungslose Kämpfe geben”.”

²⁵⁶ See: “Um einen längeren Tag.”; “Renten: Vor Wohltätern wird gewarnt.”; ““Die Natur setzt uns Grenzen”,” *Der Spiegel*, January 30, 1989; ““Blüm läßt den kleinen Mann bluten”.”; ““Lebenslang Fürsorge und Schutz”.”; “Pleite im Paradies.”

could be easily overcome and the other arguing that even without the population becoming older, the pension system would still have to be reformed.²⁵⁷

The section where the articles are published is also important, as some may be more popular among readers than others. Going back to the argument by Tim Radford, it is very likely that readers do not buy the FAZ or *Der Spiegel* because of their science coverage, but rather for its other content.²⁵⁸ Most of the articles tended to focus on policy-related items, which makes it understandable that the majority of articles would be printed in either the economy or politics sections (64 percent, see Figure 51). Articles from the front page also typically fell under the category of being related to politics or economics, so based on this conclusion, 77 percent of articles could be considered economy or politics related.

Figure 51: Section in the News Publication



Distribution of articles mentioning the aging population based on section in the FAZ and *Der Spiegel*. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

There were only two articles from the science section – one about research on Alzheimer's Disease and the other about the role of medicine, which argued its role was to shorten the time spent in illness and not to increase life expectancy.²⁵⁹ Several of the articles from the sports section were about efforts to attract older people to

²⁵⁷ Natorp, "Sterben wir aus?"; "Droht eine demographische Katastrophe?."

²⁵⁸ Radford, 97.

²⁵⁹ See: "Geröll im Gehirn."; Stephan Sahm, "Plädoyer für eine kluge Medizin," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 23, 1997.

sports due to the importance of remaining active in old age.²⁶⁰ However, it is clear that both the science and sports sections were not common news sections interested in the aging of the population. The articles from the “other” category were diverse in nature and included articles from the technology, auto, and travel sections, the additional FAZ magazine or Sunday edition, or the opinion section. There were more culture/society articles, which were wide-ranging, covering issues like city development/decline of cities²⁶¹, population developments and trends²⁶², and how political parties were evolving, particularly the SPD, to become more attractive to older voters²⁶³. Articles also talked about death, assisted suicide/euthanasia, and the role of medicine in the aging process²⁶⁴, as well as provided some reviews of books or television shows that centered around the older population.²⁶⁵

There was a small number of articles published in the science sections, many of which referred to the aging population as a general fact or observation. Typically, specific research was not cited or quoted that proved the population was aging. Research and data about population changes does not have to come from research that is difficult to comprehend. This makes it easier for journalists to understand and to feel comfortable referencing it in their articles. This repetition of easy-to-understand statistics was noticed, particularly in articles written by the same author. Surminski, Kannengießer, and Hort were examples of journalists that repeated similar arguments and statistics in multiple articles. What cannot be forgotten is they were likely assigned to cover these specific areas, but since they had found an easily comprehensible statistic, they continued to repeat it in their articles, such as the fact one in four Berliners were over the age of 65.²⁶⁶ Where this statistic originated from is not clear, but by continuing to repeat it in multiple articles, it reiterated that this change to the population was critical.

Looking at the average length of articles (Figure 52), there were periods of growth in the length of articles, particularly from *Die Zeit*, but these increases never seemed to last long. *Der Spiegel*, specifically in the early years, did not publish many articles about the aging population, but, for example in 1966, 1969, and 1972, when

²⁶⁰ See: haf; Müller.

²⁶¹ For example, see: Barrey; Leibbrand; Herchenröder; Bry, "Wieviel "Rheinland-Pfälzer" gibt es in fünfzig Jahren?," *ibid.*, March 22, 1976; Lafrenz; Ehrlich; Behr.

²⁶² For example, see: Julitz; Hondrich, "Die Verwandlung.;" Meinhard Miegel, "Kein kolossaler Wirtschaftsgigant," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 15, 1990; Spiegel; Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Im Fremden das Eigene hassen?," *Der Spiegel*, August 17, 1992.

²⁶³ For example, see: Adam, "Die Partei als Vehikel der Macht.;" Bannas, "Frischer Wind von den Älteren.;" Adam, "Zikadenmusik.;" E.F; K.A., "Ein frohes Lied," *ibid.*, December 30, 1996.

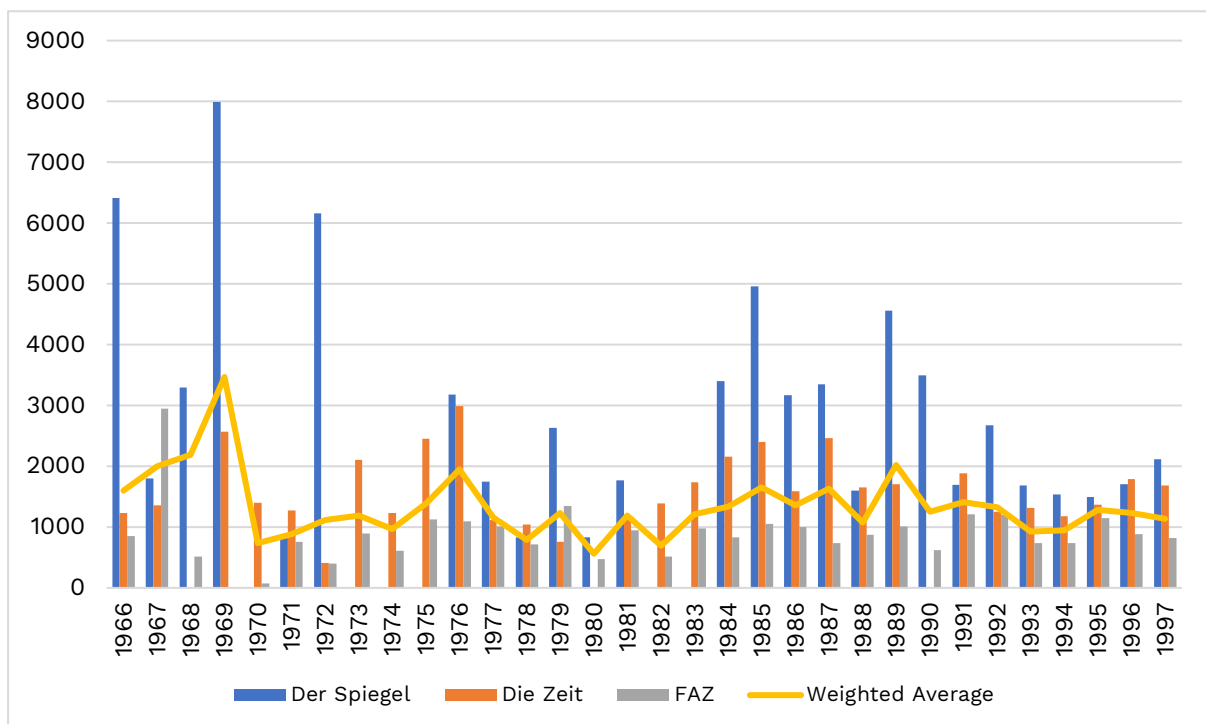
²⁶⁴ For example, see: "“Drei Monate sind viel für einen Sterbenden”.;" epd; Max Frisch, "Der Arzt und der Tod - der Patient und der Tod," *ibid.*, January 5, 1985; Schostack; Behrends; Diessenbacher, "Der Tod und die Pflege.;" Deutscher Ärztetag.

²⁶⁵ For example, see: Jeremias; Astroh; Baring, "Im Niemandsland der Seele."

²⁶⁶ For example, see: Hort, "West-Berlin hat hohen Einwohnerverlust.;" "Mehr Arbeitskräfte für Berlin.;" "Weniger Arbeitskräfte aus dem Bundesgebiet nach Berlin."

only one article on this issue was published, they were long articles (6,414, 7,990, and 6,158 words, respectively). Over the entire period, however, *Spiegel* articles did not have a noticeable increase in length but seemed to be shorter even though the actual number of articles slightly increased. The FAZ was the most consistent in article length and did not fluctuate greatly between the years, even though there were large fluctuations in the number of articles published. Over time, the average length of articles was fairly consistent and there was not an upward trend, as I would have expected. The main growth that took place was during the early 1980s leading up to the high point in articles in the late 1980s as pension reforms were heavily discussed. After this period, there was a slight decline, but overall, it remained around the same average length. This indicates that even though attention given to the issue grew over time, it was reflected in the quantitative increase in articles talking about the issue, rather than through longer, more in-depth articles.

Figure 52: Weighted Average Word Count



Average word count and weighted word count, which considers the number of articles coded each year, by publication. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Differences in Publications: Variance in the Type of Coverage, But Similar Patterns of Publication Frequency

As I explained in Chapter 3, I selected these three publications because of their variances in format and publication frequency. The FAZ is an example of how a daily

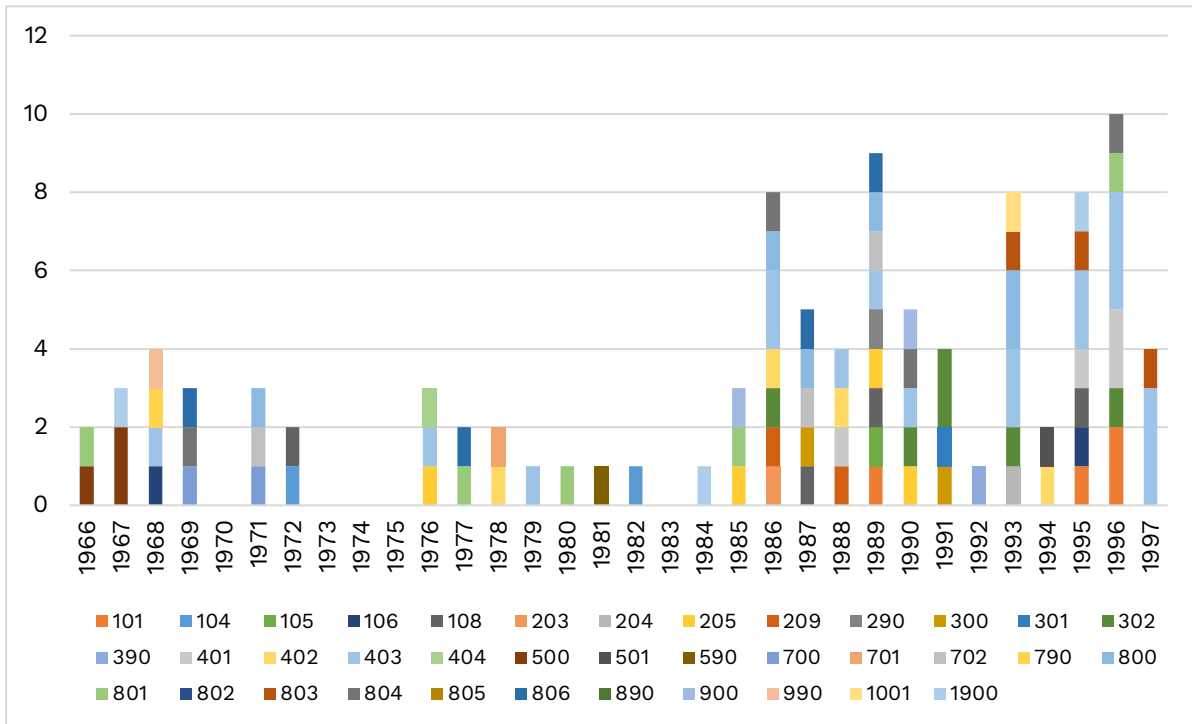
newspaper covered the issue, while *Die Zeit* is an example of a weekly newspaper. Both have similar layouts, but the way in which they could select what issues to cover, as well as how much time was available to write an article, varied. *Der Spiegel* is comparable to *Die Zeit* since they are both weekly publications, but it is a magazine, which has a different layout, fewer articles than in a newspaper, and the articles tend to be longer. This difference in the articles found in the publications supports the concept of “latent actuality” put forth by Badenschier and Wormer in which weekly publications have more time to work on articles and give them a more personal and narrative touch.²⁶⁷ The three publications do confirm the finding of past agenda setting research that different media place similar salience on an issue, which can be seen by the similar growth trends in frequency among the publications.²⁶⁸ They varied in the types and content of articles, but there were similarities in when attention was placed on aging.

