Parties, Candidates and Issues in the German Federal Election of 1980: An Application of Normal Vote Analysis

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An application of the concept of a normal vote to the West German political system is attempted. Normal vote parameters for West Germany are calculated and the 1980 Federal election is analysed by means of this newly established baseline. Furthermore, a modified version of the well-known Boyd formula for the computation of short-term effects will be proposed since under some circumstances Boyd's S may be seriously inflated. Finally, the formula will be extended to multivariate relationships. Applying the resulting partial short-term coefficient shows quite clearly that the outcome of the 1980 German Federal election was more strongly influenced by candidate evaluations than by issue orientations.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Utility of an Analytic Baseline

Empirical analyses of the voters' choice generally try to contrast the election under consideration with the results of past elections. Their outcome serves as a kind of baseline for the interpretation of actual influences, i.e. factors specific to the election analysed. All such comparisons, however, are endangered by the fact that they draw on elections which themselves may be characterized by a unique configuration of influences: 'Every election is in some way deviating, in the sense that a unique admixture of personalities and issues are always responsible for some part of the aggregate outcome' (Campbell 1977: 53).

What, strictly speaking, seems to be a prerequisite for any such comparison is a kind of Archimedian spot, i.e. a fixed-point of analysis which neither should be affected by the short-term influences of a specific election nor by any long-term changes in the electorate. It should be evident that, due to the historicity and permanent variability of all things political, such fixed-points are only imaginary. Nevertheless, it may be useful to determine a medium-term baseline for the analysis

of electoral outcomes which enables us to separate numerically the long-term and short-term influences by which each election is characterized.

For this purpose Philip E. Converse (1966) has developed the concept of normal vote for the American party system. During the last fifteen years, this analytical tool has become one of the standard instruments of theoretically orientated electoral research. To our knowledge, the instrument of normal vote analysis has never been applied to political systems outside the United States. This undoubtedly is true for the Federal Republic of Germany. In our analysis we thus invade *terra incognita* with all its inherent dangers for the explorer from overseas. It is, therefore necessary to elaborate the implications of normal vote analysis and to examine carefully whether the basic requirements of a transfer of the concept to the German political system are met.

1.2 Theoretical Foundations of Normal Vote Analysis

As early as 1944 Lazarsfeld and his collaborators showed that a strong majority of the voters in Erie County had made up their mind long before election day or even before the campaign started and the presidential candidates were nominated. The Ann Arbor group detected similar effects (Campbell *et al.* 1954; 1960). Comparable results have been recorded for the West German party system time and again during the last 25 years (Kaase 1967). The evidence of at least medium-term partisan affiliations in a considerable proportion of the German electorate seems to be well-founded.

While Lazarsfeld and his collaborators as well as several German authors proceed on the assumption that such long-standing voting decisions are determined or strongly influenced by the social structure (Lazarsfeld *et al.* 1944: 25 ff.; Berelson *et al.* 1954: 54, 125; Liepelt 1968: 13 ff.; Berger *et al.* 1977: 229 ff.), Angus Campbell and the other members of the Ann Arbor group base their analyses of the American voter on the concept of party identification, i.e. a long-lasting, emotionally rooted psychological 'membership' of a political party (Campbell *et al.* 1954; 1960).

According to the Ann Arbor group's theory the individual voting behaviour is influenced by long-term as well as by short-term forces. The long-term factor is represented by (positive and/or negative) partisan attachments which under normal circumstances exert the strongest single influence upon the vote (Miller 1978; Campbell 1979: 264). Short-term forces which generally change between two elections are political issues and candidates. Voters may be influenced by these short-term forces in such a way that their actual vote will be temporarily deflected from their long-standing partisan affiliations. After the short-term influences vanish, an overwhelming majority of the American voters tend to return to their habitual (i.e. 'normal') voting behaviour represented by their party identification.

The same logic may be applied to the level of the political system. The outcome of any particular election may accordingly be regarded as a result of the interplay between short-term and long-term factors. The political parties may be temporarily favoured by attractive candidates or certain issues as we all know from our own experience. In contrast, it is equally possible for a political party to profit for many years from an enduring distribution of party identifications as has been the case with the Democrats in the United States since the 1930s.

One speaks of a 'normal vote' if the outcome of an election and the distribution of partisan affiliations in the electorate coincide (Campbell 1964; Converse 1966). This

correspondence may emerge either because the voters have based their decisions on party identification only (i.e. with no short-term influences acting in favour of one particular party or candidate) or because several competing short-term forces cancel each other out (Miller 1979: 407).

The analytical virtues of the normal vote concept are manifold: It permits the researcher to decompose the outcome of any particular election in terms of the interplay between candidates, issues and party affiliations in a numerically specifiable way; furthermore, it enables the researcher to categorize elections according to the degree of stability of partisan loyalties; and, finally, it helps to bridge the gap between micro and macro-analysis.

1.3 Operationalizing the Normal Vote Construct

In his seminal article of 1966 Philip E. Converse operationalizes the construct as follows: (a) According to their party identification the voters or, to be more precise, those of the electorate who either identify with a political party or call themselves independents are grouped into five categories ranging from 'Strong Democrats' and 'Weak Democrats' over 'Independents' to 'Weak' and 'Strong Republicans'. (b) For each category the mean turnout rates and the Democratic share of the two party vote are then determined. In order to eliminate the influence of short-term variations, Converse here proposed a method by which, over a series of elections, both parameters are measured and averaged. (c) From these normal vote parameters Converse then constructed several graphs which represent the behaviour of the electorate in those elections. By means of interpolation, he then determined the expected participation rates within the five identification categories for those situations where the short-term influences either cancel each other out or are insignificant. (d) A second group of graphs, finally, shows the defection rates of each identification category. Thus it is possible to calculate the expected Democratic share of the vote under varying short-term conditons for each of the five identification categories. It will be located exactly at that point of the curve where the defection rates of 'Strong Republicans' and 'Strong Democrats' are equal (Converse 1966; Campbell 1977).

1.4 Problems of Inter-Cultural Transfer and Application

A normal vote analysis of elections outside of the US can be confronted with some formidable problems of operationalization and measurement. This holds especially true for the transfer of the concept to the West German party system as will be discussed in the next chapter. But we will first have to ascertain whether the empirical foundations of the normal vote in West Germany exist at all.

As we have seen above, the American normal vote analysis is firmly based on the concept of party identification. The question then arises whether such long-standing partisan affiliations as conceptualized by the construct of party identification actually exist in West Germany (Falter 1977, 1981; Gluchowski 1978). Some scholars have expressed serious doubts concerning the applicability of the identification concept because of the well-known institutional and historical peculiarities of the West German electoral and party system (Kaase 1976; Klingemann and Taylor 1977). Other analysts emphasize the apparently low stability of party identifications (Pappi 1976) or try to demonstrate that partisan

affiliations in West Germany are mainly derived from group membership in a politicized social structure (Berger 1977; Pappi 1977).

More recent analyses, however, tend to be more optimistic about the transfer of the concept from the American to the West German context (Falter 1977, 1981; Norpoth 1978; Gluchowski 1979; Baker *et al.* 1981). Baker's investigation of 1978, for example, aptly demonstrates the increased applicability of the concept to the younger age cohorts which did not, like their elders, experience the depoliticizing ups and downs of German political history during the last 75 years (Baker 1978).

Furthermore, there is strong evidence that socially derived party ties are gradually being replaced by more attitudinally rooted party affiliations (Baker *et al.* 1981), since the numerical importance of such politically binding social factors as active membership in the Catholic church or the trade unions is clearly declining (Pappi 1977: 217 f.; Baker *et al.* 1981). There is nowadays more room and functional necessity for partisan attachments in the Ann Arbor sense of the concept than used to be the case ten or fifteen years ago (Shively 1979; Falter 1981, 1982).

Finally, it should be pointed out that the concept of normal vote does not necessarily imply the existence of attitudinal party identifications. What is presumed in normal vote analyses is the existence of long-standing attachments of individual voters to political parties, no matter how they are rooted, or whether short-term deviations from these affiliations occur. Both of these requirements appear to be fulfilled in the case of the West German party system. In the light of such considerations we think it is legitimate to attempt an application of normal vote analysis to the West German political system with special emphasis on the Federal election of 1980.

2. The Method of Normal Vote Analysis

2.1 Adapting Normal Vote Analysis for the Federal Republic of Germany

Applying normal vote analysis to German elections is a far from straightforward procedure. The country does not have a clear-cut two-party system, and there are no data on the distribution of partisanship collected by means of a standard instrument over a long period, voting intentions over the past decade have differed considerably from aggregate election results, and, finally, the original American method for deriving differential turnout among partisanship categories appears to be inefficient in the German context. In this methodological section we will first deal with these problems one by one, and we will then present a brief analysis of the effect coefficients of normal vote analysis developed by Boyd (1972).

Normal vote analysis requires, in a first step, that the distributions of party identifications are available for a series of elections. In the survey we use for analysing the 1980 election,[1] party identification is measured thus: 'Many people in the Federal Republic lean towards a particular political party over a longer period, even though occasionally they vote for another party. How about you: Generally speaking—do you lean towards a particular party? If so, which party is this?' Respondents classifying themselves as leaning towards a party are then asked: 'All in all—how strongly or how weakly do you lean towards that party?' Responses offered are: 'very strongly', 'rather strongly', 'moderately', 'rather weakly', and 'very weakly'. Identical items are available in surveys for the 1972 and 1976 Federal

elections.[2] From these two items we construct an index of party identification with five categories:

1. Those who refuse to respond to the first item or reply 'don't know' are coded as missing.
2. Those who lean 'very strongly' or 'rather strongly' towards the SPD (CDU/CSU) are classified as strong SPD (CDU/CSU) leaners.
3. Those who lean 'moderately', 'rather weakly', or 'very weakly' towards the SPD (CDU/CSU) are classified as weak SPD (CDU/CSU) leaners.
4. All other respondents are coded as independents.

In the United States, normal vote parameters usually have been based upon elections covering a decade or so. As we intend to analyse the German 1980 election using the September survey from that year it is hardly appropriate to exploit that same survey for deriving normal vote parameters. Thus, for that purpose we have only two surveys, i.e. from 1972 and 1976. It would be very useful to add data at least for the 1969 election so that normal vote parameters could be estimated from three elections over a time span of seven years. However, neither of the two surveys available for the 1969 election contains the above party identification items. We thus have to choose between either abandoning the idea of incorporating the 1969 election into our analysis or looking for a substitute measure of party identification in the 1969 studies.

