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# Radicalized Youth: Examining the Role of Reeducation in Youth Deradicalization

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## Abstract

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*Extremist groups are radicalizing children because they are vulnerable to indoctrination and are less likely to question authority. In a post-conflict environment, indoctrinated youth seeking to reintegrate must overcome both the traumas of child soldiering in addition to the damaging psychological and social affects of radicalization. It is clear that radicalized youth require additional support to address their extremist views and behavior. Deradicalization theories offer potential solutions to rehabilitating extremist youth, but have yet to be directly applied or tested in this context. This study argues that reeducation is the most effective strategy to deploy in the deradicalization of youth, and that post World War II occupied Germany is an ideal case study for testing this theory. A mixed methods approach utilizing archival, survey, and voting data is employed to compare the different reeducation policies and measure their effectiveness. This study finds that reeducation initiatives, specifically in recreational youth organizations and in educational institutions which have been purged of extremist influences, are successful at deradicalizing youth.*

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**Key words: radicalization, deradicalization, reeducation, German youth, denazification, youth organizations**

## Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	1
II. Why Postwar Germany?.....	3
III. Literature Review .....	5
A. <i>Ideological Radicalization</i> .....	6
B. <i>Social Radicalization</i> .....	7
C. <i>Deradicalization</i> .....	9
D. <i>Reeducation</i> .....	11
IV. Theoretical Approach.....	14
V. Case Selection.....	17
A. <i>American Zone</i> .....	18
B. <i>British Zone</i> .....	21
C. <i>French Zone</i> .....	26
VI. Methodology.....	29
VII. Results and Findings.....	31
VIII. Discussion and Conclusion.....	36
IX. References.....	38

## Introduction

Terrorist groups are increasingly radicalizing youth as a strategy to bolster their support and ranks. Organizations like the Islamic State recognize that children are highly susceptible to indoctrination and have effectively radicalized thousands of adolescents to serve in both military and auxiliary roles (Benotman and Malik, 2016). Youth radicalization is employed as a means of direct control and also ensures the longterm survival of a group and its ideology. Indoctrinated youth suffer from the affects of child soldiering in addition to a multitude of negative psychological and social issues engendered by the process of radicalization. Without support, these adolescents often maintain their extremist views and experience greater risks of relapsing into violent behavior (Benotman and Malik, 2016: 50). As the Islamic State continues to sustain territorial losses and radicalized youth are freed or captured, it is vital for the post-conflict reconstruction efforts of Syria and Iraq, as well as for future conflicts, to understand which youth deradicalization policies are the most effective.

It would be intuitive to find solutions to this dilemma by delving into literature on the deradicalization of youth, yet there is surprisingly limited research on the subject. Current research examines the radicalization of youth, but fails to comprehensively address the deradicalization process. To mend this glaring research gap, this study uses broader theories from terrorism studies, which assert that the driving mechanism of successful deradicalization is reeducation emphasizing moderate beliefs, and applies them to the context of youths. The use of radicalized children by extremists is not a new, but instead a reemerging phenomenon, which is why this study utilizes the post World War II occupation of Germany as a comparative case study to test and expand upon youth reeducation and deradicalization theories. The American, British, and French zones had distinct occupational objectives, however all prioritized the democratic reeducation of the German youth, millions of whom were indoctrinated with extremist ideology (Kater, 2004). This study argues that it is possible to measure the effectiveness of

each zone's youth reeducation policies and to test specific reeducation strategies by utilizing a mixed methods approach that analyzes archival, survey, and youth voting data.

This study will first justify why postwar Germany is a valid comparative case study, before delineating the leading theories of youth radicalization, deradicalization, and reeducation. The expectation that reeducation leads to youth deradicalization will then be tested using two hypotheses, which guide the analysis. A mixed methods approach was necessary to examine a phenomenon with such complex causality. The hypotheses are first explored using qualitative data collected by the Western zones of occupation. They are then quantitatively analyzed using correlation tests and archival, survey, and voting data to determine an association between the policies and lower rates of youth votes for radical parties. Ultimately, the key findings presented suggest that reeducation has been a successful method for the deradicalization of youth—a combination of direct and indirect approaches being most effective—and should be considered an essential element of contemporary youth deradicalization policies.

## Why Postwar Germany?

Post World War II Germany is an exemplary case study to employ for the examination of youth deradicalization policies. Following the collapse of the Nazi dictatorship in May 1945, the Allied powers—America, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union—occupied a socially and economically shattered state, where millions of adolescents were subjected to twelve years of systematic indoctrination and radicalization. Nazi ideology pervaded nearly every facet of life for youths living in the Third Reich, as the regime completely controlled the education system, media, and youth organizations. By 1939 the Hitler Youth’s membership, which included the female equivalent League of German Girls, totaled 8,870,000 members (Fischer, 1995: 346). The entire curriculum of the education system, from elementary school to the university level, had been supplanted with Nazi ideology (Kater, 2004: 43). It was the regime’s intention to create a generation of ardent Nazis and loyal followers who, through radicalization, would perpetually swell the ranks of the army and party. When asked about the German youth, Hitler stated that “no boy or girl shall leave school without having been fully instructed in the need for and nature of racial purity...they will not be free again for the rest of their lives” (Fischer, 1995: 351). It was in this environment of prolonged indoctrination that the Allied powers undertook the deradicalization of the German youth.

A month after the official capitulation of Nazi Germany, the Allied powers met at the Potsdam Conference to delineate their occupational objectives. They decided Germany would be partitioned into four zones, each governed by a different Allied state— America, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union respectively. They agreed on the overall occupational strategy which prioritized the short term goal of denazification, defined as the immediate removal of high ranking Nazi party members from positions of power and the dissolution of all Nazi affiliated organizations and policies, closely followed by the longterm objective of deradicalization through reeducation (Tent, 1982: 2). The Western Allies believed that the youth were vital to the democratization initiative, but must first be reeducated in

democratic values, stating in the Potsdam Agreement that “German education shall be so controlled as completely to eliminate Nazi and militarist doctrines and to make possible the successful development of democratic ideas” (Balfour, 1956: 82). Although the zones were to follow the general policies prescribed at the Potsdam Conference, each zone was in actuality, autonomous and issued their own policies. This was especially apparent when it came to reeducation policies, as the Potsdam Agreement “was so sufficiently broad on education controls that the four occupying powers had freedom to effect any changes they desired without regard to the consequence in the other zones” (Tent, 1982: 39). Each zone’s reeducation policy, and the denazification policies which significantly influenced them, varied drastically.

It is this variation in reeducation and denazification policies across the zones which makes postwar Germany most suitable as a case study for testing and examining youth deradicalization theories. The policies and conduct of each zonal government were so diverse that this is not a single, but instead, small N case study, where each zone is treated as its own entity. By comparing regions with the same cultural background, time period, and shared postwar reconstruction environment, a number of variables are held constant, while the key explanatory variables, reeducation and denazification, are discussed and analyzed. The wealth of archival and qualitative data available also enables a comprehensive mixed methods approach, which is necessary to fully develop and examine the complex causality of a phenomenon like deradicalization. Finally, the sheer scale of the reeducation initiative, which involved millions of people and nearly five years of concerted effort from the American, British, and French governments, is conceivably the largest in human history, providing an unprecedented opportunity to analyze and expand upon the phenomenon of youth deradicalization through reeducation. Before presenting the cases, it is necessary to discuss the key theories of radicalization, deradicalization, and reeducation used to evaluate the policies of each zone.

## Literature Review

Delineating the mechanisms of radicalization is necessary before delving into the process of deradicalization through reeducation, as they are “mirror images of each other, and the processes that promote deradicalization reverse those that promote radicalization” (Kruglanski et al., 2014: 84). There are conflicting definitions of radicalization which vary immensely depending on the field of study. Traditionally, scholars of terrorism studies tended to measure radicalization by participation in acts of violence, while those studying psychology and sociology focused on the social and ideological aspects (Pisoiu, 2014: 3). These limited criteria narrowed the analysis of radicalization, which recent scholarship has shown is instead a complex process with different degrees of severity influenced by a multitude of factors. For example, although frequently used in specific reference to either religious or political extremism, the term radicalization is a generalizable social and psychological phenomenon (Pisoiu, 2014: 3).

