

Systems of Government Support of Minority Activities in Slovakia (2011 – 2020)

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Abstract | Background: According to the 2011 census, approximately 12% of the population of Slovakia declared their belonging to national minorities. Government funding has been available to organizations engaged in minority cultural activities since 1998, and since then it has become the most important income source for minority organizations. Besides these, minorities with a kin state may draw on resources coming from the latter as well, but this is out of the scope of this paper. In the period between 2011 and 2017, the culture of minorities was funded by the Government Office of Slovakia under the auspices of the funding program “Culture of National Minorities”. Since 2018 the Fund for the Support of Minority Culture has been funding these projects. With the reform, minorities have received more control over the distribution of the budget, which also became much larger. Objectives: The aim of the paper is twofold. It analyzes the system itself which encompasses the changes and continuities in the funding system in terms of rules, priorities, and the budget, but also the changes in the activity of the organizations, the distribution of project proposals by project type, and the type and nationality of the applicant. Besides this, the data provided by the donors are utilized for the sake of the analysis of the composition and structure of minority institutional systems in Slovakia. The analysis is based on documents and data published by the donors on the internet. Conclusion: By transferring the right of decision to councils elected by the minority organizations themselves, there was a potential for significant change in the priorities guiding the decisions. However, the comparison showed that in several respects the new system resembles the former to a considerable degree. Arguably the biggest change was the doubling of the budget. Nevertheless, this did not lead to a similar increase in the number of applicants or proposed projects. In general, smaller minorities were more successful than the larger ones. Nonprofit organizations were the favored type of organizations, and publishing and cultural activities and events were the most successful of the various project types. The data also provided insights into the size, composition and structure of minority institutional systems. While the Hungarians, Roma and Rusyns maintain a relatively extensive institutional system with many organizations, the institutional systems of smaller communities consist of only a handful of organizations. The analysis of the internal structure and inequalities within institutional systems showed, that the smaller minorities, in fact, tend to rely on an even more limited number of hierarchically structured organizations that try to cover as wide a range of activities as possible and receive the dominant share of the funding allocated to the respective minorities.

Keywords | government funding, minorities, non-profit organizations, grants, Slovakia

Background

Slovakia gives home to a significant number of people belonging to national minorities. In the census in 2011, 12.3% of the population declared a nationality other than Slovak, and 13.9% of the population declared a non-Slovak mother tongue.[1] For the ethnocultural reproduction of their communities, minorities rely on the operation of various institutions and organizations, most of which operate as third sector organizations (association, foundations, etc.). The protection of minorities by the Slovak state rests on the rather vague dispositions stemming from the Constitution, and on multilateral treaties concerning minority protection: most notably the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

Slovakia is fulfilling its obligations stemming from these treaties primarily by funding minority cultural activities.[2] Government funding was primarily studied in literature due to its mostly negative effects on the operation of non-governmental organizations (Ali & Gull, 2016; Bloodgood & Tremblay-Boire, 2016; Chaves et al., 2004). Scholars have warned among others about potential bureaucratization and the negative effects of professionalization, loss of autonomy, mission drift, and also the crowding-out effect of government funding on private donations. Government funding is one of the driving forces of hybridization in the third sector (Billis, 2010). On the other hand, government funding has its advantages: it can incite the establishment of new organizations, increase effectiveness, help organizations become well-known, and also can function as a source of credibility and worthiness of an NGO (Ali & Gull, 2016).

On the other hand, government funding was rarely studied in terms of the priorities, and the effect on the supported institutions. Government funding became accessible to minority organizations in Slovakia in 1998, and soon became one of the most important sources of income (Nagy & Tóth, 2006). Studies on ethnic Hungarian organizations show that these resources were – besides kin-state support coming from Hungary – the most important source of income for Hungarian cultural institutions and civil society organizations (Morauszki, 2012; Morauszki & Porubszky, 2009; Nagy & Tóth, 2006). Government support is still the main source of income for minority organizations, and field studies show that the total income of an organization is positively correlated with the proportion of government funding within it (Morauszki, 2021). As a result, the way government funding is distributed has a significant impact on the way minority institutional systems operate: the main activities, as well as internal inequalities and the structure of the institutional systems in general.

Objectives

Therefore the paper analyses the system of the funding of minority cultural activities by the Slovak state in the years between 2011 and 2020.[3] From 2011 to 2017 the cultural activities were funded by the Government Office of the Slovak Republic (GO) under the auspices of the funding program Culture of National Minorities. Since 2018 this funding scheme has been replaced by the autonomous Fund for the Support of Minority Culture (*Fond na podporu kultúry národnostných menšín*, FSMC), which was established by an act of the National Assembly of the Slovak Republic in 2017.[4] In 2021 the term of the first director of the Fund ended, hence this is a good occasion to study the first years of its operation and to point out the differences, as well as the similarities compared to the previous system, which was presented in detail in the past (Morauszki, 2020). The main aim of the paper is to examine, how the change in the institutional arrangements - which was significant, considering that instead of a government body, the support of minority cultures was entrusted to an autonomous institution - affected how grants are actually distributed among the minority institutions. The paper aims to analyze and compare the grant systems of the GO and the FSMC from both the supply and the demand sides: the priorities of the donors, and the activity of the applicants. The paper aims to explore, how the legislative changes and changes in the decision-making process affected the actual decisions and the distribution of the budget. But besides the primary aim, the data provide a glimpse into the structure of minority institutional systems in Slovakia, which will also be analyzed. In this respect, the paper aims to explore and describe the composition and internal structure of minority institutional systems in Slovakia.

Models of minority institutional systems have to take into consideration that while the institutional systems consist mainly of formally equal nonprofit organizations, they are stratified, even hierarchical, and in their formation bottom-up and top-down processes combine (Kiss, 2006). While community-based, grassroots and other civic organizations are present in the institutional systems, their backbone consists of organizations that try to emulate the operation of public cultural institutions in the legal form of associations and foundations (Kiss, 2006). In the case of the Hungarian cultural institutions, Tóth distinguishes the national level “Hungarian ... of Slovakia” types of mostly umbrella organizations that aim for a monopoly or at least dominant position in the specific field of activity, such as culture, education, advocacy, and derive their legitimacy from the resources acquired for the minority institutional system, and distinguishes these organizations from other smaller non-profit organizations (Tóth, 2006). [5] Compared to Hungarians in Slovakia, we have much less information about other minorities. The analysis of the grant systems offers an opportunity to study the structure of and inequalities within minority institutional systems in Slovakia and the paper examines whether the hierarchical structure presented by Kiss’ model of minority institutional systems can indeed be detected in the case of minority institutional systems in Slovakia.

Data and Methods

The paper is based on publicly available data provided by the funding institutions: calls, various documents regarding the operation of the funding institutions, and primarily the published decisions. The donors published the most important data regarding all proposed projects, including the name of the applicant, its residence, the name of the project, the total budget, requested and approved funding, and other data on their web pages.[6] These data were scraped, cleaned and compiled into databases containing all incoming requests for funding between the years 2011 and 2020.[7] Based on the available variables, further variables were created. The type of the organizations was determined based on the data provided by the organizations (already available in the data of incoming proposals), but, as it proved to be inconsistent in certain cases, the online register of non-governmental and non-profit organizations was also used to determine the legal type of applicants.[8] The district and county, and type of residence were coded based on the residence of the applicant. In the case of organizations that moved in the analyzed period, the current residence (at the time of the proposal) was used for the analysis of the distribution of proposals, but the last residence was used for the analysis of the distribution of applicants. The paper analyzes the data using quantitative, descriptive statistical methods at the level of project proposals and at the level of applicants: contingency tables and group means were calculated to analyze the bivariate relationships between potential explanatory variables and indicators of activity (e.g. the number of applicants and proposals) and success (e.g. number and proportion of funded proposals, and ratio of approved funding). The database of applicants was built by aggregating the database of project proposals based on the name of the applicant, which was cleaned so that each name is unique. As the whole population is analyzed, hypothesis testing is not necessary to determine, whether findings can be generalized from the sample to the population.

