In the past decade, historians have actively debated the social composition of the Nazi party's membership and electorate during the Weimar years. Most now generally agree that the social class most inclined to join and vote for the National Socialists was the petty bourgeoisie, including artisans, shopkeepers, and peasants.¹ Substantial support, however, has been shown to have come from higher social strata. Recent studies have demonstrated that residents of affluent neighborhoods, vacationers, cruise ship passengers, civil servants, and rentiers—all arguably elite—supported the National Socialist German Workers party (NSDAP).² On the other hand, big business and Junkers—the core groups of the ruling class in Weimar Germany—were generally disinclined to join or vote for the Nazis, although some of them gave various other kinds of direct and indirect support.³

The present study is primarily interested in elite support manifested by membership in and voting for the Nazi party. The thesis here is that "peripheral elites", that is, provincial aristocratic and bourgeois elements that lacked control of the central machinery of the government and economy, were the main upper-class groups giving active support to Nazism. Nazism represented to these peripheral elites an aspiration to remove control over the machinery of the national government from the hands of the large corporations and the Junker class, as well as to free the government from influence by the organized working class. They desired government policies more favorable for small-to-medium-size industrial firms, banks, and commercial enterprises.
### Regional Elites

#### Table 1

Shifts from Election to Election in Correlations Between Percentage of Domestic Servants and Percentage Nazi Vote

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1924A*</th>
<th>1924B</th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>1930</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>.06x</td>
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<td>.13x</td>
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<td>-.05x</td>
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<td>.37x</td>
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<td>Bavaria</td>
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<td>.02x</td>
<td>.04x</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1932B</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>Number of Localities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bavaria</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Underlining: Significant, positive initial correlation or significant shift in direction of overall party vote shift.

Initial correlation, not shift.

x: Not significant at .05 level.

These peripheral elites never became the central decision-making group within the Nazi party, a part played by "military-political-intellectuals" of a statist and totalitarian orientation. The peripheral elites, however, played a very important role as a bridge between the party's ideologues and the petty-bourgeois masses. As seen in Table 1, peripheral elites contributed to the voting surges of the NSDAP in May 1924 and again in 1930. This elite support represented an assurance to the core elites that Nazism was not truly a socialist movement and thus served to ease Hitler's accession to power in 1933.

In distinguishing peripheral elites from core elites, geography and class position were closely related, for all regions were not equal. Core regions obviously included the great metropolises, especially Berlin,
Hamburg, and Düsseldorf, the home cities of many top industrial corporations, banks, and commercial enterprises, as well as government centers. Also included would be the heavy-industry centers of the Ruhr and Upper Silesia, home to some of the wealthiest people in Germany and headquarters to the great iron, steel, and coal companies. Likewise, Protestant Prussia, the region around which Germany was unified and the home of the Junkers, the aristocratic landowners of East Elbia, must be considered a core region, in spite of its predominantly agricultural composition. The rural elite of Protestant Prussia was accustomed down to the revolution in 1918 to exercising disproportionate influence over the political and economic life of Germany as a whole. This power continued to a lesser degree in the Weimar period through Junker influence in the military and civil service and through Junker control over the dominant national farm organization—the National Rural League (Reichslandbund—RLB). The political party of the Junkers in the Weimar period was the German National People’s party—DNVP.

Peripheral regions, Catholic and/or non-Prussian, including Bavaria, Rhineland-Westphalia outside the Ruhr, and southwest and central Germany, lacked the political power of Protestant Prussia and were generally areas of peasant, rather than estate, agriculture and small to medium-sized industrial firms. Elites in these areas were less wealthy than the core elite and also lacked a tradition of service to the national state.

The consciousness of elites in core and periphery was historical as well as economic. Politics in Germany in the 1920s still reflected displacement of peripheral elites in the unification process of the 1860s, and old resentments lingered. Below the surface of the large national parties that appeared dominant in 1919, many regional and sectoral parties were waiting to break out and did so in 1920–28.

Within this constellation of class forces, the Junkers were in many respects the most volatile. Until 1918 Junkers obviously were an important component of the ruling class because of their close association with the Hohenzollern state machine. After 1918 their position became less dominant. The Kaiser had always seen himself as the natural leader of the Junkers, but Friedrich Ebert, the Social Democratic president of Germany from 1918 to 1925, in spite of his role in creating the Free Corps (right-wing paramilitary organizations, many of whose members later became Nazis), was despised by the estate owners. The election as president of Germany in 1925 of Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg partially remedied this problem for the Junkers, and Hindenburg would play a vital role both in providing special government assistance for East Elbian agriculture and in brokering the deal between the Nazis and the DNVP that brought Hitler to power.
The revolution of 1918 cost the Junkers the dominance in Prussia given them by the three-class suffrage system, where the bottom 80 percent of the taxpayers could vote for only one-third of the state parliament seats. With their loss of control over Prussia, Junkers lost their leveraged position of dominance over the German federation. The ultimate indignity of the revolution for the Junkers was witnessing the support their agricultural workers gave to radical proposals such as dividing up the estates. With the support of the Social Democratic government, the Junkers smashed the revolutionary movement in both urban and rural areas, using army and the Free Corps. Finally, after a viable independent labor movement in rural East Elbia had been destroyed, the Junkers set about convincing peasants and agricultural workers to favor the DNVP and RLB, by involving them in cooperatives for credit, marketing, and purchases, protecting the workers from inflation through in-kind wages, and fighting for higher agricultural prices and an end to government restrictions on farming. The success of the estate owners in winning special protection for the purported agricultural interests of all sections of the East Elbian population brought many in the lower classes to respect Junker hegemony during the early 1920s.

