

**Radical Right-wing Attempts and Government Responses to Constructing and
Securitizing a 'Roma Issue' in Hungary, 2006-2010**

By

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Abstract

Acts of violence targeting Roma individuals in 2008-2010 raised public attention to an ethnicizing/racist political discourse on behalf of radical right-wing politicians and extreme right-wing actors in Hungary who aimed at constructing a 'Roma issue' through political discourse and presenting it as a concern to societal security. Seeking answers to the question, 'Why (and how) could right-wing political entrepreneurs create a securitized 'Roma issue' in Hungary between 2006 and 2010?', the thesis argues that radical right wing actors successfully used societal resentment and the strong anti-Roma attitudes of Hungarian society to generate political capital, building on prevalent concerns such as criminality, public safety and economic regression. These concerns were presented in a much distorted way through increased scapegoating and radical othering, centralizing 'Roma otherness' – used here as an analytical term – as a key motif of radical right wing discourse and setting the scene for securitizing the Roma population of Hungary 'from whom majority society should be protected'. Through methods of process tracing and discourse analysis the practical results are shown: threat marches of paramilitary organizations such as Magyar Gárda in rural neighborhoods identified as 'Roma neighborhoods', physical violence targeting Roma people and a heightened potential of conflict within society. The thesis also offers alternative explanations for the desecuritization process initiated by the government in 2009. However, these alternative explanations still need to be studied and verified beyond the 2006-2010 timeframe to see to what extent desecuritization was successful or government measures only diverted or delayed securitization attempts.

Keywords: Roma, Hungary, securitization, right-wing extremism, Magyar Gárda

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Introduction

The strengthening right-wing extremism – popular movements, political parties and paramilitary organizations – in Central Europe has been a subject to increased scrutiny in recent years.¹ Within this wider framework of analysis that includes the examination of nationalist, populist, anti-Semitic and anti-immigration elements as well, extremist anti-Roma tendencies and practices have also become more and more studied. Some analyses have gone beyond human and minority right abuses and anti-discrimination policy recommendations,² and highlighted repeated cases of violence³ as well as examples for attempts at securitizing the relations of Roma (minority) and non-Roma (majority) communities.⁴

Studies focusing on the situation of Roma require interdisciplinarity, thus traditionally follow a tripartite – often overlapping – approach in the region: first, a descriptive sociological one that primarily focuses on issues of poverty, housing and (un)employment;⁵ often complemented by a second anthropological-cultural approach invoking Roma cultural traits, politics of identification and integration;⁶ and a third human rights / legal approach

¹ Abbas et al., Right-wing Extremism in Central Europe. An Overview.; Langenbacher and Schellenberg, *Is Europe on the „right” path? Right-wing extremism and right-wing populism in Europe*; Schiedel, *Extreme Rechte in Europa*; Goodwin et al., The new radical right: Violent and non-violent movements in Europe; Mammone et al., *Mapping the Extreme Right in Contemporary Europe. From Local to Transnational*; Mareš, Trans-national cooperation of right-wing extremists in East-Central Europe; Melzer and Serafin, Right-wing extremism in Europe. Country analyses, counter-strategies and labor-market oriented exit strategies; Dettke, Hungary's Jobbik Party, the Challenges of European Ethno-Nationalism and the Future of the European Project.

² Melanie H. Ram: “Anti-discrimination Policy and the Roma”; OSCE – ODIHR, Addressing Violence, Promoting Integration; Guy and Bedard, Improving the Tools for the Social Inclusion and Non-discrimination of Roma in the EU; European Roma Policy Coalition, Analysis of the National Roma Integration Strategies; Dezideriu, “Roma Rights 2013: National Roma Integration Strategies: What Next?”

³ Since 2008 European Roma Rights Center has registered at least 48 violent attacks against Roma in Hungary, 40 attacks in the Czech Republic and 13 attacks in Slovakia resulting in a combined total of at least 11 fatalities. Between September 2011 and July 2012 14 attacks against Roma and their property had been registered in Bulgaria. ERRRC, Attacks against Roma in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. See also: Amnesty International, Violent Attacks against Roma in Hungary

⁴ Political Capital, Backed by popular demand: Demand for right wing extremism (Derex) index, 56-61.; ERRRC, Factsheet: Roma rights in jeopardy; Bodnárová and Vicenová, Anti-extremist Strategies of Political Parties in Slovakia

⁵ See for example: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States; Nemzeti Társadalmi Felzárkóztatási Stratégia

⁶ Dupcsik, A magyarországi cigányság története; Binder, “A cigányok” vagy a „cigánykérdés” története?; Vajda and Dupcsik, Country Report on Ethnic Relations

focusing on women's rights, segregation in education, anti-discrimination practices and more recently, on hate crimes.⁷

Insecurity and violence targeting Roma, gaining more importance and visibility in the past couple of years have been less at the forefront of research for two reasons. On the one hand, violent criminal cases are usually dealt with in a legal framework, while on the other hand, the heightened level of insecurity developing into systemic phenomena of societal tension taking the form of repeated communal violence have not been present until recent years. Securitization as an extreme version of politicization that 'upgrades' an issue from the level of societal and political discourse to the level of security discourse in relation to the Roma population of Central Europe and specifically of Hungary had been atypical.

However, acts of violence targeting Roma individuals in 2008-2010 raised public attention to an ethnicizing/racist political discourse on behalf of radical right-wing politicians and extreme right-wing actors in Hungary who aimed at constructing a 'Roma issue' through political discourse and presenting it as a concern to societal security. Seeking answers to the question, 'Why (and how) could right-wing political entrepreneurs create a securitized 'Roma issue' in Hungary between 2006 and 2010?', the thesis argues that radical right wing actors successfully used societal resentment and the strong anti-Roma attitudes of Hungarian society to generate political capital, building on prevalent concerns such as criminality, public safety and economic regression. These concerns were presented in a much distorted way through increased scapegoating and radical othering, centralizing 'Roma otherness' – used here as an analytical term – as a key motif of radical right wing discourse and setting the scene for securitizing the Roma population of Hungary 'from whom majority society should be protected'. Through methods of process tracing and discourse analysis the practical

⁷ See for example United States Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2013 – Hungary; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: Making Hate-crime Visible in the European Union; FXB Center for Health and Human Rights – Harvard School of Public Health: Accelerating Patterns of Anti-Roma Violence in Hungary.

consequences are shown: threat marches of paramilitary organizations such as Magyar Gárda in rural neighborhoods identified as ‘Roma neighborhoods’, physical violence targeting Roma people and a heightened potential of conflict within society.

Thus, the thesis builds on an interdisciplinary approach under the overarching concept of securitization.⁸ As societal perception and related attitudes, stereotypes towards Roma in Hungarian society stand at the core of my thesis, Chapter 1 introduces those prevailing negative attitudes that created a receptive medium, open to radical right-wing discourse building on scapegoating and blaming. First, the stereotypes related to Roma in Hungarian social thought are summarized building on the empirical studies on the social perception of Roma in the 1990s, where anti-Roma attitudes and stereotypes related to ‘criminality, conflicting attitude, unemployment, societal differentiation and segregation’ will be examined in more detail, also evaluating trends up until 2010. As the available research results show, anti-Roma sentiment, negative and also discriminative attitudes towards Roma have prevailed strong in every aspect in Hungary. I will argue that in accordance with the research framework (see below) these provided a key factor for the securitization attempt in question to be successful.

After this insight on the societal background of the securitization attempt, Chapter 2 provides an assessment of the political background through introducing and examining radical and extreme right wing actors carrying out the securitization attempt. Here I argue that these political entrepreneurs were interested in building on the underlying societal resentment and increase tension between Roma and non-Roma populations in order to appear as protectors of Hungarian population and values against a ‘negative Other’, thus to gain political support.

⁸ A number of related or somewhat relevant issues are not directly addressed in the thesis in order to preserve its clear focus and streamlined structure of argumentation. Thus the politics of identification (i.e. the question of ‘who Roma are’), specific socio-economic characteristics and vulnerabilities of Roma (segregation, education, inequality, unemployment, women’s rights, etc.), and policy oriented questions (fostering integration and anti-discrimination, enhancing crime prevention, improving public order etc.) are not dealt with. The thesis does not include policy recommendations. Where necessary, complementary comments are included, also providing further sources on the given issue.

The success of such motives was demonstrated by significant gains in elections in 2009 European Parliament and 2010 national parliamentary elections (even though I do not claim that the anti-Roma campaign was the sole source of increasing political support).

Chapter 3 provides the main argument of the thesis analyzing the securitization attempt of radical and extreme right-wing actors targeting Roma in Hungary between 2006 and 2010. Through process tracing and discourse analysis I argue that a gradual escalation of tensions took place, eventually becoming a successful securitization attempt. When analyzing the securitization process, three trigger events (at Olaszliszka, Veszprém, Sajóbáony locations)⁹ and three securitization moves (discourse on ‘Roma criminality’, threat marches by Magyar Gárda and a series of physical attacks against Roma) are identified and analyzed. (See the analytical framework below.) Discourse analysis serves to demonstrate how the key element of the securitization process, radical othering worked. In doing so, I can rely on a sample of quantitative and qualitative analyses carried out in recent years. As the securitization attempt can only be deemed successful if the target audience subscribes to it and verifies the demand for state (government) action, the context of one case that is identified in the analytical framework as the ‘successful securitizing speech act’¹⁰ will be paid focused attention. Therefore, an assessment of five interviews conducted in Miskolc with local representatives and former executives is provided in Chapter 3 in order to elaborate upon the underlying dynamics of societal tension between Roma and non-Roma residents in Northeast Hungary. The region is one of the hot spots where the radicalization of Roma – non-Roma relations could be observed. The interviews also provide a comparative example of how different actors perceive the core of the problem which is then discursively abused by the radical and extreme right wing.

⁹ Hungarian names of persons, locations, institutions and organizations etc. are displayed according to Hungarian spelling throughout the thesis.

¹⁰ A clash took place between local Roma residents and members of extremist organizations conducting a threat march in Sajóbáony on September 15, 2009 to which the Mayor of the nearby city Miskolc reacted as ‘if circumstances prevail, there was a need to prepare for civil war’. (See below.)

The research framework is set between 2006 and 2010 for two reasons. On the one hand, according to my argumentation, the radical right carried out securitization in order to boost political support for Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom that can be spectacularly measured between 2006 (gaining 2.20% of votes and not making into the national parliament), 2009 (gaining 14.77% at European parliamentary elections) and 2010 (gaining 16.67% at national elections). On the other hand, the securitization attempt at the focus of the thesis has peaked in 2009, followed by the first signs of government action to desecuritize these issues and a temporary calmer period in 2011.¹¹

Beyond a theoretical analysis of the securitization move of radical and extreme right wing actors in Hungary the practical conclusions of how such an attempt can be redirected to normal politics – desecuritized – by the state should also be drawn. As the most capable and legitimate authority, the central government (the state) is entitled to act among such circumstances.¹² However, as it has been pointed out, ‘the Government had remained tolerant towards Jobbik’s intimidation practices’¹³ and in general, ‘government responses had been weak’.¹⁴

With the prevailing discourse on ‘Roma criminality’, in the period running up to the 2014 ‘election super-year’ (national and European parliamentary and local government elections

¹¹ ERRC reported 5 cases of physical violence that targeted Roma in 2010 and 4 cases in 2011 – compared to 23 in 2008 and 19 in 2009 respectively. 8 further cases had been reported by September 2012. ERRC, Attack against Roma in Hungary: January 2008 – September 2012. OSCE listed 22 and 23 violent cases in 2008 and 2009, respectively. OSCE – ODIHR, Addressing Violence, Promoting Integration, 56-64. Comprehensive summaries of violent cases for the period beyond 2012 have not been published yet. However, reports on acts of hate speech, racially motivated crimes, ‘military trainings’ by extreme right organizations are available. For an assessment of recent developments see: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Racism, discrimination, intolerance and extremism: learning from experiences in Greece and Hungary.

¹² Throughout the thesis I use the term ‘government’ to refer to the national government of Hungary. As my assessment focuses on events and political discourses between 2006 and 2010, it means the Gyurcsány (2006-2009) and Bajnai (2009-2010) governments. Indirectly some measures of the Orbán government (2010-) will also be touched upon where necessary for giving a process-oriented explanation. For the purposes of my thesis I consider ‘government discourse’ any public speech and remark on behalf of members of the respective government; that is any member of the coalition government, not just the major governing party. Occasionally I also refer to local government and administration, or individual party representatives when it has an important contribution to the analysis, but on such occasions I clearly define the background and significance of the case.

¹³ Dettke, Hungary’s Jobbik Party, 15.

¹⁴ FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health: Accelerating Patterns of Anti-Roma Violence in Hungary, 36.

taking place) there are fewer threat marches organized than in 2009-2010, while physical violence declined and mainstream media discourse seems to be less loaded with the previously prioritized issues centered around anti-Roma sentiments. At the same time practical evidence shows that the securitizing radical right wing discourse and intimidation practices, such as the conduct of threat marches and the formation of local vigilant groups have not ceased beyond 2010. On the contrary: following a temporary restraint in 2011 these practices returned by 2012 and have prevailed ever since.¹⁵

Therefore the 2010-2014 government period needs to be further studied, going beyond the limitations of the current thesis as the in-depth analysis of these developments vis-à-vis the government desecuritization practices would encompass another volume. In order to give a glimpse on the tangible government responses regarding radical and extreme right securitization attempt of Roma in Hungary, Chapter 4 will offer a brief introduction of government response in terms of legal, police and political action in 2009-2010.

Theoretical foundations

The most fundamental need of any society is security – whether it is defined as an ability to prevent, deter or avert threats and protect against them, or as a set of favorable circumstances that implies no perceivable threats at all. Usually it is the most powerful actor, the state (central government) who initiates securitization regarding a potential threat to national security (national sovereignty, territory, citizens etc.). In classical cases clearly definable, quantifiable (usually military) threats are identified as threats against which the state needs to act. But beyond the objective criteria of security – such as the number of armed forces – it is the subjective perception of security (lack or presence of fear of insecurity) that determines the level of security that characterizes a society and the focus on new challenges to

¹⁵ Ibid, 29-31 and 37-40.

security (for example how international terrorism became top priority concern in most European countries' security policy after 2001).¹⁶

As international security studies explain, during the Cold War era the gradual broadening of the perception of security issues took place, adding political, economic, societal and environmental issues to the primarily military-centered security agenda of states and international organizations. After the Cold War 'a new framework for analysis' was to be considered in which such new areas (sectors) of security could be dealt with.¹⁷ Thus the need for understanding how an issue becomes prioritized and part of the security agenda of any state has been addressed by Barry Buzan and his colleagues who laid down the foundation of the Copenhagen School of international security studies, focusing their research on the process of securitization. Securitization as an inter-subjective and socially constructed process aims to understand 'who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent object), why, with what results, and not least, under what conditions.'¹⁸ The concept of securitization was developed from this constructivist thought throughout the 1990s, and as a process-oriented conception of security, examines how a certain issue is transformed into a matter of security. Securitization is an extreme version of politicization that 'upgrades' an issue from the level of societal and political discourse to the level of security discourse, enabling the use of extraordinary means in the name of security.¹⁹

Even though the constructivist Copenhagen School has become one of the dominant schools in security studies, noteworthy criticism has also been developed associated with it. Criticism evolved gradually throughout the 1990s when – building on the extended understanding of security to non-military aspects – new phenomena, especially the

¹⁶ Originally this dualism was pointed out by Arnold Wolfers termed as: 'Security is any objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquire values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked.' Wolfers, "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol", 150.

¹⁷ Buzan, *People, States and Fear*; Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, *Security – A New Framework for Analysis*.

¹⁸ Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 32.

¹⁹ Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization"; Wæver, "Societal Security: The Concept"

securitization of migration (and the integration of immigrants) in Western Europe came under scrutiny. These debates are instructive with regard to my thesis as these provided an analysis of the theory and practice of atypical cases of securitization, when not the state, but a non-state actor is the securitizer, acquiring authority in a field which normally should belong to the central government. In these cases, the securitizer has been a political actor (with anti-immigration agenda) that could build on anti-immigrant sentiment of the population. On the one hand conceptual, while on the other methodological criticism has to be considered based on these debates when establishing the analytical background of the thesis.

In his 1995 study, Jeff Huysmans investigated the logic along which migration had been securitized in Western European political discourse in the first half of the 1990s. There he explored the – then – newly defined sphere of societal security and centered his work around the politics of identification and the Self / Other dichotomy, pointing out ‘how culture becomes security policy’ among certain conditions.²⁰ His conceptual criticism focused on the question whether is it an acceptable risk that certain phenomena, like migration and asylum had questionably been brought under the same umbrella as drugs and terrorism when identified as ‘challenges to societal security’ by non-state actors. Huysmans pointed out two risk factors: ‘first, as in many cases issues related to societal security are identified in terms of the politics of identification (along a spectrum of ‘Us and Others’), such interpretations can serve as a tool of legitimization for xenophobia and nationalist reaction. Second, when addressing certain issues in a (societal) security framework, it is the responsibility of the securitizer to avoid such normally unintended consequences. However, this potential in securitizing an issue can be abused by non-state actors (social movements, political actors) as well, because ‘security is what agents make of it’.²¹ This will be the exact case that I am investigating throughout my thesis. Therefore, Huysmans argued that instead of

²⁰ Huysmans, “Migrants As a Security Problem: Dangers of “Securitizing” Societal Issues”

²¹ Huysmans, “Defining Social Constructivism in Security Studies”

manufacturing a perception of immigration as an existential threat to European societies, such potential conflicts should be dealt with within a context of ethico-political judgment of the terms and conditions of integration of immigrant individuals into society. This is the process of desecuritization that takes place when a certain issue (which had been securitized beforehand) is taken out of the realm of security and starts to be dealt with in the political realm through a normalization process in which the use of extra-ordinary means for tackling the issue is abandoned.²² Huysmans' criticism is important because he calls for deconstructivism instead of constructing and developing securitizing discourses, and for its diversion back to the political context through desecuritization.

Going beyond the securitization of migration and the conceptual criticism of Huysmans, Paul Roe investigated how the societal security dimension of securitization theory can be used to explain the escalation of inter-ethnic tensions into violence. He used the case study of the clash between constituent Romanians and minority Hungarians in 1990, in Tirgu Mures, Transylvania.²³ According to Roe, a Huysmans-type deconstructivist strategy, while perhaps conducive to the desecuritization of the individual migrant, is not possible in the case of the collective minority.²⁴ He argues that in seeking to maintain their collective identity, minorities, as entities different in cultural etc. characteristics from majority society,²⁵ necessarily hold a certain 'societal security-ness', which, 'if removed, results in the death of the minority as a distinctive group.'²⁶ Therefore he suggests that 'managing' securitized issues might be more profitable than trying to 'transform' them (through desecuritization).

What is important to note here is that within the theoretical framework of societal security my case study builds on the results of both previously mentioned research traits. The

²² Huysmans, "The Question of the Limit"

²³ Roe, "Misperception and Ethnic Conflict"

²⁴ Jutila, "Desecuritizing Minority Rights: Against Determinism", 167.

²⁵ Roe based his research on speaking of an identifiable objective 'distinctive groupness' of minorities – which might be useful for policy analysis, but is not suitable for analyzing societal realities and practices. As Brubaker argues, 'we should not uncritically adopt categories of ethnopolitical practice as our categories of social analysis.' Brubaker, "Ethnicity without groups", 166.

²⁶ Roe, "Securitization of Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization", 279.

example of securitizing migration bears significance because it puts ahead an example where non-state actors abused securitization, while Roe's case study offers an example of inter-ethnic conflict. However, I will argue that the securitization attempt of the radical right targeting Roma in Hungary was framed less as an inter-ethnic or inter-cultural conflict, but more of a racist opposition in which extremists claim Roma to be inferior. Thus, within my thesis I examine a case where the securitized entity ('Roma')²⁷ is constructed (much) less as a threat to Hungarian culture and more as a burden to Hungarian society in economic terms and a threat to security in terms of public order.

