Equality, Reciprocity, or Need? Mitigating Ethnocentric Bias in Policy Evaluation with Distributive Fairness

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Abstract

The literature on welfare chauvinism shows that ethnocentrism reduces support for outgroup redistribution. To limit bias, scholarship suggests framing policies universally or addressing beneficiary deservingness. However, policies to support disadvantaged groups and ensure equity cannot always be framed in universal terms. Moreover, dominant groups often hold minoritized groups to a deservingness double standard. Thus, we ask: what are effective ways of mollifying ethnocentric bias in policy evaluation? We argue that principles of distributive justice -- normative justifications for who should get what and why -- can reduce ethnocentric bias. We test through three experiments in Slovakia and with the Roma as the outgroup. Frames using the distributive principle of reciprocity reduce ethnocentric bias amongst majorities; conversely, frames centered around the principle of need garner minority support. Given salient anti-Roma prejudice, we consider our findings a floor. For less stigmatized outgroups, reciprocity frames may bolster support for redistributive policies even further.

Keywords: ethnocentrism; welfare chauvinism; redistributive policies; distributive fairness; equality; reciprocity; need; anti-Roma prejudice

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Ethnocentrism – the inclination to see the world as divided between identity-based ingroups and outgroups, and to assign positive and negative attributions according to these delineations (Kam and Kinder 2007; Sumner 1907) -- influences various outcomes, from attitudes and vote choice (Kinder and Kam 2009) to foreign direct investment (Andrews, Leblang, and Pandya 2018). Ethnocentrism also affects individual evaluations of redistributive welfare policies. Individuals tend to judge policies in group-centric terms -- i.e., based on whom the policies benefit (Nelson and Kinder 1996; Schneider and Ingram 1993). And, individuals are unlikely to support redistribution across identity lines due to negative evaluations of outgroups (Kinder 1986; Gilens 1999; Wright and Reeskens 2013). A rich literature on welfare chauvinism -- the stance that redistributive transfers should be restricted to solely ingroup members, or “our people” (Andersen and Bjorklund 1990, 212) -- underscores ethnocentrism’s effects on public support for welfare programs (e.g., Ford 2016; Harrell, Soroka, and Iyengar 2016; Kros and Coenders 2019). In sum, dominant groups are unlikely to support redistributive transfers when the primary beneficiaries are outgroup minorities, and thus salient identity differences undermine public support for a host of social welfare programs.

Mitigating ethnocentric bias in individual evaluations of redistributive policies is important. While the relative economic benefits of universal versus targeted welfare policies depend on factors like bureaucratic efficiency or within-minority-group inequality (Brady and Bostic 2015; Hanna and Olken 2018), targeted policies help those most in need. Due to historical oppression and ongoing patterns of prejudice, ethnic and racial minorities are often in precarious

socioeconomic positions relative to majorities (Reeves, Rodrigue, and Kneebone 2016). Thus, reducing ethnocentric bias is normatively important, and potentially economically beneficial. In this article, we ask: what are effective ways to reduce ethnocentric bias in redistributive policy evaluation?

Two related literatures have taken up this question. The first suggests that individual preferences over welfare policies result from the interaction of individual-level characteristics and policy details. Individual ideology or economic status, through mechanisms like self-interest, individualism, or affect toward beneficiaries, can influence how individuals evaluate welfare policies (Cavaille and Trump 2015; Feldman et al. 2020; Iversen and Soskice 2001; Skitka 1999; Skitka and Tetlock 1993). These characteristics interact with policy features and framing. A particularly consequential policy feature is perceived beneficiary deservingness (Petersen 2012; van Oorschot 2006; Zucker and Weiner 1993). Importantly, ethnocentrism underlies both causes. An extensive body of work shows that white American opposition to welfare is a function of ideological commitments to individualism and specific components of anti-black affect (Gilens 1999; Feldman and Huddy 2005). Similarly, in the European context, ethnocentrism explains why majorities perceive immigrants and minorities as less deserving than ingroup members with the same deservingness profiles (Ford 2016; Kootstra 2016). The second body of work focuses on interventions meant to reduce outgroup prejudice generally (Kalla and Broockman 2020; Paluck et al. 2021; Tankard and Paluck 2016). These studies argue that improving attitudes and social norm perceptions related to minoritized groups can have positive downstream consequences, like reducing ethnocentric bias in policy evaluation.

While these literatures have provided important insights into: how ethnocentrism, individual characteristics, and policy features affect individual evaluations of redistributive

policies, and how to effectively mitigate prejudice, these two components have yet to effectively be combined. A policy's presentation to an audience matters, and when it comes to ethnocentric bias, a tacit recommendation of some scholarship is to simply remove group-centric cues or frames (e.g., Lawrence, Stolker, and Wolman 2013; Nelson and Kinder 1996). Often, however, this is not possible. Instead, we argue that principles of distributive justice -- i.e., normative justifications for who should get what and why -- can be used as policy frames to reduce ethnocentric bias.

We focus on three principles of distributive fairness: equality, reciprocity, and need (Deutsch 1975; Miller 2001; Reeskens and van Oorschot 2012).¹ Each principle presents a rationale for why a given distributive policy is “fair” or “justified”, and together these are the three “inherent principles in social security transfers” (Clasen and van Oorschot 2002, 89). We test whether these principles, when adopted in policy formulations and conveyed through policy frames, bolster support for redistributive transfers to minoritized groups. Moreover, we also depart from the existing literature by examining the effects of these justifications amongst the majority *and* the minority. Mitigating ethnocentric bias in policy evaluation is difficult, and this paper provides a step towards this goal.

In three experiments (two survey, one field), we find: (1) strong evidence of ethnocentric bias in policy evaluation; (2) that the normative justification of reciprocity is most effective at reducing ethnocentric bias amongst majorities; and (3) that minority outgroups, however, respond most favorably towards distributive policies justified by need. We conduct our studies in the Slovak Republic (Slovakia) and with the Roma as the outgroup. The extreme situation of Slovak

¹ Reciprocity is commonly referred to as equity; however, to avoid confusion with the usage of equity in other academic disciplines and popular discourse, we use reciprocity.

Roma (Kende et al. 2021), and the numerous policies meant to remedy said situation (Hrustič 2020) render our case critical and worthwhile. Moreover, surveying Roma participants is difficult. A host of methodological problems -- e.g., defining a representative sample of Roma, hesitance of both survey enumerators and Roma to engage with one another, the reluctance of Roma to identify as such, and the necessity of face-to-face interviews (see Messing 2014) -- hamper recruitment efforts. Thus, our study provides needed data on the preferences of Europe's largest minority group.

Importantly, our findings warrant both caution and optimism. Taken to their extreme, reciprocity-based policies have clear links to worker activation schemes ("workfare"). Various studies emphasize that workfare does little to improve the economic conditions of Roma communities, and may even reinforce anti-Roma stereotypes. Thus, while reciprocity may mollify ethnocentrism's effect on welfare policy support, the tangible realization and consequences of such policies may reify the racialized and disadvantaged status of the Roma (Drál' 2008; Kócze 2020, Van Baar 2012; Vidra 2018). Optimistically, however, support for intergroup redistribution is relatively high, even in the presence of ethnocentric bias. And, more importantly, we show that policy frames centered around the norms of distributive fairness can be effective remedies towards mitigating ethnocentrism in policy evaluation.

Redistributive Policy Support

Individual-level characteristics interact with policy features and frames to determine whether, and to what extent, an individual supports a redistributive policy. Many studies locate support for the expansion of the welfare state or social protection in individual self-interest (e.g., Amable 2009; Cavaillé and Trump 2015; Iversen and Soskice 2001). Those who stand to gain from redistribution

support the expansion of social protection, while those who stand to lose oppose it. Individual-level characteristics like risk of unemployment, income, or skill specificity predict support for redistribution. The impact of these micro-level material interests depends on macro-structural conditions that exacerbate or reduce individual risk (Iversen and Cusack 2000; Rehm 2011). This literature, focused on the role of material self-interest, contrasts a body of work that centers “symbolic politics” in its explanations of redistributive policy preferences (Kinder 1986; Sears and Funk 1991).

Work on policy preferences and symbolic politics suggests that, while self-interest may predict preferences in some policy domains (especially those where costs are clear and imminent), “learned affective responses to particular symbols relatively early in life” are the primary determinant of policy support (Sears and Funk 1991, 13; see also Lau and Heldman 2009). Work on the racial integration of U.S. schools serves as an example. Racial prejudice and ideological commitments about the scope of government led white conservatives to uniformly oppose busing programs, no matter if they had children in the relevant schools (Green and Cowden 1992). Yet, while busing does not entail any imminent or clear material costs, redistributive welfare policies do. More importantly, some scholars argue that symbolic opposition is actually an instance of group interest, which itself is an alternate form of self-interest (Weeden and Kurzban 2017). In the busing example, white conservatives realize that it is in the interest of co-ingroup members to oppose the policy. Individual interests arise due to group membership.