The paper presents the changes in the size of the grant systems based on multiple indicators: the size of the budget and the number of proposals and applicants. The preferences guiding the decisions were analyzed based on the proportion of successful grants, and the ratio of the approved funding compared to the requested amount by various potential explanatory variables, such as the nationality, type of organization and project aim. For the purpose of analysis, a successful grant is any grant that received funding regardless of the actual amount or its ratio compared to the requested amount. The average ratio of approved funding is calculated for only the successful grants, excluding those proposals that were rejected altogether.

Preferences are visualized using horizontal bar charts representing the distribution of applicants (where applicable), proposed and approved projects, requested and approved funding by various potential explanatory variables. Separate bar charts are presented for the two donors. The differences in the activity and demands of various applicants, in indicators of success (the proportion of successful grants and the ratio of approved funding), and differences between the two donors can be deduced from the comparison of these distributions.

Structure of the two funding systems: similarities and differences

Although the funding of minority cultural activities was carried out by two different donor institutions in the period between 2011 and 2020, the Government Office of Slovakia was responsible until 2017 and the Fund for the Support of Minority Culture from 2018, and there were significant changes with the establishment of the Fund at the legislative level, the basic structure of the funding, the organizations eligible to apply, and other aspects did not change significantly.

One significant change was, however, how the donor published the calls for project proposals. The GO published its calls annually on its web page, and there was a single call each year for all subprograms and minorities. The Fund publishes multiple calls per year, each for only a specific subset of minorities and/or subprograms.[9] While the way in which the subprograms were enumerated changed over the course of time, the main project types did not change: the press and other kinds of minority media, book publishing, various cultural projects and events (theatres, festivals, creative arts, etc.), research and the dissemination of results, and intercultural events and research were funded annually. From 2014, training, research and publication in the field of minority rights were listed as a separate subprogram. The Fund carried on the funding of these subprograms in 2018. These subprograms managed to include several spheres important for the socio-cultural reproduction of minority communities, however, from the viewpoint of the Roma, the lack of opportunity to apply for projects that have a social character could potentially be considered a deficiency. Only expenses directly connected to a specific project were funded, other expenses (e.g. unrelated operating costs, purchase of various equipment, etc.) were not.[10] A novelty of the new system of funding is the introduction of scholarships to private persons.

Both the funding system of the GO, as that of the Fund, are rather inclusive in terms of the applicants' legal form: besides non-profit organizations (civic associations, foundations, non-investment funds, not-for-profit organizations providing publicly beneficial services, organizations with an international element, associations of legal persons), counties or municipalities, churches and church institutions, public and subsidized institutions of counties or municipalities, including schools, and universities were eligible to apply for funding. Private persons were first eligible up to 2013, and then again, after the funding was taken over by the Fund (for scholarships), and similarly, companies and entrepreneurs could apply until 2014 and again from 2018. Furthermore, the applicant itself does not have to be a minority institution, the deciding factor is that the project is related to minorities.

Except for scholarships, where there was a strict limit of one scholarship proposal per applicant, each applicant could propose multiple projects, and, as we will see, there were applicants that proposed a large number of projects each year, while others did not take up this opportunity and only applied occasionally, and for a limited number of projects. Projects were proposed by a single applicant, and we have no information regarding proposals by consortia.

There were limits set on both the requested and on approved funding: the minimum level of funding was 400 euros until 2012 and 500 euros from then, while the upper limit changed more often. Cost-sharing was mandatory in both the case of the GO and the Fund: while there were some exceptions depending on the subprogram in certain years, the typical mandatory level of cost-sharing was 5% of the total budget.[11] Applicants typically fulfilled these minimum obligations, and the level of cost-sharing was basically equal to the mandatory level, but not higher. Furthermore, applicants to the Fund had to pay an administrative fee, which as a rule amounted to 0.1% of the requested funding, while it could not be lower than 20 euros or higher than 1,000 euros.

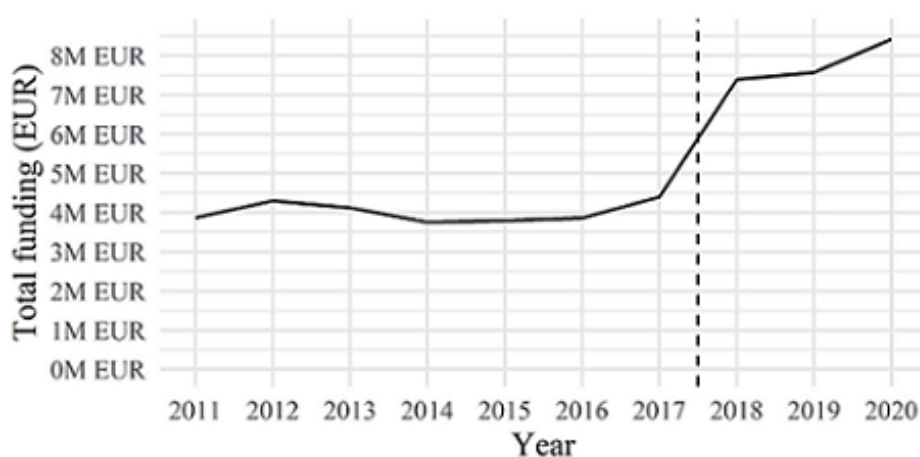
Table 1: Limits of funding for project proposals in EUR, 2011 – 2020[12]

Year	Lower limit	Upper limit
2011	400	100,000
2012	400	3,000-75,000 (depending on sub-programme)
2013	500	200,000
2014	500	100,000
2015-2017	500	150,000
2018	unknown	
2019-2020	500	66,000 (200,000 for press and publishing)

In the case of the GO, the decisions were made by commissions appointed by the leader of the GO. There was one commission for each minority, except the Hungarian, which had two commissions, due to the greater number of proposals. Commissions consisted of three members, with at least one member belonging to the respective minority. The institutional reform changed the decision-making process significantly. The decisions of the Fund were made by professional councils partially elected by the minority institutions themselves. There is one such council for each minority, except the Hungarian and the Roma, which have three councils. Each council has five members: three members are elected by the minority institutions, and two members are nominated by the director of the Fund. This way, if all members are present, the representatives of the minority organizations have the majority in the voting.

Size of the grant system

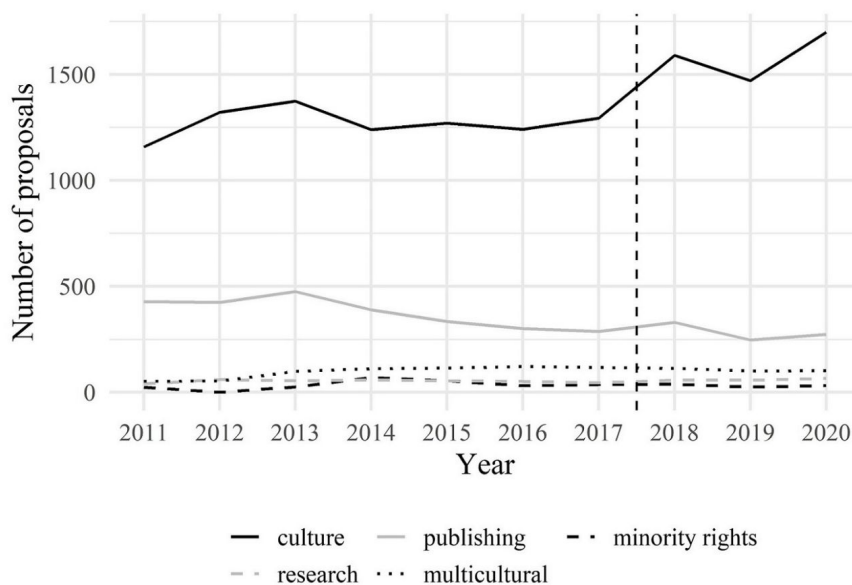
Perhaps the most significant change in the funding was the twofold increase of the available budget: between 2011 and 2017 the annual budget amounted to approximately 4 to 4.5 million euros, and since 2018 the annual budget has increased to 7.4 to 8.4 million euros.