Methodological criticism is centered on how the theory of securitization can be better applied for analyzing 'real life situations', namely having more sociological embeddedness. Thierry Balzacq argued that a speech act view of security does not provide adequate grounding upon which to examine security practices in real situations: 'For instance, many security utterances counter the 'rule of sincerity' and, the intrinsic power attributed to 'security' overlooks the objective context in which security agents are situated.'²⁸ By differentiating between philosophical and sociological approaches to securitization, he put emphasis on basic methodological differences. In his interpretation the philosophical approach primarily concentrates on the statement of the speech act itself, while the sociological approach – which he wished to emphasize more – views securitization as a pragmatic process, including the context, features of the audience and power relations of the parties concerned.²⁹ Therefore, as a corrective, Balzacq put forward three basic assumptions: '(i) that an effective securitization is audience-centered; (ii) that securitization is context-dependent; (iii) that an effective securitization is power-laden.'³⁰

²⁷ Throughout the thesis I use 'Roma' with quotation marks when I refer to the constructed, abstract image, the societal representation of Roma people in Hungary.

²⁸ Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context", 171.

²⁹ Balzacq, "Enquiries into Methods: A New Framework for Securitization Analysis", 31-32

³⁰ Balzacq, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context", 171.

In line with Balzaq, Matt McDonald argued that the securitization framework is problematically narrow in three senses. ‘First, the *form* of act constructing security is defined narrowly, with the focus on the speech of dominant actors. Second, the *context* of the act is defined narrowly, with the focus only on the moment of intervention. Finally, the framework of securitization is narrow in the sense that the *nature* of the act is defined solely in terms of the designation of threats.’³¹ Meanwhile Jeff Huysmans, who contributed to methodological question, called for the further extension of the constructivist understanding of security issues towards cultural and historical contexts.³²

As I am not developing an argumentative study about scholarly debates on securitization, I will rely on the balanced adoption of these critical remarks and develop my analytical framework accordingly, including as much examination of the broader context as it is possible within the limitations of a thesis.

Setting the proper research framework without analytical fallacies

As political and social sciences research focusing on Roma is not only academically complex but also politically sensitive, we need to keep in mind several key axioms when reading the thesis.

First, as Catherine Charrett also points out recalling Buzan et al, ‘the Copenhagen School asserts that the role of the securitization analyst should not be confused with that of the securitization actor; the analyst does not decide what constitutes a justifiable threat or what should or should not be securitized. The objective of the Copenhagen School is to understand the *modus operandi* of existing security actors, and not to normatively judge their actions. (Buzan et al 1998: 33-34, 35)’³³ Accordingly, the following chapters will serve the purpose of

³¹ McDonald, “Securitization and the Construction of Security”

³² Huysmans, Jef. “Revisiting Copenhagen”

³³ Charrett, *A critical application of securitization theory*, 14.

academic analysis and not of formulating policy recommendations for securitization or desecuritization in any context.

Second, there are a number of debated conceptual, notional issues playing important roles in the following analysis, like the use of terminology ‘Roma issue’ and ‘Roma criminality’ when recalling political, media or public discourse. Being ware of the fact that the act of naming the elements of discourse itself pre-determines many things, it is important to note here that these expressions are used in a solely analytical manner, referring to elements of discourse, and I do not subscribe to using these in any other context or wish to provide legitimacy for these expressions.

The notion of ‘Roma’ itself provides a heatedly debated issue in academia (see Chapter 1 for more detail and references), recalling arguments from analytical fallacies of groupism to the politics of identification. As Rogers Brubaker argued against the use of essentializing conceptions during any analysis that refers to a community of people: ‘we should not uncritically adopt categories of ethno-political practice as our categories of social analysis.’³⁴ Such fallacy would lead to what Brubaker framed as ‘groupism: the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis.’³⁵

Therefore, the analytical chapters of the thesis do not deal with describing, defining or analyzing ‘Roma’ as a societal group (who Roma people are, what characterizes them, what are ‘Roma’ cultural traits and social conducts either through self-identification or external identification) and the politics of identification. Instead, I deal with the Hungarian society’s constructed image of ‘Roma’. The ‘socially constructed image of the Roma’ – that mostly bears negative features and connotations independent of what reality might be – has already

³⁴ Brubaker, “Ethnicity without groups”, 166.

³⁵ Ibid, 164.

been extensively studied empirically in Hungary. (See Chapter 1) Thus, it is not ‘Roma’ that the thesis is centered around but ‘anti-Roma sentiment’ that is present, identifiable and describable in Hungarian society.

Third, the same conceptual problem appears when one attempts to explore the question of agency: to analyze those actors, political entrepreneurs who are exploiting societal tensions in Hungary in order to gain political momentum through securitizing the Roma as a threat to societal security. Defining ‘right-wing’, ‘radical right-wing’, ‘right-wing radicalism’ or ‘radical right-wing populism’ (often used as synonyms) is a troubled, debated problem of political sciences as well as other disciplines that has not brought clear results to this date. It is ambiguous to determine the ideological characteristics of people subscribing to different sets of radical and extreme right-wing thinking and ideology for different motives. A widely held view differentiates between radical and extreme right-wing based on the assumption that the radical right-wing accepts the limitations of parliamentary democracy and challenges democratic institutions only rhetorically, while the extreme right-wing directly act to break these limits and impose undemocratic measures.³⁶ But such theoretical classification proves to be inadequate in practice, because there is no clearly definable demarcation between democratic and undemocratic rhetoric (necessitating case-by-case scrutiny in legal practice), and it is usually not only political speeches, but practical actions initiated by them that matter.

However, one needs to deal with this problem in order to avoid the analytical fallacy of labeling everyone ‘more to the political right than center-right Fidesz’ an extremist, or a ‘Nazi’, because not all right-wing actors (nationalist, ultra-conservative or other) necessarily follow such an agenda. A distinction has to be drawn between those subscribing to extremist ideologies because they internalize them and those who support Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, identifying themselves as ‘radical nationalist’ for other reasons (such as protest

³⁶ Krekó, Juhász and Molnár, “A szélsőjobboldal iránti társadalmi kereslet növekedése Magyarországon”, 53.

votes). Even though this remains an attempt to label groups of individuals based on certain imposed characteristics along identifiable patterns of behavior (e.g. electoral preferences), hereafter a working definition will be used. The term ‘radical right-wing actors’ will be used in this article to identify those formal and informal associations loosely (sometimes more closely) connected along a wide range of characteristics, among which pursuing undemocratic (in some cases violent) incentives targeting people identified in their discourse as ‘Roma’ is a common, binding element. In this definition ‘radical right-wing’ stands right to ‘conservative right-wing’ on the political spectrum, and is followed by ‘extreme right-wing’ (for example neo-Nazi organizations) at the extreme right end of the spectrum. Where the nature of actions or discourse implies, for example because of the involvement of neo-Nazi organizations, the more diffuse notion, ‘extremist and right wing’ will also be used.

The analytical framework

Broadly speaking the thesis – as elaborated in more detail above – builds on the concept of securitization that emerged from constructivist thought in international relations. Accordingly, securitization is understood as an extreme version of politicization that ‘upgrades’ an issue from the level of social and political discourse to the level of security discourse. This means identifying an existential threat that demands urgent and immediate attention, as well as the use of extraordinary measures to counter this threat.³⁷ As non-conventional, non-military threats – such as threats to societal security – are more difficult to quantify and justify as truly existential, more explanation is needed regarding how extremist actors can abuse securitizing discourse for such argumentation.

Specifically speaking about the methodology of the thesis, securitization, as a process-oriented conception of security, examines how a certain issue is transformed into a matter of

³⁷ Buzan et al., “A New Framework for Analysis”, 24-25; Wæver, “Securitization and Desecuritization”, 51.

security. As an inter-subjective and socially constructed process it aims to understand ‘who securitizes, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent object), why, with what results, and not least, under what conditions.’³⁸ When examining the political practices of domestic extremism, Manuel Mireanu argues along this narrative: ‘Extremist groups use a mechanism of security to gain legitimacy for their actions. Leading members of political extremist groups articulate speech acts that speak on behalf of the society, attempt to securitize threats taken from the social imaginary and then propose urgent measures to tackle these threats.’³⁹ Therefore in the thesis I will use process tracing for mapping up how in the period 2006-2010 Hungarian radical and extremist right wing actors carried out a securitization attempt of Hungarian Roma population. The peak of the process was in the running-up period to the 2009 European and 2010 national parliamentary elections, escalating into a series of threat marches in 2007-2010 and acts of physical violence against Roma residents in 2008-2010 (see Chapter 3).

The conceptual framework of the thesis in several aspects goes beyond the traditional interpretation and use of the Copenhagen model of securitization introduced earlier. First, in accordance with the critical remarks of Thierry Balzacq, I view and examine ‘securitization as a pragmatic process, including the context and the features of the audience, as well as the relations of the parties concerned.’⁴⁰ Therefore, I will apply process tracing and two new conceptual elements will be introduced: trigger events and securitization moves that brought the process forward and elevated discourse to more and more securitized levels. Within this broader framework the securitizing discourse (speech act) will be only one of the factors that I examine.

Second, securitization as a discursive practice will be explained by using the concept of ‘radical othering’ as put forward by Lene Hansen (see below) in order to highlight the logic of

³⁸ Buzan et al., “A New Framework for Analysis”, 32.

³⁹ Mireanu, *Domestic extremism – A political analysis of security and violence*, 43.

⁴⁰ Balzacq, 2011. “Enquiries into Methods: A New Framework for Securitization Analysis”, 52-53.

right wing extremists who constructed a ‘negative pole’, an image of any adversary (Roma) to the majority population (Hungarians).⁴¹ This goes beyond traditional speech act analysis because the underlying sentiments, prejudices and the negative image of Roma strongly present in Hungarian societal thought also need to be studied. Therefore, Chapter 3 will offer a more detailed examination of discourses, including Jobbik’s formal political and changing media discourses and the image of Roma represented in various media sources in the 2006-2010 timeframe.

Third, securitization as a political practice and tool of the radical right wing will be studied in order to understand the motives of securitization – thus the question of political entrepreneurship will be briefly addressed to give a realistic explanation of events.

As I mentioned, when analyzing the securitization process, three trigger events (at Olaszliszka, Veszprém, Sajóbábony locations) and three securitization moves (discourse on ‘Roma criminality’, threat marches by Magyar Gárda and a series of physical attacks against Roma) are identified. I argue that through this process the normally politicized issues of public safety and criminality, occasionally accompanied with active scapegoating and blaming in education and social welfare controversies were used in a securitizing discourse. This also means an atypical approach to securitization where I do not point to one single event or one definite speech act that identifies (constructs) the securitized threat. What follows is a process-oriented explanation that gives much space to examining the context in which securitization took place, what means the securitizing actor applied, and explaining why the audience was receptive to the securitization attempt.

Following upon the criticism by Matt McDonald introduced above, I will identify *trigger events* that escalated the process to a higher level and *securitization moves* that kept moving the process forward. (Figure 1)

⁴¹ Hansen, “A Case for Seduction? Evaluating the Poststructuralist Conceptualization of Security”, 370

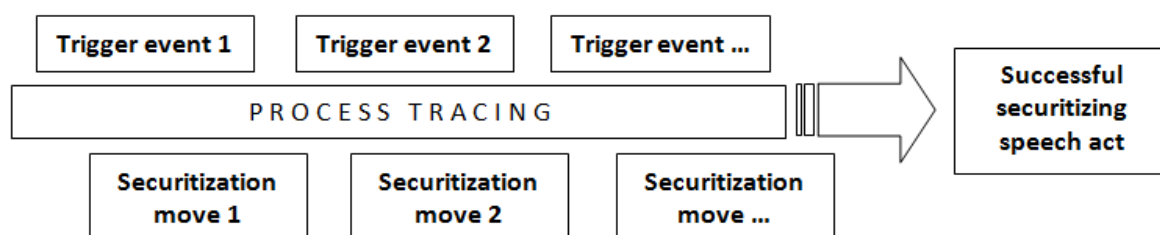


Figure 1: The theoretical scheme of process tracing for the securitization of Roma in Hungary leading up to the successful securitizing speech act (2006-2009)

This methodological approach also offers an answer to the remarks of Thierry Balzacq in which he put forward ‘three basic assumptions: (i) that an effective securitization is audience-centered; (ii) that securitization is context-dependent; (iii) that an effective securitization is power-laden.’⁴² The issue of audience will be addressed in the following subchapter when the negative attitudes and prevalent strong anti-Roma sentiments attributed to majority Hungarian society will be described. The context of securitization und underlying dynamics of power (i.e. developing political support) will be mapped up through process tracing in the period 2006-2010 shown by Figure 1. While the ‘effective securitization move’ hereby named as ‘successful securitizing speech act’ – identified not only as the result of the process described but as a distinctive element, indeed as a speech act of justification – also needs further explanation.

The Copenhagen School stipulated that a securitizing move in itself does not constitute a successful securitization attempt. For the securitizing move to be successful, it must be accepted by the audience, what is demonstrated by the demand for state (government) action. My thesis identifies the statement by former Mayor of Miskolc Sándor Káli (member of the then governing Socialist Party) on November 16, 2009 as the speech act that verified successful securitization. Then he commented on a violent clash between Roma and non-Roma residents in Sajóbábony a day earlier as ‘there was a need to prepare for circumstances

⁴² Balzacq, “The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context”, p. 171.

of civil war.⁴³ I identify this step as a ‘successful securitizing speech act’⁴⁴ as the head of the local government authority, who was inherently tasked to avoid securitization and to prevent societal conflict, openly justified that tensions were to surpass a level when state action becomes necessary in order to avoid the escalation of violence.

This specific case is identified as the ‘successful securitizing speech act’ within the wider framework of the securitization process, as the commentary came from the political left, evaluating it as an element of the ongoing highly charged political discourse and thus justifying the existence of a securitized discourse. Taken as such, it also satisfies the criteria that Wæver identified for a successful speech act: it was delivered by an authentic, authorized representative of the then governing Socialist Party; the occasion was significant as the violent clash on the previous day and Káli’s statement received heightened attention in Hungary and it was repeatedly cited in national media. Also, Káli’s statement generated significant response on behalf of the society and the political elite as well. (Figure 2)

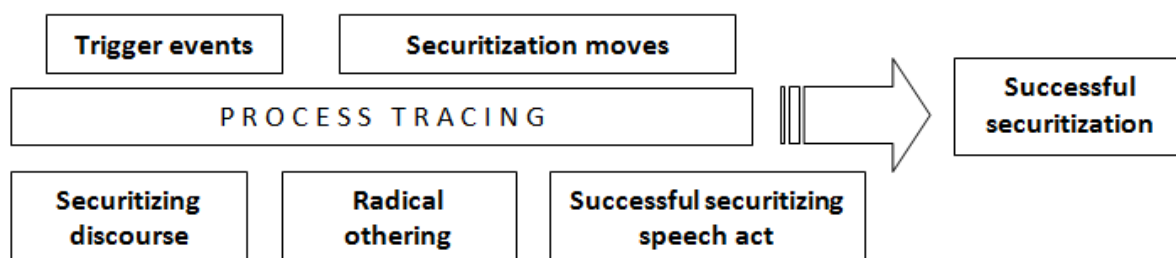


Figure 2: The elements of the process that led to a successful securitization of Roma in Hungary (2006-2010)

From the analytical perspective there is one more element of the process that needs to be carefully described: ‘radical othering’. This creates the connective tissue among societal phenomena (public resentment, negative public perceptions and attitudes towards Roma) and

⁴³ “Tömegverekedés miatt zárták le Sajóbáonyt.” Origo.hu, November 15, 2009. Accessed May 1, 2014. <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20091115-sajobabony-tomegverekedes-miatt-lezarta-a-rendorseg-a-varost.html>

⁴⁴ The ‘speech act’, as defined by Wæver, is the specific element of discourse which clearly identifies a threat to society. The success of such speech act depends on many factors, for example on who (an authentic, authorized actor), among what circumstances (on a significant occasion), at what level (national media) delivers it, and what response it generates on behalf of the society and political elites. Wæver, *Security the Speech Act*, 8.

political action (upgrading political discourse on public safety, economic concerns and linking these to Roma through scapegoating, blaming and othering) by radical and extreme right wing securitizing actors. As Lene Hansen defines, ‘radical othering’ is ‘the discursive process of identification through which the image of a negative pole is constructed against one’s self-identification.’⁴⁵ Thus, an image of an ‘enemy’ that bears negative characteristics and poses a clearly defined threat to ‘us’ is constructed.⁴⁶

In relation to the Hungarian case it is the constructed image of ‘Roma’ that had been framed by radical and extreme right wing actors. This image depicts Roma people within an ethnicizing groupist discourse through blaming and hate speech as ‘parasites, burden to society, criminals’ etc. Such construction of the ‘threat’ identified by the radical and extreme right wing would ‘justify a need to act to discipline the Roma’ as some of them argued. The constructed, racist nature of this discourse clearly builds on the public perceptions of ‘Roma otherness’ and prevailing negative attitudes towards ‘the Roma’ documented in recent years’ empirical research, as it will be explained in Chapter 1.

The most significant limitation to the process tracing analytical framework introduced above is the extensive media and political discourse analysis that is needed to precisely underpin the claims and argumentation. Given the relatively long time period (4 years), the high number of incidents ranging from education and social controversies that had been ethnicized to threat marches and physical violence targeting Roma people requires either the

⁴⁵ In her 1997 article Lene Hansen – later widely applied in analytical case studies – studied the ways and methods of how security identity is developed and how threats are defined by the state according to poststructuralist schools of security studies (like the Copenhagen School). She builds on the dyadic approach of differentiating between Self and Other, presenting three levels of the Other: the ontological level (the perception of the Other’s being in relation to the Self along the Self/Other dichotomy); the axiological level (a valuation of the Other in terms of moral status and ‘affection’ as being inferior, equal or superior to Us); and the praxeological level (the practical policy towards the Other: modifying the Other (assimilation, enslavement, extermination), modifying oneself to the Other (active neutrality, deliberate indifference) or submission to the Other (self-assimilation). Based on this concept, Hansen defines the ‘radical Other’ as one attributed a high degree of difference from Self, associated with securitized or highly politicized attributes, as an existential threat, as a threat to security. This concept serves as one of the theoretical centerpieces of the thesis, identifying how ‘Roma’ have been identified as such ‘radical Other’ by radical and extreme right-wing actors in Hungary. Hansen, “A Case for Seduction?”, 369-397.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 370.

analysis of thousands of media records or selectivity within this potential pool of discourse elements. The varying focus of these events under scrutiny is moving in-between local significance and national visibility, thus it suggests the need for well-judged selectivity. Also, radical nationalist Jobbik and extremist groups have less access to mainstream media, therefore developed their own (mainly online) media channels (like openly racist kuruc.info and barikad.hu) besides using political statements. Access to archived information on these sites is limited.

Last but not least we need to emphasize that identifying and analyzing the securitization process is not the end of the story, but in this specific case, the central government's response and desecuritization attempts also need to be briefly summarized. These, beginning in 2009 temporarily prevented further escalation and full-fledged securitization. However, we need to keep in mind that given the prevailing tension in Hungarian society the desecuritization process is (will be) a complex one, its in-depth analysis would go beyond the current analysis as also indicated earlier.

I. Public perceptions of ‘Roma otherness’ in Hungary

As the analytical framework of the thesis has explained, the subjective societal perception and constructed image of Roma and related negative attitudes, stereotypes prevailing in Hungarian society stand at the core of my thesis. According to my claim, these negative attitudes created a receptive medium open to the anti-Roma radical right-wing discourse that was successfully used by Jobbik to generate political capital after 2006 by constructing a ‘Roma issue’ and securitizing it. I do not claim that it is the exclusive driver behind the successful securitizing discourse of Jobbik, but a predominant determining factor in a wider set of ‘enablers’, including failures of government policies, the negative effects of economic recession that caused a transformation of social redistribution systems, strong welfare chauvinism present in Hungarian society, long-term criminality trends, etc.

Regarding my analysis on a highly sensitive contemporary issue of politics and a topic of methodological debates, we must keep in mind what Rogers Brubaker pointed out: ‘we cannot identify clearly bound communities in society as ‘groups’, having static patterns of self-identification.’⁴⁷ Also any attempt to identify cultural or any other set of characteristics that would attempt to ‘objectively’ characterize individuals belonging to ‘Roma’ has been fruitless in Hungary (see an outstanding puzzle of the debate during the 1990s by Kemény, Ladányi, Szelényi, Kertesi and Havas.⁴⁸), therefore I do not attempt either to do so. Besides avoiding obvious concerns about analytical fallacies described in the Introduction, actually there is no need to address the self-identification of ‘Roma’ here as the thesis is focused on the subjective perceptions of ‘Roma otherness’ in Hungarian society which does not necessarily coincide with the objective self-image, or any set of cultural or other characteristics of any individuals who identify themselves as being ‘Roma’.

