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The Decay of Support for Monarchy and the Hitler Regime in the Federal Republic of Germany

G. R. BOYNTON AND GERHARD LOEWENBERG*

I. INTRODUCTION

Public support for the existing institutions of government depends in part on public perceptions of the alternatives. This assertion will not come as news in those parts of the world where changing the regime is a regular part of political life. In France, for example, where regimes have been numbered to distinguish them from each other, it is common knowledge that public evaluations of the Fourth Republic depended on comparisons with the Third, that especially in its early years the Fifth Republic was frequently judged by comparison with the Fourth, and that in particularly sophisticated circles these more or less contemporary regimes have been frequently compared with the First and Second Republics.

In the United States, however, where a change of regime has not been generally contemplated since the Civil War, research on the sources of support for the regime has fastened on other variables. Studies have shown that support for the regime comes disproportionately from citizens with high socio-economic status, from those who are politically well-informed and who have a sense that they are effectively participating in politics, from citizens who believe that government officials abide by accepted norms of political conduct, and finally, from those groups in the population which are satisfied that their policy demands are being met.¹ These sources of support for the regime have been studied in several settings, but always in settings in which the aggregate level of support has been high. If the study of support seeks to explain variations in support and, in the end, variations in the stability of regimes, research must be conducted in settings in which regimes have

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¹ See, for example, Samuel C. Patterson, John C. Wahlke, and G. Robert Boynton, 'Dimensions of Support in Legislative Systems', in Allan Kornberg, ed., *Legislatures in Comparative Perspective* (New York: McKay, 1973), pp. 282-313.

changed, and it must be based on data gathered over time. This is why we have been eager to undertake a secondary analysis of time-series data on public attitudes toward the new regime which was established in Western Germany after the Second World War against a background of severe regime instability.

We know that regimes can survive great stress. Presumably, those correlates of the supportive attitudes of individuals which have been the subject of previous research, such as socio-economic status, sense of political efficacy, and satisfaction with policy outputs, would have predicted the erosion of support in both the United States and Great Britain in the early 1930s, yet both regimes survived without serious challenge. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the fall of the Fourth French Republic in the 1950s can be explained by these variables. Why does one regime survive a major economic depression, while another succumbs to a colonial war?

David Easton has posited the existence of 'diffuse support', attitudes relatively independent of immediate events, to account for regime stability in the face of otherwise adverse conditions. In essence, he has invented this concept to explain variance in regime stability which cannot be explained by those correlates of support which vary over short periods of time. However, 'diffuse support' has proven difficult to distinguish both conceptually and operationally from what Easton calls 'specific support' or support related to immediate events.²

In this paper we propose to introduce a new variable into the equation between supportive attitudes and stability to explain the capacity of some regimes to survive in adversity great enough to cause others to collapse. We take our cue from the general recognition that where regimes have been unstable, as in Germany, further instability is generally expected. Instability in the present has often been explained by instability in the past. Would postwar German democracy prove unstable, and eventually revert to dictatorship or autocracy? This question was raised by nearly all observers of the German scene in the late 1940s, by policy makers as well as scholars. Why German democracy has proven stable, and why reversion to dictatorship and autocracy has become increasingly improbable, is the central substantive question which we address in this paper.

We hypothesize that the existence of visible alternatives to an existing regime can cause the transfer of public support from one regime to another under conditions which might otherwise be consistent with the maintenance of support for the existing regime. Because de Gaulle kept the traditional French ideas of executive supremacy alive throughout the time of the Fourth Republic, because Hitler was able to use German nostalgia for an authoritarian regime to conjure up visions of a more effective alternative to the Weimar Republic, a shift in public support from one regime to another occurred. Because the public perceived no such alternatives in Great Britain in 1931 or in the United States in 1933, a weakening of the sources of supportive attitudes for the existing regimes did not produce regime change. It seems to us that in this sense the historical setting profoundly affects the attitudes of individual citizens toward a change of regime. As long as memories of super-

² Gerhard Loewenberg, 'The Influence of Parliamentary Behavior on Regime Stability', *Comparative Politics*, III (1971), 183-5.

seded regimes remain alive, those regimes stand as viable alternatives to existing regimes. In this way a pattern of changes of regime may perpetuate itself, and the memory of past regimes becomes an important variable affecting attachment to the regime of the present. For this reason, we decided that it would be particularly interesting to discover what changes had occurred in German public attitudes toward previous regimes in the two decades after the establishment of the postwar democratic regime.

New political institutions and procedures, products of a little-noticed constitutional convention, legitimated by military governments, had come into existence in the western zones of occupation in 1949. The new regime succeeded four years of military occupation, twelve years of the Nazi dictatorship, fourteen years of the Weimar Republic, and forty-seven years of the Second Empire. Within the living memory of the first Chancellor of the new regime and of his contemporaries, Germany had experienced four clearly distinct political regimes. Many Germans looking at the new Federal Republic in 1949 had been politicized into one or another of these previous regimes; most at least knew of their existence. To what extent did the German public regard them as alternatives to the new regime, potential objects of support in competition with the new regime? To what extent was the survival of the new regime in fact due to a decline of support for its predecessors? And how might such a decay of support for monarchy and for dictatorship be explained? These are the questions we will now consider.

II. THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE: SUPPORT FOR MONARCHY, HITLER, AND REGIME SYMBOLS

The data on which we base this analysis, as well as the related analyses we have previously presented, are provided by the Institut für Demoskopie of Allensbach, a German polling organization which has conducted monthly surveys of German public attitudes for over twenty-five years. The Institute's sampling methods, which we have described previously,³ are similar to the methods employed by the American Institute of Public Opinion. While our secondary analysis of these data has necessarily limited us to the use of items not specifically designed for our purposes, and to time-series governed by the practices of the Institute rather than by our theoretical requirements, the data do provide a satisfactory base for testing our hypotheses. The care with which the Institute formulates its items, the maintenance of wording through repeated surveys generally spanning a decade and more, and the sampling procedures employed, make the Allensbach data a rich resource for secondary time-series analysis.

We identified three items in the Allensbach data which we thought would measure public attitudes toward previous regimes, one item asking attitudes toward monarchy, one asking attitudes toward Hitler, and one asking attitudes about the national flag. Although there were other relevant items, they were either asked only two or three times, or their wording departed significantly from the

³ G. R. Boynton and Gerhard Loewenberg, 'The Development of Public Support for Parliament in Germany, 1951-59', *British Journal of Political Science*, III (1973), 169-90, p. 171.

wording of the items we had selected, and we therefore limited ourselves to three items measuring our dependent variable.

The item on monarchy read as follows: 'Would you say that it would be best for our country to have a monarchy again, that is, a king or an emperor?'⁴ When this question was first asked in 1951, approximately one-third of the respondents replied affirmatively, one-third replied negatively, and one-third were undecided. When the item was asked fourteen years later, only one-eighth of the respondents favored monarchy, nearly two thirds rejected it, and fewer than a fourth were undecided. In-between the item had been asked at three other times (see Table 1).

The question we chose to measure attitudes on Hitler read: 'Everything that had been built up between 1933 and 1939, and much more, was destroyed by the war. Would you say that, if the war had not taken place, Hitler would have been one of the greatest German statesmen?'⁵ Nearly one-half of the population answered this question affirmatively when it was first asked in 1955; a little less than one-third still felt this way twelve years later (see Table 1).

Finally, we employed one measure of attitude toward a symbol of the regime, the flag. The Federal Republic adopted as its insignia a black, red and gold flag which had been the flag of the Weimar Republic and of the revolution of 1848. Although there was no open controversy over the choice, this flag had been an object of intense controversy during the Weimar Republic. At that time, the imperial black-white-red flag had been used by opponents of Weimar democracy, and the postwar Allensbach surveys indicated that loyalty toward the flag of the Empire survived in the population into the 1950s. At intervals between 1951 and 1958, the following item was asked in the surveys: 'Our federal flag is black-red-gold. Would you prefer black-white-red?'⁶ At the beginning of the decade twice as many respondents preferred the imperial to the republican flag, but by 1958 the republican flag had become the two to one favorite (see Table 1).

No study of public attitudes designed today would employ single items to measure general orientations. However, because we were engaged in secondary analysis, we were compelled to rely on the items available in the surveys, and to select those which seemed most suitable for our purposes. We made our selection by three standards. First, we selected items which had been asked without change of wording in at least five surveys covering at least eight years, in order to have a reliable measure over a substantial period of time.

Second, we examined the face validity of the items available to us. The question on monarchy seemed clearly designed to tap affinity for the type of monarchical regime Germany had known longer than any other single regime during the previous century. With respect to the item on Hitler, we believed that a question which explicitly excluded the disastrous consequences of the war from an evalua-

⁴ 'Würden Sie sagen, es wäre am besten für unser Land, wieder die Monarchie, also einen König oder Kaiser, zu haben?'

⁵ 'Alles, was zwischen 1933 und 1939 aufgebaut worden war, und noch viel mehr, wurde durch den Krieg vernichtet. Würden Sie sagen, dass Hitler ohne den Krieg einer der grössten deutschen Staatsmänner gewesen wäre?'

⁶ 'Unsere Bundesflagge ist Schwarz-Rot-Gold. Wäre Ihnen Schwarz-Weiss-Rot lieber?'

tion of Hitler's statesmanship would measure attitudes toward his political leadership uncontaminated by attitudes toward the war. And we further believed that this evaluation of Hitler's political leadership, in the perspective of German history, would tap attitudes toward the regime which he so completely personified. The question asking preferences between the republican and the monarchial flag seemed to us capable of tapping basic loyalty to the regime, because the flag had been a conspicuous symbol of controversy over the regime between 1919 and 1933. Like the Canadian flag in the 1950s, the flag of Germany had been the object of intense dispute in the 1920s. Opponents of Weimar democracy ostentatiously refused to fly the black-red-gold republican flag which the Weimar Constitution had specifically established as the symbol of the state. Instead, they exhibited the flag of the Empire, the black-white-red banner which quickly came to symbolize loyalty to the old regime. The swastika of the Hitler regime had deliberately used the colors of the imperial flag. Most German citizens who had lived through the years of the Weimar Republic and the accession of Hitler to power were highly sensitive to the question of the national colors. We therefore assumed that attitudes toward the flag would signify relative support for the present, as opposed to a previous regime.

However, we did not limit ourselves to examining the face validity of the items available in the Allensbach surveys. As a third standard for selecting items, we examined the relationship between responses to the questions we regarded as measures of support for the regime and other items presumably measuring the same attitudes. These secondary items, which we used to validate our primary measures, were generally available in only a few of the surveys which Allensbach had carried out, and so we used them as spot checks on the items for which we had longer time series.

On monarchy, for example, the Allensbach surveys contained seven different questions at one time or another. On two occasions, two questions were contained in the same survey. Unfortunately, they were not asked of the same respondents, but appeared on a split ballot, one-half of respondents being asked each question. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the marginal totals for both questions were very similar. Furthermore, similar correlations were obtained between responses to either of the questions on monarchy and questions about party preference. Consistently, respondents preferring parties with monarchial traditions, like the Bavarian party and the German party, expressed high support for monarchy on either of the questions on monarchy; so did respondents favoring extreme right-wing parties. In 1957 the correlation (γ) between respondents favoring monarchy and those saying they preferred a system without any political parties was .55. The two principal formulations of the questions used in the surveys gave very similar results over time, although we decided not to combine them into a single series. Instead, we relied on the single item which was asked unchanged from 1951 to 1965, and used the other formulations, as well as questions on party preference, to validate the question we selected as a measure of the dependent variable.

We were able to compare responses to the question on Hitler with responses to a

more extensive set of related items. Those favorable toward Hitler preferred oligarchy to democracy. Respondents positive toward Hitler tended to deny that Germany had been responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War, indicating their inclination to distinguish between Hitler and the war. The supporters of Hitler also indicated a preference for the imperial over the republican flag, favored a one-party system, expressed sympathy or indifference to prospects of a new Nazi movement, believed that the working man was more esteemed during the Hitler regime than at present, and were skeptical of the value of parliament. In short, responses toward the item we selected as a measure of attitude toward the Hitler regime correlated as we would have expected with other items tapping attitudes toward democracy and its dictatorial predecessor (see Table 2).

