

Polling after Fascism: Opinion Research, Mass Society, and Democratic Fragility in the
Federal Republic of Germany, 1945-1960

By

Sonja Gammeltoft Ostrow

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

History

August 11, 2017

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Helmut Walser Smith, Ph.D.

David Blackbourn, Ph.D.

Sarah Igo, Ph.D.

Jennifer Fay, Ph.D.

Copyright © 2017 by Sonja Gammeltoft Ostrow
All Rights Reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
Introduction: Polling, Democracy, and German History.....	1
Chapter	
I. Transatlantic Influences, Mass Psychology, and the Making of Modern Opinion Research.....	24
The State of the Art in Germany before 1945	28
American Opinion Research and Lazarsfeld's Legacy	39
Deciphering the Masses	49
II. Polling under Occupation: Bringing Public Opinion Research to Germany.....	63
Early Experiments	67
Envisioning the Postwar World	76
The German Challenge	81
Polling Germans	89
Making Sense of Surveys and their Effects	101
III. The Negative Consensus: Making the Case for Opinion Research, 1948-1951.....	105
The Occupiers and the Institutes: Opinion Research and Democracy	110
Allensbach, Emnid, and the Selling of Native Opinion Research	123
Building the Profession: The 1951 Weinheim Conference	136
IV. From the Inside Out: The Allensbach and Emnid Polls and the Contours of West German Political Culture	150
The Human Work of Polling	153
Methods, Media, and <i>Meinungsfreiheit</i>	162
Deciphering the German Nation	174
Polls and International Comparison	182
Democrats in the Marketplace	193
Polls and Political Culture	198

V. The Inescapable Mass? The Frankfurt School and the Group Dynamics of Opinion Formation	200
Empirical Experiments in the United States and the Return to Germany	204
The Purpose of the Group Experiment	214
Process, Methods, and Discoveries	221
Reception and Afterlife	231
VI. Space for Debate: Critics of the Polls and the Stirrings of a West German Public Sphere	239
Early Critics in the Press and Academia	241
Power and Promise: Later Critiques of the Polls	247
Counter-sites of Public Opinion Expression	261
Conclusion: Surveys, Risk Societies, and the Emergence of a Democratic Public in West Germany.....	277
REFERENCES	287

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The process of researching and writing a dissertation is at times an intensely solitary one. And yet I simply could not have done it without the generous support of a village of people and institutions, beginning with the faculty, students, and staff of Vanderbilt University. I am indebted first and foremost to my advisor, Helmut Smith, whose elegant writing and innovative approach to historical problems has inspired me from the beginning to work harder to investigate the big questions of German history. His probing questions and critiques on countless drafts of this dissertation have improved it immeasurably. I would never have pursued this topic without the inspiring example and encouragement of Sarah Igo and her fascinating seminar on the history of the human sciences. Michael Bess has not only enthusiastically supported my research, he has provided me with a model of engaged teaching that I hope to emulate one day. Thanks go also to David Blackbourn and Jennifer Fay, for their incisive criticism.

I am lucky to call the other members of my graduate school cohort (and their families) friends as well as colleagues, and I am grateful to them for their support over the course of this long journey. Jason Bates and G.L. Black, Tizoc Chavez, Michel Chresfield, Alex and Adrienne Jacobs, Ashish Koul, and Lance and Lauren Ingwersen have helped me to enjoy graduate school even in the midst of the many stressful moments. Also at Vanderbilt, Jeremy DeWaal has been a generous mentor to me, and an excellent guide to the wonders of Cologne. Cassandra Painter, Dani Picard, and Carolyn Taratko have offered helpful feedback, and the friendship of Mario Rewers and Kara Schultz has helped make graduate school life more pleasant. Friends from beyond the academic world have also been amazing supporters as I pursued my doctorate many hundreds of miles away. I am especially

thankful for Kim Johnson and Ashliegh Buck, who have been like sisters to me and have believed in me more than I believed in myself.

Research for this dissertation was generously funded by the International Dissertation Research Fellowship of the Social Science Research Council. This project profited immensely from the flexibility afforded by the SSRC fellowship, as well as the intellectual stimulation provided through the SSRC community and in particular the 2015 IDRF Workshop in Savannah, Georgia. I also owe thanks to the organizers and fellow attendees of the 2014 Berlin Program Summer Workshop on “Virtual Germans” at the Freie Universität Berlin and the 2015 Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar sponsored by the German Historical Institute for their thoughtful feedback on portions of my dissertation. The probing questions of attendees of the Vanderbilt German History Seminar helped me to sharpen a key chapter of the dissertation and rethink other portions of it. Benjamin Ziemann and Jonathan Wiesen both provided stimulating feedback and suggestions about key sources and approaches at different stages in the writing process.

While researching this dissertation, I traveled to multiple locations within Germany and the United States. I am grateful to the archivists at the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, the fantastic Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach am Neckar, the Freiburg Universitätsarchiv, the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, and the Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt. Archivists from the Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach shared several documents from the papers of the Neumanns upon my request. Christa Sonnenfeld at the archive of the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt was immensely helpful in tracking down documents related to the Frankfurt School’s Group Experiment. At the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn, Ulrike Krüsmann generously assisted me in locating the audio tapes from various meetings of the

Mittwochsgespräche in Cologne. These last two archival collections were key in helping me identify the stories and questions at the heart of this dissertation, and I am exceedingly thankful for the opportunity to explore them. Closer to home, I am grateful to the archivists at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, the Butler Library of Columbia University, and the Mudd Manuscript Library of Princeton University.

My husband Greg has been incredibly understanding and supportive during the long years of graduate school and dissertation writing. His love and faith in my ability to complete this project helped me to stay the course even when the self-doubt was overwhelming. Our son Otis arrived just in time to help with final edits. It is difficult to say which birthing process was more demanding, but I am thankful for the lessons I have learned over the gestation of both my dissertation and my son.

I owe the greatest debt to my parents, Winston Ostrow and Lise Lotte Gammeltoft. From the beginning they have inspired me to greet the world with curiosity and an open mind, and exposed me early on to the power of words and the importance of historical understanding. Both supported me through the peaks and valleys of my time in the United States and in Germany, and celebrated with me when I made archival discoveries or arrived at a new analytical perspective. They both read multiple drafts of introductions, chapters, and conclusions, and listened without judgment as I rambled on about opinion research and democracy. Above all others, they made this work possible.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Denazification cartoon, 1948.....	89
2. "Meinungsforschung' oder 'Lieschen Müller macht die deutsche Politik"	252
3. "Die demoskopischen Reiter"	252
4. "Die demoskopischen Wetterfrösche"	252

INTRODUCTION

POLLING, DEMOCRACY, AND GERMAN HISTORY

After most polls failed to correctly predict the winner of the U.S. presidential election in fall 2016, many media observers decried the practice of public opinion polling as a whole, as well as the primacy of empirical data that polls assume. Is public opinion polling dead? Hardly, but it has certainly fallen from the grace it had achieved in the second half of the twentieth century. In the wake of recriminations about who and what was to blame for American pollsters' apparent inability to uncover the true desires and concerns of voters, however, the broader, international history of public opinion polling has been lost. In fact, the groundbreaking pollsters of the 1930s and 1940s, including George Gallup and Elmo Roper, did not see election forecasting as the culmination or best possible application of their work. Rather, election predictions were a publicity tool, and a way to (hopefully) demonstrate the accuracy of their polling apparatus. Gallup and Roper intended their polls to chart "the pulse of democracy" *between* elections, and claimed they gave a voice to the people who would otherwise be lost in the mass or relegated to the dusty corners of society by elites.¹

Gallup and Roper's methodology and their vision for the function of polling in a modern mass democracy increasingly gained favor with policy makers facing the challenges bequeathed by World War II. Opinion research quickly became a tool of armed

¹ As scholars have pointed out, such language glossed over the power relations at play in opinion research, as well as the selective definition of "the people" that Gallup and Roper often applied when seeking "the public opinion of America." J. Michael Hogan, "George Gallup and the Rhetoric of Scientific Democracy," *Communication Monographs*, 64:2 (1997): 161-179.

forces abroad, and eventually a cornerstone of occupation policy in key areas occupied by the western Allies. In the first decades after the war, no zone of occupation was more sensitive than Germany. Public opinion research, it was hoped, would help the Allies, and eventually native Germans, keep an eye on “the German question,” and encourage full participation in a western-style liberal democracy.

This dissertation examines how public opinion polling was introduced to Germany and eventually became integrated into West German foreign relations, internal governance, and political culture. It has two interrelated goals: to understand how public opinion polling became an indispensable source of data about the German population for observers both within West Germany and abroad; and to provide a new lens through which to make sense of Germany’s transition to a stable parliamentary democracy. As West Germany fashioned an identity for itself in opposition to communist East Germany and the Nazi Third Reich, as well as to the seemingly chaotic democracy of the Weimar Republic, public opinion polls were a tool used by multiple parties to monitor this identity and transmit a particular narrative to global observers. The deployment of polls in the service first of western occupation authorities and later the West German state eventually had the effect of opening up a space for questioning the nature of public opinion, which had formerly been viewed as stemming entirely from educated elites or invested in the *Führer*. Public opinion polling after 1945 did not single-handedly produce democratically-minded West Germans, but, sometimes in spite of the actual goals of its practitioners, it helped to promote the idea that the foundation of a good government and society was the willingness of individuals to share their opinions and assess those of their fellow citizens from a neutral and “scientific” perspective.

The rise of public opinion research in West Germany is the most striking example of a new way of viewing and understanding “the masses” in western Europe after World War II. Empirical advances in the social sciences in the early to mid-twentieth century granted governments and administrators, as well as consumer marketers, a newfound optimism in their ability to assess large numbers of people. Survey units of the western Allies eagerly promoted opinion research in their respective zones in Germany, with the United States demonstrating a singular commitment to survey research as a means by which to maintain a watchful eye on the German population while also spreading democratic values more broadly. Methods for counting, classifying, and assessing what had formerly appeared to many to be an amorphous, indecipherable mass emboldened their practitioners with the notion that they might even be able to use this knowledge to direct individual choices and the development of interests and beliefs.

In West Germany, this optimism was firmly bound up with the methods, rather than the subjects, of modern opinion research. Most German opinion researchers in the first two decades after 1945 viewed those they polled with relative pessimism, fearing that they had neither the requisite enthusiasm for democracy nor the necessary political literacy to rise to the challenges of a new era. A major selling point of public opinion research for the western Allies and the office of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was its ability to locate antidemocratic elements of public opinion before they became a threat to the state or an international public relations disaster. The most prominent opinion research institutes of the immediate postwar period, the Institut für Demoskopie at Allensbach and the Emnid Institute, marketed their services to the young government of the Federal Republic by emphasizing the need for West Germans to manage their own population rather than allow

foreign powers like the western Allies sole access to the potentially unsettling views of West German citizens. They also invoked the failures of politicians during the Weimar Republic to properly assess the mood of the people. The Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt (popularly referred to as the Frankfurt School) developed its own ambitious opinion research project in the early 1950s in large part out of fear of lingering fascist elements in the German population.

Despite this overriding concern for the fragility of West German democracy, the gradual institutionalization of public opinion research after 1945 eventually had the unexpected effect of encouraging truly public conversation and debate, a development which reached its culmination in the protest movements of the late 1960s. The mid-1950s witnessed a flourishing of public forums, which became opportunities to practice a more congenial and conversational mode of public debate than that demanded in earlier periods of German history.² By the early 1960s, many academics felt the need to make a case against public opinion research, and their arguments often hinged upon assumptions about who was qualified to assert “public opinion,” as well as the validity of the methodology used by most opinion research institutes.

This study distinguishes itself from earlier work on public opinion research in both its frame and method. Previous historical examinations of opinion research in West Germany have focused on the way in which polling influenced the electoral strategies of West German political parties and the political reporting of West German television in the

² Nina Verheyen, *Diskussionslust: Eine Kulturgeschichte des 'besseren Arguments' in Westdeutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

1960s and 1970s.³ In contrast, I am more interested in how public opinion research was invested with utopian as well as practical value from the earliest days of its use by the western Allies, and how such research in turn conveyed contemporary understandings of democracy and the West German nation itself. I also aim to uncover the contingent beginnings of empirical public opinion research in West Germany, which brought together an unlikely network of men and women who worked to professionalize and institutionalize empirical research. To this end, I place special emphasis on the formative years of 1945-1951, which saw an intensive effort by the western Allies, particularly the United States, to establish opinion polling in western Germany. Even more importantly, during these years Germans on both the left (such as Theodor Adorno of the Frankfurt School) and right (such as Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann of the Allensbach Institute) attempted to join forces and consolidate the field of empirical opinion research. I also eschew the norms of most histories of West German empirical social research by tracing its roots back to the early work of Austrian-American social scientist Paul Lazarsfeld and including the reconstituted Frankfurt School as a central actor.

This project is not, however, an exhaustive study of public opinion research in West Germany after World War II, but rather an examination of West German political culture

³ The most significant work on the history of public opinion research in West Germany is Anja Kruke's wide-ranging survey, *Demoskopie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Meinungsforschung, Parteien und Medien, 1949-1990* (Düsseldorf, Droste Verlag, 2007). Kruke is particularly interested in how opinion research institutes worked with political parties in West Germany and how their work was eventually appropriated by the media (especially television) as a news-generating device. This means that the focal point of her research is the 1960s and 1970s. Similarly, Peter Hoeres in his *Außenpolitik und Öffentlichkeit: Massenmedien, Meinungsforschung und Arkanpolitik in den deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen von Erhard bis Brandt* (Munich: Oldernbourg Verlag, 2013) amply demonstrates the ways in which the West German media used opinion polls progressively in the 1960s, but he devotes only a short section to analyzing the institutionalization of polling during the 1950s under Konrad Adenauer. While I agree that the developments of the 1960s and 1970s were important, my study aims to unearth the practical and ideological origins of the particular path that opinion research took in West Germany by focusing on the late 1940s and 1950s.

through the lens of the discipline of public opinion research. The historiographical frame of this dissertation thus extends into the history of mass democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany. There are two dominant strands of scholarship on this topic. An older strand of the literature emphasizes the reintegration of Nazi-era officials during Adenauer's tenure as Chancellor and the persistence of authoritarian tendencies in political and social life throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. One of the earliest exponents of this argument was the sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf. Although the "revolution" of National Socialism had swept away many of the barriers to liberal democracy by doing away with traditional social hierarchies, Dahrendorf and other scholars argued that many aspects of authoritarian or traditional German culture remained in West Germany after 1945.⁴ Based on this narrative, many historians have described the Adenauer years as a "restoration."⁵

A second strand of the scholarship on democratization in West Germany agrees that Nazi and authoritarian influences remained throughout the 1950s, but contends that the roots of a democratic culture nevertheless were put in place in the late 1940s and 1950s, although this culture did not fully blossom until much later. Often scholarship in this vein emphasizes the work of German intellectuals, particularly those who had lived in exile in the United States during World War II, in establishing the foundation of the Federal Republic's parliamentary democracy.⁶ Of course, democracy is not merely the product of

⁴ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1967).

⁵ For a damning account of the reintegration of former Nazis into political life in the Adenauer era, see Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

⁶ Among others, see A. Dirk Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Arnd Bauerkämper, Konrad Jarausch, and Marcus Payk, eds. *Demokratiewunder: Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945-1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005); Sean Forner, *German Intellectuals and the Challenge of*

ideas, but of actions and institutions, and two scholars in particular, Konrad Jarausch and Axel Schildt, have done much to illuminate the transformations of the postwar period at the level of everyday life. In his *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*, Jarausch analyzes the “learning process” through which Germans were “recivilized” after the enormous civilizational break represented by the Holocaust. By largely discarding the remnants of militarism, nationalism, and monopoly capitalism that had marked German culture up to 1945, Jarausch argues, West Germans gradually built a “culture of civility” and the basis for a “postnational nation.”⁷ Axel Schildt’s work emphasizes a progressive modernization and westernization of the Federal Republic, analyzing the changing social relationships, tastes, and domestic norms of West Germans increasingly influenced by American products and practices.⁸ Schildt documents a transformation of society during the 1950s, buoyed by the growing economy of the Federal Republic.⁹ However, both Schildt and Jarausch suggest that while social and cultural changes were underway in the 1950s, political transformation is only visible by the mid-1960s. And while Jarausch argues that a process of “collective rethinking” was spurred early on by Allied denazification efforts, he doesn’t explain how styles of communication between government and the people changed.

A central premise of this dissertation is that opinion polls are both themselves cultural constructions and potential influences on behavior and political culture; both

Democratic Renewal: Culture and Politics after 1945 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and James Chappel, “Catholicism and the Economy of Miracles in West Germany, 1920-1960,” *New German Critique* 126, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2015): 9-40.

⁷ Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁸ Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten. Freizeit, Massenmedien und ‘Zeitgeist’ in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1995).

⁹ Axel Schildt, *Ankunft im Westen. Ein Essay zur Erfolgsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1999).

Jarausch and Schildt ignore this dimension of survey data in their analyses.¹⁰ Although both scholars draw on the results of opinion research to demonstrate gradual democratization and westernization, they rarely examine the production and dissemination of such polls, or the influence of the polls themselves on German public life.¹¹ Jarausch also writes briefly about the establishment of “a new, democratic public sphere” and the importance of such works as Jürgen Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. While Jarausch traces the origins of Habermas’s work to the emergence of a progressive media and literary scene, he does not address the more direct influence of the rise of public opinion research. More importantly, neither scholar considers closely the way in which the climate of public opinion in the Federal Republic was constructed and shaped through public opinion polling. After all, it was the practice of opinion polling itself which solidified freedom of opinion as one of the foundational aspects of a democratic public sphere.

In contrast, I propose to examine public opinion polls and the circumstances of their creation and reception as contributors to the processes of change within West Germany. Public opinion polling was not a magic bullet. Despite their claims about giving voice to the common man, many West German pollsters harbored understandings of the German people that were indeed more indicative of a restoration of pre-1945 thought patterns than of a progressive embrace of democracy. Nevertheless, the history of opinion polling demonstrates that the 1950s were not simply a period of reversion to authoritarian tendencies. The practice of public opinion polling gave concrete form to novel ideas about

¹⁰ Ian Hacking memorably termed the way that classifications and categories in turn shape the conceptions of the people to which they are applied “looping effects.” Ian Hacking, “The Looping Effects of Human Kinds,” in Dan Sperber, David Premack, and Ann James Premack, eds., *Causal Cognition: A Multi-disciplinary Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): 351-383.

¹¹ Opinion polls are the source for an entire section of Schildt’s examination of mass leisure in the 1950s. See Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten*, pp. 303-450.

the scientific management of the relationship between citizens and states that laid the foundation for a more democratic political culture. By examining the development of a public sphere of conversation and debate that evolved in tandem with shifts in the locus of and priority placed upon public opinion, I attempt to unearth the deeper cultural effects of the institutionalization of opinion research in West Germany. Understanding these impacts involves tracing the development of three interrelated themes: the scientific nature accorded to empirical opinion research to justify its existence in the Federal Republic; anxieties about mass society on the one hand, and mass surveillance on the other; and the evolution of democratic publics.

The first theme, the embrace of empirical opinion research as a scientific approach to social questions, was part of a global turn towards empirical, technocratic approaches to state problems that accelerated after World War I. “Experts” of all kinds had been moving into positions of authority by virtue of their proclaimed expertise since the late nineteenth century.¹² With increased funding from academic and commercial sources, a new generation of social scientists and journalists in the 1930s made rapid advances in data gathering and analysis techniques, which they applied to the study of human behavior and interaction. In the mid-1940s, many believed that empirical data, the essence of science, could help correct the excesses of National Socialism. Hard data, supporters of empirical research suggested, would do away with the biases and stereotypes that drove the ugliest and most destructive aspects of National Socialism. Even those German theorists who made their names by questioning the lessons of the Enlightenment, Theodor Adorno chief among

¹² The scholarship on expertise and professionalization has blossomed since the 1980s. See the essays in Thomas Haskell, ed., *The Authority of Experts: Studies in History and Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

them, argued after 1945 that in Germany there was a desperate need for empirical approaches to social questions. This embrace of a supposed methodological sophistication was married to a recognition of the right of every individual to express his or her opinions without fear of retribution. This combination made modern empirical opinion research seem to be a major departure from the “opinion research” undertaken in the Third Reich.

On the surface, the idea of public opinion as the foundation of democracy and civil society contrasted sharply with the conception of public opinion in dictatorships like the Third Reich. In the vision of Carl Schmitt, and in practice in National Socialist Germany, opinion could exist in public only in an acclamatory form. According to Schmitt, the people of a valid democratic state already shared a political identity, which the sovereign dictator embodied. The outcomes of the political process under that dictator would therefore be identical with the desires of his subjects.¹³ In the Third Reich, the Nazis extolled the will of the people, but in reality the regime worried about differences in opinion, especially ones that could eventually contribute to low morale. Both the Gestapo (the secret police) and the *Sicherheitsdienst* (the Security Service) originally were intended to root out enemies of the Reich, but their work soon transitioned into systematic surveillance of the general attitudes and opinions of all Germans. Between 1933 and 1944 the Gestapo and *Sicherheitsdienst* compiled hundreds of reports detailing the activities of various religious, political, and social groups in the Reich as well as the overall mood of the populace and reactions to specific party measures. Their subject was not truly public opinion, since public space was not available in the Third Reich for the airing of views opposed to the will of the *Führer*.

¹³ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Instead, they attempted to capture the popular opinions often expressed in private, and which frequently diverged from the party line.¹⁴

How did such efforts differ from the post-war work of occupation survey teams and opinion research institutes? Opinion researchers of the time would (and did) claim that their work fostered democracy by giving all people, regardless of economic background or social status, an opportunity to share their opinions and influence public policy in between elections. Yet opinion pollsters in Germany after 1945 did not always uphold the democratic principles that they claimed guided their work. For instance, the survey units of the American occupation forces rarely publicized their findings. Similarly, the contracts between the West German government and various research institutes typically specified that the Press and Information Office of the government retained the ability to limit publication of any and all poll results.¹⁵ By not displaying all poll results for the public to see, the occupation authorities, the Adenauer government, and the opinion researchers left themselves open to criticism about potential misuse of polls. Some commentators even argued that they used the polls against, rather than in the service of, the people.

To counteract such criticism, opinion researchers working in Germany after 1945 argued that it was their refined, scientific methodology that set their work apart from what had come before. The anonymity of poll respondents meant that opinions could not be traced to individuals. Representative and quota sampling were techniques designed to eliminate bias on the part of researchers and ensure that those polled reflected the makeup

¹⁴ Ian Kershaw has emphasized the distinction between public and popular opinion in his examination of everyday responses to the National Socialist state. Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 4.

¹⁵ See, for example, the first contract between Emnid and the Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BAK) B 145/1568, Tgb. 4670/50.

of the country as a whole. Claims about the “scientific” and unbiased nature of public opinion research are problematic, of course; as pollsters themselves had to acknowledge, unconscious bias crept all too easily into poll construction and the wording of questions, regardless of how perfect the polled sample appeared to be. Nevertheless, we should take their insistence on outlining the “scientific” nature of their work seriously, in the sense that these claims were made within a global context of increasing emphasis on empiricism, data, and technocratic management. Sources from opinion research institutes, research conferences, and correspondence between researchers all highlight the fascination with method and the dedication to demonstrating the scientific nature of their practices that defined those working in public opinion polling.

Initially, West German opinion researchers used the stark numbers resulting from their interviews to calibrate degrees of risk and threat to the West German state and the post-Nazi world order. Later, the data produced by opinion research became a way for West Germans to demonstrate to foreign countries their progress toward becoming a peaceable yet powerful partner in global politics. Allied and German polling institutes regularly asked questions meant to measure attachment to predetermined sets of “democratic” values and judgments, implicitly positing a standard for ideal responses. My project can be seen in part as a history of attempts to measure the extent of West German political fragility and create a framework for the consolidation of a democratic political culture – a process that has had enduring implications for contemporary Germany and

Europe as a whole.¹⁶ The language of science and precision in which this process was conducted made it all the more seductive to internal and external observers.

The “scientific” techniques advertised by public opinion researchers also shaped a new approach to the second theme that runs through this dissertation: anxieties about mass society. Mass psychology has its roots in the nineteenth century, when Gustave Le Bon popularized a profoundly dystopian vision of the masses as destructive and uncontrollable.¹⁷ In Germany, most elites of the 1920s and early 1930s, including academic social scientists, used similar language to describe the lower classes, who were playing an increasingly prominent role in German politics.¹⁸ After 1945, the optimal role of the masses in a democracy was still unsettled. In western Germany, many feared a return to the unstable democracy experienced during the Weimar Republic. Others noted a potential link between the direct rule of the people and totalitarianism.¹⁹ Public opinion researchers presented themselves as uniquely capable of navigating between extremes, offering a method for organizing, measuring, and analyzing what many had dismissed in the 1920s as an amorphous mass. Representative sampling and the typical format of opinion research

¹⁶ The framework in question often revolved around notions of political and cultural “normality.” For the importance of the “longing for normality” in Europe after World War II, see Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann, “Introduction: Violence, Normality, and the Construction of Postwar Europe,” in Bessel and Schumann, eds., *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁷ Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

¹⁸ Stefan Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 73-80.

¹⁹ Ralf Dahrendorf thus makes a distinction in his *Society and Democracy in Germany* between a liberal version of democracy based on the defense of personal liberty and a version based on the direct rule of the people, which Dahrendorf deems constitutive of totalitarianism. See Dahrendorf 13. Hannah Arendt also famously claimed that a prerequisite for totalitarianism was the dissolution of social classes into an amorphous, irrational mass. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2d ed. (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1968).

reports, which broke down thousands of respondents into organized groupings, promised to make sense of a population in flux after two world wars.

In this regard, my research originally was inspired by scholars working in a loose field of inquiry sometimes referred to as science studies. These scholars often build upon the writing of Michel Foucault on the disciplinary functions of myriad aspects of modern society.²⁰ Many scholars have linked standardization and quantification, two tools foundational to the work of twentieth-century public opinion researchers, directly to the growth of a “surveillance society,” in which all citizens are made legible through their reduction to numbers. Nikolas Rose has written about the “numericization of politics” – the increasing emphasis placed on numbers, whether the majorities and minorities identified through polling or calculations of gross domestic product – at all levels of governance in liberal democratic states. In fact, Rose argues, quantification is a central feature of modern democratic government. Numbers help legitimate power in democracies while also providing the basis for technologies of rule, and a domain for the operation of technical “experts.”²¹ Similarly, Ian Hacking has argued that the promise of modern statistics to allow for “the taming of chance” has turned everyday life into data usable by states.²²

The notion of “the taming of chance” has particular resonance in the twentieth century, which Ulrich Beck has described as characterized by a globally linked “risk society.”²³ In his elaboration of this concept, Beck was especially concerned with the ecological disasters he saw as marking the late twentieth century and creating a need for

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

²¹ Nikolas Rose, “Governing by Numbers: Figuring out Democracy,” *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 7 (1991): 673-692.

²² Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

²³ Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (London: Sage, 1992).

strategies of risk management. However, the concept is also useful for understanding the political context of the early post-World War II period. For the western Allies, especially the United States, West Germany was the epicenter of a continent fraught with political risk, in which various forms of totalitarianism threatened the brave new world of democracy that they claimed to have enabled. West German opinion researchers and their clients hoped to develop innovative ways to assess this risk; in the process they synthesized a particular understanding of dangers to the democratic process and the best methods to discover them. These practices indeed served an educational – some might even argue disciplinary – function in West German society.

Yet while I have continued to find Foucauldian notions of pervasive yet diffused discipline and governmentality to be useful for making sense of the relationship between postwar opinion research and West German society and politics, my research has also made clear that this framework has its limitations. Of course, I document an *aspiration* to perfect surveillance. Not only did West German opinion researchers advocate the use of poll results by governments, they even suggested that citizens look at the polls in order to see, and therefore police, themselves. Yet stressing these dimensions of their rhetoric can lead to a critical understating of the difficulties that these researchers faced in attaining credibility as well as in perfecting their research methods, difficulties of which they were also well aware. Pollsters in West Germany were never as powerful as scholars like Hacking, or German critics of polling in the 1950s and 1960s, lead us to believe. The polling work of the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes, while perhaps revealing of attitudes, was not analogous to the wiretapping and reading of mail that Josef Foschepoth has documented as

a feature of the Federal Republic.²⁴ Nevertheless, there is no denying the power relations in play: opinion research could be used against the very people being polled, as the American occupation officials who only cautiously entrusted opinion research capabilities to their West German counterparts understood. Indeed, much of the opinion research conducted in Germany after 1945 was motivated by suspicion and concern about who the Germans really were.

Above all, fears about the identity of Germans and the fragility of the Federal Republic drove opinion researchers to develop systems for measuring the evolution of a democratic political culture. The sometimes unanticipated effects of these frameworks constitute the third theme that reoccurs throughout this study: the relationship between opinion polling and the development and definition of a democratic public sphere in West Germany. On the one hand, poll results could be used to locate and quantify those who opposed the creation of a democratic public sphere, as well as influence perceptions of West German political culture by outsiders. Opinion polling between 1945 and 1960 fit into the Federal Republic's attempt to construct a "defensive" democracy in which public opinion potentially represented a threat to democratization, but also the key to a revival of West Germany's global standing. As a body of knowledge about "ordinary" citizens, poll results contributed to an image of "the Germans" at home and abroad. Opinion polls enabled observers to declare Germans to be progressive or backward, democratic or fascist. The relevance of these polls was heightened as West Germany entered into negotiations for the future European Union. By scrutinizing these processes, my dissertation analyzes how the disembodied opinions of "Lieschen Müller" – symbol of the

²⁴ Josef Foschepoth, *Überwachtes Deutschland: Post- und Telefonüberwachung in der alten Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).

“average” German – found their way to the national and international stage and became signifiers of West German political maturity.

Of course, polled Germans were also participants in the polls that assisted in the construction of a new West German identity. “Reception” has been difficult to trace in this story, but the sources demonstrate that Germans encountered the earliest polls of the Allies with considerable skepticism and even fear. By the mid-1960s, however, many had become eager to read about and share their opinions with researchers as well as with one another. Nevertheless, it is obvious that a low level of skepticism of polls remained into the 1960s and beyond, and at key points it burst into public discourse – or indirectly helped foster alternative forums for the sharing of opinions.

One such moment came with the outpouring of criticism of polls and their claims to be an integral component of a healthy democracy in the early 1960s. Central to this criticism was Jürgen Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, still a key text for scholars interested in civic engagement and the construction of public opinion.²⁵ As I demonstrate, this work was in part an emotional reaction to the inroads that public opinion polling had made into German political culture by the early 1960s. As such, it is a telling example of the impact of public opinion research on conceptions of the ideal relationship between and among citizens and their government.

Another such moment is visible in the emergence of public forums like the weekly *Mittwochsgespräche* (Wednesday Conversations), which took place in the Cologne central train station between 1950 and 1956. Here, and in other public forums like it that sprouted up in cities across West Germany in the mid- to late-1950s, participants engaged with one

²⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989).

another on a variety of topics, including the contributions of contemporary writers, the acceptability of military service requirements, and even the value of opinion research. Central to this forum and others like it was the notion that freedom of expression coupled with the *toleration* of multiple opinions and viewpoints formed the foundation of a democratic civic culture. At the Cologne *Mittwochgespräche*, academics, artists, politicians, and other elites met face to face with a diverse and engaged group of Germans eager to make their voices heard. All were welcome, and all were entitled to speak, listen, and contribute to a passionate discussion of the most important issues of the era.

This theme of the relationship between public opinion research and the maturation of a democratic public sphere in particular draws attention to the ever-present specter of East Germany. As opinion researchers in West Germany were fond of pointing out, there was no such thing as public opinion polling in East Germany, save a very few opinion research projects undertaken by the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the 1960s and 1970s.²⁶ However, there was a constant emphasis on discussion and active participation in the regime. Mary Fulbrook has called East Germany a “participatory dictatorship,” and the quantity of political discussions in East Germany in the 1950s was certainly greater than in the Federal Republic.²⁷ The regime also developed a confidential petition system through which citizens could share concerns and grievances.²⁸

These openings for political participation and expression coexisted awkwardly with a broad system of censorship and coercive institutions like the secret police, however. The

²⁶ Heinz Niemann, *Meinungsforschung in der DDR. Die geheimen Berichte des Instituts für Meinungsforschung an das Politburo der SED* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1993).

²⁷ Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

²⁸ Jonathan Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Ch. 7.

monopoly of the SED over political organization and public expression – for example, after 1950, expellees were not allowed to organize as an interest group – greatly limited opportunities for uncensored opinion exchange.²⁹ Further, the communist underpinnings of the state demanded that the SED at least try to maintain the illusion of a society untouched by the segmentation and classification schematics of opinion pollsters. The SED's hold on legitimacy in effect thus rested on a denial of other voices.

Despite the many contradictions of public opinion polling as used in occupied western Germany and later in the Federal Republic, the practice offered an affirmation of the desirability of expression and participation from a variety of individuals and groups. This dissertation does not take the language of opinion researchers, which frequently connected their discipline to scientific progress and democratic political practices, merely at face value. It does, however, investigate this language and the act of polling as one solution to the problem of mass democracy as perceived by elites, and one influence on the development of a strong democratic political culture in West Germany.

Chapter Summaries

“Polling after Fascism: Opinion Research, Mass Society, and Democratic Fragility in West Germany, 1945-1960” consists of six chapters and a conclusion. The chapters are organized thematically, but are roughly chronological in their examination of specific episodes and key actors in the history of public opinion research in West Germany. Chapter One opens with an examination of the trans-Atlantic origins of the type of opinion research applied in western Germany after 1945. As empirical methods gained favor among Anglo-

²⁹ Jarausch 141.

American social scientists, researchers increasingly applied these methods to the study of “the masses,” the specter of which haunted elites in all mass democracies of the early twentieth century. In Central Europe, however, social scientists largely refused to investigate the experiences and attitudes of the working classes, the group usually pinned to “the masses.” One notable exception was the Austrian psychologist Paul Lazarsfeld, who emigrated to the United States after Adolf Hitler rose to power. His influence on the development of opinion research is still felt today, and provided methodological inspiration for future German public opinion researchers and a way for them to situate the discipline, initially viewed as foreign by most Germans, within a longer Central European tradition of empirical study. This chapter also introduces two alternate paradigms through which the opinion researchers I follow in the rest of the dissertation viewed opinion research.

Lazarsfeld’s interest in opinion research was driven by a fascination with “the art of asking why” – that is, an interest in the details of technique and methodology, on the one hand, and on the other, in the complex mechanics of behavioral psychology. George Gallup and Elmo Roper also believed that the development of a scientific methodology was essential to their craft, but their discussion of public opinion polling also emphasized the democratizing capabilities of polling. Both visions for the significance and potential contributions of public opinion research would be invoked at different times by various actors in West Germany.

Chapter Two follows the introduction of survey-based opinion research by American occupation authorities first in Italy in 1943, then in France in 1944, and finally in western Germany in 1945. The British and French occupation forces also developed opinion research programs in their zones and were important sponsors of the rising native opinion research institutes. However, polling was perceived from its introduction as an

“American science,” and the American authorities were more prolific and persistent in the practice and advocacy of polling than the other Allies. They were also the most forceful preachers of the gospel of opinion polling according to Gallup and Roper, emphasizing over and over that polling could help establish the foundation for a vibrant democracy. As this chapter illustrates, however, the optimistic, ambitious rhetoric from above did not always match the experience of pollsters and polled on the ground. American-led survey units struggled with the suspicions of Germans, the instantiation of gender stereotypes in the process of polling, and the propensity of native interviewers to enact a hierarchical relationship over the course of the interviews.

Although the U.S. was involved directly in opinion research projects until the official end of the occupation in 1955, native opinion research institutes began working in western Germany as early as 1947. Chapter Three examines the relationship between three of the most important and influential of these research institutes, their attempts to attract attention and investment from the West German government, and their interaction with the survey division of the U.S. High Commission for Germany, which maintained a watchful eye over German polling in the early 1950s. The Allensbach and Emnid Institutes, along with the reconstituted Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, worked diligently to convince Germans of the value of empirical social research, including opinion polling. At the same time, they sought to benefit from the support of the western Allies while also making the case for independent, German approaches to German problems. These efforts culminated in a conference at Weinheim an der Bergstrasse in 1951, where the diverse perspectives of the participants were highlighted, as well as their enduring emphasis on empirical methodologies as the solution to the problems of a society in transition.

In Chapter Four, I analyze the polls and methods of the dominant opinion research institutes of the early postwar period, the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes. These institutes presented opinion research as a scientific tool through which to create a portrait of the nation and assess West German democracy, defined and measured through responses to questions about attitudes towards political values and knowledge, stereotypes, and other everyday subjects. These poll results were then used as a kind of public relations strategy intended to demonstrate the normality of Germans, especially to international observers. Domestically, the media tentatively embraced polls, but continued to push the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes to explain and substantiate their claims about the “scientific” nature of their work.

Chapter Five examines the empirical work of the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt, with a focus on the groundbreaking *Gruppenexperiment*, which elaborated a new methodology for unearthing deep-seated prejudices and opinions through moderated group discussions. I discuss the ways in which this project challenged existing methods of public opinion research and also promoted the idea that opinion formation only occurred within groups. At the same time, I show how the distrust of the public that is very clear in some of the work of the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes also makes the Frankfurt School’s project less of a departure from the norm than it initially seems.

In Chapter Six I discuss the contemporary critics of the idea that empirical public opinion polling buttressed democracy or was inherently democratic. The integration of opinion polling into West German political culture prompted some of the most well-known intellectuals of the 1960s and beyond – among them Jürgen Habermas and Wilhelm Hennis – to publish meditations on the identity and role of “the public” within a democracy. Here I

also look at the phenomenon of public forums in West Germany in the 1950s, with a focus on the famous “Wednesday Discussions” in Cologne. At such forums, composed of a broad swathe of Germans, public opinion was expressed and a certain kind of democratic culture instantiated in a way very different to the polls. Such forums posed the question – sometimes explicitly – of where and how a “public” and knowledge about its opinions is produced, and what level of public criticism was best for a nascent democracy like West Germany.

Finally, in the conclusion I build on the theme of the international implications of national polls by briefly exploring the significance of public opinion research for managing relationships between the Federal Republic and its West European neighbors. This broader western European context highlights the centrality of concerns about the fragility of democracy that drove so much public opinion research after World War II. In its insistence on empirical methodologies and statistical representations of popular opinion, modern polling has offered a unique tool for assessing risks and opportunities from regional as well as national perspectives. Yet despite its claims, public opinion research could not provide a perfect diagnosis of a given population, or allow its users to decisively shape opinion. What it did do in the long term, however, was activate debates about the relationship between governments, elites, and ordinary citizens, and revive and entrench a notion of public opinion as the key to understanding the nation and its constituents.

CHAPTER I
TRANSATLANTIC INFLUENCES, MASS PSYCHOLOGY, AND THE MAKING OF MODERN
OPINION RESEARCH

In October 1958, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, the co-founder of the Institut für Demoskopie at Allensbach and the face of public opinion polling in West Germany, together with her husband Erich Peter Neumann, contacted a small publishing house in Leipzig, Hirzel Verlag.¹ In 1933 Hirzel had published a pioneering study of unemployment in the Austrian town of Marienthal, authored by the young Austrian social psychologists Paul Lazarsfeld, Marie Jahoda, and Hans Zeisel. The Neumanns, through the publishing arm connected to their opinion research institute, hoped to issue a new edition of *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal* in Germany. They soon contacted the leading author of the work as well, Paul Lazarsfeld, who by 1958 was a professor of Sociology at Columbia University and renowned for his research on media and his contributions to the methodology of opinion research. By re-issuing Lazarsfeld's groundbreaking work, the Neumanns hoped to demonstrate to all Germans that modern opinion research – the art of asking a scientifically selected sample of citizens a series of carefully worded questions in order to produce an accurate analysis of the thought, opinions, and experiences of a larger group – actually had roots in German-speaking Europe, despite being connected in the popular imagination with the American impresario George Gallup and the American

¹ The correspondence related to the re-publication of *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal* has been digitized by the Institut für Demoskopie in cooperation with the Archiv für die Geschichte der Soziologie in Österreich and is available at http://agso.uni-graz.at/marienthal/archiv/institut_fuer_demoskopie_allensbach/korrespondenz_paul_lazarsfeld/

occupation authorities who put his principles into action through constant surveying of the German population after 1945.

This chapter examines the key developments in the social sciences that set the stage for the application of empirical opinion research to Germany after World War II. It also places the trajectory of opinion research in West Germany within a broader history of attempts to address the place and voice of “the masses” in modern societies, as well as to harness the power of science to assess and manage society. After 1945, empirical opinion research was proclaimed to be (and at times derided as) an “American science,” but the history of the discipline reveals a complex trans-Atlantic developmental process. Many figures played a role in this story, including the well-known American pollsters George Gallup and Elmo Roper. But rather than these figures, the prehistory of opinion research in postwar Germany revolves around the relationship between three of the most influential analysts of the development of communication and media in modern societies: Paul Lazarsfeld, Theodor Adorno, and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann – a rather unlikely triumvirate.

Lazarsfeld’s influence on these last two figures was enormous. Traces of his impact on Noelle-Neumann, whose Allensbach Institute quickly became the most recognizable opinion research institute in West Germany, are evident throughout her writing and her approach to opinion polling, but oddly little-remarked upon by scholars, especially within Germany itself. Lazarsfeld’s relationship with Adorno, as well as with other members of the Frankfurt School who were forced to emigrate to the United States in the 1930s, is more well known. The brief period of direct collaboration between these two scholars in the United States has been portrayed by many as the clash of two intellectual titans of the twentieth century, one the representative of what American sociologist C. Wright Mills

memorably derided as “abstracted empiricism,” the other one of the last bearers of a uniquely Continental theoretical approach to social questions.² The following analysis of the interactions between these three figures with respect to opinion research and communication research more broadly lays the foundation for understanding the perspectives and intellectual projects of Adorno, Noelle-Neumann, and other German theorists and researchers who led the charge to chart and decipher public opinion in postwar West Germany.

Lazarsfeld, Noelle-Neumann, and Adorno all began to develop their own perspectives on public opinion and the relationship between individuals and groups more broadly in the context of the fear of and obsession with “the masses” that gripped many European elites in the early twentieth century. However, the question of “the masses” was not a uniquely German or European concern. Modern, empirical opinion research was refined in the United States to address problems and questions that arose out of the growing size and power of all social classes in modern mass democracies. Initially, American elites were eager to find ways to understand purchasing habits and accurately predict consumer preferences. But opinion research evolved rapidly from the 1930s onward in the service of a government concerned about rising numbers of poor, unemployed, or disgruntled American citizens. By 1930, U.S. government officials had realized that the census could not provide the kinds of detailed information about popular attitudes that they needed, and they marshaled a combination of expertise from academia, federal workers, and the private sector. A unique brew of psychology, sociology, and statistics, stimulated by concern about “the masses,” combined to bring opinion research

² C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

respect as well as notoriety within the United States, so much so that it was considered an essential tool in waging – and winning – wars.

Survey research was not born in the United States – the earliest social surveys were undertaken in the late nineteenth century in England by Charles Booth, who inspired a legion of social reformers in England and the United States to quantify and interview the poor and downtrodden in their communities.³ At the same time, a Norwegian statistician, Anders Kiaer, began making the case for representative survey methods, advocating the use of representative sampling by governments.⁴ But it was in the United States during the twentieth century that survey research evolved into what can now be recognized as opinion polling. This evolution, however, was in part the product of European – and very often German or Austrian – minds. As the sociologist Christian Fleck has demonstrated, it was the combination of European scientists with generous American donors (especially Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller) and the uniquely American institutions that they funded that truly made the difference.⁵ Historian Perrin Selcer concurs, arguing that it was the “institutional success” of American social science rather than methodology or function within society that set it apart.⁶ Selcer attributes this to the comparatively enormous scale of American higher education, which allowed for more teaching posts in social scientific

³ Jean Converse, *Survey Research in the United States: Roots and Emergence 1890-1960* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 1-16. Booth’s monumental *Life and Labor of the People in London* (1889-1903) was based on interviews with and surveys of over 1800 London residents and church workers, and demonstrated the economically depressed circumstances that one-third of all Londoners found themselves in, according to Booth’s calculations. As Converse notes, however, Booth did not use systematic sampling to determine the subjects whom he interviewed, and at the time he referred to his work as a survey in the sense of an overview of a topic or area.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵ Christian Fleck, *A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences: Robber Barons, the Third Reich and the Invention of Empirical Social Research* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

⁶ Perrin Selcer, “The View from Everywhere: Disciplining Diversity in Post-World War II International Social Science,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 45(4), Fall 2009: 309-329, 316.

disciplines and greater disciplinary specialization overall. Philanthropic and academic support further eased the movement of empirical social science into broad swathes of public life as it was applied to problems in agriculture, industry, media, and political culture with increasing urgency after the Great Depression.

At the same time, the foundations that backed American social science research sought out European scholars in need of financial and institutional support. Paul Lazarsfeld's arrival in the United States in the early 1930s with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation was fortuitous both for his own career and for the further development of empirical social research. Eventually, his influence would be transferred back to his continent of origin, where his ideas shaped approaches to interviewing and analyzing ordinary people. Lazarsfeld's work in Austria provided the foundation for the ideas and methodologies he would go on to refine in the United States, as the founders of the German Allensbach Institute emphasized in their re-publication of *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal*. But they neglected to point out that Lazarsfeld was unique among German-speaking social scientists of his era. Before 1945, few appreciated the promise of empirical survey research as a way to understand society, much less to study public opinion. And during the Third Reich, there was no public opinion – only the opinion of the *Führer*, and the popular opinions that ordinary Germans uttered in privacy or under their breath.

The State of the Art in Germany before 1945

The western Allies introduced systematic, empirical opinion research to Germany, but quantitative research methods were not unknown in Central Europe before 1945.

Voting statistics had been kept and occasionally analyzed in terms of social class,

confession, and differences between urban and rural voters in Germany since the first election to the Reichstag in 1871.⁷ But the most active users of surveys, and the leaders in the attempt to describe groups of Germans quantitatively as well as qualitatively were market researchers. Paul Lazarsfeld's earliest forays into what we might term "modern" market research occurred in Austria *before* his emigration to the United States, and he was not the only practitioner of the discipline in German-speaking Europe. Most notably, the Nuremberg-based *Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung* (Society for Consumer Research) was founded in 1934 to explore the behavior of the German consumer.

While the practical purpose of the *Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung* was to help companies understand Germans in order to sell more of their products, Wilhelm Versofen, the group's founder, and his colleagues also held deeper and, in their view, nobler aspirations: they aimed to understand humans more holistically. According to Versofen, "The object of consumer research is the human being – how he behaves, not the goods he consumes."⁸ They also hoped to give a voice to previously silent or overlooked consumers. This was to be achieved through a blend of quantitative and qualitative research methods structured around in-person conversations with shoppers as well as workers – the same method that formed the foundation of public opinion research in the United States. Interviewers avoided simple yes-no questions in order to glean a more detailed

⁷ Dieter Roth, *Empirische Wahlforschung: Ursprung, Theorien, Instrumente und Methoden* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), 8.

⁸ Wilhelm Versofen, "Bericht über die Ordentliche Mitgliederversammlung der GfK," *Vertrauliche Nachrichten für die Mitglieder der GfK*, no. 15 (July 1941): 19, Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung archive, Nuremberg. Quoted in Jonathan Wiesen, *Creating the Nazi Marketplace: Commerce and Consumption in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 159.

understanding of how and why their subjects acted in the marketplace and in their homes.⁹ Future West German statesman and the architect of the West German “economic miracle” Ludwig Erhard worked for the *Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung*, an experience that likely made him more open to the use of public opinion research in West Germany than many of his future colleagues in the federal government.¹⁰

Beyond the *Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung* and Lazarsfeld’s work, survey research and empirical examinations of society had shallow roots in Central Europe. There were no true forerunners of political opinion research, and in general those working in sociology and in statistics maintained their distance from each other; Lazarsfeld was truly an original within German-speaking Europe in this regard.¹¹ During the Weimar Republic, politicians still turned to newspapers when they desired a glimpse into “the public’s” perspective on given questions.¹² At the same time, most German sociologists adamantly refused to investigate contemporary social phenomena empirically, insisting that their discipline’s commitment to impartiality and scientific analysis required them to avoid descriptions of contemporary developments. Instead, they strove to theorize general principles and modalities of social formations across time and place.

These sociologists, like most members of the German bourgeoisie during the 1920s and 1930s, were keenly interested in the question of “the masses.” “In all areas of interwar

⁹ For a thorough discussion of the GfK’s foundation and activities, see Wiesen, *Creating the Nazi Marketplace*, Ch. 4.

¹⁰ See Chapter 4 of this dissertation for more details on Erhard’s involvement with public opinion research after 1945.

¹¹ David E. Morrison, *The Search for a Method: Focus Groups and the Development of Mass Communication Research* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 1998), 24.

¹² Bernhard Fulda, *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 205. Also see the essays covering World War I and the Weimar Republic in Frank Bosch and Peter Hoeres, eds., *Außenpolitik im Medienzeitalter: Vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013).

society,” as Stefan Jonsson has written, “the mass was seen as the mother of all problems, if it was not seen as a promise of all solutions.”¹³ In interwar Germany and Austria, the masses were viewed as the antithesis of bourgeois individuality. Even many advocates of democracy in the Weimar Republic despised “the average man” and argued that without an educated elite to guide them, the masses would recklessly sabotage the very institutions of democratic governance.¹⁴ This understanding drew on the works of nineteenth-century French mass psychologists, popularized by Gustave Le Bon.¹⁵ In such work, the masses – who reached their apotheosis in the urban crowd – were characterized as primitive, dangerously irrational, and easily influenced. German observers like Theodor Geiger and Siegfried Kracauer saw just these qualities in the growing population of industrial working class and white collar workers, most visible in Berlin.¹⁶ But rather than examine working class communities – the group almost always implicitly assumed to constitute “the masses” so feared at this time – most sociologists claimed instead that “the masses” were largely indescribable and amorphous, best understood as the absence of social formation and organization.¹⁷ Among others, the prominent sociologist Leopold von Wiese, who later

¹³ Stefan Jonsson, *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 7.

¹⁴ This was the stance of the figures examined in Udi Greenberg’s collective biography of five German intellectuals who later shaped American approaches to the Cold War. Karl Loewenstein, for example, whose theory of “militant democracy” would heavily influence the German Supreme Court’s rulings on criminalization of the German Communist Party, argued that the institutions of representative democracy must stand above, and be protected from, the will of the people, precisely because the masses could not be trusted with control over state affairs. Udi Greenberg, *The Weimar Century: German Emigres and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

¹⁶ Sabine Hake, *Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany: Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

¹⁷ Jonsson 73-80.

would lead efforts to re-establish the sociological discipline in post- World War II Germany, subscribed to this view. From this perspective any attempt to categorize or make sense of the elements of mass society was futile, and so von Wiese and many of his cohort in German-speaking Europe in the interwar period avoided empirical examinations of the contours of their own society and scoffed at the use of surveys.

With the rise of the Nazis, empirical investigations faced a different kind of challenge. Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist party rose to power in part by professing to actualize the will of the people. In this self-conception, “public opinion” was exalted in theory, but in practice only if it aligned with the desires of the *Führer*. What was publicly expressed was necessarily in line with the Party. The existence of, and scope for, “public opinion” during the Third Reich is therefore a topic of much debate. Some scholars point out that in such a society, true “public opinion” cannot be said to exist – only “popular opinion.”¹⁸ Although scholars have debated how totalitarian the Third Reich really was, there was clearly a high level of censorship from above and below, making it difficult for Nazi party administrators to truly know what people thought and felt about the regime and its policies. To do so, they relied on “Situation and Morale Reports” (*Lage- and Stimmungsberichte*), produced by multiple agencies of the Nazi state as part of a Reich-wide systematic effort beginning in April 1934.¹⁹ These reports were the product of varying levels of surveillance, a tactic certainly not invented by the Nazis. Different types of state

¹⁸ Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002). For an overview of the difficulties facing historians seeking to determine even popular opinions of Germans during the Third Reich, see Kershaw’s essay “The ‘Everyday’ and the ‘Exceptional’: The Shaping of Popular Opinion, 1933-1939,” in Kershaw, *Hitler, The Germans, and The Final Solution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

¹⁹ Otto Dov Kulka and Eberhard Jäckel, eds. *The Jews in the Secret Nazi Reports on Popular Opinion in Germany, 1933-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), xxxvii.

surveillance have been an element of German politics and society since at least the nineteenth century, although it is important to note that this was not a feature unique to German history.²⁰ The *Sicherheitsdienst* or SD, the security service of the SS, issued morale reports, as did the Gestapo and regional and local party leaders. Theoretically, these different sources created a kind of pyramid structure of reporting which built up to summarizing reports issued by the SD Main Office in Berlin. At times, however, reports from different agencies competed against or contradicted one another.

Descriptions of the *Lage-* and *Stimmungsberichte* by their producers demonstrate that some at least explicitly viewed this surveillance work and resulting reports as a necessary substitute for public opinion. Otto Ohlendorf, notorious for his leadership of one of the mobile killing units during the invasion of the Soviet Union, also directed the SD's efforts to measure the responses of the German population to various government measures. Ohlendorf allegedly remarked to Heinrich Himmler's masseuse that the role of the SD was "to give the party and state leadership an unvarnished picture of how their measures affected all areas of life, including the economy, administration, culture, and law; it must take over the functions that accrue to public opinion in a parliamentary state."²¹ Here was a German official declaring that "public opinion" did not truly exist in the Third Reich; nevertheless, he understood the necessity of rooting out the "unvarnished" attitudes of ordinary people, who had no public forum in which to express themselves.

²⁰ S. Jonathan Wiesen and Andrew Zimmerman, eds., "Forum: Surveillance in German History," *German History* Vol. 34, No. 2: 293-314.

²¹ "...Partei und Staatsführung ein ungeschminktes Bild darüber zu geben, wie sich die Maßnahmen der beiden Institutionen auf allen Lebensgebieten der Wirtschaft, der Verwaltung, der Kultur, des Rechts u.a.m. auswirkten; er müsse die Funktion übernehmen, die der öffentlichen Meinung im parlamentarischen Staat zukomme." Quoted in Heinz Boberach, ed., *Meldungen aus dem Reich: Auswahl aus den geheimen Lageberichten des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1939-1944* (Neuwied and Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1965), ix.

To meet this need, regional and local party leaders regularly submitted situation and morale reports containing assessments of morale and popular opinions on various policies, the supply of food items, activities of groups potentially hostile to the Party, and, later, reactions to Allied bombing and other wartime hardships.²² They also provided a curious version of media reception analysis, in the form of reports on the effectiveness of specific propaganda, such as films, broadcasts, and newspaper articles.²³ These reports were largely anecdotal in nature, and filtered through bureaucratic layers, as the reporting officials had incentives to demonstrate their own abilities to steer and control public opinion in their districts. Nevertheless, these reports reveal the heterogeneity of experiences and attitudes that remained after the Nazi seizure of power. In the early years of Nazi rule, they also record a popular mood that sometimes opposed official policy, in the sense that it demanded ever greater extremes from the government in its treatment of non-Aryans. In these years, numerous local reports from throughout Germany describe localized acts of destruction against Jews and increasing calls from ordinary citizens for greater clarity in the distinction between Jews and the rest of German society.²⁴

The reports of the SD, based on the jokes, comments, and complaints of ordinary Germans uncovered largely through spying, began as a complement to the work of the Gestapo and the reports of local officials, but eventually became the primary source of information about popular opinion throughout the Reich.²⁵ The SD initially devoted special

²² Aryeh Unger, "The Public Opinion Reports of the Nazi Party," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 29 (Winter 1965-66): 565-582.

²³ *Ibid.*, 569.

²⁴ See Kulka and Jäckel.

²⁵ Unger 578. Also see Michael Wildt, "Einleitung," in Michael Wildt, ed., *Nachrichtendienst, politische Elite und Mordeinheit. Der Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2003): 7-37.

attention to potential adversaries like Jews, Marxists, and the churches. A network of at least 30,000 agents worked for the SD in such a capacity.²⁶ The SD employed or worked with agents in a number of specialized fields in order to gauge opinion and mood in varying areas of life. For example, many judges and lawyers passed on information to the SD.²⁷ Over the course of the 1930s, the SD also expanded its focus from surveillance of “enemies of the state” to a broader assessment of popular attitudes and reactions to various government measures.²⁸ The Chief of the SD and Gestapo, Reinhard Heydrich, instructed agents in September 1937 to “be cold as ice and objective in the assessment of the situation and its presentation.”²⁹ And reports did indeed note discontent among the population at various points.

There is also evidence that the SD experimented with empirical survey methods. Joseph Goebbels, Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, noted in his journal that the SD did in fact conduct at least one survey “in the manner of the Gallup Institute,” but Goebbels did “not value such investigations because they are always undertaken with a deliberative purpose in mind.”³⁰ For his part, the propaganda minister preferred to rely on his mother, who “knows the sentiments of the people better than most experts.”³¹ Goebbels’s Ministry did receive reports on surveys of audience responses to party-sponsored propaganda, including films and radio programs, but there is no evidence

²⁶ Kulka and Jäckel xxviii.

²⁷ Boberach xxii.

²⁸ Ibid., xii-xiii.

²⁹ Quoted in Kulka and Jäckel xxviii.

³⁰ Quoted in Leonard Doob, “Goebbels’s Principles of Propaganda,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 14 (Autumn 1950): 419-442, 422. I have not been able to find any other information on the singular survey conducted by the Security Service.

³¹ Ibid., 31.

to suggest that these surveys were conducted using deliberate sampling methods in order to gauge the reactions of the populace as a whole.³²

As war approached, local officials as well as the SD had much less incentive to include references to criticism of the regime in their reports. The Party Chancellory discouraged reports of low morale or deviating views by telling local leaders that “the attitude of the members of the community will reveal whether the local leaders of the party possess the confidence of the people to the necessary extent and whether the party members are really exemplary in their effort and combat readiness.”³³ And as the reports of the Security Service increasingly reflected “defeatist” attitudes at large in the population, their distribution was restricted to smaller and smaller audiences within the Party administration.³⁴ Ohlendorf, as director of the SD’s efforts to decipher popular opinion, increasingly worried that the negative content of the SD’s reports could be viewed as posing a threat to Hitler and the party leadership.³⁵ The SD reports were halted in summer 1944, but a few attempts to assess the attitudes of the population, as well as uncover the various rumors circulating among the people, were undertaken in the winter and spring of 1945 with the cooperation of the Ministry of Propaganda for the Reich and the propaganda arm of the Wehrmacht.³⁶

³² See, for example, the reference to audience reaction surveys following screenings of the 1942 pro-euthanasia film “*J'accuse*” in Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 105.

³³ Quoted in Unger 573.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 581.

³⁵ Boberach xviii.

³⁶ Known as the “Mundpropaganda-Aktion,” these efforts were explicitly combined with attempts to influence the attitudes of citizens. Soldiers were sent into cities to speak with ordinary Germans, gathering rumors and opinions while also spreading the Party and army’s preferred narrative. The architects of this action hoped that the trust which many Germans accorded to soldiers above all others connected with the Party would allow them both special access to the true attitudes of the people and greater power to influence them. Volker Berghahn, “Meinungsforschung im ‘Dritten

It is important to note that although citizens of the Third Reich could never be sure when they were being observed, most knew about the existence and nature of secret police and surveillance agencies. As Robert Gellately has emphasized, the Nazi regime openly celebrated the work of these institutions and the press of the Third Reich reported on concentration camps, police actions, and judicial proceedings against citizens. Furthermore, the police depended on the participation of ordinary Germans to identify “criminals.” Denunciations by neighbors and coworkers helped direct the police to specific individuals in many cases.³⁷

The social democratic observers funneling information from within Germany to the *Sopade*, the Social Democratic Party of Germany in exile, operated in greater secrecy. The *Sopade* provided another account of attitudes toward the regime and general trends in popular opinion with a focus on the attitudes of the working class. Between 1934 and 1940, “secretaries” stationed on Germany’s borders funneled regular reports to the *Sopade* headquarters in exile, initially located in Prague and later in Paris.³⁸ These individual reports were selectively compiled into official monthly reports circulated throughout the organization. Because they were produced by actors in opposition to the National Socialist

Reich’: Die Mundpropaganda-Aktion der Wehrmacht im letzten Kriegshalbjahr,” *Militär-geschichtliche Mitteilungen* Vol. 1 (1967): 83-118. Several reports from Berlin, Nuremberg, Vienna, and Hamburg are collected in Wolfram Wette, Ricarda Bremer, and Detlef Vogel, eds., *Das letzte halbe Jahr: Stimmungsberichte der Wehrmachtpropaganda 1944/45* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2001).

