
ZSÓFIA RAKOVICS* & ILDIKÓ BARNA**

Jobbik's journey from radicalism to mainstream politics: Analyzing the parliamentary speeches of Jobbik and the dynamic network of its politicians between 2010 and 2020

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* [\[zsofia.rakovics@tatk.elte.hu\]](mailto:zsofia.rakovics@tatk.elte.hu) (Doctoral School of Sociology, Research Center for Computational Social Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary)

** [\[barna.ildiko@tatk.elte.hu\]](mailto:barna.ildiko@tatk.elte.hu) (Research Center for Computational Social Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary)

Abstract

Exploring the substantial influence wielded by politicians in shaping social reality and molding the public perceptions of the country may be beneficial from a social scientific point of view. Our research delves into the distinctive realm of parliamentary discourse to unravel this intricate process.

We focus on the transformative role of politicians and political parties within the public political sphere. Through an innovative approach, linguistic similarities in parliamentary speeches are harnessed to unveil the strategies of political communication, the dynamics of power dynamics, and the myriad modes of interactions.

Our research puts the spotlight on Jobbik – Movement for a Better Hungary, a notable far-right party that has navigated a decade of political success in Central and Eastern Europe. Gaining a substantial share of the vote in national elections, Jobbik's evolution from its radical right-wing origins to a moderate conservative people's party is the subject of scrutiny. Leveraging techniques such as natural language processing, document embedding, social network analysis, and structural topic modeling, the study dissects Jobbik's journey from radicalism to mainstream politics.

We uncover the transformation of Jobbik through a meticulous analysis of parliamentary speeches and the use of quantitative analytical tools. We not only reveal the evolution of Jobbik's identity but also contribute to a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between political communication and power dynamics.

Keywords: Jobbik, parliamentary speeches, natural language processing, document embedding, structural topic modeling, social network analysis

1 Introduction

Politicians play an influential role in the construction of social reality and in shaping the public perception of a country. They both influence and are influenced by the political polarization of society. Therefore, by studying the political speeches of the members of the country's parliament, we gain unique insights into this process and society.

The dynamic network of politicians and political parties reveals information about their role in the political public sphere. Constructing networks based on the linguistic similarity of their parliamentary speeches is fruitful for examining their communication strategies, identifying patterns in how political power operates, and the various modes of interaction.

Jobbik – Movement for a Better Hungary (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*)¹ has been one of the most successful far-right parties in the past decade in the Central and Eastern European region, obtaining 17 and 20 percent of votes, respectively, in the Hungarian national elections of 2010 and 2014. Jobbik was founded in 2003, became a major political actor in 2009, and after 2014, strived to change its image to be seen as a more centrist, less radical actor, a mainstream conservative people's party.²

Studying Jobbik's transformation is insightful not only for the East-Central European region but also in a broader context for various reasons. Initially known for its far-right ideologies, the party tried to reposition itself as a more centrist force, distancing itself from its far-right past. The party is known for its nationalist and populist agenda, focusing on issues like national identity, EU skepticism, criticisms of globalism, and anti-immigration – topics now familiar to the Central and Eastern European region and worldwide. As issues of democratic regression and the erosion of institutions became more prominent in some Eastern European countries, including Hungary, Jobbik's stance on these issues attracted attention and contributed to debates on the state of democracy in the region. Jobbik's journey encapsulates a case study of the adaptability and strategic repositioning of political parties in response to changing electoral landscapes. This transformation highlights the dynamic nature of political identity and strategy and illustrates how parties on the radical right can undergo significant ideological shifts to broaden their appeal and enhance electoral viability.

Our research involved analyzing the parliamentary speeches of Jobbik politicians to examine their political communication and the evolution of the organization. We aimed to describe the main characteristics and dynamics of Jobbik, which has turned from a radical, far-right standpoint into a people's party. For this, we used natural language processing, document embedding, social network analysis, and structural topic modeling.

First, we constructed the document representation of the corpus, embedding the speeches in an abstract vector space in which the relationships between speeches and party representatives could be mapped. Second, we built a network based on the similarities in speeches in the document, embedding space for each political term. Third, by considering the time dimension, we generated a dynamic network of party members based on their parliamentary speeches, which we analyzed using social network analysis. Finally, we used structural topic modeling to identify prevalent topics in each parliamentary term and the evolution of these over time.

¹ At the party congress in 2023, the decision was made to change the party's name to Jobbik – Conservatives (*Jobbik – Konzervatívok*).

² Gábor Vona discussed the transformation into a people's party at Jobbik's June 2014 party congress, with the aim of reaching a broader spectrum of voters. In his words, 'those who operate a subculture will remain within a subculture' (Vona, 2017, 16:41). The term 'people's party' (*néppárti*) and the process of becoming a people's party (*néppártosodás*) have been adopted in the literature on Jobbik (for example, Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016; Héjj, 2017; Kovarek & Farkas, 2017; Róna, 2016; Szabó, 2019). In our study, we also use the term in the aforementioned sense.

To drive our analysis, we formed the following research questions:

- What are the main characteristics and dynamics of Jobbik, which has changed from a radical, far-right standpoint to a mainstream people's party?
- Can we observe the signs of internal conflicts and fault lines between the party representatives of Jobbik using quantitative text analytical tools and social network analysis based on the parliamentary speeches of Jobbik MPs?
- What topics characterize the parliamentary speeches of Jobbik's MPs? What are the temporal dynamics in the prevalence of these topics?

2 Theoretical background

2.1 The beginning and Jobbik's road to the Hungarian parliament

Jobbik's predecessor was the Right-wing Youth Community (*Jobboldali Ifjúsági Közösség*, Jobbik for short), founded in 1999 by college and university students to bring together nationalist-minded youth in response to their frustration with the political elite. The organization became a party in 2003 under the name Movement for a Better Hungary (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*, *Jobbik*).³ The timing is no coincidence: the right-wing conservative Fidesz lost the 2002 elections, and the first far-right party in Hungary, the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (*Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja*, *MIÉP*), failed to meet the threshold to enter parliament. In the 2006 parliamentary elections, an alliance between Jobbik and MIÉP won only 2.2 per cent of the vote. After this failure, Jobbik dissolved the alliance and started to find its own voice. It is worth noting, though, that following this disappointing election outcome, Jobbik secured electoral reimbursement, which constituted a substantial financial asset for the party (Pirro, 2019). The party's growing impact became clear in the 2009 European Parliament elections. Jobbik won almost 15 per cent of the vote and was able to send three members to the European Parliament. In the 2010 parliamentary elections, Jobbik won 17 per cent of the vote, immediately becoming the third strongest party in parliament, less than three percentage points behind the Hungarian Socialist Party (*Magyar Szocialista Párt*, *MSZP*), which won the second most votes.

A significant amount of analysis has been dedicated to unraveling the factors behind the 'secret of Jobbik's success' (Jeskó et al., 2012; Karácsony & Róna, 2010). The analyses have identified several factors: the match between the supply of and the demand for the far-right (Krekó & Juhász, 2017), the appropriation of the 'Roma issue' (Kim, 2016, pp. 3–4, 6–7; Krekó & Juhász, 2017; Krekó & Mayer, 2015, pp. 190–191; Goldstein, 2021, pp. 26–27), the prolonged political crisis starting in 2006⁴ (Krekó & Mayer, 2015, pp. 189–190; Héjj, 2017, p. 84; Pirro, 2019, p. 157; Szabó, 2019, pp. 153–155), the Hungarian and world economic crises (Enyedi, 2015; Grajczjár & Tóth, 2010).

³ See also n. 1 above.

⁴ The crisis started when in mid-September the speech commonly known as the 'Őszöd Speech,' delivered by recently re-elected Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, was leaked. He gave this speech following his electoral victory while addressing a closed meeting of the Hungarian Socialist Party parliamentary group in Balatonőszöd. In this speech, PM Gyurcsány admitted that the Hungarian Socialist Party had lied during the electoral campaign and made false electoral pledges. Some of the phrases from the speech (e.g., '*hazudtunk éjjel, hazudtunk nappal*' [we lied at night, we lied during the day] and '*elkürtük*' [we screwed up]) have been used as catchphrases by the opposition.

