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Czech Germans in Interwar Czechoslovakia

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Circumstantial Liberals

Czech Germans in Interwar Czechoslovakia

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Abstract

While ethnic minorities may ultimately strive for creating their own state, or joining an ethnic kin state, these options are rarely realistically feasible. In such conditions, I argue, that dominant ethnic minority representatives strive to collaborate with the ethnic majority, and pursue liberal political goals, such as the protection of minority rights and civil liberties, that would ensure the survival and wellbeing of all ethnic groups. This contrasts with much of the literature which sees ethnicity as a source of particularistic, rather than liberal, politics. However, I suggest that when the plausibility of secession or irredentism increases, ethnic representatives abandon their liberal collaborative aims, and rather seek to end their minority status through exit. I study these mechanisms on the case of the German minority in interwar Czechoslovakia. Using historical analysis and quantitative content analysis of parliamentary speeches between 1920 and 1938, I demonstrate that the political actions of ethnic minority representatives are circumstantial.

Českosl. republika jest tedy výsledkem jednostranné české vůle, obsadila německá území proti všemu právu násilím zbraní. [The Czechoslovak Republic is an outcome of unilateral Czech will, it unlawfully occupied German territories through violence.]

– Rudolf Lodgmann von Auen, 1.6.1920

...eine tausendjährige Symbiose der beiden Völker... ein ineinandergewebter bunter Teppich..., wenn man ihn zerschneidet, zugleich auch das kostbare Muster vernichtet. [...a thousand-year-old symbiosis of the two peoples ... an intertwined colorful carpet, which if one cuts, one also destroys its precious pattern.]

– Franz Spina, 16.11.1921

Z vůle německého lidu splynuly dva německé státy v jeden... Sudetští Němci nemohou a nechtějí pominouti tuto velkou dějinnou událost, aby i s tohoto místa nezaslali německému lidu v nové říši bratrský pozdrav a srdečné blahopřání. [From the will of the German people, two German states united into one... Sudeten Germans cannot and do not want to overlook this historical event without sending their brotherly congratulations to the German people in the new Reich.]

– Karl Hermann Frank, 15.3.1938

Introduction

Czechoslovakia became an independent state on October 28, 1918, in the final days of World War I. At its birth, the country of the Czechs and Slovaks contained over three million German speakers, together with a number of other nationalities[1]. While celebrated on the streets of Prague, Czechoslovakia was an unwelcome creation for most of her three million German-speaking citizens, whose loyalties were rather tied to Vienna. As Lodgmann von Auen, the de facto representative of the German speakers, recalled at the first meeting of the elected Czechoslovak parliament, Germans were included in the Czechoslovak state unilaterally.

Czechoslovakia has been widely celebrated as a rare case of a multi-national democracy in the center of Europe that survived the interwar period (e.g. Cappocia 2007), while

[1]For political reasons, census data combined Czech and Slovak speakers into a hitherto unknown category of “Czechoslovak speakers".

eventually becoming one of the first victims of Nazi aggression. The domestic German-speaking population played a major role in the demise of the first Czechoslovak Republic. On the international front, the presence of large, dominantly German-populated areas in the border regions of Czechoslovakia created an auspicious pretext for Nazi foreign policy. On the domestic front, the Sudetendeutsche Partei (SdP), a political party for the defense of the German speaking population of Czechoslovakia, harboring national socialist ideology, and secretly receiving funds from the German NSDAP, gained the support of a large majority of German-speakers[2], winning the 1935 elections. Through tactics of increasing demands, the SdP induced and simultaneously undermined Czechoslovak attempts at ethnic settlement, ultimately crippling the state, and inviting foreign intervention. Hitler's diplomacy succeeded in annexing the, so called, Sudetenland to Germany in September 1938 with the shameful assent of Britain and France, before occupying all of Bohemia and Moravia six months later. As K.H. Frank, the parliamentary speaker of the SdP, suggests, Sudeten Germans could thus join their ethnic brethren in a greater Reich.

These facts lead to the popular sense of the Sudeten Germans as "Nazi traitors" who destroyed Czechoslovakia. This common understanding, however, rests on the overwhelming focus on the last years of the first Czechoslovak Republic. Before the rise of the SdP and the fateful 1935 election, the Sudeten Germans enjoyed a balanced system of German parties, spanning the political spectrum. The most significant of these parties participated in Czechoslovak governments between 1926 and 1938. Indeed, the words of Franz Spina, leader of the Farmer's Union, and long-time minister of the Czechoslovak government, describing a "thousand-year symbiosis of the two peoples," paint a different picture.

Why and how do ethnic minorities come to cooperate with the majority-dominated state? What are the political aims they seek? And when does this cooperation break down? Given their initial reluctance, why did the Sudeten German minority accept to work within the Czechoslovak state? What were the preferences of the Sudeten German

[2]For the sake of simplicity, I refer to all German-speakers of the Czech lands as Sudeten Germans in this text. The name 'Sudeten' is, however, somewhat problematic. The German speakers of Czechoslovakia generally referred to themselves as "Böhmer Deutsche" or Czech German. Sudetenland was initially only one of four different dominantly German-speaking areas of Czechoslovakia. It was only in the 1930s, in the context of rising national tensions, that the name Sudetenland and Sudeten Deutsche came to represent the German-speaking areas and population as a whole.

leaders and ministers? And how did this cooperation collapse? This chapter studies the political preferences and actions of Sudeten German elites. It seeks to understand the circumstances under which Sudeten German leaders accepted to cooperate with and within the Czechoslovak state, what the aims of their cooperation were, and how this cooperation was undermined. This chapter points to the circumstantial nature of ethnic minority status. It demonstrates that, inherently, the Sudeten Germans were neither Nazis, nor democrats. They were primarily an ethnic minority, and as such, they sought protection of their group.

This chapter argues that when ethnic minorities cannot ensure their group survival through becoming a majority (gaining independence or joining an ethnic kin state), they seek the protection of their rights via liberal multi-ethnic arrangements. Under these conditions, dominant ethnic elites strive for ethnic cooperation, and development of ethnically egalitarian policies. This effort is undermined when circumstances present the possibility of ensuring group survival through other means. This argument is counterintuitive and novel because it suggests that under particular conditions, ethnic minorities are a source of *liberal political preferences*. This goes against much of the literature on ethnic politics which sees ethnicity as primarily a source of particularistic tension and conflict that naturally detracts from ideological preferences and politics. This argument also puts the Sudeten German question into a new light. By highlighting the circumstantial nature of political preferences, this chapter reconciles the fact that, despite their initial reluctance to accept Czechoslovakia as their home, the dominant Sudeten German elites and their supporters who encompassed a majority of the German speakers, strove for peaceful and egalitarian relations between the ethnic majority and minority, until the rise of the Third Reich provided them an escape from minority status.

Consequently, this chapter neither rehabilitates nor vilifies the Sudeten Germans. It is clear that while some of the Sudeten elites were committed Nazis from early on, others came to national socialism with the rise of Hitler. Some of these men concertedly undermined the Czechoslovak state, and later served the Third Reich with diligence, actively participating in its barbaric atrocities. Simultaneously, some Sudeten German elites dedicated their lives to the fight of Nazism, and strove to protect Czechoslovak democracy – some of these men were killed by their co-ethnics in Nazi concentration camps.

This chapter first summarizes the literature on ethnic politics, showing its anti-ideological expectations. Subsequently, the chapter develops the theoretical argument

about the circumstantial effect of ethnic status on political preferences. It then turns to test these propositions on the Czechoslovak case. In the first step, the article reviews the historiography on Sudeten German party politics, focusing on the developments of the party system over the 20 year period. In the second step, the chapter turns to quantitative analysis of all parliamentary speeches by Sudeten German parliamentarians in the four democratically elected parliaments of the first republic between 1920 and 1938. The final section serves as a conclusion.

Ethnicity and Ideology

The literature on ethnic politics has rather limited views on ethnicity and political preference. It starts from the premise that group identity is important to human beings, and that groups are naturally focused on their self-interest. The literature consequently finds that ethnicity produces particularistic, group-centered preferences that either contradict, or at least avoid, policy-based ideological politics. Furthermore, the group-centeredness of ethnic politics leads to suboptimal political and social outcomes, as groups seek to further their self-interest at the expense of others.

In the Weberian tradition, I define ethnic group identity as a "subjectively felt sense of belonging based on the belief in shared culture and common ancestry" (Wimmer 2008b: 973, see also Horowitz 1985). Ethnicity is thus an affective ascription of meaning, rooted in common practices, symbolisms, and myths about group origins, leading to an understanding of shared fate. Ethnic identity can center around combinations of divergent traits and social characteristics, be they linguistic, religious, phenotypical, geographic or other. More recent scholarship, focusing on the malleable, constructed nature of ethnic identity, suggests that nonetheless ethnicity tends to be defined by characteristics that are either impossible (skin color), or difficult (language, religion) to change (Posner 2005). While ethnic identities can be constructed, activated, deactivated, and redrawn by institutional arrangements or strategizing elites and political entrepreneurs, ethnic identities tend to change only incrementally, and thus tend to be relatively stable over time (see Wimmer 2008b: 983, 996).

Scholars agree that group identity is central for human beings. Social-psychological literature demonstrates that humans tend to form groups "by nothing more than random assignment of subjects to labels, such as even or odd" (Akrelof and Kranton 2000: 720, see also Hutnik 1991). Others emphasize individuals' striving for self-esteem through

social group comparisons (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 40). This psychological need translates into the social realm. A strand of identity theorists underlines the role of group identity in helping find people's respective and respected place in the changing world based on "imagined communities" rooted in culture (Gellner 1983), language (Anderson 1991), or memory (Smith 1986). Most recent works on ethnicity see ethnic identity as an information shortcut, as "perspectives on the world" (Brubaker 2006: 17). Hale (2008: 35) suggests that ethnic identity serves as information reduction tool because it is generally "highly perceptible," as well as it tends to "correlate with other highly important categories" (ibid.: 41). Consequently, ethnicity provides a set of potentially highly salient cues about unknown individuals or social situations. Given the visibility of some ethnic markers, such as skin color, language, or accent, ethnicity may provide more effective information shortcuts than other characteristics, and these shortcuts may be particularly useful in politics.

