

Does Familiarity Breed Contempt?
Inter-Ethnic Contact and Support for Extremism
in Interwar Poland and Czechoslovakia¹

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1 Introduction

One key condition for sustaining democracy is the continued predominance of liberal democratic parties within the party system. Where radical, exclusionary parties gain sufficient mass popular support, the fate of democracy is bleak. Multiethnic democracies are especially vulnerable to the kind of polarizing and zero-sum political competition that can breed communal conflict, simmering resentments, and anti-liberal politics (Dahl 1971; Horowitz 1985; Lijphart 1977). The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between ethnic demography and mass electoral preferences for anti-liberal political parties. We are particularly interested in how such support varies across different local demographic contexts, and the degree to which individuals in ethnically heterogeneous contexts are more vulnerable to exclusionary or anti-liberal appeals.

Despite decades of research, scholars still disagree on why the geographic proximity of groups leads in some cases toward greater tolerance and cooperative behavior across groups, while in other cases toward increased prejudice and political polarization. Good theoretical arguments have been made for both perspectives. In favor of the salutary effects of ethnic proximity, proponents of the contact hypothesis argue that prejudice and intolerance are rooted in individual ignorance of other groups, which can be ameliorated through contact between groups (e.g., Brewer and Miller 1988; Siegelman and Welch 1993; Siegelman, Welch, and Bledsoe 1996; Welch and Siegelman 2000). In this view, the greater the level of contact between groups, the more each group learns about the other, and the greater the realization of shared interests and values. As stereotypes erode, understanding and tolerance should increase across groups. At the political level this implies that, all other things being equal, ethnic groups in close contact ought to prefer liberal over other parties.

Proponents of the threat hypothesis take the opposite tack (e.g., Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). While not denying the theoretical advantages of contact, they emphasize how the demographic balance influences the degree to which one group perceives other groups as threats. Threat perception may be rooted in actual competition over resources and jobs, or in hazier fears of social and political vulnerability to people who are seen to have different values and ways of life. Either way, the propinquity of ethnic groups is thought to induce suspicion and hostility rather than mutual tolerance. Translated to the political level, this view implies that parties seeking to capitalize on inter-group hostility should find their greatest success in ethnically heterogeneous areas.

The tension between the two approaches lies as much in research design and method as it does in theory. Much of the work has focused on race relations and politics in the U.S., where the wide availability of detailed survey and ecological data has facilitated sophisticated attempts to bridge the theoretical divide (e.g., Oliver and Wong 2003; Stein, Post, and Rinden 2000). As troubled as race relations have been in the U.S., however, there are two features of the American context that complicate efforts to test the two competing hypotheses. First, extreme levels of residential and professional mobility means that it is difficult to determine the direction of causality. For example, the correlation between intergroup contact and tolerance may be less a result of learning than the prior decision of tolerant people

to live in ethnically mixed areas. In the latter case, it is tolerance that leads to inter-ethnic contact, rather than vice versa. To avoid this conundrum, some scholars have shifted from observational to experimental research, where the variables at work can be manipulated in a semi-controlled setting (Glazer 2003). Of course, what is gained in methodological rigor is lost in empirical validity: however realistic the experiment, it is not at all clear that the conclusions travel very well back to the real world.

The second troublesome feature of the U.S. context concerns its truncated party political palette. The dominance of two liberal democratic parties and the institutional barriers to the success of alternatives means that the U.S. party spectrum does not reflect whatever potential mass constituencies exist for exclusionary or anti-liberal politics. Instances of political extremism such as George Wallace's presidential candidacy and David Duke's various attempts to capture state office in Louisiana do provide important opportunities to test the threat hypothesis (Wright 1977; Giles and Bruckner 1993; Voss 1996), but these are the exceptions that prove the rule. We simply do not know who would support hypothetical African-American, Hispanic, communist, or fascist parties if the rules of the game were changed in a way that increased their potential viability.

In this paper we test the contact and threat hypotheses through a detailed examination of electoral behavior in interwar Czechoslovakia and Poland. The principal advantage of taking the hypotheses so far afield is that these countries provide some remedy for the two aforementioned deficiencies of the U.S. case. First, although both countries were undergoing urbanization at the time, the level of mobility was far below that of the post-World War II U.S. The great wave of out-migration to other countries had ceased after World War I, and although the cities continued to attract rural folk, neither the labor nor the housing markets were flexible enough to give many the luxury of choosing where they could live. Most people were stuck where they were. The analysis will therefore be less contaminated by the selection effect. Second, electoral systems featuring a combination of proportional representation and relatively low thresholds to enter parliament meant that both countries enjoyed a remarkably diverse array of viable political parties. The interwar period may be best known for authoritarianism, but it was a golden age for political diversity. Fascism and communism had not yet been discredited, and they competed alongside nationalist and liberal democratic parties for mass support. Both Czechoslovakia and Poland had at least two elections that were free enough to render voting behavior a sensible guide to mass political preferences.

