Ethnic Diversity, Democracy, and Electoral Extremism: Lessons from Interwar Poland and Czechoslovakia

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1 Introduction

The political elites of interwar Czechoslovakia and Poland confronted a central paradox. On the one hand, since they viewed their states as vehicles of national expression and survival, they sought to build unitary nation-states. On the other hand, this unitary ideal had to confront a deeply multicultural reality: over one third of the inhabitants of both countries were ethnically foreign. This multiculturalism should not be confused with the optimistic and benevolent liberal design of the present era in the developed West. It resulted, rather, from the imperial recognition of the limits of state power to effect cultural engineering. Historians generally acknowledge that the successor states of interwar Europe had little appreciation for these limits. The result was a mix of minorities policies, pursued with different intensity and combination at different times, that oscillated between assimilation, accommodation, and discrimination. It is not surprising therefore that the large minorities of both Czechoslovakia and Poland did not always embrace the new national states. On this much historians agree.

What remains unknown or at least disputed, however, is the precise nature of minority public opinion in Czechoslovakia and Poland, and the preferred mix of political strategies of various minorities for dealing with their new states. To take the most obvious example, suspicions about the political loyalty of Jews in Czechoslovakia and especially in Poland to the interwar republics, and their supposed role in supporting communist parties (and, after World War II, communist takeovers), has poisoned the relationship and led to assignations of collective guilt for the crimes of the 1930s and 1940s. The same can be said for the Ukrainians of Poland and Subcarpathian Rus, the Hungarians of Slovakia, and, of course, the Sudeten Germans. Until we have a solid understanding of the minority publics in these societies, it will be difficult to adjudicate these debates or potentially deconstruct the myths on which they are based. Czech, Slovak, and Polish national historiography, even when not “nationalist” or right wing, has largely viewed the minorities as disloyal and destabilizing. From this not very sophisticated or convincing perspective all minorities and their attitudes are lumped together in the same group. Communist historiography stressed the discrimination confronted by national minorities but never really came to grips with just how varied the potential responses to discrimination were. Historians in the West have been much more willing to problematize the issue of social and political identities in both countries and in recent years have generated fascinating local and case studies of identity politics. Yet, as plausible as these recent studies are, from the standpoint of social science they are not systematic (indeed, they do not intend to be).

The present study is intended to fill in part of that gap in our knowledge. It is a work of history using the methods of modern political science. It is of course always hazardous to assess attitudes and political strategies of large groups of people. One good (though by no means perfect) venue for doing this is elections. During elections citizens have the opportunity to boil down their preferences to their most raw form and cast their ballots if not for the party they like the most, then at least for the party they dislike the least. Interwar Czechoslovakia, by the standards of the day, was a solid democracy. Four national elections occurred in: 1920, 1925,
1929, and 1935. Most students of the era consider them to be free and fair, even if in the Eastern part of the country there was a modest amount of administrative pressure applied to the minority population. Poland’s second republic, by contrast, is normally considered to be a failed democracy. After one fair nation-wide election in 1922, a series of unstable parliamentary coalitions led to Marshall Pilsudski’s coup d’etat in 1926. Yet, even after the coup, Poland would hold one more election that is extremely useful for gauging ethnic minority opinion and political strategies, in 1928, when Pilsudski attempted to gain a parliamentary majority for his pro-government Bezpartyjny Blok w Wspolpracy z Rzadem (Non-Party Bloc for Cooperation with the Government—or BBWR). This election is also generally considered to have been conducted freely and fairly despite more than a modest amount of administrative pressure during the campaign and the disqualification of thousands of votes in the Eastern part of the country. Even with these caveats, the best evidence that the election is still a useful one for analysis is that Pilsudski was not able to gain a majority for the BBWR; this would have to await the fully “managed” elections of 1930.

How could the various ethnic groups respond to the stringent minorities regimes in both Czechoslovakia and Poland? What was the range of possible political reactions to accommodation, assimilation, and discrimination? A useful framework remains Albert Hirschman’s “Exit, Voice, and Loyalty.” Faced with a poorly performing state (or firm), Hirschman maintained, dissatisfied citizens (or consumers) first may choose to “defect” or “exit” from the existing order altogether. In our adaptation of this notion, exit would be a move away from democratic politics into anti-system or revolutionary politics of either the left or right (or, possibly, non-participation). A second modal response is the articulation of dissatisfaction within the existing democratic order through ethnonational “voice.” In this case, voters would cast their ballot and voice their dissatisfaction by way of ethnic parties that attempt to remedy the situation by way of parliamentary power. A third option for dissatisfied ethnic groups is suggested by Hirschman’s concept of “loyalty.” Under certain circumstances ethnic groups (or parts of groups) may choose to politically assimilate by casting their ballots for non-ethnic parties that offer either protection or a path for inclusion that remains short of abandoning group identity altogether. We expect that the very different historical conditions in which the Jewish and other ethnic minority groups entered the new Czechoslovak and Polish states, the kinds of policies that they confronted, and their life chances within the new order profoundly affected their political attitudes and dominant strategies. The challenge is to specify how.

In what follows, we use a unique data set to analyze the ethnic minority vote in four elections: 1929 and 1935 in Czechoslovakia and 1922 and 1928 in Poland. In all of these elections a large range of democratic and non-democratic, as well as ethnic, non-ethnic, and multiethnic parties, competed for office. Our purpose is to identify the political preferences and strategies of both countries’ minority populations, concentrating especially on the Jewish populations, and offer plausible explanations for the trends that we identify. Neither of these tasks is easy. For one thing, even in the era of mass surveys and floods of individual level data, reported preferences are frequently falsified. This is especially true regarding issues of race,
ethnicity, and religion. In the interwar period, the problem is made even more complicated by the absence of representative public opinion surveys. Exit polling had not yet been invented. This leaves the historical researcher with no choice but to rely on actual election results and census data. Although this method removes the element of self reporting (and therefore preference falsification), it is dependent upon the quality of historical statistics. If either the election or census materials fail to mirror the underlying reality, then any analysis based upon them will be flawed. Even more important, however, inferring the behavior of individual ethnic groups from aggregate level data is packed full of pitfalls. To do it accurately requires the use of methods that have only recently been developed (and which are discussed in detail below). We make no pretension to a full account of Jewish public opinion or the public opinion and strategies of other ethnic groups. What can be accomplished, however, is a much more accurate rendering of the mass political voice than has been possible to date.

We proceed in three stages. First by way of historical background to these elections and the societies in which they occurred, we discuss the nature and limitations of the census and electoral data. We then turn to an analysis of the vote broken down by ethnic group using graphical and statistical techniques. In the final part of the paper we attempt to explain these patterns. To preface the results: it makes little sense to speak of a homogenous minority vote in either country. The Jewish vote in areas where significant numbers of Jews resided in Czechoslovakia was highly diverse but displays the predominant strategy of political assimilationist loyalty. In Poland on the other hand, the trend over time was for Jews to remain isolated in ethnonational electoral ghettos with a small trend over time of political assimilation. In neither case did Jews constitute a large reservoir of voters for the extreme left (and certainly not for the extreme right). An interesting question, of course, concerns the relationship between ethnic minority status more generally and extremist or anti-democratic politics. How large was the constituency for anti-democratic politics among the Ukrainians, Belarusans, and Germans of Poland and the Hungarians, Ruthenians, and Germans of Czechoslovakia? Using our data, we are able to assess these questions as well, and in doing so we will be able to better situate Jewish political behavior in the multiethnic context of interwar East-Central Europe.

