

# Intimate Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Shadow of the Holocaust

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Two tragedies befell the Jews of Eastern Europe after the outbreak of World War II. The first and by far the best known and exhaustively researched is the Shoah, the Nazi extermination effort. The second, as Żbikowski (1993: 174) eloquently puts it, is “the violent explosion of the latent hatred and hostility of local communities.” This book focuses on the second tragedy, a wave of popular anti-Jewish violence that erupted in summer 1941, in the aftermath of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. With the Soviet army retreating, the German army advancing, and government authority collapsing, civilian populations across hundreds of villages and towns stretching from the Baltic states in the north to Romania in the south committed atrocities against their Jewish neighbors. These often gruesome and sadistic crimes ranged from looting and beatings to public humiliation, rape, torture, and murder. One of the most widely known yet hardly unique such incidents occurred in the town of Jedwabne, Poland on July 10, 1941. In a day-long rampage under the approving eyes of the Germans, Poles committed mass murder. The Jews were ordered to gather in the town square, where among other humiliations they were forced to clean the pavement, smash the monument to Lenin, and hold a mock “religious” funeral on his behalf. Those who attempted to flee were hunted down and clubbed, stoned, knifed, and drowned, their bloodied corpses often left in pits. Apparently dissatisfied with such inefficient methods of murder, the perpetrators herded hundreds of remaining Jews—women, children, the old, and the sick—into a barn that was doused with kerosene and set alight (Gross 2001). Ethnic violence is never easy to comprehend, but it is especially puzzling when the perpetrators are civilians and the victims are their neighbors (Fujii 2009; Straus 2006). This book investigates the reasons for such intimate violence.

The 1941 pogroms are a particularly interesting instance of ethnic violence for two reasons. First, they happened under conditions of state collapse. Many who study ethnic violence emphasize the key role of state elites in orchestrating conflict

(e.g., Brass 2003; Gagnon 2004; Lambrozo 1992; Wilkinson 2004). But state actions cannot explain the 1941 pogroms because the Polish state had all but collapsed by the time they occurred. The Germans invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 but did not establish full political authority on Polish territory until at least September (Żbikowski 2007: 315; Snyder 2008: 96). In the period between Soviet and German rule there was no central government in Poland. To the extent anyone was in control it would have been the Germans, but as we argue further below they did not function as a de facto state elite. Although the Germans did try to incite pogroms, they met with only limited success. Pogroms occurred both with and without the Germans being present. Like Kalyvas (2006) and Petersen (2002), we seek to understand ethnic violence under conditions of state collapse such as can occur during periods of war, civil war, regime change, and the collapse of empire.

Second, the scale of the attacks demonstrate that ethnic violence is not an inherent feature of inter-group life in stateless or near stateless societies even with relationships as long-standing and conflictual as those between Jews and non-Jews. Given the long history of restrictions, attacks, and expulsions directed against Jews in Poland, it is easy to believe that non-Jews must have eagerly assaulted their Jewish neighbors when the Nazi onslaught on the Soviet Union presented an opportunity. After all, the Germans were if anything sympathetic to those who wanted to attack Jews, and in the absence of a state the “clouding features of legal restraint” (Petersen 2002: 12) disappeared and people were freer to act on their desires. As Kalyvas (2006: 389) notes in regard to civil wars, chaotic and uncertain circumstances offer “irresistible opportunities to harm everyday enemies.” Where violence did occur it was often quite gruesome, and could include beheading, the chopping off of limbs, rape, and the ripping of fetuses from the wombs of pregnant women.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The testimonies of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw are filled with such descriptions. The atrocities described in this sentence occurred in a single pogrom. See Faygl Golombek’s testi-

Yet pogroms were relatively rare events. According to our data, in the six regions comprising most of the then eastern Polish borderlands—Białystok, Lwów, Polesie, Stanisławów, Tarnopol, and Wołyń—pogroms occurred in 204 municipalities, comprising just 9 percent of all localities in the region where Jews and non-Jews dwelled together. Most communities never experienced a pogrom and most ordinary non-Jews never attacked Jews. Such a pattern is not limited to Poland. Tolnay and Beck (1995: 45), for example, report that more than one-third of counties in the U.S. South never experienced a lynching. Varshney (2002: 6-7) notes that only eight cities in India accounted for just over 45 percent of all deaths in Hindu-Muslim violence. Our data show that ethnic violence is situational rather than inherent. The task for researchers, one we undertake in this book, is to identify in societies with long histories of animosity the local contexts in which ethnic violence either breaks out or fails to do so.

Why did pogroms occur in some localities but not others? This is our central question. Our results demonstrate that some of the most commonly believed explanations for pogroms do not hold up to empirical scrutiny. The 1941 pogroms were not orchestrated by the state, and in general did not occur where economic competition between Jews and non-Jews was fiercest or where Jews were the most sympathetic to communism. None of these accounts explain the relative rarity of the violence. We find some support for the claim that anti-Semitism was important, but even more for the idea that the pogroms were rooted in competing nationalisms. We contend that the pogroms represented a strategy whereby non-Jews attempted to rid themselves of what they thought would be future political rivals. Pogroms were most likely to occur where there were lots of Jews, where those Jews advocated national equality with non-Jews, and where parties advocating national equality were popular. In the following section we review existing

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mony AŻIH 301-1858.

explanations for municipality-level variation in ethnic violence, and then expand our own explanation that focuses on political threat.

## **Explanations for Pogroms**

### **Jewish Collaboration with the Soviet Occupation**

As a consequence of secret protocols to the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact concluded between Germany and the Soviet Union, the two countries divided Poland between them. When Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939 it remained within its allotted territories in the west. The Soviet Union invaded Poland on September 17, 1939 and occupied the eastern borderlands, the so-called “kresy”, with the intention of incorporating them into the Soviet state. During the roughly two years between the Red Army’s arrival and its retreat in the wake of the June, 1941 Nazi invasion the Soviets ran a brutal occupation regime. The Jewish collaboration hypothesis (e.g., Musiał 2004) posits pogroms as revenge for alleged Jewish support of the Soviet occupation.

This hypothesis is both logically plausible and consistent with some aspects of the historical record. First, although it is impossible to know the entire distribution of attitudes toward Soviet rule on the eve of the occupation, most scholars agree that a common Jewish reaction to the arrival of Soviet soldiers was one of relief. Having experienced open discrimination and not a few pogroms in interwar Poland, Soviet rule, harsh as it might have been expected to be, offered at least the prospect of civic equality. It was certainly preferable to the Nazi rule in western Poland. In the words of Moshe Levin, it was “the lesser of two evils,” a sentiment some Jews were known to have voiced openly. For example, according to Henryk Szyper, whose memoir was written at the time of the occupation, a Jewish director

of a store would say to a Pole who complained, “[t]here is no more free Poland, your time is over. It is our time” (AZIH 301-4654, pp. 46-47). Such attitudes, however rarely expressed, could only have inflamed Poles, for whom the occupation meant the end of national sovereignty.

Second, although all national groups suffered under Soviet rule (collectivization, nationalization, and deportation, for example, touched all corners of society), the de jure removal of barriers that had impeded Jewish integration in interwar Poland meant that the status of Jews increased relative to that of Poles, who were no longer the ruling *Staatsnation*; and also to that of Ukrainians, whose nationalist aspirations the Soviets brutally repressed. Positions within the Soviet apparatus were in theory as open to Jews as they were to Poles or Ukrainians, and at the lower levels of the administration the regime found many Jews willing to serve. As Brakel (2007) reports in his study of the Baranowicze region in northeast Poland, Jews worked in the Soviet administration, ran for office, were members of the newly created communist youth organization, and were even among those more trusted “vostochniki” brought in from other parts of the Soviet Union to help administer the new territories. The fact that low-level state bureaucrats would have had the most contact with the local non-Jewish populations meant that Jews were visibly associated with the Soviet regime. According to one observer, “[o]ffices and institutions that never saw a Jew on their premises abound now with Jewish personnel of all kinds.” (Cited in Pinchuk 1990, 50.) In the words of Szyper (AZIH 301-4654), an unquestionable achievement of Soviet rule was “factual emancipation and equalization of political citizenship.” For Petersen (2002) Polish and Ukrainian resentment at their relative loss of status was a prime driver of pogrom violence, regardless of whether or not the Jews actively had a hand in the reversal of Polish and Ukrainian fortunes.

Third, there is ample anecdotal evidence that local non-Jewish populations blamed

the Jews for the Soviet occupation. We agree with Żbikowski (2007) that no “uniform pogrom scenario” existed, but eyewitness accounts of how pogroms actually occurred do reveal some recurring themes. One of these is the ritual humiliation of the Jewish victims in ways that clearly associate them with the Soviet regime. For example, in the towns of Kolno and Jedwabne, locals forced the Jews to remove the statue of Lenin and bury it in the ground. In Kolno the Jews then had to sing and pray for the buried monument; in Jedwabne the Jews were subsequently beaten to death and thrown into the same grave.<sup>2</sup> In Siematycze, the Jews had to dismantle the Lenin statue with hammers and sickles.<sup>3</sup> In Radziłów Poles made the Jews sing a Soviet song, *Moskva Moia*, while in Kościelne, as the Lenin statue was being thrown in the water, the Polish police forced a local Jew to give a dictated speech in which, among other things, he said “Lenin, you gave us your life and you give us death, you’ll never rise again.”<sup>4</sup> We know that the perpetrators of many pogroms had previously been incarcerated in (Soviet) NKVD prisons.<sup>5</sup>

Chapters 4 and 5 will investigate how consistent the connection is between where locals believed non-Jews to have collaborated and the distribution of pogroms. Although we have no systematic data by locality on Jewish presence in the Soviet administration, it stands to reason that sympathy for the Soviet regime would be highest where support for communist parties was strongest. Therefore if pogroms were about punishment for collaboration with the Soviet occupation then the probability of a pogrom should be positively related to pre-war communist support. We find no such systematic relationship between pogrom outbreaks and the vote given to communist parties during the interwar period.

We can also challenge the degree to which the locals’ beliefs were warranted

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<sup>2</sup>Żbikowski 2007, pp. 334-335, fns 61, 65.

<sup>3</sup>ibid., p. 335, fn 67.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, fns 64, 66.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, pp. 347-348.

given actual evidence of collaboration. Such a challenge is important because it provides leverage on the crucial issue of perpetrator culpability. The pogroms were barbarous and unlawful, but there is still a difference between punishing those who are guilty of traitorous acts and scapegoating a vulnerable minority for acts it either did not commit or were also committed by members of other groups. In the former case we might condemn the perpetrators for the manner in which punishment was delivered but concur with the principle that treachery deserves punishment. In the latter case the perpetrators are guilty of both inhumane punishment and persecuting the innocent. In fact, a balanced consideration of the historical record casts significant doubt on the Jewish collaboration hypothesis.

First, if part of the humiliation ritual during a pogrom involved having Jews dispose of a Soviet statue, a different part had them assume “Jewish” roles while doing it. In Kolno, for example, the blacksmiths who broke up the Lenin monument had to sing *Hatikvah*, a song that would later become the national anthem of Israel, while doing it. The broken monument was placed on a cart, and other Jews, dressed in prayer shawls, had to pull the cart to the Jewish cemetery for “burial.”<sup>6</sup> In Kościelne it was *Hatikvah*-singing Jews that carried the Lenin statue from the center of town to the river.<sup>7</sup> In Siematycze all the Jews had to wear prayer shawls while they dismantled the symbols of Soviet rule.<sup>8</sup>

Second, although some Jews certainly collaborated, so did some non-Jews. Indeed, as many have noted, the common non-Jewish perception that most Jews were sympathetic to communism and supported the Soviet occupation, and that most of the collaborators were Jews, is not borne out by actual facts. We do not have numbers to prove this for the *kresy* as a whole, but regional studies clearly bear this out. Consider, for example, the Białystok voivodship in northeast Poland, which

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<sup>6</sup>Żbikowski 2007, p. 334, fn 61.

<sup>7</sup>ibid., p. 335, fn 64.

<sup>8</sup>ibid., p. 335, fn 67.

according to the 1931 census was roughly 67 percent Polish, 16 percent Belarusian, and 12 percent Jewish (just over 150,000 Jews). According to Jasiewicz (2001: tables 7-16, pp. 1119-1134), in 1940 Jews comprised 1.2 percent of 238 chairpersons of rural committees, 9 percent of 297 people in communist youth organization (*Komsomol*) management, 5.4 percent of 10045 government candidates, and 4 percent of 8885 (communist party) cadres. Not only are these rates of participation well under the Jewish proportion of the population, but in absolute terms represent a miniscule proportion of even the working adult Jewish population. Only among “local careerists” (*wydwizency*) was there disproportionate Jewish presence, with Jews comprising just over 19 percent of 5404 people. Brakel (2007) reports similar findings for the Barnowicze region. Moreover, to the extent there was a Jewish presence, it was more pronounced at the lower rather than the upper levels of Soviet administration. For example, in the March 1940 elections to the Supreme Soviet, not a single Jew was among the representatives of the newly incorporated provinces of eastern Poland. The Galician city of Lwów was roughly 30 percent Jewish, yet Jews comprised a far lower percentage of its Soviet. Some other towns with Jewish majorities nonetheless had non-Jewish mayors (Pinchuk 1990: 49; Yones 2004, 48).