In the period from 1919 to 1923, an important group of Junkers aligned themselves with Erich Ludendorff, the quartermaster general of the German army in World War I and the effective dictator of Germany from 1916 to 1918, who set up a movement to overturn the Weimar state, rule by military dictatorship, and resume the war. Hitler and the early Nazis were allied with the Ludendorff Circle in a subordinate capacity. The Junkers saw Hitler as a “drummer” with the task of stirring up the Bavarian masses on behalf of a nationalist counterrevolution. The failure of this plot in Berlin in the autumn of 1923 did not prevent the outbreak of the Beerhall Putsch in Munich, but the Reichswehr (German army), which had been arming, equipping, training, and providing officers for the Sturmabteilung (SA—the paramilitary wing of the Nazi party, which was actually more important and powerful than the party itself during this early period) now pulled away. There was a breach between the traditional Junker conservatives in the DNVP and the Ludendorff-Hitler movement, and the Junkers briefly moved toward cooperation with the Weimar regime.

From 1926 on, however, the Junkers entered a profound economic crisis that eventually cost them their leadership over the peasants and agricultural workers of East Elbia and Germany generally. As their estates became less and less profitable due to falling agricultural prices and rising industrial prices, they were under pressure to increase the exploitation of their workers. In the agricultural crisis of the 1870s autonomous peasant cooperatives developed in western and southern
Germany because noble landlords were unable to provide traditional types of individual assistance to nearby peasants, but in the late 1920s many Junker-dominated agricultural cooperatives in northeastern Germany collapsed, damaging the ability of the Junkers to tie the peasants to themselves through co-op loans, marketing, and other assistance. Junkers demanded special government assistance for themselves through the Osthilfe (Eastern Aid) program, and this angered many west and south German peasants who felt that they also deserved aid.

The result was that peasant support for the DNVP greatly diminished in 1928, particularly in western, southern, and central Germany, where peasants switched to the Country People's party (Landvolkpartei) based on anti-Junker elements within the RLB. After 1928 the Nazis were able to recruit many Landvolk voters. Nazi meetings in East Elbia were filled with workers, small peasants, and agricultural workers, with high school students, teachers, or ministers usually the only representatives of the local elite present. Junkers seldom attended. Nazism spread in the Northeast as an anti-Junker, as well as anti-urban-worker and anti-Jewish, movement.

The alliance between Hitler and the Junkers was renewed, however, in the joint DNVP-NSDAP referenda against the Young Plan—an arrangement for reparations payments on loans to Germany—in 1929 and against the Social Democratic-dominated Prussian government in 1931. Many areas of complete agreement between the Nazis and Junkers did, of course, exist. Both supported militarism and expansion in the East and opposed the workers' movement. Reports of Junker agricultural congresses from the early 1920s reveal a surprisingly crude anti-Semitism.

Junkers supported many aspects of the Nazi economic program: autarky through high tariff barriers for agricultural products; German self-sufficiency in grain; and compulsory mixing of alcohol made from distilled fermented potatoes with gasoline to keep up farm prices and make Germany more self-reliant in energy resources.

Nazis and Junkers differed sharply on the questions both of settling peasants and agricultural workers on bankrupt estates and the use of imported Polish agricultural labor. Speaking at a Silesian Nazi party school, von Reibnitz asserted, “In the German East there is not the correct, healthy mixture of small and large farms.” He wished to restrict large estates to only 7 to 10 percent of the agricultural land in East Elbia, comparable to the percentage in Württemberg. Harwig von Rheden-Rheden, writing in the agricultural supplement of the Nazi daily, called it “shameful” that foreign migratory workers were brought in for the sugar beet harvest.

In any case, Junkers were not willing to concede a leadership role to Hitler. A Nazi estimate in January 1933 was that only one Junker in ten
supported the Nazis in the Frankfurt/Oder electoral district, with the remaining nine supporting the DNVP. Junkers always saw themselves as the natural rulers of Germany and regarded the Hohenzollern kaiser as the crowned symbol of Junker supremacy. They saw Nazis as plebeian, South German, and, perhaps worst of all, Catholic. Wilhelm Henning, the chairman of the Association of Nationalistic Soldiers, stated: "Our preference for the Hohenzollerns will not allow us to aid in the establishment of a one-sided party domination which at least in its practical consequences might aid Roman strivings to replace this party dictatorship through an empire of a South German Catholic prince." Junkers could not rid themselves of nineteenth-century categories in evaluating the Nazis. For them, Nazis were always agents of rival monarchs in Bavaria and Austria.

