

MEASURING PHANTOM BORDERS: THE CASE OF CZECH/CZECHOSLOVAKIAN ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHY

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With 3 figures

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Summary: The article focuses on Czech/German ethnic boundary from former interwar Czechoslovakia and its persistence (or transience) in electoral behaviour in selected post-1989 elections. In the analytical part of the article links between populations in regions and electoral results is discussed in order ‘extract’ phantom borders. The analysis draws on both recent GIS data on historical spatial units and historical electoral data to explore the concept of phantom borders. The focus is on phantom borders that can be observed in electoral data and cannot be identified in contemporary socio-economic data or structures and thus reflect institutional (in)stabilities of regional institutions as reflected in electoral behaviour. In conclusion, the article notes some methodological problems connected with the delimitation and visualisation of phantom borders in electoral maps.

Zusammenfassung: Der Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit der ethnischen Grenze zwischen Tschechen und Deutschen innerhalb der Tschechoslowakei in der Zwischenkriegszeit und geht der Frage nach, ob bzw. wie sich diese Grenze in (exemplarischen) Wahlen nach 1989 widerspiegelt. Die Analyse von Zusammenhängen zwischen Region, Bevölkerung und Wahlergebnis zielt letztlich darauf ab, mögliche Phantomgrenzen innerhalb Tschechiens herauszuarbeiten. Der Fokus liegt auf den Phantomgrenzen, welche anhand des Wahlverhaltens aufgezeigt werden können, die allerdings keinen Zusammenhang mit gegenwärtigen sozio-ökonomische Strukturen erkennen lassen. Insofern können die Phantomgrenzen als Indiz persistierender institutioneller Strukturen gelten. Darüber hinaus werden in dem Beitrag einige methodologische Aspekte und Probleme bei Abgrenzung und Visualisierung von Phantomgrenzen auf der Basis von Wahlergebnissen verdeutlicht und diskutiert.

Keywords: Phantom borders, electoral geography, political behaviour, border studies, Czechia, Czechoslovakia

1 Introduction

Research on borders and bordering has been a perennial topic in geography. Traditionally, geographers have been interested in the spatial distribution of various phenomena and necessarily also in forms of spatial demarcation and methods for delimiting spatial thresholds. The concept of border/bordering may be viewed as analogous to the concept of other/othering in the social sciences, which, for example, is also expressed as a conflict between the principles of *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli*. The multiplicity of ways in which borders can be defined and approached is illustrated in an article by JONES (1959), which was originally delivered as a presidential address at an AAG conference. JONES reviewed different border concepts from several disciplinary points of view and in a long historical perspective. Borders can be seen, for example, as natural or artificial, contractual, geometrical, power-political, etc. It should also

be noted that most studies on borders have focused on national borders. In more recent literature, PAASI (1998) describes a shift from viewing a border as a fixed line to viewing it as a constructed boundary. Developments such as globalisation pressures and cross-border co-operation can alter the meaning that is ascribed to a given border. Constructed boundaries can be regarded as institutions and symbols that exist in various practices and discourses and that can be conceptualised as processes instead of fixed realities. According to NEWMAN (2003), the focus of research should not be on borders per se, but on the bordering process. Boundary demarcation, boundary management, boundary transition zones, perception of borders, the opening or elimination of borders, and borders and power relations are all examples of how the bordering process can be framed in geographical research (NEWMAN 2003). The phantom border concept acknowledges theoretical shifts in the way borders are researched and also actual changes in the

way borders and bordering are defined. In Czechia, like other CEE countries, the nature and perception of borders have changed significantly in the past 25 years: firstly in connection with the fall of the Iron Curtain from 1989 to 1991, where a once impassable barrier suddenly became permeable, and secondly in connection with EU accession and membership in the Schengen area of free movement, where borders have become not just permeable but often almost invisible. The collapse of the state-socialist systems in the early 1990s led to a re-opening of borders and restored the importance of regional electoral behaviour. As a post-communist electoral geography established itself, the re-emergence of pre-socialist socio-cultural patterns in electoral behaviour was observed (HIRSCHHAUSEN et al. 2015). After several decades of no free democratic elections new political parties often tried to draw on a historical tradition of a party in a region to mobilise their electorate.

To frame the concept of phantom borders within the wider strands of political geography there are a few points that first need noting. Firstly, electoral geography is still one of the main research trends in political geography, though it is not the most progressive one. The amount of work in this field focusing on the analysis of electoral patterns per se has slightly decreased, while the amount focusing on interlinkages between democracy and representation has increased (BUČEK 2006). And this is directly related to the second point, which is that there has been a shift away from the (empirical) analysis of election results towards the analyses of public participation in democracy, issues of citizenship, and the right to vote (Ó TUATHAIL 1998). In this context phantom borders can be seen as a unifying concept that brings the two sides of electoral geography together (patterns and practices) and also links them to other neighbouring disciplines. Phantom border in electoral geography is thus seen as an institution which is expressed and perpetuated in practice – electoral behaviour.

