
Explaining the Nazi Vote: The Findings and
Limits of Ecological Analysis

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Abstract

Using national-level voting returns and census data, this study examines the factors affecting the change in the Nazi vote in four elections from 1930 to 1933. No single factor explains the growth in Nazi support. Changes in turnout, votes for the right-wing DNVP, and certain Protestant, middle-class parties affect the Nazi vote in the 1930 and July, 1932 elections. The Nazis receive an initial impetus from unemployment, and have developed a momentum in the July, 1932 election. Changes in votes for the Catholic and left-wing parties also affect the Nazi vote in certain elections. These and related findings necessitate revision of traditional interpretations of the rise of the Nazi vote. Arguing against overly-simple, structural determinist and individual-level explanations, the paper concludes with a description of an additional type of data to be used in future research.

Explaining the Nazi Vote: The Findings and Limits of Ecological Analysis

The voter support for Hitler's Nazi Party grew from 810,127 in the 1928 election to the National Parliament, to 1,376,781 in July, 1932, and reached its zenith of 17,277,180 in March, 1933. This dramatic rise in Nazi support was a crucial factor in Hitler's rise to power. A number of social scientists have studied the voting returns of this period, attempting to discern the causes of this growth in Nazi support. Due to weaknesses in methodology and incomplete data, the results of these earlier studies are less than conclusive. This paper presents an additional, and hopefully conclusive, analysis of the growth of the Nazi vote. The paper concludes with a discussion of the limits of this type of analysis and of the most promising direction for future research in this area.¹

Previous scholars have used the voting returns to identify the Nazi voter constituency. Most studies have concluded that Nazi votes came from two sources: marginally-integrated, first-time voters, and earlier supporters of the middle-class and right-wing parties.² Disagreement and controversy exists, however, concerning the importance of these two segments of the Nazi constituency. One school of thought, hereafter referred to as the mass analysis, sees the marginal, first-time voters as the core of the Nazi constituency. The class analysis, in contrast, claims this distinction for the earlier supporters of middle-class parties.

The mass analysis holds that the degree of integration into the political and social structure is the primary factor distinguishing Nazi voters from others. This theory sees the conversion of individuals

to an extremist movement as consisting of two steps: detachment from previous political allegiance; and response to extremist appeals and support of the extremist movement. The detachment process is easiest when no strong loyalties exist, and when the individual lacks the membership in or close ties to secondary social, religious, or occupational groups which reenforce such loyalties. Following this thinking, one would expect previously apathetic and young, first-time voters, since they are already detached and atomized, to be the first to support the rising extremist movement -- in this case the Nazis. This is the position of R. Bendix³ and K. O'Lessker⁴, the two main proponents of the mass analysis.

The first large Nazi gain came in the 1930 election, with an increase of 5,569,545 votes over their 1928 total. In explaining this initial increase, Bendix notes that 2,444,990 nonvoters in 1928 voted in 1930; that 1,758,234 young people voted for the first time, and that the right-wing German Nationalists, the DNVP, lost almost 2,000,000 votes. "The most plausible interpretation of this evidence is to suggest that the increase in Nazi votes resulted from a radicalization of members of the nationalist parties of the Right and from the sudden participation of about 4,200,000 nonvoters and young people."⁵ The findings of O'Lessker's standardized multiple linear regression analysis support this conclusion. The beta weight of +1.08 for change in turnout produces the most change in the Nazi vote for this pair of elections. Change in turnout is seen as measuring the effects of the previously apathetic nonvoters and the young, first-time voters. Change in DNVP vote, with the beta weight of -.82, is the second most powerful variable associated with change in the Nazi vote. From this O'Lessker concludes, "... that it was a

combination of new voters and defecting Nationalists that transformed the Nazi party into a true mass movement in September, 1930."⁶

The initial support for an extremist political movement thus comes from the margins of the political system: from the marginally integrated, (the previously apathetic and young, first-time voters); and from the ideologically marginal, or right-wing voters. Class or occupational ties and loyalties, in this view, are a detriment rather than a cause of the initial support for an extremist political movement.

According to the mass analysts the marginal voters and defecting Nationalists continue to play important roles in the changes in the Nazi vote in the July and November, 1932 elections. The loss of over 1.5 million votes by the nationalist parties, combined with the addition of another two million previous nonvoters and newly eligible voters, contribute to the Nazi gains of over 7.3 million votes in July, 1932. The decline in voter turnout by 1.4 million and the DNVP gains of over 800,000 votes also account for the Nazi losses of over two million votes in the November, 1932 election. Yet, according to the mass analysis, a new element is added to the Nazi constituency in the July election: middle-class voters deserting their liberal, class-based parties. For the loss of over 3.7 million votes from these parties is an important factor contributing to the Nazi gains in this election. This is the only election in which middle-class voters affect the change in the Nazi vote. For the increase in turnout of almost four million in the March, 1933 election, which occurs after Hitler has been appointed Reichkanzler, is the chief factor explaining the Nazi gains of over five million votes in this election.

