

Tuned to Fear – Analyzing Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Addresses, focusing on the enemy images identified in the National Consultation

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- * [Szalay_Aron@student.ceu.edu] (Research Center for Computational Social Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Central European University, Vienna, Austria)
- ** [zsofia.rakovics@tatk.elte.hu] (Research Center for Computational Social Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; Doctoral School of Sociology, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary)

Abstract

This study investigates the prevalent use of fear as a political tool by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Through critical discourse analysis and automated text analytics, we analyze the State of the Nation addresses from 2010 to 2022, identifying recurring enemy images such as ‘Brussels’, ‘migrants’, ‘George Soros’, ‘Ferenc Gyurcsány’ and ‘opposition.’ National Consultations are also examined to understand fear-inducing strategies. Our findings reveal a consistent pattern of fearmongering, with enemy images aligning with key events and political contexts.

By employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, this research deepens our understanding of fear’s role in shaping public perceptions and political dynamics. It sheds light on the strategic use of fear in Hungarian politics and its impact on democratic processes. Furthermore, the study highlights the implications for the construction of illiberal systems in Central and Eastern Europe.

The analysis of Orbán’s discourse provides valuable insights into the manipulation of public sentiment and the consolidation of power through fear tactics. This study contributes to the broader discourse on the intersections of fear and politics, providing insight into fearmongering through official speeches.

Keywords: Viktor Orbán, political communication, state of the nation address, automated text analysis, fear, enemy image

1 Introduction

The media frequently use fear as a tool because of its attention-engaging nature (Altheide, 2013). It is also commonly used to steer the focus of a population away from certain topics (Sik, 2020). Hungarian politics has, in recent years, become filled with fear due to ever more regularly emerging enemy images created by the government. The right-wing ruling parties of the country have built up a nationalist, exclusivist system that is strongly based on narratives of war and the need for the protection of the state from ‘others’ (Demeter, 2018).

According to Gerő et al. (2017), the negative marking of vulnerable social groups in Central and Eastern Europe is now more present than at any other time since the Second World War. Populist parties in Poland and Hungary have gained substantial popularity by using images of both insider and outsider enemies and stressing the importance of national sovereignty (Csehi & Zgut, 2020). While the regimes of the region differ in certain aspects, populism certainly plays an important role and has commonalities within Central-Eastern Europe (Kopper et al., 2023). Populist fearmongering is, therefore, a crucial issue of significant relevance to understanding contemporary Hungarian and Central-Eastern European politics.

The trend to large-scale fearmongering is in line with the Schmittian friend-enemy dichotomy, which suggests the necessity of the existence of groups of 'strangers' to enable identity formation against them. These enemies strengthen the 'insider' group and represent harmful elements that threaten society. As weak liberal societies are unable to protect themselves against their enemies, groups that clearly point out who the enemies are, have a substantial advantage, according to Schmitt's theory. These strong groups can be seen as potent candidates for tackling the threat of the stranger (Schmitt, 1932/2008). Hungarian and Polish populists have successfully portrayed the European Union as a weak system that is unable to overcome its challenges (Kopper et al., 2023). This weak liberalism is tackled on a Schmittian basis by the 'illiberalism' of Viktor Orbán, which is posed as a strong, reliable system (group) that knows its enemies and has its ways to fight them.

The Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, is a key figure in the country's public life and has an important role in European politics as well. His populist communication strategy has led to significant changes in Hungary and attracted numerous international followers (Körösényi & Patkós, 2017). With his system of 'illiberal democracy', he has been a model for many right-wing parties in the region (Krekó & Enyedi, 2018). He has supported candidates in the national elections of Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia, creating international bonds and forming alliances with like-minded politicians. The State of the Nation addresses of Viktor Orbán are considered cornerstone events in which he reports on the achievements of the past year and outlines his plans for the year ahead. The political content of these speeches is, therefore, of paramount importance, which is why we focus on these texts in our research.

The images of the 'enemy' have played a significant role in the political discourse of the last decade in Hungary. Whether in the media, on billboards, or in National Consultations, they have become part of public narratives and strong reference points in political communication (Kitzinger, 2000). By examining the different enemy images originally defined in the National Consultations and Viktor Orbán's speeches, we can map the origin of enemy images and their propagation patterns.

The study is intended to show how official communication is used for fearmongering in Hungary through the example of the prime minister's most prominent speeches. The main research question was as follows: How are the enemy images identified in the 2015-2022 National Consultations echoed in Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation addresses? Our empirical analysis relied on both quantitative and qualitative methods; we used critical discourse analysis and automated text analytics to study the enemy images in the prime ministerial speeches. We computed the weighted relative frequencies of target words associated with depicting enemy images and applied statistical tests to check whether they were significantly more or less frequent in different time periods and years.

We also examined the keynote speeches delivered on the anniversaries of national holidays and compared the patterns observed in them to those revealed in State of the Nation addresses.

Our results indicate that there were five different enemy images used for attuning listeners to fear ('Brussels', 'migrants', 'George Soros', 'Ferenc Gyurcsány', and 'opposition') in the State of the Nation addresses, which were frequently referred to in other types of prime ministerial speeches as well. The temporal dynamics of the emergence of these enemy images are in line with our prior assumptions, supporting the insights from our qualitative analysis.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Fear and moral panic

Furedi (2006) argues that fear plays a central role in our societies. The culture of fear involves an obsession with safety in a society that has not experienced truly fearful events, such as wars. Fear in current Western societies may often seem baseless regarding the everyday reality. However, it is present and expands, especially through the media, without firsthand experience of real terrifying events. Fear is not as much an individual emotion as it is a constant state of being in the world. It is a form of vigilance that is largely based on the moderated content that one receives and accepts as a representation of reality (Furedi, 2006).

According to Domonkos Sik (2019), this culture of fear derives from a crisis of integration. In such a culture, individuals cooperate based on a fear of becoming 'the other'. However, these latter groupings, which are not based on honest solidarity, are much more prone to identify outsider enemies in relation to whom the group can define itself and strengthen cohesion.

