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Political Meetings of the National Socialists and the Increase of the NSDAP Vote
Analyzing Conditions of Propaganda Effects with Aggregate Data

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Abstract: This article seeks to explore the link between the campaign propaganda of the National Socialists and the electoral gains of the NSDAP. Two conditions are analyzed which might modify an effect of NSDAP propaganda on the party's electoral scores. First, it is examined whether the impact of NSDAP meetings depends on the percentage of 'nationalistic' voters. Second, it is tested whether the public meetings of the NSDAP's right-wing competitors could restrain the effect of National Socialist campaign propaganda. The multivariate analysis of a sample of 226 communities demonstrates that the NSDAP's campaign intensity significantly advanced the rise of the party. This influence of NSDAP propaganda is indeed the larger, the higher the percentage of 'nationalistic' voters in a community. Moreover, the analysis reveals the effect of NSDAP propaganda to be greater in communities where the public activities of the party's right-wing rivals were above the average. Overall, the findings presented in the article strongly suggest that NSDAP propaganda is an important predictor of the party's increase.

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1. Introduction

The dramatic rise of the NSDAP in the Weimar elections after 1928 is still puzzling. How can it be explained that the NSDAP succeeded in attracting up to almost 14 million German voters? How could it happen that, apparently, a large segment of the German electorate saw the National Socialists as the only solution to the Republic's economic and political problems? Remembering that in 1928 the NSDAP still had been a small and dubious splinter group of the right wing, the party's surge in the following years appears all the more astonishing.

Empirical analyses on the social, occupational and denominational background of NSDAP voters and members which were published in the last years have greatly improved our knowledge on the factors predisposing for the Nazi party (cf. Falter 1991; Falter/Kater 1993; Winkler 1995; Mühlberger 1997). As the knowledge on these predispositional factors seems to be well-established by now (see Küchler 1992 for a review), further analyses may certainly add some details. It is not very likely, however, that important new elements will be added to the picture.

Yet, the situation is quite different if we want to explain why *especially the NSDAP,* instead of another German party, achieved this dramatic electoral breakthrough. In answering this particular question, further variables have to be taken into account Obviously, there must have been some characteristic distinguishing the NSDAP from its competitors. Contemporary opinion (cf. Mierendorff 1930) soon identified the *propaganda activities of the NSDAP* as the most distinctive feature. Later on, presumably under the impression of the National Socialist state propaganda during the years of dictatorship, it was assumed that even before 1933 large parts of the German electorate had been manipulated and seduced by a powerful propaganda apparatus of the Nazis (cf. Bracher 1960: 123-124). Diametrically opposed to such a hypothesis of manipulation is an interpretation brought forward by Bessel (1980) who called the alleged impact of NSDAP propaganda a »myth«. Both interpretations represent rather extreme, and also not very convincing, ways of thinking about an effect of National Socialist propaganda. Assuming, for instance, manipulation of the German electorate by skilful agitators, ignores that the propensity to vote for the NSDAP differed markedly between the main blocs in the electorate. Moreover, both interpretations are largely based on mere speculation or, at best, on an impressionistic use of empirical data. While a multitude of regional and local studies published in the last three decades did focus on the role of Nazi propaganda (see for example Noakes 1971; Faris 1975), they cannot be viewed as a strict test of a causal relationship between propaganda and voting behavior.[1] Only with the instruments of systematic

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[1] The quantitative study of Wernette (1974) utilizes propaganda data which are seriously flawed (cf. Ohr (1997: 28-31) for a discussion of Wernette's analysis). As a

empirical analysis we can hope to shed some light on the causal question of propaganda impact.

In this article I will attempt to explore whether an independent and significant influence of the NSDAP's political propaganda on the rise of the party can be established. It will be argued below that an impact of NSDAP propaganda is very likely to depend on certain conditions. Two conditions of an impact of propaganda will be discussed, first the percentage of nationalistic voters in the electorate, secondly the propaganda of the NSDAP's closest competitors on the right wing.

Propaganda encompasses many different forms of political communication. It is essential for the purposes of empirical analysis to define propaganda operationally. For the following analysis I will focus on the campaign propaganda of the NSDAP, i.e. the *public political meetings* the party held. The empirical analysis will be based on a sample of 226 communities, belonging to the German state of Hessen-Darmstadt. Using aggregate data on the number of political meetings and on the electoral results and social structure for these communities, I will analyze in particular whether the NSDAP meetings in the year 1931 could contribute to the National Socialist increase between the Reichstag election 1930 and the state election of Hessen-Darmstadt in 1931.

2. Explaining the Impact of NSDAP Propaganda

2.1 Conditions of an Impact of NSDAP Propaganda

The question whether political propaganda can move voters to change their party choice has a long tradition in voting research (cf. Lazarsfeld et al. 1948 for the classical study). On a more general level, communications research seeks to explore media effects on attitudes and behavior (cf. Katz 1987 for an overview). Much empirical work has been done, showing quite clearly that there can be no simple effect equation. The media in general and the propaganda of political parties in particular may indeed affect the political agenda of citizens and even alter political preferences to some extent, as a host of empirical analyses were able to establish. However, communication effects are contingent upon a vast array of conditions, be it the political interest of the recipients or their political commitments.

Taking this presumed conditionality of communication effects into account, we have to ask which conditions are to be considered in the case of NSDAP propaganda.[2] In rational choice theory the basic ideological preferences of an

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consequence, those results of Wernette which concern the relationship between propaganda and voting behavior do not stand on safe ground.
[2] Cf. Ohr (1997: 35-65) for a detailed discussion of conditions for propaganda effects; see also Jagodzinski/Ohr (1994).

individual are a crucial condition (Downs 1957: 47), whereas group norms determine media effects in the communication studies of the Yale (Hovland et al. 1953) and Columbia tradition (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948). It therefore appears that in the first place a political party has to meet the ideological preferences of its target groups as well as it has to correspond to the norms of the relevant groups.[3] However, maintaining the right message will only be a necessary condition for effective persuasion in most cases. In order to persuade a recipient to accept the new creed, a communicator has to be trustworthy as well as competent In short: a communicator has to be credible (Hovland et al. 1953). Aside from choosing the ideological themes appropriate to the target groups, a political party is thus also obliged to create a favourable party image during the course of an election campaign. This is particularly true with regard to the challengers of the incumbent parties as voters can judge only the 'real' performance of the incumbents. Evaluating how credible a challenging party is, voters have to rely on the campaign behavior of the respective party instead of using real data: Hence, campaigns can matter, especially in the case of challengers (Popkin 1991).

How, and to what extent did the ideological content of NSDAP propaganda before 1933 meet the ideological preferences of the Weimar electorate? Which were the main features of Nazi party ideology and which part of the electorate had the greatest affinity to the themes of the National Socialists? For the region under scrutiny in the present article the study of Hennig (1983) on Hessen is particularly relevant[4] Investigating the campaigns of the various nationalistic and right-wing parties, Hennig is able to show that ideological differences between the Nazis and the traditional right-wing parties were almost negligible. Nationalism, Anti-marxism, the concept of a national community ('Volksgemeinschaft') and a rejection of western democracy were no typical National Socialist principles. The traditional parties of the right wing, like the DNVP (Deutschnationale Volkspartei), the DVP (Deutsche Volkspartei), the CSVD (Christlich-Sozialer Volksdienst) or the 'Hessischer Landbund', a party representing the interests of protestant farmers, equally endorsed these principles (Hennig 1983: 396).[5]

As the ideological distance between the NSDAP and the traditional parties of the right wing was very small - if existent at all -, voters switching from the old right-wing parties to the NSDAP did not have to change their political

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[3] Ressource mobilization theory focusses on organizational variables but reaches quite similar conclusions with regard to the conditionality of propaganda effects (cf. McCarthy/Zald 1977).

