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Romani too? Also a victim?

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Victim blaming towards minority victims of bias-motivated crimes

theses of Ph.D. dissertation

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1. Problem statement

„*Compassion for the victim is deceptive,*”¹ writes Natascha Kampusch in the epilogue of her autobiographical book. Is compassion for the victim really deceptive or even deceitful? Does compassion depend on the victim's identity, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, life situation, class or other characteristics? If the answer to these questions is yes, will people's attitudes towards crime victims change?

These seemingly layman's assumptions shed light on several very important criminological and sociological issues. They raise the fundamental issue of victimisation, dilemmas related to the victim status of minority and/or marginalised and/or stigmatised victims, and questions related to the phenomenon of victim blaming of victim blaming.

1.1. Reasons for the choice of thematic concept

- 1) The international and domestic criminological, legal and sociological literature has been dealing and continues to deal with the issue of victim blaming and hate crimes in detail, but less attention is paid in academic literature to the phenomenon of victim blaming towards the minority victims of bias-motivated crimes, especially violent hate crimes. The dissertation aims to present the negative and harmful process by which compassion and sympathy towards the victims of hate crimes can not only be insincere and deceptive but can even disappear altogether in the case of unpopular victim groups. In this case, the victim's status as a victim may be questioned, and the victim might even become the subject of blame for the crime instead of the perpetrator.
- 2) In the context of hate crimes, victim blaming is directed against social groups towards which strong stereotypes and prejudices already exist. The process is harmful on several levels: from an individual point of view, the victims may not encounter solidarity, empathy and sympathy from society; they may lose their trust in society; and they may also suffer serious psychological problems, while social solidarity may further decrease. Hate crimes similarly exert their effects on multiple levels, affecting individual, community and societal levels. In this way, the intersection of the two phenomena can be examined and interpreted on several levels, paying attention to individual victims, community effects and structural issues.

¹ Natascha Kampusch (2010) Budapest: Scolar Kiadó, 256.

- 3) The third reason for choosing the topic is to focus on Roma victims. The history and literature of criminology greatly addresses the impact of minority and/or marginalised status on crime. In the public discourse this often boils down to the depiction of minority group members as criminals. This is a prejudice strongly present in Hungary, which, according to my hypothesis, influences the perception of Gypsy² victims.

1.2. The basis of the dissertation

Victim blaming is a justification mechanism that as a vicious circle –often reinforced by the narratives of media or populist political environment – has such powerful consequences that it can even lead to criminal acts, in this case, hate crimes, when people are assaulted because of their group affiliation. The concept and the phenomenon were first used and popularised by the psychologist and sociologist William Ryan in his book *Blaming the Victim* about minority and/or marginalised groups and the socio-economic situation of these groups.³ According to Ryan, it is a common phenomenon when the majority of society claims that people in poorer, more underdog situations are to blame for their situation, as they are lazy and uninterested in improving their status since they are living well on state subsidies and benefits. Ryan clearly pointed out that this blames the disadvantaged and completely ignores the influential role of social structure. Members of vulnerable and stigmatised groups are victims of deprivation and/or social injustice and/or institutional discrimination and prejudice. As a result, these communities become targets of high-level blame as alleged sources of economic, cultural, biological, political or other threats. This process can evolve into a vicious circle, from which exiting is extremely difficult, perhaps even impossible. Yet reducing and eliminating the impact from the outside using state resources is not an easy task either. The objective of the dissertation was a detailed description of the individual stages and elements of the vicious circle process – hate crime, victim blaming, populism, anti-Roma sentiments – and the analysis of the process as a whole, i.e. how these sub-areas are connected and intertwined. In the second part of the dissertation, I am illustrating this theoretical concept with the help of two case studies.

1.3. Research questions

² In the thesis I use the terms Roma and Gypsy as synonyms, joining Csaba Dupcsik's position. This debate is not settled and by using the alternation I indicate that I do not use either term with self-evident certainty.

Dupcsik Csaba (2018) *A magyarországi cigánység története. Történelem a cigánykutatások tükrében, 1890-2008*. 2nd ed. Budapest: TK Szociológiai Intézet, 9.

³ William Ryan (1971) *Blaming the Victim*. New York: Vintage Books.

