

Voting Across Ethnic Lines in Late Imperial Austria¹

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Parliament in Austria after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 is typically seen as yet another confirmation of the aging Monarchy's inability to cope with the rise of modern nationalism. Indeed, a certain consensus within the historical literature is fairly represented by Alan Sked's generalization that

the nationality problem...[determined] the whole course of political life there...The result was that government fell into the hands of the bureaucracy, as parliamentary life became paralysed and [Emperor] Franz Joseph selected premiers from the ranks of the high civil service. There is no controversy surrounding the course of events.²

The view that national identity was the fundamental factor in Austrian political life gains persuasive power from the fact that Austrian political parties are generally represented as being divided along ethno-national lines.³ Aside from highlighting the Monarchy's failures, such a portrayal has rather bleak implications for representative political institutions in ethnically and linguistically divided societies.

This interpretation rests on the seemingly innocuous assumption that voters supporting the German Progressive Party, for instance, were themselves German. By this standard, effectively all of the parties elected to the Austrian Parliament, the major

exception being the multi-national Social Democrats, can be seen as ethnically based parties. Even granting this assumption, however, ethnicity played a less prominent role in Austrian parliamentary life than is generally assumed. In my own research, I have found that:

- The degree of ethnic heterogeneity of electoral districts did not have significant effects on a number of electoral behaviors, including voter turnout, the effective number of parties receiving votes, and the occurrence of first-round majorities.
- Non-instrumental voting, that is, voting for candidates who have little chance of winning, was at least as likely to be based on non-ethnic factors such as religion or ideology as on ethnic divisions.
- The multi-ethnic Social Democrats received considerable support regardless of districts' ethnic composition.
- Austrian parties were as divided along regional, urban-rural, religious-secular and socio-economic lines as they were along ethnic ones. This hyper-fragmentation of the party system was not unique to Austria in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, and need not be attributed to ethnic divisions as such, but rather to the institutional environment in which parliamentary representatives operated.
- Parties demanding national autonomy were by far the least successful in courting Austrian voters of any nationality.
- Parliamentary obstructionism can as easily be attributed to a lack of executive accountability as to ethnic conflict. At the same time, it served

as a mechanism for protecting minorities and keeping the government in check

- Despite obstructionism, Parliament was quite capable of passing important legislation, something that required the formation of multi-ethnic majorities.⁴

These findings were themselves based on the assumption that a party's ethnic label, as given in the official statistical sources, represented that of its electoral base. While finalizing these findings, however, it became clear that the electoral results in a number of precincts simply did not make sense unless one allowed that voters were casting ballots *across* ethnic lines. For example, in the first round of voting in 1907, *Gerichtsbezirk* Jablunkau, a precinct in Silesia's District 5 (Stadt Bielitz), cast 21% of its ballots for the German Progressives, 78% for the German Christian Socials, and 1% for a (German) Social Democrat, despite the fact that Jablunkau was 85% Polish and only 15% German. Furthermore, this behavior appeared to have occurred at a far greater frequency than has been recognized in the historical literature.⁵ Nevertheless, these tentative observations were based on a very small number of cases, and the assumption that party label accurately reflected party constituency was therefore maintained. The purpose of this analysis is therefore to determine whether such voting was more than an isolated occurrence in Austria, drawing on the full range of relevant district elections.

Historical Background

The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 established separate though similar constitutions for the Western ("Austrian") and Eastern ("Hungarian") halves of the

Monarchy. Under constitutional rule, which lasted until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, each half of the Monarchy maintained an elected parliament, along with a number of joint institutions, including the person of Franz Joseph, who ruled as Emperor (*Kaiser*) in the Western and King (*König*) in the Eastern half.⁶

The Austrian half consisted of seventeen provinces - Bohemia, Bukowina, Carinthia, Carniola, Dalmatia, Galicia, Görz & Gradisca, Istria, Lower Austria, Moravia, Salzburg, Silesia, Styria, Trieste, Tyrol, Upper Austria and Vorarlberg – each of which elected representatives to both regional Diets and the central Parliament. In Austria, the franchise for Parliamentary elections was progressively expanded through a series of electoral reforms, culminating with the introduction of universal manhood suffrage in 1907. Hereafter, parliamentary representatives were to be elected from single-member districts (with the exception of 36 two-member districts in Eastern Galicia). Furthermore, electoral districts were to be drawn so as to be as ethnically homogeneous as possible. Elections were held using the absolute majority runoff rule. Under this rule, if no candidate received more than 50% of the votes in the first round of elections, a runoff would be held between the top two candidates.⁷

The establishment of ethnically homogeneous districts was an attempt to cope with the enormous ethno-linguistic complexity of the Monarchy in the face of national conflicts that had become especially prominent in the second half of the 19th century. According to the 1910 census, which asked respondents to specify “language of everyday use,” Austria’s population of 27,963,872 was 23% Czech, 36% German, 3% Italian, 18% Polish, 1% Romanian, 13% Ruthenian, 3% Serbo-Croatian and 4% Slovenian.⁸ The population was subdivided further by religious, socio-economic and regional differences.

The fact that these ethno-linguistic groups did not live in compact territorial units limited the degree to which homogeneous electoral districts could actually be delineated, a problem by no means unique to Austria-Hungary.⁹ Indeed, district-level ethnic minorities are effectively unavoidable in any country that is not ethnically homogeneous and defines electoral districts along territorial lines. That being said, Austria was remarkably successful - 77% of the single-member districts established in 1907 were effectively homogeneous. Nevertheless, district ethnic minorities were a considerable presence, and district populations were furthermore subject to demographic changes over time – by 1911, 74% of single-member districts were effectively homogeneous.¹⁰

The very existence of district ethnic minorities raises the question addressed here: what did qualified members of the minority group do come election time? Several options present themselves. They might simply abstain from voting. They might submit an empty or spoiled ballot. They might cast a protest votes for an ethnic minority-based party, one that has no chance of winning the district. They might vote for a multi-ethnic party such as the Social Democrats. Finally, they might choose the least conflictual option, voting for a party nominally representing the ethnic majority.

