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ETHNONATIONAL CLASSIFICATION IN EASTERN EUROPE

Abstract

This paper considers three common theoretical perspectives that explain how and why actors classify individuals. First, cultural theories suggest that characteristics such as language and shared histories help actors to make social, and in particular, ethnonational classifications. Second, theories of race and ethnicity expand on cultural theories, by noting that such characteristics can be used for external or internal classification of individuals. Finally, theories of nationalism predict that the presence of a bordering state can heighten ethnic tensions, thereby sharpening social classifications, especially given a history of political domination. Survey data from Eastern Europe, and in particular, the difference between interview and self-reports of ethnonationalism, provide support for theories of race and ethnicity and cultural theories. The data exhibit sharp differences between internal and external processes of classification, in support of theories of race and ethnicity, and show that language is an important tool of classification, in support of cultural theories. In contrast, theories of nationalism explain few of the patterns in these data.

ETHNONATIONAL CLASSIFICATION IN EAST EUROPE

It has become, perhaps, common to argue that social characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and national identity are not fixed, essential attributes, but are constructed by actors. Yet, claiming that social characteristics are socially constructed is considerably easier than showing how they are socially constructed. Here, we try to investigate some dimensions of this process of social classification within the context of post-socialist East Europe. The heightened salience of ethnicity in Eastern Europe during the market transition provides a strategic research site to examine theories of social classification, that is, how individuals assign, and, are assigned to, social groups.

Using ethnonational groupings as our primary example, we assess three theoretical perspectives that have implications for social classification, which we roughly classify as the following: 1) cultural theories, 2) theories of race and ethnicity, and 3) theories of nationalism. As we explain in detail below, we examine social classification among several groups of ethnic majorities and minorities in four countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Russia) using the difference between interviewer identification and self-identification of ethnonationality. We find that the patterns of social classification in Eastern Europe cannot be explained by any single theory, but that race and ethnicity and cultural perspectives provide the most explanatory power.

Ethnic Classification

There are, perhaps, two dominant overall views of social classification, the essentialist and the social constructionist. Classification is relatively unproblematic from the essentialist perspective: Persons can easily be grouped into “races” that have an “essence,” that is, certain

natural, fundamental characteristics that its members share with each other and not others (Appiah 1990; Calhoun 1997: 18). Essentialized views of race are widespread and have existed for centuries (Hirschfield 1996). Early works on race and ethnicity² often adopted essentialist understandings of social categories (Fichte [1806] 1968; Herder 1966; Park and Burgess 1921; Shils 1957; Smith 1983:180). State governments often institutionalized essentialist views in the forms of official categories. The United States' "one drop rule," which stipulated that anybody with African ancestry was black, exemplifies this tendency. The essentialist perspective suggests that classification is relatively unproblematic – since categories are given and fixed, there should be widespread agreement between individuals as to social classifications. Indeed, the phenomenon of "passing" illustrates this perspective, as it suggests that, in rare cases, individuals can pretend to have an identity that is not truly theirs. From the essentialist perspective, ethnicity is not situational, and not a choice, but rather something someone is born with and that stays with them for life.

The social constructionist perspective, however, opens up the possibility (though not the necessity) of disagreement between different classifiers about the social groupings of individuals. Critiques of essentialist perspectives cite historical evidence attesting to the arbitrary and artificial nature of social categories (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Nobles 2000; Roy 2001; Smith 1983; Smith 1986). Anglo-Saxon Protestant European immigrants to the United States were originally classified as non-white and treated disparagingly by the WASP majority (Park and Burgess 1921; Ward 1989). Yet, over time, their racial status changed. For example, Irish Americans achieved both white status and the political and economic benefits previously enjoyed

²In this paper, we use "race" to refer to social actors' cultural distinctions based on physical or biological differences and "ethnic" to their cultural distinctions based on social differences.

exclusively by American whites (Ignatiev 1995; Smedley 1993: 218-219; Williams 1989). Similarly, Harris and Sim (2002) highlight the fluidity of racial identification among American adolescents, by showing how racial self-identification varies based on where the “race” question is asked and who is present. Gender is also a socially achieved, not innate status, as Garfinkel’s classic study (1967) of Agnes shows.

Indeed, with respect to ethnicity, much recent work treats it as an outcome of social classification (Bourdieu 1991:221; Jenkins 1994:202; McAll 1990:66-67). Weber’s (1978: 389-390) theory of ethnicity as a process of social closure, by which groups demarcate themselves vis-à-vis other groups often out of economic and/or other interests, informs many of these works. These approaches treat ethnicity as an ascriptive category constructed by social actors that creates and perpetuates social boundaries (Barth 1969:9-10; Jenkins 1994:202; McAll 1990:66-67; Weber 1978:388). In extreme cases, these categories produce highly stigmatized ethnic pariah groups, such as the European Roma (Gypsies) and the Scandinavian Coast Lapps (Barth 1969: 31; Eidheim 1969).³

In contrast to the essentialist perspective, social constructionists argue that different actors may view ethnic and racial boundaries in different ways, and any particular individual may be assigned a classification that varied by context or classifier. In particular, there are three sets of non-essentialist theoretical perspectives of social classification – cultural theories, theories of race and ethnicity, and nationalism – that can be used to show how classification occurs.

Cultural Theories

³Laitin (1995a) conversely, argues that gypsies and other stigmatized groups may “rationally” chose to remain socially ostracized out of economic interest.

We use the label, “cultural theories” to designate the first set. As will be true of the other literatures as well, we group together a rather large and heterogeneous set of material, and then refocus it around the question of how social classifications are made. Theories of cultural difference examine markers that delineate ethnic boundaries. These works are inspired in part by semiotic theory, following De Saussure’s (1985: 34-35) and Barthes’ ([1957] 1972: 109-158), assertions that social actors and their actions function as signs, constructs that organize social reality according to sets of binary codes (e.g., insider/outsider). These approaches also often draw upon hermeneutic theory, stressing the processes by which people interpret various markers and the shared meanings attached to them. Geertz (1973: 259), drawing upon both approaches, describes the assumed cultural givens, which give rise to “primordial attachments”, including markers such as religion, language and custom. Linguistic differences can be potent markers of ethnic distinction. For example, ethnic movements in South India arose in response to the linguistic hegemony of Hindi-speaking Northwestern India. Indeed, linguistic markers are such powerful indicators of ethnic distinction that Geertz (1973: 315) calls Indonesia’s nationalist slogan, “One People, One Country, One Language”, a hope, not a description.