- 1) The first research question focuses on a theoretical problem. As it is stated at the beginning of the introduction, the academic literature on hate crime and victim blaming is significant separately, but the connection between the two topics is not in focus of scientific interest. The question is how to conceptualize the phenomenon of victim blaming – which today is a term more often used in the context of sexual offences – in cases of bias-motivated crime.
- 2) In the light of the answer to the first research question, the doctoral thesis also seeks to answer the question of how and where the victims of prejudice-motivated crimes belonging to stigmatised and/or marginalised minority groups – focusing on the Gypsies from the second part of the thesis – appear as victims? Does society and public opinion see them as full-fledged victims, or is their victim status questioned or even denied? Do they face victim blaming?
- 3) The thesis is also attempting to answer the question of what kind of prejudice and stereotypes emerge when Roma become perpetrators of “anti-Hungarian”⁴ crimes, and whether these show similarities with the narratives that are formulated when they become victims. In other words, the question is whether the social attitudes and narratives towards Roma are similar when the Roma are listed as victims and when they are listed as perpetrators.

2. Methodology

The methodology of the first part of the thesis – the description of the theoretical framework and the presentation of the social context – is desk research. In this part of the thesis, I have processed the existing literature sources and previous research. During the desk research, I organised the collected research data and literature and reinterpreted them in view of my doctoral topic.

⁴ I put the “anti-Hungarian” phrase in quotation marks throughout the dissertation. The reason for this is that the Roma people in Hungary are also Hungarian citizens, so the “anti-Hungarian” motive, in my opinion, is not meaningful. Nevertheless, I apply the term because it is used in the Hungarian Supreme Court (Kúria) judgement of the Tavaszmező street attack.

The methodology of the second part of the thesis is qualitative case study,⁵ a method used in many scientific fields. The main characteristic of this is that it is quantitatively small-scale, it aims to describe and analyse only a few persons, organizations or events. The case study aims to understand individual and rare events. The case study is a meso-level tool, which is not only a simple data collection method, but also a tool for generalisation, even suitable for theorising, but the usual goal is rather to emphasise uniqueness.

An important methodological criterion for the preparation of the case study is that the processed cases are not randomly selected, but rather a conscious decision is behind the selection. When selecting the cases, I kept in mind that the events should contain the essential components of the problem areas outlined in the dissertation and that they are displayed more effectively than in other cases. It is important to emphasise that due to the nature of the chosen methodology – the case study and the critical discourse analysis carried out within it – it cannot be and does not aim to be representative. The conclusions formulated in the thesis cannot be considered general conclusions, but they can provide an opportunity for further thinking.

In the course of the thesis, I put the emphasis on anti-Roma sentiments; the reason for this is that the Gypsies are the most populous and the most rejected ethnic minority in Hungary.⁶ Within the framework of the case studies, I have processed the events of 2011 in Gyöngyöspata, which Margit Feischmidt and Kristóf Szombati described as *the laboratory of the far-right in Hungary*.⁷ The demonstration of the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) party, then the illegal “patrolling” activities of various far-right paramilitary organizations, the intimidation of the Roma population for weeks, the mistakes of the authorities, and the attitude of national politics towards the crime all make the case unique and outstanding. The other selected case is the 2009 Tavaszmező street crime. This is a significant and unique offence because it is a *reverse case* not in the sense that the facts provided increased protection to minority victims, but that it was a so-called “anti-Hungarian” crime, the perpetrators of which were Roma.

⁵ Russel L. Weaver (1991) Some reflection on the case method. *Legal Studies*, 11(2):155-171; Pál Gábor (2020) Kvalitatív esettanulmány és diskurzuselemzés. In: Jakab András, Sebők Miklós (szerk.) *Empirikus jogi kutatások*. Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 461-475.

⁶ According to the 2011 census, there are 315,583 Roma living in Hungary. For detailed data see Hungarian Statistical Office (2014) *2011 Census*. Budapest: KSH, 15, 58, 62 and 66. http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/nepsz2011/nepsz_09_2011.pdf. The last survey aimed to determine the number of the Roma population was carried out by the University of Debrecen. The survey estimated that 876,000 Roma live in Hungary. Tátrai, Patrik, Pásztor Zoltán István (2018) A roma népesség területi megoszlásának változása Magyarországon az elmúlt évtizedekben. *Területi Statisztika*, 58(1): 3-26

⁷ Szombati, Kristóf, Feischmidt Margit (2012) *Gyöngyöspata 2011: A magyarországi szélsőjobboldal laboratóriuma: A politikai mozgósítás és az interetnikus konfliktus elemzése és tanulságai*. Budapest: Ökopolisz Alapítvány.