Looking at the selection of coded articles from *Der Spiegel*, there was not a large variety of topics addressed (Figure 53). Those written about, however, were highly relevant at the time. For example, in the early years, the aging of the population was referred to and mentioned in articles, but by the mid-1970s, concerns began to rise about the future of the pension system and focus began to center on the declining birth rate. Once discussion began about reforming the pension system in the late 1980s, there was an increase in the number of articles focused on the pension system. In the early 1990s, as immigration was a hot topic, there were more articles and interviews published about immigrants and asylum seekers, many of which sought to reduce fears about this influx of people from outside of Germany. By the end of this period, as the next round of pension reform debates began, the articles moved on to covering this big issue.

²⁶⁷ Badenschier and Wormer, 64.

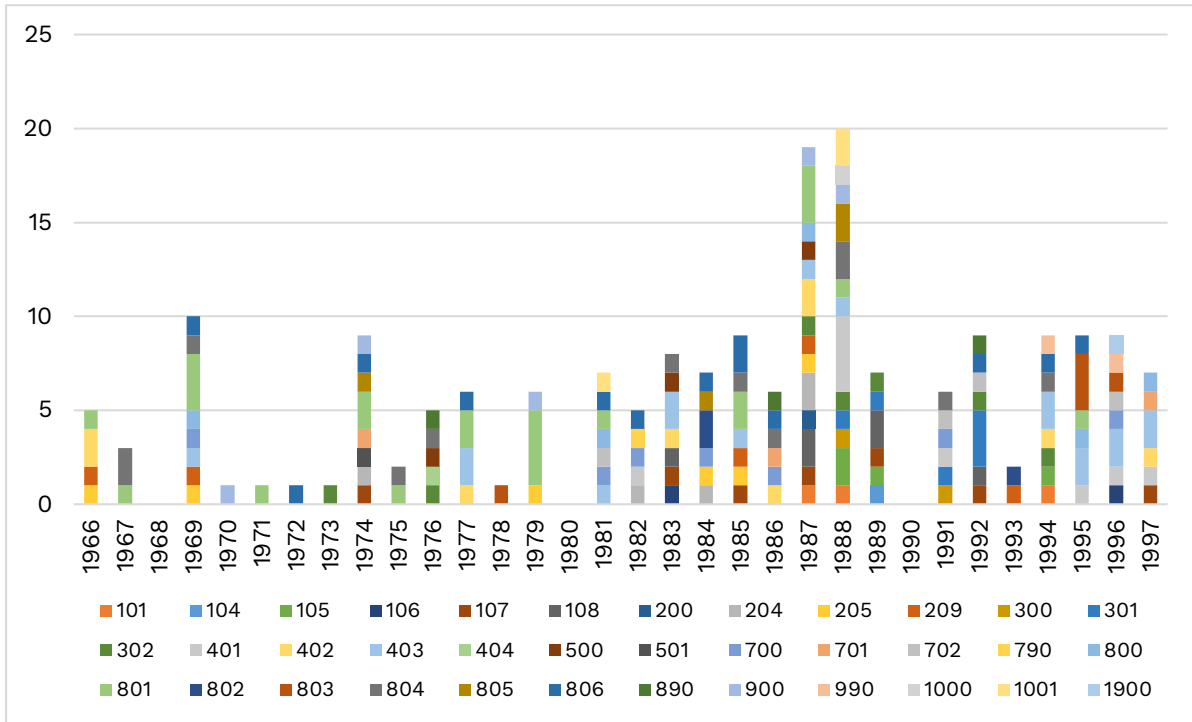
²⁶⁸ Dearing and Rogers, 90.

Figure 53: *Der Spiegel* – Sub-Topics per Year

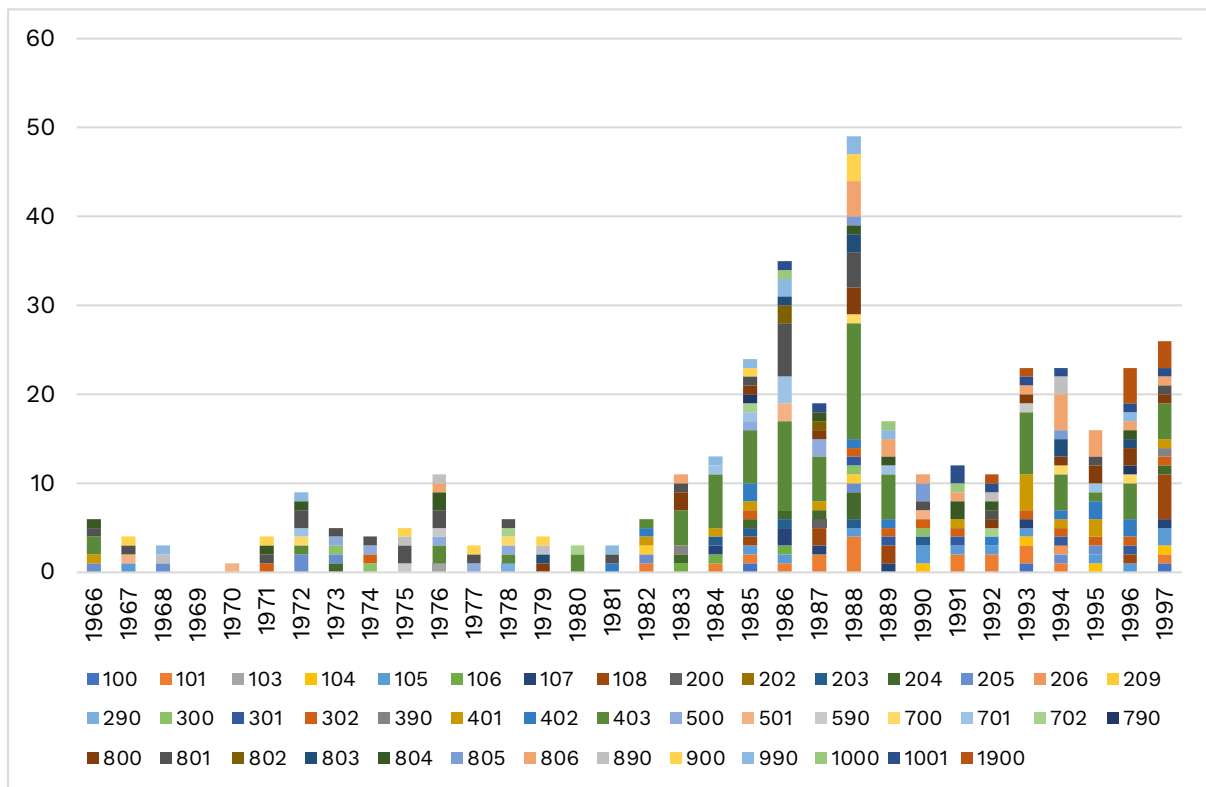


Distribution of sub-topics in *Der Spiegel* by year. For the complete list of codes, see Chapter 3. **Source:** GOLD Database, author’s calculations.

Figure 54: *Die Zeit* – Sub-Topics per Year



Distribution of sub-topics in *Die Zeit* by year. For the complete list of codes, see Appendix 1. **Source:** GOLD Database, author’s calculations.

Figure 55: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* – Sub-Topics per Year

Distribution of sub-topics in the FAZ by year. For the complete list of codes, see Appendix 1. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Turning to *Die Zeit*, they had more articles that covered a wider variety of topics than *Der Spiegel* but did not publish as many articles as the FAZ (Figure 54). There were articles addressing various policy debates going on at the time, but articles were more often about society-related topics, such as the composition of the aging population, what it means to be older, and how older people are viewed. Book reviews were also more common, reviewing books that specifically explored different aspects of old age. Compared to the other publications, there were more articles addressing different issues, such as adapting the market to older consumers or what more older drivers means for society. Like *Der Spiegel*, there was more focus on immigration in the 1990s, discussing the role of immigrants in maintaining the social security system and labor market, which was part of the general discussion at the time about the need for immigrants in German society.

As a daily publication, the FAZ covered a wider variety of topics and publish more articles (Figure 55). A large portion of the articles were dedicated to addressing the pension system or other policy-related fields like health care or the labor market, but there were also many touching on society-related topics. A distinction between the daily and weekly publications, however, is apparent from both a quantitative and

qualitative perspective with the FAZ clearly producing more news-related articles and opinion pieces compared to background articles or interviews, which was the case for *Die Zeit* and *Der Spiegel*.

There were a few sections to note in the FAZ that were not found in the other publications. For example, a speech given by Kohl in 1979 was reprinted in the FAZ in a section dedicated to speeches given in the Bundestag.²⁶⁹ This type of article or reprint is significant because it sends a signal to readers about the importance of what was said. Both the speech from Kohl and Chancellor Schmidt were shared. A number of speeches were given on that day and the decision to select these speeches is significant, but also likely related to their positions as leaders of the two major political parties in Germany. These speeches were given during the debate about the annual budget for the chancellery, a topic that already receives special attention. Regardless, their publication draws more attention to what was said and reaffirms the importance of this debate and what was discussed. The FAZ also had a series summarizing articles from political journals. Several coded articles came from this specific series, which is a useful way to communicate to the public the discussions in the academic community. Since many people do not have direct access or interest in reading academic articles, these summaries are a tool by the FAZ to share information with its readers and like the speeches given in the Bundestag, signals a level of importance regarding the research.

7.3 Conclusion: Coverage Grew with the 1992 Pension Reform, But Expanded to Include More Issues Over Time

The issue of aging received a range of attention in the media. Quantitatively, the number of articles over time increased and despite the decline in attention following the fall of the Berlin Wall, it continued to receive more attention than any time before 1983. Articles mainly framed the aging of the population and its effects around an ongoing policy-related debate or reform. But there were also articles that covered societal aspects of aging and what this later stage of life entails. From this analysis, there are several important observations:

- The coverage given to the aging of the population was influenced by current events in Germany, as well as the government's announced political agenda. Coverage dropped between 1989 and 1990, in part due to the focus on reunification, but returned to an upward trend throughout the 1990s.

²⁶⁹ Helmut Kohl, "Bloße Technokraten sind nicht in der Lage, die Kräfte unseres Volkes zu mobilisieren," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 25, 1979.

- Unlike the research and policy materials that were coded, it was more common for news articles to only address one sub-topic and not multiple at once.
- The FAZ, as a daily newspaper, was able to publish more articles that addressed the topic of aging. These articles were typically news articles about current events or opinion pieces. Articles from *Der Spiegel* and *Die Zeit* were typically longer than the FAZ articles and included more background and interview pieces.
- Even though the topic appeared to grow over time as the number of published articles increased, this was not reflected in the length of the articles, which stayed relatively consistent over time.

Chapter 8: Identifying the Contributing Factors and Stages of Development of Germany's Awareness

Thus far, the previous three chapters have looked at research, policy making, and the media individually to see how they addressed the issue of the aging population in Germany. This part of my study not only provides a summary of my findings from the previous chapters but brings these three groups together to draw conclusions about how the debate developed collectively and to answer my main research question: In light of the damage caused to the academic field of demography by the “Third Reich” and due to the habit of policy makers to think in terms of legislative periods and not with a more long-term focus, how did policy makers, researchers, and journalists in Germany react to and address the development of the aging population?

The first two sections give examples of the awareness among researchers, policy makers, and journalists of both the historical impact on the field and the need to take action even though the full effects of population aging would not be felt in the immediate future. Section 8.3 answers the research question by explaining the impact of politicians putting population aging on the agenda, the growth of the research field and interest in the topic in Germany, and the influence of the change in rhetoric used to describe aging. Then, I return to the literature discussed in Chapter 2 about the binary relationships between these three groups to explain how they apply to the situation in Germany. Finally, using a multi-stage process, I explain how the awareness developed about the aging society.

