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Mainstream Political Discourse on the Roma Minority in Hungary between 2010 and 2019

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Abstract

This study examines how Hungarian politicians represented the Roma minority in public statements reported by the National News Agency from 2010 to 2019. Through an integrated theoretical framework, we analyzed communication styles to uncover not only what was said about the Roma but also the underlying motivations, proposed societal relationships, and social orders conveyed by these statements. Our methodology combined textual and thematic analyses to explore both the explicit content and the covert implications of these communications.

Our findings reveal a dual discourse from the governing party, Fidesz, which simultaneously emphasizes integration and inclusion to meet European expectations while exploiting anti-Roma sentiment and perceived victimhood, particularly during the refugee crisis, to appeal to domestic audiences. Fidesz employed a complex propaganda strategy, portraying the Roma as both subjects of integration and as scapegoats in the context of refugee-related threats. In contrast, far-right parties like Jobbik engaged in overtly racist propaganda, reinforcing negative stereotypes and solidifying in-group identity among their supporters. Liberal-left-centrist parties, meanwhile, were largely ineffective, often replicating Fidesz's portrayal of the Roma as helpless victims without providing substantive alternative narratives.

This analysis highlights the relational and deeply political nature of discourse, demonstrating how representations of the Roma are manipulated to serve broader political agendas. It also underscores the lack of critical engagement with structural inequalities, revealing how these narratives perpetuate existing power dynamics rather than addressing the systemic issues affecting the Roma community.

Keywords: political discourse; Roma; anti-Gypsyism; prejudice; inclusion; propaganda

1 Introduction

Since assuming power in 2010, Viktor Orbán's government in Hungary has embarked on a path of illiberal democracy characterized by the centralization of power and the undermining of established checks and balances (Enyedi & Krekó, 2018). This consolidation

extends to controlling political communication and public media (Krekó, 2022; Polyák, 2019). Despite Fidesz's significant parliamentary majority, the government cultivates an image of victimhood, resonating with the collective Hungarian psyche's perception of external and internal threats (Szabó & Csertő, 2023), with the Roma minority often positioned among these perceived threats.

On the European stage, Hungary presents a contrasting narrative. The European Union (EU) recognizes the Roma as Europe's largest ethnic minority and has actively worked to address their discrimination and social exclusion. EU initiatives emphasize socioeconomic inclusion, equality, and participation. However, the Roma community continues to face persistent challenges, with notable regional variation in prejudice and discrimination across EU Member States (Kende et al., 2021). Historical, cultural, and legal factors contribute to socially endorsed prejudice in Eastern European countries (Kende et al., 2017), in contrast to more veiled discrimination in Western European countries (Kende & McGarty, 2019).

Fidesz navigates these contradictory demands by consolidating power internally through narratives of victimhood and perceived threats while externally engaging in EU initiatives aimed at promoting minority inclusion and equality. The far-right opposition amplifies in-group victimhood narratives, often depicting Roma individuals negatively, deepening societal divides. Conversely, the liberal-left-centrist opposition struggles to articulate a distinct representation of the Roma that aligns with their values, hindered by entrenched societal biases (Bíró-Nagy et al., 2022).

Our research inductively examines Hungarian political discourse on the Roma, focusing on how this communication implicitly mediates political interests, the positions of the authors, and the proposed social relations. We examine how strategic communication and prejudice shape political agendas and national identity. A core premise of our study is that Hungarians' perceptions of the Roma are entwined with their self-identity construction (Bigazzi, 2009; Bigazzi et al., 2019). Utilizing moral typecasting theory (Gray & Wegner, 2009), which suggests that people categorize groups as either perpetrators or victims, we assess the implications of majority Hungarians viewing themselves through this lens. In particular, we explore how this self-perception influences Hungarian politicians' representation of the Roma, the nation's largest ethnic minority.

2 Theoretical Background

We construct our knowledge through communication, which is fundamentally mediated by representation (Duveen, 2002). Representation 'provides collectivities with intersubjectively shared means for understanding and communicating' (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990, p. 2). Moscovici (1961/1976) identified three distinct ways to represent and communicate a social object. Diffusion transmits content of general interest by blurring social differences among an audience with the aim not to influence openly but to inform, allowing opinions to be forged. Propagation transmits information via a more authoritarian relationship with a specific audience, integrating content into the latter's own worldview and values, assimilating some and neglecting others, thereby generating and strengthening attitudes. Propaganda has the aim of fostering group identity and identifying opponents and enemies.

These different communication processes shape the cognitive organization of knowledge of the audience differently (Buschini & Guillou, 2022). However, they also exhibit

different relationships between the source of information and the target group (audience), affording different degrees of autonomy in relation to the social object. Diffusion assumes a wide target group and encourages individual opinions, propagation frames content with implicit direction, and propaganda directly imposes relational attitudes on social objects. Power dynamics influence these processes, with dominant sources allowing for divergence and minority identities, often constructed on threat perception, driving toward cohesion and homogeneity (Deschamps, 1982). Propaganda, particularly, serves as a form of minority influence aimed at fostering societal change (Elcheroth et al., 2011; Moscovici, 1961/1976).

Knowledge construction and representation are inherently relational, collaborative, and deeply political processes (Howarth, 2011). The source's political power dictates the domination of communication channels and the construction of identities and positioning. Communication about a social object shapes its representation, potential relations, and interactions. Additionally, it regulates and organizes the construction of the societal landscape by offering identity positions and placing the actors on the map of normative group relations.

The social representation of intergroup relations entails cognitive processes that shape the social order. Staerklé (2009; Staerklé et al., 2011, 2012) delineates four different mechanisms that regulate and organize social order: the moral order, rooted in shared values about bad and good; a free market system, based on meritocracy; social diversity, deriving from ethnic and cultural differentiation between groups; and structural inequality, centered on the management of inequality. The initial two mechanisms emphasize normative differentiation, while the latter are characterized by categorical differentiation.

Diffusion functions as a normalization process, providing reference frames (Sammut & Bauer, 2011) that support a broad, normatively aligned consensus. Propagation involves a majoritarian influence, leveraging a superordinate position to foster normative conformity. Conversely, propaganda serves as a minority influence strategy, challenging and proposing alternatives to the prevailing social order (Howarth, 2006). It frequently employs stigmatization or strong categorical differentiation to deepen social identity distinctions beyond the majority's normative parameters (Staerklé, 2015).

Relating to minorities involves navigating relational inequalities. Assimilation efforts (Gordon, 1964), often linked to prejudice, imply that those who are different lack normative qualities. Segregation creates physical and psychological distance from minorities, frequently through the relativization of differences, thereby strengthening categorization. Integration (Bourhis et al., 1997) focuses on the need for minorities to be part of the majority and, similarly to assimilation, implicitly expects action and responsibility from minorities (Bowskill et al., 2007). In contrast, inclusion represents a systemic approach that advocates for systemic changes to embrace diversity as a societal asset (Bigazzi et al., 2019). The fundamental distinction between integration and inclusion lies in their focus (Houtkamp, 2015). Relational concepts like inequalities often translate into policies designed to ameliorate or empower the target group to meet normative expectations without addressing relationships and their context. When differences are seen as the root of inequalities, policies targeting these groups aim to 'correct' these disparities. However, such approaches, despite their intentions, can inadvertently result in victim-blaming (Ryan, 1976).

The framework presented in this table encapsulates and typologizes the interplay between communication styles, the mental organization of knowledge, the relationships proposed by sources of information, the regulation behind social order, and the potential

societal relationships with minorities. In this research, we will explore how and what political actors communicate about the social object of the Roma, while also making assumptions about what this type of communication offers to its audience according to these theoretical dimensions (see Table 1).