Processing these two different cases provides an opportunity for comparison: it highlights how Gypsies appear as victims and perpetrators of (hate) crimes.

Conducting a case study may involve several other methods, such as interviewing, discourse analysis, document analysis as well as processing images or audiovisual materials. In the thesis, I used court judgments, ombudsman reports, parliamentary materials and shadow reports of advocacy organizations as sources for the two case studies. Furthermore, I also processed the literature already published on the subject in both cases. The case studies were completed by a critical discourse analysis. The purpose of the content analysis (media analysis) is to examine how the online media report on the two selected cases and what narratives they present. Qualitative content analysis provides the opportunity to capture the deeper, latent level of a text. Within the qualitative media analysis method, I used the method of *critical discourse analysis* (CDA). The viewpoints of the social explanatory movement – associated with Teun A. van Dijk – can be applied to all types of texts, but it is most widely used for the analysis of written texts published in the media. The primary goal of the method is to provide an insight into society, its operating mechanisms, power relations and socio-political strategies through the analysis of the text.⁸

The three media selected for media analysis are *Index*, *Origo* and *kuruc.info*. One of the selection criteria was that the online news portal had already existed and had a high number of visitors at the time of the Tavaszmező street attack and Gyöngyöspata events,⁹ as well as that the archives of the portals were easily accessible, which allowed processing the articles even during the coronavirus epidemic. The examined period stretches from the first day after the incident to one week after the final judgment (in the case of Tavaszmező street: between 1 October 2009 and 14 February 2013. In the case of Gyöngyöspata: between 6 March 2011 and 15 February 2017). I attach importance to one week after the final judgment because it allows me to include any possible analytical articles after the announcement of the judgment. When the cases occurred, *Index* and *Origo* were considered independent news portals, but it is important to mention that *Origo* became an openly pro-government news portal after the editorial change in 2014. *Kuruc.info* can be considered a radical far-right portal during the

⁸ Teun van Dijk (1993) Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2): 249-283.

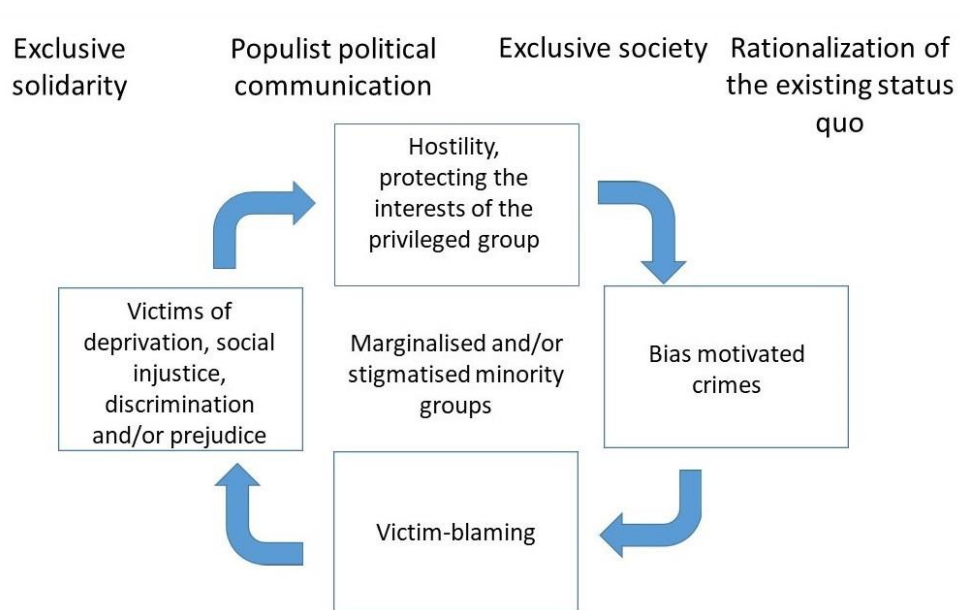
⁹ Accessing visitor data from an online portal is not an easy task. On the portal of Gemius only the data between 2018 and 2020 are available free of charge. Finally, I have selected the two news portals mentioned above based on the analysis on the website of Médiakutató. Tóth, Borbála (2012) A digitális média feltérképezése: Magyarország. *Médiakutató*, 1.3.1.2. https://www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2012_03_osz/02_digitalis_media_felterkepezese. For data for the second half of 2017 and the first half of 2018, see: <https://ite.hu/legnezettebb-hazai-weboldalak-rangsora/>.

