Party Identification, Party Choice, and Voting Stability: The Weimar Case*

W. PHILLIPS SHIVELY
University of Minnesota

The tragic and dramatic voting changes which took place in Germany from 1928 to 1933 have often attracted the attention of political analysts.[1] In terms of the number of lives they affected, they may comprise the most momentous electoral change to have occurred in any country at any time. Inasmuch as they pose a challenge to theories of viable democracy, these changes have also been of considerable theoretical interest to political scientists.

In this paper I shall try to identify some of the sources of electoral stability and instability during the Weimar Republic, in the hope of contributing to general theories of electoral change and to understanding the particular tragedy of Weimar as well. Although this paper includes other aspects of stability and instability, it centers on the question of whether or not party identification was an important factor in Weimar voting. The most important current theory of voting stability is what I shall call the "party identification theory of electoral stability." According to this theory, to the extent that voters have acquired enduring psychological attachments to existing political parties, electoral change will be muted; in particular, sudden bursts of votes for "flash parties" will be less likely.

Dennis and McCrone state the theory:

> Party system stability, in the sense of a persisting configuration of organized partisan competition, is a function of how widely rooted in mass public consciousness is the sense of identification with the parties. Two aspects of mass identification are important: (a) the extent of partisan identification as measured by the proportion of the general public who identify themselves psychologically with one or another of the parties, however intensely; (b) the intensity of party affiliation, seen as the percent of identifiers who have a strong (and thus, more enduring) sense of commitment to one of the parties.[2]

Philip Converse states it:

> While there is undoubtedly a variety of indicators of this habituation [to democracy], the one most noteworthy in our eyes is the progressive "binding in" of popular loyalties to one or another of the traditionally competing political parties. Where these loyalties have not yet had time to develop, it seems likely that electoral support will have numerous capricious overtones, and that in times of severe distress nontraditional and antidemocratic parties may find ready support. When in an intermediate stage they become at least moderately developed, such probabilities may decline quite visibly although it may remain a frequent strategy of political dissent to launch a new political party in hopes of striking sufficient popular support to become viable. When these loyalties become still further developed, however, even such a strategy comes to seem forbidding in the extreme and is rarely entertained for any purpose more serious than short-term maneuver.[3]

The theory as it is stated in these two examples compares nations (or the same nation at different points in time) having different overall levels of party identification. It also implies a difference among subgroups of a population,

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[1] For example: Reinhard Bendix, "Social Stratification and Political Power," in *Class, Status, and Power,* ed. Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Lipset (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953), pp. 596–609; Karl D. Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik* (Villingen: Schwarzwald, 1960); Walter Dean Burnham, "Political Immunization and Political Confessionalism," delivered at the 1970 meeting of the International Political Science Association, Munich, 1970; Philip Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in *Ideology and Discontent,* ed. David Apter (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1964), pp. 252–254; Rudolf Heberle, *From Democracy to Nazism* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1945); Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1960), 140–154; Werner Kaltefleiter, *Wirtschaft und Politik in Deutschland* (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1968), pp. 13–94; Karl O'Lessker, "Who Voted for Hitler? A New Look at the Class Basis of Naziism," *American Journal of Sociology,* 74 (July, 1968), 63–69; Loren K. Waldman, *Models of Mass Movements: The Case of the Nazis,* Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1972.

[2] Jack Dennis and Donald J. McCrone, "Preadult Development of Political Party Identification in Western Democracies," *Compartaive Political Studies,* 3 (July, 1970), 247.

[3] Philip E. Converse, "Of Time and Partisan Stability," *Comparative Political Studies,* 2 (July, 1969), 141–142.

with those at the lower levels of party identification contributing disproportionately to whatever shifts and surges occur. The latter version of the theory has been tested experimentally by Dean Jaros and Gene Mason, using American subjects.[4]

Comparative Studies of Party Identification

Party identification theory, from which the party identification theory of electoral stability derives, was developed from American studies.[5] But it has been applied to quite general comparative questions, as in the two examples cited above. The justification for doing this appears to be that party identification has seemed to develop in much the same way in most western electorates. In a number of studies, for instance, levels of party identification similar to that found in the United States have been indicated by responses to "party identification" questions patterned on those used in the American studies.[6]

Exceptions to this—such as the low levels of partisanship observed in France and Italy—might have cast doubt upon the value of applying party identification very generally, if they could not be accounted for.[7] It would have seemed risky to extend party identification comparatively—and especially to extend it to historical cases such as the Weimar Republic—if national levels of party identification had to be treated as chance occurrences. But Converse has developed an ingenious theory which accounts for the low partisanship of electorates such as those of France and Italy, and which indicates that they, along with the electorates of other countries. are progressing towards a roughly similar equilibrium level of aggregate party identification—approximately that observed in the United States and Britain today.[8]

To paraphrase his theory:

(1) The strength of an individual's party identification increases as a function of how long he has been voting for a party. It does not increase as a function of his age except indirectly through this relationship.[9]

(2) If an individual's father identified with a party, that individual may be expected to have a stronger party identification than if his father did not identify with a party.

(3) Combining (1) and (2), the longer an individual's father had been able to vote, the stronger the individual's party identification will be. If his father had been able to vote for a relatively long period, he will be more likely to have developed a party identification to pass on to his child.

(4) From (1), the strength of the individual's party identification is a function of the individual's age (which determines how long he has physically been able to vote), and of the history of suffrage extension and restriction in his country (which determines how long he has legally been able to vote). From (3), the strength of the individual's party identification is a function of the history of suffrage extension and restriction in his country (which determines how long his father had legally been able to vote).

Converse's theory accordingly combines individuals' ages and the history of suffrage in their countries to predict the level of their party identification. A French woman aged sixty, who in 1958 had only been able to vote for 13 years (having gotten the vote in 1945), could be expected to identify more weakly with a party than an American woman aged sixty, who in

[4] Dean Jaros and Gene L. Mason, "Party Choice and Support for Demagogues: An Experimental Examination," *American Political Science Review,* 58 (March, 1969), 100–110. The introduction to their paper provides an excellent review of the party identification theory of electoral stability.

[5] Especially Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960).

[6] See, for example, Angus Campbell and Henry Valen, "Party Identification in Norway and the United States," in *Elections and the Political Order,* Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), pp. 245–268; David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), pp. 55–61; and the data on various countries (including data from the Almond and Verba study), presented in Dennis and McCrone, cited above.

[7] Converse and Dupeux found that in France 45 per cent of respondents, as compared with 75 per cent of American respondents, expressed a sense of identification with some party. Philip E. Converse and Georges Dupeux. "Politicization of the Electorate in France and the United States," in *Elections and the Political Order,* Campbell et al., p. 277; working with the Almond and Verba data, Converse found that the average strength of party identification in Italy was well under half that in Britain and the United States. Converse, "Of Time and Partisan Stability," p. 151.

[8] Converse, "Of Time and Partisan Stability."

[9] This assumption is particularly important to Converse's theory, and for what follows in this paper. There is evidence for the assumption from the United States (*American Voter,* p. 163) and Britain (Butler and Stokes, pp. 55–57). In both cases, the strength of an individual's identification increases as he grows older, but this is a function solely of how long he has identified with the party, not of his age *per se.* If the length of time that individuals have identified with the same party is held constant, the relationship between age and the strength of identification disappears. In other words, we might expect a voter aged fifty, who had initially acquired an identification with a party ten years before, to show roughly the same strength of identification as a thirty-year-old voter who had initially acquired his party identification ten years before. This, despite the fact that we would generally expect fifty-year-olds to identify more strongly with a party than thirty-year-olds.

1958 had been able to vote for at least 38 years. Italian men aged fifty who in 1958 had been able to vote at most one time before 1945 and whose fathers had only rarely voted, could be expected to show lower levels of party identification than French men of the same age. And so on. According to the theory, if all countries continued to hold elections in an unbroken series, they would tend to reach roughly the same equilibrium level of party identification within a few generations.

The theory is attractively simple. It uses only two independent variables—individuals' ages, and the history of suffrage—though it combines these in rather complex ways. Using the data from the Almond and Verba study, Converse was able to put his theory to a stiff test and was relatively successful at predicting the level of party identification for age and sex cohorts in all five countries. The correlation between his predictions of the average strength of party identification in specific cohorts—say, Italian men aged 50 to 60—and the actual average values for the cohorts is an impressive .93. Even when he allows for variation within the cohorts and predicts the strength of individuals' party identification from his theory, he achieves a .46 correlation.[10]

This is an elegant theory, which—together with the high levels of partisan attachment that have been observed in a number of countries—would seem to provide a strong basis for treating American levels of party identification as the norm, and applying party identification theory in a general, comparative way.

Confusing Partisan Choice and Party Identification

On the other hand, evidence has gradually accumulated that "party identification" in Europe may be different from the psychological attachment found in the American electorate. The European version appears to be much less stable over time than American party identification, and it seems to refer more often simply to the party the respondent intends to vote for, rather than one he feels an enduring attachment to. There is evidence for this in at least three studies:

(1) The first example is a panel study of German voting, 1967 to 1969, conducted by Max Kaase and Uwe Schleth.[11] The questions used in the two waves of this panel are not fully comparable. In 1967, respondents were asked their party identification, in a question which included a list of the main parties. In 1969, the question did not cue the respondents with the names of the parties. As a result, the per cent of respondents expressing an identification dropped from 52.0 per cent in 1967 to 28.9 per cent in 1969.[12] The panel does allow one measure of the stability of party identification, however. Of those respondents that reported an identification in response to the harder question in 1969, only 65 per cent repeated the same identification they had given twenty months before.[13] At the same time, their reported party identifications correlated closely with immediate party preferences. The respondents were asked in 1969 to rank the five parties by preference. Of those who were willing to rank the parties, 100 per cent of the strong CDU/CSU identifiers in that year, and 95 per cent of the weak CDU/CSU identifiers, ranked that party first. Ninety-eight per cent of strong SPD identifiers, and 94 per cent of weak SPD identifiers, ranked that party first. Apparently what was tapped by the party identification question was not a lasting attachment, but the respondents' immediate party preference.

(2) David Butler and Donald Stokes have shown that party identification in Britain differs from American party identification in much the same way.[14] Comparing their threewave panel

[10] Converse, "Of Time and Partisan Stability," pp. 161–163.

[11] The results which I discuss are reported in Max Kaase, "Determinanten des Wahlverhaltens bei der Bundestagswahl 1969," *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*" 11 (March, 1970), 46–110.

[12] The questions were: 1967, "Ganz allgemein gesprochen—betrachten Sie sich als CDU-Anhänger, als SPD-Anhänger, als FDP-Anhänger, als NPD-Anhänger, als Anhänger einer anderen Partei oder fühlen Sie sich keiner Partei besonders verbunden? (Do you generally think of yourself as a supporter of the CDU, the SPD, the FDP, the NPD, or some other party, or do you not feel particularly tied to any party?); 1969, "Ganz allgemein gesprochen, betrachten Sie sich als Anhänger einer bestimmten politischen Partei, oder fühlen Sie sich keiner Partei besonders verbunden?" (Do you generally think of yourself as a supporter of a particular political party, or do you not feel particularly tied to any party?).

[13] Kaase, p. 82. The Survey Research Center's American panel from 1956 to 1960 provides two comparisons with the German figure. Of those who identified with a party in 1958, 82 per cent reported the same identification they had given in 1956; of those who identified with a party in 1960, 88 per cent reported the same identification they had given in 1958. The difference between the American and German results is a conservative one, for two reasons: (1) twenty-four months intervened between questioning in the American study, compared with twenty months in the German study; (2) the American identifiers were isolated by means of an "easier" question than the Germans (the American question cued the names of the parties), and thus should have been a less firmly partisan group than the German identifiers. Source: SRC American Panel Study: 1956, 1958, 1960 (SRC S440, ICPR 7252).