2 Interwar Czechoslovakia and Poland: Censuses and Elections

Czechoslovakia emerged from remnants of Austrian and Hungarian halves of the Habsburg empire and Poland came into existence from parts of the three collapsed empires, the Habsburg, the German and the Russian. Creating a sense of one nation, even among Poles would not be easy, as Galicia, West Prussia, and Congress and Eastern Poland had all lived for 150 years under very different political regimes. In Czechoslovakia, of course, the bond between Czechs and Slovaks was even more tenuous, as each had inhabited very different parts of the Hapsburg Empire. Divisions over administrative control, the place of religion in society, and the kinds
of policies appropriate for overcoming the formidable regional economic disparities between the highly industrialized Czech lands and the backward and agrarian areas of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus plagued the first Czechoslovak republic from the beginning of its existence until its end on the eve of World War II. In recognition of the historically very different origins of the regions in both cases, statistics were collected not only for smaller administrative units but also divided up along the larger historical boundaries. Thus Czechoslovak census and electoral data was reported and even published in volumes that were categorized as Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and Subcarpathian Rus. Even the Poles recognized the continued importance of the divisions of the country into “West” (Prussian Poland), “South” (Eastern Galicia or Habsburg Poland), “Central” (Congress Poland) and “East” (Kresy or the Eastern Territories). This breakdown of all data into regions is highly useful for performing regional analyses which in any case are necessary in countries with such pronounced regional variation. In both countries the data is further broken down to the district and municipality/commune level. It is on this latter unit that we will focus our attention in the analysis that follows.

Even more troubling for the new nation-builders than divisions among the titular nation was the presence of sizable minority populations. In both Czechoslovakia, Czechs and Slovaks constituted just over two thirds of the population. In Poland, Poles also made up just over two thirds. According to the 1921 census, in Poland Jews made up a large ethnic minority (between 8 and 11 percent depending on how one counts them). They were highly dispersed throughout country (but predominantly urban), with few living in the formerly Prussian areas but close to three million living in Central and Eastern Poland as well as Galicia. Germans were also a dispersed (though not nearly as dispersed as Jews) if much smaller minority, making up approximately four percent of the total population. The Ukrainians and Belarusians were highly concentrated ethnic minorities living primarily in Galician and in the East. Approximately 15 percent of Poles were classified as Ukrainians and 4 percent as Belarusians.

It is at this point, however, where the historians begin to ask serious questions. The Polish census of 1921 was conducted under with haste in unfavorable conditions and by a highly inexperienced bureaucracy. Some historians maintain that for political reasons Ukrainians were systematically undercounted in the census.\footnote{Jerzy Tomaszewski, \textit{Rzeczpospolia Wielu Narodow}, [Republic of Many Nations] (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1985); Zbigniew Landau and Jerzy Tomaszewski, \textit{Rabotniczy Przemyslowi w Polsce: Materialne Warunki Bytu 1918-1939} [Industrial Workers in Poland: Material Conditions of Life, 1918-1939] (Warsaw: Ksazka i Wiedza, 1971).} Polish census takers asked respondents both for their nationality and religion. When one adds up the number of Ukrainains and Belarusians, the number is significantly less than the combined number of Uniates (Greek Catholics, the religion of almost all Ukrainians in Galicia) and Orthodox (the religion of Ukrainians and Belarusians in the East). The solution proposed by Jerzy Tomaszewski the use of religion data to infer ethnic composition. This is the solution we adopt in this paper for Poland. But it should be noted that this is a less than optimal solution. For one thing, other historians who maintain that the 1921 census was basically a good study and the
nationalities data is still useful. For another, using religion data to infer nationality creates problems of distinguishing between the Ukrainians and Belarusians of the Eastern Territories. Finally, and most important, it is quite possible that in 1921 identities were more fluid than raw census categories can hope to capture. Belarusian peasants may have had little consciousness of being Belarusian or could be convinced with very little effort that they were in fact Poles of the Christian Orthodox faith.

In the case of the Jews, for example, Figure 1 shows scatterplots of the relationship between declarations of Jewish religion and Jewish nationality, across three regions. Each dot represents a settlement. (We exclude the West as there were too few registered Jews.) First, note the diagonal that runs from lower left to the upper right of each panel. This 45 degree line represents a situation in which all who declare themselves to be Jews religiously also declare their nationality as Jews. Deviations from this line indicate areas where some who declared themselves as religious declared a different nationality (points below the diagonal) and those declared themselves Jewish nationality did not declare themselves as religiously Jews (points above the diagonal). Since there are no dots above the diagonal, but many below, it is clear that many who declared their religion as Jewish were not declaring Jewish nationality. In most cases the declared nationality was probably Polish. Second, there are interesting regional differences. In the East we see that with few exceptions Jews declared themselves both religiously and ethnically Jewish; in Central and even more so Southern Poland, however, it is clear that many Jews were declaring themselves to be Poles. This provides some evidence for the oft-mentioned differences in levels of modernization between the Russian and Hapsburg empires. It cannot be accidental that Jews in the formerly Russian East were the least assimilated, whereas those in the relatively advanced former Hapsburg lands in the South had begun declaring a non-Jewish national identity. This deserves much further investigation.

In the analysis that follows, for the sake of simplicity and maximizing the number of potential minorities in interwar Poland’s population, we use religion data to infer nationality, fully aware of all the pitfalls that are attendant with such a usage. Unfortunately we are unable to make use of Poland’s 1931 census because the data was never published at the village level and cannot therefore be matched with the electoral returns.

Czechoslovakia’s censuses also reflected the complexities of its multicultural society. The most obvious peculiarity of its census was the amalgamation of Czechs and Slovaks into one category (“Czechoslovaks”) for purposes of enumeration. Of course the real reason behind this was all too obvious to observers at the time: if counted separately it would quickly become apparent that more Germans resided in Czechoslovakia than Slovaks. The Germans lived throughout the country but were highly concentrated (constituting overwhelming majorities) in the Sudetenland, compromising approximately 23 percent of the total population of the country. The Jews of Czechoslovakia were of course a much smaller minority (approximately

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Figure 1: Regional Jewish Population by Religion and Nationality. The dots in each panel represent settlements. We exclude the western region because there are too few registered Jews.

