The Dissolution of Czechoslovakia

Historical analysis of the causes of the partition of Czechoslovakia

Adam Wrobel
Abstract

Czechoslovakia, as a common state of Czechs and Slovaks, dissolved after 74 years of existence. The thesis is conducted as a historical analysis whose aim to analyse the causes of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and to identify their historical origins. The theoretical framework which accompanies the analytical part is based on Gellner’s nationalism theory, Deutsch’s theory of social communication and theoretical conditions regarding the coexistence of nations in multinational states. The thesis demonstrates that the Czech-Slovak convergence, created by the utilization of the Czech language in Slovakia, geopolitical closeness and belonging to the same cultural circle, was not sufficient enough to overcome the administrative borders which contributed to the Czech-Slovak bipolarity. The analysis shows that even though the dissolution was an issue of political elites, the partition was predominantly caused by the Czech-Slovak dualism which was an after-effect of asynchronous historical development in two different state formations. The heterogeneous historical development resulted in retardation of the Slovak nationalism and unequal positions of the Czechs and Slovaks during Czechoslovakia. This was reflected in different perspectives on the common state and consequent differences in political cultures of Czechs and Slovaks.

Key words: Czechoslovakia, dissolution, federation, nationalism, nation, historical development
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ČSFR</td>
<td>Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (Česká a Slovenská Federativní Republika)</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>HSLS</td>
<td>Hlinka's Slovak People's Party (Hlinkova slovenská řadová strana)</td>
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<td>HZDS</td>
<td>Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (Hnutí za demokratické Slovensko)</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<td>ODS</td>
<td>Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana)</td>
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<td>Civic Movement (Občanské hnutí)</td>
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<td>SdP</td>
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<td>Slovak People's Party (Slovenská řadová strana)</td>
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<td>SNR</td>
<td>Slovak National Council (Slovenská národná rada)</td>
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<td>VPN</td>
<td>Public Against Violence (Verejnosť proti násiliu)</td>
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1 Introduction

The Czechs and Slovaks are two alike nations in the heart of Europe whose relations are based on proximity, neighbourhood, as well as mutual learning and emancipation. Relations between Slovakia and the Czech Republic, respectively the Slovaks and Czechs, are one of the most positive ones within the European framework.

Throughout the time, several fluctuations and peripeteias in the form of dramatic separations and reunions may be perceived. However, these fluctuations have never been accompanied by dark chapters full of animosity, violence, or brutality. Hence, dynamics of the Czech-Slovak relations have always evoked associations of family, more precisely brotherhood. This makes the Czech-Slovak story rather unique in the context of Europe. The singularity of the Czech-Slovak relations was also demonstrated by their peaceful partition which manifested that if two nations do not want to coexist within one state formation, then their common statehood can be dissolved in a peaceful way.

The Czech-Slovak relations can be divided into several chronological stages, but none of them can be described as unproblematic. The unification of Czechs and Slovaks in 1918 and the existence of Czechoslovakia as one of the stages raised many socio-cultural as well as national questions. The most questionable issue was the position of Slovaks within Czechoslovakia which was inevitably followed by Slovak nationalism.

The historical events and Czech-Slovak relations preceding the creation of Czechoslovakia had been significant stimuli that influenced the existence, continuity, and dissolution of Czechoslovakia in the 20th century. Therefore, the thesis will seek to outline the historical causes of the Czechoslovak dissolution in 1992. By the historical analysis, it will be possible to identify major convergences that unified Czechs and Slovaks as well as divergences that problematized the coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks within one state formation.

Since the thesis focuses on historical development and national questions within multinational states, nationalism theory was selected as a theoretical framework that should create a comprehensive understanding of the development of Czech-Slovak relations and consequent national issues in Czechoslovakia. The theory of nationalism will be complemented by theoretical approaches regarding the coexistence of nations within multinational states.
1.1 Previous research

The topic of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia has been addressed by many prominent authors from various scientific disciplines. Questions regarding the partition intersect with the study of history, sociology, cultural and social anthropology, economy, political science, international relations studies and, finally, law. Due to the variety of perspectives and scholars, conclusions regarding the partition and its major causes are often partial and provisional. However, they are often to a varying extent interconnected or similar.

The first prominent approach to the dissolution is a political approach. Political scholars consider political differences between the Czech part of the federation and Slovakia to be the fundamental cause of the partition. After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, a homogeneous Czechoslovak society was never created, but it can be stated that there was a Czech society on the one hand and a Slovak society on the other, and this was reflected in different political cultures. The differences in the political cultures of Czechs and Slovaks became increasingly important after the Velvet Revolution. This is underlined, for example, by a Slovak politician Fedor Gál in his publication *The dissolution of Czechoslovakia in a political perspective* (Rozpad Československa v politickej perspektíve) where Gál states that the dissolution was caused by the political discrepancy which resulted in the election of Czech and Slovak political representations which had different political priorities.

The economically oriented stream focuses on the economic situation before the partition and analyses the impacts of economic factors on the dissolution. Experts, examining the causes of disintegration through the economic perspective, presuppose that the partition was mainly caused by the adaptation crisis originating in the transition from a planned economy to a market economy. An example of this perspective is a publication *Češi a Slováci: hospodářské a sociální diskrepance* by Zdeněk Lukas, who focuses on economic reforms after the fall of communism and the subsequent economic recession. In general, it can be claimed that the dissolution was caused by different attitudes and views of Czechs and Slovaks on the economic reforms and the market economy. The different attitudes were later reflected in the election of different political parties and elites.

On the other hand, law-oriented scholars incline to the option that the dissolution of Czechoslovakia was due to an absent functional constitution. Therefore, this group of scholars state that the disintegration of Czechoslovakia happened due to an institutional problem, which was based on the failure to adopt a new democratic constitution and consequently solve the new constitutional arrangement of Czech-Slovak relations (see Stein, 2000).
Regarding the previous research on the Czech-Slovak history and the historical causes of the dissolution, political ideologies that influenced the interpretation of the Czech-Slovak history should be accounted for. The first political ideology that influenced the Czech-Slovak historiography is nationalism, especially Slovak nationalism. In terms of the philosophical question on the establishment and later disintegration of Czechoslovakia, it is important to highlight the so-called Ľudácka literature which assesses the historical events of Slovak and Czech-Slovak history according to whether the Slovaks approached the creation of own state or vice versa. To put it plainly, any historical event that led to the approach or creation of an independent Slovak state and Slovak sovereignty is perceived positively, while events that led to a retardation of this idea are seen as negative occurrences. It is prominent that this interpretation of historical events was for “national awakening and building” activities (see Hrušovský, 1939; Ďurica, 2003).

On the other hand, the Czech nationalism was influential in the Czech lands and acted as a contrasting stream to agile German nationalism from which nationally oriented Czech historians sought to separate. Expanding Czech and German nationalisms separated Czech and German inhabitants of the Czech lands. The separation was not only regarding the choice of language but also a different view in the interpretation of history. Under such conditions, the Czech historiography often excluded the Slovak nation which did not experience similar historical events and traumas.

After 1948, due to the political dominance of the communist’s regime, a fundamental ideological turn in the interpretation of history can be detected. Marxist ideology was presented in the literature mainly due to the usage of Marxist phraseology. A fundamental shortcoming of the communist literature is in the presentation of the communist party in Czechoslovakia as the only stimulus that can solve national questions and the neglection of antagonism between federalism and communism (e.g., Falťan, 1968).

1.2 Research problem and aim

Czechoslovakia dissolved at midnight on December 31, 1992 and during this night its 74-year long existence with a de facto interruption during World War II was concluded. Paradoxically, the partition occurred when Europe started to integrate and the European Union to enlarge. For that reason, the creation of the two successor republics was an unexpected and contradictory phenomenon.
Dissolution of multinational states has been a relevant topic until today because several national conflicts are still present at a local level and internationally all over the world as well as Europe, e.g., Spain or the United Kingdom. This makes the case of Czechoslovakia important because the nonviolent and systematic process of dissolution can serve as an example of how to separate a common statehood without the need for warfare. Due to the peaceful manner, the partition is often called “The Velvet Divorce” (Wilde, 2019).

Despite the cultivated process of dissolution, the partition of Czechoslovakia is until today accompanied by numerous questions, such as: Was the division of Czechoslovakia inevitable? What were the causes of the disintegration? To clarify the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, this thesis will seek to explain the causes of the dissolution by using a historical prism. The historical perspective and analysis will attempt to incorporate the above-mentioned approaches to the dissolution and establish a deeper investigation of how and why Czechoslovakia partitioned as well as to explain the causes of the dissolution by focusing on their historical origins.

In order to reach the aim, the following research question will be utilized: What were the historical causes of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992? Apart from the essential research question, the thesis will focus on two additional and operational questions which are supposed to help to answer the primary research question:

- What did the historical development of Czechs and Slovaks look like?
- What were the major disputes between Czechs and Slovaks during Czechoslovakia?

2 Theoretical framework

As the thesis focuses on the coexistence of two alike nations and their relations, it is necessary to become acquainted with key concepts and theories which are related to the topic and research. Due to the wide-ranging academic discourse, it is beyond both the scope and the aim of the thesis to create an extensive discussion of the various theoretical approaches to this problem. The main aim of this part of the thesis is to create a summary of basic concepts and to introduce the most relevant theoretical approaches that are important for understanding the following chapters and the question of the Czech-Slovak coexistence.