Junkers saw the Nazi party as inclined toward socialism and aiming to tear down traditional leadership strata. This critique certainly seemed to have considerable local justification with reference to East Elbian Nazis, although their leftism was the consequence of the anti-Nazi stance of the Junkers. Northeast German Nazis were radical by default, since the local upper classes could not be recruited to the Nazi movement in large numbers. With an almost exclusively plebeian base, Nazis in Protestant Prussia adopted a "socialist" line. The radical SA was larger in proportion to total Nazi party membership in the Northeast than elsewhere in Germany, while the more elite Schutzstaffel (SS) organization was delayed in establishing itself in East Elbia.

North German "radicals" and South German "conservatives" within the NSDAP had in common an anti-Junker stance. Both opposed "Kaiser fetishists": "the men of the eternal yesterday, the stubborn dogmatists of Old Prussian-conservative tradition and pigtailed privy councillors and courtier circles of the Wilhelmian epoch are still today the leaders of the German Nationalists." In the contest between the plebeian NSDAP and the Junker-dominated DNVP for political control of East Elbian agriculture, estate owners defended their hegemony by refusing to allow members of the Stahlhelm to attend Nazi meetings, coercing local newspaper owners into refusing Nazi ads, and pressuring local innkeepers to refuse to rent meeting halls to the Nazis. The conservative Junker newspaper, the Kreuz-Zeitung, criticized at length Nazi economic and agricultural programs as "socialist," "utopian," and dangerous to the autonomy of the farmer. In turn, the Völkischer Beobachter accused DNVP estate owners of firing Nazi agricultural workers and hiring Communists in their stead.

The Nazis quickly took away the mass following of the Junkers in the rural Northeast in 1930–31. Junker control over the Stahlhelm and
RLB was shaken. New Nazi or proto-Nazi elements ousted the previous DNVP-oriented leaders and gave greater attention to peasant and agricultural worker interests. Nazi agitators aroused small peasants against the "moral serfdom" involved in the traditional custom of making deep bows to estate owners.

The class composition of Nazi support among farm owners in East Elbia is shown by the occupations of the NSDAP representatives elected to the Brandenburg Chamber of Agriculture in 1931: thirteen peasants and one gardener on the plebeian side, and one estate renter, two estate owners, and three owners of knights’ estates on the elite side, or fourteen to six in favor of the plebeians. Only one of the elite representatives of the Nazis had an aristocratic name, suggesting that big landlords who backed the Nazis were more likely to be commoners than noblemen. By contrast, DNVP-RLB slates typically had a preponderance of aristocrats.

Hostility between Junkers and Nazis was particularly acute in the Reichstag campaign of November 1932, when Hitler said of the Herrenklub, a Berlin society of 300–400 nobles and capitalists to which many ministers in von Papen’s cabinet belonged: “You speak against Marxism as a class phenomenon, and you yourselves are the worst sort of class phenomenon.” National Socialists were even worried in October 1932 that Junkers might engage in an anti-Nazi putsch with support from Franz von Papen and Paul von Hindenburg. Nazis feared that if they did well in the November 1932 elections, reactionaries could make a coup d’état, abolish the Constitution, and rule by means of a military dictatorship that could eventually restore the Hohenzollerns to power. Nazis need not have worried because they did poorly in this election, and the reactionaries instead became anxious about the large increase in the Communist vote and decided that the best thing after all would be to make Hitler chancellor in a coalition government with the DNVP, Stahlhelm, and von Papen.

In this coalition government, formed at the end of January 1933, Alfred Hugenberg, head of the DNVP, was made minister of economics and also minister of agriculture, the two ministries that most affected core elites in big business and estate agriculture. Hugenberg’s job was to protect core elites, who had not backed Hitler, from peripheral elites and the petty-bourgeois masses, who had. Junkers had helped to oust General Kurt von Schleicher as chancellor in January 1933 because Schleicher favored dividing up bankrupt Junker estates among workers and peasants, and Junkers knew that this was also the Nazi program. In the event, their fears came true, but not in the manner they feared. Junker estates were divided up, not by Nazis in 1933, but
with the arrival of the Red Army in 1945, as a logical consequence of Junker short-sightedness in giving power to Hitler.

Junker culpability in the Nazi accession to power, however, is not the same thing as direct Junker support for Nazism. The Junkers had resisted the Hitler movement for as long as they could. Only after they had lost their mass support to the Nazis and the only alternative seemed to be a leftist government did they agree to support a cabinet in which Hitler was chancellor. By contrast, outside Protestant Prussia, National Socialists were more successful in elite recruitment. In Catholic and/or non-Prussian regions, including central and southwest Germany, Rhineland-Westphalia, and Bavaria, members of local elites more frequently joined and voted for the Nazis.

