

When fairy tales come true: Culture-specific figurative framing in contemporary Hungarian political rhetoric

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SZÉCHENYI 



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INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE

STRUCTURE OF THE TALK

1. Introduction
2. Research question and hypothesis
3. Methodology
4. Discussion of results
5. Conclusions

I. INTRODUCTION

- System change after communism
- Unanimous agreement to join the EU
- High expectations, very positive image
- Referendum: 83.76%
- Final stage of the transformation process
- Final stage of democratization
- Hungary “rejoining” Europe



I. INTRODUCTION

- Strained relationship
- Sargentini report
- 49% (Eurobarometer)
- Hungarian government's framing of its relationship with the EU

2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

- How has the Hungarian government framed its relationship with the European Union in the past few years?
- Conflict an **immanent feature** of world politics (Morgenthau 1948)
- CONFLICT frame **routinely exploited** by politicians to explain and justify their foreign policy (Lakoff 1991; Mio 1997; Musolff 2016; etc.)
- H₁: Framing of relationship with EU based on **CONFLICT frame**

Morgenthau, H. J. 1948/1973. *Politics among nations*. New York: Kopf.

Lakoff, G. 1991. Metaphor and war: The metaphor system used to justify war in the gulf. *Peace Research*, 23(2/3), 25–32.

Mio, J. S. 1997. Metaphor and politics. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 12(2), 113–33.

Musolff, A. 2016. *Political metaphor analysis*. London: Bloomsbury.

2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

- How has the Hungarian government framed its relationship with the European Union in the past few years?
- Frames primarily **cultural constructs** (Kövecses 2005)
- CONFLICT frame instantiated by more specific, “culturally and historically mediated” scenarios (Musolff 2016: 30)
- H₂: Government has framed its conflict with the EU as
 - 1) Hungarian freedom fight against oppression (against the Habsburgs in 19th century or against the Soviet regime in 1956);
 - 2) Common Hungarian fairy tale of the youngest son’s quest for happiness (cf. Lakoff 1991)

3. METHODOLOGY

1. Corpus: Websites

- Hungarian Government (kormany.hu)
- Prime Minister (miniszterelnok.hu)

2. Observed period: 2015–2017

- Originally from 2010 onwards, but no reliable data
- Comparable datasets

3. Keyword: Brüsszel

- Conventionalized expression for “EU” (PLACE FOR INSTITUTION)
- “subtle political bias” to reduce complex entity of EU Commission to one city (Musolff 2016: 9)
- Sentences (≠ identical sentences; ≠ city of Brussels)
 - „A válasz egyszerű, mert mi nem akarunk nagyobb hatalmat adni Brüsszelnek.” (2017)
 - “The answer is simple, because we don't want to give more power to Brussels.”