⁴⁷ Brubaker, “Ethnicity without groups”, 166

⁴⁸ Havas and Kemény, “A magyarországi romákról”; Ladányi and Szelényi “Ki a cigány?”; Ladányi and Szelényi “Az etnikai besorolás objektivitásáról”; Havas et al., “A relatív cigány a klasszifikációs küzdőtéren”; Ladányi and Szelényi “Még egyszer az etnikai besorolás objektivitásáról”

The ‘socially constructed image of Roma’ – that mostly bears negative features and connotations independent of what reality might be – has already been extensively studied empirically in Hungary. Thus, the following subchapters are not discussing and describing who ‘Roma’ are and how Roma people identify themselves or are externally identified, but it is the societal representation of all those individuals who are identified externally as being ‘Roma’ in colloquial discourse. Empirical research has also been using such a colloquial, informal definition of ‘Roma’.

Relevant empirical research is characteristically based on two main approaches: ethnographic studies aim to describe the cultural traits, customs and habits of Roma people, while related wider sociological studies describe those circumstances among which Roma people live, for example housing conditions, education and employment opportunities, income status, etc.⁴⁹ In many cases we can recover information from cross-cutting examinations of comprehensive research on poverty, employment and housing across the whole population, based on which focused thematic analyses referring to Roma might be carried out.⁵⁰ Regarding the current thesis, it is not this set of characteristics that are of central importance, but society’s image of, and opinion about these. This specialized question lies at the crossroads of sociological and socio-psychological research on the values and attitudes of Hungarian society regarding majority-minority relations, xenophobia and prejudice that relies on a well-developed research base and literature built on TÁRKI Social Research Institute, the Faculty of Social Sciences at Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences, the Institute for Minority Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and several other educational and research institutions, as well as on the work of opinion polling agencies. The following subchapters will summarize the most important findings of relevant research on the prevailing

⁴⁹ See for example: Kemény, Janky and Lengyel, *A magyarországi cigányság 1971-2003*; Kemény, *Roma of Hungary*. An overview of research literature on Roma can be found in Dupcsik, *A magyarországi cigányvizsgálatok cigányképe*.

⁵⁰ See for example: Kertesi, *The Employment of Roma – Evidence from Hungary*.

attitudes and stereotypes towards ‘Roma’ that have prevailed in Hungary and will point out how these have changed, in certain aspects deteriorated in the past decade in Hungary.

I.1. Prevailing attitudes and stereotypes towards Roma in Hungary in the 1990s

The research results on the social attitudes towards Roma in Hungary around the change of regime period were summarized in a comprehensive study by Lázár Guy.⁵¹ When examining the social representation of Roma, he gave an assessment of the characteristics attributed to Roma by members of the society, comparing results from 1987 and 1992. He came to the conclusion that mostly negative stereotypes about Roma were present in this period, and that these negative stereotypes were mostly related to personal relations, contacts and the way of living. When asked about whether certain characteristics were attributed to Roma people or not, a significant majority of respondents characterized Roma as ‘violent, lazy, unreliable, dirty, uneducated and parasitic’ despite the fact that the results revealed a somewhat improving picture between 1987 and 1992, as shown in Table 1.

| ‘Roma people are...’ | 1987 (N=874) | 1992 (N=1201) | Difference |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| Violent | 79 | 71 | -8 |
| Lazy | 78 | 68 | -10 |
| Unreliable | 68 | 65 | -3 |
| Dirty | 76 | 63 | -13 |
| Uneducated | 71 | 62 | -9 |
| Parasitic | 70 | 62 | -8 |
| Joyful | 59 | 53 | -6 |
| Poor | 52 | 45 | -7 |
| Antipathetic | 50 | 41 | -9 |
| Unfriendly | 41 | 28 | -13 |

Table 1: Characteristics attributed to Roma people according to Guy’s research (the percentage of respondents who agreed)⁵²

According to Guy, negative stereotypes were weakening by the beginning of the 1990s, as indicated in Table 2. Between 1987 and 1992 the proportion of those who would have segregated Roma within society had decreased by 16 per cent, of those who would have

⁵¹ Lázár, “A felnőtt lakosság nemzeti identitása a kisebbségekhez való viszony tükrében”

⁵² Ibid. 58.

used coercion against them fell by 13%, of those who would have assimilated them by 12%, while of those who thought Roma were not ordinary, good people and those who did not believe Roma could fit into society by 2 per cent. Additionally, there was a 13 per cent increase among those who would have granted autonomy to Roma and 7 per cent increase among those who thought it was important to preserve Roma cultural traits.⁵³

| Statement | 1987 (N=762) | 1992 (N=1200) | Difference |
|--|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| There are worthy Roma people, but most of them are not. | 91 | 87 | -4 |
| Roma should be forced to live the way other people do. | 78 | 65 | -13 |
| Roma should not give up their customs and habits. | 69 | 76 | +7 |
| Roma culture enriches Hungarian culture. | 66 | 67 | +1 |
| Roma people will not integrate into Hungarian society. | 66 | 64 | -2 |
| Roma people do not deserve support. | 33 | 20 | -13 |
| Roma people should be completely separated from the rest of society. | 39 | 23 | -16 |
| Roma people should become Hungarian in every aspect. | 37 | 25 | -12 |
| The Hungarian government should do more for Roma people. | 23 | 18 | -5 |

Table 2: Respondents' opinion about Roma people according to Guy's research⁵⁴

This positive change was attributed by social scientists to the democratization of society, making people more conscious of democratic norms, political freedoms and minority rights, as well as institutionalizing the political representation and self-governance of political and ethnic minorities.⁵⁵ According to Enyedi et al the anti-Roma sentiment between 1994 and 2002 decreased from 56 points to 44 on a scale of 100 which was attributed to the increased political discourse on non-discrimination, integration and social inclusion. Anti-Roma sentiment was not a fundamental characteristic of any major political party during these years (MSZP – 46 points, Fidesz – 48 points), while the two ends of the spectrum were represented by liberal SZDSZ (24 points) and extreme right MIÉP (64 points).⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid. 79.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ For a more detailed explanation see: Csepli, Fábián, and Sík, "Xenofóbia és a cigányságról alkotott vélemények.", 462.

⁵⁶ Enyedi et al., "Nöttek-e az előítéletek Magyarországon?", 385-386.

In the years that followed the change of regime period, both experience and sociological research underpinned that those identified by majority society as belonging to the Roma minority were considered as losers of the change of regime.⁵⁷ The fundamental transformation of the Hungarian economy practically erased many of those sectors in which Roma people had been employed, resulting in sky-rocketing unemployment and in a situation for low-skilled workers on the job market that was even more difficult than before. Meanwhile xenophobic attitudes and prejudices that already then attributed Hungarian society were given an impetus as the transformation period resulted in increased societal tensions. Thus society's relation to poverty and the poor has changed for the more negative and was brought more to the forefront of social thought.⁵⁸ Those identified as Roma had to face parallel revulsions regarding cultural and ethnic otherness and the negative attitudes towards the poor.⁵⁹

Enyedi et al also pointed out that the negative socio-economic effects of the change of regime that brought about increasing impoverishment and a growing gap within social strata were especially unfavorable for Roma: 'As a result of the transformation of the social welfare system, local conflicts of social interest had often been burdened by an ethnic undertone. Regarding this phenomenon, social scientists (Ladányi – Szelényi 2002, Gábos – Szívós 2002) warned about the dangers of ethnicizing poverty. Besides ethnocentrism the main source of anti-Roma sentiments has become "welfare chauvinism", the fear that social benefits provided to ethnic minorities [*among whom the ratio of poor was proportionately higher* – Cs. T.] could endanger the sustainability of the whole welfare system.'⁶⁰ Székelyi, Örkény and Csepeli came to the conclusion that 'there was a strong correlation between the inclination to discrimination and the societal image of poverty-stricken Roma people.'⁶¹

⁵⁷ Havas and Kemény, "A magyarországi romákról."

⁵⁸ Fábán, *Tekintélyelvűség és előítéletek*.

⁵⁹ An assessment of these processes is given by Székelyi, Örkény and Csepeli, "Romakép a mai magyar társadalomban."

⁶⁰ Enyedi et al. "Nöttek-e az előítéletek Magyarországon?" 375.

⁶¹ Székelyi, Örkény and Csepeli, "Romakép a mai magyar társadalomban", 32.

Based on empirical evidence, György Csepli summarized the characteristics of the representation of Roma in Hungary along eight negative stereotypes:⁶²

- great societal distancing;
- overestimation of the absolute numbers and the growth rate of Roma people within Hungarian society;
- strong prejudices often embodied in blaming ('thief', 'criminal');
- a preference for radical ways of societal conflict resolution (deportation, segregation);
- collective paranoia ('Roma want to do harm');
- 'Romaphobia' (anticipation of fear);
- segregation in schools;
- intolerance (forced homogenization).

In sum, studies as early as in the 1980s and repeatedly during the 1990s⁶³ highlighted that Hungarian society in general is very much characterized by ethnocentrism, xenophobia and welfare chauvinism that all strengthened disinclination and prejudices towards Roma in Hungary. Some of these results are put into a broader context in the next subchapter to show tendencies complemented with research results beyond 2000, because we can observe multiple tendencies in the 1990s. On the one hand, there was certain relative improvement around the change of regime attributed to the democratization of society and later thanks to the positive effects of changing political culture, including more anti-discrimination and minority rights protection measures. While on the other hand the burden put on society by the economic transformation strengthened ethnocentrism and anti-Roma sentiment in the form of

⁶² Csepli, "Cigányok és zsidók: diszkrimináció és intolerancia a mai magyar társadalomban." Accessed May 2, 2014. http://konfliktuskutato.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=278 These conclusions are based on two decades of empirical research quoted throughout the thesis. A sample of these research results is included in this chapter.

⁶³ Fábrián, *Tekintélyelvűség és előítéletek*, Székelyi et al., "Romakép a mai magyar társadalomban", Csepli, "A nagyvilágon e kívül..."

welfare chauvinism. These phenomena could build on the generally high level of prejudice within Hungarian society and the specifically strong negative sentiments felt towards Roma.

I.2.Strengthening negative perceptions after the turn of the millennium

If we compare the 1990s with the first decade of the new millennium, we find that anti-Roma sentiments, negative and also discriminative attitudes towards Roma have been significantly strengthening in every aspect in Hungarian society. Despite the fact that systematic, comparable empirical research results have been fragmentary in the past two decades;⁶⁴ those available have revealed these trends as it is summarized in Table 3.

| | Ratio of respondents agreeing with the statement | | | | | |
|--|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <i>Positive items</i> | 1994 | 1997 | 2000 | 2002 | 2008 | 2011 |
| More social benefits should be given to Roma than to non-Roma. | 15 | 10 | 15 | 12 | 8 | 11 |
| All Roma children have the right to attend the same class as non-Roma. | - | - | 88 | 89 | 86 | 82 |
| <i>Negative items</i> | | | | | | |
| The problems of Roma would be solved if they finally started working. | 89 | - | 85 | 88 | 78 | 82 |
| The inclination to criminality is in the blood of Roma. | 64 | - | 55 | 53 | 60 | 60 |
| It is right that there are still pubs, clubs and discos where Roma are not let in. | 46 | 47 | 38 | 33 | 36 | 42 |
| <i>N</i> | 988 | 3,857 | 1,521 | 1,022 | 4,040 | 3,040 |

Table 3: Attitudes towards Roma in the 1990s and 2000s in Hungary⁶⁵

Regarding social benefits provided to Roma people, only 11 per cent of respondents supported that more should be provided to them, while still more than 4/5 of respondents agreed in 2011 that their problems would be solved ‘if they finally started working’. Furthermore, still 60 per cent of respondents agreed that ‘the inclination to criminality is in

⁶⁴ Csepeli et al., “Xenofóbia és a cigányságról alkotott vélemények”; Publicus Research, “Cigányellenesség a norma.” Accessed April 20, 2014 http://www.publicus.hu/blog/ciganyellenesség_norma/ Bernát, “Integráció a fejekben”; Bernát et al., *The Roots of Radicalism and Anti-Roma Attitudes on the Far Right. Hungary: Where Do We Stand in 2012?*

⁶⁵ Bernát et al, 4.

the blood of gypsies’, showing why ‘Roma criminality’ could be used so effectively in recent years’ political and media discourse. Regarding attitudes to segregation, we can see a slightly deteriorating trend in the past decade both in schools and in public places. Bernát et al emphasized in their research summary, that ‘traditional socio-demographic characteristics have only a small impact on attitudes towards the Roma, suggesting that anti-gypsy sentiment is fairly evenly (and widely) spread throughout society.’⁶⁶

If we also add the results of polls conducted by Publicus Research in 2009 that focused on public attitudes, we find similar results: people think of Roma as having an inclination to criminality, conflicting attitude, characterized by unemployment, societal differentiation and self-segregation, as assessed in Table 4.⁶⁷

| Statement | Rather disagree | Rather agree |
|---|-----------------|--------------|
| There are certain criminal acts that are more often committed by Roma perpetrators, therefore respective legal measures should be applied for Roma. | 45% | 46% |
| It is better if Roma do not mix with non-Roma. | 40% | 50% |
| Roma are not more inclined to commit violent crimes than non-Roma. | 52% | 37% |
| Roma are inherently unable to coexist with non-Roma. | 38% | 52% |
| The increasing number of Roma people within society is a threat to societal security. | 27% | 62% |
| Roma people should be given more support than non-Roma people. | 74% | 18% |
| A certain number of students of Roma origin should be admitted to institutions of higher education irrespective of whether they fulfilled application requirements. | 75% | 16% |

Table 4: Public sentiment expressed towards Roma along certain dimensions of cooperation and conflict.⁶⁸

Another telling research, conducted by Marketing Centrum in January 2009 (still before the murder cases in Veszprém and Tatárszentgyörgy localities that received outstanding media attention and were strongly bound to the discourse about Roma) drew a detailed picture

⁶⁶ Bernát et al., 2.

⁶⁷ Publicus Research, “Cigányellenesség a norma” Accessed April 20, 2014 http://www.publicus.hu/blog/ciganyellenesseg_norma/

⁶⁸ Ibid.

of attitudes related to the Roma minority and of anti-Roma sentiments.⁶⁹ Along the questions and results, as summarized in Table 5, four attitudes had been mapped up in the research: On the one hand, about two thirds of respondents rejected discrimination in general (1), while on the other hand 53% were against the positive discrimination of Roma and 40% in favor (2). In contrast, 78% showed anti-Roma attitudes (3), while 54% devolved any problems (4), claiming that ‘there is no discrimination at work’ and ‘there is no Roma issue’.

| Statement | ‘Fully agree’ (per cent) | Median score of answers |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Primarily the Roma themselves are responsible for arising inter-ethnic conflicts. | 41 | +52 |
| Roma people do not respect private property and cannot fit into society. | 39 | +49 |
| There would be no problems with Roma if at last they learnt to work. | 35 | +47 |
| Roma people often intimidate peaceful people. | 37 | +44 |
| Roma people are just like everyone else, there are both good and bad people among them. | 34 | +40 |
| Roma people have theft in their blood. | 32 | +40 |
| Roma folk culture is just as worthy as Hungarian folk culture. | 35 | +37 |
| Roma are often discriminated against at work. | 21 | +23 |
| Everyone should speak out against the discrimination of ethnic minorities. | 21 | +16 |
| Everyone would get along better if Roma and non-Roma children would learn segregated in schools. | 23 | +12 |
| Marriage between Roma and non-Roma usually end up unhappy. | 13 | +7 |
| It is outrageous that Roma and non-Roma children are segregated in schools. | 19 | +6 |
| Studies of Roma children should be supported by fellowships. | 13 | -9 |
| There is no ‘Roma issue’ in Hungary. There is only ‘poverty issue’. | 15 | -11 |
| Roma applicants to graduate programs should be aided by means of positive discrimination. | 10 | -27 |

Table 5: Statements and responses mapping up attitudes and sentiments related to Roma⁷⁰

These results from 2009 also show what people consider to be the most pressing problems of Roma: unemployment and finding a job (21% mentioned in the first place and 46% mentioned altogether); criminality (17% and 41%); ignorance, uncivilized behavior (9% and 32%); poverty (8% and 30%); lack of education or lack of access to education (9% and

⁶⁹ Marián, “Milyenek a cigányok?”

⁷⁰ Ibid, 9.

26%); alcoholism (7% and 19%).⁷¹ These are very strong, mostly negative representative elements, often coupled with negative prejudice in a more generalized sense as well (like in the case of poverty).

Looking at the determining factors beyond such sentiments, Bernát et al. using the data set referred to in Table 3, came to the conclusion that ‘the strongest relationship is not between anti-gypsy sentiment and any socio-demographic characteristic, but between anti-gypsy sentiment and political preference: a disproportionate number of those who agreed with all the negative statements about the Roma are supporters of the far-right Jobbik party (which hardly comes as a surprise). What is more surprising is that less than half of Jobbik voters (46 per cent) agreed with all three items, even though the party’s main pillar is anti-gypsy. It is also noteworthy that a third of those who support the two larger parties share this anti-gypsy attitude (Hungarian Socialist Party – 33 per cent; FIDESZ-KDNP – 31 per cent), as do a fifth (21 per cent) of supporters of the small leftist party LMP.’⁷²

This is also supported by the data published in the Political Risk Index of 2010 by Political Capital, highlighting that people encountering more negative attitudes are significantly more inclined towards Jobbik. As Table 6 summarizes, 68% of Jobbik-voters, 55% of Fidesz-voters and 54 of MSZP-voters openly declared anti-Roma sentiments in a 2009 opinion poll.⁷³ We need to highlight that according to these results the majority of Hungarian people perceive the Roma population as a threat to societal security (38% fully agree, 25% rather agree – altogether 63%). Moreover, this is true along any party preference measured (Jobbik: 85%, FIDESZ: 64%, MSZP: 56% fully or rather agree). The situation is similar with respect to criminality: almost half of the respondents think that ‘the inclination to criminality is in the blood of gypsies’, giving easy way to discourse on ‘Roma criminality’. (47% of the total population, 66% of Jobbik, 48-48 per cent of FIDESZ and MSZP voters)

⁷¹ Ibid, 15.

⁷² Bernát et al, 2.

⁷³ Political Capital, “Magyarország politikai kockázati indexe”, 60.

| Statement | | Total population | Jobbik | FIDESZ | MSZP |
|---|-------------------|------------------|--------|--------|------|
| A growing Roma population in Hungary means a threat to societal security. | 5:fully agree | 38 | 62 | 37 | 36 |
| | 4 | 25 | 23 | 27 | 20 |
| | 3 | 21 | 11 | 19 | 21 |
| | 2 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 11 |
| | 1: fully disagree | 9 | 1 | 10 | 11 |
| The inclination to criminality is in the blood of gypsies. | 5: fully agree | 26 | 37 | 27 | 27 |
| | 4 | 21 | 29 | 21 | 21 |
| | 3 | 29 | 24 | 29 | 25 |
| | 2 | 11 | 6 | 11 | 11 |
| | 1: fully disagree | 13 | 4 | 12 | 17 |

Table 6: Attitudes shown towards Roma along party preferences in 2009⁷⁴

In sum, this chapter gave an overview of the societal perception of Roma and those related negative attitudes, stereotypes and sentiments that had prevailed in Hungarian society during the 1990s and have remained strong or even strengthened in the past decade. Empirical studies have shown that the perceived representation and also ‘socially constructed image’ of Roma mostly bears negative features and connotations (independent of what reality might be) and highlighted that Hungarian society is very much characterized by ethnocentrism, xenophobia and welfare chauvinism that all strengthened disinclination and prejudices towards Roma. According to my claim, anti-Roma attitudes and stereotypes related to ‘criminality, conflicting attitude, unemployment, social differentiation and segregation’ created a receptive medium open to the anti-Roma radical right-wing discourse that was successfully used by Jobbik to generate political capital after 2006 by constructing a ‘Roma issue’ and securitizing it, as it will be explained in the next chapters.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 61.