To understand the historical causes of the dissolution the theoretical framework will utilize several theoretical elements. The first element of the theoretical framework is Ernest Gellner’s modernization theory of nationalism that will seek to provide a theoretical understanding of Slovak nationalism during Czechoslovakia and to explain the development of the Czech-Slovak relations. Due to the
theory it will be possible to understand why the Slovak and Czech nations had significantly different starting positions when Czechoslovakia was established. However, this theory is not sufficient enough to understand the causes why Czechs and Slovaks emerged as two different nations. That is why the second element of the theoretical framework will be Deutsch’s theory regarding social communication which will help to analyse the process of convergence and divergence between the Czechs and Slovaks before they became modern nations. For this reason, it is necessary to define a nation as such. At the same time, this chapter will seek to define the concept of a multinational state where a focus will be given to the fragility of multinational states and theoretical assumptions regarding the coexistence of nations in multinational states.

2.1 Nationalism

The difficulty of an analytical understanding of nationalism is due to its different natures which are influenced by non-identical and historically different cultural traditions (Calhoun, 1997, p. 123). That is why a great number of different definitions, theories and approaches to these phenomena have been created.

Gellner’s historical and sociological approach to nations and nationalism propose that nationalism is a political principle in which the political and national unit should be identical. Gellner approached nationalism as a theory of political legitimacy, which requires ethnic boundaries which do not overlap with political boundaries (Gellner, 1983, p. 1). Consequently, the theory suggests that nationalism creates nations and not vice versa (Gellner, 1964, p. 169).

A typical feature of Gellner’s theory is a transition of traditional society into industrial (Gellner, 1983, p. 50-51). Therefore, the key factor that strongly supports this transition and allows the creation of nationalism is the industrial revolution associated with consequent industrialization (O’Leary, 1997, p. 222). According to the theory, an industrial and modern society requires a homogenous common medium called “high culture” (Gellner, 1983, p. 141).

The emphasis is on effective and widespread context-free communication which is spread through the medium (Gellner, 1983, p. 35). A universal, standardized form of communication in terms of a national language is thus an essential element of nationalism and national consciousnesses (Anderson, 2006, p. 44-45). The communication and the subsequent dissemination of culture requires several prerequisites, such as mass literacy and education of society. Literacy and education are closely related to a sophisticated education system that enables the dissemination of culture (Gellner, 1983, p. 35).
In general, nationalism can be understood as an ideology with its focal point on a nation that is a basic building block of the ideology. Promotion of the nation’s well-being is a prominent aim of nationalism (Smith, 2013, p. 9). National ideologies have well-defined goals such as autonomy, cultural identity or belonging and territorial unification which can be interpreted as a nation-state. To reach these goals and well-being of a nation, cultural or political programmes are often established (Smith, 2013, p. 24). Depending on who shares the same objective and subjective characteristics, distinction among nations is created. Therefore, nationalism has inclusionary and exclusionary tendencies (Kumar, 2010, p. 393).

2.2 Nation

One of the most important concepts in the Czech-Slovak relations is a theoretical concept of a nation. The phenomena of a nation and nationalism are viewed by various perspectives which differ according to the focus and research positions of individual authors. Therefore, creating a universal definition seems to be impossible. Some scholars focus on defining the nation by means of objective factors such as language, religion, institutions, and others. Whereas some definitions approach the concept of nations by emphasizing subjective factors such as attitudes, perceptions, or feelings (Smith, 2013, p. 11).

Ernest Gellner (1983), a supporter of the modernist theoretical paradigm, proposes two different yet intertwined definitions of a nation:

- “Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating”
- “Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation” (p. 7).

Subsequently, Gellner (1983) claims that men create nations which are based on human beliefs, loyalty, and solidarity. A nation can be created from a group only if members of the group recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other. It is the recognition, unlike shared attributes that differ the members from non-members, which turns a group into a nation (p. 7).

Additionally, it is important to highlight that Gellner assumes that nations are not a universal necessity but they appeared with a modern era (Gellner, 1983, p. 6). The core of Gellner’s concept is based on the idea that nationalism is a force or principle which creates nations (Gellner, 1964, p. 169). In other words, a nation is a derivative, or perhaps a construct of nationalism. Hence, to understand the creation of nations it is essential to understand the genesis and principle of nationalism.
This is closely linked to Deutsch’s theory regarding social communication. According to Deutsch, prior to the creation of modern nations, the world consisted of individual societies or communities that were either separated or connected only by trade or vassal relations. With the greater interconnection among the communities, cultural habits were transferred which enabled the emergence of a common culture and subsequently a common nation (Deutsch, 1966, p. 88). Disruption of this communication in the form of certain barriers results in the division and emergence of different civilizations, in this context nations (Deutsch, 1966, p. 38). It can, therefore, be claimed that depending on the intensity and extent of connections between individual communities, the communities unite and form larger formations in the form of nations or, conversely, differentiate and emerge as different nations.

Apart from Gellner’s definition, the concept of nations can be approached from different perspectives. In the Czech-Slovak context, it is necessary to differentiate between an ethnic nation and a civic/political nation. Understanding the nation in a political context means that the nation is perceived as demos, therefore as a political community. Political perception of a nation is based on citizenship. Members of each civic nation are territorially centred in one state. Due to citizenship, citizens have a right to vote and exercise their sovereignty (Vlachová & Řeháková, 2004, p. 489). A political nation is created when an ethnically diverse population, subordinated to one government, acquires whether spontaneously or violently a consciousness to a state. Acquisition of consciousness to a state is not in contradiction with ethnic consciousness. That is why various citizens of a civic nation do not have to lose consciousness to their ethnic origin (Rychlík, 2015, p. 18).

On the other hand, an ethnic nation is based on ethnos which can be interpreted as a cultural community. Cultural community is primarily based on common language. Language proficiency is a crucial prerequisite for becoming a member of a nation. Except for the language, all members of the nation share the same history and culture (Vlachová & Řeháková, 2004, p. 489).

### 2.3 Multinational state

As the essay focuses on Czechoslovakia, therefore a multinational state, it is also necessary to define what a multinational state is. To define a multinational state, a definition by Alain Dieckhoff was selected. According to Dieckhoff (2011), the concept of a multinational state is often too generally defined which results in the fact that a wide range of states can be defined as multinational states (p. 33).
That is why Dieckhoff differs between two types of national plurality. The first plurality is a state that has a national minority whose co-nationals are a majority in a neighbouring state. This type of plurality is, however, not a multinational state but rather a nation-state with a national minority. The second type of plurality is a state that contains two or more internal nations or minorities that do not form a majority in another state formation. This form of plurality can be addressed as a multinational state (Dieckhoff, 2011, p. 33).

Additionally, the existence and continuity of multinational states are accompanied by several issues. “The problem of multinational states is that if territorially based minorities feel oppressed and alienated, then they can easily challenge the legitimacy of their continued incorporation, generate nationalist claims, and demand independence.” (Layton-Henry, 2001, p. 9896). Ergo the crucial destabilizing factor of multinational states is the principle of nationality, nationalism, and nationalistic tendencies for self-determination (Jönsson, Tägil, & Törnqvist, 2000, p. 170).

During the analysis of the Czech-Slovak relations, it is important to mention theoretical conditions under which the coexistence of nations in one multinational state is possible. The first possible condition is that ethnic nations, regardless of their origin, identify with the common state and create one national identity. This process creates one political nation from several ethnic groups and must be accompanied by one common idea that is strong enough to connect different ethnic nations. The second possible condition is the existence of nations which have partial autonomy and are connected by a supranational state organization. De facto, it is a coexistence of political nations, with limited sovereignty, which are joined into one state formation. This type of coexistence is, for example, a federation (Rychlík, 2015, p. 21-22).

3 Methodology

3.1 Method

Due to the historical nature of the topic, the thesis will be structured as qualitative historical research. “The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and interpret issues or phenomena systematically from the point of view of the individual or population being studied, and to generate new concepts and theories.” (Mohajan, 2018, p. 2). The historical method can be defined as an approach of qualitative research which focuses on a critical investigation of historical events, development and experience and their subsequent interpretation (Špiláčková, 2012, p. 23). Historical research can be divided into three phases: a collection of data through primary or secondary sources, criticism of the data by scrutinizing their validity and consequently presentation of the data (Paler-Calmorin & Calmorin, 2007, p. 69).
The historical analysis of the dissolution was selected because as Edgar Kiser (n.d.) claims: The relationship between the present and past is encoded in a historical justification. Which means that the present can be understood by knowing its origins in the past (p. 4). Because of the fact that at the time of writing, the partition of Czechoslovakia occurred less than thirty years ago, the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and particularly its consequences are still a present phenomenon. Which indicates that the partition as well as the consequences should not be assessed through “the eyes of today” but rather with a comprehension of their historical causes and legacies.

Therefore, the epistemological approach to the analysis is causal determinism, which can be defined as a belief that each event is a consequence of previous events and conditions based on the principle of causality. In other words, every event occurred as a result of a series of events or conditions that happened before (Hoefer, 2016).

3.2 Materials

The topic of Czechoslovakia is a theme for many research publications. However, most publications are fragmented and periodized. Consequently, most of them focus on certain short-term stages of Czechoslovakia. The number of research works that would deal specifically with Czech-Slovak relations and long-term development of these relations is negligible. That is why the analysis of the long-term historical development of Czech-Slovak relations is perceived as the greatest contribution to the topic.

The research will be based predominantly on secondary sources which focus on the Czech and Slovak history as well as political publications elaborating on the period of Czechoslovakia. Since the topic of the thesis has purely Czech-Slovak nature, the thesis will be based primarily on publications from the Czech and Slovak authors. An exception is the theoretical part, where international authors were used for the theoretical anchoring of the Czech-Slovak relations and the accompanying national issues.