Table 1 Integrated theoretical framework of the typologies of political communication

Communication styles	Diffusion	Propagation	Propaganda	
Mental organization of knowledge	Opinion	Attitude	Stereotype	
Relationship with source	Normalization	Majoritarian influence	Minority Influence: aimed at societal change	
Social order	Free-market meritocracy	Moral order	Social diversity	Structural inequality
Differentiation	Normative	Normative	Categorical	
Relation to Minorities	Integration	Assimilation	Segregation	Inclusion

3 Hungarian Roma (Representations) Tied to Economic, Social, and Political Agendas

Messing and Bernath (2017), after analyzing Roma media representation in Hungary for 25 years, highlight the rarity of systematic changes in thematic framing, closely tied to shifts in political discourse. This suggests that the discourse reflects broader political and social positioning rather than the Roma's actual situation(s). We aim to outline the economic-political landscape since 1990, Roma policies, and their media representation.

The shift to a market economy in the 1990s adversely affected Roma people, with a significant proportion facing long-term unemployment and poverty (Bárány, 2001; Kertesi & Kézdi, 2011). The economic transition of the 1990s exacerbated structural inequalities, fueling interethnic tensions and a surge in public and political debates about national and local issues, including poverty, culture, crime, education, and Roma political participation (Feischmidt et al., 2013; Messing & Bernáth, 2017). The establishment of the Roma political representatives' system in 1993 coincided with the founding of Hungary's first extreme-right party, MIÉP (Party of Hungarian Justice and Life), whose main narrative portrayed the economic transition as a struggle between governing anti-Hungarian groups and national resistance (Kovács, 2013).

During the transition years, Hungary faced the dual challenges of democratization and Europeanization. The democratization process highlighted the insufficiency of merely establishing formal democratic institutions without their systemic integration into the socio-cultural context, leaving them ill-equipped to manage burgeoning informal political-business networks (Ágh, 2016; Herman, 2015). This situation led ordinary citizens to feel a loss of control over the transition, accompanied by concerns over the potentially high costs. Concurrently, Europeanization, marked by Hungary's 1994 EU membership application, required structural adjustments with a focus on ethnic minority issues, culminating in initiatives aimed at enhancing Roma social inclusion (European Council Framework

Convention, 1995). These efforts resulted in the development of policies and action plans to address the escalating issues of poverty, inequality in opportunities, and social exclusion faced by the Roma minority.

Despite these efforts, Roma employment plummeted in the early 2000s, highlighting persistent economic challenges and societal prejudice (Enyedi et al., 2004). The Roma issue became more prominent in the media, with a focus on social problems such as housing (Yuval-Davis et al., 2017). The rise of the radical right-wing party, Jobbik, with its anti-Roma stance, alongside Fidesz's ethnicization of national discourse, underscored growing societal divisions (Csigó & Merkovity, 2016; Kovács, 2013; Vidra & Fox, 2012). Particularly, after losing the election again in 2006, Fidesz intensified its minority influence propaganda, utilizing strong, 'empty populistic' elements, such as 'direct reference to the will of the people, opportunism, the construction of a moral majority, and the promise of state defense against insecurity' (Csigó & Merkovity, 2016:300).

The global economic crisis in 2008 and the subsequent economic and moral collapse of the Hungarian government, famously illustrated by the socialist prime minister's admission of having lied to voters, amplified the crisis discourse and ethnic nationalism of Fidesz, as well as the overtly racist rhetoric of Jobbik. This shift led to a change in perspective towards the Roma minority, from viewing them as a national minority to ethnic 'othering.' The political and public discourse saw a significant escalation in overtly racist content, portraying the Roma as criminals (Vidra & Fox, 2014; Yuval-Davis et al., 2017). Jobbik's electoral success in 2009 and 2010 was closely linked to the emerging media attention on Roma-related issues. To gain legitimacy, Jobbik prioritized themes such as the 'Roma question' and 'Roma criminality' (Bíró-Nagy et al., 2012; Csiki, 2014; Feischmidt & Szombati, 2016).

During this period, violent incidents perceived as perpetrated by Roma individuals, such as the Olaszliszka lynching in 2006 and the Marion Cozma killing in Veszprém in 2009, heightened violence and prejudice against Roma. Threat marches by paramilitary organizations closely connected to Jobbik, such as the Hungarian Guard, were held, and racist attacks occurred that resulted in the death of six Roma individuals and several injuries, attributed to the extreme right 'gang of four,' associated with extreme right organizations (Csiki, 2014). A 2009 survey revealed widespread anti-Roma sentiment among Jobbik, Fidesz, and MSZP voters (Political Risk Index, 2010).

In 2010, following its electoral victory, Fidesz amended the Media Law, significantly restricting critical discourse and centralizing media control through the Media Council. This led to the consolidation of news content production via Hungary's national news agency, MTI, raising concerns about the autonomy and diversity of perspectives within the public media sphere. Critics were particularly worried about the potential impact on the independence and autonomy of Hungary's public media landscape (Hargitai, 2021).

Liberal-left-centrist parties were cornered in this communicative space: the emerging anti-Roma sentiment did not prompt these political parties to propose an alternative, more inclusionary perspective on the issue. The radical discourse was dominated by Jobbik, the only party that managed to present a stance independent of Fidesz, but this offered no solace to the Roma people. Jobbik's rhetoric focused on rejecting the elitism and corruption of mainstream parties alongside its anti-Roma and anti-Jewish positions (Batory, 2016).

The 2015 migration crisis further complicated Hungary's political landscape. The government's hardline stance on migration, juxtaposed with its claims of focusing on Roma integration, revealed a complex, often contradictory approach to minority issues (Tremlett & Messing, 2015).

Since 2010, the communication about Roma communities has been entangled in a politics of double discourse, where, on the one hand, their integration was promoted as part of the Europeanization process, and on the other, they remained internal, still subordinate 'others' to be dealt with (Kóczé & Rövid, 2019).

This historical context sets the stage for our research into the nuanced political discourse surrounding the Roma in Hungary since 2010. Our aim is to uncover the role of information sources of political actors, their broader interests within the political landscape, and how they influence the organization of social order and propose relationships with minorities.

4 Study

4.1. Research Question and Hypotheses

We sought to answer the following research questions:

How do political actors in Hungary communicate about Roma communities, and what underlying communication strategies and power dynamics are revealed through the analysis of overt and covert structures within this public discourse?

What does this communication reveal about their interests, roles, the relationships they propose to their audience, the social order they assume, and their approaches to minority groups?

Our study analyzed Roma-related communication by Hungarian politicians from 2010 to 2019, drawing on Messing and Bernáth's (2017) observation that thematic shifts in the representation of Roma issues are rare and closely linked to broader political discourse changes. We expected to observe that two significant events during this period – the economic and moral collapse of the socialist government at the end of the 2000s and the refugee crisis in 2015 – would influence these discourses.

We explored the governing party's efforts to navigate the expectations of both European and domestic audiences, hypothesizing that Fidesz politicians employ both propagation and propaganda to craft their messages, depending on the audience and the message's specific objective. We anticipated that Jobbik would demonstrate a distinct rhetorical stance, differentiating itself from Fidesz's ambiguous messages intended to placate both European partners and domestic audiences. Furthermore, we expected that other opposition parties, faced with strong anti-Roma sentiments among the electorate and a political space dominated by Fidesz and Jobbik's narratives, which starkly contrast their core values, would likely opt for silence. Finally, we also expected that the migration crisis would alter the political discourse related to the Roma communities, with Fidesz using the Roma as a justification for anti-refugee policies.

4.2 Data

In a pilot project in 2018, we collected data from popular news websites, such as index.hu, hvg.hu, 24.hu, 444.hu, 888.hu, and kurucinfo.hu. However, we soon realized that most relevant articles identified MTI as their source. Despite the controversies surrounding the independence and autonomy of MTI (see Hargitai, 2021, for example), in terms of Hungarian

politicians' communication about the 'Gypsy' and 'Roma' communities, there was a nearly complete overlap between the news provided by MTI and the news appearing on these portals.