[14] Butler and Stokes, pp. 40–43.

for 1963–64–66 with the Survey Research Center's American panel for 1956–58–60, they found that for Americans, a change in party identification was accompanied by a change in voting 75 per cent of the time, while a change in voting was accompanied by a change in party identification only 27 per cent of the time. In other words, a change in reported party identification appeared to produce a changed vote, but a changed vote definitely did not produce a change in reported party identification.

Among their British respondents, on the other hand, Butler and Stokes found that a change in party identification was accompanied by a change in voting 76 per cent of the time, but that a change in voting was accompanied by a change in party identification 62 per cent of the time.[15] There is an element of enduring attachment to parties in this finding—i.e., a change in voting is less likely to be followed by a change in party identification than *vice-versa*. But the difference is much smaller than in the American case. It appears that more often than in the American study, what is measured as "party identification" is not a lasting attachment transcending particular elections, but rather an expression of immediate voting intention.

(3) Finally, though it cannot provide as definite evidence as the German and British panels, the study of Norwegian party identification by Angus Campbell and Henry Valen provides some evidence that in Norway, too, "party identification" is more nearly an expression of voting intention than is true in the United States.[16] Campbell and Valen found that in the 1957 Storting election only 6 per cent of Norwegian party identifiers identified with a party other than the one for which they voted; by contrast, in the 1958 Congressional election in the United States, 14 per cent of party identifiers identified with a party other than the one for which they voted. Thus, reported party identification appears to coincide more perfectly with voting in a particular election in Norway than in the United States, though without a panel study we cannot tell whether this simply means that Norwegian elections are more related to party than are Congressional elections in the United States.

To sum up the problem: A good deal of evidence suggests that party identification theory can be widely applied. Converse's successful general application of the theory to the five nations in the Almond and Verba study is particularly compelling. It is tempting to generalize from the theory to cases such as that of the Weimar Republic, with which this paper will be concerned.

On the other hand, there is some convincing evidence that what has been measured as "party identification" in Europe is often different from "party identification"' in the United States. In particular, if it is not a learned, enduring attachment transcending particular issues and events, then it cannot insulate an electorate against sudden changes as the party identification theory of electoral stability suggests it can.

Testing for Party Identification in the Weimar Republic

Given the status of comparative party identification theory, as sketched above, it seems worthwhile that a dominant concern of this paper should be to assess the party identification theory of electoral stability in the Weimar case. From the theory we should expect to find that instability in Weimar in general, and Hitler's electoral support in particular, was based on those portions of the Weimar electorate whose level of party identification was relatively weak. The instability of Weimar voting, and the magnitude of the move to Hitler, could then be attributed to the overall level of party identification in the Weimar electorate. Presumably we would find—or guess—that this level was fairly low compared with levels in other countries. Converse implies such an extension of the theory to Weimar when he points out, in presenting his theory of the development of party identification, that Germany in 1933 could be expected to have had an aggregate party identification of about 1.05 on his scale, compared with 1.80 for a "mature" electorate such as that of the United States.[17]

It should appear particularly likely that the theory applies to Hitler's electoral surge, since earlier studies of his support have suggested that he did unusually well among rural voters and previous nonvoters.[18] These are portions of the population among whom—on the basis of studies of electorates in other places and at other times—we might expect party identification to have been particularly weak.[19]

[15] These figures are calculated from Butler and Stokes, Tables 2.6 and 2.7, pp. 41–42.

[16] Campbell and Valen, "Party Identification" in *Elections and the Political Order,* Campbell et. al., pp. 245–268. The figures used here are calculated from Table 13–5.

[17] Converse, "Of Time and Partisan Stability," p. 166.

[18] See particularly Heberle, Lipset, and O'Lessker, cited above.

[19] The relationship between nonvoting and party identification in the United States is demonstrated in *The American Voter,* pp. 96–101. For the lower party

In order to see whether the party identification theory of electoral stability can apply to Weimar elections, we must decide to what extent party identification was a factor in Weimar voting. The problem is to sort out party identification (an enduring, learned psychological attachment to political parties) and immediate party choices (bound to the particular moment). It is not easy to do this. Since direct measurement is impossible, any test must be an indirect one. We must predict some effect of the presence of party identification which can be measured, and then see to what extent that effect is observed in Weimar voting.

Party identification should differ from immediate party choice in one way which may help us to infer its relative importance during the Republic. Since an identifier's party attachment is a learned attitude, its strength should be a function of the length of time the individual has been able to exercise it—that is, a function of the length of time he has been able to vote.[20] The particular choice of party in an election, however, should not necessarily show such an effect.[21]

Therefore, if an electorate had achieved an appreciable level of party identification, we would expect a group to whom the vote had just been extended to act as Converse predicts. Starting back at time zero in learning an identification, the new group would have weaker party identification in general than their more experienced fellows, and we would expect their voting behavior to be less stable than that of the rest of the electorate. But if the voting decisions of the electorate were generally based on things other than party identification, we would not expect the voting of the new group to be any less stable than that of the rest.

In the Weimar Republic, women comprised such a group of new voters. They were first able to vote in 1919, whereas men in the Empire had enjoyed full and uninterrupted suffrage since 1871. In 1933, the year of Hitler's final electoral victory, women had only been voting for 14 years. A woman who was 60 years old in 1933, for example, had first been able to vote when she was 46. Theories of party identification as an enduring attachment to parties would predict that these women should have had much lower levels of party identification than men, and accordingly should have been more erratic in their party support at the polls than men.

By using an unusual body of data on Weimar voting, which I shall describe below, we can estimate how stable the voting of men and women was during the relatively quiet "golden years" of the Republic, from 1924 to 1928. And we can also look at net changes among a more restricted group of men and women voters from 1928 to 1933. This will allow us to infer whether or not party identification was present among Weimar voters. At the same time, by comparing urban and rural voters and Catholic and non-Catholic voters in the same way, we shall develop a more general picture of some of the sources of stability and change in Weimar voting.

Stability of Voting in the Mid-'twenties: Method

In the mid-'twenties, a number of districts in Germany tabulated the votes of men and women separately, which gives us the handle we need for this analysis. For the elections of May, 1924, December, 1924, and 1928, a total of 187 districts separated their votes in this way in at least two of the elections. We can treat each of these districts in effect as two "districts," or aggregations of voters—one consisting of all the men eligible to vote in the district, and one consisting of all the women. Thus for each of the three pairs formed by these elections there are close to 374 aggregations for which we know the percentage of registered voters voting for any given party. In addition, these aggregations show a spread on some important background variables. Half are totally male and half totally female. They range from rural (no towns with population greater than 2,000) to cities like Köln and Berlin. They also vary in percentage of Catholics, which seems relevant for this analysis; and fortunately, there is wide variation in the percentage of Catholics. Of the 374 aggregations, 260 are less than 20 per cent Catholic and 62 are more than 80 per

dentification in the rural portion of the American electorate, see *The American Voter*, p. 409; for France, see Sidney Tarrow, "The Urban-Rural Cleavage in Political Involvement: The Case of France," *American Political Science Review*, 65 (June, 1971), 341–357.

[20] See footnote 9 above.

[21] The finding of Butler and Stokes that the duration of present party tie accounts for approximately *all* of the relationship between age and party identification in Britain (Butler and Stokes, pp. 56–58) is puzzling, and seems to weaken my interpretation of British voting. If it is true that British party identification is to a greater extent than American party identification an expression of immediate partisan choice, one would expect either that the age-party identification relationship would be weaker than in the United States (which is not the case) or that it would be less fully accounted for by the duration of the party tie. The Butler-Stokes table is not strictly comparable to the *American Voter* table (p. 163 of *The American Voters*), and it is possible that if the two tables were set up in a comparable way, the second expectation would be confirmed. But it is a puzzle.

cent Catholic. This convenient characteristic of the aggregations is a result of the exclusive geographic distribution of religious affiliation in Germany, particularly before the population movements of World War II.

The most unsatisfactory characteristic of the aggregations is that there are none that are rural and Catholic. Nor do they comprise a systematic sample of Germany. The choice of whether or not to tabulate the votes of the sexes separately was apparently up to local electoral administrators, and in general, cities and towns are overrepresented in the sample. This does not cause serious difficulty, since, in the present study areas of different population were examined separately through the use of dummy variables and interaction terms in the regression equations. The most such overrepresentation might have done is raise the standard errors of estimates for rural areas, because of the low variation in the dummy variable "rural/nonrural." But even this did not turn out to be very serious; the standard errors associated with this variable were not uncomfortably high.

A more serious problem is that the sample is not representative regionally. The Catholic districts seem to be spread satisfactorily across the Catholic areas of Germany (except for the Polish areas in the East, which are not represented). But the Protestant districts are strongly skewed to south-central Germany. About two-thirds of them, including all of the rural ones, are in Thüringen, a mixed-industrial province centering on the city of Weimar.

These data were analyzed by multiple "ecological" regression, taking the percentage of registered voters voting for a party in the second of a pair of elections as the dependent variable.[22] The independent variables, analyzed separately for each party, were: (1) proportion of registered voters voting for the party in the first of the elections; (2) proportion female (either zero or one in all districts); (3) proportion Catholic; (4) dummy variables for population: "under 2,000/not under 2,000"; "2,000–5,000/not 2,000–5,000"; "6,000–15,000/not 6,000–15,000"; and (5) all first-order interactions among these variables.

For instance, to estimate the proportion of Catholic/female/Socialist voters living in towns of 6,000 to 15,000 population, who repeated a vote for the Socialists in the second of two elections, the intercept of the equation for the Socialists was added to the slopes for "proportion voting Socialist, election 1," "proportion Catholic," "proportion female," "dummy '6,000–15,000,'" and the appropriate interactions. This sum estimated the proportion Socialist in the second election for a hypothetical town with population 6,000 to 15,000, composed solely of Socialist, female, Catholic voters; in other words, the proportion of such voters repeating a Socialist vote in the second election. The Appendix presents a brief discussion of such "ecological" inference, particularly as applied to the analysis in this paper.

The following procedure was observed: First, as noted, the sample did not include any rural, Catholic districts. To avoid collinearity problems, therefore, each analysis was run twice. To estimate the stability of Catholics, the analysis was run without the dummy variable "under 2,000," and all rural districts were dropped from the sample. To estimate the stability of Protestants, the analysis was run without the variable "per cent Catholic," and all districts with more than 12.5 per cent Catholic were dropped from the sample.

For each party, these equations were run from the first election to the second, for each of the three pairs of elections. Similar equations were also run *backward,* predicting to the vote in the first election from the vote in the second. This is a valid operation, since causality is not posited in either case; the aggregate vote at an earlier time does not cause the vote at a later time, any more than the latter causes the former; both are the result of economic, historic, and other characteristics of the district. It was necessary to run both "backward" and "forward" regressions, so that a party whose vote was declining during those four years (such as the Communists) would not appear to have less stable voters than a party which was on the upswing (such as the Social Democrats, who were recovering some of the votes they had lost between 1920 and 1924).[23] Unnecessary interac-

[22] "Ecological" regression is simply an interpretation placed on regression equations which use data on individuals grouped into aggregations, such as "per cent Nazi" or "per cent Catholic." There is an increasingly large body of literature on the technique. The best presentation is probably Donald E. Stokes's "Cross-Level Inference as a Game Against Nature," in *Mathematical Applications in Political Science,* ed. Joseph L. Bernd (Charlottesville, Va.: The University of Virginia Press, 1969), pp. 62–83.