One very common practice in these peripheral regions was for aristocrats who were leaders of local peasant organizations to join the NSDAP. Over and over again, one notes the presence of Nazis with names beginning with "von" or Nazis who farmed large estates as heads of state, provincial, or county branches of the RLB or the Chamber of Agriculture. Aristocratic farm leaders in peripheral regions who joined the Nazis were much less inclined to quit the party over policy disputes than were Junkers.

Of all the peripheral regions, the Southwest—the most democratic and egalitarian area of Germany—surprisingly became the area of strongest elite support for Nazism. In Baden, members of the upper classes conversed casually with newspaper vendors, saleswomen, and waiters in cafes. In Württemberg, "after a good supper, a man of office and worth will sit and drink wine with a modest artisan." These could be regarded as matters of style, rather than substance, since there was no accompanying willingness to give up real privileges to the masses. Nevertheless, these expressions of democratic spirit had political consequences and served to differentiate the southwestern elite from the Junkers and North Germans generally. Their democratic traditions prepared them for the mass politics of National Socialism and, unlike North German elites, they had no inbred prejudices against associating with the masses. In many respects, the Nazi movement was a continuation of the Grossdeutsch—Greater German—democratic movement of 1848, with its aspirations to create a Germany inclusive of Austria and other eastern territories, which had great appeal in Catholic areas of the Southwest.

Another factor in the politics of southwestern elites was the many resorts and spas in the region. Rentiers and retired people living in these spa towns had suffered greatly in the inflation of 1923 and blamed Weimar democracy for their plight. They often voted Nazi in con-
sequence. These people were geographically marginalized as a function of their generational marginalization. Many of them had lived and worked in core sectors of Protestant Prussia, but now no longer ran companies, estates, military units, or government departments. Unlike those actively running the institutions of society, they were under no constraint in the expression of their political beliefs. They had nothing to lose by radicalism. In this, they strongly resembled the young. High school and university age children of Junkers and big businessmen also frequently joined and supported the Nazis, even while their parents remained loyal to the DNVP. Thus, Nazi support came from the generational—as well as geographic and power/wealth—periphery of the elite.

Central Germany shared with the Southwest an economy based on small factories and a political structure of autonomous states (Länder). The Chemnitz-Zwickau electoral district of Saxony included the Erzgebirge and the Vogtland, a region of much domestic industry and many small lace, embroidery, silk-weaving, and toy factories, and was a prime locale for support by the local elite for the Nazis. Here employers felt ignored by the national government, which they accused of favoring the interests of big business. The prosperity of the rest of Germany seemingly had permanently left behind the Erzgebirge-Vogtland, where the poor still sometimes ate dog meat. Thuringia was similar, only somewhat less impoverished, with no city over 100,000 population and generally small factories whose owners heavily favored the Nazis. Throughout central Germany, then, a high elite vote for National Socialism was produced by the relatively small size of factories and by a regional pattern of political loyalties.

In Bavaria, the homeland of National Socialism, much more elite support for Nazism existed than in Protestant Prussia, but this Bavarian elite support was restricted in scope by religion. Certainly the core groups of the Bavarian upper class—the Catholic aristocracy, not very politically influential, and the large industrialists—did not desire Hitler in power. The Catholic aristocracy supported the Bavarian People's party (BVP) and hoped for a restoration of the Wittelsbachs, the former ruling family of Bavaria, and the larger industrialists mostly moved from the German People's party (DVP) to the DNVP. The BVP attacked the Nazis as favoring a "Greater Prussia," just as the Prussian loyalists attacked the Nazis for wanting a Bavarian or an Austrian to rule all of Germany. In general, Nazis in Bavaria received support from elite members who had formerly voted for the liberal parties, the DNVP, or the anti-clerical peasant movement, the Bavarian Peasant Association (BBB), rather than those who had supported the Catholic and particularist Bavarian People's party.
Upper-class Bavarians gave less support to the Nazis in towns where the Catholic church held a particularly dominating position, for instance, diocesan seats such as Eichstätt. In strongly clerical towns, the middle class tended to dominate the local Nazi group, while the upper class remained aloof and loyal to the church. Anticlericalism distinguished Catholic elite support for the Nazis in Bavarian peasant villages. In larger towns, the Nazis were more likely to have many supporters among the stratum of notables than in smaller towns where the local elite was more traditionalist. In Catholic agricultural areas in Bavaria, elite support for the Nazis came especially from individuals who were not well-established local residents, but rather less religious and less socially conservative newcomers. Civil servants, teachers, and educated professionals represented the Nazi elite in Catholic Bavaria, rather than large property owners, who remained true to the BVP. In Protestant areas of Bavaria, wealthy estate owners, industrialists, and bankers quite frequently joined the Nazis.

The class structure of Rhineland-Westphalia differed markedly from that of Bavaria. The heads of huge coal and steel corporations at the summit in the Ruhr, men of strong national political influence and international economic power, suspected Nazi social radicalism. Two leading heavy industrialists, however, Fritz Thyssen and Emil Kirdorf, were members of the Nazi party for a period, although both were suspicious of its anti-big business rhetoric. In the German regional structure, the Ruhr counted as metropolitan, while the rest of the Rhineland and Westphalia was merely provincial and was typified by small and medium-size business. Thus, Nazism in the Ruhr, as in Protestant Prussia, was plebeian, although not proletarian. Elsewhere in the Rhineland and Westphalia, however, National Socialism often had strong support from the same types of small-factory owners who backed it in central Germany.