In short, although the face of the Soviet regime may have had more Jews than non-Jews were accustomed to seeing, on the whole it would appear Jews were under-represented in the administration both in absolute and relative terms. Those in more influential positions, who bore greater responsibility for Soviet crimes, were overwhelmingly non-Jewish. We can conclude two things from these observations. First, if pogroms were really about collaboration, then there ought to have been retaliation against non-Jewish collaborators. Yet there are exceedingly few such instances. Żbikowski (2007: 348) writes of the “discount” generally applied to Polish and Belarusian collaborators. According to one eyewitness, in July 1941 soldiers returning to Bolechów (in Galicia) wearing Soviet uniforms after the depar-

ture of the Red Army were killed only if they were Jews (Mendelsohn 2006, 195).<sup>9</sup> Similarly, regarding the city of Lwów, Syzper observes that, “[S]omewhat tacitly all Ukrainians agreed to peace. Nobody [no Ukrainians] was attacked for participating in the Soviet administration” (AZIH 301-4654). If there were pogroms against non-Jews in retaliation for collaboration, no one ever reported them. Clearly anti-Jewish sentiments outweighed the anti-Soviet ones when it came to retaliation. Second, given the tenuous relationship between non-Jewish perceptions of Jewish collaboration and actual Jewish collaboration, it is difficult not to conclude, along with Mick (2007) and Brakel (2007), that these perceptions have more to do with anti-Semitic stereotypes that pre-date the Soviet occupation than with the occupation itself. This brings us to another important proposed explanation for the pogroms, anti-Semitism.

## **Anti-Semitism**

Among those who see the 1941 pogroms as simply yet another manifestation of a long history of anti-Jewish discrimination and violence, anti-Semitism is an obvious explanation. How else to explain the brutality, the humiliation, the desecration of religious objects, and the victimization of old women and children? After all, these were hardly the first pogroms to have struck Poland, even in the twentieth century. There were a few scattered pogroms during the period when the Soviet Union invaded eastern Poland in September, 1939 (Himka 1997, 182), and a major wave of anti-Jewish violence between 1935 and 1937. For example, in 1936 there were 21 pogroms and 348 “outbreaks” in the Białystok region (Tolisch 1937). In

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<sup>9</sup>“You know, if you had something with the Jews, you killed them. I’ll give you an example., After the Soviets retreated, that summer of ‘forty-one, a lot of Jewish boys who’d been conscripted by the Russian had made their way home to Bolechow—they’d been drafted into the Russian army and were returning home. So the Ukrainians were standing on the bridge looking into the returning soldiers’ eyes as they came back, and if they thought someone was a Jew, they threw him down from the bridge into the river. And it was a river with big boulders and so forth, you can imagine what happened.

August, 1937 alone Jews in 80 different localities suffered attacks (Melzer 1997, 66). Less widespread violence occurred in the early 1930's in universities, where some students hoped to pressure the government to limit the number of Jewish pupils (Michlic-Coren 2000, 35). Hundreds of pogroms occurred between 1918 and 1920 in Polish and Ukrainian-inhabited areas in the southeast, where Jews were caught in the middle of a Polish-Ukrainian struggle for political supremacy. During the November, 1918 Lwów pogrom Polish perpetrators destroyed Torah scrolls and humiliated religious Jews, foreshadowing the widespread ritualized violence of 1941 (Hagen 2005, 137-138). Other pogroms, resulting in hundreds of deaths, occurred in the Russian part of Poland between 1903 and 1906 (Lambroza 1992).

Nor were pogroms the only means by which Jews were attacked. Although Jews participated in most aspects of interwar Poland's economic, social, and political life, they also suffered discrimination, both formal and informal. As detailed by Rudnicki (2005), the last legal restrictions against Jews left over from the partition era (before World War I) were lifted only in 1931, a decade after the establishment of independent Poland. But Jews still had to contend with the efforts of right-wing Polish nationalists to curb Jewish rights and circumscribe Jewish influence. In the 1930's, for example, nationalists organized boycotts of Jewish businesses and portrayed the Jews as an "alien element" that was incompatible with Polish national life (Rudnicki 2005, 160). They made numerous political proposals, such as to deny Jews equal political rights, to prevent them from entering military service, and to bar them from employment across a range of professions. Though these never made it very far politically, both Jews and non-Jews who wanted to protect equal rights were forced into a position of having to argue against them.

Other measures, less overtly discriminatory against Jews but with barely disguised (and sometimes undisguised) anti-Jewish intent, were popular enough to become law. These included a ban on "inhumane" (read: kosher) animal slaughter,

a more restrictive citizenship law, and various measures empowering state officials to regulate their spheres of activity in ways that ultimately resulted in a reduced Jewish presence (Melzer 1997, 81-94). Among the better-known of these measures pertained to higher education. Under pressure from nationalist students and their allies, in 1937 the education ministry issued regulations that segregated seating areas for Christians and Jews across higher education, with punishment for those who failed to comply. The so-called “ghetto benches” resulted in a drastic decline in Jewish enrollment (Rudnicki 2005, 166; Melzer 1997, 71).

To these we can add what authors have referred to as non-Jewish “folk culture” or “folk prejudice.” Generalizations are hazardous given the dearth of systematic evidence, but there is some consensus that ordinary non-Jews viewed Jews as something of an alien element in their midst, not necessarily mortal enemies but certainly not as one of their own. Originally Jewish difference was construed primarily in religious terms, with Jews cast as Christ-killers and enemies of the Church. For Gross (2001: 122-124) this image of the Jews lay behind the 1941 pogroms in Radziłów and Jedwabne, where “peasant mobs”, imbued with deeply-ingrained beliefs about the Jewish need for the blood of Christian children to prepare the Passover matzo, swooped in for primitive slaughter and plunder. Over time other stereotypes were added to the religious one: Jews as swindlers, as atheists, as arch-capitalists, as communists. In the case of Ukrainians, Himka (1997, 182) argues that within the Galician peasantry there existed a belief that “a day of reckoning was coming when all the Jews would be slaughtered.” Whatever the particular stereotype, Jewish “otherness” meant that, however cordial the relationship might be between Jews and non-Jews at times, in the end non-Jews would not feel the same solidarity with Jews that they felt towards one another (Struve 2012, 271-272; Weeks 2005, 29-30).

Neither successive Polish governments nor the Roman Catholic Church con-

done physical violence against Jews, and indeed at the highest levels both explicitly condemned such violence. At the same time, however, many influential political and religious leaders sympathized with the idea of defending Polish interests against a perceived Jewish threat. A full accounting of either the evolving state attitude toward or Roman Catholic views of the Jews is beyond the scope of this study. Here we provide only some illustrative examples. In June 1936 Premier Sławoj-Składkowski all but expressed support for the nationalist boycotts, stating that “[If you want] an economic struggle, then by all means go ahead.”<sup>10</sup> By 1938, acting as Minister of Internal Affairs, he was less equivocal, claiming that the struggle against the Jews was “a struggle of economic necessity.”<sup>11</sup> In 1936 both Roman Catholic Primate August Hlond and Archbishop of Cracow Adam Sapieha issued pastoral letters that condemned violence but also endorsed the boycotts and accused Jews of a host of other threats to Poland, such as atheism, bolshevism, and corruption (Michlic 2006, 122-123). The portrayal of the Jews as what Michlic (2006) refers to as a “threatening other” was also visible in the Catholic press (Landau-Czajka 1994, 146-175) and in the attitudes of portions of the lower Catholic clergy (Libionka 2005, 234-237).

There is no question that antagonism toward Jews has had a long history in Polish lands, that during the interwar period the atmosphere became increasingly hostile, and indeed violent, toward Jews, and that in summer, 1941 many pogrom perpetrators were animated by hatred or rage (or both). But we should nonetheless not be too quick to infer that the wave of pogroms in summer 1941 can be reduced to anti-Semitism. First, the number of pogroms that occurred is not consistent with a one-sided portrayal of interwar Poland as uniformly hazardous for Jews. As noted above, pogroms occurred in roughly 9 percent of localities where Jews and

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<sup>10</sup>Cited in Melzer 1997, 21.

<sup>11</sup>Cited in Rudnicki 2005, 160.

non-Jews dwelled together. Even one pogrom is one too many, but over 90 percent of the places where a pogrom *could* have occurred experienced no pogrom at all. Despite the increased opportunity offered by the German invasion and the collapse of state authority, the vast majority of Poles and Ukrainians did not perpetrate pogroms, and the vast majority of Jews were not victims of them. If interwar Poland were as riven with anti-Semitism as the “pessimistic” view would have it, and anti-Semitism were indeed the primary motive behind pogroms, then we would expect far more pogroms than we actually observe.<sup>12</sup> The relative rarity of pogroms thus implies one of two things: either persecution of Jews was not as widespread or deeply held as in the “pessimistic” view, in which case its more limited distribution might (or might not) account for the pogroms that we observe; or such persecution was widespread and therefore could not have accounted for the pogroms.

We dissent from the “pessimistic” view, which tells only part of the story, though no doubt the dominant one. Although Jews in interwar Poland certainly experienced discrimination and violence, their story is not one of unremitting doom, even in the 1930’s. For example, Jewish commerce survived, and in the case of large enterprises in some ways even thrived, despite nationalist boycotts and acts of violence (Marcus 1983, 243-245). Although small traders suffered far more, even at the end of 1938 half of such traders were still Jews. Moreover, for all of interwar Poland’s faults, Jews enjoyed many freedoms permitted under the Polish system (Mendelsohn 1986, 138). They formed their own political parties that competed and won seats in elections, and served as representatives of other parties. They had a lively cultural and civic life, including a Hebrew and Yiddish press, a system of schools, and sundry religious and other volunteer organizations. Jews were free

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<sup>12</sup>We borrow the label “pessimistic” from Polonsky (1994), which provides a balanced overview of the debate on how much anti-Semitism there was in interwar Poland. See also Mendelsohn (1994).

to be Hasidic or zionist or socialist or marxist or even Polish. Mendelsohn (1986, 139) lauds “the extraordinary creativity of Polish Jewry.”

Although more radical Polish nationalist views of Jews spread among the elite as the 1930’s wore on, not all non-Jewish leaders were hostile, and some, albeit a distinct minority, actively promoted joint cooperation between Jews and non-Jews. For example, the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) and (Jewish) Bund organized various joint actions in protest against anti-Jewish initiatives. The PPS stood alone in the late 1930’s as the only major (non-Jewish) political party that did not openly advocate a Poland free of Jews, and some of the leadership explicitly condemned the rising anti-Jewish tide (Brumberg 1989, 82-89; see also Holzer 1994, 202; Melzer 1997, 24-25). There were similar liberal currents within the Catholic Church, though before the war they never influenced Church policy (Polonsky 1997, 209; Connelly 2002, 653). Michlic (2006, 77-78) lists a number of other prominent non-Jewish political and intellectual elites who denounced the violence and the idea that Jews were the enemy of Poles.

Notwithstanding a prevailing folk prejudice with its stereotypical image of Jews, there is little actual evidence that the nationalists’ more sinister views were even close to universal at the mass level. Consider the boycott of Jewish businesses, a key nationalist demand that by the late 1930’s was being encouraged even in pastoral letters of the Catholic Church. According to Marcus (1983, 244-245), the vast majority of peasants nonetheless patronized Jewish traders because the prices were lower. That decision hardly implies a love for the Jews, but it is consistent with Weeks (2005, 29), who notes that the most important anti-Semites were middle-class, and even in the interwar period were never too successful at selling their program among the peasantry. The overview of memoirs in Bronsztejn (1994) illustrates that there were many non-Jews that had sympathy for Jews or judged them as individuals by the same standards they judged other non-Jews. Jolluck

(2005) analyzes the testimonies of thousands of Polish women who during the Soviet occupation were considered “harmful” by the authorities and thus deported to the Soviet Union. Even among this sample, which was almost certainly more nationalist in orientation than Poles as a whole, roughly one-third expressed either positive or neutral views of Jews. That counts as a lot against a baseline assumption of ubiquitous hatred of Jews.

The second reason for caution in prematurely reducing the 1941 pogroms to anti-Semitism concerns what gets counted as anti-Semitism. At risk of oversimplification we can identify both “broad” and “narrow” understandings. In the “broad” understanding anti-Semitism is something of a grab-bag of different kinds of hostility (e.g., Brustein 2003; Gross 2006; Michlic 2006). It includes cases in which the primary target happens to be Jews for incidental reasons, as for example the nationalist economic boycott. Given the Jews’ position in the Polish economy (to be discussed further below), the nationalists’ desire to claim a commanding position for Poles in commerce was bound to have the largest effect on Jews. It includes cases where the primary target could well have been other groups but the Jews were singled out, as in beliefs that Jews were uniquely enthusiastic in their support for the Soviet occupation. Poles might well have pinned the accusation on Belarusians but didn’t. It includes cases in which the target could only be Jews, as in accusations of deicide or the ritual murder of Christian children.