Other potent social markers are putative shared histories and collective memories (Calhoun 1997: 56-60; Smith 1986: 212-13). Smith (1986: 25) suggests that ethnic groups are historical communities constructed upon shared memories. On an abstract level, collective histories function as what Barthes ([1957] 1972: 142-143) calls myths. Myths, according to Barthes, naturalize social relations and structures, providing them with a clarity “which is not just that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact”. In this sense, shared histories function as powerful, taken-for-granted markers of ethnic distinction.

For cultural theorists, markers such as language and putative shared histories are pervasive. Geertz (1973: 363) argued that the everyday world of taken-for-granted social action is populated by “concrete classes of determinant persons positively characterized and appropriately labeled.” He notes however, that symbol systems defining these classes are not given: they are historically constructed, socially maintained and individually applied (Geertz 1973: 364). Rapaport (1997: 17), drawing upon the empirical example of contemporary German Jews, also adopts a cultural approach to ethnic classification. Citing Bourdieu, she suggests that social life is organized according to the logic of distinction. Specifically, she argues that Jewish and German boundaries in post-Holocaust Germany are consciously and actively maintained internally by Jews on the basis of a cultural typification of Germans, which signifies a certain type of mentality: precise, punctual and obsessively bureaucratic (Rapaport 1997: 66). Thus, taken together, cultural theories privilege the role of social markers, both internally and externally generated, to ethnic and racial classification. We examine this perspective empirically, noting how cultural markers, and in particular, language, influence social classification in the Eastern European context.

Ethnic and Racial Theories

We denote the second set of perspectives as theories of race and ethnicity. Cultural theories describe the characteristics (language, religion, etc.) that constitute the content of the classification; theories of race and ethnicity build from this perspective, by noting the variable deployment of these characteristics. In particular, the race and ethnicity literature notes the perspective from which classifications are made, thereby distinguishing between altero-referential and auto-referential social classification (Guillaumin 1995). Racial classification is often altero-referential, because the dominant group perceives a specific group of “others” as

being different. Ethnic classification, on the other hand, is often is auto-referential, and thus self-declared. Calhoun (1997: 40-41) analogously distinguishes between internally ascribed ethnic “identities” and externally ascribed ethnic “categories”. These two processes have very different social consequences: racialization often facilitates a one-sided politicized relationship between the dominant group and the group designated as a race while self-declared ethnic identification can be a source of political empowerment (Guillaumin 1995: 51; Nobles 2000: 15). Theories of race and ethnicity are similar to cultural approaches, however, in noting that actors draw on social markers (language, history, etc.) in making classifications.

Empirical research also suggests that ethnic and racial classifications can be internally or externally ascribed. The dramatic increase in respondents identifying themselves as native Americans on United Census forms illustrates this phenomenon. This trend dates back to 1960, when the US Census Bureau changed the method for census classification from ascription by field enumerators (external classification) to mail-in self-reports (internal classification). During the following 30 years, the number of people selecting Native American as their racial identity tripled. Demographers note that this phenomenon cannot be attributed to demographic factors such as increased birth and decreased mortality rates (Nagel 1995). Instead, the reduced stigma and increased symbolic value of claiming Native American ancestry propelled more people to self-identify as Native American. Similarly, Mexican-Americans violently resisted the U.S. government’s attempts to classify them under the category "other races" (than white) in the 1930 census: they perceived themselves as white during this period (Petersen 1987: 223). Consequently, Mexican-Americans were classified in later censuses as non-English speaking whites or in accordance with Spanish surname. These examples show that, indeed, social classifications can correspond to internal or external processes.

Other scholars, however, are more skeptical that the categories of race and ethnicity correspond to social processes of external and internal classification. While Jenkins (1994:199, 201) also distinguishes between social categories that are defined by others and social groups that define themselves, he suggests that the “distinction between internal and external definition is primarily analytical” for in the complexity of every day life, “each is chronically implicated in the other.” Similarly, Barth (1969:10, 16), drawing upon Goffman, portrays ethnic boundary-construction as a fluid, interactive process, negotiated between various ecologically interdependent social groups. The findings in Harris and Sim’s (2002) recent article support this perspective; the self-identifications of adolescents who identify as black and white are more rigid than those who identify as other mixed race groups, reflecting the still influential one-drop rule governing American society. Unlike approaches that frame race as externally ascribed and ethnicity as internally ascribed, the above works portray ethnic classification as a reciprocally determined process involving both external and internal ascription.

In sum, race and ethnicity perspectives are concerned primarily with how group boundaries are defined, and in particular, the perspective from which the act of classification occurs. Like the cultural perspective, it notes that social characteristics such as language and history form the content of the classification. We note the disagreement in the literature about whether racial and ethnic classification can be fruitfully examined by considering the former as an altero-referential and that latter as an auto-referential process. Thus, we investigate empirically whether this perspective helps us to understand social classification in the Eastern European context or not.

Theories of Nationalism

Third, a broad literature in nationalism investigates specific political processes implicated in ethnonational classification and how these categories facilitate political power.⁴ Ethnic and national classifications are so closely related that it is difficult to distinguish between them (this is particularly true in Eastern Europe). Geertz (1973: 307), for example, speaks of the emergence of international “ethnic blocks” engaged in “total relations with one another” setting the stage for a “direct clash between personal identity and political integrity” in nascent, multi-ethnic nation-states. Wimmer (1997: 632-633) similarly notes that ethnic differences are often exploited by national elites in the interest of establishing and maintaining political power. Once politicized, ethnic differences often crystallize.

Nationalist ideologies suggest that everyone belongs to one, and only one, nation and that nations are tied to territories or states (Schopflin 1995: 38). As nationalism is tied to politics and political rights, one might expect that national identities are often more salient than ethnic ones (Schopflin 1995). Historically, “transitions to capitalism have been accompanied by strong national mobilization” (Keating 1996 :11). Thus, in the countries undergoing market transition in Central Europe, it is possible that relations between majority groups and ethnic-national minority groups who are tied to other neighboring nation-states to be especially divisive.

Scholars adopting a nationalism perspective, including Brubaker (1996), and McIntosh et al. (1995), note that often majority and minority ethnic boundaries are especially salient in states in which the latter have ties to bordering states perceived by the majority as threatening. In such

⁴For analytical purposes, we conceptualize nationality as a “large categorical identity that encompasses many smaller categories (‘tribes’, ethnic groups) each of which may be organized internally on the basis of further categories and complex networks of interpersonal relationships” (Calhoun 1997: 39).

cases, ethnicity and nationality often intersect and ethnic relations are particularly volatile. Brubaker (1996), using the heuristic of a “triadic nexus”, explains ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia in terms of three clashing types of nationalism: national minorities (e.g., Bosnian nationalism in Serbia); nationalizing (Serbian nationalism in Serbia) and homeland (Bosnian support for their coethnics living across the border). National minorities are often caught between the “nationalizing” nationalism of the state in which they reside and the “external homeland” nationalism of the state to which they are also connected. In extreme cases (e.g., Bosnia) these colliding nationalisms explode, igniting virulent ethnic conflict. We examine this empirically in the Eastern European context, considering how the presence of border states may affect social classification.