TABLE 2 *Relationship between Attitude toward Hitler and Attitudes toward Democracy and Dictatorship*

	Inter-item correlations (gamma)						
	1955	1956	1959	1960	1961	1962	1967
Prefer oligarchy	.29	.25		.10			
Prefer democracy	-.30	-.36		-.27			
Germany not responsible for World War II	.37	.40	.41			.40	.46
Prefer 1-party system	.35	.33	.18	.28			
Favorable or indifferent to Neo-Nazi movement		.51	.43			.41	
Worker most esteemed under Nazi regime			.23	.25			
Prefer imperial flag	.26	.24					
Prefer republican flag	-.14	-.25					
Only alternative to Nazis were communists in 1933	.33		.24			.27	
Fifty MPs are enough	.20	.21	.32				

We were similarly able to establish that the question we had selected on the flag tapped attitudes toward the regime, and that it distinguished respondents supporting the existing regime from those with loyalty to its pre-democratic predecessors. We found a substantial correlation between preference for the imperial flag and support for monarchy (gamma = .30) and similarly strong correlations with preference for oligarchy. A preference for the flag of the Empire was also moderately associated with preferences for a one-party system and skepticism of the value of parliament. Finally, we determined that preference for the imperial flag correlated with favorable attitudes toward Hitler and toward a prospective neo-Nazi movement (see Table 3). On the strength of this validation, we chose the question asking preferences between the black-red-gold and the black-white-red flag, and rejected a similar question which specifically referred to the date when the old flag was last used. Responses to the question which included the date did

TABLE 3 *Relationship between Attitude toward the Imperial Flag and Attitudes toward Monarchy, Dictatorship and Democracy*

	Inter-item correlations (gamma)					
	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
Prefer monarchy					.30	
Prefer oligarchy			.32	.29		.21
Prefer 1-party system	.09	.27	.20	.16	.22	.26
Favorable or indifferent to Neo-Nazi movement				.29		.33
Hitler a great statesman			.26	.25		
Fifty MPs are enough	.18	.20	.24	.25	.12	.20

not correlate with other measures of regime support, leading us to doubt that it validly indicated the attitude in which we were interested.

We were therefore able to determine that three questions which had been repeatedly included in the Allensbach surveys – on monarchy, on Hitler, and on the flag – were valid measures of support for previous regimes, both on their face, and by the association between the responses they evoked and responses to questions tapping similar attitudes.

III. CHANGE IN SUPPORT FOR PREVIOUS REGIMES: THE AGGREGATE TREND AND ITS COMPONENTS

To obtain summary measures of attitudes toward monarchy, Hitler, and the symbol of previous regimes respectively, we constructed indicators based on responses to the survey questions which we had selected as our measures. For example, respondents favoring monarchy were scored +1, those expressing no opinion were scored 0, those opposed to monarchy were scored -1. We used the same three-point scoring system for responses to the question on Hitler, and on the imperial flag. For each item we then calculated a mean support score for the German population for each year in which the question was asked. To permit comparison of the trends in support for monarchy, the Hitler regime, and the symbol of previous regimes among various groups in the population, we decided to work with mean scores separately standardized for each measure.

To begin with, we plotted the standardized means for the aggregate population (see Fig. 1). The resulting graph reveals a secular decline in the indicators of each of these measures of support for previous regimes. One prominent departure from this general trend cannot, however, go unnoticed. Support for the Hitler regime appears to rise in 1962 and 1963, contrary to the general trend. As we shall see subsequently, that rise is exhibited in all sections of the population. Our data provide one clue to explain this departure from the long-term erosion of favorable attitudes toward Hitler. In both the 1960 and 1961 surveys, shortly after an epidemic of anti-semitic acts caused tremors in Germany's self-confidence about its

democratic foundations, there was a sudden upsurge in the proportion of respondents who said they did not know how they felt about Hitler (see Table 1). At the same time, those favorable toward Hitler declined markedly. This suggests that perhaps the surveys of 1960 and 1961, rather than those of 1962 and 1963, were out of line with the general trend. Perhaps what appears to be a sharp decline of support for Hitler in the earlier two years is actually a temporary withdrawal of public commitment on the question, which the summary measure we have graphed conceals. If so, there occurred a steadier but more gradual decline in support for

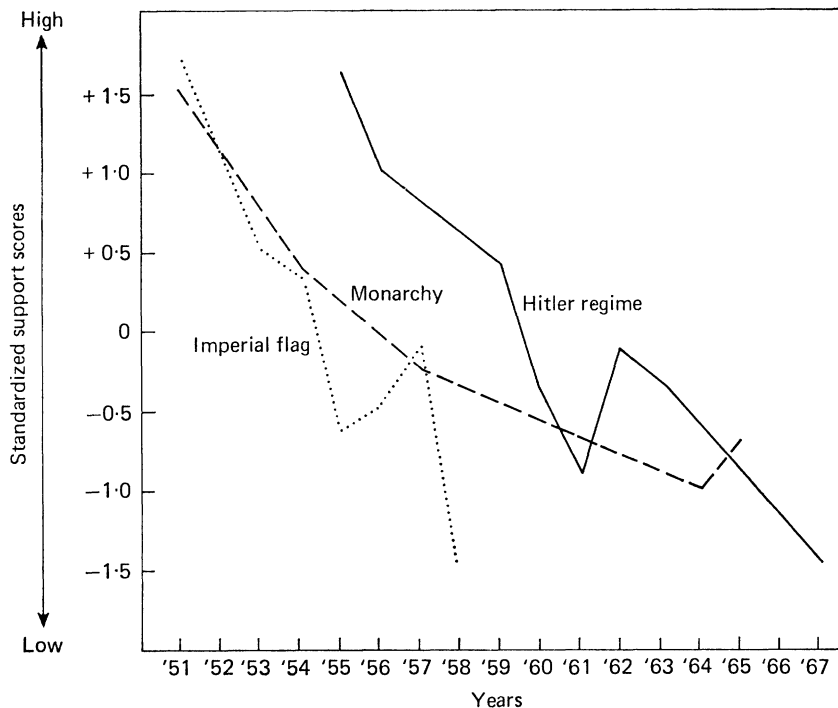


Fig. 1. Support for previous regimes

the Hitler regime than the graph would indicate. The steady rise in the percentage of respondents expressing themselves negatively toward Hitler seems to bear this out.

In the remainder of the paper we will investigate two possible explanations for the net decline in support over time. First, we will compare the trends in the population as a whole with the trend in various sections of the population, to determine whether net change can be explained by differential patterns of attitude change among different groups of citizens. Second, we will examine changes in the sizes of attitude groups in the population, to determine whether changes in the composition of the population can explain net attitude changes in the population as a whole.

What are the relevant population groupings for purposes of decomposing aggregate changes in basic political attitudes? Based on the findings of research on other political attitudes, we decided to compare attitude trends among standard demographic and socio-economic groups: sex, religion, urbanization, education, and social class. Since these groups have generally proven to have distinctly different political attitudes at any one moment in time, we wanted to know whether they would also show different patterns of change in attitude over time. Furthermore, we wanted to compare attitude trends among political groupings in the population. We therefore undertook to compare the trend of support for previous regimes between adherents of different political parties and between proponents and opponents of the Government in office. To test the effect of contextual factors on support for previous regimes, we decided to compare trends of support between respondents living in sections of the country which had voted strongly for the Nazi party in 1932, and respondents living in sections which had been most opposed to Nazism. Admittedly, this would be a very indirect test of the influence of the attitudinal environment, in view of population mobility since 1932. However, since our data permitted us to make this comparison, we were anxious to see whether it would enable us to detect the influence of a contextual factor. Finally, on the strength of research on political socialization, we decided to compare trends among age groups, to test the proposition that basic attitudes are fixed at an early age and are then preserved over time.

To compare the trends among the groups into which we divided the population, we partitioned the variance in attitude exhibited in our total sample into four component parts.⁷ To understand this four-way partition, it is necessary to recognize that the total sample subject to our analysis could be decomposed according to two criteria: we could compare attitudes between sub-groups of the population, for example between young and old or male and female, at given points in time; we could also compare attitudes in the entire population or sub-groups of the population from one year to another, through all the years for which we had surveys. Using two-way analysis of variance, we were able to determine, first, what proportion of the variance in attitudes in the total sample was due to variance *between* the sub-groups we were comparing at any given points in time. This would be variance due to attitudinal differences between groups at single time points, and would therefore be unrelated to trends in attitude over time. Second, we were able to determine what proportion of the total variance existed *within* sub-groups of the population. This would also be unrelated to trends over time, as well as being unrelated to differences between groups. This would be variance unexplained altogether by our approach. We excluded these two components of variance from further analysis, and focused on the remaining components of variance, each of which would be due to attitude change over time.

The variance in attitude which existed between the entire population sample from one year to another would be one component of change, namely that component unrelated to different patterns of change in sub-groups of the population.

⁷ This is the same procedure which we described in detail in a previous article. See Boynton and Loewenberg, 'Development of Public Support for Parliament in Germany,' pp. 175-8.

The variance in attitude existing between sub-groups in one year and sub-groups in other years would be a second component of change, namely that which was due to different patterns of change among the groups into which we had divided the population. This second component, as a percentage of both components of variance due to change, gave us a precise measure of the extent to which attitude change in the population from year to year was due to different patterns of change in different groups of the population. By this means we were able to compare the percentage of change in the total population which was due to different trends among each of the demographic and political groupings into which we were able to divide our sample. These are the percentages reported in Table 4.

TABLE 4 *Different Patterns of Change in Support for Previous Regimes among Population Groups*

Population grouped by	Per cent of total attitudinal variance over time attributable to different patterns of attitudinal variance among sub-groups of the population, with respect to		
	Monarchy	Hitler regime	Imperial flag
Sex	1	1	4
Religion	0	6	2
Urbanization	5	7	5
Education	3	8	12
Social class	5	17	—
Party preference	3	25	12
Attitude to government policy	0	21	15
Sense of representation	—	—	28
State vote for Hitler in 1932	2	13	3
Age	2	19	14

In order to display the trend of generally declining support for previous regimes among the various sub-groups of the population, we graphed the standardized support scores for each set of groups. The resulting graphs reveal three different patterns. *First*, some group trends follow each other very closely, as we found when we compared respondents by sex or religion. This pattern indicates that these two variables did not affect attitudes toward previous regimes at any time. *Second*, some group trends run parallel to each other; this was true when we compared respondents by urbanization and education as well as by most other demographic characteristics. That finding indicates that these demographic variables did affect attitudes toward previous regimes, but did so consistently over time. *Third*, some group trends converge or intersect with each other. This was true particularly of social class and political groups, suggesting that these variables affected attitudes toward previous regimes differently at different times. This third pattern therefore provides our first principal source of explanation of attitude change in the population as a whole.

TABLE 5 *Components of Change**

Population grouped by	Attitude to monarchy %	Attitude to Hitler regime %	Attitude to imperial flag %
Sex			
Attitude change			
among men	45	48	49
among women	54	52	51
Change in size of groups	1	0	0
Religion			
Attitude change			
among Protestants	56	58	55
among Catholics	44	39	43
Change in size of groups	0	3	3
Urbanization			
Attitude change			
among urban residents	46	47	46
among rural residents	52	51	53
Change in size of groups	1	3	1
Education			
Attitude change			
among elementary educated	70	61	60
among higher educated	23	29	34
Change in size of groups	7	10	6
Social class			
Attitude change			
among highest class	11	26	—
among middle class	63	61	—
among lowest class	15	8	—
Change in size of groups	12	5	—
Party preference			
Attitude change			
among CDU/CSU supporters	38	34	29
among SPD supporters	18	21	13
among supporters of other political parties	10	15	13
among supporters of no political parties	25	20	31
Change in size of groups	9	9	13
Attitude to Government policy			
Attitude change			
among those favorable	41	59	44
among those unfavorable	17	21	18
among those undecided	25	14	25
Change in size of groups	17	6	12

TABLE 5 *Continued*

Population grouped by	Attitude to monarchy %	Attitude to Hitler regime %	Attitude to imperial flag %
Sense of representation			
Attitude change			
among those believing MPs responsive	—	—	44
among those believing MPs not responsive	—	—	38
among those uncertain	—	—	15
Change in size of groups	—	—	3
State vote for Hitler in 1932			
Attitude change			
among those in states with high Nazi vote	44	54	48
among those in states with low Nazi vote	56	44	51
Change in size of groups	0	2	1
Age			
Attitude change			
among those under 30	22	34	22
among those 30 to 45	22	26	23
among those 46 to 60	28	17	23
among those over 60	17	12	28
Change in size of groups	11	11	4

* Per cent of attitude change in total population attributable to attitude change within specified groups, compared to per cent attributable to change in size of groups, over period for which data are available.