The “narrow” understanding of anti-Semitism, by contrast, excludes scenarios in which Jews are targeted in their role as prosperous traders, sympathizers with communism, or supporters of the Soviet occupation. In the “narrow” view anti-Semitism refers only to instances in which Jews are targeted for being Jews. For example, Blobaum (2005, 4) contrasts the anti-Semitic 1918 Lwów pogrom, where as noted above religious Jews were humiliated and religious objects desecrated, with the 1898 Galician pogroms (Stauter-Halsted 2005), where the victims were

Jews, but who were targeted “as owners of inns, taverns, and distilleries.” In the former case the pious could have avoided injury only by ceasing to be Jews; in the latter the victims’ Jewish identity was seen to be ancillary.

We take no position on whether anti-Semitism *ought* to have the “broad” or “narrow” interpretation except to say that for our purposes it is better to “split” rather than “lump.” We would like to know which purported motive for the 1941 pogroms best accords with the observed distribution of those pogroms. Were the pogroms revenge for alleged Jewish support of the Soviet occupation? Were they about robbery and the opportunity to get rid of economic rivals? Were they about ridding the nation of an alien and fundamentally unassimilable group? For analytic clarity we refer only to the last question as implying anti-Semitism. We operationalize local-level anti-Semitism using the interwar vote for nationalist parties that espoused the “narrow” view of anti-Semitism. These parties are described in more detail in Chapter 2. Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate that at best there is a middling relationship between the distribution of mass anti-Semitic attitudes and pogrom occurrence.

## **Economic Competition**

Another family of explanations relates to economic rivalry and hardship. The study of the economic roots of ethnic violence has a long pedigree in comparative politics (Bonacich 1972; Horowitz 1985; Forbes 1997). Three kinds of arguments get made. One focuses on the deleterious effects of economic downturns, which lead to the scapegoating of vulnerable minorities. Jews would be particularly targeted in times of crisis because non-Jews associate them with markets and capitalism (Rogger 1992; Rohrbacher 1993). We don’t doubt the applicability of this hypothesis under more settled political conditions, but even the most creative conspiracy-mongers were not blaming the Jews for the Nazi invasion and concomi-

tant economic collapse. The economic scapegoating hypothesis lacks prima facie validity.

A second and related economic explanation focuses on competition in ethnically-segmented labor markets and economic production. In this view Jews constitute a quintessential “middleman minority” (Blalock 1967). As summarized by Olzak (1992: 40), such minorities are distinguished by dwelling in enclaves, their sojourner status, and “concentration in finance, commerce, and other jobs that mediate between producers and consumers ...” Of these characteristics only sojourner status does not clearly characterize the Jews. At just under 10 percent of the population, according to figures from the late 1920s and early 1930s Jews comprised over 40 percent of university graduates (Marcus 1983: 67), over 70 percent of those employed in commerce, and controlled 39 of 137 joint-stock companies in commerce (Tomaszewski 1989: 147). Particularly sensitive were the small market towns, the *shtetlach*, where Jews were demographically weighty and tended to be notably wealthier and more influential than their peasant neighbors. Jews were not sojourners in Poland in the literal sense, having dwelled in Poland for hundreds of years. Nonetheless, as noted above, many non-Jews, particularly on the right of the political spectrum, considered them a foreign element. In the middleman minority view Jews are most vulnerable to pogroms where they are most segregated from non-Jewish populations and where they have excessive influence over important economic sectors, such as commerce. Adapting Olzak (1992: 40), in these areas Jewish success is likely to be seen as a threat both to non-Jewish elites who seek to maintain power and to those in lower-status positions who resent their economic reliance on Jews.

Ethnic economic competition ought to be a compelling explanation. Having regained their own state after well over century of being submerged in other empires, many Polish leaders were keen to take ownership of the new state. As we

have discussed, the idea of “Polonizing” the economy—ensuring that ethnic Poles dominated—originated with rightwing nationalist elites. But by the latter half of the 1930’s it had become more broadly accepted and led to calls for an economic boycott of Jewish businesses and scattered pogroms. Unfortunately we lack good local-level indicators of economic competition between ethnic groups. As an admittedly inadequate proxy we use a dummy variable identifying the *shtetlach*, the small market towns where we know that such competition was most bitter. A *shtetl* was basically a small town that had lots of Jews, so this indicator will unfortunately capture both demographic and economic dynamics. We find that in the Polish-dominated northeastern voivodships a *shtetl* was not more likely to experience a pogrom (conditional on levels of nationalism and other factors), while in the Ukrainian dominated southeastern voivodships the opposite was true.

A third and closely related economic explanation argues that the 1941 pogroms occurred where non-Jews sought to rob Jews of their wealth. Looting during the pogroms is well-documented (see, e.g., Żbikowski 2007, 343-345). In the case of the Jedwabne pogrom, for example, we know that peasants from surrounding villages brought carts to carry away Jewish property. In other cases Jews were able to buy their way out of trouble, at least temporarily. But we should not confuse looting that might occur incidental to a pogrom with looting as the motive for a pogrom. If robbery or extortion were the driving force, we would expect pogroms to occur where the difference in wealth between Jews and non-Jews is the largest. One way we proxy for this is with illiteracy, which was greater among non-Jews than Jews and correlated with standard of living. The problem with the illiteracy data, as with most such indicators of wealth disparity, is that they are not generally available at the local level. However, we are fortunate to have data from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee on the location of free loan associations. These associations were established to assist Jews in economic distress by offering

no-interest loans for economic development. According to the wealth hypothesis pogroms should take place in localities where Jews were too prosperous to warrant a free loan association. We are unable to include this variable in our analysis of ethnic Polish regions, but we find little evidence of a wealth effect in Ukrainian Galicia.

## **Political Threat and Ethnic Violence**

Our explanation focuses on dueling nationalisms, and is broadly consistent with the “power-threat” model initially developed to understand the dynamics of U.S. race relations (Blalock 1967). Power-threat theory argues that where minority groups threaten the dominance of the majority, the majority will take actions to suppress minority power. In the postbellum U.S. South, for example, this view holds that whites saw two sources of threat to their continued racial dominance. One was the sheer number of liberated blacks, which led to white fear of being outnumbered. Another was the influence of political parties such as the Republicans and later the Progressives, who were more sympathetic than the Democrats to black civil rights. The theory maintains that where the black threat was most acute—where blacks constituted a substantial minority and racially inclusive parties were popular—whites intent on preserving the racial status quo were most likely to implement measures of social control such as electoral disenfranchisement, Jim Crow legislation, and lynching (Tolnay and Beck 1995: 57).

We argue that the difference between violent and non-violent localities in Poland lies in a similar combination of the popularity of parties supporting minority rights and polarization between Jews and non-Jews. There are three important explanatory factors, each of which can be measured at the local level and can independently influence the probability of a pogrom: the popularity of Polish and Ukrainian

parties advocating ethnic tolerance, the demographic weight of Jews, and the degree to which Jews advocated national equality with Poles and Ukrainians. Let us first address the effect of ethnically tolerant parties. One of the most important divisions within mass opinion in interwar Poland pitted nationalists who advocated imposing a homogeneous culture throughout the territory against others who preferred more inclusive nationality policies. Although this conflict is sometimes reduced to one between majority and minority groups, in actuality both majorities and to a lesser extent minorities were internally divided on these issues.

For Poles this conflict played itself out in the political struggle between two blocs of parties: the National Democrats and their allies, who sought a “Polish” Poland with minimal minority rights, and the party of the dictator Marshal Piłsudski, the BBWR, which favored an accommodation with the minorities in exchange for allegiance to a multinational state led by Poles. Ukrainians were a minority in Poland but constituted a majority in the southeastern region of Galicia. They were basically united in their desire for autonomy (from Poles) but like Poles were divided on the extent to which Jews could be included in their national project. According to power-threat theory pogroms would be more likely to occur where the popularity of tolerant parties indicated a population supportive of pluralistic nationality policies. In these areas the nationalists would have felt the most threatened and attacked Jews in the hopes of forestalling the need to acknowledge Jewish national rights. Of course this is only true up to a point: there would be no perpetrators in localities where all the non-Jews respected Jewish rights. Sadly such a situation appears to be exceedingly rare. We show that in accordance with power-threat theory the probability of a pogrom increases with support for the ethnically pluralist BBWR party.

The second factor correlated with the likelihood of a pogrom is the size of the Jewish population relative to that of non-Jews. Where Jews were few in number

they posed little danger to Polish and Ukrainian authority, and there were correspondingly few pogroms in those localities. But the likelihood of a pogrom went up in tandem with the proportion of Jews. Part of this was probably about increased Jewish visibility, which made Jews easier targets. But a more important aspect was the potential threat substantial Jewish numbers posed to non-Jewish dominance. Polish and Ukrainian nationalism had never been sympathetic to Jewish difference, and attitudes hardened after the Nazi seizure of power and death of the dictator Marshal Piłsudski. This put the Jews in a difficult situation. Allying with the Polish or Ukrainian nationalists might have allayed nationalist fear, but at the unacceptably high cost of forsaking Jewish culture. Any other option left the Jews open to suspicion of disloyalty to the national cause. For nationalists, then, Jews were inherently suspect. We illustrate the positive correlation between the Jewish population proportion and the occurrence of a pogrom using interwar census data on ethnic and religious affiliation.

The third factor associated with pogroms is the proportion of Jews that sought recognition as a nation equal to that of the Poles or Ukrainians. Among the political options that significant numbers of Jews actually pursued in interwar Poland, Jewish nationalism had arguably the least sympathy among non-Jews. (We do not count communism. Contrary to popular belief both then and now, Jewish support for communism was miniscule at the mass level. See Kopstein and Wittenberg 2003; 2011.) Jews who identified with non-ethnic parties that acknowledged at least some minority rights might well have been seen by Polish and Ukrainian nationalists as a threat, but at least they would have gotten some credit from those non-Jews who saw in that identification a reasonable attempt to fully participate in political life as Jews. But even non-nationalist Poles and Ukrainians balked at the idea of Jewish self-government, comprehensive Hebrew and Yiddish education, and other rights the Jewish nationalists were hoping to acquire. Localities where

Jews supported national equality with the majority group proved particularly vulnerable to pogroms. In these areas, where non-Jews felt the least solidarity with their Jewish neighbors, Jews were doubly cursed: they contained a greater number of both potential perpetrators and non-Jews who didn't feel enough solidarity with the Jews to intervene on the Jews' behalf. Our indicator of Jewish nationalism is the proportion of Jews who supported parties advocating national rights. We compute this quantity from interwar census data on the number of Jews and the electoral results obtained by the Bloc of National Minorities and the Galician Zionists, two of the leading parties promoting Jewish national rights. We show that the greater the proportion of Jews voting for these parties, the more likely a pogrom.

The role of the non-Jews who do not participate directly in the violence is crucial. First, they may of course warn Jews of the impending attack or rescue them if it is imminent. There are many documented cases of violence having been averted, frequently at great risk to the lives of the rescuers. Second, and more commonly, they contribute to what Horowitz (2001: 326-373) calls "the social environment for killing." Would-be perpetrators may refrain from acting if they do not sense broader popular support for violent activity. Fujii (2009: 30) describes a range of responses to genocide between rescuing on the one hand and perpetrating on the other. It is the bystanders, who neither rescue nor kill, that often set the tone of community expectation for or against violence independent of any state instigation. The most important of these bystanders are authoritative figures such as priests or teachers, whose statements and actions will be interpreted to signal approval or disapproval. Pogroms occur when there are both perpetrators motivated to act and others who either implicitly or explicitly are willing to condone the violence.

It might appear puzzling that in the midst of the Nazi offensive against the Soviet Union ordinary non-Jews could even think that attacking Jews would improve

Why Pogroms in Some Localities and not Others?		
Hypothesis	Indicator	Evidence
Economic competition	Shtetl/ free loan assoc.	Low
Anti-Semitism	Vote for anti-Semitic parties	Medium
Soviet occupation	Vote for communist parties	Low
Political threat	Jewish pop/vote for ethnic & tolerant parties	High

Table 1: Why do pogroms occur in some localities and not others? Leading hypotheses, the indicators we use to test them, and the strength of the evidence in their favor.

their national prospects. But this is because we have the benefit of knowledge of the horrors that were to come. In summer, 1941 most civilians, Jewish or not, could not have known what ultimate fate awaited the Jews or even how bleak Polish or Ukrainian national prospects were. The Germans did murder thousands of Jewish and non-Jewish civilians during summer, 1941, and often in the most brutal manner, but the ghettos had yet to be fully operational, plans for total extermination of the Jews had yet to be implemented, and many non-Jews were still being lulled by the Germans into believing they would be treated leniently if they joined the fight against the Soviet Union. Consequently, non-Jewish civilian populations could have seen the lawless atmosphere as an ideal and perhaps their only opportunity to rid themselves of competitors in anticipation of a future autonomous national life. This was certainly the message the Germans wanted to telegraph as they strove to incite local populations to attack their Jewish neighbors.

We summarize the alternative and main hypotheses in Table 1. The hypotheses will be discussed more fully in chapter 3, and then tested in chapters 4 and 5. In the remainder of the present chapter we discuss our data and methods, and provide a roadmap of the book.

## Research Design

All research on the spatial distribution of violence must grapple with an inevitable tension between the level of aggregation at which violence takes place and the ecological units for which there are data to test competing explanations. Brass (2003: 28) notes that in India and the United States ethnic riots never take place across entire cities, but instead occur in neighborhoods or even on specific streets. Much the same could of course be said for other countries. Yet at the same time systematic economic, political, and social data to test competing explanations for such violence are usually available only for municipalities or larger geographic units. Important micro-comparative data collection exceptions such as Kalyvas (2006) notwithstanding, researchers usually address this mismatch in one of two ways.

