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Forced Migration, Staying Minorities, and New Societies: Evidence from Postwar Czechoslovakia

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Abstract: *Can staying minorities who evade ethnic cleansing affect political outcomes in resettled communities? After World War Two, three million ethnic Germans were expelled from Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland, but some were allowed to stay, many of them left-leaning antifascists. We study quasi-experimental local variation in expulsion policies, a result of the surprising presence of the U.S. Army, which indirectly helped antifascist Germans stay. We find a long-lasting footprint: Communist party support, party cells, and far-left values are stronger today where antifascist Germans stayed in larger numbers. Postwar German Communist elites appear to be behind this effect along with the intergenerational transmission of values among active party members.*

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The global number of displaced people is at a record high, with violent conflicts and wars at the root of most forced migration and ethnic cleansing.[1] Forced migration has immediate dramatic consequences for the displaced and for the communities that become their new homes. There are also long-term effects on the displaced and their descendants, documented by a large body of literature (for surveys, see Becker 2022; Becker and Ferrara 2019). However, it is often overlooked that ethnic cleansing is never complete: some members of the displaced community manage to evade expulsion and become members of newly created societies (see Bell-Fialkoff 1993).

Little is known about the "stayers" who escape ethnic cleansing. In particular, there is hardly any evidence regarding whether they can affect political outcomes in

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[1]Of the 100 million displaced people worldwide today, around half of them were forced to leave their country. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2022): UNHCR: Ukraine, other conflicts push forcibly displaced total over 100 million for first time, access: 30.12.2022.

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FIGURE 1 Line of Contact in the Final Days of World War Two in Europe (May 1945)

Notes: The red line is the line of contact where the Western Allies (mainly British and U.S. forces) and the Red Army met in May 1945. The gray lines correspond to national boundaries as of 1930. The gray shaded area in Czechoslovakia represents Sudetenland—a region settled by around three million Germans, which was annexed by Nazi Germany in October 1938. The U.S.-liberated part of Sudetenland is in dark gray, while the Red Army-liberated part is in light gray.

the communities in which they have become a minority. Can stayers of strong political convictions act as a "small seed" and take an active role in politics in their resettled communities, the way that migrants entering established societies sometimes do? Answering this question is important for understanding ethnic cleansing. It can also shed light on community identity formation, since stayers are more strongly rooted locally than the new incoming majority settlers.

We study the long-term footprint of the staying German minority who evaded Czechoslovakia's expulsions after World War Two. Three million ethnic Germans were forced to leave Sudetenland—a region in the Czech borderlands that was predominantly populated by ethnic Germans prior to the war (see the shaded regions in Figure 1). However, some 200,000 Germans avoided deportation: half antifascists (mainly Communists) and half indispensable industrial workers. Even 70 years later, Communist vote shares are significantly higher in Czech regions where antifascist Germans stayed in larger numbers, as illustrated in Table 1, which controls for regional differences in industrial shares.[2]

[2]Column 1 based on all Czech regions implies that a 1 percentage point higher population share of antifascist German stayers in 1946 is related to a 0.5 percentage point higher Communist vote

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TABLE 1 Staying Antifascist Germans and Communist Vote Shares

	Czech Republic (13 regions)	Sudetenland (67 counties)	
	Communist Vote Share 2017 (1)	Germans (Percent) (2)	Communist Vote Share 2017 (3)
Antifascist Germans (%)	0.540†		0.027*
	(0.271)		(0.011)
Industry (%)	−0.115*	0.509**	−0.076**
	(0.044)	(0.186)	(0.027)
Mean dependent variable	0.082	0.084	0.095
Observations	13	67	67
R^2	0.316	0.160	0.175

Notes: The table reports estimates from OLS regressions. In Columns 1 and 3, the Communist vote share in the 2017 Czech elections serves as the dependent variable. Column 1 relies on the latest available (late 1946) regional data on staying antifascist Germans (certified antifascists or Germans subject to potential future transports and therefore likely antifascists [Luža 1964]) as a percentage of the 2017 population. The units of observations are the 13 regions as of 1950 covering the entire Czech Republic. Columns 2 and 3 use data on the number of staying Germans as of late 1946 from Urban (1964) for 67 Sudetenland counties. Since this data source does not separately show German antifascists as opposed to German indispensable industrial workers, we estimate the number of antifascists as the residual of the regression presented in Column 2, where we regress the share of staying Germans (as a percentage of the 2017 population) on the county industry share on employment in 1930. In Column 3, we use the residuals from the model in Column 2 (i.e., variation in staying Germans unexplained by industry structure) as a proxy for antifascist Germans. Significance levels (robust standard errors).
$^{\dagger}p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

Such correlations suggest a legacy of stayers beyond the fall of the Iron Curtain, but the presence of non-displaced antifascist Germans could be endogenous to local political preferences. For example, strong Czech Communist elites might have been able to protect their ethnic German party fellows. To avoid such concerns, we study a natural experiment generating exogenous variation in the number of antifascist German stayers in Sudetenland. This variation was the result of the U.S. Army liberating parts of Czechoslovakia—a consequence of the Western Allies' unexpected military progress in the spring of 1945. Western Sudetenland became the only region in postwar Europe where forced migration was temporarily controlled by the U.S. Army, as the line of contact between the U.S. and the Red Armies divided Sudetenland between May and December 1945 (Figure 1).

This nearly straight line was designed to connect U.S. troops in Germany and Austria, and it gave rise to different expulsion policies within Sudetenland. On one side of the demarcation line, the U.S. Army prevented early ("wild") expulsions of ethnic Germans. On the other side of the line, Czech officials began to expel Germans immediately after liberation, supported by the Red Army (Brandes 2001). The Red Army also recruited thousands of antifascist Sudeten Germans to help build the Communist party in the Soviet-occupied zone in Germany. This opened a gap across the demarcation line in the share of deported Germans, particularly antifascist Germans. When organized mass deportations started in 1946, together with organized resettlement, antifascist Germans became entitled to stay in Czechoslovakia. At that time, the Red Army had already cleared its zone of a large number of antifascist Germans, who typically held far-left values. Thus, the 1945 demarcation line in Sudetenland led to variation in the local presence of left-leaning Germans staying in postwar Czechoslovakia.

We contrast neighboring areas within Sudetenland, separated by the 1945 demarcation line between the U.S. and the Red Armies, using a spatial regression discontinuity (RD) approach. We ask whether different expulsion policies after World War Two translate into differences in political attitudes, election outcomes, and ethnic identities today. We disentangle the impacts of expulsion policies from other effects, including postwar resettlement, changes in industrial structure, selective

share in 2017. We obtain qualitatively similar results based on 67 Sudetenland counties (Columns 2 and 3).

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mobility, and the direct effects of liberation by the Red Army as opposed to the U.S. Army.