We also investigated whether attitude change in the population might be due to changes in the composition of the population, as might occur if groups supporting previous regimes diminished in size within the total population. We apportioned total change from year to year between that component due to changes in the *size* of population groups, and that due to changes of *attitude* within groups, using a differential equation.⁸ Since the demographic composition of the German population changed very little during the time period we were investigating, attitude change attributable to demographic groups was largely due to changes of attitude within these groups rather than to changes in their size. However, political groups did change in size. Thus attitude changes attributable to political groups were notably due to changes in the political composition of the population. This apportionment of change between that due to changes in the size of groups and that due to attitude change within groups provides our second principal explanation of attitude change in the population as a whole, and is reported in Table 5.

⁸ Boynton and Loewenberg, 'Development of Public Support for Parliament in Germany', p. 178.

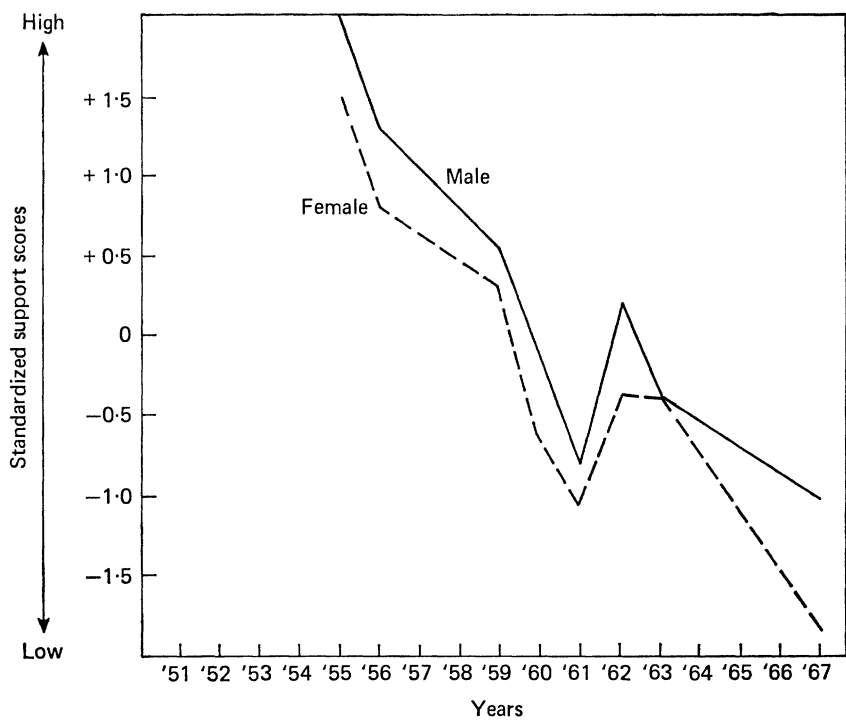


Fig. 2. Support for Hitler regime by sex

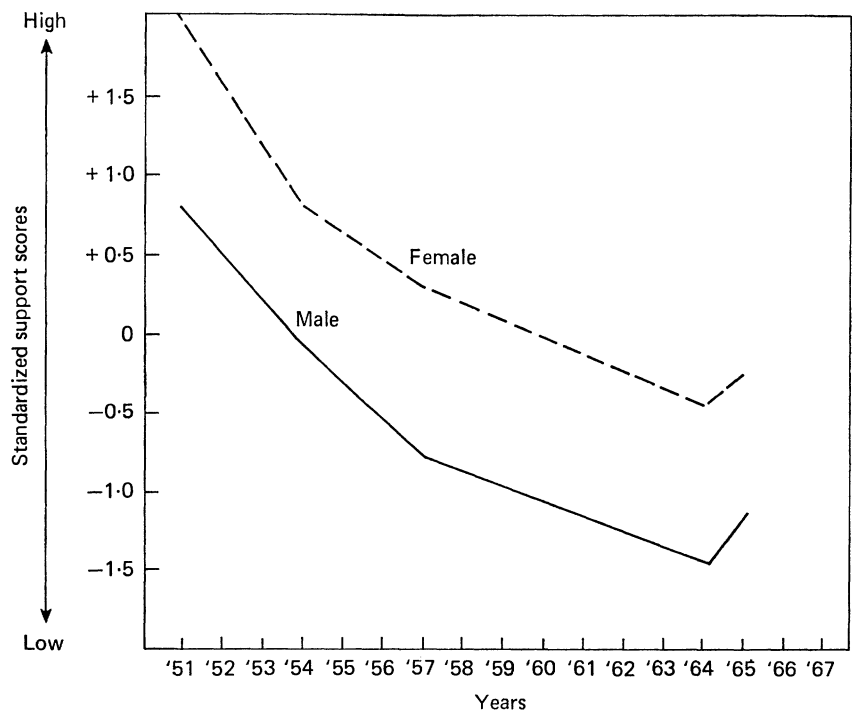


Fig. 3. Support for monarchy by sex

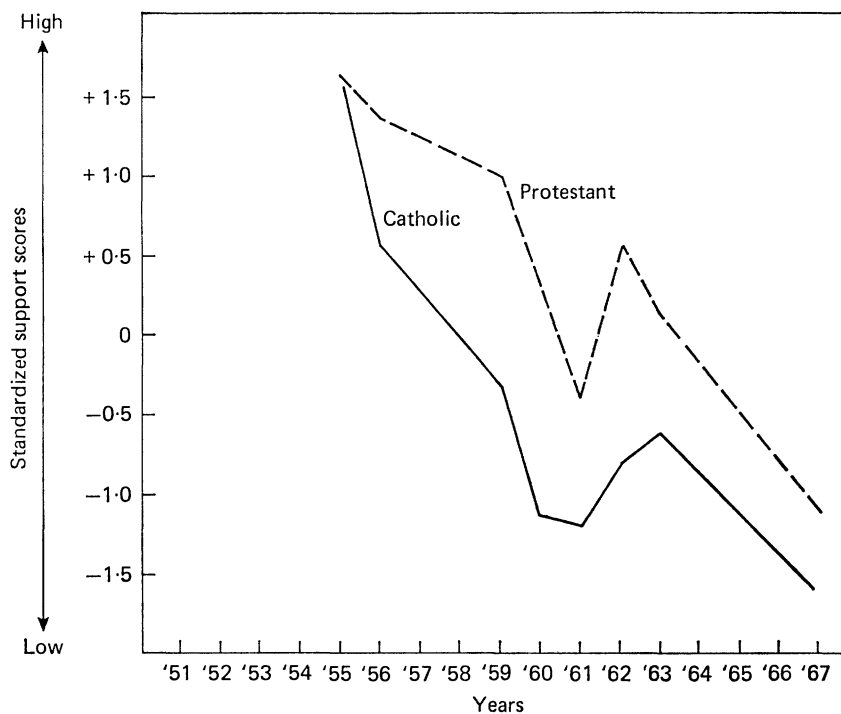


Fig. 4. *Support for Hitler regime by religion*

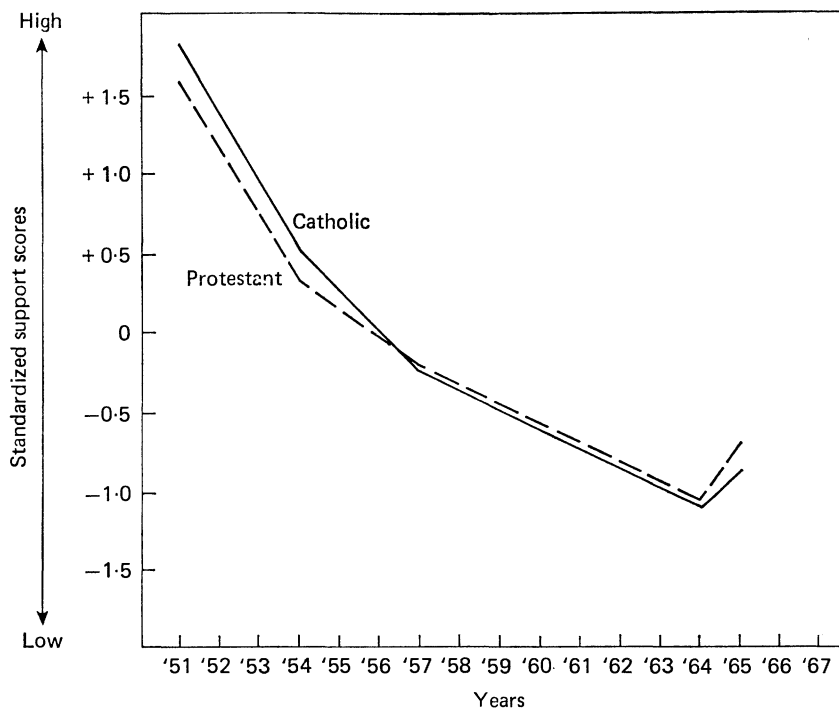


Fig. 5. *Support for monarchy by religion*

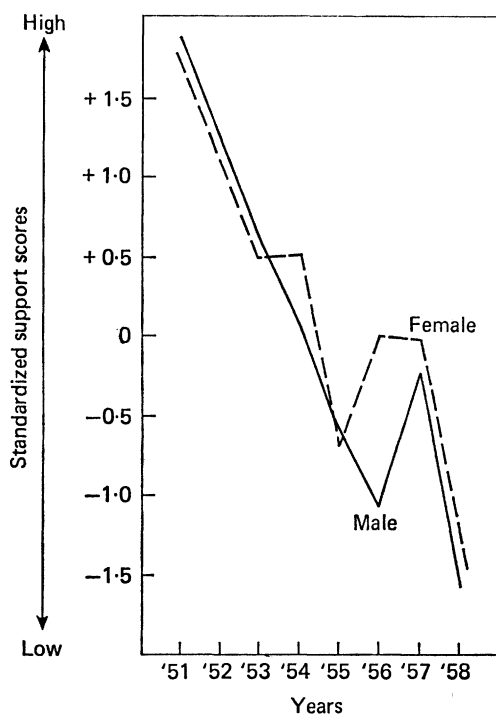


Fig. 6. Support for the imperial flag by sex

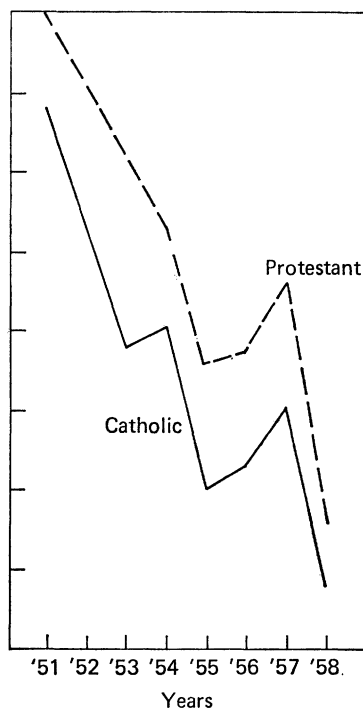


Fig. 7. Support for the imperial flag by religion

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON DECLINING SUPPORT FOR PREVIOUS REGIMES

Sex and Religion

We found that neither sex nor religion made very much difference for attitudes toward previous regimes. Although these standard demographic variables are known to affect a wide range of political attitudes, they appear to influence voting behavior and issue attitudes more substantially than basic attitudes toward regimes (see Figs. 2-7). We did find evidence that women were consistently more favorable to monarchy than men (Fig. 3) and that Protestants were consistently more favorable toward the Hitler regime than Catholics (Fig. 4). Since German women have been less active in politics than men despite their enfranchisement since 1920, their lasting propensity for monarchy may be an expression of their relative political parochialism. Furthermore, since the Nazi party met strong resistance in Germany from the supporters of Catholic political movements, the lower support for the Hitler regime among Catholics is not surprising. These two relationships – between sex in one case, religion in the other, and attitudes toward monarchy and Hitler respectively – are consistent with hypotheses based on cross-sectional data. Neither of these variables however, offers any explanation of the changing support for monarchy and the Hitler regime in the population as a whole. Their effect was consistent, and small.