Stanley Cohen's theory of 'moral panic' (1972) fits well with the culture of fear. Moral panic implies the fear of the destruction of society's shared culture by an outsider enemy. The creation of moral panics is not a shallow process. They are efficient because they are built on deeply held stereotypes or assumptions and involve a convincing theory about why bad events played out the way they did. This involves enemies that are fearful and threaten the very foundations of social order. The tactic of deploying moral panic in a society that is obsessed with safety can generate great political advantages.

Viktor Orbán's campaign strategists found moral panic to be a useful tool for strengthening the government's position. This is the basis of what Endre Sik (2016) calls the 'moral panic button' – a campaign strategy that involves the creation of moral panics and uses the fear thereby generated to strengthen the in-group, thus maintaining the government's popularity. The strategy resembles a button, the pushing of which results in an immediate moral-panic-generating campaign that reaches every corner of the country. The usage of the moral panic button creates increasing in-group/out-group division, which needs to be maintained if the government is to keep its support – however, it can lead to the enhanced control of public discourse and ultimately to the decline of the institutions of democracy (Gerő & E. Sik, 2020).

The culture of fear is universal in contemporary Western societies (Furedi, 2006); however, the systematic utilization of this for fearmongering through moral panics is exceptionally severe in Hungary (Sik, 2016). Meanwhile, enemy creation has also been used as a tool in other Central-Eastern European countries (Spasojević, 2019). Supplemented with the strong presence of right-wing populism in the region (Kende & Krekó, 2020), pressing the moral panic button may become a prominent choice if other governments are willing to follow the Hungarian example. This could lead to more division and societal disintegration in Central-Eastern Europe.

2.2 Enemy images

Holding opposing views and having political opponents is a crucial aspect of democracy; an opponent, however, is not equivalent to an ‘enemy’ (Szabó, 2007). The tendency to turn opposing parties into enemies has increased in frequency in a few post-socialist countries that are drifting away from liberal democracy (Szelényi & Csillag, 2015). Hungary has, in recent years, become one of the most notable examples of such states. Since Viktor Orbán’s election win in 2010, the country has taken a turn towards an ‘illiberal’ system (Szelényi & Csillag, 2015), which, among other elements, is constructed through the constant maintenance of enemy images (Kopper et al., 2017). Fear is a basic emotion that is a useful instrument for defining in- and out-groups, as well as shifting the focus away from certain issues (D. Sik, 2020). It has long been used in Hungarian politics to divide people. While the left created a discourse in which the right was pictured as the ‘enemy of democracy’, in the rightist discourse, the opponents were the ‘enemy of the nation’ (Kopper et al., 2017). These divisive narratives have accelerated in recent years, especially since the refugee crisis of 2015, which stirred up xenophobic attitudes throughout Central and Eastern Europe (Walter, 2019). According to Kopper et al. (2017), Viktor Orbán has been very successful in creating fearsome enemy images, in opposition to which he can place himself in the position of a ‘protector’ with the ability to save the nation from the outside and inside threats.

The presence of enemy images in Hungarian politics can be observed not only in political speeches but also on billboards, media advertisements, and in the news. Orbán’s government has successfully built a hegemony (Cooper, 2023) that involves control over a large part of the media sector, enabling it to spread and form messages that support its standpoint (Bajomi-Lázár, 2013).

These enemy images often serve to promote group cohesion and distinguish ‘us’ from ‘them’. This has resulted in Viktor Orbán being able to unite his community in a way that other politicians have been unable to in recent years (Gerő & Szabó, 2017). Hence, using enemy images goes beyond gaining popularity by pointing to one stranger or another. It advances the feeling of belonging to the in-group, as the out-group is clearly defined.

2.3 National Consultations

Public consultations about policy changes or important initiatives can be identified in several countries throughout Europe (Pócza & Oross, 2022). They take various forms. Some are organized bottom-up, initiated by citizens or non-governmental organizations, while

others are arranged top-down by governments (Gáspár, 2021). According to Pócza and Oross (2022), such popular consultations can be useful components of a deliberative democratic system, as they allow citizens to participate in nationwide or local decision-making processes. The Hungarian example of a popular consultation is, however, different from other similar initiatives in Western Europe. The Hungarian so-called 'National Consultation' is much more of a marketing tool than a representative opinion poll (Gerő & E. Sik, 2020). Fidesz's top-down, government-organized consultation politics started in 2010 when they won the general election. As Endre Sik (2016) puts it, National Consultations are used periodically to create moral panic and effectively manipulate voters. The questions in Hungarian National Consultations are often leading; phrased in a manner that does not promote objective reflection, and the scientific professionalism of surveying.

Enemy images are crucial elements of National Consultations. In his theory about the moral panic button, Endre Sik (2016) describes a campaign process used by Orbán's government that is largely built on the National Consultation. He argues that when the government is in need of popular support, it creates an 'enemy' that is depicted as dangerous to the nation and launches a vast campaign against it. The script of these campaigns includes easy-to-remember slogans, media, and street advertisements, which are disseminated as official information. Such 'information campaigns' are then concluded with a National Consultation, followed by another campaign informing the public about the consultation's results. The ultimate goal, as Endre Sik (2016) sees it, is the creation of moral panic, which is a fear of a danger that may allegedly destroy the given society's shared cultural and moral heritage (Cohen, 1972). National Consultations are, therefore, efficient and frequently used by the Hungarian government to create fear and manipulate citizens. Over the past few years, they have proven to be a sufficient means of building popular support before elections or other times when needed (Gerő & E. Sik, 2020).

This research addresses the National Consultations in the period between 2015 and 2022. Although there were National Consultations before 2015 as well, the choice to start the examination in 2015 was based on the theory of the moral panic button, which was systematically implemented in the government's strategy in 2015 to restore Fidesz's declining popularity (Gerő & E. Sik, 2020). Within this time frame, eight consultations featured numerous 'enemies'; however, examining the surveys made it clear that a few of these enemy images have been present in multiple National Consultations. These reoccurring enemy images became the focus of this research.