Figure 1: Change of budget, 2011 – 2020

This, however, did not increase the number of proposals, or the number of applicants to a similar degree, which might suggest, that the minority institutional systems already reached their capacity to apply for funding before the increase. While in 2018 a significantly higher number of projects was proposed – 2,126 compared to 1,778 in 2017, out of which 2,054 were grant requests and 72 were requests of scholarships – the number of registered proposals decreased again.[13] As figure 2 shows, most of the proposals was related to cultural activities and events, and the

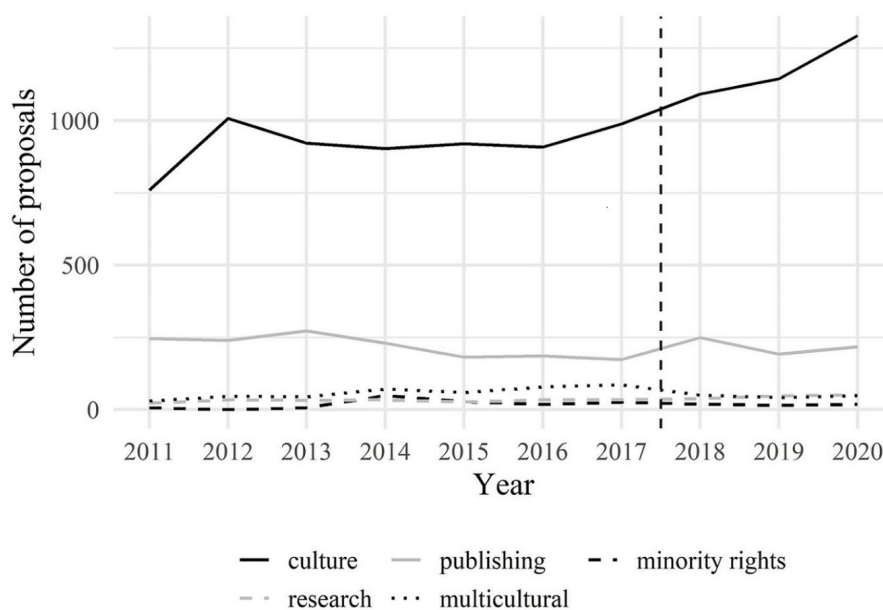
increase in the number of proposals was also related to these subprograms, while the number of publishing proposals decreased, and the number of the proposals related to the three remaining types stagnated.

Figure 2: Number of proposed projects by project type, 2011 – 2020



However, the increased budget made it possible for the number of funded projects to increase. In the total time period, the proportion of successful proposals was 69.5%, which shows that the main aim was to support as many projects as possible. The success rate was 67.9% while the GO was distributing the funding, and 72.9% in the case of the Fund. Still, the increase was not as high as the difference in the budgets, and is mostly due to scholarships. Apart from these, the number of funded grants began to decrease again after 2018. Out of the five big types of projects, only the number of supported projects related to cultural activities and events increased.

Figure 3: Number of funded projects by project type, 2011 – 2020

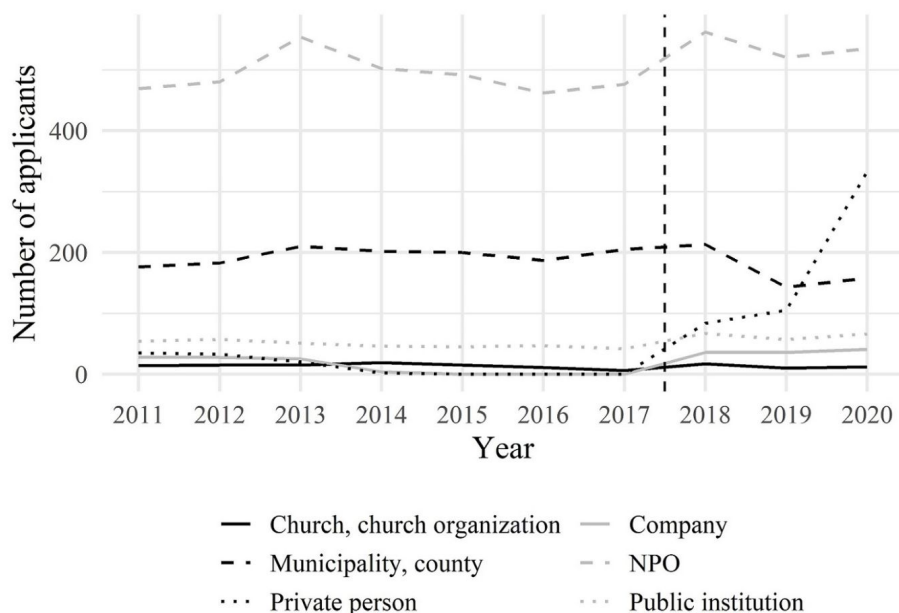


This does not mean, that the Fund did not attract new applicants: in fact, many of those who applied to the Fund were new applicants that did not apply to the GO. In the period between 2011 and 2020 a total number of 2,721 applicants

proposed at least one project: there were 1,817 applicants between 2011 and 2017, and a total of 1,705 applicants between 2018 and 2020. Out of these 1,705 applicants, 904 were new applicants that only applied to the Fund. However, in their case, the scholarships play an important role, too: most new applicants were private persons, but the number of new non-profit organizations is also non-negligible.[14]

Due to the one application per applicant limitation in the case of scholarships, the great number of such applications automatically meant an increase in the number of applicants. Between 2011 and 2017, the number of applicants typically changed between 700 and 800, except for 2013, when 875 applicants proposed at least one project. Compared to this, the Fund was more popular: in 2018 a significantly higher number – 980 – of applicants applied, and while in 2019 their number decreased to 871, in 2020 a record number of 1,145 applicants proposed at least one project. While the increase in the number of most types of applicants was only small compared to 2019, the increase in the number of private persons was threefold from 105 to 333. All in all, the increase in the number of applicants in the case of the Fund is mainly due to the companies, entrepreneurs and private persons again becoming eligible. The growth of the system in terms of budget did not result in a similar growth in other indicators, such as the number of project proposals or the number of applicants, however, it made the further increase in the already high success rate possible.

Figure 4: Number of applicants by legal form, 2011 – 2020



Preferences guiding the decisions

One of the paper's aims was to identify the donors' preferences that guided their decisions, and the paper uses two indicators of preference: the probability of a proposal to be accepted, and the proportion of the approved funding compared to the requested amount. One objective already identified was to accept as many project proposals as possible, which resulted in a success rate close to 70%. As a result, however, a successful project proposal received on average 48.9% of the requested funding in the case of the GO, which ratio improved significantly after the budget increase to 62.2%. However, certain types of applicants, projects, and certain nationalities can be identified, in which cases the success rate was higher, and in which cases it was lower.

As opposed to preferences in terms of project aim and type of applicant, which can be identified from the decisions of the professional councils, the preferences in terms of nationality were built into the system. In the case of the GO, the annual budget was distributed among minorities on an annually negotiated basis. Between 2011 and 2015 the amount received by smaller minorities increased, and the proportion received by the Hungarian minority decreased. The

fraction allotted to multicultural projects first increased to almost 9% but later decreased to 6%. Between 2015 and 2017 the distribution did not change. In 2017 the proportions were written into the Law establishing the Fund.[15] In the new system especially the share allocated to Moravian projects increased (from 0.8% to 1.4%), but the Roma projects receive a significantly higher share of the budget, too (22.4% compared to 17.1% in 2017), and also the Hungarian minority receives more (53% compared to 52.4%). However, most minorities receive only a smaller part of the budget, than before. Despite this, smaller minorities still receive a higher share of the budget, than is their share within the minority population of Slovakia based on the data of the 2011 census.