However, there are two factors that are particularly relevant to our analysis that have significantly contributed to Jobbik's success. First, the utilization of the internet and the launch of the radical news portal Kuruc.info in 2006, which by 2009 became the third most visited Hungarian news site (Barlai, 2012; Barna & Knap, 2019; Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016, pp. 257–258; Molnár, 2015; Pirro & Róna, 2019; Róna, 2016). Second, the extremist paramilitary organization known as the Hungarian Guard (*Magyar Gárda*), which was founded in 2007⁵ (Barna, 2017; Barna et al., 2018; Róna, 2016; Szabó, 2019, pp. 151–153). Jobbik also had close links with several other far-right organizations (Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement [*Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom*]⁶ and the Outlaws' Army [*Betyársereg*]⁷). According to Kitschelt's definition, '[m]ovement parties are coalitions of political activists who emanate from social movements and try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition' (Kitschelt, 2006, p. 280). In this sense, Jobbik was a movement party at this time.

Jobbik 'was largely ignored by mainstream mass media and was therefore driven towards alternative solutions of communication on the internet' (Hyttinen & Näre, 2017, p. 238). Therefore, Kuruc.info and the frequent gatherings and demonstrations of the Hungarian Guard served as channels for successfully conveying their message to voters, which clearly contributed to it becoming a parliamentary party (Bíró-Nagy & Róna, 2013, pp. 3–4, 20–21). Bernáth (2014) pointed out that despite the mainstream media treating Jobbik representatives as *persona non grata*, 'the weakness of professional dialogue related to extremists, the extremist politicization of the issue, and sometimes routine habits' can contribute to the expansion of far-right discourse. Szabó and Bene (2015) came to a similar conclusion when they analyzed the positions of radical right media within the general media sphere.

At the same time, the left-wing parties pursued a *cordon-sanitaire* strategy. 'Correspondingly, left-wing politicians did not participate in any public debate with Jobbik politicians and did not challenge the politics of Jobbik, but simply called it "fascist" and "extremist"' (Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016, p. 256). 'However, it turned out very soon that the cordon sanitaire strategy not only did not stop the rise of the far-right party but actually helped to spread its political messages without any counterpoint or criticism' (Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016, p. 257).

2.2 Jobbik as a parliamentary party

Jobbik faced new challenges when it entered parliament. Parliamentary politics put the party under pressure: it had to change from a movement party to a parliamentary party.

⁵ In July 2009, the Budapest Court of Appeal in its final judgement dissolved the Hungarian Guard. According to the judgement, the association had been carrying out its actual activities in abuse of its right to association and its activities had infringed the freedom and rights of the Roma to such an extent as to justify its dissolution.

⁶ The Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement is a revisionist, irredentist, xenophobic and antisemitic organization founded by László Toroczkai in 2001. For more, see Juhász et al. (2017).

⁷ The Outlaws's Army is a Hungarian racist, antisemitic organization founded in 2008 by László Toroczkai and Zsolt Tyirityán. For more, see Juhász et al. (2017).

It had to both preserve the far-right radicalism that had helped it get into parliament while also projecting a more moderate, professional, and expert image to appeal to a broader spectrum of voters (Borbáth & Gessler, 2021, p. 84). On the one hand, Jobbik remained active in the extra-parliamentary field even after entering parliament (Pirro & Róna, 2019; Róna, 2016), and its first parliamentary term was characterized by several extreme racist, anti-Gypsy, and antisemitic manifestations.⁸ At the same time, Jobbik also displayed the typical moderation associated with parliamentary work in general (Róna, 2006, p. 226), and the party underwent a process of professionalization. Representatives of the party repeatedly said during this period that they would prefer to focus on professional, policy work (Szabó, 2019, pp. 143–144). Jobbik MPs were particularly active in Parliament, and the Jobbik parliamentary group was among the most active ones (Böcskei & Molnár, 2019, p. 6).

The same dichotomy was also identified by Enyedi and Róna (2018), who analyzed the so-called speeches before the orders of the day and the instantaneous questions of party president Gábor Vona between 2010 and 2013. They found that during this period, 'Jobbik's agenda was dominated by law-and-order and Roma issues' and 'in the party president's speeches, conspiracy theories, criticism of Israel and irredentism was only marginally present' (Enyedi & Róna, 2018, p. 258). However, the demonstrations organized by Jobbik and the cover pages of the party-affiliated weekly *Barikád* ('Baricade') presented a completely different picture (Enyedi & Róna, 2018, p. 258).

The attitude of mainstream politicians and a great part of the media towards Jobbik did not change significantly even after it entered parliament. '[M]ainstream politicians tried to pretend that Jobbik did not exist and refused to enter direct debates with the representatives of Jobbik. Many media outlets, especially on the left, refused to interview Jobbik politicians [...]' (Enyedi & Róna, 2018, pp. 257–258). Nevertheless, the major political parties notably responded to their political rival. While the Hungarian Socialist Party exhibited fewer but significant changes, the transformation was more pronounced in the case of Fidesz. Since 2010, Fidesz has implemented several stringent law and order measures aligned with Jobbik's 2010 election program and resembling policies typically associated with far-right parties rather than traditional conservative ones (Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016, pp. 254–255; Enyedi & Róna, 2018, pp. 259–263). Several factors could explain Fidesz's behavior, one of which is the aftermath of the 2006 riots. Witnessing Jobbik's rapid and radical ascent in popularity, Fidesz may have sought to take preventive measures to ensure that Jobbik could not become a governing force (Enyedi & Róna, 2018, p. 265). The 2014 election campaign clearly indicated that Jobbik aspired to this role.

⁸ The most important examples were the following: May 2010: Gábor Vona, then president of Jobbik, took the oath of office in May 2010 at the inaugural session of parliament wearing the vest of the Hungarian Guard, which had been outlawed by then. (This vest was part of the uniform of the Hungarian Guard and was reminiscent of those used by Hungary's pro-Nazi groups of the 1940s.); June 2011: Balázs Lenhardt expressed satisfaction at the relegation of the traditionally Jewish-supported Hungarian football team, MTK, from the league, stating that MTK is a foreign body in Hungarian football; July 2011: Előd Novák accused one of the state secretaries of bias because of his Jewish origin during a debate in Parliament; April 2012: Zsolt Baráth brought up the 1882 Tiszaeszlár blood libel accusations; November 2012: Márton Gyöngyösi called on the government to assess how many Hungarian-Israeli dual citizens of Jewish descent are in the government and parliament, because they, according to him, pose a national security risk; May 2013: Tamás Gaudi Nagy questioned whether everything related to a Holocaust exhibition was entirely in line with the historical facts (Róna, 2016, pp. 40, 50–51).

2.3 Rebranding Jobbik: from a far-right radical party to a people's party

Jobbik had to radically change its image and political message in order to have a realistic chance of winning the keys to the government in the 2014 elections. They needed to appeal to a much broader segment of the population and convince voters that they were capable of governing (Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016, pp. 245–246). This transformation started in the autumn of 2013, with the 2014 election campaign, which the media and political analysts have dubbed the 'cuteness campaign' (*cukiságkampány*). This campaign marked a sharp departure from their 2010 campaign. In September 2013, in a speech to the party's parliamentary group, Jobbik president Gábor Vona 'asked his MPs to rid their rhetoric of its radical edge. The party chairman requested [that] Jobbik members [...] distinguish between substantial and formal radicalism. He said the problem was not what they said, but how they said it' (Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016, p. 245). The campaign's fundamental aim was to reposition the party in the political market (Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016, p. 245). The 2014 Jobbik campaign was notably dominated by positive slogans and messages such as 'The future cannot be stopped' (Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016, p. 247). The party's campaign messages were about raising living standards, improving education, and creating jobs. In the campaign, Jobbik used 'colorful billboards looking like Benetton advertisements, and pictures of the party leader Gábor Vona with heart-shaped messages, dogs, and pets' (Krekó & Juhász, 2017, p. 127).