[4] See Paul (1990) for an excellent account of NSDAP campaigns at the level of the whole German Reich.

[5] The same seems to apply to other parties of the right wing: »The various right-wing splinter parties were no competition since they agreed with the nationalism and anti-Socialism of the Nazis and were at best highly doubtful of the merits of democracy« (Allen 1984: 145).

convictions. There are two more reasons that made conversion of right-wing voters likely. First, if voting norms existed within the so-called national bloc, these norms were only negative in direction, against the two socialist parties and against the Catholic Centre party (Rohe 1992: 161). Secondly, the ties between the parties of the right wing and their voters seem to have been relatively weak.[6]

If then, all in all, the conditions for NSDAP propaganda to convert nationalistic, right-wing voters were particularly favorable, the question arises: What did the NSDAP distinguish from its closest competitors? Or, to put it differently: How could the National Socialists achieve the respectability which made them a credible option to large parts of the German electorate? Which factors are able to explain that a small and, equally important, very obscure splinter group of the right wing apparently succeeded in improving its public image? Finding an answer to these questions is essential, of course, as favorable conditions alone cannot explain the particular attractiveness of the NSDAP in the eyes of many voters: »Being well disposed towards certain parts of the Nazi message« was not the same thing as being a Nazi« (Kershaw 1983: 177).[7]

Contemporary opinion on the Nazi party reflected very clearly the fact that the NSDAP was markedly different with respect to its public appearance, its *style and public presentation of politics*. The scandal propaganda of the party and the violence of the paramilitary SA helped to create a climate of confrontation and put the Nazi party on the political agenda (Kershaw 1983: 174).[8] Yet, probably the most important aspect of Nazi propaganda was its sheer quantity:

> »... the very quantity of Nazi propaganda amounted, in terms of the image created, to a qualitative distinction from other bourgeois parties. Based on their public image, the DNVP, DVP, and the various right-wing interest-organizations increasingly appeared puny competitors of the Nazis« (Kershaw 1983: 174).

This immense intensity of NSDAP campaigning made the party visible in the first place, something the National Socialists desperately needed in the last years of the twenties. Secondly, the waves of political meetings made the NSDAP appear as an energetic and determined movement. In the eyes of large

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[6] With regard to the ideological, socio-cultural and attitudinal factors mentioned, the situation was markedly different in the bloc of political Catholicism, including the Centre party, and in the socialist bloc, including the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the communist party (KPD).

[7] »The presence of an underlying nationalist predisposition, by itself, had no payoff for the party« (Hamilton 1982: 311).

[8] »The use of terror also made the Nazis appear powerful since ... most acts of Nazi terrorism went unpunished by the authorities. This facilitated the attachment of voters to the Nazi movement« (Wemette 1974: 30).

parts of the German electorate the Nazi party thus gained credibility and competence. The image of an obscure splinter party had been replaced by an image of determination (Hennig 1983; Kershaw 1983; Richter 1986; Paul 1990).[9]

In summarizing the preceding discussion, the *intensity* of the NSDAP campaign seems to be the crucial aspect of its effectiveness. If the ideological preferences of voters were in line with the ideological themes of Nazi propaganda, the intensity of National Socialist propaganda could have induced voters to switch to the NSDAP.

2.2 Hypotheses

To test the assumption that the intensity of NSDAP campaigning fundamentally improved the National Socialists' image in the electorate requires, ideally, data on the propaganda intensity as well as data on the individuals' evaluations of the party. However, survey data on individual beliefs and attitudes are not available for the Weimar period. Therefore, aggregate data have to be used as a substitute. Consequently, the level of analysis and the level of the interpretations fall apart in the following analysis, as it is the case in most aggregate analyses. We have thus to deal with the well-known problem of ecological inference (Robinson 1950). Of course, a positive correlation between NSDAP propaganda and NSDAP election scores is only a very weak indication of a causal influence of NSDAP propaganda at the individual level. However, the problem of the ecological fallacy should not be exaggerated. The probability of the ecological fallacy greatly diminishes if the aggregate model is correctly specified, especially with regard to contextual influences. Seen in this light, there is nothing particular about the ecological inference problem: Generally, a model has to be specified correctly if we want to draw a causal inference. This rule holds for each empirical analysis, as well as for aggregate analyses.

A second problem of causal inference might be more severe. This second problem is due to the fact that potentially relevant explanatory variables are not available for a quantitative analysis of persuasive communication in the Weimar period. Public propaganda of the Nazi party was only one form of political communication. A more informal, interpersonal form of communication might have been at least equally important as a path to persuade voters. Mobilization from 'below' (Kershaw 1983: 163) could have been the main prelude to the surge of the NSDAP. Unfortunately, it is not possible to test this hypothesis empirically, because data on indicators like, for instance, door-to-door canvassing (Kramer 1970/71), the infiltration of interest

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[9] Allen reaches exactly this conclusion in his seminal study of the German town Northeim: »... the prime effect attained by the Nazi meetings was achieved simply by their numbers. If you wanted an energetic party this was it« (Allen 1984: 143).

organizations, or the bloc recruitment of groups in the electorate (Oberschall 1973) are not available. If, as cannot be ruled out, public propaganda of the Nazis and mobilization from the 'grassroots' were intimately related, a causal interpretation of propaganda effects will be risky.[10]

Keeping these two basic methodological problems in mind, our central hypothesis can be formulated as follows: As the National Socialists' 'image of determination' developed with the intensity of NSDAP propaganda, the increase of National Socialist strength should have grown - ceteris paribus - with the intensity of NSDAP propaganda. This positive effect of NSDAP campaign propaganda on the party's increase should be the larger, the larger the nationalistic potential. I will use the term *nationalistic potential* in the following for that conglomerate of ideological orientations in the electorate which corresponds to the themes of the Nazi party. Hence, in line with the theoretical approaches mentioned above, a conditional effect of NSDAP propaganda is to be expected (Ohr 1994; Ohr 1997).

Until now I have ignored the propaganda of the NSDAP's right-wing rivals. However, the propaganda of the NSDAP constituted only one part of an election campaign. And the activities of the NSDAP's right-wing competitors in particular could have had an influence on the impact of Nazi propaganda. Yet, the direction of such an influence is difficult to predict in advance. On the one hand, it seems fairly natural to assume that an intensive right-wing activity should have limited the effect of National Socialist agitation. On the other hand, it also appears conceivable that the ideologically similar propaganda of the traditional right-wing parties could have prepared the ground for the NSDAP. How, and to what extent, the propaganda of the traditional right-wing parties could modify the impact of the NSDAP's public meetings has to be decided by empirical means.

Campaign propaganda of the NSDAP is an independent variable with regard to the NSDAP gains. Even though this is the main analytical perspective in the present article, it seems to be fruitful as well to examine the antecedents of NSDAP propaganda. If the strength of the nationalistic potential was in fact a crucial condition for the success of National Socialist propaganda, it was imperative for the party to take this restriction into account. Assuming that strategic considerations played an important role in the party, it can be expected that the National Socialists concentrated their campaign upon the regions most favorable to a success of propaganda.

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[10] For a more comprehensive discussion of methodological problems in analyzing propaganda effects with aggregate data see Ohr (1997: 66-80).