One of the historical publications which will be used is History of Slovakia (Dějiny Slovenska) by Dušan Kováč. Although the publication focuses on the Slovak history, Kováč often describes the historical events in the Czech-Slovak context which will allow us to analyse the course of the development of Czechs and Slovaks before they became modern nations as well as afterwards. Furthermore, for the analysis of the Czech-Slovak relations before the existence of Czechoslovakia, a publication by Zdeněk Veselý Czech-Slovak Relations: Documents (Česko-Slovenské vztahy: Dokumenty) will be utilized. This publication focuses on the formation of the Czech and Slovak identity and the following political issues. In addition, the publication contains official documents that shaped modern Czech-Slovak relations, which will make it possible to make an analysis of the primary sources.
Since the communist form of government persisted in Czechoslovakia for over forty years, the Marxist-influenced literature cannot be avoided. The first publication is *Czechs and Slovaks (Češi a Slováci)* by Miloš Gosiorovský, who explores the Czech-Slovak relations during the 20th century. To gain an insight into the historical development of Czech-Slovak relations before the era of modern nations, a publication by František Čapka *The Journey of Czechs and Slovaks through History (Cesta Čechů a Slováků dějiny)* will be employed. The research will consider the Marxist authors because, despite their ideological burden and Marxist phraseology, these works are factually reliable.

First and foremost, the aim of the thesis is to maintain a high level of objectivity. For that reason, another material, which will be used, is a publication called *Czechs and Slovaks in the 20th century (Češi a Slováci ve 20. století)* by Jan Rychlík, who focuses on the Czech-Slovak relations during Czechoslovakia. An important material focusing on the disintegration of Czechoslovakia is a publication by Karel Vodička *The Division of Czechoslovakia: Ten Years After (Dělení Československa: Deset let poté)*. The publication concentrates on the dissolution and consists of wide-range analyses from numerous experts. Such a spectrum of materials will allow the research to create a plastic perspective and ensure a credibility of the research.

4 Historical events preceding the establishment of Czechoslovakia

The nature of the Czechs and Slovaks relations and their coexistence in Central Europe before the era of Czechoslovakia was given by the interdependence of these two nations. The Czech-Slovak relations have been established with the first emerging state-forming units in Central Europe. One of the possible linkages between Czechs and Slovaks was and until today is their geopolitical location. Czechs, as members of the Slavic ethnolinguistic group, were to a great extent encircled by Germans.

The geopolitical location, as well as the ethnic arrangement and demarcation, resulted in turning towards the east where similar nations from the same ethnicity were located. Therefore, Slovaks were used as a corridor between Czechs and the east. On the other hand, Slovaks used the proximity to Czechs as a protection and support from the Hungarian influence and their aggressive assimilation policy to which they were exposed (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 11).

According to Mlynárik (2003), from a historical perspective, the Czech and Slovak relations can be divided into two major chronological periods. The first period is from the arrival of Slavic tribes in Europe to the 18th century. This period can be characterized by ethnic and cultural similarity. Ethnic and cultural analogy served as a background and the basis of bilateral relations between Czechs and Slovaks. The second period which started in the 19th century, especially during and after the national
revolutions in 1848, is characterized by a shift from the cultural level to a political sphere. In this period, Czechs and Slovaks became modern nations with their political programs (p. 12).

4.1 Coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks prior to the 18th century

The roots and origins of the Czech, as well as Slovak, are dated to the period between the sixth and ninth century when Slavic tribes began to settle in the area of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia. Slavic tribes in the area of today’s Czech Republic and Slovakia initially did not create any form of a larger political unit because their mutual influence was at a very low level (Čapka, 1988, p. 6).

An important and one of the first political units in the area of the Czech Republic and Slovakia was the Great Moravian Empire. The Great Moravia Empire, established in 833, was the first state that connected most of the western Slavs. The existence of the Great Moravian Empire has significant importance for Czechs and Slovaks because it was the first common state of these two nations (Čapka, 1988, p. 8). From today’s perspective, Great Moravia cannot be considered as a common state of two nations, because the Czechs and Slovaks began to form as modern nations at the end of the 18th century. However, this does not change the fact that Great Moravia is considered as the beginning of the Czech-Slovak relations (Veselý, 2001, p. 9). In 905, Great Moravia was defeated by Hungarian attacks and Slovaks felt under the Hungarian sovereignty which lasted for ten centuries, more precisely, until the creation of independent Czechoslovakia (Veselý, 2001, p. 10).

During the 10th and 11th century, Hungarians gradually incorporated Slovakia into a newly created Hungarian feudal state. Despite the fusion with Hungary, Slovaks did not lose their ethnic character and background (Čapka, 1988, p. 23). This could be explained by the fact that Hungary separated Slovaks from other Slavic ethnic groups by a state border. This condition allowed the creation of external conditions for formations of Slovaks as an independent nation (Kováč, 1998, p. 33). After the unification of Slovaks with Hungary, any Slovak development, such as socio-cultural or political, was fully controlled by Hungarian authorities (Mahoney, 2011, p. 33-34).

It is important to highlight that the separation of Slovakia from Czech lands created distinct conditions for further development of Czechs and Slovaks which later influenced modern relations between Czechs and Slovaks. Unlike Czechs, Slovaks did not have their independent state that would allow greater cultural development (Schwarz, 1994, p. 12-18). Despite the separation of Czechs and Slovaks into two different state formations, both ethnic groups managed to keep bilateral relations. These relations were stimulated especially by permeable borders which allowed to maintain trade routes and by military clashes between ruling dynasties (Mlynárík, 2003, p. 14). According to Deutsch’s theory, it can be claimed that permeable borders and military clashes resulted in constant cultural
exchange and communication between the Czechs and Slovaks, which contributed to their close development and convergence.

The following centuries, from the 10th to 16th century, became a symbol of fragmentation of the Czech and Slovak relations. While the Slovak territory became a part of the Hungarian state, a Czech medieval state was created in Bohemia. Consequently, an area of today’s Moravia was attached to the Czech state ruled by the Přemyslid dynasty. The Přemyslid Principality later became the basis for the formation of the modern Czech nation (Schwarz, 1994, p. 12-18; Veselý, 2001, p. 10). The feudal system in the Czech lands started to establish their own Czech national identity. Simultaneous emergence and stabilization of the Old Czech language in the Kingdom of Bohemia contributed to the later rise of Czech national identity (Mahoney, 2011, p. 43-44). The Slovak ethnic group which was under the control of Hungarians did not have conditions to establish their own national identity to an extent as the Czechs did. This uneven development caused a significant predominance and superiority of the Czech influence in Slovak territory. However, this predominance was noticeable, especially from the 14th century. (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 14).

Czechs and Slovaks experienced several re-unifications, however, these re-unifications had a momentary character and that is why the development of Czechs and Slovaks was dichotomic and took place in different conditions. Permanent unification of Hungary thus Slovakia and the Czech lands took place during the reign of the Habsburgs in 1526. Nonetheless, Slovaks and Czechs were administratively divided even though they were in one state formation. (Veselý, 2001, p. 10).

From the 14th to 16th century, the Czech language was an important determinant that shaped the Czech-Slovak relations because the Czech language started to be used and stabilized in Slovakia. During this era, the Czech language started to be used in schools, administration as well as trade (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 14). Over time, the Czech language became a literary and standard language among the members of the Evangelical church (Urban, 1989, p. 196). As a result, the expansion of Czech language and documents between the 14th and 16th century established new cultural values in Slovakia (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 14-15).

Between the 16th and 18th century, Czechs and Slovaks were incorporated into the multinational Habsburg monarchy which initiated a new and special period of the Czech and Slovak coexistence (Kováč, 1998, p. 342). Just as in the previous period, the language aspect played an important role. Czech language became widely spoken in the Slovak territory and led to the formation of the older West Slovak and younger Central Slovak literary language. The Czech language turned out to be an important cultural aspect of Slovak population which caused the fact that the Czech language had a
huge impact on the formation of Slovak national identity (Schwarz, 1994, p. 29-37). Recalling Deutsch’s theory, it can be deduced that the Czech language was a major interconnecting element which contributed to the Czech-Slovak convergence.

4.2 Formation of modern nations

From the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, when the formation of Czechs and Slovaks into modern nations emerged, up to the present, three types of mutual relations can be distinguished. These relationships vary according to the statutory ties between these two nations:

- The first period can be characterized as an era when both nations did not have their own state and were integrated into the multinational Habsburg empire. In this period, bilateral relations had a combined form and structure. The Czech-Slovak relations had both national/domestic and international form, especially from the establishment of Austria-Hungary in 1867.

- This form of the relationship changed in 1918 when Czechoslovakia was created. In the period when Czechs and Slovaks had an independent state, bilateral relations were based on national/domestic form. This type of relation lasted until 1992, with an interruption from 1939 to 1945.

- The third period refers to the establishment of the independent Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. On December 31, 1992, Czechoslovakia was divided into two independent republics, which initiated an international form of relations (Veselý, 2001, p. 11).

According to Veselý’s classification, the first period is tightly connected to the creation of the modern Czech and Slovak nation which is often in historiographies called the era of national revival because at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Czech and Slovak national movements were created. The constant confrontation of the Czechs with the German nationalism and confrontation of the Slovaks with rising Hungarian nationalism contributed to the formation of both Czech and Slovak national ideologies (Kováč, 1998, p. 344). It has to be highlighted that the terms “Slovakia” and “Slovak” are the product of modern nationalism. Until then, during the Hungarian rule, Slovakia was known as the “Upper Hungary” or “Upper Land” (Mahoney, 2011, p. 34).
The formation of the Czech and Slovak nation was a process conditioned internationally as well as on intrastate level. The first stage of the national revival, starting at the end of the 18th century, was based on cultural reciprocity, when the Czech and Slovak intelligence increased their interest in their national language, culture and history (Kováč, 1998, p. 343). Emphasis was placed on the development of language and literature as the basic and determining features of a nation (Veselý, 2001, p. 11).

