The affective politics of the Orbán-regime's populist nationalism in Hungary: Reconstituting collective identity along racialized and political lines

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Abstract

The populism of the Hungarian Orbán-regime has been examined at length since Orbán and his Fidesz party came to power in 2010. However, most of these analyses do not have a concrete conceptualization of populism, and none of them address the affective politics of populism, even though they implicitly acknowledge the crucial role of affects in populist politics. In this dissertation, I mobilize a constructivist—affective conception of populism in order to ask the question: how does the Orbán-regime attempt to construct a political camp identity? I analyze the government's responses to a 2018 verdict by the Curia (the Supreme Court of Hungary) which ordered the state to pay those Roma students who had been educated in a segregated school in the town of Gyöngyöspata. I use discourse-historical analysis, a subset of critical discourse analysis, to link this discourse to historically specific political struggles and broader political cleavages in Hungary. I argue that the Orbán-regime, utilizing the affective repertoire of populism, rearticulates already-existing political and racialized cleavages in the discourse analyzed, thereby reconstituting the collective identity embodied by 'the people' as well as 'the enemy'. Ultimately, I seek to contribute to a research agenda which takes seriously the role of affects and the construction of group identity in the Orbán-regime's politics.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Hungarian Orbán-regime, in power since 2010, has received a considerable amount of academic and popular attention alike. It has been staunchly criticized for its anti-LGBTQ ideology, so-called anti-gender stance, authoritarian measures such as restricting media and civil society freedoms, Eurosceptic statements, anti-migrant and anti-Roma campaigns, and finally, its populism. Populism, and perhaps especially right-wing populism, has become somewhat of a buzzword both in academia and news media. While the usage of the term is often unclear, most academics and commentators agree that we have seen a considerable wave of populism in the past decade around the world. Britain, the United States, Brazil, the Philippines, Hungary, Poland, India, and more countries have witnessed the rise of so-called right-wing populists, whose ideologies often include nationalism, xenophobia, racism, misogyny, authoritarianism, and more. Indeed, these ideological admixtures among right-wing populists have become so widespread that it is difficult to analytically separate each ideology from the rest, which has resulted in considerable confusion around the specificities of right-wing populism.

Populism, in one way or another, engages with the notion of 'the people's will', often, but not always in a national context, which has also led to a lack of clarity regarding the boundaries between populism and nationalism. I contend that the most urgent task is to develop a concrete but sufficiently dynamic conceptualization of populism which allows for the examination of its political mechanisms and profitability. In this dissertation, I build on a constructivist conception of populism developed by Urbinati (2019) which argues that the notion of 'the will of the people' is an artificial entity mobilized by populist political actors in order to legitimize their rule. This understanding of populism allows me to ask, what does populism *do* for the Orbán-regime? More specifically, though, I seek to conceptualize how populist politics attempts to address and mobilize constituencies. I argue that this is best done through bringing Urbinati in dialogue with the literature on the affective politics of populism, which points to the construction of group identity as a salient dimension of populism. I seek to understand the ways in which the affective politics of Fidesz's populism contributes to the construction of their political camp identity. This is significant because at present, there is no analysis of the Orbán-regime's affective politics or populist construction of collective identity, even though an implicit understanding of these often underpins investigations in the literature.

To do this, I investigate the government's response to a 2018 verdict by the Supreme Court of Hungary which ordered the state to pay HUF100 million (~£232,000) to Roma students in the town of Gyöngyöspata, Northeast Hungary, who had been forced to study in a segregated school between 2004-2014. This case study was selected for various reasons. On the one hand, the government, and Viktor Orbán in particular, responded extensively to this verdict, passionately disagreeing with it for reasons that will become clear through the dissertation. As a result of his responses, the biggest national news sources were preoccupied with the Gyöngyöspata case for months, if not years. This indicates that the

segregation verdict was seen by the regime as politically important; therefore, an analysis of the state discourse in question has the capacity to illuminate broader discourses and political mechanisms of the Orbán-regime.

On the other hand, Gyöngyöspata has been a nationally renowned symbol of ethnic tensions since at least 2011, when far-right organizations marched into the town following the news of "increased rates of 'Gypsy crime'" and attempted to intimidate the local Roma population. Afterwards, the Orbán-regime launched its reformed Public Work Scheme in Gyöngyöspata in the same year, leading many to argue that the reason for this was to convince the local white population that they were going to „make Roma people work" and not allow them to live off welfare benefits, which had been a source of ethnic conflict in the town (see Szombati 2018, 2021). The symbolic significance of the town of Gyöngyöspata across the country adds to the importance of analysing the state discourse regarding the segregation verdict. While previous work has attempted to conceptualize this discourse, I seek to advance a historically and politically embedded study which conceives of anti-Roma racism as constitutive of the regime's politics and links this discourse to internal political struggles in the 2000s in Hungary.

In *Chapter 2: Historical and Political Context,* I provide political and historical background to my analysis. I discuss the regime change in 1989-90, Orbán's Fidesz party's political trajectory throughout the 2000s, and the political and economic crises that coalesced in Hungary in the second half of the 2000s. This will allow me to embed my case study in broader political cleavages and internal political struggles, through which I seek to emphasize the importance of internal political developments in Hungary for the eventual rise of Fidesz's populism.

In *Chapter 3: Theory and Literature Review,* I elaborate on the constructivist conceptualization of populism, followed by an examination of the affective politics of populism. I propose to integrate these two theoretical strands and argue that this allows me to identify more concretely and dynamically the mechanisms of Fidesz's populist politics, and the ways in which it attempts to constitute political camp identity. Then, I detail the history of Fidesz's identity construction throughout the 2000s, first against the Hungarian left-wing block, and then against the Roma minority.

In *Chapter 4: Methodology,* I elaborate on the main concepts and goals of critical discourse analysis and discourse-historical analysis and emphasize that due to the close engagement with politico-historical developments in Hungary, DHA is the ideal methodology for the current dissertation.

In *Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis,* I analyze the state's discourse regarding the Gyöngyöspata segregation verdict and make the argument that Fidesz attempts to reinforce the boundaries of its own collective political and national identity, 'authentic Hungarianness', by constructing the Roma minority and the political left as embodying fundamentally anti-Hungarian interests and values. Affectively, the

in-group is constituted through respect, honor, and diligence, while the collective enemy is constituted through fear, anger, resentment, and distrust. I identify this as Fidesz's populist emotional governance (Kinnvall & Svensson 2022) which establishes certain groups as appropriate targets of anger, hatred, and resentment, channelling popular disillusionment into a populist, ethno-nationalist political agenda. Thusly, the affective reconstitution of group boundaries aims to build on already-existing political and racialized cleavages, taking advantages of previous crises in a moment of conflict to sustain a sense of solidarity amongst members of the in-group.

Lastly, in *Chapter 6,* I conclude by identifying the main contributions of my analysis to the existing literature and suggest possible directions for future research regarding the affective politics of the Hungarian regime's populism.

Chapter 2: Historical and Political Context

1.1. The regime change, 1989-90

In this chapter, I provide historical and political contextualization to my case study of the state discourse regarding the Gyöngyöspata segregation verdict in 2018. First, I briefly note the aftermath of the regime change in 1989-90 before discussing the significant political and economic crises in Hungary in the second half of the 2000s. Then, I briefly examine Fidesz's[1] political trajectory and ascent to power. Through these sections, I seek to embed my analysis in a historical context.

Hungary, between 1945 and 1989-90, was part of the state socialist block led by the Soviet Union. In 1989-90, the Soviet Union collapsed everywhere in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the countries in the region began to integrate into the global neoliberal capitalist economy. While the integration was promised to be a straightforward road towards prosperity and freedom (Szulc 2012; Kulpa 2014), the simultaneous trends of deindustrialization, trade liberalization, and the flexibilization of national labour markets (see e.g., Kóczé 2018) resulted in widespread unemployment, poverty, and increasing insecurity (Szombati 2018).

1.2. Fidesz's political trajectory in the 2000s

Here, I want to give a brief overview of Fidesz's political trajectory up until 2010. Orbán's party was first in power between 1998-2002, however, they did not manage to get reelected in 2002. In 2002, then, Orbán recognized that significant resources, organizational capacity, and, crucially, media control were necessary for Fidesz to not just seize power but stay in power, and that this had to be done through the party's insertion into civil society (Greskovits 2020). Fidesz also underwent significant ideological

[1] The current Hungarian regime, in power since 2010, is most often referred to as the Orbán-regime as it is led by Viktor Orbán as the Prime Minister. It is also often called Fidesz (=Alliance of Young Democrats), the leading party of the regime, or NER ("System of National Cooperation"). In this dissertation, I will use these terms interchangeably to refer to the regime.

change: originally, it was founded by young liberals, which is reflected in the party's name (Alliance of Young Democrats), and was affiliated with the Liberal International between 1992 and 2000. However, in the early 2000s, the importance of nationalism and Christianity were increasingly clearly articulated as among the party's central values. Fidesz's extensive civil society activities following the loss of the 2002 elections included wide-ranging collaborations with Churches, on the one hand, and various nationalist organizations, on the other (Greskovits 2020). Thus, while the governing left-wing MSZP[2] increasingly emphasized the international dimension of their rule, focusing on the importance of joining the EU – which Hungary did in 2004 –, Fidesz began to assume the role of the right-wing, conservative, nationalist party (see Miklóssy 2008). It is primarily MSZP and Fidesz which, throughout the 1990s and particularly the 2000s, contributed to the emergence of new political cleavages in Hungary, and managed to address large swathes of the population through their activities.

1.3. Political and economic crises in the second half of the 2000s

While the first half of the 2000s saw the return of a certain degree of social stability after the turbulence of the 90s had settled, in the second half of the 2000s, a number of political and economic crises coalesced in Hungary. A major figure in these crises was Ferenc Gyurcsány, the Prime Minister between 2004-2009 and then-member of MSZP. Gyurcsány, as PM between 2004-2009, and the left-wing block more broadly, is portrayed as responsible for 1) the foreign currency lending crisis in 2006 which led to many households being in enormous debt (Fábry 2019); 2) austerity policies prescribed by the IMF which began to hollow out the welfare state; and, paradoxically, what is perceived as 3) overspending on welfare which led to the emergence of a so-called „work-shy" stratum surviving solely on benefits and thought to have contributed to the financial crisis from 2008 onwards (see Vidra 2018). Those perceived as „work-shy" and „welfare-scrounging" were understood as primarily Roma people (see Chapter 4, section 5.2), which led to the emergence of serious ethnic tensions in different locales around the country throughout the second half of the decade. It is important to note that these ethnic tensions had already been roused across the region throughout the 1990s due to extensive unemployment, poverty, and insecurity, which contributed to the destabilizing effects of the economic crises in the second half of the 2000s.

In addition to the serious economic crises and escalating ethnic tensions, Gyurcsány gave a speech in the town of Őszöd in 2006 (now colloquially known as „the Őszöd speech") at a gathering of party officials, in which he admitted having lied „day and night" to the electorate about the country's financial situation. When a recording of the speech was leaked to the public, it led to the most significant crisis of legitimacy in Hungary since the regime change. The cumulative crises of the ruling MSZP, and Gyurcsány in particular, meant that the 2010 elections essentially became a referendum on MSZP's

[2] MSZP is The Hungarian Socialist Party, also the successor party of MSZMP, the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party, which was in power between 1956-1989 during state socialism. MSZP, in coalition with SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats) was in government for the majority of the 2000s (2002-2006, 2006-2010).

economic policies, and were consequently won by Fidesz by a landslide (Stegmaier & Lewis-Beck 2011). Gyurcsány is one of the most notable figures marked by the Fidesz regime as an enemy; he is imagined to stand for communism, corruption, and opportunism – problems that, for Fidesz, define the Hungarian left –, and anyone associated with him can be easily discredited by being labeled as „Gyurcsány's man". Because he continues to be a prominent leftist political figure to this day[3], this tactic of delegitimization remains a popular tactic for Fidesz.

Chapter 3: Theory and Literature Review

2.1. What is populism?

In this chapter, I will first provide a literature review of different conceptualizations of populism, illustrating throughout why this literature is relevant for the examination of the Orbán-regime's politics. Then, highlighting the research gap this dissertation addresses, I explain the significance of a constructivist conception of populism combined with an affective lens (sections 2.1. and 2.2.). This not only addresses the lack of analytical clarity around populism, but also directs attention to the mechanisms through which populism seeks to politically mobilize people. Then, I theorize the internal political struggles in Hungary in the second half of the 2000s (sections 2.3. and 2.4.) which contributed to the rise of Fidesz's populism, thereby addressing the shortcomings of the dominant globalization-leads-to-populism argument.