Definitions

Unless otherwise specified, the term “district” refers to one of the **electoral districts** (*Wahlbezirke*) established by the electoral reform law of 1907.¹¹ Most of these were comprised of several smaller **precincts**, which generally consisted of a judicial district (*Gerichtsbezirk*) or part thereof, often corresponding with an individual town and each having its own polling location (*Wahlort*). For example, District 3 in Carinthia was

comprised of four precincts, Ferlach, Eberndorf, Eisenkappel and Bleiburg. Place names are those listed in *Österreichische Statistik*.¹²

The various groups discussed here (Czechs, Germans, etc.) are referred to as **ethnic groups**, and occasionally **nationalities** (*Nationalitäten*), the official German usage. With the exception of Jews, whose party politics are not considered here, all of these groups were distinguished by language. The number of members in each ethnic group is based on the Austrian census, which specified nationality by self-declared “language of everyday use.” As discussed below, Croats and Serbs are treated as identical for the purposes of this analysis.¹³

Ethnic majority refers to the ethnic majority in an *electoral district* (which is not necessarily the majority in each precinct within that district). In the rare case that a district has no true majority, “majority” refers to the largest group (plurality) in that district. **Ethnic minority** refers to all other groups in a district.

Party labels (German Progressive, Czech National, etc.) are my own translation of the names given in *Österreichische Statistik*.¹⁴ The term **ethnically based party** refers to a party that draws on a single ethnic group for political support.¹⁵ **Multi-ethnic party** refers to one that draws on more than one ethnic group. Here the latter term is applied exclusively to the Social Democrats, which was organized as a federation of “national” Social Democratic parties.¹⁶ All other parties are therefore considered “ethnically based parties.” Finally, the term **trans-ethnic voting (TEV)** refers to the act of voting for a party that nominally represents an ethnic group other than one’s own.

Case selection

This analysis draws on precinct- and district-level data from the first and second rounds of the 1907 elections, the first to be held exclusively through universal manhood suffrage. In those elections, 516 representatives were elected from 444 single-member districts, as well-as 36 two-member districts in Eastern Galicia. Most of those districts consisted in turn of several precincts, in which instances the data for the district as a whole was excluded. For each round in each election, each “case” therefore consists of either one electoral precinct or, in instances where the district was not subdivided, one electoral district taken as a whole. Hereafter “precinct” will often be used to refer to both kinds of case.

Six provinces’ districts – the 70 districts in Galicia, 64 in Lower Austria, 49 in Moravia, 7 in Salzburg, 22 in Upper Austria and 4 in Vorarlberg – were eliminated due to technical considerations. The elimination of the districts in Lower Austria, Salzburg, Upper Austria and Vorarlberg is justified by the fact that these provinces had a more or less homogeneously German-speaking population. As a consequence, *Österreichische Statistik* does not provide district- and precinct-level linguistic data for the tiny ethnic minorities that did live in these provinces. Moravian electoral districts, meanwhile, were defined along ethnic rather than territorial lines. Since each district consisted entirely of either self-declared Czechs or Germans, these districts had no ethnic minorities. Finally, Galicia’s districts were eliminated due to charges that electoral data for that province are unreliable, a matter that will be taken up more generally below. The remaining eleven provinces leave us with 264 electoral districts and the precincts of which they were comprised.

However, a number of the remaining precincts were eliminated out of further technical considerations. These included:

- Precincts with incomplete demographic data. These included a small number of cases, such as several districts in Prague, in which population data was available for groups of districts but not for the districts individually.
- Precincts with no ethnic minority.
- Precincts in which the Jewish Nationals received votes. This was necessary due to the fact that, after 1851, Jews were considered a religious group but not a “nationality” by the Austrian census. As a consequence, *Österreichische Statistik* does not indicate the number of Jews at the district and precinct level.¹⁷
- One precinct in which a Socialist candidate received votes, since the ethnic affiliation of this candidate is not specified in *Österreichische Statistik*.

Several additional comments are in order regarding the selection of cases. First, the replacement election (*Ergänzungswahl*) for Styria’s District 4 was not included. Second, two rather obscure Tyrolean parties, the Christian Trientiner Peoples Party and the Tyrolian Peoples Federation, were classified as Italian and German respectively, following *Österreichisch Statistik, Tafel IX*. Finally, *Österreichische Statistik* is inconsistent in that it classified Serbo-Croats as a single nationality in Görz & Gradisca and Istria, yet classified Croats and Serbs as being separate nationalities in Dalmatia by drawing on religious affiliation. Here Croats and Serbs are treated as a single ethnic

group in all provinces. One of the consequences of this is arguably to underestimate TEV in Dalmatia, since said voting between Croats and Serbs is ruled out by definition.

The resulting dataset consists of 475 precincts for the first round of elections in 1907, in all of which the district ethnic minority comprises at least 1% of the precinct population. For the second round, it consists of 234 such precincts.

The Test

The *measurement* of Trans-Ethnic Voting (TEV) used here involves subtracting the number of qualified ethnic majority voters, votes for the Social Democrats, votes for ethnic minority based parties, and empty, split and spoiled ballots from the number of ballots cast, and then dividing by the number of qualified voters in the district, the result being the percentage of qualified voters who were members of an ethnic minority and who voted for an ethnic majority based party. For example, in GB Jablunkau (1907, 1st round), 588 ballots minus 92 qualified Germans minus 7 Social Democratic votes minus 0 Polish party votes minus 1 spoiled ballot, divided by 608 qualified voters, indicates that at least 80% of the qualified voters in that part of the district were Poles who showed up to vote for either the German Christian Socials or the German Progressive Party.¹⁸

This measurement takes advantage of the fact that the *district* ethnic majority is not necessarily the largest group in all of the *precincts* that comprise that district, since such instances facilitate the detection of trans-ethnic voting. For example, the Stadt Bielitz district had a German majority, but the precinct Jablunkau within that district was overwhelmingly Polish. Since each district elected only one representative, only a German or a multi-ethnic party would have a chance of winning. At the same time, the

large number of Poles in Jablunkau makes it easier to detect Polish votes for German parties, since not all of the votes that must have come from Poles can be assigned to the Social Democrats, spoiled ballots, etc.