Our findings imply that stayers left a lasting footprint. Today's Communist party vote shares, the density of local Communist party cells, Communist party membership rates but not German ethnicity are higher where the presence of U.S. forces led to more antifascist Germans avoiding deportation. Geocoded survey data corroborate our main findings and show stronger preferences for redistribution, planned economies, and authoritarianism in places with more antifascist stayers. We estimate that 10 antifascist stayers after World War Two are related to about four votes for the Communist party in Czech national elections today. This effect magnitude is consistent with the presence of spillover effects of stayer values on settlers, given the emigration of German stayers during the Prague Spring of 1968 and the declining size of the stayer community due to low birth rates (Wilde 2015). German surnames among regional Communist elites in the 1950s and among Communist party candidates in local elections today allow us to examine distinct transmission channels. The results suggest that early elites among German stayers go hand in hand with political persistence both within the Communist party and outside of party ranks.

Our causal evidence brings novel insights to the large body of literature on forced migration and "demographic engineering" (Bauer, Braun, and Kvasnicka 2013; Becker et al. 2020; McNamee and Zhang 2019; Testa 2021), which has not studied stayers thus far.[3] We add to the few studies that exploit local variation in the intensity of ethnic cleansing (Arbatli and Gomtsyan 2019; Charnysh 2019; Charnysh and Peisakhin 2022). To the best of our knowledge, we provide the first evidence implying that a small minority of stayers can affect a society's values and political attitudes after ethnic cleansing. Our evidence on the spatial persistence of far-left preferences complements that on far-right political values (Cantoni, Hagemeister, and Westcott 2020; Jurajda and Kovač 2021; Ochsner and Roesel 2020; Voigtländer and Voth 2012). Our ability to look *across* regime change and contrast the intergenerational transmission of values with the "small seed" long-term effects of stayer elites extends previous work on political leaders *within* political systems (Ochsner and Roesel 2020; Dippel and Heblich 2021).

A large body of literature studies how immigrants integrate into an existing majority (e.g., Bisin et al. 2016), while our setting offers a view of an ethnic group that does not relocate but becomes a minority in a newly created society. We can also jointly study political and ethnic identities. Postwar Czechoslovakia eliminated the use of German in public life and promoted far-left values. The findings suggest that stayer parents deciding on which of the two main identities (German or far-left) to inculcate in their children reflected an environment that supported one but suppressed the other identity. This is consistent with Egan (2020), who shows that ethnic identity can be adjusted in response to political identity and, more generally, with the growing body of literature suggesting that minorities make integration decisions in response to incentives (Algan et al. 2022; Atkin, Colson-Sihra, and Shayo 2021; Bazzi et al. 2019; Fouka 2019). However, the expression of political identity by the offspring of stayers is not merely an opportunistic survival strategy within the Czechoslovakian Communist regime because the far-left political values we measure correspond to free and democratic elections in the modern Czech Republic up to 2018, long after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Finally, our analysis also brings novel findings to the research exploring the various effects of the line of contact between Red Army troops and U.S. and British forces in 1945 Europe (e.g., Martinez, Jessen, and Xu 2023; Ochsner 2017). We are the first to investigate the demarcation line in Czechoslovakia, and our findings are in line with anecdotal evidence that Red Army soldiers treated Slavic people and Germans differently (Glassheim 2016, among others). This suggests that the fast progress of U.S. and British forces in 1944/1945 may have reduced postwar violence and acts of revenge.

Historical Background

Sudeten Germans in the Czech Lands

Prior to World War Two, Czechoslovakia hosted one of the largest German-speaking minorities outside Germany. Sudetenland—Czechoslovakia's borderlands—were home to three million ethnic Germans in 1930. German and Czech communities were sharply segregated.[4] Nationalism among Sudeten Germans accelerated after Adolf Hitler seized power in Germany in 1933 (Wolf 1938). The Sudeten German Party (*Sudetendeutsche Partei*) supported the annexation of Sudetenland to Germany and won two-thirds of the Sudeten German vote in the 1935 Czechoslovakian election. Nazi

[3]Related research investigates the effects of voluntary emigration on family members left behind (for a survey, see Antman 2013).

[4]In three of four counties of the Czech lands in 1930, either self-declared German or Czech ethnicity accounted for more than 90% of the population. Figure SI1 in Supporting Information (SI) Appendix D shows the population of the Czech lands between 1921 and 2011.

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Germany annexed Sudetenland in September 1938, followed by the first wave of ethnic cleansing where Czech and Jewish citizen were forced to leave Sudetenland. In September 1939, Sudetenland was fully incorporated into the *Reich* and the remaining Czech lands became the Nazi-administered territory of the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia," referred to as the "Czech main lands" below. After Germany's surrender in 1945, the national boundaries as of 1937 were restored. In a second wave of ethnic cleansing, almost the entire German population was expelled from Sudetenland and replaced by about two million Czechs, Slovaks, and other nationals. However, some 200,000 Germans stayed, corresponding to 6% of the German prewar population (Urban 1964).

Demarcation Line in 1945 Czechoslovakia

It was neither intended nor foreseeable that U.S. forces and the Red Army would meet in Czechoslovakia in May 1945. At the Yalta Conference in February that year, Czechoslovakia had been allocated to the Soviet sphere of influence. However, the German Western front collapsed after British and American forces crossed the Rhine River in March 1945, while in the East, German resistance against the Red Army remained substantial. During March and April, the Soviets gradually agreed to the further eastward progress of the U.S. forces. In the heavy battles of April 1945, the Red Army prioritized Berlin and Vienna, and did not make significant progress into the Czech lands in between. The U.S. Army, by contrast, had already liberated large parts of Germany and Austria, and demanded to connect their troops standing at the German Elbe and Mulde Rivers with U.S. troops along the Danube River in Austria (see Franzel 1967 and Figure 1). The Soviets accepted a nearly straight demarcation line formed by the Czech cities of Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad), Plzeň (Pilsen), and České Budějovice (Budweis). SI Appendices A and E.4 (pages SI2 and SI28) describe the line and its exogenous location in detail. U.S. troops approached the line on May 5 and stopped, gaining control over a strip of around 10,000 square kilometers in western Czechoslovakia.

The red line in Figure 1 shows the final position of the demarcation line as reported by Pecka (1995). The line cut through Sudetenland as well as the Czech-populated former protectorate. It followed roads and railways,[5] and it did not coincide with any preexisting geographic, administrative, or ethnic boundaries.[6] Both the Red Army and the U.S. Army had secured their zone's borders as of May 1945 (Pogue 1954). Sudeten Germans thus had very limited opportunity to flee either zone.[7]

Expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia

In regions controlled by the Red Army, the expulsion of Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia began immediately after Germany's surrender (Brandes 2001). At least 700,000 Sudeten Germans were displaced in "wild expulsions" in the Red Army zone between May and July 1945, and thousands were killed (Glassheim 2016).[8] The U.S. forces, by contrast, prevented most early displacements of Germans (Slapnicka 2000). Therefore, the number of staying Germans was substantially larger in the U.S. zone by December 1945 when both U.S. and Red Army forces left Czechoslovakia. Figure 2 traces the proportion of ethnic Germans in the 1930 population in the U.S.- and Red Army-liberated regions along the northern half of the demarcation line in Sudetenland, where we have collected rare monthly population data during the expulsions. There is no difference in population dynamics before 1945, but by the end of 1945 there is a large gap caused by the extent of displacement.