I understand populism not as a substantive political ideology, but rather a political logic, strategy, or a way of making political demands (Blühdorn & Butzlaff 2019; Bonikowski et al., 2019; Bonikowski 2017; Rodi et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2021; Urbinati 2019; Laclau 2007; Mouffe 2018; Loew & Faas 2019; Tietjen 2022; Weyland 2001; Albertazzi & Mcdonnell 2015). As a political logic rather than an ideology, it needs a 'host ideology' to specify its appearance as left- or right-wing (Loew & Faas 2019). Right-wing populism often merges with nationalist and authoritarian concerns and arguments which can take on an ethnic, nativist character where the interests of non-natives, thought to be supported by a 'corrupt elite', are pitted against those of native people, whoever these might be (Mudde 2007; Stanley 2011; Rooduijn & Akkerman 2015). One of the most salient host ideologies for right-wing populism, then, is nationalism, including ethno-nationalism, which I understand as „the idea that legitimate membership in the nation is limited to those with the appropriate immutable, or at least highly persistent, traits, such as national ancestry, native birth, majority religion, dominant racial group membership, or deeply ingrained dominant cultural traits" (Brubaker 1992 cited in Bonikowski 2017: S187). I understand ethno-nationalism to be a specific type of nationalism as nationalism – „a distinct combination of beliefs about the appropriate criteria of national membership, aspects of the nation and

[3] Gyurcsány is currently the head of DK, the Democratic Coalition, one of the biggest parties on the Hungarian opposition.

the state that are deserving of pride (or shame), and the nation's position vis-à-vis the rest of the world" (Bonikowski 2017: S188) – is not always predicated upon an ethnic basis (see Brubaker 1992; Calhoun 1997).

Populism is built upon a dissociative conception of the political sphere pioneered by Carl Schmitt (2007 [1932]), who argues that political associations are built through dissociation, or through identifying common enemies (called the friend—enemy relation), rather than through identifying common interests (in Tietjen 2022). Thus, the fundamental duality in populism is that between the 'morally decent people' versus 'the corrupt elite' (Bonikowski et al., 2019; Brubaker 2019). However, I argue that this antagonism is not sufficient for the specification of populist politics because such a dichotomy is present in other types of political logics (Silva et al., 2021). Many have taken issue with the predominant understanding of populism in the literature which centers the 'people vs. elite' dualism but fails to specify additional criteria for populist politics, contributing to unhelpful conflations with other concepts such as nationalism and authoritarianism, on the one hand, and making it easy to label wildly different political activities populist, on the other (see Bonikowski 2017; Bonikowski et al., 2019; Rodi et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2021).

One of the primary concerns of the literature on the Orbán-regime is its populism, usually examined in conjunction with its nationalism and authoritarianism (Paternotte & Kuhar 2018; Rogers 2019; Gagyi 2016; Gyulavári & Pisarczyk 2023; Hungler 2022; Toplisek 2020; Rorke 2021; Ismayilzada 2023; Geva 2021). This body of literature is highly varied: populism is examined in relation to labour law (Gyulavári & Pisarczyk 2023; Hungler 2022), anti-Roma racism (Rorke 2021; Ismayilzada 2023), anti-gender campaigns (Paternotte & Kuhar 2018), welfare policy (Hungler & Kende 2021; Stubbs & Lendvai-Bainton 2020), and the political economy of the regime overall (Rogers 2019; Gagyi 2016; Toplisek 2020; Geva 2021). This literature, however, often takes for granted the concept of populism as applied to the Orbán-regime, creating the impression of uncritical and unreflexive adoption (see Bonikowski 2017; Bonikowski et al., 2019; Rodi et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2021 for the academic usage of populism as a 'buzzword').

For instance, Gagyi (2016) identifies the Orbán government as 'antidemocratic populist', arguing that the regime „portrays itself as the organic representative of national interest" (p. 359). However, Gagyi never attempts to define or theorize populism in this work, which makes it difficult to situate her work within the literature more broadly. Equally, Geva notes that a degree of „financial nationalism made Orbán appear like a populist hero" (2021: 83), while Hungler (2022) discusses the Orbán-regime's claim to be the sole representatives of 'the people' understood as a homogeneous entity. Stubbs & Lendvai-Bainton (2020) examine the hegemonic positions of contemporary authoritarianism, populism, conservatism, and neoliberalism in Hungary, Poland, and Croatia, arguing that what unites all three ruling parties is their „combination of welfare chauvinism, layered social welfare and nationalist

populism" (p. 555). Once again, however, none of these scholars attempt to conceptualize populism or the category of 'the people' in their work, contributing to the lack of analytical clarity around the regime's populist politics as well as the concept of populism in general. Ultimately, the lack of attention in this literature to the constitution of the category of 'the people' obscures the dynamics through which the Orbán-regime's populist politics seeks to address and mobilize the populace. Thus, first, while I agree with the broad consensus in the literature that nationalism and populism are both prominent elements of the regime's politics, I specify that populism is a political strategy whose host ideology in the Hungarian case is ethno-nationalism. In this, I emphasize the Orbán-regime as reinforcing the character of the Hungarian nation-state as ethnically white.

As a starting point for a more thorough conceptualization of populism, I find Silva et al.'s (2021) specification of the four criteria of populism helpful: „a normative element (orientation to democratic norms of equality and popular sovereignty); a comparative element (sense of undeserved inferiority); a rivalry between parts (one part is deemed responsible for the undeserved suffering of the other) and a redemptive element in the form of an appeal to the restoration of democratic equality" (Silva & Vieira 2018a: 507). The key to populism is therefore not merely the *virtuous people versus corrupt elite* dualism, but also the argument that the virtuous people, however that group may be defined, had been wronged by an elite (and anyone thought to be representing the interests of that elite or benefitting from their activities), and that this situation needs to be properly addressed so that popular sovereignty, or the 'will of the people', may be restored. Thus, while the Orbán-regime articulates a dichotomy between 'the people' and 'the corrupt elite', I argue that what is significant here is not merely the representation of such a dualism, but rather, the argument that white Hungarian people had been wronged by the previous liberal-Socialist government who had been supported by international liberal institutions such as the EU and the IMF, and that this needs to be rectified; Hungarian people need to 'take their country back', which can only be achieved through the rule of Fidesz.

Another strand of literature emphasizes that contemporary populism in Europe is a reaction to neoliberal globalisation and the economic and political dislocations experienced by many as a result (see Kalb 2009; Shields 2012; Stankov 2018; Voss 2018). This understanding of populism as fundamentally a reaction to neoliberal capitalism has started to gain tract in the literature on Hungary in recent years (Gagyi 2016; Toplisek 2020; Scheiring 2020b; Szombati 2018, 2021). Vidra (2018), while sympathetic to these arguments, suggests scholars need to address more thoroughly the internal political struggles through which populism has come to play such a key role in the Hungarian political landscape. For example, Toplisek's (2020) statement that 'social dislocation and economic hardship produced voter demand for populist politics' is important, but his work does not allow for an insight into the specific internal political issues at play, rather, it merely indicates a general trend. Moreover, he does not attempt to understand how and why economic and social vicissitudes can lead to an increase in demand for populism. Such arguments implicitly endorse a view that economic change automatically leads to the

rise of populism, which is not only untrue, but undermines the role of institutional factors, politicians, political parties, local power-holders, and others in influencing the translation of economic grievances into specific political issues. Overall, this body of literature is primarily focused on the 'demand' side of populist politics.

Szombati's work (2018, 2021) makes the same argument that neoliberal capitalist integration produced increased demand for populism, but explores through detailed ethnographic work the ways in which the actions of mayors and political parties in Hungary, in conjunction with structural conditions, contributed to the populist politics of the Orbán-regime. I take inspiration from his work to avoid the occasionally structuralist thrust of the globalization-leads-to-populism argument, which fails to properly consider the complex internal political struggles that contributed to the rise and continued popularity of Fidesz. Therefore, contrary to much of this literature, this dissertation focuses on the 'supply' side of populism and addresses Fidesz's role in articulating and reinforcing political cleavages according to a populist political logic in order to mobilize people.

2.2. A constructivist conception

Alongside arguing for a more specific delineation of populism, which allows me to concretize the arguments made by the Orbán-regime beyond the dichotomy of 'the people' versus 'the corrupt elite', I seek to operationalize Urbinati's (2019) constructivist conception of populism throughout this dissertation. I argue that such a conceptualization helps turn our attention away from the question of what populism *is,* and instead asks what populism *does* for the Fidesz regime, and thereby allows for a dynamic examination of the Hungarian political landscape. Urbinati (ibid.) argues that 'the people' in populism is an empty signifier, an artificially constructed entity which is used by populist political actors to justify and legitimize their political power by exploiting the dissatisfaction of certain groups and invoking the 'will of the masses'. Thus, in populist discourse, 'the people's will' is imagined to be incarnated in the leader (Urbinati 2019) who claims to be the sole representative of the people understood as a homogeneous entity (Hungler 2022). The Orbán-regime imagines itself as the only rightful, authentic representative of Hungarian people's will, and fundamentally asserts that only through their rule, and Orbán's leadership, can popular sovereignty prevail (see Hungler 2022; Geva 2021).

A charismatic leader (Taggart 2000) or the proposal of extemely simple solutions communicated provocatively (Moffitt & Tormey 2014) are not necessarily defining elements of populism, but they are some of its recurrent elements in the Hungarian case (see Loew & Faas 2019). Charisma and simple, emotionally charged communication are political strategies often used by populist leaders to appear deeply affected by who/what has wronged 'the people', and to communicate clearly and efficiently that

this must be addressed urgently. For example, Fidesz often communicates via large-scale billboard campaigns with messages such as 'Stop Soros' (referring to George Soros[4]).



Figure 1. A billboard from the government's 'Stop Soros' campaign from 2018 which reads, "we can't let Soros get the last laugh." Above, in smaller writing, it says, "99% reject illegal migration". Source: EDNews (2021).

These are highly emotionally charged messages which capitalize on the political dissemination of fear, anger, and resentment, arguing that the political left, both domestic and European, does not represent the true 'will of Hungarian people' (see Stubbs & Lendvai-Bainton 2020; Rorke 2021; Rogers 2019; Ismayilzada 2023). This is embodied in the figure of George Soros, who is portrayed to stand for migration and liberalism, which according to Fidesz are antithetical to 'what Hungarian people want' (Gyulavári & Pisarczyk 2023; Rogers 2019). While much of this literature then recognizes the centrality of such emotionally charged communication to the regime's politics, they generally take such affective dimensions of populism for granted, failing to explicitly address the notion of affective politics and the ways in which it plays a role in populist mechanisms of cleavage formation. The explicit focus on affective politics within the regime's populism asks not just what the category of 'the people' does for Fidesz, but addresses the mechanisms through which Fidesz articulates political cleavages, which in turn enables me to engage with historically embedded political struggles meaningfully.

2.3. The affective politics of populism

While Urbinati herself does not engage with the literature on the affective politics of populism in her work, I argue that the most fruitful operationalization of her constructivist account of populism is by bringing it into dialogue with an affective approach. In this dissertation, in line with Tietjen (2022), I

[4] George Soros is a Jewish—American—Hungarian billionaire and hedge fund manager, founder of the Open Society Foundations, a grant-making network. He has been targeted by the Orbán-regime because this foundation often funds 'liberal causes'; for example, Fidesz accuses him of wanting to bring non-European migrants into EU countries.

understand ‘affect’ as an umbrella term for all kinds of affective phenomena, such as emotions and moods. A key argument in this body of literature is that both ‘the people’ and the collective enemy (‘the corrupt elite’) are affectively constituted. In order to be able to effectively mobilize ‘the will of the masses’, the ‘masses’, or at least a significant part of them, need to feel disempowered, unheard, and left behind – whether by previous governing parties, global elites, or both. Populism therefore emerges most forcefully in the aftermath of crises of democratic legitimacy (Hawkins, Read & Pauwels 2017), when people feel that democratic institutions are not adequately representing their concerns and interests.

The affective politics of populism channel such disillusionment, repackaging „feelings of alienation, inadequacy, and disempowerment into a collective ethos” (Kinnvall & Svensson 2022: 529) by concretizing and collectivizing affects, especially fear and anger (Tietjen 2022). Populism „more overtly, explicitly, frequently, creatively and effectively engages with the affective dimension of human existence” which means that populist politicians are more likely to display passion, ‘political incorrectness’, ‘bad manners’, and the like (Tietjen 2022: 290). Communicating simple, emotionally charged and provocative messages, like Orbán and his Fidesz party does, can make the political actor seem like an ‘ordinary man’ who rejects the establishment’s formalism, and identifies with as well as represents the interests of ‘the masses’ instead. Orbán often emphasizes that he is an ‘ordinary guy’ from the countryside, in contrast with leftists, both domestic and European, who are portrayed not only as being disconnected from ‘the masses’, but also as having betrayed them throughout the economic and political crises between 2006-2010. Thus, Orbán has skilfully taken advantage of the collective sense of disillusionment in the aftermath of MSZP’s legitimacy crisis and the financial crises in the lead-up to the 2010 national elections. Fidesz’s continued exploitation of previous crises and collective disillusionment is a central focus of this dissertation.

