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NOTES AND COMMENTS

END OF IDEOLOGY? A TREND ANALYSIS OF COMMUNIST PARTY STRENGTH IN TEN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACIES

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During the early 1960s, a number of prominent political and social theorists argued that one of the major results of the phenomenal economic growth of Western Europe after World War II was the "deradicalization" of politics. Ideology would cease to be a major factor as the radical parties of the left and right responded to a breakdown in traditional class cleavages to pursue "pragmatic" programs of economic reform.[1] More recent studies focusing on value changes (Inglehart, 1971) and capital-labor confrontations (Hibbs, 1976) in these countries suggest, however, that ideological politics has not disappeared. This paper examines trends in strength of the communist parties in ten West European nations to determine whether their hypothesized decline as a result of economic development[2] has occurred.

Communist parties were chosen for the analysis on the basis of two of their characteristics: (1) as revolutionary social movements they require a great deal of commitment from their members (Kriegel, 1972) and are likely to be more susceptible to membership decline if the "new Europe" theorists are correct, and (2) they "remain important agencies for the mobilization of latent discontent and the crystallization of labor-capital cleavages" in advanced industrial societies (Hibbs, 1976:1058).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNIST PARTY STRENGTH

Lipset (1960) argued that sustained economic growth and the relative absence of economic crises combined with increased levels of citizen education result in declines in economic insecurity and high levels of citizen political sophistication. This cluster

of factors associated with "economic development" contributes to the decline of ideologically based politics and to lessened strength for ideological parties:

> The instability of the democratic process in general and the strength of the Communists in particular . . . are clearly related to national levels of economic development including levels of educational attainment. The Communists represent a mass movement in the poorer countries of Europe and elsewhere, but are weak where economic development and educational attainment are high (Lipset, 1960:125).

The continued existence of communist parties in the advanced developed societies is based mainly upon their appeal to the lowest status groups (Lumpenproletariat) and isolated workers.

Noting that Lipset's findings were based upon a sample heavily biased toward Western democracies, Marsh and Parish (1965) challenged the cross-national validity of those findings. Utilizing a large cross-national sample, they found that communist party strength was *positively* related to economic development at the lower levels of development. At the higher levels, however, Lipset's hypothesized inverse relationship was supported by their data.

Seeking a comprehensive theoretical explanation for the Marsh and Parish findings, Benjamin and Kautsky (1968) hypothesized that while communist parties are modernizing movements that aggregate dissatisfaction at all levels of economic development, the dissatisfied segments of society vary. In societies where modernization has not begun, where there has been little impact of western industrialization, there are no communist parties. As modernization begins, intellectuals striving for greater progress join the party. Given the numbers of intellectuals in these societies, the parties are relatively small. With further development, the parties begin to grow as they draw support from more intellectuals, the urban middle strata, and the incipient labor movement, peaking at the next level as they expand their appeal to the workers in largely "antilabor" societies. For the most developed nations, they argue:

> As economic development proceeds, however, these latter groups (small peasants, middle strata of shopkeepers and artisans) are absorbed by the advanced industrial economy, either to disappear or to be converted into farmers or small businessmen, and workers become integrated into the society and are no longer alienated. With high economic development, then, Communist party strength may be expected to be very low (Benjamin and Kautsky, 1968:111, parentheses added).

Hibbs (1973) partially confirmed this hypothesis as part of a massive investigation of political violence. He noted, however, that social mobilization (Deutsch, 1961, 1966) significantly increased the amount of explained variance in communist party size. Although social mobilization has been traditionally linked with economic development, it has been empirically demonstrated to be a separate concept (Hibbs, 1973).[3]

All of the literature cited above, however, has been recently challenged. Hibbs (1976) has demonstrated that strike activity in advanced industrial societies has not declined with economic development. More significantly, Inglehart (1971), seeking an explanation for the radicalism of the late 1960s and early 1970s, predicted that a significant value change is occurring in these countries which is likely to produce further ideological conflict.

Using Maslow's need hierarchy for the theoretical base, Inglehart argued that a postwar generation, socialized during a period of economic abundance and accompanying bourgeois values, has shifted its value priorities to Maslow's highest level. Their accompanying political values are now in conflict with the bourgeois value structure of advanced industrial society, creating a new group to take the place of the traditional de-politicized working class.