³⁷ Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³⁸ These reports have been published as *Deutschland-Berichte der Demokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade) 1934-1940* (Salzhausen: Verlag Petra Nertelbeck, 1980).

state, the reports contained their own biases, as most reporters were looking actively for examples of negative attitudes toward the regime.³⁹

Still, the *Sopade* reports could be remarkably matter of fact about the absence of the foundation of future opposition within Germany. A report from 1934 observed that there was “not only no public opinion in Germany,” but “also no sectional opinion any longer.”⁴⁰ By this the writers meant that spheres of society with a potential for opposition – the industrial working classes and the church-based community – were divided. By 1937, reports emphasized the depressed state of workers, some of whom had given up on revolution from within Germany and begun to view war as the only path to the destruction of the National Socialist regime.⁴¹ Nevertheless, “secretaries” continued reporting on reactions to economic, political, and social changes, including concerns about the arrival of war and consumer shortages. Needless to say, these reports were created and transmitted in the utmost secrecy. While the various reporters observed their fellow Germans and talked to others about their experiences, this was very rarely done in an open fashion, since these reporters wanted to avoid being discovered. And as in most of the reports of the SD, the observations contained in the *Sopade* reports were largely impressionistic and anecdotal in nature, although they also relied on information from workers in plants and factories who had access to more detailed intelligence about production and resource mobilization.

³⁹ See the assessment of *Sopade* reports as sources on German popular opinion in Kershaw, *Hitler, The Germans, and the Final Solution*, 122-3.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Kershaw, *Hitler, The Germans, and the Final Solution*, 125.

⁴¹ See, for example, the report from Schlesien in *Deutschland-Berichte der Demokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade) 1937* (Salzhausen: Verlag Petra Nertelbeck, 1980), 11.

In the academic sphere, the rise of the Nazis and the expansion of anti-Semitic regulations in the 1930s led to a narrowing of the backgrounds and intellectual pursuits of social scientists in the Third Reich. Ute Gerhardt has questioned whether there was anything that could even be called “Sociology” during the Third Reich.⁴² The German Sociological Association essentially ceased activity in 1933 after many of its members had fled Germany or been forced to resign. The flood of scholars fleeing from German-speaking Europe in the late 1930s was a boon for the United States academic community, as well as for the Allied cause in World War II. Many emigrants became advisors, translators, and analysts for the United States and British governments. Emigration to the United States also benefited some German scholars, like Theodor Adorno, who was able to augment his philosophical training in Europe with a new education at the hand of American social science research institutions.

American Opinion Research and Lazarfled’s Legacy

Although survey research did not originate in the United States, empirical opinion research in the form of market research was adopted by American businesses earlier than in most other countries for several reasons. In the wake of the more efficient production that was the corollary of Taylorization beginning in the 1910s, American businesses were eager to expand their markets and sell to as many consumers as possible. In 1911, a Bureau of Business Research was founded at Harvard’s Graduate School of Business.⁴³ Breakthroughs in statistical methods to determine sample sizes and sorting criteria helped

⁴² Uta Gerhardt, *Denken der Demokratie: Die Soziologie im atlantischen Transfer des Besatzungsregimes* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007).

⁴³ Sarah Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 110.

to substantiate the claims of market researchers and, eventually, public opinion pollsters to be drawing actionable “facts” from the formerly unknown mass of Americans. While the theory of probability was understood already in the eighteenth century, the more systematic quota and random sampling methods used today were developed gradually and only began receiving sustained scientific attention in the early decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁴ The growing mass media in the United States also had an interest in applying these methods to better understand and entice readers and listeners. Resulting media research contributed to the advancement of empirical research methods across categories of inquiry, and further blurred the lines between consumers and citizens. George Gallup, for example, first began developing his own methods of surveying as a University of Iowa applied psychology Ph.D. student in the late 1920s, when he undertook an analysis of newspaper reader preferences for his dissertation.⁴⁵ Opinion research thus gained a foothold in the business *and* academic worlds relatively early in the twentieth century in the United States – in sharp contrast with the situation in Germany.

George Gallup (along with Archibald Crossley and Elmo Roper) made a name for himself and his method of opinion polling by successfully predicting Franklin Roosevelt’s victory in the 1936 presidential election. The accuracy of Gallup’s poll in the presidential race made an especially strong impression on the American public because the *Literary Digest* straw poll, which had successfully predicted the winners of the previous five elections, failed to foresee Roosevelt’s victory. Gallup’s use of representative sampling demonstrated the bias inherent in the method used by the *Digest*. Magazines like the *Digest*

⁴⁴ Frederick F. Stephan, “History of the Uses of Modern Sampling Procedures,” *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, Vol. 43, No. 241 (March 1948): 12-39.

⁴⁵ Igo 116-17.

surveyed their readers or (as in 1936) mailed surveys to car and telephone owners to forecast elections. But as the failure of the *Digest* to project Roosevelt's victory revealed, the recipients of these surveys were not necessarily reflective of the entire electorate of the United States. In contrast, Gallup, Crossley, and Roper based their predictions on in-person, one-on-one interviews conducted with a smaller group of people, but one that was "scientifically" selected to approximate more closely the make up of American voters. The American pollsters capitalized upon the positive publicity generated through their correct election predictions to expand scientific opinion polling into other areas of life; their polls soon claimed to chart the contours of the "average" citizen by uncovering the views of the American public on everything from the role of women in society to military policy.⁴⁶

In addition to highlighting the superiority of their methods, Gallup and Roper also used the language of democracy to legitimize their profession. They compared their own polls to ballots, and claimed to give voice to "the people."⁴⁷ According to Gallup, in the American context, "polls can fill the gaps in the existing democratic structure" by supplying "an essential corrective to the vast amount of wishful thinking and speculation" which otherwise ruled discussions about the desires and beliefs of the majority of Americans.⁴⁸ Gallup and his fellow opinion researchers proclaimed that public opinion polling would facilitate the smoother functioning of democracy in the age of the masses by allowing "the common man" to have a say in the governance of his country.

⁴⁶ Igo 103-4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 122-24. In fact, as Igo shows, "the people" given voice through Gallup and Roper's polls were only one subset of American society: generally white, middle class individuals were overrepresented in their samples.

⁴⁸ George Gallup and Saul Forbes Rae, *The Pulse of Democracy: The Public-Opinion Poll and How It Works* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940), 127. Sarah Igo discusses the ways in which American pollsters aligned their work rhetorically with the will of "the people." Igo 118-26.

While Gallup and Roper got all the press, the advancement of opinion research of all kinds would not have been possible without the distinctive contributions of an Austrian immigrant: Paul Lazarsfeld. Lazarsfeld's significance for the development of communication research and empirical social research (as he termed it) more broadly, and for discussions about public opinion and interactions between individuals, groups, and government in the United States (and eventually in postwar Germany), cannot be overstated. In sociologist Christian Fleck's elaborate ranking of German-speaking social scientists by reputation and citations of their works, Lazarsfeld holds pride of place, ahead of such luminaries as Max Weber, Joseph Schumpeter, and Theodor Adorno.⁴⁹ Lazarsfeld stands apart from other twentieth-century sociologists not only because of the influence of his ideas, but because of his methodological and institutional innovations: among other practices, he helped pioneer the university-based social research institute and (largely out of desperation for funding) many of his projects brought intellectual exploration together with the concerns of government and private enterprise in remarkable ways. And much more so than Gallup and Roper, he endeavored to understand *why* people voted, consumed, or listened in the way that they did, not just to determine their preferences. Above all, he was interested in what he termed the "psychological analysis of action."⁵⁰

Lazarsfeld was born in Vienna in 1901, and found his way to the United States in 1933 as a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation. His stay in the United States was prolonged indefinitely by the increasing instability and antisemitism in Austria and eventual triumph of fascism in his home country. The future communications researcher drew on a variety of

⁴⁹ Fleck 156.

⁵⁰ Paul Lazarsfeld and Arthur Kornhauser, "The Analysis of Consumer Actions," in Paul Lazarsfeld and Morris Rosenberg, eds., *The Language of Social Research*, (Glencoe: Free Press, 1955): 392-404.

disciplines to craft his own academic process; originally trained as a mathematician, he embraced the study of psychology and was eventually appointed a professor at Columbia University in the Sociology department. Lazarsfeld began developing his skills in empirical research and institutional management early in his career, helping found the *Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle* in Vienna in 1925. In a period and a place in which the social sciences “were dominated by philosophical and speculative minds,” Lazarsfeld’s interest in applying statistical analysis and surveys to psychological and social questions made him something of an outlier.⁵¹ This meant that other German and Austrian academics interested in studying communities and individuals through surveys and other empirical research technologies often turned to the *Forschungsstelle* for help. One of Lazarfeld’s clients at the *Forschungsstelle* was none other than Max Horkheimer’s Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt (commonly known as the Frankfurt School), which employed Lazarsfeld and his colleagues to organize survey research among workers in Austria, the basis for the volume *Autorität und Familie*.⁵²

In 1933 the *Forschungsstelle* published its most enduring work, a study of unemployment in the Austrian village of Marienthal, near Vienna.⁵³ After the shutdown of the town’s textile factory, over fifty percent of workers in Marienthal had become unemployed by the time Lazarsfeld and his colleagues began conducting their research in 1931. *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal* was exemplary in its use of both quantitative and

⁵¹ Paul Lazarsfeld, “An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir,” in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, Eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1968), 270.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 274 n. 7.

⁵³ Marie Jahoda, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Hans Zeisel, *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal. Ein soziographischer Versuch über die Wirkungen langdauernder Arbeitslosigkeit* (Leipzig: Hirzel Verlag, 1933). The village of Marienthal, located approximately 30 kilometers outside of Vienna, has since been incorporated into the town of Gramatneusiedl.

qualitative methods, which yielded surprising findings. Lazarsfeld and his colleagues discovered that the unemployed workers they studied through participant observation and personal interviews had despondently withdrawn from politics rather than embraced revolutionary ideas and actions as a way to address their condition. This was an important and, for those hoping that workers would lead the charge against fascism in Europe, a disheartening conclusion.

This study of Austrian unemployment turned out to be Lazarsfeld's entrée to a long and illustrious career in the United States. Shortly after the publication of the Marienthal study, the Rockefeller Foundation took an interest in Lazarsfeld's work, and paid for his initial two-year research stay in the United States. According to his own account, Lazarsfeld was welcomed in the United States as a "connecting cog" between older European philosophical traditions and the empirical direction of contemporary American social science.⁵⁴ After arriving in the United States, Lazarsfeld founded the University of Newark Research Center, then joined the Office of Radio Research at Princeton University in collaboration with Hadley Cantril, and finally founded the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University. He also helped establish research centers in Oslo and Vienna after World War II. He served as president of the American Association for Public Opinion Research in 1949-50 and of the American Sociological Association from 1961-62. During his tenure on the Princeton Radio Research Project, Lazarsfeld pioneered a remarkably collaborative and open atmosphere, frequently working with fellow social scientists as well as experts in other disciplines, such as the psychoanalysts Erich Fromm and Fritz Redl. As Christian Fleck notes, such extensive cooperation and collaboration with

⁵⁴ Lazarsfeld, "An Episode in the History of Social Research," 271.

other scholars differed greatly from the typical European practice.⁵⁵ It was an approach that future German opinion researchers and social scientists interested in empirical opinion research – including Adorno, who worked directly with Lazarsfeld on one part of the Princeton Radio Research Project – would draw upon in their attempt to consolidate the discipline in western Germany after 1945.

Lazarsfeld had his own vision for opinion research. Unlike George Gallup and the future pollsters of West Germany, he did not claim that opinion research was especially democratic. What motivated him instead was a desire to understand the mechanics of listening, reading, and decision-making. Not content merely to “describe opinion,” he aimed to study “it *in the making*.”⁵⁶ Whereas Gallup and Roper’s rhetoric was more utopian, Lazarsfeld’s emphasized methodological curiosity. Despite his education – both formal and sentimental – in the Marxist milieu of interwar Vienna, he never proclaimed his work to be in service of Marxism, democracy, or any other political ideal. And while Gallup and Roper’s conception of public opinion polling as a democratizing force was fundamental to the institutionalization of polling in western Germany by the western Allies, it was Lazarsfeld’s emphasis on technical apparatus and methodological approach that most influenced the work of rising pollsters like Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, as well as leftist researchers and theorists like Theodor Adorno. In effect, Lazarsfeld and Gallup offered two disparate, but not necessarily incompatible, visions for empirical opinion research. Both

⁵⁵ Fleck 171.

⁵⁶ Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, “The Process of Opinion and Attitude Formation,” in Paul Lazarsfeld and Morris Rosenberg, eds. *The Language of Social Research: A Reader in the Methodology of Social Research* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1955), 231. Emphasis in original.

were applied to western Germany after 1945, but it was Lazarsfeld's template that more heavily influenced the execution of public opinion polling in West Germany.

Lazarsfeld was also instrumental in expanding the application of the opinion poll beyond basic questions such as the popularity of consumer goods or radio programs. He himself did so partly by accident, according to his own accounts. After he was contracted by the United States Department of Agriculture to carry out an investigation of the potential use of the radio in disseminating certain farming policies, Lazarsfeld shifted the focus of the study to how voters made their decisions in the 1940 election.⁵⁷ In the process of carrying out this study, Lazarsfeld also helped systematize the use of the "omnibus survey," which combined questions covering market research with questions related to politics or social issues.⁵⁸ Before this invention, Lazarsfeld and his colleagues had occasionally convinced commercial market researchers to include a few questions related to their particular studies on the radio sporadically in their surveys; but opinion surveys generally stuck to one topic. The "omnibus survey" allowed researchers to address a variety of questions for different interested parties at relatively low cost.

Much of the early work for the Princeton Radio Research Project was relatively simplistic, developing new methods to determine "likes" and "dislikes" of media content rather than probing mindset and rationale. However, interviewing protocols and frames of analysis quickly became more sophisticated. Lazarsfeld and his colleagues developed the "panel method" during the first two years of the project's existence, in which the same group of listeners was interviewed multiple times over a period of months in order to

⁵⁷ David Goodman, *Radio's Civic Ambition: American Broadcasting and Democracy in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 233.

⁵⁸ Fleck 208.

assess the development of attitudes over time.⁵⁹ As his methodological tool box grew, Lazarsfeld became increasingly convinced that opinion research could address the most pressing questions facing modern societies. As he insisted to a Polish audience in 1958, it was far more interesting – and important – to use the refined methods of opinion research to study what Lazarsfeld referred to as “psychological variables.”⁶⁰ For Lazarsfeld, opinion research ideally was not merely another method of acquiring statistical data. Advances in sampling practices and statistical analysis and the development of more complex questioning strategies meant that it could yield rich insights into why people acted a certain way, what their intentions were, and how their attitudes and expectations changed over time.

While Lazarsfeld remained fascinated by mathematical theories and refinements in statistical analysis, the shift he called for demanded, above all else, attention to the types, phrasing, and sequencing of questions asked by pollsters rather than a single-minded pursuit of new sampling techniques. His own work had matured in this regard when he and Robert Merton were hired by the Columbia University Sociology Department in 1941. Together they developed the “focused interview,” in which the interviewer confronted a group of participants with a “stimulus” such as a radio broadcast or printed text.⁶¹ This practice was the forerunner of what is now known as the “focus group.” But his obsession with uncovering the sources of actions had led him to an uncommon interest in the rationales behind responses even earlier. Only two years after arriving in the United States,

⁵⁹ Paul Lazarsfeld and Marjorie Fisk, “The ‘Panel’ as a New Tool for Measuring Opinion,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 2 (1938): 596-612.

⁶⁰ Paul Lazarsfeld, text of “Public Opinion Research and Social Science,” to be delivered at Seminar on Public Opinion, Warsaw, September 1958. Paul Felix Lazarsfeld Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 29, Subject File: Television – University of Chicago, Folder 4, Subject File: UNESCO.

⁶¹ Fleck 211.

Lazarsfeld published an article in *National Marketing Review* elaborating “the art of asking why.”⁶²

As Lazarsfeld recognized, most people did not think through all of their reasons for making or not making a purchase or voting for a certain candidate: “the average consumer is not trained to survey offhand all the factors which determine his purchases and he usually has a very hazy understanding of the *why* question,” he told his fellow market researchers in 1935.⁶³ He advocated careful training in creating questionnaires and in conducting interviews not out of distrust of consumers, but out of the belief that these consumers did not understand that researchers wanted “the whole story” – or they simply hadn’t processed this story fully themselves. Market researchers using progressive interviewing techniques and survey construction could unearth the hidden psychology of action by anticipating the full range of potential explanations – “the *total* motivational set-up of the first degree.”⁶⁴ In doing so, Lazarsfeld argued, interviewers would “enable our respondent to give us the right answers.”⁶⁵ He also broke down the sources of action into three different motivating forces: influences from others, attributes of the product, and the process or impulse which preceded a given purchase. According to Lazarsfeld, it was possible to design efficient questionnaires that addressed all three forces, as well as zero in on the force most relevant to the client or researcher.

This article immediately caught the attention of market researchers and public opinion pollsters, and continues to be cited in manuals for questionnaire construction and

⁶² Paul Lazarsfeld, “The Art of Asking WHY in Marketing Research: Three Principles Underlying the Formulation of Questionnaires,” *National Marketing Review* Vol. 1 (Summer 1935): 26-38.

⁶³ Lazarsfeld, “The Art of Asking WHY in Marketing Research,” 26.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

focus group moderation over eighty years after it first appeared. The article was well known to Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and other opinion researchers in the Federal Republic of Germany after 1945.⁶⁶ It offered not only an argument for attempting to dig deeper to get to “the whole story” of which respondents themselves often were not fully aware, but a crucial step toward refining the methodology to do so.

Deciphering the Masses

Much of Lazarsfeld’s most influential research explored, in various ways, behavioral psychology, or the reasons why people act in the way that they do. In the process, his work also addressed the problematic of communication with “the masses,” the specter of which obsessed elites with ever greater intensity after the turn of the twentieth century. Lazarfeld’s research demonstrated that “the mass” was neither the frenzied, easily influenced monster that many elites feared nor the sleeping giant of revolution that socialists around the world hoped for. Most of the Austrians he analyzed for *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal* were not especially interested in revolution, and the Americans that he later turned his attention to were not only uninterested in revolt or enlightenment, they were often less impressionable by the media than many had hoped (and feared). Yet his emphasis on “the art of asking why” led Lazarsfeld to attempt to move beyond summaries of interests and responses. His ultimate goal was to refine methods for determining *why* people reacted, or did not react, to certain stimuli in certain ways.

One of the Princeton Radio Project’s most famous studies analyzed reactions to a radio production of H.G. Wells’s “War of the Worlds” in October 1937, which left many

⁶⁶ Lazarsfeld was the most cited scholar in a number of Allensbach Institute publications, including their first *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung* (1956).

listeners with the impression that World War II had begun.⁶⁷ Here the investigations centered on whether listeners had become convinced that the radio program was a news broadcast transmitting a real situation and, if so, why they did not take further steps to determine its veracity. As Lazarsfeld wrote in a project memorandum, becoming scared or hysterical “is too understandable in certain situations,” especially when highly visceral media was involved and the state of global politics was already tense.⁶⁸ The real question was why, “after people were scared they were not able or not willing to check up to see whether it was true or not.”⁶⁹ Lazarsfeld suggested that research on this problem could be extended to other issues facing Americans, such as “mass hysteria” in race riots. “We are living through a critical era of rapid, enforced cultural change in our American life,” Lazarsfeld wrote in an application for funding to follow up on this question.⁷⁰ “Our chief national hazard is not the application of intelligence to our problems but the dragging lag in popular knowledge and acceptance that shackles the application of intelligence,” he argued, elaborating that “while science strives to discover and to formulate intelligent policies, it must also work at the problem of how to secure informed democratic consideration of and action upon such policies. The problem of securing needed social change is a crucial bottleneck. And it is the aim of this project to explore the conditions necessary to widen this

⁶⁷ Hadley Cantril, *The Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940). Although Cantril was credited with primary authorship, Lazarsfeld was instrumental throughout the analysis of the episode.

⁶⁸ Memorandum from Paul Lazarsfeld to Dr. Hadley Cantril, October 12, 1939, Subject: Analysis of Check-ups in Orson Welles Study. Paul Felix Lazarsfeld Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University,, Box 26, Princeton Radio Research Project (2), Rand Project, Folder, Princeton Radio Research Project.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Proposal for Continuation of Radio Research Project for a Final Three Years at Columbia University (1940-1943), Paul Felix Lazarsfeld Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 26, Princeton Radio Research Project (2), Rand Project.

bottle-neck in so far as these conditions can involve use of broadcasting.”⁷¹ The tone and wording of this proposal bear uncanny similarities to the language used by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and other future West German pollsters concerned about the ignorance they viewed as an unfortunate defining feature of postwar West German society. While Lazarsfeld and his colleagues never developed a fool-proof method for the government to ensure that citizens were always properly informed and educated, they did continue to refine their understanding of how people make decisions, and their critique of the state of popular knowledge as well as their suggestion that scientific, empirical social research could help correct it would provide a template for future opinion researchers to follow.

Lazarsfeld’s later work continued to explore the dynamics of influence. In particular, he investigated how people were influenced by those around them (particularly those individuals he labeled “opinion leaders”) and the media. His 1944 classic *The People’s Choice* arose out of his research on voting in the 1940 presidential election and identified a “two-step flow of communication,” first from media to opinion leaders, and then from those individual influencers to the general population.⁷² In an analysis based on monthly interviews with a panel of 600 inhabitants of Erie County, Ohio over a period of seven months, *The People’s Choice* demonstrated that the media had less of a hold on “the masses” than many had feared (and as reactions to the production of “The War of the Worlds” suggested). Instead, most individuals were much more likely to form their opinions based

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, *The People’s Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944).

on the beliefs of family members and close friends than on the claims made in the pages of newspapers or over the radio waves.⁷³

At the same time that Lazarsfeld was working on the radio project and fine-tuning his method for determining the sources of action and choice, other researchers in the United States were making advances in understanding morale and motivation within organizations. The leading American researcher in this field was Rensis Likert, who, along with Lazarsfeld, was a member of a loosely knit group of young social scientists around New York City interested in expanding the methods and purview of market research.⁷⁴ After briefly teaching psychology at New York University and Sarah Lawrence College, Likert was hired to direct research for the Life Insurance Sales Research Bureau in 1935. Likert's research for this institute, based on in-depth interviews with hundreds of insurance agents, demonstrated the importance of psychological rather than bureaucratic factors, that is, strong interpersonal relationships within organizations rather than a focus on efficiency above all else.⁷⁵ Likert's work on institutional morale attracted the attention of social scientific advisers of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and in 1939 – on the very day that Hitler invaded Poland – Likert became director of the department's survey unit, the Division of Program Surveys, tasked with conducting interviews with farmers across the United States. In this new role, Likert built on Lazarsfeld's approach to questionnaires and interviews, and drew a clear distinction between the openness to free answers

⁷³ Lazarsfeld's analysis of the 1948 presidential election confirmed many of these findings, emphasizing again the importance of social context. According to this study, media was more likely to merely confirm beliefs already held than convince individuals of new ideas. Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Election* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

⁷⁴ Lazarsfeld, "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir," 296.

⁷⁵ Converse 155.

advocated in his division and the standardized responses demanded by Gallup- and Roper-style poll questions. At the same time, he cautioned his interviewers to avoid “emotionally charged words” and recognized the need to construct basic questionnaire templates that eliminated as much bias as possible in their wording.⁷⁶

Gradually Likert helped to expand the Division of Program Surveys, arguing to anyone who would listen that the agricultural problems his unit was studying needed to be understood within a broader context of national economic health and morale. In 1941 the Division of Program Surveys began working closely with the Bureau of Intelligence within the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF). Likert’s division helped the OFF to survey American opinions and morale as war loomed. The U.S. entry into the war stimulated the creation of other federal agencies with the goal of studying opinions and attitudes within the United States and its armed forces. Elmo Roper briefly led a separate polling division, and Lazarsfeld was asked by the director of the Bureau of Intelligence to make recommendations on the best way to phrase questions, often reviewing questionnaires for Likert’s and Roper’s units before they were deployed in the field.⁷⁷ Eventually Lazarsfeld’s attempt to mediate the disagreement between Likert and Roper about how to approach questionnaires was published in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*.⁷⁸ Overall, surveys were deployed with greater frequency than ever before, as “experts” from a variety of academic disciplines and private institutions advised the government that in this war, it was both necessary and possible to study and quantify the psychology of citizens on the home front.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 156.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 195-6.

⁷⁸ Paul Lazarsfeld, “The Controversy over Detailed Interviews: An Offer for Negotiation,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 8 (Spring 1944): 38-60.

In 1941 the federal government established a National Opinion Research Center in affiliation with the University of Chicago.

As the end of the war approached, this concern with citizen attitudes was expanded to (soon to be) defeated enemy populations. Given his experience designing research to uncover morale, Likert was named director of the Morale Division of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, a project intended to determine the economic, physical, and emotional effects of intensive Allied bombing campaigns in Germany.⁷⁹ After 1945, support for government-funded polling within the United States waned. Domestic opinion research continued, but it was funded largely by academic and commercial sources rather than government.⁸⁰ In contrast, Congressional interest in opinion research on foreign populations increased. In addition to funding survey divisions working directly under the American, British, and French occupation forces, the U.S. government, along with the British and French governments, took an interest in promoting German-led opinion research. Among those who profited most from this foreign support were Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's Allensbach Institute and Theodor Adorno's reconstituted Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt. And both Noelle-Neumann and Adorno had learned many of their techniques, either directly or indirectly, from Paul Lazarsfeld.

The Central European Connection: Lazarsfeld, Adorno, and Noelle-Neumann

Theodor Adorno arrived in Newark in 1938 to begin work on Lazarfeld's Princeton Radio Research Project. Columbia University already had a relationship with Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, and other members of the early Institute for Social Research

⁷⁹ This project is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

⁸⁰ Converse 182.

originally based in Frankfurt, who had fled Germany soon after Hitler's rise to power. Drawing on his friendly relationships with Columbia professor Robert Lynd as well as their mutual friend Lazarsfeld, Horkheimer was able to arrange a position for Adorno working with Lazarsfeld's project, based out of the University of Newark at the time.⁸¹ Adorno's arrival brought to the fore latent tensions between American and European social scientists as well as between gentiles and those of Jewish descent, tensions of which Lazarsfeld was already only too well aware. The collaboration of the two social scientists has often been depicted as the seminal moment in which the embodiment of empirical research (Lazarsfeld) encountered the paragon of theoretical speculation (Adorno).⁸² Adorno's time in the United States working under the auspices of the Princeton Radio Research Project has frequently been described as the unsatisfying and confused clash of American and European values. But such assessments ignore Lazarsfeld's own European background, and the fact that his interest in statistical analysis and empirical social research preceded his arrival in the United States. They also occlude Lazarsfeld's relative openness to theoretical concerns, and his belief (repeated throughout his career) that "a combination of 'insight' and quantification" was necessary for effective analysis.⁸³ At the same time, such accounts usually overlook Adorno's (however tentative) embrace of empirical research methods once he returned to Germany. Recently the frame of interpretation has shifted within the study of cultural and intellectual history, and a lively

⁸¹ Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995), 268.

⁸² See Fleck, *A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences* for a particularly scathing critique of Adorno's contributions to the project (or lack thereof) and what Fleck describes as ignorance of basic social research principles. Other writers have been more sympathetic to and even admiring of Adorno, including Detlev Claussen, "Intellectual Transfer; Theodor W. Adorno's American Experience," *New German Critique* No. 97 (Winter 2006): 5-14.

⁸³ Lazarsfeld, "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir," 284.

interest in the histories of transatlantic exchange and transfer has motivated more scholars to see in Adorno's sojourn in America an episode of "transfer of experience."⁸⁴

At the time of his arrival in Newark, Adorno was known largely for his philosophical work on music, and it was in this capacity that Lazarsfeld believed he could be of use on the Princeton Radio Research Project. Adorno himself knew he had much to learn; the concept of a "project" itself was foreign to him prior to his arrival in the United States.⁸⁵ As part of his contribution to the project, Adorno proposed developing a typology of music listeners, iterating a lengthy list of listener types ranging from "the sensuous type" to "the musical sportsman" to "the musically indifferent." His project proposal of 1938 alluded to his newfound perception of the necessity to at least reference a more scientific approach: "The author set to work at once ... Because he was convinced, however, of the interdependence of theory and empirical research, he very soon discovered that it was necessary to alter some of his theoretical aims and ideas, especially in those cases in which he discovered that American conditions differed from the European."⁸⁶ Even the act of categorizing music listeners was a nod to what Adorno understood to be one of the aims of American social research. He also described the interviewing method that would later inform the Frankfurt School's empirical work in West Germany, proposing "the method of following the respondents own suggestions as far as possible," and then, ideally, "only when he comes, through his own suggestions, to one of the crucial points of our study, to try to induce him

⁸⁴ Claussen 6.

⁸⁵ Theodor Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, Eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1968), 340.

⁸⁶ Adorno, Memorandum, Music in Radio (June 26, 1938), 1. Paul Felix Lazarsfeld Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 25, Subject File: Planning Project (2) – Princeton Radio Research (1), Folder: Princeton Radio Research Project – Adorno, Theodor.

by more precise questions to discuss problems interesting to us.”⁸⁷ The method referenced here was that of the “detailed interview” or “open-ended interview” developed by Lazarsfeld.

However, Adorno’s references to current research practices could not conceal a proposal that included many unsupported assumptions and a general disdain of American research practices. Colleagues on the Radio Project objected to various aspects of Adorno’s approach. Criticized by one colleague for confusing “aesthetic judgments and questions of scientific fact,” Adorno retorted that “an analysis of social phenomena which has no notion whatsoever of what ought to be done and what is bad is completely meaningless.”⁸⁸ In his response to Adorno’s 1938 project proposal, Lazarsfeld sternly pointed out its pitfalls. “You know that I have an unchanging respect for your ideas and that I am sure our project will in the end profit greatly by your cooperation,” Lazarsfeld wrote. “But you also know that I have great objections against the way you present your ideas and against your disregard of evidence and systematic empirical research.”⁸⁹ He pointed out several instances in which Adorno’s insistence on using Latin or French phrases could make him appear arrogant and his ideas obscure to American readers. Most damningly: “Your disrespect for possibilities alternative to your own ideas becomes the more disquieting

⁸⁷ Ibid.,101.

⁸⁸ Adorno to Paul Lazarsfeld, Re: Reply to Dr. Gora’s Letter. Paul Felix Lazarsfeld Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 25, Subject File: Planning Project (2) – Princeton Radio Research (1), Folder: Princeton Radio Research Project – Adorno, Theodor.

⁸⁹ Lazarsfeld to Adorno, undated (some time after June 1938). Paul Felix Lazarsfeld Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 25, Subject File: Planning Project (2) – Princeton Radio Research (1), Folder: Princeton Radio Research Project – Adorno, Theodor.

when your text leads to the suspicion that you don't even know how an empirical check upon a hypothetical assumption is to be made."⁹⁰

Lazarsfeld's harsh response was not too far from the mark. Of all the members of the early Frankfurt School under Max Horkheimer, only Erich Fromm had experience using surveys and other empirical research methods to assess the thoughts and experiences of men and women. In fact, once Fromm was forced out of the circle around Horkheimer and left Columbia University, the university became increasingly disenchanted with the Frankfurt School as a whole.⁹¹ Adorno thus benefited enormously from exposure to Lazarsfeld's research methods, and his further work in connection with *The Authoritarian Personality*, the most famous empirical work produced by members of the Frankfurt School during their stay in the United States, as well as the empirical research they conducted upon returning to Germany after the war, is scarcely conceivable without this collaborative period.

Meanwhile, despite the stagnation of the social sciences in Germany after 1933, some forward-thinking Germans nevertheless perceived that the opinion research techniques refined by Lazarsfeld in the United States could be of use in the Third Reich as well. Most notably, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, the future co-founder of the Institut für Demoskopie at Allensbach, avidly sought a foothold in the field. Born in 1916 in Berlin, Noelle went on to spend 1937-38 at the University of Missouri-Columbia on a scholarship funded by the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), studying journalism and the evolving field of U.S. public opinion research, then dominated by George Gallup's

⁹⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁹¹ Thomas Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 84.

statistical methods. Her doctoral thesis synthesized this knowledge and also drew from published polls to analyze U.S. public opinion with respect to Germany. Noelle-Neumann hoped that the methods she had studied in the United States could be put to use within Germany itself. She later claimed that the Nazi regime was uninterested in implementing the empirical research practices she advocated, but she was able to hone her personal interviewing techniques as a journalist for the Nazi party organ *Das Reich*.⁹² Sociologist Christopher Simpson has contended that these techniques have a more insidious origin. He argues that the ideas and methodologies Noelle-Neumann developed in her youth under the influence of National Socialism continued to infect her theories and practices throughout her life.⁹³ Simpson suggests that her interviewing techniques were themselves influenced by the Nazi SD's practice of sending interviewers on train trips across the Reich to strike up conversations with ordinary Germans in an attempt to determine popular attitudes.⁹⁴

This analysis may be true; although Noelle-Neumann continually denied anything but superficial allegiance to the Nazi party and its principles, such allegations dogged her throughout her lifetime.⁹⁵ However, National Socialist ideology was far from the only influence on her development as an opinion researcher. Her obsession with refining survey

⁹² Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "25 Jahre Meinungsforschung in Deutschland," Institut für Zeitgeschichte, ED 117/75, Polit. Meinungsforschung, Allensbacher Berichte, Presse-Korrespondenz des Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach.

⁹³ Christopher Simpson, "Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of Silence' and the Historical Context of Communication Theory," in *Journal of Communication* 46 (3), Summer 1996: pp.149-73,162. Simpson's investigation was itself inspired by an earlier expose by Leo Bogart. See Leo Bogart, "The Pollster and the Nazis," in *Commentary* 92 (2), August 1991, pp. 47-50.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹⁵ Most recently and controversially, Jörg Becker's 2013 biography of Noelle-Neumann highlighted the Allensbach Institute co-founders complicity in the Third Reich, leading to lawsuits from Noelle-Neumann's estate, partial retractions by Becker, and the ceasing of publication of the biography. Jörg Becker, *Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann: Demoskopin zwischen NS-Ideologie und Konservatismus* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2013).

structure and individual questions harkened back to Lazarsfeld's own analysis of "the art of asking why." In addition to his work on question construction, Lazarsfeld's thoughts on "the obligations of the 1950 pollster to the 1984 historian," as articulated in a speech to the American Association for Public Opinion Research, also seem to have influenced the way in which Noelle-Neumann thought about the significance of her research. In this speech, Lazarsfeld asked his audience, "do we not have a tendency to ask questions which will make interesting reading in tomorrow's newspapers? Don't we overlook the fact that, in a way, the pollster writes contemporary history? Might not the 1984 historian reproach us for not having given enough thought to what he will want to know about 1950?"⁹⁶ According to Lazarsfeld, opinion research would aid the future historian in analyzing changes in the values and attitudes of people in a given time and place, and their relationship to actions and events. It was no coincidence that in her memoir, published in 2006, Noelle-Neumann reflected on her life's work and suggested that historians would one day thank her for making such rich, dependable sources available for the study of modern Germany. "Only with the help of demoscropy," she declared, "can truly independent information about what the people of a country felt and thought about a certain moment in history be determined ... With representative polling, there now exists at [historians'] disposal, for the first time in history, a medium through which the people themselves speak to historians."⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Paul Lazarsfeld, "The Obligations of the 1950 Pollster to the 1984 Historian," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol 14. No. 4 (Winter 1950-51): 617-638, 618.

⁹⁷ "Nur mit Hilfe der Demoskopie können wirklich unabhängige Informationen darüber gewonnen werden, was die Bevölkerung eines Landes zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt der Geschichte gefühlt und gedacht hat ... Mit der Repräsentivumfrage stand nun zum ersten Mal in der Geschichte ein Medium zur Verfügung, durch das die Bevölkerung selbst zu den Historikern spricht." Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen* (Munich: Herbig, 2006), 157.

Noelle-Neumann and her husband Erich Peter Neumann also included four works authored or co-authored by Lazarsfeld – more than any other author – in a reference list of “selected literature” in the first *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung* (Yearbook of Public Opinion), their compilation of what they deemed to be the most interesting or instructive results from various opinion polls conducted between 1947 and 1955. The cited works included Lazarsfeld’s 1954 volume *Mathematical Thinking in the Social Sciences*, as well as the textbook *The Language of Social Research: A Reader in the Methodology of Social Research*, published in 1954. This latter volume contained short articles by Lazarsfeld and others on everything from multivariate analysis to the panel method to the process of opinion formation and interviewing methods.

In 1958, the Neumanns spearheaded the publication of the second edition of Lazarsfeld’s *Marienthal* study. Erich Peter Neumann wrote to Lazarsfeld that he believed the younger generation of Germans would benefit from a demonstration of “what approximately twenty-five years ago in the field of empirical social research was achieved here.”⁹⁸ Their goal with the re-publication was not to make a profit – they only printed a few thousand copies of the book – but to embed empirical social research in all its forms deeper into the fabric of German society. Lazarsfeld’s early work in Austria gave the founders of West Germany’s most prolific and infamous public opinion research institute the opportunity to situate their practice within the history of German-speaking Europe, to

⁹⁸ “Während ich diesen Brief schreibe, stehe ich noch unter dem unmittelbaren Eindruck der Lektüre, insbesondere des von Ihnen formulierten Nachwortes. Dieser Eindruck hat mich zu dem festen Entschluß gebracht, dieses Werk in seiner originalen Form neu verlegen zu wollen, weil ich es für unermesslich wertvoll halte, einer jungen Generation zu demonstrieren, was hier vor annähernd 25 Jahren auf dem Gebiet der empirischen Sozialforschung geleistet worden ist.” Erich Peter Neumann to Paul Lazarsfeld, October 27, 1958, http://agso.uni-graz.at/marienthal/archiv/institut_fuer_demoskopie_allensbach/korrespondenz_paul_lazarsfeld/05_05.jpg.

show that it was not a purely foreign, Anglo-American import but an enlightening tool with roots in their own culture.

Through his work on both sides of the Atlantic, Lazarsfeld helped to initiate a new way of approaching and, ultimately, quantifying “the masses” who so troubled observers of modern culture before World War II in both the United States and continental Europe. In doing so, he helped set the stage for the application of opinion research by the Allies in occupied Europe, while also giving Germans the tools for their own future opinion research. His commitment to studying opinions “*in the making*” would be reflected in the efforts of Allied survey units, Noelle-Neumann’s Allensbach Institute, and Adorno and the reconstituted Frankfurt School, as well as in the attempts by ordinary West Germans after the war to build an open, democratic society in which public opinion could, indeed, be made.

CHAPTER II

POLLING UNDER OCCUPATION: BRINGING PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH TO GERMANY

It took a war for the ideas and methods of Paul Lazarsfeld, George Gallup, Elmo Roper, Rensis Likert and others to make their way to the streets of Germany. As it gradually became clear over the course of 1943 and 1944 that the Allies would win World War II, civilian and military leaders debated the ideal approach to ensure future global security. After much deliberation, western Allied policy came to be shaped in important ways by the principles that U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had outlined in his 1941 State of the Union Address. In this influential speech describing the goals and benefits of democracy, Roosevelt described the “four freedoms”: freedom of speech and expression; freedom of worship; freedom from want; and freedom from fear.¹ On hand to administer and assess the availability of these freedoms in occupied territories was a growing cadre of experts, nurtured in Allied intelligence agencies such as the Office of Strategic Services and institutions that merged academic with strategic and commercial objectives. These experts – like Lazarsfeld, Roper, and Likert – brought trust in science and statistics to bear on their assignments, and they were eager to develop new technical tools to describe the conditions they encountered and the changes they hoped to see.²

¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union,” January 6, 1941. The speech has been digitized and is available on the FDR Presidential Library’s website at <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/od4frees.html>.

² Among others, see James H. Capshew, *Psychologists on the March: Science, Practice, and Professional Identity in America, 1929-1969* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Among the tools immediately implemented in this process was empirical public opinion polling. Small survey units trailed the combat divisions of Anglo-American forces in Italy in 1943 and France in 1944, and a full-scale operation was launched in Germany in 1945. These units quickly began polling residents on topics including access to food, living conditions, radio listening habits, and political stances. While public opinion polling was already a normal part of the political culture in the United States and England, it was World War II that facilitated the spread of public opinion research worldwide. And while combatant states in previous wars had often attempted to assess the morale of their enemies, in no earlier conflict had the victorious armies striven so overtly and systematically to evaluate present conditions among conquered populations – and measure their progression toward the future state that the victors imagined for them.

Empirical opinion research, as conceptualized and carried out by the Anglo-American invasion and occupation forces, was an informational strategy but also part of an idealistic impulse to transform the political culture that the western Allies believed had led to war in Europe in the first place. Inspired by the democratic rhetoric of George Gallup and Elmo Roper, survey research teams hoped that polling would inspire democratic ways of thinking as well as promote the practice of democracy on a daily basis within formerly fascist states. At the same time, they used polling as a way to understand the people who still had to be viewed cautiously as potential enemies. In this way, the Allies, especially the Americans, lumbered under two conflicting perspectives: a desire to bring democracy to the people of Europe, and a fundamental distrust of those same people.

Early pollsters operating under the auspices of the Allied occupation forces were viewed by native populations with a similar combination of hope and trepidation.

Interviewers sent out to record the opinions of Italian, French, and German people sometimes observed reticence and distrust on the part of their subjects, but also noted – especially in Italy and Germany – at times a willingness, even a compulsion, to speak openly about topics that had been taboo under fascist rule. Anonymous, empirically-grounded public opinion research appeared for some to offer a means to assess the existence of the freedoms that Roosevelt had described in his speech, as well as a way of enacting freedom of speech and expression. While earlier regimes in Germany had been aware of the importance of public opinion for modern mass politics, they either viewed the majority of citizens as amorphous and unintelligible and so deferred to newspapers or elites for expressions of what they saw as the true “public opinion” or engaged in varying levels of surveillance to unearth what they believed no one would state openly. Public opinion research based on random or quota sampling of the entire adult population of a given area was in this way a new concept in Germany and would for decades to come be described as an American import, identified with its foremost exponent in the United States, George Gallup.³

In this chapter, I analyze the implementation of public opinion research in the wake of Allied military operations in Germany. Doing so means examining the other locations at which Anglo-American Allied experts experimented with opinion polling. Scholars who have previously treated survey research under the Allied occupation, most prominently Richard Merritt and Uta Gerhardt, have meticulously examined polling results and the bureaucratic decision-making behind the survey operations in the western zones of Germany, but neglected to investigate the lessons learned by the Allies in earlier polling

³ Felix Keller, *Archäologie der Meinungsforschung: Mathematik und die Erzählbarkeit des Politischen* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 2001), 35.

efforts in the Middle East, Italy, and France.⁴ Certainly conditions were different in each area, but it was in the Middle East and Sicily that Allied social scientists first tested and expanded upon Gallup and Roper's visions for opinion research as a tool of democratic policy, and in doing so transformed the potentially threatening foreign masses into knowable groups. Successes at each test site on the road to Germany reinforced confidence in the methodology of representative survey techniques.

In addition, historians of public opinion research in Germany have not examined the physical and intellectual labor that went into producing poll results on various topics, as well as the experience of those who were surveyed. By doing so, I hope to integrate the early years of opinion polling more deeply into the larger history of the immediate postwar period, where it belongs. Opinion polling efforts in the context of the occupation of Germany were the product of transnational processes of knowledge transfer and experimentation, as well as responses to the challenges of operating among physically and psychologically traumatized locations and populations. As polling efforts continued into the 1950s, they became ever more invested with ideas about democratic governance and behavior by American advisors and practitioners.

⁴ Merritt uses survey results to assess the success of the American denazification and democratization projects, but does not analyze polling itself as a mechanism of democratic governance. Richard L. Merritt, *Democracy Imposed: U.S. Occupation Policy and the German Public, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Gerhardt is more interested in method, but primarily from a disciplinary perspective. Uta Gerhardt, *Denken der Demokratie: Die Soziologie im atlantischen Transfer des Besatzungsregimes* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007). Kruke, who has written the most extensive analysis of the use of public opinion polling in the political process of the Federal Republic, devotes less than one percent of the pages in her book to examining the foundational period between 1945 and 1949, offering what is at best a very superficial overview. Anja Kruke, *Demoskopie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Meinungsforschung, Parteien und Medien 1949-1990* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2007).

Early Experiments

The first testing ground of empirical opinion research techniques on potentially hostile populations was not a Western European nation, but the Middle East. Fifteen towns in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine provided the raw material – the interviewees – for a United Nations project intended to demonstrate the democratizing potential of survey research. Stuart Dodd, Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut, led the project, a survey of a random sample of Arab and Jewish radio owners about their listening habits.⁵ Dodd conceived the project as having two primary aims: understanding these habits, and investigating the potential for polling as “an instrument of democratic policy.”⁶ The former aim would be translated most immediately into useful information for various Allied broadcasters, but it was the latter aim that structured much of the report.

While the report from this operation offered copious data related to radio programming preferences, and this information clearly had uses in and of itself, the writers chose to emphasize the larger function of the study: “In sum, this radio poll demonstrated that, under appropriate conditions, public policy in the Middle East can be democratically guided by scientific polls of public opinion.”⁷ Several of the interviewers who had been selected from the local population apparently were attracted to the job because of this democratic promise. The authors of the report remarked that some of the local people selected to serve as interviewers viewed opinion research as a way to foster a more direct

⁵ Stuart Dodd and assistants, *A Pioneer Radio Poll in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine* (Palestine: The Government Printer, 1943). Subtitle notes: “With the cooperation of the public and the Egyptian, Lebanese, Palestine, Syrian, American, British, and French Government Authorities.” The “United Nations” at this point referred to the group of nations that had agreed to come together to oppose the Axis powers – the basis for the institution we call the United Nations today.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

relationship between their people and the authorities, influencing public policy for the better.⁸ The authors concluded:

Polling both implements and symbolizes the ideal of democracy which underlies the Atlantic Charter, as a fundamental war aim of the United Nations. This radio poll helped, in its small field, to implement democracy by determining the will of the people so that the broadcasters can adjust their public policies to it. It symbolized democracy in that the local populations were surprized [*sic*] and pleased to find that government authorities, in one department at least, really cared to know the desire of the individual citizen. To see government broadcasters apparently spending money and effort to hear the voice of the people was commented upon by many as a lesson in the ideals of democracy.⁹

For those hoping to extend opinion research efforts to other nations, this was a promising outcome indeed. Dodd's findings appeared to provide proof that the idealistic ambitions of American opinion researchers to empower "the people" were achievable, at least among groups unfamiliar with polling.

Following in the footsteps of Lazarsfeld, however, Dodd was just as concerned with methodology and its reliability as with the end result. The technique of surveying was what made this "lesson in the ideals of democracy" possible, according to Dodd and his assistants. In a document of fifty-seven pages (not including appendices), the section devoted to explaining the survey construction and execution process and to analyzing the method's reliability and usability comprised twenty pages. The writers of the report detailed the lengthy process that went into the effective construction and standardization of their "scientific instrument for mass observation" – the opinion survey.¹⁰ They explained the considerations one must take into account when determining the ideal sample size and crafting instructions for interviewers, as well as the behind the scenes work, such as

⁸ Ibid., 39.

⁹ Ibid., 57.

¹⁰ Ibid., 38.

negotiating with authorities and developing effective conversational styles, essential for a successful study. To test the reliability of their method, the team analyzed the responses from interviews conducted by different interviewers, with differing family members, at various times of the month, with different degrees of familiarity between interviewer and subject, and various sample sizes.

In the end, the experimental polling project demonstrated a scientific law of sorts that would prove to be significant in the polling of defeated Germans: while the responses of individuals were often unreliable – that is, they tended to vary based on the status of the interviewer, the date and time of the interview, and other factors – the responses of the polled sample as a whole were quite dependable.¹¹ This was a fascinating reversal of the way in which elites had once viewed the masses. Whereas crowd psychologists like Gustave Le Bon and social scientists like Leopold von Wiese had warned that individuals became peculiarly opaque and uncontrollable when brought into a crowd, Dodd's project suggested that modern survey techniques actually made the aggregate a more reliable source of information than the individual. Deciphering the masses required only a particular type of training and expertise, based in science and statistics.

The insights from the project would soon be brought to bear in Italy following the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943. But Dodd and his assistants did not claim that their method in the Middle East could be applied wholesale to other regions; each population was different and required some sort of experimental polling study to determine reasonable expectations for reliability, ideal sample size, and willingness of the population to participate. The earliest empirical opinion research in Allied-occupied Sicily was

¹¹ Ibid., 50.

conducted therefore not as a full-scale polling project but as a three-month trial under the auspices of the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF, a joint American-British formation) beginning in November 1943.¹²

The PWB initially viewed social scientific polling techniques from a utilitarian perspective, as a means to obtain intelligence among recently conquered populations quickly and efficiently and present the resulting information in a precise way.¹³

Representation of information was just as important as the information itself; the way in which poll results were analyzed statistically and delivered as stark, unambiguous numbers presented an opportunity for Allied officials to break through the morass of complaints and silences emanating from every street corner in newly liberated Sicily. To lead this effort, the PWB invited Stuart Dodd to put his experience in the Middle East to use in Sicily. Although there were many American social scientists well-versed in polling techniques by this time, Dodd's experience polling potentially hostile populations unaccustomed to this "democratic" science was thought to be of use in Sicily. Although the success of the Middle Eastern study had alleviated some concerns, Allied authorities were still uncertain about the willingness of defeated populations to respond truthfully to their questions; unlike Americans and Britons, Italians were completely unfamiliar with the concept of public opinion polling, and there was some doubt that they would be receptive to it.

¹² The Allied Control Commission did not operate in Italy until this time. In Italy, as opposed to Germany, the Anglo-American forces operated mainly through local officials and at the beginning entrusted much more power to the Italian government, led by Marshall Badoglio.

¹³ Public Opinion Survey Section, Psychological Warfare Branch, Allied Force Headquarters, *Surveys of Public Opinion Held in Sicily November 1943-January 1944* (Palermo: I.R.E.S., 1944), ix.

Nevertheless, the PWB Survey Unit was instructed to attempt to undertake a variety of surveys of the population. In addition to making more routine inquiries into food supplies and everyday needs, these surveys, as in the Middle East, investigated media usage, particularly radio listening habits, as well as opinions about public safety and the effectiveness of various public officials.¹⁴ Between November 1943 and January 1944, surveys of a random sample of seven thousand Sicilians (higher than the average sample for a modern opinion poll; Dodd and his staff deemed a true representative sample unattainable under the disruptive conditions in Sicily and southern Italy) were conducted on these topics. Initially Italian-speaking Allied personnel conducted interviews, but as early as two weeks after the launching of the invasion of Sicily, the PWB began recruiting local Sicilian interviewers. The Survey Unit in Sicily would, at the height of its operations, employ 31 Anglo-American personnel and 171 Italians, including 100 Italian interviewers.¹⁵

According to Dodd, in order to “accustom the public to surveys” in Sicily, the team began with examinations of social and economic topics and only gradually incorporated potentially sensitive political questions into their surveys.¹⁶ The Survey Unit also spread information about their project through radio, newspaper, and leaflet announcements and attempted to publish the results of some surveys in order to build interest and confidence in the team’s activities. Over the course of several surveys, the unit observed a decreasing

¹⁴ For the earliest public opinion research conducted in Italy, also see documents at the National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (henceforth NARA II), RG 331, Box 923, Folder on “Liaison, Public Opinion Poll,” Dec. 1943.

¹⁵ *Surveys of Public Opinion Held in Sicily November 1943-January 1944*, Appendix III, Administration and Personnel.

¹⁶ Stuart Dodd, “A Barometer of International Security,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer, 1945): 194-200, 198.

percentage of respondents refusing to answer or replying “no opinion” to some political questions, such as those asking about level of confidence in their public officials.¹⁷ In some cases, polling resulted in tangible changes for the benefit of the local population, as when interviewers learned that the distribution of sugar was much slower and less efficient than had been understood. Dodd’s team was able to present its data to local officials and so spur a nearly immediate improvement in the delivery of sugar rations.¹⁸ This example also illustrates the inextricability of economic and political questions in occupied territories: distribution of crucial food items was intimately related to relationships between the people and civilian and military authorities and to the question of adherence to stated laws and regulations. Dodd’s team’s ability to show that it could use its findings to enact change undoubtedly made Sicilians more receptive to opinion research.

Again, as in the radio poll in the Middle East, the primary lesson from the polls as emphasized by the report writers was that such survey work could produce “organized and reliable results,” even when the surveyed population had no prior experience with polling.¹⁹ Further, “As in Syria, the overt and conspicuous procedure of polling was a source of encouragement and reassurance to the people; it may be that in the twilight period between war and peace, the practice of ‘polling’ by the occupying authority, in addition to its function as an aid to administration, will prove to be amongst the procedures capable of assisting in the political reorientation of conquered enemy peoples.”²⁰ The willingness of

¹⁷ *Surveys of Public Opinion Held in Sicily November 1943-January 1944*, 65. Here the report noted an increasing willingness of respondents to honestly rate their confidence in the police, or *Carabinieri* (described as “the most delicate” question in the surveys covering views of public officials), and credited this shift to the “considerable publicity which survey work received” in various media.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁹ *Surveys of Public Opinion Held in Sicily November 1943-January 1944.*, x.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

many respondents to give presumably less desirable answers (from the perspective of the Allies) was also viewed as demonstrating a positive change in political culture. This was the case in the report's analysis of responses to a question about attitudes toward Italian military collaboration with the Allies in the war effort. The report writers described the 15% of those who answered that no, Italy should not collaborate with the other Allies to help win the war, as "evidence of the security and freedom which Sicilians already feel, in expressing their opinions to the Allied authorities."²¹ They suggested that this result would have been highly unlikely under Italian fascist or German rule, as civilians would have feared punishment for answers that contravened the expectations of the authorities. Under this logic, willingness to admit to a viewpoint unpopular with current leadership could be viewed as a victory in the long-term war of political and cultural rehabilitation.

The writers of the report took their role very seriously, repeatedly emphasizing the scientific basis of their methodology and referring to interviewers and project assistants as "survey engineers." But they also showed awareness of the potential for raw poll results to mislead. At several points, the report writers strove to place results in historical and socioeconomic context, pointing out that, for instance, the differences in the percentage of those calling for stricter regulation of grain taxation in Palermo vs. Caltanissetta vs. Messina were only comprehensible – and significant – when one understood the agricultural history of each city.²² Dodd and his assistants understood that the oft-emphasized power of poll results – their ability to represent information using what seemed to be simple, straightforward numbers – could also be a negative when those numbers only conveyed part of the story.

²¹ Ibid., 63.

²² *Surveys of Public Opinion Held in Sicily November 1943-January 1944*, 50.

Various experiments conducted to determine the reliability of the responses to poll questions in Sicily replicated the findings of the comparable experiments in the Middle East: while there was some fluctuation at an individual level – e.g., when a given respondent was asked the same question after a week or was asked by a different interviewer – the responses for the surveyed Sicilian public as a whole remained “highly constant.”²³ By surveying a larger sample of a given population, Dodd’s team was able to mitigate the effects of individual dishonesty or changeability. The lesson, it seems, was that individuals were unpredictable and sometimes untrustworthy; but groups – that is, statistically delineated groups, not undifferentiated masses – were both manageable and trustworthy. As such they were the basis for a healthy Italian democracy.

The Allied authorities seem to have viewed Dodd’s Survey Unit as experimental, and merely one part of a larger information strategy. In fact, the records of the Allied forces in Sicily indicate that the Allies obtained the majority of their information about the Italian population through surveillance. In some areas, Allied forces relied on the reading of local letters for information even on basic living conditions.²⁴ But it is clear that Anglo-American authorities were seeking to use social scientific techniques to streamline and rationalize the occupation. Survey research especially would play an increasingly important role in occupation policies, including in the removal of fascists from government posts.

While the interim government led by Marshall Badoglio initiated some small-scale bureaucratic purges following Mussolini’s arrest and then flight to northern Italy under German protection, elimination of fascistic elements remained disorganized and haphazard

²³ Ibid., Appendix 1, “Reliability of the Surveys.”

²⁴ See Report of March 1944, Civil Censorship Section from Agrigento, Sicilia, NARA II, RG 331, Region 1, Sicily, Box 3632, Folder 10100/101/16 (337).

into spring 1944 (and beyond, some would argue). The most prominent attempt to develop an organized method to guide the defascistization of Italy was led by the supreme governor of Sicily, Charles Poletti, an American. Poletti worked with political experts and Italians to create the *scheda personale* or personal card, a precursor to the questionnaire used in denazification efforts in Germany.²⁵ First put into systematic use in mid-1944, the *scheda personale* was to be completed by “office bearers, functionaries, and other public servants” in order to determine the degree of their collaboration with Fascism.²⁶ The *scheda personale* distinguished between two types of fascists: those who remained loyal to Mussolini even after the decision of King Victor Emmanuel III to arrest him; and those who demonstrated loyalty to the King following this event and Mussolini’s creation of the Republic of Salo in northern Italy. Although ridiculed by many Italians, Poletti’s questionnaire form was at least a well-intentioned effort to bring order, logic, and, above all, science to a process that had until then had little rhyme or reason.

Further north, a small survey unit was also attached to the Allied invasion forces at Normandy in 1944.²⁷ The purpose of this unit was to assess the attitudes of the inhabitants of northern France to the British and American forces. Local French civilians trained by the unit conducted roughly one thousand interviews. John Riley, one of Wilson’s assistants, wrote about the difficulties faced by the unit in the *American Sociological Review*. The most daunting challenge faced by the survey unit, according to Riley, was the lack of a basis for proper sampling techniques. In the absence of detailed population statistics, the

²⁵ Roy Palmer Domenico, *Italian Fascists on Trial 1943-48* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 32-34.

²⁶ NARA II RG 331 Box 925, Folder 10000/129/56 labeled “Miscellaneous Dec. 43-Jan. 44.

²⁷ John W. Riley, Jr., “Opinion Research in Liberated Normandy,” *American Sociological Review* Vol. 12, No. 6 (1947): 698-703.

interviewers used area sampling, which required them to interview someone living in every *N*th house in a given area. Since the interviewers had no way of knowing beforehand the characteristics of each household, they tabulated this data as they worked in an attempt to ensure that people of different genders and ages were interviewed. Not surprisingly, Riley's account of the results of the surveys in Normandy highlighted the positivity, optimism, and relief with which the French civilians greeted Allied forces. In comparison with the accounts of Dodd, Riley's language was also remarkably straightforward, with no references to the democratic promise of opinion research projects. The emphasis, for Riley and his colleagues in France, was clearly on acquiring information that would be of immediate use to the Allied forces, including quality and quantity of foodstuffs among the population and reactions to Allied divisions as they moved into France. The small nature of this survey effort in comparison with even the experimental effort launched in Sicily, as well as the straightforwardly informational language applied to the Survey Unit's work, suggests that American and British advisors were much more concerned about what awaited them in Germany. As the most powerful enemy of the Allied cause, Germany also represented the ultimate test of the claim that public opinion research could increase the flow of useful information to Allied forces while also contributing to a more positive relationship between local civilians and foreign military units.

Envisioning the Postwar World

Other than funding scattered efforts by people like Dodd and Poletti in Italy, and Wilson's Survey Unit in France, the Allies concentrated their energy in 1943 and 1944 on defeating their more dangerous and powerful opponent, Germany. Opinion research and

the denazification apparatus eventually deployed among the occupied population of Germany would build upon the precedent established in Italy.²⁸ But between the Allied invasion of Sicily in 1943 and the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, there was also a leap in the scope and ambition of survey researchers. Why? Certainly the eventual Allied consensus on the necessity of the total defeat of Germany unleashed a more vigorous debate about how a defeated Germany would be rebuilt (or not) economically and politically.²⁹ Allied control over defeated portions of Italy had from the beginning been less total and ambitious.³⁰

Another clue is provided by the published work of Stuart Dodd, the very man responsible for bringing opinion research to Sicily. Dodd's perspective was as indebted to trust in the clarifying power of numbers as to hope for a peaceful and democratic world. This vision was strengthened by Dodd's experiences in the Middle East and Sicily, which provided the foundation for his projected plan for the future. In an article published in *The Public Opinion Quarterly* in the summer of 1945, Dodd elaborated on his vision for the

²⁸ A PR release from Allied Headquarters remarked, "The scheda personale or personal questionnaire adopted by the Allied Military Government in Italy as a basis for purging the public administration of Fascist personnel is now being used in occupied parts of Germany, where a similar form - the Fragebogen - has been adopted to weed out Nazis ... Experience so far gained in the military government of Germany proves the value of lessons learned by AMG officers in Sicily and Italy." Press Release of 31 March 1945, Headquarters Allied Commission APO 394, Public Relations Branch, NARA II, RG 331 Box 947.

²⁹ The debates among American policy makers are detailed in Carolyn Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany, 1944-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For a more generous assessment of the infamous Morgenthau Plan, which proposed harsh reparations to be paid by Germany, eventually disregarded in favor of the Marshall Plan, see Wilfried Mausbach, *Zwischen Morgenthau und Marshall: Das wirtschaftspolitische Deutschlandkonzept der USA 1944-1947* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1996).