Radicalization is typically a gradual process, where increased exposure to a group or ideology causes a change in individual behavior and values (Horgan, 2008). This slow shift towards radicalization is often represented as a scale with varying degrees of intensity, ranging from a lower “attitudinal support”, to “actual engagement in violence” (Kruglanski et al., 2014). This scale is illustrated as a pyramid, where the base is composed of passive sympathizers and supporters of the cause or ideology, while the “higher levels of the pyramid are associated with decreased numbers but increased radicalization of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors” (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008: 417). These recent findings allow for more generalizability, which is why for the scope of this study, the broadest definition of radicalization, “increasing time, money, risk taking, and violence in support of a cause or group” will be employed (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008: 416). Beyond these generally agreed upon assumptions, scholars are conflicted and in constant debate over which causal mechanisms, social or ideological, are more significant in pushing individuals further through the process of radicalization.



## *Ideological Radicalization*

Initial scholarly explanations for the causes of terrorism state that the primary motivator for radicalization and eventual violence is ideology. An ideology “is a collective belief system to which group members subscribe” (Kruglanski et al., 2014: 76). This theory contends that the ideology of an organization is what influences and reforms the identity of an individual through all stages of radicalization. As an individual becomes more committed to a group’s ideology, their own goals will begin to overlap with the political objectives of the organization, to the extent that it becomes rational and strategic for them to participate (Lake, 2002; Crenshaw, 1981). It is through this gradual indoctrination of ideology that an individual will eventually commit themselves entirely, willing to carry out violence or even suicide attacks for the goals of the organization (Pape, 2005).

Children are particularly vulnerable to radicalization through ideology because they have yet to fully develop their own values and beliefs (Bloom and Horgan, 2015). Their lack of an established values system and mental development enables organizations to more easily indoctrinate them (Schauer and Elbert, 2010). Once inculcated with radical ideology, “children are more likely to consider it normal, and therefore defend its practices” (Benotman and Malik, 2016: 27). Groups like the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, prefer using child soldiers because they are more effectively controlled through ideology (Kelly et al., 2016: 8). They are also less likely to question the ideology of the group, which makes them more willing to participate in tasks or violence.

A common strategy of extremist groups is to use their ideology to dehumanize or demonize their opposition. By presenting anyone who does not subscribe to the group’s ideology as inferior or inherently evil, members “become more willing to act violently and less likely to object to immoral acts” (Lankford and Gillespie, 2011: 127). During open conflict with an opposition group, ideology can lead to the mass radicalization of an organization, even of nominal members not directly involved with violence. The entire opposition group becomes the enemy because they share a “bad essence”, which

can “make sense of the impulse to attack all of them, without regard for age, gender, or civilian status” (McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2008: 428). This is how indoctrinated child soldiers of the LRA are capable of committing “brutal acts of violence” against civilians, believing that they are not killing people, but instead cleansing the “impure outside world” (Titeca, 2010: 69). These findings conclude that ideology is the driving force of radicalization, justifying the use of violence in pursuit of the group’s goals. However, another prominent camp within radicalization studies argues that social factors, instead of ideology, are more influential in the radicalization process.

### *Social Radicalization*

These scholars believe that social benefits and rewards through increased cohesion within a group are what inspire initial membership and drive radicalization. Some researchers have even asserted that people participate in extremist groups not at all for political or ideological goals, but to develop social relationships, progressively committing more time and energy in order to improve them (Abrahms, 2008: 96). A common motivation for entry into extremist groups is through social pressure from friends and family already in the organization (McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2008: 421). Once inside the group, new members wanting to show dedication to their personal connections who recruited them, will quickly begin changing their values to fit those of the group. This phenomenon is magnified if the entire community is in support of the organization (Constanza, 2015:13). Regardless of having preexisting contacts, new members will begin adopting the majority views of the group. This psychological phenomenon is known as the group extremity shift theory, where through social pressure, individuals subconsciously change their views to “move their opinions towards the mean opinion of the group” (McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2008: 422). Even those forcibly brought into an organization, will “gradually become dedicated” to it (Sklad and Park, 2017: 3). Social and psychology theories like group extremity shift are beneficial when analyzing radicalization, because they are “cross culturally

applicable to virtually all social interactions” (Williams and Lindsey, 2014: 137). Radicalization through social pressures appears to be heightened among adolescents.

Children are highly influenced by social pressures as they have yet to fully develop their own identity. This makes them prone to radicalization, as extremist groups can offer “at least three primary universal psychological needs” for adolescents, “the need to be accepted, the need to belong, and the need for a positive social identity and personal significance” (Sklad and Park, 2017: 2). Once inside a radical group, it is difficult for youth to disaffiliate themselves from it, as the process of social radicalization only accelerates, especially if family and friends are within the group. Family and friends are often the initial reason for youth joining a group, and once recruited, they become “important agents of radicalization” (Özerdem and Podder, 2011: 68). Even without personal connections, adolescent members will typically come to view the group as a “surrogate family”, attaching themselves to their peers and the group’s identity (Schauer and Elbert, 2010: 320). This powerful group socialization can entirely restructure the social identity of an adolescent, to the extent that they no longer view themselves as individuals, but part of the collective group, “willing to participate in radical violence” (Özerdem and Podder, 2011: 69).

Social radicalization is accelerated by isolation from competing influences, which is why leaders of extremist groups try to weaken and limit contact with traditional support systems. Isolation can be physical, “or social and symbolic, where individuals are encouraged to ignore the presence, opinions, and values of others” (Lankford and Gillespie, 2011: 124). By detaching new members from the traditional norms that created their values before entering the group, like family and community beliefs, it is easier to deflect “alternative views”, which makes indoctrination more effective (Skald and Park, 2017: 3). Youth are particularly susceptible to indoctrination when removed from family and social support. Family and community are “a critical factor in the normative development of youth” and without them, can be prone to radicalization (Özerdem and Podder, 2011: 68). When isolated, children

are also vulnerable and searching for a parental figure, typically someone who commands authority, like a group leader, who “become critical to influencing radical youth” (Horgan, 2009: 136). These theories show how children, like those abducted into the LRA, can quickly radicalize and become attached to a group’s leader when isolated from their family and community (Allen and Vlassenroot, 2010).

It is clear that social factors are significant to the process of youth radicalization, as they lead to a restructuring of personal values as well as social networks, but the impact of ideology cannot be discarded. Recent scholarship has shown that social pressure and ideology are “not mutually exclusive” in the process of radicalization, and that “both are of crucial importance in that social bonds...bring individuals in contact with ideology...ideology constitutes a shared reality to which members of a social network...[are] bonded by a common worldview” (Kruglanski et al., 2014: 76). It is this potent combination of social and ideological factors that deradicalization initiatives attempt to undo.

### *Deradicalization*

The deradicalization of adolescents has unfortunately not received as much attention as the radicalization of youth. Instead, the emphasis of post-conflict youth has been on their reintegration and disengagement, which rarely addresses the psychological process of deradicalization. This study, along with the forthcoming works of John Horgan, the leading scholar on radicalization and deradicalization within terrorism studies, are beginning to address this phenomenon. Until further research is conducted on youth deradicalization, broader theories from terrorism studies will have to be employed.

The number of state sponsored deradicalization programs are burgeoning, as they are increasingly being seen as a viable counter terrorism strategy. Saudi Arabia has invested substantial resources into their deradicalization program, lauding it as “the jewel in the crown of modern counterterrorism techniques”, capable of more effectively thwarting extremism compared to conventional military tactics (Dechesne, 2011). Saudi Arabia is considered to have the most

comprehensive program, boasting an impressive 2% recidivism rate among participants, which has been imitated by other countries (Boucek, 2008). States believe that these initiatives have the potential to significantly undermine extremist organizations by permanently removing individuals from the cycle of radicalization by counteracting the affects of indoctrination (Lankford and Gillespie, 2011). Despite the emerging number of deradicalization programs and their significance as a counter radicalization strategy, “there remains little clarity about what deradicalization implies”, as it remains a contested concept with significant gaps in its research (Horgan, 2009: 156; Köhler, 2014: 420).

When deradicalization initiatives first emerged, they encompassed a wide variety of objectives, programs, and disparate terminology, which made it difficult for researchers to analyze (Horgan and Braddock, 2010: 268). The lack of an operationalized definition and inadequate data from the programs themselves have left the field surprisingly untested. Recent attempts to accurately conceptualize a definition of deradicalization as well as methods to systematically evaluate programs could improve the field immensely. The basis for this new definition, is a clear distinction between disengagement and deradicalization.