Thus, self-interest arises in two forms. Self-interest can be material: “it is not in my interest to support this policy because I will not accrue any economic benefit from it.” Or, self-interest can be symbolic: “this policy contradicts my values, and therefore I oppose it.” We suggest that ethnocentrism plays a role in both cases. First, if material self-interest dominated preferences,

those who stand to lose economically from redistributive transfers would oppose such policies equally no matter if they benefit members of their ingroup or outgroup. Existing research shows that this is not the case -- minorities are penalized more than majorities (e.g., Ford 2016). Second, whether or not we consider symbolic opposition a form of self-interest, ethnocentrism remains a primary determinant of welfare policy support. For example, anti-black stereotypes and racialized notions of who benefits from social assistance are dominant explanations for the lack of support for American welfare (Gilens 1999). Nonetheless, material self-interest can influence individual opinion on welfare independently of ethnocentrism, and we discuss the implications of this for our analysis below. Thus far, we have focused on how individual-level characteristics influence redistributive policy support, but policy design and policy frames matter as well. A rich literature shows that support for welfare policies is intimately tied to whom the policy benefits, specifically their perceived level of deservingness

Deservingness and Redistributive Policy Preferences

Support for redistributive policies hinges on the extent to which an individual considers the beneficiary to be deserving of the support granted to them (van Oorschot 2006; Petersen 2012; Skitka 1999; Zucker and Weiner 1993). Attribution theory (Weiner 1985) underpins much of the underlying logic behind deservingness criteria and suggests that individuals assign responsibility for a situation either with the individual or with society. This attribution leads to negative (in the case of the individual) or positive affect (in the case of society) towards the referent. Affect, in turn, determines willingness to help. Thus, “those who blame poverty on causes under the personal control of the poor [are] less likely to support government assistance” (Zucker and Weiner 1993, 928). The opposite is true for those who attribute responsibility to societal causes. Importantly,

differential attributions are a product of ideology. Liberals, due to egalitarian ideological commitments, are more likely to attribute responsibility to society; conservatives, possessing tendencies towards individualism, are more likely to locate responsibility at the individual level (Skitka 1999). Thus, individual-level ideology combines with ideas about beneficiary deservingness to produce support for redistributive policies.

Other beneficiary characteristics also matter for redistributive policy support. Returning to the American welfare example, Gilens (1995) shows that white respondents' support for welfare is conditioned on whether they think African Americans would have equal outcomes to whites, "if they only tried harder" (1006). Here, there is a connection between deservingness, in the form of effort, and support for redistributive transfers. Similarly, Schneider and Ingram (1993) argue that support for public policies hinges on two beneficiary characteristics: power and construction. Together, these characteristics determine the perceived deservingness of beneficiary groups. Individuals perceive groups without power and with a positive social construction, as most deserving. In this framework, power and negative social constructions lead majorities to see minorities as competitors, limiting policy support.

More recent scholarship refines and disaggregates deservingness into multiple constituent components. Van Oorschot (2006) motivates these criteria with an empirical puzzle: why do individuals support social programs for the elderly or the disabled more than social programs for the unemployed or immigrants? The answer to this question is predicated on social solidarity, i.e., the extent to which individuals feel concern for the beneficiary group. Solidarity, in turn, is a function of perceived deservingness, which itself is composed of five different criteria: control, need, identity, attitude, and reciprocity (see van Oorschot 2006, 26). Control refers to the degree of responsibility the beneficiary group bears for its position. Need corresponds to the severity of

the beneficiary's situation. Identity refers to the perceived closeness between giver and receiver. Attitude signifies the extent to which the beneficiary group is judged to be likeable or grateful. The final criterion is reciprocity: the extent to which beneficiaries have contributed or will contribute to the social system.

Following attribution theory, control is a first-order concern for individual support for redistribution through social policies (van Oorschot 2006). Work by Petersen and colleagues (Petersen 2012; Petersen et al. 2012) argues that evolutionary trajectories conditioned individuals to use a deservingness heuristic predicated on control and reciprocity. Cues about beneficiary effort -- i.e., if the situation warranting help is within or outside the beneficiary's control -- signify whether said beneficiary is a contributor to the social system. This heuristic determines the level of individual support for helping the beneficiary.

Ultimately, however, ethnocentrism plays a role in deservingness perceptions. Not only does the deservingness criteria of identity itself impact individual evaluations (De Swaan 1988), but Kootstra (2016) and Ford (2016) show that respondents penalize minorities more than majorities with the same deservingness profiles. The effects of deservingness criteria are themselves conditional on identity. Thus, we turn to a discussion of ethnocentrism and the related phenomenon of welfare chauvinism.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the psychological tendency/predisposition to demarcate the social world in terms of identity-based ingroups and outgroups (Sumner 1907). This demarcation entails the attribution of positive characteristics to one's own group, and negative characteristics towards outgroups, inducing sentiments of threat, resentment, prejudice, and ultimately, ingroup favoritism. The

ethnocentrism literature has established the effects of this perceptual bias on a variety of outcomes, including economic growth and public goods provision (Habyarimana et al. 2007), the quality of democracy (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972), foreign direct investment (Andrews, Leblang, and Pandya 2018), and support for the radical right (Bustikova 2019). While these examples illustrate the broad impacts of ethnocentrism, our primary concern is how this perceptual lens impacts individual evaluations of redistributive policies.

Ethnocentrism, Policy Evaluation, and Welfare Chauvinism

Individuals evaluate policies ethnocentrically -- i.e., in terms of what social groups they benefit (Nelson and Kinder 1996). Thus, policy support is a function of beneficiary identity. Ethnocentrism in policy evaluation manifests across various issues. Consider Kinder and Kam's (2009) examples: the War on Terror, foreign aid, immigration, LGBTQ+ rights, and welfare. Ethnocentrism impacted individual evaluations of each of these policies. Other work has shown the salience of ethnocentrism in college admissions (Bell 2021), affirmative action more generally (Feldman and Huddy 2005), crime (Hurwitz and Peffley 2005), and healthcare (Larsen and Schaeffer 2021; Tesler 2012). Given this issue-area diversity, we make two points. First, policies vary in the extent to which they can be delinked from an identity group. Consider affirmative action. Such a policy can be framed as an intention to recruit low-income students, to recruit low-income students from non-majority identity groups, or to recruit low-income students from a specific identity group. These variations will evoke different levels of ethnocentrism. However, it is often difficult to delink policies from the outgroup that they are meant to benefit, and some policies cannot be delinked from outgroups at all. Thus, group-neutral framing is not always a feasible remedy for ethnocentric bias. Second, we suggest that ethnocentrism is particularly likely

to color policy evaluations when it comes to redistributive policies -- i.e., policies that determine resource allocations amongst different groups.

A common prescription of academic studies is to decouple policies from outgroups (e.g., Lawrence, Stoker, and Wolman 2013; Nelson and Kinder 1996). If a policy is framed universally, ethnocentric bias is less likely to manifest. Yet, universalization comes with trade-offs. First, there is a normative cost. What message does it send to minoritized groups when policies intended to benefit them have to be couched in universal terms? Conferring rights and resources to minority groups boosts self-worth and rights historical wrongs (Liu 2015). These shifts can have important downstream consequences for outcomes like political participation (Brady, Verba, and Scholzman 1995; Wong, Lien, and Conway 2005). Second, if group identity forms a salient cleavage of political competition, political elites are likely to politicize universally framed policies in ethnocentric terms anyway. Consider social assistance programs like the American Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). TANF is meant to benefit the poor, regardless of race, yet the media and political elites still heavily racialize the program. Third, some policies are formulated explicitly in relation to an identity group and cannot be reframed in universal terms. Nonetheless, as shown in the affirmative action example above, policies vary in the extent to which they can be framed universally. We discuss the implications of this variation for our experimental design below.

Racialized reactions to welfare programs underscore the salience of ethnocentrism in evaluations of redistributive policies (Harell, Soroka, and Iyengar 2016; Kros and Coenders 2019; Reeskens and van Oorschot 2012; Wright and Reeskens 2013). Rooted in theories of realistic group conflict, welfare chauvinism suggests that ethnicity and race are *the* dividing lines of intergroup competition for resources. In a world of finite resources, individuals are likely to oppose

the redistribution of resources across ethnic and racial boundaries. In the (West) European context, studies of welfare chauvinism largely focus on immigration (Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Soroka et al. 2016). The relative ethnic homogeneity of Western Europe allowed the development of extensive social welfare states (Crepaz 2007), which increasing levels of migration now allegedly threaten to undo. Again, deservingness is often the relevant mechanism. Individuals perceive immigrants as undeserving and judge them according to a “double standard” (Kootstra 2016, 328) -- though ideology and prejudice seem to moderate the extent to which this double standard manifests (see Buss 2019; Ford 2016). These findings suggest that ethnocentrism limits support for redistributive transfers to minoritized groups through shifts in deservingness perceptions.

The preceding discussion highlights the salience of ethnocentrism in individual evaluations of redistributive policies. Whether ethnocentric bias manifests due to racialized cues and frames as in the American context, from increasing levels of immigration as in the West European context, or from ethnic tensions in the Central and East European context (e.g., Bustikova 2019), it affects how individuals view intergroup distributive transfers. Thus, we ask: how can we best mitigate ethnocentric bias in welfare policy support?