³⁰ Control over Italy was initially valued, primarily by the British, only as part of a larger strategy of maintaining influence over the Mediterranean region. In the long term, both the British and the Americans would see Italy within the context of the struggle between Communism and western liberalism and devote more resources to creating stability in Italy and preventing communists from taking political control of the peninsula. Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 39-42.

institutionalization of public opinion polling as a tool of the United Nations – that is, as a tool of world peace and democracy. Here Dodd built on the language used by Gallup and Roper to promote opinion polling in the United States, but he added a global dimension, essentially mandating active public opinion research as a requisite attribute of any state claiming to be serving its people. As the title of his article implied, a UN-managed public opinion polling agency would, in his view, serve as “a barometer of international security.” Dodd described the use and fine-tuning of polling methods under his leadership first in Palestine and Syria in 1943, then in Sicily, where unreliability and untruth were measured. “Only when these trials showed high reliability was the polling technique ready to be extended from the democratic countries of its origin to the totalitarian and hostile countries.”³¹ Polling projects in these countries were clearly conceived as a step towards the main objective: the accurate monitoring of the defeated German population.

A global opinion polling apparatus would be beneficial on a variety of levels. Dodd mentioned in passing the way in which opinion polling potentially could empower individuals and so foster democratic values: “It is a mechanism far simpler than the holding of a plebiscite ... It can implement democracy in making the voice of the people heard in government.”³² The violence and demagoguery that had come to be associated with German plebiscites in the 1930s and 1940s would also have made scientific opinion polls more appealing than highly-charged, single-issue referenda. According to Dodd, the possibility for opinion polls to mitigate violence extended far further, however: in his vision, polls would be able to take the pulse of a population and determine its likelihood of

³¹ Stuart Dodd, “A Barometer of International Security,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer, 1945): 194-200, 195-6.

³² *Ibid.*, 196.

contributing to another world war. A United Nations polling body “would serve to measure political pressures that threaten another storm.”³³ However, the examples he listed to illustrate the potential object of postwar surveys demonstrated that this method would not only be applied to the former Axis powers. Among the possible trends to be analyzed, he wrote, were whether “the Germans [are] feeling frustrated, bitter, determining to try again to conquer the world” as well as whether “the American public [is] slipping back to isolationism and neglecting their international responsibilities.”³⁴ What was clear to Dodd was that the ability to carry out surveys was closely connected to freedom of expression, one of the “four freedoms” laid out by Roosevelt in his 1941 State of the Union address. Indeed, Dodd suggested, “permission to survey opinion might even be made a touchstone of whether that freedom of speech guarantee was being observed,” and if not, “violation of such a treaty provision could be brought before the World Court as a justiciable issue.”³⁵

Dodd proposed that each United Nations member country should have national survey teams, thoroughly trained in the most advanced methods, under the auspices either of private non-profits or the government (or occupying authorities in the case of “enemy territories”). Survey results would be reported in a journal published by a coordinating international agency, enabling all countries to know the state of public opinion around the world. The greatest defense against the falsification of survey results by interested parties

³³ Dodd, “A Barometer of International Security,” 196. In a note to this statement that illustrates Dodd’s ambitious effort to quantify all aspects of human interaction, Dodd explained how psychological pressure could be measured: “It [surveying] would measure the force of public opinion and the area in which it operates, thus extending the conception of ‘pressure’ from physics to psychology. In this operational definition of pressure as force times area, ‘force’ in turn is defined as the arithmetic product of the acceleration of change of an index of public opinion times the population-mass thus changed. Thus these psychological forces and pressures become measurable.” *Ibid.*, 196 note 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 196.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 198.

was the application of “the central bureau’s scientific standards,” which would be formulated and then monitored by an international governing body composed of social scientific experts.³⁶

Dodd’s was not merely a cry into the wilderness; his words fell on receptive ears, eager to construct a better world in the wake of catastrophe. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), founded in 1946, was the product of the kind of approach that appealed to Dodd. Perrin Selcer has analyzed the social scientific endeavors of UNESCO in terms of an interdisciplinary effort to harness global diversity and spread norms that would foster a collaborative international community. This program required a new integration of experts and policy makers, and “a new way of knowing grounded in new institutions.”³⁷ This “new way of knowing” called for empirical measurement of the wants, needs, and fears of the world’s citizens. Accordingly, UNESCO would sponsor an Institute for the Social Sciences in Cologne, Germany following the war, although it was never able to bring Dodd’s full vision to fruition.³⁸

In addition, Dodd is representative of the type of ambitious, cosmopolitan expert who would help shape much of American and global policy over the next few decades. Like Lazarsfeld, he brought together different intellectual and cultural traditions throughout his career. Born in Turkey in 1900 to missionary parents, Dodd graduated from Princeton University in 1926 with a degree in Psychology. He then did a postdoctoral fellowship in London, where he worked with Karl Pearson, one of the founders of modern statistics and

³⁶ Ibid., 198.

³⁷ Perrin Selcer, “The View from Everywhere: Disciplining Diversity in post-World War Two International Social Science,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 45: 4 (Fall 2009): 309-329, 311.

³⁸ Several West German institutions, including Max Horkheimer’s Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt, competed for sponsorship by UNESCO. Eventually Rene König of the University of Cologne won the opportunity to lead the institution.

the foremost exponent of what Theodore Porter has termed “statistical utopianism.”³⁹ Dodd seems to have embraced much of Pearson’s faith in statistics, but he sought to harness it to psychology. In fact, Dodd’s ultimate goal was an overarching scientific theory of society and social interaction, a topic he explored in books such as *Dimensions of Society: A Quantitative Systematics for the Social Sciences*, published in 1942, and *A Scientific Foundation for World Culture*, unfinished at his death in 1975. After the war, Dodd accepted the position of Professor of Sociology at the University of Washington, where he was also named director of the fledgling Public Opinion Laboratory. From there he corresponded frequently with Paul Lazarsfeld, as both sought to develop innovative mathematical approaches to statistical analysis.⁴⁰ I have not been able to discover why he was not invited to (or chose not to) lead the Survey Unit in occupied Germany. But he would not be the last Princeton graduate to direct survey work under the auspices of the Allied forces, nor the last to see in polling a force for democratic change.

The German Challenge

Almost immediately after their arrival in western Germany, the Allies undertook several types of surveys of the defeated population. These different surveys, including the Strategic Bombing Survey, the *Fragebogen* or questionnaire that formed the basis of denazification efforts in the western zones, and ongoing general public opinion surveys, gave the occupiers as well as their German assistants an opportunity to expand upon the

³⁹ See Theodore Porter, “Statistical Utopianism in an Age of Aristocratic Efficiency,” *Osiris*, Vol. 17 (2002): 210-227.

⁴⁰ Paul Felix Lazarsfeld Papers, Butler Library, Columbia University, Box 89.

methods employed in the Middle East and Italy. They also deeply influenced future responses to public opinion polling.

The Strategic Bombing Survey was the first major survey project undertaken by the Allies in Germany. Officially established by order of President Roosevelt on November 3, 1944, the survey was intended to determine the effects of American bombing campaigns on the German military effort and various aspects of German life. The goal was to apply the lessons from the survey to the ongoing war against Japan.⁴¹ The Survey consisted of twelve divisions focusing on different types of effects of bombing campaigns. Although primarily concerned with the impact of bombing on industry and the German economy as a whole, political and psychological effects on the civilian population were also considered.

The Morale Division was the unit most concerned with these psychological effects. During the summer of 1945, Morale Division staff examined German documents, both personal and official, and interviewed 3,711 German civilians as well as German military and political leaders.⁴² Division director Rensis Likert oversaw 130 employees at the height of the Division's activity, including some of the future stars of American Sociology and Political Science. Among them was Gabriel Almond, who made his name in 1963 with the publication, in collaboration with Sidney Verba, of *The Civic Culture*, a groundbreaking work on comparative political cultures.⁴³ As Director of the Division of Program Surveys of

⁴¹ A detailed organizational history of the Strategic Bombing Survey can be found in David MacIsaac, *Strategic Bombing in World War II: The Story of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976). Unfortunately, MacIsaac devotes only a few paragraphs to the Morale Division of the Survey.

⁴² The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on German Morale*, 2 Vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, 1947): Volume 1, pp. iii-iv. I consulted a copy of the report held at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich.

⁴³ Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). Almond and Verba used data gleaned from

the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Likert, along with the Office of War Information, had conducted a number of surveys of American civilians and soldiers, but the Strategic Bombing Survey represented a novel extension of such work in defeated territories and a new level of investment and bureaucratic organization. In retrospect, the executive officer of the Morale Division of the Strategic Bombing Survey in Japan, George H. Huey, described the survey as the most recognizable beginning of a new era in social scientific research, marked by the development of large-scale organization and bureaucratic complexity.⁴⁴

While the Morale Division's work was not based on strictly random or probability sampling methods, the team made a concerted effort to obtain a representative snapshot of German attitudes and experiences. Interview subjects were selected to represent a cross-section of the German population. In contrast with the survey efforts in France after the invasion of Normandy, Likert's interviewers could build this cross-section from detailed demographic data. Survey staff drew their sample from military government registration records when possible or, more frequently, from ration card lists from the Department of Nutrition.⁴⁵ Since all Germans at that time had to register with the Department of Nutrition in order to receive crucial rationed food supplies, this meant that the ration card lists had become, within a few months, fairly exhaustive. According to the Strategic Bombing Survey report, once subjects had been identified, interviewers used "the indirect interviewing

opinion polls to compare the political cultures of Great Britain, West Germany, Italy, Mexico, and the United States.

⁴⁴ George H. Huey, "Some Principles of Field Administration in Large-Scale Surveys," *Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol. 11, No. 2 (Summer, 1947): 254-263.

⁴⁵ The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on German Morale*, Vol. 1, 127.

method.”⁴⁶ In this type of interview, the subject was asked broad questions that invited longer narrative responses rather than yes or no answers, and was eventually led to address the specific issues that concerned the investigators – an interview style that originally stemmed from Paul Lazarsfeld’s work. Interviewers were fluent in German and familiar with German history and culture, though not necessarily natives.⁴⁷

The members of the Morale Division of the Survey sought above all to understand why, in the face of near total destruction of German cities, German civilians continued to support the war effort – or at least did not generally disobey orders from the Nazi regime. The writers of the report explained the inaction on the part of German civilians with a blend of situational and cultural factors. First, they called attention to the “terroristic control” exerted by the Nazi party and the Gestapo. Second, the emphasis on discipline and obedience to authority supposedly engrained in German culture resulted in many simply putting their heads down to work at the tasks before them. Third, the writers blamed “the intense emotional nationalism,” intensified by Germany’s geographic position, which led Germans to fear encirclement and deem wars necessary for national survival.⁴⁸

In any event, the report writers observed, these reasons did not matter in practice; nor did the fact that many Germans did indeed question the regime and its actions in the last months of the war. As the Moral Division staff discovered after reading several SD reports, the Nazi regime had reached this conclusion, as well: “German intelligence reports [during the war] invariably distinguished between *Stimmung*, which was the way people felt, and *Haltung*, which was the way they behaved ... The interaction between *Stimmung*

⁴⁶ The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on German Morale*, Volume 1, 109.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

and *Haltung* was important; so long as *Haltung* remained satisfactory, the authorities could afford to ignore a certain lowering of popular morale.”⁴⁹ This early differentiation between *Stimmung* and *Haltung* noted by Nazi authorities and reiterated by American investigators would haunt those interested in democratizing Germany, because they appeared to expose the unpredictable relationship between what Germans said, what they believed, and what they did. Even if morale had faded somewhat over the course of the war and the genocidal regime had been defeated, observers wondered whether, after twelve years of Nazi dictatorship and at least outward subservience to the goals and values of that dictatorship, the Germans could ever be trusted. Perhaps Germans outwardly could play the part of democratic world citizens – but if only *Haltung* and not *Stimmung* was transformed, how could the Allies be certain that German nationalism would not rise again? This concern drove the development of the policies eventually implemented in each zone: the Soviets applied a class-based purge of those who had thrived under Nazism, while the western Allies, and above all the American forces, undertook an effort to “reeducate” Germans. As many scholars have demonstrated, with this hope American occupying forces aimed to transform not only the political structures of West Germany, but cultural practices more broadly.⁵⁰

But how to measure such a transformation? They could spend huge amounts of money and manpower on “reeducating” Germans in schools, movie theaters, and cultural

⁴⁹ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁰ The early emphasis on denazifying the West German educational system reflects this broader focus. See James Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: “Reeducation” and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984). American films, music, and other aspects of American popular culture were also deployed in order to transform German culture in the image of the American occupiers. See Jennifer Fay, *Theaters of Occupation: Hollywood and the Reeducation of Postwar Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

centers, but how could the American, British, and French authorities be sure that West Germans were truly absorbing the new styles of conversation, play, and politics so earnestly offered by their patrons? The success of opinion research projects in the Middle East and Sicily convinced Allied authorities that modern empirical opinion research could serve both as an engine of democratic culture and as a tool with which to evaluate progress toward the hoped-for culture of democracy in the western zones of Germany.

Early efforts to identify and remove those inimical to this democratic culture centered around a *Fragebogen*, or questionnaire. This denazification questionnaire, adapted from the *scheda personale* employed to identify fascists in Italy, introduced many Germans to the survey method.⁵¹ Although the *Fragebogen* were not part of public opinion research *per se*, as surveys of political attitudes and experiences they were part of a larger project to assess the population in an organized way. Each *Fragebogen* consisted of 131 questions, essentially covering the activities of each person who completed the questionnaire throughout his or her life up to that point. The questionnaire experience helped to condition the responses of Germans to the practice of opinion research, in many cases making them more suspicious of its use.

The *Fragebogen*, and the process of denazification in the western zones of which it became a symbol, was despised and ridiculed by many Germans. Most memorably, novelist Ernst von Salomon mocked the process by completing the American questionnaire with lengthy, detailed answers from his own life.⁵² Von Salomon used complete transparency in

⁵¹ See the American Psychological Warfare Division's Press Release of 31 March 1945, NARA II, RG 331 Box 947, Folder 10000/129/241 PRB Press Releases Jan-Mar 1945.

⁵² Ernst von Salomon, *Der Fragebogen* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1951). Von Salomon's violent past as a member of the *Freikorps* and accessory to Weimar Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau's murder in 1922 was detailed in this semi-autobiographical work, one of postwar Germany's early

his responses to great effect; for most West Germans, however, the lesson learned in the process of denazification was that it was much wiser to equivocate in one's responses, and so hide one's involvement with National Socialism. Others objected to the assumption of collective guilt implied in the denazification process. Dolf Sternberger, a German otherwise sympathetic to the project to rebuild Germany as a democracy, observed in a radio broadcast in 1946 that liberation from Nazism brought "no joy in liberation. Mistrust ruled. All were thrown in one pot ... Instead of a golden age, which had been ironically named 'the fourth Reich,' an era of collective guilt and the questionnaire began. Barbed wire ruled rather than a helpful brotherly hand."⁵³

Until August 1946, those who wanted to actively participate in German public life – newspaper editors, for example – were subjected to an even more rigorous screening conducted by a psychiatrist, a "political interrogator," and a psychologist.⁵⁴ The political theorist Carl Schmitt, disgraced after his intellectual collaboration with Nazism, wrote bitterly, but not without some justification, that such investigations relied on a subversion of the elements of friendly conversation in order to interrogate and understand individuals. Allied interviewers did not allow their subjects to defend their views rationally, but instead sought to expose their deepest beliefs under the guise of convivial communication. Further,

bestsellers. His negative assessment of the American occupation as well as his blasé attitude toward Nazi crimes generated both intense criticism and acclaim within the West German public sphere, as I discuss in Chapter Six.

⁵³ "kein Jubel der Befreiung. Es herrschte Mißtrauen. Alle wurden zunächst in einer Topf geworfen ... Statt des goldenen Zeitalters, das man ironisch 'das vierte Reich' genannt hatte, begann die Epoche der Kollektivschuld und der Fragebogen. Statt der helfenden Bruderhand regierte der Stacheldraht." Dolf Sternberger, transcript of "Eine Rede über die Enttäuschungen dieser Zeit," in *Dreizehn Politische Radio-Reden 1946* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1947), 12. At Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach (hereafter DLA Marbach).

⁵⁴ Robert Schmid, Acting Chief, Intelligence Branch, "Memorandum: Intelligence Branch Achievements and Objectives," 5 August 1946, NARA II, RG260 Box 151

Schmitt claimed, the information gleaned about individuals was then used to censor those deemed potential threats to the values of the Allies – a process that belied the claims of those same Allies to be establishing a more democratic culture.⁵⁵

The sense of invasiveness and futility surrounding the denazification process is well represented in a famous cartoon from 1948 (see Fig. 1 below). The cartoonist depicted a figure, presumably an occupation official, who has sliced open a German individual's head in order to pluck out any remnants of Nazism. The denazification process is here depicted as a violent assault on the German body, at one level, and as a hopelessly simplistic exercise on the other. Even American officials eventually conceded that the denazification effort, as dictated by the *Fragebogen*, had been a failure.⁵⁶ As their understanding of Germany and awareness of the realities of governance on the ground grew, their reliance on other methods of information discovery and control also increased.

⁵⁵ Jakob Nordberg, *Sociability and its Enemies: German Political Theory after 1945* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2014), especially pp. 57-68.

⁵⁶ Alexandra Levy argues that negative assessments of denazification in OMGUS polls helped to convince American officials that the process was not working, and that their resources would be put to better use by focusing on reeducation. However, Levy does underestimate the importance of practical and geopolitical concerns on the ground in occupied Germany, perhaps overstating the influence of the OMGUS poll results. Alexandra Levy, "Promoting Democracy and Denazification: American Policymaking and German Public Opinion," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* Vol. 26 Issue 4 (2015): 614-635. On the other hand, Konrad Jarausch argues, denazification measures did succeed in the long run, in the sense that the political influence of the most egregious Nazis and their ideas was radically reduced, while anti-Fascists and others who had not collaborated with the Nazis were given an opportunity to take the lead in the new political parties and, eventually, the government. See Jarausch, *After Hitler*, 55. For a contrary perspective, demonstrating the reversal of many denazification measures by the Adenauer government after 1949, see Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

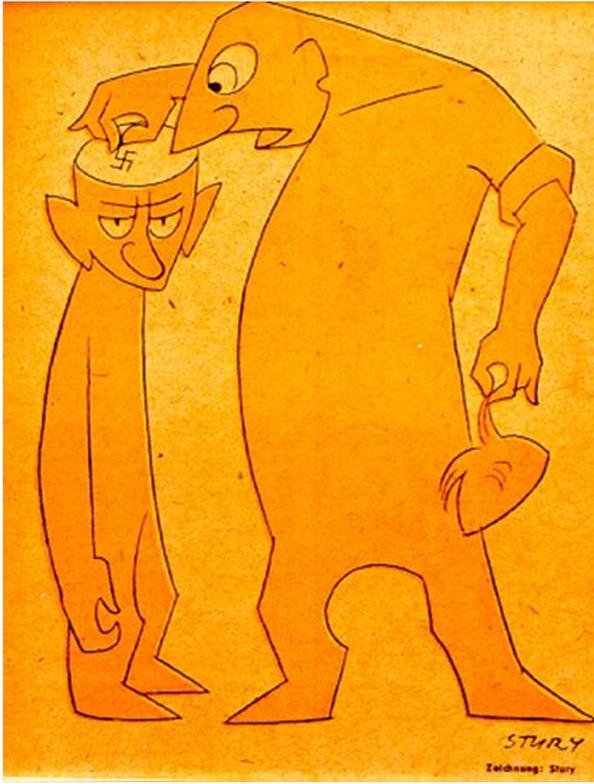


Fig. 1
Denazification cartoon, 1948 (Haus der
Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,
Bonn).

Polling Germans

The Survey Unit of the U.S. Military Government was a complement to and an outgrowth of the work of the Strategic Bombing Survey and the denazification push. Following closely behind invasion forces, in October 1945 an Opinion Survey Section under the Information Control Division (ICD) of the Office of Military Government in Germany (OMGUS) had begun carrying out surveys of individual Germans at a pace of about one Zone-wide survey per week.⁵⁷ The Section was led by Frederick W. Williams, who had been

⁵⁷ Robert Schmid, Acting Chief, Intelligence Branch, "Memorandum: Intelligence Branch Achievements and Objectives," 5 August 1946, NARA II, RG260 Box 151. Williams gives a personal account in an article in the *Weekly Information Bulletin* No. 39 (April 1946), 5-12.

a Research Associate in the Princeton University Office of Public Opinion Research.⁵⁸ In the first two months of operations, interviews were conducted by German-speaking American military personnel. As the scope of the Survey Unit's operations increased, the unit soon employed native German civilians to carry out the surveys.⁵⁹ With the help of ration cards, which virtually every German required in order to obtain food, OMGUS officials had enumerated and categorized nearly every resident of the American zones by spring 1947, allowing for what one visiting social scientist called a "sampler's paradise."⁶⁰ After September 1949, when the military occupation of West Germany formally came to a close, OMGUS was renamed the U.S. High Commission for Germany (HICOG) and the Opinion Survey Section was replaced by the Reactions Analysis Branch, institutionally located within the HICOG Office of Public Affairs. Leo Crespi led the Reactions Analysis Branch under HICOG, and would prove to be a tireless advocate of polling activities in West Germany.

American interest in and support of public opinion polling was crucial in inserting opinion research into military and civilian operations. There was certainly a longer history of social statistics in Germany during the Weimar Republic and under Nazism, but Uta Gerhardt, among others, has demonstrated that the empirical survey research used after 1945, in purpose as well as technique, was first and foremost the product of American

⁵⁸ The Office was founded in 1940 by Psychology professor (and collaborator with Paul Lazarsfeld on the Princeton Radio Research Project) Hadley Cantril, who also helped found the leading journal of the discipline, *Public Opinion Quarterly*.

⁵⁹ See Weekly Operations Bulletin (Information Control Division), 19 January 1946, p. 1, NARA II RG260 Box 151.

⁶⁰ Elmo C. Wilson, quoted in Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt, eds., *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 5.

ideas and influence.⁶¹ However, as we have seen, this product was also a transatlantic creation: empirical opinion research as it was applied by the U.S. military was a novel amalgam of (Central) European sociological and psychological insights and American institutional practices.⁶² Despite the profound impact of European scholars like Paul Lazarsfeld, however, public opinion polling was still deemed by most to be “American” science – largely because George Gallup, an American, was its most visible ambassador.

In Germany, the “Americanness” of opinion research was reinforced by the emphasis placed on it by the U.S. authorities in comparison with the other Allies. Although French and British occupation authorities also sponsored opinion polling in the German zones under their authority in the early years of occupation, American support was both more enthusiastic and enduring. French and, especially, British officials looked to the Americans as pioneers in this field. In September 1946, an official in the Intelligence Section of the British military government in Germany requested assistance from the OMGUS survey team with words that emphasized the American (“Gallup”) system’s dominance in the eyes of the British forces: “We are considering applying the ‘Gallup’ system of public opinion research to the British Zone ... You have so much more experience in this type of work than we have that I would be most grateful to receive any help and advice that you can give us.”⁶³ The British quickly built up their own opinion research arm, the Public Opinion Research Office (PORO), which exchanged polling results relatively

⁶¹ Gerhardt, *Denken der Demokratie*.

⁶² Transatlantic exchanges in communication research in particular are well documented in Everett M. Rogers, *A History of Communication Study* (New York: The Free Press, 1994) and Fleck, *A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences*. See Chapter 1 for more on Lazarsfeld’s pioneering radio research and its significance for modern public opinion polling projects.

⁶³ Letter from Ian Winterbottam to Frederick Williams, September 1946, NARA II, RG260, Box 145. Folder on “British Element.”

freely with the American Survey Unit. Some polls were also undertaken by the Office of Information Services in the French Zone. These polls focused on immediate economic and political concerns, which contrasted sharply with the more extensive surveys ventured in the American and British zones. In the Anglo-American zones, questions about economic and political conditions were joined by questions about moral responsibility for the war and other topics related to reeducation and denazification efforts.⁶⁴ The American and British forces also conducted opinion surveys in Austria on a limited basis beginning in 1946, drawing on experiences in western Germany.⁶⁵ Notably, the Soviets attempted no comparable research in their zone, and in the future public opinion polling would be publicly decried by Soviet and East German authorities as a particularly devious vehicle of capitalist culture.⁶⁶

In practice, the Survey Unit's interest in deciphering the "true" opinions of the German people sat somewhat uneasily with broader OMGUS goals regarding democratization. Some of the questions on politically charged topics were written in such a way as to make clear the opinion of the interested body. For example, a survey from 1946 included the following question: "Do you believe that the German people is at least partly responsible for the acts of the Hitler regime, since they supported this regime?"⁶⁷ Even the act of asking about a certain topic itself could influence responses over time, according to some theorists. Before becoming head of HICOG's Reactions Analysis Branch, Leo Crespi

⁶⁴ Report from the "European Congress" of public opinion research held by the French Institute of Public Opinion, 30 January 1947. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 164, Folder labeled "Opinion Survey Drafts."

⁶⁵ Native members of the survey unit in Austria often traveled to Germany in order to receive detailed instruction in methods and procedures as used in the survey units in Germany. See the documents at NARA II, RG 260, Box 164, Folders labeled "Vienna (Reports)."

⁶⁶ Matt Henn, "Opinion Polling in Central and Eastern Europe under Communism," *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 33, No. 2 (April 1998): 229-240.

⁶⁷ "Glauben Sie, dass das deutsche Volk wenigstens zum Teil schuld ist an den Tater des Hitler Regimes, da es dieses Regime unterstutzte?" OMGUS ICD Survey 26, 10 December 1946, Question 19, NARA II, RG 260, Box 145.

authored a paper on the so-called “interviewer effect” – and the responsibility to educate for good that went with it. According to Crespi, in his discipline it had long been clear that “a series of questions not only measures responses, but has a definite educational effect.”⁶⁸ This effect did not equate polling with propaganda in the author’s mind, however. Instead, Crespi argued, being faced with opinion questions often stimulated interest in respondents, which led them to think through the matter further or even search for additional background in an attempt to develop a more informed opinion of the matter. This was all the more important in Germany, considering that, according to one intelligence official, “An ability to think critically about basic societal matters did not mark German thinking”; indeed, the average German was rarely “willing to do more than condemn the patently immoral and praise the obviously decent and honorable.”⁶⁹ Crespi’s paper, like the work of Stuart Dodd, presented the polling method, rather than the specific questions asked, as the ultimate vehicle of democratic culture.

Developing and deploying surveys in the American zones followed an established protocol. First, Survey Section staff prepared a rough survey in consultation with representatives from interested branches of OMGUS. Then this survey was “pretested” – conducted among a small group of Germans to identify any problems with question phrasing or structure. The respondents for the full survey were then selected based either on representative or random sampling, depending on the size of the population to be covered. Respondents received a notification in the mail that they had been selected for a survey; an interviewer then followed up to make an appointment for an interview in the

⁶⁸ Leo Crespi, “The Interviewer Effect in Polling,” in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring 1948): 99-111, 99.

⁶⁹ Robert Schmid, Acting Chief, Intelligence Branch, “Memorandum: Intelligence Branch Achievements and Objectives,” 5 August 1946, NARA II, RG260 Box 151.

home of the respondent. Surveys had both quantitative and qualitative portions, and required both the filling out of punch cards and the writing of explanations in the case of more open-ended questions. Interviewers generally also submitted a report on their experience in the field, where they described any problems they encountered and recounted any striking rumors or anecdotes that came up during the interview. Completed surveys were returned to headquarters and the results were tabulated by a Hollerith machine.⁷⁰

In this way, the Survey Section hoped to assess “trends of thought” among the occupied population using “scientific methods of sampling and interviewing the population similar to those used by the Gallup poll and other organizations in the United States.”⁷¹ Later directives repeated that opinion surveys would “utilize the latest scientific and technical opinion survey methods” to determine reactions to specific measures of OMGUS, assess the political reorientation of the German public, and reveal the most pressing concerns of the people.⁷² In some ways, these aims were simply a continuation of the goals of the Strategic Bombing Survey and the denazification questionnaire. What was unique about the opinion research operation was its insistence on a particular methodology and its concern with change over time. The Survey Section was to trace the flow of particular trends and attitudes on certain topics. Most importantly, it was to measure the progress of “political reorientation.”

⁷⁰ “How Opinion Surveys are Made,” undated. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 167. Herman Hollerith invented the Hollerith machine in 1888 to process the copious data produced in the U.S. census.

⁷¹ Directive from G.H. Garde, Lieutenant Colonel, 29 April 1946. AG 350.09. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 144.

⁷² Letter from G.H. Garde, Lieutenant Colonel, AGD Adjutant General, 24 June 1946, on Subject: Location of Certain Information Control Personnel at OMGUS (Rear). NARA II, RG 260, Box 144.

Of course, this task was easier said than done given the conditions in Germany at that time. The interviewers working under the auspices of the American military government frequently observed a reticence and deep distrust among the German population. Many Germans appeared to fear that pollsters were actually Soviet spies.⁷³ One German interviewer wrote in a 1946 report that of many of the men and women he surveyed seemed to be afraid and hesitant to respond truthfully. He observed, "When I go to people and interview them as a representative of the Military Government I am doubtless left in the dark in many cases as to their real thoughts, and in some cases even lied to ... in this way the previous regime is unconsciously still functioning."⁷⁴ Some Germans even found the tactics of the opinion researchers after 1945 rather similar to those of the Nazis. A satirical article published in Bayreuth in 1949 offered a striking critique along these lines. The author of the article claimed to have asked a cross-section of the local population what they thought of the recent establishment of a (German-led) opinion research institute in Munich. "Herr X" responded, "'Institute for Public Opinion Research?' Ha, ha, ha! 'New-style Gestapo Organization for the inconspicuous monitoring of upstanding citizens!' That's what it should be called ... is there anything in the world more scandalous than systematic spying on a population?"⁷⁵

⁷³ Numerous reports from interviewers in the field illustrate this. See, for example, reports from interviewers in Berlin at BAK 5/233 folder 21.

⁷⁴ Klaus Poser, Bericht über das Ergebnis des besonderen Interviews über die Kürzung der Lebensmittelrationen, 3 April 1946. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 153.

⁷⁵ "Institut zur Erforschung der öffentlichen Meinung?" Ha, ha, ha! "Neumodisch Gestapo-Organisation zur unauffälligen Überwachung der Aufrechten!" So sollten es heißen. ... Gibt es etwas Schändlicheres auf der Welt, als seine systematische Bespitzelung der Bevölkerung?" In "'Freie' Meinung über die 'öffentliche' Meinung," in *Fränkischen Presse*, 23 July 1949. Included in letter from Opinion Surveys Field Officer for Northern Bavaria Henry Herz, 26 July 1949, NARA II, RG260 Box 151.

Interviewing itself was physically difficult and emotionally draining work. Interviewers reported constant shortages of gasoline and functional vehicles, essential for those trying to reach multiple respondents in a wide area.⁷⁶ Many also complained of insufficiently warm clothing, as well as lack of food during their long days of interviewing.⁷⁷ Such problems persisted at least up to the currency reform of June 1948; a survey officer in northern Bavaria reported in May 1948 that all of the interviewers in his area were in dire need of shoes, clothing, and soap.⁷⁸ Fred Trembour, Chief of the Reaction Analysis Branch in Bremen, remarked that these were concerns that pollsters rarely faced on American soil. Polling in postwar Germany was an entirely different challenge, which sometimes prevented German interviewers from reflecting on the more theoretical issues involved in their work.⁷⁹ Another problem facing the Survey section was its reliance on native German interviewers who had to be cleared of any Nazi affiliation. As late as 1948, survey supervisors reported the discharge of interviewers discovered to have been Nazi party members.⁸⁰

American staff took great pains to train their German interviewing teams in a more “democratic” interviewing style, regardless of the past political activity of each interviewer. Trembour, in a letter meant to alert his superior Leo Crespi to the danger of lowering the status and pay grade of interviewers, emphasized how carefully interviewers were

⁷⁶ See, for example, letter from William F. Diefenbach, Chief Field Staff, ICD Opinion Surveys, 12 June 1947. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 144; interrogator reports in RG 260 Box 147, Folder labeled “Frankfurt 8.7.47-28.7.48.”

⁷⁷ See field reports at NARA II, RG 260, Box 145.

⁷⁸ Henry Herz, Monthly Activities Report, 31 May 1948, at NARA II, RG260, Box 151.

⁷⁹ Fred Trembour to Miss Anne Cody, 23 Jan. 1948. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 148, Folder labeled “Interrogators.”

⁸⁰ See Ernest J. Colton’s Report 3 of 12 Feb 1948 at NARA II, RG 260 Box 145, Folder labeled “Bremen.”

cultivated for their role. Trembour wrote, "There are no comparable workers anywhere in Germany, hence direct replacement of such qualified interviewers is impossible ... our method of gathering information by interviews requires a constant free, unbiased, non-compelling approach towards all respondents whether a peasant or a lord mayor."⁸¹ He pointedly contrasted the interviewing style preferred under OMGUS with that presumed to be the norm before the arrival of American troops: "This is in complete contrast to the investigative, forced type of interrogation which may not be unknown in Germany. Our type of interviewer is simply not to be found at large in Germany; he must be developed."⁸²

Trembour's fervent defense of the intensive preparation undertaken by his interviewers was in part a shrewd attempt to maintain a hold on crucial resources and elevate his and his employees' stature. But records indicate that training of interviewers was indeed taken very seriously. Interviewers and the surveys they collected were constantly scrutinized and evaluated for potential flaws in interviewer style as well as survey construction. On the other hand, Trembour also complained about the approach of his German interviewers, suggesting that the old habits he alluded to in his letter to Crespi were more deeply engrained than anticipated. Trembour wrote to a colleague in 1949 that "It is my impression of interviewers that many still misunderstand the purpose of our questioning, not realizing that we are trying to get the opinions of all groups in proportion to their numbers in the whole population, but tending to think we want the best opinions of certain more qualified people so as to get the right answers for tough problems of national

⁸¹ Fred Trembour to Leo Crespi, 2 March 1949. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 156.

⁸² Ibid.

importance.”⁸³ This approach, according to Trembour, reflected traditional German views, which credited the capacity to formulate public opinion only to educated elites. In terms of style, the fact that interviewers were officially referred to as “interrogators” perhaps did not help matters. Clearly, although American officials had grandiose visions for their “democratic” approach, these visions were sometimes lost in translation. At the same time, the difficulties that American staff encountered when training their German colleagues also attest to the potential power of public opinion research to change the relationship between average citizens and elites. Simply by asking their German interviewers to accurately record the responses of *all* respondents in a given sample, American officials were challenging German assumptions about whose opinions were of value.

Gender bias was also at work in the labor of the interviewers. One report from October 1948 stated that “the majority of interviewed women do not possess their own opinion.”⁸⁴ According to the writer, these women answered questions with answers such as “I must first ask my husband about that” or “This question is a man’s concern” or “Why don’t you ask my husband?”⁸⁵ The refusal of women to participate in surveys and the discomfort some husbands felt with the idea of their wives being interviewed were apparently common enough to necessitate a radio program explicitly addressing such concerns. In the program, which aired in mid-May 1947, a Survey Unit interviewer explained to a confused husband that in order to investigate the true opinion of all subsets of the population in an efficient way, the Survey Unit relied on picking a representative

⁸³ Letter from Fred Trembour to Ernst Colton, 5 April 1949. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 145, Folder labeled “Bremen.”

⁸⁴ Ernest J. Colton, Bi-weekly Report, 1st half of October, 19 October 1948, sent to ISD Opinion Surveys, OMGUS Rear, APO 696 A. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 145, Folder labeled “Bremen.”

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

sample using ration cards. In many cases, the interviewer noted, this led to the selection of a woman to be interviewed.⁸⁶ In other words, officials tried to explain that the selection process was scientific, and therefore required a non-negotiable segment of the population to be interviewed, regardless of sex. But gendered stereotypes also appeared to influence the behavior of the interviewers themselves. In one such case, Trembour observed that questionnaire forms were not alternated by his team of German interviewers as directed; instead, interviewers tended to use the more complex questionnaire with men and the simpler questionnaire with women.⁸⁷

If American officials critiqued their German interviewers, these same interviewers were nearly as open in their criticism of survey question content and construction. In this way, the feedback from German interviewers on individual surveys provides one window onto the reactions of the German population as a whole. These interviewers were not reticent in their critique of specific survey questions. In 1947 one German interviewer observed, after cataloguing a lengthy list of awkward or unnecessary questions used in the most recent survey he conducted, "I would like to note that in the structure of this as well of earlier surveys, one can see a rather distressing ignorance of the German mindset."⁸⁸ Other reports reveal the irritation some German interviewers surely felt when asking their subjects about Nazi crimes. One interviewer remarked in his comments on a survey that

⁸⁶ Manuskript über Sendung: *Institut zur Erforschung der öffentlichen Meinung*, 17 May 1947. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 152. In the same program, Frederick Williams discusses the history of public opinion polling, emphasizing its roots in the United States and the scientific selection of those to be interviewed for a given survey.

⁸⁷ Letter from Fred Trembour to Ernest Colton, 5 April 1949. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 145, Folder labeled "Bremen."

⁸⁸ "Bei dieser Gelegenheit, möchte ich darauf hinweisen, dass sowohl bei diesem als auch bei vorhergegangenen Surveys im inneren Aufbau, eine teilweise geradezu erschütternde Unkenntnis der deutschen Mentalität zu erkennen war." Eberhard Garbe, "Bericht zum Fragebogen Nr. 42, Munich," 24 June 1947. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 145.

one question in particular deserved more space for nuanced answers, “since not all Germans tortured and murdered millions of helpless Europeans. One shouldn’t generalize the great guilt of a group of criminals to the entire German people.”⁸⁹

Despite the logistical difficulties, and their unfamiliarity with opinion research in general, some Germans saw in the field a path to career success. In fact, American officials bemoaned the rapid growth of new opinion research institutes. A civilian employee responded to an article about the establishment of a new institute in Bavaria with the warning that “The enthusiasm of the Munich bunch might be considered commendable, but I am afraid we would be indirectly responsible if we permit these so-called ‘institutes of public opinion’ that are cropping up all over the place, to get out of hand.”⁹⁰ The archive of the U.S. Opinion Surveys Branch contains many letters from individual Germans applying for permits to establish opinion research institutes.⁹¹

In the face of such activity, as well as potential critiques from those concerned about the validity of OMGUS and HICOG surveys, army staff strove to maintain the integrity of the surveys operation by repeatedly emphasizing the scientific nature of their work. A February 1946 letter to the Third U.S. Army in Berlin advised that informal polls by army units were not allowed, since those units “do not normally have means available to conduct

⁸⁹ Otto Ehring, “Durchsicht zum Fragebogen Nr. 36/10.12.1946,” NARA II, RG 260, Box 145. The question that evoked this response ran as follows: “Sind Sie mit den folgenden Feststellung einverstanden oder nicht?: Nachforschungen haben den Beweis erbracht, dass die Deutschen Millionen hilfloser Europäer gepeinigt und hingemordet haben.”

⁹⁰ Letter from Karl Brauckmann, 28 July 1948, subject: Gross Misrepresentation of Opinion Surveys work in Germany (response to article “Gallup erfährt alles” in *Allgemeine Zeitung*, Mainz, 9 July 1948). At NARA II, RG 260 Box 147, Folder labeled “Frankfurt 8.7.47-28.7.48.”

⁹¹ For several such letters, see NARA II, RG 260, Box 149.

scientific polls and since therefore the results of such surveys are not always accurate.”⁹² Almost two years later, an OMGUS Daily Bulletin in Hesse reminded its readers, “no Military Government office is authorized to conduct or organize polls, with the exception of the Opinion Survey Unit of ICD ... The reason for the above restrictions is that unqualified people conducting public opinion polls will tend [*sic*] to misinform the public generally, resulting in more harm than good.”⁹³ Interviewers were regularly assessed and rated on their abilities in an attempt to ensure uniform quality.⁹⁴ Beginning in fall 1947, interviewers were issued special passes identifying them as Information Control Division employees.⁹⁵ While this was in part a response to German concerns about spies disguising themselves as Survey Section pollsters, it was also an acknowledgement that the work the unit was doing was important enough to the occupation to protect the reputation of the Section and allow for continuation of its work unhindered by popular concern.

Making Sense of Surveys and their Effects

From October 1945 to February 1949, sixty-seven full scale, scientifically designed surveys were carried out in the U.S. Zone of Germany, and were complemented by hundreds of smaller-scale surveys in specific areas or among particular groups.⁹⁶ ICD

⁹² Letter from 20 Feb.. 1946 to the Third U.S. Army in Berlin from Survey Section. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 144.

⁹³ Daily Bulletin to Headquarters, Office of Military Government for Hesse, Wiesbaden, Germany 31 December 1947, Bul. No. 244: p. 2-3. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 144.

⁹⁴ See evaluations of individual interviewers at NARA II, RG 260, Box 144, Folder “Public Opinion Surveys” and reference to factors to be assessed in letter from William F. Diefenbach to Nora Kalbfleisch, 14 Dec. 1946, NARA II, RG 260 Box 145, Folder “Check on Interrogators.”

⁹⁵ Thomas P. Headen, note from 12 Sept. 1947. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 148, Folder labeled “Interrogators.”

⁹⁶ Report “Trends in German Public Opinion,” Report number 175, June 1949, Opinion Surveys Branch, Information Services Division, at NARA II, RG 260, Box 167.

surveys covered a vast array of topics: black market prices, perceptions of guilt for the war, media consumption. Some surveys consisted largely of trend questions, that is, questions which were tracked multiple times over the course of the occupation. Others were the ad-hoc response to the most pressing concerns at any given time. Many surveys dealt directly with the denazification process, asking Germans to state their perception of the effectiveness and fairness of the process (the majority responded in the negative on both counts). Many others asked at regular intervals whether the respondent was better or worse off than a year ago or during the Third Reich. Survey Unit employees also reported on rumors and jokes circulating in their area, viewing these as manifestations of public opinion.⁹⁷

What were the psychological effects of public opinion polling? It is difficult to distinguish propaganda from reality at times. Articles in German newspapers (approved by OMGUS) presented the one-on-one interview with Survey Unit employees as a novel and refreshing experience after years of cautious silence, and reassured readers that their honesty, not their ability to “correctly” answer questions, was desired. Further, their opinions would be kept anonymous.⁹⁸ One reporter noted in a 1947 radio program that the people of Germany were not accustomed to being asked for their opinions; rather, under

⁹⁷ For several reports of rumors and jokes between 1946 and 1949, see NARA II, RG 260, Box 153. Access to accurate information was at a premium in occupied Germany, and the lack of information among the occupied population led to constant rumors. The occupying authorities battled the constant spread of misinformation about American, British, French, and Soviet intentions and Allied-German interactions. The situation was so dire that American-sponsored Radio Bremen in spring 1946 began running a new feature on Sundays called “Das Gerücht der Woche” (The Rumor of the Week). The program would describe and ridicule the most widely distributed rumors in the area. See Daily Intelligence Digest #136, 20 March 1946, p. 2. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 145, Folder labeled “Daily Intelligence Digest 4 Jan. – 31 March 1946.”

⁹⁸ See the German press clippings collected at NARA II, RG 260, Box 164.

the Nazis they had been dictated their opinion by the regime.⁹⁹ One of the program guests, William Diefenbach, who worked in the Surveys Unit, agreed, and remarked that one of the goals of opinion research under the Allied occupation forces was to give Germans the opportunity to speak freely.¹⁰⁰ In an attempt to demonstrate the ways that the results of public opinion polls could help to fulfill the will of the people, Diefenbach also shared an example of poll results influencing the Military Government's decision to maintain the requirement that newspapers remain nonpartisan (rather than allow party newspapers).¹⁰¹

Survey Unit officials were cognizant of the possibility that German respondents might lie or at least dissemble in response to questions posed by Allied authorities. The multi-party elections held in the American Zone in January 1946 were used as an opportunity to compare election results to survey responses in order to determine the accuracy of OMGUS surveys. According to Frederick Williams, the unit's predictions for voter turnout matched the actual turnout numbers, while the percentage of those who had declared support for the Communist party was only two percentage points lower than the actual percentage of votes cast for the Communists.¹⁰² Later, Leo Crespi's staff undertook an investigation into the possible effects on survey results of U.S. sponsorship. Surprisingly, in most areas of inquiry the change in responses to a known representative of the U.S.

⁹⁹ Manuskript über Sendung: *Institut zur Erforschung der öffentlichen Meinung*, 17 May 1947, p. 5. At NARA II, RG 260, Box 152

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Frederick Williams, *Weekly Information Bulletin* No. 39 (April 1946): 5-12, p. 7. Election polling would continue to be the most common method for polling institutes to assess the accuracy of their methods throughout the twentieth century.

government versus an anonymous polling agency interviewer were not statistically significant.¹⁰³

How survey questions actually contributed to a learning process on the part of the German population is difficult to measure, especially since responses to poll questions did not always trend in the directions that American officials had hoped. It is possible that the types of questions included in surveys at some level did help to shape West German understandings of what would be considered appropriate and inappropriate beliefs and behavior in an American-sanctioned democracy. What seems more likely is that opinion surveying efforts under the Allied occupation of western Germany helped to facilitate the spread of ideas about the reality and desirability of public opinion as a measurable entity. Polling helped to temper the negative connotations of “the masses” by making them legible. But, as the pioneering opinion research studies of Stuart Dodd in the Middle East and Sicily suggested, it also helped to break through the untrustworthiness of individuals by placing them in the context of statistical groups. The native German opinion polling institutes founded in the late 1940s would build upon the paradigm established under OMGUS and HICOG, while reinterpreting the connection between polling and democracy with particular reference to the German experience.

¹⁰³ Leo Crespi, “The Influence of Military Government Sponsorship in German Opinion Polling,” *International Journal of Opinion and Attitude Research* 4 (1950): 151-178.

CHAPTER III

THE NEGATIVE CONSENSUS: MAKING THE CASE FOR OPINION RESEARCH, 1948-51

In a 1949 letter to Süddeutsche Rundfunk director Fritz Eberhard, Erich Peter Neumann, co-founder of the Allensbach Institute with his wife Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, wrote, “We are certainly not fanatics of the survey method, but we also believe that presently there is no better means of analyzing the dominant tendencies of the masses. Indeed, a lack of information ‘from below’ characterized the internal politics of the Weimar Republic. It is astonishing that one forgets to draw out the consequences of this.”¹ The western Allies were the first to implement large-scale empirical public opinion research in Germany, but it was German opinion researchers themselves who argued most fervently for the continued importance of such research to West Germany’s postwar development. Though few were as explicit as Neumann, many researchers presented their discipline as a much-needed antidote to Germany’s fascist past and a guarantor of a democratic future. West German opinion researchers and their clients hoped that opinion polling would open up a new understanding of the human psyche and therefore a new methodology for identifying potential political dangers before they came to fruition. By doing so, these researchers argued, they would enable the interruption of the mechanisms that so ignominiously felled the Weimar Republic. In the process of developing what they saw as new ways to assess risk, they attempted to synthesize a particular understanding of dangers to the democratic process and of the human mind itself.

¹ Erich Peter Neumann, Institut für Demoskopie /Gesellschaft zum Studium der öffentlichen Meinung, to Fritz Eberhard, 5 January 1949, at Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich (hereafter IfZ), ED 117/ 119, Correspondence with Herr Staatssekretär Dr. Fritz Eberhard, Stuttgart.

Yet this perspective, despite containing some of the keywords found in the claims of George Gallup, Elmo Roper, and Stuart Dodd about the power of opinion polling, could not have been more different in tone. Gallup and Roper had founded their message upon an optimistic faith in “the political wisdom of the common people.”² These pollsters had argued that their work was necessary because the “average” American was often smarter than politicians; accordingly, the voices of the masses were to be embraced and scientifically listened to, rather than feared. Most West German opinion researchers in the immediate post-war period, in contrast, were guided by fear and a deep-seated concern about the capacity of Germans to make intelligent decisions, much less become democratic, peaceable citizens. Erich Peter Neumann and his wife, as well as theorists and researchers like Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School, were intrigued by the potential of empirical opinion research to make the German masses legible, but their essential skepticism of these same masses lingered. International sponsors and observers of West German opinion research viewed this approach with some concern. Despite latent suspicion of the motives of some West German pollsters, however, these sponsors continued to fund polling projects and education in empirical research methodologies, all the while advocating a particular democratic vision for polling.

The years between the creation of the partially sovereign Federal Republic of Germany in May 1949 and the official departure of Allied occupation forces in May 1955 were especially fruitful ones for West Germany’s small but active group of opinion research practitioners. Much of their work was carried out with the intellectual, if not always financial, support of the American, British, and French governments, but against the

² George Gallup, quoted in Igo 122.

current of the still somewhat traditionally-minded social scientific community in Germany. This meant that those advocating empirical social research in West Germany in the late 1940s and early 1950s united in surprising ways, a development often glossed over by historians.³ Even as they competed for scarce resources and publicity during these years, opinion researchers from seemingly opposing ends of the political spectrum found common cause in their pursuit of appropriate methodologies for understanding German society. Historians and journalists typically have emphasized the conservative ties of Erich Peter Neumann and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann of the Allensbach Institute and of Karl von Stackelberg of the Emnid Institute, all of whom worked closely with West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and the ruling Christian Democratic Party (CDU) from the mid-1950s onward. On the other hand, the left-leaning scholars of the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt (here also referred to as the Frankfurt School), especially Theodor Adorno, have been described chiefly in terms of their leftist and supposedly anti-empiricist philosophy. Yet the archival record demonstrates that the founders and associates of all three of these institutes were in constant contact in the early 1950s, sometimes to proclaim opposition to another institute's practices, but more often to learn from and support one another in an attempt to solidify the place of empirical opinion research within West Germany.

³ Anja Kruke's analysis of political opinion research in West Germany from 1949 to 1990 exemplifies this. Kruke's work demonstrates in great detail how opinion research institutes eventually ingratiated themselves with specific political parties and how their findings influenced political campaigns. But Kruke's analysis of the years before 1955 devotes little attention to the surprising alliances and shared rhetoric that marked the earliest years of public opinion research in postwar Germany. Anja Kruke, *Demoskopie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Meinungsforschung, Parteien und Medien, 1949-1990* (Düsseldorf, Droste Verlag, 2007).

The alliance between these opinion researchers was in part a defensive stance. As the practitioners of a discipline new to Germany, they faced resistance from the existing social scientific community and confusion from politicians unfamiliar with the representative sampling practices developed in the United States. The attempt, led by the Allensbach Institute and the Institut für Sozialforschung, to professionalize opinion research and communicate its rigorous social scientific credentials culminated in a U.S.-sponsored conference at Weinheim an der Bergstrasse in 1951. Notably, the conference was attended by numerous representatives of the international community as well as by German researchers and social scientists. Many of these American, British, Dutch, and French observers, among others, participated in the conference not only to demonstrate their support for empirical opinion research in West Germany, but also to keep a watchful eye on the development of such research. Concerned that empirical techniques and the concept of public opinion research could be misused under the Federal Republic, and wary of the Nazi-era credentials of some researchers, these international observers were eager to emphasize their optimistic, utopian vision for opinion research, often in contrast to the more defensive stance of West Germans. These episodes and the words and actions of their participants matter because they can tell us much about the fears, hopes, and ambitions that helped to undergird the particular type of democratic culture that emerged in West Germany.

In their effort to establish the value of their profession to postwar society, early West German opinion researchers enacted a negative, defensive consensus in two senses. First, their cooperation was part of a fundamentally defensive response to the discipline's doubters within the German social scientific community and among prospective patrons.

Second, they presented empirical opinion research as a tool of defense for West German democracy. True, this was only one aspect of their articulation of the promise of empirical opinion research. Adorno, for one, hewed more closely in this period to the rhetoric of Gallup and Roper, which emphasized that the representative sampling practices and anonymity upon which modern opinion polling was based were fundamentally democratic because they gave every member of society, regardless of socio-economic standing or political affiliation, a chance to share his or her views without fear of censure. Further, the views of each person polled were given equal weight. More frequently, however, opinion researchers emphasized a different kind of contribution to democracy: the potential for opinion research to help build a German democracy by *preventing* the rise of anti-democratic groups. Opinion polls would allow policy-makers to identify threats to the nascent Federal Republic before they could gain momentum. In doing so, pollsters implied, they were an essential component of the “*streitbare*” or “*wehrhafte*” (militant or defensive) democracy articulated in the *Grundgesetz* or Basic Law’s prohibition against activities and organizations inimical to the constitution and to democracy.⁴ This stance conveys the fundamentally distrustful view of West German citizens on the part of the opinion researchers, a view which increases the tension between the empowering and silencing

⁴ Several sections of the *Grundgesetz* were designed with the concept of “*streitbare Demokratie*” in mind, particularly Article 79, paragraph 3 (the “Eternity Clause,” which prohibits amendment of the constitution); Article 5, paragraph 3; Article 9, paragraph 2; Article 18; Article 21, paragraph 2. Marcus Thiel notes that the idea of a “militant democracy” was institutionalized in 1956 in the German Federal Constitutional Court’s so-called “KPD decision,” which deemed the banning of the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD) to be constitutional. The Sozialistische Reichspartei (SRP) had already been banned in 1952, however. Thiel argues that since this party was closely associated with National Socialism, its ban was less controversial. Marcus Thiel, ed., *The “Militant Democracy” Principle in Modern Democracies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 111. For an analysis of the relationship between the paradox of the Basic Law’s lauded defense of human rights and its prohibition of certain political activities and expressions, traced to the ideas of liberal the ideas of Karl Loewenstein, see Udi Greenberg, “Militant Democracy and Human Rights,” *New German Critique* 2015, Vol. 42, No. 3: 169-195.

functions of modern opinion polling: was this surveillance by another name, or an extension of the voting process into the everyday? Here again pollsters also invoked their application of “scientific” methodology – according to them, it was the distinctive features of their method, such as anonymity and representativeness, that lent their work its democratic credentials.

The cooperation among prominent opinion researchers on various ends of the political spectrum, as well as the similarities in their rhetoric in the early 1950s, represent a brief moment of consensus for the various institutes in question, one overlooked by most historians of postwar social science. Eventually Adorno and the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt would mount a multi-faceted challenge to empirical opinion research as practiced and interpreted by most research institutions, and the majority of extant opinion research institutes would ally themselves with specific political parties and factions within the government. In the early years of the Federal Republic, however, cooperation and collaboration, not just competition, among various social scientific and opinion research institutions under the auspices of the American occupation forces drove the professionalization of public opinion polling and its integration into the fabric of the Federal Republic’s political culture.

The Occupiers and the Institutes: Opinion Research and Democracy

Although they had been surveying the German population since October 1945, Allied occupation officials only began to fund empirical opinion research projects led by German social scientists in 1947. The first empirical opinion poll conducted by a German institute was a survey of students at Freiburg and Tübingen universities by what would

become the Institut für Demoskopie at Allensbach. Commissioned by the French occupation authorities in the winter of 1947, the Allensbach Institute's first study broached a wide range of topics, but focused primarily on political attitudes and expectations for the future in an attempt to assess the potential for German democracy.⁵ In the British and American zones, occupation officials retained greater control over survey operations. In fact, Allensbach Institute co-founder Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann initially had attempted to work with American occupation authorities, to no avail. Only in 1948 did the Emnid institute publish the first truly German-conceived and executed opinion research in those zones, and the American forces carried out their own opinion research up to their departure in 1955. Despite some initial misgivings about the growing number of native opinion research institutes, however, American officials soon adopted an aggressive strategy of actively grooming and regulating such institutes. As a result, West German opinion researchers recognized the importance of winning American support and endorsement, quickly adopting and expanding upon the language used by Americans to clarify the power of empirical opinion research. This language and American influence were important threads connecting otherwise diverse practitioners of opinion research in postwar Germany.

The most famous and controversial of West Germany's opinion pollsters (and Germany's opinion pollsters to the present day) were the Allensbach Institute's Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and her husband, Erich Peter Neumann. Noelle-Neumann's personal involvement with the Third Reich dogged her from the end of the war until her death in

⁵ Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, *Bericht über die Befragung der Studenten der Universitäten Tübingen und Freiburg*, July 1947, in *Jugend nach dem Krieg: Umfragen 1947-48 + 8 Berichte*, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BAK), ZSg132/2681 (IfD report #s 11-14). For her account of this first study, see Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *Die Erinnerungen* (Munich: Herbig, 2006), 152.

2010.⁶ Given her contested past, she was careful to avoid detailed discussions of her work as a journalist in Germany before 1945. Instead, in promotional and autobiographical materials she emphasized her hands-on experience with American, and thus implicitly anti-Nazi and democratic, research methods. As one of the very few Germans to have studied empirical opinion research methods in the United States before the war, she saw the defeat of Nazi Germany by the Allies as an opportunity to forge her reputation as a leader in empirical public opinion research.

In contrast with his wife, Allensbach Institute co-founder Erich Peter Neumann has received strikingly little scholarly or popular attention. Noelle-Neumann was, without a doubt, the scientific force behind the institute's success and credibility. Her husband never studied empirical social science. Yet his public relations savvy and relationships with key politicians made him just as essential to the institute's rise. Neumann's life and career resembled that of so many Germans active in political and economic affairs during the early years of the Federal Republic of Germany. Born in 1912 in Breslau in the German Reich, his hometown became the Polish city of Wroclow after World War II. As a young man, Neumann moved to Berlin to pursue a career as a journalist, writing for the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and after 1941 serving as a war correspondent, primarily on the eastern front.⁷ His experiences in the late Weimar Republic and Third Reich, combined with a healthy sense of ambition, helped him to recognize the potential contained within his wife's dissertation and empirical research

⁶ Noelle-Neumann's Nazi involvement and the journalistic debate about her past, which has continued to rage in the present, are discussed in Chapter 1.

⁷ "Erich Peter Neumann," *Internationales Biographisches Archiv* 32/1973, 30 July 1973. See also the more subjective account of Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "In Memoriam: Erich Peter Neumann," *Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach*, Br. An Neumann, Erich Peter, 1973.

experience. While managing publicity for the Allensbach Institute, he also founded a political consultancy: the *Büro für Politische und Wirtschaftliche Expertise* (Office for Political and Economic Expertise), which developed strategies to publicize government measures.⁸ From 1961 to 1965 he served in the Bundestag as a CDU representative – the quintessential political insider. But in the first few years after the end of the war, he still bore the taint of Nazi party membership and had to work even harder than his wife to convince Allied authorities that his institute should be entrusted with political research. Perhaps the lingering suspicion with which the couple were viewed after 1945 helps explain why the Neumanns so passionately and frequently declared that their methods were essential to preserving the Federal Republic – they had more to prove in this regard than those social scientists and publicists who had spent the Nazi years in exile.

According to Noelle-Neumann, the American authorities she first approached were hesitant to support her fledgling institute out of fear that an opinion research organization would be an ideal front for “Werewolves,” groups resisting political change in Germany.⁹ The recollections of American officials suggest their reactions may have had more to do with their doubts about Noelle-Neumann in particular. Leo Crespi commented a few years after Noelle-Neumann made her first pitch to OMGUS officials, “She made a good impression, was intelligent and personally attractive. She also exhibited some knowledge of public opinion research methods, which was unusual in Germany in 1946.”¹⁰ These

⁸ See documents organized under “Büro für politische und wirtschaftliche Expertisen – Allensbach” in BAK B145/1664.

⁹ Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, “25 Jahre Meinungsforschung in Deutschland,” accessible at the IfZ, ED 117/75, Polit. Meinungsforschung, Allensbacher Berichte, Presse-Korrespondenz des Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach.

¹⁰ Undated letter from Leo Crespi, Chief, Reactions Analysis Branch, to Government Affairs Branch, OPA, Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, on “The Institute for Demoscopy and

characteristics were all valuable qualities in an opinion researcher, Crespi admitted. Yet he was convinced that this attractive outward façade hid potentially dangerous tendencies. As he recalled, “discussion with her, even then, revealed dubious elements in her thinking. Particularly disturbing was her tendency to view opinion research as an instrument by which power could be obtained.”¹¹ Americans were suspicious of the fact that Noelle-Neumann had been “persona grata enough” to obtain approval from Joseph Goebbels to study in the United States in the 1930s. Crespi was also critical of the Allensbach Institute’s questionnaire construction and sampling methodology. “What we know of her work with the Institute for Demoscopy,” Crespi observed, “has certainly not increased our respect either for her professional integrity or competence.”¹² Nevertheless, Noelle-Neumann’s and her husband’s grasp of publicity quickly built the Institute into the most well-known in the Federal Republic.