Luckily in one of the 1969 surveys,[3] respondents were presented with the same eleven-point thermometer scales of feelings about the major parties that also appear in the 1972, 1976 and 1980 questionnaires. If in the latter three studies a very high association between party thermometer readings and party identification could be established, we would then be able to develop an approximate party identification measure for 1969 enabling us to include that year in our computation of initial normal vote parameters.

For such an approximation we first have to compute a single sympathy scale for the two major parties from the individual party thermometers. This is achieved by subtracting values of the CDU thermometer (CSU thermometer for respondents from Bavaria) from values of the SPD thermometer. This combined scale ranges between -10 and $+10$ with the maximum (minimum) of $+10$ (-10) being reached if, at the same time, the SPD (CDU/CSU) is ranked extremely positively *and* the CDU/CSU (SPD) is ranked extremely negatively. As is shown in Table 1, the twenty-one values of this joint sympathy scale in the surveys from 1972 to 1980 are then aggregated into five classes to approximate as closely as possible the percentages of respondents in the five party identification categories.

Table 2 demonstrates how close the aggregation of party thermometer scores comes to the distribution of party identification. Across the three surveys, for almost half of the respondents party identification is exactly reproduced by the combined party thermometer, for almost 90 per cent of the respondents both classifications deviate from each other by at most one category.

The satisfactory reliability of this approximation for the 1972–1980 surveys now enables us to continue our series of distribution of party identification backwards to the 1969 election. Three criteria have guided us in the choice of cut-off points for the last column of Table 3. First, the independent category should be defined in the same way as in the three other surveys, i.e. comprise thermometer values of $-1, 0$, and $+1$. Second, the distribution of thermometer readings around the independent

TABLE 1. Party Identification and Party Thermometer 1972–1980

	Party Identification	Party Thermometer %	Party Thermometer %	Thermometer Ratings
	strong SPD	28.6	29.3	4 to 10
	weak SPD	14.1	17.5	2 and 3
1980	independent	25.1	23.2	−1 to 1
	weak CDU/CSU	11.2	7.5	−2
	strong CDU/CSU	20.9	22.5	−10 to −3
	strong SPD	22.3	19.9	5 to 10
	weak SPD	16.2	20.9	2 to 4
1976	independent	25.9	20.8	−1 to 1
	weak CDU/CSU	15.9	18.1	−4 to −2
	strong CDU/CSU	19.7	20.3	−10 to −5
	strong SPD	31.0	30.7	4 to 10
	weak SPD	11.1	15.7	2 and 3
1972	independent	29.2	26.0	−1 to 1
	weak CDU/CSU	9.5	11.3	−3 and −2
	strong CDU/CSU	19.2	16.2	−10 to −4

TABLE 2. Predicting Party Identification from Party Thermometers 1972–1980

		(1) Exact Predictions	(1) Exact Predictions	(2) Deviations by one Party Identification Category	(2) Deviations by one Party Identification Category	(1)+(2)	(1)+(2)
	N	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
1980	1407	641	(45.6)	489	(34.8)	1130	(80.3)
1976	1997	961	(48.1)	838	(42.0)	1799	(90.1)
1972	1910	957	(50.1)	671	(35.1)	1628	(85.2)

category should be symmetric. Finally, the percentages of respondents in the five classes should be a reasonable extension of the distributions of partisanship measured in the 1972–1980 surveys. This is clearly the case. The proportions of weak identifiers oscillate around values which are similar for both major parties.

The share of independents exhibits a downward trend and is exceptionally high in 1969, the year that saw the end of the Grand Coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD. Percentages of strong identifiers of both parties show an upward trend; this trend is stronger for the Social Democrats and in 1972 it is interrupted by the 'outlier' of the Brandt vs. Barzel contest which took place in a highly emotional atmosphere following the attempt to overthrow Brandt's government. The fact that in 1969 the categories of strong identifiers came to eight thermometer degrees is not surprising, since at the end of the Grand Coalition extreme ratings of the two major parties were rather exceptional.

TABLE 3. Party Identification 1972–1980 and a Substitute Measure for 1969

Party Identification	(%)			1969 Approximation	
	1980	1976	1972	(%)	Thermometer ratings
strong SPD	28.6	22.3	31.0	18.1	3 to 10
weak SPD	14.1	16.2	11.1	11.3	2
independent	25.1	25.9	29.2	41.7	−1 to 1
weak CDU/CSU	11.2	15.9	9.5	12.6	−2
strong CDU/CSU	20.9	19.7	19.2	16.2	−10 to −3

We will now proceed to derive normal vote parameters for the Federal Republic from the 1969, 1972, and 1976 data, for 1969 using the party identification substitute described in Table 3. As the correlations between this substitute measure and voting intentions for 1972 to 1980 are consistently very high and almost identical to the correlations between voting intentions and party identification itself, we can be fairly confident that the need to approximate party identification for the 1969 election does not threaten the validity of the subsequent analyses.

If one wants to compute expected (i.e. 'normal') voting from distribution of partisanship for the United States, differential turnout rates between identification categories have to be taken into account. As these turnout rates do vary considerably,[4] the partisan composition of actual voters is very different from that of the total electorate. Differential turnout for the Federal Republic, on the other hand, cannot have such dramatic effects because the extremely high overall participation in elections does not allow very much variation between party identification categories. Therefore, of course, German surveys even without any weighting are more representative of *actual* voters than American ones.

As we intend here to replicate the original method of normal vote analysis as closely as possible, we do not want to ignore the turnout parameter. But a simple imitation of Converse's (1966) method appears inappropriate. According to the American model, the percentages of respondents intending to cast a vote should, for each partisan category, be regressed upon the turnout percentages for the total sample over a series of elections. For each category, this yields a prediction equation which allows a projection of turnout in that category if the overall propensity to vote is known.

Applying this procedure to our data for the Federal Republic would not be very useful.[5] With only three elections, regressions would have only one degree of freedom. Moreover, we can perform this correction much more elegantly by means of an instrument called 'repräsentative Wahlstatistik'[6] that is not available in the United States. If we take the distributions of sex and age within the party identification categories and within the total samples, this instrument permits us to compute *actual* turnout percentages and to compare them with intentions to participate in the respective election, as is done in Table 4. The ratio of reported and actual survey turnout is a measure of the extent to which respondents exaggerate the latter. Computing arithmetic means of these ratios for the elections of 1969 to 1976 then enables us to correct the distribution of party identification in the 1980 survey in Table 3 for the actual electorate, as is shown in the last column of Table 4.

TABLE 4. Declared Intention to Cast a Vote and Actual Turnout 1969–1980

Party Identification	1980 Declared Intention to Cast a Vote[a] (%) (1)	Actual Turnout (%) (2)	1976 (1)[a]	1976 (2)	1972 (1)[a]	1972 (2)	1969 (1)[a]	1969 (2)	Mean Ratio (1)/(2) 1969–1976	Corrected Composition of the 1980 Electorate
strong SPD	98.7	87.9	98.6	90.6	94.3	91.2	96.1	87.6	1.07	29.2
weak SPD	96.3	87.6	96.0	90.2	93.3	91.3	98.3	87.4	1.07	14.1
independent	90.0	86.8	94.8	90.5	86.9	90.7	94.4	87.0	1.03	24.3
weak CDU/CSU	95.9	88.7	99.7	93.7	95.6	91.1	95.2	87.0	1.07	11.1
strong CDU/CSU	99.3	88.4	98.4	90.8	96.7	91.0	95.3	87.0	1.08	21.3
Total Sample	95.3	87.7	97.3	90.6	92.4	91.0	95.4	86.9	1.06	100.0

[a] 'Don't know' or similar responses have been proportionally divided among the 'will vote' and 'will not vote' groups.

This result demonstrates that adjusting for differential turnout in the Federal Republic may not be entirely superfluous, but it does not have very marked consequences.

This procedure of correcting the partisan composition of the 1980 electorate proceeds from the assumption that in the Federal Republic strong partisans are slightly more prone to exaggerate their propensity to vote than weak identifiers or independents. If, at the other extreme, one holds that this exaggeration works across party identification categories in a completely uniform way, identical adjustments would have to be made in all five groups. The result of such an alternative approach, however, would be very close to the data in the last column of Table 4, so our general conclusion that adjusting for differential turnout in the Federal Republic is almost inconsequential would not be affected.

After the adjusted composition of the electorate has been computed, the 'normal vote' can be derived from past voting behaviour within the separate party identification categories. In the United States, the Democratic normal vote is estimated by multiplying the percentages of voters in the party identification groups with the group-specific mean prior Democratic shares of the two-party vote and by summing across all five categories. Republican and Democratic normal vote thus obviously add to unity. One could apply the same logic to the two major German parties or to opposition vs. government coalition parties. This, however, would not fully exhaust the potential of normal vote analysis, as it might also be enlightening to investigate the importance of long-term and short-term factors for the electoral success of the smaller liberal FDP and for the flow of voters between the two government parties. Therefore, defection rates away from party identification in Table 5 are presented for the distribution of votes[7] among the three parties CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, and others. By multiplying mean voting intentions from 1969 to 1976 within each party identification category with its adjusted share of the 1980 electorate from Table 4 and then summing for each party, we arrive at an initial estimate for the 1980 normal vote. In Table 5 this is contrasted against the actual outcome of the election.