period under review and it still is.¹⁰ The main purpose of the analysis of the articles published on the radical website was to introduce the image of the Roma as enemies as constructed by the extreme far-right media.¹¹

3. Results of the doctoral thesis

I researched whether the prejudices and stereotypes that the Hungarian Gypsies encounter every day really affect the way they are judged when they become victims of a hate crime. The question has been raised whether we can talk about *ideal victims* in the case of Roma or, to take Nils Christie's concept further, *an ideal victim group*. One of the main dilemmas of the dissertation is whether there is a vicious circle process that affects minority victims of bias-motivated crime.

Figure 1. Vicious circle



¹⁰ During the events in Gyöngyöspata, the news portal *kuruc.info* openly supported the Jobbik party and the paramilitary groups affiliated to the party. At the time of the rise of Jobbik, the internet portal was considered popular especially among young adults. Róna, Dániel, Sörös Anett (2012) A kuruc.info nemzedék. Miért népszerű a Jobbik a fiatalok között? In: Szabó Andrea (szerk.) *Racionálisan lázadó hallgatók 2012: Apátia – Radikalizmus – Posztmaterializmus a magyar egyetemisták és főiskolások körében I.* Szeged: Belvedere Meridionale, 113–157, 129-135.

¹¹ The examination of the articles on *kuruc.info* and the development of analytical criteria were greatly assisted by Glózer Rita (2013) A „cigányok” mint ellenség. In: Bogdán Mária et al. (szerk.) „Csak másban” *Roma reprezentáció a magyar médiában.* Budapest, Pécs: Gondolat Kiadó, and Petre Breazu, Aiden McGarry (2023) Romaphobia in the UK Right-Wing Press: racist and populist discourse during the Brexit referendum. *Social Semiotics*, online first.

- 1) The **prejudices and stereotypes** described in the dissertation prevent the Roma from being full members of society, which also means that they cannot, or rather society does not allow them to be *ideal victims*. People tend to position specific groups at the bottom of the victim „hierarchy”, such as the homeless or drug addicts, or the young and economically disadvantaged belonging to a minority group.¹² For these social groups, the question of worthiness and self-blame often arises, i.e. whether they are responsible for their situation, and whether ending up in such a social situation was in fact caused by themselves. This is what William Ryan considers victim blaming. This social situation, the related prejudices and stereotypes, supplemented by populist political narratives, can lead to (violent) hate crimes.

- 2) One of the strongest and most frequent manifestations of prejudice against the Roma relates to their perceived criminal tendencies and high levels of involvement in crime, as well as their undeserved access to various social benefits. These prejudices are also present in the articles and speeches included in the media analysis of the events in Gyöngyöspata, for example in the form of openly victim blaming phrases, which make it clear that the speaker believes that Roma are to blame for the situation. Other examples in discourse analysis are much more euphemistic and sophisticated ways of victim blaming. For example, the visual representation of Roma in a stereotypical way, or their “invisibiliy”, i.e. that they are not given an adequate opportunity to speak, can reinforce existing prejudices. In late modernity, the media and thus the public discourse have become more and more prevalent, and the flow of news and reports is accelerating. This process can also have an impact on social solidarity, as there is less time and opportunity for deliberate news consumption and thoughtful construction of one's narratives. In the case of **exclusive solidarity** in Hannah Arendt's sense, solidarity is exclusive to one group, and the consolidation of solidarity is based on the common interest within the group. The press coverage of the events in Gyöngyöspata partially¹³ highlighted the fact that in the accelerated media environment and flow of information, the victims find it difficult to articulate their traumas, suffering and grievances, which can lead to a form of secondary victimisation and victim blaming.