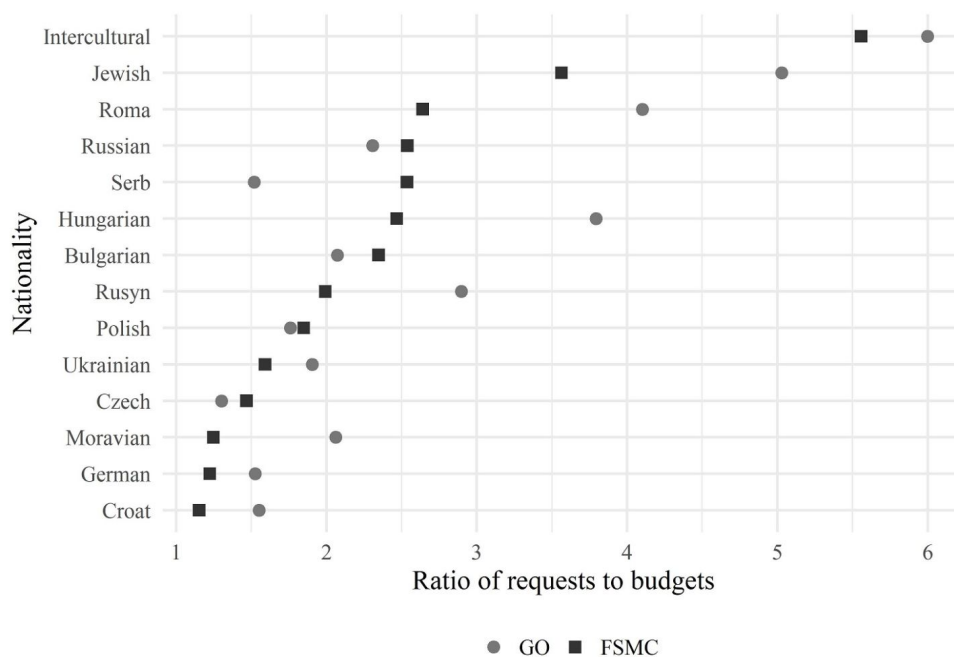
Table 2: *The distribution of the budget by nationality*[16]

Nationality	2011	2012	2014	2015-2017	2018-2020	Census '11
Bulgarian	0.80%	0.80%	0.90%	0.90%	1%	0.20%
Czech	4.20%	3.90%	5.40%	5.90%	3.70%	4.70%
Croat	1.50%	1.40%	1.30%	1.20%	1%	0.20%
Hungarian	58%	54.90%	51.80%	50.40%	53%	70.30%
Moravian	0.60%	0.50%	0.70%	0.80%	1.40%	0.50%
German	3.40%	3.20%	2.50%	2.30%	1.80%	0.70%
Polish	1.90%	1.80%	1.60%	1.70%	1.40%	0.50%
Roma	13.50%	12.80%	16.60%	17.10%	22.40%	16.20%
Rusyn	5.30%	5.10%	6.90%	7.60%	6.40%	5.10%
Russian	1.20%	1.20%	1.30%	1.40%	1.10%	0.30%
Serb	0.50%	0.40%	0.70%	0.70%	0.70%	0.10%
Ukrainian	3.70%	3.40%	2.80%	2.60%	2%	1.10%
Jewish	1.80%	1.70%	1.50%	1.40%	1.10%	0.10%
Interethnic	3.70%	8.90%	6%	6%	3%	

As the distribution of the budget was fixed, the success of the individual minorities in terms of the proportion of accepted proposals, and the proportion of the received funding compared to the requested funding depended on the ratio of the available budget and the total requests from the particular minority. It is true for all minorities, that the total requests exceeded the available budget, but to various degrees.

The “nationality” of the proposal, the council, which decided about the funding of a particular project, has only been reported since 2014, therefore the analysis of the distribution of projects and funding by nationality only covers the period between 2014 and 2020. While until 2017 in the case of smaller minorities, such as the Czech, Germans, Croats, the ratio of the total requested funding to the budget of the respective minorities was only between 1.3 (the Czech) and approximately 2 (Bulgarians, Moravians), the requests for intercultural projects amounted to 6 times the available budget and was the highest among the Jewish organizations with a ratio of approximately 5. Roma requested four times as much as their budget, while Hungarian organizations requested 3.8 times as much.

After the reform, with the change of the distribution of the budget, these ratios changed, and those of the larger minorities decreased markedly, but still the ratio tends to be lower for small minorities. The only minority in which the ratio increased significantly, was the Serbian one.[17] This, however, does not necessarily mean a lack of interest on the part of smaller minorities, but rather, that the selection process happened within the applicant organizations. As the paper will present, smaller minorities tend to have institutional systems consisting of only a small number of organizations, among which there is an even more limited number of nation-wide catch-all organizations, which are responsible for a dominant proportion of the projects. This intra-organizational selection process also explains why the distribution of the budget was not changed in favor of minorities with high request/budget ratios.

Figure 5: Ratio of the total requested funding to approved budget by minority and donor[18]

Due to the above, smaller minorities were typically more successful. No signs of the trade-off between the proportion of accepted proposals and the ratio of approved funding to requests can be seen; smaller minorities tend to be characterized by higher numbers in both indicators of success. Figure 6 shows that in fact the relationship between the two indicators seems to be positive, which should be attributed to the distribution of the budget. But Figure 6 also shows that most councils strived to accept as many proposals as possible, and rather decided to approve only a smaller part of the requested funding. Besides this, the change of the distribution clearly benefited the larger communities, while most of the smaller minorities are still the beneficiaries of the system. The distribution of the accepted projects compared to the distribution of all proposals, and the distribution of funding compared to requests also indicate that projects aimed at a specific minority were preferred to intercultural projects. The share of these was reduced from approximately 6% of the budget to 3% and can be characterized by lower success indicators.

Figure 6: Indicators of success by minority and donor

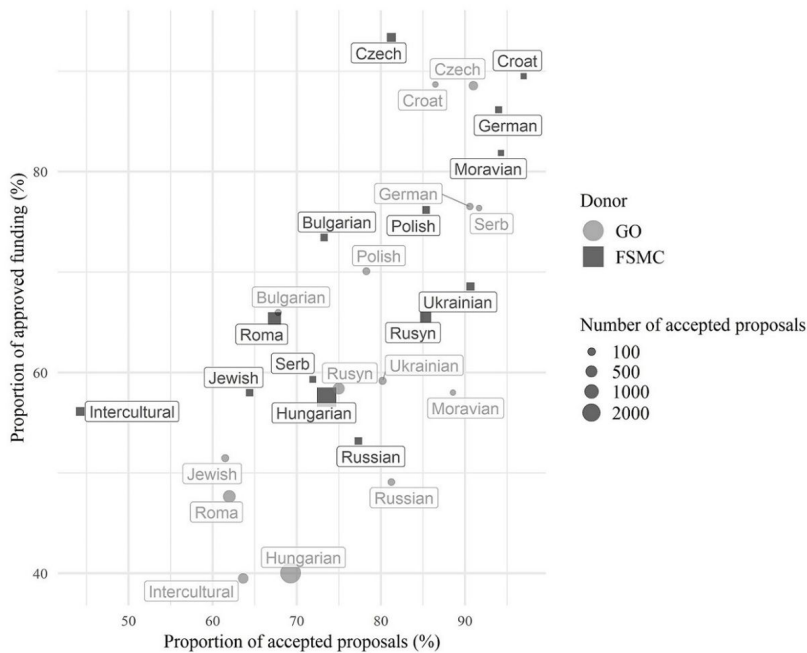
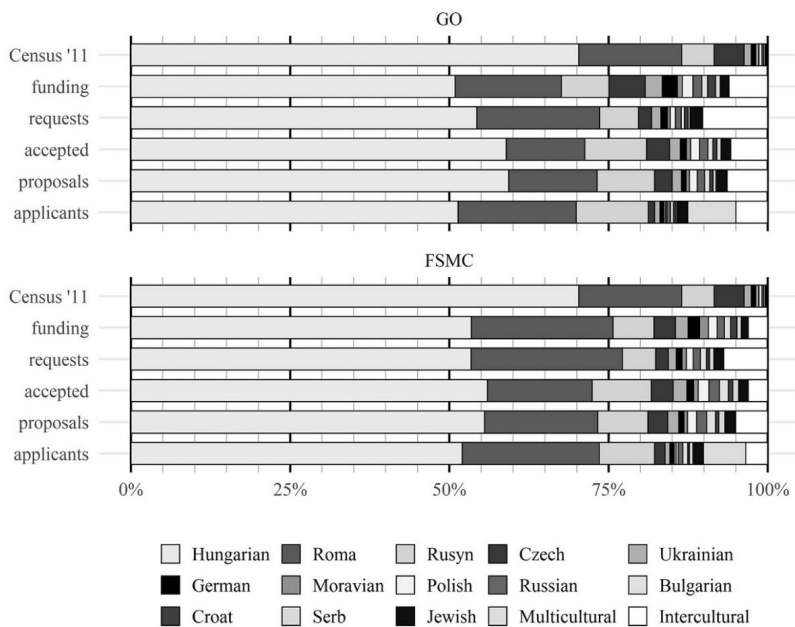