3. Empirical Analysis

3.1 Data and Measures

To test the hypotheses outlined above, data on the election scores of the NSDAP as well as data on its campaign propaganda are needed for a sufficiently large number of aggregate units. Additionally, for the multivariate analyses data on further variables, e.g. social-structural data, must be available. The following analysis is based on a sample of 226 communities, including all communities of the four counties Bensheim, Heppenheim, Friedberg, and Schotten. These four counties belonged to the German state of Hessen-Darmstadt. Overall, the sample is more rural than the German Reich on the average. But the election results in the region are fairly similar to the whole Reich. Additionally, important relationships, e.g. the relationship between the NSDAP vote and the percentage of protestants, do not markedly differ between the Reich level and the sample (Ohr 1997: 100-107). For these 226 communities I have compiled a data set on the political meetings of all relevant political parties (cf. Ohr 1997: 108-118 for a description of the data and information on their reliability) for the years 1931 and 1932." This data set has been matched with data on election results and the social and denominational structure of the 226 communities.[12]

For the present analysis I will focus on the state election of Hessen-Darmstadt in November 1931, 15th. The indicator for electoral success of the Nazi party will be the *change (in percentage points) between the Reichstag election in September 1930 and the state election in November 1931.*[13] This change variable will be the main dependent variable in the following analysis.

Turning to the main explanatory variable, the measure of NSDAP propaganda intensity takes the absolute frequency of NSDAP meetings in a community between *April and November 1931* as a starting point Yet a reasonable measure of National Socialist propaganda intensity has to take into account that, say, ten meetings in a middle town mean something quite different than ten meetings in a small village. Therefore, we will get a better indicator for the intensity of NSDAP propaganda by dividing the number of meetings of a community by the number of eligible voters. Multiplying this

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[11] The data on political meetings were collected during the research project for my doctoral thesis (Ohr 1997).

[12] I would like to thank Jürgen Falter (University of Mainz) for providing me his community data set for the whole state of Hessen-Darmstadt. Meanwhile this data set is available at the ZA/ZHSF at the University of Cologne.

[13] The percentages for the NSDAP were calculated with the number of eligible voters as the basis. Note that the NSDAP change is calculated by subtracting the smaller percentages of 1930 from the larger percentages from 1931. Thus, a gain of the NSDAP between the two elections is reflected by a positive change value.

term with 1000 gives the number of political meetings in a community per 1000 eligible voters in the 1931 campaign (cf. Jagodzinski/Ohr 1994: 580; Ohr 1997: 125-128). In order to mitigate outlier effects, the propaganda variable was transformed for the regression analyses (cf. sections 3.3 and 3.4) by means of the logarithmic function to the base e, that is the natural logarithm.

The second main explanatory variable in the empirical analysis will be the nationalistic potential in a community as it is expected to be a crucial condition for the impact of NSDAP meetings. Of course, no direct measure of this potential can be devised with aggregate data on election results. If it is assumed, however, that election results reflect at least to some extent voters' ideological orientations, it is possible to find an indirect measure. One possible measure could be the percentage of the right-wing parties in a former election (Jagodzinski/Ohr 1994: 579). But election results depend not only on ideological orientations. Short-term factors like, for instance, competence evaluations of political parties or political scandals etc. can also influence the election scores of parties. A better indicator for the nationalistic potential is probably the propensity of a community to vote for Hindenburg in the presidential election in April 1925. Hindenburg apparently succeeded in collecting the various nationalistic and anti-republican groups for the first time in the Weimar period (Falter 1991: 363). In the empirical analysis I will therefore use the percentage of eligible voters who voted for Hindenburg in 1925.[14]

Two indicators of the social and denominational structure will be employed in the empirical analysis. First, the importance of agriculture in a community is measured by the percentage of eligible voters working in the agrarian sector, including their families ('Berufszugehörige Personen'), with the total population as the percentage base. Secondly, the importance of protestant culture is operationalized by the percentage of protestants in the population. Finally, there might be differences in voting behavior which cannot be explained by the variables of the model. Such differences might be due to the effects of unmeasured variables like, for example, voting traditions of a region. In order to capture the effects of unmeasured variables, 0-1-coded dummy variables for the three counties Bensheim, Friedberg and Schotten were used in the regression analyses. The fourth county, Heppenheim, was the reference category.

3.2 NSDAP Propaganda Intensity: A First Impression

According to the theoretical considerations, the intensity of NSDAP propaganda was the crucial aspect of its impact. An extremely high intensity

[14] The bivariate pearson correlation between the NSDAP increase from 1930 to 1931 and the Hindenburg vote in 1925 is +0.82, a correlation no other predictor of the National Socialist increase attains.

may have convinced nationalistic voters that their political aims could be advanced best by the Nazi party. Therefore, examining the degree of NSDAP propaganda intensity seems to be a natural first step in the empirical analysis. Do the propaganda figures for the 226 communities indeed exhibit a qualitative distinction between the Nazi propaganda and the propaganda of the other parties, in particular with regard to the traditional right-wing parties, as Kershaw (1983: 174) assumes?

Figure 1 shows the number of political meetings for the campaign before the state election of Hessen-Darmstadt in November 1931 (cf. Ohr 1997: 146). As Figure 1 clearly demonstrates, there is in fact a qualitative difference between the campaign of the Nazi party and their closest competitors in the national bloc. In the seven months before the election the National Socialists were able to hold 449 meetings.[15] Only the communist party (KPD) could reach this extremely high level with 442 meetings and even surpass the NSDAP in the two weeks before election day (201 communist meetings vs. 148 NSDAP meetings). While the communist and the National Socialist patterns of meetings over time look very similar, the right-wing rivals of the NSDAP were virtually not visible in the public domain. Only in the first two weeks in November - election day had been November, 15th - the parties of the national bloc appeared on the political map. Nevertheless, the overall picture does not change: With regard to the nationalistic segment of the ideological market there was only one party to dominate the political agenda: the NSDAP. National Socialist propaganda reached a very high level of intensity, and it was also almost permanent. The contrast to the traditional parties of the national bloc could hardly be greater. Seen in the light of these data, it is not at all surprising that the Nazi party gained visibility and reputation in the nationalistic part of the electorate.

Let us now turn from the level of NSDAP propaganda intensity to its regional structure. Since from a strategical point of view regions with a high nationalistic potential promised to be the most favorable ground for the Nazi party, it was expected that the NSDAP recognized this and focussed on mainly nationalistic areas. To examine this hypothesis, Figure 2 shows the intensity of NSDAP campaign propaganda for four different levels of the nationalistic potential (cf. Ohr 1994: 656; Ohr 1997: 155). Figure 2 exhibits a strong relationship between NSDAP propaganda intensity and the nationalistic potential. As the nationalistic potential in the sample is 32.8 percent on the average, Figure 2 reveals a clear divide at approximately this mean value. If the potential is less than 30 percent, the NSDAP held less than two meetings per 1000 eligible voters. The situation looks fairly different if the nationalistic potential is above average. In those communities with a percentage of nationalistic voters above 30% the measure for campaign intensity more than

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[15] For the month of April 1931 only a few meetings were documented. The NSDAP, for instance, held only five meetings in April.