Several additional comments need to be made regarding this measurement. First, it is based on highly conservative assumptions. Specifically, it is assumed that the ethnic majority had 100% turnout, that as many ethnic majority votes as possible went to ethnic majority based parties, that as many ethnic minority votes as possible went to the Social Democrats and to ethnic minority-based parties, and that as many spoiled, split and empty ballots as possible were cast by disgruntled members of the ethnic minority. In other words, this measurement presumes against trans-ethnic voting unless no other explanation is available.

Second, another, more contestable assumption is that the ethnic proportions of the population of qualified voters are the same as that of the general population. Possible objections to this assumption will be taken up below as we turn to Alternative Explanations.

Third, these estimated proportions of trans-ethnic voters are *minimums*. That is to say, the number increases as soon as one weakens the implausibly strict assumptions that the ethnic majority had 100% turnout, that members of the ethnic majority were disinclined to vote for their own Social Democratic candidate, etc. In all likelihood, trans-ethnic voting actually occurred at a greater rate than indicated in those cases where it has actually been detected.

Fourth, the failure to detect trans-ethnic voting in a precinct does not mean that it did not take place. Rather, it reflects the limits of the measurement used here. In these

cases, 0% trans-ethnic voting is simply a minimum – one cannot rule out the possibility, for example, that *all* ethnic minorities in these districts voted across ethnic lines but went undetected. One factor limiting our ability to detect trans-ethnic voting is the size of the minority group. In cases where the minority population was small, the majority's share of the general population tends to approach, and even exceed, the rate of electoral participation, and one cannot rule out the possibility (however improbable) that all participating voters were members of the ethnic majority. Indeed, the argument could be made that trans-ethnic voting, though harder to detect, is *more* likely in these districts, since the ethnic minority lacks a sufficient base to form a protest party.

Interestingly, another factor limiting our ability to detect trans-ethnic voting is the popularity of the multi-ethnic Social Democrats. In districts where they did well, it is generally harder to rule out that all ethnic minority votes went to the Social Democrats (whether or not this was actually the case). This leads us to our final comment. In most cases, members of the ethnic minority who did not cross the ethnic line must have voted for the *ethnic majority's* Social Democratic candidate. Although this is not trans-ethnic voting in the sense used here, it nevertheless indicates a minimal concern for ethnic loyalty.

The Results

Under the highly restrictive assumption that 100% of qualified members of district ethnic majorities participated in elections, minority voting across ethnic lines could be detected in 9% of the precincts containing ethnic minorities (Table I). This

proportion increased to 16% when votes for Social Democratic candidates are counted as crossing ethnic lines.

These proportions might appear to be relatively low, however, one must further consider the sensitivity of the measurement used here to the size of the ethnic minority population in a precinct. As discussed previously, the smaller the relative size of the ethnic minority group, the harder it is to rule out that ethnic minorities failed to participate, submitted empty ballots, voted for a Social Democrat, etc. Voting across ethnic lines is therefore highly unlikely to be detected when ethnic minority populations are small, whether or not it actually occurred. In the first round of elections in 1907, for example, the average size of district minorities in a precinct was 14%. Average *non-participation*, meanwhile, was 19% of qualified voters, 1% of ballots were invalid, empty or split, and 25% of ballots went to the Social Democrats. Leaving aside any possible correlation between these several variables, it is quite difficult to detect any trans-ethnic voting that might have occurred in precincts where minorities comprised a small proportion of the population.

The sensitivity of this measurement to ethnic minority group size is apparent when one considers only those cases in which minorities comprised a larger proportion of the precinct population. As indicated by the data in Table III, TEV is in fact detected with greater frequency as the proportion of minorities increases. Strikingly, in those precincts with 40% or greater minority populations, TEV was detected more often than not, even under the most restrictive assumptions.

In short, in those precincts where the occurrence of trans-ethnic voting *could* most easily be detected, it generally *was* detected. Logically, we cannot rule out the possibility

that TEV actually occurred more often in precincts with large minority populations. Indeed, an argument could be made that majority parties would be more likely to court minority voters in places where those voters were a sizable presence. An alternative possibility is that TEV occurred even more frequently in districts with fewer minorities, since those districts provided less of a basis for minority protest parties. Either of these interpretations, of course, affirms the claim that TEV was a significant factor in Austrian elections.

On a behavioral level, this tells us that district ethnic minorities did *not* simply rally behind their own parties out of ethnic loyalty. Neither did they simply stay at home, nor cast their ballot for the Social Democrats in order to avoid supporting their alleged ethnic opponents. Rather, significant numbers of them were perfectly willing to put *non-ethnic* political considerations to the fore. This indicates a far more pragmatic attitude towards elections on the part of the Austrian voter than has generally been recognized.

One can also observe in Tables I and II that trans-ethnic voting increased significantly between the first and second rounds of voting held under Austria's absolute majority runoff system. Even under the most restrictive assumptions, trans-ethnic voting could be detected in the second round in 14% of all cases in 1907. In part, this could be due to the fact that ethnic minorities were more aware in the second round that a candidate representing their own ethnic group couldn't possibly win an electoral majority – although presumably this was clear before elections had even been held, since Austrian electoral districts were designed to “belong to” specific ethnic majorities. A stronger possibility is that some members of the district ethnic minority voted for an ethnic minority candidate in the first round, in order to give that candidate more bargaining

power before the second round. Some members of district ethnic minorities, in other words, seem to have acted as a sort of “kingmaker”, throwing their support behind the ethnic majority’s nominal party that appealed to them the most. Others, of course, simply voted for the ethnic majority candidate in the first round. Whatever notions of group identity were at play, this once again indicates a pragmatic rather than a nationalistic approach to voting.