After the Allensbach Institute, the second most active opinion research institute that emerged after the war was Emnid. The Emnid Institute (the name is an acronym for *Erforschung der öffentlichen Meinung, Marktforschung, Nachrichten über die Wirtschaftsentwicklung, Informations-Dienst* – Public Opinion Research, Market Research, News about Economic Developments, Information Services) was founded by Karl-Georg von Stackelberg in 1945 in Bielefeld, in the British zone. Stackelberg was more similar to Erich Peter Neumann than to Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, more master of publicity and relationship-building than social scientific innovator. Stackelberg had also been a journalist

Opinion Polling in Germany.” Leo P. Crespi Papers, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Box 1. Also see Dr. Wim de Jonge, “Report on a Survey of Public Opinion and Market Research Institutes in Western Germany,” Dec. 23, 1951, in Leo P. Crespi Papers, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Box 9.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

prior to and during the war, then founded his institute in order to work with the Red Cross and other relief organizations on demographic projects.¹³ The institute's first interviews were with prisoners of war, and made no pretense of being representative or statistically rigorous. As did Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's first forays into opinion research, these early investigations on the part of a German institute aroused the suspicion of occupation officials. After intensive questioning, Emnid was cleared for further work in the British zone and Stackelberg subsequently learned much about the process and organization of such an outfit from his observation of the British Public Opinion Research Office (PORO).¹⁴ Quickly the institute began to specialize in economic questions, conducting interviews related to household consumption, and, after the currency reform of 1948, market research for a variety of private consumer goods firms.¹⁵ Through his contacts at PORO, Stackelberg soon met Leo Crespi, head of HICOG's public opinion research division, and other American opinion researchers. In the summer of 1950, Stackelberg visited the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.¹⁶ Such visits were necessary: as late as 1953, evaluators working on behalf of Crespi praised Stackelberg's enterprising, energetic approach and willingness to learn, but noted that the institute had some ways to go before it caught up even to the Allensbach Institute in basic polling standards.¹⁷ Stackelberg sought to complement his interpersonal skills with the methodological expertise of

¹³ Dr. Wim de Jonge, "Report on a Survey of Public Opinion and Market Research Institutes in Western Germany," Dec. 23, 1951, p. 16, in Leo P. Crespi Papers, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Box 9.

¹⁴ Karl Georg von Stackelberg, *Souffleur auf politischer Bühne: Von der Macht der Meinungen und den Meinungen der Mächtigen* (Munich: Verlag Moderne Industrie, 1975), 33.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁷ Jan Stapel, "Report on West German Opinion Research Organizations," January 1953, Leo P. Crespi Papers, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, MC235 Box 9.

Friedrich Lenz, who served as the scientific director of Emnid. Lenz had been a respected professor of economics before the war and especially strengthened Emnid's credentials in consumer and market research.

Another institution that was to play an important role in the development of empirical opinion research in West Germany was the Institut für Sozialforschung, usually referred to as the Frankfurt School. The Institut für Sozialforschung was founded in Frankfurt in 1924 with the purpose of exploring social and political conditions from a critical, neo-Marxist perspective.¹⁸ Under the leadership of Max Horkheimer, the Institute attracted a number of innovative and influential psychologists, economists, and social theorists, among them Herbert Marcuse, Friedrich Pollock, and Theodor Adorno. After 1933, the Institute and its members came under increasing scrutiny and censure and were forced to leave Germany, with many members eventually emigrating to the United States.

During the war, Horkheimer and Adorno both became American citizens, and their time in the United States would shape many future projects of the Frankfurt School. Adorno and Horkheimer are perhaps best known for their critique of the social relations and "culture industry" created by capitalism in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which they wrote during their stay in the United States.¹⁹ Their rejection of commodity culture in this text certainly carried over to future critiques of market research techniques, as other scholars have pointed out. Yet their experience in America also awakened an interest in exploring

¹⁸ For narratives of the Institut's early years, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), and Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995).

¹⁹ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002). Horkheimer and Adorno first published this work in Amsterdam in 1947.

empirical methods for researching public opinion, and their work in this area is much less studied. Horkheimer's interaction with the American system for funding social scientific research and need to shore up financial support for his own institute shaped the projects he and his colleagues took on in both the United States and in Germany, while Adorno's sojourn in the United States brought him into contact with cutting edge techniques in empirical research, above all through his work with Paul Lazarsfeld.

Horkheimer eventually returned to Europe in 1948, after his tenure as chief research consultant at the American Jewish Committee had ended.²⁰ Adorno followed in November 1949, and Pollock returned as well, creating the small but significant nucleus of the postwar Institute. Funds collected from the U.S. High Commissioner in Germany (HICOG), the city of Frankfurt, the Society of Social Research, and private donors bankrolled the reconstruction of the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt beginning in November 1950. HICOG also funded the Institute's first research project in occupied Germany: a study of political attitudes among West Germans, the results of which were published as *Gruppenexperiment* in 1955.²¹

All of these institutions – the Frankfurt School, Emnid, and the Allensbach Institute – were beneficiaries of an increased Allied and especially American emphasis on the value of native German opinion researchers and the broader importance of opinion research to the successful transformation of (West) Germany from fascist dictatorship to parliamentary democracy. From a utilitarian perspective, German opinion researchers could alleviate the

²⁰ Horkheimer and Adorno helped co-author *The Authoritarian Personality*, in which they attempted to identify the personality traits of individuals with authoritarian or fascist tendencies, as part of the American Jewish' Committee's *Studies in Prejudice* book series. Horkheimer's stay (like Paul Lazarsfeld's initial two years in the United States) was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. See Wiggershaus 397.

²¹ Wiggershaus 434-5. I discuss *Gruppenexperiment* in detail in Chapter 5.

burden on Allied researchers attempting to carry out their work in ever more spheres of German life. OMGUS Opinion Surveys Unit Chief Frederick Williams argued as early as 1948 that a native institute would help to reduce the workload of the Military Government or aid it by exploring new topics, especially in the realms of market and media research.²²

The transition from fully occupied territory to semi-sovereign land in 1949 lent a greater sense of urgency to utopian as well as practical motivations for establishing native opinion research institutes in the Federal Republic. The Americans in particular wanted reliable sources of information within western Germany, but such information was important in part because it was an indication of democratic or undemocratic trends. The methodology of polling itself was invested with a political imperative, a value partly created through contrast with Nazi information gathering tactics. According to one policy directive, when “properly acquired and used,” information could contribute to the building of a truly democratic society; but “improperly used it can fall into disrepute as another variation upon the traditions of the ‘informant’ to which Germany is unhappily not unaccustomed.”²³

The distinction between proper and improper use was a recurring trope in HICOG discussions of the value of opinion research. In 1952, Leo Crespi, director of the HICOG Reactions Analysis branch, claimed that support of native German polling institutes was a priority of the American High Commission in Germany because it provided the crucial link between governed and government in a modern democracy, allowing for “an understanding of

²² Frederick Williams, memorandum to Max Ralis, 19 June 1948, NARA II, RG 260, Box 152.

²³ Undated (probably 1949) memorandum for the Reactions Analysis Branch, NARA II, RG 260, Box 153.

the values, fears, aspirations, and confusions of the rank and file of a citizenry.”²⁴ But it could only function effectively if it was carried out openly and empirically: methods mattered. To this point, Crespi wrote in 1949 that part of his division’s mission consisted of ensuring “the development of unbiased democratic practices” in the gathering – but also the publication – of public opinion.²⁵ Importantly, here Crespi underscored the impact of information collection and dissemination practices in and of themselves, not simply the information gleaned. Such practices, in his view, were value-laden; as such, they could be purveyors of democratic principles or obstacles to their development. Publication of poll results was difficult to regulate, but HICOG could at least keep an eye on what polls were being carried out: Article XI of Allied High Commission Law No. 5 required all public opinion agencies in Germany to send copies of their reports to the High Commission.

As they sought to professionalize the field of empirical opinion research, German pollsters were eager to conform to Crespi’s vision and establish their alliance with anti-Nazi, post-1945 forces. This strategy entailed emphasizing the American roots of their empirical research methods. As noted earlier, Noelle-Neumann was quick to point to her studies in the United States. Like Noelle-Neumann, in his promotional materials Emnid founder Karl von Stackelberg emphasized his hands-on experience with American empirical research methods, gained through his two-month stay in the United States

²⁴ Leo Crespi, “America’s Interest in German Survey Research,” in *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung: Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 215.

²⁵ Leo Crespi, letter of 23 September 1949, p.2, NARA II), RG260, Box 145, Folder “Correspondence Out.”

funded by the U.S. State Department.²⁶ Others claimed that since polling was inherently democratic (at least as described by Gallup, Roper, Crespi, and other Americans in the field), their work was obviously beneficial to democracy. EMNID's scientific director, Friedrich Lenz, told audiences and potential clients that public opinion research was a discipline that could only emerge in a democratic society governed by the rule of law.²⁷ Theodor Adorno suggested to an audience of social scientists that the Nazis had correctly seen in empirical public opinion research based on representative sampling an unwelcome "democratic potential," and accordingly avoided it.²⁸ It was no coincidence, he explained, that the Nazis had rejected the use of a survey instrument called a "poll" – after all, this term also referred to the practice of voting. And the process of voting in democratic countries, like representative public opinion polling, was defined (at least in theory) by an imperviousness to markers of privilege and the equal weighting of all voices.

Of course, it was in the interest of opinion researchers – and all Germans – to stress discontinuities before and after 1945, including the gap between empirical opinion research practiced after the war and any methods used before. The Neumanns did not make frequent claims about the democratic aspects of their work, but they *were* particularly vociferous exponents of the view that empirical opinion research would help

²⁶ See *Aufgabengebiet der EMNID*, November 1950, BAK B145, KB145/1568, as well as Letter from Stackelberg to Herrn Ministerialdirigent Dr. Blankenhorn, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 14 October 1950, BAK B145, KB145/1568.

²⁷ Friedrich Lenz, "Die Erforschung der öffentlichen Meinung," lecture given at the Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, Frankfurt, 16 March 1950, at NARA II, RG 260 Box 148.

²⁸ "Daß der statistischen Auswertung jede Stimme gleich viel gilt, daß der bei der Bildung von Querschnitten so wichtige Begriff des Repräsentativen kein Privileg kennt, erinnerte allzu sehr an die freie und geheime Wahl, mit der denn auch die einschlägigen Erhebungen den Namen 'Poll' teilen." Theodor Adorno, "Zur gegenwärtigen Stellung der empirischen Sozialforschung in Deutschland," *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 27.

preserve the state that had emerged after the fall of the Third Reich – a state that the United States and other western nations now hoped to see succeed. Erich Peter Neumann was especially fond of claiming that Hitler’s rise to power could have been avoided if opinion polling had been established during the Weimar Republic. In such a scenario, Weimar-era leaders would then have been able to monitor the rise of anti-democratic sentiment and take action before it reached fatal levels.²⁹ For Neumann, it was the health and vigor of West German democracy in the form of appropriate government control that was at stake. Government oversight of public opinion through empirical opinion polls would temper what he perceived as the naïve ignorance of well-meaning politicians and enable an accurate evaluation of risks to the new political order.

These opinion researchers and sociologists clearly were ready to rush into the world of empirical public opinion research, but there was still some concern about how the vast majority of German citizens would react. In order to establish their ability to provide an accurate risk assessment, pollsters first had to convince potential clients that they were able to access the honest opinions of those polled. Despite the initial problems encountered by interviewers working under OMGUS and concerns that the German people were not yet ready for a full confrontation with this “democratic” and sometimes deeply personal practice of one-on-one interviewing, German pollsters insisted that Germans were eager to express their opinions after years of repression, and in fact were just as open to the practice of opinion research as Americans. The report from the Allensbach Institute’s

²⁹ See, for example, the introductory paragraphs in Eric Peter Neumann’s speech “Politische und Soziale Meinungsforschung in Deutschland,” in *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung: Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), p. 44, as well as Elisabeth Noelle Neumann’s “In Memoriam Erich Peter Neumann, 1912-1973,” at Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, and the letter to Fritz Eberhard quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

inaugural project among German students at the Universities of Freiburg and Tübingen attests to eagerness, at least among the young people who were the focus of the study, to express their views. Interviewers for the study reported “astonishingly strong interest, liberality and willingness to express opinions.”³⁰ Allensbach researchers also noted the (to many, including American observers) surprising willingness of West Germans to answer questions related to such personal issues as sexual relations (although, of course, in some respects these issues may have been less delicate than the topic of individual political attitudes in the immediate postwar period). In their 1949 study of the “intimate sphere” in postwar German society the Allensbach researchers observed defiantly that “The results of [our] survey show these skeptics to be wrong; willingness and candidness were even greater than we had dared to hope.”³¹ These statements were somewhat exaggerated, as the survey responses did not come close to the confessional quality of, for example, the sources for the famous reports of sexologist Alfred Kinsey. But the eagerness with which many Germans embraced the opportunity to share their opinions and experiences did indeed surprise many.

Even as opinion polls expanded in the western German zones to encompass everything from food preferences to sexual habits, however, political attitudes remained the predominant interest of the occupation forces. By August 1946, American officials had already established a rough schema of groups (based on income, profession, political party

³⁰ ““Erstaunlich starkes Interesse, Freizügigkeit und Bereitwilligkeit der Meinungsäusserung.” Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, “Bericht über die Befragung der Studenten der Universitäten Tübingen und Freiburg,” Juli 1947, p. 24, *Jugend nach dem Krieg: Umfragen 1947-48 + 8 Berichte*, BAK ZSg132/2681.

³¹ “Die Ergebnisse der Umfrage gaben den Skeptikern Unrecht, Bereitwilligkeit und Aufrichtigkeit waren sogar grösser, als wir zu hoffen gewagt hatten.” Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, “Gesellschaftsanalyse im Bereich der Intimisphäre,” p. 2, BAK, ZSg 132/2698.

affiliation, location, and other qualities) determined to be “more democratic” or “less democratic.”³² Through a reeducation program, American officials had hoped to increase the proportion of “more democratic” German citizens. By the time West Germany had obtained partial sovereignty in 1949, however, these same officials saw the outward trappings of a functional capitalist state, one willing to work closely with the United States, but not yet broad-based, active support for democracy. The authors of the report “Trends in German Public Opinion” noted somewhat despondently in June 1949 that polls revealed widespread approval of western policy, but scant evidence of true political and cultural re-orientation: “German disinterest in politics and unreadiness to assume responsibility remain vast.”³³ American officials therefore concluded that West Germany merited further tutelage – and continued observation via opinion surveys.³⁴

Allensbach, Emnid, and the Selling of Native Opinion Research

West German opinion research institutes thus relatively quickly established rapport with the various Allied occupation forces, which needed the services of men and women fluent in the language and culture of Germany; forging such a relationship with the newly constituted federal government in Bonn after 1949 proved to be much more difficult.

German politicians were not accustomed to polls: in the previous German experiment with

³² *Weekly Operations Bulletin* (Information Control Division), 19 January 1946, p. 1, NARA II, RG260 Box 151.

³³ Opinion Surveys Branch, Information Services Division, “Trends in German Public Opinion,” Report Number 175, June 1949, NARA II, RG260, Box 167.

³⁴ Hans Woller notes that while the American forces deemed the high voter turnout in West Germany a positive sign, they understood that the health of a democracy was based on more than this. See Hans Woller, “Zur Demokratiebereitschaft der Provinz des amerikanischen Besatzungsgebietes. Aus den Stimmungsberichte des Ansbacher Oberbürgermeisters an die Militärregierung 1946-1949,” *Vierteljahrsheft für Zeitgeschichte*, 31. Jahrg., 2.H. (April 1983): 335-364.

democracy during the Weimar Republic, politicians used the press as a window on to public opinion (and often therefore misconstrued it).³⁵ None of the opinion research institutes that had sprung up during the Allied occupation were able to support themselves financially solely with political opinion research projects. The majority of their time and resources were devoted, of necessity, to media and market research, and even then most – including the powerhouses of the Allensbach Institute and Emnid – barely survived the currency reform of 1948. Yet various pollsters continued throughout the 1950s to doggedly pursue government contracts and the support of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, hoping that these would also confer publicity, validation, and an entrée to further projects. The entreaties from opinion research institutes converged around a few key themes: the need for the German government to take control of the technologies and information gathering techniques available to it in order to prevent its total deference to the western Allies and its decline relative to other modern nations; the importance of monitoring – and appearing to outside observers to be monitoring – potential challenges to liberal democracy; and the possibility of influencing the development of public opinion in a positive direction.

Pollsters had to demonstrate their worth by establishing their field's scientific credentials, starting with instructing the West German public in the use of novel sampling practices. The Allensbach Institute was particularly adept at presenting empirical opinion research as a scientific discipline with a broad application, but one that could be used effectively only by experts.³⁶ In an attempt to illustrate the validity of empirical opinion

³⁵ Fulda, *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic*, 205.

³⁶ See, for example, the introduction of the *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955*, in which the Neumanns referred to their statistical sampling techniques and the raw results of the polls as an “unobliging, rough language” requiring special interpretive skills to decipher. Elisabeth Noelle and

research, while also making sense of the discipline's position on the fringe of the social sciences, Erich Peter Neumann went so far as to compare the pioneers of empirical opinion research to Galileo and Einstein, suggesting that like those groundbreaking scientists, opinion researchers often faced initial resistance to their claims. In some respects, he observed, the science of human nature still lay far behind physics and astronomy. While science had enabled humans to trace the path of the stars and make precise calculations of energy usage, for example, very little was known with certainty about man's deepest motivations and behaviors.³⁷ In Neumann's grandiose vision, empirical opinion research would replace conjecture about these subjects with fact.

The challenge of demonstrating the scientific basis of empirical opinion research was increased by the furor around the incorrect predictions made by Gallup and Roper for the 1948 U.S. presidential election. The American pollsters had confidently predicted a victory by Thomas Dewey; instead, Harry Truman won the election. All engaged with the professionalization of empirical opinion research methods felt compelled to address this apparent failure of polling models. Adorno advised an audience of social scientists that the incorrect predictions of 1948 should not be seen as an indication of the poverty of modern opinion research methods, but rather a reminder that the public shouldn't expect such

Erich Peter Neumann, *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955* (Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956), v.

³⁷ Erich Peter Neumann, "Ist die Meinung von Lieschen Müller Wichtig?" Speech delivered at the Mittwochgespräch Köln, 23 June 1954, p. 5. I am grateful to the Archive of the Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach for providing me with a copy of the final draft of this speech. This speech was directed at an audience of "ordinary West Germans," but drew heavily on an earlier speech delivered by Neumann to businessmen. See Neumann, "Die Verantwortung des Unternehmers für die öffentliche Meinung," spring 1953, accessible at BAK, ZSg 132/2478 (IfD# 278).

polls to be able to predict the future.³⁸ The Allensbach Institute described the methodological lessons learned from the incorrect predictions of 1948, but similarly emphasized that representative opinion polls granted access to views in a given moment; their ability to predict *future* behavior was more advanced than any previous methodology, but still limited.³⁹ The 1948 fiasco illustrates how election predictions were both the most visible advertisement of opinion research and, at times, a limiting factor. Both the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes used election forecasts as a test of the reliability of polling methods and embraced the media spotlight that these forecasts focused on their work, but their ultimate aim was to convince the government and other entities to employ them on an ongoing basis to explore a much broader range of topics.

To this end, opinion research institutes repeatedly attempted to clarify the ways that poll results could be used both for and against the West German government and nation. The Bundesarchiv in Koblenz contains many letters from institutes begging Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his staff to allow them to conduct specialized studies of interest to the government. The letters from Emnid and the Allensbach Institute illuminate the inward- as well as outward-looking capabilities of empirical opinion research, and show that the leaders of these research institutes stressed the ways that opinion poll results could influence perceptions of German power and personality abroad as well as steer policies at home.

³⁸ Theodor Adorno, "Zur gegenwärtigen Stellung der empirischen Sozialforschung in Deutschland," *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 36.

³⁹ See, for example, Erich Peter Neumann, "Die Verantwortung des Unternehmers für die öffentliche Meinung," 4-5.

First, the opinion institutes frequently reminded Adenauer and his staff that public opinion research was an essential tool for modern democracies and their leaders. As noted earlier, this was in part also a public relations project for a nascent profession eager to situate itself firmly in a post-1945 world. In a 1949 letter to Adenauer, Grete Lenz, wife of Emnid's Friedrich Lenz, argued that it was strange that the German federal government, unlike most modern democratic governments, seemed uninterested in working with a German political opinion research institute. According to Lenz, in these other countries, opinion research "is generally recognized as indispensable"; governments and political parties elsewhere understood that public opinion research was the best method to determine popular reactions to policies, and they also recognized "that these methods through the choice of topic and publicity also foster a democratic shaping of opinion."⁴⁰ Here Lenz seemed to build upon Crespi's conception of practices of information collection and dissemination as themselves constitutive of political culture.

Representatives of Emnid also made the case that West German prestige was at stake. In the same letter, Lenz suggested that by contracting with a native German opinion research institute, Chancellor Adenauer's government could counteract the sometimes negative effects of American-led polls. She cited a recent misleading report by the American opinion research division on the topic of the German "Civil Servant Law," published in one

⁴⁰ "Es fällt uns auf, dass die Deutsche Bundesregierung von solchen Untersuchungen, die ihre Politik dem Ausland gegenüber erfolgreich unterstützen, keine Kenntnis nimmt und kein Interesse daran zeigt, dass hier ein unabhängiges deutsches Institut für die politische Meinungsforschung besteht, welche im Ausland – nicht nur wegen Gallup – allgemein als unentbehrlich anerkannt wird; Staatsmänner, Regierungen und Parteiführer wissen dort, dass Meinungsforschung (Public Opinion Research) sie über die Popularität ihrer laufenden oder geplanten politischen Maßnahmen unterrichtet, und dass diese Methode durch Themenwahl und Publizität auch für eine demokratische Meinungsbildung wesentliche Dienste leisten kann." Grete Lenz to Konrad Adenauer, 1 December 1949, at BAK B145/1568. Emphasis in original.

of the largest newspapers in western Germany.⁴¹ In a later letter, Stackelberg, founder of Emnid, proposed that by making use of a native opinion research institute, the *Bundesregierung* would guarantee a “certain prestige abroad for Germany.”⁴² Most importantly, Stackelberg argued, opinion research was a powerful tool that should not be left to the occupation forces but “should rest in German hands alone.”⁴³ Stackelberg suggested that the use of opinion research would be seen as modern and democratic in and of itself, effectively classing West Germany in the highest echelon of western nations. At the same time, he suggested, a nation ought to have full oversight over the production and distribution of knowledge about its inhabitants.

Erich Peter Neumann used a strikingly similar tactic in his first petition to Adenauer on behalf of the Allensbach Institute. In a 1949 letter, Neumann told Adenauer that his institute had conducted a study on antisemitism in West Germany. Although they had originally intended for the results of the study to be shared with the press and radio, they had decided not to do so, as they feared that more sensational sections of the study would be seized upon for their news value and published without reference to their full context.⁴⁴ Neumann offered Adenauer privileged access and control over such “sensitive” opinion research. Eight months later, Neumann wrote that the Allensbach Institute thought it only appropriate that the Chancellor have access to the same type of advanced, high-level

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “Allein die Tatsache, dass die Bundesregierung sich dieses demokratischen Mittels bedienend würde, wäre ... im Ausland von einer gewissen Prestigebedeutung für Deutschland, abgesehen davon, dass dieses Instrument, das bisher amtlicherseits in Deutschland vorwiegend von den Besatzungsmächten gehandhabt wurde, im Rahmen unseres Landes allein in deutschen Händen liegen sollte.“ Karl von Stackelberg to Doktor Fillies/Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 3.4.50, BAK, B145/1568.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Erich Peter Neumann/Institut für Demoskopie to Konrad Adenauer, 26 September 1949, BAK B145/1566.

information about Germany as the American High Commissioner. Further, he argued, it would be helpful for Adenauer to be able to show that explosive issues such as lingering antisemitism were “also being observed from the German side.”⁴⁵ In Neumann’s formulation, as in Stackelberg’s, opinion research was linked to state power and prestige; it promised to enable the West German government to show American authorities that West Germany was ready for full sovereignty, that it was taking the necessary steps to manage internal risks. And on a personal level, without it, Adenauer would always be inferior in his own country to the American High Commissioner.

Although his first letter was not enough to entice Adenauer to finance polls conducted by the Allensbach Institute, by the time they received the second letter it was clear at least to some of Adenauer’s staff that the use of native German opinion research institutes could be beneficial to the regime in precisely the way Neumann had suggested. One member of Adenauer’s staff commented a few days later, “Above all in the investigation of National Socialist tendencies, social tensions, and the general position of the population on the work of the federal government could such surveys be very valuable, especially for the leading politicians.”⁴⁶ He continued, “They could also potentially be useful vis-a-vis the High Commissioner’s office ... It is especially important that the institute be obligated to publish the results of surveys only with the agreement of the office of the

⁴⁵ “Wir glauben ferner, daß es von großer Bedeutung wäre, wenn der Herr Bundeskanzler z.B. in der Frage der Entwicklungen zum Antisemitismus darauf verweisen könnte, daß dieses Problem auch von den deutschen Stellen beobachtet wird.” Neumann/Institut für Demoskopie to Regierungsdirektor Wirmer, 8 Mai 1950, BAK, B145/1566.

⁴⁶ “Vor allem in der Verfolgung der nationalistischen Tendenzen, der sozialen Spannungen und der allgemeinen Einstellung der Bevölkerung zur Arbeit der Bundesregierung werden derartige Erhebungen vor allem für die inneren Politiker der Bundesregierung sehr Wertvoll sein können.” Aktennotiz für Herrn Bundeskanzler, 11 May 1950, BAK, B145/1566.

Chancellor.”⁴⁷ At stake was control over the West German image abroad and knowledge of potentially destabilizing conditions in West Germany itself. German opinions – as construed through the science of empirical opinion research – colored perceptions of German identity abroad and were therefore too important to be left to occupation forces. The insistence on government control of research results in this note also makes plain that the risk of damage to West Germany’s image abroad could sometimes outweigh concerns with a democratic – that is, open – dissemination of information.

Unlike Neumann and his cohort, government officials avoided hyperbolic language comparing modern empirical opinion research with the most famous scientific advances. Instead they frequently used medical metaphors. For example, opinion research was often referred to as a “stethoscope” on “the pulse” of the German body politic, conveying a sober acknowledgement of the unstable, perhaps even sickly nature of a German democracy and political culture that needed to be protected from itself.⁴⁸ In such language, German citizens were assumed to be ill, and the government to be invested with the ability to correct the maladies of the patient.

As opinion research institute leaders jockeyed for resources and recognition, they also appreciated the importance of working with the (state-affiliated) West German media. Fritz Eberhard exemplifies the close ties between government and media in the early Federal Republic, especially in radio and, eventually, television. Eberhard had lived in exile in England during the Nazi period and upon his return to occupied Germany after the war,

⁴⁷ “Auch als Material gegenüber der Hohen Kommission werden sie gegebenenfalls gut brauchbar sein. Wertvoll ist vor allem, dass das Institut sich verpflichtet, Umfrageergebnisse nur mit Zustimmung des Bundeskanzleramts zu veröffentlichen.” Aktennotiz für Herrn Bundeskanzler, 11 May 1950, BAK, B145/1566.

⁴⁸ See draft of speech by Herr Ministerialdirigent Krueger, Presse- und Informationsamt, for the third Emnid Arbeitstagung, 11 June 1953. BAK B145/1568.

he too gained experience under American auspices as program advisor for Radio Stuttgart from 1945-6. He remained active in politics and media, serving as a social democratic representative and state secretary in the regional government of Württemberg-Baden.⁴⁹ It was in his capacity as the well-connected director of the Süddeutsche Rundfunk that the founders of various opinion research institutes, most tenaciously the Neumanns, contacted him. Like most West Germans, the Neumanns and their institute felt the crunch of the currency reform of June 1948. They were in dire need of sustained funding, especially because their chief interest, political public opinion polling, was not yet profitable.⁵⁰ The Allensbach Institute founders claimed to Eberhard that radio “has a duty to concern itself with its listeners using all means at its disposal. But secondly, in a poverty-stricken land it has the necessary means required for the development of opinion or listener research.”⁵¹ Radio directors, the Neumanns suggested, were uniquely situated to patronize and benefit from empirical opinion research. And as a medium historically concerned with national education and uplift, it had an obligation to aid in the advancement of such a necessary technology as empirical opinion research.

Eberhard’s reply reveals an ambition not only to use opinion research to reach more listeners, but to understand the hidden secrets of the human mind. He concurred with the

⁴⁹ “Fritz Eberhard Gestorben,” Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, *Das Historische Stichwort*, 29 March 1982.

⁵⁰ See Letter from the Institut für Demoskopie to Staatssekretär Fritz Eberhard, 10 May 1949, Institut für Zeitgeschichte (hereafter IfZ) ED 117/ 119, Correspondence with Herr Staatssekretär Dr. Fritz Eberhard, Stuttgart.

⁵¹ “In diesem ganzen Zusammenhang fällt – wie gesagt – dem Rundfunk eine besondere Verpflichtung zu. Denn einerseits könnte er es tatsächlich als Verpflichtung empfinden, sich um den Hörer mit allen Mitteln zu kümmern, die zur Verfügung stehen. Zweitens aber verfügt er in einem verarmten Land noch am ehesten über die notwendigen Mittel, die eine Entwicklung der Meinungs- oder Hörerforschung braucht ...” Institut für Demoskopie to Süddeutsche Rundfunk, November 12, 1948, IfZ, ED 117/71, Hörerforschung Dez. 48 – Sept. 57, Anlage 4, Auszüge aus dem Schriftwechsel des Süddeutschen Rundfunks mit dem Institut für Demoskopie, Allensbach.

Neumanns that German radio networks had a special role to play in the further development of the methods “that could reveal the stirrings of the human soul and the mentalities of the masses.”⁵² For Eberhard, such work represented a “completely uncharted territory” – a chance to apply scientific techniques to make human nature predictable and understandable.⁵³ Even as he proclaimed his intellectual solidarity with the Allensbach founders, however, Eberhard admitted that he was already using another research institute (Emnid) for a survey of the Süddeutsche Rundfunk’s listeners. But he framed this too in terms of a commitment to demonstrating the impeccably scientific nature of empirical opinion research, as employing different institutes would allow him to compare results and decrease the potential for any sort of research bias.⁵⁴

Elites like Eberhard believed radio and other media had a special role to play in the education of the populace in its most vulnerable moments, and opinion institutes loudly presented their work as crucial to such a mission. For the Neumanns, regular opinion polls would help to counter the “apathy” that dominated the West German political scene. In successive reports in the early 1950s, the Neumanns repeatedly brought attention to the lack of political engagement among the West German population. In one report which they sent to Eberhard, they described a “prevailing political lethargy” that could only be remedied if political representatives took an active interest in public opinion and its

⁵² “...Methoden, die die Regungen der menschlichen Seele und die Mentalität grosser Menschenmassen aufschliessen können.” Süddeutsche Rundfunk to Institut für Demoskopie, February 9, 1949, IfZ, ED 117/71, Hörerforschung Dez. 48 – Sept. 57, Anlage 4, “Auszüge aus dem Schriftwechsel des Süddeutschen Rundfunks mit dem Institut für Demoskopie, Allensbach.”

⁵³ “völlig unerschlossenes Neuland.” Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

education.⁵⁵ For the Neumanns, empirical opinion research provided the missing link. It would simultaneously make voters feel that they had a voice; it would educate officials about the thoughts and concerns of the electorate; and in practice it could serve as an educational platform for the democratic process.⁵⁶ Eberhard seems to have agreed with the Neumanns in spirit; he too saw the development of scientific opinion research as essential to the future of the Federal Republic, but he was more cognizant of the public relations challenges involved in the official adoption of such research. He observed that, in fact, if the government sponsored opinion research on particular questions, it would be easy for critics to protest that the results were biased.⁵⁷

Yet Eberhard did see a way that the government could benefit from opinion research: after a 1949 meeting with the Neumanns, he wrote in his notes that “the federal government must attempt to win trust gradually abroad, and runs the danger of losing internal trust in the process (for example: Stresemann within his own party) ... I emphasized the importance of establishing a “Trust Barometer” for the federal government, also as a means for dealing with foreign countries.”⁵⁸ This note offers a fascinating glimpse into the strategic approach to political risk under development in West Germany at this time. Eberhard, like Erich Peter Neumann, framed the contemporary

⁵⁵ “Die Abgeordneten von Bonn,” Institut für Demoskopie Pressedienst 22 November 1952, IfZ ED 117/75, Politische Meinungsforschung/Informations- u. Pressedienst des Instituts für Demoskopie, Sept. 49 – April 58.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the Neumanns’s emphasis on the educational properties of their research, see Norbert Grube, “Targeting and Educating Consumers in West Germany: Market Research by the Allensbach Institute up to the 1970s,” in *The Voice of the Citizen Consumer: A History of Market Research, Consumer Movements, and the Political Public Sphere*, ed. Kerstin Bruckweh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁵⁷ Reply from Eberhard to the Institut für Demoskopie, 29.4.49, IfZ, ED 117/ 119, Correspondence with Herr Staatssekretär Dr. Fritz Eberhard, Stuttgart.

⁵⁸ Eberhard, Aktenvermerk from 29 Juni 1949, IfZ, ED 117/119.

challenge explicitly in terms of the negative example of Weimar. Although the subject of this rumination – a method for measuring the support of West German citizens for the West German federal government – was an internal political question, Eberhard linked it to West Germany’s position within the world as a whole. Internal assessment of “trust in the government” could also be a foreign policy tool, presumably to show allies and enemies alike that the risk of West German defection from democratic principles was low, while support of Adenauer’s government was high. While there is no evidence of direct communication between Eberhard and Adenauer regarding this strategy, the Allensbach Institute’s long-running poll on the popularity of the Chancellor was eventually used in just the way Eberhard anticipated: to demonstrate to his own citizens and to the United States that Adenauer had the support of the majority.⁵⁹

Because it took so long for the opinion research institutes to establish permanent contracts with the West German government and media (both Emnid and the Allensbach Institute began work for the government at the very end of 1950, as stipulated in trial contracts that were gradually revamped as the government became increasingly dependent on opinion polls), the bulk of financial support for opinion research operations came from the business sector at this time.⁶⁰ Even the Frankfurt School promoted its services to German businesses; in 1954 it undertook a project investigating worker-management relationships for the Mannesmann company.⁶¹ All of these institutes clearly were most

⁵⁹ See the poll results collected in Erich Peter Neumann and Elisabeth Noelle, *Umfragen über Adenauer: Ein Porträt in Zahlen* (Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1961).

⁶⁰ Krueger, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Aktennotiz for Dr. von Twardowski, 13.11.1950, BAK B145/1568. Kruke suggests that political surveys made up only 5-20 percent of the work of the West German institutes. Kruke 43.

⁶¹ Wiggershaus sees Horkheimer’s acceptance of the Mannesmann project as a key moment in the institute’s loss of intellectual independence. Wiggershaus 479.

passionate about political opinion research, but they recognized that it was market research that paid the bills. The insights gleaned from this market research work also had implications for politics and media, however – “the masses” were ultimately also consumers, and market research provided a platform for pollsters to fine-tune their survey instruments and their understanding of the human mind.

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann spoke of the difficulties involved in assessing the rationale behind choices in a 1956 speech to the Arbeitskreis für Betriebswirtschaftliche Markt- und Absatzforschung (Working Group on Operational Marketing and Sales Research). After noting that consumers were not irrational in the sense of buying products or services that did not fulfill their specified function, she observed that consumers were not consciously rational enough to explain why they made certain choices. In fact, “We have much more an exceptionally dangerous consumer” – one who attempted to give the answers he or she *thought* were the most rational.⁶² Noelle-Neumann explained, “We know this, because we have the ability to press him with survey techniques.”⁶³ The insights of opinion research came in part through a concerted distrust of those being polled. Pollsters drew on the methods of criminologists, drawing on “detective tricks” to get to the truth of this “reasonable-yet-unreasonable” consumer.⁶⁴ This logic was also translated to the indispensable yet most dangerous element of a democracy: its citizens. Erich Peter Neumann declared in a 1954 speech that “The female and male Lieschen Müllers [that is,

⁶² “Wir haben vielmehr einen ausgesprochen gefährlichen Verbraucher ...” Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, Referat auf der Tagung des Arbeitskreises für Betriebswirtschaftliche Markt- und Absatzforschung in Stuttgart, 24 February 1956, p. 2, IfZ ED 117/75, Politische Meinungsforschung/Informations- u. Pressedienst des Instituts für Demoskopie, Sept. 49 – April 58.

⁶³ “Wir wissen das, weil wir ihn mit Fragebogen-Technik gleichsam dazu zu zwingen vermögen.” Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

the average German] are the raw material of democracy,” and accordingly, in Neumann’s view, “it is the duty of the good administrator to observe this raw material as often as possible, in order to see if it is fermenting or if other, negative developments are visible.⁶⁵ Properly carried out opinion research would help government officials fulfill this duty and protect the West German state by giving politicians access to minority and majority views.⁶⁶

Building the Profession: The 1951 Weinheim Conference

The methods and striking rhetoric used by the Neumanns and von Stackelberg did not emerge in isolation. Historians and scholars of opinion research in West Germany tend to present the Allensbach Institute and Emnid, among other institutes, in relentless competition with one another for scarce resources and as polar opposites ideologically and methodologically from the Institut für Sozialforschung (Frankfurt School).⁶⁷ But especially in the early 1950s, the empirical opinion research community was so small and the need to develop standards within the field so great that there was actually much cooperation and communication between these institutions at the individual as well as institutional level. This professional exchange is exemplified in the career of Ludwig von Friedeburg. After working as a project assistant in the Institut für Sozialforschung’s *Gruppenexperiment* project of 1950-51, von Friedeburg pursued further studies in psychology and sociology at

⁶⁵ Die weiblichen und männlichen Lieschen Müllers aber sind, um es zu wiederholen, der Rohstoff der Demokratie. Es ist die Aufgabe des guten Verwalters, von diesem Rohstoff möglichst oft eine Stichprobe zu betrachten, um zu sehen, ob es vielleicht gärt oder ob sich andere, ungute Entwicklungen anzeigen.” Erich Peter Neumann, “Ist die Meinung von Lieschen Müller Wichtig?” Speech at the Mittwochgespräch Köln, 23 June 1954, p. 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁷ Most importantly, Anja Kruke, *Demoskopie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*.

the University of Freiburg, then spent two years developing his empirical social scientific research skills at the Allensbach Institute.⁶⁸ He then returned to the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt, and was eventually appointed director of the institute in 1966. Indeed, his Frankfurt School colleagues were happy to welcome back someone trained in the rigorous statistical methods used by Noelle-Neumann and her staff. Further, with the important exception of the Allensbach Institute, what all of the opinion research institute leaders and the majority of their staff during the early 1950s had in common was an initial dependence on Allied and especially American support. Emnid founder von Stackelberg's short trip to the United States was funded by the American government, while many researchers got their start in the profession by working as interviewers for Allied survey units. Hans Sittenfeld, for example, worked in the Reactions Analysis Staff of HICOG under Crespi as a Senior Research Analyst until 1952, when he joined the Institut für Sozialforschung as a researcher.⁶⁹ Emnid's Friedrich Lenz and the Allensbach Institute's Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann gave a joint lecture under the auspices of the the Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten (Office of Public Affairs, originally erected by the Allies but under German leadership after October 1949), to which American occupation officials were invited.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Recommendation letter from Theodor Adorno for Ludwig von Friedeburg, 8 April 1954, Archive of the Institut für Sozialforschung (hereafter IfS Archive), Binder: Korrespondenz mit Institutionen 1a A-D 1951- "Förderung Öffentlicher Angelegenheiten.

⁶⁹ Dr. Hans Sittenfeld, Reactions Analysis Staff, HICOG, to members of the planning committee for the working conference on empirical social research in September 1952, 24 January 1952, p. 4, IfS Archive, Binder: Korrespondenz mit Institutionen 1a A-D 1951- . Förderung Öffentlicher Angelegenheiten.

⁷⁰ Friedrich Lenz & Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, Referate, Institut zur Förderung Öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, Abteilung für Wirtschafts- und Sozialfragen 16. March 1950, at NARA II, RG260, Box 151.

American support also brought the presumed polar opposites of postwar German social science, the Neumanns and Theodor Adorno of the Institut für Sozialforschung, together in an early attempt to professionalize empirical social scientific research. At the behest of HICOG (specifically Leo Crespi), they collaborated with the Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten to organize a conference on empirical social research that took place at Weinheim an der Bergstrasse in December 1951.⁷¹ Crespi hoped to connect academics as well as pollsters, but early meetings to discuss the conference foreshadowed the difficulties that would be aired at the conference itself. At a meeting in June 1951 that brought, among others, Crespi, Adorno, Horkheimer, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, and von Stackelberg together with Professors Abendrothe, Flaskämper, and Schmid, it was clear that the academic researchers wanted to place much more emphasis on theoretical aspects of opinion research, while pollsters were interested in discussing methodology and practical applications of empirical work.⁷²

Eventually, in an attempt to include both perspectives, the attendance list would rise to 122 men and women engaged with empirical social scientific research methods. The attendance and content of the Weinheim conference were a testament to the desire of

⁷¹ Though frequently referenced as a seminal moment in the establishment of opinion research in West Germany, the conference has received little sustained attention. Matthias Stahl provides a brief summary (with little analysis) of the conference in “Die Weinheimer Tagungen: Geschichte der Zusammenarbeit zwischen akademischer und privatwirtschaftlicher Forschung,” in Stahl and Frank Faulbaum, eds., *Qualitätssicherung in der Umfrageforschung: Neue Herausforderungen für die Markt- und Sozialforschung*, GESIS-Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften (Wiesbaden, 2012). The most incisive discussions of the conference are found in a collection of papers given on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the conference. Within this volume, Ute Gerhardt particularly stresses the importance of American influence on the methodologies and democratic visions discussed at Weinheim. Ute Gerhardt, “Der Einfluss der USA,” in Heinz Sahner, ed., *Fünfzig Jahre nach Weinheim: Empirische Markt- und Sozialforschung gestern, heute, morgen* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2002).

⁷² Tagungsprotokoll from meeting of 15 and 16 June 1951, IfS Archive, Binder: Korrespondenz mit Institutionen 1a A-D 1951-. Förderung Öffentlicher Angelegenheiten.

Crespi to build a broad and deep foundation for empirical social research in West Germany. In the end the conference did in fact bring together researchers from a variety of backgrounds (academia, market research, industrial research, government statistics), engaged with a diverse array of methodologies.⁷³ Italian, Dutch, Swedish, and Swiss social scientists, as well as numerous representatives of the American and British militaries, also attended, although the majority of attendees were based in West Germany. Among the international attendees and sponsors were many who, like Crespi, hoped that empirical social research, and public opinion research in particular, would promote a democratic political culture in West Germany, but also feared the actual intentions of many German opinion researchers.

The organizers emphasized their desire to discuss a range of approaches to social, political, and economic questions in the Federal Republic, while ultimately arriving at standards for survey research in Germany in order to distance themselves more clearly from unqualified practitioners who could taint public perception of the profession.⁷⁴ One participant, Ludwig von Friedeburg, later remarked that the few opinion research institutes in existence in West Germany at this time had to coordinate among themselves in this way because all opinion researchers were viewed with distrust if one institute

⁷⁴ "Einige Gedanken über die Gestaltung der Geplanten Arbeitstagung der Deutschen Empirischen Sozialforschung im September 1952 in Weinheim," undated, IfS Archive, Binder: Korrespondenz mit Institutionen 1a A-D 1951- . Förderung Öffentlicher Angelegenheiten. In the planning for this second conference, the organizers discussed how each group of researchers – statisticians, opinion researchers, the Institut für Sozialforschung, market researchers, and plant operations researchers – might bring its particular expertise to bear on selected problems, such as the German youth.

published crude or inaccurate findings.⁷⁵ In the published proceedings of the conference, organizing committee coordinator Hans Sittenfeld stressed that this was a unique challenge in West Germany: not only were many methods of empirical social research new to the nation, but Germans found themselves in such a chaotic situation after 1945 that they couldn't simply adopt wholesale the methods developed in western countries. German social scientists had to develop their own methods: "Here, much searching, thinking, and also experimentation is necessary."⁷⁶ In this way, the conference was intended as a call to arms to all interested in Germany's postwar social, economic, and political development. All of the leading social scientists and opinion pollsters of the time gave lectures or participated in panel discussions at Weinheim, among them Adorno, both Neumanns, Stackelberg, and rising academic stars like Rene König. And all emphasized Germany's unique sociopolitical and intellectual situation. While Germany's needs with respect to empirical social research might have been less unique in actuality than these attendees claimed, it is clear that an element of national pride was central to their calls for professionalization.

These undertones of national honor and a sense of Germany's uniqueness should be understood as part of the strategy of the conference organizers, who hoped to bolster the scientific credentials of opinion research by bringing German opinion researchers into closer contact with more traditional German social scientists working in academia.⁷⁷ To

⁷⁵ Ludwig von Friedeburg, "Wie war das damals?" in Heinz Sahner, ed., *Fünfzig Jahre nach Weinheim: Empirische Markt- und Sozialforschung gestern, heute, morgen* (Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2002), 24.

⁷⁶ Hans Sittenfeld, "Zur Einführung," *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 15.

⁷⁷ Hans Sittenfeld, "Zur Einführung," 16-17.

this end, they elected Dr. Leopold von Wiese, Social Scientific Chair at the University of Cologne and editor of the influential *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, President of the conference. Giving von Wiese such a position was clearly meant to signal that opinion research should be incorporated into the existing social scientific community. This symbolic gesture did not go quite as planned, however. Rather than stressing the importance of empirical methods for examining the problems facing the young Federal Republic, in his opening comments von Wiese spoke at length of the need for a continued primacy of *theory*. It would be dangerous, he declared, if sociologists became mere observers and not thinkers, if they became beholden to statistical material.⁷⁸ Further, he worried, the fact of the matter was that most people “don’t have their own opinions” on most questions, and if they did, these were likely simply inaccessible or unintelligible to researchers.⁷⁹ From this perspective, he implied, one was left wondering what opinion researchers could actually contribute.

It was against such criticism and doubt that the earliest advocates of the discipline found themselves united. For those most familiar with the theoretical work of the Frankfurt School, Adorno’s speech on “The present situation of empirical social research in Germany,” which emphasized the “critical” and “enlightening task” of empirical work, will come as a surprise.⁸⁰ In fact, Adorno offered a nuanced rebuke of von Wiese by insisting that social scientists must be open to the possibility that empirical research – even market research –

⁷⁸ Leopold von Wiese, “Eröffnungsrede des Präsidenten der Arbeitstagung,” *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 24.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 25. Indeed, von Wiese was “astonished by the great trust and respect that our American friends have for every statement of opinion from all of their fellow citizens.”

⁸⁰ Theodor Adorno, “Zur gegenwärtigen Stellung der empirischen Sozialforschung in Deutschland,” *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952).

might disprove or at least complicate theories of human activity.⁸¹ The important thing was that there exist a reciprocal relationship between theories and facts.⁸² Empirically-grounded social research could prevent philosophers and social scientists from falling into the trap of single-mindedness and dogmatism.⁸³ By asking detailed questions about behaviors and choices, researchers could “clarify the social reality which is largely hidden from individuals and even the collective consciousness.”⁸⁴ They could move beyond vague notions of “conservatism” and *Heimatliebe* to illuminate, for example, the costs and benefits underlying the claims of farmers about why they maintained certain practices.⁸⁵ This approach has clear affinities with Paul Lazarsfeld’s explanations of his vision for empirical research. And as in Erich Peter Neumann’s speeches and letters, empirical opinion research was presented as opening up new possibilities for understanding human behavior and social life.

Adorno’s speech lauded the clarifying potential of polls and surveys, but also addressed their limitations. He called on his colleagues to incorporate a wide range of methods into their research and to not oversell the power of their discipline. He noted that polls and surveys were not the only, or best, research methodology: group interviews and discussions (such as those used in the contemporary investigations of the Institut für Sozialforschung itself) could provide insights as well, complementing more quantitative

⁸¹ Theodor Adorno, “Zur gegenwärtigen Stellung der empirischen Sozialforschung in Deutschland,” 33. Adorno used the research that went into *The Authoritarian Personality* as an example. Adorno and his colleagues had assumed that children who demonstrated resistance to authority would grow up to be independent thinkers and less likely to apply stereotypes; empirical research proved the opposite to be the case – those same children often became conformist adults.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

work.⁸⁶ Further, empirical research was “not a magic mirror that displays the future, nor a more scientific astrology,” and it should not be presented to the public as such.⁸⁷

Regulations within the discipline should strive to ensure that charlatans could not appeal to the desire of the public for easy answers and predictions of the future. Indeed, only vigilance within the discipline could protect it.⁸⁸

But even as he defended empirical research techniques, Adorno voiced many of the qualifications that he would elaborate on later in the 1950s. Individual empirical studies would never verify general theories, he argued, while any attempt to use a given theory as a starting point for empirical investigations could influence the results themselves.⁸⁹

Representative sampling was a useful technique, but statistical majorities did not necessarily correlate with the real power holders in a given society. Slavish reliance on statistical analysis, then, only served to elide the ways in which public opinion was influenced by a narrow set of interests. Only when combined with qualitative research and a deep engagement with social and economic realities – “reflection on the actual distribution of power within society” – could empirical research open up new avenues for making sense of human activity and psychology.⁹⁰ Finally, the danger of the misuse of polling was evident to Adorno. While calling for his audience to use polls responsibly and not misrepresent the capabilities of opinion research to the public, he betrayed his belief

⁸⁶ Ibid., 35.

⁸⁷ Ibid.,36-37.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 37.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 37.

that contemporary “mass culture” and its “undemocratic” tendency to grasp on to simplistic and “streamlined” explanations might make such responsible use impossible.⁹¹

Although this critique would seem at odds with the claims made by the Neumanns, in some respects it was based on a very similar assessment of the supposedly unsophisticated and politically uneducated German people. In the panel following Adorno’s lecture at the conference, Erich Peter Neumann proposed to the audience that *German* opinion research had a special responsibility, because democracy was under greater threat in Germany than elsewhere.⁹² He stressed the function of opinion research as an informative medium; its role in the service of democracy lay “in the realm of political pedagogy, and as connective link between above and below, below and above.”⁹³ Returning to his favorite trope, Neumann declared that the Weimar Republic had failed because its leaders had presumed to know and understand public opinion through the press, recognizing the threat of National Socialism only when it was far too late to stop it.⁹⁴ Unlike the press, poll results, according to Neumann, were impersonal and oblivious to the hopes and expectations of politicians or interest groups.⁹⁵ Polls also functioned as a yardstick by which individuals could measure their alignment with the majority. “It [opinion research] is also a mirror, and it may be educational for people to continually discern themselves in this group picture.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ Ibid., 36.

⁹² Erich Peter Neumann, “Politische und Soziale Meinungsforschung in Deutschland,” *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 44.

⁹³ Ibid., 46.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 48.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

The following presentations covered market research, industrial surveys, listener research, the contribution of psychology to empirical social research, marketing and distribution research, and the analysis of advertisements in print publications. The second panel was devoted to empirical methodologies, primarily sampling techniques. A third panel was devoted to presentations on survey use within social research, the construction of questionnaires, group discussion and one-on-one interviewing techniques, and methods for analysis. Above all, the presentations in this last panel emphasized the expertise and care required to execute a successful (unbiased and informative) research project. As the first presenter of the panel, Ludwig Neundörfer of the Soziographisches Institut of the University of Frankfurt, reminded his audience, the object of empirical social research was ultimately the essence of man.⁹⁷ Its discovery required deftly written and delivered questions, free from suggestive words or body language, presented to research subjects in a variety of contexts. While many of the panel presenters sought to convince the audience of the primacy of particular methods, there was also an undercurrent of recognition that the complex object of research required a nuanced cocktail of methodologies.

The keynote lecture of the conference was delivered by an Italian opinion researcher, Pierpaolo Luzzatto Fegiz, founder of the Italian DOXA Institute. Fegiz devoted his lecture to calling for greater international collaboration, especially within western Europe. Although the conference proceedings indicate his comments were met with applause throughout, it is also clear that although participants saw the value of Europe-

⁹⁷ Ludwig Neundörfer, "Das soziographische Erhebungsverfahren," *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 157.

wide collaboration, they believed it was more important to establish credibility for their discipline and their individual institutes within Germany first.

Although the conference demonstrated German interest in more such gatherings, HICOG was wary of funding additional conferences, leading the members of the conference organization committee to consider other options for financing its meetings – including appealing to German business leaders.⁹⁸ In part, this reluctance derived from accusations in the German press of malevolent American influence on opinion research in the Federal Republic, described as an unnecessary meddling in German affairs. If HICOG gave German researchers financial support, critics claimed, this would result inevitably in research – and results – steered largely by American interests.⁹⁹ At least one conference attendee also expressed misgivings about the Americanization of social scientific research in Germany. Oskar Anderson, a professor at the Statistical Institute of the University of Munich, objected to the use of English words in place of their German counterparts in terms like “quota-sample,” “at random,” “testen,” and “significant.” Anderson argued that since the Americans had not invented such concepts – in fact, many had been written about centuries earlier in Latin – it did not make sense to adopt English terms for German use. “In the middle ages man held Jerusalem to be the world’s navel,” Anderson declared. “Should the USA now take

⁹⁸ Hans Sittenfeld, Reactions Analysis Staff, HICOG, to members of the planning committee for the working conference on empirical social research in September 1952, 24 January 1952, IfS Archive, Binder: Korrespondenz mit Institutionen 1a A-D 1951- . Förderung Öffentlicher Angelegenheiten.

⁹⁹ Sittenfeld, Reactions Analysis Staff, HICOG, to members of the planning committee for the working conference on empirical social research in September 1952, 24 January 1952, 3. In his letter, Sittenfeld cited an editorial in the *Bonner Parlamentarisch-Politisch Pressedienst* from 8 January 1952 with the provocative headline “Americans ‘organize’ Opinion Research.”

its place for us?”¹⁰⁰ Without this source of funding, however, institutes scattered throughout the western zones had fewer incentives – financial and intellectual – to pursue sustained collaboration.

The struggles of opinion researchers to attain financial stability and credibility within the broader social scientific community are a reminder of the limits of viewing the founding of public opinion research in West Germany through a strict Foucauldian frame. Despite their ambitions to capture the essence of the human in any given moment, the opinion researchers who met at Weinheim in 1951 were well aware of the substantial limitations to their craft. This is especially evident in Karl von Stackelberg’s opening comments in his presentation on questionnaire construction, in which he responded to an earlier presentation by a Frankfurt School researcher, Dietrich Osmer. Stackelberg objected to Osmer’s claim that opinion researchers “normally” believed simply that “each individual has a straightforward opinion, individual opinions are measurable without great difficulty, and one receives a picture of public opinion if one adds up all of the individual opinions.” To this suggestion, Stackelberg exclaimed, “If only it were so easy!”¹⁰¹ The founder of Emnid not only admitted that public opinion was complex and difficult to track, he noted that an important function of the conference was to bring practitioners of different methodologies together and increase the experience and wisdom of the profession as a whole. Stackelberg, the Neumanns, Adorno, and others had grand visions of what empirical opinion research, properly conducted, would enable, but they were limited, among other

¹⁰⁰ “Im Mittelalter hielt man Jerusalem für den Nabel der Welt. Soll USA jetzt bei uns diese Stelle einnehmen?” *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 128.

¹⁰¹ Karl von Stackelberg, “Die Frage und ihre Formulierung,” *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 172.

constraints, by what Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann described as the wiles of their “exceptionally dangerous,” “reasonable yet unreasonable” subjects.

Adorno, Stackelberg, the Neumanns, Leo Crespi, Fritz Eberhard and many other figures interested in establishing opinion research in West Germany did explicitly espouse the view that empirical opinion research could protect the fledgling democracy of West Germany. However, they differed on how opinion research would play such a role, leading to simmering distrust of West German motives among Americans like Crespi and many western European observers. In a land in which enemies had become friends and former Nazis were rarely prevented from joining in the rebuilding of the West German political and economic systems, “democracy” was increasingly difficult to define. The methodological premise of empirical public opinion research – the equal validity of each individual opinion – perhaps provided these researchers and many others some sort of concrete ground on which to base their practical understanding of democracy. Their claims about the defensive function of opinion research also fit very well into the particular version of “militant democracy” that had gained traction in the wake of the failed Weimar Republic and catastrophic years of the Third Reich. Further, opinion researchers could quite rightly claim that their work brought the Federal Republic into line with the most advanced western capitalist democracies.

Broader political concerns did not make the professionalization of opinion research completely frictionless, however. The Weinheim Conference of December 1951 marked a high point of attempted collaboration among opinion researchers and the West German social scientific community, enabled through American (HICOG) support. However, the

conference was in part necessitated by the ambivalence of prospective clients and fellow social scientists in Germany.

In the long term, however, Weinheim was a pivotal moment for the establishment of survey research as a pillar of the postwar world order. The audience of the Weinheim conference is notable for its large inclusion of representatives of the American occupation in Germany. Of the 122 attendees, fourteen – over ten percent – were affiliated with the American occupation. True, HICOG was the most significant sponsor of the conference, so it had a vested interest in its successful execution. But more importantly, HICOG's survey director Leo Crespi and others seem to have been convinced, like the Neumanns, that a secure post-war West Germany required the institutionalization of methods to monitor and communicate the populace's hopes, worries, and political stances. Yet their collaboration with German opinion researchers was guided in part by pessimistic assessments of the German people, including those same German opinion researchers. The utopian vision of American opinion researchers like Gallup and Crespi did not translate directly into the language and work of German pollsters, who instead embraced Paul Lazarsfeld's notion of opinion research as an essentially method-based practice that provided the key to understanding behavior. The Allensbach Institute, the Emnid Institute, and the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt would put this vision into practice in various ways, in an attempt to understand and then build a stable post-fascist society in West Germany.

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE INSIDE OUT: THE ALLENSBACH AND EMNID POLLS AND THE CONTOURS OF WEST GERMAN POLITICAL CULTURE

Amidst the welter of ambitious public opinion researchers who jockeyed for support and publicity in the first decades after World War II, two rose to the top: the Institut für Demoskopie at Allensbach and the Emnid Institute in Bielefeld. Like many businesses in the western zones of Germany, both the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes struggled for survival after the currency reform of 1948. But both were ultimately successful in fostering a relationship with the Adenauer government (Emnid was later favored by Ludwig Erhard, especially on economic questions) and building a client base for their market, consumer, and industrial research arms. Over the course of the 1950s, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and her husband Erich Peter Neumann, the founders and tireless promoters of the Allensbach Institute, and Karl Georg von Stackelberg of Emnid also positioned their work as an essential accessory to foreign relations. A litany of Allensbach and Emnid opinion polls conducted after 1945 invited Germans to assess their present, predict their future, and compare themselves with citizens of other nations. In the process, the two institutes avidly worked to promote and refine their methods, ultimately presenting opinion research as a scientific method through which to understand the West German public and cultivate a democratic political culture.

The sheer number of polls related to elections and candidate and party popularity produced in the 1950s have rightfully drawn the attention of historians like Anja Kruke, who has narrated the integration of the pollsters into the CDU party apparatus during the

1950s (the SPD only saw the benefits of polling much later).¹ In the process, however, historians like Kruke have often under-emphasized what these institutes considered some of their most important work: surveys on West German political culture, societal change, and economic experience. In fact, election forecasts were neither the primary source of either institute's income nor the main interest of the Neumanns or von Stackelberg. As the Allensbach Institute pointed out in its promotional materials, election forecasts were undertaken by pollsters in West Germany and beyond chiefly as a "*Zerreissprobe*" – a test (and hopefully a demonstration) of the dependability of the representative survey method as an accurate guide to the thoughts and opinions of citizens.²

Reports from these two institutes in the 1950s, often written for Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's government, demonstrate an overriding concern with what both institutes saw as the dangerous ignorance and apolitical attitudes of West German citizens. Concurrently, however, the leaders of both institutes sought to use the scientific apparatus of opinion research to defend West Germans from (often foreign) accusations that they were lingering too closely at the margins of their National Socialist past. The history of public opinion research in West Germany in the first few decades after the end of World War II makes clear how much national polls have an outward-facing as well as an internal function; not only do they inform people (and their governments) about themselves, historically they have provided a methodology for demonstrating national change to concerned foreign observers.

¹ Anja Kruke and Benjamin Ziemann, "Meinungsumfragen in der Konkurrenzdemokratie. Auswirkungen der Demoskopie auf die Volksparteien und den politischen Massenmarkt 1945/49-1990," *Historical Research/Historical Sozialforschung* Vol. 26, No. 1 (95) 2001: 171-9.

² *Institut für Demoskopie: Gesellschaft zum Studium der Öffentlichen Meinung MBH Allensbach am Bodensee*. At BAK, ZSg 132/156.

