

Germany

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Germany in the interwar period is characterized by two distinct regimes: the Weimar Republic lasted until 1933 and the Nazi regime lasted from 1933 until 1945. Some sources view the Weimar Republic initially as a parliamentary democracy with (often unstable) coalition governments, which became akin to a presidential system under Brüning (who ignored parliament and ruled by presidential decree: See Kolb 2005; Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009)). However, we code the Weimar republic as a semi-presidential (or dual executive) system. Unlike other countries using semi-presidential system (such as Finland or the French Third Republic) where the president and the PM co-exist in harmony, the semi-presidential system in the Weimar Republic was unique in its “vertical structure” (Shen 2009, 39). In the words of Shen (2009, 39), “although the President and the Chancellor both owned important constitutional powers, they were designed not to be used at the same time.”

Specifically, according to the Weimar Constitution, the Reichskanzler (the chancellor) governs in normal times, while the Reichspräsident (the president) governs in abnormal times, only for a limited time. Therefore, the reason why the Archigos (Goemans et al. 2009) or other scholars have been treating the Weimar Republic as a parliamentary system is because the Republic was in “stable” for the most of its history (before 1930 or economic crisis in 1929). It seems that the focus on the use (or abuse) of the executive powers of the president under Brüning, leads some scholars describe the period as the end of the parliamentary system. However, there was no constitutional change or regime change, because the Republic was semi-residential system from the beginning (Shen 2009, 39; Stykow 2007, 204; Vincent 1997, 206; Kolb 2005, 118-9; German Bundestag n.d.).

Nazi Germany under Hitler, in contrast, was a personalist authoritarian regime; it had a single-party structure, but the Nazi party did not exercise control over the decisions of the leader, nor did it control the career path of officials independent of Hitler. The Nazi party was sizable, but in many ways it acted as a bureaucracy to Hitler’s personalist regime.

Following elections in January 1919, the Weimar coalition came to power, which included the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the German Democratic Party (Deutsche Demokratische Partei: DDP), and the Center Party (Zentrum: Z) (Henig 1998; Kolb 2005). This coalition, under Ebert’s fellow party-members Scheidemann, Bauer, and Müller oversaw the construction of a new constitution and new elections as Ebert became president (Encyclopædia Britannica). However, following the 1920 parliamentary elections, the Weimar coalition lost its broad support as a result of the Treaty of Versailles and could no longer count on a majority in parliament. Consequently, the SPD left the coalition and a minority government was formed by Fehrenbach of the Catholic Centre Party with the nationalist, right-liberal German People's Party (Deutsche Volkspartei – DVP), and DDP, with outside support of the SPD. This is a SOLS change. The Fehrenbach government would be the first in a string of minority Zentrum

governments, followed by those of Wirth and Cuno. Wirth led a coalition of Zentrum DDP and SPD, which was coded as a minor SOLS change (Collier and Pedley 2002, 10; Henig 1998). Wirth was succeeded by Cuno, a respected business leader, who was not affiliated with a party and led a coalition of Zentrum DDP and DVP, (German Bundestag 2006; Kolb 2005; Collier and Pedley 2002, 10; Henig 1998).

Cuno was forced to resign after the SPD withdrew its support and was succeeded by Stresemann of the DVP who headed the "great coalition," which consisted of his DVP, the SPD, Zentrum, and DDP. This is a SOLS change. Following disagreement over how Stresemann dealt with the leftwing and rightwing threats, the SPD left the coalition on 3 November 1923. This is a minor SOLS change (Paxton and Hessler 2011, 217; Henig 1998). Soon thereafter Stresemann was forced out of office because of a vote of no confidence. Stresemann would remain as a minister in the subsequent minority government of Marx established that consisted of the Centre Party, DVP, DDP, and the Bavarian People's Party (BVP), which was coded as a second SOLS change (Kolb 2005; Encyclopædia Britannica; Biesinger 2006, 37; Collier and Pedley 2002, 10; Henig 1998; Kolb 1988, 199).