II.Radical right-wing actors

The significant strengthening of the radical right wing in Hungary became undeniably apparent in 2009 when Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, identifying itself as a ‘radical nationalist’ party⁷⁵ received almost 430.000 votes (14.77% of all votes cast)⁷⁶ at the European Parliamentary elections. Next year at the national elections more than 850.000 voters (16.67% of all votes cast)⁷⁷ supported the party (reaching more than one million votes, or 20.22% in 2014).⁷⁸ The reasons behind the transformation of the radical right have been under scrutiny since then from various points of view. Besides others, Grajczár and Tóth examined the effects of the economic crisis on boosting radicalism;⁷⁹ Krekó, Juhász and Molnár were focusing on values and attitudes behind growing societal support;⁸⁰ Rudas examined the voter base,⁸¹ while Bíró Nagy and Róna the institutional development of Jobbik;⁸² Karácsony and Róna were researching media discourse,⁸³ while Jeskó and Bakó Tóth the patterns of internet

⁷⁵ As mentioned in the Introduction of the thesis, a widely held view differentiates between radical and extreme right-wing based on the assumption that the radical right-wing accepts the limitations of parliamentary democracy and challenges democratic institutions only rhetorically, while the extreme right-wing directly acts to break these limits and impose undemocratic measures. Róna and Sörös also bring up this problem, signaling that neither international scholarly literature nor national research has clarified which notion would best characterize Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, moreover, they reject the use of the label ‘radical nationalist’ in a scientific paper. (Róna and Sörös, “A kuruc.info nemzedék”, 1.) Therefore, without taking any side in the scholarly debate, I use this term in the thesis to indicate the self-identification of the party, while I use ‘radical right-wing actors’ in accordance with Krekó et al. to identify those formal and informal associations loosely (sometimes more closely) connected along a wide range of characteristics, among which pursuing undemocratic (in some cases violent) incentives targeting Roma is a common, binding element. In this definition ‘radical right-wing’ stands right to ‘conservative right-wing’ (Fidesz) on the political spectrum, and is followed by ‘extreme right-wing’ (for example neo-Nazi organizations) at the extreme right end of the political spectrum.

⁷⁶ Source of data: National Election Office (Országos Választási Iroda) http://www.valasztas.hu/hu/ep2009/7/7_0_index.html Accessed May 10, 2014

⁷⁷ Source of data: National Election Office (Országos Választási Iroda) <http://www.valasztas.hu/dyn/pv10/outroot/vdin1/hu/l403.htm> Accessed May 10, 2014

⁷⁸ Source of data: National Election Office (Országos Választási Iroda) <http://valasztas.hu/dyn/pv14/szavossz/hu/orszlist.html> Accessed May 10, 2014

⁷⁹ Grajczár and Tóth, “Válság, radikalizálódás és az újjászületés ígérete: a Jobbik útja a parlamentbe.”

⁸⁰ Krekó, Juhász and Molnár, “A szélsőjobb iránti társadalmi kereslet növekedése Magyarországon.”

⁸¹ Rudas, “A Jobbik törzsszavazóiról.”

⁸² Bíró Nagy and Róna, “Tudatos radikalizmus. A Jobbik útja a Parlamentbe, 2003-2010.”

⁸³ Karácsony and Róna, “A Jobbik titka. A szélsőjobb magyarországi megerősödésének lehetséges okairól.”

use.⁸⁴ Lately, Dániel Róna gave an outstanding summary and assessment of the research results of the past years in his doctoral thesis.⁸⁵

The researchers referred to above agree that the strengthening of right wing radicalism in general and the evolution of Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom in particular is to be examined along a demand-supply model, also accepted in mainstream literature.⁸⁶ In this approach ‘demand’ on the one hand means those socio-economic macro processes that create a receptive environment for radical ideas (economic crisis, recession, disillusionment with the ruling political elite). ‘Supply’ on the other hand means the political agenda offered by radical actors among whom Jobbik emerged after 2002 and those decisions that brought about the party’s electoral success. In addition, Chapter 1 introduced those prevailing anti-Roma attitudes that created a receptive medium, open to radical right-wing discourse building on scapegoating and blaming – a medium where demand and supply met.

In the following I will argue that in the examined timeframe (2006-2010) radical right wing political entrepreneurs were interested in building on the underlying societal resentment and increase tension between Roma and non-Roma populations in order to appear as protectors of Hungarian population and values against a ‘negative Other’, thus to gain political support. The success of such motives was demonstrated by significant political gains at the 2009 EP and 2010 national elections. (Even though I do not claim that the anti-Roma campaign was the sole source of increasing political support).

⁸⁴ Jeskó, Bakó and Tóth, “Jobbik: Egy net-network párt természetrajza. A radikális jobboldal webes hálózatai.”

⁸⁵ Róna, “Jobbik-jelenség. A Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom Népszerűségének okai.”

⁸⁶ Carter, Elisabeth L. *The Extreme Right in Western Europe*; Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge, Cambridge, 2007; Norris, *Radical Right: Voters and Parties in Electoral Market*. Quoted by: Róna, “Jobbik-jelenség. A Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom Népszerűségének okai”, 6.

II.1. The evolution of Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom

After the unsuccessful electoral performance of the ‘traditional’ extreme right wing political party, MIÉP (Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja – Hungarian Justice and Life Party) at the 2002 national parliamentary elections, Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom (Movement for a Better Hungary) had been established as a political party in 2003 to promote a ‘traditionalist – radical nationalist political agenda’ in a more modern, youthful manner.⁸⁷ Running together with MIÉP at the 2006 elections still proved to be unsuccessful;⁸⁸ therefore, in order to stand the chance of getting into parliament at the next elections, the party renewed its leadership and transformed its political discourse significantly.⁸⁹

The failure of MIÉP also created a window of opportunity for a new radical/extreme right wing actor to appear on the political scene. By addressing previously neglected issues, such as societal and economic problems, public safety and criminality concerns, etc. that were related to wide strata of Hungarian society, also playing on prevalent authoritarian values and strengthening anti-establishment sentiment Jobbik could fill in a ‘missing role’.

Jobbik’s way into Parliament is examined in detail by Bíró Nagy et al, who identify the autumn of 2006 as the first major break-through for the party.⁹⁰ Two events – street violence subsequent to the political scandal caused by premier Gyurcsány’s leaked Balatonőszöd speech and the Olaszliszka murder case – provided excellent opportunities to radical and extreme actors for great publicity on national media and highlight some political messages that resonate within society. It was the time from when anti-Roma discourse gradually became a fundamental feature of the party (for details see the next chapter). From 2007 on Jobbik could proceed with establishing and spreading out its local network of party

⁸⁷ Körösnéyi et al., *A magyar politikai rendszer*, 284.

⁸⁸ MIÉP gained 4.37% of votes in 2002, while the MIÉP – Jobbik joint list gained only 2.20% in 2006. Source of data: National Election Office, Ibid.

⁸⁹ “Bethlen Gábor program.” Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, 2007. Accessed 05 May, 2014. http://www.jobbik.hu/sites/jobbik.hu/down/File/Bethlen_Gabor_program.pdf

⁹⁰ Bíró Nagy et al, 3-4.

institutions.⁹¹ Thus, within two years the party became able to field more than 700 local organizations, welcome thousands of new party members and run candidates in almost every electoral district. Their political agenda was also developing rapidly – and very effectively –, moving from more ideological aims in 2007 (‘Bethlen Gábor Program’) to a detailed public policy goals by 2010 (‘Radikális változás’). Prior to 2007 anti-communism and anti-capitalism, from 2007 on anti-Roma discourse centered on ‘Roma criminality’, public safety and order, while in the 2009-2010 campaign periods anti-elite and anti-EU elements of political agenda were present.⁹² For the argumentation of the thesis, the new elements of discourse on criminality and public order, strengthening a socially constructed confrontational dimension of Roma – non-Roma relations are of utmost importance.⁹³

The multiple reasons for the growing political support towards Jobbik are summarized by Dániel Róna as a complex set of correlating factors as shown in Figure 3.

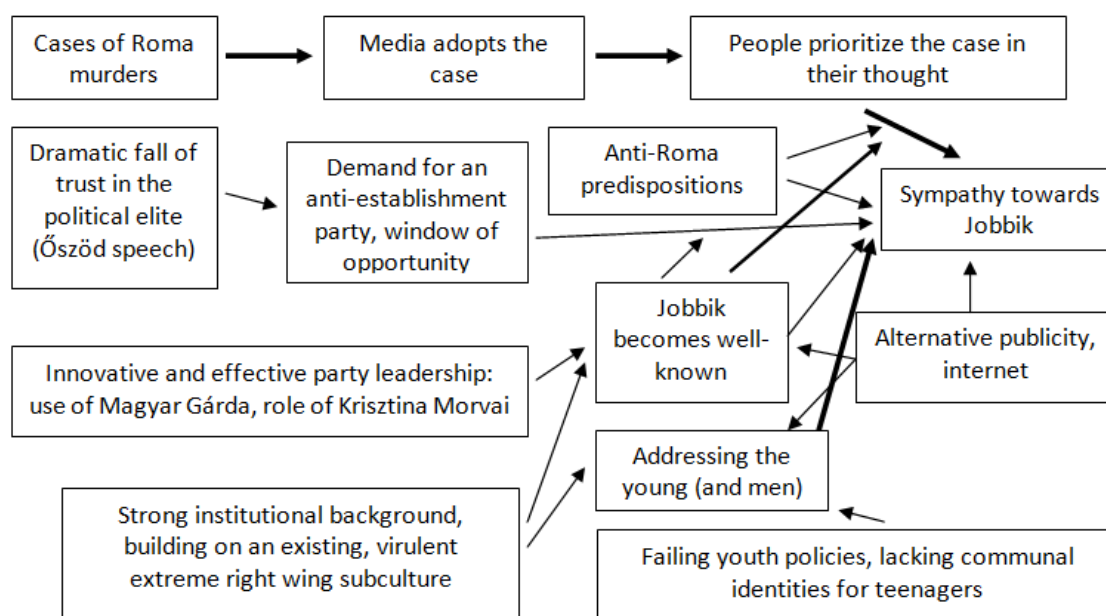


Figure 3: The correlating set of factors that have resulted in Jobbik's success⁹⁴

⁹¹ Bíró Nagy et al, 6.

⁹² Bíró Nagy et al, 36.

⁹³ Political Capital, “*Láttelel 2008*”, 67-71.

⁹⁴ Róna, “Jobbik-jelenség. A Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom Népszerűségének okai.” 172.

Among these factors not only the elements of Jobbik's political agenda but the tools the party used to improve its visibility and outreach to people, are remarkable: a window of opportunity opened up by domestic political crisis; a well-established institutional system and credible representatives; the use of media; the focus on younger generations – and above all abusing any issues framed in relation with Roma.

II.2. Why do radical and extreme right-wing⁹⁵ actors target Roma?

As mentioned above, Jobbik's discourse began focusing on public order and 'Roma criminality' from 2006 on, building on the public's ever stronger desire for order and stability – especially after the 2006 October government crisis and widespread protests. In doing so, the party and related associations were successful in creating their own alternative media (explained in detail in the next chapter). The refraining attitude of Hungarian parliamentary parties from addressing issues of societal and economic concern, created a window of opportunity for Jobbik to identify and openly speak out for an agenda that found response within majority society. It is important to see that this constructed discourse reduced rural public safety concerns to a criminological problem involving Roma, and acts of crime being often referred to as 'Roma criminality'. This resulted in an oversimplifying discourse full of false assumptions discursively equaling 'Roma' and 'criminal' and constructing a 'Roma issue', as it is elaborated upon in the next chapter on discourse.⁹⁶

However, singling out a problem of great societal concern – criminality – could not have been so successful if the issue would not have stayed at the forefront of public awareness and media attention. The foundation of Magyar Gárda and similar/related paramilitary organizations, conducting demonstrative marches in criminality-stricken rural neighborhoods

⁹⁵ Athena Institute has been researching domestic extremism, organizations and hate groups in Hungary through monitoring, independent investigation and fact-based analysis. For more see: <http://www.athenaintezet.hu/index/>

⁹⁶ Political Capital, "Láttelek 2008", 67-71, Political Capital, "Láttelek 2009", 67-69, Bíró Nagy et al, 10-12.

– that were identified as Roma neighborhoods – since 2007 meant the means through which the maintained intensive attention was ensured. On the one hand these actions demonstrated a tangible alternative solution that Jobbik offered for problems of criminality, public safety and order perceived,⁹⁷ while on the other hand the frequently repeated marches offered a spectacular topic for media.

This is a significant element of Jobbik's discourse, because it frames Roma – non-Roma relations along an offensive-defensive dimension in which Jobbik and Magyar Gárda are depicted as protectors of the population from an aggressive, dangerous, threatening 'other' (radical othering) due to the inadequate presence of public authorities. Some analysts even call Magyar Gárda 'the symbol of anti-Roma sentiments'.⁹⁸

While Jobbik in the thesis is identified as the key political entrepreneur attempting a securitization move, there are also a number of formal and informal associations and individuals across the radical-extremist political spectrum, that serve as the executives of the radical nationalist / extremist agenda. Organizations such as Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom, Magyar Gárda, Magyar Gárda Hagyományörző és Kulturális Egyesület, Új Magyar Gárda, Magyar Nemzeti Gárda, Betyársereg, Véderő, Szebb Jövőért Polgárőr Egyesület/Szebb Jövőért Magyar Önvédelem etc.⁹⁹ act on the ambiguous borderlands of democratic institutions, pursuing a racist/extremist/anti-Roma/anti-Semitic agenda and using such rhetoric, very often clearly crossing the border. (Table 7.) These extremist groups go beyond a cultural fundamentalist or traditionalist/nationalist agenda, and some of them organized into paramilitary organizations act as hate groups, conducting threat marches in rural neighborhoods. These associations are not only executors of the radical nationalist

⁹⁷ Eurobarometer 2009 notes that 70% of Hungarians 'perceive an ethnic conflict' between Hungarians and Roma people. Bernát, 320.

⁹⁸ Political Capital, "Láttelelet 2008", 60.

⁹⁹ Sixty-four Counties Youth Movement, Hungarian Guard, Hungarian Guard Traditionalist and Cultural Association, New Hungarian Guard, Hungarian National Guard, Outlaws' Army, Protective Force, For a Better Future Hungarian Civil Guard, etc.

political agenda, but their overall (both democratic and undemocratic) activity served as a catalyst in the securitization process in order to create an atmosphere of fear, physical threat, and to escalate tension. Their relation to Jobbik is evident as in June 2009 the most influential ones met in Szeged and agreed upon harmonizing their activities.¹⁰⁰ The common feature of securitizing actors in the case examined here has been their shared anti-Roma sentiment and extreme right-wing political discourse.

| Radical / extreme right-wing actor | Stance towards democratic norms | Characteristics of organization | Associated risks | Transparency of activities (Associated risk: 1-6) | Estimated strength / support |
|---|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja (MIÉP) | Accepting (in parliament 1998-2002) | Nationalist-traditionalist political party | Rhetorical - ideological confrontation | Transparent (not apply) | 0,04%* |
| Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom | Accepting (in parliament 2010-) | Radical nationalist political party | Rhetorical-ideological confrontation | Transparent (not apply) | 20,3%** |
| Új Magyar Gárda | Accepting – breaching | Nationalist – traditionalist movement / Paramilitary organization | Rhetorical-ideological confrontation, ethnic conflict | Transparent (4) | 200 |
| Magyar Nemzeti Gárda | Accepting – breaching | Nationalist – traditionalist movement / Paramilitary organization | Rhetorical-ideological confrontation, ethnic conflict | Transparent (4) | 100 |
| Hatvannégy Vármegye Ifjúsági Mozgalom | Accepting – breaching | Nationalist-irredentist movement | Rhetorical-ideological confrontation | Transparent (5) | 60 |
| Betyársereg | Breaching | Extremist movement – paramilitary organization | Aggressive mass demonstrations, ethnic conflict | Partly transparent (5) | 60 |
| Szebb Jövőért Magyar Önvédelem | Breaching | Anti-Roma extremist movement – paramilitary organization | Aggressive mass demonstrations, ethnic conflict | Transparent (4) | 100-150 |

Table 7: Major radical and extreme right-wing actors¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Alfahir.hu: Együttműködnek a radikális szervezetek! <http://alfahir.hu/node/30942> Accessed May 15, 2014.

¹⁰¹ Compiled based on Athena Institute's Hate Groups Map (<http://athenaintezet.hu/gyuloletcsoportok/>) and Political Capital, "Láttelek 2008", 66.

The key to understand the connection between prevailing strong anti-Roma sentiments and the rising popular support for these actors is the discourse within the process of securitization assessed in Chapter 3.

III. The securitization attempt targeting Roma in Hungary, 2006-2010

Acts of violence targeting Roma individuals in 2008-2010 raised public attention to an ethnicizing/racist political discourse on behalf of radical right-wing politicians and extreme right-wing actors in Hungary who aimed at constructing a ‘Roma issue’ through political discourse and presenting it as a concern to societal security. As briefly introduced in Chapter 2, it was in a period of transformation of the radical and extremist political right wing that had begun around 2002 and became apparent in 2006, gradually consolidating the position of radical nationalist political party Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom in national politics. Gaining momentum from the violent events that associated the anti-government demonstrations of October 2006, right wing individuals and groups used the window of opportunity opened up by wide-spread societal resentment to enhance their political capital before 2009 European and 2010 national parliamentary elections. This chapter provides the main argument of the thesis analyzing the securitization attempt of radical and extreme right-wing actors through process tracing and discourse analysis.

Hereby I argue that Radical and extremist right wing actors successfully abused the prevalent strong anti-Roma attitudes of Hungarian society and negative public perceptions of the Roma¹⁰² to generate political capital, building on concerns for criminality, public safety and economic regression. These were presented through increased scapegoating and radical othering, centralizing ‘Roma otherness’ – used here as an analytical term – as a key motif of radical right wing discourse. In this discourse a parallel was drawn between high criminality rates, the public’s strong desire to enhance public safety and the settlement patterns of Roma people, calling for the government to take ‘necessary measures to protect the Hungarian people’, primarily in underdeveloped rural regions. Terms, such as ‘Gipsy crime’ and ‘Roma criminality’ that had already been brought up before, reappeared as a key feature of the

¹⁰² Unlike anti-Semitism, anti-Roma attitudes are openly declared, majoritarian characteristics of Hungarian society that are not restricted to the radical and extreme right-wing. Political Capital 2008, p. 22

‘Roma issue’.¹⁰³ Societal discourse went even beyond that, as a significant proportion of Hungarian society has had an abstract image of ‘the Roma’ in mind that is ‘poor, uneducated, unemployed, disproportionately relying on social benefits, more likely to commit criminal offenses’¹⁰⁴ and as being both a burden and a threat to society. An earlier study by Székelyi et al specified ‘welfare chauvinism’ as the link between the perception of poor Roma households as recipients of social benefit and the inclination to discriminate them by other social groups competing for financial resources.¹⁰⁵ When economic conditions deteriorate, such competition becomes harsher – just like since the 2008 economic and financial crisis has hit Hungary.

Recalling the argument of Manuel Mireanu, extremists groups use a mechanism of security to gain legitimacy for their actions. Speaking on behalf of the society they articulate a constructed divide between certain groups within society that are vulnerable and threatened by other groups, and volunteer to take actions against these threats. This not only means that through radical othering society becomes divided between ‘us’ and ‘them’ along lines of extremist ideologies but also means that these groups challenge the monopoly of violence of the state.¹⁰⁶ ‘Political extremism can thus be seen as providing security to a community that feels threatened and that demands security; extremist actions are the exceptional part of an existential discourse based on social fears. These groups are there to ‘rescue’ society from a common enemy, against which the state is either helpless, or in complicity with.’¹⁰⁷

Existing and perceived problems brought up by Jobbik were to set the scene for securitizing the Roma population of Hungary ‘from whom majority society should be protected’. As a result, between 2007 and 2010 – escalating in 2009 before and showing a declining trend after the 2010 national elections – threat marches and intimidation from

¹⁰³ Despite the fact that terms like ‘Gipsy crime’ and ‘Roma criminality’ have duly been discredited in academia for motives of discriminatory ethnic profiling, these have remained parts of public and political discourse.

¹⁰⁴ Bernát, “Integráció a fejekben”, 312-326.; Csepeli, “Cigányok és zsidók: Diszkrimináció és intolerancia a mai magyar társadalomban” Accessed May 2, 2014.

http://konfliktuskutato.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=278

¹⁰⁵ Székelyi et al., “Romakép a mai magyar társadalomban.”

¹⁰⁶ Mireanu, “*Domestic extremism – A political analysis of security and violence*”, 43-44.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 45.

extreme right-wing organizations and individuals targeted rural neighborhoods. In these neighborhoods predominantly poor, segregated people, identified by the local population as Roma, lived.

