use. It is contended, however, that they can substantially increase its effectiveness and reliability when employed in political historiography. The case study in Section III is designed to illustrate these claims in practice, as well as amplify the points made above.

The Election of 1824. The election of 1824 is of considerable interest to historians because it marked the break-up of the one-party rule developing after Jefferson's victory in 1800, because it was the first in which a country-wide popular vote was cast, and because Andrew Jackson, though unsuccessful in his bid for the presidency, was thereby established in national politics on a firm footing. Placing stress upon the latter point, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. stated in his Pulitzer Prize work: "His immense popular vote in 1824 came from his military fame and from the widespread conviction of his integrity." The sentence clearly offers an explicit explanation of voting behavior throughout the country in 1824 and will be analyzed in those terms.

At first sight, Schlesinger's explanation might appear to be of the type which cannot be verified but only argued about. The causal factors, i.e., Jackson's military fame and widespread conviction of his integrity, are of such a highly generalized nature as to make it difficult to measure their impact and separate them out from other possible determinants of voting behavior. Stated in terms of the original formulation, the explanation would force historians to rely upon impressionistic data, and scholars of equal competence might reasonably be expected to offer contradictory albeit plausible estimates of its validity. How, for example, could one even begin to attempt to determine whether an undifferentiated number of men voted for Jackson because they were impressed with his heroism and integrity or because he was, as an alternative hypothesis has it, a representative of the frontier? Without fairly precise delineation of the kind of men who voted both for and against Jackson, explanations of why a certain number of men voted for him are not subject to systematic tests of their potential verifiability.

But it is possible to reformulate Schlesinger's original statement and thereby render the hypothesis more susceptible to verification. The


statistics of the popular vote are available before 1824 and in that
election the national vote stood:²³  Jackson 153, 544; Adams 108, 740;
Clay 47, 136; Crawford, 45, 618.

These statistics make it possible to translate the vague factual
description, "immense vote," with its connotation of extremely
widespread support, into an explicit statement that Jackson received
approximately 43 percent of the popular vote, his nearest rival 31
percent, and his two other rivals, 13 percent each. (No statistics were
presented by Schlesinger for either the popular or the electoral vote on
a state or national basis.) Once the verbal description is translated even
into such gross quantitative terms as the national totals and percentages,
one the problem is not to explain why an "immense," or
"overwhelming," or "very large" proportion of the American people
wanted Jackson to be president, but why 43 percent of the "small"
(defined below) number of people who actually cast ballots voted for
him, the problem becomes easier to handle.

Who Voted for Jackson?  Because Jackson received less than 50
percent of the vote, the statistics appear to rule out the likelihood that
all throughout the country the majority of the "chauvinistic masses"
who voted cast ballots for Jackson, unless it can actually be
demonstrated that his support was more or less uniformly distributed
along tight class lines. This follows since the "masses" must logically be
expected to outnumber the other classes or the term "masses" is not
relevant to the election of 1824. If Jackson’s support was very heavy in
some areas and very light in others, in some places both the masses and
the other classes voted preponderantly for him, and in other places
both groups voted preponderantly against him. This conclusion would
have to follow unless two conditions obtained; a different proportion
of voters are to be designated as belonging to the "masses" and "other
classes" in different areas, and both groups displayed uniform voting
behavior throughout the country.

To my knowledge, no evidence has ever been offered that in 1824
significantly different proportions of the masses voted in the different
states where popular suffrage obtained; moreover, breaking down the
returns by states demonstrates anything but a uniform distribution. It


suggests that if Jackson’s widespread military fame and reputed
integrity actually do explain his lead in the popular vote, then these
generalized factors operated in a remarkably selective manner which
demand both explicit statement and further specification. For he
carried but eight of the eighteen states in which popular votes were
cast, only in six did he get 50 percent or better, and as the table below
shows, Jackson’s margin over his nearest rival was two to one or better
only in Alabama, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania.

The approximately 50,000 plurality given him in the last two states
more than accounts for his lead over John Q. Adams in the nation-wide
vote, a fact which should be central to any interpretation of the 1824
election results and of Jackson’s popular lead. That is, roughly 42
percent of Jackson’s entire vote came from three states which cast only
22 percent of the national vote. In these three states he got about 80
percent of the vote, whereas he had only 43 percent of the national
total, and 32 percent in the other 15 states.²⁴

Table VII—Popular Vote, 1824—States Carried by Jackson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Jackson</th>
<th>Adams</th>
<th>Crawford</th>
<th>Clay</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>20,197</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>36,100</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>5,440</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>4,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>9,443</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>2,416</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>1,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>3,234</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>1,694</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>20,415*</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>15,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>10,985</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>9,110</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>1,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>7,343</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>3,095</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>1,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1,901</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>1,542</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*"People's Ticket," or anti-"Caucus" vote

²⁴  These statements, and the table above, are based on the data found in
ibid., 88.
Several pertinent facts concerning the election in general, and the strong Jackson states in particular, further indicate the partial nature at best of an explanation which attributes his support primarily, if not exclusively, to “his military fame and ... the widespread conviction of his integrity.” That approximately 350,000 votes in all were cast, out of a population of nearly 11,000,000, indicates how small a percentage of the “chauvinistic masses” actually voted. (The comparable figures for 1828 were 1,150,000 votes, 12,250,000 people.) And to quote Stanwood’s standard work on American presidential elections, the figures given above credit to Jackson:

...a great many votes which, like the 20,000 in North Carolina, were cast for no candidate in particular, but in opposition to the caucus ticket generally [opposition to nomination by a Congressional party caucus of Crawford as the “regular,” albeit unofficial, candidate], and of which it was estimated at the time that 5,000 were given by friends of Adams; and other votes which, in some Northern states, were cast against Adams generally, without being for any particular candidate.

A major source of distortion relative to the popular vote is that the statistics do not include states where the legislatures made the choice. In three of the states Jackson received none of the electoral votes; in New York, the most populous state in the Union, he received one out of 36; he took 3 out of 5 in Louisiana, and all 11 in South Carolina. Hence as Jackson received but 15 of the 71 electoral votes of these states, pending a detailed study, the presumption seems reasonable that their popular vote would have substantially decreased his percentage of the national total. Such reasoning is speculative, yet to indicate how little is really known about the popular sentiment in 1824, Stanwood observed that: “there were real contests in very few of the States, so that the partisans of neither [sic] candidate were fully represented at the polls.” Thus, Massachusetts, home state of John Q. Adams, where Jackson did not get a single vote, cast more than 66,000 ballots for governor in 1823 and only 37,000 in the presidential election a year later.

Viewed in light of the above considerations, the conclusion seems warranted that Schlesinger’s hypothesis regarding the extent and reasons for Jackson’s vote in 1824 is not consonant with the election statistics. The factors denoted by him as voting determinants throughout the country could have been operative only in certain localities, states, and sections; they could not have had the unrestricted nationwide impact demanded by his hypothesis.

Conditions Favorable to Jackson. When attention is turned to the three states in which Jackson was strongest, the historian’s obligation to specify the conditions under which causal factors actually function becomes more obvious. In states where Jackson secured few votes, or only a minor percentage of the total vote, either his fame and integrity were unknown and unpublicized (subject to investigation if deemed important), or far more likely, they were ineffective as determinants of voting behavior. On the other hand, it is possible that those alleged causal factors were operative in Tennessee, Alabama, and Pennsylvania. Schlesinger’s hypothesis then could be restated to set forth the conditions under which Jackson’s military fame and integrity determined voting behavior and those which yielded opposite results. By way of illustration, among other conditions which it might be necessary to take into account: Tennessee was Jackson’s home when such a factor was extremely important, particularly in a western state seeking national influence (he ran about 40 to 1 in Tennessee). Neighboring Alabama was a frontier area strongly responsive to the victor of the Creek War of 1813-1814 which opened it to settlement. Jackson was of Scotch-Irish descent when marked conflict existed between the New England “Yankee” element, strongly based on the seaboard, and the


26. Stanwood, op. cit., p. 87. A later study claims that the North Carolina vote was primarily for Jackson. The point is, however, that the confused nature of the 1824 campaign makes it difficult to comprehend the real significance of the vote given in the name of a particular candidate. The Electoral College vote, cited below, is given in ibid., p. 93.