The very concept of phantom borders is a new conceptualisation that attempts to understand space and agency in time. It considers the re-production of regional differences in territories where a political border was abolished and lost its legal value (HIRSCHHAUSEN et al. 2015). In connection with such a change the significance a former border holds for the populations and institutions in a place tends to diminish in the borderless situation, but sometimes certain aspects of the previous spatial division show themselves to be remarkably persistent in the long term and *re-appear* as a phantom border. This implies that there are probably certain mechanisms, such as

norms, values, and cultural codes, valid at a local level that guide social interactions and reproduce differences previously generated by the existence of a border (see ZARYCKI 2015). Such differences might thus affect social, cultural and economic development of related regions. In general the concept of phantom borders provides a support for grasping previously innominate type of border and shows a potential for further theoretical advancement and clarification. The novelty of the phantom borders concept has given rise to a number of new issues, and some of these were described in papers presented at the first phantom border conference,¹⁾ which focused on political behaviour. First, not all languages have a word for ‘phantom’ and researchers in language environments other than English are faced with the conundrum of translation and finding a name for the phenomenon they are dealing with. Second, the reflection of phantom borders in political behaviour should be observed and re-observed in multiple instances in order to achieve better validity.²⁾ Unfortunately for this objective, not all electoral events such as EU accession elections are periodic and allow this kind of approach. Third, phantom borders should be clearly distinguished from related concepts such as invisible borders or relic borders. Invisible borders are not necessarily past borders and relic borders are by definition remnants of the past which continue to exist but are not necessarily reflected in modes of behaviour today. Fourth, phantom borders should not be identifiable in contemporary socio-economic data and therefore easily explained by conventional models. This non-identification is a limiting factor which cannot be dealt with simply because of intrinsic features of spatial data analysis (see below) and data limits per se (see Data and methods).

It is necessary to acknowledge the peculiar nature of electoral data in a geographical perspective. Firstly, we know the electoral results (how people voted), but we don’t know why certain people voted for certain parties or politicians. Since we are working with aggregated data for selected spatial levels there is a risk of an ecological fallacy occurring when we analyse spatial patterns (ROBINSON 1950). Secondly, in order to compare electoral data for two different time periods the data we work with need to be for the same spatial units. Often they are not, and the

¹⁾ “Phantom Borders in the Political Behaviour and Electoral Geography in East Central Europe”, Frankfurt (Oder) /Slubice, November 14–15, 2013.

²⁾ I would like to thank one anonymous reviewer for kindly pointing out this issue.

original data have to be aggregated into bigger spatial units. When selecting the spatial units into which data will be aggregated (MAUP; OPENSHAW 1984) it is possible for certain electoral patterns or boundaries to end up either underlined or suppressed (gerrymandering, malapportionment; JOHNSTON 2002).

The aim of this article is to detect measurable phantom borders in Czechia and to understand how phantom borders influence contemporary electoral behaviour. As Czechia is a country with relatively stable borders and one that during the state-socialist period experienced several decades of no free democratic elections, it is expected that phantom borders will be difficult to identify and their role in contemporary electoral behaviour will be small. The article focuses on the Czech/German ethnic boundary and the Catholic religion population boundary that existed in interwar Czechoslovakia and how these boundaries have manifested themselves in post-1989 electoral behaviour, based on the observation of selected elections in that period. Both recent GIS data on historical spatial units and historical electoral data are used in this analysis. The analytical part of the article presents a discussion of two case studies of possible phantom borders. Special attention is devoted to phantom borders observed in electoral data that cannot be identified in contemporary socio-economic data or structures and thus point to the institutional stabilities of regional institutions. In conclusion, the article looks at the methodological problems attached to with delimitation and visualisation of phantom borders in electoral maps.

2 Data and methods

Because the phantom border concept is not just a search for cases of phantom borders in different countries that is required (BOROWCZAK and DOLATA 2013; JANCZAK 2013; PUTRENKO 2013; ZAMFIRA 2015) but also a methodological discussion of how phantom borders should be searched for, delimited, and measured (ZARYCKI 2015). Current borders are usually clearly drawn somewhere on a map and this type of representation determines how phantom borders are researched. The search for phantom border should also however in some way deal with the issue of the nature of borders/boundaries. There are several ways in which to conceptualise a border and approach borders in research. A political boundary is often represented as a line between spatial units, but data on political behaviour (electoral data) are usually available for statistical units – regions. A political

border from the past might cut across contemporary statistical units, thereby concealing the possible existence of a phantom border. Another point that has yet to be defined clearly is which contemporary social action or practices today a phantom border should be observed in reference to. In the case of voting, the action or practice could be votes for a certain party, electoral turnout, or votes for more parties on the same side of a political cleavage.

This article uses aggregated data from an electoral research project that is focused on analysing data on voting in parliamentary elections between 1920 and 1935³⁾ (available at the juridical district level; $n=320+$), in 1946⁴⁾ (available for administrative districts; $n=160+$), between 1992 and 2010 (available at the municipal level; $n=6000+$), and in the presidential election in 2013 ($n=6000+$). The data for period 1992–2013, which refer to municipalities ($n=6000+$), were converted to refer to so-called juridical districts, which were used as units of electoral analysis in the 1920s and 1930s. The electoral data for the interwar and post-1989 time periods were supplemented with additional statistical data from relevant censuses and were recalculated to refer to juridical districts using GIS software. The result is a database of electoral and census data for the periods 1920–1935 and 1992–2010 that refer to identical spatial units, in which it is thus possible to search for phantom borders.