In sum, we note that these three literatures provide different understandings of the way social classification occurs. From an essentialist perspective, there should be little difference in the way in which individuals are classified. Social constructionist perspectives, however, highlight the different ways that such classification can occur. First, cultural theories note that markers such as language or shared history can be used to denote difference. Second, the race and ethnicity literature suggests that such markers can support either altero or auto referential classification. Third, theories of nationalism suggest that the political geography of nation states affects how classifications are made.

The East European Context

We examine these different perspectives empirically in the Eastern European context, noting that they provide different, though not necessarily mutually exclusive, bases for social classification. Since 1989, the former socialist countries of Eastern and Central Europe have undergone sweeping transformations. The economic changes in these countries are referred to as

the “market transition,” term describing a general shift from an economy based on socialist redistribution to one based on capitalist markets. The social consequences of this transformation have been equally dramatic. Social and ethnic differences were often suppressed during the Communist period, as part of explicit national unity campaigns that attempted, sometimes forcibly, to reduce social inequality and to assimilate ethnic minorities (Juska 1999:525; McIntosh, et al. 1995:942-3). Ironically enough, some of these ethnic differences had been institutionalized by the very same governments. For example, the issuance of identity cards in the Soviet Union institutionalized ethnic and national differences (Brubaker 1996; Hersch 1998; Slezkine 1996). After the collapse of communism, ethnic identity became increasingly politicized in this region in the absence of socialist policies of national unity. Many nascent states had heterogeneous ethnic populations, as well minority groups that were ethnically affiliated with neighboring states. Some ethnic majorities perceived these minorities as threatening. Other minority groups, such as the Roma, had no claims to a nearby state but were historically stigmatized. All these minority populations are in varying degrees vulnerable vis-à-vis the ethnic majorities as the socialist state waned. The increased popular significance of ethnicity in Central and Europe has profound social implications, because ethnic and racial classification affects peoples’ life chances (Caplan 1996; McAll 1990; Nobles 2000: 29; Starr 1992; Takaki 1987; Telles and Lim 1998; Ward 1989; Williams 1989).

We will examine the classificatory processes of ethnonational majorities and minorities in four Central and Eastern European states, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Russia. We selected these cases because they possess populations comprised of various ethnonational groups that are no longer mediated by socialist state policies. We are especially interested in the classifications of ethnonational borderland minorities, such as Turks in Bulgaria, Ukrainians in

Russia, and Hungarians in Romania. We also examine Roma ethnic classification, since the Roma are dispersed over several countries in this region, and are a highly stigmatized group that does not have ties to a nation-state. Each case is overviewed below.

Roma as an Example of Ethnicity in Eastern Europe

Roma ethnicity in this geographic region has been historically fluid. The Habsburg empress, Maria Teresa, in the 18th century, for example, attempted to eliminate Roma ethnic identity through state-imposed assimilation (Crowe 1991: 117). Often, Roma children were removed from their families and placed in Austrian/Hungarian foster homes. However, Roma children resisted assimilation; many ran away and rejoined their biological families (Crowe 1991: 117). Ultimately, strong Roma resistance to this program led to its abandonment. Thus, Roma identity was partly maintained internally, despite Habsburg efforts to eradicate it.

However, these assimilationist policies were partially successful. The Habsburgs were able, to a large extent, erase many markers of Roma ethnic identity. Thus, Roma in Hungary often speak Hungarian and do not travel; in contrast, Bulgarian Roma often speak forms of Romany languages and travel. Thus, there are far fewer cultural markers of Roma ethnicity in terms of language and shared history in regions of the former Habsburg Empire, though at the same time, the Roma remain a highly stigmatized group, excluded from the social life of ethnic majorities. In many ways, the Roma of Europe are an example of a racialized ethnicity. Ethnic majorities often claim they can distinguish them on the basis of skin color or facial features and are assumed to be descendants of a biologically inferior, non-European people from the East (Crowe 1991:151; Fraser 1992:249). Nonetheless, there is little evidence for a common Roma ancestry and no genetic basis for Roma ethnicity. The Roma are highly heterogeneous, viewed as a singular group, as “Gypsies”, only by outsiders. We also note, however, though many Roma

are poor, noticeable and easily targeted, little comparative, systematic evidence exists about Roma. What is known about Roma is often the result of research on communities selected precisely because they are poor and stigmatized (e.g. Stewart 1997), but it is not clear whether these communities are representative of larger Roma populations. We go beyond this research to explore the actual processes that contribute to and perpetuate Roma stigmatization. We suspect that theories of race and ethnicity that differentiate between altero and auto-referential classification may work especially well in explaining social classification of Roma.

Turks in Bulgaria, Hungarians in Romania, and Ukrainians in Russia as Examples of Ethnonational Identity

Many East European countries are multiethnic states, often populated with large groups of borderland minorities. Many of these borderland minorities were created by shifting political boundaries. The Ukraine was independent from Russia from 1917-1920, then ruled by Soviets until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Central Intelligence Agency 2001).

Transylvania, the northern region of Romania, was part of Hungary for more than 1000 years, until 1918 (Central Intelligence Agency 2001). Similarly, what is now contemporary Bulgaria was part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire between 1396-1878 (Tiscali Reference 2002).

As noted earlier, Brubaker (1996) and McIntosh et al. (1995) assert that majority groups tend to be intolerant toward ethnic minorities with ties to neighboring states perceived by the former to be threatening. The cases of Turkish identity in Bulgaria and Hungarian identity in Romania are especially salient in this regard. In the Romanian case, anti-Hungarian sentiments simmered even during the socialist period (Verdery 1983:19). Verdery (1983:19) notes that these tendencies were especially pronounced in Transylvania, a region that had long suffered under Magyar domination, and were exacerbated by the fact that both Romania and Hungary have claimed sovereignty over the area. McIntosh et al. (1995: 949) argued that Hungarians in

Romania and Turks in Bulgaria are presently perceived to be political threats by their respective majority populations, because of their ties to neighboring Hungary and Turkey. They attribute this finding, in part, to Hungary's and Turkey's historical legacies of political domination in this region. They note that anti-Turkish nationalist sentiments in Bulgaria are intensified by Turkey's military strength, a development that many Bulgarians find alarming as well as a historical legacy of Ottoman domination. We also note the strong linguistic and cultural differences in these two cases: Bulgarians and Turks on the one hand, and Romanians and Hungarians on the other, do not share similar languages, religions, or histories. Thus, is it reasonable to suspect that cultural and nationalism theories explain social classification in these contexts.