Unlike in the United States, where historians have identified a persistent obsession with “the average,” polling in West Germany more often zeroed in on the extremes of public opinion, the potential threats to a nascent democratic state.³ On the other hand, opinion research also allowed West Germans to publicize a particular version of their society in order to make the claim that they did indeed belong in the family of civilized nations once again. Especially in the 1950s, West German opinion research was at times just as much about projecting an image outward into the rest of the “free world” as it was about developing insights that would make governing at home more responsive and effective.⁴ The work of historian Peter Hoeres has helped direct attention to the role that polls, as a vehicle of West German public opinion, played in international relations. However, Hoeres has written almost exclusively about the post-Adenauer years, after Ludwig Erhard became Chancellor of the Federal Republic in 1963.⁵ By examining the evolution as well as the international context and reception of polls in the late 1940s and 1950s, this chapter demonstrates that although the power of the polls may have increased with the growth of various mass media venues in the 1960s and 1970s, a pattern of usage of opinion polls to assert or rebuke claims about the West German character was already in place by the early 1950s. Indeed, this was one of their chief uses by the Emnid and Allensbach Institutes.

As Jan-Werner Müller has observed, the fear held by many Europeans about the potentially totalitarian trajectory of government by the masses encouraged the postwar

³ Igo, *The Averaged American*.

⁴ Anja Kruke and Benjamin Ziemann have emphasized the principal of responsiveness in the use of opinion polls. Kruke and Ziemann, “Observing the Sovereign: Opinion Polls and the Restructuring of the Body Politic in West Germany, 1945-1990,” in Kerstin Brückweh, et al., eds., *Engineering Society: The Role of the Human and Social Sciences in Modern Societies, 1880-1980* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 234-51.

⁵ Hoeres, *Außenpolitik und Öffentlichkeit*.

embrace of different types of “checks and balances” on popular sovereignty, such as constitutional courts and social scientific planning.⁶ It is not surprising that it was a German sociologist (Ulrich Beck) who developed the idea of the world of the twentieth century as a global “risk society.” From a geopolitical perspective, Germany was ground zero for the risk of superpower confrontation in the 1950s; it was also the site of domestic uncertainty, and distrust of a population that had for twelve years worked toward the goals of a genocidal dictatorship. The polls of the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes provided a framework with which to parry both elements of risk, while serving as vessels for a new type of political education.

The Human Work of Polling

When one peers beyond their election forecasts, the incredible variety of the early work of both the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes becomes evident. In its first few years of existence the Allensbach Institute conducted political and economic polls; it did market research; and it undertook projects for a textile factory in southern Germany.⁷ Ludwig Erhard commissioned several surveys from the Institute in his capacity as Director of the *Verwaltung für Wirtschaft* in 1948.⁸ Other projects, such as its earliest polls on anti-Semitism among Germans, the Institute carried out on its own initiative, in the hopes of selling the results to media outlets or political organizations, or simply to drum up further interest in opinion research. An early promotional pamphlet outlined the Institute’s

⁶ Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 143-50.

⁷ Institut für Demoskopie, *Bericht über eine Betriebsumfrage Durchgeführt im Mai 1948, Branche: Textilfabrik*, BAK ZSg 132/ 1.

⁸ Institut für Demoskopie, *Das Jahr I: Irrtum und Propheti der öffentlichen Meinung*, BAK ZSg 132/2684 (IfD # 29).

competencies in several areas: marketing and consumer research; pre- and follow-up testing of advertisements; public relations studies; reader and listener analysis for print media and radio; political public opinion and attitude research; statistical socio-economic surveys; and industrial psychology.⁹ In 1947 and 1948, the Institute carried out the first statistically representative surveys in Germany in many of these categories. In 1950, fifty percent of the Institute's studies were related to market research; political opinion research made up fifteen percent of studies.¹⁰ Two years later, political opinion research represented a slightly higher percentage of the Institute's work, but was still secondary to market and media research. Of roughly 131 full-scale surveys undertaken by the Institute in 1952, 34 covered political public opinion, while 62 were part of market or media research projects.¹¹

The polls conducted by the Emnid Institute, founded by Karl von Stackelberg in 1945 and the Allensbach Institute's most well-known competitor, ranged over a similarly diverse array of topics. In the first ten years of Emnid's existence, the institute produced reports from surveys covering everything from the availability of firewood and coal (still a concern in the early 1950s), the habits of cosmetics-buyers and coffee-drinkers, and the existence (or not) of latent militarism within West Germany. The Emnid's weekly newsletter, the *EMNID-Informationen*, informed subscribers, including government officials, of notable results from the entire range of polls. In its 1953 synopsis of the Institute's activities during the previous year, the *Informationen* described the institute's consumer research as the main focus of its work, but also noted the outsized importance of

⁹ *Institut für Demoskopie, Gesellschaft zum Studium der Öffentlichen Meinung*. At BAK ZSg 132/156.

¹⁰ *Institut für Demoskopie, Kurzgefaßte Information über das Institut für Demoskopie*, p. 1. At BAK ZSg 132/628 II.

¹¹ "Glauben Sie an Gott?" *Der Spiegel*, 28 October 1953, p. 14.

its political public opinion research projects both in West Germany and abroad. The *Informationen* boasted that the results of its political opinion research not only were closely observed in Bonn, but were often taken up by foreign embassies and international media. According to the *Informationen*, at least 345 newspaper and magazine articles featuring poll results from Emnid had appeared in 1952.¹² As were the Neumanns, then, von Stackelberg and the Emnid Institute were very aware of the potential power of public opinion research, in tandem with the media, for modern public relations.

Both Emnid and the Allensbach Institute supported their appeals to the Adenauer government and other clients with assertions of the “scientific” nature of modern public opinion research and the progressiveness of their methods. Yet each institute accentuated different methodological approaches. The Allensbach Institute stressed the basic similarity of its different research areas – they all focused on uncovering the essential truths of human behavior. In contrast, Emnid emphasized the ever-increasing number of methodological refinements made in each area, particularly for testing the appeal of media advertisements. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, as the Allensbach Institute’s scientific director, was also interested in improving existing survey methods, but was above all dedicated to perfecting what she saw as the most foundational ingredients of opinion polling: question construction and questioning techniques, as well as the mechanical analysis of survey data.

Although their technical jargon and the simple percentages produced through polls dominated the reports of the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes, the survey process was inseparable from its human practitioners. Sometimes hundreds of interviewers worked on carrying out particular surveys among a statistically representative sample of 2000-3000

¹² *EMNID-Informationen: wöchentlicher Dienst der EMNID*, Nr. 1/53, 27.12.52/3.1.53. At BAK, ZSg.2/640.

Germans, usually spread across all states of the Federal Republic along with Berlin. At least until the 1970s, the Allensbach Institute conducted all of its opinion research through in-person interviews. Emnid also carried out the vast majority of its research in this manner, but used written mail-in forms for some of its media research. More in-depth surveys about political and economic trends included the opportunity to provide explanations for answers rather than just yes/no responses.¹³ The Allensbach Institute claimed that the greater attention its interviewers paid to explanations given for different responses set it apart from George Gallup's research in the United States.¹⁴ However, this (slightly) more personal, free-form approach also belied its assertion that it used a dependable, bias-free method. In rare instances, the Allensbach Institute even asked members of a specific group to be interviewed to carry out the interviews themselves. This was the case in the Institute's path-breaking analysis of students at the universities in Tübingen and Freiburg in the summer of 1947.¹⁵ Students themselves were trained and instructed to carry out the interviews of their own cohort, creating the possibility either for more open interviews with students, or for highly skewed results dependent even more on the rapport and personal relationships between interviewer and interviewee than would have been the case with a more highly trained interviewer with no previous contact with the students.

In most survey projects, the Allensbach Institute entrusted its interviewers with quotas that the interviewers were themselves to fill: that is, based on official statistics, it

¹³ See, for example, Institut für Demoskopie, *Bericht über die 1. Umfrage der Wirtschaftspolitischen Gesellschaft von 1947 über die deutsche Situation (im Anschluss an die Bundestagswahl vom 14 August 1949)*, BAK ZSg 132/2686 (IfD# 35).

¹⁴ Institut für Demoskopie, *Umfragen 1947/1948: Berichte und Arbeitsmethoden*. At BAK ZSg 132/10.

¹⁵ Dr. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Bericht über die Befragung der Studenten der Universitäten Tübingen und Freiburg," Juli 1947 (unpag). In *Jugend nach dem Krieg: Umfragen 1947-48 + 8 Berichte*, BAK ZSg 132/2681 (IfD # 11-14).

compiled a list of representative groups based on characteristics including age, location, gender, and occupation and instructed interviewers to find people who fit each description. Generally interviewers from the Institute did not directly ask respondents their social class; instead, interviewers were instructed to assess the social class of the respondent at the end of the interview.¹⁶ This assessment was, according to the Institute's guidelines, to be based upon the respondent's education level, occupation, current economic status, and the "general impression" made.¹⁷ This practice inevitably invited a certain amount of subjective perception on the part of the interviewer.

Indeed, the Institute's reliance on sampling decisions made while in the field opened it up to criticism from those in favor of more rigid sampling practices. Early in the Allensbach Institute's existence, representatives of the OMGUS Surveys Unit, which, as we have seen, closely monitored the activities of all native German opinion researchers, focused much of their criticism of Noelle-Neumann's operation on this very question. One OMGUS field officer observed with disdain that the Institute's quota list entrusted interviewers with far too much freedom to make final selections, and implied that the fact that the interviewers could specify social status themselves might result in the deliberate falsifying of this characteristic in order to "meet" the assigned quota.¹⁸ The history of

¹⁶ Interviewers then assigned the respondent to one of four categories: "upper class (A), upper middle class (B); broad middle class (C) and the lowest class, living in meager circumstances" ("*Oberschicht (A), gehobene Mittelschicht (B), breite Mittelschicht (C) und die in dürftigen Verhältnissen lebende einfachste Schicht (D)*").

¹⁷ See, for example, the appendix for a report from a survey conducted in 1954 for the Bundesbahn, "Marktforschung für das Kursbuch: Wer benutzt es und wer kann es lesen?" BAK, ZSg 132/ 2899 (IfD # 1097).

¹⁸ Henry Herz, OMGUS Opinion Surveys Field Officer for Northern Bavaria, 7 September 1949. At NARA II RG 260 Box 151. The letter from Herz was attached to the Allensbach Institute's questionnaire for its study on the "Intimate Sphere" in the summer of 1949, a study which OMGUS criticized on many levels.

opinion polling in the United States confirms that such stretching of the quota guidelines by time-crunched interviewers was a relatively common occurrence, while the interviewer's own social background could influence the people he or she chose to interview as well as the content of responses.¹⁹

The questionnaires themselves were another tool of the institutes that often straddled the line between art and science. In their attempt to uncover opinions on and knowledge about a wide variety of issues, the institutes constantly reformulated their question constructions. The Allensbach Institute's polls were composed primarily of concretely-worded questions that often corresponded only indirectly to larger issues. For example, rather than asking "What do you think about the stability of the value of the Deutschmark?" the institute asked several more specific questions like the following: "Imagine that someone hides 20 Marks today and finds it in ten years. What do you think: will he be able to buy as much, more, or less with the 20 Marks as he can today?"²⁰ In other surveys, interviewers simply asked respondents what topics, based on a list provided by the interviewer, they had discussed with others in the past week. Such survey questions enabled researchers to determine what issues were truly top of mind for the majority of Germans. Especially during the 1950s, they confirmed the frequently un-political nature of day-to-day conversations. In November 1959, for example, most Germans cared far more

¹⁹ Igo 128-30.

²⁰ "Stellen Sie sich vor, jemand verlegt heute 20 Mark und findet sie in zehn Jahren – also 1973 – wieder. Was meinen Sie: wird er sich dann für die 20 Mark soviel kaufen können wie heute, oder mehr, oder weniger?" Institut für Demoskopie, "Der Einfluß von Frageformulierungen bei Untersuchungen zur Feststellung des Geldwertrauens: Ein Experiment in einer repräsentativen Bevölkerungsumfrage," at BAK ZSg 132/ 2906 (IfD # 1137).

about the price of butter and potatoes than about potential upcoming visits by U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower or Soviet leader Nikita Krushchev.²¹

In some cases, respondents were presented with a dialogue containing the detailed opinions of two hypothetical men, and asked whose opinion their own most closely resembled. Interestingly, such questions seemed to yield fewer “undecided” responses. In such cases, it may simply have been easier to agree with an already fully-formed opinion; respondents did not have to come up with their own justification for their response. At the same time, such question construction also imparted a lesson to Germans that educated discussion and even disagreement was to be embraced. Polling thus worked to gradually consolidate an acceptable lexicon of opinions that could be stated openly, as well as to lay the groundwork for a manner of communication novel to many Germans.

Conversations among pollsters and their clients attest to the degree to which opinion researchers themselves acknowledged that poll results were human constructions rather than unbiased sources to be taken at face value. The perennial interest of West German opinion researchers in refining their methods of data collection and analysis is one signal of their understanding of the malleability of the polls. The Allensbach Institute led the charge in identifying, publicizing, and even exploiting biases contained within certain question formulations. Noelle-Neumann commented in a letter exchange with a researcher at the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt that the results for one 1952 survey on anti-Semitism in West Germany had to be understood in context: the questions in the survey had been crafted in order to evoke higher levels of anti-Semitism in order to gauge

²¹ Institut für Demoskopie, “Bericht #421: Gespräche ohne Politik,” in *Die Stimmung in Bundesgebiet 1960 Teil 1*. At BAK, ZSg 132.

possibility rather than everyday attitudes.²² Here was one of many instances in which, for domestic security purposes, a West German opinion research institute strove to uncover the extreme rather than the average. In contrast, in a 1962 report for Adenauer on the “social climate,” the Institute argued that the responses to one question were not actually accurate, because “the question presumed too much.”²³

Noelle-Neumann observed in a later address at a global congress of opinion researchers that question construction remained the crux of opinion research. As they did at the 1951 Weinheim Conference, social scientists throughout the 1950s devoted considerable time to the question of whether random or quota sampling was preferable. Despite all of the attention paid to the accuracy of various sampling methods, however, Noelle-Neumann noted that it was question construction that was more likely to prompt enormous shifts in responses.²⁴ Within a survey, the order and arrangement of the questions could also affect the answers to individual questions. When one views the results of individual survey questions in isolation, it is easy to forget that questions were always asked in the context of a larger survey, often consisting of fifty or more questions. Disparities in answers to similarly, but not exactly, worded or ordered questions was a problem not only because they could spread misleading information, but because the existence of different answers from different opinion research institutes led potential clients to question the credibility of all opinion research.

²² Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann to Diedrich Osmer, 26 Jan. 1954. At the IfS Archive, binder “Korrespondenz mit Instituten, 1951 - .”

²³ “Hinzu kommt, daß eine offensichtlich in voller Aufrichtigkeit erteilte Antwort tatsächlich falsch ist, weil die Frage zuviel voraussetzte.” Institut für Demoskopie, *Die Soziale Mentalität 1962: Ergebnisse einer Repräsentativ-Umfrage*, at BAK ZSg 132/2886 (IfD # 1006).

²⁴ Elisabeth Noelle, “Über den methodischen Fortschritt in der Umfrageforschung,” *Dialectica* Vol. 16 (1962): 307-28. This was the revised text of an address given at the ESOMAR/WAPOR Congress in Baden-Baden on Sept. 11, 1961.

The preponderance of “undecided” or, in Emnid’s terminology, “opinion-less” (*Meinungslose*) respondents in opinion polls is also a factor that makes understanding any poll an exercise in interpretation. Let us consider, for example, a 1961 Emnid poll which asked respondents whether a given group (such as religious sects or unions) exerted more or less influence in the Federal Republic than they deserved.²⁵ From 1959, when this question was first asked by Emnid, to 1961, the percentage of those “without opinion” (*ohne Meinung*) grew by at least a few percentage points in every category. This difference was particularly striking in the case of one group: Jews. In 1959, only 12% of those polled declined to give a definite answer to the question of Jewish influence in the Federal Republic. In 1961, 42% of respondents were *meinungslose*. Emnid speculated that the publicity around the Eichmann trial and anti-Semitic episodes in Germany around the time of the poll had contributed to a situation in which West Germans “had become unsure or didn’t want to express themselves because of taboos.”²⁶ Opinion researchers could thus make educated guesses about the nature of undecided or unknown responses, but such large numbers of open-ended responses inevitably damaged the credibility of the answers that *were* given.

²⁵ The question ran: “Sind Sie der Meinung, daß die nachstehenden Gruppen im Bundesgebiet mehr Einfluß, weniger Einfluß oder gerade soviel Einfluß haben als ihnen zukommt?” The groups listed were Protestants, unions, Jews, Catholics, bankers and big industry, free masons, farmers’s organizations, and expellee groups. Emnid, “Meinungen über Grüppeneinflüssen in der Bundesrepublik,” *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 17/1961 from 29 April 1961, p. 2. At BAK, ZSg.2/640.

²⁶ “Hierin kann zum Ausdruck kommen, daß durch die Ereignisse der jüngsten Zeit (antisemitistische Äusserungen, Eichmann-Prozeß) die Befragten in ihrer Haltung unsicher geworden sind oder sich aus Gründen des Tabus hierzu nicht äußern wollen.” *Ibid.*

Methods, Media, and *Meinungsfreiheit*

Despite these pitfalls, both institutes continued to describe their work as an application of, and contribution to, principles of the natural and social sciences, grounding their survey results in representative sampling methods. At a time when few West Germans understood how the 2000 people typically interviewed for a survey could represent the nation as a whole, the Allensbach Institute declared itself simply to be obeying the “law of large numbers.”²⁷ That is, researchers were able to calculate the minimum number of people they had to interview in order to report results with an error of less than approximately five percentage points. In its earliest reports, the Institute endeavored to explain to government officials and others that by selecting interview subjects based on salient categories – occupation, age, location, urban vs. rural, economic status – it could delineate a group of individuals who, together, reflected the make up of the West German population as a whole.²⁸ This claim quickly caught the attention of West German media, which saw its potential as a source of entertaining and perhaps enlightening content.

Magazines and newspapers introduced the earliest polls of the Allensbach Institute with a blend of curiosity and skepticism that betrayed the low level of understanding of polling even among educated Germans. Analysis of the Allensbach Institute’s first surveys on political interest and general worldview among West German youth was published in the Freiburg-based magazine *Die Gegenwart* in 1947. The publication of these results

²⁷ Institut für Demoskopie, *Das Gesetz der grossen Zahl: Grundlagen der Demoskopie* (Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1953). At BAK ZSg 132/39.

²⁸ Institut für Demoskopie, *Bericht über die 1. Umfrage der Wirtschaftspolitischen Gesellschaft von 1947 über die deutsche Situation (im Anschluss an die Bundestagswahl vom 14 August 1949)*, at BAK ZSg 132/2686 (IfD# 35). The survey informing this report was conducted on the day of the first elections for the West German Parliament.

demonstrated the Institute's commitment to a democratic sharing of information about the public with that public, as well as the Neumanns's media-savvy approach to building a reputation for their institute. The editorial commentary on the poll results, on the other hand, illustrates the caution with which media approached the methodology of modern opinion research. The editors of *Die Gegenwart* remarked, "This study was conducted using the ground principles of the Gallup method, which was developed in the United States ... one has to doubt whether one can receive results produced in this manner without skepticism."²⁹ Yet the editors felt compelled to share the content of the study with their readers, because, they declared, "the report offered here nevertheless provides such interesting glimpses into the experience of today's youth that it seems right to share it with a larger public."³⁰

By the mid-1950s, opinion polling had moved to the headlines of more mass-market publications. Noelle-Neumann graced the cover of *Der Spiegel* in October 1953 and again in August 1957, shortly after the publication of the Institute's second *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung* (*Yearbook of Public Opinion*, a collection of what the Institute deemed to be some of the most interesting and important results from its polls during the 1950s) and before the September 15 federal elections. The 1953 article educated readers about the statistical foundations of opinion polling methods, especially representative sampling techniques, suggesting that at this point the "scientific" foundations of opinion research remained

²⁹ "Diese Untersuchung ist nach den Grundsätzen der Gallup-Methode veranstaltet, die in den Vereinigten Staaten entwickelt worden ist und dort allgemeine Anerkennung gefunden hat ... Auch wenn man diese Methode nicht grundsätzlich in Frage stellen will, bleibt doch zu bedenken, ob ein so ermitteltes Resultat nicht mit Skepsis aufzunehmen ist." "Vom Zeitbild der Studenten: Bericht über eine Umfrage in Tübingen und Freiburg," *Die Gegenwart* 30 Nov. 1947. At BAK 5/233 – 2/21.

³⁰ "Der hier vorgelegte Bericht vermittelt jedoch dessen ungeachtet so interessante Einblicke in das Zeitbild der studentischen Jugend der Gegenwart, daß es gerechtfertigt erscheint, ihn einer größeren Öffentlichkeit zu unterbreiten." *Ibid.*

unclear for many Germans.³¹ Such techniques, the article explained, produced a sample that mirrored the structure of the entire German nation, allowing research institutes like the Allensbach Institute to survey a mere two thousand people in order to determine the views of forty million Germans. This explanation and those of other publications make clear that at this time, average Germans still found what the Institute later referred to in its first *Jahrbuch* as the “language of percentages” to be unfamiliar but also intriguing and potentially useful.³² Like the editors of *Die Gegenwart*, they were uncertain about the methodology that had produced poll results, yet captivated by their content. The seemingly straightforward numbers offered by the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes appeared to simplify questions once deemed incredibly complex, in a way that left some observers wondering at the sleight of hand involved in such a show of clarification.

While the media debated the merits of their methods, the opinion researchers at Emnid and especially Allensbach argued in various venues that their work provided a much-needed solution to the problem of forging a stable democracy in the modern age. Drawing on the long history of concern with the entry of groups other than the bourgeoisie into politics, the Neumanns connected the need for empirical opinion research directly to the rise of the masses. In its 1951 promotional pamphlet, the Allensbach Institute described political surveys in this way: “Goal: the analysis of the political-psychological condition of the mass – continual observations of radical developments – regular information for the leading offices and organizations about public opinion on the questions

³¹ “Glauben Sie an Gott?” *Der Spiegel*, 28 October 1953.

³² Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955* (Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956), v.

of the day – analysis of the intelligibility and popular interpretations of political terms.”³³

The West German masses – who the Institute showed over and over again to be largely ignorant of the most pressing contemporary issues and unaware of the meaning of many of the policies and proposals that the Adenauer government had already begun to view as its legacy – were nevertheless citizens invested with an ongoing and crucial role in the success of West German democracy. With empirical, representative opinion research, the Institute offered a method to assess the extreme edges of the masses as well as their potential to contribute productively to a new political culture. The results of their research could then aid political representatives in developing informational campaigns or simply foster a deeper connection with their constituency.

In a speech to a group of business leaders in 1953, Erich Peter Neumann described recent German political history as punctuated by the concurrent growth in the number of career politicians as well as “the masses” who since the end of the nineteenth century had wielded the power to determine the fate of those politicians. It was essential, Neumann declared, that “a fruitful relationship” between the masses and political representatives developed, and such a relationship depended on “correct information about the people.”³⁴ The information gleaned through representative surveys could be “generalized exactly like

³³ “Zweck: Analyse politisch-psychologischer Zustände der Masse – Kontinuierliche Beobachtungen radikaler Entwicklungen – Regelmäßige Information führender Stellen und Organisationen über die öffentliche Meinung zu Tagesfragen – Untersuchungen über die Verständlichkeit und populäre Auslegung politischer Begriffe.” *Institut für Demoskopie, Gesellschaft zum Studium der Öffentlichen Meinung*, 9, BAK ZSG 132/51.

³⁴ “Halten wir fest: die Herstellung eines fruchtbaren Verhältnisses zwischen der Masse und der Politik ist von der richtigen Information über den Menschen abhängig.” “Die Verantwortung des Unternehmers für die öffentliche Meinung.” Vortrag von Erich Peter Neumann, 1953, p. 3, at BAK, ZSg 132/2748 (IfD # 278).

laboratory analyses.”³⁵ Along these lines, the Neumanns forcefully presented the work of the Allensbach Institute as a way to parse the psychology of West German voters by showing the preferences of different groups: men and women, different confessions, and different generations.³⁶

At the same time, the Neumanns drew on the more populist message of George Gallup by suggesting that their work also gave these very masses the opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns, to have a voice where before they had none. A 1949 Allensbach publication, which included a number of polls from 1947, the Institute’s first year of operation, argued that these polls contradicted the accusation that surveys turned individuals into statistical figures. Instead, “people have a chance to speak in a context in which they would otherwise have no voice.”³⁷ The promise of anonymity was central to this service rendered by opinion researchers. Allensbach interviewers were carefully instructed not to interview people they knew and to maintain a strict policy of anonymity. Names of interview subjects were not to be noted; respondents were designated solely in terms of demographic criteria.

Both the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes viewed their work as a way to monitor trends within West German political culture, and to varying degrees this also meant exploring not only what the population thought, but what it *knew*. Both frequently devoted questions or even entire surveys to examining the meaning and significance of certain

³⁵ “Die repräsentative Umfrage-Methode gestattete uns, über Sachverhalte dieser Art exakte Messungen zu veranstalten, deren Resultate sich, und das ist das entscheidende Moment, genau so verallgemeinern lassen wie Laboratoriums-Analysen über irgen ein Material.” Ibid.

³⁶ Institut für Demoskopie to Konrad Adenauer, 1 Juni 1950. At BAK, B145 1566.

³⁷ “Im Zusammenhang kommt der Mensch zu Wort, wo er sonst keine Stimme erhält.” Institut für Demoskopie, “Das Jahr I: Irrtum und Propheti der öffentlichen Meinung,” p.1, BAK, ZSg 132/2684 (IfD # 29).

terms for the West German populace. In this respect, as the Neumanns themselves often stated, the term “opinion research” as applied to their work could be misleading. Rather than “opinions,” they sought to understand knowledge about and behaviors related to matters of current concern.

More often than not, polls showed knowledge about political ideas and terms to be sorely lacking, especially in the first decade after World War II. For example, according to an April 1950 Allensbach survey, 56% of those polled had “no idea” what was meant by “social market economy” (*Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*).³⁸ Erich Peter Neumann established a public relations arm of the Allensbach Institute specifically to develop campaigns to remedy such ignorance.³⁹ Emnid made this type of political survey research less of priority, but did enough to show comparable dismay at the level of political education in the Federal Republic. The front page story of the *Informationen* from January 1953, for example, was drawn from a survey that had shown that only half of the 2100 surveyed adults knew what the Bundestag was. The writer lamented, “Repeatedly surveys have demonstrated that the civic and political education of the population leave something to be desired.”⁴⁰ Over a year later, an Emnid poll found that only 34% of the total population could explain what the EVG (*Europäische Verteidigungsgemeinschaft*, a 1952 proposal to create a European army) was, and a paltry 24% could provide even a basic description of the function of NATO, despite

³⁸ Institut für Demoskopie to Konrad Adenauer, 1 Juni 1950. At BAK, B145 1566.

³⁹ Norbert Grube, “Das Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach und die ‘Deutschen Lehrerbrief’ als Instrumente staatsbürgerlicher Erziehung? Ansprüche und Umsetzungen 1947 bis 1969,” *Jahrbuch für historische Bildungsforschung* 13 (2007): 267-88.

⁴⁰ “Schon wiederholt hat sich bei Befragungen gezeigt, dass die staatsbürgerliche und politische Unterrichtung der Bevölkerung zu wünschen übrig lässt.“ *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 3/53, 24 January 1953. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

the fact that the West German relationship to these organizations was hotly debated by politicians during the early 1950s.⁴¹

Both the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes were eager to determine the degree of political engagement among various subsets of Germans, or what Emnid described in one of its newsletters as “the question of how much the democratic life of the Federal Republic consists of lively contact as well as the mechanical act of voting.”⁴² Indeed, this was the focus of the very first research project undertaken by the Allensbach Institute – the 1947 study of students in Freiburg and Tübingen. Here and in future opinion research, the institutes rarely made differences of political engagement among social class their focus. Throughout the first few decades of polling after World War II, the sharpest divisions, at least as elucidated in Emnid and Allensbach reports to patrons in government and media, appeared to run along lines of gender first and foremost, followed by education level and party affiliation. The Freiburg/Tübingen study was one of the first in which opinion researchers observed and highlighted in their reports a notable disparity between the levels of political interest expressed by different genders. Women were far more likely than men to either not respond or express indifference to various survey questions.⁴³ Although the individual results of such polls must be taken with a grain of salt, or at least an acknowledgement of the myriad mitigating factors involved, it is clear that when viewed in

⁴¹ Emnid, “Die Kenntnis des aktuellen politischen Vokabulars bei der Bevölkerung des Bundesgebietes,” *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 25 from 19 June 1954, p.3.

⁴² “Die Frage, wieweit sich das demokratische Leben in der Bundesrepublik über den Automatismus von Wahlen hinaus auch lebendiger Kontakte bedient, untersuchte das Institut für Meinungsforschung der EMNID ...” “Angewandte Demokratie,” *EMNID-Informationen* 33/1945 from 13 August 1955, p. 2. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

⁴³ “Die Einstellung der Jugend zu der Idee der Bildung der Vereinigten Staaten von Europa,” (Dezember 1947/Januar 1948). In Institut für Demoskopie, *Jugend nach dem Krieg: Unfragen 1947-48 + 8 Berichte*, BAK ZSg 132/2681 (IfD # 11-14).

aggregate they do indeed reveal a political culture very much divided along gender lines. On average, twice as many men as women claimed to have knowledge of and discuss political issues throughout the 1950s – regardless of subject.⁴⁴

The Neumanns repeatedly harped on the lack of political engagement by West Germans; and without such engagement, they claimed, the Federal Republic perpetually ran the risk of meeting the same fate as the Weimar Republic. Their language on this topic was filled with condescension toward a majority of Germans. According to Erich Peter Neumann, “The survey method enables us to determine that the citizen has not followed along with the advancement of our technical age. He remained politically backward.”⁴⁵ Neumann justified this harsh judgment by noting that “not even the simplest vocabulary of day-to-day parliamentary process is familiar [to him] ... today the politically educated use an idiom that is so far from the people as to be like Latin in the past.”⁴⁶

In addition to analyzing knowledge of and interest in politics, Emnid and Allensbach polls attempted to measure attachment to democratic values. Strikingly, opinion polls in the 1950s made a strong case for the claim that freedom of opinion was viewed as the most important kernel of a democratic political culture. Beginning in July 1949, for example, Emnid asked respondents on a yearly basis “Which of the four freedoms [i.e., freedom of

⁴⁴ See Institut für Demoskopie, *Das politische Bewußtsein der westdeutschen Bevölkerung: Trendergebnisse 1949-1967*, 2, in BAK ZSg 132/1426.

⁴⁵ “Die Umfrage-Methode setzt uns in den Stand, festzustellen, dass der Staatsbürger nicht mitgekommen ist, als das technische Zeitalter mit Siebenmeilenstiefeln aufbrach. Er blieb politisch zurück.“ “Die Verantwortung des Unternehmers für die öffentliche Meinung,” 4.

⁴⁶ “Und als zurückgebliebenes Kind einer sozusagen frühreifen Epoche erleben wir ihn stotternd, wenn er auf die Elementargesetze unserer staatlichen Welt angesprochen wird. Ich konnte Ihnen eine Fülle von Daten vorlegen, die demonstrieren, dass nicht einmal die – von Ihnen ausgesehen – einfachsten Vokabeln der parlamentarischen Umgangssprache geläufig sind. Ich konnte darstellen, dass die vermeintlich politisch Gebildeten heute ein Idiom anwenden, welches so volksfern wirkt wie das Latein einer erregenden Vergangenheit.“ Ibid.

worship, freedom of speech, freedom from fear, and freedom from want, as iterated by U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1941 and later incorporated into the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights] do you personally hold to be the most important?" The front page of the *EMNID-Informationen* from February 23, 1952 noted approvingly a shift toward the increasing valuation of *Freiheit der Meinungsäusserung* (freedom of speech).⁴⁷ Working on similar terrain, Allensbach Institute interviewers asked West Germans, "Do you have the feeling that one can freely state his political opinion in Germany, or is it better to be cautious?"⁴⁸ The Institute held this question to be especially important to any evaluation of the fate of democracy in the Federal Republic. The Neumanns wrote in an introductory paragraph, "The guarantee of the right to freedom of opinion is, at its heart, the external mark of a democratic state."⁴⁹ According to the 1953 poll conducted by the Institute, 54% of West Germans believed that one could speak freely.

Significantly, however, one-third of respondents declared that it was better to be cautious. As they sometimes did, in the report on this particular question, the Allensbach Institute included an appendix with verbatim responses, offering some clues to the reasons why people responded the way they did and the values that they associated with freedom of speech. These responses make clear that wherever West Germans stood on the spectrum of responses, many strongly associated free speech with democracy, even though democracy was not mentioned in the survey question itself. A thirty-something CDU

⁴⁷ "Freiheit der Meinungsäusserung wird stark betont," *EMNID-Informationen* 32.2.1952, p. 1, at BAK, ZSg.2/640.

⁴⁸ "Haben Sie das Gefühl, dass man heute in Deutschland seine politische Meinung frei sagen kann, oder ist es besser, vorsichtig zu sein?" Institut für Demoskopie, "Die Politische Meinung," Bericht #87, in *Die Stimmung im Bundesgebiet 1953 Teil I*. At BAK ZSg 132.

⁴⁹ "Das garantierte Recht des Bürgers auf Meinungsfreiheit ist im Grunde das äußere Kennzeichen eines demokratischen Staates." *Ibid.*, 1.

member from Lower Saxony answered that one could speak freely in the Federal Republic, declaring that “We are in a democracy, after all.” A woman in her sixties from Bavaria answered, “We live in a democracy and can’t be punished for expressing ourselves.” Those who believed that it was still better to practice restraint with voicing one’s political opinions used similar language to explain this conviction, arguing that democracy was still lacking in the Federal Republic. A farmer in his late thirties or early forties from Baden-Württemberg explained his answer thus: “Because we still don’t live in a democratic state.” A worker in his thirties from Hamburg declared, “Caution is required! In this respect democracy has not yet been completely achieved.”⁵⁰

Others answering in the negative pinpointed specific instances in which freedom of opinion was neither promoted nor respected in West Germany. One woman in her late forties from Bavaria stated, “If one speaks freely, then one is [labeled] a Nazi.” Another woman in her late thirties from North Rhine-Westphalia observed, “If you talk too much about the good times we had before, you’re labeled a Nazi.” A man in his early thirties from Baden-Württemberg suggested one could speak one’s mind, “but not against the Allies or Adenauer.” Others suggested caution in the face of an uncertain political climate – after all, the first half of the twentieth century had already shown how quickly fortunes could change. One man in his twenties from Baden-Württemberg noted, “One never knows what the future will bring,” while a middle-aged woman from North Rhine-Westphalia explained,

⁵⁰ “Wir sind doch in einer Demokratie.” (Kontoristen – 30-34 J. – Niedersachsen – CDU); “Weil wir in einer Demokratie leben und für Äußerungen nicht bestraft werden können.” (Frau eines Beamten – über 60 J. – Bayern – BHE); “Weil wir immer noch nicht in einem demokratischen Staat leben” (Landwirt – 35-44 – Baden-Württemberg – SPD); “Vorsicht geboten! Die Demokratie ist in dieser Beziehung noch nicht vollendet.” (Kaufmann – über 60 – Hamburg – Deutsche Rechtspartei). Institut für Demoskopie, “Die Politische Meinung,” Bericht #87, in *Die Stimmung im Bundesgebiet 1953 Teil I*. Anhang (unpag.). At BAK ZSg 132.

“We’ve gotten smarter after the previous war. It’s always better to keep one’s opinion to oneself, since another war could come.”⁵¹

The theme was addressed by Emnid as well. Similar questions highlighted in the *EMNID-Informationen* of the 1950s included “In your opinion, what is the most essential feature of democracy?”⁵² From 1953 to 1960, the most frequent answer to this question was simply “freedom,” which garnered from 36% to 49% of answers, beating out “rule by the people,” “equality before the law,” and “economic and social recovery.”⁵³ In 1953, 40% of respondents named “freedom” and 12% “rule by the people” as the primary characteristic of democracy; in 1960, those numbers were 49% and 26% respectively, perhaps indicating a higher level of understanding of, and greater faith in, democratic political practices. Yet this poll also demonstrated that “freedom,” understood largely as freedom of opinion, was still the most obvious everyday experience that West Germans associated with democracy. The *Informationen* noted that respondents described this quality in terms of “being able to open one’s mouth,” “every one can have his own opinion,” and “the freedom of people, including Jews.”⁵⁴ Interestingly, the survey results were generally consistent across gender, party membership, and profession. Regardless of

⁵¹ “Wenn man frei äußert, ist man ein Nazi.“ (Frau eines Ingenieurs – 45-59 – Bayern – SPD); “Man hat schnell etwas zuviel gesagt; wenn man zuviel von der guten früheren Zeit spricht, wird man als Nazi hingestellt.“ (Weberin – 35-44 – Nordrhein-Westfalen); “Aber bloß nichts gegenüber Alliierten oder Adenauer.“ (Schneidermeister – 30-34 – Baden-Württemberg); “Man weiß nie, was die Zukunft bringt.“ (Monteur – 18-29 – Baden-Württemberg – SPD); “Wir sind durch den vorigen Krieg schlau geworden. Es ist immer besser, seine Meinung für sich zu behalten, da ja noch einmal Krieg kommen kann.“ (Rentner – 45-59 – Nordrhein-Westfalen – BHE). Institut für Demoskopie, “Die Politische Meinung,“ Anhang (unpag.).

⁵² “Was ist ihrer Meinung nach das wesentlichste Merkmal der Demokratie?” *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 19/1960, 14 May 1960, p. 4. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

⁵³ Results from surveys in 1953, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, and 1960 compiled in *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 19/1960, 14 May 1960, p. 4. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

⁵⁴ “dass man den Mund aufmachen kann/jeder darf seine eigene Meinung haben/offen sprechen zu dürfen/ein Leben in Freiheit/die Freiheit der Menschen, auch der Juden.“ *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 19/1960, 14 May 1960, p. 4. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

demographic category, West Germans named freedom (often specifically indicating that they meant freedom of opinion) more frequently than any other characteristic.

These results are fascinating because they indirectly supported the pollsters' own arguments that their work was essential to democracy, because they were the ideal, unbiased mediators between the masses and the state. Protected by the anonymity central to opinion research methodologies, people would tell the pollsters what they might otherwise be afraid to utter – as was the case with those respondents to the 1953 Allensbach poll who suggested that for the most part, it was better to keep one's political opinions to oneself. At the same time, as the Neumanns maintained, the success of public opinion research demanded a certain level of democratic openness to already be in place. By the mid-1950s, in this as in other fields, it seems that West Germans were more self-assured and secure in a changed but stable political culture. Already by 1955, 70% of West Germans surveyed by the Allensbach Institute agreed that one could speak freely on political questions, and this number remained relatively stable throughout the late 1950s.⁵⁵ For opinion research institutes, such a shift was both a vindication of their work and a latent challenge to it: they could assure clients that respondents would answer honestly, yet theoretically a more open field of political expression made the democratic task of empirical opinion research less essential.

The onset of the 1960s presented an opportunity for pollsters to use their archive of survey responses to reflect on any progress that had been made toward the ideal of a mature, democratic West Germany. According to the Allensbach pollsters, their analysis revealed some promising signs: in the past year the population had shown indications of

⁵⁵ Institut für Demoskopie, *Mentalität und Wissen: Wandlungen in der Bundesrepublik. Materialdokumentation 1949-1961*, Table 22. At BAK ZSg 132.

readiness to work through the legacies of the era of National Socialism. Nevertheless, the Institute diagnosed lingering apathy, a condition that conveniently afforded more opportunities for their work. While Germans by the beginning of the 1960s had familiarized themselves with the West German state, the Allensbach researchers observed, “on the other hand there is a critical lack of rational understanding of democracy, a broad-based stagnation in the spread of civic knowledge.”⁵⁶

Deciphering the German Nation

As part of their argument that their research would safeguard democracy, Emnid and the Allensbach Institute presented poll results as mosaic stones in a larger, always-shifting portrait of the West German people. Beginning in the 1950s, both institutes offered their services to the Adenauer government and the CDU, promising insights into the psychology of West German voters. There is little evidence that such polls directly influenced the practice of governance in the Federal Republic, however. A notable example of government policies that ran counter to popular opinion according to polls is the abolition of the death penalty in 1949. According to one Allensbach poll, over half of West Germans and West Berliners in December 1952 were in favor of the death penalty; nevertheless, it remained illegal.⁵⁷ Instead of claiming to shape internal policy (as critics of

⁵⁶ “Die Durchsicht des Materials zeigt einerseits eine starke Eingewöhnung der Bevölkerung im neuen Staat, andererseits einen bedenklichen Mangel an rationalem Verständnis der Demokratie, eine weitgehende Stagnation in der Verbreitung staatsbürgerlichen Wissens. Indessen hat die Bevölkerung in diesen Jahren ein erhebliches politisches Pensum in der Auseinandersetzung mit der zurückliegenden Ära des Nationalsozialismus verarbeitet.” Institut für Demoskopie, *Mentalität und Wissen: Wandlungen in der Bundesrepublik. Materialdokumentation 1949-1961*. At BAK ZSg/132.

⁵⁷ Institut für Demoskopie, “Ueber die Todesstrafe,” Bericht #76, in *Die Stimmung im Bundesgebiet 1953 Teil I*, at BAK ZSg 132.

opinion researchers worried their polls would), the Allensbach researchers emphasized that their work was a neutral, scientific source of information on every imaginable dimension of the West German citizenry.

The variations on the theme of governance in Allensbach and Emnid polls were endless. Frequently, of course, polls probed the popularity of politicians. The Neumanns devoted an entire book to survey results documenting the approval ratings of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.⁵⁸ Another recurring Allensbach question was simply intended to determine what respondents deemed the most pressing question facing West Germany, while other questions were more theoretical in nature. In 1957, for example, the Allensbach Institute asked West Germans how the government should operate. Did they agree with the argument of a hypothetical man that “the government should do what the majority of the people want”? Or did they agree with this man’s hypothetical adversary that “the government should do what it believes is best, whether that follows the will of the majority or not. It has a better overall understanding of the situation.”⁵⁹ In 1957, 49% of respondents agreed with the first statement, 35% with the second, and 16% were undecided.⁶⁰ Such questions evaluated the political maturity of respondents and their trust in the government. But they also highlight a lingering concern about mass democracy. As

⁵⁸ Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, *Umfragen über Adenauer*. The most frequently used question was “Are you generally in agreement with Adenauer’s policy, or not?” (“Sind Sie im großen und ganzen mit der Politik Adenauers einverstanden oder nicht einverstanden?”)

⁵⁹ “FRAGE: ‘Hier unterhalten sich zwei Männer über die Regierung. Wer von den beiden sagt das, was auch Sie darüber denken: der Obere oder der Untere?’

Der Erste sagt: ‘Ich finde, die Regierung soll sich danach richten, was das Volk will. Was die Mehrheit der Leute will, das muss die Regierung auch machen.’

Der Zweite sagt: ‘Ich finde, die Regierung soll so handeln, wie sie es für richtig hält, ob das immer nach dem Willen der Mehrheit ist oder nicht. Dafür hat sie den besseren Überblick und trägt die Verantwortung.’” Institut für Demoskopie, *Die Stimmung in Bundesgebiet 1963, Teil 1*, Report 621. At BAK ZSg 132.

⁶⁰ Ibid. In 1964, 48% agreed with the first, 34% with the second, and 18% were undecided.

the Allensbach researchers pointed out, those with a higher education level were more likely to agree with the second statement: 51% of those who had obtained the *Abitur* agreed that the government should not be guided solely by the will of the majority.

At times the Allensbach Institute explored specific terms and concepts in an effort to aid politicians in developing an effective public relations campaign, especially as elections approached. In 1956, the Institute examined the popular interpretation of the term “*bürgerlich*.” According to the Institute, its findings suggested that this term, contrary to traditional expectations, did not evoke negative associations from the majority of West Germans, and in fact was generally associated with positive attributes.⁶¹ This clearly was not merely an exercise in intellectual exploration: in his report, Erich Peter Neumann highlighted the relevance of these results for politicians, advising CDU representatives to take ownership of the term “*bürgerlich*” and its connotations for peace, quiet, and order, ideas which appealed even to supporters of the left-leaning SPD. In this analysis, the language of class warfare was a thing of the past, no longer relevant for the majority of West Germans, even workers. According to the report, a surprising 48% of SPD voters said the SPD was itself a ‘*bürgerliche Partei*.’⁶²

Was this, then, an endorsement of Helmut Schelsky’s claim in 1953 that West Germany had become a “leveled-down middle-class society”?⁶³ According to the 1956 study, terms like “*bourgeoisie*” no longer carried the sharp Marxist valences and negative associations that they once had among some groups in Germany. But the weight of party

⁶¹ Institut für Demoskopie, “‘Bürgerlich’: Gutachten über die populäre Interpretation eines Begriffs,” 1956. At BAK ZSg132/2797 (IfD #533).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶³ See Paul Nolte, *Die Ordnung der deutschen Gesellschaft: Selbstentwurf und Selbstbeschreibung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2000), 330-335.

affiliation on survey responses to certain types of questions suggests the existence of, at the very least, differing interpretations of who was winning and who losing under the terms of the social market economy. For instance, a May 1962 Allensbach poll examined popular assessments of the achievements of Ludwig Erhard's so-called *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) in the wake of a speech in which Erhard had discussed the danger of higher wages and increasing demands on the state to West German global competitiveness. In this survey, interview subjects were presented with two figures who offered elaborately articulated opinions on the economic achievements of the Federal Republic. The first figure, with whom a sizeable minority of 31% of those surveyed stated they were in agreement, declared: "One speaks so often of *Wirtschaftswunder*. But the majority lives rather modestly. Most people actually earn too little in comparison with how much they work. So before one speaks of 'not over-doing it' [*Maßhalten*, the phrase used by Erhard in his speech], one should first raise wages and salaries to an appropriate level."⁶⁴ The second figure, with whom 51% of those surveyed agreed, instead argued that "I believe that today the masses are doing very well, and most are able to manage. If the economy doesn't currently allow for [heightened] wage claims, one should be content and not make demands that could destroy everything that we have attained so far."⁶⁵ Significantly, a majority of SPD-members agreed with the first opinion, and were the only statistical

⁶⁴ "Man spricht heute so viel vom Wirtschaftswunder. Aber die große Masse lebt noch ziemlich bescheiden. Ich meine, die meisten verdienen eigentlich zu wenig im Vergleich zu dem, was sie leisten und arbeiten. Ehe man vom Maßhalten spricht, müßte man doch erst einmal die Löhne und Gehälter richtig erhöhen." Institut für Demoskopie, Bericht #520, "Erhard's Echo – Wirtschaftswunder oder nicht?" (May 1962), 4, in *Die Stimmung im Bundesgebiet 1962 Teil I*. At BAK, ZSg 132.

⁶⁵ "Ich finde, der Masse geht es heute doch recht gut, und die meisten können sich ganze schön was leisten. Wenn die Wirtschaft jetzt keine großen Lohnforderungen verträgt, dann sollte man sich auch zufriedengeben und nicht auf Forderungen bestehen, die vielleicht alles kaputt machen, was wir bis jetzt erreicht haben." Ibid.

category in which a majority of respondents did so.⁶⁶ Poll results like these helped to inform some of West Germany's earliest public relations campaigns. Once politicians pinpointed which groups were dissatisfied or uninformed, they could work to convince a broader spectrum of citizens of the achievements of the social market economy.⁶⁷

The research institutes also helped the West German government to understand – and perhaps shape – the deepest fears of the population. Anja Kruke has argued that West German opinion research institutes in the 1950s helped to foster an atmosphere of “Cold War angst,” which allowed politicians to implement certain security policies.”⁶⁸ As early as 1948, the Allensbach Institute diagnosed a “*Masse-Hypochondrie*” among West Germans, which it described as an unsubstantiated fear that conditions (especially economic conditions) would worsen in the future.⁶⁹ And throughout the 1950s, both the Allensbach Institute and Emnid conducted numerous surveys asking West Germans about the likelihood of another world war, an attack by the Soviet Union, and other nightmare scenarios.

Emnid, for its part, presented an optimistic view of West Germans beyond the political sphere. In these reports, Emnid hoped on the one hand to clarify to commercial firms and media clients where opportunities lay; but its work also served the purpose, in its own words, of allaying fears of “*Vermassung*” (massification) and “*Individualitätsverlust*”

⁶⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁷ Mark Spicka, “Gender, Political Discourse, and the CDU/CSU Vision of the Economic Miracle, 1949-1957,” *German Studies Review* Vol 25, No. 2 (May 2002): 305-332.

⁶⁸ Anja Kruke, “Western Integration vs. Reunification? Analyzing the Polls of the 1950s,” *German Politics and Society* Issue 82 Vo. 25 No. 2, Summer 2007: 43-67, p. 44.

⁶⁹ Institut für Demoskopie, “Zweite Umfrage zur Neuordnung der Währung,” 2. Excerpt reprinted in *Umfragen 1947/1948: Berichte und Arbeitsmethoden*. At BAK ZSg 132/10.

(loss of individuality).⁷⁰ As part of their ongoing evaluation of the national character and political culture of West Germany, both Emnid and the Allensbach Institute explored the relationship between West Germans and their occupations, since for many analysts, Germans had been defined historically in part by their discipline and dedication to work. The Neumanns wondered in their reports if West Germans were becoming less hard-working, while beginning in 1951 Emnid ran semi-annual surveys which examined whether West Germans thought of their profession as the fulfillment of a higher purpose or merely as a way to earn money.⁷¹ Such surveys were complemented by an equal number of reports on the content of free time off of work. Of course, questions related to how workers and others spent their Saturdays interested purveyors of entertainment, but they were also one aspect of a larger societal shift that had concerned many Germans since the nineteenth century. A 1960 Emnid report presented a long list of popular free-time activities: reading, garden work, walking and hiking, various sports – none of which, according to the Emnid researchers, substantiated concerns of atomism or the overwhelming pull of the irrational mass.⁷²

Such optimism also came to the fore in Allensbach reports with greater frequency over the course of the 1960s, and reflected the entangled nature of economic and political experience. Throughout the 1960s, many reports of the Allensbach Institute emphasized the growing satisfaction of West Germans with their government and their personal positions. They also observed a close relationship between stabilizing economic status and

⁷⁰ "Freizeitinteressen, neu Durchleuchtet," *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 47/1960, 26 November 1960, p. 2. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

⁷¹ See Institut für Demoskopie, *Die Soziale Mentalität 1962: Ergebnisse einer Repräsentativ-Umfrage*, pp. 5-6. At BAK ZSg 132/2886 (IfD #1006).

⁷² "Freizeitinteressen, neu Durchleuchtet," p. 2.

interest in political life. When asked whether they would be satisfied if their current financial status remained the same for the next five to ten years, 70% of respondents in 1962 replied in the affirmative, up from an already impressive 48% in 1957.⁷³ In 1967, the Institute celebrated what it proclaimed as the growing “allergy” of West Germans to the extreme right. While in 1953 less than one quarter of those surveyed declared that they would do whatever they could to prevent another seizure of power by a National Socialist party, in 1967 34% agreed to this statement.⁷⁴ By the late 1960s, the Institute could claim that as economic circumstances improved, “the political interest of the people also grows.”⁷⁵

If many of the polls conducted by Emnid and Allensbach were intended at least initially for government officials or specific clients, others were offered to the public as a way for all West Germans to better understand themselves and their nation. The *EMNID-Informationen* was made available to any interested subscriber, while the Allensbach Institute published several compilations of survey data in the 1950s alone. The results of the Allensbach Institute polls that were deemed most interesting and constitutive of the German public were published in the landmark first volume of the *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung* (Yearbook of Public Opinion), covering the years 1947-1955 and containing the questions and answers for 2176 questions posed to a statistically representative sample of

⁷³ Institut für Demoskopie, *Die Soziale Mentalität 1962*, 8.

⁷⁴ “Während 1953 noch nicht mehr als 25 Prozent sagten: „Ich würde alles tun, was ich könnte, damit so etwas (eine Machtergreifung durch eine neue nationalsozialistische Partei) nicht passiert,“ gaben diese Antwort 1967 immerhin 34 Prozent.“ Institut für Demoskopie, *Das politische Bewußtsein der westdeutschen Bevölkerung: Trendergebnisse 1949-1967*, 7. At BAK, ZSg 132/1426.

⁷⁵ “Mit steigendem Wohlstand und zunehmender wirtschaftlicher Sicherheit wächst das politische Interesse in der Bevölkerung.“ *Ibid.*, 2.

West Germans and West Berliners by the Institute in that span (the authors estimated this to be about one-fifth of the total number of survey questions posed by the Institute).⁷⁶

The first *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung* was an attempt to sketch the contours of the German nation and demonstrate what insights were made possible by empirical opinion research. The first volume contained four main sections, following an introduction presenting the basic methodology of the Institute and a sample questionnaire. These sections were “The Germans;” “The Federal Republic;” “German Problems;” and “Germany and the World.” The editors included a motley collection of poll results on everything from preferred vacation destinations to smoking habits to political party membership. In the “Education/Knowledge” and “Taste” subcategories under the section dealing with “The Germans,” the Institute demonstrated the variety of methods that it used to explore the thoughts and feelings of the German public. Many questions in these sections were presented alongside visual materials – cartoons and caricatures that the respondents were asked to explain, images of furnished rooms which the respondents were asked to rank, even a set of leaf patterns that respondents were asked to identify. The Neumanns presented the volume as a reference work for understanding West German society in all its contours. But it was also a form of advertising for the Allensbach Institute, intended to demonstrate the range of subjects that could be clarified through empirical opinion research. Published by the Institute itself, the *Jahrbuch* series also helped the Neumanns and their employees take back control over the Institute’s work and message from the media. This first *Jahrbuch*, then, was a tool for the professionalization and refinement of the Institute’s style of opinion research as well as a reference work. It drew on Gallup’s

⁷⁶ Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955*, vi.

methods and “American social science” while also placing its own West German stamp on the process.

Polls and International Comparison

The first Allensbach *Jahrbuch* and the *EMNID-Informationen* were offered first and foremost to West Germans, but both institutes were aware that their opinion research invited international scrutiny as well. Foreigners worried about what West Germans thought and what their opinions might mean for global security; so too did West Germans worry about where they fit within the current international system. Opinion polls invited subjects and readers to experience inclusion in a society of modern democracies yet also fostered comparisons that accentuated West German uniqueness. West German opinion researchers emphasized that their craft could only be practiced in a truly “free” society – in pointed contrast to what was possible in East Germany. International comparisons also quickly became a standardized part of the opinion research community. Emnid’s weekly *Informationen* newsletter, for example, included a section on opinion research around the world. Some of the selected poll results potentially held economic value for subscribers. Far more frequently however, the institute included news about polls that indicated something about the general character and culture of another country. There were also more and more attempts to develop comparative studies of European nations based on opinion polls. Such projects were made easier by the spread of the American Gallup institute into Western Europe through partnerships with extant native institutes. Significantly, Emnid became Gallup’s West German affiliate in 1955, and in 1962 the institute carried out the polling in West Germany for a study on opinions about a European community

commissioned by the Press and Information Office of the European Community.⁷⁷

European integration proceeded in tandem with the Europeanization of public opinion research.

The polls of West Germans were scrutinized by other Europeans and observers across the Atlantic, especially when questions of anti-Semitism or militaristic tendencies were involved. The HICOG survey episode of 1953 illustrates the extent to which opinion poll results could create firestorms in the press and foster tension between Allied and native opinion researchers. In early January 1953, HICOG's "Year End Survey of Rightist and Nationalist Sentiments in West Germany" was leaked to the press.⁷⁸ *The New York Times* published a selective analysis of the results on its front page under the headline "Rise in Neo-Nazism is Shown by Survey in West Germany; Big Majority Found Unwilling to Resist Revival of National Socialism."⁷⁹ The article focused on one question in particular from the HICOG report: "When you consider everything, was there more good in the ideas of National Socialism or more evil?" 46% of the roughly 1500 West Germans interviewed in 1951 and 44% of those interviewed in 1952 answered "more good," while 35% and 29% in each year responded "more evil." According to the *Times*, this result showed lingering nostalgia for life during the Third Reich among large swathes of the public, and accordingly an unwillingness to defend the new West Germany democracy. This article did little to

⁷⁷ Press- and Information Service of the European Communities, *Attitudes towards Europe* (1962). GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA0078 Data file version 1.0.1, doi: 10.4232/1.10850.

⁷⁸ HICOG Reactions Analysis Staff Report Number 167, January 12, 1953. In Leo P. Crespi Papers, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, MC235 Box 9.

⁷⁹ Drew Middleton, "Rise in Neo-Nazism Is Shown by Survey in West Germany. Big Majority Found Unwilling to Resist Revival of National Socialism – Youth Strongly Share Trend, U.S. Learns," *New York Times*, January 18, 1953.

foster American and British faith in the survival of democracy in the Federal Republic.⁸⁰ The HICOG report itself, though its analysis and tone were less dramatic than the *Times* article, nevertheless warned of “a widespread German vulnerability to a recrudescence of Nazi political ideas.”⁸¹ Most ominously, the report noted, an improving economic situation in West Germany had not seemed to decrease this vulnerability.⁸²

In response, many West German politicians declared opinion surveys as a whole to be unreliable, and the leading German opinion institutes had to walk a tenuous line between defending modern polling practices and distancing themselves from the work and claims of HICOG. While some opinion researchers were most concerned with the unprofessional dissemination of the poll results and the resulting oversimplification of the media’s interpretation, others argued that the results were, in fact, false. Both the Allensbach Institute’s Erich Peter Neumann and Emnid’s Karl von Stackelberg published responses to the *Times* article, and the polls conducted by their institutes in the aftermath of the episode should also be understood in part as reactions to the HICOG findings.

Neumann immediately wrote an editorial for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in an attempt to add a more nuanced analysis of the responses to HICOG’s poll. Neumann’s editorial was titled “The Americans and National Socialism” – a choice of words that entirely dissociated the episode from Germans themselves and suggested that Neumann viewed the problem as stemming from the American response to National Socialism.

⁸⁰ The HICOG report was released at roughly the same time as the “Naumann affair,” the arrest of accused Neo-Nazis attempting to infiltrate the Free Democratic Party by British authorities in early 1953. Deborah Kisatsky describes the turbulent relationship between Adenauer’s infant government and his Allied patrons in Deborah Kisatsky, *The United States and the European Right, 1945-1955* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2005).

⁸¹ HICOG Reactions Analysis Staff Report Number 167, January 12, 1953, p. 2. In Leo P. Crespi Papers, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, MC235 Box 9.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 4.

According to Neumann, the polling practices used by HICOG were scientifically sound. It was the *interpretation* of the poll results that he questioned. He suggested that in the minds of many respondents, political and economic questions were not directly related; they could appreciate the economic advantages they had enjoyed under the Third Reich without wishing for a return to the political persecution or other aspects of what Neumann referred to as “the wicked policy of National Socialism.”⁸³

Emnid mounted a similar argument, attempting to show that positive memories of life under the Third Reich in comparison with the Federal Republic had more to do with living standards than ideology. The 24 January 1953 edition of the *EMNID-Informationen* featured the results of a poll in which respondents were asked, “In which respects do you think our current political system is better and worse than the Third Reich?”⁸⁴ While 34% of respondents declined to answer the first part of the question, and 38% the second, the most common responses to the first question fell under the category of “today freedom reigns” and “the current state is a *Rechtsstaat*.” Many responses (roughly 44%) to the second part of the question maintained that living standards had declined, and cited high prices, worsened economic status, poverty, and unsatisfactory support for war victims and the elderly.⁸⁵

⁸³ Erich Peter Neumann, “Die Amerikaner und der Nationalsozialismus,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22 January 1953. A translated copy of this editorial is available as “The Americans and National Socialism”: Remarks on a Survey by Erich Peter Neumann” in Leo P. Crespi Papers, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, MC235 Box 9. Quotes used here are taken from that translation.

⁸⁴ “Wie steht die Bevölkerung zum Nationalsozialismus?” *EMNID-Informationen* 4/53, 24 January 1953, pp. 1-3, BAK ZSg.2/640. A fuller analysis of this EMNID study is also accessible in “Das Staatswesen des ‘Dritten Reiches’ im Urteil der Bevölkerung,” Jan. 1953, BAK, B145/4261. The question ran: “In welcher Beziehung ist Ihrer Meinung nach unser jetziges Staatswesen besser als das dritte Reich? Und in welcher Beziehung schlechter?”

⁸⁵ *EMNID-Informationen* 4/53, 24 January 1953, p. 3, BAK ZSg.2/640.