Figure 1
Political Meetings from May to November 1931
(Counties Bensheim, Heppenheim, Friedberg, and Schotten)
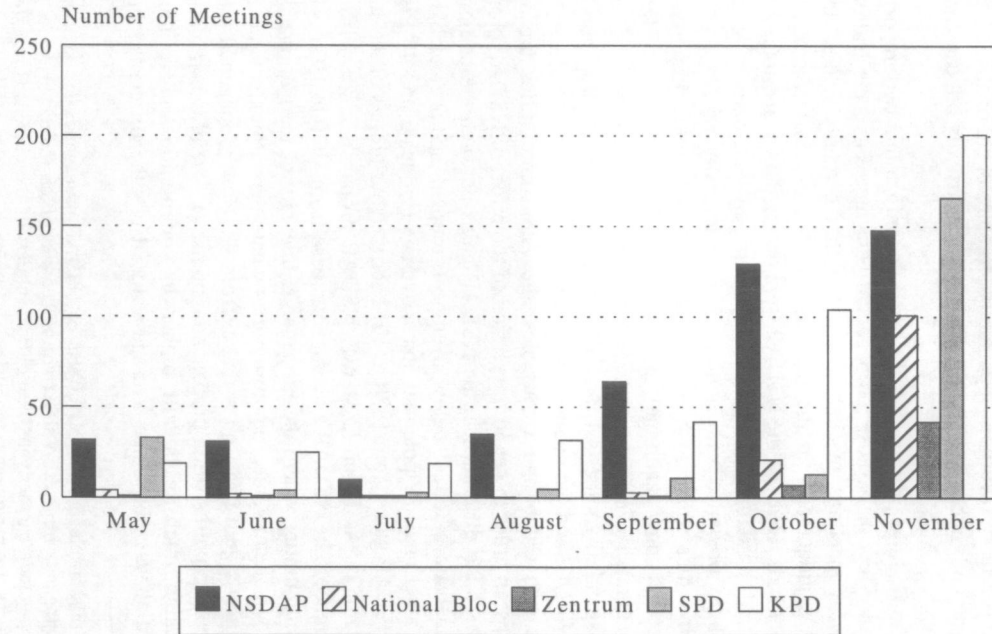
National Bloc: DNVP+DVP+CSVD+Landbund.

doubles. Whether the relationship is in fact due to a rational propaganda strategy of the Nazi party cannot be decided with the data at hand. Another interpretation seems possible as well. In communities where the nationalistic potential had been high the NSDAP was also more likely to have party activists at its disposal. It is thus conceivable that the relationship in Figure 2 simply reflects a more favorable opportunity structure in nationalistic communities. Of course, both interpretations need not hold exclusively but can complement each other.

The findings presented in this section confirm that two important conditions for an effect of NSDAP propaganda were met. First, the National Socialists' political meetings reached a quantity that certainly helped to improve the party's judgements in the nationalistic part of the electorate. Secondly, the propaganda waves of the NSDAP were not randomly distributed but had a clear regional structure. Communities where an anti-marxist and nationalistic ideology prevailed saw a much higher intensity of Nazi propaganda than communities where such an outlook had only marginal importance.

Let us now examine the possible effect of the NSDAP campaign propaganda.[16] For the purposes of a first graphical test of the conditional propaganda hypothesis I have dichotomized both the propaganda intensity of the NSDAP and the nationalistic potential at their mean values.[17] In combining these two dichotomous variables, the 226 communities are split into four groups. In order to get an impression of the effect of NSDAP propaganda I will compare the difference in the NSDAP gains between the communities with a nationalistic potential below average (groups 1 and 2) and the communities with a nationalistic potential above average (groups 3 and 4). Figure 3 depicts the NSDAP gains from 1930 to 1931 for the four groups of the sample (cf. Ohr 1994: 657). As Figure 3 shows, NSDAP propaganda seems to have made a difference. The NSDAP's average increase from 1930 to 1931 is clearly higher in communities where the propaganda intensity of the National Socialists was above its mean value. In communities where the nationalistic potential was low the party's gain rises, on average, from 4.2 (low propaganda intensity) to 8.1 percentage points (high propaganda intensity). The effect of National Socialist campaign intensity is still higher in communities where the nationalistic potential was above the average value. Here the difference in the NSDAP

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[16] In this article only *direct* effects of NSDAP propaganda are analyzed. Of course, propaganda might also affect voting behavior in an indirect way: As is well known, propaganda can activate the political interest of the citizens (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948) and, as a consequence, mobilize to participate in political elections (cf. Ohr 1997: 176).

[17] The (weighted) mean of the number of NSDAP meetings per 1000 eligible voters is 2.71, the mean of the nationalistic potential equals 32.8%. In Figure 2 low propaganda intensity denotes an intensity below or equal the mean of 2.71, high intensity a value above 2.71. Likewise, low nationalistic potential designates a value below or equal 32.8%, high potential a value above 32.8%.

increase amounts to more than six points if we compare communities with a low intensity (18.0 percentage points) to communities with a high intensity (24.3).

Two points should be noted when judging the results in Figure 3. First, the pattern clearly supports the notion that NSDAP propaganda made an important contribution to the party's electoral increase. Secondly, the findings are in line with a conditional hypothesis of propaganda effects.

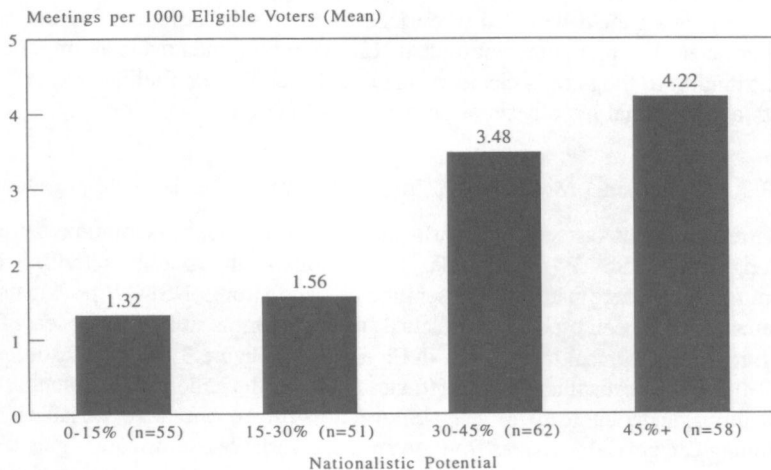### 3.3 A Conditional Model for the Impact of National Socialist Propaganda

The results of the last section clearly supported two of our assumptions on the intensity of NSDAP propaganda: Concentrating the public activities on communities where nationalistic sentiments were strong, NSDAP propaganda seems to have been especially effectual in these communities. Yet, at least for two reasons graphical analyses as in Figure 2 and Figure 3 cannot substitute a full-fledged statistical analysis. First, variables like the nationalistic potential or the propaganda intensity of the NSDAP are truly quantitative variables. In building categorical variables from quantitative variables, information gets lost. Additionally, the choice of the cutting points is always more or less arbitrary. Secondly, a thorough analysis of NSDAP propaganda - of its antecedents as well as its possible effects - has to take further explanatory variables into account. Ignoring important control variables may produce spurious results.

In this section and in the following section I will examine the hypotheses on NSDAP propaganda by means of multiple regression analyses. As a first step in the multivariate analysis I will take up again the question of whether the public meetings of the NSDAP followed a certain regional structure. According to the bivariate pattern in Figure 2, the propaganda intensity of the National Socialists rose with the degree of the nationalistic potential. Table 1 displays the estimates for a multivariate model which seeks to explain the regional structure of NSDAP intensity (cf. Ohr 1997: 165). As in all following analyses standard ordinary least squares regression was used to estimate the coefficients.[18]

Table 1 shows three predictors of the NSDAP propaganda intensity to be significant in the multivariate model: the percentage of protestants, the importance of agriculture in a community and, finally, the percentage of the NSDAP in the Reichstag election 1928. All effects are positive. Thus, the

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[18] Each community in the sample was weighted by the respective number of eligible voters. Dividing the eligible number of voters of each community by the arithmetic mean of the number of eligible voters, the (unweighted) mean of the weighting factors equals exactly 1.0 and the number of cases in the sample (226) remains unchanged. For an effect to show up in Table 1 or in the following tables at least the .05 significance level had to be attained, with the exception of the intercept. For the dummy variables of the counties a two-tailed test was used as the direction of an effect could not be predicted in advance. All other effects were tested with a one-tailed test.