The most frequent enemies of the National Consultations have been (1) 'Brussels', which in Orbán's narrative refers to the European Union, (2) immigrants, and (3) George Soros. Orbán has long fostered mistrust of the European Union and has several ongoing disputes with its leaders (Scheppele, 2022). In government advertisements, campaign materials, and speeches, if the European Union is mentioned in a negative context, it is denoted by the name of the Belgian capital, Brussels. The topic of migration, the second most frequently deployed enemy, is crucial for Viktor Orbán. According to Scheppele (2022), this has brought him numerous voters and, from time to time, helps to ensure his election majorities. The American-Hungarian billionaire George Soros, the third most important enemy, has become a central enemy image, especially because of his support for the integration of immigrants (Reményi et al., 2023), but his vision of Open Society is also the absolute opposite of Orbán's illiberal approach (Kopper et al., 2017). In the right-oriented media, Soros has been connected to support for illegal migration and civil associations that criticize the

Hungarian government. These three most repeated enemy images (Brussels, immigrants, and Soros) are accompanied by several other 'shorter-lived enemies.' Further, there are at least two more enemies whose presence has not been particularly striking in the National Consultations, but based on their appearance in the media, advertisements, posters, and speeches, are worth mentioning and analyzing. These are (4) Ferenc Gyurcsány, the former Prime Minister, whom Orbán likes to present as his archenemy, and (5) the 'opposition' (most opposition parties, regardless of political orientation). In the current political discourse, these five enemy images seem to be most frequently represented based on the National Consultation, news, advertisements, and media presence. Therefore, these are at the core of this study.

2.4 State of the Nation addresses

Every February, Orbán gives a speech in which he reports on the previous year's achievements and plans for the coming year. In addition to members of the press, these speeches are typically attended by high-ranking public figures, such as the president and members of the government. The primary target audience is, therefore, typically highly educated, pro-government intellectuals. The annual State of the Nation speeches are broadcast live to the public, usually on HírTV, a channel close to the government. In this study, we focus on the State of the Nation speeches between 2010-2022, which covers the second period of Orbán's prime ministership until the end of the study. Except for the first speech in 2010, all of them were delivered by Viktor Orbán in his capacity as Prime Minister. The key element of these speeches is a summary of the state of the country. In the beginning, this involved a stronger economic focus; however, even then, there were a few speeches intended to demonstrate strength. 'Fighting as a metaphor [...] has been reintroduced into political rhetoric and thus into political discourse (e.g., anti-EU "freedom fight", "utility-price fight", "We will not be a colony" etc.)' (Tóth, 2015, p. 117). Such militant, revolutionary statements and speech styles have been associated with Viktor Orbán throughout his political career. His speaking style has, in the meanwhile, undergone several changes. As Tóth (2015) observes, at the beginning of his career, Orbán stood out among the politicians of his time for his complex yet easy-to-follow sentences. Later, however, this changed, according to Tóth (2015), and less complex, shorter messages became more typical. Another change is an increasing emphasis on nationalism in Orbán's communication. The nation's unity beyond borders became part of the speeches explicitly and in jokes and proverbs, too (Tóth, 2015).

During the qualitative analysis of the speeches, other changes were also noticed. The tone, which we initially categorized as 'civic-conservative', gradually changed, accelerating pace after 2014 to a more populist, more emotional tone. The related speeches, along with the simplification in style and increase in emotion-provoking content, more often included information from unclear sources, often categorized in public discourse as conspiracy theories. A good example of this new tone is a passage from the 2022 State of the Nation address: 'If we let the pro-migrant Brusselian bureaucrats help the both ridiculous and dangerous characters of the Gyurcsány-show to win, they will open the borders' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address, 02/12/2022). This quotation is worth highlighting for several reasons. First, it presents three enemy images (immigrants, Brussels, and

Gyurcsány) in a single sentence. Second, in an unprecedented way, it refers to the exact components of the Fidesz campaign that were shown in the media and on posters. Third, it presents an unverifiable piece of information as a clear truth. In addition, attention should be paid to the stylistics and the simple, consistent wording of the sentence, which makes an equivalence between the enemy images and an undesirable event presented as a threat.

The interest of this research, apart from Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation addresses, was other keynote and annual speeches of his. These were chosen based on the attention paid to them by the media and the size of the audience that was reached. We analyzed the prime ministerial speeches from the national days of March 15 and October 23, as well as the regular lectures given by him at the Bálványos Free Summer University and Student Camp in Tusnádfürdő, Romania.

3 Data and research questions

The examined Hungarian text corpus was prepared for the research project of ELTE Research Center for Computational Social Science¹ (RC2S2), entitled 'The layers of political public sphere in Hungary (2001–2020)'.² The corpus contains texts collected from the miniszterelnok.hu website and its archive. The raw texts in the corpus were collected and pre-processed by Zsófia Rakovics, a researcher of ELTE RC2S2.

The database of speeches also includes metadata such as information about the circumstances in which the speech was given, for example, publicly available information about the date and place of the speech, the official title of the speech, and a short introduction (lead) to the speech. Given that the dates of the speeches were available, we created a year variable and used this for aggregation during the analysis. We also visualized the relative frequency of relevant keywords related to enemy images according to time (by using the year variable) and created an index to signal the time of the parliamentary elections, which was also used for the visualization. We categorized the speeches by their type and identified State of the Nation addresses (the main target of our analysis) and other keynote speeches, which included the prime ministerial speeches of the national holidays of March 15 and October 23 and Viktor Orbán's annual lecture at the Bálványos Free Summer University. The keynote speeches were chosen based on their recurring nature and the media's strong attention to them.

Our research sought primarily to identify the way in which the enemy images in the National Consultations appear in the State of the Nation address speeches of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Furthermore, we aimed to investigate the presence of these enemies in other keynote speeches and compare the frequency of their mention to those in the State of the Nation addresses. As a result, the following research questions were formulated for the study:

¹ The website of ELTE Research Center for Computational Social Science (RC2S2): rc2s2.elte.hu

² Details of the research are available on the RC2S2 research group website, under the research projects section 'The layers of political public sphere in Hungary (2001–2020)'. The research was funded by NKFIH, with the following research ID: K-134428. The principal investigator of the project is Renáta Németh.