¹² Simon Green (2007) Crime, Victimisation and Vulnerability. In. Sandra Walklate (ed.) *Handbook of Victims and Victimology*. Devon: Willan, 91-118, 92.

¹³ It is important to highlight that the two independent portals interviewed the victims several times, but – in my opinion – not in a depth that would have given us the opportunity to get a better understanding of the victims' narratives.

Furthermore, according to Arendt, solidarity should not be only a feeling but it should also be manifested in actions, for example, in the form of political actions.¹⁴

The question is whether the most common instances of prejudice against the Roma, the “Gypsy crime” and the narrative of unworthiness play a role in exclusive solidarity. The representation of Gypsies as a social problem, their association with crime, and criminalising and securitising ideas related to the Roma have an impact on social opinion and public discourse. Magnified and exaggerated reports generate fear in people and the majority members of society expect the state, including the institutions of power control, to deal with the problem. But if certain groups of society perceive that the state institutions are unable or unwilling to do this, then “law enforcement” groups can organise and come to the fore. These groups also use the media, which can further fuel moral panics. This can weaken solidarity, even when Roma become victims of crime. The distinction between deserving – *ideal* – and undeserving victims influences solidarity, empathy or sympathy.

- 3) This is where **populist political communication** comes into play. When a populist political establishment or politician designates a scapegoat or what and who are or are not considered a people, this creates an obstacle to meaningful discourse between different social groups or to the manifestation of solidarity. Populism is also identity politics. Populists believe that they have a morally superior vision by which they can determine who belongs to the categories of *us* and *them*.¹⁵ According to Éva Fülöp and Pál Kővágó, one of the reasons for the support of populist movements is the feeling of relative deprivation, which stems from the fact that others benefit more favourably from the goods than one's group. This goes hand in hand with a sense of injustice and resentment, and the group causing this feeling of deprivation is blamed as a result.¹⁶ Most feelings of social deprivation arise from and are nourished by complicated socio-economic relationships, but the group members are interested in developing a simplified interpretation as this is an easier process to transmit, accept and understand.

Projecting this on the specific cases it becomes clear that these prejudices against the Hungarian Gypsies are strongly expressed and members of the political elite often reinforce

¹⁴ Hannah Arendt (1991) *A forradalom*. Budapest: Európa Kiadó.

¹⁵ Martin Buber (1999) *Én és Te*. Budapest: Európa Kiadó.

¹⁶ Fülöp Éva, Kővágó Pál (2018) A történelmi sérelmekhez való viszonyulás és a kisebbségi csoportokkal szembeni intolerancia összefüggései. In: Fülöp Éva, Kővágó Pál (szerk.) *A kollektív áldozati szerep szociálpszichológiája*. Budapest: Oriold és Társai, 371-400, 392.

them with populist statements and actions. An example is when the Prime Minister labels the compensation received for segregated education as undeserved income, or when social policy measures such as the narrowing of social benefits or the tightening of conditions enter into force, which exclude Roma and/or the poor from the social system. Inadequate political action also includes that the Hungarian state does not distance itself from extremists and does not stand firmly against extremist ideologies and groups. All of these reinforce stereotypes and feelings of hostility towards Gypsies, so social solidarity or empathy towards them may decrease, disappear, or even turn into hostility.

- 4) Together, the above phenomena can lead to **hate crimes**. Solidarity could be formed even then, but the state often gives the wrong social and legal answer to this issue as well. Inadequate investigation, treatment, or legal classification of bias-motivated crime sends a negative message to the victims. Victims belonging to minority groups do not receive adequate help and justice, which can lead to a further loss or complete lack of trust. This issue is still present even though in recent years there has been clear progress and development both in the field of legislation and law enforcement. Despite this, the legal and victim protection treatment of hate crimes is not always adequate. The reasons for this are manifold: on the one hand, the victims do not trust the authorities, fear various forms of secondary victimisation, do not recognise that they have become a victim, or the lack of legal knowledge and/or legal awareness prevents the case from being handled professionally. On the other hand, there are also systemic problems, such as the prejudicial attitudes of the authorities, the lack of specialised knowledge and the political dimension of hate crimes. Hate crime provisions and qualifying circumstances have an enlightenment function,¹⁷ which is necessary precisely because certain minority groups have historically suffered or are currently suffering from disadvantages or they are considered inferior. This scorn, contempt and rejection – present in the mind of haters and prejudiced people – is in stark contrast to enhanced criminal law protection, so they justify to themselves that the Roma or any other minority group does not deserve it. This can also be interpreted as victim blaming.