[23] There are ways in which the aggregate vote in the first of two elections might serve as a cause of the aggregate vote in the second. The act of voting for a party in the first election (and the memory of having voted for it, when it came time to vote again) might lead people to repeat that vote. Repeating votes in this way might, for example, serve to maintain attitudinal balance for the voters. Again, the ardor of party workers might be affected by the results of the earlier election; this would affect the results in the second

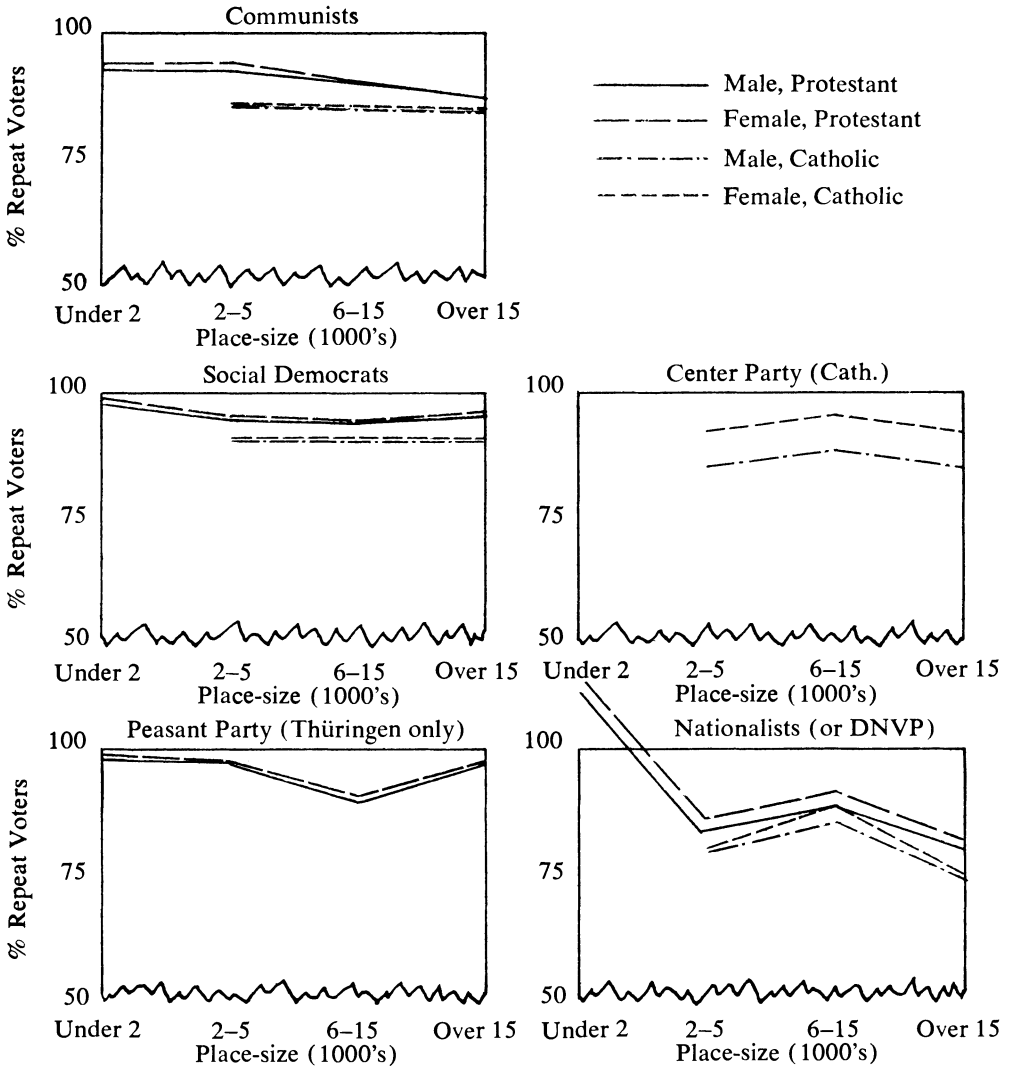

Figure 1. Voting Stability, 1924–1928

tion terms were then eliminated, and the standard errors were checked for collinearity problems. This procedure yielded for each of the relevant subgroups six estimates of the stability of their members' votes for each party. These six estimates, were averaged to produce a single estimate of overall stability for each subgroup for the period 1924 to 1928.

Stability of Voting in the Mid-'twenties: Results

The results of this analysis are shown in the graphs in Figure 1. The most important observation is that women do not show up as less stable in their voting than men. On the contrary, for all parties but the Democrats, the estimate of stability for women is higher than that for men, though the differences in this direction are mostly small. The fact that women were apparently not less stable in their voting than men indicates that party identification in the American sense was not present among Weimar voters, and that Converse's theory in particular does not apply to the development of the German electorate. I shall present further evidence for this in the examination of voting changes from 1928 to 1933.

If variations in party identification—the

election. I have chosen to ignore these possibilities, however. The danger in doing so seems less serious than the distortion which would result from carrying the analysis only forward in time.

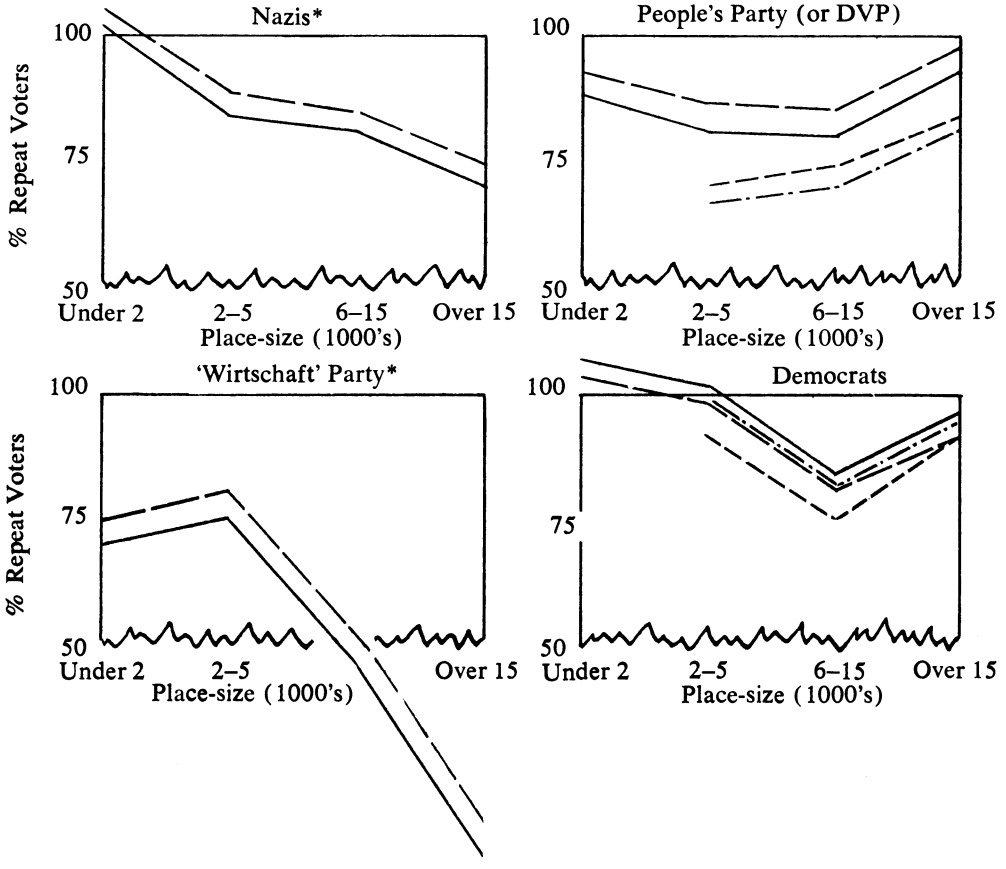

Figure 1 (Continued)

* Catholics are not included in the graphs for these two parties because, when the separate analysis with Catholics was run, the results differed from those of the simpler Protestant-only run. This could only have been due to faults in the more complex model, since all of the variables in the Protestant run were included in the broader one. Such faults may have been the existence of higher-order interactions which I had not included, or nonlinear relationships involving per cent Catholic. When I was unable to find the problems in the broader models, I discarded them. No Catholics are shown for the Peasant Party because it ran only in Thüringen, which was 2.8 per cent Catholic. No Protestants are shown for the Center Party because it received only trace support from among Protestants.

prime theoretical interest of this paper—cannot explain stability in Weimar voting, what other sources of stability and instability can we see in voting in the 'twenties? One group which shows up clearly as a source of stability in those years is the rural electorate. For all parties but the Center Party (for which voting stability in villages of less than 2,000 people could not be measured) and the People's Party, either rural voters or voters in towns of 2,000–5,000 people are the most stable group of voters. Though the difference for some parties is slight, for others it is rather high.

One possible explanation for the greater stability of rural voters and the (slightly) greater stability of women voters is suggested by Converse's "Information Flow and the Stability of Partisan Attitudes."[24] In this paper Converse demonstrates two bases for stability of attitudes in the American electorate in 1952: (1) the existence of previously formed opinions, which have been insulated fom the impact of new information, *or* (2) a lack of exposure to new information which might otherwise cause a

[24] Philip E. Converse, "Information Flow and the Stability of Partisan Attitudes," in *Elections and the Political Order,* Campbell et al., pp. 136–157. See also J. Merrill Shanks, "The Quality of Electoral Change: 1952–1964," paper delivered at the 1969 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, September 2–6.

