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Francesco Cinnirella, Ruth Schueler

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## Nation Building: The Role of Central Spending in Education\*

Francesco Cinnirella<sup>†</sup> and Ruth Schueler<sup>§</sup>

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#### **Abstract**

It is generally argued that, in the context of Imperial Germany, public primary education was used to form "loyal citizens" and to build a nation. In this paper we analyze to what extent state spending on primary education affected participation at general elections and votes for pro-nationalist parties. We combine census data on the composition of school funding with federal election data at the level of 199 constituencies in five-year intervals from 1886 to 1911. Panel estimates of models with constituency and time-fixed effects show that an increase in the share of central spending is positively related to the vote share for pro-nationalist parties. Results on voter turnout are weaker and less clear cut. Estimates of models with lagged state spending by category of expenditure are consistent with the role of indoctrination of public primary education.

Keywords: Nation building, primary education, indoctrination, Prussian economic history

JEL Classification: N33, N43, H72, I28

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<sup>†</sup> Ifo, CESifo, CEPR and CAGE. Ifo Institute, Poschingerstr. 5, 81679 Munich, Germany; cinnirella@ifo.de.

<sup>§</sup> Ifo Institute for Economic Research at the University of Munich, Poschingerstr. 5, 81679 Munich, Germany; schueler@ifo.de.

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