1. How are the enemy images identified in the 2015-2022 National Consultations echoed in Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation addresses?
2. How do these same enemy images appear in other keynote speeches?
3. Is there a difference in the frequencies of appearance in the two different types of speeches?

Aligned with the main research questions, we filtered for the relevant types of speeches, namely State of the Nation addresses, and focused on those texts, specifically examining the full corpus (all available transcripts) to draft an overview of the talks of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

The hypothesis was that enemy images would appear in both types of speeches (the State of Nation addresses and the keynote speeches) but be associated with different patterns as the audience also differed. Based on the moral panic button theory of Endre Sik (2016), it was assumed that the dominant periods of different enemy depictions would occur at different times. On the basis of the National Consultations, it was expected that the mention of 'immigrants' would peak in 2015, 'Brussels' in 2016, 'George Soros' in 2017, while 'Ferenc Gyurcsány' around 2010 and the 'opposition' around 2022.

4 Methods

For the research, we applied qualitative and quantitative methods, using critical discourse analysis and automated text analytics to study the enemy images in prime ministerial speeches. The qualitative analysis enabled the examination of implicit fearmongering, while the quantitative analysis provided data regarding the explicit appearance of enemy images. The utilization of the two methods resulted in a more holistic understanding of the enemy images that were deployed.

We defined targeted keywords according to the focus of our research and combined words with the same substantive content (in other words, we searched for synonyms). We categorized and interpreted these words in the 2010-2022 State of the Nation addresses by annotating them to examine their meaning qualitatively. As a result, the database built for the analysis included not only the metadata of speeches and the raw texts but also the occurrences of individual words within each text (so-called document term frequency). Utilizing basic methods of automated text analysis, we used bag-of-words models and examined the absolute and relative occurrences of keywords in the speeches. To compare the results statistically according to years and type of speeches, we applied statistical tests. The findings are documented in the *Results* chapter.

4.1 Qualitative analysis

We studied the National Consultations qualitatively and then created a database of words categorized as enemy images, in which the enemy images were the variables sorted by column, while those in the National Consultations were sorted by row. In this database, a '1' denoted if the enemy image appeared in the current consultation sheet and a '0' if it did not. As discussed above briefly, the dataset and the concept of the analysis were later simplified by combining words with the same meaning or referring to the same enemy.

Table 1 Representations of enemy images in the National Consultations.
The total number of National Consultations examined is equal to 8 (N=8)

Enemies	Frequency	Frequency in percentage (%)
Brussels	7	88%
Immigrants	5	63%
George Soros	3	38%
Socialist-liberal party coalition	1	13%
Amnesty International	1	13%
Helsinki Committee	1	13%
NGOs supported internationally	1	13%
ISIS	1	13%
Terrorism	1	13%
Political parties of the opposition	1	13%
Banks	1	13%
Ferenc Gyurcsány	1	13%

The table above shows the results of the analysis of the dataset. We can find in each row the enemies named in the National Consultations and the corresponding frequency. The list of enemies includes not only people (George Soros, Ferenc Gyurcsány) but also organizations (Amnesty International, Helsinki Committee, NGOs, banks, a party coalition), the name of a city (Brussels, referring to the European Union), and concepts (immigrants, terrorism).

Eight National Consultations took place in the period under review, of which Brussels appeared as an enemy in seven. The only omission was the online-only survey 'About a New Start' in 2021. The second most frequently mentioned enemy was immigrants, a group that appeared in five questionnaires in total. The third most frequently mentioned enemy was George Soros, whose name was mentioned in three National Consultations. The remainder of the enemies appeared in only one questionnaire each, but this does not mean that they are short-lived, one-time-only enemy images, as the Prime Minister's speeches attest. Ferenc Gyurcsány, for example, was only named in one questionnaire, yet he is recurrently depicted as an enemy in the rhetoric of Viktor Orbán and Fidesz-KDNP. For this reason, we compared the underrepresented actors in the National Consultation with their appearance in the campaigns. We found the five most typical enemy images to be Brussels, George Soros, Ferenc Gyurcsány, the opposition, and migrants. Gyurcsány, a former Prime Minister, is a dividing personality and is widely unpopular among many Hungarians, regardless of their political standpoint (Gerő & Szabó, 2017). Connecting his person to the whole opposition and pointing out this important enemy was a campaign strategy that promised success; therefore, he was not left out of this analysis either. The political opposition is the natural opponent of the government, which has also been turned into an enemy in the Hungarian case. Based on this, it was also considered important to

include the opposition in the analysis beyond its frequent representation in campaign materials. Therefore, the study analyzed the occurrence of the five abovementioned enemy images.

In the qualitative research, we started by using Fairclough's principles of critical discourse analysis (1995; 2013). An important element of this is the recognition of the ideological use of language (Keller, 2012), so we took these guidelines into account throughout the research process and in interpreting the results.

The keynote speeches were chosen based on their recurring nature and the media's strong attention to them. In this research, we declared the prime ministerial speeches given on the national holidays of March 15 and October 23, along with Orbán's annual lecture at the Bálványos Free Summer University, to be keynote speeches. Hungarian media tends to closely follow these events as they can often be regarded as crucial, course-setting talks, shedding light on the future direction of the government. The State of the Nation addresses and the abovementioned keynote speeches are not only of high importance but are repeated annually in similar settings. Hence, they provide an outstanding opportunity for analysis and over-time comparison. The observation of enemy depictions in these speeches helps illustrate the overall relevance of enemies throughout time in the narrative of the current Hungarian Prime Minister.

We examined the current Hungarian Prime Minister's State of the Nation address speeches more thoroughly by annotating them qualitatively. In this process, we created categories based on speaking style, substantive content, and the main message of the speeches. The goal was to examine possible changes in style over time and to observe how these official speeches were influenced by the campaign mechanisms.

The discourse analysis approach enabled the examination of underlying, quantitatively undetectable messages present in the speeches. The linguistic nuances and sentence formulations could be highlighted, making it possible to detect implicit fearmongering and changes in tone of voice.