350,000) than they were in Poland but in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus they constituted much larger percentages of the local communities. In Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus there also lived a large and deeply dissatisfied Hungarian minority of approximately 700,000 inhabitants. Both at the time and today, Hungarian scholars have disputed the reported census numbers. But their arguments have much more to do with procedures than reported outcomes. In any case, the dispute is more over tens than hundreds of thousands.4

Since the essence of our method is to match census with electoral data, a discussion of how the data is structured is in order. Both the Czechoslovak census and electoral data are more detailed and complete than the Polish data. In total, we have complete census data on religion, nationality, and total inhabitants for over 15,000 settlements in the country. These data have been matched with electoral returns, providing us with what by any standards is a very large data set for analysis. The structure of the Polish data makes it far more cumbersome to use. The 1921 census was published in fifteen volumes, one for each voivodship. The volume on Wilno was never published. Even more difficult, however, is that a large number of rural estate settlements (obszary dworskie) cannot be matched up with electoral data which was not disaggregated for settlements of less than 500

inhabitants. In total, settlements in the 1921 census that can be matched with the 
1922 and 1928 electoral results reduces the total population considered in our our 
analysis by approximately one third. It is less serious for considering Jewish voting 
behavior because the unmatched gminas are primarily in rural areas where the vast 
majority of Jews did not live. Overall, however, the data set is still very large and 
representative of the country as a whole. It provides an unprecedented view of the 
ethnic makeup of Poland’s two nation-wide free and fair elections during the 1920s.

The electoral rules in both countries were largely proportional. This led to a 
plethora of class, ethnic, and regionally based parties, more than twenty in Czechoslo-
vakia and more than 30 in Poland. Since many of the parties ran on similar plat-
forms and since what we are interested in here is the nature of the ethnic vote, it 
makes sense (and indeed the number of parties requires us) to group the parties into 
“blocs.” In what follows we discuss the nature of the blocs we use and situate the 
blocs within the conduct of the four elections in our study.

Czechoslovakia’s party system was a product of pre-independence politics and 
also the dominant ethnic cleavages in the new republic itself. Czechoslovakia con-
ducted four free and fair national elections before its collapse on the eve of World 
War II: 1920, 1925, 1929, and 1935. By 1929 the party spectrum was fully spread 
from the revolutionary left to the fascist right with a full range of parties in between. 
The data for these elections were published in volumes corresponding to electoral 
districts and the data is further broken down to the district and municipality (obec) 
level.

Czechoslovakia political left had been deeply affected by both the creation of the 
Czechoslovak state and the revolutionary events in Russia. By 1925 the left had split 
into a revolutionary communist left that cleaved closely to the third international 
line coming out of Moscow and a social democratic party that attempted to capture 
the non-revolutionary left, while at the same time appealing to Czech and Slovak 
nationals. German social democrats also ran on a separate list. Among the German 
parties, in addition to the Social Democrats, there were several bourgeois parties 
and, of course, by 1929 the pro-Nazi party led by Konrad Henlein that achieved such 
spectacular success in 1935. In Slovakia, the largest pro-Slovak party was the Slovak 
People’s party led by the charismatic Andrej Hlinka. For the purposes of our analysis 
of the 1929 and 1935 elections, we have grouped the parties into seven categories as 
either communist, non-nazi German ethnic, Hlinka, nazi, Czechoslovak republican, 
and other. Although this grouping does not do justice to the great diversity of rural 
and urban based Czech and Slovak parties, as well as the significant split between 
pro and anti Hrad parties, the point of the these blocs is to highlight the extent to 
which Czechoslovakia’s ethnic groups were gravitating towards the loyalist response 
of political assimilation, the voice option of ethnonational parties, or the exit option 
of revolutionary politics of the left and right. It should be noted that although 
the blocs remain the same between the two elections, the meaning of the blocs does 
change somewhat. The most important change that took place concerned what we 
call the Hlinka bloc. Although the Hlinka’s Slovak People’s party had been eager 
to participate in government during the mid-1920s, by the time of the 1935 election, 
it was clearly anti-system, favored the breakup of the Czechoslovak state, and had 
made an alliance with other “autonomist” groupings in Slovakia and Ruthenia. The
communists, on the other hand, although still revolutionary in orientation, by 1935 were no longer dead set on the breakup of the Czechoslovak state. Nevertheless, the blocs remain accurate reflections of the main ethnic currents in Czechoslovak electoral politics. The parties within each party bloc are shown below.\textsuperscript{5}

**Communist 1929:** List 1-Communists


**German 1929:** List 3-Nemeckeho volebniho spolecenstvi, List 4-Nemecke socialne-demokraticke strany delnicke, List 6-Nemecke narodni strany a sudetsko-nemeckeho zemedelskeho svazu, List 17-Nemecke krest’ansko-socialni strany lidove a nemecke strany zivnostenske

**German Nazi 1929:** List19-Nemecke narodne-socialisticke strany delnicke

**Other ethnic 1929:** List 2-Zemske krest’ansko-socialni, madarske narodni a spissko-nemecke strany, List 5-Volebniho sdruzeni polskych stran a zidovskych stran

**Hlinka 1929:** List 18-Hlinklovy slovenske ludove strany

**Communist 1935:** List 4-Communists,

**Republican 1935:** List 1-Republicans, List 2-Czechoslovak social democracy, List 3-Czech national socialists, List 5-Czech people’s party (Sramek), List 10-Cs Zivn obch

**German 1935:** List 6-German social democrats, List 8-Bund der Landeswirte, List 9-German Christian Socialists

**Czechoslovak fascists 1935:** Narodni obec fasist

**Hlinka 1935:** List 7-Aut. blok (Hlinka)

**Henlein 1935:** List 12-SDP

**Hungarian 1935:** Kraj krest’ soc. mad’ n. a Wahlblock

Interwar Poland held three national elections that can pass the minimal test for being free and fair. The 1919 election took place only in Congress Poland and parts of Galicia and although they have much to tell us about the Jewish vote, they tell

us almost nothing about the vote in the Eastern Territories and in Eastern Galicia where the bulk of Poland’s minorities lived. For the purposes of the following analysis, we ignore the 1919 results. The 1922 election took place before the eastern borders of the country were completely settled in the minds of many Ukrainians and while the question of Silesia remained open. The electoral system, based on a modified system of proportional representation, made it relatively easy for small regional parties to gain entry to the lower hose, the Sejm. As a consequence many different ethnic and regional parties contested the election. At least four ethnic Ukrainian parties and several ethnic Jewish parties competed, and these were complemented by a plethora of regional, class based, and multi-ethnic parties. Because there were so many parties, and many of these had ideologically similar profiles, we simplify the analyses by grouping the parties into blocs. Despite strong evidence that the Galician Ukrainians boycotted the election, scholars consider this election to be generally free and fair. The results certainly reflect the very diverse political makeup of the new state. The minorities parties, led by the Blok Mniejszosci Nordowych (Bloc of National Minorities), received 16 percent of the popular vote, for a total of 89 out of 444 parliamentary seats. The Communist party received a modest 1.4 percent of the vote, while the nonrevolutionary left, dominated by the Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (Polish Socialist Party or PPS) and the agrarian Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe-Wyzwolenie (Liberation Party), garnered nearly 24 percent of the vote. The political center consisting mainly of the Partia Centrum and the Narodowa Partia Robotnicz (National Workers Party), received roughly 5.4 percent of the vote. The right dominated in the cities by the Crzescijanski-Zwiazek Jednosci Narodowej (Christian Alliance of National Unity), which included the National Democrats, Christian Democrats, and the Christian National Party, won a plurality of roughly 30 percent and was the only political grouping to win significant support in every region of the country. In rural areas, the center-right agrarian Piast party performed reasonably well, winning just over 13 percent. Together the urban and rural right were the only viable parliamentary coalition before 1926.

