



Deposited via The University of Sheffield.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/191925/>

Version: Published Version

Article:

Matlovičová, K., Kolesárová, J., Demková, M. et al. (2022) Stimulating poverty alleviation by developing tourism in marginalised Roma communities: a case study of the central Spiš region (Slovakia). *Land*, 11 (10). 1689. ISSN: 2073-445X

<https://doi.org/10.3390/land11101689>

Reuse

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence. This licence allows you to distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon the work, even commercially, as long as you credit the authors for the original work. More information and the full terms of the licence here:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

Article

Stimulating Poverty Alleviation by Developing Tourism in Marginalised Roma Communities: A Case Study of the Central Spiš Region (Slovakia)

Kvetoslava Matlovičová ¹, Jana Kolesárová ², Michaela Demková ³, Katarína Kostilníková ³, Peter Mocák ³, Piotr Pachura ⁴  and Mark Payne ^{5,*} 

¹ Department of Tourism, Faculty of Commerce, University of Economics, Dolnozemska cesta 1, 852 35 Bratislava, Slovakia

² Global Location Services & Incentives, Emeia, Ernst & Young, 811 02 Bratislava, Slovakia

³ Department of Geography and Applied Geoinformatics, University of Prešov, 17. novembra 1, 080 01 Prešov, Slovakia

⁴ Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, Czestochowa University of Technology, Al. Armii Krajowej 19 B, 42-200 Czestochowa, Poland

⁵ Department of Education, University of Sheffield, Edgar Allen House, 241 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2GW, UK

* Correspondence: mark.payne@sheffield.ac.uk



Citation: Matlovičová, K.; Kolesárová, J.; Demková, M.; Kostilníková, K.; Mocák, P.; Pachura, P.; Payne, M. Stimulating Poverty Alleviation by Developing Tourism in Marginalised Roma Communities: A Case Study of the Central Spiš Region (Slovakia). *Land* **2022**, *11*, 1689. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11101689>

Academic Editors: María de la Cruz del Río-Rama and José Álvarez-García

Received: 27 August 2022

Accepted: 23 September 2022

Published: 29 September 2022

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract: The main objective of this study is to demonstrate that opportunities to support the poor marginalised Roma communities (MRCs) by creating opportunities for their active participation in tourism development have been under-utilised to date. In particular, the application of a pro-poor tourism (PPT) approach is an advantage that allows the cultural specificities of the MRCs to be exploited for their own development. A risk factor for successful implementation is the considerable differentiation within Roma communities. This study analyses the approaches of 65 municipalities of the Central Spiš region to the development of PPT as an option for poverty reduction in the MRCs in Slovakia. Based on the analysis of the local preconditions for tourism development, the specific potential for the development of Roma culture and the traditional economic activities, human resources, and the degree of segregation, we show that there is no universal solution that would be applicable in all communities. The limited possibilities to obtain relevant data determined the analysis options we used. Therefore, we used a mixed-method approach, in which we subjected the quantitative data to qualitative analysis based on interviews with the mayors of the communities being studied. Four assumptions were verified in the aforementioned way: (1) the MRCs in villages in the immediate vicinity of developed tourist centres show a higher level of activity in relation to their own development; (2) Roma who are active in small-scale farming will also be more active in maintaining other traditional craft activities, typical for Roma communities in Slovakia, forming the basis for the development of their own PPT product; (3) the activity of NGO's focusing on the development of the local MRC's is not a guarantee for the development of PPT activities in the villages; and finally that (4) the high level of segregation of marginalised Roma communities is a major obstacle for the implementation of PPT. This paper concludes with a typology of municipalities in relation to the preconditions for the development of PPT, which can be considered as a contribution to the discussion on the possibilities of a differentiated approach to PPT development strategies at the level of municipalities with the numerous MRC's.

Keywords: pro-poor tourism; poverty alleviation; marginalised Roma communities; segregation; cultural heritage

1. Introduction

The problem of poverty is discussed intensively in Slovakia, especially in the context of Marginalised Roma Communities (MRCs). The unfavourable living situation and the

social status of segregated Roma communities, in particular, has not been improved to a satisfactory level for a long time. These are communities that have long lived on the fringe of society, not only in terms of their social status, but also physically (they usually inhabit the peripheral areas of villages in marginalised or underdeveloped regions). The active approaches of numerous local and regional authorities, which try to initiate and support projects aimed at the activation and emancipation of local Roma, can be seen as a welcome step forward. Solutions are being sought to help communities affected by multiple marginalisation to break the cycle of absolute poverty. In a broader context, we are talking about the search for development incentives for peripheral territories.

The concept of pro-poor tourism (PPT) as an explicitly formulated phenomenon began to appear in the literature in the late 1990s. It was a response to the need to find alternative solutions to the problems of poverty resulting from the failure of top-down planning [1,2]. However, the philosophy of poverty reduction through tourism development itself is much older. The ‘poverty agenda’ has been the focus of practitioners for decades [3]. Initially, the main objective of tourism development was regional economic growth, which supported inherently disparate development—strengthening the centres and weakening the periphery [4–8]. Poverty reduction was implicitly perceived as a positive externality from tourism in the areas where it developed [9,10]. The PPT approach can thus be seen as a concept where two separate agendas have been fused: economic growth through tourism development and poverty reduction, through the involvement of the poor in tourism services [9–11]. In other words, the main objective of the so-called conventional tourism system is to increase visitor arrivals and the expansion of the industry, while the issue of the extent of poverty alleviation is sidelined [10].

How to engage relevant stakeholders, including the poor, and how and where to intervene to improve opportunities and enhance protection for the poor at the local level while achieving economic growth have become major challenges [12]. Ultimately, PPT development not only leads to direct benefits for the poor, but also brings other benefits in economic, social, environmental, and cultural spheres [1,13,14]. Relationships between tourism entrepreneurs and the poor are gradually strengthening, leading to the creation of new opportunities for the poor, with the prospect of their wider involvement and the creation of benefits for all stakeholders. Gradually, this approach is beginning to focus on the study of specific forms of tourism—e.g., cultural tourism [15], eco-cultural tourism [16], or creative tourism [17].

The term ‘pro-poor tourism’ first appeared in the research through *The Department for International Development* (DFID, later replaced by the *Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office*, FCDO) in 1999 [18] when it was reviewing the links between sustainable tourism and poverty reduction and exploring how tourism could contribute to poverty reduction [12]. Subsequently, in the same year, the concept was presented at the 7th United Nations Assembly on Sustainable Development, where the vision, i.e., to make “poverty a central issue in the tourism agenda”, was also presented [19]. To realise this goal, the *Pro-Poor Tourism Partnership* (PPTP) was formed. DFID, which coined the term ‘pro-poor tourism’, continues to play an important role in highlighting the potential of tourism to alleviate poverty and is closely linked to the *Overseas Development Institute* (ODI), which is an important part of the PPTP. Members of both the PPTP and the ODI have contributed to a significant proportion of the existing key literature on tourism and poverty alleviation.

The term ‘pro-poor tourism’ itself is problematic and cannot be described as the preferred technical term for the wider initiative. Some authors (e.g., [19]) even consider it a pejorative term and suggest replacing it with a more appropriate alternative. The UNWTO label “Sustainable Tourism—Eliminating Poverty” (ST-EP) is proposed as one alternative. Sofield et al. [19] argue for a higher level of acceptability of the acronym ST-EP. Other alternatives that are used in this context in the literature are: *tourism as a tool for ‘poverty alleviation’*, *‘poverty reduction’*, or *‘poverty elimination’*. Other authors, Zhao and Ritchie [10], propose the label *‘Anti-Poverty Tourism’*, which they argue refers to any form of tourism development with poverty reduction as a central objective [10]. Despite the diversity of opinions on the

labelling of the subject, we believe that the label PPT is apt and unambiguous in terms of the objectives it pursues, which is why we have preferred it in our study.

The indicated potential of the tourism sector for poverty reduction has not yet found an adequate response in research. So far, this issue has been examined by, e.g., Cole [20], Ashley and Mitchell [1], Hall et al. [21], Koens and Thomas [22], Frenzel, Koens, Steinbrink, and Rogerson [23], Hoogendoorn et al. [24], Okpoko [25], Chigora, Mutambabra, Ndlovu, Muzurura, and Zvavahera [26], Koens and Thomas [27], Neha Itty [28], Scheyvens [29], and Zeng, Ryan, Cui, and Chen [9]. In the early years, the existing literature was essentially based on case studies that were transformed into theoretical frameworks (e.g., [3,19,30]). In addition, related research papers were produced in the form of so-called grey literature, which only minimally contributes to the methodological development in this area of research (e.g., [12,30]). There have also been criticisms of the concept in the literature (e.g., [2,31]) due to the lack of systematic analysis of tourism's impact on poverty alleviation and the absence of empirical evidence on how tourism contributes to poverty alleviation. In 2007, Zhao and Ritchie [10] attempted to complement the feeble methodological base by developing an integrative research framework for research on tourism as a tool for development and poverty alleviation. Their ambition was to stimulate future in-depth research in this relatively new field. The gap in the lack of scholarly works focusing on evaluating the impacts of PPT and its success in combating poverty was later filled by Mitchell and Ashley [1], who sought to gather evidence that tourism enhances personal development and alleviates poverty. For this purpose, they used an analysis of the correlation between tourism intensity and several personal development indicators. Case studies from around the world were analysed, but the focus was primarily on Africa and other developing countries. In 2011, Scheyvens's *Poverty and Tourism* [29] appeared, which contributed to the broadening of the theoretical frameworks of the concept. The key factors for the implementation of this approach were discussed by Tolkach et al. [11].

The rather one-sided focus of the work of that time, which was exclusively on developing countries, can be considered somewhat limiting. One of the few exceptions is the case study by Dixey, Holland, and Burian [30], *Tourism in Poor Rural Areas: Diversifying the product and expanding the benefits in rural Uganda and the Czech Republic*, which focuses on the problem of rural depopulation and its sustainable development through the development of nature trails and rural tourism. Later in 2012, the paper, *Pro-Poor Tourism in a First World Urban Setting: Case Study of Glasgow Govan* by Butler, Currand, and Gorman [32], investigated if and to what extent the PPT principles are being used for poverty alleviation in a region of a developed country, namely Glasgow Govan in Scotland.

In the environment of Central Europe, the problem of poverty reduction specifically focusing on the MRCs, has been addressed by a number of authors (e.g., [27,33–36]). The above-mentioned research emphasises the issues of high unemployment and unexploited social capital, the identity of the Roma ethnic minority, the marginalization and stigmatization of the MRCs, and segregation. These issues create a certain framework for the subsequent considerations of the implementation of the PPT concept also under the conditions within Slovakia. To some extent, this is related to the minimal response of the newer streams of geographical thinking (e.g., critical geography and postcolonial approaches) in the geographical works of the Slovak provenance [37]. Among the few works published so far, this topic is addressed by Kolesárová [38], Matlovičová et al. [39], Mušíňka [40], Rochovská et al. [41], Michálek and Sládek Madajová [42], Klimovský et al. [43], and Hutárová et al. [44].

In Slovakia, these are territories which, despite the current lack of economic development, have exploitable potential for the development of tourism. In this context, it makes sense to consider the promotion of specifically targeted tourism products and forms of tourism aimed at supporting poor communities, the so-called pro-poor tourism (PPT) concept.

