Environment of Tension, Moments of Conflict

A Comparative Study of Majority-Roma Interethnic Relations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

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Abstract

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Why is majority-Roma conflict more prevalent in the Czech Republic than in neighboring Slovakia, despite social, political, and historical similarities between these societies? In this dissertation, I compare the dynamics of interethnic relations in these most similar cases employing conceptions of group position, intergroup contact, and political process. I find that perceived challenges to Whites' superior group position evince more intergroup conflict in the Czech Republic, while Slovak politicians and activists attempt to maintain an uneasy peace through avoiding threat to the majority. The project mainly draws evidence from interview-based fieldwork conducted from 2014-2015.

This dissertation contributes to a better understanding of the dynamics of majority-Roma relations on the societal and local levels with implications for the study of

interethnic relations and conflict. First, I show how the influence of policy on group threat represents how state-level actions could contribute to conflict as it did in the Czech Republic in the first decade of the 21st century. Then, by revealing how majority threat is further avoided at the local level in integrated church organizations in Slovakia, I show that a local mechanism of structured contact, even in integrated settings, prevents interethnic conflict without the transformation of inequitable relations. Finally, through understanding majority-Roma relations from the perspective of those who serve and advocate for the Romani minority in East Central Europe I argue that interethnic relations should be considered alongside other elements of the polity in understanding ethnic movements and the way they may affect conflict through majority threat.

Findings contribute to the study of interethnic relations and conflict. I illuminate mechanisms of interethnic conflict that reflect a more open polity and mechanisms of interethnic peace that do not transform inequitable intergroup relations. I also challenge scholars to consider how the dynamics of group position can influence actors' decisions in ethnically-driven civil rights movements.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A moment of realization of how reviled Roma are in Europe did not come from living in Prague for 4 months in 2006 nor from traveling to Hungary, Poland, and around the Czech Republic during that time. Rather, in 2008, when I was a quite seasoned traveler in region, my travel companions and I bought 'maxi taxi' tickets (essentially a shuttle bus service) from Cluj-Napoca, Romania to Budapest, Hungary from a very enthusiastic ticket agent in a tiny, but (pleasantly and surprisingly) air-conditioned office. We asked for a nearby grocery store recommendation, to buy snacks for the long ride ahead of us. The enthusiastic Romanian woman, who must have been younger than 30 and spoke excellent English, emphatically insisted on locking the office door and leading us to the grocery. As we walked through the outdoor bus terminal, we passed many Roma, most of them women with small children, asking for change from the bus travelers. I was mortified, not at their behavior, but at the ticket agent's, who shouted at and berated the Romani women as we followed her through the terminal. Though I did not understand her words, her tone transcended the language barrier. When we reached the grocery just a minute later, the woman quickly said something about how she didn't want the 'gypsies' to bother us, then turned around and scurried back to the ticket office.

Not only were this woman's actions completely unnecessary, as we could have easily found the grocery on our own and we would need to immediately return to the bus terminal without her as chaperone, but it revealed to me a casual racial hatred toward

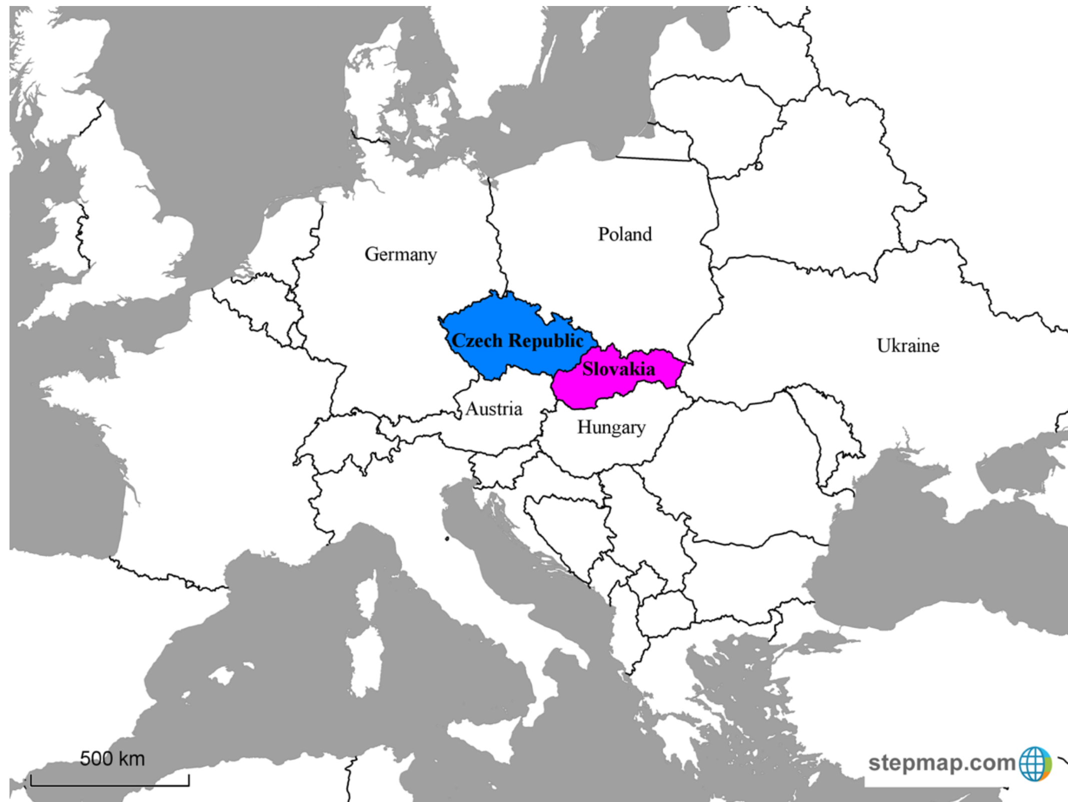
people who were simply panhandling, as no doubt people do at bus stations all over the world. I did not know at the time that Cluj-Napoca, Romania, where I had the shocking experience of walking through the bus terminal with the ticket agent, was the site of Brubaker et al.'s (2006) study of nationalist politics and 'everyday ethnicity.' Yet, Brubaker and his team, apparently deeming it too complicated to study, did not include Roma in their study of Romanian-Hungarian relations. After that experience at the bus terminal in 2008, I soon started to notice this hatred in many countries in eastern and central Europe. Cautionary stories of tourists being drugged on trains and robbed by 'gypsies' resurfaced in my mind. While plentiful in pop culture and literature, the stereotypical and exoticized depictions of 'gypsies' rarely went deeper into the human experiences of European Roma. I began to wonder, what was so different about this group? What were the dynamics of majority-Roma relations?

Beginning and Development of the Project

In 2012, I began to design a project that would study interethnic relations between the majority and Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, focusing on the construction of the infamous walls erected by municipalities to segregate Romani communities. I selected these two neighboring countries as they offer a case comparison often used as 'most similar' case designs (Froese 2005; Nedelsky 2004; Tomczuk 2016) (See Figure 1.1). By studying why White Czechs and Slovaks built segregating walls, and the effects they had on local interethnic relations, I thought I could illuminate how these countries, one generation after the end of communism, managed their ethnic diversity. I knew interethnic relations were tense, and I thought studying sites with walls would be a way to

understand that tension, the comparison either adding confidence to similar findings or helping reveal social processes through differences. This project would change drastically.

Figure 1.1: Location of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in Europe



Knowing that interethnic tensions were high, perhaps I should not have been surprised when repeated, large anti-Roma demonstrations occurred throughout the Czech Republic weekly, during the hot summer of 2013. Yet, I was shocked, along with much of the world, and even many Czechs. The events seemed out of character for the country of human rights champion Václav Havel, the socialism with a 'human face' of the Prague Spring, and the peaceful Velvet Revolution showed such repulsive, obvious racism

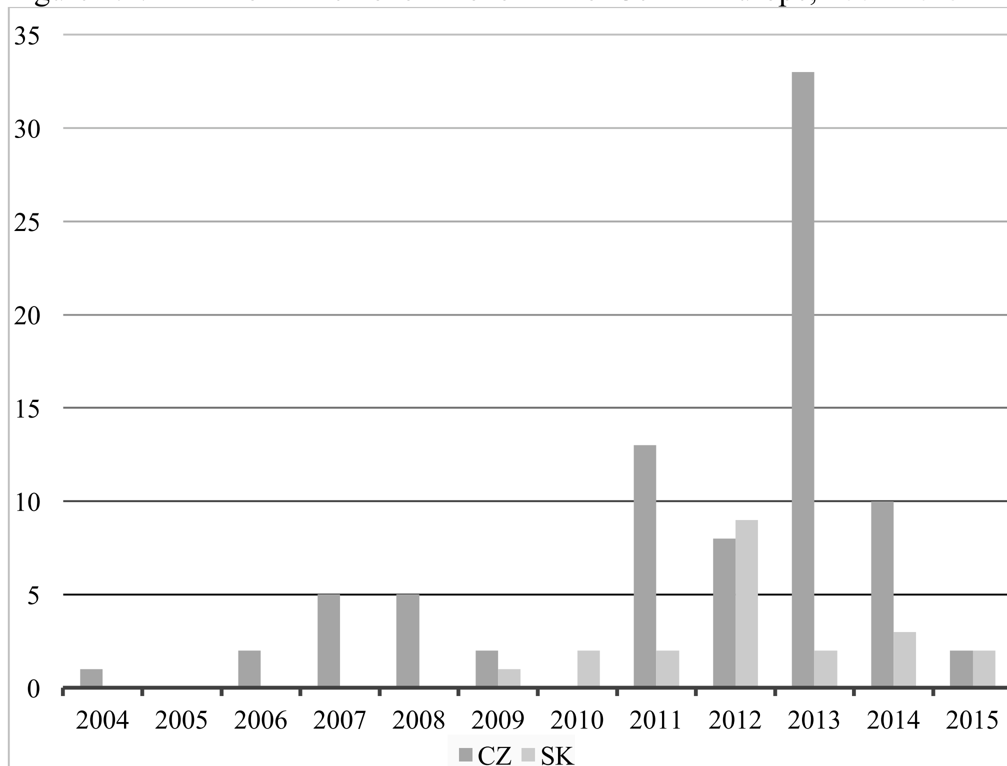
towards their countrymen. Beyond the institutional violence of a ‘ghetto’ wall, Czech Roma feared physical violence in their own homes. Repeated demonstrations of neo-Nazis, extremists, and ‘ordinary’ citizens marching on Romani communities gained global attention. Furthermore, they started not in Ústí nad Labem nor Ostrava, famous for their walls segregating poor Romani communities, but in the sleepy city in which I had studied Czech language for a summer, the beautiful, peaceful České Budějovice, near the Austrian border. In fact, the housing estate to which the marches were directed was adjacent to the University of South Bohemia campus, where I had lived and studied. Why were these demonstrations happening? Were interethnic relations worsening in the Czech Republic? Thus, this project began to develop into its current form.

Case selection

The literature on interethnic conflict had been plagued by the issue of only studying ‘positive’ cases, so I aimed to avoid this pitfall. Varshney’s (2002) approach to Hindu-Muslim relations in India took the comparative strategy of studying both communities in which violence occurred and those which remained peaceful, increasing the explanatory power of his findings. Inspired by his work, I designed a comparative project which would look at both peaceful communities and communities with conflict in the Czech Republic and in neighboring Slovakia. The cross-country comparison offers a natural ‘most-similar’ case design, and within country variation would offer even more explanatory power. I selected two towns in each country, made contacts with organizations there, and left to begin my fieldwork in June 2014, less than a year after the spate of anti-Roma demonstrations which had shocked me. While I conducted research in

both my 'positive' and 'negative' cases of České Budějovice and Ústí nad Labem, I also met many government workers, non-profit employees, and activists in Prague who ran national or regional programs. I quickly came to realize the important role that the government had in setting the tone for interethnic relations through policy. I also came to abandon the idea of having a truly 'negative' case in the Czech Republic. My 'negative' case, Ústí nad Labem, experienced an anti-Roma demonstration the summer I arrived, and nearby villages had anti-Roma demonstrations throughout 2013. I no longer considered this case within a case to be 'negative.'

Figure 1.2: Anti-Roma Demonstrations in East Central Europe, 2004-2015[i]



[i]See Chapter 2 for a more detailed description of data collection on anti-Roma demonstrations.

By the time I arrived in eastern Slovakia in January 2015, I had discarded the original plan to focus on a 'positive' and 'negative' case of interethnic conflict in both

countries. I instead decided to investigate non-profit organizations, church organizations, and government bodies who worked with Roma and Romani communities across the country to gain a deeper understanding of the quality of interethnic relations –the facets and the actors involved. I began to work with data from the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) on anti-Roma demonstrations and riots in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and a clear difference revealed itself, this type of interethnic conflict was much more common in the former (See Figure 1.2).

I choose to use anti-Roma demonstrations as a measure of interethnic conflict. This data source offers many strengths. First, demonstrations are very easily measured. Reported in multiple news sources, I can decide with certainty that the events happened and that they contained an anti-Roma message. They represent the majority's willingness to mobilize against an often socially-excluded, ethnic minority. Finally, studying conflict that is not open war or ethnic cleansing could lead to an understanding of the peace-keeping mechanisms (or lack thereof), which prevent or maintain conflict before it becomes violent. This 'intermediate' level of conflict, between individual-level and group-level violence, can illuminate what leads to moments of conflict in an environment of tension or even how multiethnic societies can avoid interethnic violence even in the context of high interethnic tension. Compiling evidence from the ERRC and other sources reveals obviously different trends in the two East Central European countries. Between 2004 and 2015, the Czech Republic generally experienced growing frequency in anti-Roma demonstrations, only falling off in the last two years. Slovakia, on the other

hand, never had more than 9 demonstrations in a year, and experienced only two in 2013, while the Czech Republic saw 33.

So, I lost the ‘within case’ variation of having ‘conflict’ and ‘no conflict’ towns in each country, but I think a richer study emerged from this loss. I collected data from a variety of racially integrated or otherwise involved organizations revealing the dynamics of interethnic contact and relations at the state and local levels. The interviews help to answer the question of how ethnic relations differ in these socially and politically linked countries, such that the outcome for interethnic relations is so stark?

Historical context: Roma-Majority Relations

This background section cannot offer a detailed account of Roma-majority relations in East Central Europe to today. I aspire, however, to provide the historical and social context in which interethnic relations developed and take place. This section briefly discusses the beginnings of Roma experiences in Europe, the development of interethnic relations through the Enlightenment, early modernity, and the communist period. I highlight the ‘othering’ and social exclusion of Roma, the relevant history of the region, and the few, but important differences between my cases.

Roma have lived throughout Europe at least for the past 500 years. Linguistically and genetically traced to India, the term ‘Roma’ (or sometimes, ‘Roma and Sinti’) is a political catchall to refer to groups with a variety of linguistic and cultural differences often including Roma, Sinti, Romnichal, and Irish travellers (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2017). Some counts estimate about 11 million Roma in European countries. They make up larger portions (7% or more) of the population in Romania, Hungary,

Slovakia, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Macedonia (The New York Times 2013). European Roma and their experiences are linguistically, culturally, and historically diverse (Matras 2015). Some Roma achieve integration and success in their fields, but many never leave their segregated village or settlement. To overgeneralize the experiences of such a diverse population would be a disservice. Still, because outsiders tend to know little about European Roma, a few points help set the context for understanding interethnic relations in East Central Europe. As early as the 16th century, Roma were lumped into a category of other outsiders. As one historian wrote of medieval Rome "… [the hospices] numbers rose briefly in 1590, when over a thousand beggars took refuge there… and the streets of Rome were filled with notices ordering the expulsion of vagrants, *Gypsies* and the like" (Geremek [1997] quoted in Powell and Lever 2015:7, my emphasis). One scholar described how, after the Enlightenment, Habsburg rule over central Europe consolidated policy towards Roma and began to treat this group as a distinct population which could be assimilated, especially during the 19th and early 20th centuries. These polices focused particularly on settling nomadic Roma and incorporating them into the legal economy (van Baar 2011). Powell and Lever (2015) mark this as part of the process of demarcating Roma as non-European 'Others,' by way of constructing what Europe 'should' be (8).

While many traveled, some Roma communities have been sedentary for nearly a century, most likely as consequence of the paternalistic Habsburg policies to assimilate Roma into a 'superior' culture (Cviklová 2011: 59). In the 1940s, Nazis targeted Roma for extermination and murdered many hundreds of thousands of people. Whole communities were decimated. In fact, some estimates suggest that nearly all Czech Roma

were murdered or displaced during this period.[1] With the ethnic cleansing of the Sudetenland after WWII (the Czechoslovak government expelled German-speakers from the region in 1945), Slovak Roma, many of whom were spared extermination in the devastating irony that Slovakia was a Nazi satellite state after 1939, helped repopulate that region of Bohemia, the westernmost Czech lands (Cviklová 2011:59).

During the socialist period, Eastern European Roma were officially employed, travelling was banned, and ethnic differences were minimized, yet local implementation of these dubious policies was spotty (Cviklová 2011:59; Scheffel 2005). While many Roma worked in industrial resource extraction or factories during this period, lack of education and skills essentially excluded Roma from the economic transition and de-insdustrialization in post-communist nations during the 1990s (Guy 2001). Phenotypic differences between many majority populations in European states make it easy to discriminate against darker-haired or darker-skinned Roma. Often called 'gypsies' in local languages, many reject this term as a slur. Majorities exoticize Roma as mysterious, magical, musical and overly sexual and further stereotype their group as lazy, criminal, and violent (Yuval Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2017).

Reliable information on racial inequality is hard to come by in East Central Europe. I cannot use census information, as Romani ethnicity is sorely underreported. Famously, in the 2011 census, over 15,000 Czechs reported their religion as "Jedi," the fictional group of knights from the *Star Wars* films, a number hundreds higher than that

[1] Nazis also killed or displaced nearly the entire Jewry of East Central Europe. Thus, one of Europe's most significant ethnic and religious minorities, and the only other minority which shared Roma's 'stateless' status, all but disappeared in a short decade.

of Czechs reporting Romani ethnicity (Hospodářské noviny 2011). I use the rather conservative estimates of 200,000 Czech Roma and 500,000 Slovak Roma, estimated by the Council of Europe, even Czech official documents use these estimates (New York Times 2011; Office of the Government of the Czech Republic 2015:5). Likely, even more people are perceived as or identify as Romani/Gypsy in both countries.

Roma endure low levels of education and income and high levels of unemployment, discrimination, and segregation. In the Czech Republic, less than 20% of Roma living in marginalized areas have any secondary schooling or official training (World Bank 2010). Fifty-eight percent of Roma are at risk of poverty compared to 10% of the general population (FRA 2016:14).[2] The material situation of Roma communities in Slovakia is even more dire. A 2011 survey found that 87% of the families surveyed were living in poverty. While three quarters of Roma would prefer to live in mixed neighborhoods, 42% of Roma households live in predominantly Roma communities (World Bank 2012). Thirteen percent of the general Slovak population live at risk of poverty, but the proportion of Slovak Roma in this situation is a staggering 87% (FRA 2016:14).

While segregation is high in both countries, that Slovaks are much more religious than Czechs provides a potential opportunity for integration. Over 80% of Slovaks report being a religious person, compared to only 32% of Czechs (Atlas of European Values

[2] 'At risk of poverty' means earning below 60% of the median equivalized income. "The equivalised disposable income is the total income of a household, after tax and other deductions, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults; using the so-called modified OECD equivalence scale (1-0.5-0.3)" (FRA 2016: 14).

2011). Romani communities usually practice the same religion of their majority neighbors, often with some vestiges of Hinduism (Hancock 2010; Matras 2015:43, 117).

Survey and interview data confirm that Whites hold negative views of Roma. In one 2005 study of central European attitudes, “Non-Roma respondents consistently expressed negative views of the Roma overall, describing the Roma as dishonest, aggressive, un-hygienic, lacking work ethic, unemployed, poorly educated and prone to criminality” (Open Society Foundation 2005:3). Respondents attributed these characteristics to actual observation in Romani individuals, not to stereotypes or prejudices. The European Values Study found that over half of Czechs and Slovaks report that they do not want Roma as neighbors (EVS 2010a, 2010b). When asked about the past five years, 61% of Czech Roma and 54% of Slovak Roma responded that they experienced discrimination in employment, education, housing, or other services (FRA 2016:38).

Table 1.1: Relevant Information Comparing the Czech Republic and Slovakia

	Czech Republic	*Slovakia*
Total population[i]	10.5 million	5.4 million
Roma population[ii]	200,000	500,000
% population Roma	2%	9%
GNI/capita[iii]	$28,740	$26,820
Percent religious[iv]	32%	81%
% population at risk of poverty[v]	10%	13%
% Roma at risk of poverty[v]	58%	87%
Do not want Romani neighbors[vi]	57%	51%

[i] (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic 2015: 5; Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2016: 10)
[ii] (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic 2015: 5)
[iii] (Freedom House 2017a, 2017b)
[iv] (Atlas of European Values 2011)
[v] (FRA 2016: 14)
[vi] (EVS 2010a, 2010b)

Studying Interethnic Relations

How does one approach investigating the difference in the level of interethnic conflict in most-similar cases? The literature on interethnic relations is vast, and the best work combines approaches from social psychology, sociology, and political science (Denis 2015; Minkoff 1995; Varshney 2002). What would it look like to approach the topic of interethnic relations in a paired case comparison from different levels of analysis? From the societal level, scholars study the effects of ethnic relations policy on group norm and group threat (Hjerm and Yaganoshi 2011; McLaren 2003; Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2013). On the organizational level, others center the effects of organizations and community on the quality and outcomes of interethnic contact (Denis 2015; Varshney 2002). Still others generate valuable findings on interethnic relations by considering how actors make decisions to advocate and mobilize for minority groups (Liu 2006; Minkoff 1995).

This study relies on a combination of perspectives on interethnic relations. First, understandings of the group position and group threat help structure my understanding of majority-Roma relations (Blalock 1957, 1967). From this approach, negative prejudices and feelings towards an out-group may derive from a sense of the in-group's superior group position, relative to other groups. Visibility of the threat to group position can make perceived threat more salient (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; McLaren 2003). A threat to the majority's superior position can motivate mobilization of the group to protect its position (Andrews 2002). On the societal level, how does state policy on ethnic relations signal a threat or lack of threat to majority group position?

Social psychology on intergroup contact is invaluable for contextualizing how segregation or integration can affect interethnic relations (Allport 1954). In some contexts, intergroup contact can foster brokerage or even affective relationships between individuals across groups improving interethnic relations (Brown and Hewstone 2005; Pettigrew 1998). In other contexts, contact can increase interethnic contempt (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2009). Though its roots are in social psychology, sociologists also study contact between groups at the individual organizational levels. Denis (2015) looks at contact through the context of group position and finds that superior group position can be maintained even with close affectual relationships between groups. Organizational approaches to intergroup contact help scholars understand that 'everyday' contact, including passing or economic exchanges, without more in-depth contact in civil society can foster more animosity (McLaren 2003; Varshney 2002). On the other hand, Varshney (2002) showed that 'associational' intercommunal contact, in which members from different communities cooperate in the context of civic engagement, can reduce the likelihood of interethnic conflict, as members of different communities come to trust each other, work together, and share information, even with very distinct group boundaries. The type of contact and how it signals group position matters for interethnic relations.

Political process theory shows us how opportunities and constraints shape decisions and actions in multiethnic societies (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Olzak 2006; Vermeersch 2006). The majority can respond to minority group civil rights claims with mobilization to maintain their advantages (Andrews 2002; Owens et al. 2015). Ethnic activists are aware of these movement-countermovement dynamics as

related to majority threat to group position. How do minority group activists make choices in the context of high ethnic hostility, and how do their actions contribute or avoid interethnic conflict?

Methods

I draw on 69 semi-structured interviews with key informants involved in interethnic relations and interethnic contact (See appendices for full list of respondents and further explanation of methods). I interviewed 27 respondents from three locations in the Czech Republic: Ústí nad Labem, České Budějovice, and Prague, the capital (See Figure 1.3). That I have respondents from only two towns outside the capital is a vestige of the earlier version of the project in which I perceived Ústí as a 'negative case.' In Slovakia, I interviewed 42 respondents from 19 different towns, mostly in eastern Slovakia, where the Romani population is concentrated (See Figure 1.4). Some were towns of a few hundred people, others worked at a large NGO headquarters in Košice, the second most populous city in the country. I selected respondents by contacting non-profit organizations and government organizations. In Slovakia, these connections also referred me to churches and church organizations.