Thus, we decided to systematically gather the relevant statements from MTI using the keywords 'Gypsy' and 'Roma' for the period between 2010 and 2019. Our inclusion criteria included statements that referred to the Hungarian Roma community and were made by Hungarian politicians from either the government parties (Fidesz, KDNP) or opposition parties that received at least 1 percent of votes in elections. This threshold is meaningful as parties failing to achieve it must repay campaign support. We also included communications from official Roma minority representatives but excluded statements from non-affiliated public figures or those broadly concerning Roma at the European level (i.e., not specifically Hungarian Roma).

This process yielded 1,829 statements with 290,891 total words and 1,931,088 characters, averaging 190.25 words per statement. Most statements originated from Fidesz (44.72 percent) and Jobbik (20.40 percent), with a noticeable decline in statements since the 2015 refugee crisis (see Table 2).

Table 2 Breakdown of Statements by Year and Source

Source	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Governing Parties and Government											
Fidesz-KDNP	84	120	138	144	79	45	67	60	47	33	817
Government	5	3	3	5	9	19	32	26	14	11	127
Liberal-Left-Centrist Opposition Parties											
MSZP	43	36	35	19	21	6	9	11	2	6	188
LMP	24	23	24	8	4	13	1	5	3	2	107
DC	NA	NA	7	12	12	8	2	NA	4	6	51
Together	NA	NA	NA	11	11	4	1	NA	NA	3	30
Liberal party	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	2	4	2	NA	2	11
Momentum	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	1
Radical Right-Wing Parties											
Jobbik	56	80	74	59	37	19	14	11	5	18	373
OHM	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	14	16
Other											
Independent	13	1	3	3	3	1	1	2	NA	6	33
Roma Self-go.	12	22	4	24	9	1	1	2	NA	NA	75
Grand Total	237	285	288	285	186	118	132	119	77	101	1829

Note: DC = Democratic Coalition. OHM = Our Homeland Movement. Roma Self Go. = Roma Self Government. NA = Not Available.

4.3 Method

In order to uncover the complex interplay between communication styles, the role of the source, and how the audience is expected to relate to it, as well as the proposed social order and relationships with minorities as outlined in our theoretical framework, we employed two complementary inductive methods of text analysis. These methods were specifically chosen for their ability to reveal both the overt and covert structures within political discourse, aligning with our aim to explore how political actors communicate about the Roma in Hungary.

The first method, a form of automated multidimensional text analysis using IraMuTeQ, leverages graph theory and the co-occurrence of words to identify the main clusters within public discourse. This approach aligns with our theoretical interest in communication styles and the organization of knowledge, as it allows us to map the 'visible' and 'said' aspects of the discourse—essentially, the dominant narratives and how they are structured within the broader social order. By automatically detecting patterns across large datasets, this method helps us identify prevalent themes and communication strategies employed by political actors.

The second method, a manual bottom-up thematic analysis, complements the automated approach by delving deeper into the broader textual and social context of the discourse. This method is crucial for interpreting the meanings behind statements and understanding the deeper structures and patterns related to how minorities are represented and the underlying intentions of the information sources. It is particularly well-suited to uncovering implicit relations and power dynamics that may not be immediately visible through automated analysis alone.

Together, these methods offer a comprehensive view of the data from two distinct but interconnected perspectives: the first method provides an overarching map of the discourse, while the second allows us to interpret deeper, more nuanced patterns. This dual approach is particularly effective in uncovering the layered meanings and social implications of political communication concerning Roma communities—specifically, how and why political actors discuss these communities and what underlying information and patterns are revealed according to the assumptions in our theoretical framework.

The automated textual analysis of the 1,829 statements involved several steps. Initially, we used DeepL to translate the statements into English and removed non-alphanumeric tokens for consistency. We then utilized IraMuTeQ software, which is well-suited for handling theoretical frameworks emphasizing communication and the social construction of knowledge (Sarrica et al., 2016). IraMuTeQ enables the quantitative analysis of a corpus through various tools: lexical analysis, similarity analysis, descending hierarchical analysis (DHA), and correspondence factor analysis (CFA). The establishment of the corpus included morphological normalization, converting words to their base forms for lemmatization, and was conducted using the software's English dictionary (Pola et al., 2015). Lexical analysis identifies and reformats text units into initial context units (ICUs) and elementary context units (ECUs). It performs word frequency identification and lemmatization, simplifying words to their root forms for clustering. This process standardizes verbs to their indicative tense, reduces plurals to singular forms, and simplifies variants of lexical roots to capture essential lexicons for statistical analysis (Sarrica et al., 2016). Similarity analysis employs graph theory to identify co-occurrences between words and their hierarchical

significance or structure (Marchand & Ratinaud, 2012; Pereira, 2001). DHA facilitates the classification of text segments based on lemmatized word frequency, maximizing similarity within classes and differences between them. The chi-square ($\chi2$) test measures relationships between words by comparing observed and expected distributions. Higher $\chi2$ values indicate the greater specificity of a term within a word class, resulting in a partition of classes aiming for homogeneity and differentiation. CFA, following DHA, plots words and variables linked to each DHA cluster on a Cartesian plane, highlighting significant words based on p-values. Words are positioned according to their frequency or $\chi2$ values in their class.

For the manual thematic analysis, we adopted an approach based on the framework established by Braun and Clark (2013). We developed a three-level coding system consisting of codes (defined as the most fundamental units of analysis, representing parts of the data deemed relevant for the analysis), themes (defined as patterns within the data, indicating a meaningful combination of codes), and overarching themes (defined as a higher level of abstraction, embodying broad, more general themes that emerge from the organization and integration of more specific themes in the data). Initially, the first author created a coding system through deep immersion, adopting a bottom-up approach. This in-depth examination enabled the first author to identify keywords, subsequently establishing patterns among these codes and organizing them into themes and overarching themes. The process was iterative, aimed at challenging emerging patterns and identifying cases that did not conform. Once the coding system was established, the first and second authors of the paper coded the data independently. The statements were divided into two corpora, with each corpus fully coded by one coder and a randomly chosen 10 percent of the statements coded by the other. With the goal of preserving the data's natural representation and recognizing interconnected themes across varying levels of abstraction, our coding system was non-exclusive, allowing for a single statement to be assigned multiple codes or themes. The interrater reliability, assessed using Cohen's Kappa, demonstrated an average agreement of 98.46 percent, reinforcing the credibility and consistency of our coding process.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Automatized Textual Analysis

The lexical examination of 1,829 statements produced 9,833 text segments (TS), with a total of 347,504 occurrences. The Hapax index stood at 1.02, showing that 35.19 percent of the words (lemmas) were used only once: 3,547 out of 10,080 forms. We focused our analysis on adjectives, adverbs, unrecognized forms, common names, and verbs, reducing the dataset to 7,359 forms. In this refined dataset, 2,501 hapaxes (forms used only once) represented 0.72 percent of total occurrences and 33.99 percent of forms and were excluded from further analysis.

