



Historical sociolinguistics and language shift: On verticalization

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GOAL AND ROADMAP

1. Introduce ‘verticalization’ model of language shift,
2. Argue that it works better / does more than some other accounts,
3. Point to some correlates and predictions of the model.

‘THEORIES’ OF SHIFT

HOW AND WHY DOES SHIFT HAPPEN?

- Ongoing processes of acculturation or adaptation;
"Time takes care of the question of language."
— Nils Haugen
- For at least German, World War I did it: "a thunderclap from a cloudless sky."
— Carl Wittke
- "There was no one consistent pattern to explain why foreign languages remained vibrantly alive among some peoples but not among others"
— *History of Wisconsin*, VI:33
- "An interrelated, multidimensional set of social conditions"
— Walt Wolfram

REID & GILES

The objective vitality of an *ethnolinguistic group* (an ethnic group defined by its language) can be defined by factors such as economic status, geographic concentration, and political representation, according to Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor. **The greater the group's objective vitality, the more likely it is that group members will learn and maintain their ingroup language.** According to *ethnolinguistic identity theory*, which **explains language shifts**, multilingualism, language attitudes, and media use, perceptions of group vitality are predictive of behavior.

Ethnolinguistic vitality (Landweer)

(See Frey 2013 for more discussion)

- relative position on the urban-rural continuum;
- domains in which the language is used;
- frequency and type of code switching;
- population and group dynamics;
- distribution of speakers within their own social networks;
- social outlook regarding and within the speech community;
- language prestige; and
- access to a stable and acceptable economic base.

Ethnolinguistic vitality

(See Frey 2013 for more discussion)

- relative position on the urban-rural continuum:
Yiddish and Pennsylvania Dutch?
- domains in which the language is used: **Circular?**
- frequency and type of code switching: **Relevant to shift?**
- distribution of speakers within their own social networks: **Circular?**
- access to a stable and acceptable economic base:
Hmmm, this might be promising.

Robert McColl Millar, in *Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics*, 2012

Over the last forty years or so some sociolinguists have become interested in both the sociolinguistic and linguistic nature of language shift. **The actual process itself is fairly well understood, although there have not as yet been many attempts at joining up all the sociolinguistic and linguistic findings into one unit.**

We **need** a theory of shift

- Science: "a system of knowledge covering general truths or the operation of general laws esp. as obtained and tested through scientific method."
- Earlier accounts usually aren't testable (cannot be falsified), lack 'the power to explain observable phenomena', etc.
- Often vague ('status', 'prestige', etc.)