Some aggregate violent incidents up to the level at which existing demographic or other explanatory information may be matched, be it cities (Wilkinson 2004; Spillerman 1970; 1971), counties (Olzak 1992; Tolnay and Beck 1995), or even regions (Petersen 2002). While such aggregation may be necessary to test competing explanations, it does entail a loss of information, in this case spatial variation in violence. The higher the level of aggregation, the poorer the fit is likely to be between the values of the explanatory variables at the higher level and the values the variables would have had had they been measurable at the micro-level locations where the incidents actually took place. Consider again the effort to explain the pattern of lynching in the postbellum U.S. South. It is of course an important finding that there is a negative correlation across counties between the popularity of parties supporting amicable relations between whites and blacks and the incidence of lynching (Tolnay and Beck 1995, 197). However, this fact by itself tells us little about whether localities *within* counties where those parties were popular were the

places that had the fewest lynchings. Inferring the local outcomes from the county results is tricky even with ideal data and exemplary methods (Achen and Shively 1995; King 1997). Even analyses of cities, which largely avoid aggregation issues, have to deal with the problem of urban bias.

Other researchers eschew large-N analysis in favor of case studies (e.g., Brass 2003; Gross 2001, 2006) or small-N comparisons (e.g., Varshney 2002). We do not gainsay that much can be learned from these exemplary studies and the research traditions they represent. Indeed, the harrowing account of the 1941 Jedwabne pogrom in Gross (2001), with its provocative claims regarding Polish anti-Semitism and collaboration with the Nazis in the extermination of the Jews, led to a passionate debate about the reason for the pogrom and a surge of research on other pogroms, of which the present study is a part. But the nuance that is gained through rich description of a small number of cases is inevitably paid for in conclusions whose external validity are questionable. Many aspects of Gross's characterization of Jedwabne have been challenged. But even if his account were wholly accurate, we still would not know how representative Jedwabne is of localities where pogroms occurred. In fact, as we show in Chapter 4, Jedwabne is not at all like other pogrom localities in its neighborhood.

We employ a large-N, within-country quantitative approach, but which focuses on one wave of pogroms (in summer 1941), and includes a qualitative cross-regional comparison between one region where Poles were predominant and another where Ukrainians were the majority. This strategy offers a number of advantages. First, as noted at the outset of this chapter, the 1941 pogroms occurred under conditions of state and civil society collapse. This relieves us of the burden of measuring the role of the state in inciting pogroms and of civil society in modulating inter-ethnic conflict. Arguments focusing on the state and civil society are ex-ante precluded.

Second, our large-N data suffers much less than comparable data from the in-

formation losses due to aggregation. We match electoral and census data (to be discussed below) at the lowest geographic level at which they can be matched. For our six voivodships this yields nearly 2000 localities, ranging in size from villages to large cities. Our data do not span the entire population of the eastern borderlands. We were unable to find census data for the Nowogrodek and Wilno voivodships. This is unfortunate because in those areas we surmise that Lithuanians may have been much more prominent among pogrom perpetrators. We were also unable to analyze the very smallest villages. Here the limitation is not the census, which in 1921 covered even the tiniest rural outposts, but the electoral data. The state published results only for localities with at least 100 electors. Still, our data represent the best evidence we have to test our hypotheses. The inclusion of villages avoids both the ecological inference problems associated with larger units of analysis and the urban bias of town-only research.

Third, the comparison between the Polish-dominated northeast and the Ukrainian-dominated southeast allows us to explore, in a qualitative rather than quantitative manner, a set of potential explanatory factors that operate at a level of analysis above the municipality. As we elaborate further in later chapters, these factors include the historical legacies of having dwelled in different partitions prior to Polish independence (with the northeast in the Russian partition and the southeast in the Austrian partition), and differing Polish and Ukrainian notions of statehood and the role Jews might play in it.

# Data

## Pogroms

Those who study ethnic violence under settled political conditions usually have the benefit of being able to rely for information on the press or other organizations that, while certainly not wholly unbiased, at least do not have a direct stake in the conflict. Uncovering violent acts is difficult even under these circumstances due to selection effects: only larger episodes may get reported, and events outside of towns may be poorly covered or ignored entirely. The resulting urban bias almost certainly underestimates the true extent of violence, and blinds us from uncovering causes that might be particular to rural areas.

Obtaining accurate information on pogroms in summer, 1941 poses even more difficult challenges. There was a war going on, and not the kind of war where intrepid and neutral reporters could traipse around the battlefield recording atrocities. On the eastern front it was a clash of two of the bloodiest tyrannies in history and the scene of carnage that would later be called war crimes. What fragmentary evidence we have of what happened comes from a combination of German military and police reports, Soviet military correspondence, non-Jewish reminiscences, and above all the testimonies of perpetrators and survivors. Needless to say, the amount and quality of information is highly variable. There is an ongoing debate among Shoah scholars, for example, about the extent to which survivor accounts, which may be affected by faulty memory, antipathy toward members of other groups, and "contamination" by postwar discussions, should be accepted at face value in the absence of corroborating information. The same can be said for non-Jewish reminiscences, which suffer from similar problems and tend toward the self-exculpatory. This is not even to speak of Nazi and Soviet sources, which have every reason to distort the deliberate murder of civilian populations.

The often contested accounts of what happened in particular localities necessitates a minimalist approach to classifying pogroms. Adapting Horowitz's (2001: 22) definition of a deadly ethnic riot, we define a pogrom (against Jews) as a collective attack on one or more Jewish civilians that is geographically limited in scope and in which the perpetrators are primarily civilians. Although for some places it is possible to reconstruct important information such as the number of victims or the demographic profiles of the killers, the available source material is too uneven to replicate that feat across all localities. This does limit the types of analyses we can perform. Spilerman (1976), for example, has sufficient information to statistically analyze the severity of U.S. race riots. Wilkinson (2004) is able to investigate riot proneness with data on the frequency with which violence occurred in particular localities. We are not so fortunate. Our main dependent variable is thus simply whether or not a pogrom occurred in a given locality.

Even reconstructing such minimal information about a locality required overcoming two big challenges. The first concerns identifying localities where pogroms did *not* occur. The evidentiary material tends to report instances of violence, but between the war, the Shoah, and the passage of time it can be unclear for some places whether the absence of documentation means there was no pogrom or just that neither perpetrators nor victims are alive to tell their stories. We compensate for this problem by capitalizing on a recent surge in scholarly interest in the culpability of local civilian populations in the Shoah. Spurred in part by the passionate reaction in Poland to accounts of what happened during the Jedwabne pogrom, historians have begun the painstaking work of locating and sifting through source materials to reconstruct what happened in even the smallest communities in summer, 1941 (e.g., Machcewicz and Persak 2002; Rubin 2006). Our pogrom database builds on this research.

The second challenge is that not every instance of anti-Jewish violence counts

for us as a pogrom. A key feature of pogroms is that the perpetrators be primarily civilians. Given that the pogroms were occurring in the middle of a war, it is thus important to establish for a particular place that the violence in question was not military. In some cases sources generally agree that the German military itself directly killed Jews, such as in the town of Białystok, where police battalion 309 burned alive between 800 and 1000 Jews in a synagogue (Szarota 2004: 215). For us such acts do not count as pogroms.

In the vast majority of cases, however, the evidence suggests that Germans were either not present, or were present but did not take a large role in the actual violence. Nationalists in Poland and Ukraine argue that even when the Germans refrained from direct participation, civilian populations were not responsible for pogroms because the Germans compelled them to commit the crimes. We do not doubt that there may have been instances of such coercion, but the available evidence does not support the broader inference. The general presence of German army units, police battalions, and mobile killing units in the region is of course indisputable. It is also clear that the Germans preferred their dirty work to be done by locals in so-called “self-cleansing” actions. For example, on June 29, 1941 SS-Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich noted in a telegram that “Nothing is to be put in the way of the self-cleansing actions of anti-communist and anti-Jewish circles in the newly occupied areas. On the contrary, without trace they are to be unleashed and, when necessary, to be intensified and to be steered onto the right path ...” The question is whether such incitement and orchestration count as compulsion. In general they do not. Few would deny that if the Nazis had truly wanted to compel the locals to act, they could have succeeded in doing so—the Nazis were not exactly timid about using force and intimidation to get their way. Yet there is strong evidence that the effort to incite pogroms had only uneven success (e.g., Brown 2004: 208) and no evidence that local populations were ever penalized for

having failed to act on German instigation. In short, while Germans wanted the locals to act against the Jews, they stopped well short of forcing the issue. The German presence does not automatically absolve civilian populations of responsibility. We will say more about the German presence in Chapters 4 and 5.

## **Election and Census Data**

A different set of challenges relates to the municipality-level interwar Polish census and electoral data. The exigencies of war and realities of dictatorship mean that the available information is far less rich than in countries where elections and censuses occur with regularity. The outbreak of World War II precluded a census in 1940-41, and the war itself destroyed the municipality-level results from 1931. Our main source of demographic data is thus from 1921. Poland did have regular elections throughout the interwar period, but Piłsudski's coup d'état meant that no election after 1928 was free and fair enough to be usable. Therefore our main source of popular political preferences are the 1922 and 1928 national parliamentary election results. The 1922 election is considered to be free and fair by the standards of the day. The 1928 election, conducted two years after a coup that brought Marshal Piłsudski to power, was marred by a modicum of administrative interference in the eastern provinces, the principal target being communist parties. Fortunately for us there is a record of these intrusions in the number of invalidated votes, which the state recorded. In some cases we rectify the undercounted communist vote by adding to it the invalidated vote. It would have been nice to have been able to download everything we needed from the ICPSR or other electronic archive, but we are apparently the first researchers to comprehensively exploit these data. They had to be entered from published materials.

The 1921 census is known to have overcounted Poles and undercounted minorities. To compensate we follow Tomaszewski (1985) and infer national affiliation

from the more accurate data on religious adherence. Roman Catholics are equated with Poles, religious Jews with Jewish nationality, the Orthodox with Belarusians, and Greek Catholics (Uniates) with Ukrainians. This solution does mis-categorize non-trivial numbers of Orthodox Ukrainians (In Wołyń) and Jews (by religion) in Galicia who categorized themselves as Poles by nationality. These issues are addressed in different ways. First, we assess the sensitivity of our results when areas likely to contain such populations are included and excluded from the analysis. Second, for Ukrainian areas we re-estimate some of our models using 1939 local-level demographic information found in Kubijovyč (1983). Finally, we check for robustness using powiat-level data from the 1921 and 1931 censuses.

## **A Roadmap**

Chapter 2 begins the analysis with an historical overview of ethnic relations in the eastern Polish borderlands up until the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June, 1941. The roots of anti-Jewish animosity predate the founding of independent Poland after World War I. We first show how 19th century debates on Jewish emancipation and the merits of ethnic versus civic forms of nationalism got recast during the interwar period into partisan struggles over state ownership, economic redistribution, and the proper limits of minority autonomy. We then discuss how these debates grew sharper and more ominous for Jews (and some non-Jews) with the rise of fascism in Germany and the 1935 death of the dictator Piłsudski, whose political party favored a reasonable accommodation with the minorities. Finally, we consider the Soviet occupation of 1939-1941, which spelled the end of Polish independence and further thwarted Ukrainian national aspirations. Because Polish and Ukrainian nationalist historiography argues that the 1941 pogroms were a response to Jewish collaboration with Soviet oppression, we discuss Jewish and

others' attitudes toward Soviet rule. In Chapter 3 we introduce our data: where it comes from and what its limitations are. We then discuss measures for our explanatory variables and the statistical methods we employ to test our hypotheses.

Chapters 4 and 5 test our argument in two regions of Poland, the northeastern provinces of Białystok and Polesie (Chapter 4), where Poles predominated alongside substantial Jewish and Belarusian minorities, and the southeastern provinces of Wołyń, Lwów, Stanisławow, and Tarnopol, where Ukrainians predominated over significant Jewish and Polish minorities. In both regions we find that Jewish population proportion and interwar sympathy for parties advocating greater Jewish national autonomy are robustly related to an increase in the likelihood of a pogrom, but less support for similar claims about economic competition and anti-Semitism, and no support that communism led to pogroms. In the northeast, where the perpetrators of pogroms were primarily Poles, the relationship between communist popularity and pogrom likelihood is negative, a finding consistent with other evidence suggesting that non-Jewish communists were among the most resistant to anti-Semitic incitement. In the southeast pogroms were largely a Ukrainian affair, and we find no statistical relationship between communists support and pogrom outbreaks.

Chapter 6 extends the argument beyond Poland and Jews as victims. We first examine other areas that experienced pogroms in 1941, especially Lithuania and Romania, where in both cases the targets were Jews. Here we expect the same factors to be relevant as in Poland—Lithuanians and Romanians perceived Jews and the Jewish struggle for national recognition in broadly similar ways to Poles and Ukrainians. We then discuss earlier pogrom waves in Eastern Europe, especially that of 1917-1920 in Ukraine, which resembled the 1941 pogrom wave in the lack of central government control but differed in the prominent role paramilitary gangs played in the violence. We surmise that these gangs were less concerned

with the prospects of Jewish nationalism than in simply terrorizing anyone they suspected as not being fully supportive of Ukrainian independence. Finally, we examine violence beyond Europe, including the lynching of blacks in the U.S. and Hindu-Muslim riots in India. Tolnay and Beck (1995) and Wilkinson (2004) have already found evidence for the demographic component of the power-threat argument in the U.S. and India, respectively. We conjecture that although neither U.S. blacks nor Indian Muslims have sought national autonomy in the manner of East Europe Jews, the threat these minority groups are seen to pose is nonetheless conceived by the majority in similarly partisan terms.