8.1 Evidence of the Long-Lasting Historical Influence

The impact of the “Third Reich” and its redefining of demographic research to justify its actions had a lasting impact on how Germany approached the subject. After WWII and the fall of the “Third Reich”, demography was associated with eugenics and race research because of its use to rationalize the discriminatory laws that were enacted, and the atrocities carried out in the concentration camps. Because of the desire by the Nazis to establish the “ideal” German population, pronatalism was closely tied to the field. For many, population policies were synonymous with family and fertility policies. This meant other aspects of demography were also not well researched since the concern of not wanting to promote childbearing for the sake of population growth prevented the overall field from growing. The impact of the “Third Reich” on the research field was known and examples were found in the collected documents from research, policy, and the media.

In the media, Adam referred to the historical impact in two articles from 1986 and 1988. The first was about a conference in Bielefeld with European demographers to discuss population and family policy. He began by stating:

The fact that the Federal Republic could not, should not, or was not allowed to pursue a population policy is part of the political commentary of the post-war period. Both the word and the matter itself fell victim to the *damnatio memoriae* [condemnation of memory] with which Germans seek to come to terms with their recent history.¹

He went on to address the continual decline in the birth rate that could not be addressed through population policy. He observed that only scientific experts from East Germany, as well as other eastern and western European countries, were talking about population policy and speaking about politics and birth rates in such a complimentary manner. Adam quoted Kaufmann, who argued that the German social state was demographically blind; by not rewarding families for having children, their existence was negated. Through the arguments from Kaufmann, Adam makes the point that demography goes hand-in-hand with the social state, but this close relationship had been largely ignored due to the lack of interest or willingness of the German government to tackle population policies.

In Adam's 1988 article, he began by stating that all political parties believe that the government should not pursue population policies based on the lessons learned from the "Third Reich". He quoted the head of a state chancellery office, which was led by the SPD, who said, "It cannot be the task of politics to bring about certain developments in population figures. It is, however, the task of politics to ensure that people can make the free decision to have children."² In Adam's opinion, this mindset was leading to an inequality in how the different generations were being treated, with the younger generations being burdened with providing for the older population. Both articles showcased an awareness of the impact of the Nazi-led policies that created an environment afraid to establish any form of population policy for Germany.

In 1996, an interview with French demographer Herve Le Bras in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin*³ focused on whether the German population was dying out and how France and Germany had dealt with declining birth rates. He was asked about the field of demography being suspicious since WWII:

In France...it is highly respected, relatively richly endowed and taken seriously by politicians. Demography is considered a positive symbol of the nation. In Germany, racism has discredited the subject, even though Hitler, even in his worst delusion, by no means pursued a targeted promotion of the birth rate.

¹ Adam, "Der blinde Staat."

² "Harte Jugend, süßes Alter?."

³ This was a weekly publication in the Friday editions of the FAZ between the periods of 1980 and 1999.

We French always wanted to help our German colleagues in our meetings to rehabilitate demography.⁴

Le Bras went on to say Germany only began to be interested in its declining population in the 1930s. Prior to this, the historical precedent was to not interfere in family policies specifically related to increasing the birth rate, even in the times of Bismarck. After the war, demography became more taboo and politicians were not concerned about the prospect of the German population shrinking by half within half a century. If the issue was raised, the politicians doing so were seen as right-wing, even fascist. This association with demography being a taboo subject was closely related to family policy and the birth rate, particularly in these news articles.

From the policy side, there were no explicit mentions of the need to avoid discussing population policy due to a negative image created by the “Third Reich”. However, it was evident in the earlier half of the considered time frame that politicians did not see it as their responsibility to influence the reproduction behaviors of Germany’s citizens. For example, in a written response to questions about the government’s position on the declining birth rate, Federal Interior Minister Genscher stated it was not the government’s goal to have the birth rate reach a certain level; it should remain the right of married couples to decide how many children they have.⁵

Among the research results, there were not many publications that explicitly mentioned this historical factor, at least in the context of the aging population. Two examples from the coded research documents are mainly centered around the declining birth rate in Europe and gives attention to the specific situation in Germany. When Julian Hollick cited the response by the West German government to the declining birth rate, he credited the impact of the “Third Reich”:

In West Germany, the government admits that the present birth rate is too low. They will not set official targets, however, in part because they are haunted by memories of the racist population policies of the Third Reich, and in part because they doubt the value of such projections. There is no active pro-natalist lobby, nor does the issue seem likely to be one that will play any part in the forthcoming elections.⁶

A similar article by Alison McIntosh compared the response to the low birth in France and West Germany. She presented the sharp contrast in the pronatalist response by the French government to address the declining birth rate to the lack of response in West Germany:

France's underlying pronatalism contrasts sharply with the aversion felt by a majority of West Germans – and notably the present government – to any

⁴ Jürg Altwegg, "Warum haben die Deutschen weniger Kinder, Monsieur Le Bras?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Magazin*, November 15, 1996.

⁵ Deutscher Bundestag, "Fragen gemäß § 111 der Geschäftsordnung für Juli 1972. Teil I: Fragen Nr. 1 bis 207 mit den dazu erteilten schriftlichen Antworten."

⁶ Julian Crandall Hollick, "Demographic Change in Europe," *The World Today* 36, no. 9 (1980): 366.

thought of intervention by the state in the reproductive behavior of individuals. This deeply emotional response has been inspired, not by demographic events themselves, but by the distressing memories of Nazi population policy that are still aroused in many minds when mention is made of a need to stimulate fertility. Indeed, it is only in recent years that it has become possible to discuss population issues in West Germany with a degree of detachment.⁷

As this was more closely related to the decline in the birth rate, it is likely there was more acknowledgement of this historical factor in all fields when specifically addressing the declining birth rate.

In addition to these references, several of my expert interview partners cited this influencing factor, usually without being prompted. Birg claimed he only faced opposition from the academic world when he began working in demography. He said demography was a very “unloved” subject because of the Nazi’s misuse of the subject for eugenics and race hygiene research, which contributed to there being no department of demography after WWII. Political parties were also unwilling to address population issues because of how the Nazis misused it. The reason they eventually addressed the situation was because it reached a level where it could no longer be ignored.⁸ Kaufmann cited the taboo nature of demography after WWII and its lack of existence. He argued that he was able to write his dissertation about aging because he was not enrolled at a German university. He also mentioned how advanced France was in the field and their efforts to address the decline in their birth rate already in the 19th century.⁹ In the interview with Beatrice Fromm, who helped establish the MPIDR in Rostock, she emphasized the discredited and corrupt image of demography caused by the Nazis. One of the leading reasons for choosing demography for the new institute was the desire to improve its image, which at the time only consisted of a few professorships and still had room for growth.¹⁰ This influence by the Nazis was cited in the proposal for the new institute put forth by Karl Ulrich Mayer in 1993.¹¹

As a result of the tarnished image, there were few demographers left in West Germany that could carry on the research. According to Kaufmann, many of them had either left Germany or had themselves a damaged reputation following their involvement with the “Third Reich”. Even once the MPIDR was founded in the 1990s, they had to turn to researchers outside of Germany to fill the director position because the field was still weak. Foreign researchers would be able to carry out population research because they did not have a similar historical background as

⁷ McIntosh, 184.

⁸ Birg, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Herwig Birg."

⁹ Kaufmann, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann."

¹⁰ Fromm.

¹¹ Mayer, "Vorüberlegungen zur Errichtung eines Max-Planck-Instituts für Demographische Forschung."

someone from Germany.¹² Flöthmann made similar arguments about there being a lack of researchers left in Germany to carry on and develop the field following WWII that did not have damaged reputations.¹³

From these examples, it is clear the reputation of demography created by the “Third Reich” played a significant role in the slow development of the field in Germany and therefore, the slow recognition of the aging population. The necessary research infrastructure to develop and promote the field, as well as interest, was missing. Even though demography is also comprised of mortality and migration, the overwhelming social construction of demography was related to population growth and pronatalism. This association with pronatalism and Nazi policies led to an avoidance of recognizing all the implications of a changing population and influenced the way policy makers, researchers, and the media addressed the aging society in Germany.

8.2 Lack of Interest in Long-term Issues

A characteristic of demography-related research not specific to Germany is its long-term nature. Population changes are slow to develop, and their effects are not usually felt immediately, making it is easier to ignore. In the case of long-term projections, there is always the chance that an event could alter the outcome that was projected decades in advance. For example, the influx of immigrants to Germany in 2014 counteracted the expected shrinkage of the population and contributed to an increase in the working age population.¹⁴ Even though this did not influence the aging of the population, it did lead to an unexpected increase in population size and was not something the government or society had assumed would happen.

Another unique feature of demography-related research is that in many cases, the larger implications of population changes are felt by the old age pension system, which is extremely important in Germany. Since demographic projections can change, politicians are particularly reluctant to undertake reforms that could reduce benefits and be unpopular among voters, especially if there is a chance the actual situation has different results, making said reforms unnecessary. Even if the projections are certain, politicians do not want to be associated with a significant pension reform, especially if the opposing party can claim benefits were removed. This will not be explicitly stated as a reason for not reacting and instead, politicians will either ignore the projections or emphasize that they are just projections that could change.

¹² Kaufmann, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann."

¹³ Flöthmann.

¹⁴ Statistisches Bundesamt, “Bevölkerung im Wandel: Annahmen und Ergebnisse der 14. koordinierten Bevölkerungsvorausberechnung,” (Wiesbaden, 2019): 12.

Therefore, politicians continue to make decisions based on the short-term for the sake of their political careers.

Media and research took a more critical approach in evaluating the limited actions of policy makers. In 1966, Kannengießer addressed the recent decision to increase public sector pensions to equal civil servants' pensions. He argued that the economy cannot handle providing such a high level of benefits and would eventually have to increase pensions for all to the same level of the public sector. With the impending increase in older people, he accused politicians of being too short-sighted, following the adage, "After us comes the great flood."¹⁵ During the late 1970s, there was renewed debate about the need to consolidate the pension system. According to Dieter Pohl, the government was hoping to soon overcome the impending mountain of retirees, while the German Pension Insurance (*Bundesversicherungsanstalt für Angestellte*) released their analysis that did not see an end to this large number of pensioners. Pohl highlighted these differing viewpoints and argued that because politicians' terms in office would be ending in the fall of 1980, they were not interested in the issue. Politicians with a focus on social policy would argue they could not do anything to influence citizens' reproductive activities and legislation could only be planned for a four-year period. However, if changes were not made, he argued, then the system would collapse. Since reform decisions do not happen in a short period of time, politicians needed to plan ahead to make sure they addressed the issue before it was too late.¹⁶ Both journalists appeared very aware of the impending situation and the need to take action. As journalists, they could be openly critical to suggest that politicians were too short-sighted and more concerned about re-election instead of taking action they deemed as necessary.

Researchers were not as critical when addressing the long-term nature of the issue. They emphasized the challenges that would be posed by an aging population in the future, thereby underscoring the issue's long-term nature, but they usually did not draw attention to the implications for policy making. Peter Rosenberg explained the complexities in making political decisions related to aging: Policies must address a longer period of time and have to consider potential changes that may occur that are not directly related to the policy area under question, but still impacted.¹⁷ Building on Rosenberg's argument, Schmähl also cited the need for long-term thinking and action because the types of changes that need to be implemented cannot be done overnight. The time needed for the transition must be included in the planning. Population changes develop over a long period but also cannot be reversed in a short time frame.

¹⁵ Translated from German: „Nach uns die Sintflut.“ Kannengießer, "Versorgt wie die Beamten."

¹⁶ Piel, "Zielstrebig in die nächste Krise."

¹⁷ Rosenberg, "Soziale Sicherung bei demographischem Wandel: Alternative Thesen."