Third, there is good reason to expect these countries' ethnic demography to be a powerful determinant of political behavior. The lands comprising Czechoslovakia and Poland had been multiethnic for centuries, and numerous stereotypes and mutual prejudices had arisen under Hapsburg, Prussian, and Russian rule. The arrogant, exploitative German and backward, clerical Slovak had become staples of Czech and Polish literature. In the Slovak popular imagination the Czechs were hypocritical urban sophisticates, the Hungarians nationalist usurpers. Hungarian discourse held both Romanians and Slovaks in disdain, while Polish mythmaking saw both Belarusians and Ukrainians as "misguided" Poles, assimilable to the Polish nation. (Wrzesinska 2002; Radomski 2000; Ogonowski 2000; Benecke 1999; Wojciechowski 1991; Tomaszewski 1985; Wiskemann 1938; King 2002; Seton Watson 1911). And

Jews, of course, carried the twin curse of being viewed as both highly modern (cunning in trade) and essentially backward (inward looking and secretive).¹

The founding of the new states after World War I gave new life to these prejudices by reshuffling the ethnic hierarchy. Poles who were formerly subordinate to Germans and not much above Ukrainians or Jews, now found themselves ruling over all three. Czechs who were inferior to the Germans in the Hapsburg era but superior in the ethnic pecking order to Slovaks, now found ruled in tandem with the Slovaks over Germans and Hungarians. This reversal of ethnic fortunes rendered interwar ethnic relations particularly volatile. Although in Czechoslovakia and Poland there existed both class and rural/urban cleavages, many historians maintain that the deepest and most important divides in these societies were ethnic (e.g., Rothschild 1974, Polonsky 1972). The issue for us is how local ethnic demography influenced the propensity of a member of a national group to view people from other groups as rivals or enemies. Does familiarity breed contempt? Or does real-life interaction mitigate animosity?

Finally, including both Czechoslovakia and Poland gives us purchase on potential explanatory factors that neither alone offers. Czechoslovakia was a peculiar country. First, it had two nominally ruling nations, but de fact one was really dominant. There was always Slovak ambivalence toward the Republic. Second, its two largest minority groups, the Germans and the Hungarians, had neighboring homelands. Irredentism, though not always on the political agenda, remained a lurking danger, a “pull” on the minorities that was at least partly independent of Czechoslovak domestic politics. Third, even with the rise in the attraction of authoritarian movements by the mid-1930’s, the Czechoslovak government remained remarkably committed to liberal politics regarding the minorities. It’s true that neither the Germans nor the Hungarians ever gained full autonomy, but they did have their own political parties and were able to go about their daily lives largely without interference.

In Poland the situation was quite different. There was, of course, a German minority in the West and an Orthodox (Belarusian) minority in the East, parts of which surely wished to join Germany and the Soviet Union. But in Poland we can also observe the political behavior of the Jews, who had no external homeland next door (though Zionism was increasing in strength²), and the Greek Catholic Ukrainians, who had brethren in the neighboring Soviet Union, but who had no illusions about their fate should they join the USSR. Moreover, the Poles were the only ruling nation, and certainly relative to the Czechs and Slovaks were aggressive in asserting their “ownership” over the new country, especially in politics. Whereas Czechoslovak elections were mainly free of problems, in Poland opposition parties got harassed, and not just those of the minorities: “Polish” parties such as the Communists and, at least by 1928, the Right were also under pressure. Poland thus offers a quite different national context.

¹“By the nineteenth century, the comic stereotype of the dancing little Jew (zydek) clutching his belly, stroking his beard and babbling gibberish, had become a fixture of the popular imagination, a kind of Polish Black Sambo.” (Steinlauf 1997, p.6)

²It is important to keep in mind, however, that in an era before the state of Israel’s existence, Zionist political parties were seen primarily as local Jewish parties that served the interests of Poland’s Jews.

We find that neither the contact nor the threat hypothesis holds general sway within either Czechoslovakia or Poland or across national groups. Generally speaking, the threat hypothesis holds best for the Czechs and Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, and to a much smaller degree for the Poles in Poland. These groups were at their most politically moderate when they lived in relative local isolation from other national groups. For the Slovaks and to a lesser extent the Germans, by contrast, contact moderates political behavior. Both proved most vulnerable to extremist appeals when they were concentrated in their own localities, though only in the case of the Slovaks are these effects pronounced.

2 Data: Elections and Censuses

2.1 Elections

Interwar Czechoslovakia was, by the standards of the day, 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 interwar republic, by contrast, is considered to be a failed democracy. After one fair nation-wide election in 1922, a series of unstable parliamentary coalitions led to Marshal Pilsudski's coup d'état in 1926. Yet, even after the coup, Poland would hold one more election—in 1928—that is extremely useful for gauging ethnic voting and political strategies, when Pilsudski attempted to gain a parliamentary majority for his pro-government *Bezpartyjnny Blok w Wspolpracy z Rzadem* (Non-Party Bloc for Cooperation with the Government or BBWR). This election is also considered to have been conducted freely and fairly despite more than a modest amount of administrative pressure during the campaign on both the extreme left and extreme right and the disqualification of several thousand ballots 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 parliamentary majority for the BBWR; this would have to await the fully “managed” election of 1930.

The plethora of class, ethnic, and regionally based political parties in both Czechoslovakia and Poland gained a significant number of votes in national elections. In all there were more than 20 parties in Czechoslovakia and more than 30 in Poland during the interwar era. With so many parties, both mainstream and extremist, it is both logical and necessary to group them into party families. In Czechoslovakia the extreme right consisted in the Czech lands of both a Nazi oriented Sudeten German party and a much smaller Czech fascist party. In Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus, the far right was the Slovak People's Party led by Antonin Hlinka. On the left, the main party was the Czechoslovak Communist Party. In Poland, the primary party on the far right was the National Democrats, which ran under various names, and a few other minor parties. Although the National Democrats were clearly not Nazis, their vision of Poland called for the assimilation of the Slavic minorities and the isolation or expulsion of the Jews.³ On the left,

³The party explicitly stressed the national-Polish character of the state and, short of physical

although the communist party was technically illegal, several communist parties ran under names that did little to conceal their true identity. For the communists of both Czechoslovakia and Poland, elections were primarily a means to mobilize public opinion against capitalism. Revolution was the goal, not merely a seat in government. In addition, each country had a range of parties of the non-revolutionary left, the bourgeois center, as well as a large number of ethnic minority parties. We list each country's blocs and the parties that belong to them in an Appendix.