From these data, two case studies that best fit the provisional definition of phantom borders were selected. The first case study focuses on the Sudety Region⁵⁾ and its relevance for electoral behaviour today. How is the past occurrence of two population resettlements, first the expulsion of the ethnic Czech population before WW2 and then the expulsion of the ethnic German population after WW2, in the Sudety Region reflected in contemporary voting patterns? Does this resettlement history matter after three generations of development? The second

³⁾ Voting in the parliamentary elections was compulsory in period 1920–1935.

⁴⁾ In first elections after WW2 only four parties were allowed to draw up an election candidate list and the right to vote was limited to only Slavic nationalities. A broader and more detailed explanation and examination of regional electoral results in the aftermath of these changes and after the uprooting of the population and political structures is beyond the scope of this article.

⁵⁾ This includes the geographical area called Sudety Region and other border regions that were inhabited by the Czech German population in the 1930s.

case study focuses on a Catholic political party (ČSL/KDU-ČSL) and its electoral support in the 20th century, during which Czech society underwent a major shift from being a ‘country of religious believers’ to a ‘country of non-believers’. How has the decrease in the number of Roman Catholics shaped electoral support for the Catholic party?

2.1 Measuring phantom borders?

In principle, there are three ways of visualising phantom borders. Phantom borders can be described in writing using spatial references, visually using various cartographic techniques, and statistically using selected measures of similarity/difference. This article focuses primarily on the last two. It should be noted that borders are in principle part of a spatial pattern, which draws a set of borders between regions with different concentrations of phenomena. From a cartographic perspective transferring a spatial pattern of data to set of borders is a user-defined task. The opening question in the search for phantom borders is whether we are looking for a border that has never been defined before (a previously undefined boundary) or whether we know beforehand that there was a border in a place (previously defined boundary). This article focuses on a clearly defined and named border in the first case study (which is more consistent with the phantom border definition) and an empirically identified and defined border in the second case study (which is less consistent with phantom border definition, but corresponds in principle to the idea of a phantom border). The second question after a border is ‘found’ is whether it makes a difference to any particular spatial pattern. Measuring the difference a border makes is not a straightforward task and there are several ways to go about it. Viewed from a statistical perspective, the border spatial pattern can be measured by various statistical measures. Simple correlation coefficients are a useful tool for measuring persistence and similarity in voting patterns, and elementary or grouping statistics on next-to-border spatial units allows the difference to be expressed numerically. Viewed from a cartographic perspective, there is a broad range of techniques which may be applied. The principal questions concern the spatial units measured and the scaling methods – in particular, how to set a scale and the number of units on it. Using inappropriate cartographic techniques could result in a misinterpretation of spatial (in)stability.

The main phantom border maps in this article are shown in pairs using different cartographic techniques (maps A1, A3 and A2, A4 in Fig. 1; maps B1, B3, B5, B7 and B2, B4, B6, B8 in Fig. 2). The reason for this approach is to show how the use of different cartographic techniques could result in certain trends in the data being underlined or suppressed. The natural breaks method looks for breaks in data distribution and creates a defined number of scale groups based on internal coherence within groups and external difference between groups. The sizes of such groups may of course differ. Conversely, the quantile method ignores breaks in the data and creates defined scale groups based on the number of units within a group. If the data are normally distributed this analytical approach does not need to be applied. But the data on Czech/German ethnic composition are U-shaped and therefore the display of maps A1 and A3 differ visually. On the other hand the data on the electoral turnout in the presidential election in 2013 are more or less normally distributed; consequently, maps A2 and A4 are more similar. In the second case study the maps of the phantom borders of the ČSL party are also shown using two different cartographic techniques. First, a fixed scale maintaining the same break values is used in order to show the general and long-term decline of electoral support for the ČSL party. Second, the natural breaks scale is used to show that despite an overall decline of electoral support for the party the regional patterns of low and high support remained almost unchanged throughout the entire last century. By comparing the maps produced using the fixed-scale method and the maps produced using the natural-brakes method it is possible to illustrate the different meanings of the persistence of different forms and modes of social practices that reflect specific historical spaces. This approach may also be relevant for the discussion of phantom borders in general.

3 Measuring phantom borders: two case studies

In order to explore the existence of phantom borders in Czech electoral data two case studies will be presented. These case studies represent two different types of border that have the potential to be considered phantom borders under the current definition (HIRSCHHAUSEN et al. 2015). First, we shall search for the phantom border of the Sudety Region for in contemporary electoral patterns. This border will reflect what aspects of population/electoral

behaviour persist after several decades of development. Second, a phantom border of religion based voting reflecting the north-west (industrial) versus south-east (agricultural) division of Czechoslovakia in the 1920s – 1930s will be contrasted with electoral patterns today and their underlying features. The study of these borders will demonstrate the extraordinary stability of voting behaviours despite decades of social, spatial, and institutional changes. The case studies are structured as follows. First, the case study and the nature of the particular phantom border(s) are described. Second, a series of maps showing phantom borders in time are presented. Third, a discussion and examination of phantom borders based on findings from this electoral geography research project is presented. To conclude, the phantom borders identified in the Czech context are summed up and related to the overall phantom borders concept.

