

Reflection of the press on the French political strategy in interwar central Europe

Introduction

The interwar period (1918-1939) was a crucial epoch in European history characterized by the emergence of new nations, shifting political alliances, and the attempt to maintain peace following the devastation of World War I. Among the countries navigating this complex landscape were France, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, each seeking to establish a stable diplomatic framework to ensure their sovereignty and security in a volatile region. This dissertation aims to explore the intricate diplomatic relations among these nations during this period, with a particular focus on how their respective newspapers reported on significant events and political agreements and how they influenced the public opinion in these countries.

Historical Context

Following the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Europe witnessed the realignment of national borders and the birth of new states, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. France emerged as a dominant power on the continent, keen to establish alliances that could counterbalance the threat from Germany and other potentially aggressive neighbors. Czechoslovakia, a newly formed nation-state, sought recognition and protection from Western powers, while Poland, having regained independence, aimed to solidify its territorial integrity and diplomatic standing. These geopolitical dynamics set the stage for a tripartite relationship that was marked by both cooperation and tension. As the memory of World War I lingered, each country had its own agenda, influenced by national interests and historical grievances, which shaped their diplomatic strategies.

Media's Role in Shaping Perception

The media played a pivotal role in framing public perceptions of diplomatic relations during the interwar years. Newspapers not only reported on political events and decisions, but also influenced public sentiment and national identity. Analyzing how the press in France, Czechoslovakia, and Poland covered key diplomatic events allows for a deeper understanding of the political climate, national narratives, and public opinion. The press provided a platform for political discourse, often highlighting the significance of alliances, treaties, and conflicts. This dissertation will examine various incidents, such as the Franco-Czechoslovak alliance of 1924, and the impact of the League of Nations, through the lens of newspaper coverage. By dissecting articles, editorials, and opinion pieces, this research will reveal how media narratives shaped and reflected the complexities of diplomacy between these nations.

Methodology

This dissertation employs a transnational approach, recognizing that diplomatic relations cannot be fully understood within the confines of national borders. By examining the interactions and influences among France, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, the research emphasizes the interconnectedness of their diplomatic strategies and media representations. Additionally, the study utilizes discourse analysis as a methodological framework to analyze newspaper articles from the interwar period. This involves examining language use, thematic representations, and the framing of events in the press to uncover underlying ideologies and the socio-political context of the time. In addition the thesis will consist of chapters. Methodology, Sources related to the research topic (which will be divided into older and newer ones), Newspapers reactions on agreements involving Poland, Newspapers reactions on agreements involving Czechoslovakia.

Objectives and Scope

This dissertation aims to elucidate the diplomatic relations between France, Czechoslovakia, and Poland during the interwar period, emphasizing the role of media in shaping public perceptions and national narratives. By investigating key political agreements and significant events, the research will reveal how newspapers in each country represented these relationships and the underlying themes that emerged in their coverage.

Research questions:

Which narratives dominated in newspaper articles about the treaties between France and Czechoslovakia/Poland?

How did the agreements between these countries influenced social and political discourses?

What consequences have these treaties had on the international relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia?

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