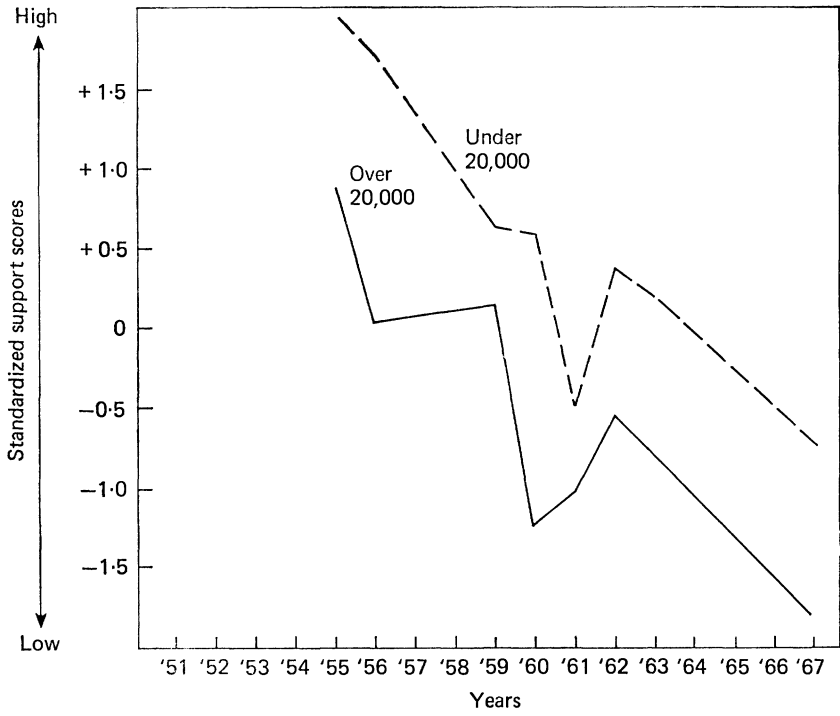


Fig. 8. Support for Hitler regime by size of community

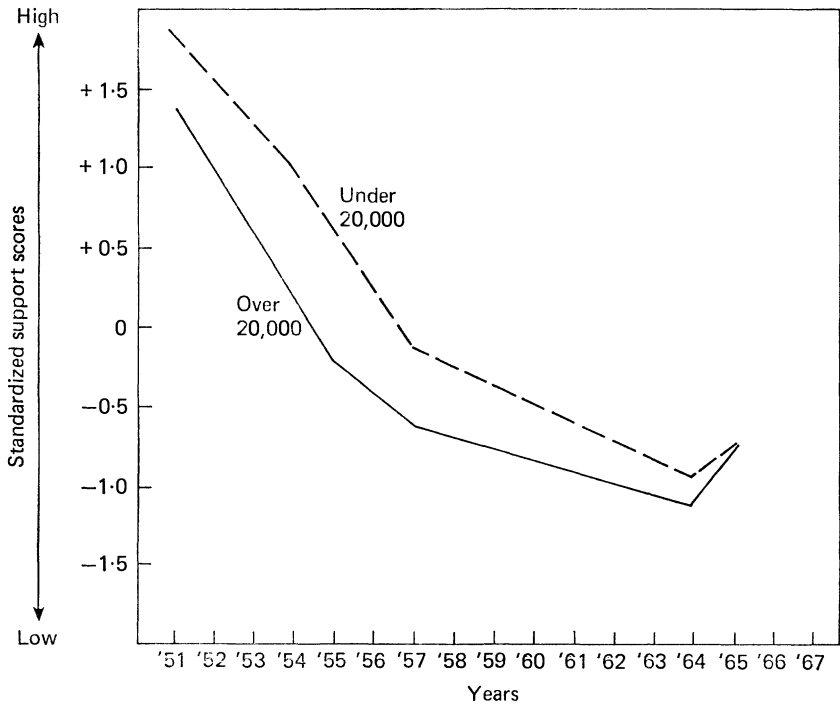


Fig. 9. Support for monarchy by size of community

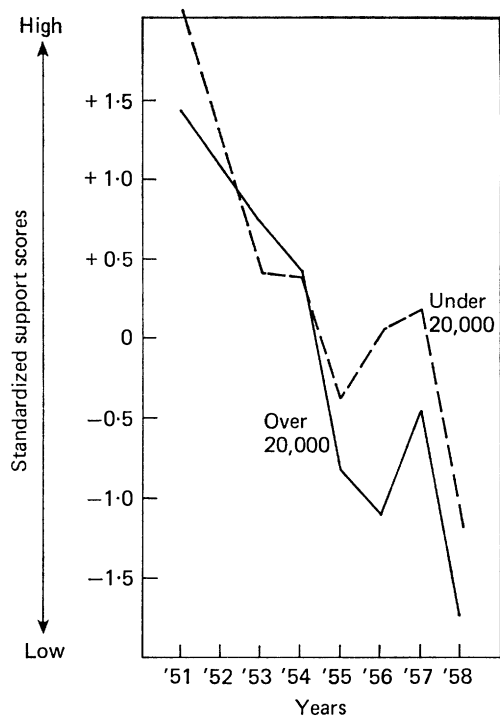


Fig. 10. Support for the imperial flag by size of community

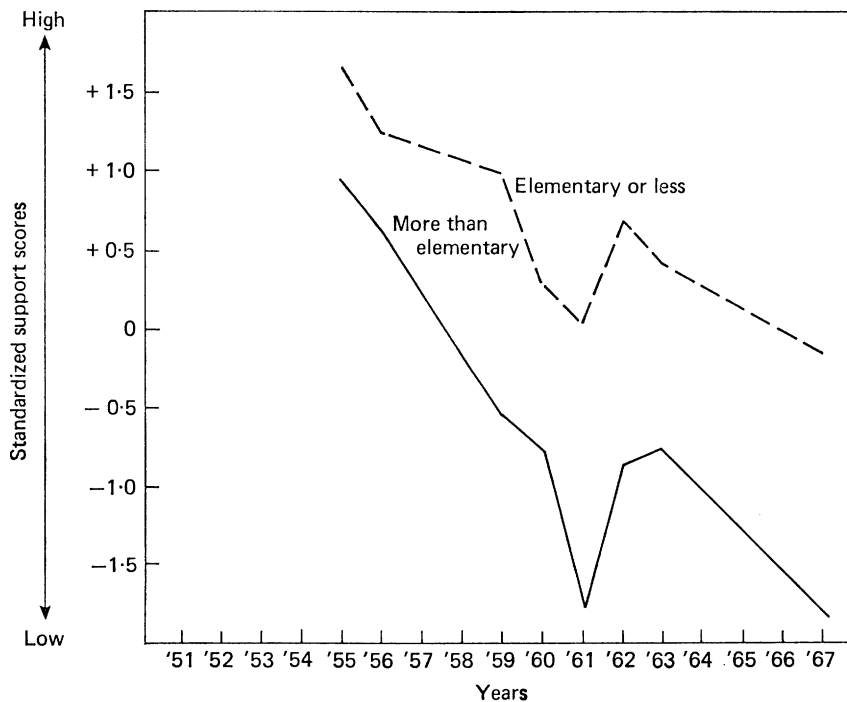


Fig. 11. Support for Hitler regime by educational level

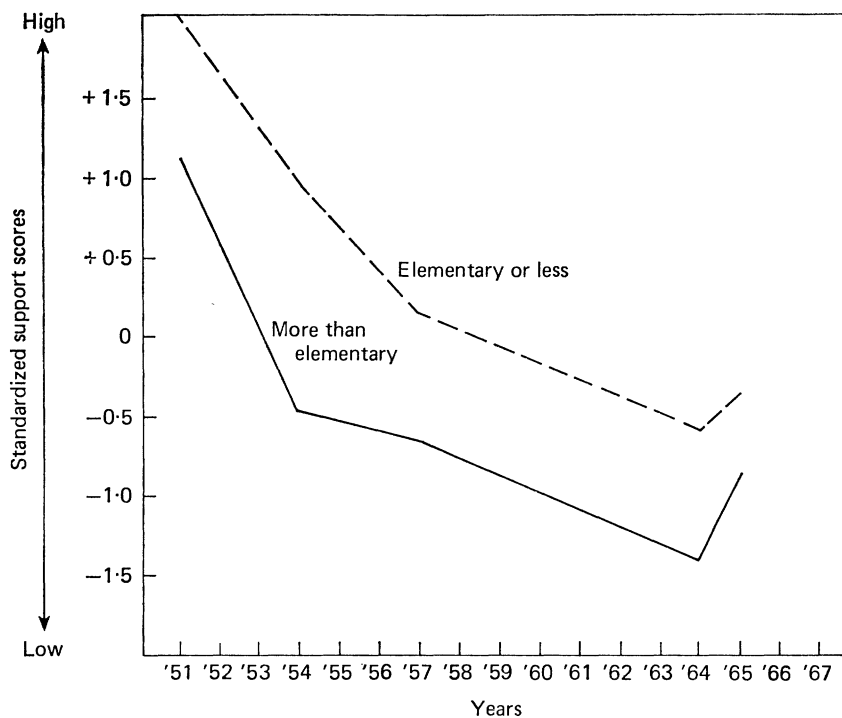


Fig. 12. Support for monarchy by educational level

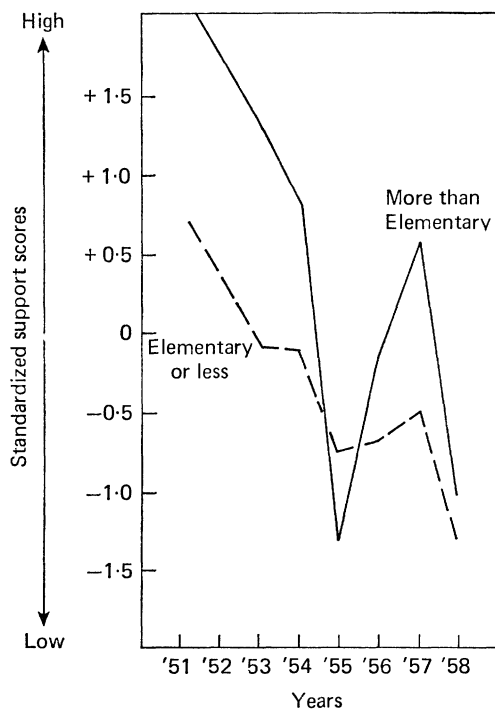


Fig. 13. Support for the imperial flag by educational level

Urbanization and Education

Both urbanization and educational level also appeared to be consistently related to attitudes toward previous regimes, in the manner we would have expected from previous research based on cross-sectional data. Respondents in towns having a population of less than 20,000 were continuously more favorable to the Hitler regime and somewhat more willing to support monarchy than respondents in cities over that size (see Figs. 8 and 9). This is a direct indication of the extent to which attachment to previous regimes was a reflection of parochialism. We found slight evidence that toward the middle 1960s support for monarchy depended less and less on urbanization, as the support trends between town and city gradually converged (see Fig. 9). However, according to our analysis of variance, only 5 per cent of the change in attitude was due to different patterns of change between the urban and the rural population (see Table 4). Attachment to the imperial flag seems to have had little to do with urbanization (see Fig. 10).