Nevertheless, as early as the 19th century shifted to its second half, the first political programs began to form. For the Slovak nation, it was the first political program based on a national idea (Kováč, 1998, p. 343). The second stage of the emancipatory efforts of the Czech and Slovak nation started with the revolutionary year 1848 when all of these questions ceased to be linguistic and shifted to the political level (Rychlík, 2015, p. 28).

The pre-revolutionary period until the revolutions in 1848 is closely connected with the Czech-Slovak divergence which is mainly related to the language aspect. The Czech and Slovak national revivals, in the Central European context, were parallel processes but not completely synchronous. Czechs could refer to the continuity of the Bohemian kingdom during the rule of the Přemyslids and the Margraviate of Moravia which was a strong impulse for the formation of the Czech national consciousness, hence the consciousness of its statehood. Contrary, the Slovak national movement did not have this historical-state foundation and background on which they could base their agenda. As a consequence, the Slovak national movement had to additionally assert a clear territorial and administrative delimitation of Slovakia. The different pace of the socio-economic development of the Czech lands and Slovakia also caused and supported the asynchronous process of the national revival (Veselý, 2001, p. 11).

Since the Czech lands were economically more developed, nationally conscious bourgeoisie served as a strong foundation for the Czech national revival as they demanded political rights and played an active role during the second stage of the Czech national revival (Mahoney, 2011, p. 107). Slovakia remained an agriculturally based area and retained its agrarian and traditional status. That is why, according to Gellner’s theory, Slovakia could not fully create its "high culture" and subsequent national awareness. As an outcome, the Slovak national movement did not possess such a large foundation and support among the population (Veselý, 2001, p. 12).
The schism regarding the question of a nation between Czechs and Slovaks was also stimulated by the custom border between Hungary and the western part of the Habsburg Empire, which lasted until the middle of the 19th century. This significant political and economic frontier made it impossible to create a common Czech-Slovak market that would have an integrational effect and would support further integration of the Czechs and Slovaks (Rychlík, 2015, p. 28).

At this point and in accordance with Deutsch's theory, it can be stated that the permeability of borders and continuous influence of the Czech language in the Slovak territory allowed the Czechs and Slovaks to develop as extensively similar nations, however, the level of communication and interconnection was not high and strong enough for the Czechs and Slovaks to merge. The political and economic barrier between Hungary and Austria, therefore Slovakia and the Czech lands, did not allow greater integration and consequent merging.

The first stage of the national revival raised a question whether Czechs and Slovaks were one nation or two. Answers to this question were not unanimous, especially among the Slovaks (Kováč, 1998, p. 344). In the Czech lands, the conception of the Slovaks as an integral part of the Czech nation prevailed and dominated. The uninterrupted continuity of the affiliation of the Slovaks to the Czech nation was supported by the usage of the Czech language in the Slovak territory (Veselý, 2001, p. 12). Unlike the Czech lands, the question of the nation was in Slovakia tightly connected to confessionalism. Christian bipolarity in Slovakia was reflected during the national emancipatory movements. Members of the Evangelical church in Slovakia used the Czech language as a literary as well as a liturgical language. On the other hand, the Catholic branch used Latin during their liturgies (Kováč, 1998, p. 344). Because the questions regarding the nation were closely linked to the question of language, since the end of the 18th century the Slovaks used two standard languages which separated them into two assemblies. The first group considered themselves as an independent nation and those who considered themselves as a part of a unitary nation together with the Czechs, hence the Czechoslovak nation (Kováč, 1998, p. 344-345).

The social and political development in Hungary resolved the Czech-Slovak and intra-Slovak dilemmas. Since the beginning of the 19th century, the Hungarians began a powerful Magyarization wave and tried to introduce laws favouring the Hungarian language within the Hungarian territory. As a contrapower Ľudovít Štúr, a member of the Evangelical church, and his followers Štúrovci came to the forefront in 1843 and in the same year Štúr codified the Slovak literary language (Kováč, 1998, p. 345). Referring to Gellner's theory, Slovakia, by codifying the national language, laid the foundations for the emergence of the Slovak national identity.
In the upcoming years, Štúr published newspapers where he gradually managed to formulate a Slovak political program and in 1847 he managed to reach an agreement, on the form of the Slovak language, with the Slovak Catholic branch (Kováč, 1998, p. 345). In the 1850s, Štúr's form of the Slovak language became the language of the majority of the Slovak nation and the Czech-Slovak language separation was established (Veselý, 2001, p. 15). At this time, a stereotype of the Slovaks began to emerge among the Czech public: Slovaks were seen as the ones who want to separate, who break the unity (Kováč, 1998, p. 346). All of these factors mentioned above led to the fact that in the 1840s, it was definitely determined that the Czechs and Slovaks would continue to historically develop as two different nations, albeit conscious of their closeness (Rychlík, 2015, p. 28).

During the revolutionary years 1848/49, the Czech-Slovak dichotomy was partially solved. The idea of Czechoslovak unity shifted into efforts to establish a state-political unity (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 19-20). Thus, the idea of Czechoslovak unity moved, despite linguistic differences, into efforts to project state-political unity. The majority of Czech political parties, in their programs and state-law projects, counted with the political unification of the Czech lands and Slovakia (Veselý, 2001, p. 15).

However, during the national revival the Czechs and Slovaks began to create their own separate political programs. The Czech national program was based on the so-called historical law which means that the representation referred to the continuity of the Czech kingdom during the rule of the Přemyslids and the Margraviate of Moravia (Rychlík, 2018, p. 41). The Slovak political representation did not accept the Czech political program because at that time they already had their own political program which logically could not be based on the principle of the historical law because the Slovak nation never had an independent state before. Therefore, the Slovak national program was based on the principle of natural law (Rychlík, 2015, p. 28; Rychlík, 2018, p. 41).

4.3 Turn of the 19th and 20th century

Succeeding events at the turn of centuries were continuity and consequence of the national revivals. The national revolutions inside the Habsburg Empire were followed by a period of absolutism (Kováč, 1998, p. 122). Absolutism and the centralist government sought to suppress the national revolutions and nations inside the Habsburg Empire. Contrary, this form of government had its counterproductive outcome, which had a positive impact on Czech-Slovak relations. Czech officials started to be appointed to the Slovak administrative offices and Czech professors to the schools. This led to expanding awareness of Czech-Slovak reciprocity (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 20).
The establishment of the Austro-Hungarian dualism in 1867 influenced the Czech-Slovak relations to a great extent, especially after World War I, during the era of the so-called “First Republic”. The Slovaks, due to Magyarization, did not have the possibility for cultural development to such an extent as the Czechs and the development of the Slovak civil society began to slow down and partially stagnate (Rychlík, 2015, p. 38). Hence, a significant political, as well as cultural, boundary emerged between the Czech lands and Slovakia which resulted in a divergence in developmental paths, especially in the field of politics, economy and the level of the national movements and their power. The creation of a strong political boundary between Austria and Hungary, therefore the Czech lands and Slovakia, accompanied by Magyarization resulted in a gradually increasing dissimilarity between the Czech lands and Slovakia (Kováč, 1998, p. 346-348).

Both nations entered the 20th century with the fact that they established and maintained their national existence but their positions at the beginning of the 20th century were diametrically different. The Czech nation represented a well-established nation with a developed civil society which had advanced political, social, economic and cultural attributes which were a result of extensive industrialization. In comparison, the Slovak nation did not reach this level because of distinct and more complex conditions for development (Veselý, 2001, p. 18). This corresponds to Gellner's theory of nationalism and assumption that a nation is created only after the transition from traditional society to an industrial society. Due to the fact that Slovakia was only slightly affected by industrialization, a wide-spread Slovak awareness was not created and, therefore, the Slovak nation to a great extent assimilated with the Hungarians. It is also important to mention that the new wave of Magyarization, in the form of Apponyi's laws from 1907, eroded the Slovak education system and resulted in its catastrophic state (Veselý, 2001, p. 14). Going back to Gellner, the insufficient education system prevented the dissemination of Slovak national awareness.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Czech-Slovak relations encountered two different approaches to their nature. The perception of the Czech-Slovak nation as one cultural ethnic formation with one language was outdated. The Slovak literature and language became very popular across Slovakia and hence the idea of the Czech-Slovak nation as one cultural unit had no basis for success. On the other hand, the political situation in Austria-Hungary required cooperation with a presumption that the linguistic questions will not affect the cooperation. The new phase of reciprocity entailed cooperation at the political level and the formation of an idea of a political unit that respects linguistic differences (Kováč, 1998, p. 350).
T. G. Masaryk, as one of the greatest representatives of future Czechoslovakia, and his party constructed a political program which supported the Czech-Slovak reciprocity based on the idea of political unity (Kováč, 1998, p. 350). Masaryk’s idea of Czechoslovakism perceived the Czechs and Slovaks, despite minor nuances, as one political nation and, therefore, the realization of Czechoslovakia was a way to achieve the right for their own nation-state. Masaryk supported the idea of Czechoslovakism because of its practical and political benefits. Slovakia was perceived as a corridor for Czechs from the German encirclement and as a link to other Slavic nations such as the Poles and Russians. The unification of the Czechs and Slovaks would also be beneficial for the Slovaks, who would be able to create, together with the Czechs, greater resistance to the Hungarians (Rychlík, 2018, p. 115).

5 Creation of Czechoslovakia

Foreign resistance was the essential foundation for the establishment of Czechoslovakia. In 1915, Czech Committee Abroad was established by Masaryk (Rychlík, 2015, p. 46). Since 1916, the committee was presented in the form of the Czechoslovak National Council, being the first common and official representative organisation of Czechs and Slovaks which enforced the idea of an independent state (Veselý, 2001, p. 20).