In 2014, among the Jobbik candidates running for parliamentary seats, there was a significant decline in the proportion of radical candidates. This decline was most notable in the reduction in the number of candidates with previous affiliations with far-right organizations and a decrease in visual radicalism (Róna, 2016, pp. 233–234). The latter was consistent with the fact that 'in several statements, Jobbik claimed that moderation pertained only to communication; it stressed that its program had not changed. Jobbik politicians openly noted that though their communication had softened, the essence had remained as radical as previously' (Bíró-Nagy & Boros, 2016, p. 248). Concurrently, there was a substantial increase in professionalization: the party fielded a considerably larger number of candidates with extensive national and local political experience (Róna, 2016, pp. 234–235). The 2014 election results demonstrated that Jobbik's strategy was effective: the party secured 20 per cent of the vote and expanded its voter base by slightly over 160,000 within a span of four years.

The rebranding impacted various levels of the party to varying degrees: it was significantly more pronounced at the top of the party hierarchy, signifying a 'top-down led deradicalization process' (Hyttinen, 2022, p. 424). Róna (2016), analyzing the speeches of Jobbik MPs in Parliament, found that although the tone of Jobbik's parliamentary speeches had already started to moderate somewhat by the autumn of 2013, this moderation accelerated during the party's second parliamentary term. In the early months of 2016, Jobbik submitted legislation that was quite moderate and resembled proposals typically associated with centrist parties (Róna, 2016, p. 226).

2.4 Internal conflicts and fault lines

As mentioned earlier, Jobbik initially viewed the party's new direction more as a communication strategy. In the autumn of 2014, Tamás Sneider, the party's then vice-president, talked to Jobbik activists and members of the Outlaws' Army. A recording of the conversa-

tion was leaked in March 2015. According to this, Sneider, in addition to making various racist and antisemitic statements in line with Jobbik's previous policy, also said what party president Gábor Vona had denied in response to a public question: that there is a strategic alliance between Jobbik and the Outlaw's Army, and that 'they can do what I cannot do in Parliament, I cannot put it that way, because I have to focus on making Jobbik likable and appealing to the ordinary citizen who lacks any sense of national sentiment and get them to vote for us' (Medvegy, 2015).

The Jobbik leadership began to clearly embrace this strategic shift in the spring of 2015. In April 2015, Lajos Rig won Jobbik's first individual mandate in Tapolca in a parliamentary by-election. After the election, Gábor Vona, speaking to journalists, stated that he considered Jobbik a force for changing the government and was determined to carry the 'people's party' process through in the party. Regarding Jobbik's racist manifestations, he talked about 'pruning wild twigs' (Czene, 2015). In his traditional New Year's speech in January 2016, Gábor Vona spoke about the success of the party's strategy of becoming a people's party, and his commitment was made even more evident by the sign on the pulpit reading 'Real People's Party'.⁹ The subsequent 'Building Bridges' campaign aimed to bring together a wide range of voters.¹⁰

The declared process of strategic change was completed with the events of spring 2016. In April 2016, before Jobbik's upcoming congress aimed at leadership renewal, Gábor Vona, utilizing his presidential veto, declared that he would not allow three of the current vice presidents belonging to the party's radical wing, István Apáti, Előd Novák, and István Szávay, to run for the position of vice president in the congress. Additionally, he stated that he would not support Lórántné Hegedűs either.¹¹ According to the official justification, as the party was preparing for government, they wished to include its successful mayors in the leadership. Apáti and Szávay eventually fell in line with the decision a few days later. However, Novák and Hegedűs participated as candidates in the nomination process, and nearly half of the Jobbik local branches supported them.¹²

The stakes at the congress were whether Vona Gábor could rally the party behind him or if a party split would occur. In May 2016, at the party congress, Gábor Vona was elected party president, and it seemed that the party was aligning behind him.¹³ The party's vice-presidents were those the president wanted: the former vice-presidents (Tamás Sneider, János Volner, and Dániel Z. Kárpát) were joined by three Jobbik mayors, Erik Fülöp, Dávid Janiczák, and László Toroczkai. The congress essentially resulted in the isolation of Előd Novák, the 'party's daredevil' (Róna, 2016, p. 44). The other three stakeholders mentioned above were confirmed in their political capacity by Congress.

Even with these events in the spring of 2016, we cannot interpret them exclusively along the moderate-radical fault line. Róna (2016) points out that 'the three elected mayors are not much more moderate than Előd Novák, but they are more disciplined, and their

⁹ See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPicGnMoKpQ>

¹⁰ See the campaign video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QNepAkb1bo>

¹¹ István Apáti, Lórántné Hegedűs and Előd Novák were also Jobbik MPs at that time.

¹² However, according to Jobbik's statutes, even if they had been elected by the congress, they could not have become members of the presidency.

¹³ It is important to note, however, that Vona was elected president with about 80 per cent of the candidates voting yes, although he had no other challenger.

personalities do not symbolize uncompromising radicalism, but rather the ability to win and govern' (Róna, 2016, p. 236). Despite Jobbik's support among the total adult population being 14 percent in the spring of 2016, as opposed to Fidesz's 26 per cent,¹⁴ Jobbik's members and leaders genuinely believed that Jobbik could defeat Fidesz in the elections, and they staked everything on this single card. To support this claim, we would like to mention two events. At the congress, Gábor Vona not only clearly stated that Jobbik's goal was to change the government but also announced that if this failed, he would resign as party leader. Another revealing moment was in June 2016, when Jobbik expelled Előd Novák from the parliamentary group and recalled him from parliament. Novák returned his parliamentary mandate, so he was not ultimately expelled from the party. Meanwhile, his wife, MP Dóra Dúró, retained her former position and remained the deputy leader of the Jobbik parliamentary group.

Jobbik won 19 per cent of the votes in the 2018 parliamentary elections. Although it increased its voter turnout by around 75,000 voters compared to 2014, it came second behind the ruling party. Gábor Vona announced his resignation as party president on the night of the election, as he had previously promised. The resignation was quickly followed by events that made the party split inevitable, now clearly along the moderate-radical fault line. Hyttinen suggests that 'Vona's charisma and popularity made it possible to stretch the original ideological borders, but his resignation after the 2018 elections led to an instant split between the two incompatible factions within the party' (Hyttinen, 2022, p. 445).

Besides resigning as party leader, Gábor Vona also did not take up his parliamentary mandate and was replaced by Lajos Rig. One month after the electoral defeat, Jobbik held its next congress, where Tamás Sneider and László Toroczkai competed for the party presidency. The delegates chose Sneider, but the division within the party was unmistakable in the result: Sneider received 298 votes, while Toroczkai received 256. On the one hand, this showed that Jobbik would continue along the 'people's party' line, but on the other hand, signs of the party's split had already emerged. Toroczkai first tried to unite the radical faction within the party, but this led to his expulsion from the party in June 2018. As a result, several members left the party, including Jobbik MPs István Apáti, Dóra Dúró, Erik Fülöp, and János Volner, who formed the not official 'Our Homeland Movement'¹⁵ (*Mi Hazánk Mozgalom*), founded by Toroczkai and his associates.