We found somewhat more evidence that education had an influence on the change of attitudes toward Hitler. From the start, respondents with only elementary schooling were more supportive of the Hitler regime than more educated respondents, but the gap between the two groups widened over the twelve year period we studied (see Fig. 11). Over time, the favorable attitude toward Hitler declined more rapidly among those with higher education than among the less educated; 8 per cent of the change in attitude toward the Hitler regime was due to a different pattern of change between the educated and the less educated, a higher percentage than that due to differences between the urban and rural populations. Furthermore, at the end of the period over 30 per cent of the population had higher education while only half as many had attained this level of education twelve years earlier. Ten per cent of the change in attitude toward Hitler was due to a change in the educational composition of the population (see Table 5). Thus support for the Hitler regime declined with above average rapidity among educated Germans, and they in turn made up an increasing proportion of the population. In these two ways education therefore gives us the first explanation of attitude change toward Hitler.

The influence of educational level on attitudes toward monarchy appears to be remarkably consistent throughout the entire time period (see Fig. 12). The contrast between the influence of education on attitudes toward the Hitler regime and attitudes toward monarchy is notable, even if it is not dramatic. The *growing* influence of education on attitudes toward Hitler enables us to explain change in this attitude by education. The *steady* influence of education on support for monarchy, on the other hand, means that education cannot explain change in attitude toward monarchy, even though at any given point in time attitudes toward monarchy were dependent on educational level. This contrast illustrates that while steady differences between the attitudes of groups at successive points in time (parallel trends on the graphs) reveal a decided relationship between groups and attitudes, only varying differences between the attitudes of groups over time (diverging trends on the graphs) reveal changing relationships which can help us to explain change in the total population. The influence of education on attitudes toward the flag follows no clear pattern (see Fig. 13).

Social Class

Both monarchy and dictatorship were in different ways class-based regimes. Monarchy was clearly a regime led by the upper classes. The Nazi movement was brought to power by the middle class, although once in power Hitler brought about a social revolution which destroyed much of the established class structure.⁹ To what extent, we wondered, was support for these regimes in the postwar German population dependent on social class? We had as a measure the interviewer rating of respondents. The results of our analysis indicated that support for the old regimes was still class-based and that, furthermore, the erosion of that support could be explained at least in part in class terms.

In the beginning of the period we investigated, support for the Hitler regime was highest among the middle classes, lower in the two classes at the opposite

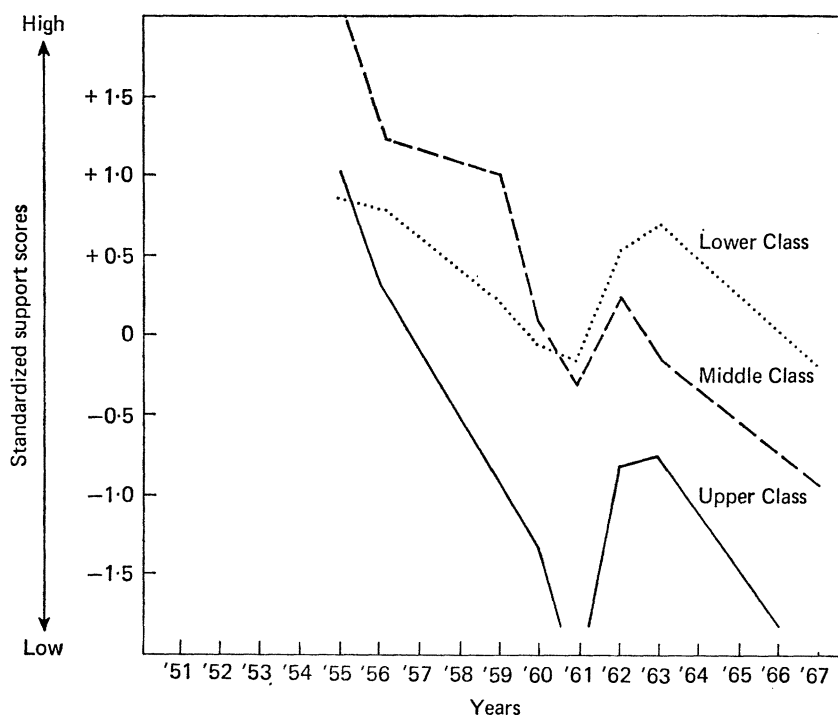


Fig. 14. Support for Hitler regime by social class

ends of the social spectrum. However, over the twelve year period between 1955 and 1967, the attitude toward Hitler among the lowest class changed very little, while support declined very rapidly in both the middle and upper class (see Fig. 14). Seventeen per cent of the change in attitude toward Hitler was due to different patterns of change in the different classes (see Table 4). Furthermore, when we apportion the change attributable to social class by our second analytical method, we find that 61 per cent of the change in attitude was due to changes within the

⁹ David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), *passim*.

middle class, 26 per cent was due to change within the upper class, only 8 per cent was due to change in the lower class, and a mere 5 per cent was due to a change in the class composition of the population (see Table 5). In short, the decline in support for the Hitler regime in the population was fueled by attitude changes in the upper class and, most significantly, in the middle class which had been the mainstay of the Nazi movement in the last years of the Weimar Republic.

No such pattern existed with respect to the decline of support for monarchy. The appeal of monarchy was consistently greatest in the lowest class, once again suggesting that support for this regime came from the most parochial section of the population. The appeal was less among the middle class, least among those at the top of the social structure (see Fig. 15). What had once been an upper-class

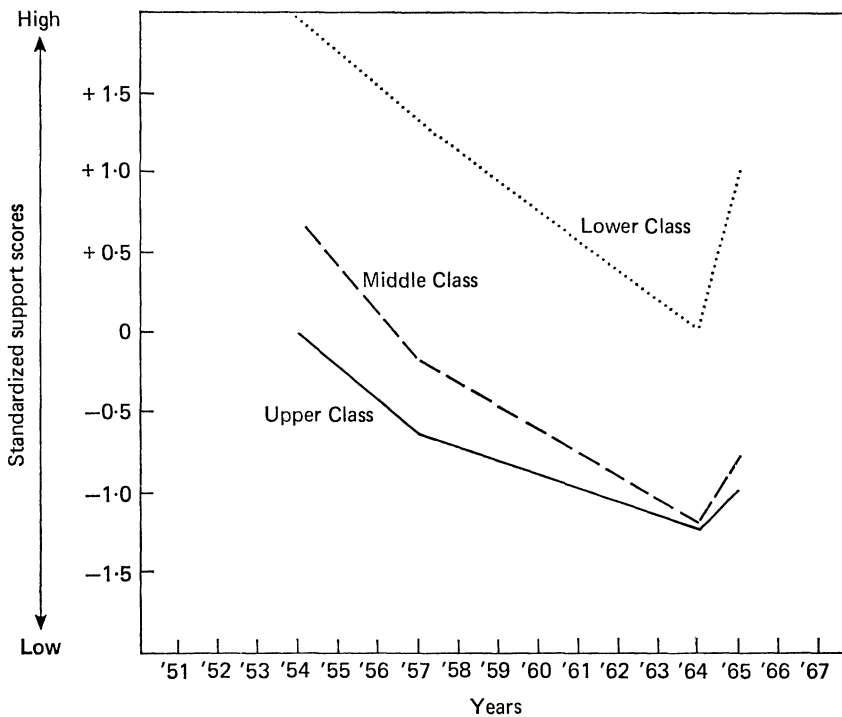


Fig. 15. Support for monarchy by social class

regime drew its residue of support from those most isolated from new political currents. And the pattern of decline could not be explained in class terms. Although the decline was somewhat more rapid among the middle than among the upper classes, only 5 per cent of the change in attitude toward monarchy was due to differences in the pattern of change among the classes (see Table 4). We did not have enough data to assess the influence of class on attitudes toward the flag, but we would have expected a similar result.

In seeking the determinants of attitudes toward monarchy and the Hitler regime in a population showing less and less support for them, we have found that neither

sex nor religion were related to support at any time (with the two exceptions which we noted above), but that urbanization, education, and social class were related to support at all times. We found, furthermore, that different patterns of declining support for monarchy existed between urban and rural populations, and that different patterns of declining support for the Hitler regime existed among people of different educational levels and social classes. In this sense the urban-rural distinction, educational differences, and social class are all factors which provide some explanation for the erosion of public support for previous regimes. In short, that erosion occurred most rapidly among the more educated groups and among the middle and upper classes so far as the Hitler regime was concerned; there was some convergence between the attitude of the urban and rural population toward monarchy, but educational and class differences persisted and even widened with respect to support for the Hitler regime.

V. THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL FACTORS ON DECLINING SUPPORT FOR PREVIOUS REGIMES

Our previous research has shown that the growth of support for a new regime can best be explained by different patterns of increasing support in different political groups of the population, defined by party preference, attitudes toward the Government in office, and sense of representation. The question to which we now turn is whether differences in attitudinal trends among political groups will also best explain declining support for previous regimes.

In democratic countries, party is the clearest point of orientation for citizens' attitudes toward current issues. In continental European countries, where party names have shifted frequently and party loyalties are not as strong as in Great Britain and the United States, citizens nevertheless maintain underlying affinities for broad partisan tendencies. In Germany specifically, clear and stable distinctions existed in the 1950s and 1960s between the political views of citizens preferring the Social Democratic Party, the Christian Democratic Union, or one or another of the smaller parties of the center or right. Further, these distinctions in the postwar period echoed the political cleavages of the Weimar Republic. At that time, the Right had been nostalgic for an authoritarian regime, while the friends of democracy were found disproportionately on the Left. Did the Right-Center-Left cleavage continue to affect attitudes toward monarchy and the Hitler regime in the postwar period?

In the early 1950s support for these old regimes was indeed stronger among the partisans of the center and right, those who preferred the CDU, the minor parties, or no particular party, than among the SPD partisans. With respect to monarchy, the difference never changed (see Fig. 17). With respect to loyalty for the imperial flag, some narrowing of the gap between different groupings appears to have taken place (see Fig. 18). But the most dramatic changes occurred with respect to attitudes toward Hitler. Here the least change occurred among Social Democratic supporters, the most change among Christian Democrats (see Fig. 16). The CDU partisans, although at first exhibiting that greater loyalty to the old