Disengagement is simply when an individual physically refrains from direct involvement with radical activity. Its focus is on behavioral changes, “from offending to non offending, while leaving the ideological or psychological aspects aside” (Köhler, 2014: 420). Deradicalization is instead concerned with changing the behavior and beliefs of former extremists, where programs are directly intervening to “align detainees’ behavior and or thinking to non radical, nonviolent ideals” (Williams and Lindsey, 2013: 136). Deradicalization is a longterm and complex cognitive transformation which seeks to “decrease commitment to an ideological goal” (Kruglanski et al., 2014: 87). Compared to disengagement, the objectives of deradicalization are much more substantial because they attempt to undo the detrimental social, ideological, and psychological affects of the radicalization process.

These explicit definitions are a constructive step towards better analysis, but also reveal one of the most significant gaps in the entire field, that disengagement, not genuine deradicalization, has been the focus thus far (Horgan and Braddock, 2010). Although permanent deradicalization is the main goal of these initiatives, disengagement has overwhelmingly been the focus of analysis, as “the simple absence of criminal behavior and the measurement of reoffending or recidivism rates” is much easier to quantify compared to changes in beliefs which are “impossible to determine with absolute accuracy” (Köhler, 2014: 425). A method to quantify and measure attitudes and beliefs of those who have participated in deradicalization programs is needed to mend this rift in the field. It is difficult to conceptualize an abstract term like feelings and principles of an individual, but not insurmountable. A potential solution to this dilemma could be revealed by evaluating the driving mechanism of deradicalization, reeducation.

### *Reeducation*

The forerunner to the extensive Saudi deradicalization program was in Egypt years earlier. In a seemingly endless struggle with extremist groups, the Egyptian government decided that instead of torturing captured extremists, they would attempt to rehabilitate them through reeducation. This ambitious and innovative strategy of deradicalization entailed employing moderate Islamic scholars from the prestigious Al-Azhar University to reeducate inmates by correcting their religious misconceptions. This initiative “achieved significant success in combating extremism”, by using “Islamic theological arguments to delegitimize the use of violence against the state, the society, and the other”, demonstrating that reeducation could be an effective tool in countering extremist ideology (Gunaratna and Ali, 2009: 279). The Saudi program would adopt and refine the strategy of religious reeducation, making it a cornerstone of their policy.

The Saudi program has a committee of “clerics and scholars” that specialize in religious reeducation who “point out the incorrect views held by the indoctrinated terrorist, explain precisely why they are wrong, and introduce the correct ideas and lessons” (Lankford and Gillespie, 2011: 121). Similarly to the indoctrination process itself, the strategy is to gradually change the beliefs of extremists through prolonged “confrontation” with their radical ideologies, “to persuade participants to accept a moderate, nonviolent interpretation” (Williams and Lindsey, 2013: 138; Dechesne, 2011: 290). Exposing participants to “positive interactions with people of all cultures and religions” has also shown to further reeducation (Lankford and Gillespie, 2011: 129).

Successful reeducation efforts attempt to reverse both the ideological and social damage caused by radicalization (Khöler, 2014). As outlined previously, it is the deleterious combination of ideological and social pressures that push individuals further through the process of radicalization. Programs attempt to strengthen the identity of participants in order to help them resist the social pressures of rejoining a group (Williams and Lindsey, 2014: 142). The intended result of emphasizing the individuality and free thinking of participants throughout the reeducation process is to improve their ability to maintain moderate beliefs when under pressure from extremist influences. This feature of reeducation seeks to alleviate the difficult psychological transition from a socially cohesive group with a strong collective identity to individual autonomy. The fundamental strategy of confronting both social and ideological issues in tandem has shown to be highly effective, but can also be applied in less formalized settings with indirect methods.

While many of the deradicalization programs today administer reeducation directly to detainees in a controlled environment, there are other settings which are potentially better suited for youth deradicalization. Attending school and receiving an education has shown to be critical in the deradicalization process of youth (Constanza, 2015: 12). A formal education is among “the factors widely proven to be essential for successful deradicalization” (Köhler, 2014: 423), but it may also “be

the best place to deploy primary interventions” (Skald and Park, 2017: 2). A learning environment is not only a healthy place for adolescents to begin rebuilding social ties with peers their own age, but also a setting where they can be exposed to the prolonged reeducation necessary for longterm deradicalization. The curriculum of educational interventions is vital to the deradicalization effort and should “aim at reducing actual discrimination and exclusion...sharing experiences of social exclusion...and promote equality in an open manner” (Skald and Park, 2017: 3). This style of curriculum directly confronts the often discriminatory ideology of extremist groups and exposes adolescents to an open dialogue of varying opinions which is prohibited in radical groups. These theories on deradicalization through reeducation are what form the expectations of this study.



## Theoretical Approach

Theoretically, this study asserts that the concepts and theories of radicalization, deradicalization, and reeducation outlined above, can be applied to youth living in post World War II Germany, whose experiences can directly inform contemporary approaches to youth deradicalization. The German youth were thoroughly radicalized both socially and ideologically under twelve years of Nazi influence. The Nazi Party diffused extremist ideology through every facet of German society, ensuring that all youths were to some extent exposed, altering their attitudes consciously or subconsciously. Socially, adolescents opposed to the Nazi party or outside of its membership were often ostracized and pressured by their peers and family to join. For the millions of children that willfully joined the Hitler Youth, it offered them a sense of belonging, identity, and purpose—invaluable social benefits for a developing adolescent (Sklad and Park, 2017: 2). The Nazis also made a concerted effort to isolate youth from competing narratives and beliefs by weakening traditional support systems like the family and church (Kater, 2004: 37). This isolation was also physical, as Hitler Youth camps and events were often located outside of communal areas, limiting the control of parents and the church. All of these factors of radicalization were ultimately compounded by the influence of Hitler, as “Führer worship was at the center of all Hitler Youth and school activities” (Kater, 2004: 67). This potent combination of extremist ideology and social pressures made radicalization nearly inescapable for all German youth.

Following the collapse of Nazi Germany, the Allied powers had the immense task of deradicalizing and rehabilitating the German youth. Allied leadership feared that the German youth would resist or even organize an armed insurgency against the occupation, as they had been profoundly impacted by the negative affects of radicalization (Fuessl and Wegner, 1996: 5). The intensity of it caused many German youths to dehumanize their perceived enemies and legitimized the use of violence against them (Fischer, 1995). It was common for Hitler Youth members to experience violence, as many were pressed into active combat on the frontline or served in auxiliary roles as flak gunners and

firefighters against the Allied bombing campaign (Beck, 1986). When Allied forces landed in France, they were shocked by the level of fanaticism and war crimes carried out by the 12th SS division, a combat division comprised entirely of Hitler Youth members aged thirteen to eighteen (Meyer, 1994). The Western Allies believed that fundamentally altering the extremist attitudes and beliefs of the German youth was vital to the success of their occupation, which was only possible through the reeducation of democratic values (Tent, 1982).

Although separated by nearly a century, radicalized adolescents today share a multitude of experiences with German youths who struggled to deradicalize and rehabilitate themselves in a post-conflict environment. It is clear that contemporary theories on the process and factors of radicalization and deradicalization are applicable to the experiences of the German youth. These striking similarities shape the expectations of this study, which holds that reeducation is the driving mechanism of deradicalization, which engenders a lasting change from radical to more moderate beliefs. Reeducation can be administered in a variety of settings, ranging from controlled environments like classrooms and official programs, to informal places like recreational organizations and cultural exchanges. It is expected that the more exposed an adolescent is to the treatment of reeducation, the more likely they are to be effectively deradicalized.

In the context of postwar Germany, which will be discussed in the upcoming section, the Western zones of occupation pursued different reeducation strategies through an array of policies. This study contends that it is theoretically possible to measure the effectiveness of the reeducation policies in the American, British, and French zones, by employing voting data. These western zones established free and open democratic elections, permitting even radical right and leftwing parties to participate in national elections. Voting outcomes are a strong indicator of attitudes and beliefs (Friese et al., 2012). Utilizing youth voting data for radical parties, it is possible to examine which zones had the highest and lowest youth radical votes, which in turn can show which zonal policies were the most successful at

reeducating the German youth. The Russian zone did not have open elections, which is why their zone has been omitted from this study.