Ethnic identity thus creates bonds within groups that are seen as rooted in "primordial sentiments" (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972), or that are strategically "activated" based on ethnic demography (e.g. Chandra and Boulet 2012). Ethnicity is, however, not expected to induce broader ideological preferences. The literature sees ethnicity primarily as a particularistic attachment contradicting, or at best by-passing, ideological policy-focused politics. Ethnic preference is expected to translate into group-centered privilege.

Two strands of ethnic politics literature provide two views of how ethnicity functions in political life, yet both of them come to similar conclusions about the non-ideological nature of ethnic identity. The first, traditional strand following Herder, sees ethnicity as innate, and ethnic groups as historically given and separate. This primordial understanding of ethnicity inspired some initial works in political science (e.g. Rabushka and Shepsle 1972; Horowitz 1985) that demonstrate how the politicization of ethnic identity leads to ethnic outbidding – that is, the taking of extreme positions by diverse ethnic groups. Group preference is equated with exclusive ethnic group particularism, leading to extremism which corrupts and destabilizes political competition.

More recent works, belonging to a second strand of research on ethnicity and politics, criticize the primordial approach to ethnic group identity, focusing instead on the formation and reframing of groups (see Wimmer 2008a, 2008b, Chandra 2012). This, constructivist view, focuses on the construction, activation, and mobilization of ethnic identity, which it sees as endogenous to politics. This literature highlights the strategic nature of ethnicity, which can be harnessed by calculating political elites. Consequently,

Wilkinson (2004) demonstrates ethnic cleavage manipulation by political elites, while Laitin (1998) addresses individual strategic responses in identity formation.

Much of the literature on ethnic politics points to generally negative outcomes of ethnic politics. Gerring and colleagues (2016: 1) write that "few good things are attributed to [ethnic] diversity." Ethnicity is expected to destabilize polities, which impedes the development of public policies (Easterly and Levine 1997), prevents the effective provision of public goods (Alesina et al. 1999), and can lead to conflict and civil war (Fearon and Laitin 1996, 2003, Fearon et al. 2007, Cederman et al. 2015, Wucherpfennig et al 2015). Consequently, in order to find a remedy to ethnic tension, research has focused on the study of institutions and institutional contexts that may help mitigate the effects of ethnicity. Lijphart (1977) proposes 'consociational' arrangements as security mechanisms in ethnically diverse societies. Fearon and Laitin (1996) study informal group institutions. Chandra (2005), echoing the constructivist understanding of ethnicity, focuses on institutional context in the politicization of ethnic identity. Posner (2004, 2005) suggests that political institutions shape individual identity repertoires and identity choices, which can be mobilized for the sake of coalition-building. Bochsler and Szocsik (2013) argue that ethnic government participation can be a moderating factor of ethnic extremism. Zuber and Szocsik (2015) underline the role of group segmentation as a radicalizing factor.

Given the institutional focus of the literature, the study of the behavioral political consequences of ethnicity is more limited. It focuses on the role of ethnicity in electoral behavior, where ethnic identity is described as a stabilizing force. These works find that since ethnicity provides group bonds, it can lead to the stabilization of political choice. This choice is, nonetheless, rooted in the particularistic attraction among co-ethnics "regardless of the platform of the party" (Chandra 2004: 12, see Birnir 2007a 2007b, Long and Gibson 2015, Csergö and Regelmann 2017). Chandra (2004) demonstrates how ethnicity leads to electoral politics of ethnic head counting, whereby voters support their co-ethnics in exchange for patronage, regardless of the ideological characteristics of the parties. Birnir (2007a: 32) demonstrates how "membership in an ethnic group functions as a stable but flexible information cue for political choices." Ethnic groups thus have more information about their ethnic candidates and parties than other, non-ethnic voters, which stabilizes ethnic vote, and aids in the formation of structured political competition. Chandra's (2012) discussion on the theorization of electoral politics from constructivist perspectives further implicitly underlines the exceptional nature of politics in the context of ethnic group identities. She states that "[p]arties seek to win votes not

by defining a correct issue position but by creating coalitions with the right combination of [ethnic] attributes" (Chandra 2012: 44).

In a similar vein, the study of immigrant minorities dominantly assesses their integration, political trust, and participation (e.g. Martiniello and Body-Gendrot 2016, Fennema and Tillie 1999, Isani and Schlipphak 2017, Jacobs et al. 2002, Jacobs et al. 2004, Morales and Giugni 2011). Fewer works, mostly centering on the U.S. and the U.K., study their political behavior (e.g. Barrera 2007, Hajnal and Lee 2011, Sanders et al. 2013). This work, often single country in scope, also highlights the role of co-ethnic attraction. In short, ethnicity in political competition is seen as leading to politics of belonging rather than to ideological and issue-based politics (Lynch and Crawford 2011: 286-7).

Recent studies of ethnic political behavior critically engage the expectation that ethnic politics should lead to ethno-nationalist extremism – the expectation of the 'outbidding' model developed by the primordialists. These works (Coakley 2008, Mitchell et al. 2009, Zuber 2012, 2013, Zuber and Szocsik 2015) suggest that institutional and competitive conditions of party systems can induce ethnic parties to adopt more complex strategies. Strategic interaction may lead them to moderate their ethno-national or ethno-territorial demands, potentially reaching out to voters of other ethnic groups, and engaging political issues other than ethnicity. This engagement of non-ethnic issues is not understood as stemming from their socially-rooted interests, but rather from tactical calculus seeking to strengthen their political and electoral position. While this is much in line with the argument here, this paper further suggests that ideological preferences are (conditionally) rooted in ethnic minority status.

While this rich literature has identified important dynamics between ethnic identity and politics, it suffers from two important shortcomings. First, its assumption that ethnic minority search for support of their group is particularistic, detracting from, or outright opposed to, the formation of more general ideological preferences is limiting. Theoretical, as well as empirical accounts suggests that ethnic minorities are interested in obtaining and maintaining rights (e.g. Kymlicka 1995, Evans and Need 2002). Such an inclination entails the prospect of broader ideological interests.

The second shortcoming of research on ethnic politics is its frequent selection bias towards situations in which ethnic group identity is highly salient, ethnic relations are strained, and inter-ethnic competition is high. While studying these scenarios is necessarily informative, it risks overestimating the conflictual character and consequences of

ethnic group interactions and ethnic politics. This approach is also group-focused, with limited study of intra-group variance cross-sectionally and over time.

Theory and Hypotheses

This work takes a theoretical step back, departing from group-centered approaches and assumptions. It proceeds from the assumption, supported by the theoretical literature on ethnic minority politics (e.g. Kymlicka 1995: 93), that ethnic groups primarily *seek group preservation and maintenance of group culture*. This approach relaxes the frequent expectation of the literature that ethnic identity leads to self-focused particularism, and allows us to consider the motivations stemming from ethnic minority status. In this position, the paper can question the conditions under which groups seek cooperation, and under which their aims become self-focused and particularistic instead.

This paper argues that ethnic group status, in search of group preservation, may induce ethnic minorities to seek individual and group rights. Ethnic minorities thus come to support liberal political arrangements, specifically: collective (linguistic, religious etc.) rights; inclusive conceptions of society which recognize minorities as political and cultural peers; civil liberties and the rule of law that protect individuals and groups from abuses of state power. Minority status, by leading ethnic minorities to search for political and cultural protection from the majority, infuses politics with broader ideological content. Such ideological positions, generally regarded as normatively positive, are not an expected outcome of ethnic politics. However, this liberalizing political aim is likely to be cross-pressured by a number of conditional factors. The liberalizing ideological effects of minority status are thus *circumstantial*.

One of the key variables cross-pressuring the search for liberal rights and freedoms is the potential for separation or for the joining of an ethnic kin state. Meadwell (1999) suggests that ethnic minorities seek boundary change, so long as feasibility permits. But the feasibility of separation or irredentism depends on complex interactions between minorities, domestic majorities, potential ethnic kin states, and other states (e.g. Brubaker 1996, Keating 2009, Siroky and Hale 2017). While minorities may prefer not being in a minority status, in most cases, this situation is locked in by political practices, by the standing constitution of the state, and by the international order. Under these circumstances, ethnic minorities need to seek their survival and reproduction within the standing structure of the state they are in. However, when domestic and/or international

developments increase the possibility of separation or irredentism, the strategic calculus of ethnic minority members and elites is likely to change. When ceasing being a minority is a feasible option, the search for rights of minorities naturally becomes comparatively less appealing.

Another important variable is the approach of the dominant or majority group in society. When some significant majority elites seek cooperation with the minority group, it produces incentives for minority de-radicalization. If there is a possibility for political alliances over commonly-shared interests between (some sections of) the majority and the minority, minority elites have incentives to engage with the majority, and such engagement is likely to have positive, trust-building effects that lead to further coordination. This is because the majority's engagement with the minority may provide the minority with resources (parliamentary support, government participation etc.), which the minority is likely to seize in search of supporting its rights.