The wider context of the constructed ‘Roma issue’ went beyond criminality and public safety (even though these were the flagship symbols of anti-Roma discourse as discussed below) and was extended to a variety of concerns regarding education (segregation) and social welfare (benefits) as well. Throughout the period 2007-2009 a slow but continuous escalation took place along this constructed discourse, from time to time presenting various highly disputed issues contextualized in an ethnicizing framework, for example:

- Education controversies: the primary school of Mátraszőlős, primarily attended by Roma children, was closed for bankruptcy on August 30, 2007, just a few days before the beginning of the school year, forcing all children to attend schools in the neighboring settlement, Pásztó. The case was highlighted in national media because of its relevance to the Roma minority.¹⁰⁸
- Public safety concerns: a series of demonstrative (threat) marches were organized by Magyar Gárda and associated organizations, sometimes related to Jobbik’s political demonstrations, sometimes independently. Major rallies included Szentes (November 8, 2007), Tatárszentgyörgy (December 9, 2007), Nyírkáta (April 12, 2008), Vásárosnamény (April 27, 2008), Pátka (June 13, 2008), Sarkad (March 1, 2009), etc. The demonstrative aim of these was to ‘present an alternative for inadequate police presence in rural areas and to prevent criminal offenses’, as discussed in Chapter 2. The marches were either directly targeting neighborhoods where Roma families lived, or communicating anti-Roma messages.

¹⁰⁸ “A lakosságtól vár pénzt a mátraszőlősi iskola.” Origo.hu, September 12, 2007. Accessed May 05, 2014. <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20070912-a-lakossagtol-var-penzt-a-matraszolosi-iskola.html>

- Criminality concerns: Chief of Police of Miskolc, Albert Pásztor on January 30 2009 was talking about local criminality in ethnic terms, generating fluctuating debate on behalf of local and central authorities, the police, Roma authorities, NGOs and the population, also envisaging his resignation, which in the end did not happen.¹⁰⁹ Only a few days later, the murder of handball player Marian Cozma was highlighted in national media from early in ethnicized terms, often identifying the suspects as ‘Roma’ and ‘Roma criminals’. (An elaborated examination of these cases will follow in the next subchapters.)
- Social welfare controversies: Mayor of Monok, Zsolt Szepessy on July 20, 2009 proposed the introduction of a social welfare card that would restrict the use of the social benefit to cover existential expenses. The whole idea was framed in media in relation to Roma who received social benefit.¹¹⁰

During this period the activities of radical and extreme right-wing organizations, including paramilitary groups, became more coordinated and cooperative. Meanwhile, beginning in 2008, a series of physical attacks targeted Roma individuals, and the threat-perception of the population – including both Roma and non-Roma – became more sensitive and alarmed.

The next subchapters will examine the events of the period 2006-2010 in the narrow context of securitization regarding the criminality – public safety discursive trait, being the most effective tool of radical and extreme right actors in their securitization attempt. Through process tracing and discourse analysis I argue that a gradual escalation of tensions took place, eventually becoming a successful securitization attempt. Discourse analysis serves to demonstrate how the key element of the securitization process, radical othering worked.

¹⁰⁹ “A miskolci utcai rablásokat kizárólag cigányok követik el.” Index.hu, January 30, 2009. Accessed May 5, 2104. <http://index.hu/belfold/cigbun090130/>

¹¹⁰ “Szociális kártyát vezetne be a monoki polgármester.” July 20, 2009. Accessed May 5, 2014. <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20090720-a-monoki-polgarmester-szocialis-kartya-bevezeteset-javasolja.html>

III.1.Process tracing

Following the design of the analytical framework for the thesis, three trigger events (at Olaszliszka, Veszprém, Sajóbábony locations) and three securitization moves (discourse on ‘Roma criminality’, threat marches by Magyar Gárda and a series of physical attacks against Roma) are identified when examining the process of securitization. Trigger events escalated the process to a higher level, while securitization moves kept pushing the process forward. (Figure 4)

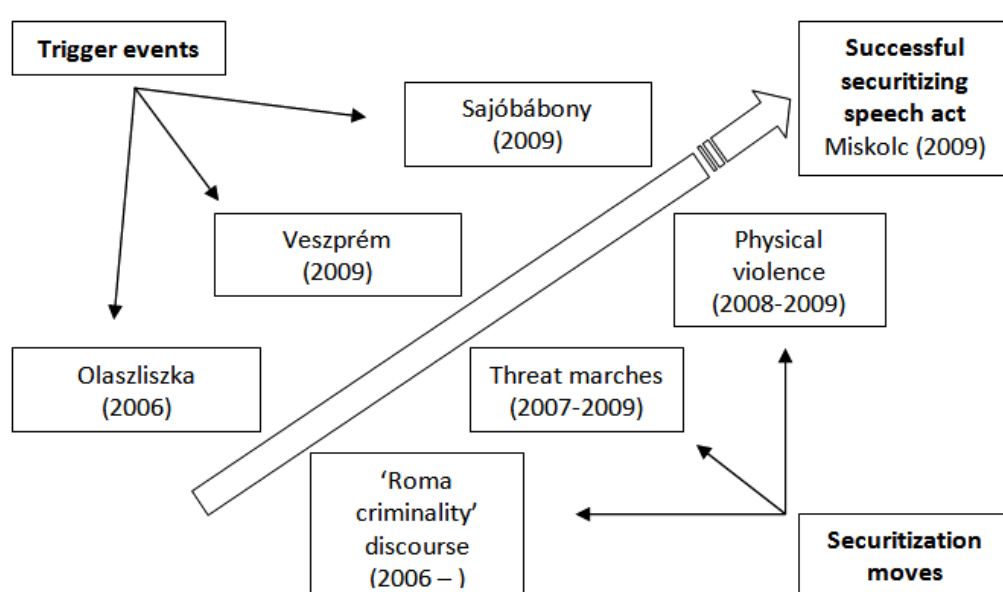


Figure 4: The process of securitizing the Roma of Hungary, 2006-2009

The events of October 15, 2006 in Olaszliszka (Northeastern Hungary) marked a decisive point in consolidating anti-Roma discourse. A local teacher, Lajos Szögi easily hit a young girl by car in a road accident and when he stopped his car and got out to check upon her, he was beaten to death by her relatives and fellow residents a taking revenge on the scene. Because the family involved was Roma, the violent incident was presented by radical right-wing actors as an evidence of ‘an inherent, ethnicized conflict between Hungarians and

Roma' that exemplifies the threat that people can expect to face anytime, anywhere.'¹¹¹ The brutal nature of the incident and the way it was presented in national mass media was consciously used by Jobbik and related organizations in the coming months to step up as supporters of the claim from society that further measures had to be taken to ensure security and to maintain public safety and order – far beyond the measures taken by public authorities and the police.¹¹²

On this occasion 'Roma criminality' became an everyday motif of radical and extreme right wing media discourse.¹¹³ Though the term itself had appeared in Hungarian media before, previously it was rejected as being duly discredited for racial bias, reflecting the established democratic practice that no information on the physical, ethnic etc. characteristics of perpetrators can be recorded on behalf of police authorities. However, practice is not so simple if we take one – outstanding – example. Chief of Police of Miskolc, Albert Pásztor on January 30 2009 in an interview spoke about local criminality patterns and when speaking about robbery cases he included that 'such petty crime as robbery in the street has recently been carried out here only by Roma; a Hungarian would try to rob a bank or gas station, but street robberies are only committed by Roma.'¹¹⁴ He was talking about local criminality along ethnic terms, adding that 'it is time to speak out frankly and openly so that we can find a solution to this problem' – generating fluctuating debate on behalf of local and central authorities, the police, Roma authorities, NGOs and the population. Both in an official statement in February 2009 and in a personal interview in August 2012 (see below) Mr. Pásztor emphasized that he had no racist intentions and he was looking for solutions and not

¹¹¹ "Cigány csűrhe lincsezt halálra egy pedagógust." Kuruc.info, October 16, 2006. Accessed May 5, 2014. <https://kuruc.info/r/2/6487/>; "Támadnak a cigányok!" Kuruc.info, October 20, 2006. Accessed May 5, 2014. <https://kuruc.info/r/26/6616/>

¹¹² "Jobbik: Olaszliszka után új romapolitika kell!" Kuruc.info, October 16, 2006 Accessed May 5, 2014. <https://kuruc.info/r/2/6497/>

¹¹³ "A cigánybűnözés ellen demonstráltak Olaszliszkán." Kuruc.info, October 28, 2006. Accessed May 5, 2014. <https://kuruc.info/r/1/6817/>

¹¹⁴ Index "A miskolci utcai rablásokat kizárólag cigányok követik el." Index.hu, January 30, 2009. Accessed May 5, 2014. <http://index.hu/belfold/cigbun090130/>

generating new problems.¹¹⁵ The overwhelming support behind him (uniting the political left and right, as well as Roma and non-Roma representatives in this respect) demonstrated that it was indeed media (both mainstream and extreme right) that used this occasion to boost discourse on ‘Roma criminality’ making it the second securitization move in the process tracing.

Only a few days later (February 8), the murder of handball player Marian Cozma of the Hungarian club MKB Veszprém with whom two other players had also been seriously injured became the next trigger event that influenced anti-Roma public discourse greatly. The three players got involved in a club fight in Veszprém and had been attacked then stabbed by local perpetrators.¹¹⁶ The violent attack was highlighted in many national media from the beginning in ethnicized terms, often identifying the suspects as ‘Roma criminals’. They were indeed of Roma background and when safety camera footage was released popular anti-Roma resentment flared up.

Public safety has been people’s top concern for years and extreme right wing actors were ready to address this concern. As argued in Chapter 2, the establishment of local Jobbik party organizations and Magyar Gárda organizations, as well as the launching of a series of threat marches in neighborhoods perceived as predominantly inhabited by Roma were well-coordinated, serving the purpose of raising public awareness and gaining political support especially in rural regions. The undemocratic anti-Roma elements of Jobbik’s and related associations’ discourse calling for an ‘alternative solution’ facing the inability of then governing parties was reinforced by the establishment of paramilitary Magyar Gárda. (Recalling Mireanu’s argument: these groups offer ‘protection’ to a community that feels threatened and that demands security, by challenging the monopoly of violence of the

¹¹⁵ “Maradhat a miskolci rendőrkapitány.” Hvg.hu, February 1, 2009. Accessed May 5., 2014. http://m.hvg.hu/app/itthon/20090201_miskolc_cigany_fokapitany/2

¹¹⁶ “Veszprémi gyilkosság: két férfit köröz a rendőrség.” Index.hu, February 8, 2009. Accessed May 5, 2014. http://index.hu/bulvar/2009/02/08/kamerak_rogzitettek_a_veszpremi_gyilkossagot/

state.¹¹⁷) The foundation of Magyar Gárda expressed radical and extreme right wing actors' willingness and readiness to intervene where they perceived that the state was not adequately providing public safety. By conducting demonstrative marches in criminality-stricken rural neighborhoods – that were also identified as Roma neighborhoods – since 2007 these groups staged a tangible alternative solution that Jobbik offered for the problems perceived. This element of Jobbik's discourse framed Roma – non-Roma relations along an offensive-defensive dimension in which Jobbik and Magyar Gárda were depicted as protectors of the population from an aggressive, dangerous, threatening 'other' ('Roma') due to the inadequate presence and inactivity of public authorities. As mentioned before, some analysts even call Magyar Gárda 'the symbol of anti-Roma sentiments.'¹¹⁸

The demonstrative aim of the series of demonstrative (threat) marches that had been organized by Magyar Gárda and associated organizations was 'to present an alternative for inadequate police presence in rural areas' and 'to prevent criminal offenses'. The marches were either directly targeting neighborhoods where Roma families lived, or communicating anti-Roma messages identifying 'Roma criminality' as the reason for organizing these marches. Demonstrative (threat, intimidation) marches had a very significant consequence: they gave tensions physical reality, brought them to the streets in several rural settlements and escalated them further along a Roma – non-Roma dimension.¹¹⁹ During 2008-2009 the activities of radical and extreme right-wing organizations, including paramilitary groups, also became more coordinated.

Meanwhile, beginning in 2008, a series of physical attacks targeted Roma individuals, thus the threat perception of the population – including both Roma and non-Roma – became

¹¹⁷ Mireanu, 44-45.

¹¹⁸ Political Capital "Láttelek 2008", 60.

¹¹⁹ Here we should recall what Anikó Bernát in her study in 2010 wrote: These developments in radical / extremist right wing activities came in a period when Hungarian society perceived outstanding levels of societal tension. The data of Eurobarometer 2009 show that Hungarian society suffered from the highest levels of societal tension from among 27 EU member countries along all four dimensions surveyed: between majority and an ethnic minority (close to 70% of respondents), among older and younger generations, among the rich and the poor, as well as among employers and employees. Bernát, "Integráció a fejekben", 319-321.

more sensitive and alarmed. Between June 2008 and July 2010 twenty-one armed attacks targeted directly Roma individuals, families or property. (Table 8)

| Location | Date | Physical attack |
|--|----------------------|---|
| Pátka | June 3, 2008 | Three Roma houses attacked by firebombs (no injuries) |
| Galgagyörk* | July 21, 2008 | Shots fired at Roma houses (no injuries) |
| Piricse* | August 8, 2008 | Two Roma houses attacked by firebombs, a woman shot in the leg while trying to escape |
| Nagycsécs* | November 3, 2008 | Two Roma houses attacked by firebombs, two men trying to escape shot dead |
| Nyíradony-Tamásipuszta* | September 5, 2008 | Shots fired at a Roma house (no injuries) |
| Siófok | September 17, 2008 | A hand grenade thrown into the yard of a Roma house (no injuries) |
| Tarnabod* | September 29, 2008 | Four Roma houses attacked by firebombs and shots (no injuries) |
| Debrecen | November 4, 2008 | A Roma house attacked by a firebomb (no injuries) |
| Pusztadobos | November 20, 2008 | A Roma house attacked by a firebomb (no injuries) |
| Alsózsolca* | December 15, 2008 | A Roma man shot, seriously wounded, another lightly injured |
| Tatárszentgyörgy* | February 23, 2009 | A Roma house attacked by a firebomb, a man and his son shot dead while trying to escape; two other children wounded |
| Tatárszentgyörgy | April 7, 2009 | A Roma house attacked by a firebomb (no injuries) |
| Old | April 15, 2009 | Shots fired at the house of a Roma family |
| Fadd | April 13, 2009 | Two Roma houses attacked by firebombs (no injuries) |
| Tiszalök* | April 22, 2009 | A Roma man shot dead |
| Táska | May 5, 2009 | Shots fired at the house of a Roma family (no injuries) |
| Kisléta* | August 3, 2009 | A Roma woman shot dead, her daughter seriously injured |
| Sajóbábony | November 14-15, 2009 | Physical violence between small groups of local Roma individuals and members of Magyar Gárda carrying out 'demonstrative patrols' in town |
| Siófok | March 18, 2010 | Three Roma houses damaged by firebombs (no injuries) |
| Hatvan | May 22, 2010 | A Roma house damaged by firebombs (no injuries) |
| Olaszliszka | July 4, 2010 | Shots fired at a Roma House (no injuries) |
| *: Attacks committed by the 'Gang of Four' – István Kiss, Árpád Kiss, István Csontos, Zsolt Pető | | |

Table 8: Physical attacks involving the use of fire bombs or firearms targeting Roma individuals in Hungary, January 2008 – July 2011¹²⁰

Among these attacks 9 proved to be serial attacks and killings, altogether murdering 6 people and injuring further 7 by firearms, all of them Roma. Based on the criminal trial involving the so called 'Gang of Four' the attacks were motivated by anti-Roma sentiment, racist hatred.¹²¹ These hate crimes (even though this legal qualification is not applied by

¹²⁰ The complete list with more details can be found in: ERRC, *Attacks against Roma in Hungary*.

¹²¹ "Romagyilkosságok: megvan az ítélet." Mno.hu, August 6, 2013. Accessed May 5, 2014. <http://mno.hu/belfold/romagyilkosságok-megvan-az-itelet-1176777>
 "Kimondta a bíróság a rasszista indítékot." Mno.hu, August 6, 2013. Accessed May 5, 2014. <http://mno.hu/belfold/kimondta-a-birosag-a-rasszista-inditekot-1176938>

Hungarian law) also received lively media attention and the anti-Roma characteristic of the attacks was obvious, creating an atmosphere of mutual distrust, fear and conflict in rural settlements where Roma and non-Roma people lived together. The high and returning media attention dedicated to the attacks themselves, then to the investigation and the trial also contributed to the sustained atmosphere of distrust, tension and fear. Therefore the escalating physical violence meant the third securitization move within the process that we are investigating.

The escalation of tensions peaked by the end of 2009 with frequent demonstrations of radical and extremist groups in small and middle-sized rural settlements. Sometimes these also provoked furious reactions from local Roma residents. Even though only extreme right-wing discourse adopted the vision of ‘civil war’ before, the violent clash between local Roma residents and members of Magyar Gárda marching in Sajóbáony on November 15, 2009 signaled a new level, making it the third trigger event identified in my analysis.¹²²

The Sajóbáony incident in itself represented the level of apparent, open, physically violent conflict on a local level, unprecedented before. The reason why its importance went beyond that was that the incident was commented by then Major of Miskolc, Sándor Káli as ‘there was a need to prepare for circumstances of civil war.’¹²³ In a personal interview conducted with Mr. Káli in August 2012 he emphasized that his intention was to point out the momentary loss of control over the tense situation that enabled local actors to turn to violent means. He wanted to call the attention of both the authorities and the local population to the necessity of avoiding such incidents from happening again in order to prevent mutual confrontation and escalation.

¹²² “Hogyan lett majdnem háború Sajóbáonyban?” Index.hu, November 16, 2009. Accessed May 5, 2014. http://index.hu/belfold/2009/11/16/hogyan_lett_majdnem_haboru_sajobabonyban/

¹²³ “Tömegverekedés miatt zárták le Sajóbáonyt.” Origo.hu, November 15, 2009. Accessed May 5, 2014. <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20091115-sajobabony-tomegverekedes-miatt-lezarta-a-rendorseg-a-varost.html>

This specific case is identified as the ‘successful securitizing speech act’ within the wider framework of the securitization process. I argue that the fact, that someone representing both ‘public authority’ and (then governing) ‘left-wing politics’ as the Mayor of Miskolc (the fourth largest city of Hungary situated in Northeastern Hungary, a region where Roma – non-Roma tensions are constantly high) and as a member of the Hungarian parliament subscribes to the securitizing discourse, clearly expresses that it had taken roots not only in radical right-wing politics that time but had received a response on behalf of the governing elite as well.¹²⁴ Despite Káli’s intention national media took over this new element of the securitization discourse.¹²⁵ However, there were some who were eager to voice that neither the terminology, nor – more importantly – the situation reflected the imminent threat of extensive societal conflict.¹²⁶ These expert warnings can also be seen as the first steps towards a desecuritization process in which both central and local authorities had to take their share.

It was only the upcoming national elections and certain government measures after which tensions seemingly began to ease. These included strengthening police presence on the streets, with strong emphasis on rural neighborhoods, as well as further efforts to tackle criminality (including petty crimes) through initiating the Public Order and Safety Program (Rend és Biztonság Program) in 2009-2010.¹²⁷ The last major incident (involving firearms) in the examined time period took place in Olaszliszka on July 4, 2010, when shots were fired at a Roma house (causing no injuries), and in the coming months a temporary ‘de-escalation’ – desecuritization – followed (in more details see below).

¹²⁴ This claim might be disputed, but from the discourse analytical point of view Káli was representing both, and his commentary cannot be assessed independent of the context, like as if it was his private opinion. Carrying heavy symbolic charge by polarizing the context to such extremes as talking about civil war, what was nationally broadcasted and carried on by media, it had the potential to be identified as a ‘successful securitizing speech act’ in accordance with securitization theory.

¹²⁵ See for example: “Sajóbábony után: ‘polgárháborús állapotra készülünk’.” Népszabadság online, November 16, 2009. Accessed May 5, 2014.

http://nol.hu/archivum/sajobabony_utan___polgarhaborus_allapotra_keszulunk_

¹²⁶ Tóth, “Tatárszentgyörgy után”

¹²⁷ Jogi Fórum, “Rend és Biztonság.” Jogiforum.hu, September 07, 2009 Accessed May 20, 2014. <http://www.jogiforum.hu/hirek/21574>

III.2. The key to securitization: successful radical othering

Balzacq argued that an effective securitization is audience-centered¹²⁸ and practice has shown that in the securitization process described above the connection between the securitizing actor and the audience was constructed through radical othering. Thus societal phenomena (public resentment, negative public perceptions and attitudes) had been directly linked to Roma and transformed into political action (securitizing discourse on public safety, economic concerns) through scapegoating, blaming and othering. Recalling the traits of the negative image of Roma in Hungarian society introduced in Chapter 1 and the tools and practices of the radical right discussed in Chapter 2, this section will give an explanation why Hungarian society proved to be a very receptive audience to the securitization moves of the radical and extreme right wing through discourse.