Like Roma identity, the cultural markers of Ukrainian ethnonational identity have historically been very fluid. In the early Soviet period, for example, Laitin (1995b: 36) notes that in 1923 only 22% of business was conducted in Ukrainian in the Ukraine; however, by 1927, 70% was conducted in Ukrainian, because of a rise in Ukrainian ethnonational identity. This trend was also reflected by Ukrainian concerns that Ukrainians would be classified as a subset of the Russian nation in the 1926 census questionnaire (Hersch 1998: 96). After much debate, Soviet authorities rephrased the question for the Ukraine (Hersch 1998:96). Service (1997:368) also notes that Ukrainian nationalist sentiments hindered Soviet leadership during Khrushchev's reign; the Russian Presidium during this time assumed that common linguistic origins, culture and history united Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians. Juska (1999:530) notes that over time Russian-Ukrainian ethnic boundaries became more fluid because of the cultural and linguistic similarity of these two groups. She suggests that post-war modernization and economic development accelerated the process of Ukrainian assimilation into the Russian nation. In fact,

Juska contends that Russified Ukrainians will likely resist nationalist attempts to establish Ukrainian hegemony in contemporary Ukraine.

At the same time, the fact that the Ukraine is now a sovereign nation creates a borderland situation for Ukrainians in Russia. Such Ukrainians, though culturally similar to Russians, may be now perceived as belonging to a different state than the Russian one. According to the nationalist perspective, this may solidify ethnonational classification.

Examining the Theories Empirically

We examine social classification in Eastern and Central Europe using ethnonational groups from Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia. The three groups of theories of social classification – race and ethnicity, culture, and nationalism – differ with respect to their predictions in Central and Eastern Europe. While these sets of theories are broad and diverse, we distill from each of them several concrete implications that we can then examine empirically with survey data. Theories of cultural difference focus on shared linguistic or historical traditions that facilitate the attachment of such labels. Theories of race and ethnicity focus on the external/internal processes of classification, and in particular, how outsiders attach a stigmatized or racialized label, while insiders attach a positive or neutral label. Theories of nationalism, in contrast, consider how the presence or absence of a formal political unit, namely a state, heightens ethnonationalist labeling. Broadly, then, while these perspectives share non-essentialist approaches to social classification, they may privilege different mechanisms and processes.

To examine these theories empirically, we expand on Telles (2002) and Telles and Lim (1998), who analyzed the difference between interviewer-identification of race and self-reported race using Brazilian survey data. In particular, we try to predict interviewer-identification of ethnonationalism based on social and ethnonational characteristics of the respondent. We

examine in detail several empirical facets of interviewer-identification. First, we consider whether there is agreement between interviewers' and respondents' reports of ethnicity. Essentialist theories suggest there should be little, if any disagreement between different individuals' social classifications, while social constructionist approaches allow for this possibility. Second, we consider whether the difference between the interviewer and respondent corresponds to internal or external classificatory processes. An external classification is made by the interviewer; an internal one, by the respondent. Third, we note what social, economic, and cultural characteristics of the respondent lead to interviewers' classifications. For example, in the case of an external label, negative social characteristics (low education, poverty) might prompt interviewers to classify a respondent as a racial minority. Similarly, a linguistic difference may prompt an internal or external ethnonational classification.

We draw out the theoretical implications of these empirical indicators for each country, noting that the different theories imply different predictions. According to theories of cultural difference, there should be a large discrepancy between interviewer and self-reports where ethnic minorities share many linguistic and historical traits with the majority. Individuals will simply have a difficult time distinguishing between groups; outsiders may find it impossible. Thus, there will also be a large difference between interviewers and respondents, but the classification will be an internal one (that is, respondents will identify themselves as ethnic minorities). Therefore, cultural theories predict large discrepancies between interviewer and self-reported ethnicity with respect to assimilated Roma living in areas formerly ruled by the Habsburgs, and among Ukrainians in Russia, because of the linguistic and cultural similarities between these groups and the majority group in each country. Conversely, there should be little discrepancy between interviewer and self-reported Roma ethnicity in areas outside the former Habsburg Empire,

Turkish ethnicity in Bulgaria and Hungarian ethnicity in Romania, cases in which these minorities possess many distinct linguistic and historical traits that distinguish them from the majority population.

The race and ethnicity literature predicts that there would be a large discrepancy between the interviewer and respondent's classifications for stigmatized groups, and that this would be primarily an external process of classification, in that the interviewer would make this classification on the basis of social characteristics. Thus, in the case of the Roma, this perspective predicts a large discrepancy between interviewer and respondent's reports and that interviewers will ascribe Roma ethnicity externally on the basis of negative social characteristics such as poverty and low education. In contrast, Ukrainians and Hungarians are not stigmatized groups, so there will be little difference between the interviewer and self-reports. Turks, on the other hand, are somewhat stigmatized; thus, there may be a moderate amount of discrepancy between interviewer and respondent self-reports of Turkish ethnicity.

According to theories of nationalism, there should be little discrepancy between interviewer and self-reported ethnic classification with respect to minority groups with ties to neighboring states perceived by the majority as threatening. Respondents' self-reports will be facilitated by political identification with their homelands and interviewer classification by the perceived political threat that posed by these respondents. Thus, in the case of Turks in Bulgaria and Hungarians in Romania, these theories would predict little discrepancy between interviewer and respondents' ethnonational classification. In contrast, the Roma do not correspond to a nation state, and thus, are not politically marked groups, so there will large discrepancy between interviewer and self-reported ethnicity in these cases. Roma will be identified through an internal process of classification, with the respondent identifying as a minority on the basis of in-group

criteria; because there is no nation-state threat, interviewers may choose to ignore the respondents' self-identify to include them as members of the majority group. The Ukrainian case is intermediate; there is a newly formed border state that may help to crystallize social classification, but it has not been historically a political threat.

Methods and Variables

We will assess the three perspectives empirically using evidence derived from our recent survey in Central and Eastern Europe (here we use Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia) fielded in 1999-2000. The survey has three parts, a general sample that is nationally representative, an oversample of Roma, and an oversample of the poor. Household and individual interviews were conducted. The household questions provide the context for the individual interviews and provide data for variables defined only at the household (household income, number of people in the household, etc.). Household interviews were conducted with the most knowledgeable person present, not necessarily with the individual respondent.