The work published so far from poor communities in the developing regions of Southeast Asia and Africa suggests that the PPT concept can work well, but only in the immediate context of tourist destinations. As shown in the work published so far

(e.g., [1,10,29]), the successful implementation and especially the sustainability of the PPT model is built on the exploitation of numerous externalities from developed tourism in neighbouring tourist attraction areas. At the same time, they suggest that the above claims need to be verified in other culturally distinct territories. In the Central European environment, where marginalised Roma communities are numerically represented, the above assumption has not been explicitly tested. Therefore, the following hypotheses were tested on the sample of 56 municipalities of the Central Spiš region, which is situated in the neighbourhood of the most attractive tourist areas in Slovakia (High Tatras, Low Tatras, and Slovak Paradise):

H1: *In municipalities in the neighbourhood of well-developed tourist centres, MRCs will take a more proactive approach to their own development.*

In addition to the localization factors of the municipalities, especially in relation to the existing developed tourist centres, the endogenous potential for tourism development could influence the success of the PPT implementation. In this respect, the hypothesis to be tested was:

H2: *Roma who are active in small-scale farming will also be more active in maintaining other traditional craft activities typical for Roma communities in Slovakia.*

The purpose was to highlight the hitherto under-exploited opportunities to help the poor of the MRCs by creating opportunities for their active participation in tourism development. In particular, the advantage of applying the PPT approach was that it allowed the use of the cultural specificities of the MRCs for their own development. A risk factor for successful implementation is the considerable inner differentiation of Roma communities. There is no one-size-fits-all solution that can be applied across the board to all MRCs. For this reason, at the stage of planning the activities, the selection of the participating communities (or the municipalities in which they are located) appeared to be crucial. In the context of the above, the following hypotheses were tested:

H3: *The mere existence of an NGO focusing on working with MRCs is no guarantee of the long-term sustainability of PPT activities.*

H4: *A fundamental barrier to the implementation of PPT is the high level of segregation of marginalised Roma communities.*

2. Materials and Methods

The main problem of studies focusing on marginalised Roma communities in Slovakia, but also in other Central European countries, is the availability of relevant data. Although official censuses provide data on national minorities, the majority of the MRC residents officially report themselves as Slovak or other nationalities (e.g., Hungarian or Ruthenian). Here we encounter the problem of the self-perception of identity of members of national minorities. Official statistics work exclusively with data which is based on the so-called self-declaration. From the point of view of the analysis of assumptions for PPT in marginalised communities, on that basis, we cannot identify the specific attributes of MRCs, necessary for the evaluation of their development problems. For this reason, for the purposes of the present analysis we used our own empirical research and data from the national mapping of Roma communities [33,45] in which we participated. Unlike the Slovak Statistical Office, these surveys used so-called qualified estimates, based on the method of imputed ethnicity. This demanded field research, which was carried out directly in the MRCs. To classify the municipalities according to the groups of indicators (see above), we used data from our own research conducted in 2014, 2015, and 2019. The research in the municipalities was complemented by an online survey of the mayors of the 56 municipalities under study. Due to the low response rate (45%), we do not report its results separately. However, we have used the opinions of the mayors of the selected municipalities, which we report in the text of this study (92% of the mayors who participated in the survey do have segregated

Roma communities in their municipalities). Furthermore, we have used data from the national survey of Roma communities [33,45] and from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic [46]. In classifying communities according to their potential for PPT within each group of areas, we assessed the following in each of the 56 communities:

- (1) The preconditions for tourism development in the municipality—we considered three groups of indicators:
 - (a) The attractiveness of the territory in terms of the environmental potential for the development of tourism, as evaluated based on the number of identified attractions per registered number of visitors—the assessed components of the environment have been identified as follows: relief, climate, aquatic environment, flora, and fauna (the degree of protection of the territory was also taken into consideration, e.g., national park, nature reserve, natural monument);
 - (b) The attractiveness of the territory in terms of cultural–historical potential for tourism, number of identified attractions per registered number of visitors—the assessed components of cultural–historical potential: architectural works, technical monuments, national–historical monuments, monuments of folk architecture, natural monuments, cultural facilities, and organised events, etc.;
 - (c) The material and technical base and the number of visits—quantity and capacity of accommodation and catering facilities, number of visitors (official data available for 2019), accessibility, and other facilities (facilities with a tourist and recreational function, e.g., playgrounds, swimming pools, ski slopes, and cross-country skiing tracks, etc.).

The final value of the estimated potential for tourism development (0–9) was determined for each municipality separately as a weighted average of the above groups of indicators. The value of the weights was determined on the basis of the level of importance of the indicator for the assessed area. The assessment also accounted for the current state of tourist demand (the calculation also included the actual number of registered visitors), which allowed us to optimise the scope of expected benefits in relation to the size of the actual market reach.

- (2) As part of the synthetic assessment of human resource potential in the 56 municipalities with MRCs, the rate of Roma unemployment, the proportion of Roma involved in ‘activation works’ (state-subsidised work for the poor, which was organised by municipalities), the number of Roma entrepreneurs in the municipality, the number of active (Roma) freelancers in the municipality, and the number of Roma in the municipality who were long-term employed abroad and maintained regular contact with their families in the municipality, were evaluated. The final score of the indicator (0–9) was determined for each municipality separately as a weighted average of the above groups of indicators. The value of the weights was determined on the basis of the level of importance of the indicator for the assessed area.
- (3) In the overall assessment of the specific potential for the development of Roma culture and the promotion of traditional economic activities, we considered:
 - (a) The availability of active support to the MRCs: (1) the implementation of field work (FW), (2) the existence of a community/low-threshold centre, and (3) the operation of NGOs, citizens’ associations, and pastoral or other development centres that work with Roma;
 - (b) Cultural, artistic, and economic activities of the MRCs: we observed the presence of Roma music/dance (folk) ensembles, active Roma craftspeople/artists (painters, carvers, producers of traditional products, and producers of musical instruments, etc.), the existence of Roma farming households that were growing vegetables, and Roma cattle-breeding households.

The final synthetic score value was set in relation to the nature of the indicator: the size and frequency expressed in an absolute value, the data converted to the number of inhabitants of the municipality or the MRCs, the percentage, and the potential score where

the assigned score was in the interval (0, 9). The final value of the synthetic indicator was determined as a combination of the weighted average with the weights determined according to the level of importance of the indicator on the assessed area.

- (4) The final assessed area of preconditions for the development of PPT was the degree of MRC segregation expressed as an index of segregation in the 56 municipalities of the Central Spiš region that were studied. The sets of the indicators as well as the method of its calculation is described in Table 1.

Table 1. The sets of indicators used to calculate the MRC segregation index in the municipalities of the Central Spiš region.

Indicator	Assessed Attributes	Calculation
The share of the municipality's population lived in concentrations	(a) concentrations inside the municipality	(a) $(M_i\%/100) \times 10$
	(b) concentrations on the edge of the municipality	(b) $(M_i\%/100) \times 20$
	(c) segregated concentrations	(c) $(M_i\%/100) \times 30$
Proportion of MRC population by location of concentration	(a) in the built-up municipality area	(a) $\sum P_k (M_i\%/100) \times 10$
	(b) mixed location	(b) $\sum P_k (M_i\%/100) \times 20$
	(c) in the outside built-up municipality area	(c) $\sum P_k (M_i\%/100) \times 30$
Share of MRC residents live in segregated communities by the distance of the concentration from the municipality	(a) 1–99 m	(a) $\sum P_k (M_i\%/100)$
	(b) 100–499 m	(b) $\sum P_k (M_i\%/100) \times 2$
	(c) 500–999 m	(c) $\sum P_k (M_i\%/100) \times 3$
	(d) 1000–1999 m	(d) $\sum P_k (M_i\%/100) \times 4$
	(e) over 2000 m	(e) $\sum P_k (M_i\%/100) \times 5$
Proportion of residents of MRC concentrations occupying substandard dwelling types	(a) share of their residents of the total number of registered Roma in the municipality/share of brick houses under construction or not registered in the Land Registry	(a) $(P_r\%/100)/(M_i\%/100)$
	(b) share of their residents of the total number of registered Roma in the municipality/share of wooden houses—not registered in the Land Registry	(b) $((P_r\%/100)/(M_i\%/100)) \times 2$
	(c) share of their residents in the total number of registered Roma in the municipality/share of container-type modular cabin (“unimobunky”) and caravans (small static mobile homes or trailers, “maringot-ky”)	(c) $((P_r\%/100)/(M_i\%/100)) \times 2$
	(d) share of their residents of the total number of registered Roma in the municipality/share of dwellings using non-residential premises for housing	(d) $((P_r\%/100)/(M_i\%/100)) \times 3$
	(e) share of their residents of the total number of registered Roma in the municipality/share of other dwellings	(e) $((P_r\%/100)/(M_i\%/100)) \times 3$
	(f) share of their residents of the total number of registered Roma in the municipality/share of shanty houses	(f) $((P_r\%/100)/(M_i\%/100)) \times 5$
Proportion of residents of MRC concentrations occupying dwellings built on someone else's land	(a) The share of dwellings that are built on the land of known private owners outside the settlement	(a) $M_i\%/100$
	(b) share of dwellings built on land owned by the municipality, church, the Slovak Army, the Slovak Land Fund, under its administration, possibly state institutions and other owners	(b) $M_i\%/100$
	(c) the share of dwellings which are built on land of unknown owners	(c) $(M_i\%/100) \times 2$

Table 1. Cont.

Indicator	Assessed Attributes	Calculation
Access to drinking water	(a) The share of dwellings without access to drinking water (no piped water or well)	(a) $(M_i\%/100) \times 8$
	(b) The share of the population using other sources of drinking water (no 'tap')	(b) $M_i\%/100 \times 2$
Access to the public sewerage system	The share of dwellings that do not use the sewerage system or a cesspit	$(M_i\%/100) \times 8$
Access to the public electricity network	The share of dwellings that cannot use the public electricity network	$(M_i\%/100) \times 8$
Street lighting	The share of settlements not covered by street lighting	$(M_i\%/100) \times 4$

Note: M—municipality; P—population of MRC. Source: own processing based on data from [47].

All of the above partial attributes of the municipalities were then used in the comprehensive analysis of the impact assessment for the development of PPT in the study area. The evaluation of each Hypothesis H1–H4 is presented in the conclusion of the study.

3. Study Area (Spiš)

The selected area of the Central Spiš region is a compact area in terms of cultural attributes. The selected districts formed the central part of the historical region of Spiš (Figure 1). The cultural and historical potential of the Spiš County for tourism development reflects the economic development at the time of German colonization (13th–15th centuries). The preserved medieval urban structures, sacral complexes, castles, and fortifications are valuable. Today, the region faces many socio-economic challenges. Among the most serious are undersized economic sectors and high unemployment, particularly affecting the large number of marginalised Roma communities.