While the individual chapters will go into more detail as to the other sources of data I employ, suffice it to say here that my data are not limited to the interviews I conducted nor the data on anti-Roma demonstrations from the ERRC. Before each interview, I would read as much about the organization and respondents as was available online (websites, blogs, and Facebook pages) or in printed literature (often pamphlets or

Figure 1.3: Czech Respondent Locations and Major Slovak Cities

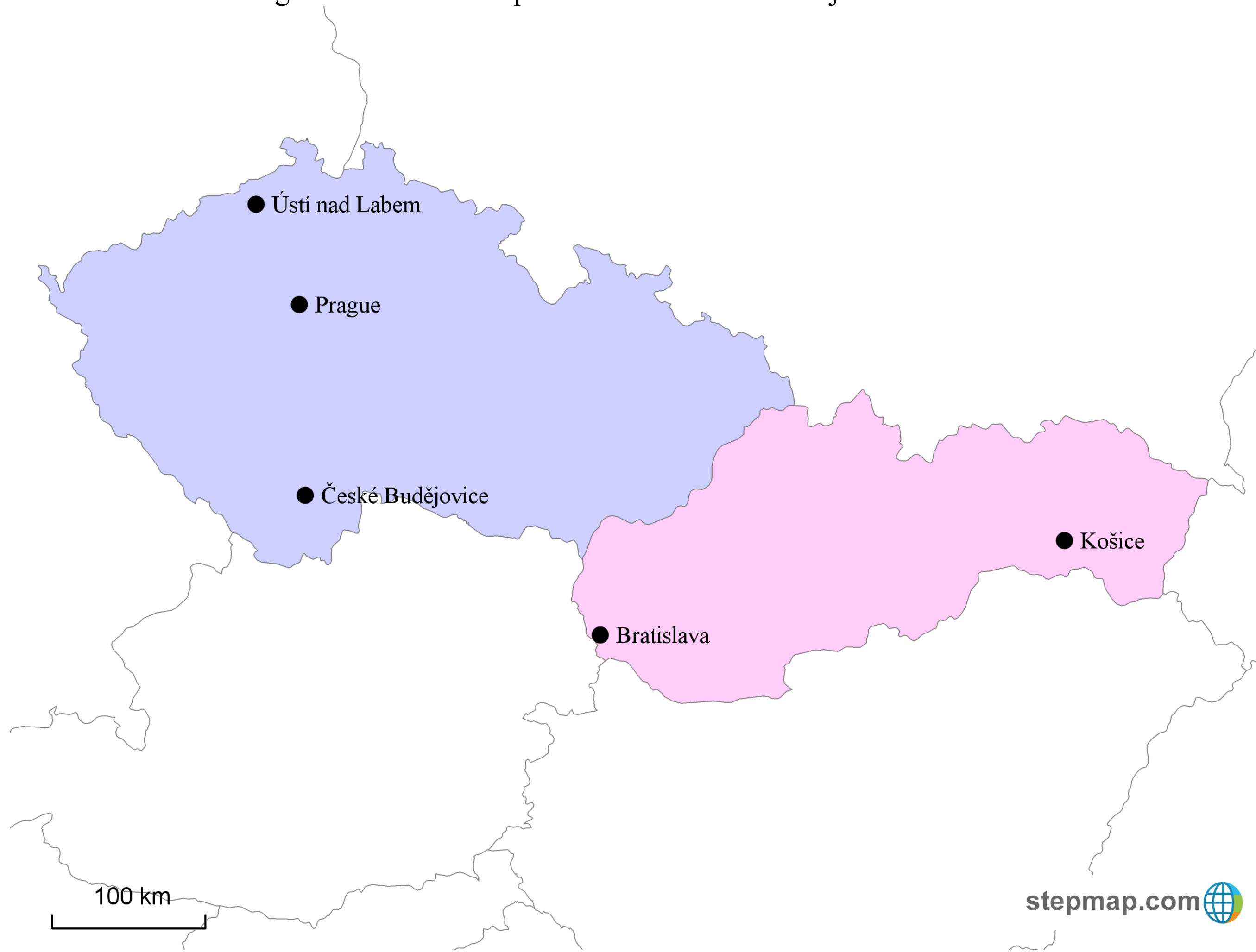
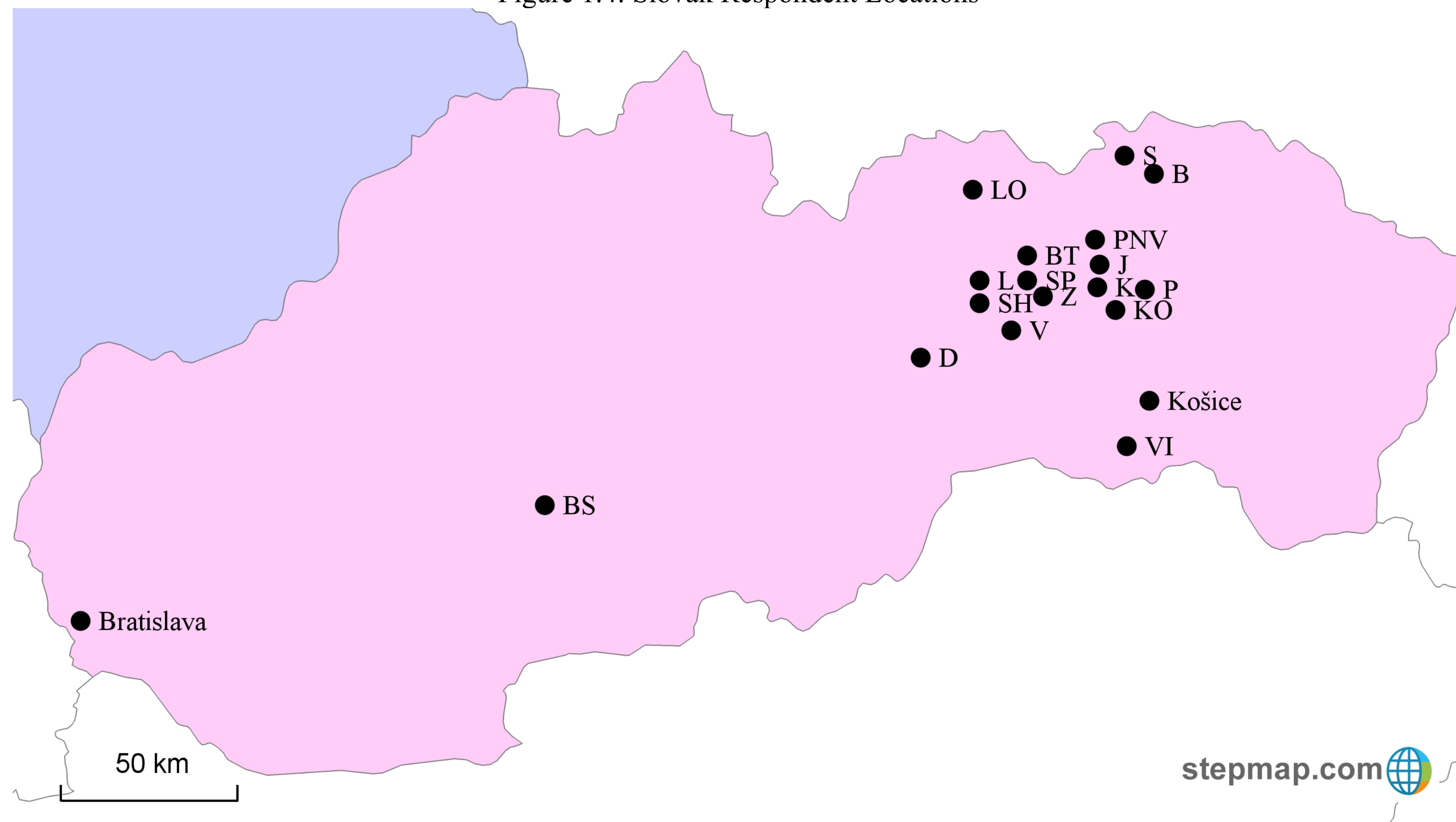


Figure 1.4: Slovak Respondent Locations



B: Bardejov
BS: Banská Štiavnica
BT: Brutovce
D: Dobšina
J: Jarovnice
K: Kecerovce
KO: Kojatice
L: Levoča
LO: Lomnička
P: Prešov
PNV: Pečovská Nová Ves
V: Vítkovce
S: Sveržov
SH: Spišský Hrhov
SP: Spišské Podhradie
VI: Velká Ida
Z: Žehra

organization-generated reports). I studied government documents, including reports and policy, at the state and European levels. While social scientists in both countries publish on interethnic relations including anti-Roma demonstrations, I also relied on news sources, including Romani media (in Czech, Slovak, and English languages). Whenever possible, I triangulated information published by multiple sources to avoid possible bias in reporting.

A Note on Language

I would like to specify how I will use language referring to ethnicity in this dissertation. In Romanes language, 'Rom' refers to an individual (Romani) person, 'Roma' is the plural, and 'Romani' is an adjective (Vermeersch 2006:10; Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2017:11). I will use 'Roma' as the plural noun referring to Romani individuals. The adjective 'Romani' will refer to individuals and groups who identify as or would be identified by others as Roma. In a few instances, I also use this modifier for abstract ideas like 'Romani activism,' to denote that these ideas are closely associated with Romani communities and their interests, as other scholars do (Plaut 2016). To avoid confusion, I will use 'Roma' (not Romani) as a modifier when the modified noun does not refer to the ethnicity of an individual, but rather is part of the title of their position. For example, in the Czech Republic, many of the 'Roma coordinators' who work for municipalities or regions, do not personally identify as Romani, but rather as White, or 'ethnic' Czechs.[3] The use of the word 'Roma' as an adjective in this way is common in

[3] This translation is further complicated by the fact that adjectives are much more easily formed in the Czech and Slovak languages than in English. So, Czechs and Slovaks use the adjectival form of 'Rom' in

spoken and written English. When respondents used the word *cigán* in Czech or *cikán* in Slovak, I translate this as 'gypsy,' a word European Romani activists deem as a racist slur. When Romani individuals used this word to refer to themselves, I capitalize it to denote it as a self-identification.

I use 'White Czech' and 'White Slovak' to refer to non-Romani, native, White citizens in each of these countries. I also often use 'White majority' or simply 'majority,' as many of my respondents preferred the latter term. Roma (and some Whites) use the term *gadjo* (*gadje*, plural) to refer to any non-Romani person. Some of my respondents also used the term *neromský* or non-Romani. 'Czechs' and 'Slovaks' refer to all citizens of those countries, not just those who are White. I also denote if I am referring to another minority group, for example the "Hungarian-speaking minority in Slovakia." I use the term 'White' for several reasons. First, both the literature on European Roma and my own research revealed that the divisions between the majority and Romani minority have both racial and ethnic dimensions (Yuval-Davis, Wemyss, and Cassidy 2017). For centuries, Roma were excluded from owning land or participating in more profitable professions. Unlike the European Jewry, another historically persecuted group, they often practiced Christianity, but were deemed by Roman Catholic authorities to be lesser than other Christians (Hancock 2010:112-113). In work and death camps, Nazis murdered hundreds of thousands of European Roma, viewing them as an inferior race. Both voluntary and forced settlement destroyed traditional travelling ways of life. While some

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Czech and Slovak language (*romský* and *rómsky*), not the Romanes language word (Romani), which is used by international activists and in the English-language literature on European Roma.

Romani individuals in East Central Europe can and do choose to 'pass' as White, many darker-skinned Roma do not have that option. Even educated, native-speakers of the majority language, or otherwise 'assimilated' Roma report discrimination based on their names or skin-color (FRA 2016). Furthermore, at anti-Roma demonstrations, demonstrators use the term 'black' disparagingly, othering Roma from 'White' Czechs and Slovaks. Thus, I made the decision to use 'White' to refer to the socially-constructed group of citizens which make up the majority in in my two cases.[4] As Roth (2016) recommends, I capitalize 'White' as a proper noun to distinguish this concept as the socially-constructed race that it is (1331).

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 2: Supporting Equality or Emphasizing Difference?

If both states officially protect their Romani citizens in the face of similar levels of anti-Romani sentiment, yet the outcome for visible conflict is so different, what could be the government's role in either contributing to or preventing interethnic conflict? In other words, can a state policy activate majority threat in a way that increases interethnic conflict? The second chapter attempts to adjudicate between competing hypotheses on the role of policy on interethnic relations. The 'group norm' hypothesis expects that permissive policy will signal the elite group norm, and the society will become more tolerant. On the other hand, this hypothesis expects that a conservative policy will show

[4] To those who would argue that few Czechs and Slovaks use the term 'White' to refer to the majority, I would point out that many White Americans would be uncomfortable using the term to refer to themselves, instead opting to use 'colorblind' language, which obscures racist inequity and power relations.

that intergroup tolerance is not a collectively shared norm, and interethnic conflict will be higher. The 'group threat' hypothesis expects the opposite that permissive policies will threaten the sense of the superior group position enjoyed by the majority group and thus increase interethnic conflict. The more conservative policy will not activate group threat as the policy defers to or even supports the majority's sense of their superior group position.

Findings support the group threat hypothesis. As the two countries implementing the same EU-directed policies during the 1990s as candidate states, I trace how these policies came to diverge to be more progressive, visible, and threatening to the majority in the Czech Republic. These changes occur just as the number of anti-Roma demonstrations began to increase in 2007. The majority responded to the increased threat to their superior group position. In Slovakia, the policy became even more ineffective and remained nearly invisible, and Slovaks experience lower interethnic conflict. This chapter relies on process tracing and government documents as well as my qualitative interviews.

Chapter 3: Contact and Segregation in Organizations

At the local level, how do integrated organizations or other organizations aiming to improve interethnic relations manage contact? Or, how does local intercommunal contact affect the level of interethnic conflict? As organizations in both countries and of all kinds operated in a context of high interethnic hostility, how were organizations in the more peaceful setting influencing interethnic contact in a way that prevented conflict? Centering on the 'negative' case with the much lower level of interethnic conflict, chapter

3 highlights the peacekeeping mechanism available only to Slovak religious organizations.

Though the literature led me to expect other mechanisms, findings suggest that integrated church organizations foster neither associational intergroup contact nor affective personal relationships, yet contain conflict by using their religiously afforded legitimacy to integrate their organizations while carefully managing the perceived threat to the White majority. Integrated church organizations carefully manage the symbolic threat to White superiority in their communities through two mechanisms: (1) they focus on physical and spiritual needs rather than on advocating for Romani rights, and (2) they structure interethnic contact in ways that require the least accommodation from the majority. In contrast, Czech organizations seem unable to racially integrated spaces, as legitimacy with one community seems to come at the expense of legitimacy with the other. The intercommunal contact merely connects socially marginalized Romani communities with official institutions and not with their majority neighbors.

Chapter 4: Accommodating and Confrontational Ethnic Activism

As the anti-Roma demonstrations and riots are often accompanied by counterdemonstrations in support of Romani communities, these events have the potential for group violence. In Slovakia, on the other hand, Romani activists conceive of activism as interest-based service provision and downplay ethnicity. Why would ethnic activists from politically and historically linked societies choose very different activities, some that seem to contribute to interethnic conflict and others that attempt to avoid it? Chapter 4 shows that ethnic activists interpret the potential for and potential

consequences of majority threat within the political opportunity structure, and they adjust their strategies to be either more accommodating or confrontational based on that interpretation.

This chapter contributes to the literature by highlighting how ethnic activists perceive and consider the potential effects on group threat when choosing their mobilizing activities and frames within the political opportunity structure. Though ethnic hostility is high in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia, activists interpret the consequences for interethnic conflict in different political opportunity structures. Slovak Romani activists choose a strategy more accommodating to White's sense of superior group position in the context of a polity in which their few allies are unable to effect policy change and in which their communities do not trust that police would stop interethnic violence. Czech Romani activism often takes more confrontational forms as activists face a political opportunity structure that includes elite allies and a trusted riot police force. In the Czech context of higher interethnic conflict, a feedback loop reactivates activists' more confrontational strategies when counterdemonstrators go out to meet neo-nationalists at anti Roma riots.

Conclusion

While they are written to stand alone, together, the three substantive chapters of the dissertation contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of Roma-majority relations on the societal and local levels. The influence of policy on group threat shows how state-level actions can increase conflict and did during the end of the first decade of the 21st century. Revealing how majority threat is further avoided at the local level in

integrated church organizations in Slovakia shows that a local mechanism reinforces the state's message that majority threat should be avoided. Finally, understanding majority-Roma relations from the perspective of those who serve and advocate for the Romani minority in East Central Europe shows how interethnic relations should be considered alongside other elements of the polity in understanding ethnic movements and the way they may affect conflict. Activists must consider if activating majority threat is worth the risk to their communities within a polity that may be more or less likely to protect them in the face of majority mobilization.

These findings have implications to better understand majority-minority relations in any multiethnic society. When majority backlash is a possibility, actors at the forefront of interethnic contact or minority advocacy will consider the potential for that backlash. Thus, states and organizations committed to racial equity should ensure that institutions have the capacity and accountability to protect minority communities. If that condition is met, minority advocacy groups and their political allies can challenge unequal relations. Those challenges may lead to more conflict but perhaps also to social transformation.

Chapter 2

Supporting Equality or Emphasizing Difference?
State Policy on Interethnic Relations and Conflict in Central Europe

Officially, all Czechs and Slovaks, including those who identify as Romani, are full citizens. In fact, since the 1990s, national minorities have enjoyed officially-recognized minority rights (to language and religion) in these European Union countries (Vachudova 2005). Yet, over half of both Czechs and Slovaks do not want Romani neighbors (European Values Study 2010a; 2010b). This enmity toward the most materially and socially disadvantaged ethnic group in Europe often manifests in anti-Roma demonstrations throughout the Czech Republic (Mareš 2012b), a central European country generally considered to be 'Western' (Guy 2003) Policy often attempts social change through reformed laws and protections. Yet if both states officially protect their Romani citizens in the face of similar levels of anti-Romani sentiment and the outcome for visible conflict is so different, what could be the government's role in either contributing to or preventing interethnic conflict?

Anti-Roma demonstrations are a public manifestation of interethnic tension and the animosity the White majority hold against the Roma minority. Thus, I aim to explain why the frequency of this type of conflict is so much higher in the Czech Republic than in neighboring Slovakia. Demonstrations also create the potential for interethnic violence when Romani activists and their allies organize counterdemonstrations. Especially because data on hate crimes or other racially-motivated attacks may be unreliable, the obvious difference between the frequency of anti-Roma demonstrations is a good

measure for interethnic conflict. Also, examining ethnic conflict that is not violence may help reveal how conflict could escalate or lead to violence emerging.

Although Czech and Slovak policies towards the Roma minority and interethnic relations had similar roots in the post-communist transition, they came to diverge after the 1990s. How did the policies come to diverge and what are the consequences for majority/Roma relations? The group threat hypothesis would argue that progressive policies towards minorities would activate a threatened response from the privileged majority (Hjerm and Yaganoshi 2011; McLaren 2003). On the other hand, the group norm hypothesis would expect progressive policies to encourage interethnic tolerance (Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2013).

Through a 'most similar' paired case comparison of two neighboring central European states representing a positive and negative outcome on open interethnic conflict, I find support for the group threat hypothesis for the effects of policy regarding Roma, a domestic minority. I argue that in the Czech Republic, where the government strategy challenges majority populations to reform their attitudes and reexamine racist institutional practices, perceived symbolic threat to majority group position results in higher interethnic conflict. In Slovakia, on the other hand, a policy more deferential to claims of White superiority, based on the assumptions that cultural and economic differences between groups explain segregation, avoids both threatening Whites and empowering Roma. The Slovak government demonstrates limited engagement in shaping interethnic relations. Muted civil rights claims result in less interethnic conflict.

My research uses data collected by international organizations on racist crime and demonstrations to gauge the level of interethnic conflict. I examined government documents and spoke with officials of the Czech and Slovak state to understand the differences in their policies. I conducted semi-structured interviews with government officials, community leaders, activists, and non-profit employees between June 2014-June 2015, which provide depth of understanding in how national policies influence interethnic relations at the local level, where conflict erupts. I immediately demonstrate the difference in the level of interethnic conflict, followed by a review of the literature of policy effects on interethnic relations, the relevant background to these 'most similar' cases, and a description of my method. Then, for each case, I first use causal process tracing to understand how the policy came to diverge from a similar starting point in the 1990s, when both countries adopted EU-mandated legislation on minority and human rights. I then consider each country's policy's implications for majority threat on the state and local levels.

Differing Levels of Conflict

In 2013, 26 anti-Roma demonstrations across the Czech Republic drew the world's attention. Hundreds attended repeated demonstrations in the heretofore peaceful city of České Budějovice garnering the most attention. In some instances, extremists broke from official parade routes to march on Roma-inhabited housing complexes shouting "Heil Hitler" and giving Nazi salutes. Civil society organizations and activists created coalitions to block the marches and organize counter-demonstrations. Clashes

erupted between the protestors and riot police (ECRI 2015: 20-22). People feared going into the streets or letting their children out.

That summer was the most intense period for publicly demonstrated anti-Roma sentiment in central Europe, yet the frequency of anti-Roma demonstrations had been increasing since 2008. Demonstrations reveal the animosity that a sizable share of the majority White population holds against the Roma minority (European Values Study 2010a; European Values Study 2010b). Whereas data on hate crimes or other racially-motivated attacks are unreliable in east-central Europe, the obvious difference in the frequency of anti-Roma demonstrations is a good indicator of different levels of interethnic conflict. They also create the potential for violence and disorder.[5] To document anti-Roma demonstrations, I use data collected by non-profit organizations and international NGOs on interethnic conflict and violence. Even if imperfect, this information is the best available on intergroup conflict in the two countries. The European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) collects data on hate crimes, racist violence, and integration policies from member governments and domestic non-profit organizations in an attempt to capture underreporting. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Hate Crime Reporting (ODIHR) collects official information on hate crimes and other extremist crimes from the Czech and Slovak governments. The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is an international public interest law organization with offices in both the Czech and Slovak Republics which has

[5] Violence can occur between demonstrators and police, or, in some instances, violence erupts at these demonstrations when Romani activists and their allies organize counter-demonstrations.

been recognized by the Council of Europe and the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Table 2.1: Anti-Roma Demonstrations by Country, 2011-2014

	Total	*Per 1000*	*Per 1000 Roma*
Czech Republic	65	.006	.325
Slovakia	16	.003	.032
Ratio CZ to SK	4.1	2.0	10.2

Note: Data from ERRC (2015), available upon request.

The ERRC recorded 65 demonstrations between 2011 and 2015 in the Czech Republic and only 16 in Slovakia (ERRC 2015) (See Table 2.1). Though the Czech Republic's population of 10.52 million is nearly twice Slovakia's 5.43 million, even adjusted for population, over twice as many anti-Roma demonstrations occurred there. Considering that Roma only number roughly 200,000 in the Czech Republic, in this five-year period, 0.33 anti-Roma demonstrations occurred for every 1000 Roma in the country compared to only 0.032 in Slovakia (about 500,000 Roma citizens) (Vermeersch 2006: 18). In other words, adjusted for population, over ten times the number of demonstrations occur in the Czech Republic.

I do not include data which I collected on anti-Roma demonstrations between 1993 and 2011 in Table 2.1 because I am unsure if they are complete. However, in searching newspaper, NGO, and scholarly sources (and through personal communication with Czech political scientist, Miroslav Mareš, on his study of the far right in Central Europe), I have found that between 1993 and 2003, apparently no anti-Roma demonstrations occurred in either country (See Figure 2.1). From 2004 to 2010, fifteen demonstrations occurred in the Czech Republic, with five each in 2007 and 2008, the

moment that Czech policy began to take a turn to be more progressive on interethnic relations. In Slovakia, at least three anti-Roma demonstrations occurred after that moment between 2009-2010. The demonstration in 2009 was inspired by those that occurred in the Czech Republic in 2008, organized by Marian Kotleba, and marked the beginning of his new far right party People's Party –Our Slovakia, which would win seats in parliament in 2016 (Mareš 2012b: 290). Even if incomplete, these data reflect the trend presented in Table 2.1, and support the argument that the frequency of anti-Roma demonstrations increased with the increased visibility of a progressive Czech policy on interethnic relations. Anti-Roma demonstrations remained infrequent in Slovakia.

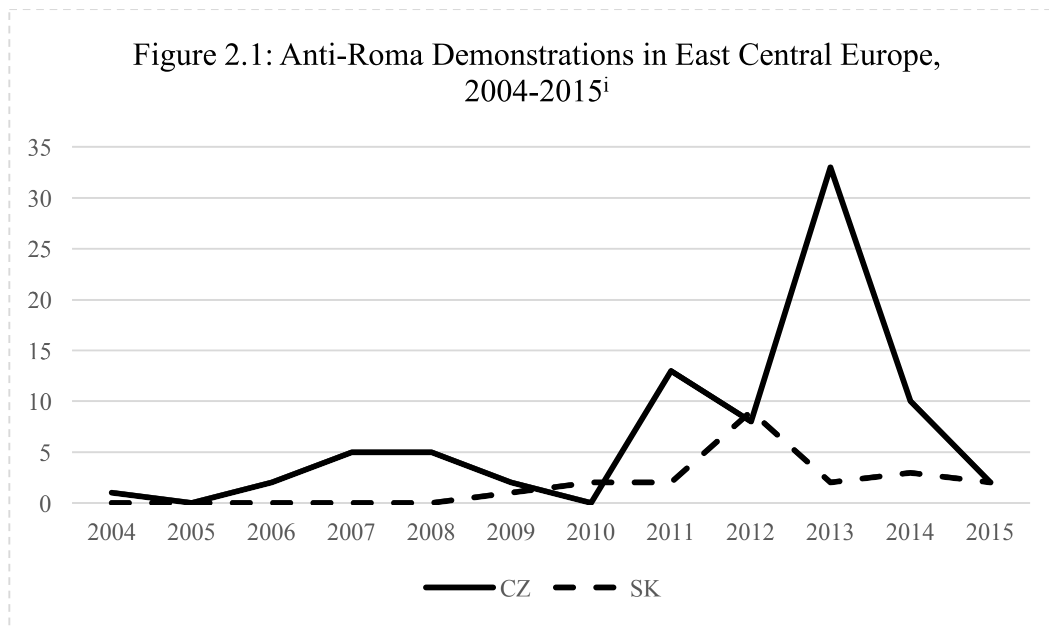

Figure 2.1: Anti-Roma Demonstrations in East Central Europe, 2004-2015[i]

[i]Data compiled from (Albert 2006; Albert 2009; Albert and Redlová 2008; CTK 2004; Dizdarevič and Valeš 2010; ERRC 2015; Mareš 2011; Mareš 2012b; Vilikovská 2010)

The differing levels of interethnic conflict as demonstrated by prevalence of anti-Roma demonstrations may lead one to conclude that relations are much better in Slovakia. Indeed, though Slovak Roma experience higher levels of poverty and

segregation than Czech Roma, overt conflict between the majority and Roma remains rather low. ODIHR data on hate crimes reports 138 hate crimes against Roma and Sinti during 2011-2014 in the Czech Republic (ODIHR 2014a).[6] Slovakia does not report ethnicity-specific hate crimes to the ODIHR, but NGOs reported only 9 incidents of violence against Roma between 2009 and 2012 (ECRI 2014: 22; ODIHR 2014b).[7] My subsequent analysis finds support for the argument that a more progressive policy emphasizing equality and challenging Whites to reform their prejudices activates perceived threat to the majority group position, leading to the more frequent anti-Roma demonstrations in the Czech Republic.

Policy and Intergroup Conflict

Research on policy and race relations has focused too much on native populations' prejudices against immigrants and too little on outcomes of domestic interethnic conflict (Hjerm and Yaganoshi 2011; McLaren 2003). If we apply hypotheses from these studies to Roma-majority relations, we would expect more negative attitudes in Slovakia as a result of its conservative policy on interethnic relations (Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2012) and more activated majority threat from the higher population proportion of the Roma minority (Quillian 1995). Nevertheless, Czechs and Slovaks express similar levels of interethnic enmity. From a perceived threat perspective,

[6] Notably, changes to the law so that some crimes were classified as lesser extremist offenses, the count dropped from 59 and 52 in 2011 and 2012, respectively, and to the low teens in 2013 and 2014 (ODIHR 2014a).
[7] These data are very likely much lower than the actual hate crimes which go unreported.

government policy could signal threat to the security of the majority's group position. Also, while studying determinants of prejudice is important work, the literature should go deeper to investigate the way a threatened majority impacts race relations on the ground, including interethnic conflict, here measured by anti-Roma demonstrations.

Czech and Slovak *policy* on interethnic relations is a useful explanatory factor because it represents the official view of the state and has the potential to influence the entire country. Sociologists often study policy and its effects on the public (Krysan 2000). In policies with possible racialized outcomes, government strategies can influence race relations (Spencer 1998). For states which acceded to the EU within the past fifteen years, new policy could be an explanatory factor (Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2012), as governments rapidly changed or added policies to conform to EU standards (Vachudova 2005).[8]

Though the literature has focused on the effects of immigration policy on xenophobia, the logic should extend to domestic interethnic relations. Schlueter et al. (2012) use policy as the independent variable to test the effects of 'permissive' and 'conservative' immigration policies on natives' opinion of immigrants. In a cross-European comparison, they find support for a *group norm* hypothesis, which predicts that the states with more permissive policies have more positive opinions of immigrants, through the mechanism of elites changing policy to demonstrate the preferred group norm, affecting the opinion of the population at large over time. Does this relationship

[8] Sometimes policy is a dependent variable, as when social mobilization or public sentiment affects policy change (Htun 2004; Kingsbury 2015). Because of the historical context of EU candidacy and expansion, that is not the case for the relevant policies in East Central Europe (Vachudova 2005).

operate in a similar way for demonstrated antipathy towards domestic ethnic groups? In that case, the progressive Czech policy should foster more positive attitudes towards the Romani minority. In fact, both the Czechs and Slovaks report similarly negative views towards Roma, despite differing policies. Taken further than reported prejudices, the group norm hypothesis would also expect less interethnic conflict in the Czech Republic. On the contrary, I find that more progressive policies lead to a more salient threat for the majority, resulting in more conflict in the form of anti-Roma demonstrations.

The mechanism through which progressive policies could lead to increased interethnic conflict is through increased saliency of *group threat* experienced by the White majority responding to (perceived or real) attempts by Roma to increase their access to resources or their prestige. Blumer (1958) posited that negative feelings towards other groups, or prejudice, was founded in collectively-experienced sense of maintaining group position (relative to other groups). From this seminal work, others investigated how the threat to that superior position could generate prejudice towards other groups (Olzak 1992). The 'realistic' group threat branch of this literature attempts objective measures of threat, such as the proportion of a minority group in a particular labor market, in order to observe effects of 'real' threat on prejudice (Hjerm and Yaganoshi 2011; Quillian 1995). The 'perceived' group threat branch finds evidence that *perceived threat* to group position has effects on negative attitudes towards other groups, perhaps regardless of 'real' threat they pose (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; McLaren 2003). Based on proportion of the population, the 'realistic' threat of the Romani minority for the White majority would be higher in Slovakia, which would not explain the fewer anti-

Roma demonstrations there. In the policy domain, the perceived threat of 'government favoritism' or 'special treatment' (through welfare, affirmative action programs, or other social benefits) could elicit the threatened majority response of anti-minority protests.