According to the mass analysis the class or occupational composition of the population should have little effect on the growth of

extremist voter support. For changes in turnout and support for Rightist parties reflect the effects of marginal integration and political ideology -- both of which are independent of class or occupation. Previously apathetic voters are, if anything, predominantly lower-class, while young, first-time voters come from all classes. Right-wing voters may be predominantly middle-class, yet most middle-class voters support middle-class, liberal parties up to July, 1932. Class or occupational factors are thus of only secondary importance in explaining the rise of the Nazi vote.⁷

The class analysis sees the Protestant middle class as the core of the Nazi voter constituency. Lipset⁸ reviews the literature and offers two kinds of evidence in support of this view. Studies of separate regions and of the German cities produce positive correlations between the size of the middle class and the strength of the Nazi vote in these elections.⁹ The second kind of evidence comes from Lipset's examination of the aggregate trends in voter support for the various kinds of parties in this period. He notes the almost complete collapse of the liberal, middle-class parties from 1928 to 1932. The losses of the predominantly upper-class, right-wing DNVP are much less. Likewise the left-wing parties and the Catholic Center Party experience no dramatic losses. Since the parties of the upper and lower classes and the Catholics remain strong, while the liberal parties of the Protestant middle class collapse, class analysts conclude that the Nazi voter constituency was predominantly Protestant middle class.

Lipset agrees with the mass analysts' assumption that increases in turnout reflect the voting behavior of the marginally integrated. He argues, however, that, ". . . the most outcast and apathetic

sections of the population can be won to political action by extremist and authoritarian parties only after such parties have become major movements, not while they are in their period of early rise. To support a new and small movement requires a relatively complex, long-term view of the political process, which insecure, ignorant, and apathetic persons cannot sustain."¹⁰ Lipset finds a $-.2$ rank order correlation between the percent increase in the Nazi vote and the percent increase in the proportion of the eligible electorate voting in the 1930 election. This correlation changes to $+.6$ for the July, 1932 election.¹¹ From this he concludes that Nazi support from politically and socially marginal voters is a secondary factor in the growth of the Nazi vote. The earliest and most important Nazi support comes from the Protestant middle class.

The differences between the mass and class analyses are confined to the interpretations of the 1930 and July, 1932 elections. They agree that change in turnout is the most important factor explaining change in the Nazi vote in the November, 1932 and March, 1933 elections. There is likewise general agreement that the economic depression is the main factor mobilizing Nazi support in the 1930 and July, 1932 elections. Two additional factors are seen affecting the Nazi vote in July, 1932: the "bandwagon" effect, or the desire to support what appears to be a rising movement, and the fear of a Leftist revolution. The bandwagon effect suggests that an extremist political movement is able to generate its own momentum: that early victories help cause subsequent victories. This effect also explains the large Nazi gains in the 1933 election after Hitler has come to power. While the depression and the bandwagon mentality mobilize both Protestant middle-class voters and previous non-voters, the fear of

a Leftist revolution mobilizes only the former. This suggests that the rise of the Nazi vote is due, in part, to a polarization process: Communist gains in 1930 cause increased Nazi support from the Protestant middle class in July, 1932. Other factors, such as nationalism, regionalism, and disgust with the democratic system, are also mentioned in explaining the Nazi voter mobilization. Since no data exists for these attitudinal variables, the analysis presented below studies only the effects of the depression and of previous Nazi and Communist gains on the changes in the Nazi vote.

Previous studies of the Nazi vote contain a number of weaknesses in methodology and interpretation. All such studies commit the ecological fallacy: the inference from aggregate-level data of relationships between individual-level characteristics.¹² One cannot conclude from a positive correlation between the number of middle-class inhabitants in cities and the increase in the Nazi vote in these cities that middle-class individuals voted Nazi. For the data is on the aggregate level -- in this case cities -- while the interpretation is on the individual level. To avoid this fallacy one must either have individual-level data, such as is produced by survey research, or interpret the findings on the aggregate level. Since individual-level data is lacking, the latter practice is employed below.

A second weakness in this literature concerns the measurement of the variables. Lipset,¹³ for example, uses the per cent increase in the Nazi vote and the increase in the proportion of the eligible electorate voting in his rank-order correlations. The interpretation of correlations between variables in percentage form is problematic, since one does not know whether the correlation reflects relationships between the numerators, the denominators, or both. In other

studies, such as O'Lessker's,¹⁴ the correlations are between changes in the actual number of voters, the number of Nazi votes, etc. This practice is preferable to using percentages, but contains an additional weakness: one will frequently find spurious positive correlations due to the fact that the number of inhabitants in a city sets limits on the number of individuals who can vote, or vote Nazi. To avoid this problem, one should control for the number of inhabitants in the correlations based on such numerical measures. Consequently, the population of the areal units is included as a variable in the regression equations discussed below.

A final weakness in this literature concerns the use of the 35 large election districts as the geographical units of measure in a number of the studies. Most of the variance in the variables studied is within, rather than between, these election districts. Regional studies have explained some of this within-district variance for particular regions. Unfortunately, it is difficult to generalize from relationships found in one region, to all of Germany. To avoid this problem of generalization, and to study all of the variance in the variables, the data used in this study is based on the roughly 1100 urban and rural districts, (Land- and Stadtkreise) of which Germany was comprised.