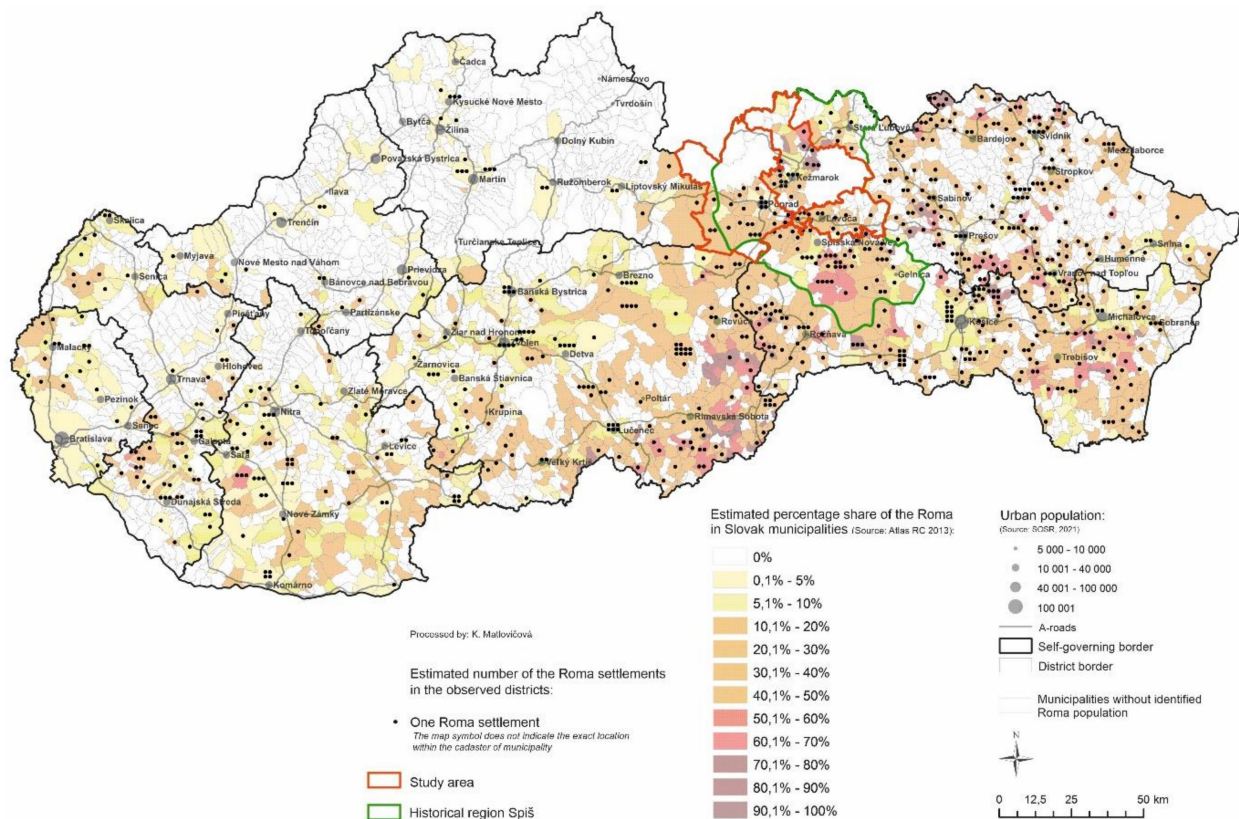


Figure 1. Location of the study area within Slovakia. Source: based on data from [47].

In terms of the current administrative division, the study area is defined by three districts of the Prešov Self-Governing Region (PSK), Poprad, Kežmarok and Levoča, situated in its north-western part. In terms of population, Poprad is the largest town (49,855, [48,49]). The central part of the Poprad district lies in the Poprad basin. The northern part of the territory is mountainous. The Vsoké Tatry (High Tatras) and Belianské Tatry (Belianske Tatras) ranges extend into it and the southern part of the district is partly covered by the Kozie chrbty and Nízke Tatry mountain ranges, the Hornad basin, and the Slovenský raj mountains. The district of Kežmarok is situated in the northern part of the Poprad basin. Its territory consists of the geomorphological units, the High Tatras, Spišská Magura, and the Levočské vrchy mountain ranges. The last of the district's physical-geographical units consists of a part of the Hornad basin, a part of the Levočské vrchy and Branisko mountains.

In terms of the focus of the study, the presence of marginalised Roma communities (MRCs) in the neighbourhood of a tourist-attractive area was a determining criterion for the selection of the area. The Central Spiš region is a tourist-attractive area with high visitor numbers and well-developed infrastructure. Mountain tourism, medical tourism, cultural, and rural tourism are dominant. In the neighbourhood of the local tourist sites, numerous Roma communities are located and characterised by varying degrees of segregation and living standards.

One of the prerequisites for the development of PPT in villages with localised concentrations of poor Roma communities is their location in the surroundings of important tourist centres. The development of PPT in the case of Central Spiš is based on the use of the externalities of the development of the Vsoké Tatry (High Tatras mountain), as one of the key Slovak tourist destinations. The MRCs are concentrated or dispersed in 56 of the 103 municipalities of the Central Spiš region. More specifically, Roma live in 22 municipalities in the Poprad district, in 11 municipalities in the Levoča district, and in 23 municipalities in the Kežmarok district [33]. Each of the 56 municipalities is characterised by specific local conditions and preconditions that determine the nature and extent of the possible use of pro-poor activities.

4. Results and Discussion

The set of attributes of the primary destination supply determines its character and functional utilization in the tourism sector. The suitability of a place for the implementation of the PPT approach increases as the degree of development of the above-mentioned preconditions increases. In the case of the study area, in each of the 56 municipalities we assessed the degree of attractiveness of the territory in terms of the existence of its own *local resources for the development of tourism* on the basis of 12 indicators (for the details of the construction see Section 2, Materials and Methods). The resulting positions of the municipalities within the four quadrants (Figure 2) were then used to verify Hypothesis 1 (see Section 5, Conclusions). The classification method used can serve as a model example for local and regional authorities as well as tourism development organisations in the process of setting development priorities aimed at the inclusion of marginalised Roma communities. In the first phase, PPT support should be targeted at municipalities with the best preconditions for the successful implementation of new tourism products, namely municipalities in the first (none of the municipalities are located here) and second quadrants. The highest values within the monitored indicator were achieved by the district towns of Levoča (7.7), Poprad (7.5), and Kežmarok (7.2), where services and cultural life are the most developed. The municipalities of Štrba, Veľká Lomnica, Liptovská Teplička, and Spišské Podhradie also have an above average position within the indicator with a value of 6 to 7. Together with the other 17 municipalities in the second quadrant (Figure 2), they have relatively wide opportunities for creating links with the private sector and developing PPT. The rest of the municipalities show lower values on the indicator, which mean limited possibilities for PPT implementation.

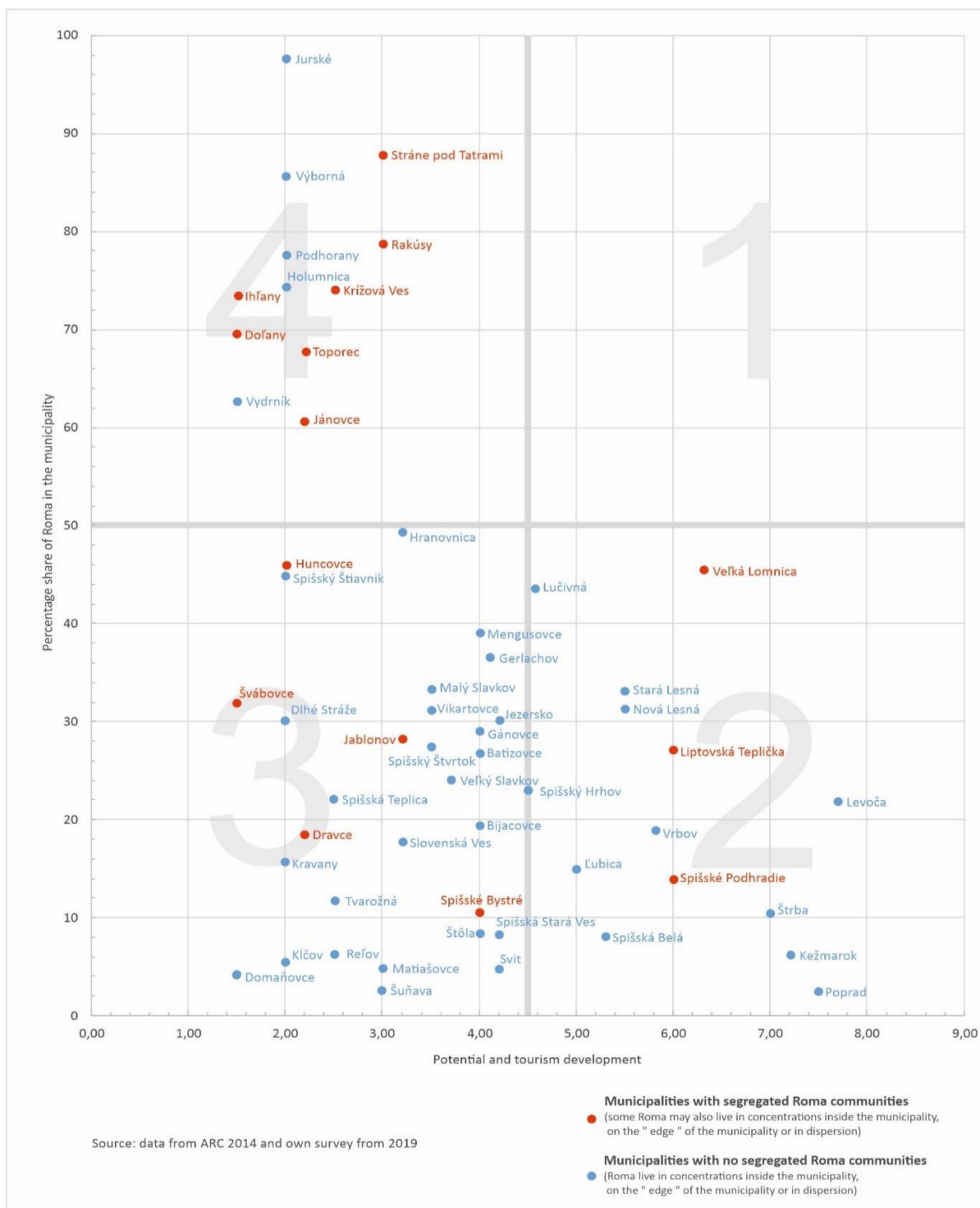


Figure 2. Attractiveness and development of tourism in municipalities with MRCs of Central Spiš. Source: own evaluation based [45,47] for more see methodology.

Considering that the study area as a whole represents an attractive tourist destination, recommendations to municipalities with a lower degree of attractiveness could be to look for opportunities for applying a pro-poor approach in supply chains and associated tourism sectors.

The Roma communities in the 56 municipalities that were under study differed from each other in the human resources precondition. One of these preconditions is the size of the mainly segregated concentrations. As a rule, the number of unemployed, i.e., the volume

of the unused labour force, increases with the increasing size of the community [50]. The structure of the unemployed in terms of qualifications and work experience varies. It should also be noted that as the number of segregated communities increases, so does the number of long-term unemployed with low levels of education [51,52]. One of the instruments of the unemployment reduction policy is 'activation works' (state-subsidised work for the poor, organised by municipalities). This is targeted towards long-term unemployed inhabitants, which deliver public services for municipalities. The tool aims to stimulate and support working habits. The activation allowance provided is most often used as a reward for the unemployed to engage in various municipal services. It can also take the form of voluntary service.