Schmähl was complementary by saying the acknowledgement of demographic challenges helps create the opportunity to prepare and still make changes at an early stage, which was the case in 1989.¹⁸ In 1997, Höhn acknowledged both the pros and cons of demographic change being a slow process. The good news was it allowed policy makers to take time to create a “careful and responsible response” to the expected changes. The bad news was that policy makers may decide they have so much time that they delay these decisions to the future, especially if they deem other issues more pressing. She goes on to argue that it is the responsibility of demographers to educate policy makers about the foreseeable effects of population aging, while policy makers must be prepared to take steps in a timely manner that will “rejuvenate” an aging society.¹⁹

Politicians were aware of the tendency to ignore taking necessary action. In many of the speeches given in the Bundestag, arguments were made about the need to take action now. Speakers reminded fellow members how much time was “left” before the effects of the aging population would be felt. Leading up to the 1990s, there were several examples of disinterest to take action in response to a change that was projected to be noticed in 2000 when there were other, more pressing issues to address.²⁰ Most of these arguments came from the SPD, including Chancellor Schmidt in 1979 who called for not overdramatizing the situation.²¹ Members from the CDU/CSU, especially Kohl, both before becoming Chancellor and as Chancellor, and Minister Blüm, however, were vocal in the need to make changes. In 1976, Kohl stressed the need to “look past one’s own nose” when debating the future of the generational contract, implying the need to plan ahead.²²

By the time the debate about the 1992 pension reform happened, there were a few more calls to react to these population changes. At the start of the debate, Minister Blüm emphasized that just because the pension system would not face any financial challenges until the beginning of the 1990s, this did not mean they should not begin negotiations.²³ Cronenberg (FDP) disagreed and argued several times there was still plenty of time before the effects would be felt and there was the chance that the projections would change.²⁴ By the final debates, Cronenberg argued in support of these reforms while there was still time. Günther (CDU) made sure to bring

¹⁸ Schmähl, “Perspektiven sozialer Sicherung in einer alternden Gesellschaft,” 266-67.

¹⁹ Höhn, “Bevölkerungsentwicklung und demographische Herausforderung,” 92.

²⁰ For example, see: Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 95. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode.”; “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 205. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode.”; “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 199. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode.”

²¹ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 154. Sitzung der 8. Wahlperiode.”

²² “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 255. Sitzung der 7. Wahlperiode.”

²³ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 61. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode.”

²⁴ “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 91. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode.”; “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 132. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode.”

attention to the fact that the parties were trying to address issues related to aging early on by introducing flexibility into the working life:

[C]hanges had to be introduced in this field, even though these changes will initially have a rather minor impact. I assume that these effects will contribute more to financial stability in later decades than by 2010. After that date, the change in the age structure will be much more noticeable than it is initially. *As you can see, we have also considered the period after 2010.*²⁵

As this research has shown, the aging of the population has an impact on a variety of different areas, but especially on old age pension programs due to the nature of the pay-as-you-go system. When dealing with population aging, which causes the ratio of system contributors to system recipients to dramatically change, resulting in less incoming funds, policy makers are faced with the reality that the system must be reformed in order to maintain itself. For this situation, this meant policy makers had to reduce benefits. The reason politicians could approve the 1992 reform is because they achieved almost unanimous support for the reform. By voting together, it became easier for politicians to convince voters that this was the right action to take. Parties did not have to worry as much that during the next campaign, opposing parties would gain votes because they did not support the reform. During the debate, Dreßler (SPD) stated:

With the currently presented law from the SPD, CDU/CSU and FDP, the turbulent 15-year phase about the pension system is now closed. We hope that in the future there will no longer be any need to intervene more or less arbitrarily in the pension law on a case-by-case basis and to ensure its soundness with every new financial transaction.²⁶

This sentiment was likely shared by other parliament members and after such a long debate, they were glad to not have to worry about having to reform such a controversial and publicly important program.

Old age policies gained more attention and during debates about health care reform, it was clear politicians understood reform was needed to handle the future increase in older patients. There was one example of dissent and a push to return to focusing on short term issues: Rüttgers, Minister of Education, Science, Research, and Technology, argued that the government should not forget about short-term/immediate problems, which in this case was the younger population. In the coming years, the younger population was expected to grow, which meant education sectors could not be ignored. With focus having turned towards resolving future

²⁵ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 174. Sitzung der 11. Wahlperiode." Emphasis added by author.

²⁶ Ibid.

problems regarding the aging population, Rüttgers reminded politicians that they could just wait until the population declined to avoid taking action.²⁷

Arguments against immediate action returned during the debate about the 1999 pension reform: In reference to the statement already quoted from the last debate, Dreßler (SPD) argued another round of reforms was not necessary since it had been agreed upon in the previous negotiations that the pension system would be secure until 2015. In his mind, he did not see the immediate need to tackle more reforms earlier than what had been agreed upon.²⁸ Minister Blüm, however, was in favor of reforms because life expectancy was already on the rise and politicians should not wait until after 2015.²⁹ Clearly, politicians were not excited about the idea of reducing benefits of constituents, particularly when the SPD had been active in trying to grow support among older voters. Dreßler's reluctance was not solely because there was more time before the impact of the aging population was felt, but rather due to an unwillingness to make another significant pension reform within such a short period of time.

The long-term nature of the issues created by the aging of the population was particularly influential in the decisions of politicians. Their decision to delay action influenced the agendas of the media and how they approached the topic.

8.3 How Researchers, Policy Makers, and the Media Addressed Population Aging

Considering this historical context and the unique nature of demographic-related developments, this research asked how policy makers, researchers, and journalists in Germany reacted to and addressed the development of the aging German population.

Politicians Led the Way

When I first approached this topic, I assumed researchers were the first ones to look into larger issues, such as demographic change, since their work involves thinking about and understanding various phenomena. But due to lack of interest and poor communication, readers do not hear about new scientific research in the news because this type of news is not easy to find, and headlines tend to focus on political developments. Therefore, my first hypothesis stated:

The discussion around the aging of the population in Germany did not gain traction until politicians began to acknowledge the issue within the context of a significant policy debate (i.e., pension reform or health care). Once this

²⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 98. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

²⁸ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 185. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

²⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 189. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

occurred, despite researchers having looked into this issue before, the aging of the population began to stand on its own and was seen as a separate issue that needed to be addressed.

Beginning with a quantitative comparison of the coverage aging received among the three groups of interest, one can see that interest began to grow in the 1980s for all three groups (Figure 56), but it was not simultaneous. The media was the first to show increased attention in the first half of the 1980s and interest among policy makers declined in the early 1980s after a period of slightly heightened interest in the second half of the 1970s. Researchers had a sharp jump in publications in 1987, which declined the following year, but did not drop below pre-1987 levels in the following years. Unlike what was originally expected, research was not the clear leader of the debate about aging. When looking at Figure 56, it should be remembered there were differences in the number of documents coded for each group, as well as the pool of materials available, which explains the stark differences in number of results each year. Based on my findings, there were no research publications found in 1966 from my keyword searches, so when looking at this specific time frame, policy makers and the media were the first ones to start discussing this issue in some form.³⁰ Thus, my main hypothesis is not fully supported as politicians and the media appeared to cover the issue before researchers, but it was within the context of the 1992 pension reform when interest grew among all groups significantly.

Media coverage in the 1960s was not very specific to the aging population, but there were a few articles in 1969 reporting on studies about older people, such as a study about the situation of older people in Rhineland-Palatinate and the Bonn Gerontological Longitudinal Study (*Bonner Gerontologische Längsschnittstudie*).³¹ Politicians were also acknowledging the issue, but in terms that implied the aging population was a temporary situation that did not require significant action at that time. A few results from the 1960s are examples of early interaction between research and the political community: Schellenberg (SPD) called for more research to understand how and when contribution rates to the pension system should be increased, which he viewed as inevitable.³² An event by the German Society of Gerontology was an opportunity for members of both the research and political communities to come together. Several speakers recommended older workers work longer and suggested what tasks they could complete³³, while the speaker from the

³⁰ This does not mean that researchers were not addressing the topic, but research output was minimal during the second half of the 1960s.

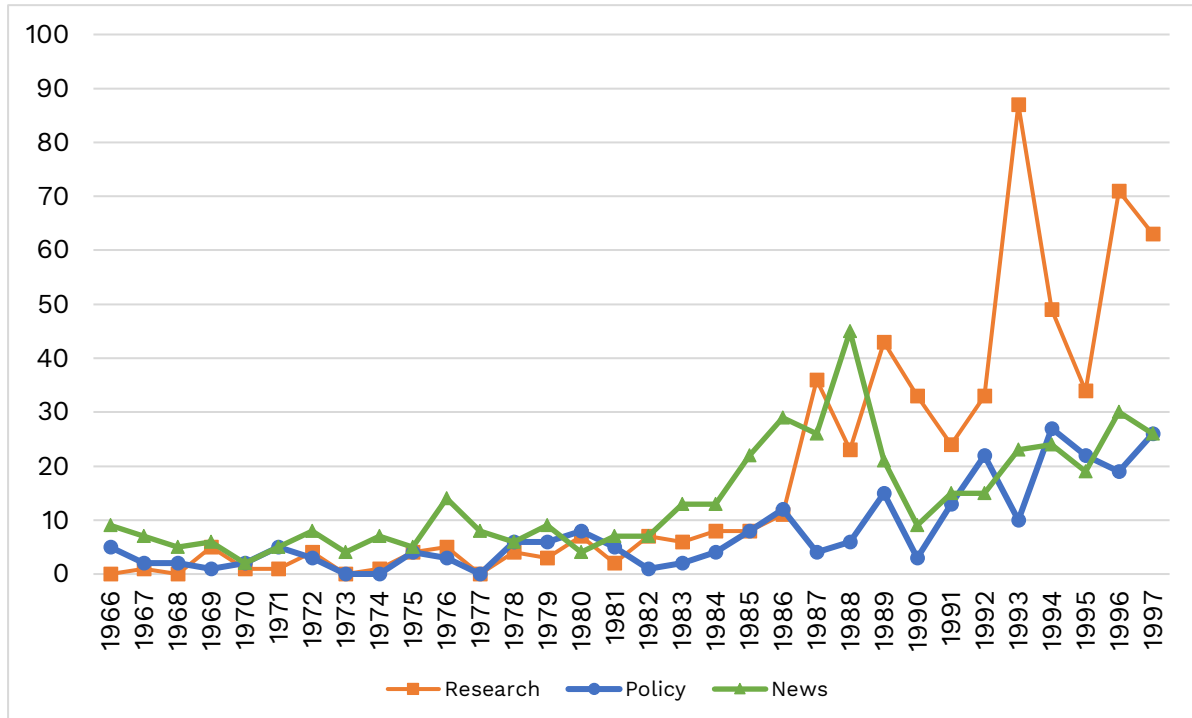
³¹ Prause; "Um einen längeren Tag."

³² Schellenberg.

³³ W. Schiffel, "Etiam in senectute mobilis: Vorschläge für Altersberufe," in *Flexibilität der Altersgrenze: Symposium der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gerontologie 1968*, ed. René Schubert

Federal Ministry of Health argued the pension system in its current form was still adequate and there was room to make exceptions for specific situations.³⁴

Figure 56: Coverage by Year



Number of documents coded by year by group. **Source:** GOLD Database, author's calculations.

Throughout the 1970s, there was not much overlap between researchers, policy makers, and the media. One exception is an FAZ article that reviewed Georg Sieber's book, *Die Altersrevolution*, which was coded as part of the research findings. Books and articles in the research sector were still growing during this time, but touched on policy-related issues, such as health care and the pension system, as well as presented a picture of what it means to be older. Politicians were not debating aging-related issues consistently but were focused on health care and insurance and the pension system. By the end of the 1970s, the government claimed it was aware of long-term population developments and had established an expert group that included researchers to look into the issue.³⁵ In response to a GA, they said they

(Darmstadt: Dr. Dietrich Steinkopff Verlag, 1969); Schubert, "Verschiedene Formen des Alterns.;" A. Störmer, "Die Bedeutung der Rehabilitation für eine flexible Altersgrenze," *ibid.*

³⁴ Paul.

³⁵ Bundesregierung, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Franke, Müller (Remscheid), Müller (Berlin), Zink, Burger, Frau Geier, Schedl, Frau Schleicher, Kroll-Schlüter, Pohlmann, Höpfinger, Neuhaus, Geisenhofer, Hasinger, Bühler (Bruchsal), Frau Karwatzki, Dr. Blüm, Frau Verhulsdonk, Dr. George, Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohenstein, Frau Dr. Wex, Niegel und der Fraktion der CDU/CSU."

would pay more attention to gerontological research.³⁶ Even though the media covered these policy-related issues, it did not coincide with the political materials coded for this research and they also addressed a broader range of issues that included economic and regional aspects. Therefore, this early period cannot be considered as having a specific sector drive the debate about the aging population.