In the 2019 European Parliament elections, Jobbik achieved a disappointing result of 6 per cent, leading to the resignation of the party's leadership. The party congress was scheduled for after the October municipal elections, but it was already known in the summer that the party's newly elected faction leader, Péter Jakab, was considering running for the position of party president. Overall, in the municipal elections, Jobbik performed better than in the EP elections, but its results were far below those of the 2018 general elec-

¹⁴ Source: <https://www.zaveczresearch.hu/stabil-parteroviszonyok/>

¹⁵ The Our Homeland Movement is a far-right party founded by László Toroczkai in 2018 after he left Jobbik. Among the party's founding members are several former Jobbik MPs, including István Apáti, Dóra Dúró, Előd Novák, János Volner, and Gábor Ferenczi. (The latter two left the Our Homeland Movement in 2019.) The party stood in the 2019 European Parliamentary elections, where it did not win a seat. However, in the 2022 Hungarian parliamentary elections, the party achieved 6 percent of the vote and was able to send six MPs to Parliament.

tion. Additionally, opposition parties believed that their only chance of victory was to field joint candidates given the significant alterations to the electoral system carried out by Fidesz, the considerable influence of Fidesz-controlled media, and Fidesz's overwhelming popularity. This meant that Jobbik had to form alliances with parties, particularly the Democratic Coalition led by Ferenc Gyurcsány, with which it had previously been in disagreement and which some of its membership already found almost impossible to digest.

In November 2019, the Congress was due to take place. Peter Jakab, whom most party members wanted as their president, however, attached conditions to his candidacy. One of them was that he wanted to decide on the vice president. The party's national electoral committee did not support this, so Jakab withdrew his candidacy, and, as he was the only candidate, the congress was postponed to January. At the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, two groups fought to control Jobbik: Péter Jakab's and István Szávay's circles. The latter group presumably consisted of the following individuals: Tibor Bana, János Bencsik, Anett Burik, Csaba Gyüre, János Stummer, and Andrea Varga-Damm, all of whom, except for Burik, were Jobbik MPs. It is also important to point out that Szávay had to resign his mandate in January 2019 because it was revealed that he had made severely antisemitic statements in a leaked private conversation.

In January 2020, the Jobbik congress was finally held, where Péter Jakab was elected as president with 88 percent of the votes. His preferred candidates for vice presidents (Balázs Ander, Róbert Dudás, György László Lukács, Anita Kőrösi Potocskáné, György Szilágyi, and Dániel Kárpát Z.) were also elected. In February 2020, a recording of Jakab's speech before the closed-door congress was leaked. In the speech, Jakab criticized the outgoing presidency (Tibor Bana, Csaba Gyüre, János Stummer, Gábor Szabó, Tamás Sneider). He also mentioned the 'Szávay clan' and personally named the people he did not want to work with. In February 2020, István Szávay left the party, as did Tibor Bana, János Bencsik, Gergely Farkas, and Tamás Sneider, who were among the party's MPs. In addition, Andrea Varga-Damm was expelled from the party. And we must also mention one other person who left the party, Ádám Mirkóczki, who had been a member of Jobbik since 2008 and was a member of parliament and spokesperson of the party between 2010 and 2018.

3 Data and methods

3.1 Analyzed corpus

The name of the corpus used for our research is PARLDATA, which contains speeches from the National Assembly of Hungary. The data was collected from the official website of the Hungarian Parliament by the non-profit organization K-Monitor, its volunteer developers, and Precognox. The database contains parliamentary speeches collected from 1998 to 2020 and metadata related to each speech, such as information about the speech (e.g., type and date, the actual parliamentary session in which the speech was held), and details of the speaker (e.g., name and party affiliation). In our research, we focused on speeches given between 2010 and 2020; the relevant corpus contains 385,880 parliamentary speeches of different types. The analyzed corpus is part of the ELTE RC2S2 research project *The layers of political public sphere in Hungary (2001–2020)* supported by the

NKFIH (National Research, Development and Innovation Office). For the research, we applied conventional preprocessing steps and cleaned and filtered the PARLDATA corpus according to the purpose of the analysis. Based on the 'type of speech' metavariable, we removed ceremonial and order of business speeches that, from a substantive point of view, are not relevant to the current investigation and do not contribute to the political message of the speaker. Furthermore, we corrected the party affiliation of the speakers (if necessary) and targeted only party-affiliated politicians to enable the selection of members of Jobbik. We also deleted speeches that were too short (less than five words long) and texts that did not pertain to the speeches (e.g., the name of the speaker and opening addresses at the beginning of the speech). The resulting corpus consists of 170 298 speeches, 17 335 of which were given by politicians of Jobbik. We also removed the punctuation and capitalization of words and deleted special characters and URLs from the raw texts. After these data cleaning and filtering steps, we used the e-magyar text processing system (emtsv, Váradi et al., 2018) to unify the various forms of the same words.

Parliamentary speeches represent the core and official narratives of political parties and their individual representatives. As these texts are assigned to individual speakers, researchers gain information not only about each party member separately but – by examining the relationship between the parliamentary speeches – also about the hierarchies of parliamentary parties and the power dynamics among their representatives.¹⁶

3.2 Methods

For our analysis, we applied a series of natural language processing (NLP) tools. First, we constructed the document representation of the corpus, embedding the speeches in an abstract vector space in which the relationships between speeches and party representatives could be mapped. Second, we built a network based on the similarities of speeches in the document embedding space for each political term. Third, by considering the time dimension, we generated the networks of party members for each term based on their parliamentary speeches, which we analyzed using social network analysis. Finally, we used structural topic modeling to identify the topics of each parliamentary term and the evolution of these over time.

We used Word Mover's Embedding in the first phase of our analysis. For calculating the document distance (Wu et al., 2018a), Word Mover's Distance (Kusner et al., 2015) was computed, which measures the similarity of two documents in the word-embedding space and we used the distances to kernels and embeddings (Wu et al., 2018b), which is a procedure typically used to obtain a vector representation of documents.

To construct a network of Jobbik politicians, we followed the steps described in this section. First, we aggregated the document vectors. The unit of analysis was politician and parliamentary term (a four-year period for each member of parliament). In other words, the document vectors coding the linguistic characteristics of the speeches for the defined unit were aggregated (averaged) in each parliamentary term. Second, we created a net-

¹⁶ As mentioned before, our paper is not the first to include an analysis of Jobbik MPs parliamentary speeches. See for example: Róna (2016), Enyedi & Róna (2018).

work of Jobbik representatives per parliamentary term. If two politicians' speeches were more similar than a predefined threshold, an edge was constructed in the graph between them. Third, we applied the cluster walktrap process (Pons & Latapy, 2005), a clustering procedure built upon random walk and undertook social network analysis to compute the basic characteristics of the graph. By generating the network of Jobbik politicians for the different parliamentary terms, we were able to observe the temporal dynamics within the parliamentary party representatives. We computed basic features of the social networks (Scott & Carrington, 2011) to learn more about the general structure of Jobbik and the relationship between the parliamentary members of the party in each term.

To obtain information about the substantive content of the speeches, we applied topic modeling. In general, this is a commonly used approach in the social sciences that allows researchers to approach a problem not only in a quantitative way but also to complement that perspective with qualitative analytical methods and interpret the results accordingly. The basic concept of topic modeling is built on 'bags of words' models that exclude the information derived from the syntactic relations of words in texts and the word order within sentences.

Various topic modeling techniques exist that differ in their statistical assumptions; our approach employed structural topic models (Roberts et al., 2013), which include a between-topic correlation structure and enable the integration of document metadata that impacts topic variation across documents. We utilized the STM package in R (Roberts et al., 2019) for building structural topic models – a method for revealing latent themes within a corpus while taking into consideration – in our case – time as a continuous explanatory variable. This generative statistical model characterizes a topic as a distribution over terms and a document as a distribution over topics.

We used the parliamentary speeches of Jobbik party representatives and built STMs. To address this issue of identifying the optimal topic number, we adopted a mixed-methods approach; we evaluated the interpretability of our models by computing topic coherence scores, which measure the semantic similarity between the most significant words in each topic, and to complement that approach, we interpreted the topics substantively. The latter was more dominant during the evaluation process. Since STM is unsupervised, the researcher is responsible for understanding the substantive content of the topics. In our analysis, we relied on the most pertinent terms to interpret the topics, and according to the qualitative interpretation of the various model outputs, we selected a structural topic model with seven topics.