In the United States, three documents were signed, gradually proclaimed the unification of Czechs and Slovaks, and declared the sovereign Czechoslovak Republic (Veselý, 2001, p. 20-21). At the same time in Paris, the Czechoslovak Provincial Government was formed from the Czechoslovak National Council and consequently, the Czech and Slovak domestic political representation began to support the establishment of Czechoslovakia (Kováč, 1998, p. 354-355).

5.1 The First Republic

On October 28, 1918, independent Czechoslovakia was declared and a new era of the Czech-Slovak coexistence started. However, due to the impermeability of the Czech-Slovak border, the Slovak representation did not know about the declaration. Therefore, the official proclamation of the common state in Slovakia was two days later, when on October 30, 1918, the Slovak authorities in Martin adopted and declared the separation of Slovakia from Hungary and its annexation to the Czechoslovak state (Kvaček, 2013, p. 167-170). Instantly after the establishment of Czechoslovakia, national intrastate issues arose, especially concerning the internal organization and position of the Slovaks in Czechoslovakia (Veselý, 2001, p. 29).
The process of integrating Slovakia with the Czech lands turned out to be complex. Factors influencing the whole process were partly outlined in the previous chapter. The main cause was the asynchronous historical development due to which Czechs and Slovaks met in the new state with extensively unequal dispositions. As a result of dualism and extensive Magyarization, the Slovak society almost disappeared (Harna, 1990, p. 13). By the time of the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the Czechs were a politically and culturally structured society and had an efficient economy. On the other hand, the Slovak nation was predominantly traditionally based and consisted mainly of peasants living in rural areas which caused the industry to be undeveloped and the economy to be inefficient (Příhoda, 2003, p. 32). Nevertheless, it has to be highlighted that during the First Republic, the Slovak nation universally developed and shaped itself into a well-established nation. This led to a stronger national awareness and emancipatory tendencies (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 25).

The different level of development was also a factor influencing the views on Czechoslovakism and the common state. While sympathy with the Slovaks prevailed in the Czech lands, the enthusiasm from national liberation prevailed in Slovakia (Harna, 1990, p. 13). Czechs perceived the new state as the implementation of their national program, which was enhanced by the annexation of Slovakia. It was viewed as a conjunction of the nationalist idea of a nation-state and political pragmatism. Even though the Slovak public welcomed the new state spontaneously, the perspective on it was different from the Czech one. The Slovak approach to the concept of the state was based on the communion of two subjects, therefore the merger of Czechs and Slovaks (Kováč, 1998, p. 357-358). Their perception was based on the idea of unification of two subjects using a right for self-determination and constitutional arrangement based on this perception (Veselý, 2001, p. 33-34). All of these circumstances mentioned before led to several schisms among Czechs and Slovaks during the First Republic.

5.2 Intrastate Czech-Slovak schisms

The Slovak connection to the Czech lands was not as easy as it initially seemed. The unification turned into a military conflict between Czechoslovakia and Hungary lasting for several months. With the declaration of Czechoslovakia, the Slovak National Council (Slovenská národná rada: SNR) took over the power in Slovakia. However, the SNR did not gain the necessary authority and in practice, it was unable to maintain order in Slovakia (Rychlík, 2015, p. 69-70).

The Czechoslovak government was forced to join Slovakia to the Czech lands by using military force so by gradual subordination of the Slovak territory to the Prague government (Rychlík, 2015, p. 72). The Czechoslovak army managed to consolidate the situation in Slovakia but due to the threat of Hungarian irredentism, the Czech government decided that conditions in Slovakia required a strong
centralist system led from Prague (Rychlík, 2015, p. 77). In December 1918, a ministry with full power for the administration of Slovakia, led by Vavro Šrobár, was established. However, it was not an independent government but a ministry which was subordinated to the central government in Prague (Kováč, 1998, p. 184).

This is how the future position of Slovakia in Czechoslovakia was determined. Since Czechoslovakia was not created by a transfer of power from national authorities to common political bodies, that is to say the process of federalization from a bottom-up approach, further attempts of federalization or autonomy of Slovakia were perceived as decentralization of the power of a unitary state (Rychlík, 2015, p. 77). Additionally, the constitution which was created in 1920 codified one state, one nation and one language - Czechoslovak, and only confirmed the centralist form of government and supported the unitarism of Czechoslovakia (Měchýř, 1991, p. 31; Rychlík, 2015, p. 83).

Not only the annexation of Slovakia to the Czech lands was complicated but also twenty years of coexistence within the First Republic experienced multi-level discrepancies which were generated during this period. One of a few intra-state issues was related to the employment of Slovaks, especially in the state and public administration. Insufficient representation of Slovaks in the state administration became the most frequent criticism of the government policy. During the establishment of Czechoslovakia, Slovakia was lacking qualified officials. This was caused by two factors: The "Slovak Hungarians" refused to work for the newly created state and positions in the state administration were often inadequately paid. Therefore, Czech assistance and the relocation of Czech officials was necessary for the functioning of the state (Rychlík, 2015, p. 96).

The problem arose with increasing time and the new generation, which had the capability to work in the state and public administration. As a consequence, the Slovak intelligence vainly sought its application (Měchýř, 1991, p. 27). The consequent issue was the low representation of Slovaks in the central representative bodies and the government. All governments since 1918 consisted of two, a maximum of three Slovak ministers (Rychlík, 2015, p. 99). Slovak requirements for proportional representation in the central government only confirmed the absence of common Czechoslovak identity (Rychlík, 2015, p. 101).

Another fracture between the Czechs and Slovaks was enhanced by a different economic development which resulted in complaints against the government. During the First Republic, the Slovak industry could not compete with the more developed Czech industry (Rychlík, 2015, p. 104). As a result, two hundred of Slovak factories and companies, employing about one-quarter of the pre-war number of workers, ceased production. The economic recession and crisis in the 1930s complicated, because of
a lack of funding, the industrialization of Slovakia. Nevertheless, it cannot be stated that in the pre-war period, the Slovak industry was only liquidated. After the economic crisis, employment in Slovakia increased and exceeded the pre-crisis situation by 10%. The state's financial support focused on the development of infrastructure in Slovakia. During the Hungarian rule, most of the railway network was built on the basis of Budapest-to-periphery. After 1918, the railway network connecting the east and west of Slovakia started to be built and thus supported the consolidation of a unified national market which would have a greater integration effect. After analysing these factors, it can be stated that economic conditions in Slovakia were adverse, but they were not caused by the Czech hegemony, however, the situation in Slovakia was a consequence of the market economy (Rychlík, 2015, p. 105-106).

A disagreement between the Czechs and Slovaks was also based on confessional questions. The source of the problem was in the different role of the Church within the society. The secularization trend taking place in the Czech lands influenced the Slovak ethnic group, where religion played a national function (Rychlík, 2015, p. 86-87). Czech intelligence, less influenced by religion, coming to Slovakia entered a very religious environment which they perceived as undeveloped and their behaviour towards the Slovak nation was insensitive. This supported the Slovak aversion towards Czechs. It is important to mention that the centralist government did not try to securitize Slovakia, but it was only an initiative of independent and private individuals (Rychlík, 2015, p. 88).

During the First Republic several stereotypes that persisted in people’s thinking throughout the existence of the common state were created. The Slovaks were perceived by Czechs as poorer, less developed and less educated. The Czechs gained a feeling of superiority and considered themselves as dominant. The relationship of both ethnic groups was often compared to a relationship between an older and younger brother, father and son or marriage, where the Czechs were a dominant male and the Slovaks had the role of a passive woman (Přihoda, 2003, p. 33-34).

The centralist constitution, unequal position of Czechs and Slovaks within one state, different perceptions of Czechoslovakia and all of these factors mentioned above, resulted in the fact that Slovaks as an ethnic nation did not identify with Czechoslovakia and, therefore, a unified Czechoslovak political nation was not created which made it impossible for the first theoretical condition regarding the coexistence of nations in multinational states to become a reality. The remaining possibility was the creation of a state formation, where two political nations would partially devote their autonomy and sovereignty to the central government.
The Second World War and the creation of the Slovak Republic

The dissatisfaction of the Slovaks in the newly created state and the disagreement with its conception led to the Slovak nationalism and efforts for autonomy (Veselý, 2001, p. 34). The main representative of this stream was the Slovak People’s Party (Slovenská ľudová strana: SĽS) which was later renamed to Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party (Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana: HSĽS), according to its leader Andrej Hlinka (Gosiorovský, 1979, p. 86; Veselý, 2001, p. 34). SĽS demanded the autonomy since the early 1920s and gradually presented several proposals for the Slovak autonomy (Kováč, 1998, p. 192). All of these proposals were based on the same philosophical background which claimed that the Slovaks are a sovereign political nation which is distinct from the Czech one and de facto, it should have a right for its government on its territory (Rychlík, 2015, p. 110-111).

What is important is the fact that at this time the SĽS and its representatives, including Andrej Hlinka or Jozef Tiso, asked for autonomy within Czechoslovakia and not for an independent state (Měchýř, 1991, p. 45). SĽS’s realistic perspective was aware that the political situation in Slovakia could have been stabilized only by the centralized government and direct independence could have been existential for the Slovak nation. As a result, SĽS even supported the centralistic constitution in 1920 (Veselý, 2001, p. 34-35).

Nevertheless, all proposals for Slovak autonomy were rejected by the Czech side because acceptance of the Slovak autonomy was understood as an acknowledgement of dissolution of Czechoslovakia (Rychlík, 2015, p. 128). The only concession from the centralist concept of government was the introduction of the provincial system in 1928. In this year, Slovakia became an independent province, ruled by a president and a nationwide provincial government. However, the remits of these establishments were limited so they did not erode the centralist system (Kováč, 1998, p. 192).