In chapter 7 we conclude the book with a discussion of the broader implications of our findings. First, we revisit contemporary debates on the merits of minority assimilation for reducing inter-group violence. The traditional argument holds that assimilation ought to reduce such violence because the process of acculturation reduces the majority perception that the minority is a distinct group. According to this view Orthodox Jews, who were by far the most resistant to acculturation and the most visibly different from non-Jews, ought to have been the principal target of pogroms. But the pogroms were not about “otherness” in this specific cultural sense. In fact the Orthodox were among the least sympathetic to Jewish national aspirations, and at least in part supported “Polish” parties in hopes of securing their religious rights. Our findings suggest that cultural assimilation is no guarantee of safety, but also that something less demanding of minorities than cultural assimilation may be sufficient to secure that safety. Where minorities can find common ground with majorities in the political sphere, majorities may feel just enough solidarity with them to ensure peaceful inter-group relations.

Second, we weigh in on the still-sensitive issue of civilian culpability in the Shoah. Many Poles and Ukrainians are loath to accept responsibility for persecuting Jews because it challenges their self-image as victims and resisters of Nazism.

On the Polish side this was amply demonstrated by the hue and cry over what really happened during the Jedwabne attacks (Brumberg 2002). Contrary to the claims of the nationalists, however, local civilian populations were not victims of the war in the same way as Jews were. Ordinary Poles and Ukrainians may have died at the hands of both the Germans and Soviets, but they also willingly killed Jews, both in collaboration with and independently of the Germans. They were victimizers as well as victims. It is also true, however, that the vast majority of Poles and Ukrainians never participated in a pogrom. In our view the small number of pogroms relative to the number that could have taken place requires replacing the notion of *national* responsibility with a proper recognition of the local circumstances under which ordinary people committed such ghastly crimes. Perhaps then the painful issue of guilt and culpability can be put in proper perspective.

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# Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Northeastern Poland, Summer 1941

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In this chapter we turn to an analysis of the northeastern kresy, a region of Poland occupied by and then annexed to the Soviet Union as part of the Western provinces of the Belarusian republic following the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939. We focus on the territories that had been the Polish voivodships of Białystok and Polesie before the Soviet annexation. The main ethnic groups inhabiting these areas were Poles, Jews, and Belarusians. Our analysis of 352 localities in these voivodships affirms the broad utility of power threat theory and offers more limited support for the anti-Semitism hypothesis. The louder the Jewish call for cultural autonomy and the greater the popularity of parties such as the BBWR that advocated inter-ethnic cooperation, the greater the perceived threat to Poles who sought a nationally homogeneous state, and the more likely a pogrom.

We begin with an overview of social, political, and military conditions in Białystok and Polesie on the eve of the pogroms. Conditions were ripe for pogroms: the hated Soviet regime melted away and with it the violent suppression of Polish nationalism, and the German army and *Einsatzgruppen* were slowly establishing control. We then begin our quantitative analysis with a comparison of Jedwabne, the locality with one of the best known of the 1941 pogroms,, with other localities where pogroms also occurred. We find that although Jedwabne has come to be paradigmatic of pogroms of the period, it is in no way representative of localities where pogroms occurred. We then offer some prima facie evidence for the applicability of the power-threat hypothesis by descriptively comparing municipalities where pogroms did not occur with those where they did occur. Following that we introduce a statistical model that shows that the perceived Jewish threat to Polish dominance predicts pogroms even once factors such as Polish nationalism and the extent of communist support are taken into account. Finally, we interpret these findings by turning to several narratives of pogrom violence. The combination of factors leading to a pogrom suggests something about the complex mix of motives at work. Rather than hatred or revenge, inter-communal indifference provides the context in which pogroms occurred.

## The German Presence

It is important to recall that most of the pogroms discussed in this book occurred during a six week period following the German invasion of the Soviet occupied eastern borderlands on June 22, 1941. It was a period of near statelessness. The German Army Group Centre moved through the northeastern borderlands exceptionally quickly. One week into the campaign, German units had encircled and destroyed Soviet forces deployed in the Bialystok salient and had advanced beyond Minsk to the edge of the Pripet marshes (Stahel 2009, 192). In the face of this onslaught, public authority at the local level collapsed, as local communist and police officials evacuated with the retreating Soviet forces.

In most towns local Poles replaced the departed Soviet officials, and, with German permission, temporarily carried out both political and police functions for the first several weeks. But the general political situation remained chaotic. Throughout the Bialystok and Polesia voivodships, German army units stopped in communities primarily to raise their flag, leave a small field troop, and then push on. According to the account of Yehoshua Kales, who survived the war hidden by a Christian in the town of Siemiatycze, "Overall, the Poles had all the power in their hands for the first couple of weeks." (AZIH 301-1463). The pattern and degrees of German involvement varied from place to place. A survivor account from Rokitno in Polesia voivodship, describes how the pogrom unfolded there:

"The Soviet authorities remained in Rokitno until June 29, 1941, as well as units of the Red army. The last to withdraw was the sapper detachment, which blew up the railway bridge and burned down several other objects. The town was then left entirely without authorities. On the night of July 3, the local Poles attacked and robbed Jewish houses. The Jews resisted, and a struggle developed during which one fell victim, whom the murderers killed boards....Among the local murderers, the following distinguished themselves: the Volksdeutsche Retslov and the Pole Krukowski. At the same time a local police force of Poles was established. Retslov was appointed its commdant. No Germans had yet appeared in Rokitno." (AZIH 301-3179).

It was not for "a couple of weeks," the narrative continues until the "three SS men arrived in Rokitno from Rarnow and began to throw their weight around in true Hitlerite fashion."

Although in some places German forces attempted to instigate pogroms, in other towns, such as Rokitno, deadly pogroms occurred before the Germans even arrived.

The Wehrmacht itself was trailed by SS units, known as the Einsatzgruppen. These units were tasked with killing communists and Jews. The problem they confronted was one of scale. In the areas covered in this chapter in the northeast portion of Poland SS-Gruppenführer Arthur Nebe's Einsatzgruppe B deployed less than 700 soldiers in a region with over 225,000 Jews. According to Edmund Dmitrów: "The task of the Einsatzgruppen confronted its leadership with the problem that the size of their own forces was limited compared to that of the Jewish population." (Dmitrów 2004, 122). Furthermore, the speed with which regular German military units moved across Western Belarus forced Nebe's to move along with them. By the first week of July, Nebe's main units had already left Western Belarus and were located in Minsk. Small sub-units of the Einsatzgruppen remained in the area but they were very thin on the ground. This is one reason why the SS-leadership decided to permit anti-communist and anti-Semitic elements from the local Polish and Belarusian populations to engage in "self-cleansing" actions. As noted in the introduction, however, their efforts to encourage pogroms met with only limited success.

## **Legacy of Soviet Occupation**

Soviet repression was experienced by the local population in a number of important ways. According to Gurianov, on the territory of Western Belarus, 44,981 people were arrested during the Soviet occupation. Many were accused of having supported anti-communist resistance movements and others were arrested for crimes ranging from membership in illegal organizations to economic "speculation" to crossing the Soviet-German border illegally. Of those arrested 48.9% were Poles, 24.2% were Jews, and 18.3 percent were Belarusians.(Bockowski p.207). These numbers on their own do not suggest that Soviet repression disproportionately affected Poles over other ethnic groups. In addition to arrests, several

thousand inhabitants were deported to the interior of the Soviet Union. Deportations occurred in four waves. In February 1940, landowners, civilians, military personnel who had received land for taking part in the struggle for independence, as well as foresters and their families were the primary victims. In the second wave, in April 1940, the families of those previously jailed, of those in hiding, or those who had fled across the border were shipped eastward. In June 1940, Polish nationals who had fled the German occupation were deported. Whereas the earlier deportations had targeted mostly Poles, this third round focused primarily on Jews. On June 20th a final round of deportations was initiated, primarily of Poles those who had worked in the anti-Soviet underground, as well as families of landowners, policemen, and higher officials of independent Poland, but this last action was never completed because of the Soviet invasion. (Wierzbicki p.32)

During the Soviet occupation, perhaps even more fateful for inter-ethnic relations than the arrests and deportations were the dramatic changes in the ethnic composition of government, public administration, and the police. These were spheres that had been completely dominated by Poles, but in both the Bialystok and Polesia regions Jews and especially Belarusians took up strong positions in all of these sectors. By October 1, 1940, for example, in the Bialystok region Bockowski estimates that there were somewhere between 9,000 and 12,000 people working in the state administration. Of these approximately 3900 were Belarusians, 3104 were Russians, 1420 were Jewish, and 613 other nationalities. This represented a dramatic break with the past. By the end of 1940, within the Bialystok district communist party organization committee, 48 Belarusians, 14 Russians, 13 Jews, and 2 Poles were employed full time (Bockowski 109). Perhaps even more significant were changes at the lower level. At the Bialystok Pedagogical Institute in the Class admitted in March 1940 spaces were allotted by nationality with a clear preference for Belarusians and Jews over Poles: 25 Belarusians, 22 Poles, 18 Jews, and 4 Russians matriculated for the fall (Bockowski 128).

It is important to note that preference for Belarusians and Jews over Poles in predominantly Polish areas began to change in fall 1940 (p.140), when orders came down from Minsk

to increase the number of local Poles in state and party positions. From the standpoint of ethnic relations, however, the damage had already been done. The state administration and civil service, which had earlier been "owned" by Poles, were now in the hands of a multi-ethnic political elite. On the eve of the German invasion, the 3rd battalion of the Red army stationed near the town of Ostryn sent a report up the chain of command noting: "According to the information of the local population, with regards to the moving of troops of the Red Army, Polish counterrevolutionary elements are spreading rumors about the Red Army leaving Western Belarus and they are threatening the Belarusian and Jewish population with revenge" (Wierzbicki p.34). Multiple Jewish survivor reports note that those just released from Soviet prisons were strongly represented among pogrom perpetrators (AZIH 301-1858; Destruction of the Jews of Szczuczyn, 7). But most administrators stationed from the interior of the Soviet Union had fled with the retreating Soviet authorities, leaving the local Belarusian and Jewish population vulnerable to retribution for the ordeal of the preceding 21 months.

## **Anti-Semitic Polish Nationalism**

As noted in Chapter 1, both historians and survivors point to the strength of the anti-Semitic and Polish nationalist National Democrats (*Endecja*) as the key to understanding pogroms (Zbikowski, 2007). Israel Lewin, a survivor from Wizna, was advised to flee by a Polish friend soon after the outbreak of the war because "the nationalists have already been given permission to do what they want." (AŻIH 301-4391); Szymon Datner's account of the same town testified that "Polish fascists, anti-Semites of long standing, the well known Endeks sized up the situation and began persecuting those Jews who were in hiding." (AŻIH 301-192). Datner's account of the Kolno pogrom points to the same group: "It was not in vain that the Polish Endeks and fascists had drummed into their minds over the course of long years the notion that Jews and Communists were one and the same thing, and they were the ones responsible for their misfortune" (AŻIH 3011996).

The *Endecja* was in fact particularly strong in parts of Białystok and Polesie. In 1902, of the 6800 members of one of the main precursor civic organizations to the National Democrats in all of Poland, almost one third (2,275) were active in the Łomża region, which comprises part of Białystok (Wolsza, 1992). Most historians trace the organizational capacity of the *Endecja* in these regions to the size and social position of the petty nobility, the so-called *szlachta zagorodowa*, who possessed small farms and often lived no better than the peasantry among whom they resided. This group had a reputation for fanatical patriotism, religiosity, and a sense of belonging to a socially better stratum than the ordinary folk (burghers, peasants, and Jews) in their surroundings.

In independent Poland, the National Democrats emerged as the strongest party in the region, winning on average over half of votes cast in the 229 settlements of the Białystok voivodship in 1922. The party could draw upon both an anti-Jewish political Catholicism and a deep resentment against Jewish economic competition in the small market towns, the *shtetlach*. We lack systematic data for all of the towns in our two provinces, but one study of the retail sector in 11 towns in the Białystok region found that in 1932, 663 of 721 retail shops (91%) were owned by Jews. Although this proportion dropped in the face of the growth of the Polish retail sector and economic pressure applied against Jews after Piłsudski's death, by 1937 Jews still owned 563 of 873 retail shops (64%) in these same towns, providing plenty of fuel of National Democratic agitation and boycotts (Linder 1937, 17 cited in Mendelsohn 1983, 75).