The preparations for a normal vote analysis would now be complete. From

Table 5. Voting and Party Identification 1969–1980

| | Party Identification | Declared Intention to Vote (Secondary Vote, %) | | | |
		CDU/CSU	SPD	FDP	Others
1980	strong SPD	2.1	95.1	2.1	0.8
	weak SPD	1.7	92.5	4.0	1.7
	independent	19.4	36.0	32.0	12.7
	weak CDU/CSU	91.3	5.1	2.9	0.7
	strong CDU/CSU	97.5	0.7	0.7	0.7
1976	strong SPD	1.2	94.1	4.2	0.5
	weak SPD	2.5	89.9	6.8	0.8
	independent	40.3	22.4	33.1	4.2
	weak CDU/CSU	91.9	5.3	2.8	0.0
	strong CDU/CSU	98.6	0.5	0.8	0.0
1972	strong SPD	2.4	94.2	3.2	0.2
	weak SPD	3.5	91.5	5.0	0.0
	independent	33.6	44.7	19.3	2.4
	weak CDU/CSU	99.3	4.3	1.8	0.6
	strong CDU/CSU	96.3	2.9	0.9	0.0
1969	strong SPD	0.5	93.5	5.0	1.0
	weak SPD	2.6	93.8	2.6	0.9
	independent	47.1	42.8	6.4	3.6
	weak CDU/CSU	92.1	4.3	3.5	0.0
	strong CDU/CSU	90.4	3.1	2.5	3.8
Mean 1969– 1972	strong SPD	1.4	93.9	4.1	0.6
	weak SPD	2.7	91.7	4.8	0.6
	independent	40.3	36.6	19.6	3.4
	weak CDU/CSU	92.4	4.6	2.7	0.2
	strong CDU/CSU	95.1	2.2	1.4	1.3
	Normal Vote 1980	41.1	50.2	7.2	1.4
	Actual Election Result (Secondary Vote)	44.0	43.5	10.6	1.9

Tables 4 and 5 expected voting could be assessed for relevant sub-groups of the electorate, if only their distribution of party identification were known. We have to recognize, however, that for the Federal Republic the normal vote estimate in Table 5 in a characteristic fashion deviates from the result of the 1980 election. The Social Democratic vote share is dramatically overestimated, the CDU/CSU vote is underestimated. This reflects the well-known fact that since the early Seventies measures of voting intentions in the Federal Republic have been systematically biased in favour of the governing Social Democrats (Noelle-Neumann, 1980), this naturally affects our Table 5. Deviations between observed and expected voting are due to this bias as well as to short-term influences on 1980 voting. In order to isolate the latter type of influences, normal vote estimates have to be adjusted for biased reporting of voting intentions—a problem that is virtually non-existent in the United States.

In solving this problem, the existence of the 'repräsentative Wahlstatistik' again proves extremely helpful. With these data we can for all four surveys derive actual voting behaviour from their combined sex- and age-distributions. In Table 6 these

TABLE 6. Voting Intentions and Voting Behaviour 1969–1980

		Second Vote (%)			
		CDU/CSU	SPD	FDP	Others
1980	(1) Voting behaviour of the sample according to 'repräsentative Wahlstatistik'	43.7	43.6	10.6	1.9
	(2) Voting intention of the sample	37.7	50.7	8.2	3.3
	(3) Election result	44.0	43.5	10.6	1.9
1976	(1)	47.8	43.3	8.0	0.8
	(2)	45.9	43.2	9.8	1.1
	(3)	48.0	43.3	7.8	0.8
1972	(1)	45.3	45.7	8.1	0.9
	(2)	38.2	54.0	6.9	0.7
	(3)	44.6	46.3	8.2	0.9
1969	(1)	44.9	43.3	5.7	6.0
	(2)	45.6	46.9	4.6	2.8
	(3)	46.0	42.8	5.6	5.6
Mean Ratio (1)/(2) 1969-1976		1.07	0·92	1.08	1.39
Adjusted Normal Vote 1980		44.0	46.2	7.8	1.9
Actual Election Result		44.0	43.5	10.6	1.9

values are juxtaposed against reported sample voting intentions and against election results. This comparison demonstrates two things. On the one hand, reported voting behaviour in the samples and election outcomes are very close together, there can be no doubt about the quality of sampling with regard to sex and age distributions. On the other hand, however, respondents systematically lie about the party they plan to vote for.

The mean ratios of sample voting behaviour to sample voting intentions 1969 to 1976 convey a vivid impression of systematic errors that afflict the measurement of voting intentions in the Federal Republic. If the first estimate of the 1980 normal vote in Table 5 is multiplied by these ratios and the result is normalized to sum to 100 per cent, we get the adjusted 1980 normal vote estimate in Table 6. We have to stress that our normal vote computations so far exclusively rest upon parameters derived from the 1969 to 1976 elections—they might as well have been performed prior to the 1980 election. Furthermore, we wish to remind readers that in the subsequent normal vote analyses expected voting within relevant sub-groups is not set against actual voting outcomes, but against voting intentions observed within these same sub-groups. As these observations, however, are subject to the same bias as the preliminary normal vote estimate of Table 5, they have to be adjusted in an analogous fashion.[8]

We now have a solid foundation for our normal vote analysis of the 1980 election. It will be possible, of course, to use our parameters for investigating future German elections. We have deliberately refrained from making use of the 1980 survey data when calculating the parameters in order to avoid the criticism that

TABLE 7. Normal Vote Parameters from Surveys 1969–1980

Party Identification	CDU/CSU	SPD	FDP	Others	Mean Ratio Declared Intention to Vote/ Actual Turnout
	Mean Voting Intentions (%)				
strong SPD	1.6	94.2	3.6	0.6	1.09
weak SPD	2.6	91.9	4.6	0.9	1.08
independent	35.1	36.5	22.7	5.7	1.04
weak CDU/CSU	92.2	4.8	2.8	0.3	1.07
strong CDU/CSU	95.8	1.8	1.2	1.1	1.09
Mean Ratio Actual Voting/ Voting Intentions	1.09	0.91	1.13	1.19	—
Adjusted Normal Vote 1980	43.6	45.5	8.7	2.3	—

relationships observed in 1980 have been used in a circular fashion, for their own explanation. However, the 1980 survey can naturally be included in future research that is concerned with a subsequent election. In Table 7 all normal vote parameters computed from all four surveys from 1969 up to 1980 are presented in order to facilitate such future analysis. This table clearly indicates that normal vote analysis in the Federal Republic is highly robust against changes in the empirical bases for computing its parameters. For the United States, an even stronger insensitivity of normal vote analysis to changes over time has been reported by Miller (1979).

2.2 Quantifying Long-Term and Short-Term Effects in Normal Vote Analysis

Although normal vote computations produce theoretically 'expected' distributions of votes for entire samples or subsamples the primary goal of normal vote analysis is not prediction, but to discover what makes actual vote shares deviate from expected ones. Boyd (1972) has proposed two measures, L and S, to capture long-term and short-term factors, respectively. We shall employ his formulae for L and S with a slight modification. In the United States, generally less respondents intend to vote than offer a party identification. Therefore, for each category of a given analytic variable, Boyd proceeded with two weightings based on numbers of cases; the number of respondents in that category registering a voting intention, and the number of respondents in that category which can be assigned a party identification. This procedure appears to retain a high number of cases but has two obvious disadvantages. First, the formulae for L and S get complicated, and, secondly, long-term and short-term effects on the vote are computed for different subsamples.

To avoid this, we propose to compute L and S only for those respondents who report a party identification *and* a voting intention.[9] If we have an analytical variable with K classes with n_i such respondents, respectively, and if we denote the sum of all n_i as N, the expected percentage of the vote in the i-th class as E_i, and the observed percentage of the vote in the i-th class as O_i, then L and S are defined as follows:

$$L = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{K} n_i \left| E_i - \dfrac{\sum_{i=1}^{K} n_i E_i}{N} \right|}{N}$$

$$S = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} n_i \left| O_i - E_i - \dfrac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} n_i(O_i - E_i)}{N} \right|}{N}$$

L and S can be illustrated in Figure 1, which represents a division of the September 1980 sample into two categories of an analytic variable and contains expected and observed vote shares for the CDU/CSU. L is the weighted mean absolute deviation of the expected values E_1 and E_2 from their weighted mean $\bar{E}$, i.e. the weighted mean of the distances between E_1 and $\bar{E}$, and between E_2 and $\bar{E}$. If we did not have the classification along the analytic variable we would expect $\bar{E}$ for all N respondents. Due to the different partisan affiliations within these two classes, however, we expect E_1 and E_2, respectively, so that the deviations of E_1 and E_2 from $\bar{E}$ measure the contribution of party identification to the divergence of observed vote shares.

The illustration of S is slightly more complex. As $\bar{E}$ and the weighted mean of observed vote shares, $\bar{O}$, usually are not identical, expected values are so transformed by the last expression in the numerator of S that $\bar{O}$ and the weighted mean of the transformed expected values E_1' and E_2', which we denote by $\bar{E}'$, are identical: $\bar{E}' = \bar{O}$. In other words, the expected values are displaced in E_1' and E_2' by adding $(\bar{O} - \bar{E})$ to E_1 and E_2, respectively. The above formula for S, then, represents the weighted mean of the distances between O_1 and E_1' and between O_2 and E_2'. These latter deviations are interpreted as effects of the analytical variable which underlies the classification of the sample. Note that L and S exactly split the deviations of O_1 and O_2 from $\bar{O}$ into two components: L is the weighted mean of the absolute distances $E_1\bar{E}$ and $E_2\bar{E}$, S is the weighted mean of the absolute distances O_1E_1' and O_2E_2'. But as $E_1' = E_1 + \bar{O} - \bar{E}$, $E_1\bar{E} = E_1'\bar{O}$ and, accordingly, $E_2\bar{E} = E_2'\bar{O}$. In the weighted mean the deviation of O from $\bar{O}$ is composed of a deviation of E' from $\bar{O}$ (Boyd's L) and a deviation of O from E' (Boyd's S).