The data used in this study come from the German Census. For each urban or rural district we have the numbers of inhabitants (population), Protestants, inhabitants in cities larger than 10,000 (Urbanity), and employed in Industry, Trade, Agriculture, and the civil service in 1925. To avoid multicollinearity, the residuals of the variables of Protestants, Urbanity, and the occupational variables, regressed on population, are used. In addition, a measure of occupational homo-

geneity within each district was computed from the occupational variables. The residuals of the numbers of individuals receiving emergency unemployment relief in 1930 and 1932, regressed on population, are used as the measures of unemployed.

The variables measuring voting behavior consist of the changes, between pairs of consecutive elections, in the number of eligible voters, the total number of individuals voting, and the numbers of votes given the various parties. The pairs of elections are: 1928-1930; 1930-July, 1932; July, 1932-November, 1932; and November, 1932-1933. As will be noted in the regression equations, certain variables were transformed with the logarithmic function to produce more normal distributions. All variables were standardized to avoid the effects of differences in scale between variables. The betas in the multiple linear regression equations measure the amount and direction of change in units of the dependent variable which are caused by one unit of change in the independent variable, controlling for the effects of all other independent variables in the equation. Using this method and data, hypotheses from the mass and class analyses are tested below.

The mass analysis hypothesizes that changes in turnout and the vote for the right-wing DNVP should have the strongest effects on the change in the Nazi vote in 1930. Turnout, or the change in the total number of individuals voting, should have a strong positive beta, while the beta for the change in DNVP vote should be strongly negative. Since the Nazi support is independent of class, occupational, or religious characteristics, the mass analysis predicts no strong effects, either direct or indirect, between these variables and the change in the Nazi vote. With the exception of the DNVP vote, changes

TABLE 1
EXPLAINING THE 1930 NAZI VOTE

Equation No.	Dependent Variable	Mult. R ²	Betas	Selected Variables	Variables Not Selected ^e
1	Δ 1930 Nazi ^c	.80	+ .59 + .26 - .18 - .18 - .15 + .13 + .13 - .12 + .09 - .08 - .07 + .07 + .06 - .05 - .05 - .05	population ^c Δ 1930 turnout ^c Δ 1930 DNVP ^c Δ 1930 Center ^d Δ 1930 Other ^d 1930 Unemployed ^{a, c} Urbanity ^a Δ 1930 Business Pty Protestants ^a Trade ^a Δ 1930 KPD ^c Δ 1930 SPD Agriculture ^a Homogeneity ^a Industry ^a Δ 1930 Peasant Ptys ^b	Δ 1930 DVP Δ 1930 State civil servants ^a

^aThese variables are the residuals of the variable regressed on population.

^bThis measures the changes in number of votes for all Peasant parties, combined. Since Peasant parties in different regions had different names, this combination is necessary to measure changes on the national level.

^cAll such variables have been transformed with the logarithmic function, to produce a more normal distribution.

^dThis measures the combined vote changes for the various small, regionally-based, non-peasant parties.

^eThe significance level necessary for inclusion in the regression equation is .05. Variables listed in this column did not meet this criterion.

in voter support for all of the other parties should be unrelated

to the dependent variable. For according to the mass analysis it is only defecting DNVP voters and increases in turnout which produce this first Nazi electoral victory.

The class analysis provides an additional set of hypotheses for this election. According to Lipset, neither turnout nor the DNVP vote should have strong effects on the dependent variable. Rather, one should find strong negative betas for the changes in votes for the Protestant, liberal, middle-class parties: the Other parties, the Peasant parties, the DVP or German People's Party, the State Party, and the Business Party. According to this theory Nazi voters are predominantly Protestant. Consequently the number of Protestants should have a strongly positive beta. There should be no significant effects of changes in the votes for the Catholic Center and left-wing (KPD and SPD) parties on the dependent variable, however, since these parties appeal to much different constituencies than do the Nazis.

Despite these differing, and in one instance contradictory hypotheses, the mass and class analyses share one hypothesis: the number unemployed should have strongly positive direct and indirect effects on the change in the Nazi vote. Table 1 presents the regression equation with which these hypotheses may be tested. All variables with relationships of statistical significance of .05 or greater were added to the regression equation. The variable population is included in this and other equations as a control for the size of the districts, to prevent spurious relationships.

The hypotheses of the mass analysis receive strong support from the findings in Table 1. Disregarding population, changes in turnout and the DNVP vote are two of the variables with the strongest effects

on the change in Nazi vote. The $+0.13$ beta for Urbanity is likewise consistent with the mass analysis; one would expect to find a higher rate of marginal integration, and thus Nazi support, in urban areas than elsewhere. The only evidence casting doubt on the mass analysis is the strong negative betas of the changes in votes for the Center, Others, and Business parties. The mass analysis has no explanation for these betas, which suggest that changes in turnout and the DNVP vote are not the only political factors affecting the change in the Nazi vote.