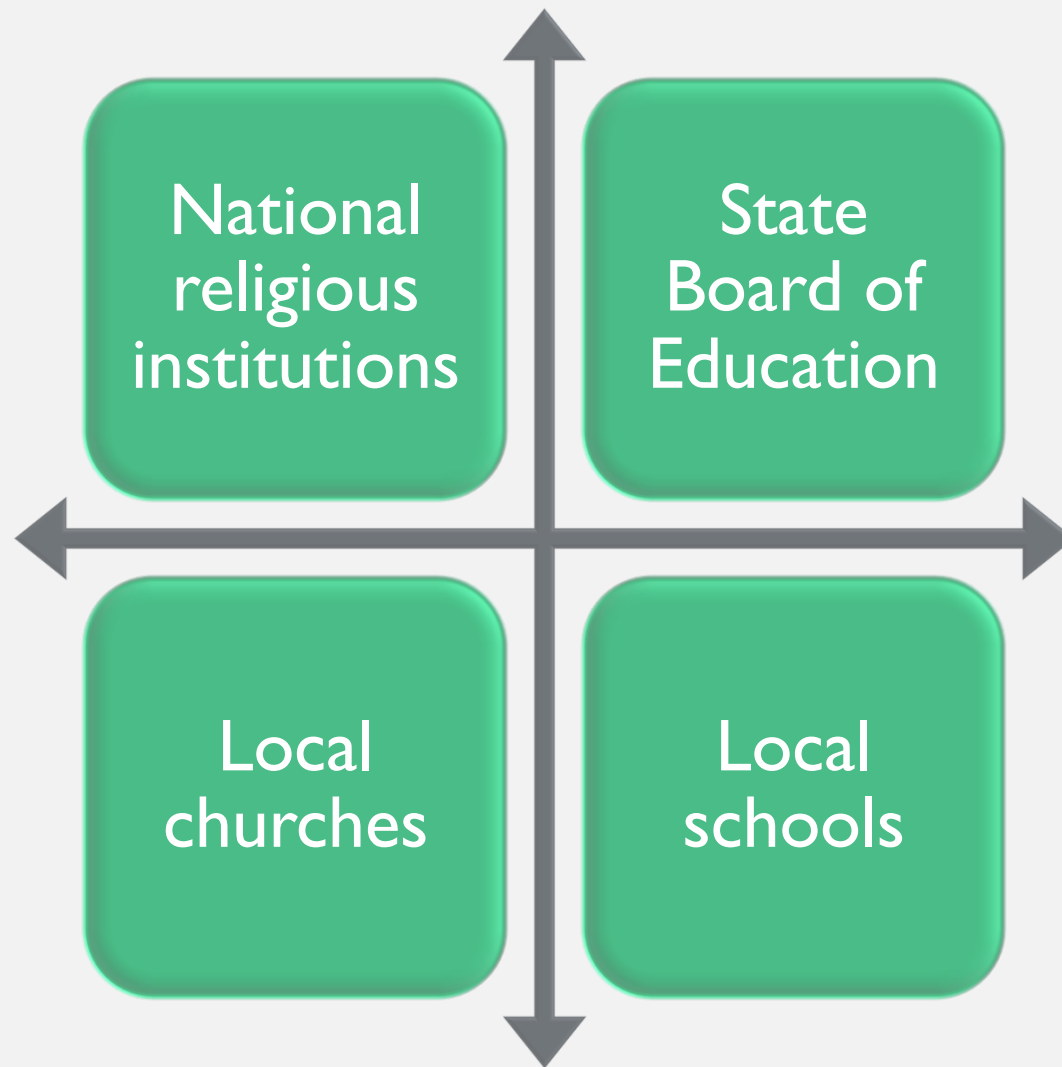
VERTICALIZATION

“The Great Change”

Key patterns of interaction within communities are ...
"two rather distinct types of systemic ties: The relationships through which they are oriented to the larger society beyond the community constitute the community's vertical pattern, and those that local units share with each other on the local level constitute the community's horizontal pattern."

— Roland Warren 1978:240

A model of shift



HORIZONTAL → VERTICAL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

- Verticalization is typically not piecemeal.
- Government and private institutions (e.g. education, religion)
- Technology, industry, commerce, labor
- Media
- Mobility and infrastructure

Domain Loss (David Natvig)

- Spaces for using the minority language > fewer
- More pressure for majority language in more settings
 - Parents (work) + children (school) → home
Transmission of minority language to next generation can stop

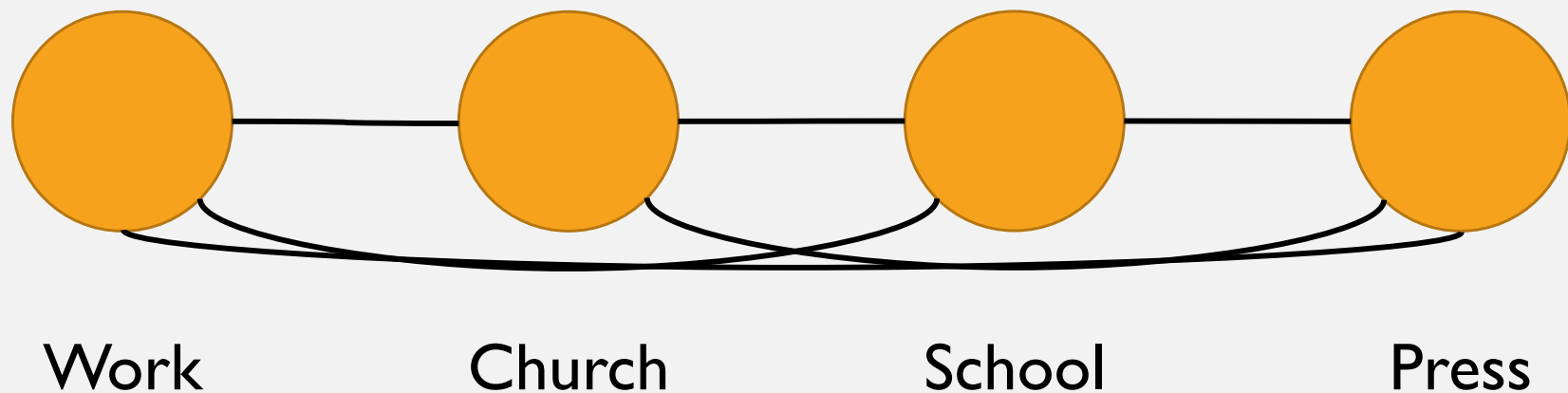
TESTABLE CLAIM

If and when community structures verticalize, there is language shift.