For the German 1980 election, we computed observed and expected vote percentages for the three major parties as well as for the sum of all other parties. Accordingly, for each analytic short-term variable we could present four pairs of L- and S-coefficients. Even if we disregard all parties but the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP, we are left with six effect coefficients for each subdivision of the sample. On the other hand, it may be useful to be able to assess also the impact of long- and short-term variables on the competition between the two government parties and the major opposition parties. For this purpose, we occasionally present government vs. opposition coefficients which result from first computing effect coefficients for the SPD-FDP government from joint observed and expected voting and then averaging these with the CDU/CSU coefficients. These government vs. opposition coefficients closely correspond to the normal vote coefficients in the United States studies that are based upon the distribution of the two-party vote.[10]

Before presenting our normal vote analysis of the German 1980 election we have

CDU/CSU proportion of the vote

$E_2 = 50.6$

$E_2' = 46.7$
$O_2 = 45.7$
$\bar{E} = 43.9$

$\bar{O} = \bar{E}' = 40.0$

$E_1 = 30.4$
$O_1 = 28.5$
$E_1' = 26.5$

$(n_1 = 406)$ $(n_2 = 813)$
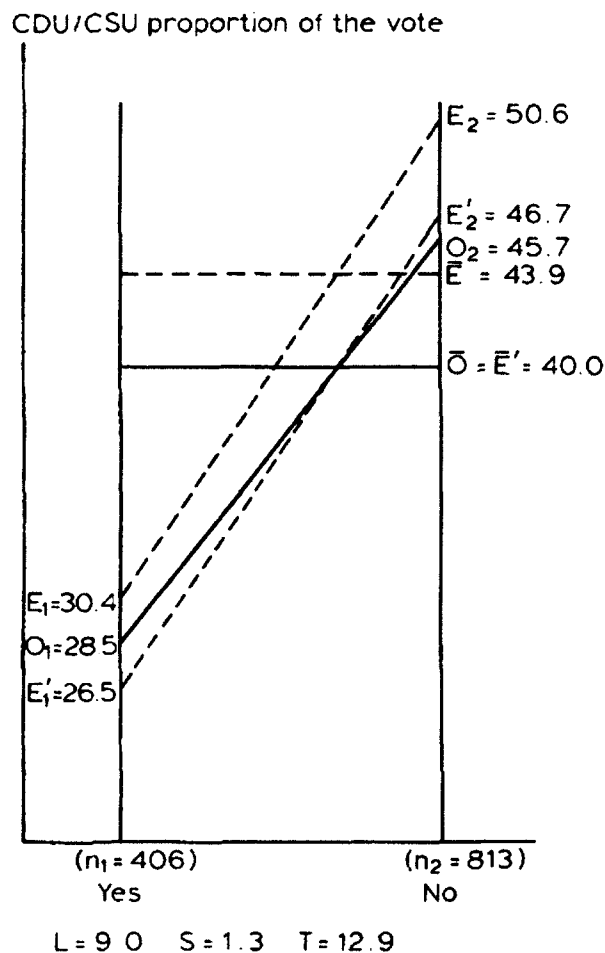Yes   No

$L = 9.0$ $S = 1.3$ $T = 12.9$

FIGURE 1. Normal Vote Analysis—First Case: Union Member in the Household?

to alert the reader to three deficiencies in the method. First, L and S can convey the impression that *all* variations of voting behaviour between response categories are accounted for by partisan affiliation and by the given short-term classification. Secondly, the measurement of short-term influences on voting by S can be inaccurate. Thirdly, the idea of statistically controlling for third (short-term) variables has never been applied to the effect coefficients of normal vote analysis. While S measures the impact of a short-term variable on voting after controlling for partisan affiliation within its response categories, it is conceivable that this represents a spurious relationship, if there is a second short-term variable which is highly collinear with the first one and is causally prior to it.

As to the first issue, we have seen in Figure 1 that L and S arithmetically split the deviation between O and $\bar{O}$ into a first deviation between E' and $\bar{O}$ and a second between O and E', where E' is the result of shifting E by $\bar{O} - \bar{E}$ percentage points. This is mathematically correct. The fundamental logic of normal vote analysis, however, is not to explain deviations of observed vote shares from *their* overall mean, but from the mean *expected* vote. Due to party identification we would expect, had we no further information, the overall normal vote $\bar{E}$, and not $\bar{O}$. If we know the distribution of partisanship within the response categories of a variable, we no longer expect $\bar{E}$, but E_i—the normal vote specific to the i-th category. In total, one thus has to explain a weighted mean sum of the deviations of O from E *and* of the deviations of E from $\bar{E}$; this total we denote by T:

$$T = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{K} n_i(|O_i - E_i| + |E_i - \bar{E}|)}{N}$$

This definition of T underlines the two steps of normal vote analysis: First, we explain (by party identification) that expected voting should vary between categories; then we have to explain why observed and expected values differ. If, instead, one strives to explain only the deviations of observed voting from *its* overall mean, one neglects discrepancies between mean expected and mean observed voting which are arithmetically eliminated in the formula for S, but which are not eliminated from T. The sum of L and S is equal to the weighted absolute mean distance between O and $\bar{O}$, but is below T. The notion that all variation of observed voting is captured by L and S rests upon the choice of the wrong baseline. If mean expected behaviour is accepted as the proper base, the difference between mean observed and mean expected voting clearly remains unexplained by either partisanship or the short-term variable underlying a given classification. Only in the exceptional case that $\bar{O}$ equals $\bar{E}$ do L and S exhaust the total variation T. If one would regularly compute a third normal vote coefficient $R = T - L - S$, this property of normal vote analysis would be clarified.

So far we have assumed here that L and S accurately measure long-term and short-term effects. We now proceed to show that this is not necessarily so for S, by illustrating the two logically possible constellations of the data. In the first case, observed vote shares in *all* categories are either above or below expected vote shares. As an example, in Figure 1 we have CDU/CSU vote shares in the German 1980 election for the item 'Is there a union member in your household — yes or no?' In both categories observed CDU/CSU voting is below expectation. As shifting E into E' by $\bar{O} - \bar{E} = -3.9$ takes place in the direction of observed vote shares, there is no problem with computing S from the above formula as a weighted mean of the distances between O_1 and $E_1{}'$ and between O_2 and $E_2{}'$. The result is $S = 1.3$, against a much stronger long-term component of $L = 9.0$, with $T = 12.9$ and $R = 2.6$.

The second logically possible case is that observed vote shares across response categories sometimes are above and sometimes below expected voting. As an example we have in Figure 2 FDP vote shares for the item 'Would you prefer someone else to run for Chancellor for the CDU/CSU—yes or no?' For respondents replying in the affirmative, observed FDP voting is above expectation, in the 'no' category expectation is above observed. This pattern is more typical for normal vote diagrams than the first one. The overall mean deviation of observed from mean expected voting is $T = 3.4$. L and S according to the above formulae are 0.5 and 3.2, respectively, i.e., the sum of L and S exceeds T.

The reason for this is not hard to detect. In order to have $\bar{E}{}' = \bar{O}$, expected values are shifted upwards by $\bar{O} - \bar{E} = 1.8$ into E'. In the 'no' category this means that $E_2{}'$ is shifted *away* from O_2. In this category now the distance between $E_2{}'$ and O_2 is entered into the computation of S. Out of this distance the section $E_2{}'\bar{E}$ does not have to be accounted for at all, it is not a component of T. The section $\bar{E}E_2$ has already been explained by party identification and has entered into the computation of L. Therefore, S is obviously inflated if the data follow this kind of pattern. Under such adverse circumstances S alone can exceed T.

If we want to correct this deficiency, we have to remember that, on the one hand, expected values should be transformed so that $\bar{E}{}' = \bar{O}$, but that, on the other hand, a

FDP proportion of the vote

$O_1 = 13.5$

$E_1'' = 12.1$

$E_1' = 9.4$

$E_1 = 7.6$

$\bar{O} = \bar{E}' = \bar{E}'' = 8.7$
$E_2' = 8.3$

$\bar{E} = 6.9$
$E_2 = E_2'' = 6.5$
$O_2 = 5.6$

($n_1 = 454$)   ($n_2 = 705$)
Yes   No
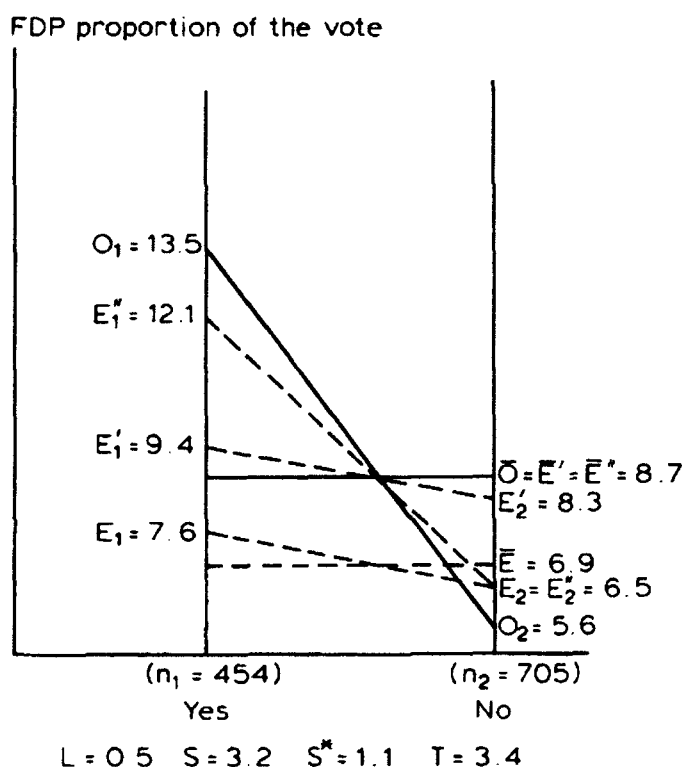
$L = 0.5$ $S = 3.2$ $S^* = 1.1$ $T = 3.4$

FIGURE 2. Normal Vote Analysis—Second Case: Would You Prefer a Different Candidate of the CDU/CSU for Chancellor?

transformation *away* from O leads to the undesirable consequences just described. One solution to this dilemma would be to retain E_2 as E_2'' in the 'no' category, and to shift E_1 only in the 'yes' category appropriately stronger by the amount $(\bar{O} - \bar{E})N/n_1$ into E_1'', so that $\bar{E}'' = \bar{E}' = \bar{O}$. As the above formula for S contains the standard shift of E into E' in its numerator, we propose a modified S^* with E'' defined as described here:

$$S^* = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{K} n_i |O_i - E_i''|}{N}$$

In our example $S = 3.2$ is replaced by $S^* = 1.1$, so that $R = T-L-S^* = 1.8$. Our modification of Boyd's S can be easily generalized for more than two categories. Whenever adding $(\bar{O} - \bar{E})$ to E_i in at least one category would shift E_i' away from O_i, S^* has to be computed instead of S. In all those categories E_i'' equals E_i, in all other categories, whose joint number of cases we denote by N_1, E_i'' is defined as $E_i + (\bar{O} - \bar{E})N/N_1$. We do not claim that our S^* is the only conceivable modification to correct the error we have detected in the original S. We do maintain, however, that short-term influences on voting are exaggerated whenever conventional values of S are reported in spite of the fact that the data exhibit the pattern we have just analysed.