4 Results

4.1 Network of Jobbik politicians

We examined Jobbik's social network, constructed according to the similarity of the speeches of the party representatives for each parliamentary term, 2010–2014, 2014–2018, and 2018–2020 (half term). In the following, we demonstrate the results according to the visualization of the social networks. The figures (Figures 1–3) show the politicians (vertices of the graph) and their connections (edges of the graph) based on the similarity of the speeches of the politicians of the given time periods. According to these visualizations, the party coherence and dynamics can be observed.

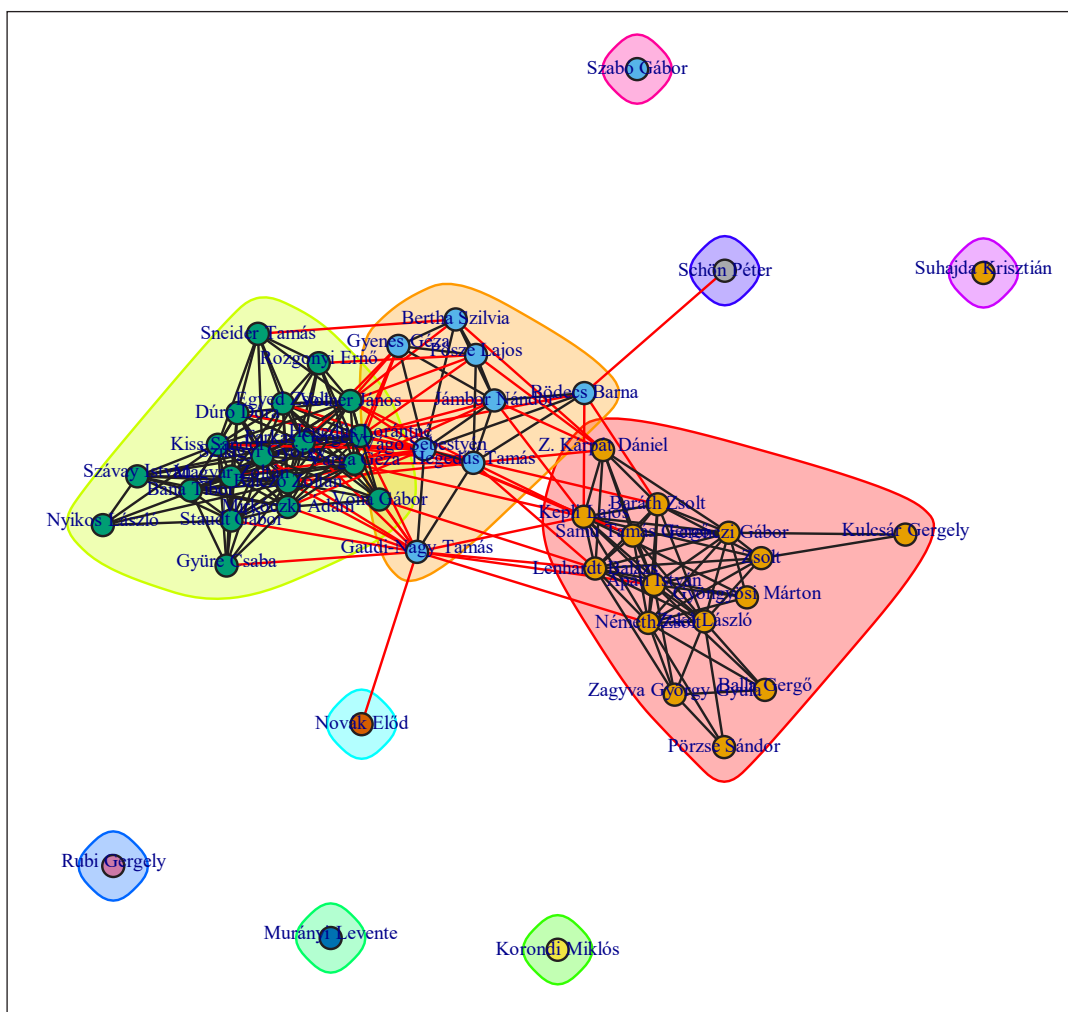


Figure 1 Network of parliamentary party Jobbik between 2010 and 2014

Figure 1 shows how ten clusters were generated based on the similarity of the speeches of Jobbik representatives for the first parliamentary period. Seven politicians stand alone in one-person clusters, namely Gergely Rubi, Krisztián Suhajda, Miklós Korondi, Gábor Szabó, Levente Murányi, Péter Schön, and Előd Novák, according to their parliamentary speeches within the examined period – these are the representatives of Jobbik whose speech is not that similar to other members of the party. Besides the seven one-person clusters, there are three other densely populated clusters. The first one (light red) contains fifteen, the second (light orange) eight, and the third (light yellow) nineteen party representatives. The light red group links politicians like Dániel Z. Kárpát, Zsolt Barát, István Apáti, Gyula György Zagyva, and the light orange one contains members like Sebestyén Vágó, Lajos Pósz, Tamás Hegedűs, and Tamás Gaudi-Nagy. Vona Gábor is involved in both the light orange and the yellow groups and seems to be an important link between them. The light-yellow cluster contains politicians like János Volner, Gábor Staudt, Zoltán Magyar, and István Szávay. For further information, see Figure 1.