27. Ibid., 87. The same page gives the information for the Massachusetts vote cited below and indicates that the situation in the Bay State was not unusual.
Scotch-Irish and German elements west of the Alleghenies. Probably associated with those ethnic loyalties and conflicts as a determinant political behavior—here research using manuscript sources would be indispensable to verify the assumption—is the fact that as early as 1821 the leading politicians of Pennsylvania had decided to run Jackson as a candidate. 28 Local, sectional, and ethnic influences aided his rivals as well, but this only underscores the point that the significance of the voting statistics is not apparent if only the national totals are considered in isolation and the basic conditions affecting voting patterns in various areas are left unspecified.

The main point of the discussion has been that the greater the precision achieved in breaking down voting statistics over space, the greater the possibility of fixing the conditions under which a given explanation can be valid. Hypotheses take on more precision, and a greater possibility of verification, if the factual stipulations which they must logically be expected to satisfy are carefully thought out and then demonstrated rather than assumed.

In frontier Tennessee, the vote for Jackson was "immense"; in neighboring Kentucky, the home of Henry Clay, Jackson was badly beaten (roughly 17,000 to 6,000). Obviously, in Kentucky, military fame and reputed integrity were not key determinants of voting behavior. But it is possible, and, for purposes of illustration, it will be assumed here as fact, that in a number of Kentucky counties, Jackson did run ahead of Clay. A comprehensive explanation of the 1824 election would have to explain such phenomena, or at least it should state explicitly that it does not satisfy certain systematic findings.

If the deviant cases not satisfied by the explanation were of the magnitude indicated above—a number of Jackson counties in a strong Clay state—then it would be logical to expect the historian to deal explicitly with questions of this nature: What conditions, if any, differentiated the Jackson counties from those voting for the native son, Henry Clay? Was Jackson's fame greater, and belief in his integrity more firm, in certain counties than in others? If opposite voting patterns occurred in counties where detailed investigation leads one to conclude that his fame and integrity were uniform, what other conditions were different? Given Schlesinger's primary causal factors, why should those different conditions have operated to bring about different patterns of voting behavior?

The last question, the "why" question, would be the interpretative element in formulating that part of the hypothesis covering the deviant cases; the previous "what" questions are in the category of factual description. Factual questions yield information analogous to the natural scientist's statement of the conditions under which water boils at a certain temperature, but they fail to explain why the phenomenon occurs under those conditions. To take a hypothetical case: We might factually demonstrate that in all counties where over 50 percent of the entire population was Scotch-Irish, over 50 percent of the popular vote went to Jackson. To explain why this result occurs in such counties is a job of another order and explicit recognition of the distinction between fact and interpretation favors progress towards its solution.

The following possibility is suggested to bring out the potential dangers of generalized explanations which do not attempt to specify the conditions necessary for them to be verifiable. A careful analysis of the areas of Jacksonian strength and weakness, in order to state the conditions under which his military fame and reputed integrity operated as determining factors, might lead to the unanticipated conclusion that they were of relatively minor importance everywhere. It might be observed that Jackson was strong only in areas having certain characteristics: frontier areas not settled by New England migrants and no "native son" candidate; areas dominated by Scotch-Irish and German voters; agrarian areas dependent upon certain staple crops; and so forth. It might also be observed that in a number of areas where detailed investigation demonstrated little or no perceptible differences in awareness of Jackson's heroism or stress upon his integrity, his proportion of the vote varied widely depending upon the extent to which the area possessed the characteristics specified above.

If Schlesinger's explanation could be valid only in areas having specific characteristics in common, and does not hold true when these characteristics are absent, it would be more logical to try to explain the vote for Jackson in terms of those specific characteristics rather than general causes which did not in fact operate generally. No implication is

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intended that any of these developments took place in fact. The point is that the procedure of attempting to specify the conditions under which a given set of causal factors operate might yield systematic findings not consonant with the hypothesis. These findings might then lead to reformulation of the hypothesis, or to construction of a series of new hypotheses more consonant with the data. In turn these hypotheses would be subject to additional testing through the re-analysis of existing data and the collection of additional data necessary to their verification.

Because the amount of data bearing upon voting behavior in 1824 is circumscribed by the nature of that particular election, and because the time dimension cannot be adequately utilized, a more elaborate example follows of how the potential verifiability of a generalized explanation can be evaluated. The time period covered will be somewhat longer than in Section II, and the spatial units much more delimited than in either Sections II or III.

**IV. Generalized Interpretation Analyzed in Terms of the Historian’s Time Dimension**

As suggested above the historian’s time dimension is a complex construction; it is simultaneously a methodological tool and a subtle concept. Although this study confines itself to the methodological aspects of the time dimension, they are pointed out by discussing briefly the time dimension’s conceptual role.

To convey more vividly the idea that “a historical phenomenon can never be understood apart from its moment in time,” Marc Bloch quoted a nicely turned old Arab proverb: “Men resemble their times more than they do their fathers.”29 Though this idea of historical context is easily accepted and freely talked of, it is terribly difficult to apply in practice. Among other things, it calls for a creative, disciplined imagination, as well as an impressive store of substantive knowledge.

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The concept associated with the time dimension, therefore, is much less easily handled than the method of recording and analyzing phenomena chronologically.

Notwithstanding the consideration that a really thorough historical analysis must employ both the concept and method inherent in the time dimension—their separateness has been exaggerated here to clarify the point—the mere chronological recording of data is extremely useful in beginning an inquiry into voting behavior during a particular campaign. Just as one thinks in terms of the spatial distribution of voting performance, one “instinctively” thinks in terms of time. Members of some group voted as they “normally” did; others were “more Republican than usual”; still others “sharply broke with tradition,” etc. To refer back to the example given in Section III: We would use the space dimension to locate the farm price support issue as a voting determinant for Iowa corn-hog farmers because they have been thought to be strongly Republican over time, and because essentially we want to know whether they cast a higher or lower than “normal” Republican vote.

But as in the case of the space dimension, it is dangerous to use the time dimension impressionistically. And perhaps because chronology is more subject to blurring than geography, the dangers are actually much greater. For unless we really know what normalcy [sic] is, we are easily liable to come a historical cropper. Down is up, up is down, climaxes beginnings, beginnings climaxes, unless we have some accurate objective historical standards to measure from and contrast with, and systematically do so.

**The Election of 1896.** Apart from its intrinsic importance, the election of 1896 is of particular interest to students of methodology in political history. It is particularly interesting because the Populist campaign of the nineties coming to a climax (of sorts) in 1896 has long been taken as proof of the Turner frontier thesis covering all phases of American history. Without going into the complicated material involved, the alleged closing of the frontier in 1890 was said to have been directly responsible for the emergence of Populism as a major current in American politics. And Turner and his followers claimed that the emergence of Populism after 1890 proved the broad thesis that the
presence or absence of "free land" was the key factor in American history. Again, without going into details, a vital sub-proposition of the frontier thesis held that the dominant conflict form in the United States was sectional, i.e., conflict between the inhabitants of different geographic areas rather than conflict between groups or classes. Though Turnerians recognize the existence of socio-economic group and class conflicts, they essentially regard them as subordinate. In fact, "Un-American," in the best sense of the phrase, describes the view taken by Turnerians of group and class conflicts in the United States (particularly the latter); "Un-American" because their relative insignificance was viewed as stemming from the uniqueness of American society. Class conflict was looked upon as a foreign importation, untrue to the American genius and spirit.