ANALYSIS OF TRENDS IN COMMUNIST PARTY STRENGTH

The selection of the sample of ten countries listed in Table 1 was based upon the following criteria: (1) use in other major studies of communist party strength (Lipset, 1960; Benjamin

and Kautsky, 1968; Hibbs, 1973); (2) similarity of historical development, economic structure, and culture relative to other nations; (3) political cultures with a well-defined left tradition and full legal status for the communist parties.[4]

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF SAMPLE WITH OTHER STUDIES CITED

SAMPLE	Lipset* (1960)	Benjamin & Kautsky** (1968)	Hibbs (1973)	Inglehart (1971)	Hibbs (1976)
Austria	Unstable	V	X		
Belgium	Stable	V	X	X	X
Denmark	Stable	V	X		
Finland	Unstable	IV	X		
France	Unstable	IV	X	X	X
Italy	Unstable	IV	X	X	X
Netherlands	Stable	V	X	X	X
Norway	Stable	V	X		X
Sweden	Stable	V	X		X
Switzerland	Stable	V	X		

* Lipset (1960:30,Fn7) classified democracies as stable or unstable based upon whether or not any totalitarian movement received 20 percent of the vote since approximately 1935, and whether or not political democracy continued uninterrupted since WWI.

** Benjamin and Kautsky (1968) classified societies into five types based upon their level of economic development. Type V is the highest type.

Two indicators of communist party strength are used in the trend analysis. The first measure, the percent of votes received by the communist parties, is relatively straightforward. It taps the ability of the Western European Communist party to perform one of its self-appointed tasks—legislative representation.[5]

A second measure,[6] capable of assessing the membership strength of communist parties relative to other actors in the system, is "relative party size." Unlike voting strength, which includes voters who are not communists, this measure taps the "more permanent" strength of the parties.

Relative Party Size $=$ $\dfrac{\text{Estimated Membership of Communist Party}}{\text{Number of Votes Cast for Other Parties in Last Election}}$

This latter measure is based upon the assumption that political systems contain segments of the population that are the revolutionary forces (communist party members), segments against them (those voting for other parties), and a *neutral* segment (those not voting), and hence not included in the measure. This latter part of the population is seen as potentially mobilized by either side, creating a research question as to which side will be able to mobilize them, and under what conditions. It is assumed, moreover, that the parties are open, that is, that they place no upper numerical limit on membership.

In order to determine trends in the two measures of party strength, each was regressed against a third degree polynomial term for time.[7] For each country, the first election during or after 1944 was the initial time point (t=0), with time increased by 1 (t1, t2 . . . tn) for each subsequent election. Each term in the polynomial then indicates a bend in the time line. A country whose best fit trend is a postwar decline in party strength followed by increases would be best described by a second degree polynomial where the least squares estimator for time itself is negative and the estimator for the squared value of time is positive. If the R^2 change due to the square value of time is not significant at the .05 level, then the best fit line is that predicted by Lipset, a declining communist party strength. The third degree value of time (time cubed) will indicate whether any upward movement in party strength is of but a temporary nature.

For each country, the *sign* of the regression coefficient indicates the trend direction, its *magnitude* indicates the rate of change, and the R^2 indicates how well the line/curve fits the strength data. The magnitude of the squared term relative to time itself will provide an indication of how early (in time) the bend occurs in the time line. Similarly, the same comparison should be made for the cubed value of time relative to the other two values.[8]

Thus, if Lipset is correct that the strength of communist parties declines in economically developed societies, the data in Table 2 would show either: (1) a significant negative regression coefficient for time, or (2) a large value for that coefficient