Turning now to the third weakness of normal vote analysis mentioned above, we can fairly quickly demonstrate how S can be adapted to allow statistical controls for a second short-term variable. Let O_{Ai} and E_{Ai} (O_{Bj} and E_{Bj}) be observed and expected vote shares in the K(L) categories of a short-term variable A(B), and let subscripts ij denote numbers of cases and observed and expected voting in the KL categories of the cross-classification of A and B. Then, a partial S, $S_{A.B}$ controlling

the effect of B, can be defined as follows, with E either E' or E'', according to whether S or S* is to be computed:

$$S_{A,B} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{L}\sum_{j=1}^{K} n_{ij}|(O_{ij} - E_{Ai}) - (O_{Bj} - E_{Bj})|}{N}$$

We can illustrate this procedure in Table 8 with CDU/CSU vote shares and the two short-term variables 'competence at fighting inflation' and 'preferred Chancellor' from the German September 1980 survey. For the former variable alone we get an S* of 4.5, for the latter variable an S* of 6.7, and for their cross-classification S* is 6.8—which strongly suggests collinearity between the two short-term variables. This impression is supported by the partial effect coefficients. If we hold perceived competence to fight inflation constant, the partial S for Chancellor preference is 3.3, but if Chancellor preference is held constant, the partial S for competence to fight inflation drops to .5. Thus, while the preference for chancellor obviously made a difference in the German 1980 election deviations of observed from expected voting in the categories of the 'competence to fight inflation'—variable are largely spurious: which party voters saw as the most able to combat inflation depended almost exclusively on their partisan attachments and their preference for Chancellor. This finding of the comparatively small political effect that evaluations of issue competence have in West Germany is not at all new or surprising—what is new is

TABLE 8. Controlling a Short-Term Variable in Normal Vote Analysis (CDU/CSU Vote Percentages)

Short-term Variable A	Perceived Competence to Fight Inflation			
	SPD	CDU/CSU		
O_{Ai}	4.1	87.4		$S^* = 4.5$
E_{Ai}	8.1	82.2		
n_i	499	381		

Short-term Variable B	Preferred Chancellor			
	Schmidt	Strauss		
O_{Bi}	8.0	98.2		$S^* = 6.7$
E_{Bi}''	13.1	88.8		
n_j	566	314		

Combined Index AB	Schmidt + SPD	Schmidt + CDU/CSU	Strauss + SPD	Strauss + CDU/CSU
O_{ij}	2.1	41.9	91.3	98.4	$S^* = 6.8$
E_{ij}''	7.3 →	48.0 →	63.6 →	89.5 →
n_{ij}	489	77	10	304

Controlling for B				
$\|(O_{ij} - E_{ij}'') - (O_{Bi} - E_{Bi}'')\|$	.1	1.0	18.3	.4	$S^*_{A.B} = .5$

Controlling for A				
$\|(O_{ij} - E_{ij}'') - (O_{Ai} - E_{Ai}'')\|$	1.2	11.3	31.7	3.8	$S^*_{B.A} = 3.3$

that the effect coefficient of normal vote analysis can be modified to produce such a finding. With this example we have moved so far in the direction of an analysis of the 1980 election that it seems high time now to proceed from method to substance.

3. A Normal Vote Analysis of the 1980 German Federal Election

3.1 A Global Analysis of the German Normal Vote Parameters

The normal vote in West Germany at the beginning of the eighties equals 44 per cent for the two Christian-Democratic parties, the CDU and the CSU, 46 per cent for the Social Democrats and approximately 8 per cent for the FDP, i.e. the Liberal party. The share of the other parties combined amounts to roughly 2 per cent (Table 6). These figures show that in the 1980 Federal Election the expected and the observed vote differed only slightly. The CDU/CSU-share of the vote can be accurately predicted from the normal vote. The same is true for the small splinter parties. The SPD misses its theoretically expected vote by three percentage points while the actual FDP result is about the same margin higher than could be expected from the Liberal normal vote alone. These latter differences between expected and observed voting point to the influence of short-term factors which will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections of this chapter.

Readers familiar with the political discussion in Germany before and after election day may be surprised by these results. Most observers agreed that Franz Josef Strauss, the Leader of the Bavarian-based CSU and highly controversial candidate for Chancellor of the two Christian parties, exerted a strong negative influence on his parties' electoral fortunes. On the other hand, it was generally assumed that Chancellor Helmut Schmidt as the widely acclaimed incumbent and top candidate of the SPD had won many additional voters for his party.

There is, however, no conclusive contradiction between our results and these interpretations. It is quite conceivable, for example, that the CDU/CSU-share of the vote was indeed negatively affected by the unfavourable image of Strauss and that, in compensation, those losses were neutralized by other, positive short-term influences in the issue area. Moreover, it is possible that the discrepancy between the expected and the observed vote of SPD and FDP should be attributed mainly to ticket splitting. Approximately 30 per cent of those who intended to give their second vote to the FDP party list meant to support their constituency's SPD candidate with their first vote.

There is an alternative possible explanation for this quite unexpected SPD advantage in the normal vote. In the 1980 survey, 6.8 per cent of the respondents declined to indicate their party identification; another 2.7 per cent answered 'don't know' to the identification question. Analogous to our experience with reported voting intentions, more CDU/CSU partisans than SPD- or FDP-adherents could be expected among those 9.5 per cent. Furthermore, in Table 4 (last column) the CDU/CSU partisans are outnumbered by SPD-identifiers in approximately the same proportion as the CDU/CSU-voting intentions reported in Table 6 by SPD-voting intentions. The relative SPD surplus in identifications (33.6 per cent), hence, equals almost exactly the proportional SPD surplus in voting intentions (34.5 per cent). It seems plausible, therefore, that our measures of party identification have been biased in the same direction and by similar mechanisms as our assessments of voting intentions.

Unfortunately, to know about the problem does not automatically solve it. In contrast to voting intentions we lack an objective baseline against which measurement error can be assessed and corrected. More basic research is needed in this respect. Nevertheless, we are able to demonstrate the probable effects of bias in the identification categories used in our analysis. It is possible to correct further the adjusted composition of the electorate with regard to identification categories given in Table 4 by means of the weights for voting intentions given in Table 6. From the resulting values and the transition rates of Table 5, a new normal vote may be computed. This will in turn have to be corrected for biased voting intentions. By means of these procedures, we obtain an adjusted normal vote for the CDU/CSU of 47.2 per cent, for the SPD of 43.3 per cent, for the FDP of 7.7 per cent and for other parties of 1.9 per cent.

Two consequences clearly result from these desirable but only intuitively based correcting procedures: First, the above mentioned expectations are met: in 1980 the SPD ended up about 'normal' while the CDU/CSU got an 'abnormally' low and the FDP an 'abnormally' high share of the vote. Secondly, it becomes evident that the short-term influences favouring the Social-Liberal coalition (and, in turn, dis-advantaging the two Christian parties) may be slightly underestimated in the following analysis since we proceed from a normal vote which probably is biased in favour of the SPD. Hence in the subsequent sections the short-term influences cannot be assessed with absolute accuracy. However, as we have no systematic knowledge about measurement errors in respect to party identification we shall proceed in our analysis on the basis of the normal vote estimates reported in Tables 4-6.

It is noteworthy that the combined normal votes for SPD and FDP coincide closely with their combined share of the vote: their combined normal vote amounts to 54 per cent, and their share of the actual vote equalled 54.1 per cent. Such perfect congruence of expected and observed vote is quite uncommon in the United States. The expected and the observed vote of Democrats and Republicans during the last eight presidential elections only twice coincided closely enough for the outcome to be labelled as 'normal' (Campbell 1979: 266).

If one further compares the American and German normal vote results, it becomes evident that the normal vote of the American Democrats and the German SPD–FDP coalition (and thus, in turn, the normal vote of Republicans and CDU/CSU) are quite similar. Analogous to the Republicans in the United States, the two German Christian parties therefore need rather strong positive short-term influences in order to achieve a clear majority. On the other hand, the Republicans have demonstrated time and again that presidential elections can be won from a minority position. With an even more attractive own top candidate and/or with a less popular rival leader than Helmut Schmidt, the CDU/CSU might have been in reach of an absolute majority of seats or even votes in 1976. Whether the same was true for the 1980 election and what effects the Strauss candidacy produced will be discussed below.

In spite of all the similarities between the American and German normal vote parameters the three-party system of the Federal Republic is clearly mirrored by the current normal vote distribution: with an expected share of approximately 8 per cent the FDP easily surmounts the 5 per cent hurdle of the German electoral law. However, this margin is so small that an accumulation of unfavourable short-term influences at a particular election may cause the Liberal vote to drop below the 5 per

cent threshold. The loss of parliamentary respresentation—and consequently of political visibility—could prove to be fatal for the party.

The normal vote concept, furthermore, helps to explain why the German Liberals from time to time in a particular Land election fail to pass the 5 per cent mark but regularly (at least until now) manage to reenter the Diet in the following election. Due to its retained visibility at the federal level and the disappearance of unfavourable short-term influences the FDP generally succeeds in winning back its 'normal' share of the vote.

3.2 The 1980 Election: A Maintaining Election

The authors of the 'American Voter' have developed a scheme for the classification of presidential elections which draws on elements of the normal vote concept and on a classification suggested by V.O. Key (1955). According to this scheme presidential elections may be classified according to two criteria: (a) Who has been elected—the candidate of the majority or minority party as defined by the normal vote of the electorate?; (b) did the composition of the long-standing party affiliations change considerably during the last four years or did it remain largely unaltered? (Campbell et al. 1966: 63 ff.; Pomper 1967).

According to these two criteria four types of elections can be distinguished: (1) Maintaining elections, where the distribution of party identifications of the last election remains unchanged and where the candidate of the majority party wins the election; (2) Deviating elections, where the distribution of party identifications in the electorate remains unchanged, too, but the candidate of the minority party wins due to short-term influences; (3) Converting elections where the majority party's candidate wins but where his party undergoes a substantial change with regard to the composition of its long-standing support; and (4) Realigning elections where the former minority party not only wins the election but also, as a result of a deep-reaching reshuffle within the electorate, takes over a majority in respect to normal vote.

This classificatory scheme forms the core of the theory of 'critical elections'. It not only arranges political elections according to shifts in the underlying normal vote distribution but also points to possible electoral developments of the future since disruptive formations of new electoral coalitions as experienced in the New Deal era or during the first years of the Federal Republic are quite extraordinary and therefore of long-ranging impact (Falter 1982).

The scheme can be easily adapted to multi-party systems if there exists an underlying bipolar structure. One only has to replace the majority party by the governing coalition and the minority party by an alliance of opposition parties which strive for political power.