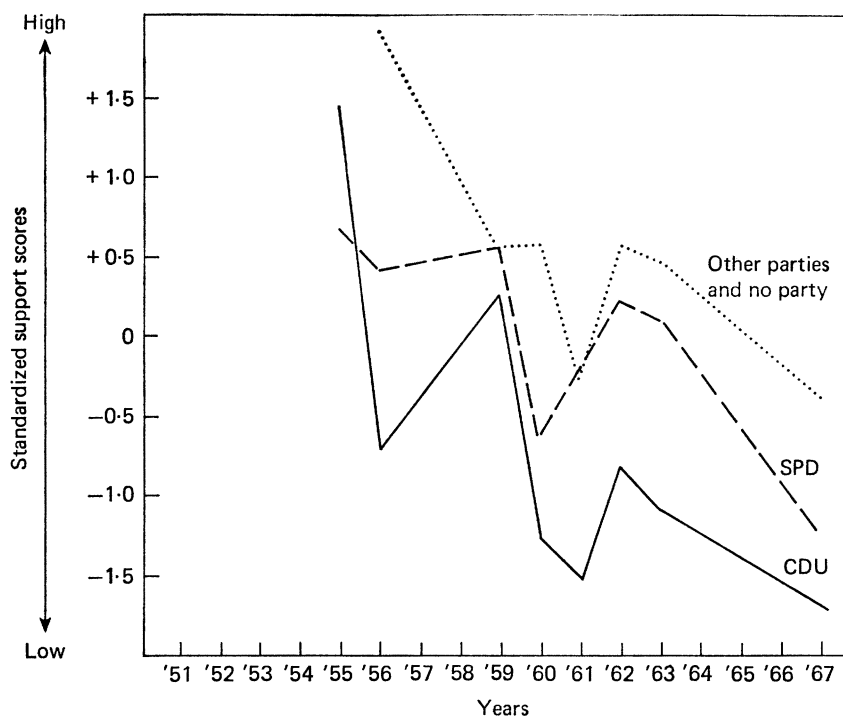


Fig. 16. Support for Hitler regime by party preference

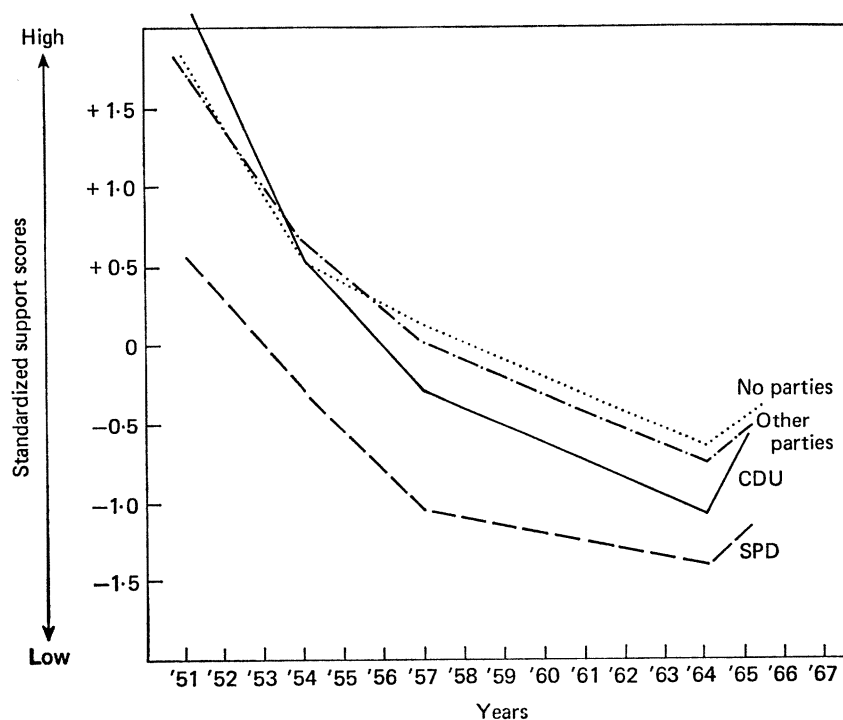


Fig. 17. Support for monarchy by party preference

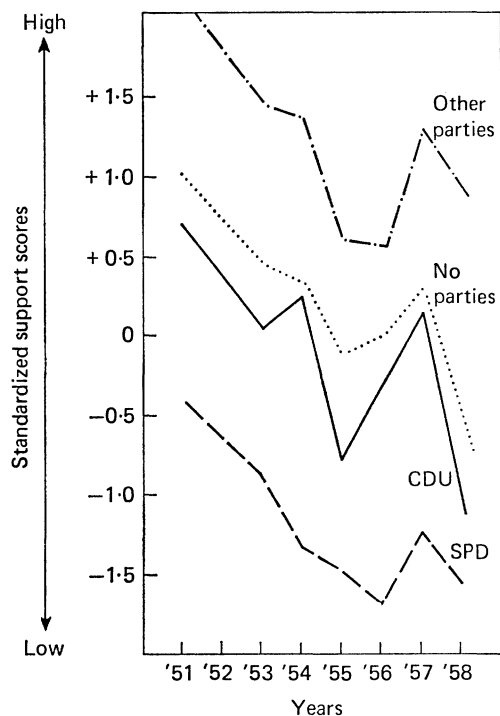


Fig. 18. Support for the imperial flag by party preference

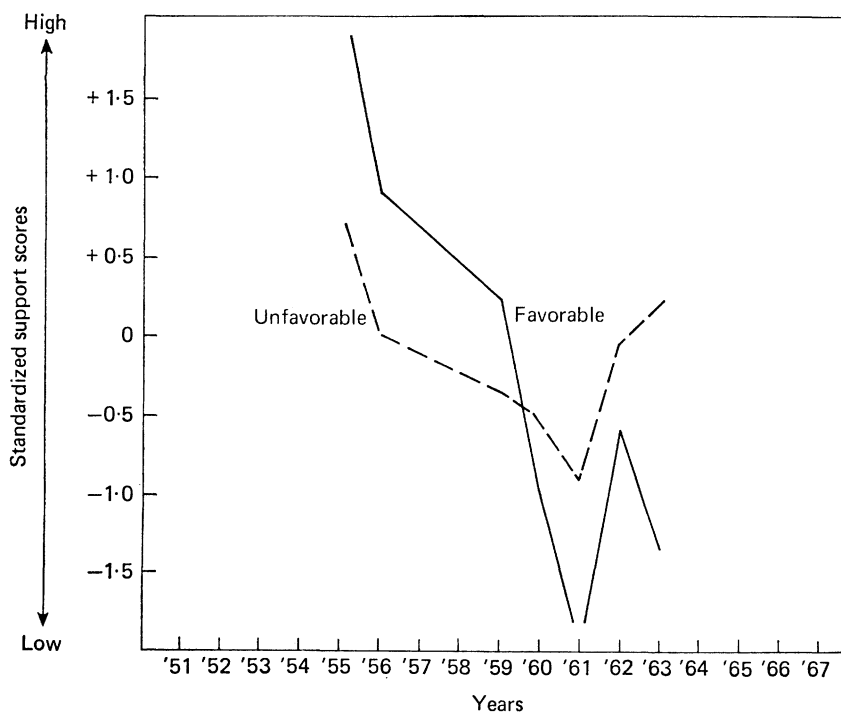


Fig. 19. Support for Hitler regime by attitude toward the government in office

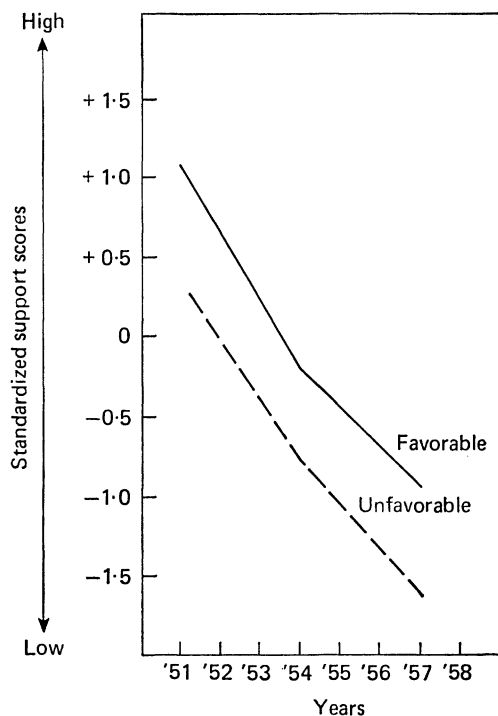


Fig. 20. Support for monarchy by attitude toward the government in office

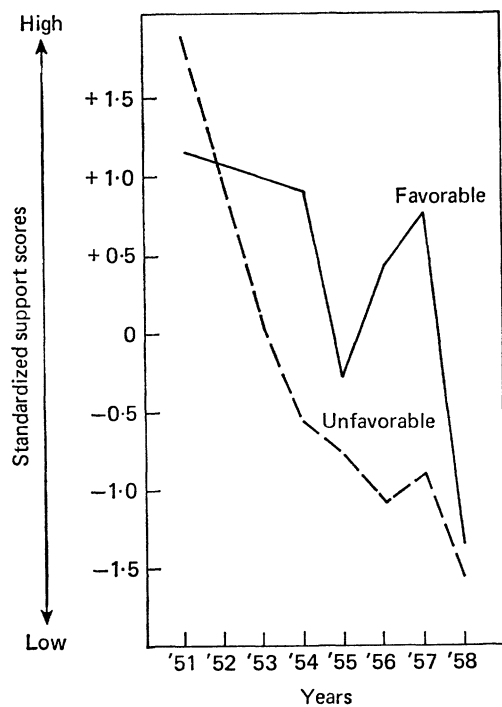


Fig. 21. Support for the imperial flag by attitude toward the government in office

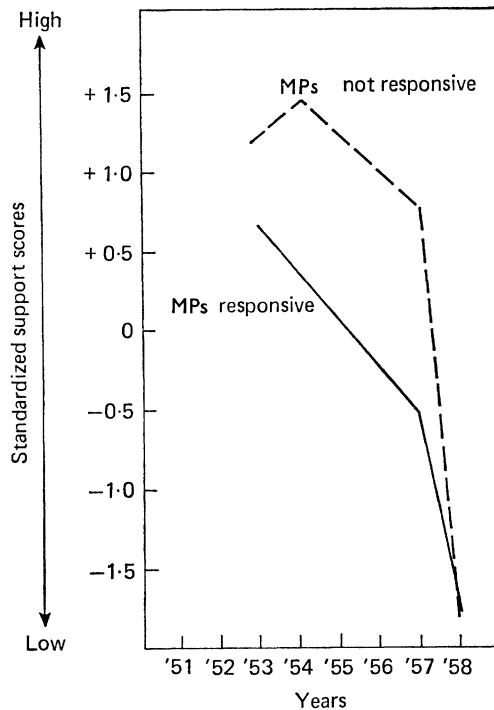


Fig. 22. Support for the imperial flag by sense of representation

regime which was not surprising among conservatives, also found themselves supporters of what was the governing party throughout this period. Perhaps for this reason, they fled more rapidly than adherents of any other party from the view that saw merit in Hitler, thereby contributing disproportionately to the decline in support for the Hitler regime. Over one-third of all changes in attitude toward Hitler among party preference groups was due to changes among CDU supporters, who also became an increasingly large segment of the population (see Table 5). The analysis of variance shows that 25 per cent of all change in attitude toward Hitler between party preference groups was due to different patterns of change among them (see Table 4). Thus changing attitudes among party groups provides the single strongest explanation of the erosion of support for the Hitler regime.

When we compare the pattern of attitude change among those favoring the policies of the Government in power and those opposing these policies, the effect of satisfaction with the Government on the lessening of support for its Nazi predecessor becomes even clearer. In the mid 1950s, favorable attitudes toward Hitler were far more frequent among the friends of the Government in office than among its opponents, but year by year those favorably inclined toward the Government exhibited a precipitous drop in support for the Hitler regime, while the view of the opponents of the Government changed much less. By 1960, support for Hitler among those favoring the Government dropped below the level of

support among those dissatisfied with the Government (see Fig. 19). Twenty-one per cent of the changing attitude toward the Hitler regime between proponents and opponents of the Government was due to these dramatically different patterns of change (see Table 4). Altogether nearly 60 per cent of this change was due to changing attitudes among the Government's followers (see Table 5).

No such difference existed between friends and foes of the Government with respect to support for monarchy. Consistently, those satisfied with the Government were slightly more favorable toward monarchy (see Fig. 20). While the difference was not as steady with respect to attitudes toward the imperial flag, a similar relationship existed, with no discernible trend (see Fig. 21). Apparently public orientations to the remote monarchical regime were largely unaffected by changes in satisfaction with Government policy, but positive attitudes toward the immediate antecedent of the postwar regime, the Hitler dictatorship, were apparently undermined by the policy successes of the Adenauer Government.

As a brief addendum to these conclusions on the influence of policy satisfaction on attitudes toward previous regimes, we can report a limited finding on the relationship between a citizen's sense of being represented in the present government and his support for an old regime. In a few data sets, we had measures of citizens' confidence that Members of Parliament would attend to their problems in response to letters. Those having such confidence originally exhibited less affinity for the imperial flag than those who lacked that sense of representation, but by the end of the 1950s, the difference in attitude toward the flag between these two groups had disappeared (see Fig. 22). But while a citizen's support for the symbol of an old regime may have had less and less to do with his sense of being represented in the new one, as we have seen above his satisfaction with the policies of the new regime seems to have had a profound effect on his loss of interest in its historically most immediate alternative.

VI. POLITICAL CONTEXT, POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION, AND DECLINING SUPPORT FOR PREVIOUS REGIMES

Research on voting behavior, based on both ecological and individual-level data, suggests that the 'climate of opinion' may affect a voter's choice.¹⁰ To make a rough test of the effect of this contextual characteristic on support for regimes, we divided our population into two groups, the first consisting of respondents residing in states which had cast an above average number of votes for the Nazi party in 1932, the second living in states with below average Nazi voting.¹¹

¹⁰ Erwin K. Scheuch, 'Social Context and Individual Behavior', in Mattei Dogan and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Quantitative Ecological Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1969), pp. 133-55.