The second stage of expulsions occurred between February and October 1946. Organized mass deportations displaced two million Sudeten Germans from both the former U.S. and Red Army zones (Řeháček 2011). Figure 2 shows that these organized expulsions never fully closed the initial gap across the demarcation line in the extent of displacement. Around 240,000 Germans lived in Czechoslovakia when the last mass transportations left in October 1946 (Luža 1964), though another few thousand left during 1947 and 1948.

In the early days of Communist Czechoslovakia, Sudeten Germans were not allowed to practice their language, and interethnic marriages required government

[5]It overlapped with roads and railways by 27% and 45%, respectively (see Figure SI2 in SI Appendix D, page SI8).

[6]The exception was its southernmost part (south of the village of Žernovice, see Figure SI3 in SI Appendix D, page SI9), where the line overlapped with the border of Sudetenland, that is, with ethnic divisions.

[7]Crossing the demarcation line was possible only with permits from both Soviets and Americans, and one had to return by the end of the day. The Red Army frequently opened fire on those crossing the line illegally (Řeháček 2011). Both armies implemented similar restrictions to the reinstalled Czech–German border (Brandes 2001), which was under strict Czechoslovakian control after December 1945.

[8]The term "wild expulsions" refers to displacement in 1945, which was often violent and brutal; the nature of displacement changed with the Potsdam agreement.

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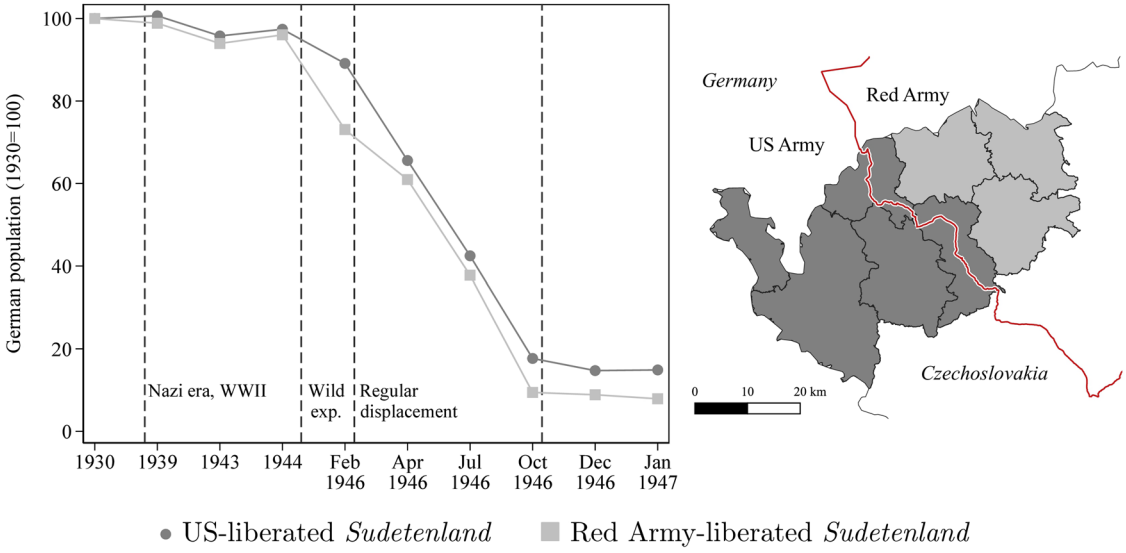
FIGURE 2 Germans in U.S.- and Red Army-Liberated Regions (Percentage of 1930 Population)



Notes: The graph on the left compares the proportion of staying Germans as a percentage of the 1930 population in U.S.- and Red Army-liberated regions corresponding to the northern half of the Sudetenland demarcation line. The corresponding map on the right shows the primarily U.S.-liberated regions in dark gray, while the Red Army-liberated counties are in light gray. The 1947 political counties of Aš, Cheb, Kraslice, Loket, and Sokolov, sum up to the U.S. region; the Red Army-liberated region is the sum of the political counties of Jáchymov, Karlovy Vary, and Nejdek. The red line on the map represents the demarcation line between U.S. and Red Army forces between May 1945 and December 1945. May 1945 to December 1945 corresponds to the presence of U.S. forces in western Czechoslovakia and "wild expulsions" in Red Army-liberated Sudetenland. February to October 1946 is the period of organized mass displacement of Germans from Sudetenland. For sources, see Section E.2 in the SI Appendix, page SI26.

approval (Kučera 1992). German identity faded. As of 2001, only 31,000 Sudetenland residents (1.0% of the total population) declared German ethnicity, and there were almost no ethnic Germans in the rest of the country. Accounting for dual identities and underreporting, the German government estimates the German community in the Czech Republic at 40,000 today.[9]

Antifascist Germans

The German stayer community in postwar Czechoslovakia consisted of two groups, each about 100,000 strong: indispensable industrial workers and antifascists.[10] Sudetenland was rich in heavy industry, and German industry specialists (with their families) often stayed where they'd been previously employed. Antifascists were certified by local authorities (national committees, *národní výbory*). German elite antifascists, the Communist party, and the Social Democratic party were involved in the certification process (Foitzik 1983; Schneider 1995). Certified antifascists included (prewar) members of the Czechoslovakian Communist party and the Social Democratic party as well as Germans active in the anti-Nazi resistance (Kučera 1992).

Three mechanisms gave rise to the local overrepresentation of antifascist German stayers in regions liberated by U.S. forces. First, in the "wild expulsions" that occurred in the Red Army zone in the summer of 1945, ethnicity was often the only selection criterion. Nazi Germans and antifascist Germans were often treated equally and expelled together (Schneider 1995). The absence of "wild expulsions" (reduced violence against civilians) in the U.S. zone thus opened a gap in the number of Nazi Germans as well as antifascist Germans across the demarcation line. Second, an agreement between the Soviet administration in Germany and the Czechoslovakian government increased this gap for antifascist Germans.[11] The Soviets aimed to roll out Communist party cells in its East German zone as fast as possible. Communist party

[9]Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat (2022): Deutsche Minderheiten in anderen Staaten Mittelost- und Osteuropas, access: 17.01.2022.

[10]A small number of German Jews and Germans married to Czechs were also allowed to stay.

[11]See Bundesministerium für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge, und Kriegsgeschädigte (1957, 343–55).