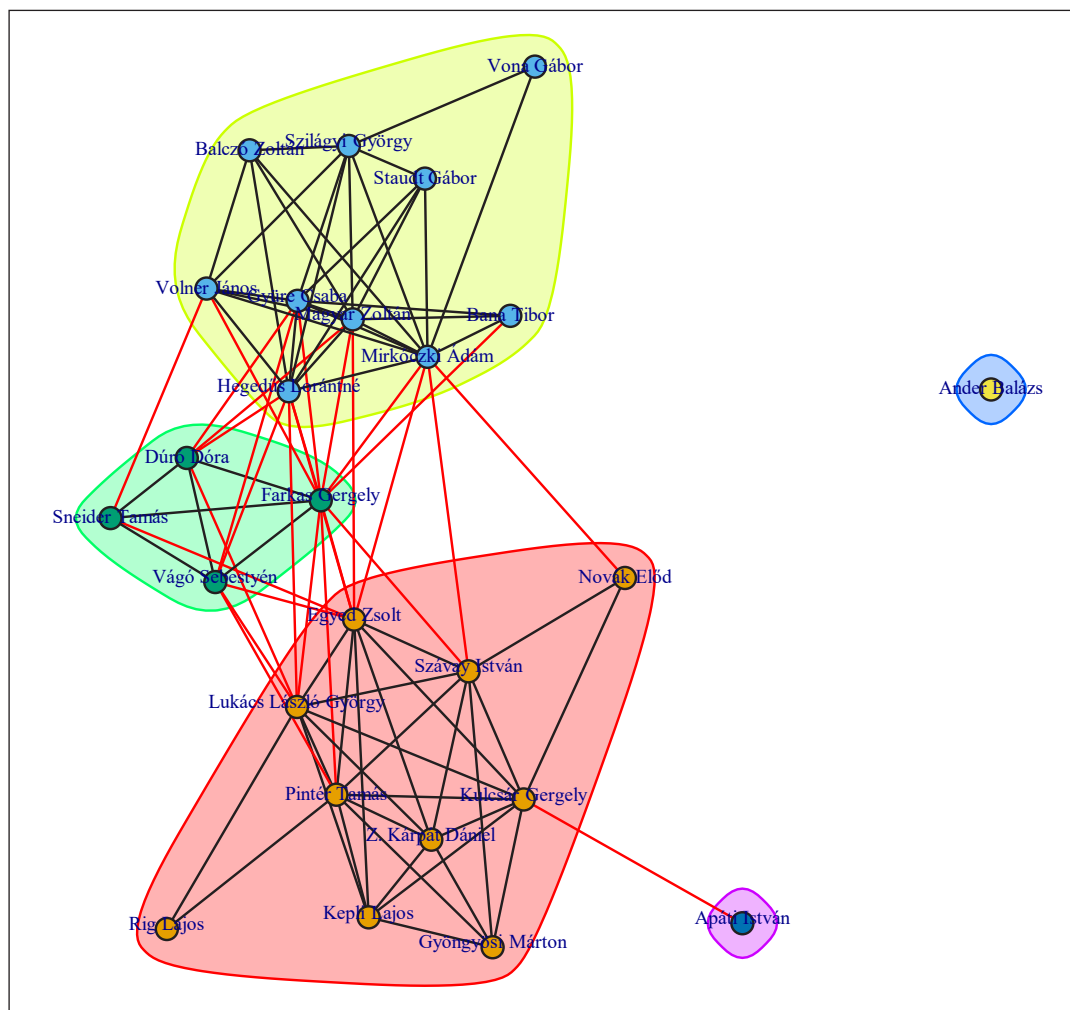


Figure 2 Network of parliamentary party Jobbik between 2014 and 2018

As summarized in Figure 2, there are five clusters of Jobbik party representatives for the second parliamentary period. According to the similarities of the speeches, there are two politicians, István Apáti and Balázs Ander, who stand alone in a cluster; they do not speak similarly to other members of the party, Jobbik. There are two bigger and densely connected clusters and a smaller one. To the latter cluster (colored light green) belong only four politicians, namely Dóra Dúró, Gergely Farkas, Sebestyén Vágó, and Tamás Sneider. The other two clusters are equally populated; they contain ten party representatives. One of them (colored light red) groups politicians like Előd Novák, Dániel Z. Kárpát, Márton Gyöngyösi, Tamás Pintér, while the other (colored light yellow) links members like Gábor Vona, Zoltán Magyar, János Volner, Gábor Staudt, although the lists are not exhaustive (for further details, see Figure 2).

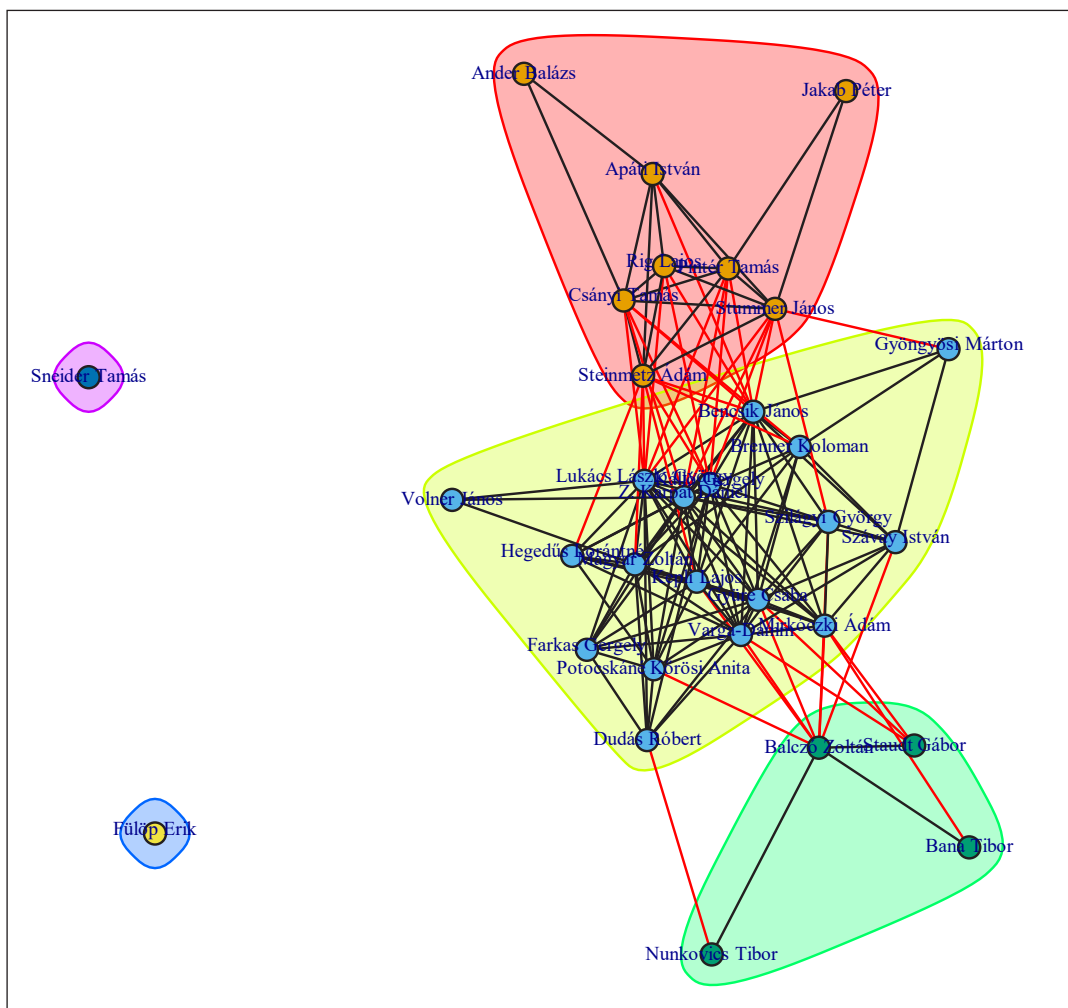


Figure 3 Network of the parliamentary party Jobbik between 2018 and 2020

Based on Figure 3, within the last examined period, there are again five clusters of party representatives for Jobbik. Tamás Sneider and Erik Fülöp stand alone in one-person clusters, while the rest of the members of the party are grouped in three bigger clusters. The smallest group (colored light green) contains four politicians: Zoltán Balczó, Gábor Staudt, Tibor Bana, and Tibor Nunkovics. Another cluster (light red) links eight people together (for example, Péter Jakab, Tamás Pintér, István Apáti, and Balázs Ander), while the third cluster groups politicians like Isván Szávay, János Volner, Róbert Dudás, and Andrea Varga-Damm, etc. For further details, see Figure 3.

We computed some of the basic features of the graphs to examine the differences between the targeted parliamentary terms. A summary of these can be found below in Table 1.

Table 1 Features of the network for the parliamentary terms

Features of networks	Parliamentary terms		
	2010–2014	2014–2018	2018–2022 (half term)
Number of vertices	49	26	32
Number of edges	247	93	152
Number of clusters	10	5	5
Density	0.21	0.29	0.31
Diameter	4.53	3.65	3.65
Average distance	1.97	1.77	1.68
Average number of degrees	10.08	7.15	9.50
Transitivity	0.63	0.57	0.62

Major changes were introduced to the parliamentary system after 2010 by the governing party coalition, Fidesz-KDNP (Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance and Christian Democratic People’s Party), which is led by the current Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The effect of this was that the number of party representatives in the Hungarian Parliament increased. Therefore, it is more informative to study the number of vertices (the politicians of Jobbik in the parliament) for each period only if one keeps in mind the general changes that took place.

As Table 1 summarizes, the number of edges refers to the number of speeches that are more similar to each other than a predefined measure. Observing the number of edges, it is obvious that the various parliamentary periods were different according to the similarity of the speeches. For the last (half) term, the number of edges is relatively high compared to the previous one. Density increased, which means that, in general, homogenization took place within the language of Jobbik, according to the parliamentary speeches. The diameter of the graphs decreased, not independently of the decrease in the number of people involved in the analysis; for the last two parliamentary terms, the measure is equal. The average distance decreased as well, from the first-term measure of 1.97 to 1.77 and 1.68. Observing the average number of degrees, we can see that in the second parliamentary term (2014–2018), the speeches were less similar to each other, but the decreasing tendency between 2010–2014 and 2014–2018 was reversed, and in the period 2018–2020 the average number of degrees became higher again, indicating that more speeches were similar to each other among party members of Jobbik. The transitivity measure is relatively high compared to other parties for each parliamentary term.