Elite members in peripheral regions who became Nazis often were former particularists and separatists, the supporters of local dynasties that had ruled before German unification. Many had been advocates of a local state separate from the rest of Germany in the turbulent period from 1918 to 1923 when the French sponsored such movements in western and southern Germany. The thwarted will to provincial sovereignty became transformed into a desire to oust the core elites from control over the central government.

The decline of particularism was simultaneously the death of monar-
chism. After the 1926 referendum to expropriate the former princely houses—a referendum sponsored by the Social Democratic party (SPD) and the German Communist party (KPD) that failed but, in the process, revealed extensive antimonarchical sentiment among non-
Marxist voters—the decline of monarchicalism was marked among the plebeian supporters of the pro-Hohenzollern DNVP as well as among particularists backing various regional dynasties.\textsuperscript{46}

In Hanover the turning point away from particularism was the referendum of May 18, 1924, on separate state status. Hanover had been absorbed by Prussia as a result of the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, and the supporters of the dispossessed Guelph dynasty of Hanover formed their own political party, the German Hanoverian party (DHP), known as the Guelph party. The May 1924 referendum was a failure for the Guelphs.\textsuperscript{47} This failure had been anticipated two weeks earlier by urban elite voters for the German Hanoverian party who switched to the Nazis in the May 4 Reichstag election.\textsuperscript{48} Losses to the DHP between 1920 and May 1924 seem to have been concentrated in towns with a strong local elite population. Movement of Guelph peasants to the Nazis was much slower, and it was only in 1932 that the Nazis finally decimated the Guelph party among the deeply conservative and localist peasant masses.\textsuperscript{49} As the Guelph movement disintegrated, its local units urged supporters to switch to the Nazis.\textsuperscript{50}

Similar particularist movements in the northwest German regions of Schleswig-Holstein, Schaumburg-Lippe, and Oldenburg also eventually produced an important vote for the Nazis. Schleswig-Holstein and Hanover had been absorbed by Prussia in 1866, while Oldenburg retained its independence but remained in clear danger of being swallowed by Prussia as part of the movement of government rationalization. Particularist elites wanted to be controlled neither by the Junkers of Old Prussia nor by the Socialists of New Prussia, and the Nazis advocated continued independence for Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Oldenburg, and Schaumburg-Lippe and respect for local autonomy within Prussia elsewhere. For example, in Hanover, the Nazis criticized liberal peasant leaders who supported organizations devoted to centralizing the Reich government with greater Prussian dominance.\textsuperscript{51}

In Bavaria, separatism and particularism were gradually exhausted by a long series of rebuffs. In the immediate postwar period, numerous consultations between BVP leaders and the French with a view toward establishing a separate Bavarian or Catholic monarchy in the south of Germany came to naught. Many in the BVP had separatist aims in the events leading up to the Beerhall Putsch in November 1923. However, the most decisive demonstration of public sentiment on the issue of separatism and particularism was the vote in April 1924 on a proposal of the BVP that was backed also by the DVP and DNVP. This referendum called for a separate Bavarian state president, an upper house to the state parliament, and a simplified form by which the Constitution could be revised. The purpose of the referendum was to establish a
state structure for Bavaria as much like the prewar structure as possible, which would make it a simple matter to restore the local monarchy. This referendum was held simultaneously with the Landtag election in which the Nazis first showed substantial strength in Bavaria, and the referendum failed. In deciding against particularism, many Bavarian voters also decided in favor of Nazism and switched from the parties supporting the referendum.52

Bavaria also had its own internal particularism. The dominant region, Upper Bavaria, centered on Munich, gave strong support to the Wittelsbachs. Other regions of Bavaria were less supportive of the Wittelsbachs. The least favorable region was predominantly Protestant Franconia, where the most intense cluster of aristocratic support for National Socialism in Germany could be found. Franconian aristocrats felt alienated from the Catholic aristocracy of South Bavaria and the Wittelsbachs, yet not, of course, integrated into the Prussian aristocracy.53 These aristocrats had no hope of restoring a favorable position for themselves merely by returning to the past, and support for the Nazis appeared to be the best way to create an authoritarian society. Franconia was unusual as well in the level of support the Nazis had among sections of the elite other than the aristocracy, including police officials, government administrators, and small factory owners.54 Franconian localities had given the highest votes of any localities in Germany to the DNVP in 1920, but in 1924 they became the strongest localities for the Nazis.55