The first step was a word cloud analysis which, after removing the search words 'Roma' and 'Gypsy', as well as 'Hungarian,' revealed that public discourse on Roma during this period mainly highlighted political actors like government (N = 1882), Europe (N = 1214), and minister (N = 1375, including references to Zoltán Balog, then Minister of Human
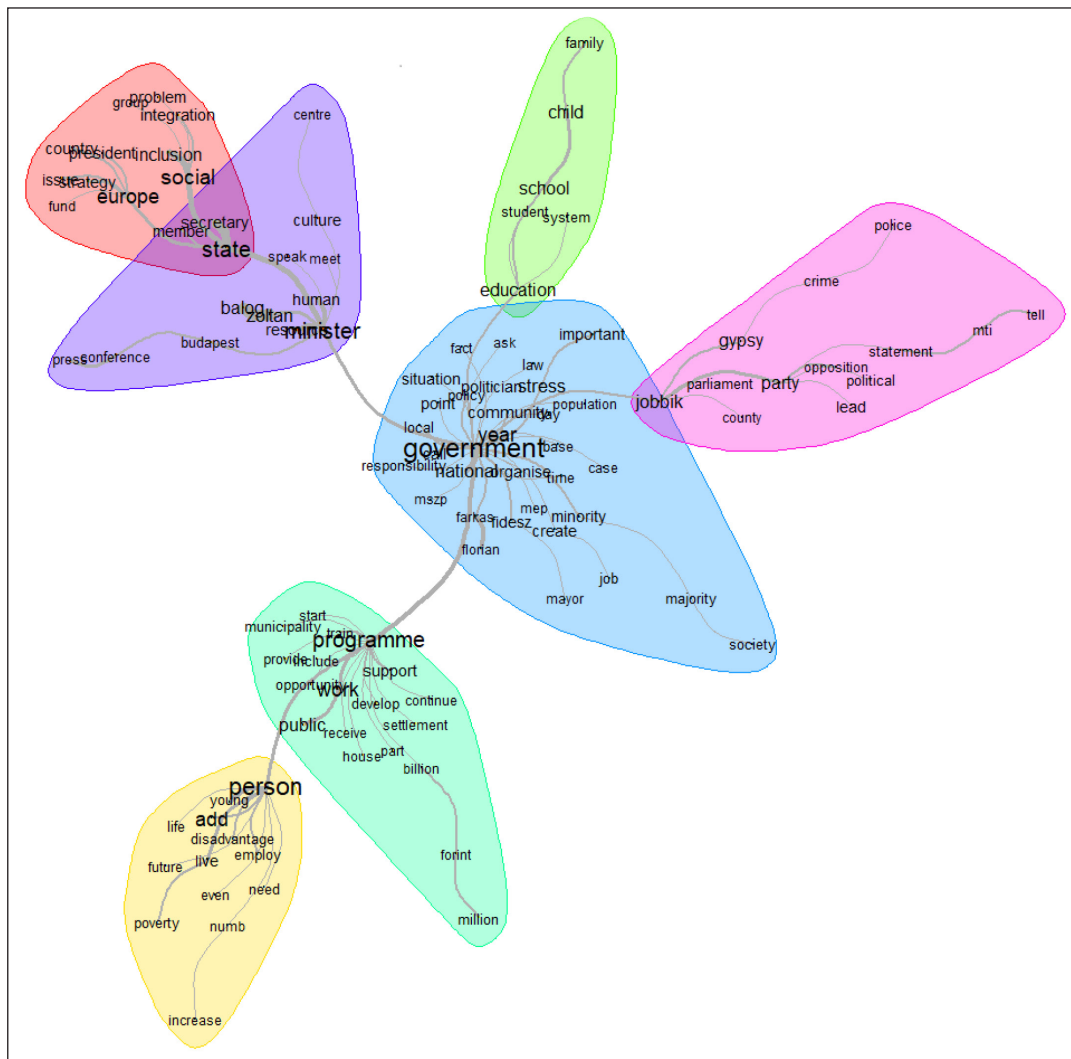
Resources). Other frequently mentioned entities were related to strategies, programs, the socio-political areas of intervention, and explanation of causes such as: programs (N = 1340), state (N = 1286), work (N = 1059), Jobbik (N = 895), education (N = 857), child (N = 855), school (N = 817), parties (N = 772), inclusion (N = 705), integration (N = 644), community (N = 641) strategies (N = 483), crime (N = 446), disadvantage (N = 421), poverty (N = 386).

Second, a similarity tree was generated to illustrate the relationships (co-occurrences) among words with a frequency of above 200 in the textual corpus (Flament, 1962; Marchand & Ratinaud, 2012; Verges & Bouriche, 2001). This analysis revealed a central discourse focusing on the government's actions, including efforts to improve situations, assume responsibility, organize, represent, and cooperate. Four main branches emerged from this central discourse: (1) Education, covering topics such as children, the school system, families, and segregation; (2) Jobbik's discourse, emphasizing 'Gypsy crime'; (3) The development and implementation of European work programs with a sub-branch reflecting the perspectives of Roma individuals as people with lives, difficulties, poverty, disadvantage, needs, and future aspirations. Finally, (4) the State, with two smaller branches focusing on European funds, integration, inclusion, and the government's efforts to solve problems (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Similarity Analysis: Co-Occurrences of Words with Frequencies
Greater Than 200

Third, we conducted a descending hierarchical analysis with an 85.09 percent success rate in classifying text segments, indicating a satisfactory index (Camargo & Justo, 2013). The analysis yielded five classes, hierarchically organized into three clusters. Figure 2 provides a summary of these results, showing the classes, clusters, and their relationships. Each class in the figure is highlighted by its most significant words, selected based on their p values (< .0001) and the highest chi-square values. Cluster A, Integration, includes Class 1 (Education) and Subcluster C (European Discourse) with Class 2 (EU Dialogue) and Class 3 (Culture). Cluster B, National Discourse, comprises Class 4 (Local Conflicts) and Class 5 (Parties).

These findings reveal a dual discourse on the Roma community between 2010 and 2019. The first discourse (Cluster B), rooted in the national context, involves politicians from various parties who leverage the issue for debates (campaign, elect), assign blame (racism, hate), and express opposition (condemnation). This discourse focuses more on political positioning than on constructive discussions about the Roma issue (coexistence). The modalities of our variable source (authors) saturating in this class are the different opposition parties and Roma representatives. The local context, marked by significant intergroup conflict (e.g., Miskolc, Gyöngyöspata), is characterized by demonstrations and marches that often require police intervention to maintain safety, order, and prevent crime. The modalities of our variable source saturating in this class are Jobbik and Our Homeland.

The other discourse (Classes 1, 2, 3) focuses on achieving inclusion, emphasizing education (school, child, disadvantage, vocational) and identity politics rooted in cultural specifics (music, community, value, history). This discourse is framed within the broader European context and political landscape (inclusion, strategy, Europe, European Framework, administration, policy, affair). The modalities of the variable source saturating in these three classes are governmental and FIDESZ representatives.

This duality illustrates the complex and fluid representation of communication about Hungarian Roma, which is influenced by political agendas and societal tensions. In the national context, the Roma become a tool for political objectives, perpetuating stereotypes and exacerbating social divisions. In the political news related to the European context, they are the focus of integration strategies and social welfare initiatives.

In Figure 2, we can observe the time variable saturating in each class. The two national classes are predominantly characterized by news before the refugee crisis, while the two European classes and the Inclusion class are more representative of communication in the period following the refugee crisis.

The automated text analysis of news related to the Roma community reveals key patterns in how political actors and parties frame their discourses. A focus on the most frequent words indicates that the discourse predominantly centers on integration, emphasizing strategies to reduce poverty, prevent crime, and address social disadvantages. Education is identified as the primary means to achieve these goals.