Horizontal Community Structure (David Natvig's graphics)

Community Language

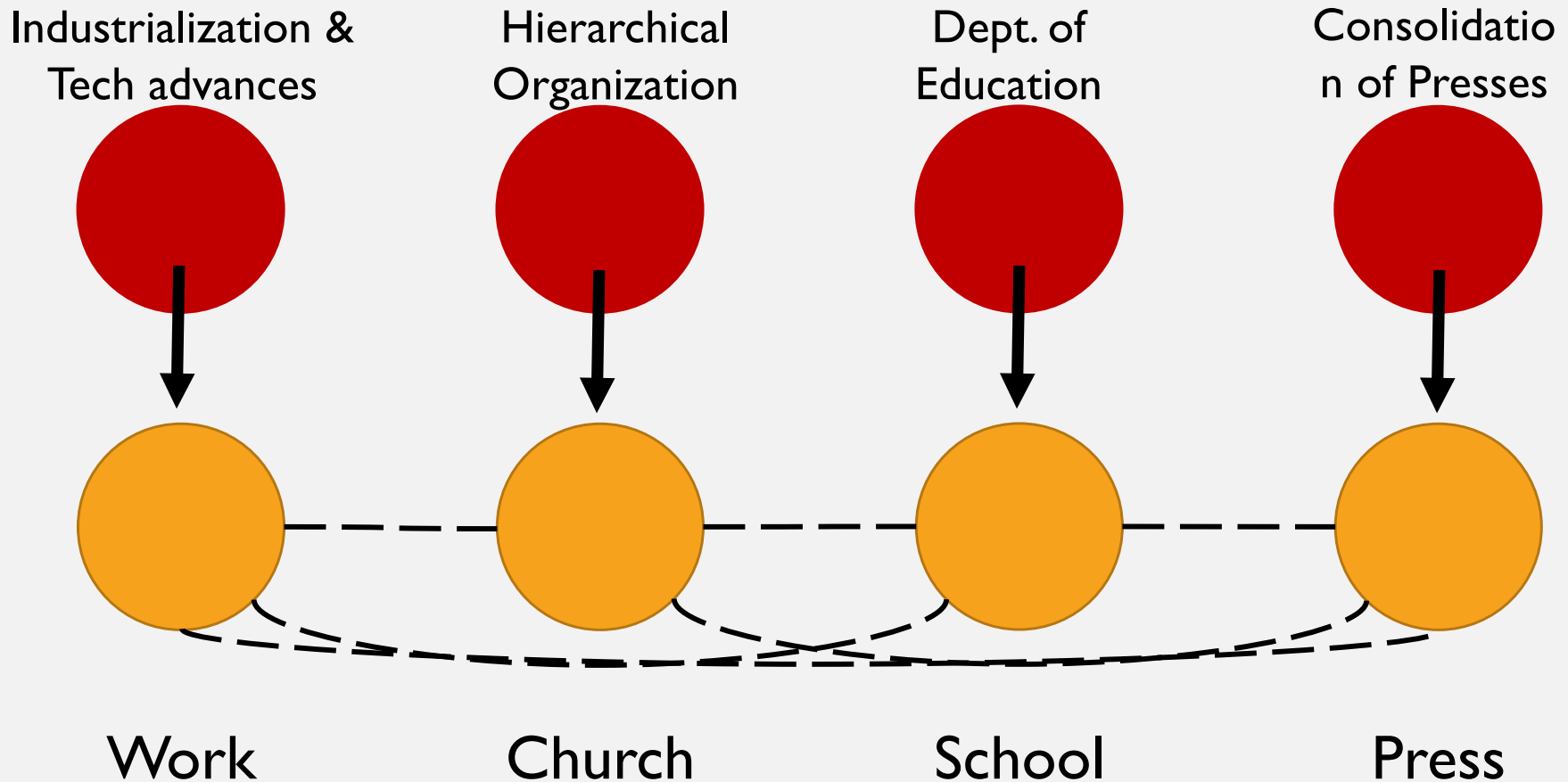
Majority Language



Community Language

Majority Language

Verticalization



Domain Loss