This article consequently hypothesizes that ethnic minorities are inclined to seek liberal[3], multi-cultural solutions for their self-preservation, as long as they are 'stuck' as minorities, and while they share some common interests with significant segments of the majority. Of course, this liberal aim is unlikely to be homogeneously shared by the minority group, as most groups contain some radical elements. However, when stuck as minorities and facing some coordinating incentive with a part of the majority, the *dominant* section of the minority elite is likely to seek liberal outcomes. Under these circumstances, the key minority elites seek peaceful and constructive coordination with the majority. In order to legitimize their self-preservation claims, these minority elites aim for general multi-ethnic or ethno-blind arrangements that create a fair level playing field on which all individuals can participate regardless of their ethnic background. This liberal inclusive approach is likely to be always contested by hardliners in the ethnic (and in the majority) camp. However, these extreme appeals are unlikely to garner significant political support while the minority remains in an intransigent minority position. The

[3]I use the term 'liberal' in reference to liberal political thought which focuses on the legal equality of citizens, their rights and liberties. This term is appropriate from the perspective of contemporary analysis, but is somewhat historically misleading. In fact, none of the proponents of this approach in the Sudeten case would consider themselves to be liberals – note that there was no "liberal" party in Czechoslovakia on either side of the linguistic divide. Also, a number of the political values of these actors would fall well short of liberal ideals. Nonetheless, I use the term to stress the inclusive, and rights-focused nature of their aims.

liberal approach is, however, vulnerable to change in the perceived status of the minority group. The extent to which the feasibility of escaping their minority position seems realistic, liberal moderates and their aims become sidelined by calls for greater (national) unity. As the perceived feasibility of such unity becomes more palpable, ethnic extremist calls gain in prominence and public support.

This argument focuses the preference formation of ethnic minorities constrained to (semi) permanent minority status, and on how these preferences change when context shifts. My argument builds on, but departs somewhat from the work of Jenne (2007). Her theoretical focus is on the interplay between majority repression of and external support to ethnic minorities, also covering the Sudeten German case. The Sudeten case, however, underlines two important theoretical points. First, the majority rarely has a unified approach to the minority, as some actors within the majority may seek political gains in cooperation with minority actors. Especially when the minority is politically significant, its engagement may alter domestic political coalitions, becoming an important strategic consideration for majority actors. During initial repression of the Sudeten Germans, some actors – particularly around president Masaryk – sought Sudeten German cooperation. Second, external support to the ethnic minority may or may not increase its ability to pressure the domestic majority or to escape its minority status. In the mid-1920s, the Sudeten Germans were effectively supported and implored by Germany under the leadership of Gustav Stressemann to accept the Czechoslovak state, engage with its authorities constructively, and enter government. This points to my argument which stresses the probability of remaining a permanent minority or ending minority status via secession or irredenta as the key variable in determining the preferences and behaviour of ethnic minorities and their representatives.

In the Czechoslovak context, we would then expect that Sudeten German cooperation within Czechoslovakia varied in time as a function of the perceived domestic and international viability of the Czechoslovak state. While Czechoslovakia was a precarious newborn in the tumultuous aftermath of World War I, Sudeten Germans sought to wrest their territories from it, and re-join Austria. As the Czechoslovak state became recognized by international actors, and Austria herself, while developing viable political and economic institutions and processes, dominant actors of the Sudeten Germans moderated their nationalist appeals, and sought cooperation with Czech authorities, political and economic elites. This led to a period of cooperation which lasted well into the economic turmoil of the Great Depression. Only with the rise of Nazism in Germany, and

the Third Reich's focus on extra-territorial ethnic Germans, did the Sudeten German cooperation start to slip. As the calls to the Sudeten Germans to go "heim ins Reich" [home to the Reich] amplified, were the Sudeten cooperative elites replaced by ethnic extremists whose rhetoric and actions ultimately enabled irredenta.

From Majority to Minority and Back

The beginnings

When Czechoslovakia is born of the defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire in the chaotic final days of World War I, most German speakers living in the Czech lands see the new state as a mere craze of the confused times, which would in the worst case include only to the dominantly Czech-speaking areas of the Bohemian and Moravian interior. However, as the Czechoslovak National Committee begins to act as a de facto government in Prague, German representatives – former Sudeten German members of the Austrian Reichsrat – take a clear irredentist position. They form a provisional assembly of German Bohemia, and commence with the formation of four disconnected German territorial units (*Gauen*) (Crowhurst 2015: 26). The irredentists leadership of the Sudeten Germans spans the political spectrum, uniting the nationalist Rudolf Lodgman von Auen, who becomes the governor, with the socialist Josef Seliger, his deputy, proclaiming the principle of self-determination, and seeking to remain a part of Austria.

Czechoslovaks quickly subdue the German Gauen militarily. Czechoslovak Legionnaires – Czech defectors from the Austrian army who fought alongside the allies, who are experienced and loyal to the national cause – establish Czechoslovak authority over the German-speaking territories by the end of November 1918 (Wiskeman 1938: 82, Cézar and Černý 1962 I: 105-6, 109). In the context of Czechoslovak occupation, the leaders of German irredenta leave for Vienna, where they seek support for their cause, and prepare for the peace conference that will ultimately decide the fate of Sudeten German territories. Violence erupts when Sudeten Germans are prevented from taking part in Austrian elections in March 1919, which explicitly manifests their inclusion in Czechoslovakia (Wiskeman 1938: 84). Over time, however, the attractiveness of German self-determination is slowly overlaid by routine life concerns (Cézar and Černý 1962 I: 151).

The conference with Austria, leading to the signing of the peace treaty in Saint-Germain-en-Laye on September 10, 1919, officially recognizes independent Czechoslo-

vakia, largely following the historical territory of the Czech lands, thus including the dominantly German-speaking areas. Lodgeman von Auen and the Sudeten German representatives are denied a hearing, while some historians point out that the Czechoslovak minister of foreign affairs, Edvard Beneš, exaggerates the numbers of Czech minorities in the German-speaking territories (Brugel 1973a: 41, Wiskeman 1938: 88). Czechoslovakia signs a minorities treaty, which is later translated into the country's constitutional order, and which guarantees basic rights and freedoms of all ethnic minorities.

Despite mentions of a central European Switzerland by Beneš, Czechoslovakia is founded on the principle of a national state of the Czechs and Slovaks, and its minorities are not considered as constituent members (Wiskeman 1938: 94). The Revolutionary National Assembly – the legislative body of the new state – is made up of Czechs and Slovaks, and minorities are absent – partly due to the unwillingness of the Sudeten representatives to legitimate the body (Houžvička 2015: 135). The Assembly moves to pass the most critical laws – the constitutional and the language laws of 1920 – prior to general elections which would bring minorities into the legislature. The basic legal contours of Czechoslovakia are thus decided without minority participation. Despite their opposition to the state, the Sudeten German political elite, pardoned by Czechoslovak president Masaryk, returns to Czechoslovakia and begins to organize.

The activation of cooperative politics

Between the years 1920 and 1923 the Sudeten political camp forms into clearly defined political parties that crystallize into two strands. The *negativists*, made up of the Deutsche Nazionalpartei (German National Party - DNP) led by Lodgman von Auen, and by the Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei (German National Socialist Workers' Party - DNSAP) – the Czechoslovak branch of the national socialist movement led by Rudolf Jung – remain true to the original demand of Sudeten self-determination, and reject the Czechoslovak state. However, the events of these three years see the formation of an alternative, *activist* political strand, that comes to accept and cooperate with Czechoslovakia. The activists will come to span the political spectrum, and be made up of three dominant political parties: the social democratic Deutsche sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei (German Social Democratic Workers' Party - DSAP), the agrarian Bund der Landwirte (Agrarian League - BdL), and the Christian Deutsche Christlich-Soziale Volkspartei (German Christian Social Peoples' Party - DCSV).

While the negativists consider the new status quo which relegates Sudeten Germans to a minority position in a new state a provisional misfortune that must be categorically opposed, the other parties slowly start to respond to Czechoslovak attempts to engage with Sudeten representatives. This process is slow and wrought with mutual mistrust. While the Czechs fear Sudeten irredentism, Sudeten Germans see Czechoslovak state consolidation as an encroachment on their rights. The fulcrum lies in questions of language. Under Austria, Czechs were allowed to use their language in official business in areas where they made up at least 20% of the population, while the official state language was German. The situation reverses with the creation of Czechoslovakia, whose language law emulates the Austrian. Sudeten Germans can use German in communication with the state, and are provided German schooling in areas where they form at least 20% of the population. The official state language is, however, 'Czechoslovak' – a language that does not exist, but is deemed to be constituted by Czech and Slovak linguistic branches (Houžvička 2015: 139-40). The replacement of German-speaking officials with Czechs is of course highly symbolic for both the Czech and the German-speaking population.

After the first democratic elections in Czechoslovakia held in 1920, the five dominant Sudeten German parties enter the Czechoslovak Assembly, and form a German parliamentary club which through its speaker Lodgman von Auen declares Sudeten aim at self-determination (Bruegel 1973b: 179). This Sudeten unity, however, slowly dissipates. The SDAP is first courted by the socialist Czechoslovak prime minister Tusar, while president Masaryk establishes contacts with the BdL leadership and seeks their involvement in government (Cézar and Černý 1962 I: 192, 244).

Several international and domestic developments determine the formation of the German activist camp, and its steadily increasing collaboration with the Czechoslovak government. On the international front, it is primarily the definitive closure of the question of Czechoslovak state boundaries. While the Saint-Germain peace treaty establishes Czechoslovakia internationally, it is the bilateral treaty of Lány of December 1921 by which Austria recognizes the boundaries of Czechoslovakia. Failed coup attempts of the Habsburg Emperor Charles in Hungary in 1921 further eliminate any hope for the recreation of the old regime (Cesar 1962 I: 264, Benes 1973: 109). Finally, the failed Nazi putsch of 1923, and the 1925 Locarno treaties normalize relations between the victorious powers and Germany, and greatly weaken the irredentist claims of extra-territorial Germans (Wiskeman 1938: 131).