TABLE 2
PREDICTED VALUES OF POLYNOMIAL REGRESSION
PARAMETERS OF COMMUNIST PARTY STRENGTH ON TIME

Country	N	Percent of Votes					Relative Party Size				
		t	t^2	t^3	Constant	R^2	t	t^2	t^3	Constant	R^2
Austria	10	.019	n.s.	n.s.	3.574	.026 n.s.	-.563	.027	n.s.	3.137	.975
Belgium	10	-5.560	1.073	-.063	11.349	.953	-2.055	.373	-.021	3.569	.995
Denmark	11	-2.707	.212	n.s.	10.109	.657	-.310	.020	n.s.	1.269	.835
Finland	10	-.582	n.s.	n.s.	23.243	.495	-.217	n.s.	n.s.	3.207	.504
France	6	-.506	n.s.	n.s.	23.942	.169 n.s.	-.059	n.s.	n.s.	1.873	.521 n.s.
Italy	7	.239	n.s.	n.s.	26.039	.009 n.s.	-1.214	n.s.	n.s.	12.318	.713
Netherlands	9	-2.704	.251	n.s.	9.183	.983	-.317	.025	n.s.	1.005	.948
Norway	8	15.049	.650	n.s.	11.480	.757	-1.264	.249	-.016	2.286	.994
Sweden	9	.122	n.s.	n.s.	3.938	.046 n.s.	-.055	n.s.	n.s.	.833	.273 n.s.
Switzerland	8	-.304	n.s.	n.s.	4.067	.517	-.167	n.s.	n.s.	1.222	.958

relative to the regression coefficient for the squared value of time, indicating a decline followed by a leveling off at a low level.

The Italian communist party experienced a decline in relative strength since WW II, but little change in voting strength. This is somewhat surprising since Italy was classified as both Type IV and unstable (Table 1) and should experience a growing communist party.

The parties in Finland, Switzerland, Denmark, and the Netherlands fit Lipset's findings in varying degrees. In each country, the party shows an initial decline on both indicators of strength (although the decline is relatively small for Finland as demonstrated by the extremely small regression coefficient relative to the constant). The data for Denmark and the Netherlands, however, show increases in both indicators following that decline. The Norwegian party follows a similar pattern on the Voting Percentage indicator, but not in Relative Strength.

The trends in strength for the remaining four countries differ considerably. Belgium experienced an initial decline, followed by growth, and decline again on all indicators of party strength. The large values for R^2 indicate that the third degree polynomial fits quite well in this case. Austria, on the other hand, presents a mixed case. While no significant trend is fit by the polynomial for Vote Percentage, the Austrian communist party shows an increasing trend in the Relative Size measure with a large R^2 indicating a close fit of the regression equation with the data. Variations in the strength of the communist parties of France and Sweden cannot be described by the polynomial regression as seen from the result of the F-test.

CONCLUSIONS

The lack of consistent trends exhibited in the ten countries makes it clear that more research is required before the "end of ideology" - "decline of left extremism" thesis can be accepted. While a certain amount of the disparity is due to country characteristics, the high degree of homogeneity between these countries should have produced more conclusive results. One of the difficulties for future researchers is the lack of theoretical

development concerning the concept of economic development. Will further economic growth produce an end to radicalism? The trends in certain countries seem to support Inglehart's hypothesis that it will not—or will only so long as the value structure supporting increased development carries significant weight. If an economic development variable had been included in place of time, perhaps an answer would be in sight. It is possible that increased left radicalism accompanies economic stagnation in advanced industrial societies. If Inglehart is correct that workers possess bourgeois values, what would be the significance for radical parties of the left, right, or center[9] if the expectations resulting from these values are unmet? By demonstrating that no clear trend seems to exist in the countries examined, further research concerning these questions seems warranted utilizing data showing party choice by occupation and age cohort.

APPENDIX: DATA POINTS AND SOURCES

Data Points:	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	Finland	France	Italy	Neth	Norway	Sweden	Switz	Total, All Countries
1944									X		1
1945	X		X	X				X			4
1946		X			X	X	X				4
1947										X	1
1948				X		X	X		X		4
1949	X	X						X			3
1950		X	X								2
1951					X	X				X	3
1952							X		X		2
1953	X		X			X	X				4
1954		X		X							2
1955										X	1
1956	X				X		X		X		4
1957			X					X			2
1958		X	X	X	X				X		5
1959	X					X				X	3
1960			X						X		2
1961		X						X			2
1962	X			X	X						3
1963						X	X			X	3
1964			X						X		2

APPENDIX: DATA POINTS AND SOURCES (Concluded)

Data Points:	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	Finland	France	Italy	Neth	Norway	Sweden	Switz	Total, All Countries
1965		X						X			2
1966	X		X	X							3
1967					X		X			X	3
1968		X	X		X	X				X	5
1969								X			1
1970	X			X					X		3
1971	X	X	X					X		X	5
1972				X			X	X			3
1973			X		X			X	X		4
1974	X	X									2
1975			X	X						X	3
1976								X			1
N	10	10	11	10	8	8	9	8	10	8	92

Total Sample by country and year.