Community Language

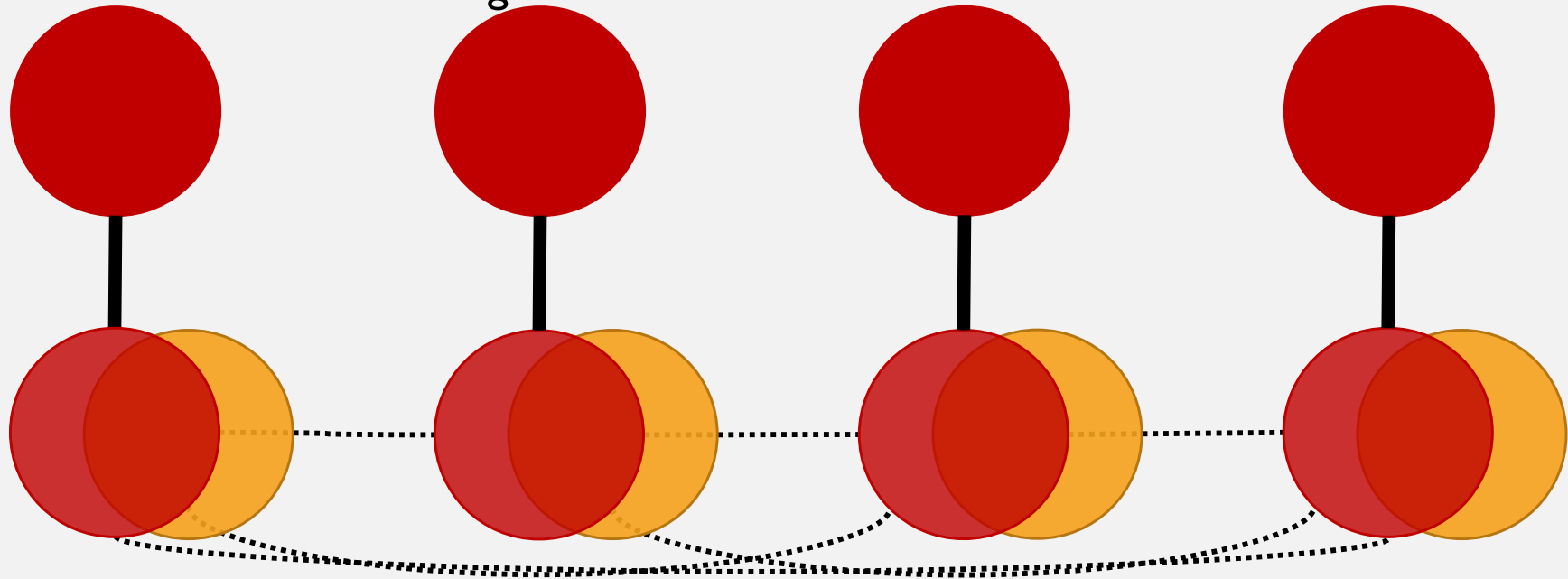
Majority Language

Industrialization &
Tech advances

Hierarchical
Organization

Dept. of
Education

Consolidatio
n of Presses



Work

Church

School

Press