Finally, the great frequency with which trans-ethnic voting can be detected brings our more restrictive assumptions about voter participation into question. If large numbers of district ethnic minorities were willing to vote for their alleged ethnic opponents, after all, then there is much less reason to suppose that they participated at a lesser rate than the ethnic majority, as has been assumed so far in this analysis.

The actual rates at which ethnic majorities and minorities turned out to vote cannot be known. However, it is worth considering the results if we assume that both groups participated at the same rate – an assumption that, although merely an approximation, is more plausible in light of our findings under more restrictive assumptions.¹⁹ Under this looser assumption, unsurprisingly, trans-ethnic voting can be detected with much greater frequency, in 22% of all first-round precincts and 31% of all second-round precincts in 1907 (Tables I & II). Furthermore, voting for either the ethnic majority’s nominal party or the majority’s Social Democratic candidate could be detected in the majority of precincts in the first and second rounds. Given that trans-ethnic voting remains undetected in at least some of the remaining precincts, and even if ethnic minorities’ actual rate of participation was less than that assumed here, it is clear that trans-ethnic voting occurred with great frequency. District ethnic minority support for

the ethnic majority's nominal candidates, Social Democratic and otherwise, was a normal part of Austrian elections under universal manhood suffrage.

Alternative Interpretations

The argument made here is that election outcomes in a significant number of Austrian districts cannot be explained without allowing that ethnic minorities voted for the ethnic majority's parties. However, several alternative explanations, particularly those involving possible inaccuracies in the census and election data, still need to be addressed.

One of the assumptions made in this study is that the ethnic proportions of the population of qualified voters are the same as that of the general population. This might lead to objections that apparent trans-ethnic voting could be explained away by changes in the district population over time, variations in voting qualification between different ethnic groups, inaccurate population data, and so forth. Not all cases presented here can be explained away so easily, however. Consider once again the first round in GB Jablunkau in 1907. One explanation of the electoral outcome might be that the census data for the general population is simply inaccurate. Typically, however, such an argument invokes a tendency of ethnic minorities to misstate their identity out of fear of ethnic reprisals. To maintain that explanation in this case is to make either the peculiar claim that the census-taker had, for whatever reason, over-reported the number of Poles in this precinct, or the even more peculiar claim that Jablunkau secretly had a German majority that was declaring itself Polish on the census. Either way, it would seem much more likely that the number of Poles would be *under*-counted within the German-

dominated Stadt Bielitz district. Hypothetical inaccuracies in census ethnic data, in other words, would tend to *favor* the conclusions drawn here.

Another explanation might be that the Polish population had simply shrunk between the 1900 census and the 1907 election. However, the 1910 census indicates that this was simply not the case (1907: 85% Polish, 15% German; 1910: 84% Polish, 14% German, 1% Czech) – unless one wishes to argue that the Poles in Jablunkau left before the 1907 election and returned afterwards.

Still another explanation might be that a higher proportion of the German general population in Jablunkau was actually qualified to vote. For this argument to be maintained, however, one must assume a general population in which, *at minimum*, 116% of Germans were 24+-year-old male residents!²⁰ This is, of course, impossible. The same objection applies if one wishes to argue that qualified Poles were for some reason not registered.

Short of arbitrarily deciding that electoral returns in GB Jablunkau were simply false, one must concede that they voted for nominally German parties. Similar arguments apply to any precincts in which ethnic minorities comprised a large proportion of the population. These, of course, are the cases in which TEV is detected with the greatest frequency.

There is, however, an alternative, potentially more damaging, interpretation of these results. It could be the case, after all, that the population statistics are more or less correct, but that the *electoral statistics themselves* are inaccurate. Specifically, apparent instances of trans-ethnic voting might be explained away as mere cases of electoral fraud, ones in which district ethnic majorities have simply falsified the returns in their own

favor. Fraud, after all, occurs to some degree in most electoral systems, and would seem especially likely in cases such as Austria, where elections under universal manhood suffrage were a new experience. Furthermore, if this turns out to be the case, it would indicate that fraud was very widespread, bringing into question the entire electoral dataset.

However, one should not jump to the conclusion that electoral fraud was widespread. Arbitrarily contesting the data only for those district elections where trans-ethnic voting seems to have occurred is a dubious argument. Furthermore, historical accounts of the 1907 election fail to mention widespread fraud. On the contrary, William Jenks, in his thorough study of the 1907 electoral reform and the 1907 election, argues that “the campaign was relatively calm despite a vast array of candidates and parties” and that the “government studiously avoided any attempt to influence the voters, though its distaste for the Social Democrats and Pan-Germans was an open secret”. The only instances of malpractice that Jenks discovers took place in Galicia, where

the Ruthenes found that even secret balloting did not eliminate manipulation, but their complaints could not be justly laid at the cabinet’s doorstep; the Polish political machine, operating through electoral commissioners, was too effective to disintegrate overnight.²¹

For this reason, Galicia’s districts have been eliminated from this analysis. Nevertheless, even this “Polish political machine” was not absolutely effective - for example, in Brody and in several other Galician districts, the Polish candidate was soundly defeated by Zionists receiving non-Jewish Ruthenian support.²² Finally, it should be noted that Jenks is hardly an apologist for Austrian electoral reform. Indeed, the overall conclusion of his work is that the 1907 reform was a “failure”, *not*, however, because of electoral malpractice, but because it failed, in his view, to solve the nationality problem.²³

In short, we have no reason to presume that electoral fraud is more plausible than Catholics putting their religion before their ethnicity or businessmen thinking in terms of their own class interest. Furthermore, there are several additional reasons to reject the “widespread fraud” argument. First, it does not easily explain cases in which a district’s ethnic *majority* voted across ethnic lines. Going outside of the set of examples discussed above, a strong case can be made that this happened in Styria’s Friedau district in 1907, where significant numbers of German voters favored the *Slovene* Liberals over the Social Democrats and the German Radicals.²⁴ However, apparent instances of trans-ethnic voting on the part of ethnic *majorities*, unlike minority TEV, are subject to the objection that the census data is misleading. In the case of Friedau, it could be the case that these voters were Slovenes who declared themselves German to the census-taker (due to dominant-group pressure), but revealed their “true” ethnic identity on election day.