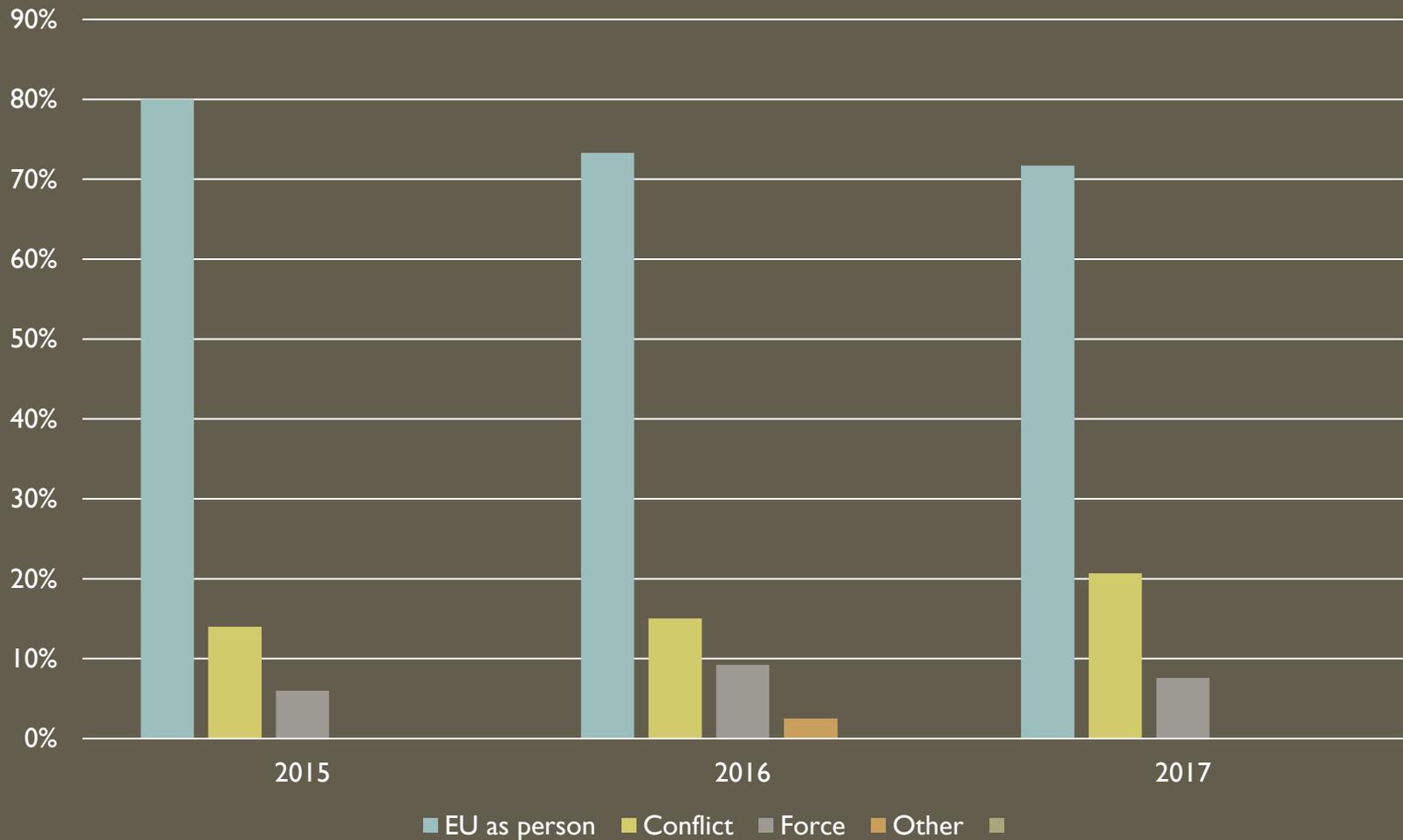
3. METHODOLOGY

- In sum **415 tokens**
 - 2015: 50 tokens
 - 2016: 206 tokens
 - 2017: 159 tokens
- Bottom-up analysis of data
- Metaphor identification procedure (Pragglejaz 2007)
- **Three** main metaphorical frames emerged
 - FORCE
 - CONFLICT
 - PERSON

Pragglejaz Group. 2007. MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol* 22(1): 1-39.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Major metaphorical frames, 2015–2017



4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

I) FORCE

- EU AS FORCE and HUNGARY AS COUNTER-FORCE
 - „Brüsszelt meg kell állítanunk...” (2016)
 - “We must *stop* Brussels...”
- Widely used in 2017 in anti-EU ads concerning immigration (Benczes in prep.)

Benczes, R. (in prep.). Visual metonymy and framing in political communication. In: Kristóf Nyíri and András Benedek (eds.), *Image and Metaphor in the New Century: Perspectives on Visual Learning*, vol. 3. Budapest: Hungarian Academy of Sciences & Budapest University of Technology and Economics.

“Let’s stop Brussels!”
National Consultation 2017



ÁLLÍTSUK MEG
BRÜSSZELT!

Nemzeti Konzultáció
2017



4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

2) CONFLICT

- EU AS OPPONENT IN ARGUMENT/BATTLE
 - „Brüsszel a bevándorlás miatt *támadja* Magyarországot...” (2017)
 - “Brussels is *attacking* Hungary because of immigration...”
- ARGUMENT IS WAR
 - „Magyarország *megvédte az igazát* Brüsszellel szemben” (2015)
 - “Hungary *defended* its position against Brussels”

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

3) EU AS PERSON

- Person with desires, emotions, interests and opinions
- Agent who initiates actions
 - „Brüsszel *megtiltaná*, hogy kereskedelmi megállapodást kössünk unión kívüli országgal...” (2015)
 - “Brussels would *prohibit* us from signing a trade agreement with countries outside of the EU...”
- Commonly manifested as NATION AS FAMILY in literature
 - Married life of a couple (Musolff 2001)
 - Parent–child relations (Lakoff 2004)

Lakoff, G. 2004. *Moral Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Musolff, A. 2001. Cross-language metaphors: Parents and children, love, marriage and divorce in the European family. In: J. Cotterill and A. Ife (eds.), *Language Across Boundaries*. London: Continuum, 119–34,