In all of the countries except Russia, the general sample is approximately 1000 interviews at the household and individual level. Given the size of Russia and the problem of coverage, we increased the general sample to 2512 individual and household interviews. In Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, we oversampled both the poor and the Roma. The final sample includes an oversample of 524 Roma in Bulgaria, 481 in Hungary, and 368 in Romania. We interviewed an oversample of 517 poor in Bulgaria, 447 poor in Hungary and 505 poor in Romania. There was no oversampling in Russia. The proportion of the Roma in the general population is miniscule and the level of poverty is quite high and thus we attained a large enough sample of poor in the population in the Russian random sample without oversampling.

The oversamples of the poor⁵ and Roma were collected beginning in May 1999 on the basis of a screening question inserted into omnibus surveys in each country. We fielded individual and household questionnaires in three sub-waves (approximately November 1999, March 2000, and June 2000), thus assuring some seasonal variation in consumption. The Roma oversamples were selected on the basis of interviewer identification because we expected self-identification to be the smallest category of respondents. Interviewers' assessments were also used to screen for the poor oversample to assure consistency in the oversampling method.

Ethnicity is measured in several ways in the survey. First, the interviewer assessed ethnicity in the initial screening used to select the oversamples. Then, during the interview, the respondent was asked to select his/her ethnicity and to indicate all applicable categories. Thus, for example, an individual could identify him/herself as majority, Turk, *and* Roma. Finally, towards the end of the survey, the interviewer was asked to indicate the respondent's ethnicity. The interviewers were asked, "What is your best guess of the ethnic or national origins of the person with whom you just talked?" Further, interviewers were instructed to "give more than one response if appropriate."⁶

⁵The analyses in this paper were conducted both with and without the oversample of the poor. Since both sets of results were basically the same, we chose to keep the poor oversample in the paper to maintain a larger sample size.

⁶ This sample design was necessary because the Roma are such a small percentage of the population in each of these countries; had we not oversampled the Roma, we would not have a large enough sample of Roma to conduct these analyses. We chose to oversample using interviewer classification of Roma (rather than self classification) because other surveys have shown that interviewer classification results in a larger number of Roma (Emigh & Szelenyi

In this paper, we use self-identification and the interviewer classification (based on a question that was asked after the respondent indicated his/her ethnicity) as measures of ethnicity. While most contemporary surveys use self-identification of ethnicity, interviewer assessment is also a well-known technique. For example, up until 1970, all United States Census surveys relied on interviewer assessment of race only (U.S. Census Bureau 1975). Our dataset is unique (along with the dataset used in Telles (2002) and Telles and Lim (1998)) in that ethnicity was measured by both interviewer and self-classification.

Another unique aspect of this dataset is that we have some information about the interviewers. The vast majority (97%) of the interviewers identified themselves as members of Roma (2001:7). We believe that the sample design does not predetermine the results because there is substantial variability in the interviewer assessment of Roma in the screener compared to in the later survey (20% of households classified as Roma at the time of the screener were not re-identified by the interviewers in the later survey). Further, we get the same substantive results concerning the effects of poverty, household size, and education on interviewer classification as Roma when we conduct the analyses using the screener dataset only (results available upon request). However, there are some drawbacks to this sample design. While interviewers were only told whether respondents were part of subsample 1 or 2, some interviewers may have thought that this was a Roma survey. This may also be confounded by the fact that some of the interviewers for the screener and the survey were the same. For example, for those cases that were part of the poor or ethnic oversamples in Hungary, 305 out of 928 respondents had the same interviewer for both the screener and the survey. In Romania, however, none of the interviewers were the same (Bulgarian interviewer identification information is unavailable for the screener).

the majority group in each country. Only three percent identify themselves as members of some other ethnic group (in addition to or instead of majority), such as Ukrainian or Hungarian.⁷

Compared to the random sample of these populations, interviewers tended to be younger, were more often female, and most distinctly, were more educated (46% had completed a higher degree compared to only 14% of the random sample). While it is possible that this more educated group may differ from the general population in their classification of ethnicity, we assume that the interviewers' classifications will approximate the average classification of ethnicity by educated members of the majority group in each country.⁸

Although we explicitly oversampled only for Roma, we also examine Turks in Bulgaria, Hungarians in Romania, and Ukrainians in Russia. In our data, Turks comprise approximately 10% of the Bulgarian population; Hungarians comprise about 7% of the Romanian population, and Ukrainians comprise about 4% of the Russian population (based on interviewer classification). In our sample, this amounts to 239 Turks in Bulgaria, 129 Hungarians in Romania, and 85 Ukrainians in Russia.

⁷ We tried our analyses both with and without the cases which were interviewed by non-majority interviewers and the results did not change. Therefore, we included the non-majority interviewers' cases in the paper.

⁸We also conducted all of the regression analyses presented later in the paper with the addition of interviewer characteristics as independent variables (interviewers' sex, education, and ethnicity). For the most part, the interviewer characteristics did not significantly affect the dependent variables. (See footnote 17 for the one exception: interviewers' identification of individuals as Ukrainian in Russia). More importantly, adding interviewer characteristics to the models did not change our substantive results at all.

Table 1 shows the weighted means and standard deviations of these and other variables for the relevant countries. We give the weighted results here because they are consistent with our regression analyses. This table provides population estimates for each country. The table shows that from the perspective of the overall populations of these countries, we are examining small ethnic groups. We therefore oversampled the Roma and the poor to have large enough numbers of these ethnic groups to estimate our regression results. Appendix Table X shows the unweighted means of the variables from our sample.

The other independent variables included in the analysis are also shown in Table 1. Poverty is coded as a dichotomous variable, coded 1 if the respondent's median per capita income is at least 50% below the distribution in their country and 0 otherwise. Income is based upon a summary measure of nine survey questions about household income from different sources (wages/earnings, state transfers, sale of production, interest, borrowed money, sale of personal things, gifts from relatives/friends, gifts from other people/institutions, and other income). The number of people in the household is determined from household rosters included in the survey. Education is coded as a dichotomous variable, coded 1 if the respondent reports having only an elementary school education or less, coded 0 if they have more education. The interviewer was also asked to assess the characteristics of the settlement surrounding the respondent's home. We dichotomized this question by coding as 1 those whom the interviewer reports as living in a Gypsy settlement or majority Roma settlement and 0 otherwise. For the minority language variables, we coded the respondents as 1 if they said that they spoke that particular language (Roma, Turk, Hungarian or Ukrainian growing up); they were coded 0 if they did not speak that particular language growing up. For the majority language, we coded the

respondents as 1 if they spoke only the majority language growing up, and 0 if they spoke one or more other languages growing up.