In the late 1930s, these boycotts were frequently accompanied by pogroms in this region and were abetted by the growth of what social scientists today would call pogrom "networks" (Brass 2006; Scacco 2008). The existence of such networks and their connection with the National Democrats in northeastern Poland during the late 1930s is supported by a great deal of anecdotal and archival evidence. For example, in a statement to the Sejm in 1937, Prime Minister Felicjan Flawoj-Składkowski discussed his response to daily reports of anti-Jewish riots in the Wysoki Mazowiecki district of Białystok in a way strongly indicative of nationalist

agitation:

The Starosta [district prefect] told me that the man behind the disturbances was a lawyer named Jursz, leader of the National Democrats, but he never takes part in the riots personally. I sent for him. He was not at home, so I left word to tell him that Skladkowski was here and said that if riots occur, he will be sent to Bereza [prison] and will be freed only if for one month after his incarceration no riots will occur. When, therefore, riots took place, we sent him to Bereza. After six weeks, we freed him, no riots having occurred....During the time of his imprisonment they evidently endeavored not to provoke riots, and none occurred (Segal 1938, 89).

## Perceived Jewish Threat

One of the most important political vehicles of the Jewish struggle for cultural autonomy was the Bloc of National Minorities, an electoral alliance that drew together all of the country's major national minorities—Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. As described by Mendelsohn (1983, pp. 53-54), the Bloc was built on the idea that all the minorities shared a similar interest in gaining national autonomy. The best strategy to achieve this, given electoral districts and rules favoring the Polish majority, was to form a united front.

Popular support for the Bloc of National Minorities undoubtedly increased Polish suspicions that the minorities, and the Jews in particular, were resisting a reasonable accommodation with Polish national aspirations. Indeed, given the minorities' demographic weight and the fractionalizes Polish political spectrum, it could conceivably have been the largest parliamentary party. The Bloc could and sometimes did hold the balance of power, as occurred when the country's minorities supported the Left's candidate for the subsequently assassinated President, Gabriel Narutowicz. The strong performance of the Bloc in the 1922 elections shocked Polish public opinion and seemed to confirm the worst fears of Poles that the country's national minorities were either unassimilable or disloyal.

In northeastern Poland the key player within the Bloc was the General Zionist Party, led by Yitzhak Grünbaum. The General Zionists spanned the religious/secular divide, incorporated both workers and businessmen, and, despite all of the bluster about Hebrew (a lan-

guage spoken by very few Polish Jews), its newspapers were published and party meetings were conducted in Yiddish as well as Polish. It is therefore probably best thought of as a Jewish "catch-all" party that took aim at the "center" of the Jewish electorate. Although the Zionism's goal was a Jewish state in Palestine, for the General Zionists day-to-day politics involved pressing demands for Jewish cultural and political rights and autonomy. The Bloc was seen both by Jews and Poles as his creature and a vehicle for the Zionist program (this especially so, after the orthodox Agudas Yisroel decided to field its own list in 1928).

Poles of the both the Left and the Right viewed Zionism as a danger because of the threat it posed to the establishment of a nationally homogeneous Polish state. According to Mendelsohn (1981), "the origins of the Zionists' support for the so-called minorities bloc resided in their conviction that Poland must be transformed from a nation-state into a multinational state and their search for allies in the struggle to maintain this goal." For the Polish Left, Zionists represented a failure of the project of assimilation and a return to Jewish medieval separatism. For the Polish Right, Zionism was seen as a "step toward the creation within Poland of a 'Jewish state...'" (Mendelsohn 1981, 14). The General Zionists did not constitute the same irredentist threat as parties representing Germans, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, but in some ways the threat they posed was more intractable: since the Jews were urban and literate, the Zionist appeal represented a threat to precisely those modern sectors of the economy and polity that the Poles hoped to dominate. The Zionists' calls for government funded Jewish schools in Hebrew and Yiddish, a transformation of Jewish communal organizations, the kehilot, from purely religious institutions to democratic political ones, and other forms of Jewish extraterritorial autonomy were opposed by Polish governments of all political stripes. This fear of a Jewish "state within a state" was repeated time and again, not only in the literature of the Polish right but also, after 1935, in the platform of the otherwise centrist Peasant Party (Cang 1939, 249).

Even ethnically tolerant Poles viewed the Bloc of National Minorities as a danger. The Pilsudskiites efforts to undermine it were taken with exactly this concern in mind. When the

	Białystok median	Jedwabne
Frac Polish	48%	36%
Frac Jewish	45	62
Frac Belarusian	.5	0
Frac Endecja 1928	16	22
Frac Min Bloc 1928	28	50
Poles for Endecja 1928	38	63
Mins for Min Bloc 1928	47	76
N	31	1

Table 1: Median Values of Basic Demographic and Political Characteristics, Jedwabne and Its Pogrom Neighbors. Source: census and electoral data and authors' computation.

Interior Ministry's chief of its political department, Kazimierz Świtalski, was dispatched to the Eastern borderlands in 1927 to meet with Jewish leaders in an effort to discourage the formation of the Bloc for the upcoming national elections in 1928, both he and his interlocutors could agree that Poles considered the Bloc an "anti-state organization" (Świtalski 1992, 215). Although Świtalski's efforts bore some fruit in Eastern Galicia (to be addressed in the next chapter), in this part of Poland his efforts failed.

## The Jedwabne Pogrom in Regional Context

We now turn to our quantitative analysis. One of the advantages of our data is that it allows us to situate individual pogrom localities within the distribution of all pogrom localities. Recall from Chapter 1 that Gross (2001) launched the recent flurry of research on the 1941 pogroms with his account of the vicious Jedwabne pogrom (Białystok voivodship), where in his telling anti-Semitism was so rife that the Polish half of the community murdered the Jewish half. Although even then it was known that Jedwabne was not the only pogrom that occurred, Jedwabne has nonetheless come to represent the 1941 pogroms and symbolize Polish anti-Semitism and collaboration with the Germans.

Misplaced emphasis on Jedwabne is unfortunate because it was far from being a typical Białystok pogrom municipality. Table 1 compares Jedwabne with other localities in the Białystok voivodship that had pogroms across a range of demographic and political factors. As discussed in Chapter 3, we report the median percentage (excluding Jedwabne itself) rather than the mean due to skewness in the data, and use religion data as a proxy for nationality. As evident in the first five rows of the table, Jedwabne was far more Jewish, less Polish, and more supportive of both the minorities bloc and the the Polish nationalist Endecja than other localities that had pogroms. This polarization may be better appreciated by examining the last two rows in the table, which present estimates of the the percentage of Poles supporting Endecja and the percentage of minorities supporting the minorities bloc, respectively. We computed these according to the logic laid out in Chapter 3, by making two assumptions. The first is uniform turnout rates across nationalities, which is not wholly unreasonable. The second is that Endecja support came exclusive from Poles and minorities bloc support came exclusively from non-Poles. Given the profiles of the two parties, this assumption is eminently reasonable. In Jedwabne strong majorities of both Poles (63 percent) and Jews (76 percent) supported their respective nationalist parties, in proportions far higher than the medians of the rest of the voivodship.

We can conclude two things from these findings. First, Jedwabne is not only not representative of other pogrom localities in Białystok, but something of an extreme case. Polish support for Endecja (63 percent) and minority support for the minorities bloc (76 percent) put Jedwabne above the 90th percentile. Jedwabne was *much* more politically polarized than most other places, a fact that might account for that pogrom's exceptional cruelty. It is also worth noting that Jedwabne is the only pogrom locality that had no Belarusian inhabitants, leaving Poles and Jews in direct and unmediated ethnic competition. Second, the findings cast some doubt on the claim that it was the Soviet occupation and the suspected Jewish role in it that turned Poles against Jews in 1941. However brutal the Soviet occupation may have been, it is clear that Poles and Jews were polarized long before the outbreak of war. This

is of course especially true for Jedwabne, but also for the other pogrom localities, where on average large minorities of both Jews and Poles supported their respective nationalist parties.

## Why Pogroms? Descriptive Statistics

How do pogrom localities differ from places where pogroms did not occur? As a first cut at this question we divide all 352 localities in our northeastern sample into two groups, those where pogroms occurred and those where they did not. The extent to which the two sub-samples differ across important demographic and political characteristics offers prima facie evidence, without imposing any statistical assumptions, that there is something worth exploring further. Table 2 reports median values for a range of important characteristics across the Białystok and Polesie voivodships. The top and middle sections of the table present raw census and electoral data. The bottom portion contains estimates of group vote for particular parties, computed according to the logic presented in the previous section. Even a cursory examination shows that the two sub-samples differ in important ways.

First, the results are consistent with our hypothesis on the importance of the Jewish national threat. Focusing on the demographic data in the top third of the table, it is clear that pogroms occurred where more of the Jews actually resided, both in absolute terms and relative to the number of other nationalities. The differences are in fact stark: pogrom localities had more than ten times as many Jewish inhabitants as non-pogrom localities. Moving to the middle third of the table, median support for the minorities bloc was far greater where there were pogroms (22 percent) than where there were no pogroms (1 percent). Support for Jewish parties that were not such advocates of national autonomy, such as the socialist Bund or the orthodox Jewish list (dominated by Aguda), did not appreciably differ across the two sub-samples. The result does not qualitatively change if we consider the proportions of Jews that supported the minorities bloc (the lower third of the table). Jews in localities where pogroms occurred were far more nationalist (51 percent) than in localities where no pogrom occurred

(39 percent).

Second, there is some support for the anti-Semitism hypothesis. *Endecja* was slightly more popular where pogroms occurred (13 percent) than where they did not (9 percent). But Poles were far more nationalist in pogrom localities (39 percent supporting *Endecja*) than in peaceful places (24 percent). On the other hand, if anti-Semitism were behind the violence there is no reason why pogroms should not have broken out in localities where there were smaller numbers of Jews. These populations would have been particularly vulnerable to the Poles among whom they lived.<sup>1</sup> Yet as we see from the top part of the table, pogromists had a strong preference for localities with lots of Jews. In fact no pogrom occurred in any settlement with fewer than 360 Jews (Wąsosz).

Third, there is no support for the hypothesis that pogroms were revenge for Jewish support for communism. Although communist support was low everywhere, it was 6 times as low in places that would later experience a pogrom. Our hunch is that this result reflects two significant but unappreciated facts about the sociology of communist support in interwar Poland. The first is that at the mass level the communists did not attract many votes from Jews—the strongest supporters, as the table suggests, were to be found among Belarusians in the eastern voivodships (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2003). The second is that areas where communist sympathy was strong among non-Jews were not fertile ground for those wishing to instigate anti-Jewish violence. The communists did not recoil from violence, but it was directed more at class enemies than ethnic ones. Whatever the role local communists played in abetting Soviet rule, there was little hint of mass communist support in the late 1920s.

Fourth, we acknowledge that the preference among pogrom perpetrators for localities with lots of Jews may have other interpretations. For example, if the objective were simply to persecute Jews, then it would make sense to focus attention where more of the Jews dwelled, in the cities. Or if the problem was not the availability of perpetrators but finding Jews to

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<sup>1</sup>Indeed the risks to the perpetrators would have been lower where there were fewer Jews (who would presumably have less capacity to resist). On the calculation of these risks and the propensity to target individuals in locations with low risk to the perpetrators, see Horowitz (2001, 527).

	Pogrom	No Pogrom
Polish 21	33%	43%
Jewish 21	41	3
Orthodox 21	10	35
Number of Jews 21	1574	137
Pop 21	5290	5000
Bund 28	0%	0%
Orth Jew List 28	4	0
Min Bloc 28	22	1
Endecja 28	13	9
Comms 28	2	12
J Support 4 Bund 28	0	0
J Support 4 Orth 28	11	0
J Support 4 Min Bloc 28	51	39
P Support 4 Endecja 28	39	24
N	56	296

Table 2: Median Values of Basic Demographic and Political Characteristics of Pogrom and Non-Pogrom Localities. Source: census data and authors' computation.

persecute, then it makes sense that the probability of a pogrom would increase with the relative proportion of Jews in a locality. It might also be the case that pogroms were more likely to occur where Jews were more visible because in these localities the identification of Jews with the Soviet occupation was more palpable or at least believable. Where there were few Jews, by contrast, the Soviets were more likely to have relied on Poles and Belarusians, making it more difficult to blame Jews for the occupation. Given the findings of both Jasiewicz (2001) and Brakel (2007) it is not plausible to argue that a small minority of Jews occupied the majority of spots in the Soviet administration.

## Why Pogroms? Multivariate Analysis

Table 2 provides prima facie evidence that there is something worth investigating. Pogroms tend to occur where there are lots of Jews, where there is greater support for non-Polish ethnic parties, where there is lower support for communism, and where Polish nationalism is stronger. We would like to know the relative significance of these factors, and for that we need to specify a model. Our central claim is that something like Blalock's power-threat hypothesis explains the distribution of pogroms: pogroms were most likely to occur where Jewish calls for cultural autonomy and the popularity of ethnically accommodationist political parties were widespread enough to threaten Polish plans for a nationally homogeneous state.

Our empirical strategy differs somewhat from standard approaches to power-threat theory (e.g., Tolnay and Beck (1995)), which model threat as a function solely of minority population share and the vote shares of ethnically tolerant parties. We include the basic specification, but add two extensions. The first is an interaction term between minority demographics and the vote share for ethnically tolerant parties. If each of these separately is perceived as a threat, then the two together should be particularly threatening. Our indicators of these are the fraction of the 1921 population that is Jewish (FJew), the fraction of the 1928 vote received by the Bloc of National Minorities (FMinBloc), and the interaction between the two (FJew\*FminBloc). The second extension incorporates the assumption, incorporated into the bottom third of Table 1, that only Jews supported the Bloc of National Minorities. We use the fraction of Jews that supported the Bloc of National Minorities (FJMinBloc) as an alternative to the vote share of the Bloc (FMinBloc) as an indicator of political threat, and also include an interaction with the fraction of Jews (FJew\*FJMinBloc). If Poles saw Jews in general as a potential threat, then they must have viewed nationalist Jews as an even larger threat.