4.2 Dominant topics in parliamentary terms

As described in the 'Methods' section, we applied structural topic modeling to examine the substantive content of parliamentary speeches by Jobbik members over time. According to the evaluation process, we selected a topic model with seven topics. The interpretation of the topics and ten corresponding keywords associated with the various topics are shown in the table below.

Table 2 Topics and ten dominant words for each in the examined period (2010–2020)

Topic	Keywords
Topic 1: Social issues	pension system, public burdening, family home creation benefit, labor market, home creation, credit impaired people, National Asset Management, Hungarian Bank Association, eviction moratorium, family allowance
Topic 2: National politics	Miklós Horthy, 1945, anti-Hungarian, patriotism, finnugor, nazi, army, György Mátsik, memorial, fascist
Topic 3: Electoral law	recommendation slip, house rules, electoral law, constitution, candidate, National Election Committee, vote, mandate, constitutionality, electoral system
Topic 4: Corruption	Balaton, community transport, contracting, the Municipality of Budapest, contracting authority, world heritage, Hungarian State Railways, public procurement, tourism, National Land Fund Management Organization
Topic 5: Sports	Hungarian Olympic Committee, corporate tax, sports, Olympic, stadium, sports federation, Ferenc Puskás, football, athlete, sports facility
Topic 6: Policies	GMO, carbon dioxide, renewable energy, climate change, nuclear, electricity, free trade, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, energy strategy, EU-Canada Trade Agreement
Topic 7: Legal system	judicial, judge, National Court Office, lawyer, Civil Code, Misdemeanor Law, civil proceedings, victim, Criminal Law, imprisonment

Besides the interpretation of the topics and the study of the most important words assigned to each topic, we examined the dynamics of topic dominance over time. The following table shows the proportion of each topic for the years between 2010 and 2020. The color scale ranges between blue (lower values) and red (higher values), highlighting the dominance of each topic relative to their presence for different years.

Table 3 Topics and topic dominance for each year in the examined period

Year	Topic 1: Social issues	Topic 2: National politics	Topic 3: Electoral law	Topic 4: Corrup- tion	Topic 5: Sports	Topic 6: Policies	Topic 7: Legal system
2010	10,4%	13,7%	26,9%	8,2%	17,8%	7,8%	15,1%
2011	13,6%	13,3%	23,6%	7,9%	19,6%	6,7%	15,3%
2012	12,9%	12,4%	20,4%	10,3%	18,8%	9,8%	15,4%
2013	13,3%	10,5%	17,9%	11,2%	20,2%	9,2%	17,7%
2014	18,4%	9,5%	14,6%	11,1%	19,7%	13,9%	12,8%
2015	16,9%	10,4%	10,9%	13,4%	18,5%	16,6%	13,4%
2016	18,2%	10,8%	10,8%	13,7%	20,0%	15,3%	11,2%
2017	20,1%	11,0%	7,4%	12,1%	22,4%	15,8%	11,3%
2018	21,6%	11,8%	9,2%	8,7%	23,8%	13,6%	11,3%
2019	24,0%	12,4%	8,5%	7,8%	24,5%	14,7%	8,0%
2020	20,2%	9,7%	8,1%	10,2%	27,5%	15,1%	9,1%

As demonstrated by Table 3, in 2010, the most prominent theme discussed by Jobbik politicians in the parliament was the new electoral law. The proportion of that topic within the given year's speeches was 26.9 per cent. The second most discussed theme was sports (17.8 per cent), while the third was the legal system (15.1 per cent). Although the proportions changed slightly, the patterns were the same in 2011 and 2012. In 2011, the proportions of the electoral law, sports, and legal system topics were 23.6, 19.6, and 15.3 per cent, while in 2012, they were 20.4, 18.8, and 15.4 per cent, respectively. From 2013 onwards, the topic of sports became the most popular among Jobbik's party representatives. The dominance of the topic for each year is visible from the results; the proportions of the topic were 20.2, 19.7, 18.5, 20.0, 22.4, 23.8, 24.5, and 27.5 per cent between 2013 and 2020, respectively. In 2013, the second most popular topic was electoral law (17.9 per cent), and from 2014, social issues were second in line, with proportions of 18.4, 16.9, 18.2, 20.1, 21.6, 24.0, and 20.2 per cent each year between 2014 and 2020.

As shown in Table 3 through the colors of the values, Topic 1 (Social Issues) was dominant relative to its presence between 2017–2020, while Topic 2 (National Politics) was more dominant between 2010–2012 and 2018–2019. Topic 3 (Electoral Law) was intensively discussed between 2010–2014, while Topic 4 (Corruption) between 2013–2017. The theme of Sports (Topic 5) had a higher peak between 2017 and 2020 than its own average values, and from 2017 the topic became more dominant in each year (see relatively larger proportions compared to other topics). Topic 6 (Policies) was more dominant between 2015–2017 and 2019–2020 relative to its average value, while Topic 7 (Legal System) between 2010–2013.

5 Discussion

It is immediately apparent, looking at Figure 1, which shows the 2010–2014 parliamentary term network, that the three clusters containing most of the MPs are very dense. The average degree of the graph is 10.08, which is not much less than in the graphs of the other two terms, even though the number of MPs in those is fewer. Gábor Vona, the president of the party, is highly embedded in the network, and his speeches share similarities with those of his peers in the other clusters. Among the vice presidents that reigned during this period, István Apáti, Zoltán Balczó, Csaba Gyüre, Előd Novák, Tamás Sneider, and János Volner were also MPs. All of them were very active in parliament: even Tamás Sneider, the least active, made 153 speeches. Apáti, Balczó, and Volner have an especially high number of connections, which means their speeches have similar patterns to many of the other MPs. The latter two connect to those in the other clusters, while Apáti is only linked to Tamás Gaudi-Nagy, the central figure in one of the adjacent clusters. It is worth noting that with 990 speeches, Gaudi-Nagy is the Jobbik MP who spoke most frequently in this parliamentary term. Of all the vice presidents, Előd Novák's position is the most interesting: He was one of the most active MPs in Jobbik in the 2010–2014 term.¹⁷ Our analysis shows that he has a unique speech style that does not resemble that of any of his party peers. One may assume that the subsequent ousting of Előd Novák from the party is not unrelated to this. Like Novák, Péter Schön's speeches are similar to those of only one of his fellow MPs (Barna Bödecs). It is important to note, however, that Péter Schön was a Jobbik MP who made very few speeches: he spoke only 21 times in parliament, compared to the average of 213 by Jobbik's MPs. It is also worth looking at those MPs who form a cluster on their own and whose speeches do not resemble those of any of their fellow MPs. Of these, Miklós Korondi has made the most speeches (115), but even this is below average for Jobbik. The others, however, are by any measure inactive members of the parliamentary chamber, with around 20 or fewer speeches.

The graph showing the network of the 2014–2018 parliamentary term (Figure 2) clearly shows that not only has the number of clusters decreased, as shown in Table 1, but also the number of individual MPs. This may be partly due to the fact that fewer MPs won seats in this term, with only 26 MPs from Jobbik compared to 49 in the previous term. It is important to point out, however, that the drastic reduction in the number of clusters was not accompanied by a significant increase in density (0.29 in this term compared to 0.21 in the previous one). Starting the individual-level analysis with the party leader Gábor Vona, it is obvious, even by looking at his speeches, that his position has changed significantly. In Jobbik's first parliamentary term, his speeches were similar to those of many of his fellow MPs, whether they were members of his own cluster in the network or other clusters. In the 2014–2018 term, however, he became isolated. There were only two MPs in the parliamentary group, Ádám Mirkóczki and György Szilágyi, who spoke in a similar way and who were all members of the same cluster. It is worth noting that Mirkóczki was the spokesman of the party at the time, so it is understandable that his speeches were similar to those of the president of the party he represented. György Szilágyi previously served as

¹⁷ He was the second most active politician with 720 speeches in the 2010–2014 parliamentary term.