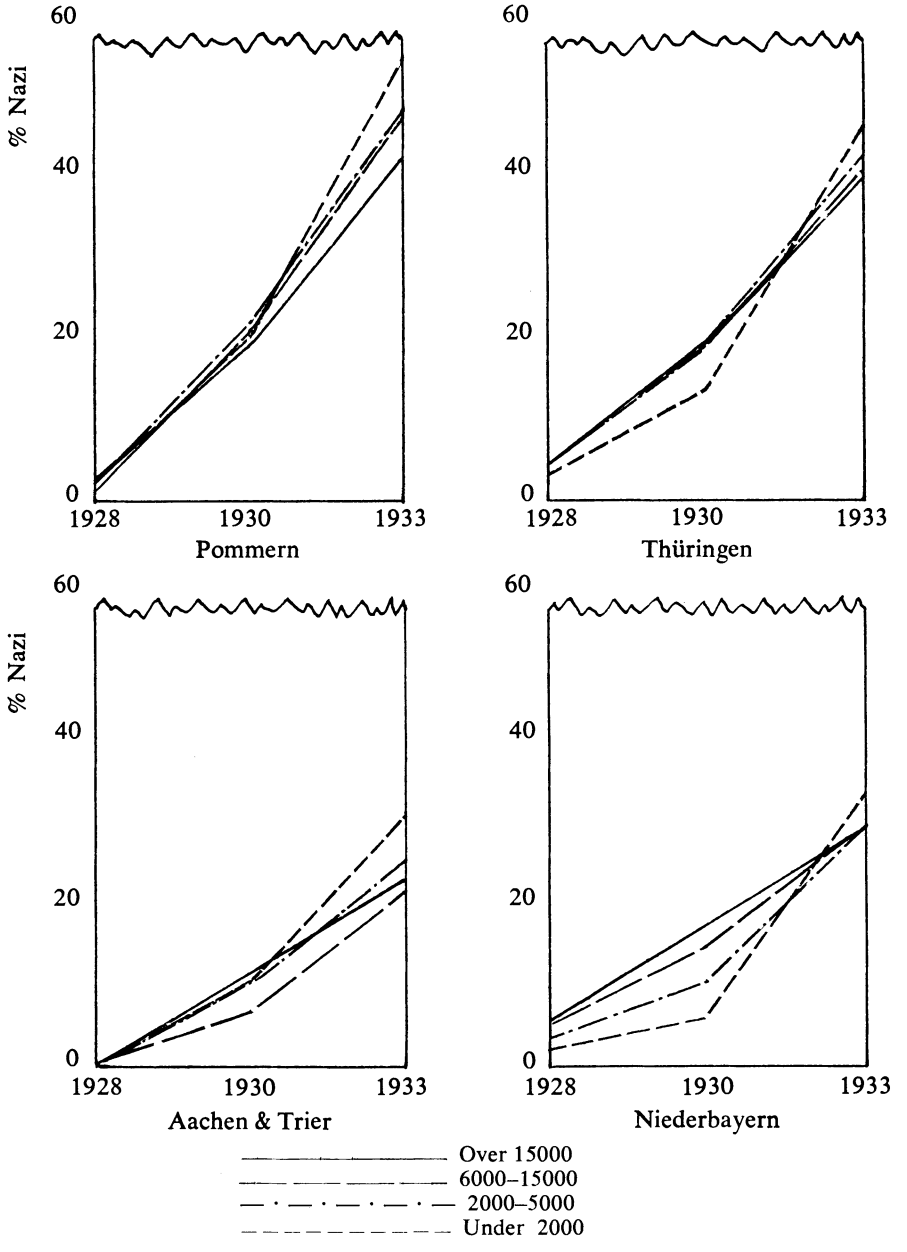

Figure 2. Per cent of Registered Electorate Voting Nazi, by Place-size

voter to shift his vote. It is likely that within the Weimar population, women and rural voters were particularly isolated from flows of new political information, thus accounting for the greater stability of their voting. Further evidence of this stability can be found in the net voting changes from 1928 to 1933.[25]

[25] A third source of electoral stability which appears in the graphs does not seem to be of particular theoretical interest. For all five parties for which Catholics and Protestants are compared, Protestants are the more stable supporters. This is probably because a Catholic voting for any of these parties would have experienced a strong cross-pressure which none of his Protestant counterparts experienced—the influence of the Center Party, which was endorsed by the Catholic Church. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that for all five parties, Catholic women, who might be expected to have felt this pull more strongly than men, were a trifle less stable relative to Catholic men that Protestant women were relative to Protestant men. (The differences are admittedly very slight.) This interpretation also is consistent with the fact that Cath-

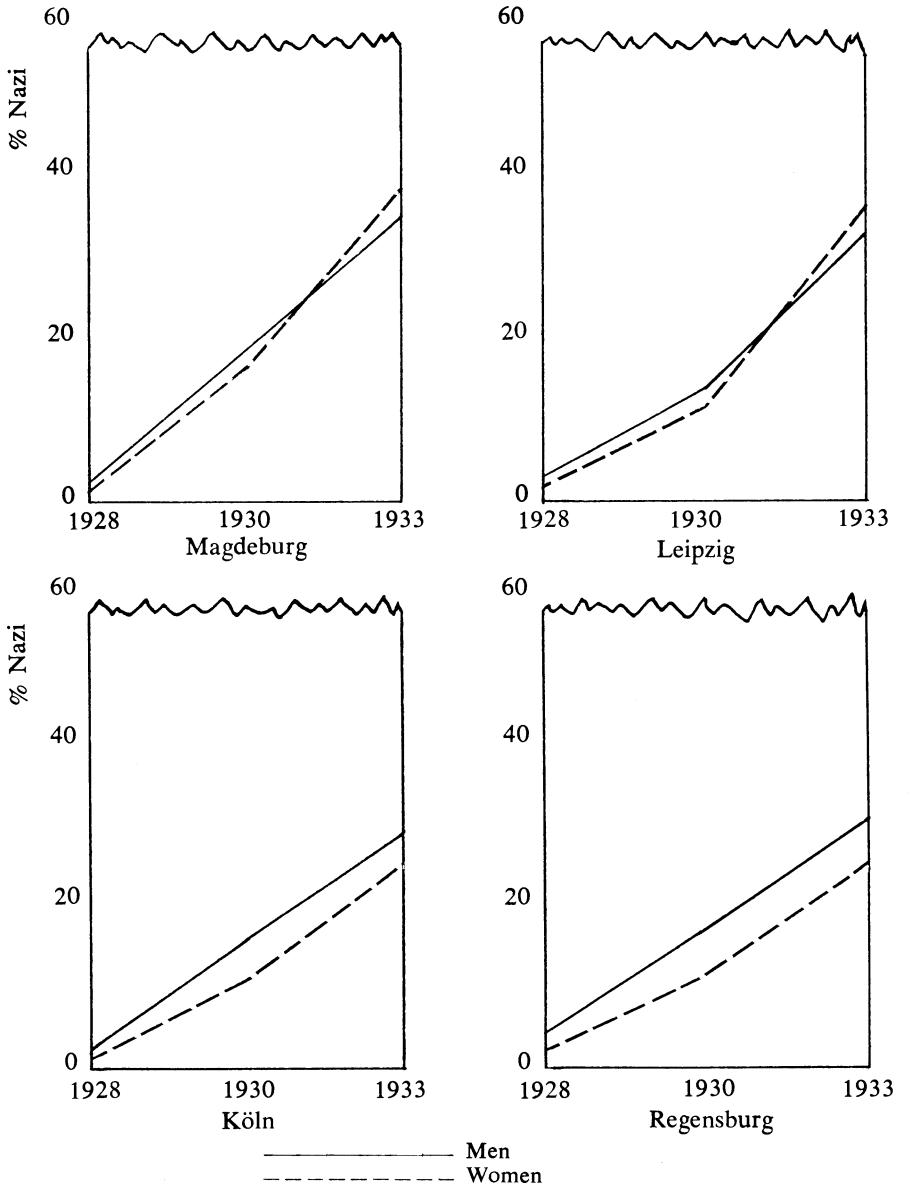

Figure 3. Per cent of Registered Electorate Voting Nazi, by Sex

Shifts in Voting, 1928–1933

Data from this period of Nazi electoral surge are more fragmentary than for the mid-'twenties. In only nine districts were votes reported by sex after 1930, and all but one of these are large cities.[26] Also, votes were not reported separately by place-size for the two elections in 1932. Consequently, examining the variables I have stressed requires the use of even more isolated pockets of data than did the 'twenties, and because of the small number of cases, regression analysis is not feasible. On the other hand, simply examining net changes proves useful for this period in which parties' shares of the vote shifted so sharply.

Of the nine cities or towns for which votes were tabulated by sex, four have data available on both participation and party-votes in 1928, 1930, and 1933. These are Magdeburg and Leipzig (both almost wholly Protestant), and

olic women who voted for the Center Party were so much more stable than the men. The difference between men's and women's stability is greater for the Center Party than for any other.

[26] Initially, the failure to generate such data was due to the economic burden of separating the sexes in the midst of the Depression. Later, it was aggravated by the Nazi scorn for elections, which left unpublished some separate tabulations.

Köln and Regensburg (largely Catholic).[27] For these cities we can calculate the percentage of the registered electorate of either sex voting for each party.

In order to compare rural and urban voters, four provinces were chosen which represented the major regions of Germany and are at the same time homogeneously Catholic or Protestant. The four are: (1) Pommern, with a population in 1925 of 1.9 million, 3.5 per cent Catholic, located in the Junker domain in eastern Germany; (2) Thüringen, population 1.6 million, 2.8 per cent Catholic, located in the mixed industrial Protestant part of central Germany; (3) Niederbayern/Oberpfalz, population 1.4 million, 96.0 per cent Catholic, located in Bavaria; and (4) the administrative districts Aachen and Trier in southwestern Germany, which were combined for analytic purposes into one unit with a population of 1.2 million, 91.9 per cent Catholic. For the elections of 1928, 1930, and 1933, the votes within each of these provinces were separated into the four place-size groupings used in analyzing the 'twenties.

The rise of the Nazi vote among these groups is presented in Figures 2 and 3. Because the validity of the results is attested by the fact that the same pattern occurs in each of the provinces and cities, I have charted each of them separately.

Note in Figure 2 that compared to the urban population, rural voters initially moved only slowly to the Nazis, from 1928 to 1930. They then moved much more rapidly to the Nazis from 1930 to 1933. Although the differences between men and women are smaller than those between urban and rural voters, the pattern in Figure 3 is the same.[28] In all four cities, men got off to a quicker start from 1928 to 1930, but the women came on more quickly from 1930 to 1933—overtaking the men in the two Protestant cities, narrowing the gap in the two Catholic cities.[29]

This makes sense if we recall the different circumstances of 1930 and 1933. In 1930 the Nazis were only beginning the ambitious electioneering and propaganda effort which marked the period 1930–1933. They had not yet become powerful in the national government. Their membership in 1930 was about 400,000; by 1932 it was about 1,200,000.[30] In charting levels of violence in one small German town, Allen found that in 1930 there were four political fights reported in the press; in 1932 there were twenty-three, three of them "major battles."[31] In short, by 1930 Germany had not yet been flooded with information about the Nazi Party; by 1933 it had.

Figures 2 and 3 suggest that this difference in information flows affected the timing and source of surges of votes for the Nazis, in a way which is consistent with my interpretation of the sources of stability in the mid-'twenties. From 1928 to 1930, information flows in Germany were much the same as they had been in the mid-'twenties, and women and rural voters shared less in the dominant move (to the Nazis) during those two years than did their male and urban counterparts. From 1930 to 1933, information flows in Germany expanded dramatically. Women and rural voters now more than made up for their earlier lag. The combination of the stability of female and rural voting during the mid-'twenties, and the lag of these two groups in moving to the Nazis in the early 'thirties, strongly suggests that their earlier stability was due in part to a lack of exposure to political communication.

Of course, it is no news to students of elections that rural Germany went more heav-

[27] The figures for these cities are taken from Herbert Tingsten's *Political Behavior* (London: P. S. King and Son, 1937), pp. 28–29 and 51–58. The partial data he reports on five other cities or towns indicate the same patterns as those shown by these four.

[28] In the case of Regensburg, it is possible to carry the comparison of men and women voters beyond the Nazi take-over. Interestingly, even given the changed nature of elections, the same process continued. Women continued to narrow the gap between themselves and the men, and finally overtook the men in 1934:

	March 1933	Nov., 1933	Aug., 1934
% of registered men casting Nazi votes	30.7	91.1	82.6
% of registered women casting Nazi votes	25.3	89.6	83.3
Difference	+ 5.4	+ 1.5	− .7

Source: Bavaria. Statistisches Landesamt. Zeitschrift, vol. 65, p. 585; vol. 66, p. 250.

[29] The predominantly male vote for the Nazis in the early elections has sometimes been used as evidence of the special radical nature of the Nazi voters. As Seymour Lipset puts it:

> In the 1920s and 1930s the more conservative or religious a party, the higher, in general, its feminine support. The German National People's party had more female backing than any party except the Catholic Center party. The Nazis, together with the more liberal middle-class parties and Marxist parties, received disproportionate support for men.

Lipset, *Political Man*, p. 143. But the pattern as we see it here suggests that women did not really respond differently to the Nazis than did men. They lagged behind the men, but probably ended up ahead of them.

[30] See Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties* (New York: Wiley, 1954), p. 84.

