Why did the Weimar Republic fail?

The cause of the ultimate failure of the Weimar Republic has been debated and searched for by various historians. However, it may be established that its doom could not have been determined solely by one factor. As historian Hiden states, the downfall of the Weimar Republic was a consequence of an interaction of various issues, many previous to the creation of the Republic. The issues at hand when revising the breakdown of the Republic are those of: the economic crisis that inflicted Germany throughout the duration of the government, the political confusion and excessive impact of parties present, and an unsolved vital concern residing its core and foundation. This essay will assess in a thematic way how problems with the foundation, political instability, and an economic crisis, may have been leading causes to the decease of the Weimar Republic.

The Weimar Republic, set up in January 1919, was built on the foundations of a poor and vanquished Germany, marked by its great loss in World War I. The German population, still struck from an overwhelming sense of defeat and loss of pride, was not given any explanation of why the soldiers had claimed defeat and why the harsh terms of the Versailles treaty had been accepted. Through the creation of a new Republic, the people felt as if all their questions remained unanswered, and focused the resentment they felt towards the Allies, towards the newly formed government. Throughout the years, Germany had learnt to familiarize and adapt to an authoritarian regime, leaving the people prone and set towards the maintenance of an authoritarian rule. The newly established republic had varied excessively progressive laws, all included in the new Constitution. Many consider this Constitution, set in August 1919, the cause of the weak foundation and later decline of the Republic. Ebert, the president of the Republic, was determined to create a new democratic state and created a constitution that acted to his benefit. He introduced concepts that were new to the German people, such as universal suffrage for all over 21 years of age, proportional representation in government, and the renown Article 48. Whilst trying to create a democratic state through the written Constitution, we may note that proportional representation and Article 48 truly are flaws leading to the Republic’s death. Article 48 may be considered detrimental to the state as it called for the President’s intervention for “emergency measures”, giving him the ability to overpower the Reichstag’s decisions at any given time. The problem however, was that no criteria was established for when it was in order for a president to take over, leaving ample space to a ruler willing to satisfy his wills. Secondly, the issue of the proportional representation is one that had long-term repercussions, contributing to the later rise of the Nazi party. Following this method, the major parties would continue to dominate the Reichstag, howevered would be obstacled by the minor parties which could, and would, disrupt proceedings and create scalpor in the government.

The fall of the Weimar Republic was also very much triggered by the unstable and worsening economic situation in Germany. Despite its struggles and trials, the government was incapable to preventing the 1923 hyperinflation phenomenon from occurring. The burden which the reparation costs represented where still alive in 1923, when French troops invaded the Ruhr as a consequence of Germany’s inability in meeting the payments. Because money was lacking in the whole state, in order to finance things such as reparation costs,