3.1 Case study 1: the Sudety ‘border’ region

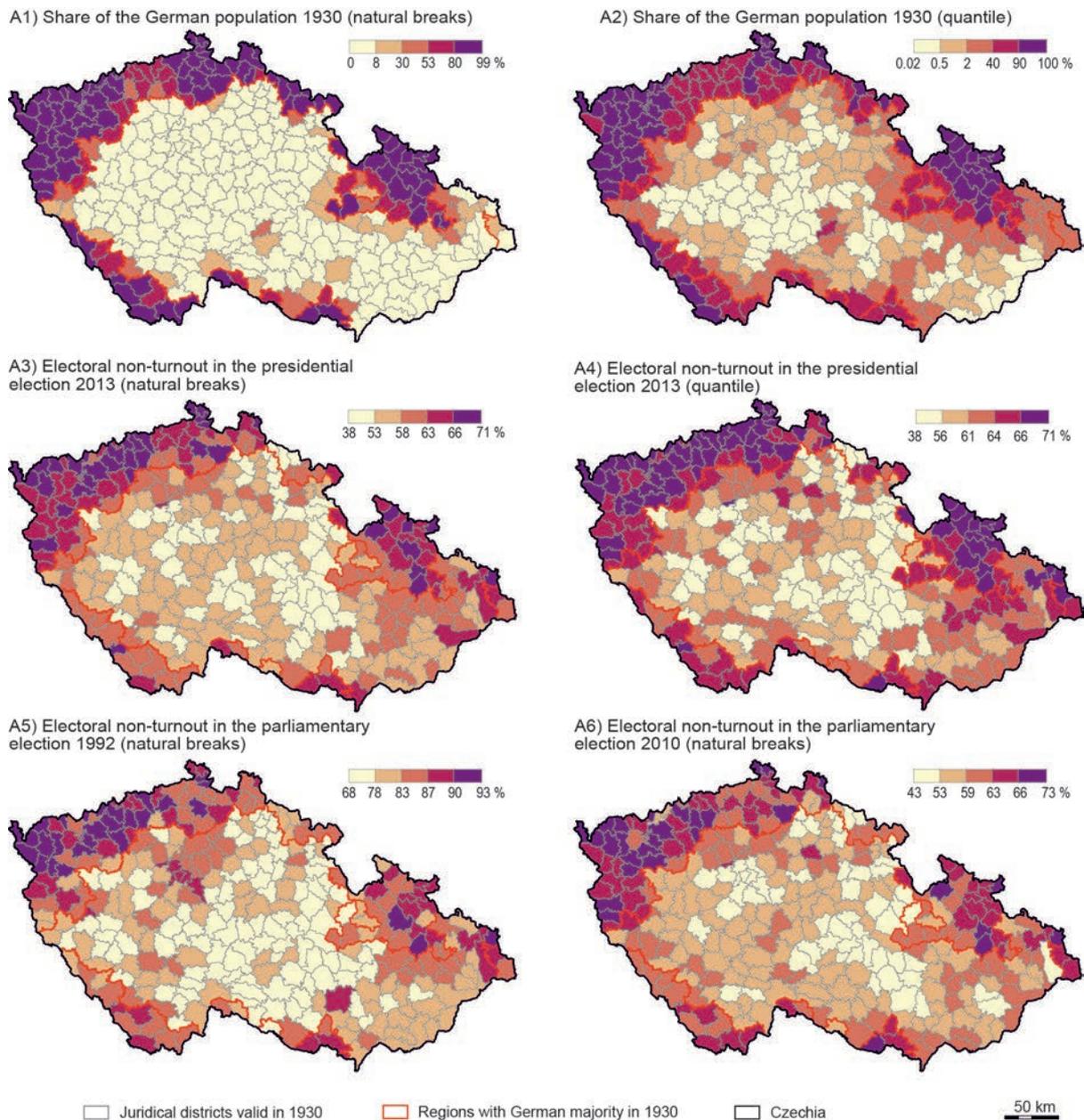
The first case study of phantom borders in Czechia focuses on the so-called Sudety Region. The population of the Czech borderland was totally transformed between 1939 and 1946. Changes included the expulsion of the ethnic Czech population before WW2 and the expulsion of the ethnic German population after WW2. The Sudety Region was subsequently only partially resettled and, more importantly, in a socially selective way (Daněk 1995). It is generally claimed that population changes in the Sudety Region led to a break in historical continuity and the decline of local communities. In most cases the people who moved to the region had no roots in the area and no attachment to the land. Broadly speaking, those who moved there were relatively poor, lower classes, as it was an area where they could more easily become home and land owners. A significant share of the new settlers also had ties to the Communist Party or to military structures and moved to the region to establish new agricultural co-operatives or to secure national borders.

The effect of resettlement on the demographic structure of the population (e.g. a younger age structure, lower education levels) was visible in census maps for several decades, but it gradually disappeared and now cannot be traced at all. Throughout the state-socialist period the effect of resettlement on political behaviour was invisible; everyone voted for one party and it made no sense to analyse such

data. This changed after 1989 when free democratic elections were re-established. A few studies have focused on patterns of electoral continuity with pre-socialist times (JEHLIČKA and SÝKORA 1991). Some similarities to pre-socialist parliamentary elections were found, but most of them disappeared in the 1990s when the Czech Republic’s current political system was constituted (KOSTELECKÝ et al. 2013). An exception to this is voting patterns in the ČSL/KDU-ČSL party, which is the second case study in this article (see also BERNARD et al. 2014).