[31] William S. Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single Town, 1930–1935* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), p. 296.

ily Nazi than did urban Germany. But it is interesting to see that those groups which added disproportionately to the Nazi gains in the early 'thirties were the ones that had been relatively stable in the more "normal" elections of the mid-'twenties.

The Contribution of New Voters to the Nazi Surge

One trend which many writers have associated with the rise of the Nazis is the increase in participation during this period. Lipset has argued that new voters figured importantly in the Nazi rise from 1930 to 1933, though not in the early increase from 1928 to 1930.[32] Karl O'Lessker, using a more precise correlation technique, argues that new voters figured heavily in the Nazi vote in both periods.[33] In a re-analysis of O'Lessker"s data, Schnaiberg finds that from 1928 to 1930 the Nazis did *not* gain more of their votes from among new voters than most of the other parties did.[34] His findings, and O'Lessker's, tend to re-establish Lipset's interpretation on a more solid basis. The general conclusion to be drawn from this literature is that the Nazi Party drew disproportionate support from the new voters who flooded into the participating electorate between 1930 and 1933. This result has held up rather well under repeated investigations.

All of the studies supporting the hypothesis, however, are based on some form of ecological correlation or regression, relating changes in the Nazi vote, by district, to changes in voting turnout. It is possible that recurring biases of estimation, because of the repetition of this design, have produced a result which is replicable but spurious. Complementary designs of inference can help us to see whether this is the case.

[32] Lipset, pp. 149–152.
[33] O'Lessker, "Who Voted for Hitler?" pp. 66–67.
[34] Allan Schnaiberg, "A Critique of Karl O'Lessker's 'Who Voted for Hitler?' ", *American Journal of Sociology*, 74 (May, 1969), 732–735.

Table 1. Correlation by Sex Aggregations, Regensburg 1928–1930

	% Change in Participation	% Change in Nazi vote
F	+7.2	+ 8.1
M	+2.4	+11.9
r = −1.0		

In this section, I shall examine two such complementary designs.

(a) Sex-aggregation Analysis. It is possible to calculate an "ecological" correlation using aggregations other than geographic districts. The present study provides an example of such aggregations: The aggregation of all men living in a particular city, and the aggregation of all women living there. For these two aggregations, the correlation between change-in-participation and change-in-percentage-of-vote-Nazi can be calculated, just as it can be calculated for two or more geographic districts.

This association is illustrated in Table 1, showing the relationship between change in participation and change in the Nazi share of the vote for Regensburg, between 1928 and 1930. Note that since there are only two aggregations (males and females), the correlation can be only +1, 0, or −1. A regression line will always form a perfect fit with an N of 2; its slope will determine the sign of the correlation coefficient. In Regensburg from 1928 to 1930, the sex that showed the greater increase in participation was not the one that moved more strongly to the Nazis. Accordingly, the correlation in Table 1 is −1.0.

This procedure involves a risk of the ecological fallacy, just as geographic ecological correlation does. But because the aggregations are set

Table 2. Sex-aggregated Correlations Between Change in Participation and Change in the Nazi Share of the Vote for Reichstag and Presidential Elections

	9/30–3/32	9/30–7/32	9/30–10/32	9/30–3/33	3/32–7/32	3/32–10/32	3/32–3/33	7/32–10/32	7/32–3/33	10/32–3/33
Augsburg		1.0								
Hagen	1.0									
Köln	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	1.0	1.0
Leipzig				−1.0						
Magdeburg	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	1.0	1.0
Regensburg	1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	−1.0	1.0	1.0
Wiesbaden	1.0	−1.0	1.0	−1.0	−1.0	1.0	−1.0	0.0	1.0	−1.0

up on a basis other than geographic contiguity, if this produces any biases they will be *different* from those produced by geographic ecological correlation.

For example, a plausible alternative explanation of the geographic ecological correlation between change in participation and change in the Nazi vote might be that in those districts in which the Nazis seemed to be advancing from one election to the next, voters for all parties (and the local workers for all parties) became unusually excited, and participation *by voters for all parties* rose. This upswing would suffice to produce correlations of the sort Lipset observed between changes in Nazi strength and changes in participation. It is plausible that Lipset's correlations might be due to this process, rather than to the presumed process in which, as new voters were drawn into participation, they came in as Nazis.

I have used this hypothetical process as an example, because in this particular instance, the ecological fallacy would not be manifest in ecological correlations based on sex aggregations. The two sex aggregations in any analysis live intermingled in the same geographic district. The extent to which the Nazis appeared to be advancing locally could not vary across the two aggregations. Thus, it could not act as a variable to produce the misleading correlation I have suggested above.

Sex-aggregated correlations, therefore, provide a complementary test of the hypothesis that new voters tended, more than other voters, to be Nazis. Table 2 presents sex-aggregated correlations between change in voting participation and change in the per cent of voters casting Nazi ballots, for the seven cities which reported votes separately by sex for two or more elections from 1930 to 1933.

In contrast to geographic ecological correlation, which produces positive correlations for every pair of elections between 1930 and 1933, this technique suggests that only in the last election—March, 1933—could the Nazis have drawn disproportionate support from among previous nonvoters.[35] Overall, only 14 of the 43 relationships in the table are positive. This negative result is statistically significant, with probability .016 of getting as few as 14 positive correlations in 43 tries, if in fact the correlations should be expected to be positive in a majority of cases. It does appear from the table that the 1933 election might fit the hypothesis. Of 17 relationships which involve the 1933 election, 8 are positive. This compares with 6 relationships positive of the 26 which do not involve the 1933 election.

(b) Analysis Over Time. A second alternative design is the analysis of a series of changes over time in turnout and the Nazi share of the vote, for any particular geographic unit. Indeed, a very simple analysis of this type has formed part of the evidence for the presumed strong relationship between earlier apathy and Nazi voting. If we look at changes over time in turnout and the Nazi share of the vote for the nation as a whole, using only Reichstag elections, we find a positive relationship, as shown in Figure 4(a).

But if we include land elections and the 1932 presidential election in such a series, the relationship disappears. In part (b) of Figure 4, such time series have been drawn for Hessen, Oldenburg, Lippe-Detmold, Hamburg, and the Vierlande district of Hamburg. The first four are the only districts in Germany in which at least two Land or local elections were held between the 1930 and 1933 Reichstag elections. The Vierlande district of Hamburg has been included separately in this treatment because it is a Protestant, rural district of the sort which furnished the richest source of Nazi votes. (Fifty-nine per cent of the male labor force were independent farmers in 1925.)

Though participation generally tended to rise during this period, along with the Nazi share of the vote, it does not appear from Figure 4 that the two trends were directly interdependent. If the two rose together because the Nazi vote was made up disproportionately of marginal voters, then we should expect that when participation dropped in a local election, the Nazi share of the vote would also drop. But this is never the case.[36]

As with the sex-aggregated correlation analysis, these time series leave open the possibility that in 1933 the Nazis did profit disproportionately from the influx of new voters. In each series, even when a local election falls in 1933, as is true of Lippe-Detmold, the two trends appear to coincide. At any other point in the various series, however, the trends appear to be, if anything, negatively related.

[35] A similar analysis for nine cities between 1928 and 1930 bears out Lipset's and Schnaiberg's finding of no relationship for that period. The coefficient is −1.0 for all nine cities.

[36] In West Germany today, the Christian Democratic vote, which consists disproportionately of marginal voters, has acted the way I have suggested the Nazi vote should have acted. One reason the Social Democrats were able to control as many state governments as they did during the period of Adenauer's popularity was that the Christian Democratic vote dropped off sharply in state elections. Compare R. J. C. Preece, *"Land" Elections in the German Federal Republic* (London: Longmans, Green, 1968), p. 33.

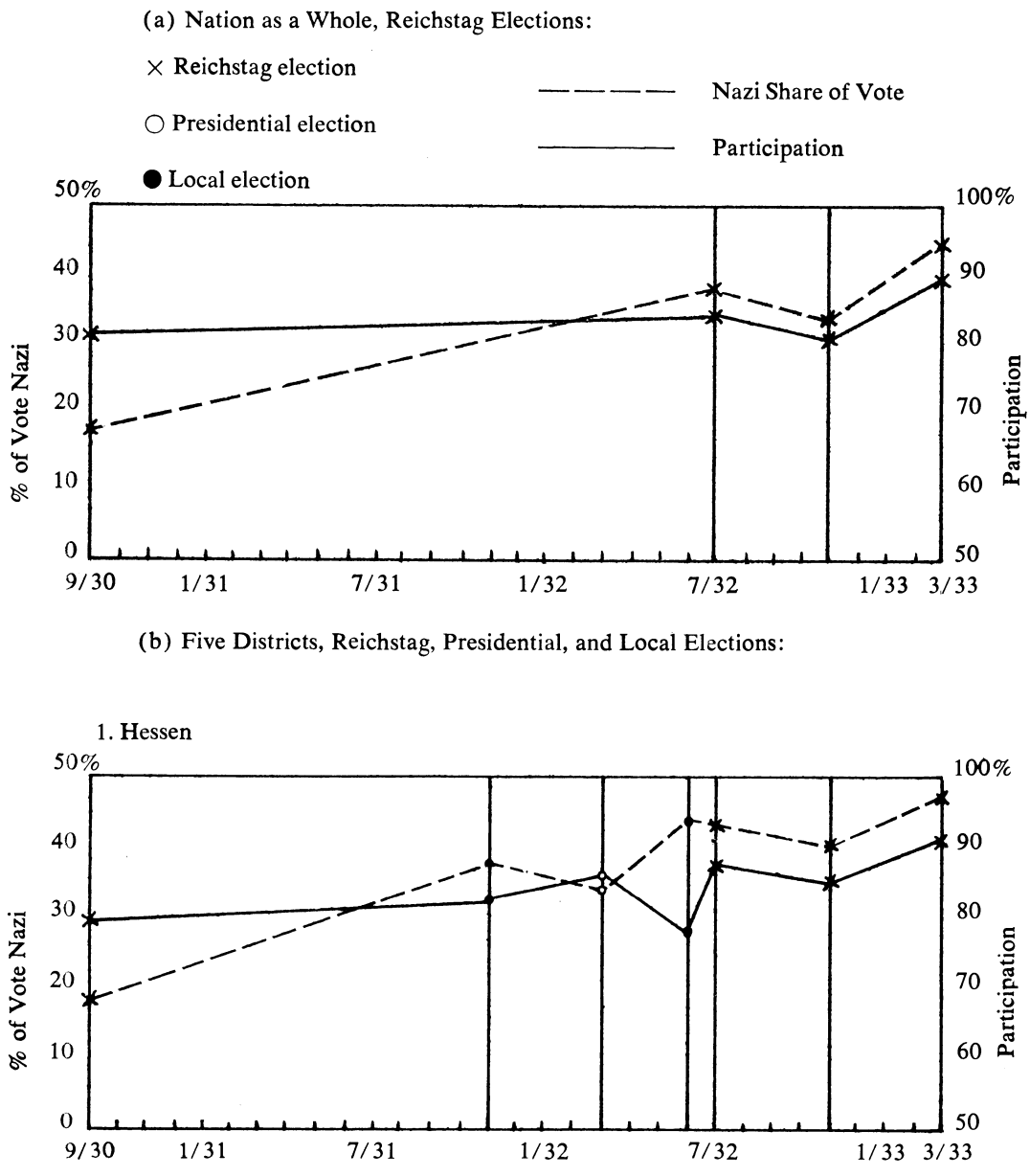

Figure 4. Electoral Turnout and Nazi Share of the Vote, 1930–1933

I believe that the general conclusion to be drawn from geographic correlations, sex-aggregated correlations, and time series is that during the great period of its growth, from 1928 to the end of 1932, the Nazi party did not draw unusual support from among previous nonvoters. The 1933 election may have been an exception, but the likelihood remains that the Nazi party essentially was not a party of new and marginal participants.