Figure 2
NSDAP Meetings and Nationalistic Potential

Meetings per 1000 Eligible Voters (Mean)

0-15% (n=55)	1.32
15-30% (n=51)	1.56
30-45% (n=62)	3.48
45%+ (n=58)	4.22

Nationalistic Potential

Communities weighted by the number of eligible voters.

Figure 3
NSDAP Increase, Propaganda Intensity and Nationalistic Potential

NSDAP 1931% - NSDAP 1930%

low (n=92)	NS-Propaganda	high (n=19)	low (n=51)	NS-Propaganda	high (n=64)
4.2		8.1	18.0		24.3

low *Nationalistic Potential* high

Communities weighted by the number of eligible voters.

42
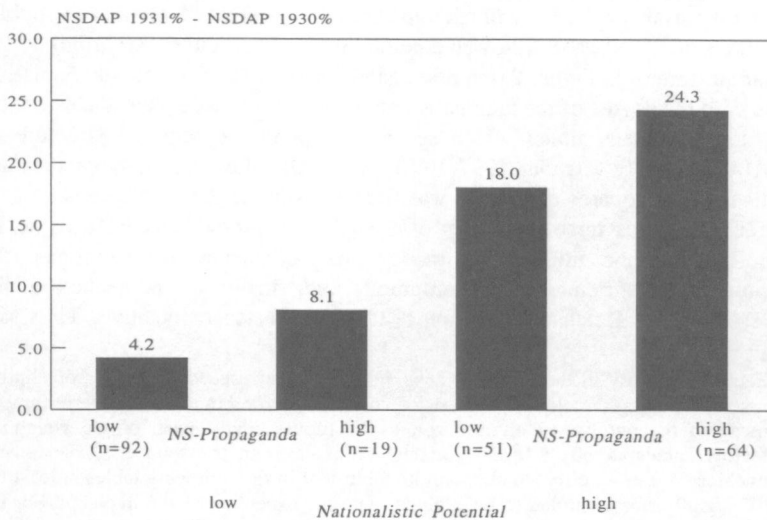
Table 1

Determinants of NSDAP Propaganda Intensity

Dependent variable: NSDAP Propaganda Intensity 1931

Independent variable	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients
Importance Agriculture	+0.011
	(+4.97)
Percentage Protestants	+0.006
	(+5.13)
NSDAP Percentage 1928	+0.085
	(+2.97)
Intercept	+0.273
	(+2.93)
R2;	0.284
Adjusted R²:	0.274
n:	226

T-Values in Parentheses; communities weighted by the number of eligible voters 1931.

NSDAP was most likely to hold public meetings in protestant and rural communities as well as in those regions where the party already had been strong in 1928. Even though in multivariate analysis the nationalistic potential has no significant effect on propaganda intensity, the regression model is perfectly compatible with the pattern in Figure 2: The NSDAP concentrated its propaganda activities heavily on those communities where nationalistic sentiments had been strong. As the denominational and social-structural background of the nationalistic potential is predominantly protestant and, to a somewhat lesser degree, also rural,[19] the results of Figure 2 and Table 1 do not contradict each other. Rather, both patterns can be understood as different perspectives of one phenomenon.

The positive relationship between NSDAP strength in 1928 and National Socialist propaganda intensity points to a relevant precondition of propaganda activities I have already alluded to: In order to conduct an election campaign, a political party is in need of activists who are willing to do the work involved.

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[19] Together with the indicator variables for the counties more than 75 percent of the variance of the nationalistic potential can be explained with the percentage of protestants and the importance of agriculture (no table, cf. Ohr 1997: 165).

Hence, if the NSDAP strength in the Reichstag election of 1928 is viewed as a measure of party activists a plausible interpretation of the relationship can be given.

Overall, the bivariate and the multivariate results on the regional structure of NSDAP meetings are in line with an assumption that the Nazi party at least in part strategically planned its campaigning. Concentrating the public activities on those communities where the odds appeared to be in the party's favor, the National Socialists met a crucial condition for an impact of their propaganda.

Any analysis of the relationship between propaganda and voting behavior has to take into account that the electoral fortunes of a party do not depend on propaganda alone. Strictly testing the impact of propaganda thus implies that relevant explanatory variables of voting behavior are incorporated in the model. Not all variables thought to be substantively important are accessible, however, as was already pointed out. Regarding the explanation of the NSDAP increase between 1930 and 1931, apart from propaganda three variables were assumed to have relevant influences: the nationalistic potential, the mobilization of former non-voters and, finally, the strength of the NSDAP at the Reichstag election in 1930.

The *nationalistic potential* measures right-wing and nationalistic beliefs and values. A strong effect of the nationalistic potential might thus testify to the importance of ideological distances for the voting decision. Nationalistic voters might have cast their ballot for the NSDAP because the Nazi party's ideology was closest to their political views. An interpretation focussing exclusively on ideological distances is not very convincing, however, because the NSDAP and its right-wing rivals differed only in nuances, as was argued above (cf. for instance Hennig 1983; Allen 1984). The indicator may also measure processes of 'grassroots' mobilization in the nationalistic part of the electorate, of course in a very indirect way. Local notables, for instance, who made their conversion to the Nazi party public may have initiated processes of mobilization from below (cf. Kershaw 1983; Allen 1984). As a consequence, a positive effect of the nationalistic potential on the increase of the NSDAP vote can be expected.

Secondly, the *National Socialists' strength in the 1930 Reichstag election* should have limited the party's gains between 1930 and 1931 since, in general, large gains will be harder to achieve for a political party if its level is already high. Thirdly, *mobilization of former non-voters* which is measured by the change in turnout should at least in part have supported the growth of the Nazi party from 1930 to 1931. Finally, dummy variables for the counties of the analyzed region were employed as proxies for the influences of unmeasured variables.

Which role does the indicator for the intensity of NSDAP propaganda play in a model including the explanatory variables mentioned? Table 2 shows the multiple regression estimates for two different models, first an *additive* model of propaganda impact (left-hand side), second a *conditional* model for the

influence of NSDAP propaganda (right-hand side) (cf. Ohr 1997: 176).[20] Although the conditional propaganda model is theoretically more sound than an additive model, it is sensible to estimate also the additive model for the purpose of comparison. To model the effect of NSDAP propaganda conditionally, I have created a productterm of the nationalistic potential and the intensity of NSDAP propaganda.[21]

If we estimate a base model including all explanatory variables listed in Table 2, except the indicators of NSDAP propaganda, the R^2-measure achieves a very high value. More than 80 percent of the variance in NSDAP gains can be explained with the nationalistic potential, the change in turnout, the NSDAP strength in 1930 and, finally, the dummy variable for the county of Bensheim. Thus, there is not much variance left for the propaganda variable. Additionally, as we know from Table 1, NSDAP meetings were most likely to be held in protestant and rural communities, also in communities where National Socialist activists were living. Protestantism and the importance of agriculture are not only important predictors of NSDAP propaganda. Both factors have relevant direct and indirect effects on the other explanatory variables of the NSDAP propaganda increase as well (cf. Ohr 1997). As a consequence, the change in the R^2-measure *cannot* be large if propaganda is added to a model explaining the NSDAP's electoral scores.