The class analysis finds little support for its hypotheses in Table 1. The class analysis predicts that all five middle-class parties should have strong negative betas; this is the case for only two: the Other parties and the Business party. The $+0.09$ beta for Protestants is consistent with the class analysis' identification of the Nazi constituency as predominantly Protestant. Yet to argue a simple "religious determinism", as in identifying the Nazi constituency as Protestant, is to over-simplify. For the strong -0.18 beta for the Center party is twice as large as that for Protestants. This finding refutes the class analysis contention that the strongly Catholic Center party is appealing to a different constituency than are the Nazis. Religion, as a demographic and ideological factor, is important in explaining the early rise of a fascist movement. More important, however, is the political organization and mobilization of religious constituencies. This is shown by the strong beta for the Center party, when the number of Protestants is controlled in Equation 1.

Both mass and class theories predict positive effects of the number unemployed on the change in the Nazi vote. This hypothesis

is supported by the $+0.13$ beta for unemployed in equation 1. Both theories hypothesize positive, yet different, indirect effects of unemployed as well. According to mass theory the number unemployed should increase the Nazi vote by increasing turnout and decreasing the DNVP vote. Equations 2 and 3 in Table 2 show that this is only half correct: the number unemployed does have a negative effect on change in the DNVP vote, but has no effect on change in turnout. According to class theorists, the positive indirect effect of unemployed on the Nazi vote should be through its negative effects on the changes in votes for the middle-class parties. Equations 4, 5, and 6 show that this is the case for both the two Protestant, middle-class parties, (Other parties and the Business Party), and for the middle-class Catholic Center party.

Both mass and class theorists agree that turnout should be only weakly associated with the religious and occupational characteristics of the districts. It is for this reason that class theorists discount the significance of turnout in this election. This is also the basis for the mass theorists' claim that the 1930 Nazi constituency consists largely of declassed, atomized individuals. Our aggregate-level data on the structural characteristics of the districts offer no measure of social cohesion or integration, so no conclusive resolution of this issue is possible. If social cohesion and integration is the main factor affecting turnout, however, structural characteristics should be largely irrelevant to turnout. Equation 2 shows that this is not the case. Changes in turnout are significantly associated with the demographic, occupational, and to a lesser extent religious characteristics of the districts. Class theorists would suggest that such characteristics serve as the bases for social groups and net-

TABLE 2

EXPLAINING THE INDIRECT EFFECTS ON THE 1930 NAZI VOTE

Equation No.	Dependent Variable	Mult. R ²	Betas	Selected Variables	Variables Not Selected ^d
2	Δ 1930 Turnout ^{b,c}	.57	+ .78 - .16 - .15 + .12 + .10 - .10 - .07	Population ^{b,c} Agriculture ^a Homogeneity ^a Urbanity ^a Industry ^a Civil Servants ^a Protestants ^a	Trade 1930 Unemployed ^{b,a,c}
3	Δ 1930 DNVP ^{b,c}	.47	- .58 - .30 - .21 + .21 - .10 - .08 - .06	Population ^{b,c} Trade ^a Protestants ^a Industry ^a Homogeneity ^a 1930 Unemployed ^{b,a,c} Civil Servants ^a	Urbanity ^a Agriculture ^a
4	Δ 1930 Center ^{b,c}	.36	+ .52 - .48 + .21 - .18 - .07	Population ^{b,c} Protestants ^a Urbanity ^a 1930 Unemployed ^{b,a,c} Civil Servants ^a	Agriculture ^a Industry ^a Trade ^a Homogeneity ^a
5	Δ 1930 Other ^d	.20	+ .38 - .25 - .25 - .12 + .10 + .08	Trade ^a 1930 Unemployed ^{b,a,c} Protestants ^a Urbanity ^a Population ^{b,c} Homogeneity ^a	Agriculture ^a Industry ^a Civil Servants ^a
6	Δ 1930 Business Party	.14	+ .41 + .37 - .21 - .16 - .13 - .07	Urbanity ^a Population Civil Servants ^a Protestants ^a 1930 Unemployed ^{b,a,c} Homogeneity ^a	Agriculture ^a Industry ^a Trade ^a

^aThese variables are the residuals of the variable

regressed on population.

^bAll such variables have been transformed with the logarithmic function, to produce a more normal distribution.

^cThis measures the combined vote changes for the various small, regionally-based, non-peasant parties.

^dThe significance level necessary for inclusion in the regression equation is .05. Variables listed in this column did not meet this criterion.

works within districts. To the extent that this is the case, the interpretation of turnout as a product of the re-integration and mobilization of previously isolated individuals warrants reexamination. The strength of the association between turnout and the Nazi vote thus does not disprove the class analysis. Rather, the demographic and occupational characteristics, which are seen by both class and mass analysts as underlying party support, are also related to change in turnout.