Emnid's Karl von Stackelberg appears to have undertaken a personal mission to demonstrate that the publicized results of the HICOG survey were, if not completely false, at least greatly misconstrued. In later newsletters, Emnid shared responses to the questions "In your opinion, what was the most prominent aspect of National Socialism? Do you find this good or bad?" and "If there was again - as in 1933 - an opportunity to vote for or against a man like Hitler, how would you decide to vote?"⁸⁶ 26% and 21% gave no response to each of these questions, respectively. In this case, Emnid explained the high percentage of "*Meinungslose*" as a product of the fact that younger respondents would have had little to no memory of life in the Third Reich, while some segments of the population - most notably, women - generally had "no opinion" about most political questions. That the high percentage of respondents unwilling to answer many questions related to the Nazi era might actually suggest that a sizeable minority of Germans viewed that period positively, even taking into consideration the ugliest aspects of National Socialism, was thus conspicuously absent in any explanations of the results of these various poll questions. The institute firmly declared that the responses of the Germans - 67% stated they would vote against "a man like Hitler" - "may be seen as an indication that the speculations in connection with the much-discussed American survey results and related claims of a 'neo-Nazi danger' are unsubstantiated and do not correspond to the actual opinion of the West German public."⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *EMNID-Informationen* 11/53, 14 March 1953, p.1, BAK ZSg.2/640. "Was war Ihrer Meinung nach das wesentlichste Merkmal des Nationalsozialismus? Finden Sie das gut oder schlecht?" and "Wenn es jetzt- wie 1933 - wieder eine Gelegenheit gäbe, in einer Wahl für oder gegen einen Mann wie Hitler zu stimmen, wie würden Sie sich dann entscheiden?" Warum?"

⁸⁷ *EMNID-Informationen* 11/53, 14 March 1953, p.1, BAK ZSg.2/640. "Die Ergebnisse dieser beiden neuen Befragungen des Instituts können als Hinweis dafür angesehen werden, dass die Spekulationen im Zusammenhang mit den viel diskutierten amerikanischen Umfrage-ergebnissen

Von Stackelberg himself authored the cover article of the Emnid newsletter from 4 April 1953, in an effort to, in effect, defend German opinion research itself against the wrong done to it through the *Times* controversy. The article was titled “*Missbrauchte Meinungsforschung*” (Misused Opinion Research). According to von Stackelberg, both “the way the poll results were published and the conclusions drawn from them” merited harsh criticism.⁸⁸ Moreover, he declared, the incident had demonstrated “the danger that opinion research results can be misused as propaganda.”⁸⁹ As a leader of an opinion institute, von Stackelberg wanted to save the practice of opinion research from its misuse in such instances, and the only way to do so was through more rigorous polling and analysis. Yet despite Emnid’s declaration that it was upholding a scientific, unbiased approach to opinion research in the face of its subversion by the HICOG research branch, responses from von Stackelberg and his institute were full of emotion and righteous indignation. Emnid’s analysis of such surveys ultimately served to defend the people of West Germany, not scientific standards.

Given the uproar caused by the *New York Times* article in January 1953, it was not a coincidence that the Allensbach Institute published a report on “opinions about Hitler” on January 24, 1953.⁹⁰ According to the report, the Allensbach interviewers gave respondents

und die daraus gefolgerte Übertreibung einer ‘neo nazistische Gefahr’ unberechtigt sind und nicht der tatsächlichen Meinung der westdeutschen Öffentlichkeit entsprechen.”

⁸⁸ Karl von Stackelberg, “Missbrauchte Meinungsforschung: Eine abschliessende Stellungnahme zu der viel erörterten Umfrage zum Nationalsozialismus,” *EMNID-Informationen* 14/53, 4 April 1953, p. 5, BAK ZSg.2/640.

⁸⁹ “... die Gefahr ist deutlich geworden, die darin liegt, dass Meinungsforschungsergebnisse propagandistisch missbraucht werden, statt in einem echten kritischen und aufklärerischen Geist dazu beizutragen, aus seiner neutralen, wissenschaftlichen Sicht die Zusammenhänge im menschlicher Zusammenleben zu analysieren.” Ibid.

⁹⁰ Institut für Demoskopie, “Die Meinung über Hitler,” Bericht #77. In *Die Stimmung im Bundesgebiet 1953 Teil I*, At BAK ZSg 132.

a list of descriptions of Hitler, varying from “Hitler was the greatest statesman of the century” (10% of those polled agreed to this statement) to “Hitler was an unscrupulous politician who was guilty of perpetrating many horrors” (garnering the assent of 28% of respondents). The greatest percentage (40%) of those interviewed fell somewhere in the middle, concurring that “Hitler accomplished many good things, but these are outweighed by his disastrous deeds and personal qualities.” Another 22% agreed that “Hitler made some mistakes, but he was nevertheless an exemplary political leader.” To the unbiased observer, these results do not promote unequivocally the conviction that, seven years after the fall of the Third Reich, West Germans had come to view the *Führer* in the same light as had much of the western world. The fact that nearly two-thirds of respondents appeared to view Hitler as a positive figure in their nation’s history could have been cause for concern – especially since, in the case of Allensbach polls related to anti-Semitism in the Federal Republic, the views of one-third of the populace were presented by the Neumanns as dangerous and worth monitoring closely by the government. Yet in their report in January 1953, the Institute emphasized simply that “Hitler is today judged negatively by around two thirds of the population.”⁹¹

The Emnid and Allensbach institutes devoted much energy in 1953 to rebutting the results of the January HICOG survey, but questions intended to uncover deep political habits and affiliations were not unique to this year. Questions which directly queried the salience of the Nazi past in the present, such as “If a man like Hitler ran again for political office, would you vote for him?” provoked the most news coverage and debate within and beyond Germany’s borders, as in the episode of 1953. The media furor around such polls

⁹¹ Ibid.

would certainly have helped to “teach” West Germans the “correct” answers to such questions – if they did not already feel compelled to answer in a certain way. It quickly became clear which “opinions” could be professed openly, and which were best expressed only in the privacy of one’s own home.⁹²

While the prominence of survey questions related to Nazism in West German opinion polls would have contributed to a feeling of separateness from other nations, and a sense of sharing a special German national fate, other questions worked in the opposite direction, prioritizing the issue of West Germany’s present and future place in Western Europe. One recurring Emnid poll asked respondents, “Do you have the impression that we can count ourselves among the society of western peoples, or in your opinion are we still enemies as we were in the past?”⁹³ In addition to showing an increase in the number of respondents agreeing that “we belong completely” (23% in 1954, up from only 8% in 1951), over the course of the early 1950s a greater percentage of those polled actually gave a response (only 11% of those polled in 1954 were “*ohne Meinung*,” down from 21% in 1951).⁹⁴

Such polls were always multi-layered attempts to understand how West Germans thought about themselves and their nation in relation to others. In some cases, research institutes invited survey respondents to compare themselves explicitly with other national subjects, and to place themselves within a broader international landscape. Emnid, for

⁹² The Frankfurt School’s study of “un-public opinion,” the so-called “Gruppenexperiment,” aimed to address precisely this problem. See Chapter Five.

⁹³ “Haben Sie den Eindruck, dass wir uns heute zur Gemeinschaft der westlichen Völker zählen können, oder stehen wir Ihrer Meinung nach als Feinde von gestern doch noch ausserhalb?” This question was posed yearly beginning in 1952. *EMNID-Informationen* 7/54 from 13 February 1954, p. 2, ZSg.2/640.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

instance, asked West Germans on an annual basis throughout the 1950s, “Do you have the feeling that Americans see us today primarily as friends, as strangers, or as enemies from the past?” The percentage of those stating that they were seen by Americans as friends grew from 19% in 1951 to 49% in 1954, while the percentage of those declining to answer the question shrank from 22% in 1951 to 10% in 1954.⁹⁵ Both figures likely represent a shift not only in attitudes toward the United States, but in a willingness to answer questions touching on matters of geopolitical significance in uncertain times. But the question construction itself is worth considering: why would Emnid ask people to see themselves through the eyes of another nation? In doing so, could the opinion research institute have helped propagate the idea that identity was a product created through observation from the outside? Other historians and theorists have elaborated on the theory that national identity is brought to the fore at moments of encounter with an “other,” moments which bring one’s own unique background into sharp relief. Empirical opinion research helped to provide such moments of encounter and comparison with a more systematic, “scientific” framework.

One way in which Allensbach and Emnid polls clarified both West German political values and West German uniqueness was through comparison with East Germany. Especially after 1953, such comparisons opposed West German freedoms to what was assumed to be a lower standard of political life in the East. One 1958 Allensbach report included the following survey question: “In the Eastern Zone the people have fewer freedoms than we do. If there were negotiations for unification and the Russians demanded

⁹⁵ “Die Einstellung der Amerikaner zu den Deutschen im Urteil der Bevölkerung des Bundesgebietes,” *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 7/54, 13 February 1954, at BAK, ZSg.2/640.

that we give up some of our freedoms in return, which freedoms could we give up?"⁹⁶

While a few of those interviewed claimed they would be willing to renounce uncensored mail, freedom of assembly, or freedom of the press, 51% declared they were unwilling to give up any of their freedoms. The responses, however, are less significant than the question, which merely reinforced a particular understanding of the strange but privileged situation in which West Germans found themselves with respect to their less lucky relations to the East. Such questions presented West Germany as the modern, democratic state, and implicitly the one that had moved beyond its Nazi past, in contrast with the Soviet-affiliated eastern lands. The question thus stated as fact the political superiority of the West German system, and implicitly suggested to respondents that in a contest between the two states, multiple types of freedom were at stake.

The Allensbach Institute, through its publications and the tireless work of Noelle-Neumann, fostered this notion more assertively than did Emnid, both within the Federal Republic and internationally. The decision to publish an English-language compilation of the Institute's survey results in 1967 – based on the model of their *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung* – must be seen as part of this effort. Noelle-Neumann and her husband introduced the publication of *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls 1947-1966* with the observation that "This is not a portrayal of the Germans based on second or third hand reports; it is the nation's own description of itself."⁹⁷ In the wake of the Eichmann trial, reports of anti-

⁹⁶ "In der Ostzone haben die Menschen ja weniger Freiheit als bei uns. Angenommen, es wird über die Wiedervereinigung verhandelt, und die Russen verlangen, dass wir als Preis für die Wiedervereinigung einiege unserer Freiheiten aufgeben. Auf was von dieser Liste hier konnten wir noch am eshesten verzichten, wenn wir dafür die Wiedervereinigung erreichen?" Institut für Demoskopie, *Die Stimmung in Bundesgebiet 1958, Teil II*, 13. At BAK ZSg 132.

⁹⁷ Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls 1947-1966*, trans. Gerard Finan (Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1967), vii.

Semitic incidents in West Germany, and other events in the 1960s, the Neumanns described this self-assessment of the German people as a useful corrective to the assumptions of foreign observers. According to the Neumanns, “the most fruitful attribute of this publication is the fact that it disproves, or at least casts doubt on, stereotype judgments of a nation by its neighbors. The Germans, on account of their role in world politics over the past century, have at times been exposed to collective repudiation, more than any other nation, with the inevitable consequence that the entire population was identified with small ruling groups.”⁹⁸ Their polls would help to correct this misunderstanding, they wrote: “only the self-portrayal of groups in the form of poll results can project a picture that is comparatively objective.”⁹⁹ The authors presented opinion research as the means by which Germans actively clarified their identities to themselves and to international observers.

The duo went on to reiterate more explicitly the common refrain of the close link between public opinion research and democratic freedoms: “the method of survey research, if it is to work properly, presupposes freedom of expression, and the awareness of that freedom, not only in journalists, artists and politicians, but in every individual.”¹⁰⁰ Again, the implicit argument was that the mere existence of a public opinion research institute was evidence of a democratic political culture. *The Germans* was thus a multi-leveled vindication of the postwar German public, and a clear attempt to sever that public from any continued association with National Socialism.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Ibid., ix.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., vii.

¹⁰¹ As Jonathan Wiesen has noted, the results of public opinion polls sometimes led directly to public relations efforts on the part of the West German government. This was the case with a PR

Democrats in the Marketplace

Clearly the founders of the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes approached their work in political opinion research with special fervor and a sense of their contribution to West Germany's international standing and internal structure. As noted earlier, however, market and media research were the greatest sources of profit for both institutes. Yet immediately after World War II, few purveyors of consumer goods were interested in the service they provided. Depressed economic circumstances were partly to blame. Additionally, Volker Berghahn has observed that elitist views of "the masses" influenced marketing strategies, as they did so many other aspects of early post-war culture. Many producers of consumer wares in Germany simply had no interest in marketing their products to lower-class buyers.¹⁰² The market for consumer research was therefore somewhat limited initially to obvious mass market, low-cost products like cigarettes and chewing gum. The Allensbach and Emnid Institutes eagerly pursued work with producers of these items, but they also sought to bring their services to other categories. Publications like the *EMNID-Informationen* and the *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung* can be seen as part of their public relations strategies in this regard, as such publications helped to spread awareness of the potential insights yielded by scientific survey research.

The Allensbach Institute's *Jahrbuch* also helped to develop notions of a German "taste" in consumer goods. In the first *Jahrbuch*, a seven-page section titled "Taste" was

campaign designed by West Germany's Federal Press Office to counter an international 1962 survey that found that Germans were seen both as an "aggressive" and "authoritarian" people by other nations. Jonathan Wiesen, "Germany's PR Man: Julius Klein and the Making of Transatlantic Memory." In Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweis, eds., *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006): 294-308.

¹⁰² Volker Berghahn, "Recasting Bourgeois Germany," in Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

included in the general section devoted to “The Germans.” This section was therefore small, but significant. The majority of the questions in this section covered home decoration and furniture. The responses surely were helpful for furniture makers and sellers, informing them of the likes and dislikes of men and women in West Germany. But they also created a spectrum of options for interview subjects that they might not have considered. Images – though simplistic by the standards of today – of differently furnished rooms or styles of furniture normalized novel approaches to decoration and their inclusion in social scientific surveys added an air of gravitas to household purchasing decisions.

Sometimes opinion research institutes had to fight the resistance of those potential clients who sometimes had difficulty understanding the necessary translation of industry terms and ideas into everyday language for surveys. As late as 1961, for example, the Emnid Institute felt the need to explain to clients why it designed surveys in a certain way. In one case, the institute responded to a negative article published in the *Pharmazeutische Zeitung*, the professional magazine for pharmacists, regarding its consumer research in the pharmaceutical industry. The *Pharmazeutische Zeitung* accused Emnid of asking “suggestive questions” and generally offering inconclusive, unscientific results.¹⁰³ Emnid noted in its rebuttal of the magazine’s critique that good opinion researchers recognized that the average citizen thought quite differently about the products or practices of a given industry than someone who worked in that industry. Everyday vocabulary was much less specialized than industry jargon, and survey questions had to reflect this difference.¹⁰⁴ Researchers encountered a similar situation with political surveys, of course, for, as their

¹⁰³ ““Meinungbefragungen auf dem Arzenteilsektor,” *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 36/1961, 11 September 1961, p. 6. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

own polls demonstrated, few West Germans understood many of the terms used by politicians and diplomats.

Although Emnid and Allensbach differentiated market research from their true “public opinion research,” they also insisted upon the inseparability of economic and socio-cultural trends. In 1955 Emnid’s director of market research declared, “Market research and social research are closely related. Every economic event is also a social process,” explaining that, in his view, “the illumination of market events not only has to do with the relationships between men and things, but, even more so, the relationships between men.”¹⁰⁵ Some historians have held this to be particularly true of West Germany in the 1950s. According to Paul Betts, “the ’50s was perhaps the most ‘thingly’ of all epochs.”¹⁰⁶ Consumer goods took the place of political leaders and symbols in their representation of the era and its achievements. In turn, how West Germans behaved in the marketplace was seen by opinion researchers as a reflection of – but also an influence on – their larger worldview.

This meant that West German pollsters viewed negative responses to surveys related to the economy with special concern. A 1962 Allensbach report, drawing on surveys from 1956, 1958, and 1962, lamented the public decline in trust in the *Deutschmark*, the West German currency. From 1956 to 1962, the Allensbach researchers recorded an increase of almost ten percentage points in those who expected the *Deutschmark* to be

¹⁰⁵ “Marktforschung und Sozialforschung gehören eng zusammen. Jedes wirtschaftliche Geschehen ist zugleich auch ein sozialer Prozess. Es handelt sich bei der Durchleuchtung des Marktgeschehens nicht allein um Mensch-Sach-Beziehungen, sondern ebensosehr um Mensch-Mensch-Beziehungen. Marktforschung ist darum ein Sektor aus dem Kreise angewandter Sozialwissenschaften.“ *EMNID-Informationen* 24/55 from 11 Juni 1955, p. 7. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Betts, *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 4.

worth less in ten years. This was not purely an economic question, announced the report. “An assessment of the political development in West Germany must start from the assumption that the *Deutschmark* has been, so to speak, the foundation of social peace and of the construction of democracy in the Federal Republic,” the researchers wrote.¹⁰⁷ They went on to warn their readers, “If we don’t succeed in increasing trust in the currency again instead of letting it decline, we must reckon with a threat to the inner political stability of the state.”¹⁰⁸

This emphasis on the need for *political* public opinion research as a means through which to understand Germans as consumers as well as citizens was a recent development, but market research itself was not. As we have seen, market research, unlike political public opinion research, had been developed in Germany before World War II. It was no coincidence that Ludwig Erhard, the mastermind behind the social market economy and Chancellor of the Federal Republic from 1963 until 1966, was also a founding member of Germany’s first marketing research institute, the Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung (GfK) in Nuremberg.¹⁰⁹ The Allensbach and Emnid Institutes’ ambitious vision for opinion research mirrored Erhard’s approach to research while at the GfK. As Erhard, then Minister of Economics, noted in a May 1960 speech, he and his colleagues at the GfK had never been satisfied merely with quantification; instead, they strove for qualitative understanding,

¹⁰⁷ “Wir müssen bei Einordnung und Bewertung der politischen Entwicklung in Westdeutschland davon ausgehen, daß die D-Mark gleichsam das Fundament des sozialen Friedens und des demokratischen Aufbaus in der Bundesrepublik gewesen ist.“ Institut für Demoskopie, Bericht #524: „Das Vertrauen in die D-Markt sinkt,“ in *Die Stimmung im Bundesgebiet 1962* Teil I, 3. At BAK ZSg 132. The percentage of those foreseeing the decline of the *Deutschmark* increased from 55% in 1956 to 62% in 1962.

¹⁰⁸ “Wenn es nicht gelingt, das Vertrauen in diese Währung wieder zu vermehren statt es abflauen zu lassen, muß man auf eine Gefährdung der inneren Stabilität des Staates in politischer Hinsicht gefaßt sein.“ Ibid.,4.

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion of the Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung.

“research on motivations, in order to perceive the modulations of human nature.”¹¹⁰ They wanted not only to understand what people did, but *why* they did it. Emnid (and Allensbach) built upon this legacy of curiosity, which also closely resembled Paul Lazarsfeld’s research agenda.

Yet Erhard did not claim in this 1960 speech that all was the same as it had been in the 1930s. In fact, he mentioned the “deadly threat” that hung over western Europe and the world as the result of the collision of political and economic systems after World War II. Because of the absence of “harmony” in political life, according to Erhard, people strove for more predictable economic relationships. The fears and desires that ruled people in the 1960s were largely unconscious, however – and to Erhard’s mind, that made the need for modern, intelligent market and opinion research even more pressing. Mere quantification could only take researchers so far. The things that truly ruled men in those times, according to Erhard, “are things that are played out subconsciously, that can’t be grasped rationally.”¹¹¹

Erhard’s speech was not dedicated solely to advocating for greater research within West Germany, however. Instead, he exhorted his listeners to put their skills to use in the battle for the Third World. “The free world,” Erhard noted with chagrin, had not been as successful as the Soviet-led Eastern bloc in bringing its message to the developing states of the world. Despite the resources that the United States extended to these states, it had not

¹¹⁰ “So strebten wir immer weniger nach Zahlen, wir bemühten uns vielmehr, eine Art Motivforschung zu betreiben, um die Modulationen des menschlichen Wesens zu erfassen.“ Speech reprinted in “Bundewirtschaftsminister Professor Erhard über Meinungs- und Marktforschung,” *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 22/1960, 4 June 1960. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

¹¹¹ “Da sieht man, dass man mit der Quantifizierung der Umwelterscheinungen nicht mehr auskommt. Das sind Dinge, die sich im Unterbewußtsein abspielen, die rational nicht erfaßbar sind.“ Ibid.

won the battle for hearts and minds. It was up to the market researchers in the audience to “discover why the amount of financial support itself was not decisive, but clearly much more the form and attitude with which and position from which it is offered.”¹¹² Within Germany, too, Erhard observed, financial success and material accumulation had only re-awakened the desire of West Germans for something more: harmony within themselves and within their society.¹¹³ His challenge to market researchers, then, was no less than to unearth the deepest motivations and desires not only of West Germans, but of all citizens of the world. His audience members from EMNID evidently were paying attention; later that year, the Institute announced that it was opening an office in Bangkok in order to aid German companies in their understanding of the people of southern Asia.¹¹⁴ Not only did poll results open a window for the rest of the world onto West Germans, but opinion research institutes also helped open new foreign markets to West German industry.

Polls and Political Culture

While poll results can be useful guides to the “zeitgeist,” they are not so straightforward or neutral as some historians have assumed. The leading West German opinion research institutes of the 1950s and early 1960s were sensitive to the variations in responses that differing question constructions and arrangements could evoke, depending on their purpose. Polls could measure knowledge and opinions, and by injecting certain concepts and questions into the minds of readers and respondents, they could initiate or

¹¹² “Und mich interessiert es als Politiker in höchstem Maße zu erfahren, wie es kommt, dass nicht allein die Höhe entscheidend ist, sondern offenbar viel mehr, in welcher Form und in welcher Gesinnung und in welcher Haltung sie geboten wird.“ Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ “Coordination Center for Southeast Asian Studies: Eine Gründung der EMNID-Institute in Bangkok,” *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 46/1960, 19 November 1960. At BAK ZSg.2/640.

strengthen trends of thoughts and behavior. Yet neither pollsters nor individual survey questions and responses held the power within themselves to actually accomplish a full transformation of a population. Similarly, despite fears (continuing into the present) that opinion polls would interfere with the process of governance by inducing politicians to follow the whims of the populace, the early history of opinion polling in West Germany, at least, contains more instances of the government following through with policies opposed by the population according to polls than examples of slavish submission to the majority. So what role, if any, did the polls offered by the Allensbach and Emnid institutes play in West German political culture?

One answer is that they helped form the backbone to the political education of West Germany, and the projection of West German identity internationally. It was pollsters themselves who helped substantiate the idea, now a relative commonplace among historians and political scientists, that economic stability was essential for the durability of democracy. And it was those same pollsters who helped politicians and average citizens develop a language for interpreting their nation's political culture, one built in part through "scientific" comparisons with their own past and future, on the one hand, and with the present of other nations, on the other. Over the course of the 1950s, the Allensbach and Emnid institutes provided tools for politicians and citizens to explain their behavior and break down a complex population into manageable blocks of statistical figures. Working from the inside out, their statistics and graphs (selectively) charted a journey through time and mindset, one enticing in its simplicity but one with which many West Germans never felt entirely secure.

CHAPTER V

THE INESCAPABLE MASS?

THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL AND THE GROUP DYNAMICS OF OPINION FORMATION

A few years after returning to Germany following over a decade of exile in the United States, Max Horkheimer, director of the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt, remarked, "In America we got to know the questionnaire and interview methods; however, we became convinced that the questionnaire is not the ideal way to determine what truly concerns Germans."¹ He continued: "Here there is only one method that would be successful, namely: let people speak, let them speak about all that concerns them, what they think about this or that, which perspective they have on politics or economics, but don't do this with a questionnaire."² Horkheimer and his closest collaborators at the Institut für Sozialforschung did not dispute the necessity of studying the opinions of Germans in order to determine the extent of their transformation to democratic citizens after World War II. Rather, they took issue with the typical method used by groups like the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes, as well as the survey units of OMGUS and HICOG. Germans, Horkheimer claimed, required a more free-flowing method centered around group discussion rather than isolated interviews. More importantly, such group-based

¹ "Wir haben in Amerika den Fragebogen und die Interviews kennengelernt, kamen aber hier zu der Überzeugung, dass der Fragebogen für Deutschland nicht das geeignete ist, um aus den Menschen das herauszuholen, was sie innerlich wirklich beschäftigt." Notes from "Arbeitstagung von 1953," 18, IfS Archive, Ordner "Memoranden und Aufsätze (Juni 1950 bis Dezember 1953): 8. Forschungsprojekte des Instituts". Quelle: Archivbox 1.

² "Hier gibt es nur eine Methode, die erfolgreich werden kann, nämlich: Lässt die Menschen einmal sprechen, lässt sie von all dem sprechen, was sie bewegt, was sie über dies oder das denken, welchen Standpunkt sie in der Politik und in wirtschaftlichen Leben vertreten, aber macht dies nicht mit Fragebogen." Ibid.

interviews allowed researchers to assess how groups, and through them, individuals, actually formed opinions.

Horkheimer's Institut für Sozialforschung was closely involved in efforts to professionalize empirical social scientific inquiry, including opinion polling, in the early 1950s. The Institute's collaboration with polling institutions such as Emnid and the Allensbach Institute reached its zenith in 1951 at the Weinheim Conference. Yet while Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Friedrich Pollock, the nucleus of the reconstituted Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt am Main, embraced many aspects of empirical social science that they had encountered during their exile in the United States, they also questioned the efficacy of traditional polling methods in assessing the nature of a given "public." Especially considering what was at stake in postwar Germany, they doubted the capacity of Gallup-style polls to determine the true attitudes of Germans toward democracy, the occupation authorities, and their role in the crimes of the Third Reich. Their controversial work *The Authoritarian Personality*, based on research conducted in the United States, had already demonstrated that fascistic, authoritarian tendencies could exist even in a democracy as storied as the United States.³ After returning to Germany, the remaining members of the Frankfurt School thus resolved to conduct their own study of German "public opinion," one that would penetrate the depths of the German psyche and allow them to develop a fuller understanding of the dynamics of opinion formation and the nature of the German public itself. The result was a study consisting of 121 focus groups (termed "discussion groups" by the researchers) conducted among diverse subsets of West

³ Theodor Adorno, Else-Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950).

German society in the winter of 1950-51, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of which was finally published in 1955 as *Gruppenexperiment* (Group Experiment).

If the frequent polls of the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes helped to constitute what was sayable by publicizing and quantifying which opinions were appropriate for West Germans in the immediate postwar period, the work of the reconstituted Frankfurt School in effect clarified what many West Germans were unwilling to say. That is, the Frankfurt researchers demonstrated the variety of ways with which many of the participants in their discussion groups evaded critical analysis of their own past. Like the polls of Allensbach and Emnid, the Frankfurt School's Group Experiment arose out of a fundamental distrust of postwar Germans. Horkheimer, Adorno, Pollock, and their colleagues in Frankfurt went much further, however. By applying Freudian principles to their analysis of the group discussions they conducted, they claimed to uncover and diagnose pathological tendencies in many West Germans unwilling to accept their own responsibility for the Third Reich, World War II, and the Holocaust.

In its very structure, the *Gruppenexperiment* study revealed an interest not only in examining what the authors perceived as latent anti-democratic attitudes lurking within post-war Germany, but in rethinking the condition of West German society and the ideal dynamics of a future German public. The polls of the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes knit the survey responses of thousands of individuals together into what they referred to as the public opinion of West Germans. For the theorists of the Frankfurt School, this was insufficient. Instead, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Pollock suggested, it was necessary to study the influences upon and dynamics of opinion formation by individuals – a process that only occurred within groups. This interest in the broader social context of public opinion was a

product of the combined influences of Marx and Freud on their work, as well as of the impact of their collaboration during their years of exile in the United States with other social scientists there, particularly Paul Lazarsfeld. This uncommon concatenation of experiences and intellectual influences inspired Adorno, Horkheimer, Pollock, and their colleagues to seek to create a new methodology for understanding public opinion formation, based in part on empirical techniques developed primarily in the United States but filtered through a commitment to theoretically informed qualitative analysis.

For many decades, scholars have emphasized the theoretical and even anti-empirical works of the Frankfurt School. Recently, however, historians and sociologists have rediscovered the Institute's empirical projects of the 1940s and 1950s. Eva-Maria Ziege and Mark Worrell have written theoretically-informed examinations of the Frankfurt School's foray into empirically-based projects meant to uncover antisemitic attitudes among American and European workers.⁴ Matthias Benzer has also drawn attention to Adorno's shifting perspective on empirical research, noting that at least before 1955, Adorno was much more open to such research than many scholars have claimed.⁵ This chapter builds on the studies of Ziege, Worrell, and Benzer while illuminating the relationship between the work of Frankfurt School researchers and the practices of and debates among other opinion researchers in West Germany.

An analysis not only of the published volume *Gruppenexperiment*, but also of archival sources covering the genesis, execution, and afterlife of the study, demonstrates

⁴ Mark Worrell, *Dialectic of Solidarity: Labor, Antisemitism, and the Frankfurt School* (Boston: Brill, 2008). Eva-Maria Ziege, *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie: Die Frankfurter Schule im amerikanischen Exil* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2009).

⁵ Matthias Benzer, *The Sociology of Theodor Adorno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

that the Frankfurt School's Group Experiment was the product of an intensive engagement with methodological approaches to public opinion research combined with an overarching concern with societal influences on individuals. The project began with the Institute's profound suspicion of the average West German citizen (a distrust shared by the Allensbach pollsters), grounded partly in the nineteenth-century theories of pathological mass behavior popularized by Gustave Le Bon. In the end, the project offered not a coherent snapshot of West German public opinion, but a powerful yet incomplete analysis of the relationship between individuals and groups. The goals behind the method used by the Frankfurt School researchers were difficult to reconcile with the standards for empirical analysis that they also hoped to meet. Ultimately *Gruppenexperiment* could not fulfill the ambitions of its authors. But the project retains its significance as a foray into the mediated (whether by other individuals, society as a whole, or actual media outlets) process of opinion creation and a reflection of the lingering fear of "the masses" in the decade following German defeat in World War II.

Empirical Experiments in the United States and the Return to Germany

The Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt was gradually pushed to the margins of the German scholarly community in the years after Adolf Hitler's rise to power, forcing it to move outside German geographic borders as well as explore different types of scholarly work. Their Jewish backgrounds and Marxist theoretical stance sent many of its staff in search of asylum outside Germany's borders, first in western Europe, and eventually in the United States. After members of the Institute were driven to different parts of the world in these years, the Institute lacked both a critical mass of researchers as well as the funds to

support them. Eventually the Institute's director, Max Horkheimer, with the help of his colleagues Franz Neumann and Erich Fromm, was able to secure an affiliation with the Department of Sociology at Columbia University in New York City. After Fromm and Neumann became estranged from the circle around Horkheimer in 1939 and 1941, respectively, this relationship soured, and the Institute's financial status became even more precarious.⁶ This crisis within the Institute led Horkheimer to attempt to expand the Institute's capabilities in order to court new sources of funding and prestige. In particular, Horkheimer recognized the need to augment the Institute's theoretical work with the empirical methods preferred by many American funding sources.⁷ Although the Institute had produced research projects based on questionnaires and quantitative data analysis while it was still located in Europe, these projects, including a study of authority and the family (*Studien über Autorität und Familie*), had been almost entirely the work of Erich Fromm. Horkheimer, as well as his close collaborators and confidantes Theodor Adorno and Friedrich Pollock, had less experience directing large empirical studies. As a result, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Pollock greatly benefited from their interaction with accomplished empirical researchers like Paul Lazarsfeld in the United States.

Although the Institute failed to secure funding from the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations, two of the largest and most prestigious granting bodies in the United States, in the early 1940s Horkheimer did establish a relationship with the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC). The AJC provided the funding for what would become the five-volume *Studies in Prejudice* series, while the JLC funded a

⁶ See Wheatland 82-84.

⁷ Ziege 25-26; Wiggershaus 273.

project devoted to studying anti-Semitism among American workers. Both projects entailed a combination of qualitative and quantitative fieldwork and analysis.

The study of anti-Semitism among American workers was the first large-scale empirical examination of anti-Semitism in the United States.⁸ Although the final report remained unpublished and the project is often overshadowed by the more famous *The Authoritarian Personality*, the project on “Anti-Semitism among American Labor, 1944-1945” represents a key moment in the Institute’s evolution and is the most obvious methodological antecedent of the *Gruppenexperiment*. The primary finding of the study, which was carried out near the end of World War II in 1944, was that at least 50% of the union workers interviewed harbored anti-Semitic views. In fact, the researchers found, the war effort and knowledge of the genocidal policies of the Nazis actually increased anti-semitism among some workers.⁹ More significant for the future work of the Frankfurt School in Germany, however, was the methodology developed for the project.

In a memorandum for the study, Adorno expressed many of the methodological and theoretical positions that would guide his approach to the Group Experiment in Germany. First, he emphasized that the quantitative and qualitative results of social science research must be combined with theoretical concerns: “Antisemitism in particular cannot simply be treated in terms of ‘unbiased’ social research but only through particular reference to a theory of society.”¹⁰ Second, he suggested that the “results,” in the sense of responses or

⁸ Ziege 171.

⁹ Catherine Collomp, “Anti-Semitism among American Labor’: a study by the refugee scholars of the Frankfurt School of Sociology at the end of World War II,” *Labor History* Vol. 52, No. 4 (Nov. 2011): 417-39.

¹⁰ Theodor Adorno, “Labor Project Memorandum re: Write-up of final report,” Dec. 1, 1944. Reprinted in Theodor W. Adorno und Max Horkheimer, *Briefwechsel 1927-1969, Band II: 1938-1944*, Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz, eds. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), 610.

“data,” should not be seen as complete and self-explanatory but rather should be subjected to “incessant critique and interpretation.”¹¹ In addition, Adorno acknowledged the researcher’s struggle to meet the expectations of the larger social scientific community by facilitating the generalizability of a given set of findings, and to balance the demand for quantitative analysis with what Adorno saw as the more useful exercises in contextual exposition and qualitative analysis. After only a short stay in the United States he was convinced that “everything concerned with statistics, heaps of statisticians, facts and figures automatically tends to assume a certain weight of its own, often quite disproportionate to the scientific validity, and value, of the results obtained.”¹² Scholarly norms as well as particular aspects of social problems often required a quantitative approach, but numbers and graphs did not an analysis make. As he would argue in a later reflection on his experiences working under the direction of Paul Lazarsfeld, “empirical investigations are not only legitimate but essential ... But one must not confer autonomy upon them or regard them as a universal key. Above all, they must themselves terminate in theoretical knowledge.”¹³

The fieldwork for the project was influenced by these principles but directed by Pollock, Paul Massing, A.R.L. Gurland, and Leo Lowenthal rather than Adorno. Convinced that traditional surveys carried out by professional interviewers were limited in their ability to penetrate the depths of individual opinions, especially when those opinions were considered unsavory, the Frankfurt School researchers instead decided to train

¹¹ Ibid., 611.

¹² Ibid., 617.

¹³ Theodor Adorno, trans. Donald Fleming, “Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America,” in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds. *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 353.

representatives of the population to be studied – union workers – to carry out guided interviews of their fellow laborers. These interviews were designed to determine the attitudes of their fellow workers towards Jews and their propensity for antisemitism in everyday life. The interview questions were open-ended, intended to facilitate informal conversations. In their instructions to the interviewers, Pollock and his team wrote, “We want to know what working people honestly are thinking about the whole ‘Jewish question’ and why they feel that way. Polls will not tell us. Interviews won’t either. Friendly conversations will.”¹⁴ In other words, the researchers assumed that traditional polls elicited “opinions” that were deemed to be acceptable or desirable by the researchers. Informal conversations had a much better chance of unearthing what people really believed. Pollock’s remark foreshadowed the Frankfurt School researchers’ acknowledgement of the existence of a second strand of opinion that flowed beneath the responses more easily summoned and codified as “public opinion” through Gallup-inspired polling methods. It also pointed to a belief in the centrality of conversation and discussion in unearthing, but perhaps also creating, opinions. Both of these assumptions would influence the methodology of the *Gruppenexperiment* project over five years later.

The *Studies in Prejudice* series was overseen by Horkheimer at the same time that the project on “Anti-semitism among American Labor” was being carried out. The series represents a professionalization of the Institute’s empirical work as well as a deepening of its quest to analyze individuals in the context of societal dynamics. *The Authoritarian Personality* is the longest and most well known of the volumes in the series. For this project, Adorno and his colleagues developed an “F scale” (with the “F” referring to fascism) in

¹⁴ Quoted in Wiggershaus 367.

order to measure prejudice and authoritarian tendencies among individuals, as discovered through questionnaire-based interviews. The researchers argued that individuals with more authoritarian personalities likely were more susceptible to fascist, anti-democratic rhetoric. It was only the specifics of their environment – in this case, the democratic norms of the United States – that limited these individuals from wholly embracing authoritarianism. Faced with conditions similar to those in interwar Germany, the researchers suggested, such individuals in the United States would not necessarily have defended the democratic principles believed by many to undergird American political culture.

The authors sought to unite Freudian-inspired depth psychology with quantitative attitude surveys, and relied on a combination of individual interviews and questionnaires. Adorno and the Institute for Social Research co-authored *The Authoritarian Personality* with Nevitt Sanford's Berkeley Public Opinion Study. Sanford was a professor of Psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, and for the *Authoritarian Personality* project he directed the research process on the ground, whereas Adorno and his staff largely focused on analysis.¹⁵ American social scientists conducted interviews, distributed questionnaires, and carried out the analysis for the larger, Berkeley-based portion of the research. However, Friedrich Pollock of the Institute of Social Research did organize research in Los Angeles.¹⁶ In this project, too, Adorno and his colleagues reiterated that specialized techniques were needed to unearth attitudes and opinions located beneath the surface of the interview subjects' initial responses to questions, the "hidden tendencies, frequently

¹⁵ Adorno, et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, xii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xiv.

unknown to the subject himself, which are contrary to those manifested or verbalized on a surface level.”¹⁷

In the process of working on the *Studies in Prejudice* series, Horkheimer, Adorno, and the other members of the Frankfurt School in exile in the United States seem to have become increasingly convinced that the key to unearthing these “hidden tendencies” lay in finding new ways to study individuals *within* social contexts. By the time of the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality* in 1950, Horkheimer and Adorno had shifted their focus even further towards studying the society-based group dynamics that influenced individual tendencies, rather than individual personality assessments. As Horkheimer wrote in the foreword to *The Authoritarian Personality*, “we recognize that the individual *in vacuo* is but an artifact; even in the present series of studies, although essentially psychological in nature, it has been necessary to explain individual behavior in terms of social antecedents and concomitants. The second state of our research is thus focused upon problems of group pressures and the sociological determinants of roles in given social situations.”¹⁸ This “second state of research” would be carried out in occupied Germany.

After the end of World War II, the core members of the Frankfurt School in the United States – Horkheimer, Adorno, and Pollock – gradually returned to Germany. Horkheimer was the first to make the journey, rejoining the faculty of the University of Frankfurt in 1948. Emboldened by his experiences in the United States, Horkheimer was eager to reestablish the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt and take advantage of the willingness of the occupation forces of the United States to encourage German-led social

¹⁷ Ibid., 293.

¹⁸ Max Horkheimer and Samuel Flowerman, “Foreword,” in Adorno, et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, vii.

scientific endeavors. The Institut für Sozialforschung was rebuilt in Frankfurt in the early 1950s thanks largely to support from the Office of the High Commissioner for Occupied Germany (HICOG). Numerous grants from HICOG gave the Institute the opportunity to resume research and teaching. HICOG also covered about two-thirds of the costs of constructing a new building for the Institute in Frankfurt.¹⁹

The reconstituted Institut für Sozialforschung was tasked with facilitating the incorporation of the most up to date empirical research into German academic life. In his HICOG grant application and later materials, Horkheimer presented the Institute as committed, first and foremost, to the teaching of a new generation of (democratic) social scientists, well versed in cutting-edge research techniques as well as steeped in the critical theoretical approaches that had been the hallmark of the Institut für Sozialforschung before the war. The importance of empirical research methods to HICOG is apparent in the documentation. According to the terms of the grant award, HICOG hoped a new building would allow the Institute to “function more effectively in carrying out its work of training students in modern fact-finding techniques of social research and of conducting research in social psychology, especially in the study of social attitudes, as a contribution to tolerance and cooperation among persons.”²⁰

In the winter of 1950-51, HICOG contracted Horkheimer’s Institute to carry out a study of German political awareness. Horkheimer was eager to produce an empirical showpiece through which to demonstrate the Institute’s expertise and so obtain further

¹⁹ See Summary Report from January 7, 1952, which lists the total US contribution to construction as DM 236,000 and total German contributions as DM 150,000. Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt, NA 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 751 IX-275-276.3.

²⁰ John Riedl, Chief of Education Branch and Cultural Relations, to Max Horkheimer, 12 April 1950. Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt, NA 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 751 IX-275-276.3.

research contracts. He, Adorno, and Pollock also hoped to extend their research on antisemitism and authoritarian tendencies, conducted during their wartime exile in the United States, to the German case. Because of this deeper interest, the study was focused much more on uncovering antisemitism and lingering nostalgia for an authoritarian regime than its vague categorization as a study of “political awareness” implied. Above all else, however, the Frankfurt School scholars hoped to test an innovative research methodology that would productively unite theory and praxis.

In the early 1950s, both Horkheimer and Adorno expressed a belief that empirical social research would foster a democratic culture in Germany. As we saw in Chapter Three, Adorno, in his collaboration with German opinion researchers leading up to and immediately after the Weinheim Conference, suggested that the Third Reich had failed to pursue public opinion polling systematically precisely because of the analogous nature of the polls to the practices of voting in democratic elections.²¹ For Horkheimer, empirical social science, as it had developed primarily in the United States and Great Britain, helped define a way of thinking conducive to democracy, as well as a solution to the problem of “the masses.” At a meeting of Institute employees and collaborators in 1950, he remarked that just as the development of the natural sciences had helped to hinder an irrational belief in witches, an understanding of social scientific practice would eventually “make it impossible for demagogues to exert any suggestive power” over the masses, because citizens would have a more “objective” understanding of social problems and conditions.²²

²¹ Adorno, “Zur gegenwärtigen Stellung der empirischen Sozialforschung in Deutschland,” *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung, Methoden und Probleme* (Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952), 27.

²² “So glauben wir, dass die Sozialwissenschaften, wenn sie einmal die Massen ergreifen, es dann unmöglich machen, dass Demagogen eine Suggestivkraft ausüben. Sie beziehen sich heute auf

The *Gruppenexperiment* was only one, albeit the most time-consuming and ambitious, of a number of empirical research projects undertaken by the reconstituted Frankfurt School in the early 1950s. While working on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the transcripts from the Group Experiment discussions conducted in 1950-51, various employees and associates of the Institute also collaborated on projects in connection with an American-led community study of the city of Darmstadt and several projects related to the effectiveness of assorted radio programs.²³ The Institut für Sozialforschung provided consultation on a host of additional research projects for HICOG. The Institute's employee Karl Sardemann worked with the Reactions Analysis Branch of HICOG as a "scientific consultant" in the second half of 1951, conducting group discussions with attendees of the World Youth Festival in Berlin in August 1951.²⁴ The Institute also held lectures for American students and HICOG staff on the history, culture, and economy of Western Germany.²⁵ Finally, the Institute conducted a major research project on the

gesellschaftliche Probleme, wenn sie einmal so objektiviert sind, dann wird es für Demagogen schwerer, irgendwelche Kraft auszuüben."Besprechung am 28. Und 29. Juni, 1950, p. 2. IfS Archive, S1: Tagungen 1950-1961, Ordner 1: 1950-1952.

²³ Report to John O. Riedl, Education and Cultural Relations Division, Office of Public Affairs, HICOG, APO 807 Re: Institut für Sozialforschung, Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, Frankfurt-Main, Dec. 11, 1950, Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt, NA 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 751 IX-275-276.3. For an analysis of the influence of the Darmstadt Community Study on the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, see Uta Gerhardt and Alexia Arnold, "Von Chicago nach Darmstadt: Das Verhältnis zwischen der Chicago-Soziologie und der Darmstadt-Studie. Zur Kontinuität und Diskontinuität der Gesellschaftskonzeption(en) im Blickfeld der Stadt-Land-Thematik," in Rüder vom Bruch, et al., eds., *Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006).

²⁴ See Reports to John Riedl from August 13, 1951 and September 12, 1951, Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt, NA 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 751 IX-275-276.3.

²⁵ See Report to John Riedl from August 13, 1951. Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt, NA 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 751 IX-275-276.3.

reaction of German “experts” to the *Voice of America* broadcasts.²⁶ Yet the *Gruppenexperiment* study remained the source of the Institute’s greatest hopes and ambitions as well as something of an albatross; as Adorno put it, the study was “the child of our love, but also our worry” (“das Kind unserer Liebe, aber auch unserer Sorge”).²⁷

The Purpose of the Group Experiment

Horkheimer presented the Group Experiment to the American officials overseeing funding for the project as an inquiry “into potential German chauvinism,” but emphasized as well the function of the project as an opportunity develop innovative methods for studying attitudes and opinions and then to train researchers in those new methods.²⁸ In their attempt to forge a balance between polished empiricism and reflective theory, the Institute members could draw on their own experiences with earlier empirical research projects, chiefly the project on “Antisemitism among American Labor” and the work that went into *The Authoritarian Personality*. Despite these connections to earlier projects, however, Horkheimer and Adorno saw the techniques they developed for the *Gruppenexperiment* as crucial methodological innovations, necessary for the special case of Germany. The *Gruppenexperiment* research project was conceived of both as an elaboration upon existing quantitative and qualitative methodologies and as an inquiry into the process of opinion formation itself. The Frankfurt School scholars viewed the project as an

²⁶ See “Report on Voice Study” (April 1951), Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt, NA 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 751 IX-275-276.3. The Voice of America was founded by the United States in 1942 to provide radio (and, later, television) broadcasts to Germany and other countries.

²⁷ Protokoll der Mitarbeiter-Besprechung am 3. April 1954, IfS Archiv, F2 111.

²⁸ Report to John Riedl from June 10, 1950. Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt, NA 1 Nachlass Max Horkheimer, 751 IX-275-276.3. In his later correspondence with Riedl, Horkheimer also referred to the project as the “Study on German Attitudes towards America.”

opportunity to challenge the theoretical bases of the type of public opinion research pioneered by George Gallup and Elmo Roper. In the 1955 publication of the findings of the study, Adorno and his collaborators agreed with Leo Crespi, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, and others that opinion polls could reveal important information about political threats while also exerting a formative influence on the German population. However, they saw the nature of this influence as dependent on the techniques used. The *Gruppenexperiment* was conceived as an attempt to develop a methodology that would navigate between a desire to reflect an infinitely complex social reality and the need for workable scientific terminology and analysis. The Frankfurt researchers would do so by combining survey research with the case study approach, both of which, they acknowledged had long been in use in the United States for different applications.²⁹

Their project was profoundly ambitious in its scope: the Frankfurt researchers aimed to spotlight questions of social relationships and power through open-ended discussions in small-group settings. In a 1952 meeting, which occurred while the researchers were analyzing the results of the group discussions, Adorno articulated a stance on opinion research that would be reiterated in later publications and talks related to the *Gruppenexperiment*. He noted that opinion research was inadequate when structured like market research, as it so often was. “The method acts too much like a filter,” Adorno

²⁹ Friedrich Pollock, et al., *Gruppenexperiment: Ein Studienbericht, Bearbeitet von Friedrich Pollock* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955) 20. One note on further citations from *Gruppenexperiment*: with the exception of the prologue, written by Franz Bohm, and the long analytical essay written by Adorno, it is difficult to determine authorship of individual portions of the study. Pollock and Adorno were the primary editors and authors, but they worked with a large team of research assistants and fellow contributors.

insisted; “it captures only as much from reality as is discoverable with the terms used.”³⁰ The survey method limited responses through the generally closed-ended questions it contained. Further, the Institute claimed in the introduction to the published *Gruppenexperiment* volume, the ideal poll would capture the “dynamic moment” of opinion formation and orient itself toward the “objective social facts” of a “*vergesellschafteten Gesellschaft*” (“totally socialized society,” as it is often – not unproblematically – translated).³¹ In such a society, each individual’s opinions could not truly be seen as the opinions of independent individuals, since they were so enmeshed in the collective. In addition, a more accurate assessment of public opinion would be attuned to the unequal power relations that actually structured society and granted the opinions of some more weight than others.³² Accordingly, researchers should strive to understand the prejudices and cultural influences that mediated the expressed opinions of respondents. In particular, they should bring theoretical reflection to bear on quantitative data in order to illuminate society as a whole.³³

In an introductory section of *Gruppenexperiment* dealing with methodology, the researchers argued, echoing Adorno’s earlier comments, that “The democratic potential of

³⁰ “Die Methode erweise sich viel zu sehr als Filter; sie erfasse von der Realität nur gerade so viel, als sich mit den Begriffmerkmalen decke, aus denen das Gerüst der Befragung bestehe.”

“Bericht über die Sitzung am 28.4.52,” IfS Archive, F2 1.

³¹ Pollock 20. Scholars of the Frankfurt School and Adorno in particular have struggled to properly translate *vergesellschaftete Gesellschaft* for English-speaking audiences. Jeffrey Olick and Andrew Perrin, in their translation of some portions of *Gruppenexperiment*, render this term as “totally socialized society,” as does Matthias Benzer. Douglas Kellner translates the term as “totally administered society,” thus emphasizing the particularly modern and mechanical process by which individuals have become integrated into society. See Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity* ((Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989). Within the context of *Gruppenexperiment*, “totally socialized society” seems to me to be more accurate in its indication of dissolution into a collective.

³² Pollock 21.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5.

the new methods is not so unquestionable, as is so gladly assumed particularly in Germany after the suppression of public opinion by the Hitler regime.”³⁴ According to the researchers, opinion research often maintained significant features of the marketing and consumer research out of which it developed: “It tacitly insinuates the universe of the consumer as that of man,” and as a result, “the diverse tendencies to social control and manipulation that can be observed to derive from modern empirical sociology in the realm of consumer analysis or ‘human relations’ are not merely incidental to the method itself.”³⁵ Questionnaires, they contended, assumed that each respondent possessed a clear and singular opinion about all issues. Traditional polls therefore offered interviewees a limited set of potential responses and simply took those responses at face value without investigating the deeper economic, cultural, and social structures which underlay them. Further, this process potentially ignored darker and more complex currents of attitude and opinion that often ran alongside more socially acceptable responses. Perhaps Germans had learned to give the “correct” answers to questions about their views of Jews, foreigners, and militarism; but what did they *really* believe?

Horkheimer, Adorno, and their collaborators were not the only observers to ask this question. A sense of a more opaque current of opinion increasingly pervaded analyses of the surveys undertaken by OMGUS and HICOG between 1945 and 1955. Although the surveys aimed, in effect, to show that Germans were making progress toward democracy,

³⁴ “Das demokratische Potential der neuen methoden is darum nicht so fraglos, wie es gerade in Deutschland, nach der Knebelung der öffentlichen Meinung durch das Hitlerregime, so gern angenommen wird.” Pollock 16.

³⁵ “Nicht umsonst ist die moderne “Meinungsforschung” aus der Markt- und Konsum-forschung entstanden. Stillschweigend unterstellt sie das Universum der Kundschaft als das der Menschen. Darum sind die vielfältigen Tendenzen zur sozialen Kontrolle and Manipulation, die im Gefolge der modernen empirischen Soziologie etwa im Umkreis der Konsum-Analyse oder der “human” relations” sich beobachten lassen, der Methode selbst nichth äußerlich.” Ibid., 17.

their results pointed toward a more complicated reality. These polls suggested that confidence in the Bonn government was on the rise throughout the 1950s, and that most West Germans believed that they lived in a democracy.³⁶ But this optimistic assessment of the German aptitude for democracy rested uneasily with poll results that indicated a somewhat nostalgic, or at least ambivalent, relationship with the Nazi past. Most dramatically, the results of HICOG's survey of nationalist sentiment in 1953, which found that nearly half of all polled Germans recalled the ideas of National Socialism as being more positive than negative overall.³⁷ The collected data indicated that over the course of the 1950s, West Germans had "come to terms with their Nazi history" mainly by decrying the acts of Nazi leaders and party officials, rather than taking ownership of their potential complicity in the crimes of the Third Reich. In retrospect, it seems true that, as Richard and Anna Merritt wrote, "What Germans thought about as they lay in bed trying to go to sleep, or what they discussed in the family circle or over a glass of beer at the local pub, cannot be determined through public opinion analysis."³⁸ It was precisely this discomfiting space between publicly expressed opinion and private thought, and the process by which public opinion was formed and expressed through their interaction, that members of the reconstituted Frankfurt School attempted to explore in the winter of 1950-51.

The proposed corrective to the approach borne of "consumer analysis" developed by Adorno and his colleagues was the group discussion (*Gruppendiskussion*), based on their belief that individual, much less public, opinions are not constituted in isolation, but in the

³⁶ Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt, *Public Opinion in Semisovereign Germany: The HICOG Surveys, 1949-1955* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980).

³⁷ HICOG Reactions Analysis Staff Report Number 167, January 12, 1953. In Leo P. Crespi Papers, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, MC235 Box 9. This report, and the firestorm it created in the international press, is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

³⁸ Merritt and Merritt, *Public Opinion in Semisovereign Germany*, 9-10.

context of society as a whole and often only through dialogue with other individuals. Such small-group discussions would be modeled on the social space of the train car, in which, they observed, strangers brought together by chance often struck up surprisingly candid and personal conversations.³⁹ This approach corresponded clearly to Horkheimer's claim that Germans would not respond to typical questionnaire-led interviews. A 1953 report on the study described it as an attempt "to elicit and measure the underlying attitudes and true view of typical population groups" by "giving respondents the opportunity to 'talk themselves out' in familiar surroundings."⁴⁰ In addition, they suggested that only group discussion as prompted by an emotionally-charged stimulus, and moderated by an experienced outsider, could allow researchers to move past the resistance and rationalizations that characterized many individuals' initial reactions to opinion surveys.⁴¹

Four assumptions undergirded the project. The first assumption was that opinions and impressions of individuals were ineluctably shaped by the society in which those individuals lived, and often only developed through conversations with other individuals. Second, the researchers proposed that personality structure also determines opinions. This assumption can be linked directly to the Institute's work on *The Authoritarian Personality*, which identified predispositions toward fascism based on certain personality qualities. The third assumption was that the inability to share an opinion on certain questions, which pollsters typically note as "*keine Meinung*," may actually be the product of psychological inhibitions rather than a true lack of opinion. Respondents may actually have an opinion on a matter, but decline to share it out of fear or other reasons, both conscious and

³⁹ Pollock 35.

⁴⁰ Quarterly Progress Report for Quarter Ending June 30, 1953, Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt, Nachlass Max Horkheimer, NA1 751 IX 275-IX276.3.

⁴¹ Pollock 33.

unconscious. Finally, the researchers argued that responses to opinion questions are often rationalizations that can obscure deeper reactions.⁴² The study was designed to use small discussion groups to probe all four of these assumptions and determine why people expressed themselves in a certain way in a given context.

A central object of inquiry in the project was the “totally socialized society” (*vergesellschaftete Gesellschaft*). With this term, used repeatedly throughout the analytical portions of the 1955 publication of the study, Adorno and his colleagues attempted to capture what they saw as the current reality of life in the modern world: society that has been entirely taken over by collective identification and conformity. In such a totally socialized society, individual opinions could not be understood – indeed, they could not be formed – without reference to the surrounding social context. This interpretation of society was indebted in part to the work of Freud, and through him, Gustave Le Bon (both cited in the introduction to *Gruppenexperiment*). The Frankfurt School’s insistence, in their study of West German public opinion, on the full incorporation of the individual into the surrounding social group bears a striking resemblance to Le Bon’s chilling account of the submission of individual rationality to the crowd in his nineteenth-century opus.⁴³ The Frankfurt School researchers believed, like Freud, that “psychological mass phenomena” could be derived from the “psychodynamic of individuals within groups.” In this process,

⁴² Pollock 32-33. The final assumption bears an uncanny resemblance to Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann’s discussion of the “exceptionally dangerous” consumer who, in attempting to display rationality, can unconsciously mislead interviewers (and him or herself) about his or her true beliefs. See Chapter Three.

⁴³ Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896). For an analysis of the Le Bon’s intellectual predecessors and influence, see Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors*.

“the identification with the collective is decisive.”⁴⁴ Adorno’s analytical essay within *Gruppenexperiment* was particularly insistent about the way in which such collective identification structured emotionally-charged responses to questions about the guilt of Germans for the war and their reactions to accusations about their unreadiness for democracy. However, the theme was constantly invoked throughout the entire report on the project.

Process, Methods, and Discoveries

The study itself was a massive undertaking, and produced far more material than a single research team could reasonably hope to analyze in full. Fieldwork was conducted in the winter of 1950-51. In total, the study encompassed 121 small discussion groups composed of 1,635 participants, recruited from districts in and around Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, and Augsburg. Most groups consisted of between eight and sixteen participants and were moderated by an affiliate of the Institute. Each discussion was recorded and later transcribed. The participants themselves, though not a statistically representative sample of the West German population, were culled from diverse subsets of society: workers, professors, war veterans, farmers, students, and refugees, to name just a few of the participant categories recruited by the Institute. In order to facilitate a sense of safety and familiarity (or, at the very least, neutrality), the discussions were held in traditional group gathering places, including bars, hostels, refugee camps, and factories and other work places.

⁴⁴ “Freud ... die psychologische Massenphänomene aus der Psychodynamik der einzelnen von solchen Gruppen umfaßten Individuen hergeleitet. Entscheidend dabei ist der Identifikation mit dem Kollektiv als solchem.” Pollock 7.

At the beginning of each group, the moderator played a tape recording of the stimulus (*Grundreiz*), a reading of a letter (referred to as “the Colburn letter,” after its alleged author) supposedly written by an American or British soldier (depending on the occupation zone in which the discussion took place) reflecting on his experiences with Germans during his time in the occupation army. In the letter, Colburn claimed that Germans were unenthusiastic about democracy and the influence of the American and British occupiers. More disturbing, he stated, was the fact that “in general one finds very few Germans who unambiguously renounce what happened” or admit to being partially guilty for the murder of European Jews under Nazi rule.⁴⁵ Far from beginning with neutral questions, as did most questionnaires used to assess public opinion by research institutes at the time, the discussions informing the Frankfurt School’s study thus began with statements designed to provoke emotion and debate.

Approaches to the moderation of the discussion groups shifted throughout the course of the study. Initially, Adorno and his colleagues seem to have thought it necessary for the moderator to ensure that the group responded to specific lines of inquiry, and even proposed planting a participant in the group who would voice inflammatory viewpoints. Quickly, however, the Institute recognized the danger of the moderator or planted participant influencing the results of the study too directly, and praised the benefits of a more unstructured discussion.⁴⁶ The moderators were given some freedom in their opening remarks and questions, although they all touched on the same key components of the discussion. They emphasized above all their interest in the immediate, unadorned

⁴⁵ “... man findet doch heute in der Mehrheit nur wenige, die sich unzweideutig vom Geschehenen lossagen.” Pollock 502. The Colburn letter is reprinted in full in an appendix to *Gruppenexperiment*.

⁴⁶ See Adorno’s letter to Erich Herzog, 27.11.50, at IfS Archive, F2 2.

reactions and beliefs of the participants, expressed “how you speak in your everyday lives.”⁴⁷ Further, the moderators told the participants, not only would this honest articulation of beliefs aid in the scientific aims of the research project; it would contribute to the bettering of German society: “The opinion of the people on specific questions contributes to the good of the whole.”⁴⁸ In some discussions, the moderator informed the participants that they were selected as statistical representatives of a section of the population; the researchers would not be able to interview everyone in this segment of the population, which made the comments of those interviewed doubly important.⁴⁹ The effect was to emphasize honest participation in the discussion as a kind of civic duty. The participants then were largely given free rein, although the moderator would try to steer the discussion to address attitudes about democracy, German identity, and memory of Nazi rule and the murder of European Jewry.

A team of research assistants recorded and transcribed the discussions; an even larger team coded the responses in an attempt to make them more amenable to interpretation. Quantitative analysis of the discussion entailed organizing the comments in the discussion transcripts under twelve general content areas: Form of Government, Bonn Government, War Guilt, Concentration Camps, Antisemitism, the U.S. Occupation, the USA, England, France, Eastern Bloc Countries, Remilitarization, and German Self-Judgment. Research assistants then coded responses related to these subjects as expressing either “acceptance,” “conditional acceptance,” or “rejection.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Transcript from Gruppensitzung Nr. 24, Hamburg, 31.10.1950, p. 1, at IfS Archive, F2 19.

⁴⁸ “Die Meinung des Volkes zu bestimmten Fragen, die kommt auch wieder der Gesamtheit zugute.” Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 97, 120.

In theory, the project was a radical departure from public opinion research as it had been conducted in West Germany up to that point. In practice, however, the Institute researchers faced familiar challenges. Especially in Bavaria, discussion leaders reported that some participants suspected that the moderators were actually Soviet agents and would later betray their identities.⁵¹ In response, the Institute placed special emphasis on convincing participants that their comments would remain anonymous. A memo to discussion moderators declared that “The success of the interview depends primarily on the tact and skill of the interviewer. It is essential that the participants, to whom absolute anonymity has been promised, do not have even a trace of suspicion that this policy of anonymity could be compromised.”⁵² Participants were given a pseudonym for the duration of the discussion as well as in the transcript created from the audio recording of the discussion. Discussion moderators were urged to adopt a friendly, open stance, although they were also encouraged to press participants to clarify their comments and inject controversial ideas into the mix if the conversation became stale.