Second, however, actual electoral procedures would seem to have hindered fraud. Elections were overseen by Election Commissioners (*Wahlkommissare*) and Election Commissions (*Wahlkommissionen*), while voting at the actual polling station was overseen by candidates’ representatives (*Vertrauensmänner*). For each precinct (*Wahlort*) within an electoral district, the Election Commissioner was chosen by the district administration, the five- to seven-member Commissions were chosen by local government representatives, candidates’ representatives were chosen by the candidates themselves, and all of these had to be qualified to vote in the precinct in question.²⁵ Given the high degree of multi-partisan participation in this process, and the high degree of public interest in the elections themselves, it is hard to believe that widespread fraud could have simply been overlooked. Returning to the earlier example, GB Jablunkau,

being its own precinct, had its own Election Commission, and it is unlikely that the local Christian Social and Social Democratic parties would have simply allowed blatant German Progressive cheating to go unquestioned. It should also not be overlooked that the instances of Galician malpractice mentioned above, though not adequately addressed, were nevertheless *discovered*.

Third and most importantly, with the exception of Jenk's comments regarding Galicia, no other evidence indicates widespread corruption. Indications of electoral tampering (e.g. the number of ballots exceeding the number of qualified voters, high numbers of unanimous elections, etc.) are noticeably absent. Given the huge variety of winners in Austrian elections, corruption would have involved a conspiracy among dozens of mutually hostile political parties, all of whom had an uncanny ability to cover their tracks. Such an interpretation cannot be credibly maintained.

Finally, were fraud widespread, one would expect a much different outcome from the elections themselves. According to Jenks, the most significant results of the 1907 election were that "the guardians of privilege virtually disappeared,...the parties which were generally representative of the middle class suffered losses," and "the most violent nationalists of every nationality were rejected by the electorate."²⁶ In other words, those who were generally the *best* equipped and the *most* motivated to engage in corruption, including those *most* likely to hold positions within the administration, lost. If the widespread conspiracy had actually existed, it was surprisingly counter-productive.

Conclusion

These findings have several important implications for our understanding of both Austrian elections and the “Nationalities Question,” and call for locally focused case studies of individual electoral races. If the above analysis holds, some of the following must have occurred in 1907:

- In Bohemia:
 - Czech votes for the Free Pan-Germans, German Agrarians, German Christian Socials, German Progressives and/or Pan-Germans
 - German votes for the Czech Agrarians, Czech Clerical Agrarians, Czech National Socials, Czech Radical Progressives, Realists, and/or Young Czechs
- In Bukowina:
 - German and/or Romanian support for the Young Ruthenians and/or the Old Ruthenians
 - German and/or Ruthenian support for Independent Romanians, the Romanian Democrats and/or Romanian Nationals
 - Romanian and/or Ruthenian support for the Christian German, German Agrarians and/or the German Christian Socials
- In Carinthia:
 - Slovene support for the German Christian Socials and/or the German Peoples Party
- In Carniola:
 - German support for the Slovene National Progressives and/or the Slovene Peoples Party
 - Slovene support for the German Agrarians and/or the German Christian Socials
- In Dalmatia:
 - Italian support for the Croatian Democrats, the Croatian Party, the Croatian Pure Rights Party, an Independent Croat, an Independent Serb and/or the Serbian Party
- In Görz & Gradisca:
 - Slovene support for the Italian Clericals and/or the Italian National Liberals
- In Istria:
 - Italian support for the Slovene Nationals
 - Italian and/or Slovene support for the Croatian Nationals
 - Serbo-Croatian support for the Italian Christian Socials, the Italian National Liberals and/or the Slovene Nationals
- In Silesia:
 - Czech and/or Polish support for Free Pan-Germans, German Christian Socials and/or the German Progressives
 - German support for the Czech National Party
- In Styria:

- German support for the German-Friendly Slovenes, the Slovene Clericals and/or the Slovene Liberals
- Slovene support for the Christian Farmers Confederation, the German Christian Socials, German Conservatives, German Peoples Party and/or the German Radicals
- In Trieste:
 - Italian support for the Slovene Nationals
- In Tyrol:
 - German support for the Christian Trienter Peoples Party and/or the Italian Nationals
 - Italian support for German Christian Socials, German Conservatives, the German Peoples Party and/or German Progressives

This tentative listing illustrates the fact that trans-ethnic voters could be found among all of Austria's major nationalities. Certainly, some of the options presented are more plausible than others – e.g. Czechs and Poles seem more likely to have supported the liberal German Progressives than radical Pan-German nationalists. Nevertheless, the set of logical possibilities listed above narrows the field for further historical investigation by suggesting parties that were actively courting trans-ethnic votes.

Closer examination of districts where TEV has been detected suggests the variety of political circumstances and motivations behind such voting. In the 1907 election in Silesia's District 4, for example, the Polish Nationals drew some ethnic protest votes (Table IVA). Such votes, however, were in no way commensurate with the Polish population (in Freistadt, for example). Clearly, many Polish votes went to the German parties, as well as a German Social Democratic candidate, in both rounds of the election. By the second round, the election involved a choice between liberalism and socialism, and one suspects even the former Polish National voters played a role in the German Progressives' eventual victory (see e.g. Schwarzwasser).