4.2 Quantitative analysis

In the quantitative part of our research, we examined the appearance of the previously defined keywords representing different aspects of the various enemies mentioned in the State of the Nation addresses. We also studied the keynote speeches given on the anniversaries of national holidays and compared the patterns we observed to those revealed in the State of the Nation addresses.

Before starting the quantitative investigation, we calculated the length of the texts, which is defined as the sum of the occurrences of the words that make up the speeches. We used this information to compute relative frequencies from the observed frequencies by dividing the observed frequency of the target words by the length of the actual speech and then multiplying by one hundred to filter out variations in the number of words in the texts before the analysis. Thus, we computed the weighted relative frequencies of selected keywords associated with the depiction of enemy images and applied statistical tests to check whether they occurred significantly more or less frequently in different time periods and years.

We followed the methodology used by Boda and Rakovics (2022) when analyzing the relative frequency of migration-related keywords in prime ministerial speeches. We examined the average occurrences of the most typical words associated with enemy images in the highlighted speeches (both State of the Nation addresses and different types of keynote speeches) using independent sample t-tests and then visualized their distributions by including the time dimension in the analysis. We also used paired-sample t-tests to compare the relative frequencies of the different keywords that occurred in the speeches. Further, most importantly, we examined the results over time to generate information about the dynamics of change over the years. The latter are detailed in the *Results* chapter of our article.

We hypothesized that based on the peculiarities of the State of the Nation address speeches – namely, those whose audience is a rather limited, politically highly engaged, well-educated group – they would feature enemy images less frequently than the keynote speeches that are directed towards the wider population. Therefore, we expected to identify fewer words connected to inimical characters in the State of the Nation addresses and more in the other keynote speeches.

5 Results

5.1 Qualitative results

By applying qualitative methods, we learned about the meaning and interpretation of the examined keywords and the substantive context in which they occur. During the annotated interpretation, we noticed that the enemy images from the National Consultations appeared in higher proportions than previously expected, according to our hypotheses.

The narrative of the 2010 State of the Nation address was dominated by an emphasis on the need for strong government. It is important to note that this speech was delivered during the government of Gordon Bajnai, so Viktor Orbán was still speaking as a politician in opposition and as the prime ministerial candidate of Fidesz-KDNP. In this State of the Nation address, he essentially summarized the policy guidelines for the coming years, which he would steer. He set out the main principles of a 'work-based society', talked about the policy of opening to the East, and criticized the work of the government of the time, which he described as weak. His main message was to 'rebuild' the country and put it on a strong national foundation.

Putting the country on a new foundation was also a central theme of the 2011 State of the Nation address speech. Here, in addition to outlining the economic situation and political goals, images of the enemy were more prominent. The main enemies of the period were 'speculators', but these speeches never declared exactly who they were, and no clear information was shared about them, only that they posed a threat to Hungary. However, the radical communication offensive against these mysterious groups that we learned about later was not yet launched in the current Prime Minister's speeches.

In his 2012 annual assessment, Viktor Orbán declared that 'Hungary stands on new foundations'. This speech also had a stronger economic focus and discussed plans, a new constitution, and workplace creation. There was also criticism of the European Union,

with the claim that 'Europe is slowly becoming like alcohol: it inspires great goals and prevents us from achieving them' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address speech, 02/07/2012).

The State of the Nation address of 2013 was the first time that recurring slogans appeared that we had seen in various government campaigns. The key message of this year was 'Hungary is doing better' (In Hungarian: 'Magyarország jobban teljesít'). This speech was already intended somewhat in preparation for the 2014 elections, and the word 'socialists' as a source of danger was mentioned several times.

In 2014, an increase in references to religion was noticed. Viktor Orbán quoted from the Bible twice and used religious terms several times. In addition, the later to be emblematic 'Brussels bureaucrats' appeared here, and there was a general shift in terminology. From this point onwards, the European Union was increasingly consistently referred to as 'Brussels'. Left-wing political parties and socialists are also mentioned in a negative context, which is not surprising given that the speech was made in the run-up to the parliamentary election campaign.

The year 2015 was an important turning point in Viktor Orbán's communication. As Gerő and E. Sik (2020) wrote, the most unfavorable opinion poll for Fidesz-KDNP came out in January of that year. There was a drastic drop in the party's popularity, which was responded to with a radical communication strategy. Institutionalized fearmongering was, from then on, part of campaigning (Gerő & E. Sik, 2020). This part of the 2015 State of the Nation address is an example:

'Migrants from the west of the continent are being recruited by terrorist organizations, while the southern borders of the EU, including our own, are besieged by a new era and wave of migration, which is baffling increasingly frustrated states and governments. And all this is happening at a time when millions of Western Europeans feel they have to work more and more for less and less money if they are able to keep their jobs at all.' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address speech, 02/27/2015)

The speech showed growing populist overtones, and for the first time, climate change was mentioned as a problem to be tackled. Endre Sik (2016) also dates to this year the construction of the previously mentioned 'moral panic button', which has defined the political discourse in Hungary until the present time and successfully restored the loss of popularity of Fidesz-KDNP.

In the 2016 State of the Nation address, we hear a more populist Viktor Orbán who is more likely to base his message on emotions and fears. 'We will teach Brussels, the people smugglers and the migrants that Hungary is a sovereign country and that the only way to enter its territory is to obey our laws and obey our uniformed officers' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address speech, 02/28/2016). The new slogan was 'stopping Brussels', and he assured his audience that 'Hungarian reforms are working' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address speech, 02/28/2016).

In 2017, the emergence of enemy images became even more pronounced than before: migrants, George Soros, and the decline of the European Union were discussed. It is striking that in this speech, there was less talk of the economy, which was the focus at the beginning, and of the reforms that had been carried out and planned. The dominant narrative typically involved fighting enemies. It is also interesting that, in this speech, he used whole sentences from his annual assessment from the previous year.

In the heat of the election campaign, the 2018 State of the Nation address was not short of enemies. Viktor Orbán, who described himself as the defender of Christian Europe, talked about the network of Soros, the Soros plan, immigrants, and an opposition unfit to govern. 'Stop Soros' appeared as an emblematic slogan, and we can observe the growing emphasis on us-versus-them groupings (Molnár, 2020).