Looking at the distribution of party identifications in 1976 and 1980 proves that the SPD–FDP coalition in both elections could rely on a strong majority at the normal vote level. Furthermore, it is obvious that during those four years no dramatic shifts in the distribution or social composition of party allegiances between coalition and opposition occurred. No new coalitions at the level of the social groupings were formed, and no economic or political large-scale crises occurred. The German Federal election of 1980 has to be categorized as 'maintaining' in accordance with its status as a near perfect normal vote election. In contrast to US elections of the same type it was characterized, however, by a very

high turnout. This is customary in the Federal Republic and may be interpreted as the result of both a widespread feeling of moral obligation to go to the polls and registration laws which (in contrast to the United States) considerably facilitate voter participation.

3.3 The Effects of Selected Variable Groups

In this section we want to analyse the mean long-term and short-term effects of whole clusters of attributes on the vote and compare our findings with similar results of American normal vote analyses.

Looking at the mean effect coefficients of the various attribute dimensions one easily discovers that only issues, candidates and attitudes towards the political parties and possible coalitions exerted stronger short-term influences upon the vote. The same is true for long-term coefficients which in addition display above-average values for demographic and socio-structural variables.

Our theoretical expectations are widely fulfilled by the distributions found: The strongest short-term effects were indeed exerted by issue and candidate-related variables, i.e. the classical short-term factors of the social-psychological theory of voting behaviour (Campbell *et al.* 1954, 1960). Furthermore, the relatively high long-term coefficients within the variable group 'demography and social stucture', particularly those of the attributes 'church-attendance', 'religion', 'union-membership' and 'region', represent the effect of varying distributions of party identification across the categories of these variables. Higher short-term effects from these variables could only be expected if particular social or demographic groups had been politicized by the campaign and other political events before election day. Our data demonstrate that no such politicization of the social structure occurred in 1980.

Similar findings are reported in American normal vote analyses. The long-term effects of the demographic and socio-structural variables tend, however, to be much lower in the US. This may be explained by the absence of such deep-seated political cleavages within the American electorate as are normally present in European polities. In the US, only the variables 'religion', 'race' and 'union membership' show significant, but still comparatively small, L-coefficients (Miller and Levitin 1976: 129–133; Miller *et al.* 1976: 774/5). In respect to the short-term effects of these and related variables Miller and Levitin (1976: 132) state: 'As in virtually all of the presidential elections of the previous twenty years, the *direct* relationship of position in the social structure to voting behavior provided negligible additional insight into the nature of *short-term influences* affecting the vote.' The well-documented exception to the rule is the Kennedy election of 1960 where religion exerted a significant short-term effect upon the vote (Converse 1966).

Other variables analysed here deal primarily with short-lived but strongly politicized attitudes and evaluations. As a consequence their L- and S-coefficients are rather high. This is particularly true for such short-term factors as candidate-orientation and issue-competence. The parallels with American findings are evident. It should be pointed out, however, that in American normal vote analyses, again, the S-coefficients by far exceeded the L-coefficients while the opposite is true for the German political system (Boyd 1972: 448; Miller and Levitin 1976: 134ff., 147ff.).

The differences between German and American effect coefficients, which also can be found for more generalized attitudes towards politics and society (Falter and

TABLE 9. Mean Effects of Selected Variable Groups

Variable Group	No. of Items	L	S
Demography and Social Structure	13	6.1	1.6
Political Involvement	6	2.0	1.9
Political Participation	13	1.1	1.1
Political Efficacy	3	2.6	1.9
Political Environment	4	1.3	0.7
Attitudes Towards the Political System	17	6.6	2.0
Candidate Evaluations	12	15.3	3.6
Government, Parties and Coalitions	14	14.2	3.9
Political Issues	17	20.1	4.8

Source: Condensed from Tables 3.1–3.9 from Falter and Rattinger 1982; figures represent arithmetic means of average item-effects calculated by means of the original Boyd formulae for S and L

Rattinger 1982: 64ff.), indicate how much stronger candidate and issue orientations in Germany are determined along party lines. These phenomena should be interpreted as a consequence of the substantially higher organizational and ideological formation of the German party system. Groupings strongly rooted in the socio-political cleavage system do penetrate the public sector down to the community level much more intensely in West Germany than in the United States. The political parties in West Germany still represent a blend of catch-all and ideologically orientated parties. In comparison to Republicans and Democrats they are characterized by a rather high programmatic visibility and distinctiveness. Positions on single issues and appraisals of political competence, therefore, display a strong disposition towards long-term polarization as the high German L-coefficients of these variables clearly indicate.

In contrast to the differences in the L-coefficients the German and American short-term effects of candidate and issue orientations are quite similar. Nevertheless in both political cultures the values of L and S tend to be positively associated: '. . . with some notable exceptions, previously politicized issues are the ones that get activated for and used by the voter during the campaign' (Brody and Page 1972: 452). This correlation implies, moreover, that political topics such as 'preferred coalition', 'preferred chancellor', 'issue competence' etc. not only exhibited considerable long-term but also strong short-term influences upon the 1980 German Federal election.

In sum, we have found in the above section that there are significant differences of short-term and long-term effects between various groups of variables. Furthermore, we have discovered that despite the lower long-term coefficients in America and somewhat less clear-cut short-term influences in Germany the same patterns of influence seem to apply in both countries. In the next paragraphs we will analyse the impact of some of the more important short-term variables on the 1980 election.

It should be pointed out that in the following normal vote graphs the expected and the observed vote within the categories may be systematically biased. The mean observed vote of the two coalition parties is about 56 per cent while their actual

share of the vote was 54.1 per cent. This difference is caused by slightly inaccurate correction factors for voting intentions due to the *very* strong bias in favour of the SPD in 1980. The mean expected vote for the two coalition parties in the following graphs is about 54 per cent, i.e. the value of the Social-Liberal normal vote. As demonstrated above this value may be overestimated by some percentage points (perhaps four or so). Since both sources of error exert the same amount of bias within all categories of the variables under consideration our substantive results should not be seriously endangered by these differences. In 'true', i.e. accurate, normal vote graphs the observed values should shrink about two percentage points on average while the expected values should diminish by an unknown but probably much higher amount. The direction of the association between short-term influences and the outcome of the 1980 election should be unaffected by such alterations; its strength, however, might be somewhat underestimated here.

3.4 Coalition Preferences and Candidate Orientations

The two leading candidates were Helmut Schmidt (SPD) and Franz Josef Strauss (CSU). The opinions within the electorate about the latter were strongly polarized while the former as the incumbent did not stir much controversy about his political abilities and democratic virtues. About 27 per cent of the respondents declared themselves to be strongly opposed to Strauss (−5 at an eleven point thermometer). Only 14 per cent displayed strong sympathies (+5) towards the leader of the CSU. In comparison, Schmidt fared much better: He was strongly disliked by only three per cent of the electorate while 35 per cent expressed strong support for his candidacy. A mere 5 per cent of the electorate expressed neither likes nor dislikes for the candidates.

The normal vote analysis of the candidate thermometers reveals that Strauss did repel a great number of voters. On the other hand, our figures show that he also won additional voters for the CDU/CSU. Among those who expressed moderate to
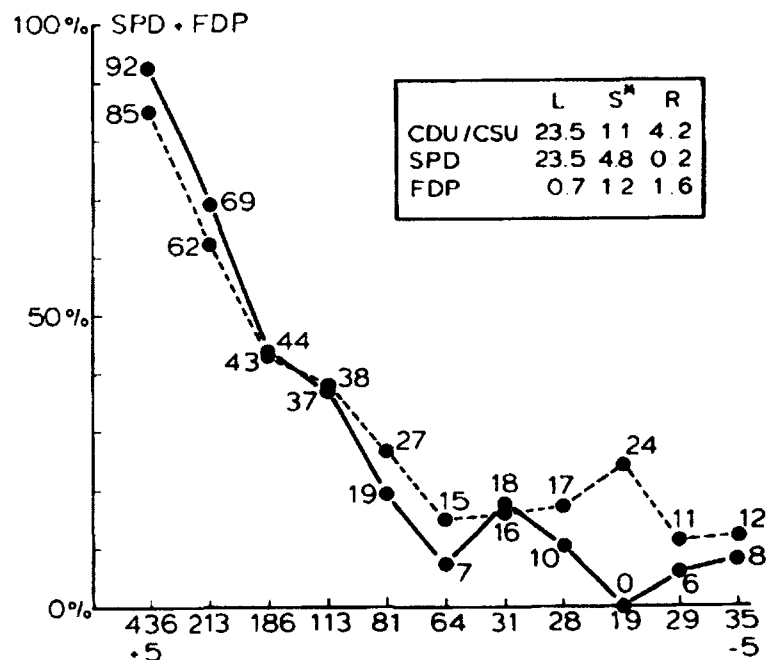

Figure 3. Schmidt-Thermometer

strong sympathies towards Strauss (+3 to +5 on the thermometer) the two Christian parties won a considerably greater number of voters than could be expected on the basis of party identification alone. Among the other voters who expressed only a slight, a neutral or a negative attitude *vis-à-vis* Franz Josef Strauss the observed CDU percentage fell considerably below the expected level (Figure 4).

Essentially the same is true for Helmut Schmidt and his party. The chancellor, however, was able to stimulate considerably more positive and much less negative attitudes than Franz Josef Strauss. As a consequence he managed to win more than twice as many additional voters in excess of the normal vote of his party in the highest positive category of the candidate thermometer than Strauss for the CDU/CSU. In the strongest negative category the difference between the two candidates is even more striking: 2.7 per cent of those voters who under normal circumstances, i.e. with a less controversial candidate, should have voted for the CDU/CSU, did prefer another party in 1980. The analogous losses of the SPD in the same category of the Schmidt thermometer amounted to a mere 0.1 per cent.

The variable 'preferred chancellor' shows comparable results. Among those who favoured Franz Josef Strauss as chancellor, the two Christian parties won a good deal more votes than could theoretically be expected on the basis of party identification. In the much stronger category of voters who preferred Helmut Schmidt as chancellor the CDU/CSU lagged approximately 10 per cent behind their expected share of the vote. It should be pointed out that a substantial number of CDU/CSU-identifiers belonged to this category. Finally, similar results are obtained among those who favoured neither Strauss nor Schmidt: two-thirds of the members of this group identified themselves as CDU/CSU-partisans but only 53 per cent voted for one of these two parties.