According to data from the national sociographic mapping of Roma communities in Slovakia [33], the percentage of Roma involved in 'activation work' in the examined municipalities varies (it also varies at the municipality level between communities). The situation is similar in municipalities with large communities and within them large groups of long-term unemployed whose members are involved in activation work (e.g., the municipalities of Rakúsy and Ihľany). In this respect, local governments have competencies that allow them to regulate the number of offered positions for activation work according to the actual need. There are several reasons for the low number of positions for activation work (e.g., in the municipalities of Lučivná, Spišská Teplica, Batizovce, and Vikartovce). The most common ones include, for example, the abuse of the low level of control during work¹, or the reluctance to work on the side of the long-term unemployed.

In the communities with a low level of education and a low proportion of the unemployed Roma being involved in activation work, it is to be expected that conditions will be more difficult when trying to achieve a higher level of their personal activation. These facts should not be overlooked when implementing pro-poor approaches. On the contrary, they need to be considered and the planning of measures needs to be subsequently adapted to the circumstances.

In the scope of the synthetic assessment of the labour force potential of the MRCs, we incorporated not only the number of unemployed Roma, but also the number of those unemployed engaged in activation work and the number of entrepreneurs and active tradespeople, including them in the total number of the MRCs. The highest potential within the monitored territory is in the municipalities situated in the first quadrant: Ihľany, Jurské, Toporec, Holumnica, Krížová Ves, Rakúsy, and Výborná (Figure 3).

In the case of the marginalised communities, we are talking about the communities with specific lifestyles and a distinctive approach to life oriented towards the present. Planning activities which are aimed at improving their living situation from the perspective of another culture (within Slovakia, the majority culture) often fail to understand their real needs. The experience of several municipalities shows that social work, community and various support centres, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civic associations, and pastoral or other religiously oriented associations play an important role in this respect. Its role can be helpful whether in the field of communication, education, increasing economic literacy, or the development of the necessary skills of the community members with regard to the development of the intended pro-poor activities. Our field research which includes interviews among the mayors of the villages of the Central Spiš region in which the assistance centres operate, has shown that these centres play an indispensable role in the process of poverty reduction of the MRCs. In other words, such a form of assistance significantly increases the chances of the successful implementation of pro-poor activities. The MRCs in such communities show that they have more interest in improving their own socio-economic situation and the willingness to participate in the planned PPT development activities.

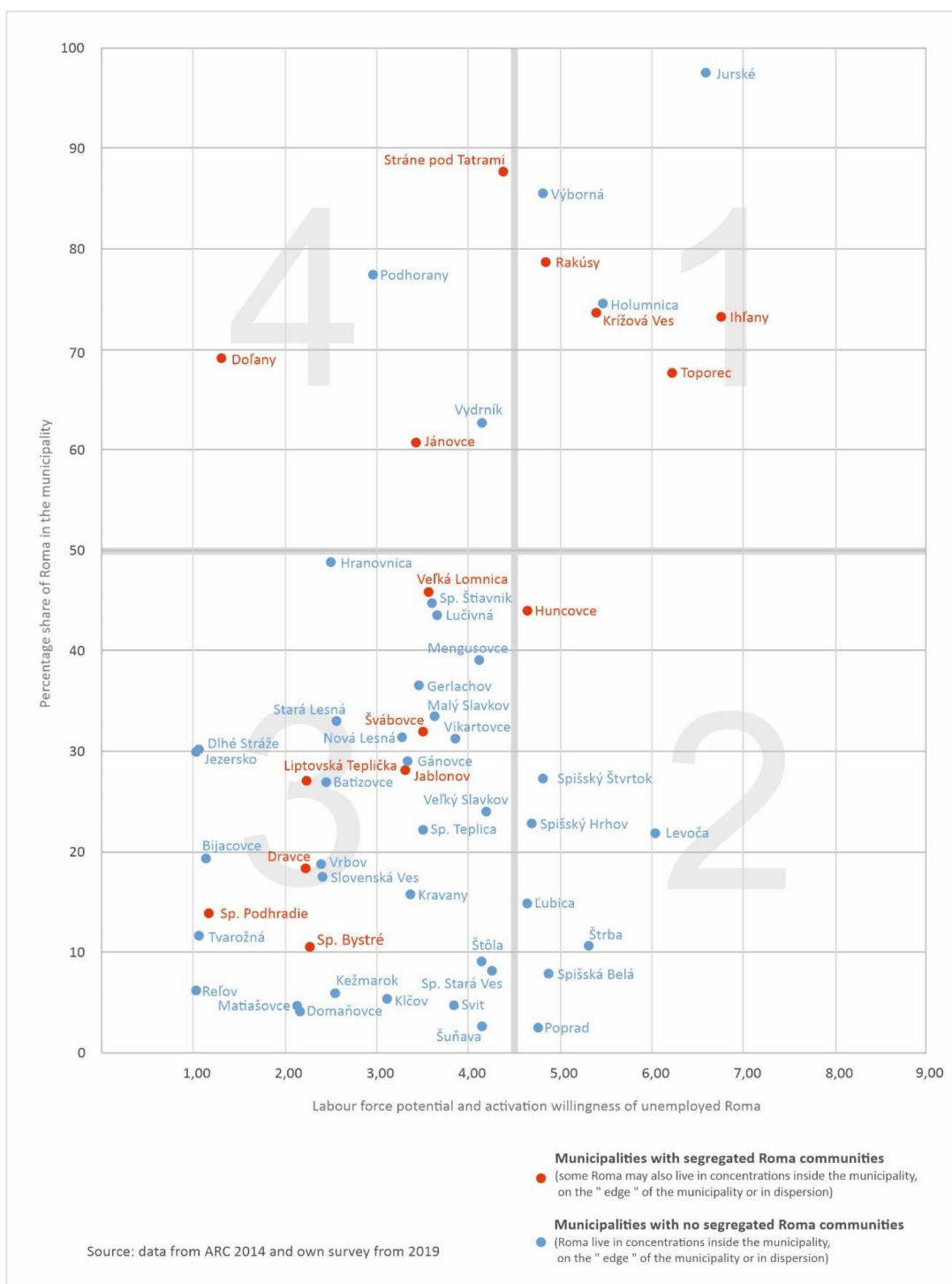


Figure 3. Labour force potential and activation of the unemployed Roma (The Activation Works program) in the MRCs of Central Spiš. Source: own evaluation based [45,47] for more see methodology.

Social Work (SW) is provided within the framework of the *National Project Social Work and Field Work in Municipalities with the Presence of Marginalized Roma Communities II* and is aimed at improving the current unsatisfactory situation in Roma communities (MINV 2022). It is a project implemented with the support of the European Social Fund (ESF) under the Operational Programme: *Employment and Social Inclusion*. Social work is carried out in the natural environment of the MRCs, where it focuses on people in social need or in a current crisis situation and on individuals at risk of socio-pathological phenomena

(e.g., drug addiction, prostitution, and petty crime—especially theft). Field social workers provide assistance to Roma in the areas of housing, education, hygiene, health, and for the elimination of socio-pathological phenomena. SW is currently funded by a contribution in 203 municipalities in Slovakia (data as of 2022; [53]). There are 10 municipalities of those under consideration: three municipalities in the district of Kežmarok (Malý Slavkov, Spišská Stará Ves, and Vrbov), three municipalities in the district of Levoča (Dravce, Spišské Podhradie, and Spišský Hrhov), and four municipalities in the district of Poprad (Gánovce, Kravany, Spišské Bystré, and Svit) [53].

Social assistance for MRCs is also operating in other municipalities in Slovakia. It is mainly organised by the NGOs and the municipalities themselves. This includes, for example, the support of social inclusion of the MRCs through community work in community centres. Similar to SW, the development of community centres is implemented with the support of ESF under the Operational Programme: Employment and Social Inclusion. The national project, Community Centres, is mainly intended for a group of people who are socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion, with an emphasis on the MRCs, who are characterised by their inability to participate in social, economic, political, and cultural life due to factors such as low income, poor health, lack of education, poor contact with the majority population, and discrimination [54]. There are currently 92 Community Centres (CCs) in Slovakia, eight of which work with the MRCs in the study region. Specifically, these are in the municipalities of Doľany, Levoča, Kežmarok, Výborná, Veľká Lomnica, Toporec, Spišská Teplica, and Rakúsy [54].

Some of the activities at the community centre (KC) are leisure activities, especially for Roma children and youth, and others provide educational training and courses. Leisure activities include, for example, dancing, singing or art clubs, handicraft and cooking clubs, regular meetings on responsible reproductive behaviour and health care, and the organisation of a variety of events for children and adults. The diversity of the KC's focus also opens space for training and developing the skills needed for tourism development. KCs can initiate projects to obtain grant funding to support activities related to the tourism sector.

An example is the former community centre in the village of Krížová Ves in the district of Kežmarok, where the Roma population is in the majority. From 2007 to 2015 it was operated by the Committee for Youth in the Diocese of Spiš. The community centre cooperated with the art school in Kežmarok and focused on the handmade production of various utilitarian and decorative items (oven mitts and wooden pots, etc.) as part of the skills development, which we considered in the PPT (souvenir sale). At the same time (2007), a Roma Pastoral Centre (RPC) was opened in the village, having been built on the previous activities of the Roman Catholic Church in the local Roma settlement and continuing to this day. In 2001–2003, the local parish priest rehearsed a musical with young Roma, as part of the regular camps for children and youth, which they performed in the surrounding villages. In 2007, they organised the 'Krížová Ves is looking for a Superstar' competition, where local musically talented Roma performed. In 2009, they organised a festival of Roma and Slovak gospel groups, FestRom, in Krížová Ves, which managed to attract around 800 spectators (visitors). In 2010, the local Roma band JEK H DROM recorded their own CD with mostly their own musical production. In 2009, the tradition of organising Roma animation schools aimed at the formation of Roma animators started in the village, and a year later the RPC also set up a low-threshold club. Currently, the RPC offers Bible, creative, and dance clubs for children and youth within the Church Leisure Centre and also cooperates with the Private Joint School in Kežmarok, which teaches young seamstresses on its premises. (Information on activities with the RMC in Krížová Ves was drawn from [55]). Another important organisation that has been active in the village since 2016 is the Kežmarok Platform for Social Inclusion KEPLA n.o. (with activities in the Kežmarok district and the Spiš region). It provides assistance and support mainly for building infrastructure (also necessary for the development of PPT). It focuses mainly on housing and employment (training in social and communication skills, financial literacy

courses, assistance and advice in self-help house construction, and assistance in setting up a municipal social enterprise, [56]).

There are currently 59 registered citizens' associations working with Roma in the Central Spiš² region (the other 23 municipalities of the Central Spiš have no registered citizens' associations, [57]).