Instead of just measuring raw voting data, this study seeks to examine specific reeducation policies implemented by the Western Allies. Two reeducation strategies employed to varying degrees across the zones were the use of youth organizations and the restructuring of educational institutions. With archival and voting data, it is possible to test if there is a correlation between both of these policies and lower rates of youth votes for radical parties. The denazification rates of teachers will be used to measure the extent of how thoroughly each zone's education system was restructured, as it represents how many teachers were dismissed and replaced with faculty that were seen as more democratic. Reeducation was also administered through youth organizations, which is why they will also be used as an indicator. The primary expectation, that increased exposure to reeducation results in more effective deradicalization, leads to the formulation of two hypotheses;

*H1: Higher rates of denazification in school and university faculty results in lower youth radical votes.*

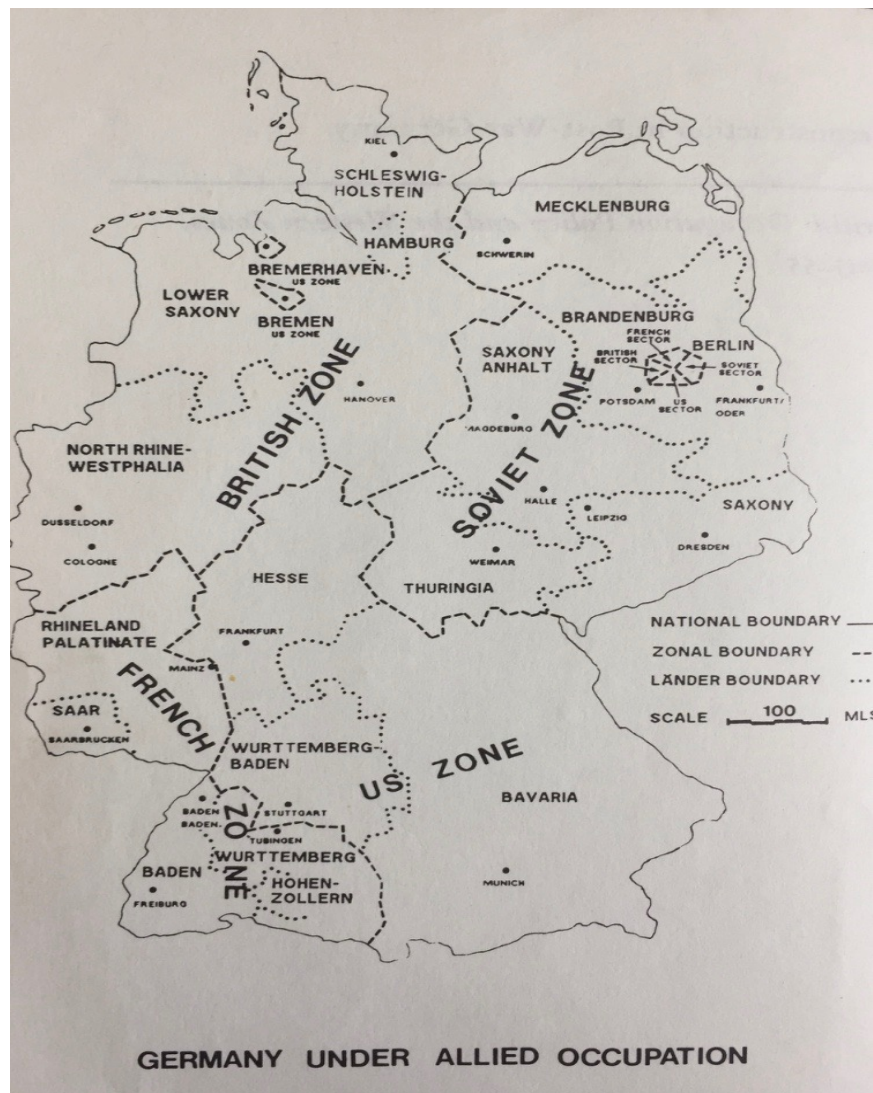
*H2: Higher rates of youth organization membership results in lower youth radical votes.*

These hypotheses test if reeducation leads to youth deradicalization and also examine two types of reeducation strategies, which could yield substantial policy recommendations for contemporary youth deradicalization efforts. This study will also utilize primary and secondary qualitative data to comprehensively contextualize the reeducation policies of each zone. A mixed methods approach will enable less quantifiable reeducation measures such as cultural exchanges and general attitudes of the occupying governments to be considered in the analysis. Most importantly, this theoretical approach allows the underdeveloped and untested theories of youth deradicalization to be examined in the context of an elucidating comparative case study, which can begin to remedy the lack of evidence and policies for this pressing phenomenon.

## Case Selections

West Germany was governed by American, British, and French administrators from 1945 until the formation of the Federal Republic in 1949. During those four years, the occupational governments maintained direct control over their respective zones and would still wield substantial influence until the official end of the military occupation in 1955 (Feigel, 2016). A joint governing body called the Control Council was intended to unify policies across the zones, but political infighting and increased tension with the Russian zone made it ineffectual, leaving the individual zonal governments to enact their own distinct policies.

*Image 1: Map of Allied Zones of Occupation (Turner, 1989)*



## *American Zone*

The Occupational Military Government of the United States (OMGUS) sought to implement the most thorough and punitive denazification policy out of the western zones and an equally ambitious reeducation strategy. The US asserted significant influence during the Potsdam Conference, shaping the core tenants of the treaty which would establish the parameters of denazification and reeducation for all zones (Balfour, 1956: 80). The US attempted to pressure the French and British zones through the Control Council to enact the polices envisioned at the Potsdam Conference, but were largely unsuccessful. The British were content with their “laissez faire” approach, dismissing American polices as too severe (Turner, 1989: 198) and the French had their own drastically different ideas for denazification and reeducation through culture (Willis, 1962). Regardless, the other zones would follow the basic mechanisms for denazification established by the US.

This entailed the immediate dismissal and detainment of top ranking Nazis, the distribution of questionnaires (*Fragebogen*) to the German people which were to determine the extent of their support for the Nazi Party, and appointed councils (*Spruchkammer*) that would interpret the questionnaires and deliver penalties. Germans who completed a questionnaire were then designated into one of five categories; exonerated, follower, lesser offender, offender, and major offender, then dealt with accordingly (Biddiscombe, 2007: 40). From the perspective of the French and British, administering millions of questionnaires to the average German seemed quixotic while there was rampant starvation and a shattered economy to rebuild, which is why they instead focused on prosecuting top Nazi officials (Turner, 1989). Despite their inability to fully influence their allies, OMGUS had complete control over their zone, comprised of the German states of Bavaria, Hesse, and Wurttemberg-Baden, where they could actualize their extensive reforms.

These ambitious policies first culminated in the passing of directive JCS 1067, which called for immediate and sweeping denazification across the US zone, which critically impacted German youth and their reeducation. Unlike the French and British zones, denazification in the American sector permeated all levels of German society and strictly enforced dismissals based on the categorization system (Biddiscombe, 2007: 38). Dismissed Germans were rarely allowed to appeal their sentence. Even those waiting for their questionnaires to be evaluated, a process which could take months, were restricted to only working in menial labor. These measures were particularly difficult for German youth, who were unable to return to school until October 1945 and were initially viewed suspiciously by Americans (Tent, 1982: 55). An official US military pamphlet warned occupation forces to “be on your guard, particularly against young Germans between the ages of 14 and 28. Since 1933, when Hitler came to power, German youth has been carefully and thoroughly educated for world conquest, killing, and treachery” (Taylor, 2011: 249).

The punitive nature of the directive meant that justice, not reeducation, was the first priority of OMGUS. Americans believed that reeducation through democratization could only begin after educational institutions had been purged of Nazi influence. This attitude led to a staggering 49% of university faculty and 55% of primary and secondary school teachers to be dismissed in the American zone (Tent, 1982). As the Education Branch of OMGUS scrambled to find replacement teachers and textbooks that were purged of Nazi ideology, thousands of disillusioned German youth remained out of school. When schools finally began to reopen in October 1945, and later universities in 1946, the Education Branch still lacked adequate resources and remained understaffed. This is illustrated by the dire shortage of textbooks, as by 1947, only 3 million had been published in the US zone, while the British zone had 12.5 million and the French 6 million (Willis, 1962: 169).