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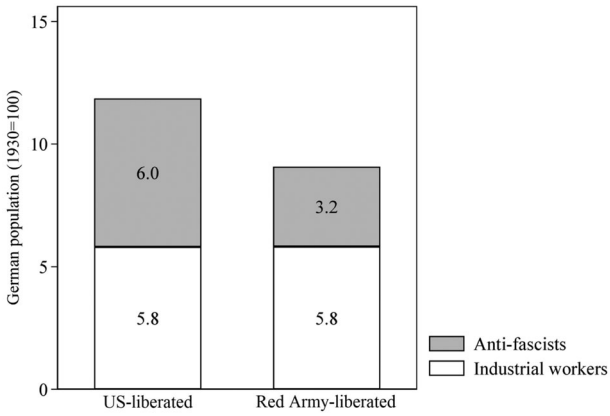
membership was high in many parts of Sudetenland, but almost no party structures existed in the north of the Soviet zone in Germany. As a result, some 30,000 antifascist Germans left Czechoslovakia for East Germany in prioritized transfers in 1945 (Foitzik 1983), and these early leavers came from the Red Army-controlled part of Sudetenland. Third, when organized mass displacement started in 1946, antifascist Germans became entitled to stay. More antifascist Germans were still present at this point in the US-liberated parts of Sudetenland and thus could stay.[12]

For three counties divided by or in close proximity to the demarcation line, we collected handwritten lists from local archives reporting the number of Germans at the municipality level in late 1946 when mass transfers were completed.[13] The lists distinguish between antifascists and industrial specialists.[14] We relate these counts to the 1930 local German population and compute averages for 76 municipalities. Figure 3 shows the results. Corroborating Figure 2, we find that more Germans stayed on the U.S. side (12% of the 1930 population) than on the Red Army side (9%). The entire gap in the share of staying German population between U.S.- and Red Army-liberated regions is accounted for by antifascists. The difference in antifascists across the line is significantly different from zero at the 5% level ($p = 0.011$), while no significant difference is found for industrial workers ($p = 0.992$).

In 1948, the Czechoslovakian Communist party (KSČ) took control of Czechoslovakia and introduced a Stalin-esque regime that lasted until 1989. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the staying antifascist Germans were powerful and prominent actors in the Communist regime. Urban (1964, 36) reports that "a considerable share of the Germans who are allowed to stay are senior Communists," many of them being "even more fanatic Communists than the Czechs." Antifascist Germans, such as Josef Pötzl, made it to the Czech parliament in the 1950s as Communist MPs.[15] Table SI1 in SI

FIGURE 3 Staying Germans after Expulsions by Entitlement (Percentage of 1930 Population)



Notes: The figure shows how the staying German population in neighboring U.S.- and Red Army-liberated regions of Sudetenland after the end of organized mass transports in late 1946 (as a percentage of the 1930 population) breaks down into different legal entitlements. Data were hand-collected from local archives in Karlovy Vary and Sokolov. The sample consists of 76 municipalities (U.S. Army: 22, Red Army: 54) in the counties of Karlovy Vary, Kraslice, and Loket. Industrial workers also include the few Germans exempt from displacement based on Jewish origin, advanced age, and mixed marriage. The antifascist group includes certified antifascists and Germans subject to potential future deportation, who were likely to be antifascists as of late 1946. We performed t-tests of mean differences: antifascists: $p = 0.011$, industrial workers: $p = 0.992$.

Appendix D, page SI11 compares the names of county-level Communist party leaders in 1959 on both sides of the demarcation line in the Sudetenland region of Karlovy Vary. Among Communist elites, German surnames are overrepresented by a factor of 1.4 on the U.S. side compared to the Red Army side.[16]

Data

We compile a new data set of Czech municipalities covering the interwar period and the era after World War Two. It covers the last national election in the interwar period (1935) and all Czech elections from 1996 to 2017.[17] All data are translated to the territorial status of the present-day 6,244 Czech municipalities. As some of

[12]Wilde (2015) notices a remarkably high number of antifascist Germans in the county of Sokolov located on the U.S. side of the demarcation line. Schneider (1995) reports that in the Red Army-liberated country of Ústí nad Labem all Communists had already departed by May 1946.

[13]Figure SI4 in SI Appendix D, page SI9 provides samples.

[14]We add the small number of Germans in mixed marriages and German Jews to industrial specialists. Antifascists include Germans subject to potential later deportation and Germans receiving "special treatment" or who were granted citizenship, as these are likely to be antifascists in 1946.

[15]Other examples of KSČ MPs of German ethnicity are Jan Jungbauer, Rudolf Müller, and the antifascist stayer and eventual mayor of Kraslice and Order of Labor awardee, Heribert Panster.

[16]The methodology for identifying German as opposed to Slavic surnames is discussed below.

[17]We also collect data on democratic national elections in Czechoslovakia (1946, 1990, 1992), which, however, are not directly comparable to other elections: Germans were not eligible to vote, and deportations and resettlement were still ongoing in May

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the municipality-level information is not available prior to World War Two, we additionally rely on information at the level of the 330 Czech counties as of 1930. We also use the 2010 and 2016 waves of the *Life in Transition Survey*, for which we geocode respondents' residences. The survey asks respondents about their political values. We combine all data with information on the location of the 1945 demarcation line, which we reconstruct based on Pecka (1995). SI Appendix E, page SI26 describes how we retrieved and processed data from digitized hardcover copies, local and national archives, and both hand-collected and administrative sources.

Our two main outcomes of interest are the extent of self-declared German ethnicity and the vote share of the Czech Communist party (KSČM since 1990). The latter is a natural choice of a political identity measure since many antifascist German stayers were closely aligned with the Communist party and generally likely to support left-wing values. The Communist party was the ruling party between 1948 and 1989, and its direct successor is the leading far-left party in the Czech Republic.[18]

Empirical Strategy

Our identification strategy is to exploit the quasi-experimental nature of the demarcation line and to compare areas close to the line, assuming that neighboring U.S.- and Red Army-liberated areas share similar trends and unobserved characteristics prior to the expulsion of Germans. Balancing tests presented in SI Appendix A, page SI2 (see Tables SI2, SI3, and SI4 on pages SI12, SI13, and SI14) and based on geographic and prewar demographic data as well as data on the extent of bombing during the war allow us to conclude that adjacent areas under Red Army control provide a counterpoint for US-liberated regions where fewer antifascist Germans were displaced.