Results

Altero vs. Auto Classifications of Ethnicity

Table 1 indicates that, contrary to essentialist theories of social classification, ethnicity is not a fixed entity, since the means of the dependent variables, interviewer classifications of ethnicity, are not the same as the means for the self-identifications of ethnicity. This is particularly evident among the Roma; the proportion identified as Roma by interviewers is higher than the proportion identifying themselves as Roma in all countries. In Bulgaria, for example, nearly 11% of the population is classified as Roma by the interviewers, whereas only 9% identify themselves as Roma. As a percentage of the total population, disagreement in classification is small, but from the perspective of Roma, discrepancies in classification are large and salient. For example, Appendix Table 2 shows that among those in the Roma oversample, 62% of those who did not identify as Roma are classified as such by the interviewer.

Tables 2-5 show how the classification of ethnicity by interviewers varies by self-identification of ethnicity for Roma, Turks, Hungarians, Ukrainians, and the majority group in each country.⁹ These tables highlight the fluidity of ethnic classification. If ethnicity were an immutable trait, the diagonals of all the tables would either be all 100 or all 0. In contrast, we do not find perfect agreement between respondents' and interviewers' assessments of the respondent's ethnicity. Roma classification in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania illustrates the process of ethnic classification for a stigmatized minority group. The most striking finding is that nearly 100% of the time, when the respondent self-identifies as Roma, the interviewer accepts

⁹ Chi-square tests show the reported associations to be significant at the $p < .001$ level.

that classification. In other words, the interviewers almost *never* report that the respondent is not Roma if the respondent claims to be Roma. In fact, this finding created estimation problems in our later analyses, since self-identification as Roma is a near-perfect predictor of interviewer classification. This makes it impossible for us to estimate regression models that include self-identification as an independent variable separately by country in Hungary and Romania. However, this finding is itself very important. While at first glance it seems that interviewers merely always agree with the respondent's self-perceptions, this is *not* always the case for other ethnic identities, such as Turk, Hungarian, Ukrainian, or the majority group. In Romania (Table 4), interviewers report that almost 7% of respondents who claim to be Hungarian are not Hungarian (See Appendix Table 3 for a breakdown of the classifications/identifications in this cell). And in the most striking case, 56% of respondents in Russia (Table 5) who self-identify as Ukrainian are not classified as Ukrainian by interviewers. In both these cases, interviewers are contradicting respondents' self-identity to *include* them as members of the majority group. This almost *never* happens in the Roma case, suggesting that interviewers perceive Roma to be such a stigmatized group that no one would claim to be Roma if they were not.

In Bulgaria (Table 2), fourteen percent of respondents who self-identify as Turk are not classified as such by interviewers. However, this contradiction reflects a different process than for Hungarians in Romania (Table 4) or Ukrainians in Russia (Table 5) because interviewers are not classifying these respondents as members of the majority group. Appendix Table 4 shows the breakdown of how interviewers classify the 67 cases in which the respondent self-identifies as Turk and the interviewer does not classify them as Turk. In the majority (65.7%) of these cases, the interviewer classifies the respondent as Roma, even though the respondent does not self-identify as such. This suggests that interviewers believe that respondents are using Turk as a

cover for their "true" Roma ethnicity. This, again, demonstrates how the Roma's status as a racialized minority group lowers their standing. Further, Roma ethnicity also seems to be a primary status that supersedes all other ethnic identifications. This is suggested by the fact that 25% of self-identified Turks who also self-identify as Roma are *only* classified as Roma by interviewers. Turkish ethnicity appears to have a middling status, somewhat lower than that of the majority group, but not as stigmatized as the Roma. Thus, Roma self-identity overshadows Turkish self-identity in our sample.¹⁰

Like these self-identified Turks in Bulgaria, in all countries except Russia, a significant percentage of respondents who self-identify as members of the majority group are not classified as such by interviewers. In Bulgaria (Table 2), for example, interviewers do not classify over 3% of those who identify as majority as such. Of these cases, 80% of the time (results not shown in table--available upon request), interviewers classify the respondent as Roma. Likewise, of the 3% of cases in Hungary (Table 3) in which interviewers do not classify respondents as majority when they self-identify as such, 91% are classified by interviewers as Roma. In Romania (Table 4), 94% of those whose self-identification as majority is contradicted by interviewers are classified as Roma. These findings further support the idea that outsiders assume there are individuals who deny their "true" Roma ancestry, by claiming to be members of another group (in this case, the majority group).

¹⁰Conclusions about Turks in these data should be drawn cautiously. We suspect that many of them were included in the sample because the interviewer suspected them of being Roma and thus, they may not be representative of Turks in Bulgarian more generally. In our sample of self-identified Turks, about 32% come from the random sample, 36% come from the poor oversample, and 32% come from the ethnic oversample of Roma.

Correspondingly, to a far greater degree than for other ethnicities, interviewers classify respondents as Roma who do not self-identify as such. For example, approximately three percent of respondents who do *not* self-identify as Roma in Bulgaria (Table 2), Hungary (Table 3) and Romania (Table 4) are classified as such by interviewers. In contrast, less than 1% of respondents in Bulgaria and Romania are classified as Turk or Hungarian if they do not self-identify as such, and only 1.6% of Russian respondents (in Table 5) who do not self-identify as Ukrainian are classified as Ukrainian by interviewers.

There is another group for whom a significant number that do not self-identify are classified as such by interviewers: the majority group in Hungary, Romania, and Russia. However, a completely different dynamic is occurring here than in the Roma case because the interviewer's classification serves to *include* rather than exclude. In the most striking instance, Table 5 shows that nearly 28% of those who do not self-identify as members of the majority group in Russia are nevertheless classified as such by interviewers. The vast majority of these people identify themselves as Ukrainian. Thus, this finding represents the inclination to diminish boundaries between Ukrainians and the majority group in Russia. This tendency is also suggested by the finding that 56% of those who self-identify as Ukrainian are not classified as such by interviewers. The vast majority (97%) of these cases are instead classified as members of the majority group.

Table 6 adds a different dimension to the analysis, by tabulating interviewer classification as Roma by self identification as Roma separately for those who spoke a Roma/Gypsy language as a child and for those who did not. We use language as a way to distinguish between two groups of Roma: those who are clearly culturally different from the majority and other groups and those who are not. The main finding here is that, among the 50 people who spoke Roma as a

child and did *not* self-identify as Roma, 43% are classified as Roma by interviewers. Contrary to cultural theories, those whose mother tongue was Roma do not always use that cultural characteristic to identify themselves as Roma. As race and ethnicity theories predict, the boundary-making process also involves the perspective of the actors and whether they make an external and internal classification. Even those who spoke Roma language as a child do not always identify themselves as Roma; perhaps some even deliberately choose to deny that ethnicity out of fear of stigmatization. However, outsiders will often classify a person as Roma if they spoke Roma as a child, even if that person does not identify as such. Thus, external labeling occurs much more often when the interviewer is able to rely upon a marker such as language to determine Roma ethnicity.