The phantom border of the Sudety Region is not visible in patterns of electoral support for parties or for presidential candidates, but it is apparent in electoral turnout. Maps A1 and A2 (Fig. 1) show the distribution of the ethnic German population in 1930 (the darker the colour the more Czechoslovakian Germans; the shaded areas approximately correspond to the Sudety Region. Districts with an ethnic German population of more than 50 per cent are outlined by a red line. Maps A3 and A4 show the electoral turnout in the first ever presidential election in the Czechia in 2013 (first round⁶) with an inverted scale (the darker the colour the lower the level of participation in the election). The two pairs of maps are surprisingly similar, especially when quantiles are used as the method of scale definition. It is possible to identify the phantom border of the Sudety Region in contemporary election turnout in both the presidential and the parliamentary elections. A half century after the resettlement of the Sudety Region the population currently residing there still exhibits a form of electoral behaviour that differs from inland areas that experienced no population resettlement or break in historical development. To express this in one sentence: people in ‘disrupted regions’ vote less than people in regions with ‘historical continuity’, although not necessarily for different political subjects. In some studies participation in different types of election is taken as an indicator of the level of civic society, because it reflects the degree of interest and participation in issues of general concern. In this respect, the phantom border of the

⁶ In the first round of the presidential election nine candidates met the eligibility requirements to run for president, which resulted in a considerable range of choices in the first round and, more importantly, diminished the ‘candidate effects’ in spatial perspective. In the second round of the election there were only two candidates; therefore, the role of ‘candidate effect’ as a contextual effect overwrote other contextual effects that applied in the first round of the election.



Note: The spatial units of analysis are juridical districts, which were used as administrative units in the 1920s and 1930s. All newer data (after 1990) were recalculated and aggregated using GIS into historical juridical districts to enable a direct territorial comparison of electoral or population data between different time periods.

Fig.1: Does WW2 resettlement influence electoral behaviour three generations later?

Sudety Region could be viewed as a border between a stable and more developed civil society in areas of settlement continuity and a disrupted and the less stable civil society in resettled areas which has profound consequences for socio-economic development in both types of regions.

There are two almost anecdotal exceptions where the phantom border of the Sudety Region is disrupted based on data showing electoral turn-

out in the presidential election in 2013. The border regions of the Krkonoše Mountains and the Šumava Mountains do not fit the phantom border delimitation. The reason for these exceptions is a trivial one. The first round of presidential elections took place in the middle of the winter ski season and a significant share of people who voted in these two low-density areas were there on holiday. Consequently, the electoral turnout in these regions

is much higher than would be expected and phantom border does not fit as well as it probably would without this particular effect.

It is interesting to note that phantom border of the Sudety Region is more pronounced in the case of electoral turnout in the presidential election than in the case of the parliamentary election. Examples of the latter are the parliamentary elections in 1992 and 2010; see maps A5, A6. This difference is difficult to explain. Voting for a party might have a different meaning for voters than voting for a president. For example, in the Czech parliamentary democracy the president is relatively weak and has no influence on economic conditions in the country. Therefore, voting for a president is more about the norms, values, and beliefs the candidates represent than about it is about the economic issues (taxes, investments and social benefits) that tend to dominate parliamentary elections. There may be a different mechanism in effect. For example, there are limits imposed on presidential campaign spending but not on the campaign spending of parties in parliament; a core-periphery position may selectively influence electoral participation and thus diminish the difference between the in many cases peripheral areas of the Sudety Region and other regions. It should be noted that the presidential election in 2013 was the first presidential election in Czechia where the president was directly elected by the public. Voters were therefore unable to draw on previous voting experience, unlike in other types of periodic elections.

3.2 Case study 2: religion and the Catholic party

The second case study of phantom borders in Czechia deals with the Czechoslovak People's Party (ČSL/KDU-ČSL). The party was established in 1919 after several small Czech Catholic parties merged. Politically the party tended to focus on rural issues, agriculture, and issues of relevance for Roman Catholics. In the 1920s election the party was successful in the southern and the eastern parts of Czech lands, in areas that were more agricultural and more religious than the more industrial and less religious northern and western regions. Since that period, the spatial pattern of electoral support for ČSL in elections before the state-socialist period, the elections in 1925, 1929, 1935 (see the selected years in maps B1–B4 in Fig. 2) and after the state-socialist period, in 1992, 1996, 1998, 2002, 2006, and 2010 (see the selected years

in maps B5–B8 in Fig. 2), has remained extremely stable. The Sudety Region is not included in this delimitation in the 1920s and the 1930s because the ethnic German population residing in the region voted for a German Catholic party with a similar political focus. It should be noted that this case study fits less well with the definition of a phantom border as a political border, but it helps us to understand how certain modes of social interaction may endure over time.