The work of NGOs such as ETP and the Regional Development Partnership can also be highlighted. ETP Slovakia is a non-profit, consulting, and educational organisation. Since its inception, ETP has been working with municipalities, businesses, and NGOs on programmes that develop public participation in decision-making, increase the sustainability of local development, and improve environmental care. ETP Slovakia's mission is to promote Roma integration by building and developing the potential of individuals and communities. ETP connects professionals and communities by bridging human, social, and economic capital in socially disadvantaged communities and by supporting communities in their long-term development and self-sufficiency. ETP is actively involved in the establishment of community centres. The organisation's successful projects include Building Hope in Lunik IX, Escape 9—Bridges for Lunik IX, Building Hope—Improving Life in Roma Ghettos, Community on the Road to Prosperity, Chance for Roma, From the Shack to the 3E House, RomaNet, Microloan Programme and Savings Programme—Let's Make Our Dream Come True, and many more [58]. ETP was also one of the partners of the international Art4ROM project, which promotes intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, and social inclusion between Roma and non-Roma children aged 5–10 using an innovative educational methodology based on the use of art in both in-school and out-of-school settings [14]. Subsequently, performances were organised in the Košice Culture Park, where visitors could support talented children from Roma settlements (Stará Ľubovňa, Rankovce, Moldava nad Bodvou, and Košice-Sace) who presented themselves through singing, dancing, theatre performances, or painting [58].

The aim of the Regional Development Partnership is to improve social, cultural, economic, and social conditions in the regions of the Slovak Republic [59]. As a result of its activities, the Roma Education Fund, for example, is a development programme that seeks to actively address the unfavourable social situation of at least some Roma in Slovakia. It focuses on supporting Roma children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds who study in secondary and primary schools and have a high probability of continuing their studies at university. At the same time, it supports the economic activities of Roma, focusing on small-scale handicraft production (e.g., the production of crocheted bags made of linen twine and the production of hand-sewn notebooks). In this way, Roma will acquire the manual skills and habits as well as the minimum knowledge of how to run a business, which will then enable them to better position themselves in the labour market [60].

In Central Spiš, the largest number of support and assistance centres are located in Poprad, Kežmarok, Spišské Podhradí, Do'any, Dravce, and Veľká Lomnica. This group of municipalities is active within all the groups of organisations under consideration (social work, community/low-threshold centre, NGOs, citizens' associations, and pastoral or other development centres focusing on work with Roma). There is also a relatively diverse range of activities in the municipalities of Liptovská Teplička, Krížová Ves, Rakúsy, Levoča, Toporec, Slovenská Ves, Spišský Hrhov, and Spišský Štiavnik. In 22 municipalities none of the monitored support activities were found. These are mostly municipalities with a small Roma community. However, there are also those in which the living situation of the Roma minority is inadequate, i.e., the support of the MRCs in the municipality would be beneficial.

An important precondition for the sustainable development of PPT (in the sense of its orientation towards the culture of poor communities) is the maintenance and development of Roma culture and traditional activities, which should form the core of the tourism product. Involving the MRCs in PPT through the activities that are close to their hearts and that engage many of them in their free time, increases the chances of successful implantation of PPT projects. At the same time, it creates opportunities for further personal development of the individuals involved.

At present, it can be stated that, with a few exceptions, the development of craft activities in the MRCs is rare, featuring in only five villages—Mengusovce (basketry), Hranovnica (wicker broom making), Poprad (painting), Spišská Teplica (violin making), and Vikartovce (shingle making). In contrast, Roma music/dance groups were identified in 12 villages³.

In 22 villages with MRCs we identified Roma families engaged in farming (growing vegetables) and 41 families engaged in stock raising (breeding domestic livestock). However, it should be noted that these are occasional activities, which are undertaken by a small number of families. An exception is the village of Spišský Štvrtok, where almost every family (86 families) is involved in farming, followed by the villages of Toporec (80 families run a farm), Ihľany (50 families), Krížová Ves (21 families), Nová Lesná (17 families), and Jurské (12 families).

The cultivation of agricultural crops is carried out, to a greater extent, in the municipalities of Toporec (82 families), Nová Lesná (30 families), Jurské (12 families), Holumnica (11 families), and Spišská Teplica (10 families). In these municipalities, where local Roma have a relationship with cultivation or breeding, pro-poor activities can be subsequently initiated, for example in the field of agro-tourism.

When assessing the specific potential of Roma culture, we observed the existence of Roma music/dance (folklore) ensembles, active Roma craftspeople/artists (painters, carvers, traditional product manufacturers, and musical instrument makers, etc.), the existence of Roma households growing vegetables, and Roma households raising domestic livestock. High values within the above-mentioned indicator were achieved by the district towns of Poprad (4.7) and Kežmarok (3.3) (Figure 4).

Based on the available data from the last comprehensive mapping of Roma communities in Slovakia from 2013 [33] and information from our own research in 2019⁴, we calculated the MRC Segregation Index in the monitored municipalities of Central Spiš. Fifty-six municipalities were selected and identified as MRCs. An overview of the indicators that were entered into the calculation as well as the construction of the index, is described in Table 1. The results of the evaluation of the villages in terms of the degree of MRC segregation and the assessment of the potential for tourism development in the village, are shown in Figure 5.

In terms of PPT development, the best preconditions are in the municipalities located in quadrant 1—a low level of MRC segregation and a high potential for tourism development. There are 15 municipalities in this quadrant. Poprad, Kežmarok, and Levoča, where the segregated MRCs are located, have the best ratio of the monitored indices. The Roma in them live in several concentrations mostly on the outskirts of, or inside, the city. In Poprad there are five concentrations (two on the outskirts of the city and three inside the city, where a total of 630 Roma live in 88 dwellings), in Kežmarok there are two concentrations inside the city (226 Roma live in 38 dwellings), and in Levoča there are three concentrations (two on the outskirts of the city and one outside the city, where 1263 Roma live in 245 dwellings, [45]). Their position in terms of the preconditions for the development of tourism (the best among the examined municipalities) can be perceived as natural with regard to their size. They are the three largest settlements in the study area and are the current administrative centres (district towns). Their potential for the development of PPT—especially cultural tourism—stems from their rich history and the number of valuable cultural and historical attractions. In addition to these, there are 12 municipalities located in the first quadrant, which from the point of view of planning potential activities in the field of PPT show the best preconditions for its successful implementation. These are the municipalities of Štrba, Stará and Nová Lesná, Spišská Bela, Spišský Hrhov, and Ľubica. Liptovská Teplička and Spišské podhradie also have promising potential for PPT development. However, there are segregated Roma communities in these municipalities, Spišské Podhradie (two segregated communities of 255 inhabitants) and Liptovská Teplička (two segregated concentrations with 736 inhabitants, [45]), whose involvement in PPT will pose a greater challenge. However, as some communities (e.g., Krížová Ves, mentioned

earlier in the text) show, positive results can be achieved despite high levels of segregation and underdevelopment. Our classification of municipalities in terms of the different indicators is intended to be useful for local and regional governments as well as for organizations focused on assisting and supporting poverty alleviation in the RMC through tourism development. As our study has shown, PPT development should be promoted primarily in those municipalities that have the greatest potential for these activities. Other municipalities should primarily focus on other activities that are expected to be acceptable to the RMC and, given the benefits, sustainable.

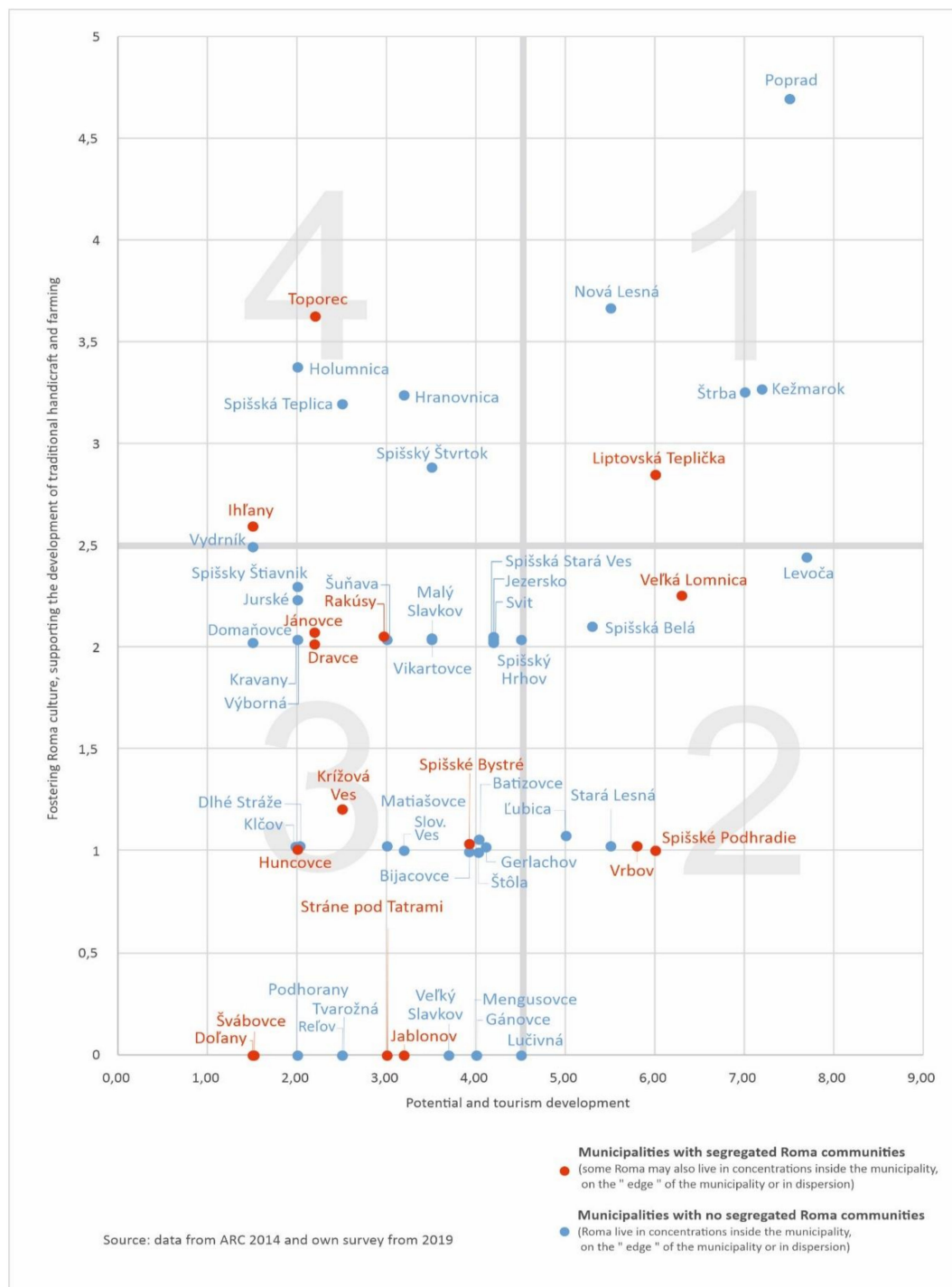


Figure 4. Fostering Roma culture, supporting the development of traditional handicrafts and farming in Central Spiš Municipalities. Source: own evaluation based [45,47] for more see methodology.