Vona's chief of staff and came into the spotlight in 2020 when he became vice-president of Péter Jakab, who also supported the people's party strategy and replaced Vona as president of Jobbik.

The 2014–2018 parliamentary term, as described earlier, brought great changes in the life of Jobbik: the party clearly chose to continue the people's party strategy and chose Gábor Vona to lead this process. The party president withdrew his confidence from three of the party's former vice-presidents, István Apáti, Előd Novák, and István Szávay. With Apáti, we saw that, unlike in the previous term, he was very 'out of line' here. Előd Novák's speeches¹⁸ between 2014 and 2016 were similar to those of many of his colleagues, but the change was not dramatic. Let us recall, however, that Novák formed a separate cluster in the previous term. István Szávay occupied a much more central position than the other two vice presidents: he spoke like many MPs (one of his connections was Előd Novák), and these similarities also show up as between-cluster ties. Let us also look at the situation of Lorántné Hegedűs in this context, who was not supported by Vona in her candidacy for vice president. Hegedűs was one of the more active MPs in Jobbik's first and second terms, and her speeches were similar to those of many of her fellow MPs. In her case, this may be the reason why, as we wrote earlier, half of Jobbik's local branches supported her candidacy for vice president.¹⁹ The speeches of the vice president whom Vona voted for (Tamás Sneider, János Volner, and Dániel Z. Kárpát) had many similarities with those of other party MPs.

The next parliamentary term started with even more turbulent processes. Jobbik failed to win the elections, so the change of government that the party had staked everything on, which probably held together the increasingly fractious forces of the party, at least on the surface, did not materialize. Gábor Vona resigned as party president, and the congress elected Tamás Sneider, who represented the continuation of Vona's line, as president against László Toroczkai, a staunch supporter of the radical line.²⁰ The events led to a party split. Dóra Dúró left the parliamentary group in May 2018 and is therefore not included in Figure 3. In her case, it is worth noting that her speeches during the previous two terms were very similar to those of her fellow MPs in Jobbik. In the first term, her degree number (number of connected politicians in the graph) was above average for Jobbik (13 versus 10.08); in the second term, it was still around the average (7 versus 7.15). The latter figure is certainly high, considering that her husband, Előd Novák, was expelled from the party during this period. István Apáti, Erik Fülöp, and János Volner joined the Our Homeland Movement in October. Among them, István Apáti's speeches were relatively similar to those of other MPs, and this is worth evaluating in light of the fact that he was much more isolated in the previous term between 2014 and 2018. The similarity of János Volner's speeches to those of other Jobbik MPs decreased considerably over time. In the case of Erik Fülöp, the graph shows complete isolation, but this is probably because he only addressed the Parliament six times.

¹⁸ Előd Novák's mandate ended on 31 August 2016.

¹⁹ This was also the case with Előd Novák, but there we can assume that his speeches were addressed to those who did not agree with the process of the deradicalisation of Jobbik.

²⁰ It is worth noting that Sneider is associated with a completely separate cluster, but the fact that he had a total of eight speeches in Parliament plays a big role in this.

Finally, let us look at the events of 2019–2020. In 2020, after some wrangling, the party elected Péter Jakab, who was then the party's parliamentary leader, as also its president. He spoke often, but Figure 3 shows that his speeches were unique. Jakab then identified the 'Szávay clan' as his main opponent. All of the people mentioned by name were MPs except Anett Burik. It is important to note that all of them, except for Tibor Bana (János Bencsik, Anett Burik, Csaba Gyüre, János Stummer, and Andrea Varga-Damm), were among the MPs who shared connections to many others and bridged clusters in the network. It should be added that this also applies to István Szávay, the assumed informal leader of the group, who left the parliamentary group in January 2019, as mentioned earlier. It seems, therefore, that with their departure, the central figures of the network based on the speeches of Jobbik's MPs had left.

Let us also look at the MPs who appeared alongside Péter Jakab: Balázs Ander, Róbert Dudás, László György Lukács, Anita Potocskáné Körösi, and György Szilágyi.²¹ Ander, Lukács, and Potocskáné gave many speeches, but there was a significant difference in their similarity. While Balázs Ander's speech style is unique (he formed a cluster on his own in the previous term), the speeches of the other two representatives show a high degree of similarity. Szilágyi spoke less than Potocskáné, but their edge degrees are similar. Dudás, on the other hand, spoke less but in a similar way to many other MPs.

The results of the structural topical model clearly show that the topics of Jobbik MPs' contributions changed significantly between 2010 and 2020. The first term was dominated by topics related to national politics, electoral law, and the legal system. For the latter two, this was the case for the whole term and even somewhat carried over to the next term. However, issues related to national politics had already decreased in importance by the end of Jobbik's first term in Parliament. The results of the topic modeling also show that Jobbik was turning to other issues in the second parliamentary term: corruption and global policies were at the center of their parliamentary speeches. In the second half of their second parliamentary term, social issues and sports became important. However, it is clear from the words most commonly used in each topic that criticism of Fidesz policies is most often related to these topics. These themes persisted in the last term of the studied period, with the exception of corruption. Also, the topics of national politics returned at the beginning of the term.

6 Summary

In our paper, we describe an analysis of the parliamentary speeches delivered by Jobbik MPs between 2010 and 2020. Our study focused on both the content of these speeches and the networks that formed among politicians within each parliamentary term based on the similarity of their speeches. During this period, Jobbik underwent significant transformation. In 2010, it became a parliamentary party, and from late 2013 onwards, it embarked on a transformation process with the goal of becoming a 'real people's party.' This transformation process was marked by numerous internal conflicts and divisions within the party,

²¹ Of the former vice-presidents, only Z. Dániel Kárpáti remains.

eventually leading to a split, resulting in the departure of many members. It is worth noting that these conflicts remained concealed for a considerable time as the party maintained its unity in pursuit of winning elections and gaining access to government positions. These dynamics became evident through our network analysis based on the similarity of parliamentary speeches. With Gábor Vona's resignation in 2018, the party lost a charismatic leader who had held the party together. Network analysis clearly shows the difference between Vona and the party's later presidents. Our analysis of the topics covered in parliamentary speeches clearly reflects the trends described in the literature. The main themes of each parliamentary term and the dynamics of these themes demonstrated the process of professionalization that Jobbik aimed to achieve based on its objectives.

The metamorphosis of Jobbik involved not merely a shift in ideology but also a strategic rebranding effort influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, Jobbik faced the challenge of broadening its appeal beyond its traditional base of far-right supporters. This necessitated a recalibration of its political rhetoric and policy priorities to attract moderate voters who were disillusioned with the established parties. Externally, the changing political landscape in Hungary, marked by the dominance of Fidesz and the fragmentation of the left, provided Jobbik with an opportunity to reposition itself as a viable alternative. Jobbik's strategic communication involved a conscious effort to soften its image, distancing itself from previously held extremist positions and adopting a more inclusive and socially acceptable discourse. This rebranding was evident in its emphasis on issues like corruption and social issues, which resonated with a broader electorate.

The power dynamics within the Hungarian political sphere also significantly influenced Jobbik's journey. As Fidesz consolidated its power, the political space for opposition parties became increasingly constrained, compelling Jobbik to adapt its strategy. The party's shift towards the center can be seen as a pragmatic response to the hegemonic position of Fidesz, aimed at carving out a sustainable niche in the competitive political environment. Additionally, the interactions between Jobbik and other opposition parties, including potential coalitions and electoral strategies, underscored the complex dynamics of power and alliance-building in Hungarian politics.

In conclusion, Jobbik's evolution from a radical right-wing party to a mainstream political force is a multifaceted process that underscores the importance of political communication and power dynamics. By rebranding itself and adapting to the changing political context, Jobbik's shift demonstrates the fluidity of political identities and the strategic calculations that underpin party transformation.

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