Mass analysts see DNVP voters as united primarily by a right-wing ideology. Class analysts, in contrast, emphasize the importance of class or occupational characteristics to the DNVP vote. Equation 3 supports the class interpretation, in that the measures of the numbers employed in both trade and industry are fairly strongly associated with the DNVP vote. This means neither that political ideology is irrelevant to the interpretation of the DNVP vote, nor that the DNVP constituency is predominantly upper-class. Our data provide no conclusive answers to either of these questions. The findings do suggest that the demographic and occupational characteristics of the districts are relevant and related to the process whereby the DNVP loses votes in this election.

The indirect effects of religion on the 1930 Nazi vote are in the direction predicted by the class analysts. The combined indirect

effects of Protestants are $+0.17$, (-0.02 turnout, $+0.04$ DNVP, $+0.09$ Center, $+0.04$ Other, $+0.02$ Business), which is larger than the direct effect of Protestants on the 1930 Nazi vote of $+0.09$. Religion is clearly important in explaining the 1930 Nazi vote, as is predicted by the class analysis.

The class analysis receives additional support from the findings on the indirect effects of urbanity and the occupational characteristics. Urbanity has significantly high betas in Equations 2, 4, 5, and 6. Trade likewise has high betas in Equations 3 and 5. Yet the combined indirect effects of these variables on the Nazi vote, through their effects on the dependent variables in Equations 2 through 6, are generally weak. And in the case of the measure of urbanity, the cumulative indirect beta of -0.0378 is in the opposite direction as its direct beta of $+0.13$ to the Nazi vote. Two points are to be made from this. First, the class theorists are correct in pointing to the importance of structural variables, in both directly and indirectly affecting the 1930 Nazi vote. Second, the effects of these variables on the Nazi vote are not consistently in the same direction. Consequently, to simply argue that the Nazi constituency is or is not made up of individuals or populations with certain structural traits or positions, is to over-simplify. The indirect effects of structural variables on the 1930 Nazi vote show much more complexity than is predicted by simple "structural determinism", of which "class determinism" is but one variant.

Four points may be made in summarizing the analysis of the 1930 Nazi vote. First, no single factor stands out as the chief determinant of the Nazi vote. Rather, a considerable number of variables affect the early growth of the Nazi voter support. Second, the Nazis

benefit at this stage from both increases in the number of votes cast (turnout), and from losses by their chief competitor on the right -- the DNVP. This is not to say that Nazi voters in 1930 are necessarily either new voters or previous DNVP supporters. Rather, the Nazis show stronger-than-average gains in districts in which the DNVP vote dropped and the number of votes cast increased.

A third point concerns the effects of demographic, occupational, and religious factors on the Nazi vote. The findings show support for the class contention that these factors affect, if not "underlie", changes in turnout and the voter support for the various parties. The measure of the number of Protestants is the most important of these factors. The effects of these variables on the 1930 Nazi vote are quite complex, however. Little support is shown for a direct, structural deterministic thesis from the findings presented here.

Finally, unemployment does benefit the Nazis in this election. This operates both directly, and through decreasing the votes for other parties. Unemployment does not, however, increase turnout.

The mass and class explanations for the Nazi gains in the July, 1932 election are very similar in many respects. Both see turnout and the losses of the Protestant, middle-class parties as the main factors accounting for the Nazi gains. Neither suggests that shifts in support for the Center or left-wing SPD or KPD parties are directly related to Nazi gains. For Catholics and working-class voters are not part of the Nazi constituency. Mass and class analysts likewise agree on the effects of unemployment and previous Communist gains on the Nazi vote in this election. Unemployment aids the Nazis by increasing turnout and decreasing the votes for the Protestant, middle-class parties. The polarization hypothesis holds that previous (1930) KPD

TABLE 3

TESTING EXPLANATIONS FOR THE JULY, 1932 NAZI VOTE

Equation No.	Dependent Variable	Mult. R ²	Betas	Selected Variables	Variables Not Selected ^e
7	ΔJ32 Nazi	.76	+ .38 + .32 + .27 - .23 + .20 - .17 - .16 + .14 + .10 - .10 - .10 - .08 + .07 - .07	Population ^c Δ1930 Nazi ^c ΔJ32 Turnout ΔJ32 Peasants ^b Urbanity ^a ΔJ32 Other ^d ΔJ32 Center ^c Agriculture ^a Protestants ^a ΔJ32 DNVP ΔJ32 KPD ΔJ32 Christ-Socs Industry ^a ΔJ32 SPD	ΔJ32 Business Pty ΔJ32 State Pty Δ1930 KPD 1932 Unemployed ^{c, a} Industry ^a Trade ^a Civil Servants ^a Homogeneity ΔJ32 Eligible vtrs ΔJ32 DVP

^aThese variables are the residuals of the original variable regressed on population.

^bThis measures the changes in number of votes for all Peasant parties, combined. Since Peasant parties in different regions had different names, this combination is necessary to measure changes on the national level.

^cAll such variables have been transformed with the logarithmic function, to produce more normal distributions.

^dThis measures the combined vote changes for the various small, regionally-based splinter and non-peasant parties.