The results in Carinthia's District 7 indicate a race in which the division between religious and secular voters overwhelms ethno-national interests (Table IVB). No Slovene protest party emerges at all, and much support for the German Christian Social candidate, who nevertheless was defeated by a German Social Democrat, appears to have come from Slovene voters.

The election in Tyrol's District 17 similarly suggest a victory of Catholicism and traditionalism over nationalism (Table IVC). Once again, no protest party emerged, and even overwhelmingly Italian precincts voted exclusively for German Christian Social and German Conservative candidates (e.g. Enneberg, Buchenstein). Here, however, the massive support in favor of one candidate suggests a lack of sophistication on the part of this district's voters, or perhaps outright fraud.

Finally, the results in Bukowina's District 10 suggest a kind of "lesser of two evils" approach by ethnic minorities, as German and perhaps Ruthenian voters influenced the outcome in a race exclusively between national Romanian candidates (Table IVD). The outcomes here parallel those in other districts in Bukowina, where German and Ruthenian voters appear to have tilted the balance between Romanian Democrats and Romanian Nationals, and German and Romanian minorities chose between Old and Young Ruthenian candidates.

These and many other examples suggest a great degree of sophistication on the part of many Austrian voters, as well as the variety of factors – socio-economic, religious, ideological, etc. – that they weighed in casting their votes. Furthermore, they suggest that the presence of ethnic minorities had a moderating influence on ethno-nationalism. Elsewhere, it has been argued that ethnic extremists could play a

“kingmaker” role in elections. Supporters of the Czech National Socials, for example, although a relatively small party in itself, could often decide between the liberal Young Czechs and Czech Social Democrats in run-off elections, thereby pulling both parties in a more nationalistic direction.²⁷ Simultaneously, however, ethnic minorities could have played a similar role, even in races between two nominally national parties, by supporting the party that showed the most concern for their interests, thereby serving as a buffer *against* excessive nationalism.

All of this took place in a context in which Parliamentary elections were quite local. Elsewhere I have pointed out that, although the Austrian party system seemed to have been primarily divided into mutually hostile national camps, Austrian parties and candidates actually appealed to very narrow constituencies, each of these limited in terms of socio-economic status, ideology, religious affiliation and geographic region as well as ethnicity.²⁸ To this must now be added that Austria’s larger party system was built on a series of local compromises between candidates and the ethnic majorities and minorities in their districts.

This raises further questions about the meaning of the national party labels. On the one hand, there seems to have been a broad consensus that each district “belonged to” its ethnic majority. Nominally Polish parties, after all, were never elected in districts with a German majority. It is less clear, however, what these labels actually meant, whether they were declarations of deeply felt identity and political purpose, convenient shorthand for official compilers of electoral statistics, or something in between.²⁹ Here it is suggested that these labels often masked a much more complex world of local inter-ethnic compromises.

Finally, these findings have more general implications for students of nationalism and ethnic conflict. Austria-Hungary is often presented as the classic multi-national empire torn apart by irresolvable nationalist conflicts. The Austrian half in turn is portrayed as the more chaotic of the two, due to the Germans' inability, unlike their Hungarian counterparts, to maintain an artificial political majority. The evidence presented here encourages a much more nuanced and positive interpretation of that case, one that emphasizes reasoned choice and compromise as much as ethnic hostility. More specifically, it promotes a more "top-down" approach to the study of ethnic conflict and democracy, one that focuses on political institutions and elites as much as mass mobilization and inter-group attitudes. Institutions such as electoral districts and rules, after all, specify the demographic context in which elections take place, while political elites choose which strategies are actually pursued in that context. This emphasis on multiple possibilities and choice allows a cautious optimism in a world in which democracy is desirable and ethnic heterogeneity is inevitable.

Table I: Proportion of Cases in Which TEV is Detected, by Province (1907 1st Round)

Province	# Cases	Assume Majority Participation = 100%				Assume Majority Participation = Minority Participation			
		TEV		TEV including Social Democrats		TEV		TEV including Social Democrats	
		#	p	#	p	#	p	#	p
Bohemia-Czech	93	1	0.01	5	0.05	4	0.04	49	0.53
Bohemia-German	129	1	0.01	10	0.08	6	0.05	61	0.47
Bukowina	30	15	0.50	15	0.50	29	0.97	29	0.97
Carinthia	15	4	0.27	4	0.27	5	0.33	9	0.60
Carniola	17	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	0.18	7	0.41
Dalmatia	17	0	0.00	0	0.00	10	0.59	10	0.59
Görz & Gradisca	8	0	0.00	1	0.13	1	0.13	4	0.50
Istria	19	0	0.00	0	0.00	6	0.32	8	0.42
Silesia	38	7	0.18	19	0.50	7	0.18	25	0.66
Styria	63	11	0.17	15	0.24	21	0.33	40	0.63
Trieste	9	0	0.00	1	0.11	1	0.11	2	0.22
Tyrol	37	5	0.14	5	0.14	10	0.27	25	0.68
OVERALL	475	44	0.09	75	0.16	103	0.22	269	0.57

Table II: Proportion of Cases in Which TEV is Detected, by Province (1907 2nd Round)

Province	# Cases	Assume Majority Participation = 100%				Assume Majority Participation = Minority Participation			
		TEV		TEV including Social Democrats		TEV		TEV including Social Democrats	
		#	p	#	p	#	p	#	p
Bohemia-Czech	64	1	0.02	4	0.06	8	0.13	39	0.61
Bohemia-German	82	3	0.04	16	0.20	17	0.21	61	0.74
Bukowina	12	11	0.92	11	0.92	12	1.00	12	1.00
Carinthia	8	4	0.50	4	0.50	5	0.63	6	0.75
Carniola	1	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.00	1	1.00
Dalmatia	6	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	0.67	4	0.67
Görz & Gradisca	2	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Istria	9	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	0.22	2	0.22
Silesia	19	7	0.37	14	0.74	7	0.37	17	0.89
Styria	17	6	0.35	6	0.35	12	0.71	13	0.76
Trieste	7	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	0.71
Tyrol	7	0	0.00	0	0.00	5	0.71	6	0.86
OVERALL	234	32	0.14	55	0.24	73	0.31	166	0.71