Because the Populist demands of the 1890's were held to be new departures in that they advocated collective action by government to benefit individual entrepreneurs or citizens directly, because the voting patterns show distinct sectional differences, because in 1896 the Populists fused with the Democrats, the election of 1896 was taken by Turner to prove his frontier thesis and its sectional subproposition. Note the logical consistency: after 1890 demands were made for collective action, "proof" that the alleged traditional individualism allegedly caused by the presence of alleged free land no longer had a basis in material conditions; the political conflict over the question of collective action found effective sectional, not group or class, expression.

During the 1930's, the Turner thesis came under increasing attack and alternative theses were proposed to explain American history. One alternative thesis, of which Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., was probably the chief proponent, attempted to substitute the rise of the city and the urban movement in America for the significance of the frontier and the westward movement. In place of sectional conflict as the dominant form, Schlesinger postulated the "clash between two cultures—one

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statistic, individualistic, agricultural, the other dynamic, collectivistic, urban." The "urban thesis" attracted wide attention in the 1930s, and, in turn, was subjected to criticism. Probably the most elaborate and penetrating attack upon the thesis was made by William Diamond at the close of the decade. The quotation below suggests his main line of criticism:

though urban-rural conflict may be as important as sectionalism, the significance of either one as the basis of an American history is open to serious question. It is certainly legitimate to ask whether emphasis on the existence and importance of the antagonism of city and country does not frequently obscure the further facts (true of sections as well) that "city" is a collective term and that in it lives a heterogeneous population made up of many interest groups and classes leading more or less different ways of life. The question of the meaning of urbanization requires further examination, for if the determining forces in human behavior are to be found in economic and social distinctions rather than in geographical or political groupings, then such a judgment as the one suggested [i.e., increasing urban-rural conflict] becomes not only of little value as a clue to the study of American political history but invalid as well. Nevertheless the flow of people into cities has changed the face of the nation, as once the westward movement did. The conflict of urban and rural populations must, therefore, be given its place as a factor in American history—a factor which has been perhaps as important as the frontier and the westward movement.

In place of sectional or urban-rural conflicts, Diamond was suggesting that the basic determinants of American history were conflicts between interest groups and classes. As he saw it, whether in the form of sectionalism or urban-ruralism, political conflicts in the United States really stemmed from socioeconomic entities because, dependent upon their socioeconomic composition and functions, fundamental differences existed between cities, e.g., industrial, commercial, financial
cities, metropolises, seaports, inland centers, etc. But though the cities differed from each other, Diamond accepted the view that they all had significant conflicts with their surrounding rural areas. Whatever the real basis for the antagonism, therefore, urban-rural conflicts were characteristic of American life. In his words, as applied to the election of 1896:

But whatever the basis of urban-rural antagonism, whatever the forces that accentuate or soften the clash of city and countryside, the fact remains that in the election of 1896 there was a high urban-rural tension. \(^{34}\)

That sentence was stated as a proven proposition at the end of a factual demonstration rather than as a hypothesis to be tested. Quoted out of context here, the hypothesis is not clear. But before attempting to remedy the deficiency it is desirable to discuss briefly the challenging and important task Diamond set himself. Though his own approach differed from the urban thesis, it differed even more sharply from the frontier-section thesis. Since he was working at a time when the latter was dominant, and since the urban thesis was consonant with his own in form, if not content, his study concentrated upon establishing that:

The urban-rural conflict has been of some importance in American history. Little, however, has been done to measure that importance. It is the purpose of this article to take a step in that direction by making a study of the conflict at one fixed point in American history, the first Bryan-McKinley campaign: to establish the existence of that conflict in the nation as a whole and to see whether or not it followed a recognizable pattern [italics added] \(^{35}\).

The Real Significance of Urban-Rural Conflicts. Diamond conceived his first task to be the demonstration of significant urban-rural conflicts throughout the nation. But stated in such terms, the demonstration would support the urban thesis against which his study was directed perhaps as much as against the frontier-section thesis. However, if instead of a general pattern of urban-rural conflict, there was “a recognizable pattern” then, Diamond contended in effect, the urban thesis really would be specious. That is, if voting behavior in 1896 (and elections generally) could be shown to take different patterns according to the different socioeconomic structures of given urban-rural areas (Eastern industrial-dairy agricultural, Western commercial-staple agricultural, seaport-perishable agricultural, etc.), Diamond believed his broad thesis of group and class conflicts as the determinants of American history would be supported. Urban-rural tensions affected voting behavior all throughout the country, he maintained, but some cities voted more heavily for McKinley than their hinterland while other cities voted more for Bryan. According to him, these differences were not random but could be shown to follow “a recognizable pattern,” i.e., they were associated with a definite socioeconomic pattern.

Diamond’s article contains so many suggestive ideas that it is difficult to summarize his views without distorting them, but the quotations below provide us with a specific hypothesis subject to systematic analysis:

It has become a commonplace that Bryan directed his entire campaign in 1896 to both farmer and laborer, to the inarticulate but potentially powerful workers and the vast lower middle classes that make up the bulk of the population of cities as well as to the farmers of the West and South. Yet because “a solid East and Middle West,” the most highly urbanized sections of the nation, overwhelmed and defeated Bryan, it has gone almost unnoticed that he occasionally scored heavily in Eastern cities, the foci of the “toiling masses” to whom he addressed himself. John Giffen Thompson has pointed out—though without statistical evidence—that the “fact that Bryan carried a number of the agricultural states of the West, in 1896, while the East voted strongly against him has obscured the further fact that he received strong support in many of the eastern urban centers while heavy majorities against him were in many cases rolled up in the rural sections of the East.” This, if accurate, would be a highly significant comment on the factors which determined the election of 1896, and it would at the same time bear witness to the political cleavage between urban and rural populations. \(^{36}\)

34. Ibid., p. 304.
35. Ibid., p. 281.
36. Ibid., pp. 281-282.
The hypothesis still has not been made clear but another quotation facilitates doing so. (It is clear in context, the difficulty lies in making it clear in abbreviated form.)

The cities of the East, with the highest urban-rural tension [italics added], were the oldest cities in the nation. In the northeast many of the cities were the products of the factory, sometimes the centers of finance. There the laboring and immigrant populations were set off against a rural background of conservative landowners. There the cities were more radical than the countryside. Most of the cities between the Alleghenies and the Rockies were the offspring of the railroad; they were trading posts and transportation centers. In them frequently were centered the influences against which the farmer of the West rose in protest. They were often the centers on which they [sic] depended for the marketing of their products. Those cities, it has been shown, were more conservative than their surrounding rural populations.37

The 1896 Campaign as Catalyst. Put in other words, Diamond’s hypothesis really was that the Bryan campaign of 1896 increased the intensity of urban-rural political conflicts throughout the entire country. In given urban-rural political entities (cities within a state) possessing different socioeconomic structures, the intensified conflicts expressed themselves in different political forms. Northeastern cities were “more radical” than usual; the surrounding rural areas were “more conservative” than usual. The reverse was true in the West; there the rural areas were “more radical,” the cities “more conservative.” Whether in particular areas the city or its hinterland was “more radical,” the same pattern held throughout the country; the Bryan campaign acted as a catalyst to intensify urban-rural political conflicts having their roots in persistent socioeconomic antagonisms.