It is remarkable, on the other hand, that 14 per cent of those who favoured Franz Josef Strauss as chancellor were partisans of either the SPD or the FDP but, consequently, did not vote for the coalition. These findings clearly demonstrate that
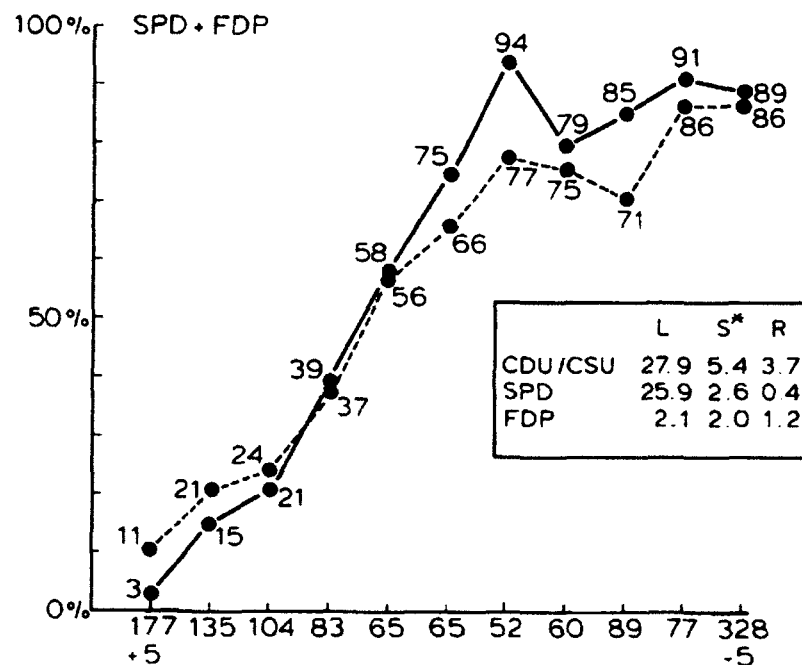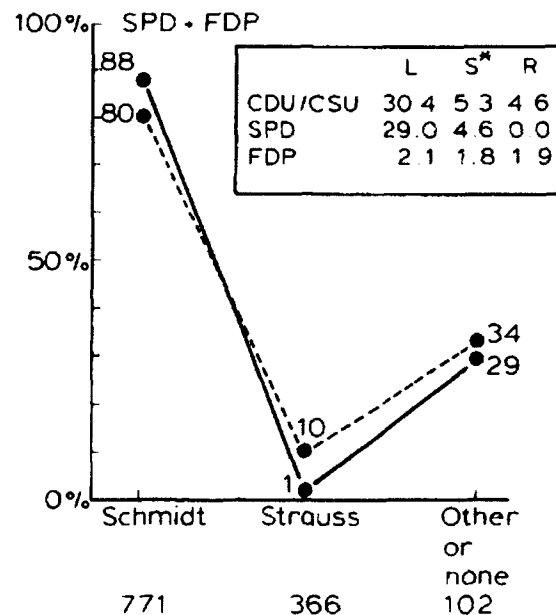

FIGURE 4. Strauss-Thermometer

FIGURE 5. Preferred Chancellor

the outcome of the 1980 German election was strongly influenced by the short-term factor 'candidate orientation'.

Some additional evidence may be gained by looking at the variable 'satisfaction with preferred party's top candidate'. Among those who were predominantly satisfied with the candidate of their favourite party were 42 per cent CDU/CSU partisans and 56 per cent adherents of the two coalition parties. More than two thirds of the few respondents who were somewhat dissatisfied with their party's top candidate were CDU/CSU-identifiers. Among the latter almost 10 per cent voted for other parties. Quite similar discrepancies between the expected and the observed vote can be found among SPD- and FDP-partisans who did not agree with Helmut Schmidt or Hans-Dietrich Genscher as leading candidates of their favoured party.

In sum, these findings demonstrate that the candidacy of Franz Josef Strauss scared away a certain number of CDU/CSU-partisans. Nevertheless the losses resulting from antipathy towards Strauss seem to have been much smaller than is generally assumed by the public. According to our results the net losses, adjusted for the (smaller) gains stimulated by Strauss amount to approximately 1 per cent of the valid votes or 2 per cent of the expected vote of CDU and CSU.[11]

3.5 Issue Orientations and Ascribed Competence

The outcome of the 1980 election, of course, was not influenced by candidate orientations and coalition preferences alone. As discussed above, issue orientations exerted a considerable short-term effect on the voters' decision too. They are defined here by differing ascriptions of competence to the competing parties on a variety of topics. Our choice of the issues analysed was governed by the endeavour to replicate an earlier study of Klingemann and Taylor (1977) on the German Federal election of 1976. This study, however, is based on quite different methods of analysis and techniques of variance decomposition (Rattinger and Falter 1982).

In order to determine the mean effects of issue orientations upon the 1980 vote we created an index of issue competence consisting of topics from eleven different
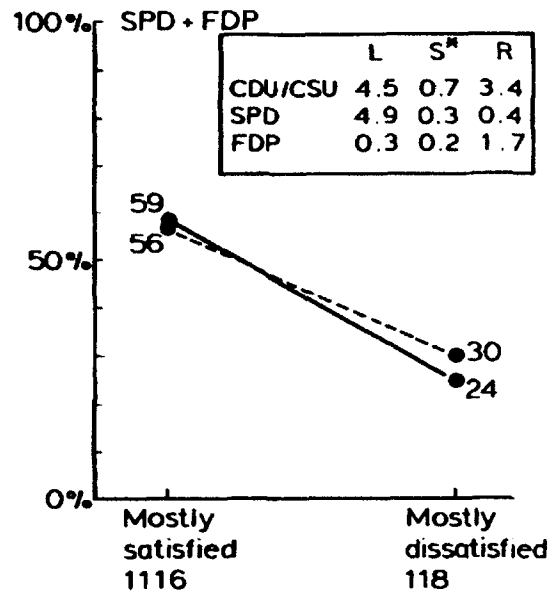
Figure 6. Satisfaction with top-candidate of preference party

issue areas. These areas were: environmental protection, tax-cuts, job security, old age insurance, training facilities for adolescents, law and order, relations with the USA, reunification of Germany, relations to Soviet Russia, protection from a Soviet invasion and price stability. The seven Klingemann-Taylor issues form part of this index. The effect coefficients of a modified index consisting only of the seven Klingemann-Taylor issues correspond almost perfectly to the coefficients obtained by our own eleven-issues index.

The normal vote analysis of our index yields a relatively high L-factor while the S-component is at best medium high. Nevertheless, a clear short-term effect of the index becomes manifest if one looks at the differences between the observed and the expected vote. The actual vote of the two coalition parties, for example, is significantly above their categorical normal vote among voters with predominant SPD-ascriptions in issue competence. The opposite is true for those with predominant CDU/CSU-ascriptions. Exactly the same pattern, with the sign reversed, of course, can be observed in the case of the two Christian parties and their adherents.

From an inspection of the marginals we can ascertain that the SPD in general was considered more competent than the CDU/CSU or the small Liberal party. Only on the law and order issue and on relations with the United States were the two Christian parties regarded as competent by more respondents than the SPD. In respect to the tax-cut issue, SPD and CDU/CSU ended up about equal. In all other areas the Social Democrats were regarded by voters as being more competent than the CDU and CSU.[12]

The small Liberal party, finally, was estimated to be more competent than its competitors by only a tiny fraction of the electorate: a mere 1.5 per cent of the respondents nominated them as the most competent party in eight or more issue areas. And as little as 3.9 per cent of those respondents who gave competence ascriptions in all of the eleven issue areas regarded the FDP as being most competent in at least four areas. The effect of issue orientations, however, is of particular importance among the FDP voters. For those respondents who ascribed issue competence in less than four (and typically none) of the issue areas to the

SPD + FDP

	L	S*	R
CDU/CSU	19.2	3.8	4 6
SPD	19 8	5.3	0 1
FDP	1 9	3.5	1 7

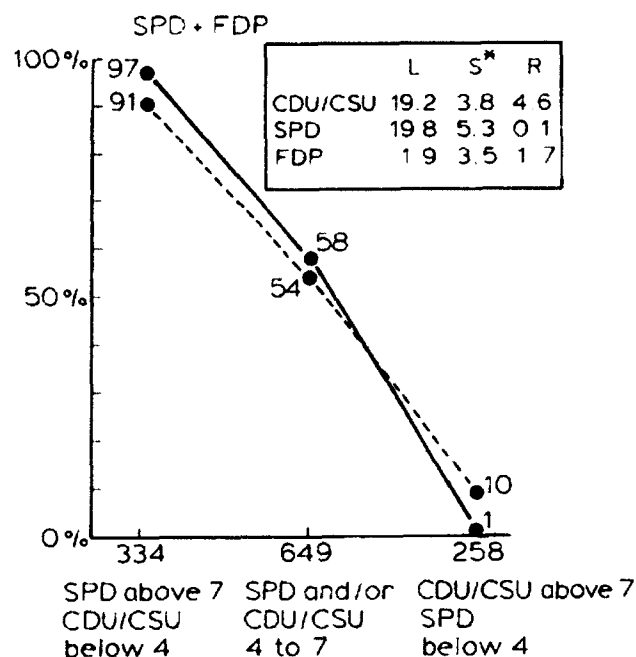| SPD above 7	SPD and/or	CDU/CSU above 7
CDU/CSU	CDU/CSU	SPD
below 4	4 to 7	below 4

FIGURE 7. Competences ascribed to CDU/CSU and SPD

smallest one of the parliamentary parties there existed virtually no differences between their expected and their actual vote. There is a dramatic difference between observed and expected vote, on the other hand, among those few voters who ascribed issue competence to the FDP in at least four areas. The long-term effect, however, turns out to be negligible as is always the case with the FDP.