In the 2019 State of the Nation address, there was a renewed emphasis on economic growth, but enemies were not pushed to the background either. The Prime Minister analyzed in detail the incompetence of the political parties in opposition and ridiculed them, for example, by declaring, 'all we can say about our fellow Members of Parliament in the opposition is that they are indeed every inch people of courtesy and refinement: every inch up to their ankles, but no further!' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address, 02/10/2019). Brussels was not left out either since it was claimed that 'in Brussels, the seven-point work plan has already been drawn up and is ready for deployment, with which they want to turn the whole of Europe into an immigrant continent after the European elections' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address, 02/10/2019). It is important to note that by 2019, several National Consultations and billboard campaigns had already been implemented, in which the images of the enemies that appear here were central figures. In this speech, the person of George Soros was presented as a mystical background manipulator of power who strongly wanted Hungary's downfall.

In Orbán's 2020 State of the Nation address, he talked about Soros, Brussels, and the opposition was also mentioned in the populist, fighting-for-freedom tone familiar from recent years. There was also much talk of the Trianon anniversary and the tenth anniversary of the Fidesz government. Orbán said: 'The facts [...] show that the last ten years have been the most successful ten years in the history of Hungary over the last hundred years' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address, 02/16/2020). He also noted that he believed that democracy based on National Consultation was 'true' democracy.

As the State of the Nation Address of 2021 was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the traditional February annual assessment speech was not held again until two years later, in 2022. Given that this was again in the parliamentary election campaign period, it was not surprising that there were references to the political parties in opposition, this time mostly mentioned as 'the left'. That was the last speech that was analyzed in our research and may be considered a summary of all previous addresses of the State of the Nation. It was the most radical of all. All the enemies of previous years appeared in it, as well as the terrifying shadow of war. Orbán also declared that 'the stakes of the election are huge; it is a vital turning point for Hungarians' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address speech, 02/12/2022). This speech was closer to being a campaign speech than an annual review in the sense of 2010. Images of enemies and fearmongering played a key role in the narrative, which was concluded with: 'Saddle up, the campaign has begun, it's time for us to ride out. We'll be back in fifty days, from the right hand's side! God above us all, Hungary first! Go, Hungary, go, Hungarians!' (Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation address speech, 02/12/2022).

In conclusion, the qualitative analysis helps identify a radicalization of the way of speaking in the State of the Nation addresses. Images of the enemy always appeared in the speeches but were particularly emphasized after 2014. The initial function of the State of the Nation addresses gradually changed from 2016 onwards, at an accelerated pace, into a

campaign of fearmongering and maintenance of the fear induced by political communication. Thus, the strategic, ideological use of the speeches (Fairclough, 2013) increased compared to the context-following functional use that was typical before.

5.2 Quantitative results

During the quantitative analysis, we studied how the relative frequencies of the various images of the enemies identified in the National Consultations changed over time. We also studied the State of the Nation addresses separately, and together with the keynote speeches of the current Hungarian Prime Minister, the talks of March 15, October 23 and at Tusnádfürdő.

Focusing on the changes over time, we created graphs of the temporal variation in the appearance of the five identified enemy images, as detailed earlier.

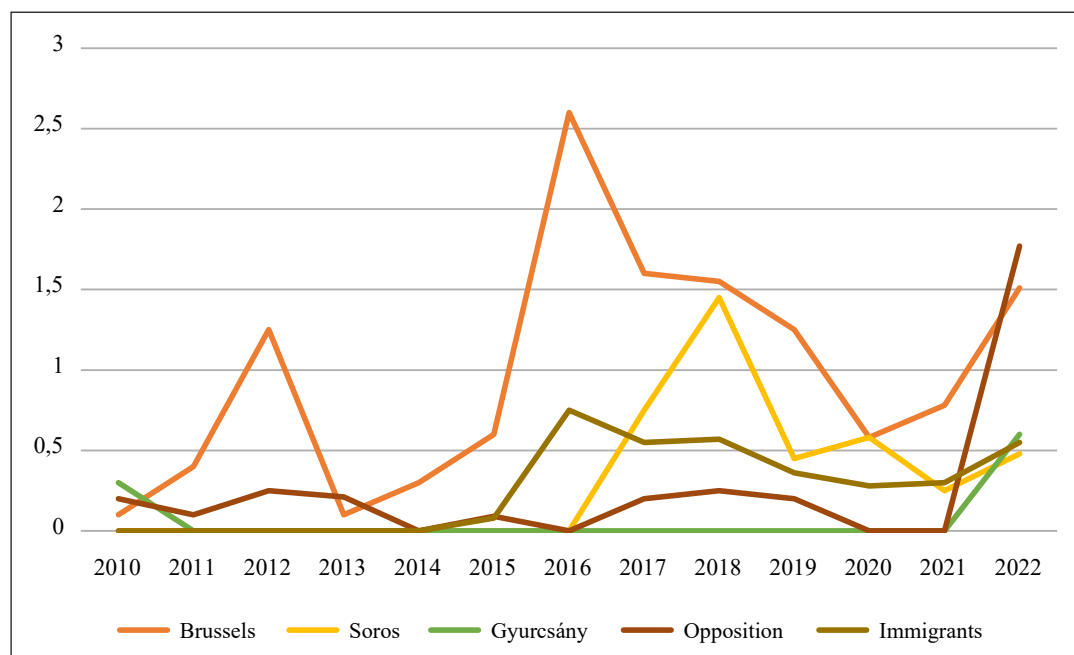


Figure 1 Relative frequencies of mention of the five enemies over time. The horizontal axis shows the years, and the vertical axis shows the relative weighted frequencies. The graph shows the relative frequencies in all types of prime ministerial speeches according to time for the words 'Brussels', 'Soros', 'Gyurcsány', 'opposition', 'migration'.