We apply a spatial regression discontinuity (RD) design (Lee and Lemieux 2010) to the most granular data available—municipalities. Our preferred specification corresponds to a local-linear RD strategy (Calonico et al. 2017), but we use a parsimonious polynomial RD regression model as a starting point. This model is estimated with ordinary least squares (OLS); it allows for standard errors robust to spatial correlation (Conley 2010) and for easy interpretation of the effects of control variables:

$$\begin{aligned} Communist_i = \alpha + \beta_1 US_i + \beta_2 Distance_i + \beta_3 Distance_i^2 \\ + \beta_4 Distance_i \times US_i \\ + \beta_5 Distance_i^2 \times US_i + X_i'\gamma + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned}$$

Here, $Communist_i$ denotes the vote share for the Communist party in a national election in Czech municipality *i*. The vector of β coefficients refers to a quadratic RD polynomial interacted with dummy variable US_i taking on the value one if a municipality was liberated by U.S. forces in 1945 and zero otherwise. $Distance_i$ measures the great circle distance of a municipality to the demarcation line in kilometers. Distances are positive on the Red Army side and negative on the U.S. side. X_i is a vector of municipality-level geography controls (distance to the German border, to the nearest main road and railway line, mean altitude, and the difference between maximum and minimum altitude) and population controls (logged prewar population in 1930, logged present-day population, present-day population in percentage of 1930). We restrict this least-squares estimation to municipalities ±25 kilometers around the demarcation line; the rationale for this bandwidth choice is provided in SI Appendix A, page SI2. We exclude the few municipalities divided by the demarcation line, so our data set covers four types of municipalities: Sudetenland and the former protectorate (Czech main lands) municipalities that were allocated either to the U.S. or the Red Army zones in 1945.[19]

Most of our RD analysis is then based on flexible RD specifications corresponding to the local-linear procedure with a data-driven optimal bandwidth proposed by Calonico et al. (2017). We report RD standard errors robust to optimal bandwidth choice. The optimal bandwidth ends up being close to that used in our polynomial specification.

Results

The results presented in Table 2 provide robust evidence of the long-term effects of the presence of U.S. forces in 1945 Sudetenland on the electoral success of the Czech Communist party. Applying a quadratic-interacted RD

1946. Municipalities were consolidated into large units during the Communist regime, affecting the 1990 and 1992 measurements.

[18]For average vote shares, see Figure SI5 in SI Appendix D, page SI10.

[19]We also exclude municipalities divided by the border between Sudetenland and the Czech main lands (former protectorate) as well as municipalities south of the village of Žernovice. Figure SI6 in SI Appendix D, page SI10 shows the corresponding maps.

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TABLE 2 Communist Vote Shares in 2017 National Election

	Sudetenland			Czech Main Lands		
	Parametric RD (1)	Parametric RD (2)	Local-linear RD (3)	Parametric RD (4)	Parametric RD (5)	Local-linear RD (6)
U.S. zone 1945	0.094*	0.089**	0.080**	0.004	0.004	0.003
	(0.036)	(0.017)	(0.026)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Population 1945		0.041†			−0.014	
		(0.021)			(0.025)	
Geography controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Population controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Mean dependent variable	0.107	0.108	0.106	0.107	0.107	0.105
RD bandwidth	25.000	25.000	18.081	25.000	25.000	13.416
Effective observations	186	185	128	563	554	315
R^2	0.798	0.835	–	0.801	0.815	–

Notes: The table shows the effect for U.S.-liberated regions (RD estimates) at the demarcation line between U.S.- and Red Army-liberated regions in 1945 Czechoslovakia based on a parametric (quadratic-interacted) polynomial approach without/with control variables (Columns 1, 2, 4, and 5, bandwidth: 25 kilometers) and a local-linear RD specification including a data-driven optimal bandwidth choice (Calonico et al. 2017). The units of observation are municipalities. The dependent variable is the vote share of the Communist party (KSČM) in the 2017 Czech national elections. Columns 1–3 show estimates for regions originally settled by ethnic Germans (Sudetenland). Columns 4–6 refer to the Czech main lands. We exclude municipalities south of Žernovice, where ethnicity divides corresponded with the demarcation line (Figure SI3 in SI Appendix D, page SI9). Geography controls are the distance to the external (German) border, distance to the nearest main road, distance to the nearest railway line, mean altitude, and slope (difference between maximum and minimum altitude). Population 1945 is the population in December 1945 as a percentage of 1930 levels. Other population controls are logged population in 1930, logged present-day population, and present-day population as a percentage of 1930 levels. Significance levels (Conley 2010) standard errors/robust RD standard errors.
$^{\dagger}p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

polynomial in Column 1, we find the vote share of the Czech Communist party in the 2017 national election to be about nine percentage points higher as one steps across the demarcation line from the most western Red Army-liberated Sudetenland municipalities to adjacent municipalities under U.S. control.[20] Our main point estimates do not change and RD effects become more precisely estimated when we control for local geography and for the prewar and present-day population as well as for changes in population density in Column 2. The OLS-based findings are confirmed in our preferred RD specification, where we allow for flexible local-linear polynomials and rely on an optimal data-driven bandwidth. In Column 3 of Table 2, we find a statistically significant effect of eight percentage points in the Communist vote share at the demarcation line within Sudetenland. Since the local-linear RD specification is more flexible, we use it as a baseline in what follows. The baseline findings are fully robust to various sensitivity, placebo-effect, and subsample checks (all based on the local-linear RD approach). SI Appendix B, page SI4 provides the details.

[20]Figure SI7 in SI Appendix D, page SI11 shows the corresponding RD plots.

Discontinuities in outcomes across the 1945 demarcation line can correspond to multiple treatment mechanisms. Our main hypothesis is that they are a result of different expulsion policies and that they operate through antifascist German stayers. An immediate concern with this interpretation is that liberation by the U.S. as opposed to the Red Army exposed the local populations to different levels of violence against civilians.[21] To explore this mechanism, we rely on municipality population data from December 1945 based on food stamp records. High levels of 1945 depopulation indicate extensive "wild expulsions" and are thus likely to correlate with Red Army (direct or tolerated) misdeeds.[22] Such misdeeds may reduce the support for the Communist party, which was closely aligned with the Soviets. At the same time, the depopulation control (violence

[21]Memories of World War Two violence experienced by family members do not differ across the line, but this mainly reflects the direct experience of the resettlement populations. See Table SI5 in SI Appendix D, page SI14.

[22]For example, the county of Teplá on the Red Army side was significantly more depopulated in 1945; this is consistent with local reports of Soviet violence (Řeháček 2011).