Poland’s political institutions exacerbated the polarized politics that emerged during the 1922 election campaign. The constitution of March 1921, drafted primarily by anti-Pilsudski forces on the right, established a weak presidency and a strong parliament. The electoral rules were strongly proportional, with larger parties benefiting marginally from extra seats apportioned to “national lists.” The results of this system of transforming votes into seats was a highly fragmented body that could not easily form a stable majority.

Perhaps the thorniest issue in coalition politics was the legislative strength of the parties representing national minorities that had been elected as part of the Bloc of National Minorities. “Polish” parties, for their part, refused to form a government with any club of minority members of parliament, and in fact there was not to be one non-Polish cabinet minister in interwar Poland. The exclusion of minority deputies from policy making, however, meant that the implementation of the Minorities Treaty would be left solely in the hands of ethnically Polish politicians. The result was a less than adequate protection of cultural and educational rights for the country’s Germans, Ukrainians, Belarusans, and Jews. It was only natural then that Soviet propaganda during the 1920s should try to convince Belarusans,
Ukrainians, and Jews (just as German propaganda was aimed at Poland’s German population) that their national aspirations could be better realized and their cultures better protected in the union republics across the Soviet frontier.

The fragmentation of the party system combined with the exclusion of the national minorities from government ultimately led to economic mismanagement and corruption. In March 1926 amid growing discontent and the prospect of a right wing majority returning to power in the parliament, Jozef Pilsudski and his supporters staged a coup d’etat. Even after the seizure of power, however, Pilsudski was not ready to break with democratic institutions altogether. In 1928 Poland’s second parliamentary elections were held. Pilsudski wanted elections in order to gain a parliamentary majority for his pro-government bloc. The vote took place under the watchful eye of the state; nevertheless, by the standards of the day, the election was, for the most part, fair. Only in a few of the eastern provinces were large numbers of votes invalidated by zealous local authorities. These were, it appears, primarily the ballots of Belarusan and Ukrainian communist voters. In the end, communist parties probably received 10 percent of the vote nationally, with this number reduced through administrative measures to 7.5 percent. Evidence of the relative fairness of these elections is that Pilsudski’s pro-government bloc received just over 21 percent of the vote and under 30 percent of parliamentary seats. Pilsudski’s main nemesis, the parliamentary right, received nearly 9 percent of the vote. Pilsudski was not able to obtain a parliamentary majority until the completely “managed” elections of 1930. In short, even with its problems, the semi-free election of 1928 still allows to evaluate the political preferences of Poland’s interwar minorities and permits us to evaluate the evolution of the loyalties over a crucial period of the country’s history.

The electoral data for the 1922 and 1928 Sejm elections was published in two separate volumes. For each one the data is broken down first into 64 electoral districts, then into powiats, and finally into settlements. Importantly, the number of votes and the number of disqualified ballots is recorded, which can assist us in pinpointing the location of administrative pressure in the 1928 election. This data can also yield important information on turnout. Larger settlements for each can be easily matched with census materials, but, as noted, since data was published only on settlements with more than 500 inhabitants, the full match data set is smaller than it would be if the electoral data were recorded down to the smallest settlement units.

The main methodological and theoretical issue for dealing with the Polish electoral data is how to group the parties into blocs. As noted, Poland’s system of proportional representation generated a large number of parties—22 state lists and dozens of regional lists for the 1922 election and 26 state lists and several dozen regional parties for the 1928 election. With so many parties, analysis necessitates grouping them into blocs. For the 1922 elections, historians agree that the party orientations can be classified as either right, center, non-revolutionary left, ethnic, and communist. For the 1928 election, historians agree that it makes sense to group the

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parties as either Pilsudskist (pro-government), Right, Center, Non-Revolutionary Left, Revolutionary Left, and Ethnic. A large number of small regional lists that received very few votes cannot be classified, and so are left in our analysis as “other.” The blocs for the two elections are shown in table two:

**Communist 1922:** Communist lists.

**Non-revolutionary left 1922:** Wyzwolenie (Liberation), PPS (Polish Socialist Party), Peoples’ Councils, Peasant Party-Left Wing, Radical Peasant Party

**Minorities 1922:** Bloc of national minorities, East Galician Zionists, West Galician Zionists, Jewish populists, Chliborobi (pro-Polish Ukrainians), Bund, Poala Zion

**Center 1922:** Polish Center, Bourgeois Center, National Party of Labor

**Right 1922:** Christian Alliance of National Unity, National-State Union, State Alliance of the Kresy, Piast

**Communist 1928:** Communist List, Peasants’ Self Help, White Russian Pro-Communists, Sel-Rob, Sel-Rob Left, Ukrainian Party of Labor

**Non-revolutionary Left 1928:** PPS (Polish Socialist Party), Wyzwolenie (Liberation), Stronnictwo Chlopskie

**Center 1928:** National Party of Labor

**Pro-Government 1928:** BBWR (Pilsudski), Catholic Union of Western Areas, National-State Bloc of Labor & Monarchists, Peasant Association

**Right 1928:** Piast and Christian Democrats, Catholic-National List (Endeks), Monarchists

Historians disagree on a number of issues, however, and offer little guidance on other important questions. First, although the existence of a political right in interwar Poland is undisputed and the inclusion of the National Democrats and Christian Democrats in this bloc is also something that scholars agree upon, there is less agreement on whether the agrarian Piast party that was strong especially in Galicia should also be categorized as right or center-right (as advocated by Rothschild and Kowalski) or as centrist (as by Polonsky and Roszkowski). The question is not an easy one and makes a large difference in how one evaluates the performance of the right. For example, in a “narrow” conception of the right, in which the Piast is left out, in Galicia in the 1922 elections the right received more than 15 percent in half of all settlements. If the Piast is included as part of the right, however, in Galicia in half of all settlements it received more than 63 percent of the vote.

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7 For an excellent treatment of interwar Poland’s party platforms on a range of socio-economic and ethnic issues, as well as excerpts of the party platforms themselves, see Alicja Beleikowska, Stronnictwa i związki polityczne w Polsce: charakterystyki, dane historyczne, programy, rezolucje, organizacje partynne, [Political Parties and Associations in Poland: Characteristics, Historical Data, Programs, Resolutions, and Party Organizations] (Warsaw: Ak. Dom Ksazki Polskiej, 1925)
We believe it makes sense to take an expanded view of the right and include the Piast party in the bloc. For one thing, since the National Democrats were weak in Galicia, the right part of the spectrum was occupied by the Piast. For Galicia, the right consisted primarily of the Piast. Second, an analysis of its party platform reveals positions on the ethnic minorities that are not easily distinguishable from the more extremist National Democrats. Finally, there is the retrospective point that the Piast participated in government as a coalition partner with the National Democrats until the coup. Pilsudski certainly viewed the Piast leader Witos as a member of the right and imprisoned him under terrible conditions in 1930.