Populism consistently builds on fear and anger as affective tools of political mobilization; therefore, while a constructivist notion of populism is helpful, beyond asking ‘what is the function of the category of ‘the people’ in populism?’, more fundamentally, we need to ask, ‘how is this category capable of articulating resonant political cleavages?’. The former question is addressed in Urbinati’s constructivist account, but I argue that the latter is best addressed through an affective analytical lens. In order to effectively address constituencies, populism has to concretize affects – identify what is going wrong, why, and who is responsible –, as well as collectivize affects – base emotions on shared concerns and synchronize affective responses, for example through frequent rallies and demonstrations (Tietjen 2022). Fear and anger evoke a sense of urgency and crisis which is more likely to mobilize people, on the one hand, and fuels scepticism towards institutions of representative democracy, on the other, because in situations of urgency, political deliberation and decision-making are overshadowed by the need for an immediate collective response (ibid). Moreover, fear and anger are crucial for populist politics because the very core of populism is the argument that ‘the people’ had been wronged by the

‘corrupt elite’, and that this needs to be rectified; the affects of fear, anger, and a sense of urgency are central to the articulation of this idea. In Fidesz’s campaigns, phrases such as ‘Stop Soros’, a sense of urgency and crisis is manufactured, which creates a need for an immediate collective response. The instigation of fear and anger through such slogans concretizes affects by identifying who is responsible, why, and what is to be done, and collectivizes them through campaigns and frequent referenda.

Thus, populism prioritizes direct contact with the leader – in the form of rallies, referenda, and the like – as against institutions of representative democracy (Bonikowski 2017, Bonikowski et al., 2019, Urbinati 2019). Fidesz orchestrates frequent, politically manipulative referenda – with questions such as „Do you support the popularization of sex-change procedures for underage children?” (see Csatári & Janecskó 2022) – and uses the results of such referenda, portrayed as ‘the will of the people’, to legitimize their political stances and power. Through referenda as well as rallies and demonstrations, such as the „Peace March” organized by Fidesz and its civil society representatives every year, the ruling party aims to concretize and collectivize affective responses of fear and anger, creating a collective ethos among members of its political camp that helps constitute it as a coherent group. Such an affective lens on populist politics is therefore particularly useful for the examination of the Orbán-regime because they operate in a classically populist manner – utilizing the affects of fear and anger through demonstrations and referenda to delineate the in-group from the outgroup –, however, these tactics have not yet been examined from a specifically affective perspective.

In addition to the constitution of the in-group, the outgroup is constituted through the populist image of the collective enemy (the ‘corrupt elite’ and those seen as aligned with its interests), which is able to homogenise disparate phenomena due to its emotionally charged nature, and thereby explain divergent incidents through reference to an evocative framework. While Fidesz’s construction of the collective enemy as a central characteristic of the NER regime is a cliché at this point (e.g., Gyulavári & Pisarczyk 2023; Toplisek 2020; Szikra 2018; Thorleifsson 2021; Rogers 2019; Stubbs & Lendvai-Bainton 2020), the affective politics underpinning the constitution of the collective enemy are taken for granted in the literature. Through the construction of the image of the collective enemy through these affects, the affective ties binding the category of ‘the people’ together are (re)created. Thus, an analysis of the affective politics of the Orbán-regime’s populism helps understand the dynamics and significance of the regime’s group identity construction.

Kinnvall & Svensson (2022) identify ‘emotional governance’ as a crucial dimension of populism, which they understand in a Foucauldian sense of techniques of surveillance, control and manipulation. Populist affective politics channel the populace’s disillusionment towards certain objects identified as appropriate objects of fear and anger, which reconstitutes collective identities by elevating some concerns to become constitutive of people’s identities, and thereby bestow their lives with coherence, continuity, and meaning (Tietjen 2022: 289). The affective ties to the group, the category of ‘the people’,

then transcend affective ties to specific political concerns (Tietjen 2022). For Fidesz, concrete issues are often easily transcended through reference to the common, evocative framework of 'the corrupt elite' – primarily embodied by figures such as Gyurcsány, Soros, and the EU/Brussels –, which then serves the purpose of recreating meaningful affective ties for the in-group. In this dissertation, I seek to understand the ways in which emotional governance in Fidesz's populism functions to maintain group identity. Ultimately, I argue that not only do populist politicians use 'the people' as an artificially constucted entity to legitimize their power, but that through emotional governance, this signifier ceases to be empty for 'the people' themselves whose powerful affective attachments form the basis for political mobilization. I examine the Orbán-regime's Gyöngyöspata discourse from an affective analytical lens, attempting to understand the ways in which the affective politics of populism constitutes group identity for Fidesz.

2.4. Fidesz, collective identity, and the political left

In this section, I review the ways in which Fidesz's civil society activity throughout the 2000s is conceptualized in the literature, and identify how my analysis expands on this body of work as well as offers a new analytical lens through the affective politics of populism. This section seeks to embed my understanding of Fidesz's populist ethno-nationalism in its politico-historical context which helps understand the dynamics of group identity construction over time. After the loss of the national elections in 2002 – having been in power 1998-2002 –, Fidesz launched a long-haul, transformative campaign in the form of the Civic Circles Movement (*Polgári Körök Mozgalom*) which sought to transform civil society through the extension of right-wing „grassroots networks, associations, hierarchical organisations, and media" (Greskovits 2020: 252). Greskovits (2020) argues that such civic activism was harnessed for political ends: as he puts it, „the movement helped Fidesz to forge strategic or ad-hoc alliances among all fractions of the right and even non-rightist organisations; take deeper roots in civil society; and flexibly respond to challenges of non-conventional and conventional politics alike" (p. 254).

Equally, the Circles intended to shape popular consciousness through, among other things, strategic alliances with churches and the espousal of versatile nationalist and patriotic practices (ibid.). Enyedi (2005: 697) argues that Fidesz thus played a key role in the „popularisation of conflict perceptions and consolidation of camp identities", which is a crucial insight into the consequences of Fidesz's civil society activities throughout the 2000s. Therefore, Fidesz's participation in the delineation of the boundaries of political camp identities as a key agent had already begun in the 2000s, which means that understanding the regime's mechanisms of identity construction provide crucial insights into long-standing political cleavages in Hungary. As Greskovits eloquently argues:

> ...[T]he success of strengthening such attachments hinged on the sense of belonging, autonomy, and importance that members got from the circles, and on regular encounters with leading

> activists (...) who offered them new ways to feel, think, and act as members of „imagined communities" (Anderson 1991) (2020: 257).

Greskovits' analysis of Fidesz' activity in civil society long before they came to power in 2010 is significant because he argues that the serious and wide-ranging collaborations, network-building, and identity construction that the Circles accomplished contributed to Fidesz's overwhelming success in the 2010 national elections. However, even though he draws on Enyedi (2005) and Anderson (1991) to emphasize the importance of the Civic Circles for the formation of political attachments, a sense of belonging, and ultimately, collective identity, he does not make explicit the affective nature of these developments. Moreover, he does not specify the political entities against which Fidesz, through the Circles, attempted to forge a sense of collective identity; this also prevents us from understanding the specific internal political struggles which the Circles participated in so as to establish a collective political identity. I aim to embed my analysis of the Gyöngyöspata case study in a politico-historical context, taking seriously the internal political struggles in Hungary during the second half of the 2000s, addressing Fidesz's construction of party identity *against* the political left as well as the Roma minority.

Defining itself against the Hungarian left-wing block, Fidesz framed key points of reference – such as the 2006 foreign currency lending crisis, the Őszöd speech, austerity, and the financial crisis – as failures of the liberal-socialist government which exposed the country to external, anti-Hungarian forces. The association of Gyurcsány, in particular, with the betrayal of national interests, was widely resonant with the population due to MSZP's well-established association with communism, as MSZP was MSZMP's – the leading party under communism – successor party. Communism is understood across East Europe as the rule of an 'alien civilisation', and those associated with MSZMP in Hungary are therefore routinely accused of having betrayed the national interest and national sovereignty (see Miklóssy 2008). Thus, for Fidesz, the delegitimization of the Hungarian left has primarily been accomplished through the accusation that the latter is anti-Hungarian and stands for foreign interests. In this dissertation, I seek to demonstrate that the state discourse about the Gyöngyöspata segregation case was intended to rearticulate such already-existing political cleavages, thereby delineating and reinforcing the boundaries of Fidesz's vision of authentic Hungarianness and further entrenching its populist ethno-nationalism. Through the analysis of the state discourse regarding Gyöngyöspata and the ways in which it builds on previous crises and societal cleavages, I center the role of internal political struggles in Fidesz's rise to power and political project, thereby providing an important corrective to a dominant argument in the literature that neoliberal capitalist integration led to the rise of populist politics.

2.5. Fidesz, Jobbik, collective identity, and anti-Roma racism

Alongside Fidesz's delegitimization of the Hungarian left, it is also necessary to examine the history of the party's incorporation of anti-Roma racism into its political project. Kristóf Szombati's book *The Revolt of the Provinces: Anti-Gypsyism and Right-Wing Politics in Hungary* (2018) aptly demonstrates that the rivalry between the two right-wing parties in opposition in the 2000s, Fidesz and the far-right

Jobbik, pushed Fidesz to incorporate elements of anti-Roma racism into its eventual political project of populist ethno-nationalism. Jobbik's primary strategy of electoral mobilization, particularly between 2007-2010, was to generate a moral panic on „Gypsy criminality", which resonated with rural workers in different locales due to the deep dislocations caused by the cumulative crises throughout the second half of the decade discussed before. Cohen (2002: xxxvii) argues that „successful moral panics owe their appeal to their ability to find points of resonance with wider anxieties", and in the economically and politically tumultuous decades following the collapse of communism in 1989, people's identities, statuses, and economic situations were being majorly transformed. Such instability, while momentarily alleviated in the first half of the 2000s, worsened in the second half of the decade, and Jobbik was successful in transforming local social problems and tensions into a coherent, national political agenda centering on the figure of the criminal 'Gypsy' surviving on welfare benefits (see Szombati 2018).

While Szombati, in line with much of the literature discussed, does not frame his argument through a specifically affective lens, I argue that his analysis makes clear that Jobbik affectively reconstituted collective identity by drawing a clear boundary between 'the Gypsy' and the good, hardworking Hungarian. They did this by essentializing Roma people as „welfare-scroungers" who had taken advantage of the generous welfare benefits distributed by the liberal-Socialist government, thereby constituting them through the affects of anger and resentment. In turn, the figure of the 'hardworking Hungarian' was constituted as the negation of Roma „welfare-scroungers", and Jobbik then articulated its own political identity through the argument that they fundamentally represented the interests of such 'hardworking Hungarians'. Jobbik undertook various political mobilization campaigns, primarily in small, rural towns, staging demonstrations and frequently inserting themselves into local conflicts between Roma and non-Roma people (ibid).

Such a reconstitution of identity, centering on 'Gypsy criminality', generated significant electoral support for Jobbik, which Fidesz subsequently recognized, and incorporated such discourse into its own project. The exploitation of previous economic, political, and social crises is therefore central to Fidesz's politics not just when its comes to the delegitimization of the left but equally for its anti-Roma racism. Most of the literature which discusses anti-Roma racism under the Orbán-regime, however, fails to recognize it as a long-standing and key element of the regime's politics, focusing on discrimination, poverty, welfare policy, or Fidesz' public work programme as a bounded issue (see Vidra 2018; Hungler 2022; Rostas 2020; Szikra 2014, 2018; Csoba 2014; Pap 2020; Kovai 2019). While this is highly valuable and important work, it tends to marginalize and compartmentalize anti-Roma racism, and there is a shortage of work which addresses anti-Roma racism as a recurrent element of the Orbán-regime's populist politics. As noted before, it has become a cliché to note the NER regime's constant populist invocation of the collective enemy, which therefore has become a taken-for-granted notion in the literature regarding the Hungarian Roma minority as well (Rorke 2021; Ismayilzada 2023). Most analyses in the literature do not address the roots and the political embeddedness of anti-Roma racism

in Hungary, rather, they simply argue that 'the Roma' are constituted as the enemy of the regime. Rorke (2021: 94) contends that the state discourse regarding the Gyöngyöspata segregation verdict sought to „revive an older hatred" in the „search for an enemy". This argument fails to shed light on the specific reasons why the segregation verdict might have been important for the regime's political discourse, thereby eschewing the significance of the politico-historical embeddedness of anti-Roma racism in Hungary.