Figure 1. shows the occurrence of words related to images of the enemy in all the featured speeches by year. We used standardized variables for measuring relative frequencies, created as described in the methodology section. There was relatively large variation in the mention of enemy images. 'Brussels' appears to be the most frequently used in prime

ministerial speeches. Gyurcsány, the political parties in opposition, and Brussels were mentioned in 2010 as enemies in talks. The relative weighted frequencies of Brussels increased and reached a local peak in 2012. In 2013, the relative frequency of the occurrences of the 'opposition' was greater than that of the other enemy images, but from 2014 onwards, Brussels became the most often discussed enemy of Hungary, according to Viktor Orbán. The weighted measures of Brussels, referring to the European Union, increased between 2013 and 2016. The latter year – 2016 – is important because a new enemy appeared: migration, which occurred relatively frequently. From then onwards, mention of migration and Brussels became relatively frequent in the speeches. Mentions of migration reached a local maximum in 2016, and after a slight decrease (in 2017), saw an uptick in 2018 as well. In the same year (2018), the enemy image of George Soros was used by Viktor Orbán relatively frequently, almost as often as Brussels. In 2020, the relative dominance of both Brussels and Soros was equal in the prime ministerial speeches. In the year of the parliamentary elections, the relative frequency of mentions of all enemies increased, which finding aligns well with the results of the qualitative analysis and the fact that 2022 was a year of parliamentary elections. Mentions of the opposition and Ferenc Gyurcsány became dominant in that period, while Brussels remained the number one enemy according to the State of the Nation addresses and the keynote speeches of Viktor Orbán.

In the second graph, Figure 2, we have focused closely on the State of the Nation addresses and plotted the emerging enemy images by year, similar to Figure 1.

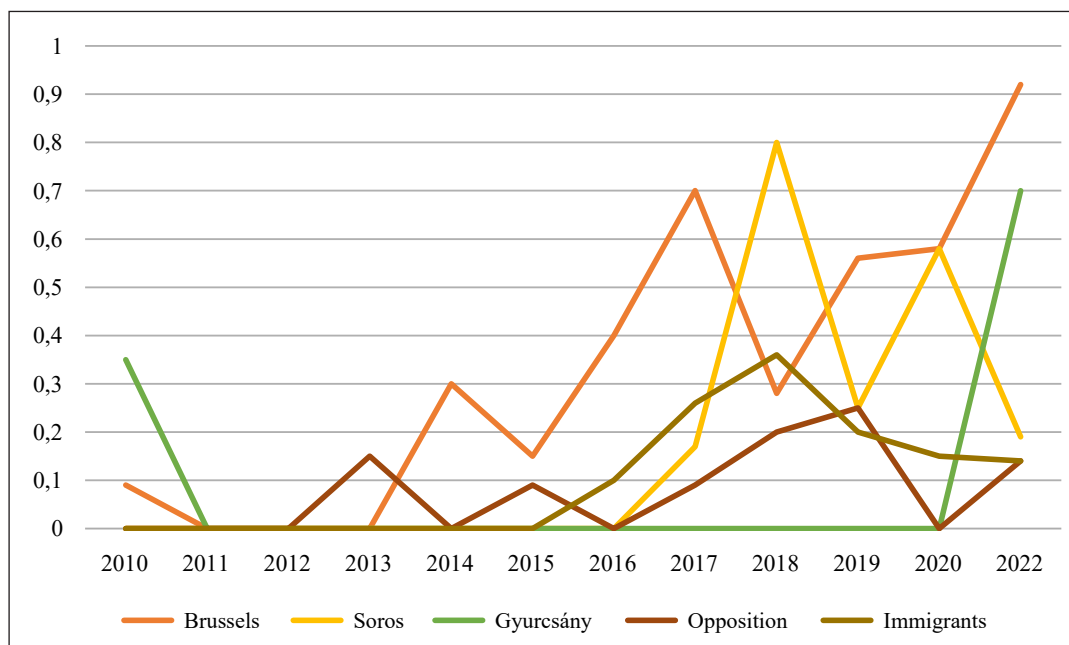


Figure 2 Relative frequency of mentions of the five enemies over time in the State of the Nation addresses. The horizontal axis shows the years, and the vertical axis shows the relative weighted frequencies. The graph shows the relative frequencies in the State of the Nation address speeches according to time for the words 'Brussels', 'Soros', 'Gyurcsány', 'opposition', 'migration'.

Please note that, as no State of the Nation address was held in 2021, we have no data available for that year.

The results of Figure 2 are slightly different from those of Figure 1: a shift in time is observable in the appearance of enemy images and a decrease considering the volumes – the relative frequencies – over time. The dominance of the different enemies changes more drastically in the State of the Nation addresses when considering time. This finding aligns well with the expectation that the role of the State of the Nation addresses and the other keynote speeches (March 15, October 23, and Tüsnádfürdő) are conceptually different.

Brussels is again one of Hungary's most dominant enemies, but the relative frequency of mentions of this is not that high throughout the examined period. The peaks of relative frequencies for Brussels are in 2014, 2017, 2019 and 2022. Taking the date of the parliamentary elections into consideration, it is quite visible that the word 'Brussels' was used at the most critical time periods when the elections took place. The dominance of 'George Soros' is greater in the State of the Nation addresses than observed in all targeted speeches (including the keynotes as well). Viktor Orbán depicted Soros as an enemy most dominantly in 2018 and 2020. Ferenc Gyurcsány, the former Prime Minister of Hungary, was mentioned most frequently in 2022, in the year of the parliamentary elections.

According to the State of the Nation addresses, the enemy images in each year of the elections were dominant to varying degrees. In 2010, Ferenc Gyurcsány was the most frequently mentioned enemy, replaced by Brussels in 2014, the only enemy in that year. George Soros became the number one enemy in 2018, with the highest relative frequencies in that year, when migration, Brussels, and the political opposition were also mentioned relatively frequently in the State of the Nation addresses. In 2022, Brussels and Ferenc Gyurcsány became the most often mentioned enemies of the country.

The observations based on the quantitative methods that were used therefore confirmed the qualitative results. In other words, the images of the enemy that appeared from the outset were radicalized after 2014 and became an increasingly integral part of Viktor Orbán's narrative. Finally, 2022 was the year when most enemies appeared at the same time, as seen in the figures (Figures 1 and 2). This is the only year in which all the enemy images examined are represented in the State of the Nation address speeches.