Community Language

Majority Language

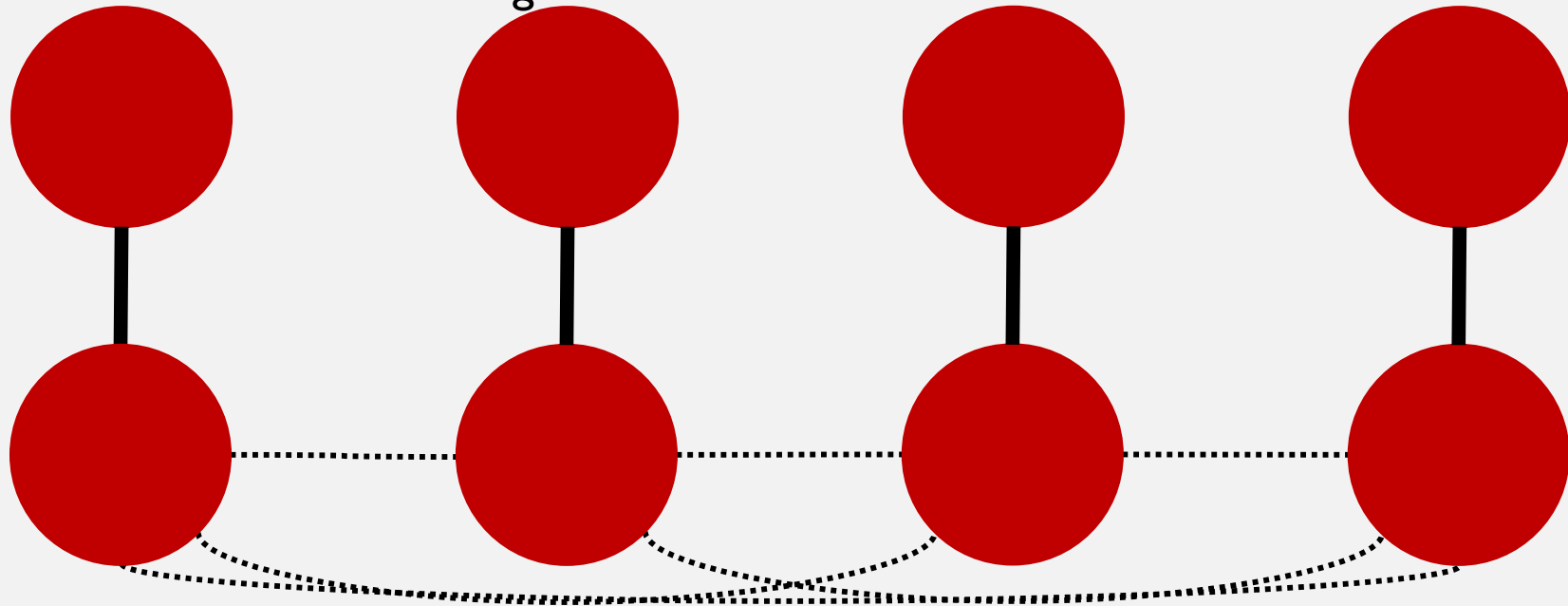
Language Shifted

Industrialization &
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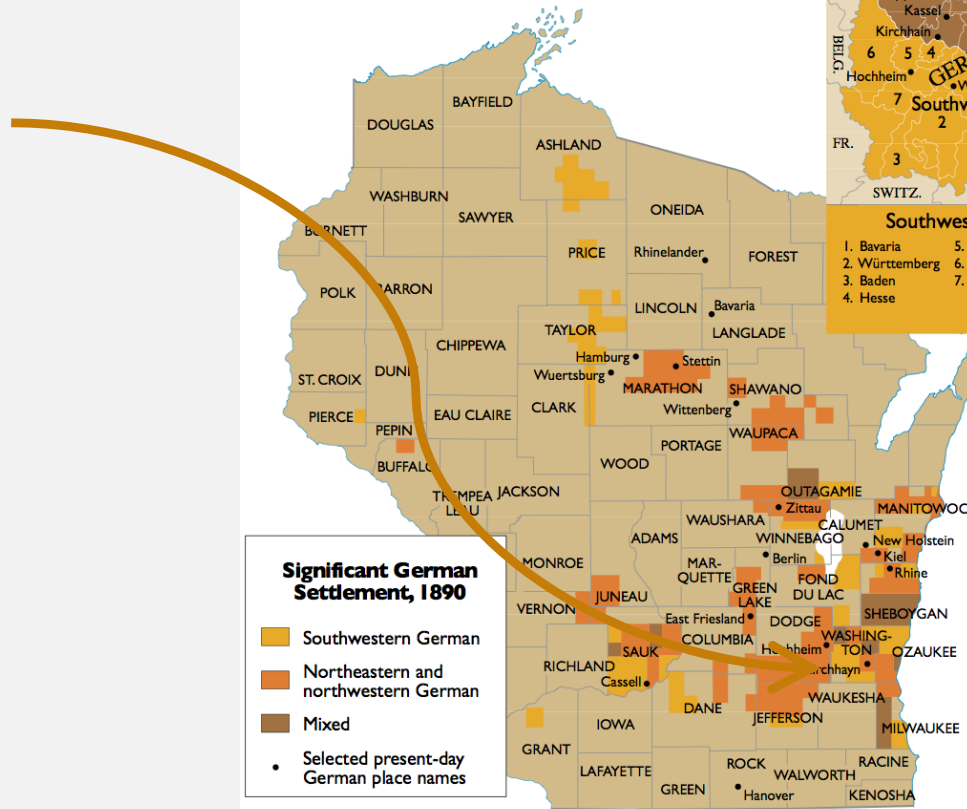
Work