Before discussing the meaning of “radical” or “conservative,” it is necessary to indicate what Diamond meant by “urban-rural tension.” He constructed an ingenious index to measure the differences in voting behavior between a city and its hinterland. The relationship was expressed in a “percentage ratio”:

The percentage ratio of a city is the ratio of Bryan’s percentage of the votes in that city to the percentage of votes he received in the nonurban sections of the state. The percentage ratio of a state is the ratio of Bryan’s total urban percentage to his rural percentage. The result in either case is a number which may be either greater or less than one. If greater, it means that the percentage of urban votes given to Bryan was greater than his percentage of the rural vote of the state. If less, then Bryan did better among the rural population. Ratios from .9 to 1.1, while they show a clear-cut difference in urban and rural votes, will be called the range of low urban-rural tension. Ratios below .9 and above 1.1 will be regarded as representing a high degree of tension between city and country.38

Though his definition of urban-rural tension is exceedingly useful, his definition of “radical” is much less so. That the problem is more than semantic is evident to scholars familiar with the difficulties “radical” and “conservative” have caused for political historians. What “radical” means at a given time in American history has never been agreed upon, and Diamond’s arbitrary definition, unfortunately, led him into serious trouble. Since Bryan was the nominee of more than one party—though the other parties were really insignificant in 1896—the statistical comparison was made between the returns for Bryan and McKinley, not for the Democratic and Republican parties:

The Bryan vote, from no matter what source, was basically a radical vote. Given that definition of radicalism, the urban-rural percentage ratio of Bryan votes represents the degree to which cities were more or less radical than rural sections of the states in which those particular cities were located.39

Such a definition of radicalism is open to at least two kinds of objection, “substantive” and “methodological.” Without attempting to do so here, a good case can be made out for the proposition that the majority of Bryan votes cannot in any meaningful sense be regarded as radical; indeed, in my opinion, it is better characterized as “reaction-

37. Ibid., p. 304. Certain voting groups were designated by Diamond in general terms, but the conflicts between them and the reason for their intensification by the Bryan campaign were only implied in a highly generalized fashion.

38. Ibid., pp. 282-283.
39. Ibid., p. 283.
ary.” That proposition is certainly debatable but the “methodological” objection is not. The campaign of 1896 was not tabula rasa. Deeply felt, persistent traditions and party loyalties are basic to American political history and, in the short run at least, changes in voting behavior are confined to relatively narrow limits. Within reasonable limits, no matter how the Democratic ticket in 1896, or what kind of campaign the party waged, its nominee would have received a substantial percentage of the total vote. As in the case of the 1884 election, the table below emphasizes the remarkably broad continuities in American voting behavior during the late nineteenth century despite basic socioeconomic changes.40

Table VIII—Presidential Elections, 1868-1900
PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE CAST
FOR REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>48.2</td>
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<td>1884</td>
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<td>1888</td>
<td>47.8</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td>43.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “net turnover” in Democratic strength from 1892 to 1896 was only an insignificant +0.9, a figure which certainly indicates that a substantial number of people who voted for “conservative” Grover Cleveland in 1892 on the Democratic ticket voted for Bryan in 1896 on the Democratic ticket. The inference is undeniable that any political

John Doe would also have attracted a considerable number of votes if he had been the Democratic standard bearer. A definition of “radicalism,” therefore, which holds that it can be applied to every vote for Bryan “from no matter what source” is meaningless at best, and in this instance, positively harmful to Diamond’s own intelligently conceived broad study. For had he attempted to find out which votes could reasonably be termed “radical,” he would have been forced to examine both the net turnover and the gross turnover in voting behavior. And had he done so, unlike the 1884 election, he would have found that the gross turnover was not only considerable, but that it followed a definite sectional pattern which invalidated his generalized hypothesis concerning the 1896 election. Rather than follow the same procedure employed in the 1884 and 1824 analyses, attention here will be focused upon only one state. Such restricted scope enables us to demonstrate that the procedure applied broadly throughout the nation for those years can yield much more precise and definite results when the requisite data is available.

It must be emphasized that the concern here is not with the inappropriateness of “radical” as a description of all Bryan votes in 1896. In reality, the terms “radical” and “conservative” were irrelevant to the hypothesis under examination, and only served to confuse its conception and attempted verification. When reformulated, the hypothesis actually claimed that the dominant determining factors in the 1896 election were certain socioeconomic antagonisms taking the shape of urban-rural political conflicts, and that these antagonisms and political conflicts were intensified in 1896. Whether the result was increased or diminished “radicalism” really did not matter. The point at issue was that “the determining forces in human behavior are to be found in economic and social distinctions rather than in geographical or political groupings.”

The claim that political conflicts were intensified in 1896 was not made explicit in Diamond’s article but his hypothesis is meaningless if it does not include that claim. Clearly, if “urban-rural tension” in all Northeastern states, for example, was identical from 1880 to 1900 it would make no sense to maintain that Bryan “occasionally scored heavily in Eastern cities, the foci of the toiling masses” to whom he addressed himself.” Similarly, the designation of certain cities as “more

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40. The table has been compiled from material in the Tribune Almanac for the years included in the time span covered. The 1892-96 comparison is slightly distorted because of the erratic fusion of Democrats and Populists in several states; however, the basic point is not affected. The national percentages, of course, exaggerate the degree of stability because they obscure the impact of counter-balancing changes on the state and local level.
"tension" such as "sectionalism" might have assumed more importance as a voting determinant than the persistent socioeconomic antagonisms reflected in "urban-rural tensions," as Diamond defined them. And once this conclusion had been arrived at, one might well have gone on to make a higher level generalization for all American history—political and nonpolitical—which subsumes several essential features of all three theses, i.e., the "frontier-section," "urban," and "interest groups and classes" theses. For, again in my opinion, all three are partially correct, although, as they are usually stated, even their verifiable elements need considerable modification and reformulation.

If the reader anticipates an attempt to demonstrate the validity of that sweeping judgment, what follows will come as anticlimactic. The analysis is confined to demonstrating that in New York State, the systematic statistics of voting behavior indicate that intersectional antagonisms modified the determining impact of intrastate, or intrasection urban-rural antagonisms, and that the Bryan campaign raised issues which tended to narrow rather than widen the area of political conflict between the urban and rural populations. That is, the issues raised by the Bryan campaign were such as to cut across group or class lines, and, in relative terms, united voters normally antagonistic to each other against voters in another section, also normally mutually antagonistic.

Thus, whatever the political weight assigned to factors associated with the "frontier-section," "urban," "interest groups and classes" theses for longer periods of American history, in 1896 more weight should be given to the "frontier-section" factors and less weight to those associated with the other two. Actually, this formulation implies that some weight should be given to all three types of factors, and that estimates of the relative amount of weight could only be made after an exceedingly thorough, systematic, and complicated analysis. Moreover, the formulation implies that similar results would be found if the same procedure were followed in states other than New York. It does not imply, however, that the pattern would be the same everywhere.

The Bryan Vote Compared with the "Normal" Democratic Vote. Perhaps the discussion has wandered far enough afield to justify repetition in the interests of greater clarity. In the study under analysis, apart from other methodological objections, the failure to
compare the 1896 election with those preceding and following it makes the real significance of the results impossible to comprehend. Though the space dimension was systematically employed to analyze voting behavior, the analysis was fundamentally ahistorical. Compilation of data over time, the basic tool of the historian, was ignored.

It is a major proposition of this monograph that quantitative data are meaningless when isolated from either their spatial or chronological contexts. Presented in ahistorical fashion such data might seem to have one meaning; in historical context they may have entirely opposite meanings. Were urban-rural conflicts a constant factor in American politics, were they in 1896 the start or culmination of a long-time trend, was the 1896 election a deviant?