A second and equally difficult question concerns the status of the Bloc of National Minorities, which ran as a party in 1922 and received 16 percent of the vote in 1922 and 12.8 percent in 1928. On the surface it appears to be a multi-ethnic party. But it’s behavior does not fully support this assessment. This Bloc of National Minorities ran as a marriage of convenience between German, Jewish, Ukrainian, and Belarusian parties. Immediately after the election, it broke up into ethnic parliamentary clubs whose members did not always cooperate with (and frequently competed against) each other. What are we to make of this? From the standpoint of the ethnic minority voter and from the ordinary Pole, the Bloc was clearly an ethnic party, set up to support ethnic interests. But from the standpoint of other ethnic parties, especially those that did not join the bloc, it seems to be truly multi-ethnic. For purposes of simplicity, we group it together with the other ethnic parties because our purpose here is to evaluate the changing loyalties of Poland’s minorities and not to evaluate per se the conditions under which ethnic versus multi-ethnic parties thrive, although clearly Poland’s party system is amenable to answering this question–as shown by the number of parties that defected from the Bloc in 1928–something we leave for future papers.

A third question concerns the communist parties. In interwar Poland, the communist party was illegal. It nonetheless ran under a number of names that were easy for voters to identify, usually some variation of “workers and peasants” in its name. Although the communist party received only 1.5 percent of the vote in the 1922 election, in 1928 it received 2.5 percent of the vote. However, a large number of regional and local communist, ethno-communist, and pro-Soviet parties mushroomed in time for the 1928 election and when taken together they received 8 percent of the vote, a total that most historians argue would probably have reached closer to 10 percent had a large number of ballots not been invalidated in the Eastern Territories. Rothscld groups most (though not all) of these parties as “ethnic,” whereas Polishsky groups them as “Communist and Pro-Communist.” Polish historians remain agnostic on this question, mostly because serious analysis of the communist party was precluded under the communist regime and the question of the political loyalty of interwar Poland’s minorities has yet to be addressed. It appears, however, based on the platforms of these parties (for example, the Ukrainian Party of Labor–see Encyclopedia of Ukraine) and based on their willingness and desire of most to adopt communist party names with ethnic suffixes that the elites of these parties were at least pro-Soviet and most likely had made the decision to cast their lot with the world communist project emanating from just over the border in the Soviet Union in the hope that they would fine followers among their co-ethnics who had grown
weary of the thin gruel of assimilation and discrimination that was Polish minorities policy. Given the large range of moderate ethnic parties that competed in 1928, a vote for any of the ethno-communist parties was most likely a leap out of ethnic political “voice” per se and into anti-system “exit.”

## 3 Methods of Analysis

Our goal is to estimate the proportion of a social group voting for a particular party (or group of parties). Since there were no surveys during the period under consideration, it is necessary to rely upon indirect estimation using census and electoral data. This poses a statistical problem. Our ultimate quantity of interest is an *unobserved* quantity: the proportion of a group voting for a party. However, we observe only the aggregate geographic distribution of the social group and the electoral results. We will employ a variety of methods to make inferences from the aggregate data.

One is graphical data analysis. The advantage of this method is that it imposes no statistical assumptions. As will become clear below, quite a lot of information can be learned from a visual inspection of the data. By examining municipalities that are homogeneously minority, for example, it is possible to make direct inferences about which parties a particular group supported. We will use this to reconstruct the voting behavior of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia. Considering areas where there are no minorities, by contrast, allows us to absolve the minorities from responsibility for whatever parties get elected in those areas. This logic will be used to show that the Jews could not have been major supporters of communist parties in Poland.

There is a limit, however, to the usefulness of such aggregate analysis. The ecological fallacy prevents us in most cases from “reading off” our actual quantity of interest from the raw census and electoral data. We employ Rosen et al.’s ecological inference model (hereafter, EI) to estimate who voted for whom. The goal is to estimate the percentage of a given social group that supported a given party or bloc of parties using only census data on social group membership and electoral data on the number of voters for that party or bloc.

The advantage of this ecological inference approach is that it combines deterministic information about the possible values of the quantity of interest with a statistical model of what the most likely values of that quantity are within that range of possibilities. EI first computes deterministic bounds on the possible values of the quantity of interest using only the census and electoral data, without statistical assumptions. In other words, for each unit in the sample, if formalizes the kind of non-statistical information discussed above. For example, if there were a municipality that had 90 percent Jews, and the communist party only received 5 percent of the vote, then we know that at most 5.5 percent (5/90) of the Jews there could have voted communist, and possibility none at all (if the non-Jews in the settlement all supported the communists). That is, the range of possible Jewish support for the communists is 

\[0, 5.5\]  
EI computes and collates all this information for each group and each settlement and each party bloc.

EI then narrows the range of possibilities further by assigning each potential value
within each range a likelihood of being the true value. That is, it takes the ranges for all the settlements together, and estimates the most likely combination of values for the percentages of each group that support particular parties. For example, if it turned out that across settlements the range of potential Jewish support for communists parties was always in the range of $[0,8]$ percent or less, then EI would choose a value that lies within the range of each settlement.

4 Initial Results and Speculations

4.1 Poland

In Poland we begin with the 1922 election. In this election the bloc of parties that performed the best were that of the right. Indeed, the Endek-dominated Christian National Union was the only party to receive a significant number of votes in every region of the country. When combined with the Piast, the right had attained a clear plurality. Figure 2 consists of four panels, one for each of Poland’s regions, that illustrate the relationship between the presence of religious minorities (Jews, Protestants, Uniates, and Orthodox) and the vote for minorities parties in 1922.

There are several noteworthy features of this figure. First, if we define ethno-political polarization as a situation in which minority parties receive votes only from minorities, and minorities vote largely for minorities parties, then the most convincing evidence of polarization occurs in western and central (Congress) Poland, where with a few possible exceptions the fraction of the minorities tracks pretty closely the fraction of the vote accruing to their parties.\(^8\) Perhaps unsurprisingly, this phenomenon is strongest in the West, where the Germans are the predominant minority. Of all Poland’s minorities they had the best developed national consciousness. Second, the East and South display a slightly different pattern. There is some polarization: the triangular shape (at a 45 degree line) in both panels means that minorities parties rarely ever received a greater share of the vote in a settlement than the minority fraction of the population. Poles were not voting for the minorities parties. But the minorities themselves supported parties other than the ethnic parties. As is apparent on the right hand side of each panel, which contains settlements that are composed largely of minorities, in many cases the minorities parties got less than 10% of the vote. There is in fact quite a lot of vote variance in homogeneously minority districts, with votes going to the Center as well as the non-revolutionary Left, and in the East to the communists. In fact, the bulk of support for the small communist party at this stage came from the radical Polish minors of the Dabrowa basin.