The Question of Party Identification

The stability of women's voting in the mid-'twenties provided evidence earlier in this paper that party identification as a learned, enduring attachment to parties was not important in the Weimar elections. An analogous examination of the net shifts in men's and women's voting from 1928 to 1933 provides further evidence of this.

Let us make the following assumptions (both

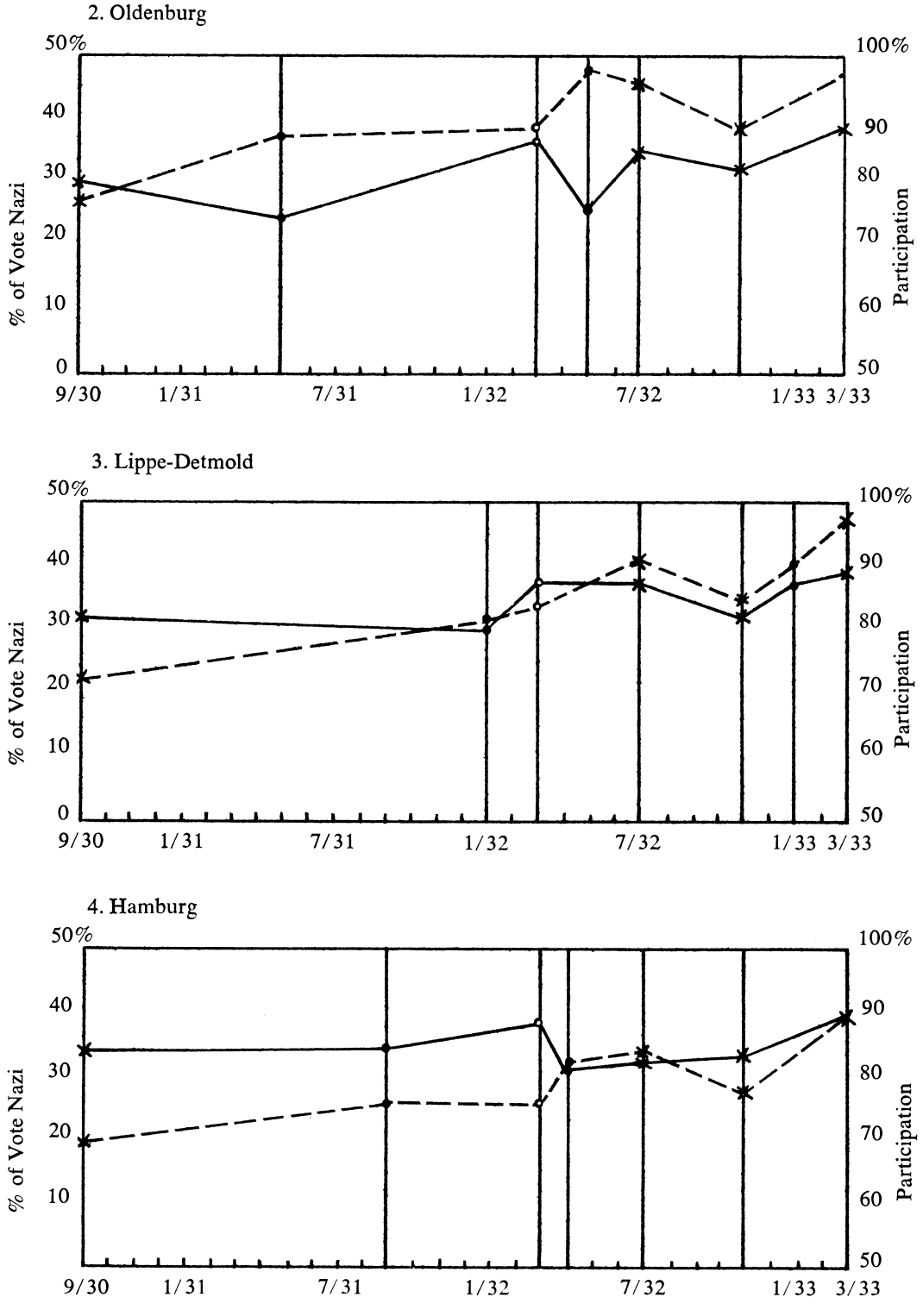

Figure 4 (Continued)

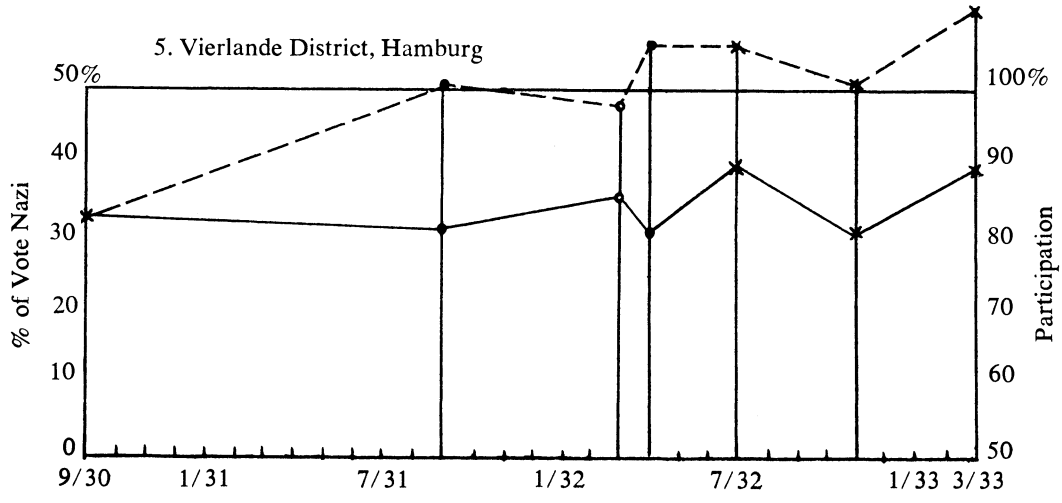

Figure 4 (Continued)

of which have been discussed earlier):

(1) If party identification as an enduring attachment to parties was present in the Weimar electorate, then it was stronger among men than women. As was pointed out earlier, in 1928 German women had only had the vote for nine years; men had had the vote for 57 years.

As an additional basis for the assumption, we may note that women's participation was considerably lower than that of men throughout the Weimar Republic.[37] In the United States, participation has been found to increase with the strength of party identification.[38]

(2) By 1933 the German electorate had been nearly saturated with political information, so that support for a party resulted from preference for that party, rather than from not having been exposed to relevant information. The general surge in participation from 1928 to 1933 and the dramatic catching up in 1933 of groups that had apparently lagged in voting Nazi in 1930 because

[37] Compare Herbert Tingsten, *Political Behavior,* pp. 27–29. Also Gabrielle Bremme, *Die Politische Rolle der Frau in Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1956), pp. 35–50; Hartwig, "Wie die Frauen im Deutschen Reich von ihrem politischen Wahlrecht Gebrauch machen," *Allgemeines Statistisches Archiv,* 17 (1928), 497–513; Hartwig, "Das Frauenwahlrecht in der Statistik," *Allgemeines Statistiches Archiv,* 21 (1931), 167–183. In general, women's participation lagged behind men's by several percentage points.

[38] Campbell et al., *The American Voter,* pp. 96–101.

Table 3. Net Shifts, 1928–1933, as Percentage of 1928 Vote

		Middle-Class Parties (%)	Social Democrats (%)	Nationalists (%)	Center (%)
Magdeburg	F	−89.1	−26.4	+ 3.1	*
	M	−88.0	−25.8	+28.8	*
Leipzig	F	−80.8	− 4.3	−21.5	*
	M	−80.4	− 6.0	− .4	*
Köln	F	−84.5	− 9.2	+42.6	+16.5
	M	−87.5	−26.3	+33.3	+12.3
Regensburg	F	−85.9	− 5.5	−37.1	+ 6.7
	M	−87.9	−14.8	−25.3	+ 4.8

* A negligible vote; but as in the Catholic cities, the party made greater gains among women than among men.

of a lack of information—both of these suggest that virtually all of the population had been reached by political information by 1933. This should be particularly true for cities, such as the ones examined here.

Between them, these assumptions predict that in the 1933 election, women should have been less loyal than men to the parties for which they had voted in 1928. But this was not the case, at least in the four cities for which we have data tabulated separately by sex.

From Table 3 we can see that vote losses among men were no less than those among women for those parties which were stagnant or declining during this period. For the middle-class parties the two rates were about the same. And women voters were actually more loyal than men to the Social Democrats and the Center Party. Only for the Nationalists were the net shifts more negative for women than for men.

My analysis of the impact of previous nonvoters provides a second source of evidence that party identification as a lasting attachment was not present among the Weimar electorate. An interesting theory of American elections holds that the new voters in any election generally exaggerate the short-term shifts involved in the election.[39] New voters in 1956 went strongly Republican, in 1932 strongly Democratic, and so on.[40] This tendency occurs because the party identification of new voters is weaker than that of the population as a whole, and hence they are more susceptible to whatever short-term forces are at work in the election.

To turn this theory around, *if* the many new voters in the early 'thirties in Germany did not vote much differently from the rest of the voters, this suggests that the older voters did not have stronger party identification than the new ones, i.e., party identification was not widespread among either group.

Alternative Explanations of the Stability of Women's Voting

The argument that enduring party identification was not important in Weimar elections depends heavily on the finding that women's voting was not less stable than men's. At least three additional explanations can be advanced for the women's stability, however. Since none of these three implies an absence of learned party identification, we must consider them as alternatives to the interpretation I have advanced up to this point.

(1) The stability of women voters might have been due to their being older, on the average, than the men. Given the generally greater longevity of women, and a presumed general propensity to hold more stable opinions as one ages, this might be a reasonable expectation. Because of the high mortality of young men during World War I, however, the female electorate in Germany does not appear to have been older than the male electorate.

In the May, 1924, election, for instance, ballots were counted separately by both age and sex in four districts, one urban and three rural, covering the main regions of Germany. The average age of both men and women eligible to vote in those districts was the same—40.5 years.[41] The greater number of women at an advanced age in the districts was balanced by a great gap in men between the ages of 25 and 40.

(2) Alternatively, the stability of women voters might simply have been due to the fact that German women always voted as their husbands did, and thus repeated in a derivative way the stability of their husbands' votes. This explanation is not supported by further examination of women's voting. First of all, it cannot account for the fact that women were actually a bit more stable than men in the mid-'twenties. Derivative "stability" of the sort suggested here could only produce a level of stability approaching that of men, not exceeding it. Furthermore, the crossed lines in Figure 3 suggest that rather different processes of change took place for the two sexes from 1928 to 1933. This should not have been the case if women simply voted as their husbands directed. Finally, examination of simple voting results in a Catholic city such as Köln shows that the women were capable of voting quite differently from the men. In 1928, for example, 68.5 per cent of eligible men voted in Köln, but only 53.3 per cent of eligible women did so. In the same year, only 21.5 per cent of the men's votes were cast for the Center Party, compared with 37.8 per cent of women's votes; 45.5 per cent of the men voted for a Marxist party, compared with 32.0 per cent of the women.[42] These differences are simply too great to allow us to credit the alternative explanation of women's voting stability.