Szombati's work (2018, 2021) is a notable exception in this regard (see above). However, as indicated above, the affective constitution of identity in Orbán's populist politics remains a significant research gap. The current dissertation seeks to demonstrate that the internal racialized other (the Roma minority) as well as the liberal—Socialist block are lumped together into a homogenised image of the collective enemy, seen as sharing the same, fundamentally anti-Hungarian interests. The regime's populist ethno-nationalism contributes to political cleavage formation through emotional governance whereby these two primary groups are identified as appropriate targets of fear, anger, and hatred, and the victorious argument is made that 'we' are going to take 'our' country back from 'them'. I conceptualize the Gyöngyöspata state discourse as a reaffirmation of already-existing political and racialized cleavages, the formation of which Fidesz had played a significant part in. The moment of significant political conflict which the Gyöngyöspata verdict represented provides an excellent case study for the examination of Fidesz's delineation of group boundaries through populist emotional governance, and through it, a deeper understanding of the long-standing cleavages cutting through the landscape of Hungarian politics.

In sum, the current literature does not engage with the Orbán-regime's populist politics from a specifically affective lens, which represents a significant research gap given that emotional governance is central to the regime's strategies of collective identity construction. Often, populism is poorly conceptualized, and its affective dimensions remain unexplored in the Hungarian case. Moreover, internal political struggles are not considered thoroughly in this literature, which often argues that Hungary's integration into the global system of neoliberal capitalism, and the dislocations thus caused, are behind the rise of populism. While there are currently two studies (Ismayilzada 2023; Rorke 2021) which examine the PM's discourse regarding the Gyöngyöspata verdict, they do not give an indication of how and why Roma people are identified as an 'other' by the regime in the first place, thereby ultimately failing to identify the political significance of this discourse.

To address these knowledge gaps, I focus on operationalizing affective and constructivist understandings of the categories of 'the people' and 'the corrupt elite/enemy' which help me ask what populism *does* for the regime, and specifically, how populism conceives of and disseminates understandings of the collective group of the Fidesz camp. I argue that my case study of the state discourse surrounding the Gyöngyöspata segregation verdict is an ideal object of analysis for the current

dissertation due to the national significance of the discourse for Fidesz as well as the importance of the town of Gyöngyöspata as a long-standing symbol of ethnic tensions. The former indicates that Fidesz saw the articulation and dissemination of this discourse as politically important, which means that understanding Fidesz's aims and strategies in this discourse is crucial to understanding their political operation more generally. The latter points to the fact that the invocation of the town of Gyöngyöspata in political discourse signals an engagement with ethnic group boundaries between Roma and non-Roma in Hungary, thereby offering relevant and needed material for my examination of Fidesz's discursive constitution of collective identity. The Gyöngyöspata case study is therefore well-suited for the examination of Fidesz's articulation of political cleavages as well as the ways in which this is constitutive of their project of populist ethno-nationalism as a whole.

Chapter 4: Methodology

3. Research gaps and research questions

3.1. Research gaps

In this chapter, I first note the research gaps and research questions guiding this dissertation. Then, I set out the framework underpinning my research: critical discourse analysis (CDA). I first discuss the relevance of CDA to this dissertation before elaborating on its key concepts and main goals. Then, I discuss why I chose to do discourse-historical analysis (DHA) specifically wihtin the framework of CDA, detailing the research process. I draw on the key tenets, concepts, and goals of CDA to conceptualize the interrelations between power, discourse, and ideology, but undertake DHA specifically due to its focus on the strategic and historic nature of discourse (see Reisigl 2017). Lastly, I address issues of reflexivity and positionality.

The research gaps highlighted in the previous section are best addressed through the methodology of critical discourse analysis. The Orbán-regime's affective politics, while underpinning the arguments in much of the literature regarding the construction of the collective enemy and political group identity through discourse, have not yet been explicitly addressed. Instead, the dynamics of such affective politics are generally taken for granted in the literature reviewed. While the state discourse surrounding the Gyöngyöspata segregation verdict has been analyzed previously (Ismayilzada 2023; Rorke 2021), the arguments in these studies do not attempt to politically or historically contextualize this discourse, thereby falling short of recognizing its significance. The importance of the town of Gyöngyöspata as a national symbol of ethnic tensions, and Orbán's extensive engagement with the segregation verdict in political discourse suggests that this case study is significant for understanding the ways in which the regime conceptualizes collective identity, especially vis-à-vis the Hungarian Roma minority, among others. I seek to examine Hungarian government members' responses to the 2018 verdict in which the Hungarian state was ordered by the Supreme Court of Hungary to pay HUF100 million (~£232,000) to

students – and their families – whose education had suffered from segregation between 2004 and 2014 at a school in the town of Gyöngyöspata. Critical discourse analysis enables me to analyze the case study as politico-historically situated, which helps in achieving a primary aim of this dissertation, namely, to link internal political struggles to the Orbán-regime's populist politics.

Moreover, CDA has been used extensively in research on right-wing politics (Sengul 2019), identity construction in politics (Wodak 2007), populist discourse (Ietcu-Fairclough 2007), nationalist discourse (Wodak 2017), the role of the media and the elite in reproducing racism through discourse (van Dijk 1993, 1998), and more. Thus, there is a long and diverse body of work investigating populist, nationalist, racist, and right-wing political discourses through CDA, which demonstrates the value of CDA for analyzing such discourses and therefore further supports the appropriateness of CDA for this research. It is through considering these research gaps as well as the epistemological framework and relevance of CDA to the current analysis that the research questions were formulated.

3.2. Research questions

a) How did the Orbán-regime respond to the Gyöngyöspata segregation verdict, and what does this tell us about its discursive construction of a national and political identity?

b) How does this discourse fit into the Orbán-regime's political project at large?

4. Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

4.1. Key concepts and goals

I conceive of CDA not merely as a method for data analysis, but a theoretical and methodological whole, which means that the methodology is closely informed by CDA's theoretical tenets (see Jorgensen & Phillips 2002: 4). However, despite this holistic approach, CDA contains a heterogeneity of methodological and theoretical perspectives, and therefore it is at most a shared perspective on doing discourse analysis (van Dijk 1993; Wodak 2002). CDA promotes the view of a dialectical relationship between discourse and the social structure that frames it – thus, discourse is both socially constitutive and socially shaped, it both sustains and transforms the social order (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). Two key concepts in CDA crucial to this research are power and ideology. Power is associated with groups, communities, and institutions, and can thus be institutionalized in a social structure (Lê & Lê 2009). Power often manifests „in social control in terms of resources such as social status, expertise, knowledge and authority" (Lê & Lê 2009: 11). However, as van Dijk argues (2004: 25):

> ...[p]ower is not only a way to control the acts of other people, but also their minds, and such mind control, which is (...) at the basis of action control, is largely discursive. In other words, discourse plays a fundamental role in the cycle of the reproduction of social power.

Power is therefore expressed in and through discourse, but discourse also shapes social reality, including relationships, institutional orders, and structures that express complex patterns of power (van Dijk

1997). Discourse is therefore central in the reproduction of structures, which is why my examination of the Gyöngyöspata state discourse has the capacity to illuminate Fidesz's structurally embedded construction of political group identity.

A core aim of CDA is to understand the interrelationships between power, discourse (language), and ideology (Sengul 2019; Wodak 2002). *Ideologies* are „particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal power relations, relations of domination and exploitation" (Fairclough et al., 2011: 371). Ideologies are, in short, *socially based schemata* which indirectly control the mental representations, attitudes, and specific beliefs of individuals (van Dijk 1997). The relationship between ideologies and discourses may be very indirect because specific beliefs may be modified by the constraints of the social, political, and historical context; thus, „ideological beliefs need to be inferred, hypothetically reconstructed, from actual discourse" (van Dijk 1998). Ideologies are often expressed in the form of discourse: socially based schemas affecting representations, attitudes, and belief systems organize and order discourses so as to (re)produce coherence and group identities (van Dijk 1997). In this way, ideology is produced and reproduced through discourse (van Dijk 2015). One of the primary aims of CDA is to 'demystify' discourses by deciphering their ideological contents (Wodak 2002: 12). A key concept here is the *ideological square:* this refers to a common strategy of ideological polarization and group identity formation whereby we express/emphasize information that is positive about Us (the in-group) and negative about Them (the ideologically defined enemy or outgroup), as well as suppress/de-emphasize information that is positive about Them and information that is negative about Us (van Dijk 1998).

The main goal of CDA is to uncover power relationships and demonstrate inequalities embedded in the fabric of society (Rogers 2004) through an understanding and analysis of discourse as both constituted by, and constitutive of, structure. CDA takes an explicitly political stance against power abuse, racism, discrimination, and inequity (Lê & Lê 2009; van Dijk 1997), and rejects the notion of a „neutral", „objective" and „value-free" science (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). As such, it is deeply concerned with questions of responsibility, interests, and ideology, which is why it is keen to embed the data in its social, political, and historical context (Wodak 2002). The notion of being critical further means that CDA seeks to change social phenomena as much as it seeks to explain them, and that it sees itself as a form of social intervention rather than dispassionate science (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). These questions need to be taken seriously when someone is undertaking critical discourse analysis, especially as there have been concerns that the term 'critical' has been treated as unproblematic and used by scholars unreflexively (see Billig 2002; Breeze 2011). In sum, CDA investigates social inequality – including structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control – as expressed in and constituted by discourse, and it does so in a way that relates to broader goals around emancipation and equity.

4.2. CDA: Racism and nationalism

A key insight that CDA supplies specifically in relation to racism and nationalism is that nationalist and/or racist ideologies are reproduced through discourse, and especially public and elite discourses, including those by the political elite (van Dijk 1993). With respect to the discursive construction of national identities, DHA specifies that nations are mental constructs, and that national identities „are continuously negotiated, co-constructed and re-produced discursively. On the one hand, as imagined community, they are stable enough to allow identification and cohesion of social groups. On the other, they are flexible and dynamic enough to be articulated by various actors in various contexts and for various audiences" (Wodak 2017: 409). Racism similarly allows for the discursive formation of group identities through, among others, the strategy of the ideological square which might be used by powerful white elites to denounce 'black culture', for example (see van Dijk 1998).

Racism and nationalism might both be used as exclusionary, discriminatory ideologies to discursively construct the outgroup as an enemy, a threat, which then may be used to generate support for a particular political agenda (van Dijk 1998; Guillem 2017). A hallmark of such „us vs them" discourse is their underlying belief in the *immutable nature* of both the ingroup and the outgroup, which not only provides a sense of stability for the group identities in question, but also upholds the power relations embedded in the status quo. It is this „us vs them" discourse that I seek to address in the context of the Orbán-regime, specifically engaging with the regime's understanding of Roma people as possessing an immutable nature, and the ways in which this contributes to the stability and coherence of the NER's delineation of collective identity as well as the legitimization of their power.

5. Discourse-historical analysis (DHA)

The uniqueness of the DHA approach within CDA is its focus on the strategic and historical nature of discourse as well as its careful consideration of interdiscursive (between different discourses) and intertextual (between texts) relations (Sengul 2019). As part of my DHA methodology, I am taking a series of thematically connected discourses/discourse fragments as starting points and reconstructing their historical interrelationships within a specific period of time (Reisigl 2017). I seek to „integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis" (Fairclough et al., 2011: 364) in accordance with the principles of DHA, working outward from text to context (Johnstone 2008). I chose DHA specifically as my methodology because I seek to demonstrate the analyzed discourse fragments' politico-historical embeddedness in the internal struggles of the country, which also illustrates the strategic nature of the state discourse regarding the Gyöngyöspata segregation verdict. Ultimately, the aim is to link this discourse with the political, economic, and social tensions and dynamics borne out of the struggles of the 2000s in particular.

5.1. DHA – The research process

In the research process, I collected data from key Hungarian news sources such as Telex, Népszava, and Index which are amongst the most widely read and notable news sources in the country. I searched for relevant articles through the keywords „Orbán", „romák" (=Roma people in plural), „Gyöngyöspata", „Orbán+Gyöngyöspata", „Orbán+romák", „cigányok" (=Gypsies), „Orbán+cigányok", „közmunka" (=public work), „Orbán+közmunka", and „romák+közmunka". Keywords are ideologically and discursively significant: as Raymond Williams argued (1985: 15), keywords are „significant, binding... indicative words in certain forms of thought" reverberating through society (quoted in Chun 2017). Thus, keywords can help organize discourses as central and recurring elements of speech, which means they are vital to consider in any discourse analysis and therefore helpful starting points. Ultimately, keywords can help uncover the ideological content of discourses by making clear the connections drawn between different ideas and entities in a given discourse. The keywords I chose were informed by my pre-existing theoretical knowledge: after consulting the literature and initially searching for articles, it became clear that there was an important discursive link between Roma people and public work (see Chapter 4, section 5.2.). As for the ethical considerations, all of the data collected was publicly available online and therefore no issues concerning the ethics of confidentiality or data protection arose.