Similar questions need to be asked in regard to sectional, as well as group and class, conflicts. Comparison with other elections was even more necessary than usual since the hypothesis claimed that intensified socioeconomic antagonisms resulted in Bryan occasionally “scoring heavily” among the “toiling masses” of Northeastern cities. Yet, in chronological isolation, the 1896 election returns cannot be taken to prove any proposition other than the relative strength in that year of the Republican and Democratic parties in given localities. Certainly they provide little factual basis for a hypothesis which assumes that workers in a number of Northeastern cities responded favorably to the Bryan campaign. (Actually the claim was made that this situation obtained in all five New England states having at least one city of 45,000 population, and in New York.) Reformulated, the hypothesis must demonstrate factually that the Democratic vote among the working classes in those cities was heavier than usual, and that the increase can be definitely attributed to Bryan’s campaign. Only a factual demonstration of this kind would provide a systematic basis for the hypothesis under examination, i.e., that intensified socioeconomic antagonisms between the urban and rural populations in the Northeast were the major determinants of voting behavior in 1896.

In point of fact, when comparison is made with preceding elections, support appears to be lent to a hypothesis—advanced here solely for illustrative purposes—that the Bryan vote in New York and other Northeastern states, far from reflecting intensified “urban-rural ten-

sion” in 1896, was a sharply diminished remnant of the normal Democratic vote. Just the reverse appears to be true of the assumptions that Bryan occasionally scored heavily in the Eastern cities, and that acute urban-rural tension, intensified by his campaign, was responsible for the Democratic vote in that section. So far as can be determined madly from the Tribune Almanac, every major urban area in the Northeast gave Bryan a considerably lower vote than it had usually cast for Democratic candidates in previous elections. The decreased Democratic urban strength in 1896, and to a lesser extent in succeeding campaigns, is consonant with our hypothetical thesis; it is in flat contradiction to the hypothesis which claims that intensified socioeconomic antagonisms taking the form of “urban-rural tensions” were the major determinants of voting behavior in the Northeast. One is even tempted to go so far as to speculate that the Bryan campaign in 1896 perceptibly weakened the Democratic party for a number of elections thereafter in the Northeastern cities.

Though the real concern here is not with the question of what “radical” and “conservative” means, or whether it is correct to characterize the Bryan vote as “radical,” a reference to the latter question throws light on the hypothesis’ basic weakness. The inappropriateness of denoting all votes in 1896 for Bryan as “radical” without examination of previous voting patterns perhaps is best seen in this paradoxical situation: If all votes for Bryan be taken as “radical,” then New York and Kings counties, for example, were more “radical” than most rural counties but they were much more “conservative” in depression-ridden 1896 when Bryan vigorously denounced Wall Street than in relatively prosperous 1892 and 1888! (Brooklyn is Kings County.) Table IX below* appears to demonstrate convincingly that the urban-rural conflict in presidential elections needs to be considered in historical perspective.

Possibly it is belaboring the point but preparing such a table on a

*1. The table is based upon unpublished data compiled by myself and various assistants in connection with a long term statistical analysis of New York voting patterns. The Tribune Almanac was the primary source of the raw data. The two urban counties selected were actually cities and contained an insignificant farm or rural population; all other urban counties show the same trend in 1896. Beginning in 1876, minor parties were on the ballot and hence the percentages above do not add up to 100%.
national scale would have presented enormous difficulties and it is easy to appreciate why the author of the 1896 study confined his statistical compulation to a single election. However, it seems obvious that the value of his study would have been greatly enhanced had he not only suggested an interesting approach to the Bryan campaign but been able to carry his work to its necessary conclusion. Of course, it is easy enough to write that the work should have been carried through to its "necessary conclusion." The fact that numerous historical studies have made statistical analyses based solely on a single set of election returns indicates that the procedure cannot be attributed to personal failings but has its roots in the nature of the material. At the same time it is necessary to recognize that there has been a basic conceptual weakness in American political historiography. Studies in political history which make anything like a systematic analysis of voting behavior over time and space are the exception rather than the rule.

Table IX—Presidential Vote, 1860-1900, in Urban Counties, the Strongest Democratic Rural Counties, and New York State, in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NEW YORK</th>
<th>KINGS</th>
<th>SCHOHARIE</th>
<th>SENeca</th>
<th>NEW YORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COUNTY</td>
<td>COUNTY</td>
<td>COUNTY</td>
<td>COUNTY</td>
<td>STATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Urban)</td>
<td>(Urban)</td>
<td>(Rural)</td>
<td>(Rural)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did Urban or Rural Voters Respond More Favorably to the Bryan Campaign? If urban-rural tension in New York is calculated from the ratio of the urban vote percentage to the rural vote percentage for the Democratic party—the index used by Diamond—then Bryan's campaign had the effect of reducing urban-rural tension in the state to a lower point than in any election from 1860 to 1900! This can be seen most readily by comparing the Democratic percentage in the most urbanized counties, New York and Kings, with the party's percentage in the state from 1860 to 1900. The extent to which the Democratic campaign in 1896 alienated the party's urban followers can also be gauged by comparing its sharp decline in New York and Kings with the relatively small decline in Schoharie and Seneca.

Contrasting urban and rural Democratic response in New York to Bryan's campaign illustrates the inaccuracy of what Diamond accepted as a valid "commonplace," i.e., "that Bryan directed his entire campaign in 1896 to both farmer and laborer, to the inarticulate but potentially powerful workers and the vast lower middle classes that make up the bulk of the population of cities as well as the farmers of the West and South." More precisely, if the group which controlled the Democratic party in 1896 actually believed that a program to raise commodity prices and the cost of living for urban dwellers, couched in

Democratic percentage of the total vote was 17.5 less in New York County, 17.1 less in Kings (Brooklyn), only 4.3 and 3.1 less in Schoharie and Seneca respectively, and 9.2 in the entire state. In fact, Schoharie became the banner Democratic county in the state, and even Seneca, for the first time since at least 1860, cast a heavier Democratic vote than either New York or Kings counties. The Bryan campaign for monetary inflation, it might therefore be speculated, in relative terms was more favorably received in rural farming areas suffering from commodity price declines than in urban areas consuming farm commodities. And the inappropriateness of applying the term "radical" to groups waging such a campaign perhaps in underscored by the recognition that "tinkering with the currency" required no structural changes in American institutions or principles. Here again the time dimension is indispensable to historical analysis, for such "tinkering" had long been a part of the American political tradition.
terms of sectional conflict, was destined to win votes in that depression year, then the urban election returns in the Northeast must have come as a rude shock. (Whatever Bryan may have said in specifically addressing himself to Eastern audiences, a dominant theme in the free silver "crusade" was the conflict between the allied South and West against the Northeast—and the "goldbugs" made certain that this fact was brought home to Eastern voters.)

The objection might be raised that the statistics cited above showing sharp decreases in Democratic strength in New York and Kings counties do not necessarily indicate that Democratic "workers" or members of the "lower middle classes" deserted the party in 1896. Conceivably, nonworking and non-lower middle class Democratic support in New York County, for example, could have fallen off to such an extent as to account for the party's decreased percentage. Probably this was the case to some extent, but it also appears clear that this was far from the whole story. Unfortunately, the Assembly Districts were reapportioned between the 1892 and 1896 elections so direct comparison is difficult. But that Democratic support fell off in working class as well as in nonworking class areas is seen in the much smaller Democratic pluralities in every Assembly District. (Not even the most intricate pattern of gerrymandering could have eliminated a substantial number of "lower-class" districts in New York in the 1890's, and the larger number of Assembly Districts probably resulted in more homogeneous units.) Whereas in 1892 the Democrats carried every one of the thirty Assembly Districts, for the most part by extremely wide margins, in 1896 they only took eighteen of the thirty-six Districts by more than 100 votes, the Republicans carried fourteen, and of the remaining four, the Democratic plurality was less than 100 in two, and the Republicans also took two districts by a few votes.\(^\text{42}\)

In an attempt to achieve greater precision a convenient device was employed to identify the working class districts without exhaustive research. The assumption was made that they were likely to be those in which the Socialist Labor party was strongest. Party percentages were calculated for the two "most Socialist" districts in 1896 and are shown in the table below.\(^\text{43}\)