Table III: Proportion of Cases in Which TEV is Detected in relation to Minority Group Size (1907 1st Round)

% Ethnic Minorities in Precinct	# Cases	Assume Majority Participation = 100%				Assume Majority Participation = Minority Participation			
		TEV		TEV including Social Democrats		TEV		TEV including Social Democrats	
		#	p	#	p	#	p	#	p
>=40%	50	30	0.60	42	0.84	35	0.70	44	0.88
>=30%	72	35	0.49	54	0.75	45	0.63	63	0.88
>=20%	107	39	0.36	60	0.56	59	0.55	87	0.81
>=10%	179	42	0.23	68	0.38	77	0.43	140	0.78
>=1%	475	44	0.09	75	0.16	103	0.22	269	0.57

Table IV - Sample Electoral Outcomes

A. Silesia District 4 (1907)

District	Precinct	Ethnic Composition	Participation	Ballots
Silesia 4 (Round I)	Teschen	6% Czech, 60% German, 34% Polish	0.94	20% German Christian Social 51% German Progressive 12% Polish National 16% Social Democrat
	Oderberg	5% Czech, 54% German, 41% Polish	0.96	13% German Christian Social 13% German Progressive 10% Polish National 61% Social Democrat
	Freistadt	3% Czech, 31% German, 67% Polish	0.94	36% German Christian Social 19% German Progressive 9% Polish National 34% Social Democrat
	Schwarzwasser	36% German, 64% Polish	0.97	4% German Christian Social 48% German Progressive 42% Polish National 3% Social Democrat
	OVERALL:	5% Czech, 54% German, 41% Polish	0.95	20% German Christian Social 39% German Progressive 13% Polish National 26% Social Democrat
Silesia 4 (Round II)	Teschen	6% Czech, 60% German, 34% Polish	0.93	77% German Progressive 21% Social Democrat
	Oderberg	5% Czech, 54% German, 41% Polish	0.95	17% German Progressive 81% Social Democrat
	Freistadt	3% Czech, 31% German, 67% Polish	0.92	47% German Progressive 50% Social Democrat
	Schwarzwasser	36% German, 64% Polish	0.87	87% German Progressive 36% Social Democrat
	OVERALL:	5% Czech, 54% German, 41% Polish	0.93	62% German Progressive 36% Social Democrat

B. Carinthia District 7 (1907)

District	Precinct	Ethnic Composition	Participation	Ballots
Carinthia 7 (Round I)	Feldkirchen	99% German, 1% Slovene	0.79	33% German Christian Social 41% German Peoples Party 25% Social Democrat
	Rosegg	13% German, 87% Slovene	0.74	58% German Christian Social 35% German Peoples Party 7% Social Democrat
	Millstatt	100% German	0.86	43% German Christian Social 44% German Peoples Party 11% Social Democrat
	OVERALL:	79% German, 21% Slovene	0.79	41% German Christian Social 40% German Peoples Party 18% Social Democrat
Carinthia 7 (Round II)	Feldkirchen	99% German, 1% Slovene	0.72	37% German Christian Social 63% Social Democrat
	Rosegg	13% German, 87% Slovene	0.81	60% German Christian Social 40% Social Democrat
	Millstatt	100% German	0.84	48% German Christian Social 51% Social Democrat
	OVERALL:	79% German, 21% Slovene	0.77	45% German Christian Social 54% Social Democrat

C. Tyrol District 17 (1907)

District	Precinct	Ethnic Composition	Participation	Ballots
Tyrol 17	Bruneck	99% German, 1% Italian	0.89	94% German Christian Social 3% German Conservative
	Taufers	100% German	0.85	96% German Christian Social
	Enneberg	2% German, 98% Italian	0.87	95% German Christian Social 1% German Conservative
	Buchenstein	100% Italian	0.38	93% German Christian Social 1% German Conservative
	Welsberg	98% German, 2% Italian	0.91	95% German Christian Social 2% German Conservative
	OVERALL:	73% German, 27% Italian	0.83	95% German Christian Social 2% German Conservative

D. Bukowina District 10 (1907)

District	Precinct	Ethnic Composition	Participation	Ballots
Bukowina 10	Dorna Watra	49% German, 57% Romanian, 3% Ruthenian	0.84	10% Romanian National 67% Romanian Democrat 22% Independent (Romanian)
	Kimpolung	26% German, 68% Romanian, 6% Ruthenian	0.85	13% Romanian National 18% Romanian Democrat 69% Independent (Romanian)
	OVERALL:	30% German, 65% Romanian, 5% Ruthenian	0.85	12% Romanian National 33% Romanian Democrat 55% Independent (Romanian)

¹ This paper draws on Philip J. Howe. "Well-Tempered Discontent: nationalism, ethnic group politics, electoral institutions and parliamentary behavior in the Western half of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, 1867-1914." Ph.D. diss., University of California at San Diego, 2002.

² Alan Sked. *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire 1815-1918*. (New York: Dorset Press, 1989), 218-219.

³ See for example Franz Ritter von Juraschek and Rudolf Riemer. Introduction to *Österreichische Statistik*, vol. 84, no.2. Vienna: Kaiserlich-königlichen Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1908, Tafel IX, Stanley Z Pech. "Political Parties among Austrian Slavs." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 31 no. 2 (1989):170-193, Karl Ucakar. *Demokratie und Wahlrecht in Österreich. Zur Entwicklung von politischer Partizipation und staatlicher Legitimationspolitik*. Vol. 24 of *Österreichische Texte zur Gesellschaftskritik*. Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1985, Tabellen 3.4-1 & 3.4-2, and Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, eds. *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*. Vol. 7. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000. Tabelle A3.