In the research process, I examined articles that were written in 2018 or later. As the 2018 Gyöngyöspata case was widely reported on nationally, the keywords primarily yielded results pertaining to this case, mostly from the years 2018, 2020, and 2021. I used statements, press conferences, speeches, and interviews with prominent members of the government as data, but mainly with Viktor Orbán himself. I contend that this overrepresentation is warranted in this case due to the fact that Orbán is widely considered to be the personification of the Hungarian regime whose statements and speeches are key to the ideological and discursive reproduction of the ruling party's power. Alongside the Gyöngyöspata case, I also collected data on other, thematically relevant discourses from the same time period and using the same sources, such as on Roma people in general, or Roma people and public work in order to embed the Gyöngyöspata discourse within specific political, social, historical, and economic contexts.

CDA does not have a generalized method of sampling, but Machin and Mayr suggest that texts are usually selected „according to the interest of the analyst, where perhaps they have observed ideology in operation" (2012: 2016). Thus, I collected data according to the principle of 'purposive sampling' based on the keywords, which Yin (2011: 88) describes as the sources of data „that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data, given your topic of study" (quoted in Sengul 2019: 383). At the same time, I also collected context information which I tracked in a separate document which included legal, institutional, and local, but also political and historical details. The context information was partially collected from news articles which contained socio-political analyses of the Gyöngyöspata case, which were then used as background knowledge in conjunction with academic articles and analyses.

After the systematic data collection in Excel, I conducted the analysis in the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti. I organized the data according to meaningful categories, then identified master discourses and specified their subcategories in order to conceptualize the relationships between the discourse fragments within broader discourses. I did this multiple times throughout the research process: as more data was collected, more categories emerged, and the subcategories as well as master categories had to be modified to accommodate the new data. This iterative process helped me throughout the research process to identify larger discourses of the regime and link these to my case study specifically. This was part of my DHA methodology which directed my focus towards historical and political linkages. For transparency reasons, the full list of the categories and sub-categories identified can be seen in Appendix 1.

6. Reflexivity and positionality

The notion of *being critical* in CDA „is to be understood as having distance to the data, embedding the data in the social, taking a political stance explicitly, and a focus on self-reflection as scholars doing research" (Wodak 2002: 10-11). Due to the close engagement with power relations and inequality, CDA promotes reflexivity as an important tool in scrutinizing our own positionality and power. Reflexivity is „commonly viewed as the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of the researcher's positionality" (Berger 2015: 220). This idea challenges the view of knowledge as objective and knowledge production as a neutral process (see Berger 2015). Personal characteristics of the researcher such as gender, race, affiliation, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, beliefs, and biases all might affect the research process and outcome (ibid) – but instead of this being seen as a negative thing, it should be understood as contributing to transparency and accountability, which should enhance rather than reduce credibility. My ongoing practice of reflexivity throughout the research process has included repeated peer consultation and review as well as the creation of logs of the research process (Berger 2015). The ongoing, recursive interaction between the data, theory, and academic reviews and consultations helped me address a central problem of CDA, which is the question of how the researcher's readings of texts or discourse fragments are justified and validated (Wodak 2002: 13). Additionally, to further strengthen my interpretive framework, I had informal peer consultations with fellow Hungarians about the Orbán-regime, which often helped clarify the importance of certain concepts, strategies, and discourses.

However, it is equally important to not see reflexivity as a confession, catharsis, or cure to the problem of doing representation or research: as Pillow (2003: 186) argues, „[p]rominent in much qualitative research is the idea that the researcher, through reflexivity, can transcend her own subjectivity and own cultural context in a way that releases her/him from the weight of (mis)representations". Reflexivity therefore should not be seen as a one-time act which definitively deals with the problems inherent to doing representation, but rather as an ongoing process, a necessary practical application of critical social

science which rejects unsituated knowledge production (see Grosfoguel 2013). The benefits to doing social scientific research this way is the recognition of our own embeddedness within institutional and systemic structures of power, which contributes to more accurate understandings of processes of knowledge production. Such practices interrogate truthfulness, offering the possibility of multiple answers to the same problem (Trinh 1991) rather than a singular, all-encompassing Answer. The task is therefore „to challenge the representations we come to while at the same time acknowledging the political need to represent and find meaning" (Pillow 2003: 192).

The task of political representation is always ethically fraught, especially as I am a white, middle-class Hungarian woman at a prestigious British institution seeking to understand and represent the situation of the Roma minority in Hungary. While I focus on state discourse and therefore the state's understanding and creation of collective national identity through anti-Roma racism – among others –, my positionality means that I can only understand anti-Roma racism from an outsider perspective. I consider it important to acknowledge that this research is limited by the lack of direct engagement with Roma people in Hungary due to the necessary time and resource constraints of a master's dissertation. Nevertheless, I take the task of political representation seriously in this dissertation, hence the close engagement with questions of reflexivity and positionality. In line with CDA, I conceive of this research not just as social science but more expansively as social intervention, and hope that it contributes in some way to an emancipatory agenda which staunchly positions itself against anti-Roma racism.

Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

5.1. Outline of chapter

In this chapter, I analyze the most notable discourse fragments from the Gyöngyöspata state discourse in conjunction with other thematically relevant discourses. First, I set out the details of the Gyöngyöspata segregation case and the situation of the Roma minority in Hungary more broadly. Then, the chapter is split into six sections which each address a key finding of this research, followed by a discussion section which sets out my contribution to the literature in light of the findings and key arguments. The first section titled 'Hungary vs Roma' analyzes a discursive racial divide in Orbán's discourses, followed by a section, 'Inhabiting the national will', which conceptualizes the notion of the national will and the national space vis-à-vis such a racial divide. Then, the secton 'Segregation vs integration' seeks to understand the use of the word 'integration' in the state discourse regarding the segregation verdict, while the following section, 'The disturbance of peace' theorizes the use of the words 'justice' and 'peace' in this discourse. Afterwards, the section entitled 'The work-based society and the paternalistic state' conceptualizes the relations between work and the notion of hardworkingness vis-à-vis the Roma minority in the Orbán-regime's discourses. Lastly, I address the ways in which the so-called 'Soros-network', referring to George Soros, appears in the state discourse surrounding the

segregation verdict, and what this tells us about the collective enemy, and in turn, the collective national identity, being constituted.

5.2. The town of Gyöngyöspata and the Roma minority in Hungary since 2010



Figure 2. The position of the town of Gyöngyöspata on the map of Hungary (first picture), and on the map of Heves county. Source: Gyöngyöspata megközelítése (2015).

Gyöngyöspata is a town in Heves county, about 80 kms northeast from Budapest. Its population is around 2,000 people, and it is one of the smallest towns in Hungary. According to the 2022 census, 92% of the population identifies as Hungarian, 4,9% as Gypsy[5]; the rest is distributed between German, Romanian, and other nationalities (KSH 2022). In many ways, the situation of the Roma population in Gyöngyöspata is similar to that of Roma in other parts of the country, which can be summed up in the following quote: „in Gyöngyöspata, you can easily tell where the world of Roma begins: where the asphalt road ends"[6] (Szelestey 2020). This indicates that while non-Roma people in general tend to reside in areas with proper infrastructure and guaranteed access to clean water, electricity, internet, street lights and built roads, etc., Hungarian Roma people often do not have access to such basic necessities. According to the 2011 census, there are around 315,000 Hungarian Roma people living in Hungary, which makes them the largest minority of the country; yet, according to professional estimates, that number is more likely to be anywhere between 450,000 and 800,000 (KSH 2011). Roma people in Hungary tend to be extremely marginalized: they tend to reside in rural areas (their highest concentration in the population is in the two poorest counties, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg), most often on 'settlements' geographically disconnected from the rest of the town (see Szombati 2018). This means that segregation, including residential segregation, is a fundamental feature of Hungarian Roma people's lives.

Indeed, school segregation powerfully contributes to the fact that Hungarian Roma tend to be low- or unskilled workers and therefore often trapped in cycles of poverty and structural unemployment. A survey commissioned by the UNDP found that Romani men and women in Hungary spent on average

[5] 'Gypsy' is the official category used in the census.
[6] All translations from the original Hungarian quotations are mine.

6.71 and 5.66 years in school, respectively, while the respective average years for non-Roma men and women are 10.95 and 10.7 years (Kóczé & Cukrowska 2013). Hungarian Roma people's lack of access to schooling is due to school segregation – including being put in the same classes as students with various disabilities – as well as widespread discriminatory attitudes in the education system, such as the belief that „Roma students do not care about education". Unsurprisingly, then, only 32% of Romani women and 26% of Romani men aged 16 and above are in paid work (ibid.). Moreover, Roma people are overrepresented in the Orbán-regime's Public Work Scheme, not being able to find a job in the primary labour market (Kovai 2019; Szikra 2014). However, the Public Work Scheme has a limited impact on participants' chances of employment, and the reduction of long-term unemployment (Köllő & Scharle 2011: 160). Additionally, public work provides few opportunities for training or the upgrading of one's skill base, which therefore means that most people in public work are not able to subsequently join the primary labour market (Bohle & Greskovits 2019).

The marginalization of the Hungarian Roma minority has arguably gotten worse since Fidesz came to power in 2010. The new regime abolished early retirement, made requirements for disability benefits extremely stringent, and reduced the length of unemployment benefits to 3 months (90 days), which is by far the shortest among European countries (Bohle & Greskovits 2019; Csoba 2014). Overall, the Orbán-regime's turn away from the welfare state, and primarily the Public Work Scheme, „has strengthened the ethnic division between the Roma and non-Roma and has increased the stigmatisation of and discrimination against unemployed Roma people" (Asztalos Morell 2014; Scharle 2015; Szőke 2015; in Kovai 2019: 148). While the public work scheme and the turn away from a generous welfare state had started earlier than 2010 (Csoba 2014; Kovai 2019; Szikra 2018), Orbán's Fidesz party began to channel significant resources into a renewed public work scheme at the same time as they drastically reduced social allowances. This is what Orbán and his Fidesz party's reign has called a 'work-based society': a society with significantly reduced social allowances in order to 'encourage' people to participate in employment rather than 'live off' welfare benefits. Dorottya Szikra sums up Orbán's 'work-based society' in the following way: „[b]uilding a „work-based society" instead of a welfare state means that only citizens who have a stable labour market position deserve the merits of redistribution" (2018: 10). Sándor Pintér, then Minister of the Interior, said of the vast public work programme in 2013:

> Public workers get wages instead of benefits, we take care of their work-related capabilities, their self-esteem, they don't feel useless, they don't get lost, they don't go off the rails, since they do valuable work every day. Their children can also see that the future, livelihood, can be guaranteed through work. (...) the majority is less and less willing to accept that (...) healthy, lively people live off benefits exclusively for generations (quoted in Farkas et al., 2014).

Thus, under the Fidesz regime, Roma people have been forced into the public work scheme, which is both a consequence of, and contributes to, their marginalization. Building on escalating ethnic tensions in the second half of the 2000s as well as Jobbik's strategy of disseminating the notion of the 'Gypsy criminal' in political discourse, Fidesz built a so-called 'work-based society' which pretends to offer a

solution to „welfare-scrounging", discursively attached to the Roma minority, but in fact merely deepens the crisis of structural unemployment and poverty amongst Roma.

5.3. The Gyöngyöspata case



Figure 3. Members of a far-right organization called Véderő (Defense Force) in Gyöngyöspata in 2011 after reports of increasing rates of "Gypsy crime". Source: István Huszti for Index (2011).

The town of Gyöngyöspata had already become a national symbol of ethnic tensions in 2011 when far-right paramilitary groups descended on the town, intimidating and stalking Roma people for months (Cseke, 2020 July 17th). Géza Csemer, then-President of the Roma Minority Self-Government in Gyöngyöspata, said of the period: „Gyöngyöspata was a war zone, and the government did not stop it" (ibid). He remembered that many years had passed before the enmity started to fade and Roma and non-Roma neighbours started speaking to each other again (ibid.). It is notable that that same year, Fidesz decided to announce plans of its Public Work Scheme in the town of Gyöngyöspata, leading some to argue that the scheme was specifically intended to address the problem of „Roma laziness", which by then had become a significant issue in the eyes of the public, both in Gyöngyöspata and country-wide (Szombati 2021). After the tumultuous years following 2011, Gyöngyöspata once again appeared in the national news in 2018 because of a court ruling by the Debrecen Court of Appeal in favour of Romani families whose children had been forced to learn in segregated settings between 2004 and 2014 (Rorke 2021). In the end, the Hungarian state was required to pay HUF100 million (worth £215,400 today) in compensation to the Romani children in question as well as their families (ibid.). According to the legal reports used in the case, Roma students were physically segregated: their classrooms were on the ground

floor while the non-Roma classrooms were upstairs. Roma students could not go upstairs, not even to use the bathroom, they could not stay for afternoon activities, and they were forbidden from participating in swimming lessons, IT lessons, were not taken on class trips, and were not allowed to take part in the carnival ball (Cseke 2020 May 12th; Rorke 2021).