¹¹ Votes cast for the Nazi party were above the national average in the regions presently incorporated in the following *Länder*: Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate, Schleswig-Holstein. The regions in which the Nazi vote was below the national average are presently incorporated in the following *Länder*: Bavaria, Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, North-Rhine-Westphalia. The Saar was left out of this analysis, since it was not a part of Germany in 1932.

Despite the population movements of the war and postwar periods, we wondered whether one could still distinguish between political environments which had been receptive to Nazism and those which had been hostile, and we wanted to determine whether such ecological influences might manifest themselves in attitudes toward past regimes. Our findings suggest that favorable attitudes toward Hitler declined less rapidly in areas of the country which had been the mainstays of the Nazi party in the early 1930s (see Fig. 23). Although support for the Hitler regime did not differ in the two environments in 1955, the rate of decline was sharper in the regions which had been most resistant to Nazism a generation earlier. Thirteen per cent of the change in support for the Hitler regime among respondents in these different political environments was due to different patterns of change between them (see Table 4). This seemed to us to permit the inference that the political environment had long-run effects on regime attitudes. The declining support for an old regime seemed to be led by the regions which had given it less than average support in the first place.

No such relationship existed with respect to attitudes toward monarchy or the imperial flag (see Figs. 24 and 25). Since the regions in which an above average vote for the Nazi party had been cast were also the more generally conservative regions of the country, we might have expected that they would exhibit greater tenacity in supporting monarchy, but this was not the case. This was still another indication that changes in support for monarchy were unaffected by the political influences which appeared to affect changes of attitude toward the more recent past.

Research on political socialization – most of it based on studies of the political orientations of American children – suggests that basic political attitudes, including support for the regime, are established early in life. Much of this research has been done on the unproven assumption that attitudes established early in life are preserved through the life cycle.¹² Our data did not include measures of children's political attitudes but the data we had on support for past regimes among adults did permit us to test inferences regarding the possible effects of political socialization on these attitudes, by comparing trends of support among different age groups.

We divided our population into four age groups. We assumed that the youngest group, those under 30 in the 1950s, had had their earliest political experiences under Nazism, while the oldest, those over 60, had been socialized in the last years of the monarchy. We therefore wanted to see whether the younger group was disproportionately favorable toward Hitler, and whether the older group disproportionately supported monarchy. This proved to be the case, permitting the inference that early childhood socialization had had a long-term effect on regime attitudes.

However, while the age differences with respect to support for monarchy and the imperial flag remained unchanged through the period we investigated, the age gap in support for the Hitler regime narrowed perceptibly over time (see Figs.

¹² See the discussion by Donald D. Searing, Joel J. Schwartz, and Alden E. Lind, 'The Structuring Principle: Political Socialization and Belief Systems', *American Political Science Review*, LXVII (1973), 415–32.

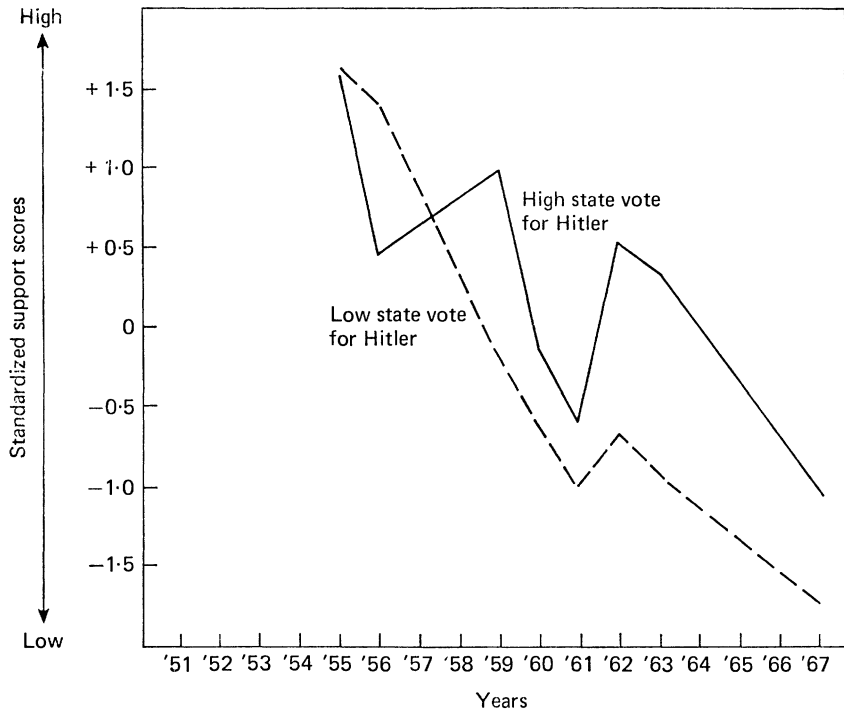


Fig. 23. Support for Hitler regime by state vote for Hitler in 1932

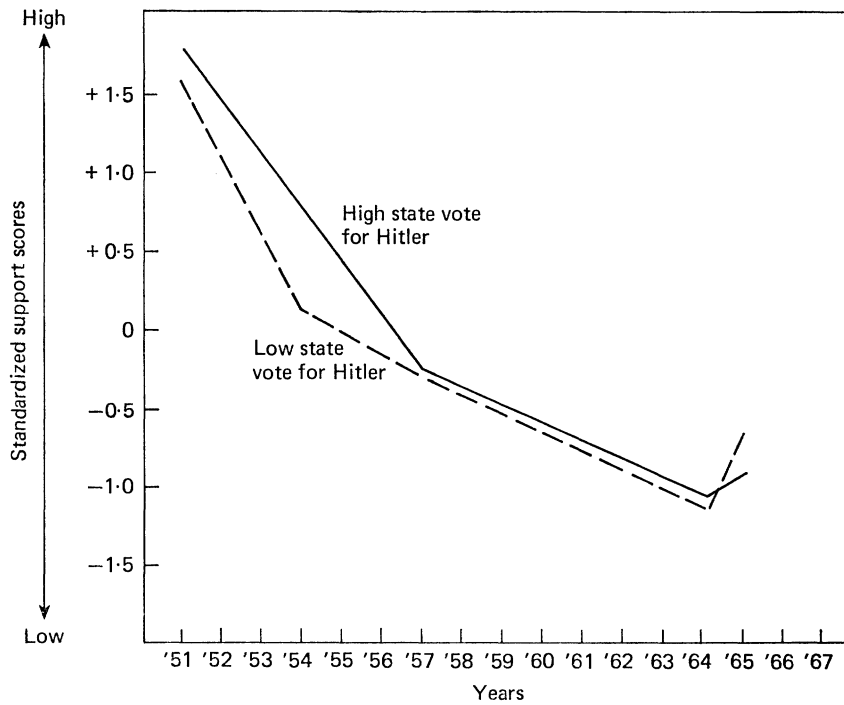


Fig. 24. Support for monarchy by state vote for Hitler in 1932

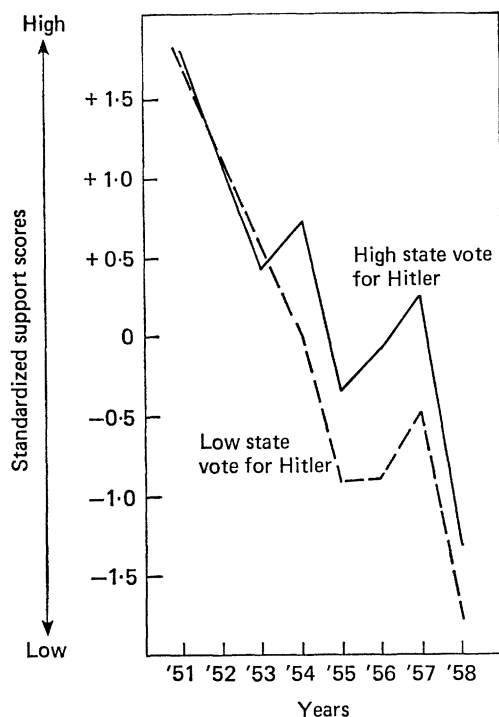


Fig. 25. Support for the imperial flag by state vote for Hitler in 1932

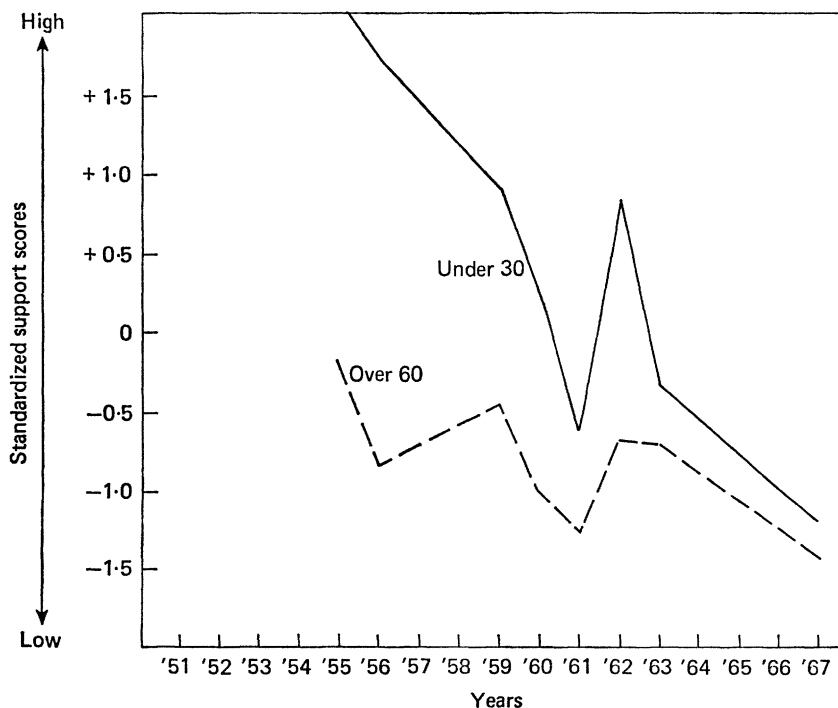


Fig. 26. Support for Hitler regime by age groups

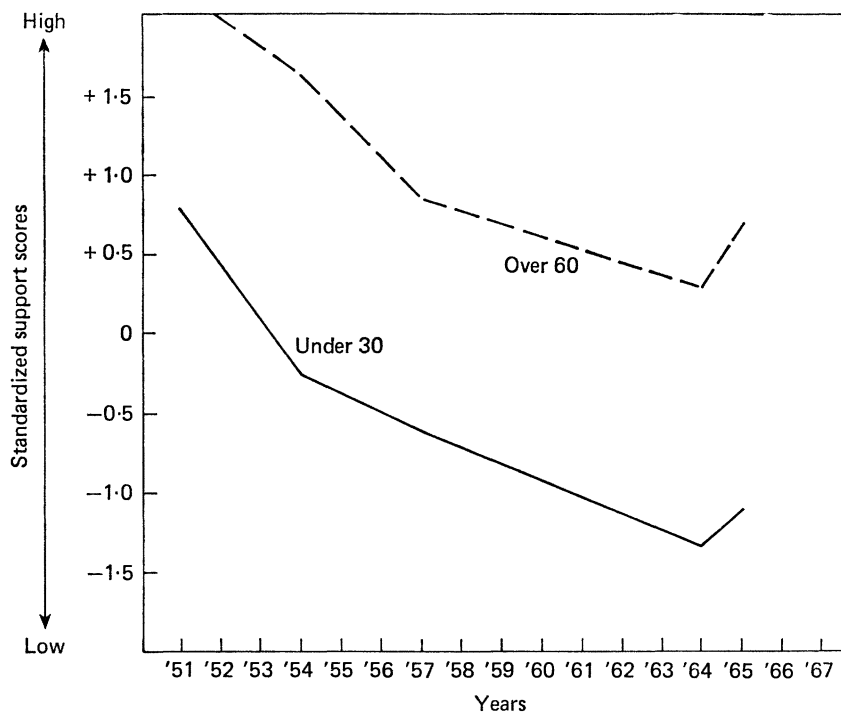


Fig. 27. Support for monarchy by age groups

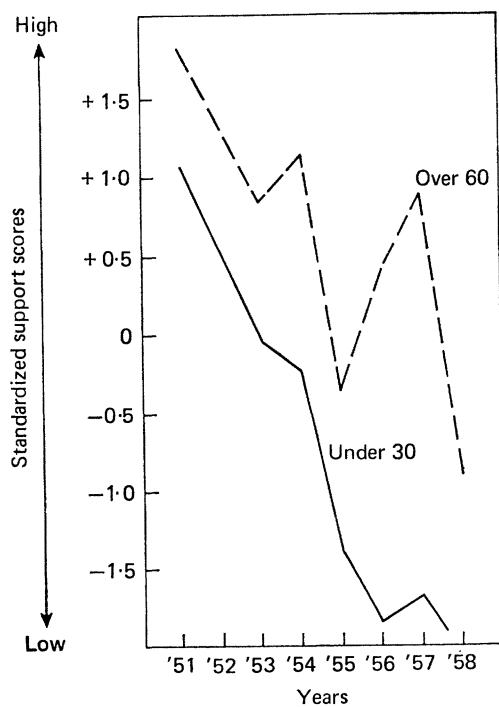


Fig. 28. Support for the imperial flag by age groups

26–28). This contrast suggested that attitudes toward monarchy continued to be age-related even while the aggregate support for monarchy in the population declined. Thus support for monarchy appeared to be a life-cycle phenomenon: individuals, regardless of their early political experiences, had a greater propensity to support monarchy as they grew older. On the other hand, attitudes toward Hitler appeared to be generational. The youngest age group was originally the most favorable toward the Hitler regime, but toward the end of the 1960s age differences in support for Hitler were disappearing. This suggested that the attitudes toward regimes in the youngest group in the population, far from indicating a congenital propensity to support dictatorship, indicated attachment to the regime under which it had been socialized. Those under 30 in 1967 were no longer the children of Hitler, but the first generation to be socialized in the Federal Republic.