Growing international tension additionally influenced the internal political problems of Czechoslovakia. The economic crisis, the threat of Germany, under the rule of Hitler, and German nationalism, were reflected in the Czech-Slovak relations (Kováč, 1998, p. 202). In the 1930s, Czechoslovakia started to be encircled by fascist regimes in Germany, Poland and Hungary which affected national minorities and their anti-Czechoslovak political campaigns (Čapka, 1988, p. 34). In the 1930s, the position of HSĽS strengthened as a result of the conviction of the Slovaks that the impact of the economic crisis in Slovakia was caused by the unwillingness of the Prague’s government to help Slovakia (Veselý, 2001, p. 37).
The year 1935 was a major year for interwar Czechoslovakia. That year, two elections were held in Czechoslovakia: parliamentary and presidential (Rychlík, 2015, p. 138-139). The dichotomic historical development of Czechs and Slovaks was reflected on the political level. The Czechs and Slovaks had different opinions, attitudes and values which consequently led to the dualism of political culture. The Czech and Slovak dualism in political culture resulted in a different voting behaviour and different election results in all elections since the foundation of Czechoslovakia and the elections before the dissolution in 1992 (Vodička, 2003, p. 205).

In general, on a national scale, polarization towards either the right-wing or the left-wing parties and their radical forms could have been observed. After the parliamentary elections, the radicalizing party of the German minority SdP became one of the largest single parties in the government. In Slovakia, the dominance of HSĽS was confirmed (Rychlík, 2015, p. 138-139). Both political parties began to present themselves as the only political representatives of both nations in Czechoslovakia (Veselý, 2001, p. 37). As the war approached, HSĽS gradually became a clerically fascist party (Gosiorovský, 1979, p. 108). This is due to the new generation, which took the lead of the party and was inspired by the fascist regime on the Iberian peninsula and in Germany (Veselý, 2001, p. 37).

During the same year, T.G. Masaryk was replaced by E. Beneš as a president of the republic. From the perspectives of Slovak nationalists, Beneš was an unacceptable candidate. Beneš, unlike Masaryk, did not recognize the Slovak nation or language and advocated that the Slovak nation should merge with the Czech nation (Rychlík, 2015, p. 139).

Under the influence of Nazi Germany, the internal disintegration of Czechoslovakia proceeded. On September 29, 1938, the Munich Agreement was signed, and Germany appropriated one-third of the Czechoslovak territory. This was used by Slovak autonomists and on October 6, 1938, Slovakia declared full autonomy within the Czechoslovak state. Czechoslovakia became a federal state that lasted less than a year. As a result, the republic was renamed to Czecho-Slovakia. This period is known as the Second Republic. In 1939, Germany annexed the Czech lands and under the German pressure, Slovakia declared the independent Slovak state which was, however, a satellite state under the dictatorship of Germany (Čapka, 1988, p. 35-36). Interesting was the attitude of the Slovak population, which was not excited about the independent state. Even though HSĽS was the strongest party in Slovakia, the majority of the Slovak population supported centralist parties (Kováč, 1998, p. 209-218). From this, it can be deduced that most of the Slovak nation wanted the preservation of Czechoslovakia and only one-third of the Slovak nation wanted autonomy (Měchýř, 1991, p. 47).
The understanding of the Slovak Republic differed among Czechs. While the first group perceived the establishment of the Slovak Republic as a betrayal of Slovaks, the second group perceived the Slovak state as another form of an occupied state, which did not differ much from the Czech one. The idea of Slovak betrayal was reflected on the conviction that only the Czech state, not the Czechoslovak state, should be restored after the war (Rychlík, 2015, p. 218). Nevertheless, the nationalist anti-Czech stream that reigned in Slovakia and escalated with the expulsion of the Czechs from Slovakia at the beginning of the war became marginal with the upcoming end of the war. (Rychlík, 2015, p. 209-218). The will of the Slovak population to restore the continuity of Czechoslovakia was confirmed by the Slovak National Uprising of 1944, which promoted the idea of the Czechoslovak state (Měchýř, 1991, p. 63).

7 Renewed post-war Czechoslovakia

The war, occupation, domestic as well as foreign resistance modified the understanding of the idea of Czechoslovakism. The restoration of Czechoslovakia became a reality, however, history demonstrated that the restored republic could not have the same form as the interwar republic, especially regarding the national question (Čapka, 1988, p. 36).

In 1945, the Košice program (Košický vládní program) was published, which can be interpreted as an agreement and compromise between the federal and autonomous organization of the state (Čapka, 1988, p. 36). The program acknowledged the peculiarity of the Slovak nation and the position of the Slovak and Czech nation should be based on “peer-to-peer”. As a result, Slovakia acquired a legislative and executive body whose activities were with the communist takeover of the political power symbolic or terminated (Měchýř, 1991, p. 63; Veselý, 2001, p. 46-47). The establishment of legislative and executive institutions in Slovakia was perceived negatively in the western part of the republic because there were not similar national institutions in the Czech lands (Měchýř, 1991, p. 67).

Within two years, three different agreements, defining the specific competences of the Slovak and central national authorities, were signed. The competences of the Slovak authorities significantly weakened with the third agreement from 1946. The main initiators of this direction were the Czechoslovak-oriented socialist and communist party, which won the elections in 1946 in the Czech part of the republic, however, lost to a democratic party in Slovakia.
The communist party aimed to strengthen its political power in the Slovak part and the weakening of Slovak autonomy was justified by the fear from potential separatism of Slovakia. Hence, the Slovak political institutions became inferior to the central government and their competences were considerably limited. Czechoslovakia, in turn, became a centralized state, which for many years became an asymmetric model of the Czech-Slovak relations (Veselý, 2001, p. 42-43). During this period, a belief that the Czechs implemented communism in Slovakia was established (Příhoda, 2003, p. 36).

7.1 Czech-Slovak relations during the communist regime

After the communist coup in February 1948, the communist party took control of all strategic positions in the state (Kováč, 1998, p. 262). During the communist dictatorship, national issues became marginal and their solution was subordinated to the question of maintaining power by the communist party (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 26). As a consequence, the Slovak question remained in the background until the 1960s. Hence, the communist regime did not provide suitable conditions for the harmonious development and coexistence of the Slovaks and Czechs.

Based on Marxist theories, the Slovak question and the unequal relations between the Czechs and Slovaks should have been solved by the industrialization of Slovakia. The Slovak national question was expected to be solved automatically if Slovakia would achieve the same, especially industrial, development as the Czech lands (Kováč, 1998, p. 268-269). As a consequence, between 1948 and 1960, significant changes in the economic structure of Slovakia could be perceived (Rychlík, 2015, p. 384). Nevertheless, the policy of economic alignment and industrialization of Slovakia had also its counterproductive outcome in the form of an increase of the Slovak nationally conscious intelligence which wanted to have more power in decision-making and greater sovereignty for the Slovak nation. (Rychlík, 2015, p. 393). This concurs with Gellner’s theory based on the assumption that industrialization creates and supports nationalism and national awareness.

In 1960, a new constitution, which was ratified, anchored the leading role of the communist party. The constitution abolished the last remnants of Slovak self-governing bodies, resulting in the culmination of centralism in which any national question was prohibited. Despite the persecution of nationalist efforts, the idea of Slovak autonomy was so strong that it succeeded in 1968 (Kováč, 1998, p. 269). The Czech-Slovak crisis was partially solved by the so-called Prague Spring in 1968 when a federalist form of government started to be prepared (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 27).
A turning point in the history of the common state of Czechs and Slovaks was during 1968. During the Prague Spring in 1968, the gradual liberalization of the communist regime and its subsequent rehabilitation and democratization took place (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 27). Nevertheless, during the Prague Spring, the aspirations of both nations differed. While the Czechs asked for the democratization of public life, the Slovaks demanded a federalization (Příhoda, 2003, p. 36). However, the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 20, 1968, determined the constitutional transformation of Czechoslovakia, which took place only on a limited and formal level, which corresponded to the socialist normalization conditions (Veselý, 2001, p. 50).

On January 1, 1969, the Act on the Czechoslovak Federation, which established the Czech Socialist Republic and the Slovak Socialist Republic, came into force (Gosiorovský, 1979, p. 155). The newly created national republics should have been equal and semi-autonomous subjects, which should partly devote their sovereignty and power, for example, regarding foreign policy and defence, to the federation (Veselý, 2001, p. 52). Although the federal arrangement declared the existence of two separate nations living in one state formation, the federation was a formal act, because all the political power remained in the hands of the centralistic communist party (Kováč, 1998, p. 298). Retrospectively, it can be stated that the federation under the communist doctrine did not meet the second theoretical condition for the coexistence of nations in one state because, although Czechoslovakia became a federation, it functioned as a unitary state with the communist party in power.

Over time, the communist party strengthened the power of the central federal institutions and consequently supported unitarism, lasting until the Velvet Revolution (Veselý, 2001, p. 52) The 1960s until 1980s, can be summed up as a period when the Czechoslovak federal state was a purely formal subject in which the demands of the Slovak nation played a marginal role.