These measures were necessary, the Frankfurt School scholars believed, because most Germans held opinions that they dared not express under normal conditions, but that still fundamentally shaped German society and its prospects for true political and cultural transformation. The study collaborators worked from the assumption that Germans could not be trusted, that there was something dark and unsettling at the heart of the German

⁵¹ Stichwortprotokoll d. Mitarbeiterkonferenz, 22 December, 1950, v, Archive of the Institut für Sozialforschung, F2 1.

⁵² “Der Erfolg des Interviews hängt im wesentlichen von dem Takt und dem Geschick der Interviewer ab. Es muss unter allen Umständen vermieden werden, dass die Versuchspersonen, denen bei den Gruppenuntersuchungen absolute Anonymität zugesagt wurde, auch nur die Spur eines Verdachtes bekommen, dass der Grundsatz der Anonymität gegenüber der Leitung der Studie durchbrochen wäre ...” Entwurf (2. Fassung) Interviewer Anweisung, 24.1.1951, IfS archive, F2 104.

psyche. These suppositions were not so far removed from those of the founders of the Allensbach Institute, as we have seen. Erich Peter Neumann had described the West German population as, at worst, a potentially fatal ingredient in a relatively weak West German democracy, and at best as pupils in need of education. Similarly, Adorno, Horkheimer, and Pollock likened the space in which the group discussions were held to a schoolroom.⁵³ In moments of particularly heated debate, the moderator would sometimes remind the participants to only speak one at a time.⁵⁴

Letters exchanged between discussion group leaders attest to the challenge faced by these researchers. The discussion leaders had to know when to let participants pick their way through the discussion on their own, and when it was truly necessary to interject their personal opinions or experiences, insert a provocative statement into a slow-moving discussion, or raise an issue that did not appear to be emerging organically from the discussion members themselves. They also had to be aware of the gap that sometimes existed between their worldview and education level and that of the group participants.⁵⁵ As Adorno and one of his colleagues agreed early in the project, the goal was for the discussion leader to identify points in the conversation when it was necessary to veer from pre-determined topics and questions without compromising the amenability of the discussion to quantitative analysis.⁵⁶

The interviewers also noted differences between groups in different locations in Germany, as well as unexpected discrepancies even within “homogeneous groups,” in

⁵³ Stichwortprotokoll d. Mitarbeiterkonferenz von 22.12.50, IfS Archiv, F2 1.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Diedrich Osmer’s interventions in Report from Gruppensitzung Nr. 72, IfS archive, F2 13.

⁵⁵ See, for example, letter from Osmer to Herzog, 30 Oktober 1950. IfS Archive, F2 2.

⁵⁶ Memorandum über die Besprechung zwischen Herrn D. Osmer und Professor Dr. Th. W. Adorno am 9. Oktober im Institut für Sozialforschung, at IfS Archiv, F2 3.

which all of the participants had a similar background, profession, or education level. The report from a group held in Hamburg observed that participants there took a much longer time period than others to “warm up” to the moderator and to the discussion, but once they did so, the discussion was quite lively.⁵⁷ In the process of analyzing the discussion transcripts, researchers also realized that certain terms had very different connotations in different regions. The term “DP” or “Displaced Person,” for instance, equated with “Jew” for southern Germans, while those in northern Germany understood “DP” to include all refugees from eastern Europe.⁵⁸ This variability, of course, made the coding of responses on many issues exceedingly complex.

After much debate about its contents and repeated bureaucratic delays, *Gruppenexperiment* finally was published in 1955 as the second volume of the “Frankfurt Contributions to Sociology” series. Weighing in at over 500 pages, the book included a section describing the goal and methodology of the project, and the theoretical explanations for both; detailed descriptions of the participants; a quantitative analysis of the group discussions, complete with myriad charts and graphs bringing the information contained in the analysis to visual life; an interpretive essay by Adorno, one of eleven qualitative analyses originally written based on the study; a section on the “Integration Phenomena” in discussion groups; and, finally, an afterword in which Pollock, Adorno, and their colleagues frankly catalogued the various problems inherent in the design and analysis of the study. The most salient of these issues was the high number of “silent participants,” a number noted as relevant throughout the preceding portions of the study, although its implications were never fully addressed.

⁵⁷ Transcript from Gruppensitzung Nr. 24, Hamburg, 31.10.1950, at IfS Archive, F2 19.

⁵⁸ Bericht über die Sitzung vom 8.7.1952, at IfS Archive, F2 1.

The strength of the study was also its weakness. The transcripts from the group discussions do indeed suggest that participants were able and willing to steer the discussions in the direction they chose and speak freely, spontaneously, and at times emotionally about political questions. Yet this also meant that each discussion was unique, making coding and analysis in terms of set categories, however broad, challenging. In addition, the relative freedom present within the space of the discussion group allowed particularly vocal or passionate participants to, in effect, “hijack” the discussion and maintain an “authoritarian” control over its direction. As a result, the researchers observed in their notes, in some groups certain key themes were never actually discussed.⁵⁹ The researchers seemed to believe that in this respect the discussion groups were relatively accurate microcosms of society as a whole – with a certain number of elites who dictated the course of the discussion, those who went along with the arguments of those leaders, vocal opponents of the leaders, and those who said little to nothing.⁶⁰ But this also meant that it was difficult to claim that the results of the study applied to a broad subset of German society, since so many participants said very little about each topic.

Nevertheless, Adorno and his colleagues wrote several essays based on qualitative assessment of the discussion group transcripts, cross-referenced with quantitative analysis. The only essay that was included in the final publication *Gruppenexperiment* was Adorno’s “*Schuld und Abwehr*” (Guilt and Defense). Adorno’s essay was based on analysis of one-fifth of the group discussion transcripts. In *Gruppenexperiment*, the authors explained that Adorno’s essay had been selected for publication over the others because it

⁵⁹ Bericht über die Sitzung am 3.3.1952, IfS Archiv, F2 1.

⁶⁰ “Elite, Opposition, Mitläufer, Wenig- und Nichtssager.” “Stichwortprotokoll der Besprechung über die qualitative Auswertung der Gruppenstudie am 6.2.52, IfS Archiv, F2 1.

illuminated both the promise of the methodology used for the project as well as a fundamental aspect of the German relationship with the past and present. First, “Guilt and Defense” “allows us to make concrete that the group method triggers emotional utterances stemming from deeper layers of the respondents than the traditional interview method reaches.” Further, the essay offered “a kind of phenomenology of ... the German neurosis,” a central subject of inquiry for the researchers and, apparently, an obsession of some of the participants themselves.⁶¹

Adorno’s essay revolved around a detailed analysis of the many ways in which discussion participants sought to defend themselves from the accusations made in the “Colburn Letter” about German behavior in the wake of World War II. The essay included extensive passages quoted directly from the discussions. While Adorno himself acknowledged that many of the quotes had been selected because they were particularly strong expressions of the syndromes (“Syndrome”) he aimed to critique, the willingness of participants to express sentiments that certainly would have been contrary to the hopes of the western Allies is indeed striking. In many cases “defense” took the form of blatant justifications of many of the tenets of National Socialism, including systematic racism. At other times participants juxtaposed the acts of Germans during the war with negative assessments of the Allies and the postwar occupation of Germany, or highlighted German suffering while minimizing or ignoring Jewish suffering. Indeed, seeking refuge in their collective identity as Germans – as opposed to all other groups – was one of the most

⁶¹ “Für die Monographie Schuld und Abwehr haben wir uns entschieden, weil sie erlaubt zu konkretisieren, daß die Gruppenmethode affektbesetzte, aus tieferen Schichten der Befragten stammenden Äusserungen auslöst, an welche die traditionellen Fragemethoden nicht heranreichen. Zudem gibt die Studie ene Art Phänomenologie dessen, was die Diskussionsteilnehmer selbst so gerne deutsche Neurose nenne ...” Pollock 276.

dominant defensive strategies. “Of all those who participated in the experiment and found themselves on the defensive, none was disposed to assert: it was right that they were killed,” Adorno observed, in one of the most penetrating insights of the essay; “Rather, it is most often a matter of trying to reconcile one’s own excessive identification with the collective to which one belongs with the knowledge of the crime.”⁶²

Adorno and his colleagues made much of the fact that participants resorted to speaking about themselves as members of groups, pitted in opposition to other collectives – “the Germans,” “the Americans,” “we workers.” According to the researchers, “the psychic reservoir from which many of the participants drew was largely collective narcissism – despite being assembled in small groups, they acted as if they were members of a mass, or at least behaved as if they were in a mass as soon as the discussion came to the question of “we,” which for them replaced the concept of Germany.”⁶³ This reinforced an opposition of “us” vs. “them” in the discussions, and, according to the researchers, fueled an ever-increasing identification with Germans as a collective that structured individual responses. However, the “stimulus” designed for the groups – the “Colburn letter” – itself introduced the idea that “the German people” did indeed exist as a particularly problematic and untrustworthy group. It was therefore not surprising that discussion participants frequently played off of the German/Anglo-American dichotomy set up by the letter.

⁶² “Von all den Versuchsteilnehmern, die sich in Abwehr befinden, ist kaum einer so geartet, daß er etwa vertreten würde: es ist in Ordnung, daß sie umgebracht worden sind. Sondern es handelt sich meist um den Versuch, die eigene überwertige Identifikation mit dem Kollektive, zu dem man gehört, in Übereinstimmung zu bringen mit dem Wissen vom Frevel.” Pollock 281.

⁶³ “Das psychische Reservoir, aus dem viele der Versuchsteilnehmer schöpften, war in weitem Maße kollektiver Narzißmus – trotzdem sie in kleinen Gruppen versammelt waren, agierten sie als Mitglieder einer Masse, oder taten wenigstens so, als wären sie in einer Masse, sobald die Rede auf jenes ‘wir’ kam, das bei ihnen für den Begriff Deutschland eintrat.” Pollock 43.

Nevertheless, for Adorno, Pollock, and their collaborators, the results confirmed the initial fears of the Institute members and cast doubt upon the optimistic claims of HICOG officials and German politicians, who hoped to promote West German independence. When engaged in discussion with their peers in comfortable locations (as opposed to the superficial rapport of one-on-one public opinion polls), many of the participants indeed expressed antisemitic attitudes, discontent with the American occupation, and an unwillingness to acknowledge collective guilt for the murder of European Jews. Though few openly ardent fascists emerged during the discussions, these findings led Adorno to believe that the prospect of a transmuted, and still dangerous, form of fascism might yet re-emerge: "It is the tendency of fascism," he wrote in his analysis, "not somehow to arise again in the old form but to hibernate by ingratiating itself to whoever is currently strongest, especially by exploiting the conflict between West and East, and to await the hour for which the exponents of dictatorship are hoping."⁶⁴ In fact, the aforementioned silence of many of the participants supported this possibility: by not speaking up to counter antidemocratic or antisemitic arguments, such participants, in the eyes of the Frankfurt researchers, appeared to express assent.

The broader implication of these findings, for Adorno and his colleagues, was that "public opinion" and its source, the "German public," were vastly more complex entities than the occupation pollsters – and the American experts who had developed their methods – had assumed. Indeed, analysis of the dynamics of the discussions illustrated the degree to which individual and public opinions were malleable and unstable, constantly in

⁶⁴ "Es ist die Tendenz des Faschismus, nicht etwa in der alten Form sich wieder herzustellen, sondern durch Anbiederung an die heute Stärksten, insbesondere auch durch Ausbeutung des Konflikts zwischen Westen und Osten, zu überwintern und die Stunde abzuwarten, auf welche die Exponenten der Gewaltherrschaft hoffen." Pollock 397.

formation and shifting in response to questions and context. Accordingly, Adorno noted that the goal of the 1950-51 study had not been to “provide a definitive answer to the question of what the Germans still are or are not anymore. Posing the question like this would presuppose a consistent identity, a clarity and stability of meaning that hardly exists in the present reality. One probably comes closest to the truth by accounting for how particular complexes are processed intellectually and psychologically and drawing conclusions on that basis about certain potentialities, without depending on statistical reports in which opinions and attitude are themselves a function of the dominant power constellations.”⁶⁵ Negative attitudes towards Jews, DPs, and the U.S. occupation, Adorno suggested, were not “results” to be calculated, commented upon, and then forgotten as new “issues” emerged. Instead, they demonstrated a central, structural thread of the “ideological syndromes” buttressing West German political culture and fostering the potential for antidemocratic behaviors and inclinations.⁶⁶ Only by interrogating the dynamics of such attitudes could a “public” be identified and, indeed, formed.

Reception and Afterlife

By the time the *Gruppenexperiment* was published in 1955, the authors acknowledged that much had changed. The introduction to the published volume called for

⁶⁵ “Die eindeutige Beantwortung der Frage, was die Deutschen noch sind oder nicht mehr sind, wird nicht angestrebt. Eine solche Fragestellung würde eine Identität des Bewußtseins mit sich selbst, eine Artikuliertheit und Stabilität der Meinung voraussetzen, die in der gegenwärtigen Realität kaum existiert. Man kommt wohl der Wahrheit am nächsten, wenn man Aussagen darüber macht, wie bestimmte Komplexe intellektuell und psychologisch verarbeitet werden, und daraus Rückschlüsse über gewisse Potentialitäten zieht, ohne an statische Befunde dort zu glauben, wo Meinung und Haltung selbst in weitestem Maße Funktion der je herrschenden Machtkonstellationen sind.” Pollock 279.

⁶⁶ “ideologische Syndrome.” Pollock 283.

further studies of the same issues examined in the ensuing pages, as “the conception of democracy in Germany has measurably shifted in a positive direction.”⁶⁷ Still, there is no mistaking the essentially pessimistic view of West Germans as a collective that pervades *Gruppenexperiment*. If there was an improvement in the eyes of Adorno, Pollock, Horkheimer, and the other collaborators on the study, it is difficult to imagine, based on their assessment of the 1950-51 group interviews, that it could come from the dynamics of Germans discussing key topics in groups of their contemporaries. During the process of analysis between 1951 and 1954, the question of shifts in attitudes since the group discussions of 1950-51 was raised in meetings among members of the Institute for Social Research. In one such meeting in the spring of 1952, this possibility was met with the argument that “public opinion in Germany is much more tightly structured than it is in America, for example. In general, since 1950 this structure has not changed.”⁶⁸

In his introduction to *Gruppenexperiment*, the CDU politician and economist Franz Böhm explicitly called attention to the significance of public opinion poll results to national self-understanding and international relationships. “Should one air his dirty laundry in front of the public at home and abroad?” Böhm asked.⁶⁹ Böhm praised the innovative nature of the study and argued that it was necessary for observers within and outside of Germany to be aware of the “true opinions” of West Germans. But his question emphasized what West Germans, and pollsters in particular, had already come to understand:

⁶⁷ Pollock 11.

⁶⁸ “... die öffentliche Meinung in Deutschland viel fester strukturiert ist als etwa in Amerika. An dieser Struktur hat sich im wesentlichen seit 1950 nichts geändert.” Bericht über die Sitzung am 9.4.1952, at IfS Archive, F2 1.

⁶⁹ “Soll man seine fragwürdige Meinungswäsche in aller Öffentlichkeit vor dem gesamten In- und Ausland waschen?” Franz Böhm, “Geleitwort,” in Friedrich Pollock, et al., *Gruppenexperiment*, xii.

publicizing the unvarnished opinions of West Germans about such controversial topics as anti-Semitism and war guilt was fraught with controversy.

Not surprisingly, some German academic reviewers contested the existence of the potentialities and dynamics explored in *Gruppenexperiment*, and their significance for an understanding of German public opinion as a whole. Peter R. Hofstätter, a Professor of Psychology at the College of Social Science in Wilhelmshaven, delivered the most high-profile and devastating critique of the pessimistic analysis contained in *Gruppenexperiment*. In a review published in the respected *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* in 1957, Hofstätter admitted that it was unlikely that many Germans would voice views deemed “inopportune” in the current political climate when faced with a traditional survey.⁷⁰ However, he questioned whether the methodology that Adorno and his colleagues had devised was an ideal, or even appropriate, solution to this problem. His critique focused on two interwoven issues: the methodology, which he found insufficiently rigorous and inappropriate for the subject, and the topic, which he deemed too sensitive for social scientific study, much less for emotionally-charged debate such as that which took place during the 1950-51 discussion groups.

For Hofstätter, the problems with the methodology buttressing *Gruppenexperiment* began with the “stimulus” used to prompt discussion – the “Colburn letter.” This stimulus, according to Hofstätter, might have inspired angry reactions by participants, but it was unclear whether comments made in the heat of the moment in response to a series of claims *designed* to provoke actually reflected the “true” beliefs of those who uttered them.

⁷⁰ Peter R. Hofstätter, “On *Group Experiment* by F. Pollock: A Critical Appraisal,” in *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Olick and Andrew Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 191.

In addition, Hofstätter questioned the effectiveness and ethics of the group method as a whole for such complex issues. He wondered, “does the group arrangement impede personal introspection?” and suggested that perhaps intensive one-on-one interviews would have been a better way to get to “non-public opinion,” thereby disregarding the importance of the group context to the Frankfurt School’s project entirely.⁷¹

Hofstätter also found the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the material produced in the discussion groups to be lacking in rigor. He argued that since, as the authors themselves acknowledged, roughly 60 percent of the group participants did not speak during the discussion of any given topic, the findings of the study could hardly be indicative of the German psyche or anything approaching public opinion. Indeed, on the topic of “Jews and anti-Semitism,” 78 percent of participants said nothing – hardly compelling support for Adorno’s analysis in his “Guilt and Defense” essay.⁷² Hofstätter continually criticized the selective examples used by Adorno, and suggested that the study report in general was deeply flawed because of the authors’ penchant for psychoanalytic methods. “The qualitative analysis,” Hofstätter wrote, “is mostly nothing but an accusation.”⁷³

Adorno was given an opportunity to respond to Hofstätter’s remarks in the same issue of the *Kölner Zeitschrift*. In his reply, Adorno reminded Hofstätter that the group context which Hofstätter was so quick to dismiss was essential to the goals of the researchers. He noted that “the effort to understand individual and collective opinions *in statu nascendi* ... was more important than the substantive findings, which were never

⁷¹ Ibid., 196.

⁷² Ibid., 193.

⁷³ Ibid., 195.

claimed to have been proven conclusively.”⁷⁴ Rather, the study was designed to “call forth real social behavior that simultaneously reflects and produces ‘public opinion.’ Its medium is the conversation and the interaction between those who are talking with each other.”⁷⁵ The percentage of those who remained silent in groups was only a partial indication of participation, Adorno argued: sometimes assent to the comments of others was demonstrated in the groups using nonverbal cues – just as was the case in ordinary conversations.⁷⁶ Finally, because the nature of the difficult – yet important – issues under investigation was as sensitive as Hofstätter admitted, the researchers combined traditional and experimental methods guided by psychological and sociological insights. Adorno interpreted the essence of Hofstätter’s review as pleading for the researchers to, in effect, ignore the deep-seated prejudices that continued to plague Germans. This struck Adorno as another example of the typically German denial of guilt and complicity that emerged during the discussion groups themselves. In Hofstätter’s remarks, according to Adorno’s rebuttal, “The method is declared useless so that the existence of the phenomenon that emerges can be denied.”⁷⁷

Clearly, this exchange was part of an ongoing battle over national guilt and memory, and the experience of the 1950-51 study contributed to Adorno’s later well-known reflections on “the meaning of working through the past.”⁷⁸ But it also hints at

⁷⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, “Reply to Peter R. Hofstätter’s Critique of *Group Experiment*,” in *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Olick and Andrew Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 198.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 202-3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁷⁸ Adorno delivered the address “Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit” (“The Meaning of Working Through the Past”) during an education conference in Germany in 1959, partly in response to an outbreak of antisemitic attacks in the Federal Republic. An English translation of the

disagreement over the ideal shape and role of the social sciences in postwar Germany. Adorno was forced by Hofstätter's critique (and in many respects, rightfully so) to defend the specific measures by which the Frankfurt researchers attempted to align the demands of empirical social science and the principles of quantitative verifiability associated with any claim to empiricism, on the one hand, with a belief in the fundamental responsibility of the social sciences to make the fullest possible analysis of the conditions at work in a given society, a mandate which required theoretically-informed methods rather than "mindless technique."⁷⁹ Conducting research using modern and empirical, but in their view theoretically informed, social scientific methods, Adorno and his colleagues suggested through their work, inescapably led through the past and pointed to the existence and relevance of a subterranean strand of "public opinion," more accessible to researchers through group discussion methods and psychoanalytic analysis than through survey techniques subordinated to statistical analysis.

In their remarks in the *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, both Hofstätter and Adorno made valid points. Hofstätter certainly misread – and then misrepresented in his review – the goals of the Frankfurt researchers as they related to the study of opinion formation within groups. However, it is also true that these goals were at times lost in the hundreds of pages of analysis that filled *Gruppenexperiment*. Concerned as they were with the "objective" facts undergirding the *vergesellschaftete Gesellschaft* of West Germany, discussion of objective social conditions is largely missing from the quantitative

address can be found in Theodor Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). The connection between his rebuttal to Hofstätter and this speech is pointed out by Andrew Perrin and Jeffrey Olick in their introduction to *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), and the essay is also reprinted in the volume.

⁷⁹ Adorno, "Reply to Peter R. Hofstätter's Critique of *Group Experiment*," 200.

analysis as well as Adorno's essay, which sometimes does read as an assemblage of individual quotes removed from their context within the groups.

The *Gruppenexperiment* fell into relative obscurity in West Germany after 1957, as members of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt turned to other projects and democracy in West Germany appeared less vulnerable than Adorno and his colleagues had feared. In the early 21st century, however, the *Gruppenexperiment* has received renewed attention, especially from sociologists. The sociologists Andrew Perrin and Jeffrey Olick published translations of portions of the published study in 2010, and analyzed the project within the context of memory studies and contemporary theorizations of public opinion.⁸⁰ As they insightfully point out, the essay "Guilt and Defense" is a key work in Adorno's *oeuvre* and an essential reference point for anyone seeking to understand his later reflections on efforts by Germans to face their past. They also note that the Institute's critique of standard opinion polling methods anticipated many contemporary analyses of the problems associated with such practices. Although they were unable then to meet the high expectations that they posed for themselves, Adorno and his colleagues did succeed in crafting a provocative challenge to traditional public opinion research.

In its own time, *Gruppenexperiment* was less innovative in tone than it might have appeared initially, although it did emphasize a new source of public opinion. Despite their

⁸⁰ Jeffrey K. Olick and Andrew J. Perrin, eds., *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). Also see Jeffrey K. Olick and Andrew J. Perrin, "Non-Public Opinion: Adorno and the Frankfurt School's *Group Experiment*," in *The Hedgehog Review* (2010): 79-88. In their selective translation and analysis of the project, Olick and Perrin are specifically interested in the way that many of the critiques of traditional opinion research articulated within *Gruppenexperiment* presaged current theories. In the context of German history, they have focused on the contribution of *Gruppenexperiment*, and in particular Adorno's essay "Guilt and Defense," to debates about the proper relationship between Germans and their genocidal past. They are much less concerned about how the project and the Frankfurt researchers interacted with developments in opinion research in their own time.

critique of traditional opinion research methods, their pessimism about Germans as a collective aligned the Frankfurt researchers quite closely with their peers at the Allensbach Institute and the survey units of OMGUS and HICOG. Indeed, the project extended Gustave Le Bon's critique of the crowd to their own times. The analysis contained in *Gruppenexperiment* suggested that, if opinion formation occurs within groups, hopes for a deeply-rooted West German democracy were unlikely to come to fruition, for it was within the discussion groups of 1950-51 that the most troubling aspects of "non-public opinion" had emerged among Germans. Yet the Frankfurt School's project also hinted at the possibility of redemption through group discussions, a prospect eagerly seized upon by more optimistic West Germans over the course of the 1950s. The Institute's Group Experiment shifted the focus from representative individual responses (the source of public opinion as conceived by the Allensbach Institute, for example) to the dynamics of collectives. According to the logic undergirding *Gruppenexperiment*, what mattered for the future of the Federal Republic was not so much what individual Germans believed or were willing to admit to interviewers during one-on-one interviews in their homes, but the potential for action that Germans created together through conversation and debate.

CHAPTER VI

SPACE FOR DEBATE:

CRITICS OF THE POLLS AND THE STIRRINGS OF A WEST GERMAN PUBLIC SPHERE

On a cold, dreary Wednesday evening in December 1955, a large group of men and women gathered in the central train station of Cologne, as some of them had nearly every Wednesday since 1950, to discuss the most pressing cultural, political, and social questions of the day. This particular meeting of the public *Mittwochgespräche*, or Wednesday Conversations, centered around a simple yet profound question: “Is there still such a thing as public opinion?” Friedrich Sieburg, a well-known journalist and literary critic, declared in his opening comments that the event title was intended to be provocative. In theory, of course, public opinion still existed. But according to Sieburg and many of the discussion participants, in the context of a rapidly-changing West German state just beginning to feel the effects of the so-called “economic miracle” of the 1950s and finally enjoying its sovereignty after ten years of occupation following World War II, it was necessary to revisit the concept. As participants noted, by 1955, public opinion polling and consumer research had become ubiquitous in West German political and economic life. But did this ubiquity of opinion research actually promote or stifle popular participation and government responsiveness in West Germany’s fledgling democracy?¹

This question preoccupied a host of academics, media observers, and ordinary West Germans throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. Public opinion researchers, even Theodor Adorno and his associates at the Institute für Sozialforschung, claimed that their

¹ Audio tape D94/180, Bonn Haus der Geschichte Informationzentrum/Mediathek.

specialized techniques were necessary to make sense of the political culture of West Germany and promote progress toward democracy. These claims were attacked on multiple fronts, most explicitly by social scientists in academia as well as by journalists. The Frankfurt School's own *Gruppenexperiment* challenged many of the basic premises and methodologies of the Allensbach Institute and other prominent West German (and American) public opinion research institutions, even as it promoted the utility of empirical research methods for an understanding of German political culture. An older generation of German social scientists remained unconvinced of the validity of applying any empirical approach to the questions facing German society. In the long term, other intellectuals would leave a deeper impression on West German understandings of publics, privacy, and the value of opinion research, prominent among them Wilhelm Hennis and Jürgen Habermas. But most Germans perceived the work of opinion researchers through the popular media and in-person interactions, not dense sociological texts. And in some cases, West German citizens sought out more direct and interactive ways of creating and expressing public opinion, as in the case of the relatively understudied *Mittwochsgespräche* that took place in the Cologne central train station in the 1950s.

By examining more closely the critics of empirical opinion research in the 1950s and early 1960s, as well as some of the alternative venues for public opinion expression that emerged in the decade after Germany's defeat in World War II, this chapter explores the ways opinion polling as idea and practice stimulated new approaches to, and discussions about, mass participation in the public sphere and the place of this public in a democracy. These developments suggest that during the 1950s, West Germans were negotiating a new relationship between individual and collective, a relationship that public opinion research

helped to provoke and mediate. The mass appeal of, and energetic discussions produced through, discursive forums like the Cologne *Mittwochgespräche* add support to recent scholarship challenging claims about the depoliticized nature of West German society in the 1950s. These forums largely tapered off by the 1960s – a period that coincided both with the ascension of empirical opinion research to a position of relative security and normalcy in West Germany and with the growing willingness of a new generation of West German journalists and broadcasters to provide a more critical analysis of national political trends, helping to plant the seeds for the protests of the late 1960s.² But these shifts should not obscure the important developments that took place over the course of the 1950s, as the practice and reception of empirical public opinion research stimulated and fundamentally reshaped the way in which elites and ordinary citizens thought about the nature and role of mass publics in a democracy.

Early Critics in the Press and Academia

Germans initially encountered public opinion research with considerable trepidation and confusion. As illustrated in Chapter Two, interviewers working for the survey divisions of the western Allies were often mistaken for spies. Ordinary citizens, particularly women, did not quite understand why their opinions were in demand. And many German social scientists, steeped in a tradition that emphasized theory over empirical investigation, doubted the value of the research methodology that pollsters saw as the foundation of their discipline. As we saw in Chapter Three, the older generation of sociologists, exemplified by Leopold von Wiese, was highly skeptical of the promises of

² Christina von Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise: Eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienöffentlichkeit 1945-1973* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006).

public opinion researchers. Speaking to the tenth Conference of German Sociologists in October 1950, von Wiese, the editor of the influential *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, voiced concerns that he would reiterate at the 1951 Weinheim Conference. “Now everyone is counted, questioned, and then questioned yet again with surveys,” he lamented, “And with troubling speed sociology is transforming itself into statistics and administration.”³ Citing the establishment of opinion research centers such as the Allensbach Institute, von Wiese worried that an emphasis on empirical survey research was “threatening to stifle the tree of discovery.”⁴ For von Wiese, costly surveys merely allowed researchers to confirm what they had already known.

Although social scientists and other academics were slow to support or adopt the practice of opinion research, the German media quickly grasped its utility, although they remained skeptical of its perceived American roots. The popular press helped familiarize West Germans with public opinion research by providing digestible explanations of the methods used by public opinion researchers. At the same time, journalists presented polling as a truly “American” creation – a label that was never unequivocally positive. A 1953 cover story on opinion polling in *Der Spiegel* suggested that the effectiveness of representative opinion polling within Germany did not belie the fact that, according to the authors, opinion research institutes were as American as “the Statue of Liberty, Coca-Cola, *Readers Digest*, chewing gum, and the Kinsey Report.”⁵ *Der Spiegel* warned that wholesale

³ “Nun wird gezählt, vor allem gefragt und immer wieder auf Millionen Fragebogen gefragt. Und mit beängstigender Geschwindigkeit verwandelt sich Soziologie in Statistik und Verwaltungslehre.” Leopold von Wiese, “Ansprache zur Eröffnung des zehnten deutschen Soziologentages am 17. Oktober 1950 in Detmold.” *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 3. Jahrgang 1950/51, Heft 2: 143-5, 144.

⁴ “Aber alle Techniken des Zählens und Befragens haben die Eigenschaften von Wucherpflanzen; sie drohen den Baum der Erkenntnis zu ersticken.” Ibid.

⁵ “Glauben Sie an Gott?” *Der Spiegel* 28 October 1953, 12.

adoption of the American way could have dire consequences. It also questioned whether Germans could really benefit from this “American” methodology, which had, after all, been employed by the western Allies to secure control over the German population.⁶

Within the German media, there were disagreements about the merits of individual opinion research projects. The reception of surveys related to sex and intimate relationships, which for many commentators embodied the most modernizing and potentially destructive effects of empirical opinion research, demonstrates the diversity of critiques issued by varying types of publications as well as their contrast with those offered by academics. Some journalists were eager to use such poll results as inspiration for their reporting, while others were more tentative. A West German magazine, *Wochenende*, early on stoked the controversy over opinion research with a three-month series of articles based on the first study of sex habits in western Germany, which the magazine had commissioned from the Allensbach Institute in 1949. The Allensbach study was modeled on Alfred C. Kinsey’s research on sexuality in the United States. His work, and those studies, like the Allensbach Institute’s, that he inspired internationally intensified public debate about the validity and desirability of representative survey-based research in general.⁷

Much of the mainstream western German newspaper and magazine coverage of Kinsey’s work and the potential for similar studies in Germany highlighted the moral implications of such studies or the lack of a moral foundation in the field of statistical research more broadly. An article in *Die Zeit* in 1953 warned that “in the age of testing, of this American method for establishing ‘the average’ ... no area of life [can remain] truly

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Christiane Reinecke, “Statistiken der Liebe, oder: Dr. Kinsey fragt die Frauen. Umfrageforschung und ihre mediale Vermarktung in transnationaler Perspektive,” *Comparativ* 21 (2011): 29-44.

private.”⁸ *Der Spiegel* turned its nose up at the allegedly distinctively American tendency to “force the most private expressions of life into statistics and tables.”⁹ Other German commentators suggested that the publication of surveys documenting illicit behaviors would lead to a disruption of the moral norms that formed the basis of German society. Surveys on sexual habits, like the Kinsey reports, were particularly controversial, but for such critics they merely highlighted a broader debate about representative surveys in general. What did it mean, for example, if a “representative survey” showed that a majority of Germans held opinions or engaged in behaviors that were generally believed to be immoral or unhealthy? Media observers worried that “representative” responses would be equated with normality, no matter how far they veered from the ideal. Morality and immorality, such observers declared, could not be decided properly by statistical machinations.¹⁰ Such fears arose in direct response to media representations of survey results: the headline for the first article in the 1949 *Wochenende* series asked readers, “Do you know what is normal?”¹¹ The implicit message was that the results of the Allensbach Institute’s survey would redefine what readers perceived as typical or acceptable behaviors. In the end, however, the *Wochenende* series did not openly challenge, for example, the institution of monogamous marriage – instead, the editors presented the

⁸ “Im Zeitalter des Tests, dieser amerikanische Methode zur Feststellung des menschlichen Durchschnitts, (...) kein Lebensbereich im echten Wortsinne” private bleibe. “Kinsey über die amerikanische Frau,” *Die Zeit* 19 November 1953. Quoted in Reinecke 35.

⁹ “... der amerikanischen Mentalität, selbst die privatesten Lebensäußerungen in Statistik und Tabellen zu zwängen ...” “Glauben Sie an Gott?” *Der Spiegel* 28 October 1953, 12.

¹⁰ Reinecke 35.

¹¹ “Wissen Sie, was normal ist?” Reinecke 40. In the end, however, the *Wochenende* series did not explicitly challenge, for example, the institution of monogamous marriage – instead, the editors presented the survey results as insights into the reasons for stability or instability within marriages, and encouraged readers to take steps to heal their own potentially “sick” marriages. See Reinecke 42.

survey results as insights into the reasons for stability or instability within marriages and a stimulus for more open conversation about such topics. The series explicitly encouraged readers to be open with their partners and children about sex and expectations within marriage.¹²

The criticism of many media outlets helps to contextualize the way in which the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes marketed themselves to the West German government. Partly in order to overcome accusations that their work would upend cultural norms, these opinion researchers loudly claimed that empirical public opinion research would function as a mode to identify extreme tendencies before they got out of control. Once the government or interest groups had accurate data about potentially troubling trends in West German society, they could more efficiently create campaigns and policies to counteract them. In such a framework, as some of the promotional materials for the Allensbach Institute in particular suggested, West German elites could become influential partners in the process of molding the new political culture, rather than being slaves to the potentially dangerous whims of “the masses.”

Early German opinion research institutes sought relationships with media outlets, but they also hoped to establish intellectual respectability by publishing more serious accounts of work conducted for magazines like *Wochenende*. Initially, the German social scientific establishment dismissed such efforts categorically. In a review of the Allensbach Institute’s full volume of surveys of the “intimate sphere” (*Die Umfrage in der Intimsphäre*) in 1953, von Wiese was still clearly perturbed by how “unavoidable” opinion research had

¹² Reinecke 42.

become. He insisted that opinion research was a realm of mere statistics, not sociology.¹³ He also objected to the Allensbach Institute's claim that revealing the intimate relationships between men and women via survey data was a useful contribution to attempts to understand German society. Instead, according to von Wiese, the volume represented "the stupid triumph of quantity over quality, the affliction of democracy to wrongly believe that the expression of any arbitrary person has the same import of that of a more valuable person." The principle of the majority, he continued, might be an "unavoidable evil of politics," but it should not be extended to the private sphere.¹⁴ He concluded the review by advising the Allensbach researchers to "leave the intimate sphere to Kinsey and his people."¹⁵ Von Wiese thus followed the rhetoric of advocates of representative opinion research in linking their research with the tenets of representative democracy – but for him, as for many German sociologists and other academics, this representativeness was precisely the problem. The opinions and everyday private behavior of the average German were, in von Wiese's view, neither interesting nor instructive.

¹³ Leopold von Wiese, review of Ludwig v. Friedeburg, Institut für Demoskopie, *Die Umfrage in der Intimsphäre*. In *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 6 1954/54, Volume 1: 121-122.

¹⁴ "Das, was an diesen Befragungen abstößt, ist der dumme Triumph der Quantität über die Qualität, das Gebrechen der Demokratie, zu wähnen, daß die Äußerung jedes beliebigen Zeitgenossen die gleiche Bedeutung hat wie die des wertvollen Menschen. Mag das Prinzip der Majorität ein unvermeidliches Übel der Politik sein; aber man sollte in den Bereichen des Persönlichen und Privaten nicht zu zählen und mit Prozentzahlen zu arbeiten versuchen." Ibid., 122.

¹⁵ "Ist es nicht vielleicht ein gutter Rat, den Allensbachern zu empfehlen, die Intimsphäre Mister Kinsey und seinen Leuten zu überlassen?" Ibid.

Power and Promise: Later Critiques of the Polls

By the mid-1950s, the primary critiques launched at public opinion polling had shifted. Critics in the media, now more familiar with the basic methods used by opinion research institutes and cognizant of their growing client base, were increasingly concerned with the possibility that polls could disrupt the balance of power in politics. But critics were not certain in which direction polling was more likely to pull. On the one hand, opinion research might make it easier for politicians to manipulate citizens; on the other, it was also more likely for those same politicians to be swept up by the whims of the masses. In a 1956 review of the first *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung* published by the Allensbach Institute, the magazine *Der Spiegel* suggested that the results presented in the *Jahrbuch* showed “the average German, with whom the politicians will have to deal if they want to prepare themselves in the next year for the federal elections.”¹⁶ This formulation could be interpreted as proposing that the *Jahrbuch*, despite its populist claims, was in the end simply a tool with which politicians and other elites could better understand and manipulate voters. The reviewer also wondered if the very structure of opinion polls might hinder their ability to paint an accurate and sufficiently multi-dimensional portrait of a people, noting that “complex issues can’t always be reduced to the formula of a short question.”¹⁷

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann’s more extensive conversation with a *Der Spiegel* reporter in August 1957, shortly after the publication of the second *Jahrbuch* and before

¹⁶ “So rundet sich dal Bild des Durchschnitts-Deutschen, mit dem die Politiker es zu tun haben, wenn sie sich im nächsten Jahr zur Kampagne für die Bundestageswahlen rüsten.” “Gruppenbild des Volkes,” in *Der Spiegel*, 25 July 1956, 37.

¹⁷ “... sich komplizierte Sachverhalte nicht immer auf die Formel einer kurzen Fragen reduzieren lassen.” *Ibid.*

the September 15 federal elections, was featured inside the magazine in an article entitled “Straw Poll at the Kitchen Table” (“*Probewahl am Küchentisch*”). The title of the article alluded to the location at which Allensbach interviewers spent most of their time: in the homes of German citizens, conducting one-on-one interviews on sometimes innocuous, sometimes very intimate, topics. Noelle-Neumann herself referred to her personal experiences in “kitchens and living rooms” (“*Wohnkuchen und Wohnzimmer*”) to buttress her more theoretical arguments about public opinion. The article turned the tables on Noelle-Neumann by making her the subject of a probing interview about her institute’s methods and the influence of polling generally.

By 1957, the reporters from *Der Spiegel* were more well-versed in many theoretical and methodological objections to the idea of “public opinion” and its obtainability by researchers like Noelle-Neumann. They were particularly concerned about the power of publicized poll results to shape the behavior of voters. Noelle-Neumann insisted, perhaps surprisingly, that men and women were actually not so easily influenced. The reporters then switched to a different tactic: they questioned the scientific basis of the Institute’s work by suggesting that certain aspects of the Institute’s methods potentially biased the results of opinion polls and therefore the resulting claims to the content of “public opinion.” They pointed out that interviewers could shape responses through the wording of questions as well as the circumstances in which the questions were posed. This influence could in turn create “a picture of a so-called ‘public opinion’ ... that is actually put forth by the questioners themselves.”¹⁸ Not only could the questions purposely be designed to

¹⁸ “Nun könnte man sich ja denken, daß durch die Umfragen nicht nur der Mitläufereffekt erzielt wird, sondern daß auch durch die Formulierung der Frage, die einem bestimmten Personenkreis gestellt ist, eine Antwort in dieser oder jener Weise vorgeschrieben oder doch präjudiziert wird.

provoke a certain type of response, but the interviewers could inadvertently influence responses, they contended. For example, the two (male) reporters suggested, if an attractive woman interviewed a man, would he not attempt to seek her approval by answering her questions in the way he thought she would like?

Noelle-Neumann's response was nuanced; as we have seen, under her leadership the Allensbach Institute often stressed that question construction and the interview situation were more important factors in determining the validity of responses than the statistical techniques used to identify respondents. She replied to the reporters that the potential danger actually lay in the reverse of what they had diagnosed as a potential problem: "The interviewers are subject to the risk of only hearing from the responses what they themselves expect ... the interviewer himself may act as a type of sieve, through which only comes what he had already expected."¹⁹ Because of the potentially sieve-like capacity of interviewers, Noelle-Neumann observed, her institute assigned each interview only seven or eight interviews. With up to 300 interviewers involved in obtaining the full sample of interviews, the risk of one interviewer having a profound influence on the outcome was minimized. She also preferred female interviewers in the field, as she believed they were more naturally inclined to listen neutrally to others without feeling the need to impose their opinion (in actuality, however, Noelle-Neumann stated, the ratio of

Könnte nicht auf solche Weise ein Bild einer sogenannten Öffentlichen Meinung entstehen, das überhaupt durch die Frager erst hergestellt wird?" "Probewahl am Küchentisch: Ein *Spiegel* Gespräch mit der Leiterin des 'Instituts für Demoskopie' in Allensbach, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann," *Der Spiegel*, 21 August 1957, 19.

¹⁹ "Die Interviewer unterliegen der Gefahr, daß sie nur das von der Antwort hören, was sie selber erwarten. Es war eine für uns höchst unerwartete, aber dann sehr einleuchtende Feststellung, daß der Interviewer selbst wie eine Art Sieb wirkt, durch das nur herauskommt, was er schon irgendwie erwartet hatte. Darum verteilt man auch die Interviews auf eine so große Zahl von Mitarbeitern; in sieben bis acht Interviews pro Mitarbeiter können sich keine Erwartungsschemata bilden." *Ibid.*, 20.

male-to-female interviews at the Allensbach Institute at this time was one-to-one). In addition, the Institute put potential interviewers through a series of tests and training simulations in order to “soften” those interviewers with “hardened ears.”²⁰

Noelle-Neumann’s responses to repeated questions about the potential biases built into questions themselves also stressed the complexity of poll-construction and management. Noelle-Neumann noted that one must always be careful when dealing with a single question or results from a single poll question. “The questioning technique, the development of the correct series of questions – we never speak of single questions. If one sets worth on dependable results, it always takes a whole battery of questions, and this whole development is incredibly complex.”²¹ She therefore cautioned against making assumptions about “public opinion” from one question or set of questions; it was through the synthesis of all of the questions asked by the Institute, as demonstrated in the *Jahrbuch*, that a portrait of a public and its opinions was produced. In this particular aspect of the process, Noelle-Neumann demonstrated that the methodological considerations for public opinion polling were hardly a reduction to cold, scientific principles. Instead, they were imbued at their foundations with concerns about human interaction itself.

The *Spiegel* reporters continued to press Noelle-Neumann; they wondered if public opinion polling institutes disrupted the normal functioning of democracy. They worried that politicians would now be led, rather than themselves leading the people in the appropriate direction. Or worse, politicians and parties could use polls before elections to determine what message to send in order to be elected, and deliberately mislead citizens.

²⁰ “verhärteten Ohren.” Ibid.

²¹ “Die Befragungs-technik, die Entwicklung der richtigen Frageserien – wir sprechen nie von einzelnen Fragen, es handelt sich immer, wenn man auf zuverlässige Ergebnisse Wert legt, um ganze Batterien von Fragen – diese ganze Entwicklung ist unendlich kompliziert.” Ibid., 21.

Noelle-Neumann responded that politicians and parties would always try to understand the desires of the people. The benefit of empirical opinion research as practiced by the Allensbach Institute was that it was at least scientific, anonymous, and unbiased.²² The reporters then proposed another extreme scenario: “Now come the opinion polling institutes, always saying: ‘The parliament is no longer the representative of the people’s opinion, the people’s opinion is now different, we say it. And now on the one side stands the government with its Parliament, and on the other side stands the people’s opinion, that no longer goes through the filter of the Parliament, but through the filter of the opinion research institutes. Don’t you see a change in the entire structure as we know it?’”²³ Noelle-Neumann replied by observing that in a picture-perfect democracy, “public opinion” stood next to the Parliament.

The cartoons, culled from other publications, which accompanied the article vividly illustrate the fears about opinion polling circulating in the West German media (see figs. 2 - 4). In sum, the three cartoons portray the infantilization and even dehumanization of politicians and ordinary citizens through opinion research.

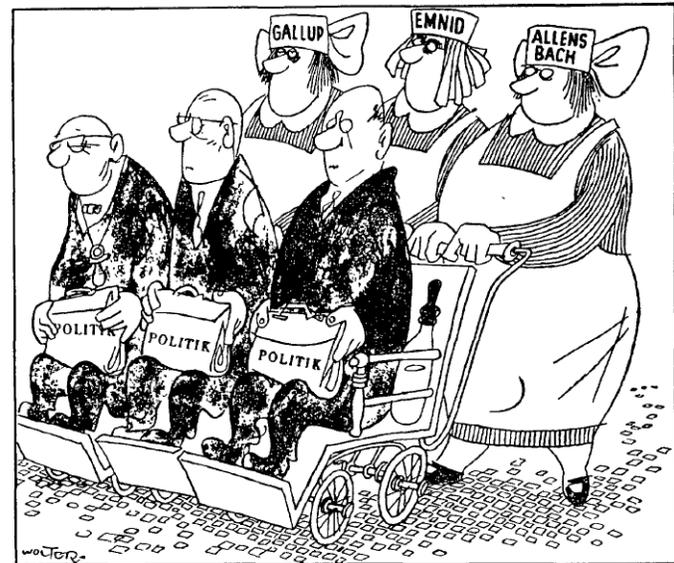
²² Ibid.

²³ “Jetzt kommen die Meinungsforschungsinstitute und sagen immer: Das Parlament ist ja nicht mehr Vertretung der Volksmeinung, die Volksmeinung ist ja anders, wir, wir sagen es euch. Und nun steht auf der einen Seite die Regierung mit ihrem Parlament, und auf der anderen Seite steht die Volksmeinung, die jetzt nicht mehr nur durch den Filter des Parlaments geht, sondern durch den Filter der Meinungsforschungsinstitute. Sehen Sie da nicht eine Änderung der ganzen Struktur, wie wir sie eigentlich kennen?” Ibid., 22.



Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschaftszeitung
 „Meinungserforschung“ oder „Lieschen Müller macht die deutsche Politik“

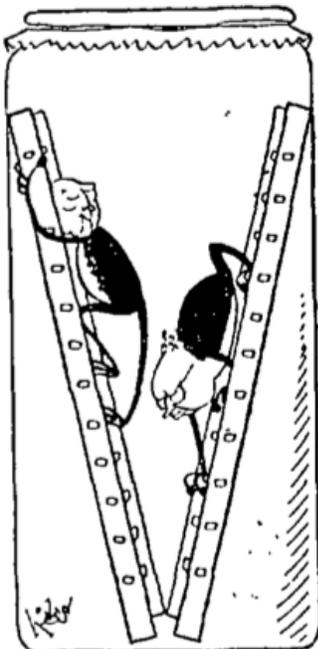
Fig. 2 (left):
 “Meinungserforschung’
 oder ‘Lieschen Müller
 macht die deutsche
 Politik.” *Deutsche
 Zeitung und
 Wirtschaftszeitung*,
 reprinted in *Der Spiegel*,
 21 August 1957.



Die demoskopischen Reiter

Die Welt

Fig. 3 (right).
 “Die
 demoskopische
 n Reiter,” *Die
 Welt*, reprinted
 in *Der Spiegel*,
 21 August 1957.



Die Zeit
 Die demoskopischen
 Wetterfrösche

Fig. 4 (left), “Die
 demoskopische
 n
 Wetterfrösche,”
Die Zeit,
 reprinted in *Der
 Spiegel*, 21
 August 1957.

The first cartoon shows a woman wielding a hula hoop and whip, the tools of a circus director, as two caricatured politicians take on the role of trained circus animals, awaiting the woman's instruction. The caption reads: "Opinion Research," or "Lieschen Müller makes German politics." The cartoon thus brings to visual life the common concern that the distribution of the results of public opinion polls would reduce political actors to circus performers, responding slavishly to every whim of "Lieschen Müller" – symbol of the average German. The second cartoon conveys a similar message; it features three nurses representing the Gallup, Allensbach, and Emnid opinion research institutes pushing wheelchairs labeled "politics." In this conception, opinion research controlled the direction of politicians, who were reduced to the level of helpless old men. The third cartoon is of a glass mason jar holding two men with the bodies of monkeys (or bugs?) crawling up and down ladders. The caption reads: "The demoscopic weathermen." The cartoon can be read as suggesting that when under observation by pollsters like Noelle-Neumann, men lose an essential part of their humanity and are reduced to lab animals, useful only for their predictive abilities.

If media observers worried that opinion research might reshape West German politics and society, West German academics throughout the 1950s were less convinced of its significance. Leopold von Wiese's successor as the unofficial leader of West German social science, Rene König, offered a more generous assessment of empirical research in general during the 1950s, but was almost as dismissive of opinion polling as von Wiese. König had spent the Nazi years in exile in Switzerland. He returned to Germany to take on the post of chair of Sociology at the University of Cologne, where he was instrumental in encouraging West German social scientists to adopt more empirical research methods. He

outmaneuvered other competitors, including Max Horkheimer's Institut für Sozialforschung, to partner with UNESCO to establish a transnational Institute for Social Research based out of the University of Cologne. König's 1952 textbook *Praktische Sozialforschung* praised the combination of empirical research and theory that in his view had developed in the United States. However, he went on to question the validity of the basic assumption of opinion research: that everyone had an opinion on the given matter in question. Any "sensibly posed question" would prompt a response of some sort; but this response did not necessarily equate to an opinion. In many cases, König argued, the "opinion" that supposedly resulted from a survey was essentially created by the survey itself.²⁴ Like the authors of the 1957 *Der Spiegel* article, König viewed the results of most public opinion research as inaccurate and potentially biased.

Later in the decade, another group of academics and social scientists focused their critique of public opinion research on the claim of its practitioners to be working in the service of democracy. One such critique was articulated by Wilhelm Hennis. Far from being a part of the "old school" of the German social sciences, Hennis in the 1950s was an aspiring political scientist at the University of Frankfurt who had not yet established his name in the discipline. Perhaps now most well known for his interpretation of Max Weber, Hennis was early on concerned with the relationship between political theory and political practice – a focus reflected in his his *Meinungsforschung und repräsentative Demokratie: zur Kritik politischer Umfragen* (Opinion Research and Representative Democracy: towards a Critique of Political Surveys), published in 1957. Hennis opened this book by cataloguing the ways that German political parties had become dependent on opinion research. As traditional

²⁴ Rene König, *Praktische Sozialforschung: Das Interview: Formen – Technik – Auswertung*, (Dortmund: Ardey Verlag, 1952), 22-23.

class divisions and corresponding ideologies had eroded within Germany, politicians were increasingly desperate to understand the often more personal justifications for voting for a certain party. Without an ideology to guide them, voters were more difficult to predict. Opinion research promised to solve this problem by differentiating voters in new ways. “The more unarticulated the opinions, the clearer the utility of opinion research,” Hennis wrote.²⁵

Hennis’s primary critique was that “public opinion research” actually had no relation to the “public opinion” traditionally spoken of by philosophers and political scientists. What such research discovered was, rather, information. Perhaps this information could be of use to companies or politicians, but it should not be seen as a substitute for a kind public consciousness, will, or spirit of the people. Hennis pointedly criticized the Neumanns for the vagueness of the definition of public opinion that they had formulated in the 1954 Allensbach Institute publication *Antworten* (Answers). The Neumanns had described “die öffentliche Meinung” as “a complex phenomenon, that one might better describe as a field of power or tension ... observed from the perspective of a bird.” That, Hennis sneered, was “an image, certainly not a definition.”²⁶ This vagueness contrasted markedly with the precision of their methodological discussions, Hennis pointed out, suggesting that the opinion researchers were evading analysis of their actual contribution by hiding behind arcane descriptions of their scientific apparatus. Returning to his initial comment on the dependence of modern opinion research on the erosion of traditional identities – worker, Bürger, farmer, married, single, urban, rural – Hennis

²⁵ “Je unartikulierter die Meinungen, um so klarer die Nutzen der Meinungsforschung.” Wilhelm Hennis, *Meinungsforschung und repräsentative Demokratie: zur Kritik politischer Umfragen* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1957), 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

emphasized that this state of affairs produced a triumph of emotional (and even accidental) factors over rational decision making. According to Hennis, “The potential for the manipulation of opinions and emotions is the actual price of democratic equality.”²⁷ Public opinion research tapped into this opportunity to discover and then influence people on an emotional level. The anonymous, representative model of “public opinion” as peddled by opinion research institutes also evaded the sense of personal responsibility for each opinion that Hennis, citing older theories of political philosophy, deemed essential for the rule of reason over despotism.²⁸

This critique was as much a lament of the state of postwar German society as an analysis of the ills of empirical opinion research. In his assessment, Hennis wrote approvingly of the nineteenth-century emphasis on a structured bourgeois education as the necessary foundation for a reasoned opinion about politics. “Public opinion” earned its status not by being uttered by a certain number of individuals, but through the quality and nature of its content.²⁹ As A. Dirk Moses has observed, Hennis believed wholeheartedly that “democracy was explicitly *not* the self-rule of the people.”³⁰ The ever-increasing visibility of public opinion polls in the Federal Republic, in Hennis’s view, only nurtured the fallacy that merely by living in a certain place, one could have an educated opinion on that state’s affairs, much less an opinion worthy of consideration by decision makers, when in fact only an elite few possessed the capacity to reflect and offer judgment upon such affairs. His

²⁷ “Die Manipulierbarkeit der Meinungen und Emotionen ist der eigentliche Preis demokratischer Egalität.” *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁰ Moses, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* 98.

concerns corresponded to a lingering fear common to many more conservative, educated West Germans about the dangers of the masses.

Jürgen Habermas, at the time a young student of Adorno and Horkheimer, was also an advocate of political participation and debate grounded in education and reason. In the now-classic *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, published in 1962, Habermas too articulated an argument against public opinion research. The basic premise of this book is well known. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas delineated the emergence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of the “*liberal* model of the bourgeois public sphere” in England, France, and Germany. Habermas defined this public sphere as the public site of rational-critical discussion and debate among private individuals, which mediated “the tension-charged field of state-society relations.”³¹ This mediating site of debate was facilitated above all by the highbrow press, produced and read by the educated bourgeoisie.³² According to Habermas, the decline of the public sphere as “a critically debating entity,” the second part of the structural transformation alluded to in the book’s title, began in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, in conjunction with the commercialization of the press and the entry of the masses into politics. As access to the public sphere was expanded to include women as well as non-bourgeois men, it was depoliticized and intellectually impoverished. Drawing upon the pessimistic arguments advanced by his mentors Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* about the devastating effects of “the culture industry,” Habermas claimed that this broadened

³¹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 29.

³² *Ibid.*, 51. This aspect of Habermas’s argument in particular has been the subject of ongoing critique. See the essays in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992).

public was essentially a passively “culture consuming public” rather than a site of active rational-critical debate.³³ The strategies of advertising and publicity professionals, rather than rational discussion among equals, directed public participation in the political process. In such a context, the “public opinion” supposedly revealed by modern research institutes lacked the rational-critical quality essential to his definition of the public sphere. According to Habermas, opinion research produced a “public sphere manufactured for show” in no way analogous to the public sphere formed by a critically debating public.³⁴ Like Hennis, Habermas seems to have believed that public opinion research elevated “opinions” with emotional content rather than intellectual substance. Habermas writes, “Publicity was, according to its very idea, a principle of democracy not just because anyone could in principle announce, with equal opportunity, his personal inclinations, wishes, and convictions – opinions; it could only be realized through the rational-critical debate of a public into public opinion.”³⁵ While this formulation was in theory more progressive than Hennis’s critique, Habermas’s insistence that such debate was only truly possible among equals similarly restricted the capacity for public opinion creation to a limited number of educated citizens.

The critical works of Hennis and Habermas appeared as part of a striking wave of German publications centered around opinion polling. Between 1957 and 1960, multiple authors from universities and opinion research institutes published meditations on the services as well as injuries that the practice of polling could perform for or inflict upon the German nation. This spate of publications demonstrates the degree to which public

³³ Habermas 169.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 221.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

opinion research was still viewed as unsettling by many, but also the extent of its embrace (however begrudging) as a useful tool for politicians and social scientists.

The publications of critics like Hennis and Habermas were met by increasingly sophisticated responses by opinion researchers themselves. In 1959, Gerhard Schmidtchen, then a researcher at the Allensbach Institute, published *The Questioned Nation: On the Influence of Opinion Research on Politics* (*Die befragte Nation: Über den Einfluß der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik*). Schmidtchen, whose book was cited by Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, sought above all to reclaim opinion research from the “school for misunderstanding” that had resulted from the selective publication of individual poll results by newspapers and other media.³⁶ The book was also a defense of opinion research from criticism that survey research only created statistical figures “with doubtful relevance for the understanding of societal situations and processes.”³⁷ Drawing extensively from Allensbach polls, Schmidtchen first took readers through a detailed discussion of the methodology of empirical opinion research and its relationship to theory. He then explained how survey research was and could be used by political parties, individual politicians, and interest groups. According to Schmidtchen, empirically-oriented opinion research, among other benefits, could help promote discussion of important topics, allow politicians to better engage with German citizens, and prevent demagogues and charlatans from gaining power.³⁸ Schmidtchen saw the greatest dangers of opinion research not in the process or product of opinion polling itself, but in the

³⁶ “Schule für Mißverständnisse.” Gerhard Schmidtchen, *Die befragte National: Über den Einfluss der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik* (Freiburg: Verlag Rombach, 1959), 17.

³⁷ “... das Umfrage-Instrument befasse sich nur mit statistischen Gesamtgrößen von zweifelhafter Relevanz für das Verständnis gesellschaftlicher Sachverhalte und Vorgänge.” Ibid.

³⁸ These potential effects are summarized in Schmidtchen 214-16.

misrepresentation of polls by the media. In a symbol of a slow but notable improvement in the attitude of social scientists toward empirical research in general and survey-based opinion research in particular, the book received a relatively favorable review in the pages of the *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*. Once helmed by the formidable von Wiese, whose low opinion of opinion research as a research tool has already been elaborated, the journal could no longer ignore the growing discipline. Gerhard Scherhorn, an economist at the University of Cologne, reviewed Schmidtchen's volume. Scherhorn praised *Die befragte Nation* for being one of the first works to attempt to analyze the data collected through opinion research from a more theoretical perspective. Within the academic world, opinion research finally was gaining some respect.

Works like Schmidtchen's and the proliferation of poll results in the media did not alleviate all fears related to the power of opinion polling, however. Critics continued to worry that German citizens would see poll results and then change their views or behavior to reflect the majority poll preference. They posed the question of the threat of the *Mitläufereffekt* – the bandwagon effect, or the tendency for people to change their own views to accord with the perceived opinions of others. In 1964, one German opinion researcher, Günter Wickert, made headlines by suggesting that West Germans needed to take measures to minimize the power of polls to influence political decisions, and in particular voting.³⁹ His call for a "self-embargo" by polling institutes during election months was dismissed by many in the opinion research industry, the media, and the government's press office as a cry for media attention rather than a serious political

³⁹ "Keine Wahlprognosen mehr? Ein Demoskop plädiert für politische Enthalsamkeit," *Die Zeit* 22 October 1964. The article and Press Secretary Wolfgang Glässer's response can be found at BAK B145/5473.

intervention, and no rules were put in place to limit the publication of polls. Still, Wickert's plea, though ineffectual, played off of broader fears of the increasing power that polls did indeed hold in West German public life. But by 1964, polls on more than just political elections had been so well integrated into the cultural landscape that eliminating them entirely seemed like a joke.