As mentioned above, Lene Hansen defines ‘radical othering’ as the discursive process of identification through which the image of a negative pole is constructed against one’s self-identification. Thus, an image of an ‘enemy’ that bears negative characteristics and poses a clearly defined threat to ‘us’ is constructed.¹²⁹ In relation to the Hungarian case it is the constructed negative image of ‘Roma’ that bears outstanding importance. This image depicts Roma people within an ethnicizing groupist discourse through blaming and hate speech as ‘parasites, burden to society, criminals’ etc. Such construction of the ‘threat’ builds on the public perceptions of ‘Roma otherness’ and prevailing negative attitudes towards ‘Roma’ documented in recent years’ empirical research.

Thus the key to understanding radical / extreme right wing securitization attempts targeting ‘Roma’ in recent years in Hungary is to explain what serves as the medium for anti-Roma sentiment that can be escalated or ‘upgraded’ through radical othering. This medium is

¹²⁸ Balzacq, “The Three Faces of Securitization”, 171.

¹²⁹ Hansen, 370.

the long-existent negative public perception of ‘Roma’ in Hungary¹³⁰ that is a prevailing image drawn through ethno-historical stereotypes of Roma in Hungarian society that has repeatedly been studied as discussed in Chapter 1. This has created an ‘enabling environment’ – as Athena Institute calls it – that describes a social environment, in which people who have radical views or groups of such people subscribe to extremist ideas.¹³¹ This pattern coincided with the need perceived by a significant ratio of Hungarian population to deal with problems of societal and economic security, strongly connected in popular discourse to Roma. When radical right wing Jobbik appeared on the political scene in 2003, the new party adopted the topic as one of its flagship projects, as it was shown in Chapter 2. Soon, and especially after 2006 Jobbik was able to dominate how issues related to the Roma population of Hungary had been thematized as other political parties tried to avoid these issues, or when they got involved, their activities brought only limited results. The following subchapters will demonstrate and analyze how the radical right was able to construct its own discourse centered on anti-Roma sentiments and radical othering, and then use it for its political purposes.

III.3.Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis in this chapter serves to demonstrate how the key element of the securitization process, radical othering in the broader context worked. Analyzing discourse is important in this regard for various reasons.

Methodologically, following upon Norman Fairclough’s work on the social theory of discourse,¹³² it shows how the connection between discursive practice and social practice is

¹³⁰ This abstract image of ‘Roma’ does not necessarily coincide with the objective self-image of any individual, or any set of cultural or other characteristics of any individuals or communities that identify themselves as Roma. As mentioned before, the investigation of this issue is not addressed by the thesis.

¹³¹ “Early warning dispatch 6. – Miskolc.” Athena Institute. Accessed May 21, 2014. <http://athenainstitute.eu/en/context/read/41>

¹³² Fairclough, “Discourse and Social Change”

constructed, underpinning the inter-subjective, socially constructed characteristics of securitization in a context-driven approach. Thus, it also meets the critique of Thierry Balzacq regarding securitization theory, calling for a wider scope of analysis, including the context of securitization to a larger extent.

As Fairclough introduces this multidimensional approach as a synthesis of socially- and linguistically-oriented views of discourse, he attempts at drawing together language analysis and social theory. Thus Fairclough sees ‘any discursive ‘event’ (i.e. any instance of discourse) as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice, and an instance of social practice. The ‘text’ dimension attends to language analysis of texts. The ‘discursive practice’ dimension, like ‘interaction’ in the ‘text-and-interaction’ view of discourse, specifies the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation, for example which types of discourse (including ‘discourses’ in the more social-theoretical sense) are drawn upon and how they are combined. The ‘social practice’ dimension attends to issues of concern in social analysis such as the institutional and organizational circumstances of the discursive event and how that shaped the nature of the discursive practice, and the constitutive / constructive effects of discourse.’¹³³ Regarding the current study this means focusing not only on textual analysis but also examining the multidimensional relation between discourse as a piece of text (news items), as discursive practice (media representation of Roma on television) and as social practice (discourse surrounding the ‘successful securitizing speech act’ in Miskolc).

In doing so, I will do a tripartite examination of discourses. In Section III.3.1 an overview of available research results on Jobbik’s changing media discourse and the image of Roma represented in various media sources in the 2006-2010 timeframe is given. In Section III.3.2 the formal political discourse of Jobbik related to Roma is briefly assessed to provide concrete examples of the party’s formal discursive trait. As the securitization attempt can only be

¹³³ Ibid, 4.

deemed successful if the target audience subscribes to it and verifies the demand for state (government) action, an assessment of five interviews conducted in Miskolc with local representatives and former executives is included in Section III.3.3. These serve to elaborate upon the underlying dynamics of societal tension between Roma and non-Roma residents in Northeast Hungary. This also gives a comparative example of how different actors perceive the core of the problem which is then discursively reconstructed by the radical and extremist right wing and identified as a ‘Roma issue’.

Thus, beyond the methodological underpinning of my argumentation, discursive analysis will highlight important characteristics of Jobbik’s atypical use of media, the effects of radical and extreme right wing discourse gaining a kick-off effect by building on ‘Roma criminality’, as well as give a glimpse of how Roma are represented in media in relation to society’s prevailing negative image of Roma.

III.3.1. Media discourses

A comprehensive in-depth media discourse analysis of the examined four year period would certainly go beyond the limitations of the current thesis, but there are some analytical sources that we can rely on regarding both Jobbik’s media discourse and the image of Roma represented in various media sources in the 2006-2010 timeframe.¹³⁴

The evolution of Jobbik’s media presence and discourse, putting great emphasis on ‘Roma criminality’ have mostly been evaluated in studies that examine the strengthening radical and extreme right wing in Hungary and the underlying political and social processes. Two main questions are at the forefront of these studies: How could Jobbik so effectively use

¹³⁴ When doing media discourse analysis, we can follow two methodological approaches: quantitative and qualitative analysis. The first accounts for when, how often and along what pattern certain elements of discourse appear, while the second goes beyond and more thoroughly analyses the context and content of these elements. Research in Hungary usually includes quantitative analysis only as it is more cost-effective – the few exceptions are included in the chapter.

media, and what were those discursive messages that the party could use to attract not only greater attention but also greater support?

Bíró Nagy, Boros and Varga show that despite the fact that Jobbik as an emerging political party and its representatives had minor presence in mainstream media (both on public and commercial television and radio), the party was able to create its ‘alternative media presence’.¹³⁵ The authors describe the evolution of this alternative media presence as the following: ‘Due to the difficulties to gain representation in mainstream media that Jobbik had experienced, the party had to create its own alternative media, for which internet provided the necessary means. Between 2006 and 2010 Jobbik developed such an ‘online network’ in which adjoining news portals and social media sites made it possible to reach out to more people and in a more effective way than other, more influential, better organized parties that traditionally had greater popular support could do it.’¹³⁶ This alternative media network includes sites such as kuruc.info – the most important online communication tool of the extreme right wing –, barikad.hu (changing its name to alfahir.hu since 2007), hunhir.hu, nemzetihirhalo.hu, nemzetiegyletek.hu, szebbjovo.hu, mariaorszaga.hu, szentkoronaradio.hu, atillakiraly.hu, vastagbor.blog.hu, polgarinfo.hu, ellenkultura.info, radicalpuzzle.blogspot.hu, etc.¹³⁷

In their study on the youth generation that feels more open towards radical and extreme right attitudes, Róna and Sörös call this a ‘markedly different, offensive communication strategy’ that effectively builds on Web2 interactive applications, such as facebook, youtube and various blogs.¹³⁸ These popular, cost-effective tools of mass communication are deemed to be an important factor in the rapidly growing popularity of Jobbik as they offer new forums to share information, express opinion and give feedback (often anonymously), as well as for

¹³⁵ Bíró Nagy et al., 27-31.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 30.

¹³⁷ Bíró Nagy and Róna, “Tudatos radikalizmus. A Jobbik útja a Parlamentbe, 2003-2010.” 34.

¹³⁸ Róna and Sörös, “A kuruc.info nemzedék.”, 15.

organizing demonstrations. (It is also worth to mention that Karácsony and Róna also point out that those more open to Jobbik's agenda follow alternative mainstream media sources less, thus it is easier for them to find justification of their opinion.)¹³⁹

The traits of media discourse by Jobbik is also deeply elaborated upon by Karácsony and Róna, who analyzed the connection between the representation of various issues related to with Jobbik in mainstream media between 2006 and 2009 and the party's political success at the 2009 EP elections. Most importantly, the authors point out that those issues were given greater visibility in mainstream media that involved violence – and these at least discursively involved Roma either as victims or as perpetrators. (The examined cases were the murder of Lajos Szögi in Olaszliszka (October 2006), the foundation of Magyar Gárda (August 2007), the statement of the chief of Policy in Miskolc on Roma criminality, mid-term elections in Ferencváros, Budapest where a Jobbik candidate was involved (both in January 2009), the murder of handball player Marian Cosma in Veszprém (February 2009), the murder of Jenő Kóka in Tiszalök (April 2009) and the European Parliamentary elections (June 2009). The media sources examined included the television news programs M1 Híradó, TV2 Tények, RTL Klub Híradó and the mainstream newspapers Népszabadság and Magyar Nemzet.)¹⁴⁰ According to their evaluation that was based on surveying perceptions of a sample of 3000 people, there was a close correlation between the visibility of these cases in media and the importance people attributed to them. Thus, media discourse had a determining agenda-setting role in the process, constructing a perceived connection between crime and Roma.

Going beyond this, we also need to consider the transformation of the wider political context in which Jobbik was gaining more visibility. The evolution of Jobbik into the second most influential right wing party has been discussed in Chapter 2, therefore I only include the relevant characteristics of the party's media discourse here that in a comprehensive manner

¹³⁹ Karácsony and Róna, "A Jobbik titka. A szélsőjobb magyarországi megerősödésének lehetséges okairól.", 53-54.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 50-51.

included more than advocating ‘Roma criminality’. Gimes et al give an overview of how the party could build on the political and societal crisis in the autumn of 2006 that immediately and long-lastingly brought the transformation of the radical and extreme right wing to the center of media attention.¹⁴¹ This period is also important because these events coincided with the Olaszliszka murder that is considered as the first stepping stone of Jobbik’s vivid anti-Roma discourse fusing criminality with Roma. From this time on either anti-establishment or anti-Roma rallies also highlighted the representative figures of the extreme right (such as Tamás Polgár, László Toroczkai, György Budaházy, László Gonda). (Figure 5.)

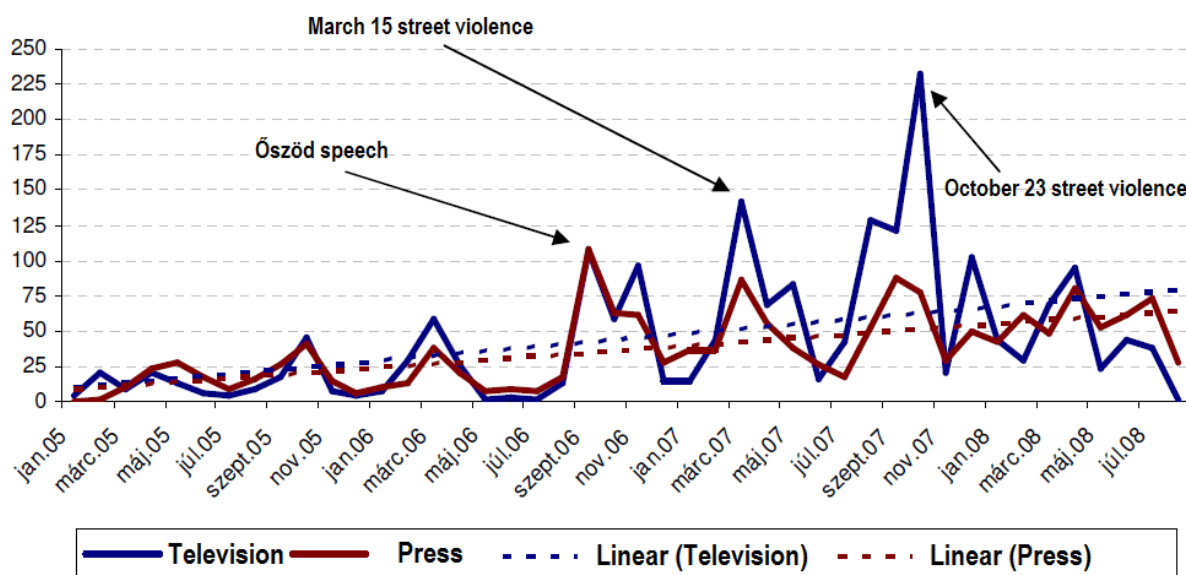


Figure 5: The appearance of Jobbik representatives in media, 2005-2008¹⁴²

However, the internal political crisis in Hungary only opened a window of opportunity through which visibility could be achieved (Figure 6), and the key element of the advancement of radicals was the adoption, then centralization of ‘Roma criminality’ in their anti-Roma discourse. There seems to be a consensus among analysts that the fact that Jobbik could present itself as a competent actor who addresses two issues of societal concern, criminality/public safety and Roma–non-Roma cohabitation was the fundamental reason why

¹⁴¹ Political Capital, “Láttelelet 2008”, 74-79.

¹⁴² Ibid, 78.

the party gained increased political support. Gimes et al even call this ‘kidnapping the Roma issue’¹⁴³ referring to the argumentation of Jobbik that at last there was a political actor that was ready to openly address these problems.

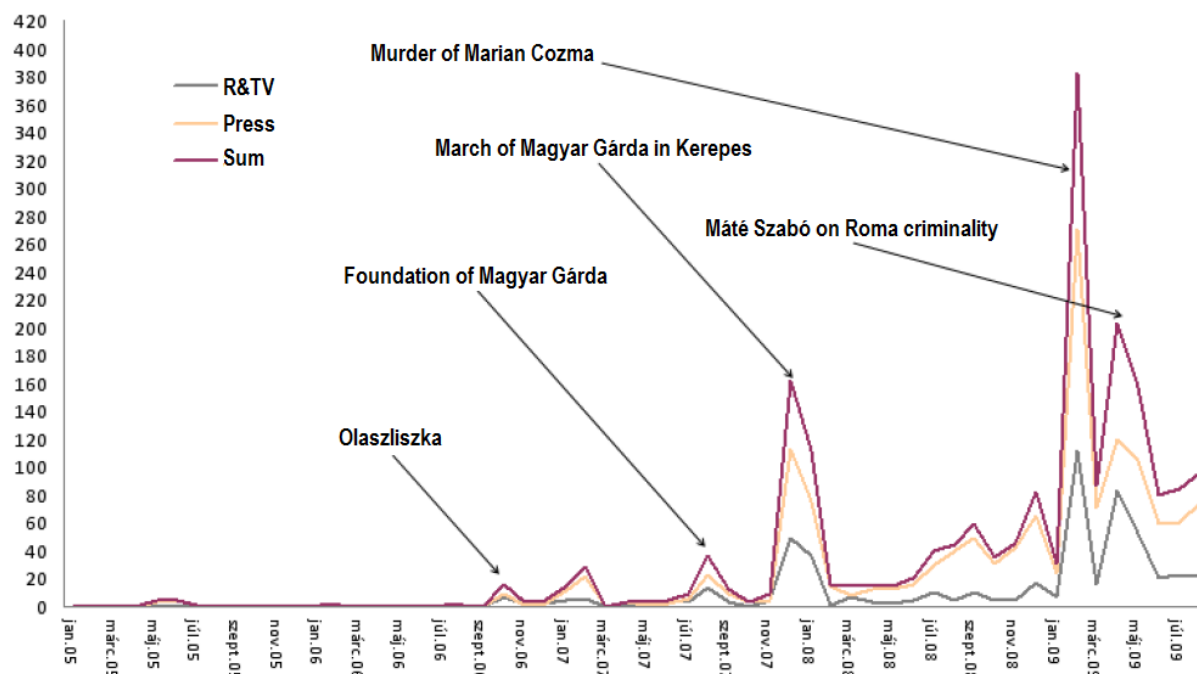


Figure 6: The presence of ‘Roma criminality’ in media (number of appearances), 2005-2009¹⁴⁴

The other aspect of media discourse analysis needs to focus on the image of Roma represented in various media sources. As the thesis is centered on the anti-Roma sentiments and negative image of Roma of the society, this media representation on the one hand demonstrates this negative image, while on the other hand might influence how people think about Roma, thus improving or worsening their sentiments. Some of the authors quoted above also developed their argumentation based on various samples of media sources and items and there are additional media analyses that are of use in this regard.

As Veronika Munk summarized, quantitative media analyses on the representation of Roma have been carried out since the 1960s when the image of ‘Roma’ was built around topics of employment, housing and education in a generally positive tone. To a significantly

¹⁴³ Political Capital, “Láttelelet 2009”, 68.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 51.

lesser extent Roma culture, as well as problems of deviance and criminality were also presented.¹⁴⁵ During the 1980s the media image of Roma became dual: on the one end of the spectrum stood Roma as gravely disadvantaged, depicted often in a criminalizing, generalizing and dehumanizing way, while on the other end representations of successful Roma individuals (mostly musicians) stood in a friendly, positive manner.¹⁴⁶

This changed together with the change of regime when political instability and economic downturn greatly influenced both the situation of Roma itself and public sentiment regarding Roma people. As András Hegedűs assessed: ‘The tone changed: as majority society was in crisis, its members began to see an adversary in Roma minority that has to be countered and defeated.’¹⁴⁷ Within a few years topics in which Roma were represented gained more frequency in media, but moving along a negative course: in 1995 35% of appearances in media was in relation to prejudice, discrimination and ethnic conflict, and a further 25% was related to criminality and deviances.¹⁴⁸

The first comprehensive media analysis on the representation of Roma was conducted by Bernáth and Messing in 1998 in which they also confirmed that the number of appearances of issues related to Roma was steadily growing and these have penetrated societal discourse. Their research also confirmed that the image of Roma within media greatly coincided with that of society, and like that, it was burdened with local conflicts (25% of articles on Roma), criminality (25%), poverty and social problems (further 20%).¹⁴⁹ These characteristics prevailed beyond the turn of the millennium, while openly racist content declined until 2006 due to the strengthening media supervision.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Munk, “A romák reprezentációja a többségi média híreiben az 1960-as évektől napjainkig.”, 90.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 91.

¹⁴⁷ Hegedűs, “A cigányság a sajtóban”, 75.

¹⁴⁸ Munk, 92.

¹⁴⁹ Bernáth and Messing, “Vágóképként, csak némában – Romák a magyarországi médiában.”, 9-10.

¹⁵⁰ Munk, 94.

There seems to be a consensus among researchers that 2006 meant a turning point regarding media, political and societal discourse as building on the publicity raised by the Olaszliszka murder the underlying term of ‘Roma criminality’ was placed into the focus of attention. The term itself that was present in police and criminological jargon and discourse in the 1970s and 1980s was taken over and introduced in public discourse in 2005 by extremist blogger Tamás Polgár.¹⁵¹ However, the breakthrough came with the Olaszliszka murder after which political and media discourses took over ‘Roma criminality.’ ‘There was a shift in associated meanings and sentiments: the image of Roma that previously had been pictured along ‘inoffensive, harmless’ stereotypes was shifted towards a portrayal of Roma as ‘aggressive, dangerous, murderer.’¹⁵² Beyond 2006 openly racist, anti-Roma discourse became widely spread and accepted, even in media. Juhász evaluates it as ‘for many people speaking about ‘Roma criminality’ was represented as openly speaking of the truth’ and became a recurring element of discourse in media as well when any issue in relation with the cohabitation of Roma and non-Roma was discussed.’¹⁵³ Additionally, the thematic content of news depicting Roma was also narrowing and became more focused on poverty and criminality, while discussion on anti-Roma prejudices died down and aspects of discrimination or the protection of minority rights that had been actively present a decade earlier completely disappeared.¹⁵⁴

The 2012 analysis of Bernáth and Messing offers a comparative evaluation of their previous studies from which we can draw the conclusion on how the topics represented in media in connection with Roma have changed since 1988. Table 9 illustrates how the

¹⁵¹ Polgár (also known under the nickname Tomcat as blogger) appeared on public television that year in an interview show that was focused around free speech (‘A szólás szabadsága’) where he spoke about an online game, ‘Olah Action’ he had developed before, in which players had to kill ‘Gipsy criminals’. During the months that followed he frequently appeared in national media commenting on various issues related to Roma, often advocating extremist views on ‘Roma criminality’.