The stability of electoral support for the ČSL party is even more striking if we take into account the differences between former Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 1930s and modern-day Czechia and all the changes that have occurred in the past 80 years. In the 1920s and 1930s the political system of Czechoslovakia was not only highly fragmented along ethnic lines but also along several cleavages representing differences between agriculture and industry, the state and religion, and urban and rural and national and international interests, etc. There were also highly differentiated spatial patterns of support for political parties between regions. In contemporary Czechia the political system is far less fragmented, and the main cleavage is an economic one, while regional differences of electoral support are low. Despite the change from a regionally and ethnically heterogeneous Czechoslovakia to a much more homogenous Czechia and an overall decline in the importance of religion for the Czech population, the pattern of electoral support for the ČSL party has remained stable. The values of the correlation coefficients between subsequent elections in the past 25 years and also between the 1920s, the 1930s, and contemporary elections are around 0.9.

As well as looking at electoral support for the ČSL party, to complete the picture the figures below show the distribution of Roman Catholics in the population over time based on census data. The distribution of the Catholic population over time shown in maps C1–6 (Fig. 3) matches the pattern of electoral support for ČSL party. Both change slowly and decline steadily in total, but the spatial pattern of regional differences is stable. A reason for this stability could be labelled the 'lack of change'. The existence of strongly rooted local institutions related to religion and the fact that the Catholic religion did not expand spatially in Czechia during the last century limited the possible ways in which a spatial pattern might change. It should be noted that no other party that existed in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 1930s had a similar degree of stability; usually only minor relics of electoral behav-

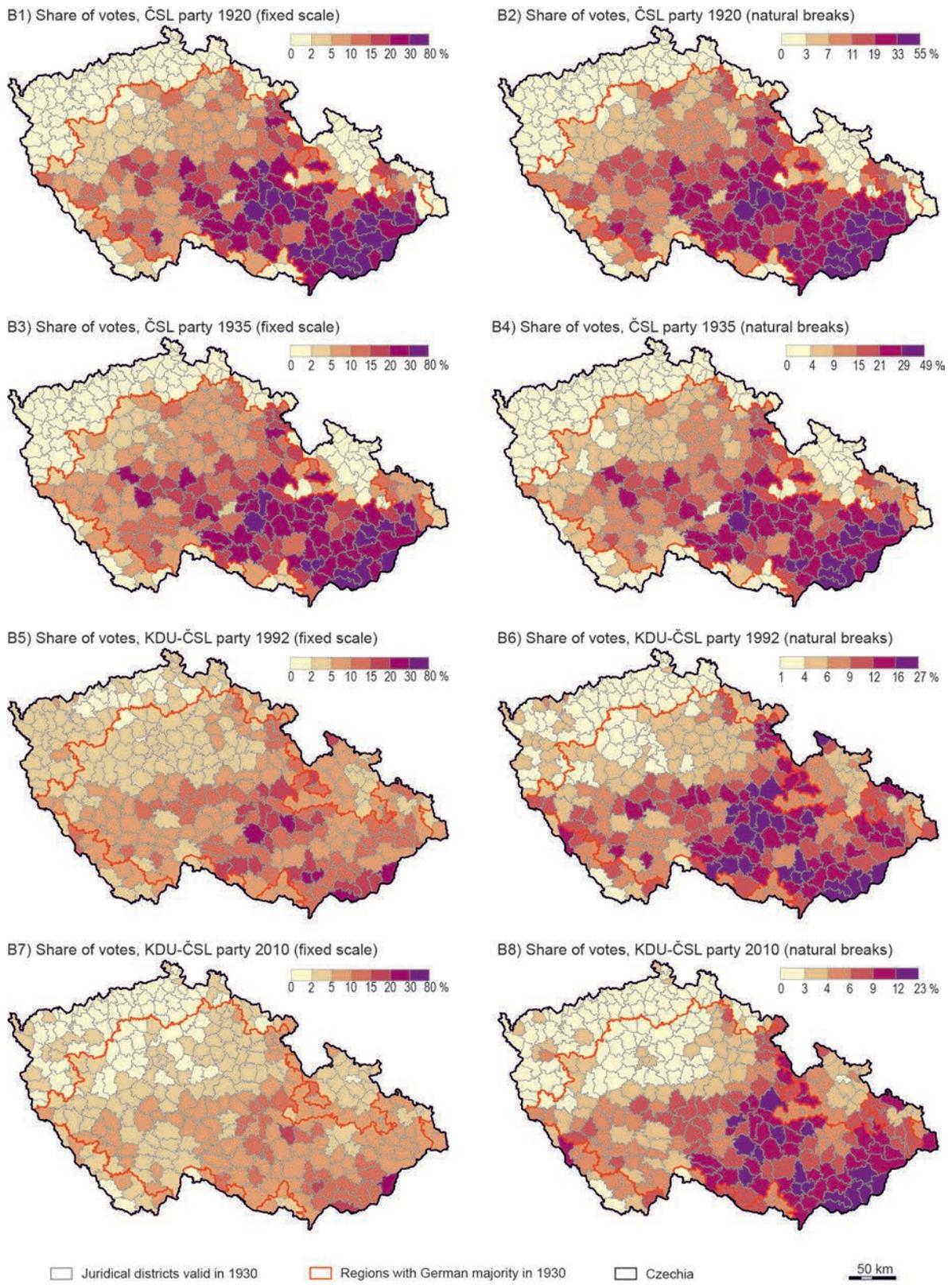


Fig. 2: Highly stable electoral behaviour – the case of ČSL. Data Source: Czech Statistical Office

our from the 1920's and 1930s have been found in modern-day electoral data,⁷⁾ and some pre-war parties were never re-established. It may sound like a bit of a paradox, but voting for a Catholic party is the most stable element in elections in the most atheist country in Central Europe.