Church

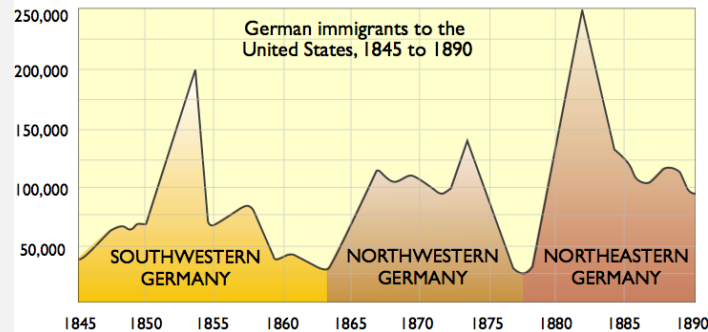
School

Press

From Germany to Wisconsin



Most German speakers came to Wisconsin from states that formed the German Empire in 1871 (see map above). Others came from Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, and western Poland (then part of Russia). Those from Germany came in three major waves (see chart at bottom left). The first wave (1845–60) left south-western Germany because of poor farms, bad harvests, a potato blight, overpopulation, and political upheaval. The second wave (1865–75) came from northwestern Germany after the end of the U.S. Civil War. Falling wheat prices (the result of cheap U.S. wheat exports) encouraged farmers from this usually prosperous grain-growing region to go to America, along with displaced farm laborers and urban craftsmen unable to find work in industries. The third wave (1878–93) left northeastern Germany because farm consolidation caused displacement of farmworkers. This was the largest and poorest of the German immigrant groups, and many settled in urban areas. After the third wave, Germany's expanding industries were able to absorb available workers and reduce the need for emigration. By this time most of America's cheap public farmland had been settled.



From "Wisconsin's Past and Present: A Historical Atlas"
By The Wisconsin Cartographers' Guild
www.wisconsin.com/wibook
© University of Wisconsin Press, 1998

1910 CENSUS: ELSE KOBOW

NATIVITY.			CITIZENSHIP.		Whether able to speak English; or, if not, give language spoken.	Trade or profession of, or particular kind of work done by this person, as spinner, salesman, laborer, etc.
Place of birth of this Person.	Place of birth of Father of this person.	Place of birth of Mother of this person.	Year of immigration to the United States.	Whether naturalized or alien.		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Ger German	Ger German	Ger German	1881	Na	German	Laborer
Ger German	Ger German	Ger German	1881		German	None
Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin			German	None
Wisconsin	Ireland	Canada			English	Laborer
Wisconsin	New York	Wisconsin			English	None
Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin			English	None
Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin			English	None
Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin			English	None
Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin			English	None
Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin			English	None
Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Wisconsin			English	None
Ger German	Ger German	Ger German	1882	Na	German	None

HUSTISFORD 1910: SOME BASICS

Language	Knew English	965	76%
	Only German	310	24%
Monolinguals			
Gender	M	127	41%
	F	183	59%
Place of birth	US	108	35%
	Foreign-born	202	65%
Immigration date			
	Pre-1880	111	59%
	Unknown	17	9%

BEN FREY 2013: ENGLISH IN 1910

Township/County/District	English	German	Total
Kiel, Manitowoc	787 = 83%	164 = 17%	951
New Holstein, Calumet	717 = 72%	272 = 28%	989

Township/County/District	European-born	US-born	Other	Total
Kiel, Manitowoc	133 = 81%	30 = 18%	1 = 1% (French)	164
New Holstein, Calumet	97 = 36%	134 = 49%	41 = 15%	272