Mitigating Ethnocentric Bias

Variations in policy cues and frames can attenuate ethnocentric bias by changing perceptions of beneficiaries. The most consequential cues are those that directly convey identity differences: ethno-racial backgrounds (Harrel, Soroka, and Iyengar 2016), country of origin (Gorodzeisky 2011), or immigration status (Ford 2016). Together, these cues signal whether the beneficiary group is “like us”, and thus entitled to benefits. However, washing away group identity has tangible costs. Alternative frames can focus on deservingness. Policy frames can bolster support by

emphasizing the need or control of a beneficiary group. Likewise, reducing sentiments of competition between the majority group and minority beneficiary can make individuals more supportive of redistribution (Bell 2021; Schneider and Ingram 1993). Yet, if identity remains salient, these shifts are unlikely to have much of an effect. Alternatively, interventions could focus on the macro-contextual conditions that moderate the impact of individual-level differences on support for welfare redistribution. While an individual's income, employment status, or ideology are difficult to manipulate, informative interventions could target contextual conditions to bolster support. For example, an intervention could illustrate the extent to which immigrants actually use the welfare system, and what the costs of this usage are.

A final strategy is to focus on reducing prejudice directly, with the hope that doing so has a downstream reduction on ethnocentric bias. However, changing prejudiced attitudes towards specific outgroups is difficult (Paluck et al. 2021) and, due to its diffuse nature, mitigating ethnocentrism may be even tougher (see Cargile and Bolkan 2013). Yet, some interventions do work. Strategies focused on narrative exchange (Kalla and Broockman 2020) or on social norm perceptions (Tankard and Paluck 2016) seem to mollify prejudice. Interventions focused on social norm perceptions are effective because they do not focus on changing individual attitudes; instead, they signal what society considers typical and desirable behavior. Given the importance of this finding for combating prejudice, we also test whether the normative frames we employ have effects beyond individual attitudes and shift individual perceptions of social norms.

Given this discussion, existing work offers three potential pathways for mitigating ethnocentric bias. Variations in policy frames and cues can deracialize outgroup transfers or shift perceptions of beneficiary deservingness. Communicative interventions can focus on the underlying causes of ethnocentric bias at the individual-level. Finally, the amelioration of personal

prejudice can be a first step towards reducing ethnocentric bias in policy evaluation. We suggest an alternative strategy that focuses on different normative justifications for redistributive transfers. A policy's design and the way that it is communicated convey different ideas about who should get what, and why said allocation is fair. Variations in these policy frames can mitigate ethnocentric bias.

Mitigating Ethnocentric Bias: A Distributive Fairness Approach

While most justifications for redistribution are economic, many of them also rest on normative premises. Welfare redistribution is ultimately about distributive justice -- "the issue of how to allocate scarce resources fairly and appropriately" (Jost and Kay 2010, 1126). Reeskens and van Oorschot (2012), following Deutsch's (1975) formulation, argue that there are three main principles of welfare redistribution: equality, reciprocity, and need (also see Miller 2001). Each of these principles offers a normative justification for who should get what and why.

The principle of equality is predicated on the universality of rights and privileges. Equality postulates that every citizen, regardless of personal need or contribution, should be entitled to the same benefits. Equality is a prevalent principle when it comes to the granting of political rights, e.g., the motivation behind "one person, one vote" (Jost and Kay 2010, 1132). The existing literature largely finds low levels of individual support for equality-based welfare policies (Reeskens and van Oorschot 2013). As a result of ethnocentric bias, we expect such reservations to be even stronger when it comes to outgroup distributive policies. Policies built around equality break down demarcations between groups, and treat them equally ignoring differences in deservingness across individuals. Similarly, if we take self-interest into account, majority groups in dominant economic positions may not support equality-based policies because they provide the

same benefits to all groups, regardless of contribution. Thus, dominant groups are likely to oppose equality-based policies.

The principle of reciprocity (also known as equity, proportionality, or merit) suggests that those who contribute more should be entitled to more. Higher contributions lead to further benefits. Welfare programs based on the principle of reciprocity tend to reproduce existing societal hierarchies and are the dominant type of assistance in conservative welfare states (Clasen and van Oorschot 2002). Given that reciprocity-based policies reinforce the economic positions of dominant groups, we expect majorities to evaluate them favorably, even in the presence of ethnocentric bias. Dominant groups may either contribute more, or overestimate their contributions to, a given social system, and thus see reciprocity-based policies as in their self-interest. Similarly, dominant groups may underestimate the contributions of outgroups, and thus favor policies that can “verify” their contributions. This latter source of support may be particularly relevant when outgroups are stereotyped as dependent on or as abusers of welfare.

Importantly, formulations of reciprocity-based policies can vary substantially. Reciprocity could simply mean paying taxes to receive benefits. Yet, reciprocity is also intimately related to work activation programs (“workfare”) where the granting of benefits is predicated on conditionality rather than entitlement (Lødemel and Trickey 2001). In these programs, the provision of welfare benefits requires meeting certain conditions that promote and enforce searching for and carrying out work (Brodkin and Larsen 2013, 41). If these conditions are not met, benefits are not provided. Examples of such provisions include assessment and training programs, verification of employment searches, or at the extremes, mandatory acceptance of underpaid, low-skilled labor positions (an especially common occurrence amongst Roma, a point we return to below).

The final principle of distributive justice is need. The principle of need postulates that social assistance programs should target individuals for whom assistance provides the largest marginal benefit -- generally the poor and disadvantaged. By doing so, such programs reduce social risk and assume that those who are better off can provide for themselves (Reeskens and van Oorschot 2013, 1176). Given the disadvantaged situation of many minority groups, we expect minority outgroups to be supportive of social programs based on principles of need. Conversely, we expect majorities to express reservations about these programs, especially when beneficiaries are outgroup members. These predictions are based on the cognitive biases that arise from ethnocentrism: dominant groups are unlikely to categorize ingroup members as “in need” -- doing so would devalue their own standing. Instead, they will associate any negative status, like need, with outgroups, reinforcing stereotypes and group boundaries. This reinforcement will lower support for the given policy. Moreover, if majorities are in dominant economic positions, and need is concentrated amongst minoritized groups, it would not be in the majority’s self-interest to support redistribution.

Equality, reciprocity, and need motivate allocation rules for welfare policies. Individuals can support these allocation rules due to ideological convictions, or because they benefit their self-interest. At the same time, however, policies formulated according to these principles provide signals about the beneficiary group. Specifically, they provide information about the conditions beneficiaries would have to fulfil in order to receive social assistance. Thus, normative motivations for policies could mitigate ethnocentric bias through either or both of these pathways. For example, a reciprocity-based policy about worker activation could overcome ethnocentrism amongst conservatives because of its individualist underpinnings, because of lower expected costs (as beneficiaries work for benefits), or because it mitigates the deservingness double standard by

requiring effort. Much of the work testing the relationship between welfare support and different principles of distributive justice is observational (e.g., Clasen and van Oorschot 2002; Reeskens and van Oorschot 2013), and very few studies directly consider the role of ethnocentrism in the process (though see Reeskens and van Oorschot 2012). Our study fills this gap by testing the effects of distributive fairness policy frames on support for welfare transfers to minoritized groups. We discuss the case of the Slovak Roma before turning to the three experimental studies.

The Slovak Roma, Welfare, and the European Union

The Roma are Europe's largest, and most discriminated against minority (Bracic 2020; Kende et al. 2021). In fact, recent work finds that Roma populations consistently rank at the bottom of ethnic hierarchies in most European countries (Gesthuizen, Savelkoul, and Scheepers 2021). In Slovakia, Roma compose 7.6 percent of the population (about 417,000 people, Ravasz et al. 2020). Roma face extreme poverty and discrimination in health care, employment, housing, and education. About 85 percent of Roma live below the poverty line (versus 12 percent of the general population), 17 percent live on less than 3.8 euros a day (Grauzelová and Markovič 2020), and 8 percent of Roma households lack running water (Ravasz et al. 2020).

While the Roma are often treated as a single identity group, and political elites formulate policies accordingly, this approach masks substantial heterogeneity amongst the Roma generally and the Slovak Roma specifically. For example, besides being split into two different Romani-language dialects, a substantial amount of the Roma residing in Slovakia also speak, and ethnically identify as Slovak or Hungarian. In fact, the reluctance of Roma to self-identify as such is seen as a major barrier to both inclusion programs and mobilization efforts (Csata, Hlatky, and Liu 2021; Vermeersch 2003, 884). Moreover, the Roma community in Slovakia is unique in that two-thirds

of the population resides in rural, segregated settlements on the outskirts of towns and villages. Place-based dynamics, like land disputes, often determine the salience of Slovak-Roma resentment in different localities. Despite this heterogeneity, anti-Roma prejudice is diffuse and widespread. For example, 76 percent of Slovaks hold unfavorable views of the Roma (Wike et al. 2019). Moreover, institutional policies (both national and European) also treat Roma uniformly, ignoring substantial differences amongst different Roma communities (Ram 2014). Together, discrimination and universal institutional practice reify a common negative social construction of the Roma. This negative social construction also includes commonly held stereotypes about Roma welfare dependence and abuse: 80 percent of Slovaks agree that “the Roma in Slovakia enjoy undeserved benefits and abuse the social system” (Poslon et al. 2020). In turn, these stereotypes lead to low levels of public acceptance of Roma social assistance programs.