2.2 Censuses

In both Czechoslovakia and Poland the titular nationalities made up only roughly two-thirds of the population, yet as Rogers Brubaker notes, each majority nationality nonetheless tried to construct unitary nation-states in which it "owned" the state. These efforts were reflected in the very way these states counted their own people—the census. Czechoslovakia conducted two censuses, in 1921 and 1930. Poland also conducted two, in 1921 and 1931. Czechoslovakia's censuses reflect the complexities of its multicultural society. In this paper we use the 1930 census materials, since it was carried out between the time of the two elections to be analyzed. The most obvious peculiarity of its census was the amalgamation of Czechs and Slovaks into one category ("Czechoslovaks") for purposes of enumeration. Apart from the desire to assert the unity of the new Czechoslovak nation, the primary motivation behind this typological peculiarity was all too obvious to observers at the time: if Czechs and Slovaks were counted separately, Germans would outnumber Slovaks. This quirk of the data does not affect the analysis because almost all Czechs lived in Bohemia and Moravia, while Slovaks lived in Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. Germans lived throughout the country but were highly concentrated (constituting overwhelming majorities) in the Sudetenland, comprising approximately 23 percent of the total population of the country. The vast majority of Germans were Habsburg Germans, and although they viewed themselves as culturally superior to the Czechs, they did not at the outset of the republic harbor any desire for unification with Germany. The Jews of Czechoslovakia made up a much smaller minority (approximately 350,000) than in Poland but in parts of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus they constituted a much larger percentage of the local communities. In Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus there also lived a large and deeply dissatisfied minority of approximately 700,000 Hungarians. 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.⁴ Finally, Subcarpathian Rus in Eastern Slovakia was also

expulsion from the country, called for the expelling Jews from trade and industry, and for limiting their civic rights. It supported the boycott of Jews in trade and the numerus clauses in high schools and at universities. The National Democrats' view was that Jews were not satisfied with having rights equal to the Poles, and that they demanded special rights and privileges, trying to organize a country within the country. The party blamed Jews for monopolizing industry and trade, inhibiting the formation of Polish middle class, causing disunity between educated and working strata. These points are all outlined in the party's 1925 platform. *Becikowska, Alicja. Stronnictwa i Związki Polityczne w Polsce. Warszawa: Skład Główny: Sp. Akc. "Dom Książki Polskiej", 1925.*

⁴And the dispute is more a matter of tens than hundreds of thousands.

home to 540,000 mostly poor and agricultural Ruthenians (or Rusins) who spoke an Eastern Slavic language (a dialect of Ukrainian).

Census figures are always disputed, but Poland’s interwar censuses have been subject to particularly close scrutiny and have engendered much debate. The 1921 census was conducted with haste, in unfavorable conditions, and by a highly inexperienced bureaucracy. Some historians maintain that for political reasons Ukrainians were systematically undercounted. Polish census takers asked respondents both for their nationality and religion. The sum of Ukrainians and Belarusians, however, is significantly less than the number of Uniates (Greek Catholics, the religion of almost all Ukrainians in Galicia) and Orthodox (the religion of most Ukrainians and Belarusians in the East). According to the 1921 Polish materials, Jews made up a large ethnic minority (between eight and ten percent, depending on whether nationality or religion data are used). They were highly dispersed throughout the country (but predominantly urban), with few living in the formerly Prussian areas but close to three million living in other parts of Poland, including Galicia. Germans were also a dispersed (though not as dispersed as the Jews) if much smaller minority, constituting approximately four percent of the population. Approximately 15 percent of Poles were classified as Ukrainians and four percent as Belarusians, both groups living in much more concentrated areas in the East and South.

The solution to the issue of ethnic misclassification, proposed by one prominent Polish historian (Tomaszewski 1983), is to use religion data to infer ethnicity. This is the solution we adopt in this paper for Poland, but it is also not without its shortcomings. First, it creates problems of distinguishing between the Ukrainians and Belarusians of the Eastern Territories, both of which tended to be Orthodox. Second, and more important, it is quite possible that in 1921 identities were more fluid and less established than raw census categories could capture. Belarusian peasants, for example, often had little consciousness of being Belarusian or could be convinced with very little effort that they were in fact “Poles of the Orthodox faith.” Yet, it is precisely this point that lends the use of religion data to infer primary identity a large measure of credibility. Minorities and majorities in Poland often identified each other and themselves by religious categories. Jews, for example, in their memorial books (Yizkhor books) assembled immediately after the Holocaust frequently referred to Poles in their communities as “Catholics.” Belarusian peasants often thought of themselves primarily as “Orthodox.”

3 Methods

What we forfeit in moving to the interwar period are survey data. Instead we rely on an original database of actual electoral results and census data. The basic unit of analysis in our study is the lowest level at which census and electoral data can be matched. In Czechoslovakia this is the municipality (in the case of Prague, municipal districts) and the obec (village or small group of villages). The result is a data set of over 15,000 matched settlements. In Poland the unit of analysis is also the municipality (and in the case of Warsaw city districts) and the *gmina* (village or group of villages) as long as it had at least 500 electors. The Polish census and

electoral data are not easily merged. A large number of rural estates in Western and Southern Poland do not have direct corresponding entries in the electoral data, which in practice means that only 45 percent of settlements registered in the census can be used. The result, however, is still very large, with over 4,000 fully matched settlements, representing 85 percent of the country’s population.⁵

We use recently-developed ecological inference techniques to estimate group preferences for political parties.⁶ The best of these methods combines deterministic information about the possible values of the quantity of interest (in this case the fraction of a particular social group in a locality that could hypothetically have supported a given party or bloc) with a statistical model of what the most likely values of that quantity are within that range of possibilities. Although highly popular, the method in King (1997) is not easily applicable in ethnically and politically heterogeneous situations where there are more than two national groups and parties. Instead, we employ the nonlinear least squares approximation of the multinomial-Dirichlet model presented in Rosen et al. (2001), which yields consistent estimates for arbitrarily large tables. For details of this model we refer the reader to the original article.⁷

In the absence of surveys or other systematic data on the actual degree and nature of contact between national groups, we use proximity as a proxy. This is a risky strategy. Much like in the US, where different ethnic groups might dwell in adjoining areas of town but rarely ever see one another, it is possible that East European national groups lived “in separate worlds.” We offer two pieces of evidence in defense of our assumption. First, the bulk of our observations are villages with small populations. The median population of our Polish settlements is 2,072, and those of Czechoslovakia only 434. It is not so easy to lead a separate existence when there is at most one market, one post office, and one school.