On the domestic front, the international events create a sense that the Czechoslovak

state is here to stay, slowly driving a wedge between the strategies of the negativists, and the nascent activists. Interestingly, Sudeten German activism is formulated in 1923, during an economic crisis (Cézar and Černý 1962 I: 303). It is based on political as well as economic expediency. On the political front, German social democrats and agrarians start finding common positions together with their Czech counterparts. For the socialists of both ethnicities, the great political menace is the rise of the inter-ethnic Communist party, founded in 1921, which threatens their political primacy (Cézar and Černý 1962 I: 257). The BdL shares the Czech agrarian interest in agricultural tariffs, and is more willing to accept Czech land reform which aids their smallholding voter base (Cézar and Černý 1962 I: 221, Šebek 2005: 110). The Christian Socials share the Czech Peoples' Party's interest in clerical pay (congrue). In the economic sphere, Sudeten German industrialists are torn between the economic interest of maintaining their supply and market ties to the Czech interior (Wiskeman 1938: 86), and seeking protection from more efficient German industries on the one hand, and the national interests of self-determination on the other (Brugel 1973a: 32). Nonetheless, economic developments lead German business to cooperate with the Czechoslovak state (Boyer 2012: 131), and in 1922 the Czech and German industrial chambers merge into one. These developments lead to the collapse of the German parliamentary club due to divides between the activist moderates and the negativist extremists (Bruegel 1973b: 179), and by 1923 the activist parties organize a common working group in parliament (Broklová 1999: 49).

German political aims

The negativists, the DNP and the DSNAP, continue to call for self-determination inside the Czechoslovak national assembly, and use various tactics to undermine its work. The situation escalates in 1922 when Alois Baeren, a radical member of the DNP, throws a 'stink bomb' at the chairman of the assembly (Cézar and Černý 1962 I: 266-7). This polarizes the Sudeten German camp, increasingly discrediting the unconstructive methods of the negativists.

The activists turn to seeking solutions to the concerns of their constituents through the institutional framework of the Czechoslovak state. Franz Spina, leader of the BdL, states in 1922 that "[i]t is now a question of fighting, realistically and shrewdly, not against the State but for our rights in the State" (cited in Brugel 1973a: 71). In 1926 Franz Spina of the BdL, and Robert Mayr-Harting, leader of the DCSV, enter the Czechoslovak

government as ministers. From this date until 1938, all Czechoslovak governments have at least two ministers from the German activist camp. The key aims of activist parties rest on preserving the key interests of the Sudeten German ethnic group. They can be broadly divided into four areas: constitutional rights, civil liberties, linguistic rights, and social matters.

The key concern for the activists is the constitutional position of their group in the new state. It is particularly difficult given that they went from being the dominant ethnic group of Austria to being a minority in a new political entity. Activist leaders lament the loss of rights not simply in practical terms, such as access to services or jobs in their language, but also in symbolic terms. They call for recognition of their group as a group equal to the Czechs and Slovaks, as having inherent rights to participate in the formation of the state and society.

The sincerity of this aim is difficult to evaluate. Is it a genuine call for equality, or is it a thinly veiled harking back to being the dominant ethnicity of Austria, as some historians suggest (e.g. Broklová 1998, 1999)? Indeed, a number of negativists also call for "true democracy" in Czechoslovakia, which is difficult to accept from the mouths of national socialist parliamentarians (e.g. Knirsch, 3.12.1920). The distinction between the negativist and the activist calls for rights, however, lies in their context. Negativist calls for rights tend to quickly slip into threats. In his speech, Hans Knirsch (DNSAP, 3.12.1920) suggests that the Germans are "waiting for the sign of [Czech] goodwill... otherwise [they] will arrange themselves accordingly." On the other hand, activist calls are increasingly associated with expressions of loyalty to the state, so long as it provides a respectful home for its minorities – something absent in negativist discourse. In the case of the activist ministers, these statements are further backed by more concrete deeds as well. Mayr-Harting sums up the activist position in an early statement entitled "The First Step:"

> The Germans want to be loyal citizens of this state, but only at the price of recognition of our nationality as equal within the state. As equals among equals, they request political, national and cultural self-administration. As domiciled citizens on land they have long since held, they request full political freedom in their historical areas of inhabitancy. And with this, everything has been said. (cited in Broklová 1998: 189)

The activist calls for recognition of equal rights[4], and the recreation of Czechoslovakia into a state of nations, rather than a nation state, effectively elevate the central importance of group rights. Although traditionally not a part of a liberal understanding of rights, the concept of group rights has been theorized as central to group preservation, and effective inter-ethnic cohabitation (Kymlicka 1995). As early as 1921, the Association of German Lawyers writes to the Czechoslovak government calling for the "legal guarantee of linguistic equality of all nations" of Czechoslovakia[5]. The ultimate goal of the group's symbolic recognition is to allow the Sudeten Germans their sense of participation in the state. The words of Spina "This is our state too", underline the double-sided character of responsibilities and rights that come with this participation (cited in Brugel 1973a: 85).

As a minority in a state dominated by the Czechs and Slovaks, the Sudeten Germans fear the potential repressive capacity of the state. When the minister of finance, Alois Rašín, is assassinated by a Czech anarchist in 1923, the national assembly passes a Defense of the Republic Law, which provides strict punishment for treason, conspiracy, or violent attacks against the republic. While not atypical, this step is seen as a concerning limitation of civil liberties by the German minority, which some see as an act of Czech national chauvinists (Šebek 2005: 92). Similarly, while the BdL comes to accept the Czechoslovak state, the party expresses concerns about the control of the repressive state apparatus (Kubů and Šouša 2012: 152). Ludwig Czech, leader of the socialist DSAP, speaks about the creation of "first and second class citizens... aimed against the proletariate and national minorities in this state..." (6.3.1923).

The most crucial aim of the German activists is the language question, which stands at the core of cultural reproduction of the group, as well as the economic fortunes of its members. The original language law of 1920, passed by the revolutionary assembly without the presence of ethnic minorities, entrenches the 20% minority language rule discussed above. The unresolved questions are the construction of Czech schools in dominantly German-speaking areas, and the use of minority languages in civil service. The latter is defined by an executive order of 1926, which passes without a parliamentary debate. The order angers all German parties because it restricts the use of minority languages even in lower civil service posts, and requires non-Czech employees to pass

[4]Spina refers to "die Anerkennung der nationalen Gleichberechtigung" (cited in Kubů and Šouša 2012: 162).

[5]"...eine sprachliche Gleichberechtigung aller Nationen verbürgendes Gesetz" in Kučera (1999: 71).

Czech language tests within six months (Šebek 2005: 206, see also Kučera 1999).

The activists, however, work towards improvement. After the entry into government, Mayr-Harting recalls significant improvements in language law, in the maintenance of civil service posts for German-speakers, and maintenance of German schools (in Broklová 1999: 89). This work leads to a new language order of 1928 which increases the use of German (Wiskeman 1938: 133). Franz Spina, a professor of Czech linguistics (Höhne 2012), works to improve the situation of German schools, and seeks the creation of a particular administrative schooling bureau for every ethnic group in Czechoslovakia. The socialist Wenzel Jaksch (1964: 248), recalls the fruitfulness of German government participation which led to a "flourishing school system, and a network of efficient local governments which provided many social services for the people of cities, districts, and industrial settlements."

Social affairs are another important area of interest of the German activists. The importance of this policy area increases dramatically after the 1929 Great Depression, which hits Czechoslovakia with full force in the early 1930s. Coincidentally, Ludwig Czech becomes the new minister of social affairs after the 1929 parliamentary elections. The response to the social disaster of the next years thus lies on his shoulders. As unemployment rises, Czech orders the multiplication of the statutory social assistance period, as well as the subsidy. This, according to preceding legislation, covers only unionized labor, leaving many without social assistance. Czech thus arranges a special aid scheme which is payed out "strictly in accordance with the numbers of unemployed registered locally" (Bruegel 1973: 83). Brügel suggests that Czech's policies set a certain standard, and are continued by subsequent ministers (ibid.: 84). Czech's focus on the social character of the challenge he faces, rather than its distribution across different groups, as well as his insistence on 'strict numbers,' amount to a pragmatic policy of ethnic blindness. This enables him to support those in need, naturally favoring the economically harder-hit German-speaking areas.

Despite the good will of German activists, their achievements in terms of concrete policy outcomes that would improve the ethno-linguistic position of the Sudeten population are limited. This is partly because, as Sobieraj (2002: 3) suggests, they are not sufficiently strategic in drawing concessions from the Czech majority, and partly because the Czechs simply are not ready to compromise on ethno-linguistic issues until very late (see Kučera 1999). Fundamentally, activist work is most successful in areas that are explicitly not ethnic. Cooperation flourishes in the context of deeper economic

competition in the political system (see Boyer 2012), in which Czech and German parties of the same ideological colour naturally converge. The activists are aware of this, as Franz Spina juxtaposes what he calls 'class parties' (Ständeparteien) with 'worldview parties' (Weltanschaungparteien), emphasizing that he cares about the economy and farming prior to worldview (Sobieraj 2002: 160). Activists thus stress that regular economic cooperation in a common state brings rights, justice and equality to all those who participate (Böllman in Sobieraj 2002: 170).

The Great Depression and the rise of Nazism

Despite Czech's efforts, the economic crisis is deep, and long. Since it hits German-speaking areas, involved in lighter, export-oriented industries hard-hit by falling international demand, harder, it fuels ethnic tensions in Czechoslovakia. This translates into the slow rise in popularity of the Sudeten German national socialist DNSAP. It is impossible to separate the rise of Nazism – among both the Sudeten Germans, and their neighbors in Germany – from the dire economic and social situation of the early 1930s. Whether the Sudeten Germans would increasingly turn to the DNSAP in the absence of Hitler's success on the other side of the border, whether they would turn to the DNSAP without an economic crisis, are unanswerable questions. What can be said, however, is that the Great Depression *does not* lead to the collapse of Sudeten German democratic, activist politics. Contrary to popular view that the Great Depression precipitates a uniform downfall of democratic forces, Cézar and Černý (1962 II: 81-82) suggest that it rather produces a polarization in the Sudeten German camp. Local elections in 1931 – in the depth of the Great Depression – show an increased support of the DNSAP, but also of the socialist, activist DSAP. Indeed, the Great Depression sees the activist parties seek greater collaboration with their Czech ideological counterparts in their responses to the economic and social situation. The Agrarians, for example, cooperate on tariff protection (Lidové Noviny 25.3.1930), while the Socialists of both nationalities hold common party conferences, support each other in government negotiations, and largely follow shared goals and strategy (Lidové Noviny 28.9.1930, 21.1.1931, 19.2.1931, 14.9.1932). In fact, the Great Depression further focuses activist politics on pragmatic daily cooperation within the government, no longer calling for some overt accommodative moment between the national groups (Peroutka, Lidové Noviny 8.3.1931).