Academic and policy assessments of these programs are also mixed. Spurred by European integration, the Slovak state developed a neoliberal approach towards welfare generally and the Roma specifically (Škobla and Filčák 2020). Work activation or “workfare” is a central element of the Slovak welfare system. As of 2013, to receive full unemployment subsidies, a worker has to complete 32 hours of “activation” work per week. Generally, this means low-skilled, labor-intensive jobs provided by municipal governments. In Slovakia and elsewhere in Central Europe, practitioners and academics criticize these programs for their inability to increase labor force participation and their lack of focus on the structural causes of poverty (Card, Kluve, and Weber 2010; Messing and Bereményi 2017; Škobla, Csomor, and Filadelfiová 2018). Activation also intensifies ethnic disparities and the racialized subjection of minority groups (Grill 2018). By controlling these programs and who can access them, municipal authorities can take advantage of Roma dependency, and manipulate local Roma by facilitating or restricting employment access.

Ultimately, these shortcomings reinforce the socioeconomic marginality of Roma communities and exacerbate negative stereotypes of Roma welfare dependence (Drál' 2008, Vidra 2018).

European integration did not just spur Central European countries to modify their welfare systems; it also provided (and provides) European Structural Funds for supporting the integration of marginalized groups. For example, during the 2014-2020 programming period, the European Union (EU) allocated around 10 percent of its budget directly to outgroup transfers (Author calculations, European Commission 2018 data). 21.5 billion euros were allocated specifically for Roma integration, including 52.4 million euros to improve infrastructure in Slovak Roma communities (European Commission 2020). Due to comparatively low levels of development, Central Europe receives the bulk of this funding and Roma communities are major targets of these programs. However, the effects of European Structural Funding on Roma socioeconomic inclusion are inconsistent at best. For example, European funds improved the basic infrastructure in many Slovak Roma communities (e.g., wells, roads, and housing, see Filčák, Szilvasi, and Škobla 2018). Yet, funding does little to remedy some of the fundamental challenges facing Roma communities. Funding fails to elevate the Roma as equal co-citizens (Rövid 2011), and it fails to incentivize majorities to actively invest in the wellbeing of Roma communities (Sobotka and Vermeersch 2012). At the same time, funding programmes lack verification mechanisms and are undermined by the EU's own lack of commitment to Roma rights (Ram 2014). Some scholarship even goes as far as suggesting that the funding system sustains a hierarchical core-periphery relationship with West Europeans at the top, East Europeans in the middle, and Roma at the bottom (Trehan and Kóczé 2009). Funding for Roma communities is also not free from politicization -- far-right, Eurosceptic parties often politicize these transfers to mobilize voters (Hlatky 2021; Vermeersch 2012).

In October 2020, the European Commission launched a new EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation for the 2020-2030 period, engaging some of the challenges mentioned above. In its formulation of three horizontal priorities -- “fighting and preventing antigypsyism and discrimination, reducing poverty and exclusion, promoting participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust” -- the framework recognizes that effective Roma socioeconomic integration depends on authentic Roma participation and on addressing systemic anti-Roma racism and discrimination. It also introduces novel quantitative indicators to monitor progress in seven key areas: equality, inclusion, participation, education, employment, health, and housing (European Commission 2020). However, as the implementation of this framework in national Roma inclusion strategies is not binding, the new strategy could be considered somewhat “toothless” (Franz 2020), especially since implementation at national (and local) levels will be critical for success.

As this discussion shows, social assistance for the people living in Roma communities often fails to remedy the essential challenges that these people face. Moreover, such policies may reinforce stereotypes and prejudice, and be subject to politicization. For these reasons, improving attitudes towards distributive policies that benefit the Roma is likely to be difficult. Yet, welfare schemes are extensive at both national and European levels, and improving attitudes is necessary to bring about change. Thus, we consider our case tough but critically important.

Research Design Overview

We test the effects of normative justifications on reducing ethnocentric bias through three experiments.² In Studies 1a and 1b, we measure the extent of ethnocentric bias amongst Slovaks.³ In Study 2, we conduct a field experiment with survey outcomes in an ethnically divided Slovak municipality to determine if different normative justifications have differential effects amongst majority Slovaks and the minority Roma. Study 3 generalizes to a nationally representative sample of the Slovak population.⁴

Study 1

Our first goal is to establish the extent of ethnocentric bias amongst ethnic Slovaks. To do so, we conducted two between-subjects, single-treatment experiments. We conducted both experiments with a nationally representative sample of the Slovak population, using quotas on gender, age, region, size of municipality, and education. The final sample included 1,002 participants (52 percent female, $M_{age}=43.6$, $SD_{age}=15.9$) split across four groups (a control and treatment group for each study).⁵ The first study (1a) asks Slovaks how much money should go towards building a water well in either a hypothetical Slovak village or in a hypothetical Roma settlement. Given the

² Survey instruments, R code, and data (anonymized) for all studies:

https://osf.io/7umvz/?view_only=70debdbca9e242648ad18c35806e62fb

³ Pre-registration protocol (anonymized): <https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=tv82b8>

⁴ We conducted all studies in compliance with APSA's *Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research*. Further details in the Supplemental Information (SI) (p. 1).

⁵ See Tables A1-A4 in SI for representativeness, randomization, and descriptives.

scenario -- i.e., none of the respondents live in either of these fictional places -- we expect material self-interest to play a minimal role in respondent preferences. The second study (1b) moves from a specific, targeted transfer to a more general question about government allocations for less developed regions with or without substantial Roma populations. Importantly, this vignette mentions Roma and Slovaks as *co-beneficiaries*. As presented, the informational vignette suggests that Slovaks in less developed regions will also benefit from financial transfers. Thus, it may be in the self-interest of some respondents to support these policies. This renders Study 1b an even tougher test of ethnocentrism. We present the vignettes for both studies:

Study 1a: *[Many residents of Demerice have not had access to drinking water for a long time.] OR [Inhabitants of the Roma settlement belonging to Demerice have not had access to drinking water for a long time.] Construction of a new well will ensure healthy drinking water for inhabitants of the village. The municipality can spend a maximum of EUR 10,000 to build the well.*

Study 1b: *There are regions in Slovakia where the economic situation and the standard of living of the population are considerably lagging compared to the more developed regions of Slovakia. [Most Roma settlements in Slovakia are located in these regions.] The government plans to adopt regional development measures to help these less developed regions catch up with the economically stronger regions of Slovakia. [These measures will also help many residents of Roma settlements.] The government can spend a maximum of EUR 10 million on these measures.*

After reading the vignettes, respondents indicated how many euros they would allocate to the given project on an 11-point scale (ranging from 0 to 10,000 euros for Study 1a, and 0 to 10 million euros for Study 1b). We predict respondents will choose to allocate significantly less to projects that mention the Roma. In other words, we expect to find evidence of ethnocentrism.

Results: Study 1

We find strong evidence of ethnocentric bias. Including references to Roma communities dropped the allocation amount by roughly 25 percent in both studies. Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses across the experimental conditions in both studies, as well as the mean responses and associated 95 percent confidence intervals.

Figure 1. *Allocations, Study 1a and 1b*

Note: Distribution plot showing difference between control and treatment. Point estimate is mean, presented with 95 percent confidence intervals.

Unpaired, two-sample t-tests confirm these findings. On average, participants in the Roma condition wanted the village to spend significantly less money for construction of the well ($\Delta M = -2.71$, 95% CI [-3.26, -2.15], $p < .001$); likewise, they wanted the government to spend less money for regional development ($\Delta M = -3.03$, 95% CI [-3.59, -2.47], $p < .001$). A linear model, estimated with OLS, both with and without covariate adjustment, confirms these findings (SI, Tables A7-A10). Finally, we probed whether material self-interest plays a role in respondent preferences. We divided respondents into two groups: those at or below the sample median income (less than 801 euros/month), and those above the median income. We found no evidence of moderation. In other words, low-income individuals and high-income individuals did not respond to the treatments differently. We present this analysis in the SI (Tables A10-11).

Discussion: Study 1

These results establish a baseline assessment of ethnocentric bias amongst the majority Slovak population, and show that ethnocentrism persists despite possible self-interest on the part of the majority group. Mentioning Roma beneficiaries had a large negative effect on funding allocations to the different projects. Moreover, by conducting this experiment with two different policies and observing similar results, we can be more confident that differences between control and treatment are not a result of policy domain. Participants allocated more municipal money to building a well when it was not in a Roma settlement. Likewise, they were willing to spend more money on regional development when these regions did not include Roma settlements. Ethnocentrism triggered a reaction in both studies. Ethnocentrism manifests when individuals link a given policy with a “clear and demonizable adversary” (Kinder and Kam 2009, 221). In the Slovak case, this adversary is the Roma. Re-defining who gets help influences opinions.