Further analysis of the nodes and edges in the similarity analysis shows that this discourse is centrally organized around the government, which is depicted as pivotal in shaping and directing public conversation about Roma issues. This central governmental community is connected to several other nodes the Minister of Human Resources, Zoltán Balog, who communicates about integration; European strategies of inclusion and funding; and the political opposition, Jobbik, which uniquely criminalizes the Roma, presenting a divergent political strategy in Hungary. Education also emerges as a key community, with its perceived role in the integration process being underscored. The Programs and Initiatives discourse is primarily focused on individuals living in poverty and facing disadvantages. However, this narrative also includes the allocation of significant financial resources—billions of forints—toward programs designed to meet these individuals' needs.
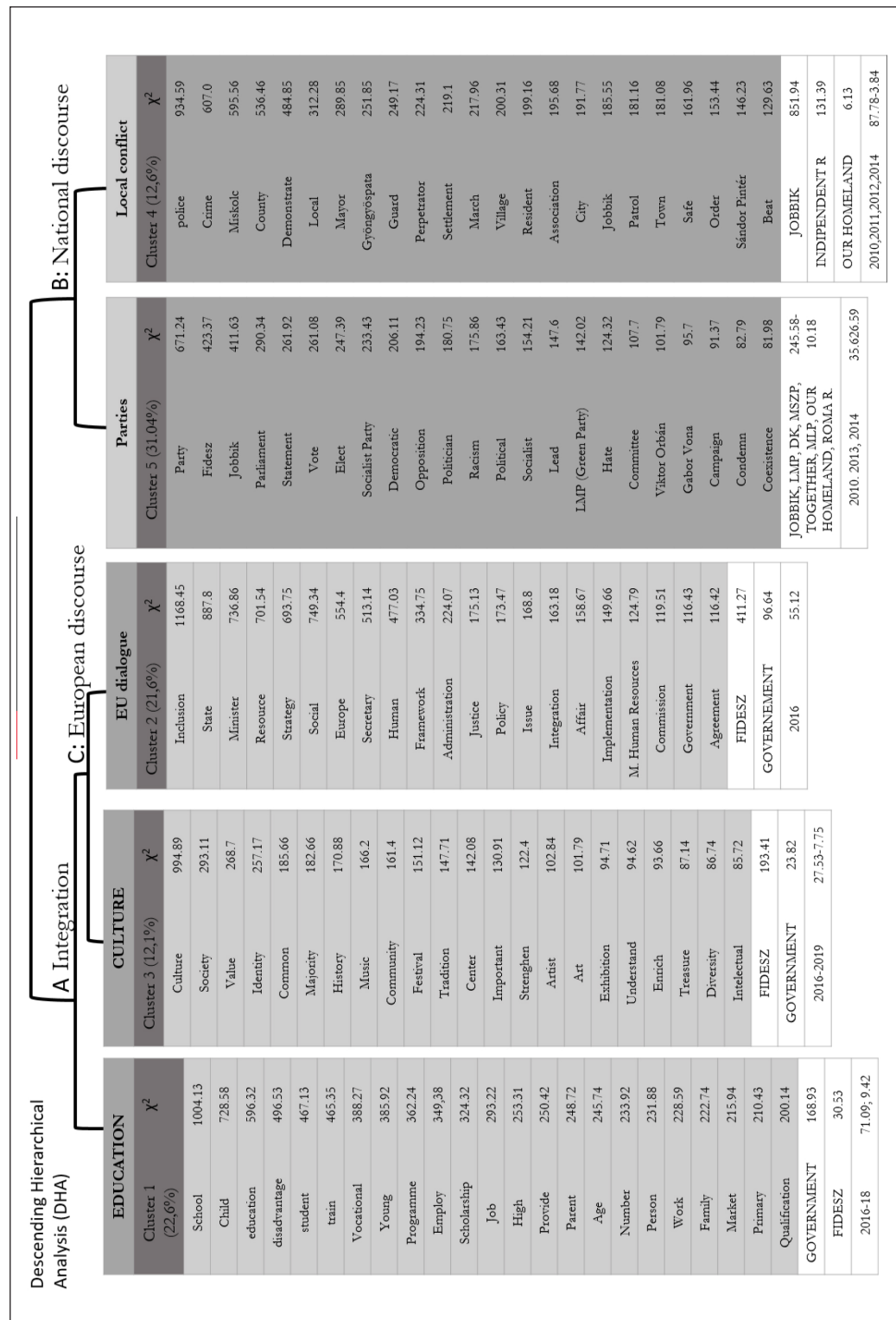
Descending Hierarchical Analysis (DHA)

A Integration — B: National discourse — C: European discourse

EDUCATION — Cluster 1 (22,6%)

Word	χ²
School	1004.13
Child	728.58
education	596.32
disadvantage	496.53
student	467.13
train	465.35
Vocational	388.27
Young	385.92
Programme	362.24
Employ	349.38
Scholarship	324.32
Job	293.22
High	253.31
Provide	250.42
Parent	248.72
Age	245.74
Number	233.92
Person	231.88
Work	228.59
Family	222.74
Market	215.94
Primary	210.43
Qualification	200.14
GOVERNMENT	168.93
FIDESZ	30.53
2016-18	71.09; 9.42

CULTURE — Cluster 3 (12,1%)

Word	χ²
Culture	994.89
Society	293.11
Value	268.7
Identity	257.17
Common	185.66
Majority	182.66
History	170.88
Music	166.2
Community	161.4
Festival	151.12
Tradition	147.71
Center	142.08
Important	130.91
Strenghen	122.4
Artist	102.84
Art	101.79
Exhibition	94.71
Understand	94.62
Enrich	93.66
Treasure	87.14
Diversity	86.74
Intellectual	85.72
FIDESZ	193.41
GOVERNMENT	23.82
2016-2019	27.53-7.75

EU dialogue — Cluster 2 (21,6%)

Word	χ²
Inclusion	1168.45
State	887.8
Minister	736.86
Resource	701.54
Strategy	693.75
Social	749.34
Europe	554.4
Secretary	513.14
Human	477.03
Framework	334.75
Administration	224.07
Justice	175.13
Policy	173.47
Issue	168.8
Integration	163.18
Affair	158.67
Implementation	149.66
M. Human Resources	124.79
Commission	119.51
Government	116.43
Agreement	116.42
FIDESZ	411.27
GOVERNEMENT	96.64
2016	55.12

Parties — Cluster 5 (31,04%)

Word	χ²
Party	671.24
Fidesz	423.37
Jobbik	411.63
Parliament	290.34
Statement	261.92
Vote	261.08
Elect	247.39
Socialist Party	233.43
Democratic	206.11
Opposition	194.23
Politician	180.75
Racism	175.86
Political	163.43
Socialist	154.21
Lead	147.6
LMP (Green Party)	142.02
Hate	124.32
Committee	107.7
Viktor Orbán	101.79
Gabor Vona	95.7
Campaign	91.37
Condemn	82.79
Coexistence	81.98
JOBBIK, LMP, DK, MSZP, TOGETHER, MLP, OUR HOMELAND, ROMA R.	245.58-10.18
2010. 2013, 2014	35.626.59

Local conflict — Cluster 4 (12,6%)

Word	χ²
police	934.59
Crime	607.0
Miskolc	595.56
County	536.46
Demonstrate	484.85
Local	312.28
Mayor	289.85
Gyöngyöspata	251.85
Guard	249.17
Perpetrator	224.31
Settlement	219.1
March	217.96
Village	200.31
Resident	199.16
Association	195.68
City	191.77
Jobbik	185.55
Patrol	181.16
Town	181.08
Safe	161.96
Order	153.44
Sándor Pintér	146.23
Beat	129.63
JOBBIK	851.94
INDIPENDENT R	131.39
OUR HOMELAND	6.13
2010,2011,2012,2014	87.78-3.84

Figure 2 Descending Hierarchical Analysis Results: Cluster and Class Structure and Hierarchical Relationships (Numbers in Parentheses Indicate the Percentage of the Total Text Segments Included in Each Class)

The clustering analysis reveals a notable shift in political communication before and after the refugee crisis. Before the crisis, political discourse about the Roma in MTI news was dominated by national debates between parties, reflecting a competitive political environment with multiple voices vying for influence. After the crisis, the discourse shifted to emphasize EU frames, education, and identity politics, with Fidesz and government actors dominating. The content became less diverse, with Jobbik's narrative of 'gypsy crime' emerging as the only significant dissenting voice. This shift from diffusion to propagation—marked by fewer, more controlled messages—reflects the government's consolidation of power and control over the narrative. By this time, the Roma discourse had come to focus on cultural identity politics rather than addressing the structural inequalities involved in Roma integration.