Second, and more importantly, the historical literature reveals multi-layered relations among national groups. Consider, for example, the case of Poland’s Jews. Although Jews had lived in large numbers in Poland since the fourteenth century, prior to World War I they had had little contact with Poles apart from the municipal market where goods could be bought and sold. Jews had their own municipal councils, raised their own revenues, and even performed many functions of self government, even if they did have casual contact with Poles. By the interwar era, however, even though the social distance between Poles and Jews—especially in small towns—remained a powerful barrier to contact, national groups that shared a

⁵These data are being collected under the auspices of our larger project, “Majorities and Minorities: A New Look at Ethnonationalism and Electoral Extremism,” with generous funding from NCEEER and NSF (SES-0217499).

⁶Forgoing survey data may seem like a high price to pay, but even if survey data were available, there are good reasons why it might be unreliable for our purposes. It is well known in survey research that respondents are often reticent about expressing unpopular sentiments to their interviewers. Consequently, surveys of political preferences will tend to underestimate the actual level of support for extremist parties. This effect may be heightened by ethnic differences between the interviewer and the respondent. Of course it would be best to have both kinds of data to test for consistency between the two, but historical research places limits on method.

⁷All estimates are performed in R 2.2.0 with the code described in Wittenberg and Bhaskar (2005).

common municipal space also interacted with each other on a daily basis. Their children often went to school together, they celebrated national holidays together, worked together in local government, and even participated together in such stalwart institutions of small town life as volunteer fire departments. In short, contact between ethnic groups living in close proximity to each other was non-trivial and often intensive (Zborowski and Herzog 1971; Hoffman 1997; Salsitz 1992).⁸

In the case of the Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia, the story is equally complex. In some portions of Czechoslovakia, Germans lived largely on their own and actually needed to have little contact with Czechs. However, in the cities of Bohemia not only was there extensive and intensive contact between Czechs and Germans, but historians have documented quite carefully that the same people frequently moved back and forth between these two communities. The contact between the two groups was so intensive in many places that by 1930, many Germans were in the process of *becoming* Czechs, a process that naturally raised alarms among leaders of the German community (King 2002, pp.165-168). Much the same can be said for the Ukrainian population of Poland and the Hungarian and Jewish populations of Subcarpathian Rus in Czechoslovakia.⁹

4 Results

4.1 Czechoslovakia, 1929

We begin our analysis with the 1929 national parliamentary elections in Czechoslovakia. As noted earlier, Czechoslovakia was a “model democracy” during the interwar period. Multiethnic yet relatively prosperous, its trouble-free elections and broad range of parties exemplified the potential for inter-ethnic cooperation. Our estimates of the social bases of the main party blocs appear in Figure 1.

Since Czechoslovakia was constructed out of territories that had been a part of other empires, each of which had a different configuration of national groups, we present a separate panel for each region. In each panel except Sub-Carpathian Rus, the horizontal axis represents the fraction of the titular majority, Czechs and Slovaks, ranging from zero (settlements without any Czechs or Slovaks) to one (purely Czech or Slovak settlements).¹⁰ The numerical strength of minority groups in a settlement is inversely related to the strength of the majority groups. Thus, the upper horizontal axis indicated the fraction of minority groups, with zero on the right and one on the

⁸This was not universal. Approximately 25 percent of Jews sent their children to Polish public schools. Jewish participation in volunteer fire departments was also not universal. Furthermore, although Jews and Poles frequently served together on town councils, the position of mayor remained exclusively Polish as were almost all positions in the local bureaucracy and public school systems.

⁹Ukrainian national historiographers and demographers point to the category of *Latinyki* as a large group of Ukrainian speakers in Poland that practiced Roman Catholicism and whose children were heavily polonized. See the introduction in Kubijovyc (1939).

¹⁰There is good reason to believe that the Slovaks, though technically co-rulers with the Czechs, chafed under what they perceived as Czech domination. They were, however, dominant over the other non-Czech ethnics within Slovakia. There were too few Czechs or Slovaks in Sub-Carpathian Rus to estimate the effects of aggregation, so the local majority, the Ruthenes, are used instead.