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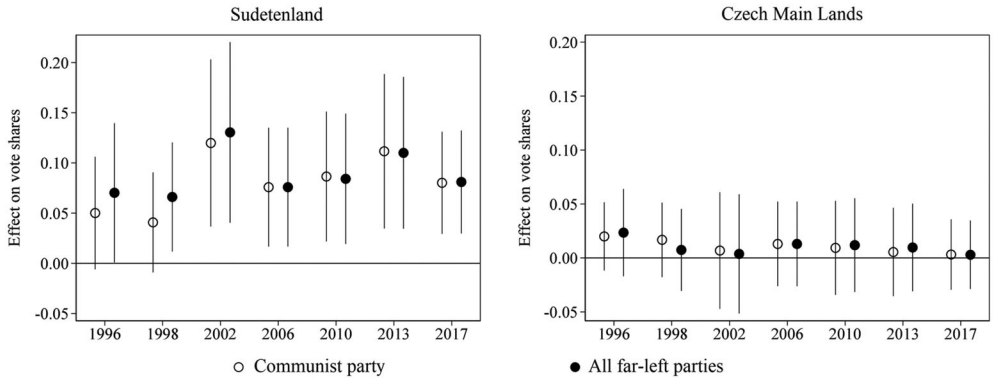
FIGURE 4 Demarcation Line Effects in Czech National Elections



Notes: The figure reports the effects for U.S.-liberated regions (RD estimates) at the demarcation line between U.S.- and Red Army-liberated regions in 1945 Czechoslovakia based on a local-linear RD specification including a data-driven optimal bandwidth choice (Calonico et al. 2017). The units of observation are municipalities; the dependent variable is the vote share of the Communist party (KSČM) or all far-left parties in Czech national elections since 1996. The graph on the left shows estimates for regions originally settled by ethnic Germans (Sudetenland). The graph on the right refers to the Czech main lands. We exclude municipalities south of Žernovice, where ethnicity divides corresponded with the demarcation line (see Figure SI3 in SI Appendix D, page SI9). Vertical bars are the 95% confidence intervals. The full set of results is available in Table SI7 in SI Appendix D, page SI16.

against all Germans) can absorb some of the variation in antifascist stayers. Column 2 in Table 2 shows that—as expected—more depopulation (that is, a lower German population in 1945 relative to 1930) comes with lower vote shares for the Communist party, suggesting that misdeeds and early violent expulsions translate into lower Communist support. However, the RD effect of the demarcation line is fully robust regarding controlling for our proxy for Red Army misdeeds, consistent with the antifascist stayer mechanism.[23] This minimizes the concern that the demarcation line effects correspond to Red Army misdeeds. The results are also robust for controlling for education—a mechanism suggested by Becker et al. (2020) and Testa (2021)—and Communist votes before the war in 1935 (SI Appendix D, Table SI6, page SI15).

Within Sudetenland, the different expulsion policies in the U.S. and Red Army zones led to a higher share of antifascist Germans on the U.S. side of the demarcation line. In the Czech main lands, however, there were almost no Germans as of 1947 and thus no meaningful difference in the share of staying Germans across the demarcation line. If the presence of U.S. forces affects present-day Communist vote shares via antifascist Germans, one would expect no effects within the Czech main lands. This is indeed born out in Columns 4–6 of Table 2, where we uncover precisely estimated zero effects for the part of the demarcation line cutting through the Czech main lands, consistent with effects operating through German stayers. The Czech main lands here provide a placebo test of our interpretation of the Sudetenland effects. Point estimates for Sudetenland are also significantly different from those for the Czech main lands.[24] We test for demarcation line discontinuities across all national elections since the Czech independence in 1993. Figure 4 shows significant effects for far-left parties in all elections.[25] The full set of results for all political camps is presented in Table SI7 in SI Appendix D, page SI16. It implies that higher Communist (far-left) vote shares within Sudetenland come chiefly at the cost of electoral success of mainstream parties, while far-right vote shares and voter turnout are hardly affected in most observed elections.[26] Again, we obtain no statistically significant or sizeable estimates within the Czech main lands.

[23]When we split the sample at the median level of depopulation, we find statistically significant effects in areas of both high and low depopulation.

[24]We estimate difference-in-discontinuities models pooling observations in Columns 1 and 4 as well as 2 and 5. The differences are statistically significant at the 5% and 1% levels, respectively.

[25]While the Communist party was always the main far-left party, there were briefly a few other small far-left parties in the late 1990s, such as the Left block (Levý blok), which eventually disappeared.

[26]In the late 1990s, we find discontinuities for the far-right camp, that is, chiefly SPR-RSČ. The party supported the idea of a unified Czechoslovakia, a policy shared by Communist elites in the 1990s.

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Next, we ask about the effect of the line on the presence of local Communist party cells. We collect data on all local (municipal) elections in the Czech Republic between 1994 and 2018 and code whether the Communist party stood in a given municipality. We pool all local elections to measure long-term Communist party structures. Table SI8 in SI Appendix D, page SI17 reports the results. Municipalities on the U.S. side of the demarcation line are about 12% more likely to host a local Communist party cell. Thus, we find not only more Communist voters but also more active Communist party structures where antifascist Germans stayed in larger numbers after 1945, thanks to the presence of the U.S. Army.

Given the absence of free elections during the Communist regime, our main analysis studies election outcomes after 1989. However, household surveys allow us to study the Communist era before 1989. Specifically, we geocode the 2010 and 2016 waves of the *Life in Transition Survey*, which asks respondents in Eastern and Central Europe about their values and attitudes, and about their membership in the Communist party before 1989. The municipality-clustered sampling limits the extent of variation in the distance to the demarcation line. We therefore use a simplified RD approach. Instead of controlling for an RD polynomial, we control for latitude and longitude, and again manually limit observations to a bandwidth of 25 kilometers around the demarcation line. We control for survey years and for the age and gender of the respondents, and compare conditional outcome means across the line in probit and ordered probit specifications. We find that respondents or their relatives living on the former U.S. side of the demarcation line in Sudetenland were statistically significantly more likely to be members of the Communist party prior to 1989 (Table SI9 in SI Appendix D, page SI18 shows the *Life in Transition Survey* estimates). Further, support for redistribution, planned economies, and authoritarianism are also stronger on the U.S. side of the line. By contrast, we find no systematic effects on any of the *Life in Transition Survey* outcomes within the Czech main lands, in line with our main findings.[27]

[27]The sole exceptions are preferences for government systems (indifference) and redistribution. We also find no effects on trust, with local government being the exception; see Table SI10 in SI Appendix D, page SI19.

Mechanisms

Antifascist Stayers

To provide further evidence on the importance of the German-stayer channel, we ask about the presence of German surnames among Communist-party candidates running for municipality-council seats. Candidates do not disclose their ethnicity, so we rely on a unique feature of nonanonymized election data: family names of candidates. Germanic and Slavic languages (German and Czech in our case) are distinguishable in terms of family names. Further, in the Czech context, German surnames, which indicate German ancestry, were not dropped with German ethnic identity (Beneš 1998). We study surnames and party affiliation of all 1.3 million candidates standing in Czech local elections between 1994 and 2018. We consult the family history research website http://www.Forebears.io to identify German names among candidates. Names most frequent to Germany and Austria are coded as German. Quality checks confirm that this simple algorithm correctly classifies nine in 10 names, with no accuracy gap between Communist and other candidates.[28]

Antifascist German stayers and their offspring were not disproportionately geographically mobile (see SI Appendix C, page SI6). If far-left values were transferred across generations within families, one would expect a higher share of German surnames on Communist-party election lists in the U.S.-liberated municipalities. We therefore apply our local-linear RD procedure to test whether the frequency of German names differs across the demarcation line. The evidence is in line with our hypothesis as the share of German names among Communist party candidates is around 15 percentage points higher where U.S. troops were located in 1945, compared to adjacent Red Army-liberated municipalities. Table 3 presents the estimates based on the set of municipalities where the Communist party ran in local elections. Furthermore, this gap across the line is unique to the Communist party. And again, we find no effects of the demarcation line in the Czech main lands. We present the results based on the most recent 2018 local elections, but all the results hold when we pool all elections between 1994 and 2018.