The 1928 election was marked most clearly by Pilsudski’s insertion of his non-party bloc into the mix, a party designed to appeal both to elements of the non-revolutionary left, the national minorities, and also to more traditional conservative elements on the right. The overall result of the election was disappointing for Pilsudski because the BBWR did not achieve its parliamentary majority. Even though he succeeded in weakening the political right, the political left, both non-revolutionary

\(^8\)We have not yet investigated whether the outlying values represent coding errors or not.
Figure 2: Minority vote for Ethnic Parties, 1922. The dots in each panel represent settlements.

and revolutionary emerged much more strongly than in 1922. Communist parties, formally banned, managed to run under not very well concealed front organizations. From the standpoint of integrating the national minorities into mainstream Polish politics the results were devastating and ultimately pushed the BBWR to a more solid alliance with the political right during the 1930s.

The overall pattern of support for ethnic parties in minority communities remains more or less the same in 1928 as in 1922, as can be seen in Figure 3. But the communist party became much more popular. To see this consider Figure 4, which shows communist support for settlements with varying proportions of ethnic groups. (Note that the West is excluded because the communists did not compete there.) In the East and South the pattern of communist support in 1928 appears similar to that of minority support in 1922 (and 1928). The communists do not usually get more votes than the number of minorities in a given place, but there is quite a bit of variation within purely minority settlements. On the peripheries of Poland it seems that the communists are popular only in minority areas. Central Poland, where Jews and to a lesser extent Orthodox are the principal minorities, shows a slightly different pattern. There it seems the communists are popular in many places with few minorities, evidence no doubt that at least in some areas, such as the Dabrowa Basin, the movement does have working class roots.\(^9\) These panels alone provide

\(^9\)Communist support in the East and South may also be related to economic status. To do this it will be necessary to condition support on these variables.
significant evidence that it is a gross oversimplification to claim that the communists derived their support only or even largely from national minorities.

The differences between the Jews on the one hand and the Uniates and Orthodox on the other become clear if we graph each separately, as in Figure 4. For reference we also include, as a fourth panel, the pattern of communist support for Roman Catholics.\textsuperscript{10} The remarkable thing about this figure is how very different the Jewish and Catholic settlements are from the Orthodox and Uniate ones. Communist support is highest in settlements where there are no Jews (or Catholics) and relatively low in settlements where there are high numbers of Jews. This is even stronger evidence that the Jews were not supporting the communists at the mass level. With the exception of a handful of probably mining settlements (on the far right of the Catholic panel, with high communist support), a similar relationship holds for the Catholics. This is in stark contrast with the Orthodox and Uniate panels, where the communists hardly ever seem to get more votes than the number of minorities in a settlement.

The ecological inference problem prevents us from taking the next step, which is to infer definitely from these graphs what proportion of each religious group supports communist or minorities parties. We are fairly safe in inferring Jewish and Catholic preferences for the communists. The communist did best where Jews and Catholics were fewest, and worst where they were dominant majorities, so whatever support these groups do evince, it cannot be very high. The story is different for Orthodox and Uniates. Here were are safest making inferences about the top right (near 1,1) and bottom left (near 0,0) of each panel. In settlements where everyone is Orthodox (or Uniate) and all votes go to the communists, then we know who voted for whom. Likewise, in settlements where there were no Orthodox (or Uniates) and the communists got no support, then we know that these minorities could not have supported the communists. But in more heterogeneous places it is more problematic to infer that whatever communist support there was came from the minority groups. For that we require ecological inferences.

Table 1 presents ecological estimates of support for various kinds of political parties across Poland’s minority groups in the 1922 and 1928 elections.\textsuperscript{11} The party blocs are displayed across the top, and the minority groups down the side. Two subtables are presented for each election: one for the South, where Catholics, Jews, and Uniates are the most prominent groups; and one for the East and Central (Congress), where the Orthodox rather than the Uniates join the Catholics and Jews. The numbers in each cell represent the estimated support for a particular blocs by a particular group. Thus, for example, looking at the section for the South in 1928, we estimate that 42% of Catholics support the government party, whereas 30% of Jews do. The “-”s in the table represent estimates of less than 1%, and the “NA” represent a party that did not run in a particular year. Across any row the percentages will not necessarily add up to exactly 100, since we exclude the vote

\textsuperscript{10}Both the Catholic and Jewish panels are computed using all of Poland, whereas the Orthodox and Uniate panels take settlement from the East and South, respectively.

\textsuperscript{11}We compute these estimates using the methods discussed in Ori Rosen, Wenxin Jiang, Gary King, and Martin Tanner, “Bayesian and frequentist inference for ecological inference: the R x C case,” Statistical Neerlandica Vol. 55, No. 2, 2001, pp. 134-156.
Figure 3: Minority vote for Ethnic Parties, 1928. The dots in each panel represent settlements.

Figure 4: Minority Support for Communist Parties, 1928.
for other parties. In the interests of clarity we leave off the standard errors for each estimate. Due to the Ukrainian boycott of the 1922 elections we do not present estimates of their voting behavior in 1922.

There are numerous intriguing features of this table. First, if we look at support for communist parties (1928), our prior inferences for the Catholics and Jews are confirmed: neither group supports them in any significant way. The same cannot be said for the Orthodox and Uniates. 37% of Orthodox support communist parties by 1928, a substantial proportion, and three times the level for the Uniates, 12%. We can conclude that minority support for the communists is quite variegated, and undoubtedly reflects as yet unmodeled organizational and economic factors. Second, we see that the Right in 1928 is largely “Polish”, which is unsurprising since these parties were perhaps the least sympathetic to minority issues. But the Right by no means monopolized the Polish vote, never rising above one-quarter of the Catholic vote. The Poles were thus themselves split on the direction the country should take. Significant minority support for the Right in 1922 and among the Jews in 1928 is almost certainly evidence of the need to condition these estimates on the degree of ethnic homogeneity of each settlement. This result could emerge if, as is entirely possible, Poles in minority areas gravitated towards the Right.