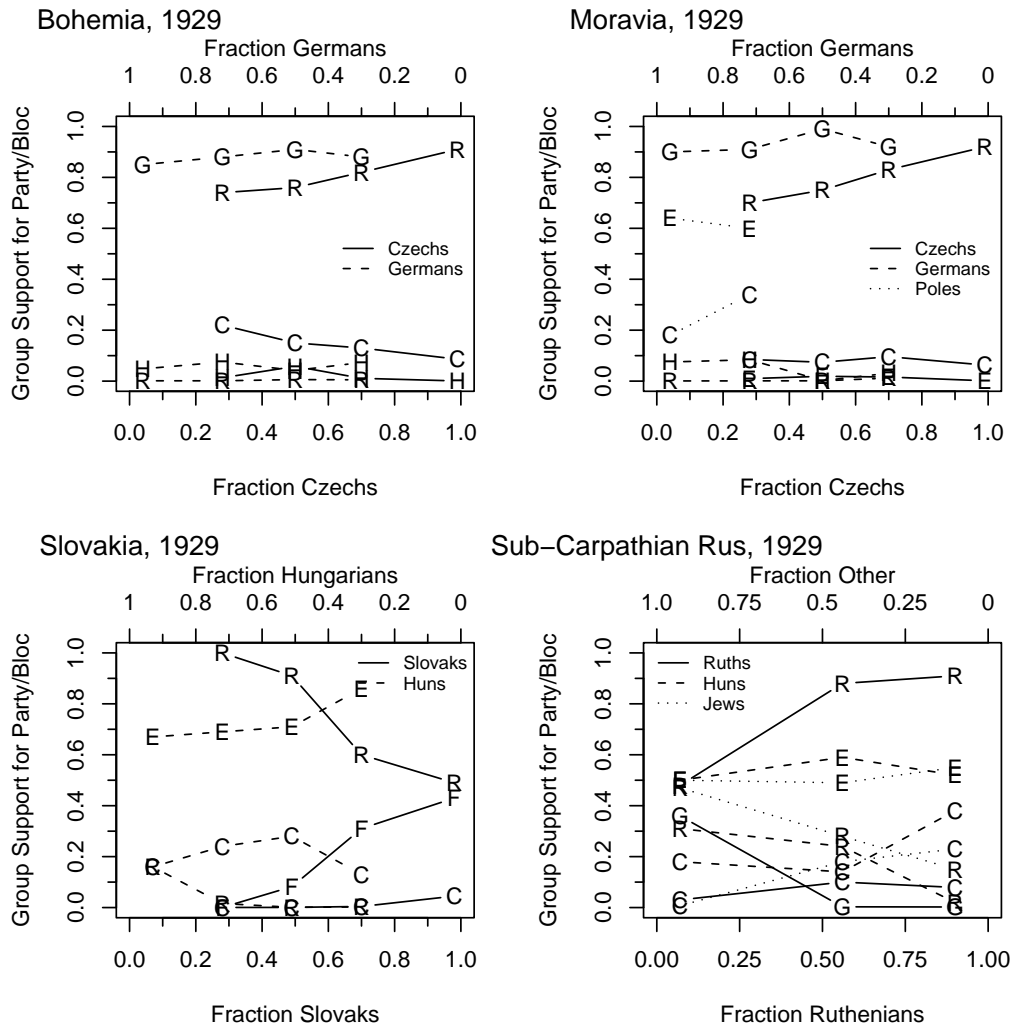


Figure 1: *Czechoslovakia 1929: Social Bases of Party Support*

left.¹¹ The vertical axes represent the fraction of a particular national group that supported a given bloc/party, again ranging from zero (no one in group x supported bloc y) to one (everyone in group x supported bloc y).

Each point (denoted by a capital letter) represents an individual estimate. The interpolated lines connecting the same letter indicate how a group's support for a bloc changes with the demographic strength of Czechs and Slovaks across settlements. Different line types used to connect letters (solid, dashed, dotted) represent different national groups. Thus, in the Bohemia and Moravia panels, solid lines represent Czech voting behavior, whereas the dashed lines represent German. The letters used on the lines stand for the names of blocs. Thus, for Figure 1, we have (G)erman parties (ethnic but full participants in the Republic), (R)epublican

¹¹There were small Jewish and other minorities in Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia, but their numbers are too insignificant, or were distributed across too few settlements (in the Jewish case) to include in the analysis.

parties, the (C)ommunist Party, the extreme right wing German (H)enlein party, (E)thnic parties for Ruthenes, Hungarians, Poles, and Jews, and Hlinka's (F)ascist Slovak People's Party. For example, in Bohemia we estimate that roughly 70 percent of Czechs who resided in settlements that were 20 percent to 40 percent Czech voted for (R)epublican parties (the leftmost R), whereas over 80 percent of Germans that lived in Czech-dominated (60 percent to 80 percent) areas supported (G)erman parties (the rightmost G). A similar logic holds for the other panels, and will hold for other figures, though the identities of the parties and the national groups may vary.¹²

Interpreting these plots takes some getting used to, but it's worth the effort, because they make it quite easy to see whether or not there is an effect to be explained: the flatter the line, the less contact matters. In Figure 1 this is most visible in German voting behavior in Bohemia and Moravia (dashed lines). Support for (G)erman parties was around 90 percent in both German-dominated settlements (the leftmost G) as well as Czech dominated-settlements. Support for (H)enlein's radical right Sudeten German party and the (R)epublican (Czechoslovak) parties remained mired at under 10 percent. Part of the stability of the German vote is rooted in the rich palette of German parties, which allowed for much vote switching within the bloc, but few supported (H)enlein, and any communist-oriented Germans would have had to vote for the Czechoslovak version, as there was none among the German parties.

Although the Germans remained immune to the proximity of their national rivals, the same cannot be said for the Czechs, where the upward sloping lines indicating support for (R)epublican parties in Bohemia and Moravia show that Czech preference for such parties decreased with the increased presence of Germans. Although overall Czech support of these parties remains quite high (70 percent or above), there is nonetheless evidence for the threat hypothesis: as Czechs move from (local) majority to minority, they gravitate toward the (C)ommunists in Bohemia and (G)erman parties in Moravia.¹³

In contrast with Bohemia and Moravia, where the threat hypothesis is supported for the Czechs, in the Slovak half of the republic the contact hypothesis works for the Slovaks. The more contact Slovaks have with their Hungarian neighbors, the more they prefer (R)epublican parties to Hlinka's (F)ascistic right-wing Populists. The trend here is even starker than in the Czech lands: where Slovaks are a pronounced minority they almost unanimously support (R)epublican parties, giving Hlinka no votes, whereas in homogeneously Slovak settlements the two groups are neck and neck. For the Hungarians a mild version of threat seems to hold. Although the Hungarians never give much support to (R)epublican parties (never rising above 16 percent), their support for the (C)ommunists and (E)thnic parties rises (slightly) as they move from local majority to minority.