The key center for Nazi strength in Franconia—Coburg—had belonged to Thuringia until after the war and never quite fit into Bavaria. As the Kreuz-Zeitung drolly put it, Bavaria was so reactionary that it did not allow Coburgers to grill their beloved Bratwürste.56 Dominated by a castle dating from the twelfth century, Coburg was a city in thrall to the past. The streets were filled with signs indicating “Suppliers to the Duke,” including jewelers, barbers, druggists, and bookdealers. The local dukes had deliberately retarded the development of transportation and industry in the area so that their hunting grounds and castles would be peaceful. The townspeople felt grateful to their duke for supplying them with wide avenues, parks, and especially theaters, for Coburgers were famous for their love of plays, opera, and music. In June 1929 Coburg became the first of many “Residence Cities”—cities of residence for a territorial ruler—across Germany’s small states to elect a Nazi government. The former duke, Karl Eduard, lived in Coburg and led the movement toward the Nazis.57 The Nazi slogans in this election formed a revealing mélange of nationalism, particularism, and anti-Semitism: “Germany for the Germans! Coburg for the Coburgers! And to Palestine with those who belong there!”58 At
the end of 1929, Duke Karl Eduard appeared at the Nazi rally and in April 1932 endorsed Hitler for president.\textsuperscript{59} Thus, the multiple levels of particularism in Coburg—against Thuringia, Bavaria, and the national government—made this a stronghold of Nazism.

Other areas of Bavaria also showed centrifugal tendencies. The Palatinate, geographically separated from the rest of Bavaria, was under Allied occupation, and the French and Belgians encouraged a local separatist movement designed to set up a buffer state they could permanently dominate. Conflicts here between the occupation troops and separatists, on the one hand, and loyal Germans, on the other, contributed to radicalization in Pirmasens, and in the winter of 1924 a group of separatists was lynched by the local population.\textsuperscript{60} Pirmasens, a center for shoe manufacture with many small factories, served both as a locus of separatism in the 1920–23 period and one of the strongest cities for the Nazis from 1929 on.\textsuperscript{61} There is a likelihood that both separatists and antiseparatists ended up in the Nazi camp.

Particularism and separatism also promoted elite support for National Socialism in other areas of the Southwest. Nazi voting totals were often highest in university towns and former residence cities, usually nonindustrial and nostalgic for the glories of their independent past. A disproportionate number of the well-to-do, especially professors, civil servants, professionals, and military officers, lived in such towns.\textsuperscript{62} Examples of cities in the Southwest where the Nazis won a strong elite support included Marburg, a reactionary university town in Hesse, with a long history of conservative and anti-Semitic voting, and an educated Nazi local leadership;\textsuperscript{63} Kassel, a residence city in Hesse, where the Nazi vote increased dramatically in 1924;\textsuperscript{64} and Heidelberg, Baden, where in 1930, out of thirty-one Nazis on the city council, fourteen were educated professionals, including judges, doctors, architects, and engineers.\textsuperscript{65} In Hesse, the Nazis attracted the “Old Nassauers,” loyal to the dynasty displaced by the Prussians in 1866, just as these individuals had also flocked to separatism during the period of French occupation. During 1923, some Nazi party members in Frankfurt am Main simultaneously were active in the “Blücher Association,” a paramilitary organization that sought an independent South German state under Wittelsbach rule and received funding from the French.\textsuperscript{66} Of course, these separatist activities were not part of Hitler’s program; they illustrate instead the confused ideological world of National Socialism on the periphery.

Microparticularism—loyalty to a single town or a tiny region—was a factor in support for Nazism by local elites in Thurginia. Because merger meant losing their status as capitals, cities that had been capitals of very small states resisted being merged into the larger state
of Thuringia in 1920. Weimar became the capital of the united Thuringian state, but other former ducal capitals lost their function. This brought with it a loss of court patronage for local merchants, an end to the flow of tax money into the city’s infrastructure, and a decline in such cultural amenities as ducal theaters and libraries. Gotha, for example, lost its Grand Duke’s Court, garrison, and government ministries.67

Central German particularism was agitated again in 1928 when the governments of Saxony and Thuringia began exploratory steps toward merger with each other, and in 1929 when the German Democratic party (DDP) and SPD urged fusion with Prussia.68 By an odd dialectic, the most parochial areas of Germany became the strongest bases of support for the movement that, once in power, would institute the most extreme policy of centralization—Gleichschaltung, the subordination of states to the national government.

Particularist support for National Socialism resulted from a complex process of “deprovincialization” that had economic, social, and political roots. Particularism was grounded in a localist economy, especially agrarian, with support from artisans, professionals, and banks serving local clients. As the German economy increasingly focused on national and international markets, the strength of economic localism declined. Another blow to provincialism was World War I. The experience of serving in military units with men from all over Germany, the growth of national consciousness both on the battlefield and on the home front, and the shared deprivation as a result of the peace settlement all served to undermine localism.

The loss of the war, to be sure, discredited Junker, Prussian, and Hohenzollern leadership, and during the 1919–23 period caused an upsurge of separatism. Once separatism irrevocably failed with Gustav Stresemann’s restoration of effective central government in 1923–24, localist elites turned their attention back to the problem of controlling the national government in their own interest. The Weimar Republic, simply by abolishing all German monarchies, helped to delegitimate monarchism. All of these factors combined to send many particularists to the Nazis in the crisis elections of 1924 and 1930.

