

## Cultural, Technical and Political Innovation under The Weimar Republic, 1919-1933 : an Exploration of Linkages with the Economy using Aggregate Data

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Drawing partly from and extending the results of Brandt (1990), we describe both graphically and analytically principal macroeconomic indicators of the Weimar Republic economy and use them to explain two national indicators of innovation for each of three areas : cultural life, technology and politics.

All six measures of innovation aim at capturing some «newness » in the area in question and the modeling aims at linking them to the economic environment.

**Cultural indicators of innovative stage activity.** The firsts measure, *World premières performed in Germany*, is built from Gentsch's (1942) detailed records, that include 5302 *premières* between 1919 and 1932, which we individually assign to *entertainment*, *drama* and *topical* categories. The second indicator, built by Brandt, regroups 257 plays considered for some reason to be « *significant plays* » by the respected literary critics. The index regroups lists made from Rorrison's selection in Piscator (1978), Rühle (1967) and Braunek (1982) : plays are also assigned to one of the same three categories but, in addition, a distinction is further made between *topical general* and *topical political* plays.

**Technological indicators of innovative activity.** Our first measure is a classical one, *industrial patents granted* yearly from 1919 until 1934, and our second measure, constructed by Brandt for the period 1919-1932, counts the various technical *staging innovations* used in plays performed on German stages.

**Indicators of political innovation.** Using Brenner's (1983) definition of political innovation, which is compatible with Veblen's theory of individious comparisons as recently rationalized by Eaton and Eswaran (2003), we retain the *shares of votes obtained by undemocratic parties of the left and of the right* in national elections as appropriate measures.

The quantitative analysis of these six measures of innovation first uses linear Ordinary Least Squares and Tobit estimators, and then looks at the robustness of the results with Box-Cox transformations. Although some results are somewhat fragile, the influence of prices, income, unemployment and the Great Inflation are effectively, if not very precisely, identified in sets of parallel small-sample tests.

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