The demarcation between activism and negativism hardens (Wiskeman 1938: 198).

On the one hand, the national socialist DNSAP becomes the dominant negativist force, eclipsing the once-dominant DNP. Inside the DNSAP, factions more closely aligned with Hitler – particularly Hans Krebs – overshadow the party leader, Rudof Jung, an adversary of Hitler's who sees himself as the rightful leader of the national socialist movement (Cézar and Černý 1962 II: 186,188). The Sudeten German negativist camp is thus increasingly aligned with the policies and aims of the German NSDAP. On the other hand, as the NSDAP ascends to power in Germany between 1932 and 1933, the activists become increasingly alarmed by Nazi policies. This in fact solidifies the democratic resolve of the activist camp, and their will to cooperate with the Czechs. Spina declares that "[t]he storm which rages around our frontiers compels the nations of this State to draw together as equals among equals" (cited in Bruegel 1973: 107). Jaksch rejects negativist calls for Sudeten autonomy by stating that "we don't want cultural autonomy for Nazi teachers to do what they like in the schools" (cited in Bruegel 1973: 148).

The rise of Nazism in Germany and its close connections with the Sudeten negativist camp naturally concern Czechoslovak authorities. Mounting evidence suggests that leaders of the DNSAP coordinate with the German NSDAP. The first political process against national socialism sentences members of the DNSAP-linked sport association Volkssport for organizing Nazi storm troops under a sporting guise (Crowhurst 2015: 89). DNSAP leaders lose their parliamentary immunity in a vote supported by Sudeten German activists (Cézar and Černý 1962 II: 137), and both negativist parties – the DNSAP and the DNP – are banned in the fall of 1933. However, in anticipation of the ban, the negativist camp prepares the formation of a new party with a new organizational base which would not be compromised by obvious association with the DNSAP. The leader of the new formation, Konrad Henlein, an unknown gymnastics teacher, discusses the formation of a Sudeten German front with Hans Krebs (Cézar and Černý 1962 II: 196). The new Sudeten Heimatsfront is rooted in populist claims of overcoming Sudeten partisanship for the sake of national unity. In order to avoid the fate of the DNSAP, Henlein combines the calls for Sudeten national unity with democratic slogans and conciliatory gestures towards Czechoslovakia (ibid.: 220-1). Nonetheless, entire local organization of the now-defunct DNP and DNSAP join the movement. A new negativist force is born.

The period between 1933 and 1935 is critical. While the economic situation is slowly improving, the political situation in the German camp is shifting. The Heimatsfront is making political headway among the German-speaking population, and activist parties

feel an increasing need to respond. In October 1933, a BdL leader, Zierhut, engages the rise of Henlein when he speaks of "irresponsible politicians and parties that make the Sudeten population look like a danger to the state," stressing that "only in a democracy can the Sudeten Germans gain equality" (Lidové Noviny 7.10.1933). By 1934, a time when Hitler is consolidating his power in Germany, the BdL as well as the DCSV are torn about their approach to Henlein, with some, particularly younger, leaders interested in electoral cooperation with the Heimatsfront (Lidové Noviny 1.6.1934). Ludwig Czech criticizes the Heimatsfront, calling for "national pacification" rather than the building of "national fronts" (Lidové Noviny 26.3.1935). Shortly prior to the 1935 parliamentary elections, the BdL attempts to coordinate with Henlein, hoping to limit Heimatsfront's agitation among its traditional rural voters (Lidové Noviny 24.1.1935). A Czech journalist summarizes the situation when stating that it is hard for the activists to defend their positions at "a time when the pan-Germanic myth is again burning bright" (Peroutka, Lidové Noviny, 4.3.1935).

The ultimate turning point in Sudeten German politics comes with the 1935 parliamentary elections (see figure 1). These elections are held on May 19, 1935, less than two months after the Saar plebiscite decided to reunify the Saarland with Germany. This is the first demonstration of the possibility of bringing extra-territorial Germans into the increasingly confident German Third Reich. Konrad Henlein, who does not personally stand for election, transforms the Heimatsfront into a fully fledged Sudetendeutsche Partei (Sudeten German Party - SdP), which he leads to a stunning electoral victory. The SdP receives over 1.2 million votes, and becomes the largest party in the Czechoslovak assembly – larger than any Czech or Slovak party. Henlein characterizes the elections as "the Saar plebiscite, as a plebiscite about [Sudeten] belonging to this state or to Germany" (cited in Broklová 1999:58). Ludwig Czech speaks of a victory for Hitler (Cézar and Černý 1962 II: 294).

The 1935 election deals a blow to the activist camp, as it loses many seats in the assembly, and, more importantly, as the tide of German public opinion shifts. Nonetheless, the three activist parties – DSAP, BdL and DCSV – turn to coordinate their response to the SdP in the form of so-called neo-activism. While Ludwig Czech and Franz Spina retain their ministerial positions, they are replaced as dominant party members by younger men – Wenzel Jaksch and Gustav Hacker. In the DCSV, it is Hans Schütz and Erwin Zajíček. It is this new generation that tries to stem the youthful appeal of the SdP, and comes to represent the neo-activist stream of the mid-late 1930s. Neo-activism is a

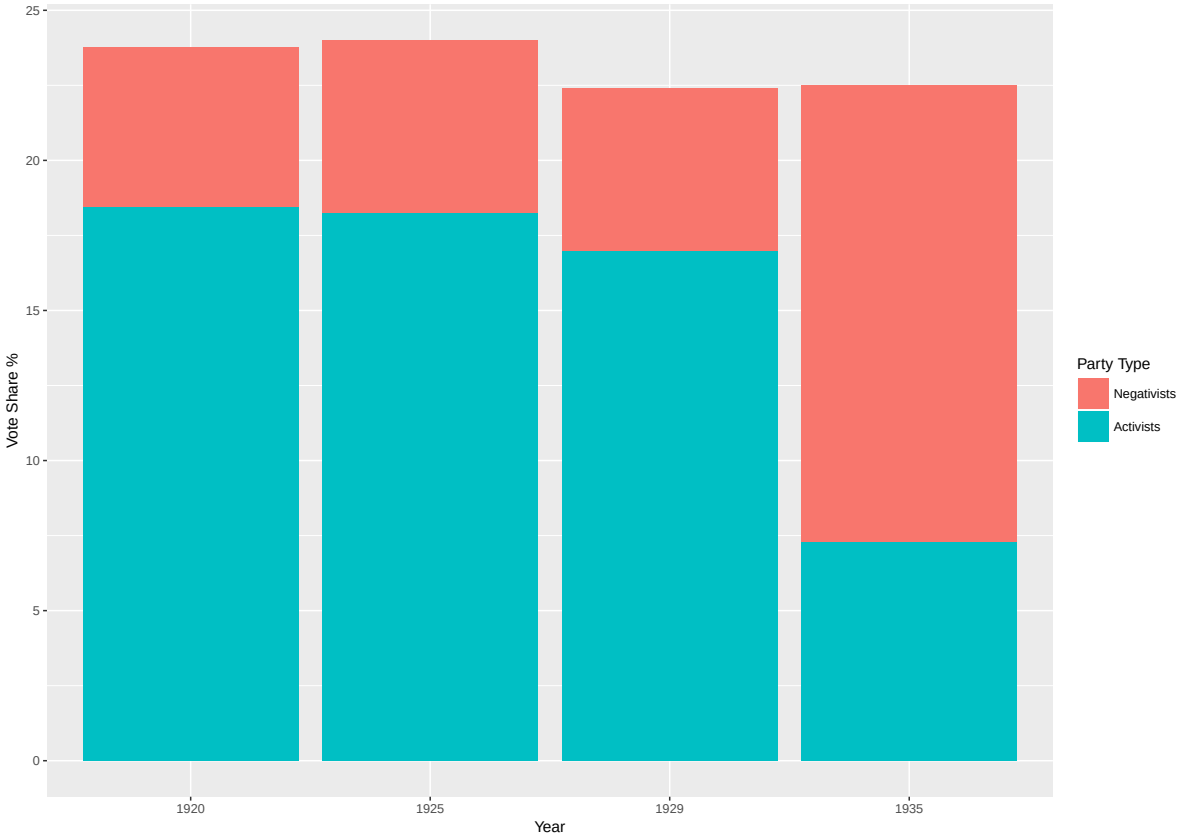


Figure 1: Electoral results of Sudeten German parties

response to the palpable threat to democracy posed by Nazism in Germany and the SdP at home. As Hitler's repression against German socialists, Catholics, Jews and others escalates, political refugees arriving in Bohemia bring the urgent reality to the Sudeten activist doorstep (Wiskeman 1938: 198). Neo-activism thus on the one hand tries to pragmatically cooperate with the Czechs in order to secure visible minority rights gains and stem the rise of the SdP. It no longer calls for Sudeten autonomy, which in light of SdP dominance is seen as dangerous to democracy even by the Sudeten activists (Šebek 2005: 279). On the other hand, neo-activism is activism in the context of heightened ethnic tensions. The neo-activists need to demonstrate their ethnic loyalties, and thus neo-activism is infused with populist references. It is particularly the socialist Wenzel Jaksch, who formulates the concept of 'Volkssozialismus' which rejects marxism and turns towards the middle classes, trying to wrest them away from the SdP. It, however, includes nationalist undertones that somewhat align it with Henlein (Cézar and Černý

1962 II: 273). Ultimately, the neo-activists are open to cooperation with the SdP (Šebek 2005: 331), which leads them down a slippery slope.