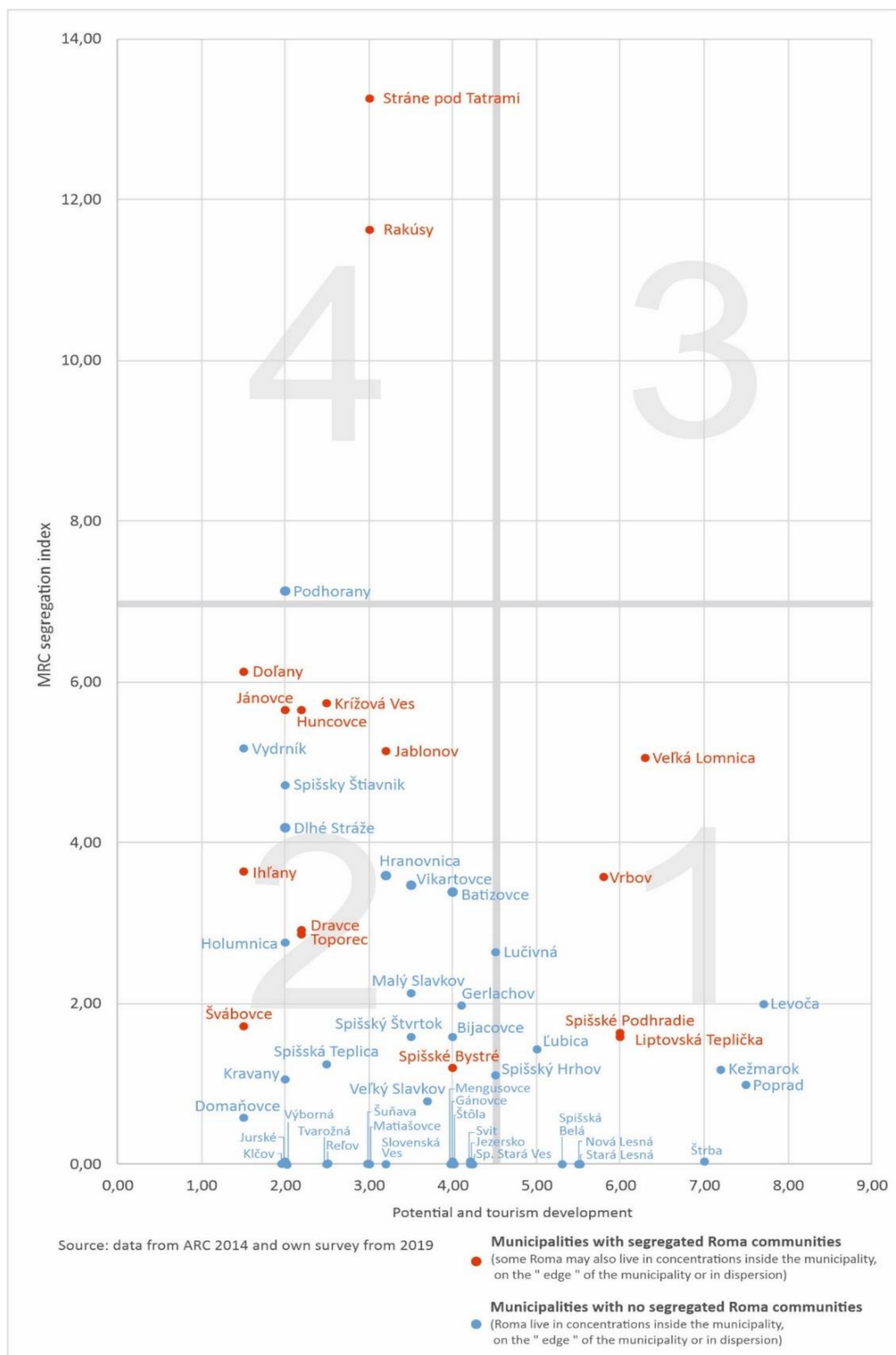


Figure 5. MRC segregation index in the municipalities of the Central Spiš region. Source: own evaluation based [45,47] for more see methodology.

In general, tourism is considered to be a multidimensional phenomenon, linking the material, cultural, and social elements of spatial reality. The consumption of the final

product and the resulting experience is conditioned by a set of basic and supplementary services, which are provided by various associated industries. In tourism there is thus a wide range of activities that could be developed through a pro-poor approach. Potential scope could be found in the creation of tourist attractions, in supply chains, or in the supply of different services that are currently in demand. The wide range of identified opportunities with links to marginalised Roma communities in the area of interest can be divided into three main groups based on their focus:

- (a) opportunities linked to Roma cultural heritage;
- (b) opportunities linked to hospitality facilities, agro-tourism, and products linked to visiting selected Roma households;
- (c) opportunities in the associated sectors of tourism.

(a) *Opportunities linked to Roma cultural heritage*

Among the most common traditional crafts that the early settled Roma practised and earned their livelihoods with were blacksmithing, basket making, trough making, kettle making, bell making, and charcoal making [61]. Nowadays, Roma are only sporadically engaged in traditional crafts, and their practice is an exception rather than commonplace.

According to our research (2014 and supplemented by a survey in 2019), there is only one shingle maker (Vikartovce), a painter (Poprad), a violin maker (Spišská Teplica), and a broom maker (Hranovnica) in the Central Spiš region. The situation is slightly better in the field of Roma music and dance. Roma music groups or ensembles are active in several municipalities—Holumnica, Kežmarok, Veľká Lomnica, Krížová Ves, Hranovnica, Liptovská Teplica, Nová Lesná, Poprad, Spišský Štiavnik, Štrba, and Vydriák.

Although the historical continuity of traditional crafts has been interrupted among the Roma and Roma music is also in decline, in the context of the development of PPT activities, the possibility for their renewal is emerging. The added value is that projects that are set up carefully have the potential to create space for self-realisation, the creation of employment opportunities, and a change in the life strategies of those involved. Drawing on examples of good practice in PPT implementation, a form of mentoring by an experienced craftsperson appears to be effective. The focus of the workshop should be on traditional crafts in the area (woodworking, blacksmithing, bell making, basket making, pottery, weaving, and tinkering, etc.). The primary requirements for culture-based tourism products are that they are attractive and easy to understand, so that they can meet the needs of tourists. This means that craft production and the products themselves need to be set up in such a way as to reflect the current demand of the tourist customer. Today, tourists are much more likely to use their leisure time actively (e.g., by learning or developing different skills). Roma craft workshops have great potential in this respect. For example, short-term courses in woodwork, handicrafts, painting, and languages, etc. are popular with tourists.

Music, dance, and puppet theatre are other traditional activities associated with Roma culture that could be considered for integration into tourist products. Several Roma music groups are currently active in the study area. Roma musicians are occasionally invited as performers at various events. Among the regularly organised Roma music festivals in Slovakia are the World Roma Festival and the International Gypsy Fest or Balval, which attract thousands of spectators (including non-Roma) every year.

(b) *Hospitality facilities, agro tourism, and products linked to the visit of selected Roma households*

The ‘Roma’ (or ‘Gypsy’) brand can also be used in the implementation of projects with a Roma theme in the area of hospitality establishments such as a ‘Gypsy/Roma’ pub, a cottage, a patisserie, or a café. Based on the available local resources, these establishments can be linked to Roma culture, handicraft production, or the sale of souvenirs or other interesting products.

Frequent, the one-sided negative media coverage linking Roma with crime, squalor, and substandard living conditions feeds the “non-Roma” stereotypes and the prejudice that are the most common obstacles to their inclusion (not only towards the Roma, but in the wider context of “otherness” as such, see e.g., [48]). Visiting Roma families as

a possible tourist product, thus raises doubts and may be considered inappropriate. In reality, however, if the conditions for their implementation are set appropriately (necessarily conditional on the consent of the Roma families concerned), such visits have the potential to reduce prejudice and increase mutual understanding on both sides.

In the study municipalities, families who were engaged in agriculture or animal husbandry were identified. Therefore, agro-tourism appears to be a potential area for PPT development [62]. Recommendations in this direction are that opportunities for tourists are created to learn about domestic animal husbandry, participation of tourists in domestic food production, participation in harvesting, feeding, herding, watering, and shearing, etc.

(c) *Opportunities in the associated sectors of tourism*

The tourism sector is characterised by the creation of demand for various products and services from other associated sectors (e.g., agriculture, construction, and transport, etc.). If such demand is met through local production/local services that employ at least some of the disadvantaged or long-term unemployed, then the development of the tourism sector can be more pro-poor.

Many businesses in tourism depend on the supply of fresh food from local production, which enables them to ensure that the quality of the gastronomic offer is of the required standard. In this regard, there is an opportunity to involve the poor MRCs in supply chains. It is therefore promising to target the production of local agricultural products for a possible change in the ratio of local and external suppliers in selected food and other related products/services. An example of good practice in Slovakia where the involvement of the MRCs in production activities has been successful and thus has increased local employment, is the Malinka Eco-centre near the village of Rudlov (the Vranov nad Topľou district).

Other activities developed with a pro-poor approach could focus on urban and countryside revitalization by supporting Roma employment in the restoration of cultural heritage and the protection of the natural environment or the construction of new buildings necessary for the implementation of tourism. Construction work or work related to the maintenance of the surrounding area is suitable for people without higher education. In addition, the maintenance of the surroundings can be linked to craft production. Such activities can result in information boards for nature trails, signboards for tourist centres, benches, baskets, rest areas, or bicycle racks. An example of a project that has been undertaken in Slovakia is the National Castle Restoration Project. The long-term unemployed people who were targeted by these projects have gained employment opportunities that have enabled them to acquire new skills and improve their labour market perspective.

5. Conclusions

Building on previously published work that analysed poverty reduction options in the MRCs in Slovakia, our research confirms that there is no one-size-fits-all solution that would be universally applicable in all communities. In most of the communities we identified positive examples of efforts to involve the local MRCs in activities directly or indirectly related to the development of services for tourism. The limited opportunities to obtain relevant data have determined the analysis options we used. Therefore, we used a mixed method approach where quantitative data were subjected to qualitative analysis based on interviews with the mayors of the surveyed municipalities.

H1: *In municipalities in the neighbourhood of well-developed tourist centres, MRCs will take a more proactive approach to their own development.*

When analysing the MRCs' activity in the 56 municipalities surveyed, we found the opposite tendency. The villages located in the immediate vicinity of the developed tourist centres were less active. Table 2 shows a relevant positive correlation at the level of 0.75 (see Table 2 - value marked in bold) between the distance of the municipality from the most attractive tourist area in Slovakia and the MRCs' activity, where we have taken into account the proportion of active Roma freelancers, entrepreneurs, and Roma involved in 'activation work'.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient of observed variables (1–4a).

	1	2	3	4a
1	1			
2	−0.27984	1		
3	−0.16927	0.163411	1	
4a	−0.26186	0.751648	0.248157	1

1—Tourism development intensity; 2—Roma entrepreneurs and Roma involved in activation work; 3—Roma involved in agricultural activities; 4a—Shortest road distance from the High Tatras.