To begin with the additive model, the (unadjusted) R^2 rises significantly by 1.5 percentage points if we incorporate the NSDAP campaign intensity in the model. As the mean value of the (logarithmic) NSDAP propaganda intensity equals 1.04, the regression coefficient of +2.322 approximately indicates the effect of NSDAP meetings (in percentage points) if we compare a community without NSDAP meetings to a community with an average value of NSDAP propaganda.[22]

The (unadjusted) R^2 increases by another 0.8 percentage points if the product term of NSDAP campaign intensity and nationalistic potential is added to the model. Even though the two component variables of this term are already in the model, this increase is significant (t=3.34, no table). However, as the main effect for the NSDAP meetings is no longer significant in this case it was removed from the model. Comparing then the base model without propaganda

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[20] Many different regression models have been estimated in order to test the direct influences of other variables as well. None of these variables, including the importance of agriculture, the percentage of protestants, or the percentage of the NSDAP in 1928, proved to have significant direct effects.

[21] In general, in an additive model the effect of a predictor variable does not differ between the values of another variable in the model. An additive propaganda model implies in particular that an effect of propaganda does not depend on the degree of the nationalistic potential.

[22] The bivariate pearson correlation between the measure for the NSDAP's propaganda intensity and the NSDAP increase between 1930 and 1931 equals +0.52 and is highly significant.

Table 2
NSDAP Change and NSDAP Propaganda
Dependent Variable: NSDAP 1931% - NSDAP 1930%

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients	
	(Additive Model)	(Conditional Model)
Nationalistic Potential	+0.453	+0.367
	(+19.09)	(+12.06)
NSDAP Propaganda Intensity 1931	+2.322	_a
	(+4.31)	
NSDAP Propaganda Intensity 1931		
*Nationalistic Potential		+0.073
		(+5.52)
A Turnout 30/31	+0.486	+0.484
	(+8.96)	(+9.19)
NSDAP Percentage 1930	-0.340	-0.344
	(-7.63)	(-7.91)
County Bensheim	-2.823	-2.825
	(-3.49)	(-3.58)
Intercept	+0.768	+3.085
	(+0.86)	(+3.68)
R^2	0.828	0.836
Adjusted R^2:	0.824	0.832
n:	226	226

T-Values in parentheses: communities weighted by the number of eligible voters 1931: a: not significant.

with the conditional model in Table 2 (right-hand side), the change in the
R^2-measure amounts to 2.3 percentage points and is highly significant (t=5.52).

The findings in Table 2 and in Figure 3 are very similar. NSDAP propaganda
intensity in the year 1931 seems to have made an important contribution to the
party's increase between 1930 (Reichstag election) and 1931 (state election
Hessen-Darmstadt). This holds in particular if the effect of the NSDAP
meetings is modelled conditionally. The conditional propaganda model is not
only theoretically superior to an additive model. It also proves to be the better
model if statistical criteria are applied.

Before we will examine the conditional effect of NSDAP meetings in greater
detail, let us briefly comment on the effects of the other explanatory variables
in the model. As was expected, the increase in turnout from 1930 to 1931 is in
fact positively related to the rise of the NSDAP. The more former non-voters

were mobilized to participate in the Hessen state election, the greater were the gains of the Nazi party in a community.[23] It is apparent in comparing the coefficients for voter mobilization between the additive and the conditional model that the effects are virtually identical.

As the NSDAP was the second largest party in Germany since the Reichstag election of September 1930, it does not come as a surprise that the level of the NSDAP in 1930 has a strong negative effect on the gains at the Hessen election in 1931. The higher the NSDAP strength had been in 1930, the smaller were the increases of the NSDAP vote in 1931. Here again the coefficients do not differ between the additive and the conditional model.

Turning now to the relationship between the nationalistic potential and the NSDAP increase, Table 2 exhibits very strong positive effects of the variable in both models. For example, according to the additive model, a difference in the nationalistic potential between two communities of, say, 30 percentage points corresponds to a difference in the NSDAP increase of 13.6 percentage points. What does this very strong effect of the nationalistic potential suggest? If, as was argued above, the nationalistic potential is in fact an indirect measure for grassroots mobilization, the importance of informal face-to-face communication is underlined. Then, at least for the *time period analyzed,* 'mobilization from below' (Kershaw 1983) is essential for an understanding of the NSDAP increase. This is not to say, however, that the public propaganda activities of the NSDAP had nothing to do with these processes of mobilization as »... the important role of 'informal agitation' testifies itself to the success of the Party in creating an attractive and distinctive image for the NSDAP« (Kershaw 1983: 173). It can thus be speculated that National Socialist propaganda of a *former period,* e.g. between 1928 and 1930, did play an important role in setting such processes of grassroots mobilization into motion.[24] Unfortunately, it is not possible to test this conjecture as neither data on propaganda for this period nor more direct indicators for grassroots mobilization are available.

Returning to the NSDAP propaganda intensity in the election campaign of 1931, I will now examine more closely the implications of the conditional propaganda model. From Table 2 we know that NSDAP meetings had a fairly strong effect on the increase of the party's vote, especially if the effect is modelled conditionally. Whether an effect of a variable is judged to be strong

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[23] The change in turnout has been calculated as the difference in the percentage of non-voters 1930 and non-voters in 1931. The mean change from 1930 to 1931 is positive (mean: +1.80 percentage points).

[24] »The conversion of local worthies to Nazism and their subsequent personal and social 'indirect propaganda role' is unthinkable without the direct propaganda which made them aware of Nazism in the first place. Above all it was the growing feeling of strength and purpose attached to the Party - a direct creation of agitational methods in the first instance - which persuaded many 'respectable citizens' that this was a party that mattered« (Kershaw 1983: 174).

depends, of course, on the criterion we use. In interpreting Table 2, I have concentrated on the change in the R^2-measure if the indicator for NSDAP propaganda is added to the model. Even though the model without propaganda already explained more than 80 percent of the variance in NSDAP gains, the conditional propaganda model raised the R^2 by another 2.3 percentage points.

Measuring the impact of NSDAP meetings exclusively in terms of the change in the R^2-measure would be unsatisfactory for at least two reasons. First, as we argued above, the NSDAP gains and the propaganda intensity can be explained in part with the same explanatory variables. The inclusion of NSDAP propaganda in a model explaining the party's electoral scores can thus not add much to the explained variance. Secondly, rather than focussing on a rather abstract measure like the change in explained variance it will probably be more illuminating if we look at NSDAP propaganda in terms of the increases of the party vote. Which increase in the NSDAP vote between 1930 and 1931 is to be expected, ceteris paribus, if the intensity of NSDAP propaganda varies?
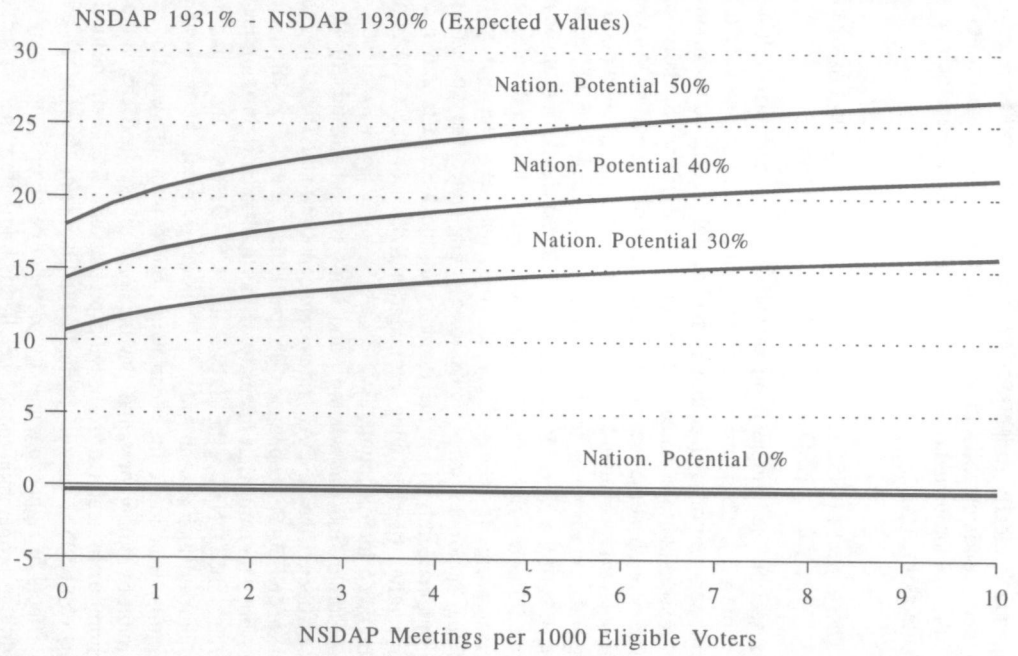
Figure 4 displays the estimates for the expected values of the NSDAP increase between 1930 and 1931 (cf. Ohr 1994: 662; 1997: 186).[25] Four effect curves are shown in the picture, each curve representing a different degree of the nationalistic potential. The effect curve just below the abscissa reveals one important implication of the conditional propaganda model: NSDAP propaganda affected voting behavior only if the nationalistic potential was not totally absent More generally, as was hypothesized, the effect of the NSDAP activity on the NSDAP gains was in fact the greater, the higher the nationalistic potential in a community. Graphically, this conditionality can be seen by comparing the slopes of the effect curves for NSDAP propaganda. The higher the percentage of nationalistic voters, the steeper is the effect curve of NSDAP propaganda.[26]