^eThe significance level necessary for inclusion in the regression equation is .05. Variables listed in this column did not meet this criterion.

gains benefit the Nazis by decreasing the votes for the Protestant, middle-class parties. The two analyses differ only in their

interpretations of the indirect effects of the "bandwagon" process. Mass analysts see the bandwagon process, measured by 1930 Nazi vote, as benefiting the Nazis in this election by decreasing the votes for the Protestant, middle-class parties. Class analysts see these previous Nazi gains as having their main effect on the July, 1932 Nazi vote through increasing turnout.

Equation 7 in Table 3 presents the factors directly affecting the July, 1932 Nazi vote. As predicted by both mass and class analysts, turnout has strong positive effects on the change in the Nazi vote. Likewise, the votes for some Protestant, middle-class parties, (the Peasant parties, Other, and the Christian-Socialists), have the predicted negative effects. Yet this is not the case for all such middle-class parties: the Business, DVP, and state parties have no significant effects on the Nazi vote. One clearly needs to distinguish between the various middle-class parties, rather than considering them as a group.

As was the case for the 1930 election, a large number of factors affect the change in the Nazi vote in this election. The strongly positive (+.28) beta for the 1930 Nazi vote in Equation 7 shows that the Nazi movement, once started, clearly has a momentum of its own. Increased votes for the Leftist (SPD and KPD), Rightist (DNVP), and Catholic Center parties decrease the Nazi vote. This is consistent with the findings for 1930, and suggests a revision of the mass and class analyses, which hold that these variables should be unrelated to the Nazi vote. Urban districts with many Protestants give the Nazis larger-than-normal numbers of new votes. The Nazis gain in agricultural districts as well, as the +.08 beta for agriculture, and the -.25 beta for Peasant parties indicate. Polarization, as

measured by 1930 KPD, has no direct effect on the Nazi vote in this election, however.

The four political variables having the greatest effects on the July, 1932 Nazi vote are the dependent variables in the equations in Table 4. The 1930 Nazi vote, the 1930 KPD vote, 1932 unemployment, and the demographic variables are the independent variables available for selection.

The class theorists suggest that the bandwagon effect, as measured by the 1930 Nazi vote, indirectly benefits the Nazis in July, 1932 by increasing turnout. The strong $+0.39$ beta of 1930 Nazi in Equation 8 supports this view. This indirect effect through turnout is $+0.12$. Mass theorists see the bandwagon effect as benefiting the Nazis by decreasing votes for the Protestant, middle-class parties. The 1930 Nazi vote does have this effect on the July, 1932 votes for the Peasant and Other parties, although the betas are quite weak. The combined direct and indirect effects of the 1930 Nazi vote on the July, 1932 Nazi vote is $+0.45$, which makes it the strongest determinant of the Nazi vote in this election. The Nazi movement clearly gains a momentum of its own in July, 1932.

The polarization thesis, held by both mass and class analysts, suggests that the 1930 KPD vote benefits the Nazis in July, 1932 by decreasing the votes for the Protestant, middle-class parties in this election. Previous Communist gains scare middle-class voters, who react by voting Nazi. The findings support this thesis only for the Other parties, in Equation 10. This indirect effect is very small ($+0.05$). Polarization clearly has little explanatory power in this election. This is likewise the case for the indirect effects of unemployment and the religious and demographic variables. As is the

TABLE 4

VARIABLES INDIRECTLY AFFECTING THE JULY, 1932 NAZI VOTE

Equation No.	Dependent Variable	Mult. R ²	Betas	Selected Variables	Variables Not Selected ^e
8	Δ J32 Turnout	.29	+ .39 - .38 - .34 - .31 - .29 - .28 - .21 - .13 - .08	Δ 1930 Nazi ^c Population ^c Trade ^a Industry ^a Agriculture ^a Urbanity ^a Civil Servants ^a Protestants ^a Homogeneity ^a	1932 Unemployed ^{c, a}
9	Δ J32 Peasant Pty ^b	.37	+ .38 + .22 - .20 - .19 - .18 - .13 + .09	Urbanity ^a Population ^c Protestants ^a Agriculture ^a 1932 Unemployed ^{c, a} Δ 1930 Nazi ^c Trade ^a	Δ 1930 KPD ^c Industry ^a Civil Servants ^a Homogeneity ^a
10	Δ J32 Other Ptys ^d	.38	- .70 - .37 - .30 + .14 - .14 - .12 + .12 - .09	Population ^c Trade ^a Δ 1930 KPD ^c 1932 Unemployed ^{c, a} Δ 1930 Nazi ^c Civil Servants ^a Protestants ^a Homogeneity ^a	Urbanity ^a Agriculture ^a Industry ^a
11	Δ J32 Center Pty	.35	- .44 + .29 + .20 + .14	Protestants ^a Population ^c Δ 1930 KPD ^c Trade ^a	Δ 1930 Nazi ^c 1932 Unemployed ^{c, a} Urbanity ^a Agriculture ^a Industry ^a Civil Servants ^a Homogeneity ^a

^aThese variables are the residuals of the original variable regressed on population.

^bThis measures the changes in number of votes for all Peasant Parties, combined. Since Peasant parties in different regions had different names, this combination is necessary to measure changes on the national level.

^cAll such variables have been transformed with the logarithmic function, to produce more normal distributions.