We conclude that different expulsion policies across the demarcation line are a prime channel accounting for our main findings. While no data are available to provide direct evidence on the intergenerational transmission of political values, our findings are strongly consistent with

[28]For details, see SI Appendix E, page SI26.

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TABLE 3 German Names in Local Elections

	Sudetenland		Czech Main Lands	
	Communist Party (1)	Other Parties (2)	Communist Party (3)	Other Parties (4)
U.S. zone 1945	0.152*	0.024	−0.114	0.002
	(0.077)	(0.077)	(0.126)	(0.037)
Mean dependent variable	0.158	0.155	0.160	0.169
RD bandwidth	27.400	14.691	19.271	16.705
Effective observations	49	95	43	390

Notes: The table shows the effect for U.S.-liberated regions (RD estimates) at the demarcation line between U.S.- and Red Army-liberated regions in 1945 Czechoslovakia. We use a local-linear RD procedure with a data-driven optimal bandwidth choice (Calonico et al. 2017). The units of observation are municipalities, and the dependent variable is the share of German names on candidate lists in the 2018 local elections. Columns 1 and 2 show estimates for regions originally settled by ethnic Germans (Sudetenland). Columns 3 and 4 refer to the Czech main lands. We exclude municipalities south of Žernovice, where ethnic divides corresponded with the demarcation line (Figure SI3 in SI Appendix D, page SI9). Significance levels (robust RD standard errors).
$^{\dagger}p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

German antifascist stayers inculcating their political values in their offspring.

Ethnic Legacy

Does the political legacy of the demarcation line we have uncovered correspond to an expression of ethnic identity? German ethnic identity was systematically suppressed in postwar Czechoslovakia, and homogenization policies resulted in rapidly declining levels of self-reported German identity. Perhaps families of German stayers kept their German name but discarded their German past, consistent with the literature suggesting that integration decisions by minorities respond to incentives (Algan et al. 2022; Atkin, Colson-Sihra, and Shayo 2021). Fouka (2019) shows that initially more integrated minority subgroups assimilate faster when exposed to a wave of discrimination. On the other hand, minorities facing discrimination may invest less in assimilation and retreat into their ethnic enclaves,[29] and outcomes of forced assimilation interact with the size of the minority community in models of cultural transmission (e.g., Bisin et al. 2016).

There were more Germans antifascist stayers on the U.S. side of the line. and these stayers were more easily integrated into the postwar Czech Communist regime. Our research design based on the quasi-random location of the demarcation line allows us to ask whether assimilation outcomes vary by the size of the German stayer community, where a larger community corresponds to higher *ex ante* integration potential. In Table SI11 in SI Appendix D, page 19, we find no discontinuity in self-declared German ethnicity or any other ethnicity across the demarcation line today, despite the differing initial share of German stayers after World War Two.

One explanation for the lack of German ethnic identity effects is that the Communist takeover in 1948 facilitated the expression of far-left political values, such that political identity may have supplanted ethnic identity for antifascist Germans and their descendants. Our research design provides no information on the cultivation of ethnic identity among staying German industrial workers, as there was no discontinuity in their presence across the demarcation line (Figure 3). However, we can again rely on the candidate names employed in Table 3 and ask how many original German names were "Czechified"—a process in which German characters in names were replaced by homophonous Czech characters (e.g., *Fischer* becomes *Fišer*). On average, 80% of all names classified as German in our data underwent such transformation. We find no statistically significant spatial discontinuity in "Czechifications" across the demarcation line.[30] Thus, we conclude that there is no evidence for ethnic assimilation differences across the demarcation line.

Resettlement by Czechs

Selective resettlement of Sudetenland on either side of the demarcation line provides another plausible explanation for our main findings. However, the resettlement process appears evenly structured across the

[29]For example, Fouka (2020) finds that language restrictions at schools directed at second-generation German–Americans strengthened their sense of ethnic identity.

[30]The coefficient of the corresponding RD estimate is −0.164 with a p-value of 0.354.

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demarcation line. First, resettlement did not result in differently sized populations on either side of the line, and it distributed resettler nationalities evenly. Table SI3 in SI Appendix D, page SI13, shows no long-term population effects of the line. Returning Germans also play no role. Once expelled, basically no Germans returned to Czechoslovakia. Similarly, restitution of former German business and private property was limited to rare cases and cannot drive our results. Further, in Table SI11 in SI Appendix D, page SI19, we do not observe any significant discontinuity in self-declared ethnicity.

Second, we do not find that Czech settlers in U.S.-liberated regions were more likely to come from prewar Communist hotspots within the Czech main lands.[31] We combine information on the origins of the new settlers from 1947 county-level migration matrices with prewar voting results from the 1935 Czechoslovakian election and find equal prewar Communist support for resettler sending areas on either side of the line. All counties close to or divided by the line are at 10–11% in predicted Communist vote shares (see Table SI12 in SI Appendix D, page SI20). We thus find no evidence for a Communist bias among settlers on either side of the line. The outcomes of the May 1946 national election underpin this finding. The election took place when displacement and resettlement were in full swing. Germans were not eligible to vote, and parties competed on an anti-German platform. We do not find any statistically significant spatial discontinuities in the Communist vote share in the 1946 election (see Table SI13 in SI Appendix D, page SI21) and conclude that settlers are unlikely to drive our main results.

Industrial Structure

The German displacement after World War Two could have led to economic consequences, as not all specialized prewar jobs could easily be filled by Czech workers. And a stronger decline of formerly German-staffed industries on the Red Army side of the line could have lowered the attraction of Communist ideas. However, the share of stayers who are designated as industrial workers is equal across the line where we can measure it (Figure 3). Further, there is no evidence that labor shortages affected industrial structures differently across the line. Tables SI14 and SI15 in SI Appendix D, pages SI21 and SI22 show no significant discontinuity in sectoral employment shares as of 1950 and 2001 based on applying our RD strategy to census data.[32] Thus, we find no robust evidence for shifts in sectoral shares. Long-term population and housing figures also do not diverge between the U.S.- and Red Army-liberated regions (Table SI3 on page SI13). Bombing during the war, and hence, presumably, industrial destruction, also did not differ across the demarcation line (Table SI2 on page SI12).

Discussion

The evidence on mechanisms presented above suggests that antifascist German stayers are the prime channel behind our baseline causal effects. We now ask whether the effects we estimate can be explained by the offspring of stayers alone (intergenerational transmission of values in dynasties) or whether they require spillovers of values into the resettler population. We also ask about the role of Communist elites in the stayer community.