The choice of communication strategy, whether diffusion or propagation, serves to shape the proposed social order. Before the refugee crisis, the more open diffusion approach allowed for a plurality of voices, suggesting a competitive political environment. After the crisis, the shift to propagation indicates a consolidation of power by the ruling party, reflecting a more hierarchical social order. The government's focus on cultural identity over structural inequalities reinforces the superficial inclusion of the Roma while leaving deeper issues of economic and social inequality unaddressed. Rather than fully aligning with European values, Fidesz engages selectively, meeting EU expectations on surface-level issues like cultural identity while resisting substantial reforms that could address economic and social inequalities. This strategy minimizes opposition and maintains the ruling party's dominance in the political landscape. The shift from a broader, inclusive discourse to a controlled narrative underscores the government's intent to focus on political expediency rather than genuine change for the Roma community, perpetuating a social order that superficially includes the Roma but fails to address the deeper inequalities that sustain their marginalization.

4.4.2. Thematic Analysis

In the manual thematic analysis, since codes were non-exclusive, we assigned 5,570 codes across 1,829 statements, with an average of 3.05 codes per statement (range: 1 to 10). We identified seven overarching themes through this analysis that encapsulate a wide range of themes and codes. For brevity, we will focus on these overarching themes in this section, with a detailed list available in the appendix. The overarching themes are presented in order of their frequency, from the most to the least common.

The 'Helping the Roma' overarching theme, representing 33.68 percent of codes (N = 1876), includes strategies for Roma integration and descriptions of EU-funded projects, portraying Roma as beneficiaries of support. Fidesz dominates this discourse, accounting for 64.57 percent of the mentions, followed by liberal-left-centrist parties (12.53 percent), Jobbik (2.82 percent), and Our Homeland Movement (0.05 percent). Fidesz's statements often present the Roma as disadvantaged and in need of governmental support, typically conveyed in a patronizing manner, highlighting Fidesz and/or the government's efforts to improve conditions for the Roma. Liberal-left-centrist parties have attempted to propose alternative approaches, yet they have still portrayed the Roma as helpless. Far-right parties

suggest helping in a distinctly patronizing way, such as proposing boarding schools for Roma children to improve their situation by removing them from their familial environments. The frequency of this theme declined after peaking in 2013. A sample quote for this overarching theme comes from an event at a summer camp for disadvantaged children, at which the Minister assured the Roma children that they could count on the Government for social inclusion in school and job creation, stating, 'We want you to succeed in life.' (Zoltán Balog, then Minister of Human Resources, 01.07.2016)

The 'Roma as Victims' overarching theme, comprising 19.07 percent (N = 1062) of the codes, emerged as a significant narrative. This involves portraying the Roma community as facing adversities like poverty, segregation, and racism. This theme included historical references to the Holocaust and hate crimes. Fidesz was the leading contributor (49.52 percent), followed by liberal-left-centrist parties (37.74 percent), Jobbik (4.23 percent), and Our Homeland Movement (0.09 percent). A peak in this narrative occurred in 2013. Additionally, the analysis shows that although the liberal-left-centrist opposition has significantly contributed to voicing this narrative of victimhood, their emphasis on it has diminished over the years. A sample quote for this overarching theme comes from Zoltán Balog, who drew attention to the need to take child poverty seriously, as it narrows the world of those affected and makes both the environment and those living in it more distrustful. 'Child poverty is also closely linked to parents' educational attainment, social status, inadequate housing conditions, territorial disadvantages, and ethnicity,' he said. Referring to the latter, he indicated that 'children from Roma families are more affected by poverty' (Zoltán Balog, then Minister of Human Resources, 19.09.2013)

Approximately 17.59 percent (N = 980) of the codes were related to the overarching theme of 'Interethnic Relations,' involving discussion of Roma integration and relations with the majority. Topics included cohabitation issues, often framing Roma as a societal challenge and emphasizing their perceived integration failure. Fidesz contributed the most codes (52.14 percent), followed by Jobbik (17.85 percent) and liberal-left-centrist parties (14.18 percent). A peak in Fidesz-related codes occurred in 2013, with a decline afterward. The discourse, while not overtly hostile, often involved a paternalistic tone, suggesting that Roma issues could only be resolved by higher authorities, thus marginalizing Roma agency and ignoring structural inequalities. The liberal-left-centrist opposition's statements were subtler, advocating peaceful coexistence and integration. We provide two sample statements for this overarching theme, one from the government and one from the opposition.

> The government considers the future and integration of the Roma population in Hungary a matter of national strategy, as stated in the opening speech of the government during a parliamentary debate entitled 'Chances for the Integration of the Roma Population in Hungary' held on Tuesday. 'The improvement of the situation of this mass of 700-750 thousand people, within which currently 80 per cent are unemployed, is a guarantee for the growth of the Hungarian economy or the sustainability of the pension system,' Zoltán Balog indicated. The Minister referred to the establishment of a system of officials within the government responsible for dealing with issues associated with the Roma population as an important government measure. Zoltán Balog expressed that 'The Roma issue is much more important than [can be] entrust[ed...] solely to the Roma (...) but it is much more important [to deal with it] than to exclude the Roma from it. Quoted from Zoltán Balog, then Minister of Human Resources (Hungarian News Agency, 2012, November 20).

Viktor Szigetvári stated that the leadership of Together would hold a meeting in Miskolc in August to find the best solutions to local issues of coexistence. He indicated that they would also consult with local Roma organizations and other parties. He added that Together's local members had presented a fair and pro-integration program during the parliamentary campaign and that they would continue to engage in fair politics; for that reason, they supported them becoming local councilors. Quoted from Viktor Szigetvári, then leader of the leftist-liberal party, Together (Hungarian News Agency, 2014, July 23).

Approximately 12.69 percent (N = 707) of the codes are categorized under the overarching theme of Rightist rhetoric, highlighting deviancy, 'Gypsy crime,' and the perceived threat from the Roma community, including concerns about their growing population. This theme encompasses discussions on punishments, restrictions, opposition to positive discrimination, and accusations of Roma selling their votes. It critiques political correctness regarding the Roma issue. Overall, these codes each contribute to a broader right-leaning political discourse, casting the Roma community as perpetrators and the majority population as victims. Jobbik leads this narrative (74.82 percent), followed by Fidesz (11.73 percent), Our Homeland Movement (6.93 percent), and liberal-left-centrist parties (3 percent). A sample quote for this overarching theme is:

The real problem,' according to Zsolt Egyed, is that the majority of the Roma population in Hungary 'live in 19th-century conditions with a 17th-century mentality… They have settled for the fact that the best way to make a living is by having children, exploiting the social welfare system, and engaging in crime'. Quoted from Zsolt Egyed, MP of the radical right-wing party Jobbik (Hungarian News Agency, 2012, November 20).[2]

Nearly twelve percent (11.74 percent; N = 654) of the codes focused on the 'Responsibility' of various actors for the situation of the Roma community. Most statements (57.49 percent) from opposition parties highlight the government's accountability. Jobbik's responsibility for the situation of the Roma is noted in 11.79 percent of the codes, while the former socialist government's accountability is mentioned in 18.2 percent of the statements. Additionally, 10.86 percent of the codes directly attribute disadvantages faced by the Roma to the community itself. A sample quote for this overarching theme is:

Tímea Szabó spoke about the dire educational situation and low level of education among most of the Roma population in Hungary. She emphasized that it is unacceptable that the governments after the regime change were unable or unwilling to address this problem and that a third generation is growing up without going to school. Quoted from Tímea Szabó, then MP of the green party LMP (Hungarian News Agency, 2012, November 13).