We get an impression of an average effect of NSDAP propaganda if we take a value for the nationalistic potential around the average of 32.8%, say 30%. If the nationalistic potential is 30%, the predicted NSDAP gain rises from approximately 11 percentage points (no NSDAP meeting in a community) to an expected increase of nearly 16 percentage points (ten meetings per 1000 eligible voters). By implication of the conditional model, this already quite large effect of the NSDAP activity still grows with the strength of the nationalistic potential. Comparing again communities without NSDAP meetings to communities with ten meetings per 1000 eligible voters, the effect of NSDAP propaganda amounts to nearly 9 percentage points if the nationalistic potential equals 50 percent

[25] The estimates of the expected values were calculated with the unstandardized regression coefficients of the conditional model (cf. Table 2, right-hand side). The other predictors of the NSDAP increase have been fixed (cf. Figure 4 for the values assigned).

[26] The relationships between campaign intensity and NSDAP increase have a nonlinear shape, because the NSDAP propaganda values were transformed by the logarithmic function.

Figure 4
Expected Increase of NSDAP Vote and NSDAP Propaganda

NSDAP 1931% - NSDAP 1930% (Expected Values)

Nation. Potential 50%

Nation. Potential 40%

Nation. Potential 30%

Nation. Potential 0%

NSDAP Meetings per 1000 Eligible Voters

Assumptions: Change Turnout: 0; NSDAP 1930: 10%; Dummy Variable Bensheim: 0.

What are the implications of these findings? Given the main result that National Socialist propaganda was particularly successful in those communities where nationalistic convictions had been strong, our interpretation of NSDAP propaganda is clearly supported: An intensive and also permanent campaign propaganda fundamentally improved the NSDAP's image in the nationalistic part of the electorate and could thus contribute to the dramatic rise of the party in the elections.

3.4 The Impact of NSDAP Meetings and the Campaign Propaganda of the NSDAP's Right-Wing Competitors

In this section the campaign propaganda of the traditional right-wing parties comes into play. These parties and the National Socialists were competing in the same segment of the ideological market Taking this competition as given, it seems reasonable to surmise that the effect of National Socialist campaigning was dependent in some measure on its competitors' activities. Assuming that an effect of Nazi propaganda may be contingent on the level of right-wing propaganda, implies, in technical terms, an interaction effect between the propaganda of the NSDAP and that of its closest rivals. Yet, this is not the only possible influence right-wing activities could have had on the election scores of the Nazi party. It seems likely as well that the campaign activity of the traditional national parties could have strengthened the ties to its followers, quite independently from the intensity of the NSDAP's activity. Hence, an additive effect of right-wing campaign activities on the NSDAP vote should also be taken into account.

In order to find out whether, and how, the propaganda of the right-wing parties affected the NSDAP gains between 1930 and 1931 in general and the effect of NSDAP propaganda in particular, the following procedure was employed: The campaign intensity of the traditional right-wing parties - again including the DNVP, the DVP, the CSVD, and the Landbund - was dichotomized at its mean value.[27] If the acitivity of the national parties in a community was above the mean value, this community was coded with a '1', communities below or equal the mean were assigned the value zero. This dichotomous indicator of right-wing propaganda was then multiplied with the intensity of NSDAP activity to model the interaction between the two variables. Both effects of right-wing activity prove to be significant if they are added to the additive propaganda model we already know from the last section (Table 2, left-hand side).

Table 3 shows the regression estimates for this model in comparison to the additive model (cf. Ohr 1997: 216). An interesting effect pattern emerges for the political meetings of the four right-wing parties. While the additive term for

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[27] The mean of the right-wing campaign intensity in 1931 was 0.44 (relative and loga-rithmic propaganda value).

Table 3
Table 3
NSDAP Change, NSDAP Propaganda, and Traditional Right-Wing Propaganda
Dependent Variable: NSDAP 1931% - NSDAP 1930%

Independent Variable	Unstandardized Regression Coefficients	
	(Additive Model)	(Conditional Model)
Nationalistic Potential	+0.453	+0.470
	(+19.09)	(+18.53)
NSDAP Propaganda Intensity 1931	+2.322	+1.711
	(+4.31)	(+2.74)
Propaganda Intensity National Bloc		−4.467
		(−2.60)
NSDAP Propaganda Intensity 1931 *Propaganda Intensity National Bloc		+2.885
		(+2.41)
Δ Turnout 30/31	+0.486	+0.466
	(+8.96)	(+8.53)
NSDAP Percentage 1930	−0.340	−0.345
	(−7.63)	(−7.78)
County Bensheim	−2.823	−3.072
	(−3.49)	(−3.79)
Intercept	+0.768	+1.244
	(+0.86)	(+1.37)
R^2:	0.828	0.833
Adjusted R^2:	0.824	0.828
n:	226	226

a Propaganda intensity of traditional right-wing parties: 0: relative and logarithmic propaganda intensity ≤ arithmetic mean (0.44); 1: > 0.44. T-Values in parentheses; communities weighted by the number of eligible voters 1931.

right-wing activity has a negative sign, the sign of the interaction term is positive. Hence, the propaganda of the traditional parties of the national bloc appears to have limited the NSDAP gains as the regression coefficient for the additive term (-4.467) indicates. This restraining influence on the electoral success of the Nazi party does only apply, however, if the level of NSDAP activity is low. With a rising level of National Socialist campaign intensity the conditional effect of right-wing activity changes its sign. Now the composite effect of right-wing propaganda is *positive* with respect to the NSDAP gains.[28] Figure 5 represents this effect pattern with the two effect curves of NSDAP propaganda intensity. The curve with the smaller slope stands for the effect

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[28] The conditional effect of *right-wing activity* combines the two regression coefficients for the parties of the national bloc.