Group threat can manifest even when the minority group does not represent an economic threat to the majority (Blumer 1958; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). In a racially polarized society, reactive majority members can perceive even a symbolic advantage to a minority group as a threat to collective status.[9] Hjerm and Yaganoshi (2011) find that the proportionate size of the Muslim immigrant group (culturally different from the majority) increases the 'realistic' group threat experienced (as xenophobia) by Europeans towards immigrants (829). This hypothesis would expect more Slovaks to experience more group threat, as Roma make up five times more of the overall population than in the Czech Republic. Instead, from a perceived group threat perspective, the Czech Republic's policy signals threat to majority group position, resulting in a more salient threat and higher interethnic conflict. For Slovakia, I argue that the mental maintenance of superiority is symbolically supported by the state policy and contributes to interethnic peace, if not social transformation.

While scholars have investigated the relationship between policy and prejudice, one gap in the existing literature is that they have mostly focused on xenophobia towards immigrants and have not captured effects on domestic interethnic conflict. Support for the group norm hypothesis does not bear out in my East Central European cases. With its

[9] In Romania, for example, majority backlash targeted the popularity of Roma-produced music, framed as an attack on Romanian culture (Vamanu and Vamanu 2013: 275-283).

numerically and proportionately larger Romani population, Slovakia is actually at greater risk for a culturally-threatened majority population using the ‘realistic’ threat hypothesis (Hjerm and Nagayoshi 2011). Can a perceived group threat perspective help explain why anti-Roma demonstrations are much more common in the Czech Republic?

Comparing Czech and Slovak Ethnic Relations Policies and Majority-Roma Conflict

This study uses data from multiple sources for a paired ‘most similar’ case comparison (Gerring 2007: 131-139; Tarrow 2010). As these similar cases hold many chararcteristics in common, yet exhibit variation on the outcome of interest (interethnic conflict), the comparison aids in identifying the mechanism that produces that variation. Having already established at the beginning of this paper the variation in interethnic conflict, I will use process tracing to show how Czech and Slovak policies diverged by 2010 (Tarrow 2010). To assess policy, I analyzed official documents of the Czech and Slovak governments and EU human rights and Roma inclusion policies. In-depth interviews with government officials, non-profit employees, and activists provide insight into the way the policy is experienced and implemented on the ground.

To show how the policy came to diverge from the starting point of similiar EU-mandated legislation of the 1990s, I use process tracing centered on a key event in each case (Collier 2011; Sewell 2005; Tarrow 2010). In these sections, I emphasize that the divergence was not inevitable, but rather key actors, including politicians and activists, seized opportunities to enact more progressive or regressive policies on interethnic relations. Understanding this period of divergence is crucial because not until after 2007

did the frequency of anti-Roma demonstrations increase in the Czech Republic. In each case, I then move on to discuss how different the policies came to be after this period of divergence and the implications for majority threat on the national and more local levels. I assess the progressiveness or regressiveness to the extent that the policy articulates and takes steps towards racial integration and to combat discrimination (Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2013). To assess threat, I pay special attention to how visible the policy is the majority on the national and local levels and the extent to which the policy challenges the majority to change. For the Czech case, I also describe examples of specific threatened-majority responses to the policy.

From June 2014 to June 2015, I conducted 69 semi-structured interviews throughout the Czech Republic and Slovakia (See Table 2.2). Interviews with key informants from the national and local governments and personal consultation with experts on country policy fleshed out not just the written policy, but how the government practices this policy. Interviews with non-profit employees and activists, while not centered on policy, often provided specific examples as to how the policy affected citizens on the ground.

Table 2.2: Number of Respondents by Country, Type, and Roma-identified

	National Government involved	*Local Government involved*	*Non-profit employee and/or activist*	*Total*	*Roma-identified*
Czech Republic	2	3	22	**27**	8
Slovakia	3	4	35	**42**	9

This paired case comparison of similar cases reveals the connection between government policy and conflict. I use easily-measured anti-Roma demonstrations to assess the level of interethnic conflict. The demonstrations represent not just anti-Roma prejudice, but that the majority is willing to take action on it. By employing process tracing, I reveal how the relevant policies unexpectedly diverged from similar starting point. Through government documents and interviews, I gauge the progressiveness or repressiveness of government policy and its visibility and potential for activating majority threat. First, I demonstrate the appropriateness of the comparison by describing the political and historical background to these cases.

Background to 'Most Similar' Cases

As I am interested in understanding what precipitates conflict between majority and Roma populations in otherwise orderly post-communist European countries, I examine both outcomes: a case in which conflict frequently occurs and a case in which repeated or sustained conflict would be expected but instead rarely occurs. Slovakia experiences less interethnic conflict than prevailing notions would suggest, especially when compared to the neighboring Czech Republic. Because of their many similarities, including a linked socio-political history, scholars often choose the republics of former Czechoslovakia for 'most similar' paired case comparisons (Froese 2005; Nedelsky 2004; Tomczuk 2016). To show how their policies on interethnic relations and the Romani minority came to diverge, I will first give a brief background on their adoption of similar policies during the 1990s. In the remainder of this section, I will describe their

similarities as pertaining to Roma-majority inequality and majority-held anti-Roma sentiment, demonstrating the appropriateness of this comparison.

Czechoslovakia was on track to join the EU very soon after the 1989 Velvet Revolution, which ended one party rule. The state had already signed an agreement with Europe, the first condition on the road to membership. After the peaceful dissolution of the federal state into two independent entities in 1993, the newly formed Czech and Slovak Republics both signed new agreements with Europe including references to both human and minority rights (Vachudova 2005: 102). By 1997, however, under the rule of Vladimír Mečiar's populist and autocratic government, the EU stated that Slovakia was failing in the areas of minority rights and democracy (Vachudova 2005: 156). Yet the period of 'Mečiarism' ended when a broad opposition coalition gained control of the government in 1998 (Vachudova 2005: 159). The new government quickly passed legislation to comply with the EU's 'Copenhagen Criteria' on minority rights. The government appointed a Hungarian deputy prime minister for human rights, and both Slovaks and the EU seemed convinced that ethnic tensions, at least between ethnic Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians, had relaxed (Vachudova 2005: 200-201). By end of the 1990s, both states had ministries of human rights, national minorities and Roma minorities. From this similar starting point, their policies began to diverge in practice throughout the first decade of the 21st century.

Majority-Roma relations are tense in both countries, at least in part because of obvious racial inequality. Roma are perhaps the most materially destitute population in Europe, though precise measures are difficult to assemble as Roma are routinely

undercounted in official census data (Mušinka et al 2014; Vermeersch 2006: 18). Roma make up roughly 2% of overall population of the Czech Republic (10.5 million) and 9% of the Slovak Republic (5.4 million) (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic 2015: 5; Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2016: 10). This difference in size of the overall population and proportion of the Roma population does not weaken the paired comparison because it would lead us to expect more conflict in Slovakia using the 'realistic' threat hypothesis.

In both societies, Roma endure low levels of education and income and high levels of unemployment, discrimination, and segregation.[10] These inequalities translate into palpable social segregation between the majority and Roma. In 2010 in the Czech Republic, Roma men made only 45% of White Czechs' income, and women only 39% (World Bank 2010: 9). In Slovakia, 87% of Roma live in poverty (World Bank 2012: 4). A third of Czech Roma live in segregated slums (Druker 2012: 195). Similarly, 30% of Slovak Roma live in slums or 'ruined houses' (World Bank 2012: 31). High levels of segregation ensure that Roma and Whites have few opportunities to get to know each other in workplaces, residential settings, or schools in either country. Whites and Roma rarely work together, as more than half of working-age Roma are unemployed (World Bank 2008: 6). Roma children are disproportionately placed in schools for mentally challenged students and international organizations have identified de facto educational

[10] The poverty of many Roma may be partially explained by their marginalization through the post-communist transition. Eastern European Roma were mainly unskilled laborers in the period before 1989 (Guy 2001). Their lack of education and skills excluded them from new opportunities in the burgeoning market economies. Many turned to state benefits for subsistence. Prejudiced members of the majority interpreted this and rising crime rates as evidence of Roma's laziness and criminality, exacerbating segregation and discrimination (Guy 2001: 13-15).

segregation in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia (World Bank 2012: 25; Lurker 2009: 5; Stewart 2002). While segregation and inequality are high in both states, in general, Slovak Roma are relatively and absolutely more impoverished than Czech Roma. Yet, how does this explain the lower interethnic conflict there?

Survey and interview data confirm that Whites hold negative views of the Roma. In one Central European survey, "Non-Roma respondents consistently expressed negative views of [Roma] overall, describing [Roma] as dishonest, aggressive, un-hygienic, lacking work ethic, unemployed, poorly educated and prone to criminality" (Open Society Foundation 2005: 3). As mentioned in the introduction, the European Values Study (2010a; 2010b) recorded that 57% of Czechs and 51% of Slovaks do not want Roma neighbors. As these countries adopted similar EU-mandated legislation on minority rights in the 1990s, ethnic inequality is slightly higher in Slovakia, and the majority in both countries harbor anti-Roma prejudices, why does the Czech Republic exhibit higher different levels of interethnic conflict?

Czech Strategy: Supporting Social Inclusion, Threatening the Majority

Much of the Czech and Slovak minority and human rights policies was adopted from EU directives in the 1990s, yet important differences in strategy and execution distinguish them. In the Czech case, policy evolved to become comparatively more progressive in its approach to interethnic relations. The crucial period of divergence was during the rise of the extreme right in the country and the government actions to curb extremism between 2007 and 2010. The establishment of the Agency for Social Inclusion (hereafter, "the Agency") in 2008, the public outrage over the 2009 arson attack on a

Romani family, and the eventually successful banning of the extremist Worker's Party in 2010 make up the key events of the period. The Czech state policy threatens the majority through its visibility at the state and local levels though anti-racism campaigns, municipal and regional 'Roma coordinators,' and police support of Romani communities during anti-Roma demonstrations.

Seizing the Moment: Czech Romani Activists and Elite Allies Affect Policy Reform, 2007-2010

That the Czech government would come to actively (and not only in words) support minority and human rights was not an inevitable outcome. While the first president of post-1989 Czechoslovakia (and after 1993, the first of the Czech Republic), Václav Havel, was an ex-dissident who emphasized human rights, Václav Klaus, the euroskeptic technocrat, an economist by training with neoliberal tendencies, heavily influenced policies as the country's first prime minister (1993-1998) and then second president (2003-2013). By 2007, the Czech radical right had reformed after a period of decline in the early 2000s, emphasizing an anti-Roma agenda. As a result, mainstream politicians started using anti-Roma rhetoric (Mareš 2015:215). Remarkably, rather than pulling center and center-right politics further to the right (as it did in Slovakia), the government took lasting steps to execute more progressive policies and combat extremism. Activists and political allies seized opportunities in a period when the radical right and visible anti-Roma sentiment could have affected a more regressive policy, demonstrating that a more progressive outcome was not at all inevitable.

Divisions between the left and right paralyzed the Czech government in in 2006. Elections at the end of the year resulted in the formation of a government ruled by Klaus' center-right Civic Democratic Party[11] (ODS) in January 2007. In this same year, seeing an opportunity to make use of European Structural Funds, the Council of Human Rights tried to improve the gap between policy and practice when it proposed the "Agency for Eliminating Social Exclusion in Roma Localities" (Večerník 2009: 59). The Agency started functioning in 2008, funded entirely by European Structural Funds, rather than by the Czech government. Later the government shortened the name to the "Agency for Social Inclusion," emphasizing a positive process over a negative label and removing the reference to ethnicity from the title. The Agency would become the most active part of the Czech government in enacting a progressive interethnic relations policy.

The establishment of the Agency, however, did not reflect a wider progressive trend in the entire government nor in the political culture. Though Parliament passed an anti-discrimination law, President Klaus vetoed it in May of 2008 (Česká televize 2008). Over a year later, the Parliament overruled the veto, making the Czech Republic the last European state to enact an anti-discrimination law (Štráfeldová 2009). In the meantime, the radical right party, the Worker's Party (DS) started closer cooperation with neo-Nazi groups, forming the paramilitary group the Workers' Party Protection Corps (OS-DS) and the youth association Workers' Youth (DM).[12] The OS-DS began to 'patrol' Romani neighborhoods, attempting to intimidate Roma. On October 4, 2008, a group of Roma

[11] Občanská demokratická strana (ODS).
[12] Ochranné sbory Dělnické strany (OS-DS) and Dělnická mládež (DM).

blocked and berated a group of the OS-DS 'patrolling' the Janov housing estate, a suburb of the town Litvínov, in northern Bohemia (Mareš 2013:108). This led to a series of anti-Roma demonstrations and riots from October to December of 2008 in Litvínov-Janov. The largest of them occurred on the official anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, November 17. A peaceful demonstration in the town square preceded a march of 1500 people, 500 of which were 'ordinary' citizens, on Janov. Mareš (2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2015), the prominent scholar studying the Czech radical right, regards this as the beginning of renewed rise of the movement. He writes of the event,

> Several hundreds of militant participants were armed with poles, sticks, sprays, knives and Molotov cocktails. They tried to attack Roma houses, however, after hours of fighting against strong police forces they stopped their action. There were several people injured on both sides. Many local citizens supported violent anti-Roma attacks. (Mareš 2013:109)

Dubbed the "Battle of Janov," the DS attempted to use this event as a symbol by which to rally and recruit supporters. Clearly, some 'ordinary' citizens supported the anti-Roma demonstrations and violence, yet a clear division in public opinion emerged of such events with many clamoring for better regulation. The government, under pressure from the media and activist groups, tried to dissolve and ban the DS as unconstitutional (Mareš 2012a:39).[13] The hastily written proposal was dismissed for not presenting sufficient grounds that the party was obstructing the democratic process or threatening the rights and freedoms of others in March of 2009, yet would soon receive renewed attention (Albert and Redlová 2008:31).

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[13] See Mareš (2012a) for a full explanation and description of the law allowing for the dissolution of illegal political parties and the government proposals to ban the DS.

Perhaps public interest would have waned, yet activists and political allies rallied around an act of anti-Roma violence rattling the country just the following month. The public reacted with horror to the racially-motivated arsonist firebombing of a Romani family's home, which left a 2 year-old child, Natálka, with burns over 80% of her body.[14] At least two of the four attackers who would be charged admitted to having attended anti-Roma demonstrations organized by the DS (Tkach 2010). This renewed the campaign to ban the party. An interim government led by Jan Fischer (put in place after a no confidence vote in March of that year) created a special anti-extremism team within the Ministry of the Interior after the arson attack (Freedom House 2010).[15] Fischer, whose Jewish father had survived the Holocaust, took a special interest in the family, publicly fundraising for them (CNN Wire Staff 2010). Though the DS attempted to distance itself from this particular act of violence, enough vocal members of the public associated the attack, and ones like it, with the party. In June 2009, just a few months after the attack, the Parliament overruled Klaus' veto of the anti-discrimination act. By the end of 2010, the government had successfully banned the DS, and in a highly-publicized trial, the arsonists were convicted and harshly sentenced (Velinger 2010). In its decision, the Czech Supreme Administrative Court wrote that, in addition to having ties with neo-Nazi groups, the DS,

> has as its objective inciting national, racial, ethnic and social intolerance and, as a consequence, an attempt to limit the basic rights and freedoms of certain groups of Czech Republic's inhabitants, especially minorities (typically Roma, but also Vietnamese and Jewish, plus immigrants more

[14] The child survived. Public interest in this story remains relatively high, as the mainstream media will occasionally publish updates on Natálka and her family (Týden 2016).

[15] President Klaus nominated Fischer based on a recommendation from an agreement between ODS, the Green Party, and the Social Democrats (Government of the Czech Republic 2010).

> generally and individuals of different origins, skin colour or sexuality) (Quoted in Mareš 2012a:43-44).

In the period of 2007-2010, the government formed the Agency for Social Inclusion, overruled Klaus' veto of an anti-discrimination act, and banned the DS for its racist activities and aims. Rather than being an obvious progression of events, the increased visibility and support of the far right and associated racial violence could have led to less progressive policies towards majority-Roma relations.[16] Yet because of vocal Romani activists and political allies like Fischer, even the center-right government led by Klaus' party, ODS, adopted more progressive policies and actions. The consequences of this crucial period for ethnic relations-related policies and group threat at the state in the Czech Republic. The resulting policy, is highly visible at the regional and local levels. In response, the banned DS would re-form quickly into the Worker's Party for Social Justice (DSSS)[17] and renew their anti-Roma activities (Mareš 2012a:45). The radical right continues to influence politics through activating anti-Roma sentiment[18] (Mareš 2012a:9) and has some electoral success at the local and regional levels.

Supporting Social Inclusion, Activating State-level Majority Threat

The Czech Council for National Minorities includes representatives from fourteen nationally-recognized minorities including a Roma representative. The Council for Roma

[16] Indeed, as I will soon explain, radical right parties have helped pull discourse to the right Slovakia (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015). And Mareš (2015) notes that the Czech public seems to find the anti-Roma sentiments and activities of the radical right less offensive than racism towards other groups. He writes, "Right-wing radical activities against the Vietnamese community and against people of Asian and African origin have mostly led to counter-reactions directed against right-wing extremism" (217).

[17] Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti (DSSS).

[18] Recently, they have also garnered attention with Islamophobic anti-immigrant sentiment (Siddique 2017)

Community Affairs helps develop the strategies for Roma integration and reports on the status of Czech Roma communities. It coordinates and advises with the Ministers of Labor, Housing, and Human Rights. While these councils are important for writing and recommending policy, they do little in the way of practice. The Agency for Social Inclusion's activities represent the greatest difference between the Czech and Slovak policies, and its activities are the most visible way that the government addresses interethnic relations. In this subsection, the approach and activities of the Agency demonstrate the extent to which the Czech policy is progressive and how its visibility threatens the majority's group position.

Czech politicians, policymakers and activists commonly and professionally use the term 'social exclusion' when discussing the status of many Roma communities and impoverished areas and neighborhoods, thus emphasizing an importance on integration. The term 'social excluded localities' refers to locations whose residents have limited access to institutions and services. In the Czech Republic, about three quarters of the residents in socially excluded localities are Romani (Agency for Social Inclusion 2016). The Agency attributes both a culture of poverty and institutional barriers to the perpetuation of social exclusion, though it specifies that exclusion is not a problem of ethnicity.

As the name change that removed the reference to "Roma Localities" suggests, the Agency claims to target communities based on their social exclusion and not on the ethnicity of the inhabitants. The website states, however, that the discrimination and stigma faced by Roma can be an additional element of social exclusion and that Roma are

already most at risk. The Agency therefore takes a somewhat ‘colorblind’ approach to social exclusion, while acknowledging that ethnic or racial discrimination can be an element of or contributing to that exclusion. The Agency was influenced by the Minister of Human Rights’ policy, the “Roma Integration Concept, 2010-2013.” This document specifies support of Roma language and culture as a goal alongside ensuring the safety of Roma communities. It states that the majority culture should incorporate Roma culture and that the memory of the Roma holocaust and its victims should be preserved (Minister of Human Rights of the Czech Republic 2009:12-16).

The Agency represents some of the most progressive government practices in the Czech Republic or Slovakia by attempting to change institutions not merely assisting individuals. Working with local municipal governments, NGOs, and civil society organizations, it attempts to improve education, employment, safety, housing, social services, and family services. Informational videos on the website demonstrate how employees from the Agency visit locations willing to work with them, identify goals and develop plans in cooperation with the local government, organizations and communities. They then execute those plans together. The Agency also helps with applications for grants from the European Structural Funds, the EU’s main investment policy tool meant to create jobs and increase the skills of the workforce. By coordinating with local organizations and the town government (listed as a ‘target group’), the Agency attempts to directly influence the structures and institutions that perpetuate marginalization (Agency for Social Inclusion 2016). It reports its effects on the target group (residents of

socially-excluded localities) as indirect. The Agency also takes on the mission to combat racism and hate crimes.

Since 2014, the Agency has operated a website, public service announcements, and social media campaign called "HateFree Culture" (Hate Free 2016). The anti-racism campaign attempts to address myths and stigma against groups such as Roma, Muslims, and foreigners.[19] The website addresses such myths and stereotypes as believing Romani individuals receive free healthcare or special treatment for social benefits (government assistance). In an interview with someone who knew the Agency's employees personally and professionally, I learned how on at least one occasion an employee 'pranked' a neo-Nazi, nationalist extremist organization by contacting their leaders who were organizing a rally, and then scheduling non-existent speaker to appear at the rally. They did this in hopes of disrupting it and for the pleasure of duping the rally organizers. This prank suggests that the individuals working at the agency are normatively committed to anti-racism even outside of their official obligations.

Czech government policy uses progressive language and activities to include Roma and Romani culture in mainstream society. The colorblind language used by the Agency literally spells out to Czechs that Romani ethnicity or culture are not to blame for their exclusion, but the historical and present institutional factors they face. The onus is placed on the majority to examine their own prejudices and aspire to a "HateFree Culture." While the Agency is also visible through its activities in municipalities, the

[19] Very recently, in the wake of the refugee crisis in Europe, the campaign has focused mainly on Islamophobia and xenophobia.

HateFree Culture campaign, in particular, challenges White Czechs. Ironically the more progressive policy contributes to the rise in anti-Roma demonstrations as a radicalized segment of Czech society responds to a perceived threat to their privilege. Since its launch in 2014, neo-nationalists have even responded specifically to the HateFree campaign. A Facebook page "Anti Hate Free" soon appeared (Pavec 2015). One nationalist website replicated the recognizable pink "HateFree" logo, crossing out the word "Hate" and writing in "Truth," to imply that the Agency for Social Inclusion spreads false information. In 2016, vandals scrawled Nazi slogans and "Death to HateFree" on several Prague cafes displaying the "Hate Free Zone" sticker[20] (*Novinky.cz* 2016).

Roma Coordinators and Police Assistants: Activating Regional and Local Majority Threat?

On the regional and local level, official involvement in interethnic relations is still highly visible, as the majority perceives support for the Romani community as threat to majority group position. Regional and municipal 'Roma coordinators' act as consultants for the government on their local Romani communities. Sixty-two local police forces employ Assistants for Crime Prevention (APK), at least 50% of whom are Romani (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic 2015: 35-36). APK act as mediators between police officers and Romani communities. These local official representatives of the government are a visible commitment to interethnic relations. Furthermore, since

[20] The Nazi slogans in this instance specifically referenced refugees. The incident sparked a pro-HateFree demonstration in which participants voiced their support for refugees, Roma, the LGBT community and other causes (*Novinky.cz* 2016).

2013, police protection of Romani activists and communities during anti-Roma demonstrations further exhibit that the state will protect minority citizens in the face of nationalist extremism.

Regional and local Roma coordinators represent a government effort to bridge the gap between socially excluded Roma and the institutions from which they are excluded, once again emphasizing inclusion. All 13 regions and the city of Prague currently have a ‘coordinator for issues of the Roma minority.’ They are meant to help implement the state’s policy on integration and advise the municipality on the status of the Romani community in their region. Recently, the regional coordinators were encouraged to focus their work more on “the fight against prejudice and, above all, on the emancipation and empowerment of Roma…” because that is “one of the most important prerequisites for Roma integration” (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic 2015: 11). The government signals its commitment to Romani inclusion through these coordinators. The regional coordinators keep the national policy visible, reminding both Romani and White Czechs of its commitment to inclusion.

In České Budějovice, the southern Bohemian (western Czech Republic) town which saw the most sustained anti-Roma demonstrations in the summer of 2013, the local government employs two ‘Roma coordinators,’ to assess the needs of the Roma community and monitor local interethnic relations. In interviews with both (majority-identified) Roma coordinators and some of their Roma and non-Roma associates in the community, I learned how they act as brokers between the municipal administration and

the local Roma communities.[21] Though they are both White Czechs, the coordinators have earned the respect and trust of Roma colleagues in local non-profit organizations. These positions (and those of regional Roma coordinators) demonstrates a willingness by the local governments to reach out to Roma populations and help their voices be heard. This network of government employees concerned with Roma issues creates an outlet through which Roma can have their voices heard, but which the majority perceive as a threat to their group position.

Finally, support for integration is even present on the streets. Sixty-two local police forces employ 212 Assistants for Crime Prevention (APK) in all 13 regions of the Czech Republic. At least half of the APK are Romani. They patrol socially excluded areas and act as mediators between the police force and the socially excluded communities they police. In České Budějovice, where the APK had only been implemented after the demonstrations of 2013, some non-profit employees I interviewed praised the APK's ability to act as bridges between the local Romani population, the police, and even the local majority population. One Romani respondent's more skeptical opinion of the APK was that they reduced conflict with the majority population through having Roma comply with White expectations (of not making noise after 10PM, for example). Yet, even he concluded that the APK lessened conflict with the police. Tellingly, the way that Romani activists and leaders view police has transformed since the critical period of 2007-2010. Before and during that period, Romani activists and

[21] I also interviewed a Romani-identified Roma coordinator in Ústí nad Labem. He emphasized a similar role, though he also focused on obtaining services for needy Romani families or families in crisis.

news sources often reported that the police did not do enough to keep counterdemonstrators and Romani communities safe from extremists (Albert 2009: 24-25). On the other hand, during the 2013 demonstrations in České Budějovice, Romani news sources reported the excellent protection that special police forces provided (Romea 2013b; Romea 2013c).

The regional and local Roma coordinators and the APK create local opportunities to see the government's commitment to Roma integration. These efforts may both assist local Romani and socially-excluded communities and make more salient the threat to the White majority. As I will demonstrate the next section, the Czech policy is visible at the local level in ways that the Slovak policy seems designed to avoid.

Slovak Strategy: Emphasizing Difference, Avoiding Conflict

Unlike in the Czech Republic, where a government agency is tasked with implementing policy on social inclusion, only the Slovak Office of the Plenipotentiary of Romani Communities attempts to use its limited resources to address the "Roma issue." In this section, I first describe the context and elements of the key event in 2004 during which Slovak Romani activists could have used the mobilization of many Roma, in response to social welfare cuts, to widen their demands. Instead, the government undercut a Romani social movement through a combination of police repression and weak concessions. The government learned that it could get away without enforcing the *de jure* equal rights of roughly 10 percent of its citizens. I now detail how Slovak policy intentionally avoids conflict through limiting threat to the majority. At the local level, NGOs (not the government) take the initiative to work with impoverished Roma

communities and thereby often mediate interethnic relations, often with their own conflict avoidance strategies to limit majority threat. Finally, repressive policing of Romani communities further signals to White Slovaks a racialized 'law and order' message, which enables their ongoing group position advantages.

Missed Opportunity: Repression of a Budding Romani Movement, 2004

Although Slovakia lagged on the satisfactory fulfillment of minority rights protections in the early 1990s during the autocratic period of 'Mečiarism,' the government formed in 1998 quickly implemented policy changes to meet the EU's 'Copenhagen criteria' on ethnic minority rights (Vachudova 2005: 200-201). These changes included the 1999 creation of the position of Plenipotentiary for Solving the Problems of Citizens Belonging to the Romani Minority (Friedman 2005: 2). Just as a more progressive approach to interethnic relations was not inevitable for the Czech Republic, Slovakia was not fated to take a more regressive tack. After all, a broad coalition including progressive forces ended Mečiarism. After the 2002 elections, however, only right-of-center parties made up the government, and Romani activists and political allies were unable or unwilling to seize the opportunity that nationwide Romani mobilization presented in 2004 to affect meaningful reforms (Marušák and Singer 2009: 189).