These findings show how Roma's status as a stigmatized ethnic minority group in Eastern Europe results in a different classificatory scheme than for other ethnic groups. On the one hand, their stigmatization is such that it seems that classifiers (the interviewers in this case) assume that no one would ever claim to “be” Roma if they were not. Thus, if a respondent self-identifies as Roma, an interviewer (almost) never disagrees with that assessment. On the other hand, there are some people whom interviewers classify as Roma even though they themselves do not claim to be Roma. This suggests that there are factors that affect outsiders’ perceptions of ethnicity, apart from a person’s self-identity, and that these factors are most important for groups such as the Roma, who are so stigmatized that it is assumed that some individuals might deny their heritage. In the following section, we examine whether additional factors, such as income, household size, and education, influence interviewers' ethnic classification of respondents.

Predictors of Interviewer Classification of Ethnicity

Table 7 shows the odds ratios for a survey logistic regression model predicting interviewer classification as Roma in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.¹¹ Not surprisingly given our previous findings, self-identification as Roma is the strongest predictor of interviewer classification as Roma. Those who self-identify as Roma are over 800 times as likely to be classified by interviewers as Roma than those who do not self-identify. More interesting, however, is that other social and economic factors in the model are also significant predictors of interviewer classification as Roma, even controlling for self-identification.¹² Respondents in the

¹¹For all of the regression analyses, we used survey logistic regression, which allows us to account for the complex sample design. Using this technique, we include the probability weights to obtain more accurate point estimates and we adjust for stratification and cluster sampling, which produces more robust standard errors. The probability weights were calculated as follows: For the analyses with Russia only, we used the base weight only (which is a post-stratification weight calculated for each country to match certain distributions of their census data). For the analyses of the other individual countries, we calculated, on top of the base weight, a weight to account for the oversamples so that the weighted proportion of Roma and poor in the sample is the same as the proportion of each in the population of each country. We determined the incidence rates of Roma and poor in each country from the screener, by calculating, based on interviewer assessment, the percentage of Roma and poor, weighted by a combined screener weight and number of people in the household. For the analyses with all of the countries combined, we adjusted these weights so that we gave equal weight to each country and each country has an equal influence on the estimates.

¹²The substantive results are the same without self-identification in the model. See Appendix Table 5.

bottom 50% of the per capita income distribution are more than twice as likely to be classified as Roma, net of the other factors in the model, relative to those with higher incomes.¹³ Each additional person in the household increases the likelihood of being classified as Roma by over one and one-third times. Education also has a strong net effect: those with only an elementary school education or less are over three and a half times as likely to be classified as Roma compared to those with more schooling. Not surprisingly, if the interviewer perceives the respondent to be living in a predominantly Roma or Gypsy settlement, the respondent is over 12 times as likely to be categorized as Roma. Also not unexpected given the findings in Table 6, respondents who spoke Roma as a child are almost 22 times as likely to be categorized as Roma.

In Table 8, we present a similar model predicting interviewer classification as majority for Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Russia. Self-identification as majority is an important predictor of interviewer classification as majority, although not nearly to the same extent as in the Roma case. Respondents who self-identify as majority are 73 times as likely to be classified as majority. The socioeconomic factors included in the model have effects in the complete opposite direction as in the model predicting Roma ethnicity. Those who are in poverty are about one-half as likely to be classified as majority; with increasing numbers of people in the home,

¹³Throughout our presentation of the results the N varies because of the different samples and variables. We used listwise deletion to drop many cases from the analyses because of missing income data, which was used to construct the poverty variable. We tried using other poverty measures (such as interviewer assessment of poverty or respondents' subjective assessment of material conditions). While this resulted in fewer missing cases, using these variables did not change the substantive results at all. Substituting the mean for the missing cases also did not affect the results.

and less education, respondents are less likely to be classified as majority. Thus, higher socioeconomic status predicts greater likelihood of being classified as majority, while lower socioeconomic status means it is more likely respondents will be classified as Roma. Those who only spoke the majority language as a child are ten times as likely to be classified as members of the majority group as those who spoke any other language (in addition to or instead of the majority language) as a child.

Table 9 shows odds ratios for models predicting interviewer classifications of ethnicity separately for Roma,¹⁴ Turks, and majority in Bulgaria, Hungarians and majority in Romania, Ukrainians and majority in Russia, and majority in Hungary. While these models are not strictly comparable to one another, we can look at the significance of the independent variables to see whether the findings for other ethnicities are similar to the findings for Roma. Looking across the models, we see that for interviewer classifications of all the ethnationalities, self-identification is the most important predictor. Language spoken as a child is also an important predictor for all ethnationalities except Turk. However, other factors seem to be less important to interviewers' classifications of minorities other than Roma. For instance, while income, number of people in the household, and education all influence interviewer classifications as Roma, these variables do not have the same effects on interviewer classifications as other ethnic minorities. Income and number of people in the household do almost significantly predict interviewer classification as Turk in Bulgaria, but the effects are in the opposite direction as they are for classifications as

¹⁴A model predicting interviewer classification as Roma could not be estimated separately in Hungary or Romania because self-identification as Roma is a perfect predictor of interviewer classification in these countries. Appendix Table 6 shows a similar model for these countries with only those who do not self identify as Roma.

Roma. That is, the poor are less likely to be classified as Turk, and as the number of people in the household increases, respondents are less likely to be classified as Turk. These findings are explained by the previously discussed finding that when self-identified Turks are not classified as Turks by interviewers, they are usually classified as Roma.¹⁵ Thus, this result complements the findings that the poor and those living in more crowded households are more likely to be classified as Roma. Income, education, and number of people in the household do not significantly affect interviewer classifications of individuals as Hungarian in Romania or Ukrainian and Majority in Russia.

In the Russian case, there is no single stigmatized racial group that is present in numbers comparable to Roma in the other countries. Perhaps for this reason, and because of a tendency to try to include as many people as possible as members of the majority group, social and economic factors are not markers of ethnic status.¹⁶

In Romania and Hungary, poverty, household size, and education significantly predict whether the interviewer classifies the respondent as a member of the majority group, but in the opposite direction as in the Roma case. The poor, those with more people in the household, and

¹⁵It is important to note that the Turks in our sample may not be representative of Turks in Bulgaria. See footnote 9.