Both the communists (FComm) and Marshal Piłsudski's BBWR (FBBWR) advocated Polish accommodation with the ethnic minorities, and power-threat theory would predict a positive relationship between support for those parties and a pogrom. It should be noted that

arguments that attribute pogroms to Polish revenge for Jewish collaboration with the Soviet occupation also predict a positive relationship between pogroms and communist support, so the statistical analysis alone may not disentangle the two explanations. The BBWR was also multi-ethnic. Poland was divided on nationality questions not only between ethnic groups but, perhaps even more fatefully, within them. Ethnic Poles disagreed among themselves about the most prudent course of action regarding the country's minority population. Since Polish nationalists advocated assimilation for the Belarusians and discrimination for the country's Jews, those villages where Poles and Belarusians supported Piłsudski more strongly would be especially threatening to the *Endecja*. In these settlements, the power-threat hypothesis tells us, Poles should be especially keen to attack Jews in order to forestall any need to acknowledge Jewish rights. Logic tells us that this effect was curvilinear: where the BBWR gained no support, clearly it did not constitute a threat to local nationalists; where it was dominant, nationalists were too weak to initiate anything. It is in the middle range, where the vast majority of localities are found, that the rising popularity of the BBWR among Poles and Belarusians should have stiffened the resolve of local nationalists to poison the atmosphere and pave the way for pogroms.

We proxy Polish nationalism with the proportion of the 1928 vote *Endecja* received ( $F_{Endek}$ ) and, through the assumption that its support came solely from Poles, the fraction of Poles that voted for *Endecja* ( $FP_{Endek}$ ). Arguments emphasizing the importance of Polish nationalism would predict a positive correlation with the probability of a pogrom.

Recall from Chapter 1 that economic arguments for pogroms claim they were more about economic competition and plunder than about racism or revenge. Narratives of actual pogroms lend support to this hypothesis. Petseye Shuster-Rozenblum's 1946 testimony on what transpired in Jasionówka is representative: "After the departure of the Red Army, "[t]he darkest elements of the Polish people soon sense Jewish weakness, and don't even wait for the Germans to arrive, but soon men come from the farms, boldly enter Jewish homes, in broad daylight taking what they can, and what they can't they destroy where it is. They soon felt

as if they had broad shoulders: the Germans would certainly allow their actions, and even condone them. Of course, this is only done by those Poles with base instincts; the shtetl workers resist and drive the robbers from the village....Here village peasants harness up the wagons, there they bring the stolen bundles to close neighbors in the shtetl in order to be able to run and grab something else, it's such a good opportunity, they'll be set for life, the shtetl never had such a holiday, the Christians call it *valny targ* (supermarket) and take pains not to let the opportunity slip away." (AZIH 301-1274.)

We test economic arguments with two different indicators. The dummy variable Shtetl identifies small market towns where Jews tended to occupy higher-status occupations than their peasant neighbors and Jewish-Gentile relations could be especially fraught. We follow Bauer (2009) in defining a shtetl as a municipality with a population of at least 15,000, of which at least 30 percent was Jewish. If pogroms are about economic competition or plunder, then they should be most common in the shtetls, where competition was fierce and wealth differentials great. The other indicator is illiteracy, which was higher among Poles than among Jews, and was correlated with standard of living. The argument about plunder would predict pogroms to be the most common in places that were the most illiterate.

We present four logit models. Models 1 and 1I employ raw vote shares for the strength of Jewish nationalism (FMinBloc) and Polish nationalism (FEndek). Models 2 and 2I incorporate the assumption that vote for the Bloc of National Minorities came only from Jews and that vote for *Endecja* came only from Poles. The indicators of Jewish and Polish nationalism for models 2 and 2I are the fraction of Jews supporting the Bloc of National Minorities (FJMinBloc) and the fraction of Poles supporting *Endecja* (FPEndek), respectively. The "I" models indicate the inclusion of Illiteracy. Unfortunately the illiteracy data is available only at the powiat level, one administrative level about the municipality. We therefore employ clustered standard errors in models 1I and 2I.

The results are displayed in Table 3. The magnitudes of the coefficients are not easily interpretable in logit, but the signs are more meaningful. Table 2 broadly affirms that power-

Explanatory Variable	Model 1	Model 1I	Model 2	Model 2I
FJew	5.0 (3.1)	7.6*** (2.4)	.3 (3.8)	-.9 (3.5)
FMinBloc	27.3*** (10.6)	27.3*** (8.8)	- -	- -
FJew*FMinBloc	-28.8* (15.8)	-38.3*** (14.1)	- -	- -
FEndek	2.3 (2.9)	5.5 (3.5)	- -	- -
FJMinBloc	- -	- -	1.1 (1.0)	.7 (1.1)
FJew*FJMinBloc	- -	- -	16.7** (8.0)	17.6** (8.6)
FPEndek	- -	- -	2.5* (1.5)	3.2** (1.6)
FComm	-1.3 (1.9)	-2.2* (1.3)	-1.8 (1.3)	-3.9*** (1.5)
FBBWR	3.2* (1.9)	2.9** (1.4)	2.0 (2.0)	0 (2.4)
Shtetl	-1.1 (1.5)	-1.1 (1.1)	-.6 (1.4)	-.6 (1.3)
Illiteracy	- -	6.6*** (2.2)	- -	6.0*** (2.2)
Constant	-4.6*** (1.3)	-7.5*** (1.8)	-4.3*** (1.1)	-5.5*** (1.5)
<i>N</i>	129	116	126	113

Table 3: Logit analysis of pogrom occurrence in Białystok and Polesie voivodships. Models 1I and 2I employ clustered standard errors because Illiteracy is measured at the powiat level. The table lists coefficients and corresponding standard errors underneath in parentheses. \*\*\* means  $p < .01$ , \*\* means  $p < 0.05$ , \* means  $p < 0.1$ .

threat theory can account for at least some of the spatial distribution of pogroms. First, indicators of Jewish threat are statistically significant and generally in the expected direction (positive) across all four models. Although this is true for the proportion Jews (FJew) in only one model, the popularity of the Minorities' Bloc (FMinBloc) is positive and significant in models 1 and 1I, and the interaction between fraction Jews and the fraction of Jews supporting the Minorities' Bloc is positive and significant in models 2 and 2I. (As we shall see below,

when marginal effects are reported, the negative coefficients on  $F_{Jew} * F_{MinBloc}$  in models 1 and 1I are washed out by the positive coefficient of the main effect,  $F_{MinBloc}$ .) Support is somewhat weaker for the related hypothesis that the popularity of the ethnically accommodationist BBWR (FBBWR) provoked Poles to commit pogroms. The coefficient is positive and significant in models 1 and 1I, but insignificant in models 2 and 2I. Power-threat theory does not require that every component of the Jewish threat be individually important, only that components be jointly important.

The largely negative relationship between communist support ( $F_{Comm}$ ) and the occurrence of a pogrom runs counter to power-threat theory, but it confirms the descriptive results from Table 2— communist areas did indeed provide infertile ground for pogroms. This finding is ironic because among Polish nationalist historians such as Wierzbicki (2007) it is an article of faith that pogroms were a matter of anti-Soviet rather than anti-Jewish actions. Yet places with strong communist support during the *intewar* period are likely to have been the most welcoming of the Soviet occupation and therefore ought to have been the first targets of pogroms. Our results show that quite the opposite is true. Communism immunizes against pogroms.

Who provided this immunizing effect? In previous work (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2003; 2011) we have shown that Jews did not vote communist in any area of Poland. In the provinces of Białystok and Polesie communist support came primarily from Belarusians. Communist support did not exceed 5 percent in the six municipalities in our sample with reports of Belarusian participation in pogroms. In a country where liberal universalism did not genuinely exist, communist universalism remained one of the few venues for inter-communal solidarity. German documents also make clear the reluctance of the Belarusians to join in pogroms. According to one frustrated *Einsatzgruppe* report from Belarusian areas: "Now as ever it is to be noted that the population on their own part refrains from any action against Jews" and continues by complaining the Belarusians "are not prepared to take part in any pogroms" (cited in Ainsztein 1974, 251).

Arguments attributing pogroms to Polish nationalism also find weak support. Although the signs on FEndek and FPEndek are in the right direction (positive), they reach conventional levels of significance only in model 2I. This result is perhaps surprising given the importance that many pogrom narratives ascribe to Polish nationalism. At the same time, however, by saying that one could not predict where a pogrom would take place based on the strength of the local *Endecja* organization or its political support, we can better appreciate the surprise and shock, expressed in so many other narratives, that Poles with whom Jews had lived side by side and with whom they had gotten along reasonably well would, under the right conditions, turn on them.<sup>2</sup> The environment conducive to pogroms was less one of Polish nationalism—for this was strong everywhere—than a large Jewish population calling for Polish recognition of its cultural and political rights.

Finally, there is mixed evidence for economic arguments. Models 1I and 2I are multi-level because illiteracy data are available only for powiats, which were the next administrative level above municipalities. The positive and significant coefficients in these models mean that powiats with high illiteracy tended to experience more pogroms than powiats with low illiteracy. This is consistent with the hypothesis that illiterate (and poor) peasant communities provided more fertile ground than other places for pogroms, but provides no information on whether the places within powiats where pogroms took place tended themselves to feature high illiteracy. The Shtetl variable, by contrast, is measured at the municipality level, and its coefficients are insignificant across all four models.

To gauge the magnitude some of the effects we compute the predicted probabilities of a pogrom occurrence conditional on different values of the three main Jewish threat variables: the fraction of Jews (FJew), the fraction supporting the Minorities' Bloc (FMinBloc), and their interaction (FJew\*FMinBloc) in model 1; and the fraction of Jews (FJew), the fraction supporting the Minorities' Bloc (FJMinBloc), and their interaction (FJew\*FJMinBloc) in model 2.

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<sup>2</sup>Shuster-Rozenblum's 1946 testimony on Jasionówka: "It is a quiet life there, the market in the middle of the shtetl is peaceful with its church and several little Jewish shops, no markets or fairs, the village survived on hard, honest work....The Jewish and Polish workers live in harmony. Everyone has the same joys and sadness." AŻIH 301-1274

	Pogrom Probability	
	25th ptile	75th ptile
Model 1 Threat	3 (1,9)	16 (3,45)
Model 2 Threat	4 (1,13)	12 (5,24)

Table 4: Predicted probabilities of a pogrom given different values of key pogrom correlates. 95 percent confidence intervals are in parentheses.

Although it is common practice to compute marginal effects based on values of regressors one standard deviation above and below the mean, that does not provide much information in the present case, where there is strong skewness in the data. Instead we use the 25th and 75th percentiles, holding the other explanatory variables at their median values in the sample.

The results are displayed in Table 4. The probability of a pogrom dramatically increased as the value of the three main threat variables increase from the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile. For model 1 the probability more than quintuples (from 3 percent to 17 percent) while in model 2 it triples (from 4 to 12 percent). This is a strong effect given that pogrom occurred in under 10 percent of all municipalities. Of course the deadliest communities for Jews were those where several factors other factors also militated in favor of a pogrom. We do not show it in the table, but where the proportion of Jews, support for the Minorities' Bloc, and support for the accommodationist BBWR were at the 75th percentile, and support for the communists was at the 25th percentile, then the probability of a pogrom reached 27 percent in model 1.

## Discussion

As Stola (2001, 2004) notes, the pogroms involved a great deal of participation, both "active" and "passive." Where the population felt a sense of ethnic threat, Poles from across the political and economic spectrum were more likely to give in to the temptation to com-

mit violence, more tolerant of others committing violence, and less likely to come to the aid of the victims. In short, the community expectation in pogrom localities either encouraged or at least failed to discourage Polish violence against Jews. An account of one less known pogrom—Szczyzyn, on June 25, 1941, in which approximately 300 Jews were killed by local Poles—may help illustrate the underlying causal relationships we seek to illuminate and the complex mix of emotions at work. Chaya Soika-Golding, one of the local Jewish survivors from the war, described the events in a letter to a friend immediately after the war from safe refuge in the West. The Germans quickly swept into town on June 22:

They hung up their swastika flag and pushed on further. The city lay in chaos. Authority passed to the hands of the Poles. This lasted about two weeks. All kinds of rowdies were let out of prison: Dombrowski, Yakubtshuk, the well known Polish arrestees under the Bolsheviks—Shviatlovski, chief of the guard and Yankayitis, the director of the school, and dothors. They were full of rancor for the Bolsheviks and the Jews. Friday night when the entire city slept quietly, the slaughter began. They [the Poles] had organized it very well: one gang in the new section, a second in the marketplace, a third on Lomzher Street....There in the new section they murdered Romorovske's family (the tailor), Esther Krieger (your neighbor with the youngest daughter), Soreh Beylkeh, Eynikl, Pishke, Yashinski, Mayzler (the head of the yeshivah)—all in their own houses...and many more. They had killed Rozental's children in the marketplace. They had also killed Kheytshe with her six month old child at breast and her older boy Grishen...Later the squads divided up the possessions of their victims amongst themselves. On readied wagons they loaded the corpses and led them just outside of the town. The goyim immediately washed the bloodied floors including the stones on the street. A few hundred sacrifices had taken place and still, the murders informed us, the massacres would continue for two more nights" (Destruction 1954/1987, 10-11)<sup>3</sup>.