6 Discussion

Based on the reviewed literature, it was apparent that an increase in the presence of enemy images in the speeches of the Hungarian Prime Minister was to be expected. This was confirmed by both the qualitative and the quantitative analysis.

In the paper, we have pointed out that enemy images were already part of Viktor Orbán's narrative in 2010, in the first examined speeches, but only in 2014 and around 2015, when the National Consultations began to become more serious, did they explicitly start to gain ground. Enemy images of individuals also appeared at different times. Brussels and Ferenc Gyurcsány were the earliest enemy images in the State of the Nation addresses, while all the keynote speeches also mentioned the opposition. This latter group only appeared in 2013 in an annual State of the Nation speech. Mention of immigrants started in 2015 in the keynote speeches and became part of the narrative of the State of

the Nation addresses in 2016, while George Soros appeared in both types of speeches in 2017. Enemies were also a dominant feature of the State of the Nation addresses in election years. Specifically, in 2018, several inimical figures were mentioned, as well as in 2022. The last annual review speech that we examined, from February 2022, proved to be the most radical. This was confirmed by both the results of the qualitative interpretation and the quantitative statistical analysis. These revealed all the identified enemy images, accompanied by a new threat – war. This speech can be considered part of the 2022 election campaign, as it contains several elements related to it. Based on Fairclough's (2013) model of critical discourse analysis, the speech can be assumed to transmit ideological content.

The findings reinforced the pattern that was established by previous studies in the field (Demeter, 2018; Gerő et al., 2017; Gerő & E. Sik, 2020; Kopper et al., 2017; E. Sik, 2016), namely that enemy images are beyond doubt present in Viktor Orbán's speeches, and a radicalizing tendency can be observed alongside a seemingly constant change in the nature of the enemies. This research thus adds value to the examination of discourse with its use of quantitative tools that enabled the statistically supportable examination of changes in enemy images. The simultaneous use of discourse analysis generated a deeper understanding of these changes, reflecting on the implicit, underlying enemy creation. Similar methods have earlier been applied by other studies in the analysis of Orbán's communication on migration (Boda & Rakovics, 2022; Sylá, 2023); however, utilizing these methodologies to identify enemy images in important official speeches over a longer period of time is the novelty of this study.

We observed that the presence of certain enemies in the Prime Minister's speeches correlates with the patterns of enemies specified in Márton Gerő and Endre Sik's (2020) study about the pressing of the moral panic button. However, the mention of these enemies might peak in frequency at slightly different times in the speeches. Meanwhile, it is clear that the panic-generating images of the National Consultations found their way into the keynote and State of the Nation speeches.

Many scholars have conducted research on Viktor Orbán's speeches before us. Comparing these previous pieces of work to our own, it is apparent that the enemy images have changed over time. This suggests that the frequency of the observed enemies differed over time, as did the enemies themselves. This constant change of enemies is in line with the nature of moral panics, which tend to appear unexpectedly, proliferate, and disappear, giving way to other moral panics after a while (Gerő & Sik, 2020). Therefore, researchers have found other enemy images worthy of focusing on throughout the years. As far as we are aware, no one has identified a single enemy whose presence has dominated over the years. Certainly, mention of Brussels and George Soros have been relatively common over a longer period, and they appear in most related studies as cornerstone enemies, while a few others seem to be present only for a limited time. Kenes (2020) notes that Orbán operates with changing enemies; most of these, however, have in common that they involve the 'Western-liberal world'. This enemy-shifting might be a key element in defining an illiberal system, as according to Sata and Karolewski (2022), Orbán's government strongly emphasizes 'friends versus enemies' narratives. Thus, enemy images might be a defining means of supporting such systems. This can be connected to Schmitt's theory concerning the importance of friends and enemies in politics. Pointing out clear enemies can sustain group cohesion and increase support for the stronger group – that is, those considered friends (Schmitt, 1932/2008).

7 Conclusion

Our research demonstrates the combined usage of automated text analysis and critical discourse analysis. By utilizing these methods, we were able to qualitatively identify radicalization in the style of the prime-ministerial State of the Nation address speeches and support our observations with keyword frequency-based statistical analysis.

Through the examination of the National Consultations in the period between 2015 and 2022, we were able to identify five main enemy images: Brussels, Gyurcsány, immigrants, Soros, and the opposition. Their presence in the State of the Nation addresses and other keynote speeches of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was examined. These enemies were present in both types of speeches; however, in accordance with our hypothesis, they exhibited different patterns in terms of frequency. The mentioning of enemy images was less prevalent in the State of the Nation addresses compared to the other keynote speeches, presumably because of the limited, government-close audience. The dominant periods of different enemy depictions, in line with our expectations, occurred in different years. However, their peaks in the State of the Nation addresses did not conform to our hypotheses in several cases, perhaps because these speeches are held in February and dominant enemy images in a given year may only arrive in these speeches with delay.

Attuning the population to fear has long been a political tool (Szabó, 2007). However, Orbán's government has created a system, through the efficient use of national consultations and marketing tools, that puts the overarching emphasis on fearmongering (Sata & Karolewski, 2022). This study has shown that the elements of fear inducement are widely present in the Prime Minister's speeches, which may be due to a strategy of redirecting the focus from certain issues and governing the public discourse in a direction that aligns with Orbán's aims. It is clear that the Prime Minister's enemy images are constantly changing; they come out of the blue, peak, decline, and rise again; some live for very long periods, while others only pop up. In a society that is overly preoccupied with safety (Furedi, 2006), the use of these enemy images and fearmongering tactics can result in substantial political gain. However, regarding the divisive nature of such strategies (Gerő & Sik, 2020), the long-term results can be devastating for society.

Funding

Zsófia Rakovics's work has contributed to the research that is supported by the ÚNKP-22-3 New National Excellence Program of the Ministry for Culture and Innovation from the source of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund.

The research has contributed to 'The layers of political public sphere in Hungary (2001–2020)' research of ELTE Research Center for Computational Social Science. The referred research project has been supported by the National Research, Development, and Innovation Office (NKFIH), registered with the identifier NKFIH K-134428.

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