Further hampering the effort of the Education Branch to reopen and restructure the education system were the continuously changing denazification laws. Under intense scrutiny from US politicians

to enact even harsher measures, OMGUS passed Military Government Law No. 8, which widened the net of denazification and “prohibit[ed] employment of Nazis either in private or in the public sector in any capacity other than common labor” (Tent, 1982: 51). Law No. 8 dismissed even more teachers and was just as unforgiving to the German youth, preventing thousands of former Hitler Youth members from attending school. More than 13 million Germans were registered into this system of denazification and, ultimately, 958,000 were prosecuted (Biddiscombe, 2007: 81).

By 1947, American officials were ready to abandon the harsh policies of denazification, which had overwhelmed them with millions of backlogged *Fragebogen* and had hampered reconstruction efforts, for a more rehabilitative approach that focused on reeducation. The draconian directive JCS 1067 was replaced with JCS 1779, which finally “gave greater priority to education...to reeducate the Germans toward democracy, which was, after all, the central goal of the occupation” (Tent, 1982: 12). Spearheading the change in attitudes towards reeducation was a blanket amnesty of German youth, which exonerated anyone born after January 1919 from denazification, simultaneously opening “positions of responsibility in youth organizations and opportunities to seek a higher education” for thousands of adolescents who had been in the Hitler Youth (HD, 1956: 13). The initial strategy of reeducation was to expose youths to the faults of Nazism and introduce basic democratic principles through educational institutions (Merritt and Merritt, 1980). By 1948, the Education Branch of OMGUS was finally given the resources necessary to meaningfully implement the second phase of reeducation, what they defined as the “reorientation” of the German youth. Reorientation intended to solidify the values inculcated during reeducation by utilizing “various media” and methods outside of the classroom (Biddiscombe, 2007: 253).

Leading these auxiliary reeducation efforts were youth organizations and information centers. The US army established the German Youth Activities Program (GYA), which trained thousands of personnel to instill “democratic ideals” in German youth, with the “ultimate goal to strive for their

reeducation and rehabilitation” (HD, 1956: 9-14). The GYA established their own youth centers, operating 323 across the US zone by 1948, but also directly supported and supervised independent German youth organizations. With the GYA’s assistance, German youth organizations began to flourish in the US zone. By the end of 1948, nearly a million and half German adolescents were members of youth organizations (Fuessl and Wegner, 1996: 9). Although the majority of these organizations were recreational in nature, such as sports and scouting groups, they were intended to subtly reeducate, as “youth assistance was not to be regarded as a philanthropic enterprise, but as a program to help German youth in building a democratic movement” (HD, 1956: 15). These initiatives yielded tangible results, as an OMGUS survey showed that “German youth who had contact with the GYA programs were significantly more favorable toward democracy than those who had little or no experience with it” (HD, 1956: 49). Although US officials had initially failed in their reeducation efforts of the German youth, it is clear that they quickly compensated for lost time after abandoning denazification as their top priority. In the last years of the American occupation, the German youth were no longer viewed as incorrigible Nazis, but the future building block of democracy.

### *British Zone*

The British were faced with the monumental task of occupying the Northwest states of Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, and North Rhine-Westphalia, which was the industrial center of Germany as well as the most heavily damaged region of the country (Balfour, 1956: 102). The region “produced 70% of Germany’s coal and 78% of its Iron and steel”, making it vital to the reconstruction effort of all zones (Biddiscombe, 2007: 96). In addition to the enormous economic responsibility of their sector, the British zone was overwhelmed with refugees, totaling over 4 million, with some regions like Schleswig-Holstein having refugees constitute 35% of their population (Connor, 1989: 302). These factors, coupled with Britain’s resources having been exhausted after six years of bitter conflict,



influenced the aims of their occupation policies which were much more pragmatic and passive compared to the other zones. Although the British wanted to establish an “effective democratic system” through reeducation, they prioritized “preventing a collapse of the economy”, which they believed would cause their zone to relapse into extremism (Turner, 1989: 5).

Regardless of their economic focus, the British were still committed to the reeducation and democratization of their zone, but were well aware of their limits, never “attempt[ing] an artificial revolution” like in the US and French zones (Turner, 1989: 239). The British hoped to reeducate the Germans by importing their distinct style of liberal democracy, education, and culture, which would create positive relations between the two countries (Feigel, 2016: 134). The British viewed this as a gradual transition, where they were to lay the foundations and “general framework” of democracy and reeducation, “which the Germans themselves should fill” (Marshall, 1989: 210). The British pursued a policy of indirect rule similar to their colonial style of governance, which favored empowering locals, typically ardent anti-Nazis, to implement their policies (Marshall, 1989: 192). This meant that the Germans themselves were directly responsible for administering denazification and reeducation, while the British were there to guide them in an advisory role.

By the end of 1946, the British had transferred control of the education system back to the Germans, having established the blueprint for curriculums and textbooks they felt would foster democratic reeducation. Although initially successful in introducing democratic values, the British were unable to permanently restructure the education system in their zone, as under the leadership of German academics, it quickly reverted back to the same system used before 1933 (Welch, 1989: 222). The combination of indirect rule, economic priorities, and desire to only establish the foundations of democracy, also led to a far less thorough system of denazification.

By the end of 1947, the British had processed 2.1 million *Fragebogen* surveys which led to the compulsory removal or dismissal of 350,000 Germans, roughly 16% (Turner, 1989: 263). Much to the

dismay of American officials, these numbers “reflected a substantially lower per capita rate of denazification punishments” compared to the other zones (Biddiscombe, 2007: 115). These low denazification figures also applied to the education system, as the average dismissal of teachers in primary and secondary schools averaged only 19% and 30% at the university level (FO 945/774). This seemingly “lackadaisical attitude toward the denazification of teachers” led to a number of prominent former Nazis maintaining their positions within the education system or even finding new employment (Biddiscombe, 2007: 96).

British military records reveal one such mishap. Dr. Carl Diem, a fanatical Nazi who was the leader of the Reich Youth sports movement, which was responsible for abetting in the process of mass youth radicalization and paramilitary training, was hired and allowed to open multiple youth academies in the British zone. Diem was previously dismissed in the Soviet zone and later in the American zone for his connections to both Goebbels and Hitler, but was able to evade British denazification screenings (FO 1050/339). British denazification and education policies have overwhelmingly been criticized as inadequate and superficial because of their priority of economic and security concerns, yet these denouncements tend to overlook their other reeducation initiatives.

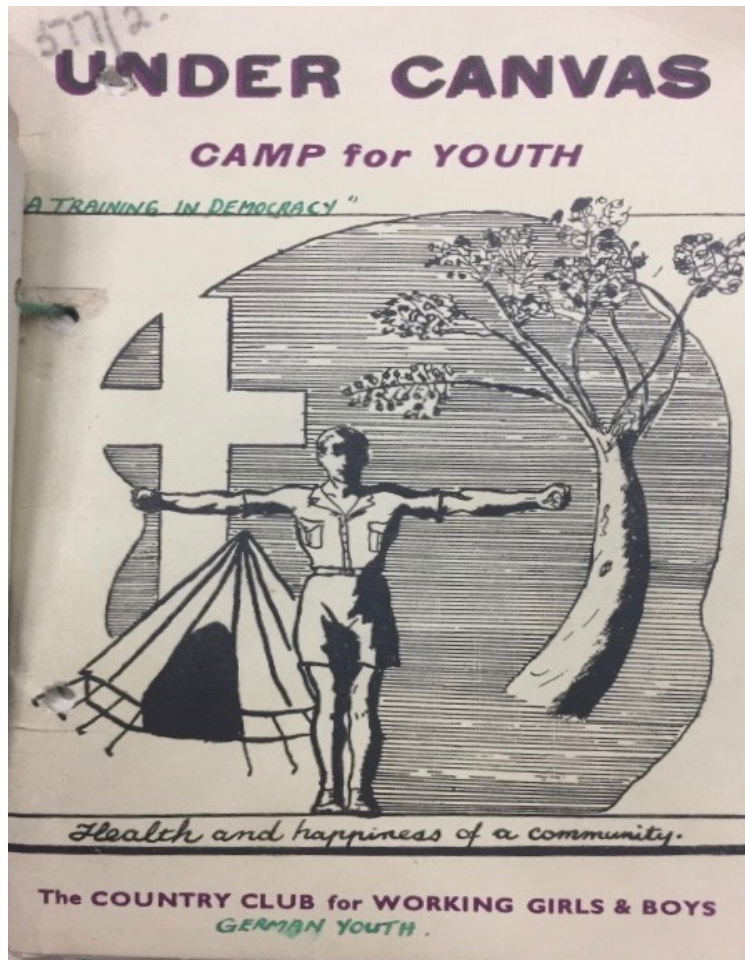
The British believed that reeducation was only possible through a rehabilitative approach, which they demonstrated as early as 1942 within their POW camps. Britain held over 400,000 German POWs, many of which were young adults, some still children captured from Hitler Youth combat divisions. The vast majority of these German prisoners had at some point participated in a reeducation program (FO 1056/559). The British were the only Allied power to implement a POW reeducation program during the war, demonstrating their early awareness for deradicalization (FO 945/294). Reeducation programs entailed a six week course on democratic and liberal values to “rid them of Nazi ideology” and prepare them for life outside of a totalitarian government (Fry, 2010: 149). The goal of these reeducation