The escalation of the events in Gyöngyös, the inappropriate actions of the police, and the lack of criminal proceedings can be interpreted as the state abandoning the Roma - the

¹⁷ Bárd Petra (2020) Prerequisites for the effective fight against hate crimes. *Hungarian Journal of Legal Studies*, 61(3): 255-268, 260-261.

victims. The situation was aggravated by the political discourse that took place during the time of the events. In 2011, Gyöngyöspata and the Roma in the settlement became the protagonists of public discourse. The political actors shaped the debate according to their interests, but where were the Gypsies in this dialogue? In the media, violence and moral panic have news value. Therefore, hate crimes are often interesting only as long as the suffering of the victims can be showcased.

- 5) The events in Gyöngyöspata resulted in **victim blaming** after the crime. Narratives that claim that the motivations for the “law enforcement” or “patrolling” of far-right paramilitary groups arriving in the settlement were the perceived or real actions or lifestyle of the Roma, can also be considered victim blaming. Examining theories of the causes of victim blaming, several of them have explanatory power in the case of hate crimes.

Roma (or other minority group) victims cannot be considered *ideal victims* in Nils Christie's sense. In the eyes of society, victims either deserve sympathy or are blamed for the harm they have suffered. Earl Rubington and Martin Weinberg found that sympathy is strongly influenced by factors such as age, social status or gender.¹⁸ According to Candance Clark, a victim who is not worthy of sympathy can receive two types of labels: 1) a person who shows inappropriate emotional reactions in the eyes of society (emotional deviants); 2) a deviant who is blamed for the crime.¹⁹ In the case of Roma victims, who receive both of the labels mentioned above, the degree of sympathy is influenced by the aforementioned prejudices and their social status. For the majority of society, it is difficult to show sympathy for Gypsy victims.

When analyzing the events in Gyöngyöspata, perhaps the theory of system justification has the strongest explanatory power. The theory of system justification²⁰ is significant because, in addition to classic victim blaming, the blaming of socially disadvantaged and marginalised groups is also present, i.e. the justification of the existing political-economic-social system. The theory pays more attention to the role of social institutions, norms and

¹⁸ Earl Rubinton, Martin Weinberg (1987) *Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective*. 5th ed. New York: MacMillan, 291, 298, 300-301.

¹⁹ Candance Clark (1987) Sympathy Biography and Sympathy Margin. *American Journal of Sociology*, 93(2): 290-321, 313.

²⁰ John T. Jost, Mahzarin R. Banaji (1999) A sztereotipizálás szerepe a rendszer igazolásában, a hamis tudat. In: Hunyady György, David L. Hamilton, Nguyen Luu Lan Anh (szerk.) *A csoportok percepciója*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 489-518; John T. Jost, Mahzarin R. Banaji, Brian A. Nosek (2004) A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology*, 25(6): 881–919.

ideologies. Among the reasons for this the capitalist system, the Protestant work ethic or the meritocratic ideology can be mentioned; whereas at the personal level, for example, the acceptance of politically conservative views, or the reduction of dissonance – the process in which the perception of a disadvantaged situation creates dissonance with expectations related to social justice and the desire for a belief in a just world – are noteworthy.²¹ In other words, system justification means the **rationalization of the existing *status quo*** and the motivation for it, however this is not the same as supporting social inequality, only insofar as these phenomena are present in society and are part of the capitalist system. This type of justification process is also influenced by the existing unfavourable stereotypes, since if someone accepts that, for example, the poor are lazy and do not want to work, then in their eyes the assumption that the poor are *poor* will be justified. System justification theory can have negative consequences such as the degradation of lower-status groups, which is closely linked to prejudice.