In 2001, the government changed the title of the Plenipotentiary for Solving the Problems of Citizens Belonging to the Romani Minority to the "Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities" (hereafter the 'Plenipotentiary') and well-known Slovak Romani activist, Klára Orgovánová assumed the post (Friedman 2005: 2). After the 2002

elections, Orgovánová's critical view of government policies affecting Roma began to clash with that of the more right-leaning cabinet. An analyst for the Open Society Foundations[22] explained how these tensions manifested in the actual documents produced by the Plenipotentiary.

> The substantive sections of the document – apparently drafted by the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary without the participation of the Cabinet – contain frank analyses of policies implemented to date and provide lists of concrete measures to be undertaken in the medium and long terms. The introductory section in which the Cabinet presumably had a hand, however, is marked by clichés that suggest a lack of familiarity with the issues addressed in the remainder of the document, for example where it notes that "the essence of the problems of the Roma has a socio-economic character" or that "Roma in a uniting Europe face similar challenges to other ethnic groups." (Friedman 2005: 3)

While Orgovánová represented a progressive, critical approach to interethnic relations, her rather toothless office did not allow her to undertake the kind of practical tactics that the Agency for Social Inclusion does in the Czech Republic. A critical moment for a shift may have been the large-scale Romani mobilization in the winter of 2004. The Plenipotentiary and Romani activist leaders had the opportunity to hold the government accountable for the social rights of Slovak Roma, but they let the moment pass.

During February and March of 2004, hundreds of Romani Slovaks and White allies in 42 towns and villages demonstrated against neoliberal reforms which drastically cut social benefits to the unemployed and poor families (Marušák and Singer 2009: 193). The government did not adequately provide advance information about the cuts, so many families found out about the 22% to 55% lower benefits when they arrived to pick up their checks at the municipal office (Marušák and Singer 2009: 191). Spontaneous

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[22] For which Orgovánová herself was a program director before her appointment as Plenipotentiary. She left the post of Plenipotentiary in 2007 (Roma Institute Website 2017).

demonstrations first erupted in early February 2004. Later in the month, several cities experienced mass looting. The Romani Parliament, an association of Romani political parties, met on February 21 to plan a response (Marušák and Singer 2009: 198; Vermeersch 2006:116-117).[23] They wrote an 'Appeal to the inhabitants of the Slovak Republic who are in need' calling for a peaceful general strike on February 25, the message of which was to be asking for work (Marušák and Singer 2009: 198). This could have been a moment to demonstrate the power of this substantial minority group, but the strike never happened.

Violent incidents and the government's mobilization of the police and army convinced leaders to cancel the February 25 strike. On February 23, police in Trebišov, a town in the most eastern part of the country, used water cannons and tear gas on an unauthorized demonstration of local Roma. Demonstrators responded by throwing rocks and bottles. Early the next morning, 240 police officers raided a predominately Roma-inhabited housing estate. Police beat residents indiscriminately, detained at least 26 individuals, and closed the estate for days (Marušák and Singer 2009: 194-195). That evening, February 24, the day before the planned general strike, the Slovak government held an emergency meeting. It mobilized 2000 police and 650 army soldiers, the largest mobilization of security forces since the military support of the Velvet Revolution in 1989 (Marušák and Singer 2009:196). Police violence in Trebišov and the military

[23] Vermeersch (2006) describes how the Romani Parliament, an ambitious effort to align the goals and strategies of Romani political parties in Slovakia, suffered from divisions even within a year of its founding in 2000 (116-117). This organization has been ineffective in establishing a common platform or electoral coalition.

mobilization, persuaded Romani leaders to cancel the general strike planned for February 25.

Romani leaders were unable to coordinate their efforts in part because they disagreed on the movement's message and in part because many feared violent government repression of further mobilization. Petitions and letter-writing campaigns demanded more to offset discrimination and inequality. They demanded that the government support Roma in higher education and job training and incentivize private firms to hire Romani employees (Marušák and Singer 2009: 193). With a more moderate approach, Plenipotentiary Orgovánová did not object to the cuts to social benefits, though she criticized the government for not providing families with more notice (Marušák and Singer 2009: 197). Some Romani leaders were more persistent than others, but their efforts soon fizzled. Following the cancelled strike, the Romani Parliament called for highway and border blockades, but government threats of a criminal investigation led them to also cancel those plans. During the unrest, clashes with the police resulted in over 200 Romani demonstrators being detained, with the last use of police force on March 19. In response to the unrest, the government allocated more funds for 'activation work.' This policy requires a few hours of (usually) menial work like street sweeping each week as a prerequisite to receiving social benefits. While the government has made no comparable cuts to social benefits in the years since, the weak concession was meager; in some towns, not even 25% of those requesting activation work receive it (Marušák and Singer 2009: 199-201).

Romani leaders, including the progressive Plenipotentiary Orgovánová did not seize the opportunity of nationwide mobilization to make greater demands for Slovak Romani citizens, in part deterred by violent repression. As a result, the government learned that a combination of that repression and limited material concessions could quell unrest. A potential watershed moment passed, and the policy on interethnic relations remains conservative.

Emphasizing Difference and Avoiding Threat Through Impotent Policies

The Slovak government's approach to interethnic relations emphasizes difference (and even segregation) over inclusion. Roma are even blamed for their own marginalization. The policy attempts to minimize threat to the majority and avoid conflict, rather than challenge racist institutions to change. The Plenipotentiary's office remains ineffective, thus potentially the most powerful elite ally to Slovak Roma remains impotent. [24]

In interviews with government workers, I learned that the Plenipotentiary's office has little power or funds to enact the policy it develops. The office writes the open document, "Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma Up to 2020" (hereafter, the Strategy). Peter Pollack, the first Roma-identified Roma Slovak MP,

[24] I do not discuss in this section the Government Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities and a committee of members as I find this office to be uninvolved in Roma-majority relations. The Romani minority does have four members on the committee, second only to the five Hungarian minority representatives. Yet, this office is mostly concerned with the preservation of minority languages, literature, and theater. In its 2016 report on the status and rights of national minorities, the office made only passing references to social marginalization, discrimination, segregation, or racism (Plenipotentiary to the Slovak Republic for National Minorities 2016). This situation reflects that the needs and interests of the stateless, linguistically and culturally diverse Slovak Roma are very different from the often politically-active, Hungarian-speaking minority.

served as the Plenipotentiary from 2012 until early 2016, when a change in government initiated turnover in many positions. The main goal of the office is to help NGOs and municipalities apply for European Structural Funds. The office itself also awards a few small grants based on projects which support its strategy for integration. A report for the Council of Europe assessed that the office "seems to be an advisory organ without the necessary powers to guide and co-ordinate [sic] the implementation of Roma integration policies" (ECRI 2014: 33). While the Slovak government has an agency on labor, social affairs, and family, that agency's documents make no mentions of the discrimination or marginalization which specifically Roma face (Implementing Agency Website 2017).[25] Thus, policy on interethnic relations is disconnected from practice.

Just as Czechs use the term "socially-excluded localities," Slovaks employ "marginalized Roma communities" (often abbreviated in writing to MRKs), emphasizing the link between Romani ethnicity and social exclusion. Marginalization includes poverty and lack of access to social and institutional resources, comparable to the concept of social exclusion (Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities 2011: 6).[26] Unlike how Czechs have removed the word "Roma" (to emphasize that not all residents of these localities are Roma and that not all Roma are living in social exclusion), Slovaks specify ethnicity. The Plenipotentiary's Strategy focuses mostly on

[25] The agency certainly does not take on the public service announcement campaigns like HateFree Culture in the Czech Republic. Indeed, the only programs which reference Roma at all are the Romani Civic Patrol, a pilot program much like the Czech APK, which the Slovak agency supported for only one year (Implementing Agency Website 2017).

[26] Though the "Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma Up to 2020" was written in 2011, the year before Pollack's appointment, he did not update the document during his tenure, despite recommendations to do so (Farenzenová et al. 2014: 5).

the material and social needs of Slovak Roma, yet external reviewers criticized these goals as ill-defined (Farenzenová et al. 2014: 5). In drafting the document, the Plenipotentiary consulted with foundations, the UN, and several government ministers. The target groups are Roma communities, Roma as a national minority, and MRKs. The Slovak policy gives space to outlining how to change majority attitudes. It discusses de-mystifying assumptions about Roma and fostering pro-inclusion and non-discrimination policies (through de-stigmatization, desegregation, and de-ghettoization processes) (Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities 2011: 4, 8-11). When it comes to influencing the Slovak majority, however, "The goal is to frame the public debate in such a way that make policies accepted as mutually beneficial" (Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities 2011: 3).

The document privileges conflict avoidance and even segregation over the incorporation and inclusion emphasized by the Czech Agency for Social Inclusion. It specifies that "Roma inclusion" is important because tensions between these ethnic groups could escalate into destructive conflict and violence (Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities 2011: 4). Thus, the Slovak policy is at least partially based on conflict avoidance. While de-segregation is also an explicitly stated goal of the document, the Slovak policy also expresses that in some cases, the target group can be separated to receive better treatment, such as in the case of Romani pupils (Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities 2011: 10). Given the context that many Romani students go to 'special schools' because they lag behind the

majority in Slovak language skills, this statement supports the de facto educational segregation condemned by the EU.

The document furthermore places some of the responsibility for their own social marginalization on Roma themselves and lessens the emphasis on institutional factors. In the brief section discussing that public officials should not discriminate and the majority public should learn about stigmas against Roma, Romani individuals are tasked with "…relinquishing their defensive behavior against the members of the majority society, which this majority perceives as alien" (Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities 2011: 10). It thus becomes the duty of Romani Slovaks to help dispel the stigmas that the majority hold against them. An external review of the document, supported by the Plenipotentiary, evaluated the antidiscrimination sections of the policy as underdeveloped. Furthermore, as the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs adopted the duties of the dissolved Ministry of Human Rights in 2012, the reviewers note that Slovaks interpret from the government actions that human and minority rights are foreign, not domestic, issues (Farenzenová et al. 2014: 52-53). Thus, White Slovaks receive the message that their interests, not the interests of Slovakia's minorities, are paramount.

The office of the Plenipotentiary seems to recognize its own limitations. It acknowledges inconsistent policies towards Roma integration and notes how past policies have failed because they were not grounded in 'theory.' Particularly, the office specifies that "de-ethnicized" policies have failed. "The issue of social exclusion of the Romani population represents a combination of ethnic and social problems, which must both be

taken into account when preparing public policies" (Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities 2011: 19). The document implies that not only discrimination makes ethnicity a factor in marginalization, but notes that only Romani communities create illegal housing 'settlements' that marginalize them. The statements do not reference the institutional, historical, and social factors that influenced Romani communities to resort to illegal housing (Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities 2011: 38). Unlike in the Czech Republic, addressing violence or hate crimes against Roma are not part of the strategy. The policy does not mention that safety from racially-motivated crimes or police brutality is a valid concern for Romani communities.

As reflected in the government policy which holds Roma partially responsible for their own social marginalization and does not actively work to combat racist beliefs (like the Czech Agency for Social Inclusion does), White Slovaks can feel secure in their group position. Indeed, conflict avoidance through minimizing majority threat is part of the state's policy, and in its own limited way, it may be succeeding. While the Czech Republic experienced a rash of anti-Roma demonstrations in recent years, Slovakia has seen few. This absence cannot be explained by a lack of nationalist extremism, as the far-right nationalist Kotleba -People's Party, Our Slovakia was just elected into the Slovak parliament in 2016 and its leader, Marian Kotleba has been politically active for over a decade. Nevertheless, anti-Roma mobilization in the streets may not appeal to many White Slovaks because they feel secure in their socially superior status and do not see the need to counter assertiveness by Romani civil rights activists.

Letting NGOs and Repressive Policing Do the Work: Avoiding Activating Threat Locally

Because Slovaks do not empower an agency like the Czech government, NGOs are the innovators when it comes to implementing programs and managing local interethnic relations. Local Romani 'activists' work not to fight discrimination or assert civil rights in the face of police violence, however, but limit themselves to meeting the material and social needs of their neighborhoods. These efforts to provide services without visible government sanction, means that policy neither empowers Romani activists nor officially threatens majority group position. Finally, racialized policing sends signals to the majority that 'law and order' will protect Whites from the 'dangerous' Romani minority.

On the local level, NGOs do most of the work with 'marginalized Roma communities' without government involvement.[27] The Office of the Plenipotentiary only assists non-profits and municipalities in applying for EU Funds, and so it has little local visibility. In 2015, I witnessed a large non-profit organization turn over several successful community centers throughout the country to their respective local governments. The NGO developed these centers and their programs independently over the past decade and arranged that the local governments would take over their administration and operation. This example underscores that non-profits and municipalities are expected to develop their own programming and the Plenipotentiary's office mostly works to help

[27] In a different chapter, I will explain further the ways that interethnic contact is managed at the local level in Slovakia.

organizations fund their own projects. In sum, the Slovak government demonstrates limited engagement in interethnic relations on the local level, including visible support for Romani communities.

activists, nevertheless, often attempt to secure basic human necessities for their communities. In one interview, I learned how an international NGO encouraged Romani 'activism' by helping individuals and small groups identify issues and develop projects such as building hygiene stations (with toilets and showers) and community centers in their settlements and neighborhoods. Other interviews confirmed that respondents considered these activities 'activism.' This kind of activism, however, does not assert Romani civil rights nor threaten the dominant status of majority Slovaks and so would not be offensive. While no doubt providing some important resources and skills in local communities, these activities do not call on Slovaks to reevaluate their racist institutions or beliefs. Instead, activists consider how local Whites will perceive their activities and if they will activate group threat.[28]

In Slovakia, racialized policing and brutality are well-documented by international non-profit organizations, even if they are rarely officially acknowledged or prosecuted (ERRC 2013; ERRC 2015; ERRC 2017). The indiscriminate beatings which occurred during the 2004 police raid in Trebišov were not an anomaly. Some Slovak local police stations hired 'Romani civil patrols' in 2014 with support from the Implementing Agency of the Ministry Labor, Social Affairs, and Family. Like the Czech

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[28] In a different chapter I expand upon the idea that Romani activists choose their activities within a political structure that includes their perception of the consequences for majority threat.

APK, Romani deputies patrol Romani communities and communicate with the police. A few continued civil patrols but state funding ended in 2015 after only one year (The Slovak Spectator Staff 2017).[29] This example of ethnic policy on the local level is an exception. The persistence of racial profiling and police brutality against Roma signals to Slovaks with whom the state's priorities lie. White Slovaks may be reassured by evidence of 'law and order' against those whom they consider to be a criminal class. While Slovak Roma see that their communities will not be protected by the state should they express grievances (as in 2004) or if interethnic conflict were to break out between neighbors.

The lack of visibility of the Slovak policy on the local level, including the limited support of non-profit organizations and Romani activists means that the majority cannot interpret threat to their group position from policy. Instead, organizations and activists must navigate interethnic relations without official support. Racialized police brutality may further send a message of 'law and order' to White Slovaks while it represses Romani communities.

Discussion and Conclusion

The paired 'most similar' case comparison reveals that a more progressive interethnic relations policy increases perceived majority threat and thereby generates higher interethnic conflict. Though originally both heavily influenced by the EU's policy, Czechs actively and visibly enact policy through a government agency, and they experience frequent interethnic conflict in the form of anti-Roma demonstrations. The

[29] The government recently announced that it would once again begin funding the patrols, allocating €10 million for the project (The Slovak Spectator Staff 2017).

Slovak government, on the other hand, defers to White majority's superior group position and enjoys a tense, tenuous peace. Both policies acknowledge that majority-held attitudes and stigma against Roma must change, but only the Czech Agency's campaign for "Hate Free Culture" takes steps to educate and inform the public. These findings help adjudicate between competing hypotheses of 'group threat' and 'group norm' effects of policy on domestic interethnic relations and goes further than previous studies by explaining actions (conflict) not just attitudes. The in-depth case comparison and qualitative methods allow for identification and observation of the mechanism that increases interethnic conflict, perceived threat to the majority group position, and makes alternative explanations unlikely. Findings have implications for the effects of interethnic relations policy in all multiethnic states.

Differing government policies on interethnic relations help explain why the majority populations behave differently, in a way that supports the group threat hypothesis. As anti-Roma sentiment is high in both cases, I show that differences in policy can contribute to different levels of interethnic conflict, even with a given level of interethnic prejudices. Furthermore, as opposed to the evidence for the group norm hypothesis for *immigration policy* on *xenophobic attitudes*, this in-depth, most-similar case comparison finds support for an alternative explanation for outcomes of interethnic *conflict*. Findings support the group threat hypothesis regarding policy's effect on interethnic conflict between the majority and a domestic minority. Thus, my study goes further to measure not just prejudices, but the consequences of policy on interethnic conflict. Previous studies which found support for the group norm hypothesis on effect of

policy on xenophobia, may have only measured that permissive policies influence reported alignment with the elite norm, not a real change in attitudes (Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2013). Future research on interethnic relations policy should consider if the policy concerns immigrants or domestic minorities, and if the outcome of interest is ethnic prejudice or ethnic conflict.

Some may argue that Czech nationalists (or Czechs in general) are simply more likely to organize demonstrations for any cause, and so anti-Roma demonstrations are not a good measure of more interethnic conflict. This explanation would be unlikely to hold up as Slovaks do occasionally hold (sometimes large) demonstrations, and some Slovaks support the nationalist, right-wing parties like Kotleba's People's Party –Our Slovakia. The anti-Roma demonstrations that do occur are organized by his political party, beginning with the earliest in Slovakia in 2009. Slovaks also held one of the largest anti-immigrant protests in Bratislava in 2015 during the European refugee crisis, attracting 14,000 people, exemplifying that the majority will take this kind of action against an outgroup if threatened (ENAR 2017). The increase in anti-Roma demonstrations occurred after the Czech policy began to be more visible and progressive. Furthermore, that Czech extremist groups specifically respond to the Agency's HateFree campaign illustrates the way that policy can increase perceived threat.

The differences between these policies cannot and do not reflect what many or even most Czechs or Slovaks think about interethnic relations. For example, several of my Czech Roma and non-Roma respondents discussed how Roma are responsible for poor interethnic relations or even their own social exclusion. While some of my Slovak

respondents articulated the most progressive ideas on interethnic relations. Yet, the public nature of these policies and government actions have the power to reach many people. They could have the desired effect of the “Hate Free Culture” campaign, or, in the case of neo-Nazis and nationalist extremists, the ironic effect of inciting mobilization for demonstrations and conflict. The policies likely have a feedback effect from Romani activism. Czech Roma activists place importance on their human rights and rights as citizens. Slovak Roma activists focus on the material needs of their local communities. Their interactions with their respective governments no doubt influence the different shape and language of the policies. The Czech policies further encourage Romani activists to assert their rights, while the Slovak policies are set up to assist the willing Romani activists to improve the material conditions in their communities.

Majority-Roma relations in central Europe are complex. While the Czech and Slovak strategies are similarly influenced by EU policy, some distinct differences have implications for the level of interethnic conflict exhibited in the two countries. The Czech strategy challenges the majority’s superior status and prejudices towards Roma. The Slovak strategy emphasizes the differences between Roma and the majority by symbolically separating Roma from ordinary enfranchisement with the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities. Despite the presence of active nationalist extremist parties in both states, the Czech Republic sees more anti-Roma demonstrations than Slovakia, where Whites feel their status is less threatened. Still, this increased level of conflict may be preferable if it is accompanied by social transformation and the expansion of civil rights to minority groups. Multiethnic states actively implementing integration policies

should be ready for majority backlash and plan to support the efforts of minority activists. Conflict may be, nevertheless, the price to pay for the possibility of social transformation. For when a state bases a policy on the assumption that segregation is acceptable (or even preferable) in order to keep interethnic peace, inequitable relations remain intact.

Chapter 3

Contact and Segregation in Organizations
Churches and Non-profits Manage Local Majority Threat

In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, interethnic tension between Whites and Roma is long-standing, with racially-motivated crimes occasionally making international news (B.C. 2013; CNN Wire Staff 2010). Recent years have been peppered with anti-Roma demonstrations and violent incidents throughout the Czech Republic, a central European country generally considered to be 'Western.' In Slovakia, on the other hand, where the Romani population is generally even more impoverished than in the Czech Republic and relations are just as tense, group-level interethnic conflict, like anti-Roma demonstrations, do not occur as often.

Phenotypic differences in skin and hair color combined with historical and structural inequalities mean that intergroup relations in central Europe have both ethnic and racial dimensions. While the economic and social situation of Roma in central Europe is well documented, the literature lacks an understanding of the conflict's dynamics –or of possible interethnic peacekeeping mechanisms. Much existing research focuses on episodes of conflict. In this chapter, by contrast, I examine the peacekeeping roles played by religious organizations in local interethnic contact. A comparison with Czech organizations unable to play this role reveals mechanisms that help explain why tension need not result in open conflict but also why peacekeeping may do little to address inequality and injustice.

Church organizations in Slovakia represent some of the only Roma-majority integrated groups in central and eastern Europe, which may be a contributing factor to local peaceful relations. Indeed, previous studies identify intercommunal civic engagement as a mechanism for interethnic peace (Varshney 2002). Under different conditions, intergroup contact can breed either contempt or amity (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2009). Aside from the different observations in level of majority-Roma conflict, the prevalence of church organizations involved in Roma-majority relations is the most striking difference between the similar Czech and Slovak cases. Czechs are largely non-religious and church-affiliated nonprofits operate very similarly to secular ones. The much more religious Slovak population could create a context in which churches provide a setting for boundary-defying, peace-keeping relationships to form.

Differently from what the literature anticipates, I find that integrated church organizations foster neither associational intergroup contact nor affective personal relationships, yet contain conflict in another way. Religious leaders who successfully use their institutional legitimacy to integrate their organizations do so by structuring an unequal interethnic dynamic to manage the perceived symbolic threat to the White majority. Because Czechs are much less religious, religiously-affiliated organizations lack the legitimacy that allows for interethnic mediation and peacekeeping. This comparison of historically and socially similar cases, one with highly visible interethnic conflict and one without, shows how the perceived legitimacy of organizations attempting to racially integrate populations can help contain conflict, yet group threat remains an influential factor in the setting of high racial hostility.

I find that integrated church organizations carefully manage the symbolic threat to White superiority in their communities through two mechanisms: (1) they focus more on the physical needs and spiritual development of their Romani clients and congregants rather than on advocating for their equal rights as citizens, and (2) they structure and/or limit interethnic contact in ways that require the least accommodation on the part of the White majority population. On the other hand, Czech organizations, even religiously-affiliated ones, mostly fail in creating racially integrated spaces, as legitimacy with one community seems to come at the expense of legitimacy with the other. For organizations which do serve Romani communities, employees are aware of the potentially adverse effects their activities have on local interethnic relations through increasing the saliency of majority threat. The mediation that does occur connects socially marginalized Romani communities with official institutions, not with their majority neighbors.

In a setting of high interethnic hostility, interethnic brokerage can yield concrete benefits to Roma, yet the peace is based on an institutionally unstable set of relations. Romani communities are able to participate, albeit in a sharply delimited capacity, in spiritual communities and often receive much-needed material or social support. At the same time, limited participation by Roma, usually on an unequal footing as recipients of charity, allows Whites to maintain a sense of their ethnic group's superior group position, averting intergroup conflict. By contrast, brokers who (even unknowingly) threaten White group position, lose credibility with local Whites and hence fail in their efforts at interethnic mediation.

Case Selection

If we are interested in understanding what precipitates conflict between majority populations and Roma in otherwise orderly post-communist European countries, scholars must examine cases in which repeated or sustained conflict would be expected but instead rarely occurs. “Negative” cases have the potential to reveal peacekeeping mechanisms that contain interethnic tension. Slovakia experiences far less ethnic violence than prevailing notions would suggest, especially when compared to the neighboring Czech Republic. Because of their many similarities, scholars often choose the republics of former Czechoslovakia for paired comparisons (Froese 2005; Nedelsky 2004; Tomczuk 2016). I show why the institutional legitimacy of church organizations in religious Slovakia positions them to mediate local interethnic contact and help to keep the peace between Whites and Roma and how Czech organizations, without this legitimacy, are not in the position to do so.

Anti-Roma demonstrations are much more common in the Czech Republic than in Slovakia. Demonstrations reveal the animosity that a sizable share of the majority White population holds against the Romani minority. They also create the potential for violence and disorder. In some instances, violence erupts at these demonstrations when Romani activists and their allies organize counter-demonstrations. Whereas data on hate crimes or other ethnically or racially-motivated attacks are unreliable in east-central Europe, the obvious difference in the frequency of anti-Roma demonstrations is a good indicator of different levels of interethnic conflict.

To document anti-Roma demonstrations, I use data collected by non-profit organizations and international NGOs on interethnic conflict and violence. This

information is the best available on intergroup conflict in the two countries. The European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) collects its data on hate crimes, racist violence, and integration policies from member governments and domestic non-profit organizations in an attempt to capture underreporting. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Hate Crime Reporting (ODIHR) collects official information on hate crimes and other extremist crimes from the Czech and Slovak governments. The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is an international public interest law organization with offices in both the Czech and Slovak Republics which has been recognized by the Council of Europe and the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. In assessing the data collected from multiple sources, a clear difference in the kind of anti-Roma conflict emerges.

In 2013, 26 anti-Roma demonstrations across the Czech Republic drew the world's attention. Repeated demonstrations attended by hundreds in the heretofore peaceful city of České Budějovice garnered the most attention, but the most violent clashes happened in Ostrava. In some instances, extremists broke from official parade routes to march on Roma-inhabited housing complexes shouting "Heil Hitler" and giving Nazi salutes. Civil society organizations and activists created coalitions to block the marches and organize counter-demonstrations. Clashes erupted between the protestors and riot police (ECRI 2015: 20-22). People feared going into the streets or letting their children out. That summer was the most intense period for publicly demonstrated anti-Roma sentiment in central Europe. The ERRC recorded 65 demonstrations between 2011 and 2014 in the Czech Republic but only 16 in Slovakia (ERRC 2015) (See Table 2.1).

Though the Czech Republic's population of 10.5 million is nearly twice Slovakia's 5.4 million, even adjusted for population, almost twice as many anti-Roma demonstrations occurred there. Considering that Roma only number 200,000 in the Czech Republic, in this five-year period, 0.325 anti-Roma demonstrations occurred for every 1000 Roma in the country compared to only 0.032 in Slovakia (about 500,000 Romani citizens). In other words, adjusted for population, over 10 times the number of demonstrations occurred in the Czech Republic (See Table 2.1).

The differing levels of interethnic conflict as demonstrated by prevalence of anti-Roma demonstrations may lead one to conclude that relations are much better in Slovakia. Indeed, though Slovak Roma experience higher levels of poverty and segregation than Czech Roma, conflict between the majority and Roma remains rather low. ODIHR data on hate crimes reports 138 hate crimes against Roma and Sinti during 2011-2014 in the Czech Republic (ODIHR 2014a).[30] Slovakia does not report ethnicity-specific hate crimes to the ODIHR, but NGOs reported only 9 incidents of violence against Roma between 2009 and 2012 (ECRI 2014: 22; ODIHR 2014b). Furthermore, no comparable large-scale unrest like that which occurred in the Czech Republic in 2013 has occurred in Slovakia since its independence in 1993.[31]

Nevertheless, interethnic relations are tense in both countries, at least partially because of obvious racial inequality. Roma are perhaps the most materially destitute

[30] Notably, changes to the law so that some crimes were classified as lesser extremist offenses, the count dropped from 59 and 52 in 2011 and 2012, respectively, to the low teens in 2013 and 2014 (ODIHR 2014b).