The interest among the political parties also grew over this period. By the 1980s, the interest of the CDU/CSU began to surpass the SPD based on the amount of mentions in various government documents. Both the CDU/CSU and SPD had different areas of interest, as well as different voter bases that influenced their interests. Older voters tended to support the more conservative parties, like the CDU/CSU, while younger people voted more often for the SPD. This shift in voter demographics was influential in growing the interest among parties and politicians for the older population. Particularly for the SPD, their continued electoral losses led them to rethink how they can better appeal to older voters and helped turn the political focus more to older people's needs.

Once Kohl became Chancellor and it was clear his government would focus on consolidating the social security system and reforming the pension system, the media began to pay more attention to the government's efforts that were motivated in part by the changing population structure. The media picked up on the discussions and debates surrounding pension reform early on as negotiations and various proposals from different parties were introduced. Based on my findings, the media discussed aging more as politicians began to discuss different types of social reforms necessary due to aging (Figure 56). The amount of attention given by the government did not significantly increase as news articles increased, but the media saw the debates to be highly relevant since major pension reform had not been carried out since the 1950s. This confirms my fourth hypothesis, which posited:

There was an increase in articles related to an aging population at the same time as politicians were participating in more debates in the Bundestag about policies directly or indirectly affected by an aging population.

Media coverage hit its high point in 1988, but when the final rounds of debate were held and the reform was passed, coverage declined. Based on the news factor theory, frequency and consonance can explain this drop: The media saw the importance of reporting on the various proposed changes that were discussed as a way to prepare citizens for the changes that would eventually affect them (consonance). Once the

³⁶ "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage der Abgeordneten Braun, Burger, Geisenhofer, Franke, Müller (Remscheid), Dr. Möller, Zink, Frau Geier, Frau Verhulsdonk, Hasinger, Kroll-Schlüter, Frau Hurland, Dr. Hoffacker, Dr. Hüsch, Dr. Hammans, Köster, Höpfinger, Frau Karwatzki, Bühler (Bruchsal), Dr. George, Ruhe und der Fraktion der CDU/CSU: Lebenssituation älterer Menschen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland."

legislation was in the final stages of debate, the media did not see this as a milestone worth covering to the same degree. This may be because it was clear that all the parties were in agreement with the final proposal, so major changes were not expected by that point. However, the level of coverage in the media remained at a higher level than before 1982 for the remainder of the period under question as more debates in the Bundestag were held about aging. Even though the media gave some attention to researchers and their work about the older population, their interest mainly picked up once the government had announced its plan to pursue reform and when reform proposals were announced.

Researchers were not publishing articles and books at the high level that I had expected. A quantitative jump in publications did not happen until the second half of the 1980s. Up until then, researchers called for reforms, mainly to the pension system and the health care system, which increased as the pension debate occurred. Once the Bundestag debate picked up, it seems to have been the catalyst for more research on the topics related to the pension system, health care and long-term care, and old age policies in general. More edited books were published during this time, which included those based on presentations and speeches given at events held by various groups, such as the metal workers union and the Robert Bosch Foundation. These organizations, researchers, and academic journals recognized the increased interest in the topic, which was a motivating factor to publish research and hold events addressing these issues because they knew it would draw more attention to their work. This ties into my third hypothesis:

As the political debate grew, researchers made an effort to produce more research that emphasized the effects of an aging population related to the issues with the idea that it could be useful for policy makers and politicians to draft new legislation and during the decision-making process.

From my findings, this hypothesis is supported because more materials were published, and more events were held about the issues being debated in the Bundestag. Whether the researchers produced this material for the benefit of policy makers is not clear, but editors and publishers were clearly interested in articles that addressed current debates and discussions in society. By participating in events with politicians or seeing the other research being published at the time, researchers could identify what topics were of current interest. For example, Herder-Dorneich published a book in 1976 that was the result of a report requested by the Federal Office of the Chancellor the previous year.³⁷ This is one example of research begun on behalf of the government being an impetus for a larger work. He cited the growth in interest over

³⁷ Herder-Dorneich.

the past decade, also by the general public, in discussing the increased health care costs and the need to have research that can be used to find solutions.

While it is clear that all groups were aware of and addressing in varying contexts the population becoming older and its impact, Germany can still be seen as slow in its reaction. For example, despite the 1992 pension reform being a noteworthy response to the aging population, the United States had already passed reform in 1977 to adjust the funding structure of its pension system to improve its sustainability. This was in part a response to the demographic impact of the U.S. baby boomer generation.³⁸ This showcases the difference in the political agendas of different countries, as well as the slow reaction in Germany to recognize the range of impact population aging would have.

Instead of researchers publicly leading this debate, the policy debate and media attention appeared to have focused researchers' attention to look more at the effects of population aging on different aspects of (old age) social policy. Therefore, I conclude that researchers were not the only ones discussing the aging population in the beginning, but the media and policy makers were also aware from an early point. The issue was discussed in various contexts, but the pension debate in the 1980s focused the attention of researchers, policy makers, and the media to look more at this specific aspect related to the aging of the population.

Expanding the Research Field: Creating Research Infrastructures to Help Address the Aging Population

Part of the approach taken by researchers and policy makers in Germany to address the aging population included supporting the creation of the necessary infrastructures to have more information on the subject. Because of the reluctance to pursue population-related research, there were not many universities or research organizations specialized in demography. This meant, the small pool of demographers in Germany could not pass along their knowledge and train the next generation of demographers. In addition, demographers may have not felt like they had a place in the German research community. A vicious cycle developed where no one wanted to tackle demography due to its negative reputation and thus there was no one to lobby on behalf of it, which meant there was no way to establish a new context or legitimacy to the field. Thus, it could never develop a new image and gain more support.³⁹ Once more research institutions, professorships, and degree programs were established, the field could begin to grow.

³⁸ Social Security Administration, "Historical Background and Development of Social Security," Social Security Administration, <https://www.ssa.gov/history/briefhistory3.html>.

³⁹ Kaufmann, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann."

Early on, when the Society for Population Studies (*Gesellschaft für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*) was created in 1952, members were from different research disciplines. It was an interdisciplinary society, which meant researchers were publishing their work in a variety of publications. This made it difficult to present the field of demography as a cohesive research field.⁴⁰ Mackenroth was responsible for establishing demography at the University of Kiel, but following his passing in 1955, the department declined. Demography did not officially return to the university until 1965 when it institutionalized demography courses under the umbrella of sociology and then in 1969 as an independent, interdisciplinary subject.⁴¹ As was detailed in Chapter 4, there were attempts to establish programs and to promote the study of demography, but they were not immediately successful. It was not until 1979/1980 when more professorships at Germany universities began to be established.

There were several examples of the government, either state or federal level, playing a role in initiating these institutes due to their desire to have population-related research available to help them make policy decisions. For example, a main reason why the BiB was created was to help policy makers understand the causes of the birth rate decline, while the DZA was established to act as a central location to coordinate and disseminate gerontological and geriatric research.⁴² Similar to the BiB, but at the state level, the Bielefeld Institute was established in 1980 to fill the demands of the Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) to understand why the birth rate in NRW was declining.⁴³ State-level government also played a role in establishing the professorship in gerontology at the University of Heidelberg in 1986: In the early 1980s, the Catholic *Altenwerk* in Freiburg went to Lothar Späth, Minister President of Baden-Württemberg, to ask for help in changing the associations of old age from always being tied to pensions, long-term care, and nursing homes. To find a solution, Späth organized a *Zukunftskongress* (Future Conference) with researchers to discuss what research can do for older people outside of medicine. Participants agreed to creating a professorship in gerontology at the university, which was filled by Lehr in 1986. This was the first professorship in gerontology in Germany and it began accepting students in 1988.⁴⁴

Looking at the increase in publications from research in the late 1980s, the majority are not directly related to newly established programs at a university or research institution. However, the development of the research field was likely an additional signal to the already developing debate that interest in population issues

⁴⁰ Jürgens, "Zur Lage der Bevölkerungswissenschaft in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," 9.

⁴¹ "Bevölkerungswissenschaft an Hochschulen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," 107.

⁴² Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 190. Sitzung der 6. Wahlperiode.," von Kondratowitz, "Zur Geschichte des DZA aus sozialwissenschaftlicher Sicht."

⁴³ Landtag Nordrhein-Westfalen.

⁴⁴ Lehr, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr."

was growing and therefore, journals and publishers were interested in publishing related materials. The university programs helped lay the foundation for the future of demography in Germany and train the next generation of researchers, as well as give a place for existing demographers to carry out their work.

The institutions and professorships highlighted are examples of the importance of the connection and agreement among researchers and policy makers in furthering the issue of aging. Researchers were interested in the subject matter, but without the initiative and financial support of the government, many of these institutions may not have been established. This implies the importance of policy makers being interested in a specific topic and seeing a need for more information, which was the situation when these three institutions and one professorship were established. Other professorships in gerontology and population studies likely also had to be approved by the state government. If the government did not have a prominent role, they were still involved in some form and aware that these professorships were being created, thereby alerting them to current research topics of interest. Once these research infrastructures were founded, the field could grow through more opportunities to educate a new generation of demographers, but also because there was a greater interest in the research they were carrying out. Since it took some time for all of these different actors to recognize the need for this research, demography was not able to create a strong presence until the 1980s.

Events and Funded Research: As Political Interest Grew, More Opportunities to Discuss Aging Arose

Another way that researchers, policy makers, and the media addressed the issue of the aging population was by organizing, attending, or reporting on the events being held about aging. Once it became clear that aging was on the political agenda, groups, in addition to government agencies, saw the opportunity to host events, support research, and publish material that would be of interest to policy makers and help them promote their organization's position on the issue. This was reflected in the increase in projects and events sponsored or organized by third-party groups, such as trade organizations or academic societies.

Early on, there were not many academic events held that focused on the aging population. Beginning in the mid-1980s, more events were held with references to the aging population, such as the meeting of the social policy section of the German Society for Sociology and the German Medical Association. In 1987, the Robert Bosch Foundation held a colloquium on health economics that addressed the challenges facing the German health system due to the changing population structure. The event

proceedings were published in 1989 and included eleven contributions that talked about the effects for the health care and health insurance systems.⁴⁵ This was the first major edited book based on a specific event that dedicated so much attention to the aging population. Prior to this, the German Centre of Gerontology published an edited book in 1987 about the graying society.⁴⁶ Both of these publications included contributions mainly from researchers with the latter providing a larger overview of the various ways an aging population would have an impact. As time progressed, more events were held that mentioned the aging population, but also the topic of aging or being older.

As the publications increased, it was a sign that more groups were taking an interest in the issue, but it also meant that awareness building was happening. Speakers at these events included representatives from various federal ministries and civil society organizations. For example, the German metal workers union held a discussion forum in 1988 about older people and the social state, calling for united social policy. Speakers included the chairmen of the union, a division head from the BMAS, and the department head of social policy for the executive board of the union, in addition to the director of the Institute for Employment Research (*Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung*, IAB).⁴⁷ An event organized by the German Society for Actuarial Science included speeches by the State Secretary of the BMAS and other researchers. These events brought members of different communities, particularly research and politics, together to help increase their awareness of each other and their work. This built connections between groups, improved the possibilities for evidence-based policy making, and fostered interest in supporting more research related to aging.

In addition to more events being held specifically about or that mentioned the aging population, there were more publications from or financially supported by third-party funding organizations. Governmental agencies at all levels provided financial support for various research projects, mainly beginning in the second half of the 1980s and the 1990s. Federal ministries, such as the BMAS, the Chancellery, the BMBF, and BMFSFJ (in their various constellations) were supportive of studies focused on topics like operational personnel planning and costs to the health care system. They also commissioned working groups, such as one on population development and new generations that published a report outlining what actions should be taken to address

⁴⁵ von Ferber et al.

⁴⁶ Deutsches Zentrum für Altersfragen.