H2: *Roma who are active in small-scale farming will also be more active in maintaining other traditional craft activities typical for Roma communities in Slovakia.*

This hypothesis was based on the assumption that for the development of a specific tourist product in PPT, based on the presentation of traditional Roma culture, the active maintenance of the traditional economic activities of Roma is a prerequisite. In this case, we used the availability of data on these activities from the Atlas of Roma Communities [47], which was supplemented by our own survey directly in the villages and the interviews with the mayors of the affected villages. Out of the 56 villages, 29 of them (almost 52%) had at least 1% of the MRC residents who were engaged in vegetable growing or keeping domestic animals. At the same time, these municipalities were also the most active in preserving the traditions of local Roma culture (i.e., practicing traditional crafts, etc.). Table 3 confirms this claim, as verified by the interviews with the mayors, although the degree of positive correlation is not significant (0.64, see Table 3 - value marked in bold). In this case, we note that the data on the MRC farming activities showed the lowest level of reliability. The reason we claim that Hypothesis 2 was confirmed, is because of the additional interviews undertaken with the mayors of the municipalities concerned, which confirmed our hypothesis.

Table 3. Correlation coefficient of observed variables (1–4b).

	1	2	3	4b
1	1			
2	−0.27984	1		
3	−0.16927	0.163411	1	
4b	0.27087	0.022847	0.643918	1

1—Tourism development intensity; 2—Roma entrepreneurs and Roma involved in ‘activation work’; 3—Roma involved in agricultural activities; 4—Intensity of maintaining traditional activities (crafts, etc.).

H3: *The mere existence of an NGO focusing on working with MRCs is no guarantee of the long-term sustainability of PPT activities.*

According to our findings, there were a total of 59 NGOs in 33 villages in the study areas, that were focused on the MRCs’ activities to improve their living standards. As we noted in our analysis of the research results, these 33 municipalities did not perform significantly better than the other 23 municipalities where no NGOs were active. Our further investigation showed that many NGOs were not active or their activities were perceived very critically by the mayors of the villages. Criticism has been directed at the way in which funding for projects is allocated. In particular, it concerned the way decisions were taken without representatives of the respective municipalities. In conclusion, it can be stated that in Slovakia Hypothesis 3 has been partially confirmed. Its generalization to other areas of Central Europe is limited by the local context.

H4: *A fundamental barrier to the implementation of PPT is the high level of segregation of marginalised Roma communities.*

This claim was verified by establishing the degree of dependence between the segregation index (see research results above) and the level of activity of Roma in the 56 villages of the Central Spiš region (number of entrepreneurs, tradesmen, and Roma engaged in

'activation work', as well as those who were engaged in vegetable farming or breeding of domestic animals). The positive correlation of 0.67369 was not sufficiently convincing to unequivocally claim that the high level of segregation of marginalised Roma communities is a major obstacle to the implementation of PPT. Additional investigations have found that many communities, despite the high level of segregation, are active and are managing to gradually improve their living standards (increasing the level of housing and the number of Roma actively participating in the activation work programme, etc.). However, due to the inconclusive level of the correlation of the observed variables, this finding cannot be generalised to all Slovakia and will require further verification in the future. At this stage, however, we consider it to be an interesting finding that will be useful for future research in this area.

The final synthesis of the conducted partial analyses and the obtained information on the MRCs in 56 municipalities of the Central Spiš region in Slovakia has allowed us to identify potentially three types of municipalities in relation to the prerequisites for the development of PPT:

1. *In the type of municipality with a high probability of success of PPT implementation based on its own product*
 - these are municipalities with a relatively low share of MRCs in the total population not exceeding 50%;
 - the local MRCs are characterised by the high rate of activation of its members, with at least 20% of the population of the poor being employed permanently or at least occasionally;
 - at least 1% of the population of the MRCs is engaged in traditional economic activities (e.g., crafts), thus forming the basis for the creation of a specific tourist product based on the local Roma culture.
2. *Municipalities with probability of successful PPT implementation, but only in the area of support services for CR*
 - these are municipalities with a relatively low share of MRCs in the total population, not exceeding 50%;
 - the local MRCs are characterised by the high rate of activation of its members, with at least 20% of the population of the poor being employed permanently or at least occasionally;
 - within these communities, 5–20% of the population have been working abroad long-term and supporting the family in the country, but their influence on the activation of local communities in maintaining traditional activities is not sufficient for the development of PPT. At the same time, however, it is an impetus for the development of other entrepreneurial activities that can be part of the tourism support services.
3. *Municipalities for which it is more appropriate to consider poverty reduction through activities outside the service sector.*
 - these are municipalities with a relatively high proportion of the MRCs in the total population of over 50% (this includes cases where the proportion of the MRCs is 90–100%);
 - the local MRCs are characterised by the low level of activation of its members, with the majority of the population not engaging in any activation activities, and their only source of income is social support from the state;
 - the basic preconditions for the development of PPT are not created in the above communities.

6. Limitations of the Study and Future Research

A limitation of the study is that the validity of the hypotheses was tested by a relatively small number of MRCs. This is due to the time-consuming nature of similar types of surveys, requiring a site visit in person and a thorough analysis of each of the MRCs

individually. Another limitation for the generalization of the conclusions obtained in the cases of Hypothesis 2 and 4 is the relatively low level of demonstrated positive correlation (at 0.75 and 0.64, respectively). This proves that the statements that “Roma who are active in small-scale farming will also be more active in maintaining other traditional craft activities typical for Roma communities in Slovakia” and that “A fundamental barrier to the implementation of PPT is the high level of segregation of marginalised Roma communities” will require further empirical verification in more than one study area (and not only in Slovakia) in order to improve their validity.

Finally, we consider the proposal of a typology of municipalities in relation to the prerequisites for the development of PPT, as a contribution to the discussion on the possibilities of a differentiated approach to PPT development strategies at the level of municipalities with numerous MRCs. The above typology is justified especially in the conditions in Slovakia. For its wider application, similar empirical validation will be needed in other territories that have the ambition to develop PPT in marginalised communities affected by poverty.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, methodology, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, data curation, original writing, draft preparation, review writing, and editing, K.M.; investigation, resources, data curation, and validation, J.K., K.K., M.D. and P.M.; validation and formal analysis, P.P.; review writing and editing, and supervision, M.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This paper was supported by the University of Presov Grant Agency for Doctoral Students and Young Researchers: *Global trends and variations in culinary tourism*, GaPU 24/2020 (awarded by: K.K.); *Service quality and behavioural changes from a supply and demand perspective in slow food restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic*, GaPU 5/2022 (awarded by: K.K.); *Dysfunctional States—A Current Phenomenon of the World Political-Spatial Structure*, VEGA No. 1/0544/21(2021-2023); *Carfree city concept and perspectives of its application in the city of Presov*, GaPU 20/2020 (awarded by: P.M.); *The concept of pro-poor tourism: an analysis of the possibilities of poverty reduction in the conditions of marginalised communities in Slovakia*, GaPu 8/2021 (awarded by: M.D.); and *The basic issues of pro-poor tourism*, GaPU/2022 (awarded by: M.D.).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Stanislav Gavalier, the mayor of Lučivná: “They have been taught that they get their money at the post office and that there is no need to work. Some apply for work in the second half of the month and leave when the month is over, but they still get the full amount of the dole payment, just as if they had been working the whole month, others go on the sick leave and so on.” (our own survey among mayors of municipalities of the Central Spiš region, conducted in 2014).
- ² They have been identified in 23 municipalities: Kežmarok (11), Poprad (7), Levoča (5), Huncovce (5), Veľká Lomnica (3), Toporec (2), Križová Ves (2), Podhorany (2), Spišský Štvrtok (2), Gerlachov (2), Svit (2), Rakúsy (2), Slovenská Ves (2), Holumnica (2), Stará Lesná (1), Stráne pod Tatrami (1), Doľany (1), Ľubica (1), Jablonov (1), Spišský Hrhov (1), Jurské (1), Jánovce (1), and Vydrník (1); [43].
- ³ Holumnica (Terne Vasta), Kežmarok (Kesaj Tchave), Veľká Lomnica (Lomnické Čháve, Loli Roklica Folklore Ensemble), Križová Ves (Jekh Drom), Výborná (Gypsy Rudo), Vydrník (Chlapčenská skupina), Hranovnica (Hranovnica Folklore Ensemble), Liptovská Teplička (Gypsy Edo, Bečkerovci), Nová Lesná (Gyps Denis, Ján Špeňák), Poprad (TatraGypsy, Gypsy Boys Poprad), Spišský Štiavnik (Gypsy Štiavnik), and Štrba (Roma Folklore Ensemble).
- ⁴ In 2019, updated results of the national mapping of Roma communities in Slovakia were published. It was not possible to use them, as the data at the municipality level are aggregated into intervals that do not allow recalculation of the indicators monitored by us.

References

1. Ashley, C.; Mitchell, J. *Tourism and Poverty Reduction: Pathways to Prosperity 2010*; Earthscan: London, UK, 2010; 157p.
2. Harrison, D. Pro-Poor Tourism: A Critique. *Tour. Dev. Glob. South* **2008**, *29*, 851–868. [CrossRef]
3. Storey, D.; Bulloch, H.; Overton, J. The poverty consensus: Some limitations of the popular agenda. *Prog. Dev. Stud.* **2005**, *5*, 30–44. Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/43500412_The_poverty_consensus_Some_limitations_of_the_T1\textquoterightpopular_agenda_T1\textquoteright (accessed on 27 July 2022). [CrossRef]