¹²Due to limited variance and hence uncertain results, in most cases we do not generate estimates of a group's voting behavior when that group is less than 20 percent of a settlement's population. We are currently developing bootstrapping techniques to get standard errors for the estimates we do report.

¹³The anomalous support for (G)erman parties emerges from the district of Hlucin, where the local Moravians had undergone a semi-Germanization that Prague was keen to reverse. See Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans*. Second Edition, MacMillan, 1967), pp. 231-234.

[Discuss Sub-Carpathian Rus. Complicated by need to conceptualize a three-way and in some cases four-way ethnic configuration. Need to think about how to define threat in such a context.]

4.2 Czechoslovakia, 1935

Let us turn now to the results of the 1935 election. This election is interesting because, unlike that of 1929, which took place at a time of maximal ethnic cooperation in Czechoslovakia, it occurred well after the Nazi seizure of power in Germany, the turn to Stalinism in the Soviet Union, and the general authoritarian turn in Europe as a whole. The aggregate performance of the parties reflect these changes: the communists and Nazis gained strength nationally; Hlinka's autonomist populists now flirted openly with totalitarianism; and the Nazi backed Sudeten German party, led by Konrad Henlein, became the most powerful party among Germans. In short, the political context was much more authoritarian and ethno-national than in 1929. The question is: how did local national demography exacerbate or mitigate the electoral consequences of this "ethnification"?

Figure 2 displays the social bases of bloc/party support in 1935, in set of panels that is analogous to Figure 1. The remarkable feature about the 1935 results is how few consequences the changed international and domestic situation had on the broad pattern of ethnic voting. It is important to distinguish between two types of patterns. One is the overall level of support a given group gives to a bloc, which is broadly related to how high a given line is above the lower horizontal axis. The second is the slope, or more generally the shape of the line. The increased political polarization by 1935 resulted in substantial changes in the average level of support given to particular blocs, but for the most part did not change the relationship between bloc support and local demographics. That is, the 1929 lines get "moved", but their shapes do not change.

The difference between these two types of patterns is most visible in the case of the Germans in both Bohemia and Moravia, where the (H)enlein Nazi Sudeten German party, hardly visible at the bottom of the panels in 1929, grabs roughly 50 percent of the vote by 1935. This came at the expense of the more moderate (G)erman parties, which still grabbed a large chunk of the vote in 1935, but not nearly as large as in 1929. However, despite the change in fortunes of the German parties, at the local level German support remained mostly impervious to the presence of their Czech rivals. There is a slight but noticeable downward trend for (H) in Bohemia, suggesting the contact hypothesis may be at work: the more Germans were exposed to Czechs, the less likely they are to support the openly Nazi Henlein.

In comparison with the German, Czech voting behavior barely changed between 1929 and 1935. The rise of fascism among Bohemian Germans and the continued popularity of the (F)ascistic radical right in the Slovak heartland did not provoke a radical reaction among Czechs. Support for (C)ommunism declined where it had been strong in 1929, and the Czech (F)ascists, not pictured, remained mired below 10 percent. Slovak voting behavior resembles the German in that the average levels of support for non-liberal parties declined between 1929 and 1935. This can be