⁴⁷ Industriegewerkschaft Metall, ed. *Ältere Menschen im Sozialstaat: Für eine solidarische Sozialpolitik*, vol. 5, Die Andere Zukunft: Solidarität und Freiheit (Köln: Bund Verlag, 1988).

the changes to the age structure.⁴⁸ Other studies in the 1990s were more specific to the older population and looked at the ability to work in old age.⁴⁹ At the state level, ministries in Baden-Württemberg and NRW commissioned research in the 1980s about the long-term changes to the family and ways to improve volunteer opportunities, including those for older citizens who were healthier in old age and able to remain active in retirement.⁵⁰

Foundations and non-governmental organizations also supported research addressing the aging population. They were more active in their support during the 1980s than government institutions and the research seemed to present a more long-term, bigger picture. The German Institute for Business Administration (*Deutsches Institut für Betriebswirtschaft e.V.*) helped support a publication on the challenges facing company pension systems; the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the political foundation of the SPD, published a book about the future of the social state; the Volkswagen Foundation funded a project about the impact of a declining population on Germany; and, the Sandoz Institute, a medical institute, funded an international study on the problems facing the elderly in the early 1980s.⁵¹ Other research societies, such as the DFG and the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB) were very supportive of research beginning in the late 1980s and 1990s. Studies from the DFG looked at, for example, distribution consequences of the 1992 pension reform, measures to support care workers, and engagement in retirement.⁵² The Hans Böckler Foundation, which is associated with the German Trade Union Confederation, was active in the 1990s to support projects that explored topics such as old age and labor union policy and guaranteed pension benefits.⁵³

⁴⁸ Mendius and Schultz-Wild; Herder-Dorneich; "Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in der Diskussion: Eine Veranstaltung der Gesellschaft für Sozialen Fortschritt löst erhebliches Echo aus."

⁴⁹ For example, see: Stadelhofer, *Kompetenz und Produktivität im dritten Lebensalter. Der Beitrag der wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung zur Vorbereitung von Menschen im dritten Lebensalter auf neue Tätigkeitsfelder und neue Rollen in Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Bildung. Ein europäischer Vergleich und Austausch*; Wahse and Schaefer.

⁵⁰ Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg, "Familie im Wandel: Überblick über Auswirkungen demographischer, wirtschaftlicher und sozialer Veränderungen auf Familie und Gesellschaft. Sonderveröffentlichung aus Anlaß des Symposiums "Familie - Fundament unserer Zukunft" des Ministeriums für Arbeit, Gesundheit, Familie und Sozialordnung des Landes Baden-Württemberg," (Stuttgart, 1985); Notz.

⁵¹ For example, see: Ehler; Rolf G. Heinze et al., eds., *Sozialstaat 2000: Auf dem Weg zu neuen Grundlagen der sozialen Sicherung. Ein Diskussionsband* (Bonn: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft GmbH, 1987); Umbach; Selby and Schechter.

⁵² For example, see: von Weizsäcker, "Alterssicherung und demographische Inzidenz: Verteilungstheoretische Konsequenzen der Rentenreform 1992."; Holz; Christiane Oswald et al., "Reaktionen auf die Einführung der Teilrente beim Übergang vom Erwerbsleben in die Nacherwerbsphase," *Sfb 186 report* Nr. 5 (1996).

⁵³ For example, see: Jürgen Wolf, "Alter und gewerkschaftliche Politik: Fragestellungen und Ansatzpunkte einer Gewerkschaftspolitik für Ältere mit Älteren," *WSI-Mitteilungen: Zeitschrift des Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Instituts in der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung* 43, no. 8 (1990); "Sozialstaat und Grundsicherung: Ein Bericht über den Forschungsstand."

This support provided by both the government and third-party organizations made it possible to carry out demographic research and specifically, aging research, in Germany. For example, the DFG and later the BMFT supported a twelve-year project led by Arthur Imhof to study the increase in life expectancy over the past 300 years and its consequences. This project brought together an interdisciplinary group of researchers, as well as ministry officials and journalists, in 1991 and 1993 for multi-day symposiums. These speakers addressed a wide variety of topics and areas of society that were affected by an aging population. The project produced a number of publications on the implications of an increased life expectancy.

The continued support of this project, as well as the support of other projects, symbolized the interest and importance placed on the issues being researched. I did not research how these funding opportunities developed and if researchers responded to generic funding calls or if the funders designed the calls around the researchers. Regardless, it was clear there was a growing interest among government and civil society to have more research available about the aging population, as well as an interest among researchers to conduct studies that would provide this information. These opportunities increased as the policy debate began to heat up and more attention was being given to the issue in the media. The interest by the government was an impetus for various events and thus, brought together individuals from different fields to discuss the aging population. Therefore, the interest and support from these third-party organizations helped bring the issue of aging onto the agenda and to the attention of both researchers and policy makers.

From Challenges to Chances

Since much of the discussion about population aging and demographic change during the 21st century has been about the importance of seeing this as a chance, I was interested in when the emphasis frame began to shift from aging being seen as a challenge to being seen as a chance. From the materials collected, researchers were the first to mention the potential an aging population could present. Gert Wagner argued in 1987:

[O]ne comes to the conclusion that through appropriate structural change...the aging of the population can be dealt with productively. Services in various forms will play a major role in this. In order to use the opportunities of an 'aging society', from an economic point of view, a systematic combination of social and labor market policy is particularly necessary.⁵⁴

Media first mentioned this more positive outlook in two articles published in November 1988. The first article was a report about a recently held conference

⁵⁴ Wagner, "Drei Thesen zur ökonomischen Bedeutung von Dienstleistungen in einer demographisch alternden Gesellschaft," 321.

organized by the commission “Aging as a Life Chance” (*Altern als Lebenschance*), which was established by the Minister President in Baden-Württemberg and led by Lehr.⁵⁵ Just two weeks later, Lehr was announced as Chancellor Kohl’s new pick to be Minister of Youth, Family, Women, and Health and in the article announcing this, it naturally included her position on the topic of aging:

She describes old age as a chance and a challenge. She does not present a pessimistic, resigned picture at all. Time and again she has argued that being old does not have to be synonymous with being on the sidelines, that old age can be productive, and that retirement does not mean inactivity.⁵⁶

These two examples are of basic news articles presenting information to readers. They highlight the work of Lehr since she was also responsible for organizing the conference and explicitly mention old age or aging as a chance. Even though the articles did not present an argument for or against this idea, they still presented the idea of viewing aging as both a chance and a challenge, which was important to help promote and spread this idea. It was not until 1993 when an editorial piece in *Die Zeit* by Borgeest and Perina argued that no one in Germany seemed prepared to face the impending demographic change. This was a chance amidst this crisis to “break down the rigid structures of learning, work and retirement”.⁵⁷ This was the first explicit example of journalists arguing in favor of seeing the aging of the population in Germany as a chance to restructure the life course.

The shift among politicians to see population aging as a chance did not happen until the 1990s. In a 1992 debate about those in long-term care and a call for nationwide standardized training for caregivers, Erika Reinhardt (CDU/CSU) proclaimed:

We are all getting older, and we don't know if we won't need nursing care. But we have the chance to achieve two things: On the one hand, we must regard aging as a natural process, allow older people to participate in our lives and promote independence in old age. On the other hand, we must give all possible help to those who are restricted in their freedom of movement. That is our task and our objective.⁵⁸

In the official proposal by the CDU/CSU and FDP to establish a study commission on demographic change, their original title for the commission was “Chances and Future Perspectives of an Aging Society.” As part of their responsibility, the commission was to create concepts and political recommendations so that aging can be understood as a chance and demographic change can be overcome.⁵⁹ The political community was

⁵⁵ B.M., “Altern als “Chance und Herausforderung”,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 15, 1988.

⁵⁶ Frisé, “Ermutigende Idee.”

⁵⁷ Borgeest and Perina.

⁵⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, “Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 111. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode.”

⁵⁹ Michalk et al.

beginning to have a more positive association with demographic change, specifically population aging.

This is an important development because it influenced how population aging was viewed by all groups and the general public. It signaled a shift in perception that changes to the population did not have to be a bad thing and as society developed, for example, through automation, it was possible to still maintain a strong economy with fewer and older people. However, the pendulum should not swing too far in the opposite direction, from seeing population aging as a major challenge that must be overcome, to a such a positive chance that so much attention no longer needs to be devoted to the issue. Birg argued that once aging was seen as a chance, the need to invest as much in research and to focus on addressing the issue was gone. It is crucial that people take a critical look at reality and do not try to paint over the challenges that come along with the positive developments.⁶⁰ It is possible that aging has both a positive and negative side, meaning that more people will be living healthier, longer lives, but this will also mean changes will have to be made to the various social systems to meet the needs of a growing older population that will eventually need care.

Viewing the development of the field of demography after 1997, there has been a shift in interest. It is understandable and expected that agendas shift, ministries and government agencies reorganize, and universities evolve; however, a clear distinction should be made that recategorizing aging from being a challenge to a chance does not mean related research and work should slow down. Following Birg's retirement from the University of Bielefeld in 2004, the Bielefeld Institute was closed and became a part of the Faculty of Health Sciences; the professorship in population research at the University of Bamberg was dissolved in 2003⁶¹; and the professorship of demography at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin was also dissolved.⁶² The position of demography representative (*Demographiebeauftragte*) in NRW has been discontinued, a sign that these demographic issues are no longer a top priority.⁶³ As Flöthmann said:

It is important to communicate this topic. It's actually a curious phenomenon. When you talk about the fact that everything is known, in principle, about the problem and what results from it, but yet you don't take it up. It doesn't hurt yet.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Birg, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Herwig Birg."

⁶¹ There is now a professor of demography at the university, but a full professorship no longer exists.

⁶² Herwig Birg, "Die demographische Alterung in Deutschland," *Die Neue Ordnung* 72, no. 4 (2018).

⁶³ Flöthmann.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

8.4 The Binary Relationships: Support of Findings from Existing Research in the German Context

In Chapter 2, I presented some of the existing research that discusses the relationships between researchers and the media, researchers and policy makers, and policy makers and the media. Keeping in mind my secondary research question of how these groups interacted and influenced each other's work, this section will evaluate if the existing research on these relationships applies to Germany during this debate and look for connections on how they influenced each other over time.

Researchers and the Media: Positive Experiences, But Clear Awareness of the Importance of Messaging

As has been seen, the media was aware of the issue of the aging population and paid attention to it. German researchers were in contact with journalists and based on my interviews, they recognized the importance of communicating with the media, even though they may have not always wanted to talk to them. There were no negative sentiments towards those that were interested in speaking with the media and the interviewees felt their research was portrayed accurately. However, it was understood that researchers must communicate short, succinct answers with journalists. The relationship between researchers and the media in Germany during the coverage of the aging population was agreeable and there was and is an understanding by researchers about how to communicate their work.⁶⁵

As the Bielefeld Institute was established, Birg cited having many requests for television, radio, and newspaper interviews. He said that his experiences with journalists have been positive and the information he provided was presented accurately. Unlike Birg, Kaufmann was not as interested in speaking to journalists because he did not think these articles or interviews had much of an impact. In his opinion, reports about their research did not receive a large media response.⁶⁶ For Lehr, she said that she did not have any problems with the media as a researcher, but it was once she entered the world of politics that her problems began.⁶⁷

Despite not being interested or impressed with the response to media efforts about his research, Kaufmann sees the benefit in interacting more with journalists. However, he agreed with existing literature that not all researchers are able to communicate their findings well with the media or policy makers. Therefore, it is important to have an institution or department to help with this process. Researchers

⁶⁵ Unfortunately, I was not able to interview any journalists, which makes it difficult to provide a full picture of this relationship in Germany. I will go more into this weakness later in the chapter.

⁶⁶ Kaufmann, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann."

⁶⁷ Lehr, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr."

that want to have contact with the media should build relationships with journalists, so it is clear they are willing to be asked when expert advice is needed, and it is easier to alert the media when there is new research.⁶⁸ Flöthmann and Lehr expressed similar sentiments about the importance of researchers being able to effectively communicate their work in a manner that can be understood. As Flöthmann described, when journalists approach researchers, they have already done their own research on who they are interviewing and what topics the researcher works on, so they are not completely new to the subject matter. Journalists are looking for facts they can use to share information with readers. They ask targeted questions and want easy-to-understand responses that do not focus on theoretical aspects, but that easily explain what the consequences of aging are, for example. When asked by journalists, Flöthmann tries to reduce the research to a single point, despite the complexities of demographic developments.⁶⁹ As Lehr argued, if someone does not express themselves clearly, then it is not likely the journalist will be able to write about the research in an understandable manner.⁷⁰

Looking at the articles collected from the keyword searches, the media did cite researchers fairly often and it was not uncommon for researchers to write pieces for the news outlets themselves. Articles written by researchers were more common in the 1980s, with just a few in the 1990s, but most did not focus specifically on the aging population. Instead, they addressed social security-related topics impacted by the aging population, immigration, and long-term care. Baltes, a leading gerontologist, wrote a piece introducing readers to gerontology as old-age research was gaining attention in society.⁷¹ Hermann Schubnell, a leading demographer, published a piece in 1986 that sought to ease concern about the declining birth rate and to argue in favor of not dramatizing the aging population.⁷² These pieces, whether offered by the researchers themselves or requested by the newspapers, are another sign of the recognition by the media that the topic was of interest.