Vote Multipliers

How does the number of antifascist German stayers in 1946 compare to Communist votes in national elections today? Table SI16 in SI Appendix D, page SI23, provides two back-of-the-envelope calculations of simplified vote multipliers; it relates counts of antifascist Germans in 1946 to counts of Communist votes today. Column 1 relies on the cross-sectional nationwide relationship presented in Table 1. Accounting for turnout rates, this relationship results in a multigenerational multiplier of about 0.26, suggesting that 10 antifascist German stayers in 1946 come with approximately three Communist votes in the 2017 election. Given the total count of antifascist German stayers reported by Luža (1964), this would imply that some 6–7% of the 2017 Czech Communist votes had these stayer roots. Our second back-of-the-envelope calculation is based on our causal RD estimates. It confirms the magnitude of the tentative cross-sectional ratio. When we relate the number of "excess" antifascist Germans to "excess" Communist votes on the U.S. side, we obtain a multiplier of 0.48, which implies that 10 staying antifascist Germans in 1946 account for four to five Communist votes in 2017.

These are sizeable effects given the further reduction of the German antifascist stayer community after 1946. In particular, the Prague Spring led to a dramatic increase

[31] Early organized Communist party building was also homogenous across the country; by 1948, all municipalities had a local cell (Marek and Malíř 2005).

[32] The only exception is the agricultural sector, which is somewhat more pronounced in the former U.S. zone of Sudetenland in 2001 but not in 1950; the effect for 2001 is also not robust to other RD polynomials. When we use a parametric RD approach, similar to that used in Table 2, The p-values for Columns 1 and 2 are 0.237 (2001) and 0.469 (1950), respectively.

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TABLE 4 Local Elites as Channels of Persistence

	German Communist Candidate Names 2018	Communist Vote Share 2017			Shapley Percent of R^2
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
German Communist elite names 1959	0.130*	0.206**		0.146**	13%
	(0.062)	(0.050)		(0.038)	
German Communist candidate names 2018			0.538**	0.463**	51
			(0.107)	(0.098)	
Region fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–
Industry controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–
Mean dependent variable	0.035	0.098	0.098	0.098	–
Observations	39	39	39	39	–
R^2	0.259	0.505	0.623	0.701	100

Notes: The table reports the results of cross-sectional OLS regressions. The units of observation are 39 counties in the 1959 regions of Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad), Plzeň (Pilsen), and České Budějovice (Budweis)—all connected by the demarcation line in 1945. The dependent variable in Column 1 is the share of Communist candidates in municipal elections with German names in 2018. Columns 2–4 explain the vote share of the Communist party (KSČM) in the 2017 Czech national elections. The explanatory variables are the population share of Communist candidates with German names in 2018 and the population share of Communist leaders with German names in 1959. Columns 1–4 report coefficients, while Column 5 reports the results of a R^2 decomposition of the specification in Column 4. All specifications control for the share of industry on county employment in 1959 and for region fixed effects. Significance levels (robust RD standard errors).
$^{\dagger}p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$.

in migration from Czechoslovakia to Germany (see SI Appendix C, page SI6). If half of the emigration flow during the Prague Spring years consisted of antifascist stayers, one out of eight antifascist stayers would have left during the Prague Spring episode alone. There is also evidence of an unfavorable age structure of the stayer community, leading to low birth rates (Wilde 2015). One may therefore expect a substantial diminution of the antifascist German stayer community after 1946, such that our multipliers serve as a lower bound. They may also be smaller than those in the literature (Ochsner and Roesel 2020) if the Czech population is less susceptible to far-left values after the breakdown of Communism compared to other "small seed" contexts studied in the literature.

Elites

Finally, we rely on German surnames to study the role of Communist German elites as a source of persistence. Previous studies suggest that local elites influence local political values for decades (Dippel and Heblich 2021). To shed light on different channels of long-term persistence, we combine data on county Communist party leaders from the 1950s with municipal data on Communist candidates today. Party leaders from the 1950s are early elites, active shortly after the displacement of Germans. Candidates running for the Communist party today can be considered strong partisans.

Column 1 of Table 4 shows that more Communist elites with German names in 1959 go hand in hand with more candidates with German names on Communist party lists today. We interpret this as suggestive of early-elites effects on the reproduction of far-left values among stayer dynasties. Next, we use both German Communist counts as dependent variables to explain Communist votes today (Columns 2–4 in Table 4). The results show that elites from both 1959 and 2018 explain Communist party vote shares today, separately as well as when used jointly in a regression. The latter suggests that German elite stayers had a lasting impact both via supporting the reproduction of extreme-left values in stayer dynasties and independently through spillover effects outside of party ranks. Both lines of persistence map onto Communist election results today. The spillover effect of staying German Communist elites that does *not* operate

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through German-descendant Communist structures today explains around 10% of the variation in Communist votes today (Column 5). Given that at least three generations bridge the seven decades between treatment and effect, including five decades of the Communist regime and over two decades of transition to democracy, we find the preservation of far-left values supportive of the notion that extremism has historical origins that begun with a "small seed" of political development (Giuliano and Tabellini 2020).

Conclusion

We provide first causal evidence on the political impacts of stayers exempted from ethnic cleansing. Three million Sudeten Germans were expelled from the Czech borderlands after World War Two, but some 200,000 were allowed to stay. We study the legacy of antifascist Germans in postwar Czechoslovakia using quasi-experimental variation and find a substantial and lasting political footprint of this left-leaning minority in today's Czech Republic. Communist vote shares, active Communist party cells, and far-left values but not German ethnic identity are more pronounced in Sudetenland today where more antifascist Germans stayed after the war. Our evidence on how far-left political values take hold in resettled communities extends the literature documenting long-lasting Communist preferences (Fuchs-Schündeln and Schündeln 2020).

The finding that stayers who evade expulsion can have effects on political values and voting behavior in resettled populations complements the literature showing that immigrants' political values act similarly upon established societies (e.g., Giuliano and Tabellini 2020). Even Germans in a Slavic country following World War Two's atrocities appear to have been able to express their political identity in newly formed societies. Our findings suggest that German elite stayers represented among local Communist elites in the 1950s, that is, shortly after the war, drive persistence within the Communist party as well as outside of party ranks. The effects we measure go well beyond the Communist regime, where state ideology was aligned with antifascists values.

Our results shed new light on the intergenerational transmission of multidimensional identity. Evidence that ethnic-identity choices respond to incentives is well established and Abdelgadir and Fouka (2020) study how integration policies affect the *joint* identity choice of immigrants across ethnic and religious dimensions. Our study of ethnic cleansing consequences suggests that among antifascist Germans, political identity may have supplanted their suppressed ethnic identity, in line with the theory predicting that well-connected representatives of a minority assimilate faster (Verdier and Zenou 2017).

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

Appendix A: Exogeneity of the demarcation line
Appendix B: Robustness
Appendix C: Mobility
Appendix D: Supplementary material
Appendix E: Data description and sources

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