[31] Except for the winter of 2004 when hundreds of Slovak Roma mobilized to protest the drastic cuts to the government assistance for poor and unemployed families. This was, however, a mobilization in response to material needs, not for ethnic equality or civil rights (Marušák and Singer 2009).

population in Europe, though precise measures are difficult to assemble as Roma are routinely undercounted in official census data (Vermeersch 2006: 18). Roma endure low levels of education and income and high levels of unemployment, discrimination, and segregation. These inequalities translate into palpable social segregation between the majority and Roma. In 2010 in the Czech Republic, Roma men made only 45% of White Czechs' income, and women only 39% (World Bank 2010: 9). In Slovakia, 87% of Roma live in poverty (World Bank 2012: 4). A third of Czech Roma live in segregated slums (Druker 2012: 195). Similarly, thirty percent of Slovak Roma live in slums or 'ruined houses' (World Bank 2012: 31). High levels of segregation ensure that Roma and Whites have few opportunities to get to know each other in workplaces, residential settings, or schools in either country. Whites and Roma rarely work together, as more than half of working-age Roma are unemployed (World Bank 2008: 6). Romani children are disproportionately placed in schools for mentally challenged students and international organizations have identified de facto educational segregation in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Stewart 2002). The segregation is likely fueled by stereotypes and prejudices held against Roma. The European Values Study (2010a; 2010b) recorded that 57% of Czechs and 51% of Slovaks do not want Roma neighbors.

Methods

From June 2014 to June 2015, I conducted 69 semi-structured interviews (ranging in length from 30 minutes to 3 hours) throughout the Czech Republic and Slovakia (See Table 3.1). I purposively identified key respondents by contacting local community leaders (for example, from non-profit registries listed on municipal websites) and

inquiring into the extent their organizations were integrated (Lynch 2013: 41). I then 'snowballed' the sample by asking for referrals for additional respondents in their town or in other towns. I interviewed eleven Slovak representatives of Church-affiliated organizations in six towns and villages in eastern Slovakia (See Table 3.2). Three respondents were Slovak Catholic clergy. One was a Catholic missionary. One was a member of a Slovak Pentecostal Church. Of the six belonging to a Protestant Church started by American missionaries, three were local Slovak Roma and three were missionaries. Eight of my Czech respondents (two of which identified as Roma) represented Catholic-affiliated charities. One represented a Protestant-affiliated charitable organization. I sought respondents with diverse opinions and with a variety of organizational connections. I continued seeking respondents until I reached the point of information saturation in my interviews (Bleich and Pekkanen 2013: 91).[32]

Table 3.1: Number of Respondents by Country, Type, and Roma-identified

	National Government	*Local Government*	*Non-profit employee and/or activist*	*Total Respondents*	*Roma-identified Respondents*
Slovakia	3	4	35	**42**	9
Czech Republic	2	3	22	**27**	8

Respondents chose the language and location of the interview, usually in their offices, but occasionally at local cafes or even once in an open field at the edge of the village. All interviews in Czech language or in English I conducted alone. While Czech and Slovak are mutually intelligible, I hired a Slovak research assistant to do some light

[32] To protect the identity and privacy of my respondents and in accordance with my consent documentation, I do not identify them by their real names nor specify the names of their organizations.

interpreting for nearly all the interviews conducted in Slovak language (January-June 2015). Interviews were transcribed in the field as well as on my return to the United States by me, my Slovak research assistant, or a Czech transcriptionist. I systematized the analysis of the interview data through two rounds of coding with ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software.

Table 3.2 Church-Affiliated Respondents by Country and Type

	Catholic (domestic)	*Catholic (foreign missionary)*	*Protestant (domestic)*	*Protestant (foreign missionary)*	*Total Catholic*	*Total Protestant*	*Total Church-affiliated*
Slovakia	3	1	1	6*	4	7	**11**
Czech Republic	8	0	1	0	8	1	**9**

*Three of these respondents were American missionaries and three were local Roma-identified members of the Church.

In this paper, I first focus on the ‘negative’ case of peaceful Slovak locales where we may expect interethnic conflict, but where it has not precipitated. After the discussion of the integration and intergroup mediation conducted by Slovak church organizations, I demonstrate how Czech organizations are unable to perform the same processes and how the brokerage that does occur merely connects marginalized Romani communities with government institutions, not with their White neighbors. I identify the central role of local church organizations in Slovakia for managing interethnic relations, a factor all but absent in the Czech case (see evidence of religiosity in the following section). The two Czech non-profit organization employees who did articulate that their organizations were different because of their religious-affiliations made no mention of specifically religious

activities. Rather, they appealed to general notions of 'equal treatment' and human rights. In practice, their activities were no different from Czech secular charities and organizations. I found no evidence of shared religious practices among the Czech laity.[33] By contrast, all 19 Slovak towns and villages I visited had at least partially integrated church organizations.

Contact, group position, and intergroup brokerage

This project looks at integrated church organizations, an understudied setting for interethnic contact outside of the US (Edwards, Christerson, and Emerson 2014). While contact and group position scholars have considered how individuals can maintain prejudice in spite of associational contact and intergroup affective ties, I go further to show how the very structure of the contact can maintain and reproduce an unequal relationship. I point out how brokerage and mediation practices maintain interethnic integration of their organizations and peace in their communities by employing their religious legitimacy to mitigate the threat to majority group position.

In contrast to many cases in which religion differs between ethnicities, interethnic contact can potentially occur in Slovak religious settings. Studies of intergroup contact and group positioning often take into account group status, symbolic resources, and frames of meaning (Bonilla-Silva 2010; Denis 2015; Durrheim and Dixon 2005). Studies find some kinds of interethnic contact contain conflict while others incite it (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2009; Pettigrew 1998; Varshney 2002). In Slovakia, public opinion data

[33] Some Czech scholars note a very recent rise in Czech Roma evangelical church participation in western Bohemia. Yet these seem to be all-Roma organizations, not racially integrated (Ripka 2015).

clarify that its citizens are religious and desire to participate in church life. Czechs report some of the highest levels of atheism in the world. Only 34% of Czechs identify as religious, compared to 84% of Slovaks, who largely profess Roman Catholicism (European Values Study 2010a; 2010b; Froese 2005). Overwhelmingly, Romani populations throughout Europe mirror the religious beliefs of their neighbors, and this holds true in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Matras 2015: 43, 117; Scheffel 2005). In Slovak town and village life, church and religious organizations are potentially available for interethnic peacekeeping processes in a way that is simply absent in the Czech case, where people largely do not go to church.[34]

The Weberian concepts of status and status groups apply to the symbolic threat to group position experienced by the White majority responding to Roma's attempts (or perceived attempts) to increase their prestige. This threat can manifest even when the minority group does not represent an economic threat to the majority (Blumer 1958; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). This symbolic threat to White prestige would need to be mitigated by those attempting to keep the peace between majority and Romani neighbors. White Slovaks are also threatened by Roma's participation in collective religious life, and church organizations typically work to contain this threat to the majority group position. While sometimes embracing a rhetoric of assimilation, unlike previous findings, Whites

[34] Religion is so much a part of Slovaks' lived experiences, that much of social life revolves around Church activities. While living in Košice, on multiple occasions I accepted invitations to events without my acquaintance mentioning that it would be a Church function. In one case, my Catholic friend did not even mention that I would be expected to attend mass (I thought I would simply be participating in a volleyball tournament). I had many experiences over my six months of fieldwork in Slovakia during which I was asked if I was Christian within the first few minutes of meeting a new person in my age group (25-35). By contrast, many Czechs avoid discussing religious topics and would neither inquire as to an acquaintance's religion nor presume it.

may not expect Roma to conform to White norms of behavior (Edwards 2008), rather Whites expect them to be objects of charity with limited participation. I find that integrated Slovak religious organizations systematically privilege *service provision* for Romani communities over *institutional advocacy* (Minkoff 1995: 57-58). Although in some cases Church organizations may be the only instruments for asserting the civil rights of their Romani congregants, in Slovakia their activities must appear nonthreatening to the majority dominant position if they are to avoid concerted White backlash like that seen in the Czech Republic (Doellinger 2013; Morris 1984; Robnett 1997).

Social psychologists have long considered intergroup contact a preventative measure against conflict (Allport 1954). Some of the specific processes by which ties are formed across ethnic groups include creating opportunities for learning about the outgroup and forming affective ties with individual members of other groups (Brown and Hewstone 2005; Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Contact theory is the widely accepted justification for integration, yet in empirical studies other scholars find that some types of intergroup contact can actually increase antipathy and the likelihood of conflict between them (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2009; Nagel 1995). Varshney (2002) asserts that mere contact between groups is not enough to prevent violence. Combining a social psychology and an organizational approach, he finds that for Hindu/Muslim conflict in India, the "...level of *everyday* forms of engagement (routine, superficial interactions)" has little effect on preventing violence, "...as opposed to the level of *associational* forms of engagement [emphases in original]" (363). Mutual membership in

organizations differentiates the latter. In this way, links formed from *intercommunal civil society* provides the peacekeeping mechanism. Through these organizations, networks form, which can disseminate information in the wake of crisis, maintaining peace at crucial moments (Varshney 2002: 10). Although impossible in Varshney's (2002) case study of Hindus and Muslims, could shared religious organizations offer a venue for associational intercommunal linkages?

Interethnic contact that helps to avert conflict does not necessarily improve relations or redress inequality. Rather, it can entrench prejudice even while it maintains peaceful relations. Denis' (2015) study found that even White Canadians who had continuous, positive contact with indigenous friends, neighbors, and family members maintained attitudes of White superiority. Contact reduced 'old-fashioned' racist prejudices, yet processes of subtyping, ideology-based homophily, and political avoidance norms allowed the dominant group to mentally maintain their superior group position.[35] These processes are similar to frames of color-blind racism, which justify racist sentiments through abstract liberalism or cultural explanations (Bonilla-Silva 2010). Slovak church organizations may rely on these or other processes to limit the threat to majority group position and thus contain conflict.

I find that leaders of integrated church organizations possess an extraordinary opportunity to be *brokers*, particularly third party individuals who can link previously isolated individuals or even 'catalyze' personal relationships between groups (Stovel, Golub and Milgrom 2011; Stovel and Shaw 2012). Institutional or spiritual legitimacy

[35] Subtyping is the explanation that outgroup individual 'exceptions' prove 'the rule.'

bolsters the authority of religious leaders in both majority and Romani communities. Moreover, as foreign missionaries, several of my respondents were religious insiders but community outsiders without personal or familial ties to either group. *Catalyst brokers* like these are in a special position to connect individuals and even facilitate integration (Stovel and Shaw 2012: 146). This contact need not result in additional personal ties across members of the groups, but could provide interethnic social capital to maintain peace (Rydgren and Sofi 2011). Brokers can also act as *mediators*, maintaining boundaries between groups, but allowing interactions or information flow across them (Gingrich and Lightman 2004).

Slovakia

The limits of integration: Service provision for Romani communities but not advocacy

With such a high mistrust of Roma amongst the majority, those community leaders who are successful in integrating their organizations must be committed to the work. Their varied services included educating children, offering community center activities, and even building homes. A 2013 documentary followed Slovak priest Marián Kuffa as he helped build homes in a Roma-inhabited settlement (Kaboš 2013). A Catholic clergyman, his organization (a halfway house for ex-drug addicts and prostitutes) has no specific goal to help the nearby Romani community, yet the large, athletic man in an ankle-length cossack strides into the settlement and tells the residents that he needs help with a new roof or plaster work. While his efforts improved the situation of many, Kuffa's work addresses neither the structural inequalities Roma face

nor offers opportunity for transformative intercommunal engagement. He is almost typical for Catholic leaders active with Romani communities. Bearing the institutional legitimacy of the socially important Slovak Roman Catholic Church, they are particularly well positioned to act as interethnic brokers or mediators. Catholic leaders working with Romani communities are motivated to minister to Roma and include them in spiritual life, but do not perform institutional advocacy. Roma attend mass or receive much-needed services from religious organizations, thereby integrating them (to varying extents).

Sister Elizabeth in Spišské Podhradie exuded energy and positivity. She was the heart and soul of the Irish sisters' community center there. Her order specifies goals of addressing social inequalities and institutional injustices. These priorities diverge from traditional understandings of Catholic charity as almsgiving (Kahl 2005). Working with local Romani communities for several years, she provided preschool for families who could not afford to pay, provided transportation for the children in her own car, and supported young Romani women attending high school[36] in a nearby town, and running other cultural and educational activities for the community. Though she attempted to work with the municipality to obtain regular transportation for her young students from their settlement to the center of town, she failed to persuade the mayor to help. She expressed doubt that the Church or the local government would sustain the community center in her absence. Like Father Kuffa's, Sister Elisabeth's efforts are personal and ad

[36] 'High school' in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is considered higher education after required 'middle school.' Students often begin at age 16 or 17.

hoc. Although Roma and White teachers and assistants work at the center, this is as far as integration occurs.

Recognizing her position as an insider and outsider, Sister Elizabeth attempted to negotiate interethnic relations, yet sensed that she could not overstep her bounds by creating any sense of threatening White group position. When asked about her influence on interethnic relations she said,

> ...I would hope that we [at the mission center] were kind of mirror [of] respect, really for a start. I mean, they [Roma] are despised in many places. That's a fact. I mean I've seen it myself, you know. So if we would hope to mirror. I mean, I don't want to offer the Romas more than non-Romas, just maybe equal. Just equality. Ok?

The Catholic nun knew the danger of giving seemingly 'special' treatment to Roma. White locals would feel slighted, and their already acute contempt for Roma may be further intensified, perhaps to violent consequences. Her perception seems astute. In fact, many of my Czech and Slovak respondents either stated that they did not want Roma to receive 'special' (and hence unfair) treatment or they explained that majority locals disliked their particular organization's efforts to provide services 'only' to Romani communities.

The Slovak nuns and priests working in the town of Lomnička are virtually the only White people with whom local Romani residents come into contact on a regular basis. Nearly all other White residents have moved away from the derelict village. The Catholic pastor expressed more concern with the spiritual development of his congregation and the education of local children than with racism, discrimination, or even improving the life chances of Roma. Indeed, he considered simply working with Romani communities in Slovakia a 'mission' in the religious sense of the word, a sentiment also

shared by other Catholic respondents. The father explained how he thinks of the Romani community in which he works,

> God has sent them to us here in Slovakia. Well now what? We can deal with them this way, and what now? Are we going to expel them? Or where will we put them? So the only thing to do is to impart values to them. And already in that is greatness. Also, for example, somewhere I read an idea that many countries, Flanders and other nations, at the height of their culture, managed to do missionary work with other people. Or they were able to transmit the values to another nation, which have been on some lower cultural level. Among Indians, Blacks, or others. Well, we have here these Roma and it's positive that we can give them those values. On the other hand, to perceive that they too have some values, which they can impart to us.

This priest wants to impart Catholic values to those at a "lower cultural level." The spiritual and educational services that he and the sisters provided the Romani community may have a positive effect, especially on the young children of Lomnička, yet they do not include an assertion of civil rights nor recognition of racial equality as part of the message.

The mixing that happens in the Roman Catholic-affiliated school described by young Father Martin in Bardejov, in northeastern Slovakia reflects how Roma are the recipients of charity and how this structures interethnic contact. White teachers come to work with the all-Roma students in his elementary school. He states "After 20 years, people have gotten used to it. They don't have a problem to go among Roma." The contact remains unequal, and structured in a way to meet White expectations. He did not mention friendships, marriages, or other interethnic relationships aside from teaching or volunteering. When asked if the situation of Roma in his town was similar to other areas in the country, he described only the resulting spiritual activities. Local Roma now get married in the church, have access to sacraments, and are regular attendees at mass. He interpreted this question, which many respondents would reference the economic or

social conditions that local Roma endure, with a discussion only of spiritual health and participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

While Church representatives and missionaries emphasized the spiritual health of their fellow believers and converts, these spiritual activities did not contribute to the intercommunal engagement previously found to prevent violent contact. That individuals are spiritually called to integrate these organizations and that the Romani community benefits materially and socially from association with them is only part of the story. As mentioned, local Whites may be threatened by the ‘special treatment’ or attention enjoyed by their Roma neighbors. The Roman Catholic Church does not institutionalize the work of these charismatic individuals. Sister Elizabeth summarized her ideas about the attitude of the Slovak clergy serving Romani communities, they “do not know what to do with them”. The danger of threatening the majority group position is a loss of credibility, and Catholic leaders may not want to take the risk.

Mediating interethnic contact: Managing threat to majority group position

Despite the opportunities religion offers for interethnic contact and understanding, practices in church organizations may actually reinforce social segregation and Roma’s social marginalization. White discomfort at sharing sacred space with Romani worshipers prompts leaders to segregate the organizations. This mediating brokerage practice is even more important in seemingly ‘egalitarian’ Protestant churches. They may initially appear more meaningfully integrated than Catholic institutions, yet carefully segregate along ethnic lines (symbolically or literally) to avoid threat to majority group position.

Religion offers the potential to form meaningful bonds across ethnic groups through providing a venue for associational contact, yet even where Roma participate in Catholic Church activities, segregation remains the defining feature of ethnic relations. I confirmed this finding in towns where I did not have the opportunity to interview a local Church official, yet respondents mentioned church activities in their town. In Sveržov, Roma receive their first communion at the Roman Catholic Church, and even attend mass with White members of the town. This, in combination with the fact that the local schools are integrated, makes for civil if not warm interethnic relations. Pavel and Lenka, who ran a local secular community center, still stressed that few real friendships or relationships crossed ethnic lines. Pavel said,

> And they sometimes come together and just stay together because they have kids in the same school, and they live in the same… and they meet each other in the same place, so they have basically no problem with this, you meet on the street, and ask this or that. But it's always this, under it, is always a feeling that it's 'we' and 'them.' So it's this separation between we and them and they not like us, which is true. They are not like us.

So even when actual Catholic Church attendance is integrated, Pavel describes neither the affective ties nor the associational contact previously found to contain intergroup conflict. In Kojatice, a secular non-profit employee named Laco, thought the brief contact that older women had at Sunday mass could be a possible springboard from which further communication could alight. Laco spoke about organizing afternoon coffee or tea at the community center to bring together older women from the Roma settlement and the White inhabitants of the retirement home. He knew that they were already cordial in mass, so perhaps they could chat more during the week. This example demonstrates how a White Slovak (who did not attend church) saw an opportunity for meaningful contact missed by Church leaders. As emphasized earlier, Slovak Roman Catholic leaders

are probably more interested in sacramental inclusion, in part because Whites perceive service provision as less threatening to their dominant group position.

In fact, some church activities purposefully reinforced social segregation between the groups as a strategy to mediate interethnic relations. In Prešov, a Pentecostal Church attracts what appears to be a growing following. More egalitarian than the Catholic Church, as ordinary members may preach to the group and lead services, their activities could offer even more opportunities for meaningful contact across ethnic lines. Yet, as one church member informed me, the presence of "many Romas" in services made White believers uncomfortable. The decision was made to split the church into an eastern part, from where mostly Romani worshipers were coming, and a western branch, where mostly White Slovaks were living. Matúš, a church member, explained,

> And the main reason was that many Romas [sic]… actually got born again in short period of time, and spaces were too small. So, they needed to do some kind of a split. But also then, they found out that maybe it's better to split this way because you can more easily work with the Romas, again they're in one church together. And again there is more White people who maybe had problems coming to church when there was… You entered in and there was many Romas, and it was stinky there and you know and so on. And so some White people had problems coming to church and now it's easier also for them, ok to come there's only three, four, five Romas, so and it's Romas they know, so it's ok. So this may be, this way it's maybe easier for both parts.
>
> But still pastor and the leader of the church are really trying to keep the church together, you know. So that the relationships between the Whites and Roma are not torn apart.

Matúš's explanation shows that White Slovaks become uncomfortable around "many" Roma, even in the setting of religious services. In this instance, the potential for Roma and White worshippers to come to know each other was curtailed by the decision to split the church. Tellingly, he justified the decision by saying that Whites can "more easily" offer services to Roma when they are segregated. They want to maintain an unequal relationship with Romani members, but not see too "many" Roma in weekly

services. In this way, the organization mediates and structures interethnic contact to manage the threat to the majority, while still allowing them to rationalize that they are including their Romani neighbors.

Catholic leaders like Father Kuffa and Sister Elizabeth have the legitimacy and moral authority of the Catholic Church behind them. Their personal magnetism is thus enhanced in a way that makes them excellent candidates for catalyst brokers. As an outsider, Sister Elizabeth's lack of personal connections to either community was an advantage. She saw herself as bridging the gap between the White and Romani communities in Spišské Podhradie through holding English language classes in the mission center on the weekend. Though only White residents attend these classes, they would perhaps meet a few of the Romani women who worked as instructional assistants in the preschool. Also, White residents would not think of the center as somewhere where only Roma go. Such modest goals speak to the depth of division between the White and Romani residents in Spišské Podhradie. Despite identifying improving interethnic relations as being an important part of her mission, the Catholic nun employed only that tentative measure.

Presbyterian American missionaries working in the Romani settlement in Vítkovce (about 1200 residents, of which about half are Roma) had noble aspirations to provide religious and practical assistance to receptive Romani residents. In the tiny village in the Košice region of central-eastern Slovakia, they started a church, helped to renovate a building for services, and trained two local Romani women as instructors for a preschool held in the same space. Yet they have not successfully included White

residents (who literally live on the opposite side of the train tracks that run through Vítkovce) in any of their activities.

When the American Presbyterians wanted to purchase land (even land located on the 'Roma' side of the tracks) for a church building and community center which only Roma attend, local Whites checked this threat. Isaac, one of the missionaries, described the situation.

> Isaac: And we approached some of them to see if they would be willing to sell, and there was some initial interest in selling, and then all of a sudden it just dried up. It just completely like "I told you before, I'm not interested in selling." The quote literally was, "The interest of the village comes before the interest of the individual…." "As I told you before, I'm not interested in selling, the interest of the community comes before the interest of the individual."
>
> SJT: It was rehearsed.
>
> Isaac: Yeah, so that was shocking. And the subtext there is "Get the hell off my porch."

In this story, the foreign missionaries' efforts to assist the Vítkovce Romani community were held in check by the local White community. These missionaries were not as skillful as Sister Elizabeth in managing majority threat to achieve their service provision goals. The Presbyterians lamented that their attempts to buy land for a community center (which would serve their church, which only Romani residents attend) were blocked by White residents, yet mostly attributed the problems of the Romani community to a combination of economic, cultural, and spiritual factors. Because they do not recognize the perils of Whites perceiving that they exclusively help Roma and are resistant to take more drastic action, they are unlikely to transform their institutional goals to mobilizing for Romani advocacy.

Czech Republic

Moving beyond everyday contact? Attempting integration without religious legitimacy

Without the opportunity to use a religious-affiliation to increase the legitimacy among both Whites and Roma, Czech non-profit organizations mostly fail at creating racially integrated spaces or transcending everyday intercommunal contact. Non-profit organizations tend to serve only Roma or hardly any Romani clients. Without truly integrated spaces, Czech civil society does not offer opportunity for associational contact. Zuzana, the White director of an organization helping drug-addicted residents of Ústí nad Labem obtain access to treatment, said, because nearly one third of her clients were Roma, her organization was an anomaly.

> We are kind of an exception. Various researchers came here to study why Roma just come to us…. When [one organization conducting research] asked [our] Roma clients why, apart from various answers they received, one was that we have a good reputation. Yeah, someone is saying that we are good, "Yeah, go there. They will help you," and this really works among Roma….

Zuzana thus reveals that her organization is unique in that both Czechs and Roma use it, albeit a particularly needy population of drug-addicted individuals. She also shows that building legitimacy among Romani clients involves having a 'good reputation' with Romani individuals. Other non-profit employees both in Ústí nad Labem and České Budějovice echoed this sentiment. Yet gaining trust from local Roma nearly always comes at the cost of alienating potential White clients, hence the researchers who studied Zuzana's organization as the exception to this segregation.

Through interviews, I learned that organizations must choose to build legitimacy either with local Roma or local Whites. As I specifically sought out organizations that

served Roma, many of them served nearly only Romani clients.[37] Roughly half of my Czech respondents reported that the majority held negative views of their organizations. Only three non-profit representatives mentioned positive views, and all three also specifically mentioned negative views. The White Czechs involved with this work may be some of the only White people who come into meaningful contact with Roma, but this does not lead to wider intercommunal engagement. One White worker at a religiously-affiliated non-profit in České Budějovice said of the majority's view of working with Romani communities, "Some value it, some do not understand it, some consider it an unnecessary a waste of time and money. I know only a few people, who think that this work is needed, useful, and that it makes sense. But then, such people are somehow connected to this work." This hardly amounts to the intercommunal, associational engagement that would form connections between ethnic communities.

Speaking of the five-year process of planning the construction of a community center, Radka, one White employee of a Catholic-affiliated youth organization, working in a newly built community center near a racially-mixed housing settlement explained local Whites' reaction to the news,

> …there was great outrage from these people, because really they were saying, "Well, clearly, it's for gypsies, they are building it for gypsies!" They didn't understand at all the meaning of a community center…. and today this building has the label of a 'gypsy building,' yeah, that only gypsies are coming here, yeah, but that's not the case. So with this they have a very bad opinion of us. Very bad, unfortunately.

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[37] Though I sought out organizations which worked with Romani communities, I did interview representatives of four organizations that did not currently serve Romani clients. Of the 19 distinct Czech organization locations at which I conducted interviews, 11 of them were only or mainly interest-driven without a main focus on Romani identity, yet served Roma. Four of these 11 organizations reported that 90% or more of their clients were Romani. Of the remaining seven, three reported that Roma-majority used different programs or services within their organization, and only one organization (a club for children in Prague) was a space in which an integrated group of clients (50% Roma and 50% majority) would actually meet and interact with each other.

Radka explained that the goal of the community center was to serve the entire community, but from the time of planning it to after it was completed, local Whites labeled the center a 'gypsy building' and did not go there. White hostility to organizations which serve Roma was a recurring theme in my interviews. Tereza, another White, female employee of a Catholic-affiliated women's legal counseling center responded to my question about how the majority views her organization.

> Well who? Intelligent people either let us be, or appreciate [the organization]. And people with prejudices and less intelligent people, which they really are [less intelligent], those who have prejudices, they really do not understand us. Well, they are saying that we are only helping gypsies, and they criticize us. And they have their prejudices, and they are not afraid to show them.

Catholic-affiliation holds little to no sway with the largely non-religious Czech population. Non-profit employees focus on gaining the trust of the Romani clients and communities they serve, yet are unable to bring local Whites into the fold and so do not support opportunities for associational contact. They perceive hostility from Whites because their organizations serve Roma. In this way, Catholic or religious-affiliated organizations are not different from secular organizations in their inability to racially integrate.

Service and advocacy: Organizational effects on majority threat

Some may argue that Czech organizations are not interested in serving or including local White Czechs, yet this was not at all what my respondents reported. Several responded positively when I asked if it was a goal of the organization to improve

relations between Roma and non-Roma in their community.[38] Some stressed that their services were open to everyone, that they attempted to ethnically integrate their organizations, or tried to broker relations.[39] Still, even service provision-focused non-profit organization employees were acutely aware of the majority threat experienced by Whites from their organizations' activities or that of the local and state government. Organizations collective inability to include non-Roma in their activities, combined with the increased threat to majority resources their activities signal to Whites, translates into a neutral to negative effect on interethnic relations.