Following elections of 4 May 1924 Marx's minority cabinet would continue without the BVP. This is a minor SOLS change. However, it would soon call for another round of elections in December hoping for enough electoral gain to win a majority (Deutsches Historisches Museum n.d.; Fulbrook 2011). Despite the fact that the coalition parties win slightly in the December elections, Marx is unable to establish a government and is succeeded by the independent Hans Luther who forms a government that includes the far-right German National People's Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei: DNVP), which had made such gains that a coalition could not be formed without it. The entry of Luther's coalition of the Z, BVP, DVP, DDP and DNVP on 15 January 1925 is coded as SOLS change (Kolb 2005; German Bundestag 2006; Encyclopædia Britannica). On October 26, 1925 (Henig 1998; Deutsches Historisches Museum n.d.) the DNVP left the coalition, however, and the remaining minority cabinet was kept in office through SDP and DDP support, which has been coded as a minor SOLS change (Kolb 2005, 74).

The remainder of Luther's cabinet resigned in December and Luther formed a new minority cabinet of the Centre, DVP, BVP, and DDP in January 1926. This is a minor SOLS change (Deutsches Historisches Museum n.d.). Luther lost a vote of confidence on May 13, and the president appointed Wilhelm Marx to form another government, which is a SOLS change. Marx' cabinet consisting of Z, DDP, DVP, and BVP is brought down in December. In January 1927, Marx builds a new coalition containing the Centre, BVP, DVP, and DNVP parties, which is coded as another minor SOLS change (Kolb 2005). In February 1928 the Marx government fell and elections lead to the establishment of another "great coalition" of SDP, Centre, DDP, DVP, and BVP, which is coded as a SOLS change (German Bundestag 2006; Kolb 2005).

Müller was succeeded by Brüning of the Centre party, whose minority coalition was supported by a coalition consisting of Centre, BVP, DVP, DDP, the rightwing Economic Party (Wirtschaftspartei: WP) (Vincent 1997, 105), and People's Conservative Association (Volkskonservative Vereinigung: KVP) (Vincent 1997, 494-5), which is coded as a SOLS change. On November 25 Johann Brecht (Justice Minister) of the WP resigned (Patch 2006, 110-1), which is a minor SOLS change. On October 9, 1931 there was a reshuffle of Brüning's cabinet and corresponding coalition, which now consisted of Z, DSTP (the German State Party: Deutsche Staatspartei), PP, and the Christian-National Peasants' and Rural People's Party (Landvolk: LV). This is a minor SOLS change (Deutsches Historisches Museum n.d.).

Brüning was succeeded by von Papen who was an ultra-rightwing member of the Centre party. Von Papen was selected as chancellor by President von Hindenburg and created a rightwing authoritarian government of the Centre Party in coalition with the DNVP (Deutsches Historisches Museum n.d.). As von Papen was of the same party as Brüning this is a minor SOLS change. Von Papen was in turn replaced by von Hindenburg in favor of non-party Schleicher heading a coalition of the DNVP and LV (Deutsches Historisches Museum n.d.), which was coded as a SOLS change. Not before long Schleicher was replaced in favour of Hitler by von Hindenburg.

During the years of 1933 and 1934 Hitler consolidated his leadership. He aligned with conservatives and industrialists and was able to ignore the Reichstag, dissolve and replace existing state governments, and take over the bureaucracy. He then introduced a single-party state under the NSDAP (the National Socialist German Worker's Party). The only institution that could bring him down during this time was the military, which, however, remained appeased as long as Hitler didn't threaten its interests. In 1934, Hitler destroyed the SA (Storm Troopers: Sturmabteilung), which was demanding more socialist economic reforms and wanted to create a new Nazi army, because both policies might threaten Hitler's survival in power. This purge established Hitler as the leader of Germany and ensured the army's support. After Hindenburg's death, Hitler combined the office of the president with that of the chancellor and had the army swear total obedience to the "Führer." Given the fact that it was really Hitler who controlled the party and the military rather than vice versa, this is best understood as a personalist system.

Hitler ruled as chancellor until he was killed in April. According to the BBC (2010), his successor Admiral Karl Dönitz, Mil, replaced him as chancellor until Germany lost World War II and was partitioned by the Allies. The transition to Dönitz is not a SOLS change. Germany, as a single country, has no data from 1946 until reunification in 1990 in COW.

From 1990 until 2008 Germany is considered a parliamentary democracy. From 1982 until 1998, Helmut Kohl of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), was chancellor. In 1990 his parliamentary coalition included the Free Democrats (FDP). In 1998 Gerhard Schröder of the Social Democrats (SPD) became chancellor in coalition with the Alliance 90/Greens. This is a

SOLS change. In 2005 Angela Merkel, CDU, became chancellor in a grand coalition with the SPD. This is a SOLS change.

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