Figure 4. Students in front of the school (Demeter Nekcsei Primary School) that had segregated Roma students for 10 years in the town of Gyöngyöspata, on January 21st, 2020. Source: Péter Komka for MTI (in Tenczer 2020).



Figure 5. People protest against the government's response to the Gyöngyöspata segregation verdict at Kossuth Square in Budapest in 2020. The sign at the front reads, "we don't want oppression". The one above says, "we are Hungarians too". Source: István Huszti for Index (in Cseke, 2020 May 12th).

However, this was not the first time since 2004 that the school found itself in legal battles due to segregation; in 2012, the Eger Regional Court found that the school had been segregating its students and that Roma students had been receiving worse quality education than non-Roma students (Rorke 2021). The Court then obliged the school and the municipality to put an end to segregation. The Curia – also known as the Supreme Court of Hungary – ruled in 2015 that neither the school, nor the municipality had fulfiled its responsibility of integration, meaning that they had not put a stop to segregation (ibid.). However, this also did not seem to end Roma students' segregation within the school, so the CFCF (Chance For Children Foundation) filed another lawsuit in December 2015 on behalf of 63 Roma students in Gyöngyöspata, demanding reparations for the students who had been segregated. This is the lawsuit that ended in 2018, with the verdict that HUF100 million must be paid to the Roma students in question (ibid.). While this legal victory is important, the situation of these Roma students is far from unique in Hungary. The European Commission found that in Hungary, 45% of Romani children are placed in segregated schools or classes, and that the segregation had accelerated since Fidesz came to power (European Commission 2018). This is not surprising given that from 2010 onwards, a national commitment to desegregation was replaced by a „policy of 'separate but equal'-style segregation, repackaged as 'social catching up'" (Rorke 2021: 95). Additionally, in 2014, Minister for Human Resources, Zoltán Balog, filed a bill which effectively legalized school segregation by

exempting some schools, namely religious-run schools, from the requirements of the Equal Opportunities Act (ibid).

5.4. Hungary vs. Roma

In the first instance, I found that a fundamental racial divide underpins a substantial strand of discourse fragments analyzed, which I labeled 'Hungary versus Roma'. In one statement from 2020, Orbán says, „*Hungary has a historical characteristic that it lives alongside a few hundred thousand Roma*" (quoted in Cseke, 2020 February 3rd). This statement is interesting because it not only establishes a sharp, racialized contrast between *Hungarians* and *Roma,* but between *Hungary* and Roma*,* implying that, even though the Roma people Orbán is speaking about have lived in Hungary for hundreds of years, they might be *in Hungary* but not *of Hungary.* They might, due to what seems to be characterized as a historical misfortune in the above statement, live in Hungary, but their fundamental, racial nature prevents them from attaining *Hungarianness,* and therefore legitimate belonging to the Hungarian nation. The statement also implies a fundamental separation between the life-fields of white Hungarians and Hungarian Roma by using the language of „living alongside", reinforcing the thesis of immutable difference. This is continued in another statement by Orbán which says, „*we have lived together with Roma for hundreds of years, and we still have not managed to integrate them*" (ibid). The language of 'we' and 'them' sharpens, and is constitutive of, an imagined racial divide that Fidesz exploits to articulate true Hungarianness, the collective political and national identity they claim to embody. The continued powerful emphasis on distance between 'Hungary and Roma', or 'we and them' essentializes the 'national interest' as inherently represented by the Orbán-regime, while the Roma minority is locked out of this notion of the national interest because they are not Hungarian by nature.

In another statement analyzed, Orbán opines that „*the Roma issue is a national issue*" and that the government's politics regarding the Roma minority helps "*create national stability*" (quoted in Czene 2021). What unites these claims with the ones above is that Roma people are collectively designated not just as an issue, but a national burden which needs to be managed purely for nation-state concerns. The discursive „Magyarization[7] of the 'Roma issue'" does not reflect Roma people's belonging in Hungary, but rather their political instrumentalization, which underpins the government's discourse that they are trying to integrate Roma, but due to the immutability of their racial difference, this has not been entirely successful. As such, the „Magyarization of the 'Roma issue'" serves to bolster state benevolence and legitimacy, as well as to entrench the 'Roma issue' as a bounded issue of an ethnic minority rather than indicative of wider societal problems, including structural racism. This is especially so because the state adopts wildly different positions with respect to Roma integration depending on what suits their political needs, either emphasizing the success of workfare policy when they need to legitimize their strategy of building a 'work-based society', or opining that the integration of Roma has

[7] Magyar=Hungarian, i.e., 'Hungarianization'.

not been successful when they seek to emphasize Roma people's racially bounded, essentialized nature. In the following sections, I will demonstrate that this racialized divide enables the Orbán-regime to (re)constitute collective national identity in the Gyöngyöspata discourse by delineating boundaries between true Hungarians and those of an inherently anti-Hungarian nature.

5.5. Inhabiting the national will

One of the most notorious comments made by Orbán in response to the Gyöngyöspata segregation verdict reads:

> „I am not from Gyöngyöspata, but if I were to live there, I would be asking how it is that, for some reason, members of an ethnically determined group living in a community with me, in a village, can receive significant sums of money without doing any work, while I work my butt off every day" (quoted in Bayer 2020).

First, this statement establishes a fundamental racial divide between white Hungarians and Hungarian Roma as having two entirely separate life-fields in Gyöngyöspata („members of an *ethnically determined group*..."), which mirrors the racial divide established in other discourses regarding the Roma minority. Second, when Orbán puts himself in the shoes of the non-Roma living in Gyöngyöspata as the PM of the country („an ethnically determined group living in a community with *me*..."), he clearly identifies with the white Hungarians of the town and thereby grants legitimacy to their (supposed) feelings and thoughts as *national, authentic,* and *Hungarian.* As such, the white population of Gyöngyöspata is being affectively attached to the Orbán-regime through this discourse, reinforcing their belonging in the Hungarian nation through a sense of solidarity borne out of a feeling of anger, resentment, and injustice directed at the Roma people of the town. Furthermore, the racialized divide is accomplished in this statement through the notion of work: while „*I* work my butt off every day", meaning the white majority in Gyöngyöspata, *they* „receive significant sums of money without doing any work". I address the ideological work accomplished by the 'work-based society' discourse in more detail below. For now, I note that work, and especially the (un)willingness to work, in this statement, is the mechanism through which a fundamental racial divide between the Roma and non-Roma population of Gyöngyöspata is established.

In a related statement, Orbán addresses Roma students' and their parents' previous alleged violence against teachers and their peers, saying:

> „...non-Roma Hungarians reacted [to this violence] by taking their children out of the school because they could not study in peace. So in a town with a population which is 80% non-Roma, the 80% took their children out [of the school]. So the feeling amongst non-Roma in Gyöngyöspata was that they are the majority, but still, they are the ones who have to take a step back, apologize, they are the problem, and then, those who had made it impossible for their children to study in peace, those have to be paid millions as a result of the lawsuits filed by Soros-organizations, based on judicial decisions. (...) [T]hey feel like they are in a hostile environment in their own homeland." He added, „the government is on the side of the 80%

> respectable Hungarians who work, who are being pushed out of Pata [Gyöngyöspata] right now. (quoted in Koncz 2020)

Hage (2012) argues that if we conceive of racist violence within the context of the national space, we can imagine the 'nationalist' as a master of said space, and the image of the racial/ethnic other as an 'object' within the national space. The nationalist is someone with a managerial capacity over the national space, the 'self' who is spatially empowered to remove the 'other', and the 'other' an object to be removed (Hage 2012). Further, the nationalist can 'inhabit the national will', while the 'other' has an inability to inhabit the national will. In the quote above, the white people in the town of Gyöngyöspata are conceived of as the 'self' who are a master of the national space, who rightfully belong in that national space, and whose complaints of being „pushed out" of *their* homeland are taken seriously. On the other hand, the Roma students in Gyöngyöspata are characterized as wreaking havoc on the town, particularly towards its white inhabitants („they had made it impossible for their children to study in peace"), and who are receiving significant sums of money undeservedly after causing trouble for the white majority. In other words, they are seen as *objects* within the national space; Orbán does not identify with their problems or positionalities, only speaks about them insofar as they are offending or bothering the white majority in Gyöngyöspata. They are not empowered to inhabit the national will, but treated as objects to be – symbolically as well as potentially physically – removed from the national space. Who is treated as a subject versus an object within the national space in Hungary is therefore fundamentally racialized, mapping onto the racial divide of 'Hungary vs Roma' which underpins the broader state discourse vis-à-vis the Roma minority.

I argue that the statements in this section should be seen as part of Fidesz's strategy of populist emotional governance – the Roma students in Gyöngyöspata are discursively identified as appropriate targets of fear, anger, and hatred because they are 'pushing' non-Roma students out of the town. The state legitimises the affects of anger and racial hatred as a rational, commonsensical reaction against the Roma minority in Gyöngyöspata, thereby seeking to channel the local white population's feelings of dissatisfaction and inadequacy, resulting from economic, political, and social issues, into specifically racial grievances. In this, it builds on the previous political activity of Jobbik and its own history of anti-Roma racism, which has rearticulated the various crises of the second half of the 2000s in racial terms. The Orbán-regime therefore, in a classically populist manner, exploits previous crises in order to constitute the 'collective enemy' through the affects of fear, anger, and hatred, which serves to establish a sense of solidarity between members of its own flock. The incessant construction of a threat to 'the people' not only establishes a sense of urgency which legitimizes state action and power, but creates the impression that the regime is deeply concerned by what 'the people' want and need. The analysis of these statements therefore demonstrates that the 'the will of the people' for Orbán is a construction which is utilized, particularly in moments of conflict and crisis, to represent his regime as the true embodiment of 'Hungarians' will', and more fundamentally, 'authentic Hungarianness'.

Orbán not only grants legitimacy to local whites' feelings on the matter of the segregation verdict, but does so in a way that affectively ties such feelings to Orbán, and through him, the notion of 'authentic Hungarianness'. Thusly, the local white population is affectively incorporated into the collective identity of Hungarianness – as defined and symbolized by the Orbán-regime –, which is also seen in their ability to authentically inhabit the 'national will'. On the other hand, local Roma are affectively constituted through fear and anger, as seen in the phrases and quotes 'pushing out' and 'hostile environment'. Roma students in Gyöngyöspata are therefore identified as an enemy to the nation because they represent a threat to those who are identified with authentic Hungarianness. The collective political and national identity that Fidesz has affectively constituted as true Hungarianness is being rearticulated in the Gyöngyöspata discourse, identifying the white population of Gyöngyöspata as being under threat by the Roma population of the town. Thus, the Fidesz camp's collective identity is reaffirmed in order for it to stay significant, particularly in a moment of conflict when identities are most prone to being destabilized and/or reconfigured; the 'naming and blaming' of Roma serves to affectively delineate the boundaries of the true national community in the Gyöngyöspata discourse. Ultimately, the populist strategy of the instrumentalization of the notion of 'the will of the people' as well as the affective politics supporting the construction of rigid boundaries between the in-group and the outgroup (the internal racialized other, in this case), serve the state's project of ethno-nationalism.

5.6. Segregation vs. integration

Not only does Orbán reframe the segregation verdict as an injury against the white majority of Gyöngyöspata, but questions the very notion of segregation, saying, „*any form of segregation is bad, and we are fighting against it. But the case of Gyöngyöspata is more complicated than that"* (quoted in Tóth 2020). He adds that when the Court had raised objections vis-à-vis some of the school's practices in the years prior to the reparations case, it was not because that was segregation but rather because „*this form of integration was not favorable"* (quoted in Nyilas, 2020 January 17th). Ultimately, he argued at a press conference that if a school in a town like Gyöngyöspata puts its students in different groups based on their abilities, the worse-abilities group will „obviously" have more Roma children, and that this should not be considered segregation, but an attempt at integration (Index Video 2020). The decade of segregation in Gyöngyöspata resignified as an 'attempt at integration' in Orbán's discourse reorients the focus from the oppression and marginalization of Roma students to the benevolence and legitimacy of the school, the municipality, and ultimately, the state. The denial of the very fact that segregation had happened therefore once more represents the Gyöngyöspata case as fundamentally an injury to the white majority of the town who work, while the Roma students in question are receiving money 'for nothing'. Moreover, this discourse mirrors a broader state discourse which portrays the state's politics vis-à-vis the Roma minority as essentially benevolent, seeking to counteract an immutable racial essence of which an unwillingness to work forms a large part.