Study 2

To investigate the effects of normative justifications on reducing ethnocentrism, we conducted a within-subject field experiment with survey outcomes (Broockman, Kalla, and Sekhon 2017). We conducted the experiment in a small Slovak municipality (approximate population 3,200), where the population is about evenly split between Slovaks and Roma. We partnered with the mayor's office in order to field the survey, and thus included some questions on the municipality's behalf. After the completion of the study, we shared the results with the municipality and interested participants.

Though the mayor of the municipality is Roma and received votes from both Slovaks and Romas, interethnic relations are not amicable. The town is residentially segregated, and Slovaks and Roma do not interact with one another in cultural, educational, or government spheres. The general acceptance of the Roma population by Slovaks is very low (Author interview with mayor, January 31, 2019). We believe that this context offers a unique opportunity to test whether normative justifications can reduce ethnocentrism. The design allows us to survey the minority Roma population, providing important information about the preferences of Europe's largest minority, and it offers a high degree of realism -- respondents are surveyed about real policies that would have a substantial and proximate impact on their municipality. We also believe that the proximate nature of the treatment allows us to explore the role of self-interest.

Though we attempted 400 different contacts with respondents, we ultimately recruited 113 participants -- 52 were Slovak, 61 were Roma (61 percent female, $M_{age}=49.34$, $SD_{age}=16.05$).⁶

⁶ We rely on enumerator-assigned (ascribed) ethnicity; see SI, Tables A12-15 for descriptives.

After providing informed consent, respondents answered several pretreatment questions including those requested by the municipality. Then respondents moved on to the experimental portion of the survey.

We based the control and three treatment vignettes on the same scenario. Enumerators told respondents that the municipality was considering a new social housing project for the Roma in the community. The Roma would pay rent to live there, and the EU would finance 95 percent of the construction. In the control condition, always presented first, this is the only information respondents received. Then every respondent received the three normative justification treatments in random order. The equality vignette mentioned that a condition for building social housing is an equivalent allocation of money for the non-Roma community. The reciprocity condition noted that only Roma who worked on the actual construction would be allowed to live in social housing. The need condition mentioned that only Roma “who are in greatest need” would be allowed to live in the social housing project. After each condition, respondents indicated their support for the construction of the social housing project on a 1 (“completely disagree”) to 4 (“completely agree”) scale. Given recent work arguing for the benefits of repeated-measures (Clifford, Sheagley, and Piston 2021), we believe that our design is a particularly appropriate test.

Results: Study 2

Table 1 shows levels of support across ethnicities and experimental conditions. First, we see that baseline levels of support were much lower amongst Slovaks than amongst Roma. Second, looking at the Slovak respondents, we see that all experimental conditions bolstered support, though only equality and reciprocity did so at statistically significant levels. Amongst the Roma, equality and

reciprocity depressed levels of support, while need had no effect. Normative justifications appear to have counteracting effects amongst majorities and minorities.

Table 1. *Differences across experimental conditions and ethnicity*

Ascribed ethnicity	Condition	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Slovak	Control	2.25	1.15
	Equality *	2.89	1.11
	Reciprocity *	3.04	1.07
	Need	2.42	1.13
Roma	Control	3.67	0.72
	Equality *	3.21	0.86
	Reciprocity *	2.89	1.13
	Need	3.66	0.68

Note: * indicates difference between control and experimental condition at $p < .05$.

To further analyze the data, we fit an ordinal logit model that accounts for repeated measures by including participants as random factors (*clmm* function, ordinal package in R, Christensen 2019). We used condition, ethnic identity, and their interaction as predictors, and willingness to support the social housing project as the dependent variable. Overall, there was a non-significant effect of experimental condition on agreement with social housing construction ($\chi^2 (3) = 1.3, p = .74$), a significant effect of ethnic identity ($\chi^2 (1) = 24.5, p < .001$), and a significant interaction between the two ($\chi^2 (3) = 68.4, p < .001$). Table 2 reports results and Figure 2 shows predicted mean responses across experimental conditions and ethnicities.⁷ Supporting the

⁷ Table A16 in SI presents numerical results.

descriptives, Slovak participants were more likely to support social housing under the reciprocity and equality conditions, while Roma participants less likely to do so.

Table 2. *Support for Roma Social Housing*

	Estimate	Std. Error	<i>p</i>
Condition - Equality	1.44	0.40	< .001
Condition - Reciprocity	1.72	0.40	< .001
Condition - Need	0.36	0.38	0.344
Roma	3.78	0.55	< .001
Equality:Roma	-3.10	0.59	< .001
Reciprocity:Roma	-4.10	0.62	< .001
Need:Roma	-0.58	0.60	0.331
Random effects	N groups	variance	SD
	113	2.22	1.49

Note: Ordered logit regression with participants as random factors; AIC = 1009.38.

Figure 2. *Predicted average agreement across ethnicity and experimental condition*

Note: Predicted averages and 95% confidence intervals calculated using *emmip* function from *emmeans* package (Lenth et al. 2021).

Discussion: Study 2

Amongst the majority, these results suggest three conclusions. First, self-interest may drive respondent preferences when policy effects are proximate. In the equality condition, Slovaks would also benefit from the policy, and thus it is in their material self-interest to support it. Second, reciprocity seems to be most effective at reducing ethnocentric bias amongst majorities. In this case, we believe that the reciprocity frame altered deservingness perceptions of the Roma by counteracting a popular stereotype: the Roma purposefully do not work so that they may claim welfare benefits. Nonetheless, given the clear link between reciprocity-based policies and work-activation programs, these results are not necessarily normatively reassuring. In fact, they may

further reinforce stereotypes about “good” Roma who work to receive benefits, and “bad” Roma who simply profit from the system. Finally, reassuring majorities that benefits go to only those who actually need them has little effect on ameliorating ethnocentric bias. Need is an important criterion for both deservingness perceptions and for many of the EU policies intended to benefit Roma communities. Yet, need may not be the most effective policy motivation, as it may do too little to counteract stereotypic beliefs about minoritized groups and, in fact, may even reinforce them. This finding also provides some tentative evidence for the deservingness double standard faced by minoritized groups -- frames discussing the needs of dominant majorities may have evoked more support.

Amongst the Roma minority, two points merit discussion. First, normative justifications do little to bolster policy support and may even depress it. Low support for equality could be a function of ethnocentric bias or deservingness perceptions. Romas, like their majority counterparts, may simply disapprove of redistribution across identity lines, even if such a policy includes benefits for themselves. This conclusion further reinforces the idea that ethnocentrism may supersede material self-interest. Alternatively, deservingness perceptions may limit support - why should economically dominant groups receive the same benefits as the disadvantaged? In contrast to the majority, the Roma least supported reciprocity (perhaps due to its connection with work-activation programs). Second, the control and need conditions evoked similarly high levels of support. Given a sense of coethnic identification, it is not surprising that minority group members would want policies to benefit the neediest amongst them.

Importantly, these findings should be interpreted in light of their context. Despite the high degrees of realism, they represent the situation of one Slovak municipality, characterized by its

own ethnic dynamics. In different municipal contexts -- with different levels of socio-economic inequality and different patterns of intergroup relations -- results may have differed.

Study 3

To generalize the results of Study 2 to a nationally representative sample of Slovaks, we recruited 1009 respondents for an online survey experiment (52% female, $M_{age}=44.7$, $SD_{age}=16.1$).⁸ We used the same quotas as in Study 1. We employed a between-subjects design with a control group and three treatment conditions (each corresponding to a normative justification).⁹ Participants read a scenario about a fictional village:

Demerice is one of many villages in Slovakia which includes a Roma settlement. Demerice could build a new apartment building, which would serve as social housing.

These apartments will be intended for the poorest inhabitants of the Roma settlement, who will pay rent for the apartments. 95% of construction costs of this apartment building would be covered by the EU funds, 5% by the municipality.

Participants in the treatment groups were also randomly assigned to one of following statements:

⁸ Tables A17-18 in SI present representativeness and randomization checks.

⁹ Prior to the vignettes, respondents answered two questions about EU funding and perceived competitiveness between Slovaks and Roma. We included these questions to probe potential interaction effects, which we present in the SI (p. 13).

Equality: *The condition for building the housing for the poorest inhabitants of the Roma settlement would be that Demerice would use the same amount of money for projects intended for non-Roma inhabitants of the municipality. The same amount of funding given for the construction of housing for residents of the Roma settlement would go to projects for non-Roma residents of the village.*

Reciprocity: *[...] would be that only those who deserve it by working on its construction would be allowed to live there. Only those residents of the Roma settlement who deserve it, could get the social housing.*

Need: *[...] would be that only those who need it the most could live there. Only those inhabitants of the Roma settlement who need it most because of their difficult life situation would get social housing in the apartment house.*

Participants indicated whether they agree or disagree with the construction personally, and whether they think “most people in Slovakia” agree or disagree with the construction (both measured on a 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 4 (“strongly agree”) scale). The first question measures the extent to which the policy frame shifted personal opinion. The second question measures shifts in perceptions of social norms.