4 Issues in search of phantom borders

The search for phantom borders based on a large set of electoral data from Czechia/Czechoslovakia produced the two provisional case studies presented above, but a number of issues also arose in the data analysis. In the case of the Sudety Region there was no political border in that area before the political border of the Sudety Region was established. Prior to that, there was only a somewhat sharp difference in the ethnic composition of the population in this region compared to other regions, which was also reflected in electoral behaviour. But it was often the case that a Czechoslovak party with a certain thematic focus bordered directly with a German party with the same thematic focus; consequently, the border was still mainly ethnically based. In the next step the ethnically mixed areas were cut into two parts when an ideological border called the Sudety Region was created. The meaning of Sudety border, which we search for as a phantom border, is related to changes after this political border was established. The two population expulsions around WW2 created a new population pattern in the Sudety Region that could be differentiated not along ethnic Czech/ethnic German lines but along the lines of stable versus resettled areas. After three generations of development during which the border was eliminated (effaced borders) this historical change is still visible in one characteristic of a civil society – election participation (a phantom border?).

⁷⁾ Several other historical parties were re-established after 1989 (social democrats, national socialists, the agrarian party, etc.), but they were either unsuccessful and quickly became insignificant, or they were successful, but their territorial support quickly changed to reflect contemporary socio-economic circumstances. An example of an unsuccessful party is the agrarian party, which lost all its electorate during the state-socialist period and the agricultural/industrial cleavage became obsolete. An example of a successful party is the social democrats, who regained electoral support in areas that traditionally supported the part in the 1920s and 1930s, but who also quickly acquired new areas of support and became successful across the country.

The case of the ČSL party, the second case study, is unique in that it is an example of the persistence of electoral behaviour in time. The areas where the ČSL party took hold in 1919 and the regional pattern of its electoral support reflected the differences that existed between the more industrial north-west and the more agricultural south-east at that time. This socio-economic pattern is no longer visible in Czechia. In terms of religion, the country has since shifted from being a place where, in the 1920s and 1930s, the majority of people were Roman Catholic to a place where almost no-one is Roman Catholic in contemporary Czechia. Under these circumstances the regional distribution of Roman Catholics and voters of the ČSL party has remained surprisingly stable. A possible explanation for this is that the decline in religion has been slow and it has prevented the original inherited pattern from changing.

This first attempt to find phantom borders on the basis of Czechoslovakian/Czech electoral data produced a few answers and many new questions for this type of research. The key points are summarised here:

For the purpose of this kind of research on Czech data it proved useful to use historical spatial units and convert contemporary electoral and population data into those units. Historical spatial units tend to follow historical borders more, and therefore may be more useful in the search for phantom borders. Nevertheless, in some case studies it may be possible to compare and evaluate historical and contemporary spatial units in particular case studies.

Different cartographic techniques may suppress or underline certain features of data that might then reveal the existence or non-existence of phantom borders when the data are converted into maps. The use of any particular cartographic methodology needs to be explained and justified.

Regional participation in elections is more stable over time than electoral support for a party, with exception of the ČSL party. Parliamentary elections are significantly influenced by changing economic conditions in regions, and therefore the territorial electoral pattern of parliamentary elections is less stable during periods of economic transformation. Presidential elections in a parliamentary system have less to do with economic conditions; therefore, other institutional conditions such as regionally specific social practices are probably more significant.