There were a few examples of the media using sensationalist headlines to describe population aging. In 1995, *Die Zeit* published an article whose title asked, "Is there threat of a war between generations?" This article received a great deal of feedback in the form of letters to the editor, which were published in a subsequent issue.⁷³ Other articles asked if the German population was dying out, if Berlin would become a nursing home, or when there would be more grandfathers than

⁶⁸ Kaufmann, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Franz-Xaver Kaufmann."

⁶⁹ Flöthmann.

⁷⁰ Lehr, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr."

⁷¹ Baltes, "Gerontologie."

⁷² Schubnell, "Das Lamento um den Geburtenrückgang."

⁷³ See: Stephan, "Droht ein Krieg der Generationen?"; "Alte aufs Abstellgleis? Cora Stephan: "Droht ein Krieg der Generationen", ZEIT Nr. 41."

grandchildren.⁷⁴ An article from 1986 asked a similar question to the one from 1995 if there was a threat of a demographic catastrophe. These articles quoted researchers, and like Lehr and Flöthmann mentioned, the statements were short and conveyed a definitive message. For example, a 1989 cover story in *Der Spiegel* quoted many researchers from the field to emphasize their argument that the aging population was going to have a large impact on society. This included gerontologist Konrad Hummel saying there will be “ruthless distribution feuds” between the generations, to emphasize the potential severity of the situation.⁷⁵ Additional context to his quote or those of other researchers was not given, which was the case in most articles, and underscores the importance of clear and concise arguments by researchers.

Researchers and Policy Makers: Knowledge Exchange Mainly Through Working Groups and Committees

Researchers in the field of demography supported policy makers by providing contextual knowledge and enlightening them to the need to respond to the aging population. Policy makers called on academic experts early on to learn more about the cause of the birth rate decline, which also led to awareness that it would eventually result in the population aging. Researchers responded to the interests of policy makers and produced more research as the topic among them grew and there was an obvious interest from their side. Even though early research already discussed the need for reforms, this may not have been publicly acknowledged by policy makers as the reforms were unpopular and policy makers thought they could hold off on taking such action. The pool of academic experts in demography and gerontology was relatively small compared to other more well-established fields, and there was also relatively little disagreement of the notion that the population was aging. This helped reduce potential controversy surrounding this specific topic and therefore, did not lend itself to strong partisanship or selective use of research that was in line with a particular party's position.

In her 1988 book about demography's contribution to policy advice, Höhn describes that it took a few years before policy makers paid attention to the birth rate decline, immigration, and population decline, but once they did, they took steps to create working groups or committees.⁷⁶ This is evidenced by the creation of the BiB, which was heavily motivated by a demand for research to understand why the birth rate was falling. These efforts continued as Interior Minister Werner Maihofer created the informal working group “Bad Sodener Kreis”, which was comprised of a

⁷⁴ See: Natorp, “Sterben wir aus?.”; “Wird Berlin zum Altersheim?.”; Kirchhoff.

⁷⁵ Schöps, ““Es wird erbarmungslose Kämpfe geben”.”

⁷⁶ Höhn, *Der Beitrag der Bevölkerungswissenschaft zur Politikberatung*, 5-6.

small group of high-level research experts. This is a clear example of the value placed on expert advice and research to find an acceptable solution to addressing the decline in birth rate. The group's recommendations already posited that the younger generation would be burdened with supporting the large older population by around 2030.⁷⁷ The group met annually with the Minister to brief him of their findings and recommendations. This eventually led a formal working group on questions about the population being established. They published two comprehensive reports on population development in Germany in 1980 and 1984.

The commission created to write the First Government Report on the Elderly brought together 16 academic experts to shed light on the situation of older people living in Germany. A debate was held in the Bundestag that showcased politicians' understanding of the need to address the demands of the older population soon since a large portion of the population was already over the age of 60 and this number would only continue to increase.⁷⁸ The Study Commission "Demographic Change" was comprised of politicians and researchers to better understand the implications of these population changes, particularly the aging of the population. Multiple debates were held in the Bundestag related to the establishment of the commission, its mid-term report, and its prolongation, each an opportunity for politicians to focus on population aging. Both groups were opportunities for researchers and politicians to interact and to provide research-based information for politicians to use in their decision-making process.

Even though these groups bring researchers and politicians into direct contact, their establishment can be seen as politically motivated. This could be the case when the Study Commission "Demographic Change" was proposed. Originally, the SPD submitted a proposal in March 1992 to establish it, but it was not debated until October, when the CDU/CSU and the FDP had also submitted a joint proposal. During the early 1990s, the SPD was trying to reach out to older voters due to the changing population structure and their losses in several national-level elections. By submitting such a proposal early on, they could claim that they were the party to initiate the commission that would look at demographic change, prove to young people that they do take the future into consideration, and gain support of older voters.⁷⁹ In this case, however, it is not as easy to argue that the commission's findings were partisan since it was not as easy to dispute the available data that the population was changing and becoming older. It seemed that all parties agreed that this issue needed to be addressed, as well as solutions found as to how society can adapt.

⁷⁷ "Baby-Baisse: Staat im Schlafzimmer."

⁷⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 211. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

⁷⁹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 114. Sitzung der 12. Wahlperiode."

When politicians cited research in their speeches or major/minor interpellations, it was to support their arguments either for or against a specific action or policy. In the majority of instances, explicit citations were not given when arguments were made in speeches nor any reference to the potential source of the information. If data was referenced, it was often statistical data, such as numerical amounts related to expected population growth. Like qualitative data, it was usually not explicitly cited, or it came from a specific government report that was the focus of the debate. There were only a few examples of politicians citing research in their speeches to support different policy measures: Braun (CDU/CSU) cited the work of Hans Thomae and Lehr in 1985 to argue that a legal age of retirement is not necessary since people are aging differently.⁸⁰ Parliamentary State Secretary Dempwolf made a similar argument in 1995 using findings from the Berlin Old Age Study to support an update of existing nursing home legislation to help ensure all citizens can organize their lives in old age as they want.⁸¹ These findings do not provide support for my second hypothesis:

In the instances where the media reported on research as science news and outside of the context of specific policy discussions, then it was likely that the research was cited in a relevant policy context at a later point. This was either directly in the form of a direct quotation/citation or indirectly by mentioning the same argument from the news article.

It is still possible indirect references were made to research or research from news articles, but it cannot be said with certainty.

There were not many instances of politicians citing various actors to bolster their arguments either for or against legislation. The main example found was during the debate about the 1999 pension reform. Volker Kauder (CDU) cited pension system experts to argue in favor of the suggested change that was expected to divide the cost of higher life expectancy more fairly among the generations.⁸² Ulrike Mascher (SPD) referred to specific organizations, such as the German Trade Union Confederation, that supported the SPD's position, which was not in favor of the proposed legislation. She also gave a generic reference to civil society organizations and women's groups, as well as other "distinguished researchers" as being against the reform.⁸³ This debate is an example of politicians using more than just scientific findings to support their arguments. When scientific expertise was used, it was minimal and more vague. Instead, the opinions of other leading civil society groups were leaned upon to bolster arguments against the reform.

⁸⁰ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 166. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode."

⁸¹ "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 138. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

⁸² "Plenarprotokoll. Stenographischer Bericht der 198. Sitzung der 13. Wahlperiode."

⁸³ Ibid.

Policy Makers and the Media: A Close, But Critical Relationship

The media was influenced by the government's agenda in their coverage of events and issues. Despite mainly focusing on the early stages of debate, the media served the role of drawing the public's attention to the issues it deemed important, which then helped narrow the focus of politicians and adjust the order of issues on their agenda.

Looking at the coverage and development of the 1992 pension reform debate, there was clear interest in the possible major reform of the system. For this issue, the media seemed the most interested in the early stages of the debate, which supports the findings from Tresch et al. that the media is usually the most interested in the early stages of the decision-making process.⁸⁴ Once Chancellor Kohl announced in his government policy statements that he wanted to focus on reforming the pension system, there was an increase in the number of articles published about the pension system. Kannengießer, an economic journalist at the FAZ, was active in writing articles in support of reform. He even wrote an article entitled "Securing Your Pensions", which was published before the government began making public claims that pensions were secure.⁸⁵ It is not clear if Chancellor Kohl was inspired by this article to use a similar phrase in his government policy statement, but Kannengießer was an early proponent from the media for this reform. Leading up to the debate of the official proposed legislation, numerous articles were published discussing what should be included in the reform, which were often suggestions from civil society organizations. The proposal put forth by the SPD was also written about, as well as eventual criticism as years passed before a final reform was passed.⁸⁶ By the time debate began in 1989 about the official proposed legislation, coverage declined. Despite writing about the joint proposal released early in 1989, my searches did not find many articles about the actual passage of the reform, but this is likely related to the Berlin Wall falling on the same day.⁸⁷

Politicians also have a different relationship with the media than researchers, particularly since politicians rely on the media to inform voters about their work. In her interview, Lehr shared the differences in how she interacted with the media during her time as a researcher and as a federal minister. Unlike her experience as a

⁸⁴ Tresch et al., 909-10.

⁸⁵ Based on my research, the sentiment that the pensions were secure was found often prior to Minister Blüm using this as a slogan for the pension reform. Chancellor Kohl mentioned securing the pensions in his government policy statement to begin the tenth legislative period in May 1983, which was after Kannengießer published his article. See: Kannengießer, "Die Renten sicher machen.;" Deutscher Bundestag, "Plenarprotokol. Stenographischer Bericht der 4. Sitzung der 10. Wahlperiode," Drucksache 10/4, Bonn, 1983.

⁸⁶ For example, see: "Oxer mit Graben.;" Kannengießer, "Zwischenbericht für ein neues sozialpolitisches Programm der SPD."

⁸⁷ This is not to say there was no coverage of the passed reform, but they were not found in my keyword searches. Articles that were written were likely shorter and less extensive than originally planned.

researcher, Lehr did not have as positive of an experience with journalists as minister. She claimed the media looks at politicians differently and views things in a straightforward, black and white manner, which is why she sometimes faced scrutiny for misconstrued actions or statements.⁸⁸ In Klose's experience, journalists were interested in population aging and acknowledged the work the SPD was doing, but this was related to the effort the party had made to make aging a topic of interest.⁸⁹ This interest by the media is visible through the handful of articles written about the SPD's efforts to gain favor among older voters. Articles were written about the establishment of the "60 Plus" working group, the establishment of the Study Commission "Demographic Change" and the announcement of Anke Fuchs as the Chair of the commission, and the publication of a series of books about the findings of the expert group he put together to discuss the effects of demographic change.⁹⁰

8.5 Stages of Development of the Debate

Based on my research, I would describe the development of awareness about the aging population in Germany in the following stages. The stages of this issue development are not part of a strict linear development that can be assigned to specific years. Instead, they overlap, and each group influenced the other to contribute to the growth of population development in the societal debate. Here, a general time frame is provided in order to provide a framework for how awareness developed.

- **First stage (ca. 1960s and earlier): No Awareness**
 - Because of Germany's history with population policies and the field of demography, there was hesitation to address population-related issues.
- **Second stage (ca. early 1970s): Recognition and awareness building**
 - Eventually, it was realized that population-related issues could not be ignored due to the birth rate continuing to decline. Policy makers noticed the lack of research to explain these changes, so the BiB was created, as well as an informal working group and later a formal working group that provided a comprehensive look at population development in Germany. The resulting reports brought more awareness to the fact that this would lead to both a shrinking and aging of the population. The NRW government also saw the need for more research infrastructures to provide data on population development in their

⁸⁸ Lehr, "Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr."