Third, there are dramatic differences between Uniates and Orthodox in support for ethnic parties in 1928. Whereas 67% of Uniates support such parties in the South, only 19% of Orthodox do in the East and Central. To the extent that we can consider the Orthodox as Belarusan and the Uniates Ukrainian, this is one more, dramatic piece of evidence that Belarusan national consciousness, which would have had to emerge in the Russian empire, was less developed than the Galician Ukrainian, which was nurtured under the Hapsburgs. The numbers do not change much if ones estimated these tables using nationality rather than religious data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1922 Polish Election</th>
<th>Communists</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Minority</th>
<th>Right</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1928 Polish Election | South       | Catholic | -    | 32     | -        | 42   | -   |
|                      |            | Uniate   | 12   | -      | -        | 21   | 67  |
|                      |            | Jews     | -    | -      | -        | 30   | 69  |
|                      | East and Central | Catholic | 2    | 58     | -        | 16   | 2   |
|                      |            | Orthodox | 37   | -      | -        | 43   | 19  |
|                      |            | Jews     | 2    | -      | -        | 27   | 64  |

Third, these need to be bootstrapped, and can dramatically increase the time for computation.

\[13\] It is important to note, however, that in the East a large portion of Orthodox voters were Ukrainian. To the extent they too supported communist parties, this constitutes evidence of the
Fourth, perhaps more surprisingly, we see that the non-revolutionary left is also almost exclusively Polish. This striking result is perhaps the best reflection of the ethno-national polarization of Polish politics. There are good reasons Poles shied away from the communists, as by this time they were openly pro-Soviet, and the county had only recently emerged from Russian rule and staved off Soviet conquest. Likewise there is little reason for the minorities to have supported the Right, which advocated policies inimical to their interests. But the Left should have been a haven for all ethnic groups wishing to avoid the extremes of the left and the right or the exclusivity of ethnic parties. (In this sense the Right can be seen as an ethnic bloc for Poles.) Instead the pro-government bloc served that purpose, enjoying huge support from both Poles and non-Poles. That support for the government parties is much higher in the South (42%) than in East and Central Poland (16%) lends extra confidence in both the data and the method. Pilsudski’s “base” was in the South, and we would have expected much higher support there than elsewhere. The large minority support may be attributable to the exigencies of life in a country perceived to be sliding into authoritarianism. For the minorities Pilsudski was far preferable to the Right, and they could hope to be rewarded for their support with a modicum of protection. Even the Orthodox—at least those who shunned the communists—preferred the government-allied parties.

Fifth, looking across the two elections, we see that the Orthodox drift from supporting minorities parties in 1922 to communist (and government) parties by 1928. The Jews, by contrast, retain their anti-communist inclinations. Interestingly, with each election, and particularly 1928, one is struck with the rough similarity in voting behavior across regions. The Jews of the former Hapsburg empire, residing in the South, are not politically different from those who lived in the much more backward Russian empire. This is at least a sliver of evidence that despite different opportunities and possibilities for assimilation in the two empires, the Jews resembled one another politically speaking more than they resembled other groups in the milieu in which they resided. Some radical nationalists might see this as further evidence that the Jews are “different” from other nationalities, but it is also possible they were merely responding to common treatment by the State.

Sixth, a sizable portion of the Jewish community (and other minorities) now supported Pilsudski’s party. One way of interpreting this, and the one most common in the historiography of the period, is many Jews viewed Pilsudski as a protector. Another interpretation, however, is that many of Poland’s Jews saw Pilsudski as a path to political, if not cultural, assimilation. It was, seen this way, an act of political loyalty, perhaps in retrospect a quixotic one, but an act of loyalty nonetheless.

What explains this drift and the difference between the political behavior of the minorities both of which faced discrimination? Why did one group opt for nationalist “voice” and the other for revolutionary “exit.” The comparison of the Orthodox and the Galician Ukrainians is an object lesson how differences in historical paths into the Polish state exercise profound effects on political behavior. Whereas the continued importance of religious differences within the Ukrainian communist for generating very different kinds of political identities and loyalties. It is quite possible that the Orthodox Ukrainians did not view potential Union with the Soviet Union with the same level of distaste as the majority of their Uniate co-ethnics in formerly Habsburg Galicia.
Galician Ukrainians had experienced a significant period of national development under Habsburg rule, the Ukrainians of the Russian areas were never encouraged to think of themselves as anything beyond “little Russians.” Perhaps equally important, however, were the very different evaluations of the Soviet Union in the two populations. It was widely understood that a vote for a pro-Soviet or communist party was essentially a vote for unification with the Soviet Union. Whereas the Orthodox Ukrainians had experienced life under Russian rule and could perhaps even look upon it with some degree of nostalgia (as compared with the harsh nationalism of interwar Poland), the Galician Ukrainians, like other subjects of Habsburg rule, considered themselves culturally superior to the “backward” Russians, and therefore looked upon any unification with the Soviet Union with more distaste than remaining within Poland and “fighting it out” on the parliamentary floor.

4.2 Czechoslovakia

In Czechoslovakia, the two elections we analyze encompass, unlike Poland, not the early years of the republic’s existence but, instead the later years, between 1929 and 1935. During this period, ethnic politics throughout East-Central Europe became infused with the politics of ideological polarization. To what extent did Czechoslovakia’s ethnic groups drift into right and left wing revolutionary politics and to what extend did they remain loyal to a state which, compared to its Polish counterpart, was much more solidly democratic and tolerant of cultural diversity?

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate that there was far less ethnic polarization in Czechoslovakia in 1929 than in Poland in 1928. Figure 5 shows the level of support for ethnic parties across different levels of ethnic homogeneity, whereas figure 6 plots support for both ethnic and communist parties. In each case there is a separate panel for each of Czechoslovakia’s major regions: Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and Sub-Carpathian Rus. There are several interesting features of these figures. First, examining the settlements with no minorities in Figure 5 (on the far left side of each panel), we see that ethnic parties must have gotten electoral support from Czechs and Slovaks. This is quite different from the Poland, where Poles almost never supported Ukrainian, Jewish, or Belarusan parties. Like Poland, however, there also appear to be differences in political behavior between ethnic Germans, who predominate in Bohemia and Moravia, and Hungarians, Ruthenians, and other minorities. We see in on the far right of the top two panels in Figure 5, and especially in Moravia, that German settlements tended to support German parties. The pattern is quite different in Slovakia, where Hungarian are the largest minority, and Sub-Carpathian Rus, where Hungarians and Ruthenians predominated. There the homogeneously minority settlements supported not just ethnic, but other parties as well.

Second, examining Figure 6, we can see that a decent chunk of the ethnic German vote in Bohemia and Moravia was going to the communists. This is especially visible in comparing the Bohemia panels across Figures 5 and 6: a good part of the vote variance in homogeneously German districts from Figure 5 disappears in Figure 6. The same cannot be said for the Hungarians and Ruthenians in Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Rus, where the continued high vote variance in minority districts even in Figure 6 indicates that the minorities had to have been supporting republican
By 1935 the Nazis had taken power in Germany and fascist movements in East Europe gained ground. Nowhere was this more true than in Czechoslovakia, where Sudeten German irredentists under Konrad Henlein weakened the State in the West, while the Slovak nationalists under Hlinka weakened it from the East. Figure 7 illustrates the level of support for Henlein across settlements with different fractions of German inhabitants. There are two important points to take away. First, similarly with the plots for Poland, where there are no Germans there is, by and large, no support for Henlein’s party. The clump of non-German settlements in Moravia that support Henlein come from the district of Hlucin, which had undergone a semi-Germanization that the Czechs were keen to reverse. Given Heinlein’s aims, this should come as little surprise. Second, examining again the far right side of each panel (there were few Germans in Sub-Carpathian Rus), we see that support for Henlein was by no means uniform. Even in 1935, ethnic Germans were supporting non-fascist parties. As we shall see, much of this went to other ethnic German parties.