curve of communities with right-wing propaganda below or equal the mean value. Communities where the public activity of the four national parties was above the average are depicted by the steeper curve.
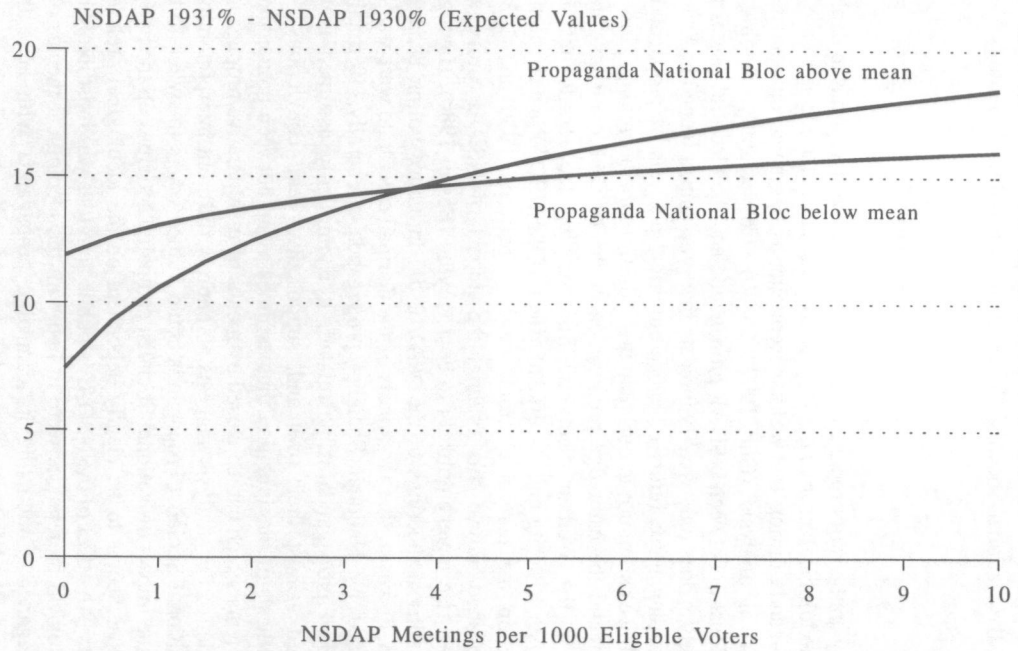
As Figure 5 shows, the two effect curves cross each other at approximately a value of 3.7 NSDAP meetings per 1000 eligible voters. Below this value an intensive propaganda of the traditional right-wing parties seems to have restrained the NSDAP gains, above this value a high activity of the national parties seems to have further boosted the NSDAP increase between 1930 and 1931. It can be presumed therefore that the propaganda of the NSDAP's right-wing competitors could have prepared the ground for the National Socialists under certain circumstances. Deciding between parties which were almost indistinguishable in ideological terms, voters may have choosen the NSDAP because this party had gained an image of determination by means of its intensive propaganda campaign.

The right-hand side of Table 3 represents a second specification of the conditional propaganda model. Comparing the effects of both conditional models, i.e. the model from Table 2 with the model from Table 3, it appears that the effect of NSDAP propaganda intensity is greater in the second model. If the activity of right-wing parties is above average, according to Figure 5 the difference in the NSDAP increase between communities without NSDAP meetings and communities with 10 meetings per 1000 eligible voters amounts to approximately 11 percentage points. In Figure 4 we saw the corresponding effect of NSDAP meetings to lie around 7 percentage points with a nationalistic potential of 40 percent, and around 9 percentage points with a nationalistic potential of 50 percent. It should be noted, though, that, due to multicollinearity, the propaganda effects of the second model might be somewhat inflated as the productterm and each of the two component variables had to be specified.[29] Two further aspects are noteworthy in comparing the two conditional models. First, the conditional model with the nationalistic potential as the conditioning factor has a slightly higher R^2. Secondly, it is the more parsimonious model of the two.

The model which sees the nationalistic potential as the decisive condition for an impact of Nazi party propaganda seems thus, overall, to be preferable on statistical and methodological grounds. Additionally, in contrast to the traditional right-wing parties it could be postulated a priori in which way the nationalistic potential would modify an effect of NSDAP meetings. However, the conditional model focussing on the propaganda of the NSDAP's right-wing rivals should not be discarded. Rather, both conditional models offer valuable insights and should be construed as alternative perspectives on the possible

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[29] All variables in Table 2, with the exception of the dummy variable for the county of Bensheim, are ratio scaled. Thus, for the analysis presented in Table 2 it was possible to model a conditional effect without including all two main effects (Jaccard et al. 1990; Thome 1991).

Figure 5
Expected Increase of NSDAP Vote and NSDAP Propaganda

NSDAP 1931% - NSDAP 1930% (Expected Values)

Propaganda National Bloc above mean

Propaganda National Bloc below mean

NSDAP Meetings per 1000 Eligible Voters

Assumptions: Change Turnout: 0; Nation. Potential: 30%; NSDAP 1930: 10%; Dummy Variable Bensheim: 0.

effects of National Socialist propaganda. While the first model emphasizes the importance of ideological proximity between propagandists and recipients for NSDAP propaganda to be effective, the second model lays the stress on the public political meetings of competing parties which were indistinguishable from the National Socialists in terms of their political ideology.[30]

4. Conclusion

Every analysis of propaganda effects on voting behavior has to deal with severe methodological problems. This is true in particular for the case of NSDAP propaganda during the Weimar Republic, as aggregate data must be used for empirical analysis (Ohr 1997: 66-80). Consequently, finding a positive relationship between NSDAP propaganda and the electoral rise of the National Socialists does only weakly indicate that propaganda indeed had a causal effect.

Keeping these limits of every empirical analysis of propaganda effects in mind, we can return to our main question from the beginning: How and to what extent did the campaign propaganda of the NSDAP contribute to the party's rise in the Weimar elections? Summarizing the results of the preceding analysis, a strong and significant effect of the NSDAP's campaign intensity in 1931 on the party's electoral increase between 1930 and 1931 could be established. Given this finding, the impact of NSDAP propaganda on the party's rise is very unlikely to be a »myth« (Bessel 1980). Having shown that the political meetings of the NSDAP did influence voting behavior does not mean, however, that large parts of the German electorate were manipulated and seduced by National Socialist propaganda. Generally, if manipulation by political propaganda is postulated, it is implicitly assumed that voters are moved against their own and, supposedly, 'real' convictions.[31] Whereas a hypothesis of manipulation thus assumes a gap between propagandists and the recipients which can be closed by means of manipulative propaganda, the main finding of our analysis suggests an entirely different interpretation.

National Socialist Propaganda could induce voters to switch to the NSDAP. But the impact of National Socialist campaign activities on the party's electoral increase seems to be clearly dependent on the ideological preferences of the voters. An effect of the NSDAP's public activities was most likely if the voters' ideological preferences were in line with the ideological themes of Nazi party propaganda. Conducting its campaign propaganda with an extremely high intensity, the NSDAP succeeded in improving its image in the nationalistic part of the electorate. Having achieved an »image of determination (Hennig 1983;

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[30] The nationalistic potential and the dichotomous indicator for the campaign propa-ganda of the traditional right-wing parties correlate with +0.42.

[31] For this argument and a critical appraisal of a manipulation hypothesis see Paul (1990: 15-16).

Kershaw 1983; Richter 1986; Paul 1990), the NSDAP more and more appeared to be the only option for nationalistic voters if compared with the traditional right-wing parties. The conditional effects of NSDAP propaganda we found in the empirical analysis strongly support this interpretation.

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Staatsarchiv Darmstadt, Abteilung G15 Schotten (Registraturgruppe) Q [Sicherheitspolizei] Nr. 76: Statistik über wichtige politische Vorkommnisse.

Electoral and Socio-Demographic Data

Die Ergebnisse der Reichspräsidentenwahl im Volkstaat Hessen am 29. März und 26. April 1925 nach einzelnen Gemeinden bzw. Stimmbezirken. Herausgegeben von der Zentralstelle für die Landesstatistik, Darmstadt 1925.

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