⁴ Howe, "Well-Tempered Discontent," *passim*.

⁵ Howe, "Well-Tempered Discontent," 240-250.

⁶ Wilhelm Brauner and Friedrich Lachmayer, *Österreichische Verfassungsgeschichte. Einführung in Entwicklung und Strukturen* (Vienna: Manzsche Verlags- und Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1976), 21-186, Brauner, "Die Verfassungsentwicklung in Österreich 1848 bis 1918," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie*, vol. 7:1, 69-237, Howe, "Well-Tempered Discontent," 111-140, László Péter, "Die Verfassungsentwicklung in Ungarn," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie*, vol. 7:1, 239-540, and Ucakar, *Demokratie und Wahlrecht*, 29-140.

⁷ Howe, "Well-Tempered Discontent," 140-181. Eastern Galicia was exceptional in several respects. There, two-member districts were established in order to allow Poles and Ruthenes to elect one candidate each. This was implemented without any particular regard for the actual ethnic composition of electoral districts. The special absolute majority runoff rules used in these districts were consequently highly complex, in fact somewhat ludicrous.

⁸ Robert A. Kann. *The Multinational Empire: nationalism and national reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1918*. Vol. 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950, 300-304

⁹ Arend Lijphart. *Democracy in Plural Societies: a comparative exploration*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977, 41-44.

¹⁰ Howe, "Well-Tempered Discontent," 239-240.

¹¹ *RGBl*. 17 (1907).

¹² *Österreichische Statistik*, vol. 84, no.2, 1908.

¹³ *Österreichische Statistik*, vol. 84, no.2, 1908.

¹⁴ *Österreichische Statistik*, vol. 84, no.2, 1908.

¹⁵ Donald L. Horowitz. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, 298-302.

¹⁶ The Social Democrats clearly meet Horowitz's criteria that "a party is multi-ethnic only if it spans the major groups in conflict," and that, unlike *non*-ethnic parties, "group members participate on a group basis" (Horowitz. *Ethnic Groups*, 299-300).

¹⁷ Historians have in fact noted a kind of trans-ethnic voting in favor of Jewish parties in Austria. In the 1907 election, non-Jewish Ruthenian voters were persuaded to vote in favor of the Zionists as part of a successful maneuver to defeat the Polish candidates in several Galician districts. See Leila P. Everett, "The Rise of Jewish National Politics in Galicia, 1905-1907," in *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: essays on Austrian Galicia*, ed. Andrei Markovits and Franks E. Sysyn (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 173, Lothar Höbelt, "Parteien und Fraktionen im Cisleithanischen Reichsrat," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie*, vol. 7:1, 975, Howe, "Well-Tempered Discontent", 266 and Ivan I. Rudnytsky, "The Ukrainians in Galicia under Austrian Rule," in *Nationbuilding*, 61.

¹⁸ As a rough point of comparison, the highest share obtained by the Polish National Democrats in any single-member *district* in 1907 (in Galicia's 89% Polish/11% Ruthenian Sanok/Dobromil district) was 71%! There, 55% of qualified voters participated, and the Polish National Democrats were elected in the 1st round.

¹⁹ Since we can no longer assume that ethnic minorities were less likely to vote simply by virtue of being ethnic minorities, it is likely that relative rates of electoral participation varied considerably by district. In part, this would reflect other demographic factors such as differences between the two populations in terms of education, income, etc. However, strategic considerations might have come into play as well. In districts with a close race between the top two "ethnic majority" candidates, for instance, members of an ethnic minority group playing the role of "kingmaker" would arguably have a much greater incentive to turn out to vote.

²⁰ 588 votes were cast in the 1st round in Jablunkau, where the population included 500 Germans. Ethnic population statistics in *Österreichische Statistik* for the 1907 election were rounded to the nearest 100. There were therefore between 450 and 549 Germans actually present in the district according to the 1900 census – by any reckoning, too few to explain the "German" party vote.

²¹ *The Austrian Electoral Reform of 1907* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 178.

²² See fn.17 above.

²³ Jenks, *Austrian Electoral Reform*, 199-214.

²⁴ Making the usual restrictive assumptions, and drawing on the less favorable (1910) population data, at least 27% of the voters in *Gerichtsbezirk* Oberfeising, for example, were "Germans" who voted for the Slovene Liberals.

²⁵ *RGBl.* 17 (1907) §§ 16-18, 23. "District administration" in this instance refers to Administrative Districts (*Bezirkshauptmannschaften*), units smaller than the Electoral District (*Wahlbezirk*) and composed of several, smaller Judicial Districts (*Gerichtsbezirke*). "Local government representatives" (*Gemeindevertretung*) refers to representatives of the actual precinct (*Wahlort*), frequently a smaller town or community within the electoral district. In the case of provincial capitals, the Election Commissioner was chosen by the provincial government.

²⁶ *Austrian Electoral Reform*, 178-9.

²⁷ Höbelt, "Parteien," 985-986.

²⁸ Howe, "Well-Tempered Discontent," Ch.IV.

²⁹ The authors of *Österreichische Statistik* often appear constrained to specify the “correct” nationality of candidates, even when it is not immediately obvious. For 1907, for example, it is noted that the representative elected in Istria’s District 4 “is actually a Croat, but was a candidate for the Slovenian National Party.” In Silesia’s District 6, meanwhile, it is noted that “it was not possible” to determine the nationality of a Social Democrat, since “neither Czechs nor Poles comprised the majority” in the district, but that the candidate joined the Czech Social Democratic club. Similarly, it is noted that Graf Bellegarde, the Independent elected in Bukowina’s District 10, joined the Romanian Club in parliament (*Österreichische Statistik*, vol. 84, no.2, 1908, 23fn3, 78fn** and 105fn2).