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
 & 12th A.D. & 16th A.D. \\
\hline
Republican & 39.6 & 43.3 \\
Democratic & 45.1 & 43.0 \\
Socialist Labor & 14.0 & 12.6 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Party Percentages, 1896, in the Most Socialist Assembly Districts}
\end{table}

In 1892 the Socialist Labor party did not achieve anything like these percentages in any district; almost certainly, this indicates that its strength was augmented in 1896 by defections from the Democrats. But the extent to which the Republicans also must have made inroads into the working class vote is suggested by the fact that even in the two "most Socialist" districts the combined Democratic (including the Populists) and Socialist Labor vote was less than the Democratic vote alone for the entire county in 1892. The county Democratic vote in 1892 was 61.5 percent; in 1896 and 12th A.D. combined vote was 59.1 percent, the 16th A.D., 55.6 percent. If the 1892 county vote is combined for the Democratic, Populist, and Socialist Labor parties, the contrast is even greater, for it came to 64.6 percent. And in 1892 there were a number of Assembly Districts in which the Democratic vote alone was well above 70 percent, whereas in 1896 no district approached that figure.

That conclusions concerning voting behavior require painstaking analysis is illustrated by the paradox seemingly involved in the following statement. Both these propositions might well have been true in 1896: workers made up a higher proportion of New York County Democratic voters in 1896 than in any previous election; a smaller proportion of workers voted Democratic in 1896 than in any previous election. Given a much sharper decline in Democratic support among nonworkers than among workers, both propositions would be accurate and consistent with each other. But if considered alone, the first proposition lends itself to the erroneous conclusion that Bryan scored heavily among the New York masses to whom he allegedly addressed himself.

\(^{42}\) Based on data in the Tribune Almanac for 1893 and 1897.

\(^{43}\) Calculated from the Tribune Almanac for 1897, p. 226.
Table XI—Comparison of Democratic Percentages, 1892 and 1896, in New York County and in "Most Socialist" Assembly Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dem. New York County</th>
<th>12th A.D. Combined</th>
<th>16th A.D. Combined</th>
<th>12th A.D. Dem.</th>
<th>16th A.D. Dem.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics cited above appear to invalidate the hypothesis which rests on the assumption that the Bryan campaign attracted greater than usual Democratic support in New York lower class districts; instead, they indicate a marked shift to the Republican party. Inspection of election returns in numerous cities, as printed in the Tribune Almanac for 1897, reveals that the pattern was uniform in the Northeast. The conclusion seems warranted, therefore, that both the space and time dimensions need to be utilized systematically by historians if accurate descriptions of voting behavior are to be achieved, let alone if verifiable interpretations are to be advanced for voting behavior.

V. Analyzing a Hypothesis for a Specific Causal Factor

Until this point hypotheses have been examined which did not differentiate between voting groups, or offered only generalized causal factors, or both. Section V deals with a hypothesis which is explicit in its identification of the group it claims to have been affected by a specific set of causal factors. Unlike the 1884 election, for example, the problem is not to find a way to learn which group's voting behavior could have been determined by a generalized causal factor. The problem tackled here is to establish that a specific causal factor, or set of factors, actually operated in accordance with a hypothesis' claims.

Necessarily, all explanations of voting behavior couched in group terms depend upon characteristics common to most, if not all, members of that group. Those characteristics may not be actually shared by every member of the group, nor are they rigidly confined to its members. But the logic underlying any claim that a certain group is responsive to a specific causal factor is that its members are more likely than nonmembers to possess the characteristics making voters responsive to that causal factor. Since few individuals other than hermits belong only to one group, explanations of group voting behavior have another logical premise which is best stated in connection with a concrete example.

Suppose a hypothesis to be offered claiming that Irish-Americans voted "strongly Democratic" because that party favored easier immigration and naturalization laws. In effect, this type of explanation connotes that one set of characteristics, i.e., those associated with Irish descent, is assigned greater weight in determining the voting behavior of individuals possessing them in common than unspecified characteristics of those same individuals which place them in other group classifications (class, education, etc.).

Our hypothesis gives primary emphasis to a specific causal factor but it does not rule out the possibility that other factors and characteristics associated with membership in other groups affected the voting decisions of Irish-Americans. It means only that their common ethnic characteristics or loyalties resulted in a common voting pattern cutting across the lines of class, education, etc. However, although other possible determinants of Irish-American voting behavior are not ruled out, at best our hypothesis assigns them a subordinate role. The main point might be stated in this form: For a hypothesis based upon group characteristics to be considered potentially verifiable, it must increase our predictive ability. Other things being equal, according to our hypothetical explanation, Irish-American workers should vote more Democratic than non Irish workers; and so on for all economic classes, or other nonethnic group categories. But it would be entirely consistent with the hypothesis if Irish workers were more Democratic than Irish employers.

Taking leave of the balmy realm of logical abstraction, an attempt now will be made to test the line of reasoning sketched above on the rockier terrain of reality.
The Election of 1860. A considerable number of explanations have been offered for the outcome of the 1860 election and two foremost American historians, Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, synthesized the material in this fashion:

Apart from the Democratic split, northern labor was the decisive force in the election. The German-Americans for the most part had joined the Democratic party as soon as they became naturalized; but they had suffered too much from tyranny in the fatherland to support it in any new shape. The personality of Lincoln swept them into a new party allegiance, and in conjunction with the New England element they carried the northern states. And in some obscure way northern labor had come to look upon slavery as an ally of the northern capitalism that exploited him [sic].

Of the various hypotheses which this paragraph holds to be valid, analysis is given here to the one explaining why German-Americans switched to the Republicans in 1860. For purposes of illustration the assumption will be accepted that such a switch took place.

It is important to note that the hypothesis holds that voters of German descent all over the country were more or less influenced by the combined impact of the same two causal factors; experience with tyranny in Germany led them to support the party (Republican) opposed to tyranny (slavery) in the United States, and the personality of Lincoln swept them from erstwhile political moorings. Precisely because the causal factors were ascribed to group characteristics of German-Americans, the hypothesis may reasonably be interpreted to mean that throughout the country members of that group "for the most part" cast Republican ballots essentially for the same reasons. The phrase was used to describe their former allegiance and, while not precise, "for the most part" conveys the idea that considerably more than 50 percent of the German-Americans voted Republican in 1860. Their voting behavior was described as a decisive factor in the Northwestern states not as a result of sectionalism, or of any particular conditions obtaining there, but because they constituted a sizeable voting group only in that section. (In other areas their numerical strength was so limited as to be of only local significance in the popular or electoral vote.)

Though the hypothesis does not necessarily imply a rigid, uniform voting pattern among German-Americans the country over, it must mean that their votes were cast in somewhat the same proportion in most areas. Of course, variations are to be expected; other factors may have influenced German-Americans of different classes, sections, religious persuasion, etc. The hypothesis, therefore, is consonant with some variation in the group's voting percentage for the Republican party. For example, if good grounds existed for the belief that Northern capitalism was allied to slavery, other things being equal, German-American workers in the North might have cast a heavier Republican percentage than their compatriots who were capitalists.

Perhaps it is useful to translate the verbal formulation into statistical terms in order to develop the logical implications of the hypothesis more clearly, as well as to indicate the kind of systematic voting data which would make it potentially verifiable. As noted above, one cannot be expected to support a hypothesis based upon ethnic characteristics by demonstrating that members of all possible subdivisions within the group (class, section, religion, etc.) voted in the same proportion for a political party. What must be demonstrated, however, is that in comparison with voters in similar categories outside the group, German-Americans consistently voted higher. That is, the hypothesis in effect predicts that if the Republican percentage in 1860 among all workers were 60 percent, among all Northern employers 40 percent, among all voters in the Northwestern states 65 percent, among all Catholics 30 percent, etc., the Republican percentage among German-American workers, employers, Northwesterners, Catholics, etc., would be higher than 60 percent, 40 percent, 65 percent, 30 percent respectively. (To achieve greater clarity the important problems will be ignored of whether the German-American vote has to be consistently higher in every significant category, and how much above the average it has to be.)