Besides particularists, Nazism received much support from liberal members of peripheral elites who had supported the DDP and DVP and always favored a strong central government. Liberals who became Nazis hearkened back to the grossdeutsch tradition of the German unification movement and welcomed any steps that would bring Austria and Germany together. These formerly liberal Nazis had several traits in common with former particularists who became Nazis. Both liberals and particularists were hostile to the power of Junkers and big
business, and both were willing to join a völkisch—populist-racialist—movement and associate fraternally with the masses. These qualities allowed them to unite with one another and with the huge Nazi following among the lower middle class in order to reshape Germany. The grandsons of the Guelphs and the 48ers joined ranks to contest Bismarck’s legacy with the grandsons of the Junkers and the Krupps.

Precedents existed in other countries for the kind of regional restructuring represented by the Nazi movement. In spite of the enormous differences in ideology, organization, and the human costs of the outcomes, structural similarities existed between the electoral coalition of National Socialism and that of Jacksonian Democracy in America from the 1820s to the 1840s. In both cases, the new movement represented a significant regional broadening of the traditional base of national power coming two generations after the founding of the new state. In both cases, peripheral elites (westerners in the American case) united with plebeian elements of the core regions to transform traditional political alignments. In both cases, core elites were divided into two major factions that had, at least temporarily, exhausted their potential for political leadership, industrialists and Junkers in Germany and northern merchants and Tidewater planters in America. In both cases, also, the agrarian and traditionalist half of the core elite was more willing to give support to the new movement than was the urban and modernist half.69

While Nazi supporters among the provincial elites hoped to create a truly national ruling class for Germany in which they could play a leading role, instead, by placing power in the hands of an irresponsible dictatorship, they brought calamity. Their banal political aim of broadening the regional basis of power was incommensurable with the consequences that ensued.

Methodological Appendix

County (Kreis) level analysis serves as the statistical base for this study, with material from 1,155 counties and towns. The percentage of domestic servants in the population is used as a substitute indicator for the percentage of affluent. For purposes of regional analysis, Germany has been broken up into seven areas. Three regions of Protestant Prussia are considered as the core: the Northeast, the heart of Old Prussia, and the preeminent Junker region, including Brandenburg, Pomerania, East Prussia, Grenzmark Posen-West Prussia, and the non-Prussian states of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz; Silesia, with a predominance of estate agriculture, but the complicating
factor of Catholic and industrial Upper Silesia; and the Northwest, including the Prussian provinces of Hanover and Schleswig-Holstein and the autonomous states of Brunswick, Oldenburg, Schaumburg-Lippe, Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck. Four regions formed the periphery: Central Germany, a Protestant, industrialized area consisting of Saxony, Thuringia, Anhalt, and the Prussian province of Saxony; Rhineland-Westphalia, Catholic, industrial provinces of Prussia; the Southwest, a region of mixed religion and light industry, including Baden, Württemberg, Hesse, Waldeck, Hohenzollern, and the Bavarian province of the Palatinate and the Prussian province of Hesse-Nassau; and Bavaria, the heavily Catholic and particularist homeland of the National Socialist movement. The election and census data used in this essay are from the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research at the University of Michigan. 70

Domestic servants are a valid indicator of elite presence, since only one German family in ten could afford to employ a servant. 71 Of the 1.4 million domestic servants in Germany in 1925, three-fourths lived in the homes of their employers. Young women under the voting age comprised a majority of domestic servants, and those who qualified to vote seldom actually voted or else voted as their employers indicated. The rate of voting of domestic servants was the lowest of any major occupational group. Domestic servants could form independent political opinions only with difficulty simply because they seldom spent much time outside their employers' homes. They were expected to work fourteen hours a day, with only a half day off on Sundays. Servants had less free time than any other workers. 72 A good example of a Nazi domestic servant was Frau Friederike Brzoska of Wollin, East Prussia, who was eighty years old in 1932 and had been working for a Nazi physician since 1922. She accompanied him to party meetings in all weather and knit socks for the SA. 73 Her support for the Nazis was an aspect of her servility, rather than representing an independent class consciousness. This argues that these statistical correlations show not the direct impact of domestic servant voting so much as an indication of the voting pattern of the elite that employed the servants.

Correlations used in this essay are Pearson's r, generated by the DSTAT-2 program. Correlation shifts show the change from election to election. Rules of interpretation are simple. In order to be significant, the correlation shift should be statistically significant at the .05 level and should be moving in the same direction as the overall vote for that particular party. For instance, in rural localities between May and December 1924, the Nazi correlation with domestic servants went up .12, a statistically significant shift, but the overall Nazi vote was declining from 6.9 percent to 3.2 percent. This means that it was not likely
that the affluent vote for the Nazis was increasing, but simply that the affluent were not deserting the Nazis in such large proportions as other groups in the population. However, the significant shift from December 1924 to 1928 of -.28 took place as the overall Nazi vote was declining from 3.2 percent to 2.8 percent, indicating that in this election affluent voters were deserting the Nazis faster than voters generally. Thus, this correlation shift is underlined.