Orbán characterizes the Roma children involved in the case as unruly, violent and uneducable, asserting that the students in question „*did not go to school and were violent*", and that they „*did not fulfil their educational responsibilities, were absent very often, and only 16 of them went on to finish high school*" (quoted in MTI-Hungary Today 2020; see also Rorke 2021). Thus, Roma children's educational abilities are seen as inherently inferior; it is not considered that segregation – and a broader context of marginalization and racism – might have played a role in Roma students' supposedly worse abilities, or that, as the students in question had said, the education they received was of a substantially lower quality than that of their non-Roma peers. Rather, their abilities form part of an immutable, racialized nature which precedes segregation and produces unfavorable outcomes independent of environmental factors. Their exclusion and marginality are rationalized through a 'victim-perpetrator reversal' (Wodak 2021) similar to what Butler (1993) describes in relation to Rodney King's beating by the police in 1991:

> ...[t]he visual representation of the black male body being beaten on the street by the policemen and their batons was taken up by that racist interpretive framework to construe King as the *agent* of violence, one whose agency is phantasmatically implied as the narrative precedent and antecedent to the frames that are shown (p. 16).

Thus, Roma students' negative racialization meant, that while they were victims of segregation, anti-Roma racism allowed governmental discourse to construe them as the original perpetrators, and the white inhabitants of Gyöngyöspata as their victims. 'Victim-perpetrator reversal' is a powerful tool within populist affective politics because it readily gives way to collective feelings of resentment and anger; the roles of 'victim' and 'perpetrator' are affectively constituted through these affects, and call for the situation to be immediately rectified.

Such role reversal is indicative of the regime's broader politics of populist ethno-nationalism, which portrays 'authentic' white Hungarian identity as that which rightfully inhabits the national will and represents the mass of hardworking, respectable white Hungarians who are being „pushed out" of their own homeland. Underlying this is the regime's politics of affectively (re)constituting true Hungarianness as the collective identity essentialized in Fidesz, and delineating the boundaries of such an identity by identifying threats to the nation. True Hungarianness as an identity is therefore (partially) borne out of a fundamental contrast with Roma identity, which is characterized by lazyness, proneness to criminality, unwillingness to work, and an inability to integrate into (white) mainstream society (Fábry 2019). Fidesz's emotional governance discursively controls and manipulates appropriate objects of anger, frustration, and fear, seeking to channel disillusionment and ethnic tensions in the countryside into support for an ethno-nationalist agenda. As Jenő Setét, who was one of Hungary's best-known Roma civil rights activists, put it in an interview in 2018, „the goal of the Prime Minister is *to exclude Roma from the notion of the nation*" (quoted in Miklósi 2018). The populist affective (re)constitution of the collective national identity therefore hinges on the discursive constitution of Roma as fundamentally anti-Hungarian, which, through their distantiation from the non-Roma population,

reaffirms Hungarianness and essentializes the Orbán-regime as the embodiment of this singular national will.

5.7. The 'disturbance of peace'

Another prominent theme that came up repeatedly in the discourse fragments analyzed is that of the 'disturbance of societal peace'. Orbán stated that the Court's decision „*violated the people's sense of justice*" (MTI-Hungary Today 2020) because „*there is a boundary that a Hungarian will never cross, or feels should never be crossed. And that's when we give money for nothing*" (quoted in Cseke, 2020 Feburary 3rd). First, the Orbán-regime instrumentalizes the populist notion of 'the people' and 'the people's sense of justice' here in order to legitimize their own political discourse regarding the segregation verdict as fundamentally and authentically representing a singular notion of „Hungarians' interest". Through the use of the words 'a Hungarian' and 'we', Orbán self-essentializes as the organic representative of the national interest, representing white Hungarians as the 'we' who 'give money' to 'them', namely the Roma minority. The negative racialization of Roma people in this statement becomes clear in the mobilization of the notion of Roma as the 'idle poor' who should work rather than be given money 'for nothing'. The fundamental racial divide which discursively legitimates belonging to the nation-state is reaffirmed here, portraying the Roma minority as the referent against which the in-group understands its collective identity. The populist dichotomy between 'us vs them', and more fundamentally, the argument that this represents an injury against the essentialized, racial interest of the Hungarian nation which needs to be rectified, anchors the state's project of ethno-nationalism.

Responding to the segregation verdict, László Horváth, an MP in the region and a member of Fidesz, said:

> „with the millions thrown at Roma families in Gyöngyöspata, the past few years' consistent, predictable trajectory of development and hard-won peace could be in jeopardy". In a press conference, he said that the verdict is „unfair and irresponsible because the decision makers did not consider the tensions it would cause", adding, „it does not create peace but unrest". He further stated, „the Prime Minister's viewpoint is clear and unambiguous: the path of integration is through education and work for Roma too, and he supports all solutions which do not offend the sense of justice or perturb societal peace (quoted in Cseke, 2020 January 16th).

Horváth's statements are indicative of who is allowed to stand in for the national body, evident in his conceptualizations of 'societal peace'. The Roma students who had been forced to study in segregated settings and endure the humiliation, exclusion, stigmatization, and further marginalization that this entailed, had presumably not experienced the verdict as 'perturbing societal peace'. Orbán and Horváth, in invoking the 'disturbance of peace' point when addressing the Gyöngyöspata verdict, unambiguously and unproblematically put themselves in the shoes of the non-Roma population in Gyöngyöspata, thereby making it clear that legitimate membership in the nation is fundamentally racialized. Peace in their discourses is understood as the status quo where Roma people are oppressed, marginalized, and segregated. The government, and Orbán as the quintessential nationalist leader specifically, portray

themselves as authentically representing the collective and unified 'will of the people', but only those people who belong to the regime's conceptualization of authentic Hungarianness through racial categorization. Moreover, we can see here that Fidesz's brand of ethno-nationalism is also fundamentally populist: their biggest fear about the verdict is that it might instigate ethnic tensions, which might potentially result in a dip in Fidesz's local popularity and political legitimacy. To prevent this, they not only monitor public opinion but control and manipulate it through the technique of emotional governance, identifying Roma people in Gyöngyöspata as the root cause of the problem and therefore appropriate targets of anger, hatred, and resentment.

The notions of *justice* and *peace,* and particularly the idea that justice and peace had been compromised, are deeply embedded in the affective politics of populism. Such a pronouncement immediately stirs up feelings of anger and resentment, and creates a sense of urgency around the situation. Within affective populist politics, it is crucial for the populist leader to concretize and collectivize feelings – identify what happened, why, and who is responsible (concretize), as well as base emotions on shared concerns (collectivize). The state discourse recognizes the reality of historically embedded ethnic tensions in Gyöngyöspata which potentially make the segregation verdict, and the substantial sum of money given to Roma students as reparations, a source of further tension amongst the white population of the town. Therefore, the state discourse is swift to come to the conclusion that it is Roma students, and Roma people more broadly, who are responsible for the disturbance of peace and corrosion of justice in the town, and that this needs to be rectified.

Orbán is clear that he is on the side of the '80% respectable Hungarians who work', thereby suggesting that something will be done to address the unfairness of what had happened. Thus I argue that in populism, both the collective enemy as well as 'the people' are affectively constituted: in the Gyöngyöspata discourse, the sense of unfairness creates anger and resentment, which then creates collective affective ties that transcend concrete issues and become constitutive of a collective political and national identity. I argue that the Gyöngyöspata discourse affectively attached local whites in the town to the Orbán-regime, and thereby to authentic Hungarianness, in contrast with local Roma who help constitute the collective national identity by being marked out as a threat to the nation. Such a discourse helps further, and is constitutive of, the regime's populist ethno-nationalism because it entrenches the argument that the current government is the embodiment of the so-called moral and cultural majority, authentically representing the singular, unified will of 'the people', on the one hand, and that this majority is under attack from internal (as well as external) others, which then necessitates their continued power.

5.8. The 'work-based society' and the paternalistic state

As László Horváth put it in the previous section, the trajectory of development, peacefulness, and integration that the inhabitants of Gyöngyöspata, including the Roma minority, have experienced under

the current regime is being „shattered" by verdicts such as the one in the segregation case because Roma people are „being given money for nothing". The government often speaks positively of this process of development and the possibility of Roma integration in general: „*the Roma issue is a national issue*" (quoted in Czene 2021); „*we need programmes which support Roma integration, which is why we are continuing the integration of the 300 poorest towns*" (quoted in Cseke & Bozzay 2020); and „*Roma people took advantage of public work by the hundred thousands, and then joined the primary labour market, which is a success*" (quoted in Nyilas, 2020, January 17th). They also cite statistics that the number of Roma students in higher education since 2010 has doubled (ibid), and that Roma employment has increased by 50% in that same period, adding that the government's most significant goal is to increase employment and ensure that one's income forms the basis for one's livelihood (quoted in Czene 2021). This self-congratulatory discourse does not necessarily mirror reality – statistics suggest that not many in public work are able to subsequently join the primary labour market, as noted before. However, these statements provide valuable context for the Gyöngyöspata discourse because they indicate that a major goal of the government with regards to the Roma minority is to incentivize them to work, which is why they oppose the segregation verdict understood as reducing the attractiveness of such incentives for the local Roma population.

Thus, the comments before such as *„integration is through education and work for Roma too";* and „*Roma are being given money without even having to work for it while others [non-Roma] work their butt off"* indicate that the Roma minority are ultimately portrayed by the regime as the undeserving, idle poor, and the money received in compensation for the decade of segregated education is seen as a gateway 'leading back' to idleness and unwillingness to work. This suggests a conceptualization of Roma as possessing a racially predetermined essence which needs to be counteracted by governmental measures. The regime therefore imagines itself as „whipping Roma people into shape" and „showing them the right way", especially in the arena of public work which Kristóf Szombati (2021) identifies as fundamentally paternalistic. The statement *„we are on the side of the 80% respectable Hungarians who work"* indicates that, in contrast with Roma, white Hungarians can and do work in Gyöngyöspata, and this willingness to work makes them respectable, which is then an important aspect of their true and authentic Hungarianness. This dichotomy suggests that white Hungarians do not need to be forced by the state to work because their essentialization as true Hungarians means that they work by themselves. The willingness to work, attached to the notion of respectability, is a powerful tool in the affective politics of populism because it signals who is worthy of respect and honor, and who is, in contrast, deserving of blame and shame. In this discourse, then, 'the people' and 'the enemy of the nation' are being (re)constituted through affective politics, with the latter being identified as appropriate targets of anger (and other affects) while the former as embodying true Hungarianness worthy of respect and honor.

5.9. The Soros-network and the convergence of anti-Hungarian interests

While the Gyöngyöspata state discourse understandably primarily focuses on the construction of the Hungarian/Roma divide, or the racial constitution of the nation, there is another equally important and related dimension, which is the political constitution of national identity. What I found in the discourse fragments analyzed is that the fundamental discursive divide between hardworking Hungarians and lazy Roma maps onto the left-versus-right, welfare-versus-work dichotomy. Orbán contrasts his regime and the political right more broadly, who are „more respectful of reality", with leftists who in his view are „ideologically motivated" (quoted in Előd 2024). He opines that he, as Prime Minister, embodies „józan paraszti ész" (=common sense) for the political economy of the country (ibid), repeatedly invoking employment numbers and statistics („*the* numbers") which according to him „show that we're doing a good job" (quoted in Nyilas, 2021 February 15th). By invoking *common sense* and a no-nonsense argument about what *the numbers* are showing, he constructs a populist argument in which he comes across as an ordinary man who is merely speaking about reality, in contrast with leftists who are fundamentally ideological and therefore cannot be trusted. I contend that Orbán continues to capitalize on the previous liberal-Socialist governing block's loss of political legitimacy and the resultant deep distrust towards left-wing parties in Hungary as a whole. Such a populist channelling of distrust and disillusionment with the liberal-Socialist block serves to delineate group boundaries: *they* are not to be trusted with the ruling of the country, but *we* know what Hungarians want, and therefore we represent all those who support the national interest.

A figure that has come to symbolize Fidesz's political enemies is George Soros, whose name came up many times in the data analyzed. This is because the Chance For Children Foundation (CFCF) which filed the lawsuit against the Gyöngyöspata school – and which had, for a long time, been involved in lawsuits against school segregation, many filed before Fidesz came to power in 2010 – had received money from Soros's Open Society Foundation, among other famous donors, embassies, and banks (Cseke, 2020 January 16th). A charge levelled against Soros and his „network" – symbolically encompassing all those seen as representing anti-national(ist), liberal, globalist, and 'Western' interests – is that the Gyöngyöspata case was merely their carefully orchestrated „financial action":

> „*their foreign-financed legal activism only resulted in societal division, not fairness*" (quoted in Tóth 2020);
>
> „*Gyöngyöspata*[8] *does not want anything to do with the Soros-network's financial actions*" (Cseke, 2020 May 12th);
>
> This is another example of „*the Soros-network's political and financial manipulation*" (quoted in Cseke, 2020 January 16th);
>
> „*referencing segregation, Soros-organizations are using Roma families as tools in their financial actions*" (quoted in Nagy 2020).

[8] In this statement, Gyöngyöspata means the people of Gyöngyöspata; or more accurately, the white majority of the town.