Czech respondents indicated clearly that local Whites experienced majority threat from the perceived benefits that Roma received from the government.[40] Indeed, the Romani-identified "Roma coordinator" of Ústí nad Labem expressed that non-Roma were threatened by their perception that they must integrate with Roma, instead of Roma assimilating into the mainstream. Zuzana, the director of the Ústí non-profit providing services to drug addicts, explained how politicians activate majority threat by using the dog whistle term 'unadaptables.'

> But there is a movement or party, which has such slogans as, "We will clean up Ústí" or "We will sort out the unadaptable citizens." This is maybe a bad word to say to you, but it is a synonym for Roma. It is now a big trend, that politicians are afraid to establish that they are speaking about Roma, so they speak about "unadaptable citizens"…. It means… a person who doesn't respect societal norms and morals and I don't know whatever else. He doesn't live according to norms. So, they started say "unadaptable." It is a deception. Yeah, it is really such nonsense. Yeah, so politics are not straightforward, so when I'm talking about Roma, so I'm talking about Roma, but they say "unadaptable," yeah, so as to not be racist. Now you already know, so it is clear then

[38] Respondents from five Czech organizations responded that their organization was specifically trying to improve the relationship between Whites and Roma.
[39] Eight respondents from seven different non-profit organizations responded to the question about improving relations with references to colorblind approaches, integration, brokerage, and/or positive interethnic relations. Three municipal government workers also referenced at least one of the above ideas.
[40] Indeed, these benefits are sometimes only 'perceived', as widespread myths about Roma include that the government provides Roma with free transit or medicines that are unavailable to White Czechs.

> when you read in the election booklet, so you know about whom they are talking and it is really dangerous this "We will clean up Ústí." It is a slogan that is almost Nazi.

Other respondents explicitly linked the effect of majority threat on politics with the experience of NGOs. Radka, the White employee of the Catholic youth center, said she did not pay attention to politics, but she knew when an election was coming up because politicians would cut funding to hers and other organizations in an effort to win favor with White voters. Petr, Radka's Romani co-worker, explained the plight of politicians who funded community projects. He explained the White majority's reaction,

> When they want to moderate [the politicians], they will say exactly this, "Well, you are again giving money only to gypsies!" Yeah, they do not see that it's really for everyone, that, well they only see that it is helping only gypsies and no one else, yeah it is the typical Czech character, unfortunately it's this way. Of course, there are people, who are completely wonderful, my colleagues here, it is, they are wonderful. Yeah, Roma simply love them. It is nice, like, I don't feel anything bad from them. Rather, on the contrary, we are trying to help everyone and such, but unfortunately, well unfortunately these are only a few of these [wonderful] people.

Petr's interpretation of the "Czech character" is that the majority interprets funding for community projects and services as going "only to gypsies." He would like them to perceive it as for everyone, but the majority instead perceives threat to their own resources.

Some respondents reported awareness that local Whites directly perceived their organizations' activities as threat. Several reported having to explain to friends and family why they would take a job working with Romani communities or clients. The White director of the same women's legal counseling center in České Budějovice for which Tereza worked, describes the attitude she often encountered,

> When you mention somewhere that you work with Roma, most of the time you just have to really defend yourself or listen to some, like, insults to the community. Yeah, and now… my last experience was on Saturday, when the national food drive for the poor was organized, so all day I was at a supermarket. And of course, again one shop employee, who by the way was in charge of [the food drive], then he said to me, "If only it were not gypsies getting it!" Yeah, and that's

> always what you hear all the time. Well, yeah. Of course, Roma are getting grocery donations too, but not only them. Yeah, it wasn't a collection for Roma, but some Roma are poor, many of them.

The director explains that members of the majority respond negatively to her job working with Roma clients and that she hears "all the time" that "gypsies" are the only recipients of services. Whites thus perceive even the activities of service organizations as a threat to Whites' resources. According to non-profit employees, even sympathetic politicians are aware of the effect of funding services for Romani communities on majority threat, and do not want to increase its salience before an election. Politicians' use of the dog whistle 'unadaptables' are clearly attempts to activate threat based on the majority's perception of the services Roma receive.

"Bridges" and "translators": Institutional not intercommunal brokerage

Czech non-profit organizations may not offer opportunities for intercommunal associational contact, but leaders could still act as brokers or mediators as I argue Slovak church leaders often do. While I find that some Czech non-profit employees and local leaders act as mediators, they do not connect communities with one another, rather they connect marginalized Romani communities to *government agencies.* Without the religious legitimacy of their leadership, either local Roma or members of the majority tend to distrust the local non-profit leaders, and so intercommunal brokerage or mediation does not occur.

One organization with branches in several towns in the Czech Republic ran a program entitled "Roma mentoring." The program aimed precisely to assist Romani individuals in their interactions with criminal justice agencies. The program employed

local Romani laypeople to act as ‘mentors’ to socially excluded Romani individuals on probation or sentenced to community service. Identifying that many Romani individuals would miss their court dates or appointments with their probation officers, thus exacerbating their legal situations, the organization trained local, trusted individuals to bridge the gap between distrustful probationers and an unflinching criminal justice system. The program manager said the Roma mentors were like, “a bridge between client[s] and the officials, it’s [like a] communication channel, two-sided. He’s some kind of a translator, because there is no, like, common language. Romani clients often fear the officials.”

‘Roma coordinators’ are local or regional government officials which represent or otherwise manage the local and regional governments’ relationship with Romani communities.[41] In this way, they sometimes quite literally broker the relations with government agencies. I spoke with the municipal Roma coordinators in two towns. The Romani-identified Roma coordinator in Ústí nad Labem said that municipality could not be an interethnic ‘mentor,’ but it tries to work with the majority and Romani communities separately. He said this does not help improve relations. He, on the other hand, acted as a resource for families in crisis. For example, if a family was going to lose housing, he could help them find access to emergency government assistance or connect them with other resources. In České Budějovice, the two White ‘Roma coordinators’ seemed well-respected among the local non-profit organizations, but Bohumír, a Romani employee of

[41] ‘Roma coordinators’ are not always Romani themselves, often they are White, but their title nevertheless remains ‘Roma coordinator.’ Here, I am speaking about the coordinators employed by local municipalities.

a Catholic-affiliated club for children, pointed out limits of Roma coordinators as true representative of the local Romani community. When I asked him how politics affected local interethnic relations, he said,

> Well, this is it, Roma really do not have any Romani person in the city who will solve the problems, like we have here only a [Roma] coordinator and, like, the coordinator deals with everything as a Roma advisor. Yeah, but some person is directly needed, who will solve the problems, who will speak for us Roma, for all of us. There are some problems, where the city [council] simply has a meeting with the mayor and they solve the problem…. Roma simply need some person in that committee, or somehow in the commissions, where one discusses, where one speaks the opinion of all Roma in Budějovice. It is needed. Otherwise, they will not resolve it. White people will not solve it for us because they do not properly know our mentality. They don't know which and where the problems are, so it must be a person who really will solve our problems for us. And which will speak mainly for us, in order for something to happen. White people cannot solve it for Roma, if they don't know what is actually going on.

This non-profit employee and member of the local Romani community saw the Roma coordinators as 'advisors,' and not able to truly represent the community. Bohumír called for a local Romani person who knows what is "going on" to speak for "all Roma in Budějovice." Clearly he sees a limit to the brokerage a White Roma coordinator can manage, even to connect the Romani community to the local government.

Several respondents from different organizations and the Roma coordinators in České Budějovice mentioned the Assistants for Crime Prevention (APK)[42] as helping improve community relations with the local police as well as mediating intercommunal relations. This national program did not launch in České Budějovice until after the demonstrations in 2013, so it was a recent change when I interviewed respondents in 2014. The police select local people to patrol their own neighborhoods, settling minor disputes and helping alert the police to more serious incidents. Petr, the Romani employee of the Catholic non-profit organization operating out of the community center

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[42] Assistenti prevence kriminality

was particularly enthusiastic. He said, "…they are actually at [the] Máj [housing estate], they are just [local] Roma people. They made them sort of partial city police officers, so they are in charge of keeping order, reporting any unusual things and such, so it is a completely wonderful thing. This service really succeeded." One of the White Roma coordinators in the city reported that selecting well-respected local people to be part of APK helped with the success of the program. Bohumír, the Romani non-profit worker who spoke to the limits of municipal Roma coordinators, had a more practical view of how the APK improves relations.

> Actually, the city arranged Crime Prevention [APK], where Roma actually work and where they actually patrol the locality… so that Roma are not making a mess, are not screaming after ten o'clock at night and so on. So they are cleaning up, so that Roma are perhaps actually cleaning up after the mess they are making, so maybe it seems to have improved a lot at Máj.

Bohumír did think that APK was evidence of the municipality addressing the issues of interethnic relations in his city, but the mechanisms by which it does so is by curbing behavior that local Whites found offensive. Surely local Roma also benefit from having their friends and neighbors as a first line of control before the city police intervene, but APK does not foster relationships or even contact. Although this program is popular among non-profit workers close to the local Romani community, it does not seem to foster associational intercommunal contact or affective intergroup ties.

Local organizations and the municipality do attempt to connect the socially excluded Romani communities with the services and official agencies from which they are excluded, but this is hardly intercommunal brokerage or even mediation. Romani individuals and communities benefit from having Romani neighbors act as intermediaries between the criminal justice system and the police force, yet these programs offer no

opportunities to communicate with their majority neighbors. Roma coordinators serve as advisors to the local government and a link to non-profit organizations and the Romani community, yet they also seem to mostly link socially excluded families to the agencies they need without either representing Roma in the government nor brokering interethnic relations on the ground.

Discussion and Implications

In this chapter, I focused on the role of integrated church organizations mediating local interethnic relations, an understudied topic outside of the US context. The comparison with Czech organizations' virtual failure to create integrated spaces due to a suspicious majority prone to group threat reveals the important Slovak opportunity to use religious legitimacy in their interethnic mediation. The Czech brokerage which does occur links marginalized Romani communities with government institutions. While nine of my respondents in the Czech Republic worked for religiously-affiliated organizations, they do not have the opportunity to capitalize on religious legitimacy with the non-believing Czech public. Integrated religious organizations in Slovakia, on the other hand, overwhelmingly engaged in interethnic mediating. Through focusing on service provision over advocacy and, by structuring interethnic contact, leaders and organizations managed the perceived threat to majority group position. This has the effect of keeping relations peaceful without transforming a socially unequal relationship, through processes different than the affective ties or associational contact previously found to prevent potential interethnic conflict. Further research should investigate if interethnic brokers can keep

peace while also fostering associational contact, and hence more stable peacekeeping relations, in central Europe and other settings.

Slovak Catholic organizations uphold traditions of charity and almsgiving (service provision) without advocating for Romani communities to assert their equal citizenship, thus managing majority threat. Slovak Protestant churches also integrate, but structure relations so that Whites need not come into contact with 'too many' Romani congregants. Roma, marginalized from many areas of social life, accept this limited participation. In neither case does contact seem to form many boundary-cutting affective relations (Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). Because of the intentionally-limited Roma involvement, it is also not associational contact that helps contain conflict (Varshney 2002). Rather these organizations are integrated because of the personal devotion of their leaders and the dire needs of the Romani community, and they help to keep peace by avoiding threat to the majority group position. In the Czech Republic, with the absence of religious legitimacy, even service provision activates the threat to the White majority.

Mediation or brokerage roles were important in both cases, but in the Czech Republic it was limited to connecting marginalized Romani communities with government institutions or services. Czech intercommunal mediation was limited or basically nonexistent. While Roman Catholic affiliation grants legitimacy to Slovak priests and nuns for both the White and Romani communities, and thus allows them to broker local relations, the Church does not institutionalize their integrating efforts. While *bridge leaders* and *organizations* could cultivate linkages between social movements and

the community, as in the Civil Rights Movement, my Catholic respondents faced this institutional constraint (Robnett 1997: 19-26). With ties to a marginalized community, Slovak church leaders could have the opportunity to mobilize Roma, but they are limited by the looming consequences of threatening majority group position. This structured contact contains conflict for the moment but does not provide long-term solutions to interethnic tensions.

Managing threat to the majority is more complicated in Slovak Protestant organizations that eschew hierarchies in spiritual communities. Integrated organizations actually reinforce segregation and structure contact to allow Whites to mentally maintain their superior group position. This finding aligns with Denis' (2015) conclusion that White Canadians could maintain their prejudice against indigenous neighbors and perceived higher group position despite continued positive personal contact with their indigenous friends and family members. Majority Slovak congregants can rationalize that they have included their Romani neighbors, yet they manage the threat to their status. When cultural outsiders do not know how to negotiate this kind of non-threatening integration, the local White community checks them, as in the example of the blocked land sale to the American Presbyterians. This paper specifies that by structuring the relationship into one of the morally superior devoted to the physically and spiritually needy, majority sensibilities are not offended, and tense relations do not erupt into conflict.

This peace based on an unequal relationship is tenuous. The structured contact perpetuates social segregation and Roma marginalization. Integrated spiritual

organizations possess the potential to advocate for the civil rights of their congregants. If in the future church organizations work to incorporate Romani leadership and challenge majority group position, transformative change may be possible, but it is unlikely to come without a cost.

Chapter 4

Accommodating and Confrontational Ethnic Activism
Potential Majority Threat as Part of the Political Opportunity Structure

In September 2014, well-known Czech Romani activist, Miroslav Brož traveled to Slovakia with his organization and other international Romani activists, with the goal to tear down four 'anti-Romani' walls segregating White and Romani communities around the country. At meetings meant to "rouse the [local] Romani community to demolish the segregating walls," local Slovak Roma expressed that they wished for the walls to remain (Romea 2014). Despite local opinion, anonymous activists nevertheless tore down a section of a wall in Košice (Romea 2014; Terenzani 2014). The director of the Romani Media Center in Slovakia said,

> Neither the larger society nor the Romani people themselves appreciate this gesture. They have not helped Romani people in Ostrovany or at the Luník IX housing estate at all, on the contrary, they have provided an impulse for various speculations and for anti-Romani sentiment to increase…. Not everything that looks like assistance actually is. (Romea 2014)

Why did Czech and Slovak Romani activists disagree on the issue of removing the segregating walls? Roma face extreme social marginalization and ethnic hostility in both countries. Yet while Slovak Romani activists avoid contention through focusing on material service provision, their Czech counterparts adopt strategies that vary from identity-driven civil rights advocacy to participating in contentious demonstrations. This difference is particularly surprising considering that the Czech Republic experiences more interethnic conflict through higher rates of anti-Roma demonstrations, which could deter Romani activism. So, why would ethnic activists from politically and historically linked societies choose very different activities, some that contribute to interethnic

conflict and others that avoid it? Particularly, why do Slovak Romani activists not mobilize for their civil rights in the more confrontational ways we see in the Czech Republic?

Scholars have demonstrated that ethnic activists choose mobilizing structures and cultural frames within a political opportunity structure (McAdam 1982; Minkoff 1995; Vermeersch 2007). Others show that threat can play a role in both ethnic minority mobilization and in the formation of majority countermovements (Andrews 2002; Einwohner and Maher 2011; Owens et al. 2015). Yet the literature lacks an explanation for how ethnic activists perceive and consider the potential effects on group threat when choosing their mobilizing activities and frames within the political opportunity structure.

In this chapter, I argue that though the Czech and Slovak political environments for minority rights activists started out quite similar during the early period of post-communist transition of the 1990s, Romani activists now make choices and interpret potential for group threat within different political opportunity structures. Although interethnic tensions and the potential for majority threat are high in both cases, activists interpret the consequences for interethnic violence differently based on the perceived *openness of the polity* to their claims and actions. While they have access to the same organizational resources and cultural frames as Czechs, Slovak Romani activists choose an accommodating strategy in the context of a polity in which they have few to no political allies and little protection from the physical threat that majority countermobilization could engender. Ethnic activism in the Czech Republic often takes more confrontational forms because activists make human and minority rights claims

within a more conducive political opportunity structure which includes elite allies and a more trusted riot police force. This demonstrates the importance of political opportunity in explaining variety in the approach and framing of ethnic activists, even for the same ethnic group in historically linked societies during the same period. Furthermore, although interethnic hostility is high in both cases, in the Czech context greater interethnic conflict paradoxically activates a feedback loop, which continues to promote activists' more confrontational strategies.

As the literature on social movements addresses the effects both of threat and opportunity on the choices actors make, I am surprised that no study shows how actors consider the dynamics of group threat (both for the in-group and towards the out-group) in varying political opportunity structures. My findings demonstrate that scholars should consider interethnic relations, especially the dynamics of threat to majority group position, as part of political opportunity structures. In short, I argue that ethnic activists are aware of the potential effect of their activities on the level of group threat as perceived by the majority and are influenced by the extent to which the government will support their claims. They adjust their strategies to be either more confrontational or more accommodating based on the perceived consequences for majority group threat, which differs depending on the institutional setting. More accommodating activism does not activate majority threat, and may thus minimize interethnic conflict or violence to minority communities, yet maintains the status quo of inequitable relations. Confrontational strategies may cause a conflict feedback loop as majority threat is

activated, a countermovement mobilizes, and minority activists further confront this mobilization.

Opportunity, Organization, Frames, and Threat in Ethnic Activism

According to the political process literature on social movements, ethnic activists make choices about their movement strategies based on their interpretation of the political opportunity structure (POS), their organizational resources, and available cultural frames (Hooghe 2005; McAdam 1982; Minkoff 1995; Vermeersch 2007). The POS is made up of "consistent—but not necessarily formal or permanent –dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (Tarrow 1994:18). Political process literature on social movements incorporates the concepts of POS, mobilizing structures, and cultural framing processes to study the emergence and development of movements (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; McAdam and Marx 1996; Pfaff and Yang 2001). Activists make choices within the POS and with the mobilizing structures and cultural framings at their disposal.

POS scholars specify the four dimensions of the POS: "(1) the *relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system*, (2) the stability of that broad *set of elite alignments* that typically undergird a polity, (3) the presence of *elite allies*, and (4) the *state's capacity and propensity for repression*" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996:10). A more open polity with stable elite alignments, not to mention elite allies and a low propensity for repression, would make up the most conducive POS for social movements. The political process literature also attempts to incorporate organizational

structure and cultural framings into their explanations of social movements. A maturing or mature movement will include the formation of social movement organizations (*SMO*s), may include radical to more moderate approaches, and are shaped by conscious decisions about framing (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996:13-16). In the context of severe ethnic hostility, ethnic activists must also consider the perceived possible effects of their activities for majority threat. If ethnic activists choose a confrontational strategy, majority countermovement mobilization may further justify that strategy in a feedback loop. I first conceptualize the possible strategies and cultural framings of ethnic activists. Lastly, I place these ideas in the context of heightened ethnic hostility and group threat.

To compare the activities of the individuals and organizations serving and campaigning for Romani communities, I adopt a broad conception of ethnic activism. Gellner (2009) defines activism as “the practice of campaigning to re-make the world in line with a consciously articulated programme” (1). Mobilization is “the capacity to harness resources (including loyalty, organization, and material resources) in an effort to reach some collective goal” (Olzak 2006:36). Both concepts help to understand the campaigns and activities of those advocating for Romani communities in east central Europe. The defining feature of ethnic mobilization is that “claims are made based upon [a] particular identity or boundary, defined by the presence of racial or ethnic markers” (Olzak 2006:37). In this chapter, this broad conception of *ethnic* or *Romani activism* includes actions and activities aimed at improving the social and political standing of Czech and Slovak Roma.

One way to conceptualize the different strategies of ethnic activism and their SMOs is by concrete activities. Organizations addressing minority interests have the capacity to offer *service provision* or *institutional advocacy* and may choose those strategies based on the POS (Minkoff 1995:57-58). Minkoff (1995) demonstrated how American women's and racial-ethnic organizations in the 1950s were mostly service organizations, but after 1968 those which engaged in advocacy for equal rights greatly increased, as national policy legitimated these more confrontational activities (73-74). Some SMOs may participate in both activities; for example, groups that both provide scholarships for Romani students (service provision) and lobby the government to take steps to end racial segregation in schools (institutional advocacy).

Activists also make choices about the framing of their activities. Vermeersch (2005; 2007) distinguishes between *identity-based activism* and *interest-based activism*. The former centers on group membership as the driving force behind political action, while the latter may focus on specific inequalities experienced disproportionately by minority groups. "Ethnic and cultural identities, then, are only important because unequal access is often experienced or socially organized in terms of ethnic and cultural difference" (Vermeersch 2005:469).[43] In the context of EU-influenced legislation on

[43] According to some scholars, when activists center ethnic identity, they run the risk of essentializing that identity in the attempt to call attention to inequity. Vermeersch (2005) writes how early Romani activists in post-1989 central Europe, using frames of multiculturalism and minority rights, ignored the intersectional characteristic of identity. Vermeersch (2005) does not use the word 'intersectionality,' but uses Young's (1995) definition of groups as "overlapping, criss-crossing, and with undecidable borders" (168). According to Vermeersch, the practice of ignoring intersectionality had the unintended consequence of reinforcing negative stereotypes and stigmatization of Roma. For example, in the early 2000s, international and domestic activists discussed the extreme segregation and impoverished conditions of the Košice housing estate, Luník IX. While international politicians pointed to anti-Roma discrimination as a factor, Slovak Romani activists did not want the truly awful conditions of one city quarter to reflect the experience of all Slovak Roma. Especially because Slovak politicians blamed Romani cultural values or norms for

minority rights, both interest and identity-based activism could have institutional, if not necessarily grassroots, legitimacy.

Table 4.1: Examples of Ethnic Activism by Type of Activities and Framing

Activity / ***Motive***	*Service*	*Advocacy*
Interest-driven	Connecting to services, government agencies	Anti-discrimination work, lobbying for human rights
Identity-driven	Providing cultural resources	Raising cultural awareness, Lobbying for minority rights

Ethnic SMOs' activities can fall on a spectrum between entirely *accommodating* or actively *confrontational* to the prevailing system of ethnic inequity (Gellner 2009; Mosse 2009; Tai 2006). Accommodating strategies are more likely to be interest-driven, service provision. Providing food and clothing for poor children or even many educational and job-training services can assist needy communities without challenging the status quo ethnic relations. Advocacy and some identity-based activities, may fall further from or closer to the confrontational pole. A non-profit organization which attempts to improve the public perception of Roma through publicizing successful Romani individuals may be identity-based advocacy, but is less confrontational than demonstrating against discrimination or shouting at skinheads at counterdemonstrations.

How does the context of high ethnic hostility affect the chosen strategies of ethnic activists? Scholars of social movements have expanded their conceptions of how

their marginalized status, Romani politicians at the time avoided drawing attention to the particular conditions of communities or specific measures to address them (Vermeersch 2005: 461-462).

opportunity can pull actors into collective action to also consider how threat, either current threat or expected repressive threat, can 'push' a group to mobilize (Goldstone and Tilly 2001:138). Threat can motivate even a relatively powerless minority to rise up (Einwohner and Maher 2011) or the majority to organize to maintain their group position (Blalock 1957, 1967). In this chapter I focus on the latter, the potential for *majority threat*, and how ethnic activists consider what that potential means for their communities. The majority could perceive visible Romani activism as attempts by Roma to increase their life chances or their status at the expense of those of the majority. Blumer (1958) understood racial prejudice as a result of a collectively-held desire to maintain group position (relative to other groups). Those who study 'realistic' group threat attempt objective measures of threat, such as the proportion of a minority group in a particular region or labor market, in order to observe effects of 'real' threat on prejudice (Hjerm and Yaganoshi 2011; Quillian 1995; Tolnay and Beck 1992). A second branch finds that *perceived threat* to group position explains negative attitudes towards other groups (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; McLaren 2003). Ethnic activism may heighten the saliency of the perceived threat to White status and advantage through making their cause more visible. If activists are aware of this possibility to activate majority threat, how do they decide to adopt more confrontational or accommodating strategies?

Research finds that the majority responds to minority group activism (Andrews 2002; Owens et al. 2015). In his study of the founding of private schools by Whites after desegregation in the United States, Andrews (2002) finds that threatened Whites responded not only to the legal changes or the proportion of African Americans in their

communities, but to the local level of African American social movement mobilization. Divergent activities (service provision or institutional advocacy), the invoked frames (interest or identity-driven), and visibility of ethnic activism may help explain differing White reactive mobilization as *movement-countermovement dynamics*. So, if the majority group can be 'pushed' to mobilization by threat, minority group actors could also be aware of this capacity and can consider the potential consequences for interethnic violence towards their community.

Table 4.2: Strategies of Ethnic Activism and Potential for Majority Threat

	More Accommodating	**More Confrontational**
Activity	Service provision	Institutional Advocacy
Motive	Interest-driven	Identity-driven
Saliency	Invisible	Visible

This section juxtaposed the political process literature on social movements with the interethnic relations literature on group threat. In a POS in which claims for civil rights are less resonant, elite allies are few, and minority group leaders have little faith in the state's willingness to protect their communities, ethnic activists would be more likely to choose an accommodating strategy to avoid the threat of majority mobilization. On the other hand, in a POS conducive to claims for minority and human rights, with the presence of elite allies, and faith in the capacity and willingness of the state to protect minority communities, ethnic activists would be less concerned with the increased majority threat, even if it engenders a majority countermovement. I take the relationship between threat and movement-countermovements further by arguing a feedback loop exists in the Czech case, in which majority mobilization reinforces the ethnic activists'

confrontational strategy. The feedback loop's maintenance of the confrontational strategy further distinguishes it from the accommodating strategy.

Methods

In this chapter, I draw upon 69 semi-structured interviews conducted in the Czech Republic and Slovakia between June 2014 and June 2015. I purposively identified key respondents by contacting local community leaders (for example, from non-profit registries listed on municipal websites) and inquiring into the extent their organizations were integrated (Lynch 2013:41). I then 'snowballed' the sample by asking for referrals for additional respondents in their town or in other towns. In the Czech Republic, 22 of my respondents were non-profit employees and/or activists. In Slovakia, 35 respondents fall into this category. The remaining respondents were government officials or employees, and I also draw on their interviews in this chapter.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I demonstrated the difference in interethnic conflict as measured by anti-Roma demonstrations, and I will not reiterate that difference here, since in this chapter I am not specifically interested in explaining conflict as an outcome but rather activists' accommodating or confrontational activities. I first offer background on how the POS came to diverge in both countries. Though I explain how policy on interethnic relations came to differ in Chapter 2, I present the divergence here with a focus on the consequences for political opportunity available to Romani activists. I then report my findings by case. In Slovakia, service provision is conceptualized as 'activism,' and that actors adopt interest-driven (over identity-driven) activities as a tactic for interethnic conflict avoidance. I then move on to the Czech case, in which some activists

privilege identity-driven activities and intentionally choose visible, confrontational strategies.

Background: Similar Starting Points, Diverging POSs

To understand how differing POSs could influence ethnic activist strategies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, I sketch out a background on the international Romani movement and domestic minority politics. International activists adopted the term 'Roma' as an umbrella term for several linguistic and cultural groups. Indeed, it was the product of debates between different national and international activists in the movement (Vermeersch 2007). The term has now become the preferred designation for Roma, Sinti, travellers, Gypsies, and others, though individuals and communities may refer to themselves with one or more of these identifiers (Petrova 2003:111). Both the Czech Republic and Slovakia have substantial populations of Roma, roughly 2% and 9% of the total populations, respectively (Office of the Government of the Czech Republic 2015: 5; Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2016:10).