Bethany Evang. Lutheran Church (Hustisford)

- 1871: "Resolution that all subjects in the church school be taught in German"
- 1872: "Permission granted allowing instruction in reading and writing in English for the upper grades of the school"
- 1893: "First mention of a sermon delivered in English" (isolated event)



Church and Parsonage in 1910



Cornerstone Laying of School of 1910

SCHAFFER 1927, FOUR WISCONSIN COUNTIES

To many [teachers] English was decidedly an alien tongue, handled with difficulty. The necessity of explaining ... to the German children many points arising in the study of reading, arithmetic, and the other prescribed subjects, created **a strong temptation to use that language almost exclusively even where it was forbidden by law.**

INTERIM CONCLUSION

- Germans didn't necessarily learn English. (Anglos often learned German.)
- Had broad institutional support
 - Churches
 - Schools
 - Also: economy, press, etc.
- **Verticalization breaks these patterns > shift**

New work, further implications

- **Cherokee** in North Carolina (Ben Frey)
- **Somali** in Barron, Wisconsin (Josh Brown)
- **Norwegian** in Ulen, Minn. (David Natvig)
- **Finnish** in Oulu, Wisconsin (Mirva Johnson)
- Many undergraduate projects on Wisconsin

NORWEGIAN IN ULEN (DAVID NATVIG)



Monolingual Norwegian (1910)

	Number	Percent
Village	17	5.4%
Township	13	4.2%
Total	30	4.8%

Assumed Norwegian (1910)

	Number	Percent
Village	202	46.1%
Township	248	63.2%
Total	450	54.2%

Monolingual Norwegian (1930)

	Number	Percent
Village	19	5.1%
Township	9	3.2%
Total	28	4.3%

Assumed Norwegian (1930)

	Number	Percent
Village	151	40.2%
Township	128	34.1%
Total	279	42.6%

NORWEGIAN ON THE FARM



P: *Ja, e har levd her alle mine dagar*

I: *Ja, så hva gjorde du som jobb?*

P: *Vel, vi var født på en farm, så vi brukte å farma og mjølka kui og... og... vel... det var alt vi gjorde.*

I: *Ja?*

P: *Ja.*

I: *Ja. Det tar mye tid å mjølka kui?*

P: *Ja. Mjølka kui og sett opp hay og planta kørn og potet.*

P: Yeah, I've lived here all my days.

I: Yeah, and what did you do for work?

P: Well, we were born on a farm, so we used to farm and milk cows... and... and...well... that's all we did.

I: Yeah?

P: Yeah.

I: Yeah. It takes a lot of time to milk cows?

P: Yeah, milk cows, put up hay and plant corn and potatoes

WORK IN ULEN: 1910 ~ 1940

1910 (205 PEOPLE)

1940 (333)

	Number	Percent
Farming, farm labor	100	49%
Unskilled labor	49	24%
Professional	48	23%
Skilled labor	27	13%
Administrative	9	5%

	Number	Percent
Farming, farm labor	133	39%
Unskilled labor	74	22%
Professional	49	15%
Skilled labor	43	13%
Administrative	34	10%

OULU (MIRVA JOHNSON)



CENSUS DATA- OULU TOWNSHIP

	1910	1920
# of residents	621	1077
# of foreign born Finns	164	344
Percentage of population that were Finnish immigrants	26.4%	31.9%
Percentage of Finnish immigrants that were monolingual Finnish speakers	27.2%	48.9%

Community Size

- Larger Swedish communities in Minnesota seem to maintain Swedish better than small ones in Wisconsin. (Certainly not a universal correlation, but shows promise.)
- Larger communities have an easier time building full horizontal structures, down to social networks, and aren't as dependent on vertical structures. **Halle Luksich.**

Founders, first effective settlement

- An “initial band of English-speaking immigrants had a profound effect on the cultural geography of Lisbon, VI, resulting in faster language shift to English for non-English speaking immigrants.”
- English was established early, so that German-speaking immigrants moved into existing structures, making it less like that they would create their own. **Mark Radcliffe**
- Germans moved in large numbers into Mineral Point and shifted **VERY** quickly, only one monolingual in 1910 who'd been there more than a year. **Justin Goninen**