programs was not to force values onto the Germans, but to indirectly expose them to British beliefs, which is the same strategy they would pursue for German youth initiatives.

By October 1947, the British zone had 850,000 German adolescents officially enrolled in youth organizations, the most popular being recreational sports groups closely followed by youth religious groups (OMGUS, 1948). Although seemingly apolitical, these youth groups were intended to expose adolescents to British reeducation. These groups were either operated by British personnel or Germans who had been trained as youth leaders to emphasize democratic values (FO 945/258). This is significant, as in the summer of 1947 alone, over 900,000 German youth had attended summer camps in the British zone with approximately 40% of the sector's adolescents belonging to a youth organization (FO 945/258).

The proposed 'Under Canvas' summer camp, whose pamphlet is pictured in *Image 2*, epitomizes this approach. The opening lines of the pamphlet state that "the camp is designed as a deliberate protest against the conception that democracy can be taught in the classroom...there must be nothing of the dim official air of government" (FO 945/258). The camp attempted to maintain the indirect approach of the British occupation, allowing the Germans "to run their own show", by letting the youth form and operate their own parliament. The 'Under Canvass' camp never materialized, as British officials felt it was too overt, instead favoring youth reeducation in less official environments like recreational sports groups or summer camps, wanting to make democratic "knowledge and experience available rather to evangelize" (Balfour, 1956: 237).

Image 2: Official Pamphlet for German Youth Camp (FO 945/258)



The British also placed great value in utilizing media as a potent tool of youth reeducation. By 1948, dozens of information centers dubbed *Die Brücke*, or 'The Bridge', existed across the zone and housed British magazines, newspapers, and books. These centers were a popular meeting location for German youths who enjoyed reading about British culture (FO 1056 /131). Towards the end of the occupation, the BBC radio service estimated that over 2 million Germans listened to their broadcasts daily, while the British newspaper *Die Welt's* circulation had reached one million (Welch, 1989: 228-231). Although the British were unsuccessful at significantly restructuring the German education system in their zone, they firmly believed that reeducation was possible outside of the classroom. Despite the slew of criticisms against British policies, their indirect approach to establishing the foundation of a successful democracy should be measured by their longterm accomplishments.

## *French Zone*

French leadership was divided on their overall occupational objectives in Germany. Echoing the draconian measures of American policies, a significant portion of the French wanted to punish the Germans for their brutal four year occupation of France. Another prominent faction within French leadership contested these harsh measures, believing that instead “the solution to the problem of Franco-German hostilities was not to embitter relations...but to seek an understanding between the two peoples which would be a firmer guarantee of peace” (Willis, 1962: 150). These contradictory beliefs is what would form the “curious mixture” of French strategy, as throughout their occupation, they would simultaneously reap harsh reparations from the Germans while also pursuing a lasting friendship through a substantial cultural initiative (Taylor, 2011: 5697). This conflicting strategy resonated through all levels of the French occupation, resulting in a wider range of denazification and reeducation policies compared to the American and British zones.

The French zonal government resisted American pressure to change their policies and maintained their own unique reeducation and denazification policies throughout their occupation. The French zone, which consisted of three German states, Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden—Baden, and Wurttemberg-Hohenzollern, was nestled in Southwest Germany on the French border. From its inception, the French sector was distinct and separate from the other zones, as it was haphazardly created at the last moments of the Potsdam Conference upon the insistence of Winston Churchill (Biddiscombe, 2007: 155). Although a recently defeated nation, the French believed they deserved a greater voice in the reconstruction efforts of Europe and Germany, and were furious at their exclusion from the main negotiations of the Potsdam Conference. The French government did not take this “bitter blow to their pride” lightly, and throughout the rest of their occupation, would constantly remind the other occupying powers that “they could not be considered bound by decisions taken without their consent” (Balfour, 1956: 39). French exclusion from the Potsdam Conference was pivotal in the creation of their zonal

policies, as they felt uncommitted to the decisions of the American and British zones, at some points even going directly against the orders of the Control Council. The combination of French independence from the Control Council as well as their emphasis on importing French culture made their youth reeducation and denazification policies unique from the other zones.

French denazification policies were closely tied to their cultural reeducation effort. They believed that only after successful denazification, could a meaningful youth reeducation program be enacted which would then prepare Germans for democracy. They viewed denazification as “an unpleasant necessity”, while the “program of reeducation was the real solution to the German problem” (Willis, 1962: 163). The French were opposed to the sweeping style of American denazification and instead sought to follow the principles of the French justice system, which prized treating each case on an individual basis, where “the character of the suspects, not simply their paper membership of the Nazi Party be taken into account” (Taylor, 2011: 5764). The French followed the rough guidelines of the American system, administering *Fragebogen* surveys and using categories, but it “was more finely tuned than the American model...it handed out punishments more lenient...but they could also be far more severe” (Biscombe, 2007: 171). Although forgiving and flexible in some aspects, the French were particularly thorough when it came to the denazification of the education system, removing 75% of teachers from primary and secondary schools in their zone, far more than the Americans who were considered heavy handed for removing around 50% of their teachers (Balfour, 1956: 230).

The extensive denazification of educational institutions and that they were the first zone to reopen schools, demonstrates that reeducation was a top priority in the French zone. They believed that a diffusion of French culture, which promoted liberty and individualism, would both deradicalize German youth and make them future allies. Unlike the other occupying powers, the French would maintain strict control over the education system throughout the occupation and were the only zone to bring in their

own teachers and advisors to operate German schools (Taylor, 2011: 5721). A fundamental component of “inculcating democratic spirit” through French values was language (Biscombe, 2007: 157), which is why French became “compulsory as a first foreign language” (Balfour, 1956: 165). At the university level, the French maintained similar numbers of denazification as the Americans and British, removing 30% of faculty, but were unprecedented in their effort to found a new university in their zone, the University of Mainz. The University of Mainz “presented an opportunity for making a new beginning”, and was the flagship of their endeavor to fundamentally alter the German education system around French values. (Willis, 1962: 175). The French were also the first to promote a massive youth cultural exchange program, where hundreds of French students would attend German universities and vice versa (Willis, 1962: 177).

Attempts to reeducate German youth in the French zone extended beyond schools and universities. Their cultural exchange program also involved youth groups and trade organizations, as well as sponsoring cultural exhibitions like the one titled “Message from French Youth”, which was visited by more than 120,000 German adolescents (Willis, 1962: 178). Although not on the same scale as the American zone, the French also thought that youth organizations were a vital part of democratic reeducation and ridding the legacy of the Hitler Youth movement. By 1947, 267,000 German adolescents were members of youth organizations (OMGUS, 1948: 11). The extensive reeducation effort through cultural initiatives has been considered the greatest success of the French occupation, as it “proved invaluable in opening the minds of young people to values other than those inculcated during the Nazi regime...and undoubtedly created a friendliness towards France which was not felt in the other zones towards their occupiers” (Willis, 1962, 179). Whether this unique approach resulted in a more effective deradicalization effort, remains to be tested.