¹⁵² Juhász, “A „cigánybűnözés”, mint „az igazság” szimbóluma”, 12.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 13. Also quoted by Munk, 96.

¹⁵⁴ Munk, 99.

protection of minority rights and the discussion on discrimination has lost ground within media discourse giving way to issues of criminality, poverty, prejudice and racism.

| | 2010-11 | 2000 | 1997 | 1993 | 1988 |
|--|------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Public policy | 33% | 18% | 27% | 31% | 6% |
| Minority rights protection | 6% | 16% | 17% | 12% | |
| Poverty, social status | 21% | 20% | 24% | 15% | 14% |
| Education | 15% | 14% | 18% | 18% | 21% |
| Employment | 12% | 4% | 8% | 10% | 14% |
| Culture, art ... of which celebrities | 22% 13% | 24% | 15% | 15% | 35% |
| Discrimination prejudice, Roma minority – majority conflict ... of which discrimination ... prejudice and racism | 23% 3% 15% | 37% 22% 11% | 38% | 12% | 6% |
| Criminality ... in which the perpetrator is not Roma | 37% 8% | 25% | 16% | 15% | 37% |
| N | 423 | 202 | 304 | 186 | 51 |

Table 9: The changing ratio of topics represented in media in connection with Roma, 1988-2011¹⁵⁵

The analysis of data shows that criminality has gained more representation than ever before, while the information shared within the discourse on Roma is loaded with equivocal instillations. Anti-Roma prejudice and discrimination appear as if these were only characteristics of the extreme right among discursive patterns where ‘less offensive discourse is not even outstanding’ while ‘normal mainstream discourse’ has taken over much of the prejudiced, generalizing, stigmatizing features that previously had only been a characteristic of extremists.¹⁵⁶ This is further reinforced by the harmful Hungarian media practice that the (suppositional) ethnic background of the suspects and perpetrators is of value in the news when they are (deemed to be) Roma – no other minority or majority identification is

¹⁵⁵ Bernáth and Messing, “Változó médiareprezentáció. Roma médiakép 1997-2011.”, 6.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 30.

mentioned at all. This instillation serves the interconnection of Roma identity and criminality in public perception to a large extent.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, Bernáth and Messing warn that as media consumption patterns change and social media takes over the role of information source ever more, the traditional filtering role of mainstream media that could prevent the spread of racist manifestations will also be bypassed.¹⁵⁸ This feature also has indicative consequences regarding the development of Jobbik's alternative media that builds to a large extent on social media platforms.

When examining the media coverage of particular events using qualitative tools of analysis, we find the same alarming characteristics. Very few such analyses have been carried out in recent years, but one conducted by National Radio and Television Commission (ORTT) exemplifies these patterns very well as analysts focused on elements of discourse on Roma. It examined the coverage of three events that had received heightened media attention and visibility within a very short period of time: the statement of Albert Pásztor, the Chief of Police in Miskolc on 'Roma criminality' (January 30, 2009); the murder of Marian Cozma (February 7, 2009) and the double murder in Tatárszentgyörgy (February 23, 2009).¹⁵⁹ The analysis included the evening news programs of major Hungarian television channels (MTV, Duna TV, RTL Klub, TV2, ATV, Hír TV, Echo TV) within one week following these cases, coming to the following conclusions:¹⁶⁰

- all news programs but that of MTV and a lesser extent Duna TV (public media) used strong dramatization and emotional framing when reporting;
- most news programs (usually with the exception of public media) directly referred to ethnicity and included traits of ethnic identification in some ways;

¹⁵⁷ Bernáth and Messing, "Szélre tolva. Kutatási zárójelentés a roma közösségek többségi médiaképéről, 2011." 8.

¹⁵⁸ Bernáth and Messing, "Változó médiareprezentáció. Roma médiakép 1997-2011.", 31.

¹⁵⁹ Országos Rádió és Televízió Testület, "A magyarországi televíziós hírműsorok romaképe a konfliktusok tükrében."

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 84-93.

- some news programs went beyond neutral factual reporting and presented a negative overall picture in which ‘Roma’ have been represented in an essentializing, generalizing way along ethnic background, neglecting individual characteristics and roles;
- the representation of ‘Roma’ appeared almost exclusively related to crime and criminality and seldom references were given to the broader context;
- these practices were leading the audience towards ‘mindless reading’, that is automatically relating news items to negative attitudes and prejudices without meaningful – or critical – interpretation.

Even though these practices are only exemplary, they demonstrate how the representation of Roma even in mainstream media has become distorted, providing a reinforcing media background to radical and extremist anti-Roma discourse.¹⁶¹ The next subchapter will briefly summarize the elements of the latter in order to create a more complete picture of the various discourses on Roma.

III.3.2. The formal political discourse of Jobbik on Roma and ‘Roma criminality’

Despite of the fact that much of Jobbik’s discourse appears through its alternative media, we should not ignore the party’s formal political discourse when examining how Roma and ‘Roma criminality’¹⁶² have been used and abused. In the examined period, three political programs have been issued: the first, under the title ‘Független állam, élhető ország, büszke nemzet’¹⁶³ in 2006 outlined the main ideological aims and program points of the party, while

¹⁶¹ Some more qualitative evaluation of the representation of Roma in television programs can be found in Bernáth and Messing, “Változó médiareprezentáció. Roma médiakép 1997-2011.” 23-31.

¹⁶² I do not intend to go into elaborations on the use of ‘Roma’ or ‘Gipsy’ (cigány) in this discourse as some consider the former as politically correct and the latter more prejudicial along one line of interpretation, while some as a modern versus a traditional form of naming the same ethnic group. I am using the phrase Roma throughout the thesis as I deem it more suitable for a non-ethnographic academic work.

Similarly, the thesis is not aimed at arguing why ‘Roma criminality’ is an erroneous notion. For more explanation see: Juhász, “A „cigánybűnözés”, mint „az igazság” szimbóluma”, 12–18.

¹⁶³ ‘Independent state, livable country, proud nation.’

the second, ‘Bethlen Gábor Program’¹⁶⁴ in 2007 repeated these in a more pictorial way, while ‘Radikális Változás’¹⁶⁵ in 2010 was already more elaborated and included a detailed set of practical goals.

With regard to ‘Roma criminality’ it is indicative that the first program in 2006 did not mention Roma in any – economic, social, educational, etc. – context and addressed criminality along with corruption and the planned reorganization of law enforcement forces and local administration. Rural pity crime was meant to be dealt with through the establishment of gendarmerie forces – what has remained a distinctive goal of the party ever since.¹⁶⁶

Bethlen Gábor Program included the term ‘Roma criminality’ for the first time, in relation to public safety and order, stating that ‘units specialized on preventing and investigating Roma criminality should be formed within police organizations.’¹⁶⁷ Also, plans to establish a voluntary, territorially organized national gendarmerie-type militia to increase public order in rural areas were presented, which is again telling in the same year when Magyar Gárda was established.

‘Radikális Változás’ goes the farthest with drafting comprehensive critique to previous ‘Roma policies’ and offering a complete revision of public policies in several aspects, including employment, education, social benefits and integration. Regarding ‘Roma criminality’ the program claims that the notion is used as a ‘conception of criminology which does not indicate that every Roma would be criminals but that there are certain types of crimes (usury, stabbing, scuffle) that are typical among members of this ethnic minority’,

¹⁶⁴ The name refers to Gábor Bethlen, the Prince of Transylvania (1613-1629) who left an economically and culturally flourishing country behind and is a positive figure of Hungarian national memories. See: “Bethlen Gábor program”, Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, accessed May 04, 2014. <http://www.jobbik.hu/sites/default/files/jobbik-program2010gy.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ ‘Radical Change’ See: “Radikális Változás”, Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, accessed May 04, 2014. <http://jobbik.hu/sites/default/files/jobbik-program2010gy.pdf>

¹⁶⁶ Független állam, élő ország, büszke nemzet, Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, published by Nézőpont Intézet, accessed May 04, 2014. <http://nezopointintezet.hu/files/2012/03/F%C3%BCggetlen-%C3%A1llam-%C3%A9lhet%C5%91-ország-b%C3%A1g-b%C3%BCscke-nemzet-2006.pdf> p. 9.

¹⁶⁷ Bethlen Gábor Program, p. 10.

adding that ‘the reasons for this are not genetic but socio-cultural.’¹⁶⁸ The program offers a complex approach to changing these deemed patterns, including law enforcement measures.

What is more important, the program continues with emphasizing that the role of Jobbik is to name the problem and speak out openly against it, positioning the party in a unique role and framing its discourse as if it was the source of truth as opposed to denying the existence of ‘Roma criminality’. This element of opposition complements very well the general discourse built around radical othering.

III.3.3.Examining a local focus point: Interviews in Miskolc regarding the identified successful securitizing speech act

Based on the theoretical foundations of the thesis and in accordance with the analytical framework, a securitization attempt is deemed to be successful if the target audience takes and supports the securitizing call, the securitizing speech act. Previously, in Section III.1 the statement of Sándor Káli, the former Mayor of Miskolc, related to a violent incident in Sajóabony in September 2009 was identified as the ‘successful securitizing speech act’, the verification that the securitization was indeed successful.¹⁶⁹ This statement, interpreted within the context of securitization built around anti-Roma sentiment, showed that the complex problems summarized in public discourse as ‘Roma issue’ had clearly gained a security dimension to which the central government had to react in order to prevent the spread of violence. I was arguing that the fact, that someone representing both ‘public authority’ and (then governing) ‘left-wing politics’ as the Mayor of Miskolc (the fourth largest city of Hungary situated in Northeastern Hungary, a region where Roma – non-Roma tensions are perceived to be high) and as a member of the Hungarian parliament subscribes to the

¹⁶⁸ Radikális Változás, p. 40.

¹⁶⁹ See for example: “Sajóabony után: ‘polgárháborús állapotra készülünk’.” Népszabadság online, November 16, 2009. Accessed May 21, 2014.
http://nol.hu/archivum/sajobabony_utan___polgarhaborus_allapotra_keszulunk_

securitizing discourse, clearly expresses that it had taken roots not only in radical right-wing politics that time but had received a response on behalf of the governing elite as well.

In order to get a closer, more detailed and accurate picture of the situation, five personal interviews were conducted by local representatives – including Mr. Káli – focusing on their perceptions of those intertwined problems that appear in public discourse as ‘Roma issue’. The interviewees were Sándor Káli, former Mayor of Miskolc, Albert Pásztor, former Chief of Police of Miskolc (in office together with Mr. Káli); Lajos Mile, the deputy leader of the parliamentary group of Lehet Más a Politika (LMP); Pál Gulyás, the representative of LMP in the local government of Ináncs, Roma activist; and Árpád Miklós, the leader of the county representatives of Jobbik in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county.

From the interviews – from which excerpts can be found in Annex 1 – the following conclusions can be drawn:

- All local representatives agree that unemployment and the lack of workplaces stand at the core of most problems in the region, often indeed interpreted as a ‘Roma issue’, binding together poverty and Roma – despite the fact that these problems relate to the whole of society.
- There is a perception that Roma, poverty and criminality are interrelated, indicating that there might be a higher ratio of perpetrators of Roma background – and this is only a perception. Every respondent agreed that ‘Roma criminality’ is not a notion that equals ‘every Roma is a criminal’ or that ‘an inclination to criminality is in the blood of Roma’ and three out of five agreed that ethnic profiling should not be allowed. Mr. Pásztor mentioned that the practices of police investigation would benefit from it, while Mr. Miklós argued that it would mean equal measures for all irrespective of ethnic background.

- Every interviewee agreed that Jobbik is an actor that speaks of Roma in relation to security and that Jobbik builds its discourse around ‘Roma criminality’. All respondents confirmed that they perceived societal tension and that it is often framed along ethnicized lines. Two main sources of tension were directly mentioned. On the one hand the vulnerability of elderly, lonely people to criminality in rural areas that results in a perception of lacking public order, safety and a constant perception of threat, while on the other hand the mutual threat perception of Roma and non-Roma triggered by the occasional appearance of ‘vigilance groups’.
- Opinions about the future conflict potential of the current situation (in 2012 when the interviews were conducted) differed greatly, reflecting personal experience and expectations. The scenario of an escalation to increased and widespread violence was refused, but sustained conflict potential either due to the presence of ‘vigilance groups’ or insufficient levels of public safety has been mentioned by everyone.
- As the perceived problems have an economic base, the central government is expected to offer measures for creating better livelihoods and opportunities for work that would directly improve every aspect of secondary problems, including criminality (petty crimes).

Having in mind that the state is the most powerful actor, the next chapter will examine those measures that were undertaken by the central government to counter the securitization attempt of Jobbik.

IV. Government responses to the securitization attempt

Ever since security became a subject to scholarly research, it has been a state-centric conception because states possess authority and control resources in the most effective and concentrated form within a given geographical boundary. The ultimate reason for the existence of states is to ensure the survival of societies that found the state, providing protection for the population and maintaining the conditions necessary for the social and cultural reproduction of this population. Maintaining order and the peaceful coexistence of people within society – whatever heterogeneous it might be – is one of these crucial conditions. Therefore, from the point of view of the state, it is dubious when any actor other than the government steps up as securitizing actor, especially if the securitizing move is aimed at a perceived threat from within the country. Along this logic, when the securitization attempt of Jobbik and related extremist proxys escalated to a level when media, social and political discourse began to adopt the possibility of open conflict along ethnic lines, it was the government's utmost interest to act against this. Government countermeasures in such a case shall extend not only to halting the securitization attempt but also to redirecting discourse to the normal politicized sphere, desecuritizing the case. Therefore, we need to take a look at those measures by the Gyurcsány (2006-2009), Bajnai (2009-2010) and Orbán (2010 –) governments that were either directly or indirectly aimed at desecuritization in the period under scrutiny.

IV.1. Desecuritization measures undertaken by the central government in 2009-2010

Experience shows that despite the prevailing discourse on 'Roma criminality', in 2014 there are fewer threat marches organized, while physical violence declined and mainstream media discourse is less loaded by the issues discussed in Chapter 3. As the most capable and legitimate authority, the central government (the state) is entitled to act among such

circumstances, but still there might be several alternative explanations why the desecuritization process was seemingly successful in 2010 and beyond.

At least four such alternative explanations might be framed: 1) The problems highlighted in discourse could have been solved; 2) Radical and extreme right wing actors could have given up with their securitization agenda; 3) Those means could have been removed that enabled radical and extreme right wing actors to carry on with securitization; 4) Public attention could have been diverted, changing perceptions of these problems. Experience has shown that the first and second options have not been realized. Social problems have prevailed¹⁷⁰ and criminality is still an issue,¹⁷¹ as well as radical and extreme right wing discourse has kept anti-Roma characteristics¹⁷² and extremist intimidation has reappeared from 2011 on.¹⁷³ However, the third and fourth explanations – not being mutually exclusive – seem to have played a role in the desecuritization process, beginning as early as 2009. In both respects the central government possessed the means to exert effective action.

Measures undertaken by the government (narrowly focusing on stopping and revising securitization not broadly on comprehensively managing i.e. criminality or unemployment) can range from normal legal action against undemocratic (i.e. paramilitary) organizations, through altering public policies to the allocation of extra resources for ensuring public safety (i.e. through increasing police presence in settlements). The general feature of any measure is

¹⁷⁰ “Egyre nagyobb a szegénység Magyarországon.” Hvg.hu, June 1, 2013. Accessed May 25, 2014. http://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20131206_Egyre_nagyobb_a_szegenysegi_Magyarorszagon; Policy Solutions, *Szegénység és szociális feszültségek*; “Hányan voltak szegények Magyarországon 2012-ben?” Tarki.hu, January 12, 2013 Accessed May 25, 2014. http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2013/kitekint/20131028_szegeny.html; “Számok bizonyítják: Óriási a szegénység Magyarországon” Vg.hu, May 6, 2013. Accessed May 25, 2014. <http://www.vg.hu/kozelet/tarsadalom/szamok-bizonyitjak-oriasi-a-szegenysegi-magyarorszagon-402946>

¹⁷¹ “2011-ben is nőtt a bűncselekmények száma.” Origo.hu, May 20, 2012. Accessed May 25, 2014. <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20120517-bunugyi-statisztika-2011ben-is-nott-a-buncselekmények-szama.html>; “Negatív rekordot mutat a bűnügyi statisztika” Hvg.hu, September 13, 2013. Accessed May 25, 2014. http://hvg.hu/itthon/20130917_bunugyi_statisztika_romlik

¹⁷² “Cigányellenes felvonulás Konyáron: „Kökömnyen móresre kell tanítani őket” Nol.hu, March 2, 2013. Accessed May 25, 2014. <http://nol.hu/belfold/konyar-1370793>; “Vona: ez így nem maradhat! – tüntetést szerveznek a cigánybűnözés ellen.” Jobbik.hu, January 4, 2013. Accessed May 25, 2014. http://jobbik.hu/rovatok/ciganybunozes/vona_ez_igy_nem_maradhat_-_tuntetesi_szerveznek_a_ciganybunozes_ellen

¹⁷³ FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health, *Accelerating Patterns of Anti-Roma Violence in Hungary*. 29-31 and 37-40.

to guarantee state control over the legitimate use of violence, to prevent the illegitimate use of violence, and to protect all citizens from physical violence irrespective of any social, cultural or other background.

However, it has been pointed out on multiple occasions and forums that ‘the Government had remained tolerant towards Jobbik’s intimidation practices’¹⁷⁴ and in general, ‘government responses had been weak’.¹⁷⁵ A delegation from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) issued its report in June 2010 after field visits studied the situation in Hungary. The resulting report identified challenges including: ‘The relative frequency of extremist anti-Roma statements in the media and public/political discourse and the weakness of legal or political mechanisms to restrict or counter such extremist rhetoric’ and ‘the weakness of legislation specifically addressing hate crimes and limited capacity to investigate or prosecute such crimes.’¹⁷⁶

Trying to respond to the situation, more attention was dedicated to altering the Criminal Code, allowing for stricter regulations and more severe sentences in order to strengthen order through deterrence from committing serious crimes. Also, legal measures taken in 2008 to restrict extremist incitement and hate speech as well as to narrow the possibilities of conducting vigilant and intimidation marches under the aegis of civilian demonstrations.¹⁷⁷ Measures such as the dissolution of Magyar Gárda Hagymányőrző és Kulturális Egyesület and Magyar Gárda Mozgalom by the court on July 2, 2009 targeted extremist paramilitary associations to limit their scope of action as soon as possible. A lengthy investigation was conducted to uncover the serial killers (the so called ‘Gang of Four’) who attacked Roma

¹⁷⁴ Dettke: “Hungary’s Jobbik Party, the Challenges of European Ethno-Nationalism and the Future of the European Project”, 15.

¹⁷⁵ FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health, 36.

¹⁷⁶ OSCE – ODIHR, “Addressing Violence, Promoting Integration”, 8.

¹⁷⁷ An overview of the most important legal measures initiated to strengthen law and order in this period can be found in Róna, “Jobbik jelenség”, 195-197.

families and property in 2008-2009, murdering 6 Roma people and injuring further 7 by firearms.

The Bajnai and Orbán governments in 2009-2010 could address most appropriately the atmosphere of fear and insecurity through strengthening police action. The aim was to maintain public order and safety by visible police presence in the streets (with strong emphasis on rural neighborhoods), efficient efforts to tackle criminality (including petty crimes), and maintaining adequate criminal procedures that bring results within reasonable timeframes (in order to strengthen the population's trust in public institutions). One such concrete measure was the Public Order and Safety Program (Rend és Biztonság Program) initiated by the Bajnai government in 2009, then re-launched in March 2010 in the running-up period to national elections.¹⁷⁸ It meant enhanced police presence in the streets, associated with the establishment or strengthening of civilian guards under the control of local public authorities in order to prevent the 'privatization of violence' by avoiding the establishment of such 'vigilance groups' like Magyar Gárda in which citizens try to take law and order in their own hand.

In order to divert public support from Jobbik, governing parties (MSZP during the running up to national elections, and Fidesz as part of its election program, then government program) also began to prioritize public order, safety and criminality concerns. Both parties reacted to the societal discourse on social benefits in a way that tried to remove the ethnicizing undertone of Jobbik. The key to such attempts would be to clearly separate discourse on Roma, on poverty and on criminality in order to cease the blend that we have witnessed.