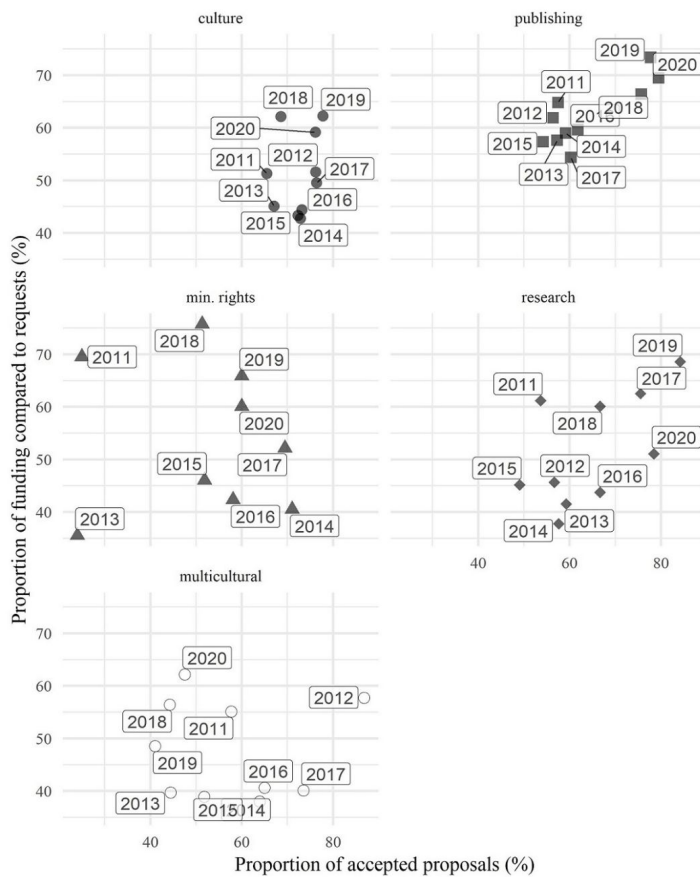
Figure 7: Distribution of applicants, proposed and funded projects, requests and funding by minority



In terms of the project aim, not only were cultural events and activities the most popular types of projects (and also the most heterogeneous group including festivals, other events, theatres, bands, choirs, etc.) but, as Figure 8 shows, were also characterized by a relatively high success rate in every year. In this case, the councils strived to fund as many projects as possible, if necessary by reducing the approved funding, as can be seen for instance in the years 2013–2016.[19] In comparison, in the case of publishing and media, the selection process was stricter, however, the ratio of approved funding was higher, and especially after the reform, these projects were prioritized, as can be seen

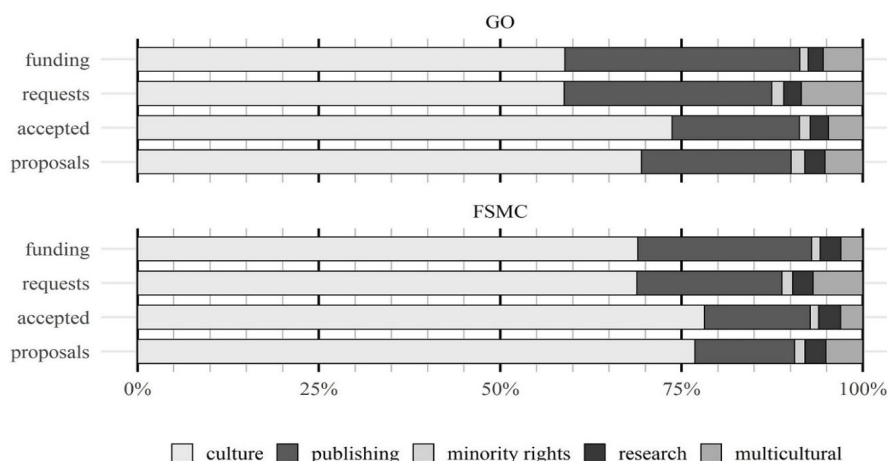
from the high values on both indicators of success. The success indicators of the rest of the project types changed more from one year to the next. Multicultural projects were the only type which fared worse in the case of the Fund, which resulted from the shrinking of their share within the budget (cf. Figure 7).

Figure 8: Indicators of success by project type, 2011 – 2020



The comparison of the distribution of proposals, requests and funding under the auspices of the GO and the Fund, shows that both in terms of demand, and in terms of the donor’s priorities, the share of cultural activities increased - mostly at the expense of publishing, which has declined despite being one of the priorities of the donor as shown in Figure 8. This suggests, that the increased budget could generate activity, especially in the sphere of cultural activities, and less so in publishing and the media.

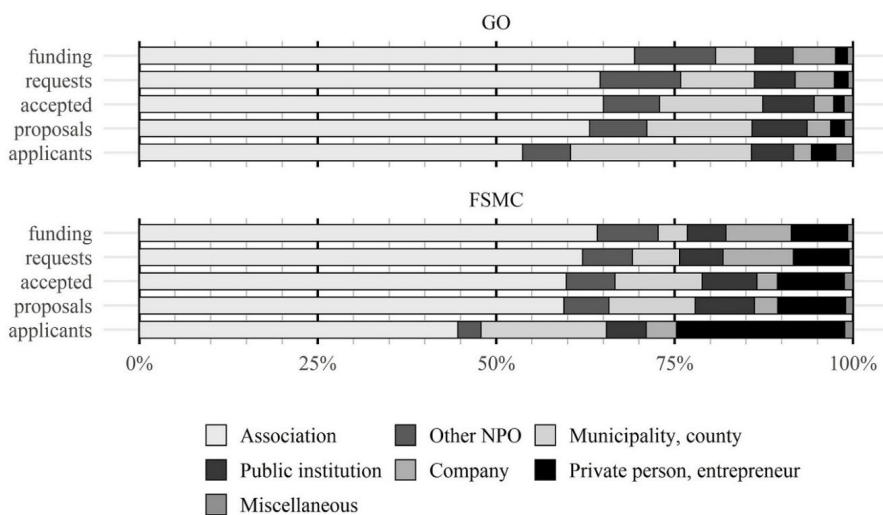
Figure 9: Distribution of proposed and funded projects, requests and funding by project type



While cultural activities (theatre, choirs, bands, festivals and other events) were the most popular project type for every minority, there were more pronounced differences in the popularity of other types of projects. While in general, minority rights projects were not frequent (2.6% of all proposals to the GO between 2014 and 2017, and only 1% of proposals to the Fund), these were relatively more frequent among projects targeting minorities, that are potential targets of discrimination and prejudices: the Roma (6.5 and 5% respectively), and Jewish population (6.6 and 12%). Research projects, on the other hand, mostly focus on the Hungarian minority: almost three-quarters of all proposals targeted the Hungarian community, compared to the total share of 63% and 58% of Hungarian-related proposals.

The distribution of the applicants and proposals by legal form shows that most minorities could rely on non-profit organizations, primarily civic associations. This will be discussed in more detail in the section on the composition of minority institutional systems. The greatest change in this respect was that private persons and companies are again eligible to apply for funding from 2018. With the introduction of scholarships, private persons and entrepreneurs became the second largest group of applicants after associations, and municipalities became only the third largest group. However, institutional actors tend to be more active, and as a result the change is smaller in the case of proposals, requests and funding. Furthermore, the preferences guiding the funding decisions seem to be stable: associations and other forms of NPOs tend to be more successful, but due to the higher average grants for publishing and the media, companies are also among the beneficiaries of the decisions (cf. Figure 10). This preference for NPOs is clear in the case of most project types, such as cultural events and activities, multicultural projects, and publishing, however, in the case of research and minority rights projects, which constitute a lower share, and therefore have a smaller impact on the general picture, NPOs do not enjoy the aforementioned preference. Instead, private persons and entrepreneurs appear to be more successful in both cases, and in the case of minority rights, also public institutions (schools) seem to be more successful than NPOs.