Data Sources:

Variable	Measure	Source
Relative Party Size	1. Party Size	Estimated membership from *World Strength of Communist Party Organization.* Missing data were estimated using average changes.
	2. Vote for Communist Party	*World Strength...* Missing data filled in from *Keesings Contemporary Archives.*
	3. Total Vote	Computed from votes and percentages of votes for communist party from above sources.
Percentage of vote for communist party		*World Strength ...*; missing data from *Keesings. ...*
		Same as above.
Percentages of votes by non-communist left parties.		Taken directly from *World Strength...* where available. Missing data filled in from *Keesings ...* using parties characterized as "left" in World Strength.

NOTES

1. Hibbs (1973:22) summarized this thesis as follows:

> The "new Europe" is where the growth of affluence is seen to produce social systems in which class conflict is minimized as all classes are integrated into society and polity. So large a proportion of the population is now feeling the advantageous effects of economic development that the age-old obsession with the distribution of profits is weakened and the "modern" concern with development is reinforced. The formerly alienated working class, in the view of these theorists, is now at peace with the industrial system, and idealogy has lost its former relevance as the absence of a suppressed class leaves little hope for radicalism. Rational calculation has come to replace ideology and dogma. . . .

   For the complete arguments, see the essays by Lipset, Dahrendorf, Aron, and Haas in Graubard (1963). For a somewhat different explanation of ideological changes see Bell (1960).

2. In addition to the works cited in Note 1, there is a body of empirical literature (Lipset, 1960; Marsh and Parish, 1965; Benjamin and Kautsky, 1968) that confirms the hypothesized inverse relationship between economic development and communist party strength in the more industrialized nations.

3. O'Keefe (1977) retested Hibbs's empirical model using two time points. He found that while the social mobilization variable produced consistent parameter estimates, the signs of the parameter estimate for the economic development variable changed.

4. The absence of a left tradition and full legal status would appear to significantly affect communist party strength. In the United States, for example, joining the Communist Party is not considered to be a viable political activity. In fact, the socialization process teaches that the Communist Party is an enemy of the democratic traditions in that country. Even during the surge of radicalism in the 1960s, there was little surge in the membership of the CPUSA. Full legal status simply refers to the constitutional or institutional status given to the communist party. The communist party (KPD) in the Federal Republic of Germany was declared and remained illegal for a number of years, and hence was not permitted to openly engage in many of the activities of other European communist parties.

5. A more direct measure, percent of seats won in the lower house, must account for difference in electoral representation laws, some of which were adopted specifically to hinder the opportunities of communist parties. See Rae, 1971.

6. For a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of various measures of communist party strength, see Benjamin and Kautsky (1968) and O'Keefe (1977:27-32). The need for two measures arises from Lipset's (1963) contention that *membership* in left parties would decline in the "new Europe" while voting strength would not. The stability of voting strength is based on the argument that left party programs would adjust (become pragmatic) in response to changing social cleavages.

7. The formula used to evaluate best fit trend lines (curve) is:

$$F = \frac{(R^2 \text{ with } K^{th} \text{ order term}) - (R^2 \text{ without } K^{th} \text{ order term})}{(1-R^2 \text{ with } K^{th} \text{ order term})/(N-K-1)}$$

8. The table below shows an imaginary example using a regression coefficient for time of 2.0 and three values for the regression coefficient for the squared value of time—1.0, 0.5, 0.25. The values in column 1 are the time points. The values in columns 2, 3, and 4 represent the predicted values of the dependent variable (using a constant = 0).

1	2	3	4
	B time = -2.0 B time^2 = 1.0	B time = -2.0 B time^2 = 0.5	B time = -2.0 B time^2 = 0.25
t1	-1.00	-1.50	-1.75
t2	0	-2.00	-3.00
t3	3.00	-3.50	-3.75
t4	8.00	0	-4.00
t5	15.00	2.50	-3.75
t6	26.00	6.00	-3.00
t7	35.00	10.00	-1.75
t8	48.00	16.00	0
t9	63.00	22.50	2.25
t10	80.00	30.00	5.00

9. Lipset (1960) argues that fascism is extremism of the center.

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