Among the FDP-voters of 1980 the share of persons whose voting behaviour was heavily influenced by their issue orientation is much higher than among SPD and CDU/CSU-voters. If one defines 'rational voting' as that type of behaviour which corresponds to one's issue preferences, the FDP-backers of 1980 were certainly the most rational members of the electorate. This fact, however, not only strengthens but it also endangers that party. If the political tides turn against it the FDP can easily drop below the 5 per cent mark. In case of stronger, negative short-term influences the 'rational' voters who cannot be regarded as permanent

100% FDP

	L	S	R
CDU/CSU	0.2	2 8	1 3
SPD	0 8	1 2	0 4
FDP	0.9	1.6	1 7

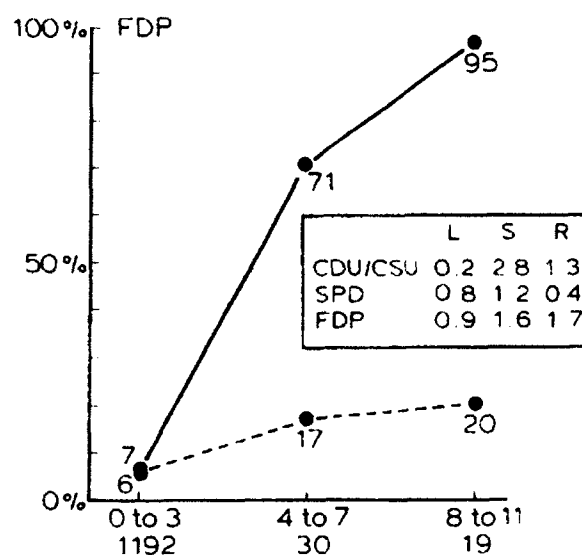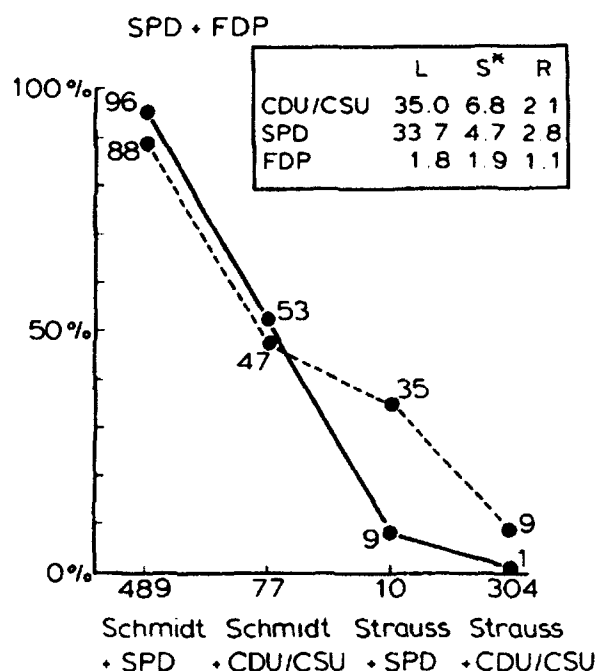| 0 to 3	4 to 7	8 to 11
1192	30	19

FIGURE 8. Competences ascribed to FDP

FIGURE 9. Chancellor preference and competence at keeping prices stable

FDP-partisans may withdraw their votes from the party as readily as they have given them. The FDP thus has to be in a state of permanent alert about the danger of failing to pass the 5 per cent-threshold of the German electoral law even in Federal elections. A good part of its policy within coalitions seems to be influenced by suppressed misgivings about its precarious situation *vis-à-vis* the voter.

In sum, the normal vote analysis of the index of issue orientations has shown that
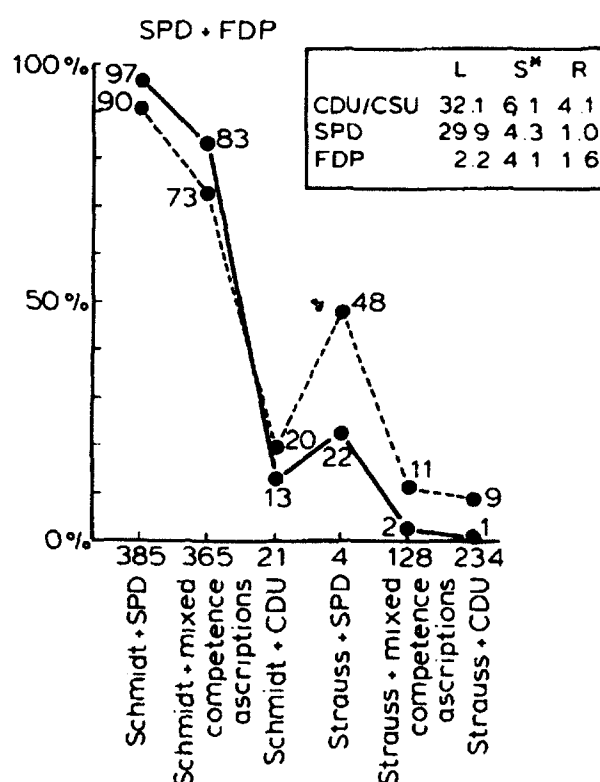

FIGURE 10. Chancellor preference and issue competence (seven issues according to Klingemann and Taylor)

differing competence ascriptions to the three (or four) parliamentary parties have exerted a clear short-term effect upon the 1980 vote which in the case of the FDP proved to be amazingly influential.

3.6 The Combined Effects of Issue and Candidate Orientations

It may be interesting to measure the effects of issues and candidates on the vote after controlling for the other factor. For that purpose we have created two combination variables where we cross-classify candidate preference and party competence. The latter is operationalized in the first case by the indicator of fighting inflation and in the second case by our issue index which now, however, only comprises the seven Klingemann-Taylor issues.

Both combination variables are characterized by very high long-term effects and medium to strong short-term influences. The effects of the two variables are hence very similar as can be seen by an inspection of their two normal vote-graphs where even the distribution patterns of expected and observed votes in both cases coincide. The partialling out of candidate preference or price stability clearly demonstrates the dominance of candidate orientation over issue competence as has been shown at the end of chapter 2.

The combination of candidate preference and the seven Klingemann-Taylor issues reveals that the two Christian parties consistently managed to win more than their expected share of the votes where they were dominant either in respect to their Chancellor candidate or in respect to their issue competence. The same holds true, with the signs reversed, for the two parties of the Social-Liberal coalition. The FDP finally was able to profit disproportionately from short-term effects, a result which once again underlines the 'rationality' of the Liberal voters as defined above.

4. Summary and Outlook

We believe we have demonstrated that the analytic instrument of normal vote analysis can be transferred to the political system of West Germany. Because of the very high turnout in Germany and the existence of official data on the electoral behaviour of the two sexes and different age categories, some of the calculation problems could be solved more elegantly for the German case than for the United States.

Moreover, in the preparatory stage of our analysis we discovered that the usual effect coefficients developed by Boyd (1972) may be inflated in certain situations. For that reason we have developed a somewhat modified procedure for computing short-term coefficients.

Applying the tools of normal vote analysis to the German Federal election of 1980 leads to plausible new insights into the process of aggregate electoral decision-making. In West Germany the influence of the political cleavage structure is still strongly mirrored by the distribution of party identifications in the population and social groupings. Accordingly, the effect of long-term factors, as defined by the distribution of party identifications, in relation to the short-term factors is much larger in the Federal Republic than in the US. In other words: short-term elements in the political situation proved to be much less influential for the outcome of the 1980 election than the traditional partisan attachments. Stronger influences upon the vote were only exerted by voters' assessments of the parties' competence in the social and economic areas and by their candidate preferences.

Since these types of short-term influences are highly correlated it might be useful to decompose their relative influence in a quantitative way. We therefore introduced to normal vote analysis the idea of statistically controlling for the effects of third variables. Thus it is possible to show that the effects of candidate preference by far outweighed the effects of issue competence. We are not in a position to prove that the CDU and CSU lost the 1980 election because of their candidate for Chancellor. The net losses which can be attributed to Strauss are indeed quite small. But unquestionably both parties would have fared much better, other things being equal, with a more positively valued leading candidate.

Notes

1. Data for the September 1980 wave of the 'ZDF-Politbarometer' (sponsored by the Second German TV network) were made available by the Central Archive for Empirical Social Research, Cologne (Study no. 1053).

2. These data, too, were supplied by the Central Archive (Study nos. 0635-7, 0823-5).

3. 'Bundestagswahl 1969' (Central Archive Study no. 426-7).

4. US turnout parameters reported by Converse (1966) vary from 26 to 86 per cent. Miller's (1979) replication with data from the Sixties yields values between 46 and 86 per cent.

5. Moreover, Converse's regression approach for deriving normal vote parameters has been severely criticized by Achen (1979) who demonstrates that such estimates will generally be biased and inconsistent.

6. According to German law, voters in a random sample of voting districts receive ballots that bear information on their sex and age. In 1980 this was done in 1,863 out of a total of about 57,000 districts with roughly 1.3 million registered voters (i.e. 3.4 per cent of the electorate). By comparing the results in those districts with the voter registers it is possible with great precision to assess turnout and voting behaviour among sex and age groups. A summary of the 1980 findings is 'Wählerverhalten bei der Bundestagswahl 1980 nach Geschlecht und Alter: Ergebnisse der repräsentativen Wahlstatistik' in: *Wirtschaft und Statistik* 1, (1981) 15–26.

7. In Bundestag elections each voter has two votes. Throughout this paper, second votes ('Zweitstimmen') are analysed as they alone determine the number of seats won by the parties.

8. A FORTRAN program developed by Hans Rattinger computes adjusted observed and expected voting for any subdivision of a sample, based upon the 1969 to 1976 normal vote parameters reported in this contribution. As input the program requires the distributions of party identifications and of voting intentions and the number of respondents for each subgroup of the sample.

9. This also seems to have been done by Miller and Levitin (1976) in their extensive normal vote analyses. While the normal vote diagrams presented, for example, by Boyd (1972), Brody and Page (1972), Miller, Miller, Raine and Brown (1976), Re Pass (1976) or Miller (1979) always contain two numbers of cases for each category of each analytical variable, Miller and Levitin report only one. Since they offer no explanation, we can only guess that they have, in fact, applied the modification described here without saying so.

10. The program referred to in note 8 computes observed and expected voting and L and S for CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, the government coalition, and averages for the government vs. opposition parties.

11. These values are based on differences between observed and expected vote of CDU/CSU partisans in connection with the variable 'candidate preference'. There is, however, no information available on how many of the 'independents' and the adherents of other parties might have voted for the two C-parties in case of another, less controversial chancellor candidate. The effect of the Strauss-candidacy might well be increased if those other groups of voters were taken into consideration.

12. Whether its statistical value equals its analytical elegance, however, has to be seriously questioned and will be investigated elsewhere (Rattinger and Falter 1982; Achen 1979).

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