Figure 10: Distribution of applicants, proposed and funded projects, requests and funding by type of applicant



Finally, the last question regarding preferences is whether the same or different organizations have tended to be successful before and since 2018. We endeavor to answer this question based on two indicators: the correlation between the total funding received from the GO, and from the Fund, and the share of “newcomers” among the most successful applicants, i.e. the top decile based on total income from the Fund. Among all those applicants who applied to both the GO and the Fund, the Spearman correlation between total funding from the GO and the Fund was 0.663. While this might have been partly due to the fact that smaller minorities have institutional systems built around central catch-all organizations that receive the dominant share of funding, the correlation analysis performed for each minority separately shows that this is not the case. It is true that the Spearman’s correlation coefficient is remarkably high for smaller minorities,[20] but it is above average for the Hungarian and Rusyn minority as well.[21]

It is, however, much smaller in the case of the Roma minority, and the multicultural applicants.[22]

Similarly, the distribution of the top-most decile based on total funding shows that most of the applicants that received the most funding from the Fund, were already among the most successful applicants to the GO: 92 out of the total 170 organizations (54.1%) were in the top decile; however, the “newcomers” applicants that did not apply to the GO constitute the second largest group with a size of 40 (23.5%). The rest was typically among the more successful applicants, either in the 9th (11.2%) or the 8th (6.5%) decile, with a small number of those that were in the 2nd to 7th decile (4.7%).[23] Both indicators showed that the continuity is somewhat stronger, however, new organizations were also able to enter the group of the most successful organizations.

Structure of institutional systems

The second aim of the paper is to provide insight into the size, composition and internal structure of minority institutional systems in Slovakia. For the purpose of this analysis, minority institutional systems are conceptualized as all those organizations that applied for funding at least in the years between 2014 and 2020, either to the GO or to the Fund. These organizations were categorized as belonging to particular minorities based on the composition of their project proposals.[24]

A non-negligible number of applicants only applied for funding before 2014, hence their nationality cannot be determined. Not counting these, the majority of the applicants were coded as Hungarian (51.3%), with the Roma applicants occupying second place (21.9%), and Rusyn applicants being the third most populous group (8.4%). At the other end of the list were Polish (6 applicants, 0.3%), Croat and Moravian (7 applicants each, 0.3%) applicants, but also the fourth largest group (not counting the multicultural and intercultural applicants) which was the Jewish one consisted of only 40 applicants. These, of course, represent communities of significantly different sizes.[25] As a result, even small institutional systems may prove to be relatively large compared to the size of the communities they are attached to.

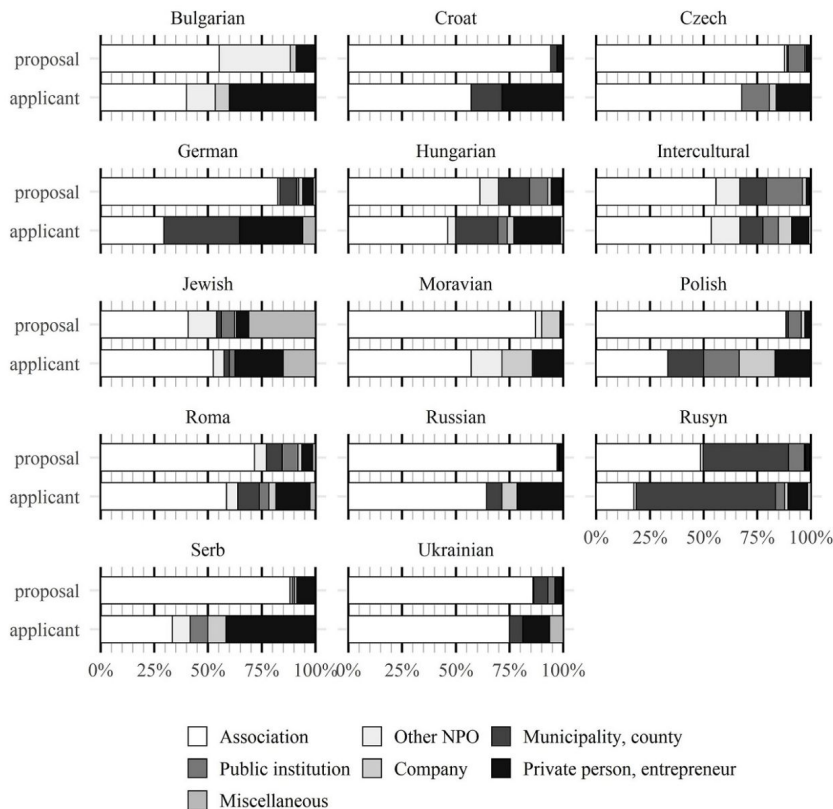
Table 3: *Relative size of minority institutional systems per 1000 people*[26]

Nationality	Size of community	Number of applicants		Number of applicants per 1,000 people	
		Total	NPOs only	Total	NPOs only
Hungarian	458,467	1,147	573	2.50	1.25
Roma	105,738	490	313	4.63	2.96
Rusyn	33,482	188	35	5.61	1.05
Czech	30,367	31	21	1.02	0.69
Ukrainian	7,430	16	12	2.15	1.62
German	4,690	17	5	3.62	1.07
Moravian	3,286	7	5	2.13	1.52
Polish	3,084	6	2	1.95	0.65
Russian	1,997	14	9	7.01	4.51
Bulgarian	1,051	15	8	14.27	7.61
Croat	1,022	7	4	6.85	3.91
Serb	698	12	5	17.19	7.16
Jewish	631	40	23	63.39	36.45
Total	651,943	1,990	1,015	3.05	1.56

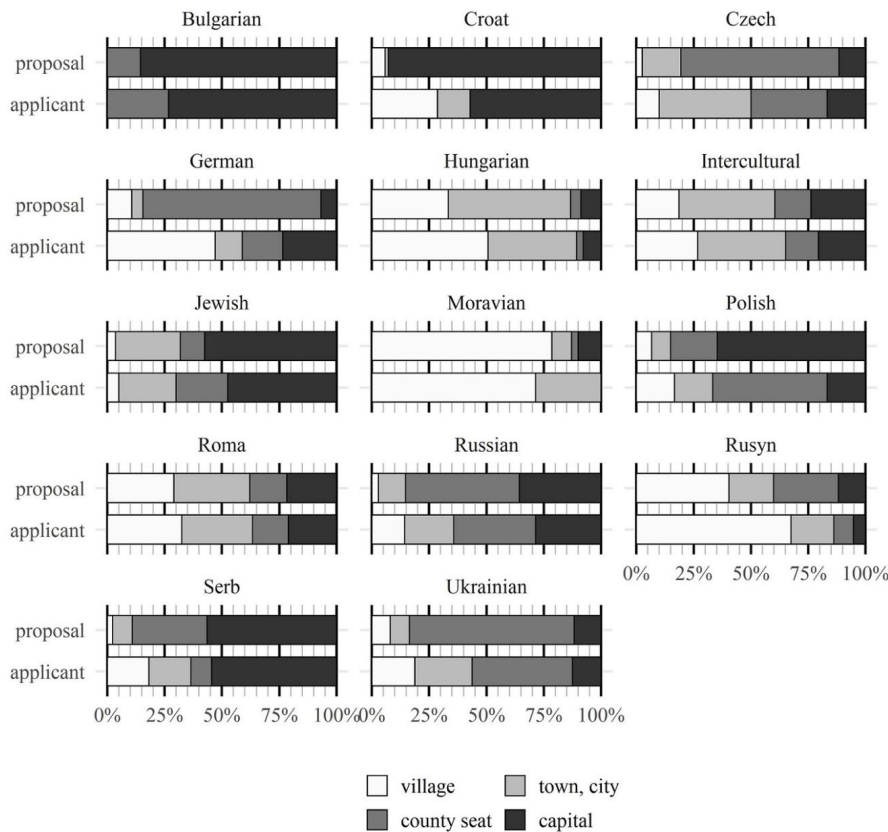
In the case of most minorities, the applicants were either NPOs or private persons. However, there are some minorities with municipalities applying in their favour. This is most evident in the case of the Rusyns, but we find many municipalities applying for Hungarian projects, and also several municipalities applied for more than one minority. The proportion of municipalities is high among German applicants, but this means only 6 municipalities.