The 'Positive Aspects' overarching theme emphasized the Roma community's positive characteristics, including culture, music, heroes, and their value to society, making up 4.43 percent (N = 247) of all codes. Most of these codes were attributed to Fidesz politicians (69.23 percent), with additional contributions from government representatives (15.79 percent), followed by liberal-left-centrist opposition parties (7.92 percent), and last, by Jobbik (2.02 percent). However, these statements often transmitted mixed messages, recognizing Roma culture but also perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing a sense of otherness. A sample quote for this overarching theme is provided in a statement of the Minister of Human Resources, Zoltán Balog, who highlighted that: „ *The festival sends a message to*

those living in deep poverty, who need something to hold onto the most, that they have a culture worth living for, worth getting to know, and worth embracing."-quoted from Zoltán Balog, then Minister of Human Resources(Hungarian News Agency, 2014, May 11).

Finally, the 'Anchoring Migrants to Roma' overarching theme emerged, linking Roma and refugee issues. Though less frequent, making up only 0.79 percent (N = 44) of all codes, it significantly influenced the portrayal of the Roma in political discourse, especially during 2015-16. Fidesz politicians were responsible for 81.82 percent of these statements, with Jobbik and government spokespersons each contributing 6.82 percent. The government cited overwhelmed social systems and Roma issues as reasons to reject refugees, framing both Roma and refugees as non-European outsiders. A sample quote for this overarching theme is:

> Hungary also has no right to comment on the experiments of other countries in this regard. In connection with this, Viktor Orbán referred to Hungary's historical circumstances, stating that it is inherent for Hungary to coexist with a few hundred thousand Roma people, which, according to him, should not be objected to by anyone in any way. However, he also emphasized, 'we do not impose the demand on anyone (...) that they too should live together with a large number of Roma minority. Qouted from Viktor Orbán, Prime Minister of Hungary (Hungarian News Agency, 2015, July 09)

Summarizing the manual thematic analysis of Hungarian political discourse on the Roma community reveals a narrative characterized by paternalism, victimization, and exclusion. Fidesz's portrayal of the Roma as dependent on government aid reinforces a hierarchical dynamic, diminishing Roma agency while upholding state authority. Although the discourse framing Roma as victims was initially prominent across political parties, it has declined, particularly among the opposition. Right-wing rhetoric, dominated by Jobbik, perpetuates harmful stereotypes, portraying the Roma as a societal threat and justifying exclusionary policies. This narrative underscores the deep-seated influence of far-right ideologies in Hungarian politics. Additionally, the shifting of responsibility for Roma issues—whether onto the government, previous administrations, or the Roma themselves—reflects a broader reluctance to address systemic challenges. Overall, Hungarian political discourse continues to reinforce power structures and marginalize the Roma, with no political actors systematically addressing the root causes of inequality, instead perpetuating dependency and exclusion.

This analysis identifies a propaganda strategy within the right-wing rhetoric, where portraying the Roma as a societal threat instills fear and reinforces negative stereotypes, solidifying the political base by presenting the Roma as a common enemy. Similarly, Fidesz's linking of Roma issues to the refugee crisis reflects a propaganda approach. By framing both groups as threats to Hungarian society and as non-European outsiders, Fidesz justifies exclusionary policies, consolidates nationalistic sentiments, and constructs minority influence in Europe concerning refugee policies.

Fidesz's portrayal of Roma as disadvantaged and in need of state intervention aligns with a propagation strategy. This approach reinforces the party's image as a benevolent protector while also subtly maintaining a hierarchical relationship where the Roma are dependent on state assistance. The emphasis on government accountability and, to a lesser extent, on the Roma's responsibility fits into this propagation strategy, aiming to shape public opinion about who is at fault for the Roma's situation.

Discussions around Roma integration, cultural identity, and the positive contributions of the Roma reflect a diffusion strategy. These narratives, although less prominent, attempt to disseminate more balanced or diverse perspectives, often highlighting cultural values but still tinged with paternalism. These discussions are less about directing public opinion and more about introducing alternative viewpoints into the broader discourse, though these viewpoints are often overshadowed by dominant narratives.

5 Discussion

Through a combination of textual and thematic analysis of political discourse on the Roma from 2010 to 2019, the study aims to understand how Hungarian politicians represent the Roma community in their statements. Grounded in social representation theory, our study suggests that representation is inherently relational, collaborative, and deeply political (Howart, 2011). This approach offers insights not only into the representation of the Roma but also into the position of the communicators, their proposals for social order, and their relationship with both the imagined audience and minority representatives within the political community.

Social representation theory identifies three ways to represent a social object: diffusion, propagation, and propaganda. Diffusion, which aims to inform and allow audiences to form their own opinions, was observed in the diverse voices within the political arena, particularly before the refugee crisis. This style of communication allowed for a plurality of opinions, where various political actors, including opposition and minority representatives, presented their viewpoints. This open communication style reflects a meritocratic aspect of social order, where different ideas, even if only superficially, compete for acceptance in the public sphere.

Propagation seeks to integrate content into the audience's worldview, reinforcing certain attitudes while downplaying others. Fidesz's use of propagation is evident in the consistent framing of the Roma as dependent on government support. This approach reinforces a moral order in which the state is seen as the protector and provider, shaping societal norms and expectations regarding minority integration.

Propaganda, by contrast, is used to create stereotypes that strengthen the identity of the perceiving group while identifying adversaries. The use of propaganda, particularly by Jobbik and Fidesz during the refugee crisis, illustrates a shift towards a more explicitly authoritarian communication style. This style fortifies in-group identity by delineating the Roma, and by extension, refugees, as out-groups, thereby steering the social order towards exclusion rather than inclusion. This approach also serves as a minority influence in the broader European political arena.

The Hungarian scenario during the specific period presented a unique case of power dynamics. Fidesz, the ruling party, wielded constitutional power yet depicted its supporters and the broader Hungarian population as besieged. This narrative resonated with a historical sense of victimhood deeply embedded in Hungarian society (Szabó, 2020). Such positioning of victimhood typically frames others as antagonists (Gary & Wegner, 2009), and studies indicate that Hungarians harboring exclusive victim beliefs displayed anti-refugee, anti-EU, and anti-Roma sentiments, driven by perceived threats from these groups (Szabó et al., 2020; Szabó & Csertő, 2023; Szabó et al., 2023).

Fidesz navigated domestic anti-Roma sentiments and EU directives on Roma integration with an ambiguous approach, representing Roma as helpless victims and as dependents needing authority intervention. This strategy, blending propagation and propaganda, entrenched stereotypes without addressing systemic inequalities or fostering empowerment. It essentialized inequalities to the Roma minority deemed in need of 'improvement' ('felzárkóztatás,' meaning 'improving them,' often misused in Hungarian political discourse as a synonym for inclusion), a dynamic Ryan (1976) termed victim blaming. Integration efforts seemed to focus on elevating minority members to meet social, educational, and labor norms rather than adopting an inclusive strategy that addresses the relations between privileged and disadvantaged groups and aims at systemic change. This double-edged communication by Fidesz was augmented by voicing powerful, overtly right-wing statements that revealed Fidesz's true position, especially during the refugee crisis when the Roma were used as a proxy to highlight the perceived threats posed by refugees. Such analogies, effective in shaping public perceptions (Ghilani et al., 2017), highlight Fidesz's deliberate depiction of the Roma as a symbolic threat to Hungarians. Fidesz argued that integrating the Roma was already a Herculean effort, suggesting that existing resources should be prioritized for the Roma, with whom 'we have to live,' as notably stated by Viktor Orbán. They implied that Hungary has inherited the challenge of dealing with 'a few hundred thousand Roma.' In essence, Fidesz, initially responding to the economic downturn in 2008 with a diverse audience in mind, employed an ambiguous system of representation. Following the refugee crisis, it purposefully recast the Roma as a figurative peril to the Hungarian populace.