These narratives draw upon the trope of the over-ideological left which „politically manipulates" situations as opposed to the commonsensical right, embodied in the figure of Orbán, who represents, as he himself put it, „respect for reality". In order to construct this discourse, Orbán relies on anti-Roma racism, drawing upon the notion of immutable racialized difference, as well as the illegitimacy of the liberal-Socialist block in Hungary, which stands more broadly for the abstract *left,* seen as fundamentally opportunistic and politically manipulative. On the other hand and perhaps more fundamentally, Fidesz uses the classic anti-Semitic trope that Jews are secretly controlling and manipulating political, economic, and social phenomena in the world for their 'own agenda', which Fidesz associates with globalism and anti-national interests (see Kalmar 2020; Berend 2022). In this way, the „Soros-network" becomes symbolic of the entire Hungarian political left which is imagined to stand for foreign interests invading the Hungarian national space and threatening popular sovereignty, and which has broad resonance due to the Hungarian left's historical links to communism seen as 'alien rule'. I argue that the notion of the „Soros-network" in the Gyöngyöspata discourse is part and parcel of the affective (re)constitution of collective identity through the delegitimization of the political left, which is marked out as the enemy of the singular national interest, embodied by Fidesz. In this way, the political left is consituted through the affects of anger, fear, resentment, and distrust, thereby construed as a threat to the nation, which serves to solidify the boundaries of true Hungarianness.

Another discursive theme that comes up in the state's invocation of the „Soros-network" is that its „financial actions" are „*destroying societal peace*" (quoted in Nagy 2020) because „*they pit Hungarians and Roma against each other in the Gyöngyöspata school case*" (quoted in Cseke, 2020 May 12th). Thus, not only does the „Soros-network" represent foreign interests which are antithetical to Hungarian interests, but these foreign interests are imagined as threatening the essentialized *racial* interest of the Hungarian nation. Societal division, in this discourse, is not only roused by the reparations given to Roma students who had suffered segregation, but by the disturbance visited upon Hungarian society by the supposedly intertwined *Roma, Jewish, and left-wing interests,* all fundamentally anti-Hungarian. In the Gyöngyöspata case, George Soros and „work-shy", unruly Roma families who wreak havoc upon Hungarian society represent the collective enemy; this discourse is then embedded in the regime's broader discourses around racialized and left-wing interests threatening the essentialized, singular interest of the Hungarian nation, embodied in Orbán. Thus, it becomes clear not just that both 'the people' and 'the collective enemy' in the regime's populist discourse are affectively constituted, but that such constitution reaffirms the collective national identity, thereby rearticulating the affective ties binding those together who are included in Fidesz' sanitized notion of the nation. To stay politically relevant and legitimize their power, Fidesz continuously has to rearticulate the threat that the 'enemies of the nation', in this case, the political left on the one hand and the Roma minority on the other, represent, and argue that only they can neutralize this threat because they embody authentic Hungarian interests.

In a speech to Parliament in 2021, Orbán said, addressing the opposition in general: „*You want to give people benefits. I don't doubt the goodwill behind this, but we want to give people jobs. They can live from that. The national, Christian, democratic side's opinion is that we need to spend on supporting workplaces"* (quoted in Nyilas, 2021 February 15th). This comment establishes a clear association between liberal-socialist parties and 'excessive social spending', which immediately calls to mind welfare recipients, notably Roma, portrayed as lazy, workshy, and potentially criminal. Orbán's other statements from the past few years, for example, „work restores one's self-esteem" (quoted in Varga 2018); „anyone can work if they want to" (ibid); and „it's better to work than to lounge around, because if we don't work, we'll starve to death" (quoted in Előd 2024) need to be interpreted in this context. The regime's populist ethno-nationalism fundamentally builds on the idle Roma vs hardworking Hungarian dualism, and argues that the latter had been wronged by the previous leftist government as well as their foreign ideological supporters (liberals and Western—liberal international institutions). Thus, the argument goes, 'good Hungarians' need to 'take *their* country back' from those who had ruined it, who had given too much to those not worthy, and who had ultimately represented fundamentally anti-national interests. The regime therefore self-essentializes as the representative of the national interest, and reconstructs this interest as the exclusive terrain of white, 'hardworking', conservative, and 'patriotic' citizens.

Chapter 6: Discussion and conclusions

In sum, the payment of HUF100 million by the state to segregated Roma students in Gyöngyöspata was framed by Orbán as a clear example of a foreign-financed, leftist, welfarist project which symbolizes the hands of external coercion, primarily through the figure of George Soros. Opposing this is Orbán's work-based society which encourages people to work hard, does not reward 'lounging around', and puts the unified collective interest of Hungarians first. Therefore, the negative racialization of Roma people and the reconstitution of white Hungarian identity is discursively linked to the fight against the political left and 'globalism'. Anti-Roma racism and the delegitimization of the political left are two intertwined and powerful tools in Fidesz's discursive repertoire: a practice of channelling collective disillusionment into the project of populist ethno-nationalism through the technique of emotional governance. The Orbán-regime affectively (re)constitutes collective national identity through the construction of threats to the nation which binds the in-group together, rigidifying the boundaries between the in-group and the outgroup.

The invocation of the Roma minority, on the one hand, and the socialist-liberal block, on the other, as enemies of the nation are embedded in a longer process of constituting a collective national identity. The reason why the linking of 'Roma interests' and 'left-wing interests' continues to be politically advantageous for the regime, as seen in the Gyöngyöspata discourse, is because it is grounded in the history of the previous left-wing government's 'excessive social spending' which is seen as having

created a stratum of Roma „welfare-scroungers". Moreover, the Hungarian left is portrayed as fundamentally communist and thereby representing the rule of an 'alien civilisation' in Hungary, which has contributed to Fidesz's discursive monopoly on a singular, unified national will, embodying a racialized notion of authentic Hungarianness. These two groups are symbolically locked out of the nation, and represent anti-Hungarianness against which Fidesz's embodiment of the collective Hungarian will is defined.

More fundamentally, I argue that the Gyöngyöspata state discourse exemplifies the ways in which Fidesz utilizes moments of societal conflict and tension to reinforce the boundaries of 'authentic Hungarianness', a symbolic terrain inhabited by those seen as hardworking, conservative, patriotic, and non-Roma. Not only does Fidesz use local conflicts to affectively (re)constitute the collective identity of its camp under the banner of authentic Hungarianness, but it does so in a way that relies on previous crises, namely MSZP's legitimacy crisis and the popularization of the „Gypsy criminal" discourse in the second half of the 2000s. It is due to the significance of this politico-historical dimension that I chose to do DHA as a methodology, which has allowed me to link the state discourse examined to the crises in the 2000s. In a classically populist manner, Fidesz exploits previous crises in order to channel the population's disillusionment and dissatisfaction into support for its project of ethno-nationalism, instrumentalizing the idea of popular sovereignty to legitimize its power. The affective constitution of the Roma minority as well as the Hungarian left as threats to the nation creates a sense of solidarity between members of the Fidesz camp, upholding and reinforcing their collective identity.

This dissertation, contrary to much of the literature, has engaged explicitly with the affective politics of the Orbán-regime's populism through a constructivist—affective conceptualization of the category of 'the people' as well as 'the enemy'. This has allowed me to ask what populism *does* for the regime, and responding to this question, I argued that the affective politics of populism serves to delineate group boundaries and thereby solidify a sense of collective identity for the Fidesz camp. I argued that the Gyöngyöspata discourse is Fidesz's attempt to reaffirm already-existing political and racial cleavages borne out of internal political struggles, which reinforces the boundaries of their political camp identity. This argument has not only mobilized a concrete conceptualization of populism, thereby addressing the prevalence of the lack of analytical clarity around this concept, but has understood populism within a constructivist—affective framework, which shed light on the dynamics and functions of populist discourse. This dissertation therefore seeks to contribute to a broader research agenda which puts affective, collective identity-focused questions at the fore of populist politics, particularly as 1) affects play a crucial role in populism, and 2) the literature on populism in Hungary in particular has largely taken such affective politics for granted.

The argument presented in this dissertation counters the tendency in the literature to focus on neoliberal capitalist integration and the concomitant societal dislocations as the primary factors for the rise of

Fidesz's populist politics. Instead, I have highlighted the significance of internal political struggles throughout the 2000s, and the ruling party's exploitation of these struggles for the construction of group identity. In particular, this dissertation has conceptualized anti-Roma racism as constitutive of the Orbán-regime's politics, against the prevalent tendency to relegate anti-Roma racism to the fringes of politics. Due to the significance of Gyöngyöspata as a national symbol of ethnic tensions as well as the salience of the state discourse regarding the segregation verdict, the analyses in this dissertation contribute to a deeper understanding of political cleavages in contemporary Hungary, and point to the importance of the discursive constitution of collective identity in understanding the Orbán-regime's continued popularity. While I have focused on state discourse in this dissertation, or the 'supply' side of politics, further research should address the 'demand' side of populist politics to investigate the dynamics of Fidesz's political project from the perspective of voters.

Through this research, I seek to promote a future research agenda which devotes more attention to the role played by the construction of group identity in the success and resonance of particular political agendas. I contend that such a research agenda is particularly important in Eastern Europe where the context of postcommunist transformation and the attendant uncertainties and challenges in political parties' identity construction arguably necessitate such a lens. Understanding more thoroughly the processes underlying Fidesz's construction of collective identity, particularly its affective dynamics, would contribute significantly to the conceptualization of the regime's continued popularity and electoral success. This needs analyses of both the 'demand' and 'supply' sides of populist politics. Moreover, while this dissertation focused on the Orbán-regime's discursive construction of the Hungarian left rather than its internal dynamics and struggles, scholars agree that the political left in Eastern Europe more broadly has been in ongoing crisis. In particular, across the region, there is a general trend since the 1990s that left-wing parties have consistently failed to articulate a coherent political agenda which resonates with a significant part of the population. Key to understanding this phenomenon would be the operationalization of an affective lens vis-à-vis the construction of a collective identity, which could provide new insights into left-wing ideology and party identity across Eastern Europe. Thus, my dissertation has implications not just for the study of populist politics, but also for the role of the construction of political camp identity in politics as a whole.

My analysis also highlights the importance of internal political struggles for the emergence and resilience of populist nationalist parties not just in Hungary, but across Eastern Europe, and potentially beyond this region. While a number of analyses now highlight the significance of neoliberal capitalist integration in Eastern Europe for contributing to the rise of populism, there is a dearth of attention given to the specific internal political struggles which have, in diverse contexts, succeeded in translating economic grievances into specifically racist and otherwise exclusionary political agendas. Jobbik's political activity, and its popularization of anti-Roma racism in particular, as well as the cumulative crises of the liberal-socialist government in the second half of the 2000s contributed significantly to the

translation of economic dislocations into support for Fidesz's populist ethno-nationalist agenda. It is then Fidesz's well-timed discourses at key moments of conflict, such as in Gyöngyöspata at the time of the segregation verdict, which delineate the symbolic boundaries of their exclusionary vision of authentic Hungarianness and remove those who are Roma and politically left-leaning from the notion of the nation. This helps them secure their discursive monopoly on an essentialized national will, ultimately upholding their ideology of ethno-nationalism. The question is, with such a discursive monopoly on the national will and the related essentialization of the Roma minority and the Hungarian left as anti-Hungarian, how does a left-wing political party articulate a nationally resonant agenda? Future research needs to explore left-wing ideology and party identity across Eastern Europe not just in order to understand the crisis of the left across the region, but also to help chart new paths forward for all parties that wish to challenge the Orbán-regime's rule and its sanitized vision of the Hungarian nation. The emancipation of the Hungarian Roma minority will have to form a substantive part of such a new path if we are to meaningfully address inequality, marginality, and racism in Hungary.

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Appendix

Main category	Subcategory	Code	Number of quotations
Race	Positive racialization of Hungarians	Hungarians peaceful/calm/inclusive	1
		Notion of pure race	2
		Hungarians support work instead of welfare	2
		Hungary not racist	1
		Peaceful coexistence with Roma	2
	Negative racialization of Hungarian Roma	Non-Roma "pushed out" of GYP	2
		Segregation vs integration	4
		No integration, burden	5
		Bad at school	3
		Good vs bad Roma	1
		Laziness	2
Justice and peace in GYP	None	Hurt sense of justice and peace	5
		Unfairness, generates tension	8
The political left	None	Leftists like to give benefits	1
		Globalists vs sovereignists	1
		Soros-network	7
		Right, Christian, democratic side gives jobs	1
Legitimization of NER	Benevolence towards Roma	Roma policies for national stability	1
		Government good for Roma in general	8
		Debating nature of reparations in GYP	3
		Government respects judicial decision in GYP	1
		Policy not ethnicized/colourblind policy	1
	Economic success	NER economically successful	2
		Good employment statistics	2
Work-based society	None	Millions thrown at Roma in GYP	1

		Money should be given for work	1
		Public work	4
		WBS instead of welfare state	4
		Work and self-esteem	1
		Work versus laziness	1
		Hungarians against money for nothing	1