The neo-activists are successful in securing attention of the Czechoslovak government, which is increasingly distressed by the SdP. In February 1937 prime minister Hodža and the neo-activsits agree on an ethnic settlement. The government promises to increase funding for German-speaking areas, to proportionally represent minorities in the civil service and thus to increase the number of employed German-speakers, to provide public tenders to Sudeten German companies, and to increase minority cultural funding (Cézar and Černý 1962 II: 394). However, while the activists are satisfied, Henlien's aims lie outside the realm of Czechoslovak law. Henlien unveils his strategy to Hitler in Berlin, saying: "We must always demand so much that we can never be satisfied" (cited in Benes 1973: 158). Henlein immediately escalates his demands, calling the government proposal insufficient, and asking for Sudeten German self-rule (Cézar and Černý 1962 II: 281). In the pre-1935 context, the government proposal would have been heeded as a major activist victory, however, in the context of Henlein's ethnic outbidding, even major gains by the activists become viewed as insignificant.

The ultimate collapse comes when the possibility of exit from minority status fills the headlines. In February 1938 Hitler demands that Germany 'liberate' 10 million Germans outside her borders (Cézar and Černý 1962 II: 414). One month later, the Anschluss of Austria ends all activist hopes, and heralds the end of Czechoslovakia. Activist politics collapse over night, as most members of activist parties conclude that the fate of Czechoslovakia will lie outside her powers. Franz Spina resigns and leaves politics, while his BdL joins the SdP. Robert Mayr-Harting joins the SdP, but then also resigns. The SdP thus becomes the sole right-wing Sudeten party, with only the weakened socialist DSAP remaining outside (Cézar and Černý 1962 II: 442-6). Henlein escalates his demands, the Czechoslovak government concedes, only to be faced with additional requests. The Sudeten question is settled by the Munich Agreement of September 1938 where Britain, France, Germany and Italy decide the fate of a country not even present at the talks. Areas with more than 50% German-speakers are ceded to the German Reich. In March 1939 German armies occupy the remaining parts of the Czech lands.

Analyzing Parliamentary Speeches of Sudeten Representatives

This section turns to analyze the discursive behavior of Sudeten German elites in order to assess the extent to which the changing context of ethnic minority status affected their stated positions and aims. The first analysis focuses on 399 speeches by the leading proponents of Sudeten German political life – the leadership and parliamentary speakers of all Sudeten parliamentary parties. The analyzed parliamentarians are listed in table 1.

Given the theoretical propositions, and the historical context of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 30s, I expect that in the early years of the country, ethno-nationalist discurse dominates among both political streams – the negativists and those who eventually become active collaborators with the Czechoslovak regime. As Czechoslovakia gains international recognition and becomes a viable state, I expect that the activist stream gradually reduces its ethno-national discourse, while that of the negativists remains steadily high. This should persist until the rise of Nazism in Germany slowly increases the potential of Sudeten irredenta. Ethno-national discourse should incrementally return to the speeches of Sudeten activists particularly after 1935, and should eventually reunite the activists and the negativists by 1938. Figure 2 summarizes these expectations.

The textual analysis uses the R package `quanteda` (Benoit et al.). In order to assess the varying presence of ethno-national discourse in parliamentary speeches over time, I define three dictionaries. The first one contains words that refer to ethnic identifiers such as 'nation', 'language', 'Czech', 'German', 'Sudeten', 'minority'. The second one contains economic identifiers, such as 'employee', 'worker', 'proletarian', 'capitalist', 'bourgeois', 'farmer', 'small owner'. The third contains references to the economy, such as 'employment', 'wage', 'tariff', 'finance', 'subsidy', 'finance', 'crisis', 'tax', 'market', 'economy', 'production', 'monopoly'. As all the parliamentary speeches are in Czech, I define these dictionaries in Czech, providing a summary in table 2.

The first analysis addresses the discourses of the activists and negativists, by comparing the proportion of words contained in these dictionaries in the parliamentary speeches. The analysis simply counts the share of each set of words over the total number of words in the speech. The results are presented graphically.

Figure 3 demonstrates the expected trend in references to ethnic group identity over the 18 years of democratic parliamentary life in the first Czechoslovak Republic. While at

First Name	Last Name	Party	Position
Josef	Bohr	DCSV	Parliam Club Speaker
Georg	Böllmann	BdL	Parliam Club Speaker
Heinrich	Brunar	DNP	Leader
Ludwig	Czech	DSAP	Leader
Eugen	de Witte	DSAP	Parliam Club Speaker
Karl Hermann	Frank	SdP	Dominant member
Wenzel	Jaksch	DSAP	Dominant member
Rudolf	Jung	DNSAP	Parliam Club Speaker
Josef	Keibl	DNP	Parliam Club Speaker
Hans	Knirsch	DNSAP	Dominant member
Hans	Krebs	DNSAP	Dominant member
Franz	Křepek	BdL	Leader
Ernst	Kundt	SdP	Parliam Club Speaker
Rudolf	Lodgmann	DNP	Dominant member
Felix	Luschka	DCSV	Parliam Club Speaker
Robert	Mayr-Harting	DCSV	Dominant member
Adolf	Pohl	DSAP	Parliam Club Speaker
Ernst	Schöllich	DNP	Parliam Club Speaker
Josef	Seliger	DSAP	Leader
Franz	Spina	BdL	Dominant member
Franz	Windirsch	BdL	Parliam Club Speaker
Erwin	Zajíček	DCSV	Dominant member

Table 1: Analyzed members of parliament

	Group Identity	Economic Identity	Economy
1	národ*	zaměstnan*	zaměstnanost
2	ras*	dělník*	zaměstnat
3	jazyk*	dělnic*	zaměstnal*
4	čech*	proleta*	zaměstná*
5	češi*	proletář*	mzd*
6	*češti*	živnostn*	mezd*
7	němec*	kapitalist*	clo
8	*němč*	buržoaz	cla
9	němc*	rolnic*	celní*
10	sudet*	rolník*	cel
11	menšin*		cena
12	minorit*		cen
13	naš* exist*		cenov*
14			kriz*
15			finan*
16			důchod*
17			kapitalism*
18			kapitál*
19			hospodář*
20			výrob*
21			daň*
22			trh*
23			trž*
24			monopol*

Table 2: Czech Dictionaries

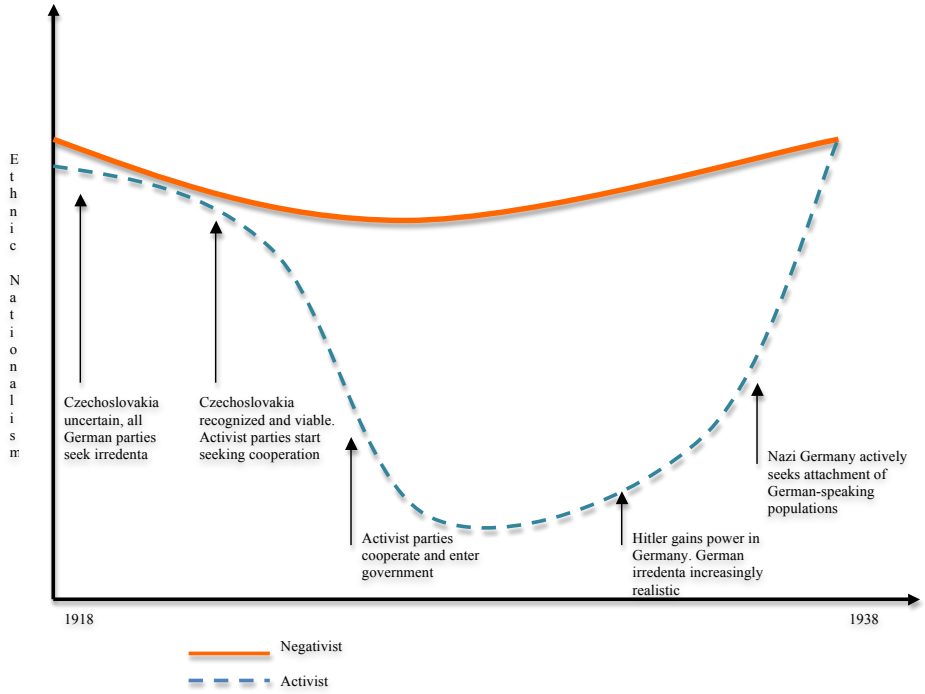


Figure 2: Expectations of Ethnic Behavior

the beginning activists and negativists stood close in their frequency of referring to group identifiers, this was significantly reduced after the activist parties entered government in 1926, while the negativists retain significant and increasing focus on group identity. The activists start reversing thier rhetoric around 1933, and particularly in 1935. By 1938 they are again approaching the negativists.

Figure 4 shows the share of words referring to the economy. It demonstrates that activist members generally speak of the economy significantly more than negativists, with an idiosyncratic exception of 1926. The difference between the activists and the negativists increases in the early 1930s and peaks during the hardest depression years of 1931 and 1932. After 1936 the activist references to the economy start to decline, likely as a reciprocal function of the rise of ethnic discourse demonstrated in figure 3.