Figure 8 indicates a diverse base of support for Hlinka. On the one hand, looking at the right side of the panel, it is clear that while some Slovaks supported him, others did not. Many in fact supported republican parties. On the other hand, considering the left side of the panel, it must be true that some non-Slovaks also supported Hlinka. Given that he had organized his autonomist party for the 1935 election by including parties of other ethnic groups, especially among Ruthenians who wished to break up Czechoslovakia, this result is hardly surprising. Figure 9, showing support for the communists for settlements with varying numbers of minorities, provides graphic evidence that true to their internationalist leanings, the communists attracted both “Czechoslovaks” as well as national minorities.

The ecological estimates for the 1935 election in Table 2 confirm much of what we found in examining the aggregate data, but also permit us to go much further. First, again quite unlike Poland, both minorities and “Czechoslovaks” supported the communist party. In Slovakia the Hungarians and Germans supported it in slightly greater proportion that the Slovaks. The communists were much more popular in Sub-Carpathian Rus overall, and there Czech and Slovak support exceeded that of the minorities. This is interesting, because in Sub-Carpathian Rus the Slovaks were a minority. Whereas in Poland the Poles gravitated toward the Right when they were in the minority, in Czechoslovakia the titular majority gravitated toward the revolutionary Left. This could reflect missing socio-economic factors and the organizational strength of the communist party. Jews were a significant proportion of the population only in Sub-Carpathian Rus, where 15 percent are estimated to have supported the communists. This is higher than in Poland, but much lower than either the Hungarians or the Slovaks.

Second, we see large levels of support for republican parties across some groups but not others. Let us consider first the minorities. Ruthenes and Jews gave massive support to these parties. There are at least two possible reasons for this. On the one hand, there may have been genuine support for the First Republic. Neither

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Figure 5: *Minority vote for Ethnic Parties, 1929.* The dots in each panel represent settlements.

Figure 6: *Minority Support for Ethnic or Communist Parties, 1929.*
German fascism nor Slovak nationalism offered much to those who prospered under the democratic system. Much as the Polish Jews in 1928 supported Pilsudski in large numbers, the Ruthenes and Jews may have felt that the republican parties were their best guarantee of security. On the other hand, unlike in Poland, neither the Ruthenes nor the Jews had any significant political parties of their own. It is possible that they might have supported ethnic parties, as they did in Poland, had more palatable options been available. There is some evidence for this in the Sub-Carpathian Rus table, where 22 percent of Ruthenes are estimated to have supported a party advocating autonomy that was an ally of Hlinka’s Slovak nationalist party.

Figure 7: *Ethnic German Support for Heinlein, 1935*. The dots in each panel represent settlements.
Figure 8: Slovak Support for Hlinka, 1935. The dots in each panel represent settlements.

Figure 9: Minority Support for Communist Parties, 1935.
### 1935 Czechoslovak Election

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Communists</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Hungarians exhibited far less loyalty to the Republic than the Ruthenes or Jews. 20-25 percent of them did support republican parties, but 50-60 percent went to ethnic parties. Many ethnic Hungarians at the time saw reunification with Budapest as a legitimate and realizable goal, so at least part of their ethnic party support should be seen as an anti-system vote. This stands in contrast to some of the Ukrainian and Jewish ethnic parties in Poland, which sought merely to protect ethnic interests within the Polish framework. In this sense the Hungarians in Czechoslovakia can be compared to the Belarusians in Poland. Belarusians and even a portion of Poland’s Orthodox Ukrainians could still reasonably view the Soviet Union in 1928, even with its simulacrum of autonomy, as an appealing alternative. For ethnic Hungarians, however, returning their lands to Hungary was better accomplished by means of an ethnic party. The Communist Party was outlawed in Hungary throughout the interwar period.

Half of all Slovaks in 1935 cast their vote for Hlinka. Although historians disagree on exactly how much autonomy the Slovaks desired, by 1935 this party and the man who ran it clearly spoke in an idiom familiar and friendly to National Socialist revisionism and anti-semitism. When you add together Slovak support for Hlinka and the communists, it is clear that nearly 60 percent wanted revolutionary exit of either the left or right. The difference with the Czechs could not be more stark: only 5 percent supported their own fascist party. Even as revolutionary parties of the left and right gained ground in Czechoslovakia, the Czechs still clung in massive numbers to republican parties.

In agreement with much of the literature, our estimate for the percentage of Germans voting for Henlein’s Nazis in 1935 is approximately two-thirds. Given the high concentration of Germans in certain areas, this is not a controversial estimate. More shocking, of course, is the shift from very modest support for the Nazis in 1929 (a level not much different from the Czech fascist vote in 1935) to overwhelming support a mere six years later. In sum, if the Jews were the most integrated of
Czechoslovakia’s minorities (and this hold true even for the Jews of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus), this table shows that the Germans were the least integrated. Even those Germans who did not vote for Henlein still chose to cast their ballots for ethnic German parties. Of course, much of this had to do with the almost complete replication of the Czech party system, from Social Democrats to Christian conservatives, in the German community. In sum, with the exception of the Jews, Czechoslovakia’s ethnic minorities by 1935 cared more about achieving national autonomy, even totalitarian national autonomy, than about democracy.

5 Conclusion

The Jewish place within the multiethnic communities of interwar Eastern Europe was unique. When given a chance, or even half a chance as the case of Poland shows, a significant number of Jews chose the path of political integration with parties dominated by the dominant national group. What explains this? Unlike the other national minorities of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and even Romania, the Jews had no external homeland upon which they would rely. Seen in retrospect, this place of the external homelands seems crucial in explaining this exceptionalism. For unlike the Germans, Ruthenians, and even Hungarians, who could pursue national and even separatist goals through the politics of fascism, and Belarusans and a portion of Poland’s Ukrainians, who could pursue national objective through the politics of communism, Jews had little alternative but either the politics of ethnonationalism at “home” or what in retrospect appears to be the vain hope for inclusion through demonstrating political loyalty and even assimilation. Revolutionary exit was not an option.

An interesting comparison in this regard is between the Jews and Ukrainians of Galicia, whose political behavior in Poland seems similar in many respects. Both pursued the politics of ethno-national voice. But over time, an increasing minority of Galician Ukrainians, twelve percent, were even willing to vote for parties advocating a “Soviet” Ukraine. No such option was available to Galicia’s large Jewish population. And of course, if by the end of the 1920s the politics of the revolutionary left would yield few dividends for the Galician Ukrainians, National Socialist Germany proposed a different path towards national autonomy during the 1930s. Again, for the Jews, this was not an option. The intricate relationship between democracy, ethnic marginality, and the presence or absence of external homelands is one that we have not pursued in this paper but it is clearly one that remains crucial to any understanding of the ethnopoliitical exit, voice, and loyalty in interwar Eastern Europe.