⁸⁹ Klose, "Interview with Hans-Ulrich Klose."

⁹⁰ See: Fuhr, "Modernisierung mit Bodenhaftung."; "Wie gewinnt man die Senioren?"; ban, "Kommission soll Überalterung der Gesellschaft untersuchen," *ibid.*, July 18, 1992; "Rebellen mit Krückstock."; Bannas, "Frischer Wind von den Älteren."; E.F.

state, so they established the Bielefeld Institute for Population Research and Social Policy. This phase is characterized by policy makers acknowledging the need for research-based information to help them understand and find potential solutions to population-related issues.

- **Third stage (mid- to late-1970s): Active delay**

- Due to the two oil crises and their impact on the German economy, it was difficult to address population changes since this mainly would come in the form of reforms to the social system. This meant benefits had to be cut, but with high unemployment at the time, the government could call these population projections speculation and delay having to take action. Thus, politicians acknowledged the information about population changes, but still chose to delay action.

- **Fourth stage (ca. 1980s): Response and early agenda setting**

- It had become clear that reforms to the social security system, specifically the pension system, were necessary. This need for reform was tied to the aging population, which helped bring attention to this specific factor. Once the media knew of the government's intentions to carry out a major pension reform, they not only wrote articles in favor of reform and what potential reform measures could include, but they also widened their attention to look at other areas affected by population aging. *The debates surrounding the 1992 pension reform placed aging on the media and political agendas, but as a sub-issue of the pension system.* As attention grew, government agencies and third-party organizations began to offer funding opportunities to promote more research on these issues. Other programs and professorships were created throughout the 1980s at German universities, proving there was interest in population-related research, motivating more researchers to look into the issue, and building the foundation for future demography-related research.

- **Fifth stage (ca. early 1990s): Full attention**

- Despite attention shifting to reunification efforts for a few years, interest returned in 1992 as the government established the BMFuS, published the Report on the Elderly, announced their plan for old age, and created the Study Commission "Demographic Change". These developments made politicians direct their attention to and debate the issue of population aging. The creation of the BMFuS was integral in ensuring issues related to seniors and population aging were addressed

regularly. This was when aging reached a high point on the political agenda as its own issue. News coverage also signaled that aging was higher up on the media's agenda again. Research continued to increase, largely in part to the contributions by the SPD's book series on aging, but also from the publication of proceedings from different events. *The period from 1992 to 1994 solidified aging's position on the agenda as its own issue; it was no longer a sub-issue only related to different social security topics.*

- **Sixth stage (ca. mid- to late-1990s): At home on the agenda**

- In the final phase, it was clear population aging was not going away as an issue and it became a central aspect of the 1999 pension reform debate. It has earned a spot on all agendas, both as a sub-issue and its own issue.⁹¹

Based on the INUS causality concept, there were clear conditions present at different points in time that were sufficient for the debate about the aging population to develop: The decline in birth rate, the increase in life expectancy, and the economic need to reform aspects of the social security system were developments that created a sufficient condition for population aging to become a topic of debate. Once pension reform was identified as an objective of the government, then this was key in putting aging on the agenda. Following the passage of the reform, the birth rate and life expectancy conditions still did not change, but the BMFuS, the Report on the Elderly, and the Study Commission "Demographic Change" helped to maintain conditions for the debate to continue. There was not one, single factor, but rather, various factors and conditions that contributed to the growth in awareness and attention given to population aging.

The Importance of Who's in Charge and What Else is Happening

The impact of the women's movement on the establishment of the Bielefeld Institute and politicians' hesitation to make cuts to social security benefits out of concern of losing support among voters, who were likely not in favor of such cuts if it meant lower benefits for them, were influential factors in the development and evolution of the discussion around the aging population in Germany. In addition to these and other factors that have been identified in this and previous chapters, there are two factors

⁹¹ In the years following the period under consideration, as mentioned in Section 6.3, the SPD was not in favor of continuing to focus on demographic issues and its impact on the labor market and pension system. This is evident in the removal of the demographic factor in the pension formula once becoming the majority party in the following elections. The party is also still focused today on promoting the interests of the labor unions based on the continued lack of support for increasing the age of retirement. For example, see: Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, "Das Zukunftsprogramm der SPD. Wofür wir stehen. Was uns antreibt. Wonach wir streben.," (Berlin, 2021).

that I want to address that played a large role in shaping the stages of the debate: Who was in charge and what else was happening at the time. In other words, the decisions to focus on the aging population was closely related to the situational environment in Germany and who was in a position to make decisions.

As the birth rate in Germany started to take a noticeable decline in the late 1960s that only continued, people began to pay attention and policy makers started to worry about what this would mean for Germany's future. This concern was the driving impetus for the establishment of the BiB and led to additional working groups, such as the "Bad Sodener Kreis" and the working group on population questions. The latter published two in-depth reports that presented a detailed picture of population development in Germany, shining light on the wide-ranging impact of a declining birth rate. These early steps already highlight the influence of this initial concern about the birth rate that helped bring attention to the aging of the population.

It became clear that the situation could not continue to be ignored. Chancellor Kohl, even prior to assuming office, was vocal in his concern about the increasing speed in which the population was aging and what this would mean for the future of the generational contract. As a member of the Bundestag, he criticized Chancellor Schmidt for not releasing the report from the Bad Sodener working group. His interest carried over to his time as Chancellor when he prioritized dealing with the aging population. During his first term, he did not explicitly announce his government would focus on issues related to the aging population, but he declared securing the pensions was a major goal. The need to improve the economic situation in Germany following the two oil crises also contributed to recognizing the need for reform. In his second term, he explicitly stated the need for a long-term plan to address the consequences from the changes to the population, which specifically included the growing older population. His interest in the issue and resulting awareness of the existing research on the topic led him to appoint Lehr to fill the position of Minister of Youth, Family, Women and Health. Had Chancellor Kohl not been interested in dealing with the aging population (for whatever reasons, be they personal or party-political considerations), nor had there been the need to address the pension system in part due to the economic situation in Germany, the debate about the older population may not have progressed as dramatically.

As a leading expert, one of the few in Germany, in the field of gerontology, Lehr had vast knowledge about the situation of older people in Germany. Kohl's interest in their situation helped him become aware of Lehr's 1985 book about becoming older as a woman, introducing him to her and her expertise. He likely found this book easily since it was published as part of a series by the Federal Chancellery. Lehr explained that he was aware of the demographic change happening in Germany

and the fact that the population was becoming older, which was why he wanted to put more attention on the aging population. During the meeting with Chancellor Kohl to accept his offer for Minister, she told him she only wanted to hold the position until the end of the current legislative period:

“And he said, ‘You have always demanded that policy must do more for seniors. Now you have the chance and now you don’t want it.’ I also said, I will manage to create a Ministry for Seniors – there were still two and a half years.”⁹²

This combination of having a Chancellor that was interested in directing more attention to the aging population with a professor who had just become the chair of the first gerontology department in Germany was likely what was needed to further the debate. Once Lehr became minister in 1988, she went on to commission the first Government Report on the Elderly. Her academic background and expertise in the field not only made her a person of interest for Chancellor Kohl, but also gave her the ability to move somewhat quickly to build up the department focused on seniors since she already had a strong background in the issues. She also had an established network of researchers in the field that she could turn to and recommend for the committees for the first Report on the Elderly and the Study Commission “Demographic Change”.

During her time as minister, Lehr established a ministry for seniors. As I have already argued, having this ministry was influential in making sure issues related to population aging and seniors in Germany continued to be addressed. Just by having annual debates about the ministry’s budget made politicians consider these issues and have an opinion on what action should be taken. This continued once the BMFuS was recombined to be part of the BMFSFJ, but it now had to compete with the other three focus areas of the ministry. Therefore, the knowledge and interest by Lehr to expand the government’s knowledge of and action towards the older population were instrumental in the development of this debate.

Hans-Ulrich Klose was also an important actor, especially for the SPD and the advancement of their interest in the issue. His interest already during his time as mayor of Hamburg and the need for the party to increase their presence in old age policy matters helped bring more attention to population aging among the SPD. The continued losses by the SPD in the national elections were also motivating factors in their interest to attract more older voters. Despite lack of interest among party leaders Lafontaine and Vogel, he worked to establish the working group “60 Plus”, which brought together members of the party with researchers and civil society representatives. This led to the publication of a book series on a variety of topics

⁹² Lehr, “Interview with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Ursula Lehr.”

related to the older population. Through the SPD's book series, the SPD gained recognition as a group seriously addressing the older population and the aging of the population, even gaining credibility among researchers and societal groups. The main argument about the importance of who was involved is supported in his case because he explained that once he no longer led the working group and moved on to focus on other topics, the group was not as successful and was no longer as influential. In addition to his interest in the subject, his role as treasurer in the party, as he argued, also helped him be successful in advancing the issue since he had close connections with other party members.⁹³ Due to his initiative, he started the push to establish a Study Commission on demographic change in the Bundestag. Without his interest and leadership, the SPD may not have developed into such an active contributor in the debate about population aging and the Study Commission "Demographic Change" may not have been established had the initial suggestion by the SPD not been made.

Looking at the MPIDR's establishment, this overarching objective to establish more Max Planck Institutes in former East Germany was a major factor in the MPIDR being established. The decision to create an MPI for demography was motivated by the migration of young people from former East Germany to the West to find jobs. One could already recognize that the former East would face a difficult economic situation, which was discussed in the media and therefore, on people's minds. But, when the institute was finally established in 1997, the reason it focused on aging from the beginning was because that was the main research focus of the founding director, James W. Vaupel. The small selection of demographers in Germany forced the commission responsible for establishing the MPIDR to look outside of Germany's borders.⁹⁴ Had the commission selected a different researcher, then the institute may not have focused so heavily on aging in the early years, highlighting the importance of who the director is in determining how the field continues to develop.

Therefore, it is apparent the events leading up to the growth in debate and the various individuals who had decision-making power were major influential factors in the debate developing when and how it did. Eventually, people would have realized that the population was aging, but without those that were interested and able to push the agenda in a certain direction, the focus of population policy debates may have remained focused on the birth rate or they would have taken place much later.

8.6 Conclusion

Researchers, policy makers, and the media influenced each other in how population aging was addressed. The historic implications of the "Third Reich" and its use of

⁹³ Klose, "Interview with Hans-Ulrich Klose."

⁹⁴ Fromm.

demography-based research to justify its actions left a stain on the research field for many years. This made it difficult for research and discussions about Germany's population development to be held due to fears of being associated with Nazi policies. Once it was realized that the declining birth rate could not be ignored, this issue began to develop. Growing interest by politicians led to more media coverage and growth in the research field. Eventually, the high point in the debate was reached in the early 1990s. Had there not been an interest among policy makers for more research on Germany's population, then the development of this debate and particularly the research field would have likely been much slower.

As this issue was so closely tied to policies related to the social state, it was not enough to provide the facts about population aging and wait for the necessary legislation to be passed to solve the problem. Instead, politicians could more easily ignore the results of future projections since the implications of these population changes would be felt well off into the future. This allowed them to avoid making changes to citizens' social security benefits – a very important aspect of German society – and potentially lose support among voters dissatisfied with the changes. It took the need to consolidate the social security system following the two oil crises and the realization that the system could not maintain itself if reforms were not made to bring greater attention to population aging. This made it possible for population aging to grow in the coming years as a topic of importance and for the field of demography to be rediscovered.

For future research, an improved system to weigh the coverage of aging in the various documents collected should be created to provide a more accurate picture of the debate's development. Since any references made to the aging population were coded without a distinction between how significant the reference was in the document (e.g., was it a theme throughout the entire publication or only referenced in one sentence?), it can appear that aging received the same level of coverage in all documents. Additionally, it would be of interest to look at how the debate about population aging has developed since 1997 and to see if the policy initiatives undertaken adequately and effectively addressed population aging. Future research should also examine any available surveys of the public to see how their opinions or interest in the topic evolved over time in correspondence to how the debates among these original three groups developed. Finally, identifying an interview partner from the media sector would have allowed for better insight into the media situation when population aging was first being discussed, as well as understanding of how the media approaches research-related news.

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