Results: Study 3

A visual inspection of the data suggests that the reciprocity condition elicited the most positive attitudes towards building the social housing project, while the need condition evoked the most

negative reactions (see Figure 3).¹⁰ This pattern manifested across both personal support, and for perceptions of majority support. On average, however, individuals were more pessimistic about societal support than personal support. We use ordinal logistic regression to estimate treatment effects (see Table 3). We present analyses with both the control and reciprocity conditions as baselines. For both personal and majority agreement, reciprocity bolstered support relative to control, and this effect was also statistically distinguishable from the effects associated with equality and need

¹⁰ See Tables A14-15 in SI for numerical results.

Figure 3. *Distribution of responses across experimental conditions*

Note: Point estimate is mean, presented with 95 percent confidence intervals.

Table 3. *Support for building social housing*

		Estimate	Std. Error	<i>p</i>	OR [95% CI]
Personal agreement	Baseline = Control				
	Reciprocity	0.60	0.16	<.001	1.83 [1.33, 2.52]
	Equality	0.22	0.16	.172	1.25 [0.91, 1.71]
	Need	-0.16	0.16	.323	0.85 [0.62, 1.17]
	Baseline = Reciprocity				
	Equality	-0.38	0.16	.018	0.68 [0.50, 0.94]
	Need	-0.76	0.16	<.001	0.47 [0.40, 0.64]
Majority perspective	Baseline = Control				
	Reciprocity	0.76	0.16	<.001	2.15 [1.55, 2.97]
	Equality	0.35	0.16	.033	1.42 [1.03, 1.97]
	Need	0.02	0.16	.92	1.02 [0.74, 1.40]
	Baseline = Reciprocity				
	Equality	-0.41	0.16	.013	0.66 [0.48, 0.92]
	Need	-0.75	0.16	<.001	0.47 [0.34, 0.66]

Note: Ordered logit regression; OR=Odds Ratio; CI=95% Confidence Interval

Discussion: Study 3

Results from a nationally representative survey experiment largely confirm findings from the field experiment. Majorities are more likely to support distributive policies for minority groups when

these policies are justified by normative arguments predicated on reciprocity. Unlike in the field experiment, equality does not have a significant impact on majority support. We believe that this is because the fictional village scenario is fairly distant to survey respondents, especially compared to the proximate case of the municipal building project in the field experiment. In the latter case, self-interest is a more likely mechanism for bolstering support through the equality frame. The same pattern manifests across individual perceptions of societal support -- though respondents were much more pessimistic about the views of their coethnics than their own views. Unfortunately, we expect these perceptions of societal support to be a more accurate measure of ethnocentric bias due to possible social desirability bias in individual responses. Finally, equality and need frames do little to mitigate ethnocentric bias. And, as in the field experiment, need frames actually depress support (though this effect is not statistically significant).

Concluding Remarks

Ethnocentrism is a pervasive and consequential perceptual lens. The tendency to assess the world on the basis of demarcations between ingroups and outgroups impacts a host of political outcomes. This bias is particularly salient when it comes to individual evaluations of redistributive policies. In this article, we propose one potential solution for mitigating this bias: framing policies to signal norms about distributive justice.

We test the effects of three types of normative arguments on support for redistributive policies: equality, reciprocity, and need. We expected that normative arguments related to reciprocity would garner support amongst majorities as reminders of the outgroup's contribution to a given social system can verify contribution and alter perceptions of deservingness. We also expected that policies predicated on need would reinforce stereotypes and group boundaries,

lowering support amongst majorities. Finally, we predicted that minority groups, due to their disadvantaged situation, would be most receptive to needs-based arguments.

To test, we conducted three experiments. We found that mentioning Roma as beneficiaries or co-beneficiaries of a distributive policy drastically reduced the Slovak majority's level of support. Next, we found that arguments centered around the normative principle of reciprocity bolster support for outgroup redistributive transfers amongst the majority. Need-based arguments, on the other hand, are likely to depress support. Conversely, minorities are most likely to support programs when they are justified by the principle of need. Finally, we generalized our findings to a nationally representative sample of the Slovak population. This experiment largely replicated previous findings. Reciprocity arguments bolstered support, while need arguments did little to shift opinions. These findings were consistent across both individual opinion and perceptions of societal opinion.

We suggest that majority support for reciprocity-based programs be viewed cautiously. Reciprocity is at the heart of the “activation” approach to welfare, under which benefits are conditional upon actively seeking and accepting jobs. Scholarship criticizes activation for its punitive character (Škobla, Csomor, and Filadelfiová 2018) and for resulting in “disputable forms of Romani minority governance, including dehumanization” (van Baar 2012, 1289). While reciprocity justifications may mitigate ethnocentric bias and bolster support for outgroup redistribution, they may also make welfare conditional upon the acceptance of underpaid and poor-quality jobs. Reciprocity may also do little to remedy the intertwined structural causes of Roma poverty and anti-Roma racism and discrimination, contrasting the priorities of the new EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation. We suggest that policymakers pay attention to exactly how reciprocity is taken on board in the design of a policy. For example,

compulsory and voluntary reciprocity based policies may reinforce different beliefs about Roma work ethic. Compulsory reciprocity-based programs may reinforce negative stereotypes related to inactive, “lazy” Roma -- by definition the program suggests that work must be forced. Voluntary reciprocity-based programs may, instead, reinforce beliefs about active Roma who willingly work. Thus, the ways in which policymakers incorporate reciprocity into policy can have important implications for the perceptions and reactions of majorities.

Given that many social assistance programs are explicitly justified by need-based arguments, our findings concerning the negative or null effect of need are concerning. We suggest two possible explanations that can motivate future research. Focusing on the needs of highly stigmatized groups may reinforce stereotypes. While equality signals benefits for the majority and reciprocity signals effort, need signals marginalization, and this may not be enough to change pre-existing stereotypes and ideas about Roma impoverishment. We also suggest that this finding may be a function of salient identity differences between majority Slovaks and the Roma. As previous work shows, majorities hold minorities to a deservingness double standard, and the more salient the demarcations between identity groups, the stronger the double standard. Thus, the effectiveness of need frames may be conditional on group differences. This would also explain the positive effect of need frames amongst the Roma minority. Other possible pathways for mitigating ethnocentric bias -- also related to principles of distributive fairness -- could explicitly focus on manipulating beneficiary deservingness characteristics. For example, interventions could focus on decreasing the degree of perceived identity differences between minority and majority groups, or they could focus on combating identity-based stereotypes directly (e.g., Cooley et al. 2019). We leave these open questions to future research.

We also consider the issue of generalizability. As it pertains to our field experiment, findings from one particular municipality should be generalized with extreme caution. Municipal intergroup contexts in other Slovak localities may make the results more or less pronounced. Also, as suggested throughout this article, we focus on an extreme case. Not only are majorities generally prejudiced against Roma, but they also heavily associate Roma with welfare misuse and dependence. In Slovakia, extreme rural segregation of Roma communities compounds these problems. This clearly contrasts welfare support dynamics in Western Europe and the U.S., where immigration and race are the primary identity cleavages. Given the extreme situation of the Roma, however, we consider our findings a floor. For less stigmatized groups, reciprocity-based frames may be even more effective, and other normative justifications could also have an effect.

Despite these qualms, our results also warrant optimism. First, majority support for redistributive transfers to a highly stigmatized minority is not disastrously low. In the two national experiments, despite ethnocentric bias, participants still chose allocations that, on average, were above the scale midpoints. The field experiment, which asked respondents about a more proximate and personally consequential transfer, led to similar results. Thus, while ethnocentrism clearly lowers support for outgroup redistribution, support remains relatively high. Second, our work suggests that policy frames based on distributive fairness can sway opinions. Motivating redistributive policies with normatively justified allocation rules can mitigate ethnocentric bias. Ultimately, our work suggests that policy makers and governments can use distributive fairness frames to bolster support for intergroup redistribution.

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Equality, Reciprocity, or Need? Mitigating Ethnocentric Bias in Policy Evaluation with Distributive Fairness

Supplemental Information

Ethical practices concerning human participants

In Studies 1 and 3, participants were recruited through an online research panel built and managed by 2muse survey company (Bratislava, Slovakia). All participants signed a consent form that explains how their data will be used including their anonymity and confidentiality, GDPR regulations, and their rights when opting into 2muse's online panel. The surveys in Studies 1 and 3 were made available to 2muse panel participants, who chose to opt into these surveys. All participants in both studies understood they were taking part in a research study. Participants were compensated for their participation in Studies 1 and 3. If participants successfully completed the survey, they received "points" that they could then exchange for material rewards in the 2muse webstore. As the member of ESOMAR, 2muse complies with its professional code and guidelines, including the equal and fair remuneration to all participants according to the Slovak and international standards.