## Methodology

It was necessary to first present the qualitative data collected on each zone in order to better conceptualize the trends that emerge when examining the quantitative data. A wide variety of quantitative data was collected to explore and test the relationship between the dependent variable; youth votes for radical parties in national elections, and the main explanatory variables—youth organization membership rates and denazification of education systems. Official youth voting data was provided by the *Bundeswahlleiter*, an organization apart of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany that oversees national election data from 1949 to present. Youth voting data for 1949 is unavailable, as only overall votes were counted in that election, which is why the 1953 and subsequent national elections will be used (Bundeswahlleiter, 2015). The youth demographic is categorized as anyone aged 21-30, as until 1972, the minimum voting age was 21. This broad age demographic is beneficial for analyzing the 1953 election, as it captures the votes of German youth who were ages 13 to 22 in 1945. Radical right and leftwing political parties were identified using a multitude of sources (Fisher, 1974; Childs, 1991; Rodgers, 1995).

Archival data retrieved at the Kew National Archives was integral to collecting official Foreign Office denazification and youth organization figures from the British zone. Official US military documents, reports, as well as secondary sources like James Tent's (1982) comprehensive history were invaluable to amassing data on the American zone (HD, 1956; OMGUS, 1948). Statistics for the French zone were primarily found in US and British reports, as well as in Roy Willis' (1962) exhaustive study. The collected data, which is specific to each zone down to the state level, enables an in depth statistical comparative analysis between the three zones.

It was the initial aim of this study to construct a dataset utilizing the quantitative data extracted from the various archival and secondary sources in order to implement a multiple regression analysis. This would have permitted a number of significant variables like prewar Nazi votes, refugees, and



unemployment rates to be controlled for in the analysis, while limiting the impact of omitted variable bias. Although it was possible to collect the data necessary for the independent variables, the voting data available was limited to the German state level, which ultimately restricted the total observations, making the sample size too small to run a robust multiple regression analysis. Regardless, it is still possible to implement bivariate correlation tests, which reveal the type of relationship between the two variables in question, an important first step in determining causality. In addition, both the American and British occupational governments conducted an array of surveys throughout their zones, many of which directly address the potential causal mechanisms of deradicalization under examination. The combination of correlation tests and survey data enables the proposed hypotheses to be tested.

OMGUS were the first to pioneer large sample public opinion surveys in postwar Germany. These surveys, unprecedented in their scale and sophistication for the time period, are still applicable as valid sources of data. The different survey samples, which ranged from 500 to 3000 participants, were an accurate sample frame representative of the target population, as they were randomly drawn from a list of registered ration card holders, which was a “complete enumeration of residents” living in the American zone (Merrit and Merrit, 1970: 5). Using the ration card database, surveyors could create sample frames representative of the entire zone or of specific groups based on age and geography. To minimize the negative impact of interviewer effects and social desirability bias, German interviewers were trained to conduct the surveys. Pilot surveys were also used to improve the studies (Merrit and Merrit, 1970). The British, impressed by the accuracy and value of the American surveys, would later implement an identical system using their own ration card database (Welch, 1989: 231). Unfortunately, the raw data from these surveys are lost, but the detailed reports of their results and major findings still survive. Overall, these surveys, some now over seventy years old, still satisfy the fundamental criteria used today for conducting survey interviews and serve as an accurate and valuable tool in analyzing the attitudes of postwar Germany.

## Results and Findings

H1: Higher rates of denazification in school and university faculty results in lower youth votes for radical parties.

Figure 1: The Effect of Denazification of Educational Institutions on Youth Votes for Radical Parties in the 1953 West German Federal Election

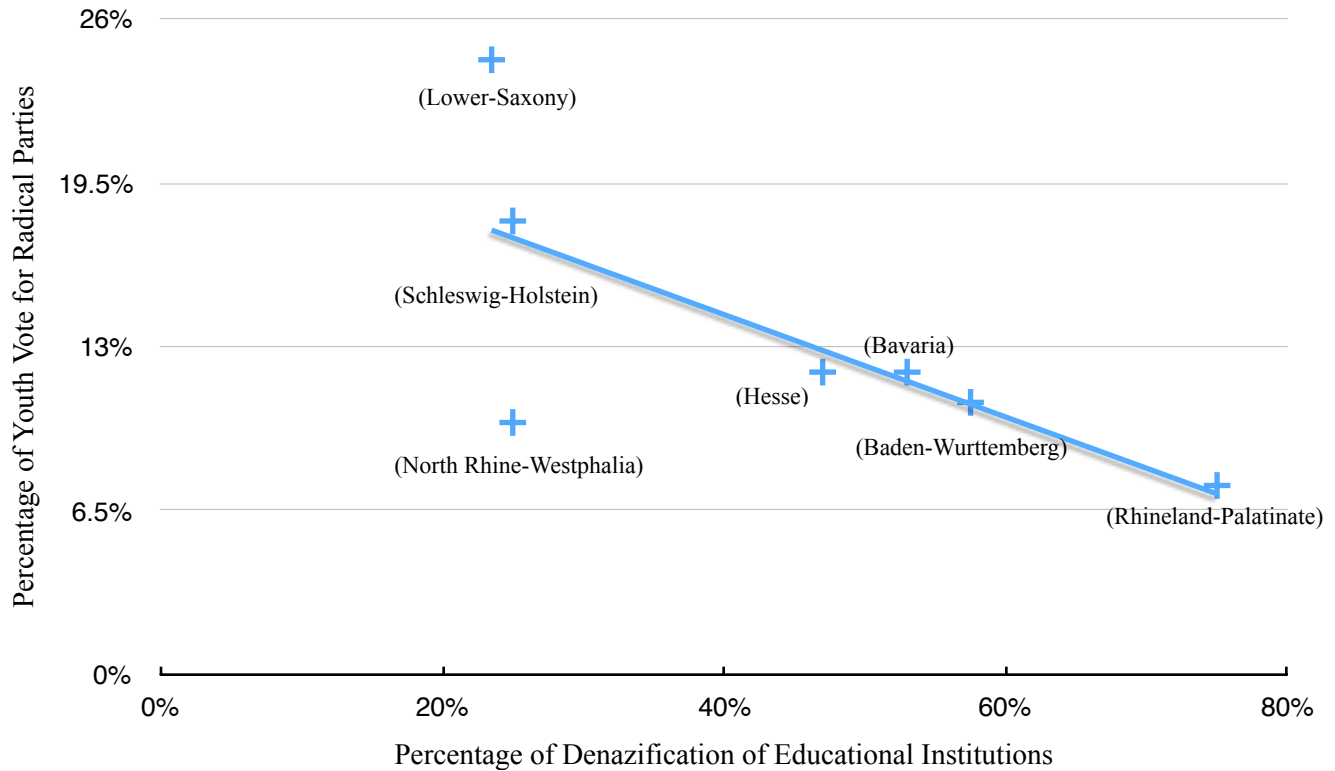


Figure 1 immediately illustrates a negative bivariate relationship between youth radical votes and denazification within educational institutions. When implementing a Pearson's test, which shows the correlation and linear association between both variables, it illustrates that there is a strong negative correlation of -0.70. When the outlier, North Rhine-Westphalia, is removed, the Pearson's test results in a statistically significant negative correlation of -0.93. Lower-Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, both states in the British zone, had the lowest denazification figures and the highest youth radical vote, while the state with the highest denazification rates and the lowest youth radical votes, Rhineland-Palatinate, is

in the French zone. Hesse and Bavaria, both states in the American zone, also exhibit high levels of denazification and lower levels of youth radical votes.

The data from *Figure 1* potentially confirms H1, rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between denazification of schools and youth radical votes. This suggests that the intensive French and American efforts to restructure their zone's educational institutions led to more effective reeducation and deradicalization of the German youth compared to the passive and indirect methods of the British.

