**Work Under Review**

*Title*: Contact in integrated church organizations: Brokering Roma/majority relations and mediating threat to majority group position in Slovak towns

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*Keywords:* ethnic relations, interethnic contact, group position, brokerage, European Roma

*Abstract:* In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, interethnic tension between whites and Roma is long-standing, with racially-motivated crimes and anti-Roma demonstrations occasionally making international news. In Slovakia, where the Roma population is even more impoverished and relations are just as tense, group-level interethnic conflict (as measured by the frequency of anti-Roma demonstrations) does not occur as often as in the Czech Republic. Integrated church organizations in Slovakia (nearly absent amongst mostly atheist Czechs), provides opportunities for associational interethnic contact, known to contain conflict. In this paper, however, I find that the mediating and brokering functions performed by Slovak church organizations and church representatives integrate these organizations to varying extents, but perceived threat to majority group position limits their ability to transform the unequal majority/Roma relationship. With evidence from semi-structured interviews conducted from June 2014-June 2015, I find two mechanisms by which integrated Slovak church organizations carefully manage the symbolic threat to white superiority, and hence contain potential conflict: (1) they focus on the physical needs and spiritual development of their clients 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. Findings have implications for all multi-ethnic societies interested in maintaining interethnic peace.

**Work-in-progress**

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

*Funding:* Research for this article was supported in part by a fellowship from IREX (International Research & Exchanges Board) with funds provided by the United States Department of State through the Title VIII Program. Neither of these organizations are responsible for the views expressed herein. The research was also supported by funding from the European Union Center of Excellence in Seattle and the University of Washington Graduate School Chester Fritz Fellowship.

*Keywords:* interethnic relations, interethnic conflict, majority threat, policy, European Roma

*Abstract:* The Czech and Slovak governments execute contrasting policies on interethnic relations between majority and Roma populations with differing results for interethnic conflict. The Czech strategy to support equality contributes to the saliency of symbolic threat to majority group, leading to more visible conflict. The Slovak strategy to emphasize difference, counterintuitively to common perceptions about segregation, helps keep interethnic relations peaceful. Though once belonging to the same state and integrating into the EU at similar times, the neighboring countries implement diverging strategies for policy regarding relations with the most socially marginalized populations in Europe. Through an examination of official documents, I identify and describe the two governments’ policies on interethnic relations. I then analyze the effects of these differing strategies for majority/Roma conflict in each country. I employ data collected during in-country interviews conducted from June 2014- June 2015 with activists, government officials, and non-profit employees at the state and local level.

Interethnic conflict takes a more visible form in the Czech Republic, where the government strategy challenges majority populations to reform their attitudes and reexamine racist institutional practices. The majority reacts to the symbolic threat to their perceived superior status. In Slovakia, implementation is less enthusiastic, more deferential to claims of white superiority, and based on the assumptions that differences between groups explain segregation. Thus, multiethnic states pursuing active integration policies should expect backlash from the threatened majority, while more complacent states may avoid conflict, yet perpetuate inequitable ethnic relations.

**Publication**

*Title:* Contention, consensus, and memories of communism: Comparing Czech and Slovak memory politics in public spaces, 1993–2012

*Keywords:* collective memories, memorials, memory politics, mnemonic frames, post-communism

*Abstract*: Memorial spaces can reinforce consensus or deepen conflict over the past. Memories of communism in Europe are particularly fraught mnemonic landscapes. Although they experienced the communist regime as a single country, Czechs and Slovaks now manifest very different political memories in public spaces with different levels of contention surrounding them. Through a media analysis (1993–2012) of events surrounding the 12 memorials addressing the communist past in the capital cities of Prague and Bratislava, this study generates a theory of differing levels of contention between societies with similar ‘difficult’ pasts. The Czech case is characterized by official and unofficial actors, who are cooperative or noncooperative, presenting often competing versions of the past through an individualistic, human rights-focused mnemonic frame. Slovak memory politics are less contentious, dominated by official memory actors, and interpreted through religion and nationalism. The collective memory literature lacks a way to understand when contention is more or less expected over a problematic past. I propose that when official memory actors privilege an individualistic mnemonic frame, contention becomes likely through the interpretations of unofficial memory actors, while a more collectivistic frame results in less contentious memory politics. In other words, the variation in mnemonic frame helps to explain why unofficial actors sometimes contest official representations of the past and other times leave them unchallenged.