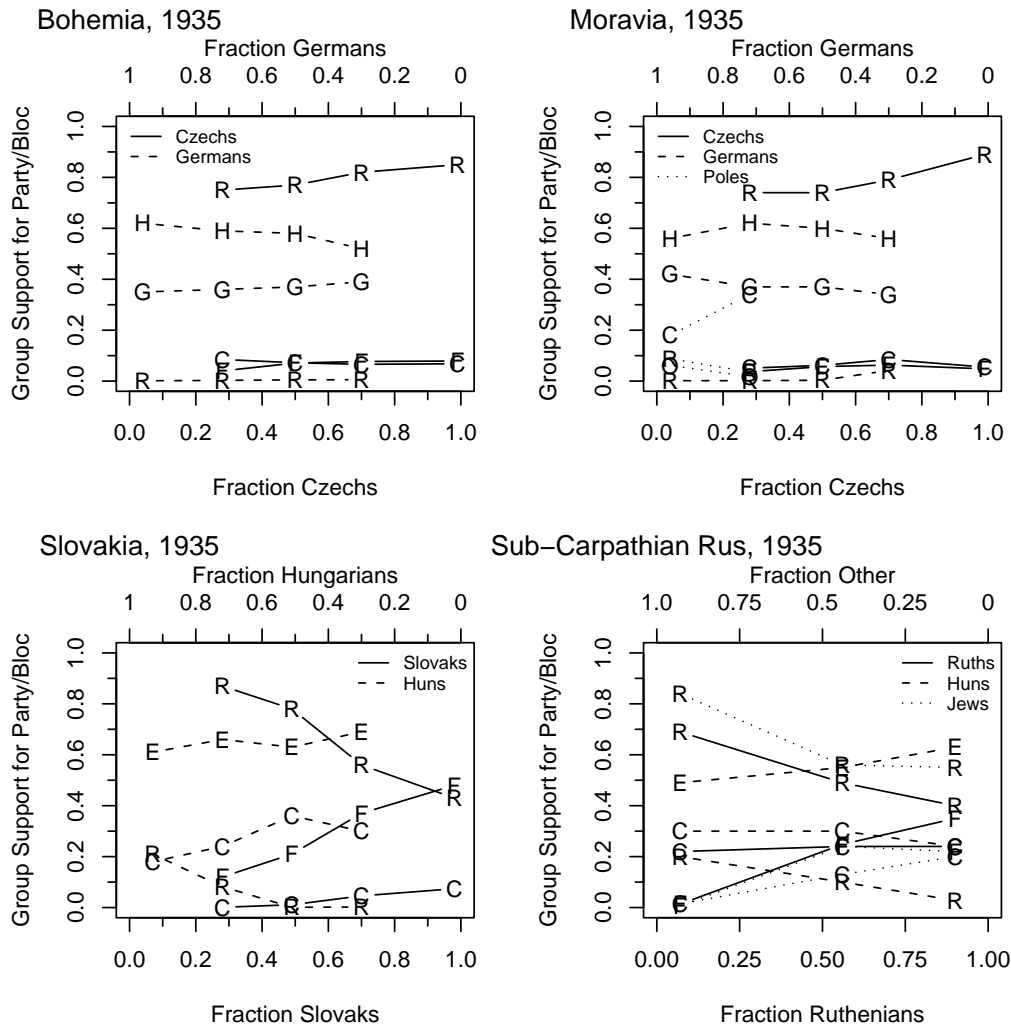


Figure 2: *Czechoslovakia 1935: Social Bases of Party Support*

seen by comparing the Slovak panels in Figures 1 and 2: the (F)ascist line gets translated upward and the (R)epublic line downward. Similarly to the Czechs, however, the basic pattern remains similar. The growing salience of ethnic politics more generally did not dramatically increase the propensity of Slovaks living in Hungarian areas to support (F)ascism. Regarding the Hungarians, the difference between 1929 and 1935 is counterintuitive: comparing the (dashed) lines indicating (E)thnic and (C)ommunist support in the two periods reveals that the (C)ommunists gained at the expense of the (E)thnic parties, especially in areas where Slovaks predominated (the right endpoints of the lines). Increasing radicalization of the Slovak majority did threaten the Hungarians, who, however, increasing found refuge on the extreme left rather than in ethnic exclusionism.

[Again, need to discuss Sub-Carpathian Rus]

In Figure 3 we examine the results of the 1928 Polish national parliamentary elec-

tion. Like Czechoslovakia, interwar Poland had four major regions, but we present the results for only two, Central (Congress) and the South (Galicia).¹⁴ To increase clarity, we present Polish voting behavior in the top two panels, and minorities' behavior in the bottom two, for parties of the non-revolutionary (L)eft, (G)overnment parties, (E)thnic parties, (C)ommunist parties, and the Polish (R)ight. As noted earlier, Poland's national demography is considerably more complicated than that pictured here. In the central region, Protestants comprised more than 10 percent of the population in nearly 100 settlements, and the Orthodox were over 10 percent in nearly 150 (out of nearly 1200). In the South there were almost 300 settlements that were more than 10 percent Jewish (out of over 2500). These multiethnic settlements are important because they allow us to explore the dynamics of three- and even four-way electoral competition. However, for methodological and theoretical reasons these cases are better analyzed separately from instances of two-way competition, which comprise the majority of settlements.¹⁵ Consequently, we restrict our estimates for central Poland to areas with fewer than 10 percent Protestants, and for the South to places with fewer than 5 percent Jews.

These results illustrate weak evidence for the threat hypothesis regarding Polish behavior. In the central region, the Polish heartland, support for both the (C)ommunists and the (R)ight is greatest when Poles live as a local minority among Jews (and Orthodox), but falls quickly as they reach parity (the middle of the horizontal axis). Once Poles form a local majority, their support for both the (C)ommunists (at under 10 percent) and the (R)ight (at around 17 percent) remains stable. The increase in vote for the non-revolutionary (L)eft in more homogeneously Polish settlements comes at the expense not of the (C)ommunists or (R)ight, but of the left-leaning (G)overnment parties (Pilsudski was a socialist, though decidedly not of the Marxist-Leninist variety). The different fortunes of the (L)eft and (G)overnment parties among Poles in the South (Galicia), with the latter dominating the former, almost certainly reflects the fact that Pilsudski's political home was in this region.

The remarkable thing about the political behavior of Jews and Ukrainians (in the bottom two panels) is its stability. Jews in predominantly Polish areas did not vote differently from Jews in largely Jewish (and to a lesser extent, Orthodox) settlements, overwhelmingly preferring (E)thnic parties to those of the moderate (L)eft, the (C)ommunists, or even the (G)overnment.¹⁶ A similar story holds for the Ukrainians, though their preference for (C)ommunist parties clearly declines as they move from local majority to local minority status. The quasi-authoritarian nature

¹⁴The exclusion of the East, with its rich Eastern Orthodox and Jewish population, and the West, with its Germans, is due to insufficient observations.

¹⁵In particular, there are too few observations to divide into quintiles of the Polish population. An analysis on the "full sample" of, say, Polish-Ukrainian-Jewish municipalities is straightforward, but the results would not be directly comparable to those presented here. Moreover, government harassment of its opponents, particularly on the communist left, means further restrictions on the number of places where all parts of the political spectrum are fully competing. We explore these more complicated situations in a future paper.

¹⁶The poor support for the (C)ommunists provides further evidence that the notion of the "Jewish Communist", so dear within certain strands of nationalist historiography, is empirically baseless at the mass level. We first explored this question in Kopstein and Wittenberg (2003).