### 7.2 The Velvet Revolution and Czech-Slovak relations

The fall of the communist dictatorship in November 1989 brought the Czechs and Slovaks not only a new ideology but also new problems and conflicts. The communist doctrine, which served as an ideologically unifying element of the state until 1989, was replaced by democracy and a pluralistic political system (Veselý, 2001, p. 53). Before defining the conflicts between the Czechs and Slovaks during the democratic regime, it is important to analyse their attitude and perception towards communism and federation. In many ways, the perception of the communist era varied among both nations. The Slovak public identified to a greater extent with the socialist regime than the Czech nation even though, unlike the Czechs, they rejected it in 1946 (Mlynárik 2003, p. 27).
During communism, Slovakia completed its process of modernization and industrialization, which was reflected in an increase in the standard of living and nationally conscious population. Nominalization and political repression did not influence Slovakia as strongly as the Czech lands. Democratization in Slovakia was less urgent also due to the prevailing feeling that communism in Slovakia was introduced by the Czechs. In addition, Slovakia investigated the post-socialist future with greater uncertainty, because the industrialization of Slovakia took place during socialism which means that the economy and industrial infrastructure were built on socialist ideas and needs. Therefore, the economic transformation associated with democratization would have a major negative impact on Slovakia (Příhoda, 2003, p. 37).

While the Slovaks associated communism with their economic growth, the Czechs started to have a negative approach towards it, especially after the invasion of the Soviet troops in 1968 and subsequent political repression (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 27). In addition, in the Czech lands the assumption that the Slovak growth was at the expense of Czech prevailed (Veselý, 2001, p. 53). The Czech scepticism towards the Slovak nation and representation as well as the federation was also supported by the fact that the head of the federation was a Slovak Gustav Husák (Mlynárik, 2003, p. 27).

Immediately after the revolution, democratic movements began to be formed in the Czech part and Slovakia. The democratic movements were represented in the Czech lands by the Public Forum (Občanské fórum: OF). A parallel establishment in Slovakia was called Public Against Violence (Verejnosť proti násiliu: VPN). The main demands did not differ much between these two democratic movements, and most of the demands focused on democratization. However, VPN had among their demands a clause regarding the democratic federation. This requirement was absent among the OF’s demands (Rychlík, 2015, p. 566).

It should be highlighted that in contrast to other multinational states, such as Yugoslavia or USSR, the Czech-Slovak anti-communist movements cooperated and worked in parallel. Therefore, the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia did not result in an armed dismantling of a multinational state. The cooperation resulted in gradual restoration of democracy and later cultivated dissolution (Rychlík, 2015, p. 566).

The differences in political culture, lasting throughout the existence of Czechoslovakia, became even more polarized after the 1989 revolution. This resulted in differences in attitude and opinion on the pluralistic political system, economic reforms, the market economy as well as different preferences of political parties (Vodička, 2003, p. 253). In general, it can be stated that the Czech-Slovak relations between 1989 and 1992 had similar schisms as during the First Republic. The fundamental schism was
regarding the approach to the common state, hence the form of federation. Meanwhile, the Czechs associated the common state with one state, the Slovaks identified with the idea of a federation which is based on the bottom-up design (Rychlík, 2015, p. 575).

The first confrontation in the post-revolutionary era of the Czech-Slovak relations was the so-called Hyphen War which contributed to the devolution between the Czechs and Slovaks. Václav Havel, as the newly elected democratic president, proposed to change the state symbols, the name of the army and above all, the name of the republic. More precisely, the proposal sought for a deletion of the word "socialist" from the official name: the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Stein, 2000, p. 61).

Such a proposal was opposed by the Slovak representation which proposed the name: Federation of Czecho-Slovakia. Hyphen, after which the entire conflict was named, should point out that the Czech Republic and Slovakia are two separate states. The Czechs rejected this proposal because it was reminiscent of the time of the Second Republic from the post-Munich era (Rychlík, 2015, p. 576). The consensus was established after several months of debates when the official name the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (ČSFR) was legislated (Stein, 2000, p. 62). The Hyphen War demonstrated that negotiations between the Czech and Slovak side of the federation would not be easy and only confirmed the fact that the Czech-Slovak conflict between 1989 and 1992 was due to the concept of the federation and its competences.

The OF and VPN turned into political subjects and won the federal parliamentary elections in 1990. Despite the fact that both democratic movements had similar goals and formed a coalition which had a majority, the Federal Assembly failed in this parliamentary term. Due to the Czech-Slovak discrepancies, the Federal Assembly was unable to approve a new constitution. Additionally, during the 1990-92 legislative period, the political spectrum fragmented. The OF disintegrated and divided into a conservative Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana: ODS) headed by Václav Klaus and the Civic Movement (Občanské hnutí: OH). Parallely, a group led by Vladimír Mečiar separated from the Slovak VPN and established a new political party Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (Hnutí za demokratické Slovensko: HZDS) (Vodička, 2003, p. 220-221). The crystallization of the political scene was an important event that adversely affected, if not fatally, the Czech-Slovak relations (Jičínský, 2003, p. 60). It can be assumed that the crystallization of the political scene led to a greater instability of ČSFR and the deepening of already existing conflicts.
The Czech-Slovak relations and their polarization were also influenced by the economic situation. The transition from the planned central economy to the market economy strongly influenced Slovakia, where the unemployment rate increased (Kováč, 1998. p. 316; Rychlík, 2015, p. 582). The Slovak nationalist oriented opposition took advantage of the bad economic situation to strengthen its anti-Czech political program. Criticism focused predominantly on the Minister of Finance Václav Klaus, as the initiator of the economic reform (Rychlík, 2015, p. 582).

During 1991, several negotiations about the constitutional arrangement took place. An important meeting was held in Kroměříž in June 1991. The result of the negotiation was that the representatives of Czech and Slovak political parties agreed to maintain a common state. However, the dispute was based again on the competences and the constitutional organization of the federation. The Slovak requirements and the Czech unwillingness to retreat prevented the stabilization of ČSFR. Additionally, it was acknowledged by the representatives that the issues regarding the future of the common state should not be an issue of elites which negotiate behind closed doors. Hence, another result of the Kroměříž negotiations was that the participants agreed that the only legitimate way that could decide about the dissolution of ČSFR was a referendum (Měchýř, 1991, p. 106-107). Nevertheless, the Federal Assembly was unable to agree on the formulation of a referendum and the referendum was never legislated into the constitution of ČSFR (Rychlík, 2015, p. 585).

The series of negotiations culminated in Milovy in February 1992. The result of the negotiation was a draft of an agreement between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, which can be perceived as a compromise between the two parties. The proposal had to be ratified by the National Councils. When the draft was submitted to the Slovak National Council, the National Council rejected the draft because it did not contain the principle of the sovereignty of Slovakia (Rychlík, 2015, p. 594-595). After this step, the Czech National Council stated that the discussion did not lead to any consensus. As a consequence, the negotiations were terminated and did not lead to any palpable result (Veselý, 2001, p. 54).

In 1992, the elections to the Federal Assembly were held. The Czech-Slovak dualism was also reflected in these elections. The winning parties ODS, in the Czech Republic, and HZDS, in Slovakia, began to overtake the initiative in the negotiations on the future of ČSFR. During the elections, many actors in the political level, including the winning parties and their representatives Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar used national emotions and national questions to increase their own political popularity (Jičínský, 2003, p. 59).
Jičínský (2003) describes the post-election political scene as a climate of nation-oriented ruling parties, political immaturity, dilettantism and egoism (p. 68). Another factor that played a role during the negotiations were personal characteristics of Mečiar and Klaus, who preferred to keep their political power (Kováč, 1998, p. 322). While Klaus was perceived as a level-headed pragmatist and economist, Mečiar was characterised as a tumultuous populist (Vodička, 2003, p. 223).

The Czech and Slovak election winners had diametrically opposed views on national politics. The ODS appealed for a functional federation, on the other hand, the HZDS sought to assert Slovakia's international status (Vodička, 2003, p. 223). The demand for international status was incompatible with the existence of the ČSFR and became fatal (Rychlík, 2003, p. 295). Consequent confrontations during the coalition negotiations between ODS and HZDS paradoxically led to the dissolution of the ČSFR (Vodička, 2003, p. 226). The tendency towards the division of the state was apparent already after the first negotiations between Klaus and Mečiar as prime ministers of the republic's governments (Kováč, 1998, p. 321). This happened despite the fact that both political parties supported the preservation of the common state in their political program (Vodička, 2003, p. 235-236).

On June 8, 1992, the first coalition negotiations started to take place (Vodička, 2003, p. 226). Already two weeks later a turning point in the negotiations which decided the division of the state could be perceived. The definite culmination came after the fourth meeting held on June 19, 1992. The meeting confirmed that the only thing ODS and HZDS, respectively Klaus and Mečiar, could agree on was the division of the ČSFR (Rychlík, 2015, p. 605-606). From that moment the gradual dismantling of the common state occurred.

In July 1992, the Declaration of Independence of the Slovak Nation was accepted by the Slovak National Council and followed by the creation of the independent constitution of the Slovak nation. President Václav Havel, who regularly entered into negotiations, consequently resigned in July. This can be interpreted as a sign of resignation and the possibility of keeping the Czechs and Slovaks together in one state (Veselý, 2001, p. 55). On November 25, 1992, the federal parliament adopted by the closest possible result the constitutional law regarding the dissolution of the federation. On the basis of this law, the common state of the Czechs and Slovaks was dissolved on December 31, 1992 (Rychlík, 2015, p. 615-616).

When analysing the Czech-Slovak dissolution it is important to mention that political leaders did not have sufficient democratic legitimacy to dissolve the ČSFR (Vodička, 2003, p. 235). This statement is also supported by the constitution, which stated that the partition of the ČSFR could be done only by a referendum (Kováč, 1998, p. 323). Therefore, the only legitimate dissolution was a plebiscite of the
citizens. This, however, meant that Mečiar and Klaus would risk losing political power as repeated 
polls in 1990-1992 showed that the citizens of both republics were in favour of maintaining the 
common state (Rychlík, 2003, p. 295). From a theoretical perspective, neither the political parties nor 
their leaders negotiating behind closed doors had the legitimacy to dissolve ČSFR even if they would 
obtain an absolute majority in the elections or even if they would present their intentions in their 
election programs (Vodička, 2003, p. 235).