Obtaining the Systematic Data. Having indicated the kind of systematic voting data required, the task now is to find real-life data to support our hypothesis. That is, we must demonstrate that in 1860
voters of German descent “for the most part” switched over to the Republicans because of the combined impact of two causal factors: Experience with tyranny in Germany led them to oppose the party of tyranny in the United States, i.e., the Democratic party now dominated by slaveholders; Lincoln’s personality appealed to voters of German descent. In reality, the hypothesis makes a considerable number of factual assumptions apart from its causal inferences, but attention here is only focused upon its assumptions concerning actual voting behavior.

For the hypothesis to be potentially verifiable, it is necessary to demonstrate that a common pattern exists for German-American voting behavior in 1860. In other words, within “reasonable” limits of variation, German-Americans grouped in subdivisions of one broad category such as economic class, geographic location, religious persuasion, etc., must be found to have made similar voting decisions. If, when classified in terms of a meaningful criterion which divides them systematically into subdivisions also containing non-Germans, the voting patterns of German-Americans do not vary greatly from subdivision to subdivision, and consistently tend to be more Republican than the average for their subdivision, then the systematic data would support the hypothesis. But the heavy weight given by the hypothesis to its claimed causal factors as determinants of German-American voting behavior does not permit a great deal of variation because of other factors.

Fortunately, long historical interest in the question of whether the “German vote” in the Northwest decisively affected the 1860 election outcome provides us with some systematic, albeit imprecise, group data in terms of geographic location. That is, we cannot classify German-Americans throughout the country according to economic class, social status, religion, etc., but we can roughly ascertain their voting patterns in terms of geographic entities such as wards, townships, counties, states, sections.

For reasons perhaps reiterated too frequently, while no rigidly uniform pattern is necessary, given the nature of the hypothesis, German-American voting percentages in the separate geographic entities must be expected to show some degree of consistency. To take an extreme case, suppose it were found that the patterns were completely random within states and between states. If that were true, German-Americans clearly were not generally affected by the causal factors the hypothesis holds to be the most weighty determinants affecting them as a group.

A random pattern means that German-American voters were no more likely to cast Republican ballots than the average voter in the different geographic entities. Yet if we cannot show that our causal factors had sufficient impact upon enough members of the group to make them more likely to have cast Republican ballots than the average of all voters in the different geographic entities, what warrant would there be for assuming that those causal factors influenced any member because of his ancestry? That is, some voters who happened to be of German descent may have decided to vote for the party of Lincoln because they believed it opposed tyranny, and because his personality appealed to them. But the same proportion of members of all other ethnic groups also might have voted Republican for the same reasons. If this were so, the hypothesis based upon German characteristics would be specious. Under those circumstances the problem would be why certain German-Americans voted Republican, not why members of that group in general voted Republican. Perhaps those individuals could be placed in another group but its criteria would not be characteristics associated with German descent.

Since the hypothesis is couched in terms applicable to German-Americans throughout the country, and our data is classified in geographic units, it is not enough to show that German-Americans in several localities or states voted preponderantly Republican. Even a factually correct statement that in the Northwest members of the group preponderantly voted Republican would not in itself lend support to our hypothesis. Such a statement in no way provides the requisite systematic data to demonstrate that German-Americans in the Northwest, let alone throughout the country, were more likely to vote Republican than non-German-Americans. If it could be shown historically that as a group the German-Americans had never displayed any homogeneous voting pattern in the nation but tended to conform to the dominant pattern of the area in which they resided, if it could be shown that this pattern obtained in the 1860 election, then clearly a different explanation would be called for than the one given in our hypothesis.
The Spatial Incidence of German Voting Patterns Over Time. Various historians have commented upon German voting behavior in 1860 but probably the most comprehensive study, based largely on quantitative data, offers a hypothesis which is consonant with the systematic voting data pertinent to it. Moreover, it differs markedly from the one based on opposition to tyranny and the personality of Lincoln as distinctive factors affecting the decisions of German-American voters. According to Andreas Dorphalen:

From the earliest colonial times the German element in this country had shown itself particularly susceptible to environmental pressure. It accepted, and adopted, conditions as it found them.45

Though his study hardly provides sufficient evidence to support this arresting thesis adequately, it is at least suggestive. Of more importance for our purposes, he analyzed in some detail the 1860 voting behavior of German-Americans throughout the country in terms of response to sectional environmental pressures. Rather than the German-American vote exhibiting the uniform national pattern demanded by our hypothesis, in percentage terms, it varied according to sectional, state, and even local patterns. Though the dominant patterns differed widely throughout the nation, to the extent that the German-American vote could be identified it generally tended to conform to the vote pattern of the section, state, and locality. It must be emphasized that the identification of the German vote necessarily was crude because of the study’s national scope, but Dorphalen’s work suggests that more intensive research and more precise methods might support the following formulation:

In different geographic subdivisions (sections, states, etc.), German-American voting percentages tended to conform to the average of all voters within each subdivision. But compared to members of their own ethnic group, German-American voters’ behavior in one subdivision varied widely from German-American voters’ behavior in other subdivisions. Stated in other words, German-American group variations in the different subdivisions tended to parallel the average variations in the


different subdivisions. Thus, the systematic data Dorphalen marshalled supported his hypothesis of German-American conformity to environmental pressures.

Probably because the German influence in the Northwest had long been cited as the cause, or a cause, of the Republican victory in 1860, Dorphalen’s most intensive analysis was given to that section. He employed a variety of quantitative techniques to determine the degree of Republican strength among Germans in the Northwestern states. The size of the area covered, and the difficulties in identifying the German vote apparently caused him to use fairly crude quantitative tests. But in the absence of more refined analyses yielding contrary results, Dorphalen’s statistical findings appear to be convincing, and are reinforced by impressionistic evidence. Perhaps a seeming digression here really is pertinent.

Although this study is designed to suggest the contributions systematic research methods might make to historical studies, it hardly means to imply that impressionistic methods and data are valueless. On the contrary, as historians are painfully aware, there are valuable kinds of evidence which it is difficult, if not impossible, to convert to quantitative form. No doubt it is far harder to devise and consistently apply methods or rules which evaluate impressionistic evidence and enable scholars to arrive at some consensus (factual or interpretive) than it is to do the same thing for quantitative data. Yet efforts toward that end are more likely to be rewarded if the historian adds another set of tools to his intellectual equipment. That is, if historians explore the possibilities of simultaneously employing traditional impressionistic methodology and systematic quantitative techniques in attacking the complex problems involved in understanding man’s past, they are likely to come closer to their goals and improve both types of methodology to boot.

To resume the discussion of Dorphalen’s use of both quantitative and impressionistic evidence to support his hypothesis: Once he reformulated the long-debated problem to take into account the time and space dimensions of German voting patterns, Dorphalen, in effect, neatly delineated the systematic voting data which must be considered by any hypothesis treating any segment of those patterns in 1860. Whether his hypothesis is verifiable or not, the quantitative and impressionistic
evidence cited by him demonstrates the factual inaccuracy of the interpretation which assumed that the "German vote" in the Northwest (or other sections or areas) was determined by causal factors which did not similarly influence non-German voters.