^dThis measures the combined vote changes for the various small, regionally-based, splinter and non-peasant parties.

^eThe significance level necessary for inclusion in the regression equation is .05. Variables listed in this column did not meet this criterion.

case for the 1930 election, religion, urbanity, and the occupational characteristics of the districts are related to the changes in voting behavior under study. There are, however, no significant cumulative indirect effects of these variables on the July, 1932 Nazi vote.

The mass and class analysts give little attention to the last two elections. Their interpretations of the Nov., 1932 and March, 1933 elections are nearly identical. Both cite the decline in turnout of 1,400,000 and the DNVP gains of almost 1,000,000 in explaining the Nazi losses of slightly over 2,000,000 votes in November, 1932. The gains of certain Protestant, middle-class parties are also viewed in this context. Likewise the increase in turnout (+3,872,514) and losses by the Leftist and Protestant, middle-class parties are cited in explaining the Nazi gain of over 5.5 million votes in March, 1933.

The regression equations for change in the Nazi vote in these two elections, (not presented here), are generally consistent with this common interpretation and analysis. Turnout is the variable with the strongest betas (+1.28 in November, 1932; +.41 in 1933) in both elections. The changes in votes for DNVP, KPD, the Christian-Socialists, and the Center party are among the more important political variables affecting the change in the Nazi vote in November, 1932. The changes

in votes for the KPD, DVP, and Center party are among the more important political variables explaining change in the Nazi vote in 1933. The findings for these last two elections are basically the same as for the first two.

The findings presented above offer a partial resolution of the difference between the mass and class analyses, suggest conclusions not reached by previous analysts, and raise additional questions for research. It is clear from these findings that a synthesis between the mass and class analyses is needed. Turnout, DNVP vote, and support for various, and different Protestant, middle-class parties are all related to the Nazi vote in these elections. The mass and class analyses should be seen as complementary, rather than mutually exclusive. Yet if both are partially right on some points, both accept the same erroneous assumptions in other areas.

Both mass and class analysts see turnout as measuring the voting behavior of marginally-integrated individuals -- the atomized masses produced by an urbanized, industrialized, bureaucratized society. If one measures marginal integration in terms of past nonvoting, this assumption is obviously true -- and tautological. If one measures marginal integration in terms of decreasing importance of occupational and class characteristics, however, the findings call this assumption into question. For turnout in these elections is affected by various religious, demographic, and occupational characteristics of the districts under study. A more plausible interpretation of turnout is that it measures simply the changes in levels of mobilization of various kinds of voters within the districts. Groups and networks based on occupational and religious characteristics most probably play important roles in this voter mobilization. The aggregate-level data used

here do not make possible a definite confirmation of this hypothesis, nor do they enable one to study the process of mobilization on the local level. The findings do make clear, however, that changes in aggregate voter mobilization are one of the chief factors affecting changes in the Nazi vote in all of these elections.

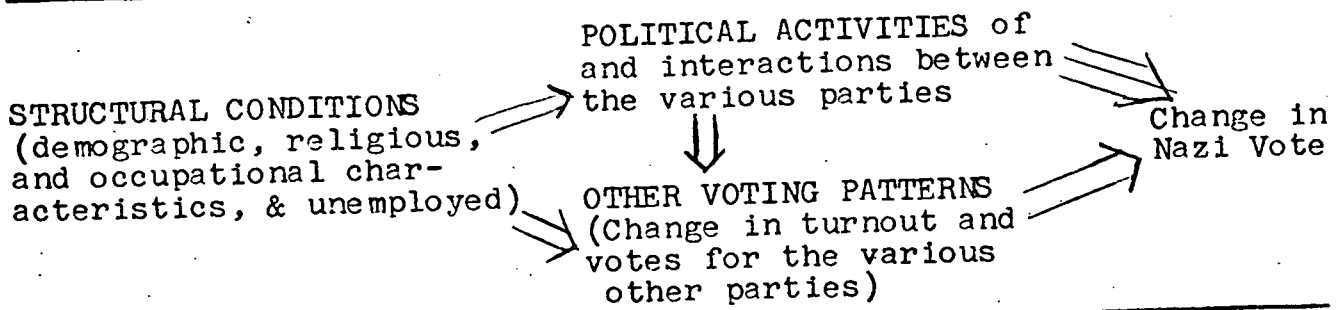
Unemployment and the bandwagon effect are the two factors most often mentioned in explanations of the mobilization of the Nazi vote. Both mass and class analysts suggest that unemployment is a continuing factor benefiting the Nazis in these elections. The findings show that the benefits of unemployment for the Nazis are limited to the 1930 election. Economic distress gives initial impetus to the growth of a fascist movement. Beyond that point its effects are insignificant. The effects of the Nazi momentum, or the bandwagon effect, are likewise limited to the July, 1932 election. It is noteworthy that in both cases the strongest effects of these two factors are direct -- not indirect through turnout, as is held in the literature. These findings thus suggest a second revision of the commonly held view of the rise of the Nazis. Unfortunately, due to the limits of aggregate-level data the direct effects of unemployment and the bandwagon effect can only be documented. It is not possible with this data to study how unemployment and previous Nazi gains benefit the Nazis in these two elections.