It should not be forgotten that the chances of holding a referendum were marginal, because, due to 
the different perspectives of political representations, the Federal Assembly would encounter a series 
of obstructions and the form or formulation of the referendum would stimulate the already escalating 
dichotomy (Vodička, 2003, p. 238-239). By approving the constitutional law regarding the separation, 
which was approved in both chambers of the federal parliament by a three-fifths majority, the 
partition gained on constitutionality and partial legitimacy (Vodička, 2003, p. 241). Despite the partial 
legitimacy, it can be stated that the dissolution occurred without the citizens' consensus and behind 
closed doors.

8 Czech-Slovak relations after 1993

On January 1, 1993, two succeeding states were established: the Czech Republic and the Slovak 
Republic. In this era, the Slovak nation reached its national self-realization in the form of a nation-
state. The Slovak nation found itself in a "year zero" when it had to self-identify as well as identify with 
a new state (Bútora & Bútorová, 2003, p. 99). This chapter seeks to analyse if the self-
realization of the Slovak nation enhanced the Czech-Slovak relations and whether the Czech-Slovak schisms have 
been resolved after the separation.

From a retrospective perspective it can be stated that the division of the ČSFR had a civilized manner 
because the questions about new state borders or division of federal property were resolved 
consensually (Vodička, 2003, p. 258). The attitude of the Czech and Slovak public also contributed to 
the civilized manner of Velvet Dissolution. The creation of the independent Czech Republic was not 
celebrated in the Czech part, because from the Czech perspective, the Czech Republic was not a new 
state but only a continuity of Czechoslovakia. In Slovakia, the effort to become independent was a 
politically important motive. Nevertheless, the attitude of the Slovak nation towards the new state 
was heterogeneous. While some of the Slovaks welcomed the new state, the other half did not share 
such enthusiasm. It was in the following years when most of the Slovak population got used to and 
identified with the new state (Rychlík, 2015, p. 618).
Czech and Slovak politicians promised that the Czech-Slovak relations will be above standard after the dissolution, however, the opposite became reality. The monetary union ended after a few months of operation and the customs union had considerable fractures. The greatest impact of the partition of the state was on the lives of citizens living near the Czech-Slovak border, where passport controls were introduced. As a result, many families were split by a political border (Rychlík, 2015, p. 619).

Between 1994 and 1998, the political development of the two nations began to differentiate once again. Mečiar in Slovakia began to practice elements of the authoritarian regime. As an outcome, the national political problems prevented the integration of Slovakia into European or international institutions. In contrast, the Czech Republic immediately underwent several steps towards the membership in the EU and NATO. Hence, between 1994 and 1998, we cannot speak of any above-standard relations. Partial improvement occurred with the end of the Klaus’ and Mečiar’s governments in 1998. The following governments were interested in greater integration between the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Rychlík, 2015, p. 620).

A fundamental milestone in the international relations between the Czech Republic and Slovakia came with the accession of both countries to the EU in 2004. The role of the EU has been significantly important and positive as it is a mediator of the Czech-Slovak relations. After the accession to the EU, cooperation has increased in many different fields (Rychlík, 2015, p. 621).

A wide range of mutual cooperation after the dissolution and especially after the accession to the EU can be explained by still prominent language affinity and cultural proximity. In recent years, several joint international projects in the cultural/entertainment sphere have been created (Reschová, 2018, p. 12). One of these international projects is, for example, the Czech-Slovak version of the Idol, several talent-seeking shows or the Czech-Slovak beauty pageant.

The fundamental cooperation between the Czech Republic and Slovakia after the dissolution is in the security area. After the partition, both armies established close cooperation during foreign military missions and in directing both countries to NATO. The Czech and Slovak armies until today have common exercises and cooperate during foreign deployments (Tomek, n.d.). The cooperation deepened in 2017 when a bilateral treaty on mutual protection of airspace was ratified. This a major aspect and milestone of the Czech and Slovak cooperation because, hypothetically speaking, if one country is not capable of protecting its airspace the other will assist. Additionally, army pilots, if necessary, can interfere over the territory of the other country (Berger, 2018).
Cooperation between the Czech and Slovak republics is also at an economic level. The main stimulus for economic cooperation was integration within the European Union. An example of the cooperation is the Operational Programme “Slovakia–Czech Republic” 2007-2013 which is an EU project focusing on cooperation among cross-border regions at the Czech-Slovak border. The aim of the programme was to support the social, cultural, and economic development and collaboration as well as accessibility and environment (European Commission, 2008). The continuity of this partnership is the project Interreg V-A - Slovakia-Czech Republic, which has been running from 2014 to 2020 (European Commission, n.d.).

At the time of writing the thesis, the Czech-Slovak relations are perceived as above-standard. The statesmen of both successor republics regularly emphasize the excellent relations between the Czech and Slovak Republic (Reschová, 2018, p. 11). Their statements are constantly confirmed by public opinion surveys. According to the survey by the Czech Institute of Sociology and Slovak Institute for Public Affairs, twenty-five years after the break-up of Czechoslovakia, the dissolution is rated positively by two-fifths of Slovaks and Czechs. The survey demonstrated that the relations between Czechs and Slovaks are perceived by the public very positively and 80 percent of respondents agree that relations between the Czechs and Slovaks should be closer than relations with any other nations (Česká Televize, 2017).

It can, therefore, be stated that the disintegration of Czechoslovakia confirmed the long-lasting Czech-Slovak divergence and bipolarity. However, the disintegration of Czechoslovakia solved the Czech-Slovak schisms, disputes, or prejudices. Nowadays the Czech-Slovak affinity and convergence is stimulated, supported, emphasized, and appreciated.

9 Conclusion

The dissolution of Czechoslovakia was a highly elitist affair as no referendum was held. The common state of Czechs and Slovaks collapsed as a result of actions of the first generation of the post-communist dilettante elites which were unable to handle the transformation process and sought to unleash nationalist emotions to gain popularity. However, the research demonstrated that behind the emergence of these elites was different voting behaviour of Czechs and Slovaks. In connection with the research question: What were the historical causes of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992? it can be stated that the primary historical cause of the dissolution was the Czech-Slovak dualism at political and economic level which was determined by dichotomic historical development.
The essential contribution to the Czech-Slovak bipolarity was the annexation of the Slovaks to the Hungarian state and the consequent thousand-year-long Czech-Slovak asynchronous historical development in two different state formations. Deutsch’s theory demonstrated that sufficient interconnection between the Czechs and Slovaks, which would result in the creation of a unified Czechoslovak nation, was never created. Integrating factors, contributing to the Czech-Slovak convergence, such as geopolitical proximity, cultural affinity and the long-term employment of the Czech language on the Slovak territory were outweighed by the political and economic borders which prevented deeper integration and did not allow to transcend the boundaries of cultural and linguistic reciprocity. After the emergence of modern Czech and Slovak nations, the economic and socio-cultural divergence between Czechs and Slovak escalated. This was caused predominantly by the formation of the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy in 1867 and agile Magyarization of Slovaks.

Consequently, the research, with the implementation of Gellner’s theory, manifested that the major factor that influenced Czech-Slovak relations in Czechoslovakia and the subsequent disintegration was the low rate of industrialization and modernization of Slovakia. Due to the historical development in different state formations and distinct conditions, Slovakia was not affected by industrialization to the same extent as the Czech lands. At the beginning of the 20th century, Czechs represented a fully established nation that had undergone industrialization and created its own according to Gellner’s terminology “high culture”, therefore, national awareness.

On the other hand, the Slovak nation had not undergone such modernization and remained its agrarian status. Hence, the Slovak national development had historical retardation which determined the unequal position of Czechs and Slovaks in Czechoslovakia. The unequal position of Czechs and Slovaks together with different understanding of the state became the key controversy between the Czechs and Slovaks during the entire existence of Czechoslovakia and contributed to the dissolution.

As soon as the Slovak nation had completed its development during the First Republic, which created suitable conditions for the development, the Slovak nation began to manifest emancipation efforts. A similar scenario repeated with the industrialization of Slovakia during the communist era. Consequently, modernization of Slovakia during the First Republic and communist regime supported the rise of nationally conscious elites which challenged the legitimacy of Slovak incorporation in Czechoslovakia and initiated nationalistic tendencies for self-determination.
During the entire existence of Czechoslovakia, national political circumstances, international situation, and Czech reluctance did not allow to create a constitution that would equalize the Czech and Slovak position in Czechoslovakia. That is why Slovaks did not identify with the state and strong Czechoslovak identity among citizens was never created. Due to the socialist ideological burden, the establishment of the federation in 1969 did not saturate the Slovak emancipatory efforts. Therefore, none of the theoretical preconditions for the coexistence of nations in multinational states were fulfilled.

Nevertheless, even the historical analysis was not able to clarify whether the disintegration of Czechoslovakia could have been prevented, and the answer would be rather speculative. It can only be stated that the disintegration was based on historical causes which were already present during the First Republic. Apart from the major findings, it is important to mention that the creation of two successor republics saturated the Slovak emancipatory efforts and the self-realization of Slovak nation solved the long-lasting Czech-Slovak disputes and schisms. Since the accession of the Czech and Slovak Republics to the European Union in 2004, Czechs and Slovaks have cooperated intensively, and their relations are perceived as above-standard.

The scope of this work did not allow to analyze all political and economic factors that affected the political decision-making before the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. In further research, the analysis should investigate and comprehensively describe all political and economic influences that played a role in the transition from a communist form of government to a pluralistic democratic system.
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