In Study 2, individuals directly engaged by the research process also included the municipality's mayor. The mayor collaborated on the development of the survey questionnaire and gave his approval for the final version. We also discussed with the mayor the potential impact of the study on the political process in the municipality as well as potential harm to all human participants directly engaged in the research process, including himself. Based on this reflection, we were very careful to respect participants' autonomy, especially of the vulnerable members of the marginalized Roma community. We sought the informed and voluntary consent of each participant. Participants were invited to take part in a survey, conducted by the researchers from University¹¹, assessing public opinion about development projects in the municipality. They received assurances about the survey's anonymity and that the anonymized results could be available for other researchers as well as for the inhabitants of the municipality. Participants' consent (or lack thereof) were documented in the Qualtrics offline app. All participants understood they were taking part in a research study. Participants did not receive any compensation for taking part in the study.

In line with APSA's *Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research*, we sought to avoid physical, psychological, social, and economic harm to human participants directly engaged in the research process. Studies 1, 2, and 3 did not involve deception. To the best of our knowledge and

¹¹ Anonymized for peer review.

reflection, all studies posed minimal risk of harm to human participants directly engaged in the research process. We are not aware of any foreseeable intended or unintended adverse impact on participants in these studies, especially on members of the vulnerable Roma population. Hence, we did not seek Institutional Review approval since it is not required in the Slovak Republic when studies pose minimal risk of harm to participants and do not involve deception.

Study 1

Table A1. *Sample characteristic and representativeness*

Variable	Survey	Census
Male	0.48	0.48
Female	0.52	0.52
Age: 18-24	0.13	0.13
Age: 25-34	0.21	0.21
Age: 35-44	0.19	0.18
Age: 45-54	0.18	0.17
Age: 55-64	0.16	0.16
Age: 65+	0.13	0.16
Education: Primary	0.10	0.16
Education: Secondary (no diploma)	0.35	0.29
Education: Secondary (complete)	0.38	0.37
Education: University	0.18	0.18
Region: Bratislavsky	0.12	0.12
Region: Trnavsky	0.12	0.11
Region: Trenciansky	0.11	0.11
Region: Nitriansky	0.13	0.13
Region: Zilinsky	0.12	0.13
Region: Banskobystricky	0.11	0.12
Region: Presovsky	0.14	0.14
Region: Kosicky	0.15	0.14
Municipality: less than 1k	0.13	0.16
Municipality: 1k-4 999	0.29	0.29
Municipality: 5k-19 999	0.16	0.16
Municipality: 20k - 99 999	0.28	0.27
Municipality: 100k+	0.14	0.13

Table A2. *Randomization check ANOVA*

	Observations	Groups	df between	df within	statistic	<i>p</i>
Gender	1002	4	3	554	0.261	.854
Age	1002	4	3	554	0.948	.417
Ethnicity	1002	4	3	547	1.524	.207
Education	1002	4	3	554	2.066	.104
Region	1002	4	3	554	0.928	.427
Municipality size	1002	4	3	554	0.875	.454

Table A3. *Descriptive statistics for Study 1a (municipal water well)*

Group	N	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Roma settlement	251	1	2	6	8	11	5.68	3.51	0.18	-1.25
Non-Roma settlement	252	1	6	9	11	11	8.38	2.81	-0.83	-0.28

Table A4. *Descriptive statistics for Study 1b (funding for less developed regions)*

Group	N	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Including Roma	253	1	2	6	9	11	5.72	3.76	0.19	-1.43
Not including Roma	246	1	7	9	11	11	8.75	2.52	-0.97	0.2

Table A5. ANCOVA analysis - opinions about building the well

	Sum Sq	df	F value	<i>p</i>	partial eta ²	CI	CI 95% low	CI 95% high
Intercept	457.39	1	45.58	< .001				
Group	823.56	1	82.08	< .001	0.15	0.9	0.102	0.20
Gender	0.27	1	0.03	.871	0.00	0.9	0	0.00
Age category	58.15	5	1.16	.328	0.01	0.9	0	0.02
Education	50.97	3	1.69	.168	0.01	0.9	0	0.03
Municipality size	16.20	4	0.40	.806	0.00	0.9	0	0.01
Region	96.93	7	1.38	.212	0.02	0.9	0	0.03
Income	80.60	8	1.00	.432	0.02	0.9	0	0.02
Residuals	4746.18	473						

Table A6. ANCOVA analysis - opinions about policies

	Sum Sq	df	F value	<i>p</i>	partial eta ²	CI	CI 95% low	CI 95% high
Intercept	316	1	32.65	< .001				
Group	1152	1	119.16	< .001	0.20	0.9	0.15	0.26
Gender	81	1	8.39	.004	0.02	0.9	0.00	0.04
Age category	113	5	2.34	.041	0.02	0.9	0.00	0.04
Education	93	3	3.22	.023	0.02	0.9	0.00	0.04
Municipality size	45	4	1.16	.329	0.01	0.9	0.00	0.02
Region	109	7	1.61	.131	0.02	0.9	0.00	0.04
Income	60	8	0.77	.627	0.01	0.9	0.00	0.02
Residuals	4535	469						

Table A7. *S1a OLS – opinions about building a well*

	Estimate	Std. Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	<i>p</i> -value
Intercept	5.67	0.2	5.28	6.07	<.001
group: Non-Roma settlement	2.71	0.28	2.15	3.26	<.001
R squared	0.15				
Adjusted R squared	0.15				

Table A8. *S1a OLS – opinions about building a well including covariates*

	Estimate	Std. Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	<i>p</i> -value
(Intercept)	6.3	0.93	4.47	8.13	<.001
groupNon-Roma settlement	2.63	0.29	2.06	3.20	<.001
GENDERFemale	-0.05	0.31	-0.66	0.56	.871
AGECAT25-34	0.25	0.57	-0.87	1.37	.663
AGECAT35-44	0.91	0.58	-0.24	2.06	.12
AGECAT45-54	0.66	0.59	-0.50	1.82	.263
AGECAT55-64	1.10	0.59	-0.06	2.27	.064
AGECAT65+	0.93	0.65	-0.36	2.21	.157
EDUSecondary (no diploma)	-0.86	0.56	-1.95	0.24	.125
EDUSecondary (complete)	-0.22	0.56	-1.31	0.87	.694
EDUUniversity	-0.08	0.67	-1.40	1.24	.908
SIZE1k-4 999	0.43	0.49	-0.53	1.37	.378
SIZE5k-19 999	0.33	0.57	-0.78	1.45	.558
SIZE20k - 99 999	0.52	0.49	-0.44	1.48	.284
SIZE100k+	0.01	0.70	-1.37	1.4	.984
REGTrnavsky	-1.5	0.72	-2.90	-0.09	.037
REGTrenciansky	-0.34	0.72	-1.76	1.08	.635
REGNitriansky	-1.24	0.71	-2.64	0.16	.083
REGZilinsky	-0.44	0.70	-1.82	0.95	.534
REGBanskobystricky	-1.23	0.72	-2.64	0.18	.087
REGPresovsky	-1.13	0.71	-2.52	0.27	.114
REGKosicky	-1.03	0.60	-2.21	0.15	.087
PINCOME2	-0.58	0.42	-1.40	0.25	.173
PINCOME3	-0.47	0.45	-1.35	0.40	.289
PINCOME4	-0.30	0.57	-1.42	0.81	.592
PINCOME5	0.74	0.75	-0.73	2.21	.324
PINCOME6	-0.18	1.01	-2.16	1.81	.857
PINCOME7	0.81	0.97	-1.1	2.73	.404
PINCOME8	0.25	0.83	-1.39	1.88	.769
PINCOME9	-1.06	0.76	-2.55	0.42	.16
R Squared	0.21				
Adj.R Squared	0.16				

Table A9. *S1b OLS – opinions about policies*

	Estimate	Std. Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	<i>p</i> -value
Intercept	5.72	0.2	5.33	6.12	<.001
group: not including Roma	3.03	0.29	2.46	3.6	<.001
R squared	0.18				
Adjusted R squared	0.18				