These measures were efficient to a limited extent, as following the national elections in 2010, mainstream discourse seems to have shifted back towards more normalized standards

¹⁷⁸ Jogi Fórum, "Rend és Biztonság." Jogiforum.hu, September 07, 2009 Accessed May 20, 2014. <http://www.jogiforum.hu/hirek/21574>

and physical violence temporarily retreated from the streets,¹⁷⁹ – but radical and extreme right wing discourse had kept anti-Roma characteristics¹⁸⁰ and extremist intimidation reappeared from 2011 on.¹⁸¹ This means that even if government measures could have restricted some tools of securitization and possibly public attention could have been diverted, the changing perceptions of the problems did not mean solving them: neither the challenge of securitization apparent on the surface nor radical and extremist anti-Roma practices, and above all, certainly not the underlying social problems that serve as a nurturing ground for any securitization attempt targeting Roma. Therefore, the changing patterns of media and societal discourse and securitization practices beyond 2010 will also need to be explored and investigated in detail.

¹⁷⁹ FXB Center for Health and Human Rights – Harvard School of Public Health, 31.

¹⁸⁰ Naming only two examples: “Cigányellenes felvonulás Konyáron: „Kökeményen móresre kell tanítani őket” NOL.hu, March 2, 2013. Accessed May 21, 2014. <http://nol.hu/belfold/konyar-1370793>; “Vona: ez így nem maradhat! – tüntetést szerveznek a cigánybűnözés ellen.” Jobbik.hu, January 4, 2013. Accessed May 25, 2014. http://jobbik.hu/rovatok/ciganybunozes/vona_ez_igy_nem_maradhat_-_tuntetest_szerveznek_a_ciganybunozes_ellen

¹⁸¹ FXB Center for Health and Human Rights – Harvard School of Public Health, 29-31 and 37-40.

Conclusions

Along the chronological line drawn between 2006 and 2010, the thesis argued that a process of securitization targeting Roma took place in Hungary. The securitization attempt by radical nationalist party Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom and related extremist proxys, such as Magyar Gárda was escalated to a level where it was widely – though not unanimously and unquestionably – affirmed by the public, provoked direct political reactions and elicited direct action on behalf of the central government. These reactions, however, seem only to be efficient to the extent of preventing further escalation and open violence, without addressing the underlying problems that enabled securitization.

When a window of opportunity in the political arena appeared for a new radical right wing party after the 2002 national elections, Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom realized that putting sensitive and contradictory societal problems on its agenda might provide the base for its political capital. However, we cannot speak of simply adopting previously unaddressed issues such as public safety and criminality, but of going far beyond. By constructing a political and media discourse that directly linked these problems to Roma through radical othering and blaming provided the means of securitization. This could build on an enabling environment, namely the dominantly negative attitudes and sentiments expressed towards a constructed societal image of ‘Roma in Hungarian society.

As Chapter 1 has demonstrated, xenophobic attitudes, anti-Roma sentiments and prejudice have long been present in Hungarian social thought and did not change for the better in the past twenty years. This very negative image of Roma could serve as the basis of successful securitization between 2006 and 2010. When economic and political crises triggered increased societal tension in Hungary from 2006 on and people demanded strong responses and called for order, Jobbik was ready to offer its ‘radical solution’. In doing so, the

party could effectively build on anti-establishment, anti-elite, anti-capitalist and anti-Roma sentiments, as explained in Chapter 2.

Driven by trigger events and supported by securitization moves, the securitization attempt escalated in 2009 and 2010 running up to European and national parliamentary elections as explained in Chapter 3. This also met response both on behalf of Hungarian society and the political elite on a national level related to a series of violent events in 2009 and 2010 (Olaszliszka, Tatárszentgyörgy, Veszprém, Sajóbábony, serial killing cases in Eastern Hungary targeting Roma families). The heightened tensions among Roma and non-Roma members of local communities brought about a series of threat marches, including cases of physical violence.

It is important to note that keeping the constructed ‘Roma issue’ on the media and political agenda was a reason for strengthening Jobbik and not a consequence. That is underpinned by the fact that it has appeared in media from 2006 on and was boosted up by 2009 – and was not brought to the forefront of discourse only after 2009/2010 when Jobbik was already a capable actor in the political arena. What Jobbik added to the problem of criminality and public safety concerns was the discursive practice that bound Roma to criminality and conflict, depicting Roma as ‘lazybones’, ‘criminals’, ‘dangerous conflicting people’, thus constructing a ‘Roma issue’ through radical othering. The practical means for sustaining media attention and catalyzing the securitization attempt were extremist organizations such as Magyar Gárda that continuously provided occasions for appearing in national media because of the intimidation and threat marches, conducted in rural areas identified as Roma neighborhoods.

Intimidation peaked by the end of 2009 and this negative trend could only be eased to some extent in 2010 when focused government action aimed at desecuritizing the heatedly debated issues of societal security. In doing so the most successful measure of the government

proved to be the removal of some of those means that enabled radical and extreme right wing actors to carry on with securitization: restricting paramilitary organizations like Magyar Gárda and diverting public discourse from envisaging conflict between Roma and non-Roma. However, it has been pointed out that in general ‘government responses had been weak’,¹⁸² and ‘the Government had remained tolerant towards Jobbik’s intimidation practices.’¹⁸³ Thus, the basic elements of Jobbik’s discourse (‘Roma criminality’) and political agenda (‘creating order’) have not vanished, and practices of intimidation have prevailed beyond 2010 as well. Also, extremist organizations have shown a potential to regroup and sustain their activities, therefore these potential means of escalating conflict cannot be taken as abolished at all.

The original contribution of the thesis for nationalism studies is the operationalization of the constructivist securitization theory in the case study of Roma in Hungary. As this is a rather atypical securitization attempt – not the state being the securitizing actor – and it encompasses a longer time period, the research framework is built on the complex analysis of political and media discourses accompanied by process tracing. Process tracing enables us to identify those means and patterns that bring securitization forward (securitization moves) as well as those events that escalate it to a higher level (trigger events). The methodology proposed herein also incorporates and builds upon the criticism towards the speech act-centered approach to securitization and allows for a much more elaborated examination of the context. Demonstrated by the results of the research that is built on this methodology, I offer this approach for further examination in other case studies as well.

Summing up my research results, I came to the conclusion that the securitization attempt of radical right wing actors was successful in 2009-2010, with Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom and associated extremist associations such as Magyar Gárda being the securitizing actors. Jobbik was developing its securitizing discourse through constructing a connection and

¹⁸² FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health, 36.

¹⁸³ Dettke: “Hungary’s Jobbik Party, the Challenges of European Ethno-Nationalism and the Future of the European Project”, 15.

correlation between Roma and poverty – poverty and criminality – criminality and Roma, thus introducing and spreading the term ‘Roma criminality’ in political, media and societal discourse through effective radical othering. In this process radicals could build on prevalent strong anti-Roma sentiments within Hungarian society, a definite call for more order and increased public safety, strengthening welfare chauvinism at the time of the financial crisis and a deep political and moral crisis in Hungary. As the underlying reasons for the success of securitization – parallel financial, political and social crises – have been difficult to overcome (if it was possible at all), the Bajnai and Orbán governments had limited opportunities to limit the means of securitization. Therefore – keeping in mind certain limitations of the thesis regarding the research timeframe – we cannot speak of successful desecuritization but only of limiting and diverting the securitization dynamics.

Along the logic of events between 2006 and 2010 the chance of a nascent securitization attempt was still present running up to the 2014 national elections – but no such escalation took place as in 2009-2010. By the end of the day the question still remains open: was the government of Hungary successful in removing the ‘Roma issue’ from the security agenda? As a presumption for continued research I would argue that it was not.

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Annex 1

Examining a local focus point: Interviews in Miskolc (August 6 and August 14, 2012)

The following excerpts are to exemplify and demonstrate how various points of view were represented in Miskolc and the surrounding region regarding the relations of Roma and non-Roma and the underlying wider economic and social problems perceived. During the personal interviews conducted in August 2012 the interviewees were asked to speak openly and let to speak freely, thus the length of the interviews varied between 40-60 minutes each depending on the interviewees. All five respondents were asked the same set of questions in the same order, listed in the left-hand column, while excerpts from relevant answers are matched on the right.

(The views represented in the interviews and included in the following section are those of the respondents and not of the author.)

Sándor Káli, former Mayor of Miskolc

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| Is there a 'Roma issue' in Hungary? If yes, what would that mean? | 'Poverty and Roma are blended in public discourse and the problems combined together are referred to as 'Roma issue'.' |
| Do Roma appear in a security context? If yes, in what ways? | 'When Roma are put into a criminality context.' 'Labeling a social group for criminals cannot be a simple mistake; it is the manifestation of a fascist ideology.' |
| Is there any actor that speaks of Roma in a security(policy) context? | 'It is Jobbik. The party could successfully build on the difficult situation in Northeastern Hungary, because they voice 'there are severe problems, many live in poverty among hardship, and Roma are responsible for this.' |
| What might 'Roma criminality' mean? | 'Roma living in privation and Roma who might be involved in criminality are coupled together regarding petty crimes – thus the notion of 'Roma criminality' has been constructed.' |
| Would it be necessary / acceptable to do ethnic profiling for suspects/perpetrators in criminal cases? | 'I can see that people are labeled and differentiated along physical characteristics – it is an everyday practice.' |
| What should be the role of the state in handling the mentioned problems? | 'Respective governments should be interested in not provoking conflict among people.' |
| What are the tools of the state for handling the mentioned problems? | 'Promoting integration, the rehabilitation of houses, development of education and by supporting local husbanding.' |
| How do you see people's security perception? | 'People look at these problems nervously and pessimistically.' 'There is sparking anti-Roma sentiment. It is tangible and I do not see any attempts at solving the underlying problems.' 'People suffer from the feeling of being threatened in a way'. |
| Do you foresee further escalation of tensions into open violence? | 'If fascist ideologies can hold on and spread, Roma people will also begin to establish self-defense guards, following the example of vigilance groups.' |

Albert Pásztor, former Chief of Police of Miskolc

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| Is there a 'Roma issue' in Hungary? If yes, what would that mean? | 'When two different cultures live next to each other, their coexistence is not without conflicts.' 'We need to reach back to the basics: this is not racism and not a question of genetics, but a cultural question: we speak of different cultural traits.' |
| Do Roma appear in a security context? If yes, in what ways? | 'Roma people culturally relate to [<i>private</i>] property in a different way than the majority of society. If they need something for their subsistence, they simply take it, even if it belonged to someone else.' 'If we consider the value of these items, these are really petty things, but when it becomes customary, almost an everyday practice, then it also becomes the source of conflicts.' |
| Is there any actor that speaks of Roma in a security(policy) context? | 'Obviously it is the extreme right wing, Jobbik.' 'There are numerous right-wing associations and they actively abuse these problems to strengthen their social base.' |
| What might 'Roma criminality' mean? | 'Even though I have never spoken about 'Roma criminality' and I do not even agree with using the term, sometimes my name still comes up when speaking about it.' 'There are certain types of crimes, ways and methods of committing crimes that are characteristic only to Roma perpetrators. I don't say that there is 'Roma criminality', but there are certain types of crimes that follow the same methods when committed. Night robberies, attacking lonely elderly people in the countryside; attacking, hurting, torturing them to force them hand over their valuables – these are typically methods of Roma criminals.' |
| Would it be necessary / acceptable to do ethnic profiling for suspects/perpetrators in criminal cases? | 'It was not a normal way of conduct and it also consumed a lot of time of mine at the Police that we could not speak of ethnic profiles. What was the use of not speaking about profiles if the victim told us the she had been attacked by Roma? By refraining from the use of ethnic profiles we only hide the problem and pull back our work.' |
| What should be the role of the state in handling the mentioned problems? | 'The closer we are to the source of the problem, the better we see it, know it, and the better solutions we can find for them. The local government should be in a more beneficial position if it had the means to act and would be well-prepared to do something.' |
| What are the tools of the state for handling the mentioned problems? | 'Governments are always committed to solving these problems – however, we have not seen much result so far.' 'The government will not solve the problem of public safety on its own. There is a need to get local communities involved, we need the local associations – gendarmerie-type civic organizations would be viable. Civic associations along democratic standards and rules of conduct would be able to help, while politically motivated organizations driven by hatred are dangerous.' |
| How do you see people's security perception? | 'The situation is grave and it is very difficult to find a way out.' 'People mutually fear each other: the majority is worried about its property and belongings, as well as Roma people, who are worried about theirs.' |
| Do you foresee further escalation of tensions into open violence? | 'How to put it... mass atrocities will also come, along ethnic lines. We have seen foreshadows of it, we have seen the Guard members. We have been witnessing much more physical threat, violence and actual clashes. It took a very serious effort from the police to separate the parties from each other and to prevent the escalation of conflict.' 'I don't expect any civil war though – but there might be a chance that Roma settlements are attacked by groups, set in fire and so on, as we have seen in Romania, Slovakia or in Italy. Actually I m quite surprised that we have not seen such things in Hungary yet.' |

Lajos Mile, the deputy leader of the parliamentary group of Lehet Más a Politika (LMP)

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| Is there a 'Roma issue' in Hungary? If yes, what would that mean? | <p>'Politicians have been trying to avoid answering this question.'</p> <p>'Yes, there are indeed problematic relations regarding the cohabitation of Roma and Hungarians – but these problems should not be bound to a single ethnic minority, because we are speaking about problems that affect the whole society. It is not an ethnic conflict, but the existential difficulties of a social group.'</p> |
| Do Roma appear in a security context? If yes, in what ways? | 'Regarding public safety. The number of perpetrators among Roma is high – but not because of an inclination based on ethnicity; it is the consequence of their social status.' |
| Is there any actor that speaks of Roma in a security(policy) context? | 'The radical right wing, namely Jobbik abused the inability of the political elite, of governments and positioned the 'Roma question' to the center of public discourse.' |
| What might 'Roma criminality' mean? | 'If we take a look at different kinds of criminal acts, we cannot deny that the number of Roma perpetrators regarding certain types is outstanding. There are certain types to which they are specialized: stealing metal, committing violent attacks, crimes against property, theft. In some regions a significant proportion of perpetrators are Roma – this is an experience within society that is a consequence of the harsh circumstances among which people live. But this does not imply that it would be a genetic inclination to criminality.' |
| Would it be necessary / acceptable to do ethnic profiling for suspects/perpetrators in criminal cases? | 'You can recognize who is Roma and who is not. But keeping any kind of record of this, like ethnic profiles for criminals would not help.' |
| What should be the role of the state in handling the mentioned problems? | 'Most problems also affect the majority society. Unemployment, bad living conditions and lack of access to work are affecting Roma to a larger extent.' |
| What are the tools of the state for handling the mentioned problems? | <p>'Education, fostering integration, improving employment policy, enhancing public safety and order, developing living conditions at the local level. The public work program cannot provide a long-term solution.'</p> <p>'We need real cooperation based on the involvement and ownership of all parties concerned – not only show-off.'</p> |
| How do you see people's security perception? | <p>'There are some who already envision civil war – I deem this exaggerated and hysterical. This would be a dramatic over-simplification.'</p> <p>'There are small localities in Borsod county where people live in fear – also Roma people live in fear when Guards march around.'</p> |
| Do you foresee further escalation of tensions into open violence? | <p>'It is the responsibility of the authorities to act and prevent atrocities.'</p> <p>'The presence of extremists does not mean that there is a general arming and preparation for violence – and does not mean either that Roma would be arming themselves against extremists. I do not see this, this is hysterical provocation. I don't expect violence.'</p> |

Pál Gulyás, the representative of LMP in the local government of Ináncs, Roma activist

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| Is there a 'Roma issue' in Hungary? If yes, what would that mean? | 'In my opinion there is a 'Roma issue': the issue of education and employment. These are much more concerns for Roma people and they are in a worse situation in these regards, thus we can say that these are 'Roma issues' – or we can say issues of poverty, issues of education policy and issues of employment policy.' |
| Do Roma appear in a security context? If yes, in what ways? | 'The subsistence of those Roma families who are about to return from Canada is not secured: most of them sold all their properties when they left and when they return to Hungary within a few months, they will have no homes, no work, no social benefits. This might trigger a rise in crimes against property, in petty crimes in the region because they will need to make a living on something.' |
| Is there any actor that speaks of Roma in a security(policy) context? | 'It is beyond doubt that Jobbik pursues such policy.' 'A complete social group; Roma; all of them are identified with criminality as if Roma had it in their blood.' |
| What might 'Roma criminality' mean? | 'There are certain types of crimes that are mostly committed by people of Roma background. Among each other we call these specific types petty crimes: stealing a chicken, vegetables, wood, or burglary in a shop. In my neighborhood such crimes are typically committed by Roma. This is a fact.' |
| Would it be necessary / acceptable to do ethnic profiling for suspects/perpetrators in criminal cases? | 'Such lists have always meant stigmatization, were not used for any good.' 'It might be useful, but I'm afraid that it could be misused. Maybe the positive side would be that at least we could show and prove that Roma people commit less crime than it is widely believed; less than white-collar criminals for example.' |
| What should be the role of the state in handling the mentioned problems? | 'These people have been left behind. Any respective government so far has left them on their own.' |
| What are the tools of the state for handling the mentioned problems? | 'Creating workplaces in Northeast Hungary, and providing public transportation to these workplaces so that poor people who cannot afford a car can also get to work. There is a strong need to sustain at least public work because otherwise there is nothing. But the most important is that if they [Roma] have a job, they have some regular income, especially if it is in a way when Roma could take their share in production and become interested, the current problems could be solved to a large extent.' |
| How do you see people's security perception? | 'The feeling of being threatened has been ingrained to Roma people's mind in rural regions. Hatred towards Roma people has intensified very much since 2009. I also perceive fear from the majority society. Media play a very significant role in this, when they report about criminality all the time.' 'We, as members of the Roma minority feel that the majority society, as well as the political elite is just playing with us.' |
| Do you foresee further escalation of tensions into open violence? | 'We haven't had any problem in my neighborhood for a while. Recently the old card had been played again when members of the Guard were marching in Devecser not long ago, but as I see, majority society gets accustomed to it, thus it is taken neutrally. They seem to understand that such conflicting attitude is artificially boosted and magnifies things more than these should be perceived.' |

Árpád Miklós, the leader of the county representatives of Jobbik in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county

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| Is there a 'Roma issue' in Hungary? If yes, what would that mean? | 'Anti-Roma sentiment is becoming stronger among people because Roma are growing in number but cannot be put to work. By now a generation grew up members of which haven't seen their parents working.' |
| Do Roma appear in a security context? If yes, in what ways? | 'In the villages elderly, often lonely people live together with young unemployed Roma – and where do the latter get what they need? Obviously they take it from whom they can. If the law would allow, we could run statistics about the growing number of burglary, robbery and theft. This means growing a security problem.' |
| Is there any actor that speaks of Roma in a security(policy) context? | 'It is only Jobbik who speaks out openly, and I am convinced that the party's growing popularity is also the consequence of naming and targeting Roma criminality. People see that at last there is a party that dares to voice this. Everyone could see that there is Roma criminality but no one dared to speak against it. Then came Jobbik and told the people: "Yes, there is Roma criminality and we can offer a solution to it".' |
| What might 'Roma criminality' mean? | 'Roma criminality is a category that does not imply that every Roma would be a criminal; it only means that there are certain types of crimes that are related to Roma. If these were committed and I was a detective, I knew where to start my investigation.' |
| Would it be necessary / acceptable to do ethnic profiling for suspects/perpetrators in criminal cases? | 'I wouldn't say that you can tell about everyone whether (s)he is Roma or not, but in most cases you can tell. I think ethnic profiling would be beneficial, because one who fights against Roma criminality also fights for the rise of Roma, because it is Roma criminals who discredit Roma people the most.' |
| What should be the role of the state in handling the mentioned problems? | 'Changing the current setup for the division of labor in the country and putting Roma to work.' |
| What are the tools of the state for handling the mentioned problems? | 'The system of social benefits and family benefits should be redesigned to motivate people for work, while also workplaces need to be created. Agricultural work and the training of skilled workers should be boosted.' |
| How do you see people's security perception? | 'Elderly people and those who live alone, especially in tiny villages feel threatened.' |
| Do you foresee further escalation of tensions into open violence? | 'If things stay the same, criminality will spread further.' |