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

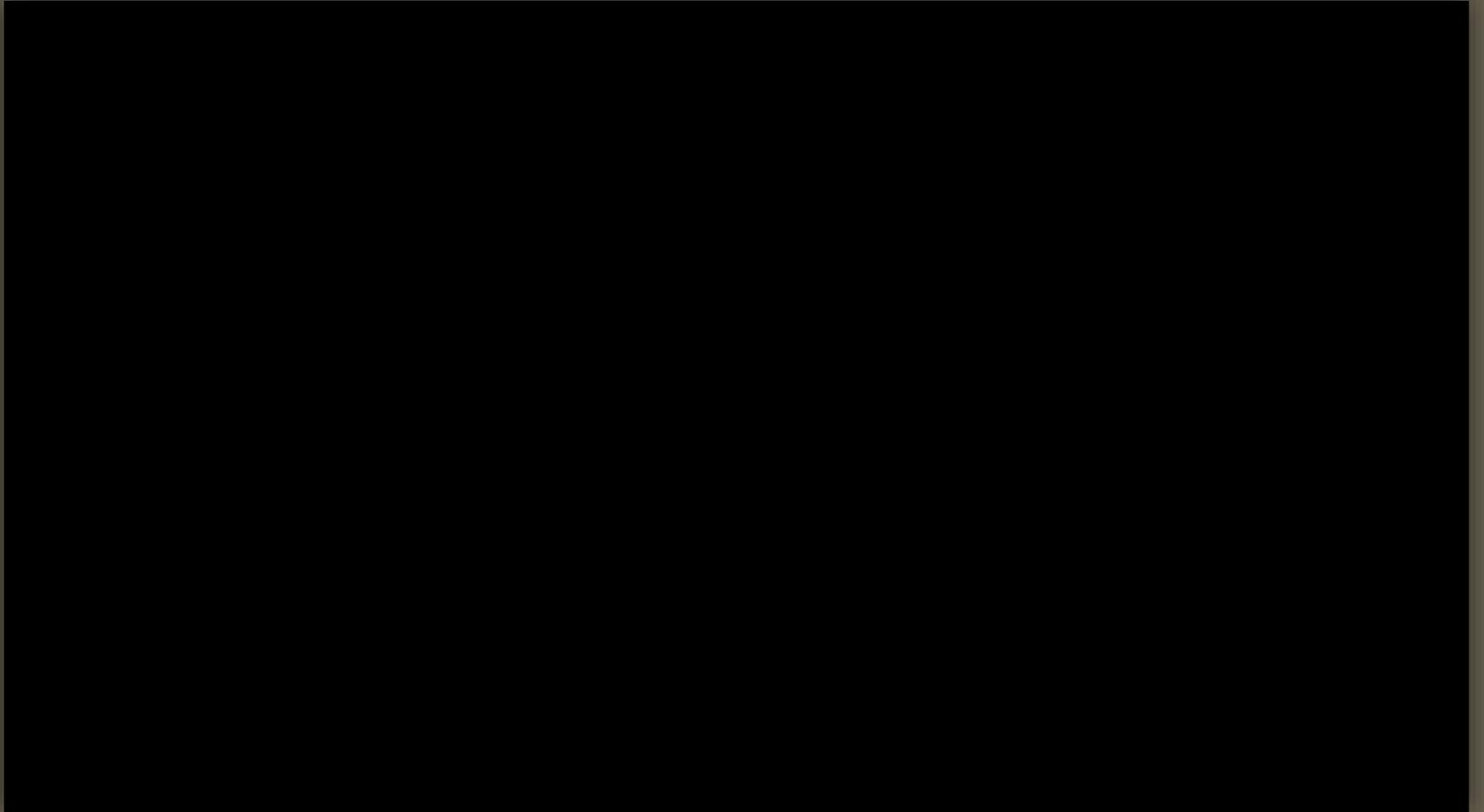
- Scenarios
- “less schematic subtype of frame insofar as they include **specific narrative and evaluative perspectives**, which make them attractive for drawing strong inferences in political discourses” (Musolff 2016: 30)
- PARTNER/COLLEAGUE IN JOINT VENTURE (EGALITARIAN MODEL)
 - EU and Hungary as partners with equal rights and mutual obligations
 - *show respect to one another, make suggestions, help each other, depend on each other, share the work*
 - 10% ⇒ 7.8% ⇒ 6.9%