*H2: Higher rates of youth organization membership results in lower youth radical votes.*

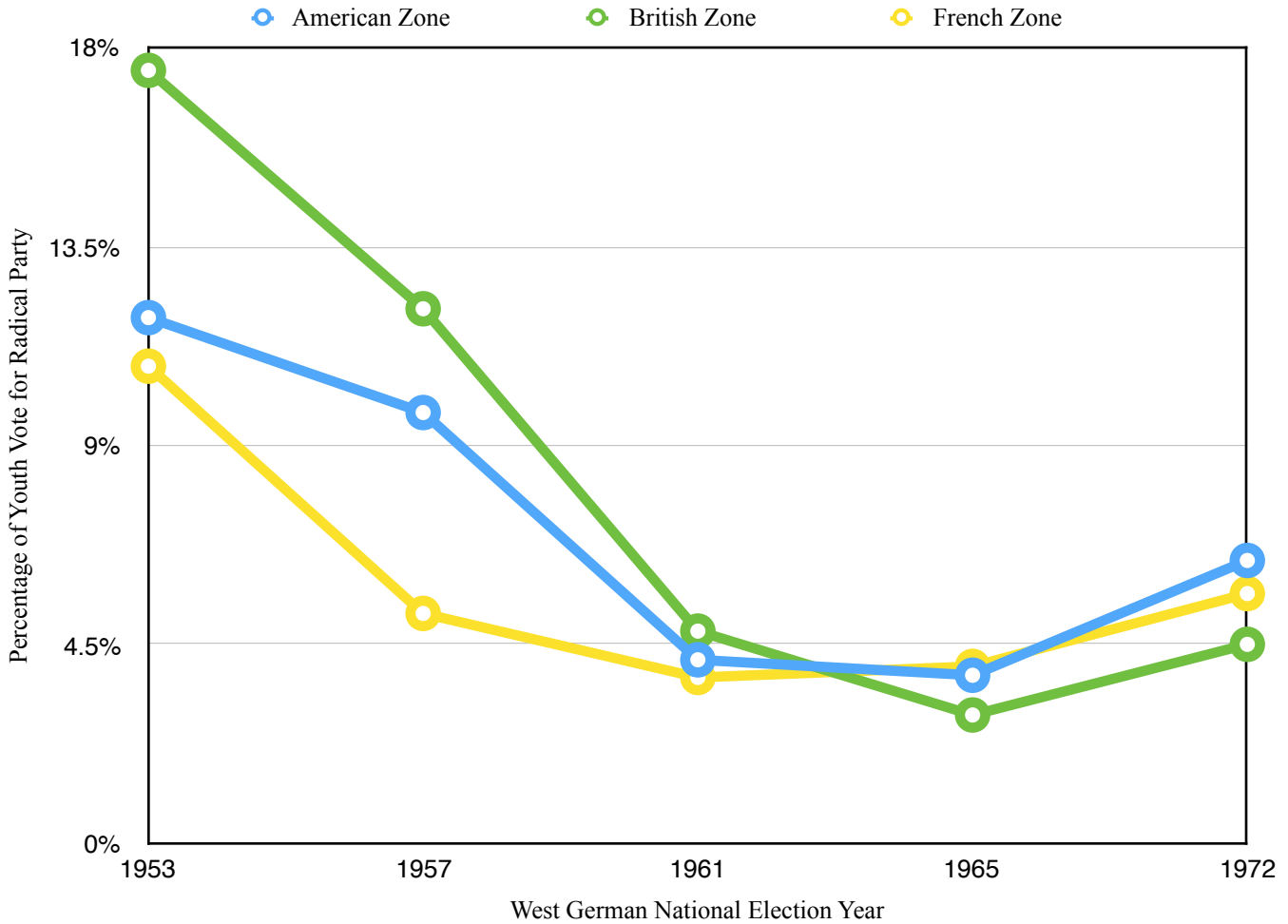
*Figure 2: Comparison of Per Capita Youth Organization Membership and Youth Vote for Radical Parties by Zone in 1953*



An initial glance at *Figure 2* reveals that the American and French zones had higher per capita youth organization membership among youth aged 10-18, as well as lower youth votes for radical parties. Implementing a Pearson's test reveals a moderate negative correlation of -0.58. Surveys conducted in the American zone suggest a stronger correlation. An OMGUS survey published in March 1948, which used a sample of 2000 youths representative of the American zone, found that 71% of adolescents belonging to democratic youth organizations supported democratic principles, compared to 49% for those that did not (Merrit and Merrit, 1970: 205). In another American zone survey, out of a sample of 1000 adolescents aged 10-18, only 4% belonging to a youth organization denied that it had given them a "better idea of democracy" (Merrit and Merrit, 1970: 156). In a following survey with a sample of 1750 persons aged 15-25, 63% felt that the American youth initiatives had achieved some forms of success in democratization, with only 6% saying that they had failed (Merrit and Merrit, 1980: 85).

Compared to the British zone, it appears that American initiatives not only led to higher rates of membership, but also increased levels of democratization through reeducation. Out of 2,200 German adolescents surveyed in the British zone, only 34% felt that youth organizations led to a democratic outlook (FO 1056/559). Although a significant rate of membership at 29%, the British may have been too passive in pushing reeducation through youth organizations. The survey data, coupled with the correlation test, suggest that an increase in youth organization membership decreases youth votes for radical parties, most likely because members of youth organizations were exposed to more reeducation. These findings reject the null hypothesis of H2 that there is no relationship between youth organization membership and youth radical votes, potentially showing that recreational organizations are an ideal setting for youth reeducation.

Figure 3: Youth Vote Percentage for Radical Parties in National Elections



A broad graphical representation of youth votes for radical parties by zone over time, as depicted in *Figure 3*, is useful in conceptualizing other trends which may have impacted the results of H1 and H2. This shows that from 1953 until 1961, the youth vote for radical parties was highest in the British zone while lowest in the French zone. These discrepancies may broadly be attributed to British failures in implementing their democratization and denazification policies. When asked in a 1948 British zone survey, 65% of participants believed that British democracy had failed to take root in their sector and 57% believed that British denazification was the least successful, compared to the American (11%) and French (7%) zones (FO 1056/559). In stark contrast, 75% of participants in a 1954 survey of West Germany overwhelmingly supported France's cultural policies to strengthen Franco-German relations

(Merritt and Merritt, 1980: 252). Another survey report also illustrates that Germans were highly receptive to cultural exchange programs, like the ones started in the French zone, with 72% of participants favoring them (Merritt and Merritt, 1980: 183). The amalgamation of quantitative and qualitative findings presented in the previous sections have significant policy implications for deradicalization initiatives today.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Focusing on the deradicalization of youth, this study argues that reeducation is the most effective method to remedy the negative social and ideological affects of radicalization. This study uses a mixed methods comparative case study of the reeducation initiatives in occupied West Germany. The findings illustrate that the American and French zones employed more effective policies when it came to reeducation, as they had more thoroughly denazified the education systems in their zones, while emphasizing participation in youth organizations. These findings suggest that an effective youth deradicalization strategy should pursue a combination of both direct and indirect forms of reeducation. Direct reeducation in formal settings like a classroom or official program to target the ideological affects of radicalization and indirect reeducation in informal settings like recreational organizations to address the social impact of radicalization. The high levels of denazification within educational institutions in the French and American zones may also suggest that it is necessary to first purge schools of extremist influence before restructuring them for reeducation.

French efforts may have been particularly successful because of their unique cultural policies. Their extensive exchange program and distinct strategy to use French teachers in their zone directly exposed German youth to a people and culture they once perceived as hostile. French policies suggest that interactions with foreign people and customs may also be significant for youth reeducation. British efforts should not entirely be dismissed, as longterm election data suggests that their strategy to establish the foundations of reeducation and democracy may have eventually led to youth deradicalization.

Further research into additional areas of postwar Germany could greatly enhance this study. If a dependent variable measuring youth deradicalization across all the zones could be established, it would be possible to incorporate the Russian zone and Berlin into the analysis. Media also played a role in the reeducation of German youth. If accurate figures on cinema, radio, and magazine consumers could be determined, it would be possible to explore the relationship between media and youth reeducation. If

youth voting data could be collected on the county level, there would be enough observations to run a multiple regression analysis, which could enable a stronger claim to be made about what directly causes youth deradicalization.

This study has made a number of contributions towards deradicalization research. It has recommended policies that could assist in contemporary youth deradicalization programs and has shown that reeducation theories from the field of terrorism can be applied to the context of youths. The data from this study strongly suggests that increased exposure to reeducation can successfully deradicalize youth. Additional studies will be necessary to formulate generalizable theories on youth deradicalization, but this study is a meaningful step in understanding this pressing and reemerging phenomenon. Most importantly, this study illustrates that radicalized adolescents require significant support and attention, and if left unassisted, could maintain their extremist views. As the Islamic State continues to lose territory, reeducation policies will determine if radicalized children will maintain their extremist views and relapse into violence, or become productive citizens, vital to the post-conflict reconstruction effort.



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