The final two figures 5 and 6 consider the shares of group and economic identity refer-

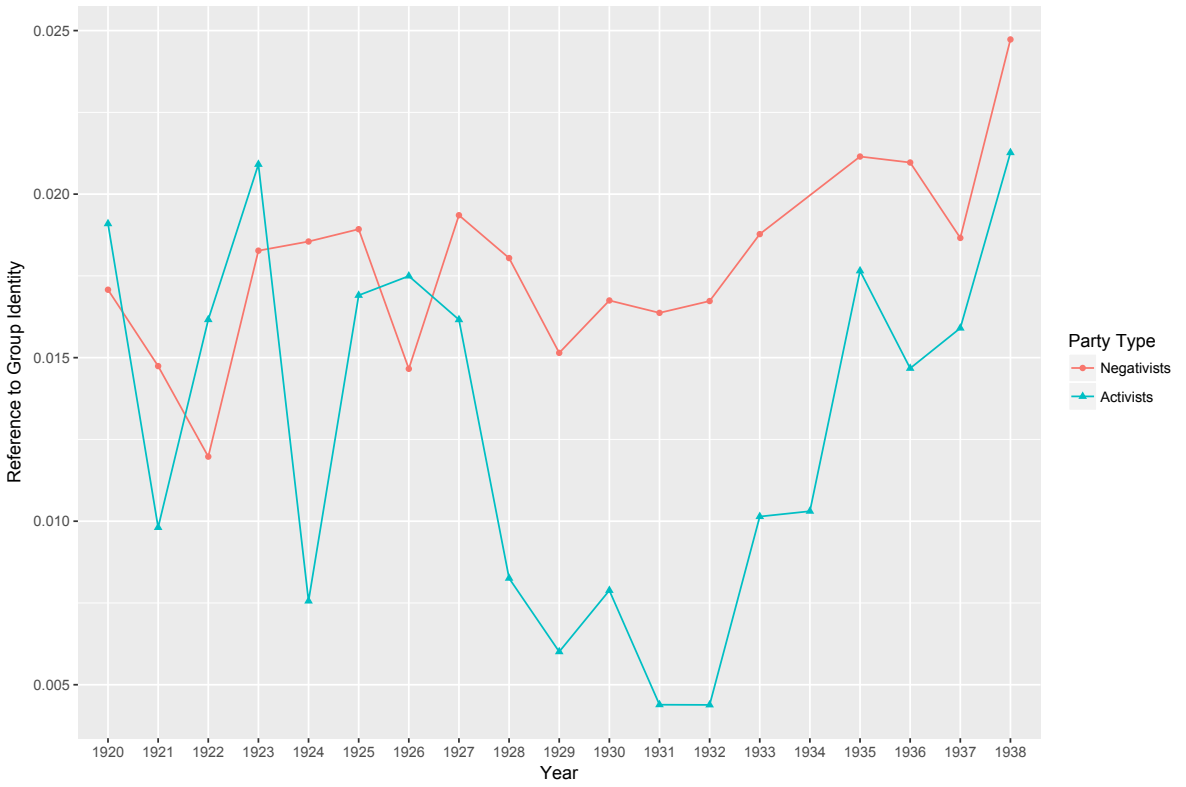


Figure 3: Share of mentions of group identity

ences of activists and negativists. The figures demonstrate that ethnic group identifiers are significantly more used than economic identifiers, however, it underscores the above-noted difference between the activists and the negativists. First, the activist share of economic identifier references is stable around 0.2%. It declines only after 1935. The negativist share of economic identifiers is significantly lower at an average of 0.14%. Interestingly, the negativists do not seem to react to the Great Depression by increasing their references to economic identity at all, while the activists record a peak in 1932. Second, the negativists have consistently higher, and increasing shares of references to ethnic group identity. On the contrary, activists, as expected, moderate their references to group identity in the second half of the 1920s. As the impact of the Great Depression peaks in 1931 and 1932, the activists speak about economic identify as much as about ethnic identity. This trend is then reversed starting in 1933.

While activists start out as similar to negativists in their reference to group identity, towards the late 1920s, and certainly by the time of the Great Depression, they turn

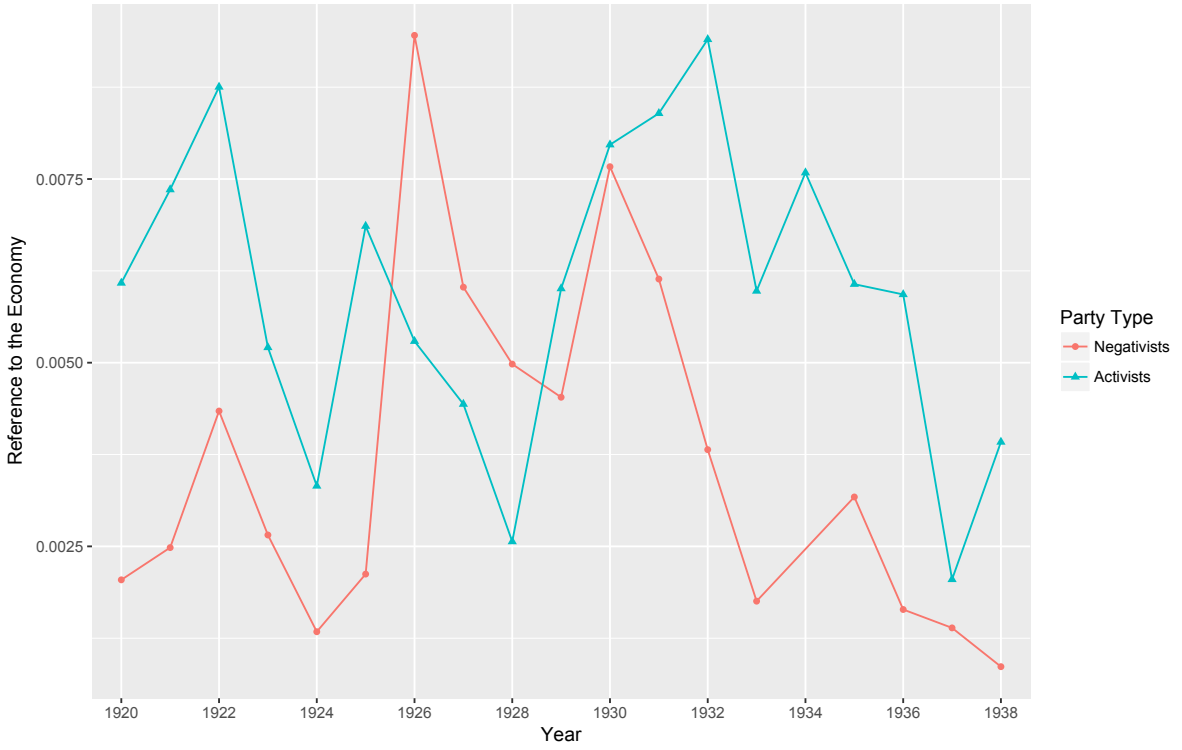


Figure 4: Share of mentions of the economy

to refer to economic as much as to ethnic identity. Simultaneously, they increase their references to the economy. This implies a growing focus on more practical, daily politics, rather than on the question of Sudeten group status in Czechoslovakia. The reversal sets in after 1933 as German Nazism comes to slowly redefine the position of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of Hitler's ascendence to power. This suggests that the activist turn away from ethnic politics and its subsequent u-turn are largely a function of the circumstantial position of the German minority in the state. The negativist camp is largely intransigent, despite its organizational change between 1933 and 1935. The negativists never moderate their extreme ethnic discourse which lies at the center of their political struggle. They merely escalate their ethnic references after 1933. While initially electorally marginal, the negativists come to dominate the Sudeten political scene after 1935, setting the Sudeten political tone to which the activists need to respond.

The following analysis finally turns to the full corpus of all speeches by Sudeten German representatives in the lower chamber of the four elected Czechoslovak Parliaments



Figure 5: Activist mentions of group and economic identity

between the years 1920 and 1938. This corpus contains a total of 1332 speeches by activists and 761 speeches by negativists. This analysis does not rely on any predefined dictionary, but rather compares the lexical differences between activist and negativist speeches over time by fitting a naive Bayesian model[6]. Logically, the more accurate the model is in separating the differences between the two groups, the more distinct they are. The simple expectation is that at the outset of the period, the two groups should demonstrate lower distinction, but this distinction should increase over time as the activists come to embrace cooperation within the Czechoslovak state, and join the government. After the rise of Nazism in Germany, and the erosion of activist politics in

[6]This analysis aggregates speeches to five-year periods starting with 1920-25, moving up by one year. Alternative time specifications lead to comparable results.