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

- AUTHORITY FIGURE (HIERARCHICAL MODEL)
 - Possesses recognized authority (Osorio-Kupferblum 2015)
 - Asserts its will and decisions on Hungary because it is able to do so
 - No coercion or force involved
 - Punishes Hungary when it thinks it's necessary
 - But has obligations and responsibilities
 - „az energia árát a piac vagy Brüsszel *határozza meg*”
 - „the price of energy is *determined* by the market or Brussels”
 - *permit, prohibit, punish, determine, want, regulate, exact, subordinate*
 - 60% ⇒ 58% ⇒ 62%

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

- BULLY (TOTALITARIAN MODEL)
 - EU as threatening figure to Hungary
 - EU has **power** to make others do something they would otherwise not be doing (⇔ authority)
 - *force, pressurize, coerce, blackmail, take away rights, take control, place itself above rules, take away our sovereignty*
 - 15% ⇒ 10% ⇒ 14%
- EU AS COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP
 - „mi többször is elmondtuk: Brüsszel nem Moszkva”
 - “we have said it a number of times: Brussels is not Moscow”
 - Legitimizes government’s conflict with EU ⇒
 - Freedom fight of 1956 against oppression (Soviet rule)



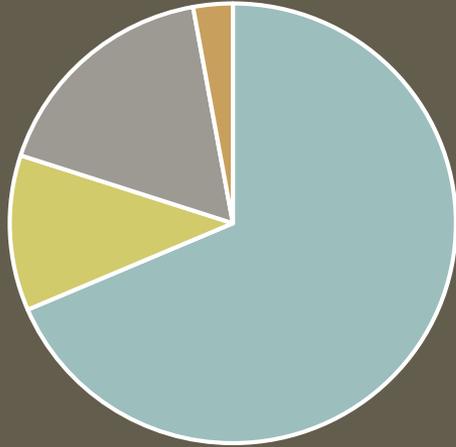
5. CONCLUSIONS

- Aim of research: investigate framing of Hungarian government's relationship to EU
- Prior accession: highly positive image
- Currently more negative conceptualisation based on FORCE, CONFLICT and EU AS PERSON frames
- CONFLICT not particularly prevalent – H_1 not justified
- EU AS PERSON particularly prevalent, manifested as PARTNER, AUTHORITY FIGURE and BULLY
- BULLY FRAME draws on culture-specific scenario of freedom fight against oppressive rule – H_2 justified
- Legitimizes government's conflict with EU

A blue flag with twelve yellow stars is flying on a tall pole against a cloudy sky. The flag is slightly tattered and has a single yellow star floating in the air to its right. The sky is a mix of blue and white clouds, with a bright light source visible on the left side.

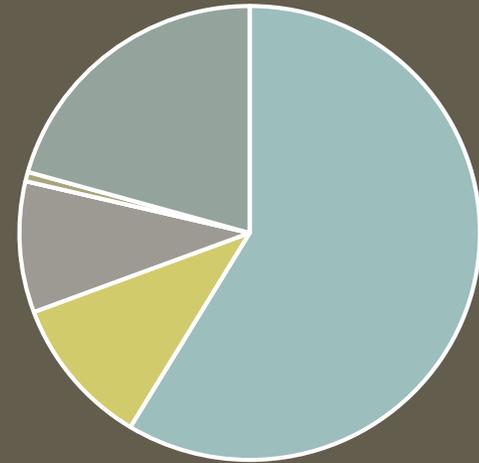
**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!**

2015



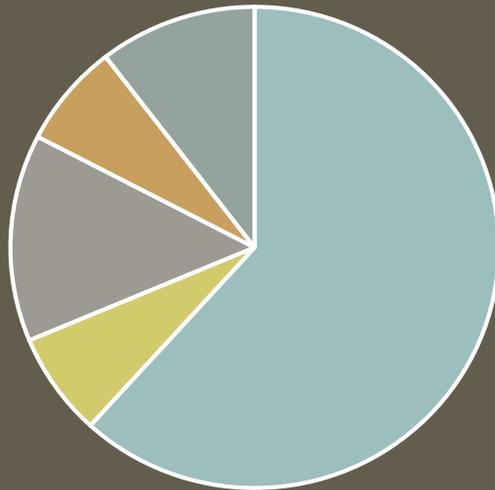
AUTHORITY FIGURE PARTNER BULLY VILLAIN

2016



AUTHORITY FIGURE PARTNER BULLY
VILLAIN SUBORDINATE NON-SPECIFIED

2017



AUTHORITY FIGURE PARTNER BULLY
VILLAIN SUBORDINATE NON-SPECIFIED