One of the main conclusions of the dissertation is that the process presented above maintains the established social *status quo*, protecting the interests of the privileged group. It is a common phenomenon when the majority of society claims that people in poorer, more difficult situations are responsible for their own situation, are lazy and are not interested in improving their status since they live well from state subsidies and benefits. The boundaries of social problems blur with the boundaries of deviance, one of the many consequences of which is the emergence of punitive populism in late modernity. The state treats these phenomena and life situations with intolerance, ultimately criminalising them, thus providing a quick and spectacular criminal policy solution to social problems.²²

Another important conclusion of the dissertation, of which the case studies are also suitable examples, is that hate crimes carry a political risk and political weight. In his doctoral dissertation, Erik Uszkiewicz points out that if a state is unable to protect its minority citizens and portrays them in a negative and dishonourable light, it contradicts the basic principles of

²¹ Berkics, Mihály (2008) A társadalmi viszonyok és a társadalomban zajló versengés igazságosságának észlelése. PhD disszertáció. Budapest: ELTE PPK, 15.

²² Borbíró, Andrea (2014) Amikor a kriminálpolitika a probléma. *Fundamentum*, 2014/3: 41-45; Podoletz, Léna (2020) *Állami kontroll és marginalizáció*. PhD disszertáció. Budapest: ELTE ÁJK; Kiss, László, Lévay Miklós (2020) Még egyszer a hajléktalanok büntethetőségéről. *Közjogi szemle*, 13(1): 8-21; Bárd, Petra, Szontagh Veronika (2021) Áldozathibáztatás kisebbségi csoportok sértettjeivel szemben. *Szociológiai Szemle*, 31(1): 29-56, 40-41.

liberal democracy. Political public discourse that supports, trivialises or is indifferent to racist violence has an impact on the development of hate crimes.²³ The government's securitisation rhetoric against minority groups can be seen in action: with the technique of securitisation, the government highlights certain living conditions, marks them as a threat, then creates different rules for them. This is not a behaviour that should be criticized in all cases (e.g. in certain Western European states, terrorism is a real threat), however, in some cases the considerations behind the selection are not criminological but (populist) political, which then strengthens prejudices.²⁴ (For example, illegal migration, criminalisation of homelessness, or the conflation of the LGBTQ+ community with paedophilia.)

What happens in the reversed case, when the perpetrators of (hate) crimes are Roma? A similar loss of trust and lack of confidence develops. In my opinion, the stated motivation of the Roma-non-Roma conflict as “anti-Hungarian” is an inappropriate legal classification and an uninterpretable concept in the Roma-non-Roma relationship. It can widen and deepen the existing fault lines, dividing and fragmenting Hungarian society.

If we examine the Gyöngyöspata and Tavaszmező street case studies from the point of view of how they depict and present the Roma, many similarities can be seen. Whether the Roma are victims or perpetrators, their ethnic origin is prominent. In the case of victims, on the one hand this emphasis may be a point to consider, because it is precisely their origin that made them victims of crime. On the other hand, because of the vicious circle mentioned above, the emphasis on belonging to the Roma is negatively charged. This does not occur at the level of legal regulation, as Roma victims of bias crimes receive increased protection, but it does happen at the level of rhetoric. The victim status of Roma victims is called into question, taken away or even diminished, precisely because of their group membership. The origin comes to the fore even when Roma are the perpetrators of the crime. This reinforces the stereotypes and prejudices that link the Roma with crime. The media must pay special attention to this and have a responsibility not to reinforce the narrative of “Gypsy crime” either with words or with visual tools. The reference to origin can reduce Roma persons to one characteristic – their ethnicity. This is a difficult question in the case of hate crimes because it is precisely the group affiliation that is emphasised, since in the eyes of the perpetrator, Gypsies appear as a homogenous group.

²³ Uszkiewicz, Erik (2022) *Romák és rendőrök – egy neuralgikus viszonyrendszer Magyarországon*. PhD disszertáció. Budapest: ELTE Állam- és Jogtudományi Kar, 203.

²⁴ For more on the topic of securitisation, see, Korinek, László (2023) *Paradoxonok a kriminológiában*. Budapest: ORAC Kiadó Kft., Nagy, Veronika (2020) *A mobilitás biztonságiasítása*. Budapest: Campus Kiadó.

Although one of the main attributes of crimes motivated by prejudice is group affiliation, we should not focus only on this single attribute. This is especially true in the light of the fact, that this often backfires, as the social solidarity that the legislation is supposed to achieve, is not given to Roma victims.

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