Our analysis of variance substantiates the contrast between the influence of age on attitudes toward monarchy and dictatorship. Only 2 per cent of the change in attitude toward monarchy, but 19 per cent of the change in attitude toward the Hitler regime, was due to different patterns of change among age groups (see Table 4). In other words, the decline in support for Hitler in the population as a whole can be explained in part by the precipitous drop in support in the youngest element of the population; no such age-related explanation applies to the decline in support for monarchy.

VII. SOURCES AND CONSEQUENCES OF DECLINING SUPPORT FOR PREVIOUS REGIMES

We have tried to determine which factors explain the erosion of support for monarchy and the Hitler regime in postwar Germany. We were more successful in explaining the decline in favorable attitudes toward Hitler than the decline in support for monarchy. It was among the educated middle and upper classes, among the followers of the party in power and those satisfied with the Government's policies, among the young and among people in the more traditionally democratic parts of the country, that the Hitler regime lost its appeal most rapidly. In general, those elements of the population enjoying the greatest success under the new regime were the quickest to lose interest in its predecessors. In addition, the more educated groups not only abandoned favorable attitudes toward the Hitler regime more rapidly than those with less education, but they simultaneously comprised a growing proportion of the total population.

No such clear explanation exists for the decline of support for monarchy and the imperial flag. The pattern of decline appears to be uniform across all social and political groups of the population, with the possible exception of a faster than average decline among the originally more supportive rural population. Of course standard demographic and political variables did affect attitudes toward monarchy at single points in time, as we would have expected, but these variables did not affect the general pattern of decline. Although at any given moment women, citizens from rural areas, the less educated, and the more conservative, were more

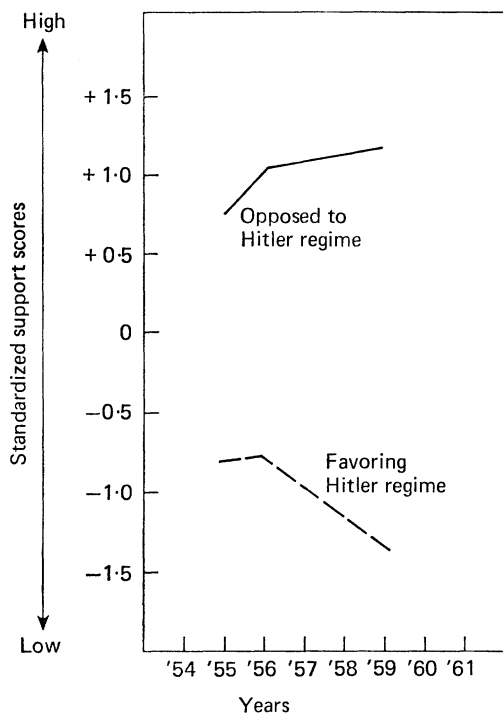


Fig. 29. Support for parliament by support for the Hitler regime

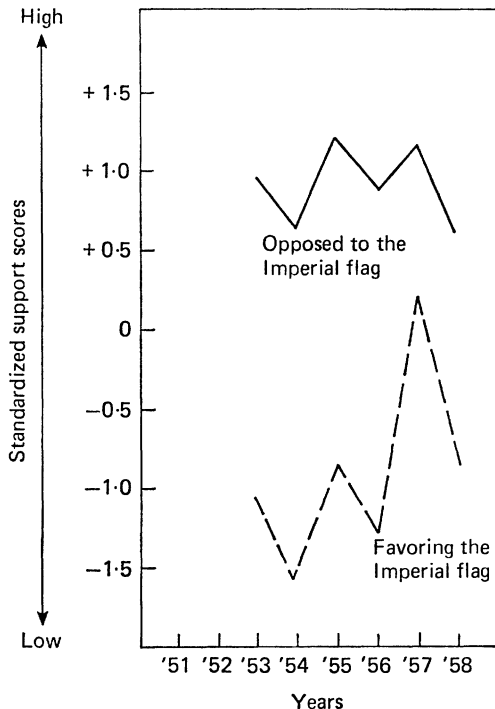


Fig. 30. Support for parliament by support for the imperial flag

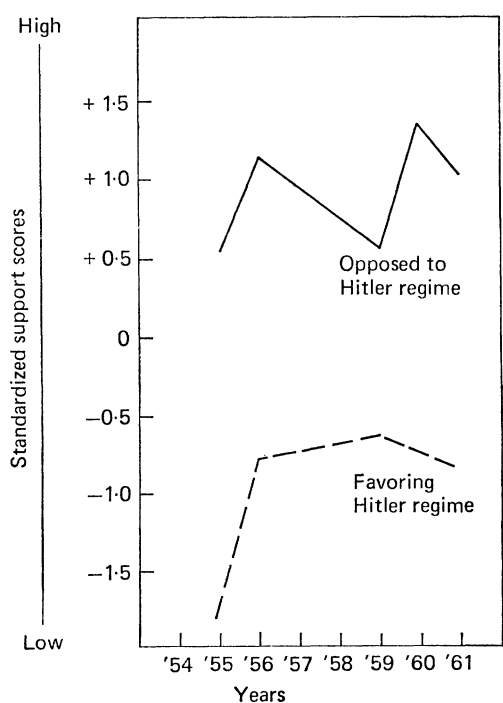


Fig. 31. Support for party competition by support for the Hitler regime

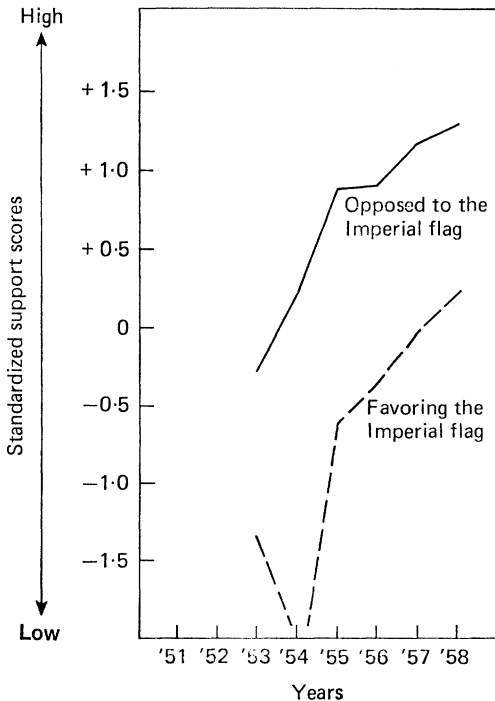


Fig. 32. Support for party competition by support for the imperial flag

inclined to support monarchy than were others, the erosion of support for monarchy occurred equally among all of these groups.

Having failed to discover an explanation for the decreasing attachment to monarchy in the postwar German population, we can only speculate on alternative explanations. The monarchical regime had collapsed forty years before these surveys were conducted. Support for this regime remained mostly in the parochial sections of the population, among those who were most immune to current socio-political influences. With the passage of time, fewer and fewer Germans survived who remembered the monarchy, and even the recollection of those who survived was growing dim. In the absence of any other influences, this aging process alone may have weakened the appeal of monarchy throughout the population, not only among its oldest members, but among those younger groups to whom the values and recognitions of the old are continuously transmitted.

We began by suggesting that support for an existing regime is dependent in part on public attitudes toward its alternatives. We have been able to demonstrate that the predecessors of Germany's postwar democratic regimes did indeed have supporters in the population in the 1950s, and that furthermore, their support diminished rapidly during the first two decades of the Federal Republic. In our previous research we have shown that support for the new regime was simultaneously growing. Were these two trends related?

In each of the years covered by our analysis, those who expressed support for the Hitler regime and the imperial flag showed relatively low support for the institution of parliament and for party competition, two salient features of the new regime which we have regarded as principal objects of public support for the Federal Republic (see Figs. 29-32). We have only limited evidence of the relative trends of support for the new regime among the proponents and opponents of the old, because relatively few surveys contain data on all of these subjects. What evidence we do have suggests that support for parliament and party competition grew more rapidly among those opposed to the Hitler regime than among those still seeing merit in it. The analysis of variance reveals substantial differences in the patterns of development between the two groups (see Table 6 and Figs. 29 and

TABLE 6 *Different Patterns of Change in Support for Parliament and Party Competition among Supporters of the Imperial Flag and the Hitler Regime*

Population grouped by	Per cent of total attitudinal variance over time attributable to different patterns of attitudinal variance among sub-groups of the population, with respect to	
	Parliament	Party competition
Support for imperial flag	30	11
Support for the Hitler regime	82	26

31). Furthermore, the proportion of the population still positively inclined toward Hitler diminished steadily. This change in the size of the group accounts for 24 and 14 per cent respectively of the change in the population's attitude toward parliament and party competition which is attributable to differences between the proponents and opponents of the Hitler regime (see Table 7).

TABLE 7 *Components of Change**

Population grouped by	Attitude to Parliament %	Attitude to Party Competition %
Support for imperial flag		
Attitude change		
among those for imperial flag	51	52
among those against imperial flag	35	32
Change in size of groups	15	16
Support for Hitler regime		
Attitude change		
among those favoring Hitler regime	45	32
among those opposed to Hitler regime	31	55
Change in size of groups	24	14

* Per cent of attitude change in total population attributable to attitude change within specified groups, compared to per cent attributable to change in size of groups, over period for which data are available.

The pattern of change between those loyal to the imperial flag and those rejecting it is not nearly so clear (see Figs. 30 and 32). While declining in numbers, those who continued to be attached to the old flag tended to become more favorable toward the new institutions, accounting for over half of the total change in attitude toward parliament and party competition attributable to differences between the followers of the old and the new flags (see Table 7). It almost seems as if that small proportion of the population remaining loyal to the symbol of the old regime was gradually becoming converted to the new institutions, while still retaining a nominal attachment to the old.

In those parts of the world which have experienced frequent changes of regime, support for any regime is in part dependent on the appeal of its predecessors, and the constant comparisons among the regimes a population has experienced is itself a source of the instability of support for the existing regime. We have offered some explanations of the erosion of the appeal of the alternatives to democracy in postwar Germany, and suggested that the support and stability enjoyed by the Federal Republic is a consequence of this process. If the decay of support for monarchy is perhaps due to its recession in memory, and the decay of support for dictatorship is due to the policy successes of the new regime, we have new explanations for the widely held view that the passage of time, and satisfaction with policy outcomes, are ingredients of public support for existing regimes.