For example, Dorpaten showed that in the ten Indiana counties where Germans had mainly settled, Lincoln only carried three. Of more importance is the fact that though the Republicans scored considerable gains over 1850 in all ten counties, the increases were not disproportionate to their gains in other Indiana counties where few German-Americans lived! And in the nine Wisconsin counties with the strongest German-American concentration, Lincoln only carried five to Douglas' four. Again, as in Indiana, Republican gains in counties of German concentration were not disproportionate to those in non-German counties. If in areas where the dominant voting pattern was not Republican the German-American vote also was not Republican, if in areas where German-Americans apparently gave strong support to Lincoln other groups also gave him strong support, if in certain states or sections Lincoln ran strongly both in non-German and German areas, then the thesis of German-American conformity to environmental pressures is given considerable credence.

The heart of Dorpaten's analysis was a comparison of statistics for German settlement and the vote in 1860 throughout the Northwest; it affords little justification for a hypothesis requiring disproportionate German-American support for the party opposed to tyranny and offering a candidate with the personality of Lincoln. That the interpretation of a fact depends on whether the fact is treated in haphazard isolation or seen as part of a body of systematic data is nicely illustrated in Dorpaten's summary of his findings:

... while it is correct to say that Lincoln's victory in the northwest would have been impossible without German support, it is wrong to conclude that his German vote was out of proportion to the size of the German element in the northwestern states. In reality the Germans did no more to assure Lincoln's victory than did their American-born neighbors. Nor did they do so in any other section or in the nation as a whole.  

46. Ibid., pp. 73-74.
47. Ibid., p. 75.
48. Ibid., pp. 75-76. I am aware of the considerable number of secondary studies concerning the German vote in 1860 but there seems little need to discuss them since the point here is illustrative rather than substantive. Of all the approaches taken to the question, Dorpaten seems to me to have adopted the most interesting and logical; it is the kind of approach applicable to studies of ethnic groups in all elections.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

If more intensive and comprehensive research than has been undertaken to-date confirms Dorpaten's description of the German-American voting pattern in 1860 and previous elections—that is, it closely conformed to dominant sectional or other spatial patterns—an excellent example would exist of the utility of stating a hypothesis in terms of the systematic voting data necessary to satisfy it. The hypothesis offered at the outset of Section V rested upon the assumption that German-American voters possessed characteristics which made them more likely to vote Republican than the average of all voters in the Northwest. Although the hypothesis might appear to be consonant with the "facts" if attention were confined to the German-American vote in the Northwest, it does not hold true when the German and non-German vote in the Northwest, and throughout the country, is examined.

Which Hypothesis to Test? Since our concern with this material is essentially illustrative rather than substantive, let us assume that Dorpaten's description of German and non-German voting patterns is accurate, and his thesis of German voting conformity to environmental pressures is verifiable. Now if we are interested in finding out why the Germans in the Northwest preponderantly switched to the Republicans, we must first determine what caused a significant proportion of the Northwestern population as a whole to switch over to the Republicans. (It is easily demonstrated that such a switch did take place when the Northwestern population is considered as a whole.) Precise, comprehensive, and systematic statements of the facts of voting behavior are necessary to evaluate a hypothesis, but they are also necessary to arrive at a logical priority for which hypothesis to test out of a multitude of possibilities. It seems logical to claim that even if data for German-American and non-German-American voting patterns were available only for the Northwest, any historian blessed with a normal amount of insight would give higher priority to the hypothesis of German-
American conformity than the hypothesis resting upon German-American characteristics making them peculiarly responsive to the Republican party. Such a priority would be especially logical because recent studies emphasize the conformist tendencies of immigrants in general.

When the problem of German voting behavior in the Northwest is stated in terms of why the section went over to the Republicans, a persuasive answer is given by Paul W. Gates’s recent study. Gates’s work in the field of land history entitles his views to attention and his hypothesis can be stated in this oversimplified fashion: The position taken by the Buchanan administration on the public land question after the Panic of 1857 was favorable to Southern proslavery interests, certain land-speculator-politicians, and other interested parties identified with the South, and unfavorable to actual squatter-settlers, settler-spectulators and “antislavery” land monopolists from the East and Middle West. The administration’s policy was so unfavourably received in the Northwest that large numbers of voters in the public land states swung over to the Republican party which promised to enact a genuine homestead measure. Hence, Republican victory in the Northwest resulted from its campaign promises on the land question, and from the actual performance of Buchanan’s administration which ran counter to the desires and needs of a majority of the section’s residents.

Clearly, if Dorpaten’s description of the German-American voting pattern in the nation is accurate, then Gates’s hypothesis is consistent with it and is a logical one to explore in examining the Republican victory in the Northwest. Whether the hypothesis is more than potentially verifiable is immaterial here. The crux of the discussion has been to underscore the importance of recognizing the logical implications of a hypothesis based upon group voting behavior. Once such recognition is attained, it is possible to marshal the requisite systematic voting data and determine whether the hypothesis is potentially verifiable. If this procedure is not followed, however, the danger exists that specious causal factors may appear to be so plausible as to gain wide acceptance and thereby divert attention from the real determinants of voting behavior.


**VI. Epilogue**

Until this point the study has essentially dealt with the problems of learning what happened, where and when it happened, and who did it. In a sense, although filled with technical difficulties and demanding arduous research, those phases of inquiry are relatively the easiest in terms of satisfactory resolution. They call for a high order of intellectual clarity and articulation but the major difficulties they present might really be viewed as mechanical and administrative, requiring efficient organization and adequate forces rather than highly skilled, intelligent, imaginative historical research.

When attempts are made to answer questions involving the why and how of American political behavior, a considerably more complex field is entered. Granted that we were able to describe what happened accurately, and who voted for it to happen, we still would not know why they voted as they did, and how their beliefs came to be formed. In other words, what are the opinion-making and opinion-manipulating devices and institutions utilized at various times to persuade various groups that they should vote for a particular party or individual, for particular reasons? How effective are these several instrumentalities in achieving such persuasion, and under what conditions? To what extent does tradition condition voter beliefs; to what extent are voter beliefs the specific result of purposive action by specific individuals, groups or institutions; to what extent are these beliefs by-products of ostensibly nonpolitical groups, activities, social processes, and institutional patterns; to what extent are these beliefs consciously or unconsciously acquired or inculcated?

Obviously, questions involving the why and how of political behavior are extremely difficult to answer for so heterogeneous and dynamic a country as the United States. It cannot be overemphasized that establishing the objective correlations indicated above does not automatically solve these questions. On the contrary, they merely allow these questions to be put forth in meaningful form. That is, questions can then be derived from known facts, not erroneous or metaphysical impressions, and the answers to the questions can be tested to conform with all known facts. Moreover, attempts to answer these questions may reveal that insufficient correlations have been established and lead to efforts to establish additional correlations.
But if one essays beyond simple description, correlations can only point the way for historical research, they cannot take its place. One may be able to establish beyond reasonable doubt, for example, that for given time periods German-Americans tend to conform to the dominant patterns of their community without knowing why they do so, how they came to be persuaded, and under what persuasion they ceased to do so. Correlations thus can be thought of on two levels, descriptive and interpretative; they are adequate for the first but merely suggestive for the second.

This study is not designed to deal with the complicated problems involved in the attainment of genuinely objective historical interpretations of systematic, well-described, known data; that is, interpretations which can be described accurately as consistent with scientific procedures. Yet it seems reasonable to maintain that before we can have such interpretations, or even argue logically whether they are possible under any circumstances, we must have known data in manageable form. Lacking sufficient data of this character, statements on the subject, both pro and con, really are incapable of resolution. No implication of mechanical separation is intended here. Obviously, the processes do not take place independently of each other, nor would it be desirable that they do so. Nonetheless, at the present stage of controversy and development, known data of the type called for above and techniques to handle them would seem to be a prerequisite if historiographic advances are to be made, and if arguments relative to "scientific history" are not to remain at the mercy of the rapid changes of intellectual climate so characteristic of the twentieth century.