(3) As a final alternative, it could be argued

[39] Campbell et al., *The American Voter*, pp. 110–115, 154–155. See also Angus Campbell, "Surge and Decline," in *Elections and the Political Order*, Campbell et al., pp. 40–63. The *American Voter* findings deal with marginal voters in general, but they would seem to apply as well to new voters.

[40] This is illustrated below in Figure 5.

[41] *Statistik des Deutschen Reichs*, Vol. 315, No. 6, pp. 35–40. The averages I give are calculated from ages broken down to eleven categories.

[42] Tingsten, *Political Behavior*, pp. 29, 56.

that in the foregoing analysis of stability in the mid-'twenties, stability arising from party identification was confused with stability growing out of a lack of information. In the analysis of changes from 1928 to 1933, the effect of party identification was isolated from that of information flow, under the assumption that in 1933 every voter, male or female, had been reached by some information about the Nazis. Thus, if the level of stability of the two sexes was the same, this must have been because the sexes did not differ on the strength of party identification.

But in my analysis of the 'twenties, the two factors could not be isolated in this way. Might it be, then, that women were as stable in their voting as men in the mid-'twenties because substantially stronger party identification among men (causing them to be stable voters) was balanced by substantially less information flow to women (causing them also to be stable voters, but for a different reason)? If so, the overall conclusion would be left dependent on the 1928–1933 data, based on an N of just four cities.

I do not think, however, that the flow of information to women was sufficiently different from the flow to men to justify this alternative. The lags for women shown in Figure 3 are of theoretical interest, but their magnitude is really rather small. The differences between men and women in Figure 3 are slight compared to the differences between urban and rural residents in Figure 2. If the magnitude of that difference is a valid indicator of the difference in information flow to the two sexes, then women could not have been much less identified with parties than men were in the mid-'twenties and still have shown up, as they did, as the more stable voters.

The "Weimar System"

To sum up the discussion thus far of Weimar voting:

There is evidence that party identification in the sense of learned and enduring attachments to parties was not a factor in Weimar elections. Accordingly, the party identification theory of electoral stability apparently cannot help us explain Weimar voting.[43] Uneven and insufficient flows of political communication apparently did contribute to the stability of elections in the more quiet periods of the Republic. But this must have been an unreliable "stability." Those "politically outside" groups which were relatively stable in the mid-'twenties, and relatively late in moving to the Nazis in the early 'thirties, ended by outdoing the rest of the electorate in their Nazi support in the final elections.

Table 4. Percentage of Vote, January, 1919–May, 1924

Party	1919 (%)	1920 (%)	1924 (%)
Nationalist	10.3	15.0	19.4
Nazi	—	—	6.6
German Peoples'	4.5	13.9	9.2
German Democratic	18.5	8.3	5.6
Center	19.7	18.0	16.6
Social Democratic	37.9	21.7	20.6
Independent Social Democratic	7.6	17.9	
Communist	—	2.0	12.6

Were there then simply *no factors* tending to promote stability in Weimar voting? A look at net voting changes during the Republic might suggest this conclusion. The Nazi surge at the end of the Republic is rivaled in magnitude by various shifts that occurred in earlier years. For instance, from 1919 to 1920, the German Democratic Party dropped from 18.5 per cent of the vote to 8.3 per cent. From 1919 to May, 1924, the Social Democrats dropped from 37.9 per cent of the vote to 20.6 per cent, then climbed back up to 29.8 per cent in 1928. To illustrate the instability of voting in the earlier years of the Republic, Table 4 shows the percentage of the vote for each of the eight largest parties in the elections of 1919, 1920, and May, 1924.

A simple measure of overall net changes in voting from one election to another may be obtained by summing the absolute values of changes in all the parties' shares of the vote, and dividing by two.[44] By this measure, as shown in the first column of Table 5, overall net voting changes were often about as great at other times during the Republic as they were in the later years.

Much of the flux in Weimar voting disappears, however, if we group the voters of all parties into three blocs—voters of the Marxist

[43] The results of this study of Weimar do not *disprove* the party identification theory of electoral stability. Party identification appears to have been absent in the Weimar electorate, and Weimar voting was rather unstable. But the results do suggest that the theory's usefulness is limited. The theory presumably helps to explain why American voting (at least in Congressional elections) is more stable than Weimar elections were. But it cannot help us understand the more important questions of the development of the German electorate over time, or of variations within the German electorate, since party identification appears to have never been a factor in German voting.

[44] This measure would equal 100 per cent, for instance, if each party had either gained or lost all of its votes from the first election to the second.

Table 5. Levels of Overall Net Change, 1919–1933

Years	Net change, for all parties (%)	Net change, for blocks (%)	Net change, Protestant non-Marxist parties only (%)
1919–1920	28.1	5.6	12.9
1920–1924A*	27.9	9.8	12.5
1924A–1924B†	9.7	2.5	4.7
1924B–1928	12.7	5.3	9.0
1928–1930	19.7	2.8	15.7
1930–1932A	35.5	1.8	18.6
1932A–1932B	6.4	1.3	4.0
1932B–1933	10.6	7.7	6.9

* Earlier of two elections in the same year.
† Later of two elections in the same year.

parties, the Center Party (which represented the Catholics), and the Protestant/non-Marxist parties (including the Nazis). The strength of these blocs from election to election is shown in Table 6.

The second column of Table 5 provides measures of overall net changes in bloc support, comparable to the measures for parties in the first column. Though we would expect the figures for net change for any groupings of parties to be lower than net change for the parties themselves, the difference between these two columns is striking.

Such net changes may conceal all sorts of compensating or indirect movements of voters, of course. Still, these tables suggest that the "Weimar system" was one in which the level of support for the three large, socially based blocs was fairly stable, but in which the vote for particular parties could be quite fluid. It would appear that the movements of voters from one party to another occurred largely within the various blocs.[45]

This interpretation is enhanced by the unusual stability of the Center Party, the only party which had no rivals for the voters of its "bloc." From 1919 to 1933 the Center vote ranged only from 14.0 to 19.7 per cent of the vote. No other Weimar party approaches this level of stability.[46]

In this light, the shift of votes from the other Protestant/non-Marxist parties to the Nazis, although its results were monstrous, does not appear to have been such an exceptional event. From the third column of Table 5 we can see that, though the level of net change involving the Protestant/non-Marxist parties from 1928

[45] Bo Särlvick describes a similar situation in Sweden. See his "Political Stability and Change in the Swedish Electorate," *Scandinavian Political Studies* (1966), pp. 188–222, esp. pp. 193–197.

[46] Some further support for this interpretation of Weimar voting is suggested in preliminary findings of a project in which I am seeking to measure "party distances" in voting during the German Empire, from 1871 to 1912. Two major gulfs in party distance appear to have determined voting during the Empire—that between the Center Party and all other parties, and that between the Social Democrats and all other parties. Distinctions among the remaining parties do form a third dimension, apparently along lines of the older urban-rural conflict over the constitution. But the distances separating these parties are relatively small. It may be that then, and later in the Weimar Republic, although the leaders of the various parties saw important differences among themselves, voters at the mass level saw essentially only Marxists, Catholics, and the parties of the Protestant bourgeoisie.

This interpretation fits quite well with the usual interpretation—presented in classic form by Lipset—of the Nazi Party as having been primarily a party of the Protestant bourgeoisie (Lipset, *Political Man,* pp. 134–152).

Table 6. Percentage of the Vote, by Blocs

Bloc	Year								
	1919	1920	1924A	1924B	1928	1930	1932A	1932B	1933
Marxist	45.5	41.6	33.2	34.9	40.3	37.7	35.9	37.3	30.6
Catholic	19.7	18.0	16.6	17.4	15.1	14.9	15.7	15.0	14.0
Protestant/ non-Marxist	34.8	40.3	50.1	47.6	44.6	47.5	48.3	47.7	55.5

to 1930 and from 1930 to the first 1932 election is greater than for any other pairs of elections during the Republic, a good deal of net change involving these parties occurred at other times, too.

This interpretation of Weimar elections is consistent with the conclusion that learned identification with particular political parties was not a factor in Weimar voting. It would appear instead that Weimar voting depended on voters' sense of the social group to which they belonged (proletarian or Catholic or Protestant bourgeois), and of the political party or parties appropriate to that group. This hypothesis leads to further consideration of the general question of party identification in comparative electoral analysis.

A Problem, and a Possible Explanation

If party identification as a learned, enduring attitude was not significant for the Weimar electorate, this finding—combined with evidence from other studies cited earlier—presents a problem which has been implicit in this paper: Why is it that such party identification is widespread in America, considerably less so in Britain and West Germany, and apparently absent in the Weimar Republic?

Butler and Stokes suggest that the difference between Britain and the United States is due to differences in the way elections are run in the two countries:

> The more durable nature of the individual's party self-image when he is voting for the opposite party in America must largely be due to the different challenges faced by the elector in the two countries. On polling day the British electors vote only for a single office at a single level of government. The American has to cope simultaneously with a vast collection of partisan candidates seeking a variety of offices at federal, state and local levels: it is small wonder that he becomes conscious of a generalized belief about his ties to party, although some of his individual choices are not guided by it.[47]

One difficulty with this explanation is that in a certain sense British voters have until recently faced an even greater challenge in the polling booth than their American counterparts did. Until the practice was changed in 1969, a candidate's party did not appear on the ballot in Britain. For the British to have voted as much on the basis of party and government as they obviously have done, while faced with a ballot on which they found only the names of candidates whose party affiliation they had to recall, indicates a highly generalized view of parties. A second difficulty with the Butler and Stokes explanation is simply that it cannot account for the further case of Germany.

The "Weimar system," in which voters' choices appear to have been structured by social and economic cleavages, suggests an alternative explanation, which I shall frame here as an hypothesis:

> If the social or economic conflicts in which a voter is involved are sufficiently clear; and if the position of parties or groups of parties with regard to these conflicts is sufficiently clear; then there is no need for the voter to develop lasting ties to any party *per se,* and he will not do so.

This hypothesis stems from the notion, suggested by Anthony Downs and others, that voters learn to choose a particular party regularly as a way of avoiding the difficult, and in a certain sense "expensive," task of gathering enough political information to make their voting choice on some other basis.[48] Simply deciding that he will regard himself as a regular supporter of a particular party gives the voter an easy way to decide his vote at each election without seeking out other information. If other information intrudes—such as Kennedy's Catholicism, or a recession—he may vote in accord with that new information in the particular instance, but his party identification is always there to fall back on.

On the other hand, a voter who is a member of a clear and distinct social or economic group, for which he feels that some party or group of parties is the clear spokesman—a Catholic in the Weimar Republic, for instance, or a Welsh miner—may not need a further guide in voting. Since his social and economic position, coupled with the linkage of some party(ies) to that position, provides him with sufficient voting cues, he does not need to identify directly with a party. In other words, where clear social or economic position coincides with a clear choice of parties relative to that position, the voter is able to "place" himself easily, without going through the arduous and time-consuming job of developing a party identification.

If this hypothesis is correct, it would explain the widespread distribution of learned and lasting party attachments in the American electorate, and would at the same time suggest how

[47] Butler and Stokes, *Political Change in Britain,* p. 43.

[48] Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper Row, 1957), esp. chap. 12. Actually, Downs takes a dim view of the rationality of choosing a political party as one's information-crutch, but the notion stems from his general discussion of the need to delegate the jobs of information-seeking and evaluation.

unusual this must be from a comparative perspective. It would suggest that the widespread American attachments are simultaneously a result of two facts: (1) that some important social and economic cleavages, especially the cleavage based on social class, seem to be relatively less clear in America than in Europe; and (2) probably more important, that the American governmental system, with its focus on the single, indivisible office of president, makes it impractical for any party to serve as a clearly "appropriate representative" for nonmajority groups such as blacks, hardhats, or farmers, who might otherwise vote in the way suggested by the hypothesis.