After the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia in January 1993, with pressure from international organizations, the two new countries rapidly adopted international documents on human and minority rights throughout the rest of the decade and early part of the twenty first century (Vachudova 2005). International pressure did not just influence the new governments but also other political actors, such as civil society organizations and activists (Vachudova 2005:143-159).[44] European funding poured into

[44] See Vachudova's (2005) sixth and seventh chapters for an excellent account of how international organizations like the European Union and Council of Europe used leverage unsuccessfully in Slovakia

the Czech Republic and Slovakia for programs and projects aimed at socially marginalized Romani communities (Trehan 2001). Dozens, perhaps even hundreds of Romani organizations and political parties emerged during this period, and this does not even account for the organizations which primarily served Romani communities but did not include an ethnic identifier in their title (Vermeersch 2007:102-103). Some of these organizations were ineffective, excluded Roma from organization leadership, or operated more like 'ethno-businesses,' with the priority to enrich their employees rather than serve Romani communities (Trehan 2001:137-139).

At this same time, post-socialist economic transitions excluded largely unskilled or lower-educated European Roma from the burgeoning market economies. As Romani individuals lost jobs and their families applied for state benefits, a mainstream stereotype emerged (or re-emerged) of laziness and criminality (Guy 2001:13-15). The social marginalization of Romani communities worsened throughout the 1990s and many families and communities have not recovered. The EU was satisfied, nevertheless, that the 'Copenhagen Criteria' on minority rights had been met by both countries by the turn of the century, and the Czech Republic and Slovakia joined the EU in 2004 (Vachudova 2005:201).

The international Romani movement and international organizations began to refocus their efforts on Roma integration during this time. In 2003, the year before their accession to the EU, an international conference including Czech and Slovak

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during the Mečiar years (a period of autocratic rule), but influenced politics enough so that a broad coalition could remove him from the government and quickly change policies to be more in line with Europe in 1998.

representatives announced the *Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005-2015* with four areas of focus: education, employment, housing, and health care. Conceived by the World Bank and Open Society Foundation (OSF), the initiative encouraged states to develop their own 'national action plans' to coordinate efforts with NGOs for *The Decade*, and both the Czech and Slovak governments did so (Friedman 2014: 10-11). Ten years later, a report found that while Romani representatives are better included in the efforts for Roma integration, the endeavor was not a success (Friedman 2014:51). *The Decade* did spread the language of integration or inclusion (over assimilation and exclusion) and may have even aligned disparate and disorganized efforts in individual countries (Plaut 2016). The Council of Europe launched a new initiative in 2015, Roma Integration 2020. Thus, to some extent, both international and domestic organizations and governments involve themselves in Roma integration and representation but with varying degrees of institutional follow-through.

Domestic politics contribute to the POS in which Romani activists make choices, and the two cases diverge here. Both governments empower ministries for Romani communities and minorities. Indeed, these ministries were established to help satisfy the Copenhagen Criteria while the Czech Republic and Slovakia were EU candidates (Vachudova 2005:200-201). Yet, as I discussed in an earlier chapter, the Czech Republic's Agency for Social Inclusion, founded in 2008, is a highly visible instrument through which the government expresses support for minorities (through a public campaign) and works on the ground to make changes in socially excluded localities (through partnerships with local governments and non-profit organizations). In Slovakia,

the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities writes policy that is deferential to Whites' perceived superiority and partially blames the Roma for their own marginalization. These differences are at least in part due to the role of the radical right in domestic politics, which brings anti-minority rhetoric into the Slovak mainstream (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015).

Anti-Roma rhetoric remains a near constant in both local and parliamentary elections in central Europe. Yet, the continued representation of the radical right (ultranationalism) in the Slovak government is exceptional among other East European democracies (Minkenberg 2015:34). Since 1990 (even before the dissolution of Czechoslovakia), the Slovak National Party (SNS)[45] has been elected to the Parliament in all but two elections[46] (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015). In 2016, Slovakia elected the even more radical People's Party –Our Slovakia[47] (ĹS-NS) led by Marian Kotleba to Parliament for the first time with 8%, winning nearly as many seats at SNS. An anti-Roma agenda is at the foundation of the platform of Kotleba's ĹS-NS, and SNS politicians use rhetoric that is both anti-Hungarian and anti-Roma (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015:234).[48] In contrast, the Czech Republic has experienced since 2007 only a limited rise of the radical right. The radical right-wing Workers' Party (DS) was banned in 2010 but quickly reformed as the Workers' Party of Social Justice[49] (DSSS)

[45] Slovenská národná strana (SNS)
[46] The 2002 and 2012 elections are the exceptions.
[47] Ľudová strana –Naše Slovensko (ĽS-NS)
[48] While anti-Hungarian rhetoric gained a lot of traction with the public during the Mečiar years, after 1998 this has become decreasingly part of the radical right's discourse (Gyárfášová and Mesežnikov 2015; Vachudova 2005)
[49] Dělnická strana (DS) and Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti (DSSS).

(Mareš 2015:211). Since then DS and then DSSS deepened their connections to the neo-Nazi groups Národní odpor (NO) and the Autonomous Nationalists (AN). A party of the radical right has not been part of the Czech government since the 1990s, and even when they earned seats in the 1998 election, internal disagreements resulted in losing the seats (Mareš 2015:210-211). Nonetheless, with the rise of the DS, more mainstream parties started using anti-Roma rhetoric, including the barely-a-dog-whistle phrase "unadaptables"[50] (Mareš 2015: 214).

Therefore, Czech and Slovak Romani activists are operating within different POSs. Despite similar levels of influence from international organizations and movements during the 1990s, the role of the radical right in mainstream politics helped influence different policies in the two countries. Ethnic activism takes different forms in my two cases because activists consider the possible majority threat engendered by claims to minority rights. Czech Romani activism mobilizes Romani identity and inspires varied approaches. The disagreements even *within* the broad group that identifies as advocates for the Romani community mirrors contentious response of the majority. Slovak Romani 'activism' eschews Romani identity as a mobilizing focal point and instead chooses to focus on material needs. Should Slovak Roma choose to assert their rights, the political opportunity structure is such that right-wing forces and general anti-minority sentiments in the government would be able to quickly mobilize against Romani activists.

[50] Both Czechs and Slovaks use the phrase nepřizpůsobiví/neprispôsobiví to refer to poor Romani families receiving social benefits.

Slovakia

Though the international human rights and minority rights documents were accepted around the same time and some international advocacy groups are active throughout the region, the shape of Romani activism is quite different in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Slovaks view service provision to Romani communities as activism. While in both countries the international Romani movement affected domestic activism after 1989, Czech Roma adopted more identity-based activism and institutional advocacy than their Slovak counterparts. Slovak Romani activism was still affected by global movements for human and minority rights, but mostly through the way they organized to obtain EU or other international funds. Slovak Romani activists de-center Romani identity as a way to seem less threatening to the White majority.

As others have noted, although Romani politicians are growing in number, especially at the local level, they are not nearly at the level of being proportionately represented and their success has been limited (OSCE/ODIHR 2014; Vermeersch 2007). The largest mobilization of Slovak Roma occurred in 2004 as a response to austerity measures which had decimated the social welfare benefits on which many Romani families rely to survive (Marušák and Singer 2009; Vermeersch 2007). Even during this remarkable moment of mobilization, the motivation was immediate material need and activists were unable to channel the energy into a coherent message for further reforms. Slovak Romani activists are sometimes explicitly motivated by avoiding conflict with White Slovaks. For others, immediate material needs are simply more important than asserting rights for Roma. Slovak Romani activists make their choices within an POS that

is inhospitable to claims of Romani civil and minority rights, without allies in the state government, they choose conflict avoidance even though it does little for their social inclusion.

Service Provision as Activism

Slovak Romani activism is interest-driven, service provision rather than identity-driven, institutional advocacy. Tellingly, when I asked Slovak respondents about Romani activism, several responded by describing 'activists' as 'community mobilizers.' Local (often Romani) volunteers usually help with or run 'soft' programs like afterschool activities or other pastimes. The leader of a nation-wide non-profit discussed how she changed the titles of the individuals who run the community centers from 'community activist' to 'community social worker' and finally to 'leader of the community center' over the years, showing how overlapping these roles are. A priest working in an impoverished urban Romani community identified activists as local Romani community 'activators' who led children's programs. Non-profit organizations contribute to this conception of Slovak Romani activism. One White international non-profit employee, originally from the Czech Republic but living and working for years in Slovakia, was presently running a program for 'Roma Activists' when I spoke with him. He considered seventeen project applications for participation in the program. 'Michal' explained the kinds of activists he selected.

> ST: So, did the groups already have some idea as to the project when they were first applying?
>
> Michal: Well that was one of the questions in the application, like what's, maybe what's your, like, key issues or the biggest problems that you feel in your municipality and how would you approach to solve them, how would you try to solve them maybe? …And yeah, in some places it was very widely specified, like unemployment or health issues or something. *But, in those ten*

> *communities* [that were selected]*, the groups were able to specify like several issues, not general problems, but, like, issues that they want to solve.*
>
> Like, let's say, *build some community center and even put on activities* with the kids there and so on. Or other another community, they have problems with water, *there's no drinkable water in that village, so they want to solve this issue*…. The money that we can provide might be some kind of startup. Something that would, like, support these groups in these initial steps.…
>
> I believe that they will, like, get… to some success that will support their future. Like maybe they could show other people in the community, "We did something. We did [a] small thing, maybe, but we are able to [do] it on our own. Of course, with support of municipality, maybe support of other institutions, but we were the people who came with this idea and did all the work behind. And this is our like result. And now we can go on, go ahead with other topics." [my emphasis]

Michal perpetuates the Slovak conception (and implementation) of Romani activism as the execution of concrete service provision like children's programs at a community center or infrastructure for potable water in a village. Several of the program participants were local Romani political candidates who would probably use their projects as a way to bolster their reputation and experience in their communities, yet this kind of activism does little to address or even draw public attention to the structural inequalities experienced by Romani communities and individuals. I asked Michal if any Slovak Romani activists campaigned for Romani rights. He responded,

> I don't think there's any group of activists in Slovakia, even… this past autumn, like October, there was protest organized in Košice, not a protest [ST: A march? No?] It was, like, just an act against building wall in Košice that prevents people from Luník IX passing through… some part of [an]other neighborhood. I'm not very sure if, but I think the wall was built by [the] municipality. And then, there was [a] group of activists who came and make a hole in this wall and did some graffiti on this wall and so…. But it was like, the activists from the Czech Republic who came to Košice and did this ((laughing)). They were like, "How come there is no one in Slovakia who supports us?"

Michal's anecdote demonstrates that conflict avoidance is one of the considerations for Slovak Roma, and may explain a hesitancy to engage in public and incendiary forms of demonstration. The same Czech activists who demonstrated at the wall in Košice also tried to hold a meeting in a Slovak Romani community. Though the community initially may have seemed open to the idea, only two locals attended the

meeting. Michal explained that local Romani community did not want to upset the local White leadership. "…I totally understand, because locals they, they don't want to make their… cooperation with municipality even worse than it is. You know, like this. Like the Czech activists… they go home and they disappear, but the locals, they stay there." Furthermore, Michal explained that one Romani community in Ostrovany felt safer with a wall separating White Slovak's property from the Romani community because they are no longer subject to Whites' accusations that children were stealing fruit from their gardens. Slovak Romani activism as service provision reflects not only need but strategic conflict avoidance.

De-emphasizing Identity to Meet Needs and Avoid Conflict

Many Slovak respondents aiming to improve the situation of Romani communities anticipated issues with encouraging discussion of Romani ethnic identity and experience. This line of thinking complements their conflict avoidance strategy to limit the saliency of the threat perceived by White Slovaks. As long as Roma organize around their material needs and not around their collective ethnic identity and experience, they are less likely to represent a threat to the dominant group position of the White Slovak majority.

In another chapter, I illuminate how Slovak religious leaders often broker interethnic relations, and this entails structuring an unequal relationship in which Roma are lesser participants. In a similar vein, a White priest who ran a community center for the Romani community in the socially excluded housing estate, Luník IX, discussed the possible drawbacks of Roma studying their own history.

> I would rather say, it has a more negative result than positive. It leads them to such vanity…. At least, I have felt that way in some cases. *They receive such incomplete information on their history, and then it causes them to feel like victims.* "We are the ones who are always abused. You are the bad guys and we are the good guys…." These individuals, who have at least a middle school education and graduated from Roma schools, had in them something that is *not healthy national consciousness, but rather aggression*. I'm saying that it is my impression that for them it was not "I learned something about my history, and it is enriching," but rather it created a gulf [emphasis mine].

This priest's comments fall in line with the general tendency to minimize the potential perceived threat. The White majority may feel "aggression" derived from learning the history of Roma in Slovakia. The priest, himself a dedicated servant living and working with perhaps the most socially marginalized Romani community, takes this hostile stance on Roma learning the history of their own oppression and thus gaining an understanding of the historical and institutional factors that contributed to the marginalization of many Romani communities.

Even Michal, who ran the "Roma Activists" program for a large international non-profit, wanted to limit the extent to which Roma identity played a role in the activists' local projects. Despite the title of the program, he wanted to create "civic activists" not "Roma activists." He mentioned that some of the local teams included White Slovaks and Hungarians, and so "one of the hidden goals, let's say, of the program is to bring these groups together, not to make Roma projects by Roma and for Roma, but to make, like, community projects...."[51] Pavel, a White community center leader in Sveržov, took a different approach to the same ends by focusing on the immediate material needs of the Roma community in his town.

> I'm not in(to) the Roma identity, but basic knowledge says that you have to… cover your other needs in the first place, and then you have to go to this kind of self-actualization stuff. And for my

[51] The Roma activism program did try to give some human rights training and advocacy to its participants, but this was a very limited part of the program.

> opinion, I'm thinking that we have to still… cover some basic needs. But… I suppose I'm one of [the] few people, if not the only one in this organization… who thinks this way.
>
> Other people are probably more advanced than me in thinking, and they are saying, "Oh, Roma identity, very good thing. They have support and we should support them." And I'm always thinking, "Well, if you don't have something to eat… if you don't speak properly, and you don't think straight because you are tired and you have no money, well you have to be concerned about this first."

Both Michal and Pavel opt to downplay Romani identity but justify this choice differently. Michal explicitly avoids discussing Romani identity because it may divide members of his activist groups from each other or from others in their communities, while Pavel simply states that immediate needs are more important. Indeed, another barrier to Romani mobilization may be that the international Roma rights movement does not resonate with many Slovak Roma, who are more concerned with the immediate needs of their community, unaware, or simply uninterested. Respondents confirmed that because in Slovakia children do not learn the history of Romani people in school, they do not have many Romani role models, or they do not feel connected to their ethnic group but rather to their own families and communities. Romani identity is not a mobilizing force. One Romani employee of a community center in central Slovakia, Olínka, said that she speaks only Slovak (not Romanes) with Roma who visit the center. She said that this was counter to the claims that Roma are 'unadaptable,' a commonly used, politicians' dog whistle for marginalized Romani communities. She continued,

> We don't have a problem with adapting ourselves. Others say that we are not adaptable. That's how they call us: unadaptable citizen, problematic citizens, further, a segregated group, that we are all under one [title]. In other words, it is not simple to be Romani. I am proud, like I said, that I am a Rom [woman], but it is not simple with our identity.

Olínka articulates that Romani identity is difficult to mobilize around because the majority holds such negative views of her group. This makes difficult the assertion of

Roma individual or minority group rights. Slovak Romani activism is mostly interest-driven and focused on service provision, and while some activists justify this as difficult for other reasons, others involved in interethnic relations articulate that identity is divisive or creates 'aggression' towards Whites. Furthermore, Romani activists may be curtailed because the police may not protect their activities or communities should the majority mobilize against them, as they have in the Czech Republic.

In the winter of 2004, the most notable instance of Romani mobilization occurred when hundreds of demonstrators protested the neoliberal reforms which has severely reduced social benefits for unemployment and for poor families (Marušák and Singer 2009: 193). The mass mobilization, which occurred across 42 towns and villages and resulted in over 200 Romani demonstrators being detained, spurred from children and families going hungry during the cold winter months. Fighting erupted between police and Romani demonstrators in Trebišov (Vermeersch 2007: 147).

This incident reveals some constraints on Slovak Romani activists. While initially Romani activists seemed to seize the moment to make broader claims about discrimination in hiring and education through letter-writing campaigns, these efforts fizzled when the government reinstated some of the social benefits it had cut. Particularly, it allocated more funding for 'activation work,' which requires a few hours of menial work (such as manual street sweeping) to receive social benefits (Marušák and Singer 2009: 199). Veermeersch (2007) suggests this as a moment when Romani activists could have aligned their strategies with Romani political parties, perhaps leading to a more robust Slovak Romani movement. Romani political parties and activists distanced

themselves from the actions and even encouraged protestors to go home and demonstrate a willingness to work (Vermeersch 2007: 147). The clashing between demonstrators and police in Trebišov shows that the police are not to be trusted to protect minority protestors. Indeed, Slovakia has a history of racialized and brutal policing of Romani communities (ERRC 2015). Secondly, Romani politicians and public activists will not necessarily support mobilization even in very dire situations. The small concessions by the Slovak government show, nevertheless, a willingness to contribute limited resources to a 'social contract' with the marginalized Romani population: meager social benefits in exchange for their peaceful resignation to their social exclusion.

Czech Republic

Many Czech organizations engage in remarkable service provision to socially excluded Romani communities. I do not wish to ignore or devalue work that improves the lives of probably thousands of disadvantaged Roma and non-Roma in the Czech Republic. Rather, I want to emphasize that some Czech Romani activists also engage in institutional advocacy and counterdemonstration mobilization as part of their activism, and that these activists take a diversity of approaches. Some are assertive, perhaps even radical, others are more willing to be mediators to the government or majority. Many put Romani identity at the center of their efforts. Activists are aware that their conflict engagement strategies may increase the saliency of group threat to the White Czech majority. Indeed, extremist mobilization is part of a feedback loop that reactivates Romani activist networks and reinforces their confrontational strategy as they organize counterdemonstrations. To some extent, Romani activists are confident in the ability of

the Czech police force to protect their communities from immediate violence. Furthermore, this interethnic conflict generates additional resources for Czech Romani activists as international attention focuses on demonstrations and counterdemonstrations and the government responds by trying to improve local relations after the outbreak of conflict.

Increasing Visibility: Identity, Institutional Advocacy, and Activism

Identity plays a central role for many Czech Romani activists. Some are specifically interested in improving public perception of Romani individuals. Others acknowledge the cultural differences in Romani communities that might make interactions with public officials problematic. Still others aim to confront racism expressed towards Roma in person by confronting extremists' and neo-Nazi marches with counterdemonstrations. Romani activists choose different strategies for advocating for Roma and Romani communities. Because many of them are identity-driven, these tactics are more likely to make majority threat salient. Rather than trying to be 'invisible,' they take steps to raise visibility of the Romani community and their interests.

I interviewed a Roma-identified non-profit project coordinator, Karolína, whose organization had goals of integrating immigrants and Roma with mainstream Czech society and raising awareness of diversity in the Czech Republic. As to their efforts with the Romani population, Karolína said, "we are *not* working with socially excluded people, or in socially excluded localities…" [emphasis mine]. She continued,

> I always say that we are like [an] elite organization. But, our strategy is that [the] Roma minority needs to have its representatives and elites in Czech Republic, and there is a lack of …[them]. So, we try to have Roma in [a] different position, not only decision-making, but also we would like to

> have… for example, educated Roma who claim openly that they are Roma, you know. Because [the] problem is that these educated Roma, they often hide their identity because it is easier for them.

Though the threat of discrimination could deter individuals from publicizing their Romani ethnicity, Karolína's organization sought to assist educated, or otherwise successful Romani individuals to stay connected to Romani communities, increasing their visibility. In addition to these activities, her organization started an international festival celebrating Romani culture in Prague to help improve or diversify public images of Roma in the Czech mainstream. As many of my respondents identified negative media portrayal as a problem facing Czech Roma, this is an important goal for many of those involved.[52]

Other activists choose to confront racism against Roma in ways that visibly challenged claims to White superiority. A few Romani activist organizations mobilize against anti-Roma marches with counterdemonstrations. One Romani activist, Renata, lived in Prague and volunteered with a grassroots organization aiming to counter anti-Roma demonstrations and protect local communities during the demonstrations. Renata explained how the organization contacts volunteers when nationalist extremists or other groups are organizing a march. They carpool or bus to the town or city of the planned march, often using their networks to identify locals willing to share their spare rooms or couches for the activists to spend the night. Volunteers' activities included chanting and marching in the streets, arguing with anti-Roma demonstrators, or even staying in homes to protect families and keep children calm during the unrest.

[52] Twenty of the 27 Czech respondents mentioned negative portrayals of Roma in news and media as negatively affecting interethnic relations, often by reinforcing stereotypes of Roma. A few respondents reported negative portrayals of Roma in media as the biggest issue facing the Romani minority in the Czech Republic.

Activists adopted different strategies on raising the visibility of Roma and their interests. Renata criticized the approaches of other organizations that she saw as opportunistically applying for EU funds. She did not think that legal organizations which lobbied for social justice initiatives were spending these funds in acceptable ways, while some families are impoverished or endangered by anti-Roma demonstrations. Renata was especially critical of the approach of Karolína's organization to raise the mainstream perception of Roma through publicly celebrating and championing educated and successful Romani individuals. She said,

> What does [Karolína's organization] do? It does not do anything! It was awarded [a foundational award]? What has it helped to realize? Because I was there [at the award ceremony] … and a friend showed that [Karolína's organization] does not deserve awards… the people who help are not there. They should be honored, not them, because without those people, it would have been shit. And so, we got out of there.

Renata privileged service provision and counter-demonstration to other forms of Czech Romani activism. Yet both Karolína's and Renata's organizations, raised the visibility of the Romani minority, albeit in different ways. Karolína's organization attempted to show that Romani individuals could economically and professionally succeed in Czech society while maintaining ties to and pride in their Romani identity and communities. Renata and other counterdemonstrators would physically meet extremists and neo-Nazis in the street as they chanted their anti-Roma slogans. Aware of the dangers the anti-Roma demonstrations posed to Romani communities, Renata and her organization saw counterdemonstrating as protecting the communities, yet a visible, confrontational strategy for ethnic activists. The diversity of their approaches reflects a healthy debate that keeps Czech Romani activism dynamic.

Confrontational Strategy: Activating Threat and Generating Resources

In České Budějovice in summer 2013, weekend anti-Roma demonstrations disrupted Máj, an integrated housing development of socialist-era panel buildings in the northwest of the city. I interviewed twelve respondents from six organizations (three Catholic-affiliated and three secular) and the city's municipal government. One of my aims was to understand the sustained conflict of that summer. All agreed that the spark of the conflict started with a disagreement between a White mother and a Romani mother watching their children on a playground, which led to a physical altercation. That the White mother was pregnant seemed to increase the outrage among her family and other White neighbors. This individual-level issue quickly transformed into a near interethnic relations crisis for Czechs. Six weekend demonstrations, soon accompanied by demonstrations in other cities around the country, brought international attention to the east central European country (BBC 2013; Romea 2013d). The events mobilized Romani activist networks, as counterdemonstrations were organized by Renata's organization and attended by hundreds.

Although difficult and dangerous to the Romani communities in the Czech Republic, České Budějovice, and Máj, in particular, the conflict seems to have generated more resources for those communities. Though not all Czechs involved in interethnic relations approve of confrontational tactics, this instance demonstrates that this technique proves productive for Romani activists even in the context of high interethnic tension. Activists also seem able to rely on the police to protect Romani communities in times of

conflict. Thus, they decide that activating majority threat poses a manageable risk, perhaps with meaningful payoff.

That the efforts of some Romani activists are confrontational and activate majority threat is perhaps best interpreted through those who disagree with their tactics, as some Czechs do. A White employee for a Catholic-affiliated non-profit organization specifically called Renata's organization of volunteer counterdemonstrations 'radical social workers' and disapproved of their tactics, especially in her town of České Budějovice. While she admitted that perhaps they helped raise pride in Romani communities experiencing anti-Roma marches in other towns and may have even helped to keep peace there, she was more critical of their efforts during the 2013 summer demonstrations in České Budějovice. She thought that the Romani activists coming from "god-knows-where in the republic" disrupted the ability of the municipality to deal with the situation.

And she was not the only advocate for the local Romani community to take an 'outside agitator' view of the Romani activists counterdemonstrating that summer. A municipal employee, Marek, one of the two White 'Roma coordinators' hired by the city to negotiate interethnic relations with the municipality, explained his opinion on activists like Renata and her organization. Speaking of the local Romani community, he said, "Basically, they almost banned the Roma activists from coming to Budějovice because the community there on Wolf Street realized that when Roma inside the large settlement are… [demonstrating], this is, pardon my language, pissing off the White masses living there…." He thought that local Roma did not want outside Romani activists agitating

local Whites. As a city government official, Marek most likely cared for the safety of the local Romani community, but he clearly expressed limits to the acceptable strategies for supporting Romani rights. He explained how he actually worked against such counterdemonstrators during the summer of 2013 as he worked on a team to open up communication between relevant actors. By his account,

> We were in communication with the police, with the intervention management, we tried to pick out the natural authorities on the side of the Romani crowd and tried to limit the Romani activists, who were pumping up the crowd there, when they were supporting this Romani self-awareness, but again, if it was in [nearby park] Stromovka, yeah, or here at [soccer stadium] Slavia in an open area with some cultural event associated with, yeah, strengthening the perhaps the spirit or culture of the ethnicity, I have no problem with that….
>
> …but it was exactly this action, "if you throw a stone at me, I'll throw two at you. Yeah. When you demonstrate, I'll demonstrate too..."
>
> …really, it massively poured oil on the fire, so that we managed to convince the Romani community from… [the Máj housing estate] to appreciate that they have a roof over their head, that they have somewhere to live, that the housing development is not so bad.

Marek thus identified some kinds of Romani activism as inappropriate or even unnecessarily incendiary, pouring "oil on the fire," or worsening interethnic tensions. His strategy as one of the city's Roma coordinators was to convince the Romani community in Máj that their situation was 'not so bad.' Marek had more to say about the activists,

> …these activists here also raised hell and they did it well because they pumped up the crowed, therefore *they polarized the antipathy with the pumped-up black crowd* and [the antipathy] spread over the entire housing development and over the entire city, *but on Saturday night this Romani activist went home to northern Bohemia*, to Moravia, to Prague, and the Roma who are living in the housing development lived with this raised, yeah, with this explosiveness. And after a week, it repeated again… [emphasis mine].

Marek may be a problematic advocate for the Romani community in České Budějovice. In fact, I never heard any other government representative refer to Roma as 'black.' He continues to say that the local Romani community 'patrolled' itself in that they would turn off the electricity to any homes that were housing out-of-town activists.

Whether this is true, Marek justified that he was representing the will and interests of the Romani community in Máj by condemning the outside counterdemonstrators. His views illustrate the more conservative approach to Romani advocacy in the Czech Republic.

Nevertheless, the highly visible tactics of the Romani activists generated some further resources for the Romani community. Marek and one other (White) Roma coordinator worked with the local community, organizations, and the police to calm the unrest in their city that summer. They set up a taskforce to meet over the next year to discuss strategies to improve interethnic relations in the city. The city police also started employing Assistants for Crime Prevention (APK)[53] after that summer. The program employs locals to act as police liaisons with the goal of limiting negative interactions with police. Several respondents in České Budějovice independently mentioned this program as beneficial in easing local interethnic tensions.