The findings suggest a third revision in the common analyses of the rise of the Nazis. Many, although by no means all, mass and class analysts are content with arguing that aggregates of individuals sharing common positions, in terms of social integration, class, religion, or previous political support, reject or support the Nazis. This mode of analysis -- tracing causal relationships from structural

position to attitude to voting behavior -- has only limited validity. This can be shown with the example of the effects of religion on the Nazi vote. Class analysts claim that only Catholics vote for the Center party. Since Protestants do not, and since the Nazi constituency is supposed to be overwhelmingly Protestant, the constituency of the Center party is completely different than that for the Nazis. If this were in fact the case, one would find the Center party vote having no effect on the Nazi vote, when one controls for the number of Protestants. Our findings show that this is not the case. From this one may conclude that the political organization and activities of various groups and parties are of central importance in explaining the rise of a fascist movement. The level of analysis cannot be limited to the individual level. Rather, the analysis must also consider the effects of organizational factors and processes. In this regard the effects of the Center, SPD, and KPD votes on the Nazi votes in these elections need reinterpretation. These effects may reflect the strength of the organizations and/or the activities of these parties, rather than merely of "negative constituencies", or constituencies which do not vote Nazi. Indeed, as the Communist gains increase over the first three elections, the effects of the Communist vote on the Nazi vote become greater. This finding is not consistent with the "negative constituencies" interpretation, but is consistent with an interpretation emphasizing the importance of the organization and activities of the parties with whom the Nazis compete for votes.

The results of voting behavior studies, such as those presented here and in the earlier literature on the Nazis, are rich in quantified detail, yet poor in interpretative meaning. Earlier quantitative studies of the Nazi vote have attempted to remedy this poverty in

FIGURE 1: CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS EXPLAINING CHANGE IN NAZI VOTE



meaning by trying to identify the "ideal-typical" Nazi voter. This type of interpretation has lead not only to the ecological fallacy, but also to unverified and untestable explanations. Referring to Figure 1, this type of argument has emphasized causal relationships from Structural Conditions to Other Voting Patterns to Change in Nazi Vote. The poverty of interpretative meaning in this argument is caused by the limits of the aggregate-level data: it is not possible to determine how or why various structural conditions affect the change in Nazi vote -- either directly, or through Other Voting Patterns. To remedy this deficiency in the state of our knowledge, it seems clear that additional data is necessary. Such data should show the group-level, historical processes producing the changes in Other voting patterns and the Nazi votes in these elections. Since such data will supplement, rather than replace, the existing data on the structural conditions, it should be quantifiable, and it should be possible to aggregate such data to the same geographical units for which the election returns are presented.

As may be seen from Figure 1, I suggest that data on the activities of and interactions between the various parties in these election campaigns is most likely to produce meaningful interpretations of the rise of the Nazi vote in these elections. For this type of data

shows the techniques and process of political mobilization, of which the changes in Other Voting Patterns and the Nazi vote are the results. The analysis of such data should enable us to go beyond overly-simple, "structural-determinist" and ecologically fallacious interpretations, while retaining the advantages of a quantitative analysis. Research in progress employs such data, taken from a German national daily newspaper, for the 1930 and July, 1932 election campaigns. The results of this research should supplement the findings presented here by providing a clear picture of the processes by which the Nazis became the largest political party in Germany.

FOOTNOTES

1. The research reported here was conducted in meeting the requirements for the Ph.D. at the University of Michigan. The United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency provided funding for part of this research. Most of the data used in this analysis was provided by the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research. The members of my dissertation committee -- Professors Charles Tilly, Wm. Gamson, Max Heirich, and Charles Bright -- gave invaluable suggestions and criticisms at earlier stages of the research. I owe special thanks to Chuck Tilly, who provided at all stages of the research guidance, advice, and support in ways too numerous to mention. The responsibility for any shortcomings in the research is, of course, solely my own.
2. For a review of most of this literature, see S. M. Lipset's "Fascism -- Left, Right, and Center" in S. M. Lipset, Political Man, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1960).
3. Reinhard Bendix, "Social Stratification and Political Power" in Class, Status, and Power, ed. by R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953), pp. 596-608.
4. Karl O'Lessker, "Who Voted for Hitler? A New Look at the Class Basis of Naziism," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 74, pp. 63-69.
5. Bendix, "Stratification and Power", p. 605.
6. O'Lessker, "Class Basis of Naziism," p. 66.
7. Class or occupational factors are seen by mass analysts as of only secondary importance in that they become important only in the second, July, 1932 election.
8. Lipset, op. cit.
9. For example, Rudolf Heberle, From Democracy to Nazism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1945).
10. Lipset, op. cit., p. 150.
11. ibid. pp. 150-151
12. For a more complete discussion of the ecological fallacy, see Wm. S. Robinson, "Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals", American Sociological Review, Vol. XV (1950), pp. 351-357.
13. Lipset, op. cit., p. 150
14. O'Lessker, op. cit.