Jobbik, emerging in response to Hungary's economic and moral crisis, embraced a narrative that vilified the Roma as threats to societal stability, employing propaganda to solidify its base. Jobbik positioned itself as the party for non-Roma individuals negatively affected by the systemic changes, criticizing the flawed democratization and Europeanization processes. For Jobbik, the Roma community represented a clear threat, central to mobilizing its voters. The representational void left by Jobbik was filled by Our Homeland Movement, which exceeded expectations in the 2022 elections, indicating a receptive audience for its overtly racist rhetoric.

Liberal-left-centrist parties struggled to differentiate their representation of the Roma from that of Fidesz or Jobbik. Similar to Fidesz, they often portrayed the Roma as victims in need of assistance but did so in a patronizing manner, failing to establish genuine partnerships.

The propagation of opinions and attitudes that view Roma primarily through a lens of dependency or criminality suggests a stereotypical organization of knowledge within the audience. This framing simplifies complex socioeconomic issues into binary good-versus-bad narratives, often neglecting the systemic factors contributing to the marginalization of the Roma. Our manual analysis highlighted how stereotypes are reinforced through both overt propaganda by right-wing parties and more subtle propagation methods by Fidesz. These stereotypes not only affect the social image of the Roma but also constrain their opportunities, reflecting a social order that favors segregation and discrimination over integration.

Fidesz's dominant role in the discourse normalizes its perspectives as the majority's views, thereby shaping national understanding of Roma issues. This majoritarian influence is a powerful tool in shaping public opinion and guiding legislative approaches to minority integration.

Before the refugee crisis, the diffusion of diverse voices suggested an attempt at meritocracy where political ideas could compete. However, the dominant propagation and propaganda strategies employed by Fidesz and Jobbik have since shifted the discourse toward a moral order in which the state and certain political entities dictate social norms and values. This top-down approach emphasizes a hierarchical social structure where the government positions itself as the moral and practical authority on minority issues. The communication strategies reveal a tension between a professed commitment to social diversity and the perpetuation of structural inequality. While political discourse occasionally highlights the positive aspects of Roma culture, suggesting a recognition of social diversity and promoting identity politics, the overwhelming portrayal of Roma as dependent or criminal reinforces structural inequalities. This inconsistency indicates a superficial acknowledgment of diversity that fails to challenge or change underlying structural inequalities.

The government's communication, particularly through propagation, nominally supports integration by focusing on education and social programs. However, the paternalistic and often stereotypical portrayal of the Roma, coupled with the endorsement of voices like Jobbik's, who advocated for Roma children to be placed in boarding schools, leans toward segregation under the guise of integration. This political approach not only undermines the agency of the Roma community but also entrenches their status as outsiders within their own country. The strategies oscillate between assimilation—whereby Roma are expected to conform to mainstream societal norms without adequate support or recognition of existing barriers—and inclusion, which remains more rhetorical than practical. True inclusion, which addresses structural inequalities, remains elusive in the political rhetoric analyzed here.

Our study faces limitations, notably regarding the source of the analyzed political discourse. The revision of the Media Law in 2010 sparked controversy over the independence and autonomy of the Hungarian News Agency (MTI). Despite our initial pilot project showing that MTI is a prevalent source for most relevant articles in news portals, an alternative interpretation of our findings persists. There is a possibility that liberal-left-centrist political parties have developed a distinct representation of the Roma community but struggled to disseminate their perspectives to a broader audience. While our study cannot conclusively verify this hypothesis, it is crucial to recognize that reliance on MTI as our data source may have introduced bias into our data and, consequently, affected our interpretations.

6 Conclusion

Our comprehensive analysis of political discourse related to the Roma community in Hungary from 2010 to 2019 reveals a predominantly categorical differentiation in the portrayal of the Roma. Political entities have leveraged communication strategies that oscillate between diffusion, propagation, and propaganda, significantly influencing public perceptions and societal integration of the Roma.

Jobbik's approach, characterized by explicit propaganda, underscores a clear demarcation between the Roma and the majority, often involving portraying the Roma as a societal threat. This strategy possibly entrenches negative stereotypes and also exacerbates social division, reflecting a broader European right-wing trend of employing fear-based politics to mobilize electoral support.

Conversely, Fidesz has employed a more nuanced strategy that blends propagation with elements of propaganda. While ostensibly advocating for Roma integration and welfare, Fidesz's discourse often maintains a paternalistic tone, suggesting the dependency of the Roma on government initiatives. This mixed messaging creates a facade of inclusivity while subtly reinforcing existing power hierarchies and social inequalities. Such strategies, though aligning superficially with European values on minority integration, actually serve to maintain Fidesz's political dominance by controlling the narrative around minority issues.

Liberal-left-centrist parties, while occasionally critiquing governmental approaches, have largely failed to propose effective alternative strategies or engage substantively with the Roma issue. Their limited impact on the discourse around Roma integration highlights a significant gap in advocacy and policymaking from parties traditionally viewed as advocates for minority rights.

In conclusion, while the political discourse superficially addresses the integration and welfare of the Roma, the underlying strategies reveal a complex landscape where power dynamics, European policy influences, and national politics converge. This convergence shapes not only public perceptions but also the socio-political realities facing the Roma community in Hungary. The need for a genuine and inclusive approach to Roma integration—one that goes beyond political rhetoric and addresses systemic inequalities—is more critical than ever.

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Appendix

List of the Overarching Themes (I., …, VII.), Themes (1., …, 8.), and Codes (a., …, e.) in the Thematic Analysis.

Overarching theme I. Roma as victims. Themes: 1. Poverty, segregation. 2. Anti-Roma attitudes, racism: a. Inciting hatred, b. Demonstrations and marches. 3. Remembrance of Anti-Roma violence: a. Remembrance of the Holocaust, b. Remembrance of the murders of the Roma, c. Hate crimes, d. Historical disadvantages.

Overarching theme II. Rightist rhetoric. Themes: 1. Deviance: a. Gypsy crime, b. Inability to integrate, c. Socialization, d. Threatened public safety, e. Unwillingness to work. 2. Perceptions of threats: a. Anti-Hungarian racism, b. Tension, c. Roma as a danger to Hungarians, d. Increasing Roma population, e. Childbearing for economic sustenance. 3. Punishment, restrictions. 4. Against positive discrimination. 5. Questioning political correctness. 6. Cheap Roma votes.

Overarching theme III. Interethnic relations. Themes: 1. Roma integration. 2. Gypsy-Hungarian relation: a. Problems of cohabitation, b. Societal issues, c. Gypsy question, Roma issue, d. Promotion of peaceful cohabitation.

Overarching theme IV. Responsibility. Themes: 1. Accountability of the government: a. Government is not strict enough, b. Government betrays the Roma, c. Corruption. 2. Jobbik's accountability. 3. Roma people's responsibility.

Overarching theme V. Helping the Roma. Themes: 1. Lessons. 2. Cooperation: a. For the Roma, b. With the Roma. 3. Education, schooling. 4. Equity: a. Equality is already present, b. Development of the social system, c. Legal equality. 5. Help from the government. 6. Strengthening Roma identity. 7. Decreasing unemployment. 8. Unemployment as a problem.

Overarching theme VI. Positive aspects. Themes: 1. Culture and music. 2. The Roma heroes. 3. Roma people as a resource/value: a. Roma belong to the nation.

Overarching theme VII. Anchoring to migrants. Themes: 1. Supporting the Roma instead of migrants: a. Roma compared to the migrants.