¹⁶It should be noted that the Russian case is the only one where interviewer characteristics were significant when we included them in the model. The findings suggested that, net of other factors, interviewers of the majority ethnicity were less likely to classify respondents as Ukrainian, and interviewers with higher education were more likely to classify respondents as Ukrainian (results available upon request).

those with less education are less likely to be classified by interviewers as majority in both countries.

The findings of the regression analyses lend further support to the interpretation that, as a stigmatized racial group, the Roma's status is ascribed externally by others. Outsiders label individuals as Roma based not just on their own self-identification, but on external characteristics such as whether they are poor or uneducated. However, that such factors are not significant predictors of interviewer classifications of other ethnic minorities suggests that these other groups' ethnic boundaries are not similarly marked by such characteristics. The Roma's stigmatized status is manifest in the interviewers' tendency to label the poor, those in large families, and the uneducated as Roma, even if the respondent does not identify him/herself that way. This suggests the classificatory process for the Roma differs from the system used to create boundaries among other ethnic groups.

Discussion

We demonstrated using a comparative data analysis that ethnicity in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe is a contingent phenomenon that is both internally and externally ascribed. This is especially true of minority identity, in which we find striking discrepancies between interviewer and self-ethnic identification. Our findings expand upon recent scholarship on social classification including Telles (2002) and Telles and Lim's (1998) work that examines disjunctures between interviewer and self-racial identification in Brazil. Like Telles (2002), we found that discrepancies between interviewer classifications of ethnicity and self-identification are not random, but are shaped by social characteristics such as education and income. In addition, our work suggests that interviewers only base some classifications, such as those as Roma or majority, on such characteristics.

Our research also allows us to assess theories of social classification. We find little support for essentialist theories that would suggest agreement between different classifiers. In contrast, our data show that there is considerable amount of disagreement among social actors. Thus, we also assess the explanatory power of the different types of social constructionist theories of social classification. Our results provide support for theories of race and ethnicity. Respondents who self-report as Roma are almost always classified by interviewers as such. This suggests that compared with Turks, Ukrainians, and other ethnic minorities, the Roma are a uniquely stigmatized ethnic group, so stigmatized in fact, that interviewers never contradict individuals who claim to be Roma. However, interviewers do externally classify individuals as Roma, even when individuals do not self-identify as Roma, on the basis of negative social characteristics, such as low education and low income. These results confirm that Roma is a racialized ethnic minority, marked primarily by external classifications. While it might seem obvious that interviewers would not override self-reports of ethnicity, this in fact did occur with respect to other ethnicities.

Our results provide mixed support for cultural theories. First, as cultural theories suggest, language is an important predictor of ethnonational identification. Furthermore, cultural theories explain well the Ukrainian case. Here, the results suggest a primarily internal process of social classification. Interviewers assimilate Ukrainians to Russian identity even when individuals self-identify as Ukrainian. The results in fact show a very large discrepancy between interviewer and respondents' classification in the case of Ukrainians, in fact, it is the largest difference of all the ethnic groups we examine. We note that this large, and primarily internal, discrepancy is not marked by social characteristics. There are few significant predictors of interviewers' assessment, unlike the case of the Roma in which there are numerous negative social

characteristics that interviewers use to mark Roma ethnicity. As we noted in the literature review, Ukrainian and Russian identity are historically similar and very fluid. The groups share a similar history and language. Thus, interviewers have little basis on which to label Ukrainian ethnicity. It is respondents, insiders, who mark the ethnicity. The Ukrainian case thus also supports theories of race and ethnicity, illustrating an auto-referential process of ethnic identification in contrast to the altero-referential process by which Roma were more often identified.

However, cultural theories provide little explanation of the Roma case. Cultural theories would predict country differences in Table 2 above. In Hungary, where Roma are highly assimilated, usually speak Hungarian, and have been settled for a long time, cultural theories would predict a higher rate of classificatory discrepancies because the groups are culturally similar. In contrast, in Bulgaria and Romania, where Roma are in aggregate less assimilated, often speak a minority language, were not subject to Habsburg assimilationist policies, and often still travel, cultural theories predict a low rate of disagreement in classification because groups are culturally different. In all three countries, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, however, the discrepancy between interviewers and respondents with respect to Roma is quite similar.

Finally, we suggested that theories of nationalism predict that ethnonational categories would be heightened, and therefore, lead to more agreement in social classifications, in multiethnic states with large populations of minorities ethnically affiliated with neighboring states perceived as threatening. Tensions should sharpen processes of classification, leading to relatively few differences in interviewer versus self-identification. However, we find little support for this theory. There was surprisingly a moderate amount of discrepancy between interviewer and respondent ethnic identification in the case of Turks in Bulgaria and Hungarians

in Romania, two ethnonational groups that fit the above criterion. In the Turkish case, the labeling process was often external; in the case of discrepancies, interviewers often ascribed them stigmatized Roma racial status, not Turkish national status. The Roma data likewise does not support this literature; there was relatively little discrepancy between interviewer and self-ethnic identification. As a non-politically marked minority, these perspectives would have predicted large discrepancies between self-identification and interviewer identification, in the absence of nationalist tensions to sharpen the labeling process. Our findings with respect to the Ukrainians also seem to contradict this literature. The Ukraine is a bordering state, with a recent nationalist movement, even though the state is probably not politically threatening to the Russian one. From this perspective, it is plausible to expect a small or perhaps even modest discrepancy between Ukrainian and Russian identity, though in fact, the difference was the largest of all the ethnic groups examined here. In fact, the data support a nationalist interpretation of a different sort. The assimilationist tendency on the part of the interviewers, that is, to override Ukrainian ethnicity with Russian ethnicity, may reflect a nationalist political agenda to assimilate Ukrainians living inside of Russia to Russian identity, not to politicize Ukrainian ethnicity.

In sum, we find that ethnicity in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe is contingent, constructed phenomenon and functions as a powerful form of social closure, especially with respect to the highly stigmatized Roma. For all the ethnicities examined here, there was some discrepancy between interviewer and respondents' assessment of ethnic identity. Thus, our results do not support essentialist views of ethnicity. However, we find that non-essentialist theories of social classification differentially explain the different cases. Race and ethnicity theories that draw attention to altero versus auto-referential social classifications help to understand the external classification of the stigmatized Roma and cultural theories help explain

the large discrepancy between interviewer and respondents' classification in the case of the Ukrainians in Russia. Thus, ethnonational classifications are based on different social characteristics in different contexts.

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