Table A10. *S1b OLS – opinions about policies including covariates*

	Estimate	Std. Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	<i>p</i> -value
(Intercept)	5.31	0.93	3.48	7.13	<.001
groupnot including Roma	3.11	0.29	2.55	3.68	<.001
SEXFemale	-0.91	0.31	-1.53	-0.29	.004
AGECAT25-34	0.89	0.54	-0.16	1.95	.097
AGECAT35-44	1.07	0.57	-0.06	2.19	.063
AGECAT45-54	1.38	0.57	0.26	2.50	.016
AGECAT55-64	1.91	0.59	0.75	3.06	.001
AGECAT65+	1.38	0.63	0.14	2.61	.029
EDUSecondary (no diploma)	-0.87	0.57	-1.99	0.26	.131
EDUSecondary (complete)	-0.73	0.56	-1.82	0.36	.189
EDUUniversity	0.30	0.62	-0.93	1.52	.633
SIZE1k-4 999	-0.25	0.48	-1.19	0.69	.599
SIZE5k-19 999	-0.50	0.53	-1.54	0.54	.348
SIZE20k - 99 999	-0.48	0.49	-1.45	0.48	.326
SIZE100k+	0.74	0.67	-0.57	2.04	.27
REGTrnavsky	0.62	0.70	-0.75	1.99	.373
REGTrenciansky	0.47	0.71	-0.93	1.86	.51
REGNitriansky	-0.14	0.69	-1.50	1.23	.846
REGZilinsky	0.67	0.71	-0.73	2.07	.348
REGBanskobystricky	1.45	0.73	0.02	2.88	.046
REGPresovsky	1.24	0.68	-0.1	2.57	.07
REGKosicky	0.75	0.57	-0.38	1.87	.192
PINCOME2	-0.48	0.43	-1.31	0.36	.259
PINCOME3	0.13	0.47	-0.79	1.05	.781
PINCOME4	-0.65	0.57	-1.77	0.47	.254
PINCOME5	-0.74	0.78	-2.27	0.78	.338
PINCOME6	-0.92	1.10	-3.08	1.25	.405
PINCOME7	1.07	1.15	-1.18	3.32	.349
PINCOME8	-0.07	0.69	-1.42	1.28	.917
PINCOME9	-0.36	0.71	-1.76	1.04	.609
R Squared	0.28				
Adj.R Squared	0.23				

Table A10. *SIa - opinions about building a well , income interaction*

	Estimate	Std. Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	<i>p</i> -value
Intercept	5.88	0.32	5.26	6.52	<.001
group: Non-Roma settlement	2.66	0.44	1.80	3.52	<.001
income: below median	-0.32	0.42	-1.16	0.51	.446
group x income	0.10	0.60	-1.07	1.27	.866
R squared	0.16				
Adjusted R squared	0.15				

Table A11. *SIa - opinions about policies, income interaction*

	Estimate	Std. Error	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	<i>p</i> -value
Intercept	6.12	0.32	5.49	6.74	<.001
group: not including Roma	3.06	0.46	2.15	3.96	<.001
income: below median	-0.65	0.43	-1.50	0.19	.13
group x income	-0.03	0.62	-1.25	1.18	.958
R squared	0.19				
Adjusted R squared	0.18				

Study 2

Table A12. *Sample gender composition*

	n	freq
Male	43	0.38
Female	70	0.62

Table A13. *Sample age characteristics*

min	Q1	median	Q3	max	mean	SD	n	missing
23	35	47	63	85	49.3	16.1	113	0

Table A14. *Ascribed Ethnicity*

	n	freq
Slovak	52	0.46
Roma	61	0.54

Table A15. *Self-Identified Ethnicity*

	n	freq
Slovak	92	0.81
Roma	18	0.16
other	3	0.03

Table A16. *Predicted average agreement across ethnicity and experimental condition*

Condition	Ascribed ethnicity	Predicted average	SE	LCL	UCL
Control	Slovak	2.2	0.181	1.85	2.56
Equality	Slovak	2.96	0.175	2.62	3.31
Proportionality	Slovak	3.1	0.167	2.78	3.43
Need	Slovak	2.39	0.181	2.04	2.75
Control	Roma	3.79	0.072	3.65	3.94
Equality	Roma	3.29	0.14	3.01	3.56
Proportionality	Roma	2.94	0.165	2.62	3.27
Need	Roma	3.75	0.08	3.59	3.91

Study 3

Table A17. *Sample characteristic and representativeness*

Variable	Survey	Census
Male	0.48	0.48
Female	0.52	0.52
Age: 18-24	0.13	0.13
Age: 25-34	0.20	0.21
Age: 35-44	0.18	0.18
Age: 45-54	0.18	0.17
Age: 55-64	0.16	0.16
Age: 65+	0.16	0.16
Education: Primary	0.09	0.16
Education: Secondary (no diploma)	0.35	0.29
Education: Secondary (complete)	0.38	0.37
Education: University	0.19	0.18
Region: Bratislavsky	0.11	0.12
Region: Trnavsky	0.11	0.11
Region: Trenciansky	0.11	0.11
Region: Nitriansky	0.13	0.13
Region: Zilinsky	0.13	0.13
Region: Banskobystricky	0.11	0.12
Region: Presovsky	0.15	0.14
Region: Kosicky	0.15	0.14
Municipality: less than 1k	0.15	0.16
Municipality: 1k-4 999	0.29	0.29
Municipality: 5k-19 999	0.17	0.16
Municipality: 20k - 99 999	0.27	0.27
Municipality: 100k+	0.13	0.13

Table A18. *Randomization check ANOVA*

	Observations	Groups	df between	df within	statistic	<i>p</i>
Gender	1009	4	3	558	4.725	.003
Education	1009	4	3	558	0.064	.979
Region	1009	4	3	558	0.341	.796
Municipality size	1009	4	3	558	1.524	.207

Table A19. *Descriptive statistics - Personal agreement*

group	N	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Control	252	1	1	3	3	4	2.5	1.08	-0.121	-1.277
Equality	249	1	2	3	3	4	2.63	1.04	-0.328	-1.067
Proportionality	254	1	2	3	4	4	2.83	1.06	-0.561	-0.896
Need	254	1	1	3	3	4	2.4	1.07	-0.054	-1.29

Table A20. *Descriptive statistics - Agreement of majority*

group	N	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Control	252	1	1	2	3	4	1.82	0.875	0.524	-1.051
Equality	249	1	1	2	3	4	2.01	0.946	0.413	-0.983
Proportionality	254	1	1	2	3	4	2.21	0.967	0.143	-1.095
Need	254	1	1	2	2	4	1.81	0.816	0.482	-0.964

Table A21. *Support for building social housing, interaction with income*

		Estimate	Std. Error	<i>p</i>	OR [95% CI]
Personal agreement	Reciprocity	0.44	0.25	.072	1.55 [0.96, 2.52]
	Equality	0.34	0.24	.149	1.41 [0.89, 2.23]
	Need	-0.09	0.24	.716	0.92 [0.57, 1.46]
	Income below median	-0.1	0.24	.679	0.91 [0.57, 1.45]
	Reciprocity x income	0.27	0.34	.420	1.32 [0.68, 2.57]
	Equality x income	-0.37	0.34	.276	0.70 [0.36, 1.34]
	Need x income	-0.08	0.34	.822	0.93 [0.48, 1.80]
Majority agreement	Reciprocity	0.87	0.25	<.001	2.39 [1.47, 3.91]
	Equality	0.62	0.24	.010	1.86 [1.16, 3.00]
	Need	0.22	0.24	.355	1.25 [0.78, 1.99]
	Income below median	0.22	0.25	.369	1.25 [0.77, 2.03]
	Reciprocity x income	-0.26	0.35	.453	0.77 [0.39, 1.52]
	Equality x income	-0.67	0.35	.056	0.51 [0.26, 1.02]
	Need x income	-0.45	0.34	.191	0.64 [0.33, 1.25]

Note: Ordered logit regression; OR=Odds Ratio; CI=95% Confidence Interval. Baseline = control condition.

Interaction effects with EU funds and perceived competitiveness

General opposition to EU funding can moderate support for transfers, as can sentiments about competition between majority Slovaks and minority Roma. To probe for potential interaction effects, we assessed participants' attitudes towards European Union funding ("The use of EU funds is advantageous for the inhabitants of Slovakia"); and their perceived competitiveness of Roma ("If the Roma get special breaks (i.e., in housing, welfare benefits) this is likely to make things more difficult for other people") (adapted from Fiske et al. 2002). For both questions, participants responded on a 1 ("completely disagree") to 4 ("completely agree") scale.

Due to a low number of respondents choosing option "1", which led to empty cells and prevented the model to run successfully, the two variables (EU funding attitudes, perceived Roma competitiveness) were recoded for this analysis such that options "1" and "2" were collapsed together, thus retaining three levels. This should be more preferable to dichotomizing variables (see e.g., MacCallum et al. 2002). In analysis, all variables were defined as ordered factors.

To estimate the overall effects of experimental conditions and interactions for both of the outcome variables at the same, we used multivariate analysis of variance. Specifically, we used the *MANOVA.wide* function from the MANOVA.RM package (Friedrich, Konietzschke, and Pauly 2019) to calculate the Wald-type statistic (WTS) and the modified ANOVA-type statistic (MATS), with 1000 iterations for resampling. An analysis with experimental conditions in interaction with the attitudes towards the EU funding and perceived competitiveness of Roma showed a significant effect of experimental conditions ($\text{WTS}(6) = 28.32$, resampled $p < .001$), attitudes towards the EU funding ($\text{WTS}(4) = 51.92$, resampled $p < .001$), perceived competitiveness of Roma ($\text{WTS}(4) = 144.65$, resampled $p < .001$). There was a non-significant interaction between the experimental conditions and attitudes towards the EU funding ($\text{WTS}(12) = 8.04$, resampled $p = .819$), and a significant interaction with perceived Roma competitiveness ($\text{WTS}(12) = 25.50$, but resampled $p = .024$).

Results indicate that the effect of experimental manipulation on opinions about social housing policies was not strongly dependent on attitudes towards the EU funding and perceived competitiveness of Roma.

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