Since in most other countries there are important and intense social cleavages, and rather more opportunity than in America for nonmajority parties to operate, we might reasonably expect that in these countries, learned and lasting party identification would be less common than in the United States.[49]

Implications

The question of whether learned and lasting party identification such as that observed in the American electorate can be taken as the general norm for industrialized electoral states appears to be open. On the basis of the Butler-Stokes study of Britain and the Kaase-Schleth study of West Germany, as well as the present analysis of Weimar voting, I would suggest that such party identification must only rarely approach American levels and that what is often reported as "party identification" in other countries is simply an expression of immediate voting choice.

But it is hard to argue away the ingenious theory with which Converse absorbs even the apparently deviant cases of France and Italy, and the excellent fit to the Almond and Verba data which he achieves using that theory. Also, as noted above, the Butler-Stokes evidence that the strength of British party identification is a function of the length of time the voter has identified with the party, rather than of his age, appears to be inconsistent with the interpretation I have otherwise placed on their findings. Finally, my own study of Weimar is necessarily based on small numbers of observations on chance data.

Although there does not appear to be a clear balance of evidence on either side, it is worth considering the implications for comparative electoral studies and electoral theory if it *is* true that the American level of party identification is the exception rather than the rule:

(1) The messiest, though in some ways the most trivial, implication is in the problem of measuring party identification. If the same sort of question may call forth either immediate choice or an enduring attachment, we are in trouble. Perhaps the only solution is to use panels to look at patterns of change over time in votes and "party identification," as was done in the Butler-Stokes and Kaase-Schleth studies.

(2) Campbell's interesting "surge and decline" model, and the related hypothesis that new voters will exaggerate any shifts in the general vote, are presumably not exportable. Both theories assume that regular voters are more strongly identified with the parties they vote for than are new voters and are thus less likely to join the new voters in responding to current factors such as the state of the economy or the appeal of a particular candidate.

In this connection, Figure 5 draws a comparison between Britain and the United States. The votes of newly eligible young voters are compared with the votes of the total electorate, from 1935 to 1966 for Britain, and from 1924 to 1940 for the United States.[50] Note how much more the new voters exaggerate general trends in the United States. In Britain, where lasting party identification is presumably not as widespread as in the United States, the behavior of new voters is not particularly distinctive.

Other theories of elections which are based on an assumption of widespread, enduring party loyalties must also be more restricted to the United States than has been thought. For instance, the concept of a "critical" (or "realigning") election almost requires that an immediate political event such as the Civil War, or Bryan's candidacy, or the Depression, can put a stamp on a voter's behavior which will affect his vote for a series of elections following

[49] There is some evidence consistent with this interpretation in the Campbell/Valen and Butler/Stokes studies cited earlier. Campbell and Valen, for instance, were not certain whether party identification had an effect on Norwegians' voting independent of their social group identifications: "The Norwegian labor union member who is a member of the Labor Party may display a strong party attachment, but one wonders if this does not merely express in different form his basic identification with the working class" (Campbell and Valen, p. 268). And Butler and Stokes note the great impact that social class has in British voters' images of the parties, and in structuring switches in voting (Butler and Stokes, p. 89; pp. 298–303).

[50] The British first-vote figures are from Butler and Stokes, p. 54; the American figures are from Campbell et al., *The American Voter*, p. 155. In both cases, the "first votes" are based on respondents' later recollections of how they had voted in the first election in which they participated. Note that the British figures are the per cent of the vote for the two main parties.

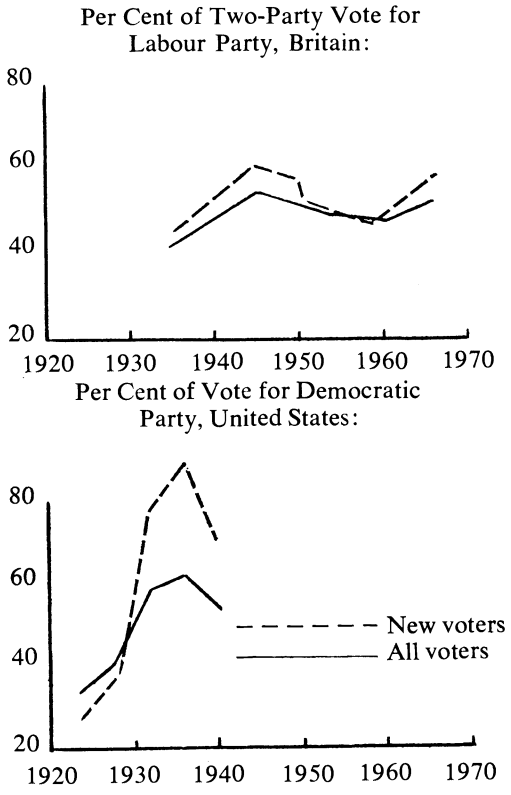

Figure 5. Voting Trends Among New Voters

it.[51] The only mechanism likely to accomplish this is a learned, lasting attachment to particular parties. It may be that electoral changes in Europe cannot follow this pattern. Indeed, the steady and gradual growth of most European socialist parties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries suggests this.

(3) The "freezing" of cleavages in Europe, which Lipset and Rokkan suggest occurred in the early part of the twentieth century, must be a result not so much of the political parties' binding of the voters' loyalty, as of some other process.[52] Thus, if lasting party attachments do not function as an intervening variable in Europe as they do in America, the exploration of bases of political cleavage, and their evolution through time, must be particularly important in studying European elections. It may be no accident that this focus increasingly characterizes the study of European elections.[53]

(4) The hypothesis I have suggested may give new meaning and dignity to the venerable concept of *tendance* in French voting behavior. Many writers have treated the French voter's support of a *tendance* (a broad political orientation such as "the Left," which might embrace a number of parties) as a weakly articulated party identification. It is possible, however, that to the French voter, espousal of a *tendance* represents a placing of himself in a system of blocs such as that which I have imputed to the Weimar Republic.

This could explain some peculiarities in French voting. Duncan MacRae, for example, was surprised to find that support for referenda in the Fourth Republic was closely correlated with support for political parties:

> It might be imagined that because the questions thus posed were not formally linked to party, some freedom from party dictates could develop. In actuality, votes on the referenda were closely linked to party, especially for the Communists and Socialists.[54]

If both party votes and votes on referenda were alternative expressions of a *tendance*, however, it would not be surprising that they were highly correlated. It is only surprising if one assumes, as MacRae did, that party loyalty is the only probable cause of a correlation between party choice and the vote on a referendum.

(5) The hypothesis I have suggested implies an interesting development of European voting behavior, by which it should tend in the future to be based more on party identification than it has been so far. Both of the factors I have taken as crucial—the existence of clear social and economic conflicts, and the existence of parties which are clearly identified with positions in these conflicts—appear to be declining in many European countries. "Umbrella" parties such as the Christian Democrats in Germany and Italy and the Gaullists in France tend to cross lines of social and economic conflict. And conflicts themselves are becoming less clear and static as the mobility of European populations increases. All this should

[51] This term was first used by Key (V. O. Key, Jr.), "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, 17 (February, 1955), pp. 1–18. See also Campbell et al., *The American Voter*, pp. 531–538.

[52] Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignment: An Introduction," in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, ed. S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 50–56. Lipset and Rokkan themselves stress the development of broad party organizations, rather than individual party identification, in the process of "freezing."

[53] For example, the papers in Lipset and Rokkan, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*. Also, see Philip Converse and Henry Valen, "Dimensions of Cleavage and Perceived Party Distances in Norwegian Voting," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 6 (1971), 107–152.

[54] Duncan MacRae, *Parliament, Parties, and Society in France, 1946–1958* (New York: St. Martin's, 1967), p. 243.

serve to make it more difficult for voters to "place" themselves without developing a party identification. Accordingly, we might expect to see Europeans more and more developing party identification in the American style.

(6) Finally, there are implications for the stability of elections, which bear particularly on the Weimar case. Suppose it is true in some countries, as I have speculated, that voters depend on a social group for their cues in voting, rather than on identification with a party. This must add a qualitatively different kind of fluidity to elections, since at any time another party may arise and establish a competing claim to the social group that one or more of the older parties represents. There must be limits to how often this can happen, of course, and under what circumstances it might happen, but when t does happen it should produce larger, more sudden shifts than we would expect in a system in which electoral change is slowed down by the presence of enduring attachments to particular parties. This, I have suggested earlier, is what happened at the end of the Weimar Republic.

Appendix

"Ecological" Inference

The sort of ecological inference used in the early part of this paper needs to be discussed, for in some circumstances it will give badly biased results. To keep things simple, consider a bivariate example, in which we wish to estimate the proportion of Socialist voters from the first of a pair of elections, who repeat a Socialist vote in the second election of the pair. We know the proportion Socialist in each election for districts of the country, but have no data on individuals directly. We wish to estimate the proportion of individual Socialist voters (P) who repeat a Socialist vote. As pointed out earlier, we can take the equation for the regression line predicting proportion Socialist in the second election from the proportion Socialist in the first election, and can then extrapolate along that line to the predicted proportion Socialist in the second election, in a hypothetical district composed entirely of Socialist voters from the first election. Since all the voters in such a district represent first-election Socialist voters, the proportion voting Socialist in the second election is the figure we are looking for.

Note, however, that this figure is a valid estimate of P only if the value of P from one district to another is independent of the value of the independent variable. For example, if P increases with the proportion voting Socialist in the first election, then when we extrapolate to a condition of 1.0 Socialist vote in the first election, we are extrapolating to a condition in which P is at its highest value and will overestimate P for the total population. On the other hand, if P is unrelated to proportion voting Socialist in the first election, then the expected value of P for the hypothetical, extrapolated district is the same as for all others, and will yield an unbiased estimate of P for the population.

This is not a trivial assumption to make, nor even a very safe one. The difficulties which many people have run into in using ecological regression, particularly its unfortunate penchant for giving estimates greater than 1.0, are probably due to violations of this assumption. There are some circumstances, however, under which the assumption is safe, and others under which, even if it is violated, the results are not too badly affected. Two of these circumstances, one of each type, are relevant for the present analysis.

First, if all of the districts are homogeneous (zero or one) on the independent variable, then the assumption is not necessary. In this case the regression line does not *extrapolate* to a hypothetical situation; it merely registers the average proportion of individuals having the dependent variable for those districts composed wholly of individuals having the independent variable. And similarly, where the condition of homogeneous districts is not completely met, but is approximated, violations of the assumption will not produce serious bias in the estimate of P. In the present analysis proportion female and the dummy variables for population are homogeneous. And proportion Catholic, which clusters near zero and one, approximates homogeneity. For these variables, therefore, the assumption seems reasonable.

The remaining variable, proportion voting for a party in the first election, requires a different justification. Fortunately, another characteristic of ecological inference is that if two variables are strongly related at the individual level, the estimate of P will not be badly biased by violations of the basic assumption.[55] This is probably true of the vote for the same party in two adjacent elections, especially in a relatively quiet period of politics, such as 1924 to 1928 in Germany.

Though ecological inference is always dangerous, it would seem to be relatively less dangerous under the circumstances of this particular study.

[55] W. Phillips Shively, " 'Ecological' Inference: The Use of Aggregate Data to Study Individuals," *American Political Science Review*, 58 (December, 1969), pp. 1183–1196; esp., pp. 1191–1192.