The elements are all there. The Soviet occupation, the collapse of authority, the riot agitators, the hatred and fear, the rage of the nationalist crowd, the third for revenge, blood, and booty, and ultimately the intimate violence perpetrated by people well known to the victims are all contained within this short narrative. To the extent that this pogrom followed the pattern of others, the primary victims in the first round were adult males. What came next, however, provides crucial clues to the permissive communal context in which the pogrom could occur and deepen.

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<sup>3</sup>For a similar narrative on Szczyzyn see that of Bashe Katsper in AZIH 301-1958.

Those remaining were stricken with fear. What do we do? How can we save ourselves? My mother ran to the priests to beg for the Jews. They offered no help. With Chana, Libe, Zeml, and Salen, I ran to the Polish intelligentsia. There too we found no salvation. My mother with other women ran after help in Grayeve [a nearby town]; they were not let into the town—curfew. What do we do? Night was falling upon us. Approximately 20 Germans entered the city—a field troupe. We were afraid to show ourselves before them. Then I had an idea: to try our luck with the soldiers, maybe they would help us. With great difficulty we chose a delegation and departed. The group of Germans consisted of soldiers and two officers. In the beginning they declined to help us, “This is not our business, we are fighting on the front, not with civilians,” they explained. However, when I offered them soap and coffee, they softened up. They guarded the city at night and all remained quiet. I, with two other women, began to work for them, and later we were placed to work in the German headquarters. And so, in this manner, the pogroms in Szczuczyn were stopped for a while.

The passage strongly indicates that what allowed the pogrom to get off the ground and intensify was the quite obvious indifference of key members of the local Polish community toward the fate of the town’s Jews. Szczuczyn’s Jewish women expected something different. Their first instinct once they understood their predicament was to turn to the priest and the intelligentsia, whom they believed could have stopped the bloodshed. But neither the priest nor the intelligentsia—a broad category in Eastern Europe that refers to the prominent and educated, especially doctors, lawyers, and school teachers—were moved by the frantic appeals of the petrified Jewish women to intervene, a point stressed in several testimonies written at different times and places. Neither lifted a finger or show any sign of solidarity with their fellow citizens. The women did not encounter hatred in their demarches (although there was much to be found in the street); they reported no reaction, “no help,” “no salvation,” “nothing.” They met indifference. Whether they also offered “soap” and “coffee” to these men remains unknown. It is also difficult to determine whether the town’s Polish spiritual and educated elite set the tone for the pogrom or merely reacted to the context in which they lived. Our statistical analysis, however, points to the importance of the context: In Szczuczyn, a town where 56% of the 4,502 inhabitants were Jewish, 88 percent of whom voted for Jewish parties in 1922 and 85 percent in 1928, and where the communists attracted a mere 2 percent of the vote, Poles most likely viewed Jews as a threat to their cultural and political dominance and the stage was set for a pogrom.

The narrative and our interpretation of it also sheds light on what in the literature is considered the critical position of the Catholic priests and the local intelligentsia. In fact, within Holocaust historiography more generally, crimes and salvation are frequently cast in terms of individual character—victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and saviors. As important as such a perspective is for establishing individual innocence and guilt, our analysis, by focussing on the local context in which pogroms did or did not occur, suggests that in many cases (though clearly not all) it was either easier or much more difficult to do the right thing. Shimon Datner, in his account of one of the most deadly and brutal pogroms of the region, which took place in Radziłów, writes that once the German military had pulled out of the shtetl,

the scent of massacre is in the air...The situation would not be so desperate, were it not for the outspoken and hostile behavior of the local Poles....Finally people try one more thing: the local Catholic priest, Aleksander Dagalevski, is the greatest authority among the Radziłów Poles and Mrs. Finkelstein is a close acquaintance of his. She goes to him in order to persuade him to exert influence on his parishioners, and get them to cease perpetrating their outrages. Mrs. Finkelstein goes on her holy errand and receives the answer that all Jews, great and small, are communists, and that he has no interest in protecting them. To the question how small children could be guilty of anything, he answer that they aren't really guilty, but that he can't put in any good word for the Jews, because his won sheep would toss him in the mud. The holy man's answer shook the shtetl's Jews, and revealed to them the hopelessness of the situation.

Delegations of Jews turned to the elite of the town with the same request "but everyone everywhere shrugged, evaded, and avoided giving a clear response" (AZIH 1994). Datner also mentions the town's only doctor who turned away the Jewish injured and other officials who refused to "swim against the tide." This narrative suggests that rather than casting priests and the local intelligentsia as either heroes or villains in order to account for where pogroms did or did not happen, a great deal can be learned by examining more closely the political contexts in which they lived. In Radziłów, where virtually every eligible Jewish voter voted for Jewish parties in 1928 and of the Polish electorate 42 percent supported the *Endecja* in the same election, it was indeed exceedingly difficult to generate the bare minimum of solidarity between the two communities that the town's Polish intelligentsia might have drawn upon to prevent a pogrom.

## Political Integration and the Minimum of Solidarity

Why, then, were some communities so much more toxic than others? Our analysis shows that the key was political integration. Where Jews and locals opted for non-nationalist political parties, pogroms might be prevented. This brings us to the complex role of the Marshal Józef Piłsudski and his Non-Party Bloc for Cooperation with Government (known by the Polish acronym BBWR). The BBWR was a party that, as we have seen, advocated toleration and accommodation of the country's minorities. Piłsudski's plan was for a reconstructed, technocratic and ethnically tolerant, albeit authoritarian party to guide the country to a "statist" as opposed to an "ethnic" order. The vehicle for this plan was the BBWR, which was founded in time for the 1928 election but was not a typical political party with grass-roots organizations.<sup>4</sup> The leadership at the local level consisted primarily of state officials and local dignitaries. It was, however, the one Polish political party that tried to bridge both class and ethnic divides and thereby remove the National Democratic poison from Polish politics. Its electoral success signalled an ethnically less polarized politics.

The question is whether Jews might have avoided pogroms if more of them had been supportive of the BBWR instead of Jewish parties. Our data do not permit us to estimate the ethnic composition of the BBWR at the settlement level—unlike in the case of the National Democrats or one of the Jewish parties, it is not plausible to assume that the BBWR's vote came from only one national group. But as we demonstrated in the previous chapter, we can use ecological inference techniques to estimate BBWR support among different groups. These results, computed for both pogrom and non-pogrom sub-samples, are displayed in Table 5.

The estimates are consistent with the argument that pogrom occurrence is associated with a decreased Jewish vote for minority-friendly "Polish" parties. Jews were half as likely to support the BBWR in pogrom areas as in non-pogrom areas, a statistically significant find-

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<sup>4</sup>On this project, see Snyder (2005). Even though the BBWR was a party of elites, it spawned a large number of pro-Piłsudskiite, nonelite associations and publications in the years after 1928 to promote civic activism and "moral regeneration" (*sanacja* in Polish, the unofficial ideology of the Piłsudskiite order). See Plach (2006).

	Support for BBWR	
	Pogroms	No Pogroms
Poles	36 (14,57)	30 (23,39)
Jews	9 (2,18)	18 (9,31)
Bela	40 (26,54)	33 (28,37)
N	37	159

Table 5: Ecological estimates of Polish, Jewish, and Belarusian support for the BBWR in the Białystok and Poleskie voivodships, 1928. The estimates indicate the fraction of the corresponding national group that supported the BBWR in localities with and without pogroms and where Poles and Jews each constituted at least one percent of the population. Associated 95 percent confidence intervals are in parentheses.

ing. Jewish support for Piłsudski was not lost on the local population—an image that carried through the 1930s and even lasted into the early years of the Soviet occupation. In his report to Stalin written one week following the Soviet occupation, after characterizing the Belarusian population as decidedly pro-Soviet, First Secretary Ponomarenko restricted his remarks about the Jews to the following observation: “One has also to note that Piłsudski is popular not only among the Polish population, but also even among the Jews. They say he was a real human being—that with him it was much better than later.” As Boćkowski (2005, 45) notes in his commentary on this report there is a notable tone of surprise regarding the Piłsudski’s popularity with the Jews. The Polish dictator was had been considered a standard enemy of the Russians since his victory against the Red Army in 1920. Jewish support for him contradicted the propaganda directed at the Jewish minority. What the Soviet authorities probably had very little sense of was the extent to which this support varied across the hundreds of small towns in their newly acquired territories.

Most historians maintain that Jewish support for the BBWR came from a mixture of semiskilled artisans, small merchants, and the Orthodox community (Bacon 1996). It is difficult, therefore, to maintain that this integration was a form of cultural, much less religious assimilation. What it was, however, was a form of *political* assimilation that may have constituted one pos-

sible path to reducing the hostility and indifference between Poles and their Jewish neighbors at the local level. This kind of assimilation was not the thick solidarity of a nation, but it may nevertheless have provided just enough communal cohesion, the bare minimum, to prevent the worst sort of depredations when all other factors pointed in that direction.

At the same time, stronger Polish and Belarusian support for the BBWR is associated with a higher likelihood of a pogrom. This is consistent with power-threat theory. Poland was divided on nationality questions not only between ethnic groups but, perhaps even more fatefully, within them. Ethnic Poles disagreed among themselves about the most prudent course of action regarding the country's minority population. Since Polish nationalists advocated assimilation for the Belarusians and discrimination for the country's Jews, those villages where Poles and Belarusians supported Piłsudski more strongly would have been especially threatening to the National Democrats. In these settlements, power-threat hypothesis tells us, Poles would have been especially keen to attack Jews in order to forestall any need to acknowledge Jewish rights. Logic tells us that this effect was curvilinear: where the BBWR gained no support, clearly it did not constitute a threat to local nationalists and where it completely dominated, nationalists were very weak. It is in the middle range, where the vast majority of localities are found, that the rising popularity of the BBWR among Poles and Belarusians stiffened the resolve of local nationalists to poison the atmosphere and pave the way for pogroms.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that the distribution of intimate anti-Jewish violence in Northeastern Poland in summer 1941 cannot be explained by the role of the Germans, the crimes of the Soviet occupation, or even Polish nationalism. Instead our analysis points more to the failure of the Polish state to integrate its Jewish citizens and the decision of many Jews to opt for the politics of nationalism, to advocate for the same rights enjoyed by their Polish co-nationals.

This finding should not be interpreted as blaming the victim. Jewish support for the Bloc of National Minorities did not mean implacable resistance to integrating into Poland's social and political life. Representatives of the parties of minorities in Poland's Sejm would have jumped at the opportunity to be part of a governing coalition, but they were never given the chance. Although Jews appeared on the electoral lists of the "Polish" parties (primarily the PPS and the BBWR), in the end not one Jewish (or Ukrainian, Belarusian, or German) cabinet member from among the minority parties was chosen in the entire interwar era. Responsibility for that properly lies with the "Polish" parties who were forming governments, not with the Jews who were seeking the best way to address their communal concerns.

Poles nevertheless considered the Jewish vote for Jewish parties as proof of the Jews's unwillingness to integrate into Polish political life. This logic is consistent with the power-threat theory, according to which Poles in localities with a large Jewish population calling for a recognition of Jewish communal autonomy and rights would view their neighbors as an ethnic threat. At the same time, this sense of threat could be mitigated by the presence of a sturdy communist organization that organized local Poles and Belarusians into the politics of universalism.

The chapter also points to the potential theoretical importance of political assimilation in fostering the absolute minimum of solidarity necessary for preventing intercommunal violence. Although the term assimilation has a checkered history in social science, our analysis suggests that it may be worth invoking in a revised form (Brubaker 2001), an issue to which we return later in this study. Assimilation in politics need not be thought of as changing something as fundamental as "identity" but, rather as a new willingness or opportunity to engage in an act as simple and mundane as joining with fellow citizens in supporting the same political party. In this limited sense, this chapter is consonant with the findings of Varshney (2002), who extols the advantages of interethnic civic engagement. By highlighting the vote and politics, however, as opposed to the thicker ties of civil society, our threshold for preventing violence may be even lower than that considered by Varshney. Given the

strength of anti-Semitic nationalism in much of Northeast Poland and the highly permissive conditions provided by the Nazi invasion, our analysis paradoxically shows that it was extraordinarily difficult to start pogroms and actually required very little to prevent them.

Why should political assimilation prevent pogroms? Where minorities are better integrated, they are presumably less despised, looked upon with less indifference, and more likely to be thought of as part of the community. Within all communities in Poland before summer 1941 there were undoubtedly people who respected their Jewish neighbors; equally all communities within Poland had what Brass called "riot specialists" who were ready for violence. Surviving and preventing pogroms may have depended more on the presence of friends from other groups than on "enemies," and it was harder to find those friends where the bare minimum of social solidarity was missing. Our analysis shows where this solidarity was to be found and the conditions that produced it.

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