And if we look at the distribution of the project proposals, we see that there is a significant difference in the activity of various actors, with the NPOs being by far the most active. Therefore, in the case of proposals, NPOs tend to be dominant (cf. Figure 11). This is true for all smaller minorities, except the Jewish one, in which case miscellaneous organizations (typically church-related) were more active. To a lesser degree, NPOs are the largest group in the case of the larger minorities as well. The Rusyns are the only exception, in which case a non-negligible proportion of proposals came from municipalities. Still, even in the case of the Rusyns, the share of NPO-proposed projects is more than twofold the share of NPOs themselves among applicants.

Figure 11: Composition of minority institutional systems and distribution of proposals by legal forms



Another aspect of the composition of minority institutional systems was the distribution by the type of residence. In this respect we see that smaller minorities rely on organizations seated in large cities, typically county seats (Germans, Czechs, Ukrainians), the capital (Bulgarians, Croats, Poles), or both (Russians and Serbs). Village-based applicants only play a relatively important role in the case of larger minorities (Hungarians, Rusyns, and to a certain degree the Roma). The only small minority with dominant village-based applicants was the Moravian. While there may be some village-based applicants among those of the small minorities, such in the case of Germans, these tend to apply only occasionally, and play only a supplementary role in their institutional systems, with large catch-all organizations responsible for the dominant share of proposals.

Figure 12: *Distribution of applicants and project proposals by nationality and type of residence*

These distributions already foreshadow that minority institutional systems in Slovakia can be characterized by a high level of inequality. For instance, while the average number of proposals by applicants between 2011 and 2020 was 6.981, the median was only 2, which indicates a strongly skewed distribution. In fact, three-quarters of all applicants proposed 7 or fewer projects, and 38.4% of applicants proposed only one project. On the other hand, the maximum number of projects proposed by an applicant was 209. Similarly, while the average number of active years was 3.089, the median was only 2. 44.7% of applicants applied in only one year, but there were organizations that applied in all 10 years (6% of all applicants).

Looking at the minorities, we see that these inequalities are present within the individual minority institutional systems as well. While there is also difference between the minorities, as we have shown previously, inequalities within the institutional systems are even greater. The difference between the median values, or even the upper quartiles and the maximums is significant. In the case of smaller minorities, the most active applicants were responsible for a dominant share of all proposals, as can be seen from the concentration ratios (CRs).[27] But even the larger institutional systems consist of a larger number of occasional applicants, and a smaller number of applicants, that propose several projects every year. This confirms what was written by Dénes Kiss about the hierarchical nature of minority institutional systems. This is even more evident if we look at the concentration of the funding. In the case of some smaller minorities, almost the whole funding went to the three most successful applicants, and in the case of, for instance, the German, the Croat or the Polish minority, the top applicant alone received more than 80% of the funding. But even the larger Rusyn institutional system is centered around a small number of organizations: the three most successful organizations received 46.8% of all funding, and the remaining 53.2% was distributed among the remaining 185 applicants. On the other hand, the Russian, Bulgarian and Jewish institutional systems appear to be at least somewhat less centralized.

Table 4: *Indicators of inequalities within minority institutional systems in activity [28]*

Nationality	Number of applicants	Median	Upper quartile	Maximum	CR1	CR3	Gini
Hungarian	1,147	2	6	129	1.8	5.0	0.634
Roma	490	2	4	26	1.4	4.2	0.535
Rusyn	188	3	6	141	13.3	23.7	0.605
Jewish	40	1	3	27	17.8	43.4	0.598
Czech	31	2	9	133	37.7	61.8	0.746
German	17	1	1	68	70.1	84.5	0.757
Ukrainian	16	6	14.75	90	45.0	64.0	0.647
Bulgarian	15	5	9	44	29.1	65.6	0.581
Russian	14	6.5	16	38	28.4	56.0	0.552
Serb	12	1	3.75	42	59.2	83.1	0.691
Croat	7	1	2.5	68	88.3	94.8	0.764
Moravian	7	4	7.5	38	61.3	85.5	0.594
Polish	6	1	25.75	116	75.3	98.1	0.729

Table 5: *Indicators of inequality within minority institutional system in received funding*

Nationality	Number of applicants	Median	Upper quartile	Maximum	CR1	CR3	Gini
Hungarian	1,147	3000	10497	609130	3.1	8.4	0.816
Roma	490	4000	15000	335302	4.7	10.6	0.73
Rusyn	188	2000	3925	518808	21.2	46.8	0.856
Jewish	40	2342	5302.5	77625	22.9	56.2	0.783
Czech	31	8224	52781	773552	49.8	66.3	0.804
German	17	2500	3700	654494	83.5	96.8	0.900
Ukrainian	16	11133	44598.75	522489	60.2	82.3	0.792
Bulgarian	15	12080	20112.5	181462	47.6	70.5	0.647
Russian	14	6050	29519.25	113500	40.6	71.3	0.685
Serb	12	1092	8195.25	123409	67.2	93.2	0.816
Croat	7	0	3828	443224	98.3	100.0	0.851
Moravian	7	15000	49500	275427	67.7	92.0	0.682
Polish	6	3184	45762	466803	87.6	99.6	0.787

Looking at the list of most active and most successful organizations, we see primarily the national-level organizations of the minorities, such as the Czech Association in Košice, the Association of Carpathian Germans, the Alliance of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Slovakia, the *Rusínska obroda* (Rusyn Revival), the Polish Club, the Croat Cultural Alliance in Slovakia, and other similar organizations. These form the backbone of the institutional system of the respective minorities, with possibly other smaller organizations connected to these. These national-level organizations can also be found among Hungarians, but in their case, the division of labor is more typical, while the main organizations of the smaller minorities tend to cover a wider spectrum of activities from media, publishing, to cultural events and community building.

Table 6: Top 20 most active applicants

Name	Proposals	Nationality
Rusínska obroda (Rusyn Revival)	209	Rusyn
Fórum Institute of Minority Research	196	Hungarian
Czech Association in Košice	194	Czech
Association of Carpathian Germans of Slovakia	159	German
Polish Club - Association of Poles and Their Friends in Slovakia	159	Polish
Vámbery Civic Association	135	Hungarian
Alliance of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Slovakia	135	Ukrainian
Hagyományok és Értékek (Traditions and Values) Civic Association	118	Hungarian
Kalligram Civic Association	116	Hungarian
Selye János University	115	Hungarian
Cultural Institute of Hungarians in Slovakia	112	Hungarian
Cultural Centre of Bodva Valley and Rudohorie	107	Multicultural
Croat Cultural Alliance in Slovakia	100	Croat
Rovás Civic Association	98	Hungarian
City Šahy	96	Multicultural
Association of Hungarian Writers in Slovakia	92	Hungarian
LILIUM AURUM, s.r.o.	91	Unclassified
molody.Rusyny	86	Rusyn
MADÁCH-POSONIUM s.r.o.	85	Unclassified
Slovakian-Czech Club in Slovakia	84	Czech

Table 7: Top 20 applicants receiving the most funding

Name	Funding	Nationality
Czech Association in Košice	1,091,479	Czech
Association of Carpathian Germans of Slovakia	1,005,448	German
Fórum Institute of Minority Research	822,830	Hungarian
Alliance of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Slovakia	761,849	Ukrainian
Rusínska obroda (Rusyn Revival)	704,108	Rusyn
Polish Club - Association of Poles and Their Friends in Slovakia	628,629	Polish
Croat Cultural Alliance in Slovakia	623,224	Croat
Cultural Institute of Hungarians in Slovakia	586,522	Hungarian
Association of Hungarian Writers in Slovakia	512,940	Hungarian
Madách Association	511,995	Hungarian
MPhilms s.r.o.	433,600	Hungarian
Kalligram Civic Association	406,478	Hungarian
Public Foundation Jókai Days in Komárom (Komárno)	400,400	Hungarian
DUEL-PRESS, s.r.o.	399,150	Hungarian
Civic Association LAVUTA	394,802	Roma
Amade	367,000	Hungarian
Csemadok Regional Organization in Rimaszombat (Rimavská Sobota)	351,900	Hungarian
Katedra Foundation	339,500	Hungarian
Csavar Civic Association	334,150	Hungarian
Jekhetane - Spolu (Together)	323,450	Roma

Conclusions

The paper analyzed the grant systems funding minority organizations in Slovakia between 2011 and 2020. In this period, two donors were responsible for the funding of minorities: the Government Office of Slovakia between 2011 and 2017, and the Fund for the Support of Minority Cultures from 2018. At the legislative level and at the level of the budget, the change in the funding system was significant. Instead of a government institution, an autonomous one became responsible for the funding of minority activities. In parallel, the minority communities gained more influence on the election of the councils responsible for decision making. Finally, the budget was doubled.