An important factor influencing Czech Romani activists' decisions to employ confrontational strategies may be a level of confidence in police protection of their communities from White backlash. The Czech Romani media outlet, Romea.cz, for example, at first reported that police were unprepared for the actions of extremists in České Budějovice in the summer of 2013 (Romea 2013a). At subsequent demonstrations, however, Romea articles reported that police were "100% prepared" to protect Romani communities from the demonstrators (Romea 2013b). Renata, the Romani activist involved in counterdemonstrating, expressed a more skeptical opinion of the police, reporting that Romani families who thanked police officers for their protection during the

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[53] Assistenti prevence kriminality (APK)

anti-Roma demonstrations were then racially profiled by those same officers at other times. Still, Romani activists and media both exercise a right to criticize racialized policing and demonstrate a confidence in police abilities and willingness to protect their communities from potential ethnic violence.

Romani activism in the Czech Republic takes heterogeneous forms. Individuals and groups may disagree with others' approaches, revealing the diversity of perspectives and goals in the Romani population. Those like Marek, with the more conservative approach, specifically reference majority threat as a reason why conflict precipitated in their town: outside activists 'pissed off' local Whites, heightening tensions to 'explosive' levels and continuing demonstrations on those summer weekends in 2013. His approach is quite similar to the conflict-avoidance approach of Slovak Romani activism. Renata and Karolína, on the other hand, most likely influenced by international movements for human and minority rights, encourage assertiveness and pride among Roma. Karolína's organization does so by organizing a Roma pride festival and heightening awareness of professionally successful Romani individuals Renata does so by physically meeting racists marches in the street. These activities lead to the more salient majority threat that Marek perceived in summer 2013, and also to more resources for Romani communities.

Discussion and Conclusion

Why did Slovak Roma (including Romani activists) reject the confrontational activities of the Czech activists who wanted to tear down the segregating wall in Košice? More generally, why do Slovak Romani activists choose more accommodating strategies, which do not activate majority threat, compared to their Czech counterparts?

While high interethnic hostility is a constant across these cases, the possible consequences for majority threat are different within varying POSs, even with access to similar cultural frames and available organizing structures. Alternative explanations that the difference in Czech and Slovak Romani activism can be attributed to differences in available cultural frames or organizational capacity and not activists' interpretation of majority threat within varying POSs do not hold up to scrutiny. While some Slovak Roma, organized in Romani political parties participate in local and regional politics, this has not resulted in greater support for the rights of Slovak Roma or transformation of racial inequity. Instead, segregation and White flight seem to be the causes of their electoral success. The confrontational activities of Czech Romani activists are more visible, hence the threat to group position is more salient to the majority. This research both complicates the argument of the global diffusion of human and minority rights by highlighting political opportunity and calls into question understandings of activists' tactics in a closed POS given the constant of high ethnic hostility. In this section I also address two alternative explanations, available resources and cultural frames and the accessibility of the ordinary political process, for the varying forms of Romani activism in East Central Europe.

Perhaps Czech Roma have cultural frames more conducive to mobilization available to them, making them more likely to engage in more confrontational activism? Slovak Romani activists downplay Romani identity as a central mobilization in order to ease the access to services and material resources for Romani communities and avoid activating majority threat. Vermeersch (2005) sees a bind between essentializing

ethnicity and calling attention to ethnic inequity. Yet some Czech activists *have* adopted a more nuanced view of multiculturalism and minority rights. Indeed, the debate between Czech Romani activists over interest-based advocacy and identity-based advocacy reflects a healthy status of Czech Romani activism. Slovaks have all but abandoned identity as a mobilizing force, and so have done little to challenge mainstream stereotypes of Slovak Roma (or threaten the majority's group position). Because Nazis murdered nearly all Czech Roma during the Holocaust, today's Czech Roma are mostly descendants of Slovak Roma who migrated immediately after WWII or during the communist period to work in factories in the Czech lands. Furthermore, under Czechoslovak communist regime, state policy towards Roma and minority mobilization was consistent throughout state. Therefore, the argument that Czech Roma have better cultural frames or a higher propensity for ethnic mobilization is thin.

Czech Roma may have more resources or allies available to them, but this is an *effect* of their strategies rather than the cause. Just as the conflict in České Budějovice generated a renewed effort to involve the municipal Roma coordinators and instituted the APK, vocal activists and visible activities can shame the state or local government into acting. During a few exceptional moments, Slovak Romani activists have garnered international attention, but it is always in response to an immediate material need. Previous instances included the treatment of Slovak Romani asylum seekers abroad in the 1990s (Vermeersch 2007: 144-147) and the mobilization in response to the social benefits

cuts in the winter for 2004.[54] Police repression deterred elite allies and leading Romani activists from encouraging that mobilization or using it to make broader demands on the government.

Do Slovak Roma, with their higher proportion of the overall population, not to mention a numerical majority in some localities, have the option to engage in ordinary politics? In 2012, Slovakia had 426 Romani representatives sitting on 197 municipal councils and 29 Romani mayors (Mušinka et al. 2013). Still, this is an underrepresentation as Slovakia has nearly 20,000 municipal councilors (OSCE/ODIHR 2014:13). Rather than indicating integrated communities electing qualified community representatives, the Romani politicians seem to be mostly a function of extreme segregation. Efforts to form coalitions of Romani parties in national elections have failed (Vermeersch 2007: 116-177). Famously, at least one Romani mayor had less than an elementary education. Tabloids sensationalized the election of the 'illiterate' Romani mayor. Even Michal, of the organization running the 'Roma activists' program, expressed worry that some of his applicants were interested more in gaining local political power than in their community service projects. Local political office, nevertheless remains a possibility for Slovak Romani activists in a way for which Czech Roma have no examples.[55]

Some scholars stress that international organizations can diffuse cultural frames and mobilizing structures to minority groups in new locations (Olzak 2006; Liu 2006;

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[54] Then MP (and current prime minster) Róbert Fico had proposed that asylum seekers be denied social benefits for one year after returning to Slovakia (Vermeersch 2007: 145).
[55] Two Slovak Romani politicians were elected to regional parliaments in 2009 (Rostas 2014: 40).

Tsutsui 2004, 2017). Yet the 'world society' hypothesis does not help explain the *differences* between my cases. Tsutsui (2017) argues that the influence of the international human rights institutions and norms has different effects on domestic ethnic activism depending on the starting levels of minority rights and levels of activism. The international movement could result domestically in movement initiation, movement facilitation, or movement reorientation. The Czech Republic and Slovakia were both subjected to pressure from the EU to afford protections and rights to national minorities quickly throughout the 1990s (Vachudova 2005). As national Romani activism movements were forming in the two countries at this same time, we would expect to see Tsutsui's (2017) process of 'movement initiation' in which Romani activism's actorhood is constructed and awareness is raised (Vermeersch 2006: 63). Plaut (2016) for example, showed that international funding shaped the strategies Romani journalism and media and brought them more into line with 'European' identity.

On the other hand, I argue that the influence of the international human and minority rights movements has different effects in the Czech Republic and Slovakia because of differing institutional settings. By showing how local strategies can diverge due to perceptions of group threat and the local POS even when influenced by the same global movement at the same period, this study explains variation better than the world society hypothesis, which to some extent expects isomorphism of global norms in local contexts (Olzak 2006; Tsutsui 2004). A more likely alternative explanation involving diffusion and learning would be that Slovak Romani activists and politicians have learned not to engage in confrontational activism by observing the effects it has on majority

threat in the Czech Republic. They do not want to incite the kind of majority countermovement that generates more anti-Roma demonstrations, which, without the confidence in the police force, could be dangerous or even deadly for Romani communities. Yet, this international learning is not contrary to my explanation that ethnic activists interpret the potential consequences of their activities for group threat within their specific POS.

Scholars of political process theory expect that socially excluded actors may choose violent or extreme tactics if they do not see changes in the structures that exclude them (McAdam 1982). Examples of this seem to be evident in the Watts riots, the wake of the police beating of Rodney King or the tactics of African National Congress in apartheid South Africa. Yet the Slovak example, when compared to the Czech Republic, confounds this argument. While Slovak Romani activists face a less open POS, because they acknowledge how their actions may affect majority threat within the context of high ethnic hostility, they choose more accommodating strategies than Czech activists, who can rely on the POS to be more open to their claims and to physically protect Romani communities from interethnic violence. Indeed, law enforcement may have been the only element preventing pogroms during the spike in anti-Roma demonstrations in 2013.

Thus, while interethnic tensions are high in both settings, the POS is more conducive to confrontational ethnic activism in the Czech Republic, causing a feedback effect in which reactive majority mobilization reactivates activists' visible, identity-based institutional advocacy that in turn generates more resources and connections for the cause. Slovak Romani activists, on the other hand, interpret the potential consequences

for activating majority threat within a POS that may not physically protect their communities and may repress their own mobilization. The implication for future research on ethnic activism is that scholars should consider the dynamics of interethnic relations, specifically threat to majority group position, alongside other elements of the POS for a better understanding of ethnic activists' decisions towards more accommodating or confrontational tactics.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This conclusion returns to the main questions and arguments of the project, outlined in the introduction, and considers the implications of the findings both for the study of interethnic relations and for multiethnic societies with interethnic conflict or aspiring to racial equity.

Main questions and arguments

If both states officially protect their Romani citizens in the face of similar levels of anti-Romani sentiment, yet the outcome for visible conflict is so different, what could be the government's role in either contributing to or preventing interethnic conflict? In chapter 2, I answer this question using process tracing, government documents, and interviews with government officials and non-profit employees. Although Czechs and Slovaks followed EU directives in implementing policy to protect the rights and improve the situation of Roma and other minorities in their countries, the states came to enact quite different strategies on interethnic relations. The Czech Agency for Social Inclusion particularly visibly challenges the majority to change their opinions towards Roma, while the Slovak Plenipotentiary for the Roma Minority remains ineffectual with a policy partially based on conflict avoidance through minimizing White majority threat. Furthermore, in support of the group threat hypothesis, the rise in anti-Roma

demonstrations was timed with the increased visibility and effectiveness of the Czech policy with the establishment of the Agency of Social Inclusion.

In chapter 3, I asked how integrated organizations or other organizations aiming to improve interethnic relations manage contact. Or, how does local intercommunal contact affect interethnic conflict? I draw from my interviews of organizations which attempt to serve Romani communities and/or improve interethnic relations. Czechs, even those interested in creating opportunities for interethnic contact, are unable to create integrated spaces due to the restraints of majority threat. While Slovak organizations face the same concern of activating majority threat, church organizations use their religious legitimacy to ethnically integrate to some extent. Rather than forming inter affectual ties or even associational contact, the organizations remain integrated without activating majority threat through unequally structuring interethnic contact. By limiting Romani participation or internally segregating the organization, Whites can mentally maintain their superior group position.

Finally, why would ethnic activists from politically and historically linked societies choose very different activities, some that seem to contribute to interethnic conflict and others that attempt to avoid it? In chapter 4, I argue that ethnic activists in the two cases both risk activating majority threat which could lead to a White backlash. Czechs, however, have openings in their polity which convinces some activists that more confrontational approaches can be productive. Slovak Romani activists, partially because they have few elite political allies and evidence of police repression of Romani movements and police brutality in Romani communities, choose more accommodating

strategies based on limiting majority threat. This strategy allows activists to provide services to Romani communities and limit interethnic conflict, but the prospects for social transformation remain limited with these tactics. On the other hand, when some White Czechs mobilized in anti-Roma demonstrations, Romani activists responded by organizing counterdemonstrations. Thus, ethnic conflict may further inspire and justify confrontational strategies. Moreover, that conflict may be productive. Communities receive more resources to improve interethnic relations and public awareness of Romani issues increases.

Implications for Studies of Interethnic Conflict

My study finds support for an approach to interethnic conflict which centers threat to group position. Particularly, when it comes to policy on interethnic relations, I find support for the group threat hypothesis for domestic minority relations while other have found support for the group norm hypothesis as it relates to natives' attitudes towards immigrants (Schlueter, Meuleman, and Davidov 2013). Threat can be activated at the societal level, and it is also managed on the local level, and actors articulate their awareness of majority threat and how it affects their choices. Some ethnic activists take the chance in activating majority threat with confrontational strategies, while other activists opt to avoid conflict with more accommodating strategies.

Future studies of the effects of policy on racial attitudes or interethnic conflict should help distinguish if the increased level of interethnic conflict in the Czech Republic was a period of 'growing pains.' In other words, was the spike in anti-Roma demonstrations observed in 2013 (and even throughout the 2011-2014 period), just an

initial backlash to the policy changes starting in 2008, meaning the group norm hypothesis will be supported once the public has adjusted to the signaled elite norm? Or, will ethnic conflict continue to be high in the Czech Republic over the long run? Alternatively, is the drop in anti-Roma demonstrations reflective of the distraction of the anti-immigration movement in this region with the European migrant crisis starting in 2015? Five anti-migrant demonstrations occurred in the Czech Republic and 2 in Slovakia (in Bratislava) between 2015 and 2016 (ENAR 2017). Will anti-Roma activities increase should the migrant crisis wane?

More research can also focus on the ways that conflict can be productive. As demonstrated in České Budějovice, the conflict of the summer of 2013 especially raised awareness of the local Romani community's concerns. As a result, they received access to more resources including the community police liaisons, AKP and more support for the municipality's Roma coordinators.

Implications for Studies of Interethnic Relations

In terms of intergroup contact, my work reveals new mechanisms by which contact can reproduce inequalities through structured group relations. In integrated Slovak churches and church organizations, Whites and Roma do not form affectual ties (Pettigrew 1998) nor the kind of associational connections that others have found to build trust between communities (Varshney 2002). These findings contribute to the literature on intergroup contact in general and specifically to integrated churches (Edwards, Christerson, and Emerson 2013). Future research should investigate in which contexts is

this kind of unequal structuring of intergroup relations possible (only in religious settings or in other types of organizations?), and question the limits to its peacekeeping capacity.

Also, in studying ethnic social movements, or perhaps even minority movements of other kinds, scholars should concern themselves with understanding minority-majority relations alongside other feature of the political opportunity structure. Some studies consider how physical threat to a group may push or prevent collective action (Einwohner and Maher 2011; Goldstone and Tilly 2001). Those who take a group position perspective only consider the dynamics from the effects of majority threat on majority countermovements (Owens, Cunningham, and Ward 2015). Remarkably, studies of minority group mobilization have not incorporated the dynamics of potential majority group threat in their analyses (Olzak 2006). I argue that without understanding the dynamics of interethnic relations within differing political opportunity structures, the opposite strategies of Czech and Slovak Romani activists would be confounding.

Finally, I reject the interpretation that Roma-majority relations cannot reveal dynamics of race relations in general because Roma are somehow too unique of an ethnic group. On the contrary, their history of enslavement, genocide, and exclusion is tragically similar to those of persecuted minorities in many societies. Some point to their difficulty to mobilize under a common identity or disagreement about tactics as struggles particular to European Roma (Petrova 2003; Vermeersch 2006), yet we see these same divisions in other ethnic movements. The first to come to mind may be the different approaches of Malcom X and Martin Luther King, Jr. Others suggest that their ‘stateless’ status in Europe makes mobilization different than for other ethnic groups. They do not have a

state government to advocate for them. Yet, African Americans, European Jews until the establishment of Israel, and many other groups were 'stateless' minorities. That Roma in East Central Europe were disproportionately affected by de-industrialization than majority Whites is also not extraordinarily unique, as scholars have argued the same about African American workers and communities (Massey and Denton 1993).

Implications for Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Other Multi-ethnic Societies

My work has revealed that, although interethnic conflict is greater in the Czech Republic, resulting from activated majority group threat at the state and local levels and Romani activists' more confrontational strategies, openings do exist for political and social change towards ethnic equity. The existence of elite allies and a healthy, diverse group of Romani activists can take advantage of the political opportunities when they become available, as politicians did with the establishment of the Agency for Social Inclusion and the banning of the Workers' Party. The greater ethnic conflict, as measured through anti-Roma demonstrations is an unwanted result of these changes, but in the Czech POS the conflict also led to more resources for improving interethnic relations, such as the APK and more support for municipal Roma coordinators. While these gains may seem meager, they are a world away from the situation in neighboring Slovakia. As long as the Czech state (or at the very least, a few political allies) remains committed to protecting Romani communities, especially during moments of majority mobilization, activists' confrontational strategies may encourage these small steps toward ethnic equity.

Slovak Roma are in a tragic bind. The dire economic situation of many communities means that they count on social benefits, the charity of the local White communities, and the efforts of church-affiliated or other non-profit organizations. The government's policy is simultaneously ineffective and accommodating to Whites' sense of superior group position. As such, organizations and activists must minimize the potential to activate majority group threat or risk losing much needed assistance. Furthermore, challenges to the system of racial hierarchy would not be supported by the state, and the police are unlikely to protect Romani communities in the event of majority mobilization.

Racism exists in both countries, as does the potential to activate majority group threat. Greater conflict in the Czech Republic may be the (hopefully temporary) price to pay for affecting social change. Conflict can be productive and transformative. Still, both countries could do more to support efforts for racial equity. Commitment to better and integrated education and job training, in both countries, but especially in Slovakia, could help assuage income and wealth inequality. These programs, however, are likely to be ineffective if not backed up with affirmative action or other incentives/sanctions against discrimination. As such activities are likely to evince a majority backlash, police protection of communities must be ensured.

If economic inequality were reduced, perhaps meaningful integration could follow. I visited one Slovak town, Dobšina, in which the ethnic integration ideal of the socialist period seems to have been partially achieved. Historically a mining town, the employment rate has suffered since the end of the socialist period and deindustrialization.

But my four respondents from Dobšina explained that the result of having good working class jobs filled by both Roma and Whites led to higher levels of racial integration. Many Romani families owned homes in town. The only intermarriages (my respondents estimated up to 10 couples!) of which I heard existed in the country were in this town, just 60 miles northwest of Košice. Though residents of Dobšina also suffered from high levels of unemployment, poor conditions in segregated Roma-inhabited settlements, and other issues, the more meaningful racial integration, perhaps a vestige of a time of greater economic equality during the socialist period, could be a model for possible change.

Given the extraordinary opportunity for integration offered by Catholic churches and organizations in Slovakia, Catholic leaders could affect transformation of ethnic relations. More than devoted individuals working in socially excluded communities like Father Kuffa, Sister Elizabeth, and the priest in Luník IX, institutional support from higher leadership in the Slovak Catholic Church would need to support integration efforts that lead not just to a reproduction of an unequal, racialized relationship, but to intercommunal affective ties or at least the associational contact that could build trust. If combined with real efforts by the government to curb discrimination and improve the educational and employment opportunities for Roma, change could begin.

Since majority threat may be an unavoidable feature of divided societies attempting to transform ethnic relations or work towards ethnic equality, states should ensure protection of minority communities. Organizations which aim for improved local ethnic relations and integration should be mindful of the concerns for majority threat, but implementation of their activities should not rely on the whims of the local majority

population. Those organizations should aim to utilize legitimacy in whatever form it may take (religious or others) to foster relationships with all communities involved. Activists must remain aware that their activities may precipitate majority mobilization, but the resulting conflict could be productive for their communities and for the cause of racial equity. Future research must illuminate if majority mobilization will be a longer lasting consequence of gains toward that goal, or if they are merely ‘growing pains’ of a transforming society.

Appendix A
Interview Methods

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 69 total respondents, 27 in the Czech Republic and 42 in Slovakia. Because I found that church organizations were different from non-church-affiliated organizations, I required more respondents to reach saturation in Slovakia, compared to the Czech Republic where church organizations operated quite similarly to their secular counterparts. Through a personal connection with a colleague, a historian of eastern Slovakia, I met and hired a White Slovak research assistant who made further connections through his own acquaintances. Slovakia is a small country of 5.4 million people. A few of my respondents said that they knew almost everyone who was involved in providing services to Romani communities in the entire country, whether they agreed or disagreed with their approach. I find it highly unlikely that though I used snowball sampling and did not focus on one or two locations in Slovakia, that my data was biased in any one direction. Rather, I sought a fuller picture of the similarities and differences at many sites throughout the country. I also made a concerted effort to 'oversample' for Romani respondents. Roma are underrepresented as employees even in the organizations which serve and work in their own communities, and I feared that were I not to make this effort, I would not have heard from hardly any Roma working in this field.

Interviews lasted between 30 minutes to over three hours, however the great majority lasted about 60 to 70 minutes. Nearly all interviews were audio-recorded with the respondents' permission. My research assistant, a Czech transcriptionist, or I

transcribed all interviews verbatim with just a few exceptions. One Czech respondent requested to answer all questions by email. One respondent in Slovakia did not consent to recording. Four other respondents in Slovakia spoke with me over an extended period with many interruptions, making audio-recording impractical. For these five exceptions, I wrote detailed notes of their responses and transcribed them.

As I speak Czech, I conducted all interviews in the Czech Republic alone. While the Czech and Slovak languages are mutually intelligible, I wanted to limit the chance for misunderstanding, as I am not a native speaker of a Slavic tongue. In Slovakia, my research assistant accompanied me, providing light interpreting for 19 out of the 42 of the interviews there. Respondents chose the language of the interview, a few chose to speak in English. Respondents also chose the location of the interview, most took place in the respondent's office. A few, however, were in local cafes, and one took place in a field at the edge of town. Again, the great majority of interviews occurred one-on-one, but a few asked to be interviewed in pairs or small groups. As I was not interested in the relationship between these individuals, but rather the work their organization conducted and how it affected interethnic relations, these few interviews conducted in pairs or groups most likely did not bias my results. Likewise, that my respondents' colleagues occasionally interrupted interviews to ask my respondent a work-related question would probably not bias their responses.

Finally, while I did not conduct participant observation, I was immersed in the local cultures for six months each. In Prague, I lived for 4 months in Žižkov (Prague 2), a neighborhood locals once considered to be a Romani community, but was now more

mixed and rapidly gentrifying. For the other two months of my Czech fieldwork, I took advantage of an opportunity to house sit for a historian colleague of mine in her Holešovice apartment. In Košice, I lived all six months of my fieldwork in the western part of the city (Košice-Zapad), between the infamous socially-excluded, overcrowded, housing settlement inhabited only by poor Roma, Luník IX, and the city municipal building where citizens collect social benefits. I made local acquaintances through swing dancing in Prague and playing club volleyball in Košice. My Czech and Slovak friends would help me interpret vocabulary with multiple meanings or connotations. I almost always traveled by bus or train to conduct interviews, but on a few occasions, my Slovak research assistant drove us in his car. In both countries, I consulted with local sociologists and requested their interpretations of my initial findings. In Slovakia, I met several times with professors and graduate students and presented my preliminary findings to undergraduate students of social work at the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice.

Appendix B
Table of Czech Respondents

Date	Town	Type of Organization	Church Affiliated	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
7/23/2014	Ústí nad Labem	Service		Woman	White
7/24/2014	Prague	Service		Woman	White
7/25/2014	Ústí nad Labem	Municipal		Man	Romani
7/25/2014	Ústí nad Labem	Service		Man	White
8/5/2014	Prague	Service		Man	White
8/7/2014	Ústí nad Labem	Service		Woman	White
8/8/2014	Prague	Service		Man	White
9/10/2014	Ústí nad Labem	Service		Woman	Romani
9/10/2014	Ústí nad Labem	Service		Woman	White
9/11/2014	Ústí nad Labem	Service	Catholic	Woman	White
10/30/2014	Prague	Service		Woman	White
11/21/2014	Prague	Identity, Service		Woman	White
11/24/2014	České Budějovice	Service	Catholic	Woman	White
11/24/2014	České Budějovice	Service	Catholic	Woman	White
11/24/2014	České Budějovice	Service	Catholic	Woman	White
11/24/2014	České Budějovice	Service	Catholic	Man	Romani
11/25/2014	České Budějovice	Municipal		Woman	White
11/25/2014	České Budějovice	Service	Catholic	Man	Romani
11/25/2014	České Budějovice	Service	Catholic	Woman	White
11/25/2014	České Budějovice	Service		Man	White
11/26/2014	České Budějovice	Service	Catholic	Woman	White
11/30/2014	Prague	State, Service		Man	Romani
12/5/2014	České Budějovice	Service		Woman	White
12/9/2014	České Budějovice	Service	7th Day Adventist	Woman	White
12/19/2014	České Budějovice	Municipal		Man	White
2/8/2015	Prague	Activist		Woman	Romani
2/9/2015	Prague	State		Woman	White

Appendix C
Slovak Respondents

Date	Town	Type of Organization	Church Affiliated	Gender	Race/Ethnicity/ Nationality
1/22/2015	Košice, Vítkovce	Church	Presbyterian	Woman	White, American
1/26/2015	Košice, Vítkovce	Church	Presbyterian	Man	White, American
1/27/2015	Košice, Vítkovce	Church	Presbyterian	Man	White, American
1/29/2015	Bratislava	State		Woman	White
1/29/2015	Bratislava	State		Man	White
1/29/2015	Bratislava	State		Man	White
2/2/2015	Prešov	Church, service	Apostolic	Man	White
2/5/2015	Košice	Service		Woman	White
2/11/2015	Bardejov	Church	Catholic	Man	White
2/12/2015	Bratislava, Kecerovce	Cultural		Man	White
2/12/2015	Žilina, Kecerovce	Cultural		Man	White
2/12/2015	Žilina, Kecerovce	Cultural		Man	White
2/23/2015	Brutovce	Service, political		Man	White
3/3/15	Košice	Church, service	Catholic	Man	White
3/4/2015	Sveržov	Service		Man	White
3/4/2015	Sveržov	Service		Woman	White
3/4/2015	Lomnička	Church, service	Catholic	Man	White
4/1/2015	Spišský Hrhov	Municipal		Man	White
4/1/2015	Levoča	Service		Man	White
4/24/2015	Spišské Podhradie	Service		Woman	White
4/30/2015	Žehra	Political party		Man	White
4/30/2015	Žehra	Political party		Man	White

5/18/2015	Kojatice	Service		Man	White
5/18/2015	Kojatice	Service		Man	White
5/19/2015	Vítkovce	Church, service	Presbyterian	Woman	Romani
5/19/2015	Vítkovce	Church, service	Presbyterian	Woman	Romani
5/19/2015	Vítkovce	Church, service	Presbyterian	Woman	Romani
5/20/2015	Spišské Podhradie	Service		Woman	Romani
5/22/2015	Banská Štiavnica	Arts		Man	White
5/22/2015	Banská Štiavnica	Service		Woman	Romani
5/22/2015	Banská Štiavnica	Service		Man	Romani
5/26/2015	Spišské Podhradie	Service	Catholic	Woman	White, Irish
5/27/2015	Dobšina	Service		Man	White
5/27/2015	Dobšina	Service		Man	Romani
5/27/2015	Dobšina	Service		Woman	White
5/27/2015	Dobšina	Service		Woman	Romani
6/2/2015	Velká Ida	Service		Woman	White
6/9/2015	Pečovská Nová Ves	Municipal		Man	White
6/9/2015	Jarovnice	Education		Man	White
6/9/2015	Jarovnice	Education		Man	Romani
6/9/2015	Jarovnice	Education		Man	White

Appendix D
Coding

While I originally began translating Czech language interviews into English for transcription, I quickly rejected this (after fewer than 4 transcripts) as a viable option and transcribed remaining interviews in the original language of the interview. After I ended my fieldwork in June 2015, I uploaded all transcripts into ATLAS.ti, the qualitative data analysis software, and coded both deductively and inductively for the first round of coding. During a second round, I only coded with the original codes or those which arose inductively in the first round. I also coded all responses to structured interview questions. I could then view all responses to a particular question at once, and compare them across respondent groups. So, while I applied some codes I expected from the literature deductively, such as instances of associational or everyday contact, other codes emerged inductively during the first round of coding. These 'inductively' derived codes, however, I applied 'deductively' during the second round. I divided respondents into several 'family' groups to facilitate comparisons between Czech/Slovak, church-affiliated/secular, and non-profit/government organizations, for example.

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