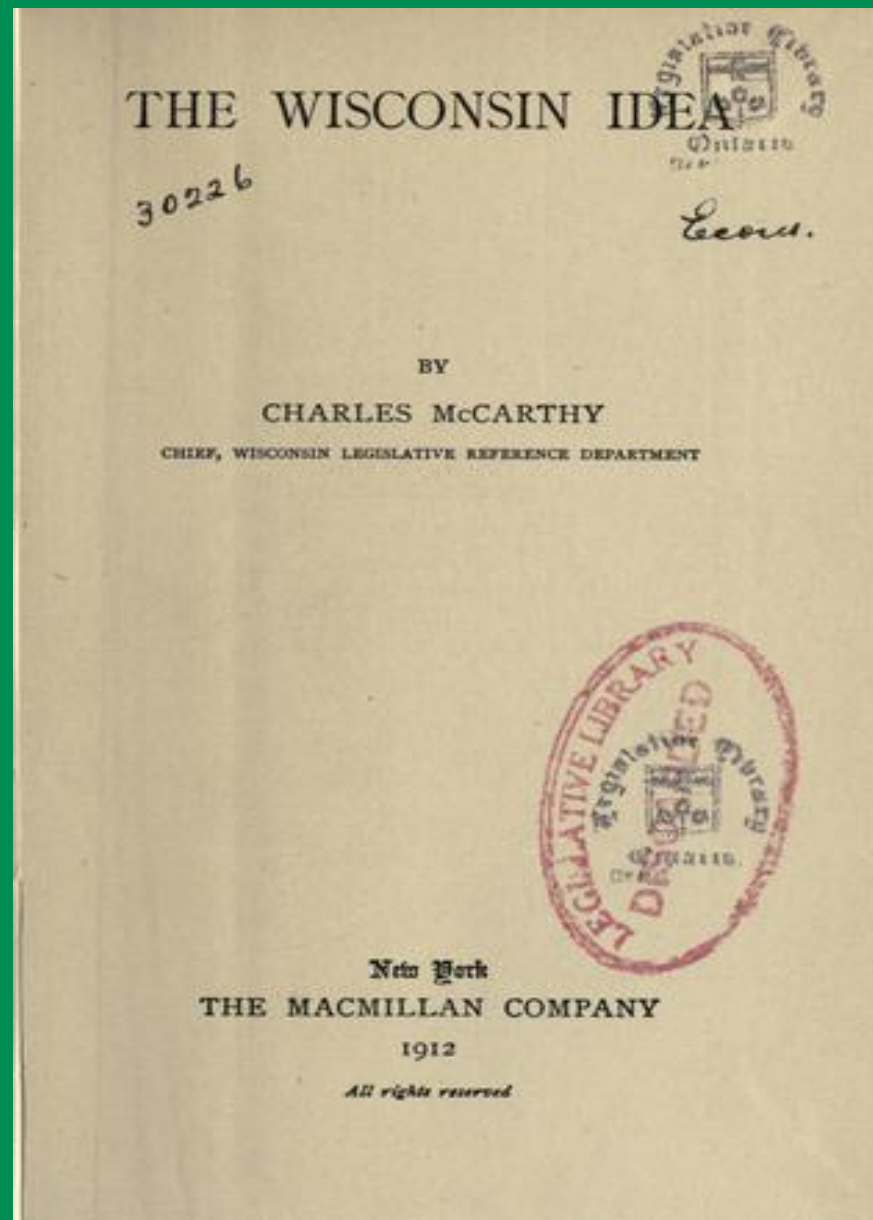
CONCLUSIONS

- Shift is a particularly important and pressing issue today.
- Evidence suggests that verticalization provides a good model of shift and of maintenance.
- **ONE** general dynamic that captures a lot of local patterns.
- Even if it ultimately doesn't work, we've got to formulate explicit, general, testable theories of how shift work.
 - **Opportunity to renormalize languages.**

THANK YOU!

Slides:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ut32b23pqjvf0aa/NARNiHS-Vert-July23.pptx?dl=0>



Maintenance and restoration

- “Renormalization”
- “Internal Verticalization” (Ben Frey, others)
- Create spaces where non-majority language use is expected/appropriate
 - Parallel majority language spaces
 - Commerce, education, written materials, games, television, movies, etc.

Maintenance (Internal Verticalization)

Community Language

Majority Language