Counter-sites of Public Opinion Expression

Empirical opinion research – defined by surveys and one-on-one interviews – was the norm for public opinion research institutes and was presented by many as a necessary means of connecting “the people” to the government. But it wasn't the only site of opinion expression available to West Germans. During the 1950s in particular West German cities were home to many experiments in public group discussions, created in order to give citizens a chance to express their opinions and ask questions, then listen as their fellow citizens did the same. Indeed, during the 1950s there was a concerted effort on the part of Allied authorities and some German political leaders to establish the foundation for a skill that had been heretofore relatively unheralded in Germany: the ability to discuss opinions on a variety of issues, including politics, and disagree with, but also learn from, other viewpoints. As Nina Verheyen has demonstrated, the American occupation authorities in western Germany saw developing a new type of “*Diskussionslust*,” or passion for discussion, among the German populace as central to addressing the perceived character flaws that had led so many to embrace Nazism.⁴⁰ In their view, the spirit of more informal banter that

⁴⁰ Nina Verheyen, *Diskussionslust: Eine Kulturgeschichte des 'besseren Arguments' in Westdeutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

allegedly characterized American conversation about even serious topics would help displace the authoritarian tendencies to which Germans were predisposed.⁴¹

For decades, historians accepted the argument (propagated by the generation of 1968) that the 1950s were a time of quiet toil and private retreat in West Germany, when the majority of Germans emphasized the sanctity of private life and rejected active participation in politics. While the basic contours of this narrative remain useful in understanding postwar German society, a new spate of works on West German cultural and intellectual life has challenged some of its details. Most recently, Sean Forner has sought to illuminate the public and private work of what he terms “engaged democrats.” These were (mostly) men who had either openly or secretly opposed Nazism and embraced the chance to contribute to the reconstruction of Germany based on democratic ideals (although they disagreed on how to define and realize those ideals).⁴² In a parallel analysis of German political theory after World War II, Jakob Nordberg has examined the roll of *Geselligkeit*, defined by Nordberg as bourgeois sociability, in the work of important postwar German thinkers, primarily Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, Carl Schmitt, and Reinhart Koselleck. According to Nordberg, some of these theorists hoped that gatherings based around sociable conversation would provide a useful basis for a democratic society.⁴³ This idea of sociability was seen by some as an answer to the question of how Germans could conceive of themselves as a collective political formation without reliance on race, an authoritarian

⁴¹ Also see Jennifer Fay’s work on the use of American films as “mimetic pedagogy” intended to tutor Germans in a more easygoing style of democratic interaction. Jennifer Fay, *Theaters of Occupation: Hollywood and the Reeducation of Postwar Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

⁴² Sean Forner, *German Intellectuals and the Challenge of Democratic Renewal: Culture and Politics after 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁴³ Jakob Nordberg, *Sociability and its Enemies: German Political Theory after 1945* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2014), 6.

leader, or chauvinistic perspectives. Other theorists, such as Arendt, viewed this emphasis on sociable conversation as mistaken; informal conversations promoted “complete homogeneity of views and attitudes” rather than the principled exchange that facilitated the working-through of differing viewpoints.⁴⁴ According to Arendt, it could never lead to politics, defined as “explicit contention over the order of things within a bounded, determinate space.”⁴⁵ For Nordberg, Habermas’s *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* must be understood as an intervention in this debate. In Habermas’s view, according to Nordberg, even if “sociable conversation is not at all the same thing as rational deliberation ... social discourse can nonetheless pass into debate,” eventually creating the basis for a democratic public sphere.⁴⁶

While Nordberg focuses on theories of democratic sociability, the emergence of civic discussion groups in cities throughout western Germany after 1945 provides more concrete evidence for the importance of open conversation as idea and practice in the decade after World War II. Forner’s narrative of the rise and fall of his “engaged democrats” describes the establishment of some such groups, such as the *Aktionsgruppe* in Heidelberg. However, as Forner himself acknowledges, these collectives – perhaps more aptly described as “salons” rather than “discussion groups” – were typically rather elitist in character.⁴⁷ A cynical observer might see them, in fact, as examples of the traditional mode of public opinion formation and expression, that is, by and for elites, comprised chiefly of professional academics who saw themselves as uniquely qualified to opine on the problems and possibilities faced by postwar Germans. In contrast, public opinion research institutes

⁴⁴ Nordberg 103.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴⁷ Forner 162-91.

like the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes proposed something very different: their work was based on the premise that the voice and opinions of every citizen, regardless of his or her education level, class, or social circle, mattered.

Among the various attempts at creating public or private discussion forums after World War II, one stands out for its intensity, relative longevity, and adoption of the premise of inclusivity also proffered by opinion research institutes: the *Kölner Mittwochsgespräche*. These “Wednesday Conversations” in Cologne were a popular series of themed discussions covering topics as diverse as contemporary art, the relationship between West Germany and the United States, and the role of the radio in West German society.⁴⁸ All were welcome to attend and to speak. The discussions, numbering 270 in total, took place in the Cologne central train station between 1950 and 1956 and helped to inspire a number of similarly-structured public forums throughout West Germany (as well as one in Leipzig). The mass appeal of, and energetic discussions produced through, such forums challenge claims about the depoliticized nature of West German society in the 1950s. They can be seen as sites of a more organic articulation of public opinion, closer in function to what Habermas idealized in his description of the bourgeois public sphere, and perhaps as more positive variations on the group dynamics analyzed in the Frankfurt School’s Group Experiment study.

The first *Mittwochgespräch* was conceived by Gerhard Ludwig, the owner of a book store in the Cologne train station, and the author and poet Jakob Kneip; neither predicted the enormous popularity of the discussion series. From Kneip’s perspective, it was a way to bring authors into closer contact with their audience. For Ludwig, the weekly discussions

⁴⁸ Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, *Freier Eintritt, Freie Fragen, Freie Antworten: Die Kölner Mittwochsgespräche 1950-1956* (Cologne: Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, 1991).

initially were part of a publicity campaign, the ultimate goal of which was simply to sell more books.⁴⁹ It was only later that he accentuated the political potential of the forum. Forty-two people attended the first discussion on December 4th, 1950. On that evening, Kneip hosted a discussion on “The Task of the Writer in Our Time.”⁵⁰ This topic typified the themes chosen for the series in its pairing of cultural and socio-political awareness; discussions frequently centered around the suitability for types of media, culture, and even social relationships to the times in which Germans now found themselves. The number of attendees of the first event surprised Ludwig, who had requested a mere five chairs for the space.⁵¹ The local newspapers reported the first discussion approvingly and helped to drum up further interest. The *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger* described the discussion series as an “exchange of thoughts” with everyday citizens and cultural leaders, and called for “open-minded and interested people,” noting explicitly that “anyone can participate.”⁵² Eventually, an average of three hundred people attended each discussion, with attendance as high as eight hundred at particularly popular discussions. Only the lengthy reconstruction of the train station beginning in 1956 brought the series to an end.

⁴⁹ Ludwig was born in Berlin in 1909, and made his name working in publicity for various presses. Between 1939 and 1943 he had managed the publicity for a Cologne publisher, and from 1943 to 1946 he worked in a similar capacity for publishers in Berlin and Frankfurt am Main. In 1946 he was invited by the British occupation authorities to take over the operations of the *Neue Illustrierte*. In the same year he opened a newspaper shop in the ruins of the Cologne central train station, and in 1949, seeing himself as a businessman but also as part of the cultural renewal of the Rhenish city, he opened a book shop. Rainer Steinberg, “Kölns ‘Kopfbahnhof’: Die Mittwochgespräche 1950-1956,” in *Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, Freier Eintritt, Freie Fragen, Freie Antworten: Die Kölner Mittwochsgespräche 1950-1956* (Verlag der Meyerschen Buchhandlung, 1991), 12.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² The notice stated that “Führende Persönlichkeiten des deutschen Geistes und Kulturlebens ... werden sich demnächst in einem Raum in der Bahnhofsbuchhandlung an jedem Mittwochnachmittag in einem Kreis aufgeschlossener und interessierter Menschen (an diesen Veranstaltungen kann jeder teilnehmen) zu einem Gedankenaustausch treffen.” Quoted in Steinberg, “Kölns ‘Kopfbahnhof,’ 15.

According to historian Rainer Steinberg, the discussions appealed to Cologne's inhabitants who had been starved of true culture as well as the freedom to state their views openly during the war years. In the *Mittwochgespräche*, Steinberg claims, Germans learned to discard their association of differences of opinion with terror and retribution and instead to embrace "dialogue-oriented conversation."⁵³ Ludwig and the attendees of the *Mittwochgespräche* had "grown weary of one-sided monologues."⁵⁴ They yearned to share their personal opinions and experiences. To that end, the focus of each weekly event was not the lecture delivered by the author, intellectual, or expert designated as that evening's "discussion leader." Rather, this lecture was designed to include a brief argument, presented as a stimulus for further discussion and an invitation to all present to share their own opinions and questions. As the discussions gained momentum, so too did Ludwig's emphasis on the democratic underpinnings of the event's structure. Ludwig went so far as to claim in an interview that it was through the *Mittwochgespräche* that many had "learned to listen ... to respect others."⁵⁵ According to his admirers, he was indeed instrumental in establishing a new culture of tolerance based on the idea of open conversation and respectful debate.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of relevant archival materials – including correspondence between Ludwig, discussion leaders, and attendees and audio recordings and transcripts of the *Mittwochgespräche* – were housed in the municipal archive of Cologne, which collapsed in 2009. Luckily, duplicate audio recordings of some of the

⁵³ Rainer Steinberg, "'Rangierbahnhof des Geistes.' Die Kölner Mittwochgespräche 1950-1956," *Geschichte im Westen* 7 (1992): 186-201, 190.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁵⁵ Audio tape D94/247 at Bonn Haus der Geschichte Informationzentrum/Mediathek.

discussions are still available at the *Haus der Geschichte* in Bonn. These recordings, despite their inconsistent quality and the obvious difficulties inherent in recording a discussion in an active train station, offer insight into the thoughts of West Germans in the 1950s on a variety of different questions. They also provide a rich source material for examining the practice of discussion and the process of public opinion formation itself. An acclamatory documentary catalogue was published by the historical archive of Cologne in 1992 under the title *Freier Eintritt, freie Fragen, freie Antworten* – “Free entrance, free questions, free answers,” the motto of the series. Though biased, this catalogue also provides some useful documentation of the series.

The event which brought the series to national attention was the forty-fourth *Mittwochgespräch* on October 17th, 1951. This discussion was led by the author Ernst von Salomon, who had recently published his controversial autobiographical novel *Der Fragebogen* (The Questionnaire). The novel consisted of von Salomon’s lengthy responses to the denazification questionnaire used in the American zone of occupation. The work amounted to a vivid account of his life and political entanglements, including his stint as a *Freikorps* volunteer and his contribution to the assassination of Weimar Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau in 1922 (von Salomon helped acquire a getaway car for the assassins). Leading a discussion on the topic of “The task of the author in our times” (*Die Aufgabe des Schriftstellers in unserer Zeit*), von Salomon declared in his opening lecture that writers needed to address contemporary issues and problems rather than staying within the safe confines of the ivory tower. But the discussion itself moved far beyond the role of writers to touch on deeper questions of guilt and responsibility for the crimes committed during World War II. Many attendees were outraged by von Salomon’s cynical and irreverent

novel, which mocked the American-led denazification process and criticized Allied occupation policy, suggesting it was little better than the Nazi regime which had preceded it.⁵⁶ According to these discussion participants, *Der Fragebogen* was a misleading and potentially dangerous attempt to deny the reality of atrocities by Germans and malign the nascent democracy of West Germany.

These criticisms of von Salomon's novel revolved around concerns about the Federal Republic's capacity to withstand threats from within – concerns that similarly motivated much of the early public opinion research conducted among Germans. Von Salomon's publisher, Ernst Rowohlt, who was in attendance at the October 17th *Mittwochgespräch*, succinctly defended his decision to publish the book – after all, it was an undisputed bestseller – and commented that if *Der Fragebogen* was truly a threat to German democracy, "I feel sorry for democracy."⁵⁷ Indeed, one scholar has interpreted this riotous discussion as a successful test for the Federal Republic, proposing that encounters with resentment and denial of guilt, such as that provided by von Salomon's novel and the *Mittwochgespräch* centering around it, are essential for the strengthening of democracy.⁵⁸ Certainly many later discussions also touched on the question of which threats the Federal Republic could successfully face, and which threats it was too young and weak to counter.

Given its inception as a way for authors to converse publicly with their readers, it is no surprise that many of the discussions in the *Mittwochgespräche* series centered on

⁵⁶ Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln, "Ernst von Salomon und sein Roman 'Der Fragebogen,'" *Die Streit der Frühen Jahre: Die Kölner Mittwochgespräche 1950-1956*, CD, 1993.

⁵⁷ "Wenn die deutsch Demokratie und die Jugend dieses Buch nicht verdauern können, dann tut mir die Demokratie und die Jugend leid." Ibid.

⁵⁸ Anna Parkinson, *An Emotional State: The Politics of Emotion in Postwar West German Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), pp. 107-111.

media and the capacity of different artists, authors, and media formats to address or influence the health of democracy in the Federal Republic. Such discussions shed light on perceptions of the dynamic between citizens, media, and government, and the capacity of each to think and act independently. Consider the content of the 167th *Mittwochgespräch*. This discussion, led by Dr. Fritz Eberhard of the *Süddeutsche Rundfunk* (and, as we saw in Chapter Three, an early supporter of empirical opinion research), was based on the topic of “Radio as tool and object of politics.”⁵⁹ Ludwig opened the discussion by suggesting that, as the *Mittwochgespräche* became increasingly well known, perhaps the public conversation in the Cologne train station could have an impact on determining how much control the government should have over radio program content. In his opening comment, Eberhard proposed that radio had a crucial role to play in fostering a tolerant, just, and free society, which required radio intendants to support the government’s wishes in some matters, and provide constructive criticism in others. Germans could benefit from “a healthy democratic mistrust” of the government.⁶⁰ Eberhard referenced the misuse of public radio under the Nazis to buttress his argument.

Eberhard’s lecture inspired a lively debate about the ideal relationship between radio and the government. Some discussion participants agreed, sharing anecdotes of their own experiences during the Weimar Republic (when there was a multitude of radio programs and opinions to be found on the airwaves) and then under National Socialism. These participants argued that the individual’s ability to choose which types of programs they wanted to hear, and the corresponding freedom of radio programs to share whichever

⁵⁹ Audio tape 153/01 D94/306, 35.2DB21T, Bonn Haus der Geschichte Informationzentrum/Mediathek.

⁶⁰ “ein gesundes demokratisches Misstrauen.” Ibid.

opinions they desired, were a necessary defense against totalitarianism; radio directors should not be beholden to any one political party. Strikingly, other participants observed that until democracy had established deeper roots in the political culture, West Germans required something different from their radio programs than what was possible in mature democracies like England. One noted that given the relative immaturity of West German democracy, perhaps it was too soon for media outlets to see one of their goals as critiquing current politics and sowing “democratic mistrust.” This individual wondered aloud whether West German radio programs could imitate one potential model, the BBC, in this regard without courting danger. Another stressed the need for *Einheitsgefühl*, a sense of unity and shared dedication toward democracy. Participants also expressed differing opinions about the need for laws regulating the independence of radio; some advocated strict laws, other saw it as the responsibility of the radio program director, while others declared it was the responsibility of listeners to make their desire for independent programming known.

Ludwig declared proudly at the opening of the 143rd *Mittwochgespräch* on August 19th, 1953, the first in a series of three designated “political” discussions leading up to the September 1953 Bundestag elections, that the *Mittwochgespräche* were “the only independent democratic forum in Germany.”⁶¹ But he followed this statement up with an admonishment to his listeners to protect the freedom of speech that allowed for such an event, to enjoy it, but not take it for granted. That evening’s discussion leader, journalist Paul Wenger, and many of the participants argued that what they lived in was not quite a

⁶¹ “die Mittwochgespräche stehen in Ruf, dass einzige unabhängige demokratische Forum Deutschlands zu sein.” Audio tape D94/295, Bonn Haus der Geschichte Informationzentrum/Mediathek.

democracy. What was needed, according to many, was “more respect” for public opinion. Only this would enable the “broadening” of democracy for which so many yearned.

At least one discussion leader over the course of the *Mittwochgespräche* argued that public opinion research could help win respect for public opinion within the halls of government. Erich Peter Neumann, cofounder of the Allensbach Institute, was the special guest for the 175th meeting on June 23rd, 1954, which explored the following question: “Does the Opinion of Lieschen Müller matter?” Neumann compared this wording to asking whether water is wet – of course the opinions of the average German mattered. The real question he believed he had been invited to address was whether it was important for opinion research institutes to *ask* Lieschen Müller for her opinion. In his view, the transparently scientific methods used by research institutes like the Allensbach Institute provided the best means of ensuring that politicians and private companies kept the best interests of all West Germans at heart. By 1954, there was enough suspicion of the nefarious power of polls in the air that Neumann felt it necessary to defend the use of polls by the government. Properly carried out opinion research, he declared, would protect “Lieschen Müller” by giving politicians access to minority and majority views, limiting the tyranny of any one group over the others.⁶²

But where did the power of public opinion actually come from in a mass democracy? The 236th *Mittwochgespräch* led by Friedrich Sieburg in December 1955, over one year after Neumann’s appearance, asked instead “Is there still such a thing as public opinion?”

⁶² Erich Peter Neumann, “Ist die Meinung von Lieschen Müller Wichtig?” Speech at the Mittwochgespräch Köln, 23 June 1954, 9. I am grateful to the Institut für Demoskopie at Allensbach for providing me with a transcript of Neumann’s speech. Unfortunately I have not been able to locate a full transcript or audio file from the June 23 discussion. The audio tape in the Bonn Haus der Geschichte labeled as containing this discussion actually contained a different discussion.

Sieburg argued that even if “public opinion” still existed in theory, it was necessary to ask how much it was steered (*gesteuert*) or minimized by media, advertisers of consumer products, or other influences like interest groups.⁶³ For the essence and power of public opinion, Sieburg claimed, was founded in its essentially negative nature: public opinion in practice was “when the people say, you can’t do that, that is not allowed ... so it is a paradox, it is actually strongest when one is unable to utter it.”⁶⁴ Sieburg asked where the voices of resistance had gone, for in his view the dissolution of the National Socialist state did not undo the need for minority voices.

The issue of public opinion research institutes was raised directly during the discussion. Participants noted that the work of these institutes demonstrated that the government and other bodies were very interested in the opinions of the populace. The question for these discussants was whether there was a way to make public opinion a pressure on the government to change in certain ways instead of a situation in which public opinion analysis was undertaken to determine the current views of the public – and then deploy propaganda to shift public opinion in a direction more in line with the wishes of the current government. In this regard, Sieburg observed in his response to the participant who made the argument above, regardless of how scientific opinion research methods were, their findings could never replace the deeper sense of public opinion as resistance and critique. Public opinion in its most potent form was a dialogue, indeed, a conversation, rather than a one-sided expression. In language similar to that used to critique Ernst von

⁶³ Audio tape D94/180, Bonn Haus der Geschichte Informationzentrum/Mediathek.

⁶⁴ “es besteht darin, dass die Leute sagen, dass kann man nicht machen, dass ist doch wirklich nicht erlaubt ... wann man viele Menschen zusammen finden, so haben wir eine öffentliche Meinung. ... Das ist ein unheimliches Paradox, dass es am stärksten ist, wann man nicht äussern kann. In tyrannische Herrschaft ist sie am stärksten, wann sie können nicht “äussern, trotzdem besteht sie.” Ibid.

Salomon's novel *Der Fragebogen* several years earlier, other participants commented that it might be dangerous to allow East German communists or others who actively opposed the structure and ideals of the Federal Republic to share their opinions. Another participant replied that an essential ingredient of a healthy democracy was confidence in its ability to withstand critique. "We can't have a democracy without risk," this participant argued. "We must be secure enough to hear opinions" from those who might oppose aspects of the current Federal Republic.⁶⁵

The structure as well as the content of the *Mittwochgespräche* was intended to promote vigorous exchanges. Ludwig advised prospective discussion leaders to make their opening statements as provocative – and brief – as possible. He even suggested that they might want to put forth some perspectives on the given topic that they actually disagreed with or knew to be false, in order to prompt greater engagement and energy on the part of the discussion attendees. Opening lectures that provided a complete, scholarly, impregnable argument were, in contrast, "deathly for the discussion."⁶⁶ Given Ludwig's preference for passionate disagreement rather than quiet scholarly exchange, perhaps it is not surprising that some academics found the series somewhat distasteful. Rene König advised Theodor Adorno not to take the forum too seriously. "It is a monstrous circus," König wrote prior to Adorno's scheduled *Mittwochgespräch* appearance in 1955, "through which you allow the beastly public, with the splendid assistance of Mr. Ludwig, to wring out

⁶⁵ "Wir können doch keine Demokratie ohne Risiko haben. We must have 'sicherheitsgefühl dass wir stark genug sind, diese Meinungen zu hören ... wir brauchen sie nicht abzustempeln.'" Ibid.

⁶⁶ See Ludwig's note to Dr. Adalbert Worliczek, 25 April 1953. Quoted in Steinberg, "Kölns 'Kopfbahnhof,'" 21.

its complexes, by which adding a little bit of thought is not essential, if not entirely unwished for. Seriously: don't take it so seriously."⁶⁷

Indeed, the unstructured nature of the *Mittwochgespräche*, which at its best allowed for the airing of diverse viewpoints, could also generate yelling matches rather than discussions, or privilege certain loud, masculine voices. Sometimes tact was lacking in the enthusiastic participation of attendees.⁶⁸ Even as he proclaimed the democratic nature of the *Mittwochgespräche*, Ludwig's management of the discussion series often drifted into a more autocratic leadership style. In the available audio files from the discussions, Ludwig sometimes takes control and redirects questions and discussions when there is too much loud exchange – or silence. But the vast majority of voices in these discussions were not Ludwig's or the designated "expert" for that particular topic; within the walls of the Cologne train station, the man – or woman – on the street truly had center stage (as long as he or she was loud enough).

Despite the overtly political nature of many of the topics discussed during the *Mittwochgespräche* and Ludwig's reference to the potential political influence of the forum, discussion leaders and participants do not seem to have seen themselves as attempting to influence politics directly. This was not a protest group or an occasion for promoting specific political parties, ideas, or slogans. Rather, what Ludwig and the participants who later reflected fondly on the glory years of the forum emphasized was the simple but

⁶⁷ "Bei den Mittwochgesprächen müssen Sie sich übrigens darüber klar sein, dass Sie keinesfalls eine ernsthafte Sache machen können. Es handelt sich dabei um einen ungeheuren Zirkus, bei dem Sie die Bestie Publikum unter der trefflichen Hilfe von Herrn Ludwig ihre Komplexe auswringen lassen, wobei, ganz kleiner Zuschuss von Geist nicht unerlässlich, wenn auch nicht immer erwünscht ist. Im Ernst: nehmen Sie es nicht so ernst." König to Adorno, 12 November, 1954. Rene König, *Schriften Band 19 – Briefwechsel Band 1* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000), 460.

⁶⁸ Steinberg, "Kölns 'Kopfbahnhof,'" 22.

profound need to speak openly after twelve years of dictatorship. The opportunity merely to express one's opinions was seized upon with relish, while the content and impact of those opinions was secondary. The forum was thus not quite a critique of empirical opinion research, but an alternative to that method.

The early success of West German opinion research institutions like the Allensbach and Emnid Institutes was predicated in part upon the claim that respondents were not to be seen and analyzed as unique individuals, but rather as representatives of a statistically significant category of citizens. Interviewers not only had to promise their subjects anonymity, but in some cases (especially when interviewing women) convince them that their responses were of use only because they would be representative of similar types of people. In contrast, public forums like the *Mittwochgespräche* prioritized the interaction of all participants, seen as bringing their own unique thoughts and experiences to the discussion. Discussions rarely ended with the issue at hand tied into a neat bow; the discussion itself, rather than a solution or answer, was the real goal. The success of both the *Mittwochgespräche* and public opinion research institutes depended upon convincing the public (in defiance of intellectuals like Hennis) that the opinion of the West German "man (or woman) on the street" mattered, but the positioning of this "Lieschen Müller" within the larger community differed.

For a variety of reasons, expressions of public opinion after the late 1940s were linked by contemporaries to the establishment of a healthy democratic political culture in West Germany. Central to this process was the notion that freedom of expression coupled with the *toleration* of multiple opinions and viewpoints formed the foundation of a democratic civic culture. Public forums like the Kölner *Mittwochgespräche* represented the

height of performance of this civic virtue. However, it was the public opinion polls increasingly found on the pages of newspapers and in radio and television reports that inserted the question of the value of the opinions of average Germans into contemporary discourse. In the process, the polls and polling institutions helped to lend a new shape to the public sphere of the Federal Republic, and laid the groundwork for the more active participation in the political process that was to mark West German culture in the late 1960s and 1970s.

CONCLUSION

SURVEYS, RISK SOCIETES, AND THE EMERGENCE OF A DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC IN WEST GERMANY

In 1945, fresh from his experiences leading an opinion research unit in the Middle East, American sociologist Stuart Dodd proposed that the United Nations establish a worldwide system of public opinion polling.¹ An international body of experts would ensure that polls in each nation met scientific standards and accurately measured levels of resistance to a peaceful and democratic world order. Dodd's article suggested that the greatest threats to this world order would come from below, in the form of recalcitrance and bitterness on the part of the citizens of individual nations. In this vision, opinion researchers like Dodd himself would be the first line of defense against another world war, because they would identify potential risks before they came to fruition. Importantly, these risks, though national in origin, were potentially global in impact: the attitudes of Germans or Americans, two groups explicitly mentioned by Dodd, could affect developments far beyond their national borders.

Over four decades later, German sociologist Ulrich Beck described a new stage in the evolution of modern society. In his now-classic 1986 book *Risikogesellschaft* (Risk Society), Beck argued that the conditions of advanced industrial societies in the late twentieth century demanded a global outlook.² Threats to industrial societies had formerly revolved around the scarcity of essential items, and improvements in technology allowed for the

¹ Dodd, "A Barometer of International Security."

² Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (London: Sage, 1992).

implementation of wealth distribution policies. In the later decades of the twentieth century, however, much of the population of Europe and North America, having nearly solved the problem of material scarcity, faced new threats from the environmental effects of industrialization and those same technological advances. Solutions to these modern risks required a willingness by states and individuals to reflect on the problems created through modernization and the forward march of science (what Beck termed “reflexive modernity”) and to operate as a “global risk society” to address the often barely perceptible threats of toxins and dangers introduced by industrial farming, nuclear proliferation, and other elements of “progress.”

Although Beck was focused above all on environmental degradation and biological contamination, his theorization of a global risk society helps to contextualize the institutionalization of public opinion polling in western Europe after World War II. First, as this dissertation has shown, the methodological advances within the field of opinion research that occurred during the 1930s and early 1940s owed much of their energy to a global (predominately trans-Atlantic) circulation of ideas and academics. And while polling was already in use in Britain and France before 1945, it was the perceived need to address the possibility of a resurgence of fascism that prompted the introduction of large-scale public opinion research to the continent, with a focus on western Germany. The establishment of the discipline of public opinion polling in West Germany was thus an early moment of crystallization of a global risk society based not on environmental concerns, as Beck described in the later twentieth century, but on the desire to maintain peace and geopolitical equilibrium.

Beck's theory also helps clarify the sometimes contradictory behavior of social scientific experts as they helped to institutionalize public opinion polling in West Germany and beyond. On the one hand, in Beck's conception, scientists are accorded the responsibility of measuring and determining "acceptable levels" of toxins.³ They become the privileged arbiters of a body of knowledge that few understand, yet that has very real consequences for ordinary people. In West Germany, public opinion researchers presented themselves as a particular type of scientist, one that possessed the technical expertise to assess the political consciousness of the German people and the risk of anti-democratic sentiment. In the process, they also created their own version of "acceptable levels" of this risk, a scale which could be modulated depending on the audience for, and purpose of, their polls. For internal audiences, such as the Adenauer government in the case of Emnid and the Allensbach Institute and the German academic community in the case of the Frankfurt School, West German opinion research institutions tended to highlight the risks they discovered, arguing that the existence of, for example, remnants of anti-semitism and fascism justified their own work. But when West Germany's international standing was at stake, these same institutions often minimized the significance of such discoveries.

This application of social scientific tools, including public opinion research, within Germany and eventually across Europe in surveys like the Eurobarometer, had its roots in the methodological and institutional innovations of Paul Lazarsfeld, the utopian vision of Stuart Dodd, and the energetic use of public opinion research by the American administration in western Germany after World War II. Although it was George Gallup who established (or, in the case of Emnid, purchased) affiliate research institutes around the

³ Beck 57-61, 64.

globe, eventually helping to make large-scale cross-national surveys possible, it was Lazarsfeld who most directly influenced the way that opinion researchers asked questions and analyzed responses. Dodd's zealous promotion of opinion research as a tool of democratic governance and "a barometer of international security" was backed by his experiences in the Middle East. And without the financial and administrative support of American occupation officials, it is hard to imagine public opinion research taking on the significance it did in postwar European, and especially German, political culture. The survey units of OMGUS and HICOG introduced polling on a large scale to ordinary Germans, supported innovative opinion research projects like the Frankfurt School's Group Experiment, and funded conferences and organizations devoted to the expansion of empirical social research, including the Weinheim Conference in 1951. In doing so, they helped make West Germans one of the most surveyed populations in history.

As this dissertation has shown, many politicians, academics, and social scientists on opposing ends of the political spectrum shared one sentiment after World War II: a fear of the masses. American support of public opinion research in West Germany was so robust largely because of fears of German revanchism and resistance to democracy, and this distrust would continue to characterize opinion research even after native West German polling institutes had taken the lead. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann and Erich Peter Neumann of the Allensbach Institute were particularly vocal in their concern about the political immaturity of West Germans. Well known for their close collaboration with the conservative Christian Democratic Union and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's government, the Neumanns lamented the decline of German education and the supposed loss of

qualities, such as a strong work ethic, that had formerly constituted the German identity.⁴ More importantly, they characterized German consumers and citizens as “dangerous” because of their resistance to sharing their actual opinions with researchers.⁵ Pollsters had to develop specialized methods in order to discover the truth. Despite their position at the opposite end of the political spectrum, the Marxist-influenced members of the Institut für Sozialforschung in Frankfurt shared this fundamentally suspicious outlook. Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and their colleagues designed their own opinion research project, the Group Experiment, to address the failings of traditional survey methodologies. They suspected that interviews conducted in a dynamic group setting would reveal that Germans were even more anti-semitic and resistant to democracy than other polls suggested, and indeed that is what they found.

The most prominent West German opinion researchers of the 1950s also concurred that Germans, not foreigners, should manage the study of German attitudes and opinions. Despite agreeing fundamentally with the American uncertainty about the German capacity to embrace liberal democracy, the leaders of the Allensbach and Emnid institutes sought to arrogate the right to investigate this claim to themselves. Partly this was for political reasons: as the Neumanns and Karl von Stackelberg of Emnid argued to Adenauer, the American government should not have greater knowledge of the German people than did the German government itself. The Neumanns and von Stackelberg were also convinced that surveys left in the hands of the western Allies were prone to misinterpretation. In an

⁴ See Institut für Demoskopie, *Die Soziale Mentalität 1962: Ergebnisse einer Repräsentativ-Umfrage*, 5-6, BAK ZSg 132/2886 (IfD #1006).

⁵ Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, Referat auf der Tagung des Arbeitskreises für Betriebswirtschaftliche Markt- und Absatzforschung in Stuttgart, 24 February 1956, p. 2. IfZ ED 117/75, Politische Meinungsforschung/Informations- u. Pressedienst des Instituts für Demoskopie, Sept. 49 – April 58.

interconnected world, unflattering poll results could create international scandals and bring harsh censure to the German people and their leaders. Rather than speaking to the German people themselves, much of the work of German pollsters was in fact intended to respond to or preempt international scrutiny.

The rise of public opinion research over the course of the 1950s did have a lasting effect on political culture within West Germany, however. This dissertation demonstrates that, despite their lack of faith in the democratic potential of West Germans, these same opinion researchers inadvertently set the stage for a popular democratic movement many years before the protests of the late 1960s and 1970s. As public opinion polling gained increasing media attention throughout the 1950s, discussion about the true source of public opinion in a democracy increased. Debates about the rights of each individual to his or her own opinion and the weight that should be accorded to those opinions in turn helped nourish public discussion forums like the *Mittwochgespräche* in Cologne. Although such efforts remained halting and limited, this development offers a counterpoint to the pollsters' own arguments about the dangerous level of apathy among the population. It also challenges assertions by many historians and members of the generation of 1968 about the simple "restoration" of authoritarian tendencies during the 1950s. As I have argued, a public sphere based on the exchange of differing opinions was indeed beginning to be assembled before the 1960s, and polling was part of what pulled it together.

Although their Group Experiment project had been grounded in suspicion of the German people, Theodor Adorno and his colleagues at the reconstituted Frankfurt School had inadvertently laid out the theoretical basis for the development of this nascent public sphere. According to the Frankfurt School researchers, individuals could not themselves

produce public opinion, and as a result they were not the proper subject of public opinion research. Instead, Adorno and his colleagues argued, public opinion was the product of collectives. In *Gruppenexperiment*, they emphasized that individual opinions were constrained by what was considered acceptable for a group as whole. But their theory also had a positive implication, one that more accurately reflects what was possible in the 1950s. In this interpretation, group discussions and the exchange of opinions among individuals certainly presented constraints on opinion expression - but they also presented opportunities for growth. As the proliferation of public opinion research in West German government and media overcame older notions of public opinion and made the views of the average German valid and worthy of consideration, energy directed towards the consolidation of a political culture based on tolerance and the exchange of differing opinions also increased.

An understanding of the history and impact of public opinion research in West Germany also offers a fresh perspective on another international development in which Germany has been centrally involved: European integration. The hopes and fears that prompted the implementation of public opinion research in West Germany eventually motivated the use of opinion research by those advocating European economic and political unity. In the project of European unification, as in the political transformation of western Germany, the themes of trust in science, fear of the masses, and interest in building an active democratic public sphere characterized the application of polling. Throughout western Europe, pro-integration politicians and observers believed that the foundation for a lasting peace must be built by experts and institutions rather than entrusted to the common man. They thus promoted western European unity as a deterrent against another

war on the continent, and social scientific expertise was called upon in the service of this goal, approximating even more closely a geopolitically motivated global risk society as described by Beck.⁶

In 1962, the Press and Information Office of the Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC) organized a survey on Attitudes Towards Europe (ATE) among its member states.⁷ The ATE survey was the earliest systematic, multinational study of attitudes toward a united Europe and a precursor of the Eurobarometer, a poll conducted twice a year among members of the EEC, and later of the European Union, since 1973.⁸ Within West Germany, Emnid and Allensbach polls, among others, had already begun tracing the rise and fall of opinions about a European community, and particularly about the relationship with France. In conjunction with other long-running surveys that probed West German allegiance to western liberal democracy and its foremost exponent, the United States, such polls helped statesmen and civilian observers interpret West

⁶ Walter Lipgens, *A History of European Integration 1945-1947: The Formation of the European Unity Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). More recently, historians have emphasized the pre-war intellectual roots of efforts to unite Europe, as in Christian Bailey, "The Continuities of West German History: Conceptions of Europe, Democracy and the West in Interwar and Postwar Germany," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 36, Jahrgang H. 4 (Oct. – Dec. 2010): 567-596. However, there is no denying that World War II, as it was in so many areas of life, was a transformative event and a key impetus for actually realizing the hopes and dreams of the pre-war era.

⁷ Press and Information Service of the European Communities, *Attitudes towards Europe* (1962). GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA0078 Data file version 1.0.1, doi: 10.4232/1.10850. The European Commission's use of public opinion research beginning in the 1960s was a relatively late instance of the growing adoption of social scientific methodologies in the pursuit of a more peaceful world. Perhaps most prominently, the 1950s had seen the newly-created United Nations commit significant resources to UNESCO, its agency dedicated to promoting educational, scientific, and cultural reforms. For an examination of some of the ambitious social scientific efforts of UNESCO, as well as the challenges these efforts faced, see Perrin Selcer, *Patterns of Science: Developing Knowledge for a World Community at Unesco* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2011).

⁸ Anja Kruke, "Aufmerksamkeit für Europa. Eurobarometer, empirische Sozialforschung und die Europäische Kommission, 1958-1979," *Comparativ: Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung* 21 (2011): 62-80.

German willingness to embrace a new distribution of power. The exploratory ATE survey and eventually the Eurobarometer thus institutionalized among the members of the future European Union an approach to understanding and shaping political culture that had been attempted in West Germany since 1945. By using “scientific” opinion polls to assess the mass publics of member states, the European Commission hoped to gain the support of those publics and shape national populations into a more unified European collective. These aims were, as always in the field of opinion research, paradoxical in their insistence both on the democratic function of the polls, through which ordinary citizens were supposedly given a voice they might not have been able to exercise otherwise, and on the power of opinion researchers to help their clients mold opinions.

Given these goals, the results of the ATE survey were disappointing. Respondents showed a “lack of passion, lack of curiosity” for the Commission and its goal of a united Europe.⁹ Only a minority were knowledgeable about, or even interested in, the actual activities and institutions of the European Commission, despite the robust media outreach strategy of the Commission’s Press and Information Office and the relative salience of debates about the role of the Commission in contemporary newspapers. Readers of this dissertation will recognize these concerns about the ignorance and apathy of the surveyed population as anxieties that also had guided opinion research among West Germans since 1945. The results of the ATE survey aligned with the many polls since the early 1950s, especially those conducted by Emnid and the Allensbach Institute, which identified a

⁹ N. Piers Ludlow, “Frustrated Ambitions: The European Commission and the Formation of a European Identity, 1958-1967,” Marie-Therese Bitsch, Wilfried Loth, and Raymond Poidevin, eds., *Institutions Europeennes et Identites Europeennes* (Brussels: Emile Bruylant, 1998): 307-325, 316-17.

persistent lack of political knowledge and interest among West Germans.¹⁰ In both the case of the West German polls and the survey among members of the EEC, purveyors of representative survey research presented the identification of levels of support for a given policy or regime as one of the primary functions of public opinion polling and one of the chief metrics for determining risk to the political system.

Whether polls have actually helped promote a more homogeneous European identity or, as in Germany, fostered the emergence of an active debate about the value of expert versus lay opinion is a question worthy of its own dissertation. Nevertheless, the evolution and effects of public opinion research in West Germany point to a nuanced process that has mitigated the risks to political order through a feedback mechanism between the pollsters and the polled - what scholar Ian Hacking has called "looping effects."¹¹ Although it is true that polls, especially those related to the German past, helped to shape what was permissible to say in public after 1945, the subjects of opinion research have in turn influenced how polls are conducted. Whether their concerns were exaggerated or not, fears of the German masses and their capacity to consciously or unconsciously mislead researchers prompted continual efforts to develop new modes and lines of questioning and analysis, which in turn invited new variations on responses, reinvigorated popular and academic critiques of the polls, and again pushed to the fore debates about the role and characteristics of public opinion in a democracy.

¹⁰ See, for example, the low number of respondents able to identify NATO or explain the basic contours of the proposal to create a European army in the report by Emnid, "Die Kenntnis des aktuellen politischen Vokabulars bei der Bevölkerung des Bundesgebietes," *EMNID-Informationen* Nr. 25 from 19 June 1954, 3.

¹¹ Ian Hacking, "The Looping Effects of Human Kinds," in Dan Sperber, David Premack, and Ann James Premack, eds., *Causal Cognition: A Multi-disciplinary Debate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): 351-383.

REFERENCES

I. Archives

Germany

Archive of the Institut für Demoskopie, Allensbach
Archive of the Institut für Sozialforschung, Frankfurt (IfS Archive)
Bundesarchiv, Koblenz (BAK)
Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar
Freiburg Universitätsarchiv
Haus der Geschichte Informationzentrum/Mediathek, Bonn
Institut für Zeitgeschichte, München (IfZ)
Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt

Austria

Archiv für die Geschichte der Soziologie in Österreich, Graz, http://agso.uni-graz.at/marienthal/archiv/institut_fuer_demoskopie_allensbach/korrespondenz_paul_lazarsfeld/

United States

Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, New York
Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
National Archives and Records Administration of the United States, College Park, Maryland (NARA II)

II. Periodicals

Der Spiegel
Die Gegenwart
Die Zeit
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie
The New York Times

III. Published Primary Sources

Adorno, Theodor. "Reply to Peter R. Hofstätter's Critique of *Group Experiment*." *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*. Edited and translated by Jeffrey Olick and Andrew Perrin. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010: 197-209.

-----, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*. Translated by Henry W. Pickford. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

- . "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America." In *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960*, edited by Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn. Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1968.
- Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. *Briefwechsel 1927-1969, Band II: 1938-1944*, edited by Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004.
- Adorno, Theodor, Else-Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Sanford. *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Harper & Row, 1950.
- Berelson, Bernard, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee. *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Election*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954.
- Boberach, Heinz, ed. *Meldungen aus dem Reich: Auswahl aus den geheimen Lageberichten des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1939-1944*. Neuwied and Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand, 1965.
- Cantril, Hadley. *The Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940.
- Crespi, Leo. "The Interviewer Effect in Polling." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1948): 99-111.
- . "The Influence of Military Government Sponsorship in German Opinion Polling." *International Journal of Opinion and Attitude Research*, 4 (1950): 151-178.
- Deutschland-Berichte der Demokratischen Partei Deutschlands (Sopade) 1934-1940*. Salzhausen: Verlag Petra Nertelbeck, 1980.
- Dodd, Stuart. "A Barometer of International Security." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1945): 194-200.
- Dodd, Stuart and assistants. *A Pioneer Radio Poll in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine*. Palestine: The Government Printer, 1943.
- Gallup, George and Saul Forbes Rae. *The Pulse of Democracy: The Public-Opinion Poll and How It Works*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989.
- Hennis, Wilhelm. *Meinungsforschung und repräsentative Demokratie: zur Kritik politischer Umfragen*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1957.

- Hofstätter, Peter R. "On *Group Experiment* by F. Pollock: A Critical Appraisal." In *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*, edited and translated by Jeffrey Olick and Andrew Perrin. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Huey, George H. "Some Principles of Field Administration in Large-Scale Surveys." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1947): 254-263.
- Institut für Demoskopie. *Das Gesetz der grossen Zahl: Grundlagen der Demoskopie*. Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1953.
- Institut zur Förderung Öffentlicher Angelegenheiten. *Empirische Sozialforschung: Meinungs- und Marktforschung: Methoden und Probleme*. Frankfurt am Main: Institut zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten, 1952.
- Jahoda, Marie, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Hans Zeisel. *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal. Ein soziographischer Versuch über die Wirkungen langdauernder Arbeitslosigkeit*. Leipzig: Hirzel Verlag, 1933.
- König, Rene. *Schriften Band 19 – Briefwechsel Band 1*, edited by Mario and Oliver König. Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000.
- *Praktische Sozialforschung: Das Interview: Formen – Technik – Auswertung*. Dortmund: Ardey Verlag, 1952.
- Kulka, Otto Dov and Eberhard Jäckel, eds. *The Jews in the Secret Nazi Reports on Popular Opinion in Germany, 1933-1945*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul. "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir." In *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960*, edited by Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn. Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1968.
- "The Obligations of the 1950 Pollster to the 1984 Historian." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter 1950-51): 617-638.
- "The Controversy over Detailed Interviews: An Offer for Negotiation," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 8 (1944): 38-60.
- "The Art of Asking WHY in Marketing Research: Three Principles Underlying the Formulation of Questionnaires." *National Marketing Review*, Vol. 1 (1935): 26-38.

- Lazarsfeld, Paul and Arthur Kornhauser. "The Analysis of Consumer Actions." In *The Language of Social Research: A Reader in the Methodology of Social Research*, edited by Paul Lazarsfeld and Morris Rosenberg. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1955: 392-404.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul and Marjorie Fisk. "The 'Panel' as a New Tool for Measuring Opinion." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2 (1938): 596-612.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. "The Process of Opinion and Attitude Formation." In *The Language of Social Research: A Reader in the Methodology of Social Research*, edited by Paul Lazarsfeld and Morris Rosenberg. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1955: 231-241.
- . *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944.
- Le Bon, Gustave. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*. New York: Macmillan, 1896.
- Neumann, Erich Peter and Elisabeth Noelle. *Umfragen über Adenauer: Ein Porträt in Zahlen*. Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1961.
- Noelle, Elisabeth. *Umfragen in der Massengesellschaft. Einführung in die Methoden der Demoskopie*. Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1963.
- . "Über den methodischen Fortschritt in der Umfrageforschung," *Dialectica*, Vol. 16 (1962): 307-28.
- Noelle, Elisabeth and Erich Peter Neumann, eds. *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls 1947-1966*. Translated by Gerard Finan. Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1967.
- . *Jahrbuch der Öffentlichen Meinung 1947-1955*. Allensbach: Verlag für Demoskopie, 1956.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. *Die Erinnerungen*. Munich: Herbig, 2006.
- Pollock, Friedrich, et al. *Gruppenexperiment: Ein Studienbericht, Bearbeitet von Friedrich Pollock*. Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955.
- Press- and Information Service of the European Communities. *Attitudes towards Europe* (1962). Cologne: GESIS Data Archive. ZA0078 Data file version 1.0.1, doi: 10.4232/1.10850.
- Public Opinion Survey Section, Psychological Warfare Branch, Allied Force Headquarters. *Surveys of Public Opinion Held in Sicily November 1943-January 1944*. Palermo: I.R.E.S., 1944.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union," January 6, 1941. <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/od4frees.html>.

The United States Strategic Bombing Survey. *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on German Morale*, 2 Vols. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, 1947.

Schmidtchen, Gerhard. *Die befragte National: Über den Einfluss der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik*. Freiburg: Verlag Rombach, 1959.

Schmitt, Carl. *The Concept of the Political*. Translated by George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Sternberger, Dolf. *Dreizehn Politische Radio-Reden 1946*. Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1947.

von Friedeburg, Ludwig. "Wie war das damals?" *Fünfzig Jahre nach Weinheim: Empirische Markt- und Sozialforschung gestern, heute, morgen*, edited by Heinz Sahner. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2002.

von Salomon, Ernst. *Der Fragebogen*. Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1951.

von Stackelberg, Karl Georg. *Souffleur auf politischer Bühne: Von der Macht der Meinungen und den Meinungen der Mächtigen*. Munich: Verlag Moderne Industrie, 1975.

Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln, "Ernst von Salomon und sein Roman 'Der Fragebogen,'" In *Die Streit der Frühen Jahre: Die Kölner Mittwochgespräche 1950-1956*. 1993. CD.

Wette, Wolfram, Ricarda Bremer, and Detlef Vogel, eds. *Das letzte halbe Jahr: Stimmungsberichte der Wehrmachtpropaganda 1944/45*. Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2001.

Secondary Literature

Albrecht, Clemens, et al. *Die intellektuelle Gründung der Bundesrepublik: Eine Wirkungsgeschichte der Frankfurter Schule*. Frankfurt: Campus, 1999.

Almond, Gabriel and Sidney Verba. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2d ed. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1968.

Bailey, Christian. "The Continuities of West German History: Conceptions of Europe, Democracy and the West in Interwar and Postwar Germany." *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 36 (2010): 567-596.

- Bankier, David. *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion under Nazism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
- Barrows, Susanna. *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth-Century France*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Bauerkämper, Arnd, Konrad Jarausch, and Marcus Payk, eds. *Demokratiewunder: Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands 1945-1970*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005.
- Beck, Ulrich. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Translated by Mark Ritter. London: Sage, 1992.
- Becker, Jörg. *Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann: Demoskopie zwischen NS-Ideologie und Konservatismus*. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2013.
- Benzer, Matthias. *The Sociology of Theodor Adorno*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Berghahn, Volker. "Meinungsforschung im 'Dritten Reich': Die Mundpropaganda-Aktion der Wehrmacht im letzten Kriegshalbjahr." *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* Vol. 1 (1967): 83-118.
- Bessel, Richard and Dirk Schumann, eds. *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Betts, Paul. *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Bogart, Leo. "The Pollster and the Nazis." *Commentary* 92 (1991): 47-50
- Bosch, Frank and Peter Hoeres, eds. *Außenpolitik im Medienzeitalter: Vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013.
- Calhoun, Craig, ed. *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992.
- Capshew, James H. *Psychologists on the March: Science, Practice, and Professional Identity in America, 1929-1969*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Chappel, James. "Catholicism and the Economy of Miracles in West Germany, 1920-1960." *New German Critique* 126, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2015): 9-40.
- Claussen, Detlev. "Intellectual Transfer: Theodor W. Adorno's American Experience." *New German Critique*, No. 97 (2006): 5-14.

- Collomp, Catherine. "Anti-Semitism among American Labor': a study by the refugee scholars of the Frankfurt School of Sociology at the end of World War II." *Labor History*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (2011): 417-39.
- Converse, Jean. *Survey Research in the United States: Roots and Emergence 1890-1960*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Dahrendorf, Ralf. *Society and Democracy in Germany*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1967.
- Domenico, Roy Palmer. *Italian Fascists on Trial 1943-48*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991.
- Doob, Leonard. "Goebbels's Principles of Propaganda." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 14 (1950): 419-442.
- Eisenberg, Carolyn. *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany, 1944-1949*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Fay, Jennifer. *Theaters of Occupation: Hollywood and the Reeducation of Postwar Germany*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Fleck, Christian. *A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences: Robber Barons, the Third Reich and the Invention of Empirical Social Research*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011.
- Forner, Sean. *German Intellectuals and the Challenge of Democratic Renewal: Culture and Politics after 1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Foschepoth, Josef. *Überwachtes Deutschland: Post- und Telefonüberwachung in der alten Bundesrepublik*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Frei, Norbert. *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration*. Translated by Joel Golb. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, "Fritz Eberhard Gestorben." *Das Historische Stichwort*, 29 March 1982.
- Fulbrook, Mary. *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

- Fulda, Bernhard. "The Market Place of Political Opinions: Public Opinion Polling and its Publics in Transnational Perspective, 1930-1950." *Comparativ: Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung* 21:4 (2011): 115-33.
- . *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Gellately, Robert. *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Gerhardt, Uta. *Denken der Demokratie: Die Soziologie im atlantischen Transfer des Besatzungsregimes*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007.
- . "Der Einfluss der USA." In *Fünfzig Jahre nach Weinheim: Empirische Markt- und Sozialforschung gestern, heute, morgen*, edited by Heinz Sahner. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2002, 29-49.
- Gerhardt, Uta and Alexia Arnold. "Von Chicago nach Darmstadt: Das Verhältnis zwischen der Chicago-Soziologie und der Darmstadt-Studie. Zur Kontinuität und Diskontinuität der Gesellschaftskonzeption(en) im Blickfeld der Stadt-Land-Thematik." In *Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Rüder vom Bruch, et al. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006, 195-222.
- Ginsborg, Paul. *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Goodman, David. *Radio's Civic Ambition: American Broadcasting and Democracy in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Greenberg, Udi. "Militant Democracy and Human Rights." *New German Critique* Vol. 42, No. 3 (2015): 169-195.
- . *The Weimar Century: German Emigres and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Grube, Norbert. "Targeting and Educating Consumers in West Germany: Market Research by the Allensbach Institute up to the 1970s." In *The Voice of the Citizen Consumer: A History of Market Research, Consumer Movements, and the Political Public Sphere*, edited by Kerstin Bruckweh. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 75-95.
- . "Das Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach und die 'Deutschen Lehrerbrief' als Instrumente staatsbürgerlicher Erziehung? Ansprüche und Umsetzungen 1947 bis 1969." *Jahrbuch für historische Bildungsforschung* 13 (2007): 267-88.

Hacking, Ian. "The Looping Effects of Human Kinds." In *Causal Cognition: A Multi-disciplinary Debate*, edited by Dan Sperber, David Premack, and Ann James Premack. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 351-383.

----- *The Taming of Chance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Hake, Sabine. *Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany: Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

Haskell, Thomas, ed. *The Authority of Experts: Studies in History and Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Henn, Matt. "Opinion Polling in Central and Eastern Europe under Communism." *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (1998): 229-240.

Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln. *Freier Eintritt, Freie Fragen, Freie Antworten: Die Kölner Mittwochsgespräche 1950-1956*. Cologne: Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, 1991.

Hoeres, Peter. *Außenpolitik und Öffentlichkeit: Massenmedien, Meinungsforschung und Arkanpolitik in den deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen von Erhard bis Brandt*. Munich: Oldernbourg Verlag, 2013.

Hogan, J. Michael. "George Gallup and the Rhetoric of Scientific Democracy." *Communication Monographs*, 64:2 (1997): 161-179.

Igo, Sarah. *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Jarausch, Konrad. *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Jarausch, Konrad, ed. *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*. New York: Berghahn Books, 1999.

Jarausch, Konrad and Michael Geyer. *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Jay, Martin. *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973.

Jonsson, Stefan. *Crowds and Democracy: The Idea and Image of the Masses from Revolution to Fascism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.

Keller, Felix. *Archäologie der Meinungsforschung: Mathematik und die Erzählbarkeit des Politischen*. Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 2001.

- Kellner, Douglas. *Critical Theory, Marxism, and Modernity*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Kershaw, Ian. *Hitler, The Germans, and The Final Solution*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- . *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002.
- Kisatsky, Deborah. *The United States and the European Right, 1945-1955*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2005.
- Kruke, Anja. "Aufmerksamkeit für Europa. Eurobarometer, empirische Sozialforschung und die Europäische Kommission, 1958-1979." *Comparativ: Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden Gesellschaftsforschung* 21 (2011): 62-80.
- . *Demoskopie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Meinungsforschung, Parteien und Medien, 1949-1990*. Düsseldorf, Droste Verlag, 2007.
- . "Western Integration vs. Reunification? Analyzing the Polls of the 1950s." *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2007): 43-67.
- Kruke, Anja and Benjamin Ziemmann. "Observing the Sovereign: Opinion Polls and the Restructuring of the Body Politic in West Germany, 1945-1990." In *Engineering Society: The Role of the Human and Social Sciences in Modern Societies, 1880-1980*, edited by Kerstin Brückweh, et al. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 234-51.
- ."Meinungsumfragen in der Konkurrenzdemokratie. Auswirkungen der Demoskopie auf die Volksparteien und den politischen Massenmarkt 1945/49-1990," *Historical Research/Historical Sozialforschung*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2001): 171-9.
- Levy, Alexandra. "Promoting Democracy and Denazification: American Policymaking and German Public Opinion." *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 26, Issue 4 (2015): 614-635.
- Lipgens, Walter. *A History of European Integration 1945-1947: The Formation of the European Unity Movement*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.
- Ludlow, N. Piers. "Frustrated Ambitions: The European Commission and the Formation of a European Identity, 1958-1967." In *Institutions Europeennes et Identites Europeennes*, edited by Marie-Therese Bitsch, Wilfried Loth, and Raymond Poidevin. Brussels: Emile Bruylant, 1998, 307-25.
- MacIsaac, David. *Strategic Bombing in World War II: The Story of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976.

- Mausbach, Wilfried. *Zwischen Morgenthau und Marshall: Das wirtschaftspolitische Deutschlandkonzept der USA 1944-1947*. Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1996.
- Mergel, Thomas. *Propaganda nach Hitler. Eine Kulturgeschichte des Wahlkampfes in der Bundesrepublik 1949-1990*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010.
- Merritt, Anna J. and Richard L. Merritt. *Public Opinion in Semisovereign Germany: The HICOG Surveys, 1949-1955*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980.
- . *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970.
- Merritt, Richard L. *Democracy Imposed: U.S. Occupation Policy and the German Public, 1945-1949*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Mills, C. Wright. *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Moeller, Robert, ed. *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- Morrison, David E. *The Search for a Method: Focus Groups and the Development of Mass Communication Research*. Luton: University of Luton Press, 1998.
- Moses, A. Dirk. *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- . "The Forty-Fivers: A Generation between Fascism and Democracy." *German Politics and Society*, Vol. 17, no. 1 (1999): 105-27.
- Niemann, Heinz. *Meinungsforschung in der DDR. Die geheimen Berichte des Instituts für Meinungsforschung an das Politbüro der SED*. Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1993.
- Nolte, Paul. *Die Ordnung der deutschen Gesellschaft: Selbstentwurf und Selbstbeschreibung im 20. Jahrhundert*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 2000.
- Nordberg, Jakob. *Sociability and its Enemies: German Political Theory after 1945*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2014.
- Olick, Jeffrey and Andrew Perrin. *Guilt and Defense: On the Legacies of National Socialism in Postwar Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- . "Non-Public Opinion: Adorno and the Frankfurt School's Group Experiment." *The Hedgehog Review* (2010): 79-88.
- Parkinson, Anna. *An Emotional State: The Politics of Emotion in Postwar West German Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015.

- Platz, Johannes. *Die Praxis der kritischen Theorie. Angewandte Sozialwissenschaft und Demokratie in der frühen Bundesrepublik 1950-1960*. Diss. Universität Trier, 2012.
- Porter, Theodore. "Statistical Utopianism in an Age of Aristocratic Efficiency." *Osiris*, Vol. 17 (2002): 210-27.
- Reinecke, Christiane. "Statistiken der Liebe, oder: Dr. Kinsey fragt die Frauen. Umfrageforschung und ihre mediale Vermarktung in transnationaler Perspektive." *Comparativ* 21 (2011): 29-44.
- Riley, John W. "Opinion Research in Liberated Normandy." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 12, No. 6 (1947): 698-703.
- Rinauro, Sandro. *Storia del sondaggio d'opinione in Italia, 1936-1994: dal lungo rifiuto alla Repubblica dei sondaggi*. Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze lettere ed arti, 2002.
- Rogers, Everett M. *A History of Communication Study*. New York: The Free Press, 1994.
- Rose, Nikolas. "Governing by Numbers: Figuring out Democracy." *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 7 (1991): 673-92.
- Roth, Dieter. *Empirische Wahlforschung: Ursprung, Theorien, Instrumente und Methoden*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008.
- Schildt, Axel. *Ankunft im Westen. Ein Essay zur Erfolgsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1999.
- . *Moderne Zeiten. Freizeit, Massenmedien und 'Zeitgeist' in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre*. Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1995.
- Schissler, Hanna, ed. *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Schwartz, Thomas. *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Selcer, Perrin. *Patterns of Science: Developing Knowledge for a World Community at Unesco*. Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 2011.
- . "The View from Everywhere: Disciplining Diversity in Post-World War II International Social Science." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2009): 309-29.
- Sills, David L. "Paul F. Lazarsfeld, 1901-1976." In *Biographical Memories* V.56. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1987.

- Simpson, Christopher. "Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of Silence' and the Historical Context of Communication Theory." *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (1996): 149-73.
- . *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare 1945-1960*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Spicka, Mark. "Gender, Political Discourse, and the CDU/CSU Vision of the Economic Miracle, 1949-1957." *German Studies Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2002): 305-32.
- Stahl, Matthias. "Die Weinheimer Tagungen: Geschichte der Zusammenarbeit zwischen akademischer und privatwirtschaftlicher Forschung." In *Qualitätssicherung in der Umfrageforschung: Neue Herausforderungen für die Markt- und Sozialforschung*, edited by Matthias Stahl and Frank Faulbaum. Wiesbaden: GESIS-Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012.
- Steinberg, Rainer. "'Rangierbahnhof des Geistes.' Die Kölner Mittwochsgespräche 1950-1956." *Geschichte im Westen* 7 (1992): 186-201.
- . "Kölns 'Kopfbahnhof': Die Mittwochsgespräche 1950-1956." In *Freier Eintritt, Freie Fragen, Freie Antworten: Die Kölner Mittwochsgespräche 1950-1956*, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln. Cologne: Verlag der Mayerschen Buchhandlung, 1991.
- Stephan, Frederick F. "History of the Uses of Modern Sampling Procedures." *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, Vol. 43, No. 241 (1948): 12-39.
- Tent, James. *Mission on the Rhine: "Reeducation" and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Thiel, Marcus, ed. *The "Militant Democracy" Principle in Modern Democracies*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009.
- Unger, Aryeh. "The Public Opinion Reports of the Nazi Party." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 29 (Winter 1965-66): 565-82.
- Verheyen, Nina. *Diskussionslust: Eine Kulturgeschichte des 'besseren Arguments' in Westdeutschland*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010.
- von Hodenberg, Christina. *Konsens und Krise: Eine Geschichte der westdeutschen Medienöffentlichkeit 1945-1973*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006.
- Müller, Jan-Werner. *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

- Wheatland, Thomas. *The Frankfurt School in Exile*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Wiesen, Jonathan. *Creating the Nazi Marketplace: Commerce and Consumption in the Third Reich*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- , "Germany's PR Man: Julius Klein and the Making of Transatlantic Memory." In *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, edited by Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweis. New York: Berghahn Books, 2006, 294-308.
- Wiesen, Jonathan and Andrew Zimmerman, eds. "Forum: Surveillance in German History." *German History*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2016): 293-314.
- Wiggershaus, Rolf. *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995.
- Wildt, Michael ed. *Nachrichtendienst, politische Elite und Mordeinheit. Der Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2003.
- Woller, Hans. "Zur Demokratiebereitschaft der Provinz des amerikanischen Besatzungsgebietes. Aus den Stimmungsberichte des Ansbacher Oberbürgermeisters an die Militärregierung 1946-1949." *Vierteljahrsheft für Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1983): 335-64.
- Worrell, Mark. *Dialectic of Solidarity: Labor, Antisemitism, and the Frankfurt School*. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Zatlin, Jonathan. *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Ziege, Eva-Maria. *Antisemitismus und Gesellschaftstheorie: Die Frankfurter Schule im amerikanischen Exil*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2009.
- Ziemann, Benjamin. *Katholische Kirche und Sozialwissenschaften 1945-1975*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007.