The paper's primary aim was to explore how these changes affected the activity of minority institutions and persons, and the distribution of funding by comparing the decision made by the Government Office and those made by the Fund. As government funding in the form of grants is the dominant source of income of minority non-profit organizations, these decisions have a significant impact on their activities and the structure of the minority institutional systems. Up to now, there was no other systematic analysis of the decisions, and the paper aimed to provide this missing analysis, to explore the preferences guiding the decision-making process, the effects of the funding on the structure of minority institutional systems, and how the significant changes at the legislative level and the budget relate to actual decision-making. In this way, the paper also aims to inform future decision-making. The structure of the funding schemes, the distribution of proposals, applicants, and funding has been analyzed based on the decisions published by the donors on their web pages.

The analysis found, that despite the reform, in several respects the funding of minority organizations continued according to the same preferences and principles. The range of eligible applicants changed somewhat, with companies, entrepreneurs and private persons regaining their eligibility in 2018, which, of course, impacted the distribution of funding by the type of applicants, and brought (back) several applicants to the system, but the range of project types remained unchanged, and based on the analysis, the preferences guiding the decisions did not change significantly. In parallel with the reform, the available budget was increased significantly, which, however, did not result in a similar increase in the activity of applicants. This shows that the increase of the budget in itself failed to further mobilize cultural initiatives of minorities. The number of proposals related to cultural activities and events increased, but we see no similar increase in the case of publishing, research, minority rights or multicultural projects. However, the doubling of the budget enabled the decision-makers to fund even more applicants, than before. Based on the data, funding as many applicants and projects as possible was always a priority, and as a result, 67.9% of all applications to the GO and 72.9% of proposals to the Fund received at least some funding. Similarly, 72.5% of those that applied to the GO, and 77.4% of those that applied to the Fund, received funding at least once. Smaller minorities were favored by the distribution of the budget, from which they received a higher share than their proportion within the population. This, coupled with the pre-selection of projects to be submitted, which presumably happened on the level of the main organizations, led to a high success rate of the proposals, and also to a high ratio of approved funding to requests. Most approved projects were tied to a particular minority, and while the donors funded multi-ethnic projects as well, the proportion allocated to these was small and decreased further after the reform. Of the various types of projects, publishing and media, and various cultural activities and events were relatively more successful. In the former case, relatively strict selection was coupled with high average grant amounts, and in the latter case, the ratio of approved projects was higher than the average. Of the various types of applicants, non-profit organizations were relatively more successful both in terms of the success ratio of the proposals, and also the ratio of funding to requests. In these respects, there were no significant changes due to a change of donors. Furthermore, the analysis of successful organizations showed that there is a high degree of continuity, with a significant proportion of successful organizations in the Fund's calls - being those that had also successfully applied to the Government Office.

The data also provided insight into the internal composition and structure of minority institutional systems and confirmed Kiss' model of hierarchical minority institutional systems. Most minorities maintain a relatively small institutional system, which is not necessarily small if compared to the size of the community, however, it is often

built around an even smaller number, often only one or two central organizations. Small population sizes call for caution in the analysis of the structure in the case of smaller minorities, however, the data suggest that this approach is typical of smaller minorities, with a few exceptions. As a result, the dominant share of project proposals of smaller minorities comes from this limited number of hierarchically structured organizations residing in county seats or the capital that try to incorporate as many kinds of activities as possible, ranging from the media, publishing, through large cultural events to club activities and community building. The concentration is even higher in the case of the received funding, which also goes to these central organizations. Interestingly, the larger Rusyn institutional system also showed signs of this, with a small number of central multi-purpose organizations, and a larger number of other occasional applicants. A division of labor can only be observed in the case of larger minorities, such as the Hungarians.

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The data used for the research is publicly available on the donors' web pages. Data manipulations and used methods are reported. Preregistration is not applicable to this article.

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

[1] At the time of writing this paper the results of the 2021 census were not known.

[2] In the State Report for the 5th monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention, the financial support system is mentioned as the main instrument of the direct support of minority cultures and languages. The State Report can be found at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/slovak-republic> (Accessed 15. 11. 2021)

[3] In the time of writing, the 2021 decisions were incomplete.

[4] 138/2017 Z. z. Zákon of Fonde na podporu kultúry národnostných menšín a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov

[5] Examples include the Association of Hungarian Parents in Slovakia, Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia, the Csemadok – Hungarian Social and Cultural Association in Slovakia, and others.

[6] Grants of the Government Office: <https://dotacie.vlada.gov.sk/> (Accessed 22. 02. 2022)

Grants of the Fund for the Support of Minority Culture: <https://podpora.kultminor.sk/statistiky/program> (Accessed 22. 02. 2022)

[7] Scraping was primarily carried out using the rvest package of R (Wickham, 2022). Data cleaning involved standardising the names of the applicants and correcting errors and typos in the names of municipalities.

[8] <https://ives.minv.sk/rmno/> (Accessed 22. 02. 2022)

[9] Some calls are only for certain minorities, and specific subprograms, the date of publication and the deadline differed for these. There were 7 calls for 2018, and 6 regular calls for both 2019 and 2020, with an additional in 2020 and an additional extra call in 2020.

[10] Some scholars consider it the greatest deficiency of the Slovak grant system, in that it does not support everyday operation (Petőcz & Tóth, 2009)

[11] Except for 2012 a uniform level of cost sharing was characteristic of the GO funding program, while in 2012 the level of mandatory cost sharing depended on the type of the project. The typical level was 5% of the total budget of the project.

[12] The instructions for 2018 are not available on the home page of the Fund.

[13] In 2019 only 1,806, and in 2020 only 1,818 grant requests were registered, only the number of requests of scholarships increased: from 72 in 2018 to 93 in 2019 to 350 in 2020.

[14] Among the new applicants there were 313 associations, 19 non-profit organizations providing publicly beneficial services, and 1 foundation.

[15] Act 138/2017. Coll. §22 (1)

[16] Proportions for 2013 are not known. In the case of the census data 100% represents all people belonging to any of these thirteen minorities

[17] The organizations of the Serbs receive only 0.1% of the annual budget of the Fund, while in the last years of the previous system received 0.7%.

[18] A value of 1 would mean that the requested amount is equal to the available budget, hence no selection process would be necessary.

[19] In these years when the budget was smaller, the difference in the proportion of funded projects is smaller than the difference in the ratio of approved funding.

[20] In the case of the Bulgarian, Croat, German, Moravian, Polish minority it is the highest possible value, i.e. 1, but it is also high in the case of the Czech (0.761), Jewish (0.783), Russian (0.786) and Ukrainian (0.857) minorities.

[21] The coefficient is 0.674 for the Hungarian, and 0.720 for the Rusyn minority.

[22] The coefficients are 0.485 and 0.518 respectively.

[23] These are mostly Hungarian organizations (19), but the Roma organizations are over-represented compared to the whole population with 40% (16 applicants), and there are also 2 Czech applicants and one German, Moravian and multicultural applicant as well.

[24] Organizations were considered as belonging to a particular minority, if at least half of their proposals were tied to a particular minority, and no proposal affected any other individual minority (intercultural project proposals were allowed, but must not amount to more than half of all proposals). If the proposals of an applicant concerned more than one individual minority, the applicant was coded as multicultural. If more than the half of an applicant's projects were intercultural projects, the applicant was coded as intercultural.

[25] In absence of more recent data, we use the data of the 2011 Census.

[26] Size of community is based on the 2011 Census data on nationality.

[27] In the case of the German minority, the difference between the first and second most active organization was 159 to 12. In the Croat case it is 100 to 4, and in the Polish 159 to 54, but the third most active applicant only proposed a single project. The Czech institutional system is somewhat more decentralized, with relatively active local organizations (in the Trnava region, Bratislava, Zvolen, Piešťany) alongside the *primus inter pares* organization of Košice.

[28] CR1 and CR3 show the concentration ratios for the most active/successful applicant and first three applicants respectively.

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