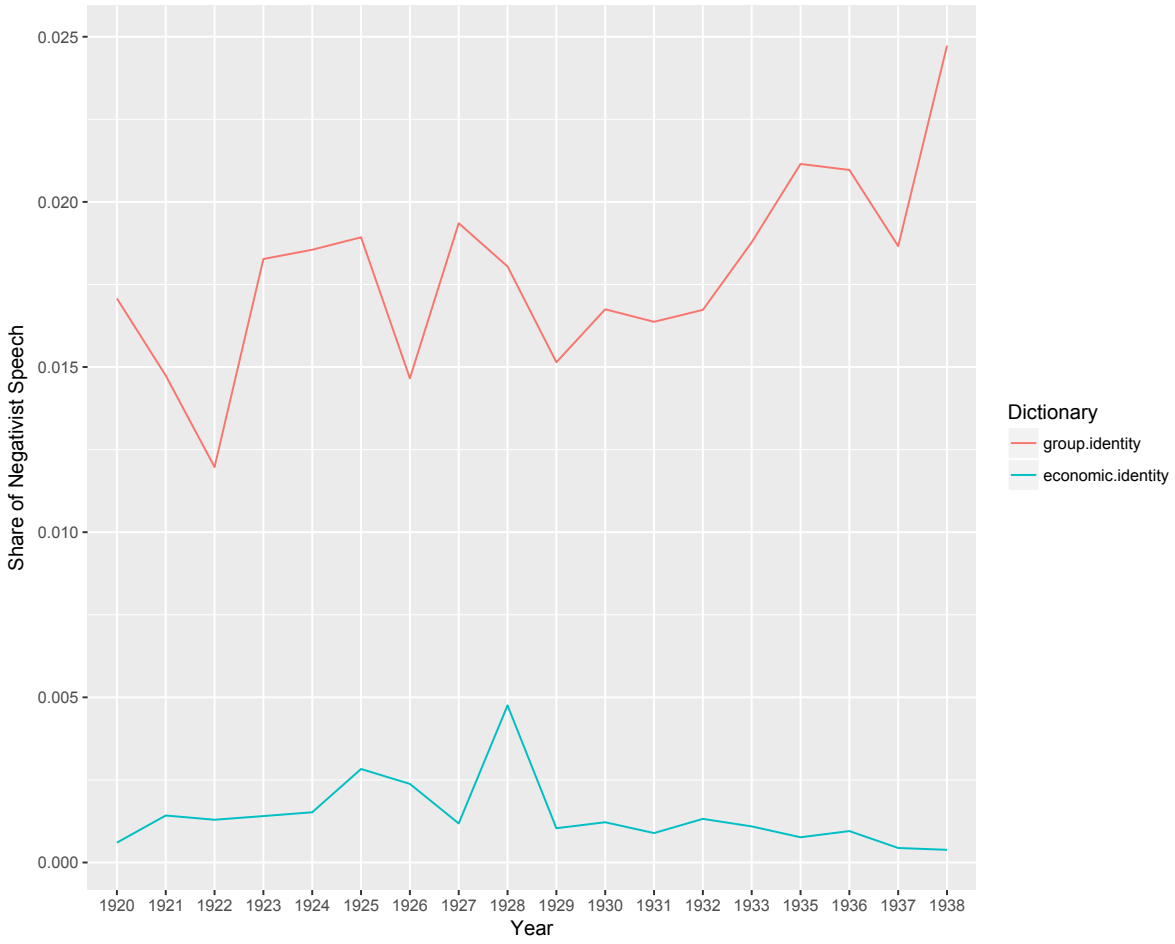


Figure 6: Negativist mentions of group and economic identity

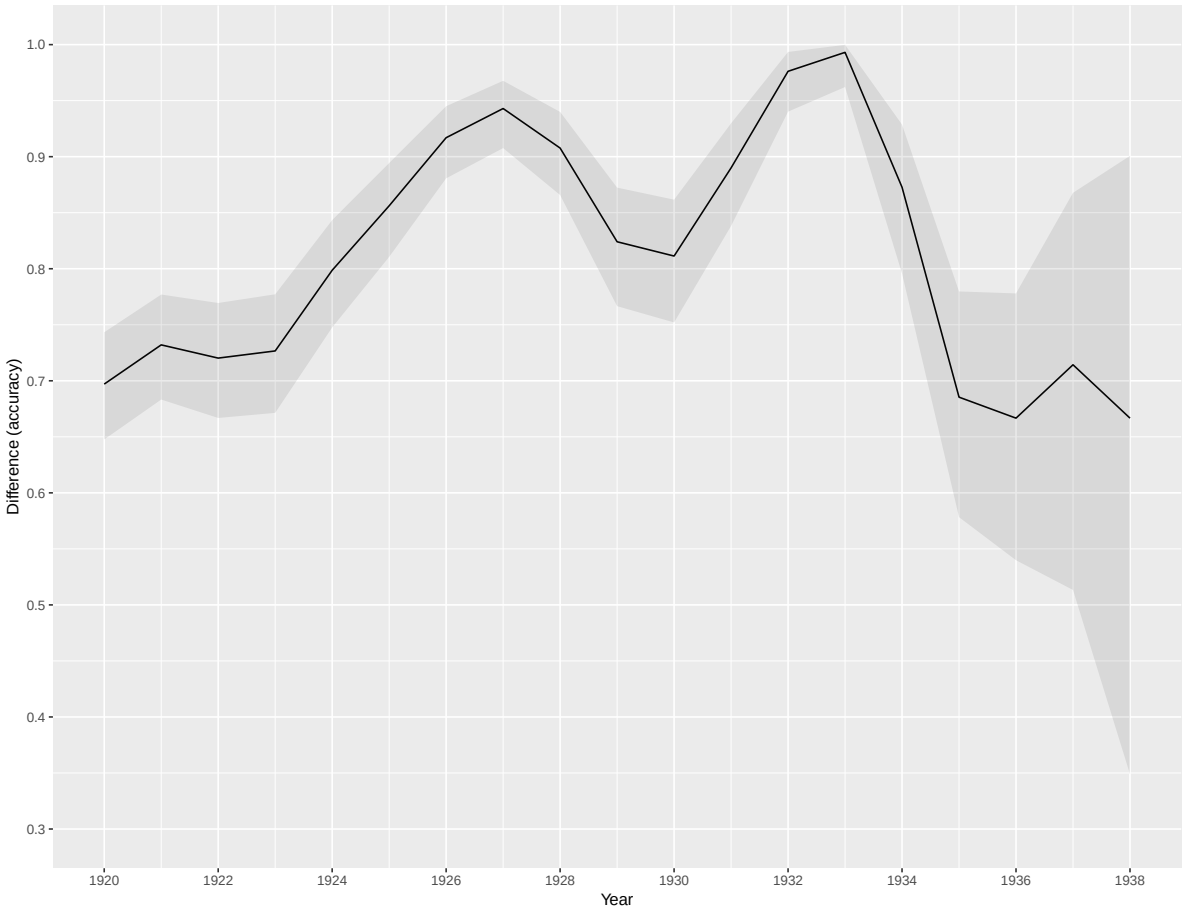


Figure 7: Lexical differences between activists and negativists over time

Czechoslovakia, the distinction between the two groups should decline.

Figure 7 summarizes the results, supporting the general expectations. While at the outset, the lexical differences between activist and negativist speech are moderate, they increase significantly in the second half of the 1920s. Interestingly, there seems to be a small reduction in this difference during the Great Depression years around 1929 and 1930, perhaps caused by increased discussion of economic topics, which made the speeches of the two groups more similar. However, in the early 1930s the distinction increases again, culminating around 1933. The following years see a notable decline in speech differences, returning to the levels of the early 1920s[7].

[7]Note that the increase in the size of the confidence intervals at the end of the time period is caused by lower number of speeches, as the final years cannot aggregate over a five-year period – the year 1934 aggregates only the years 1934-38, the year 1935 aggregates only the years 1935-38 and so on.

This purely inductive analysis of lexical differences supports the findings based on the simple identity dictionaries defined above. It demonstrates that activists and negativists distinctively parted ways by the mid 1920s, where the prior came to cooperate with the Czech majority, a cooperation that does not seem to have been hampered by the social and economic devastation of the Great Depression. It was only the ascendance of Nazism in Germany, and the subsequent electoral rise of the Sudetendeutsche Partei as the carrier of negativism in Czechoslovakia, that started to pressure and eventually erode the cooperative resolve of the activists.

Conclusion

This is not a story with a happy ending. After her dismemberment at Munich, the remaining areas of Czechoslovakia are neither economically viable, nor militarily defensible. The betrayal by western allies cripples the credibility of the Czechoslovak government. The remainder of the Czech lands is occupied by the Wehrmacht on March 15, 1939, sending the government into exile in London, and putting members of SdP leadership into prominent positions.

This paper suggests that the collapse of Czech-German collaboration which directly enabled Czechoslovakia's demise is crucially fuelled by the rise of Nazism in neighboring Germany. The extent to which Nazi ideology turns towards extra-territorial Germans and promises their inclusion in the new Reich, it undermines the position of the numerous moderate Sudeten elites seeking constructive ethnic coexistence. Indeed, when the Sudeten Germans accept – albeit reluctantly – their fate as ethnic minorities in Czechoslovakia, their dominant representatives turn away from ethnic discourse, and focus on productive work with and within the Czechoslovak government. This vital collaboration develops in the mid 1920s and continues well into the dark years of the Great Depression. The economic disaster that befalls Czechoslovakia like other industrialized countries in the early 1930s does not end Sudeten cooperation. On the contrary, Ludwig Czech, as the Czechoslovak minister of social work, tirelessly works towards improving the social situation, without regard for nationality or language. Only after 1933, when Hitler takes power in Germany, and paradoxically as the economic situation starts to stabilize, does ethnic collaboration between Czechs and Germans deteriorate. The electoral breakthrough of the SdP in 1935, in the immediate aftermath of the first transfer of extra-territorial Germans from Saarland to the Reich, shifts the internal power dynamic

in the Sudeten German camp, putting the collaborative activists on the defensive. As German Nazism grows in confidence and amplifies its calls for irredenta, the SdP escalates its demands, and the activists struggle to find a tone that would be heard by their co-ethnics. The Anschluss of Austria seals their fate.

This case exemplifies the circumstantial nature of ethnic preferences – a topic that is overlooked by the literature on both political preference formation, and on ethnic politics. It shows that while Sudeten Germans preferred to not belong to the Czechoslovak state, once this question was taken off the table by exogenous factors (peace conference, treaty with Austria, the Locarno process), the dominant minority representatives turned towards the search for ethnic group maintenance within the status quo. This leads to two developments. First, the vast majority of Sudeten German voters consistently support those parties that presented moderate cooperative solutions. Second, these elites seek inclusive policy changes, particularly in the areas of equitable access to native language schooling, to civil service jobs, and to government tenders. It is of course difficult to assess whether all of these ethnic requests are just, or whether they simply aim at re-establishing the primacy of the ethnic minority. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that, despite the details of the political give and take, the primary aim of the moderate ethnic elites is to make their group symbolically, as well as practically equal citizens and co-owners of state they live in. This goal, that in today's language may be labeled as 'multicultural,' is, however, not inherent to the the group, it is but an outcome of their current minority status. As circumstances change, political preferences change with them. As the possibility to escape from minority status becomes increasingly realistic, the cooperative moderates lose political support to the ethnic extremists who seek to redress ethnic grievances more radically – by ending the group's minority status. The moderates are torn between their original cooperative aims, and the radicalization of their group, struggling to adapt to the new discourse.

This is not a story with a happy ending. However, it is not a happy ending either for the Czechs, or for the Sudeten Germans. While Franz Spina, disillusioned with the failure of activism, dies shortly before Munich, Ludwig Czech fatefully refuses to leave the country and eventually perishes in a Nazi concentration camp during the war. Other Sudeten activists emigrate to the west, some founding settlements as far as western Canada. The SdP leadership joins the NSDAP and comes to serve the Führer through the atrocities of the Third Reich. After German capitulation, most leaders of negativist parties are captured, and those who do not commit suicide are executed. Between 1945 and 1946

some three million Sudeten Germans are 'transferred' from Sudetenland to neighboring Germany and Austria. This ends centuries of German presence in the Czech lands, making today's Czech Republic one of the most ethnically homogeneous societies in the world. Nonetheless, within this story without a happy ending is a lesson that ethnic collaboration is possible, and that it can be found even in less than auspicious places.

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