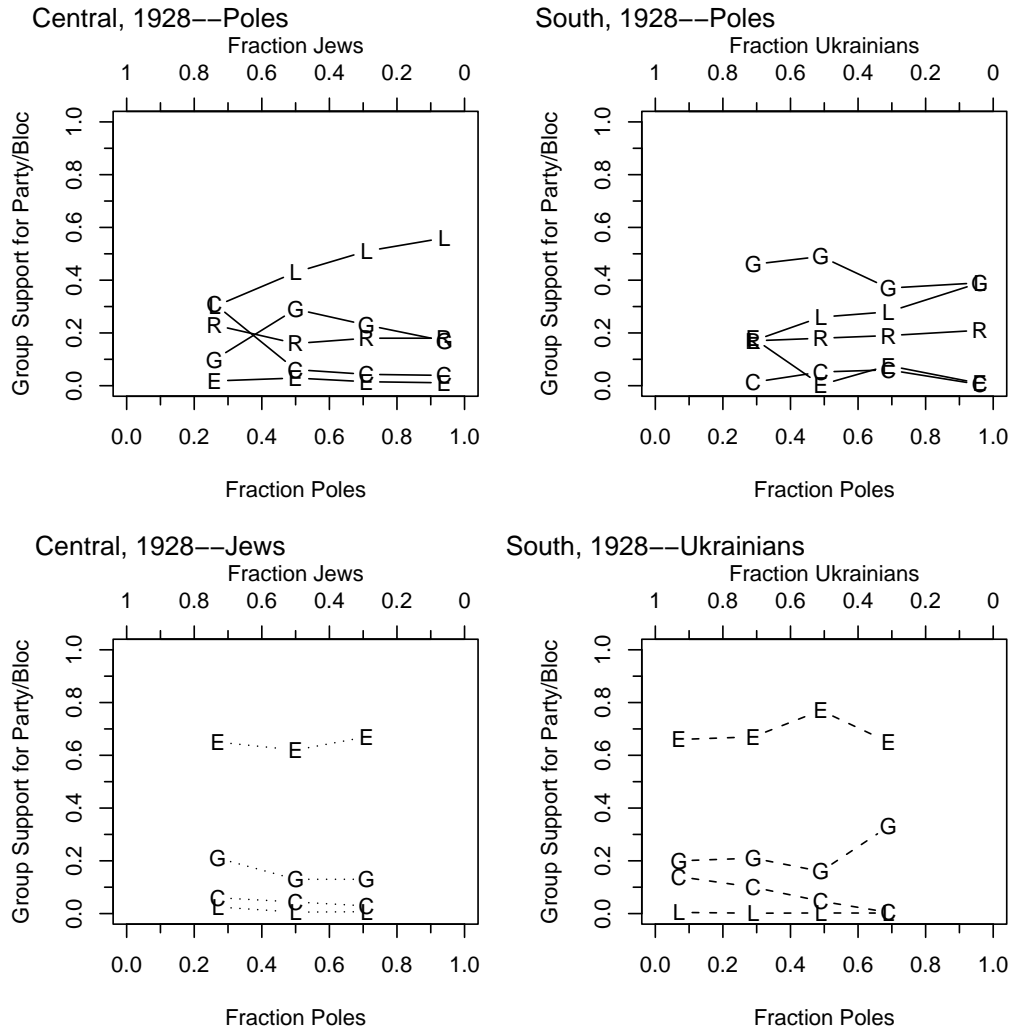


Figure 3: *Poland 1928: Social Bases of Party Support in the Central (Congress) and Southern Regions (Galicia)*

of the Polish regime by 1928 makes it difficult to interpret the surge in Ukrainian support for the (G)overnment parties in Polish-dominated settlements. On the one hand, the concomitant decline in support of (E)thnic parties and (C)ommunist parties is evidence for the contact hypothesis. On the other, it could be that these Ukrainians still felt threatened, but saw the government, which was relatively tolerant toward the minorities, as their best defense against the Right.

5 Alternative Explanations: Economic and Class Effects

[Blah blah blah ...]

6 Conclusions

What do our analyses of interwar elections in Czechoslovakia and Poland tell us about the relationship between ethnic diversity and mass support for nationalist and extremist parties? First, and not unsurprisingly, the issue is not cut and dried. Developed largely in the context of two interacting groups, the contact and threat hypotheses travel only with difficulty to contexts where there are multiple groups and modes of non-liberal politics. Second, in terms of the national power of liberal parties, it is clear that “conjunctural” affecting the entire political system can be as potentially destabilizing as local ethnic demography: the rise of Hitler radicalized Czechoslovak Germans to a greater extent than the local presence of Czechs. Third, national ethnic demography can outweigh local configurations. The Jews in particular, having for centuries been subordinate to one or another ruling nationality, and having always perceived themselves as “guests” in others’ lands, may have determined their partisan loyalties independently of the ethnic mix of their immediate life surroundings. Fourth, and somewhat surprisingly, the degree to which the dominant nationality follows a unitary, assimilationist policy appears to have relatively little effect on the broad pattern of minority preference for non-liberal parties. Though the Czechoslovakia and Poland pursued vastly different strategies, Jewish, Ukrainian, and Hungarian support for (E)thnic parties remained remarkably similar, exceeding 60 percent across across three elections.

7 Appendix

Czechoslovakia

Communist 1929: List 1-Communists

Republican 1929: List 8-Narodne-socialisticke, List 10-Socialne-democraticke strany delnicke, List 13-Narodni Demokracie, List 14-Lidove, List 15-Republikanske strany zemedelskeho a malorolnickeho lidu, List 16-Zivnostensko-obchodnicke strany stredostavovske

German 1929: List 3-Nemeckeho volebniho spolecenstvi, List 4-Nemecke socialne-democraticke 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: List 19-Nemecke narodne-socialisticke strany delnicke

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

Hlinka 1929: List 18-Hlinkovy 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

Poland

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

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