4. Kuzyshyn, A. Spatial diversification of the social sphere development in the Carpathian-Podillia region. *Folia Geogr.* **2018**, *61*, 144–162.
5. Nemethova, J. Comparison of Implementation of Rural Development Programmes Focussing on Diversification in Slovakia in the Years 2007–2013 and 2014–2020. *Folia Geogr.* **2020**, *62*, 35–51.
6. Spencely, A.; Meyer, D. Tourism and poverty reduction: Theory and practice in less economically developed countries. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2012**, *20*, 297–317. [[CrossRef](#)]
7. Stiperski, Z.; Loncar, J.; Rajter, M. Recommendation for a Typology of Cities and Municipalities in Croatia According to Development Level. *Folia Geogr.* **2021**, *63*, 85–109.
8. Penzes, J.; Pasztor, I.Z.; Tatrai, P.; Koti, T. Roma Population in Hungary—Spatial Distribution and its Temporal Changes. *Deturope—Cent. Eur. J. Reg. Dev. Tour.* **2019**, *11*, 138–159. [[CrossRef](#)]
9. Zeng, B.; Ryan, C.; Cui, X.; Chen, H. Tourism-generated income distribution in a poor rural community: A case study from Shaanxi, China. *J. China Tour. Res.* **2015**, *11*, 85–104. [[CrossRef](#)]
10. Zhao, W.; Ritchie, J.B. Tourism and poverty alleviation: An integrative research framework. *Curr. Issues Tour.* **2007**, *10*, 119–143. [[CrossRef](#)]
11. Tolkach, D.; Pearlman, M.; King, B. Key Implementation Factors in Pro-Poor Tourism. *Tour. Recreat. Res.* **2012**, *37*, 3–13. [[CrossRef](#)]
12. ID21 Insights—Communicating International Development Research: How Pro-Poor Is Tourism? Id21 insights č. 62, June 2006. Available online: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08c43ed915d3cfd001298/insights62.pdf> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
13. Acharya, A.; Pathak, A.K.; Mondal, B.K.; Dash, P.; Bhadra, T. Assessing the Economic Impact of Tourism and Verdict Ecotourism Potential of the Coastal Belt of Purba Medinipur District, West Bengal. *Folia Geogr.* **2021**, *63*, 82–107.
14. Rasoolimanesh, S.M.; Ringle, C.M.; Jaafar, M.; Ramayah, T. Urban vs. Rural World Heritage Sites: Toward community participation and support for tourism development. *Tour. Manag.* **2017**, *60*, 147–158. [[CrossRef](#)]
15. Anderson, W. Cultural tourism and poverty alleviation in rural Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. *J. Tour. Cult. Chang.* **2015**, *13*, 208–224. [[CrossRef](#)]
16. Guri, E.A.; Osumanu, I.K.; Bonye, S.Z. Eco-cultural tourism development in Ghana: Potentials and expected benefits in the Lawra Municipality. *J. Tour. Cult. Chang.* **2021**, *19*, 458–476. [[CrossRef](#)]
17. Dias, A.; González-Rodríguez, M.R.; Patuleia, M. Developing poor communities through creative tourism. *J. Tour. Cult. Chang.* **2021**, *19*, 509–529. [[CrossRef](#)]
18. The Department for International Development (DFID) 1999. Available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
19. Sofield, T.; Bauer, J.; De Lacy, T.; Lipman, G.; Daugherty, S. *Sustainable Tourism—Eliminating Poverty: An Overview*; Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism: Gold Coast, QLD, Australia, 2004.
20. Cole, S. Living in hope. Tourism and poverty alleviation in Flores. In *Tourism Development: Growth, Myths and Inequalities*; Burns, P., Novelli, M., Eds.; CABI: Oxford, UK, 2008.
21. Hall, M. (Ed.) *Pro-poor Tourism: Who Benefits? Perspectives on Tourism and Poverty Reduction*; Cromwell Press: Clevedon, UK, 2007; 167p.
22. Koens, K.; Thomas, R. You know that’s a rip-off: Policies and practices surrounding micro-enterprises and poverty alleviation in South African township tourism. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2016**, *24*, 1641–1654. [[CrossRef](#)]
23. Frenzel, F.; Koens, K.; Steinbrink, M.; Rogerson, C.M. Slum tourism: State of the art. *Tour. Rev. Int.* **2015**, *18*, 237–252. [[CrossRef](#)]
24. Hoogendoorn, G.; Letsatsi, N.; Malleka, T.; Booyens, I. Tourist and resident perspective on “slum tourism”: The case of the Vilakazi percint, Soweto. *GeoJournal* **2020**, *85*, 1133–1149. [[CrossRef](#)]
25. Okpoko, P.U. *Tourism in Nigeria*; Afro-Orbis Publications: Maryknoll, NY, USA, 2002; 173p.
26. Chigora, F.; Mutambabra, E.; Ndlovu, J.; Muzurura, J.; Zvavahera, P. Towards Establishing Zimbabwe Tourism Destination Brand Equity Variables through Sustainable Community Involvement. *Afr. J. Hosp. Tour. Leis.* **2020**, *9*, 1094–1110. [[CrossRef](#)]
27. Mereine Berki, B.; Málovics, G.; Tóth, J.; Crețan, R. The Role of Social Capital and Interpersonal Relations in the Alleviation of Extreme Poverty and Spatial Segregation of Romani People in Szeged. *J. Urban Reg. Anal.* **2017**, *9*, 33–50. [[CrossRef](#)]
28. Neha Itty, J.P. Critical Analysis of Slum Tourism: A Retrospective on Bangalore Atna. *J. Tour. Stud.* **2016**, *11*, 95–113. [[CrossRef](#)]
29. Scheyvens, R. *Tourism and Poverty*. Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 2011; 288p.
30. Dixey, L.; Holland, J.; Burian, M. Tourism in Poor Rural Areas: Diversifying the Product and Expanding the Benefits in Rural Uganda and the Czech Republic; PPT Working Paper no.12. 2003. Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238088185_Tourism_in_Poor_Rural_Areas_Diversifying_the_product_and_expanding_the_benefits_in_rural_Uganda_and_the_Czech_Republic (accessed on 27 July 2022).
31. Goodwin, H. Reflections on 10 years of Pro-Poor Tourism, *J. Policy Res. Tour. Leis. Events* **2009**, *1*, 90–94. [[CrossRef](#)]
32. Butler, R.; Currand, R.; Gorman, K. Pro-Poor Tourism in a First World Urban Setting: Case Study of Glasgow Govan. *Int. J. Tour. Res.* **2012**, *15*, 443–457. [[CrossRef](#)]
33. Crețan, R.; Málovics, G.; Berki, B.M. On the perpetuation and contestation of racial stigma: Urban Roma in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Szeged. *Geogr. Pannonica* **2020**, *24*. [[CrossRef](#)]
34. Covaci, R.; Jucu, I.S. Internal Migration and Stigmatization in the Rural Banat Region of Romania. *Identities* **2021**, 1–21. [[CrossRef](#)]

35. Berki, B.M.; Málóvics, G.; Crețan, R. “You become one with the place”: Social mixing, social capital, and the lived experience of urban desegregation in the Roma community. *Cities* **2021**, *117*, 103302. [CrossRef]
36. Vermeersch, P. Ethnic minority identity and movement politics: The case of the Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. *Ethn. Racial Stud.* **2003**, *26*, 879–901. [CrossRef]
37. Matlovič, R.; Matlovičová, K. First and second order discontinuities in world geographical thought and their primary reception in Slovak geography. *Folia Geogr.* **2020**, *62*, 52–76.
38. Kolesárová, J. Pro-Poor Tourism as a Tool for Development of Marginalized Communities (A Case Study of Eastern Slovakia). Ph.D. Thesis, Katedra Geografie a Regionálneho Rozvoja, Prešovská Univerzita v Prešove, Prešov, Slovakia, 2014.
39. Matlovičová, K.; Kolesárová, J.; Matlovič, R. Pro-poor turizmus ako nástroj rozvoja marginalizovaných komunit (príklad obce Spišský Hrhov) (Pro-poor tourism as a tool for the development of marginalised communities (A case study of the municipality of Spišský Hrhov)). In *Regióny Chudoby na Slovensku (Poverty Regions in Slovakia)*; Michálek, A., Podolák, P., Eds.; Geografický ústav SAV: Staré Mesto, Slovakia, 2016; pp. 199–228. 241p.
40. Mušíňka, A. *Podarilo sa. Príklady Úspešných Aktivít na Úrovni Samospráv Smerujúcich k Zlepšeniu Situácie Rómov (We managed to. Examples of Successful Actions at Local Government Level to Improve the Situation of Roma)*; Vydavateľstvo Prešovskej Univerzity: Prešov, Slovakia, 2012; 198.
41. Rochovská, A.; Antoš, J.; Mažgútová, I. Children Poverty in Slovakia in the Context of European Union Member States. *Folia Geogr.* **2016**, *58*, 56–71.
42. Michálek, A.; Sládeková Madajová, M. Identifying regional poverty types in Slovakia. *GeoJournal* **2019**, *84*, 85–99. [CrossRef]
43. Klimovský, D.; Želinský, T.; Matlovičová, K.; Mušíňka, A. Roma settlements and poverty in Slovakia: Different policy approaches of the state, local governments, and NGOs. *Anthropol. Noteb.* **2016**, *22*, 23–42.
44. Hutárová, D.; Kozelová, I.; Špulerová, J. Tourism Development Options in Marginal and Less-Favored Regions: A Case Study of Slovakia’s Gemer Region. *Land* **2021**, *10*, 229. [CrossRef]
45. Atlas Rómskych Komunit 2019 (Atlas of Roma Communities); Ministerstvo Vnútra SR: Bratislava, Slovakia. 2019. Available online: <https://www.minv.sk/?atlas-romskych-komunit-2019> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
46. Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. 2022. Available online: <https://slovak.statistics.sk> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
47. Mušíňka, A.; Škobla, D.; Hurrle, J.; Matlovičová, K.; Kling, J. *Atlas Rómskych Komunit na Slovensku 2013 (Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013)*; UNDP: Bratislava, Slovakia, 2014; 120p, Available online: <https://www.unipo.sk/fakulta-humanitnych-prirodných-vied/geografia/pracovníci/matlovicova/pp/> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
48. Sobotová, J.; Havlíček, T.; Klingorová, K. How the Czechs and Spanish Perceive Islam: Islamophobia in the European Context. *Folia Geogr.* **2019**, *61*, 5–24.
49. The Official Census Results of the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. 2021. Available online: <https://www.scitanie.sk/> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
50. Saberifar, R.; Mishra, P.K. Analysis of National Development Using Labour Market Model: A Case Study of Khaf. *Folia Geogr.* **2020**, *62*, 5–20.
51. Koti, T. Efficiency of Active Labour Market Policy in Hungary: Detransitive Settlement Structure of Supported Public Employment. *Folia Geogr.* **2019**, *61*, 45–70.
52. Payne, M. Slovak Roma Village of Origin and Educational Outcomes: A Critical Evaluation. *Folia Geogr.* **2018**, *60*, 31–49.
53. TSP. Implementačná Agentúra Ministerstva Práce, Sociálnych Vecí a Rodiny SR, Zoznam Spolupracujúcich Subjektov Zapojených do NP TSP II. 2022. Available online: <https://tsp.gov.sk/zoznam-spolupracujucich-subjektov-zapojenych-do-np-tsp-ii/?csrt=8187753411058895868> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
54. MINV. Ministerstvo Vnútra SR, Oficiálna Stránka 2022. Available online: https://www.minv.sk/?NPTSP_uvod (accessed on 27 July 2022).
55. RPC. Rómske Pastoračné Centrum v Krížovej Vsi, Rímskokatolícka Cirkev Farnosť Spišská Belá. 2022. Available online: <https://rkfarnosť.spisskabela.sk/romske-duchovno-spolocenske-stredisko-v-krizovej-vsi/historia-rpc/> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
56. KEPLA. Kežmarská Platforma pre Sociálne Začlenenie, n.o. (Kežmarok Platform for Social Inclusion, n.o.). 2022. Available online: <http://kepla.sk/> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
57. RNGO. Register Mimovládnych Neziskových Organizácií. Ministerstvo Vnútra Slovenskej Republiky, Sekcia Verejnej Správy. 2022. Available online: <https://ives.minv.sk/rmno/> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
58. ETP Slovensko—Centrum pre Udržateľný Rozvoj (Slovakia-Centre for Sustainable Development). 2022. Available online: <https://etp.sk/> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
59. RRP. Regionálne Rozvojové Partnerstvo (Regional Development Partnership). 2022. Available online: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regional-australia/regional-recovery-partnerships> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
60. REF. Roma Education Fund. 2022. Available online: <https://www.romaeducationfund.org/> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
61. Vaňová, J. *Rómska Kultúra—Pohľad Zvnútra (Roma Culture—The View from the Inside)*; Rómske Mediálne Centrum: Košice, Slovakia, 2014; Available online: <http://www.mecem.sk/933/romska-kultura-pohlad-zvnutra> (accessed on 27 July 2022).
62. Susilo, R.K.D.; Dharmawan, A.S.; Kurniawan, F. Accept or Against the Change: The Adaptation of the Lor Brantas Society Towards the Development of Batu City. *Folia Geogr.* **2021**, *63*, 143–165.