Notes


22. Völkischer Beobachter, October 26, 1932.

23. Frankfurter Zeitung, December 31, 1931, evening/first morning ed.


25. Ibid., November 28, 1931.


27. Ibid., October 1, 1932.


29. Such individuals were mentioned in the Völkischer Beobachter for the following regions: Palatinate, February 16, 1932; Eschwege, Hesse, February 11, 1932; Rhineland, April 10/11, 1932; Saxony, February 6, 1932; and Magdeburg-Anhalt, December 8, 1931.

30. Frankfurter Zeitung, November 28, 1924, first morning ed.; and November 29, 1924, first morning ed.

31. Ibid., November 12, 1924, first morning ed.

32. Nazis received strong support among fraternity members in East Elbian universities (Völkischer Beobachter, July 28/29, 1929). It was even said that Hugenberg's son in Munich supported the NSDAP (Frankfurter Zeitung, December 19, 1929, evening ed.). Many sons of members of the Building and Landowners' Association—a group tightly affiliated with the Economic Party—supported the Nazis (Frankfurter Zeitung, August 18, 1930, morning ed.).


34. Frankfurter Zeitung, April 22, 1932, evening/first morning ed.


39. In the 1930 Reichstag election, Nazis won 18 percent in Eichstätt, but in another diocesan seat, Passau, where the population was 95 percent Catholic, the Nazis won 31 percent. One difference was that Passau was close to the Austrian border and hence more nationalistic and Großdeutsch in its attitudes (Pridham, Bavaria, pp. 140, 159); Elke Frohlich, "Die Partei auf lokale Ebene. Zwischen gesellschaftlicher Assimilation und Veränderungsdynamik," in Gerhard Hirschfeld and Lothar Ket-


43. Turner, Big Business, pp. 91, 95, 145.


45. Turner, Big Business, pp. 198–201.

46. Ulrich Schüren, Der Volksentscheid zur Fürstenenteignung 1926 (Dusseldorf, Droste Verlag, 1978).

47. Germany, May 14, 1924, morning ed.; and Noakes, Lower Saxony, p. 118.


50. On the dissolution of the Guelph party in the city of Braunschweig in late 1930, see Vorwärts, March 3, 1931.


52. Germany, April 8, 1924, evening ed.


54. Hambrecht, Mittel- und Oberfranken, pp. 256, 258, 308.


56. Kreuz-Zeitung, October 14, 1921, evening ed.


58. Hambrecht, Mittel- und Oberfranken, p. 349.

59. Ibid., p. 537; and Kreuz-Zeitung, April 2, 1932.


62. Frankfurter Zeitung, November 12, 1924, first morning ed.

63. Eberhart Schön, Die Entstehung des Nationalsozialismus in Hessen (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1972), p. 82.

64. Schön, Hessen, p. 161; Frankfurter Zeitung, July 20, 1928, evening ed.


69. Obviously, the differences between Jacksonian Democracy and National Socialism are qualitatively more important than the similarities. Jackson was for states' rights and limited government, while Hitler favored Gleichschaltung and totalitarianism. Whereas Jackson idly wished for the death penalty for Abolitionist writers, Hitler actually imposed concentration camps, torture, and execution on Marxists.

Both Jacksonian Democracy and National Socialism represented movement away from Honoratiorenparteien—parties of notables, dominated by the traditional elite—to modern, mass parties with a professional party leadership and more organized linkages to the rank-and-file party membership and electorate, and both brought with them a substantial increase in voting participation.

Just as National Socialism served to protect capitalism by creating a new pattern of electoral forces, so Jacksonian Democracy served to perpetuate slavery by bringing northern plebeians into a coalition with southern planters. Just as National Socialism rallied the petty-bourgeois masses around a program of anti-Semitism, so Jacksonian Democracy used antiblack measures to win the support of northern urban Irish immigrants.

Both movements appealed to younger, rather than older, men, and, among the elites, to the less established rather than to the better established. Both movements were heartily opposed, at least in rhetoric, to the power of “finance capital.” Neither movement was particularly strong among urban industrial workers, and both played on male chauvinist, militarist, and antimodern themes. Just as National Socialism sought expansion in the East at the expense of the Slavic peoples, so too the Jacksonians promoted Indian Removal for the sake of white settlement.

A revealing distinction between the two movements was their relationship to Freemasonry. Jackson was a Mason and the target of agitation by the Antimasonic party, which was strong in some areas of the United States in 1828, while the Nazis were themselves devoted anti-Masons.


71. For another study that uses the presence of servants as an indicator of the elite status of the household, see Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans* (New York: George Braziller, 1979), p. 5.

p. 87; Deutsche Tagezeitung, July 12, 1925; Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), p. 263; Vorwärts, March 10, 1929, morning ed., and September 9, 1931, morning ed.

73. Völkischer Beobachter, December 11/12, 1932.