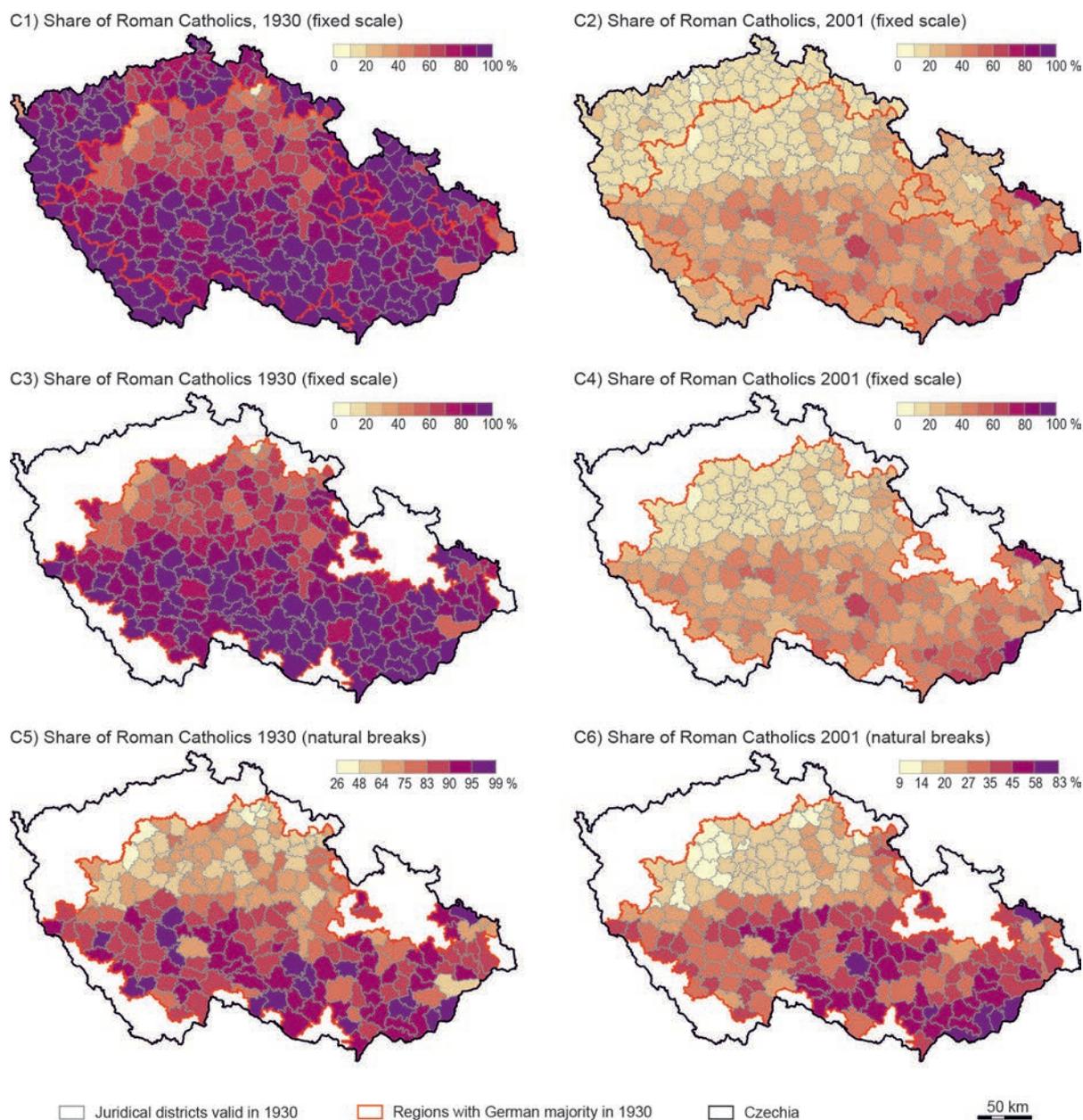


Fig. 3: Extraordinary stability of electoral behaviour – a case of ČSL. Data source: Czech Statistical Office

The spatial units for analysis should be selected in relation to the particular phantom border under scrutiny. In the case of Sudety Region, the municipal level ($n=6000+$) is too 'granular' for an analysis at a country level, but it could be useful for case studies of smaller regions.

When we use aggregated electoral and statistical data for spatial units, we face the risk of making a false conclusion based on an ecological fallacy. Therefore, it is probably better to seek historical explanations instead of statistical explanations.

5 Conclusion

The Czech political party system is often described as nationalised⁸⁾ and patterns of regional support for political parties are mild (KOUBA 2007). Despite this, the search of phantom borders in Czech electoral data produced two case studies that have distinct spatial regimes and can be considered

⁸⁾ This is measured by the level of spatial heterogeneity in regional voting results.

examples of so-called phantom borders. Markers denoting differences determined by past political borders can be observed over the long term, having endured almost eight decades in the Czechoslovak/Czech case. The case study of the Sudety Region showed that phantom borders are less visible in relation to parliamentary elections than to presidential elections, which are driven less by economic considerations and more by norms, values, and cultural codes, although, owing to data limitations, these two strands cannot be clearly separated. Voter participation in presidential elections and less clearly also in parliamentary elections shows a clear pattern reflecting population changes in the 1930s. Regions that experienced two waves of population resettlement as a result of WW2 have a significantly lower electoral turnout than regions that experience no population resettlement. This phantom border is not visible in party-related voting where the effects of population resettlement cannot be separated from the effects of economic centrality and peripherality, which significantly shape party-related voting. The second case study revealed the extraordinarily stable pattern of electoral support for the ČSL/KDU-ČSL party since the 1920s. As a Catholic party, its support has been based primarily on a church – state cleavage. Although this cleavage lost much of its significance over the last century, it simultaneously prevented changes from occurring in the spatial pattern of party electoral support. Such extreme stability is seen as a resistance to external changes; namely, to the systematic oppression of faith under socialism and the decline in faith and the diversification of belief in the last 25 years.

The two phantom borders identified in this analysis have a limited influence on political behaviour in Czechia. The overall effect on electoral results is rather weak, but understanding the specific patterns of phantom borders provides insight into contemporary political behaviour. For example, the case study of the first Czech presidential election highlighted the persistence of the effect of population resettlement. Even half a century later, and even after the generations have changed, the population in the Sudety Region is weaker as a civil society when measured by electoral turnout. This finding might help us to understand the differences and similarities in local politics and local governance between resettled and stable territories, possibly influencing also social and economic performance in regions.

In general the concept of phantom borders allows us to understand and study a previously in-nominate type of border. According to the author

perspective, the concept of phantom borders can be successfully framed within the contemporary discussion in political geography because it has the potential to be an intermediary concept between two strands of political geography: classical empirical analysis focusing on electoral patterns and more recent analysis focusing on political practices and the functioning of democracy. Although the concept itself is very new and is accompanied by an array of issues that need to be addressed, it provides a fresh opportunity for theorising borders per se (BRUNET-JAILLY 2005) and border studies and political geography in general (KOLOSSOV 2005).

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